

In Search of Identity:  
Adaptive Reuse of Jeddah's Ruins

Lama Al Sharif

A thesis  
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Architecture

University of Washington

2018

Committee

Richard Ernest J Mohler

Susan Jones

Louisa Iarocci

Juliette Dubroca

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

Architecture

©Copyright 2018

Lama Al Sharif

University of Washington

**Abstract**

In Search of Identity:  
Adaptive Reuse of Jeddah's Ruins

Lama Al Sharif

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:

Richard Ernest J Mohler

Susan Jones

Department of Architecture

Many architects and planners in the Middle East have debated identity in the built environment. Different approaches were taken to revive what is seen as a "lost" identity. They often attempt to investigate forms of the traditional by abstracting them into contemporary settings neglecting the idea behind the form. This thesis argues that the true identity is found in the thought that resulted in the form rather than the form itself. This thesis will look into the city of Jeddah as a case study.

Jeddah is located on the Red Sea coast, it is the main Islamic port of the two holy cities of Makkah and Al-Madinah. Oil discovery in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia resulted in an economic shift that in turn led major moves in the social and physical built environment. This sudden development resulted in a neglect of designs that responded to the culture of the region. Along with the introduction of modernization the region has struggled to define itself. This tension between modernity and tradition is evident in its built environment image.

In the case of Jeddah, this social and physical shift not only affected the city image, but also led to the destruction of its historical core. Jeddah's historical city (Al Balad) is falling into ruins rapidly. With the discovery of oil, many locals abandoned their old houses looking for a contemporary lifestyle. This sudden abandonment to Al Balad led many historical building to fall into ruins. This thesis argues the potential of those ruins as a place to reveal the tension between modernity and tradition. The project aims to expose the rupture in Jeddah's narrative by making use of the buildings of the past to serve the needs of the future.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To Louisa Iarocci and David Strauss Thank you so much for your dedication, and for your advice, encouragement and help from the very first day and the very first Idea.

To Rick Mohler, Susan Jones and Juliette Dubraco-Thank you so much for your advice through the design process, and for the continues support and encouragement

To my cohort- Thank you for the amazing time, I learned so much from each one of you.

To my uncle Ahmed Alsharif-Thank you for all the things you taught me about Al-Balad, and for helping me through the measurement process.

To my beloved Family- Thank you for always being there, thank you for the continues support and endless love.

To my grandmother Rida-Thank thank you for believing in me ,I will always remember and cherish the support you have given me, your trust is what encouraged me to give my best.

## Table of Content

Chapter 1: Introduction .....	6
The Thesis Approach .....	9
Chapter 2- Literature Review .....	10
Part 1: The Issue of Identity in the Middle Eastern Built Environment .....	10
A-Introduction: The importance of Identity .....	10
B-Middle Eastern approaches to revive a”Lost” Identity .....	11
1-Case Studies .....	12
a. Hassan Fathy: The new Gourn Village, Luxor, Egypt,1945-48 .....	12
b. Rifat Chadirji: Chamber of Commerce, Iraq, Baghdad,1963 .....	13
c.AHR architects: The Bahr Towers, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates ,2012 .....	14
2-Conclusion .....	15
Part 2: Jeddah As a Case Study .....	15
A-Introduction: The City of Jeddah .....	15
B-Deconstruct to Construct: Historical Center AL- Balad .....	20
1-Social aspect of the architectural experience .....	21
2-Physical aspect of the architectural experience .....	24
C-Jeddah’s Built Environment Today .....	27
Chapter 3: Context and Program .....	28
A-Introduction .....	28
B-Sites of Opportunities - Al- Balad: Context and Site .....	29
C-Building on Traditional Foundation: Project and Program .....	40
Chapter 4: Concept and Design .....	43
A-Layering: Responding to Culture .....	43
B-Exclusive and Inclusive: Responding to Context .....	50
C-Framing, Transforming, Weaving: Responding to Ruins .....	54
Chapter 5: Conclusion .....	61
List of Figures .....	63
Bibliography .....	65

## Chapter 1: Introduction

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has undergone enormous economic growth due to the discovery of oil in 1938. In many cases locals have abandoned their old houses in search of a contemporary lifestyle. These sudden changes have come with a loss of identity as the social shift in Saudi Arabia has resulted in dramatic physical changes in the urban fabric. In a very short period Saudi Arabia has developed from a collection of rural cities and villages to a nation of dense modern cities. As a result, old cities like Al Balad, have been vacated and then, in some cases, inhabited by illegal expatriates. The lack of knowledge of the historical past and the disregard of the governmental sector has led to the destruction of many significant buildings in the historic districts.



*Fig 1. Jeddah's ruins*

The conflict associated with this new growth of the Arab city have been debated by scholars in many disciplines. As Yasser Elsheshtawy observes:

The word “Arab city” evokes a multitude of images, preconceptions stereotypes. At its most elementary it is for many a place filled with mosques minarets, setting characterized by chaotic, slim like development; a haven for terrorists; maze like alleyways; crowded coffeehouses where people sit idling their time away smoking a narghile; sensuality hidden behind veils and mashrabiya’yas. But it is also a place of unprecedented development, rising skyscrapers, modern shopping malls, unabashed consumerism. Most importantly it is a setting where one can observe the tensions of modernity and tradition; religiosity and secularism; exhibitionist and veiling; in short, a place of contradictions and paradoxes.<sup>1</sup>

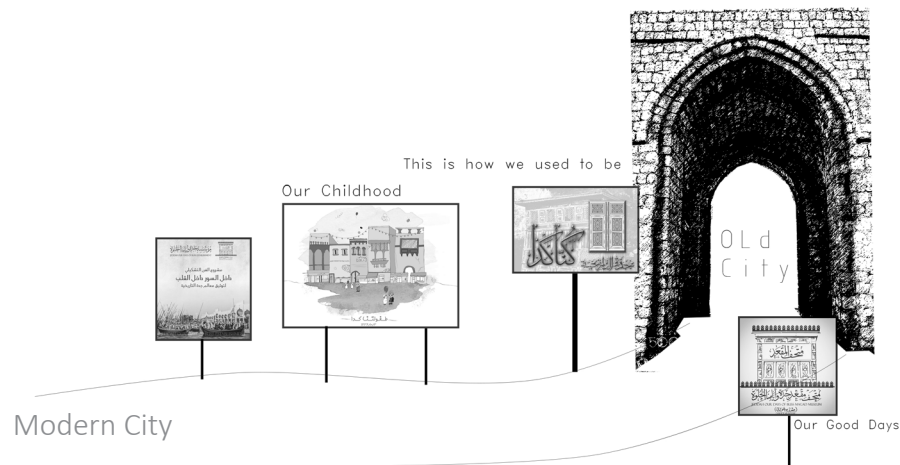


Fig 2. Romanticizing the old

Many of the efforts to resolve these tensions in architecture and urban planning has looked at the architecture of the old city as a guide to shape new interventions<sup>2</sup>. Often the approach has been either to copy what is old in order to create the new or to totally ignore the old image. Imitating forms with no clear understanding of their essence has restricted the development of the Arab city. In addition, this way of adaptation neglects the important aspect of the changing values and needs of the city residents today. Therefore, this romantic approach to the past as artefacts to be preserved has reinforced the separation between the old and new. The historical fabric has become a place for festivals and tourism, a place where locals visit only to evoke feelings of nostalgia but remain disconnected from their daily life.

1 Yasser Elsheshtawy, *The Evolving Arab City: Tradition, Modernity and Urban Development* (London: Routledge, 2008), 3.

2 Marwa Al-Sabouni, “Architecture with Identity Crisis: The Lost Heritage of the Middle East,” *International Journal of Biourbanism*, (2016): 81–97, <http://www.biourbanism.org/architecture-identity-crisis-lost-heritage-middle-east/>.

In 2014 part of the old port city of Jeddah, one of the oldest cities in Saudi Arabia, was given the status of UNESCO heritage site. The historic center of the city called Al-Balad or “the town” dates back to the 7<sup>th</sup> century. But today much of its historic fabric has not been maintained, because many of the houses are privately owned, making preserving them a personal matter. It is estimated that at least a quarter of the old city’s mud, coral stone and wood traditional houses are dilapidated<sup>3</sup>. As this once wealthy area so centered to the identity of Jeddah falls to ruin, the city continues to move forward with modern development. This thesis sees an opportunity in the imperfections of the old city, arguing that it has the potential to help city residents advance into the future but while not forgetting the past. In its function and form architecture can play a role in revealing the rich contradictions between old and new, between

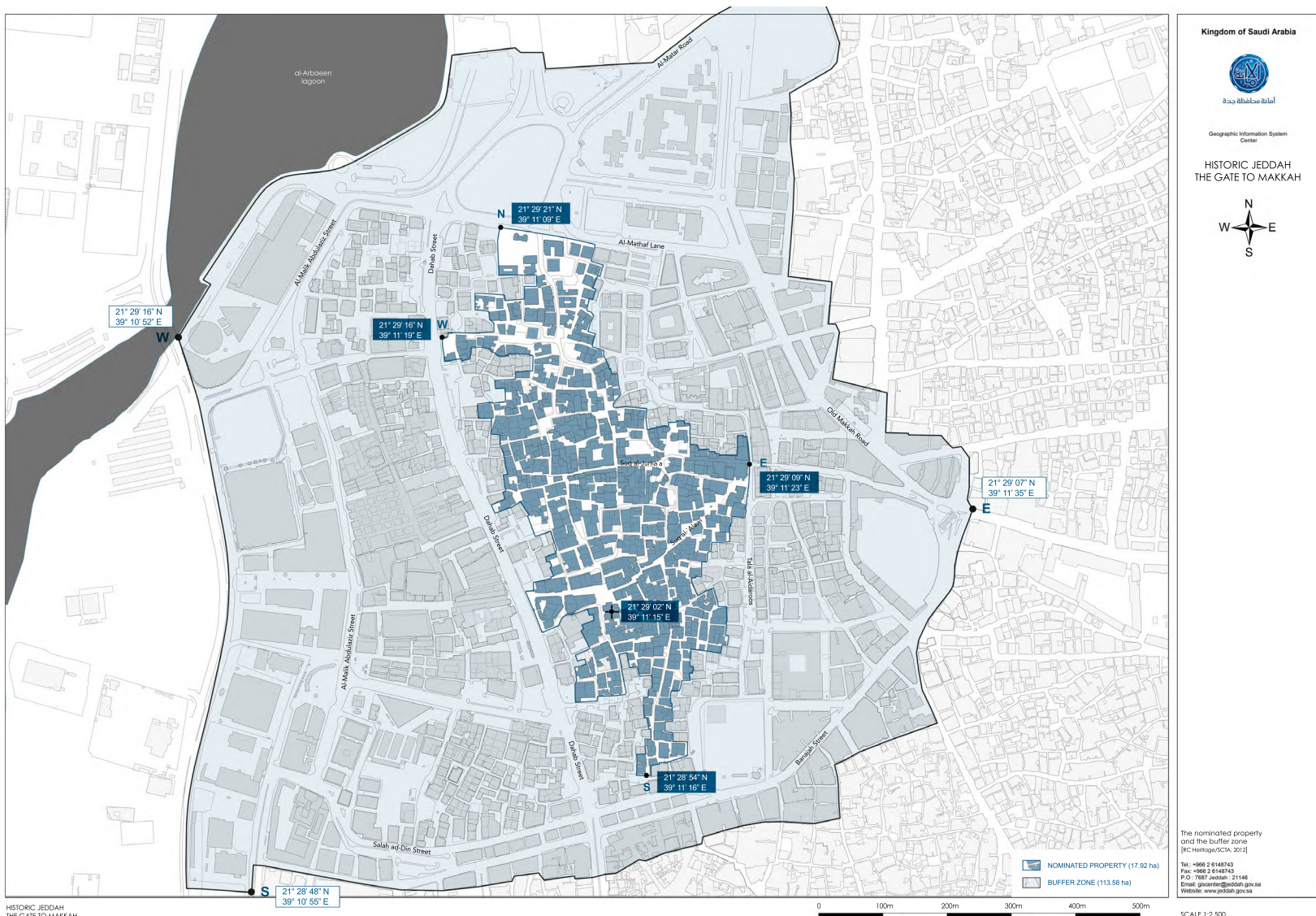


Fig 3. UNESCO's world heritage site Map by Uneso

3 Asma Alsharif, “Historic Old Jeddah Awaits Life-saving Restoration,” Reuters, January 09, 2013, , accessed June 14, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-saudi-jeddah/historic-old-jeddah-awaits-life-saving-restoration-idUSBRE9080M120130109>.

### The Thesis Approach:

The historical district of AL-Balad plays a critical role in maintaining Jeddah's connection with its past while offering the potential to create a contemporary built environment. Today there is often a clear separation between what is old and new in the fabric of Jeddah's city. In the face of rapid modernization this area is struggling to identify itself. Nothing represents the existence and voice of a society's more than the built environment<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, losing the identity of the built environment means losing a people's very existence.<sup>5</sup> Many Middle Eastern architects have taken on this issue in the Arab and Islamic built environment. Some approaches advocated "globalism", perceiving identity as an overwhelming aspect to design, others resisted new trends calling for "originality" and "locality", perceiving these modern trends as a threat.<sup>6</sup> Regardless of the different labels of those approaches, none have come to a clear conclusion about this issue.<sup>7</sup> Neglecting identity has only emphasized on the contradiction in the city image. On the other hand, the other approach regards the form more than the thought behind it,<sup>8</sup> creating a fragile adaptation to identity. This thesis argues that the identity of a place lies in the thoughts behind the form which arise from the community values. This thesis sees a potential in the ruins of the past as a foundation for the future. The role of architecture here is not to resolve the dichotomy between the traditional and modern city rather to reveal it. The proposed Micro-Community library in AL Balad is an urban infill project that will combine the reuse of historic fabric with new construction. This project aims to expose the rupture in Jeddah's narrative by making use of the buildings of the past to serve the needs of the future. The function of the library will build on the ancient Islamic library model called the House of Wisdom in order to provide a cultural and educational space to serve the present community. The goal is to recapture Jeddah's essential value of being a place for cross cultural interactions, in addition to questioning the accessibility and division in today's public spaces.

---

4 Marwa Al-Sabouni, "Architecture with Identity Crisis: The Lost Heritage of the Middle East," *International Journal of Biourbanism*, (2016): 81–97, <http://www.biourbanism.org/architecture-identity-crisis-lost-heritage-middle-east/>.

5 Ibid

6 Ibid

7 Ibid

8 Ibid

## Chapter 2: Literature review

### Part 1: The Issue of Identity in the Middle Eastern Built Environment

#### A- Introduction: The importance of Identity

“When Identity is threatened, existence is what becomes at stake”<sup>9</sup>

The feeling of belonging is a natural need for human beings, a feeling that animates the life of the built environment. The importance of identity in the built environment has been discussed by many architects and planners, some arguing for its importance but others advocating for the idea of sameness in an increasingly globalized world. Iraqi architect Rifat Cahdirji has argued that internationalism should be rejected, pointing out that each culture will have its own way of interacting with international modernity.<sup>10</sup> For instance, modernity presented more open facades of glass and steel that when applied to houses has resulted in the creation of added enclosures to protect the need for privacy. Cahdirji has argued for the idea of “international regionalism” that responds to modernity but still expresses an essential Iraqi identity in the effort to find a common ground<sup>11</sup>. However this approach has its own pitfalls which will be discussed later.

On the other hand, Yasser Elsheshtawy observes that the architecture of the Middle Eastern city is often described as “a narrative of loss”.<sup>12</sup> He argues that this attitude to design often creates an approach of attempting to gather fragmented pieces of the traditional city.<sup>13</sup> In other words, this shallow idea of identity as image creates a meaningless design. When identity is part of the design process, architects need to design expressively in response to the spirit of the place.<sup>14</sup>

This chapter will look into the different approaches taken by some pioneer architects and planners who argue for the revival of a place’s identity in their work. These precedents will guide the design process of the proposed thesis project.

---

9 Marwa Al-Sabouni, “Architecture with Identity Crisis: The Lost Heritage of the Middle East,” *International Journal of Biourbanism*, (2016): 81–97, <http://www.biourbanism.org/architecture-identity-crisis-lost-heritage-middle-east/>.

