

## Riyadh The City & The Life

HIGH COMMISSION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ARRIYADH





In the name of Allah the merciful, the compassionate





Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques

King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud



Crown Prince

Mohammed bin Naif bin Abdulaziz

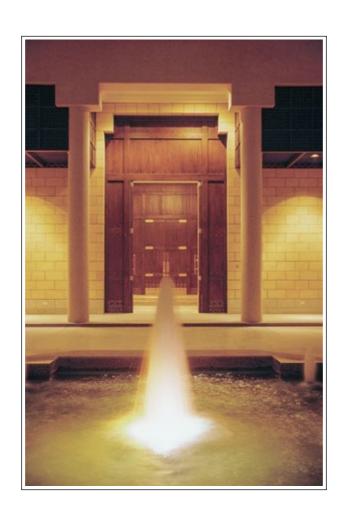
Deputy Premier and Minister of Interior



Deputy Crown Prince

Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz

Second Deputy Premier and Minister of Defense





Riyadh City reflects, God grace, its real and pioneering role, as the capital of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). It's the main hub of all national and sovereign activities of the country, the incubator of various government, regional, Islamic and international institutions and bodies, in addition to being the nationally leading center for ministries, departments and administrative, cultural, scientific and economic organizations, as well as diplomatic missions, UN and UN agencies.

The city enjoys a unique strategic site, in the middle of the vast regions of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which, for its part, occupies a middle house, among the universe continents, namely Asia, Africa and Europe.

Furthermore, Riyadh plays host to a very youthful composition of population, as youth groups constitute its main component. It has also a very strong appeal to investors, due to the hugely big public spending on the infrastructure, solid financial potentials, robust and flourishing markets, advance structures and sophisticated systems, safe and stable environment.

Moreover, the city features a great deal of well-established and qualified human resources, along commercial, industrial, agricultural, communications, transportation and other vital services and utilities.

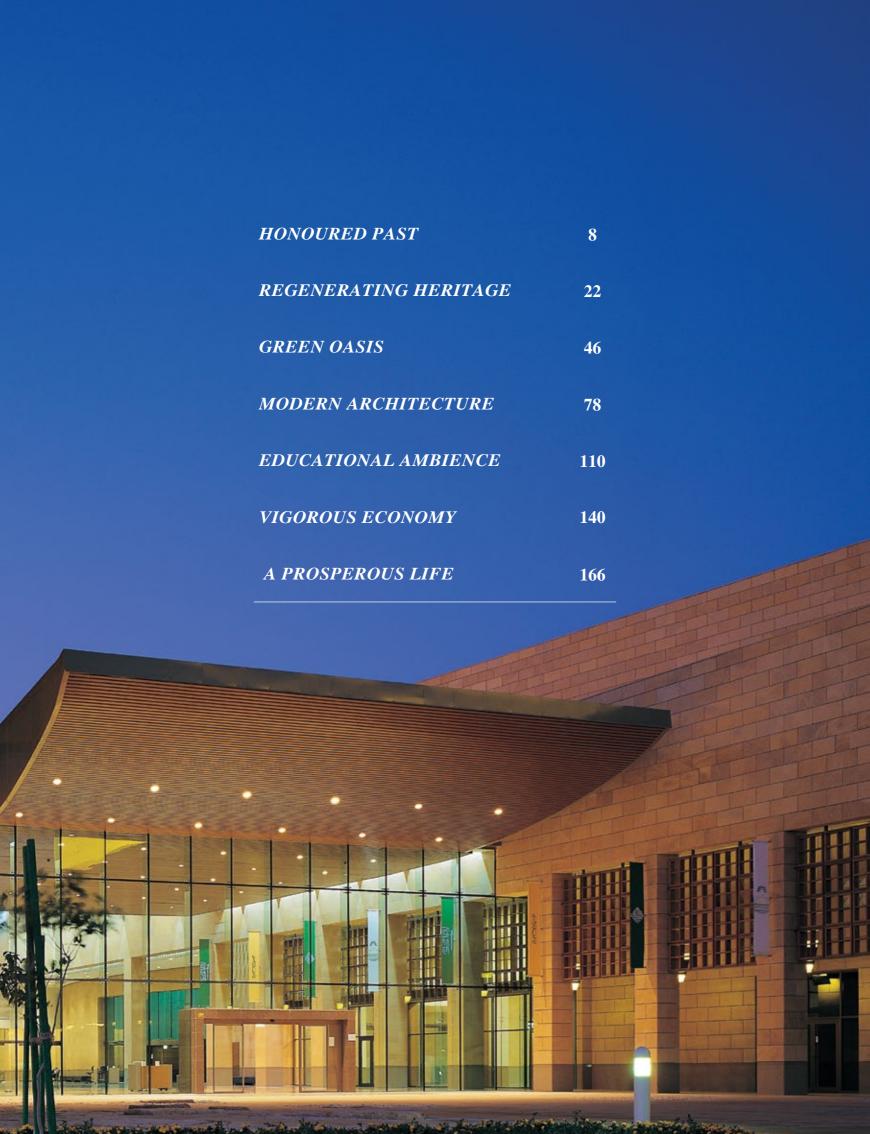
Having a wide, abundant and diversified natural resources, on one hand, and taking advantage of all through decades of taking care and development, launching of a series of great, public and private, projects and enterprises, at all sectors and parts of the city, the kept scoring quantum leaps, in all aspects and fields of life. That fact, has managed to transform Riyadh into the preferred destination for ambitious and pioneer entrepreneurs and contributed to crown it as the best terminal for serious and successful investors, seeking golden opportunities, in their long quest.

