

TRADITIONAL ARTISANS HUB: ARTISANAL HIJAZAI HERITAGE ARTISANS HUB

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Abstract

Saudi culture is rich with its traditional arts and unique folkloric dance. The proposed project is Saudi's traditional artisans center located in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. It is a complex where art and craft lovers can learn and practice Jeddah's traditional yet creative industries that will introduce resourceful crafts to the country and enhance the living conditions of many locals by learning a new skill and selling their work in the market. The center will focus on encouraging artisans and young generations to produce creative industries and spread it worldwide by having workshops given by professional craftsmen/craftswomen in a traditional Saudi building with energy efficient technology and modern facilities. Case studies were conducted to collect different types of information and studies about artisans hub around the world. The study provides the space program and analyse the appropriate site location for the project. The selected site for this project is located in south Jeddah near Al Balad and the side advantage are accessibility, surrounding land use, views, visibility, and sea accessibility and parking capacity, but limit by the expansion capability and noise level.

Keywords-- Traditional Artisans Hub, Culture, Artisans, Art and Craft

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INTRODUCTION

Pre-Islamic Kingdoms of the Minaeans, the Sabaens, the Hymiarites and the Nabateans prospered economically and culturally through their control of the caravan routes to the Mediterranean and the trading of frankincense, myrrh and spices [1]. This recognized the power of the Arabian Peninsula economically and culturally. In the seventh century Islam emerged from Makkah and had spread all over the world crossing the oceans. For the past fourteen centuries millions of pilgrims visited Makkah and Madinah to perform Hajj and Ummrah every year which led to enrich the culture of the Arabian Peninsula. Regarding the numerous number of visitors worldwide Islam influenced the cultural and spiritual life of the kingdom, especially Makkah's region. However most of the traditional crafts were shaped by the nomadic Bedouin society [1].

In the past 30 years traditional crafts decreased gradually, artisans moved to work in governmental and private sectors [2, 3]. That resulted in diminishing the few artisans left in the country. This all happened due to the oil boom. In addition to that, the kingdom was left with few artisans who showcase their work only in Janadriya and annual festivals. There is a strong connection between tourism industries and traditional craft industries. Traditional crafts can drastically raise the tourism bars according to the big demand of souvenirs [4]. Recently the Saudi Arabian government has taken a huge interest in helping preserve the art of craftsmanship since it was on the verge of extinction.

CASE STUDIES

This section will illustrate four case studies on how traditional architecture is used in modern technology from various countries namely UAE, Qatar, Morocco and Abu Dhabi. These building are carefully designed and build with their distinguishing feature and they are:

- Museum of Middle Eastern modern art, Dubai, UAE
- Museum of Islamic art, Doha, Qatar
- Sustainable market places, Casablanca, Morocco
- Al-Bahar Towers (Abu Dhabi Investment Council HQ), Abu Dhabi

Museum of Middle Eastern modern art, Dubai, UAE

Museum of Middle Eastern modern art is designed by UNstudio (Figure 1). This is an opportunity to create an entirely new type of museum, which consists of a vibrant urban center, where professionals, collectors and public meet each other. The sweeping forms of the museum may sum up the generation of buildings designed for Dubai, the center of a building boom in the gulf region that has been slowed by recent economic changes. The complex will form part of Dubai's 'Culture Village'. This new cultural hub, the so-called Culture Village, will be located on 40 million square feet of land in the historic district of Jadaf [5].

Museum of Islamic art, Doha, Qatar

Museum of Islamic art is designed by I.M. pei (Figure 2). It is located in Doha, Qatar, the architect ultimately established the museum 195 feet from the mainland on an artificial island. The museum is connected to the shore by two pedestrian bridges and a vehicular bridge. A new C-shaped peninsula provides protection from the Arabian Gulf on the north and from unsightly industrial buildings on the east. The museum building has rapidly become an iconic feature of the Doha landscape. Standing alone on reclaimed land, the building draws much influence from ancient Islamic architecture, notably the IbnTulun Mosque of Cairo. One can also notice the stepped dome like with different rotation to create light and shadow from both interior and exterior of the building [6].

