

خان المصريين في طرابلس لبنان



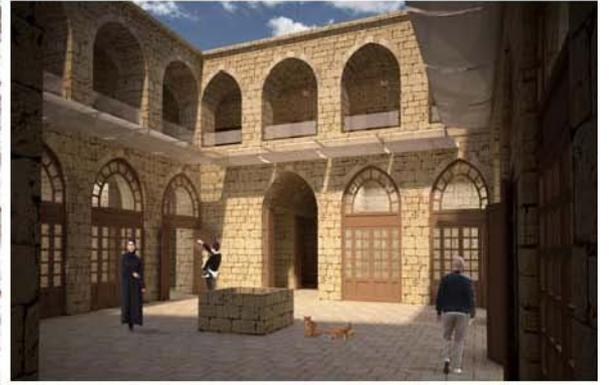
# Khan el-Masriyyin, Tripoli, Lebanon

Renovation & Rehabilitation Project  
Re-use Program: Conversion of Upper Floor into Guesthouse

preliminary project  
feasibility study



before (2020)



after (2026)

Frank Beat Keller, expert in restoration of classified buildings & anthropologist m.a.  
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ethno-expo gmbh, drone aerial photo (9.3.2019)

Bassem ZAWDEH (ethno-expo gmbh), 3d-impression (22.5.19)



## 1. Executive summary

### **The project**

Khan is arabic for "caravanserai". The "Khan of the Egyptians" in the heart of the old city of Tripoli is a listed monument of the Lebanese Republic (national heritage) and dates from the beginning of the 14th century. The structure originally served as hotel and warehouse for camel caravan traders who brought silk and spices from Asia via Syria to the shores of the Mediterranean. Here these valuables (and Syrian livestock) were exchanged for Egyptian (cotton) and Venetian (glass, etc.) goods. The khan was among the possessions of famous Roxelane (favourite of Suleiman the Magnificent) during Ottoman rule in the 15th century, passed through the hands of the Islamic foundations of Tripoli (waqaf) into widely dispersed ownership today (500-600 private owners).

Approx. surface and volume: plot:  $\sim 810\text{m}^2$ , closed shop area GF:  $\sim 433\text{m}^2$ , courtyard:  $\sim 140\text{m}^2$ , closed rooms UF:  $\sim 273\text{m}^2$ . Total building cubature:  $\sim 5'800\text{m}^3$ .

Nobody lives in the khan, and it is closed during the night. On the ground floor there are 24 shops. Several are operating, selling textiles, lingerie, footwear, electric appliances, electricity, and soap. A few are filled with debris, others serve as storage for textile shop owners elsewhere in the souk. The present proprietors of these rooms will not be affected in their rights. The interiors remain as they are. The contracts between landlords and tenants will not be affected. The restoration project comprises all original Mamluk structure and does not include later Ottoman annexes.



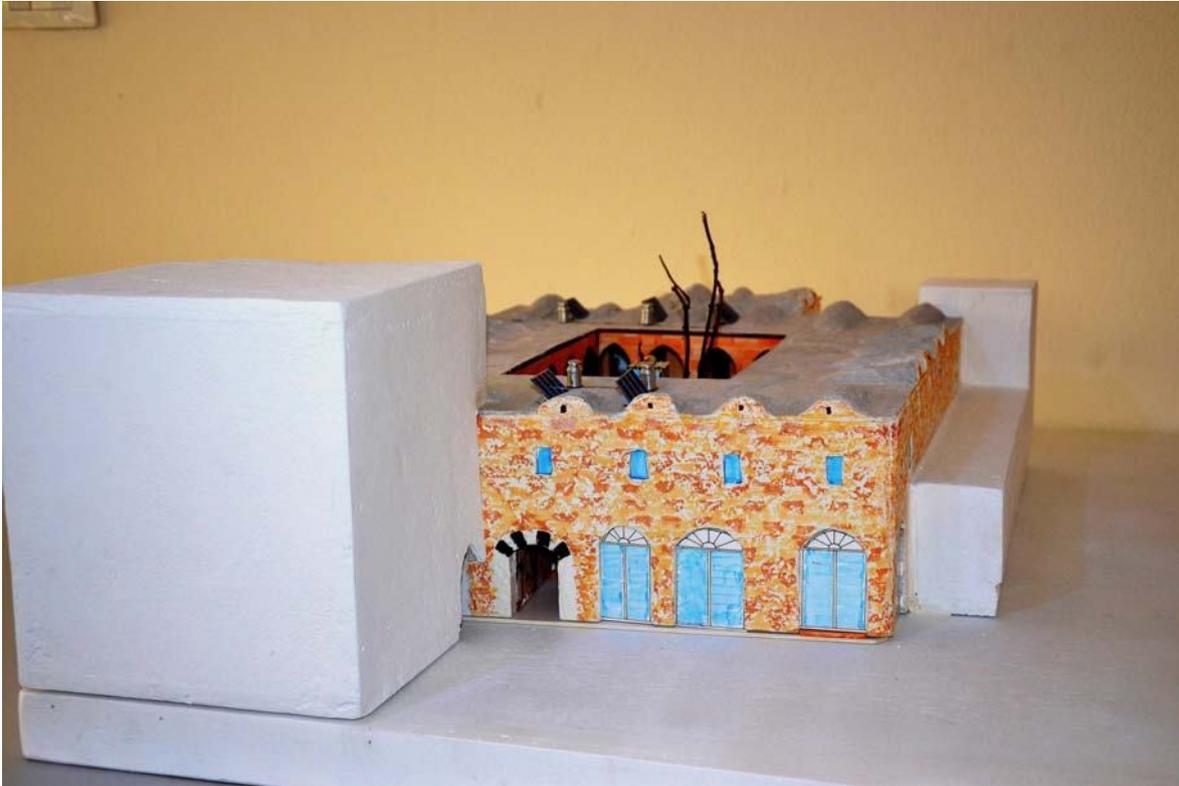
**Model showing the original structure (painted) with main gate, and annexes (white), seen from East** (Model 1:70 by ethno-expo ltd., I3tidal Badawi Najjar and Frank Beat Keller, oct. 2019)

On the upper floor 6 of the 24 rooms are legally used for soap manufacturing, storing and selling by a renowned producer. He additionally occupies some 25% of the surface on a squatting basis, including much of the arcades. All other rooms are out of use, empty or filled



with debris and refuse. The renovation and re-use project (conversion into a guesthouse of the main part of the upper floor) restores and continues the tradition of hosting travellers which has been alive for centuries on these premises but has been neglected for generations now.

The historically correct restoration will cost 2.6 millions USD and includes a selfsufficient solar energy supply (a landmark project for North Lebanon). Syrian construction workers (now living as refugees in Tripoli) will be trained on site for future reconstruction work in their own country. These costs can be borne by Lebanese and international NGOs. Accountancy will be made public on the website; payees of larger sums will be declared (which sum paid to whom, for what, date).



**Model showing the original structure (painted), and annexes (white), seen from West**  
(Model 1:70 by ethno-expo ltd., I3tidal Badawi Najjar and Frank Beat Keller, oct. 2019)

Private investment of 0.4 million USD is needed for the guesthouse on the upper floor (4-5% p.a. dividend). The hotel manager will be responsible for the proper functioning, cleanliness and security on all shared surfaces of the khan, including the courtyard, the elevator, the passages and the arcades. The hotel will cooperate advantageously with a new café and/or restaurant (ground floor) which will invite clients to sit in the courtyard.

The restoration and reuse project will transform the khan to a point of interest for tourists, both individual European travellers and Lebanese visitors living abroad on their annual visit back home. Instead of day visitors from Beirut actually being forced to leave the city at nightfall, trippers will happily stay overnight in the heart of the picturesque city-center. In this way, the restoration will contribute to the development of the ancient city. It will help to intensify its attraction for some of the 700'000 inhabitants of Tripoli and the 150'000 inhabitants of neighboring el-Mina. Surveys have shown that many of inhabitants of quarters like 3azmi, Abu Samra, el-Khalet avoid strolling through the souks as they do not feel wellcome there. The restoration fits into the concerted efforts to strengthen the importance and the image of North Lebanon and fits well with the project of the municipality to make the el-Tell area more attractive.



