

# Documentation of Cultural Heritage of Traditional and Modern Architecture in Kabul

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## Long Abstract

Preservation of cultural and historical heritage requires accurate and powerful tools to understand a place of cultural heritage, know the history, and the purpose of its construction, ensure its continuity, preserve materials, and repair and improve its condition. This tool allows accurate surveys and collection of information needed to perform documentation, evaluations, statistical analysis, site management, and monitoring of the site or monument. The recording is an essential part of the conservation process in the 1996 ICOMOS guidelines for the registration of buildings and monuments. "The recording is the gathering of information which describes the physical configuration, condition, and use of monuments, groups of buildings, and sites, at points in time." Documenting cultural heritage is one of the necessities that have to be done to preserve, maintain and transmit it to future generations. During a planned process, all elements of historical and cultural heritage, physically and in terms of descriptive data, are accurately interpreted architecturally and topographically, and maps, information, and documents are stored in databases. This process provides sufficient information for studies, planning, and decision-making. In cases where monuments of historical value are destroyed by factors such as war, earthquakes, and natural disasters, it is possible to reconstruct them by referring to the documentation. As civil wars have plagued Afghanistan for decades, the successive destruction of traditional and modern architecture's cultural and historical heritage is evident in recent decades. The lack of documentation of these buildings has led to the neglect of this cultural heritage, many of them have not been nationally registered and have been destroyed by local people or government agencies. The protection and restoration of these buildings require accurate documentation to preserve their historical heritage. This study aims to provide a framework for documenting the cultural heritage of traditional and modern unregistered architecture in Kabul and examines usable documentation techniques and tools. In addition, it seeks to provide a basic and detailed analytical list of the architectural heritage

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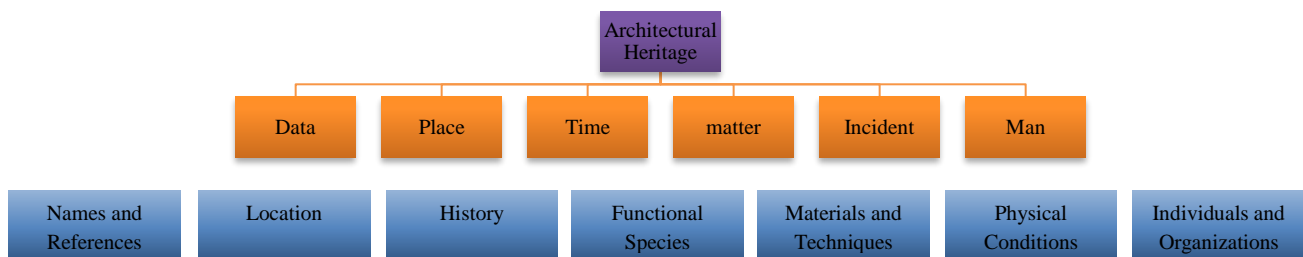
in Kabul as the core of the documentary process.



Figure 1- Darul-Aman Palace, Kabul, Afghanistan a) after the war 1; b) after restoration (© Tayebeh Nazarian)

The research method is descriptive-analytical and applied in terms of type. In this process, the prepared model according to the standards of European countries to record the architectural features of Afghanistan has been modified and changed. The detailed data entry list in this study has been designed and completed based on the global guidelines for building registration and the experience of field surveys of some cultural and historical monuments in Kabul. Cultural heritage documentation begins with the recording of attributes of historic buildings in metadata analytical catalogues and has a comprehensive approach. Understanding the physical characteristics of a historic building requires a multidimensional description of the building, recording the connections of the building with the affective domains of time, space, history, environment, society, and culture. Therefore, taking into account characteristics such as the history of formation, changes, and additions over time or structural and spatial characteristics provides the structure of the initial documentation to identify the building in the process of protection and restoration. Before carrying out any protection operations, it is essential to answer basic questions about the building, location, history, materials and construction methods, influential people in the history and developments of the building, historical events that are associated with life over time, location characteristics, and current condition of the building.

