



Works completed by DDA under the guidance of Hon'ble LG, Delhi

Restoring Heritage and Reviving Nature: The Success Story of Mehrauli Archaeological Park

In the heart of Delhi, where history whispers through ancient stones and nature beckons with its serene beauty, a remarkable transformation took place at Mehrauli Archaeological Park (MAP). Several historic monuments The Metcalf Boat House, The Circular Monument, and The Metcalf Guest House etc. – were on the brink of decay. However, through the dedicated efforts of the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), these monuments were not only preserved but given a new lease on life. Additionally, the rejuvenation of the water body at Quli Khan Tomb adds another layer of achievement to this transformative endeavor. This success story celebrates the remarkable conservation and development works carried out at MAP.



1. The Unknown Circular Monument: A Café of History and Beauty

Among these landmarks, the Circular Monument stood out as a symbol of both heritage and innovation. Its restoration was a testament to the commitment of DDA. The Circular Monument was painstakingly restored to its former glory while preserving its original structure. A beautiful cafeteria now graces its premises, offering visitors a taste of history and culinary delights.

Surrounded by meticulously designed landscaping and shaded with carefully chosen foliage, the Circular Monument has become a place where the past and present coexist harmoniously. Warm and inviting illumination casts a gentle glow and enhances its allure, revealing the intricate details of the monument even after sunset. The DDA's Civil, Horticulture, Electrical & Architectural wings worked tirelessly to bring this vision to life and The Circular Monument now stands as a picturesque oasis, offering a welcoming space for visitors to savor the park's heritage.



2. Metcalf Boat House: A Return to Authenticity

The Metcalf Boat House, once hidden beneath layers of silt and ravaged by time, has been painstakingly restored to its original glory. Both the main structure and its beautiful arches and stairs, previously obscured, have been meticulously rehabilitated. The arches, once hidden from view, are now exposed and brilliantly illuminated. The Metcalf Boat House has been reborn as the boat house it was meant to be, an embodiment of history and a reminder of its grandeur.



3. Metcalf Guest House: From Obscurity to Interpretation Center

The Metcalf Guest House, long concealed under overgrown branches and ravaged by weathering and environmental factors, is now being lovingly restored to its original splendor. DDA's efforts go beyond mere conservation; it is being developed into an interpretation center. This center will serve as a portal to showcase the rich history of the Mehrauli Archaeological Park and its magnificent monuments, bridging the past and the present for generations to come.

DDA has completed the work of Metcalfe Interpretation Centre. The works consisted of restoration and conservation of the Metcalfe Guesthouse including repair of walls,

relaying of roof in the outer galleries, stucco work in fire place, water proofing of the terrace, plinth protection and other site development and landscaping works. A platform has been made along the walls outside the interpretation center wherein the stone relics and artefacts discovered onsite during the time of conservation have been displayed. A descriptive plaque has also been installed at one side of the Interpretation Centre.

The interpretation center is designed into various galleries with innovative backlit illuminated descriptive panels along with archival photographs emphasizing on the rich heritage of the Mehrauli and Delhi City. The Gallery 1 – *Kahani Delhi ki* talks about the rich heritage and various historic cites of Delhi. The Gallery 2 – *Sufiyana* describes the rich sufi history of Mehrauli Village including the Dargah of Bakhtyar Kaki , Phool Walon ki Sair and other intangible aspects of Mehrauli. The Gallery 3 – *Zikr-e- Delhi* describes the heritage structures of the Mehrauli Village. The Gallery 4 discusses about the rich ecology of the area whereas the Gallery 5 describes the conservation and research initiatives taken in Mehrauli.

The photographs of the Interpretation Centre are as under:



Figure 1 Gallery 1- Metcalfe Interpretation Centre



Figure 2 Gallery 3- Metcalfe Interpretation Centre



Figure 3 Gallery 5- Metcalfe Interpretation Centre



4. Rejuvenated Water Body near Metcalfe Boathouse : A Marvel of Restoration

Earlier, the water body on the eastern side of Quli Khan Tomb and flanked by the Boathouse was full of silt, debris and was dry. Even though historically this water body was used by Thomas Metcalf (the Resident Commissioner of Delhi in 1840) as boating and recreation area flanked by a Boathouse, a Horse Carriageway, Circular Dining Room and a Rose Garden; over the years, due to continuous siltation from the catchment areas such as Qutb Minar and adjoining undulating slopes and no proper upkeep had reduced it to a small ditch which remains dry perennially.

