

TARIMI MANSIONS PRESERVATION PROJECT:

DOCUMENTATION OF THE TARIMI MANSIONS
2006-07: QASR ABD AL-RAHMAN BIN SHEIKH AL-
KAF

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Pamela Jerome, AIA

Introduction

For the 2006-07 season, an American team with support from the American Institute for Yemeni Studies (AIYS), the Samuel H. Kress Foundation and the Social Fund for Development (SFD) worked for a fourth season in collaboration with the General Organization of Antiquities and Museums (GOAM) on documenting the mudbrick mansions of Tarim. Qasr Abd al-Rahman Bin Sheikh al-Kaf, with the monumental portion designed by Sayid Alawi Abu Bakr al-Kaf and dating to 1938, is an addition to an earlier house, Dar Dawil, which is probably about 200 years old and is mostly collapsed. Sayid Alawi Abu Bakr al-Kaf, one of two only historic engineers of the Wadi Hadhramaut whose names are known, was the cousin of 'Umar and Abd al-Rahman bin Sheikh al-Kaf. Many of the al-Kaf family houses have been attributed to him.

The mansion was recorded from December 22, 2006 through January 10, 2007. The American team was led by director Prof. Pamela Jerome (adjunct associate professor, Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation). Neither Dr. Selma al-Radi (research fellow, New York University's Institute of Fine Arts) nor James Conlon (director, Columbia University's Visual Media Center) were able to participate this season. Sara Lardinois (architect), Michelle Langlie (Columbia University historic preservation graduate student), Ali Rajper (Columbia University historic preservation graduate student), and Deepa Mehta (Columbia University urban planning graduate student) participated in the documentation project. GOAM colleagues included Abdullah al-Saqqaf (architect) and Hussien al-Aidarous (archaeologist) (Fig. 1).

Related Work

The Tarimi Mansions Preservation Project's work of the previous seasons include the documentation of Qasr al-'Ishshah,¹ Dar al-Salam,² Hamtut and al-

¹ Conlon, James, Pamela Jerome and Selma Al-Radi, "Documentation of the Tarimi palaces, 2002-03: Qasr al-'Ishshah," *Bulletin of the American Institute for Yemeni Studies*, No. 45, 2003, pp 9-22.

² Jerome, Pamela, James Conlon and Selma Al-Radi, "Documentation of the Tarimi Mansions 2003-04: Dar al-Salam," unpublished report issued 24 May 2004. For a copy of the report, refer to www.learn.columbia.edu/tarim/html/conservation.html.

Riyadh.³ All four of the mansions belong to the al-Kafs, a prominent family of merchants who made their fortune in the late 19th and early 20th centuries through investments in Singapore. Al-'Ishshah was the family seat under 'Umar Bin Sheikh al-Kaf. Al-Riyadh, Dar-al-Salam, and Hamtut line the same street creating an impressive entrance into Tarim's palace district where many of the mansions are clustered. Qasr Abd al-Rahman Bin Sheikh al-Kaf, by contrast, is located in one of the outlying districts of Tarim known as Aydid. Nearby are several other mansions including al-Haddad and Qasr al-Quba.

Repairs and stabilization of al-'Ishshah, realized through support from the Social Fund for Development and the US State Department's Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation, were mostly completed in 2005. The 'Ishshah Palace has been open to the public as a house museum since 1997, run by the Tarim branch of the Yemeni Society for History and Heritage Protection (YSHHP) who have the long-term lease. The repairs and reconstruction of four collapsed areas permitted new programs to be developed at al-'Ishshah, including an exhibition space, a boys' choir practice space, a boy's club, and a women's center for traditional handicrafts.

The work of Muhammad al-Junied, director of the 'Ishshah Palace, is exemplary and has paved the way for the local population to begin understanding that long-term preservation of the historic city of Tarim must include the abandoned significant mansions adaptively reused in the public sector. In fact, al-'Ishshah's success is partially responsible for Vice Governor Ahmed Juneid al-Juneid's founding of a new NGO in 2003, the Tarim Assembly for Heritage Service. This NGO has taken out a long-term lease on Qasr Abd al-Rahman Bin Sheikh al-Kaf and opened it to the public as Tarim's second house museum in 2004. The importance of these local NGOs cannot be underestimated, both as stakeholders and as influences on the community.

In addition to the documentation of Qasr Abd al-Rahman Bin Sheikh al-Kaf, we accessed and assessed Al-Fijr, the mansion designed and originally owned by the architect/engineer Alawi Abu Bakr, for any worsening of damage related to the collapse of the northwest section of the mansion, which went down through three stories in October 2004. In January 2004, with the execution of the updated feasibility study requested by UNESCO,⁴ the extensively termite-damaged beam on the 1st floor directly below this area was identified as requiring immediate emergency shoring. Unfortunately, funding was not secured in time to save the three-story area of collapse. The building continues to require

³ Jerome, Pamela, James Conlon and Selma Al-Radi, Documentation of the Tarimi Mansions 2004-05: Hamtut and al-Riyad," unpublished report issued 9 May 2005. For a copy of the report, refer to www.learn.Columbia.edu/tarim/html/conservation.html

⁴ Jerome, Pamela, Updated Feasibility Study: Preservation of the Mudbrick Mansions of Tarim, Yemen, unpublished report submitted to UNESCO, Unit of Arab Countries, Division of Cultural Heritage, Paris, France, issued 15 March 2004.

emergency stabilization and is a candidate for documentation and adaptive reuse. The area of collapse did not appear significantly worse, and in fact, subsequent to our departure, we were recently informed that one of the owners and caretaker, Muhammad Hasan al-Kaf, has begun to clear out the collapse.