Figure 2- Conceptual model of recognizing architectural heritage



Descriptive and physical documentation of Kabul's cultural heritage should do by collecting and storing information in databases and spatial information systems with due care. Physical documentation means the complete and accurate interpretation of a historical building or site, taking into account all the complexities and details in the plan, volumes, decorations, and the area. The purpose of documenting is to provide accurate maps of historic buildings or sites in Kabul, usually on a scale of 1:10 to 1:50. For this purpose, Various methods can use such as scattering, classical mapping, photogrammetry, short-range photogrammetry, laser scanners, and remote sensing. The main determining factors in choosing any of these tools and methods are the size of the building or historical site and its complexity. Techniques such as short-range photogrammetry and tools such as laser scanners as well as surveying cameras allow the physical documentation of buildings and historical

heritage sites on a large scale and with great accuracy in Kabul. Physical documentation of Kabul's historical and cultural heritage can do in the following ways:

- Two-dimensional documentation: initial reports (architectural drawings for all building elements); Photographic documentation (ground photography, aerial photography, indoor photography, interior and exterior details of the building, site height, topography, and contour lines).
- 3D documentation: digital documentation, digital recording technology including remote sensing aerial radar, imaging modelling, 3D laser scanning, multidimensional image exploration, mapping; Building computer simulations, analysing databases, and managing database information.
- Four-dimensional documentation: the four-dimensional means three dimensions (length, width, height) plus time as the fourth dimension.

In the descriptive documentary, Kabul cultural heritage has prepared the most important issue for setting up and using GIS or spatial information systems. This data is descriptive, graphical, or raster. One of the most widely used global standards in the recording of multifaceted architectural heritage features is the database index for historic buildings and monuments. A comparative study of the proposed paragraphs of the Guidelines for the Registration of Valuable Cultural and Historical Monuments and the ICOMOS Recommendation on the Principles of Registration of Monuments and Complexes of Buildings and Sites provides a list that completes the database standard and records more complete details of Kabul historic buildings. Additional clauses include a description of the building site and its key elements, environmental threats, the condition of the building in terms of strength, damage to the building, the names of the components and their dimensions, the type of decoration, and the type of additions to the building. This list not only records the characteristics of the building, but also considers the characteristics of the building site, events, and happenings related to each building over time, including additions and interventions, changes in performance, or changes in management and maintenance. The comprehensive and basic list records only general information about the building, such as its name, location, or historical period. But a detailed and descriptive list provides a complete record of details, alterations and extensions, and the context of the building. Such a list outlines the next steps in protecting and prioritizing restoration work. Activities for preserving and documenting unregistered traditional and modern architecture in Kabul can first sensitize the eyes and minds of ordinary people to the architecture and surrounding details, then continue this activity in five layers:

- To assess the situation, most of the neighbourhoods of Kabul should be examined separately for alleys, streets, and valuable buildings should be identified.
- Documenting should be done by photographing and capturing some of these buildings.
- For awareness, the specific audience, architectural and construction community, and general audience, people, should be considered. For the first group, content production about the restoration or destruction of valuable buildings in the city should be provided. For the second group, architectural tours should be organized to get to know this architectural heritage.
- Collective and public participation can be implemented with projects and programs on digital platforms related to the details of Kabul city.
- The only operational solution to preserve these buildings is their national and global registration. Writing registration files and a database of many valuable buildings in Kabul will help protect this cultural heritage.

