563.SAU

The Aga Khan Award for Architecture

## ARCHITECT'S RECORD

**CONFIDENTIAL**

### I. IDENTIFICATION

Project Title: MOFA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Street Address:

City: Riyadh Country: Saudi Arabia

Telephone: Telex:

### II. PERSONS RESPONSIBLE

**A. Architect:** Henning Larsen

Mailing Address: Vimmelskaftet 49

City: 1161-DK Copenhagen Country: Denmark

Telephone: 45 1 134557 Telex: 16457 HLARCH DK

**B. Client:** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mailing Address:

City: Riyadh Country: Saudi Arabia

Telephone: Telex:

**C. Consultants** (e.g. Economists, Sociologists, Demographers, Engineers)

Name: ENGINEERS: M. Folmer Andersen A/S

Mailing Address: Lundtoftevej 1D

City: DK-2800 Lyngby Country: Denmark

Telephone: 45 2 873200 Telex: 37468 MFA DK

**D. Contractor:** Mi Ryung Construction Co.

Mailing Address:

City: Seoul Country: Korea

Telephone: Telex:

**E. Master Craftsman:**

Mailing Address:

City: Country:

Telephone: Telex:

(Please continue overleaf if necessary)



*Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia*

## III. USE

A. Specify type(s) of Use: _____

B. User/Occupant

1. Occupation/Profession _____

2. Income Level (check one) _____ High _____ Medium _____ Low _____ Mixed

C. Specify any change(s) between planned and actual use:

## IV. PROJECT TIMETABLE

(Please specify year and month)

A. Design: Commencement October 1980 Completion July 1981

B. Construction: Commencement June 1982 Completion August 1984

C. Date of Project Occupancy September 1984

## V. PROJECT ECONOMICS

(Please specify amount, currency and date of transaction)

| | Amount | Currency | Date |
|---|---|---|---|
| A. Total Initial Budget | | | |
| B. Total Actual Costs | | | |
| C. Actual Cost per sq. m. | | | |
| D. Analysis of Costs | | | |
| 1. Land | | | |
| 2. Infrastructure | | | |
| 3. Labour | | | |
| 4. Materials | | | |
| 5. Professional Fees | | | |

E. Cost Comparison

1. Please indicate how the costs of this project relate to typical building costs in the country (check one):

_____ Average _____ Above Average _____ Below Average

F. Sources of Funds

1. Please indicate the percentage of funds that came from:

_____ Private Sources _____ Public Sources

2. If funding was public, what percentage was from:

_____ local _____ national _____ international sources

(Please continue overleaf if necessary)

## VI. CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

A. Site and Building Area (please indicate in square metres)

1. Total Site Area: 83.000 $m^2$
2. Total Ground Floor Area: 30.300 $m^2$
3. Total Combined Floor Area (including basement(s), ground floor(s) and all upper floors): 85.000 $m^2$

B. Construction and Technology

1. Describe the structural system and the basic method of construction

   Construction grid: 7200 x 4800 mm
   Prefabricated columns and beams
   External walls: Reinforced concrete

2. Indicate which major building parts were fabricated on-site and which were fabricated elsewhere

   All concrete is cast in-situ

   All prefabricated elements are fabricated elsewhere

C. Description of Materials
(please also indicate if locally produced or imported)

1. Foundations

   Reinforced pad and strip foundations

2. Principal structural members: External walls : Reinforced concrete
   Columns and beams: Prefabricated steel
   Floors : Composite floors
   (Steel decking and 85 mm top
3. Infill reinforced concrete)

4. Rendering of Facades or Exterior Finishes

   External facades : Marble cladding

   Facades in courtyards: Coloured rendering

5. Floors

   Office areas: Carpets

   Public areas: Marble tiles

6. Ceilings : Suspended gypsom boards

   In streets: Acoustic plaster

7. Roofing : High density insulation with marble/concrete tiles

8. Other elements (please specify)

D. Type of labour force (please indicate percentage)

10% Skilled Workers 90% Unskilled Workers

E. Origin of labour force

0% Domestic 100% Foreign

(Please continue overleaf if necessary)

## VII. GENERAL GEOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE

A. Please describe the local geographic characteristics:

B. Please describe the local climatic characteristics:

## VIII. EVOLUTION OF DESIGN CONCEPTS

Please describe the history of the project, from its conception to its final construction and actual use.

