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### Research Paper

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# Palestine Hotel in The Old City of Hebron, Between Modernity and Traditional Dwelling Architecture During the 19th-20 Century

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## Abstract

This paper delves into the cultural, architectural, and aesthetic transformations in traditional Palestinian dwellings during the transition from the 19th to the 20th century. The chosen timeframe holds immense significance as it witnessed a profound shift in Palestinian systems, legislation, and housing patterns, including alterations in housing infrastructure. The study identifies pivotal turning points in Palestine attributed to European Western missions and Zionist migration, resulting in the introduction of concrete housing and its discernible influence on traditional Palestinian building structures. In particular, the focus is placed on the Palestine Hotel, situated in Hebron's historic Old City and constructed in the early 1900s. This hotel serves as a compelling example of the coexistence and mutual influence of modernity and traditional architecture. The hybrid design of the hotel reflects the intricate relationship between Western-style modernity and traditional Palestinian architectural elements. Employing an analytical and documentary methodology, this paper recommends several measures, including the preservation of cultural assets due to their profound impact on future generations and the safeguarding of our civilizational and cultural heritage.

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## Keywords

*Modernism; Western influence; Hebron museum; Cultural identity; Decorative elements; Stylistic changes*

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## 1. Introduction

The evolution of architectural techniques and forms in Palestine has traversed various phases, starting from prehistoric times and extending through the era of Islamic architecture (Ghadban, 2008). This architectural journey was shaped by distinct construction methods and materials, giving rise to a unique style known as "Palestinian folk architecture." This style was characterized by its distinctive building techniques, materials, layouts, and residential designs, which serve as a testament to the evolution of Palestinian architecture. The cultural significance of building materials became more pronounced in Palestine at a later stage (Al-Ju'beh, 2019).

As the era of modernity made its way into Palestine, often dated to the aftermath of Muhammad Ali Pasha's campaign from 1805 to 1848 in the Levant, significant transformations unfolded. Western ambassadors and delegates, in collaboration with local Palestinian residents and construction workers, introduced new regulations and ideas (Tamari, 2012). These developments marked the onset of a new era in the political, social, and economic landscape of Palestinian societies (Ghadban, 2008). These shifts were closely tied to historical events, particularly British influence, which became evident in 1841 with the opening of Britain's first consulate in Jerusalem (Roberto, 2020, p. 232). The subsequent establishment of additional consulates between 1841 and 1858 catalyzed radical changes in Palestinian society, impacting its economic, social, political, and architectural systems (Abuarkub, Al-Zwainy, 2018).

The issuance of the Ottoman Land Regulations in 1858-1878 aimed at transitioning from community landownership to individual private property ownership, significantly affecting urban planning. During this period, the Ottoman Empire introduced several laws, including the State Administration Act of 1871, which approved the Building Licensing System and established rules for land ownership (Ali Shaban, 2009). This legislative framework coincided with the emergence of a national Jewish homeland, contributing to the erosion of elements of the Islamic city (Al-Khalidi, 2016).

The years 1878-1919 witnessed an increase in European influence, particularly in infrastructure, communications, education, and government administration. In 1917, British rule commenced in Palestine, with Ottoman law still in force. This era marked the emergence of "Mandate architecture," which extended the previous architectural period by reshaping prevailing building structures and construction methods. Ottoman laws remained in effect until 1921, with the issuance of the Mandate for Palestine in 1922 (Bishara, 2018). This mandate introduced a new system of institutions, including local governance, and placed the mandatory power in charge of the country's administration. It also laid the groundwork for the establishment of a national home for Jews,(Ghadban, 2008)

From 1933 until the mid-twentieth century, the influence of the German Bauhaus school became evident due to the arrival of painters and architects who promoted modern architecture.( Jawabrah, 2020.p1-2 )This period saw the emergence of simple rectangular houses and suburban planning in old cities. Some houses incorporated classical influences, featuring Corinthian columns, arched windows, and exposed concrete beams (Michael, 1988, p. 39). With the strengthening of Zionism and the desire of new immigrants to create a distinct Jewish culture, traditional Arab architecture experienced a revival. Efforts were made to blend the culture of new immigrants with the local culture to create a unique Hebrew culture through this fusion (Michael, 1988). Cement construction played a central role in building both Zionist and Palestinian nations, and cement consumption and production became indicators of the ability to construct modern buildings and communities (Ben Zeev, 2019). Substantial changes in architecture and style occurred in the early twentieth century, shifting away from Orientalism towards modernism (Nitzan-Shiftan, 2009)

## **1.1. Problem statement**

There is a limited body of academic research addressing the multifaceted changes and influences that have shaped Palestinian housing prior to modernity. Existing studies have sought answers to the following critical questions:

1-Stages and Spaces of Palestinian Architecture: Few studies have delved into the examination of the key stages and spatial elements within Palestinian architecture that have directly influenced the configuration of traditional Palestinian residences.

2- Emerging Features in Palestinian Architecture (Late 19th to Mid-20th Century): Another significant inquiry pertains to identifying the most noteworthy architectural features that have surfaced within Palestinian architecture during the period spanning from the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century.

3- Historical, Social, and Architectural Significance of the Hotel Palestine: Furthermore, it is imperative to elucidate the historical, social, and architectural significance inherent in the Hotel Palestine, which currently functions as the Museum of Hebron. This entails a comprehensive exploration of its most prominent aesthetic components.

In essence, the existing academic literature is limited in its capacity to comprehensively address the evolution of Palestinian housing, its origins, and the manifold influences it has undergone. To bridge this knowledge gap, this study aims to provide comprehensive insights into these critical aspects of Palestinian architectural history.

## **1.2. Objectives**

The study has the following objectives:

1-To document, study, and analyze the aesthetic and architectural values inherent in the hotels in Palestine. This will be achieved through methods such as lifting, documentation, drawing, and analysis. The primary aim is to identify specific patterns in the aesthetic and decorative components of these hotels and establish connections to similar palaces that emerged during the same historical period.