10 Rifat Chadirji, *Concepts and Influences: Towards a Regionalized International Architecture, 1952-1978* (London: KPI, 1986), 40-43.

11 Ibid

12 Yasser Elsheshtawy, *Planning Middle Eastern Cities: AN URBAN KALEIDOSCOPE IN A GLOBALIZING WORLD* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2004), 3.

13 Ibid

14 Ibid

## B- Middle Eastern approaches to revive a (Lost) Identity

“Identity cannot be achieved as a prescribed recipe”<sup>15</sup>

Many attempts have been taken by architects throughout the world to define the right way to revive a sense of identity in the built environment. Regionalism, vernacular, or local architecture regardless of the name all these styles have had the common goal of recovering the traditions of a place. Marwa Al Sabouni in her journal article “Architecture with Identity crises: The Lost Heritage of the Middle East”, highlights the issues resulting from these efforts regarding these attempts, explaining that most of those methods are passive in the way they “copy paste” elements without understanding their true meaning.<sup>16</sup> In this way the true meaning of the architectural experience can disappear.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, a deeper understanding of the underlying structure is needed; to go beyond the visual effects of an architectural element. Place identity is instead found in the values that motivated its creation and its use. In addition, a significant part of the identity of a place lies in its narrative, the stories that each place has to tell. The built environment needs to embrace this story by revealing its layers.

This section will look into some case studies that have been as labeled vernacular, traditional, and regional. But what unites them, is the effort to embrace the story of the places they occupy and reveal the complex and sometimes contradictory layers of occupation.

---

15 Marwa Al-Sabouni, “Architecture with Identity Crisis: The Lost Heritage of the Middle East,” *International Journal of Biourbanism*, (2016): 81–97, <http://www.biourbanism.org/architecture-identity-crisis-lost-heritage-middle-east/>.

16 Ibid

17 Ibid

## 1- Case Studies

“The promoters of sameness have eliminated from modern life the tradition of individuality”<sup>18</sup>



Fig 4. New Gurna by D. M. Ben Guida

### a. Hassan Fathy: The new Gurna Village, Luxor, Egypt, 1945-48

The new Gurna village was proposed as a solution to prevent the villagers of old Gurna from continuing to rob the royal necropolis in Luxor in Egypt.<sup>19</sup> The whole village was relocated by the Department of Antiquities away from the ancient tombs.<sup>20</sup> Architect Hassan Fathy took this opportunity to make use of the traditional building technique of using fired brick for self-supporting vaults that he observed on a visit to Nubia.<sup>21</sup> His intention was to emphasize the concept of individuality in the built environment, so he trained local residents so that they could take part in building their own houses.<sup>22</sup> Fathy's approach to the revival of the lost traditions was to make use of traditional methodology that emphasizes the importance of local crafts practices. His approach is what Al-Sabouni referred to as a “copy-paste” approach, not in this case a specific element but rather a whole technique. Fathy's intention was good; he encouraged individuality in architecture. However, Fathy's housing project neglected developments in technology and returned to old practices. He overlooked the need of his users to cope with the developed world.

18 Hassan Fathy, *Architecture for the Poor an Experiment in Rural Egypt* (Chicago: Univ. Of Chicago Pr., 1986), 27.

19 James Steele and Hassan Fathy, *The Hassan Fathy Collection* (Bern, 1989), 8.

20 Hassan Fathy, *Architecture for the Poor an Experiment in Rural Egypt* (Chicago: Univ. Of Chicago Pr., 1986), 17.

21 Ibid at 6.

22 Ibid at 121.

“No truly excellent regional architecture can be achieved unless in some senses it blooms from within its own culture. Iraq must therefore possess its own regional technology before it can have its own architecture”<sup>23</sup>

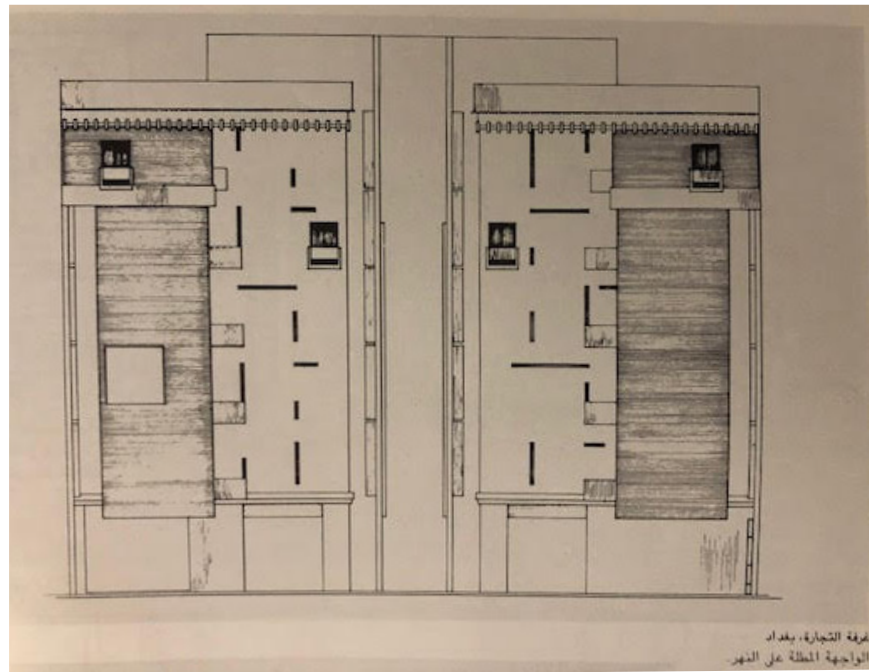


Fig 5. Chamber of Commerce by Al-Ukhaider and the Crystal Palace

b. Rifat Chadirji: Chamber of Commerce, Iraq, Baghdad, 1963

Unlike Hassan Fathy, Rifat Chadirji acknowledges the need for advanced technologies in the built environment.<sup>24</sup> His approach in his work is often referred to as regionalized international architecture. In his design for the chamber of commerce he was inspired by the traditional alleyways of the old city of Baghdad.<sup>25</sup> He described his design approach as an abstraction of existing elements in traditional buildings and in their relation to the larger context of the city.<sup>26</sup> For instance, rather than copying the Mashrabiya in his work, he seeks to describe the relation of the projected wooden element in the traditional buildings and how through repetition it creates a rhythm, and then abstract this into a contemporary form.<sup>27</sup> Regardless of the criticism that the final façade might evoke, Chadirji's concentration on the idea of technology led his designs to be more focused on the overall building form. In many of his writings he used the expression of sculpting the building. This led to the reflection of a cultural identity only on the exterior but not on the interior.

<sup>23</sup> Rifat Chadirji, *Concepts and Influences: Towards a Regionalized International Architecture, 1952-1978* (London: KPI, 1986), 43.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Rifat Chadirji, *Al-Ukhaider and the Crystal Palace* (London: Riad El-Rayyes Books, 1991), 202-206.

<sup>26</sup> Yasser Elsheshtawy, *Planning Middle Eastern Cities: AN URBAN KALEIDOSCOPE IN A GLOBALIZING WORLD* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2004), 73.

<sup>27</sup> Rifat Chadirji, *Al-Ukhaider and the Crystal Palace* (London: Riad El-Rayyes Books, 1991), 204.

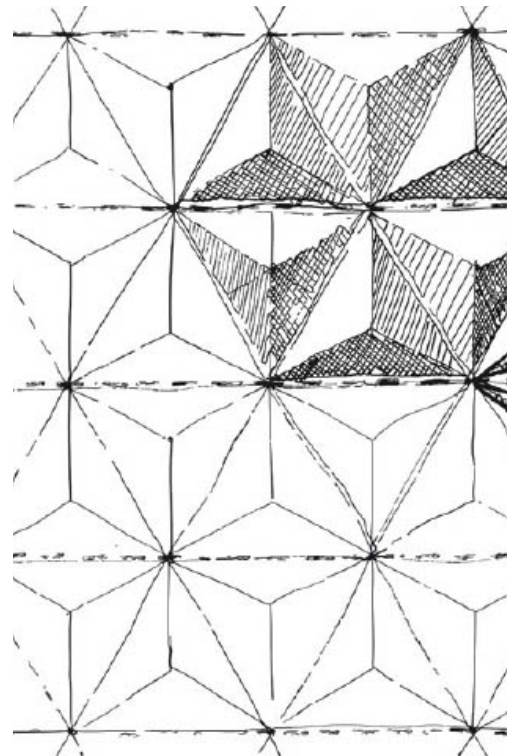


Fig 6. The Bahat Towers by AHR

c. AHR architects: The Bahr Towers, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates ,2012

The AL Bahr towers are 26 story high rise office towers designed by AHR architects located in Abu Dhabi.<sup>28</sup> The project concept is based on the abstraction of the traditional Mashrabiya or wooden shading screen. The architects described the design concept as a “fusion between bio-inspiration, regional architecture and high performance-based technology”.<sup>29</sup> The shading system of the responsive façade changes with the sun to reduce heat gain and glare. While the traditional Mashrabiya performs in the same way, the implementation of this device on a such large-scale leads to the loss of its important role as a social window to the street. In addition, the light quality penetrating through the screens of the glazed tower creates a different experience than that of the past. This project is a good example of what Al-Sabouni describes as the disassociation from the true meaning that seeks to satisfy human need but neglect the core of the experience.<sup>30</sup>

28 “AL BAHR TOWERS,” Al Bahr Towers | Office & Workplace | AHR | Architects and Building Consultants, accessed June 14, 2018, <http://www.ahr.co.uk/Al-Bahr-Towers>.

29 Ibid

30 Marwa Al-Sabouni, “Architecture with Identity Crisis: The Lost Heritage of the Middle East,” International Journal

## 2- Conclusion

These case studies show that these different approaches taken by previous architects and planner show that the concept of Identity in the Middle Eastern built environment is still in an experimental phase. The concept of “designing for identity” in this region still has many questions around it. But the fact that there is an urgent need to consider this topic is clear among many scholars. It is also clear in some cases that the implementation of the idea of identity was forced into the design which led to having some aspects of what is called traditional elements implemented or added to a modern structure, adding nothing to the overall architectural experience<sup>31</sup>.

### Part 2: Jeddah As a Case Study

#### A- Introduction: The City of Jeddah

Located on the Red Sea Jeddah is the main Islamic port for the two holy cities of Makkah and Al-Madinah, which allowed the city to develop a rich and diverse character. The constant influx of visitors annually for trade and religious purposes helped the city be more open than other regions in Saudi Arabia. During the Haj season every year Jeddah welcomes over one million pilgrims from around the world via sea and air, in addition to the continuing visits throughout the year for Umrah. This massive influx of visitors has driven the rapid development of Jeddah, along with the rise of the oil- fueled economy.



*Fig 7. 1938 Aerial view of the Old City of Jeddah by Wikipedia . Retrieved Nov 05*

---

of Biourbanism, (2016): 81–97, <http://www.biourbanism.org/architecture-identity-crisis-lost-heritage-middle-east/>.  
 31 Marwa Al-Sabouni, “Architecture with Identity Crisis: The Lost Heritage of the Middle East,” International Journal of Biourbanism, (2016): 81–97, <http://www.biourbanism.org/architecture-identity-crisis-lost-heritage-middle-east/>.

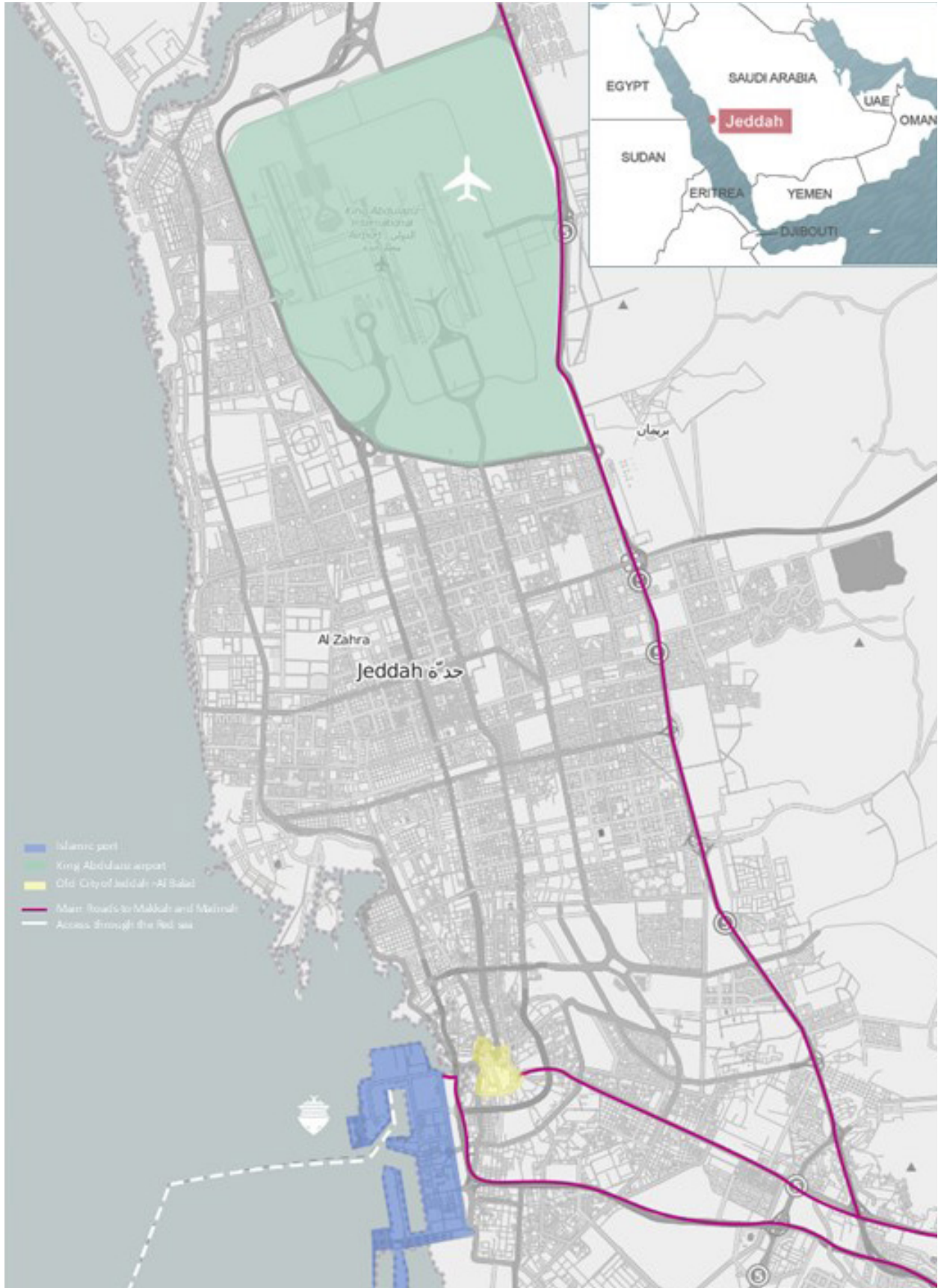


Fig 8. Jeddah today

The origins of Jeddah are believed to date back to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE when it began as a settlement of fisherman.<sup>32</sup> However, the city only officially appears on a map when the caliph, Uthman ibn Affan, in 664 CE identified it as a main Islamic port.<sup>33</sup> The importance of the city increased after the opening of Suez Canal in 1869 that linked Europe with India and Asia. The small coastal city became a gateway for commerce as well as religion, as travelers brought goods along with their skills and customs. Pilgrims from around the Islamic world found honor in settling near the holy cities, feeding the growth of the city of Jeddah. The region of Al Hijaz, which includes Jeddah, Makkah and Al Madinah, was highly influenced by the Ottoman and Mamluki empires, as these cities flourished during those eras.

