

MIRAS CULTURAL CENTER

Bareah Arshadlamphon¹, Rahma Doheim², Mohammed Fekry³

^{1,2,3}College of Architecture and Design, Effat University, Qasr Khuzam St., Kilo.2, Old Mecca Road. P.O.BOX 34689, Jeddah 21478, Saudi Arabia

E-mail: btarshadlamphon@effatuniversity.edu.sa, rdoheim@effatuniversity.edu.sa, mfekry@effatuniversity.edu.sa

Received: 20.04.2020

Revised: 24.05.2020

Accepted: 15.06.2020

Abstract

Cultural centers are critical part any community. Whereas, the previous culture of any country is an important role of the country being ranked. The Saudi Arabian culture is huge due to the improvements we are living in at the moment. Raising the cultural background around the world using cultural centers is an ideal idea to raise the world public opinion of Saudi Arabia, and by that the center will introduce our culture to native and non-native visitors. The aim of the project is to gather different people with different cultural backgrounds for exchanging cultures, group activities, social support, public information, and many other cultural purposes. Miras cultural center aims to introduce the Saudi Arabian culture to build a greater community, whereas the identity of any community is symbolized by its culture. Therefore, combining the present with the past to expand the future culture is one of the visions. Not to mention that such projects focuses on the site selection criteria. And the chosen location for Miras cultural center is in Jabal Al-Noor, Makkah, Saudi Arabia due to its value to the Islamic world. This study covered three different cases that study each of the following site criteria, concept, program analysis, and the advantages and disadvantages of each project. The cases are similar to the project in a way that standardized the needed functions in such centers and what to avoid and what to adapt from these cases.

Keywords-- Cultural Center, Exchanging Cultures, Cultural Backgrounds, Visitors

© 2020 by Advance Scientific Research. This is an open-access article under the CC BY license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.31838/jcr.07.08.97>

INTRODUCTION

Based on the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission, Saudi Arabia is defined by its Islamic heritage, its historical role as an ancient trade center, and its Bedouin traditions resulted in the cultural development of the country [1, 2]. The Saudi society has emerged over the years, that encourage the adaptation of modernism with their values and traditions from customs, hospitality to their dressing style [2]. In addition, the number of museums in Saudi Arabia is 22 museums according to the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage [3]. Variation of cultural institutions has been established throughout the country, preserving Saudi Arabia's cultural heritage. The Ministry of Culture and Information has the largest Department of Culture that sponsors a wide range of cultural programs, including literary and drama clubs, folklore classes, library events, art and crafts as well as science projects [4].

The Saudi Arabian Society for Culture and Arts was founded in 1972, which sponsors Saudi artists to develop and display their arts [5]. King Fahad library in Riyadh offers the largest collections of rare manuscripts in Arabic and Islamic literature. Moreover, the Department of museums and Antiques was established in 1974. Whereas the National Museum in Riyadh established in 1999 and it is considered as the largest museum in Saudi Arabia that was established to celebrate the completion of 100 years of taking of the Masmak Fortress by the young Abdulaziz [2].

CASE STUDIES

This study considered thee unique cultural centers from Saudi Arabia, Germany and Kuwait for case study. The selected cultural centers are sensitively design with luxury environment, also dedicated with comprehensive learning and entertainment facilities. The chosen case studies are:

- i. King Abdulaziz Center of World Culture, Dhahran, Saudi Arabia
- ii. Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Germany
- iii. Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmaad Cultural Centre, Kuwait City, Kuwait

King Abdulaziz Center of World Culture, Dhahran, Saudi Arabia

King Abdulaziz Center of World Culture, Dhahran, Saudi Arabia is designed by Snohetta (Figure 1) [6]. King Abdul-Aziz Center for world culture also known as Ithra is the first cultural center in Saudi Arabia. The center offers a variation of specialized cultural, educational, and youth leadership programs and activities, to create a positive impact on human development and culture within the kingdom "King Abdul-Aziz Centre for World Culture (Ithra)". The Centre's components includes a public library, company and community archive, museum with natural history, cultural history and Islamic art foci as well as a large gallery for temporary exhibitions, a children's museum, live performance theatre, cinema, innovation forum, media center and numerous supporting facilities such as food services, retail, guest services and hospitality focused entities [6].

