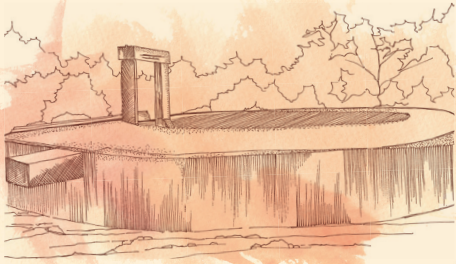


3. TUGHLAQ-ERA WELL

Located at a slight distance to the south of the main tomb is a Tughlaq-era well. It is approximately 7 m in diameter with walls that are around 2 m thick. It has a quartzite lintel and column support to pull up water. The well would have been used for wuzu (ritual

ablutions) by the populous settlement that came up here in the Tughlaq period. While a number of wells from the pre-Mughal era still survive in Delhi, this is perhaps the earliest surviving well from the Tughlaq period.



4. TUGHLAQ MOSQUE

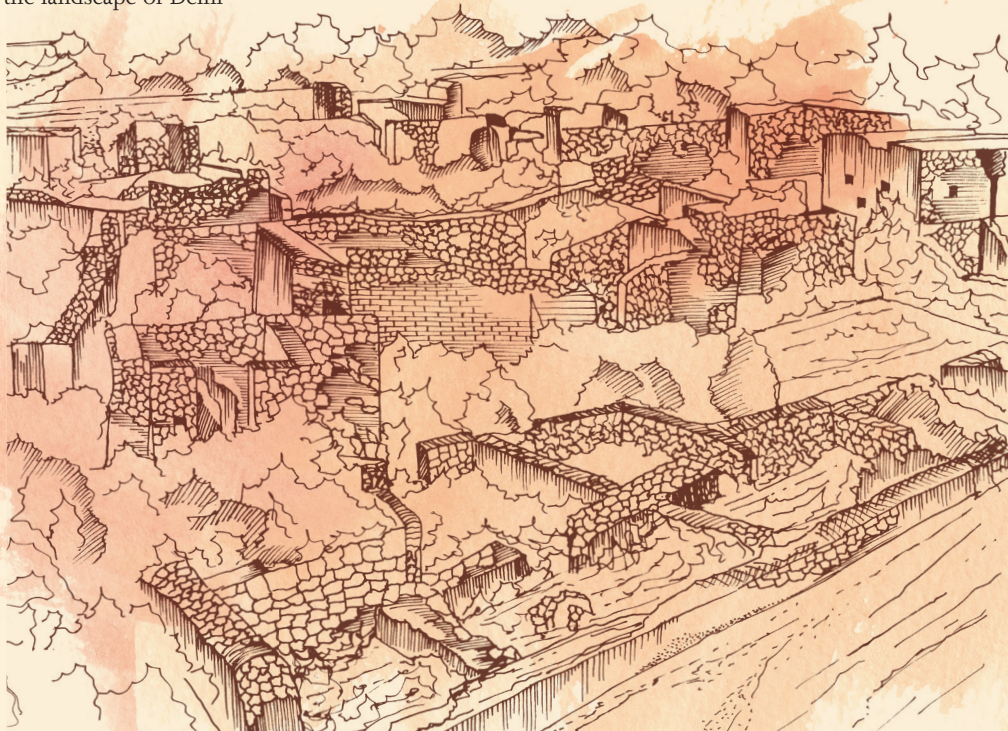
The ruined mosque located to the east of Sultan Ghari's Tomb also dates to the Tughlaq period, as is evident from its heavy stone columns, capitals, stone brackets, rubble masonry, and simple stone arches. It resembles structures built by Firoz Shah Tughlaq and would have been five bays wide and two bays deep. Firoz Shah Tughlaq is remembered till today for the restoration work he undertook of the buildings built by earlier kings and for dotting the landscape of Delhi with several madrasas, mosques, and gardens.

5. WESTERN RESIDENTIAL COMPLEX

This is a ruined residential complex, comprising interconnected residential units. Rooms are arranged around courtyards and some parts are built over two storeys. These were evidently occupied by one or more extended families. The walls of the rooms have niches for storage and an interesting structure here is a short pillar with a Sanskrit inscription. This tells of the digging of a tank (or well) in the year 1361, on the occasion of a wedding.

6. COURTYARDED RESIDENTIAL UNIT

This large ruined dwelling unit is located to the south-east of the Sultan Ghari Tomb, near the Tughlaq mosque. It is a fairly grand house with courtyards and arcaded verandahs and may have belonged to the main functionary of the mosque.



7. RESIDENTIAL ENCLOSURE

A large complex of individual units is located 200 m east of the Sultan Ghari Tomb, stretching for an area of almost 8,100 sq m. The several interconnected small residential units are indicative that the ensemble grew with the size of the family. A study of the built form, especially the arches and niches, ornamentation in plaster, and the plumbing services like drainage suggests a much later period of construction than the Tughlaq.



