

8. Towards an Inventory of Historic Buildings and Cultural Landscapes

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In a region such as the Northern Areas of Pakistan, any attempt to compile an inventory of cultural heritage must be undertaken on the basis of the natural landscape and within the constraints of given geographical boundaries. As an administrative entity, the Northern Areas of Pakistan with its capital Gilgit are currently divided into five districts: Skardu, Gilgit, Diamir, Ghanche and Ghizer. All settlements are located in the transition from the Eastern Hindukush to the Karakoram and Western Himalayas. The three mountain ranges meet at Jaglot, an exceptional natural site at the confluence between the Hunza and Gilgit rivers. All in all, the mountain ranges between Central Asia and South Asia contain over a hundred peaks from 6000 to 8611 metres and thirty peaks above 8000 metres (including K2, the second highest mountain in the world), as well as some of the largest (up to sixty-two kilometres long) glaciers, such as Biafo, Hispar, Bualtar, Gasherbrum, Lungma and Batura – not to mention many rivers, lakes and the Deosai plateau, an outstanding 3464-square-kilometre high-altitude plain located between Skardu road and Indian Kashmir.

Information on the general landscape and the climatic, ethnic and linguistic characteristics of the Northern Areas have already been provided in chapter 2 of this book. Suffice it to add, that the flora and fauna of the regions show great diversity with several globally unique species represented. The rare fauna of the Northern Areas includes the snow leopard, red fox, wolf, golden marmot, Ladakh urial, Himalayan brown bear, markhor, Himalayan ibex, blue sheep and musk deer. Six species of pheasant: the Blue Peafowl, Khalij, Koklass, Cheer, Western Tragopan and Monal, out of the forty-nine in the world are found in the Himalayas. The agro-biodiversity distribution is very rich, with a variety of species such as the morel mushroom, alpha-alpha, wild thyme, cumin, wild rose, apricot, peach, pear, walnut, mulberry, pine nut and costus root. Ethno-botanical records show that over two hundred species of plants are used as ‘folk’ medicines.

The equally unique and complex cultural heritage of the Northern Areas is the result of diverse cultural influences and traditions which left their mark on the area from the fifth millennium BC onwards (see chapter 1 in this book). The respective heritage items include a variety of remnants, such as ancient petroglyphs and rock carvings, ruins of Buddhist *stupas* and monasteries, forts and ancient palaces reaching into the Islamic period, as well as historic mosques, tombs of saints, villages, dwellings and ceremonial open spaces used by local communities up to the present day.

From the early petroglyphs and rock inscriptions, it can be learnt that several travellers visited the area and left marks of a number of languages. The majority are in Kharashti, Brahmi, Sogdian; rarely in Bactrian, Tibetan, Chinese or Hebrew. Petroglyphs and rock carvings also testify to the regional and seasonal mi-

gration of nomadic forest hunters, herders and pastoralists from Central Asia, India, Persia, South Siberia, Sichuan, Tibet, Iran, Central Asian and Inner Asia.¹ They represent animals, hunting scenes and demon-like creatures in different styles. Hunting tools discovered in forests located above various villages confirm early human activity in the area.² Other archaeological remnants consist of faint traces of semi-sedentary settlements, man-made cultivation terraces and fields, ingeniously built irrigation channels and their unique distribution and storage systems. There are also ancient paths and several elements located along the routes to provide necessary relief to travellers during their strenuous journeys.

The sociocultural traditions of individual valleys have evolved over centuries, due to fusion with other ethnic groups, influx of different languages and religions, trade of material goods and mobility of ideas.³ Hinduism, shamanism, Buddhism, and various sects of Islam succeeded or coexisted with each other. Cultural exchange materialised either through the interaction of peoples of different villages and travelling traders and religious missionaries, or through dynastic changes and shifts of political alliances between various chiefdoms. Such coalitions ranged from intermarriages between the ruling families to exchanges of gifts. The conversion and acceptance of new religions remained an important part of the processes of cultural transformation.

Independent of ethnic groups, languages and religions, people's major concern, however, was how to survive under extremely harsh high-mountain conditions; how to succeed in the daily struggle for basic subsistence. Animal husbandry and agriculture were prime preoccupations, as was the performance of rituals to harness divine powers and the forces of nature. The technology for agricultural production was introduced from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries. Melting snow was brought down from the glaciers through large and small channels constructed to feed agricultural fields and provide water for human consumption. The steep stony mountain slopes were terraced to create stepped flat areas for cultivation of fields and permanent settlements.⁴ For strategic protection, villages were normally located at the arid edge of river gorges or alluvial deposit areas located between rivers and mountains. The forts and palaces of the rulers of major settlements on the crossroads of trade routes such as Gilgit and Skardu, and those of the Hunza and Nagar valleys, were normally erected in dominant positions overlooking the settlement – as in the case of Altit and Baltit forts. On the other hand, some forts of Baltistan are nestled within the fabric of historic villages. The best and largest available land was reserved for agricultural cultivation, leaving a minimum for human and animal habitat. Summer dwellings-cum-cattle sheds for summer pastoralism remained in semi-arid to semi-humid ecological zones at higher altitudes.

As could be expected in such secluded areas, many traditional customs from earlier periods have continued until recently in the form of established social structures. Various clans and sub-clans claim lineage from one or two or, at times, three ancestors. The villagers or clans jointly own the meadows, pasturelands and water sources, and splitting shared water rights remains a major issue. Most rituals and festivals celebrated in the Northern Areas are associated with nature, the seasons, agro-pastoral activities and particular religious practices (see Insert 1). The main spiritual legacy of the past is a deep-rooted belief in shamanism.⁵ Its beliefs and ritual practices transpire in many traditional customs and represent a sort of syncretism underlying all the contemporary, more formal sectarian beliefs of various Islamic communities. Today, the entire population is Muslim and they belong to various sects: Sunni or Ithnashari Shia, Shia, Nurbakshi Shia and Ismaili Shia.

INSERT I. LOCAL FESTIVALS, RITUALS AND POPULAR BELIEFS

(This list does not include the well-known official Islamic festivals, such as *Eid-ul-Fitr*, *Eid-ul-Ahzar*, the birthdays of the Prophet and of various *imams*, and the month of mourning of *moharram* followed by the Twelver Shia)

Nowroz is the Zoroastrian New Year and is celebrated with great fervour in the Northern Areas.

Gaaruki celebrates the beginning of spring. *Bath*, a special dish, is prepared and distributed amongst the families of a village. *Sulathum* is practiced to celebrate the end of winter and move the animals to the meadows. Animals are fed and decorated with flowers to ensure that they breed during the summer.

Chaasa is celebrated at the start of winter in the second week of November. Normally the older animals are slaughtered and their meat is distributed through children between the families of each settlement. Seven- to eight-year-old boys take wooden swords, while girls carry bows and arrows to houses of pregnant women, a symbol to wish good luck and health for the unborn baby. Teenagers from the age of twelve to sixteen perform stage shows, for which they are rewarded with meals, flour, chicken, meat and dry fruit.

Thumusheling (fire festival) was celebrated on 21 December, to celebrate Siri-Badat, the cannibal king's death. Every household carried fired logs, stacking them in the middle of a communal area, the polo ground or the communal open space within the fortified settlements. The villagers danced all night around the fire while the *mir* of Hunza was the chief guest. This festival stopped when the Government of Pakistan abolished the *mir* system.

Bofao is celebrated at the start of the sowing season with a handful of seeds flung into a field by the most respected village elder. During the day milk with bread and *diramphitti* (a traditional sweet dish) is cooked and distributed.

Ginani is the celebration of the first day of harvesting. All village members assemble near one field. A stalk of wheat is covered with butter and sprinkled with flour. Ripe wheat or barley are cooked in milk and served.