The architectural concept is based on six concepts. First is on how to create a community with the growth of the past and the present while generating the future. Secondly is introverting and extroverting. Third is repository and beacon. Forth is diversity and unity. The last two concepts are teamwork and energy [6]. King Abdul-Aziz cultural center is one of the iconic buildings that achieved LEED gold despite the climatic conditions. The project is designed as five buildings separated with different volumes, connected by a rock mass in the middle, which is the idea lab. The center is one of the first cultural centers in the kingdom with a strong vision of preserving the previous cultures of the kingdom. Therefore, designing such an iconic building took time to understand the relation of each function and how they will find solution for each obstacle.

Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Germany

Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Germany is designed by Herzog & de Meuron (Figure 2) [7]. The Elbphilharmonie is a new center of social, cultural and daily life for people of Hamburg and for visitors from all around the world. The center provides attractive mix of urban uses. These varied uses are combined in one building as they are in a city. Additionally, there is an expansive topography of public and private spaces, with different character

and scales. Whereas, the Elbphilharmonie is a total work of art, where it combines innovative architecture with an exceptional location, outstanding acoustics and a visionary concert programme. Between the old warehouse and the glass structure is the Plaza - a public viewing area that extends around the whole building.

The Elbphilharmonie is a landmark visible from afar, lending an entirely new vertical accent to the horizontal layout that characterises the city of Hamburg. There is a greater sense of space here in this new urban location, generated by the expanse of the water and the industrial scale of the seagoing vessels. In order to make the new Philharmonic a genuinely public attraction, it is imperative to provide not only attractive architecture but also an attractive mix of urban uses [7]. The project combines a variation of zones that will serve residents and visitors including entertainment, socializing, culture, and residential. The idea of having more than one function to create a vertical city is one of a kind. Whereas preserving the historical background of the building was important too.

Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmaad Cultural Centre, Kuwait City, Kuwait
 Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmaad Cultural Centre located at Kuwait City, Kuwait is designed by SSH Architect (Figure 3) [8]. The cultural Centre is a multidisciplinary public space that strives to entertain, educate and inspire the people of Kuwait. The Centre offers range of events for every generation and society. It is a platform for educational and cultural exchange.

The geometric forms of complex is inspired by Islamic architecture forms a richly textured outer skin for each building that creates dramatic spaces below that are illuminated by the interaction of light and shadow. Figure 3 shows the integration of the outer skin with the interior spaces and how the light is entering the space creating luxurious experience and this reflects their concept [8]. The luxurious skin reflects the Islamic architecture forms, and how the integration of the buildings with the surroundings.



Figure 1. King Abdulaziz Center of World Culture, Dhahran, Saudi Arabia [6]



Figure 2. Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Germany [7]



Figure 3. Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmaad Cultural Centre, Kuwait City, Kuwait [8]

SPACE PROGRAM

Based on the General authority of statistics of Saudi Arabia the number of visitors assumed in a museum per day is 87 visitors. Meanwhile the assumed number of archaeological site visitors is 27 per day. Therefore, targeting new category to increase the number of visitors and to increase the tourism attractions in Saudi Arabia the project targets Hajj and Umrah pilgrims. Accordingly, the General Authority of statistics of Saudi Arabia mentioned that the number of pilgrims staying for two weeks and more in 2017 is 3,475,061 visitors and the assumed number of visitors per day is 9,521 visitors. Based on these assumptions the assumed number of visitors in the Community Center is 1592 visitors per day.

The space program of this project is tabulated in Table 1. There are five primary zones considered in this project namely introductory zone, entertainment zone, educational zone, administrative zone, and funicular railway station. There are another three sub-zones for entertainment zone namely miniature park, museum, and observational zone. Therefore, the total gross area of this project is approximately 12582 sqm.