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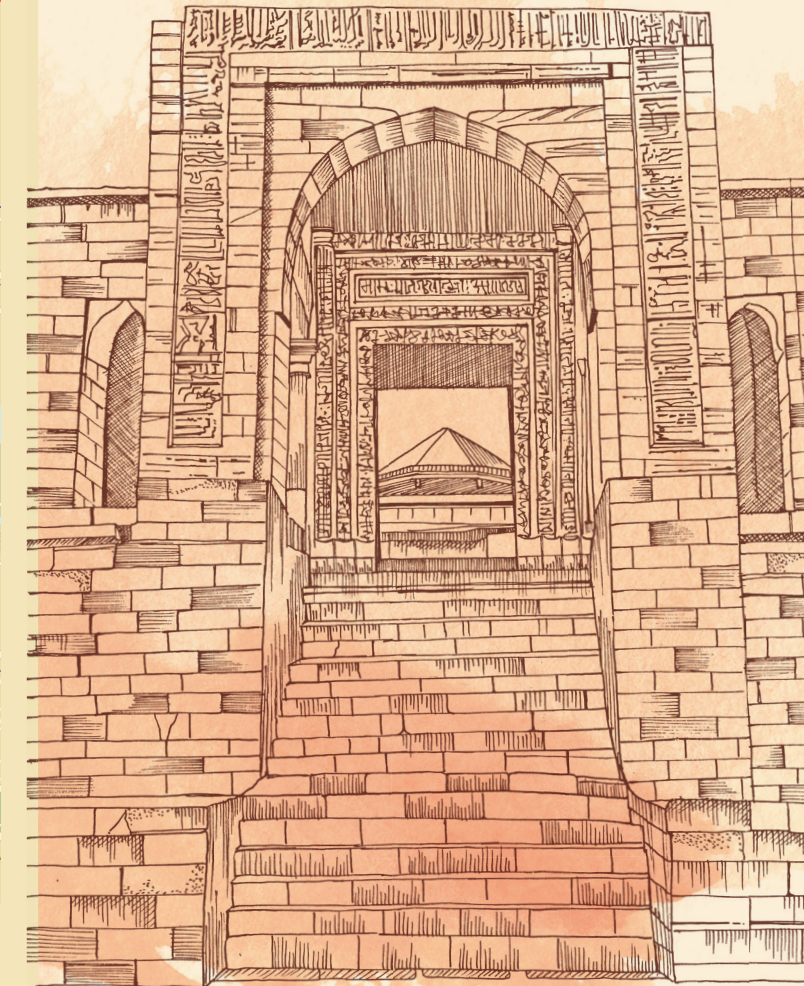
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INTACH

Delhi Chapter

a walk around SULTAN GHARI COMPLEX



1. Tomb of Sultan Ghari

Nasiruddin Mahmud was the favourite son of Iltutmish and was appointed Governor of the eastern territories of the Sultanate, at Lakhnauti in Bengal. When he died there, his body was brought back to Delhi, and was buried in this grand mausoleum a few miles away from the capital city which was at the time in Mehrauli.

The tomb, raised on a 11 ft-high rubble plinth, sits at the centre of a 77 ft square walled enclosure. The walls to the east and west are colonnaded, while those to the north and south are pierced by arched openings. The dry masonry walls use dressed

quartzite stone of a greyish golden colour. Noteworthy is the extensive use of white marble, both in the western wing and the tomb chamber. This was perhaps the earliest use of white marble in a building. Prominent bastions with shallow domes mark the corners, giving the tomb a distinctive fortress-like appearance. A projecting

doorway embellished with white marble leads to the interior from the eastern side. The technology employed in the construction is the trabeate style (horizontal beams or lintels rather than arches), something the indigenous builders were familiar with. And arches when used, like that of the enclosure wall, as well as the arch that surmounts the entrance doorway, show an interesting feature. They are technically not true arches at all, but corbelled arches, built without a keystone.

