

# Taif Highlands

## Architectural Design Guidelines





FIG.1 **TAIF HIGHLANDS ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER AREA**



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## Guidelines

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FIG. 2 Taif Highlands Mountain Plateau

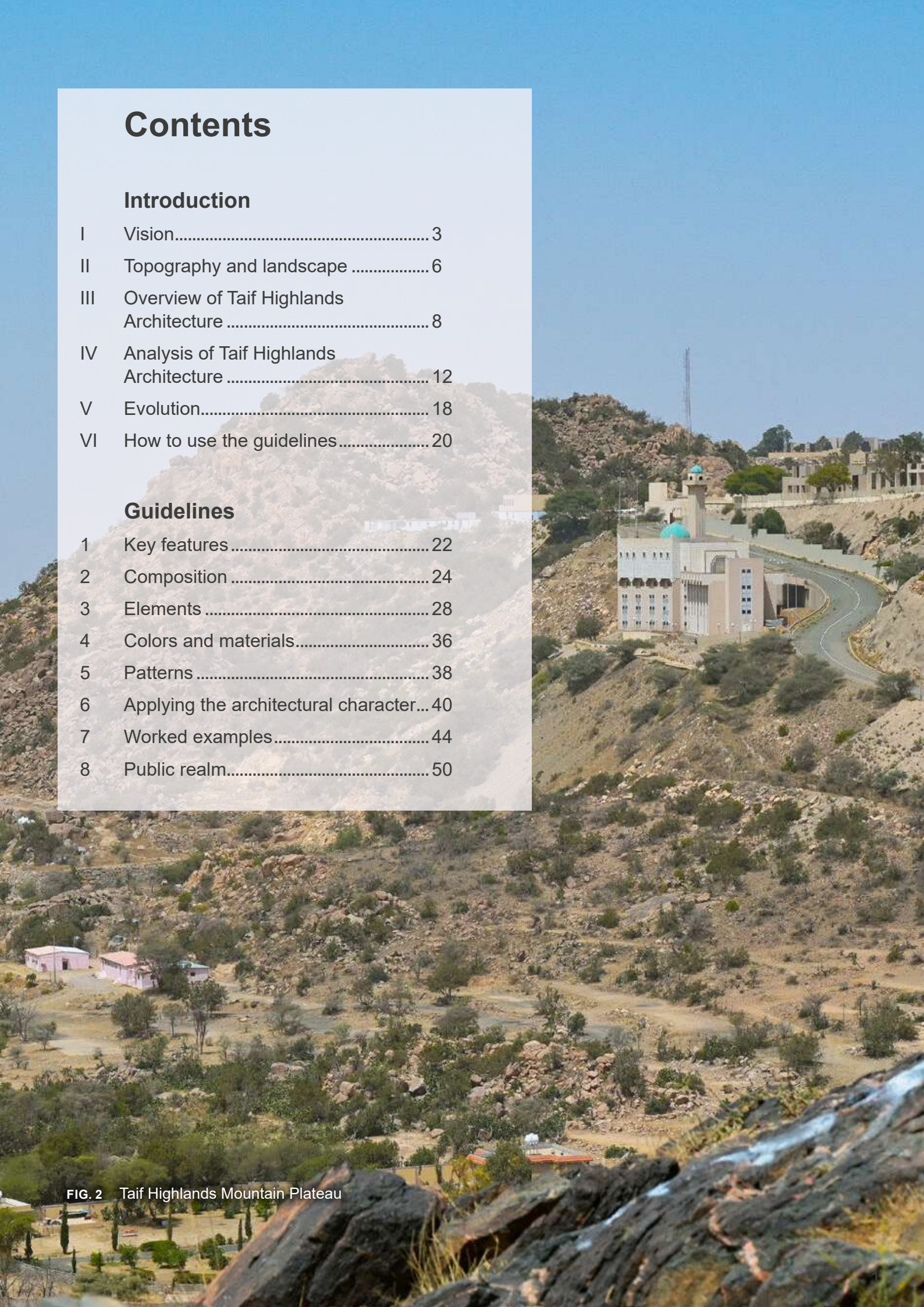






FIG.3 ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTERS MAP OF KSA



# INTRODUCTION

## Vision

To celebrate and preserve Saudi Arabia's rich architectural legacy inspired by culture, heritage and nature.

### I.1 Guidelines philosophy

The Architectural Design Guidelines aim to foster contemporary design that is rooted in the diverse geographic and cultural contexts of the Kingdom.

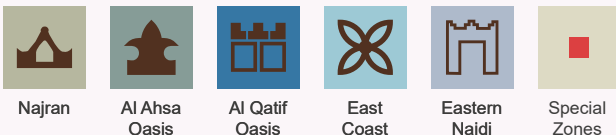
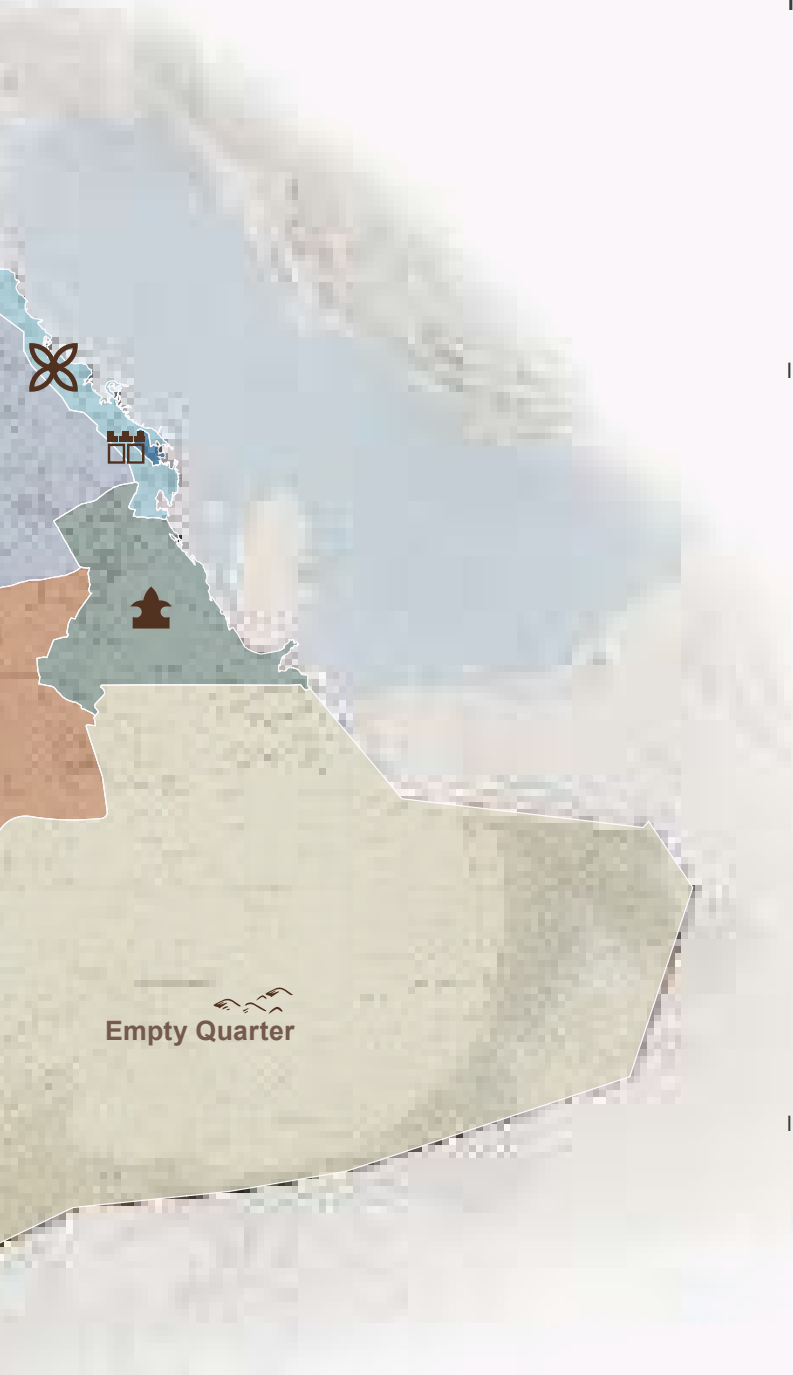
Its propositions are based on the study of historical precedent, taking inspiration from vernacular forms and the embedded knowledge shaped by generations of practice and experience.

The guidelines are forward-looking, intended for a wide range of contemporary development and suited for different levels of prescription. They aim to be succinct, well organized and useful: a positive resource for designers and easy to implement by planning authorities.

### I.2 National context

This volume belongs to a suite of 19 documents, each exploring a different geographic context and describing a distinct architectural character within the Kingdom. Together they form a comprehensive portrait of the architectural heritage of the country.

Though application boundaries for the architectural character have been defined (fig. 3), influences may extend across boundaries. Designers are advised to consult adjacent areas architectural guidelines documents and confirm the status of their building context with facts on the ground.



### I.3 **Taif Highlands**

Situated in the Hejaz Mountains, Taif is one of the oldest cities in the Arabian Peninsula with origins in the pre-Islamic Period. The city itself occupies a plateau surrounded by mountains which dictate the city's temperate climate, characterized by high rainfall and mild temperatures. The fertile conditions mean that the city retains a pleasant landscape feel.

The surrounding mountains and slopes form natural edges to the city with a collection of distinct neighborhoods nestled between the principal highways and the upland areas. Beyond the complex system of valleys which connect from the eastern desert westward towards the cliffs and on to the Red Sea, most of the central and eastern part of the wider region comprises desert.

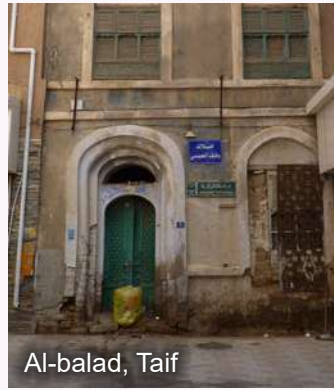
### I.4 **Settlement pattern**

Until 1947, the urban extent of Taif was limited to the historic walled quarter. This area contains a preindustrial urban pattern, which supported all the urban functions of the city including the market which was a core component of Taif historically as a meeting point of southern and eastern caravans before they continued to Makkah. The removal of the wall led to the growth of the city alongside the development of the modern highways network. The historic Souq 'Okaz, a pre-Islamic marketplace is situated north of the city. Aside from the Taif – Al-Hada Road (Highway 15), the major highways curve around the city.





Al Madhoon Mosque, Taif



Al-balad, Taif



Taif Rose, Taif Highlands



Shubra Palace, Taif



Public square, Taif



Wadi, Saysad National Park



View to Ash Shafa



Local Farm in Taif



Old Taif



Al Hada road

FIG.4 TAIF HIGHLANDS SOURCES OF ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER



## I **Topography and landscape**

Observations on the links between landscape, climate, culture and the architectural character of Taif Highlands.

### I.1 **Landscape**

Taif's plateau location is characterized by a temperate climate, with the highest level of average annual rainfall in the Kingdom, and relatively mild weather conditions. The area's geology and climate are defining factors in the form of the settlement, land form and architectural character.

High precipitation, impermeable geology and valley systems have produced ideal conditions for agriculture including farmland and orchards. Notably, Taif is the primary agricultural provider for Makkah, known as 'The Orchard of the Haram'. The warm climate, and presence of aquifers mean that Taif's landscape has an abundance of flora and fauna which are distinct to the area. These include the Damask Rose and conifer plants such as cypress trees and junipers. It is important to note that urbanization presents a risk to the depletion of underground water supplies.

### I.2 **Climate**

Taif is situated on a plateau within the Hejaz Mountains at an elevation of 1,879 meters. The Hejaz Mountains run through the central part of the region, with elevations varying from 600 m to 2,000m. The mountain range separates the flat Nafud desert from the coastal plains as illustrated on the adjacent plan and cross-section.

The Mountains surrounding Taif comprise igneous rocks such as granite which do not absorb water. This results in

rainwater running into a system of wadis and tributaries, principally Wadi Wajj and Wadi Liyyah. The presence of ancient dams near the city highlights the role that climate and geology have played in influencing the historical growth of Taif.

The city benefits from the highest total average rainfall in the Kingdom, 250 mm. It also has a relatively mild climate with temperatures ranging from 8.4°C in January to 36°C in June, its hottest month, with predominant north-easterly and south-westerly winds.

### I.3 **Culture**

Favorable weather conditions and landscape character have also influenced Taif's character as an escape for the Makkah and Jeddah elites, with the city providing second homes away from the hotter, arid conditions of the main cities. Taif is also a key point on the pilgrimage route leading to the settlement of many immigrant communities. Over time this has contributed to a multi-ethnic cultural character and development of traditional industries.

### I.4 **Architectural influence**

Typical vernacular architecture in Taif is predominantly influenced by locally available materials such as basalt stone, granite, and wood. The craftsmanship which is typical of coastal locations is less prevalent here. As noted above, the temperate climate and attractive landscape character led to the growth of second homes in Taif for the wealthy residents of Jeddah and Makkah. As such, there is a large concentration of grand houses, known as Taif mansions which have a post colonial character, built in the 19th and early 20th century.

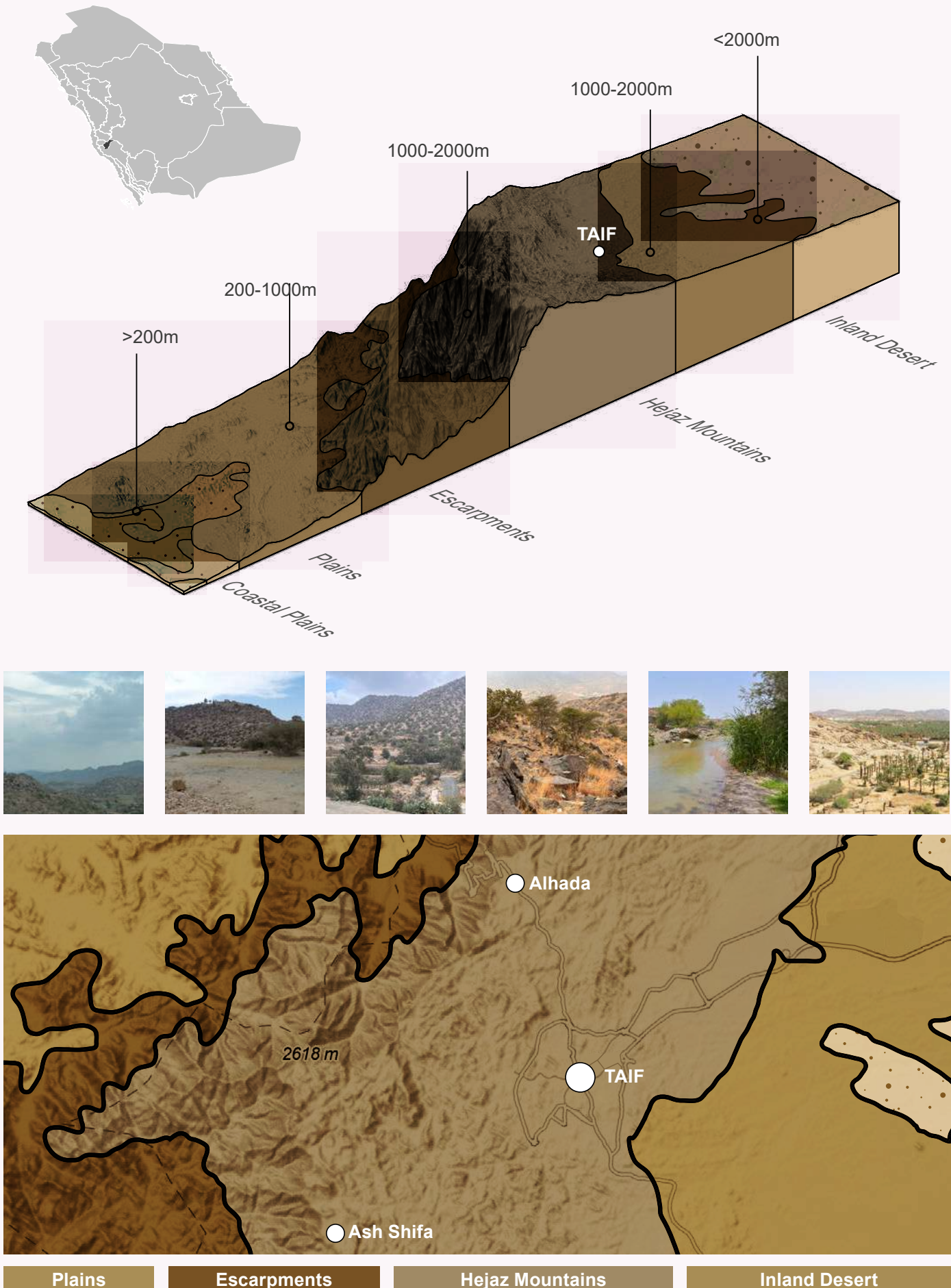


FIG.5 TAIF HIGHLANDS TOPOGRAPHY AND LANDSCAPE



## II Overview of Taif Highlands Architecture

A summary of the existing character of traditional architecture and settlements of Taif Highlands.

### II.1 Architectural character - Al-Balad

Architectural character is articulated in two predominant forms in Taif. The first are the houses which are present in Taif Al-Balad, and the second are the grand Taif Mansions. Taif traditional houses belong to the Hejaz traditional style and are concentrated in the area formerly

defined by the city wall. The typology is characterized by multiple and formal compositions on front facades. Use of projecting roshan's in Taif are rare. Instead, the shuttered timber windows are crafted with decorative wooden panels.

Structurally, houses were built using load bearing, heavy cut masonry walls, brought from at least five quarries in the mountains around the old city. Surfaces were constructed and finished with local type of lime mortar. Ceilings and roof structures were built using Tamarisk wood.