See enclosure VIII

## IX. PROJECT SIGNIFICANCE

1. In what way is this project important?

   Please describe the aspects of the project which represent a particular achievement (for example the technical, economic, or social achievement, or its response to culture, climate, etc.)

See enclosure IX 1 and 2

2. Please indicate the degree to which the client and users are satisfied with the project.

Please continue overleaf if necessary

## X. PRESENTATION REQUIREMENTS

1. The materials described below are the minimum requirements for project presentation. Please note that standard presentation dossiers are prepared by the Award, and materials should not be mounted or bound. All materials should be clearly identified. The following should be submitted:

   A. Map indicating location of project in city, community, neighbourhood, or landscape.

   B. Ten (10) photographs; preferred and maximum size for A4 presentation (18 × 24 centimetres).

   C. Twenty (20) slides; 24 × 36 millimetres.

   D. Drawings; preferred and maximum size for A3 format presentation (29.7 × 42 centimetres).
   Site, Roof, and Massing Plans;
   Floor Plan(s);
   Elevations;
   Sections.

   E. Curriculum Vitae, or Firm's Prospectus.

2. The submission of additional materials is encouraged. Please specify any appended materials not listed above.

3. Please indicate other sources of information on the project, e.g. publications, contacts, etc.

ARKITEKTUR No. 4, 1980 (danish)

THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW No. 1031, january 1983

ARKITEKTEN No. 23, 1983 (danish)

DAIDALOS No. 10, december 1983 (Berlin)

Please note: The submission of this Record is a prerequisite to candidacy for the Award. All information contained in and submitted with the Record will be kept strictly confidential until announcement of the Award is made. Subsequently, such information may be made available by the Aga Khan Award for Architecture for scholarly purposes only. Nevertheless, other persons wishing to publish, reproduce, or reprint such information shall be required to secure prior permission from the author in each instance.

Signature _____

Name (please print) Henning Larsen Date 5. februar 1985

All Materials should be forwarded to:

**The Aga Khan Award for Architecture**
Award Procedures
32, chemin des Crêts-de-Pregny
1218 GRAND-SACONNEX
Switzerland

Telephone: (22) 98 90 70 Telex: 28842 AKAA CH Cable: AKAWARDS



*Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia*

## THE BUILDING

In 1979 HLT together with eleven other international architects were invited to compete for the new Ministry of Foreign Affairs headquarters in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. After the first competition four projects were elected for further development resulting in the 1st prize to HLT.

The construction period was commenced in June, 1982 and finalized in September, 1984. In order to comply with the contract period of 730 calendar days for the Main Contract, approximately 2,000 workers were employed on site, inclusive of 7 HLT employees who in collaboration with 20 supervisors supervised the project from the office there.

The main construction consists of external concrete walls cast in-situ with a marble cladding. These external walls are designed as a double construction in order to create a comfortable indoor climate. The outer walls form a heavy shell ensuring a constant temperature in the internal constructions. Cast in-situ are also the covered streets, the triangular lobby and the domed squares. Between these structures stretches a construction consisting of steel columns, stell beams and a steel decking (composite floors). All partitions are dry walls, i.e. gypsum boards on steel profiles.

Choosing a steel construction and dry walls is a result of time pressure during the construction period and the demand for great flexibility in the office areas. All internal concrete surfaces are plastered, filled and painted. The ceilings vary from simple woodcrete boards in parking areas, suspended acoustic ceilings in office areas to delicately carved gypsum ceilings in the conference room. The flooring varies from simple screed in parking areas to marble and ceramic tiles layed in decorative patterns in the more representative areas.

The 85,000 sq.m. building contains offices, meeting rooms, lounges/salons accommodating more than 1,000 employees.

The aim was to create a house which could honour the varying requirements, wishes and needs which may change with the times. Architecturally, historical/typological elements were combined with a contemporary idiom of form and material. Thus we attempted to interpret, theoretically and practically the relations within the scope of the local culture. The objective of this building is to carry on the historical continuity and to create complexity and variation through a deliberate architectural elaboration of the traditional Islamic elements.

*Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia*

*"Is it possible to interpret and transform the physical manifestations of Oriental architectural elements into a contemporary idiom along the lines of the requirements and developments of the Islamic cultural patterns?"*

The foundations of Islamic culture were laid by the Arabs using religion as a means of expression - language, writing and visual symbols playing the decisive role as the unifying elements of the principal structure. This is especially manifested in the Arabs' highly developed sense of poetry, oratory and above all ornamentation cultivated as a perceptive art.