2- To shed light on pre-modern Palestinian homes, exploring their origins and developmental trajectory. Additionally, the study aims to investigate the external factors that influenced traditional Palestinian architecture.

3- To focus on a pivotal era in the history of Palestine, with a particular emphasis on the housing structures within the Old City. This era played a significant role in altering construction methods and design principles due to the incorporation of Western architectural influences.

In summary, this study seeks to comprehensively examine the aesthetic and architectural aspects of hotels in Palestine, trace the evolution of Palestinian homes, and analyze the impact of external influences on traditional Palestinian architecture, with a special focus on the transformative era in the Old City.

### **1.3. Research Methodology, Materials and Methods**

The research methodology encompasses three distinct approaches:

1. Theoretical and Contextual Foundations: This initial approach delves into the intricate relationship between Modernity and Traditional Palestinian Architecture in the City of Hebron, with a focus on Housing
2. Analytical Approach: The second facet of the methodology is the stylistic changes in traditional Palestinian architecture, especially in the city of Hebron, which can be classified into stages, with examples from the city of Hebron, Analysis Palestine Hotel Building, structure Architectural description and detail, Decorative Elements.
3. Data Sources: To support the research, various data sources are utilized, including references from books, theses, published scientific research, and other accessible written materials. Additionally, basic observation tools and photography play pivotal roles in data collection and analysis.

## **2. The development of Hebron and its old town between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and its characteristics**

The old city of Hebron is characterized by a homogeneous texture characterized by simple local architecture, consisting of cubic and rectangular stone blocks with arches and domes. These complexes are linked to each other by corridors, alleys, lanes, and small courtyards with gates and entrances that limit the entry of strangers to them. The origins of these houses date back to the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods, with their first foundations, and then the Ottoman period, which came to complete the fabric, (Al-Ju'beh, and others 2007). In the early 19th century, Hebron began to develop, and the old town was divided into three connected areas, and the largest part of it was in the eastern, western, and southern regions of the Ibrahim Mosque, which are the neighborhoods of Al-Masharqa Al-Fawqa, Al-Masharqa Al-Tahta, and the second, Haret Qaytoun, which is located in Mamluk neighborhoods, and the third is Al-Sheikh lane, which remained separate from the rest (Abu Hilal, 2009), The neighborhoods in the city of Hebron continued to develop horizontally by covering all the voids in the old town, then the development moved to the vertical levels, and Bab al-Zawiya neighborhood was established, which was linked with the rest of the fabric of the old town at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and a number of modern neighborhoods were also established, and in the fifties of the century In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, construction activities began to appear that spread outside the Old City of Hebron, and middle-class neighborhoods with nuclear families began to appear (Abu Hilal, 2009). Its front (yards), which were inhabited by extended families, also began in this period the emergence of what is called the house of the hallway, where the hallway is like a balcony (verandah) open on two or three sides, and the fourth side is the front facade of the house in which the main door of the house is located. It may be located in the basement or on the upper floor, and it may be used for living during the day and a place for sleeping at night, especially in the summer (Abuarkub, 2018) This modern house, built of stone, began to appear in the city of Hebron, rich in its architectural characteristics and details, and the diversity of its construction techniques and choices of stones, which include a mixture of white and pink stones. The main hall of the house (salon) was distinguished by its beautiful and decorative tiles. A carpet was used in this room while the rest of the facilities in the house, especially the kitchens and bathrooms, used black and white tiles to tile their floors (Al-Amiri, 2000).

The British Mandate accelerated the transformations in Palestinian societies and left a clear Western influence on life in general and the architectural environment in particular. New methods (such as neo-classical) and new technology (such as reinforced concrete) began to dominate construction (Bishara, 2015). A class of merchants and owners of money appeared at this stage, who began to build houses showing signs of wealth. These types of housing spread in the old city of Hebron. Its most important feature is that the presence of the courtyard is no longer a necessity in the construction of this type of housing, and the emergence of the Iwan system as an alternative to the courtyard with an open courtyard, as well as increased attention to the presence of the kitchen and enlarging its area as well as the bathrooms, (Bishara, 2015). and interest in the facade appeared with the presence of architectural openings on the ground floors with attention to its height slightly to achieve privacy Starting with the use of modern building materials and changing the roofing system while maintaining the arch system in these buildings (Ben Zeev, 2019, 40)s. The establishment of the Nachil Polk Cement Company in 1923 played a role in the spread of cement construction, including the Palestinian Cement Company (Nitzan-Shiftan, 2009).

## **2.1. The Impact of Modernity on Traditional Palestinian Architecture in the City of Hebron, with a focus on Housing**

The researcher faces difficulty identifying specific time intervals that indicate the stages of development and transformation of Palestinian architecture into modernity. However, several historical periods in Palestine have prompted reflections, considering the local architecture's influence by various historical, social, and political factors, as previously determined (Shaded. 2020). It appears that the local dimension of traditional Palestinian architecture was achieved in residential buildings and some religious and public structures. The stylistic changes in traditional Palestinian architecture, especially in the city of Hebron, can be classified and examined in the following stages, with examples from the city of Hebron.

### **2.1.1. Local Renaissance Era:**

The period between 1805 and 1848 witnessed a development in the local building style through the utilization of modern materials and technology in construction (Al-Ju'beh. 2007). A particular housing style emerged in rural areas and the outskirts of cities, incorporating the characteristics of traditional Palestinian architecture. Woodwork, in general, played a significant role, with the use of domes and vaults as roofing patterns. Tiles were used for decoration and interior wall cladding, while limestone was commonly used for exterior surfaces. Decorative columns and unique stone formations indicating wealth also emerged (Ahmed, 2008).