## The partners

The project for both, re-use and restoration, has met with a high level of acceptance among local and national stakeholders: the **President of the National Directorate of Antiquities** in Beirut, the **former and the actual Mayors of Tripoli** (in Arabic: **Trablous**), and the **President of the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Tripoli and North Lebanon**, each have signed a letter of intent, stressing the importance of the project and confirming their approval. The **Executive Director of the Islamic foundations (awqaf) as a spokesman of the Mufti** in Tripoli helpfully lends assistance, as does the Lebanese national institution CDR (**Council for Development and Reconstruction**) which is commissioned by the Parliament for similar tasks throughout the country. Both support the project with suggestions, advice and by providing available documentation. The „**Université Libanaise, Section III, à Tripoli**“ has provided access to academic studies and 2D-plans for an eventual restoration of the khan (1999). The **Ottoman Court Archives in Tripoli** have opened their doors to our researchers. The **Embassy of Switzerland** has offered logistic support.

**the project team** (at 1.1.2023, cv and photos: <https://en.karawanserei-tripoli.ch/team/>)

- **Frank Beat Keller**, Zurich and Tripoli, head of project general manager of ethno-expo ltd. in Zurich, Switzerland took the initiative for this project. He is an internationally known exhibition maker (50+ anthropological exhibitions in Switzerland, Germany, Austria, India), book author and publisher. He initiated and led projects in the field of restoration of listed buildings (in Switzerland and France) for more than 20 years. He worked in them and finished them successfully. He knows how to combine cultural heritage with modern standards and needs. Examples (photo documentation before/after restoration): [www.renoviert.ch](http://www.renoviert.ch)
- **Youssef Dabliz**, Tripoli, human relations manager.
- **Bassem Zawdeh**, Tripoli, architect, diploma of post-graduate cours of restoration studies at Université Libanaise, in Tripoli. Responsible for preparing the construction application to the authorities. Future on site supervisor.
- **Rana Ra2ad**, Nancy, France, translator.
- **Dolly Farah**, Tripoli, advocate, legal advisor.



## 2. The renovation project

### **Restoration philosophy: save as much as we can**

Whatever can be preserved, will be cleaned and/or be reused. All original materials will be repaired if possible. Parts which are damaged with no chance of repair will be replaced or exchanged for similar new parts (e.g. from the same quarries as the old ones), using original techniques. All floors open to public access will be repaired and levelled. Internally the shops remain as they are – the individual owners will or will not take care of their rooms at their own expense, and eventually they might change their use. Guidance and advice will be delivered free of charge to them. Strictly non-toxic materials will be used; organic materials will be chosen if available. Public-private partnership is of paramount importance in this respect, and communication is crucial.

### **Extent of building to be renovated (original structure)**

The khan building complex comprises different parts, but only the ancient caravanserai built in early 14th century with its two portals and original facades is to be renovated under the present scheme (see plan and model). The former stables, passageways and secondary rooms from the same period, located to the north, with separate access from outside are not included in the project. The shop stalls on the souk road side flanking the main portal (to the east) as well as the shops and offices attached towards Cheikh Abdul Kaim Ouaida street (to the south) are not part of the project. Their construction date is not know and of little heritage value, probably Ottoman and later. Nevertheless, the roof terraces of these will be integrated in the re-use program and therefore renovated. The recent constructions filling the gap between the actual khan and the Mamluk mosque el-3Aatar (currently undergoing renovation) are not part of the project.



**Roof extension of the Khan (original Mamluk structure from  $\pm 1320$ )** (drone photo 3.19)





**Project extension including Ottoman terraces** (drone photo 3.19)

### **Extent of the renovation works**

Plants and non-original technical installations will be removed. All exterior surfaces of the building (roof, facades facing the exterior as well as in the courtyard including the arcades) need comprehensive refurbishing; all surfaces need to be cleaned and freshly grouted.



**Window above main gateway before renovation Western gateway before renovation**



**Interior Vaults before renovation North-eastern corner before renovation**



### **Paramount importance of ablaq decorations**

The original "ablaq" decorations (interchanging black and white stones on the facades) will be highlighted after non-original additions will have been removed.



**The main gateway seen from the opposite khan el-Khayiyatin (tailors' carawanserai)**

### **Further features of renovation**

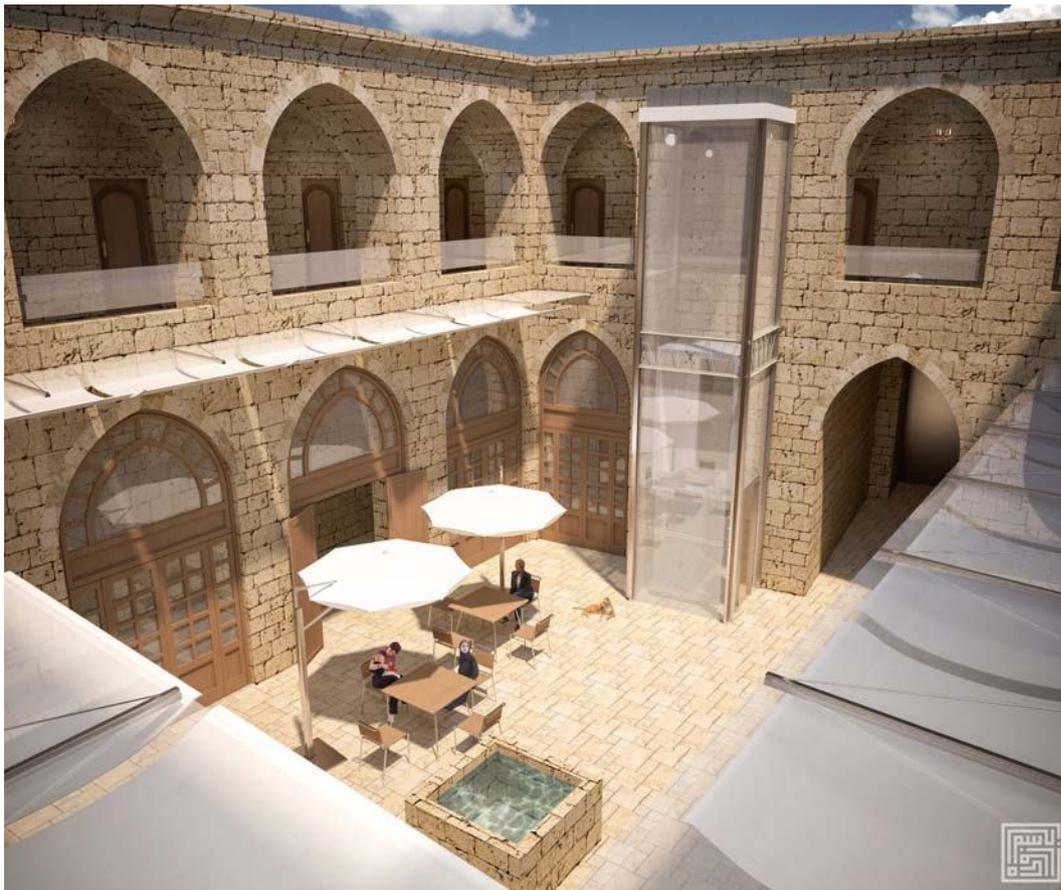
New contemporary installations (power, media, water, sewage, AC) will be installed in wall and/or concealed in the floors. The outlets of these installations will be brought to the privately owned rooms – to avoid later unprofessional on-wall installations. Private owners can connect their appliances within their rooms as they wish.

Doors to the shops, iron grids, doors to the rooms and windows will be replaced in style – except the original mamluk wooden doors in the upper floor which will be elaborately restored. An overall lighting concept (outside and courtyard) will be provided and implemented (concealed wiring, LED-illumination). Anchoring devices (hooks, eyelets), current outlets, etc. will be provided for possible future use when events take place in the courtyard.





