

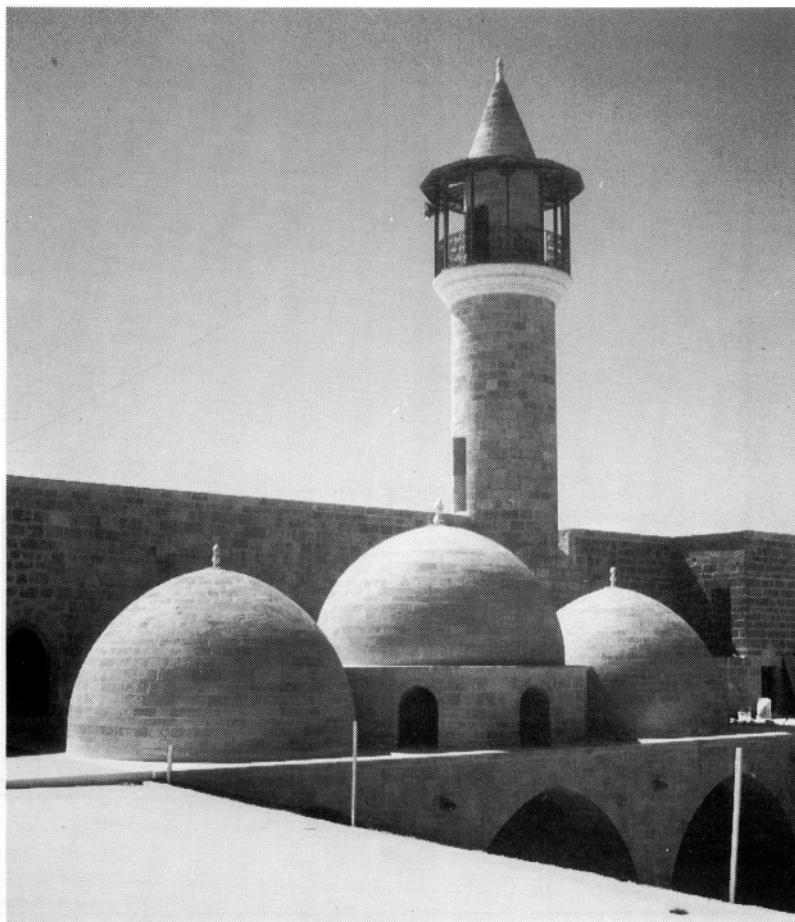


The Aga Khan Award for Architecture

Restoration of the Great Omari Mosque

Sidon, Lebanon

<i>Architect</i>	Saleh Lamei Mostafa Cairo, Egypt
<i>Client</i>	His Eminence the Mufti of Sidon and Southern Lebanon
<i>Consultant</i>	Fouad Arnaot (engineer) Beirut, Lebanon
<i>Contractor</i>	Abdel Wahed Shehab Sidon, Lebanon
<i>Completed</i>	1986, January
<i>Site area</i>	1'975 square metres
<i>Ground floor</i>	1'500 square metres
<i>Total floor</i>	2'050 square metres
<i>Costs</i>	LL 7'000'000 (US\$ 274'000) LL 3'415 per square metre (US\$ 134)



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The Great Omari Mosque dates back to the Bahri Mamluk period: it was erected in 1291 on the remains of a fortress built by the Knights of St John (the Knights Hospitallers Order) during the second period of Crusader rule in Sidon in the mid-13th century. The mosque was severely damaged by bombing during the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon; it had also suffered some deterioration due to environmental causes. In 1983, the Lebanese Departments of Antiquities and Awqaf decided to restore the building.

Site

The mosque is located to the West of the old city and is built on a hill directly overlooking the Mediterranean.

