



1 Old Dispensary 2 Forodhani Park ■ Intervention area

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## FEATURED CASE STUDIES



OLD DISPENSARY



FORODHANI PARK AND SEAFRONT

### Programme Scope/Objectives

Documentation, land and building surveys, historical research, social and economic surveys, and inventories of historic buildings and cultural resources were all undertaken here. On this basis, the development of general planning proposals and regulations, as well as detailed projects for buildings and major public areas, were elaborated. The 'Conservation Plan' provides the planning and legislative framework needed to encourage appropriate development in line with the Stone Town's historic character and today's requirements.

### Preceding pages:

The balcony of the House of Wonders offers dramatic views of the restored Forodhani Park and the sea off Zanzibar.

# Stone Town Area Programme

The Stone Town of Zanzibar, the historic core of the capital city of the island of Zanzibar, located thirty-eight kilometres off the coast of East Africa, has been a regional cosmopolitan crossroads for centuries, reflected in its unique fusion of Swahili, Islamic, Hindu and European culture arising through trade and travel. Its principal waterfront cornice displays the front line of a dense array of arresting coral stone/lime structures which are both individualistic in character and yet highly integrated into a larger urban morphology of historic importance.

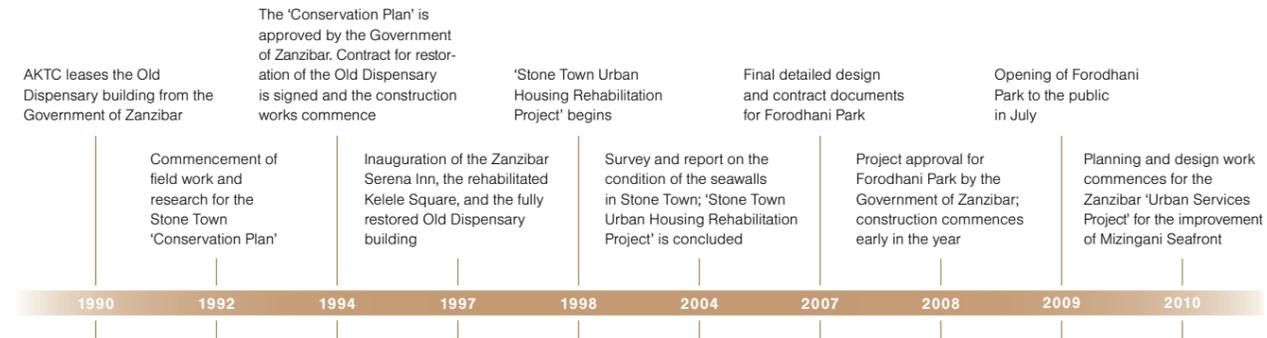
Although certain institutions of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) trace their history in Zanzibar to the turn of the twentieth century, the first involvement of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) in Zanzibar dates to 1988, when the Aga Khan Award for Architecture organized an international seminar on the island. This event raised the Trust's interest in the rehabilitation of the old Stone Town, which led to an agreement of protocol of collaboration in the Stone Town between AKTC and the Government of Zanzibar.

AKTC's sustained involvement in Zanzibar over several years made it possible to develop a coherent, long-range strategy and set of initiatives aimed at the revitalization of the town's historic core, from the definition of general policies to the implementation of specific building projects and area plans.

### The Old Dispensary

The listed Old Dispensary building in the Stone Town was the second major historical building to be restored by the Historic Cities Programme (HCP) after its establishment in October 1992. As such, it provided a model for similar initiatives carried out both in the Stone Town and elsewhere during subsequent years. The design aimed to respect the existing historic fabric, while taking into account the different building phases, thus avoiding arbitrary interventions and unnecessary alterations. Great attention was paid to ensure that all materials used in the works corresponded to or were compatible with the original ones. Any changes deemed necessary for technical reasons were carefully recorded and identified. In terms of new uses, changes were considered for their compatibility and opportunity vis-à-vis the existing fabric. The final adaptive reuse choice was to transform the Old Dispensary into a combined service, retail and cultural centre. These new uses sought to enhance the building's original qualities in the context of a culturally meaningful public function, while at the same time generating the income necessary to ensure the Centre's future maintenance.