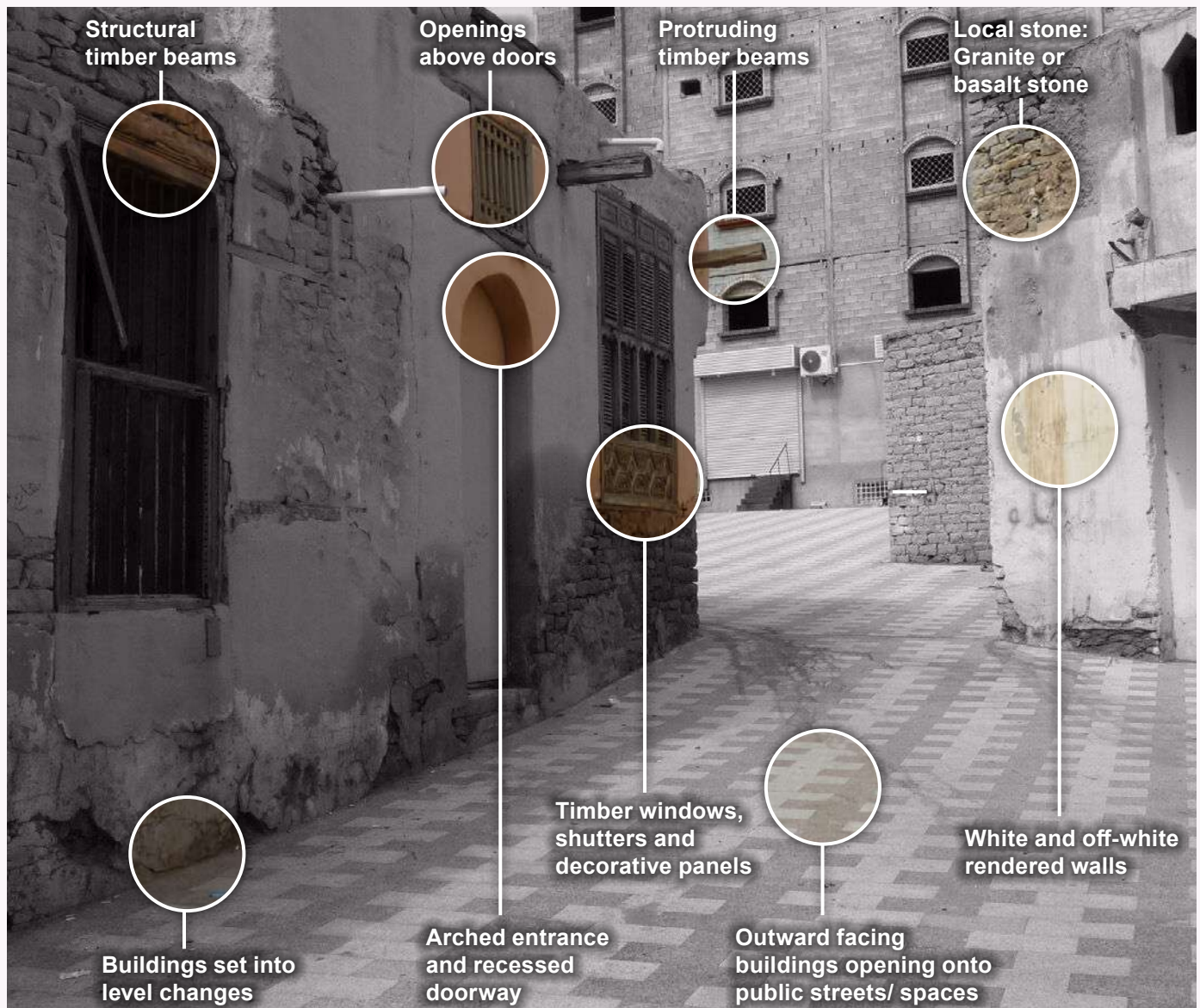


FIG.6 TAIF AL-BALAD HOUSE



II.2

## Settlement character - Al-Balad

The Taif highlands has a verdant setting in the Hejaz mountains, which creates a palette rich with landscape elements such as textured, tonal rock and lush greenery.

Taif's Al-Balad area portrays a strong 'Hijazi Mountain' culture with wind-sculpted rocks as well as abundance of fruits which grow in its fertile valley.

The more recent regular grid development of straight streets and regular intersections creates a permeable urban fabric.

Houses in Taif were designed for efficiency and limited space. Predominantly buildings are outward facing but, unlike in Jeddah, do not have multiple entrances. There is, however, some evidence for courtyards.

To maximize space the houses often share and are configured within an urban block to create a higher density and tight knit urban grain. The urban blocks create an organic pattern of streets and alleys with Baraha (small city squares) formed freely at key points.

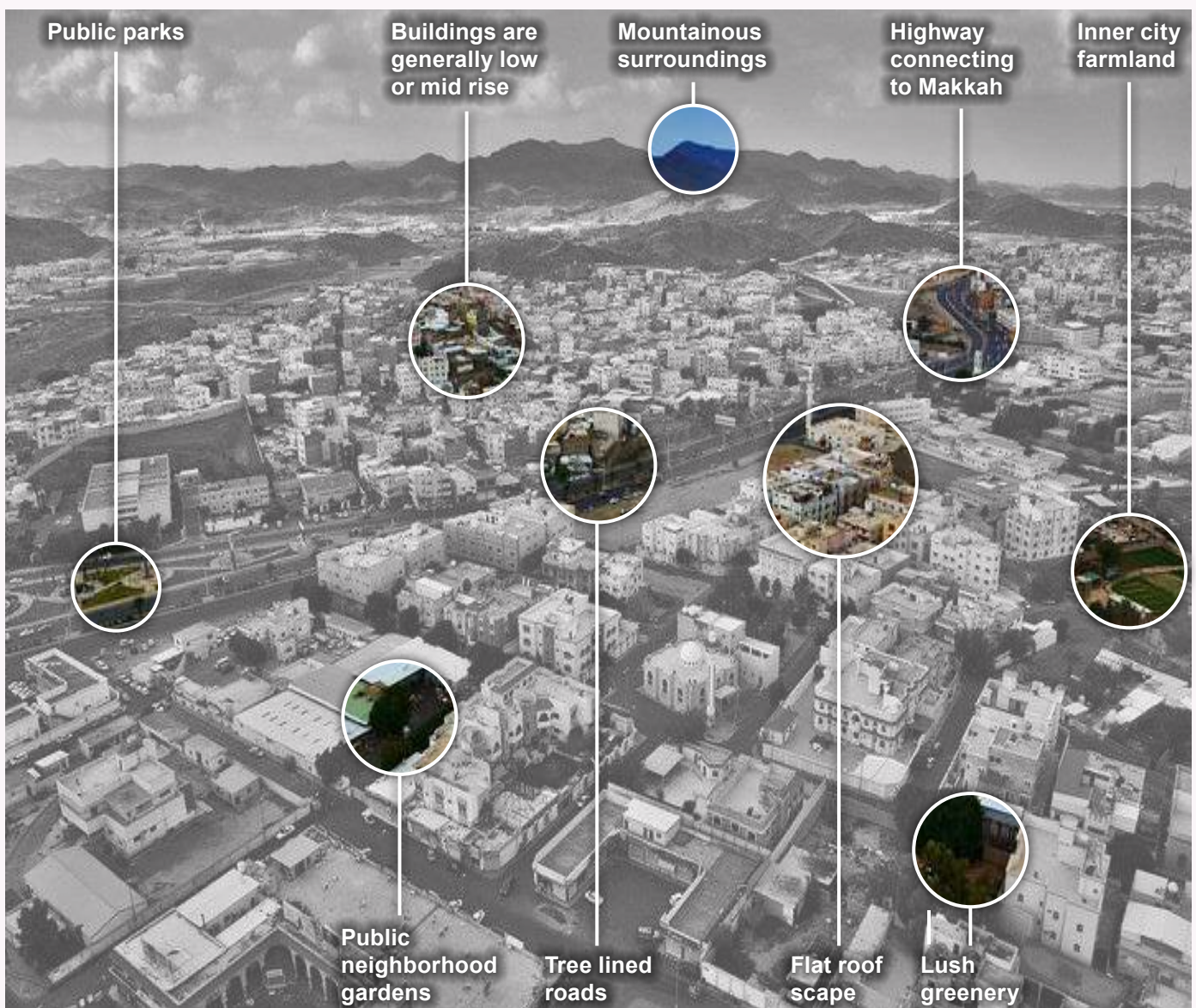


FIG.7 AERIAL VIEW OF TAIF



## II.3 Architectural character - Taif mansions

Taif mansions represent the cities prosperity and reference architectural elements from around the world. These mansions are specific to Taif and are not found in more arid zones. Known as ‘the orchard of Makkah’, Taif is synonymous with greenery and opulence. The architecture of the mansion houses represents an opportunity to explore this architectural character.

Elements include:

- Use of color, often yellows and blues.
- Stucco decorative elements – molded.
- Ornamental windows with arched tops.
- Ornamental double-recessed entrances.
- Grand proportions and use of axial symmetry.
- Neo-classical corning.

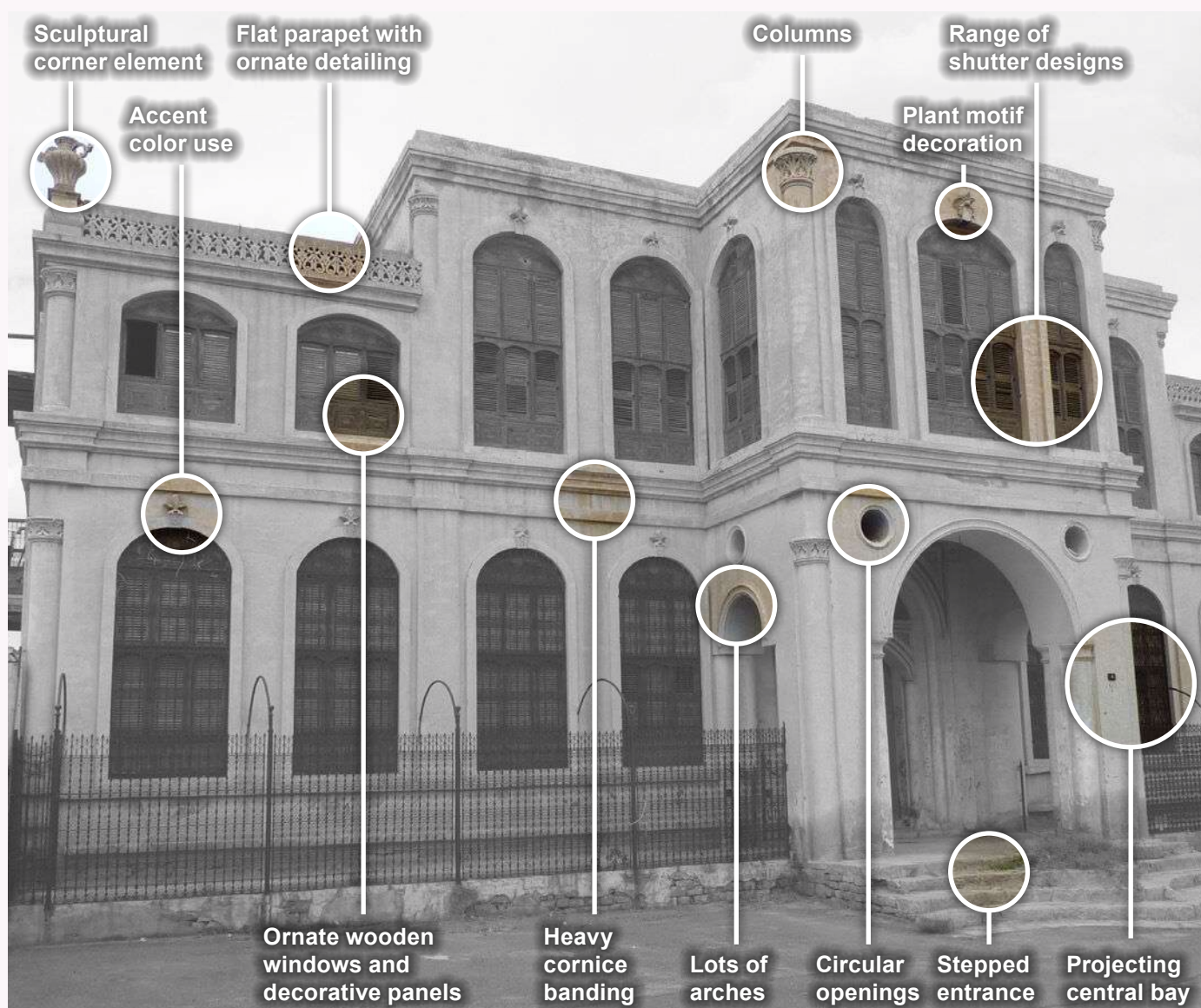


FIG.8 **TAIF MANSION**

II.4

## Settlement character - Taif mansions

The mansion typology was traditionally most common on the outskirts of the old city, with larger houses situated against the backdrop of Taif's distinctive landscape setting.

As the city has grown, the mansion typology has been subsumed within the urban structure, and is a more integrated part of the town scape.

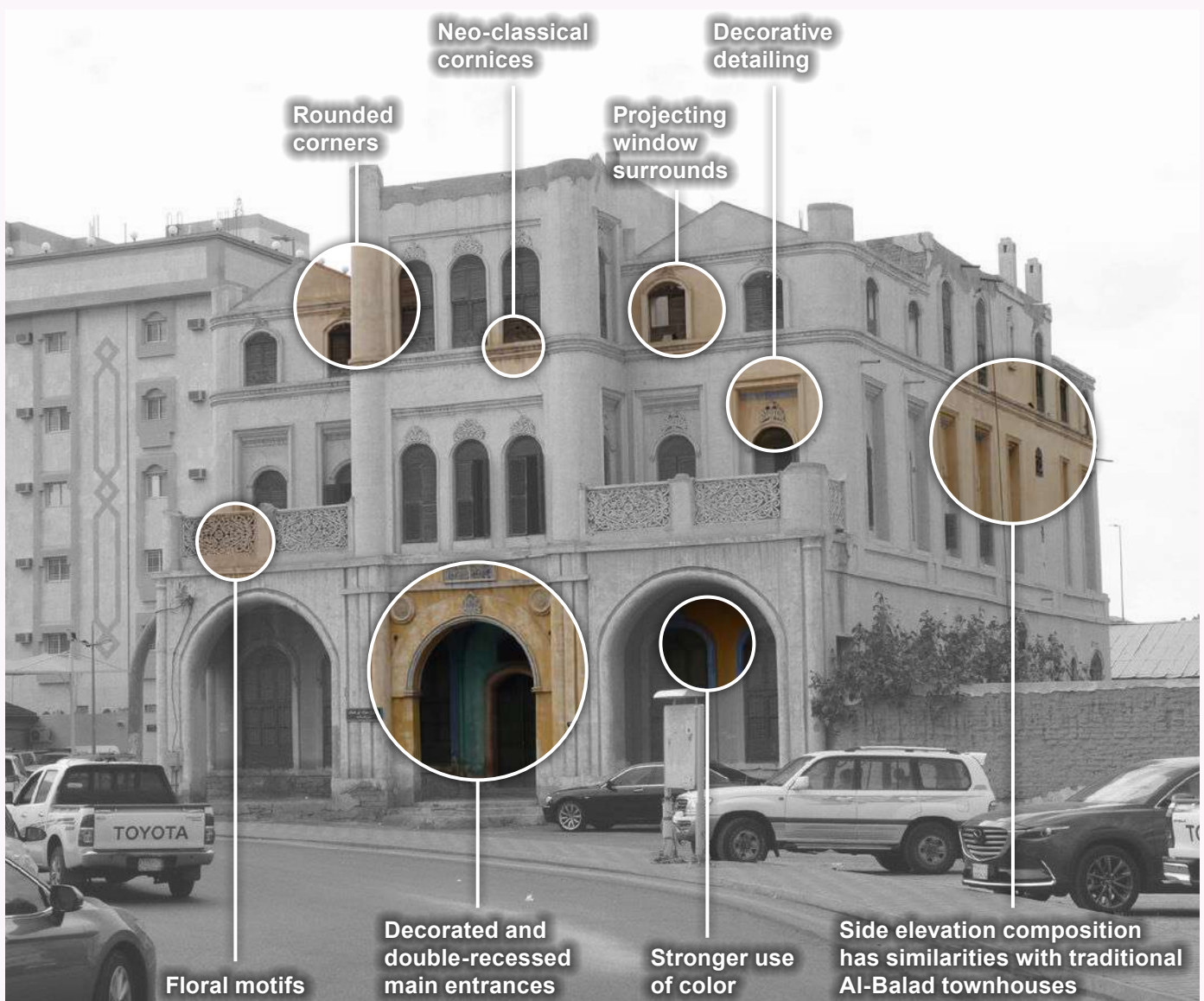


FIG.9 TAIF MANSION (IN TOWN)



### III **Analysis of Taif Highlands Architecture**

The evidence and formal analysis upon which the guidelines are based.

Analysis of the key characteristics of typical buildings illustrates several common architectural traits which form the basis of guidance in Taif Highlands. These are summarized under the following headings.

#### III.1 **Al-Balad typology**

The adjacent studies draw on a range of traditional houses from the Al-Balad area. As noted above, these are associated with the traditional Hejazi style. A range of building sizes are present with formal compositions and decorative wooden panels.

#### III.2 **Al-Balad - aspect ratio**

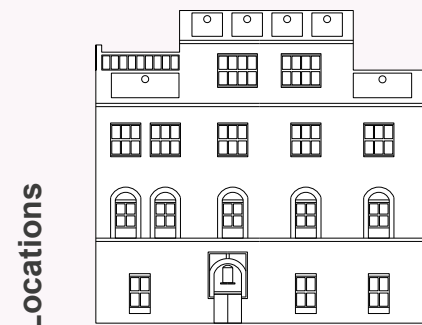
Building typologies vary across the Al-Balad examples. The examples here demonstrate wider proportions than other cities with the Hejazi character. This is indicative of a lower scale of development.

#### III.3 **Al-Balad - solid-to-opening\* ratio**

The examples from Al Balad are characterized by relatively solid facades. With punctuated openings. The proportion of the facade which is void varies from approximately 15% to 31%.

\*For the purpose of these formal studies, openings refer not to transparent glazing or void, but to non-masonry and non-rendered 'infill' surfaces such as screens and roshans.

#### **Asymmetrical simple**



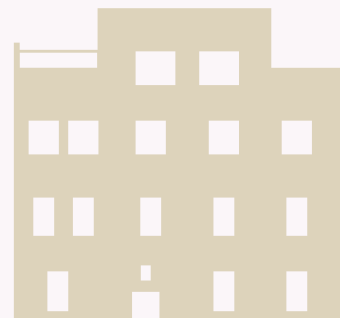
Taif

#### **Width-to-height ratio**



1:1.96

#### **Facade analysis**

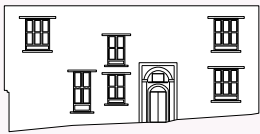


Facade area: 327sqm  
Masonry - 270sqm  
Timber - 57sqm  
17.43% void

FIG. 10 Al-Balad vernacular facade studies

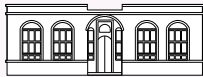
## Vernacular facade studies

### Asymmetrical simple



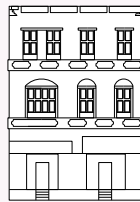
Taif Al-Balad

### Symmetrical ornate



Taif Al-Balad

### Asymmetrical simple



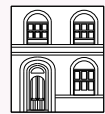
Taif Al-Balad

### Symmetrical ornate



Taif

### Asymmetrical simple



Taif Al-Balad



1:0.5



1:0.36



1:1.45



1:1.1



1:1.15



Facade area: 102sqm  
Masonry - 86sqm  
Timber - 16sqm  
15.69% void



Facade area: 47sqm  
Masonry - 34sqm  
Timber - 13sqm  
27.66% void



Facade area: 90sqm  
Masonry - 67sqm  
Timber - 23sqm  
25.56% void



Facade area: 127sqm  
Masonry - 88sqm  
Timber - 39sqm  
30.71% void



Facade area: 34sqm  
Masonry - 26sqm  
Timber - 10sqm  
29.41% void

### III.4 **Taif mansions - typology**

Taif Mansions are often larger buildings, linked to wealth and prosperity of their inhabitants. They have been influenced by more diverse architectural elements, particularly in relation to decorative elements, ornamental features and the presence of neo-classical features. This typology is distinct to Taif, and presents an opportunity to shape contemporary development with positive reference to vernacular characteristics.