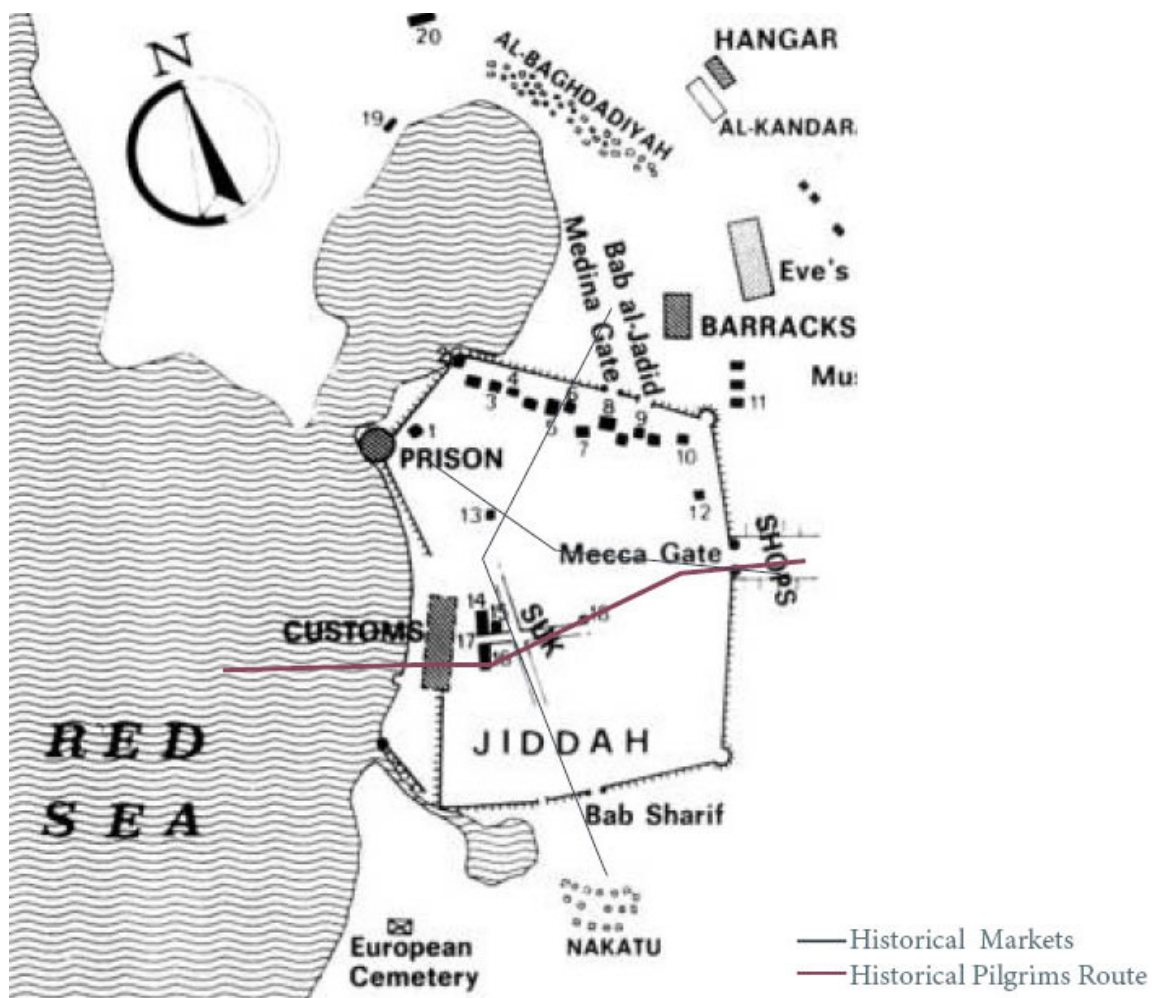


Fig 9. Map by a British travel in 1930 - Source by Arab news

32 Margaret Sevčenko and Abdulla Y. Bokhari, *Conservation in the Historic District of Jeddah. Adaptive Reuse: Integrating Traditional Areas into the Modern Urban Fabric* (Cambridge, MA: Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, 1983), 60-67.

33 Ibid

By the twentieth century Saudi Arabia witnessed the birth of a contemporary architecture which came as a result of the first Aramco (Arabian-American Oil Company) housing project on the eastern side of the kingdom in 1947.<sup>34</sup>According to Mashary Al-Naim this housing project can be seen as the trigger of the conflict between tradition and modernity in Saudi Arabia,<sup>35</sup> making locals question modern design.<sup>36</sup>In the same year Jeddah's city wall was demolished in order to enable expansion after the discovery of oil.<sup>37</sup>Once the wall was removed the population increased from 24,000 inhabitants to 106,000 in 1959.<sup>38</sup> Today Jeddah's population is over 4,000,000.<sup>39</sup>These rapid increases in development came with the imposition of new built environment style, taking away some of the traditional values and the cultural diversity which Jeddah's city was built upon.

---

34 Margaret Sevcenko and Abdulla Y. Bokhari, *Conservation in the Historic District of Jeddah. Adaptive Reuse: Integrating Traditional Areas into the Modern Urban Fabric* (Cambridge, MA: Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, 1983), 60-67.

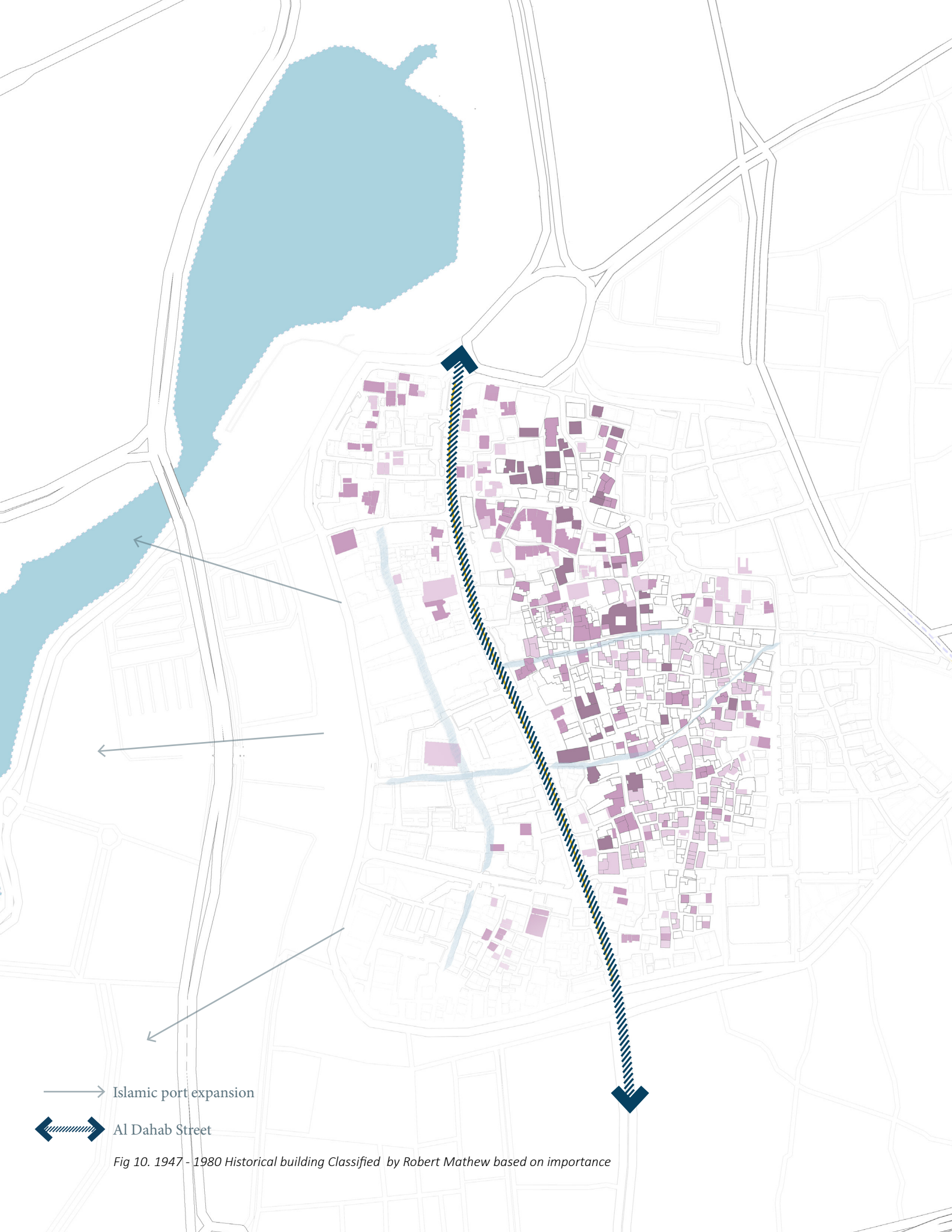
35 Ibid

36 Ibid

37 Ibid

38 Ibid

39 "Jeddah Population 2018," Total Population by Country 2018, , accessed December 15, 2018, <http://worldpopulationreview.com/world-cities/jeddah-population/>.



→ Islamic port expansion

↔ Al Dahab Street

Fig 10. 1947 - 1980 Historical building Classified by Robert Mathew based on importance

## B- Deconstruct to Construct: Historical Center AL- Balad

“Identity, in fact, should arise from our moral understanding, not from clichés stereotype. This must involve deeper exploration into the practice of the past, not only the resulting form but also the thought that produced it”<sup>40</sup>

In order to understand the identity of Jeddah it is important to understand the true values and thoughts behind key element in the traditional city and its urban fabric.<sup>41</sup> The historical center of the city (Al-Balad) covers an area of 17 hectares.<sup>42</sup>It follows the Islamic city layout, where the houses are clustered around central mosques and markets. However, in the case of Jeddah major markets expand beyond the center creating veins along the traveling paths of visitors through the city. The city was originally defined by a wall and nine gates, six towards the sea and three on the land. To the north is the New Gate (Bab Jadid), to the south Sharif Gate (Bab Sharif), and to the east Makkah Gate (Bab Makkah).<sup>43</sup> The old mosque ( Al Jami’al-Atiq) or what is called today Al-Shafi’i mosque is believed to be the oldest structure in the old city<sup>44</sup> which is located along the route from the seaport west to the gate of Makkah east, emphasizing the role of this city as a religious gate.



Fig 11. Al-Shafi’i mosque by Alarabiya

40 Marwa Al-Sabouni, “Architecture with Identity Crisis: The Lost Heritage of the Middle East,” *International Journal of Biourbanism*, (2016): 81–97, <http://www.biourbanism.org/architecture-identity-crisis-lost-heritage-middle-east/>.

41 Ibid

42 “Historic Jeddah, the Gate to Makkah.” Accessed July 15, 2018. [Http://whc.unesco.org/document/139706](http://whc.unesco.org/document/139706).

43 Alharbi and Thamer Hamdan, “The Development of Housing in Jeddah :changes in Built Form from the Traditional to the Modern,” *CORE*, January 01, 1989, , accessed June 4, 2018, <https://core.ac.uk/display/153776526>.

44 Hidayat Abbas, “Al-Jami’al-’Atiq, the Oldest Mosque in Jidda,” *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 04, no. 02 (2014): , doi:10.32350/jitc.42.02.

## 1- Social aspect of the architectural experience

One of the most important aspects shaping the image of the city is the harbor. The port on the Red sea was considered as an extension of the market or (Suk).<sup>45</sup> Pilgrims from around the Islamic world would first land here in a place called AL-Bant; making the harbor the center of cross-cultural interaction, that then continued in the mosques. It could be argued that the richness of Jeddah's historical built environment is due to this multi-cultural input. The role of the mosque in the old city was both religious and social.<sup>46</sup> In addition to these main gathering places for prayer there was a smaller structure called Zawayyah meaning "corners". While sometimes are used for prayer,<sup>47</sup> the Zawayyah are mostly places for educating young people.



Fig 12. Al Bant

The old city is a very socially active even though the Islamic city has often been mistakenly seen as a place of clear separation between public and private. However, in fact social interaction in the city is not typically suppressed but rather is encouraged. According to Yasser Adas the traditional social structure of Jeddah is divided into three main sections, the family which is the core of the structure, the community and the society.<sup>48</sup> The Architecture of the old city reflects the social structure, showing different level of interaction and layers of privacy depending on the user and the location. To better understand this concept of street, houses and façade, this section will analyze the related features of the built environment.

45 Yasser Ahmed, "Change in Identity of Saudis' Built Environments : The Case of Jeddah," British Library ETHOS - Search and Order Theses Online, January 01, 1970, , accessed July 6, 2018, <http://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.735351>.

46 Ibid

47 Ibid

48 Ibid

First, the irregular streets of the old city provide numerous opportunities for varied levels of social interaction. <sup>49</sup>The path starts at the wide passageways of public market move onto the pedestrian alleyways which are semi-public, to then to gathering corners and *Dakkah* (stone benches beside the door of the houses) which are semi-private (see Fig13), and then finally to the private hallways of house.<sup>50</sup> The gathering corners and *Dakkah* are usually used by the people living in the neighborhood, which Adas refers to as the “community”. <sup>51</sup>



Fig 13. *Dakkah*

The houses are neither open or completely closed to the outside, reflecting gradual levels of privacy and interaction, similar to the city itself. The Hejazi houses have a vertical hierarchy of sociability and privacy,<sup>52</sup> Starting from the *Dakkah* on the street level for male neighbors to gather for an afternoon tea. In addition, the ground floor is the male guest gathering room *AL-Maqad* (derived from the verb “qoud” which means setting).<sup>53</sup> Other rooms on the ground floor depend on the job of the resident, for example a merchant would have storage spaces. This emphasizes that houses were designed to fit the character and lifestyle of the resident. Moreover, the upper floors are dedicated to the family, often including several generations.<sup>54</sup> Finally, the roof has a significant role on bringing the whole family together, providing an open space for special events such as weddings. The roof also contains the *AL-Mabit* (comes from the word sleepover) constructed of wood, which is a place for the family to gather and sleep at in the summer when the weather is very hot (see Fig 14).<sup>55</sup>

---

49 Yasser Ahmed, “Change in Identity of Saudis’ Built Environments : The Case of Jeddah,” British Library ETHOS - Search and Order Theses Online, January 01, 1970, , accessed July 6, 2018, <http://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.735351>.

50 Ibid

51 Ibid

52 Ibid

53 Ibid

54 Ibid

55 Ibid



Fig 14. Traditional roof by UNESCO

Finally, the façade of the building also plays an important role in promoting social interaction. The wooden window structure or *Mashrabiya*, is an important environmental and social element in the Hijazi house. As seen in Al Bahar tower, the physical appearance of these wood screens has often inspired modern interpretations, however its social role is often not addressed.<sup>56</sup>The *Mashrabiya* or what some would call *Roshan* on the ground floor was used by the house's residents specially women to talk to people passing by.<sup>57</sup>On the higher floors the *Roshan* was mainly used by women to look onto the streets, while maintaining the needed privacy.<sup>58</sup>In addition, women sitting on the upper *Roshan* would sometimes use it to buy goods from the merchants passing by, by dropping their baskets through its openings .

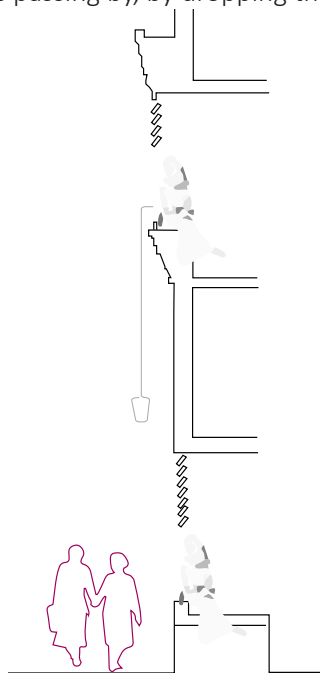


Fig 15. Social Facade

56 Marwa Al-Sabouni, "Architecture with Identity Crisis: The Lost Heritage of the Middle East," *International Journal of Biourbanism*, (2016): 81–97, <http://www.biourbanism.org/architecture-identity-crisis-lost-heritage-middle-east/>.  
 57 Alharbi and Thamer Hamdan, "The Development of Housing in Jeddah :changes in Built Form from the Traditional to the Modern," *CORE*, January 01, 1989, , accessed June 4, 2018, <https://core.ac.uk/display/153776526>.  
 58 Yasser Ahmed, "Change in Identity of Saudis' Built Environments : The Case of Jeddah," *British Library ETHOS - Search and Order Theses Online*, January 01, 1970, , accessed July 6, 2018, <http://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.735351>.