Phasing 1990 2010



The 'Stone Town Urban Housing Rehabilitation Programme' included the rehabilitation of Mnazi Mmoja, the former Royal Hotel.

**Conservation Planning**

A number of wider urban planning and conservation efforts complemented the Old Dispensary initiative to guide future development in the historic area of Zanzibar. In particular, following earlier efforts sponsored by UNCHS/Habitat, AKTC developed, in close cooperation with the Zanzibar Stone Town Conservation and Development Authority (STCDA), the national authority responsible for the historic area, a number of urban surveys, research activities and planning proposals centred on Zanzibar's historic area.

This area, traditionally known as the Stone Town, measures approximately 125 hectares, including the eighty-seven hectares that constitute the town's built-up historic core. The Stone Town accounts for only about five per cent of greater Zanzibar's total urban area. Within its confines, however, are concentrated the vast majority of Zanzibar's monuments and registered buildings, as well as principal public and commercial facilities.

Starting in 1992, a joint initiative between the STCDA and AKTC led to the preparation of a 'Conservation Plan' for the Stone Town. The Plan was formally adopted by the Zanzibar Government in 1994. It includes controls on the use and development of land, measures to protect individual buildings, street elements and open areas. The Plan also contains a set of measures designed to improve infrastructure, parking and circulation in and around the Stone Town. These proposals are complemented by a set of new building regulations, which constitute an integral part of the Plan, as well as proposals to improve and develop the principal public spaces of the Stone Town.

**Forodhani Park and the Seafront**

Two such public spaces are the Zanzibar Seafront and Forodhani Park which were, and still are, the object of sustained AKTC work. Forodhani Park lies at the heart of the historic seafront district of the Stone Town. Approval to rehabilitate Forodhani Park was given in January 2008 and work on the Park proceeded from February 2008 to January 2009, together with the restoration of the historic seawall adjoining the Park, initiated in late 2008 and completed in May 2009. The Park was reopened in July 2009 and has since turned a fairly derelict public open area into a major and highly successful concourse for residents and visitors. It reconciles aspects of both rehabilitation and revitalization to create a contemporary urban space, whilst reviving a historic sense of place. Such is the success of the Park that the initiative led the government to request the World Bank to include financing for the rehabilitation of the adjacent stretch of seafront, the Mizingani area, into its 'Zanzibar Urban Services Project' (ZUSP) loan. In this case, AKTC will provide design and advisory services to the STCDA towards the implementation of the initiative.



The lesson which can be drawn from this experience is that sustained commitment and the ability to realize projects that generate local pride and international visibility are powerful catalysts for urban regeneration. Moreover, such projects are capable of raising complementary support from governments and international institutions in areas that are normally excluded from financing because they are not considered a priority, such as culture and conservation. On the contrary, the Forodhani initiative and its expected follow-up along Zanzibar's seafront show that reinforcing connections with the city's past and its cultural traditions, and combining them with the economic regeneration of significant urban areas, can bring business and jobs, as well as increased revenue from tourism. In this respect, the Zanzibar experience can be extended to other cities in the region and provide an alternative model of urban development, one that reinforces the distinct character and authenticity of places over the look-alike, heavy-handed developments that are currently applied in so many city centres internationally.

In the new Park design, large trees were retained along the foreshore of the Park to function as focal points.