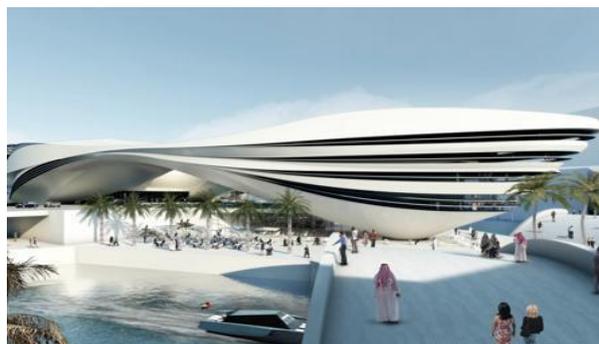


Figure 1. Museum of Middle Eastern modern art [5]



Figure 2. Museum of Islamic art, Doha [6]

Sustainable market places, Casablanca, Morocco

Sustainable market places located in Casablanca is designed by PMG architect (Figure 3). The use of negative space taking form from the canopy of hundreds of slender square timber dowels that outline the vernacular archways that lead the visitor into a semi-enclosed space of filtered light until reaching the heart of the market where an opening in the grid-like roof illuminates the space. The massive structure only touches the ground at a few specific points where columnar clusters transfer loads into the concrete base [7]. The architects wanted to create a vibrant place that reflects the identity of the culture. They used the arches to symbolize their traditional architecture. They managed to keep the market open as the old market but at the same moment it is closed as if it's a one space. Main entrances were emphasized by adding an additional scale to it. The market is considered a suitable architecture as the air flows smoothly from all directions and the movement of the arches is giving the space enough shade from the direct sunlight.

Al-Bahar Towers (Abu Dhabi Investment Council HQ), Abu Dhabi

Al-Bahar Towers is designed by Aedas Architects, located in Abu Dhabi (Figure 4). This building inspired by the traditional “mashrabiya”, the interesting geometric shapes enveloping the towers offer a powerful visual impact while intelligently protecting the interiors from excessive heat gain. It is a suitable building as the mashrabiya open and close according to the sun movement avoiding heat and glare [8].

According to the talented design team, “the cocoon-like buildings are based on a pre-rationalized geometric form, fine-tuned via parametric design tools to achieve optimal wall to floor area ratio. A solar-responsive dynamic shading screen further decreases solar gain. The system is driven by renewable energy derived from the photovoltaic panels”. The Mashrabiya comprises over 1,000 translucent moving elements on each tower and is controlled by specially designed computer software [8].



Figure 3. Sustainable market places, Casablanca [7]



Figure 4. Al-Bahar Towers [8]

SPACE PROGRAM

Figure 5 shows the overview of space program. The project is categorized into two main areas which is a buildable area that includes the artisans hub, educational center, social/public spaces, and maintenance. The unbuildable area contains landscape, amphitheatre and parking.

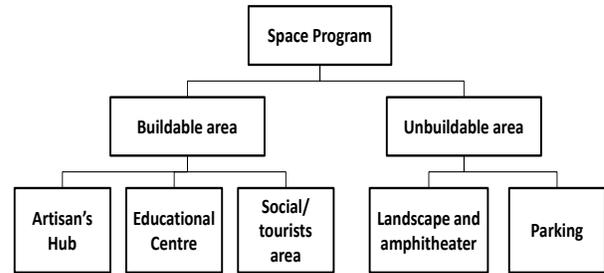


Figure 5. Space program overview

The artist’s residency is a place where the city of Jeddah welcomes craftsmen/woman from all over the globe to showcase their artwork and give short intensive workshops and seminars. It composed of two main functions, the residential area; where artisans can accommodate during their stay and a studio space for each master to get creative in. The area will accommodate 25-30 artisans at a time.

The educational wing will provide workshops, seminars, lectures and technological labs for every traditional craft. Each workshop, from weaving to boat making was studied carefully to provide the proper areas for the equipment’s and users. Each of the nine crafts will have its own workshop that will serve 150 students in total, and one master/artist for every craft.