## 2- Physical aspect of the architectural experience

The physical characteristics of the architecture of the old city of Al-Balad are also important to shaping the identity of the city including the materials, textures, light quality, and decorative patterns. However, it is important to consciously interpret those physical aspects and elements. In her article “Architecture with Identity Crises” Marwa Al-Sabouni explains that use of traditional architectural elements for inspiration relies not on the act of re-use but on the exploitation of those elements.<sup>59</sup> According to the author most middle eastern and western architects today designing in the Arab region are “dressing identity” by placing and abstracting traditional elements on modern projects.<sup>60</sup> To avoid creating stereotypes and provide a real architectural experience, it is important to acknowledge the architectural value of those elements and invent new ways of using them. A good example of a traditional element that has been misused is the dome.<sup>61</sup> Domes are seen as traditional Islamic elements and are used in almost every mosque. However, this element was created before the development of Islam, Islamic architecture reused it for its structural properties, which unfortunately is degraded today.<sup>62</sup> Today in many cases domes are placed on already structurally stable buildings.<sup>63</sup>

Analyzing the physical dimensions of Al-Balad is necessary in order to understand the values behind its physical appearance. It could be said that there are two main types of values, vernacular values which may be specific to a region depending on its climate, and religious or spiritual values, which may spread to different regions with different climates. The urban fabric of the old city of Jeddah is dense and compact and the streets are irregular, providing shaded walkways. Also, in Jeddah the streets are oriented toward the north-west to take advantage of the sea breezes.<sup>64</sup> Most of the buildings expand vertically and have no courtyards due to the high humidity in the area. This shape also helps to accelerate the sea breeze within the walkways. *Mashrabiya* covers the front façade of the buildings, filtering the air entering the house. The level of decoration on the wooden screens reflects the wealth of the residents. Moreover, the traditional city facades are designed to look down on the people not the opposite.<sup>65</sup> In Al-Balad it is hard to distinguish one building from the adjacent one; the pedestrian is always surrounded by the wooden structure of the *Mashrabiya* looking down on them. This built fabric plays an important role

---

59 Marwa Al-Sabouni, “Architecture with Identity Crisis: The Lost Heritage of the Middle East,” *International Journal of Biourbanism*, (2016): 81–97, <http://www.biourbanism.org/architecture-identity-crisis-lost-heritage-middle-east/>.  
60 Ibid

61 Ibid

62 Ibid

63 Ibid

64 Ibid

65 Rifat Chadirji, *Al-Ukhaidir and the Crystal Palace* (London: Riad El-Rayyes Books, 1991), 204.

in the architectural experience of the street. Casting complex patterns of light and shadow, the element of the *Mashrabiya* provides a sense of human scale to the pedestrian. The compacted form and the projected wooden structures provide a sense of intimacy to the streets (see Fig16).



Fig 16. Old city Urban form - Scale

Marwa Al- Sabouni notes that the richness of Islamic architecture is due to its details, noting “ zooming in from the harmonized whole, unwrapping the interwoven layers of space, elements, pattern, light, and water, the eye can move in small sequenced rebounds from sight to mind and back again”.<sup>66</sup> The details of the historic fabric of AL-Balad of Jeddah are what evoke different feelings toward the urban space. For example, the traditional houses of Jeddah have thick walls made of coral stones,<sup>67</sup> which creates a sealed dark interior so when light filters through the small holes of the *Mashrabiya* the interior details are appreciated. Light in the traditional houses play a great role in the spirit of the space. Also due to the more closed enclosure of the building the user is more directed by the light in the traditional building compared to modern architecture where full glazed façade is preferred. Al-Sabouni; compares described architectural experience to the interacting with a tree where every level of the experience brings a new aspect of the design to be enjoyed.<sup>68</sup>



Fig 17. Light



Fig 18. Texture

66 Marwa Al-Sabouni, “Architecture with Identity Crisis: The Lost Heritage of the Middle East,” *International Journal of Biourbanism*, (2016): 81–97, <http://www.biourbanism.org/architecture-identity-crisis-lost-heritage-middle-east/>.

67 Alharbi and Thamer Hamdan, “The Development of Housing in Jeddah :changes in Built Form from the Traditional to the Modern,” *CORE*, January 01, 1989, , accessed June 4, 2018, <https://core.ac.uk/display/153776526>.

68 Marwa Al-Sabouni, “Architecture with Identity Crisis: The Lost Heritage of the Middle East,” *International Journal of Biourbanism*, (2016): 81–97, <http://www.biourbanism.org/architecture-identity-crisis-lost-heritage-middle-east/>.

### C- Jeddah's built environment Today

“Buildings that do not “bear the imprint of what is appropriate “in Scruton’s words, stand in an alienated relation to people”<sup>69</sup>

As much as it is important to understand the essence of the past in the historic architecture of AL-Balad, it is essential to respond to the changes in the contemporary city. The present-day city dwellers are different from those of the past as advanced technology and discovery of the oil has increased their exposure to the world. Recently the built environment of the Gulf region including Jeddah is directed toward the concept of globalization and capitalism, high-rise glazed towers have become a sign of development. This rapid change has created a discontinuity in the built environment. The imprint of local values, and what is appropriate to the residents has slowly vanished from the city. However, because those values are still essential to the users, they had individually responded to the imposed style. For example, many modernized houses have added large transparent opening which affect the quality of the privacy to the extent that residents have had to push their houses to the inside away from the street and surround it with fences. This not only affected the house itself but has also impacted the whole urban fabric of the city. Having that said, it is important to notice these changes in the built environment, they created a diversity rather than unity in ways of understanding some terminologies in the society, such as private and public.

It is also important to notice that the idea of globalization is not the issue here, in fact Jeddah’s identity has always been one of diversity. However, this diversity was united by the Islamic moral needs, which could be argued to be the only unique restriction to shaping the built environment. Although loss of identity often blamed for the loss of richness in the built environment, it is not quite the case. It can be argued that it is the way of presenting identity with in the “contemporary” city and the introduction of the oil industry that affected the complexity and richness of the built environment. In addition, some of the building regulations which have developed under the name of cultural need have had a major role in this loss. For instant, as seen through high walls that separated buildings from the streets, and partitions that separated public spaces . This one way of accomplishing a need replaced what used to be a more complex layered system seen in the old city (see Fig 19). Today indoor public spaces in Saudi Arabia are divided into “single” section referring to male section, and “families” section referring to families and female. As

---

69 Marwa Al-Sabouni, “Architecture with Identity Crisis: The Lost Heritage of the Middle East,” *International Journal of Biourbanism*, (2016): 81–97, <http://www.biourbanism.org/architecture-identity-crisis-lost-heritage-middle-east/>.

this may appear as a way of responding to the user's cultural needs of privacy, this way of approaching public spaces neglects the female user as an independent entity. In fact, some users due to their cultural and religious need may not feel comfortable around men. Moreover, this concept of separation in the public spaces are not taken in consideration through the design process. In other words, a café for instance would be designed as a single space. But then upon completion a partition would be added defining the two sections, or different floor would be assigned to different users. In most cases this need is not addressed through the design process but is implemented as an afterthought. Having that said, the design of Jeddah's public spaces and its representation to the community's needs and identity need to be questioned.



*Fig 19. Public to private conceptual illustration*

### Chapter 3: Context and Program

#### A- Introduction

Since this thesis is addressing the issue of contradiction between “traditional” and “contemporary”, it will investigate the transitional edge between both. This chapter will highlight the major changes in the old city urban fabric in order to show the rationale for the choice of site. This project will respond to the changes in the traditional urban fabric while addressing the contemporary user through a dialogue between the old and new. The proposed design of a Micro-Community library is a strategy prototype to reuse the historic fabric with new construction.

## B- Sites of Opportunities - Al- Balad: Context and Site

The urban changes to the old city visible today are a result of three main factors. First, the increase in vehicular traffic which dominated the narrow paths of the fabric along with the wider arteries which was created through the old city.<sup>70</sup>In 1960s Al Dahab street was constructed running through the old city from north to the south, dividing it into east and west sections.<sup>71</sup>The introduction of this transportation element led to the demolition of many traditional buildings impacting the compacted fabric.<sup>72</sup>In addition, open spaces used originally as gathering spaces were transformed into parking spaces.<sup>73</sup>This also resulted in the fragmentation of the traditional city. Second, the expansion of the Islamic port. The western section, which originally served as the harbor was expanded to create a greater port, transformed by new large concrete buildings.<sup>74</sup> Today people perceive the eastern section as the old section, where the traditional residential quarters, markets or *Suk*, and Mosques are, and the eastern side as the modern section of the old city.

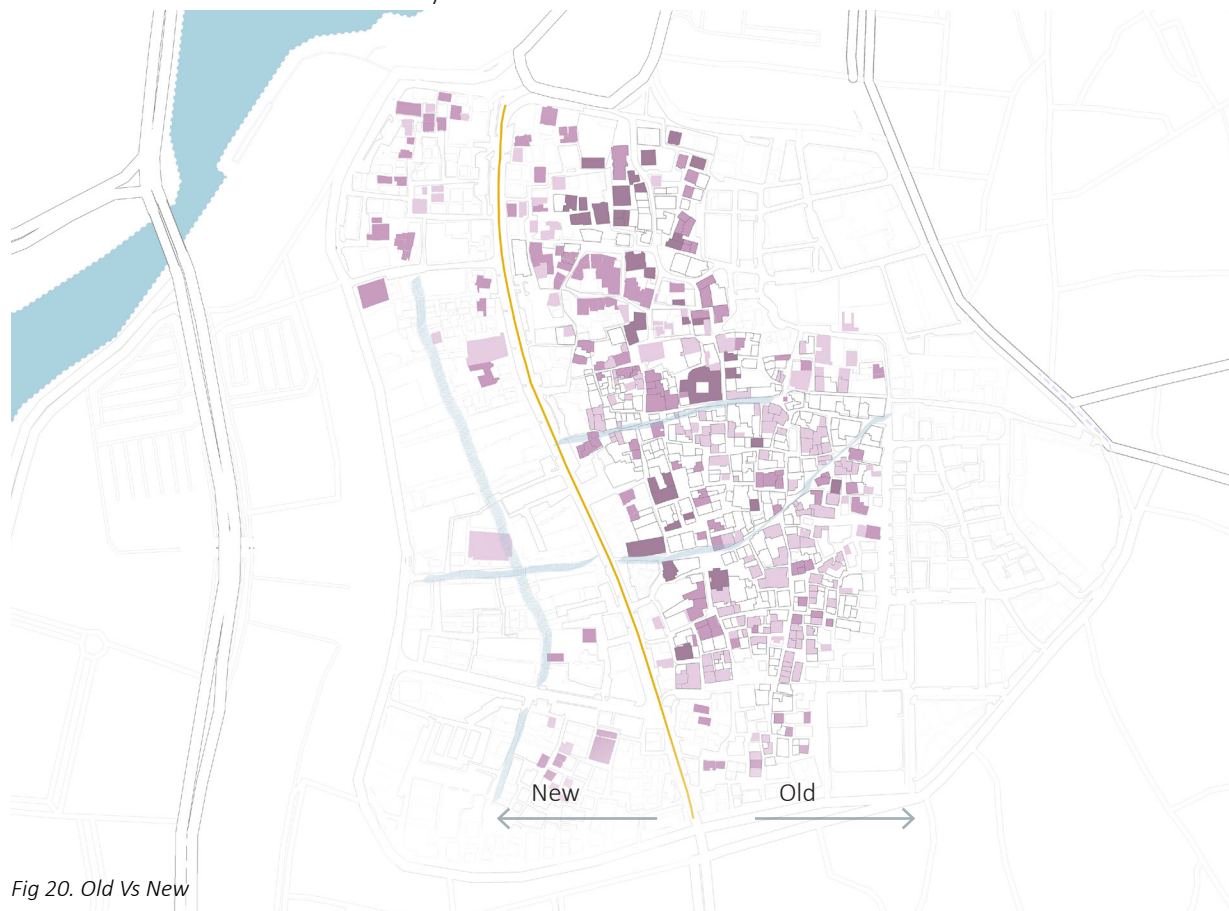


Fig 20. Old Vs New

70 Alharbi and Thamer Hamdan, "The Development of Housing in Jeddah :changes in Built Form from the Traditional to the Modern," CORE, January 01, 1989, , accessed June 4, 2018, <https://core.ac.uk/display/153776526>.

71 Ibid

72 Ibid

73 Ibid

74 Ibid

The third factor impacting the changes to the district is the decay due to the neglect of historic buildings when locals abandoned their traditional houses looking for a contemporary lifestyle. Most buildings in the historical district are privately owned which made it harder to preserve.<sup>75</sup> Current residents of the area have reused the site of the fully demolished houses as places for gathering and play areas for children (see Fig 21). Today traditional houses that were once occupied by the rich locals are today cheap rentals mostly inhabited by foreigner labors and illegal residents.<sup>76</sup> But these people have been responsible for maintaining the life of the city, selling affordable goods to visitors creating a continues flow of traffic to the markets.



Fig 21. Public adaptation

In 2014 one-third of the originally walled city was nominated by the UNESCO for having the following criteria. <sup>77</sup>First, historical Jeddah is a surviving site that portray an exchanged human valued due to the international sea trade.<sup>78</sup> Second, it was nominated for its architectural typology that largely disappeared from the Hijazi region, which includes the coral towers with lower sections serving as commercial spaces ,storages and rental rooms for pilgrims.<sup>79</sup> Finally, Jeddah’s status as the main Islamic harbor for Muslims from around the world, is seen as a major element in defining its identity.<sup>80</sup> The nominated zone covers the intact area of Al-Balad.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>75</sup> "Historic Old Jeddah Awaits Life-saving Restoration | Pictures," Reuters, January 11, 2013, , accessed June 10, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/news/picture/historic-old-jeddah-awaits-life-saving-r-idUSBRE9080M120130111>.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid

<sup>77</sup> SAUDI COMMISSION FOR TOURISM AND ANTIQUITIES. (2013). Historical Jeddah the gate to Makkah (Executive Summary- PDF).<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1361/documents/>

<sup>78</sup> Ibid

<sup>79</sup> Ibid

<sup>80</sup> Ibid

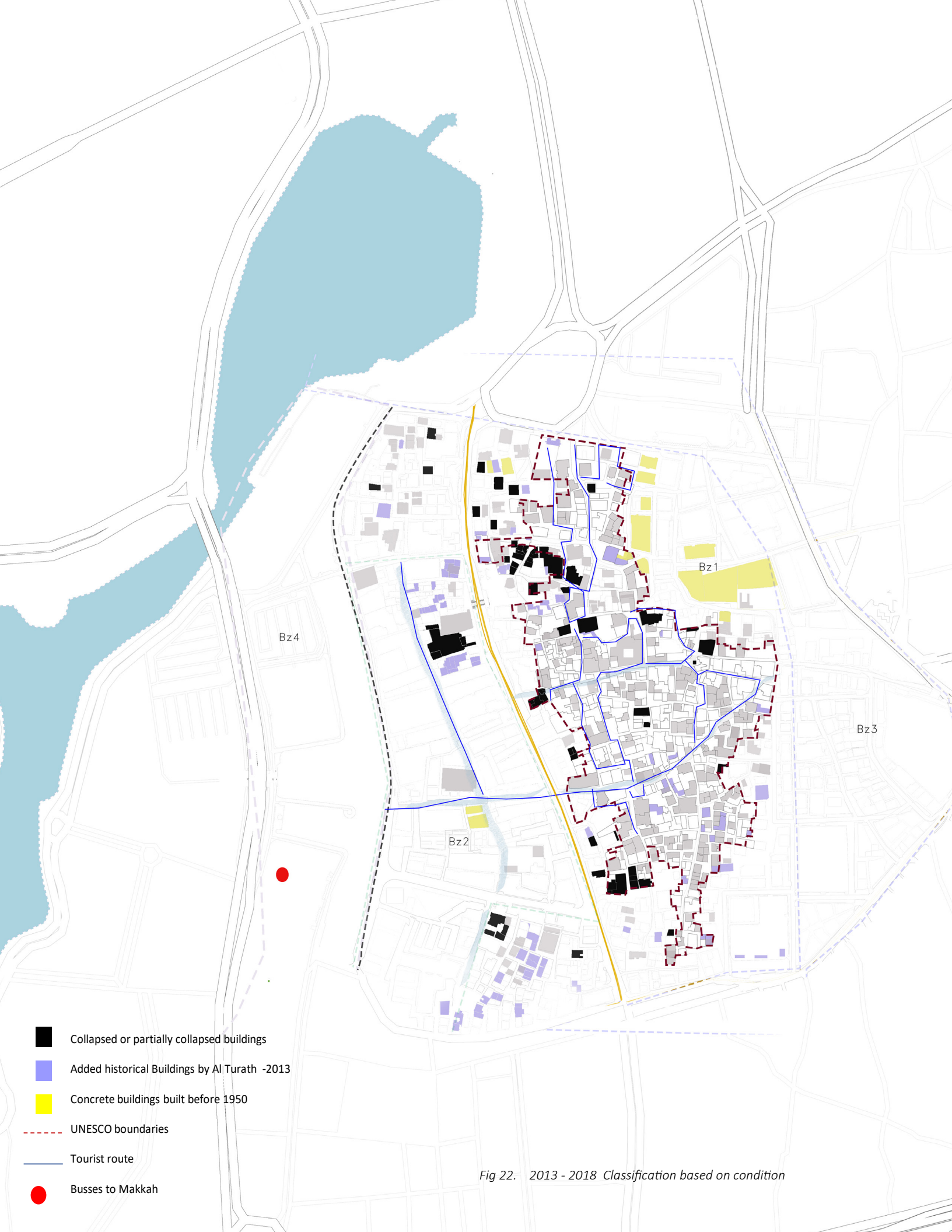
<sup>81</sup> Ibid

The map of the historic fabric of the old city seen in Figure 22 illustrates the classification of the historical structures depending on condition. According to Jeddah's municipality buildings are categorized into two main categories, buildings that need restoration and others that need to be reconstructed.<sup>82</sup> As is clear from the map, most of the reconstruction sites are aligned along the edges of UNESCO's boundaries. Due to the changes to the historical core this boundary became the edge where the transition between old and new take place, rather than the historical wall. Therefore, this thesis argues for the potential of those sites as a foundation of what could be called a "Contemporary" Hijazi architecture. The municipality regulations emphasize the need to reproduce the main features of the severely damaged buildings, encouraging the reuse of traditional materials if available while also allowing the use of "modern" materials and methods of construction.<sup>83</sup> This project will argue for the need of not reproducing the past but rather of celebrating the transition between the old and new by emphasizing on the contrast in materiality and construction methods.

