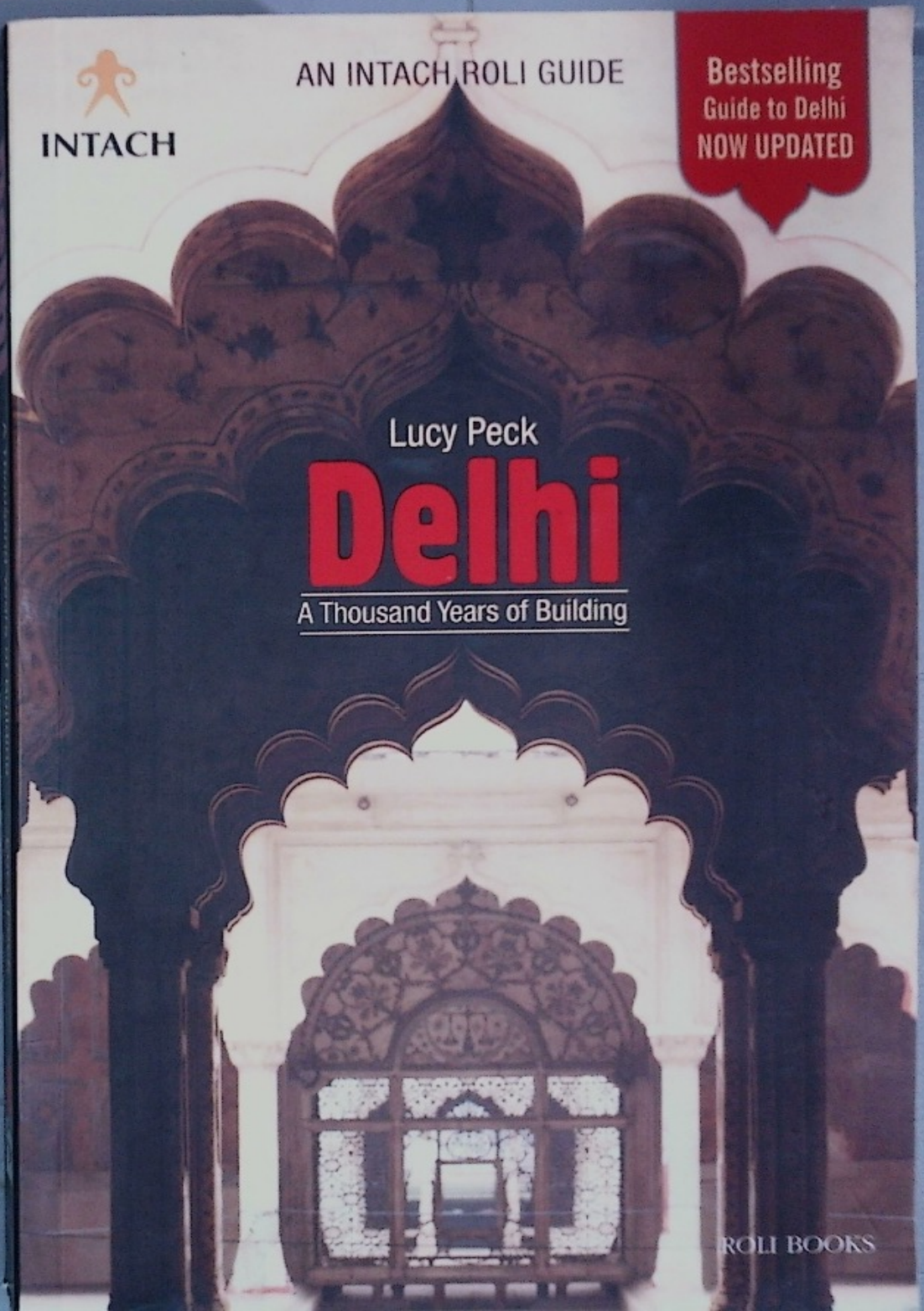
INTACH
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Lucy Peck
Delhi
A Thousand Years of Building
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Humayun's Tomb, Ch. 10

AN INTACH ROLI GUIDE

Delhi

A thousand years of building

Lucy Peck

LOTUS COLLECTION
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Lucy Peck

Roli Collection, 1, 4, 7, 15, 16, 17 (lower right), 36, 39 (top), (bottom), 60, 83 (top), 135, 140, 163 (top), 164, 165 (bottom), 177, 186 (right top and bottom), 188 (top and middle), 189, 204 (right), 206 & 207 (all top), 244, 255, 257 (middle and bottom), 258 (top), 263 (top), 265, 266, 267, 268, 271, 274, 275, 276 (bottom), 279 (bottom), 280, 281

Tony Paille, P. 288 (top)

By permission of The British Library, map p. 195 from 'A Native Map of Shahjahanabad' (X/1659)

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Lucy Peck

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Manav Agarwal

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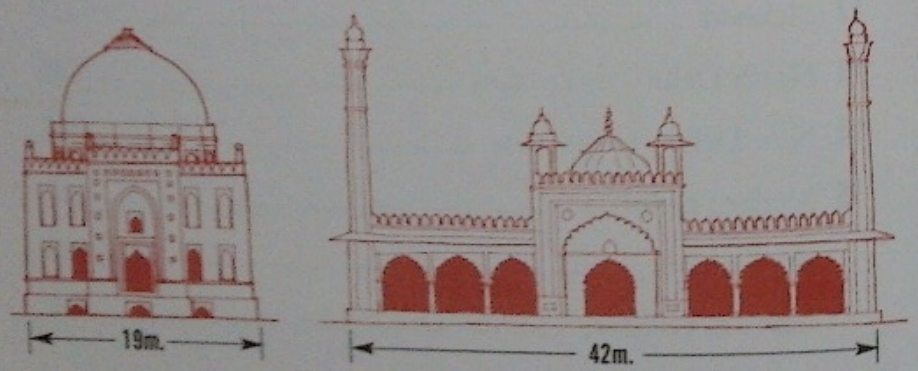
Contents

How to use this book

Delhi can be divided very easily into discreet geographical areas that each relate to a different period of history. Each chapter, therefore, relates to one of these areas and begins with a brief history and a short introduction to the area as a whole and its historical context. This is followed by maps, descriptions of walks (where practical), and short explanations of important buildings in each area. Buildings are also mentioned within descriptions of walks. Wherever a building is described it is in **bold**. The maps have keys, which are referenced with page numbers, where necessary, for each building; if a building is not mentioned in the text it might have a short explanation in the key. The maps should be considered as adjuncts to the excellent Eicher *City Map* of Delhi. Where buildings are accurately marked on that map I have felt it unnecessary to produce another map here, but there are many areas where the Eicher map is not sufficiently accurate. I hope that my maps will fill these gaps.

In exploring Delhi I have been dependent on the valuable INTACH listing, *Delhi, the Built Heritage*, which covers some buildings that are omitted from this book. I have concentrated instead on the buildings specific to each area, seeking to explain the growth of Delhi as well as its architecture.

As well as photographs and drawings many of the buildings are illustrated with Elevations and, sometimes, Sections. These are all at the same scale (approx 1:630) in order to enable comparisons to be made between them. The sample buildings here have the dimensions shown under the drawing.



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First, I would like to thank the Seven Cities of Delhi Group and the friends I made through them. It was working with the group that first showed me what was missing from among the numerous books on Delhi. I would particularly like to thank various friends who visited various parts of Delhi with me and in particular Jane Jones, who joined me over several years in an indefatigable exploration of virtually every alleyway in Shahjahanabad. We were very grateful to the many inhabitants of Shahjahanabad who invited us into their homes.

I would like to thank various people for help and encouragement with this book: Caroline Davidson of the Caroline Davidson Literary Agency, who gave me invaluable help at the beginning of the project; Ratish Nanda and O. P. Jain, Delhi Chapter of INTACH, who produced the INTACH listing, the key to Delhi's buildings; Jeremy Currie, who made for me an excellent translation of the 1840s map; William Dalrymple for information on the early colonial period; Naryani Gupta for some very helpful discussions; Philippa Vaughan for help with the Mughal period; Romila Thapar for invaluable comments on some early chapters. I would also like to thank many friends who have expressed interest in my work and I hope the finished product is as useful to them as intended. I would especially like to thank Shobita Punja of INTACH, who made the publication possible.

Special thanks go to **Reliance Infocomm** for their generous financial support for this project. It is our good fortune that their interest in protecting the heritage and historical character of cities such as Delhi, which are the pride of India, have led them to collaborate with INTACH on this project.

I would like to thank the Staff of the British Library and the ASI Archives at Safdarjang's Tomb; Vincent Rajendran, who drove me, unflappably, into the obscurest parts of Delhi. Many thanks to Priya Kapoor and Renuka Chatterjee of Roli, Rita Vohra for diligent proofreading,and, especially, Manav Agarwal, who designed the book and managed, in such a coherent way, to fit in so much. The inaccuracies and inconsistencies which, no doubt, will still emerge are entirely my fault.

Finally I would like to thank my husband Donald, who was endlessly encouraging, read various versions of the text and vastly improved the style.

Maps

The first map in each chapter shows the development of the city against a simple topographical map. * denotes a walk.

Chronology

RAJPUT

1000 BC Evidence of villages from late-Harappan culture in Delhi area
300-200 BC Evidence of the first village habitation at the Purana Qila
Mid 3rd c BC Kalkaji Ashokan Edict carved
700AD – 1160 **Tomar** rule in Delhi area
800s Suraj Kund dam and tank built
1000s Lal Kot built
1160 – 92 **Chauhan** rule from capital Ajmer.
Lal Kot extended to create Qila Rai Pithora

'SLAVE DYNASTY'

1192 Invasion by Muhammad of Ghor. **Qutbuddin Aibak** becomes Sultan of Delhi
Building of Qutb Minar and mosque
1206 Muhammad of Ghor dies. Qutbuddin Aibak establishes independent state.
1211 **Iltutmish** becomes Sultan. Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki (Qutb Sahib) arrives in India as disciple of Muinuddin Chisti of Ajmer.
1235 Qutb Sahib dies
Extension to Qutb Minar and Mosque
Hauz Shamsi, Mehrauli
Sultan Ghari's Tomb
Iltutmish's Tomb
1236 – 45 Several short disputed reigns including the only female Sultan, **Raziya.**
Shah Turkman and Raziya both buried north of city
1261 Nizamuddin Aulia arrives in Delhi during reign of **Mahmud Shah.**
1266 – 87 **Balban** Sultan of Delhi
Balban's tomb
1287 **Kaykubad** inherits from Balban
Builds palace at Kilokri

KHALJI DYNASTY

1290 – 96 **Jalalaldin** seizes power
1296 – 1316 **Alauddin Khalji** assassinates uncle and becomes Sultan.
Mosque extension, minar stump and *madrasa* at Qutb Minar
Siri Fort
Hauz Khas
Jamaat Khana Mosque at Nizamuddin (?)

TUGHLAK DYNASTY

1320 – 1324 **Ghiyasuddin Tughlak** seizes power
Tughlakabad and Ghiyasuddin's Tomb
Nizamuddin Aulia builds *baoli* at Nizamuddin
1324 – 51 **Muhammad Shah Tughlak** reigns.
1325 Nizamuddin dies
1326 Forced removal of most of population of Delhi to Daulatabad
Jahanpanah walls
Bijay Mandal and probably Begampur mosque
1351 – 88 **Firoz Shah Tughlak**

TUGHLAK DYNASTY cont.

1356 Chiragh Delhi dies
Hauz Khas restored, *madrasa* built
Firoz Shah Kotla
Qadam Sharif
Numerous hunting lodges
Khan Jahan Tilangani's Tomb
Seven Mosques built by Firoz Shah's Prime Minister
1398 Delhi taken by Timur (Tamberlaine)

SAYYID DYNASTY

1414 – 21 **Khizr Khan**
1421 – 33 **Mubarak Shah**
1433 – 45 **Muhammad Shah**
1445 – 51 **Alam Shah**
Mubarak Shah's Tomb, mosque and enclosure walls
Muhammad Shah's Tomb
Some tombs built in South Delhi e.g. some of the tombs east of Hauz Khas village

LODI DYNASTY

1451 – 89 **Bahlol Lodi**
1489 – 1517 **Sikander Lodi**
1517 – 1526 **Ibrahim Lodi**
During Sikander Lodi's reign the court is moved to Agra but Delhi remains important centre and many fine buildings are erected.
Bahlol Lodi's Tomb
Sikander Lodi's Tomb
Numerous tombs & mosques built north, west and south of city including:-
Sikander Lodi's Tomb, Bara Gumbad and Sheesh Gumbad now in Lodi Gardens
Zamrudpur tombs
RKPuram tombs
Tin Burj in South Extension
Tin Burj at Muhammadpur
Moth ki Masjid
Jamali Kamali's Tomb and Mosque
Rajon ki Baoli

MUGHAL DYNASTY

1526 **Babur** invades India and defeats Ibrahim Lodi. Foundation of Mughal Empire, ruled mainly from Agra or Lahore.
1530 – 40 **Humayun**
Walls of Dinpanah (Purana Qila) started
Sher Shah Suri seizes power.
Finishes or rebuilds Purana Qila walls
Masjid Qila Kuhna
Sher Mandal (?)

MUGHAL DYNASTY cont.

Lal Darwaza and Khuni Darwaza
1545 – 1555 **Salim Shah**
Salimgarh
1555 **Humayun** regains power but does not reign long before dying after a fall.
1556 – 1605 **Akbar**
Humayun's Tomb
Athpula in Lodi Gardens built by a courtier
Atgah Khan's Tomb
Adham Khan's Tomb
Khan-i-Khanan's Tomb
1605 – 28 **Jahangir**
Arab Serai Market & Barapula
Chausath Khamba in Nizamuddin
1628 – 58 **Shah Jahan**
1638 The emperor starts to build Shahjahanabad: Red Fort, Jami Masjid
Fatehpuri Masjid and other mosques built by his wives
Shalimar Bagh, Hastal hunting lodge built outside the city
Many large mansions built by princes and courtiers
1658 – 1707 **Aurangzeb** kills his brothers and deposes Shah Jahan, who lives another eight years as his son's captive at Agra
Zinat al-Masjid built by Aurangzeb's daughter
Mosque and Madrasa of Ghaziuddin
1681 Aurangzeb goes south to wage war in the Deccan, never to return to the north.
1707 – 19 Aurangzeb's death leads to civil war between his descendants and the gradual diminution over the next few decades of Mughal power. First *firman* (licence to trade) given to the East India Company.
Mughal Royal Family begin to spend time at Mehrauli, building palace complex near Dargah. Members of the family buried there
1719 – 48 **Muhammad Shah**
Many temples and mosques built in Shahjahanabad
1748 Qudsia Bagh built
1739 Invasion by Nadir Shah of Persia. The second great sacking of the city and the Red Fort.
1748 – 1803 The final decline of the Mughal Empire, beset by Afghan and Maratha armies, leaves **Shah Alam II** blinded and controlled by the Maratha chief Scindia.
1750 Aliganj built
1753 Safdarjang's Tomb
1779 Lal Bangla tombs in Golf course

COLONIAL POWER

1803 General Lake defeats Scindia outside Delhi. British Resident and other officials installed in Delhi.
1823 Begum Samru's House built
1824 Town Duties Committee established

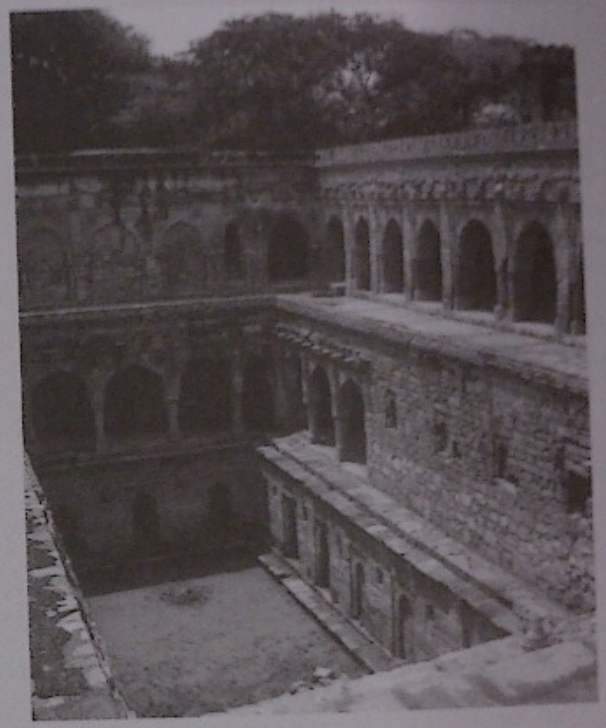
COLONIAL POWER cont.