Example: Duwik Palace is located in the old town near the Ibrahimi Mosque, and is distinguished by its design, especially its front façade and interior courtyard. The building was constructed in three historical stages. The ground floor considered the initial nucleus of the building, was built in the early 19th century (1820). The second stage took place at the end of the 19th century (1870), with the construction of the ground floor. The first floor was added at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century (1890) (Hebron Reconstruction Committee, 2020). The basement levels (-1) contain two storage rooms, believed to be the original core of the building, as well as a water well. The storage rooms faced the street and were used as animal shelters, providing access to the ground floor. The entrance features a hidden broken-helix staircase, leading directly to the ground floor from the stairwell entrance. From there, we reach the enclosed courtyard surrounded by four rooms and a bathroom. The stone staircase, consisting of a single inverted flight, connects to the first level, which has two entrances. The traditional building system with domes can be observed, while the kitchen receives less attention, and there is no bathroom. The newer levels of the building align with the transformations that occurred in housing, introducing essential facilities (Hebron Reconstruction Committee, 2020). Figure 1 illustrates the horizontal layout of the residence and the eastern front façade.



Figure 1: First level plan of the Dweik building, then the main eastern façade Photo and drawing by the author 2020

### 2.1.2. Ottoman-Influenced Renaissance Era (1848-1870):

This stage witnessed a development in the building style using new materials and technology, as well as a wide application of elements inspired by Ottoman architecture. It was characterized by the presence of both open and enclosed courtyards. There was also an expansion of architectural openings and increased attention to the façade's design. Changes in the horizontal layout emerged, including the addition of kitchens and bathrooms at the beginning of the residence. The broken-helix entrance was no longer a mandatory requirement in housing construction. The traditional roofing system with vaults continued, and stone staircases remained for access to the upper floors. There was no requirement for housing to be within the old neighborhoods. (Shaded.2020.159) (Rizk, 2000)

Example: Al-Siyaj Residence: This building, known as the "Al-Siyaj Building," is located on Al-Shuhada Street and occupies an area of 106 square meters. It consists of three floors: the ground floor, the first floor, and the second floor. Access to the ground floor is through the entrance on the eastern side facing the street, which has an external staircase. The first part of the ground floor was constructed in the Ottoman style by the late Abdul-Mo'ti Suleiman Siyaj in 1850. The front courtyard is divided and includes a kitchen (Majli) and a bathroom (Arabic-style toilet). Figure 2 illustrates the plan and distribution of facilities, entrance from the main street located on the eastern front façade.

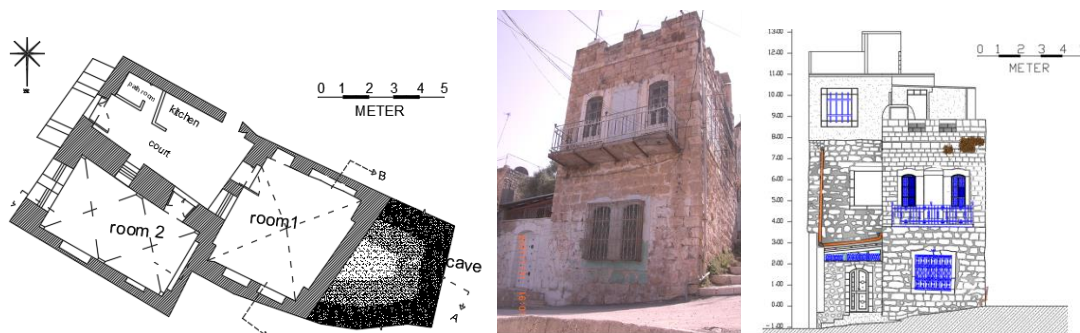


Figure 2: From the right a horizontal plan of the ground level of Al Siyaj dwelling and then the eastern front façade (Source Photo and drawing by the author 2009)

### 2.1.3. Stage of New Romantic and Transferred Architecture (1870-1903)

During this period, architectural styles in certain Mediterranean regions underwent a significant transformation due to the influence of missionary expeditions and the presence of Palestinian immigrants. European architectural elements served as a major source of inspiration during this stage (Al-Ju'beh. 2007). This era witnessed the emergence of distinct architectural designs that reflected the affluence of their owners and incorporated modern decorative elements that deviated from traditional architectural norms. This architectural phase is often referred to as the Eclectic Stage, characterized by a focus on elaborate façade decorations.

Notably, this period featured classical ornaments, marking an evolution in architectural style that is recognized worldwide as Art Deco. This shift is evident in the use of embellished floors and colorful wall designs (Al-Khalidi, 2016).

As an illustrative example, the Al-Shahada Residence, situated in the Al-Shahada neighborhood and facing Cordoba School, stands out as a prominent architectural masterpiece. Distinguished by its graceful arches, this residence occupies a central location on the eastern slope of Tel Rumeida, commanding a significant presence within the Al-Shahada neighborhood. It offers a commanding view of the historic town of Hebron. Notably, the residence is characterized by its decorative arches adorning windows and doors, lending it a distinct aesthetic charm.

Structurally, the residence comprises two floors: the ground floor and the first floor. While the ground floor and a section of the first floor were constructed by Muhammad Ali Shihada, his son Ali was responsible for completing the remaining portions of the first floor. Although the building's original core dates back to the mid-19th century, the most significant architectural influence on the residence can be attributed to this particular stage. In 1890, during the construction of the residence, the building method employed cross-shaped stone masonry with fired bricks and utilized two types of stone with earth filling. The construction process unfolded a decade after the initial rooms were built, owing to the family's expansion needs and one of the sons' marriages, which led them to establish their residence within the building (Sahouri, 2008). See Figure 3.

