

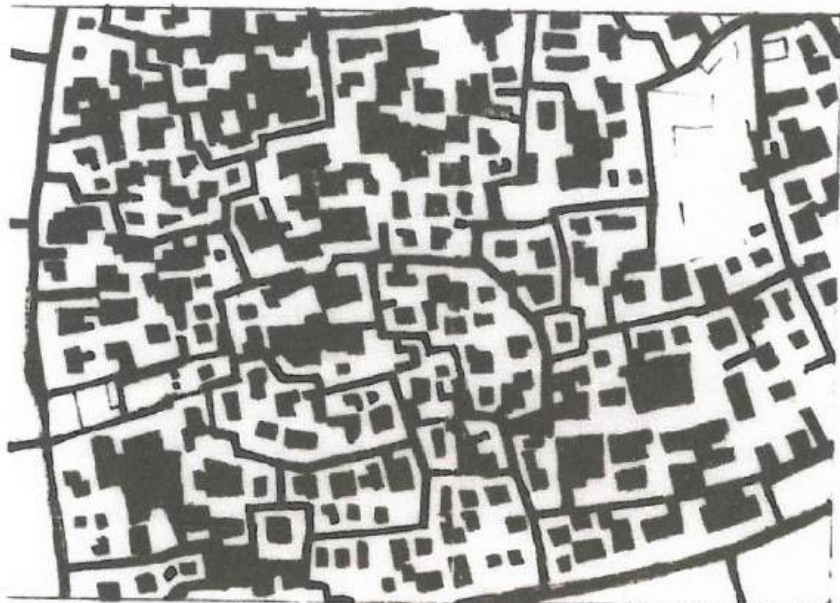


Fig 1.9 Pattern of courtyards and thoroughfares.

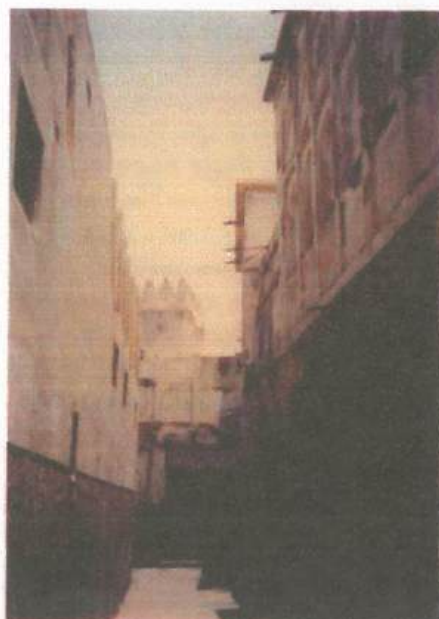


Plate 1.3 Typical streetscape.



House Form

Broadly speaking, the form of houses comprises four crucial elements.

1. Courtyards.
2. Ranges of buildings planned around the courts.
3. Roof terraces reached by staircase from the courtyard.
4. Single-room or double apartments on the first floor, approached along the roof terraces.

The general qualities of building form are shown by the bird's-eye views of houses (Figures 1.2 to 1.4 and 1.6 to 1.7). An informal impression is uppermost in all the earlier houses, although there is an overall unity. This sense of unity is due to three factors: first, piers are equidistant and windows (or infill panels) are usually the same width; secondly, the courtyard form focuses and unites the structures around it; and thirdly, the roof terrace system (with its associated parapets) establishes a constant horizontal line around each courtyard. A terrace system may be very extensive, connecting many houses together over large areas. This is truly a collective form.

The world seems a different place when viewed from the terrace. The courtyard encloses but the terrace releases. One is exposed to sun, moon, stars, wind. On the terrace one is very aware of the sky, but hardly aware of the courtyard; one sees only apartments dotted here and there, and space flows freely between them. It looks more like a 'family village' than a 'family house' in the western sense. The courtyard focuses and condenses the identity of the household and provides a setting for its daily round. Several writers have suggested that the courtyard – the heart of family life, open to the heavens but isolated from the mundanity of public life is a metaphorical link to God. The house opens to the sky; the heavens penetrate to the heart of the house. The court is the 'hidden treasure' of the house, just as the body of man hides the soul. This may not have been a conscious idea in Al Muharrag, but it was perhaps an archetypal vision towards which designers in many lands turned. In Al Muharrag there is a dual polar – that is, inside/outside and up/down. The sense of being within or without, above or below, is intense. There is no blurring of these zones; their identity is crisp and consistently maintained.

Apart from the kitchen, stores and animal stalls, all rooms are multi-functional. Thus a room may be used for sleeping, eating, socializing, and so forth. Their utilization depends on climatic conditions: ground-floor rooms are used in cold weather, and in summer many people sleep on the terraces. The upper rooms are very warm on a still summer day, but, having a design of low thermal capacity, cool quickly at night. Therefore these rooms are used at night as they are cooler than ground-floor rooms. The ground-floor rooms lose heat

through the night, and could be occupied on a still, hot day. However, a wind would cool the upper room more effectively than the lower room.

Another basic planning consideration was privacy and territoriality – in other words, the assignation of certain zones to certain groups of people within the extended household. In so far as wealth permitted it, male visitors were segregated from the family; young men from young women; servants and slaves from others; and the headman's family from other residents. When a son married, he might take an apartment in the house for a time, and a separate territory would be established. However, slaves would be companions of their masters or mistresses, children would visit their uncles' and aunts' rooms in a carefree way (as part of their play), and so on, so that territoriality was treated flexibly.

A particular courtyard may be the focus of a specific territory. For example, the headman may have had a separate court for his immediate family. Other courts may have been assigned to visitors and single men, servants, single women, and so on, or various combinations of these. There is no simple fixed pattern, and some later houses have only a single courtyard, although they are quite large. The Shirawi House is a good example of this. A territory may have a staircase leading up to a roof terrace and its associated apartment, which need not always be directly above the corresponding ground-level accommodation.

The separation of these territories is largely achieved by the careful positioning of windowless walls. This is, of course, most obvious in the separation of the whole house from the street. These walls often seem like membranes holding apart distinct realms. This means that the street doorway – and sometimes the door between courtyards – has great significance: the door pierces the membrane, and suddenly tension is released. This calls forth an opposite reaction: the visual reinforcement, celebration, strengthening of the place of piercing, the transition between realms. The doorway is therefore decorated in a rich and majestic way. In some cases there is more than one street door, so that the family does not have to pass through the visitors' territory, or young women through men's territory, and so forth: the social function of male hospitality is so important that the majlis access route is always to some extent separate from family territory.

CHAPTER TWO

Construction & Decorative Design

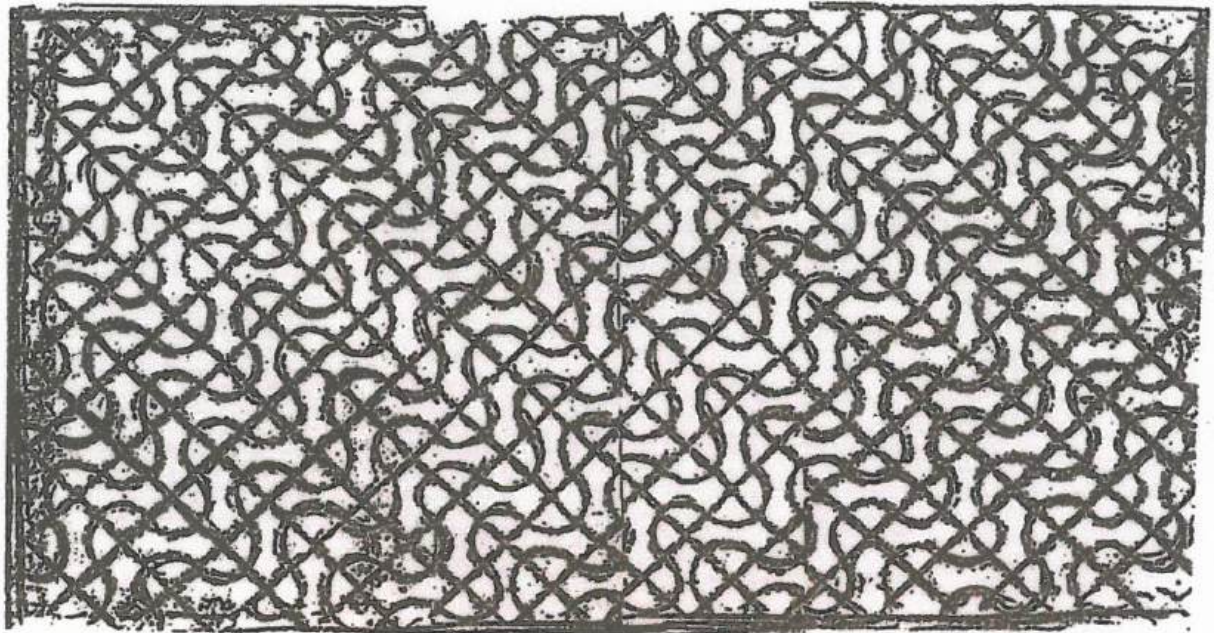


Fig 2.1 Carved plaster decoration

Construction

A complete discussion of the building industry, building construction and climate control will be found in Yarwood (1988) and only the briefest picture is given here. See also Yarwood J.R. "Building Construction in a Historic Arabian Town". Construction History. Volume 15 1999.

Calcareous stone from a quarry on Jiddah island was used for foundations walls and columns were built from coral stone (*hadjar al bahr*) excavated from intertidal flats, using a random-rubble technique, and jointed by mud (usually excavated at Rifa'a). Quartered palm trunks (*yadhaw*) were laid horizontally within solid walls in order to strengthen them. Columns were tied horizontally by beams of mangrove, known as Zanzibar poles, (*jenchel* or *chendel*). Rendering consisted of three layers: the first layer (*al tchies*) was mud; the second layer (*al misailh*) was mud and gypsum, and the third layer (*al tabidh*) was lime and gypsum. Layers were cut back to form decorative patterns. Frames were filled by non-loadbearing elements, including stratified coral stone laminae (*farsh*), about 7cm thick, which occurs naturally on the coasts. Windows had their frames, often with vertical iron bars after 1900; these were imported from ironworks such as Kuti and Jamshodpur. Stained glass may have come from Danzig.

Roof construction comprised mangrove poles, with a diagonal grid of split bamboo above. Upon this rested palm-frond woven mats (*basra mesh*) and then a layer of rubble stone set in mud, rendered also with mud - the

best was imported from Lingeh on the Persian coast. Roofs were drained by timber gargoyles (*marzam*).

Climate control was sophisticated - and heavily influenced by Persian methods. This advanced during the Middle Period, when the Persian Revolution caused a flood of refugees to cross the Gulf. Wind-towers caught breezes and brought them down to head level, as well as acting as hot-air flues at night: (see Roaf 1983 and A Coles and P Jackson 1975.) A device known as al badgir comprised two farsh panels displaced horizontally so as to create a 5cm gap which speeded air movement. These were built into parapets and walls at low level so as to cool sitting or sleeping people.

Low thermal capacity was achieved by slender structural frames and infill panels of *farsh*, which enabled first floor apartments to lose heat quickly at night, (although the diurnal range of temperature is small in Bahrain). Tall but narrow apartments facilitated cross-ventilation. Narrowness also prevented excessive sagging of the Zanzibar poles and so prevented ponding of rain-water and leakage. Provision to catch prevailing wind and minimise solar radiation is important: this topic is discussed in detail in Yarwood (1988).

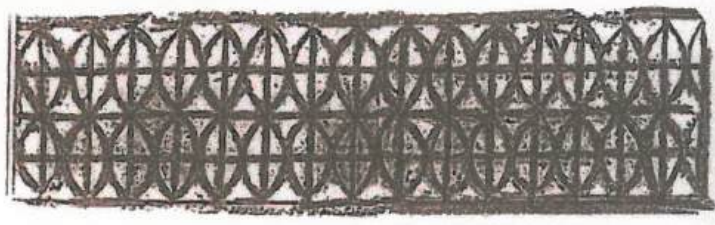
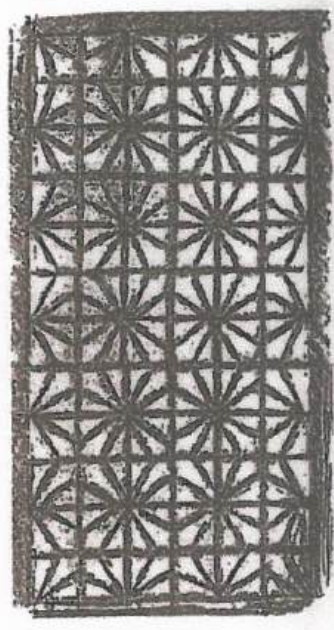
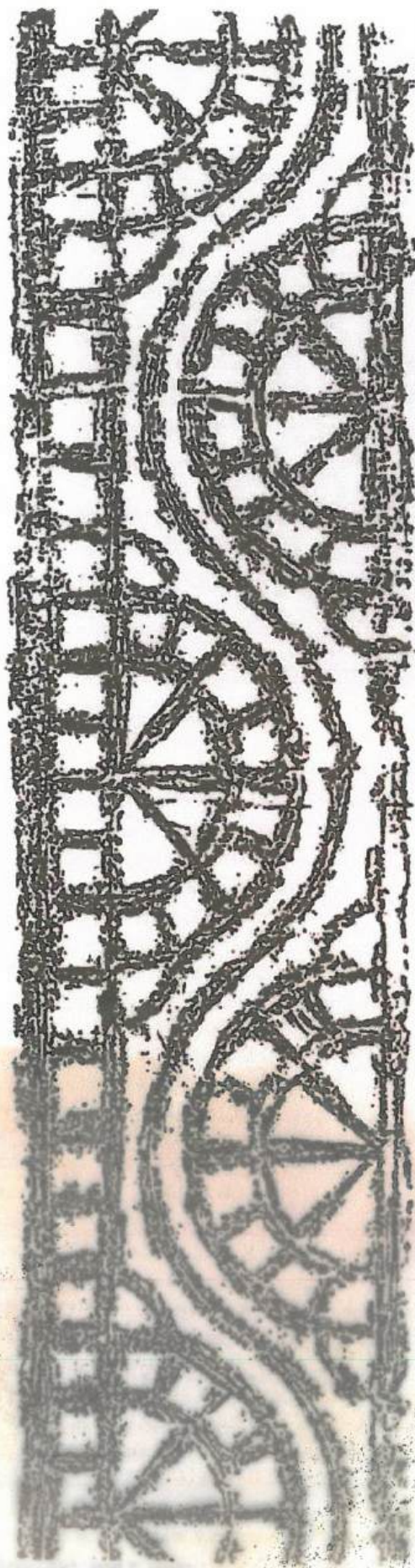


Fig 2.2 Various carved plaster panels

Building Envelope

Building elevations have a very systematic quality which arises partly from the rectilinear structural grid. There is a certain clarity which comes from a limited range of components arranged in a consistent, repetitive but elegant pattern, and it is quite easy to identify the visual elements found on elevations. The principal elements seem to be:

- merlons
- mouldings
- incised decorative plaster panels
- recessed panels
- voids
- arches – true, blind, flush and inset
- windows and doors
- brackets

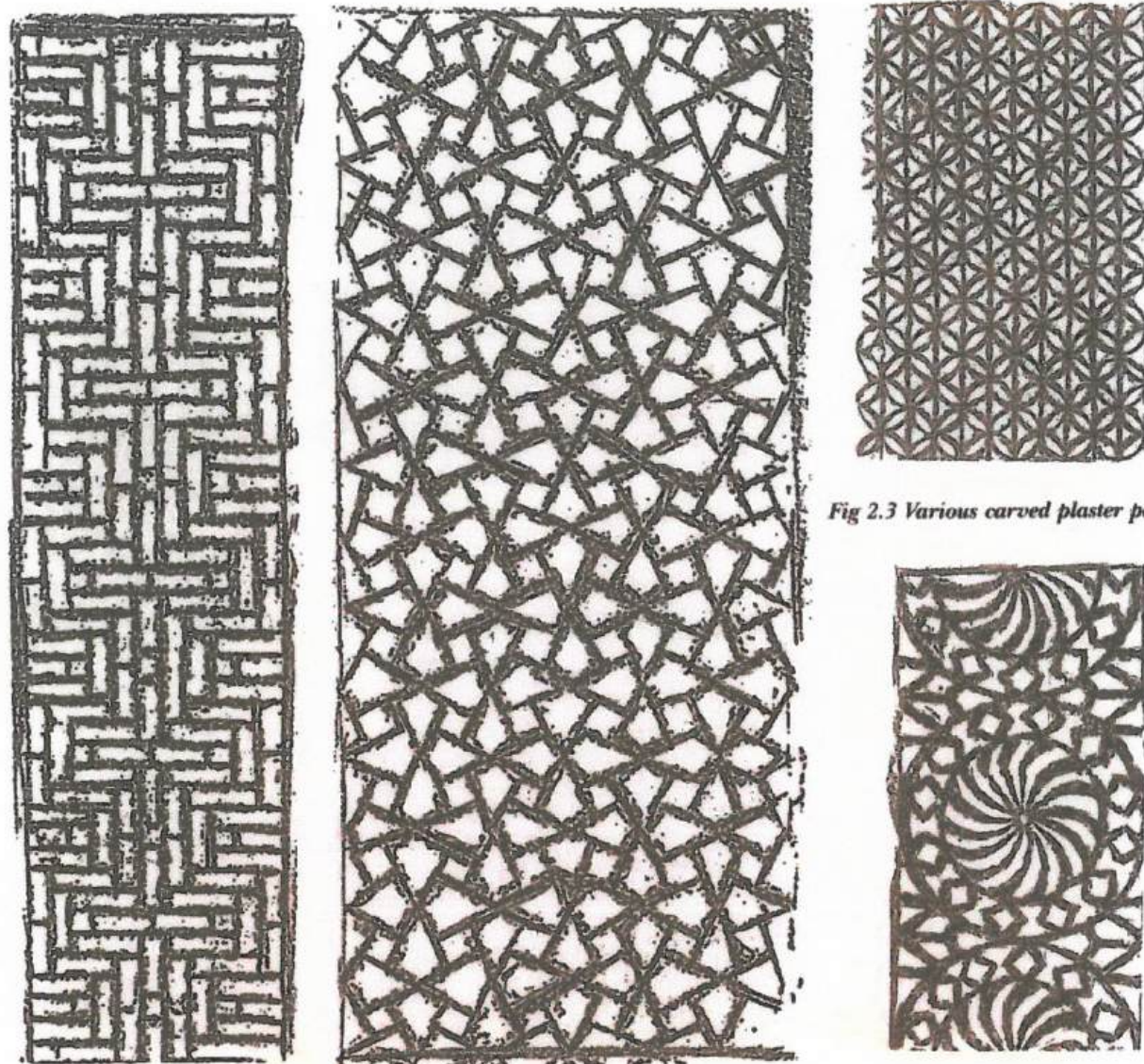


Fig 2.3 Various carved plaster panels

Drawing upon the buildings surveyed, the designs found for some of these elements are tabulated in Figure 2.4. There is considerable richness and variety. For example, I have discovered fourteen types of merlon.

The Bahraini terminology for basic arch types was told to me by a craftsman as follows:

semicircular	<i>Al Hillali</i> (crescent)
trefoil	<i>Al Bukhdadi</i> (from Baghdad)
ogee	<i>Ar Rumi</i> (peacock)
multifoil	<i>Ar Rumi Imthariyat</i> (decorated peacock)
pointed	<i>Al Bahraini</i> (from Bahrain)

It would seem that the pointed arch was regarded in Bahrain as a specifically local form. Mouldings and carved patterns also had names, and these will be detailed later in the chapter.

Geometry and Design

Much has been written on the significance of geometry

in the arts of Islam, and the general mathematical principles are now well known (see, for example, Critchlow 1976; Hankin 1925; El Said and Parman 1976; Bourgoin 1973). In Bahraini architecture, geometrical principles underlie incised plaster panels, and also small amounts of stained-glass and tacked-lath decoration. Geometrical principles can also be found in the design of elevations.

A complete analytical description can be found in Yarwood (1988).

Architectural Crafts

There were four noteworthy crafts in Bahraini architecture. Metalwork was restricted mainly to decorative wrought-iron window grilles, of which few now remain. Wood-carving was used mainly for the bolt hasps and central stops of doors and shutters, and also for architraves. The other noteworthy craft forms in timber were trelliswork (mainly window screens and ceilings) and tenoned grilles for windows. Stained-glass fanlights are an important feature of buildings in the 1920s. Lastly, plaster carving in panels and friezes is a

MERLONS														
BRACKETS														
ARCH FORMS														
VOIDS														
RECESSED PANELS														
INCISED PANELS														

Fig 2.4 Catalogue of designs for merlons, brackets, arches and panels

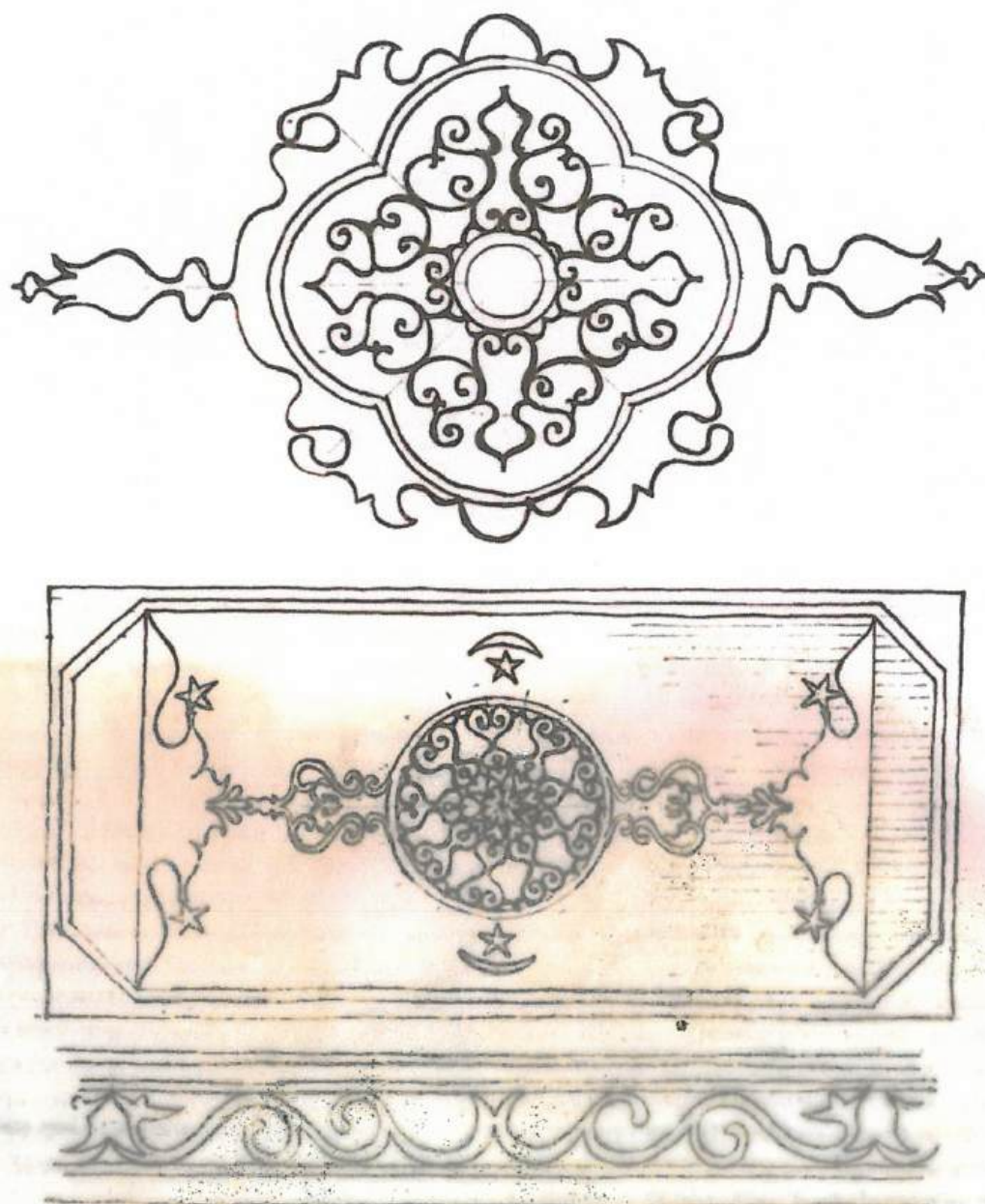


Fig 2.5 Fretted timber ceiling decorations at Madhar houses

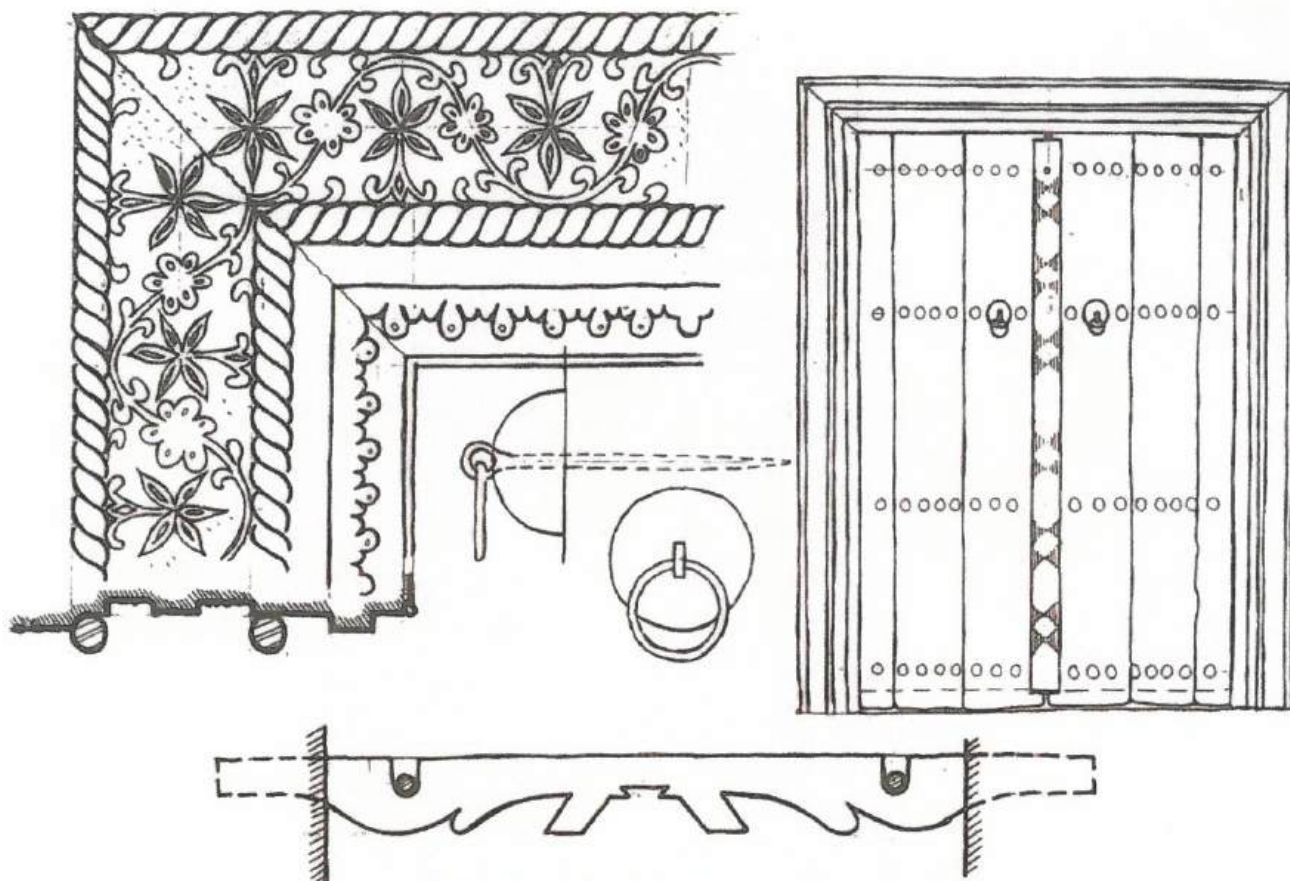


Fig 2.6 Sheikh Isa house doorway, architrave detail, iron knocker and upper door rail.

ubiquitous feature, justly well known and much loved locally.

'The finest work at the Seyadi house was executed by Persian carpenters and is nearly unique in Al Muharraq. It is possible that this was made in Persia and shipped to Bahrain. The only tacked-lath decoration and the only glass marquetry in Al Muharraq are found in this house too: see Figure 2.7. The timber fretwork and carving on certain doors was a unique prototype which spawned copies in the following decades.

Wrought Iron

Wrought-iron grilles set in timber frames (covering windows externally) are found in Sheikh Abdullah majlis, Sheikh Hamad House, Al Jahhna House and a house in Lane 1140. These were the only examples I found, but probably others still exist: see Figure 2.8. Clearly they follow a particular design idiom, having parallel vertical bars usually running from top to bottom. There are curlicues back-to-back on these bars, and they form horizontal rows, and there may be petals formed by bars enclosing the curlicues. The Sheikh Abdullah design has beautiful double flowers.

Wooden Carving and Fretwork

Doorpost carving is generally in three styles:

- Lozenge style: the cross section of the door stop is rectangular with a 'necklace' of lozenges and

rhomboids. The lozenge sides are often carved in steps, which gives a very distinctive (almost crystalline) appearance.

- Fluid style: the rectangular cross-section is carved into a 'necklace' of fluid shapes, mainly circles, quatrefoils, and ovals.
- 'Lily' style: the cross-section is semicircular. There is a stylized lily at the top. The most characteristic decoration is vertical fluting, which becomes spiral in form and again vertical. It would appear that the lily style was initiated by the Seyadi House, and is thus an import from Persia from around 1920. It is not uncommon in a debased form in the Al Awadiyyah district of Manama.

I next discuss window grilles: see figure 2.9.

Most window grilles were made from short pieces of wood (about 1.5 cm square in section) jointed by mortice and tenon. However, the grille frame was often subdivided by timber members having a similar section but spanning from side to side. These grilles are very strong. This is surprising in view of the small component size. Such grilles may be found at Sheikh Abdullah bin Mohammed House, Sheikh Salman House (majlis) and Matar House. The Seyadi majlis grilles are more complex, with outer panels framing a centre panel of a different design. The use of short elements was no doubt economic in areas where high quality timber in large sections was not readily available.

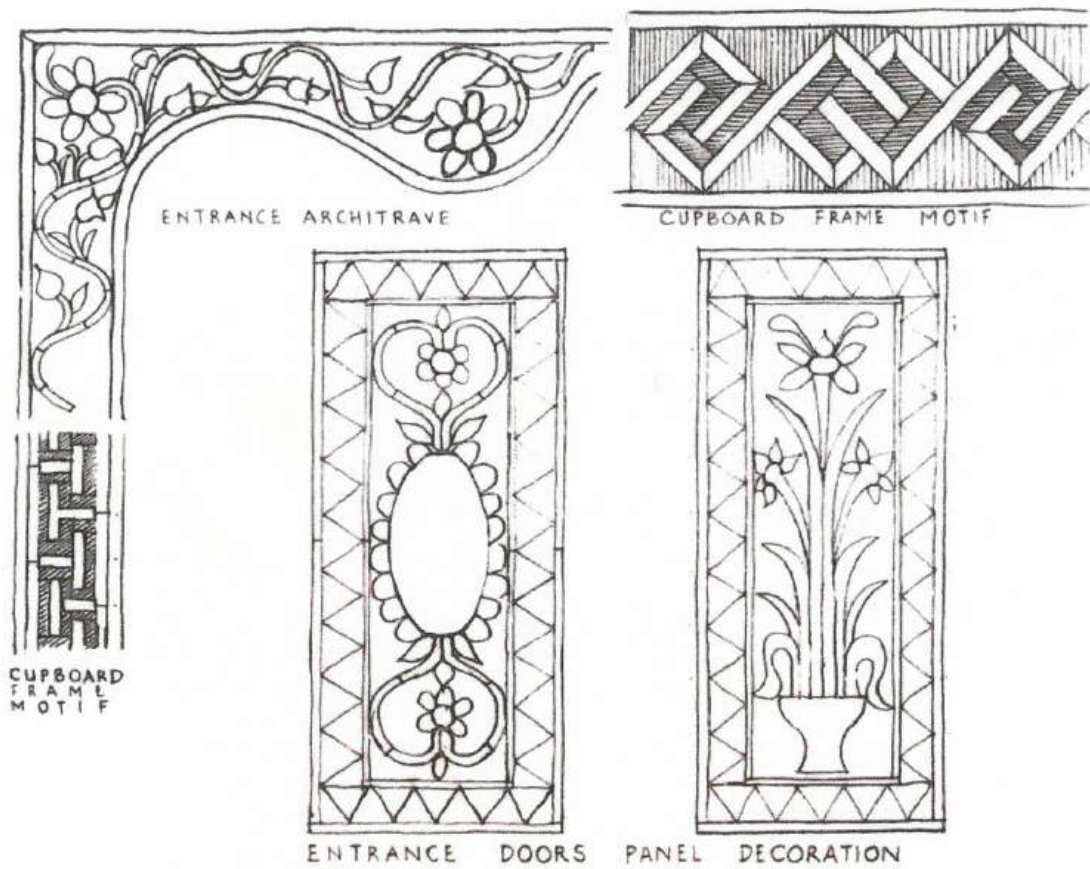


Fig 2.7 Glass marquetry at Seyadi House.

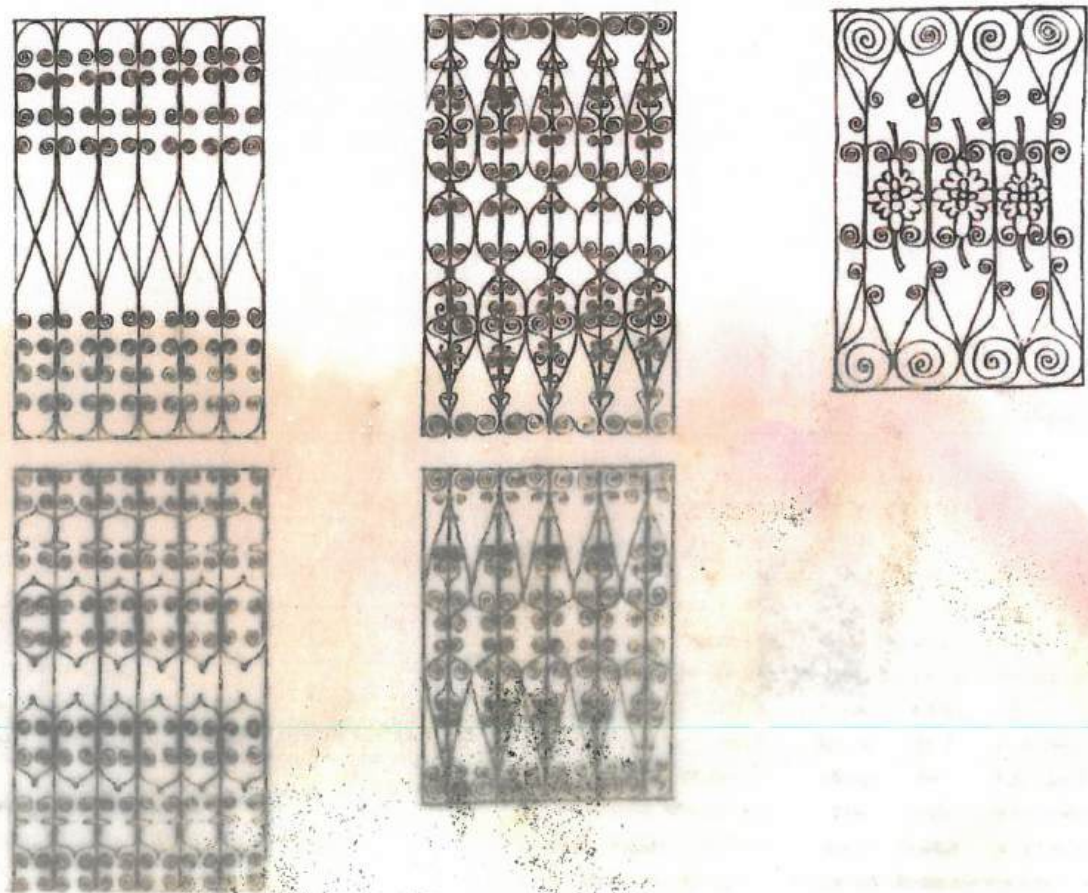


Fig 2.8 Wrought-iron window grilles.