**Courtyard, south western corner before renovation (2018)**



**Courtyard, south western corner after renovation (including café and elevator, 2022)**  
 (the tree wiii remain / it has been removed in the image for better visibility)



### **Climate-neutral technology to be installed for energy-autonomous building**

This building will become a pioneer building in North Lebanon as far as ecology and energy supply is concerned: it will be the paramount energy saving building in this part of the world and serve as model for the reconstruction of many buildings in Syria once the war is over. Solar panels on the roof will provide electricity as well as warm water. Conditions of exchange of surplus daylight energy against electricity supply during the night are still to be negotiated with Energie du Liban and/or private providers. The water for the fountain in the courtyard will be recycled.

### **Side effect (opportunity for training of Syrians willing to go back)**

The restoration of the khan el-Masriyyin offers the opportunity to include an international aid project: a group of carefully selected Syrian refugees currently living in refugee camps not far from Tripoli will be chosen to participate in an on-site training program. Eligible for this program are solely Syrians who plan and promise to return to their country as soon as possible and engage in renovation work there, once the rebuilding of the country starts. The number of participants is limited by the Lebanese law which allows not more than a certain percentage of foreigners working on the project. (The former mayor of Tripoli has given his full consent to this project in writing, see "letter of intent" on [www.khan-el-masriyyin.com](http://www.khan-el-masriyyin.com)). The selected persons will receive some general education, ie in-depth special classes on building materials and techniques suitable for the renovation of classified monuments. They will work on the site to train their newly acquired skills and gain some experience.



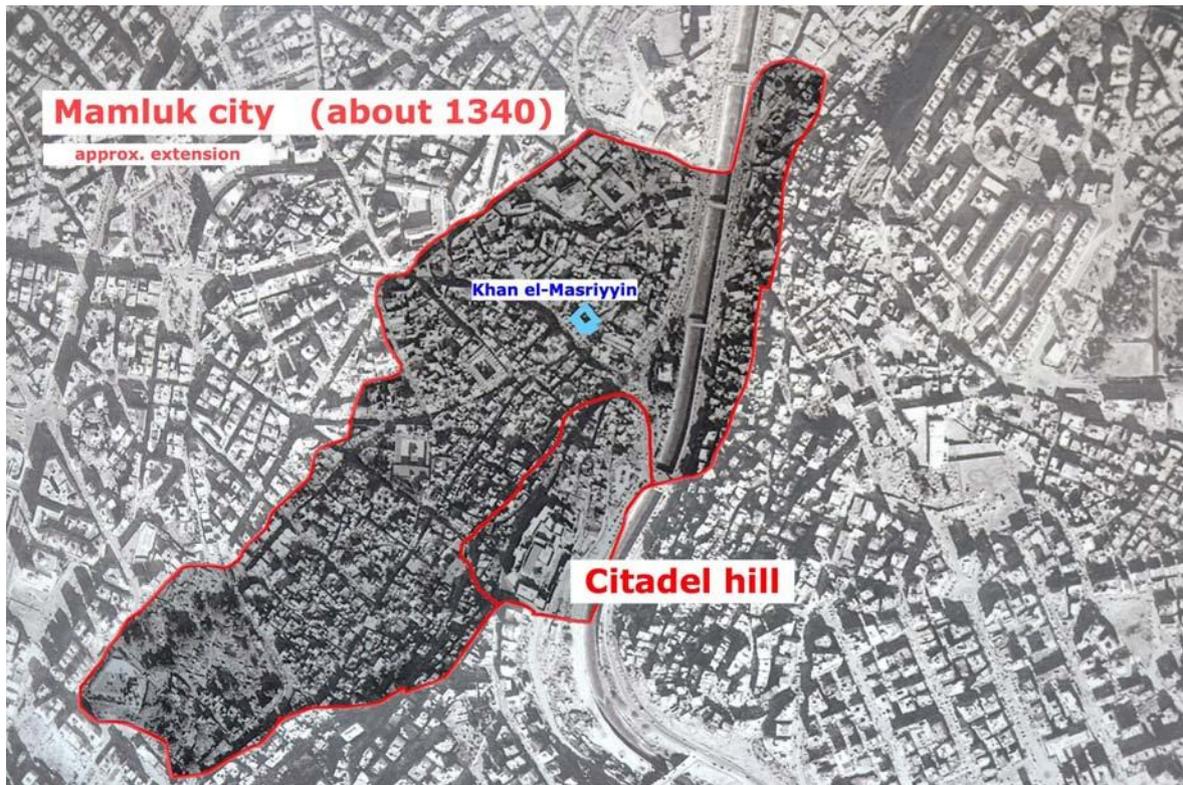
### 3. The significance of the khan in the history of old Tripoli

The former caravanserai is a two-storey building erected around a square courtyard decorated with a fountain, alongside the former long-distance Beirut-Homs road (today: souk el-Basarkan), just opposite of the „khan el-khayiatin“, the tailors' khan. It follows the construction pattern of Mamluk trade stations in the el-Sham area, normally separated by the distance a camel caravan could cover in a day.

Originally it showed arcades downstairs as well as upstairs, similar to virtually all khans in el-Sham and western Asia. At some time in its history the owners of the ground floor closed the arcades and privatized them to have more storage (or shop) surface. All rooms, including staircases and passageways were and still are vaulted; the construction is made of stone hewn at nearby quarries. Wood has not been used for construction purposes.

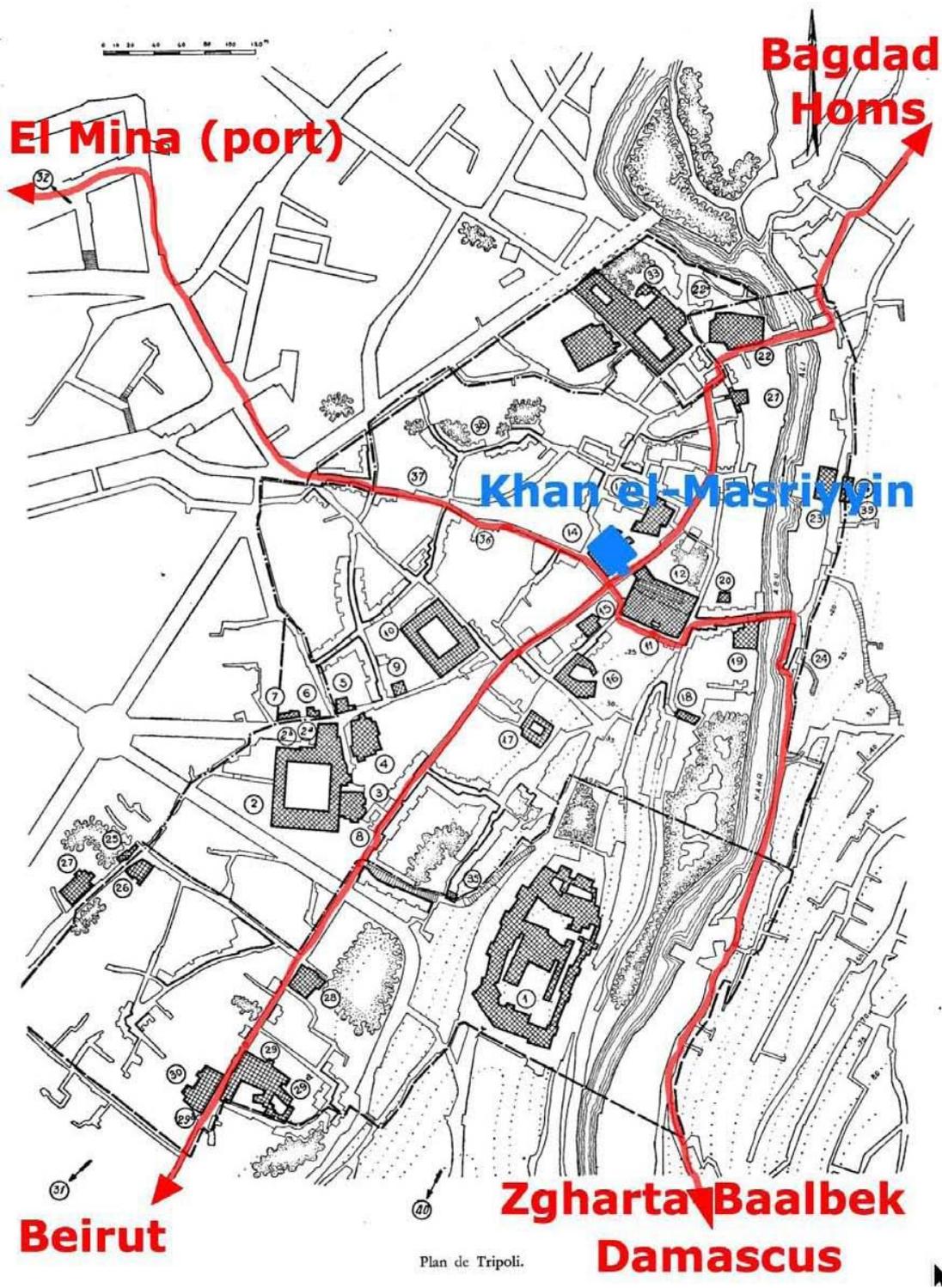
#### **The reinvention of Trablous by the Mamluks in the 14th century**