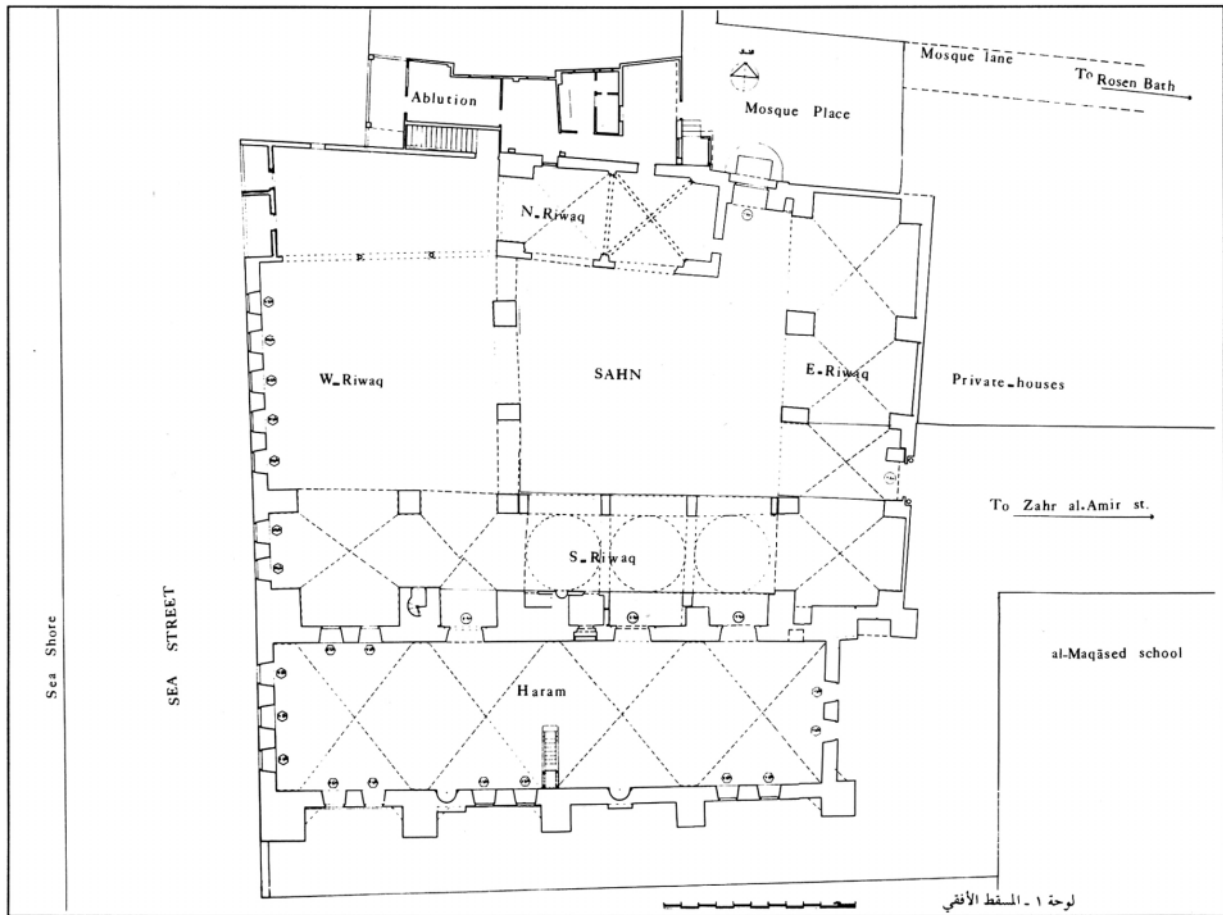
Functional Requirements

The remaining parts had to be rapidly consolidated to prevent the total collapse of the building. A thorough documentation of the structure was carried out. The restoration works were to be implemented by using strictly traditional building materials and methods.

<i>Building type</i>	071 & 612
<i>1989 Award Cycle</i>	0804.LEB

1. Northern riwaq & minaret after restoration

Restoration of the Great Omari Mosque



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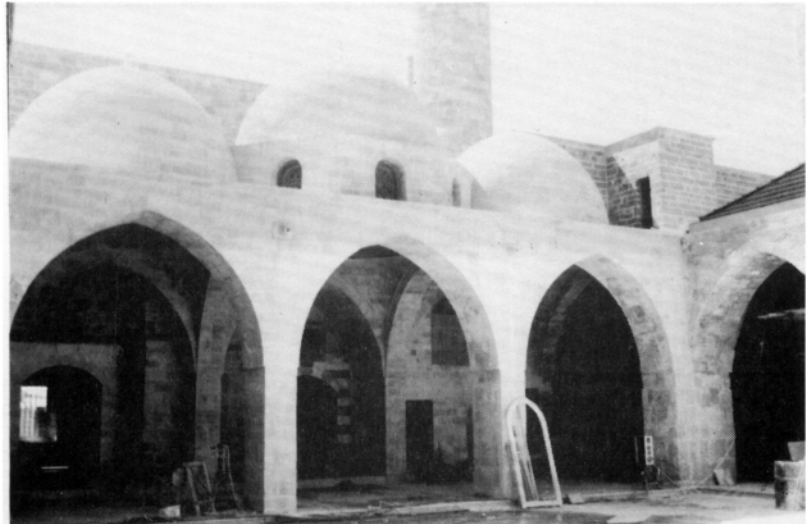
2. Plan
3. Southern & western façades after restoration



