

## INCORPORATION OF CONTEMPORARY INTERIORS IN HERITAGE CITY ENVIRONMENT

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**Summary:** *The new development in the district of Riyadh pretend to become an important center of tourism, combining the history, heritage and culture with new luxury hotels, residences and resort. It is a challenge for every architect to achieve the right balance and create new buildings and its interiors, respecting the heritage to create a modern environment.*

**Key words:** *Design, heritage city, interior, incorporate, luxury*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Diriyah Square Project is part of the Diriyah Gate Development. This new development in the western district of Riyadh, KSA is expected to become a center for history, heritage and culture at regional and national scale with the UNESCO world heritage listed mud construction district of Atturaif, whose structures formed the origins of the House of Saud from the 1700's.

The vision for the Hotels is to create an authentic Najdi Heritage setting, showcasing traditional Saudi hospitality and providing highest level of luxury and service. The hotel properties are integrated into the traditional Najdi fabric of Diriyah Square. Hotels will be designed for the guests to enjoy authentic Najdi style architectural experience with rooms overlooking internalized courtyards, scaled to traditional proportions.

### 2. THE VISION

“Anchor our vision for the future on a jewel from the Saudi past.” [DGDA BOD]

A project of national symbolic value, Diriyah Gate sets out to embrace the rich history of Diriyah, culture and natural environment of the place to cater for a unique and vibrant urban development; offering an ongoing education and enjoyment for its occupants and visitors alike.

The Diriyah Gate masterplan embraces the following project vision:

- Recreating a 300 year old mud settlement.
- To focus on tourism and become the Centre for history, heritage and culture.
- A homage to heritage through architecture.

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- A pedestrianized development.
- Well connected series of neighborhoods.
- Car-free or perceived as car-free environment.

Diriyah Square is located at the heart of the Diriyah Gate masterplan and in close proximity to the UNESCO listed At-Turaif site. Designed as a key commercial hub and a destination offering a variety of lifestyle, retail, F&B, cultural, hospitality and general entertainment. To the north of Diriyah Square is the designated Northern Cultural District and to the south is Diriyah Gardens. (Figure 1) All these districts are connected by a network of pedestrian and retail streets. In addition, Diriyah Square district bridges the Western Ring Road and physically connects the western part of the site to the eastern part of Ajmakan and the Gateway precincts. The hospitality assets are a key component within development to support the focus on tourism. Intended to cater for local and international guests, the hotels, branded residences and the resorts within the Diriyah Square development are to target the luxury and ultra luxury market segment. The architectural vision for the western plateau of Diriyah Gate is based on the distinctive traditional style of the Najdi vernacular. Drawing inspirations from the At-Turaif heritage site to influence layouts, building forms, materials, colors and decorative features. The development all share a common vision of paying homage to traditional Najdi architecture.