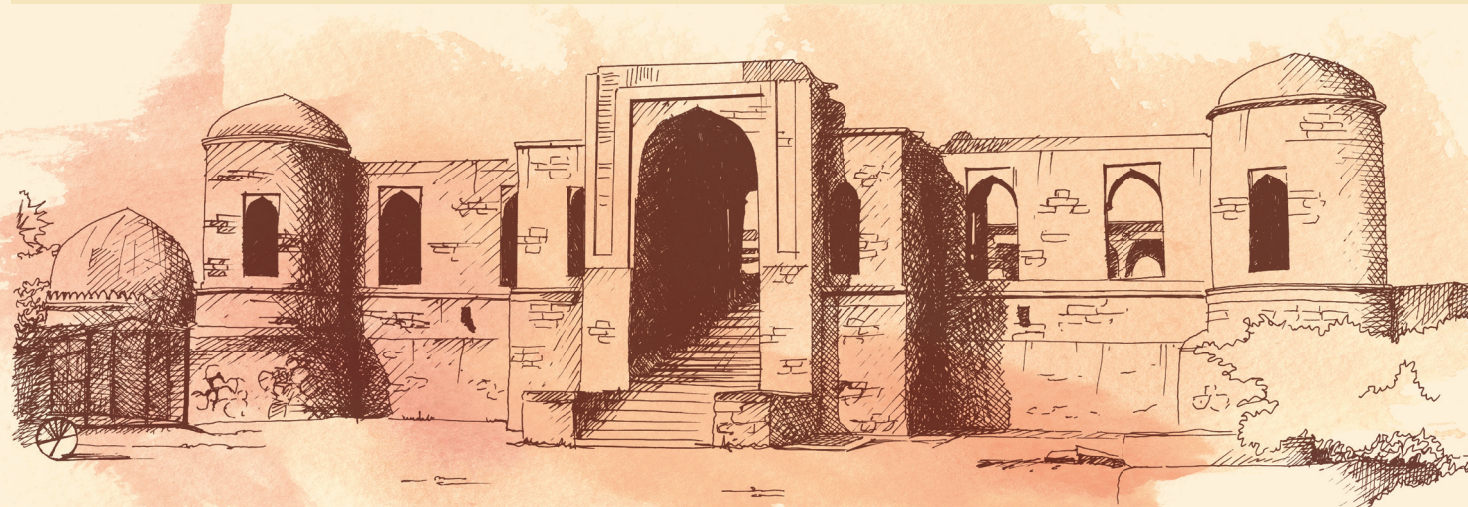
The inscription in naskh characters over the doorway gives details of the person buried inside, the date of the construction of the building, and the name of Iltutmish, who commissioned the building. The corner bastions of the enclosure, when viewed from the inside are seen to be surmounted not by true domes but corbelled conical structures. In the middle of the western wall is a prayer niche or *mihrab* in marble, fronted by a covered porch with a pyramidal roof. Quranic verses decorate the *mihrab*. Emperor Firoz Shah Tughlaq, who was known for having repaired many historic buildings during his reign, also repaired parts of this tomb in the fourteenth century. This *mihrab* area was probably included in the re-built portion.

The tomb chamber is in the centre of the enclosure, the upper part raised from the ground in the shape of an octagon. It appears that materials from older structures were used in its construction, as evident from some of the stones in its walls. Steps on the southern

Set among the rocky spurs of the southern ridge, the tomb of Sultan Ghari and the ruins around it are of great historic significance being the the oldest extant monumental tomb in Delhi, built in 1231–32. The tomb is that of Nasiruddin Mahmud, who died around AD 1229, the eldest son of Emperor Iltutmish (r. 1210–36) who was the second Slave Sultan of Delhi. The tomb represents the architectural style of the early Sultanate period, a time when Indian builders were coming to terms with new techniques and styles that had come into India with the Turk conquest. It is also distinctive in its form, with a sunken tomb chamber in the nature of a ghar or crypt, which gives the tomb its name. The tomb, particularly the grave inside, is revered by the local community who make ritual offerings and visit it in large numbers, particularly on Thursdays. There are several other buildings, some in ruins, around the main site. These include the tombs of two other sons of Iltutmish, Ruknuddin Firoz Shah and Muizzuddin Bahram Shah. Close by, there is a well of the Tughlaq period, a Tughlaq era mosque, and several residential clusters.

The tomb of Sultan Ghari is enclosed within what is today designated as the Sultan Ghari Archaeological Park by the Delhi Development Authority, about 6 km west of the Qutb Minar Complex, on the Mehrauli-Palam Road.

Timings: Sunrise–Sunset. Entry: Free



side lead down to the crypt, which is pillared. It contains several graves, of which the one against the western wall is believed to be that of Nasiruddin Mahmud.

Translation of the inscription over the entrance:

“This blessed building was commanded to be erected by the great Sultan, the most exalted emperor, the lord of the necks of the people, the shadow of God in the world, the bestower of safety on the (believers, the heir of the kingdom of Sulaiman, the master of the seal in the kingdom of the world) the sultan of sultans, Shamsuddunya Waddin, who is specially favoured by the Lord of the worlds, Abul Muzaffar Iltmish the sultan, the helper of the chief of the faithful, may God perpetuate his rule, as a mausoleum for the king of kings of the east Abul Fath Mahmud, may God forgive him with his indulgence, and make him dwell in the centre of the paradise, in (the months of) the year 629.”

2. Tombs of Ruknuddin Firoz Shah and Muizzuddin Bahram Shah

Iltutmish had other sons beside Nasiruddin Mahmud and his daughter Razia. After the death of Nasiruddin, he nominated Razia as his heir. However, various nobles conspired to put another son, Ruknuddin Firoz Shah, on the throne after his death. He was deposed after six months and Razia ascended the throne. She too was deposed and killed in 1240, after which Muizzuddin ascended the throne although he too met the same fate soon.

The tombs of both these sons of Iltutmish are historically recorded as being located to the south of the tomb of Sultan Ghari and being similar to each other. The tomb of Ruknuddin Firoz Shah was built in AD 1236 and that of Muizzuddin Bahram Shah in AD 1241. Today only one of these buildings still stands, in the form of a octagonal domed *chhatri* or pillared kiosk (approximate diameter 20 ft), with a *chajja* (projected pavilion on extensively carved brackets) and dressed stone pillars. The round dome of the *chhatri* is quite unlike the domes found in the Sultan Ghari Tomb. This is because it was replaced during the reign of Firoz Shah Tughlaq on his orders.

