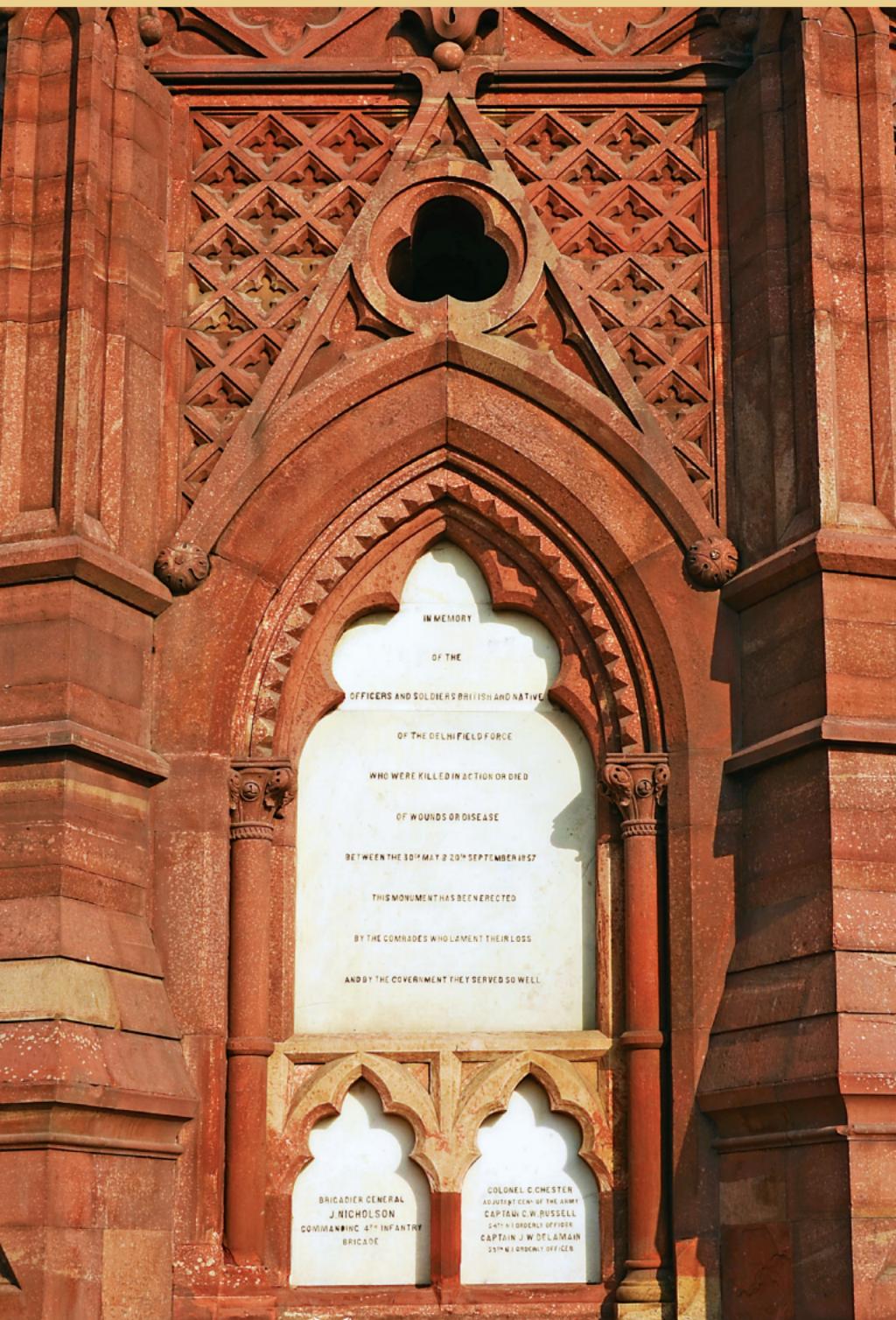


# CIVIL LINES

## and the Northern Ridge



दिल्ली विरासत  
DELHI HERITAGE



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The northern end of the Delhi Ridge and the Delhi University today dominate this relatively laid-back area that first came into prominence when the British defeated the Marathas led by the Scindias at the Battle of Patparganj in 1803 and took over the territory around Delhi.

A closer inspection reveals that some ancient buildings already existed here as it was on the outskirts of

Firoz Shah's city Firozabad. This was the location of Firoz Shah's hunting lodge in the forest, the Kushak-i-shikar, containing the Pir Ghaib, probably an observatory, a baoli (step-well), and a transplanted third century Ashoka pillar, all located in close proximity to each other. Also located nearby is the Chauburja Mosque, originally built as a mausoleum but later converted into a mosque. The Mughals undertook massive garden building projects here, of which the little that remains of the Qudsia Bagh, once a massive riverside enclosed garden, is a perfect example. Amidst this backdrop of ancient ruins, the British added several military buildings that were part of the cantonment they established here, including ammunition stores, guard houses, signal towers, etc. After the Revolt of 1857 a series of buildings commemorating the revolt were built. The Mutiny Memorial, a gothic

edifice, was built in the memory of those who had lost their lives in the revolt, while the Nicholson Cemetery houses many of their graves and cenotaphs. Many Indian and British aristocrats also built houses here and some, such as Hindu Rao's House and Sir Thomas Metcalfe's House were so large that they have been put to institutional use today.