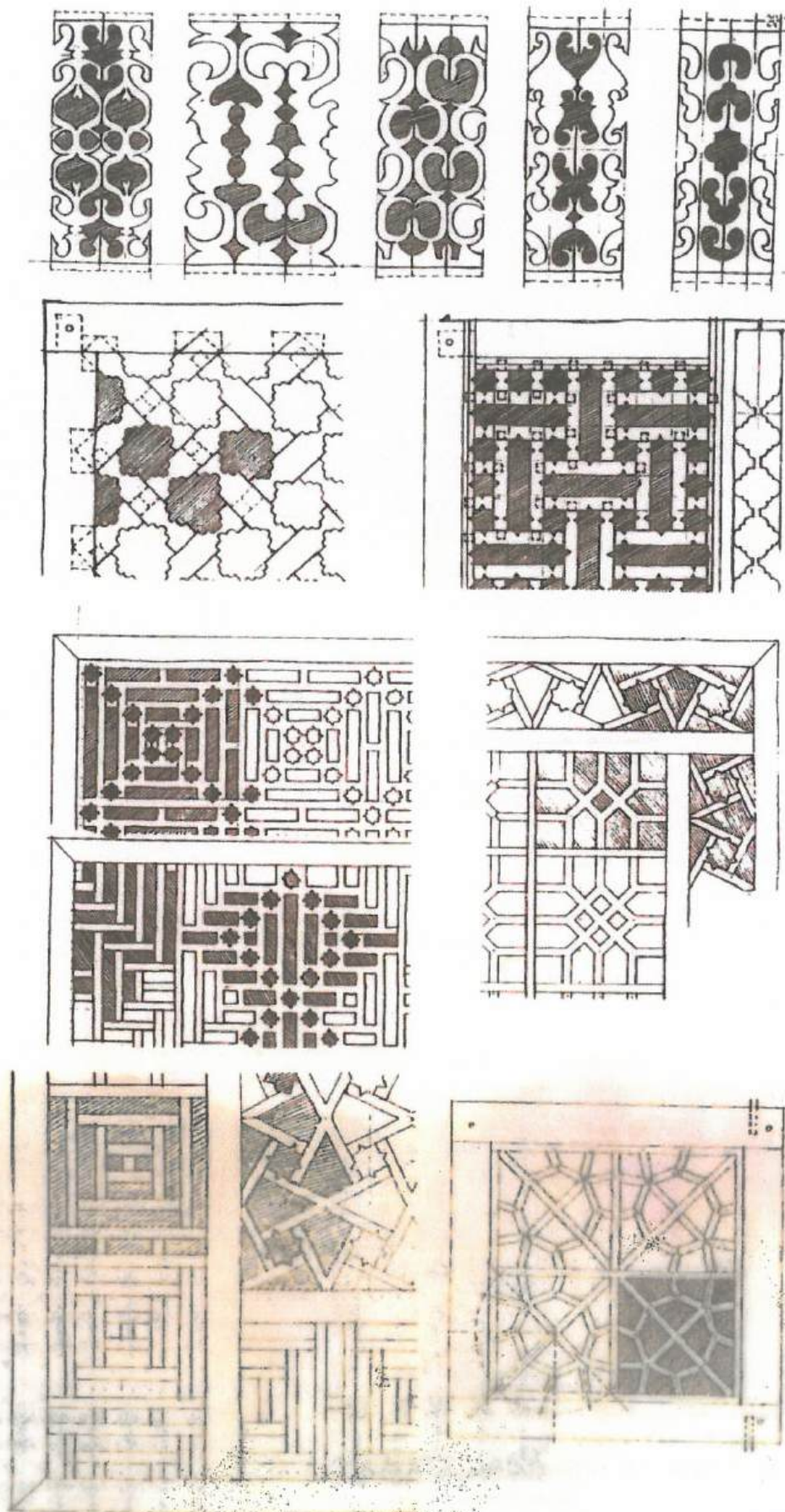


Fig 2.9 Window grille designs in timber

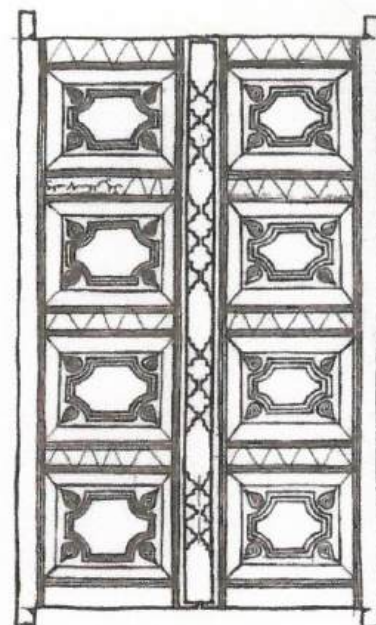
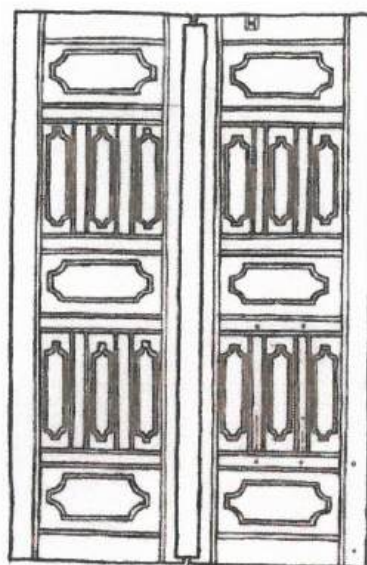
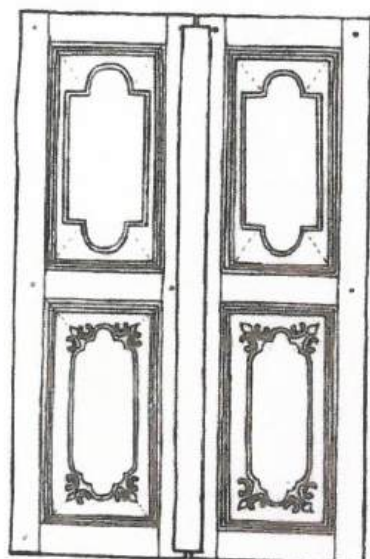
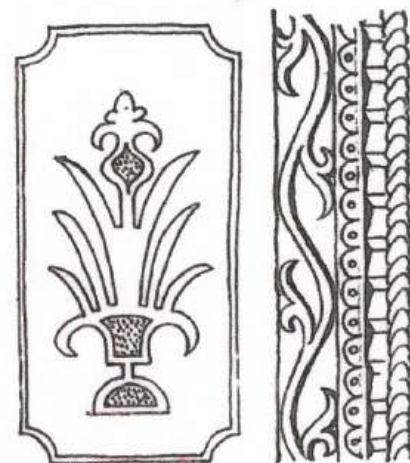


Fig 2.10 (above) Window shutters from Sheikh Isa House.
Fig 2.11 (below) Door panel and architrave from Malik House.



There is a second type of grille using fretted laminae, usually in three rows of seven. There are few of these – Sheikh Salman House and the Fakhroo House are the only ones surveyed here. There were seven types. The designs are all fluid and bold baroque, one might say. Similar grilles are shown in Coles and Jackson (1975), which describes in detail a house in Dubai (Bastakia district) built by immigrant Persian craftsmen. They resemble the forms of fretted ceilings found in the Mattar House and Seyadi women's *majlis*, or the painted ceiling at the house in Lane 918: see figure 2.5. They strike one at first as very free, but further study will reveal a repertoire of shapes, which are reminiscent of the sections of scotia, torus, cyma, astragal, ovolo, cavetto and so forth of classical architecture in the West. In addition there are flower-like forms (which remind one of honeysuckle and a rosebud).

Architrave decoration occasionally includes a foliage theme, as at the main door of Sheikh Isa House: see Figure 2.6. There are several common mouldings, which occur in many houses: barley sugar, decorated trefoil, zigzag, sawtooth, scotia, and so on. Some mouldings have names in Arabic, such as *mishara*, meaning tooth (zigzag), and *altatet habel* meaning twisted rope (barley sugar). Most mouldings are not named, or the names have been lost. The architrave (*guidhan*) is simply patterned (*manqusha*) or plain (*sadali*).

I think it is clear that a vocabulary of decoration could be drawn up. This study is probably not exhaustive; indeed the effort of collection and analysis

would be worthwhile because it could inspire new types and lead to the application of this decorative language in contemporary contexts.

Stained-glass Fanlights

I have recorded thirteen stained-glass fanlight designs. There may be more, but clearly they are not common. All have timber canes: see Figure 2.12. They fall into three categories.

- Radial glazing bars are straight pieces of wood, which ensure that the window is very simple to construct.
- Free glazing bars. The bars will not support themselves. These are found only in the Seyadi and Fakhroo Houses. These appear to have been introduced by Ahmed Seyadi's Persian craftsmen in 1920 or so.
- Late type. Introduced in the late 1920s and 1930s, this type is more common in Manama, particularly Al Awadhiyah district. The canes are thicker. Each radial is fretted from one piece of wood and so is

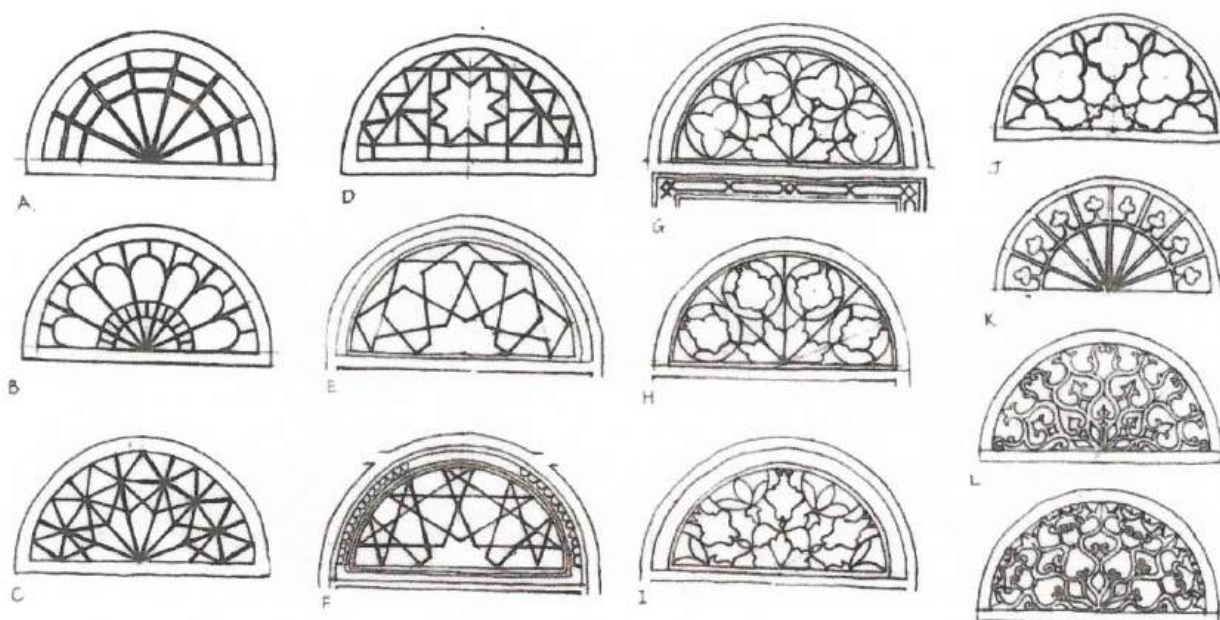


Fig 2.12 Stained glass fanlight designs.

self-supporting. The forms are fluid, representing foliage and also very explicit birds. The delicacy and refinement of the previous type is lost.

Plasterwork

Incised plasterwork is the main form of decoration in Bahraini architecture: see figures 2.1 to 2.3. There are many types of interior decoration, such as friezes, archivolt mouldings and free-standing motifs, but the main type is the rectangular panel. The semicircular and trefoil panels use the same range of designs.

Generally one pattern covers the whole panel, but in few instances a frame is provided around a central panel, and this will have a different frieze-like pattern.

There was an extensive Arabic terminology for each pattern. This has now been largely forgotten, but one craftsman was able to give me the following terms:

<i>Al Baythawi</i>	egg-shaped one
<i>Al Wardh</i>	flower
<i>Al Najmah</i>	star
<i>As Salsaleh</i>	chain
<i>Al Baydaneh</i>	almond
<i>Al Muthelathat</i>	triangles
<i>Ash Shuwarab Hamada</i>	moustache of Hamada
<i>Al Musa</i>	banana
<i>Ash Shajariyah</i>	tree design
<i>Al Mujassimch</i>	the planned one

The characteristic flavour of architecture in Al Muharrag is very largely due to its craftsmanship, and its very imperfection lends a spontaneous charm: one can

trace the hand of the creator more easily if that hand shook a little. In any event, the aspiration to produce a specifically Islamic architecture surely requires the creative involvement of the craftsman; building which emerges from an industrialized, disciplined routine must necessarily sacrifice the profound aura of historic Islamic architecture. For this reason, the revival of building craft should become a cultural priority, and the study of its history would then assume a certain urgency.

CHAPTER THREE

Historical Analysis

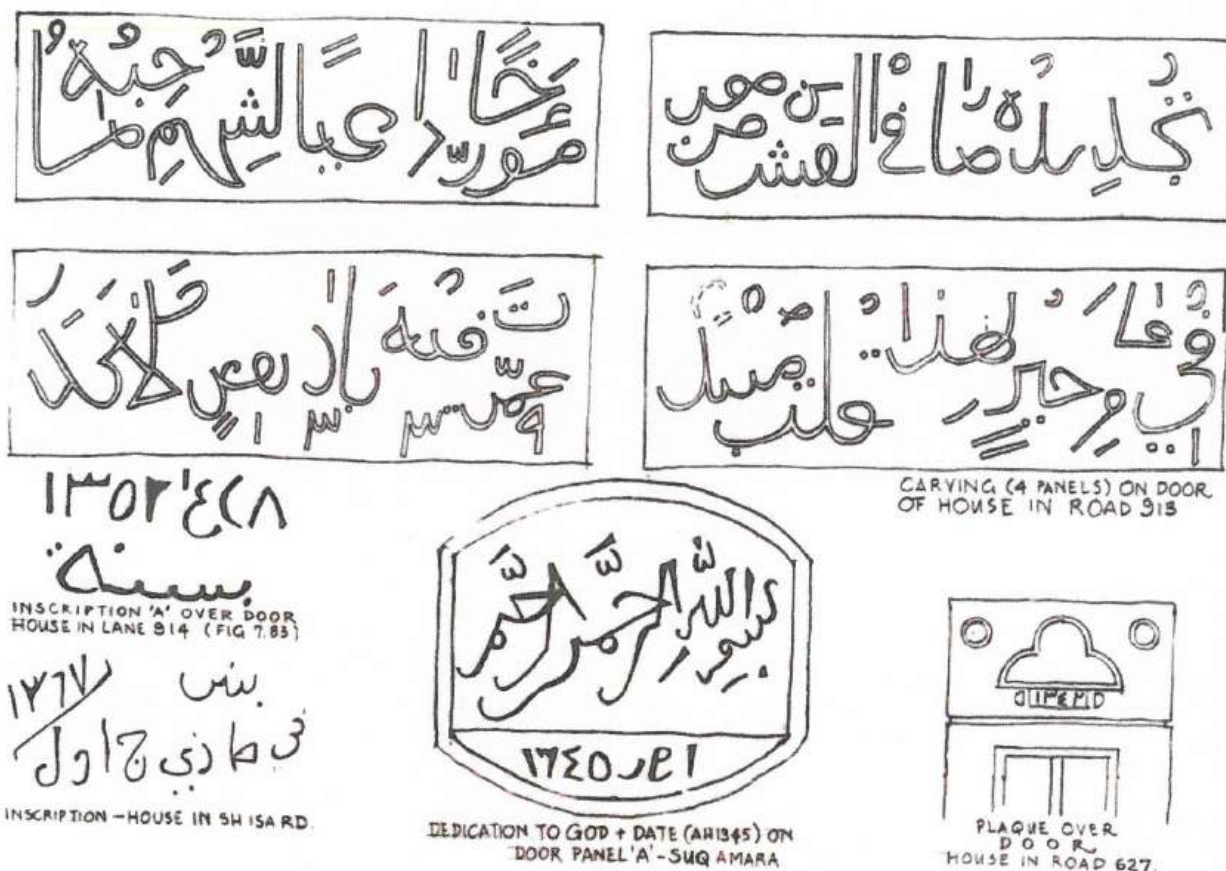


Fig 3.1 Inscriptions (Top: four panels on door of house in road 913. Left centre: over door of house in lane 914. Left bottom: house in Sheikh Isa road. Centre: over door in Suq Amara. Right bottom: house in road 627).

Review of Evidence

So far no one has established a framework for dating buildings in Bahrain, and this seriously limits one's understanding of them. It is hard to see how one style emerged from another, and so to grasp the evolutionary process. Establishing such a framework - relating particular stylistic details, plan forms and technical methods to periods of time - is not easy, because there are few documentary sources, few inscriptions, and so on. I have nonetheless proposed an outline solution to this problem using all the available evidence. Once individual buildings are dated, they can then be grouped into clusters which have common features. These may then be described as belonging to a particular style or period, the beginning and end of which are indicated by the range of building dates. It should then be possible to deduce the date of other buildings by comparison with this framework.

Four types of source have been used. First, palaces may be related to the dates of the Rulers who built them and to other known events; secondly, there are five inscriptions on buildings which contain dates of construction; thirdly, various people (particularly owners) told me the dates of certain buildings based on memory or family tradition; finally, there are a few dated photographs.

Three houses can be dated according to historical events in the nineteenth century. Sheikh Salman ruled from 1794 to 1825, and it seems likely that the earliest parts of the Sheikh Salman House were initiated at the end of the eighteenth century. The move of Utub settlers from Jaww to Al Muharrag in 1780 may have signalled a starting point for construction. The *majlis* was probably added at the end of his reign, or possibly even later. The invasion by Oman and the Wahabis forced Salman to retire to Zubara in 1799. It was only in

1820 that a treaty with the Honourable East India Company was signed and some semblance of order returned. It may therefore be reasonable to date the start of the Early period from 1820.

The so-called Sheikh Isa House was built by Hasan, eighth son of Abdullah and grandson of Ahmed al Fatiḥ. Abdullah reigned from 1825 to 1842, coming to the throne as a fairly young man. It seems likely that his eighth son would not have reached early manhood before 1840, and it is possible that this house was built during the 1840s, perhaps prior to the onset of the political turbulence which lasted until 1869.

Sheikh Hamad was first son of Sheikh Isa. The History of Bahrain by Sheikh Khalifa ibn Ahmad al Nabhan refers to Sheikh Hamad's palace being south of Sheikh Isa's palace and east of the Jami mosque. He was born in 1848 and ascended the throne in 1869. He may have initiated work on the palace about 1880 as his son was reaching manhood.

I have found only five buildings which have dates carved on them, although of course there may be others.

- a. *Amara* (warehouse) in Tijjar Road is dated AH 1345 (AD 1925). The carving is on a door panel.
- b. A house in Road 914 is dated 1352 (AD 1931). The carving is over a door panel.
- c. A house in Road 627 (al bin Shiddah area) is dated 1342 (AD 1922) over the door.
- d. A large house in Lane 913 is dated 1339 (AD 1921) by a carving on the door. This is a major renovation of an earlier house.
- e. A ruined house on Sheikh Isa Road (Kharu area) has an inscription on an internal pier dating it as 1367 (AD 1946). It is a very basic building with no obvious stylistic features. It confirms however that the traditional methods were still in use in the late 1940s.

Various Muharrag acquaintances were able to supply dates for the following buildings: wind tower in the *suq* (Road 1523), around 1925; warehouse in the *suq* (Road 1523), around 1890; Seyadi Mosque was rebuilt in its present form in about 1912; Seyadi *majlis*, 1922, and lesser apartment, perhaps around 1850; Sufi house, around 1935; Sheikh Abdullah bin Mohammed House (in Sheikh Isa Road), around 1880; Mattar House was built about 1928; waterfront khans were built one after the other by Salman Mattar from approximately 1929 to 1931; the Jalahma House *majlis* was built around 1915. All these buildings are described and drawn in later chapters.

Unfortunately there are very few useful photographs.

Description of Periods

Reviewing the buildings and dates mentioned, I distinguish four distinct periods, each of which has major common characteristics:

Early period	up to 1850
Transitional period	1850-1890
Middle period	1890-1930
Late period	1930-1940

Certain common building features are associated with each period.

Early Period

The general impression given in this period is of relatively primitive, squat and massive buildings with a horizontal visual stress. Wall surfaces are planar. Columns and beams are not expressed (that is, made visible) as they are in later periods. Solids predominate over voids, so that piers and walls are much wider than windows.

The traditional mangrove-pole roofs are exposed to view, and there are high parapets which may have corner merlons or rows of simple three-step merlons. Windows are small, almost square, and are located at floor level. Above each window are either one or two incised plaster panels. The top panel is much narrower than the window, while the lower panel is the same width as the window. Internally there are deep niches halfway up the wall; above and below the niches there may be decorative plaster friezes which run horizontally round the entire room. Horizontal zigzag mouldings at or below cornice level are a characteristic feature internally and externally.

Transitional Period

Most features of the Early period are present, but the general spirit is different. The buildings have an energetic and magnificent character; the sense of heaviness is replaced by confidence and buoyancy. Horizontal and vertical visual emphases balance each other.

High parapets with zigzag mouldings and three-step merlons are still features. Windows and voids are much bigger and wall piers narrower. This gives a lighter feeling and also allows for the emergence of the column. The piers are slender enough to lend a slight vertical emphasis; this is balanced by much use of horizontal grooves. Sometimes there is an upper row of pointed arched windows with a wide hood moulding above. There is the 'arch-and-frame' motif whereby an arch may be recessed in a rectangular frame with a rounded in the spandrel. This 'arch-and-frame' motif occurs in *fiarns* as well as apartment elevations.

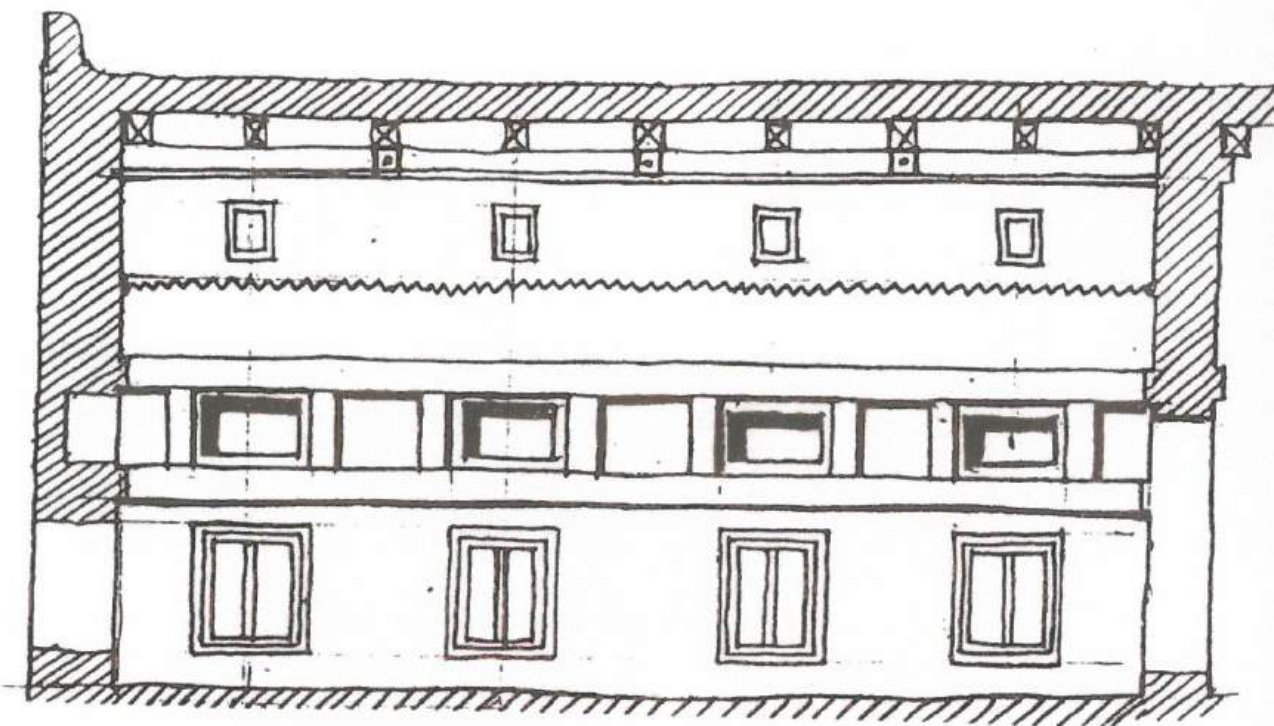
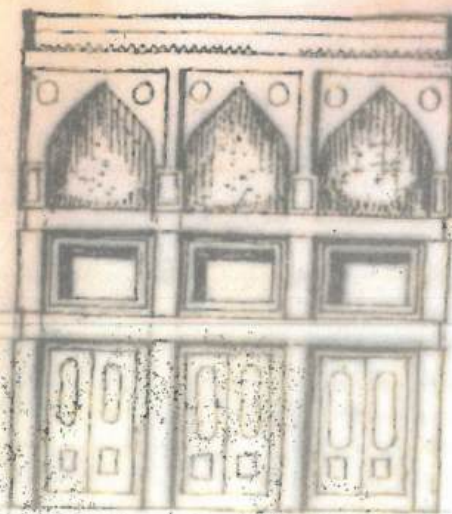
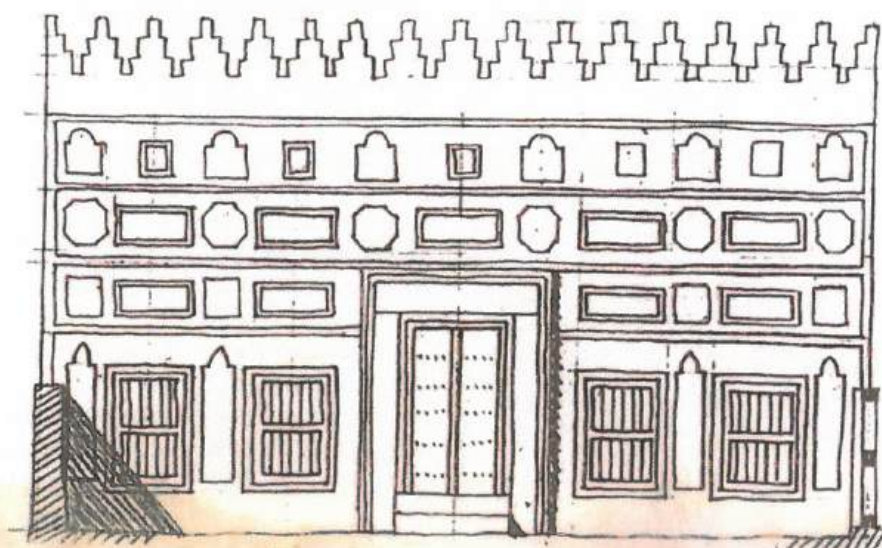


Fig 3.2 Examples of Early Period (above) and Transitional Period (below).



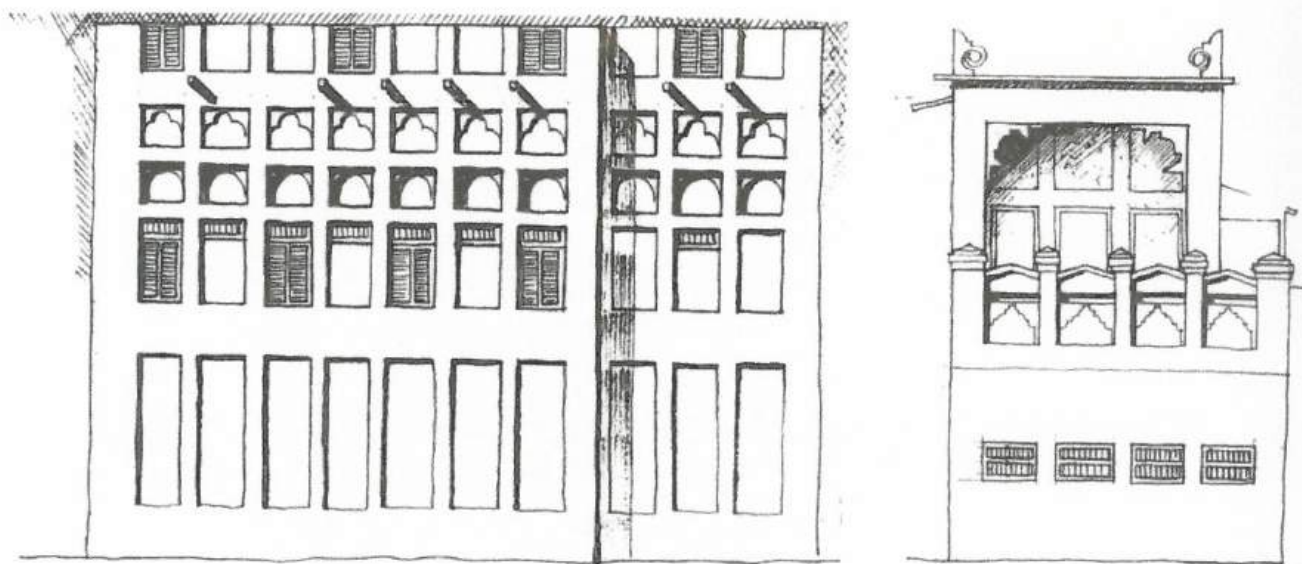


Fig 3.4 Examples of Late Period.

become increasingly fantastic. Coping, thin but boldly projecting, is common.

In this period framed doors and shutters are introduced for the first time, but the plank-and-rail type is also still used. Iron bars are placed vertically in wooden frames and also used like radial spokes in fanlights over doors as well as windows.

The Middle period produced three quite distinct styles: the Arcade style, the Perpendicular style and the Columnar style.

Arche style

The key feature of this style is that the face (or extrados) of the arch is flush with the parapet and pier, thus forming an 'archade' motif on the face of the building. Windows are usually rectangular and low. At roof level there may be merlons but never coping.

Perpendicular style

The key feature visually is a strong vertical stress. Windows are about two metres tall with glazed fanlights. There is a deep cornice beam below the coping, which projects boldly so as to terminate the vertical thrust of the piers. In contrast to the Arcade style, arches are recessed behind the cornice beam. Pointed arches are never found, nor is external incised plaster decoration.

Columnar style

This is a development of the Perpendicular style. *Liwan* (or galleries) are very large and may run the whole length of an apartment or along two, three or all four sides. There may be a colonnade at ground level below the *liwan*. Mostly there are no arches but only a cornice beam, and columns are emphasized as the main visual feature. These may be round, octagonal or square, with plain capitals and bases of contrasting form (for example, an octagonal column on a square base).

Late Period

Bahraini architecture dissolves into eclecticism and plurality in this period. There is much loss of quality. Fine detailing is rarely found, and this reflects the economic consequences of the collapse of the pearling industry. On the other hand the basic themes of previous periods are still more or less intact. The expression of structure, the tall window and stained-glass fanlight, the bold coping – all are present.

There are more tie-beams expressed, at least on road elevations, and panels are often approximately square. Examples are the Sufi House and the Sheikh Abdullah House on Airport Road. The perpendicular emphasis is lost as a result.

There is a bewildering variety of doorway designs. Models copied from different places and previous periods are combined eclectically. However, the most common theme is a quadrant cove on either side of the door, with a heavily moulded cornice above.

The Evolution of Design

Having described the general characteristics of each period, it is now possible to discover general trends and tendencies. Nine points seem fairly clear.

1. Solids reduce and voids increase as time goes by; thus windows, niches and panels become bigger. It could be said that a structure evolves from a solid wall to a frame. Rooms become higher and longer.
2. The elements of structure (piers and tie-beams) are more clearly and elaborately expressed on the façades. There is an increasing concern with regular and repetitive rhythm.
3. There is progressively less use of surface geometric decoration on façades. Of course there are exceptions to points (2) and (3), particularly the Seyid House.

4. Where decoration occurs, particularly internally, it becomes orderly and orthogonal, less magnificent but more delicate.
5. Decorative elements become increasingly pseudo-structural. In other words, they provide a visual and poetic exposition of the structure. Brackets and arches are the most common examples.
6. Increasingly each visual element is separated or articulated. For instance, a tiebeam may be given its own plane recessed or projecting relative to the piers, arches, or panels. Internally a similar tendency is clear; the various layers of plaster are cut back or built up to create several planes for grooves, recessed panels, decorative panels, beads, friezes.
7. There is a general tendency towards a perpendicular visual stress.
8. Merlons are associated with a horizontal visual emphasis, whilst coping is associated with a perpendicular emphasis. There seem to be a visual homeostasis at work so that contradictory tendencies balance out. Thus the boldly projecting coping absorbs and terminates the vertical thrust. Stability and repose are reasserted.
9. Rooms become more open to the outside whether to an enclosed court or even the street.

There was considerable creative development in the space of little over a century. The basic technical means available changed very little, and there were no new materials or methods, although some improvements occurred at the margin, with the increased availability of imported tools, better quality gypsum and other materials.

It appears that most masons in Bahrain were really concerned with structure. Their wish was to narrow the load-bearing elements as much as they could, and also to demand more from them. This was to be made clear on the façade by expressing those elements in as slender and daring a manner as possible. Walls had always been strengthened by quartered palms laid horizontally and tied at the corners. This surely was a 'latent frame'; in other words, the beam element (as it later became) was present in the solid masonry from the start.

Between 1880 and 1900, one may therefore conclude that a new feeling emerged. The 'latent frame', which lay buried inside the stonework emerged from its hiding place to become the main visual expression. It has a cool, plain, analytic, rational nature.

Conclusion: Historical Causes

Are there any external historical events which have a bearing on the architectural developments in Al Muharraq in the latter part of the nineteenth century? I think the most important factor is the relationship between Bahrain and the towns of the Persian Coast,

particularly Lingeh, Bastak and Abu Shihr (or Bushire).

Lingeh had been ruled by a Sheikh of the Qawasim tribe, and the region was not controlled by the Teheran government. In 1887, however, the government removed the ruler from office and reasserted its control quite brutally. This resulted in a major Sunni migration from the region to the Arabian coast. In 1900, Persian customs control was tightened and extended, driving out more merchants. In 1930, Reza Shah's abolition of the veil drove out many poorer people as well.

The merchants brought with them their style of architecture, and many of their craftsmen too. They built entire suburbs in Manama and Dubai (respectively the Awaddiyah and Bastakia). In Al Muharraq, most buildings of the Middle and Late periods betray heavy Persian influence. This is evident in the environmental technology (of wind towers and *badgirs*), in the perpendicular visual stress and expression of structure, and in the use of stained glass and many decorative details. Comparisons with photographs or surveys of buildings of the southern region of Persia make this clear.

Throughout the nineteenth century, of course, a native Arabian style had prevailed, its origins deriving from the remote past of Mesopotamia. De Rivoyre, visiting Bandar Abbas (near Lingeh), observes a mixture of the two styles and characterizes them thus:

Dans les rues de Bender-Abbas, les habitations des Persiens et des Arabes se distinguaient d'elles-mêmes. Le cachet national ne manquait ni aux unes ni aux autres. Les premières, gracieuses, ornementées; les secondes, lourdes, massives. (1883:52)

Al Muharraq came to have much the same quality, and the development of Perso-Arabic cross-fertilization seems to be the key historical factor in explaining the stylistic development of its architecture.

Another important factor was the influence of Baghdad and Basra after the conclusion of the First World War. The centre of British political control passed to Baghdad at that time, ending the isolation created by Turko-British rivalry. The influence of Turkish *harem* design (which reflected earlier European fashions) could be seen clearly in Baghdad houses. It is likely that the curvilinear style of Middle period decoration came partly from that source, especially since there were several Iraqi masons at work during the 1920s in Bahrain.

CHAPTER FOUR

Description of Buildings

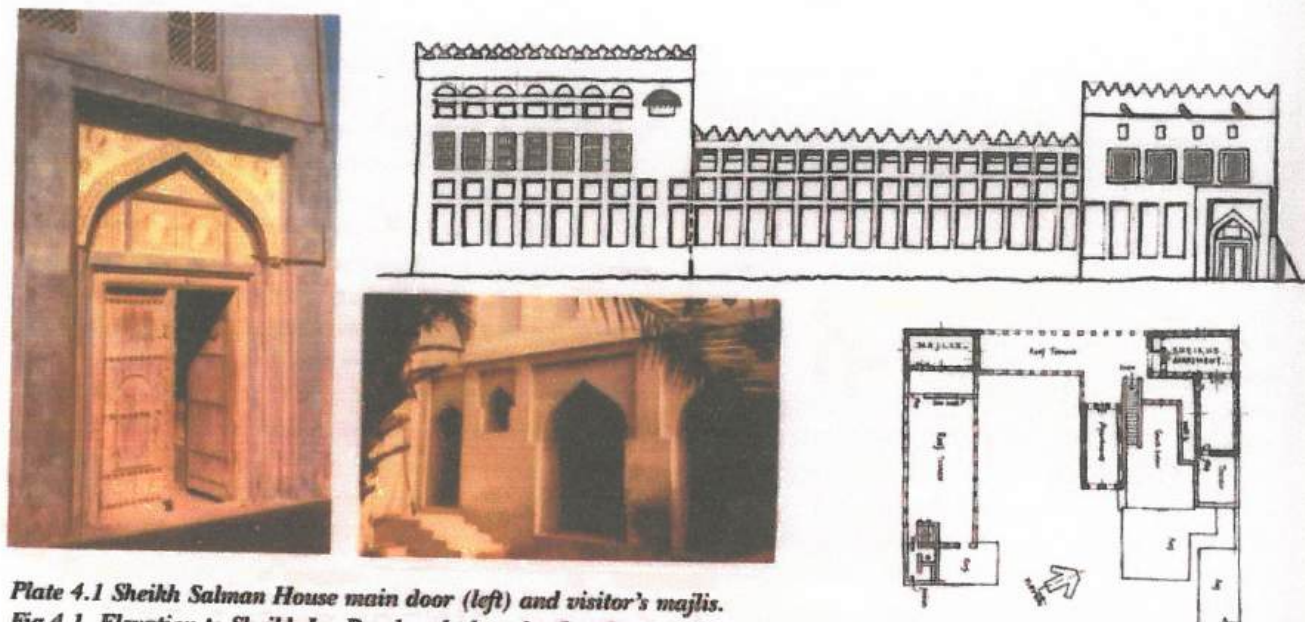


Plate 4.1 Sheikh Salman House main door (left) and visitor's majlis.

Fig 4.1 Elevation to Sheikh Isa Road and plans for first floor and ground floor.



Sheikh Salman House

Sheikh Salman's house (so-called) was built for Sheikh Abdullah bin Ahmed (son of Ahmed al Fatih), who was on the throne from 1794 to 1825. It was

afterwards occupied by his brother, Sheikh Salman. This house is of particular interest for its early date: the *majlis* is perhaps the earliest major room still extant in Al Muharraq. The start date may be around 1800.

The house is located on the east side of Sheikh Isa Road opposite the intersection with Sheikh Hamad Road. It consists of two courtyards: a family court reached from a visitors' court. However, there is also an elder son's area, which may have been walled off from the visitors' court at one time. At the far end of this court are the livestock area and storage buildings. Probably these originally had access from the road to the rear. The staircase from the visitors' or men's court leads to a terrace and thence to the *majlis* located over the entrance door and passageway). The staircase from the family court leads to another terrace giving access to the Sheikh's apartments.

The main door is a typical Early period example now much restored: see Plate 4.1. One enters the court at its southwest corner. To the right is the *livan* of the visitors' *majlis*.

Ascending a staircase to the roof terrace, one enters at the Sheikh's apartment (Figure 4.2). There are two horizontal zigzag mouldings below three-step corner merlons. There are three external niches which suggest

that there may have been a *livan* (now lost). The door has a semicircular tympanum. There is a frieze around the door and tympanum. There is also a door-head frieze with a flower pattern. Internally there are two horizontal friezes (with niches between them) and low-level windows. In addition there are short vertical friezes on either side of each niche. Shutters on the road side are solid, but elsewhere there are tenoned grilles only. The room has a ponderous quality. Between the two courts is the only interesting ground-floor room. It includes a hammam. There is a door into each court. The hammam screen has a zigzag crenellation with a decoration of segmented circles. The walls of the room have two horizontal grooves. There is a rhythmic arrangement of recessed and incised panels as well as windows. Passing into the family courtyard

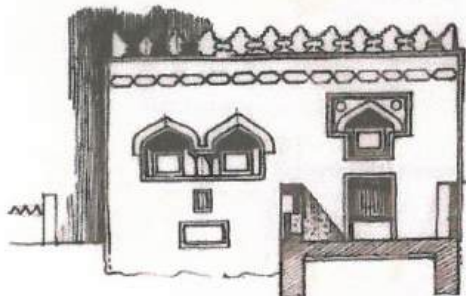
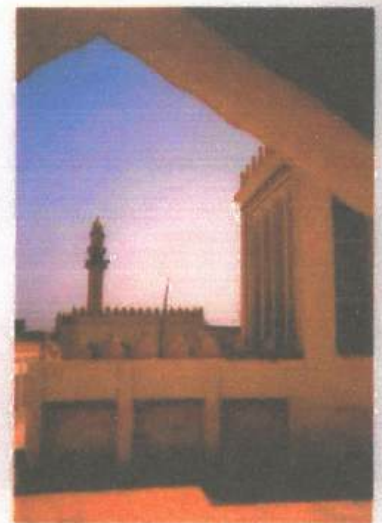
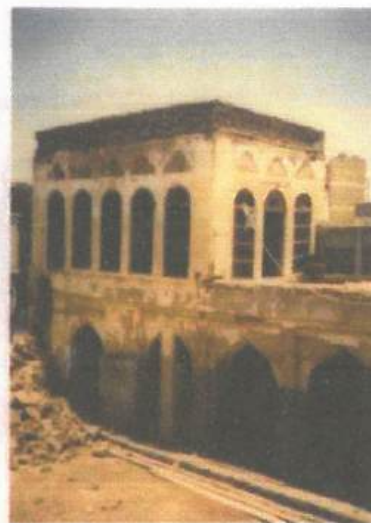


Plate 4.2 Sheikh Isa House. Road elevation, (left). Majlis, (centre). View from children's apartment with wind tower (right).