Table 1. Space program

Zones	Percent age (%)	Total Net Area (m ²)	Total Gross Area (m ²)
Introductory zone	9.6	817.4	1144.36
Entertainment zone	Miniatur e park	41	3485
	Museum	13.4	1136.1
	Observa tional zone	11.3	962.35
Educational zone	12.4	1053	1579.5
Administrational zone	5.1	436.8	567.84
Funicular railway station	7.2	609.5	914.25
Total	100	8500.15	12581.125

SITE SELECTION AND ANALYSIS

The site analysis will be conducted based on two different sites that are located in Jabal Al-Noor neighbourhood, Mecca, Saudi Arabia. This location has been chosen due to its Islamic historical coincidence that reflects the project aim towards Islamic history and cultural heritage that will attract more people to the site. Since the project is targeting tourist and all the public with different age ranges the location had to be allocated in Mecca. Figure 4 shows Site 1 is located at the northwest of the Hira Cave, while Figure 5 shows Site 2 is located at the southeast of the Hira Cave.

The site is selected based on the evaluation of certain criteria such as location, security, accessibility, topography, utilities, safety, and surrounding condition. Each of the criterions is given a weight factor in order to indicate the significant of the criterion toward the project. The site evaluation result is tabulated in Table 2.



Figure 4. Site 1 [9]



Figure 5. Site 2 [10]

Table 2. Site evaluation result

Criteria	Weight Factor	Site 1	Site 2
Location	2	6	8
Security	1.5	7	9
Accessibility	1.5	5	10
Topography	0.5	3	6
Utilities	1	6	10
Safety	1	4	8
Surrounding	1	5	10
Total		36	61

The best alternative that was chosen is the Site 2 that scored the highest among the Site 1. The scoring and evaluation of the sites were conducted according to criteria presented in Table 2. The site is located in a cultural heritage site, which is Jabal Al Nour, Mecca, Saudi Arabia. Mecca is known for its different contour levels due to the mountainous topography. The site is located on a topographic surface where the lowest contour level is around 342m and the highest contour level is 450 above the ground. The site is located on a main road, which is Husain Sarhan road. The accessibility to the site is from one access road. The lack of street network around the site will give challenges to the entrances of the workers and visitors. The site is located in a mixed-use area where it's surrounded by residential and commercial buildings.

Mecca is located on the western side of Saudi Arabia. Due to its location Mecca features a hot desert climatic condition. Due to the angle and direction of the sun in Saudi Arabia, the usage of vertical shading devices on east and west sides will be beneficial to allow the daylight to enter the building at the same time it prevents the direct sunrays to enter the building. Whereas, using horizontal shading devices on south will protect the building

from gaining heat. The wind experienced in any location depended mainly on the local topography and other factors affecting the wind direction and speed. The prevailing wind of the city is directed from the north-western side.

ZONING AND PROJECT DESIGN

Miras cultural Center a center that contributes people to exchange knowledge, entertain, educate, and spread different cultural backgrounds. Therefore, the project is located in a cultural heritage site, which is Jabal Al Nour, Mecca, Saudi Arabia. Jabal Al-Nour is one of the most important attractions in the Islamic history where GharHira is located, which was the getaway of Prophet Mohamed PBUH from the people to worship GOD before the prophetic mission. Figure 7, Figure 8 and Figure 9 demonstrate the site plan, staking diagram and the section diagram of the project respectively.

The design concept is derived from the act of cultural collision that progress many changes. The changes built up the present without neglecting the past, which will expand our culture. Whereas, the present and the future grows out of the past. Therefore, in order to generate a well raised and well-educated generations the society should acknowledge the history of their religion and country. Figure 9, Figure 10, Figure 11 and Figure 12 illustrate the main entrance, entertainment zone, Miniature Park and parking zone of the project respectively.