The khan was erected between 1309-1356 A.D., probably around 1320; unfortunately no inscription has been found as to the original builders or the founder of the monument. No documentation is available from the 14th and 15th centuries. The Mamluks had conquered ancient Tripoli, a settlement with thousands of years of history on the shore of the Mediterranean, now el-Mina, from the Crusaders in 1289 and found the ancient seaport town to difficult to defend. They then destroyed it and shifted the former city 5km from the sea to the foot of what today is Citadel Hill, where a Christian settlement existed in those times. This epoqe turned out astonishingly prosperous.



**The khan el-Masriyyin lies on the foot of Citadel Hill in the very heart of the historic city of Tripoli** (from: aerial photograph in el-Mina municipality (about 2010); John Gluck, Tripoli a Modern City, Harvard UP, 1967; onsite investigations 2019)





**Classified monuments in Tripoli historical city and historic transit routes (Mamluk and early Ottoman era)** (from: COLLART Paul, Liban, Aménagement de la Ville de Tripoli.... (Rapport de la mission UNESCO), 1953, p.11)



The [khan el-Masriyyin](#) (nr.14) was built not far from the crossing between two important overland routes of that period (Beirut – Homs and Damascus – Beka'a – Trablous) and close to the ancient crossing of the Abu Ali river. Opposite to it: the famous Mamluk hammam (nr. 12), the Mamluk khan el-Khayyatin (nr.11). The citadel (nr. 1) is on top of the hill, the great mosque (2) and many madrasas and minor mosques of the same area are nearby (3-9, 15-27).

Most probably ancient settlements had survived already for thousands of years, even though no remains of them are now to be seen. We assume that pre-Muslim shrines (Ba'al, Phoenician, ancient Greek, ancient Roman sanctuaries) were worshipped on the dominant site where the citadel is today. As with many locations all over the world probably services catering for pilgrims' needs operated in the area of what is today the intersection of the two roads. The Mamluks built most of the listed national heritage buildings of Tripoli during the period cited above, the khan being one of them. We assume that the khan was a „waqf“ (Islamic foundation) since its original construction, but no written documentation is available to prove this assumption.

Today, Tripoli is the city with most the Mamluk architectural heritage in the world (listed monuments), after Cairo. The famous hammam Ezzedin (1295-99) close by, the Mansouri great mosque (1295-1314), several minor mosques (eg el-'Attar, next door to the khan) and a number of medrasas (Koranic schools) were donated and erected during this flourishing period, as well as some commercial buildings such as the khan.

### **The ablaq stile, a mamluk contribution to world architectural heritage**

The now classified monuments mostly were – and still are – all decorated in ablaq style, the Syrian fashion of using alternating black and white stones in masonry. The crusaders brought the ablaq technique to Europe and made it popular around 1300, e.g. in Pisa and Florence cathedrals. In the 19th century it was used for the "La Majeure" cathedral of Marseilles and widely around the US.



**Khan el-Masriyyine. Facade towards east. Note the ablaq decorations on the main entry of the khan, now being part of souk el-Basarkan.**

Source: Jean YASMINE, Projet de restauration de khan al misriyyine (sic), Université Libanaise, Tripoli. 6.1999. (Cutout of a plan elaborated for the "Departement DEES en restauration").

After having taken the power in Cairo, Egypt, during the 13th century, the Mamluks conquered the el-Sham region (the Levantine crescent) which extends from Iskendrun, Turkey, until south of Jordan where the great deserts of Saudi Arabia begin. Damascus became a cultural center. In 14th century, trade between Syria (via Trablous) and the Nile delta started to flourish. Egyptian cotton was traded for meat from the el-Sham area and goods – including spices – which came in on the back of camels from Persia and Central Asia via the Silk Road,.



The khan was built to cater for the needs of these caravans, and so it was fortified with arrow loops on first floor to protect the main gateway. Tradesmen stocked and traded their goods on the ground floor, watered the camels at the fountain in the middle of the courtyard before putting them into the stables nearby, and slept in one of the many small rooms on the upper floor. They stayed for weeks and months, until they had sold whatever they had brought, and reinvested the money in goods to bring back (cotton from Egypt and valuables from Europe). The hammam Ezzedine is located just across the road where the travellers found a place to bathe.

### **Ottoman period: Roxelane, Suleiman the Magnificent's favorite, restructures**

It took some two hundred years until the khan appears in the historical documents, being then mentioned as a waqf. We have found property sale contracts in the Tripoli Ottoman Schari'a court archives mentioning the khan as founded and given to the awqaf authorities by *Haseki Sultan*, „the sultan's favorite“. The lady was known and famous in Asia and in Europe under the name of Roxelane (c. 1503-1558) and had an astonishing career. She was born in what is now the Ukraine, and was abducted from her parents home and taken to the slave souk in what is now Istanbul. This was the apogee of Ottoman power: the lands from Vienna to Mecca and from the Crimean peninsula to Morocco were ruled by Suleiman the Magnificent, a fierce, cruel and successful emperor. He bought her as a courtesan, chose her as his favourite in the harem for her skills and character. She became his companion, and outshone his legitimate wives. Subsequently, around 1521, when he was in his late thirties, he set her free, this being a legal condition before he could be allowed to marry her, after she had given birth to their first son. Thus, in her early twenties she became his most trusted adviser and the most powerful woman on Earth at the time, having more political and cultural sway than the queens of England or Spain.

Her main interest was the promotion of educational and religious Sufi-oriented issues throughout the Ottoman empire, mainly in Istanbul, Damascus, Jerusalem, Cairo and Mecca. She took over charitable institutions from the impoverished Sufi congregations and funded new ones. Historical documents testify that she completed the restoration of architectural heritage mainly in the el-Sham area, and in Egypt. An extended correspondence between the spouses has come to our time. Their often poetic testimony of mutual love, tenderness, and advices mutually given and taken can be seen in archives in Istanbul.

Later, at some (unknown) time during the Ottoman period which ended 1922, during the 19th century accordingly to oral testimonies we have received, the arcades on the lower floor were closed and merged with the warehouses behind.

The original load-bearing structure of the khan including the vaults remains mostly intact, only two walls having been removed, and steel beams from the early 20th century take the load today. During the Ottoman period, the souks alongside the ancient and former thoroughfare became more important, and the khan merged into them.

### **Mandate and Independence**

The Ottoman empire collapsed in 1922. During the mandate which followed, given by the League of Nations (1922-1943) to the French, their administration made Tripoli the gateway to Syria: the town and its port enjoyed a period of economic prosperity. and grew dramatically. The official land register was set up and the area of el-Hadid in the ancient city of Tripoli including the khan and the surrounding souk areas were mapped out in 1935. The map and borders of the plots, etc. still form the basis of what is used today. In the same period the list of classified monuments was drawn up and modern city planners set to work: the French opened up the heart of the ancient city by tearing down ancient buildings and laid down what is today Abdul Karim Ouaida Road from the river westwards, while what today is Rachid Karame Avenue followed the riverbanks. Mayor changes in the structure of the old city came about following the flood of Ali Abu river in 1956 but did not affect the khan which lies about 12 meters above river level.