Fig 4.3 North elevation of son's apartment.

and ascending the family stairs, one comes to a second terrace. To the left is a Middle Period apartment (probably for unmarried women), which is very plain. To the right are two apartments for the Sheikh's family in an L - configuration built early in the Middle period, perhaps about 1890. There is a *liwan*. It has one large semicircular arch with a rebate moulding. The flank walls have segmental arches with rectangular decorative panels inset below. The panels have tiny three-step crenellations. The elevation of the apartment within the *liwan* is fine. There are three bays with a central door. Above this is a horizontal groove. Above the groove are (from the top) semicircular decorative panels and then rectangular decorative panels of the same width. Below the groove are a niche and then the window.

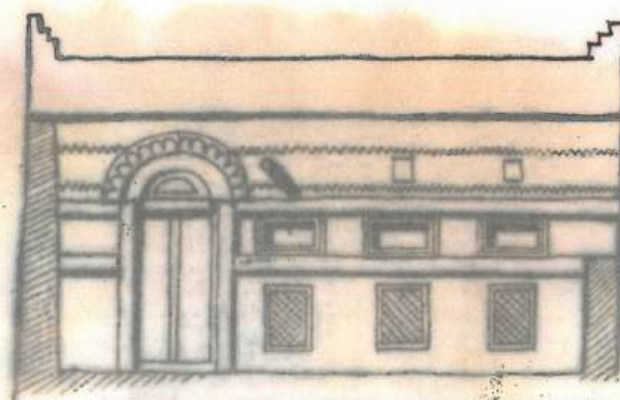


Fig 4.2 Sheikh Salman House. Terrace elevation of Sheikh's apartment.

Sheikh Isa House

This house (now named after Sheikh Isa) was built earlier than his reign by Hasan bin Abdullah, grandson of Ahmed al Fatih. It was occupied by Isa in 1869 or soon thereafter. The French Archaeological Mission published a study (Hardy-Guilbert and Lalande 1981) which is well worth consulting.

In an earlier chapter I suggested that this house was begun around 1840. A period of political turbulence lasted until 1869, after which further work would have been carried out. Most of the ground-level rooms and the children's apartment are probably Early period work. The Sheikh's apartment and eldest son's apartment appear to be Transitional period and both the main *majlis* and the wind tower are Middle period, respectively 1900 (perhaps) and 1932. But nothing is static; extant rooms are always modified later. For example the roof and shutters in the children's apartment are late - perhaps also 1900 - and I would guess that the Sheikh's ground-floor apartment was modified to its present form around 1870. A *liwan* in the servants' court and several first-floor structures have been removed since 1950, judging from aerial photographs. Restoration in the early 1980s introduced some details of dubious historical validity, such as the merlon design, as well as employing inappropriate modern materials.

There are four courtyards, and the house fills its own block (that is, it is surrounded by roads). It has very impressive external elevations; massive, immensely long, white and blank with ranks of *mirzams* casting long diagonal shadows; Plate 4.2.

The visitors' and men's court has its own street

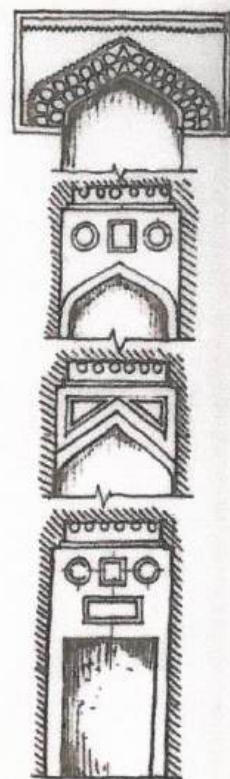
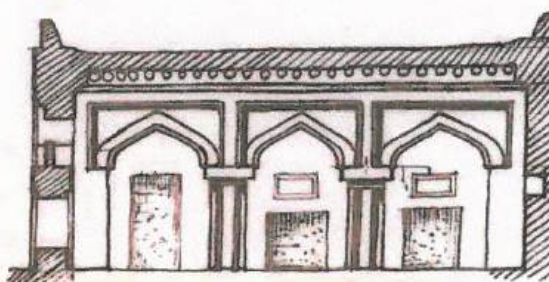
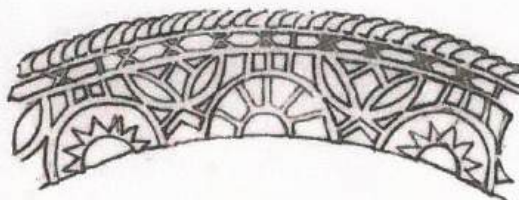
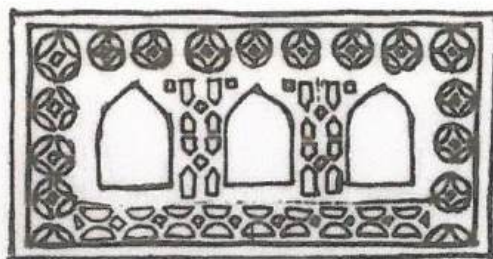


Plate 4.3 Sheikh Isa House. Children's apartment (above left). Column in son's apartment (below left).

Fig 4.5 Arch extrados mouldings (centre). Son's apartment internal arcade, (centre below). Archway sequence (right).

doorway, reached via the usual L-shaped passage. There is a business *majlis*, two men's rooms and two adjacent *liwans*. An open passage leads to animal stalls and a kitchen, and thence into the servants' court.

The staircases lead to terraces outside the visitors' apartment and the main *majlis*. The visitors' staircase is walled in and has a fine double door. The *majlis* is in the Middle period 'smooth' manner. Externally there are tall windows (with iron bars or louvres) and fanlights. There are trefoil panels above.

The servants' court has a staircase which allows direct service of the *majlis*, visitors' and girls' apartments. The women's court has its own street door. There are three polylobed arches to the street door, to the kitchen and to the passageway into the Sheikh's private court. The wind tower and adjacent family room were added by Sheikha Aisha, wife of Sheikh Isa: see Figure 4.4.

One staircase leads to a terrace to the rear of the Sheikh's apartment. The other staircase leads to a terrace giving access to the girls', children's and Sheikh's apartments. There is also a staircase from the Sheikh's private quarters. Perhaps one staircase was used by servants and women, whereas the other would be used by members of the Sheikh's immediate family.

The eldest son's apartment has two columns carrying a central beam. It is thus two bays wide. There

are double-pointed voids at high level with central stub columns. The north window facing the terrace is a fine composition; there is a pointed archivolt frieze set within a rectangular frame.

The Sheikh's apartment has a *liwan* on the long side. The elevation of the apartment (facing the *liwan*) has a very elaborate decorative composition. There are three bays with pointed polylobed blind arches and plaster friezes. In the tympana are pairs of incised panels. The central door has a double incised frieze around it. The side bays have low niches with vertical friezes on either side, and a frieze horizontally at door-head-height. The effect is agitated and unconvincing. One could regard it as a 'dry run' for the Sheikh Hamad *majlis*, where similar themes are worked out with elegance and conviction.

The children's apartment is the best design in the whole house. See Plate 4.1. It follows on from the Sheikh Salman *majlis* design. There are four low windows on the long walls. The solids dominate the windows. Above are horizontal friezes with vertical linking friezes framing four niches. A zigzag moulding and small incised panels complete the composition. The roof was renewed in this century, and decorative plaster brackets support the square-section joists. The room is a well-proportioned, calm, reassuring place, solid and simple but also elegant, the only complete

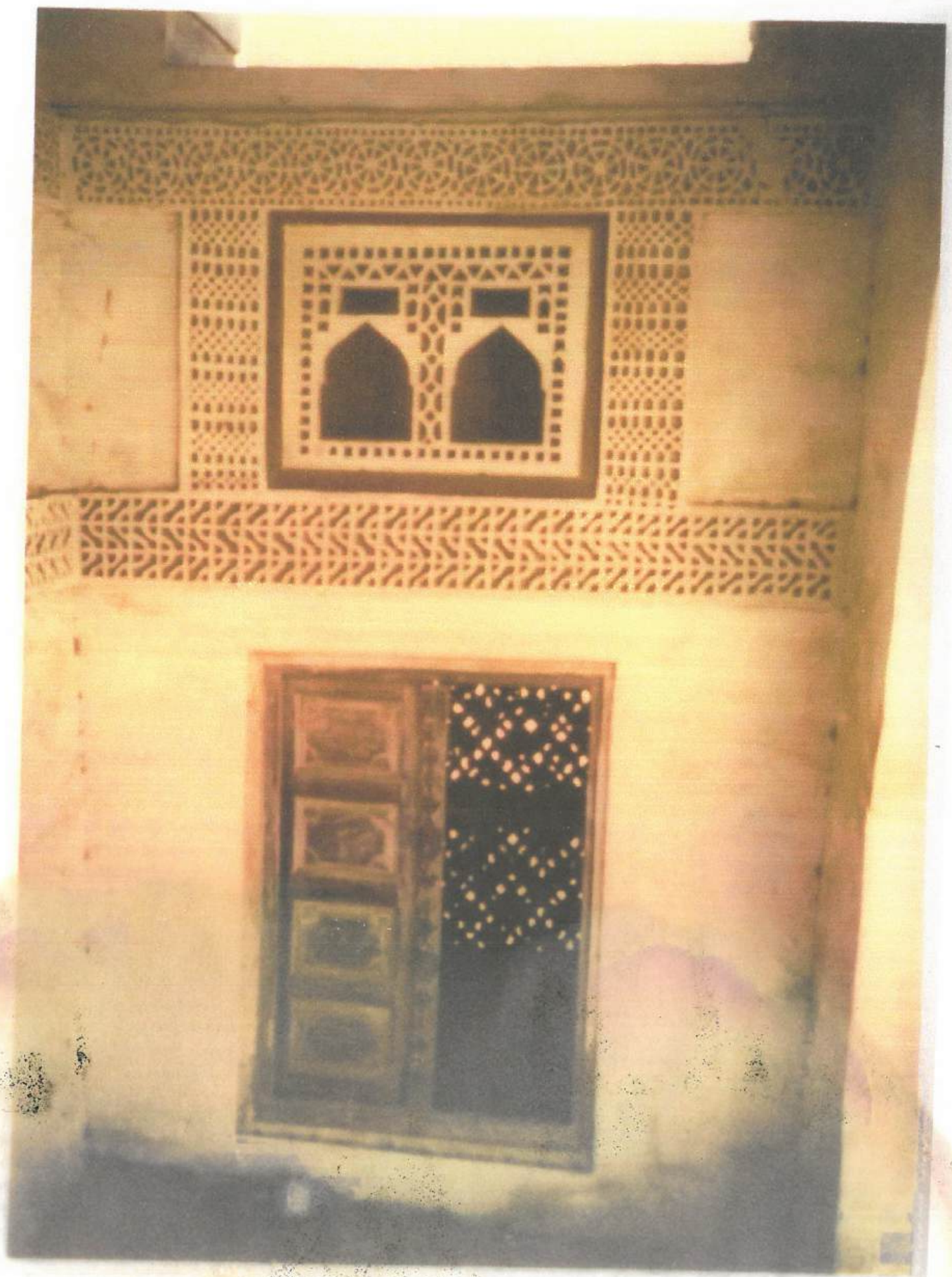


Plate 4.4 Sheikh Isa House. Side interior view of room of children's apartment.



Plate 4.5 Sheikh Abdullah house. Majlis south elevation.

success in the house. The *liwan* is very fine. It has a large pointed arch let into a rectangular frame. At the top of the frame are decorative brackets and zigzag moulding. The archivolt frieze is superb. There are incised decorative panels in the spandrel. The merlons are obviously a much later addition. The *liwan* sides have a pointed void at high level. Between the friezes is a plaster grille. These are the only such grilles now extant, but it is clear from old photographs that there were once far more; they have been replaced by incised panels below the pointed voids in the other apartments.

The passage from the women's court to the Sheikh's private court has a double polylobed archivolt to the entrance arch. After that there is a series of three decorated archways, each one quite different but together forming a delightful sequence; see Figure 4.5.



The family *majlis* has a double bay with a central octagonal column. The teak beam which it supports has the cornice moulding applied to both sides. The walls have a simple arrangement: two rows of niches and three rows of narrow panels (circles, rectangles and circles with alternate small rectangles).

To conclude, one may say that the main reason why this house lies not in the quality of the architecture or craftsmanship as such, but rather in the completeness and scope of the layout. Except for the children's rooms

on the first floor, one can find more distinguished examples of each period or feature in other houses. (Other exceptions to this general rule must be the archivolt friezes). Nowhere else can one find such a large, complex and complete nineteenth-century house plan. It is a cause for regret, as Lewcock has pointed out, that the artefacts of daily life are being removed – privies, kitchens and so on – because they are of no artistic interest. Such details would help one to envisage life as it was lived in such an establishment.

Sheikh Abdullah House

Abdullah was a son of Isā. The house was built for him as a *colony* man, and we may date the earliest parts of the house around 1880. It is a Transitional period work, but the *majlis* (the northwest apartment) is an early Middle period structure (around 1890) and the western apartment is in the Perpendicular style (around 1925).

The site is densely developed but has arisen incrementally and accordingly it is complex and informal. The visitors' courtyard is now cluttered with shacks and much altered; the western court is largely rebuilt. As a result, one can only hypothesize about the function of each court or apartment. One enters from Sheikh Abdullah Road, then so from the north. The main door is typical but now disused. In the northwest corner of the visitors' court is the *majlis*. It has six bays and one tie-beam above the low-level windows. The

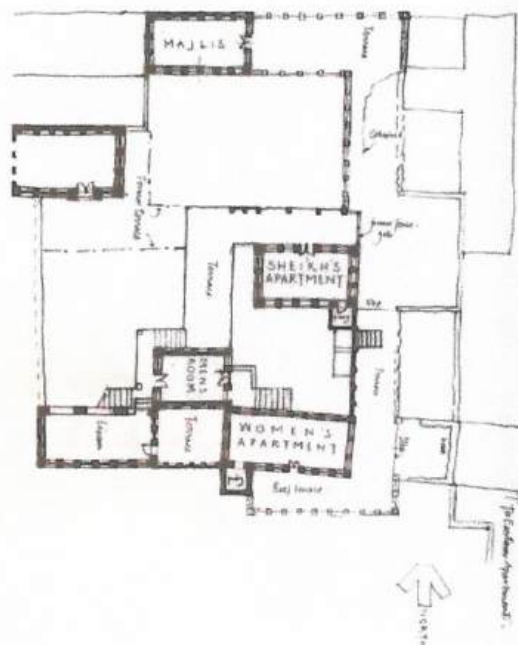
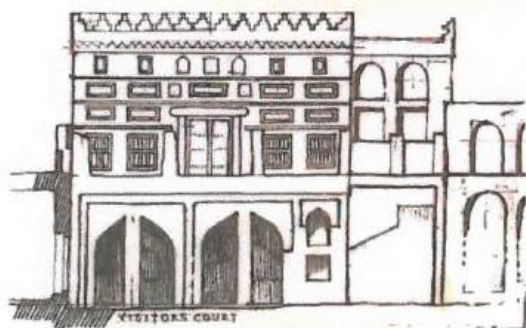
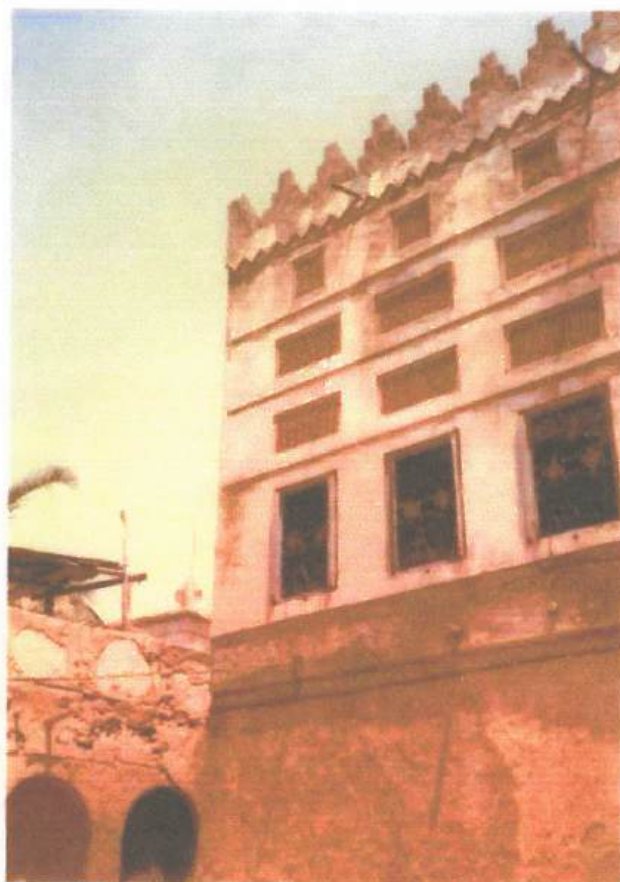


Plate 4.6 Sheikh Abdullah house. Sheikh's apartment main elevation, (top left).

Fig 4.6 Sheikh's apartment with huan below, (left). First and ground floor plans, (right).

arches are two sets of pointed trefoil and hipped ogee designs: see Plate 4.5.

The Sheikh's apartment is the real glory of the house: see Plate 4.6 and Figure 4.7. It measures three by five bays, and the outside is typical of the period: three-step merlons, zigzag moulding, three rows of panels (with horizontal grooves) lined up with low-level windows. These have lovely wrought-iron grilles. The interior is a surprise and contains many unique features. Above the shuttered windows are niches framed by horizontal friezes with vertical linking friezes. Above this is a spoked semicircle moulding and then a groove. There is then a row of incised panels, triangular ones over the windows and circular ones on the plain. Above a second groove is another row of panels. Square incised panels are over the windows. Recessed panels (with inset circular heads) are over the plain. Between

the two are incised decorative themes which I will call jug, pitcher and rose-water sprinkler. They are arranged on a symmetrical system. Above this is a small zigzag. The cornice cove is decorated with quatrefoils and rectangles with trefoil ends. The end walls do not have circular panels but instead there are incised volutes with foliage. This moulding occurs in Middle period work (such as the Tijjar Road Khay and the Seyadi House). One has therefore the feeling that the plasterwork was modified around 1920. This room is rich and startling. The complex scheme is carried out with consistency and sureness of touch. It is one of the most significant achievements of Bahraini culture.

To the right of the visitors' court one would have walked below a bridge (now lost) to enter the western court. From this a flight of steps leads first to a mediating room and then to an upper huan

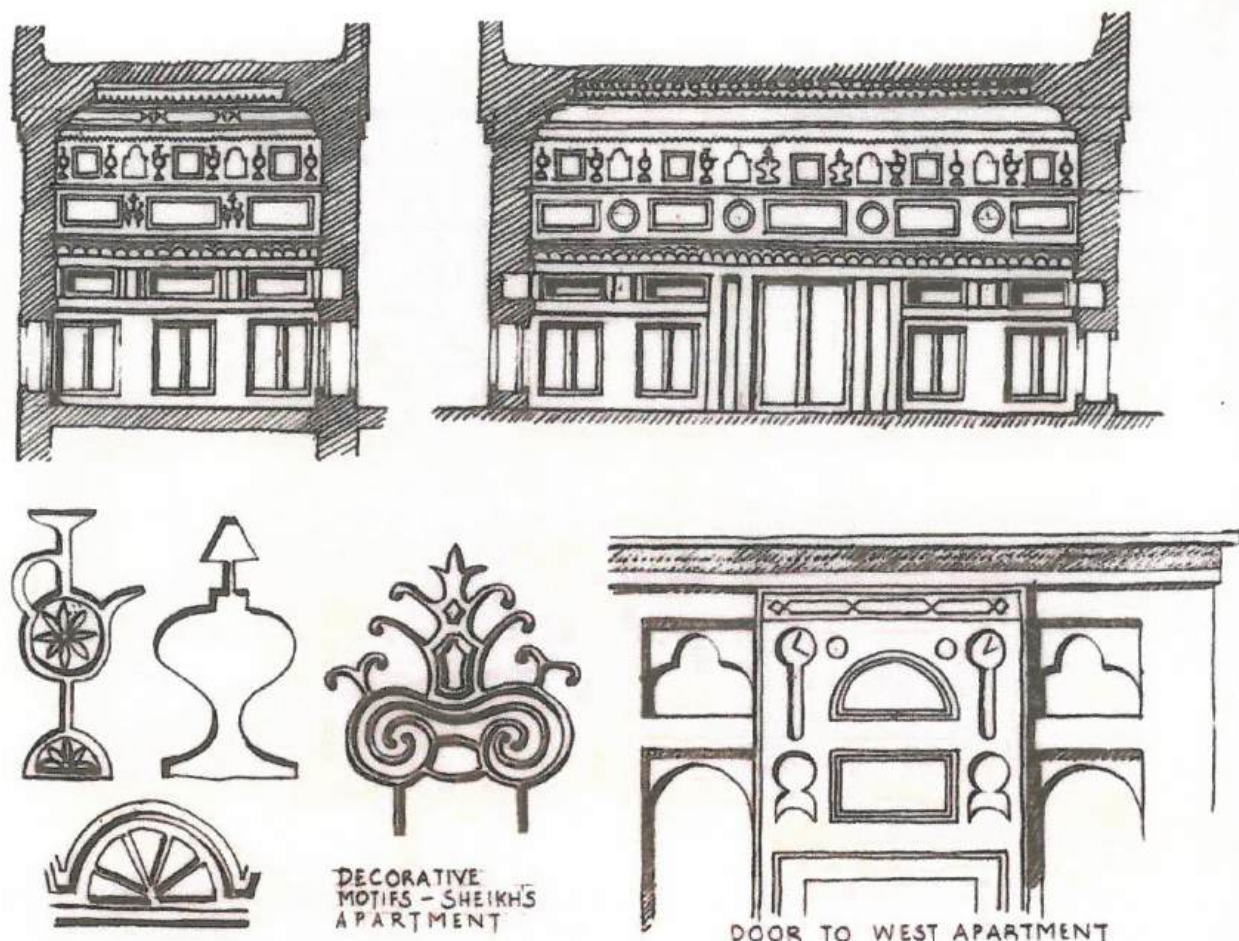


Fig 4.7 Sheikh Abdullah house. Sheikh's apartment internal sectional elevations, (top). Decorative motifs, (lower left). Detail of door head to west apartment.

overlooking the court, and finally onto the roof terrace connecting (via bridges) with the Sheikh's apartment and men's apartment. The men's apartment is Perpendicular style with a pendulum clock motif on the aedicule of the main door. The other apartments are rather plain Arcade style, with round arches to the bays.

The roof terrace system was apparently linked (at one time) to both the west and east, where apartments now function as separate dwellings. The most interesting one is a long noble Perpendicular style *majlis*. One is impressed by the deliberation with which the terrace system was put together. At ground level one can see long colonnades (or their sad remains) supporting terraces along one side of the servants' court.

Sheikh Hamad House



Much of the original house has been lost through the widening of Sheikh Hamad Road (around 1960) and the construction of Abu Ghaidh Boys' School (in the late 1940s). The only useful record is the 1954 aerial photographs, which show a major courtyard and two minor courtyards to the north. The original main

doorway is in the Al Muharraaq museum. An informant told me that the present Malik House *majlis* was originally an extension of this house, involving a bridge across Road 1349 from the school site. Apparently there was a courtyard on the school site also. To the east (towards Sheikh Salman House) was a subsidiary court and an access way until 1980. The present floor plans are shown in Figure 4.8.

The extant courtyard was divided by a wall (the remains of which still exist). East of this wall was the Mens court, with access from Sheikh Isa Road. On the south side of the court is a fine three-bay *majlis*. It is a free-standing one-storey structure, which is unusual. There are pointed arches in rectangular frames. The centre bay is wider and contains a doorway with frieze surround. It would appear that the side bays held big *fash* panels (now more or less collapsed). To the north are the Sheikh's apartments: see Plates 4.7 and 4.8. The range is two bays deep with some rooms gaining access from the lost northern courtyard. The Sheikh's first-floor room and *huan* are set across the ground-floor rooms. Beneath the *huan* on the ground floor is a family room of a conventional type. The structure of this design is rather complex and agitated.

In the northeast corner of the court is a spiral staircase built by the traditional method. At the top of

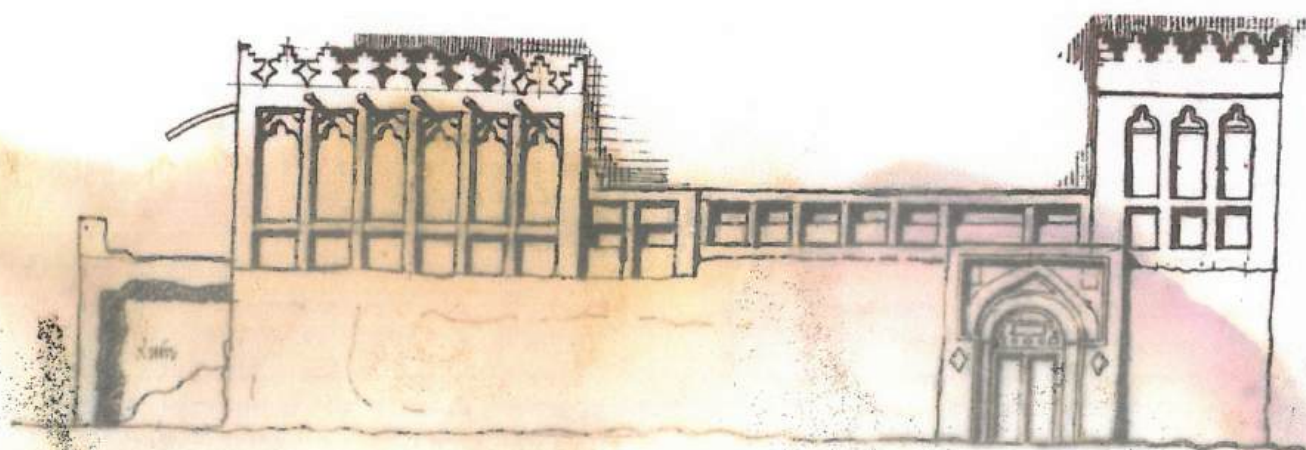
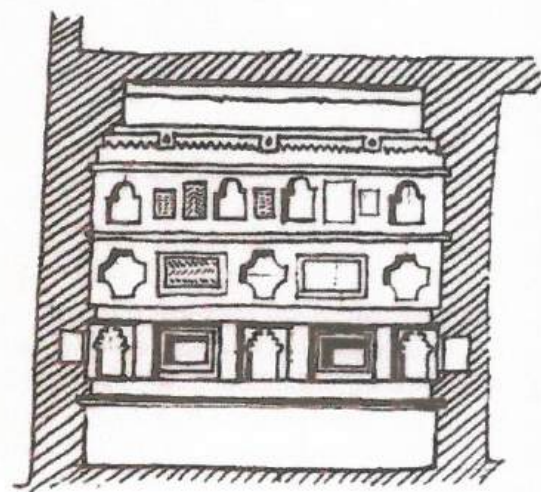
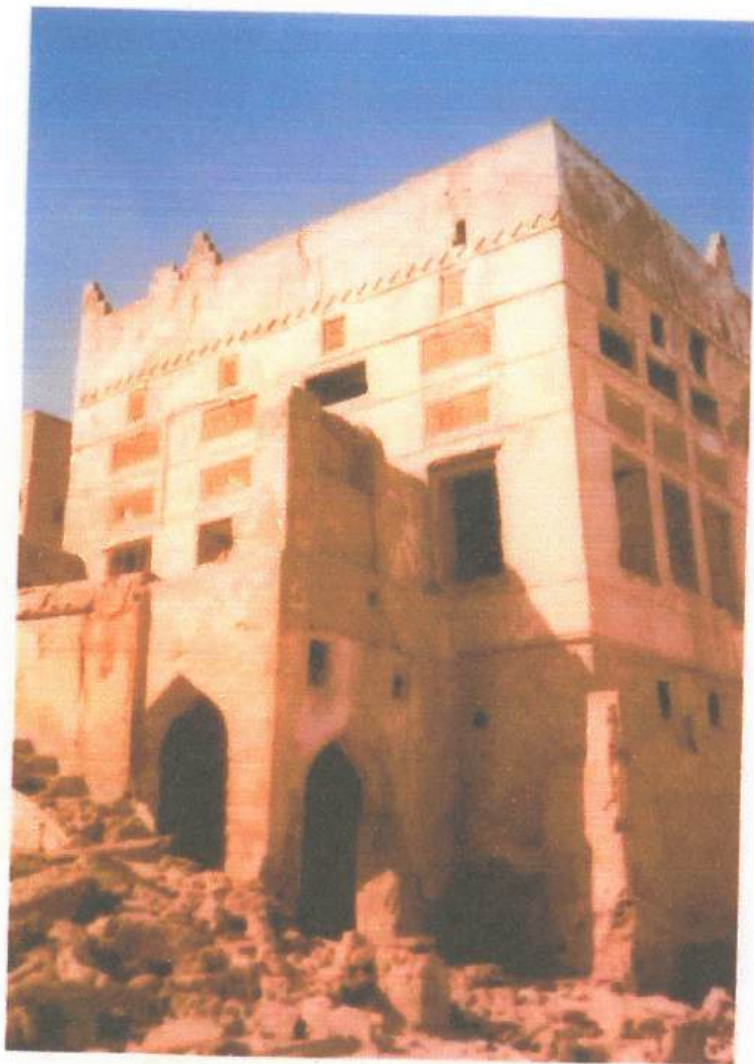


Plate 4.7 Sheikh Hamad house. Rear elevation of Sheikh's apartment.

Fig 4.9 From the top: Sheikh's living side interior elevation. Ground floor apartment interior end elevation. West elevation to lane 1349.

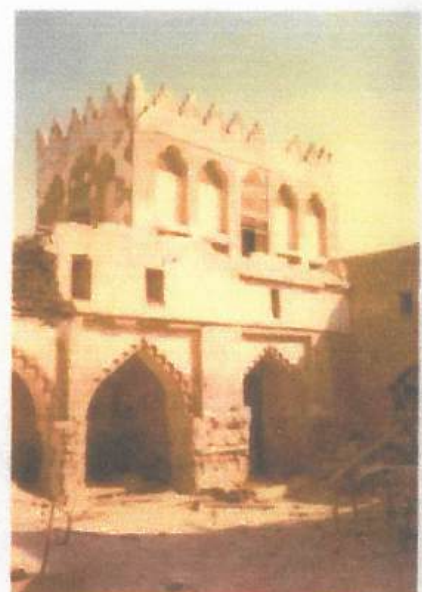


Plate 4.8 Sheikh Hamad House. Left to Right: Sheikh's apartment entrance elevation; door to lane 1349; women's apartment with *liwan* below.

Sheikh's apartment at Sheikh Salman House and the eastern apartment at Sheikh Mattar House. They are all Middle Period, but pre-date the advent of coping and the fanlight window—perhaps around 1890.

To sum up this house, I would suggest that its architectural quality much surpasses that of Sheikh Isa House even though the layout is not so impressive or coherent. The great glory is the Sheikh's room and *liwan*, and that must surely be the peak of nineteenth-century Bahraini cultural achievement in building (or any other sphere). That it should have been so neglected for so long is greatly to be regretted.

There is, unusually, an old photograph (from the 1930s) of the former main entrance facing west along Sheikh Hamad Road. This was demolished when the street was widened. The main doorway (preserved in the Al Muharraaq museum) has various carvings, mainly from the Qur'an, but also celebrating the construction of the house. They record the names of building workers.

Sheikh Abdullah bin Mohammed House

This is situated on the Sheikh Isa Road about a hundred metres south of Sheikh Salman House. It is a small but very beautiful late Transitional period house (1880) built by Said Yassim (from Al Hayayik) for Sheikh Abdullah, who was a son of Sheikh Mohammed bin Khalifah. The elevations are given in Figure 4.10.

There is a typical main doorway into an 'I' shaped passage (with doorkeeper's room to the left—exactly as at Sheikh Salman House). One enters the courtyard at the corner. To the left is a two-bay *liwan* with a living room behind. On the far side of the *liwan* a flight of stairs leads to a roof terrace. There is only one apartment on the first floor. It is set across the rooms before the

typical arrangement of the period. There are three-step merlons and a fairly shallow cornice. Four grooves divide the façades horizontally into three rows of panels. There are four low windows. Above the windows are incised panels. Between windows are tall recessed panels with pointed heads. Above these are three small recessed panels (round-headed, octagonal and square). Incised panels therefore alternate with recessed panels.

Internally the elevations are similar in spirit: see Plate 4.9. The windows have shutters and tenoned grilles (to the same design as the Sheikh Salman *majlis*). There is a niche above each window and a small recessed panel between them. On the row above there are no recessed panels (unlike the external elevation just described). On the top row all panels are incised.

The elevation to the street and the end elevation both follow the same system as the terrace elevation except that there are no recessed panels in the top three rows. Also the second groove is omitted, which improves the balance of the design.

Seyadi House

The original house was dated by members of the Seyadi family at 1850, although to my eyes it seems nearer 1870. The *majlis*, which is the principal glory of the house, was built around 1921 by Ahmed Jassim Seyadi (who died in 1972), and is without doubt the finest work of architecture in Al Muharraaq. The *majlis* woodwork was built by carpenters from Shiraz whose leader is remembered now not by name but by virtue of his one eye. The masons were Ibrahim Al Humayli (from Al Hayayik) and Yusuf Al Ramul (from Al bin Ali). Salman Sakran worked on it as a young man; in 1984 he was living in Hayayik but was



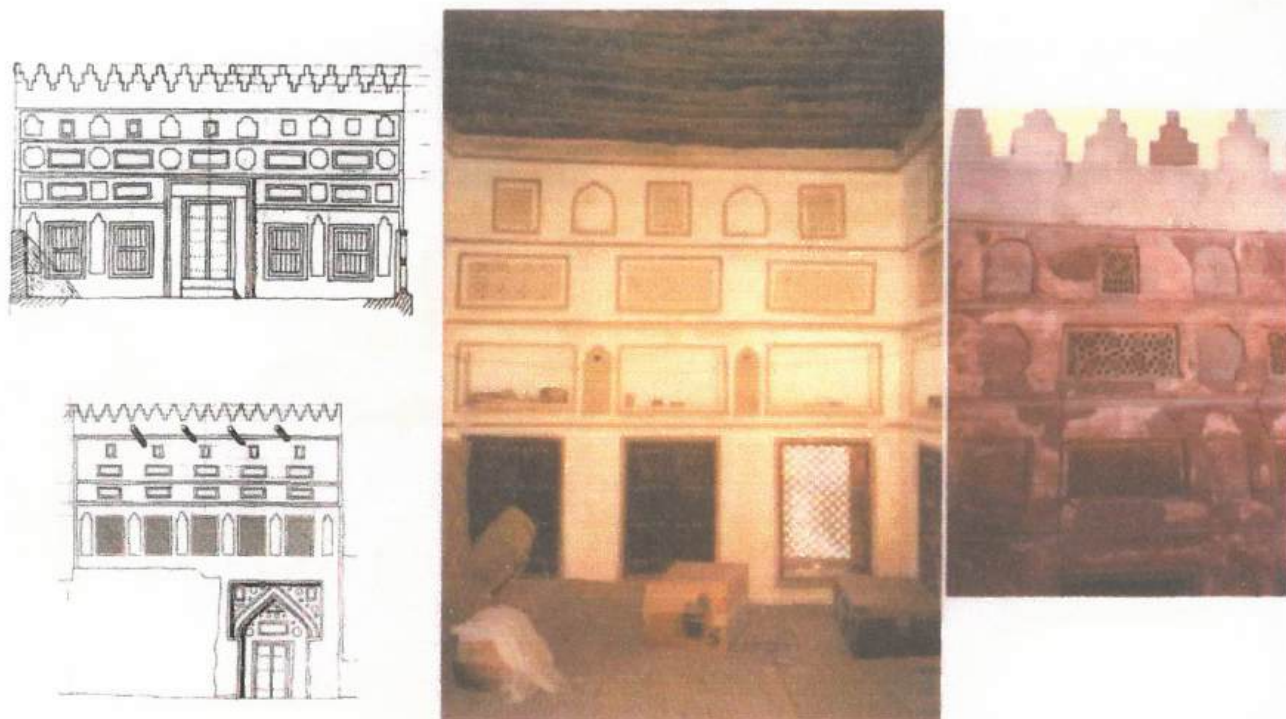


Fig 4.9 Sheikh Abdullah bin Mohammad house elevations.
Plate 4.9 Interior elevation, (left) and exterior elevation, (right).

too ill to meet me. The house was once a good deal more extensive than it now appears to be. The plans are shown in Figure 4.10 and elevations and details in figures 4.12 to 4.14.

My informant stated that a bridge crossed from the *majlis* terrace northwards over Lane 910 to several apartments on the other side of the road. Also he stated (and it is clear from adjacent ruins) that there was an apartment to the west of the entrance courtyard. A large wall has been recently built across this court, so that one is unaware of this. The ground-floor apartments and the smaller first-floor room are Transitional period and resemble the Sheikh Hamad House Sheikh's *liwan*. The addition of the enormous *majlis* seventy years later necessitated many modifications, which produced a very tight, dense, complicated house quite unlike any other.

The external *majlis* elevations are refined and serene. There is no expression of structure or function: the façade is like a veil, a smooth skin. Uniquely, the corners are rounded; at parapet level, there are cylindrical merlons with serrated tops. These remind one of fingers tensing a 'cat's cradle': they seem to hold the skin around the building taut and smooth. There are six bays on north and south elevations, each comprising four decorative plaster panels above a semicircular panel and a window (or tall panel). The grooves between the panels lend a horizontal stress, which balances the verticality of the bays: the result is complete visual equilibrium. There is a fine view from the south: framed by the minaret and colonnade of the

Seyadi mosque. The *majlis* floats high above surrounding buildings.

The main entrance was obviously built at the same time as the *majlis* by the Persian carpenters imported by Seyadi. The door and canopy are sumptuous. The canopy is in three tiers stepping out of the wall. Each tier is supported by timber rails built into the wall. The rails are linked by vertical brackets. The rails and brackets support horizontal and vertical teak panels (which have fretwork decoration). They are themselves carved. Above the door is a semicircular fanlight with iron bars radiating from the centre. The teak spandrels are decorated with fretted flowers. The architrave is rich and complex. It is based upon a round pole with zigzag moulding on either side. The door post is richly carved with a weave motif, spiral grooves and other designs. It is topped by a stylized lily flower. The doors are panelled.

This door was a prototype which changed the approach to door design in the next twenty years.

Passing through the door, one is faced by a passage about three metres wide and ten metres long. It leads into a small courtyard at the far end. The passage is open at both ends but is covered by a roof terrace probably added in 1921. To the right is a visitors room. The door into it has an ingenious adjustable louver. The main interest of this room is its ceiling. This is a tacked-lath ceiling with a heavy cornice. The colours are very bright and the effect is almost gaudy. The soffit of the cornice carries a geometric frieze also created from timber laths and bold colour.