Development was also brought to the Kashmiri Gate and Civil lines areas, to the south and east of the ridge respectively. These were the centres of administrative power during the early East India Company days and even after the Revolt of 1857. Both areas are home to a number of early colonial buildings built for administrative purposes; many of these such as the Old Secretariat continue to be in similar use till date. The Delhi University was established in the early twentieth century to the west of the ridge and contains some exceptionally beautiful and well-maintained educational buildings such as the St Stephen's College and its chapel. The original Vice Regal Lodge is today used as the university Vice Chancellor's Office.

The area, both charming and intriguing, with its many hidden surprises beckons the visitor.

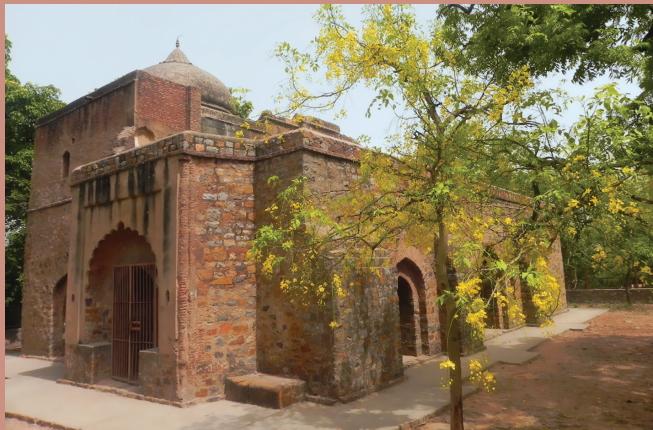
## THE EAST INDIA COMPANY IN DELHI

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Marathas controlled power in north India. Delhi itself was administered by the officers of Daulat Rao Scindia, an important Maratha chieftain. On 11 September, 1803, the armies of the British East India Company defeated the Maratha forces at the battle of Patparganj, and Delhi came under British administrative control, even though the Mughal emperor remained the titular head for quite some time.

These early years of British administration saw limited changes in the city of Shahjahanabad. The most significant of these took place north of the city, both within and beyond the city walls. Though important colonial buildings such as the Residency and St James' Church were built inside the Kashmiri Gate, some British officials were also building outside the city walls. Among the first was the Civil Surgeon Dr Ludlow, who built a house that was popularly called 'Ludlow Castle', no longer in existence, though the area continues to be called so. Others, such as Edward Colebrooke and Thomas Metcalfe followed soon after. The northern ridge soon became a British enclave, as a cantonment came up here too.

Delhi was a major centre of the Revolt of 1857, and much of the action took place in the area of the northern ridge. Many Europeans living in the city fled to the cantonment on the ridge, and the Flagstaff tower in particular, was for a short while, a refuge for a small group that later escaped. Indian forces soon captured the ridge but were later dislodged by British reinforcements, which then took position on the high ground and used it as a base to assault the city. Colebrooke's house (by then re-named

Chauburja Mosque



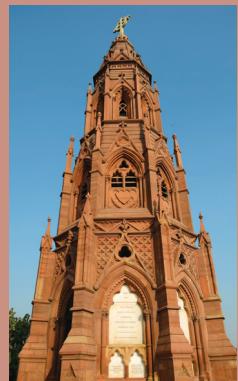
St James' Church

Hindu Rao's House), and the Chauburja Mosque were important sites where British guns were mounted.

The shelling of those crucial months during the revolt did considerable damage to the buildings in this area, particularly to the Chauburja Mosque, Qudsia Bagh, Metcalfe's House, and Hindu Rao's House. Metcalfe's House was also looted by neighbouring villagers.

The British recaptured the city in mid-September 1857, and in the following months and years the change in this area reflected the new attitude of the rulers. This area became symbolic of the British victory over Delhi, which was formally commemorated by the building of the Mutiny Memorial. There was also a strong element of sanctity attached to the Flagstaff tower and the Nicholson Cemetery, which became, in a sense, places of pilgrimage for Britons. The area also saw the development of a residential complex, the Civil Lines. This was a direct result of the revolt, because the British were now reluctant to live within the city walls.

More infrastructure came up here in the early twentieth century, when the capital was shifted from Calcutta to Delhi. This necessitated administrative buildings (the Secretariat, now the Vidhan Sabha), housing for high officials (the Vice Regal Lodge, today the office of the Vice Chancellor of Delhi University), and more bungalows to house an increased staff.