**Housing Rehabilitation**

In parallel to the various activities outlined above, a 'Stone Town Urban Housing Rehabilitation Programme' was conducted over the period 1998–2004. Co-funded by the Swedish Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the urban rehabilitation programme has benefited approximately five hundred of the poorest residents of Stone Town, who lived in publicly owned houses or in houses administered by the government-controlled religious charity board (*Waqf*). By the time the community-based rehabilitation programme was completed, nine large publicly owned houses had been rehabilitated, serving more than a hundred families.

The Kiponda Caravanserai is one of these. It was home to nineteen households with a total population of seventy people. Before rehabilitation it only had two functioning toilets: one for a family of six and one for the remaining sixty-four inhabitants. Now there are six working toilets and there are separate washing facilities. Cooking was done in the corridors or inside the rooms. Now it is done in the central courtyard. More importantly, perhaps, is that the tenants, who did not have any security regarding the length of their stay, now have formal ten-year contracts with the housing authorities. The Urban Village



Kiponda Caravanserai (top) and Nyumba Ya Moshi (bottom) before (left) and after (right) rehabilitation. In the experience of the Historic Cities Programme, housing improvement has proved crucial in the process of urban regeneration.

Tenants' Committees that were called into life by this programme have played an important role in community mobilization and empowerment. In concert with the programme, courses in building repair and lime stucco technology were run for tradesmen, their content later being collated and published as practical repair guidelines made available in both English and Swahili.

Although limited to the initial phase of activities carried out by AKTC in the Stone Town, the housing rehabilitation initiative underlines another important aspect of the Zanzibar experience: the importance of housing in the context of urban regeneration projects. There is in fact no doubt, as other AKTC work has shown in places such as Cairo, that the single, most important catalyser for disadvantaged communities is improved housing conditions. If results can be achieved in this sector, even if numerically limited but significant in quality, community support and mobilization for conservation will follow. Rehabilitation of housing remains a central aspect of urban conservation and it is vital for the sustainability of urban regeneration in this and other cities of the Islamic world.

#### Indian Ocean Maritime Museum

Future cooperation initiatives between AKTC and the Government of Zanzibar that build upon this foundation include the creation of a maritime museum through the adaptive reuse of the Orphanage building, an early twentieth-century structure located in close proximity to Forodhani Park. As a contribution to this museum, Zanzibar authorities entrusted the Sultan's Barge to AKTC for restoration and eventual display. That work has already been completed. Also in this case, the thematic exploration of the maritime traditions of the region can become a major attraction for visitors to the island and an important educational springboard for local residents. Although Zanzibar already has two important museums aimed at local history and the past, a maritime museum focusing on the Indian Ocean would bring an international perspective and context to the island and return to the town the sense of its historical role in the development of the important commercial links that for centuries has united it to the rest of the Indian Ocean and beyond.

The facade of the building chosen to house the Indian Ocean Maritime Museum: the site, which had been the local orphanage, now relocated to new premises, is located next to Forodhani Park.



## Background

### BRIEF HISTORY OF PROGRAMME AREA

The Stone Town of Zanzibar is the centre of the greater city of Zanzibar, located half-way down the western coast of Unguja, the largest island of the Zanzibar archipelago. The Stone Town is the economic, political and cultural centre of the island and contains most of the Zanzibar government and administrative buildings. As the largest and best-known historic settlement in East Africa, the town is the result of a complex stratification of spaces and uses dating back at least three centuries. It was only after 1830, however, that Zanzibar's Stone Town took on a wholly urban character and that stone buildings were built in consistent numbers. Today, the Stone Town measures approximately 125 hectares (size of gazetted area) and houses an estimated 16,000 inhabitants. The 1992 inventory identified a total of 1453 traditional structures, including Indian-, Omani- and European-influenced structures, as well as thousands of architectural and streetscape features.

## Challenges

### PROGRAMME RISKS

The poor condition and adverse developments affecting the Stone Town spurred growing concern about the

future preservation of the town and led to the Zanzibar Government's request for AKTC's support in the preparation of a conservation plan. The measures contained in the Plan were aimed at reversing the decline and guiding future development in the historic area.