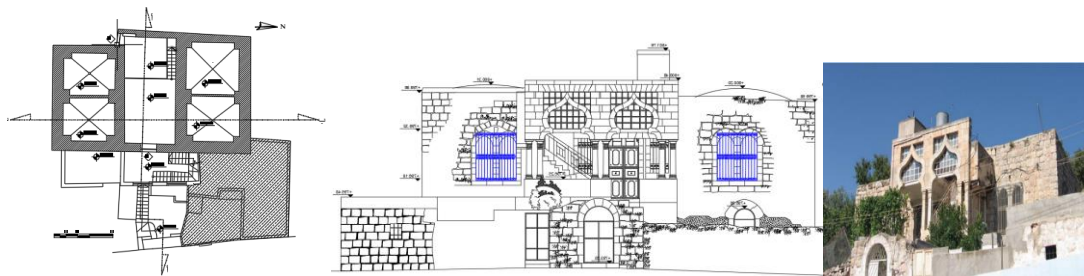


Figure 3. The plan of the Al Shehadeh dwelling and eastern front façade Source Sahouri, 2008

#### 2.1.4. Stage of Colonial Settlement Architecture Resulting from Zionist Jewish Immigration to Palestine (1903-1917)

The main style of this stage was influenced by the Bauhaus and Expressionist architecture schools. It was constructed by Palestinian hands and extensively incorporated elements inspired by European architecture. As a result, a group of simple rectangular residences emerged, and planning for construction began in the suburbs of old cities. Alongside this style of buildings, some classical influences were found in the construction of certain residences, including Corinthian columns, arched windows, and exposed concrete beams (Michael, 1988).

Example: Al-Qufaysha Residence is part of the Al-Harbawi Complex, located in the heart of the old city of Hebron at the intersection of two main streets: Al-Qasbah Market, which extends from Ain Al-Askar Square in the northwest to the area of the Ibrahim Mosque in the south, and the Laban Market, which extends to the Skafia Market area. The residence was built in three stages. The ground floor was constructed at the end of the 19th century during the Ottoman era, and the first level was built at the beginning of the 20th century. The second level was also constructed at the beginning of the 20th century (Maraqqa, 2022). The windows feature a twin-opening system, which became popular in the late 19th century as openness to the outside world increased, leading to wider architectural openings and facade designs (Ghadban, 2008).

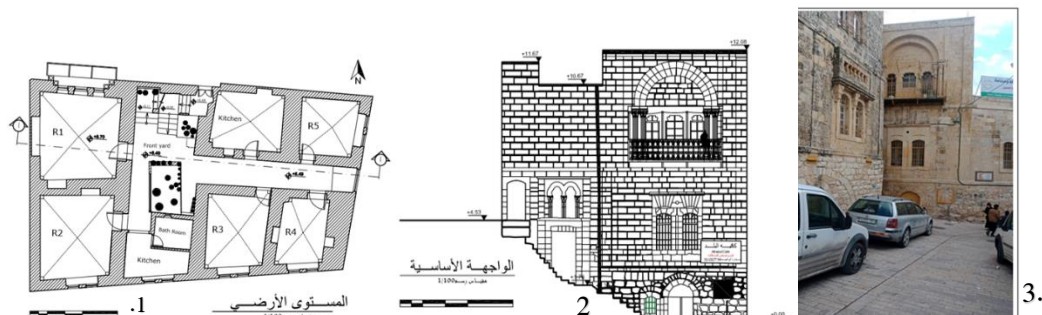


Figure.4 The Qafisha, 1 plan, 2 and 3 show the southern front façade of the dwelling Source Photo and drawing by the author 2020

### 2.1.5. Stage of Mandate Architecture:

This stage began with the entry of the British into Palestine (1917-1948). In the 1920s and 1930s, this stage emerged due to the increase in economic growth in Palestine, and the expansion and prosperity of the urban movement. As a result, numerous, new residential neighborhoods were built away from the centers of the old cities (Al-Ju'beh, 2007). After World War II, buildings opened to the outside without consideration for environmental conditions or adherence to the region's cultural values (Al-Rousan, 2009). This style can be seen as a continuation of the Bauhaus and Expressionist architecture schools. During this period, multi-story residential styles started to appear, with each floor having an independent dwelling with a central hall opening onto the rooms (shadid.2020). The use of concrete and bricks became common, and residential buildings resembling villas emerged, including detached houses and mansions. Modern construction materials were also introduced, and roofing systems changed while some buildings retained the traditional vault system Figure (5).

Example: Al-Hammouri Residence was built in the early 20th century, specifically in the 1930s, during a period of stability in the region and the British Mandate in Palestine. It is located in the Ain Sara area near Al-Waha Roundabout. The residence was constructed in 1931, (Hebron Reconstruction Committee. 2020) and is considered an architectural masterpiece in terms of design. The building consists of three floors, characterized by multiple levels within each floor, reflecting the diverse construction periods. The initial structure of the residence started from the ground floor, which is currently used as a storage space. Additionally, a private garage for cars was found at the entrance (Ali Shaban, 2009). The remaining floors were built in the 1930s ( Maraqa, 2022), as mentioned later.

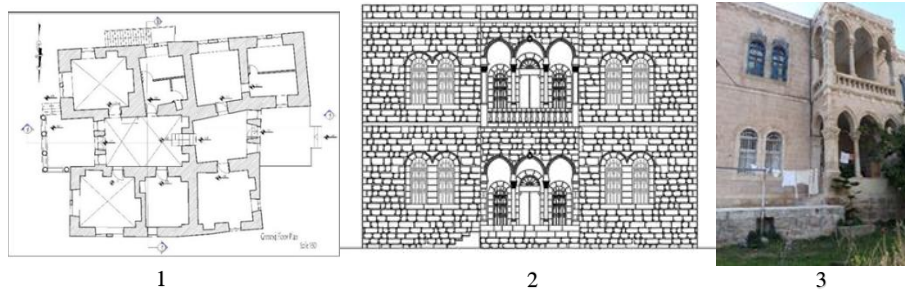


Figure 5. Al-Hammouri residence. 1 the plan, 2 the front façade, and the western façade, and 3 shows the entrance r. Source Photo and drawing by the author 2020



Figure 6. Internal and external details of Hammouri's palace Source, Photography Author. 2020.