Directly behind al-Fijr and in full view of al-'Ishshah, Salmanah, Aydid, and Khamiran mansions, Yemen Mobile has erected a cellular telephone antenna (Figs. 2 and 3). The antenna can also be seen from al-Munaysurah, al-Riyadh, Dar al-Salam and Hamtut mansions (Fig. 4), and vies for prominence with the iconic symbol of Tarim, al-Mudhar minaret. This totally inappropriate construction has compromised the palace district at the core of the historic city of Tarim. Dr. Abd al-Karim al-Eryani, chief advisor to Yemen's president on cultural affairs, has secured a promise from Yemen Mobile to have it removed. Its removal would gain huge credibility for the Tarimi Mansions Preservation Project.

The team also re-entered Hamtut to review its condition (Fig. 5). We were accompanied by Nabil al-Habshi of Universal Touring Co. because of their interest in reusing one of the mansions to develop a four-star hotel. We had met previously with Hussien Sayid al-Kaf of Seyoun, one of the owners and caretaker of the Hamtut. He alerted us to the fact that the family was being offered US \$2 million by a rich Saudi whose intention is to tear down the Hamtut and replace it with concrete development. This sounded alarms and caused us to also meet with Alwan al-Shaibani, CEO of Universal Touring Co., once back in Sana'a. Our presentation to Mr. al-Shaibani met with great interest. Since our return to the US, Mr. al-Shaibani has contacted us to indicate he had been to Tarim and is negotiating with the owners. However, because the asking price is so great (the property is huge), he is seeking assistance from the Social Fund for Development at the suggestion of Dr. al-Eryani. Subsequently, we were informed that Dr. al-Eryani showed the Tarimi mansions to the Arab Fund, one of the SFD's major contributors.

We noted some changes to mansions identified as abandoned by the TMPP. The inheritors are developing the land around al-Haddad (Fig. 6), an Art Deco mansion designed by Alawi Abu Bakr al-Kaf and located within view of the Qasr Abd al-Rahman Bin Sheikh al-Kaf in the Aydid district. Unfortunately, it appears that this is occurring at the expense of the mansion, which is still abandoned. Instead, one of the sons, who is an architect, has constructed a concrete house at the east end of the property (Fig. 7). The aesthetics of this building compromises the district as well as the historic mansion and its environment. To the west, another relative is constructing a mudbrick house with some concrete detailing.

Qasr al-Quba is in the same district (Fig. 8). Adaptively reused as a hotel, it is another mansion designed by Alawi Abu Bakr. It has been closed for the last two years for repairs. However, it appears that there is not enough money to perform

maintenance on the roofs. This is unfortunate as it means yet another one of the mansions is at risk.

We also noted one of the historic mosques in the Aydid district has had an addition of concrete blocks to its traditional “crenellated” parapet. These mosques typically have low parapets with widespread crenellations that resemble arrows. Infill with concrete block obscures the original design because the eye is attracted to the predominance of the grey color of the block, which stands out from the surrounding white plaster. This change was probably made for functional reasons, perhaps to conceal women at prayer. The concrete block is recessed slightly, and if it were coated in lime plaster, it would be less of an eyesore and the original design of the parapet would still read.

This could also be the solution for the concrete buildings that are beginning to proliferate in the historic district. With proper aesthetic guidelines and lime plaster coating, concrete buildings could die into the background and not read so prominently against the mud urban fabric.

Relations with Community Partners

The Tarimi Mansions Preservation Project (TMPP) continues to collaborate with various stakeholders concerned with the preservation of historic Tarim. Naturally, this includes Abd al-Rahman al-Saqqaf, GOAM’s regional director in Seyoun, who is the official responsible for our work in the Wadi Hadhramaut. As a token of our appreciation, we made a donation on behalf of the AIYS to the Sultan’s Palace Museum in Seyoun, GOAM’s headquarters in the Wadi, which we were told would be used for the acquisition of a new computer.

Muhammad al-Juneid, who operates al-‘Ishshah and is a member of the YSHHP, is a major collaborator. Since 2005, the local council has been empowered by the central government in an effort to end top down decisions, but unfortunately, our contact, Muhammad al-Sha’iri, director of the Municipality of Tarim, died in 2006 of cancer. Muhammad Awad Hadi is now the vice manager of the local council of Tarim, and Muhammad Baqotmy, general manager; we did not have the opportunity to meet the latter. However, we established many new relationships, including with representatives of the Ministry of Public Works, Environment, Planning, and the Social Fund for Development.