---

82 "Historic Jeddah, the Gate to Makkah," Supplementary information, accessed July 15, 2018, <http://whc.unesco.org/document/139706>.

83 Ibid



- Collapsed or partially collapsed buildings
- Added historical Buildings by Al Turath -2013
- Concrete buildings built before 1950
- UNESCO boundaries
- Tourist route
- Busses to Makkah

Fig 22. 2013 - 2018 Classification based on condition

The proposed two sites for the design proposal are sites that are easy and safe to access. As shown on the map the first site (Site A) is located on the north-east side of the UNESCO's boundaries, while the second site (Site B) is located on the south-west side. Site A covers the footprint of three sites which still maintain some of its historical structure. The site is surrounded by historical residential buildings, *Al Shafi'i* mosque to its south-west side, and the historical *AlJamee* market to its south side. Site B covers the footprint of one historical site, currently the site serves as a parking facility. The site is surrounded by historical residential buildings, one which is of local importance called the *Jokandar* house. Since this thesis emphasizes on identity of this place as a multicultural hub, the chosen site is the one connects with the visitor's or tourist path (see Fig24).

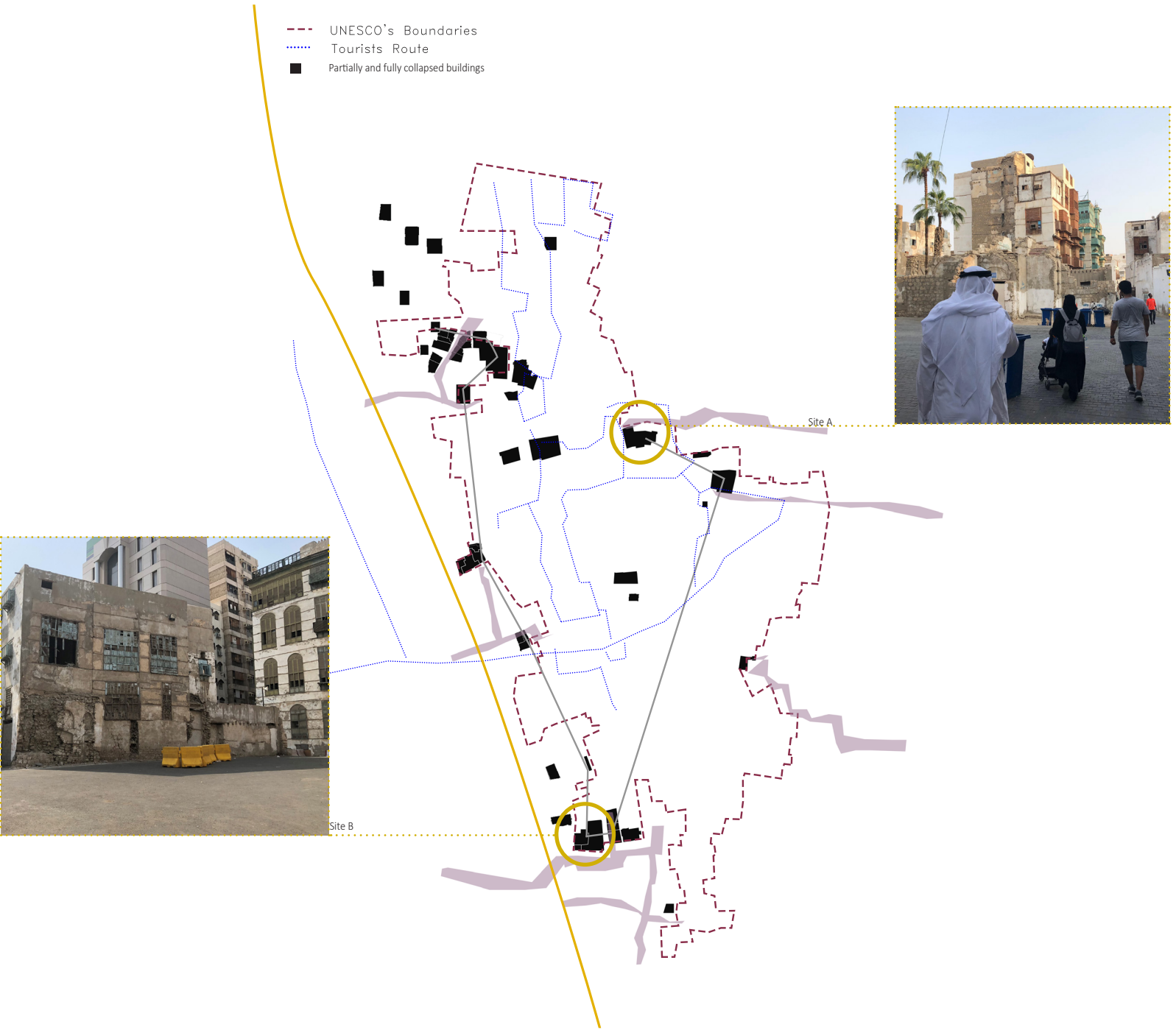


Fig 23. Proposed Sites



- Site A
- Tourist route

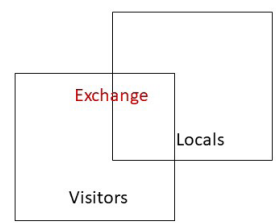


Fig 24. Chosen site -Site A



Fig 25. Existing condition

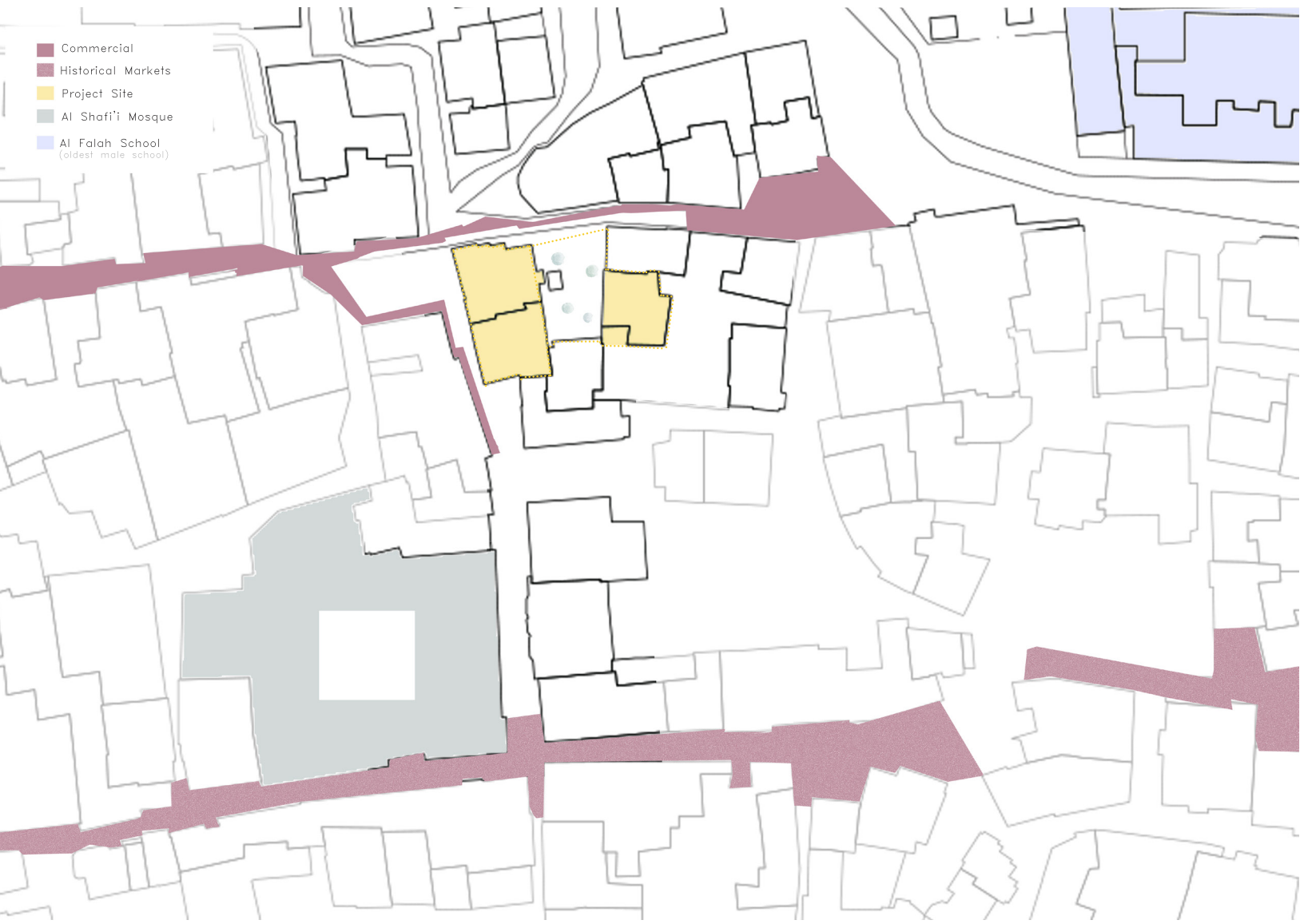


Fig 26. Context

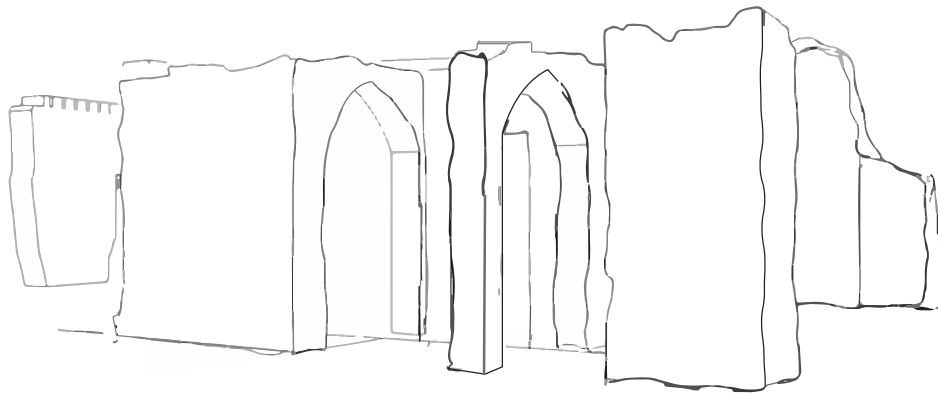


Fig 27. Existing structure



Fig 28. Existing structure

### C- Building on Traditional Foundation: Project and Program

Today the old city of Jeddah is mainly inhabited by various low-income immigrants from Africa, India, and other Asian countries, along with some Saudis.<sup>84</sup> Al Balad has become a place that is only infrequently visited by many city residents on special occasions, such as festivals. Even pilgrims are not using the old city as a place to stay, only visiting to shop and pass by. Moreover, as this area is inhabited mostly by minorities it lacks facilities and services. Therefore, this project sees opportunities in providing the much needed services for the neighborhood.

The selection of the specific function for the selected site was based on the recognition of community need that was revealed through the volunteer event “Reading for everyone”, which took place on December of 2017, at the old district. This event emphasized the importance of reading and exchanging knowledge specially among community members. For a couple of hours every Saturday books were placed in front of one of Jeddah’s historical houses where volunteers teach kids how to read.<sup>85</sup> The event had a great response from the community members,<sup>86</sup> which is an indication of the need to a place of knowledge exchange and education. Therefore, the proposed function to this site is a community Library. The proposed project aims to bring local and visitors to the historic district by creating a hub for interaction and exchange of knowledge and skills.



Fig 29. Volunteer event “Reading for everyone by Alwatan news

84 Livio Sacchi, “A Critical Survey and a Design Proposal for Al Balad, the Historic District of Jeddah, KSA,” 2013 Digital Heritage International Congress (DigitalHeritage), 2013, , doi:10.1109/digitalheritage.2013.6744811.

85 “Al-watan” , accessed July 15, 2018, [http://alwatan.com.sa/Culture/News\\_Detail.aspx?ArticleID=323569&CategoryID=7](http://alwatan.com.sa/Culture/News_Detail.aspx?ArticleID=323569&CategoryID=7).

86 Ibid

Historically libraries played a great role in being a place not only for receiving knowledge but exchanging it. In other words, libraries acted as a social hub for knowledge. One of significant examples of libraries in the Islamic culture is the House of Wisdom which was found on 8<sup>th</sup> century in Iraq. The house of wisdom used to serve as a place where artist and scholars from around the world will gather to discuss and share ideas.<sup>87</sup> Books were of a great importance to the Islamic nation, therefore this space was a place to preserve books and translate them.<sup>88</sup> Thus, this thesis is proposing a Micro-Community library built upon this traditional form. This space will be a place to exchange knowledge and information, bringing different community members and visitors to gather under one roof encouraging a cross cultural dialogue.



Fig 30. The house of wisdom -by Ancient Origins

<sup>87</sup> Ancient-origins, "The House of Wisdom: One of the Greatest Libraries in History," Ancient Origins, January 01, 2017, , accessed August 3, 2018, <https://www.ancient-origins.net/ancient-places-asia/house-wisdom-one-greatest-libraries-history-007292>.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid

The project program is also built on the main functions and activities that took place in the house of wisdom. The learning aspect was translated into the general library space, the preservation aspect is translated into the book collection and preservation room, as for the translation aspect it is projected as the visitor center space(see Fig 31). The concept of exchange was a major aspect of mosques before, however today mosques are typically only serve as a place for prayer. Therefore, the choice of the second side, which is near the oldest mosque emphasizes on the revival of this lost function of the mosque. The site is also near the oldest school, which will provide the students with a place to read and study after school hours. Finally, adjacent to the site is one of the main markets, *Suk Aljami*, which will increase the visitor's accessibility to the project.