## 2.2. Palestine Hotel Building (Hebron Museum)

### 2.2.1. The site:

The building is situated at the entrance to the Old City of Hebron, occupying a strategically significant location that serves as a pivotal juncture between the heart of the historic town, centered around the revered Ibrahimi Mosque, a prominent cultural landmark. This location also marks the transitional point from the late Ottoman Empire era to the early British mandate period. It is positioned at the crossroads of the old Shalala Street and the newer Shalala Street, facing what is now known as Ain al-Askar, a site that has gained recognition as a security point overseeing several structures and Israeli military positions, including Beit Romanin. (Maraqa, 2022).

Administratively, the building falls under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority in the H1 area. Historically, this area once served as a wheat cultivation field, dotted with a number of singular wells. The name "Ain al-Askar" derives from the copious water supply that flowed akin to waterfalls, as it served as a gathering point for water originating from the surrounding mountains enveloping the Old City of Hebron (Maraqa, 2022).

This edifice holds the distinction of being the first hotel established in Hebron. Its construction was primarily influenced during the late Ottoman era in the 19th century. Ownership of the building is attributed to the Al-Harbaoui family, with Mr. Rafiq and Ahmad Al-Harbaoui, who own commercial shops on the building's ground floor. This is suggested by indications and semantics (Bronzino, 2010).

Originally, the structure was built as a residential dwelling, with the first floor erected in the late 19th century. Subsequently, it transformed into a hotel between 1943 and 1963. From 1963 to 2002, the building was leased as a shoe factory to the Natsheh family before being temporarily closed during the Second Intifada. It remained shuttered and neglected until the Hebron Reconstruction Committee embarked on its restoration and rehabilitation, ultimately transforming it into the Hebron Museum in 2020 (Al-Quds newspaper, 2020). The second level was added in the early 20th century, as indicated by an iron inscription at the main entrance (see Figure 7).

In the 1920s, the building encountered various structural issues, including a weak connection between its foundation levels. This weakness stemmed from the absence of adequate connectivity between the foundations. To address this, two cement layers were injected and reinforced to bolster the structural integrity between the beams. This reinforcement was conducted primarily on the final level to enhance the interconnection between the beams after a thorough examination of the metal beams. The primary objective of this endeavor was to provide insulation and protection for the building's surfaces (Helmy Maraqa, 2022).



Figure 7. The aerial map of the Palestine Hotel Hebron Source Reconstruction Committee(2020)



Figure 8. Old photos of the Palestine Hotel building appear in the background of 1+2 Palestine disturbances in 1936. Body of a Hebronite shot in the Old City, being transported by car. 1936, 3+4 West Bank, Hebron of the photo since 1969 Source Photographer: Israel Press and Photo Agency (I.P.P.A.) / Dan Hadani collection.

## 2.2.2. Architectural description and detail:

### First level:

Also known as the ground floor, of the building exhibits distinctive characteristics owing to its diverse construction methods, likely attributed to the different eras in which the structure was built. Its design conforms to the contours of the land, resulting in a sloping polygonal shape that resembles a triangle. This ground floor accommodates a total of 13 commercial shops, each varying in depth. All of these shops share a roofing system featuring barrel and groin vaults, originally intended for storage and various commercial activities.

The smallest shop, numbered 6, boasts an area of 13.9 square meters, while the average-sized shops, numbered 11, have an area of approximately 18.1 square meters. The largest shop numbered 3, spans a generous 25.7 square meters.

In a conversation with Mr. Fawaz Mohammad Na'man Al-Dweik, one of the longstanding tenants of these commercial spaces, he recounted that his grandmother, Hajj Na'man Al-Dweik, had leased the store in 1918. This first level of the building is predominantly occupied by commercial establishments, as depicted in Figure 9.

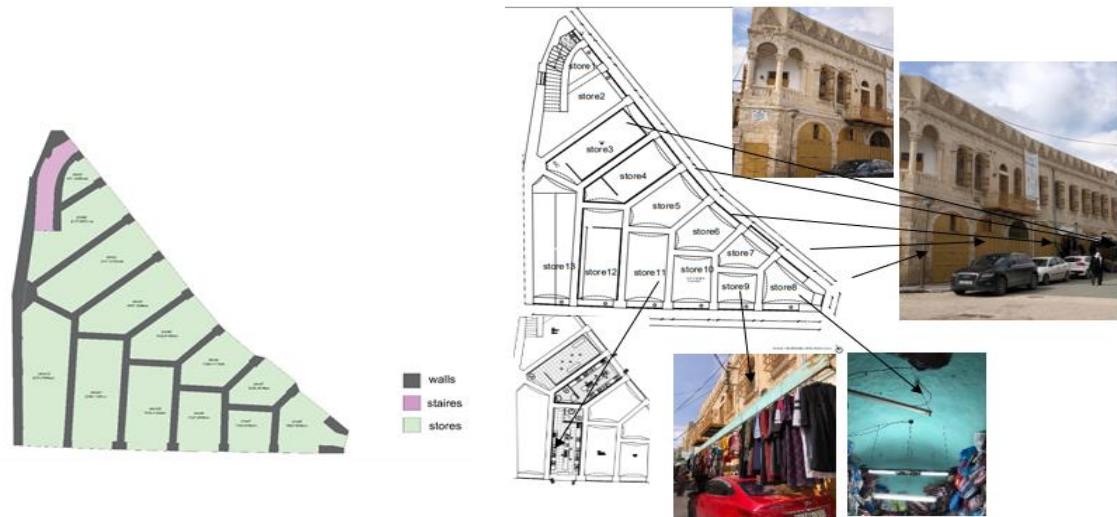


Figure 9 ground floor with some details of the spaces in it and the zoning Author Photography and drawing 2022. (Note The author utilized the sketches and preliminary drawings documenting the specific plans of the Palestine Hotel provided to her by the Hebron Reconstruction Committee in drawing and documenting the building)