This year, we worked with Ahmed Bil Faqih of the Tarim Assembly for Heritage Service (TAHS). TAHS has the long-term lease on the Qasr Abd al-Rahman Bin Sheikh al-Kaf. Originally, the rent was 15,000 Yemeni Ryals per month (US \$75) for the first two years; it has now been reduced to 5,000 YR per month (US \$25). The mansion was cleaned by TAHS in preparation for our documentation. In addition, some carpentry work was performed to secure the space, electricity introduced and one of the bathrooms was plumbed.

We met with the Vice Governor on several occasions and discussed the needs of Tarim. Vice Governor Ahmed Juneid al-Juneid requested that we develop guidelines for the treatment of historic properties and new construction within the historic district. Hussein al-Guneid, Deputy Minister of the Environment, also met with us to consider the implications to the cultural landscape. Through Ali al-Bahbooh, Tarimi representative to the Ministry of Public Works, and Muhammad Salem Musabah, an architect and manager in his office, we saw plans for the urban development of Tarim in which the entire surrounding area of date palm groves is being proposed for subdivision into building lots. The fact that this cultural landscape of date palm groves within the city is still intact is one of the unique features of Tarim. Needless to say, we are distressed by this proposal and immediately presented him with our map for the boundaries of the historic district and buffer zone (Fig. 9), which he promised to consider.

One of our big concerns is the gradual proliferation of concrete construction in Tarim. Abdullah al-Gifri, vice president of the University of the Hadhramaut and a mechanical engineer, relayed to us the cost of air conditioning concrete construction, which is 50% more than that of mud construction. This, and the fact that actual construction costs 30% more, made us think about why homeowners would consider new construction in concrete.

To answer these questions, we invited a group of Tarimi architects to participate in a discussion about concrete construction. Ali al-Bahbooh was invited as well, since he is also responsible for the approval of new construction permits. About twenty people attended the meeting, which took place in one of the elegant rooms in Qasr Abd al-Rahman Bin Sheikh al-Kaf (Fig. 10). Introductions were made by vice manager Muhammad Awad Hadi. When asked why the local architects recommend concrete construction to potential clients, we were told that the reason is economic. Architects are paid by the number of drawings and, whereas, concrete buildings require about 15 drawings, mudbrick ones only require one or two. Our response was that for the sake of their pocket, they are willing to destroy their city and culture. A lively discussion ensued. We encouraged each architect to become a member of TAHS and indicated that there are business opportunities in the repair of the mansions for which they could be considered in terms of supervision. We also admonished Ali al-Bahbooh for permitting the construction of the cellular telephone tower without consideration of its impact on the historic center and the health of the adjacent inhabitants. The latter concern was confirmed separately by Ibrahim al-Kaf, director of Health Care and Hospital in Tarim.

We met with Zeki Hadi Ba Hashwan, representative of the Ministry of Planning in Seyoun. He gave us interesting statistical information regarding the Wadi and

Tarim in particular. These statistics were incorporated into Deepa Mehta's thesis.⁵

We had several discussions with Omar Abdalaziz Hallaj, manager of the Shibam Urban Development Project (SUDP) for GTZ (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit*), economist Dr. Burkhard von Rabenau, and Tom Leiermann of DED (Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst). In the past five years, the work of the SUDP has produced remarkable results. Through a package of demand-based financial incentives, 50% of the housing stock in the walled city has been repaired (Fig. 11). This includes 30% of the abandoned housing with an incentive of 10-15 years free rent. Using a reverse pyramid scheme, subsidies are greatest for upper floors to encourage their retention. The mud masons have been organized into an association of 40 master builders and 200 foremen/apprentices who have exclusive rights to bidding on repairs within the walled city. This has resulted in a tripling in demand since 2000 for mud masons, and a 7% annual growth of income for greater Shibam. Women who received training in sewing have increased their income by 30%. School children were asked to envision their environment in drawings, which resulted in an exhibit and the publication of a book. GTZ also worked with local carpenters who are marketing new products (three-dimensional wooden puzzles) for tourists.

GOPHCY (General Organization for the Preservation of Historic Cities in Yemen) received funding from the SFD to repair al-Ranad (Fig. 12), the Kathiri sultan's palace on the main square in the center of historic Tarim. This is excellent news because after suffering partial collapse in 2004, the building is no longer occupied by the police station and the post office. It also means that GOPHCY will establish a presence in Tarim.

We met with Hussein Omar al-Hadi, secretary-general of the al-Ahgaf Library of Manuscripts. The library is housed in a concrete structure on the main square. The building is now air-conditioned, and the priceless manuscripts are protected in aluminum and glass bookcases with some in display cases for viewing. There is also a small conservation laboratory. Despite these improvements, Hussein indicated that the library would be interested in adaptively reusing one of the abandoned mudbrick mansions if the opportunity arose.