Thereafter, the old city center gradually became poorer. The original population in this densely populated area of el-Haddid, consisting of ancient and rather wealthy Tripoli families, moved away towards 'Azmi, Abu Samra and other (new) quarters of Tripoli.

Incoming migrants from Lebanese mountain villages and nearby regions started to occupy vacant apartments. They started to live in the city but remained attached to their clan-like families and kept their economic roots (agricultural land) and emotional ties (cross cousin marriages) with their original villages.

Moreover, dispossessed Syrians flocked into the area, renting or squatting available living space, with little attachment to the history and importance of the city. The el-Haddid quarter became poor, and informal power structures grew. Charbel Nahas gives several statements from individuals (2001) who described their fear of entering the area at that time.

The building stock, much of it in the portfolio of the Islamic Waqaf, slowly and progressively deteriorated. This was partly due to the laws in force which established and fixed ridiculously low rents (e.g. less than 100 USD per annum for one living room in the ancient city), an amount which could not be changed against the will of the tenant and which did not allow the owner to pay for proper maintenance even if he wanted to do so. During the civil war local gangs took power in part of the old city.

This situation has been overcome during the most recent period, but still the area lacks glamour for many Trablous citizens. The laws governing the "ancient rental agreements" are still valid. People living in the nearby 'Azmi quarter normally avoid strolling through the souks (interviews 2019). The present project, like the projects of the Municipality to transform el-Tell square into a busy pedestrian area, will upgrade the ancient heart of Tripoli and make it more attractive to both locals and visitors alike.

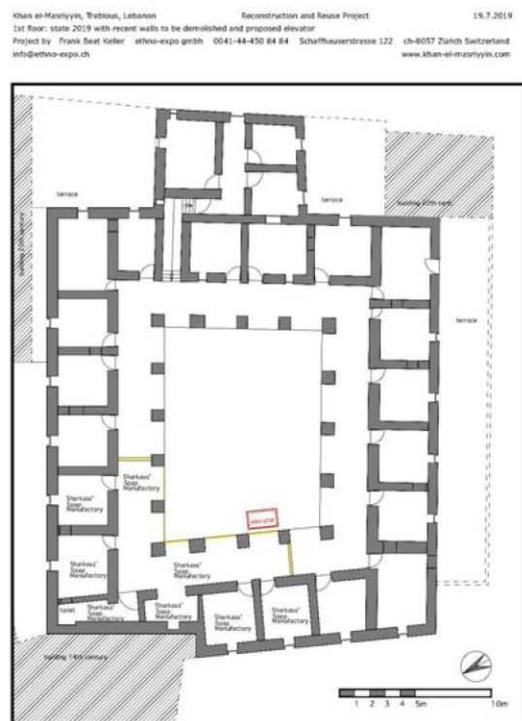
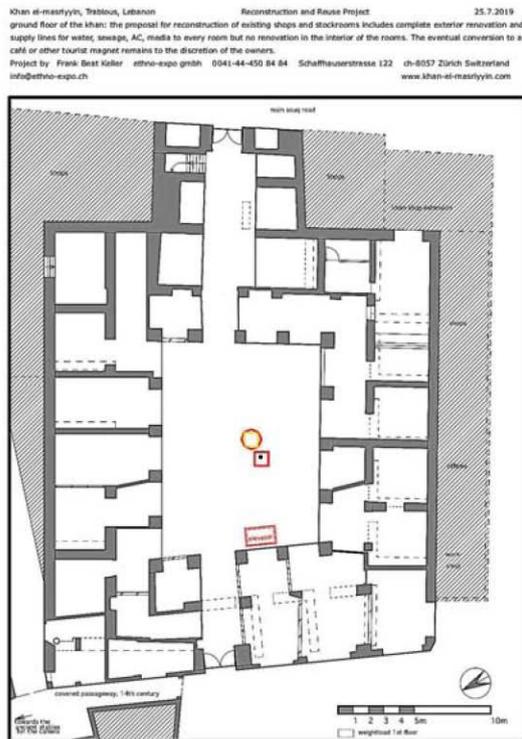
(Sources: Stefan WEBER, the restoration Project of souk Haraj in Tripoli history. Archeology and Rehabilitation BAAL V10, 2006. And personal informations by Stefan Weber, now (2019) director of the Berlin Museum for Islamic Art. Ira M. LAPIDUS, Muslim cities in the later Middle Ages, Cambridge UP, 1967 Hayaf SALAM-LEIBICH, The Architecture of the Mamluk City of Tripoli, The Aga Khan foundation for Islamic Architecture, Harvard UP, 1975 Nathalie CHAHINE el-CHAHAB, JESCO Contracting, Khan al-'Askar Rehabilitation project -report 20130417 Charbel NAHAS, [Stakeholder Analysis and Social Assessment for the Proposed Cultural Heritage and Tourism Development Project](#), November 2001



## 4. Present conditions, prior to works (2019/1440 h.)

The construction consists of large, solid, local limestone, hewn in quarries not far from Trablous, held together by ancient and subsequently renovated mortar. The weightbearing construction is generally sound although all joints have to be chequed carefully; all surfaces and wooden and iron parts are worn, rotten or rusted.

The original mamluk building showed arcades downstairs as well as upstairs. Sometime in its history the owners of the ground floor closed the arcades and made the semi-public space smaller to have more private storage (or shop) surface. All rooms including staircases and passageways were and still are vaulted, the ceilings have not been altered, and only their plaster, where it exists, has been changed through the centuries. In a few places the roof is not sealed, with water leaking through. The ablaq decoration on the facades (above the gateways) is mainly intact.



### ground floor plan (2018) upper floor plan (2018) (all measurement have to be verified before restoration)

(drawing based on French land registry (1935), with adaptations and occasional remeasuring)

Floors, particularly in the courtyard and the two passageways leading from it to the exteriors, are worn, in places defective, and often not original. The limestone must be removed and partly replaced, the surface must be smoothed and leveled out to allow proper drainage. The National Directorate of Antiquities / Direction Générale des Antiquités (DGA) in Beirut, represented by its Director, M. Sarkis el-Khoury, has given (oral) permission to avoid excavation on the site; therefore the floor can be restored easily. Some surfaces show remains of old plastering and decoration; one arcade on the upper floor notable for a sixpointed Jewish star. All surfaces and ceilings need cleaning from dust, atmospherical drop-and washout, and the residues of soap making. Some rooms and ceilings on the upper floor are covered by a thick, solid layer of encrusted olive oil dust mixed with tar from wood and petrol fires.