**Second level First floor:**

This level is reached through the narrow stone staircase connected from the street to the second level and then reaches a rectangular hall with a floor consisting of colored cement tiles from the hall extending along it overlooks four openings from the right side representing the rooms and at the end of the hall to the right we find another hall located on the right of four rooms and a room in the middle to the left Figure. 10. Illustrates this and represents room No. 1



Figure 10. The second level of the first floor with some details of the spaces in it and the zoning Author's Photography 2022( Note The author utilized the sketches and preliminary drawings documenting the specific plans of the Palestine Hotel provided to her by the Hebron Reconstruction Committee in drawing and documenting the building)

Room. 1 represents the management room, and this room contains an original stone floor with an area of 24 square meters there are windows number (2) with circular arches with inlays for stained glass.

Room 2 is located next to room number 1 and opposite the second central hall, with an area of approximately 16.5 square meters. The floor of this room is decorated with geometric and gilded patterns that contain circular shapes in beige and white colors with a decorated frame Table 1. The walls of this room tell a story of rare decorations and




drawings in the old townhouses of Hebron, with two windows in the shape of a half-circle with colored glass. The cabinets contain a decorated wooden frame made of red Swedish wood with Moorish patterns. There are also two upper cabinets, one of which leads to the first dam that represents the store located next to the room, and the second is located above the kitchen area.

Room 3 is located in front of the first central lounge with an area of about 17 square meters. It contains distinctive cabinets with unique designs and shapes. The first cabinet is located to the right of the entrance and takes the form of a rectangular wardrobe with a crown decoration at the top and glass shelves. The other two cabinets to the left of the entrance take the shape of a semi-circle from the top and resemble the traditional designs of cabinets and niches found in traditional homes in the old town of Hebron. They also have wooden shelves and two glass shelves in the middle. This room also contains two windows with the same design as the windows in the building with a semi-circle shape and colored glass. The floor of this room is decorated with circular and square patterns and floral motifs with blended colors between gray, white, and burgundy.

Room 4 and Room 5, along with the adjacent rooms, were originally separate rooms. The wall between them was demolished, and they are now located opposite the second central lounge, with a total area of 17.3 x 2 square meters. The rooms have decorative cement floors in shades of gray and white. There are two cabinets with wooden frames that have been replaced with glass frames to create display cases for museum artifacts. The cabinets have a rectangular shape with wooden decorations on top and a distinctive frame made of red pine wood, with drawers at the bottom. There are windows and a wooden door leading to a balcony overlooking the street, and the stone frame surrounding the rooms from above serves as a decoration. The floor is decorated with geometric patterns in gray and white, as shown in Table 1.

Room 6. is accessed through the main entrance overlooking the second central hall, with an area of 19.9 square meters. This room is considered one of the most beautiful rooms due to the presence of the stone corridor, i.e., the stone balcony, which we reach from the room through a wooden door designed as part of a wall cabinet located within the overall shape of the entrance. The balcony contains three windows, one single and two twins, with the same design based on the semi-circular shape and colored glass. The floor is decorated with a concrete pattern resembling a colorful carpet between shades of grayish blue, burgundy red, and white. see Table 1.

Table 1 Architectural description and detail Author 2022

The divisions of the rooms and their pictures on the first floor of the Palestine Hotel	Room no.
	Room 1
	Room 2
	Room 3



### 2.3. Decorative Elements Analysis:

#### Front view elevation:

Differences were observed in the façade designs of the Palestine Hotel building, which may be attributed to the common style of each historical period. The building consists of three main façades: the first overlooks the old Shalalah Street from the west, the second overlooks the new Shalalah Street and contains the main entrance leading to the first floor of the building, while the third is located on both the old and new Shalalah Streets and is considered a small façade with an entrance to a commercial store. The ground floor features several commercial shops with arched designs and large metal doors, while the second floor has several architectural openings decorated with various ornamental units and engravings, mostly located in the arcade overlooking the street from the east side of the façade. Stone was used in the façades, cornices, and protruding edges, some of which featured frame designs surrounding the architectural formations. The stone used in the design was mostly limestone and royal stone, which is weaker than other types. On the first floor, sandstone was used, and for the first time, a stone cornice was used inside and outside the building. The Hebron Reconstruction Committee cleaned the interior cornices, revealing the building's architectural style.

**Kizan:** which was used on the roofs of residential buildings was designed to raise the height of the wall surrounding the building and for ventilation and air renewal. The adopted design in the Old City of Hebron relied on triangular shapes for the kizan, and areas without kizan were covered with a special type of roofing. Maintenance and restoration work was carried out on the kizan using the same ancient techniques while preserving the original appearance of the building see Figure 11.