1828 European troops move to new Cantonment beyond the Ridge
1830s Development of suburbs west of Delhi – Sadar Bazaar, Kishanganj and Deputyganj.
1835 Sir Thomas Metcalfe's House built
1836 St James's Church built
1848 Part of land on east bank of river included in Delhi territory.
1857 Great Uprising in Meerut, Delhi, Awadh and a few other parts of north India.
1858 The British Government takes over administration from the East India Company. **Bahadur Shah** exiled to Rangoon.
1859 Major clearance of buildings between the Fort and the city
1863 Delhi Municipal Committee formed
1864 Town Hall built
1866 Railway comes to Delhi, necessitating a major clearance of buildings
1869 The poet Ghalib dies
1877 Durbar north of Delhi in which Queen Victoria is proclaimed Empress of India
1903 Coronation Durbar
1911 Durbar at which George V announces that Delhi will become the capital of India.
1912 Bomb thrown at Viceroy, Lord Hardinge.
The Raisina site finally selected for new capital.
1916 New Delhi Municipal Committee formed but only active from 1925
1931 Inauguration of New Delhi government buildings
1940s Delhi University moves to present site

INDEPENDENCE

1947 Independence. Partition causes a massive exchange of populations. The population of Delhi nearly doubles between 1941 and 1951.
1955 Delhi Development Authority (DDA) set up
1962 Delhi Master Plan approved by Parliament
1982 Asian Games held in Delhi
1985 National Capital Territory created.

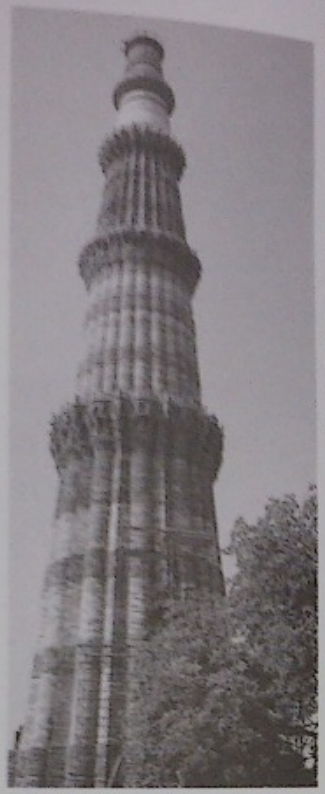
INTRODUCTION



Delhi! The name sums up the pomp and power of bygone days.

Count Hans von Koenigsmarck,
1910

Introduction



Qutb Minar

Delhi is an amalgamation of many cities built at different times in its thousand-year history, and it is this history that has been its fascination for its citizens and visitors for centuries. This book is about the growth and development of Delhi. It concentrates on the scattered remains of the earlier cities, both in terms of actual buildings but also in the way each new 'city' has affected later development and, in particular, the current appearance of Delhi. In one sense several different cities exist now: the city of the political elite based around colonial New Delhi; the city of the business elite, centred on South Delhi; the even larger city of the middle class, which has spread right out to the west, south and east, and finally the city that fits into the interstices of the others, one that is almost invisible to the elite but where millions of people live and work in indescribably desperate conditions. These modern manifestations of Delhi are physically very different but they all, to some extent, overlap with the historic cities. By exploring the old sites many aspect of the modern city are revealed.

In the historical context many people are aware that there were 'seven cities of Delhi' but it is, in fact, plausible to talk of any number up to sixteen. This number includes all known separate foundations as well as the two colonial centres, the Civil Lines and New Delhi, to which, by the same rules, must be added Modern Delhi, that is post-Independence Delhi. In fact, I hope to explain that there were certain areas that remained predominantly urban for centuries, while the majority of the places now considered as 'cities' were either suburban developments or simply failures, sometimes leaving no trace. Effectively, the real centre of power shifted thrice, from the Mehrauli area to Shahjahanabad and from there to New Delhi. Modern Delhi's commercial and government centres are still based on the Mughal and colonial cities and the urban area has spread out to encompass virtually all the previous 'cities' as well as numerous villages, which still exist among the residential layouts that supplanted their fields. This legacy has certainly shaped the urban fabric, which varies wildly from the astonishing density of the old city and village areas to the ludicrously spread-out New Delhi and Cantonment areas.

Along with this curious land-use pattern we have also been bequeathed fascinating buildings from every century over the last thousand years. Since at least the 11th century Delhi has been an important urban centre, and there is evidence of continuous occupation in the area for at least a thousand years before that. Rather surprisingly, despite the antiquity of India's urban culture, many of modern India's largest cities do not have long histories; of the six biggest cities only Delhi and Hyderabad existed as important urban centres before the arrival of the British, whose principal cities (Calcutta, Bombay and Madras) were all ports. The colonial economy and external trade gave such places an importance that eclipsed inland cities. Bangalore, although politically important, was only a small city before it became a colonial garrison town, and Hyderabad was only founded in1589.

Even in the next rank down it is surprising how few cities are truly ancient. In comparison with Europe or West Asia, there are only a small number of cities in India that were important for more than a few centuries. Those that were, such as Varanasi, are often significant centres for pilgrimage as well as being centres of specialist production such as textiles. More common have been medium-sized cities, such as Lucknow or Orchha, which were centres of power for only a hundred years or so as local families rose to power and then were superseded. Some cities in this category continued as local market centres, some dwindled to mere villages, and some were abandoned altogether, either for a site nearby or for political reasons. Often their architectural heritage is preserved only *because* the buildings were abandoned and not, as would otherwise have been the case, pulled down to be rebuilt or used as a quarry. The most moving sites to visit are those of which nothing now remains but defensive walls, ruined palaces, temples and mosques, and these places deservedly attract many tourists. By contrast, Delhi's great interest derives from the fact that it has been an important urban centre for so long. It thus contains ancient pilgrimage centres, abandoned cities, a large medieval city, a colonial capital and urban villages, all within a rapidly expanding and changing modern city. I use the term medieval, which is generally associated with pre-modern Europe, because it effectively evokes a walled city with narrow roads and traditional market areas.

Hauz Khas

Two of India's twenty-one Indian UNESCO World Heritage Sites are in Delhi and there are approximately 1,200 other monuments listed in INTACH's (Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage) first survey. These buildings are in various states of repair: some are well maintained, others are ruined; some are well loved and occupied, others are totally neglected.

Because the city has shifted from place to place over the centuries it is logical to follow the old-fashioned dynastic periodisation when discussing the architecture. To some extent dynastic changes led to shifts in style and these are outlined in Chapter 2. Although there were settlements in the Delhi region during the first millennium AD there is very little left to visit from this period. The fragments of buildings left from the Rajput era are discussed in Chapter 3. Because there were Muslim rulers in Delhi from 1192 until the British took over in 1803, most of the early architecture is 'Islamic', particularly so for the buildings that survive from the first three hundred years (1200 AD to 1500 AD), which are of military, educational or religious significance. The first Indo-Islamic style, generally called 'Sultanate', developed very quickly after the 12th century invasions, and was quite different from the local indigenous architecture of the time, but also substantially different from what was being built in Central Asia, North Africa and the Muslim heartland. For instance, whereas the architectural decoration of both Hindu temples in India and Islamic buildings in Central Asia tends to negate the structure of the buildings with a profusion of decoration (typically in carved stonework and tile-work respectively), in Indo-Islamic architecture the structure tends to be expressed quite strongly. The surviving buildings, many of them tombs or mosques, are magnificent stone structures, some in highly ornamented masonry, some built of rubble with

stucco surface decorations and some from roughly hewn stone, well proportioned but with little surface ornamentation. The few secular buildings that survive, such as palaces or hunting lodges, are mostly in ruins. This Sultanate period is covered in Chapters 4 to 9.

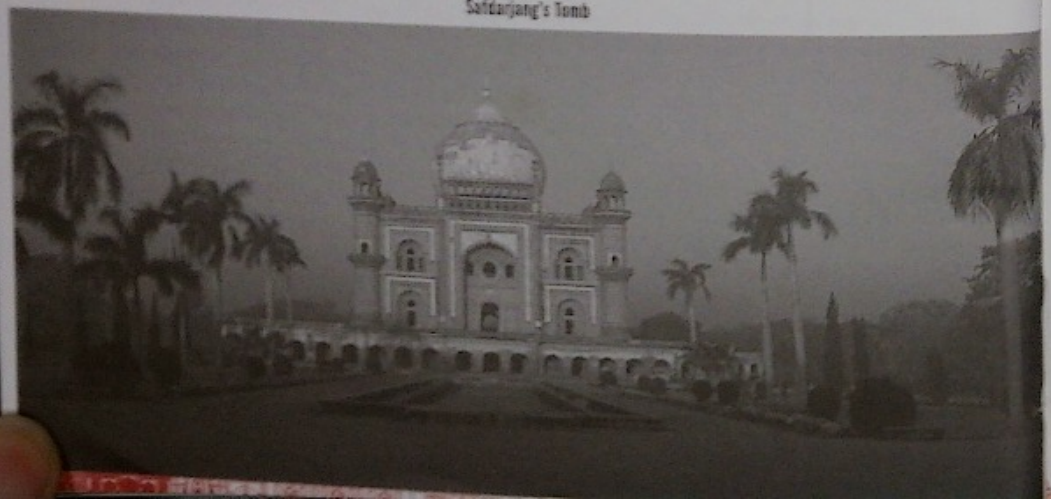
There is a greater range of buildings in Delhi dating from the second half of the millennium, when large parts of India were ruled by the Mughals, and later by the British. From the Mughal period there are, again, numerous mosques and tombs but also more in the way of secular buildings. Although Delhi remained an important city under the early Mughals, its great renaissance came in the 17th century under Shah Jahan, who built the great walled city of Shahjahanabad (see Chapter 11). Sadly no domestic, non-imperial buildings dating from this time have survived into this century. However, to an extent, the cultural life of the court survived for a long time in the city, even during the early years of British rule in the 19th century, and a traditional urban way of life continued. Handsome houses were constructed in the established style right into the 20th century. At first glance, anywhere inside the walled city (Shahjahanabad), it is difficult to envisage the Mughal city at the height of its glittering wealth when such outstanding buildings as the Red Fort and the Jami Masjid were being constructed. It is even less easy to evoke the colourful elegance of the life led by wealthy courtiers and citizens. However, at second glance, behind the dereliction, the signboards and the frightening tangles of electricity cables, it is surprising how often one notices mosques, temples and finely carved gateways to former *havelis*. The early and late Mughal periods are covered in Chapters 10 to 12.

From the British period there is a more eclectic range of buildings, some of which date from early colonial days, although pre-eminent among them must be the stately Government buildings of Lutyens and Baker (built during the 1920s). These often take visitors by surprise; their magnificence far surpasses modern government centres in most other countries. This period is covered in Chapters 13 and 14. Chapter 15 brings us up to date with a look at post-Independence Delhi and its future.

CONSERVATION

The first concerted conservation work in Delhi was undertaken in the 14th century by Sultan Firoz Shah Tughlak. He carried out extensive repairs to many of the buildings in Delhi and seems to have had a real awareness of the historical importance of old buildings and a general curiosity about the past. He was particularly fascinated by the 3rd century BC Ashokan pillars

Safdarjang's Tomb



found to the north of Delhi and had them moved to his palaces in Delhi. Later rulers were not so interested in antiquities, but the desire to honour the burial sites of ancestors or holy men meant that these buildings were kept in good repair, at least for a time.

North Block entrance

Early travellers from Europe were entranced by Delhi's image as the 'ancient seat of kings' and an extraordinary number of books, mostly in guidebook form, were written for visitors during the colonial era. It was also during this time that the history and culture of India was investigated through archaeology, numismatics and the decipherment of ancient scripts, adding to the broad body of knowledge already available from the extensive written histories in scripts and languages that were understood. Naturally some of this work was focussed on Delhi and its unparalleled collection of buildings, some intact, some in ruins. The scholar who did most early work on the Delhi monuments was Syed Ahmad Khan in the mid-19th century and it is on his work (sadly not translated fully into English from the original Urdu) that most subsequent writing was based. Once the buildings' historical and architectural importance was recognised (rather late in the day for some of them), measures for repair and conservation were undertaken with increasing professionalism by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI, founded in 1871). The extent to which the recreational value of the sites was emphasised in the early days is, however, striking. The same amount of money was spent every year on the gardens surrounding the sites as on the buildings themselves.

The movement of the capital to Delhi from Calcutta in 1911 spurred on further work in the conservation field, not least in the compilation of a four volume list under the auspices of the ASI (1916 ASI listing). Many buildings were thereby saved and can now be seen, scattered among the extensive suburbs. The buildings protected by the ASI were mainly those that were in public ownership. It was felt that buildings such as functioning mosques were outside their remit and were in any case being cared for. Equally, in those days, it was felt that buildings in private ownership could not be interfered with, which tended to exclude them from being listed, apart from those that featured because they were 'illegally occupied' such as inhabited tombs.

Following Independence the government's priorities were, naturally, focussed elsewhere for a few decades but recently there has been a revival of interest in Delhi's architectural heritage. The more prominent buildings continued to be maintained, even though the gardens have visibly deteriorated since the time of the garden-obsessed British (there has been a recent revival of some gardens). The private sector, through bodies such as INTACH have tried to fill the gaps left by the cash-strapped ASI. There is also increasing awareness of the importance of educating people to improve their environment from the point of view of general amenity as well as appreciating the cultural value of historic buildings. This has led to a growing concern for the rapidly vanishing heritage of secular and residential buildings in Shah Jahan's walled city and the numerous urban villages that have been engulfed by suburban

expansion. The first tentative steps are now being taken to protect private buildings of historical or architectural interest in such areas, but because of legislative and financial constraints it is unlikely that such initiatives will be very effective, unless there is a significant change in the general public's attitude to their environment.

Sprawling Delhi, with its ever-increasing millions of inhabitants, is obviously not as appealing to the senses as many other places in India. It cannot, for instance, compete with the romance of the ruined forts of Rajasthan and Central India. However, it is where millions of people live and, while a few care passionately about their city and its history, there are many others who can and should be guided into an appreciation of their city. Most of the main sites are pleasantly situated, so far removed from the urban chaos that surrounds them that the visitor gets an agreeable respite. Those who seek out more obscure buildings will also be rewarded. If they are observant, the curious will notice more and more relics from the past. These monuments are often neglected, so visitors will often find themselves alone, apart from local children who might show them a hidden staircase to the roof or rush off to find the *chaukidar* with the keys.

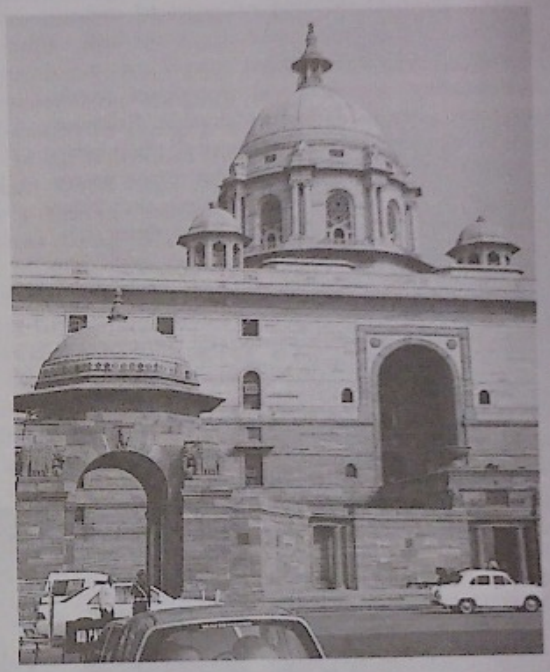
A WORD ABOUT VOCABULARY, SPELLING AND DATES

This book is written for the general reader and is based almost entirely on English language secondary sources. Because I am writing in English I have chosen to refer to buildings by their English name if that seems to be most frequently used in English, thus Red Fort instead of *Lal Qila*. It also seems peculiar to refer to the 'Rashtrapati Bhawan' rather than the 'Viceroy's House' when talking about its construction, even though the former is in common usage for general purposes. The events of 1857 have been described as the First War of Independence, the 1857 Revolt, and the Sepoy Mutiny among other things. The term Great Uprising is untainted by colonial bias and describes the event well so I have decided on that label. I have come across numerous variations for spellings of names and objects, all being transliterations from the original Persian, Urdu, Hindi, etc. This wild variation can, presumably, be ascribed in part to the very great changes in pronunciation of languages over the decades, so transcriptions accurate at one time become comical a hundred years later. I have decided to stick with the versions that occur most frequently in books that are widely read, on the basis that they will therefore be most familiar to the general reader. Some words are in common Hindi usage in which case I have tried to follow the transliterated Hindi spelling. I have also tried to stick to one short name for individuals, having myself struggled with the multiple names of, for instance, Afghan noblemen, who often had long names that could be variously contracted, and the different contractions used indiscriminately.

I have given dates as frequently as possible, mainly based on the INTACH listing; some are my own guesswork, based on stylistic details. Sometimes different sources give different specific dates; I have generally selected one date rather arbitrarily, but a few years either way makes very little difference to the general chronology. Again, because most dates are 'transliterations' from sources that use a different calendar with different year-ends, it means that the transliterations result in a year that might span over parts of two years of the Christian calendar, thus giving a date of, say, 1370-71. I have elected to quote the earlier year.

Finally, because I am writing for the general reader, I have concentrated on those buildings or aspects of buildings that are easily accessible. It is frustrating to read of the marvellous interior of such and such a building and then find, on arrival, that the door is padlocked and access is prohibited. However, it is highly unlikely that all the buildings that are open (or closed) at the time of writing will remain that way, so I apologise if some buildings are now closed or if others are omitted from description but are now accessible.

DELHI ARCHITECTURE



The gaily dressed crowds who will come in increasing numbers to see the new as well as the old Delhi should grasp the meaning to be read in the stone and marble of their capital.