### III.5 **Taif mansions - aspect ratio**

The aspect ratios of these examples vary considerably however, buildings tend to be relatively wide. This means even the tallest examples have a relatively low width to height ratio.

### III.6 **Taif mansions - Solid to opening ratio**

Although the form of openings, detailing and symmetry are different from the Al-Balad examples, the mansion examples share a relatively low void proportion with the Al-Balad typology in the range from 20.5% to 30.8%.

#### **Vertically continuous**



Shubra Palace



1:0.94



Facade area: 714sqm

Masonry - 494sqm

Timber - 220sqm

30.81% void

FIG. 11 Taif mansions vernacular facade studies



## Vernacular facade studies

### Horizontally continuous



Al Kaaki House

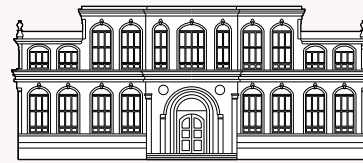


1:0.9



Facade area: 278sqm  
Masonry - 221sqm  
Timber - 57sqm  
20.5% void

### Vertically segmented



Bougari House



1:0.43



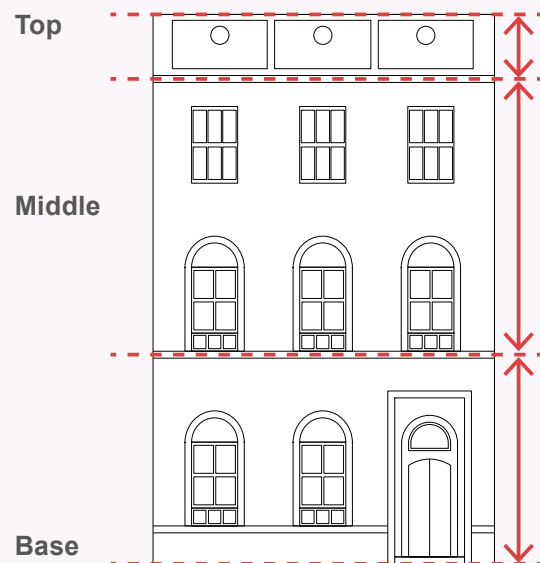
Facade area: 173sqm  
Masonry - 122sqm  
Timber - 51sqm  
29.48% void

### III.7 Horizontal articulations

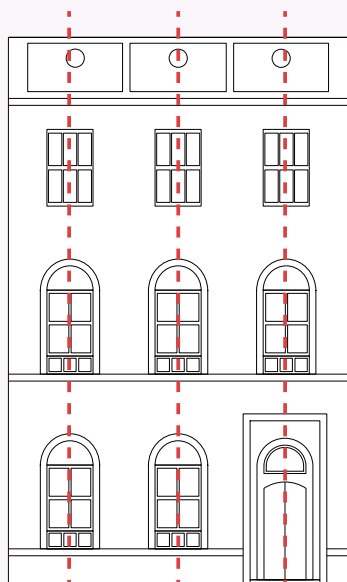
Horizontal elements are frequently used to articulate building proportions by emphasizing story heights and adding interest to the facade. Horizontal elements are present in both more contemporary and traditional buildings. The presence of cornices often signals a tripartite separation of base, middle and top, sometimes marking all three elements in the facade.

### III.8 Symmetry and formal asymmetry

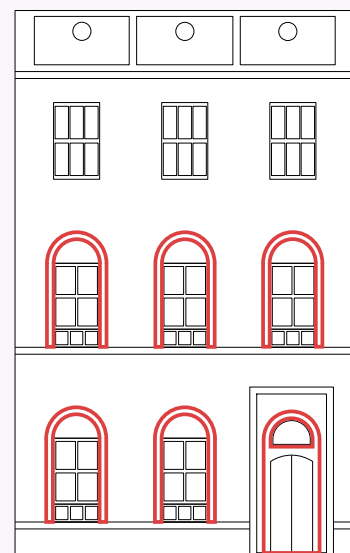
Smaller or background buildings are most likely to incorporate asymmetry in their facades, driven by offset positioning of doorways, but retaining a sense of formality. Larger, grander mansion buildings tend to be symmetrical, with emphasized, central doorways and vertical articulation of circulation.



**FIG. 13** Horizontal articulation  
Facades are typically articulated by horizontal cornicing bands running below windows



**FIG. 12** Legible vertical bays  
Most facade have repeating and bay elements on an asymmetric composition



**FIG. 14** Multiple arches  
Most facades have repeating arched elements for windows and doors with protruding surrounds for windows

### III.9 Legible vertical bays

Facades are characterized by a legible vertical arrangement of bays. Buildings tend to be symmetrical with occasional use of asymmetry.

### III.10 Recessed entrances

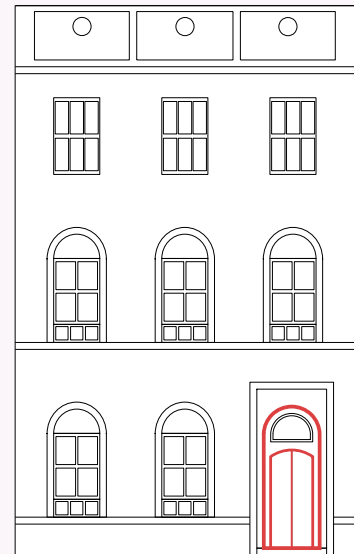
Many facades benefit from a focal, double-recessed arched entrance with an opening above the lintel.

### III.11 Circular openings

Circular or elliptical openings often occur within flat parapets in the top portion of facades.

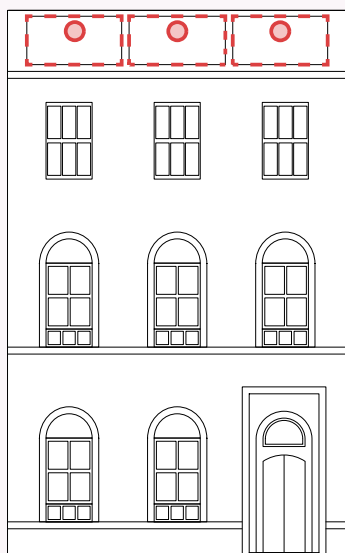
### III.12 Prevalence of arches

Arch top windows and recesses including doors are a common feature. This repeating characteristic is accentuated by protruding window surrounds.



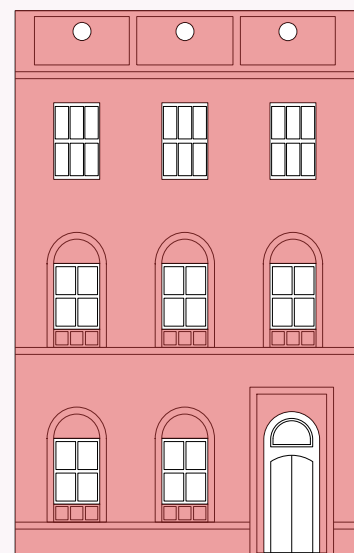
**FIG. 16** Recessed entrances

Many facades have a focal, recessed, arched entrance with an opening above the lintel.



**FIG. 15** Circular parapet openings

Many facades have circular or elliptical openings running along the top of the building



**FIG. 17** Solid with punctuation

Fenestration formed as punched hole openings within solid load-bearing masonry walls



## IV Evolution

The connection of contemporary design with traditional forms to strengthen the architectural character of a place.

### IV.1 Connecting past to future

The guidelines aim to provide architectural roots for contemporary buildings so that they connect to their historical context, draw upon their local culture and reflect the spirit of a place.

At the same time, a balance between continuity and innovation is needed. Advances in construction technology, material science, patterns of development and specifications for new building uses require buildings that can accommodate these changes while preserving the essence of the local architecture.

### IV.2 Connecting environment to form

The guidelines also aspire to connect buildings to their geography. Physical context has traditionally influenced the materials available, the patterns of development and the climate response required from architecture.

These environmental constraints have created a matrix of related, regional building typologies. The guidelines aim to provide a layer of stylistic influence to accentuate these regional building types into distinct characters that can be gathered into a diverse yet related national ‘family portrait’ of architectural character across the Kingdom.



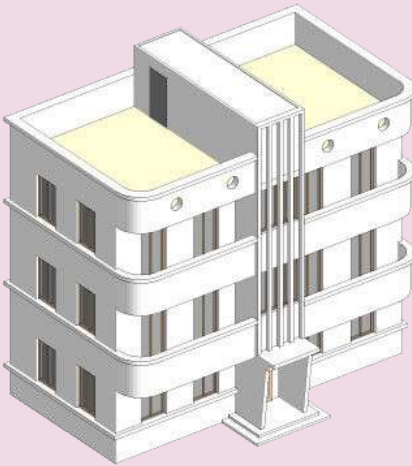
FIG. 18 Character equation for Taif Highlands (after Ishteeaque & Al-Said 2008)



Traditional building

## TRADITIONAL

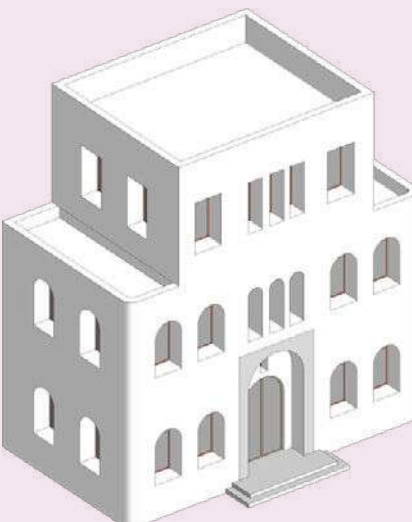
Traditional buildings in Taif Highlands are defined by clear horizontal articulation, cornices, strong vertical articulation of windows, flat parapets with circular openings, chamfered corners, presence of arches and recessed entrances, usually central in larger buildings.



Transitional building

## TRANSITIONAL

Transitional buildings offer a simplified approach to fenestration and doorways with fewer arches. Cornices are more common features on the facade, with centralized circulation emphasized through vertical articulation above the doorway. Chamfers replaced by harder edges.



Contemporary building

## CONTEMPORARY

Contemporary buildings embrace strong vertical articulation and horizontal banding of windows and cornices. Opportunities exist to accentuate fenestration across the base and middle layers with grander arched forms, to create grander doorways, and make full use of roof space.

FIG. 19 Evolution of styles

## V How to use the guidelines

The guidelines have been organized to present the rules of architectural character in a clear, efficient and useful way.

### V.1 Chapter organization

The first chapters sort the guidelines into different dimensions that help define architectural character:

- 1 **Key features** - The most essential characteristics for the architectural character.
- 2 **Composition** - The rules by which buildings are shaped and elements are related to one another.
- 3 **Elements** - The individual parts that are the building blocks of the architectural character.
- 4 **Material and color** - The prevalent materials used and color range found within the architectural character.
- 5 **Pattern** - Common motifs and patterns used in the traditional craftsmanship and material culture of the local architecture.

These chapters are followed by two sections focused on guideline implementation:

- 6 **Applying the architectural character** - Guidance for the proper interpretation and use of architectural style in new buildings.
- 7 **Worked examples** - Design studies that illustrate the use of architectural character at different scales and strengths.

The document concludes with:

- 8 **Public Realm** - An overview of public realm character in Taif Highlands.

### V.2 Guideline formatting

Individual guidelines are formatted graphically to make them more useful:

- 1 **Chapter number and heading** - Guidelines are gathered into major categories for ease of reference.
- 2 **Guideline number and heading** - Guidelines are given a unique 2-digit decimal number and heading for ease of reference and to provide precision in enforcement.
- 3 **General description** - Descriptive text to introduce the guideline topic.
- 4 **Guideline actions** - Instructions clearly identifying the actions to be taken by designers. Each action is numbered for ease of reference and to provide precision in enforcement.
- 5 **Rationale** - Set in colored text and highlighted by a side bar are the objectives and reasons for the guideline. This gives the applicant an opportunity to propose designs that meet the rationale through alternative ways. Alternatives require the approval of the relevant local authority.
- 6 **Illustrations** - Illustrations, photos and diagrams that help explain the guidelines. They are examples only: where contradictions arise between illustrations and guideline text, the text shall overrule the illustration.

The items above correspond to the figure on the facing page.



Link to the  
contents page

1 Chapter number  
and heading

2 Guideline  
number and  
heading

3 General  
description

4 Guideline  
actions

5 Rationale

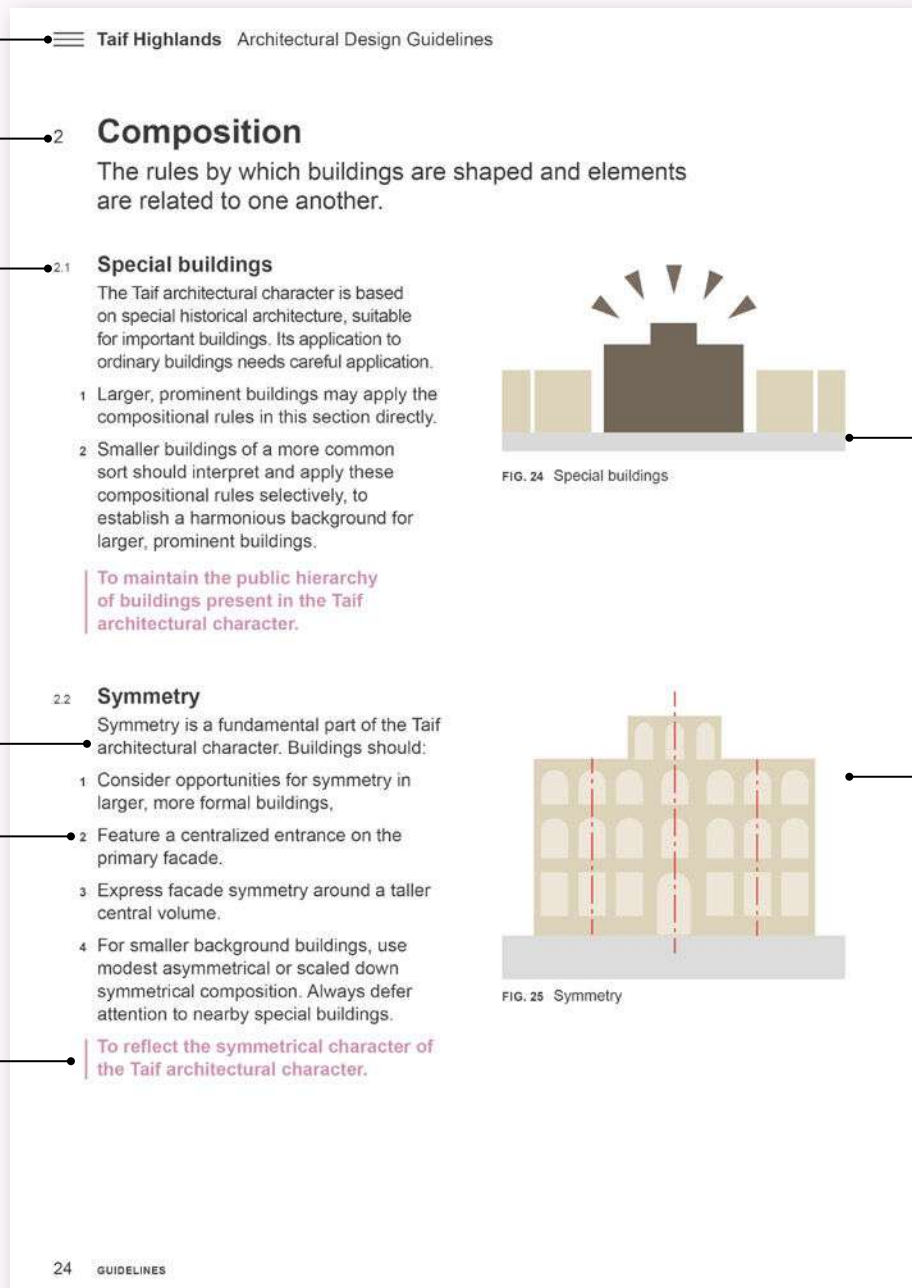


FIG. 20 Typical guideline structure

# GUIDELINES

## 1 Key features

The most important attributes essential for conveying the architectural character of Taif Highlands.