Mutiny Memorial

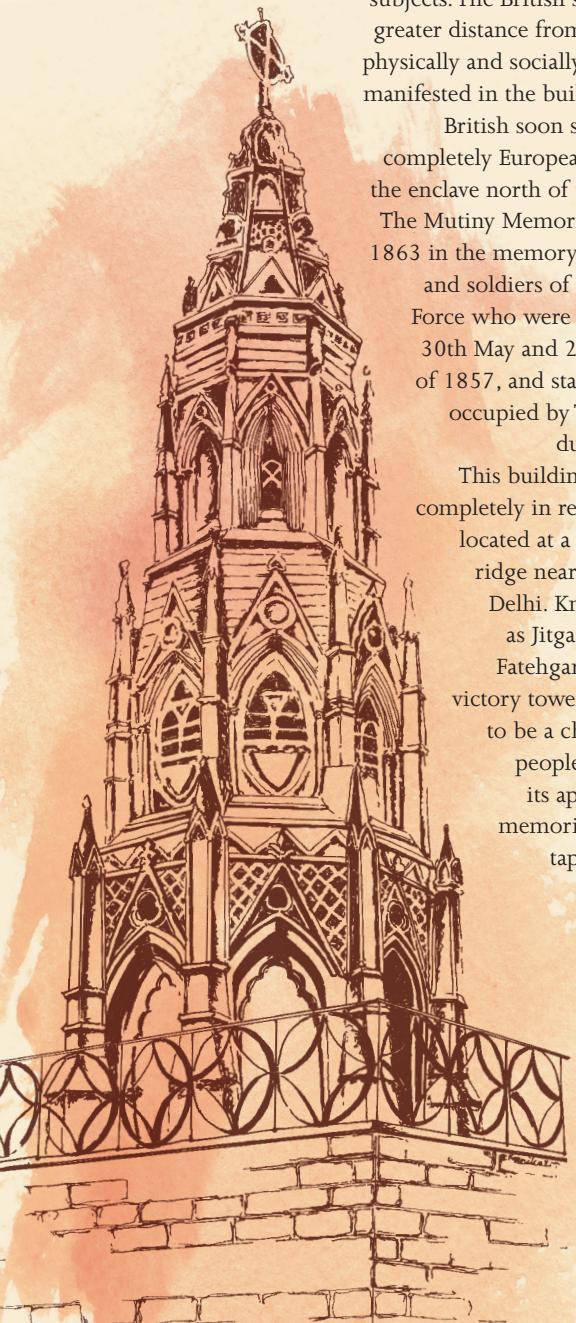
## 1. MUTINY MEMORIAL

The Revolt of 1857 against the British, more popularly known as the First War of Independence, had a profound effect on the relationship between the British government and their Indian subjects.

The British started keeping greater distance from Indians, both physically and socially. This idea also manifested in the buildings, and the

British soon started erecting completely European structures in the enclave north of the walled city. The Mutiny Memorial was built in 1863 in the memory of the officers and soldiers of the Delhi Field Force who were killed between 30th May and 20th September of 1857, and stands on the site occupied by Taylor's Battery during the siege.

This building, built almost completely in red sandstone, is located at a spot inside the ridge near Pulbangash in Delhi. Known variously as Jitgarh, Ajitgarh, or Fatehgarh, all meaning victory tower, it is assumed to be a church by many people locally due to its appearance—the memorial consists of a tapering tower of high Victorian Gothic design.



The tower is entered through an arched opening on the west and a flight of winding staircase leads up to the top. It is raised on a stone plinth paved with red sandstone, raising the tower to a height of 5 m above the ground. The tower itself is about 29.5 m high and is crowned by a red sandstone spire surmounted by a marble crucifix. The names of the soldiers who lost their lives here are inscribed on marble plaques on all sides of the façade. In the year 1972, on the 25th anniversary of Indian independence, a modest plaque was installed to enshrine the heroism of the immortal martyrs of Indian freedom.

The area around this memorial is serene and calm and attracts a number of morning joggers and those who wish to meditate. The maintenance of the monument is undertaken by the Delhi government's Department of Archaeology and a major restoration project has been undertaken for its conservation recently.

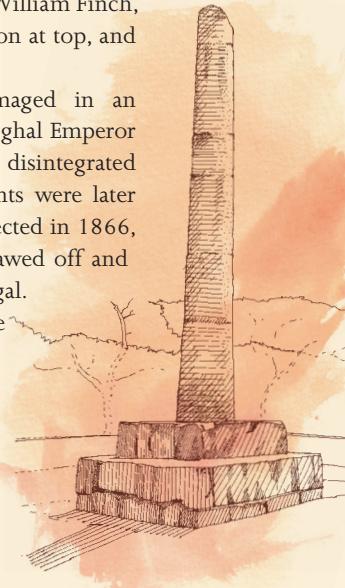
Timings: Sunrise–Sunset

Entry: Free

## 2. ASHOKA PILLAR

Firoz Shah is considered to be one of the early conservationists, with a keen interest in ancient buildings and objects. In addition to the Ashoka pillar that he moved from Topra in Haryana and had installed in his citadel in Firozabad, he moved a second pillar from nearby Meerut which was installed at what was soon to become his hunting lodge on the ridge, the Kushak-i-shikar. In the early seventeenth century, the pillar was described by an English traveller, William Finch, as one with a 'globe and half-moon at top, and divers inscription upon it'.

The pillar was severely damaged in an explosion during the reign of Mughal Emperor Farrukhsiyar (AD 1713–19) and disintegrated into five pieces. The five fragments were later re-joined and the pillar was re-erected in 1866, but its inscribed portions were sawed off and sent to the Asiatic Society of Bengal. Later, the inscribed pieces were returned and joined together and this restored pillar was installed at its current location in 1867. The current height of the pillar is 10 m. Inscribed in Brahmi script and written in the Prakrit language, the Ashokan



inscription contains messages and instructions for promoting 'Dharma' for the welfare and happiness of the people. At the base of the pillar, a plaque records its history.

Today, the pillar looks forlorn, standing alone in its fenced enclosure near a roundabout on the main Ridge Road in front of the gate of the Hindu Rao Hospital complex.

Timings: Sunrise–Sunset

Entry: Free

### 3. HINDU RAO HOSPITAL

This building, near the main Ridge Road, gets its name from the house of Hindu Rao, and is currently used as a hospital. The building complex dominates the ridge today.