New festivals have emerged with the change in agricultural products. The children and women cut the potatoes up and the men sow them and cover them with earth. The whole community lunches together near the field.

Shamanistic rituals have survived in Hunza to the present day. A *bitan* is supposed to have supra-natural powers of divination, through his bond with fairies who reside at high altitude. By putting himself into a trance, he prophesises the future. The *bitan* receives money from all families once a year. In turn he/she is employed to cure ailing humans and cattle, to release the community members from worry and interpret their nightmares.

A melange of shamanistic, Hindu and Muslim customs are practised in the Chaprot community. A bush (*sugu*) located below the settlement is believed to house a spirit which brings good luck. The Chaprot polo players tie a woollen string on a branch when leaving for a polo match, to bring good luck.

The Chaprot community prays facing certain stones they consider holy.

In some areas, women are separated from the family after giving birth. Together with women during their menses, they reside in a building, *Ashu-to-dori*, specially constructed for this purpose. Pregnant women are not allowed to enter cattle sheds for fear that the cattle may die.

Rasm-e-Ghulab is a day devoted to the memory of the dead. Wild flowers are picked and placed on the graves of those who are no longer in this world.

Haaku is the day when all the Hunzakutz / Nagerkutz officially start to collect fodder and store it for the winter months. The same day animals are slaughtered and consumed. This is done in the hope that no one in the communities will suffer from bad luck during the winter months.

The people of Baltistan hang yaks' heads or full dry pumpkins outside their houses to keep away the bad spirits. Ibex heads are used for the same purpose in Hunza and Nager.

One of the important collective activities to be mentioned is the cleaning and repair of the water channels before the melting of glacial ice and snow. An experienced senior community member leads a team of young men who implement his orders. This event lasts from two to seven days.



Figs. 159-161. Landscape character, as varying with different altitudes, from the glaciers to the high pastures and down to the settled areas of the valleys at around 2000-2500 metres (confluence of Hunza and Nager rivers).

A major impact on living patterns occurred with the opening of the Karakoram Highway (KKH) in 1978. Suddenly, new types of civilisation and economic exchange emerged, and traditional and modern living styles started coexisting side by side. While imported modern household tools became available, traditional stone and timber utensils remain in general use in the area. Similarly, traditional timber agricultural tools are still being used. Most of the men and women are educated today, and many men dress in Western style; yet the agro-pastoral social traditions have been maintained to a considerable extent. The majority of the communities still live in modest agro-pastoral dwellings, many of which are single-storey houses. Meanwhile, new construction modes based on reinforced concrete frames and cement brick infill, with large windows, spread along the main valleys.

The heterogeneous cultural trends within the area, based on the strong topographic sub-divisions and reflected in various sectarian religious groups, as well as in the variety of local languages (see chapter 2), continue to date. Communication between the valleys is still difficult, despite new road networks. In fact the KKH and the Skardu road have galvanised modern development in their immediate surroundings while leaving behind more remote areas, thus inducing a new type of cultural disparity. The Pakistani government (through its Public Works Department), and the Aga Khan Development Network (mainly through its Rural Support Programme), have been the major catalysts of progress and change over the past twenty to thirty years. Meanwhile, the Aga Khan Cultural Service-Pakistan (AKCS-P), by developing community-based planning strategies and implementing conservation projects for major monuments, have raised awareness about the value of the architectural heritage and the assets of nature (see chapter 12).

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE HERITAGE INVENTORY

In 1999, when its activities started reaching out beyond Karimabad and Hunza, the AKCS-P decided to initiate the Northern Areas Heritage Inventory, with the aim of recording the surviving cultural and architectural heritage in conjunction with the natural settings they belong to. The fieldwork demonstrated that the Northern Areas cultural and natural heritage is a legacy that transcends individual buildings and settlement, in forming complete cultural landscapes which may include historic landmark buildings, such

INSERT 2. SCHEMATIC HERITAGE CLASSIFICATION		
Natural heritage includes:	Tangible cultural heritage includes:	Intangible cultural heritage includes:
- mountain peaks - glaciers - forests - meadows and pasturelands	- cultural landscapes - archaeological sites - historic settlements with necessary components of water infrastructure storage with distribution systems and surrounding human created cultivation fields - places where past events took place - monumental historic buildings: palaces and mosques - cultural open spaces - historic individual dwellings	- climate - religion - traditions and festivals - rituals - professional skills - memory of leaders and elders - languages - games

as forts, historic settlements, religious buildings, remains of earlier settlements, archaeological relics, traces of silk routes, valleys, meadows and pasturelands, agricultural terracing, man-built channels and water storage systems. The inextricable association of the works of nature and those of man makes these cultural landscapes a unique, tangible heritage of universal significance.

If left to inconsiderate development, the nature-dominated environment of the Northern Areas may soon convert into a human-dominated environment with all the corresponding risks for the area's major assets. Data-based inventories are therefore essential for all government organisations as the custodians and managers of the nation's environmental and cultural heritage. Started in 2000 in collaboration with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, the Inventory has been established to provide basic information and set priorities with regard to environmental protection plans, constitution of nature reserves and future conservation programmes. The mapping and analysis of heritage assets should be used as an important tool for regional planning and area development. It can also be seen as a detector of potential economic resources and as a guide for appropriate intervention, rather than as an obstacle to development. The government, the private development agencies and the tourism industry need to become aware of the Inventory, which should also be fed into the curriculum of various educational institutions. Most importantly, local communities, as the 'owners' of places to be protected, need to realise the value of the irreplaceable assets entrusted to them. Whether issued online or as a publication, the Inventory will provide valuable data for scholars of history, anthropology, architecture and social studies. Its completion is expected for 2006 or 2007.

Established as they are to analyse the history, nature and variety of respective cultural heritages, inventories imply scholarly research on settlement patterns and their evolution, on architectural history, and on the structural, functional and decorative characteristics of buildings of various periods. Ideally, they must be based on a thorough documentation, including surveys on cultural landscapes and regional maps, plans of various stages of settlements, and measured drawings of monuments and buildings. Much, if not most of the corresponding groundwork still remains to be done, and this is the reason why the Inventory can only proceed at a relatively slow pace.



Figs. 162-165. The cultivated landscape and the built environment. Top left, rubble stone enclosures defining the individual fields and leaving a narrow space for irrigation channels and footpaths between them. Top right, the open square in front of Altit village. Bottom left, a covered resting space (*baldi*) along a major pathway. Bottom right, the *himaltar*, or public meeting space, at the entrance to Baltit village. All pictures by D. Lorimer, 1935.

A certain amount of literature on the Northern Areas history and heritage assets has been published since the opening of the KKH in 1978, particularly by the multi-disciplinary German missions to the Karakoram. In the field of architecture, A. H. Dani's book on wooden architecture in the Northern Areas⁶ is still a major resource. However, its focus is on mosques, *khanqahs* and forts, and even there, detailed documentation is obviously limited. As far as historic villages and traditional houses are concerned, detailed surveys are almost inexistent – except for the recent work of the AKCS-P – and comprehensive historic studies are sorely missing. Consistent mapping of cultural landscapes and particular focal areas within them is another outstanding and time-consuming task.

In designing the methodology developed for the Northern Areas it was therefore kept in mind that most of this basic information is still lacking. Based on the 2000 Pilot Inventory, it seemed logical to consider three main categories:

- identification of important, comprehensive cultural landscapes;
- comprehensive surveys of significant villages;
- concise, one-page information on individual buildings, monuments and cultural open spaces, followed by more detailed information on selected individual structures and monuments, which, after comparative analysis, are evaluated as the buildings of greatest cultural significance.