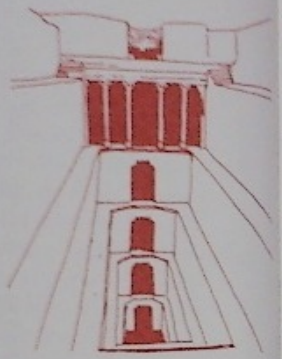
- Herbert Baker, 1930

Delhi Architecture

In order to avoid going into too much repetitive architectural detail elsewhere, this chapter will look at the most common building types to be seen in Delhi, explaining their features and genesis.

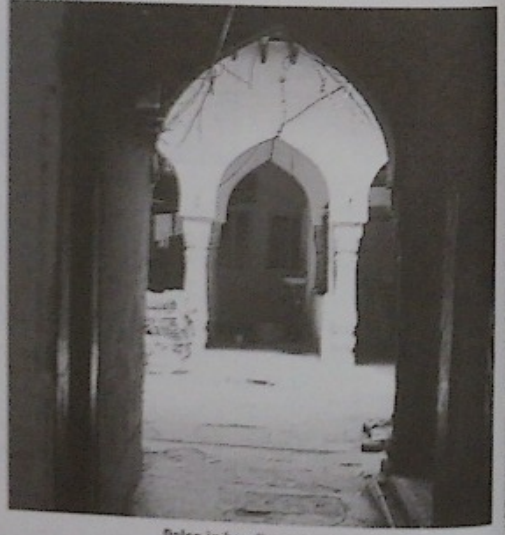
For many centuries the principal public buildings of Delhi were built by Turkish, Afghan and Mughal rulers and their courtiers, often for religious purposes and it is these that have survived. It is to be expected that important buildings such as those built for court and religious purposes would survive longer than domestic buildings; the building materials and techniques would naturally have been superior and more durable. Religious buildings had an even greater chance of survival, often being endowed for their future maintenance. For this reason we get only a partial view of ancient architecture, the more ephemeral buildings having been replaced many times over. The majority of the population would have built for themselves in a traditional style, one that we know from archaeological excavations did not change much over the centuries. Thus the village courtyard house, still ubiquitous in rural India (and still found in village areas in the city), can be taken as a model of what much of the old cities would have consisted of. Significantly, these builders would also have made up much of the construction workforce and it is not surprising, therefore, that Islamic buildings here contain 'Indian' features. This was done at first because indigenous building techniques were employed to create foreign building types (mosques and tombs) but later because patrons and architects had absorbed into their repertoire of Islamic styles features that they admired on local buildings, such as highly decorated brackets (corbels) supporting beams. Initially the two traditions were easily distinguishable from each other but they soon adapted to form a marvellous synthesis, commonly known as Indo-Islamic architecture.

Trabeate lintel



Baoli

Indigenous elements used on an Islamic building



Dalan in haveli courtyard

Surviving ancient indigenous building forms are those that were built to last and were cherished, such as forts, temples (Hindu, Buddhist or Jain) and structures connected with water collection and supply such as *bunds* (dams), tanks (reservoirs) and *baolis* (stepwells), the conservation of water being as great an issue in the past as it is in modern India. For various reasons few temples survived in Delhi from early times. Obviously a lack of patronage must have affected some, but also, although most Muslim rulers were tolerant of other faiths, temples were sometimes destroyed, either as a political statement of power or by the more fanatical of the Islamic sultans. Recent scholarship has established, however, that this latter phenomenon was much less common than is generally believed while in the former case such destructive statements could as easily be made by rival Hindu powers. Many temples have also been repeatedly rebuilt, adding to the impression that there are few ancient temples. In fact there are several sites where temples have existed for many centuries though little of historical or architectural interest remains. Although residential and community buildings have not survived in great numbers, many of the existing urban villages are ancient settlements where the street pattern and, until recently, traditional building designs and methods prevailed. A very common feature of buildings in hot climates is the open-sided room, called a *dalan*, which can be found free-standing, as part of a courtyard complex or, in effect, as the prayer hall of a typical mosque, the prototype of which was a desert house.

Tank - Gaushala, Mehrauli

Typical village

Traditional village lane

The Rajput and Sultanate Periods

CONSTRUCTION

Apart from three ancient pillars imported from elsewhere (p.32, 85), the earliest structures still visible in Delhi date from the final centuries of Rajput rule, before 1192. At **Suraj Kund** (probably 8th century) there are two relics of an early settlement: a circular tank constructed from massive quartzite (the local stone) blocks and an impressive dam, also built from quartzite blocks. The settlement at Suraj Kund was replaced by another city nearby, now known as **Lal Kot** (mid-11th century), where the walls are faced with roughly surfaced blocks over a rubble interior. The stone was cut so accurately that it allowed precise alignment in a system that did not use mortar, although the surface of the blocks was not made smooth. At both places there would have been temples; Muhammad of Ghor, who invaded in 1192, claimed to have demolished twenty-seven at Lal Kot (almost certainly an exaggeration but perhaps small shrines were included in this number). The basic construction technique in pre-Islamic times was trabeate or 'post and beam': walls were built in solid masonry but interior spaces and openings were framed by posts (often gloriously carved columns) and beams, the length of the beams dictating the spacing of the columns and the size of the openings in the walls. At the late 12th century **Qutb Minar Mosque** numerous exquisitely carved temple columns were reused, and we can see that they were as fine as any in India.

Lal Kot walls

The earliest buildings after the Turkish invasion are the **Qutb Minar** itself and those grouped around it. Luckily most of the features typical of **early Sultanate** architecture are well represented among the buildings in the Qutb Minar complex, where we can trace its evolution.

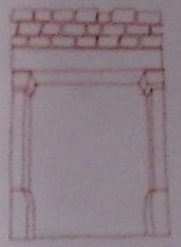
The earliest part of the **Qutb Minar Mosque** (1192 onwards) is a very good example of an Islamic building constructed with entirely indigenous building techniques (see p.40). The great screen wall of the mosque at first looks entirely Islamic with its huge pointed arches. However, you will see that the construction of the arches is unusual: trabeate, in which flat stones are built one above the other, the inner end of each one projecting further than the one below; as a cantilever, with their non-projecting ends held down by the weight of the masonry above. The shallow domes inside the entrances to the mosque are also interesting because they are the type of domes found in Hindu and Jain temples throughout India, constructed in the same way as the mosque arches, with overlapping rings of cantilevered stones. The internal profile of the dome is therefore governed by the strength of the stone slabs. This, in turn, is dictated by the slabs' depth and, of course, the depth of the carvings made on their lower surface. Elsewhere, the square spaces between the columns are roofed in a slightly simpler trabeate style, in which slabs are laid across corners, successively reducing the roof opening.

Temple columns - Qutb Minar Mosque

The problem with trabeate construction is that the structural integrity is based on the strength of stone in tension. For instance, the weight bearing down on the centre of a beam will try to make it bend in the middle; the bottom of the beam will therefore be stretched (in tension). The same applies to a cantilevered stone except that it will be in tension on the top surface. Stone is not an inherently strong material in tension. In modern times this problem has been solved using steel, which is strong in tension, either as steel beams or as reinforcement in concrete. Timber is a low-technology alternative but depends on cutting down big trees to make big beams. Although stone is not strong in tension it is very strong in compression, which is the way it is normally used, in solid walls. Arcuate construction was the invention of the Romans and its structural superiority derives from the fact that the arch is made up of blocks of stone that are all in compression. The weight from the wall above bears down on the whole arch, compressing each element in it.

A further benefit of the true arch is that it can be constructed from many small, light blocks, which are much easier to handle than the massive beams and slabs necessary in trabeate construction. From the Romans the technique spread throughout the Mediterranean world and, of course, into the Middle East and then Central Asia, from where India's Turkish invaders came. In India, however, it took several decades for local building techniques to catch up with the architectural style brought with the invasion. You will see good examples of arcuate or 'true' arches in the **Madrasa of Alauddin** (1317 - see p.42), near the Qutb Minar and you can see how the weight is transferred through the stones of the arch. It is clearly important that the joints between the blocks that make up the arch are not vertical or parallel, otherwise the blocks could slide past each other.

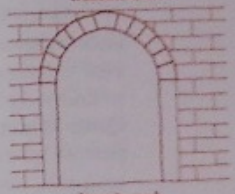
Alauddin's Madrasa arches



Post and beam lintel

Beam breaking

Trabeate arch



Arcuate arch

Domes in temples were clearly important features, but often expressed differently internally from externally. The interior shallow dome often transmogrified into a different architectural form, typically pyramidal, on the outside, which was the dominant feature. In other words the internal dome was a structurally limited but convenient and decorative way of covering the important central space. Likewise, the Islamic dome was clearly an extremely important architectural element. It is possible that the form of an Islamic dome was seen as a substitute for the sky; this certainly seems to have been the case in the context of tombs, which according to Koranic injunction, were

Qutb Minar detail

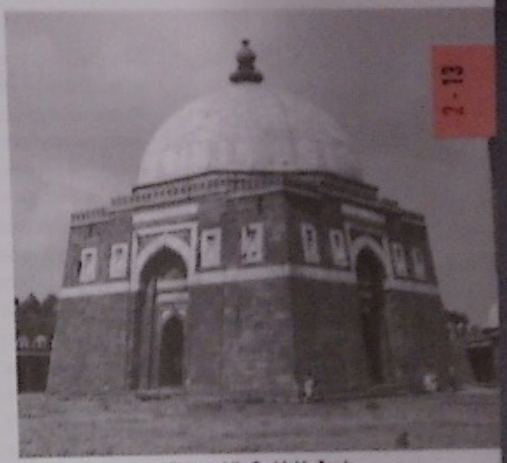
supposed to be open to the sky, and dome ceilings often featured star-like decorations on the inner surface.

The principle of the arch can of course be used in exactly the same way for spanning a large space in all directions, creating a full dome. The immediate question arises as to how to put a circular dome over a square building. In simple trabeate construction the corners are bridged with beams and the cantilevered dome built over them. This also occurs in the case of a very common tomb form, twelve-pillared pavilions. In arcuate construction it is easier to construct bigger domes, but this makes bridging the corner even more critical, and impossible with a single, simply supported beam. This is achieved instead in two ways, one based on the arch, the other on the beam and corbel or bracket (the trabeate system). The structure spanning the corner is known as a squinch. Thus, when an arch is used, it is known as a squinch arch and usually contains a half-dome, smoothing out the transition from right angle to arch. Above the squinch arches there is generally an octagonal or sixteen-sided drum with arched niches on each face. Above this there are generally several bands consisting of stone slabs acting as partial beams, transforming the octagon into a circle. The first circle has sixteen slabs, the second thirty-two and there is sometimes a third with sixty-four, which is close to a circle, the base of the dome.

As we have seen, the construction methods of the early Islamic period used both indigenous and imported techniques. The same applied to the decoration. In view of the very high quality of the indigenous temple carvings it is not surprising to find some of the finest carving in Delhi on the two earliest Islamic buildings, the **Qutb Minar** itself and the screen wall of Qutbuddin Aibak's Mosque (the earliest part of the **Qutb Minar Mosque**). It is obvious therefore that highly skilled sculptors and stone masons still abounded in Delhi at that time. The use of sandstone allowed even finer and more intricate carving than on the temple columns. The decoration on both buildings also features the Islamic *nashki* script. The calligraphy is intertwined with arabesque decoration: lovely sinuous foliage that is both traditionally Islamic but also entirely in the Hindu tradition. On the Qutb Minar stunningly intricate sculpture hangs beneath the projecting galleries. This kind of carving can, of course, be seen on the underside of temple domes and, indeed, is visible inside the mosque entrance dome. However, it is also very similar in style to the fabulous *muqarnas* that were a common feature in Islamic architecture from the 12th century.

By the time Iltutmish was ruling (1210-35) sculpture had become rather less exuberant, presumably because sculptors had been imported and the local masons were also learning Islamic restraint. An important decorative feature, the lotus bud and lotus flower motifs, became gradually more prominent and we see them on the more austere later buildings, often the only non-architectural decorative feature, along with the widely used double triangle star, a symbol of great antiquity that has meant different things in different societies.

Iltutmish's Mosque extension detail



Ghiyasuddin Tughlak's Tomb

The arrival of the **Tughlaks** (14th c.) created quite a sharp break in architectural style. In Delhi there are numerous examples of buildings from the times of the Tughlak sultans. Fortifications were massive: heavily battered (i.e., sloping) walls with roughly cut facing stones like at Lal Kot. In most respects the new forts were similar in design to indigenous ones, although they appear more impressive militarily and were designed, like Islamic forts in other countries, so that the citadel could face attack from the townspeople as well as the surrounding countryside. The walls of most non-military buildings were built using local rock, often uncut but selected to provide a flat surface for the façade, with a rubble infill. The wall was then plastered wherever a more refined appearance was required. Because there is little evidence of what the final plastered buildings were like, we are inclined to think that the Tughlaks were demonstrating their might rather than their sophistication, but contemporary descriptions of the courts rather contradict this. It is likely that we are misled by the non-durable nature of exterior plasterwork; the few Tughlak buildings that are constructed from ashlar (square, close cut) masonry, for instance in **Ghiyasuddin Tughlak's Tomb** at Tughlakabad (1320-24), are in a new, austere style with heavily battered walls and minimal decoration, but indisputably 'refined' (see p.53). These buildings were the precursors of the archetypical style now thought of as Indo-Islamic, which features, among other things, a combination of arches and square frames around distinctively 'Indian' doorways that have heavily ornamented corbels supporting a deep beam.

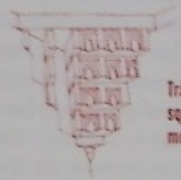
The style of portal just described is generally found in a bay projecting up and out from the main façade that is sometimes referred to as a *pishtaq*. It is a form found throughout the Islamic world and in the Central Asian context would normally frame an *iwan*, a shallow vaulted hall facing an open courtyard. This was an early architectural feature in Islamic architecture. The *iwan* could be closed at the back or form the portal for an entrance, but in sultanate architecture the *iwan* is normally so shallow that it would be misleading to refer to it as such, although it does occur in a few early buildings.

By the time of the **Tughlaks** much of the carved masonry decoration (calligraphy, lotus buds, etc.) had disappeared (although we cannot tell to what extent the buildings were originally covered with decorated plasterwork) but white marble was sometimes used to outline particular features such as doors, arches and the rectilinear frames that became such an important feature on Indo-Islamic façades. This emphasis on highlighting architectural features is in interesting contrast to the prevailing decorative system elsewhere in the Islamic world where decoration (for instance ceramic tiles) tended to smother all constructional features.

After the turmoil of the end of the Tughlak dynasty and Timur's invasion in 1398 the architecture appears to have become much less forbidding. The Indo-Islamic style reached its climax during the **Lodi period** (1451-1526) and the early

Typical chatri

Mughal interregnum of Sher Shah Suri (1540-55). The basic construction techniques remained the same: the true arch and dome alongside decorated post and beam doorways. The *iwan* disappeared completely, leaving a shallow arch (or several recessed arches) around each entrance. The *peshtaq* remained, but other parts of the façade became more dominant, especially in mosques. Externally the *chatri* as an ornamental feature on buildings also became common. It started to appear in places that once would have had a simple dome but now the dome was lifted onto columns. The architectural concept of a square, open (or screened), domed pavilion had been in existence for some time and had been much used for tombs. It was now used as well to adorn roofs. *Chatri* means parasol or umbrella and the word has been borrowed to describe a small domed pavilion supported on four, six or eight pillars. On roofs they served the practical function of providing shade, where whatever breeze was available could be enjoyed during the endless hot weather.



Trabeate squinch muqarnas

Internally a charming trabeate variant of the squinch was often used. The corner is bridged with a beam and, below it, small cantilever beams project from the wall to make a flat plane up to the beam. The gaps between the projecting beams were usually highly decorated with carved plasterwork or stucco, a good example being in the **Bara Gumbad Mosque** (1494) in the Lodi Gardens (see p.124). This type of decoration is similar to the glorious *muqarnas* that were in widespread use in Islamic architecture although, in keeping with the more structurally expressive nature of Indo-Islamic architecture, they can be read as coherent elements, unlike the honeycomb-like accretions in Spanish or Persian buildings.

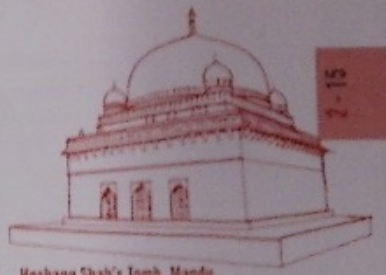
Stucco in Bara Gumbad

Tomb façade - Bara Gumbad

Another manifestation of the flowering of the Indo-Islamic style in the **Lodi period**, was the reappearance of geometric and 'arabesque' designs. The marvellous combination of arches and frames was beautified with a great variety of different coloured stone and decorative features which included coloured tile work and very fine incised stucco that would have been painted in glorious colours. Examples of this can still be seen, the best being in the tomb of **Jamali Kamali** (1528) at Mehrauli (see p.237). The ancient skills of the Indian stonemasons in laying stone without the use of mortar still existed; even the inlaid stone patterns could be made without the use of mortar, a feat that astonished Babur, the founder of the Mughal dynasty.