Documentation of Qasr Abd al-Rahman Bin Sheikh al-Kaf

Our work continues to be supported by the American Institute for Yemeni Studies under whose auspices we work. We again received a generous grant from the Samuel H. Kress Foundation for the participation of Columbia University

⁵ Mehta, Deepa, "On Conservation and Development: The Role of Traditional Mud Brick Firms in Southern Yemen," unpublished master's degree thesis, Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, 2007

graduate students. Additional funding came from Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation. The SFD provided support for some of the team's travel expenses. This year, for the first time, we were able to briefly work with five architecture students from the University of the Hadhramaut in Mukallah, training them in documentation.

Like many of the mansions in Tarim, Qasr Abd al-Rahman Bin Sheikh al-Kaf is one of the al-Kaf family villas. It is also one of the villas that was expropriated during the Marxist regime (early 1970s to early 1990s) and reused as housing for the poor. The building was documented with digital photography. Approximately 1,000 digital photographs were shot. Surveys throughout the structure resulted in sketches that were used to produce scaled architectural plans in AutoCAD.

The main (south) elevation of Qasr Abd al-Rahman Bin Sheikh al-Kaf is an impressive monumental Neo-Classical façade (Figs. 13 and 14). Abd al-Rahman was the elder brother of 'Umar. The mansion, designed by Alawi Abu Bakr and completed in 1938, is an addition to a much older house, Dar Dawil. To the west of Dar Dawil lie the ruins of a large building, apparently once part of the property (Fig. 15). The mansion was the first house to have electrical wiring concealed in the walls. Abd al-Rahman distinguished himself in his community. He funded the construction of the Anugra Dam located in Inad, 8 km east of Tarim. After World War II, famine struck the Valley and he negotiated a deal with the British to airlift food. He built the historic mosque across the street (Fig. 16).

The mansion has a long rectangular layout around a central lightwell and was once accessed by two main entrances. The west entrance is no longer used. A three-story portico supported by enormous columns graces the south elevation. Along the west end, the columns have been infilled with concrete block in order to mitigate structural damage (Fig. 17). The ground floor room at the east end was used as a school during the Marxist era. On the first and second floors, the main portion of the mansion is separated from the eastern suite of rooms by large terraces (Fig. 18). The formal rooms are located along the south elevation and connect with Dar Dawil (Figs. 19, 20 and 21). The layout of the mansion is rather confusing because it incorporates the older house (refer to plans); however, entrance into Dar Dawil from its corridors is no longer possible as they have been blocked off. Along the north elevation are some more decorated rooms (Fig. 22) as well as the bathrooms. One of the latter is exceptional (Fig. 23).

Dar Dawil is in an advanced state of disrepair (Fig. 24) but still exhibits beautiful details (Fig. 25) and rooms in reasonable condition (Fig. 26). Several sections of Dar Dawil have collapsed (Figs. 27 and 28) and during our survey, we concluded that this structure is in an extremely precarious state. It appears that the roofs were not cared for provoking collapse. In addition, there is no means of removing the soiled water from the lightwell where the bathrooms evacuate.

The north elevation of the villa faces a series of walled courtyards (Fig. 29). The northwest and central courtyards are flanked by columns that support balconies and kitchen spaces above. These upper levels are in partial collapse (Fig. 30). The grade level courtyards include extensive channels along the north building façade to direct waste water; these, unfortunately, lead water in the downhill direction through the lightwells toward the south elevation, exacerbating the structural problems of the house.

In the northwest courtyard, there is a very deep well with an elaborate system of spillways (Fig. 31). A donkey's ramp (too narrow for a camel) leads downhill from the well into a subterranean room to facilitate drawing water (Fig. 32). A woman's mosque (Fig. 33) sided by two rooms with sunken pools (Fig. 34) is accessible to the south of the well. This structure is connected to Dar Dawil, but blocked from access by collapse. An independent two-story building sits to the north of the well. The upper story has collapsed, and the connection to Dar Dawil is also blocked by fallen debris, but the building can be accessed by ladder through a window facing the northwest courtyard and was documented.

Through the central north courtyard, double doors lead into what once must have been an extraordinary split-level garden (Fig. 35). The colonnaded portico originally ringed the entire perimeter, but now, only the east and south portions survive (Fig. 36). At the center, there is a damaged decorative fountain (Fig. 37), and beyond it, monumental stairs once led up to a platform. Here, there is a series of rooms, U-shaped in plan, which frame a swimming pool. These were the guest rooms (Fig. 38) and also included a kitchen and bathrooms on the east elevation. At the center, the swimming pool is buried in sand (Fig. 39). The rooms are all in poor condition.

Beyond the guest rooms are a series of automobile garages and another well which fed the pool. This area has been appropriated by the neighborhood and is now a throughway between blocks. Children play here as well (Fig. 40). The original parcel of land went right to the edge of the cliff, but now buildings have been constructed.