Table 1. Database index and Detailed list of cultural heritage of traditional and modern architecture in Kabul

Database Index	Names and Resources	Specifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The name of the building, group of buildings.</li> <li>- A unique reference number.</li> <li>- The date of compilation of the record.</li> <li>- Cross-references to related building records and reports.<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
	Addresses	Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The location and extent of the monument.</li> <li>- Address or street reference.</li> </ul>
		Reference on the Map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A map reference or triangulation.</li> <li>- Coordinates (x, y, z).</li> </ul>
	Functional Species	Function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The type of the building function.</li> <li>- Function of floors of the building.</li> <li>- Evidence to the extent and use of the building during the time.</li> </ul>
	History	Historical Chronology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Historical value: Ancient, Historical, Contemporary.</li> <li>- Date or period.</li> <li>- Evidence to establish the date of origin, authorship, the original design.</li> <li>- The history of management, maintenance, and repairs.</li> <li>- Evidence to establish the associated events.<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
	Affiliate groups	Individuals or Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The name of the recording organization.</li> <li>- The name of the designer or manufacturer.</li> <li>- The type of ownership during the time: Governmental/Private/Endowment.</li> </ul>
	Building materials and techniques	Technical and Construction Specifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The type of the building.</li> <li>- The form and dimensions of the building.</li> <li>- The constituent parts of building: decorations, ornaments, or inscriptions.</li> <li>- Ancillary structures.<sup>3</sup></li> <li>- The construction and maintenance technique.<sup>4</sup></li> <li>- Services, fittings and machinery.</li> </ul>
		Specifications of Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The type of materials.</li> <li>- Representative elements or samples of construction or site materials.</li> </ul>
	Physical Conditions	Pathology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- General conditions of the building.</li> <li>- An assessment of the current condition of the heritage.</li> <li>- Degree of destruction: Partial/Total.</li> <li>- Type of destruction: Physical destruction/Chemical destruction/Biological destruction.</li> <li>- Interventions in the structure, body, and decorations of the building.</li> </ul>
	Protection / Legal Status	Protection and Restoration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The type of historical protection.</li> <li>- Protection and restoration time.</li> <li>- Protection and restoration priority.</li> <li>- How and rules of protection.</li> </ul>
Other Cases	Historical and Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Historical summary.</li> <li>- Cultural landscape features.</li> <li>- The nature, quality, cultural, artistic, and scientific significance of the heritage.</li> <li>- An assessment of the visual and functional relationship between the heritage and its setting.</li> </ul>	
Detailed List	Location Conditions	Description of the Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Yard indicator element.</li> <li>- Incompatibilities and environmental threats.</li> </ul>
	Physical Conditions in Detail	Current Condition of the Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Current status in terms of stability and strength.</li> <li>- An assessment of the conflicts and risks<sup>5</sup> in current condition</li> <li>- Current pathological condition.</li> </ul>
	Physical Components in Detail	Dimensions of the Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Area of the arena.</li> <li>- Built area.</li> <li>- Length.</li> <li>- Width.</li> <li>- Height.</li> <li>- Number of floors.</li> </ul>
		Shape of the Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The shape of the main element.</li> <li>- Peripheral shape.<sup>6</sup></li> </ul>
		Type of Building Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The interior and exterior characteristics of the building.</li> <li>- The components and the cultural, artistic, and scientific significance of the building.</li> </ul>
		Type of Decorations, Inscriptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Type of decorations: Painting/ Bedding/ Tiling/ etc.</li> <li>- Subject of decorations: Human/ Animal/ Geometric/ Compositional motifs.</li> </ul>
Type of Extensions and Interventions		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create and build new spaces.</li> <li>- Demolition of part of the building.</li> <li>- Convert elements and details.</li> </ul>	

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## Footnotes

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- <sup>1</sup> - Photographic, graphic, textual, or bibliographic documentation, archaeological and environmental records.
  - <sup>2</sup> - Subsequent history of its uses, structural or decorative alterations, and the impact of human or natural external forces.
  - <sup>3</sup> - The gardens, landscape and the cultural, topographical and natural features of the site.
  - <sup>4</sup> - The traditional and modern technology and skills.
  - <sup>5</sup> - From human or natural causes, environmental pollution, or adjacent land uses.
  - <sup>6</sup> - The shape of external boundaries of the building.