The Mughal Period (1526 – 1803)

The Mughals followed in the well-worn path of horse traders and Turkish mercenaries as well as Babur's great predecessor Timur. Nonetheless they brought with them from Central Asia and Kabul new ideas of architecture and decoration, especially after Humayun, the second emperor, had spent some years as an adult refugee in the Persian court. It would be wrong though to claim that a complete stylistic break occurred. Moreover the end result, even for those buildings that were commissioned by the royal court, had as little to do with the architecture of the Mughals' original homeland or Persia as had Sultanate architecture with the architecture of Afghanistan or Turkey. The early Mughal emperors were impressed by some of the buildings they found in India, such as Gwalior Fort, the buildings at Mandu and Sheikh Ahmad Khattu's Tomb at Sarkhej near Ahmedabad. As under the Sultanate, the influential buildings were not necessarily even Islamic; the influence of Rajput and other indigenous styles cannot be underestimated; the influence in both directions was, inevitably, strong.

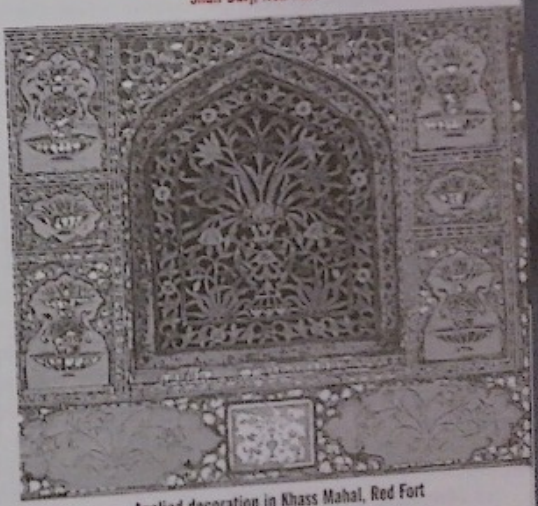


Hoshang Shah's Tomb, Mandu

Sheikh Ahmed Khattu's Tomb, Sarkhej

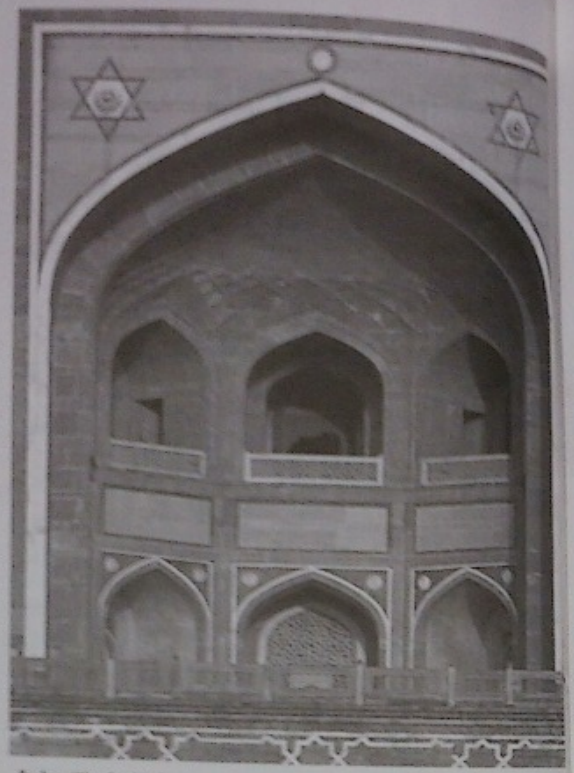
Shah Burj, Red Fort

Nonetheless, we can still identify a new style that, it is safe to say, is lighter and more delicate than the old. The peak of Mughal architecture was reached under Shah Jahan (reigned 1628-58) with the Taj Mahal and his exquisite pavilions inside the three Red Forts (Delhi, Agra and Lahore) where the extensive use of white marble is probably the most conspicuous element. However, there are other characteristics that distinguish Mughal architecture from previous styles. For instance, the way in which surface decoration was used was different: one sees in Mughal buildings, even as early as the mid-16th century, a greater emphasis on decorating flat surfaces with relief carving, inlaid stonework or tile-work. There was an increasing emphasis on applied decoration rather than the decorative use of architectural features. In other words,



Applied decoration in Khass Mahal, Red Fort

later Mughal architecture became more Persian. For instance, to consider the treatment of the transition between an octagonal dome drum and the dome itself, in sultanate architecture this was done simply, as described above, with bands of stone slabs that became increasingly circular. While this was a structural solution, the Mughal technique only appears to be structural: 'ribs', that frame each arch, are extended upwards to meet the framing of other arches, forming a net pattern known as 'arch netting'. These ribs might appear to be structural but are purely decorative. This is well illustrated in **Humayun's Tomb** (1563-71) (see p.161-5).

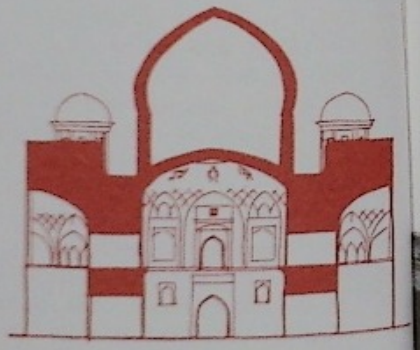


Arch netting is visible above the upper openings which are, in effect, small iwa within the main iwan, Humayun's Tomb

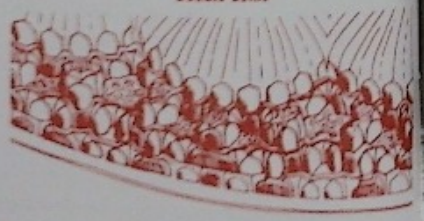
Arch netting was gradually transformed into more exotic net-vaulting, which could cover an entire ceiling. This is also an un-spiky version of *muqarnas*, the fabulous ceiling decorations found in other parts of the Islamic world. Of course, when the double dome was introduced early on in the Mughal period, the inner dome, which was generally shallower, was inherently non-structural so this sort of treatment is logically justified.

Net vaulting

The *iwan* made its reappearance in Mughal architecture, after the long dominance of the shallow arch. The use of an *iwan* created much stronger relief in the façade and, because its ceiling tended to be in the form of a half-dome, a feature that was now dominant in Islamic architecture elsewhere, notably in Persia, it also introduced additional scope for complex decoration, in the form of arch-netting or net-vaulting.

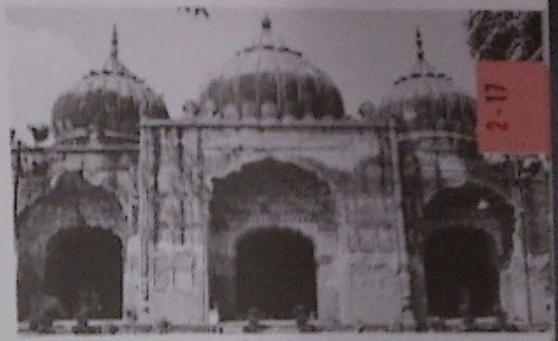


Double dome



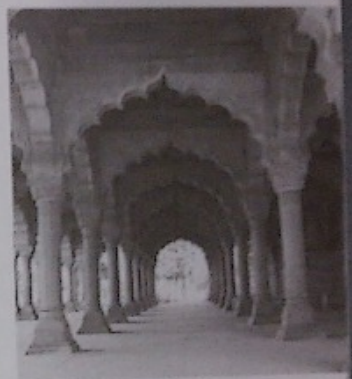
Muqarnas

Another obvious development was the treatment of the dome, previously either hemispherical or a flattened hemisphere. The dome of Humayun's Tomb is an early, perfect, example of an onion dome. This form became increasingly mannered as time went on, becoming more bulbous and sometimes acquiring ornate decorations. The emphasis on the dome as an external feature led to the dome being elevated high above the main roof. This meant creating a potentially very tall, narrow space below the dome. The inner (double) dome was introduced in order to achieve as pleasing a set of proportions inside the building as outside.



Onion domes

There were other elements that became more mannered as the Mughal style developed. For instance, columns became bulbous and were often fluted. This was possibly under the influence of European pictures of kings and religious scenes set beside fluted columns. The early Mughal reigns saw the first extensive visits by Europeans, eager to trade with the Empire, and one of the gifts they brought were pictures. Cusped arches, which had often featured in early sultanate buildings, made a reappearance, often built in trabeate style with panels carved in the shape of a cusped arch projecting beneath a simple post and beam construction. From elsewhere in India came other elements that were incorporated into Mughal architecture. Specifically from Bengal came the curious curved roof (*bangla*), not seen before on north Indian buildings but increasingly common, particularly on domestic buildings such as the later buildings in the Red Fort.



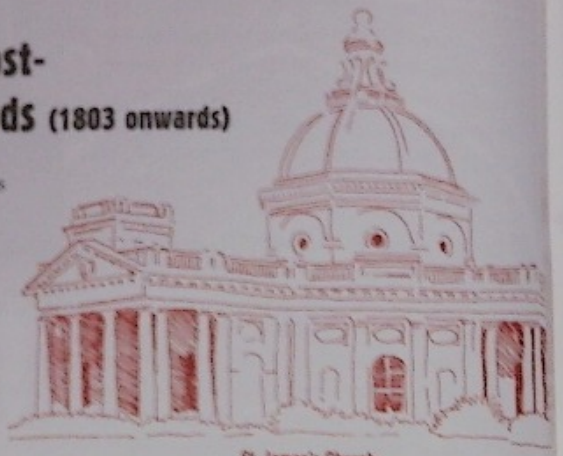
Cusped arches

Some of the features mentioned above, such as the bulbous columns and *bangla* roof profile also featured prominently in domestic and secular buildings. However, it is impossible to identify other major changes in domestic architecture because so few pre-Mughal secular buildings survive.

Domestic courtyard

'Bangla' roof with bulbous columns - Jharokha, Red Fort

The Colonial and Post-Independence Periods (1803 onwards)



St. James's Church

An early bungalow in Bengal

Like the first Turks and Afghans six hundred years earlier, the British brought with them completely new building forms such as 'bungalows', churches and railway stations. Churches already existed in India but mainly around the coast where European traders had settled (during Akbar's reign Portuguese Jesuits had built a chapel at Fatepur Sikri but it was soon adapted to commercial purposes). Likewise, whereas schools were not a new concept, the new methods of organising education were and required different building types. At first the Europeans in India adapted themselves to Indian ways of life in their marriage, dress and living arrangements. However, the increasing number of British people who came, with less adaptable habits (especially among the women), eventually led to a sharp divergence in lifestyles, thereby producing new domestic and commercial building types, something that had not been so much the case after previous 'invasions'. On the whole, therefore, the two kinds of architecture are easily distinguished, both by their built form and their decoration, although European features such as pilasters and classical window surrounds can be found on indigenous buildings such as *havelis*, and typical Indian architectural features were sometimes used on European buildings. Adorning a roof with pretty *chatris* became a popular way of 'Indianising' an otherwise alien building such as a sports stadium.

Alongside the new institutional buildings came the bungalow, so very different from the indigenous Indian house, which tends to present a blank face to the outside world, its rooms facing internal courtyards. The British bungalow evolved in Bengal (hence its name) where the earliest houses were adapted from the local vernacular rural house type. The standard form, which arrived in Delhi in the 19th century, was distinctly un-urban: a sprawling, white-painted, single-storey house with wide verandas that protected the interior from the sun and provided comfortable exterior living space. This was very similar to the *dalan* of Indian houses, palaces and mosques but, instead of facing into a courtyard, the veranda faced out onto a large garden compound, rather in the manner of a Mughal garden pavilion. The obsession for the British was 'good air' and a house in the middle of a large green garden in the extensive cantonment or Civil Lines was supposed to insulate the delicate foreigner from the dangers emanating from the 'native town'.

Bungalow

At first, for institutional buildings, as with domestic customs, the British adapted to the existing administrative buildings in the same way as they adapted to the existing administrative system. However, new methods of government soon emerged, along with their associated buildings. By the time the planning of New Delhi (started in 1912 but built mostly in the 1920s and 30s) was commenced a huge government system existed and a new building type had been created to house it, exemplified by the old Writer's Building in Calcutta. The New Delhi Secretariat buildings, which replaced the Calcutta buildings, must be some of the finest government buildings in the world (now known prosaically as North and South Blocks).

Haveli courtyard

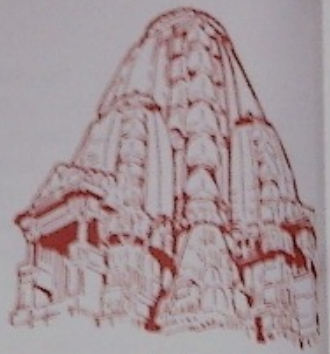
While a distinction remained in the 19th century between colonial buildings (located mainly to the north of Old Delhi) and indigenous buildings, this difference began to disappear, especially after the building of New Delhi. Although in and around the walled city traditional *havelis* were still built, by the time the capital was transferred there were a considerable number of Indians whose housing was indistinguishable from that built for Europeans, in style though sometimes not in amenity. This was sometimes by choice but often because that was all that was on offer. The trend towards building in a Western style has been inexorable ever since, with numerous estates of public sector housing laid out in 'garden city' style, perhaps architecturally more like a north European than English model. Private housing, by contrast, is laid out in 'colonies' which are constrained by market forces – thus the very affluent have reasonable sized plots in exclusive areas while most of private sector Delhi is highly congested.

PWD housing

Compared with public sector housing styles, the buildings in colonies such as Greater Kailash–II, Vasant Vihar and New Friends Colony, are wonderfully eclectic but are derived more from a wide range of European styles than from any indigenous ones.

The Main Building Types

This short section is an introduction to the types of buildings you might see. It will not take you long to 'get your eye in' and to be able to identify the most obvious buildings.



Hindu temple

RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS

THE FOUR PRINCIPAL INDIGENOUS RELIGIONS

By far the most conspicuous buildings in many Indian cities and villages are the temples. The Hindu, Jain, Buddhist and Sikh religions were all founded in India and have a common 'ancestry'. Members of all these faiths have built numerous temples and there are examples of all of them in Delhi. A very simple guide to recognising the main forms is given below but bear in mind that there are plenty of exceptions to these general 'rules'.

Hinduism can hardly be described as a religion, being more a vast collection of highly disparate practices with very ancient origins. The other three religions arose in opposition to Vedic Brahmanism. While Jain temples are similar in many ways to Hindu ones, the Buddhist and Sikh religions developed very different built forms for religious buildings.

Despite the heterogeneity of Hinduism most temples have certain features in common: the central shrine (*garbha-griha*), to house the deity with space for the devotee, and a pavilion (*mandapa*) in front of the shrine for gatherings to hear readings of texts, religious music and dancing. Sometimes, especially in the South, temples were inside a walled enclosure with tall and elaborate entrance gateways (*gopura*). In North India it is the elaborate roof over the *garbha-griha* that stands out. This is the *shikhara* and is a representation of Mount Kailasa (or Meru). It is easily distinguishable from other temple forms in being roughly pyramidal in shape although it will, to some extent, be elaborately moulded and decorated. In Delhi this description fits best the many 20th century shrines that are found in residential neighbourhoods. In Old Delhi (Shahjahanabad) there are many small shrines, typically roofed with a bulbous dome, often in the centre of a small courtyard.

Modern temple

The Jain religion is among the earliest of those that differentiated themselves from Vedic Brahmanism, although there were similarities with later forms of Hindu religion. It dates from the 6th century BC. Hindu and Jain temples are not easy to distinguish from the exterior, having the same *shikhara* form over the shrine. The emphasis on white marble in Jain temples helps to distinguish them from more colourful Hindu buildings. A typical interior has a white marble domed *mandapa* and the walls are adorned with shining-eyed Buddha-like Tirthankaras, the mainly mythological 'saints', the last of whom was the most significant teacher of the religion. The extremely wealthy Jain community in Shahjahanabad built a number of temples in which the white marble exteriors and the Tirthankara statues are prominent. The interior walls and ceilings are often decorated with fabulously colourful paintings.

Jain temple, Shahjahanabad

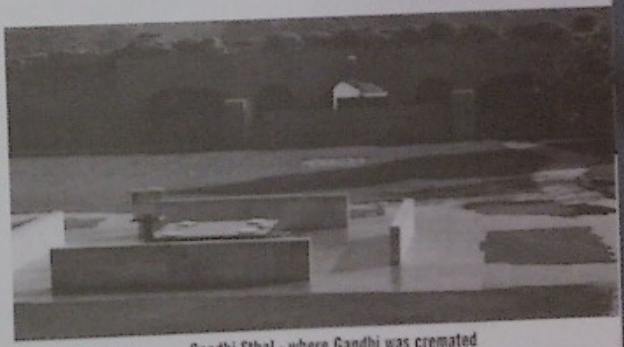
Buddhism (almost contemporary with Jainism in its origin) had more or less died out in peninsular India by the 11th century although it survived in Eastern India until the 14th century. It now survives in the furthest reaches of the Himalayan states. The architecture of the temples in these remote areas derives from local styles. There are a few Buddhist temples in Delhi of which the most noticeable examples are those built recently by the Tibetan community. They generally followed the architectural style of their homeland and the buildings are thus typical of the high Himalayan valleys and conspicuous for their brightly coloured painted decorations. Despite the early demise of Buddhism in Central India its architectural legacy was influential in centuries to come. The *stupa*, unique to Buddhism, was an often huge, generally semi-circular mound built over a relic. The *vihara*, or monastery, also featured in Jainism, and the *chaitya*, the vaulted temple hall, may have inspired similar early forms in Hindu temples.