Now, the waterbody has been rejuvenated and the surroundings are cleaned up and new plantation have been carried out. Desilting and removal of debris were taken up on priority basis. The arches under the horse Carriageway were restored to original condition as per conservation principles. The historical water culvert under the Horse carriageway has been reopened and restored allowing water from the surrounding catchment areas to flow into the water body, as it functioned before. Random rubble stones as available in site were rammed onto earth at select locations of slopes to prevent soil erosion. No cement or lime concrete has been used in these stone pitching. Soils brought by natural waterflow are allowed to fill the voids and grow grasses and vegetations. Continuous source of water from DJB (Delhi Jal Board) now fills the water body and aerator fountains have been installed for purifying the water – which now converts the dry waterbody to a permanent waterbody, allowing a micro climate to thrive naturally, suitable for local flora and fauna.





5. Quli Khan Tomb (Done by Dept. of Archaeology, GNCTD)

The tomb was constructed in the early 17th century by Emperor Akbar for his foster brother Mohd. Quli Khan. The tomb has been successfully restored by Dept. of Archaeology, GNCTD. The repair and conservation works included surface cleaning, re-plastering (wherever required), repointing of raked out joints of random rubble masonry, coping on parapet, stone consolidation (wherever required), flooring, terrace water proofing, plinth area protection and conservation of original stucco work.



6. Wall near Chaumukh Darwaza



7. Unknown Monument into Reading Room



8. Historic Gatepost



9. Open Amphitheatre



Resuscitating the heritage amidst the nature: Conservation in Sanjay Van

In the heart of South Delhi, where history whispers through ancient stones and nature beckons with its serene beauty, a remarkable transformation took place at Sanjay Van.

When Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena first visited Sanjay Van on 06-05-2023, this site was a decrepit and deplorable location of crumbling heritage structures surrounded by overgrowth of vegetation, dirt and garbage. Years of neglect had hidden the jewels here, threatening them to be forgotten from the pages of history.

Hon'ble Lt. Governor ensured that conservation of historic structures, environmental upgradation works and restoration of the site were initiated in a mission mode. Untiring efforts, out of box imagination and seamless coordination between the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), which was the main stakeholder, and Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Department of Archaeology, GNCTD resulted in this transformation that one witnesses today.

Various decayed heritage structures have been restored to their pristine historic glory and the site has been transformed into a remarkable public green space under the direct supervision of Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena.

Sanjay Van is one of the major green lungs of Delhi and a paradise for birdwatchers and nature lovers. It has evolved in a home to native as well as rare migratory avian species. The area is dotted with various historic structures getting back to the times of Prithviraj Chouhan and Anangpal II of Tomar dynasty amongst others.

The architecture is indicative of structures prevalent during the 13th - 14th Century AD. However, remnants of Quila Rai Pithora, built around the 12th Century are also seen around this area.

1. Structure No.2 (Small Fortification)

The presence of a Mihrab on the western wall and remains of minarets at two corner suggests that the structure may have been Qanati Mosque. However, local folklore indicates that this structure was part of Prithwiraj Chouhan's walled city, which may have been transformed by the later Islamic Rulers. Various other structures strewn around Sanjay Van, also allude to the times of Anag Pal. In due course of time, subsequent rulers have added layers of history to these structures.

As this restored Rock Structure at Sanjay Van stands tall after conservation, it will now be upon the people of Delhi, more than the Government departments, to preserve and carry forward this magical inheritance that has been passed on to us.