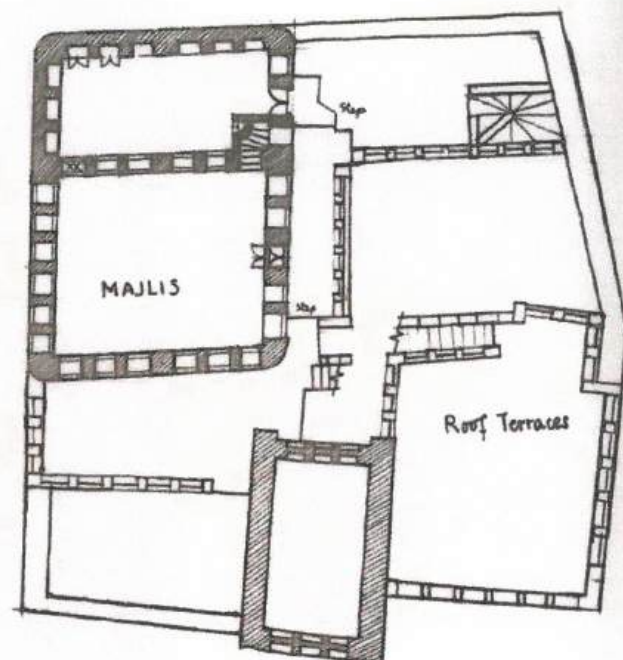
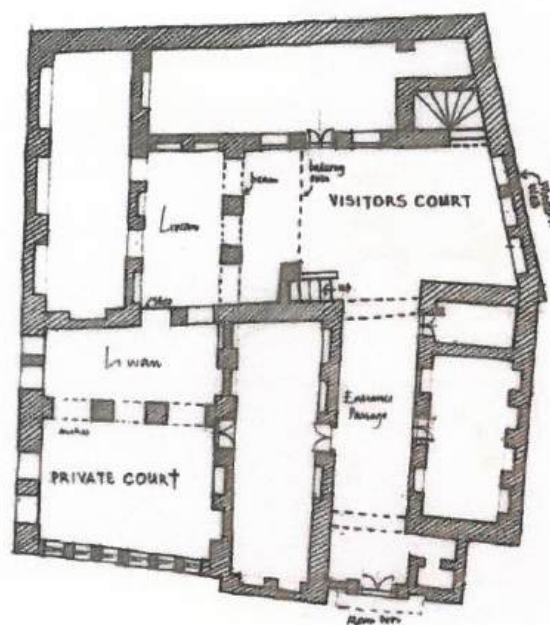


Fig 4.11 Seyadi House ground floor plan (left) and majlis level plan (right).

Passing on to the courtyard, one is struck by the height of the *majlis*, which towers above. Ahead is an apartment; the most noteworthy features are the carved doors and shutters. These are closely related in style to the main door. Again one can see how they were copied and much debased all over Bahrain in the following years.

To the left is a low *liwan* with a men's (?) apartment behind. This room is clearly Transitional period. The men's *liwan* leads (at its left hand end) into a second *liwan*. This fronts a small courtyard. On the left of this court is a windowless (men's) room which also has a door to the entrance passageway.

From the visitors' or entrance court, a flight of stairs leads up to a very low mezzanine room. This is situated above the *liwan*. The stairs lead further on to a landing; to the left is the children's (?) apartment. The entrance door faces one in the middle of a three-bay end elevation. This has three recesses with pointed arches, heavy hood moulds and decorative panels below. Internally the end elevations have the arch-and-frame motif found at Sheikh Isa and Sheikh Hamad Houses.

The stairway continues in the same direction up to a roof terrace about 0.8 metres above the floor level of this apartment. This terrace covers the entrance passageway and adjacent room. It looks like a late addition probably a method of increasing summertime sleeping capacity. A short flight in the opposite direction leads from the landing to *majlis* level. There is a balcony in front of the *majlis* and a terrace on the northern side (which overlooks the men's court). This system of stairways, terraces and voids is impressive. The stairs are very narrow, and there is a rather pleasant

sense of vertigo. The complexity of the different levels creates fascinating glimpses between intensely articulated 'heres' and 'theres'.

My informant stated that the *majlis* entrance balcony originally had incised panels between posts, and not *badgers* as now. He also confirmed (what seems obvious) that the side terrace wall did not originally have a row of three-step merlons. These features were introduced by the recent restorers regardless of precedent.

I turn now to the *majlis*. Within the overall volume of the structure there are two small rooms: a private bedroom and a room for wives above it.

I describe the right-hand wall (which is an internal partition, of course). The right-hand bay has a small spiral staircase behind it. There is a wider pier in the centre, which divides the elevation into two groups of three bays each. There is a decorative plaster frieze at 2.7 metres above the floor. Above this there is a single large panel in each bay, divided into five parts of equal width, as follows (from the top): a small incised plaster panel; a large pierced decorative panel (which permits observers in the mezzanine annex to look down); a very small incised panel; an incised plaque with trefoil ends (or cusped ends in the two centre bays); finally a decorative unpierced panel of the same size as the topmost panel. On the four narrower piers are five small roundels with incised decoration which line up horizontally with the panel sequence just described. The wider centre pier has three large roundels and a volute decoration incised in the plaster. This decorative element establishes the centre line of the room. The arrangement in front of the staircase is similar to the

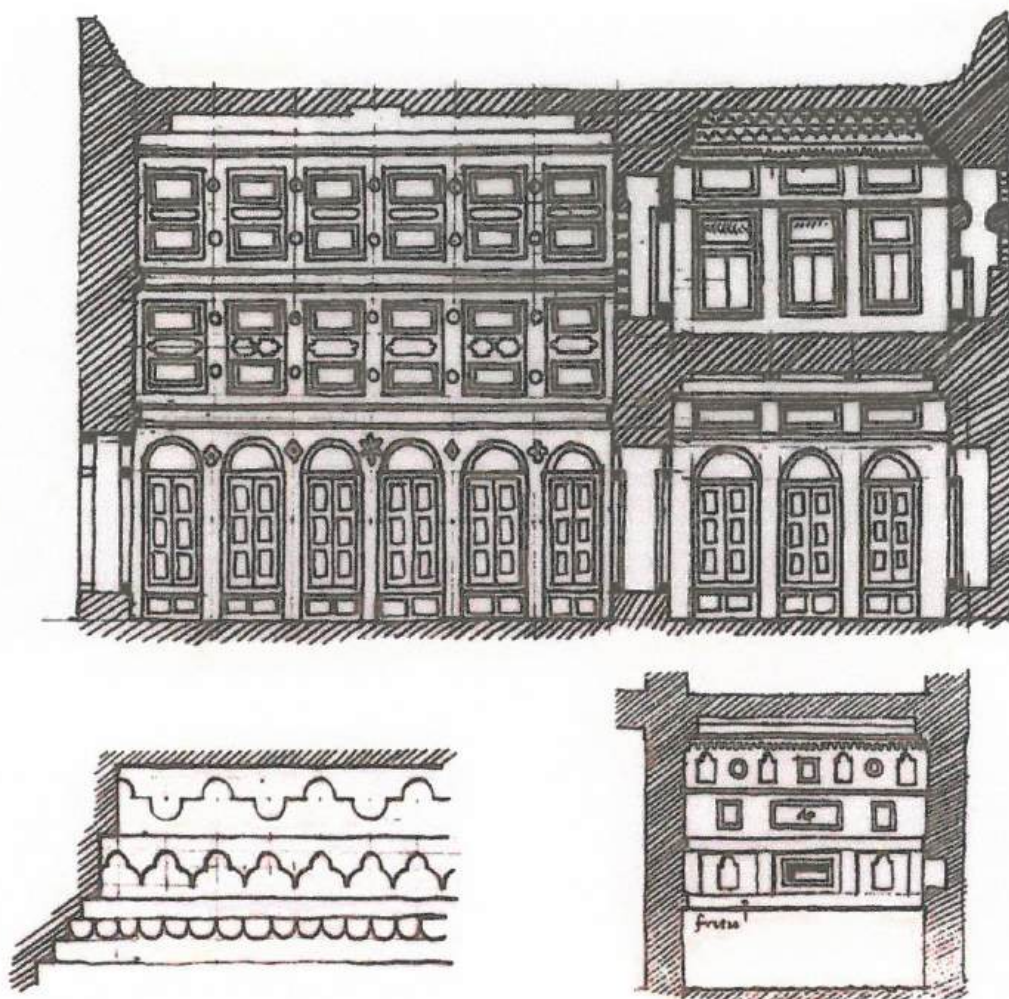


Fig 4.12 Seyadi house. Longitudinal section of majlis (above). Cornice detail of head man's room (lower left). Children's room internal elevation (right).

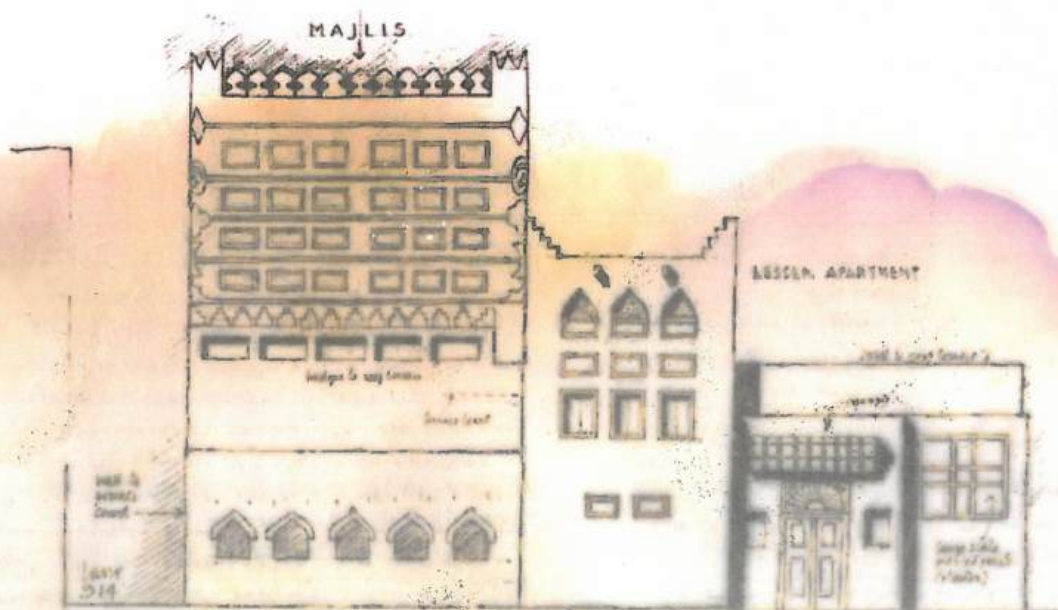


Plate 4.13 Seyadi house. North elevation.

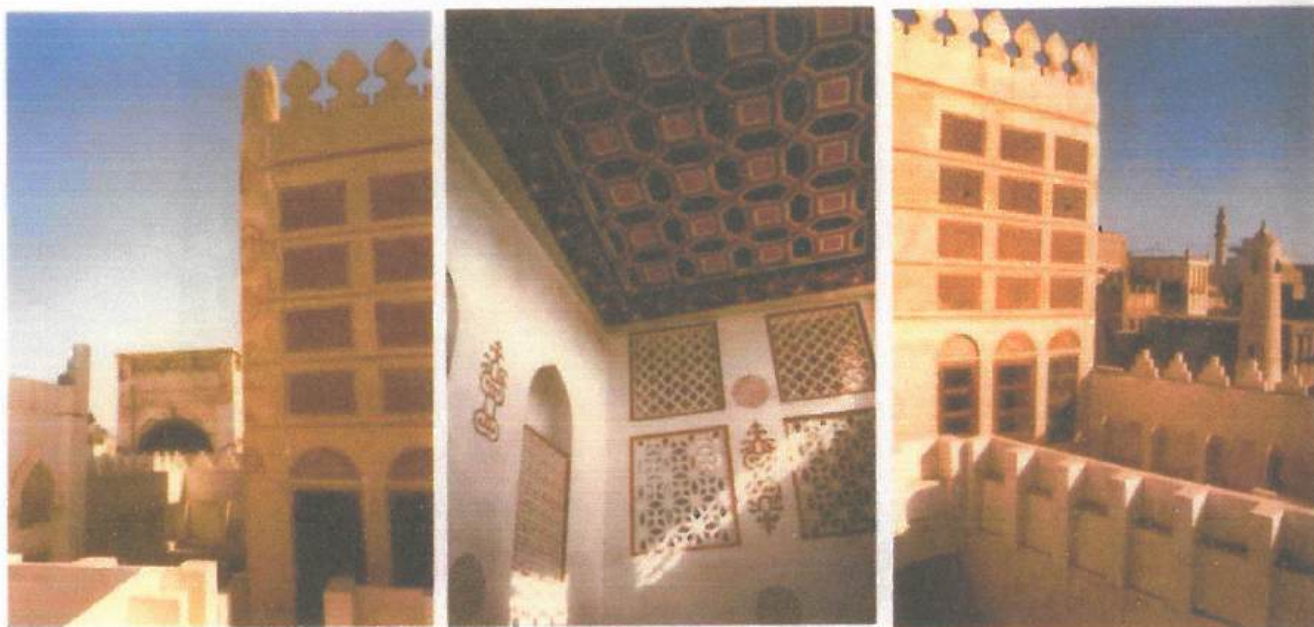
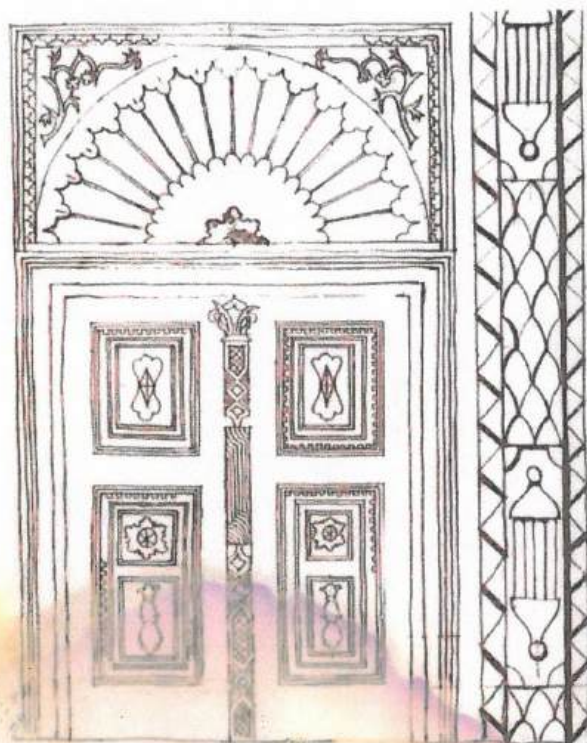


Plate 4.10 Seyadi house. View from majlis terrace, (left). Interior of visitor's room, (centre). View of majlis entrance elevation, (right).



Plate 4.11 Seyadi house business room. Fig 4.14 Main doorway with architrave detail.



other bays except that double shutters replace the second and third panels. The pale surface plaster coat is set about 30 millimetres back from the edge of each bay, and this shows up as a dark line unifying the six groups of panels into a single macro-panel.

Below the frieze are six panelled doors, with semicircular fanlights above. The semicircular lights contain elaborate stained glass. Below the doors is an upstand beam which constitutes a large threshold. The thresholds are cased in timber and patterned with

tacked Lalis.

Externally the windows have flush, panelled shutters with pierced plaster screens behind. There is an upstand beam below the windows, and this is encased in tacked-lath patterned timber.

Through the doors on the right is a small annexe room: see Plate 4.11. This is the same length as the *majlis* and about three metres wide. It was used as a private room for sleeping, and also for transacting business. This is indicated by the large iron safe under

the spiral staircase. The ceiling is covered in mirror glass. It is divided into large mirror panels by timber members which are painted red. The room is surrounded by shutters on the same pattern as the *majlis*. On the longer wall these enclose cupboards. On the short external wall the shutters cover pierced timber screens. These afford views over the adjacent street. All the doors have mirror glass panels, and they open into the width of the wall. Thus, when open, they line the jambs of the void. Faced with mirror panels they create specular reflections upon the internal surfaces of the room. This concern with mirrors and screens seems to be an extension of the Islamic – particular the Persian – concern with the artistic use of light. In this room, the architraves are surrounded by narrow (5 cm) glass marquetry panels in a simple geometric pattern. Also some of the fanlight glazing bars have fine grooves with mirror inset.

One reaches the women's room by means of the spiral staircase. This is very narrow. The upper room has a boarded ceiling with a three-tier cornice. Each tier has a different fretwork pattern on its vertical side. The cornice cuts each corner at 45 degrees with plain soffits. The ceiling is patterned with a series of rococo shapes in fretted timber similar to those found in the *majlis* of the Mattar House.

How can one sum up this magnificent piece of architecture? Coming to it from the general run of Bahraini architecture makes a deep impression. The superiority of Persian woodwork is demonstrated amply. The masons were Bahrainis, however. So – to what extent is it a Bahraini house? The idea of the wall as a veil or curtain seems more Persian than Bahraini. The delicacy and perfection of the craftsmanship create an atmosphere unique in Bahrain. On the other hand, most of the basic architectural vocabulary is Bahraini. Perhaps the craftsmanship and intellectual agility of the Persians had a major effect on the local masons, so that a fusion or cross-fertilization occurred between two traditions. Clearly this building was a seminal influence in several respects on the following decades. It would be reasonable to see the Seyadi *majlis* as a case study in cultural diffusion.

Fakhroo House



This may be called the Yusuf Abdulrahman Fakhroo House, to distinguish it from the Yusuf bin Yusuf Fakhroo House which is mentioned later. It is situated on the south side of Road 1513 in the Al Zayyinah quarter. This is a merchant's house, like the Seyadi House, but it is far more spread out (with bigger courtyards and less complex massing). This was possible because the site was on

reclaimed land next to the sea, whereas the Seyadi House arose from a process of intensification of use in an already crowded central district: see Figures 4.15 and 4.16 for plan and elevations.

It is virtually all Middle period work, having been started about 1905. The mason was Musa bin Hamad. The headman's room, the second son's room and the *ghurfa al bahriya* (a room overlooking the sea) were built later than 1905, perhaps around 1925. This is apparent from the stylistic differences and also because the first-floor level of this part of the house is higher. It was a second phase of construction. In recent times, the main courtyard has been extensively rebuilt and is occupied by the family. Most of the old house remains, however, although partly ruined.

Nowadays one enters the main courtyard (formerly the women's courtyard) from both streets. Nothing of historical note remains at ground level, although two apartments on the first floor have been renovated. A passageway leads to the male servants' court (on the left), and the animal and storage courts (on the right). The male servants' court is surrounded by unlit rooms. In the northwest corner is a long flight of timber stairs constructed in the European manner. (This is, of course, an innovation, as Bahrain stairs were normally constructed from plaster and stone on mangrove poles.)

I now pass to the upper storey reached by the staircase on the south of the women's court. There is a five-bay, 'smooth' style apartment to the east, which reminds one of the Sheikh Isa *majlis*. It has trefoil incised panels over tall fanlight windows and corner three-step merlons. This was the fourth son's apartment. To the right is the second son's apartment: a six-bay Perpendicular style apartment, with cornice, trefoil arches in the upper panel, and fretted timber screens to the windows. Internally there is a stained-glass window design which closely resembles work in the Seyadi *majlis*. There is also a mirror-faced teak cupboard with a drawer below – a very European thing, but it contrives to look local enough. The mirror has a bevelled edge and re-entrant ogee head. The aerial photograph of 1951 shows a building annexed to this one (located over the portico mentioned above). All trace of this is lost.

To the west is the headman's apartment. There is a fence and door leading to a terrace in front of the apartment. One can then enter the room or, alternatively, turn right (north) and descend four wooden steps to the side *livan* of the room. This is six bays long. Above the tall windows (with fanlights) are square, recessed panels which contain two incised decorative panels (an oval and a trefoil).

The side *livan* has a light timber roof, sloping at about ten degrees and supported from stone columns: see Plate 4.13. The north elevation fronts this *livan* as well as the end *livan*, and unifies them. This consists of four arches in two pairs.

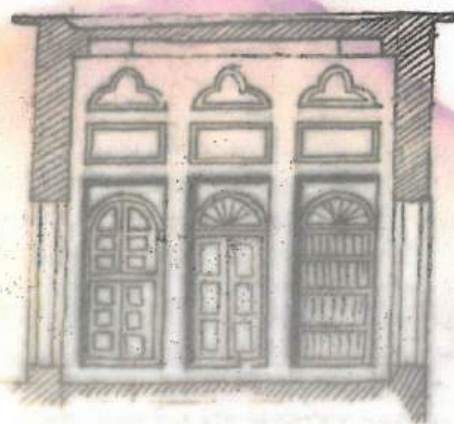
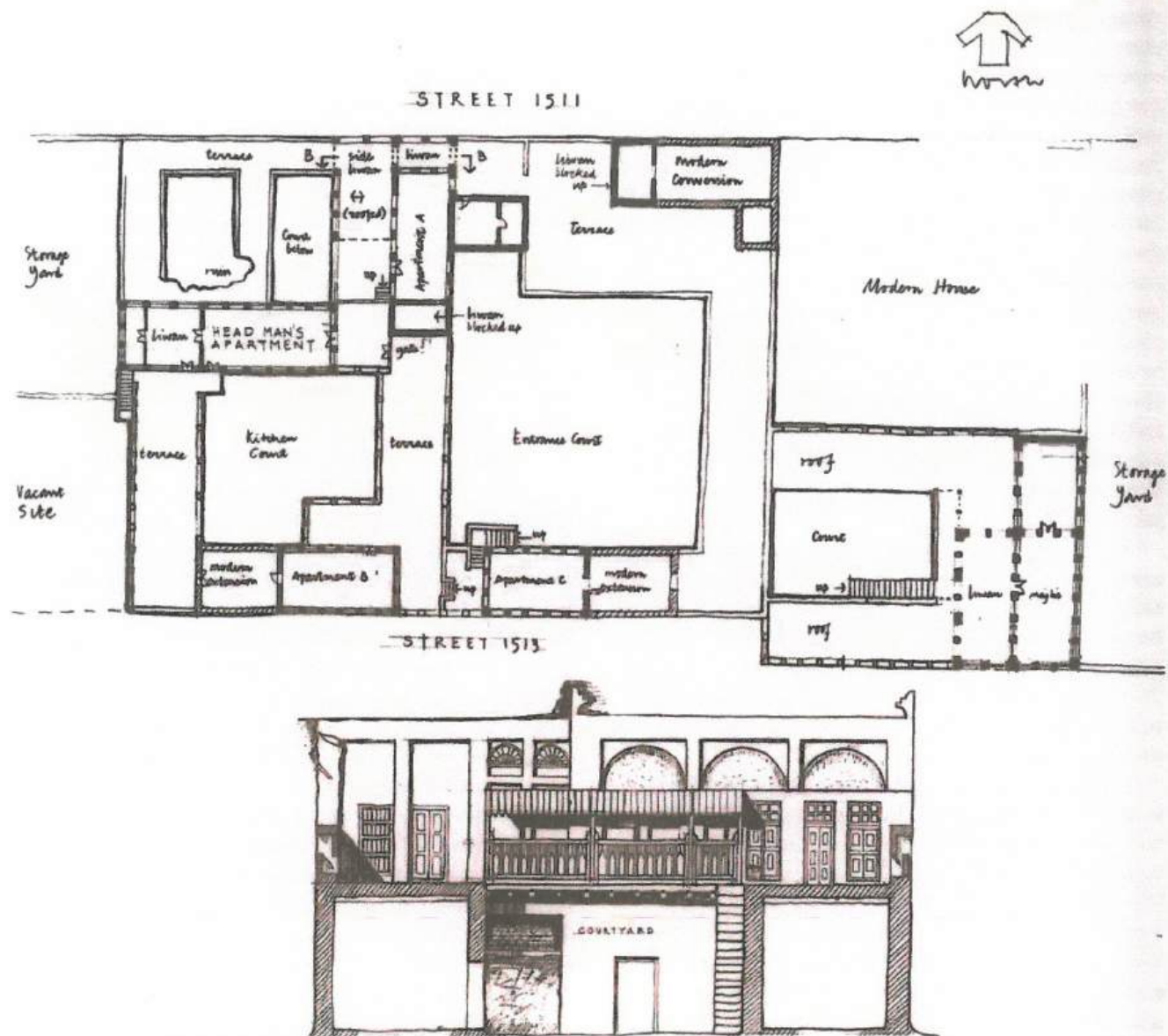


Fig 4.15 Fakhroo house. From the top: first floor plan. East elevation of east court. Section of head man's apartment. Plate 4.12 Window screen.



Plate 4.13 Fakhroo house. Head man's apartments various views.

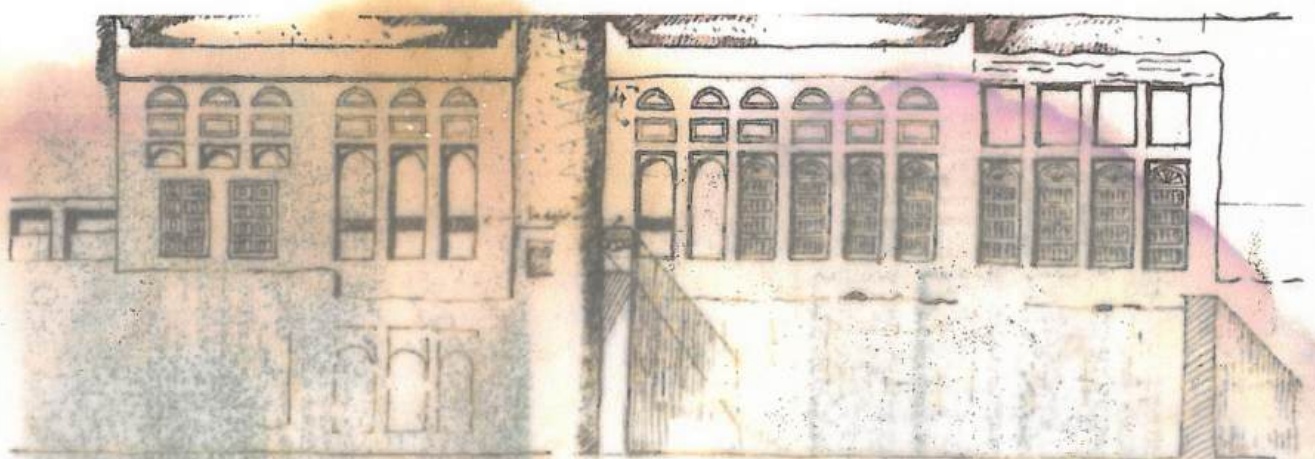


Fig 4.16 Fakhrpuri house. From the top, side elevation of Ghurfa al Bahriya. Side and rear elevation of east court apartments.

The headman's apartment is the finest room in the house. As to its elevations, there is one tie-beam near the top. The panels thus created have trefoils inset. In the *liwan* there are two decorative panels below each trefoil. There are tall windows filling the lower panels. They have stained glass in the semicircular heads and fine, fretted timber screens externally. The stained-glass patterns are similar to the floral designs in the Seyadi *majlis*. There is another design also, however, which recurs in several houses of the same period at the southern end of Bu Maher Road: see Plate 4.12.

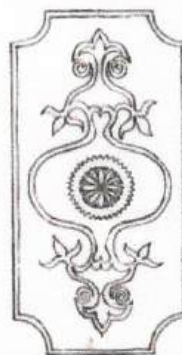
Internally there is a bold and simple projecting cornice. The windows are recessed within the rectangular panels, that is to say, the tie-beam is expressed internally. Above this are rectangular and trefoil incised panels in each bay with no horizontal groove.

Apart from the main house there are two other buildings to be mentioned. First, there is a house (to the east) which was originally part of the Fakhroo house, and was occupied by the third son; (see Figures 4.15 and 4.16). Secondly, there is a *ghurfa al bahriya* (that is, a room overlooking the sea) at the west end of the site.

West of the storage and animal court is a large garden area about 50 metres long and 15 metres wide, walled in and full of mature palm trees. There are a few remains of a roof-level walkway which connected to the *ghurfa al bahriya*. It stood on the waterfront in 1930 (before land reclamation was carried out). Below the *ghurfa* were two swimming pools. The water came from underground wells, and fed the pools, the garden and an adjacent jetty (through a pipeline). Ships would load up with water here, which the Fakhroos gave as a free public service. Some of it was shipped to Qatar and sold. In the garden were almond and apple trees as well as palms and vegetables.

Summing up the Fakhroo House, one of the most significant lessons concerns evolution, growth and expansion. Although put together piecemeal, the common visual vocabulary and the courtyard/terrace system guarantee an almost automatic visual unity. This set of buildings also demonstrates how a house can respond to changes in family needs and structure. The westwards growth enabled the eastern court to split off as a separate unit, and the original function of the courts changed as new possibilities were created.

Salman Mattar House



This was built in 1927 by Musa bin Hamad and Ahmed bin Thaif, who were reputed to be the best masons at that time. It is one of the finest Perpendicular style houses in Al Muharraaq. Together with lesser houses nearby, it makes a particularly fine group. The house now consists of one courtyard built up on three sides, with a main entrance at the western end: see Figure 4.17.

There is also another major entrance at the eastern end. This street door opens into a portico facing a rear yard. There is a staircase leading to an older eastern apartment on the first floor, from which one apparently gained access to the roof terrace system of the main house. The eastern apartment has a row of three-step merlons. Internally there are six bays comprising (from the top) trefoil and rectangular incised panels horizontal groove, niche, groove, and a larger niche or window. Between the trefoils are roundels. Between the upper niches are small recessed panels with inset round heads. The larger niches are in fact mostly room *badgirs* with horizontal shutters. This is a fine interior. One could regard it as an early Middle period work. The windows are low, and there are no fanlights. The door panels are carved. See Figure 4.18.

The main courtyard elevation is typical of the Middle period Perpendicular style. The panels above the windows have round heads flush with the piers, that is, they are not recessed behind a tie-beam. Door bays project slightly with semicircular and rectangular incised panels over the doors. Small doors lead to hammams and large ones to the apartments. Internally, the standard of plasterwork decoration is consistently very high. There is a *liwan* of three bays (plus one narrow bay) with round arches as at the Ahmed Mattar *liwan*. Behind this is the *majlis*. To the left is a timber tenoned grille over a door. The elevation of the apartment at first-floor level is exactly as in the Ahmed Mattar House, that is, trefoil arches in upper panels, tall fanlight windows, coping, seven bays.

One ascends a recent staircase (added around 1950) to a terrace: one must walk through a small kitchen (added later) to reach the main apartment. This is splendid: tall, long, bright, rich, but ordered. There is a boarded ceiling with fretted decoration: see Plate 4.14. There is a double cornice with timber mouldings and a perimeter framework frieze.

There is a horizontal groove above fanlight level. Above this, each bay has a large recessed panel, which is a square with a round head. It incorporates a semicircular incised panel at the top and a rectangular one at the bottom. In the middle are two narrow rectangular plaques with trefoil ends. Below the groove

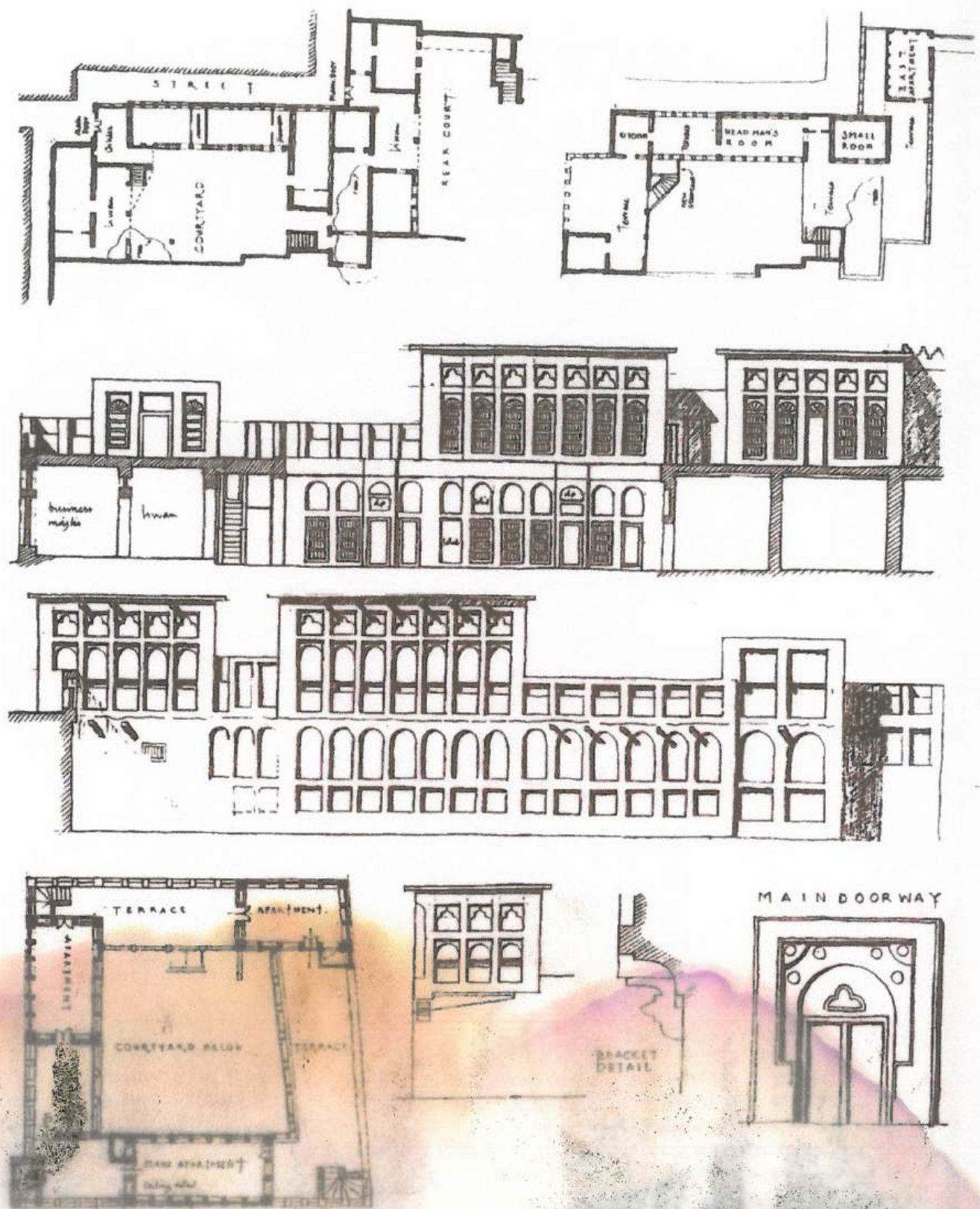


Fig 4.17: Mattar houses. From the top: Salman Mattar house floor plans; courtyard elevation; street elevation; Ahwal Mattar house floor plan; corbelled apartment with bracket detail, (bottom centre); and main doorway (bottom right).

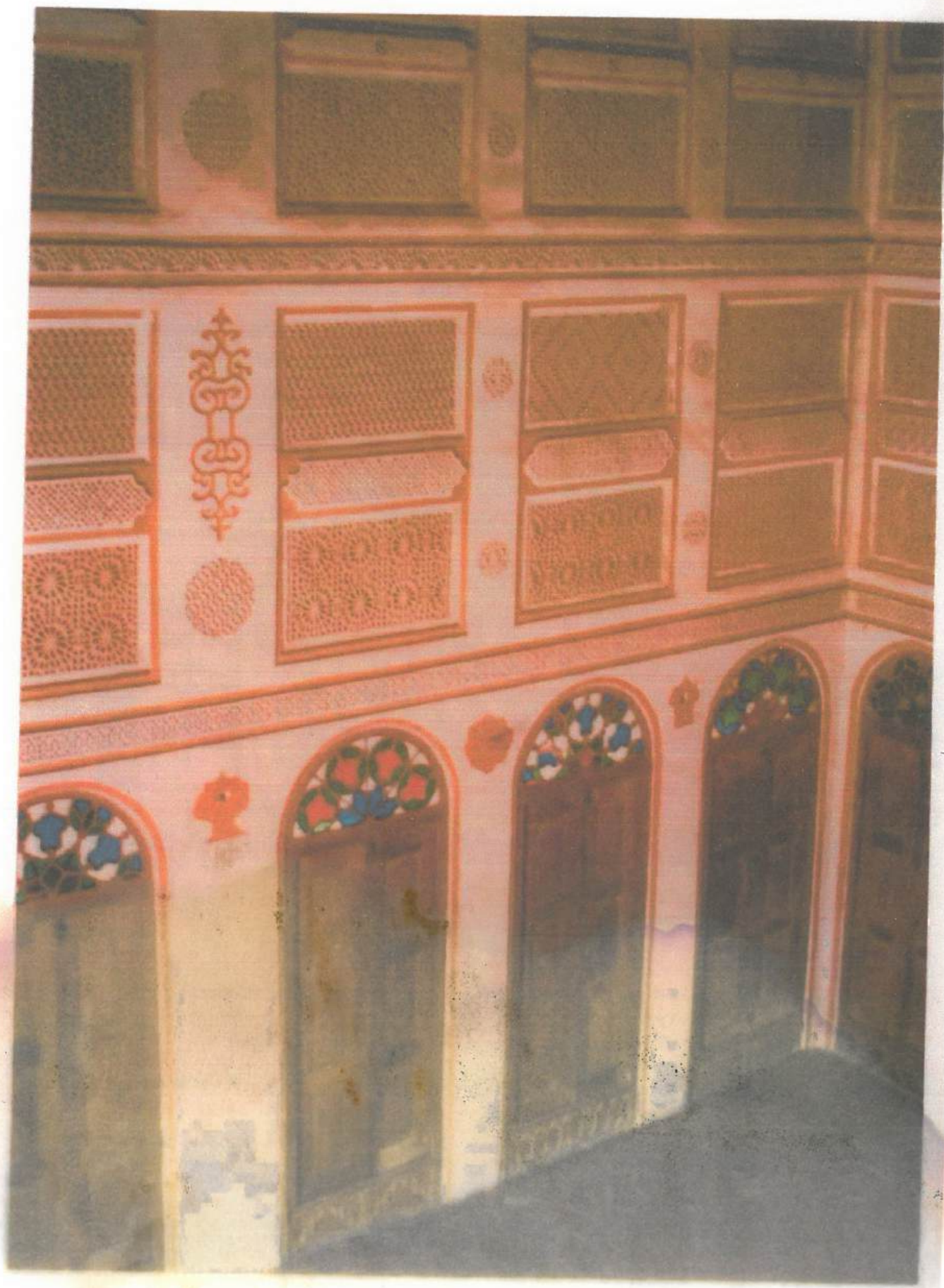


Plate 4.14 Interior view - Seyedi House Majlis

is a row of semicircular incised panels on the north wall. These echo the fanlights on the other walls, thereby establishing a unity around the room which many apartments of this period lack. On the north wall bottom register are *badgirs* which look like niches.

One can walk out at the east end onto a broad terrace, there being two structural bays below. A small apartment (children's room?) is next to the main apartment. It has a very similar external design, but it has five bays, and the central door has an ogee arch in the panel above: see Plate 4.17.

Ahmed Mattar House

This house (in Al Sheikh Abdullah quarter) is perhaps the apogee of the Perpendicular style.

It was built about 1929 by Musa bin Hamad and Ahmed bin Thaif. Only one courtyard now exists, the adjacent one having been largely rebuilt: see Figure



Plate 4.15 Ahmed Mattar house apartment view from court.