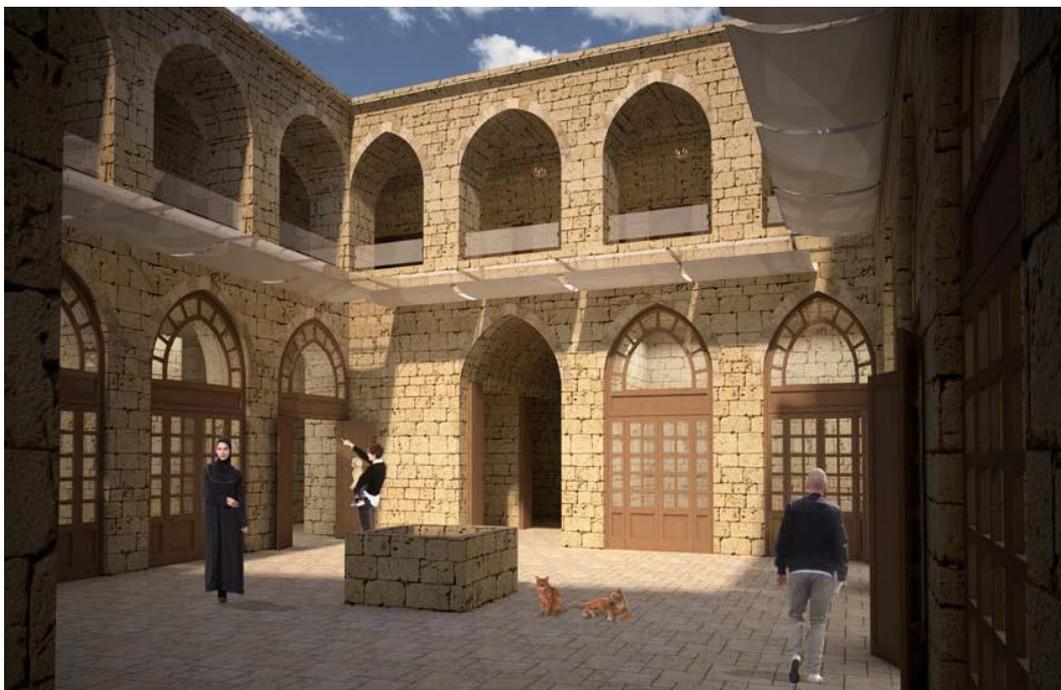
## Ground floor

The ground floor of the khan today can also be understood as an extension of the souk Bazerkan which leads north towards souk el-Haraj, with several shops selling soap, lingerie, shoes, electrical equipment, women's wear, etc. Five or six shops have been renovated internally by their current users. A few shops are closed to the public, some are used as warehouses for shops in the souks outside of the khan, while others, like the courtyard, are full of discarded furniture, etc. Most shops are owner-used, a few are rented out on contra from mandate times or under modern legislation. Electricity cables, closed circuit TV installations and rusted iron dominate the visual aspect seen from the outside as well as from the courtyard.



## The courtyard facing east, before (2018) and after renovation (2023)

(The tree remains – it has been removed in the impression for better visibility). (Photo and impression: ethno-expo gmbh 2018/2019)



### **The roof and the upper floor**

The roof shows considerable evidence of decay and neglect; the original plaster has weathered away and only been partially repaired. Many water tanks, wiring and appliances have altered the original state. Mr. A3abdel Nasr el-Mir, the tenant of room nr. 14, owns the large generators on the roof of a building nearby where he burns diesel to produce electricity. He is interested in providing the most up-to-date ecological energy system available in North Lebanon.

On the upper floor the Sharkass family produces soap from local olive oil combined with imported French perfumes and tints. The family-tradition goes back to the mid-19th century. The family owns one room only and rents or occupies others – as well as most of the open arcades. Some illegally erected walls can easily be removed.

Nobody lives in the khan; the gates are closed during the night.



**Rooms and arcades used for producing soap, occupied by squatting (2019)**

(photos: ethno-expo gmbh)



## Present ownership (2019)

There are some 26 rooms (of 3 to 38 sq.m. each) on the ground floor, and 26 rooms on the upper floor (3 to 20 sq.m. each).

The Tripoli Islamic Awqaf administers the traditional Islamic foundations in the city and holds the right to make decisions regarding the use of two thirds of the rooms concerned (see separate plans not included in this brochure). It levies a 10% commission in the event of their sale.

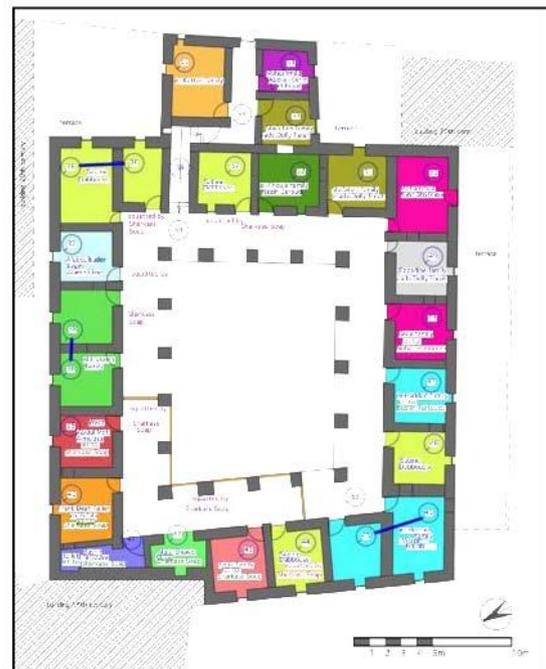
The land registry (Tripoli Municipality) list more than 300 different owners in 2018, some of them being undivided inheritances from former owners who died in the 1960ies. Several owners of certain rooms possess only 1/2400 or 2/2400 parts out of 2400/2400 qarats, the Lebanese way of subdividing shared real estate property.

This means that (an extreme case) one 14m2 room is held by 60-100 people scattered through Canada and New Zealand, to quote the most problematic example. Other rooms are owned by only one person (2400/2400) or by a handful of cousins living in Tripoli area. Two rooms belong to one antique waqf each (Islamic foundation under shari3a law, perhaps obsolete), with no identifiable addressee. Five or six rooms belong to persons living abroad; some of them can be contacted, others not. The owners of 48 rooms live in or around Tripoli.

Khan el-Masriyyin, Tripoli, Lebanon  
 Project location and floor plan  
 DEF 3.8.19  
 ground floor of the Khan: the proposal for reconstruction of existing shops and stockrooms includes complete exterior renovation and supply lines for water, sewage, AC, heating and electricity. All rooms are to be renovated. The kitchen is to be converted into a cafe or restaurant, etc. rooms to be divided into 2 sections of 2000 qarats.  
 Project by: Frank Beel-Keller, Hiltl-Gruppe GmbH, 39451-48470-1414, Tübingen, Germany, T. +49-7141-7776-1000, www.hiltl.com



Khan el-Masriyyin, Tripoli, Lebanon  
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We have identified one person living in or around Tripoli responsible for each number in the land registry, (one number designating one or several rooms), some families being represented by a lawyer.



## 5. Cost of renovation

### **Staging of works**

The renovation includes cleaning, repair and/or replacement of ancient structure (roof, facades, windows, doors, gateways, floorings, arcades). "Green" materials only will be used: no toxic materials. Materials to be used will be discussed and chosen in close cooperation with the relevant persons of the Directorate of Antiquities to meet the best architecturally, historically and environmentally appropriate standards.

Modern installations (in-wall / under flooring / flush mounted) will be brought to every room (water, sewage, electricity, media). The courtyard will be preinstalled for shading and possible later use for events and gatherings.

During the restoration, shops will remain open. Therefore a careful staging of the works to be undertaken is obligatory so as to minimize any loss of turnover. Most of the shops will remain accessible during the whole period of renovation (either from the exterior or the interior). Some will be inconvenienced by noise and dust for several weeks, while others will have to remain closed for a few weeks and will receive compensation.

### **Stage 1**

Removal of all appliances on the roof, replacement of necessary appliances by temporary solutions, refurbishing of surface for perfect seal, erection/building of supports, mountings and sockets for the climate neutral solar power project. Renovation of the facade facing south, including refurbishment of the terraces. (No renovation of the stalls below the terraces).

### **Stage 2**

Renovation of west and south facades of the courtyard including arcades (and doors) on the upper floor and passageway to the west. Renovation of facades facing north and west including gateway. Installation of the energy distribution equipment.

### **Stage 3**

Renovation of east and north facades of the courtyard including arcades (and doors) on the upper floor, staircase and passageway to the east (to the souq). Renovation of main facades facing east (the souq) including portal and souq road shading.

### **Stage 4**

Renovation of courtyard flooring, including new fountain.

### **Undetermined**

Renovation of the closed rooms on the upper floor, installation of the elevator, completion of the guesthouse on the upper floor (only after legal requirements for reuse are met), in close partnership with the eventual investor who takes care of the hotel.