The Inventory is to become an evolving database of the important heritage resources in the Northern Areas of Pakistan. It will include anything of a physical, cultural or social nature that is of unique value and should be passed from generation to generation. A major selection criterion is the significance of a structure to the respective communities because of its association with their ancestors and past culture, or because it bears witness to the presence of one or several particular civilisations. There are also cultural landscapes that illustrate the history of several periods and are of universal value, or villages that belong to a certain historic era and have a unique historic tissue or some other valuable features (see also Insert 2). Moreover, sites can be significant because they are associated with an important person, event or historic trend. Their inclusion can also be decided simply because of their outstanding beauty or rarity.

It may not be possible to salvage all the cultural resources included in the Inventory due to the quantity of material resources and the nature of material used for their construction, as well as the rapid transformation of people's lifestyle and their financial limitations. However, in the future, the Inventory will provide a tool for comparative assessment of cultural and historic assets and for setting conservation priorities. Agencies intervening in the development of the Northern Areas will need to become aware of its contents in order to make informed choices and trade-offs.

The Gilgit region has been the testing ground for the comprehensive inventory. Selected areas include Gulmit in Upper Hunza, Central Hunza, Chalt/Chaprot of Lower Nager and three villages in Upper Nager: Hopar, Broshal, Holshal and Ghushoshal. These were first surveyed in 2002, in terms of a rapid preliminary assessment. In 2003, the villages were mapped, a more detailed survey carried out and the software upgraded. In Baltistan, initial surveys have covered Chinpapa and Halpapa in the Shigar valley, Sermik in the Skardu area and Khanga in Khaplu. The remaining work is scheduled to be completed in 2005/2006. Further work will require more detailed mapping with the help of high-resolution satellite images.

EMERGING CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

So far, four significant cultural landscapes have been identified, the Hopar valley, Central Hunza, Lower Nager and Shigar valley. Due to the constraints of this article, the discussion will be restricted to only two of them, Hopar and Central Hunza. Important heritage elements in the rich Shigar valley are discussed in chapters 10 and 12 of this book. Chalt, Chaprot, Budalas and Soni Kot, though different in sociocultural terms, form another cultural landscape that reflects the development in the area from the third millennium to the present time, but it cannot be discussed in this context.



Figs. 166-168. Three typical settlements in their natural and agricultural setting: top, Sumaiyar; middle, Thol; bottom, Altit.

Hopar valley

The Hopar valley has two main glaciers, Hopar and Barpu. The Hopar glacier has three different names: Hopar related to the valley, Bualter related to the meadow, and Kepal related to the peak. This glacier is nineteen kilometres long, 2.5 kilometres wide, and 129 metres deep. The second main glacier is the Barpu glacier, which is a culmination of Sumaiyar Bar and Miar glaciers, and is thirty-two kilometres long, 3.5 kilometres wide, and 132 metres deep. The smaller glaciers include Diranchi, Ghaynthur and Koar, which face the Hamdar valley. Nearby is Rush lake which has a large forest of juniper and pine trees.

Traces of a forest/hunter society still exist in Kepal Dongus. This tradition still continues as Kepal Dongus is a hunting ground for ibex and pheasants. Graves, crude shelters, petroglyphs and rock carvings are located at Hamdar, Hapakun and Shiskin. There are ruins of three semi-sedimentary villages in the area. The remains of Mainkun have been found in the Hononu meadows, located 150 metres above the present settlements. Ruins of two others are located on a plateau, both sides of which display faint traces of the receding Bualtar glacier. The Rush lake forest, ten historic meadows (located on average at 3550 m) and twelve pasturelands continue to be used as summer grazing lands for the domesticated animals of Holshal, Broshal and Ghashoshal. The agriculture fields and orchards of the three villages are mainly fed by a common channel, which originates and falls back into the natural Diranchi water stream.

The traditional route to the villages follows the bottom of the valley, linking Holshal and Broshal. A half-a-metre-wide footpath cutting through the fields connects Broshal to the Ghashoshal *bayak* (communal open space). The houses are attached and built in linear rows on man-made

terraces, which gives the village its typical cascading profile. The roofs of the houses are normally at about the same level as the by-lane of the upper terrace, allowing sunlight to penetrate the houses. During the 1970s, the old pathway was broadened and diverted at places to create a jeep track.

The valley has not undergone any major transformation, though a few houses have started to be built in the fields by people who left the village. The Broshal settlement consists of one hundred and seventy properties, out of which sixty-five are in residential use. The rest have been converted to cattle sheds and animal

fodder stores. All the houses are dwellings with only one *mun*, or 'platform'. (See the description of traditional houses below.) In Ghashoshal, of a total of thirty-six houses, thirty have single platforms and six have two platforms. In Holshal there are forty-two houses, of which forty-one are single-platform dwellings. Most Ghashoshal and Broshal traditional dwellings have been converted into cattle sheds and grass storage sheds. The Holshal villagers are economically underprivileged and continue to live in their traditional houses. The two or three rare old houses and a mosque have historic architectural and traditional craftsmanship value. The other buildings are of group value, and harmonise well with the surrounding natural environment and the man-made agriculture fields.

The main disturbing intervention is the new road constructed by the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme with aid from the Government of Pakistan. The road not only cuts through the heart of the valley but is also encouraging the growth of linear strips of low-quality buildings on either side. This intervention is perhaps not reversible, but needs the goodwill of all the involved to contain and minimise negative consequences.

Central Hunza

The Central Hunza cultural landscape consists of Karimabad, Altit, Baltit, Ganish, Sumaiyar, the Sacred Hunza rock and the Duiker archaeological site. The natural heritage consists of the mountains of Ultar (I and II), Lady Finger, Shisper peak, Ahmadabad peak, Diran peak and Sumaiyar peak (I, II, III). The glaciers include Ultar, Tsillkeyeng and Ahmadabad. The area has undergone heavy deforestation. Gantsupar, Buria Haria, Donadus, Multansa and Hanchinder meadows are the property of the Ganishkut. Thamu Harai, Khowhat and Theeyeshar were forests owned by the *mirs* which are now reduced to meadows. The Yastaa meadows also belonged to the *mirs* and even today are frequented by them. The only meadow of Karimabad is at Ultar. The Sumaiyar meadow gives access to a substantial reservoir of semi-precious stones. Traces of a semi-sedimentary settlement and some graves have been found above Sumaiyar village.

Portions of the connecting Silk Route leading to the polo grounds of the settlements have survived the onslaught of modern development. The same is true of their polo grounds, water reservoirs, water storage tanks and the fortified walls or their foot prints. The original tissue of the Baltit *khan* (traditional settlement) is more or less intact, but the surroundings have undergone major transformation and are today engulfed by new development.

The construction of the Karakoram Highway caused major losses to Ganish *khan*, by cutting through its polo ground, separating it from the Hamchi Ghamun pasture land and demolishing a major part of it in the north (pl. 20). The new metal road joining Ganish with Karimabad and a jeep track connecting Karimabad with Altit has created a new layer of landscape. Under this lie glimpses of the historic stratum, consisting of foot prints of several physical elements of the past. If neglected, they will completely vanish, disappearing with the generation who – through their collective memory – can unravel the spatial organisation of the individual villages and historic cultural landscape maps of Central Hunza.