The original building is said to have been constructed by Edward Colebrooke, the British Resident in Delhi between 1827 and 1829. It was later bought by William Fraser, the Commissioner of Delhi, who was murdered in 1835. The house was then acquired by Hindu Rao, a brother of Baiza Bai, the wife of the adopted son of Maharao Scindia of Gwalior who had been the true power behind the Mughal throne of Delhi in the 1770s and 1780s. Baiza Bai and Hindu Rao fled from Gwalior in 1833 when her adopted son seized power after a rebellion against her. Hindu Rao moved to Delhi and bought the house on the ridge where he lived until his death in 1855. The house was severely damaged by heavy shelling during the Revolt of 1857



and photographs of the house taken immediately after the revolt show its heavily damaged state. The building was subsequently used as a convalescent military hospital and continues to be used as a public hospital till today. Although it has been much altered, it was once clearly of Anglo-Indian construction with high ceilings and a deep verandah. The vaulted ceiling of the entrance porch has survived in its original form.

### 4. BAOLI

A little further down from the Pir Ghair, is a ruined baoli that must have been part of Firoz Shah's hunting lodge. Although completely dry most of the year, the baoli fills up during the monsoon. The access to the baoli is now blocked, but from above it appears to be a fairly deep structure, the exact extent of which is difficult to determine. The walls of the baoli are made of random rubble masonry, mostly covered with vegetation now. At the very bottom of the well, there are known to be some obvious Tughlaq features such as a wall and double pillars which must have been part of the chambers surrounding the well. Above this level, there is evidence of a tunnel, approximately 193 m long that leads from the north end. The purpose of this tunnel, which was 2.15 m high with ventilation shafts and doorways, is unknown.

Timings: Sunrise–Sunset

Entry: No access to the interior





## 5. PIR GHAI

A short walk from the Ashoka Pillar stands the only substantial remains of Firoz Shah's hunting lodge or the Kushak-i-shikar, which was part of the extensive woodlands known as Jahannuma or 'World-Displayed'. The architectural features of the building, as well as the fact that the building is located at the highest point on the ridge, hint that it was

probably an observatory, but historians sometimes describe it variously as a hunting lodge or even a palace. Historical sources tell us that the building was built by Firoz Shah in order to assuage the grief of the death of his favourite son, Fateh Khan in 1373, on the insistence of his court officials who urged him to distract himself by indulging in sport. It is possible that the construction started earlier but was added to afterwards. There are conflicting accounts as to why the building got its present name—some say that it might be because of a saint (pir) who lived here but later disappeared (ghayib). It may also be connected to the fact that there are a number of tunnels that originate here, connecting it to the plains—the vestiges of which are still visible.

Although little remains of the original building, what does is quite fascinating. On the exterior the corners of the walls have a very pronounced batter, giving the building the appearance of a mosque. On the ground floor there are several rooms and passages. Two narrow chambers give access from east and west to other rooms on the north and south. A dark and narrow flight of steps lead to the second storey. This level has a verandah on the east that opens into two rooms that have holes in their ceilings. On the south, which is now towards the back of the building, two steep and narrow sets of steps lead to both the first floor and the roof terrace.

It is thus assumed that this building could have been used as an astronomical observatory.

The building now falls within the premises of the Hindu Rao Hospital and is open to access for public but photography is restricted.