4.17. The main door is plain but impressive. One enters at the southwest corner of the courtyard. To the right is a raised *liwan* approached by three steps. There is no incised plasterwork, and here one feels that such decoration would ruin the effect. The two-storey elevations have one tie-beam at each level (apart from cornice beams): see Plate 4.15. The first floor upper panels have decorative trefoil arches, but at ground level the arches occur only over doorways. Windows on the first floor have framed shutters internally and iron-bar screens outside, with stained-glass fanlights above. All three apartments have *farsh* coping. The single-storey elevations have a variety of bay widths and designs.

In the three corners of the site (other than the entrance corner) are staircases to the roof, with L-shaped passages leading from the courtyard. It is clear that the eastern apartment (being the largest) was the headman's room. The owner was unable to define the functions of the other apartments, and stated that their use had been fluid and evolved quite rapidly.

The design of the apartments is very similar. There are room *badgirs* on outside walls. Piers and tie-beams are expressed, and there are no incised panels (that is, no plaster decoration). Ceilings are boarded with superb fretwork, mainly in black, red and blue on a pale brown background. The cornice has timber fretwork and cuts off the corners of the room where the bracing is placed.

The ceilings make a considerable impact. This is enhanced by the absence of the usual plasterwork

decoration and by the contrast between the delicacy of the ceiling and the sparse, tough expression of the orthogonal structure.

The street elevations echo those of the court. There are differences, of course. The fanlights are replaced by blind arches. *Badgir* slots are set just below these arches, and roof *badgirs* line through with room *badgirs*. The design of the different parts of façades is rigorously co-ordinated – all horizontals line through, and so on.

One part of the second courtyard remains intact, namely a first-floor apartment. This is of virtually identical design (except that hipped ogees replace trefoils in the top panels). There is one noteworthy feature, however. The site corner is not quite a right angle, so that the apartment cantilevers slightly. There is a tapering cavetto terminating in a bold decorative bracket under the corner pier (which is chamfered above). It is beautifully handled.

Shirawi House

This large or at least extensive house was built around 1890-1900 in the Middle period 'Pier' style: no cornice beams are expressed and the arch extrados is in the same plane as the piers and beams. It does not have the same architectural stature as the Mattar Houses, but nonetheless it displays many interesting characteristics of form and layout. It is located in the quarter of Sheikh Abdullah. When built, it was on the coastline, the site having been partly reclaimed.

The street elevation is quite plain: see plate 4.18. There is one very large courtyard with 'L' shaped first-floor apartments at each corner. See Figure 4.19. The terraces and stairs are in the middle of each side. The plan is therefore broadly symmetrical. The roof apartments hold or strengthen the corners of the court, and this gives some feeling of conviction and power to the ensemble. On the other hand, informal variety characterizes the detail. Almost every bay in the courtyard is treated differently, but overall unity is generally preserved by the terrace-level cornice running around the entire court, and also by a common vocabulary of detailing. One enters through a simplified version of a Transitional period door via a straight passageway into the courtyard at its south-east corner: see Plate 4.18. To the left are stairs to the *majlis* terrace, and beyond that a three-bay *liwan* with pointed arches in recessed rectangular panels.

In the middle of the west range is a passage to what was originally a waterfront door. It has a very striking design – perhaps unique in Al Mukdadiya – a hipped ogee is carried down to form a horizontal cornice on each side of the opening.

The north range main apartment is typical; the interior bay arrangement (from the top) being: semicircular incised panel, rectangular panel, groove, niche, and plain dado. The cornice is angled at the corners and the triangular soffit has an incised roundel

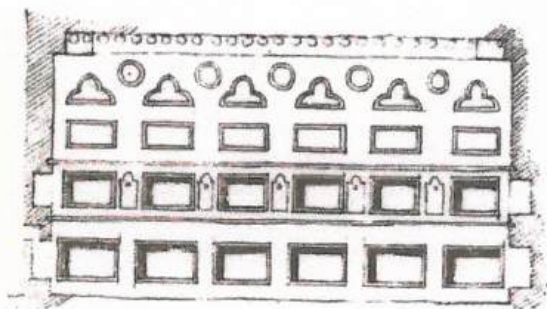
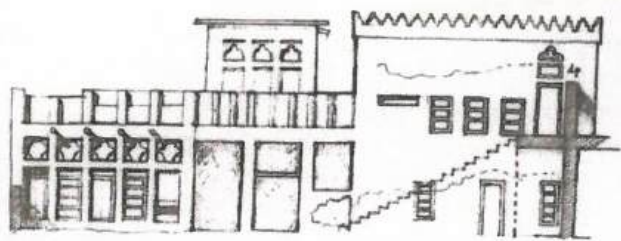
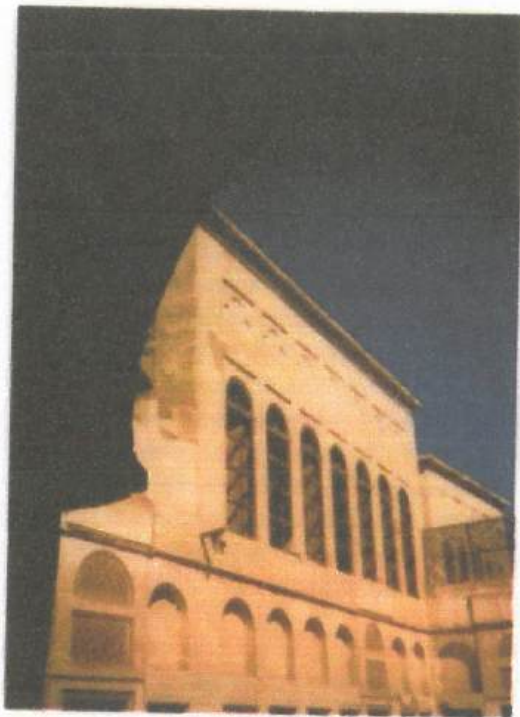


Plate 4.16 Courtyard of Salman Mattar House.

Fig 4.17 Salman Mattar House: east elevation (top) and internal elevation of east apartment (below).

with 'horn' motifs on each side. The most interesting and unusual thing about this room is the hammam wall. There is also crenellation (now sadly decayed). A row of crosses in circles survives. There are traces which suggest that the incised portions were painted blue, green and other colours.

I now pass to the first floor. Externally the apartments are all similar but slightly different. The *liwan* is at right angles to the apartment, thereby forming an L shape. In general terms each courtyard elevation has a semi-circular arch at the head of each bay, a tie-beam and a window below it at floor level. In each case this formula is realized differently. The *liwan* fronts have large semi-circular arches recessed into rectangular frames, and there were corner merlons, but only a few survive. They are perhaps a unique design and look rather weird. See Figure 4.20. Internally each *liwan* bay has (from the top) trefoil incised panel, incised panel with concave quatrefoil ends, niche, window.

The eastern range has a mezzanine room on either side of the staircase. They are reached from the landing. Such a room (which can be found in some other houses of the time) would sometimes be used for keeping chickens, for storage or for accommodating servants (and was known as *al khingiah*).

The house had a major extension or sequence of extensions to the west around 1825. First-floor *liwans* were added to the west side of the two western apartments, and the adjacent terrace was similarly extended. This created a covered passage at ground

level. This extension is an absolutely plain colonnade, with no capitals, cornices, brackets and so forth: see Plate 4.19. It is braced near the top by mangrove poles. There are louvre screens for privacy.

Al Jalahma House



It is a Middle period house of no great architectural quality, but it has an interesting plan and reveals clearly points about the incremental process of development. It was the house of the headman of the Jalahma clan on Abu Maher island.

The most obvious feature is the square *majlis* on the first floor surrounded by a *liwan* on all four sides. This was a later addition to two earlier properties. They were located on either side of a lane leading to the waterfront (as it was at that time).

The *majlis* covers the street and is mainly situated over the eastern plot but gains its main access from the western plot. The room in the northeast corner of this house was appropriated as a passageway from the entrance door to the staircase. Part of the roof terrace was appropriated to provide access to the *majlis*. At the head of the staircase one door leads to the roof terrace of the original house and one to the *majlis*.

The *liwan* west of the *majlis* is located directly above the street. A private staircase leads from the south *liwan* down to the courtyard of the eastern house. There is a bridge over the street to the north connecting with a later two storey house which provided a kitchen. The

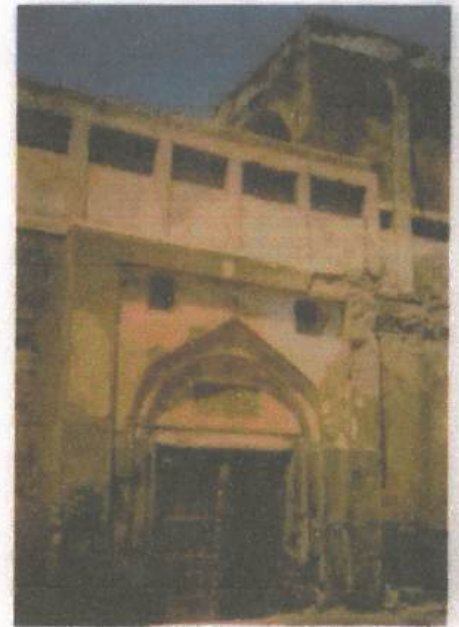
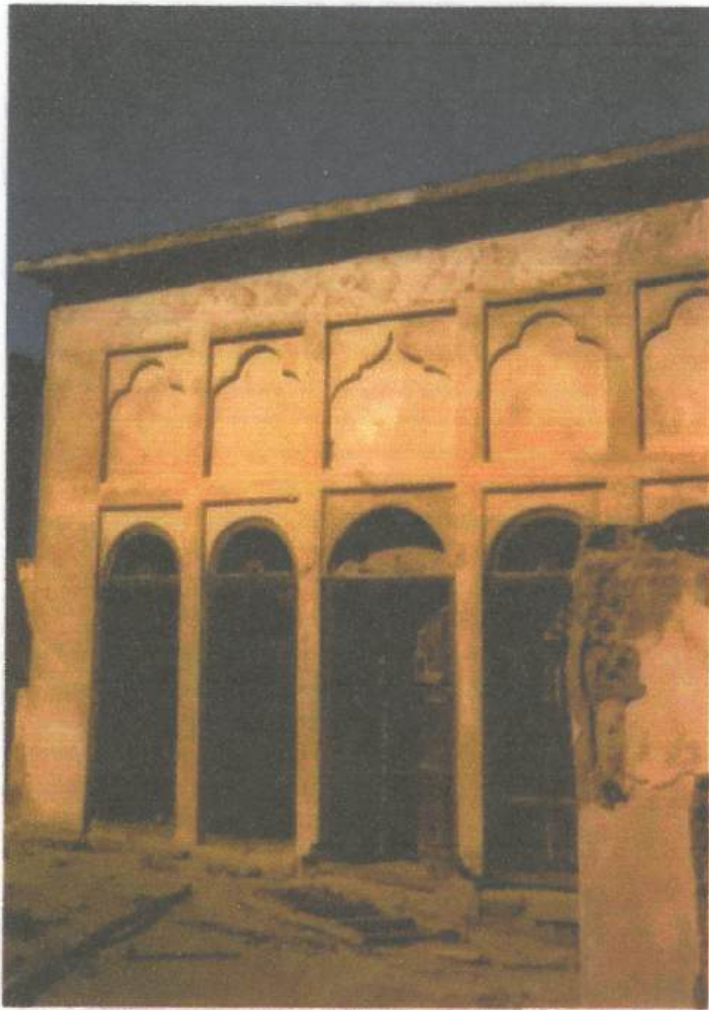


Plate 4.17 *Salman Mattar House: children's apartment; (above left)*

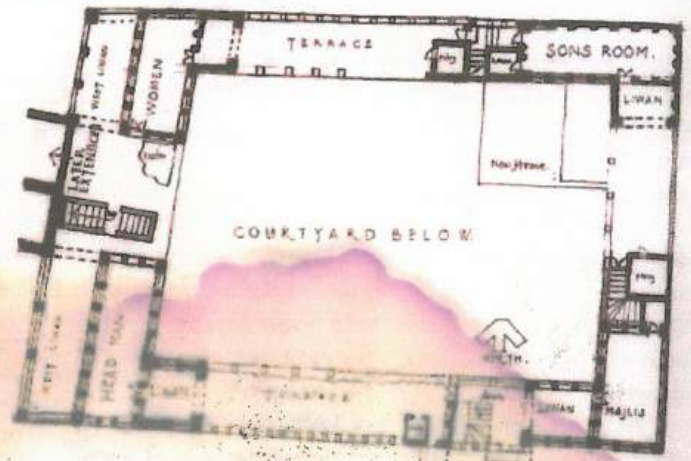


Plate 4.18 *Shirawi house street elevation and main door.* **Fig 4.19** *Shirawi house first floor plan and courtyard elevation.*

food supply came this way.

The *liwans* have four bays and five columns. There are neither merlons nor coping nor any moulding: the elevation is absolutely plain. The *majlis* itself measures six by six bays, with tall fanlight windows which can function also as doors.

This was an innovatory concept and surely connotes a new cultural impulse. This fashion was probably initiated by the colonial architecture of the British administration, which may itself reflect the Portuguese *varanda* of earlier times.

Sufi House

This is perhaps the finest Late period house in Al Muharraq from an architectural point of view. Ahmed Sufi was a builder. He built this house for himself in 1935 but never lived in it; he emigrated to the mainland, and the house has been rented out ever since. It is located in Al Mirri quarter. Plans and elevations are shown in Figure 4.22. It is a small house, having only one courtyard and one first-floor apartment. The accommodation is ranged around three sides of the court. At first-floor level is a small terrace and then a *dihliz*, an apartment, a *liwan* and a terrace, in that sequence. The *liwan* gives onto the roof terrace on the far side of the court. The two terraces are connected by a long balcony and *mashrabiya* down the side of the rooms. This is very impressive: there is timber fretwork, more elaborate and extensive than that seen in earlier periods, although the motifs employed are not new, for they can be found in window screens and roof decoration produced in earlier years.

The street elevations are rather fine. There is coping with large, volute merlons at each corner. There are three panels on each bay. In the centre row of panels are small twin-casement louvred windows. These are recessed: they rest on a flush beam. Below this is a small, plain panel recessed behind the beam.

The corner of the main front is chamfered with three incised symbols. The *badgirs* to the terrace are elaborate. Their posts are topped by low pyramids. The upper panels slope up to the centre point and are topped like a pediment. The lower panels have the same decorative arch design as the other bays.

To sum up, this house shares many of the basic characteristics of the Middle period. However, the perpendicular stress is lost. There are windows facing the street. There are no room *badgirs* and no tall windows with stained-glass fanlights. Nevertheless, the orthogonal expression of structure and the systematic arrangement of panels is carried to a new height of linguistic clarity.

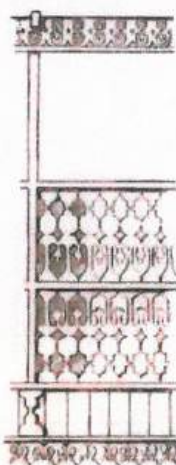
Sheikh Ali bin Mohammed House in Sheikh Mohammed Road

This was a grand house built late in the Transitional period. Two courtyards now remain. There are two

fine doorways: see Plate 4.20. The entrance passages are 'L'-shaped and emerge into the courtyards below pointed arches. A ground-floor apartment doorway has two rows of small recessed panels and two grooves above. Over the door is a wide, rectangular, incised panel surmounted by a narrow panel. Left and right are square, recessed panels surmounted by panels with pointed arches. A first-floor room of the Middle period has an unusual glazed light between the fanlight and door: the glazing bars make a crisscross pattern. The *majlis* side elevations have five bays with pointed arches. The windows are forward of the panels above, and there is a *badgir* slot between them. This is unusual – another example is the southwest apartment of Sheikh Hamad House. The end elevation has one row of three rectangular, incised panels and a narrow central panel above this.

House in Lane 1140

Only one apartment at first-floor level remains: see Plate 4.21. This is Transitional period. The street elevation



has five bays with pointed arches and three-step merlons. The short elevation faces a small roof terrace. The door is a later insertion, and the original entrance was at the other end. There are fine wrought-iron grilles.

There is a fine main door but little else. The round panels have 'petals' surrounding them like a daisy.

House in Street 1339

This small Arcade style house has an interesting first-floor apartment.

There are unique corner merlons. The feature of interest is the *liwan* side elevation. The whole is recessed within a rectangular frame. There is a central stub column-in with two *badgirs* below incised plaster panels which have a zigzag upper edge. The void has a pointed arch.

House in Road 835

There is a delightful small apartment with five bays and alternate trefoil and circular heads below a cornice. Corner merlons have small balls on top, which is uncommon: see Figure 4.21.

House in Lane 918

This comprises a Middle period Perpendicular style *majlis* on the first floor built above Transitional period ground-level room. There is a main entrance typical of the period. At first-floor level each upper panel has a moon-and-star incised motif. The main interest is the unique painted ceiling in the *majlis*, which has several very unusual motifs, such as the sun and a cock with

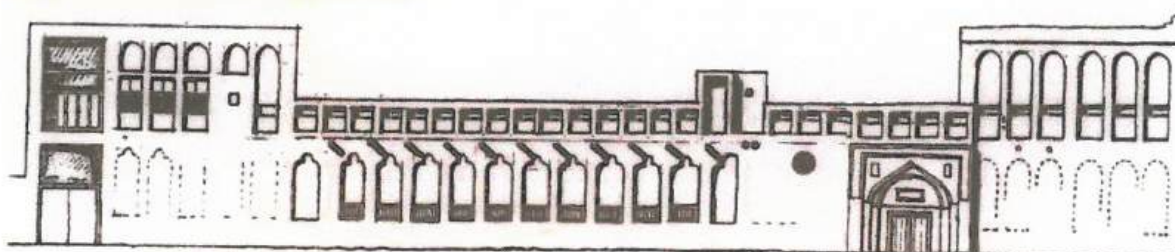
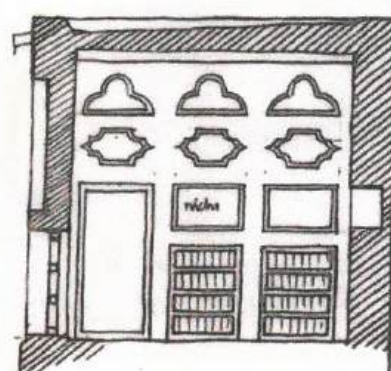
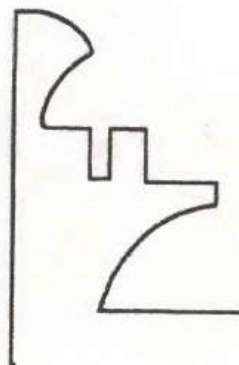
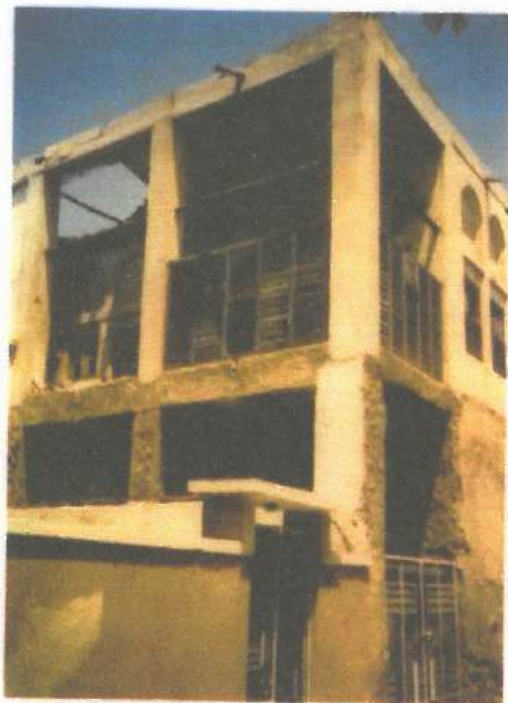


Plate 4.19 Shirawi house west liwan. Fig 4.20 Shirawi house from the top: Court west elevation. Merlon. North-west liwan internal elevation. Street elevation.

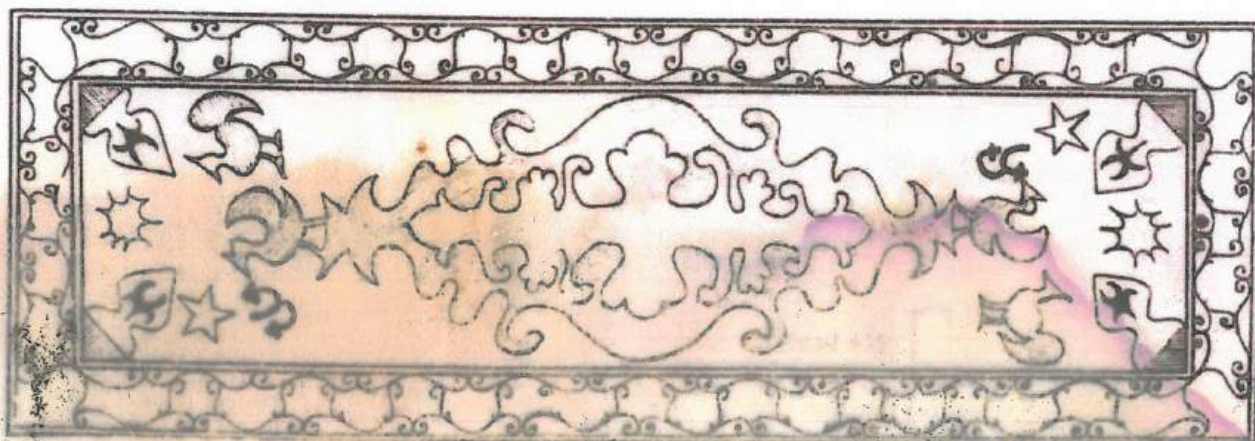


Fig 4.21 Painted ceiling at house in lane 918 (above).

lucerne in its beak. The colours are very rich, deep and glowing in quality; a deep blue ground contrasts with brilliant red and orange; see Figure 4.21.

Bin Khatir House in Street 1120

This is a fine, large, Perpendicular style house. The *majlis* street elevation has trefoil arches on the *hadjis* panel. The bays are uncommonly tall. The main doorway has a hipped ogee set within the outer frame

and a casket pediment – a simple but pleasing design. Again the perpendicular stress is very obvious. The totally plain lower storey gives the first floor a floating, remote feeling; see Figure 4.22.

House in Lane 913

This house has a superb main façade and entrance doorway; see Plates 4.22. It appears to be a Middle period house, but this results from a major restoration

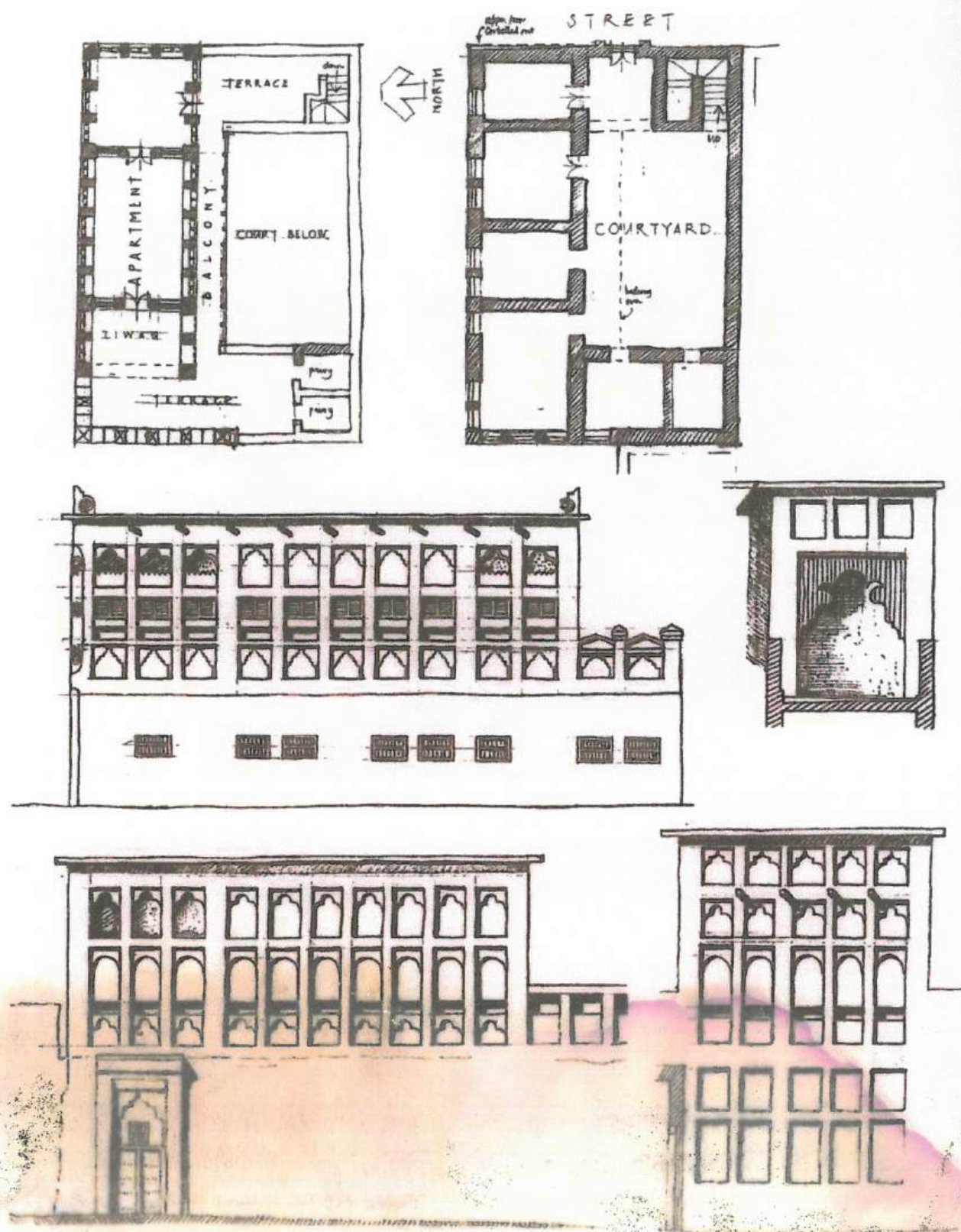


Fig 4.22 Sufi house plans and elevation (top and middle left). Bin Khatir house (in lane 1120) elevation (bottom left). House in lane 991 liwan screen (middle right) and elevation (bottom right).

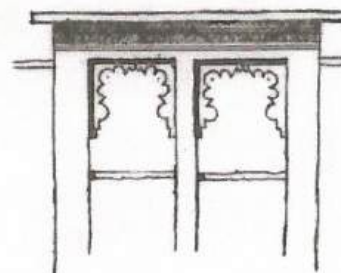
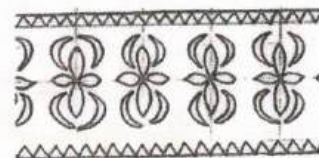
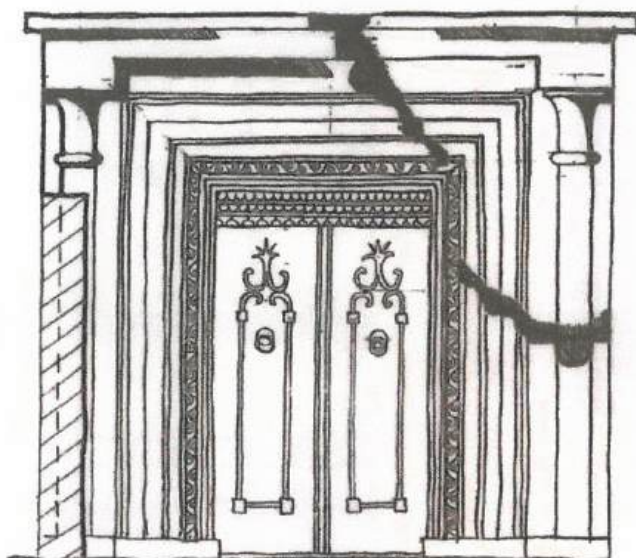


Fig 4.23 Doorway of Sheikh Abdullah house in Airport road, (left). Windtower and frieze detail at house in lane 1421, (right).

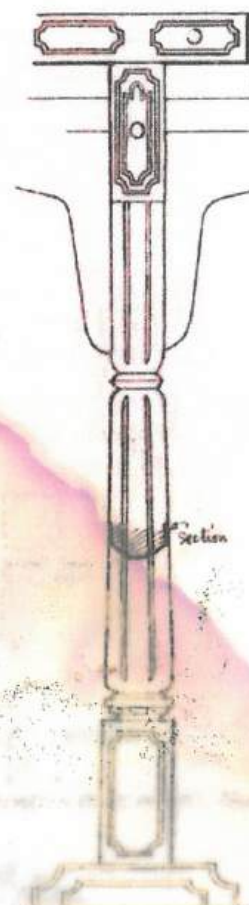
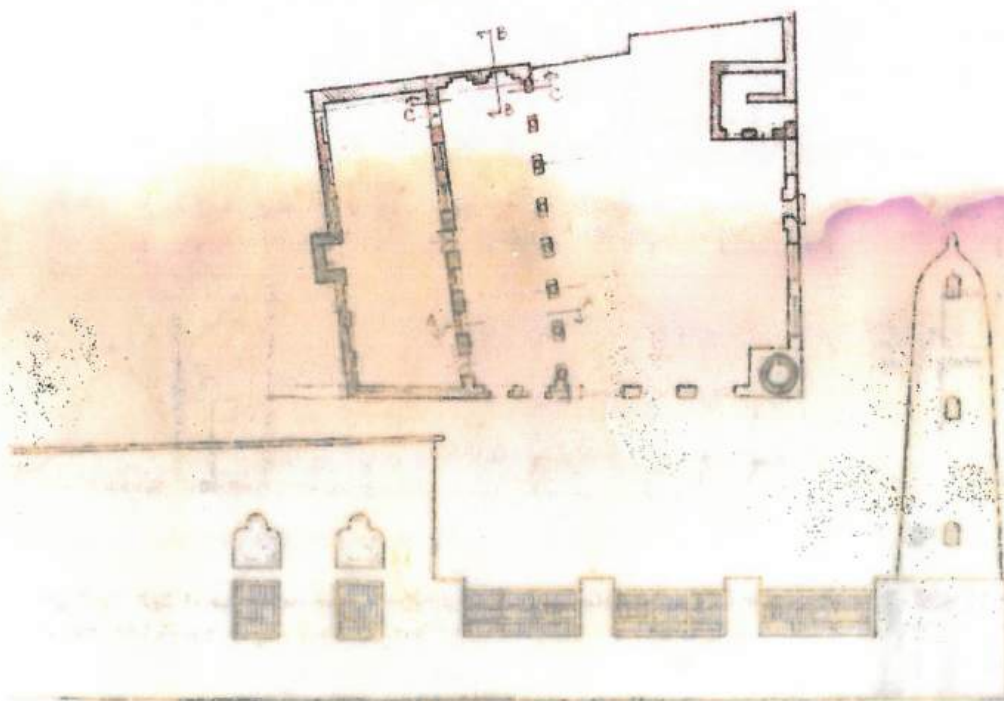
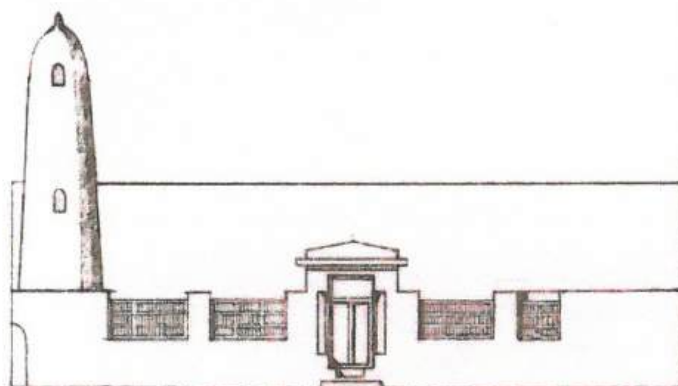


Fig 4.24 Seyadi mosque plan, elevations and column detail (right).

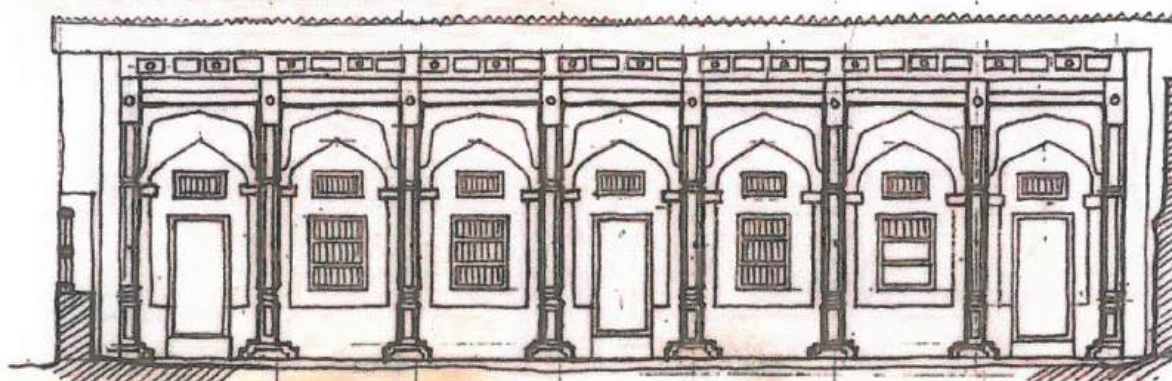
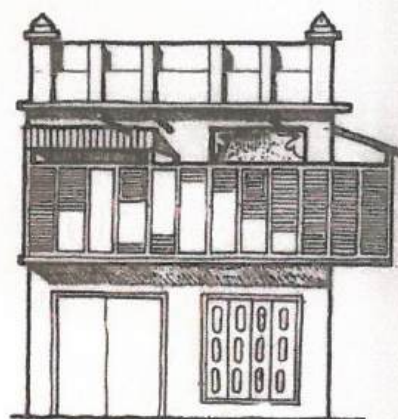
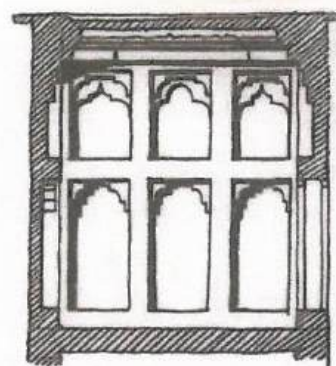


Plate 4.20 Sheikh Ali bin Mohammed house street doorway and elevation (above left).

Fig 4.25 House in lane 826 interior elevation (top). Building in Sheikh Isa road, (Steeshan area). Seyadi mosque liwan elevation. (bottom).

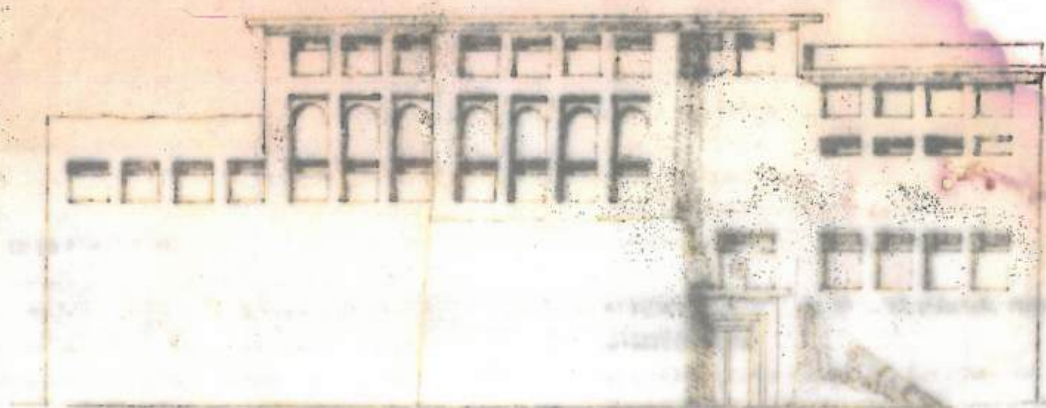


Fig 4.26 House in Street 914.

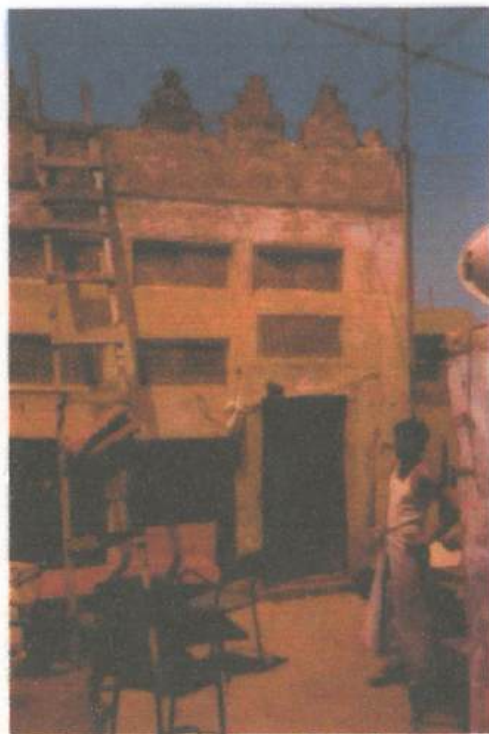
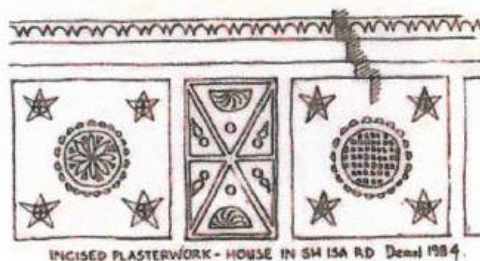
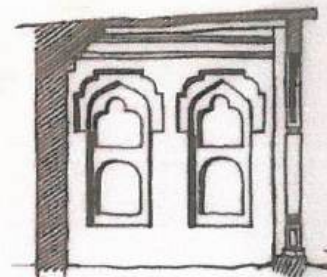
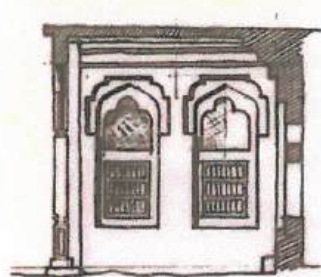


Plate 4.21 House in Lane 1140: apartment elevation facing terrace, (left). Sheikh Ibrahim House: main door. House in Road 835, (right).

Fig 4.27 Plaster decoration at house in Sheikh Isa Road. Seyadi Mosque liwan side elevations.



INCISED PLASTERWORK - HOUSE IN SHEIKH ISA RD. Dated 1984.



undertaken in 1921 (AH 1339) according to the doorway inscription. This is a poem which may be translated as follows: 'Renovated on the 20th of Safar, recording and pronouncing the excellence of the owner in a good year thus I begin saying: live long in it with but little misfortune'. There are bold, volute merlons at each corner. There are six bays comprising a semicircular incised panel and three rectangular panels below. These are in line with a low window, which has lattice shutters. The main door has a pointed arch in a rectangular panel recessed within the arcade; there are round pilasters on either side, and fine crenellation across the top.