This area is endowed with a wealth of cultural resources, including the famous Altit and Baltit forts, scores of historic houses, many richly embellished mosques, Ganish (one of the few villages which still

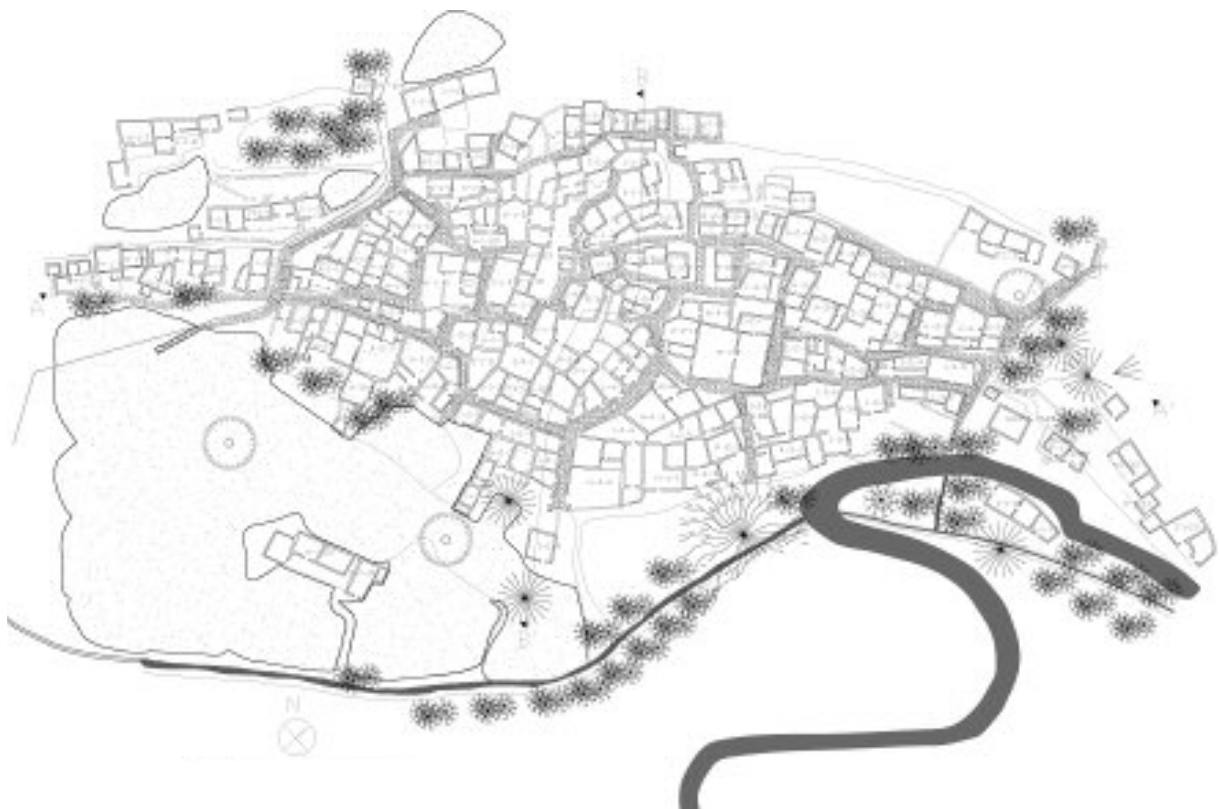


Fig. 169. Survey plan of Broshal village in the Nager valley.

retains its fortified walls), and three *shikaris* (watchtowers). The four timber mosques located in the Ganish *jataq* (communal open space) are excellent examples of family mosques in the Northern Areas. The *wazir* family's 'hanging mosque' in old Karimabad, which forms a gateway on the way up to Baltit fort, is unique in its kind.

OBSERVATIONS ON SETTLEMENT STRUCTURE

In most scholars' descriptions, the settlements in the Northern Areas appear to be fortified by a wall with one or two entrances, giving access to winding narrow lanes, surrounded by closely clustered houses. The main lane leads to a central communal space. A water reservoir is usually located two to three metres away from the settlement's outer walls, with one or two communal water storages located at the beginning of a path which leads to a *shabaran* (polo ground). During the Inventory survey, a number of different settlement typologies have been identified, with variations according to size and density of settlements and to their topographic configuration:

Villages on man-made or natural plateaus, with three sides secured by a river gorge. Only the exposed side is fortified, with one to two openings protected by watchtowers. The dwellings usually occupy the entire ground, leaving constricted, normally two-metre-wide lanes between them. The interior lanes are partly covered by first-floor structures of adjacent dwellings. A communal space with one or two religious buildings is usually located within the fortification. All villages have a large water reservoir, water storage wells, and a polo ground outside the walls. Altit, Ganish, Thole, Holshal and Chaprot villages fall into this category.

Stepped villages constructed on man-made terraces cut out of mountain slopes. Single rows of connected, tightly packed houses are located along a lane that runs between two terraces of different heights. The roofs of some houses on a lower terrace are at times part of the lane, contributing to extending its width. The roofs of others are a little over one metre high if the house entrance is from the lane. The door frame of such houses rises to one metre above the lane, while the floor of the entrance vestibule is half to one metre below the lane. The main lanes of this type of village connect the outside public area with the inside *jataq*. The mosques and a village guest house (*sawab-ha*) are normally attached to the *jataq* but can also be located at the entrance of the *khan*. Broshal, Ghashoshal, Chaprot and parts of Thole are examples of this settlement type.



Several villages protected by hills and mountains have a common entrance (*himalter*), flanked by watchtowers (*shikaris*). At times the villages have an individual protected entrance (*himalter*) as well. Hoshal, Broshal and Ghashoshal are of this settlement plan type.



Clustered houses built on a flat plateau with walled tunnel-like lanes totally covered by the extensions of the upper floors. Most settlements of the Skardu region are built in this manner for protection from severe winter winds.



Two rows of connected houses leaving between them a narrow curved lane, located on a man-made terrace. The access to the first row of houses is from the upper-level lane, while the other row of houses is entered from the lower-level lane. Baltit village is the only example of this type the inventory team has visited to date.



Rectangularly-shaped villages on flat areas, with streets of roughly equal length and two-storey houses. The Sumaiyar *khan* is planned in this manner. These villages normally feature a *jataq*, *imambarha* or *matam-sarai* (religious meeting places) and a water storage, as well as a polo ground near the entrance, similar to the settlements of Hunza and Nager lo-

Figs. 170-173. Various views of the Broshal settlement, with close-ups of houses and interior lanes.