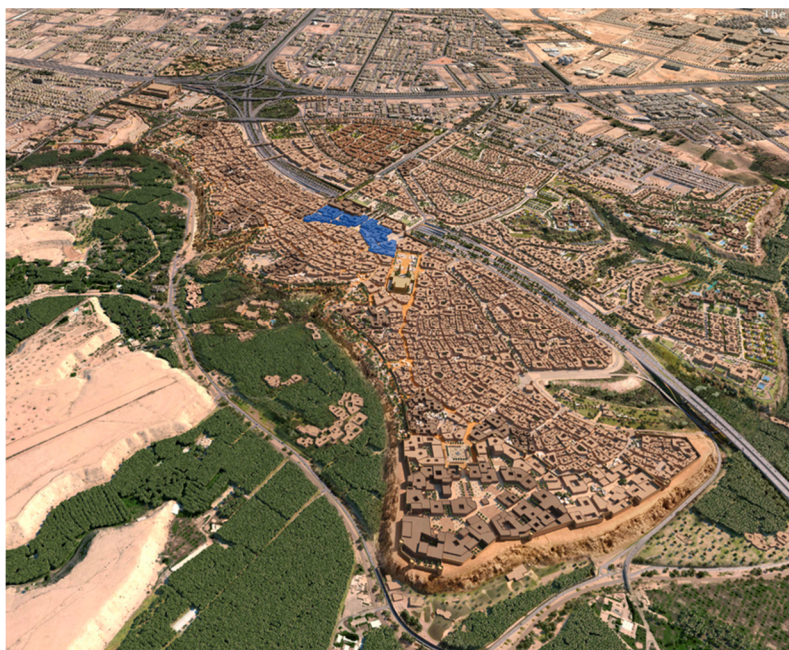


Figure 1. Site Analysis

### 3. NAJDI ARCHITECTURE REFERENCES

- Organic and Compact in form

The Najd vernacular massing is a simple, low rise block of relatively irregular shape. Buildings have a compact design where structures were built with shared sidewalls

#### - Undulating Building Form

The urban form is characterised by a unique roofscape that are created at different levels providing private useable spaces and an overall undulating urban form.

#### - Dominant Courtyard in built form & layout

Buildings are generally arranged around courtyards that act as lungs of the houses to regulate the micro-climate.



**Figure 2** Organic and Compact form, Undulating Building form and Dominant. Courtyard in built form

#### - Small Openings

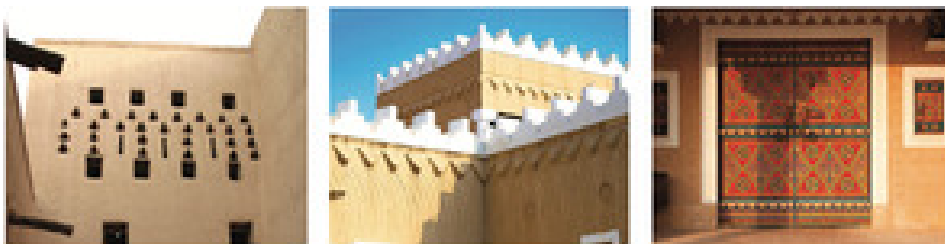
Small opening were arranged on the exterior walls to allow air circulation to the court while maintaining privacy.

#### - Roof tops & Crenellations

Roof tops were often used as terraces, but also divided and used for summer sleeping. The high saw tooth parapet walls also called as 'Sharfat' provides privacy for family members, allowing them to utilise the roofs for gathering purposes.

#### - Decorated Doors

Doors encapsulate the delicate balance of privacy achieved by Najdi architecture. They are carefully positioned so as not to face those of a neighbour, whilst their painted geometric designs provide a hint of the rich family contained within.



**Figure 3** Small openings, Roof tops and Crenellations and Decoratind doors

#### - Cluster of buildings

The individual units are cluster together sharing walls. This enabled efficiency in urban form and access to the essential private space of the courtyard irrespective of family size.

#### - Scale variation

A variation in sizes on units are encouraged to achieve the organic, irregular profiles that are commonly seen in Traditional Najdi urbanism.

#### - Building sit at plot edge

The buildings sit up to the plot edge for 60%-70% of the plot line in order to achieve the desired urban character. Modulation within a restricted 2-3m zone is permitted for 20-25% of the plot edge. A maximum of 10% of the plot edge is permitted to be left without buildings and these could form the main pedestrian or vehicular access routes into the plot.

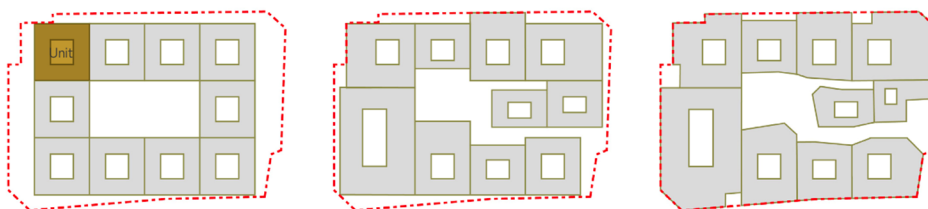


Figure 4 Cluster of buildings, Scale variation and Building sit at plot edge

#### - Hierarchy of Courtyards

A typical plot should consist of a main plaza where a typical dwelling consists of a central courtyard, around which the public and private rooms are arranged.