Seyadi Mosque in Road 905

This is undoubtedly the best – and the only really good mosque left in Al Muharrag; see Figures 4.24 and 4.25. There is a similar design at Halat an Naim. The minaret is about ten metres tall, a plain needle with no balcony. The gateway is comparatively new, perhaps around 1950, as a photograph of 1950 exists which shows an older gateway. Nonetheless it is a most accomplished design. There is a seven-bay portico of timber with

slender octagonal tapered columns. The end bays of the portico have 'nesting' niches – a trefoil arch within a pointed arch within a flat arch with hipped, round corners. The blind arcade of the prayer hall has pointed arches which echo the arch form made by the column brackets.

This creates good townscape. The interplay between the minaret 'needle', the captured volume of the portico, the mosque courtyard, the house *majlis* looming over it, and the narrow streets which approach this, creates several superb effects.

The original foundation was about 1865, but this building dates from 1910 or thereabouts, the client, turkised decoration forming a panel with calligraphy and foliage at the top.

Mosque (Building 341) in Sheikh Khalifa bin Mohammed Avenue

This has a doorway typical of the late period, with ovolo, astragal and cavetto mouldings inside the outer frame. There is a cornice. Note the plaster balustrade, which is typical of the period; see Plate 4.25.



Yusef bin Yusef Fakhroo House in Wali-al-Ahd Road

This is a large and fine house, similar (from an architectural standpoint) to the Shirawi House; in other words, it is mostly in the Arcade style. There are two courtyards. The northeastern apartment (see Plate 4.22) at roof level has a fine semicircular *liwan* arch. At the rear is a second *liwan* added later; it has no arch and is not rendered. From the terrace, the staircase lower flight projects into the courtyard.

The southeastern apartment (next to the road) is in the Perpendicular manner, but with no fanlights. The *liwan* is on stanchions, and a cast-iron joist is revealed supporting the terrace. The *liwan* has a flat arch with a flush bracket and a recessed second bracket below it: see Plate 4.24.

Jalahma Houses in Roads 1625 and 1622

There is a multifoil arch over a doorway, which closes a vista down an alleyway. An adjacent house belonging to this type has a *liwan* on the long side of the upper apartment. It has four semi-circular arches (in



Plate 4.22 Jalahma house in road 1625 liwan arch, (left). Yusuf bin Yusuf Fakhroo house south-east apartment, (top). House in lane 913, (below).

rectangular frames) resting on rectangular capitals and round columns. See Plate 4.21. The *liwan* sides have two trefoil arches recessed in rectangular frames. See Plate 4.22.

Sheikh Abdullah House at Corner of Sheikh Khalifa Road and Airport Road

This is a Late period house. There are two rows of panels over the windows, having inset trefoils and semicircular arches. Low flat-headed windows (with louvre shutters) alternate with flat panels which have small clerestories. There is a parapet in which *farsh* panels alternate with *louvre* panels. The main glory of the house is the doorway. See Figure 4.23. The edicule comprises a round plaster on either side, supporting a plain cornice and coping. Within this is a bold, ovolo moulding with a cavetto on either side. The architrave is decorated with foliage and curlicues. Across the top are four rows of carved muqarnas motifs. Each door has tacked decoration forming a panel with curlicues and foliage at the top.



Plate 4.23 Sheikh Ali House in Sheikh Abdullah Road: note the mashrabiya (left). Sheikh Ali House in Sheikh Abdullah Road courtyard.



House in Lane 911

Above the *majlis* door of this small, Late period house is an unusual decorative panel: see Figure 4.28. Left and right are pendulum clock motifs, standing at twenty minutes past one. Above a central incised panel is a complex recessed panel topped by foliage and a hipped, ogee arch. Over this are two roundels linked by an arc.

Sheikh Ali House in Sheikh Abdullah Road

There is a corner apartment at first-floor level in an 'L' shape with a *liwan* on both sides: see Plate 4.23. There are unusual corner merlons. Another feature is a *mashrabiya* reached from the apartment. The privy remains completely undamaged, and is the only one I found. This Late period house conveys a rather modernist feeling. The orthogonal frame is undecorated. There is a pleasant informal courtyard.

House in Street 914

This Late period house is adjacent to the Seyadi House: see Figure 4.26. Over the door is an inscription. There are high-level *badgirs* in rooms (an unusual innovation), presumably to remove hot air accumulating near the ceiling.

House in Lane 911

The roof has a parapet wall with hipped, ogee arches and coping. There are upper panels with trefoils in the normal way, so that the double row of panels stresses the perpendicular quality. The *liwan* end has a boarded timber screen fretted in a floral design: see Figure 4.22.

Building in Sheikh Isa Road (Steeshan Area)

This terminates a view northwards down the road. A vegetable market was held around here – the area is known as Steeshan, from the presence of the bus station serving the villages. There is a *mashrabiya* wrapping around two sides of the building (including the *liwan*). The parapet *badgir* posts are topped by pyramids – a

typical Late period feature: see Figure 4.25.

House in Lane 1421

This Late period house has a wind tower with interesting brackets and an incised cornice decoration: see Figure 4.23.

House in Road 3 (Abdur Rahman Al Fadhl Road)

This is now demolished. There was a fine doorway with a large fanlight of iron bars: see Figure 4.28. The outer

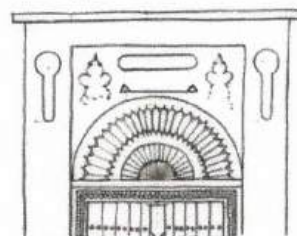
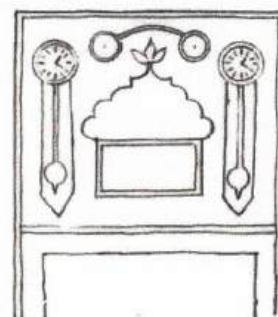


Fig 4.28 Doorways of houses in lane 911 (left) and road 3, (above).

and intermediate frames had trefoil edges. In the spandrels were 'spade' motif panels with a 'scales' motif between them. Pendulum clock motifs were on the *adnicule*. Inside there were archivolt friezes over round-headed doors.

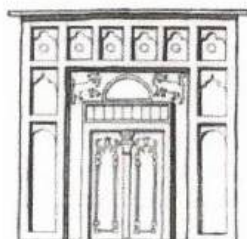
House in Sheikh Isa Road

There are interesting high-level niches around a ground-floor room. Each niche has a round panel in the middle and a pentagon star in each corner. The wall between niches is decorated with a characteristic Shia motif – a six-pointed cross with dots in the segments. Decoration was incised in stucco: see Figure 4.27.



Plate 4.24 Yusuf Fakhroo house, (above).

House in Sheikh Isa Road and Lane 1401



This single-storey Late period house has a fine and unusual doorway. Each spandrel has a lion in the Qajar style. There are six small panels with trefoils below the coping and two panels (one above the other) on either side of the door. Window

fanlights are a Late period type more common in Al Awadiyyah than Al Muharraq.

House at Corner of Sheikh Isa Road and Lane 1401

This Late period house has square windows over the fanlights (where one would expect to find a *farsh* panel). These are divided into eighty-one square panes with multi-coloured glass.

The main door is reminiscent of the Khalaf House (in Manama). It is very mannered. Instead of a decorative arch intrados there are two bracket-like sections interrupted by a central window. The usual rectangular masonry adicule is chamfered. The architrave is carved with zigzag and sawtooth motifs.

Malik House in Road 1349

The main doorway of this Late period house stands at an intersection and faces down the street. It is an impressive marker: see Plate 4.26. There is a square window and large fanlight above the door. The fanlight has radial iron bars. There are incised plaster panels in a 'double fish' shape in the spandrels. Above this are four recessed panels with a double-oval incised panel on each. This is most unusual. Left and right are round pilasters running the full height. A tall, soaring effect is achieved. The door to the *majlis* (on the ground floor) from the courtyard has carved panels in the form of stylized lilies. The

architrave has barley-sugar, sawtooth, zigzag and foliage motifs.

House in Road 1630

This small house was apparently modified in the Art Deco period, judging by its doorway.



Plate 4.25 Mosque in Sheikh Khalifa Avenue



Plate 4.26 Malik house door.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Suq

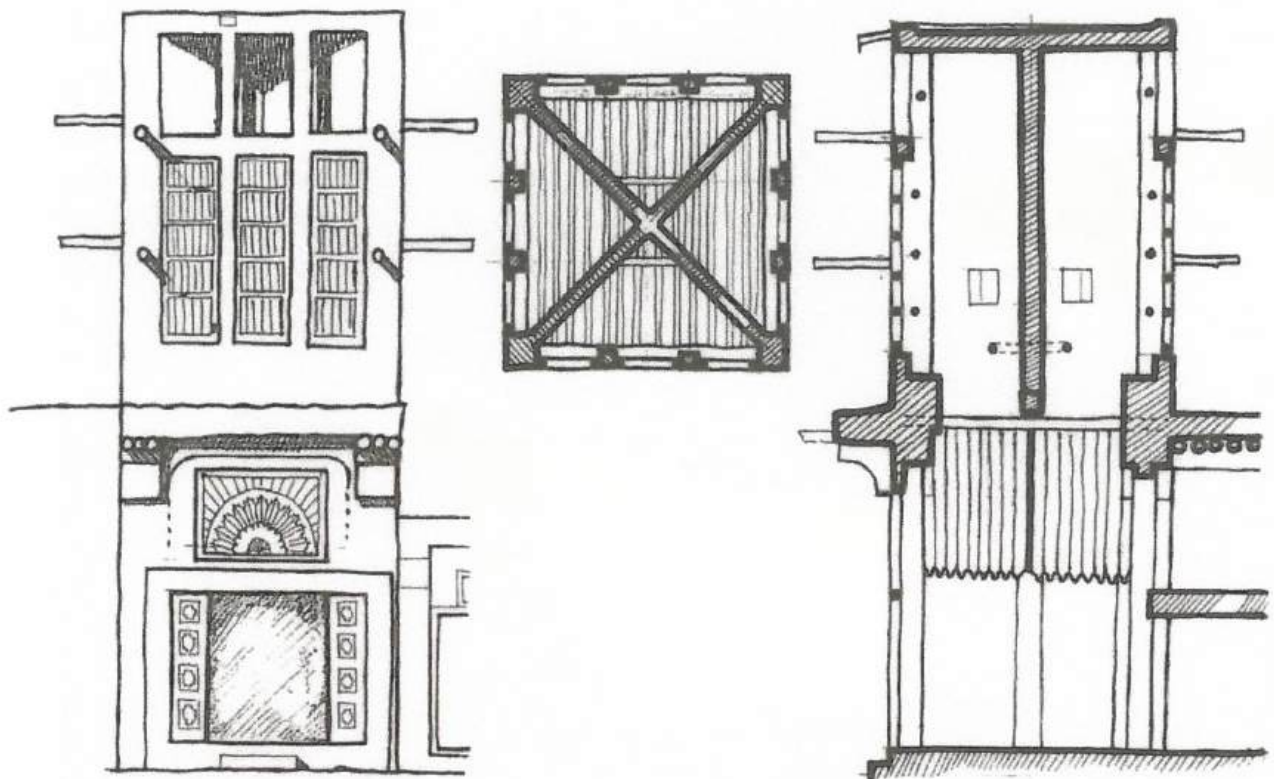


Fig 5.1 Wind tower in Suq; elevation and sections

Building Types

There are three main building types in the Suq.

Amarat

There are two types of *amara* (retail warehouse), based on either a linear or a central plan. There were twenty-two of the linear plan *amarat* and about seventeen of the central plan type. The *amarat* were referred to by the merchant's name, for example, *Amara Fakhrroo*, *Amara Adoy*, *Amara Ali Moosa*.

The 'linear plan' *amarat* generally lay on the seashore to facilitate unloading from ships. They fronted onto Tijjar Road or Road 1613, which still runs parallel to the shore. A merchant would bring mangrove, bamboo, fishing equipment, clothes, and so forth from Basra, Iran, India, Zanzibar and elsewhere to the island. All goods would be unloaded directly from boats and stored in the *amara*. A small office fronted the street, from which these goods would then be sold. This also fulfilled a social function: the merchant would meet his friends and entertain them to tea or coffee whilst discussing matters of mutual interest.

The plans of the buildings have much in common. There is a central walkway from street to shore closed by an impressive door at each end. The storage area is divided into two parts; the eastern end consists of lock-

up store rooms fully enclosed with double doors, and the western end is open warehousing. This consists of a large open area with a roof carried on columns (the bay size being three metres square). The internal height may be six metres, and the columns may be braced by mangrove poles. However, the central corridor was often not roofed. The 'central plan' *amarat* are essentially similar, but they are generally much smaller, and a single door is used to bring goods in and out.

Khans and other Living Apartments

The lodging or hostel (*khan*) was used for travellers as elsewhere in the Islamic world, but in Al Muharrag during the early twentieth century there were more migrant workers than travellers accommodated in the *suq*. Many of the pearl divers and other pearling industry workers were foreigners from 'Nejd, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Persia and elsewhere. This was a seasonal occupation, lasting from early June to early October, and in winter they went home.

There are three types of *khan*. The predominant type closely resembles the usual dome-roofed first-floor apartment, and is found above the *amara* on the street or coast frontage. It has a staircase with a separate street entrance to allow use when the *amara* is closed. The roof is normally covered with a light, timber shade



Plate 5.1 Typical street.



Fig 5.2 Suq layout in 1940's (reconstructed).



Plate 5.2 Elevation of an Amara to Lane 1125, with windtower on the right.

and used for sleeping. Accommodation was relatively primitive – people would sleep on close-packed low beds in the apartment and on the rooftop.

Some rows of shops have long *khan* apartments on the first floor. There are two examples in Road 1123 near the Bin Khatir Mosque and one example in Tijjar Road. Finally, there are three colonnaded structures on Road 1129, which is the former waterfront. These were all built by Salman Mattar and have living quarters with large *liwans* at first-floor level.

Unit Shops and Workshops

Units of accommodation were versatile. They could be used as shops, workshops or for storage, depending on the property market. A unit was generally three metres wide, whilst depth varied from three metres to about ten or more, but six metres would be about average. In round terms, a typical unit is twenty square metres. It may have been about three metres from floor to ceiling, or had an internal height of about five metres, in which case there would be a mezzanine in the rear, reached by ladder and used for storage. There were no windows, rear or side doors, all access being through the front door from the street. The door was a multi-leaf (usually four-leaf folding) door secured at night by a padlock. Through the day it was folded away against the jambs on either side. The shopkeeper or craftsmen sat in full view, and in direct, almost intimate, contact with the passer-by in the narrow street. Ventilation was provided by a grille (iron bars in a timber frame) over the door.

Such units occur in three basic forms: (a) those that line the street frontage of *amarat*, (b) as large back-to-back clusters in the *qayseriya* perhaps consisting of ten to twenty bays; (c) rows of units along commercial streets, with some other land use behind them. Such units often have a first floor for storage or living.

Accommodated within a few of these units were coffee houses, which were extremely important to the lifestyle of the *suq*. They are slowly disappearing as the former *suwaq* goes to modern restaurants (or retreats home). There are now five old-fashioned coffee houses, but I was told that there were at least twenty in the 1930s. A few of them occupied the short cross-alleys where they caught the breeze and caused less obstruction to pedestrian flow. Even now high-bench seats line the walls, and a waiter brings tea, coffee and hubble-bubble pipes. Beverages will also be carried to nearby shops when hospitality is offered before a deal.

Urban Form and Growth

On the ground, the *suq* is only occasionally impressive from an architectural viewpoint these days. However, its plan form is very interesting. In Figure 3.2 I have attempted to reconstruct from aerial photographs the plan which existed in the 1940s.

The underlying form of the *suq* is powerful, although the detail is informal since it arose organically. It originated on the coast nearest to Manama partly because people congregated there for ferry boats and this coastline was most accessible for merchants' boats.

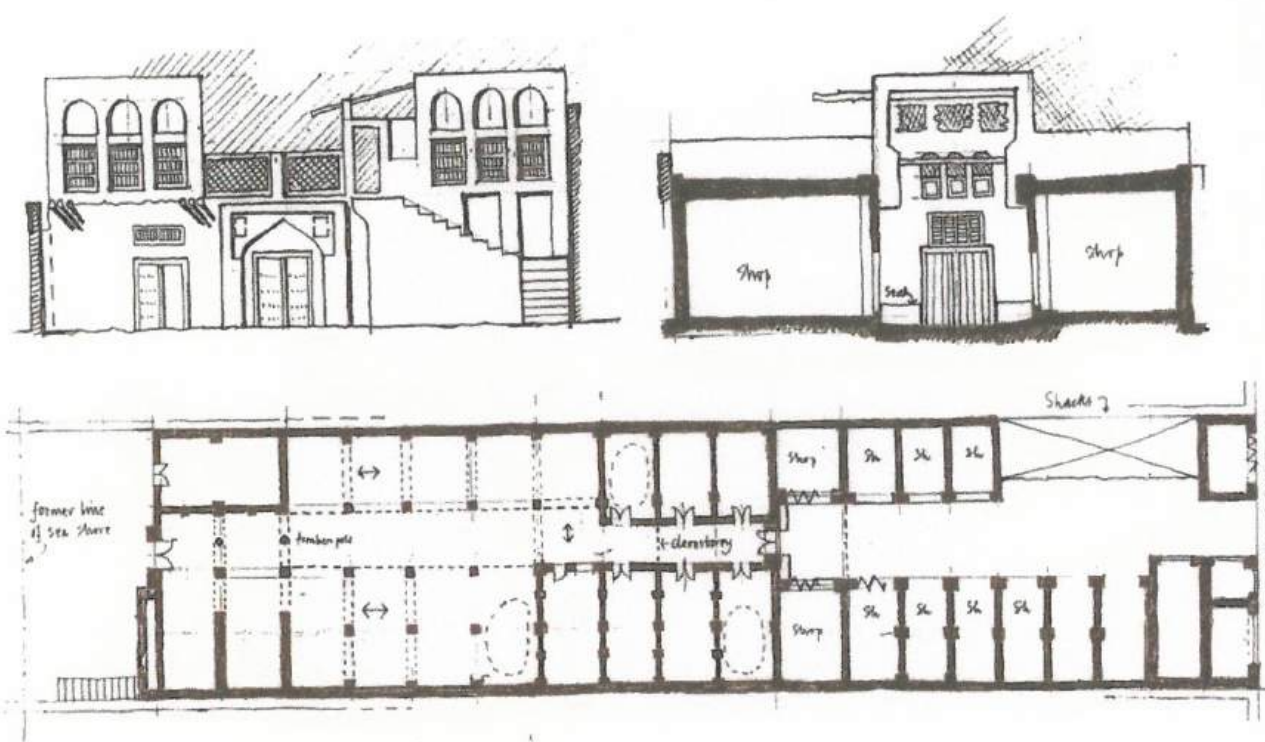


Fig 5.3 Amara Mattar: sea front elevation and cross section (above). Ground floor plan, (below).

but also because open land was available. This land was threatened by high tides, and reclamation by tipping to raise the level was necessary. The original coastline approximated to the line of Bu Maher Road and Road 1123. The coastal strip was also accessible to donkeys bringing fish and vegetables from the villages. By using this route they could bypass the narrow streets of the town.

The layout of the *sug* arose from the constraints of the site, forcing extreme linear extension before extension in depth. The growth began around the Sheikh Hamad Road because this was the link to the urban core and the ferries from Manama landed here. It now stands at the fulcrum of the plan. The *qayseriyah*, a dense, covered area, stands at this fulcrum, and the two commercial streets extend north and south from it.

A new shoreline was established by reclamation before 1890 about 60 metres west of the original shore. This was due to growing prosperity and the demand for more commercial land.

Activities and Districts

The *sug* in the 1920s and 1930s could be divided into various districts or specialized *sugs*. Within these districts most accommodation would be devoted to one category of shop or workshop.

The national or family connections with craft and trade may be summarized as follows. Groceries and bakeries were usually run by Iranians, who came mainly from the town of Qarash. They worked very long hours.

Sweetshops were also run by Qarashis or by Omanis, particularly the family of Al Maskati (from Muscat).

Herbal medicines were made and sold by Yemenis. A family named Nasr from what Saudi Arabia sold oil. Many of the goldsmiths were Indians. They worked in the area between Sheikh Abdul Wahab Mosque and Mohammed Ibrahim Mosque on Bu Maher Road. The Bahraini goldsmiths also produced swords and daggers in a separate district north of bin Khatir Mosque.

Some family names derived from trades were:

An Nabirah	well-diggers
As Safafir	copper-workers
As Saghah	goldsmiths
Al Hadda	blacksmiths
Al Najar	carpenters
Al Galalif	boat-builders

The grocery area south of Mohammed Ibrahim Mosque contained also a famous tinsmith, lock and safe-maker called Hassan al Shaj, upon whom people called to solve technical problems which were unprecedented or baffled others. In the barbers' area one family (bin Shams) was also famous as circuncisers.

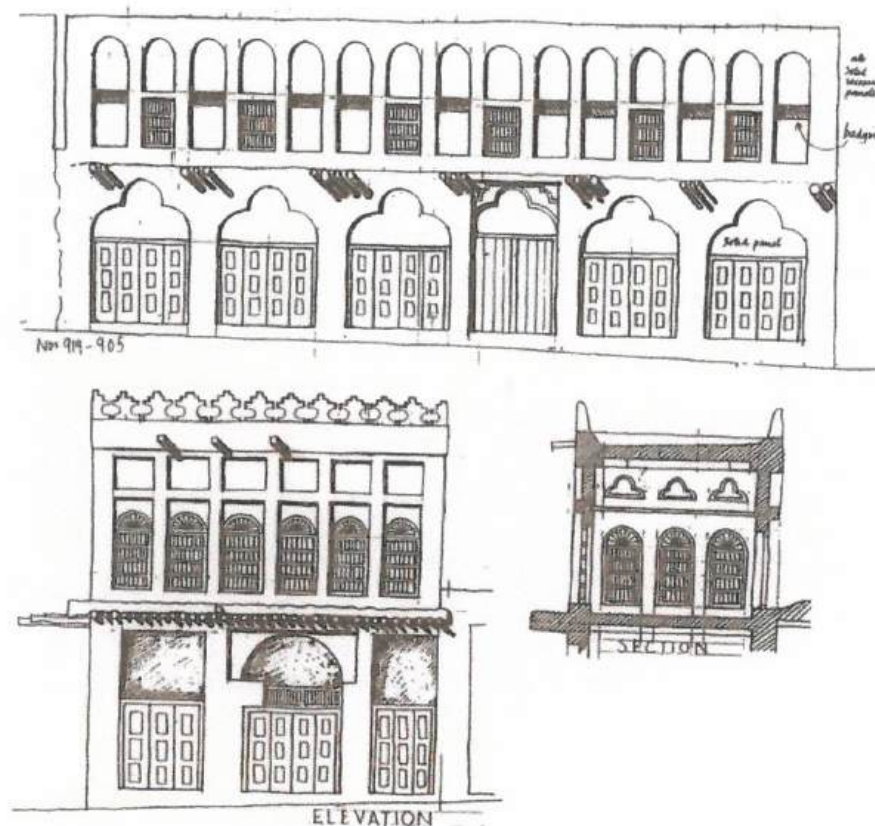


Fig 5.4 Two shops in road 1123.

DESCRIPTION OF TWELVE SUQ BUILDINGS

Amara Mattar

This connects Lane 1125 to the coastline as it existed around 1900. There are nineteen structural bays with a central corridor: see Figure 5.3. At the east end the first bays comprise three shops facing the main *suq* road. The next eight bays are shops lining an alleyway. Then follows the *amara* east door-way. The last bay before the door has a raised roof with a clerestory on three sides. Beyond the door are four bays of store rooms. The central corridor is covered, and the first two bays have a clerestory roof. Then there are four bays of open warehousing with an open central corridor. Facing the sea front (in 1900) are twin *khan* apartments at first-floor level on either side of the central corridor, with a staircase outside the west doorway to allow access when the *amara* was closed.

Shops in Road 1123

These shops are on the site north of the bin Khatir Mosque: see Figure 5.4. There are five units, with one bay for a main door and for the staircase to the rooms above. Each unit has a four-leaf paneled folding door, above which is a trefoil moulding spanning the whole door width.

Shops and Khan in Road 1123

These occupy the site south of the bin Khatir Mosque:

see Figure 5.4. Undoubtedly the finest *khans* are this one and the Tijjar Road *khan* described below. There are three tall shop units with voids above the folding doors. The central bay has a semicircular arch recessed into a rectangular frame. This looks as if it was modified later, possibly in order to insert a wider door below. There are storage mezzanines over the rear half of each unit. The floor construction projects about a metre over the road. This doubtless supported street canopies at one time. The first floor *khan* has six bays with piers and a tie-beam expressed. Access to the *khan* is from the side street (no. 1120), from which a narrow stair leads to a roof terrace at the rear of the apartment.

Shops and Apartment in Road 1129 (South Site)

This is an example of the Colonnade style, with three apartments on the first floor, side *liwans* between them, and a five-bay front *liwan* overlooking the street: see Figure 5.5. It was built by the Mattar family in about 1927 and was used for the Political Agent on his weekly visits. It fronts the Airport Road constructed shortly before, and was thus a waterfront building until the 1950s.

The corner columns are square. The four intermediate columns are round, they have square capitals which are flush with the cornice and flush square bases. There is *fush* coping and a sun screen of lath and plaster in each bay. Columns have mangrove bracing poles about halfway up, and the *liwan* end



Fig 5.5 Colonnaded shops and Khans in road 1129.

of tall columns, and brilliant sunlight flooding down from the clerestories.

square bases. On the door of one shop is a carved panel giving the date, AH 1345.

Amara Yusuf Abdul Rahman Fakhroo

This stands on the site immediately south of the *amara* just described, and it is typical in general form, although there are no shops. The entrance from Tijjar Road is down a short alley. There is a fanlight with iron bars over the door: see Plate 5.3. On the Tijjar Road frontage is a wind tower above the former office. It is not a good specimen, very plain and squat, but it is the only wind tower remaining in the *suq* apart from the example described above: see Plate 5.2.

Khan on Tijjar Road

This is above a small *amara* and is the most interesting khan in the *suq*, see Figure 5.6. Dramatically, it is built over the central corridor. Each bay has semicircular and rectangular, incised panels above a tall window with stained-glass fanlight. The same treatment occurs internally too. Between the rectangular panels are incised, volute decorations similar to those in the Seyadi *majlis*. There is a boarded ceiling with a cove moulding and fretted frieze. The roof on either side of the apartment was covered by a light roof at one time. There are remains of columns. On the north side there was an engaging little arcade consisting of three bays of trefoil arches recessed into rectangular frames and resting on round columns with square capitals and tall



Fig 5.6 (top left) Amara and Khan on Tijjar road. Fig 5.7 (top right). Workshops and Khan on road 1339. Fig 5.8 (bottom) Amara and shops on lane 1551 and Tijjar road; plan, section and elevation to lane 1551.

Glossary

amara	warehouse (in the <i>suq</i>)
amil	building worker (but this can also mean agent or governor in other contexts)
architrave	door surround
astadh	master (mason)
badgir	a device for speeding up air-flow and so assisting in ventilating a room or cooling a terrace - it consists of a horizontal slot in the lower part of a wall
banna	mason
bascheel	bamboo used in traditional roof construction
bayt	house (or building complex)
chendel	mangrove (or 'Zanzibar Poles') used as rafters
coping	flat stone on top of wall or roof parapet
denchel	see chendel
dihriz	entrance passageway (usually L-shaped) between street doorway and courtyard
djuss	gypsum
extrados	face of an arch
farsh	coral rock split along its bed (so as to form large flat panels)
fuladh	chisel
ghurfa al bahriya	a meeting room on a roof terrace (overlooking the sea)
hadjar al Bahr	'sea stone' or 'Bahrain stones', coral rock
hammam	bathroom
hoosh	courtyard
intrados	underside of arch
jadum	hammer
khingiah	a small mezzanine room with a low roof used for storage or keeping chickens, or for children's play
liwan	portico usually attached to a room and facing a roof terrace
majlis	meeting room used by men
mankrur	woven palm-leaf matting used in roof construction (above the <i>bascheel</i>) also known as 'Basra mats'
marzam	rainwater spout or gargoyle made from wood
matbakh	kitchen
merlon	decorative battlement on roof parapet
mijidah	drill (used with bow called a <i>goas</i>)
mishara khashab	hand saw
musayed	apprentice (mason)
nasal	bit
nurah	lime
rosanna	niche in the internal wall of an apartment (used for storage and display)
qayseriyyah	part of the market, formally planned and secured by locked doors
sathi	roof terrace
suq	market and related facilities
tin	mud
yadhaw	palm trunk (quartered to reinforce walls)
waqf	mortmain endowment for religious motives
zariba	open-sided stable and area for animals

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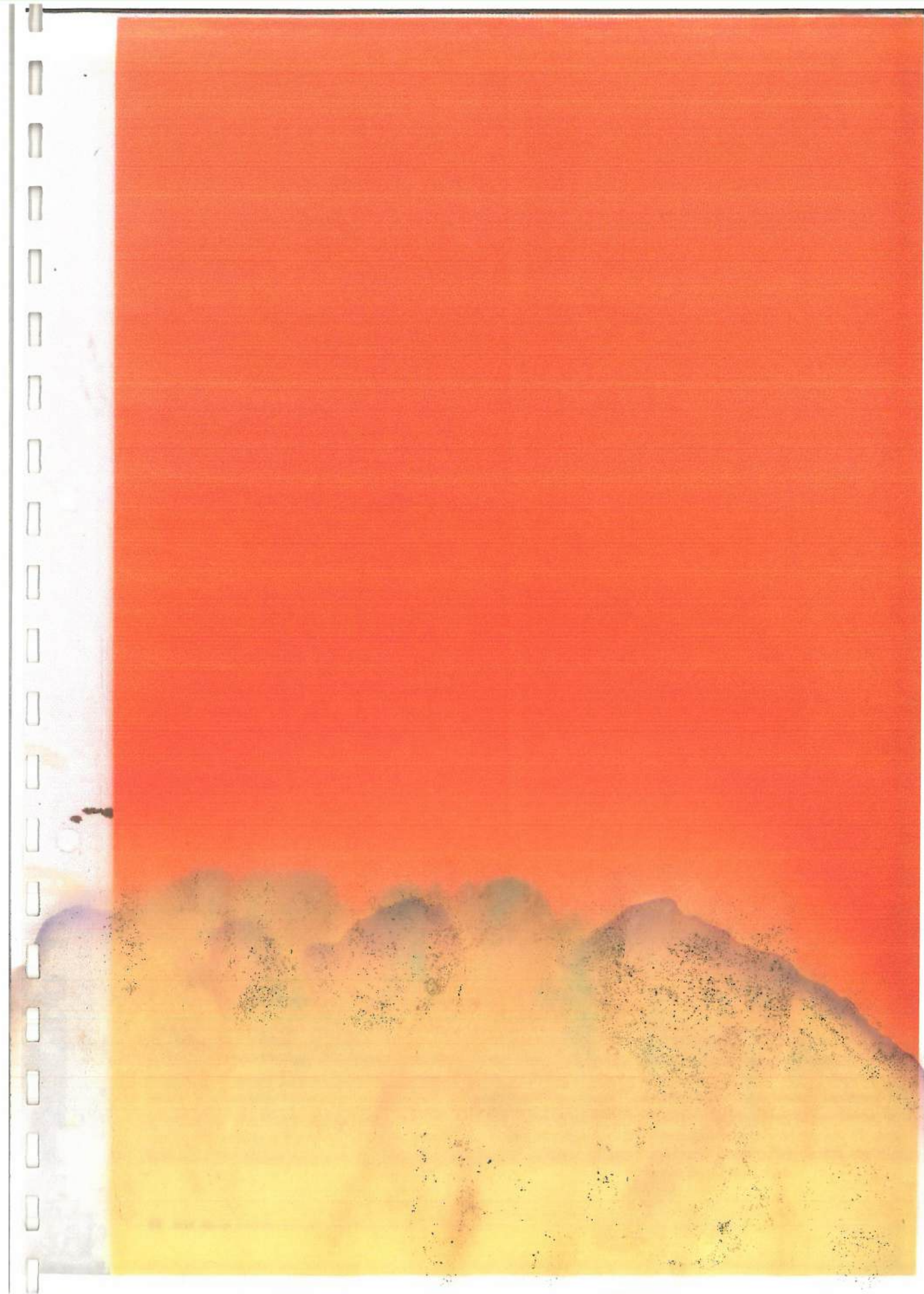
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Note on the Author

John Yarwood graduated in architecture from Edinburgh University and urban planning from Sheffield University. After an early career in British local government, he was for five years Head of Architecture at Telford New Town Development Corporation. He then worked as Head of Urban Renewal, Government of Bahrain, (living in Al Muharraq throughout). After working as a consultant in Turkey, Jamaica, Kuwait, Dubai, Philippines, Slovakia, Poland, Germany and Finland, he was Director of Reconstruction for the European Union Administration of Mostar (Bosnia-Herzegovina) for two and a half years. His book "Rebuilding Mostar" was published by Liverpool University Press in 1999. Since Mostar he has worked for the World Bank in China and also upon the regeneration of historic St Petersburg. He is currently Chief of Party on the Albania Urban Land Management Project (for the World Bank). He is a fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society and was awarded an MBE in 1997.



Al Muharraq, in Bahrain, is one of the finest remaining historic towns in the Arabian Gulf, and *Arts & the Islamic World* is happy to highlight this pioneering work aimed at documenting and critically evaluating its layout and building design. This first in-depth study is based on several years of painstaking research carried out in the mid-1980's by a British architect, Dr John Yarwood, initially in Bahrain, and later in the UK, for his highly commended doctoral thesis at Sheffield University. The author's permission for *Arts & the Islamic World* to introduce this to a wider international readership is deeply appreciated.

As Dr Yarwood has emphasized, this fascinating city is considered to be of compelling interest for a number of reasons. It occupies a crucial position in patterns of technochronology (and general cultural diffusion) spanning vast distances and periods of time. Predecessor states - as far back as Dilmun - were the main staging posts between the Indus valley and Mesopotamia. The region also received Persian influence (and beyond that, from Sassanian and Seljuk design) and transmitted onward influence to eastern regions of Africa via the Omani Empire. The city has not been studied in detail before, and Dr Yarwood was greatly assisted in his work by the Bahrain Ministry of Housing and a number of scholars and specialists.

In print since 1983, *Arts and The Islamic World (AIW)* is now coming out twice a year in a hardbound format, and is being published in association with the East-West University Press Chicago.

The journal is produced by a networking team of art scholars and specialists based in the Islamic world as well as in other Eastern and Western countries. Over the years it has steadily shaped as the leading international publication providing in-depth coverage of Islamic arts history and heritage as well as the contemporary arts scene in the Islamic world, with lavish monochrome and full colour illustrations.

Alongside general readership, its clientele includes key arts personnel: artists and art critics, art collectors and connoisseurs, heads of art and cultural institutions, libraries and research organisations, and museum directors and curators with special interest in the arts of the Arab and Islamic countries and communities.

AIW has also been producing special supplements and theme issues devoted to specific countries and regions. These include the following:

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The journal itself grew out of a key recommendation made at the 1st international Seminar on Islamic Art organised in Britain in 1982, which it covered in its very first issue. The Seminar reviewed various aspects of 'The Arts in Islamic Lands' and was attended by artists and scholars from 20 Eastern and Western countries. AIW has also been covering subsequent international seminars dealing with the following themes:

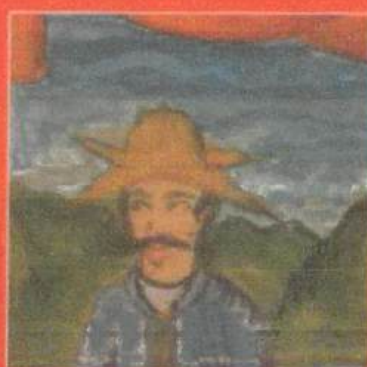
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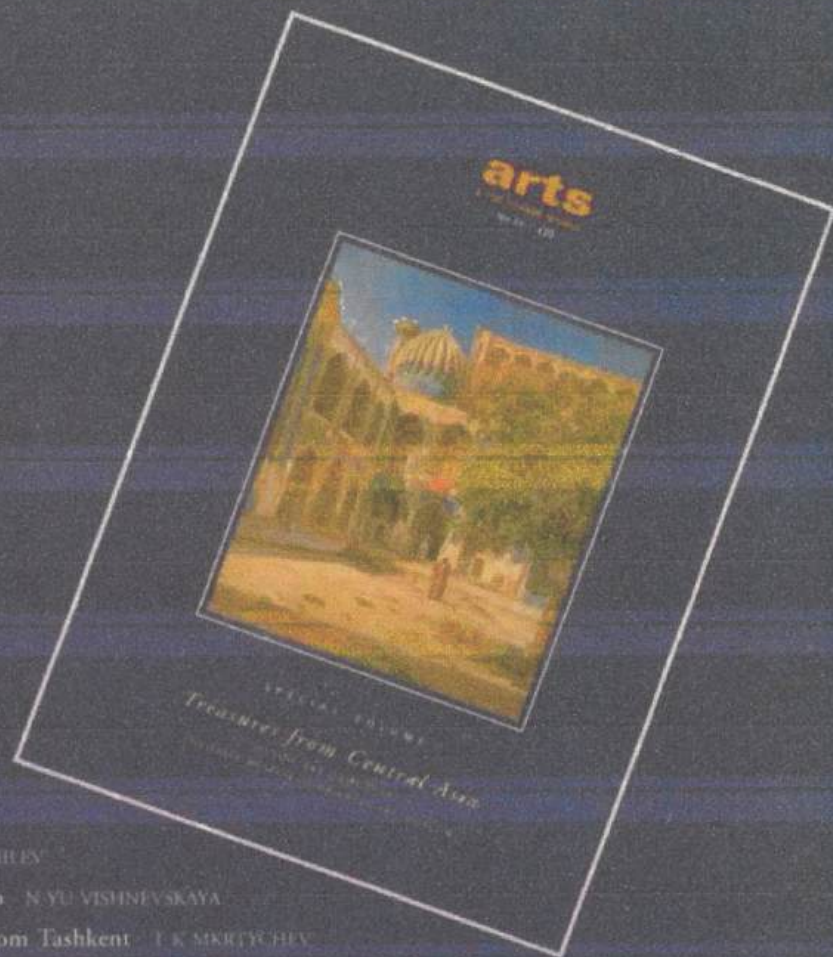
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contents

- 3 Acknowledgments
- 9 State Museum of Oriental Art SAID KIAMHIEV
- 12 Pre-Mongolian Glazed Pottery of Afrasiab N.YU. VISHNEVSKAYA
- 18 A Unique Xth Century Incense Burner from Tashkent T.K. MKRTYCHEV
- 20 Central Asian Embroideries and Fabrics E.S. ERMAROVA
- 25 Traditional Uzbek and Tajik Dress E.S. ERMAROVA
- 29 Uzbek and Tajik Jewellery E.S. ERMAROVA
- 32 Mediaeval Iranian Pottery T.KH. STARODUB
- 36 Iranian Paintings of XVIII-XIXth Centuries N.V. SAZONOVA
- 40 Rug Collections K.G. KINAEVA / N.P. NEKRASOVA
- 45 Kaitag Embroideries N.P. NEKRASOVA
- 47 Dagestan Art N.P. NEKRASOVA
- 53 Nizami's *Khamsa* Manuscript N.K. KARPOVA
- 57 Decorative Metalwork from Uzbekistan A.YE. MUYTOV
- 60 Turkish Textiles M.Y. KULEANDA
- 62 Textiles and Embroidered Fabrics of the Crimean Tatars L.F. ZORLAVTSEVA
- 68 Painting and Drawing of Uzbekistan M.I. FROMMELT
- 74 Azerbaijan Film Arts of the XXth Century S.M. KHEIMICHENKO
- 80 Rugs and Felts of the Kazakh, Kirgiz and Kyrgyzstan People L.G. BERESNEVA
- 85 Kazakh, Kirgiz and Kyrgyzstan Jewellery L.G. BERESNEVA



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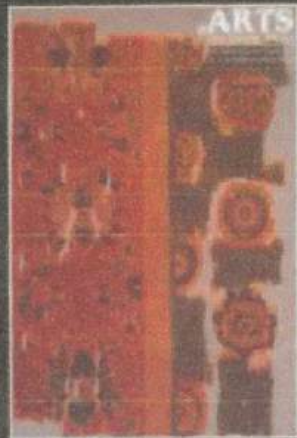
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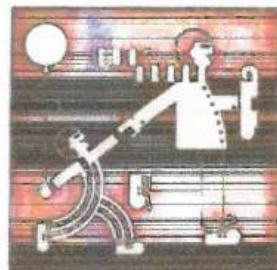
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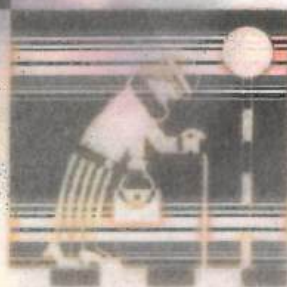
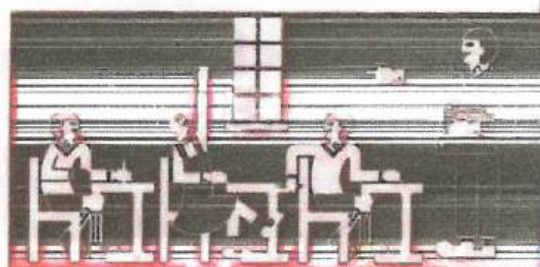
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Epilogue

PETER T MCCANN

IN SUMMING UP MY IMPRESSIONS OF THIS GREAT FESTIVAL OF ART AND CULTURE IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD, it is difficult to do adequate justice to an event so much directed to the common good of humanity. It is, too, almost impossible to find enough words of praise, satisfaction and appreciation for the compilation of these articles and pictures devoted to a religious faith and culture which has made such an overwhelming contribution to the progress of mankind in this world and which has proved such a great asset to those of us of different faiths and cultures who now live together.