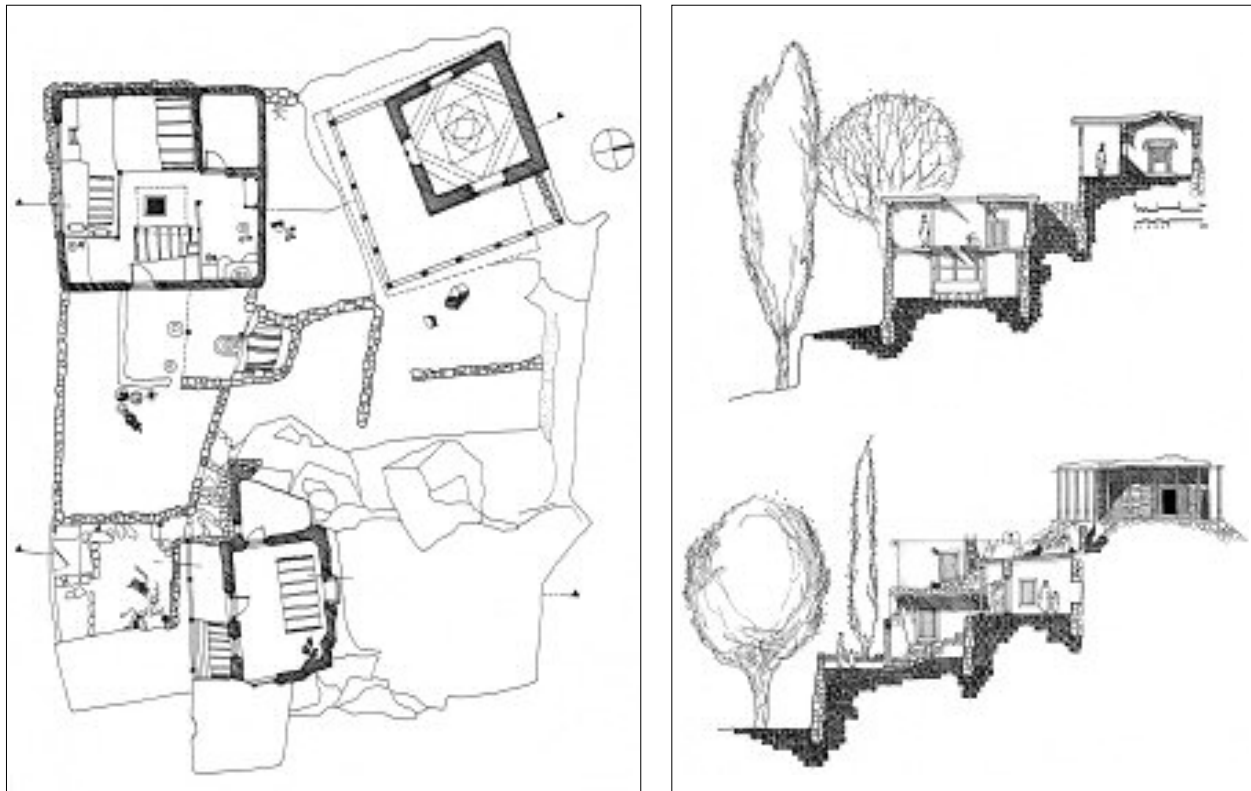


Fig. 174. Left, plan of two houses and a small mosque above them in Baltit village; right, two sections across the little settlement cluster.

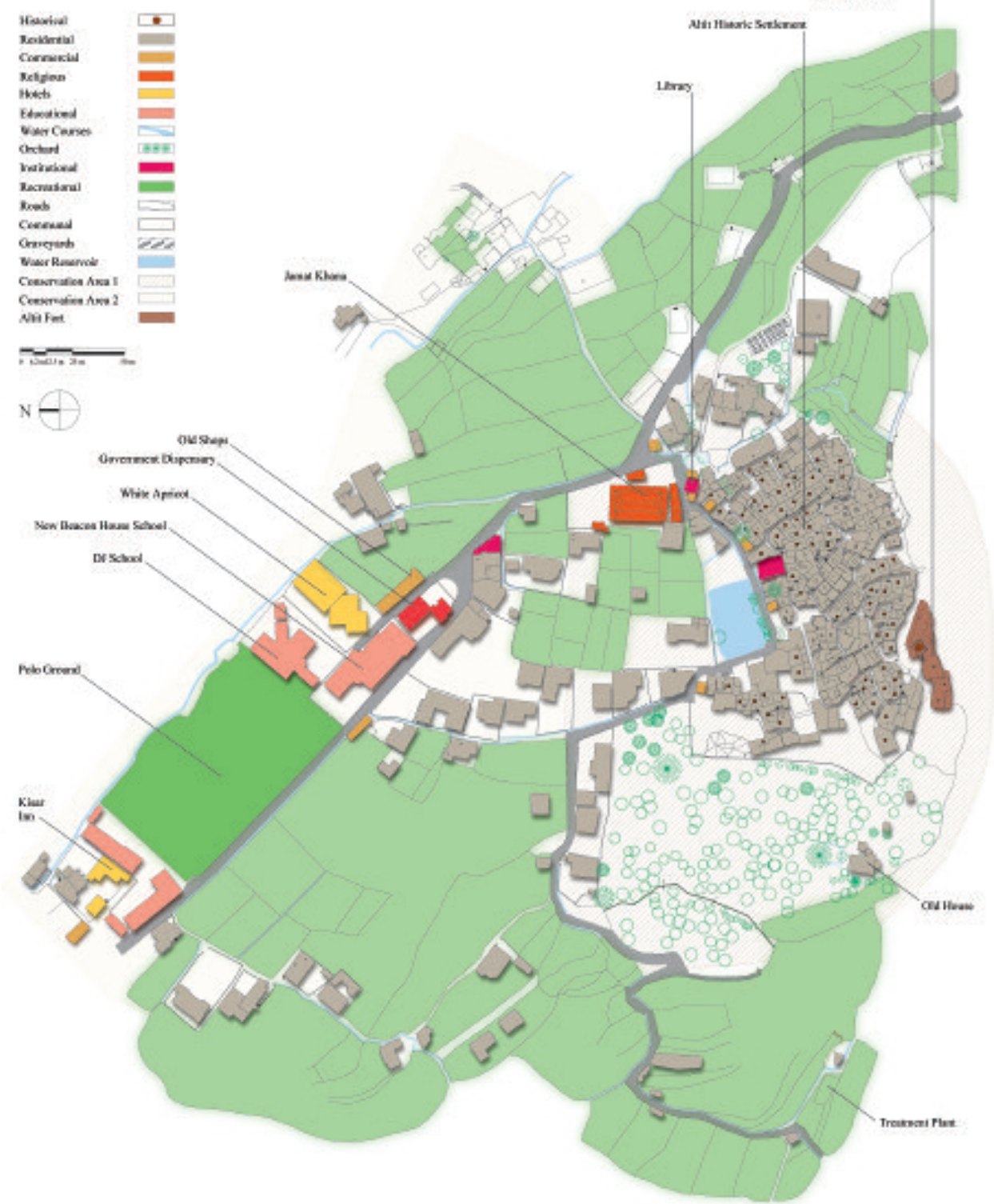
cated above a river gorge. However, in the case of Sumaiyar, the settlement has access to the river water from within the fortified village via a steep path.

Loose settlements formed by a group of houses interspersed with orchards and agricultural fields. Chalt is the only orchard house village included in the inventory.

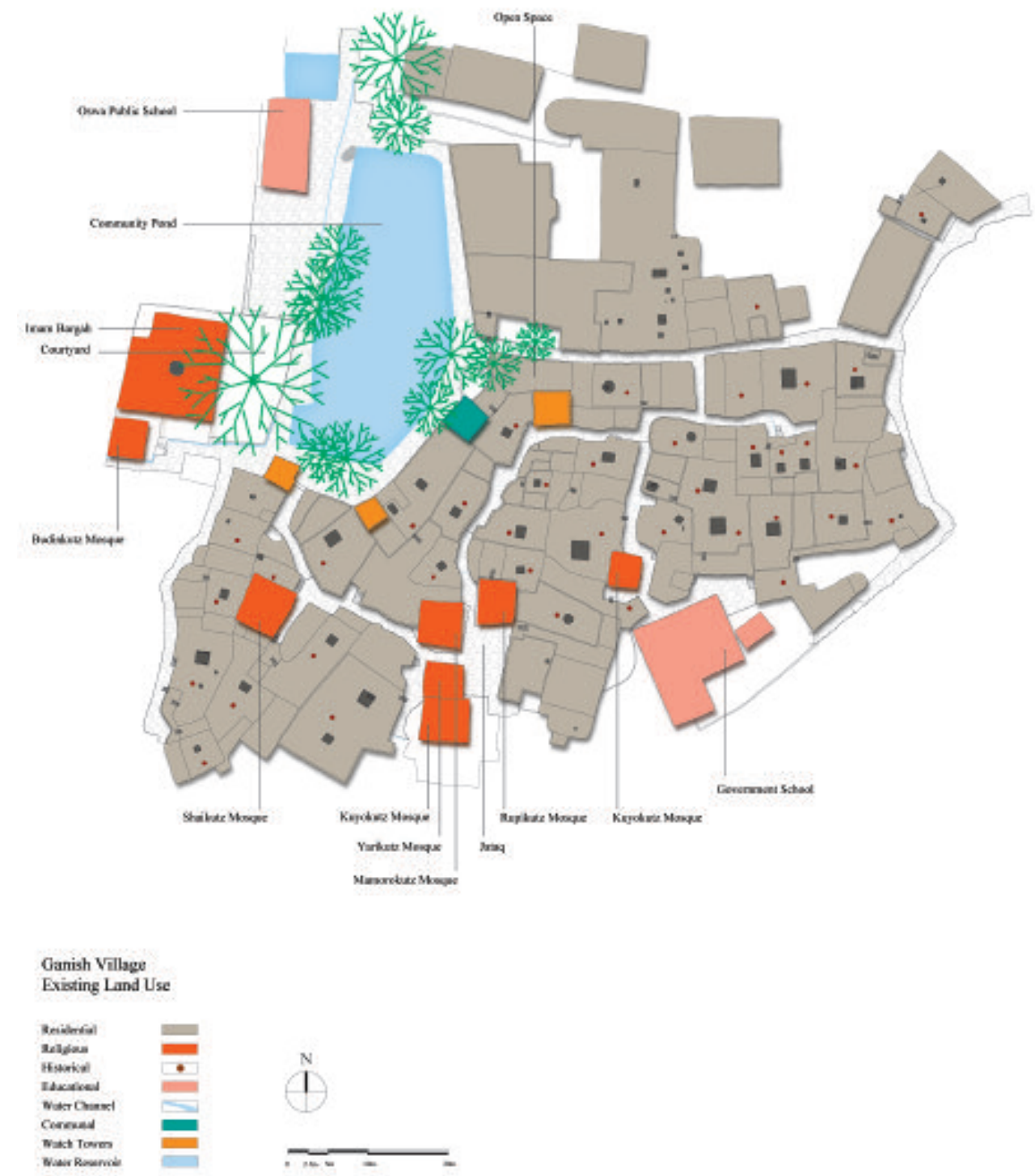
Clustered houses on flat land, strung along a stream. The villages in Shigar are the only examples of such settlement patterns.