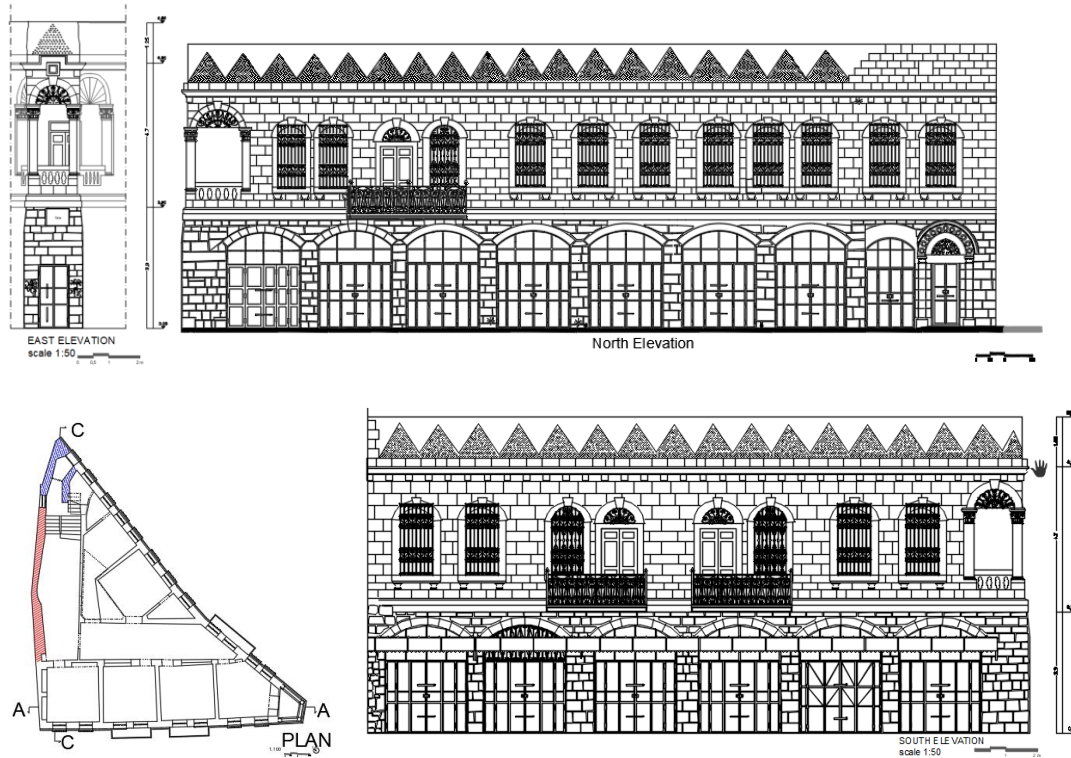


Figure 11. The facades of the hotel, namely the northern, eastern, and western facades. (Bronzino, 2010)



Figure.12. section C-C and section C-C of Palestine Hotel. ( Hebron Reconstruction Committee .2022)

### 2.3.1. Architectural openings and interior design and their designs in the Palestine Hotel building

The design of arches and domes is reflected in the architectural openings in Palestinian architecture, which adopted the arch shape as a building pattern and appeared clearly in the design of the Palestine Hotel building as follows:

**Internal doors:** Typically, internal doors are constructed using wooden panels divided into rectangular squares, sometimes with double panels. These panels are commonly joined using a tongue and groove method. Many of these doors have suffered damage over time due to exposure to weather conditions and misuse. Internal doors come in various shapes and styles, with some featuring a glass skylight above them. Some doors have arched wooden or non-wooden motifs. Wooden doors often consist of recognizable panels found in many houses, varying in size and arrangement. Additionally, there are straight doors with square tops, which may have a rectangular stone block covering one or more pieces. These stone blocks can be arranged in a staggered pattern and adorned with geometric or floral designs.

**Exterior doors:** Exterior door jambs are typically made of stone, while the door panel's attachments and additions are crafted from metal, known as "razat." The design of exterior doors is distinctive, often resembling a dissected knot comprised of a series of small knots or continuous semicircular arches, referred to as "fassa." These circular

knots have a single center, with legs terminating in straight lines, while the arches conclude in semicircular, keystone, or mocarnas shapes (Al-Quds newspaper, 2020).




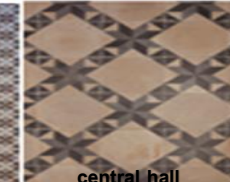




**Windows and their patterns:** The window design in the Palestine Hotel building exhibits a traditional style characterized by two prevalent designs. The first design features motorized arched windows located at the top. These windows can be singular, paired, or arranged in groups of three, each with a circular arch. Additionally, there might be multiple windows placed side by side. Some of these windows are adorned with a glass lunette, as indicated in Table (2). These windows were typically crafted from wood and comprised one or two fixed frames along with two movable ones, depending on their size. Colored glass was incorporated into these lunettes, which were positioned above doors. These lunettes could be independent and found above both doors and windows, sometimes covered with metal mesh or glass. These decorative elements were known for their colored glass and intricate metal ornamentation, sharing a similar design but varying in distribution. The right side often featured paired windows, followed by triple windows, a single window adjacent to a balcony-accessible door, two paired windows, and a corridor supported by corbelled stone pillars with Islamic-style paired columns adorned with distinctive metal designs.

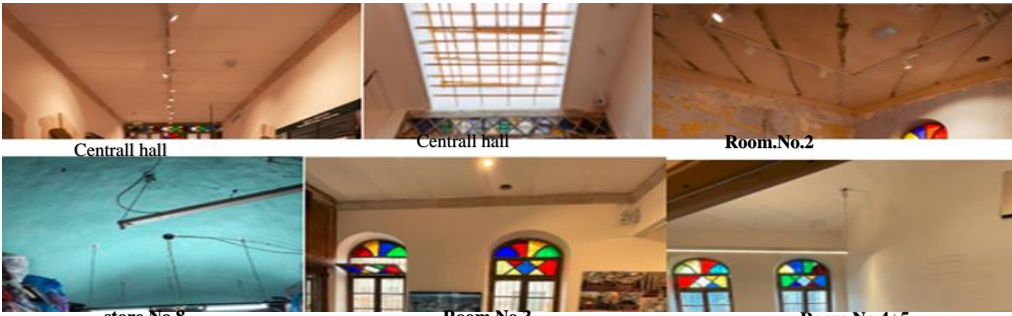
**Balcony:** The building incorporates protruding balconies on street-facing facades, supported by metal cantilevers either within the facade or within the wall. These cantilevers, referred to as "dawamer" or railway iron, are constructed from painted iron. They are positioned beneath balconies or terraces, as illustrated in Table 2. To alleviate the structural load on the building, the cement on balconies adjacent to metal cantilevers has been replaced with wooden beams. These wooden beams serve to safeguard the building's foundation by reducing the primary load. The pillars have undergone restoration in a similar style and have been whitewashed, utilizing limestone.

