

The eternal courtyard:

(urban development of archaeological khan bani saad and it's surrounding)

Khan Bani Saad, located in Diyala, has played a central role in urban and commercial life. It served as a hub for trade and lodging for merchants and travelers, while also providing a space for social and cultural interaction. Today, This khan face serious challenges, including deterioration, underuse, and the risk of disappearance.

This project was chosen because it combines historical and cultural significance with architectural challenge. Khan Bani Saad is a rich historical landmark, but it has suffered from neglect and destruction. Reviving it is not merely an architectural task, but also a social responsibility that reconnects the community with its memory. At the same time, the project represents a real challenge in balancing the restoration of the historic parts, the reconstruction of the missing sections, and the introduction of contemporary elements, while ensuring that the place retains its identity and historical spirit.

strategy analysis

Contrasting Grid Strategy

General Concept

This strategy is based on introducing new planning grids that differ in their orientation or distribution from the traditional urban fabric of the area. The aim is to create a visual and functional interaction between the old and the new patterns, contributing to the revitalization and adaptive reuse of the site in an innovative way without compromising its historical value.



Application Phases of the Contrasting Grid Strategy

1- Assessment of the Existing Fabric

The first step was to carefully analyze the historic fabric of the site and classify it into three categories: the parts to be preserved, the parts to be removed, and the parts that require restoration. This allowed me to respect the historical value of the Khan while opening space for new interventions.

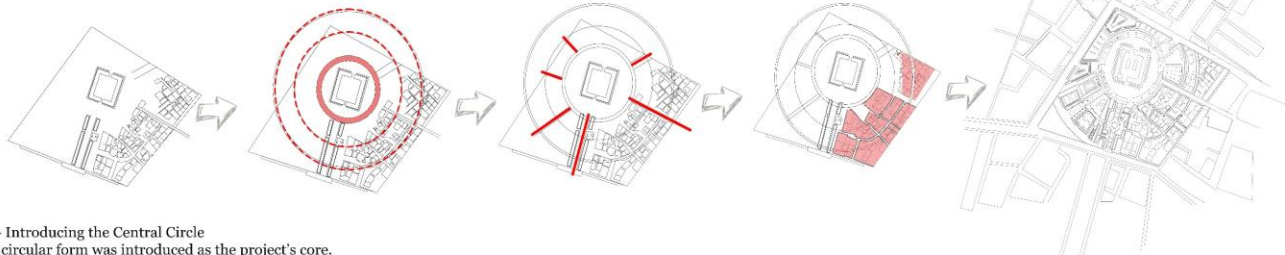


The importance of the project lies in preserving one of the most prominent examples of Abbasid architecture in the region, characterized by its arches and unique geometric design, serving as both an architectural reference and a living model of traditional techniques and Islamic art.

The site was chosen because it is located in the heart of Khan Bani Saad, a place that is historically and socially central, while also carrying symbolic value after the tragic events of 2015. This makes it an ideal point for revitalizing heritage and reconnecting it with the local community in a way that balances authenticity with modern functionality.

During the design, the greatest challenge was preserving the heritage character of the khan while adding modern functions, accurately reconstructing the damaged spaces, integrating the new with the old smoothly, and applying Islamic ornamentation in a practical and aesthetic way.

The project focuses on the development of Khan Bani Saad and its surrounding area, positioning the Khan as the main façade and cultural landmark of the proposal.



2- Introducing the Central Circle

A circular form was introduced as the project's core. Rather than a simple geometric choice, the circle was conceived as a gathering space and focal point, symbolizing unity and convergence. It organizes the spatial experience and naturally guides movement toward the heart of the project, transforming the circle into a living core rather than just a central shape.

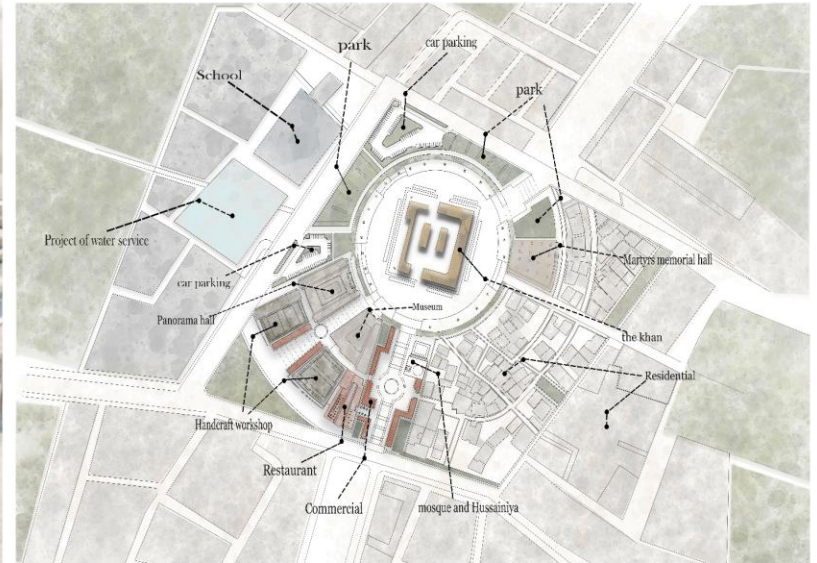
3-Defining Pathways and Orientation

Based on the contrasting grid strategy, new axes and pathways were introduced to interact with the historic fabric and to converge toward the central circle. These lines improved connectivity and reinforced the Khan as the project's main anchor.

