

Aligarh

Muslim University



To be considered Aligarh Muslim University has been often associated with magnanimity, power and beauty. The iconic seven storied building is a the state-of-the-art AMU campus has been the centre of attraction for educationists across the globe. It's nothing short of a structural marvel for an education building. Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) is an Indian public central university originally established by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan as Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College in 1875. A rare monument that serves as a window to the glorious past of ancient Indian culture, architecture, and education system that played an instrumental role in producing prodigies such as Zakir Husain, 3rd President of India; the former Vice-President of India Mohammad Hamid Ansari;

Anwara Taimur the first and the only woman to be the Chief Minister of Assam. Sports persons like Dhyan Chand, Lala Amarnath and Zafar among the many alumni of the university. This beautiful state-of-the art structure with equally affluent interiors and architecture serves as reference point to various aspiring students in many diverse educational fields ranging from art, science, history, liberal studies, technology, law and literature all under one roof. With time, traces of wear and tear were becoming evident on the monumental campus of AMU and it needed a revamp and beautification to restore its original shape and charm. The scale of work was mammoth and it needed the quality and precision of acumen to restore the heritage structure. Savani Heritage Conservation Pvt Ltd, a reputed name in the field of heritage conservation was assigned with the responsibility of restoration. Being the recipient of 7 international awards and having the expertise and experience of restoring heritage structures

I.e. The Taj, Mumbai, Royal Structures in Bhuj, Sardar Gate in Junagadh, ancient Fort in Surat... was more than enough to entrust the responsibility of AMU. Savani Heritage Conservation Pvt. Ltd., took up the task head on and executed the project in a span of _18 months. The restoration work was initiated by the AMU trust with a view to retain the legacy and pass it on as a heritage. This task of restoration would not have been possible but for one person Vice chancellor of the AMU who made remarkable efforts in generating funds and took the initiative to ensure that no stone is left unturned in getting the AMU campus up and ready for generations to come. The restored AMU Version 2.0 today is a mark of never dyeing spirit of education and a source of Knowledge and Wisdom.

After...



Before...

The restoration work of Library was one of the most complex and intense task at hand as the building is huge and it needed a specific finish to keep the decorum intact. Keeping to this view, the restoration work was initiated. The 'C' shaped building displayed a close relation with the prevailing local weather conditions, overlooking lawn on the foreground the facade was restored and repaired with necessary structural and aesthetic intervention. The key architectural elements used were brick and lime that highlights the now improved face of the library building.

After...



The structural designing of AMU is unique and use of minarets in the building makes the restoration work complex. The minarets present at intervals consists of arched niches which were cladded with stone jalis (lattice) work. The niched arches served as backing and were painted in black to create an illusion.

The jali design is an element highly inspired from Mughal style of architecture. These delicate jalis were carved out of red agra stone specifically used to break the monotony of the brick facade. These minarets were diligently restored keeping its aesthetic and presentation intact.



Before...

After...



Before...

The minarets as you see in the picture are distinctly visible and stands tall along with its architectural details, these were repainted in contrast to create a character and make them glow out as opposed to the being a hidden element prior to the restoration.

The dome of the minaret was restored with a layer of lime and the old dome finial was refabricated and redone meticulously. Extreme care was taken to blend the water outlet/snout with the facade to retain its character without affecting its workability or changing its original position.



The railings are a specimen of majestic art work of older times but with time it looked tired and faded. These railings were delicately retained and the homogeneity of these railings were maintained after colouring them uniformly to match the facade. The cut-outs in the jalis, railings and arches create a play of light and shadow throughout the day creating different patterns.

The old cement pointing was scraped out carefully, the brick facade was dressed neatly with white lime pointing that helped in creating a contrasting balance with the red bricks. The pointing grooves were wide and had to be filled with surki and lime to style a sleek finish of lime pointing of up to 3 to 4mm, which resulted in face-lifting of the dull facade.



After...



Before...

The series of merlons is a characteristic element which holds the building visually in a frame. Use of parapet of merlons over the minarets makes the minarets appear tall and sleek. The smaller domes over the turrets were a later addition with a view to balance it out with the domes of the minarets. The turrets marks the difference of layers and the top floor of the building is lined up in sequence of merlons at various intermediate levels. The entire facade was treated with waterproofing techniques to avoid further damages to the building in the future.

After...



The corridor is a strategic location as it slashes out the effects of weather and balances the temperature of the building. The passage way allows free flow of air and diffused sunlight. The original ventilation grill made up of bricks was replaced by using cement grill.

The original doors and windows were in a tired state needing repairs and hence were replaced by new ones without disturbing its décor. These interventions were necessary to preserve the longevity and aesthetics besides the original authenticity to the optimum level.



Before...

After...



Before...

The building displays use of jack arch slab. The edges of the slab needed thrust and were reinforced with iron 'I' sections using flat M.S steel plate to ensure additional structural strengthening. The walls were given extensive lime finish over the original layer.

The lime plaster being a sustainable material was used to allow breathability. A two brick thick layer of brick from the inner side of the corridor was exposed to break the whitish monotony of the lime wall to ensure proper finishing to the layout.

After...