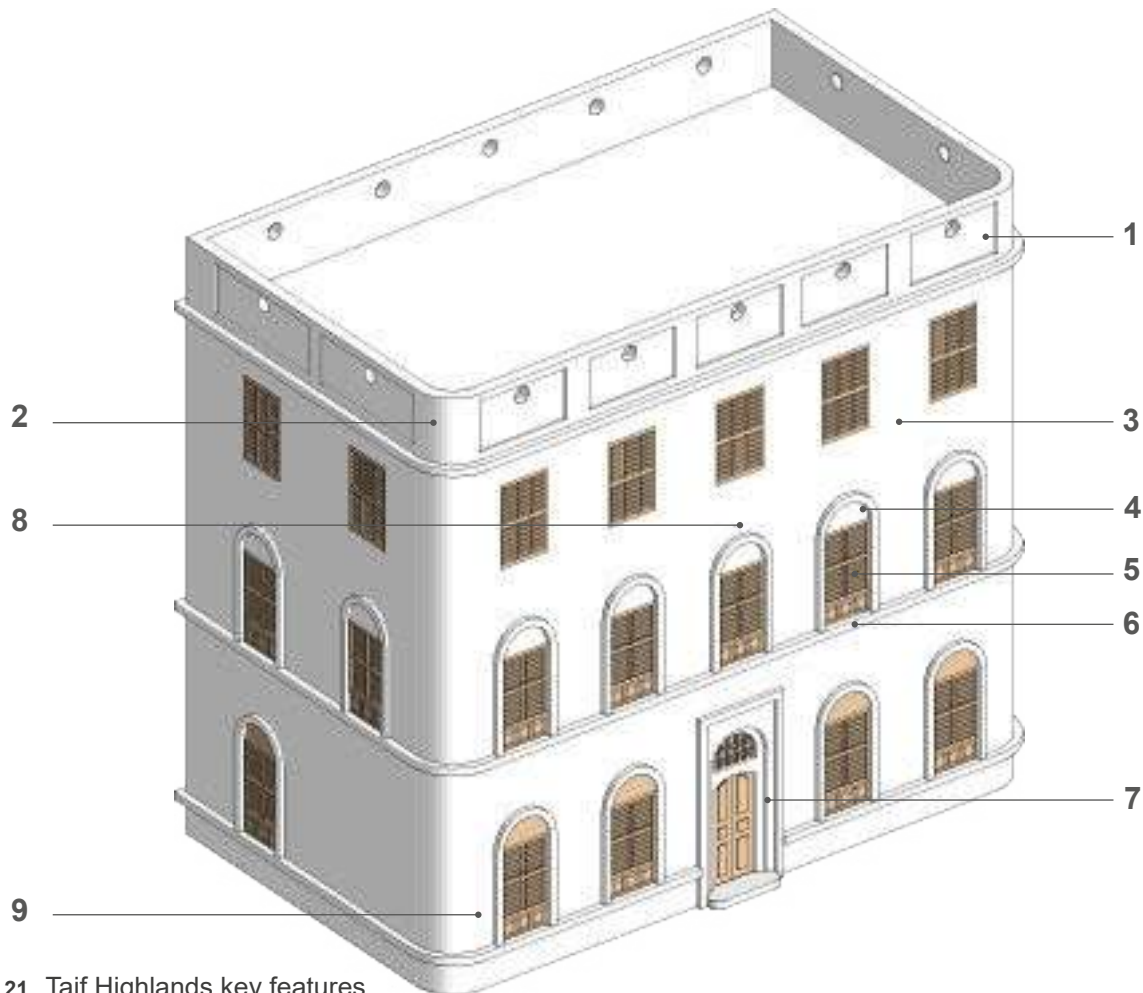


FIG. 21 Taif Highlands key features

### Key features:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Flat parapets with elliptical or circular openings</li> <li>2 Rounded corners and corner chamfers</li> <li>3 Buildings are traditionally rendered white or off-white</li> <li>4 Arch top windows and recesses</li> <li>5 Timber windows, shutters and decorative panels</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 Projecting window surrounds, cornices and bands</li> <li>7 Decorated and double-recessed main entrances</li> <li>8 Symmetrical building forms</li> <li>9 Formal compositions on front facades</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

1.1

## Character summary

The vernacular character of the Taif Highlands architecture is strongly connected to the particular environmental conditions and historical evolution of the area.

Settlements such as Taif, have been shaped by connections to water, and their location on trading routes, with travelers bringing a range of outside multi-cultural influences including goods and skills. Although historic cores have been redeveloped over time, ownership patterns mean that traditional organic street patterns have endured. These often reflect a response to the prevailing climate conditions, and the needs of the traders who resided in the settlements.

The character of many settlements, including Ash Shafa and Alhada, have been strongly influenced by the relationship to the landscape, including farmland and orchards, especially important to the region. As noted in the introduction, Taif benefits from an attractive temperate climate. This led to the settlement growing as a location for summer houses for wealthy residents of the ruling classes.

This has resulted in a unique range of building types and characters. There is evidence of Hejazi influences in the traditional Al Balad typologies in Taif, with a reliance on basalt stone. Over time, the growth of larger, more formal mansion buildings has become a key characteristic. The Taif mansions demonstrate post colonial influences and characteristics which will be vital in informing future design of dwellings and non-residential buildings in the character area, alongside ongoing environmental design considerations including flood risk management and climate resilience.



FIG. 22 Taif townhouse



FIG. 23 Taif Al Balad house



## 2 Composition

The rules by which buildings are shaped and elements are related to one another.

### 2.1 Special buildings

The Taif architectural character is based on special historical architecture, suitable for important buildings. Its application to ordinary buildings needs careful application.

- 1 Larger, prominent buildings may apply the compositional rules in this section directly.
- 2 Smaller buildings of a more common sort should interpret and apply these compositional rules selectively, to establish a harmonious background for larger, prominent buildings.

**To maintain the public hierarchy of buildings present in the Taif architectural character.**



FIG. 24 Special buildings

### 2.2 Symmetry

Symmetry is a fundamental part of the Taif architectural character. Buildings should:

- 1 Consider opportunities for symmetry in larger, more formal buildings,
- 2 Feature a centralized entrance on the primary facade.
- 3 Express facade symmetry around a taller central volume.
- 4 For smaller background buildings, use modest asymmetrical or scaled down symmetrical composition. Always defer attention to nearby special buildings.

**To reflect the symmetrical character of the Taif architectural character.**

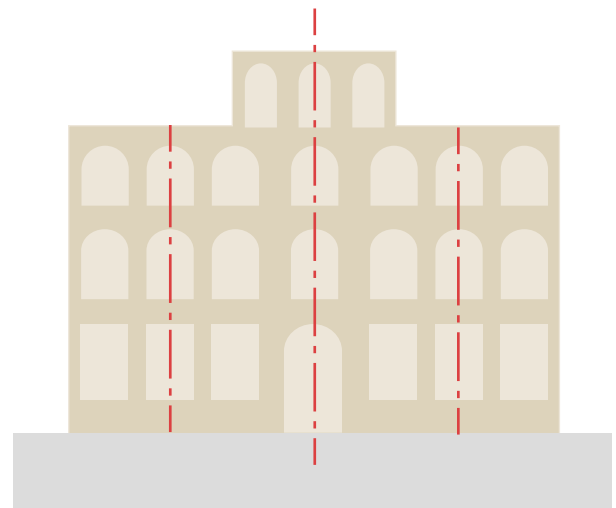


FIG. 25 Symmetry

### 2.3 Solid facades

The Taif architectural character is comprised of well grounded buildings with solid wall planes and formally arranged openings. New buildings should:

- 1 Comprise of solid facades with regular, formal openings.
- 2 Align wall piers between different floors to express stability of the facade.
- 3 Use thicker walls at lower floors than at upper floors.

**To accentuate the gravity and formality of the Taif architectural character.**

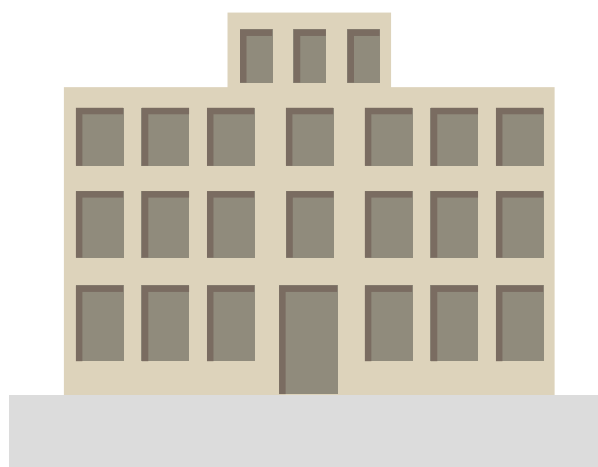


FIG. 26 Regular, formal openings

### 2.4 Vertical bays

Buildings demonstrate a strong degree of vertical alignment. Buildings should:

- 1 Align openings on different floor levels to create vertical bays.
- 2 Use a hierarchy of vertical bays to create symmetry on facades.

**To establish the facade scale and rhythm of the Taif architectural character .**

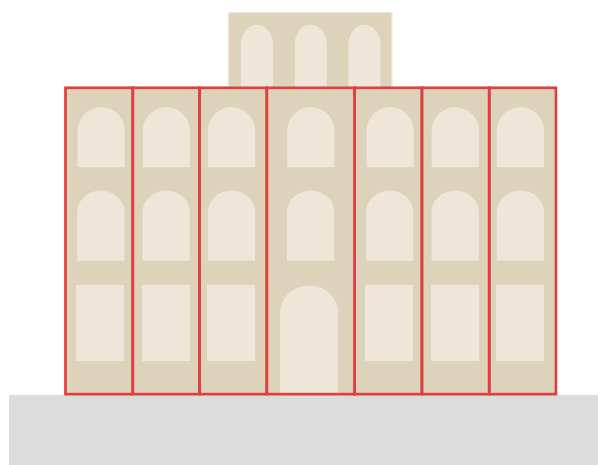


FIG. 27 Legible vertical bays

### 2.5 Horizontal articulation

Horizontal facade elements are a distinct feature. Buildings should:

- 1 Clearly express the top, middle and base of buildings by separating them with horizontal articulation.
- 2 Horizontal articulation may be comprised of cornices, changes in opening style between levels, or differences in wall thickness and surface detailing.

**To reinforce the horizontal tri-partite character of the Taif architectural character.**

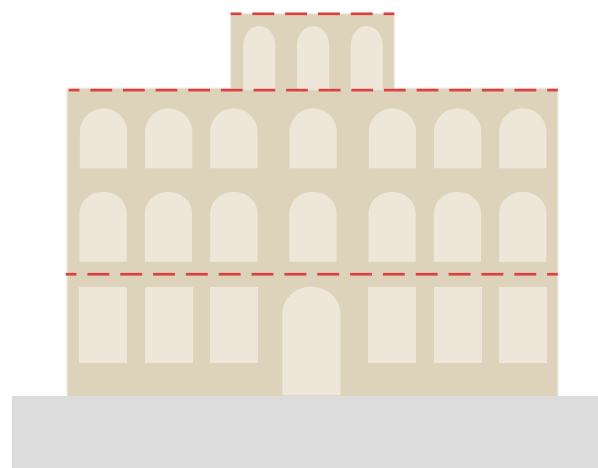


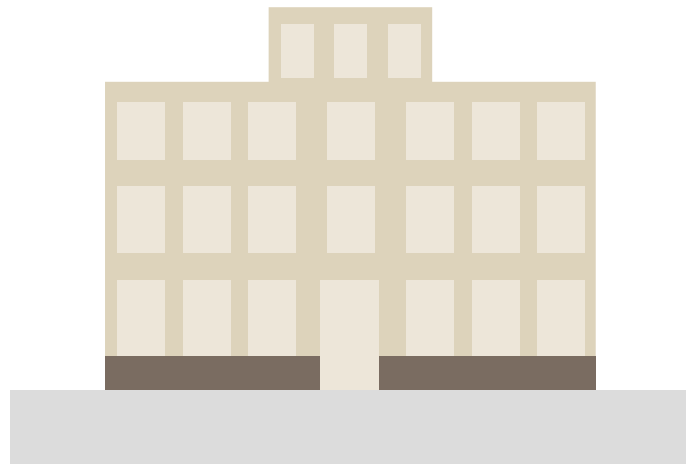
FIG. 28 Horizontal articulation

## 2.6 **Base details**

The Taif architectural character projects a sense of stability and firm footing on the ground. Buildings should:

- 1 Express thicker walls and/or a footing or knee wall detail at the ground floor level.
- 2 Use robust materials and finishes where the ground floor faces the public realm.
- 3 Use careful detailing and well-crafted features on ground floor openings (for example through the use of finer materials or carved panels set into the openings).
- 4 Accentuate primary entrances through central location and design detailing (for example the use of porticos, arches, and recesses).
- 5 Consider the use of colonnades where appropriate.

**To express the the stable and firm character of the Taif architectural character at the ground level.**



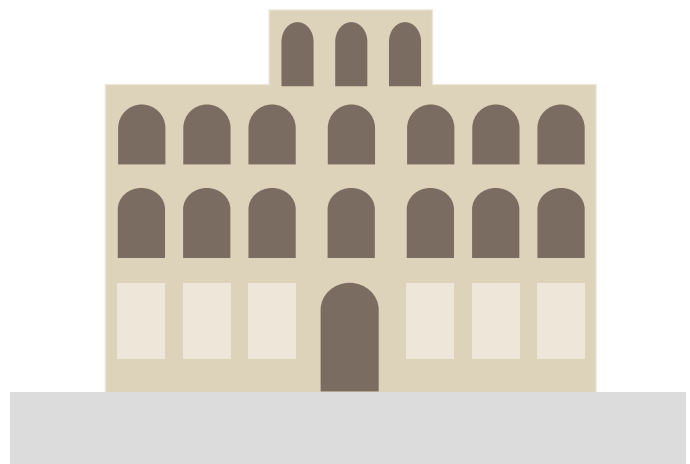
**FIG. 29** Strong base expression at ground floor

## 2.7 **Arched openings**

Openings in Taif often feature arches. New design should:

- 1 Incorporate a high proportion of arched tops on openings and recesses.
- 2 Use ornamentation (for example, protruding surrounds, carved wooden panelling) to accentuate important openings.

**To reflect the use of arches found in the Taif architectural character.**



**FIG. 30** Arched openings



## 2.8 Roofscape

The frontal roofline of Taif buildings is an important location of architectural expression.

- 1 Parapets and top level volumes should create a symmetrical silhouette on primary facades.
- 2 Parapets may be detailed by rectangular recesses, openings, or ornamentation that are aligned with the vertical bays of the facade. Parapet openings are typically circular or elliptical.
- 3 Consider rooftop accommodation and external amenities in accessible terraces, co-ordinated with the symmetrical composition of the roofline.
- 4 **To define a distinct, symmetrical top to the buildings, reflecting the architectural character.**

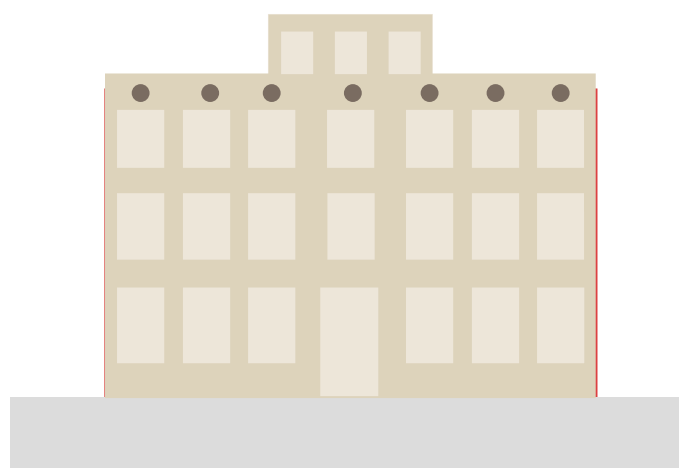


FIG. 32 Parapets with circular openings

## 2.9 Multi-aspect buildings

The Taif architectural character is expressed in stand-alone buildings that work as objects (rather than background) in the townscape. They can typically be seen from more than one side and often serve as visual focal points along the street.

- 1 Is the status of the primary facade clearly expressed through symmetrical composition and the central location of the primary entrance?
- 2 Are secondary facades and primary facades unified in detailing and style (for example, through related window types and continuous horizontal details) to express a holistic object building?
- 3 Is the surrounding open space designed to enhance the visibility of the building and flatter its design?

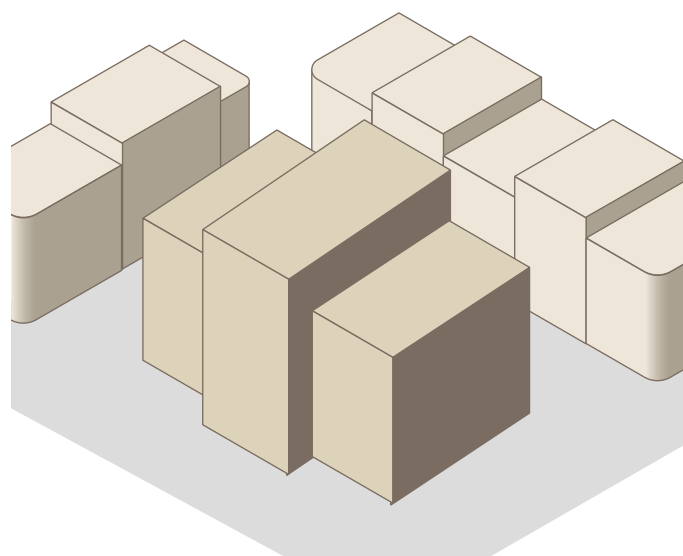


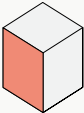
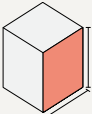


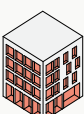
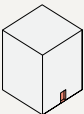
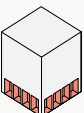
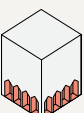
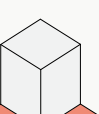
FIG. 31 Standalone, multi-aspect building

**To create object-like, multi-aspect buildings that anchor the townscape.**



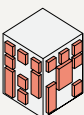
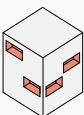

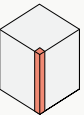
3 Elements

The individual parts that are the building blocks of the Taif Highlands architecture.


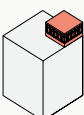
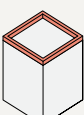
TAB. 1 Taif Highlands architectural elements

GENERAL ELEMENTS		
	<b>Key characteristics</b>	Refer to source introduction for key characteristics of the Taif Highlands area on page 22.
	<b>Facade proportion</b>	Massing is symmetric, can be vertical or horizontal in proportion. Massing should respond to context and history, have a compact form and strong geometries.
	<b>Window-to-wall %</b>	Both Al-Balad examples and mansion types share a relatively low void proportion (20 to 30%).
	<b>Opening proportions</b>	Window openings should be vertically rectangular with width to height ratio between 1:2 and 1:3.
	<b>Composition</b>	Horizontal elements are frequently used to articulate building proportions. The presence of cornices often signals a tripartite separation of base,middle and top, sometimes marking all three elements in the facade.
BASE ELEMENTS		
	<b>Entrances</b>	Primary entrances may be under a colonnade or port cochere. An accentuated entrance should be provided at the center of larger buildings. Consider the use of colonnades for retail frontages. Openings should fit into a symmetrical composition across the facade.
	<b>Shop fronts</b>	No externally mounted rolling shutters; recessed shutters preferred. If awnings and shades are used, they should be secondary to the main facade and be demountable. For areas of historic character, sideways folding shutters flush mounted with the building facade are preferred.
	<b>Arcades</b>	Where a building is located on a gateway route or other significant route designated by the planning authority, buildings should provide an arcade at the ground floor to create a more walkable city and enhance the public realm.
	<b>Curtilage</b>	The exterior ground floor of buildings, including the covered exterior space of arcades, should seek material and design integration with the surrounding public realm. The interface between the public realm and the curtilage should be universally accessible, with no sudden changes in level, single steps or other trip hazards. Careful attention should be paid to ensuring a positive pedestrian experience by improving the microclimate around buildings.