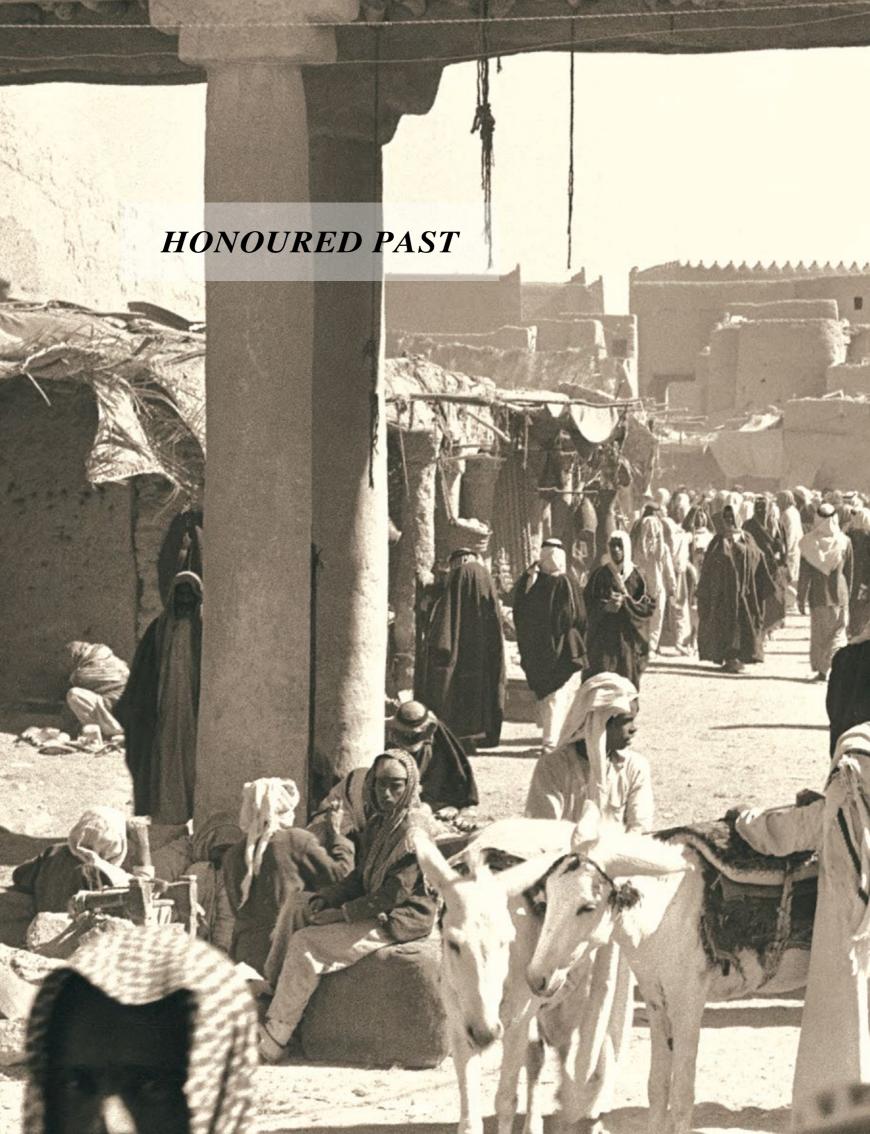
This book, is no more than a humble contribution to, only, depict some pictures of several scenes, to stand witness of different aspects and dimensions of the daily life, in Riyadh City, and to present a panoramic scenery of a multi-faceted, vivid and rapidly growing community.