The designing of interior walls of the library consists of exposed bricks giving a look of earthy appearance to the library. The door and window frames displayed weathered look and hence were highlighted with lime plaster to provide visual encasing which was absent previously. The play of white and red compliments each other and breaks the repetitive pattern of reds only due to bricks adding to the overall aesthetics.



Before...

After...



Before...

The library was brought back to its older charm by adding up lamps, reading desks and furniture. Out of total three doors, one was blocked and hence the same was released from its brick stacking facilitating a new three way access to the library. The doors and window frames were replaced completely as they looked worn out and were redone using Burma Teak. Also, the flooring was redone with new tiles to compliment the overall décor and to ensure longevity.



The lime pointing on the facade restoration facilitated the necessary facelift to the building and added new feature of distinctiveness. The addition of turrets now compliments the minarets and strike a symmetry and visual balance. The multiple arches and stone jali display rich specimen of the mughal style of architecture which marks the identity of the building. The greenery and the reddish hue of the bricks complement each other. The palm trees lined alongside the building imparts a visual treat.



Before...



After...

After...



With the passage of time, old doors and windows looked unattractive and tired needing immediate replacement. These doors and windows were placed in a pointed arch with attractive coloured glass panels on the other side of the entrance of the library. These coloured glass were sandwiched in between toughened glass. The sunlight casts coloured reflection through the glasses making the scene a visual retreat.



Before...

After...

Before...

After...



The exterior wall on the rear was waterproofed and cleared of biological growth and the wall was cleared of the black crusts. The cement layer put up at the rear door entrance as dado was meant to break the seepage of water. This cementitious layer was removed and the entire rear facade was waterproofed.

The windows were topped with chajja and covered with mosquito net. The lime washed cornices were restored and were given extended lime plastering.



Before...

After...



Before...

The blackened crust of the wall due to water seepage was repaired and waterproofed with pointed mix of surki and lime in the shade of red. The non-uniform design patterns of the merlons along the terrace lining were made uniform and the damaged merlons were mended back to maintain its original state.

After...



The overall uniformity in the fabric and shade of the facade facilitates new identity to the building. Wherever needed, the pathway alongside the building periphery was replaced with new blocks. The columns were treated strategically to maintain structural stability and waterproofing was facilitated in advance as it being prone to water seepage due to capillary action of brick and its location being on the ground floor.



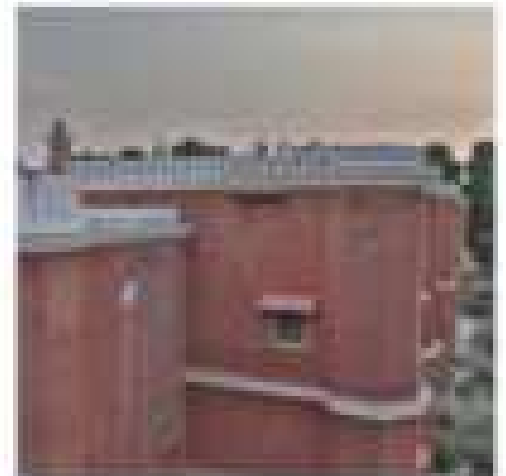
Before...

After...

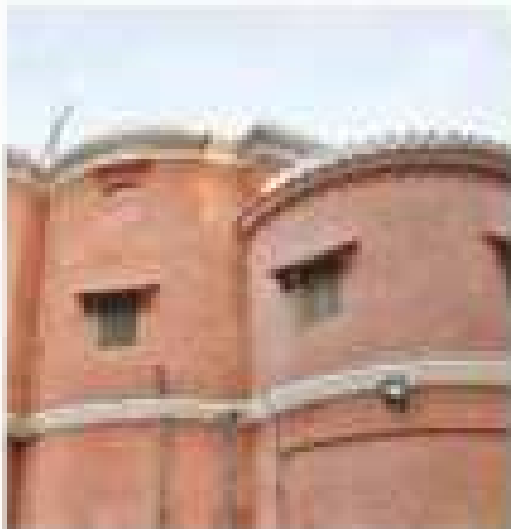
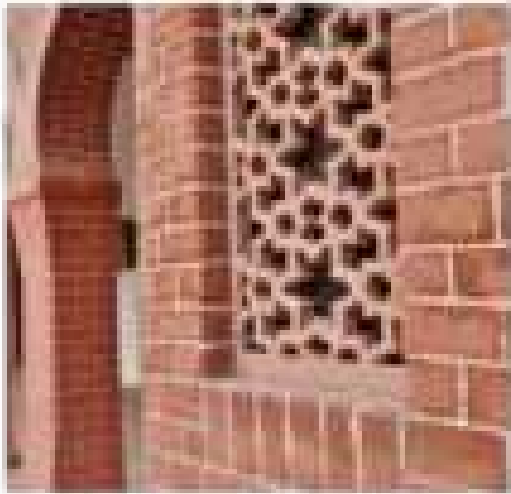


Before...

The terrace was treated diligently with lime water proofing to make the slab watertight. The glazing was layered with white tiles to accord harmony with the building. Moreover, the merlons were covered with a layers of moss in its niches and the broken ones were repaired. The overall historic feature, characteristic value and other salient features of the building were kept intact with thoughtful application of restoration practices and philosophy.











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