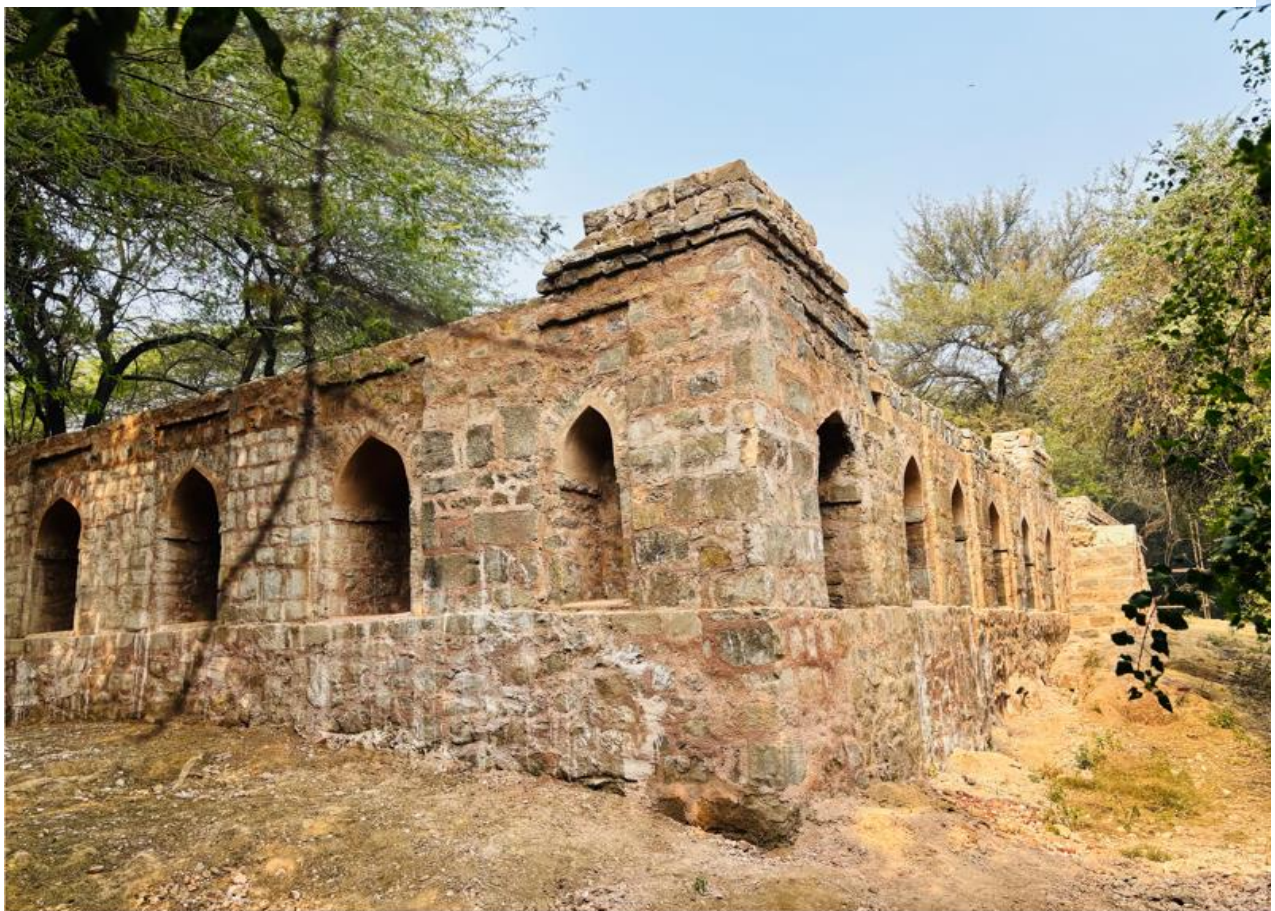




2. Structure No.3 (Large Fortification)

This structure was buried under silt till the roof level and only few portions of dilapidated bastions were visible on both the sides. The access to the terrace of the structure was missing and a temporary mound of mud was made through a broken parapet wall to access the terrace. The architecture of this nearly square shaped symmetric structure is indicative of structures prevalent during the 13th - 14th Century AD. However, as per the local folklores, it is said to be part of Mahal of Prithwiraj Chouhan, which may have been transformed by the later Islamic Rulers. The remnants of Quila Rai Pithora, built around the 12th Century are also seen around this area. The well near the historic structure also seems to be of the same era.

As this heritage courtyard and historic wells of Sanjay van stand conserved, it will now be upon the people of Delhi, more than the Government departments, to preserve and carry forward this magical inheritance that has been passed on to us.





3. Historic Well



Restoration and conservation of Heritage Monument and structures at District Park

Shalimar Bagh

Shalimar Bagh also known as Shalimar Garden is a Mughal garden located on the banks of Yamuna river in Delhi, India. It was named as Aizzabad Bagh when the garden was laid by Izz-un-Nissa wife of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan in 1653 as a tribute and replica of Shalimar Bagh, Kashmir, laid by erstwhile Mughal emperor Jahangir in 1619.