## Faisal bin Bandar bin Abdulaziz

 ${\it Chairman\ of\ the\ High\ Commission\ for\ the\ Development\ of\ Arriyadh}$ 









Riyadh has a history which stretches far back into antiquity: ancient monuments which date to more than 15,000 years ago have been discovered in the suburb of al-Thumamah. Life history, tales of Arabian kingdoms with civilizations successively established homes on the fertile soil of al-Yamamah; poems and poetic description of locations and battles that embodied the pre-Islamic life of the Arabs; gardens, settlements, trade, episodes, literature that had flourished at today's site of Riyadh.

During successive Islamic dynasties, what we now know as Riyadh and the surrounding areas were known as al-Yamamah Region. Al-Yamamah became famous for its agricultural abundance and provided food for many residents of the Arabian Peninsula. In particular, Al-Yamamah was the source of superior quality date palms from which the best species of palm trees were propagated throughout the world. At the same time the desert



• Source: Saudi Aramco

surrounding this oasis maintained it in relative isolation and played a major role in preserving its unique character.

Early towns and villages in the area included Mi'akal, al-Beneyah and Manfouhah, and over time these merged to become the nucleus of the new town of Riyadh, which became well known during the First Saudi State in the  $17^{th}$  century.

Riyadh's boundaries and special architectural character became more defined during the Second Saudi State, for which Riyadh served as capital. During the reigns of Imams Turki Ibn Abdulla and his son Faysal Ibn Turki, the chief landmarks of the city were renovated – the city wall, the Government Palace (Qasr al-Hukm), the Grand Mosque and the main residential districts. By now Riyadh was established as one of the main capitals of

the Arabian Peninsula, and a principal centre of Arabian trade, agricultural and culture.



The golden age of the city of Riyadh began on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of Shawal 1319H (15<sup>th</sup> January 1902) with the restoration of the city by King Abdulaziz and establishment of the Modern Saudi State. The city's landmarks were refurbished, and Riyadh became the seat of the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and capital of the country. Since then, the size of the city has doubled more than a hundred times to accommodate a burgeoning population. Today, Riyadh is one of the world's major decision-making capitals, and a focal point for economy and culture, but it still maintains its links to a time-honoured past.

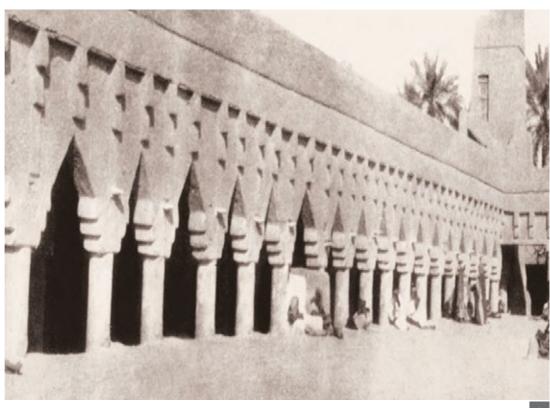


Simplicity and tolerance were characteristics of life in old Riyadh. The shade provided by the walls of Qasr al-Hukm (Government Palace) created space where people could gather and sit together. The open areas served as marketplaces.

