

## **Projects undertaken directly by DDA:**

### **Preparation and implementation of Conservation Management Plan of Mehrauli Archaeological Park.**

#### **PREVIOUS CONDITION**

Heritage structures required immediate repair and conservation, had overgrown vegetation and dead trees in and around them. The walls of heritage structures were covered with Algae and there was no proper access to these structures. The greens of the park had overgrown vegetation and dead/fallen trees and all the view points of the Qutub Minar from the site were blocked. The pathways were broken at different points and had level differences at various points making the park inaccessible in certain areas. The waterbody near Metcalfe Boathouse was neglected for many decades and was filled with silt and garbage. The monuments of the park are under various ownerships including ASI, Deptt. Of Archaeology- GNCTD and DDA. The monuments were surrounded with broken rocks, bricks, garbage and had improper pathways connecting them. There was no visual continuity of monuments and its enormous historic settings.

#### **REPAIR AND CONSERVATION WORKS**

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 and plinth area protection. This included reconstruction of broken arch in Metcalf Guesthouse as per original shape & material and repair of arches under the Horse Carriageway near Metcalf Boathouse.

Lime plaster and Lime Punning (wherever required) as per original specification retaining the authenticity of the structure was carried out for repair and conservation works.

Since, the Unknown Circular Structure does not have a roof and is exposed to harsh weather conditions of Delhi throughout the year, an all-weather protection tensile roof is proposed over the circular structure to protect it from the elements of weather. Enough care has been taken not to disturb the structural integrity of the structure and the proposed tensile roof is not touching the heritage structure at any point. The entire tensile structure is dismantlable and hence reversible in nature.

In many Archaeological sites of excavations and ruins, weather protection through various materials is a common practice throughout the world.

The Adaptive Reuse of Metcalfe Guesthouse envisions to re-use the structure as an interpretation center. A roof has been proposed to cover three side corridors of the structure in the style similar to other Metcalfe period structure as per reference available in archival painting/photograph. The structure has open arches and security for the interpretation center is also an issue. Also, as per old photograph available for Dilkusha, a wooden door with glass panels can be clearly seen at the entrance of Quli Khan Tomb. Hence, doors of similar style as visible in the photograph are also being placed around the structure for the security of interpretation center.

All the repair and conservation works were carried out under the technical supervision of Deptt. of Archaeology, GNCTD.

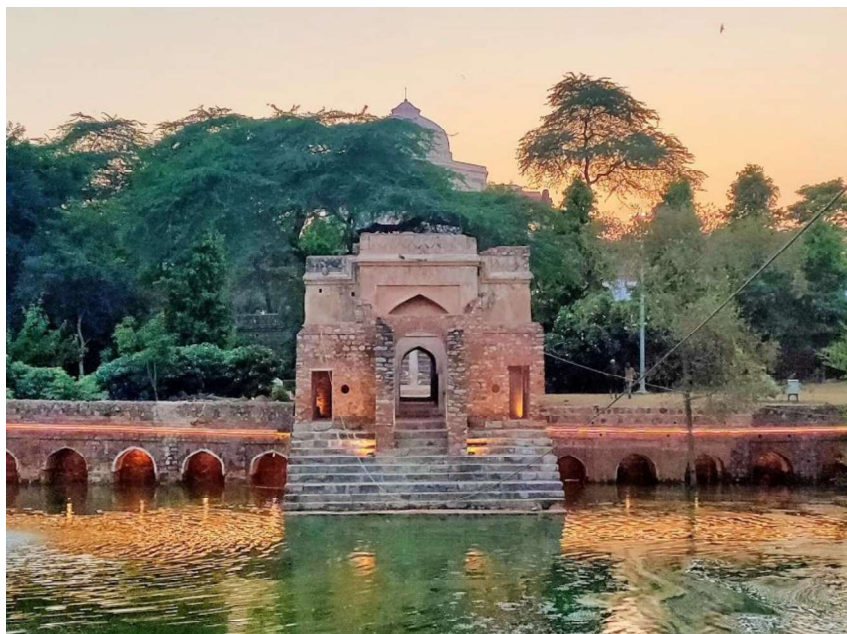
Earlier, the water body on the eastern side of Quli Khan Tomb and flanked by the Boathouse was full of silt, debris and was dry. Even though historically this water body was used by Thomas Metcalf (the Resident Commissioner of Delhi in 1840) as boating and recreation area flanked by a Boathouse, a Horse 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.