We performed a condition assessment of the mansion using Abd al-Qadr Ahmed al-Hadi, a local engineer, and Saleh Salem Bre'ik, a Tarimi master mason. There is severe structural damage manifested in the buckling of the foundation walls at the ground floor level. The massive colonnade of the south elevation is not constructed of stone, only mud. The colonnade has buckled southwards and a continuous crack appears between the portico and the south rooms. The southwestern room and portico of the main mansion is in the worst condition, with the balcony already partially collapsed (Fig. 41). In fact, in early February 2007, soon after our return to the US, this area collapsed without warning (Fig. 42) leaving part of Dar Dawil inexplicably still standing.

Prior to the most recent collapse, we received a bid from the master mason. Along with unit prices provided by GTZ, we came up with the following budget for repairs.

Estimated Budget for Repairs of Qasr Abd al-Rahman Bin Sehikh al-Kaf

Foundation stabilization:

1.	Replace deteriorated façade wood with hardwood beams to match existing including mud and lime plastering (700 LM x 2,700 YR/LM).....	\$9,545
2.	Replace deteriorated sections with wood beams to match existing including mud and lime plastering (60 LM x 4,200 YR/LM).....	\$1, 272
3.	Replace deteriorated sections of pipe joists with new steel pipes including mud and lime plastering (150 LM x 3,700 YR/LM).....	\$2,803
4.	Provide, install and conceal steel pipe joists above beams including mud and lime plastering (581 LM x 3,200 YR/LM).....	\$9,390
5.	Provide and install steel pipe joists in ceiling soffits including mud and lime plastering (350 LM x 2,800 YR/LM).....	\$4,949
6.	Provide and install steel joist hangars for wood under partitions including mud and lime plastering (250 units x 1,600/unit)	\$2,020
7.	Construct medium-sized concrete block foundation abutment walls including mud and lime plastering (40 CM x 15,000 YR/CM).....	\$3,030
8.	Construct 25-cm joists encapsulated in mortar including mud and lime plastering (1,000 LM x 2,200 YR/LM).....	\$11,111
9.	Provide expansion joints 20-cm thick in mortar including mud and lime plastering (100 SM x 3,000 YR/SM).....	\$1,515
10.	Underpinning joists using ordinary reinforced concrete including excavation and removal of debris offsite (50 CM x 9,000 YR/CM).....	\$2,273
11.	Removal of all other debris offsite (lump sum).....	\$2,525
12.	Provide and install steel 5 x 10s including mud and lime plastering (10 LM x 8,000 YR/LM)	\$404
13.	Construct mudbrick walls including mud and lime plastering (3,000 SM x 800 YR/SM).....	<u>\$12,121</u>
	Subtotal for foundation work.....	\$62,958

Roof repairs:

1.	Lime plastering (1,300 SM x 800 YR/SM).....	\$5,252
2.	Joist replacement (700 SM x 4,500 YR/SM).....	<u>\$15,909</u>
	Subtotal for roof repairs	\$21,161

Reconstruction of February 2007 collapse:

1.	Scaffolding	\$2,525
2.	Debris sorting and removal	\$2,020
3.	Demolition and rebuilding of sidewall and portico columns.....	\$5,050
4.	Foundation rebuilding	\$5,050
5.	Mudbrick rebuilding.....	\$7,575
6.	Undecorated finishes (mud and lime plaster).....	<u>\$6,060</u>
	Subtotal for collapse	\$28,280

Total..... \$112,399

Initiatives

Qasr Abd al-Rahman Bin Sheikh al-Kaf is still viable as a house museum. All of the building's belongings have been sorted and many are being displayed in the more elegant rooms as interesting artifacts. It is also being used as a meeting place for the Tarim Assembly for Heritage Service. There are plans to convert the large ground floor room, formerly a school, into a gallery space, with the first exhibit to be a collection of historic photographs of Tarim and the al-Kaf family. The loss of this building would be a huge setback in maintaining the integrity of the collection of Tarimi merchant villas; therefore, we propose to seek funding to repair it.

In addition, the garden, if restored, could become a moneymaking enterprise for TAHS. With the kitchen leased to a tea shop/restaurant enterprise, the garden could be rented for wedding parties. The area between the guest rooms and car garages, now a public right of way, could be formally converted into a children's playground with some equipment, thereby providing a much-needed amenity while gaining community good will.

GTZ is in the process of negotiating with the SFD to spread the Shibam model to other cities in Yemen. Five cities will be selected or compete for selection into this program which would allocate 100,000 euros in technical aid to each city. We plan to ensure that Tarim is one of these cities. Our interest now lies in widening the TMPP program to incorporate the traditional urban fabric, the historic mosques (collaborating with al-Awqaf charitable religious endowment and incorporating Reem Ali Nasser's documentation of the Tarimi mosques), and the cultural landscape of date palm groves.

Our discussions with GTZ came up with the following suggestions. We need to provide an urban development plan with a technical support unit. In order to encourage the continuation of mudbrick construction, benefits would include free technical advice and design (architectural fees would be covered). We plan to work with the local stakeholders to draft regulations for appropriate interventions; however, regulations are useless if there is no funding to enforce them. To this

end, GTZ is working with GOPHCY on drafting legislation requiring any area declared historic to automatically receive funding. GOPHCY will be a new and welcome presence in Tarim once the repair of al-Ranad is completed.