Most villages in Nager and Hunza consist of an outside communal area and a once fortified, very dense residential area, either located on a plateau approximately 214 metres above the river gorges or on man-made terraces absorbing the mountain slope. The communal area outside the *khan* is often vast, around a hundred times the surface of the very dense residential area. Historically, the entry to the settlements was through a half to one metre narrow lane, with poplar trees on either side, passing by the polo ground. Mosques often have a *gulk* (underground water storage tanks). Mosques, *gulks*, flour mills and *jamatkhanas* (religious assembly places) are often shaded by walnut, maple or mulberry trees. The width of the alleyways between the buildings is reduced to a few metres. The lane leading to a *pharee* (open water storage tank) winds between the fortified village and is embellished with willow, mulberry and walnut trees. In some villages, a small cabinet with shelves is placed on a stream, outside the fortifications: the locals call it their natural fridge. Milk products are stored and cooled in it during the summer months.

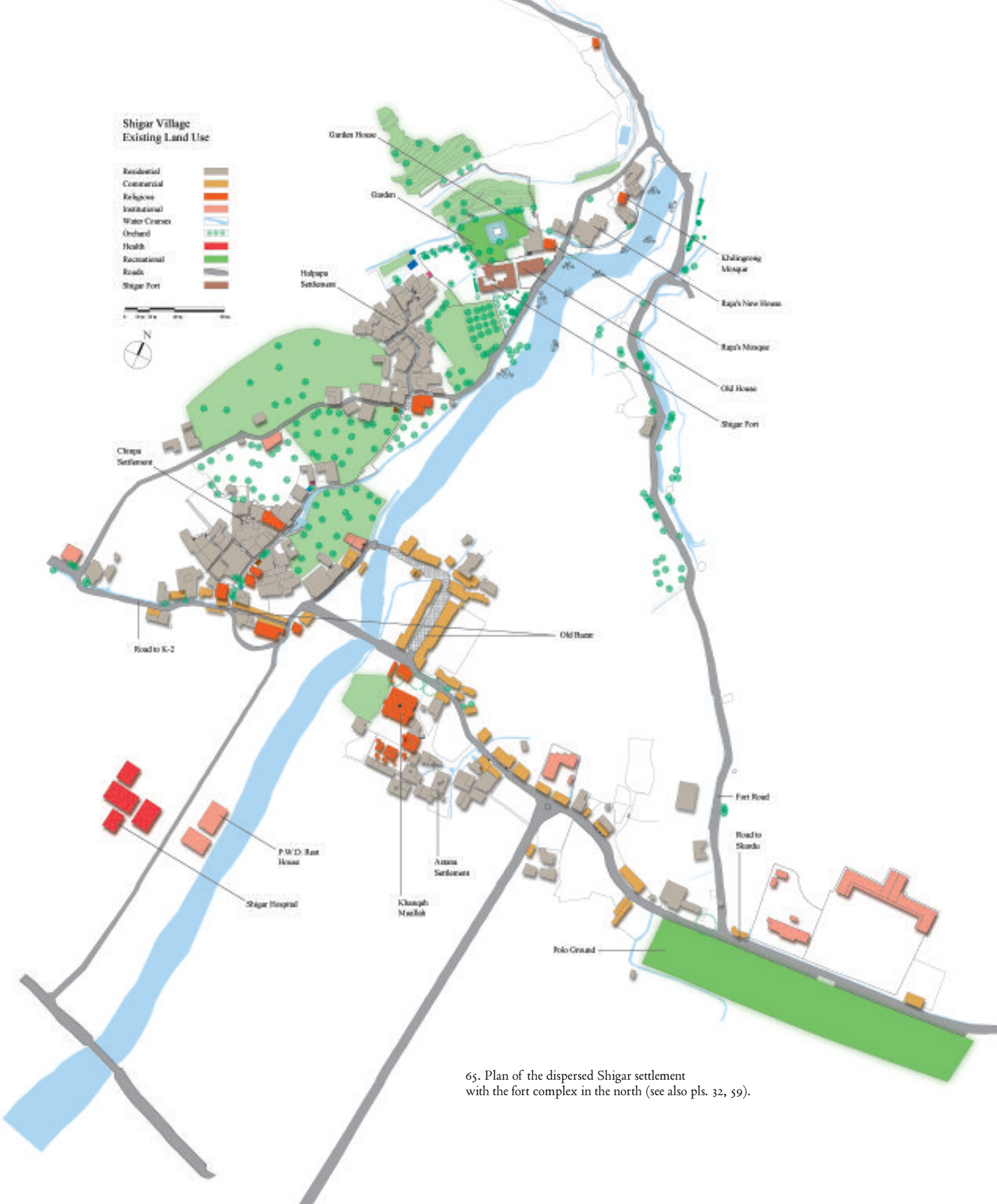
Altit Village Historic Area Existing Land Use