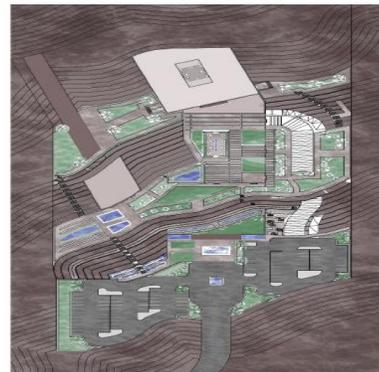


Figure 6. Site Plan

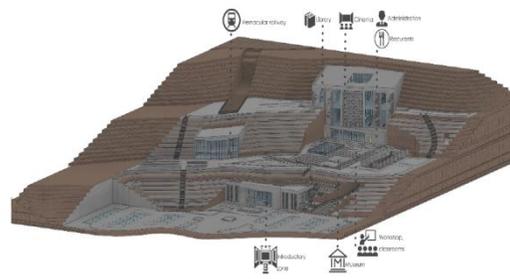


Figure 7. Staking diagram



Figure 8. Section Diagram



Figure 9. The main entrance of the building



Figure 10. Entertainment zone

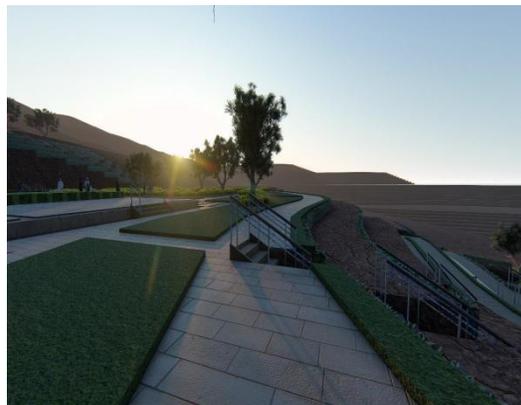


Figure 11. Miniature park



Figure 12. Parking zone

CONCLUSION

This project develops a better future, whereas without culture no community or future expansion, the present and the future cultures grows out of the past. Therefore, respecting the community and culture are the major roles in seeking the transitional point of cultural centers in Saudi Arabia. The proposed space program covered of five main zones namely introductory zone, entertainment zone, educational zone, administrative zone, and funicular railway station. The selected site location is located at southeast of the Hira Cave. This project contributes community by provides variety of books, art, and workshops. Besides that, this project protects the nature meanwhile enjoying it, also encourages people to participate and interact with each other's. This project also expected to increase the tourism activities in Saudi Arabia which will raise the economy.

REFERENCES

1. Rico, T. and Lababidi, R. 2017. Extremism in Contemporary Cultural Heritage Debates about the Muslim World. *Future Anterior: Journal of Historic Preservation, History, Theory, and Criticism* 14, 1, 95.
2. Culture, Traditions and Art - Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission | SACM. [Internet]. Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission | SACM. [cited 7 October 2019]. Available from: <https://sacm.org.au/culture-traditions-and-art/>.
3. Museum Directory. 2018. [Internet]. Scth.gov.sa. [cited 7 October 2019]. Available from: <https://scth.gov.sa/en/Museums/Pages/MuseumDirectory.aspx>.
4. Saudi Arabian Culture | Disha News. 2018. [Internet]. Dishanews.com. [cited 7 October 2019]. Available from: <http://www.dishanews.com/society/culture/saudi-arabian-culture/>.
5. Culture & Art | The Embassy of The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. [Internet]. Saudiembassy.net. [cited 7 October 2019]. Available from: <https://www.saudiembassy.net/culture-art>.
6. González, M. 2018. King Abdulaziz Centre for World Culture / Snøhetta. [Internet]. ArchDaily. [cited 7 October 2019]. Available from: <https://www.archdaily.com/898775/king-abdulaziz-centre-for-world-culture-snohetta>.
7. Elbphilharmonie Hamburg / Herzog & de Meuron. 2016. [Internet]. ArchDaily. [cited 7 October 2019]. Available from: <https://www.archdaily.com/802093/elbphilharmonie-hamburg-herzog-and-de-meuron>.
8. SSH - Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Cultural Centre. [Internet]. Sshic.com. [cited 7 October 2019]. Available from: <https://www.sshic.com/projects/sheikh-jaber-al-ahmad-cultural-centre>.
9. 21°27'37.1"N 39°51'20.0"E. 2019. [Internet]. Google Maps. [cited 7 October 2019]. Available from: <https://www.google.com/maps/place/21%C2%B027'37.1%22N+39%C2%B051'20.0%22E/@21.460316,39.8533523,694m/data=!3m2!1e3!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0x0:0x0!7e2!8m2!3d21.4603109!4d39.8555409>.
10. 21°27'16.7"N 39°51'58.4"E. 2019. [Internet]. Google Maps. [cited 7 October 2019]. Available from: <https://www.google.com/maps/place/21%C2%B027'16.7%22N+39%C2%B051'58.4%22E/@21.454646,39.8640283,694m/data=!3m2!1e3!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0x0:0x0!7e2!8m2!3d21.4546405!4d39.8662173>.