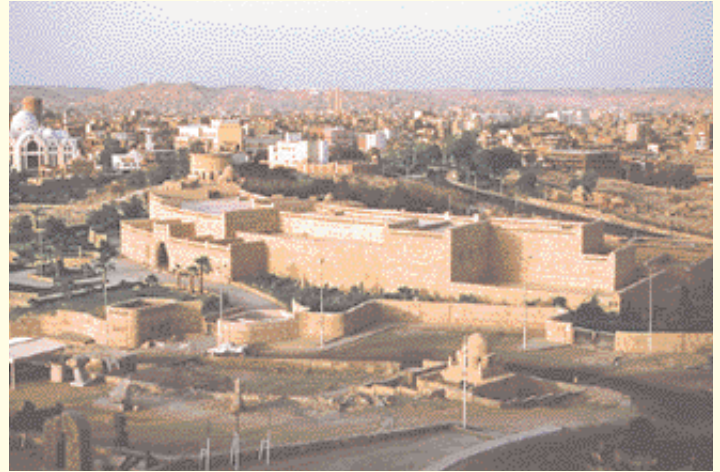


The Agha Khan Award for Architecture 2001

4 Tourism Projects out of 9 win Award



The Agha Khan Award was established in 1977 to promote those architectural concepts which address the requirements of Muslim societies and their aspirations. This award recognises the best samples of architecture throughout the Muslim world in the fields of contemporary design, social housing, improving and developing local community, renovation, re-employing and maintaining lands, as well as designing natural sights and environmental improvement.

The award is administered by an advisory committee chaired by His Highness The Agha Khan, founder of the Award, along with a select group of scientists and experts specialising in different fields. Among the many architectural projects examined by the Award's Committee of Judges for 2001, nine projects received the award, four of which were tourism projects from several countries. In selecting the winning projects, the committee considered whether the art of architecture was able to enhance living circumstances within societies in the Muslim world. The committee has also considered environmental continuity, social equality, cultural and historical identity, and human dignity. The committee took into account the positive role tourism plays in modern economies through architectural styles that preserve the environment and consolidate local culture with constructed works, as well as the projects that secure the future of the more remark-

able historical buildings in the cities.

The nine projects which were selected by the independent committee to win the Award were:

1. *New Life for Old Structures*, Various locations, Iran.
2. *Ait Iktel*, Abadou, Morocco.
3. *Barefoot Architects*, Tilonia, India.
4. *Kahere Eila Poultry Farming School*, Koliagbe, Guinea.
5. *Nubian Museum*, Aswan, Egypt.
6. *SOS Children's Village*, Aqaba, Jordan.
7. *Olbia Social Centre*, Antalya, Turkey.
8. *Bagh-e-Ferdowsi*, Tehran, Iran.
9. *Detai Hotel*, Paula Langkawi, Malaysia.

The four winning tourism projects were: ➤

FIRST: New Life for Old Structures, Various Locations, Iran

A project for reviving old structures within dense historical networks, especially in the middle of the cities of Esfahan, Yazd, Zanjan, Tabriz and Bushehr. These structures are composed of one or two levels built from clay or brick. They surround magnificent inner courtyards.

The quarters were subject to general negligence due to the view that traditional houses are not suitable for modern requirements. Moreover, non-systematic buildings were considered a real menace to the social network.

The Ministry of Housing and City Development set up a plan in 1988 to stop the materialistic and social decline of cities. This programme involved the possession of historical buildings and their renovation. Later on, they were either sold or rented to new landlords and tenants. The most important element in this operation was to find new practical uses for these buildings in order to encourage interest in them for the local community as well as to attract tourists and visitors.

The programme could create new life for Iranian city centres. It could



also improve standards of living, revive architectural impression, renew the way one views the rich cultural heritage of the country, and activate awareness in the private sector that investment in the delicate historical network of a country can benefit all, including tourists.

The main historical buildings that were revived are:

Hammam Wazir in the city of Esfahan, which was converted to the Institute of
- Cultural Promotion for Children and Youngsters
- Bayt al-Tabib in Bushehr
- Bayt Qudsiyya in Esfahan