This project will be focusing on the social area to attract the biggest number of tourists. It will host number of events and festivals during the year that will serve more than 3000 visitors and a traditional craft souk available all year long. This space also includes number of galleries, exhibition halls, restaurants/cafes, eye-catching mosque and an outdoor Amphitheatre that will hold over 1000 spectators.

Table 1 shows the buildable area contains the artist’s residency, educational wing, social interactive area including (galleries, amphitheatres, market and restaurants) and other services and facilities. Expected area in total is 25442, 57% of the entire project’s area including 30% circulation. The table below shows the total areas of each space separately:

Table 1. Buildable area calculations

| Facility | Number of users | Total current area (m ²) |
|-----------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| Artists residency | 30 craftsmen/women 10 employee 100 visitors | 5882 |
| Education center | 150 student 10 artists 10 assistants 15 employee | 7848 |
| Social interactive area | 3000 people | 14112 |
| Total buildable area | | 25442 |

Table 2 shows the unbuildable area contains both parking spaces and outdoor recreational areas, with a total space of 26309m², 43% of the entire projects area. Recreational outdoor spaces are used as safe grounds for activities, enhance microclimate within the project, integrates project with the environment and provide a buffer zone between different spaces yet keeping them united.

Table 2. Unbuildable area calculations

| Facility | Standards | Quantity | Total current area (m ²) |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| Parking for artists residency | ½ artists | 15 | 375 |
| Parking for education center | 1/3 students | 75 | 1875 |
| Parking for employees | 1/ faculty | 20 | 500 |
| Parking for social/ public spaces | Number of seating area | 1000 | 25000 |
| Parking for maintenance | Number of employees | 20 | 500 |
| Total | | 1130 | 28250 |
| Outdoor recreational area | 30% | | 7627 |
| Amphitheatre | | | 2400 |
| Total unbuildable area | | | 38277 |

SITE SELECTION AND ANALYSIS

Due to the nature of the studied project, a site located in a touristic area and cultural area is recommended, since the projects aim is to enrich the society and tourists knowledge on our traditional crafts and culture. It is preferable to have the project located by the sea since boat building took a big part in the space program.

Site 1 is located on Al Hamraa Cornish, overlooking the red sea, with a beautiful sea side road (Figure 6). It is adjacent to park Hayat Hotel and the equestrian club and overlooks the famous landmark (Jeddah's Fountain) and Al Salalm Palace. This site is located near many hotels and a recreational pedestrian road. Site 2 is located in south Jeddah near Al Balad (the historical Jeddah) and in front of Midan Al Baiaa and overlooking the Abruaien Lake (Figure 7).

It is surrounded by more than 4main loads, and a major touristic area where you can find restaurants, theme parks and entertainment facilities nearby. Site 3 is also located in north Cornish overlooking the sea (Figure 8). It is quite close to my second site option but in a more quit residential area. This site has a good potential for future expansion.



Figure 6. Site 1 [9]



Figure 7. Site 2 [10]



Figure 8. Site 3 [11]

A comparison between the three sites is conducted to determine which site is more suitable for the project. The comparison will be made based on different weighed criteria, each site will then be rated on a scale from 1 to 10 and scored, and the site with the highest total score will be selected as the project's site. The site evaluations result is tabulate din Table 3.

Table 3. Site comparison evaluation

| Criteria | Weight Factor (%) | Site 1 | | Site 2 | | Site 3 | |
|----------------------|-------------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|
| | | Rating (1-10) | Score | Rating (1-10) | Score | Rating (1-10) | Score |
| Accessibility | 25 | 4 | 1 | 7 | 1.7 | 9 | 2.2 |
| Surrounding land use | 17 | 6 | 1.0 | 10 | 1.7 | 7 | 1.1 |
| Views | 15 | 7 | 1.0 | 9 | 1.3 | 3 | 0.4 |
| Visibility | 13 | 3 | 0.3 | 10 | 1.3 | 8 | 1.0 |
| Sea accessibility | 10 | 9 | 0.9 | 8 | 0.8 | 6 | 0.6 |
| Parking capacity | 9 | 2 | 0.1 | 5 | 0.4 | 2 | 0.1 |
| Expansion capability | 8 | 7 | 0.5 | 4 | 0.3 | 4 | 0.3 |
| Noise level | 3 | 4 | 0.1 | 8 | 0.2 | 8 | 0.2 |
| Total | 100 | 42 | 5.2 | 61 | 7.9 | 47 | 6.2 |
| | | | 2 | | 1 | | 7 |

After conducting the site comparison evaluation, site option 2 appeared to have to the highest total score making it the best fit site for the project. The selected site is located in Al Arbaen Lake with a prime location by the sea. The site has irregular shape with a total area of approximately 37,000 m².