There is a remarkable improvement in the quality of space which is now attracting many visitors.

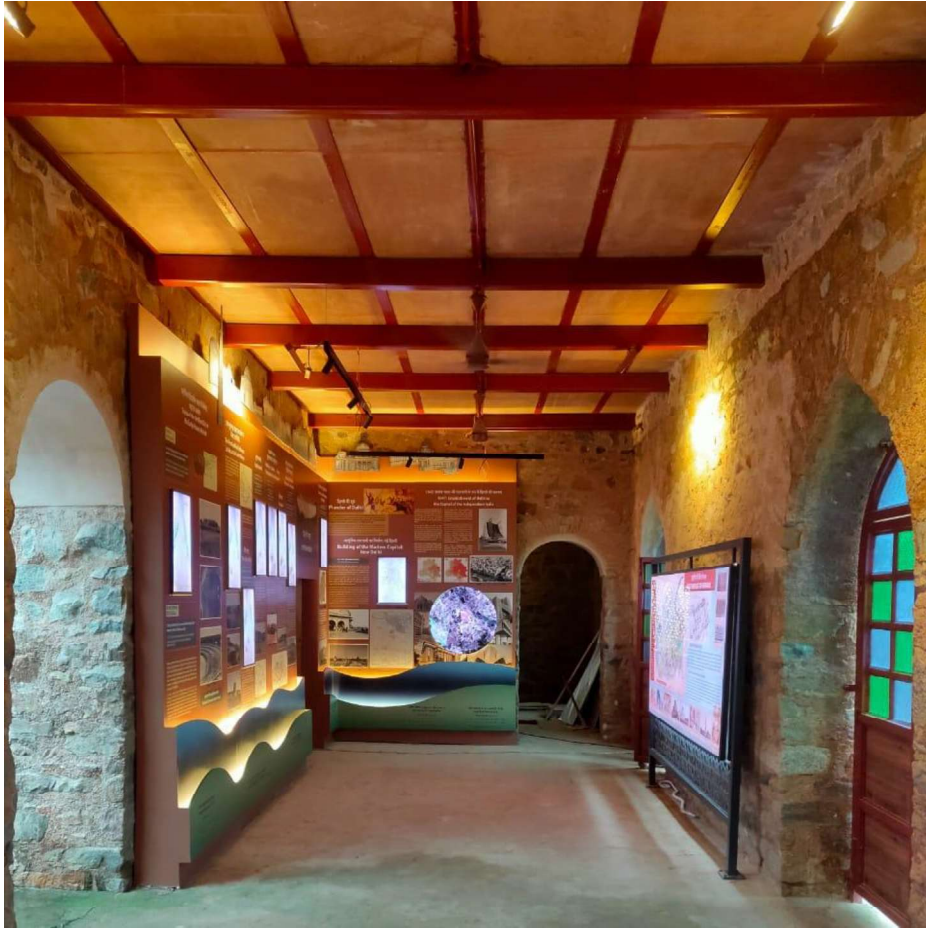
In the Mehrauli Archaeological Park Conservation of following monuments has been completed:

- Metcalfe Boat House



- Metcalfe Guest House(Adaptive re-use as Interpretation Center).





- Unknown Circular Monument (Adaptive re-use as Cafeteria).



- Rejuvenation of water body.



- Unknown Structure and wall near Chaumukha darwaza