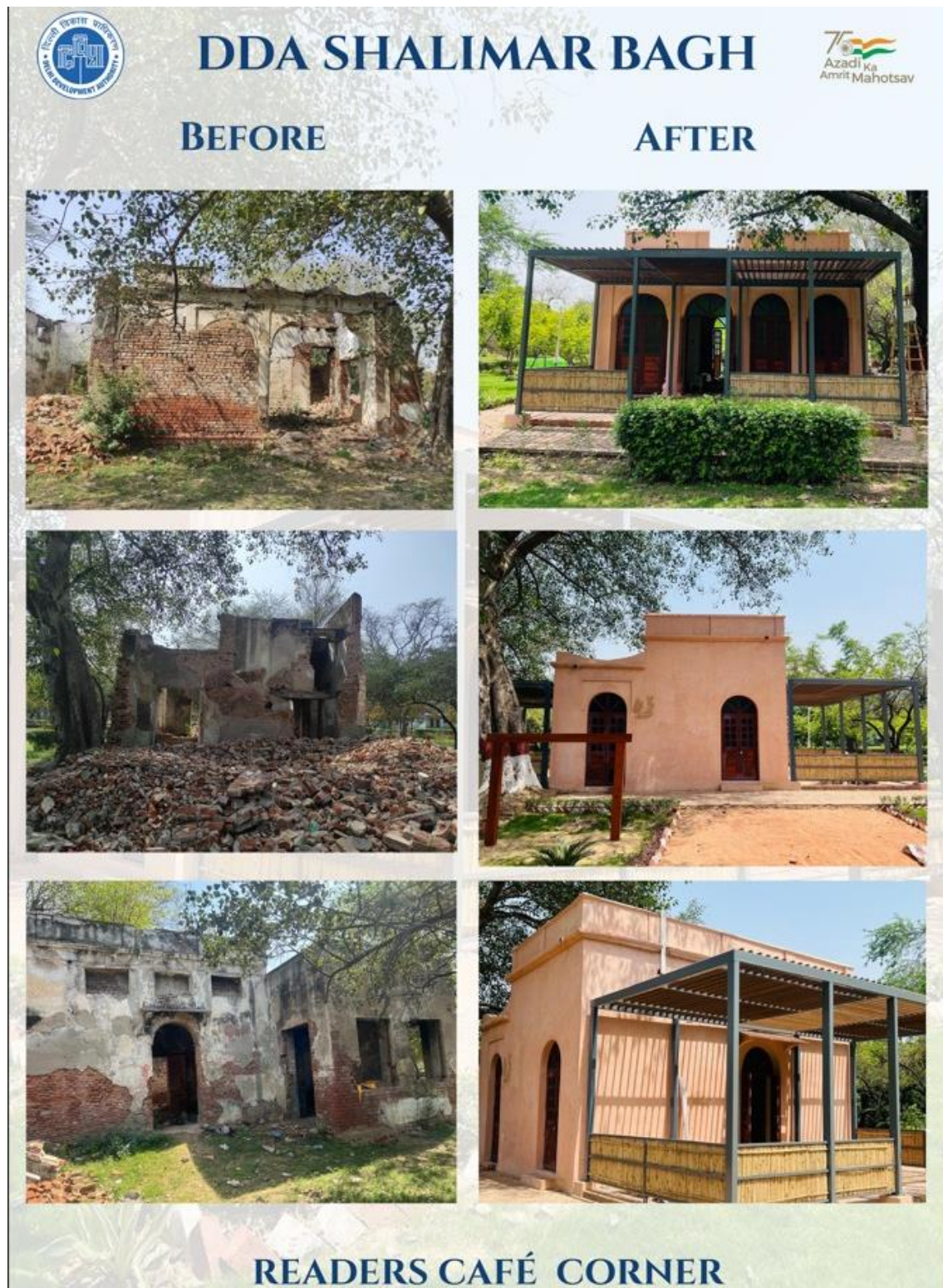
The Shalimar Bagh had witnessed events of historical significance such as in 1658 the coronation ceremony of Aurangzeb took place at Sheesh Mahal. In 1738 en route to massacre in Delhi, Nadir Shah along with his army camped here. British Residents in Delhi, such as David Ochterlony and Thomas Metcalfe, made Shalimar Bagh a part of their private estates in Delhi. In 1811, Thomas Metcalf had begun building a complex of new houses in Shalimar Bagh which were largely complete by 1813. However, since 1843, the structures were in constant neglect/decay.

Apart from the protected Sheesh Mahal, there were several historic structures in the garden that were unprotected, and were in an advanced state of deterioration. Honb'le LG visited Shalimar Bagh and directions were given to DDA for conservation of Sheesh mahal and other structures lying scattered in Shalimar bagh. The conservation of main monument is being undertaken by ASI and conservation and adaptive reuse of 4 structures is taken up by DDA.