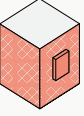
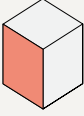
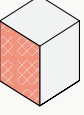
## MIDDLE ELEMENTS

	<b>Wall articulation</b>	Buildings should incorporate horizontal articulation and cornice bands, where vertically aligned rows of bands surround the building to reinforce the legibility of a clear base, middle and top of the building.
	<b>Windows and Openings</b>	Window and opening design are subject to a large number of compositional guidelines. See compositional guidelines. Opening should take up 40-60% of the overall facade.
	<b>Projecting elements</b>	Terraces along the facade can be considered either on their own or in combination with a colonnade.
	<b>Recessed elements</b>	Set openings within rectangular recesses on otherwise flat parapets. Double-recessed arched entrances. Arch top windows and recesses.
	<b>Shutters and Shading</b>	Shutters should be made out of solid wood panels, with a contemporary interpretation of traditional patterns. Ironmongery can be used functionally and for decoration.
	<b>Corner features</b>	Generally square corners. Corner features can be used to assist in architectural wayfinding, create 'urban marker' buildings with increased in height at the corner, mark main entrances, and provide variation in the streetwall height. Corbeled/chamfered corners are permitted where a building has two primary facades.

## TOP ELEMENTS

	<b>Roofscape</b>	Flat rooflines are required.
	<b>Rooftop Elements</b>	Roofscape rooms or terraces might be appropriate with a setback from the facade.
	<b>Parapets</b>	Parapets may be articulated. Rooftop mechanical equipment including rainwater management infrastructure should be set back min. 4m from the edge of the building primary and secondary frontage and properly screened behind a parapet, or in an enclosure, to avoid visibility from the main road.

## OTHER ELEMENTS AND ORNAMENTATION

	<b>Materiality</b>	See expanded guideline on "Materials and Colors" in guidelines section 4
	<b>Color</b>	See expanded guideline on "Materials and Colors" in guidelines section 4
	<b>Pattern</b>	See expanded guideline on "Patterns" in guidelines section 5



## Top



Curved masonry corners



Curved parapet



Curved parapet



Circular openings



Elliptical openings



Small openings

## Middle



Blocked-in overpanel



Traditional arched window



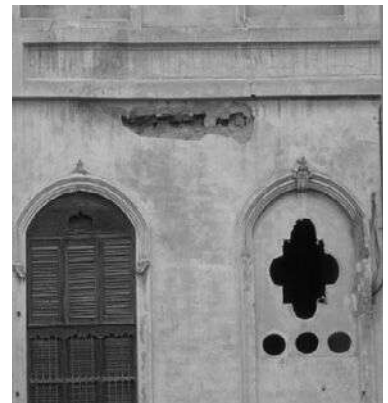
Decorative arched window



Articulated cornice lines



Masonry cornice lines



Stucco covered cornicing lines

FIG. 33 Examples for top and middle elements

## Base



Arched masonry entrance



Ornamented arched entrance



Multi-stepped reveal entrance



Traditional arch details



Entrance with roshan



Recessed door

## Ornaments and other elements



Undercut, chamfered corner



Chamfered corner



Undercut, chamfered corner



Crafted wooden window



Ornamented wooden window



Ornamented wooden window

FIG. 34 Examples for base and other elements

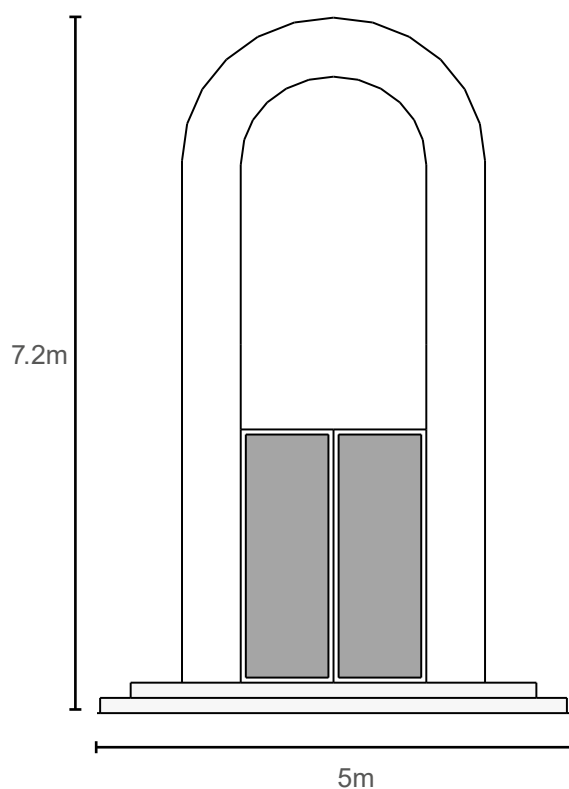
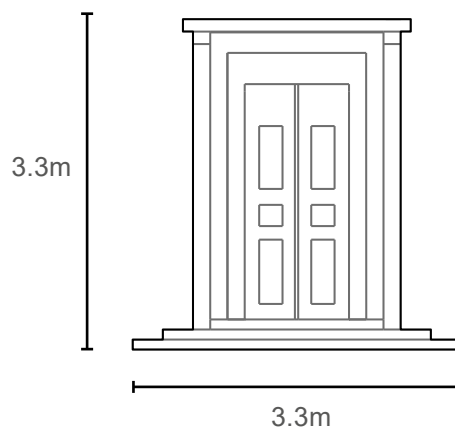
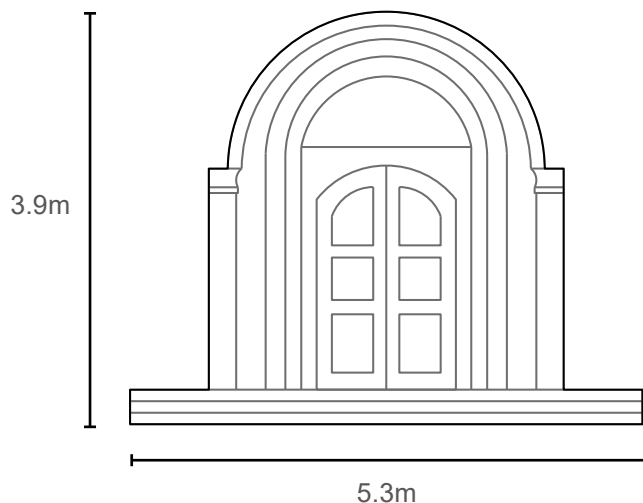
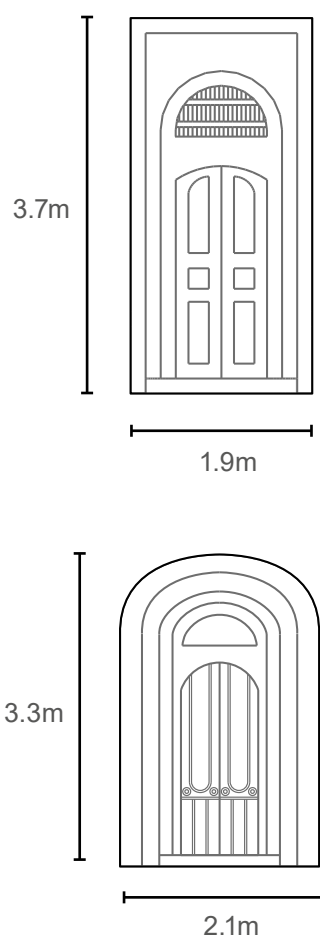


### 3.1 Doors and entrances

Doorways are a distinctive part of the Taif Highlands architecture. New buildings should:

- 1 Incorporate clearly marked primary entrances, with a threshold separating the public and private realms.
- 2 Provide double recessed doorways with arch top to add depth and interest, and create a sense of arrival.
- 3 Include architectural articulation above entrances, potentially aligned vertically with the expression of the core or staircase on the facade.
- 4 Consider staggering building entrances rather than facing each other across the street to encourage privacy.

**To create a strong sense of symmetry and formality.**



**FIG. 35** Traditional door elements



### 3.2 Windows and openings

Windows and openings in Taif Highlands have a very distinctive character reflecting the neoclassical influence on the mansion typology. New buildings should:

- 1 Provide a fenestration pattern which corresponds directly with the interior layout of the rooms in relation to the number, size, depth and orientation of the windows.
- 2 Consider use of wooden windows which are flush with the facade, including metal elements where appropriate.
- 3 Find opportunities to incorporate intricate ornamental windows on significant public buildings.
- 4 Use a combination of wooden shutters, and on rarer occasions, roshan's
- 5 Use of arched windows, window frames, and/or colonnades.
- 6 Incorporate local patterns and colors on arched frames.

**To establish consistent approaches to fenestration across buildings in the architectural character area**

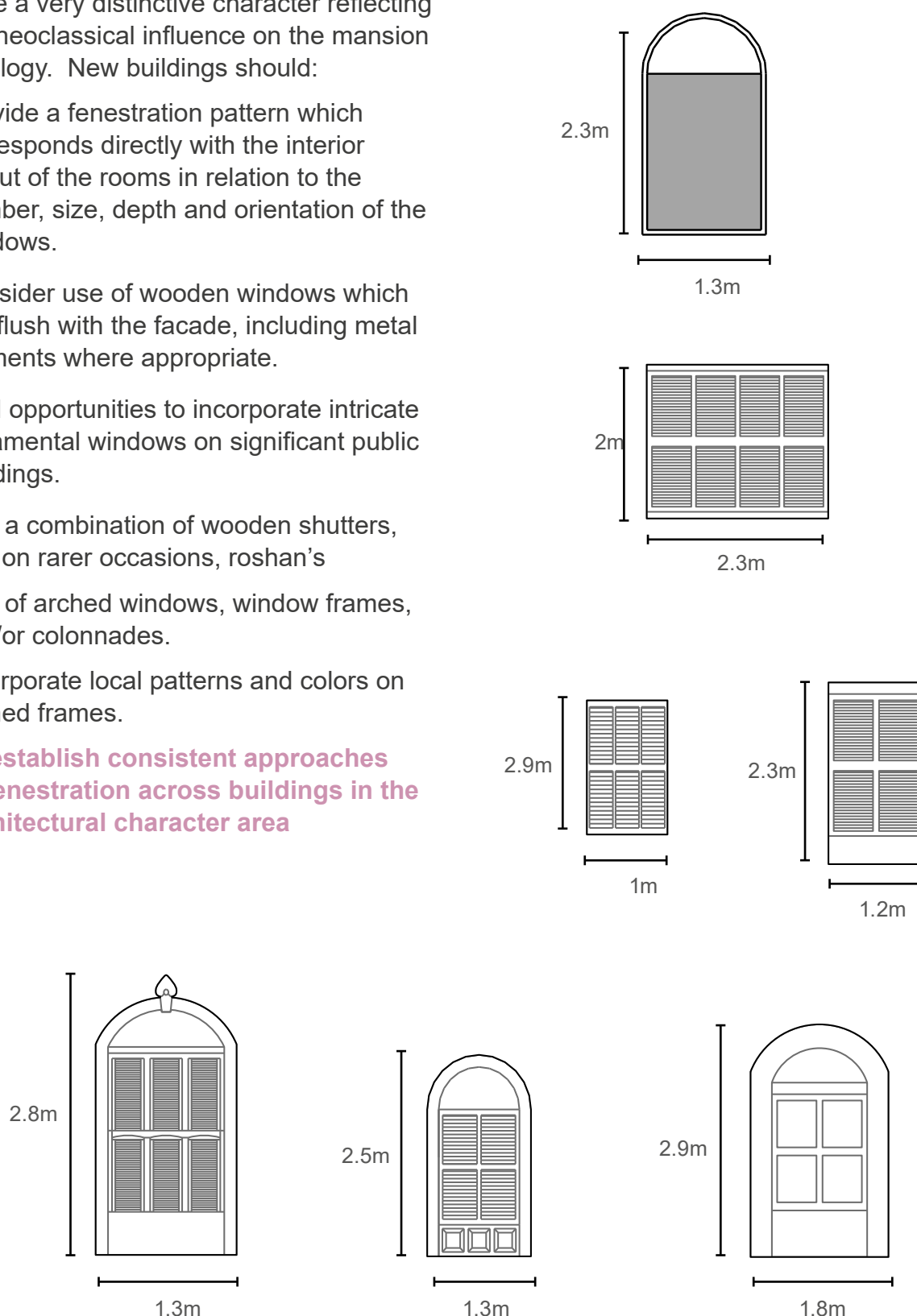


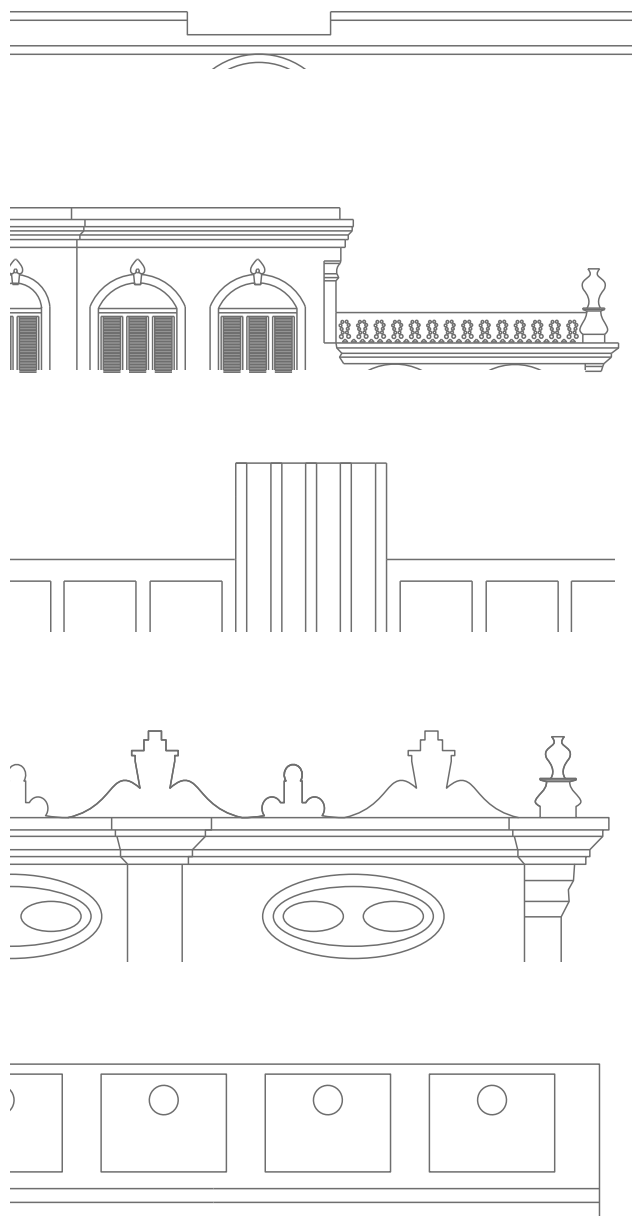
FIG. 36 Traditional window elements

### 3.3 Rooftop elements

Key rooftop elements include the following elements. New buildings should:

- 1 Defined by flat, simple parapets.
- 2 Consider the inclusion of small circular openings within rectangular recesses to mark building tops, above a cornice line.
- 3 Consider the approach to the activation of roofspace. Although traditional buildings tend to be unoccupied, opportunities for terraces or outdoor rooms should be pursued in more contemporary forms.
- 4 Embrace more decorative parapets in special cases.
- 5 Allow the expression of centralized vertical cores to break the facade in some buildings.

**To develop a consistent approach to roofscape in new development.**



**FIG. 37** Traditional roof top elements

3.4

## Other elements

Other key elements include cornicing which is a common feature used to emphasize horizontality and tripartite articulation across the building.

To embed other elements which are frequently part of the overall composition of buildings

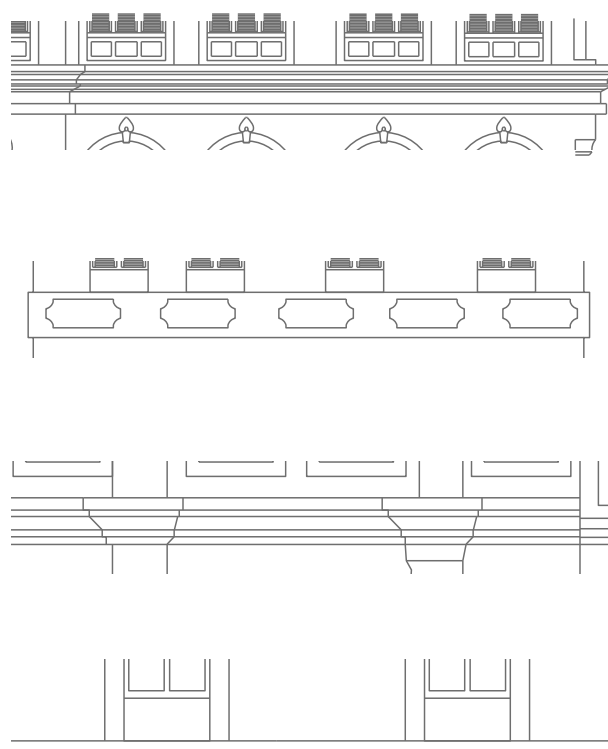


FIG. 38 Other elements



## 4 Colors and materials

The prevalent materials used and color range characteristic of traditional architecture of the Taif Highlands.

Traditional character was defined by a relatively limited palette, with a range of complementary natural colors, with the tone of original building materials retained.

The arrival of mansion houses signaled a more flamboyant use of imported craftsmanship, off-white buildings and accents of brighter colors as a display of wealth.

- 1 Use a primarily white or off-white colour for wall facades for special buildings.
- 2 Use natural colors of local materials and landscape colours in ordinary bulidings.
- 3 Highlight important openings with elements in a different color, material, or special craftsmanship (for example roshans, decorative stucco elements, expressive woodwork carving).
- 4 Differentiate special and important buildings with accent colors on architectural elements.
- 5 Avoid reflective, luminescent, or similar finishes.

To respond to the environmental character and the colors of the Taif architectural character.