4-Placement of New Masses

Finally, new built volumes were positioned along the newly defined axes and around the central space. Their placement responded both to the preserved historic structures and to the new circulation network, creating a dialogue between the past and the present.





3D Renders

Land-use plan



section A-A



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In the revitalization of Khan Bani Saad, the site was divided into two main parts. The first part is the original Khan, where the surviving structures were carefully restored. Collapsed sections were reconstructed using the same materials, drawn from the traces of the old foundations. This preserved the authenticity of the historic character while strengthening its stability. The second part is a new extension that complements the original structure. Its design was created as a direct simulation of the original Khan, but it was built using different materials. A visual separation was introduced between the two, creating a clear distinction without breaking continuity. This contrast highlights the value of the restored Khan while giving space for new functions. Visitors can easily perceive the transition, recognizing where the original heritage stands and where the new interventions begin. The project creates a balanced dialogue between preservation and renewal. Through this dual approach, the Khan has become both a monument to its past and a functional space for the future.



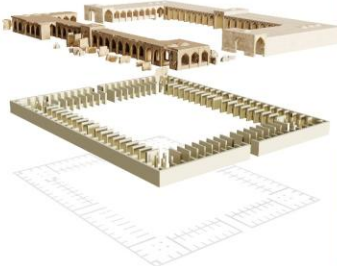
Master plan



Martyrs' Memorial Hall



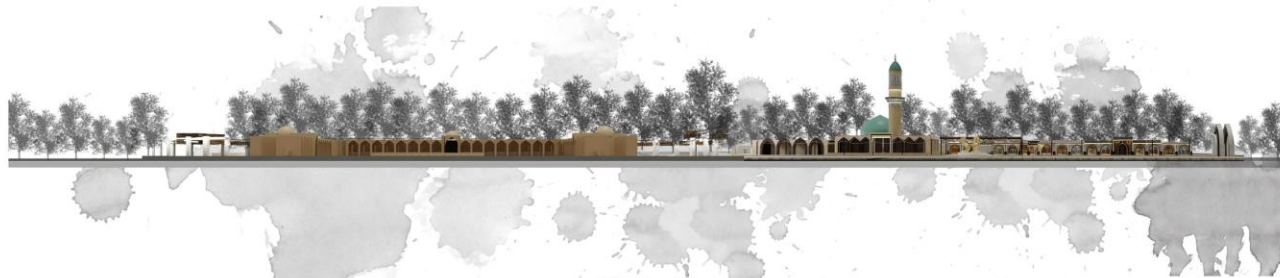
In 2015, a massive explosion struck Khan Bani Saad, claiming the lives of more than 200 innocent people and leaving the markets and a large part of the Khan in ruins. The Martyrs' Hall was created to honor their memory, where portraits of the victims form a living remembrance. A central monument with golden pillars symbolizes rising souls and everlasting light. And a symbolic crater in the floor recalls the deep scar left by the blast. This commemorative space invites reflection and resilience, preserving the victims' memory while transforming tragedy into a lasting message of hope and unity.



3D exploded view



Restored Original Section – Exhibition & Traditional Crafts Bazaar



Elevation A-A



The project carefully balances commerce, culture, memory, and modernity. Historical exhibitions display photographs and documents from across Bahri Governorate, preserving local heritage and promoting it in an accessible and engaging way. Meanwhile, contemporary artworks inspired by local traditions establish a subtle and tangible connection between past and present, enriching the visitors' experience and fostering a deeper understanding of the region's cultural continuum.

The archaeological Khan Bani Saad has been reimagined as a vibrant cultural hub, breathing new life into its historic fabric while preserving its architectural integrity. Instead of remaining a mere abandoned ruin, each here was carefully analyzed and assigned a purpose that complements the overall design of the Khan. Some rooms were transformed into spaces for cultural and artistic exhibitions, showcasing paintings, sculptures, and works inspired by local heritage, allowing visitors to immerse themselves in the rich visual and artistic history of the region. Other rooms were converted into lively environments for traditional crafts and local products, where artisans interact directly with visitors, creating a dynamic atmosphere that blends learning with hands-on engagement.



This thoughtful distribution of functions conceives that Khan Bani Saad is not merely a preserved architectural monument but a living, interactive environment where history and community coexist. As visitors move through its arches, they experience a thrilling atmosphere—from the haunting energy of tracks in some rooms to the contemplative calm of art and heritage exhibits in others—each space offering its own unique character and depth.