Guru Nanak founded the Sikh religion in 1469. Sikhs believe in one God and are notably egalitarian, both in class and gender terms. Large numbers of Sikh refugees came to Delhi after Partition and their temples (*gurudwaras*), of which there are many examples in Delhi, are easily recognised by their shiny white onion domes springing from square towers that are pierced by arched openings. Many of the largest *gurudwaras* commemorate the sites of specific events in Sikh history.

Gurudwara

Unlike Muslims and Christians, Hindus do not bury their dead. Instead the bodies are burned on the banks of rivers. Memorials (often *chatris*) were sometimes erected over the cremation site of important people. In the case of Delhi, because the rulers were Muslim, there are few such examples until modern times.

Buddhist temple



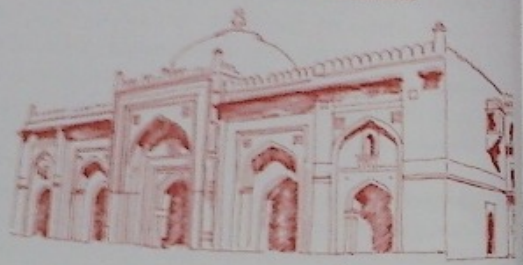
Gandhi Sthal - where Gandhi was cremated

ISLAMIC BUILDINGS

In Delhi the ancient buildings are almost exclusively Islamic. Although there are a few exceptions, they are mainly religious and are quite easily recognised.

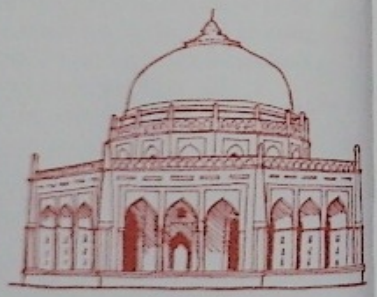
A **mosque** (*masjid*) can be of many sizes and shapes but will always have three characteristic elements: a wall that faces west towards Mecca, so that everyone faces in the right direction when praying, a *mihrab* (prayer niche) in the centre of this wall, and symmetry about one axis which passes through the centre of the *mihrab*. The smallest mosques are for private prayer, typically consisting of a small hall with three arched openings on its east wall. There are subsidiary *mihrabs* on either side of the central *mihrab* and sometimes three domes on the roof. Mosques were often built at first floor level, especially in the late-Mughal period. This would enable the ground floor rooms to be rented out as shop units, thus producing an income for the mosque's upkeep.

Mihrab niche



Mosque

On Fridays Muslims are expected to gather for their congregational worship. The Jami Masjid (Friday Mosque) will be big, with an enclosed courtyard, generally open to the sky, in front of the prayer hall. This differs only in size and number of bays from the smaller mosques, except that it has a *minbar* (pulpit) to the right of the central *mihrab*. The roof of the prayer hall may also have one or more domes; in addition, in Mughal mosques, there are often slender towers, or minarets, attached to the façade and sometimes to the enclosure walls. In the past the largest of these would have been used by the *muezzin* to call the faithful to prayer; now they are more likely to have loudspeakers attached for the same purpose. Minarets are conspicuously absent from Sultanate mosques but access to the roof presumably allowed the *muezzin* to call from there. For the main feasts (Id al-Fitr and Id al-Adha) the congregation gets even bigger and they will worship at an ***idgah***, generally a huge open space outside the city that consists of nothing but a west wall with *mihrab* and *minbar*. The most conspicuous indication of an *idgah* might be the columns at either end of the prayer wall. Smaller **wall mosques** are often attached to burial sites.



Octagonal tomb

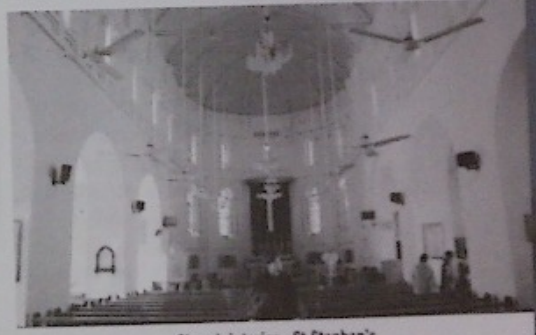
There are numerous **tombs** scattered throughout South Delhi. Strictly speaking they should be described as mausoleums, since the bodies are interred in a separate chamber below them. They are distinguished from mosques in being more or less symmetrical about two axes, in other words they are generally square, sometimes octagonal. Two very general types can be identified - first the domed pavilion, generally square with twelve pillars, which were sometimes enclosed with *jalis*. The tombs of saints seem very often to have been of this type. The second kind is a chamber enclosed by solid walls. The main entrance will always be on the south side. In older tombs the west wall is generally closed, with a *mihrab* on the inside. In all other respects each side will be the same and there is almost always a dome over the central chamber. Needless to say tombs vary in size, from a simple, small square chamber with one opening on each face and a plain dome above, to the many-chambered and elaborately-roofed Humayun's Tomb. There are generally one or more cenotaphs inside, indicating the position of the bodies lying in a vault below, the belief being that there has to be enough headroom for the deceased to sit up and reply to the Angels of the Grave who visit on the day after burial. The body is laid to align north-south so that it would face Mecca if turned on its side.

Not everyone was buried below an actual building. The alternative was burial in the open (more correct according to Koranic interpretation), sometimes in a walled compound with a prayer wall on the west side. There was a preference for burial near a holy man or saint; there are several holy sites in Delhi and they attracted burials in proportion to the holiness of the saint, the best-known examples being that of Qutb Sahib at Mehrauli and Nizamuddin Aulia at Nizamuddin. Ibn Battuta, a Moroccan traveller of the 14th century, in Delhi during the reign of Muhammad Tughlak, describes burial customs as he saw them: 'they build domed pavilions in [the cemetery] and every grave must have a *mihrab* beside it, even if there is no dome over it. They plant in it flowering trees' (from *The Travels of Ibn Battuta* – p.59).

Madrasas were religious colleges, but only in the same sense that medieval European universities were religious foundations. They would have taught a wide variety of subjects as well as the Koran. There are not many examples in Delhi but it is safe to say that the pattern of the buildings is broadly collegiate with numerous rooms giving onto common spaces.

CHRISTIAN BUILDINGS

The most obvious example is the church, generally arranged so that the congregation faces east, as in Europe. In the case of Delhi they were, of course, built by the British and look extremely European, with a dome, tower or spire over the 'crossing'. Like in Islam, congregational worship is an important part of the faith and the layout of churches results from their use. They are generally cruciform, with the altar, where the priest officiates, in the shorter, eastern arm. The congregation sits in the nave, the longer arm, and the side arms are often devoted to small chapels used for private worship. They are commonly surrounded by a churchyard in which there are burials. The constricted sites around churches meant that separate ground was consecrated for further burials; there are several cemeteries in Delhi. Many of the largest schools and colleges were Christian foundations but their buildings were largely secular in use.

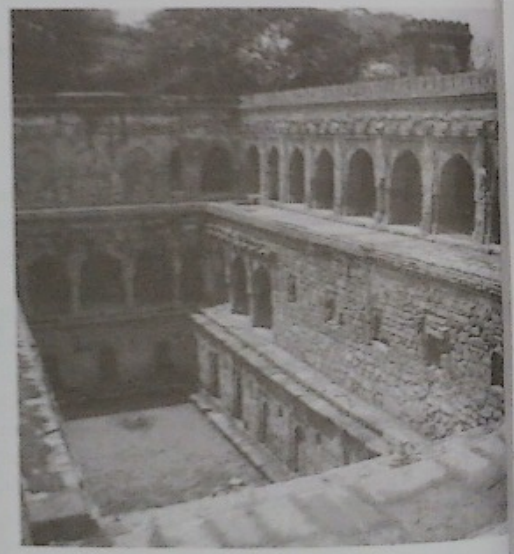


Church interior - St Stephen's

SECULAR BUILDINGS

As mentioned before, there are very few extant secular buildings from before the Mughal era. One exception is the *baoli* or step well of which there are several fine examples in Delhi (e.g., in the Purana Qila). There are records of many more that survived long into the 20th century but were, sadly, filled in. The building of *baolis* was a popular form of philanthropy, sometimes mentioned in ancient inscriptions as long ago as the 11th century. *Baolis* were an important feature of northwest India, where there is very little running water and searingly hot summers. Attached to the usual circular well for drawing water, a *baoli* has steps for people to get down to the water level. Apart from the convenience of not having to haul the water to the surface, the daytime temperature in the depths of the *baoli* would have been well below the surface temperature. Further west, especially in Gujarat, there are some astonishingly ornate examples, indicating that much time was spent in them. Most Delhi *baolis* are of a fairly simple design – one long flight of stairs down to the water. Because of the falling water table some are now completely dry.

Haveli doorway



Baoli, Mehrauli

The other main secular building form, even though most examples in Delhi do not pre-date the 19th century, is the private house, of which the largest type is known as a *haveli*. These are basically mansions, found both in cities and villages and traditionally inhabited by a prosperous, large, 'joint' family, in which all the sons and their families lived with the parents and numerous servants. The largest had several courtyards with a *zenana* wing at the back for the ladies of the family. *Havelis* are usually identified by a decorative entrance within a high wall, which may have ornate windows and balconies overlooking the street. Inside, most rooms would face onto and be accessible from one or more courtyards. It is now extremely rare to find a well-preserved *haveli* in Delhi, but some fine doorways still exist.

The 19th and 20th centuries saw the introduction of numerous building forms, such as railway stations, office blocks and apartment buildings, that are so universal that they do not need explanation.

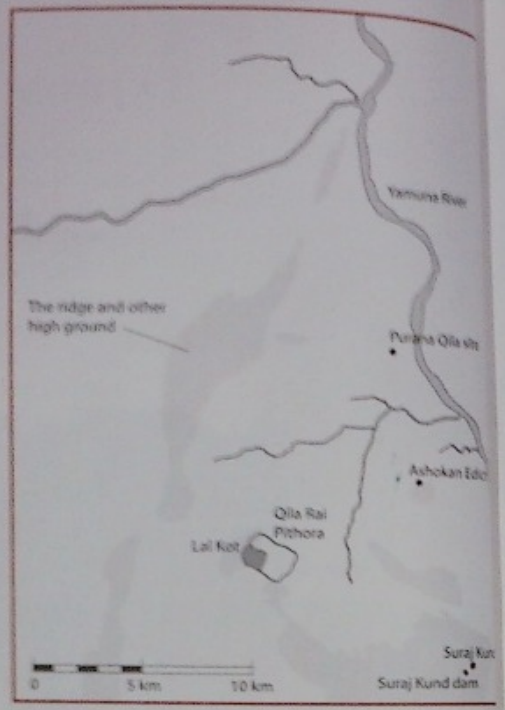
RAJPUT DELHI

This is a splendid work, and even in its decay, it retains much of its past grandeur. That a work of such importance was constructed in the desert, where it now stands, is perfectly incredible, and the ruins which still surround it attest a once populous locality.

Suraj Kund,
described by Carr Stephen, 1876

Pre-Islamic

Delhi is strategically located on the Yamuna River, in the wide corridor between the mountains and the desert, through which traffic passed between Central Asia and peninsula India. The city is situated where a spur of the Aravalli Hills meets the Yamuna River, and these rocky outcrops were the sites of some early settlements. Archaeological evidence shows that the Delhi area has been inhabited from very early times; stone-age tools, for instance, have been found at several sites. There is also evidence in the area of Late Harappan (Indus civilisation) settlements, by which time the culture, previously urban, had become village based (this Late Harappan phase is dated from the mid-second millennium BC).



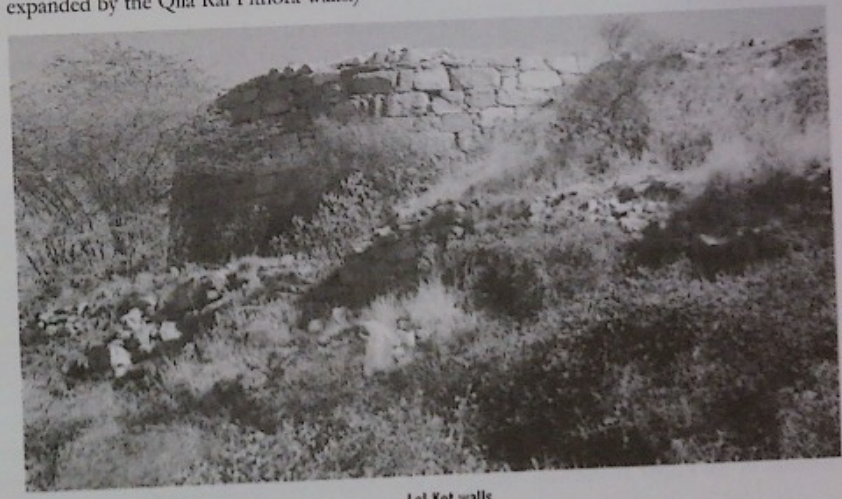
For two thousand years after the decline of the Indus civilisation some north Indian history can be gleaned from written sources, but it is from archaeology that historians gain most data and one of the archaeologists' best clues is pottery. Throughout a large area of North India there have been archaeological finds of Painted Grey Ware, the type of pottery most closely linked to the speakers of the Indo-Aryan languages of the first millennium BC, probably a mixture of pastoral incomers drifting down from the northwest and agriculturalists already settled here. Part of what we know about these people comes (via much later transcription) from the legacy of numerous hymns and religious texts as well as the epics, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*. It is commonly thought that the old village called Indrapat inside the Purana Qila, was the very site of Indraprastha, one of the cities of the Mahabharata legend. However, the crucial archaeological evidence of a Painted Grey Ware 'layer' (indicating an actual settlement) is missing, meaning that it is unlikely that the Purana Qila site has anything to do with Indraprastha of the epic legend.

Before the 3rd century BC India was controlled by numerous competing chiefs and kings, and during this time urban centres of some size developed. One of these became the base of the powerful Mauryan Empire, created by Chandragupta Maurya and consolidated by his grandson Ashoka (reigned 272-232 BC). Ashoka ruled from Pataliputra, modern Patna, but held sway over most of the Indian sub-continent. He aimed at government in a very real sense, controlling affairs, or at least exhorting a certain way of life, through his famous edicts. Again, there is no evidence of a large urban centre at Delhi, but the presence of Northern Black Polished Ware at some sites in the area, including the Purana Qila, make Mauryan-era settlements likely, although the pottery cannot be linked specifically to this narrow time frame. However, the most exciting Maurvan discovery, made in 1966, was of an Ashokan Rock Edict found at Kalkaji (East of Kailash), in South Delhi, indicating that there must have been a reasonably important settlement nearby.

After the decline of the Mauryas, India was again fragmented into a series of variously powerful local states. The excavations at the Purana Qila show continuous occupation throughout this period. From AD 320-540 the Guptas, based in the Ganga Valley, influenced all of India north of the Narmada through a grouping of tribute-paying states. The sophistication of their court can be judged from the literature of the period, which ranged from the plays of Kalidasa to complicated mathematical treatise, while their technical achievements can be judged from the iron pillar, now in the Qutb Minar complex, which is an astonishing feat of both metallurgy and casting.

After the decline of the Guptas the country again disintegrated into warring states. From AD 606 - 647 the powerful king Harsha created a smaller Gupta-type empire, based in Kanauj, about 80 km up the Ganga from Kanpur. For a time he was able to consolidate power and keep at bay the incursions from Huns and Arabs into the northwest. These attacks were mainly after booty and were not much different from fighting between neighbouring Rajput states that were equally predatory. For the next three hundred years Kanauj became the focus of endless fighting between three central ruling families (Pratiharas, Rashtrakutas and the Palas). The Pratiharas controlled a large area that included Delhi. The Tomars ruled under them here, probably based in the Suraj Kund area. It is thought that Anangpur, a village near Suraj Kund, gets its name from Anang Pal Tomar, probably the same Anang Pal who lived around the 8th century.

By the 11th century, the Tomars had achieved independence from a higher authority. They had also moved their capital from Suraj Kund to a new citadel at Lal Kot (where the Qutb Minar was later built), where the extant remains show that there were a number of fine temples and a large tank within the walls. It is calculated that the population of the city amounted to five to six thousand people, growing subsequently when the fortifications were later extended to the east. In 1160 the Tomars came under the sway of their neighbours from Ajmer, the Chauhans. Under the Chauhans the walls of the Tomar city were extended considerably by the construction of the somewhat lower walls that we know as the Qila Rai Pithora, giving a total circumference for the city of about 8 km. (For convenience I will continue to refer to the original Tomar city as Lal Kot even though it had been so much expanded by the Qila Rai Pithora walls.)