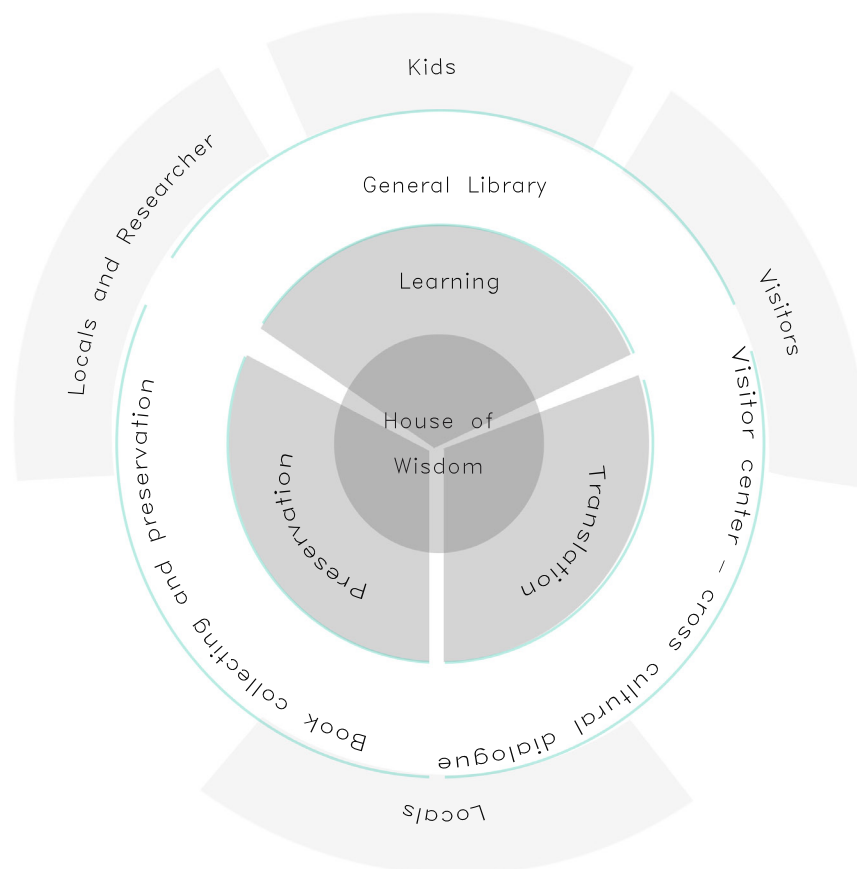


Fig 31. Program

## Chapter 4: Concept and Design

### A- Layering: Responding to Culture

The concept of layering plays a major role in the design process allowing different levels of interaction within the traditional fabric. As previously noted, the traditional social structure of Jeddah consists of three main circles; the family, the community and the society. This layering of the social structure has shaped the layering in the fabric. The user's position within these layers of society controlled their accessibility to specific spaces within the city. This system allowed a sense of discipline to the urban fabric. Figure 32 illustrates this conceptually. The project's three main spaces, the visitor hall, the general library, and special collection, are layered to allow control over the accessibility of each space. The visitor hall is placed along the outer layer to provide the maximum accessibility to these spaces, followed by the general library that is less accessible. Finally, the special collection is placed at the inner layer to control the accessibility to the space (see Fig 33).

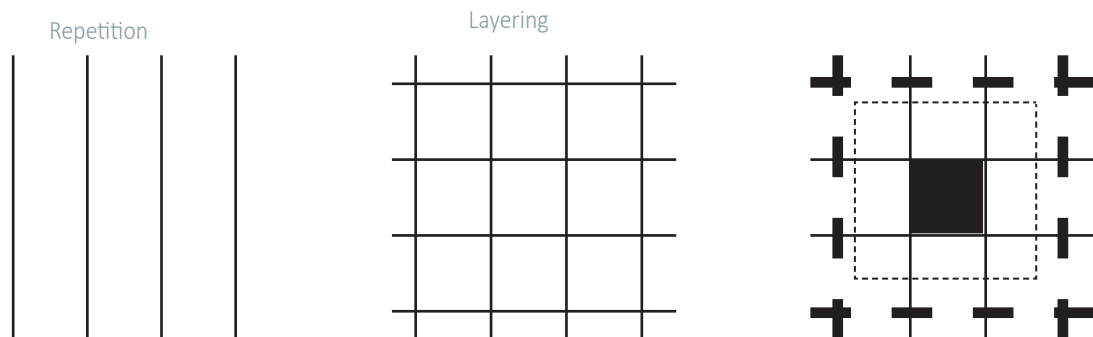


Fig 32. Layering in the City

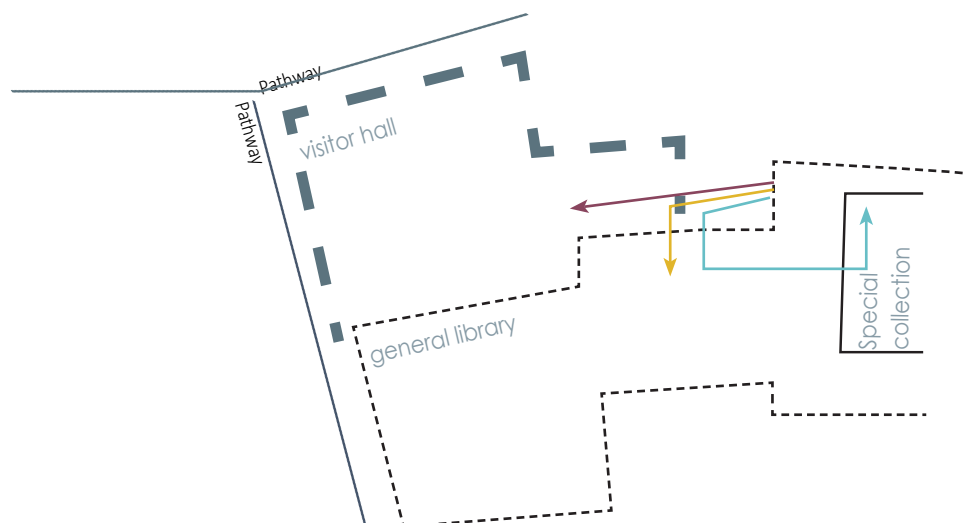


Fig 33. Direct and Indirect access

The ground plan figure illustrates how the design reflected this relation between spaces in terms of use and accessibility, by placing the visitor hall at the periphery of the site, more specifically at the corner where the three pedestrian paths meet. The general library is connected to the visitor hall taking over the rest of the ground floor. The Mezzanine is dedicated as reading spaces for children. Placing the special collection at the first floor controls entry to this room, as users need to first enter the library and reach the upper floor to gain access to it.



Fig 34. Ground Floor - Scale 1:1/16"



Fig 35. Mezzanine Floor - Scale 1:1/16"



Fig 36. First Floor/Roof - Scale 1:1/16"

The concept of layering is also implemented through the process of rethinking today's public spaces. Third places or indoor public spaces in Jeddah are usually categorized into two main sections, "single" referring to male section, and "family" referring to family and female section. This way of dividing a space neglects the female as an independent user in the public spaces. In other words, this arrangement of space does not consider women who do not feel comfortable around men. In a project such a library where users spend so long hours reading and researching this aspect becomes a critical concern. Therefore, the design project is proposing a separated female reading space. In addition, current public spaces do not consider privacy need through design process. This has resulted in spaces that are heavy on signs and separated by a simple partition that is often added at the very last-minute lacking consideration of the users experience of the space. This where the concept of layering is embraced in the design. The concept of layering appears at the transition edges between the three main spaces of the female, male and mixed gender reading areas. The level of separation is gradually layered from the very public "mixed gender" area at the center to private at both sides of the building, the east side serving as a reading room for male and the west side for female. Figure 37 illustrates how the opening of the old wall adjacent to the male section creates a visual connection to the central area, where this separation then is blurred. Privacy increases at the periphery of the room where this visual connection disappears. The transition to the female section is created through a series of wooden slats that densify along the entry edges to create a sealed partition (see Fig 38).

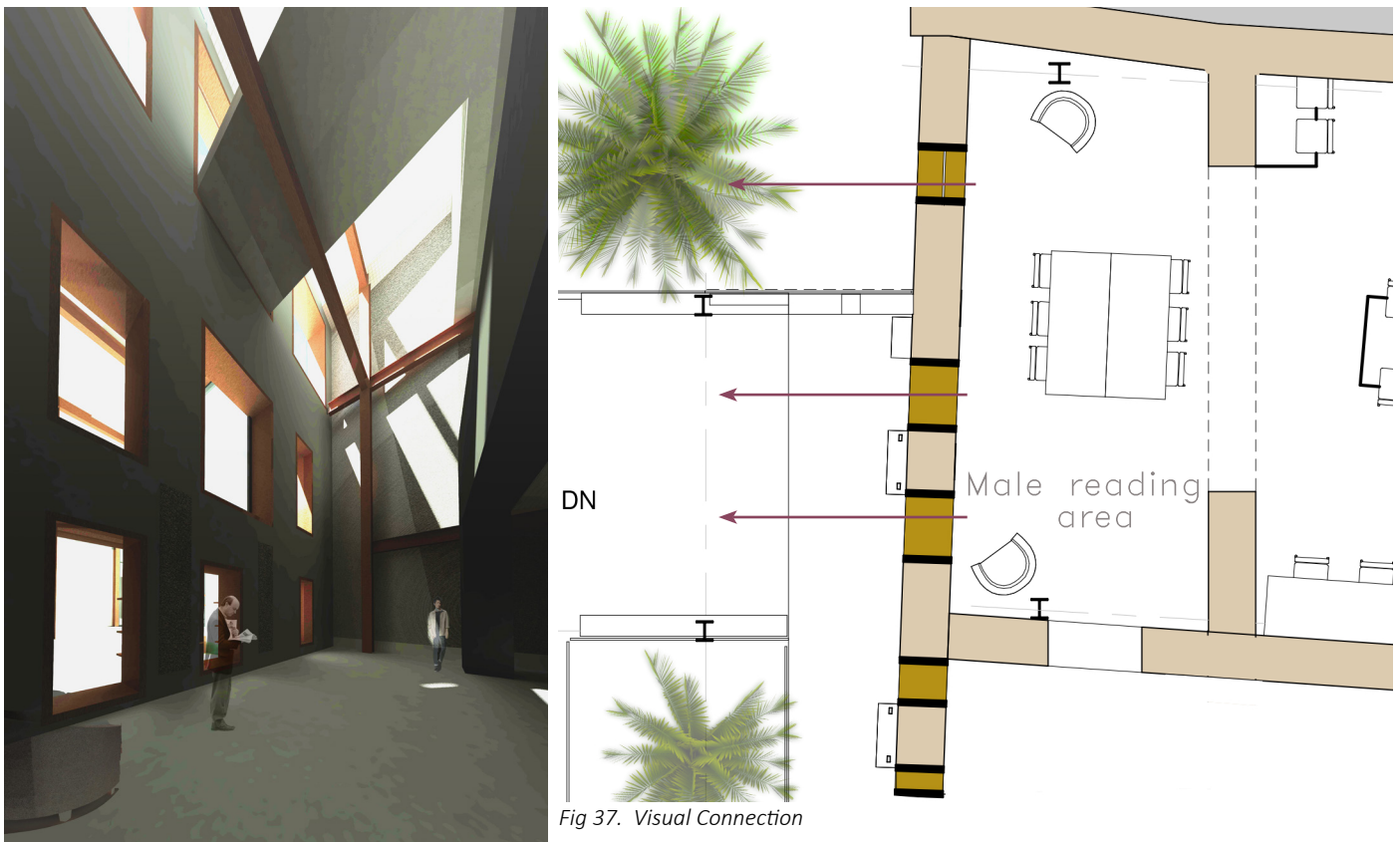




Fig 38. Female reading area



## B- Exclusive and Inclusive: Responding to Context

A main aspect that usually is overlooked in the traditional fabric is the social nature of the building facade. The traditional façade in Islamic architecture has inspired many in its form and ornamentations, specially the *Mashrabiya* element and the light quality created by its perforated patterns. However, those elements offer more than a pleasant sense of light in a space but rather its dynamic and flexible composition allows different kinds of social use of a space (see Fig 39). The design emphasizes the importance of this aspect by creating movable panels along the sides of the visitor hall(see Fig 40). Since the site is bordered by two main markets from the north and the south sides, this façade treatment will encourage the extension of market flow along the west side of the project connecting the two markets (see Fig 42). This is accomplished once the movable panels are fully open, allowing the visitor space to become part of the street, and its edges to be occupied by vendors. The panels are designed to be fully open, partially open, and fully closed, to allow exclusive and inclusive spaces depending on the need. This flexibility is created by breaking the panels into upper and lower sections, each being adjustable separately. The panels are made of precast concrete that are placed into steel framing and anchored to ground channels to make the movement easier (see Fig 41).