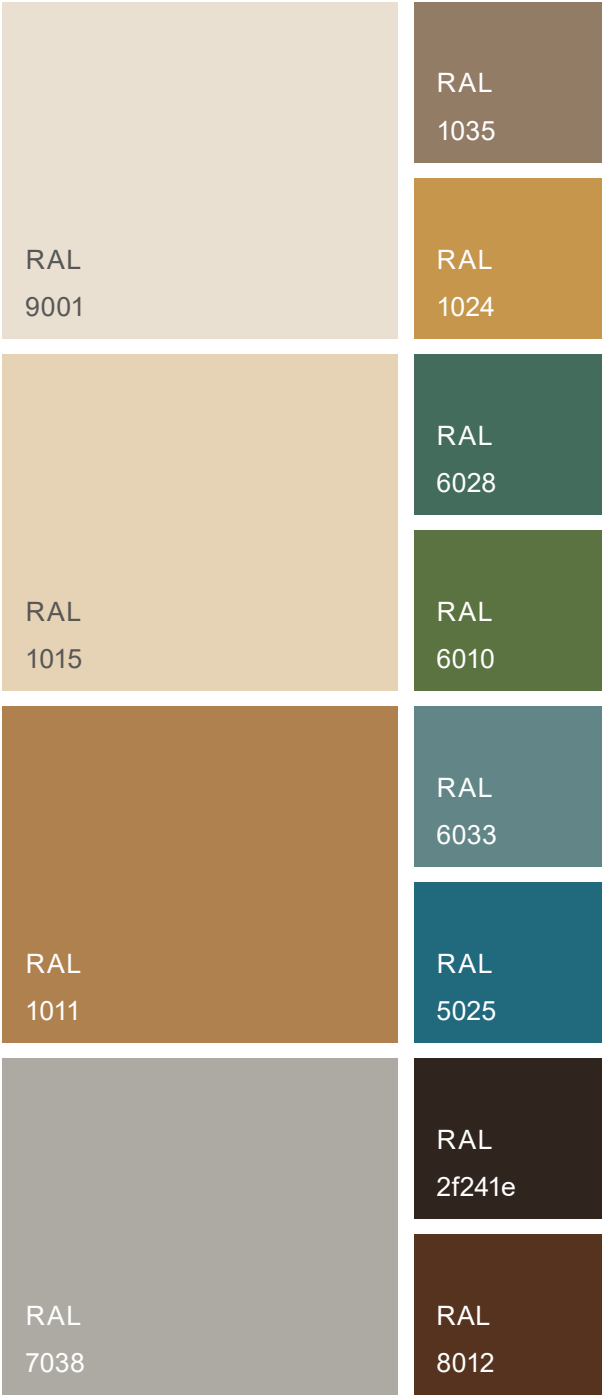
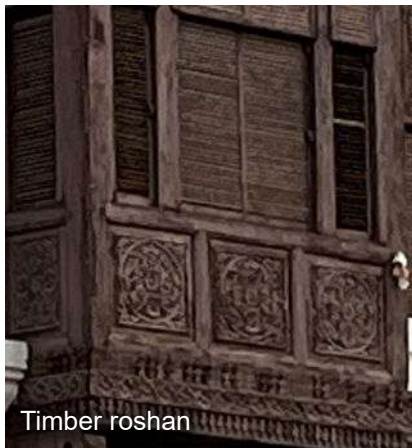


FIG. 39 RAL color palette

RAL codes are part of a universal color-matching system used to provide consistency in architectural finishes. It is recommended that teams verify colors with a physical fan deck. For more information visit [www.ral-farben.de/en/](http://www.ral-farben.de/en/)



Timber roshan



Rendered wall



Timber and masonry



Rendered white wall



Wooden shutters



Off white rendered wall



Decorative timber panel



Local stone



Focal entrance color



Stone detailing



Stone patination



Dry stone wall



Ornate details on windows



Bright accents around doorways

FIG.40 **COLORS AND MATERIALS**



## 5 Patterns

Common motifs and patterns used in the traditional craftsmanship and material culture of the Taif Highlands architectural character area.

Patterns are a key way of expressing the specific character and craftsmanship which makes an area special and distinctive. The adjacent images and abstracted patterns are intended to provide inspiration.

New buildings should:

- 1 Use geometric patterns and abstracted floral patterns, celebrating the history of Taif as the “Orchard of Makkah”.
- 2 Make use of patterns as decorative and functional elements along balconies or roof terraces to provide privacy and interest.
- 3 Use common patterns on all decorative elements for consistency.
- 4 Consider using linear horizontal patterns, articulated with paint or recessed into plaster, on facades.
- 5 Consider using patterns on doors, window grilles, and utility boxes.

**To add interest to facades and celebrate the particular architectural character of the area.**

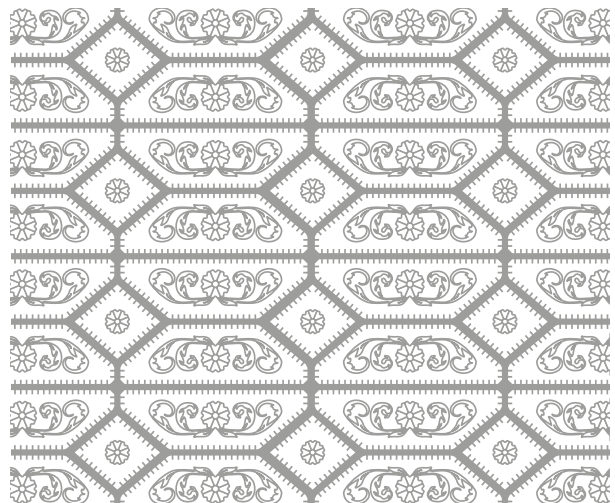
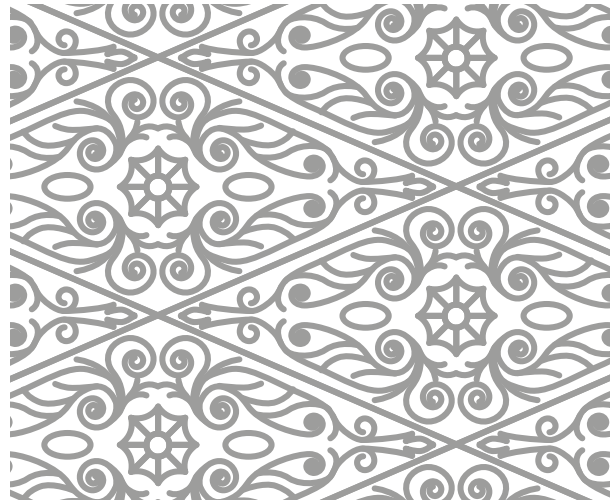
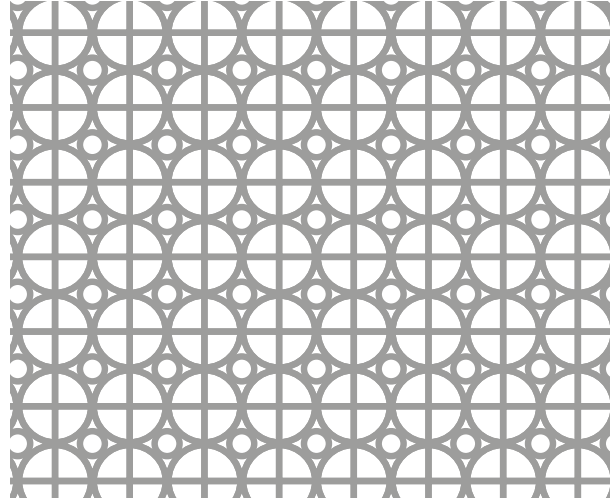


FIG. 41 Patterns abstraction

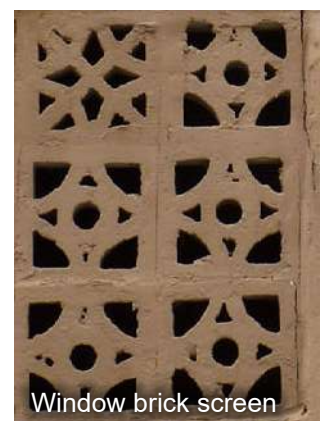
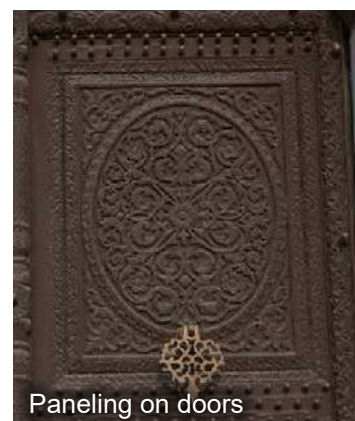
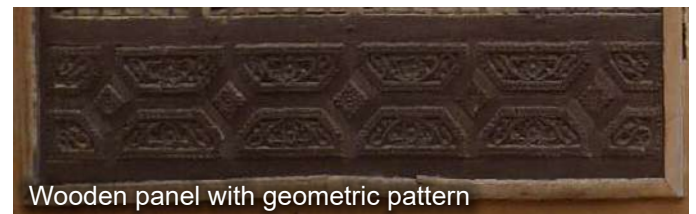


FIG.42 **PATTERNS**



## 6 Applying the architectural character

Guidance for the careful interpretation and application of architectural character to contemporary developments.

### 6.1 Interpretation

Good application of architectural character does not mean direct copying of historical examples. Their contemporary use should involve interpretation: a selective emphasis of characteristics to create meaning and beauty in its new context. Designers can selectively use formal characteristics such as:

- Color (hue, tonality, tint)
- Shape (figure, outline, 2-D geometry)
- Form (volume, 3-D geometry)
- Texture (physical surface quality)
- Line (verticals, horizontals, diagonals, zigzags, curves, dashes, etc.)
- Value (lightness to darkness)

Interpreted elements can be further transformed in the way they relate to one another. Designers can play with compositional rules such as:

- Balance (equality or harmony of parts)
- Contrast (difference of parts)
- Emphasis (strengthening of parts)
- Movement (change, directionality)
- Pattern (repetition, symmetry)
- Rhythm (even and uneven spacing)
- Unity/variety (degrees of variation)

Designing with architectural characters is an interpretive art, an effort to express the spirit and essence of the original architecture in new yet familiar ways.

**To encourage contextually sensitive contemporary design.**



FIG. 43 Example of building material abstraction\*

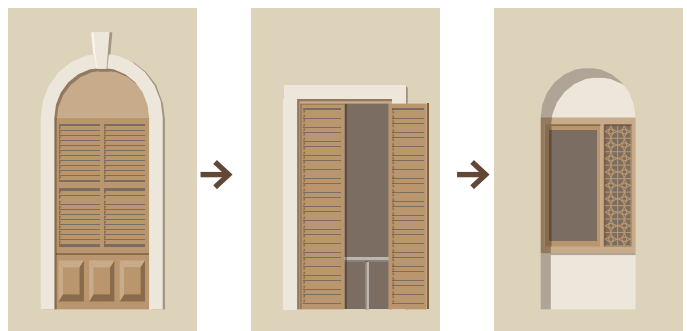


FIG. 44 Example of window shape abstraction\*

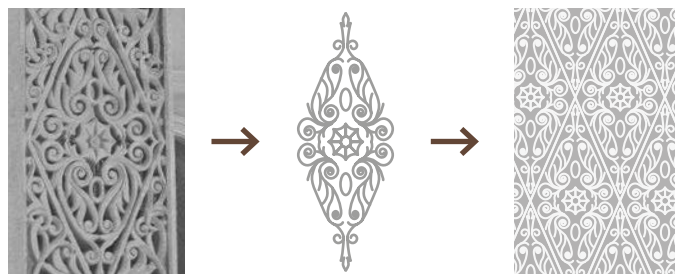


FIG. 45 Example of pattern abstraction\*

\*Note: Diagrams in this chapter are for explanation of design concepts only. The examples are taken from a variety of sources, and do not form part of the definition of the Taif Highlands architectural character.

## 6.2 Scaling

Architectural characters often come from historical building types of a particular size. When applied to new developments of a dramatically different size, the original character can become distorted or repeated in a way where their quality and craftsmanship are reduced.

When applying architectural characters to new developments, designers should:

- 1 Be sensitive to the challenges of large project sizes. Break down building massing into smaller, more diverse and interesting massings that can better fit traditional architectural elements of architectural character.
- 2 Observe the way elements are related to one another and to interior layouts in the source examples of architectural character.
- 3 Avoid mechanical repetition of elements without a clear design intention.
- 4 Respect the proportion, size and construction logic of the original architectural elements.
- 5 Do not scale and distort a small elements into oversized graphic features that ignore the principles behind the use of the original element.
- 6 Pay special attention to building elements visible from the public realm, especially at the ground floor. The closer the element is to the public, the greater the fidelity and quality it should be. Conversely, elements farther away from public view may be more highly abstracted.

**To successfully apply elements of traditional architectural character to large contemporary buildings.**

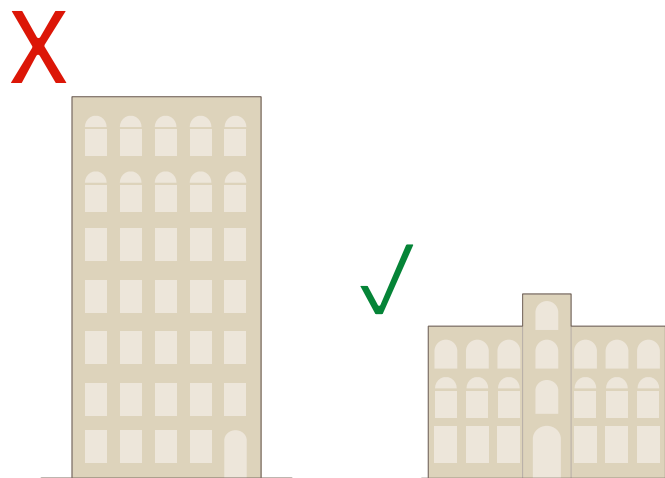


FIG. 46 Break down building massing to better fit traditional architectural elements\*

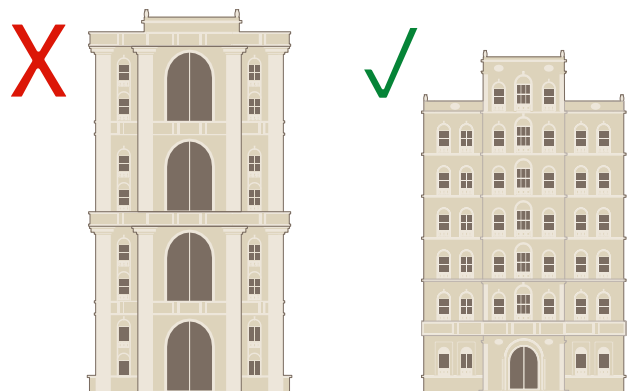


FIG. 47 Do not scale and distort smaller elements into oversized graphic features\*

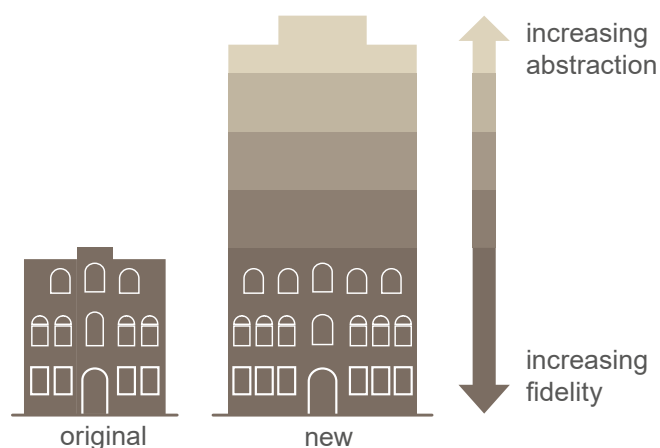


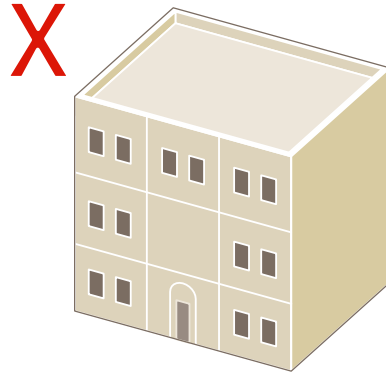
FIG. 48 Pay attention to building elements near the public realm, especially at the ground floor\*

### 6.3 **Functionality**

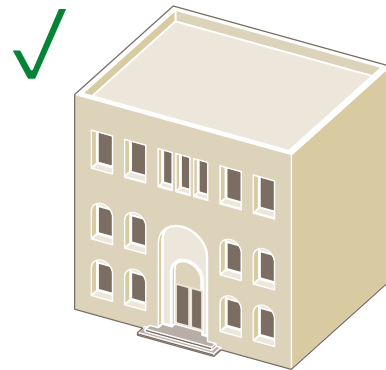
Architectural elements should perform functionally like their traditional counterparts, and not be applied superficially like graphic signage.

- 1 Architectural elements should be purposeful, contributing to the climatic or technical performance of a building. (For example: shutters should be operable, providing shading and privacy.)
- 2 Architectural characters should not be applied in a superficially like wallpaper on an unrelated building form.
- 3 Architectural elements should not employ material fakery. (For example: the use of one material that pretends to be another.)
- 4 Ornamental architectural elements are permitted where they strengthen the character and improve the quality of the building.

**To maintain the functionality of architectural elements.**



Superficial recesses and alcoves



Functional recesses and alcoves

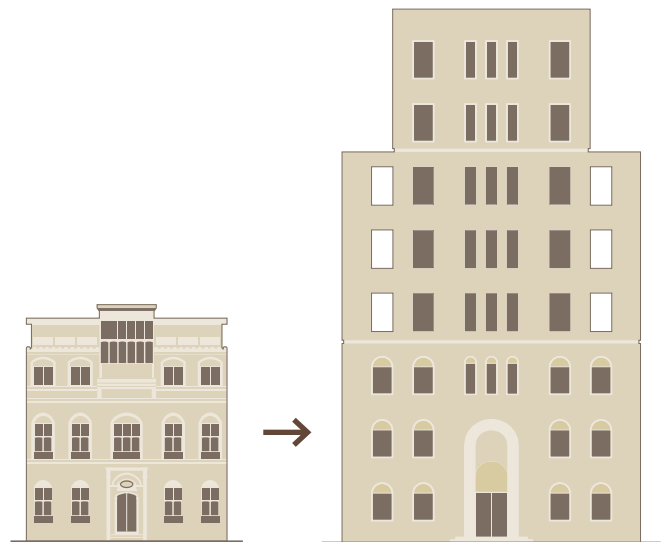
**FIG. 50** Functional use of architectural elements\*

### 6.4 **Adaptation**

The application of traditional architectural characters to new building types requires sensitive adaptation.

- 1 Precious materials from the original may need to be substituted with suitable replacements.
- 2 Some architectural elements may need to be adapted for new building systems or methods of construction.
- 3 Some new building systems may clash with an architectural character, and should be avoided (for example: large space frames, spider-joint glazing, and large areas of curtain wall).

**To apply architectural character through contemporary means.**



**FIG. 49** Adaptation of traditional architectural elements to a contemporary building\*

\*Note: Diagrams in this chapter are for explanation of design concepts only. The examples are taken from a variety of sources, and do not form part of the definition of the Taif Highlands architectural character.