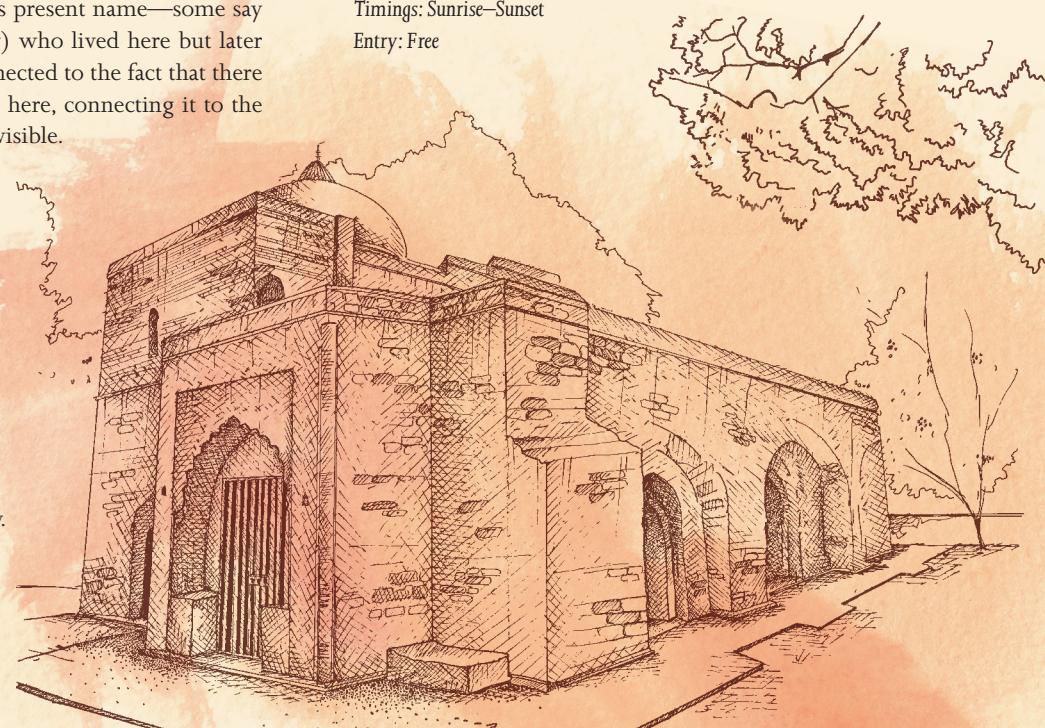
Entry: Free

## 6. CHAUBURJA MOSQUE

The Chauburja Mosque, located in a park on the main Ridge Road, is so called because of the four-domed corner turrets which once stood upon the raised platform. The two-storey building, made out of rubble masonry, has a staircase at the western end to access the upper storey. The building was originally built during Firoz Shah Tughlaq's reign as a mausoleum, but many additions and modifications seem to have been made through the years, especially in late Mughal times. This type of building—a multi-chambered tomb—is an unusual structure of this time but there were precedents of this type elsewhere. The eastern side of the structure has suffered much deterioration, but considerable restoration work has also been carried out. British forces are believed to have had taken shelter in this mosque during the siege of Delhi.

Timings: Sunrise-Sunset

Entry: Free



## EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES AND THE INTRODUCTION OF A WESTERN SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

In AD 1803, following the Battle of Patparganj, General Lake captured Delhi. The event had varied socio-economic, political, and cultural consequences. One of the most important was the introduction of a western system of education. Till then, Delhi had been home to indigenous schools such as madrasas, centres of higher education in subjects like astronomy, medicine, and rhetoric.

Delhi's oldest school too began as a madrasa, but became a landmark institution for western education. This was the Ghaziuddin Madrasa, outside Ajmeri Gate. Ghaziuddin Bahadur Firoz Jang, one of Aurangzeb's generals, established the madrasa sometime in the late seventeenth or the early eighteenth century.

The turning point in the madrasa's history was 1825, when it became the Delhi College. The Delhi College pioneered western education through the medium of Urdu rather than English. The college saw numerous ups and downs—it was shifted to the Dara Shikoh Library building (near Kashmiri Gate) in 1844, and was shut down after 1857. For a few years(1867–71) it was resurrected as the Anglo-Arabic College, but this too was closed down until 1924, when it was re-established as the Anglo-Arabic Intermediate College. It was affiliated to the Delhi University a year later, and in 1975, renamed Zakir Hussain College (today, south of Turkman Gate). Appropriately enough, the Ghaziuddin Madrasa still houses a school, the Anglo-Arabic School.

The most important contribution of the Delhi College was its role (from the 1820s to the 1850s) in the scientific, cultural, and literary efflorescence known as the 'Delhi Renaissance'. The college became a centre for discussions, debates, and Urdu mushairas (poet gatherings). It also translated western publications into Indian languages and printed publications on topics ranging from surgery to civil law.

While the Delhi College was the torchbearer for western education in Delhi, other colleges were soon to follow.

