Protecting Qatar's archaeological and architectural heritage

Division of Cultural Heritage
Archaeologists and architectural conservators have identified several thousand cultural heritage sites in Qatar.

While new sites are constantly discovered, more sites are lost to infrastructural, residential, and commercial development.

In the past 50 years, Qatar has lost a substantial portion of its original cultural heritage.
Cultural Heritage Management

- Continued Exploration
Mapping of Old Doha
• Preventive Archaeology
Rescue Excavation at the Qubib Mosque
• MAINTENANCE AND PRESERVATION

Ruwais, Police Station
• Interpretation and Heritage Education
According to the Law, Current Procedure Grants Protection only to “acknowledged” and “published” Heritage Architecture and archaeological sites.

As a result, less than 1% of Qatar’s cultural Heritage is in fact protected in the sense of the Law.

So-called “Heritage Architecture” is de-facto owned by several state institutions which do not share a Common strategy of either conservation practices or Re-deployment after conservation.
Informal Accord with Five “caretaker agencies” of Heritage Architecture

- **Ministry of Culture** *(Shared use and restoration of “Heritage Village”)*

- **Qatar Foundation** *(Common approach to current conservation projects and Conservation Practice)*

- **Msheireb** *(Common approach to future Conservation)*

- **Ministry of Interior** *(Principal Agreement to have Heritage Architecture conserved by QM)*

- **The Private Engineering Office**
Law for the Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage in Qatar

Purpose
(1) It is the purpose of this law to protect and for the future to conserve cultural heritage in the State of Qatar, in particular to monitor the condition of archaeological and heritage monuments and artifacts as well as to work towards deflecting harm from and salvaging of cultural heritage. This law is also meant to work towards inclusion of cultural heritage into urban and extra-urban development, as well as part of the protection of historical landscapes in Qatar.
Definitions

Monuments in the sense of this law are man-made things, ensembles of man-made things or parts thereof on land and under water from a past epoch the preservation of which, because of their historic, artistic, scientific or folkloristic significance, or as part of urban design, is in the interest of the general public.

Past Epoch [Paragraph 1] is preliminarily defined as the period from the prehistoric time until 1970 (Common Era). Built monuments can also include more than one structure (a historic district or an ensemble, a streetscape, a cityscape including bodies of natural growth, bodies of water or empty space connected to or surrounding it); every individual building in an ensemble does not need to fulfill the requirements of Paragraph 1, if the townscape, square, or streetscape as a whole is worthy of preservation.
Permission

Permission in the form of a No Objection Certificate is necessary for anyone wishing to excavate archaeological monuments on a property or to undertake excavation work or to undertake work that involves the alteration of the surface on a property for any other purpose, if he/she knows, or supposes, or circumstances support the assumption that archaeological monuments are located there. As Qatar has a rich historic and archaeological past, the assumption of the existence of unknown archaeological monuments in the ground and under water exists throughout and for that reason necessitates to apply for a No Objection Certificate in every case. Permission can be refused, insofar as this is necessary for the protection of an important archaeological or heritage monument.
Classification

The classification of tangible heritage assets, i.e. Heritage Areas, is a means of establishing an appropriate level of management responsibility to a heritage area both as heritage practice and in the country’s legislation; it is an important step in the procedure towards the formal protection of heritage, its inscription into the National Heritage Asset Register as an area of exceptional, limited or marginal importance.

The task of classifying Heritage Areas is being performed by the State Agency for the Protection of Cultural Heritage. In addition, proper classification is an essential contribution to all attempts to create the National Heritage Strategy; it supports informed decisions at municipality level for strategic urban planning in respect to cultural heritage and enables a potentially integrated approach during the planning and design phases for infrastructural projects.
Three main classification categories may be distinguished:

A – denotes Heritage Areas of exceptional importance. They need to be absolutely preserved as prime examples of national heritage. They are untouchable assets which must be conserved and monitored at all cost, and surrounded by an appropriate buffer zone and/or zoning ordinance. Heritage Areas that receive an “A” classification will be entered into the National Heritage Asset Register.

B – denotes Heritage Areas of limited importance. They warrant every effort to be preserved but can, in exceptional cases, be either removed or, if possible, moved to a new location. They will be surrounded by an appropriate buffer zone and/or zoning ordinance. Heritage Areas that receive an “B” classification will be entered into the National Heritage Asset Register.

C – denotes Heritage Areas of marginal importance. They need to be fully documented but can be removed from their original location, if necessary. Heritage Areas that receive a “C” classification will not receive a buffer zone and will not be entered into the National Heritage Asset Register.
National Heritage Asset Register

For informational and planning purposes, built monuments and archaeological monuments and sites have to be entered in a list [the Register]. Entries into this list are made by the State Agency for the Protection of Cultural Heritage in consultation with the Baladiyat of Qatar. Entry can be suggested by all legally responsible parties at any time. Entry in the list must be recorded in the Master Building Development Plan. The list can be inspected by anyone.

The Register is published and constantly updated through the Center for GIS [MMUP] and available through the website of the State Monument Protection Agency. Publication of a classified monument, site or artifact through the Center for GIS and the website of the State Agency for the Protection of Cultural Heritage amounts to Giving the Monument, Site or artifact a protected status.
Qatar Cultural Heritage Information Management System (QCHIMS)

- UNESCO & WHC
- GCC Heritage Practices Exchange
- Foreign Missions
- QTA
- Ministry of Environment
- MMUP
- QM Internal
- MCAH

Documentation, Analysis and Information Dissemination
Proposal

Development of Shemal Villages
Doha – Al Shemal: 95 km, ca. 1 hour

- The northern coast is a close-to-town recreational area
‘Ain Muhammad

“Al Shemal Information and Orientation Hub”
Al Areesh, Creative Restoration into a

“Slow-Down Eco Lodge”
Contemporary Views of Al Areesh
Destroyed and Reconstructable Architecture
A RECONSTRUCTED FABRIC
Full or Partial Reconstruction
Public and Ancillary Buildings
Guestrooms integrated into courtyard houses
Bedrooms arranged around the courtyard
Integration of contemporary architecture into the old fabric
Al Khuwair: “Just Ruins”
Al Jumail, Restored Village and Open-Air-Museum
Promotion of Cultural Heritage will need to include nature and environment.