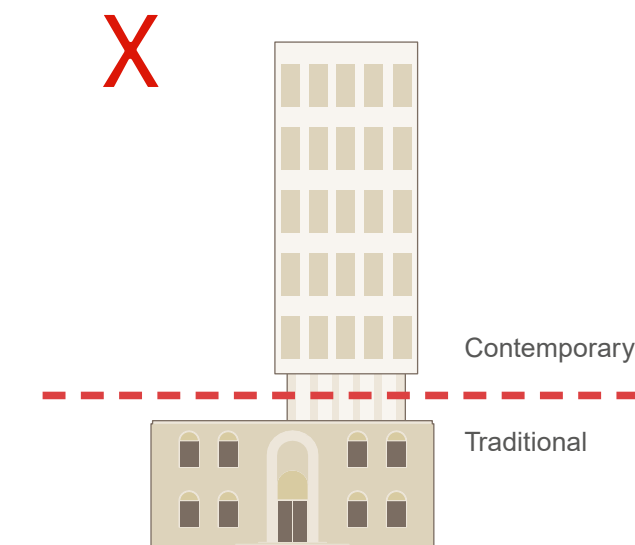
6.5

## Mixing

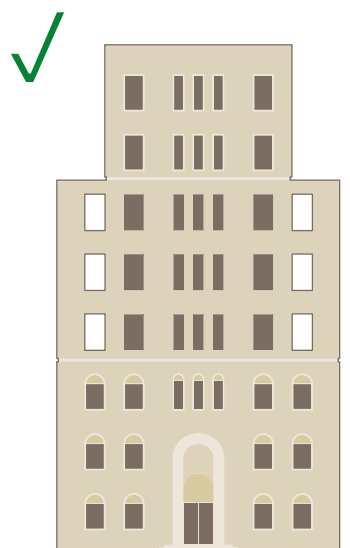
Architectural characters are part of living cultures that continually grow and change. The boundaries defining architectural character areas should be understood as provisional, open to influences from all around, rather than as fixed borders. This invites the possibility of styles and character strengths mixing together, particularly in sites located on the edges of two or more character areas.

- 1 In large scale projects, when the project site is located at the edge of two or more characters, the adjacent character can influence the project by mixing the characters in different buildings, while prioritizing one above the other based on an analysis of the local context.
- 2 Avoid mixing more than one character within a single building; instead, the mixing should occur across different buildings depending on their location within the project and their functional use.
- 3 When mixing characters, the permitted style (traditional, transitional, or contemporary) should be taken into consideration based on the specified level.
- 4 Exercise informed creativity. Do not slavishly copy architectural characters.

**To propose a clear method for the mixing and blending of architectural characters in large scale projects.**



Do not create hard breaks between mixed sources\*



Create gradual transitions between mixed sources and strengths of character application\*

FIG. 51 Appropriate mixing of sources



## 7 Worked examples

A set of design studies illustrating the application of the Taif Highlands architectural character to buildings, at different strengths and scales.

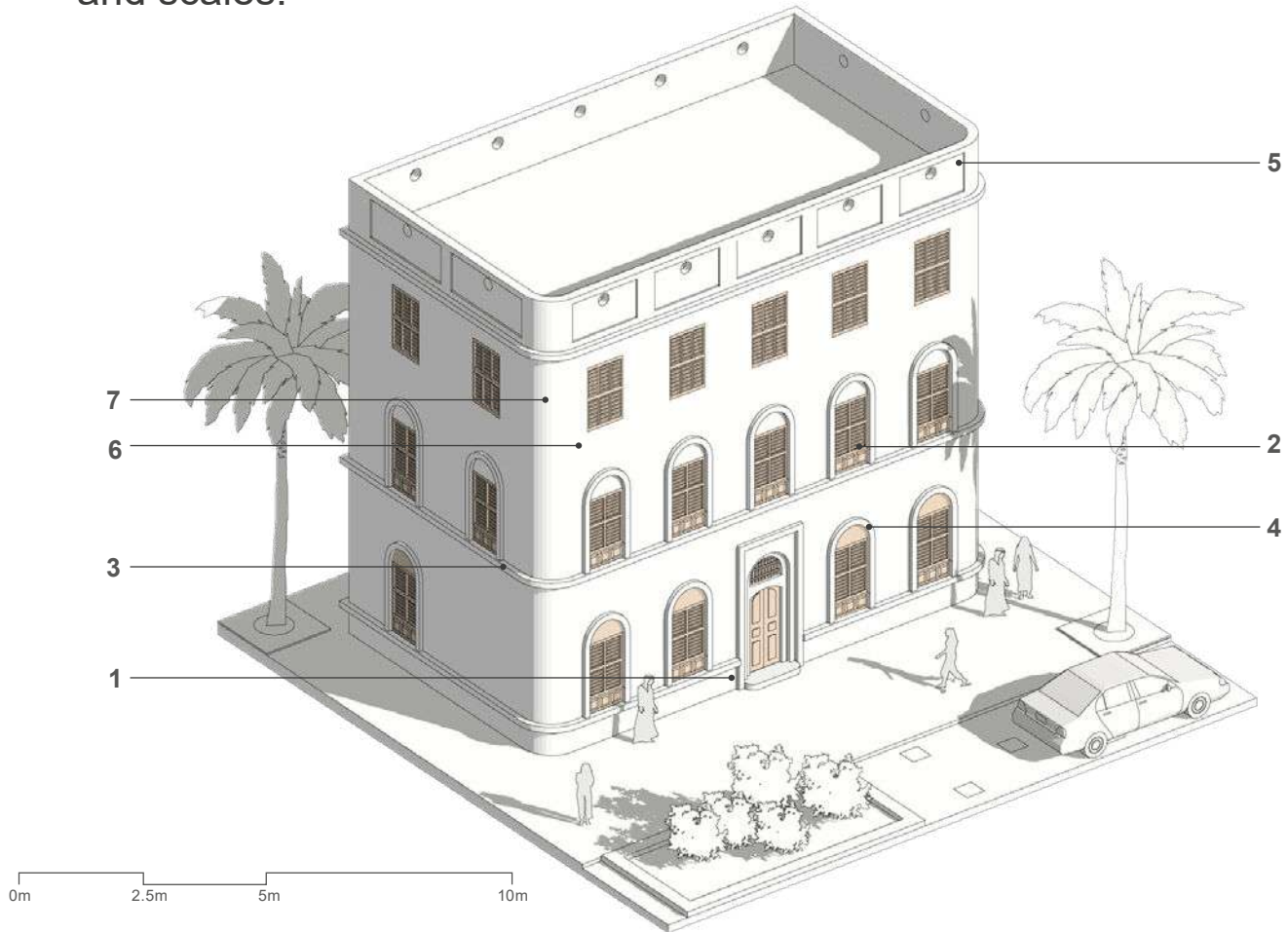


FIG. 52 Medium size building

### 7.1 Traditional

The traditional worked example features a very strong application of the guidance in sections 3 to 5. This is particularly evident in the horizontal and vertical articulation of bays, the presence of arched features and distinctive horizontal corning.

- 1 Well-crafted features at the base including double-recessed doorways and windows.
- 2 Clear vertical articulation with repeating bays.
- 3 Strong horizontal character with horizontal cornice bands with well-ordered consistent rows of window openings.
- 4 High proportion of arch top windows, including protruding surrounds and wooden paneling below window openings.



FIG. 53 Large size building

- 5 Clear building top, defined by flat parapet with circular openings set within rectangular recesses.
- 6 Consistent, neutral tone across the facade.
- 7 Chamfered building corners if appropriate.

**To create a strong connection and celebration of the Taif Highlands architecture**



FIG. 54 Medium size building

## 7.2 Transitional

The transitional model is a progression of the traditional form, without embracing all elements of the contemporary model. Many of the traditional features remain present, but some variations signal an evolution and reinvention of specific elements.

- 1 Consistent massing and overall proportions with traditional form.
- 2 Simplified rectangular windows across the facade, absence of arch tops.
- 3 Repeating cornice bands and bay design to create strong horizontal character, alongside vertical articulation.
- 4 Strong vertical articulation of central circulation core to establish symmetry.



FIG. 55 Large size building

- 5 Central entrance is accentuated as a feature at the base of the building
- 6 Flat parapet with central step for core feature.
- 7 Combination of sharp and chamfered building corners.

**To ensure that transitional buildings create a clear continuity between traditional and contemporary forms**



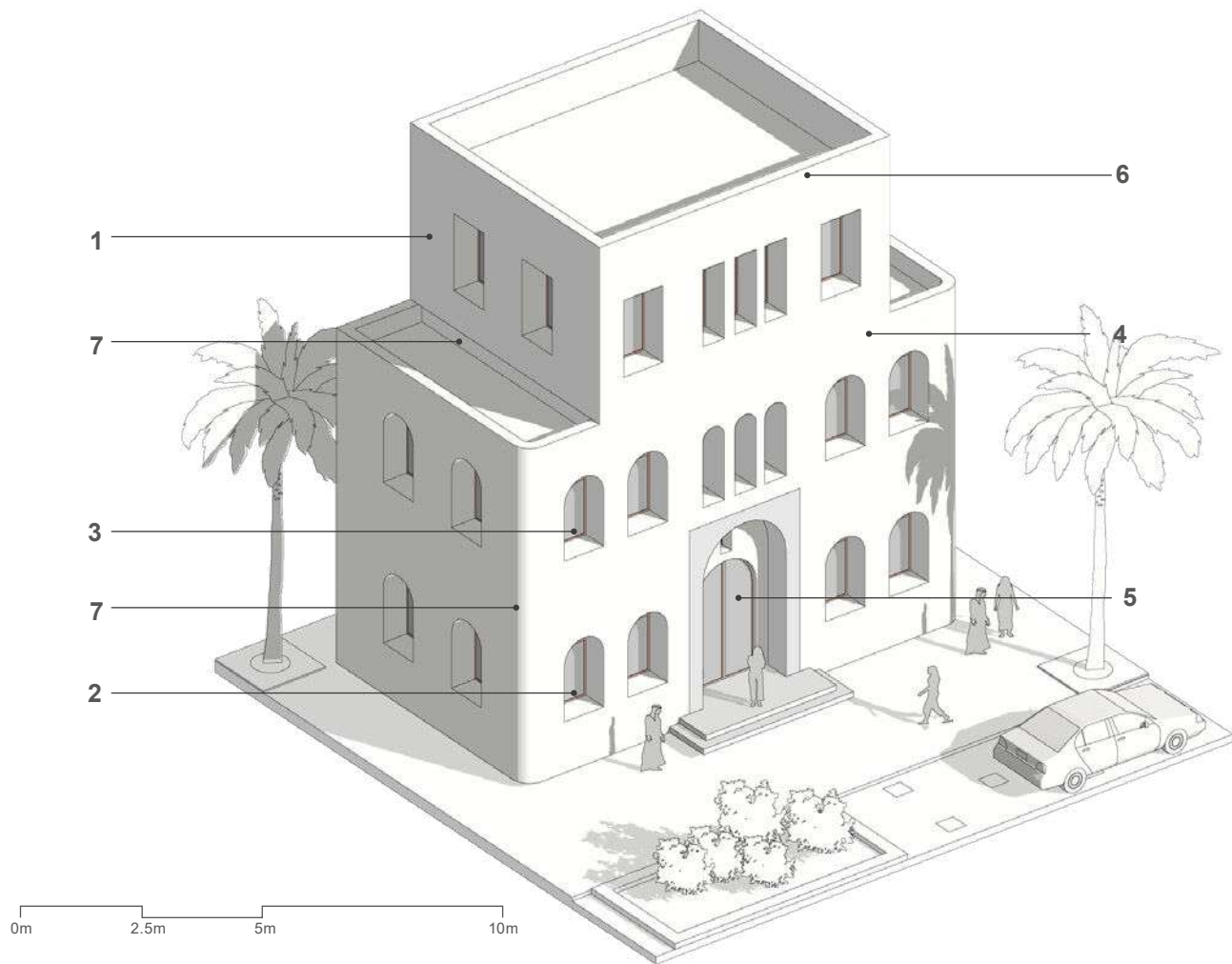


FIG. 56 Medium size building

### 7.3 Contemporary

The contemporary model ensures buildings conform to modern regulations with regard to energy, safety and other building standards, relevant to all new buildings. The model seeks to reflect changes in construction and availability of skills and materials, and also incorporates adaptation to respond to modern ways of living and working.

- 1 The overall form follows similar massing and proportions to those of more traditional buildings, with taller buildings sensitively extruding traditional forms
- 2 The overall wall to opening ratio retains a fairly consistent approach with traditional proportions with potential for simplified window design.
- 3 Windows with arch tops are used to enhance the lower stories of the building.

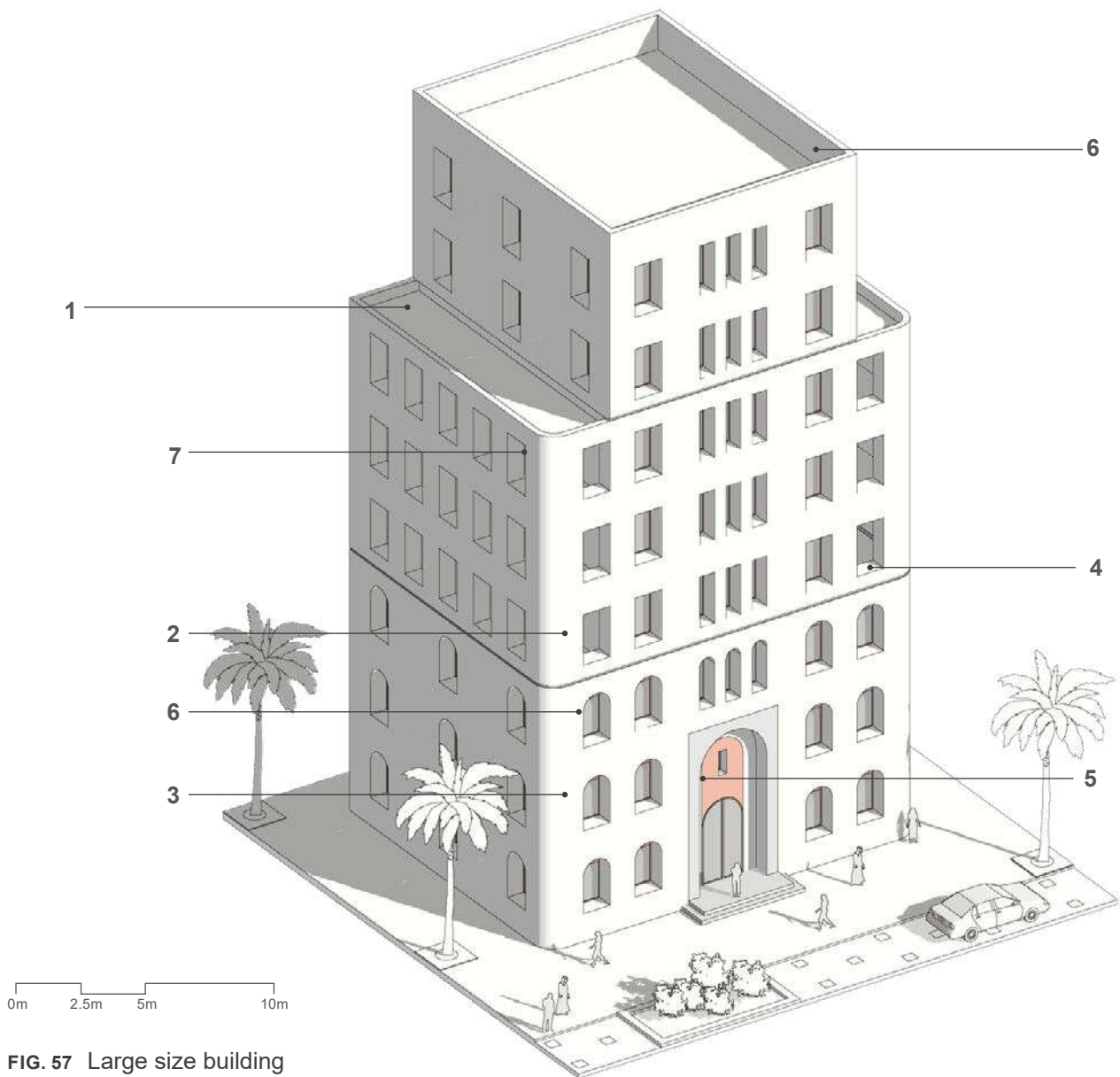


FIG. 57 Large size building

- 4 Cornice banding is absent in the medium sized building and simplified in the large scale building to create a clean contemporary facade.
- 5 Grand double-recessed entrance with crafted frame to draw attention to the center of the base and symmetry of the building.
- 6 Parapet can adopt a traditional form.
- 7 Chamfered building corners where appropriate.

**To create opportunities for simple, attractive design solutions which celebrate the essential characteristics of the area, and respond to changing ways of living and working.**

## 8 Public realm

An overview of public realm character in Taif Highlands.

### 8.1 Overview

The focus of the public realm guidelines within this document is to strengthen local character by identifying and enhancing distinct characteristics of public realm in Taif Highlands. It is meant to provide high-level principles and recommendations to be further developed in masterplans and public realm strategies within the character area.

These guidelines are not intended to be a comprehensive technical resource. For this the designer should consult the National Public Realm Design Manual prepared by the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and Housing, and support the five key principles identified in it.



- 1 Human scale
- 2 Pedestrian mobility
- 3 Sustainability
- 4 Culture and heritage
- 5 Visual appeal

FIG. 58 National Public Realm Design Manual and its five key principles.

This chapter is organized as follows:

- **General character** - a narrative summary and photographic overview of characteristic public realm found in the character area.
- **Types of public space** - A selection of spatial types that provide the architectural character area's distinctive character.
- **Materials** - A summary of hardscape character for the architectural character area.

- **Planting** - A summary of softscape character for the architectural character area.
- **Street furniture** - Suggestions and precedents for suitable street furniture.
- **Lighting** - High-level lighting principles for the enhancement of the public realm.
- **Signage** - High-level signage principles for the enhancement of the public realm.
- **Parking** - High-level parking design principles for enhancement of the public realm.
- **Worked examples** - Visualizations that illustrate the combined intentions of the public realm guidelines.

Together the sections above aim to give a broad overview of public realm that will reinforce the character of Taif Highlands.

### 8.2 General character

The adjacent photographs summaries the typical characteristics of public realm and local landscape in the Taif Highlands. As set out in the introduction, the architectural character area is characterized by a temperate climate in the mountain plateau rich with landscape elements such as textured, tonal rock and lush greenery.





Zuqaq, old Taif



Festival lighting, old Taif



Taif Rose



Wadi running through the highlands



Market, old Taif



Baraha, old Taif



Rocky landscape, Taif



Local Farm, Taif



Market, Taif

FIG.59 PUBLIC REALM



### 8.3 **Types of public space**

Taif Highlands' public realm is characterized by a hierarchy of typical streets and spaces. These typologies are distinguished by their scale, character, and relationship with predominant land uses.