The Eastern Gate of Qasr Al-Hukm was known as Bab Abu Asheera (Abu Asharah Gateway) with a passage leading to Safaat Square 1368H (1949) Source: Saudi Aramco.



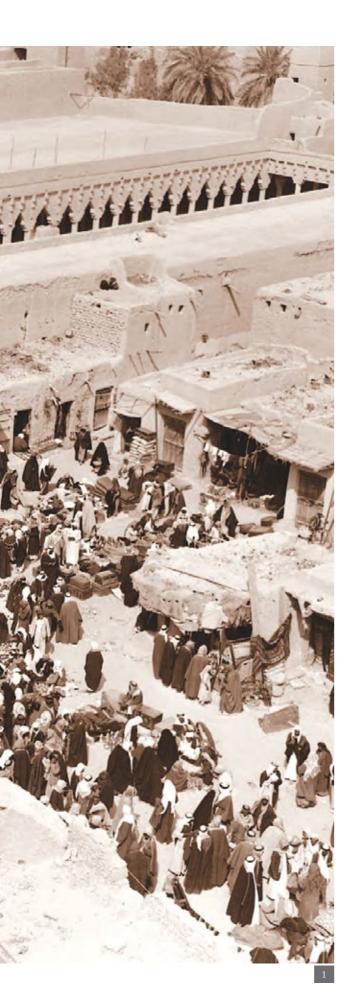




Surrounded by walls and green fields, the city's architecture was consistent in terms of design, building materials and decoration. Elements in this architecture were conducive to preserving harmony and friendly relationships among the people.

- 1. The roofs of Riyadh dwellings 1369H (1950) Source: Saudi Aramco.
- 2. The arcades and courtyard of the Grand Mosque 1366H (1947) Source: Al-Raihany.

