



The Aga Khan Award for Architecture

32, chemin des Crêts, 1218 Grand-Saconnex, Geneva, Switzerland, Telephone (22) 98 90 70

1983 ARCHITECTS' RECORD

CONFIDENTIAL

I. IDENTIFICATION

- A. Project Title SHUSHTAR NEW TOWN (FIRST PHASE)  
B. Postal Address SHUSHTAR, KUZESTAN, IRAN

II. PERSONS RESPONSIBLE

(Please give name and address for each. If more than one, please state precise roles and relationships.)

- A. Client/Owner MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE  
SHERKAT KHANESAZI IRAN (IRAN HOUSING CORPORATION)  
KAROUN AGRO-INDUSTRY CO.

B. Architect/Planner

D.A.Z. ARCHITECTS, PLANNERS & ENGINEERS  
DESIGNER IN CHARGE - K. DIBA  
PROJECT MANAGERS - A. KASHANIZO, P. REZAQHOLIZADEH  
SENIOR DESIGN COORDINATOR - C.P. SABERWAL  
PLANNERS - RAWINDRA S. SADEGH  
URBAN DESIGNER - S.K. MANCHANDARA

- C. Consultants (e.g. Economist, Sociologist, Demographer, Engineer) SENIOR ENGINEERS - A. AMIR-REZVANI  
F. SADEGHI, K. FARNOUSH  
A. YAKILI  
D.A.Z.

D. Contractor

GILARD SISTAN CONTRACTORS - FIRST PHASE (SUBJECT OF THIS COMPETITION)  
DEY CONTRACTORS - OTHER PHASES

E. Master Craftsman

NONE

### III. USE

- A. Type(s) of Use HOUSING (A NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT) ABOUT 500 UNITS
- B. User/Occupant WORKERS + OTHERS
1. Occupation AGRO-INDUSTRY WORKERS
  2. Income Level
- C. Specify any change(s) between planned and actual use. I THINK THAT AFTER THE REVOLUTION TARGETS OF AGRO-INDUSTRY WERE NOT MET. I ALSO BELIEVE USIA REFUGEES HAVE BEEN LOCATED IN NEW TOWN.

### IV. PROJECT HISTORY

#### A. Programme Development

1. Date of Commencement 1974 \_\_\_\_\_
2. Date of Completion \_\_\_\_\_

#### B. Design

1. Date of Commencement 1975 \_\_\_\_\_
2. Date of Completion \_\_\_\_\_

#### C. Construction

1. Date of Commencement 1976 - (STARTED BEFORE ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN WAS FINISHED). \_\_\_\_\_
2. Date of Completion 1978 \_\_\_\_\_

- D. Date of Project Occupancy 1978-79 \_\_\_\_\_

### V. PROJECT ECONOMICS

(For Costs, please give amounts and currencies. Specify their date(s) of validity)

#### A. Total Initial Budget

#### B. Total Actual Costs

ACCURATE INFORMATION

#### C. Analysis of Costs

NOT AVAILABLE

1. Land \_\_\_\_\_
2. Materials \_\_\_\_\_
3. Labour \_\_\_\_\_
4. Professional Fees \_\_\_\_\_

#### D. Source(s) of Funds (indicate percentage)

1. Private \_\_\_\_\_
2. Public  
  - a. Local \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. National \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. International \_\_\_\_\_

## VI. CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

### A. Site Area and Characteristics

LAND WITH RAVINES, ADJACENT TO RIVER

### B. Total Floor Area of Individual Building(s)

VARIED

### C. Structural System (describe)

BEARING WALL, STEEL BEAMS AND JACK ARCH  
(FIRST PHASE ONLY)

### D. Materials (describe and indicate whether locally produced or imported)

1. Infill CONCRETE BLOCK
2. Rendering of Facades BRICK AND CEMENT
3. Floors TERRAZZO TILES
4. Ceilings PLASTER
5. Others (interior and exterior)

### E. Site Utilities and Building Services (describe)

SEWER, WATER, TELEPHONE, ELECTRICITY

### F. Construction Technology

#### 1. Describe the Basic Method of Construction

BEARING WALL AND STEEL BEAMS

#### 2. Indicate which major building parts were fabricated on-site and which were fabricated elsewhere.

### G. Type of Labour Force (indicate percentage)

1. Skilled 35% \_\_\_\_\_
2. Unskilled 65% - UNSKILLED - AFGHANISTAN \_\_\_\_\_

### H. Origin of Labour Force (indicate percentage)

1. Domestic 20% \_\_\_\_\_
2. Imported 80% \_\_\_\_\_

## VII. EVOLUTION OF DESIGN CONCEPTS

Please describe the genesis of the project, through programme, design and construction to final and present occupancy.

Shushtar New Town  
Khuzestan, Iran  
1974–1980  
(partial completion)  
Population 30 000–40 000

This is a town for workers and employees of the Karoun agro-industry located across the river from the historic town of Shushtar. During the seventies in Iran many new towns were being built. Unfortunately, few attempts were made to incorporate vernacular architecture on such a scale as Shushtar. In the beginning, our client gave us quite a bit of trouble and interfered in the design of the project. This is very typical of developing countries where the technocrats feel that since they have a more powerful position than architects, they are free to implement their own taste and ideas into the projects they undertake. Fortunately, after a preliminary struggle with many different agencies which were involved in the investment, we succeeded, under a very tight schedule, in putting together a new town which is sympathetic to the cultural values of Iranian society and yet maintains a traditional continuity with the past.