#### - Roofscape

All roof tops in Najd are generally flat and usually accessible from central courtyard.

#### - Exterior Decorations Crenellations

Carved from either mud or stone, and usually covered with white gypsum plaster. Figures 6.10 - 6.12 show the different arrangements and styles of crenellations that can be applied to a roof parapet or terrace in order to deliver a traditional Najdi look.

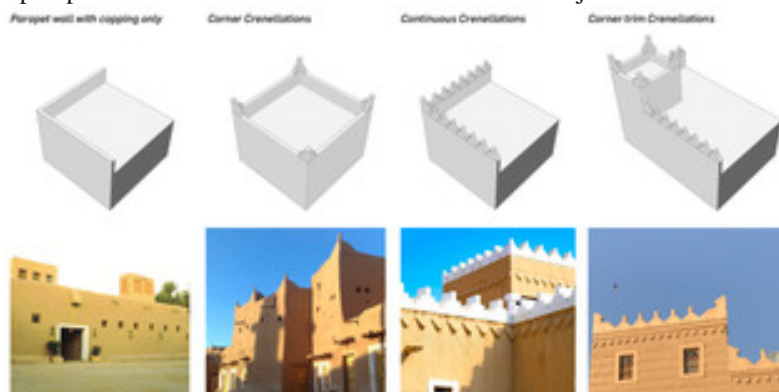


Figure 5 - Exterior Decorations Crenellations

#### - Triangle Band

This triangle band together with a groove is normally found on the exterior facade that wraps around the Najdi houses. You can find it mostly in the parapet wall under the crenellation and also on each floor level of the building. Sometimes, it can be presented as



a double layer band as shown in the examples below. Aside from decoration, it acts as flashing to avoid rain water dripping all over the mud house



*Figure 6 Triangle band*

#### **- Lighting**

Traditional lighting fixture are often connected to a wooden mounting pole embedded within the mudbrick construction. Wash lighting is also considered as one of the successful technique that can be used to illuminate buildings.

#### **- Shading**

Tamarisk or date palm fronds are commonly used for canopies. As an alternative, tensile fabric can be introduced.

#### **- Downspout**

These are wooden and mounted at the level of roof behind the parapet to allow for rain water to drain from the flat roof.

#### **- Carpets, cushions and other accessories**

Accessories in Najd are truly unique and greatly inspired by Arab culture.



**Figure 7** Accessories in Najd architecture

## 4. COMBINING NAJD ELEMENTS WITH CONTEMPORARY WAY OF LIFE -EXTERIOR VIEWS

In examples that follows we can see how it can be possible to create an atmppsphere that represents the perfect balance between the modern spirit and historical and cultural values.



Figure 8 Rooftop view of the square



Figure 9 Walking path/historical site



Figure 10 Plaza view



Figure 11 Hotel drop-off area



Figure 12 Resort exterior



## 5. COMBINING NAJD ELEMENTS WITH CONTEMPORARY WAY OF LIFE -INTERIORS VIEWS

In the following examples we can see various solutions of hotel lobbies and restaurants, but also two types of hotel room interior, one type with an ephasis on the traditional approach, ant the secon one, with more contemporary atmosphere.