Lal Kot walls

Rajput Delhi

Although Delhi as a city is not particularly ancient, there have been settlements in the area for many millennia. The two most significant early archaeological sites in central Delhi are the Purana Qila and the Ashokan rock edict near Kalkaji (there are many other archaeological sites on both sides of the river). Later, towards the end of the first millennium AD, Rajput rulers constructed two urban centres that were clearly of regional importance and contained buildings of considerable sophistication. The first site is at Suraj Kund, the second at Mehrauli.

Purana Qila excavations

PURANA QILA

The later buildings on this site are discussed in Chapter 9

This site was the location of a village called Indrapat, for which reason it is associated with Indraprastha of the *Mahabharata*. However, although excavations have revealed buildings from the early historical period (about the 3rd century BC onwards), so far nothing has been found to link the site with the Epic period. Archaeology has shown that people lived in mud-brick as well as fired brick structures and had moderately sophisticated drainage, with terracotta ring wells that may have functioned as soak-pits. There are many layers of habitation, the houses generally built in a similar style and bricks often reused. The site continued in occupation, probably until it was selected as Humayun's Dinpanah (see Chapter 9).

ASHOKAN EDICT

Correctly marked on Eicher map

The remains of the inscription, on a smooth rock face projecting from the top of a rocky hillock, can be seen under an ugly concrete shelter in a small neighbourhood park in East of Kailash, not far from the ISKCON temple on Raja Dhirsan Marg. It was discovered in 1966 and is an important part of Delhi's history and heritage, because it implies that somewhere nearby was a settlement important enough in the 3rd century BC for an edict to have been carved. Among the cluster of religious institutions on the nearby hilltops, the Kalkaji Temple is said to be of great antiquity, and might have had a settlement around it.

The edict itself does little more than emphasise the importance of a Buddhist way of life:

Ashoka says: It is two-and-a-half years since I became a Buddhist layman. At first no great exertion was made by me but in the last year I have drawn closer to the Buddhist order and exerted myself zealously and drawn in others to mingle with the gods. This goal is not one restricted only to the great but even a humble man who exerts himself can reach heaven. This proclamation is made for the following purpose: to encourage the humble and the great to exert themselves and to let the people who live beyond the borders of the kingdom know about it. Exertion in the cause must endure forever and it will spread further among the people so that it increases one-and-a-half fold.

SURAJ KUND

There is considerable evidence of early settlement, including fortifications, in the area to the south of Suraj Kund. The name of the village, Anangpur, which lies in the midst of these remains, gives a reasonable basis for assuming that the village (or a nearby hill fort) was founded by the Rajput Tomar king Anang Pal, who lived around the 8th century.

Suraj Kund Dam (perhaps 8th century)

One of two significant structures in the area, the dam lies about a kilometre to the north of Anangpur village. The area has now been severely encroached upon by modern housing but access used to be easy from Anangpur, across flat pastureland, over a small rocky hill and through another flat area, rather thickly covered in thorn trees. The dam straddles the gap between two nearby hills.

The dam is an impressive edifice, 50 m wide and 7 m high, built from accurately hewn quartzite blocks. On the inside the dam forms steps that curve round at each end. On the far side the dam drops away steeply, each layer of stones projecting a few inches beyond the layer above. There is a passage for the egress of water at the level of the ground on the dammed side. The flat land across which you have walked is clearly caused by centuries of silt deposits in the lake that once existed behind this dam. The land around has been very heavily quarried recently, so further archaeological finds are unlikely.

Suraj Kund Dam

Suraj Kund Tank (possibly mid-11th century but perhaps earlier)

The stream that runs through the dam feeds the lake at Suraj Kund. Nearby is a circular tank, supposedly built by another Tomar king, Suraj Pal. It is difficult to say how much of the tank is original because it was repaired by Firoz Shah Tughlak in the fourteenth century. We can guess that Firoz Shah would not have shown such interest unless significant remains existed. The platform on the east side may have been the base of a temple as carved temple fragments have been found nearby. Indeed the name of the tank may derive from a Sun Temple connection (Suraj = sun) rather than from Suraj Pal.

Suraj Kund Tank

LAL KOT (1060)

For some reason, presumably because he needed greater security, Anang Pal II built the strongly fortified town of Lal Kot some ten kilometres away from Suraj Kund, on a more prominent and easily defended outcrop of rock. The foundation of the city is thought to be mid-11th century and at some point the walls were extended on the west side (the part that is best preserved). The Tomars were brought under the sway of the Chauhan clan of Ajmer about a century later and the old town was considerably increased in size, now becoming known as Qila Rai Pithora. The original walls were 3.6 km in circumference with a population, it is speculated, of 5-6,000. The city as extended under the Chauhans was over four times the size, its walls being 8 km round. It is clear from the quality of the carvings on the surviving temple columns that Rajput Delhi was a place of some substance, even though it was not the pre-eminent city in the region.

Lal Kot walls

There is more surviving of Lal Kot than immediately meets the eye. The best place to start an exploration is in the village of Mehrauli, just beyond Adham Khan's Tomb, where it is easy to walk up onto the **Lal Kot wall** (unfortunately via a rubbish dump). This is the later extension wall and, presumably, built stronger and higher than the original west wall, of which nothing but a rise in the ground can be seen. The walls are constructed from random rubble internally but with a facing of quartzite blocks. There are rounded bastions at regular intervals and a few remains of a brick superstructure, which was either built contemporaneously or as a Sultanate addition. From the top of the wall it is possible to follow by sight the line of the wall right round to near the Qutb Minar complex. Following a path leftwards along the top of the wall you will find gateways and, in places, double walls. A path leads down to a tranquil little clearing containing the grave of **Baba Haji Rozbih**. This Muslim saint, who came to Delhi during the reign of Prithviraj Chauhan, converted many Hindus including, tradition has it, one of the king's daughters, reputedly buried nearby. The spot is not very far from the *Idgah* (p.229, 235) and numerous other Islamic burial sites.

Keep following the path until you reach the junction with the older west wall. Follow this to reach, on the left, the excavated site of the **Anang Tal**. This is a deep tank, thought to have been built at the founding of the city and certainly still in use when the city was taken by the Turks. Parts of the tank wall have been excavated and are still visible. The most

3.2 Lal Kot and Qila Rai Pithora

A. Later west wall, late 11th or early 12th c.
B. Grave of Baba Haji Rozbih
C. First walled area, 11th c.
D. Anang Tal, 11th c.
E. Adham Khan's Tomb, 16th c.
F. Qutb Mosque and Iron Pillar.
G. Qila Rai Pithora, 12th c. A section of which can be seen on the south side of Press Enclave Road.

impressive stonework is found at the bottom of the excavation where there are some huge blocks of stone that fit together with perfect precision, the type of work that can be seen in numerous early sites throughout India. It is quite likely that temples were associated with the tank, but no remains have been found. Nearby there is the excavated ground floor of a large masonry building. A few fragments of incised plasterwork show that it was of some importance, and also that it was probably built during the early Sultanate period, and is not therefore a relic from the Rajput town. To leave the area, it is easiest to return to Adham Khan's Tomb.

Anang Tal masonary

QUTB MOSQUE – TEMPLE RELICS (1060 to late 12th century)

The final and most impressive relics from Rajput times are the temple remains built into the mosque in the Qutb complex, mainly consisting of exquisitely carved columns but also including the famous iron pillar (see over). The inscription over the East Gate to the mosque tells of the demolition of 27 Hindu and Jain temples from which this mosque was constructed. This was no communal event; the demolition of temples probably had a greater political purpose than a religious one. It is a historical fact that Hindu conquerors were given to destroying their enemies' sacred places and seizing their principal idols; their loss was seen as a major weakening of the power of the defeated ruler. Among the demolished temples there were clearly a number that were finely carved.

The sculpted columns that support the roof of the prayer hall and colonnades are the most obvious relics. The roof itself is Rajput in style, particularly the domes over the entrance bays, which may originally have come from temple *mandapas*. The lack of mortar in indigenous building techniques must have made such re-use of materials easy. The other pre-Islamic elements are the famous iron pillar and, perhaps, part of the platform on which the mosque was built.

Kirti Mukha

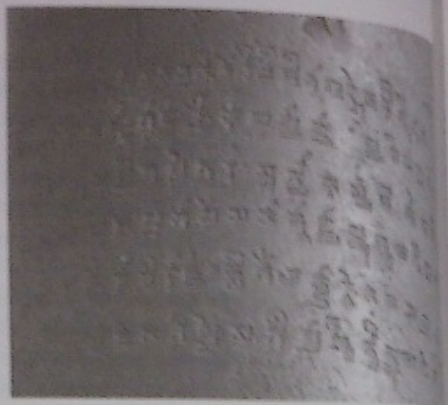
The **columns in the prayer hall** form the most organised array. The matching, central, block of columns are all full height and support temple beams, some of which are still adorned with tiny figures but others of which have been disfigured. The columns themselves feature hanging bells at the top and a highly ornamented section in the middle with bands of carvings, including the popular vase motif. There is another large group of columns of great elegance and restraint that feature a central section with hanging bells over an octagonal shaft. Others nearby are very similar, with one or two bands of hanging bells intersected by a projecting band.

The **colonnades** on the other three sides of the courtyard have higher roofs and are supported on columns made up from two or, occasionally, three columns piled on top of each other. Many of these are at least as ornate as the larger columns in the prayer hall, if not more so. In several places human figures are visible and a stylised face (*kirti mukha*) can be seen on some columns.

Temple column group

IRON PILLAR (4th century)

The pillar is over 7m high with a diameter of 40 cm at the base, 30 at the top. At the top of the column is an inverted lotus capital, which was probably once crowned by a Vaishnavite emblem such as a *garuda*, Vishnu's vehicle.



Inscription

The known history of this pillar comes from its inscriptions. From the longest inscription (a translation of which is on the wall in the northern colonnade) we know the pillar was not made under the auspices of the Delhi Tomars because it was shifted here from its original site, having originally been erected by a king named Chandra on 'the Vishnupada Hill'. A plausible theory is that the king was the Gupta emperor, Chandragupta II (reigned from AD 375 to 415). However, the name of the place is a mystery. While the difficulties involved in moving such an object imply that Vishnupada was nearby, we would expect an artefact of such quality to have been produced at an important centre of power and there was none nearby that we know of. It seems likely, therefore, that the pillar was moved some distance. It might have been a symbol of a former ruler's dominion, important for its political, aesthetic or religious significance and captured by a Tomar to enhance his own legitimacy. The Tomars clearly regarded it as an artefact of importance, as did the Turks, who positioned it in the centre of their mosque courtyard, either moving it here or leaving it in place.

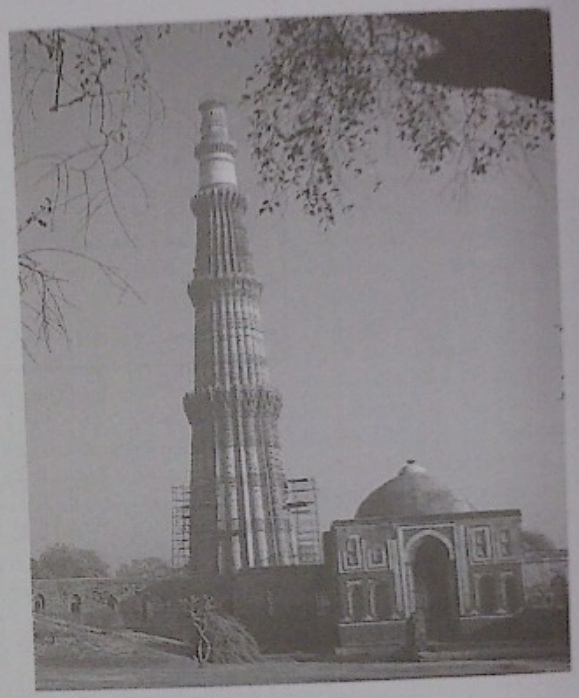
We are in a position to be even more impressed by the pillar than were the Tomars or Turks, knowing now that the workmanship involved in purifying the iron and casting it could not have been achieved in the west until the 19th century at the very earliest. The pillar has been shown to be of exceptionally pure wrought iron. The fact that it has shown so little signs of rusting has been explained recently by the discovery that the early iron-making process produced a high phosphorus content that allowed the iron to react with oxygen and hydrogen to produce a protective film of misawite that has been slowly growing ever since its manufacture.

A legend tells of an early Tomar king pulling the pillar out of the ground in order to check on the accuracy of a tale that claimed that the pillar rested on the head of Vasuki, the king of serpents, and that provided it stayed that way the Tomar dominion would last. When it was drawn up covered in blood the tale was frighteningly authenticated. The king tried to re-fix the pillar but it never held firm and eventually his dynasty fell.

Another, seemingly more plausible myth, was told to Alexander Cunningham, the indefatigable 19th century amateur archaeologist and first head of what is now the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). He was assured that the depth of the pillar had been investigated and had been found still to be continuous at 35 ft. He ordered this to be checked and discovered the base to be bulbous, extending a mere 20 inches below the surface.

Early Sultanate Delhi

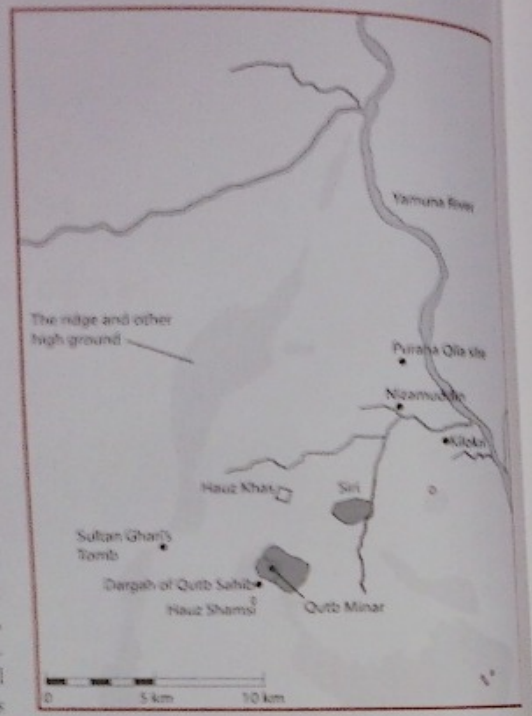
THE QUTB MINAR



'I do not think I have yet seen anything so beautiful – the beauty, though of extreme desolation.'

Fanny Eden, 1838

The Early Delhi Sultanate (1192 - 1320)



By the end of the 12th century the two most powerful rulers in northwest India were Muhammad of Ghor (Ghor is in present day Afghanistan), by now the conqueror of the Punjab, and Prithviraj Chauhan, leader of a group of north Indian states. Having taken Lahore, Muhammad advanced on Delhi. Prithviraj and his allies managed to fend him off in 1191 but the following year Muhammad returned, met Prithviraj near Panipat, defeated him and went on to capture Delhi and Ajmer. Muhammad returned home, leaving his general, Qutbuddin Aibak, as his deputy in Delhi. Qutbuddin was a highly successful governor and, when Muhammad was assassinated in 1206, he took the opportunity to establish what was an independent state, even though he still struck coins in the name of Muhammad's son.

Qutbuddin was the first of the Slave dynasty, so called because he and his successor had been slaves. Even Muhammad of Ghor's father had been a slave. Slaves in Central Asia could become the most highly trusted and privileged courtiers, well-placed to take over from their masters in one of the turbulent twists of Central Asian history – a bit like a KGB leader becoming head of a former Soviet state. Many of them were Turkish (people from the Turkic-speaking tribes who were found throughout Central Asia), were highly valued, and trained to a high degree. They were usually rewarded with their freedom following good service. Turkish families settled extensively in Afghanistan and most of the landowning and ruling classes there had Turkish origins.

Qutbuddin Aibak cleared the area of remaining Chauhan power and established himself in India, with Delhi as his capital. He built the base of the Qutb Minar and the great mosque beside it, inside the walls of the Tomar city. On his death in 1210 the Afghan nobles in Delhi selected his son-in-law, Iltutmish, as Sultan. Iltutmish continued the building work commenced by Qutbuddin, enlarging Qutbuddin's Mosque and completing the Minar. He also constructed the large Shamsi tank some distance from the city walls.

After Iltutmish's death in 1235, there was a great deal of intrigue and squabbling among weak rulers. Iltutmish's eldest son, to his father's grief, had died in Bengal in 1229. After a bloody succession of other sons and one daughter, Raziya, the only female ruler of Delhi, the court nobles invited Iltutmish's youngest son, Mahmud Shah, to take the throne. He ruled from 1245 till 1265 and was described by contemporaries as possessing 'qualities of saints and characteristics of prophets', perhaps the reason why he was dominated by his father-in-law, Balban, another ex-slave. During this period the original city at Lal Kot continued to act as the centre of power. Archaeological evidence does not give us much information about the interior of the city but outside it we know that there were several important shrines, including the burial place of Qutb Sahib, spiritual descendant of Muinuddin Chishti of Ajmer. The burial places of two of Iltutmish's children are further away from the city.