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Description

This monument is the oldest standing mosque in Sidon. It has retained some features of the previous Crusader fortress such as the buttresses on the Southern façade. Some additions/restorations, including the minaret, were executed in the late Ottoman period (second half of the 19th century). The mosque is based on a central courtyard plan enclosed by four *riwaqs* (porticoes). The rectangular prayer room is situated to the south of the southern *riwaq*; it is covered by cross-vaults. The *riwaqs* around the courtyard are covered by vaults and domes supported by pointed arches resting on rectangular and square piers. The western *riwaq* has a wooden pitched roof. Two entrances, situated to the north and east, give access to the mosque.



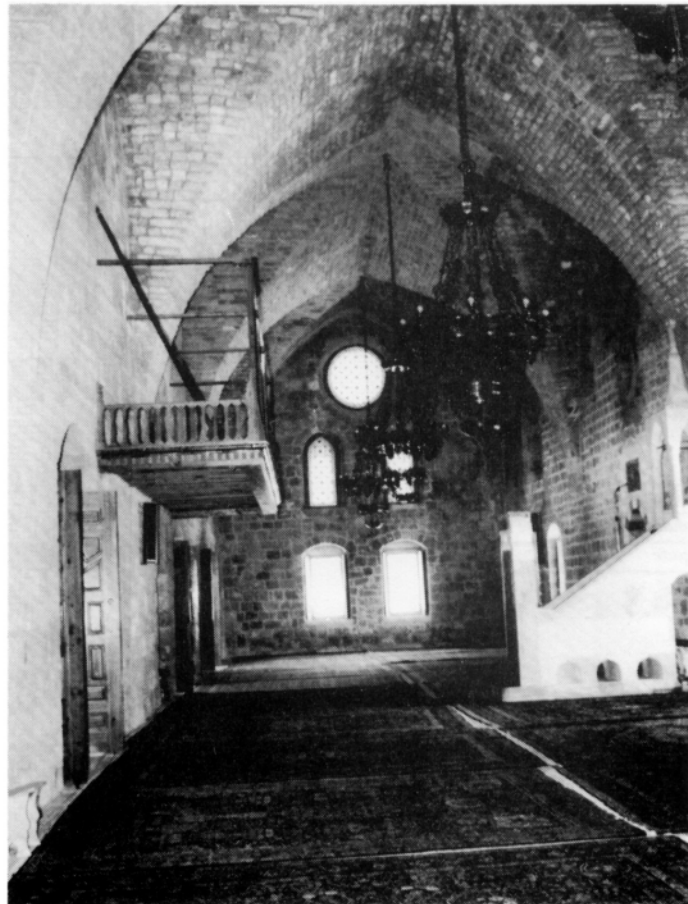
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Project Significance

The present structure, also used as a religious school, is an important gathering place for the local population. On the other hand, it now almost embodies the city's political resistance as the restoration works were carried out under Israeli occupation. The latter works, in reviving old building techniques and crafts were an opportunity for the local stone masons, craftsmen and architects to acquire some experience in the field of restoration. The present example seems to be the first of its kind in Lebanon.