We must each of us acknowledge our responsibilities to all the rest of humanity, because in each of us there exists this strange gift of an awareness of something within us which compels us to recognise the existence in mankind of a Divine Power.

The contributions in this Supplement arose out of an examination and respectful study of the Islamic world, its gifts and the heritage it has left to all of us. For myself, a mere traveller and observer, to have been invited to be the Guest Editor of this publication was a great delight, not merely in itself but also because this great event has arisen in my own city, a city which had already started developing trade links with the Muslim world some years ago.

The City of Glasgow is renowned for its great historic contribution to our nation. It is by reputation a place of friendship and extraordinary frankness. Glaswegians have no wish to act artificially towards anyone, for that, in truth, demeans whomever one seeks to delude and shames those who would delude. Therefore, in accordance with our tradition, as a true friend of humanity, the City of Glasgow sincerely appreciates the peoples of the various cultures from so many places who have come here and who enhance our City by their presence.

This great festival in Glasgow welcomed the World of Islam. It is, therefore, our hopeful expectation that those who read the foregoing pages will appreciate, and be thankful for, this opportunity to know, and benefit from, the study of Islam and will stand in wonder and admiration before its contribution to world civilisation.

As a stranger who has been involved in this most laudable task, a simple chronicler and a mere presenter, I beg to express a personal word of gratitude for the honour of having been given the privilege and the opportunity to recall memories of the singular honours and friendships bestowed on me in that land where Islam first proclaimed its message.

In closing, I wish to record my grateful thanks to all who have been engaged in presenting these exhibitions, talks and lectures, broadcasts and films, and those who have had the task of collecting and arranging all the items, for the dedication of their time and skills. It is an honour to have had the patronage of the Lord Provost of the Glasgow City, together with the cooperation of the Members of the Glasgow City Council and its officials. We are mindful also of the encouragement given by the Junior Chamber whose members are involved in so many aspects of the commerce and industry of Glasgow.

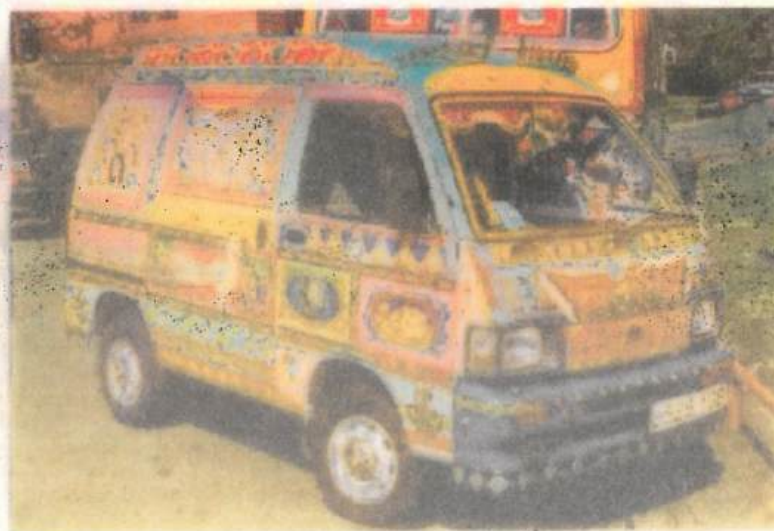
My parting words of farewell to our readers is the hope that they will be kindly disposed towards our efforts. We have but sought to make strong the cause of peace and friendship between our very different cultures. It has been an opportunity to know, appreciate and learn that we all live in the same world and to remind ourselves that as the twenty first century approaches, no man can be an island or ignore a helpful hand from other cultures.

Peter T McCann
former Lord Provost of

other activities. It is my expressed hope that Glasgow's Cultural Departments will continue to work with and for Muslims so that we can create greater understanding and growing friendship with our non-Muslim fellow citizens. In this ever-changing world it is only through respect and understanding for all cultures and religions that

we can have peace and harmony. SALAAM, Peace be with you all.

Bushra Iqbal is Community Relations Officer with the West of Scotland Community Relations Council, was a member of the SALAAM Advisory Committee.



Glasgow's Muslim Cultural and Welfare Centre

AALIYA MAAN

With the city of Glasgow heading towards an increasingly more cosmopolitan and culturally diverse future, it comes as no surprise to any Glaswegian that around 20,000 Muslims from all over the world have chosen to make Greater Glasgow their home. The Muslim population have access to 13 mosques, two of them purpose-built, the rest converted buildings. With Muslim adults so well catered for spiritually it is not surprising that for years there have been calls for an Islamic community and welfare centre, somewhere specifically for children and young people to go to socialise, study or just 'hang around' in an Islamic atmosphere.

The need for such a centre is undebatable, particularly in the Muslim community as parents' greatest fear is often that their children, growing up in a Western country will lose touch with or lose interest in their religion when what they see every day in Glasgow so strongly contradicts the beliefs and traditions of Islam. It is this fear that makes many parents over-cautious with their children and reluctant to let them out on their own or with other Scottish kids. This impossible situation can be extremely damaging to the young people involved and results in a feeling of cultural alienation. It is not surprising, therefore, that depression and mental illness are more common in Muslim teenagers than in other social groups.

The new Muslim Cultural and Welfare Centre (MCWC) in the city could be the answer to many Muslim parents' prayers. Situated in two acres of ground beside the Glasgow Central Mosque the Centre has been in the pipeline since 1984 when the Trustees of the Mosque acquired the land specifically with a view to building such a community centre. The reasons why work was not started until recently are mainly financial. The Trustees were earlier offered half a million pounds funding by the Scottish Office. But in order to ensure that their vision of the MCWC was not compromised, the Trustees and elders set

community itself with significant donations coming from prominent Muslim businessmen. Despite the fact that half the money is still to be raised, it seems that Scotland's first Muslim Cultural and Welfare Centre is well on its way to becoming a reality.

If the Centre is to be successful in this respect providing a haven for young Muslims to escape the pressures of home and a preferable and safer alternative to the streets, it will have to make itself attractive to the young. It seems obvious that the best way to do this is to let a representative committee of young Muslims play a major role in determining the direction of the centre and in organising events.

The 18.5 thousand square feet covered area on two floors of the new building will incorporate offices, a kitchen and cafeteria and an 120 x 80 feet hall to be used for sports, meetings, festivities, etc. Another smaller hall (50 by 32 feet) can be used for lesser celebrations, dinners and other recreational gatherings. The first floor of the centre will house an extensive Islamic library, conference room and specific needs unit. There will be 115 parking spaces for cars in the compound of the Centre. As well as catering for the young with educational and recreational facilities there will also be a Muslim elderly day care centre that will aim to provide care and companionship for male and female senior citizens. The completion of the Centre has been set for October '98.

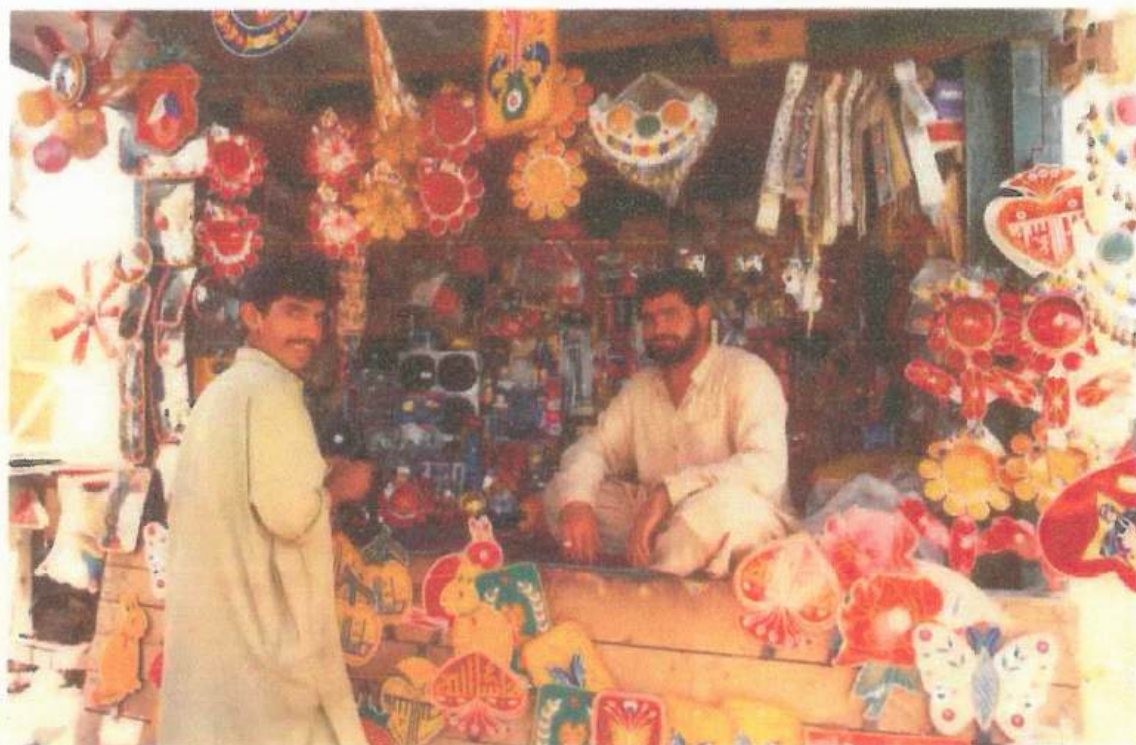
Aaliya Maan is studying Film and Media Studies at Sterling University.

An Exciting Experience

BUSHRA IQBAL

In my position as community relations officer with the West of Scotland Community Relations Council I had always been acutely aware of the general lack of interest in issues of Islamic culture in Scotland as well as Britain as a whole. In early 1994 the first ever survey was conducted into the lack of ethnic minority visitors to the museums

of artistic diversity through time and space, the freedom of the individual artist, cultural discrepancies between the various countries of the Muslim world, all these had to be discussed within the parameters of religious propriety in order to ensure that the end product - the SALAAM festival of Muslim Art and Culture -



ABOVE AND OPPOSITE, from a research trip to Karachi undertaken by Nicola Atkinson-Griffith

DECORATED MINI-BUS, now in the permanent collection of the Museum of Transport

and galleries of Glasgow as the city's largest ethnic minority had virtually no access to Islamic art and culture and this problem needed to be addressed. In late summer of 1994 Glasgow Museums appointed their first ever curator of Muslim Art and Culture, Dr Ulrike Al-Khamis. Following her initiative, plans were soon underway for a major festival devoted to Muslim Art and Culture and I, among other local Muslims, was approached to sit on an Advisory Committee to oversee the preparations and advise on religious sensitivities which of course in the field of art can be many. Indeed, it soon emerged that this first co-operation between the council, its museums and the Muslim community would

would reflect a Muslim approach to their art and culture rather than the traditional, Eurocentric presentation, where an 'exotic' non-European culture is presented through Western eyes. Work on the festival led to extensive dialogue between all parties involved and a good basis was created for future co-operation. This is no mean feat given the fact that after half a century in the West of Scotland the Muslim community here is still struggling for survival. SALAAM was the first opportunity for them to appreciate their heritage in a local museum, and even more importantly, see it appreciated by others. The festival has given both Muslims and non-Muslims the opportunity to celebrate the richness of the Muslim past.

inaccessible to children and wheelchair users. The answers to these questions are not important individually, and may be different the next time: the important thing was to have a forum in which to discuss them until a workable resolution could be found.

In our current financial and political climate, everything, no matter how idealistic, has to be measured. How can one measure the effectiveness of a festival like SALAAM? We do know that many more Muslims visited our museums. But were attitudes to Islam changed among non-Muslims? It is impossible to say, though according to our surveys, a little over 50% of visitors think that

The local community aims to continue to maintain a Committee for Islamic and Muslim Art. The museums have agreed to consult on what follow-up projects would be most interesting to them. The costs of not understanding are so great, and the opportunities for mutual enrichment so wonderful, that we are determined to go on finding ways of working together.

Mark O'Neill is Head of Curatorial Services, Cultural and Leisure Services, Glasgow City Council.



exhibitions can make a difference. But the elusiveness of a firm measure cannot be an excuse for doing nothing – even if we did not convert a single person to a less prejudiced point of view, the effort is worthwhile if only to encourage those already committed to mutual understanding.

Museums used to be lofty institutions, 'temples' in which experts spoke to the public as if from a great height. While museums still have to be scholarly, they can no longer present this impression that there is only one authoritative view, which they hold. Under the influence of projects like SALAAM, they are changing, to use another Greek word, into forums, where experts and public engage in debate and where citizens of differing backgrounds can meet and learn about each other. Museums are among the safest public spaces in our society, where young and old, individuals, families and groups can go and explore the world's heritage in peace. The



DETAIL, bus decoration

DAMASCENED STEEL HELMET from Iran, 19th century CE. Richly decorated helmets like this one probably formed part of a soldier's parade armour and may never have been worn in a battle.

FROM THE 'Open Sesame' exhibition

and changed a section on Deities to six separate sections on the main world faiths. Buddhism.

Christianity.

Hinduism, Islam.

Judaism and Sikhism.

This was a crucial step in making the whole museum work. We had realised that it would be

impossible to achieve a literal balance between different faiths, given the very different kinds of objects produced by different traditions. Our aim was to treat every object with equal respect. (Despite large differences in the size and number of objects from different religions, 85% of believers who visited the museum felt that their religion was treated fairly). Dr. Sahibzada's advice however made it clear that an even more important balance is that between the perspectives of the insider and the outsider. Combining an analytical and an empathic understanding of a faith, the close-up perspective of the believer and the detached view of the historian, is the most effective way of creating a communication which works for the general public. This is at least as challenging, and beneficial for museum staff as for community representatives, as they traditionally look at cultures from afar, from a very safe distance in fact!

When it came to the SALAAM Festival, our aims were built on this understanding. We wanted to do more than remind non-Muslims that Islam has inspired great art, or even that showing local Muslims cultural treasures they could be proud of. We wanted to bring the Muslim community with all its variety and complexity within the museum represented as a matter of course by the museum. This meant not just looking at high art and popular crafts but trying to address issues of life within the Muslim community. The collaboration of believer and historian, insider and outsider is the only way this can be done.

museum. The aim of museum exhibitions is not to make propaganda on behalf of different groups, but to increase understanding of them. If an exhibition feels to visitors that it is not addressing issues honestly, it will put them off, not draw them in to thinking more deeply about the subject. This puts museum workers in a delicate position – wishing to represent specific communities fairly, but also representing the community at large and putting the sometimes challenging questions they would wish to ask. Staff have to resist their instinct to take refuge in the less contentious past.

It can also put community representatives in



a difficult position. Representing modern themes – such as The Veil – may involve looking at difficult issues, facing up to disagreements within communities, not just giving the "official" point of view. While they may agree that honest presentation is more important than self-censorship, they may have to justify to their communities something which may be seen as 'letting the side down'. The range of points of view in the exhibitions and events in SALAAM showed what can be achieved when these issues are tackled.

FROM THE 'Open Sesame' exhibition

The learning process for the museum and the SALAAM Committee was a fascinating one. Among the issues which arose were, what kind of



LACQUERED PAPER MACHE MIRROR WITH EUROPEANIZED COURT SCENE, FROM IRAN, 19TH CENTURY CE. IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED THAT MIRRORS SUCH AS THIS HAD LIDS TO DISCOURAGE VANITY

wonderful Muslim Arms and Armour collection and discuss Jihad, without reinforcing stereotypes? How could you show contemporary Muslim art, which would be no less 'difficult' for most Muslims as for anyone else? What did we need to do to make Muslim visitors feel at home in the often strange environment of the museum?

Muslim businessmen help fund a project by an institution which they have felt to be outside their community? How should one respond to individual comments on aspects of the displays, which represented a compromise of many constraints. For example one visitor – and only one – commented that he felt that this Christian art



could not, however, and then came the time when the robe was made of the lightest fabric, densely embroidered with gold. With all, it was a robe of the highest quality.

clear this representation included present as well as past culture. It is relatively easy to generate admiration for the great achievements of Muslim culture of times that are safely in the past; promoting understanding of the present is far more difficult. The task of the museum is to make these connections.

The Committee of Islamic Cultural Museum

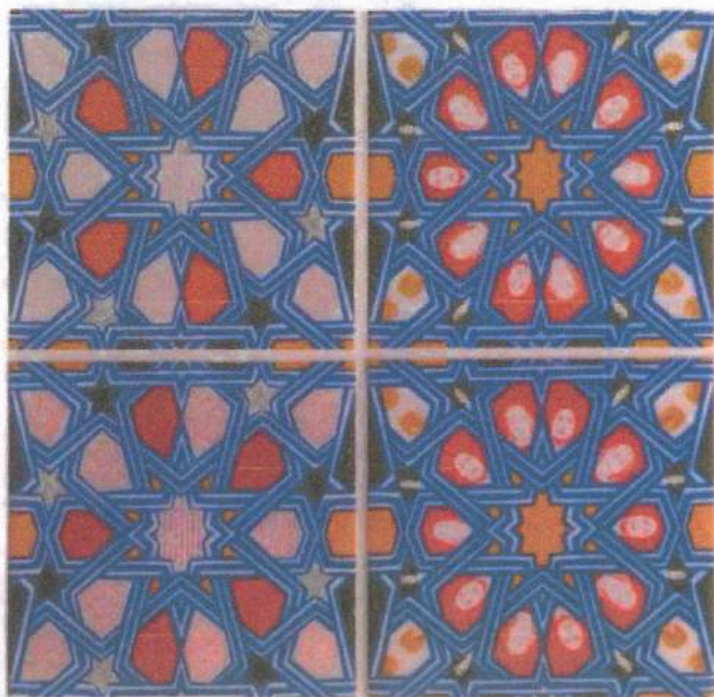
adviser on Islamic matters in the creation of the museum. We showed him slides of the objects we hoped to include in the display, many of them representational, and all emphasising what religions had in common, seen from a secular perspective. He felt that this would be interesting and acceptable, but only if there was also a focus on the past, on each faith or three or four.



Museums, Islam and Muslim Culture

MARK O'NEILL

What can be learned from the SALAAM Festival about how museums in Britain can relate to Islam and to Muslim culture? The ideal would be that Islam, Muslim art and culture and issues of interest to Muslim communities would be represented in displays in a straightforward way, just like the art and culture of other communities. However, this ideal is difficult for a



BRASS WINDOW GRILL, from India, 19th century CE. Its arched frame and intricate arabesque designs are typical of traditional Islamic art.

number of reasons. As a faith which does not distinguish between the secular and the sacred, Islam is uncomfortable with their separation in Western society. Media portrayals of orthodox Islam, especially as it has evolved in the past 30 years in the politics of the Middle East, contribute nothing to understanding. Further, on the central issues of our time – the relations between men and women, the relation of the individual and the community, finding ways to 'preserve traditional identities in a world marked by difference,' Islam has a distinctive view. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say 'views'.

There are corresponding difficulties within museums themselves. The traditional museum is a western European invention, reflecting the values that have evolved over the past 2,500 years. Many of the objects on show are 'pagan' and contain representations of the human figure, often unclothed. Many of the greatest museums, like the British Museum, are built in the style of Greek temples, and are secular versions of or even substitutes for religious buildings. It is significant that much of the greatest art which expresses Christian beliefs is no longer in churches where people worship, but in museums, where its sacred meaning is treated as if it were just another myth. Portraying Islamic art drained of its spiritual meaning would not be acceptable to most Muslims, who do not separate the aesthetic and the religious. However, museums are very important places in British society, providing unique opportunities for communities to celebrate the achievements of their culture, to assert their status as full members of society, and to combat misunderstandings promoted by news media.

The challenge facing museum staff and Muslims is to find ways in which these tensions and contradictions can be resolved creatively for the benefit of society as a whole.

Glasgow Museums staff and members of the local Muslim community have been working on these issues for some years. Our first significant attempt to represent Islam began with work on the St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art in 1990. Our overall aim was to promote mutual understanding among people of different faiths and none. For specific religions, such as Islam, our aim was twofold. First, we wished to provide opportunities for the community at large to understand something of Islam and Muslim culture. Our second aim was to represent the beliefs of an important local community in a

*It was the photo on the wall.
It was a photo of my uncle.
In the photo my uncle spoke to me.
He said remember me,
try to remember me*

It must surely be time for that communication process to begin. Speaking in Tongues was a small step in the right direction, a small step that just might initiate a large leap. The title is apt. Most Scots are naturally bilingual, able to speak and understand English and Scots though, after two centuries of linguistic repression, they may well have difficulty reading and writing their own tongue. Glaswegian Scots have a particular 'patter' readily in their mouths with which to enliven spoken poetry. The young poets taking part in the project also had Punjabi and Urdu available to them. And, given their age range, and current educational dictates, were even able to make use of a smattering of European languages. The end performance which took place in Tramway Theatre as part of the Asian Youth Festival was coloured by many 'tongues' as well as influenced by the variety of voices.

The decisions was not mine. My role was to guide and assist and advise. The performance presented the spoken work actively translated into other tongues as it was performed. Or, what might have appeared to be active translation might instead be corresponding or contrasting poems. A marriage of words in this way did, from one performance, produce as many different shows for the audience as there were languages within that audience. The effect for a listener was of things being screened by language they did not comprehend counterpointed by revelations of startling clarity in the pieces they did fully understand - a shifting veil that allows seeing and not seeing, created by words.

Whatever the full content of the final performance, I already knew we will be creating art in action. Live art forms cannot be predetermined: even though learned and rehearsed, each re-telling is subtly different in tone, energy, emphasis. Just as we can find new marvels each time we read again a favourite poem, so does the performance create new thoughts and emotions in the coming together. A new poem, the performance itself, grew from the

very naturally, nervous of striking out, with their pens, alone in a language they felt unsure of. As a native Scots speaker, it was a feeling I well remembered when crashing into the language barrier of English on starting school. So we stood together for a first poem. I asked, each told then wrote only a phrase, collectively choosing to write about the subject by which they were all most deeply affected. Once we had all the phrases, we put them together as:

Pakistan

*Feeling and thinking about my country,
it's the weather that comes first -
the air, the people, specially the
family.
Birds are flying, the sun is rising -
it is a very beautiful view.*

*I cannot sit in the sunshine.
The shadow of the trees is nice -
a lot of light and the smell of sand.
All around there are gardens,
many flowers in different colours.
I bring a melon inside -
the smell fills the whole room.*

by Parveen, Razia, Shenaz,
Saeeda, Nareen, Neelofar.

Poetry is necessary. Ninety percent of all people write poetry at some point in their lives. Poetry is important. Through thought and emotion it transfers experience directly from head and mind to heart and mind. When we experience as another person does then we understand, then we become human. Speaking in Tongues did leap across linguistic barriers to use language as it was designed, to communicate, to confirm humanity.

Janet Paisley is an award winning poet, writer and playwright in great demand as a performer of her own poetry.

Speaking in Tongues began on National Poetry Day, October 9, 1997 in the Gallery for Modern Art with readings in English, Gaelic and Urdu. Four Sunday



Speaking in Tongues

JANET PAISLEY

Words are building bricks with which we structure communication. They are instruments of power with which we influence, and often manipulate, other people. They are sounds with which we make music that evokes mood and affects emotion. They are paint with which we colour our view of the world. They are clay, by



FROM THE 'Gender and Islam' film season at the Glasgow Film Theatre

TRUCK PAINTER, from a research trip to Karachi undertaken by Nicola Atkinson-Griffith

which we shape our own thoughts. The highest art of words, poetry, deservedly merits its age-old description as the mother of all arts. As such it has long been the preserve of the few, rightly revered, but exclusive. Now, in Glasgow, as part of the SALAAM celebration of the Arts and Culture of the Muslim World, a group of young people had the opportunity, encouragement and platform to create, write and perform their own poetry.

When I was asked to lead the project, it was the excitement of bringing out new ideas, thoughts, voices, that led me to say yes. But on reflection it is the continuity through time and across cultures which was the most rewarding. From the Urdu mushaira to the Gaelic bard, there is a world-wide historical tradition of oral poetry. In Scotland today, there has been a

Across the country, groups of poets come together regularly to hear others speak their poems, to speak their own. At festivals and special events, poets speaking their work are now the norm. And many single events are spontaneously created for that purpose alone.

All of this is new, a recent flowering of the older tradition of poetry round the fireside, at family gatherings, in village and town squares. The poets are not, as might be expected when the old becomes new again, predominantly young, though there are many young people among them. Equally, they are male and female. The influence of American rap has brought out many black poets - a long overdue development in Scotland where our multi-cultural modern society has yet to be reflected in mainstream publication. But what hadn't, so far, happened spontaneously is any discernible input, or outpouring, from the Scots Asian community.

Two years ago I worked for a short time with a group of creche workers. None of the women had any particular desire to write poems. None had written before. Mainly, they wanted to make more use of English so that their grasp of the language would improve. There was Parveen, always convinced she had too few words to succeed but succeeding in *accidentally* letting the language give her an end rhyme, writing to express her love of Pakistan.

*Morning, I like
to see my family
In the morning
sound of prayer,
smell of rose,
bright weather
and open air.*

Shenaz constantly apologised for her lack of command and was barely reassured by my insistence that simplicity of language often created the most rewarding poems. Here, in *After*

My next task was to employ a film company and one with whom other curators had worked and highly recommended was called Life's Rich Tapestry. I met with Tony Grace, one of the partners, to discuss the project and to show him my initial interviews. He explained that there were various ways to create such a film and it was decided that we would accept his quote for two days filming and associated editing which allowed us to use both outside and inside locations which reflected the women's interests. The alternative was one day of filming in one location to which we would then add computer graphics to simulate different backgrounds. I felt that this could create a sense of unreality which I did not feel was appropriate to our subject matter. We were, after all, aiming to expose the myth of the veil as an exotic, sensual item of clothing for what it is, a myth.

My next task was to select from our interviewees which women we would use in the film. This was not easy but I did have certain parameters. To present a cross section which was truly representative of the Muslim women living in the city it was necessary to have one woman born in Glasgow, one from Pakistan, one Arab, one Malaysian, one who had converted or reverted to Islam and one who had not veiled from puberty but had chosen to adopt the veil later in life.

We filmed each woman in an appropriate place, Noor in the University Library where she studies, Farkhanda at her place of work, Rifat choosing fabric for hijabs and so on.

This necessitated co-operation from a great many people but I found that assistance was always freely given when the project was explained and interest and enthusiasm swiftly followed. The project was given a boost when the Equalities Committee of the City Council awarded me an extra sum of money. This I chose to use to provide extra copies of the film which I am able to lend with a pack of accompanying notes.

All of the women chosen live in and around the City, some have prominent careers, some are just beginning their careers, others are very busy mothers. They are all modern women living or working in our busy city, sharing the same concerns and tackling the same problems as the

has pressured them into wearing it. They talk in terms of identity, equality, protection, confidence and freedom, thereby exploding the myth of the veiled woman leading a secluded life which offers no choices and which is dictated by the whims of a husband, father or brother. Nobody seeing the finished film can be in any doubt as to the determination of these women to choose how they lead their lives.

To present the film, my designer, John Macinnes, built a special case into which he incorporated a drawer which we filled with hijabs for people to try on. Two more cases were designed to display hijabs which have been lent to us by women who do not appear in the film. It was important to me that we included as wide a group as possible in this project, so many other women helped to deliver a series of workshops for Secondary School pupils entitled Veiled Encounters, across the Autumn.

When the *Veil in Islam* closed at the end of December, the Veil in Glasgow was still available for loan as an exhibition in its own right. Any local community group can borrow it and our own staff will deliver and install. In this way people who could not come to the museum can have an opportunity to see the exhibition in their own communities. For those who do not have sufficient space for an exhibition, we can offer a copy of the film and, indeed, we already have requests for this service from many different organisations and are happy to hear from anyone who is interested. In this way the subject of the hijab will be kept in the forefront of debate for as long as people have an interest. I hope people will be helped towards a clearer understanding of the reasons for Muslim women wearing the hijab through this project. I certainly have and my thanks go to everyone involved.

Alexandra Robertson is a graduate of Glasgow University and the Open University and, as an Open Museum Curator, is able to pursue her commitment to lifelong learning. Anyone wanting more information about the Veil in Glasgow or to borrow either the

The Veil in Glasgow

ALEXANDRA ROBERTSON



BUSHEA IQBAL, a member of the SALAAM Steering group with some visitors at St Mungo's Museum

In May 1996 I was asked to curate a project called *The Veil in Glasgow* as part of the *Veil in Islam*, which was to be an exhibition for St. Mungo's Museum of Religious Life and Art and an important contribution to Glasgow's SALAAM Festival in 1997. This Festival was a City Council initiative to promote greater tolerance and understanding of Islam in our multi-cultural City.

As a curator of the Open Museum, I work with community groups from varied backgrounds and with very different interests but always with the same objective, to help them towards an understanding that Glasgow Museum's collections are a resource which they can use as a means of empowerment.

After discussions with Dr Ulrike al-Khamis, curator of *The Veil in Islam*, it was clear to me that the best way to proceed was to talk with local Muslim women about their faith and their

which would be the centrepiece for the exhibition instead of relying on written text which we, as museologists know, many people do not read.

Consequently, I needed to speak with women who would be willing to be filmed. This, I felt, was a great deal to ask but the finished product would be so worthwhile that

I was determined to pursue this aim.

With this in mind, I contacted the Central Mosque to discuss the project and ask advice on how best to approach local women. Much to my delight they agreed to help and asked some Muslim women to come into the Mosque to meet with me. It was also agreed that I might bring our video camera to record the initial meetings.

From the moment I met with these women I knew that we could create a great exhibition. They spoke to me with such sincerity, conviction and humour that I knew that I had to employ a film company to provide the technical excellence, which I lacked, in order to do them justice.

I was fortunate enough to be given the same offer by the Ethnic Minorities Youth Counselling Service which is based in Pollokshields in the south of the city and was once more welcomed by



But not everything attached to this Women in Focus season had thrown down a gauntlet, centre-stage. Take, for instance, the workshops held behind closed doors – most usually in the north of the city – where women old and young, Muslim and non-Muslim, resident and transitory, came together because of cloth. Yet again textiles proved massively significant. Through the medium of embroidery and needlework,

connections of trust and friendship were forged between costume-makers, musicians, dancers and – ultimately – film-makers, who recorded the process leading up to a community dance display.

JIBBAH ROBE OF PATCHED COTTON, from Sudan, 19th century CE. Many of the Mahdi's early followers were so poor that they only wore white cotton smocks repaired with brightly coloured patches. Later this type of dress was worn as a uniform throughout his army and symbolised virtuous poverty.

Glasgow's Gallery of Modern Art. For in *Quatre generations de femmes* – shown in *Out of the Blue*, another aspect of *Women in Focus* – Sedira took on a traditional male preserve: tilework. Moreover, by using figurative images – of herself, her mother, grandmother and her own daughter – within the geometry of the computer-generated designs, she had forcefully disrupted a whole swathe of conventions and cultural perceptions.

Here was a provocative, upfront statement

The resulting film was, in fact, screened as part of the GFT Film in Focus programme.

Indeed, as *SALAAM* unfolded, Glasgow found itself looking at its multi-cultural communities through a new veil of understanding, its sense of forward identity brought into clearer focus by looking – with respect – beyond the hijab and towards the cultural heart of the women who wear it.



پیغام سلام



SWALES

QUALITY

SON



the hijab per se, but at its possible hijacking by extremists as a tool of political power, and its enforced, unhappy shift into a symbol of suppression and oppression.

But if this exhibition was an invitation to non-Muslims to open their minds, to look, learn and possibly re-adjust their thinking. It was also – and this, I think, is of immense value – a point of affirmation for Muslim women living in Glasgow. Especially if they have chosen to wear the *hijab*. Indeed, within the surrounding context of photographs from places like Somalia, Malaysia and the Middle East, there was video footage of Glasgow women talking about why they choose to wear the veil.

These women may share the wearing of the hijab but really, they could hardly be more different in terms of background, attitudes – even their taste in veiling material! Listening to a young Scottish woman – a convert to Islam – talking of her decision to wear the veil or hearing how a very modern, outgoing Muslim woman had found herself choosing – after years of wearing Western clothing – to take on the mantle of her faith, is both moving and enlightening.

Some of the women who spoke on camera – there were some five or six of them – in any way downtrodden, or locked in inarticulate submission to some unseen male agenda. They were, self-evidently, able to speak for themselves. And they did, with humour and warmth and great dignity. They also demonstrated that – for those – there is veiled sense of privateness contained within the public wearing of the veil. A sense of overt identity, as a Muslim woman, yes – but also a sense of one's inner, personal identity being safeguarded...

At a time when the British Government and the media are pre-occupied with issues of privacy – even to the point of legislation – these testimonies from Glasgow women take on an unseen poignancy.

What emerged – from this video, and from the exhibition as a whole – was a quiet request for respect. For non-Muslims to temper any knee-jerk assumptions, even if they do not intrinsically change their opinions. And for Muslims, too, to keep an open awareness of how different Islamic communities worldwide interpret the tenets of faith – and women's veil may be another's



Still further glimpses, and insights, into the lives of Muslim women were offered through the medium of cinema: in Film in Focus, the GFT – Glasgow Film Theatre – put together a season of films and illustrated talks that considered the roles allocated to women both on and off the screen. Discussion sessions led by guest panellists explored the images – perhaps one should say clichés – given credence by Western cinema and by Arab cinema as well, channelling exchanges in ways that usefully enhance issues of gender as well as of culture and identity. Again, the artform was being used as a bridging medium within the city. Vanessa Paynton, who put the programme together, points out that a film like *Life... My Passion* (1995; Egypt) is likely to strike a chord with non-Muslim women, dealing as it does with the prospect of unmarried old age and the way in which three impoverished thirtysomething women still manage to face the future with resilience and even humour.

The discussions, too, threw up further points of shared experience. For in truth it is just as possible to draw up catalogues of perceived gender discrimination against women in the West – despite decades of Equal Opportunities legislation and the fanciful quest of feminist doctrines – as it is to construct a weight of evidence suggesting that under Islam, women are corralled within specific, predominantly domestic, realms.

And I daresay there are many women artists in Glasgow and beyond – who could see

Women in Focus

MARY BRENNAN

Layers of assumptions: some thick with prejudice, others shaded with simple ignorance. Whether or not women in Muslim communities actually wear the veil, Western attitudes tend to shroud them in mysteries and miseries that often say more about their own societies than the Islamic ones.

Women in Focus: a series of events tied into

Glasgow's recent SALAAM season, celebrating arts and culture in the Islamic world – sought to explore some of the accumulated myths while demonstrating, through film, talks and exhibitions, some of the realities that affect the lives and choices of Muslim women. Essentially it's an attempt to challenge unthinking preconceptions. To say, if you like – 'take time to look at what we're showing you. You say well recognise your own hopes, fears and aspirations even if the customs and clothing are different.'

Indeed, this bid to realise shared humanity has been a hallmark of the entire SALAAM! initiative. What began as an imaginative exhibition of previously unseen Islamic art treasures – sadly Glasgow has never had quite enough space to do its collections visible justice – has grown into a purposeful

statement of the city's multi-cultural identity. While personnel from the Museums and Art Galleries division created a thoughtful series of exhibitions – acknowledging modern as well as ancient Islamic arts and artefacts – the Department of Performing Arts and Venues, with the assistance of other organisations like the Glasgow Film Theatre, tried to foster contact with, and understanding of the Muslim culture worldwide but most particularly within Glasgow itself. This was a call across all communities – of age, gender, class as well as religion – to look, with fresh and open eyes, at one's neighbours.

Which brings us, I suppose, face to face with

of Muslim culture. It was, therefore, a commendably brave move to have, as central to the whole 'Women in Focus' project, an exhibition about The Veil in Islam. Curated by Ulrike Al-Khamis – who was also responsible for bringing Glasgow's long stowed-away Islamic works to light – this two-part display was a powerful, and impressively unhistrionic, collection of images that spanned continents and concepts in a way that was both immediate and accessible to a general public.

Walk into the upstairs space at St Mungo's Museum of Religious Art and Life and the first thing that hit you was the 'myth' – the familiar commercial images of mysterious veiled temptresses used, by Western agencies, to sell confectionery, films, books.... anything, in fact, that might be enhanced by a veiled reference to something exotic yet forbidden, inviting – hence the gauzy, scented costumes – but secretive – hence the covering of the face.

It's an image of Muslim women that is as representative of the culture as the straw donkeys and bull-fight posters that so many tourists bring home from Spain. And indeed that is, in part, the truth of it. Cast an eye over the extracts wittily reproduced on the pages of a 'mock-terro' novella and you would see how easy it has been for Western travellers to interpret what they saw in terms of their own context and not that of the country, or the people, they were visiting.

A symbolic passing through a draped archway – which also carried apposite quotations from the Qur'an, in translation – took you into an area of reality. Here was the chance to witness actuality; to see and hear statements from women who know, from first-hand experience, what wearing the hijab (as the veil is properly called) entails. And no, it is not simply a litany of pro-hijab propaganda that screens out opposite viewpoints.