**Preliminary cost estimate, prices of 2022****USD**

- Preliminary project, research, identification of owners, measurements, plan drawing, impressions, documentation, legal fees, advocate fees, (state of the project after first owners meeting) 29th of january, 2020 (website not included)	200'000
Supplement for 2024:	10'000
- Cleaning, refurbishing of all facades including arcades (2'350m <sup>2</sup> )x120/m <sup>2</sup>	282'000
- Scaffolding (800m <sup>2</sup> ), 3 periods * 20'000/piece, rent and mounting/dism.	60'000
- Cleaning and refurbishing of roof (600m <sup>2</sup> ) * 300/m <sup>2</sup>	180'000
- Installation of supply lines and waste water, 52 rooms * 8'000/room	416'000
- 24 doors x 1'000; 26 portals x 5'000; 23 windows x 800	172'400
- Climate neutral solar power project (including energy storage), connection with existing power networks, engeneering, hardware, putting up, installation	300'000
- Floors in passageways, courtyard, staircase, arcades 330m <sup>2</sup> x 300/m <sup>2</sup>	99'000
- Website, international communication, translations, financing	120'000
- Capacitation of Syrian refugees for future renovation work in their country	120'000
- Indemnities, legal fees, insurance	100'000
- Inauguration, media	20'000
<b>Total 1</b>	<b>2'059'400</b>
- unforeseeable expenses 10%	<u>205'940</u>
<b>Total 2</b>	<b>2'265'340</b>
- Architecture, planning, local surveillance, 15% of the above	339'801
- Rounding	<u>-5'141</u>
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>2'600'000</b>



Renovation cost (estimation of 22.11.2022, in USD)

	<b>needed amounts per years 2023-2026</b>				total
	2023	2024	2025	2026	
Preliminary project, until ready to submit to the authorities for construction permit	200'000	10'000	0	0	210'000
Cleaning, refurbishing of all facades including arcades	-	141'000	141'000	0	282'000
Scaffolding	-	20'000	30'000	10'000	60'000
Cleaning and refurbishing of roof	-	120'000	50'000	10'000	180'000
Installation of supply lines (electricity, water, and waste water) to every room	-	0	208'000	208'000	416'000
Doors, portals, windows	-	0	120'000	52'400	172'400
Climate neutral solar power project (including energy storage) and connections	20'000	60'000	100'000	120'000	300'000
Floors in passageways, courtyard, staircase, arcades, exterior	-	0	39'000	60'000	99'000
Website, international communication, translations,	40'000	20'000	30'000	30'000	120'000
Capacitation of Syrian refugees	-	40'000	35'000	25'000	100'000
Indemnities, legal fees, insurance	0	40'000	35'000	25'000	100'000
Inauguration, media				20'000	20'000
<b>Total 1</b>	<b>260'000</b>	<b>451'000</b>	<b>788'000</b>	<b>540'400</b>	<b>2'059'400</b>
10% unforeseeable expenses	26'000	45'100	78'800	54'040	205'940
<b>Total 2</b>	<b>286'000</b>	<b>496'100</b>	<b>866'800</b>	<b>594'440</b>	<b>2'265'340</b>
Architecture, planning, local surveillance, 15% of the above	42'900	74'415	130'020	89'166	339'801
Rounding					-5'141
<b>Grand total</b>					<b>2'600'000</b>



## 6. Necessary condition: guesthouse on the upper floor

### **Mission statement**

To keep the khan tidy, in good shape and well-maintained after renovation, private initiative and responsibility is crucial. The present ownership and the experience of many decades show that there is a tendency towards neglect of the architectural and cultural heritage. In contrast to what many dwellers and shopholders in the ancient city believe when they think only modern steel and glass building represent modernization, we (the project team) strongly believe that the reuse of listed monuments is of paramount importance for local and national identity.

Given the actual state of public finances in Lebanon, the very high external debt (7'300 USD per capita, e.g. 220% of GDP, see <http://worldpopulationreview.com> and <https://fr.tradingeconomics.com/lebanon/gdp>), the extraordinary challenge the country has to face being in charge of millions of refugees and the insecurity of the political situation in the el-Sham area in general, the chances that the Municipality of Tripoli will be able to come up with the maintenance cost of the khan in the future remain will poor for many years to come.

Similar renovations in many parts of the world including the local case of khan elA'askar and khan es-Saboun show that the transformation of such buildings after renovation into cultural spaces financed and run by local authorities does not work well because of lack of financing for current expenses. In fact, the cultural activities in the two places cited have almost been reduced to zero between 2020 and 2022. Similar experiences are to be expected in khan-al-Echle in Saida.

### **The guesthouse on the upper floor**

For this reason public-private partnership is needed. Public and (national as well as international) NGO financing will be found and raised to cover the restoration costs. Private funding (as an investment) is needed for the conversion of the upper floor into a guesthouse which caters for international tourists on a sound commercial basis.

For an optimal outcome of the renovation and re-use project it is crucial that a privately run hotel or guesthouse be established on the upper floor: the hotel manager will take care and maintain the building, prevent abuse, provide security (for himself as well as the guests), keep the courtyard tidy, keep the arcades in good condition, prevent cluttering and rubbish being dumped on the site, be responsible for the elevator, etc.

All or most of the upper storey will become a guesthouse, to be reached by the new elevator in the courtyard (transparent glass and iron construction) or, alternatively, by the existing steep stairs. They serve as an emergency exit also.

Obviously the present manufacturing of soap by the Sharkass family must be relocated outside of the khan for safety reasons, large stocks of oil and other soap ingredients being too dangerous next to premises where guests will sleep. Only work steps decorating the finished produce can be allowed on the premises. Perhaps a small workshop facility may remain in the building where Mr. Sharkass can show his art of transforming crude soap into the finished article.

In return, the soap outlet (shop) will prosper profiting from the increase of international, national and local public who will be strolling through the khan and/or staying overnight.



### **Extra potential for the khan in the future**

When renovated and well maintained the khan opens new shop opportunities on the ground floor (café, restaurant, gelateria); perhaps offices catering for tourist's needs will be interested to rent some areas now vacant. In any case, there is a need for a place where overnight guests will have breakfast and the opportunity to sit out in the evenings. Present owners showed interest in the proposal and are considering a change of use of their premises once the restoration will be finished.

Moreover, the courtyard will become an intimate place for private use in the evenings. Interested parties could rent it, given that all infrastructure for events is available (inwall installations provided by the renovation project, coffee shop, etc.). In this way the courtyard could become a attractive location for privately organized cultural events.

### **Problem and overall evaluation**

The future investor who wishes to set up and run the hotel needs reliable contracts (ownership or long term rental agreements) for the rooms, providing financial security and allowing a sound depreciation scheme. The political risk present in the el-Sham area, including belligerent actions between Israel and surrounding countries, is undeniable: in the evant of war, international tourists will avoid Lebanon. However Lebanese expatriates, Syrian health service seekers and aid and reconstruction personnel to/from Syria will remain.

The profit and loss estimates are based on low and intermediate occupancy; after an inital period, higher occupancy rates (and therefore higher income with nearly unchanged costs) are to be expected. After an initial period of 60 USD per person and night, prices might be raised by up to 50% if and when the khan has attained good reviews in the media and on booking websites.



## 7. Transformation of upper floor into guesthouse

### **Extent of the guesthouse (for 14 guests)**

On the upper floor there are 24 rooms. Sharkass's soap outlet remains contained within the 5 rooms where it is a legal tenant. Sharkass is the owner of one room distant from his shop. It's use has to be discussed. So, 5 rooms with double bed can be created, each having access to a private bathroom, as well as one family suite with 4 beds (in 2 rooms) and private bathroom (totalling max. 14 guests). There is one room as a reception/office room and one sleeping and rest room for the staff (24h attendance of the receptionist is needed).



### **Arcades on upper floor leading to guests' rooms (after renovation)**

(impressions by Bassem Zawdeh 2019, ethno-expo gmbh)

The renovation is possible with the permission of *one of the different owners of each room* only, but the change of use (guesthouse instead of storage/shop) needs the permission of *all* owners of each room. This is easy when only one or a few owners who live in or around Tripoli are involved.