Construction

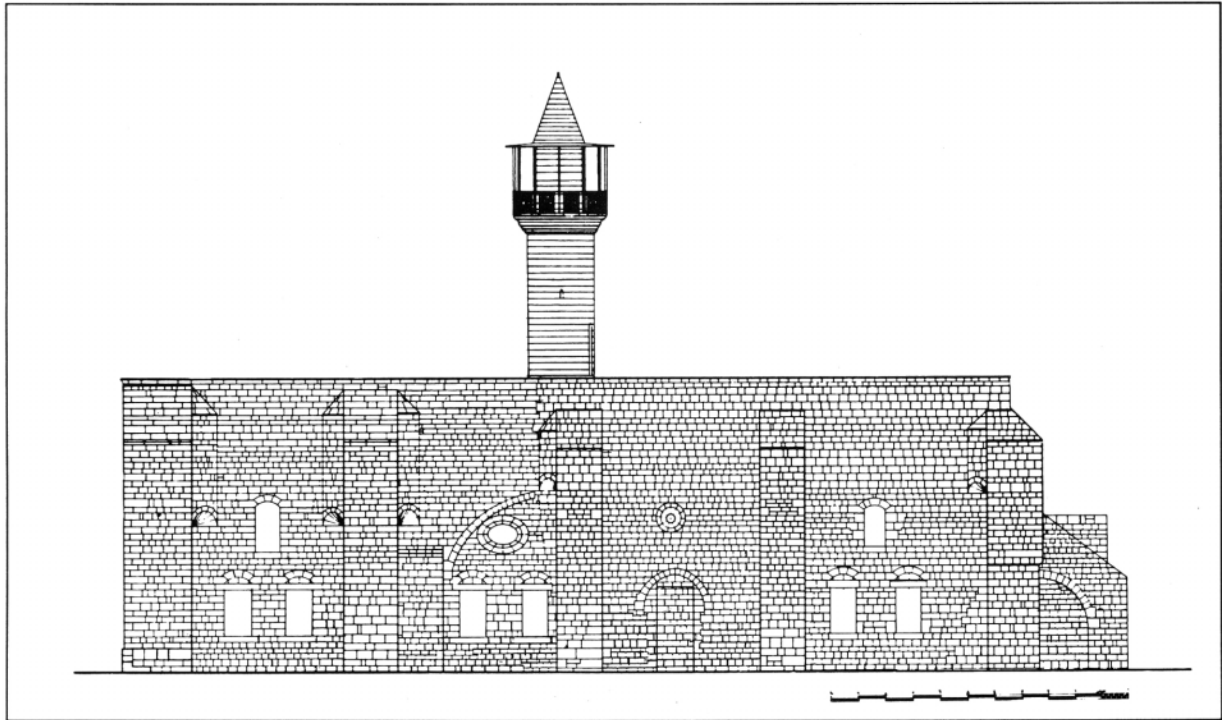
Load bearing sand stone walls with lime mortar or black pan (ashes) mortar. Finishes including marble tiles, pitch pine shutters, bronze and gypsum lattices with coloured glass and bronze lanterns (the latter two elements were manufactured in Egypt). All manpower was local.



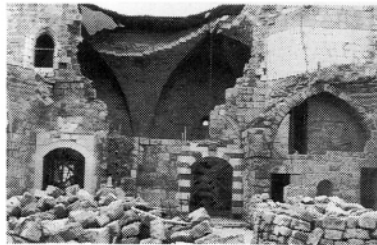
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4. Southern *riwaq* after restoration

5. Haram: interior space looking east



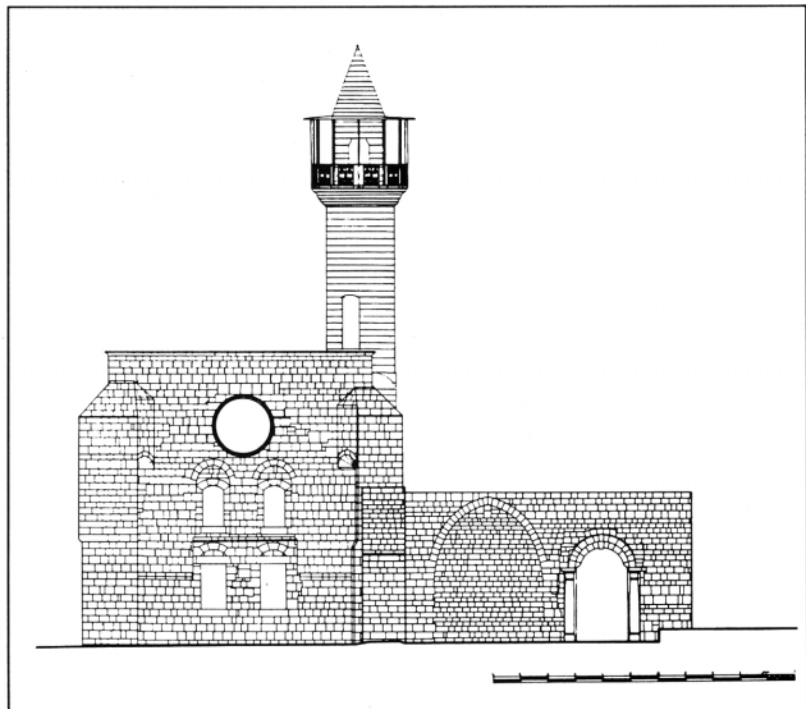
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- 6. Southern façade
- 7. Haram & southern Riwaq before restoration
- 8. Eastern façade

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