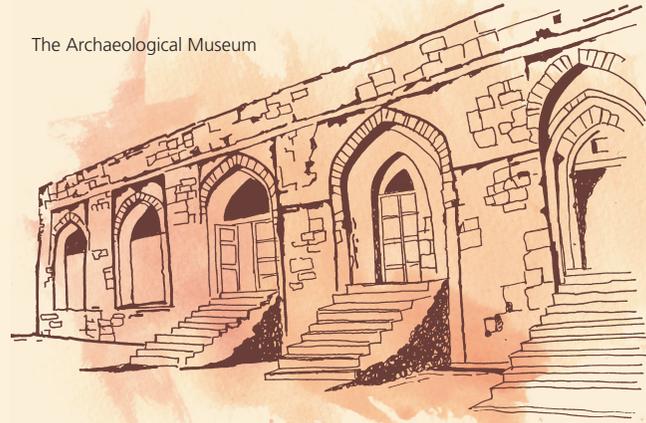


8. THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

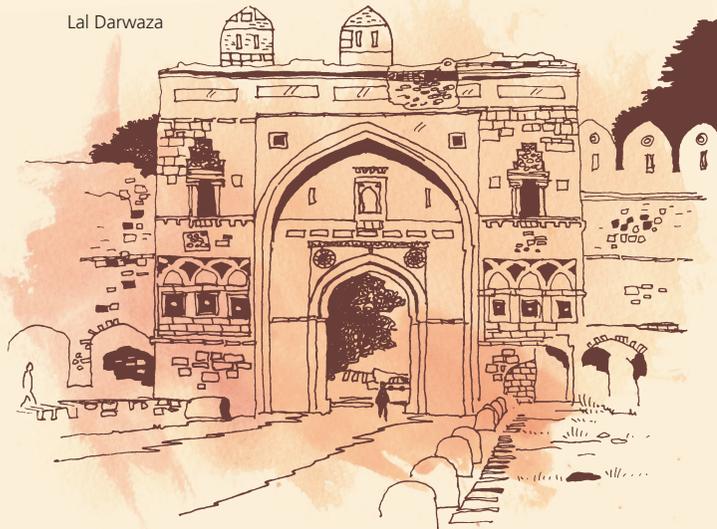
The interesting Archaeological Museum next to Bada Darwaza is devoted to the archaeological finds at Purana Qila; and also the history of Delhi.

The exhibits at the museum trace in chronological order the history of Delhi. Another interesting part of the museum is its collection of photographs of work at the Purana Qila archaeological site. The Museum is housed in part of Purana Qila itself. The hall is part of the original fort and there is fine incised plaster, in the form of medallions, on the vaulted roof of the museum.

The Archaeological Museum



Lal Darwaza



10. LAL DARWAZA

On Mathura Road opposite Purana Qila is another structure that is often associated with Purana Qila: Lal Darwaza ('red gate'). It was built during the reign of Sher Shah Sur (the early 16th century) and is one of the few remains of Sher Garh outside of Purana Qila.

It is approached via a short road flanked by thick walls made of rubble and marked by a series of recessed arches forming kiosk-like structures, which may have been shops. At the end of this short stretch is the gate, which stands between two curving bastions.

The gate is dressed with red sandstone, with some buff sandstone and grey Delhi quartzite, and there are signs of decorative elements such as jharokhas and medallions which have since fallen off. Very minor traces of ornamentation do remain, for instance on the jharokha to the left is some fine blue glazed tile, along with carving.