In February 2007, GTZ held a workshop for the Tarimi mud masons to begin to introduce them to the advantages of organizing an association. 10,000 euros was donated by Günter Grass, the Nobel Prize winner, for this very purpose in January 2004 and is still waiting to be allocated. In fact, TAHS negotiated the rent of Dar al-Salam (Fig. 43), the proposed center, at 15,000 YR/month, 5,000 less than Dr. al-Eryani is authorized to pay. However, subsequent to our departure, we were informed that Dar al-Salam's caretaker is wavering on the deal.

We met with German Ambassador Frank Mann and American Ambassador Thomas Krajeski to discuss possibilities of support for the Tarimi Mansions Preservation Project. The meeting was extremely successful in conveying our needs, and was also attended by Paul Blankenship (First Secretary) and Megan Goodfellow (assistant to Ann Marie Roubachewsky, Public Affairs Officer). We discussed the potential for an adopt-a-palace scheme on the diplomatic level. The meeting concluded with both ambassadors agreeing to support the TMPP. However, both ambassadors conclude their tour of duty in Yemen during the summer of 2007.

Upon our return to the US, we prepared and submitted a proposal to the US State Department's Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation. We were immediately denied funding due to the private ownership of Qasr Abd al-Rahman Bin Sheikh al-Kaf, despite the fact that funding had been given for al-'Ishshah several years ago under exactly the same circumstances. The DC personnel, however, suggested that we reapply for capacity building. This interests us greatly as we propose to train the Tarim Assembly for Heritage Service in preservation management skills. We recently submitted the Power Point presentation we made to American Embassy to the DC office.

We have actively worked to interest the private sector in investing in Tarim. This appears to be paying off in Alwan al-Shaibani's negotiation to purchase Hamtut (refer to Fig. 5), with potential assistance from the Arab Fund through the SFD. We also offered our expertise as preservation architects in adaptive reuse.

We met with Nicolas Martin and Gregorio Marañón, who work as technical advisors to environmental projects for the Spanish government in Beirut and Amman respectively. They informed us that Spain intends to open an embassy in Sana'a, and they were in Yemen scouting for potential aid projects. They were very interested in the issues of preserving the cultural landscape of date palm groves in Tarim and will approach their government with this idea, as well as

“adopting” al-Riyadh (Fig. 44) for reuse as a Museum of the Environment of the Wadi. We have had some e-mail correspondence with them since then.

Kamal Haglan is now the designated representative of the SFD dealing with the Wadi Hadhramaut. We met with him and agreed to assist in writing a development plan for Tarim, which he has been tasked with performing. We also met with Abdullah al-Dailami, second in command at the SFD, and Abd al-Rahman al-Arhabi, president of the SFD and Minister of Planning.

We have made contact with the World Heritage Centre (WHC) regarding Tarim. If funding becomes available to promote an urban development plan for the city, then it would make sense to seek World Heritage protection for Tarim. Our concept is to extend the existing World Heritage Site designation of Shibam to include Tarim. Toward this goal, we have asked the director of the WHC, Francesco Bandarin, to accompany the team in the upcoming season to the site. He has tentatively agreed to visit in early January 2008.

Preliminary discussions have also begun with Global Heritage Fund (GHF). The connection was made because Pamela Jerome sits on GHF’s Senior Advisory Board. GHF is involved with approximately a dozen projects in developing countries where they provide funding for conservation and management, including economic development, but will only consider the Tarimi project if it has potential for World Heritage status.

Finally, the American team also spent two days with Abdullah al-Saqqaf reviewing conditions in Wadi Do’an. We traveled to Khoreibah on the first day, stopping at various villages along the way to explore and photographically document. We went into the Left Branch of Wadi Do’an as far as Dhari on the second day. This was our first trip to Khoreibah since 1999. We found that despite the asphaltting of the road, the villages along the way continue to maintain their integrity as living mudbrick landscapes (Fig. 45), with the exception of each village gaining a major mosque constructed of concrete of dubious design. This is particularly apparent in al-Hajarain, the village that Yemen is proposing for their Indicative List to the WHC. Here, two enormous concrete mosques have been erected of inappropriate design and one of them is on the very edge of the village, thus spoiling its view from a distance (Fig. 46). These were erected with emigrant money from Saudi Arabia and are executed in Gulf taste, totally foreign to the regional style of architecture. GOAM’s director in Seyoun, Abd al-Rahman al-Saqqaf, who is responsible for reviewing proposed interventions into historic mosques, managed to impose on the design of the latter so that it at least has a traditional “crenellated” parapet (Fig. 47). In Sif, we also found that a new concrete school has been erected with funding from the SFD.