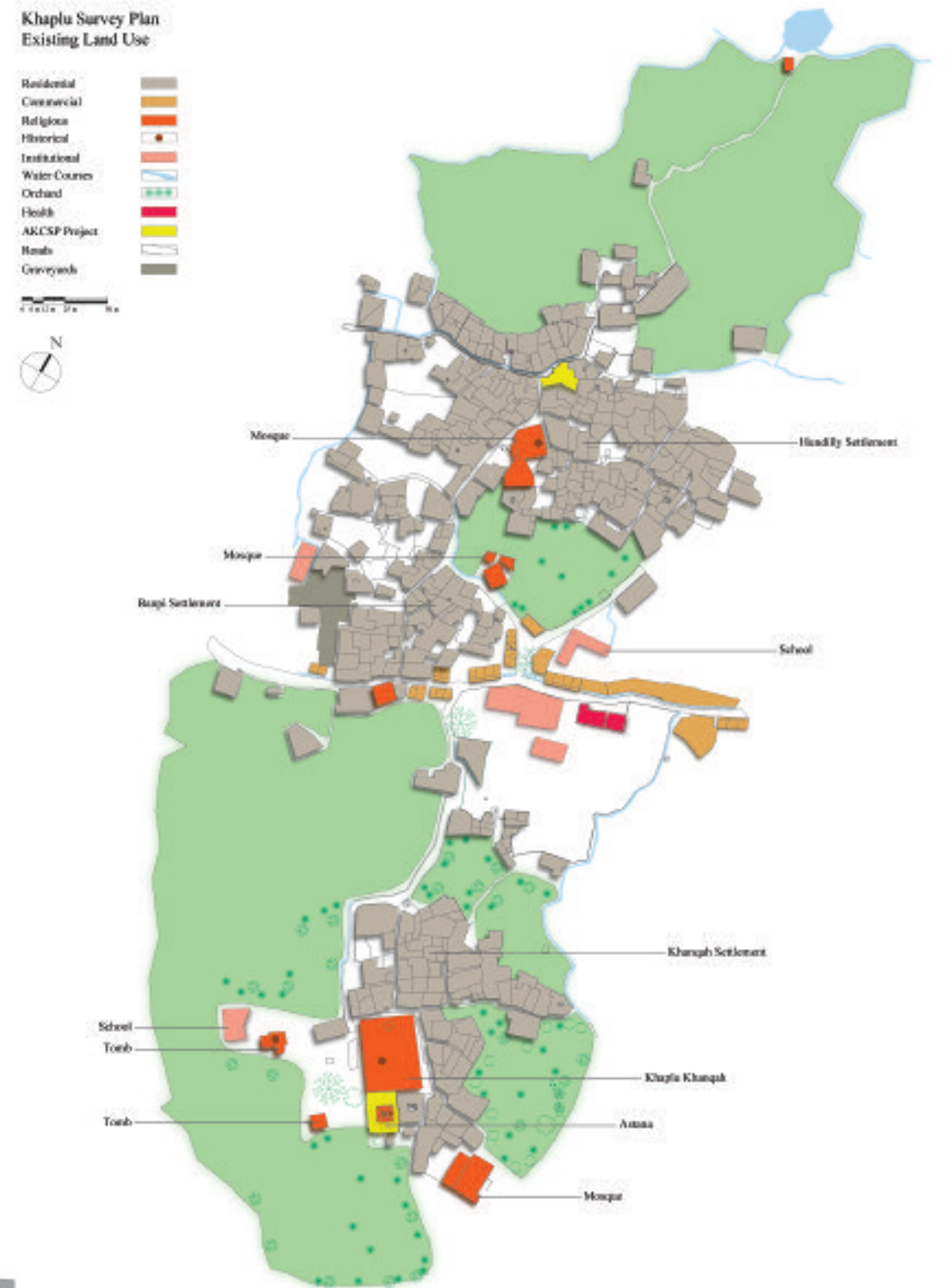
63. Plan showing the rehabilitated Altit village, with the *himalter* (entry space) close to the water pond (see also pls. 10, 107). On the right, on the edge of the cliff, Altit fort. Below the village and the fort the vast fruit tree orchard belonging to Altit fort (fig. 267). Most of the old polo ground (fig. 319) has been occupied by new educational facilities.



64. Plan of the historic nucleus of the fortified village of Ganish around the communal pond (see also pls. 116-124). The small building marked in green is the communal guest house (*sawab-ha*), accessible from *extra muros*.



65. Plan of the dispersed Shigar settlement with the fort complex in the north (see also pls. 32, 59).



66. Plan of Khaplu settlement indicating the location of the *khanqah* (fig. 137) and the *astana* (figs. 294, 304; pl. 53). Khaplu palace is located outside the perimeter of the plan.



A lane running between the *pharee* and the fortified walls, would have several *shikaris* rising along it at regular intervals. One or two *himalters*, flanked by *shikaris*, were the only openings into the village. Each settlement had a common communal space or square (the *jataq*) within its fortifications. *Jataqs* are located near the *himalters* or in the centre of the village. In Shia settlements the *matam-sarai* and at times a *sawab-ha* (guest house) are located in or next to the *jataq*.

OBSERVATIONS ON TRADITIONAL HOUSES

The Central Hunza dwellings have generally been described as three-storey structures, with a *ha* (winter house), an *agon* (summer house) and a *baldi* (covered loggia). The winter house consists of a vestibule and a *ha* which has three platforms, a *shite* (area around fireplace), a large store, a chest for grains, flour, and so on. During the first cycle of the Inventory, the team discovered this to be factually incorrect. The dwellings are now normally two storeyed. Houses with a *baldi* are rare, while the typical winter house (*ha* in Burushaski, *got* in Shina) can have one, two or three *muns* (platforms) raised about twenty centimetres from the ground. In the case of single *mun* houses, the platform is not always raised. Half the house is used as an eating and sitting space and is called *nikeerad*, while the other half is used as the family's sleeping area. The two areas are physically divided by a low timber beam fixed on the ground. In the case of two *muns*, one of them (*uyum mun*) is the men's sleeping area, and the other (*jot mun*) serves for women and children. In three-*mun* houses the longest *uyum mun* is the bed of the elders and children, pregnant women and dying elders. The medium-sized *jot mun* is set aside as a sleeping area for young unmarried members of the family. The smallest *berichu mun* is reserved for newly-married couples. Musicians sit on it during marriage functions and it is also used as a work area for the men during the day while the other two *muns* are used for sitting on. According to the locals, all dwellings in Central Hunza were one-*mun* houses. The two- and three-platform houses started to be built after the Wakhi settled in the northern Hunza valley and introduced their three-platform houses.⁷



Figs. 175-177. Above, two close-ups showing the use of the *muns* (by D. Lorimer, 1935). Below, a rendering of a typical *ha*, the focus of the traditional house, with a central opening in the roof (see also fig. 85) and the raised platforms (*muns*) around the central space.

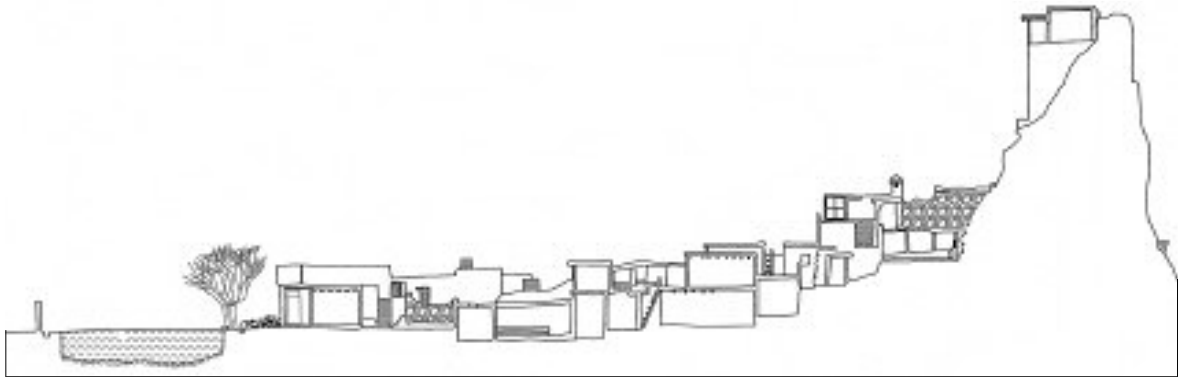


Fig. 178. Cross-section through the village at the foot of Altit fort.

According to earlier researchers, the embellishment of the timber elements was considered to confirm the age of the dwellings. The survey team found that most carved timber elements are incorporated into more recent dwellings by the house owners. At times they have been shifted two or three times in the lifetime of the current owner. Therefore it was imperative to undertake a door to door inventory of all dwellings in order to have a factual record of the different types of houses that exist within one village and to note important decorative elements.

All the dwellings surveyed in Hunza and Nager are constructed of stone masonry; the older structures feature double layer walls, more recent ones are built with simple walls. Timber ‘cribbage’ systems are only used on houses which are part of the fortified wall.