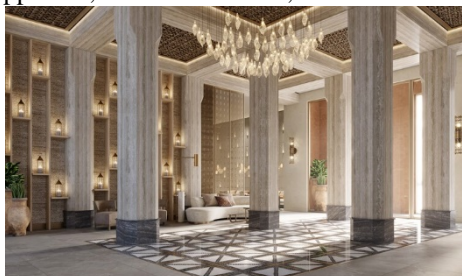


Figure 13



Figure 14

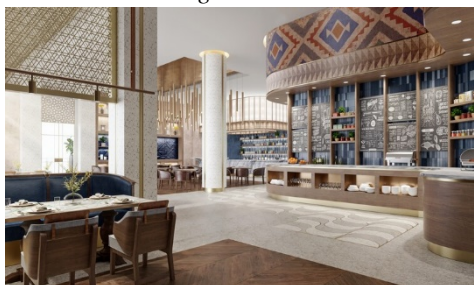


Figure 15



Figure 16

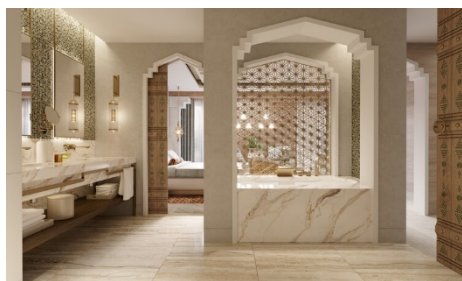


Figure 17

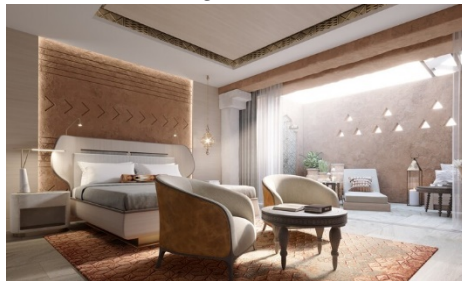


Figure 18

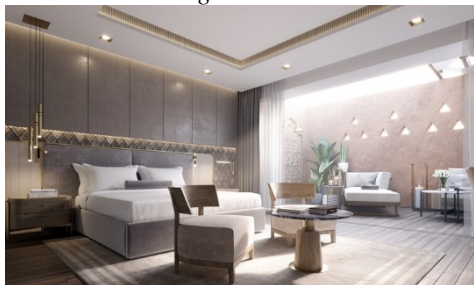


Figure 19

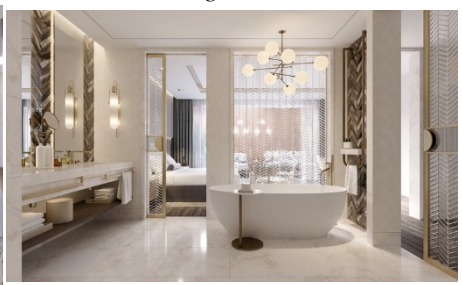


Figure 20

### 6. CONCLUSION

When we apply cultural and historical elements in architectural objects for the purpose of creating a certain environment aimed at meeting the needs and expectation of a particular group of users, we deal with a particular need of an architectural element as a tool for posing a design strategy. With proper utilization of this and any other architectural or design element, we pose an object designed for the purpose of meeting users needs and inevitably come to the conclusion that this way success as well as the permanence of the solution are secured.

### REFERENCES

[20] AECOM, Diriyah Square Concept design report 2020

## ИНКОРПОРАЦИЈА САВРЕМЕНИХ ЕНТЕРИЈЕРА У ГРАДОВЕ СА КУЛТУРНИМ И ИСТОРИЈСКИМ НАСЛЕЂЕМ

**Резиме:** Нови развојни пројекат у делу Ријада, настоји да постане важан туристички центар, комбинујући историју и културно наслеђе са новим луксузним хотелима, стамбеним зградама и одмаралиштем. За сваког архитекту, постизање равнотеже у стварању нових објеката и њихових ентеријера у модерном духу поштујући наслеђе и историју, представља својеврсан изазов.

**Key words:** Дизајн, град са културном баштином, ентеријер, инкорпорација, луксуз