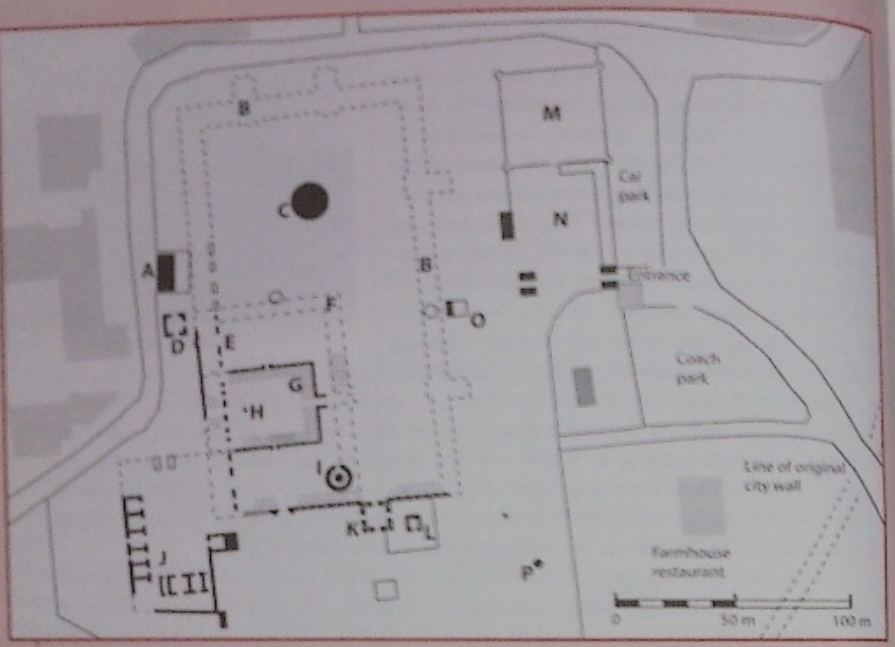

Alauddin's Madrasa

Balban eventually became Sultan himself and ruled until 1287. It is not clear how this transition came about. We do not know whether Mahmud Shah was murdered or what became of his descendants, especially Balban's grandson, the son of Mahmud Shah. After Balban's death his grandson, Kayqubad, became Sultan. For the first time the court was moved away from the old city (Lal Kot) and Kayqubad built himself a palace at Kilokhri near the Yamuna. Sufficient people moved with him for it to have been called the 'new town' although nothing of it now remains, unless the Lal Mahal in Nizamuddin was connected with it. There were many rival nobles in his court and when Kayqubad became ill he was deposed and his infant son was placed on the throne by Jalalaldin Khalji, an Afghan nobleman. In 1290 Jalalaldin set the child aside and became Sultan himself.

Despite having been a successful general, as a ruler Jalalaldin turned out to be ineffectual, being pious and merciful, especially to his nephew, Alauddin, who repaid his benevolence by assassinating him in 1296 and soon seized power. The Khalji take-over was not popular with the citizens, who had become accustomed to playing a role in the confirmation of new rulers. A revolt in 1301 caused Alauddin to carry out an extensive purge of the old aristocracy and to move from the old city to the suburbs, to the site of the army camping ground, Siri, where he constructed another citadel. His palace was built outside the walls of Siri and was referred to as the Hazar Sutun ('thousand pillared hall'), a common name for palaces. Outside the walls of the city he also built a new tank to supply water to the city, now known as Hauz Khas. In the old city he commenced two grandiose building projects: a vast extension to the Qutb Minar Mosque and a new *minar* to dwarf the existing one. Clearly this old city continued to be seen as the main religious centre.

Alauddin had a reputation for unusually cruelty, commonly crushing his enemies under the feet of elephants and building towers from the heads of the vanquished. He was also a grandiose builder and contemporary reports speak of 70,000 construction workers in the Sultan's service; judging by the scale of his projects this is not difficult to believe. His military ideas were no less enterprising. He began to establish a real Indian empire, even making several successful sorties into the south, but rebellion nearer home eventually destroyed his ambitions. His military expansionism cost money and he made some radical fiscal reforms, increasing taxation but imposing strict price controls on essential commodities, allowing him to maintain a large army, but also discriminating against the mainly Hindu rural aristocracy in favour of the mainly Muslim urban population. It also encouraged the money economy and craft production, presumably leading to the considerable growth of Delhi.

Alauddin died in 1316. Again, the void created by the death of a powerful Sultan led to a series of bloody episodes in which most of Alauddin's descendants met their ends. One of his sons, Qutbaldin Mubarak Shah, ruled for four years until 1320, before being murdered by his 'favourite', Khusrau Shah. Initially this takeover appears to have been popular among the population, but Khusrau Shah soon got a reputation for being anti-Islamic, although it is likely that he went no further than banning cow slaughter. Probably wilder stories, such as that he used the Koran as a seat, were simply an excuse for intervention by one of Alauddin's former lieutenants, Ghiyasuddin Tughlak.



Map 4.2 Qutb Minar Complex

A. Mosque of Wafati Shah, late 18th or early 19th c.
B. Foundations of Alauddin's Mosque, 1311
C. Alauddin's Minar, 1311 (p.41)
D. Iltutmish's Tomb, died 1235 (p.39)
E. Screen wall of Iltutmish's Mosque, early 13th c.
F. Line of enclosure of Iltutmish's Mosque extension
G. Original Mosque, started 1192 (p.40)
H. Iron Pillar, 4th c. (p.32)
I. Qutb Minar, 1202 (p.38)
J. Alauddin's Madrasa, 1310 (p.42)
K. Alai Darwaza, 1310 (p.42)
L. Tomb of Imam Zamin, 1539 (p.43)
M. Late Mughal garden (p.43)
N. Sarai, 18th c. (p.43)
O. Late Mughal mosque
P. Cupola from misconceived restoration of Qutb Minar, 1828

The Monuments of the Early Islamic Rulers

The Qutb Minar complex is one of two World Heritage Sites in Delhi, the other being the much later Humayun's Tomb (p.162). It consists of the religious centre of the early Turkish / Afghan city and contains buildings constructed by three of the most powerful of the early Sultans.

Although already a regionally important urban centre, Delhi only became a capital with the arrival of the Turkic Afghan, Muhammad of Ghor in 1192. Because his power base was in Afghanistan and the Punjab, Delhi was of great strategic importance to him. The city's importance may also have been enhanced because Qutbuddin Aibak, the commander left in charge of Delhi, became the most powerful of Muhammad of Ghor's sultans.

Despite the arrival of a seemingly alien political and religious culture, for the ordinary inhabitant of the city the changes might not have been as traumatic as we might think. Many things such as the currency remained the same, and they would already have been familiar with the culture and religion of traders from Central Asia. The local people would have witnessed the destruction of temples and the erection of some astonishing new buildings in their place. Local masons would have been involved in the construction and, while the new work would have surprised them, the political symbolism of the new buildings effacing the old would not. Moreover, despite the newness of the building forms, there was much architectural continuity, because of the adaptation of indigenous materials and construction techniques to these new Islamic buildings.

In the present setting of the Qutb Minar it is difficult to keep in mind that these monumental buildings were originally in the heart of a city, presumably a relatively open space hedged in by other structures of which some, such as the Sultans' palaces, must have been a considerable size. There would also have been ordinary houses, markets and all the other necessities of urban life. Not far from the religious centre we know that there was a large tank, Anang Tal (p.30), which would have been another refreshingly open spot among the city buildings. The immediate surroundings, being the oldest part of the Rajput city, were probably the most densely built up part of the fort, although there is insufficient archaeological evidence to be sure. The area to the east of the religious centre, then only recently enclosed by the Qila Rai Pithora walls, was probably not so urbanised; the fact that there are some later Sultanate tombs and graves in that area may mean that it was never densely inhabited.

These buildings continued to be an important part of Sultanate Delhi for several centuries, even though grandiose building projects were undertaken at various times elsewhere in the Delhi area. This continuing significance is evident from the number of important shrines, mosques and tombs that were built outside the city walls during the Sultanate and Mughal periods. One of the earliest, and the magnet for much of the rest, was the shrine or *dargah* of the *sufi* saint Qutb Sahib (these buildings are discussed in Chapter 12). During later Mughal times, when the residential area had shifted southwards to the area around the *Dargah* (Mehrauli village), the old city had become ruined and was used as a site for burials and the construction of gardens, one of which is inside the present enclosure.

The buildings in this area are used to illustrate the evolution of early Indo-Islamic architecture, described in Chapter 2.

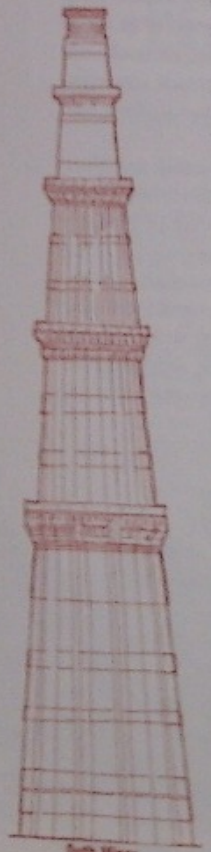
Alauddin's Madrasa

Qutb Minar (Construction started 1202)

The name appears to come from 'Qutb Sahib ki Lath', in honour of the local saint Bakhtiyar Kaki, whose popular name is Qutb Sahib. The tower was thought of as his staff (lath), which connected earth with heaven.

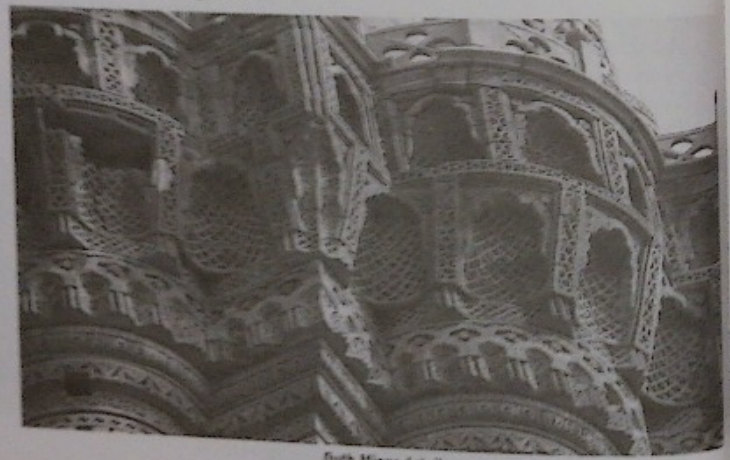
This astonishing building stands 72.5 metres high with a diameter at the base of 14 metres while at the top it is only 3 metres, a difference that, together with the 4 projecting circular balconies, gives the tower its superbly distinctive profile. The tower bears a striking resemblance to victory towers in Afghanistan and it seems certain that this was partly why it was built. It was probably also a functional part of the mosque complex. By this time a minaret had become a standard fixture for mosques throughout the Islamic world, signalling their presence from afar.

Qutb Minar detail



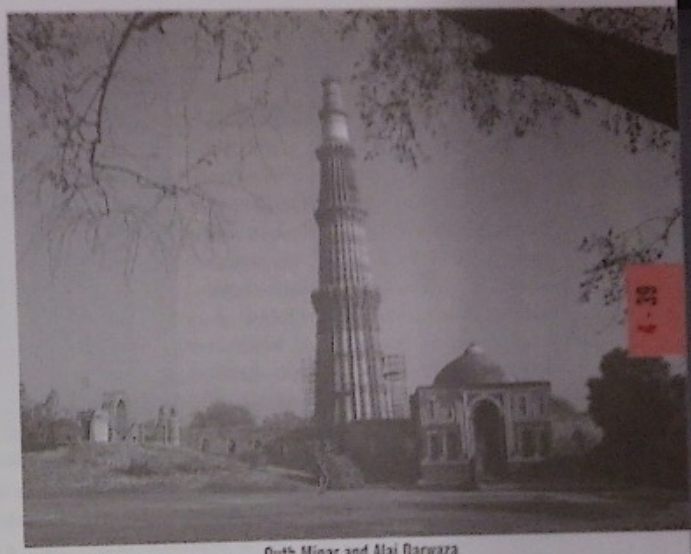
Qutb Minar

It is thought that the first level, 29 metres high, was built by Aibak (ruled 1192-1210) while his successor, Iltutmish (ruled 1210-35), built three more, altered by subsequent damage and repair. During Firoz Shah's reign the tower was damaged by lightning. He seems to have partially demolished the top layer and added two in its place, mainly in white marble. The next major repair work was carried out by the British in 1828 following earthquake damage. The entrance was extensively repaired and the inscriptions incorrectly repositioned. The clumsy parapets were also added to the balconies along with a cupola on the top. Doubts about the authenticity of the cupola led to its removal twenty years later and it ended up at the edge of the garden.



Qutb Minar detail

There was considerable scholarly debate in the 19th century about the origins of the Qutb Minar – some people maintained that it was a Rajput building, citing Devanagiri script found on the inside and its non-minaret like appearance, but this view has long since been rejected. A more current issue is stylistic: whether this is an Islamic building with indigenous decorations or whether all the inspiration came from the west with the invaders. The hanging decorations under the balconies do at first glance bear a striking resemblance to the *muqarnas* of Islamic buildings elsewhere, but their inspiration could equally (and more plausibly at this early date) come from the local masons' skills in carving highly intricate decorations under the domes of temples. It has been argued convincingly that the Qutb Minar is a good example of the synthesis that occurred in the early days of the invasion between an alien architectural style and local craftsmen who continued to employ traditional skills and techniques.

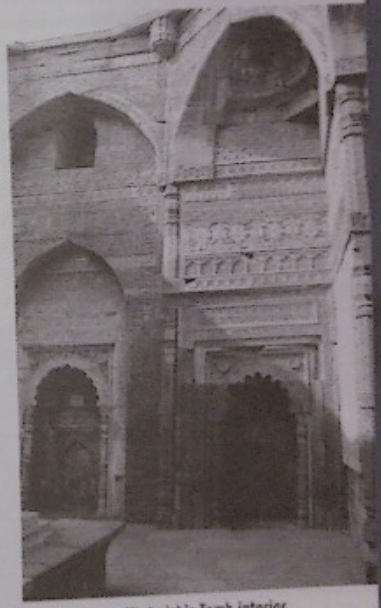


Qutb Minar and Alai Darwaza

Iltutmish's Tomb (1235)

Behind the Qutb Minar Mosque is a building believed to be his own tomb. This, incidentally, is one of the few tombs where one can clearly see that the burial chamber is separate from the upper chamber containing the cenotaph; on the north side steps lead down to a chamber beneath the tomb. The exterior of the tomb is quite austere, only the double-arched entrances being ornamented. Inside, the walls are lavishly decorated, on the west wall with three highly decorated *mihrabs* and on the other three sides from the midpoint upwards. We see here many of the features that recur on later sultanate buildings: the *pishtaq* (entrance bay) with framed arches within it, the engaged columns on external corners, and cusped arches.

The square is transformed into an octagon with uniform trabeate ogee squinch arches. There is no dome and it is not known whether one ever existed. Compared with later tombs the walls are relatively thin, perhaps incapable of counteracting the outward thrust of a dome. A dome might have collapsed or the cenotaph might have been left deliberately open to the sky, in accordance with a generally ignored belief that a grave has to be exposed to rain and dew to be blessed.



Iltutmish's Tomb interior

Qutb Minar Mosque
(started 1192)

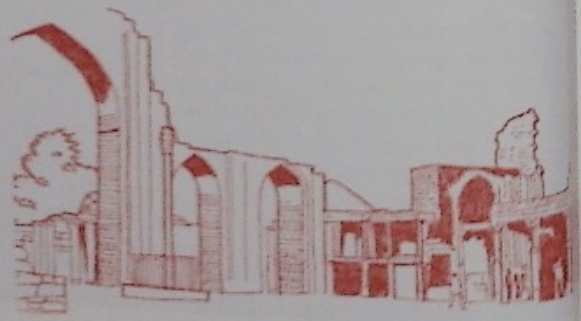
Popularly known as the Quwwat-al-Islam (Might of Islam) Mosque, the mosque actually acquired the name relatively recently, having been corrupted or misread from Qubbat al-Islam, meaning 'Sanctuary of Islam', a term that we know was used historically to describe the environs of Qutb Sahib's shrine. Early records produce no mention of the triumphalist epithet.

Qutb Minar Mosque prayer hall

The Turko-Rajput synthesis noticed on the Qutb Minar is seen again in the oldest and best-preserved part of mosque, the central courtyard built under Aibak. The mosque follows the original Arabian pattern of a hypostyle prayer hall, a courtyard and surrounding colonnades. The actual details however are unusual because, in common with other very early Indian mosques, temple columns and other elements were reused in its building. The reused columns of the prayer hall were carefully selected to match in groups. On the right side of the prayer hall there is a very ruined collection of smaller columns supporting a raised chamber, probably the private prayer hall for the Sultan and his family. Curiously, this roof aligns neither with the roofs of the prayer hall or the adjacent colonnade.

The prayer wall itself must have been built new but unfortunately it is mostly ruined. One remaining projection on the rear of the wall indicates the presence of a *mihrab* in this off-centre position, which in turn indicates two or three *mihrabs* either side of the main central one. Multiple *mihrabs* are a uniquely Indian feature, so it is interesting to see it in such an early building. It is thought to derive from temple design, where the worshipper expected to encounter an object of veneration through every opening.