### SITE CONDITIONS

In the historic Stone Town land values are highest and the pressure for change is greatest. The 1992 survey ascertained that scores of buildings were built between 1982 and 1992 and that over one third of the old structures had been altered substantially. Also the condition of the infrastructure was poor and in need of major repairs and improvement.

### DEMOGRAPHICS

The average population density in the Stone Town at the time of the 1992 survey was 183 persons per hectare. The same survey ascertained that, while the population of greater Zanzibar was expected to double by the year 2020 (reaching 414,000), population growth in the Stone Town would increase at a more moderate rate, reaching 18,000 by 2020.

### HOUSEHOLD ECONOMY

With a total of 2700 households, the average size of household in 1992 was 6.10 with an average of 1.1 persons per room. More than half of the men living in

the Stone Town were self-employed. Of these, half were involved in commercial activities, one quarter were skilled tradesmen and the rest were occupied in tourism or transport. The remaining half were salaried men working in the governmental sector, private commercial enterprises or construction.

### STATUS OF HEALTH AND EDUCATION

In 1992 the Stone Town contained six primary and five secondary schools, with a total enrolment of about 12,000 children. Because of the scarcity of educational facilities outside the central area, these 11 government schools serve a much wider area. Approximately 5500 students commute to the Stone Town daily, putting additional pressure on the ageing school buildings and aggravating traffic problems in the central area. The city's major health facility is located within the boundaries of the Stone Town in the Mnazi Moja hospital complex located in Vuga South.

### AVAILABILITY OF DRINKING WATER AND PROPER SANITATION FACILITIES

The quality of the water supply system has deteriorated steadily since 1982. The irregular supply of water and low water pressure has caused increasing installation of water pumps and storage facilities. The combination of unhygienic water-storage practices and seepage of contaminated groundwater into the mains when water

Opposite page:

The Trust has worked on the redevelopment

of smaller public open spaces, including

Kelele Square.

pressure is low have led to the pollution of drinking water. This is considered the most serious water-related public health problem in the Stone Town. In 1992, 64% of households had at least one flush toilet; 17% shared a toilet with other households; and a further 18% had no flush toilet.

### ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

The poor condition of basic infrastructure and services for Stone Town inhabitants remains an issue of concern. Some limited repairs and upgrading took place in the mid 1990s with support from the German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ). Since then, no new investment has taken place and services have substantially deteriorated, especially the supply of electricity which is erratic and subject to major black-outs.

### INFRASTRUCTURE

Investigation of the town's infrastructure focused on the supply of electrical and water services as well as the condition of drainage and sewage disposal systems. The information was used to determine the capacity and adequacy of existing systems and to identify remedial measures to be put into effect within the framework of the 'Conservation Plan'.

### ACCESS TO OPEN SPACE

The Stone Town has few open public spaces within the built fabric; however, there are several large green areas adjacent to the town along or near to Creek Road. Within the Stone Town, there are several small but highly significant open spaces directly on the waterfront, which includes Forodhani Park (approx. 1.5 ha) and Mizingani Road. The public gardens and open areas are critical spaces for the inhabitants of Stone Town for leisure activities, for sport and exercise and for social interaction, due to the generally dense living conditions. Public parks or open spaces at the time of the Plan's formulation were generally poorly maintained and often used inappropriately or encroached upon by private development.

### BUILDING CONDITIONS

The building condition survey carried out in 1992 found that over 84% of buildings in the Stone Town were in deteriorating or poor condition. These data were based on an assessment of exterior and interior building components, such as walls, floors, roofs and exterior features.