Ghaziuddin's Madrasa, later, the Anglo-Arabic School



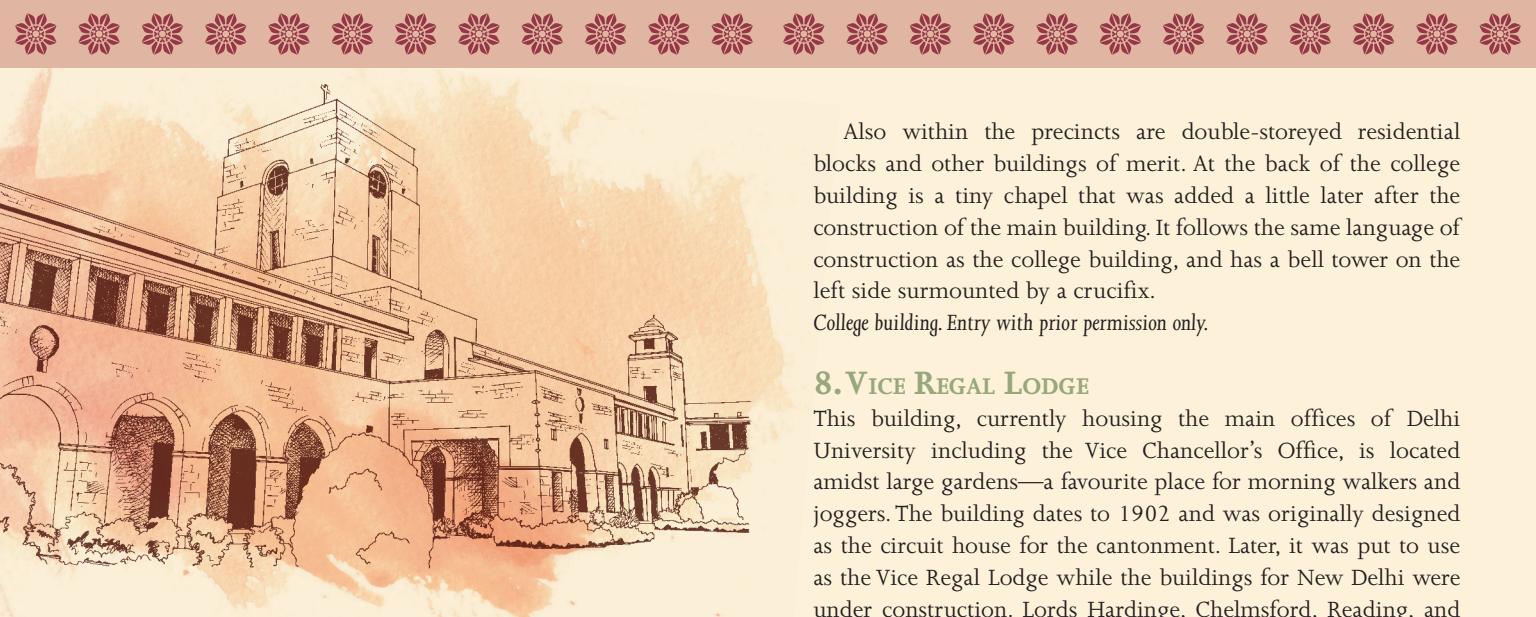
St Stephen's College, Delhi

Of these, the oldest, St Stephen's College, was started in a haveli in Katra Khushhal Rai, off Chandni Chowk. It was set up at the request of Dr French, the Bishop of Lahore. Revd. Samuel Scott Allnutt (also the college's first principal), founded it, and began classes—with three teachers and five students—on 1 February 1881. Four years later, in 1885, the college introduced a BA degree course. In 1890, St Stephen's moved to a building—now housing the Election Commission—near Kashmiri Gate, before shifting (in 1942) to its current location in Delhi University.

Hindu College, founded in 1899, too began in a haveli, in Shahjahanabad's Kinari Bazaar. It was established as a non-elitist college by some of Delhi's citizens, including Krishan Dassji Gurwale, and was affiliated to Punjab University. By 1902, infrastructure had begun to prove inadequate; a donation of some property near Kashmiri Gate, by Rai Bahadur Sultan Singh, came just in time. Hindu College moved there, until 1953, when it shifted to the Delhi University campus.

Delhi University itself came into existence in 1922, as a result of an act passed by the Central Legislative Assembly. The university began with three colleges (Hindu, St Stephen's, and Ramjas, the last-named founded in 1917). The university was eventually housed in the old Vice Regal Lodge (vacated once the new Vice Regal lodge, now Rashtrapati Bhavan, was built).

Another important institution in this context is the Indraprastha Girls' School, behind Jama Masjid. India's oldest girls' school was established in 1904 and housed (as it still is) in a haveli owned by a wealthy Kayastha Theosophist named Lala Balkrishnan Das. Another Kayastha Theosophist, Lala Jugil Kishore, took on the task of convincing Kayastha parents to send their daughters to school—an initiative, which, over a century later, is reflected in the fact that most students are still from Kayastha families. The Indraprastha College was also part of this institution.



## 7. ST STEPHEN'S COLLEGE AND CHAPEL

This building, one of Delhi University's most prominent and prestigious colleges, was designed by British architect Walter George, who had come to Delhi to work with Baker on New Delhi but stayed on post-Independence. The college building was designed by him in 1939 as the new premises for the college. St Stephen's college was established by the Cambridge brotherhood in the 1850s and was initially housed in a haveli in the walled city and then in another building in the Kashmiri Gate area.

The building is an architectural beauty which evolved from George's excellent understanding of load bearing brick construction and the severe climatic conditions of India. It has fine, well-balanced proportions with an effective use of material. The base of the building is built with dressed stone, with brickwork above this level. The complex is designed as two opposite-facing, C-shaped wings joined by a double-storeyed central building, with an arcaded verandah on the ground floor and a colonnaded verandah on the upper floor. There is a central projecting porch with an arched entry. A high bell tower rises from behind the porch. At the corners of the façade are canopies. The building blocks are interspersed with fine, well-maintained courtyards and gardens all around.

Also within the precincts are double-storeyed residential blocks and other buildings of merit. At the back of the college building is a tiny chapel that was added a little later after the construction of the main building. It follows the same language of construction as the college building, and has a bell tower on the left side surmounted by a crucifix.

College building. Entry with prior permission only.

## 8. VICE REGAL LODGE

This building, currently housing the main offices of Delhi University including the Vice Chancellor's Office, is located amidst large gardens—a favourite place for morning walkers and joggers. The building dates to 1902 and was originally designed as the circuit house for the cantonment. Later, it was put to use as the Vice Regal Lodge while the buildings for New Delhi were under construction. Lords Hardinge, Chelmsford, Reading, and Lord Irwin lived here—there is even a plaque in the registrar's office that marks the place where Lord Mountbatten proposed to Edwina Ashley, who later became his wife.

It is a long, low building, with deep verandahs on the façade that had earlier been blocked off, but have been revealed after some recent restoration work. There is a projecting entry porch supported on Doric columns, which leads to high-ceilinged halls and other rooms. The central portion also has a basement. Many alterations have been made to the garden surrounding the building and additional buildings have been built in the complex, considerably altering the original character of the complex. Its architectural features include the classical façade with semi-circular arches decorated with mouldings.





## 9. FLAGSTAFF TOWER

This circular building, can be accessed only by walking across the road from the University offices. It was built in 1828 as a signal tower for the then cantonment, and was placed at a high point on the ridge. Since the vegetation on the ridge in those days was sparse, the signal from the tower would have been visible from a considerable distance. The Flagstaff tower is historically significant as the spot where on a hot May afternoon during the siege of Delhi in 1857, the ladies and children of the cantonment gathered

in the hope that help would arrive. They subsequently escaped to Karnal. The building gets its name from the flagstaff on the top. Decorative features include mouldings, battlements, and arched niches. Access to the roof is through a winding central staircase.