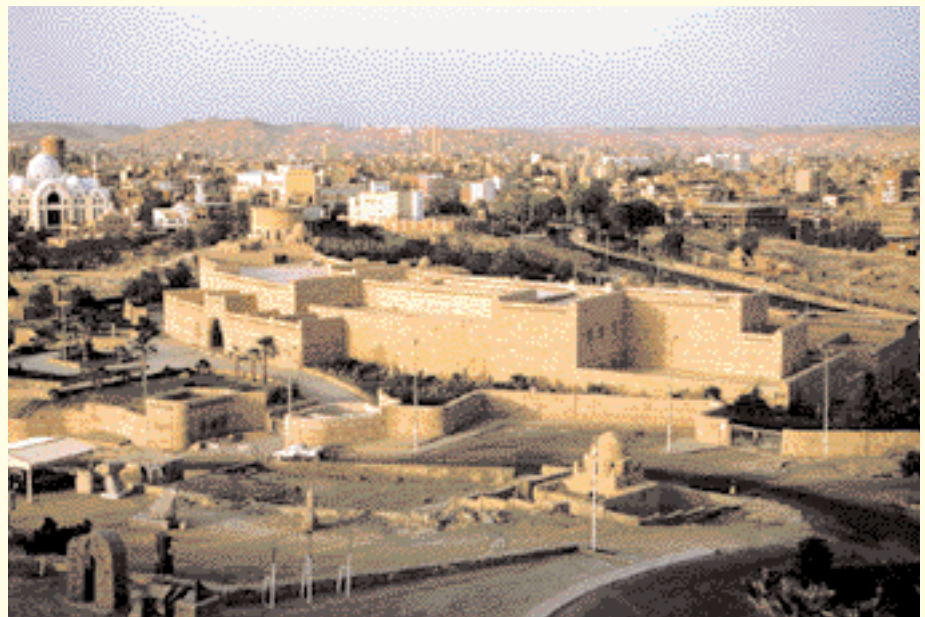
- Bayt Mujtahid Zadeh in Esfahan
- Bayt Nilofarshan in Esfahan
- Bayt Alem al-Wa'dh in Esfahan
- Four houses belonging to a Qajar family in Tabriz
- Hammam Khan in Yazd
- Manzil Nuayyed Alai'i in Yazd
- Hussainiyat Nazim Tujjar in Yazd
- Bayt Tawfiqi in Zanjan

SECOND: Nubian Museum, Aswan, Egypt

The Nubian Museum is located on the eastern side of the River Nile in Aswan, south of Egypt. It was set up on a height in order to support the rocky shapes and allow a wider view opposite two attractive sites in Aswan, namely the Fatimid graveyard and the incomplete obelisk in the east. The establishment of the Nubian Museum was funded by the government of Egypt with the cooperation of UNESCO in order to display Nubian antiquities following excavations in the region when the waters of the dam at al-Aali in Aswan flooded most northern parts of Nuba in 1971 during the diversion of the river stream and the emergence of Nasir Lake.

The museum was opened in December 1997 and displays three thousand artefacts highlighting the culture of Nuba district and its civilisation from the beginnings of pre-history to the present day.

The museum is regarded as an important centre for African and Middle Eastern archaeological studies. It is also a museum for the local community as it includes an education section – the first one in Egypt – which organises trips, lectures and practical sessions for schoolchild-



ren. It also organises cultural events for the public in general.

The museum has an important role in informing both Egyptian and foreign visitors of Nubian culture as well as maintaining one of the oldest cultures and providing a centre for the activities of a modern local community. ➤

THIRD: Bagh-e-Ferdowsi, Tehran, Iran

Tehran Municipality has made rapid efforts to set up many parks in order to stop the structural extension that has resulted from the rapid increase in the population of the Iranian capital, a factor that has led to the destruction of many parks and private gardens.

The Ferdowsi Park is regarded one of the vital tourist projects in Iran. It was set up in the areas around the north of Tehran to support the effort of preserving the natural environment of the Alborz mountains that are located in the north of this sprawling city.

The park is located in a chain of rocky grooves that sharply slope from the south. It is composed of a chain of passages paved with rocks and steps ascending to the top of a hill with views of the city. Next to these passages are places for sitting down, meeting and taking in the fresh air. The city used to include four cultural houses representing the distinct styles of the ethnic groups of Iran, notably the Azerbaijani, Kurdish, Turcoman and Zagros peoples. These passages lead at the end to statues in the eastern part and pathways to the upper valleys. These pathways represent a number of cultural and natural styles. For instance, the entrance is an open paved area. In the middle of this is the statue of the poet Ferdowsi, in whose honour the park is so named. There are also a number of waterfalls and many varieties of local plants and flowers.



The work in this park was finished in 1977. It has gained a great deal of publicity and caused direct and positive effects on the city. It has also decreased the pressure on building on the slopes of Alborz mountains and has created an environment in which nature flourishes in tandem with the culture.

FOURTH: Datai Hotel, Pulau Langkawi, Malaysia



Datai is a five star hotel located in the well-known island of Pulau Langkawi in northern Malaysia. It is an example of the tendency of the project's owner and architect towards achieving a combina-

tion between elevations and structural shapes, between traditions and tourism, and between [classical] architectural and modern styles.

The location of the hotel was chosen inside a wood away from the beach to lessen its impact on the shore. The structural complex in the sloping groove to the shore provides fabulous sights. The other advantage of the hotel is its partition into buildings and isolated houses.

The hotel includes 84 rooms divided into four sections that surround the swimming pool and are joined together with open passages. There are also 40 isolated villas located on the lower feet between the groove and the beach.

Other amenities such as restaurants, sauna and beach are distributed around the site in locally designed houses. Enthusiasm for the hotel by customers indicates that the sensa-

tional yet responsible style adopted by its architect has created a sense of both luxury and delicacy. At the same time it respects the surrounding natural environment. ■