The good news, however, is that the largest of the Bugshan mansions in Khailah (Left Branch, Wadi Do'an), which was under repair in 1997, has now been restored again and converted into a hotel (Fig. 48). Additional buildings, including a kitchen and offices, were constructed of mudbrick (Fig. 49). The guest rooms are reasonably outfitted (Figs. 50 and 51), and original painted wood ceilings have been conserved (Fig. 52).

Conclusion

Seven years have passed since the tentative beginnings of the Tarimi Mansions Preservation Project. The impact of our efforts on the community is clear. However, it is also apparent that local stakeholders require continued guidance and training to acquire preservation management skills. Our stumbling block continues to be private ownership of the abandoned significant mansions. Potentially, with the new proposed legislation, this obstacle may be overcome. In the meantime, we continue to lose the resource, which is extremely unfortunate, so graphically illustrated by the partial collapse of Qasr Abd al-Rahman Bin Sheikh al-Kaf shortly after documentation. Other major issues include the lack of coordination between various ministries and even the different branches of the SFD. This causes a disconnect between policies espoused by Planning, Environment, Culture, and Tourism and reality on the ground as implemented by Public Works. We have begun the dialogue between these government agencies, and will work towards improving cooperation, at least at local level.



Fig. 1: Part of the team recording Qasr abd-al Rahman Bin Sheikh al-Kaf.



Fig. 2: Yemen Mobile's new cellular telephone antenna is in full view of the Khamaran, Aydid and Salmanah mansions.



Fig. 3: The antenna as viewed behind al-'Ishshah palace.



Fig. 4: The antenna is visible from the Hamtut and Dar al- Salam mansions.



Fig. 5: The Hamtut is being considered for reuse as a four-star hotel by Universal Touring Co.



Fig. 6: The abandoned al-Hadad mansion is an Art Deco masterpiece designed by Alawi Abu Bakr al-Kaf.



Fig. 7: Concrete structure erected in the garden of al-Haddad. (The roof of the historic mosque constructed by Abd al-Rahman Bin Sheikh al-Kaf is in the foreground.)



Fig. 8: Qasr al-Quba, another Abu Bakr-designed mansion reused as a hotel, has been closed for two years for repairs but does not appear to have the funding to complete them.

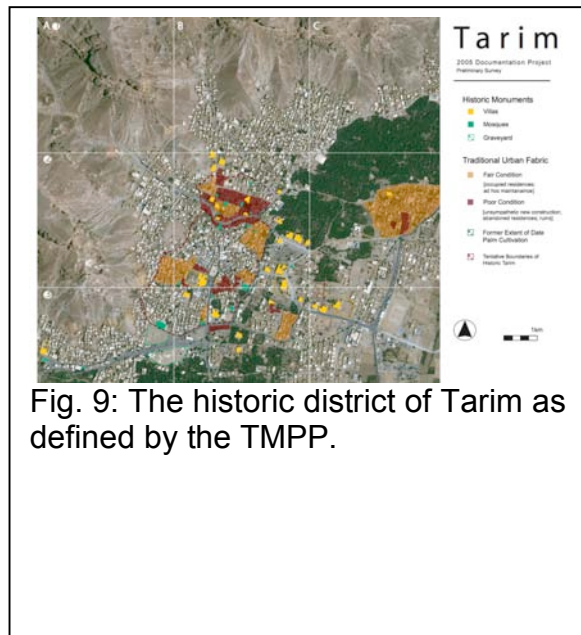


Fig. 9: The historic district of Tarim as defined by the TMPP.



Fig. 10: Meeting of the Tarimi architects in the Qasr Abd al-Rahman Bin Sheikh al-Kaf.

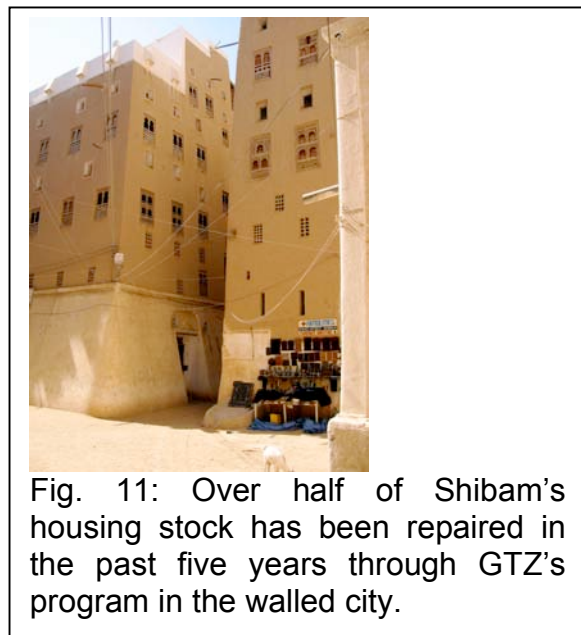


Fig. 11: Over half of Shibam's housing stock has been repaired in the past five years through GTZ's program in the walled city.