Two way

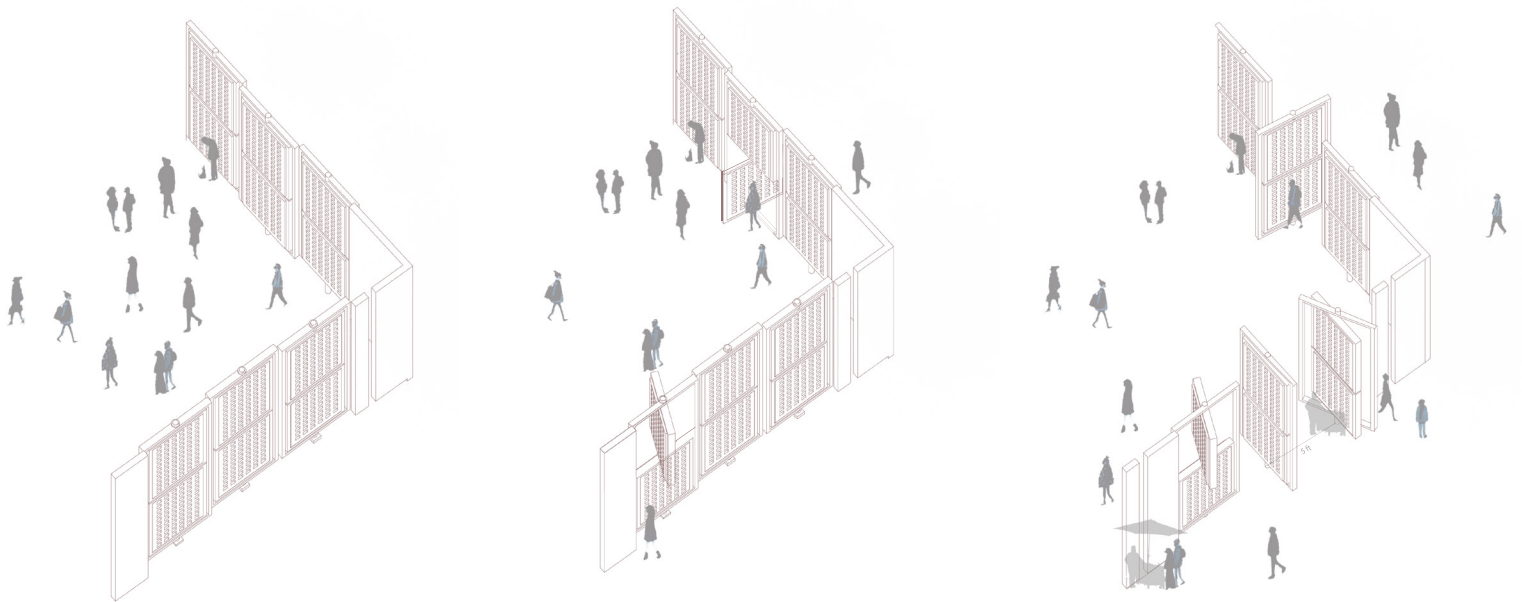


one way



No Interaction

Fig 39. Levels on engagement



*Fig 40. Exclusive and Inclusive*

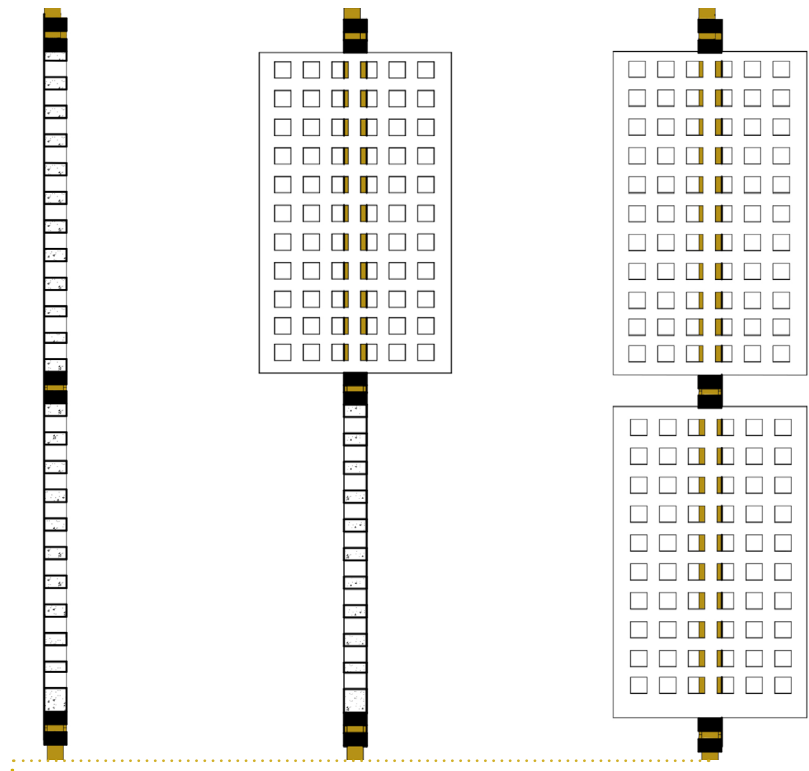


Fig 41. Adjustable panels

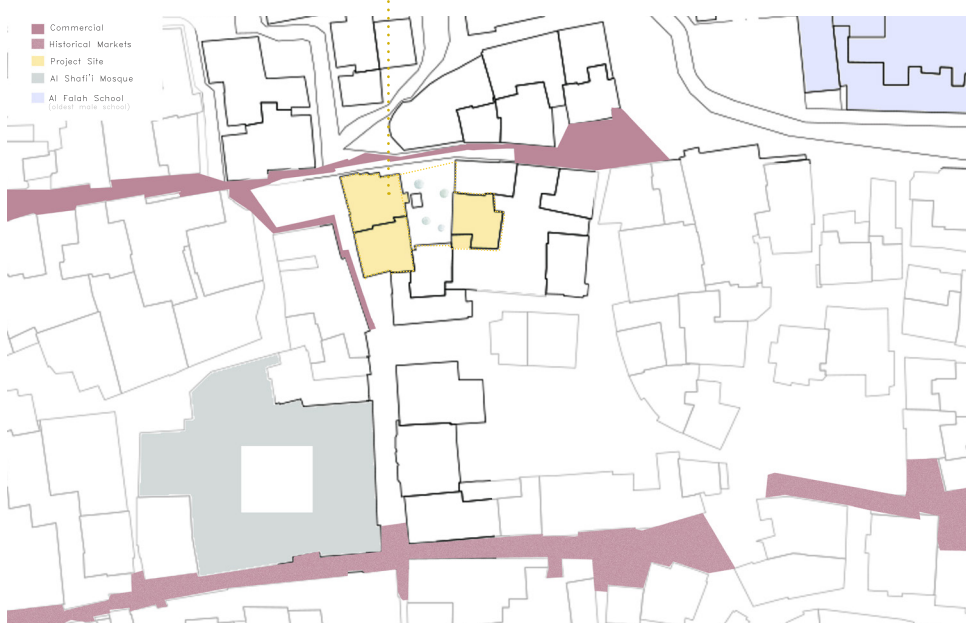
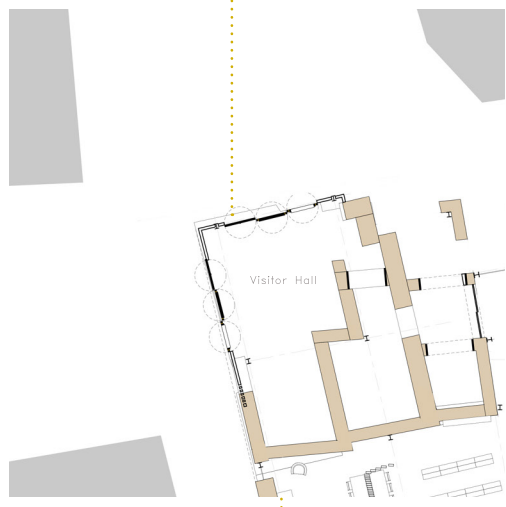
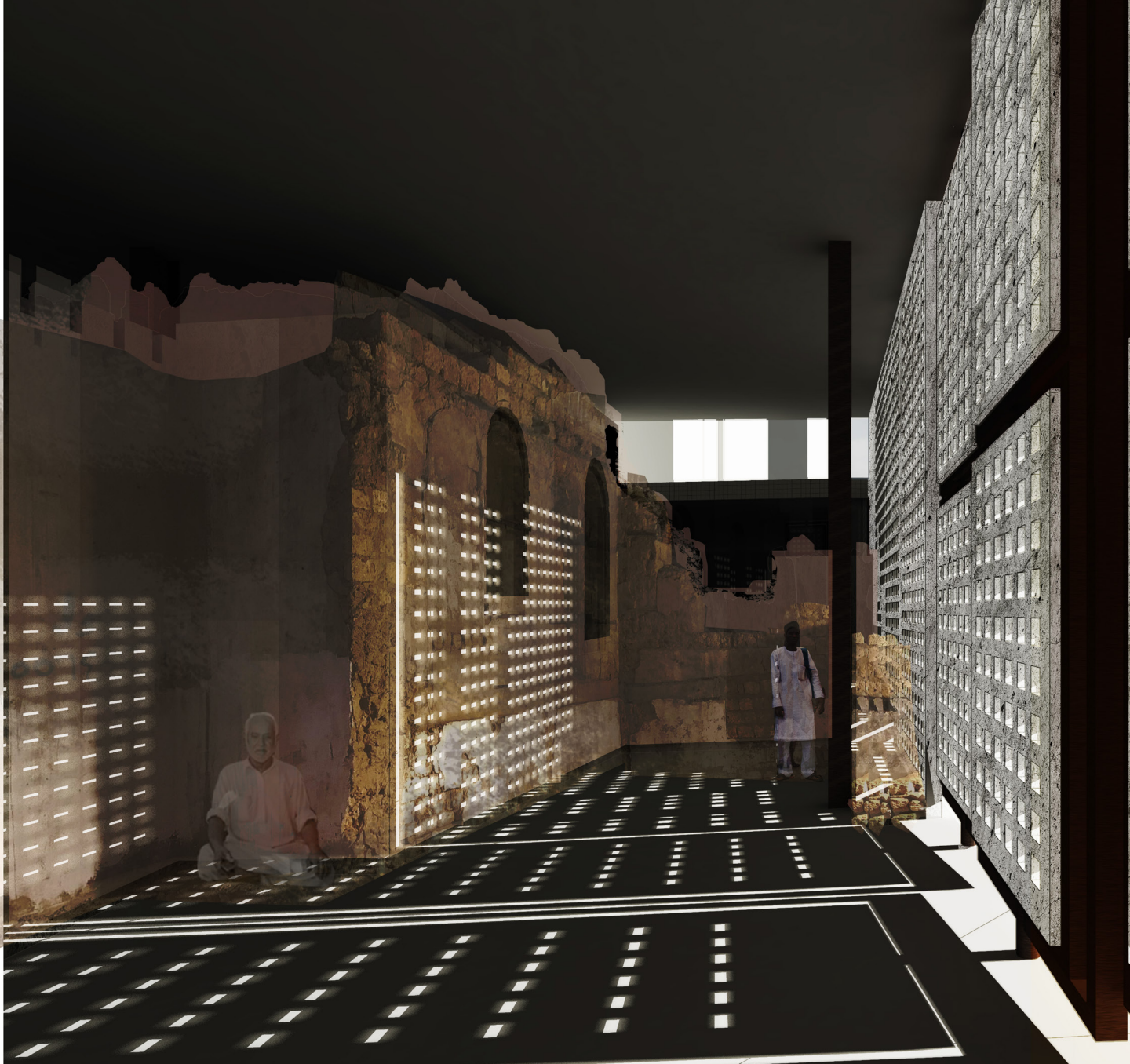


Fig 42. Responding to Context



Fig 43. Part of the Street





Exclusive

Fig 44. Light quality



### C- Framing, Transforming, Weaving: Responding to Ruins

A major question in this thesis project is how to rebuild in a historical fabric like that of Al- Balad. It is necessary to clearly define how the new structure will respond to the existing historical structure, and what messages each response is creating. The strategies in responding to the ruins are defined according to three main strategies, framing, transforming and weaving. “Weaving” is associated with the concept of understanding traditions and pushing beyond preservation. This act emphasizes the idea of modern interpretations. In addition, weaving new into old intends to make a statement about the lost social elements in our contemporary city, such as the social roof and the female projection to the street (see Fig 46). “Transforming” is associated with the concept of change in traditional conditions. This act emerges as a need through the design process to transform the function of an existing space. For instance, creating reading rooms out of the ground floor of a traditional house, or transforming a corridor to a sitting and resting place (see Fig 49). The transformation of historical walls is through the manipulation of its shapes by subtracting and adding to it. Finally, “Framing” is associated with the concept of romanticizing the old. Although the theoretical aspect of this thesis criticized the concept of romanticizing, this act allows a sense of appreciation of the aged wall and its textures. For example, when this strategy is applied to the visitor hall, the exposed walls provide a warm environment to the users allowing interaction with its texture. In conclusion, these proposed actions begin with an acknowledgment of the ruins, in all the cases the ruins are the foundation of to the action. In designing to restore identity the ruins here represent past traditions that should not be copied but treated as a base for moving forward.

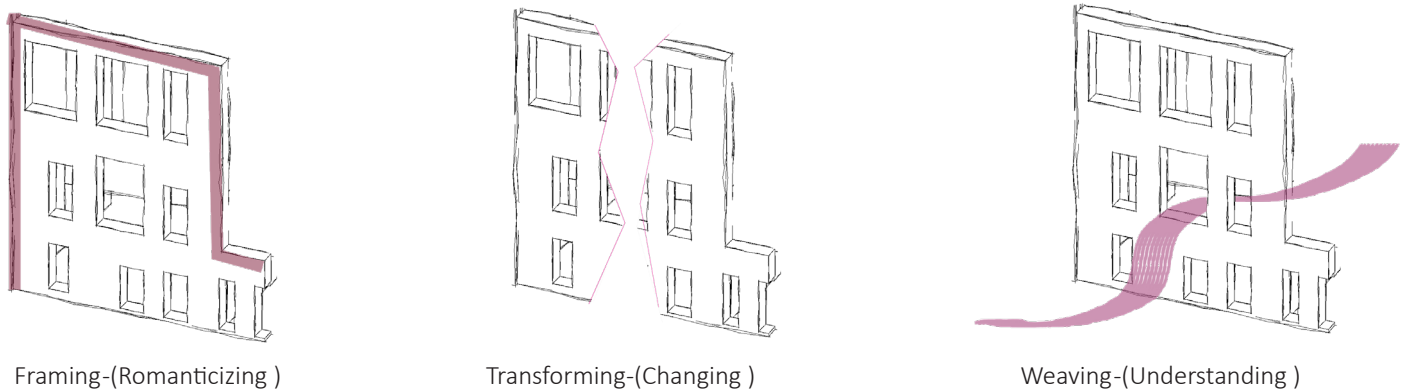


Fig 45. Responding to The ruins -Framing, Transforming, Weaving



Fig 46. Weaving



Fig 47. Section -Scale 1:1/32"



Fig 48. Women projection



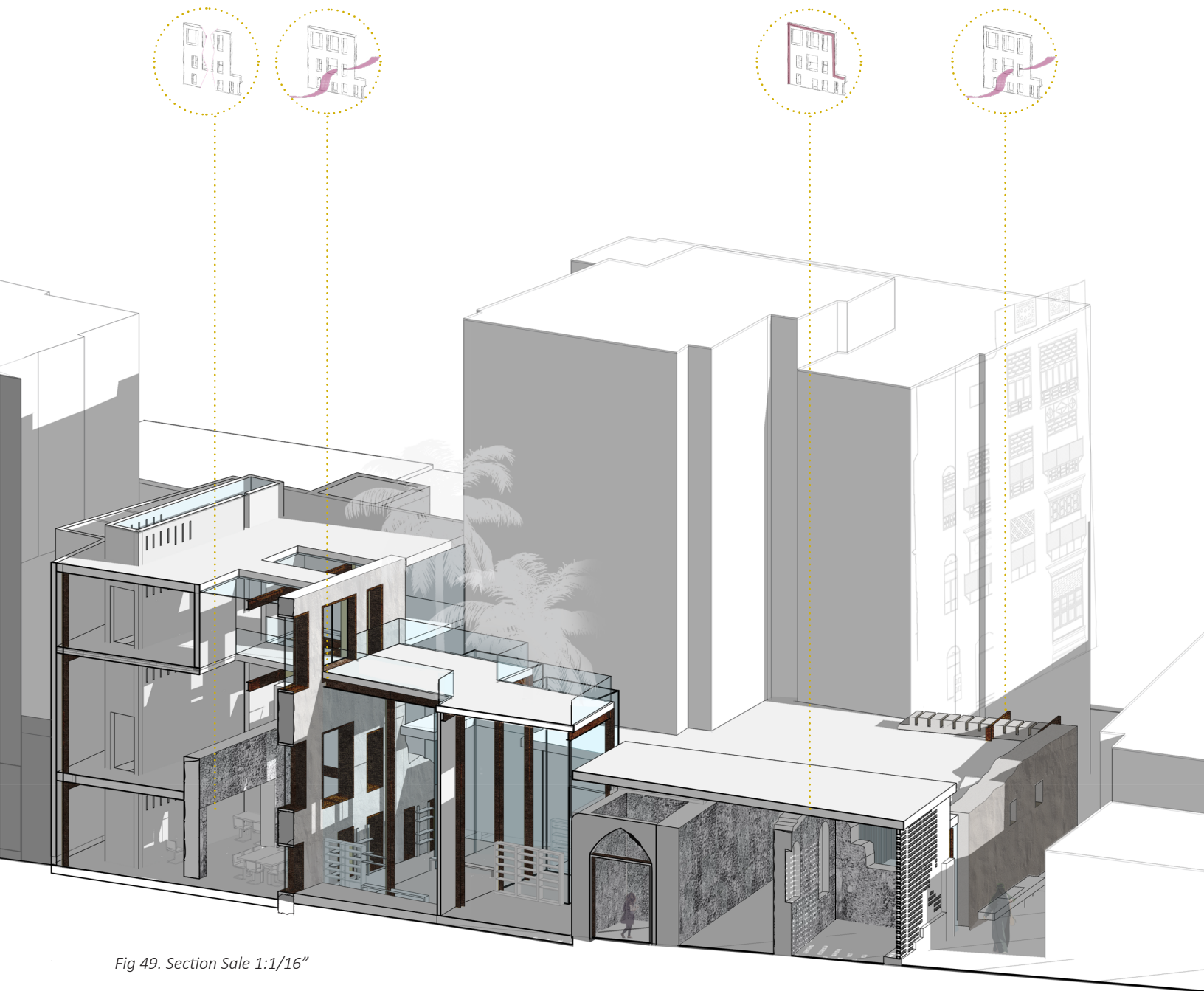
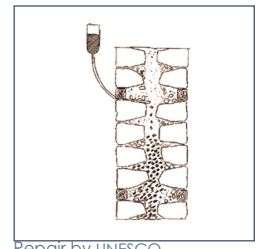
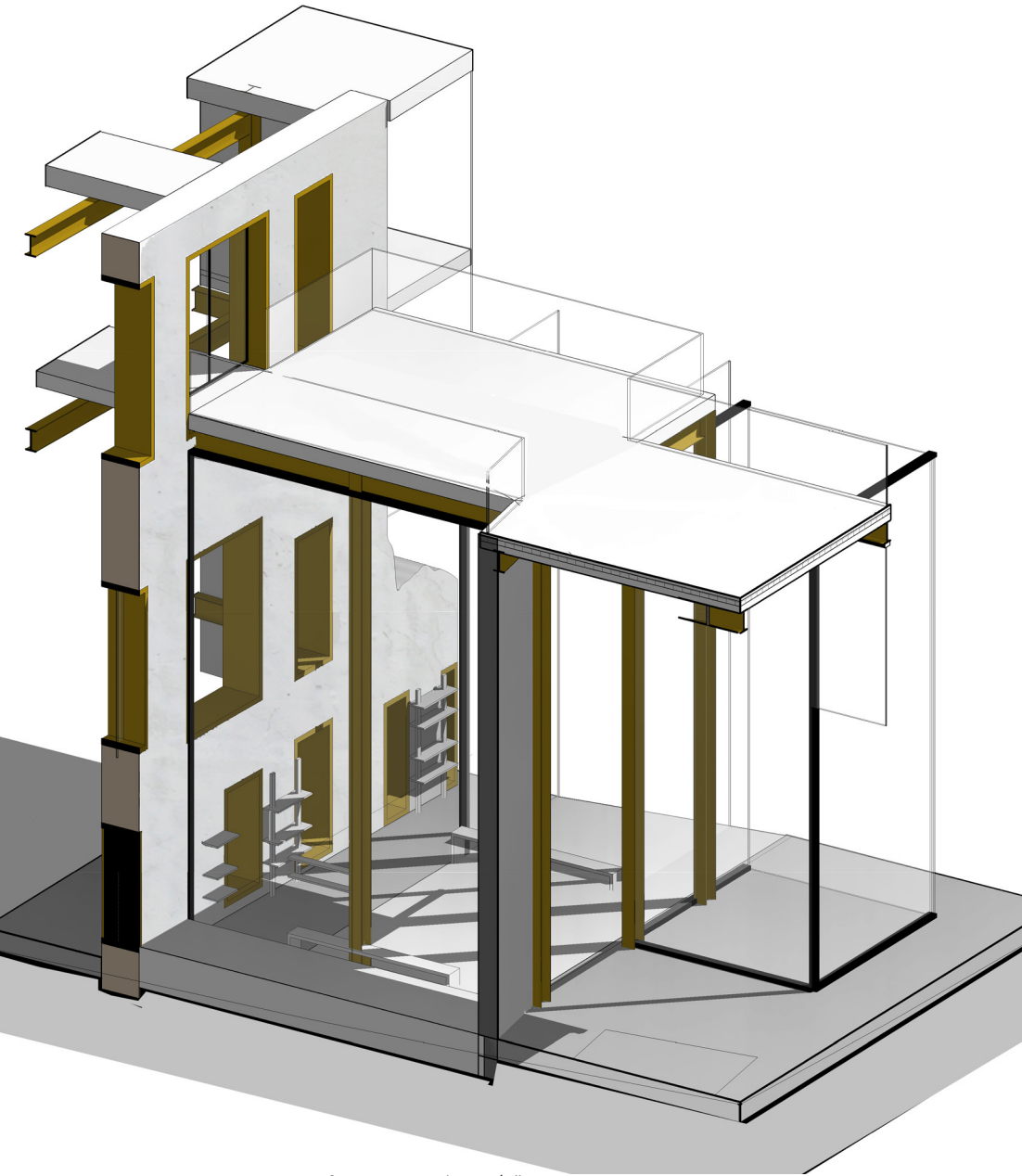
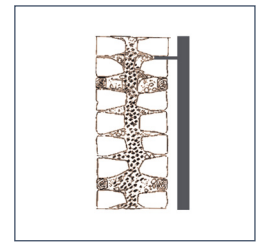