Timings: Sunrise–Sunset

Entry: Free

## 10. OLD SECRETARIAT

The Secretariat building, designed by E. Montague Thomas, a British architect, was built in 1912 to house administrative offices while the buildings in New Delhi were being constructed. Apart from housing the Central Secretariat of British India, the Legislative Council also functioned from this building when the capital was shifted to Delhi. It is today the seat of the Delhi State Legislative Assembly and of the Delhi Administration. This huge, long, and white building is grand yet delicately proportioned. It has a central vaulted portion with a tower flanked on either side by three-storey blocks and domed pavilions at the end. A colonnaded verandah runs all along the building and all the rooms have high ceilings. Casual visitors are not allowed.





## 11. SIR THOMAS METCALFE'S HOUSE

This huge house, now only visible from the outer Ring Road, was built by Sir Thomas Metcalfe in 1835 in a western style suited to Indian climatic conditions. It once stood in a large estate with formal gardens, etc. with an area of approximately 1,000 acres. Old drawings of the mansion depict its classical façade with a deep verandah all around. They also show some large interior rooms with high ceilings and a wooden roof. The house saw much action during the Revolt of 1857 when it was severely damaged. Major reconstruction was carried out subsequently and the present building was reconstructed in 1913 and the original circular columns were replaced by Gothic arches.

Casual visitors are not allowed since the building is now under the Indian Army's Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO).

## 12. COLONIAL BUNGALOWS

Spread all over the Civil Lines, along Raj Nivas Marg, Shamnath Marg, and Rajpur Road are colonial bungalows dating back to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that were either built by the

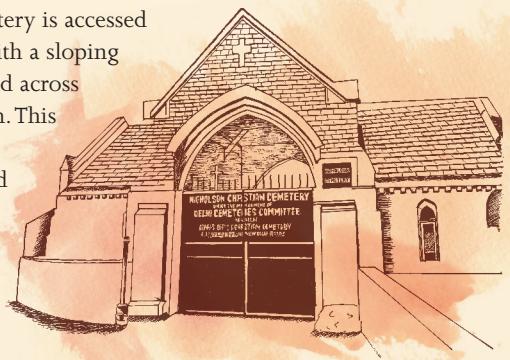


government to house civil servants or were built by private individuals. Most are set in their own large gardens, and are built in an Anglo-Indian style that is western in appearance but suited Indian climatic conditions. Some of these buildings that have survived the test of time include the house in which John Lawrence (Governor General 1864–69) stayed when he was Collector of Delhi and Panipat in the 1840s. Many of these buildings have been changed to institutional use while some others continue to be used as residences. Since this area is being redeveloped at a rapid pace, one feels a sense of urgency to visit them before they disappear completely!

Private property

## 13. NICHOLSON CEMETERY

The Nicholson Cemetery is accessed through a gateway with a sloping roof, on the main road across from the Qudsia Bagh. This is the earliest British cemetery in Delhi and was established in 1857 to house the graves of those who died during the Revolt of 1857. It is named after Brigadier



General John Nicholson, the British general who was instrumental in breaching the defenses of the rebels controlling Delhi, and in the process lost his life. He was fatally wounded during the storming of Kashmiri Gate, when the British recaptured Delhi in September 1857.

Although the cemetery is named after him, there are other important people buried here as well. The cemetery is spread over a large area with a large number of tombstones of various sizes, many of high architectural value and intricate design. Most cenotaphs are made out of fawn-coloured sandstone and granite. The enclosure wall is of the same period as the cemetery.

Timings: Sunrise–Sunset

Entry: Free

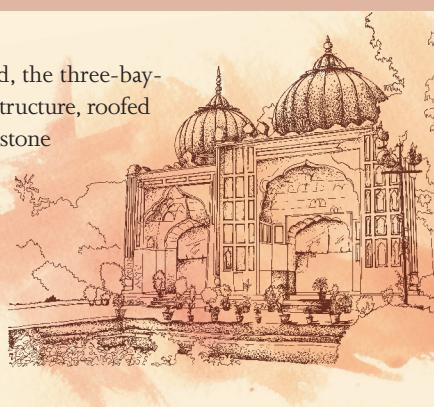
## 14. QUDSIA BAGH

The area immediately north of Shahjahanabad was a favourite place for Mughal royalty and nobility to build their pleasure gardens right through the reign of Shahjahan till the later Mughal period. The Qudsia Bagh was built around 1748 by Qudsia Begum who was first the mistress and later the wife of the Mughal emperor Muhammed Shah 'Rangeela'. Although she lost favour with her husband, she is known to have undertaken several architectural projects in Delhi, along with her close confidante, Javid Khan, when her son Ahmed Shah briefly came to power, and the garden was amongst these.

Eighteenth-century engravings of the *bagh* (garden) show that it was once much larger and closer to the river. It once had a quite magnificent, three-storeyed walled enclosure around it with corner turrets that contained rooms and balconies to view the river. Much of the garden was ruined during the siege of 1857 and large parts of it were also destroyed after Independence to construct the Inter-State Bus Terminal.

Today, the garden can be approached from its two opposite ends. The most prominent remains of the *bagh*—a mosque, a garden pavilion, and a gateway—are all built in an eclectic architectural style common to the late flourishing of the Nawabi architecture of Awadh.