Together, these spaces create a diverse public realm which caters for residents and visitors alike, and contributes to the distinct architecture of Taif Highlands.

The plan illustrates a typical hierarchy of urban spaces and streets in the Taif Highlands. The following spaces are considered to be the principal typologies:

- **Main Street:** Larger roads for vehicle access across and through urban areas.

- **Residential Street:** Primary routes through neighborhoods.
- **Parks:** Larger local space which is more likely to include adjacent commercial uses.
- **Neighborhood Gardens:** Smaller local space, typically with a more residential character.
- **Rocky Outcrop:** A natural landscape feature on the edges of development.

Specific areas might include additional variations in these typologies, reflecting local scale, character and use. Taif Al-Balad also retains many traditional typologies such as Souq, Zuquac, Baraha and Market.



FIG. 60 Typical urban plan

<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#8B4513; border:1px solid #000;"></span> Main Street	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#F0E68C; border:1px solid #000;"></span> Park / Garden
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#A08060; border:1px solid #000;"></span> Residential Street	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#FFFFFF; border:1px solid #000;"></span> Building
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#F5DEB3; border:1px solid #000;"></span> Rocky Outcrop	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#9ACD32; border:1px solid #000; border-radius:50%;"></span> Trees

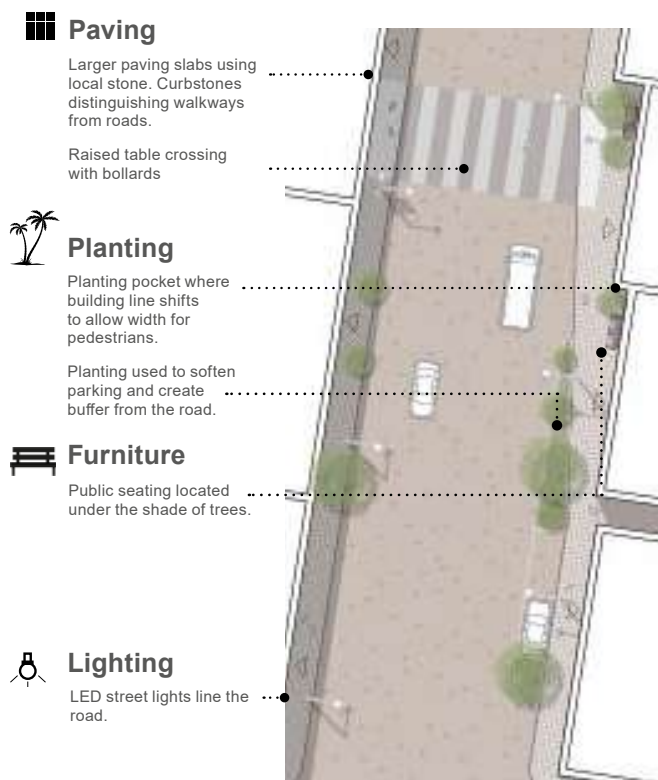


FIG. 61 Main street

Active street primarily designed for vehicle access. Pedestrian access should be generous and buffered by parking and planting. Parking should be used sparingly.

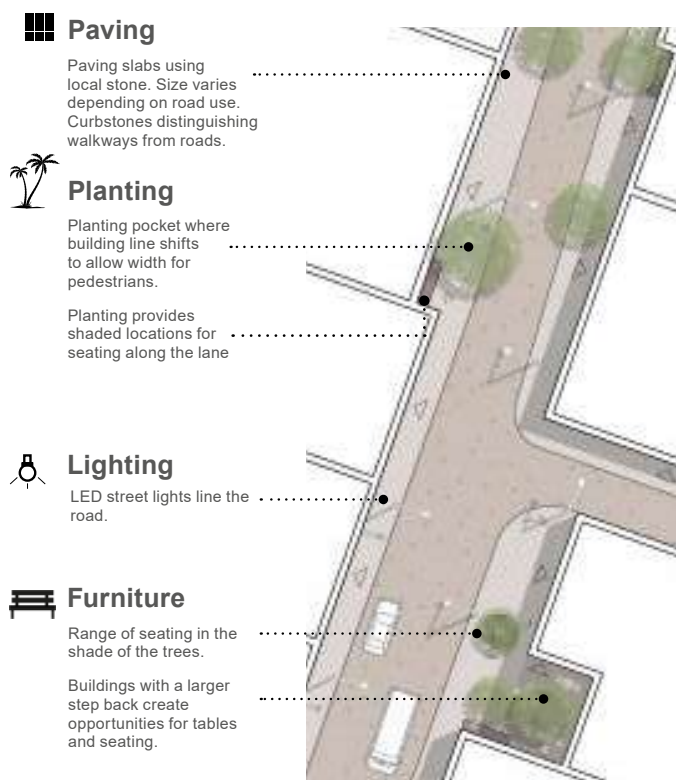


FIG. 62 Residential street

Comfortable and safe residential road with more opportunities for seating. Shops and cafes spill out to enhance street.



FIG. 63 Neighborhood garden

Smaller parks, or gardens, provide an open, green space in the gridded urban fabric relief and amenity.

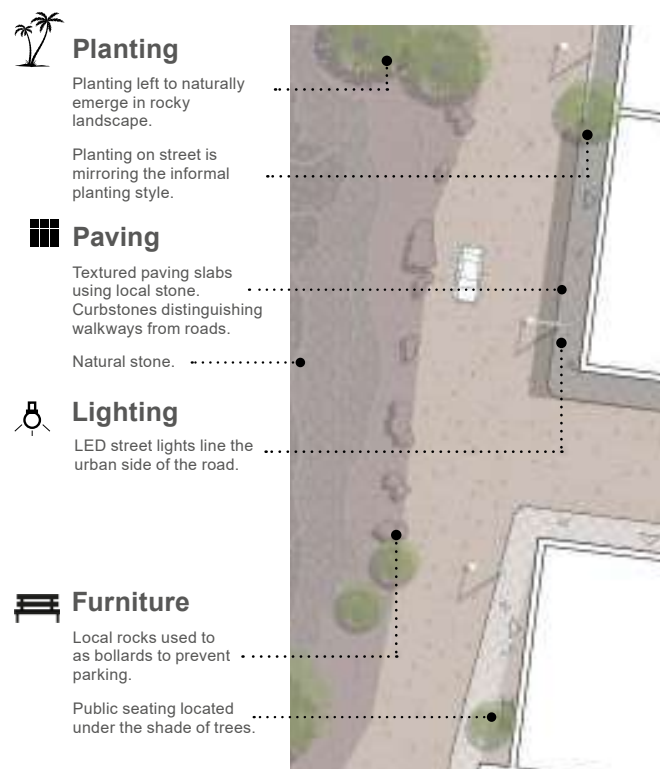


FIG. 64 Rocky outcrop

This natural landscape should be utilized and protected. Awareness of local geography, use these outcrops as asset to place.

## 8.4 Materials

The materials palette for Taif Highlands has been designed to be simple and sensitive to the existing character of the area.

### Key considerations

- 1 Select locally sourced Saudi materials with low embodied carbon and high content of reused or recycling aggregates (for non-natural materials).
- 2 Areas with higher footfall should have higher specification and materials that are durable, minimizing the need for regular repair and replacement.
- 3 Re-use materials, where possible formed from waste material.
- 4 Where possible, deliver materials using sustainable means of transport.
- 5 Select materials that have longevity and that can be easily cleaned, repaired and sourced with high-quality materials replaced like for like.
- 6 De-pave where possible to improve the microclimate and use sands or aggregates in place of paving.
- 7 Materials should provide varying textures within a simple color palette to complement the area's character.
- 8 Employ subtle changes to paving to highlight difference between typologies.
- 9 Make good existing streetscapes and ensure materials are replaced only when necessary to minimize carbon footprint.
- 10 Use larger paving format to emphasize more prominent routes.
- 11 Consider incorporating special patterns to emphasize important spaces.

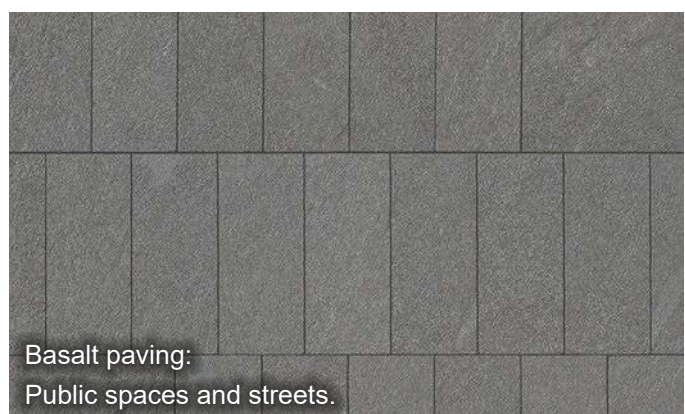
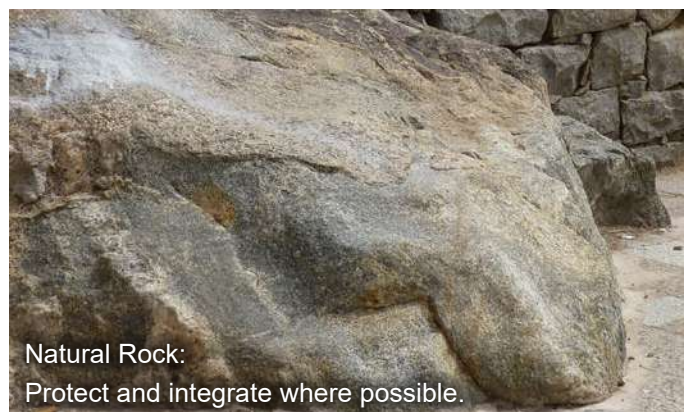


FIG. 65 Public realm material references



8.5

## Planting

Tree planting should complement the overall character of the Taif Highlands area, helping to shape places and enable planting through sustainable means.

### Key considerations

#### 1 Water must:

- Be considered carefully, responding to the local microclimate, water availability and landscape character.

#### 2 Trees should:

- Adopt an informal layout, avoiding overly linear or formal planting except in parks and gardens.
- Only be planted where shade can be best utilized or where shade is necessary to encourage using the public realm.
- Make a characterful contribution to the quality of routes and spaces. Consideration should be given to how a tree is seen and how trees can be used as wayfinding markers.

#### 3 Planting should:

- Be in keeping with existing lush character of Taif.
- Contribute to maintaining and enhancing existing landscape areas using multi-layered planting where appropriate comprising a variety of trees and shrubs.
- Consider additional habitat value such as fruits for birds, etc.
- Formal planting in parks and gardens to create a sense of destination in keeping with local character.
- Have a palette which aims to use both native plants and those that have locally adapted.

### Trees



### Shrubs

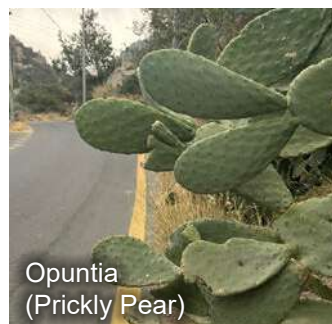


FIG. 66 Planting references



## 8.6 Street furniture

Street furniture should be carefully selected to provide continuity and co-ordination, limiting clutter. Colors and style of furniture should blend into the context rather than stand out as features. In general, the design of street furniture should find opportunities to use local materials, respond to the local landscape and cultural heritage and celebrate local craft skills.

### Key considerations

- 1 Be distributed evenly across all areas with reference to space types above.
- 2 Not obstruct pedestrian movement nor clutter public open spaces.
- 3 Consider color and material consistency.
- 4 Feel ephemeral and informal, acknowledging the historic condition of street furniture in the region.
- 5 Give consideration to accessibility with seating distributed at suitable intervals and have suitable heights and have backs or armrests.
- 6 Be of high quality, coherent, and rationalized to minimize street clutter.
- 7 Have a co-ordinated appearance, with a consistent material and color palette to complement character.
- 8 Avoid duplication by rationalizing and combining elements.
- 9 Be easily maintained and repaired with replaceable components.
- 10 Be retained and improved where existing furniture has heritage value.
- 11 Granite and stone finishes should be used to create a seamless continuity between the urban and the landscape.
- 12 Where appropriate explore the possibility of using rocks instead of columns (bollards) in areas with a rocky landscape.



FIG. 67 Street furniture references

## 8.7 Lighting

A coordinated lighting strategy should create an appropriate and distinctive atmosphere for different areas to reinforce Taif Highlands' sense of architecture. Lighting should not be distracting, the focus should always be on the setting, quality of the space and buildings.

### Key considerations

- 1 Light levels should be kept as low as possible to minimize light pollution and adverse effects on ecology and habitats.
- 2 Utilize lighting to increase overall safety and enjoyment at night.
- 3 Provide lighting and light levels that are appropriate to patterns of use, character, and context
- 4 Utilize lighting temperature to reinforce difference between routes and to define contrast between character areas.
- 5 Sensitive highlight historic buildings, mosques and public buildings after dark, subtly revealing their architecture without over-use of light.
- 6 Utilize lighting that is appropriate to scale and context of routes and spaces e.g. lower mounted lights on smaller lanes and in historic conditions to highlight textures.
- 7 Utilize contemporary lighting elements which are low energy, low heat, and dust resistant with a long life expectancy.
- 8 Manage private light spill, light pollution or trespass - particularly over-lighting of shopfronts on souqs and streets - producing diffuse, soft and warm light.
- 9 Design of lighting fixtures should be authentic to the area - simple, sensitive to the setting, not historically pastiche or using imported historic forms.
- 10 Introduce a lighting control system that allows variable light levels at different times of evening and night to save energy wherever possible.



Sympathetic, modern LED streetlights to illuminate roads and pavements.

FIG. 68 Lighting references



## 8.8 Signage

Signage should play a vital role in supporting good wayfinding across settlements in Taif Highlands. An appropriate signage strategy will contribute to a positive experience of navigating streets and spaces.

General considerations for signage are set out below:

- 1 Establish an appropriate distribution of signage based on analysis of the hierarchy of routes, and location of destinations or key buildings. Focus the position of signage where it is most suitable, for example between key destinations or at important intersections.
- 2 Use visual markers such as locally appropriate planting, paving, lighting and frontages to enable intuitive wayfinding.
- 3 Embrace signage design which is bespoke and complementary to the character of Taif Highlands.
- 4 Avoid large totems, signposts and obstructive signage that detracts from the public realm appearance.
- 5 Adopt a light touch approach to signage which aligns with the scale of routes and spaces. For example, signage could be wall-mounted, in paving or mounted on sensitively designed light columns.
- 6 Ensure that the approach to materials, font, color and size of signs is sensitive and appropriate to the local context.
- 7 Ensure signage and wayfinding are accessible and intuitive to all people including those with visual impairment and of different languages, through innovative use of symbols, color and texture.



FIG. 69 Ornamental signage



FIG. 70 Floor-based sign with embossed text



## 8.9 Parking

The approach to parking is a key component in the overall approach to the public realm. The appropriate location and design of parking has the potential to enhance the experience of moving across for streets and spaces for people.

General considerations for parking are set out below:

- 1 The design of streets and spaces should seek to prioritize the experience of people movement. In general, efforts should be made to find more space for pedestrians, avoid obstructive parking locations, integrate pedestrian crossings in suitable locations and manage traffic speeds.
- 2 The position of parking should enable the provision of greater space for pedestrians in shadier areas. On-street parking should be rationalized, with the incorporation of appropriate surface treatment of parking to achieve an increased footway width.
- 3 Tree planting should be integrated between bays to create greener streets.
- 4 Access to parking areas should be considered at the outset of the public realm design process.
- 5 Where appropriate, spaces that are currently dominated by car parking could be re-imagined as public spaces by relocating parking underground. Alternatively, some parking might be reduced alongside improvements to walking, cycling or public transport, or relocated to the edge of central destinations.
- 6 Access to smaller spaces or streets should be restricted to local private vehicles access
- 7 Local businesses to agree the timing of servicing to minimize the impact on areas with high pedestrian footfall.
- 8 Parking bays should adopt a surface treatment which is suitable to the local area and scale of the street or space.
- 9 In larger accessible spaces where unlawful parking is a concern, limited use of bollards should be considered.
- 10 Cycle parking should be carefully integrated to the public realm and be positioned at local destinations including shops, souks, mosques or transport hubs.
- 11 Cycle parking should respond to the width of streets. On narrower streets, parking should be parallel to the curb edge and on wider streets, stands can be perpendicular to the curb.



FIG. 71 Well-integrated parking bays

## 8.10 Public realm worked examples



**FIG.72 PROPOSED VIEW OF A TYPICAL STREET IN TAIF**

The worked public realm examples above illustrate typical spaces in Taif Highlands. The illustrations seek to demonstrate the application of some of the main public realm principles. Specific opportunities and features are annotated on the images above.

Proposals for key spaces and streets should prioritize the following public realm moves:

- 1 Create spaces which celebrate Taif Highlands' verdant landscape setting, and, where appropriate, the surrounding mountainous context.
- 2 Strengthen streets and spaces which re-connect historical monuments, key destinations and recreational spaces.
- 3 Create generous, high-quality streets and spaces which are befitting of adjacent mansion buildings to enhance the setting of formal buildings.
- 4 Create of well-ordered streets generous spaces for pedestrians
- 5 Develop a pedestrian friendly, walkable environment.
- 6 Establish comfortable experience for residents and visitors, as part of a vibrant urban setting.



Active ground floors to create interest and vibrancy

Contemporary application of the Taif Highlands architecture

Attractive green infrastructure to support climate resilience

Setback of building to create a local pocket space for a central neighborhood



FIG.73 PROPOSED VIEW OF A POCKET SPACE IN TAIF

- 7 Reinforce a clear hierarchy of streets and spaces as part of a local network.
- 8 Use traditional local materials.
- 9 Create a range of scales of space, including larger public spaces, smaller neighborhood squares and tighter, well-shaded streets.
- 10 Adopt an integrated approach to the provision of street trees, planting and drainage features to create shade, and establish green, resilient places.
- 11 Coherent approach to the activation of key streets and spaces, identifying suitable locations for retail and leisure.
- 12 Embrace opportunities for public art to enliven space.
- 13 Careful application of architectural guidelines to create places with a suitable scale and appropriate character.
- 14 Find opportunities to reinforce or create legible streets and wayfinding.
- 15 Use the arrangement of space and buildings to create enticing glimpses, and longer views or vistas to key landscape features, civic or religious buildings as appropriate.

**To create a welcoming, comfortable and walkable network of streets and spaces.**



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