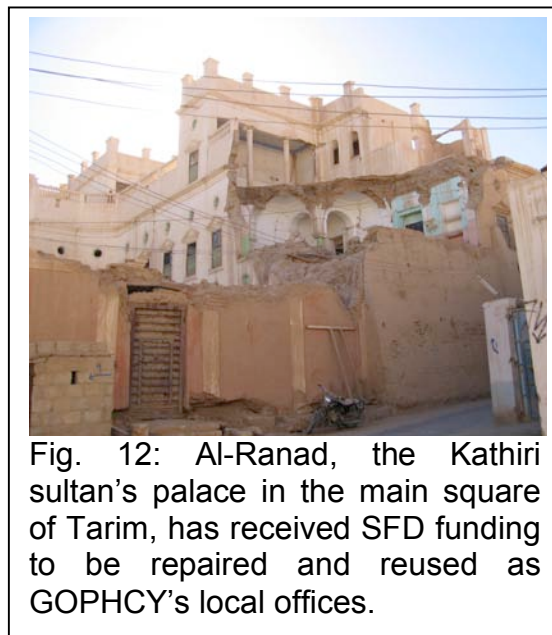


Fig. 12: Al-Ranad, the Kathiri sultan's palace in the main square of Tarim, has received SFD funding to be repaired and reused as GOPHCY's local offices.



Fig. 13: Qasr Abd-al Rahman Bin Sheikh al-Kaf, designed by Alawi Abu Bakr al-Kaf, has an impressive Neo-Classical façade.



Fig. 14: A historic photograph of the mansion shows Dar Dawil (to the left) intact.



Fig. 14: Dar Dawil, the older house to which the mansion was attached, is in poor condition and partially collapsed.



Fig. 15: The ruins of a large building adjacent to Dar Dawil, which was once part of the property.



Fig. 16: The historic mosque built by Abd al-Rahman Bin Sheikh al-Kaf is directly across the street from his mansion.



Fig. 17: Concrete block and mudbrick infill at the ground floor support buckling monumental columns in a temporary shoring measure.



Fig. 18: At the upper stories, terraces separate the eastern portion of the house from the main body.



Fig. 19: The formal rooms in the mansion are located on the south elevation (Room 109).



Fig. 20: Room 114 is another formal room.



Fig. 21: Room 214 is also a formal room.



Fig. 22: Room 219 is one of the mansion's decorated rooms along the north elevation.



Fig. 23: A bathroom on the north elevation.



Fig. 24: Room 122 in Dar Dawil was in precarious condition when surveyed and collapsed soon thereafter.



Fig. 25: Despite its poor condition, beautiful details can be found in Dar Dawil.



Fig. 26: Some of the rooms in Dar Dawil, like Room 229, are in good condition.



Fig. 27: Room 138 in Dar Dawil is in an advanced state of collapse.



Fig. 28: Dar Dawil's Room 235 has partially collapsed.



Fig. 29: A series of walled courtyards define the north elevation of the mansion.



Fig. 30: Some of the spaces surrounding the north courtyards are in an advanced state of disrepair.



Fig. 31: A deep well directs water into an elaborate system of spillways in the northwest corner of the courtyard.



Fig. 32: The donkey ramp was used to draw water out of the deep well.



Fig. 33: The women's mosque on the north elevation.



Fig. 34: The bathing pool adjacent to the women's mosque.



Fig. 35: The split-level garden at the north side of the mansion.



Fig. 36: The colonnaded portico partially survives on the south and east elevations of the garden.



Fig. 37: The broken fountain in the garden looking towards the buried swimming pool.



Fig. 38: In the elevated portion of the garden, a series of guest rooms frame the swimming pool.



Fig. 39: The swimming pool is currently buried in sand.



Fig. 40: Children, who play in the mansion's abandoned garden, assisted the team to measure the spaces surrounding it.



Fig. 41: The southwestern room of the monumental façade was in the worst condition, with the balcony partially collapsed.



Fig. 42: The February collapse of part of the monumental façade occurred without warning.



Fig. 43: Dar al-Salam has been proposed for the Association of Mud Masons.



Fig. 44: The Art Deco mansion al-Riyadh, also designed by Alawi Abu Bakr al-Kaf, has been proposed for reuse as the Museum of the Environment of the Wadi.



Fig. 45: Budha is an impressive mudbrick town typical of the Wadi Do'an, which despite the asphaltting of its road, has remained relatively intact as a cultural landscape.



Fig. 46: Al-Hajarain is on Yemen's Tentative List but has been spoiled by two large concrete mosques of inappropriate design, one seen here from a distance.



Fig. 47: One of the two concrete mosques in al-Hajarain. The local GOAM director forced the designers to adopt traditional Hadhrami mosque details at the parapet level to lessen its visual impact.



Fig. 48: The largest of the Bugshan family mansions in Khailah has been converted into a hotel.



Fig. 49: New offices built next to the Bugshan hotel are constructed of mudbrick.



Fig. 50: Guest rooms are reasonably outfitted.



Fig. 51: A modernized bathroom attached to one of the guest rooms.



Fig. 52: Original painted wood ceilings have been conserved.