The conservation works in Shalimar Bagh, will contribute to develop a "Cultural Asset". It will also inculcate awareness and appreciation of values in the society for the existing monuments/heritage structures, natural heritage and culture. Thereby addressing the concerning issues on Conservation of both Natural and Historic Environment and enhance Site Interpretation with a sense of responsibility. It will provide a healthy and clean environment to the society and also promote Heritage tourism.

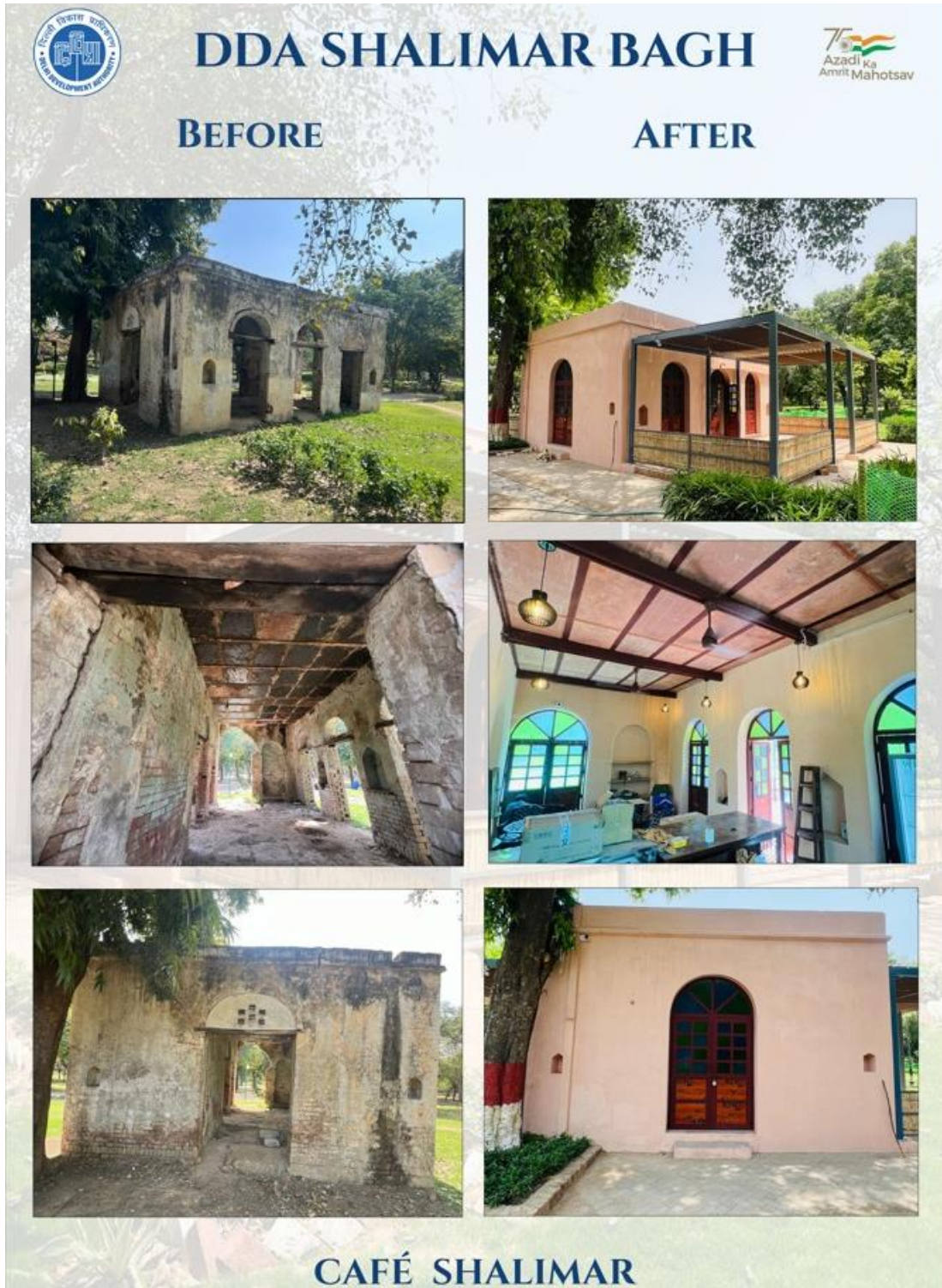
1. Conservation of Cottage 1

After restoration, the colonial structure, built in 1930s, to be used as a book café.