Standing at the eastern end, the three-bay-wide mosque is a handsome structure, roofed with domes topped with sandstone finials. The mosque is entered through three deep *iwans* (rectangular halls walled on three sides with one side entirely open) that have a complex net vaulting. The exterior decoration is mostly done in stucco plaster.

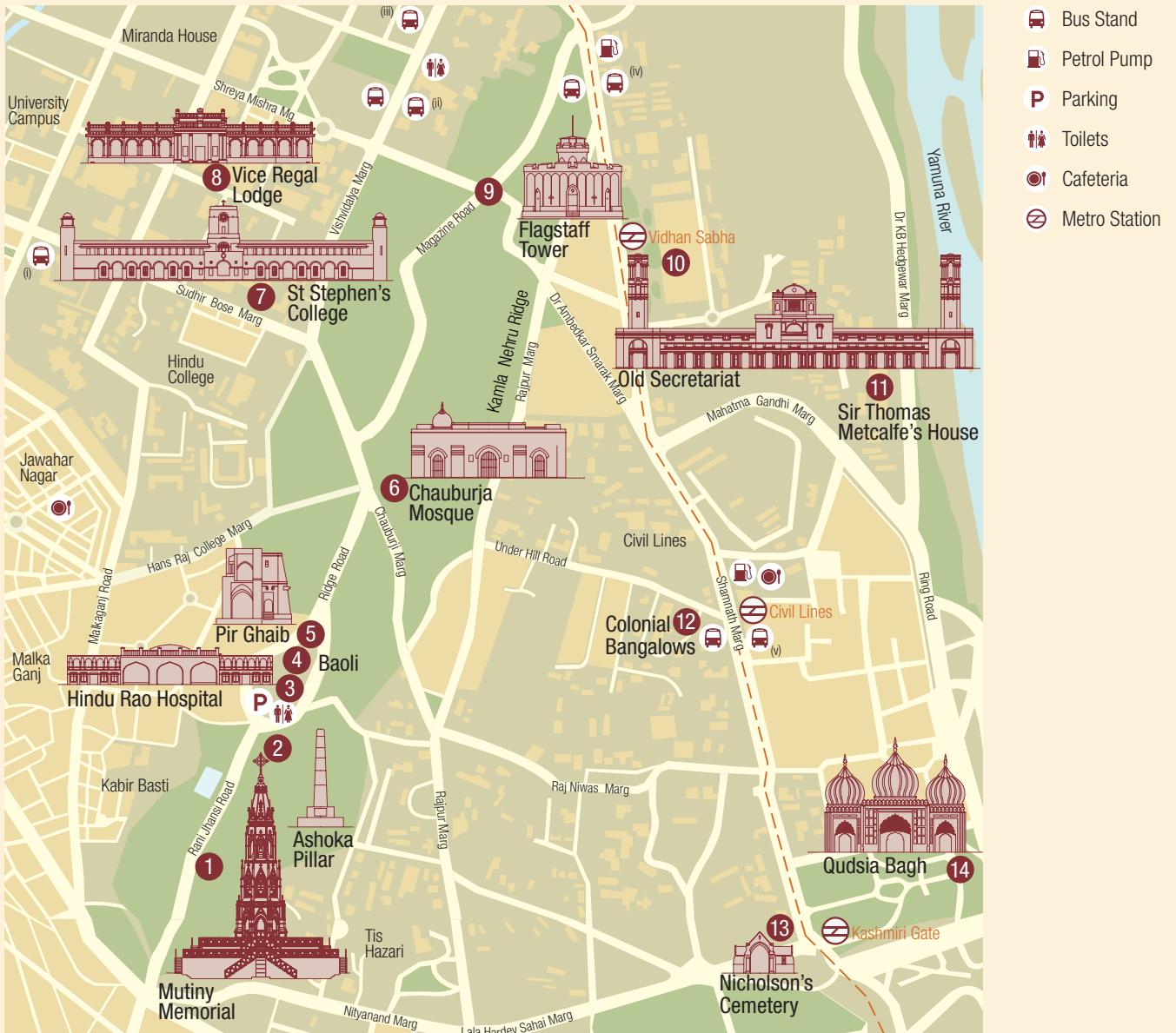


A short walk from the mosque, is the garden pavilion which has also been much altered. The most striking feature is the two sets of winding staircases that take you to the upper storey. At the far end of the garden is its only surviving gateway—a large structure made out of Lakhori bricks, decorated with delicately carved red sandstone panels and some intricately sculpted plaster work. The gateway has four semi-detached columns at its four exterior corners, each mounted by a large lotus flower capital and a zigzag pattern on its surface. Behind the gateway, on the northern side, a flight of steps lead up to the roof level.

Timings: Sunrise–Sunset

Entry: Free





### Nearest Bus Stops

- (i) St Stephen's College: 100, 816
- (ii) University of Delhi: 212, 262
- (iii) Social Work School: 212, 262
- (iv) Vidhan Sabha Metro Station: 26, 101, 103, 104, 105, 107, 112, 113, 120, 135, 143, 162, 164, 171, 173, 185, 191, 193, 258, 260,

261, 263, 266, 270, 271, 402, 883, 901, 982, 986

- (v) Civil Line Metro Station: 26, 101, 103, 104, 105, 107, 112, 113, 120, 143, 162, 164, 171, 185, 191, 193, 258, 260, 261, 263, 266, 270, 271, 402, 883, 901, 982



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