One of the most characteristic features of Islamic architecture is the focusing on the clearly defined interior as opposed to the exterior, the facade or the exterior as an "indispensable" architectural element. This is seen in the layout of the characteristic Islamic house. Architecturally, the courtyard determines the layout of the house, at the same time serving as a point of orientation for rooms of equal importance and general utility.

The anonymity of the facades is another requirement of the Islam ideology, a warning against manifestations of power and wealth through gaudy buildings. The social status of the residents is revealed only by the interior of the house, through the proportions and decorations of the rooms.

The characteristic Islamic house is often placed in a cluster of complex buildings with a common entrance through a semi-public passage which gives access to the individual private dwellings. In highly urbanized contexts, however, the multistoreyed urban house proper will often be structured around a semi-public courtyard.

The Islamic town can be viewed as a compact structure with a continuity of closed and open spaces. The low priority given to the exterior of the building results in even important urban functions such as mosques, madrasah and bazaars being integrated and incorporated into these complex structures. The impression of the limit, size and functions of the individual building is thus blurred, and the possibility of recognition to the extent of public functions is eliminated.

The European, however, sees urban contexts in terms of individual houses. The single elements determine, both physically and socially, the siting of public spaces within the complex urban structure in which the hierarchy of interrelations between the town's public spaces and individual buildings emphasizes the nature and degree of public functions. The Traditional Oriental Town functions as one big building complex, highly homogenous in construction and materials, and easily accessible to the public.

If we take Islamic town architecture as our point of departure it is important to recognize, via typological and morphological registration, the concrete historical, architectural and social basis, and then transform its physical manifestations into a contemporary idiom.

## THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The architectural design concept for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, took the Islamic tradition of urban architecture as ist starting point. The building reflects those traditions, at the same time referring to an international idiom. Thus, the building is intended to reflect Islamic culture in the global cultural currents.

In full accordance with traditional Islamic architecture the building exterior appears architecturally anonymous with heavy, lightcoloured facades, narrow embrasures, and devoid of decorations. As a marked contrast a designed interior has been architecturally elaborated with a view to producing a coherent structure of spatial impressions in a hierarchically clearly readable building complex which creates its own natural identity.

As a typical feature the main entrance has been placed symmetrically congruous with the principal form of the building, flanked by the most important rooms, which are also those to which the public has easy access. The chief structural building element is the centrally situated open space, the isosceles triangel, the lobby, formed by the complex geometrical combination of the square and the triangle. The four-storeyed high lobby sharply defines the physical centre of the building. The location proclaims its official character, and functions at the same time as a structural point of orientation.

The location of such functions and the internal communication is determined by the triangular three-storeyed, barrel vaulted street surrounding the lobby.

The traditional bazaar streets inspired this covered street which structures and determines the layout. The architectural expression of the streets will be dominated by the character of materials. The intentionally subdued daylight will accentuate the experience of the different rooms placed in connection with the streets: general functions, receptions and views to the courtyards and the lobby. The geometrical room forms are defined by the contrast between light and shade. Like the bazaar streets, the location of the internal streets in the building structure is the main factor in the hierarchic structure of the building, its identity and readability from an aesthetical layout point of view. The streets meet in three octagonal open spaces, crowned with cupolas as the centres of the vertically connected functions.

The three octagonal spaces form the centres of individual block units. The blocks contain flexible office areas grouped around 9 courtyards. The offices receive direct/indirect daylight from the window openings in the facade and the courtyards respectively. The courtyards have been designed from three main types:

The cross garden, the fountain garden, the water bassin garden.

All garden types have decorative tile pavings in patterns which architecturally accentuate the identity of the individual courtyard.

*Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia*

# LESSONS FROM THE ORIENT

## The Idiom of Islamic Architecture, Inspiration and Obligation
## by Henning Larsen's Tegnestue A/S

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The 85,000 sqm building contains offices, meeting rooms, lounges/salons accommodating more than 1,000 employees. The total price is approximately US$ 196 millions, inclusive of fees, carpeting, built in furniture, all site works, landscaping, certain security installations as well as maintenance and operation for one year.

The aim is to create a house which can honour the varying requirements, wishes and needs which can change with the times. Architecturally, historical/typological elements are combined with a contemporary idiom of form and material. Thus we attempt to interpret, theoretically and practically the relations within the scope of the local culture. The objective of this building is to carry on the historical continuity and to create complexity and variation through a deliberate architectural elaboration of the traditional Islamic elements.