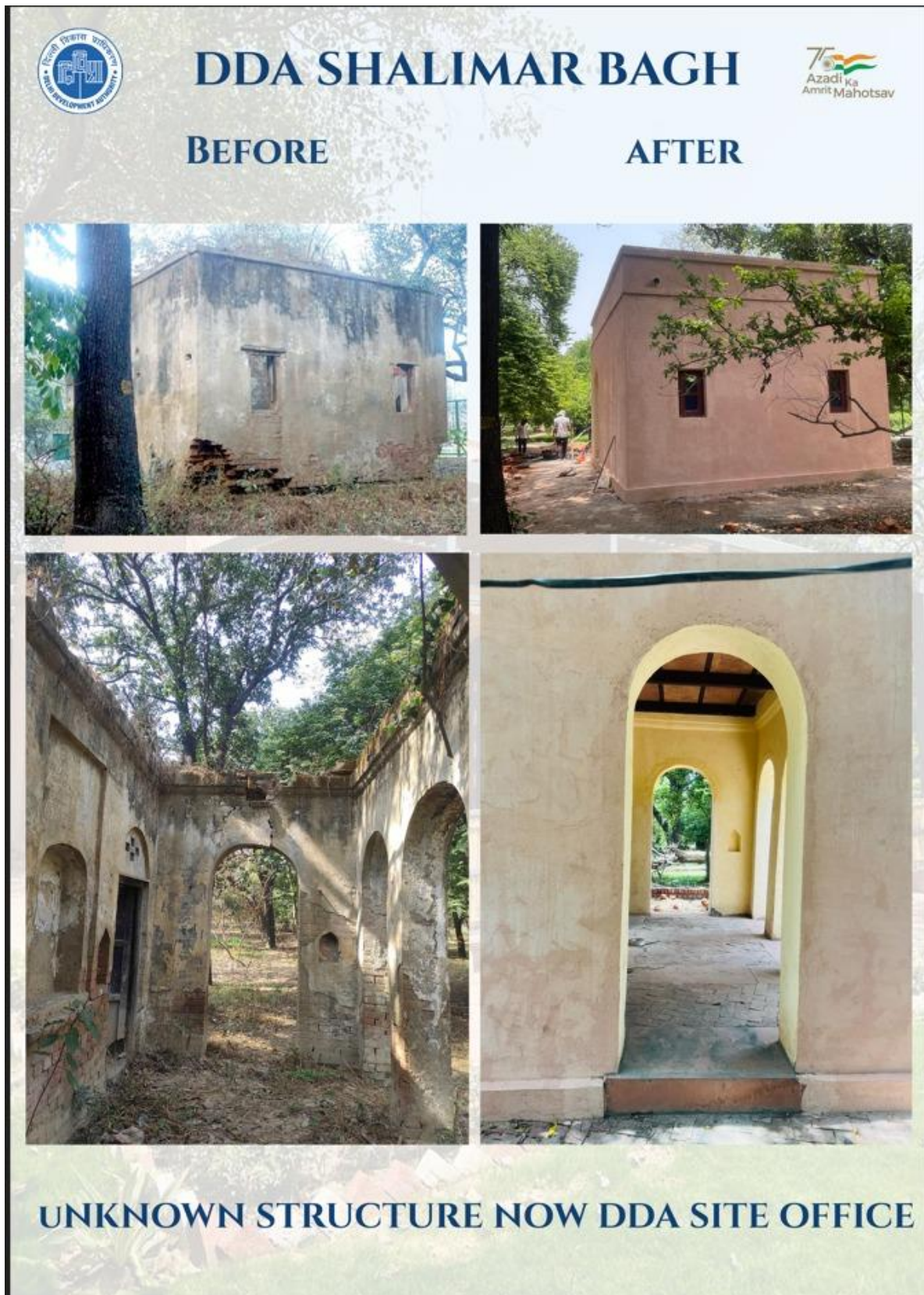


2. Conservation of Cottage 2

After restoration, the colonial structure, built in 1930s, to be used as a cafeteria.



3. Conservation of Cottage 4



4. Conservation of Baradari



Conservation works undertaken in the past by DDA:

- Restoration of Bengali Club, Kashmere Gate -2015
- Conservation & Landscape of Lado Sarai Tomb. -2004
- Conservation of Anglo Arabic Sr. Secondary School, Ajmeri Gate.-2010
- Preparation and implementation of Conservation Management Plan of Mehrauli Archaeological Park.
- Preparation of Conservation Management Plan of Sultangarhi Archaeological Park.