## Significant Issues and Impact

### MASTER PLANNING PROCESS

The master planning process aimed at developing two distinct but complementary levels of proposals: the first was the establishment of broad conservation and development policies for the Stone Town. These included controls on the use and development of land, and measures to protect individual buildings, street

elements and open areas. It also included a set of measures designed to improve parking, circulation and public infrastructure in and around the Stone Town. The second level of proposals aimed at identifying priority areas and developing preliminary planning proposals for four Action Areas (the Seafront and Forodhani Park; the Port area; the Central Market and a new mixed-use complex in Malindi). These areas correspond to the most critical parts of the Stone Town, which were in need of a comprehensive and integrated planning approach. Preparation of the Plan was accompanied by public hearings and participatory initiatives designed to increase awareness and concern for the significance of the historic area and the importance of ensuring its long-term preservation and appropriate development.

### PLANNING ISSUES

The 'Conservation Plan' advocated a model of balanced growth for the Stone Town, in which the central area maintains its capital and cultural role and its traditional urban character. The policies of the Plan were designed to curb the uncontrolled proliferation of commercial land use, decentralize inappropriate activities, reinforce residential use, promote sympathetic reuse of historic buildings, reorganize and improve the principal public open spaces, repair and ameliorate the infrastructure and delivery of public services, and rethink circulation and parking. The approval of the Plan enabled the identification of open areas to be subjected to greater public control and improvements, and eventually led to public initiatives towards their rehabilitation, such as the case of Forodhani Park, whose comprehensive upgrading was completed in 2009 with the financial and technical support of AKTC.

### BASELINE STANDARDS

A complete field survey of the Stone Town was carried out in 1992. Its purpose was to update previous surveys and gather new information needed to formulate the 'Conservation Plan'. All investigations were conducted on a plot-by-plot basis by teams of three or four surveyors. Several forms were completed concurrently to gain a complete understanding of the Stone Town's physical fabric. These included a block survey form, a building survey form and forms documenting building conditions, and streetscape and open space features. In addition, the survey comprised interviews with a representative 10% sample of households living in the historic area. The findings provided information about household sizes, employment, tenure, occupancy, in- and out-migration, schooling and access to public services.

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC INITIATIVES

A number of young Zanzibari professionals were trained and participated in the development of the Plan from its inception. They represented the core team of planning professionals who subsequently assumed positions of responsibility within the STCDA.

### CONSERVATION ASPECTS

The planning approach and policies were consistent with the relevant international charters for the conservation of historic areas, with special reference to the UNESCO 'Recommendation Concerning the Safeguarding and Contemporary Role of Historic Areas' (Nairobi, 1976). The Stone Town 'Conservation Plan' also pioneered the establishment of ad hoc legislation and planning policies for the safeguarding of Zanzibar's urban heritage. The Plan introduced categories of significant listed monuments and buildings (Grade I and Grade II). Grade I structures (24 in total) were noted for their outstanding architectural, historical and cultural value. Grade II was assigned to structures of architectural significance (191 in total), including the identification of individual architectural features to be protected. The Zanzibar Stone Town 'Conservation Plan' was the first comprehensive town plan for a historic urban area to be developed by AKTC and formally adopted by the national authorities. As such, it provided a model for similar planning initiatives carried out by the organization in the region and elsewhere.

### QUALITY OF LIFE

Access to open-space for the Stone Town population has improved substantially with the rehabilitation of Forodhani Park (completed in 2009) and the planned expansion of the open-space improvement programme, with the creation of a public seafront promenade along Mizingani Road and the amelioration of smaller gardens and open areas located in the southern portion of Zanzibar's seafront.

## Partners

### PUBLIC PARTNERS

Ministry of Water, Construction, Energy, Land and Environment, Stone Town, Stone Town Conservation and Development Authority.

## Authoritative Framework

Exchange of letters and protocols between AKTC, the Ministry of Water, Construction, Energy, Land and Environment and the Stone Town Conservation and Development Authority (1992–94). Public hearings and regular reviews were scheduled throughout 1993 and the early part of 1994 towards the formal approval and ratification of the Plan. Peer reviews and workshops were also scheduled during the Plan's development process.