There are six types of ceiling: *Gandeleksi*, *Pangtani*, *Gasiraski*, *Uzwariski*, *Uzwariski modified*, and *Takhta*. The locals claim the *Gandeleksi* to be the oldest type of roof, as it can be constructed without timber cutting and shaping tools. The craftsmen of the area refer to *Pangtani* as the most ancient type. A *Pangtani* ceiling was supported by five columns, this number having a symbolic value for the Shia community and being

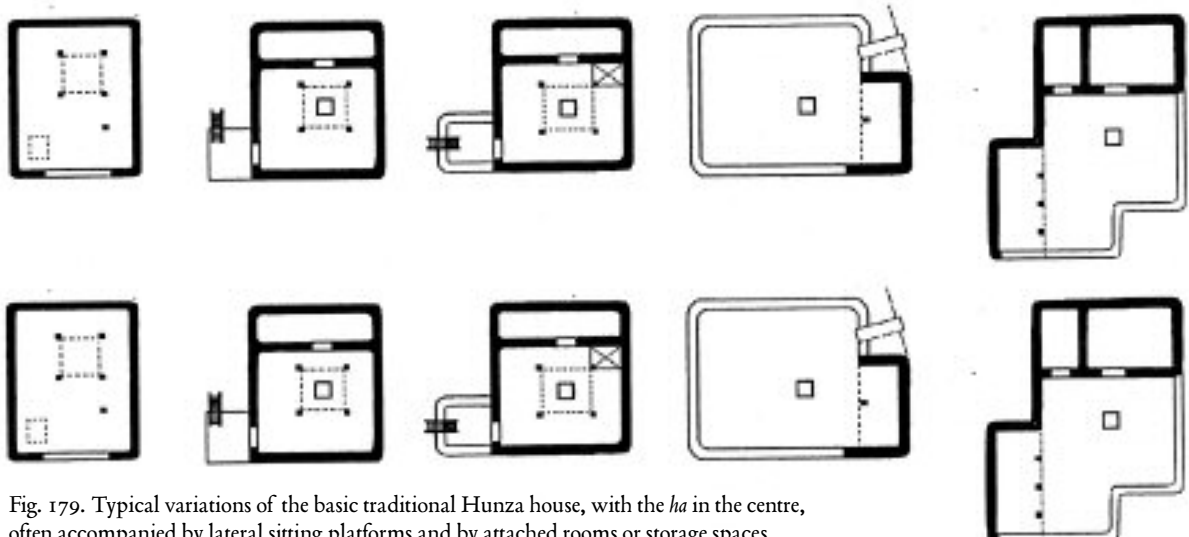


Fig. 179. Typical variations of the basic traditional Hunza house, with the *ha* in the centre, often accompanied by lateral sitting platforms and by attached rooms or storage spaces. Ground floor plans on the lower row and upper floor plans on the upper row (see note 7).

used for various purposes. (A hand with five fingers open is a popular pattern in Shia communities.) *Gasiraski* seems to have replaced *Gandeleksi* after the timber crafting tools had developed. *Uzwariski* is an Upper Hunza ceiling type, adopted by the Nagerkutz and the Hunzakutz.

The roofs are supported by (often decorated) timber columns and were traditionally water proofed by layers of birch-bark, covered with soil and *shinzak* (fine clay). At times thin strips of grass were integrated for thermal purposes. *Dambu* (local cane) can be used instead of birch bark, which at times is not available. The final waterproofing of the top layer was done with apricot paste. Today, the traditional roof materials have often been replaced by corrugated iron sheets, and polythene is normally used for water proofing.

CONCLUSION

The most striking aspect of the heritage of the Northern Areas consists in its rich and varied cultural landscapes that represent its history, its culture and its unique natural resources. To be properly conserved, the natural and cultural heritage has to be understood in its totality and in its complex interaction. In its present condition, it is a repository of early human attempts to harness nature and retains traces of important cultural exchanges, such as the Silk Route and other trade and missionary connections that passed through the region, creating a fusion of many civilisations over centuries of human history.

The cultural landscapes identified in the survey need to be protected against inappropriate development by conservation plans defining natural reserves and by legislation controlling modern building activities. Efficient application of land-use plans and building regulations, as well as permanent monitoring and proactive channelling of investments, are required. The one area which has already been heavily transformed to the extent beyond recognition is Central Hunza. Even here, important elements can be retrieved by highlighting remaining sections of the Silk Route, creating bridges and extending historic paths. Easy approaches to the semi-sedimentary settlements and the archaeological sites should be planned. The area should be presented adequately, as it has all the ingredients for becoming a World Heritage Site.

The Northern Areas have so far attracted adventure tourism – but if presented as a region where ‘history can be experienced live’, they can also attract culturally interested visitors, as well as school, college and university students. Scholars of different universities (both in Pakistan and abroad) have already done exten-

ID No:	II-4-8
	
Resource Name:	Akbar Hussain's House
Address:	Broshal / Uzun Nagar
Village:	Nagar
Period/ Age/Date:	Around 100 years
Designation:	Not Protected
Ownership:	Private
Significance:	Age, Architecture, Early Value and Location
Description:	Akbar Hussain's house is a typical off Khaz one room (plattform) plan type house (traditional room) with a Khana (Veranda). Khana (entrance lobby) leads to Jazgish, an area near the door of the house. Khana serves the dual function of a veranda and storage. The main room is 2'-3" in width, 16' long and 8' high. It is located on the east of the house. The remaining area is the abhi, place for cooking and sitting in winter. Shi (fire place) is located in the centre of the house, and is used for cooking and heating. The ceiling is a gasiraski type, formed of five layers of thick planks. The upper planks are circumscribed by the lower and turned at 45, terminating at the chagun (opening in ceiling). Seven columns define the linear spaces running along all four walls, used for storage along with the main.
Construction Materials, Method & Techniques:	The house is constructed of stone slate set in mud mortar. Juniper is used for all timber. Timber dowel is used for fixing ceiling planks and joining storage chest planks. Juniper twigs placed on juniper logs surround the centre rotated square, both supported by timber beams.
Integrity:	Only one wall of the Agor remains, the rest has disintegrated, and collapsed. (Details)

Fig. 180. A typical example of an inventory sheet, in this case for a house in Broshal, Nager valley.

sive research in the area. Coordinating and synthesising such research will be important so that it can be reflected in the Inventory as a vehicle for wider dissemination.

Hopefully, the Inventory will provide a management tool for government institutions and private organisations (such as the Aga Khan Development Network) for creating coherent frameworks of conservation and regional planning and for defining appropriate modes of intervention in the fragile cultural landscape of the Northern Areas. The Village Rehabilitation projects in Hunza and Baltistan, together with a variety of implemented conservation projects for landmark buildings (see the following chapters in this book), represent important pilot projects in this direction. Most importantly, they have helped to raise the cultural awareness of local communities and to revive traditional building techniques.

¹ H. Hauptmann, *The Indus-Cradle and Crossroads of Civilisations*, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, Islamabad 1997, pp. 32-33.

² Discovered by Fazal Karim, at Kepal Dongus next to and above the Hopar valley.

³ Jettmar suggests that the earliest influences were from Central Asia by Scythian nomads, later Tibetans. (K. Jettmar, *Beyond the Gorges of the Indus*, Oxford University Press, Karachi 2002, p. 12.)

⁴ See H. Kreutzmann and E. Ehlers (eds.), *High Mountain Pas-*

toralism in Northern Pakistan, Franzsteiner Verlag, Stuttgart 2000.

⁵ Jettmar suggests that shamanism in the area was of Siberian origin. (See Jettmar in note 3 here.)

⁶ A. H. Dani, *Islamic Architecture: The Wooden Style of Northern Pakistan*, National Hijra Council, Islamabad 1989.

⁷ For Hunza houses, see also the article "Catching a Passing Moment: The Redeployment of Tradition", by Masood Khan in *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review*, vol. VII, spring 1996.