Fig 49. Section Sale 1:1/16"

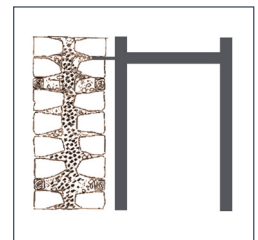




Repair by UNESCO



Support



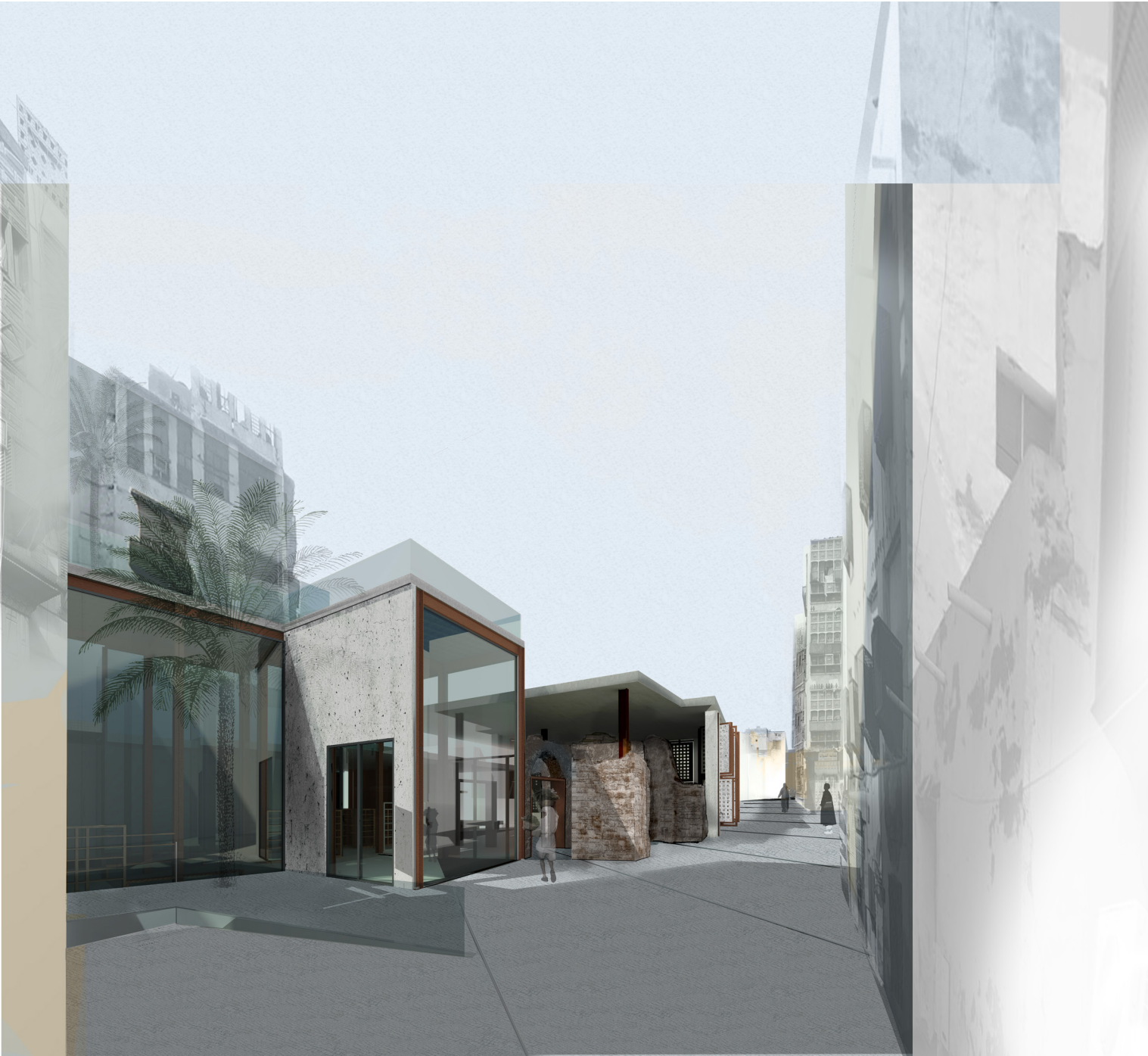
Add new structure

Fig 50. Adaptive reuse process

Fig 51. Weaving Roof -Section Scale 1:1/8"

Fig 52. Weaving Roof - Plan





*Fig 53. Building Approach*

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

Architecture in the Middle East is in a stagnant phase due to the everlasting search of what can be called it is “lost identity”. Typical approaches often attempt to glorify and simulate the past. Arab cities like Jeddah no doubt have a great rich history evident in historical cores or Al-Balad. This historical core contains a rich environment witnessed not only in the building form and details but also as seen among its people. The chaotic form and the imperfection of Jeddah’s historical core allows access to everybody, containing true public spaces and a cosmopolitan environment. It is a place where women can be seen selling goods on the street without being questioned, and people recognize each other, greeting each other as they pass by. This kind of richness is what is often missing in contemporary urban developments. While the traditional built environment is what allowed such social and cultural richness among its people, often efforts to “revive” identity mimic traditional physical forms but fail to understand the life behind it. The result of a superficial reading of the built environment, like the case of Jeddah is that the opposite was happening as people are separated from each other, the streets have no means of life. When discussing the architecture of the Gulf Region many argue that globalization is what creating such generic cities, however Jeddah is a proof that this is not the case. Jeddah has been always a cosmopolitan hub, however what shaped it in traditional form is its emphasis on moral and religious aspects. This thesis seeks to highlight how rich the architecture is that can satisfy the cultural needs of Jeddah for privacy and sociability.

The selection of the site is intended to act as a bridge to connect the gap between two separated city images, one which referred to as “Historical” and the another referred by “Contemporary”. Through the building tectonics and tension in materiality between what is old and what is new, this project aims to highlights lost concepts within the modern urban fabric. These includes notion of exclusive and inclusive, the social roof, and the window to the street. Additionally, the project for a micro-community Library in Al-Balad Also questions the nature of contemporary public spaces in Jeddah and proposes an alternative to how those spaces are divided. Current public spaces often exclude women as an independent entity, most third or indoor public spaces designating separate areas for male and others for families. In addition, those spaces in many cases are not designed to host this separation, and therefore they rely on signs for their effectiveness. This project proposed ways to use architectural tectonics to allow this division giving different characteristics to each space based on the need of the particular user. Finally, designing for

identity means designing with awareness of the community values and needs. This Identity will force itself on our design, it is that only when it is taken in consideration as part of the design process that the result is a rich experience within a space.

List of Figures -Unless noted all the images are by the author.

*Fig1. Jeddah's Ruins*

*Fig 2. Romanticizing the old*

*Fig 3. UNESCO's heritage site Map by UNESCO*

*Fig 4. New Gournā by D. M. Ben Guida*

*Fig 5. Chamber of Commerce- by Al-Ukhaider and the Crystal Palace*

*Fig 6. The Bahat Towers by AHR*

*Fig 7. Old Jeddah by Wikipedia.*

*Fig 8. Jeddah today*

*Fig 9. Map by a British travel in 1930 by Arab news*

*Fig 10. 1947 - 1980 Historical building Classified by Robert Mathew based on importance*

*Fig 11. Al-Shafi'i mosque by Alarabiya*

*Fig 12. Al Bant*

*Fig 13. Dakkah*

*Fig 14. Traditional roof by UNESCO*

*Fig 15. Social Facade*

*Fig 16. Old city Urban form - Scale*

*Fig 17. Light*

*Fig 18. Texture*

*Fig 19. Public to private conceptual illustration*

*Fig 20. Old Vs New*

*Fig 21. Public adaptation*

*Fig 22. 2013 - 2018 Classification based on condition*

*Fig 23. Proposed Sites*

*Fig 24. Chosen site -Site A*

*Fig 25. Existing condition*

*Fig 26. Context*

*Fig 27. Existing structure*

*Fig 28. Existing structure*

*Fig 29. Volunteer event "Reading for everyone by Alwatan news*

*Fig 30. The house of wisdom -by Ancient Origins*

*Fig 31. Program*

*Fig 32. Layering in the City*

*Fig 33. Direct and Indirect access*

*Fig 34. Ground Floor - Scale 1:1/16"*

*Fig 35. Mezzanine Floor - Scale 1:1/16"*

*Fig 36. First Floor/ Roof - Scale 1:1/16"*

*Fig 37. Visual Connection*

*Fig 38. Female reading area*

*Fig 39. Levels of engagement*

*Fig 40. Exclusive and Inclusive*

*Fig 41. Adjustable panels*

*Fig 42. Responding to Context*

*Fig 43. Part of the Street*

*Fig 44. Light quality*

*Fig 45. Responding to the ruins -Framing, Transforming, Weaving*

*Fig 46. Weaving*

*Fig 47. Section -Scale 1:1/32"*

*Fig 48. Women projection*

*Fig 49. Section Sale 1:1/16"*

*Fig 50. Adaptive reuse process*

*Fig 51. Weaving Roof -Section Scale 1:1/8"*

*Fig 52. Weaving Roof - Plan*

*Fig 53. Building Approach*

## Bibliography

- Abbas, Hidayat. "Al-Jami' al-'Atiq, the Oldest Mosque in Jidda." *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 04, no. 02 (2014): 09-21. doi:10.32350/jitc.42.02.
- Ahmed, Yasser. "Change in Identity of Saudis' Built Environments : The Case of Jeddah." British Library EThOS - Search and Order Theses Online. January 01, 1970. Accessed July 6, 2018. <http://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.735351>.
- Alharbi, and Thamer Hamdan. "The Development of Housing in Jeddah: changes in Built Form from the Traditional to the Modern." CORE. January 01, 1989. Accessed June 4, 2018. <https://core.ac.uk/display/153776526>.
- "Al-watan." "الوطن أون لاین :: الأخطاء الطبية ترتفع 37 % خلال 5 أعوام." Accessed July 15, 2018. [http://alwatan.com.sa/Culture/News\\_Detail.aspx?ArticleID=323569&CategoryID=7](http://alwatan.com.sa/Culture/News_Detail.aspx?ArticleID=323569&CategoryID=7).
- Al-Sabouni, Marwa. "Architecture with Identity Crisis: The Lost Heritage of the Middle East." *International Journal of Biourbanism*, 2016, 81-97. <http://www.biourbanism.org/architecture-identity-crisis-lost-heritage-middle-east/>.
- "AL BAHR TOWERS." Al Bahr Towers | Office & Workplace | AHR | Architects and Building Consultants. Accessed June 14, 2018. <http://www.ahr.co.uk/Al-Bahr-Towers>.
- Alsharif, Asma. "Historic Old Jeddah Awaits Life-saving Restoration." Reuters. January 09, 2013. Accessed June 14, 2018. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-saudi-jeddah/historic-old-jeddah-awaits-life-saving-restoration-idUSBRE9080M120130109>.
- Ancient-origins. "The House of Wisdom: One of the Greatest Libraries in History." Ancient Origins. January 01, 2017. Accessed August 3, 2018. <https://www.ancient-origins.net/ancient-places-asia/house-wisdom-one-greatest-libraries-history-007292>.
- Chadirji, Rifat. *Concepts and Influences: Towards a Regionalized International Architecture, 1952-1978*. London: KPI, 1986.
- Chadirji, Rifat. *Al-Ukhaider and the Crystal Palace*. London: Riad El-Rayyes Books, 1991.
- Elsheshtawy, Yasser. *Planning Middle Eastern Cities: Planning Middle Eastern Cities: AN URBAN KALEIDOSCOPE IN A GLOBALIZING WORLD*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2004.
- Fathy, Hassan. *Architecture for the Poor an Experiment in Rural Egypt*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Pr., 1986.
- "Historic Jeddah, the Gate to Makkah." Accessed July 15, 2018. <http://whc.unesco.org/document/139706>.
- "Historic Old Jeddah Awaits Life-saving Restoration | Pictures." Reuters. January 11, 2013. Accessed June 10, 2018. <https://www.reuters.com/news/picture/historic-old-jeddah-awaits-life-saving-r-idUSBRE9080M120130111>
- "Jeddah Population 2018." Total Population by Country 2018. Accessed December 15, 2018. <http://worldpopulationreview.com/world-cities/jeddah-population/>

2013 Digital Heritage International Congress (*DigitalHeritage*), 2013.

doi:10.1109/digitalheritage.2013.6744811.

SAUDI COMMISSION FOR TOURISM AND ANTIQUITIES. (2013). Historical Jeddah the gate to Makkah (Executive Summary- PDF). Retrieved from <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1361/documents/>

Sevčenko, Margaret, and Abdulla Y. Bokhari. *Conservation in the Historic District of Jeddah ,Adaptive Reuse: Integrating Traditional Areas into the Modern Urban Fabric*. Cambridge, MA: Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, 1983.

Steele, James, and Hassan Fathy. *The Hassan Fathy Collection*. Bern, 1989.