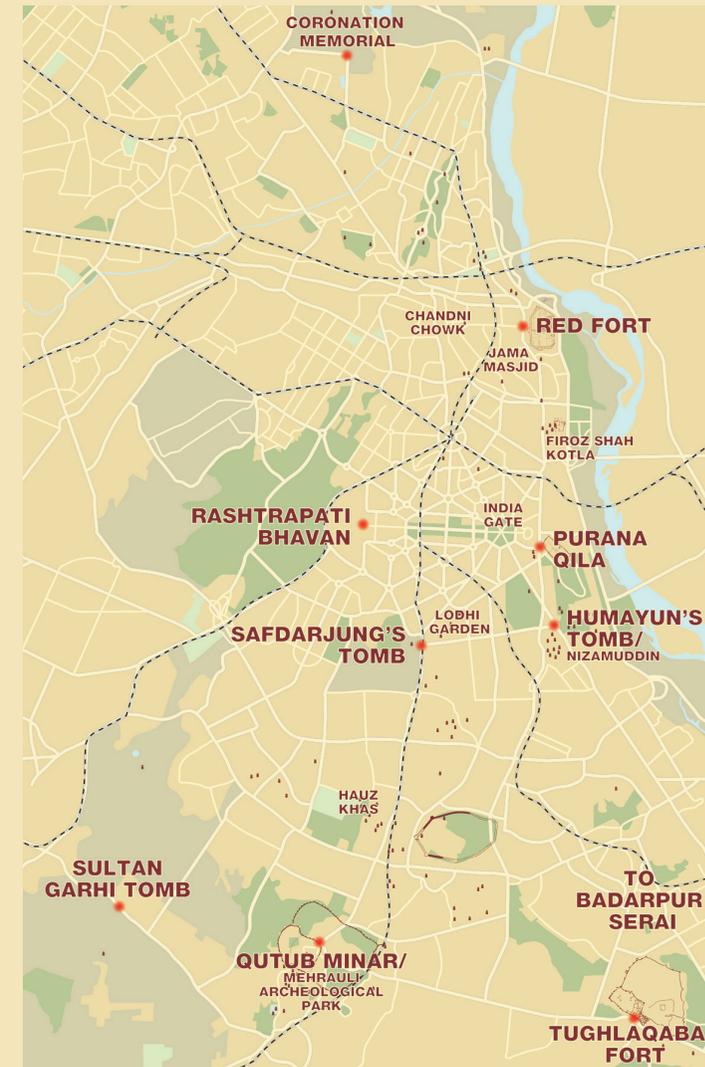
9. KHAIRUL MANAZIL

Also opposite Purana Qila, stands the building known as Khairul Manazil ('most auspicious of houses'). This was built between 1561 and 1562, on the orders of Maham Angah, one of the wet nurses of the Mughal emperor Akbar, to house a mosque and a madrasa, a school of learning. The mosque spreads across five bays, with the central bay being topped by a squat dome. The central courtyard – the sehan – has a shallow tank, used for wazu (ablutions), and is enclosed by double-storeyed colonnades on the northern, southern and eastern sides. These colonnades housed the madrasa, which no longer exists, although the mosque itself is used for namaz on Fridays.

The impressive gate of Khairul Manazil is an arched one made of red sandstone and quartzite, with sparse carving. The inside of the gate has some fine incised plaster. The five arched bays of the mosque too have similar incised plaster work, but the main ornamentation in the mosque is in the form of glazed tilework in yellow, green, white and blues above the mihrab.



Khairul Manazil



Nearest metro station: Pragati maidan, Indraprastha

Nearest bus stop: National zoological park

Bus route nos.: 044, 101, 323, 356, 374, 402, 403, 404, 405, 409, 419 ltd, 423, 425, 429, 436, 438, 447, 453, 457, 458, 461, 966

Other places of interest: Zoo, Matka Pir, Dargah, National Handicrafts and Handlooms Museum, National Science Centre, Bhairon Mandir, Pragati Maidan



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a walk around PURANA QILA





Bada Darwaza

1. BADA DARWAZA

The Bada Darwaza – the ‘large gate’ – is currently the only entrance to the fort. Prior to the 1900s, a drawbridge here spanned the moat that encircled Purana Qila.

This gate is a triple-storied structure tucked between two massive, curving bastions made of rubble masonry, and primarily dressed with deep red sandstone, relieved by inlays of white and greyish black marble. The two six-pointed stars on either side of the main arch are a common cosmic symbol used by Mughal-period builders. The second storey of the gate is pierced by three openings, of which the two outer ones are fronted by jharokhas (oriel windows) with some lovely tilework in blues and green.

2. TALAAQI DARWAZA

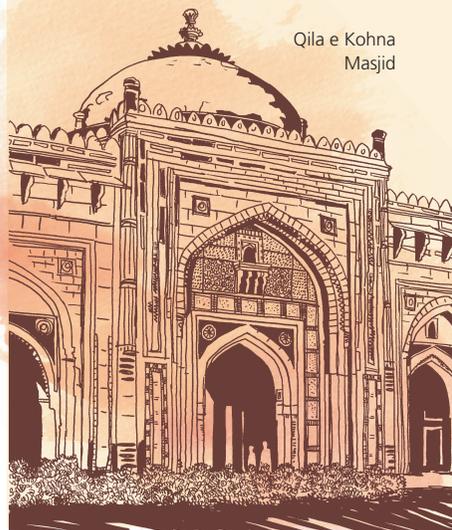
This is the northern gate of the fort, and its name means ‘forbidden gate’. There are differing stories regarding the reason behind the name. On the inside the Talaqi Darwaza is reached by going down a short flight of semi-circular steps (similar to a Roman amphitheatre). On the inside of the gate, the ceiling still has traces of some fine ornamentation: medallions of incised plaster, mirrorwork, and strips of bright blue glazed tile. The gate is flanked by bastions and decorated with jharokhas on the second storey. The opening in the head of the main archway would be used in battle to drop missiles or boiling water on attacking armies.



Talaqi Darwaza

3. QILA E KOHNA MASJID

This mosque was built by Sher Shah in 1542. The back view reveals jharokhas and bands of carved marble. In front of the mosque is a tank for wazu (ablutions) and a well that was dug in the early 1900s. The façade of the mosque is extensively decorated with carving and inlay, and the juxtaposition of red sandstone, grey Delhi quartzite and marble. Apart from geometric shapes, the ornamentation consists of bands of Quranic verses. The ceiling of the covered area is decorated with glazed tiles in blue, green, yellow and white, and the mihrab – which indicates west, the direction of prayer – is intricately carved and inlaid with red sandstone and black and white marble.