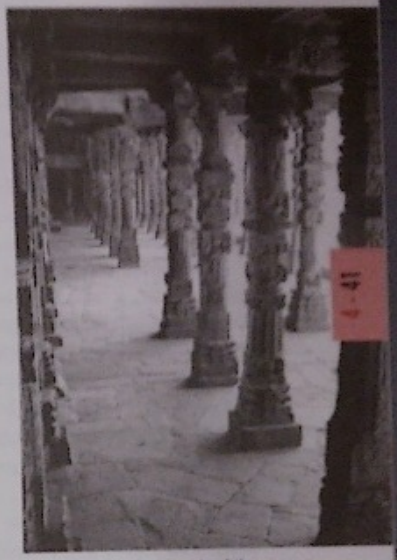
The great arched screen was erected in 1199, after the building of the prayer hall. The openings do not align with the layout of the hall. It is a lovely piece of work, combining the robust wide arches of Islamic architecture with delicate local sculptural traditions. The structural features of these arches are discussed in Chapter 2 but, in brief, the system of arcuate construction, invented by the Romans and used in West Asian buildings, was yet to arrive in India. Nonetheless, the local craftsmen used their superb masonry skills to achieve the desired shape. The wall was then carved, by craftsmen who were clearly at the peak of their profession, with glorious bands of the lovely *nashki* script threaded through with creepers (a common Islamic calligraphic device known as arabesques) as well as other panels adorned with purely decorative sculpture that would look totally at home on a Hindu temple.



Qutb Minar Mosque courtyard

The north and east colonnades are well preserved; the southern one is only partly complete and seems to have been built using much plainer or even newly carved columns. At the rear of the courtyard the colonnade is four bays deep with two-storey pavilions in the corners. Traditionally the colonnades were used as temporary shelter for travellers; one can assume that the upper rooms were rather exclusive accommodation, containing as they do some of the best sculptured columns, just visible from the lower steps.

There is a widely accepted theory that the builders of the mosque would have plastered over all the columns, beams and anywhere else that showed carvings of animate life, such things being idolatrous, especially in mosques. However, this theory is contradicted by the 14th century description of Ibn Battuta who said it was built of white stone and converted from an 'idol temple', implying that he saw it in the same state as we do.



East arcade of the mosque

The original courtyard appears large enough to have held a good-sized congregation. Nevertheless Aibak's successor, Iltutmish, proceeded to enlarge the mosque with a surrounding colonnade and an extension to the screen wall on either side. Part of the original enclosing wall survives on the south side. The screen wall contrasts dramatically with Aibak's. The flowing *nashki* is sometimes replaced by a strange knotted square *kufic* script. Gone are the sinuous intertwined plants; instead the decoration is geometric and formal, the high relief contrasting with the low relief of the carving on the earlier screen. It is impossible to know whether this part of the mosque was completed and, if so, why the original exterior wall of the first mosque was left, blocking the view of worshippers in Iltutmish's extension.

Iltutmish's mosque extension may indeed never have been finished, but Alauddin got even less far with his grandiose enlargement of the mosque at the beginning of the 14th century. This was to have been a vast enclosure with four entrances. It would also have contained a massive *minar* designed to overshadow the Qutb Minar completely. Its rubble base still stands and shows that it would have been at least twice its height. The base of the projected enclosure wall is exposed, as are the bases, an extension of Alauddin's screen arches. The only finished building is the southern gateway known as the Alai Darwaza (see over).

The mosque was in use when Ibn Battuta wrote about it and it may have remained in use until Shahjahanabad was built in the 17th century, when there was a major population shift northwards. This area became the location for gardens and burials during the later Mughal period.

South Gate of Iltutmish's mosque extension

Alai Darwaza (1310)

The third Sultan to contribute to the complex was the self-aggrandising Alauddin Khalji. As already mentioned, his plans were stupendous but the only buildings that materialised were one superb gate to the vast mosque extension, and an austere *madrasa* behind the mosque.

The completed gateway is known as the Alai Darwaza and is attached, albeit clumsily, to a section of the pre-existing wall on either side; judging by the inept conjunction of wall and gateway it is unlikely that this wall was part of Alauddin's final conception. Apart from the Qutb Minar itself, the Alai Darwaza is in many respects the most architecturally satisfying building in the complex. By the early 14th century Islamic architecture and decoration had been fully assimilated and a unique Indo-Islamic style had evolved. The arches are true and the decorations combine indigenous Indian and Islamic motifs.

Alai Darwaza (below) and detail (abo

It is likely that the exterior wall once projected above its present height, forming a significant parapet around the dome. If so, the already fine proportions would have been considerably enhanced. The alternating use of white marble and red sandstone is very effective, particularly where the two are reversed as in the three exterior façades where red predominates over the bottom half and white above. The recessed arches of the three exterior openings are particularly charming, with red columns supporting a white arch, followed by white columns and a red arch. On the underside of the red arch, white marble lotus buds (or spearheads) create a sort of cusped arch design that frames the opening. On the north side the exterior is plain red sandstone. The doorway is not as lofty as on the other sides and the shape of the arch is very unusual: entirely of marble, it is made up of three shallow arcs connected to form a slightly cloverleaf shape, elaborately decorated with circular beading.

Inside, the very slightly horseshoe-shaped arches are repeated as recessed squinch arches framing a tiny domed squinch. The centre of the dome ceiling is open and capped by a small white marble dome, a feature not seen again in Delhi.

Alai Darwaza - elevation and section

ALAUDDIN'S MADRASA (1317)

Unlike the Alai Darwaza, Alauddin's *Madrasa* is hardly ornamented at all. The original design seems to have consisted of a courtyard with, on the north side, the remains of a large gateway and, on the south, three separate chambers. The central chamber, it is thought, was Alauddin's tomb. These chambers were enclosed at the back by a wedge-shaped room with unusually wide stairs built into the end wall. Unfortunately, the facing stone has been comprehensively removed from all these walls, presumably for reuse, so it is impossible to guess at its original decoration.

On the other two sides were wings containing rows of separate chambers, generally exaggeratedly vaulted, although the central ones on each side are domed. The transition from square to octagon is made, in this case, in the simplest and plainest way, with square projecting corbels. The eastern wing seems always to have ended at the central domed chamber, above the 'moat' around the mosque platform, a window on this north side showing that this was built as an external wall. On the west side some of the chambers have haphazard openings at the rear. Behind these, incidentally, is an unfrequented bit of ground that contains some attractive trees that are native to the Delhi region, such as the gnarled *piloo* (Salvadora oleoides) – a less common sight than would be expected.

Alauddin's Madrasa

TOMB OF IMAM ZAMIN (1539)

This tomb was built on a platform beside the Alai Darwaza. Nothing is known of the Imam but it is supposed that he was connected with the Qutb Minar Mosque. The tomb has a typical design with twelve pillars forming a square. *Jali* screens enclose the chamber, apart from the solid *mihrab* screen on the west and the entrance on the south.

LATE MUGHAL GARDEN (18th century)

This is one of the many gardens and tombs built during late-Mughal times, when Mehrauli was the royal family's only other dwelling other than the Red Fort. *Chatris* stand on three of its four corners. Gardens were an extremely important part of Mughal life, many hours and indeed days being spent camping in the comparative comfort created by plenty of shade and water. They were often unattached to particular houses or palaces but were positioned in suitable resting places for travel. This garden probably had a simple layout of four garden plots bisected by paths and a pond or perhaps running water at the centre. Although no gardens have survived intact from Mughal times, the garden around Humayun's Tomb (p.165) gives some idea of what they might have looked like.

SERAI (18th century)

In front of the garden enclosure are the remains of a *serai* from roughly the same time. The two gateways remain, one of them now acting as the entrance to the complex. Part of the enclosure walls and rooms survive, as well as a small mosque, typical of late Mughal architecture. *Serais* were built to help long distance travellers. There was provision for secure storage, the stabling and feeding of animals, and facilities such as water and food for the traveller and his servants.

Serai

OTHER BUILDINGS

Scattered across part of the site are numerous graves, including a few inside the Qutb Minar Mosque courtyard. These are mostly from the late Mughal period.

4.3 Siri Fort

A Ruin in nursery area at back of Asian Games village
B Ruin in Siri Fort Park

4.4 Shahpur Jat

A City walls
B Tohfe Wala Gumbad
C Baradari
D Bastion

Other Early Sultanate Buildings

MEHRAULI (map p.228)
At the heart of the village of Mehrauli is the **Dargah of Qutb Sahib** (p.226). Nearby there is a *baoli* and further south there are the remains of the **Hauz Shamsi**, both said to be built by Iltutmish to supply the city with water. The **Idgah** to the west of the village was probably built in the 13th century. From later centuries there are numerous tombs and mosques and an even greater number of late Mughal and colonial buildings. It was during the late Mughal period that Mehrauli became particularly important, which is why it is relegated to Chapter 12.

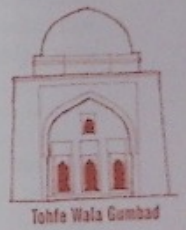
There are also some Khalji-era buildings in **Nizamuddin** village. These are discussed in Chapter 10.

Ruin in Siri Fort Park

SIRI FORT (1304)
Alauddin Khalji built Siri Fort on the site of the military camp northeast of the city. The construction follows a common pattern, with slightly battered walls (i.e., with a wider base on the outside) and a protected passage within the width of the walls. Ruins of a number of ancient buildings can be found within the walls. They may be contemporary but dates are unknown.

Alauddin Khalji also constructed a great tank to supply the new city with water: this was later restored by Firoz Shah and is known as **Hauz Khas** (p.87).

Tohfe Wala Gumbad (early 14th century)
Visible from outside the walls in front of Shahpur Jat, this mosque has to be approached through the village from the east. It seems to have been an early prototype for the Begampur Mosque, built by the Tughlaks. The central prayer hall is well preserved, with a huge arch (*iwan*) on the east side containing three equal arched entrances (although this might be inaccurate restoration – the 1916 ASI listing (p.5) describes a single door supported by modern pillars because of its dilapidated state). On the north and south sides similar openings once led through to double-aisled pillared chambers on each side, only the foundations of which remain. These halls seem to have turned at least part of the way along the sides of a central courtyard. The whole building is constructed from rubble masonry with a rendered surface inside and out, minimally decorated. If it was built by Alauddin it is a far cry from the delicacy of the Alai Darwaza or even the slightly plainer Jamaat Khana Mosque in Nizamuddin (p.174). The rubble masonry construction also distinguishes it from Alauddin's *Madrasa* at the Qutb.



Tohfe Wala Gumbad

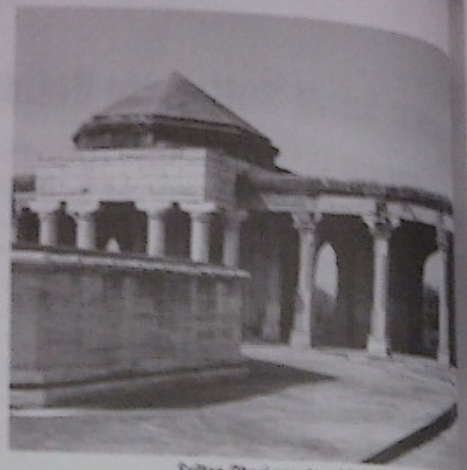
Baradari (early 14th century)
In the centre of the village, only visible in a few places (see map) is a large structure, known as the *baradari*. It is described in the 1916 ASI listing as a rectangular building with a nine-bayed central hall, and side chambers to the north and south. Arched openings are visible on the east and west sides and on the north side several vaulted bays are visible, the remains of Tughlak plasterwork still attached in places. The ground level has now risen to just below the column capstones; it is easy to see that this was once a large and impressive building.

Baradari

SULTAN GHARI'S TOMB (1231)

Near Vasant Kunj, this is shown on the Eicher map

The inscription informs us that this tomb was built for Nasiruddin Mahmud, Iltutmish's eldest son, who died before his father. It is thought that the tomb, which stands some distance from the city, was built by Iltutmish in 1231 and is therefore reckoned to be the first Islamic mausoleum in India. The name probably derives from the cave-like burial chamber (*ghar*) and it is not known who else was buried here.

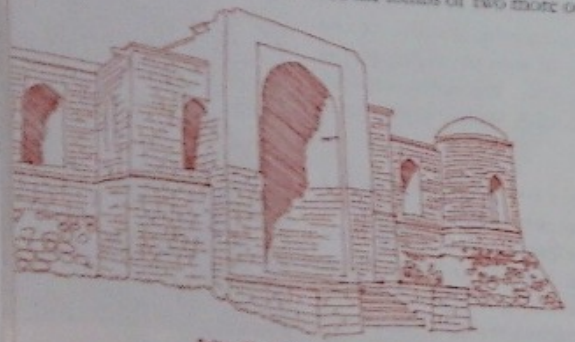


Sultan Ghari courtyard interior

The materials used are very similar to the contemporary Qutb Minar buildings, even including some reused temple pieces that probably came from a nearby demolished or ruined temple. The design is quite unlike any other tomb that was to be built in the next few centuries, the main difference being the enclosure itself, built rather like a small courtyard mosque, and the ambiguous design of the octagonal burial chamber, which projects up into the courtyard. It therefore combines the function of an underground crypt, existing under all tombs, and the standard domed tomb that is now ubiquitous in the Delhi landscape. The tomb chamber is reached down steep steps and consists of a smoke-blackened room with four columns supporting beams projecting from the walls. The graves inside are considered to be highly sacred and are visited by local villagers *en masse* every Thursday.

The entire tomb chamber construction is based on the indigenous trabeate method. Upstairs the design is more Turkish / Afghan, with a tiny white marble prayer hall in the middle of the west wall and white marble at the entrance and around the tomb itself. The fact that Firoz Shah claimed to have extensively repaired the building, as it had 'fallen into such ruin that the sepulchres were undistinguishable', makes it difficult to assess how much is original. For example, on one side of the tomb chamber's roof a red sandstone decorated cornice has been exposed, which might have been original, while the more visible white marble could have been added by Firoz Shah.

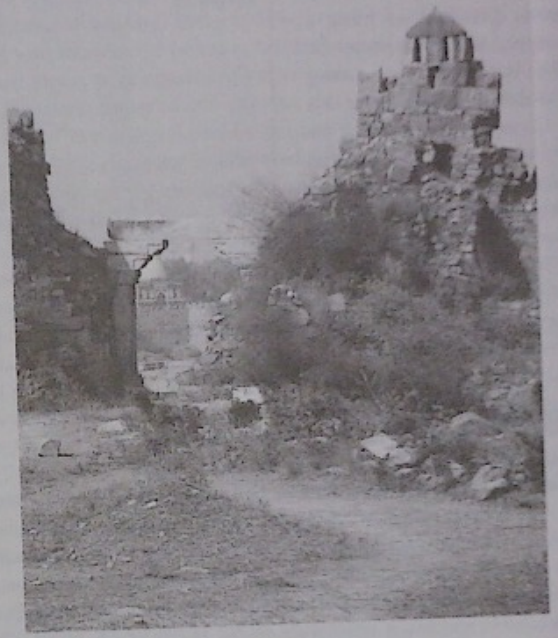
Beside the main building is an octagonal *chatri*. This is one of two that formerly stood here and were said to be the tombs of two more of Iltutmish's sons, the ones that ruled either side of their more talented sister Raziya. Both men were deposed, one dying soon afterwards, the other being killed. The chatri was restored by Firoz Shah.



Sultan Ghari's Tomb entrance

Surrounding these tombs are the ruined remains of a village which appears to have contained some quite fine buildings that are said to be mainly Mughal, apart from a Tughlak mosque some distance away, opposite the entrance to Sultan Ghari's Tomb. Ruins of a Jami Masjid and a *khanqah* have been found to the south of the tomb.

TUGHLAKABAD



The relics of palaces, baths, &c., many of which are still sufficiently entire to excite our wonder, induce us involuntarily to put the question; 'Were there giants in those days?'

Thomas Bacon, 1837

For all ye and us who feel overwhelmed but intrigued by Delhi's imposing past, here's a wonderful hand-held guide with well-mapped ways of wandering into lost centuries and monuments.

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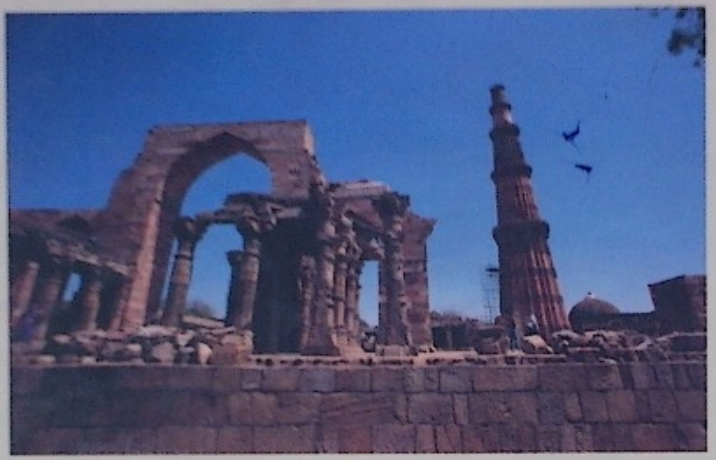

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Lucy Peck was educated in the UK and is a qualified architect with a degree in town planning. She lived for ten years in Delhi and wrote *Agra: The Architectural Heritage* (2008), *Fatehpur Sikri: Revisiting Akbar's Masterpiece* (2014), and *Lahore: The Architectural Heritage*, all published by Roli Books.

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