**Floors:** The Palestine Hotel boasts a variety of floor designs and materials. Some rooms feature stone floors, such as Room No. 1, as mentioned earlier, while others showcase decorative concrete floors. The floors have been well-maintained, with any deficiencies addressed by replacing damaged sections and making necessary repairs. Four rooms have preserved their original tiles without alteration.

**Wooden Cabinets:** Wooden cabinets in the Palestine Hotel exhibit diverse forms, present in most rooms, and have served various functions based on the available space. During the restoration of the hotel, damaged components of these cabinets, such as shutters, were replaced while retaining the essential structure and display areas. The wood was refurbished, maintaining the original color and design of certain pieces to suit their new function, such as window displays known as "vitrinas."

Table 2. The Aesthetic Formations and Interior Design in the Old Palestine Hotel Building. Source Author's 2022

Aesthetic compositions and interior design at The Palestine Hotel				Item
 Room.No.2	 Room .No.1	 Room.No.4+5	 central hall	Flooring
 fram in Room.No.3	 Centrall hall colored concrete tiles and stone floors	 Room.No.3	 Cetral hall	

 <p>Centrall hall      Centrall hall      Room.No.2</p> <p>store.No.8      Room.No.3      Room.No.4+5</p>	<p>The interior ceilings in a hotel building</p>
 <p>"The wooden cabinets in question serve two distinct purposes: one as a straightforward form of storage, and the other as fixed wooden wardrobes designed for safeguarding clothing and personal items. These wardrobes are often referred to as 'vitrinas'."</p>	<p>wooden Cabinets and Fixed wooden wardrobes found at the Hotel</p>
 <p>"The doors in the Palestine Hotel come in two distinct architectural styles: round arches and segmental arches, each showcasing unique designs."</p>	<p>Types of doors and shapes located in the Palestine Hotel building</p>

	Types and shapes of windows in the Palestine Hotel building
<p>"Windows are installed throughout the building, with the majority being crafted from wood and featuring colorful glass panels."</p>	
	Types and shapes of openings from the outside
	Aesthetic and decorative elements in the Palestine Hotel building
<p>"Numerous aesthetic and decorative elements adorn the structure. Beginning from the right, there are drawings or fragments of murals, followed by stone embellishments in the shape of cornices, and metal accents on the architectural openings."</p>	

### 3. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study provides the following key findings, addressing the research questions:

#### 1. Evolution of Palestinian Architecture in Modern Times:

Palestinian architecture and housing development experienced significant stages and transformations in the modern era, notably commencing in the early 19th century, characterized by globalization and the introduction of foreign architectural influences.

By the late 19th century, radical changes were witnessed in the architectural landscape, including shifts in construction methods, alterations in architectural forms, the emergence of individual buildings and palaces, and the transformation of traditional courtyards into wider streets.

The 20th century, marked by the British Mandate and associated laws, saw the adoption of the middle hall system, the introduction of cement in construction techniques, the use of metal bridges, the retention of domes in ceilings, and the appearance of balconies in residences.

## 2. Notable Features of Palestinian Architecture (Late 19th to Mid-20th Century):

The middle hall system emerged, coexisting with traditional Iwan designs.

A distinctive feature was the presence of arcades in design, often featuring metal bridge ceilings.

Multiple entrances within one dwelling and the implementation of multi-level staircases became prevalent, with many entrances located on the front facade.

Modern building materials, particularly cement, were employed for roofing, while domes remained a common roofing style.

The favored stone used in facades was the pink (red) Bethlehem stone, known locally as "the cross."

Facades became more intricate with decorative elements and reliefs, and the appearance of metal protrusions became noticeable.

## 3. Significance of the Palestine Hotel (Hebron Museum) Building:

The Palestine Hotel building, situated in Hebron's old town, holds historical, social, and architectural significance.

It serves as a tangible witness to the transformative changes in Palestinian housing, reflected in its architectural form, internal layout, and construction materials.

Cement played a pivotal role in its construction, symbolizing a crucial aspect of modern Palestinian history.

In conclusion, this study sheds light on the evolution of Palestinian architecture, particularly during the modern era, highlighting key architectural features and the historical importance of the Palestine Hotel building. It underscores the significance of preserving such cultural heritage for future generations.

### **To sum up**

Studying the evolution of residential buildings is an important topic that contributes to the study of traditional building history, and is a fundamental basis for preserving, and transmitting it to future generations. The importance of this topic is manifested in its provision of an additional source of information that helps to fill the gap resulting from the scarcity of historical sources in this field. Academic studies, such as this study, are considered a source of information that contributes to understanding, analyzing, and studying the history of traditional buildings. The subject of evolution requires further studies that help to better understand it by focusing on all aspects of housing, including construction, architecture, and interior design, which plays a major role in adaptation but is often not extensively discussed.

### **Recommendations**

The study proposes the following recommendations:

**Historical Scientific Studies:** Conduct in-depth historical scientific studies to uncover the unique histories of historical buildings. These studies should investigate architectural patterns, components, and the influence of external factors in shaping these patterns.

**Academic Engagement:** Promote and facilitate visits by university students and researchers to the Old City. Encourage academic research that contributes to the documentation of aesthetic and cultural elements within the area.

**Support for Cultural Heritage:** Advocate for increased support and funding from universities, institutes, and cultural heritage enthusiasts to bolster research and preservation efforts.

**Historical Building Projects:** Initiate projects and activities aimed at preserving and studying historical buildings. Consider repurposing structures like the Palestine Hotel in Hebron into museums, thereby preserving their historical significance and symbolism.

**Educational Initiatives:** Foster educational experiences for school students by encouraging visits to historical buildings. Museums can serve as repositories of illustrated and living history, helping students learn about the rich history of cities like Hebron.

By implementing these recommendations, efforts can be made to safeguard cultural heritage, encourage scholarly exploration, and create educational opportunities for future generations.

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