The site advantages are located in a well-known area just beside Al Jaffali Mosque.

This is important area of governmental wise and economical wise, where ministries and famous banks are easily available. This will increase the amount of visitors since there are a lot of employees around the area. It overlooks many famous landmarks such as Al Arbaen Lake, and Al Baiaa Roundabout. The government took Al Baladas their top priority when developing the city of Jeddah, where they created parking areas and enhanced the historical sites and most importantly they are encouraging the events and festivals in that area.

The challenges of this site are high noise level, traffic congestion during festivals. There is no enough space for future expansion except building on the sea (landfill) or after the Al Jaffali Mosque. The lake needs to be cleaned with high maintenance

Regarding the climate analysis, the site's orientations and interesting form allow for maximum benefit from the north-western prevailing winds. The sun path determines where shading devices must be used. The site's existing topography is relatively flat with a gradual slope of 1 m into the sea that might help with rainwater drainage. The site can be accessed through seven main roads by automobiles or pedestrians walkways from Al Balad. The site is connected with good views and landmarks from all sides. Al Jaffali Mosque from north, Al Arbaen Lake from west, old Jeddah and Al Ahli Bank from south and finally Midan Al Baia and governmental building from east.

ZONING AND PROJECT DESIGN

General zoning of the site is created based on the previous analysis of case studies and space program. The project will be integrated within the site taking its horizontal form. The educational part will be located next to marina for the boat

making workshop, the social zone will be spread all over the site creating an urban like small village (Figure 9 and Figure 10).

Main entrance-north entrance is located in front of the mosque and the parking building is on the right side. The journey starts with Jeddah's landmark (Al Jaffali Mosque) then into an area that represents the old Jeddah with a main spine along the project. This area will act as a market place for the traditional crafts. It is divided into seven courtyards each one is surrounded by different craft places. The axis will lead to the artists' residency and into the educational center. The main spine will not only connect the site zones together but will also connect the hub to the historical site of Jeddah through Midan Al Baiaa. Figure 11 and Figure 12 illustrate the view of the second entrance and the view of the residential area respectively. The main perspective view of the project is shown in Figure 13.

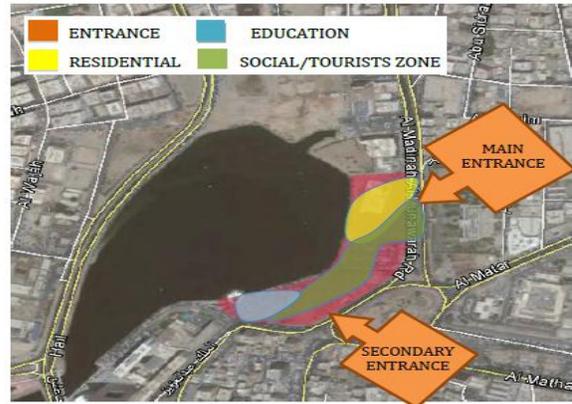


Figure 9. Site Zoning



Figure 10. Site layout



Figure 11. View of the second entrance



Figure 12. View of the residential area



Figure 13. Main perspective

CONCLUSION

"Artisanal Hijazi Heritage Hub" is aim to revitalize the traditional Hijazi culture in a modern way through entertaining and educational facilities that will suit all the visitors and consumers. The traditional architectural element of the city of Jeddah will always remain the jewels of it. In this project the architectural elements have been used in a more technological and modern way. The selected site for this project is located in south Jeddah near Al Balad and the site area is about 37,1000 m². The side draw the advantage in term of accessibility, surrounding land use, views, visibility, and sea accessibility and parking capacity. The expansion capability and noise level are the challenge for the selected site.

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