The major design feature is a multi-faceted central east-west pedestrian boulevard. This consists of many gardens, paved squares, covered and shaded resting places, arcades, bazaars, pedestrian bridges complemented by dramatic changes of level and decorated with lush plantations, fountains, running water and occasional use of Persian mosaic tile work. The neighborhoods are designed to encourage movement in the direction of this pedestrian boulevard. Major public activities, such as schools, bazaars and a variety of community affairs occur along this spine, enhancing its prominence. The contrast of the narrow paved streets of the neighborhoods, which are almost treeless, makes the boulevard a very precious place with strong imageability. This also worked out as a practical solution because of maintenance and landscaping costs which we considered difficult and luxurious for this scheme. We located many private gardens in such a manner that their vegetation could provide shade and a green touch to the narrow streets.

The streets were designed not primarily for a corridor-like function, but to generate and maintain a life of their own. Observation of old cities showed streets as a kind of playground or meeting-place; so, we created a lot of dead-end streets which preserved privacy and identity.

We managed to segregate the automobile from internal community life and also approached the whole project as a high-density horizontal apartment house, with all parking areas concentrated collectively at strategic points.

One of the concepts incorporated into our scheme was that the western notion of thinking of a house as a conglomeration of living-room, dining-room and bedrooms, was abandoned. We concentrated on the room as a flexible interior unit, since, historically in Iran hard furniture was never developed and instead large multi-purpose, multi-functional spaces were provided. Having the influence of a very strong nomadic culture, Iranian houses are not only adaptable to different daily functions, but also, in a typical courtyard house, according to the season, the inhabitants move around the courtyard to avoid or enjoy the sun.

We made two and three-room housing units planned in a manner in which they could simply expand to the next unit and become a four, five or six-room house. The idea was to avoid the eternal stigma of low-income housing and minimum room sizes. As the standard of living improves, the houses would be expanded and families could have larger dwelling units. The argument was that the Iranian way of life, especially the non-western style prevalent among low-income groups and the rural population, needed less rooms but larger spaces to accommodate different daily and nightly functions. The majority of rooms were 5x5 m and the smallest rooms were not less than 4x4 m or 3x4 m. We also concentrated on houses rather than apartments. Close to 90% of dwellings are one or two-story houses and all units are provided with a garden which is designed as an outside room without a roof. The new town is programmed to integrate different income groups. In order to further reduce the institutional (company town) character of the new community, it was planned that a percentage of houses built by the company should be offered on the open market to attract and assimilate the natural growth of adjacent old Shushtar into the new town.

Beyond accommodating the functional needs of a scheme, I am very much concerned about the physical stage we set for patterns of social interaction and collective behavior. Obviously, this objective is an involvement beyond just making buildings and is often incorporated into the program and design processes. Anticipating community and social behavior, the question is: what happens when the architect leaves and the people move in?

## VIII. SIGNIFICANCE OF PROJECT

SHUSHTAR NEW TOWN

In what way is this project important?

Please describe the aspect(s) of the project which you feel represent a particular achievement, for example, the technical, economic, or social achievement, or its response to culture or climate, etc.

Years of observation of traditional vernacular towns being chopped off by modern and contemporary boulevards prompted many questions as I made master plans of several historical towns and cities in Iran. The problem was: a traditional environment (social, cultural and physical) with its characteristics inner-oriented, private, mysterious and closely interwoven, addressing toward climatic conditions. How could it provide an efficient vehicular system and accommodate contemporary needs?

Shushtar is an attempt to resolve such contradiction and problems. Furthermore, it is a dialectical attempt to synthesize urban super blocks which addresses functional contemporary needs with a traditional and vernacular environment.

Beyond this basic attempt we have:

A grand linear pedestrian boulevard connecting all neighbourhoods, public spaces and commercial activities, etc.

Architecturally we have ceremonial elevations with continuous rhythm and consistencies (elevations facing the grand linear pedestrian boulevard), embodying like a skin an often chaotic, individualistic and closely-knit inner environment of neighbourhoods.

Narrow shaded streets and a tight structure to preserve the cool of the night.

The definitive architectural nature of the internal grand linear boulevard gives permanent order and character even if the master plan were abandoned and arbitrary self-help took over. In this case, existing designed neighbourhoods would not be out of contrasting contradiction with the unplanned.

A respect for traditional and social values.\*

Shushtar New Town, as a place, looks neither old nor new. It has an unexplainable mysterious quality about it. When I looked at Shushtar First Phase after it was completed, as a place it looked as though it had always been there. It seemed fresh, happy, strong and utopian. Perhaps it was the innocence of a new town, without the sins and scars of history.

\* Please add photocopy of text on Shushtar from "Kamran Diba - Buildings (Please continue overleaf if necessary) and Projects", Shushtar New Town page 166-223.

## IX. DOCUMENTATION

Please indicate the materials you enclose for project documentation:

- \_\_\_\_\_ 10 Photographs; Color, and Black & White; 8" x 10" (18 x 24 cm).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20 Slides; Color, and Black & White; 35 mm.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Drawings: Community plan, Site plan, Floor plans, Sections, Elevations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Project Brief/Programme
- \_\_\_\_\_ Biographical Data \_\_\_\_\_ Documentation previously submitted.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_).

Please note: The submission of this Record is a prerequisite to candidacy for the Award. All information contained and submitted with the Form will be kept strictly confidential until the announcement of the 1983 Award recipients. Subsequently, such information may be made available by the Aga Khan Award Foundation for scholarly purposes only. Nevertheless, persons wishing to publish, reproduce or reprint such information shall be required to secure prior permission in each instance.

Authorized Signature Kamran Diba Date 3 November 1982  
Telephone (33-1) 274-35-19 or (33-1) 747-4741 Telex \_\_\_\_\_  
or (33-1) 272-2249