In among the positive images – the photographs and text showed veiled women, worldwide, actively employed in all walks of life –



'OPEN SESAME' at Kelvingrove

DETAIL: DECORATED BUS AND reflection of Nicola Atkinson-Gilfith and Alphan Nart

in this city - far from the homeland remembered by their parents - there can be an added conflict of loyalties: how do you keep faith with your roots, yet put down new ones? Non-Muslims, meanwhile, can frankly be baffled by these new Glaswegians - and in the wake of ignorance, can often come racism and bigotry. These are dark feelings, but they will stay dark and unresolved if they are not voiced.

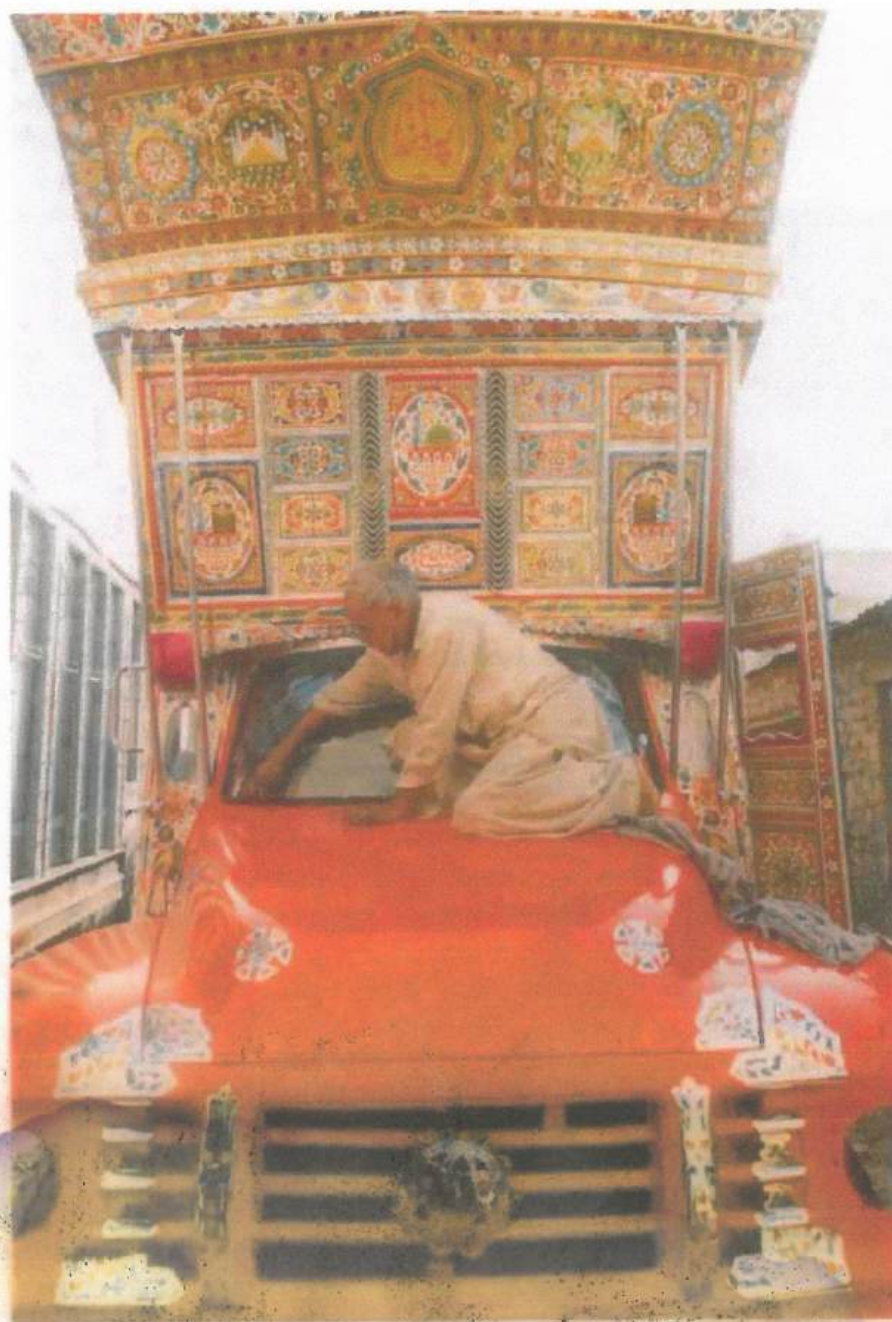
At the same time - as other cross-cultural ventures in the city have happily proved - joys do abound whether it is in the discovery of new friendships, new skills, new attitudes or new tastes. Speaking in Tongues celebrated the positive strengths of living in a culturally-diverse society. The young writers created an informal 'mushaira' that acted as a commentary on the present and future situation of Muslims and their place within the Glasgow community.

Not every instance of creative participation necessarily reached the public eye. The women who were working under the 'Film in Focus' banner on a kind of 'Clothes Show' project were allowed to decide whether the finished product was to be screened privately, publicly - or not at all. It was crucial that they should have had that choice since, for many of the Muslim women involved, being on show is not in their nature or their culture. In any case, the real legacy of bringing together these Muslim and non-Muslim women lay in the meeting, in the exchange of skills and the sharing of experiences. The Muslim women - under the observing lens of a women-only film team, devised a series for a music and dance production that was, itself, performed and filmed. At every level - from the creative use of fabric to the creative use of film - this project celebrated both the visionary and practical sides to the women's collaboration.

Meanwhile the work of Muslim film-makers from across the globe was showcased at the Glasgow Film Theatre, offering audiences access

work proved inspirational - possibly fostering new understanding between Muslim and non-Muslim communities, and encouraging would-be Muslim film-makers to realise the bigger picture of their ambitions.

The focus of SALAAM was Islamic art and culture - but that art and culture is already in our midst, in every area of Glasgow. This celebration



was to remind us of that, and to bring all the communities of this city together in a shared appreciation of our increasingly rich and diverse culture.

DECORATED TRUCK, from a research trip to Karachi undertaken by Nicola Atkinson-Gallith

A Voyage of Discovery

MARY BRENNAN

Gradually, across a period of many, many years, Glasgow's art galleries and museums have acquired a veritable trove of fine Islamic art and artefacts. It is, however, only in recent years that the true value of these collections has been recognised, behind the closed doors of curators' meetings at least. For most of these objects have lain in storage, tucked away from public view - out of reach, out of sight, out of mind. You could, I suppose, take this as a metaphor for the Muslim communities within the city. For gradually, across many, many years, Glasgow has acquired a Muslim population that is part of the city's fabric - a vital strand in its commercial profile, an element of its workforce, an influence on its culinary tastes - and yet there was no real awareness of what Muslim culture embraced. No greater familiarity with its poetry, its music, its folk-lore than with those unseen works of art.

Time, certainly, to take a closer look at what had been gained and to accord it a proper appreciation. Time to make SALAAM, a celebration of Muslim arts and culture that ran for a whole year. The most obvious starting point lay, of course, in the basements and repositories of the various galleries and museums. In 1994, Glasgow Museums appointed - for the first time ever - a curator of Islamic Art and Design: Ulrike Al-Khamis. She took charge of a thrilling array of objects - carpets, ceramics, textiles, even armour. The range, both geographically and historically, was impressive in scale and in quality.

But as ideas for displaying the artefacts were being mullied over, the curators began to feel that there was a marvellous opportunity to establish real, living links with Muslim culture at other levels. To create a widespread sense of the traditions that had shaped the artworks, and to show how those traditions had translated into other art forms. It wasn't something they could tackle themselves, so they asked colleagues in Glasgow's Department of Performing Arts and Venues if they would be interested in expanding

contacts with local Muslim communities, agreed. It's fair to say that when they responded so enthusiastically, no-one had a clear idea of what the performing arts contribution to SALAAM might be.

Suddenly the whole process of programming took on the promise of a voyage of discovery.

Here was an opportunity to surprise everyone - the Glasgow Muslim communities included, whose roots mostly connect back to Pakistan with performances of live music, poetry, film, puppetry and other art forms, from Islamic sources all across the world. Here was a huge tapestry, rich with different textures of the same essential culture. The possibility of bringing some of these textures into the city, having cross-over contact and maybe new strands evolve. The prospect was both exhilarating and yet daunting.

Daunting because it is all too easy to blunder into someone else's culture and, unwittingly, cause offence. For instance - quite by chance - the SALAAM season stretched across the actual 50th Anniversary of the Independence of India and Pakistan. There was no way that the crew wanted Glasgow's Muslims to feel that the city was muscling in on the marking of this significant event, setting an agenda for the anniversary or - worse still - instigating a rival event. Whatever SALAAM became, it had to begin with respect.



HAND OF FATIMA PAPER CHARM, found inside a copy of the Qur'an picked up on a street outside Kabul in 1971. The fingers and palm of the hand are filled with calligraphic verses and formulae.

tastes, or meet all expectations. But the Muslims and non-Muslim who came together on the performing arts steering committee hoped that their good intentions will at least be recognised for what they are by the city as a whole: a sincere attempt to focus attention on a culture that lives within a culture - the culture of the Muslims, who are now part of Glasgow's artistic culture, just as they are part of its business culture and its political culture. The programme did look out

and beyond, to Indonesia, Tunisia, the Mediterranean but this was also an inward-looking journey, an invitation to see what is already in our midst and take pleasure in it, get involved in it even. Which was where, perhaps, we could take to the roads! Mind you, traffic could well come to a sudden standstill when 'truck art' rounded the corner. Decorating everyday vehicles in vibrant colours and eye-catching designs is one of the most popular forms of folk art in Pakistan, nowadays claiming the kind of critical appraisal enjoyed by, for instance, the graffiti artists in New York's subway system.

It seemed an ideal way of advertising the accessibility, the brilliance, the relevance of SALAAM and so, as part of the celebration, Glasgow had its own specially-painted bus. When the single-decker coach took to the road, its glorious artwork was the end product of a far-reaching collaborative process, one that stretched back and forth between Karachi and Glasgow, bringing together professional artists, students and local schoolchildren. It proved a true welding of traditions and new inspirations, a crossover between Muslims in Pakistan, Muslims - and non-Muslims - in Glasgow.

And when that bus travelled through the proud, dark Victorian architecture of the city, or pulled up outside one of the more recent rises of glass and concrete, it was a tangible statement of what lay at the heart of SALAAM. Throughout the duration of SALAAM the bus shuttled between the exhibition sites, enabling members of the public - and especially

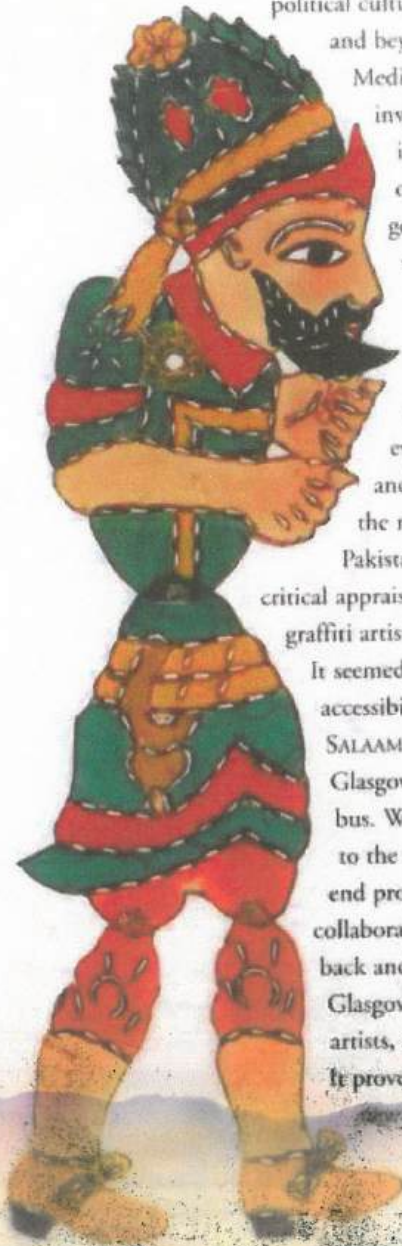
sister vehicle was decorated by the Glasgow group: a small commercial van, that when the celebration ended - became a permanent exhibit for Glasgow Museums, when it's not required to shift other exhibits, that is! And who knows what other spin-offs there might be? A bright rash of technicolour taxis? Or a rainbow scatter of illuminated minis?

And who knows what legacy will emerge from another skein of the celebration, the Folklore Project entitled 'Speaking In Tongues'. Here again there were two elements to the concept: a programme of professional performances running in tandem with specific opportunities for creative participation. Major artists from Indonesia, Senegal, Morocco, Pakistan and elsewhere were invited to give poetry readings, music recitals, dance performances and evenings of story-telling so as Glasgow audiences could witness something of the heritage and traditions that course through Muslim culture - and appreciate, too, how each geographic region, each community shades in its own individuality.

At the same time, the DPAV drew on one of the most popular traditions - the 'mushaira' or poetry event - as a springboard for a new writing initiative. Every community deserves to have its own stories. Not just the legends of yesteryear, or the 'learning tales' that are passed on, from old to young, as a means of securing tradition and preparing children for the ways of adulthood. But also new stories of itself in its own immediate time. Not the stuff of tabloid news, but the anecdote and the personal reflection that express the contemporary character of an individual, a community, a generation, a culture.

It was this character that Speaking in Tongues wanted to hear, and to hear coming from the mouths of new young writers whatever their background. This was a forum for Muslims and non-Muslims to say - through their poetry, their performances - what it is they think and feel about their relationship with the city, with each other, with their own communities and with themselves. And yes, it could as well be and was a time when prejudices were aired, and personal dilemmas were brought out into the open.

In a rapidly-changing, cosmopolitan city like Glasgow it can be hard for any young person - regardless of colour, creed or class - to know



SHADOW PUPPET, from Turkey, 20th century CE. This is Hacı Bekir, one of the two main characters of the traditional Turkish shadow theatre. He is always represented with a most painted beard and a tall



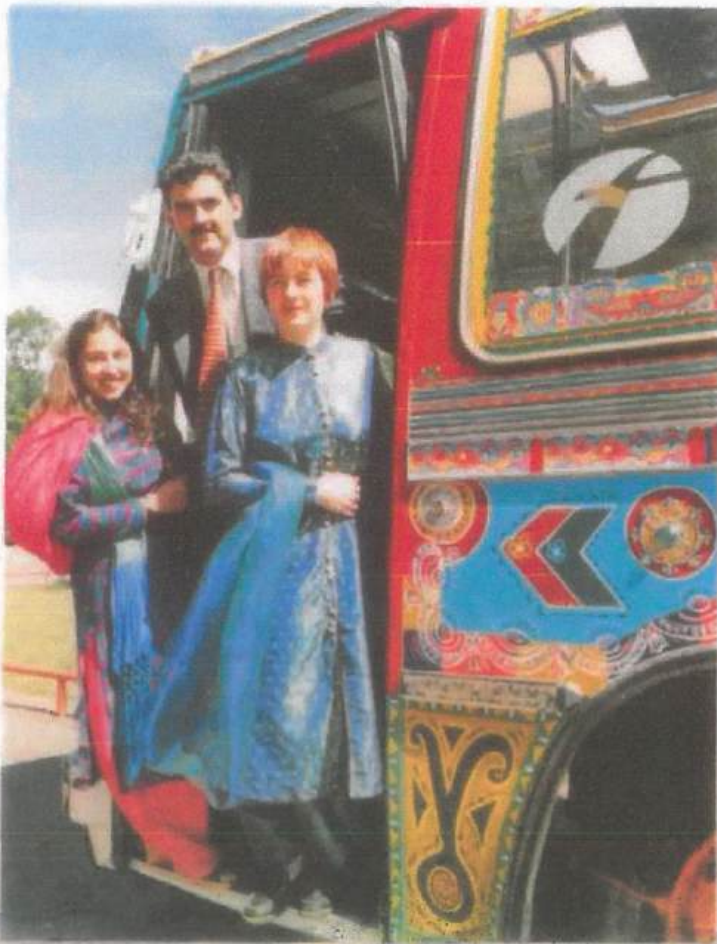
remarkable performance was presented by the dancer Amel Tafsout who seemed to become an integral part of the Fire Gallery - her costume and movement blending perfectly with the atmospherically lit space. Other performers who contributed to this unique season included Inno Sorsy, Nita Basu Chaudhuri, and Hassan Erraji.

'Speaking in Tongues' explored how poetry and verse grew within an ancient Asian culture. The award-winning Glasgow writer Janet Paisley led the project and a group of young people were invited to create, write and perform their own poetry. Close links were established with the first Youth Asia Festival which took place in Glasgow's

of fascinating films to our attention at the Glasgow Film Theatre. The focus was 'Gender and Islam' and the season looked at the representation of Muslim women from both within and outside the culture, and in front of and behind the camera. This theme was of course reflected in different ways across the entire SALAAM programme. Glasgow Film and Video Workshop was commissioned to make a film which looked at SALAAM through the eyes of women from one of the city's housing schemes. Cultural exchange came to life as the women from Red Road flats made their own silk prints with Islamic designs, visited the exhibitions in the company of some of the artists... and learned to belly dance!

Some ideas unfortunately did not get beyond the planning stage - the 'Feis/Bhangra' for example. This was intended to be a fusion of the growing traditional music movement in Scotland and the Bhangra movement. Tutors from both backgrounds were to work with young musicians to create an event which would comment on attitudes to traditional and contemporary musical styles within both cultures. 'Feis/Bhangra' remains an active idea for implementation at some future date.

The contribution of the spirit of SALAAM was very important. If SALAAM is seen as an explosion of activity which left no legacy then it will have failed. There are signs however that some strong bridges have been built and that they will continue to carry two-way traffic in future years.



ARTIST: 1997, Nigel Serafini
of Strathclyde Juries, and
Lorna Harrison-Goffin

THE GALLERY OF MICHIGAN, 1997

Tramway in November 1997. The Youth Asia Festival was a logical development from SALAAM, an event organised by and for young people. SALAAM has in many respects been about uncovering a hidden past within the city and bringing to light half-forgotten or misunderstood artefacts, traditions and practices. Youth Asia and 'Speaking in Tongues' aimed to make a statement about life as it is in Glasgow today for young Asian people and to set the agenda for future



Planning the Performing Arts Events

CHARLES BELL

The original idea for a festival to celebrate the arts and culture of the Muslim world came from Glasgow City Council's Museums and Galleries Department. The invitation to the Performing Arts and Venues Department to become involved by programming a complementary series of performance events was immediately accepted. It



was only when we began to look in detail at the exhibition's programme and to consider the ambitious aims of the project that we realised the enormity of the challenge that we had taken on. There



A WORKSHOP at Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museums

SCHOOL PUPILS about to join the decorated bus

THE BUS decorated by Nicola Atkinson-Griffith and Afshan Abid

VIAY KANGUKTAR performs at the Gallery of Modern Art

is no such entity as the 'Islamic World' and the breathtaking diversity of cultural practices and traditions in the countries linked by the Islamic faith makes redundant the concept of a neat, all-encompassing festival. We also found that there are few 'rules' - as in most cultural endeavours 'interpretation' is the important factor and the effect that the activity has on the viewer or the participant is the only true gauge of success. We were fortunate in that one member of our arts team was born in Pakistan and she was able to provide

contacts and useful advice on cultural etiquette. For the rest of us there was much reading to be done and a heavy reliance on members of the SALAAM steering group and contacts within Glasgow's Muslim community who were generous with advice and support. Our relative ignorance of Islamic art and culture at the start of the process did have some benefits - we had to discover the impulses and traditions behind

audience. Building cultural bridges between communities has to be an important element of a celebration such as SALAAM.

The event's programme grew until we had film, folklore and visual arts events weaving in and out of the exhibitions programme. The most visible symbol of connection was the SALAAM bus painted in the style of the decorated transport of Pakistan. Glasgow artist Nicola Atkinson-Griffith and Afshan Abid from Karachi combined their skills on this project and the bus happily transported numerous schools and community groups to exhibitions and performances during the year. Nicola was subsequently involved in a project to place artworks created by professional artists, school groups and individuals in buses throughout the city - a fascinating development of the SALAAM bus project and one which brightens up a means of transport which in the greyness of a Glasgow winter can be rather



depressing.

The Folklore project comprised storytelling, music and dance from Algeria, Indonesia, Morocco and Pakistan. Many of the events took place in the Gallery of Modern Art (GOMA) and the art works provided a vivid backdrop to the performances. There were several memorable evenings but I recall with particular pleasure Chloe Goodchild's songs, chants and improvisations based on Sufi mystical poetry and performed in the Air Gallery which is a room lit from above by large skylight windows. As

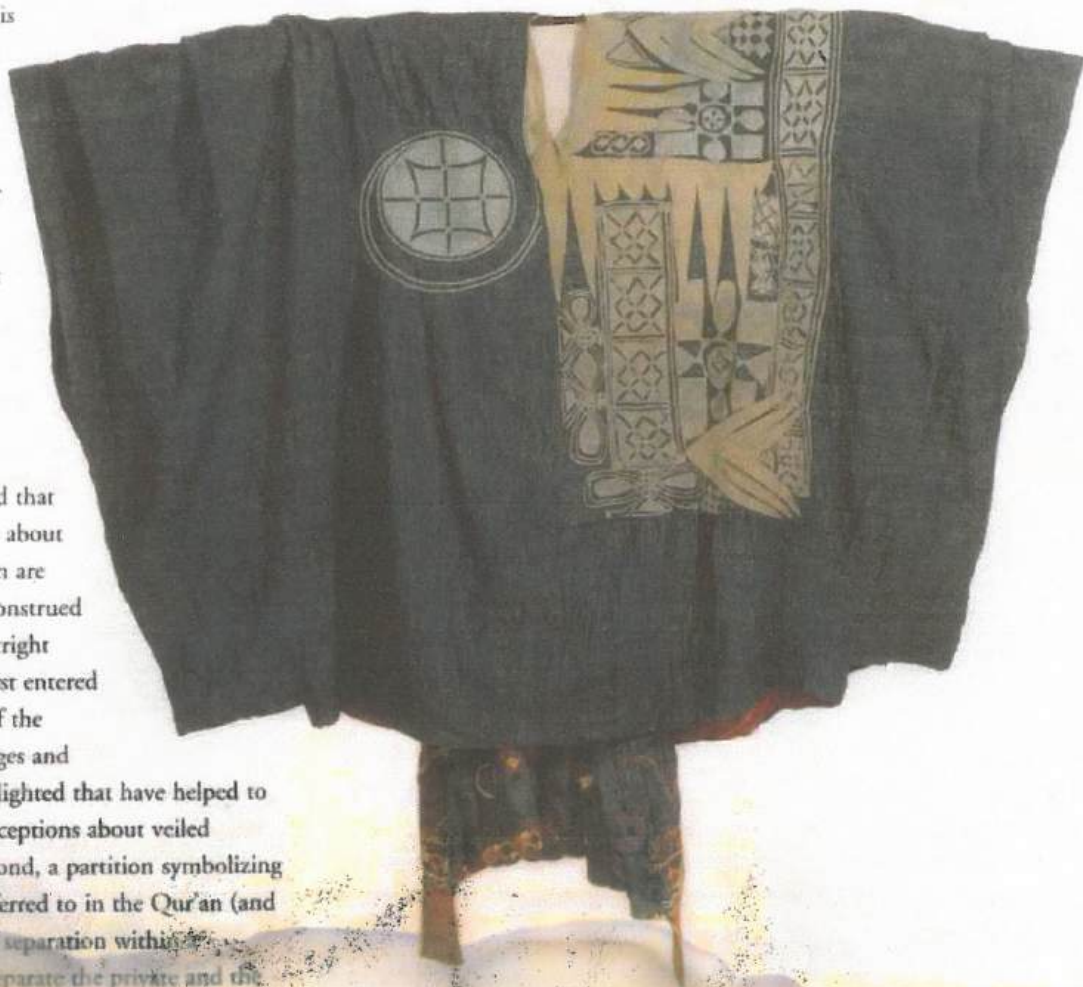
journey. The splendid Wagner Garden Carpet formed the centrepiece here, with its complex garden design reflecting the beauties and refreshing fountains that the Muslim paradise promises to all true believers.

In addition to 'Open Sesame' Dr Al-Kharnis project-led a second, very different exhibition which ran at St Mungo's Museum of Religious Life. 'The Veil in Islam - Myth and Reality' dealt with an issue that has been fervently discussed in recent years by Muslims and Non-Muslims alike. In recent years 'the veil' or more correctly the *hijab* has become the most potent negative symbol in Western eyes of Islamic

'fundamentalism'. This perception goes hand in hand with older popular images of veiled Muslim women as symbols of mystic eroticism and female oppression. At the same time true knowledge and understanding with regard to 'the veil' remains scant. This exhibition highlighted that the wide-spread ideas about veiled Muslim women are often based on mis-construed generalizations or outright myths. The visitor first entered 'The Myth' section of the exhibition. Here images and statements were highlighted that have helped to form western misconceptions about veiled Muslim women. Beyond, a partition symbolizing the concrete *hijab* referred to in the Qur'an (and indicative of physical separation within a domestic setting to separate the private and the public sphere) accessed the reality of the Muslim world. Here photographs of veiled Muslim women in all walks of life and from all over the Muslim world conveyed the stylistic diversity with which the concept of *hijab* could be interpreted and more importantly the diverse life styles of Muslim women. The photographs were accompanied by statements from Muslims of all walks of life and reflecting all kind of opinions.

general tendency in the West to apply occidental values and notions of civilizational superiority when discussing issues of another culture.

At the heart of the 'Reality' section of the exhibition, an integral yet independent mini-display could be found. This was concerned with 'The Veil in Glasgow'. Alex Robertson from the Open Museum Department of Glasgow Museums, who curated this section, went out into the local Muslim community and invited Muslim women from various walks of life to talk openly about their attitudes towards *hijab* and record their statements on video. The result was a very sympathetic film which formed the centre



piece of the 'Veil in Glasgow' display. Acting on suggestions from Muslim women themselves, a handbag, a set with various *hijab* covers and two glass cases with head-scarfs and one complete *hijab* outfit were also provided to enhance this display.

MAN'S ROBE, from sekondi, Ghana, c1900 CE. The embroidered designs are typical of those worn by Muslim Hausa traders in West Africa. The Hausa were gradually Islamized between the 15th and 19th centuries CE.

performances throughout the city. The Muslim community made a major contribution, too – among other things with the launch, in June, of 'Radio Salaam'. Manned entirely by enthusiastic volunteers and broadcasting programs in English, Urdu, Arabic, Malay and Punjabi, Radio Salaam played a vital role in raising awareness of the SALAAM festival among the local Muslim communities.

The flagship exhibition of the SALAAM festival was held in Glasgow's Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum. It was entitled 'Open Sesame'. The idea for 'Open Sesame' was born nearly

through the various stores ensued and every new vault, every new box revealed exciting surprises and often unexpected treasures. The buzz of excitement was never-ending: this is how Ali Babo must have felt after the magic formula of 'Open Sesame' had opened up the treasure-filled caves of the 40 thieves in front of his eyes! The title for the present exhibition was born.

But how to select, how to eliminate? Over a thousand art objects and ethnographic items were recorded and assessed over a three-year period.

Eventually, considerations of thematic



four
years
Khanik
explore and
the considerable
Islamic collections
housed mainly in the Burrell Collection and at
the Art Gallery and Museum, Kelvingrove, with
the aim to exploit their potential for the benefit
of the public. Together with Glasgow Museum's

and-potential requirements all helped to
determine the final choice for the exhibition.
The first challenge was to find the stories
behind the objects, the picture to emerge from
the many new pieces. Of course, each artefact
had its own story to tell, but all of them were
united by one common denominator: Islam. The
question then arose: how to present this subject

BRASS CASKET WITH SILVER
INLAY, from South Iran,
10th century CE. This
casket was probably used
for storing precious objects
belonging to the Sassanid
dynasty. It is now
housed in the Burrell
Collection, Glasgow.

second largest religion in the world with about one billion adherents all over the globe, and despite the fact that Islam as an entire philosophy of life lies at the heart of a civilization of global proportions, knowledge of it in the West remains scant and inaccurate. Too many centuries of religiously and politically motivated propaganda by Church and State have preconditioned the West to regard Islam and all that comes with it as backward and inherently dangerous. The most recent and increasingly common images of fierce Islamic fundamentalists sadly have only helped to reinforce the prejudices. Among the profusion of myths, distortions and generalisations that have

shaped our attitudes to Islam, it is difficult to gain a more objective insight.

Never has a more objective understanding of Islam been more necessary than now. Not only have the political events of recent years

brought the two worlds of Islam and the West into ever closer contact, but 10 million Muslims have made their homes in the West today. They have become neighbours, colleagues and increasingly, friends. Understanding, respect and tolerance of their right to be different are essential in a world where Muslims, together with other minorities, are increasingly the target of racism, abuse and denunciation for global political events that they themselves often have nothing to do with or condone as little as we would do ourselves.

Coming from such considerations the declared objective of 'Open Sesame' was to contribute to a better understanding of Islam and the Muslim world. At the same time, however, it very much intended to provide an

attraction for Muslim visitors, too, and it was hoped that the exhibition will help to make Muslims ever more aware and proud of their fascinating and wide-ranging heritage.



RELIGIOUS PRINT, from India, 19th century CE. An idealised bird's eye view of the holy mosque at Makkah with the Kaaba at its centre. This cubic building marks the heart of the Muslim world

BOOK WITH MINIATURE PAINTINGS, from Iran, 19th century. The only Muslim manuscript in the collection of Glasgow Museum is this small book of poems telling the tragic love story of Leila and Majnun. In Iran this famous tale had strong mystic overtones and symbolised the intense longing of the Sufi to be united with Allah

WALL PAINTING, from Iran, 17th century CE



traditional life in the Muslim world. All of these were displayed within the context of an imaginary and idealised Muslim city.

Such a city of course always has the mosque at the centre, and here visitors encountered Islam as a religion and got an insight into the duties of a pious Muslim. Around the mosque, the typical labyrinth of a Muslim city invited them to explore at leisure. They could encounter expressions of popular belief, unorthodox and yet vibrant and alive, rest in the story-telling corner of the marketplace or explore the Art of the Written Word, as practised for example by the professional scribe who traditionally offers his services outside the mosque. They could also catch a glimpse of the splendour that characterized many urban mansions and palaces in the old days or join the traders from all over the Muslim world who would meet in the market to sell their textiles, ceramics and other wares.

A visit to the citadel revealed splendid armour and an array of beautifully crafted weapons. A special section on Jihad or Holy War dealt with an issue very much in peoples minds today.

On the fringes of a typical Muslim city lie the villages and the encampments of the nomads so many of whom still populate the extensive deserts and steppes of the Muslim world and so, in 'Open Sesame', too, aspects of 'Nomad and Village Life' could be explored.

Broadening the Experience of the Individual

MESSAGE FROM THE GLASGOW JUNIOR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

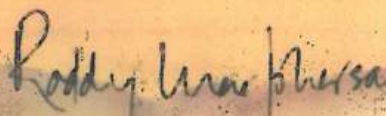
I am delighted, and honoured, to be able to join the Lord Provost in sending good wishes from Glasgow to your readers. It is also a particular pleasure to wish all success to this special supplement, since the invitation to do so comes from Peter McCann, who was our Lord Provost some twenty years ago. His efforts to encourage trade between Arab countries and Glasgow are still remembered by many members in the Junior Chamber – even though it is a condition for membership of the Junior Chamber that we are all under 40 years of age!

Glasgow Junior Chamber of Commerce is the local branch of one of the world's largest self-development organisations for young people in business. Junior Chamber International has some four hundred thousand members who are to be found throughout the world. It is indeed an organisation which exists to develop understanding and goodwill between people of different nations and different cultures; and, through its emphasis upon broadening the experience of the individual, plays a useful part in encouraging the development of commerce between cities and states.

Being a part of an international organisation, so founded upon principles which develop the potential of the individual, respect the diversity of cultures, and aim at the furthering of trade between nations, all of the Lord Provost's comments are ones that we would thoroughly endorse. But it is especially in his message of welcome to our city of Glasgow that the Junior Chamber would like to join.

It was in Glasgow, in 1937, that the Junior Chamber movement was founded in Scotland. 1997 was therefore our Diamond Jubilee. For sixty years, our self-development programmes have allowed our members to acquire knowledge of the problems arising from the working of trade and industry; to help improve the amenities of the city; and to better the condition of its people. In a mood of some celebration in our Jubilee year, we can reflect on numerous projects that we have carried out. But we are particularly happy to remember that Glasgow recently hosted the congress of Junior Chamber International, when thousands of our colleagues from around the world were able to visit our homes, and enjoy our city.

To the many friends we made at the congress from the "Islamic World," we say 'haste ye back'; and to those who have not yet had a chance to experience the hospitality of Glasgow, we hope that the invitation from the Lord Provost, our First Citizen, is one that you may one day accept.



Roddy Macpherson

BOARD OF PATRONS: Barkers Scotland, James Watt & Son, Bishop & Robertson Chalmers, CableTel UK, Clydesdale Bank plc, Coopers & Lybrand, The Copthorne Hotel, Ernst & Young, Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, Glasgow City Council, Glasgow Development Agency, KPMG, MacKay Murray & Spens, B & C Restaurants Ltd, Porter Ltd, Price Waterhouse, Royal Bank of Scotland plc, Scottish Mutual Assurance plc, ScottishPower plc, Strathclyde Police, JBB (Greater Europe) plc.

A member of Junior Chamber Scotland and affiliated to Junior Chamber International.

Salaam – A Year-Long Festival

In May 1997 Glasgow saw the launch of the first ever large-scale festival of Muslim art and culture in Scotland – SALAAM. This city-wide festival was the brain child of Glasgow Museums and their first ever curator of Islamic Art and Culture, Dr Ulrike Al-Khamis. Following Dr Al-Khamis's appointment in 1994, the promotion of Muslim

art and culture, previously confined to small individual projects, has been increasingly driven forward within the city. Within the Museums themselves

the Islamic Art Gallery housed in the world-famous Burrell Collection in Glasgow's Pollok Country Park was improved and extended. It now contains a rich array of precious carpets and rugs from Persia, India, Central Asia and Turkey as well as early Islamic pottery vessels, tiles and metal items. The Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum boasts a new display case within the Ethnography Gallery with costume items from Palestine and Jordan brought back by Dr Al-Khamis from a trip to the Middle East in 1995. The collecting of contemporary art from the Muslim world,

initiated by Glasgow Museums in 1993 with the purchase of Ahmad Mustafā's *"The Attributes of Divine Perfection"*, received renewed impetus with the acquisition in 1996 of two oil paintings by the well-known Palestinian artist Taha Zuhair: *"Allem"* and *"The Blind leading the Blind"*. As a result of the ongoing efforts within Glasgow Museums to highlight Muslim Art and Culture among the permanent displays, Dr Al-Khamis's main commitment was towards the establishment of close ties with the local Muslim community. Her increasing involvement with local Muslim groups led to a successful collaboration on the 1995 and 1996 Islam

which Islamic artefacts from the collections were utilized to highlight an aspect of Muslim culture. The greatest achievement to date, however, has no doubt been the successful launch of the year-long 1997-98 SALAAM festival. The idea for it was born nearly four years ago, when the management of Glasgow Museums decided to take five individual exhibition proposals with an Islamic theme devised by Dr Al-Khamis as the basis of a large-scale celebration of the arts and culture of the Muslim world, involving also the City Council's Department of Performing Arts and Venues and local Muslim groups. There was a strong commitment from the beginning that SALAAM, as it was named after the friendly informal greeting and wish for peace between Muslims worldwide, should be devised with the



STUCCO WINDOW WITH COLOURED GLASS INLAY, from Egypt, 19th century CE. The inscription reads *al-hamdu lillah* – Praise be to God.

STUCCO WINDOW FROM IRAN, 19th century CE. One of the famous stucco windows from the Islamic world is called *"Khusrow and Shirin"* eternalised by the poetry of the Persian Nizami in the 12th century CE. The scene shows Khusrow gazing upon Shirin bathing in a pool.

MILITARY BANNER (detail), from Iran, 19th century CE. The lion with the sun rising behind its head is a symbol of the Qajar dynasty.



close involvement, the advice and expertise of local Muslims. Consequently, the SALAAM Steering Committee was established. This consisted of local Muslim councillors and other community representatives as well as members of Museum staff and representatives from the Performing Arts and Race Equality Departments. Together, every step in the preparation of the festival was discussed and great care was extended to the fact that religious sensibilities should be respected at all times. With time the initial project grew beyond all recognition and when SALAAM was launched in May 1997, the five exhibitions organised by Glasgow Museums

SPECIAL REPORT

Glasgow's Salaam Festival 1997-98

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contents

Acknowledgements

2 Better Understanding of Different Cultures

MESSAGE FROM THE LORD PROVOST OF GLASGOW

3 Broadening the Experience of the Individual

MESSAGE FROM THE GLASGOW JUNIOR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

4 Salaam: A Year-Long Festival

8 Planning the Performing Arts Events | CHARLES BELL

11 A Voyage of Discovery | MARY BRENNAN

14 Women in Focus | MARY BRENNAN

18 The Veil in Glasgow | ALEXANDRA ROBERTSON

20 Speaking in Tongues | JANET PAISLEY

22 Museums, Islam and Muslim Culture | MAIRÉ O'NEILL

An Exciting Experience | BUSHIRA IQBAL

Glasgow's Muslim Cultural and Welfare Centre | AALIYA MAAN

Epilogue | PETER MCCANN



Better Understanding of Different Cultures

MESSAGE FROM THE LORD PROVOST OF GLASGOW

GLASGOW IS A TRULY MULTI-CULTURAL AND COSMOPOLITAN CITY, AND AS THE LORD PROVOST, I am fully aware and appreciative of the valuable role played by the Muslim communities in all aspects of the lives of our citizens. I am also proud of the way that the people of Glasgow build bridges and promote equality between different cultures, and of the many different ways in which Glasgow City Council has helped to create a better understanding of such cultures.

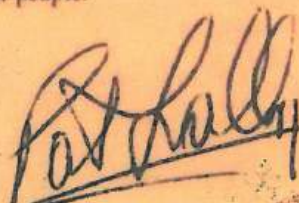
The city's celebration of Art & Culture in the Muslim World entitled SALAAM explored many facets of the Islamic way of life, and was designed to appeal to all ages, with the events including special exhibitions, talks and lectures, radio broadcasts and a film festival.

Glasgow has many Muslim artefacts within an extensive municipal collection, and the city has a proud history of exhibiting and promoting Islamic Art, including a special exhibition during our year as European City of Culture in 1990, while some of our treasures form part of the permanent displays on show at our award-winning St Mungo Museum of Religious Life & Art.

The city is also very keen to expand its relationships within the Islamic world, and at this moment in time is in the process of developing trading and friendship links with many of these countries.

Your august publication can have made no better choice as its Guest Editor on this special occasion than Peter McCann who was one of my most distinguished predecessors in the office of Lord Provost, who has long held a great interest in Islamic Culture and was dedicated to the cause of Glasgow/Arab Trade expansion.

My best wishes to all your readers. I hope that this special supplement gives you a flavour of Glasgow and its collection of Islamic Art, and should you choose to visit us in person to view our collections first-hand, I can guarantee that you will receive a warm and friendly welcome from all our people.



Pat McCann