However, the permissions are impossible to obtain for five rooms. In those cases some 60-100 heirs in distant countries have to be asked to split their inheritance to be able to produce legalized signatures made in front of an official person with the signature of this person recognized legally by the Lebanese Embassy in the respective country. Even if these rooms could possibly be used as bedrooms in a distant future, it is more realistic to plan them as storage rooms, and therefore restrict the project to 14 (instead of 20) beds. They are used for storage now and will be used for storage after transformation (for lingerie, appliances, reserve, stock), so no need to officially change their use.



## Planned boutique-hotel to start with 14 beds : for persons who like to stay overnight in Tripoli instead of one-day roundtrips from Beirut

Khan wl-Masriyyin, Trablous, Lebanon Reconstruction and Reuse Project V. 29.11.2019  
 1st floor: transformation into a boutique hotel with proposal for furnishing. Arcades permanently open to guests. Open to visitors of the soap manufactory during daytime only. To be transformed into guest rooms: (4-bedded suite + 5 double rooms)   
 Rooms not to be transformed for legal reasons (owners absent) remain: (5 depots)   
 Soap manufactory remains within its premises. Café for breakfast on ground floor. Courtyard enabled for event use.



## **Potential guests: overnight stay in Tripoli instead of short one day trip from Beirut**

Until 2022 close to the totality of tourists and visitors to Lebanon came into the country by plane to Beirut. Most of them remain either in Beirut and make one-day inland excursions to Ba3albek, Tripoli, the Cedar forest, the Jeitta grotto, etc. (mainly visitors from European countries) – or they stay in a coastal resort for a longer period of time (visitors of Arab countries). The guesthouse in the khan will not attract the resort residents but it provides an alternative for those who prefer to stay overnight in North Lebanon instead of heading back to their Beirut hotel already in late afternoon after a short day trip.

## **Potential guests: the targeted clientele**

As the guesthouse cannot provide much parking space nearby it will be frequented mainly by individual travellers, couples and groups of 3 or 4 persons who travel by public transport (Connex, minibuses, taxis).

The clientele will consist mainly of middle class tourists largely of European origin as well as travellers from America and perhaps Japan and Korea. They will have a sound educational background and are able to pay a reasonable price for one or several overnight stays.

Most of them have a feeling for architectural heritage and are interested in glimpses at the oriental atmosphere of the souks which seems very exotic to them. As some of them might be influenced by fears and prejudices, it is even more important to provide a safe and (very important!) clean atmosphere within the khan premises.

As Tripoli hosts some of the most important architectural heritage of the Mamluks, second only to overcrowded Cairo, it has the potential to become an important destination for tourists with interests in history and ancient Arab city development.

There is a still very small but slowly-growing group of Lebanese expatriates (second and third generation) who come back to their home country every year for a short holiday and to meet family members. Some of them will be keen to stay for a short period of time. A stay in the heart of ancient Tripoli gives the opportunity to bring back old memories, forgotten tastes and smells – and share these with one's own children.

The guesthouse does not compete with hotels which offer lengthy stays or with luxury holiday resorts at the beach.

Once the reconstruction of Syria takes place, the guesthouse in the khan can cater for a lively clientele as well as development and NGO and aid personnel bound for Syria or Beirut on their way through North Lebanon. They will want to recharge their batteries in an historic monument which meets contemporary standards in one of the most oriental bazaars of the el-Sham area.

Well-off students from Tripoli language centers might also be attracted during low season.

Depending on the price policy of the hotel management the guesthouse could be of interest for family members who accompany Syrians undergoing treatment in Tripoli hospitals on a weekly or bi-weekly basis.



## Costs of transformation into guesthouse (estimate for 14 beds) USD

- Arcades, windows and doors paid for by renovation project	0
- refurbishing of all walls and ceilings including in-wall electricity: 13 rooms (7 sleeping rooms and 6 bathrooms) x 3'000	39'000
- flooring including under floor water and sewage: 13 rooms x 3'000	39'000
- bathrooms: sanitary equipment, appliances, wall tiles: 6x 15'000	90'000
- furniture twin beds, cupboards, lamps, curtains, etc. 7 x 5'000	35'000
- 1 office/reception incl. furniture and office machines	12'000
- 5 staff and storage rooms (basic refurbishing for storage) incl. shelves, furniture 5x2'400	12'000
- air conditioners: 8 x 1'000	8'000
- elevator, including basement	120'000
- legal fees, insurance, etc.	10'000
- unforeseeable expenses about 10%	35'000
Total (estimation)	<b>400'000</b>
(including architecture, planning, local surveillance)	
(not included: website, initial marketing, legal fees, advocates, initial publicity, recruitment of staff)	

## Profit and loss estimate (p.a.) and dividend (% on investment)

### Income

14 beds x 365 nights = 5'110 possible overnight stays per annum.

Estimated capacity utilized/paid for: May-October: 75% (1916 nights),

Nov.-April 40% (1022 nights) = 2'938 nights @ 60 usd/person

**176'280**

(From the second year of operating onwards, higher revenues can be generated by both raising the price per night and achieving higher room occupancy rates. Overall publicity about the saving of Islamic architectural heritage will be useful to generate more customers by clever and intense marketing).

### Expenses

Full depreciation of total investment: within 10 years: average per year:

40'000

Rent of 17 rooms preferably as a % of profit

(for calculation purposes: estimate fixed rent not exceeding ø 100-150/month)

30'600

Wages: 1 general manager (including marketing, website, event organizing etc.)

25'000

Wages: 3 persons attendance, cleaning, overnight reception (@12'000 each)

36'000

Replacement and materials: 2'938 nights x 4USD

11'752

Washing: 2'938 nights \* 3USD

10'074

Running cost: electricity, media, water, publicity, fees, etc.

14'000

Total expenses

**156'426**

## Dividend on invested capital (400'000): some 20'000 p.a. equal at ± 5% per year

(small risk, very conservative estimate)

above on total payback of original investment.



## 8. Tasks accomplished & action plan

### **Tasks accomplished (until end of 2022)**

- pre-project, literature studies, archeology, history of city development
- building of a project team (head of project, human relationship manager, local architect, assistance, translators)
- measurings, plan drawing (1:100), 3d-impressions of khan when restored
- model 1:60
- contacts established with all important stakeholders: the Ministry of Culture (DGA), the Municipality of Trablous, the Chamber of Commerce of Trablous, the Islamic Awqaf of Trablous, the religious authorities,
- identification of the owners of every room, identification of tenants
- identification of a counterpart/contact person for every room, visits, talks
- purchase of one room by head of project Frank Beat Keller to become a co-owner with legal rights and become eligible as president of the owners' association
- purchase of one room by Youssef Dabliz, responsible for human relations and contacts, to become a co-owner with legal rights (and as a role model for the locals)
- setting up the NGO under Swiss legislation "The Friends of the Khan el-Masriyyin" to canalize funding
- in-depth marketing and feasibility study for guesthouse;
- building of website [www.khan-el-masriyyin.com](http://www.khan-el-masriyyin.com) (arabic), and website [www.karawanserei-tripoli.ch](http://www.karawanserei-tripoli.ch) (English, French, German).
- first articles in Trablous newspapers published; base laid for continuous media contacts, including international media (under way)
- identification of university partners and museums for future exhibition about the project; preliminary contacts established.
- identification of possible sponsors (national, international, NGOs, foundations, etc.), preliminary contacts established.
- cost estimates, budget both for exterior renovation public and NGO-funding) and guesthouse (private investment)
- secured utilization of room nr. 10 to serve as the on-site office for local supervisor during works
- secured utilization of rooms nr. 28 and 49 to serve as in-site storage and warehouse for construction materials during works
- the first assembly of the owners' has taken place, the owners' association has been legally constituted and a large majority of the votes are in favour of the project. Elections for the board of director are completed.

### **Action plan for 2023**

- fundraising for the first 200'000 USD needed to work out the documentation to obtain the building permit
- according to the agreements with DGA about all relevant details
- pre-design of a green solar power energy supply system (including contracts to sell daytime energy) and identification of a person willing to invest and run this plant
- identification of a Lebanese investor for the guesthouse (includes maintenance of elevator and courtyard). Obtain a letter of intent of an interested person.