Qila e Kohna Masjid

Known simply as Purana Qila or Qila-e-Kohna (both meaning ‘old fort’), this fortress was built in the 1530’s. The site however does have a history that makes it truly old, and also historically and culturally of great significance. It is believed to be the site of one of the oldest settlements in Delhi: Indraprastha, the legendary capital of the Pandavas. Excavations have revealed definite settlements dating from the 4th-3rd centuries B.C. and some pottery fragments that might date from as far back as 1000 B.C. The visible built structures are from the Mughal emperor Humayun’s city of Dinpanah (‘asylum of the faith’), constructed between 1530 and 1538. Sher Shah, who ousted Humayun from the throne in 1540 made substantial additions to Dinpanah and also built his own city nearby, which he named Sher Garh.

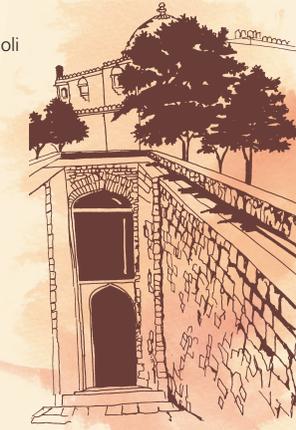
Later, with the shifting of the Mughal capital to Agra, and then the building of Shahjahanabad as the new capital, the Purana Qila was abandoned. It came to be occupied by a rural population and the village of ‘Inderpat’, recalling the ancient site of the Mahabharat. In the early 20th century the Archaeological Survey of India acquired and conserved the area. The rubble and dressed stone walls of the fort complete a circuit over a mile long, pierced by three impressive gates. The walls themselves are as high as 20m in places, and approximately 4m thick.



Purana Qila

Timings: Sunrise – Sunset, Open daily. Tickets: Indian Citizens – Rs. 5.00, Foreigners – Rs. 100.00, Museum – Rs. 2.00. Amenities: wheelchair access, parking, small canteen inside fort.

Baoli



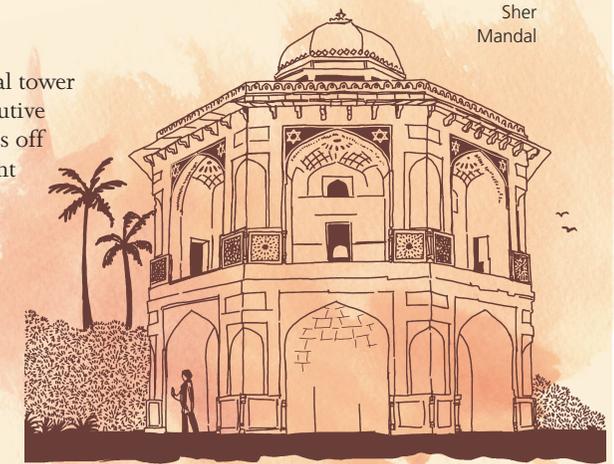
4. BAOLI

The baoli or stepwell is made mainly out of Delhi quartzite stone. Eighty nine steps separated by eight landings lead down to the water. Stepwells like this one were typically fed by rainwater, sometimes supplemented by water from underground springs. The water was covered over with a roof to reduce evaporation and to keep the baoli clean.

5. SHER MANDAL

Sher Mandal is a double-storied, squat octagonal tower made of red sandstone and topped with a diminutive dome. The upper storey is now kept locked and is off limits to visitors. On the outside, each of the eight sides has a recessed arch decorated sparingly with carving and inlays (mainly of five- and six-pointed stars) in white marble.

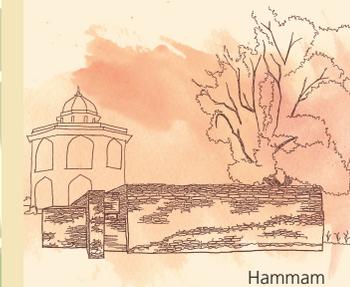
Sher Mandal was built by Sher Shah in 1541, possibly to function as a viewing tower for astronomical observations. When Humayun regained Purana Qila in 1555, he converted this building into his library, and a year later tripped and fell down its stairs to his death.



Sher Mandal

6. HAMMAM

The Hammam or bathhouse, was another important aspect of life in the citadel. It is a square, low building covered all over on the outside with thin Lakhori bricks. Earthenware pipes originally used to carry water through the Hammam can still be seen in places. The interior of the Hammam includes a chute in one of the walls. This structure had been built over and was unearthed only in 1913 when the British began clearing Purana Qila of modern buildings.



Hammam

7. SOUTH GATE (HUMAYUN DARWAZA)

This gate overlooks the National Zoological Park and is best seen from there. Ornamental chhatris top the gate, which is decorated with blue tilework and carving (including one of an elephant, on a marble tablet) and inlays of black and white marble.



South Gate (Humayun Darwaza)