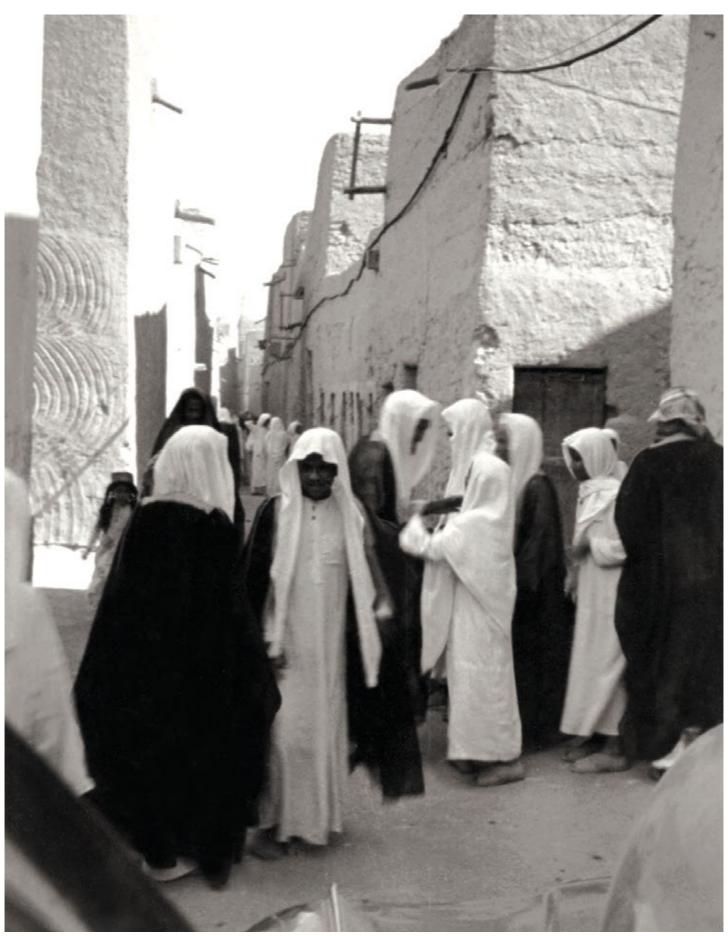




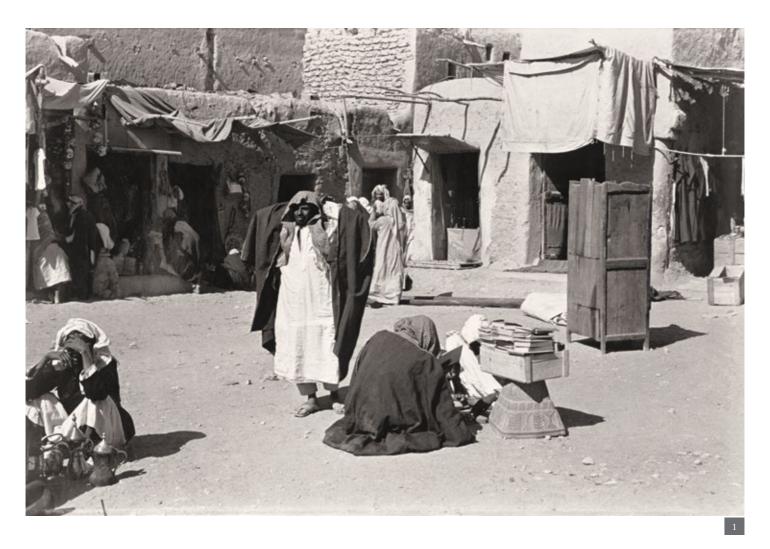
Riyadh was the main trading centre of the surrounding townships and villages of the Nejd region. Trade was the second source of livelihood of the inhabitants. Like other old Islamic cities, the markets were held in the main squares and streets surrounding the Grand Mosque and Qasr al-Hukm.

- 1. Souq al-Haraaj (Auction Market), the Grand Mosque with marketplaces and surrounding shops 1368H (1949) Source: Saudi Aramco.
- 2. The north part of Souq al-Muqaibra, with the canopies of the old slaughterhouse 1373H (1954) Source: Dr. Moller.





• Source: Dr. Moller

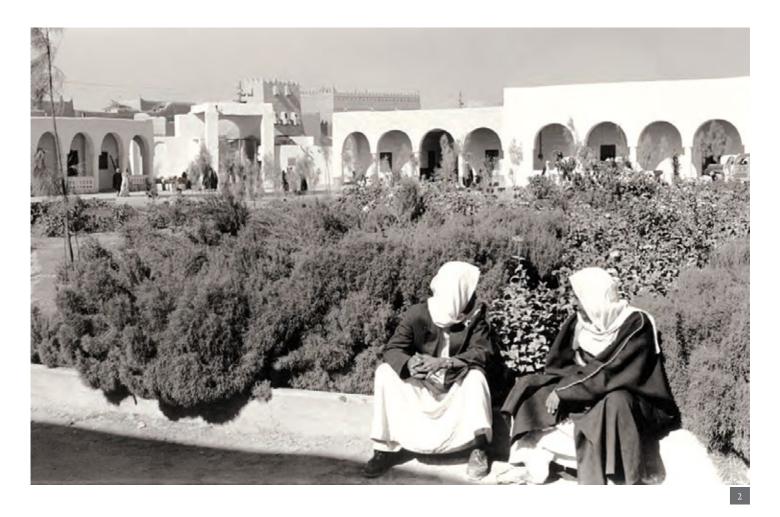




The streets were more than passageways. They served as gathering points for people and as marketplaces where hawkers used to display a variety of commodities, including Islamic books.

- 1. Auction market east to the grand mosque 1368H (1949) Source: Dr.Moller.
- 2. The south-eastern part of Souq Dkhana 1374H (1955) Source: Life Magazine.

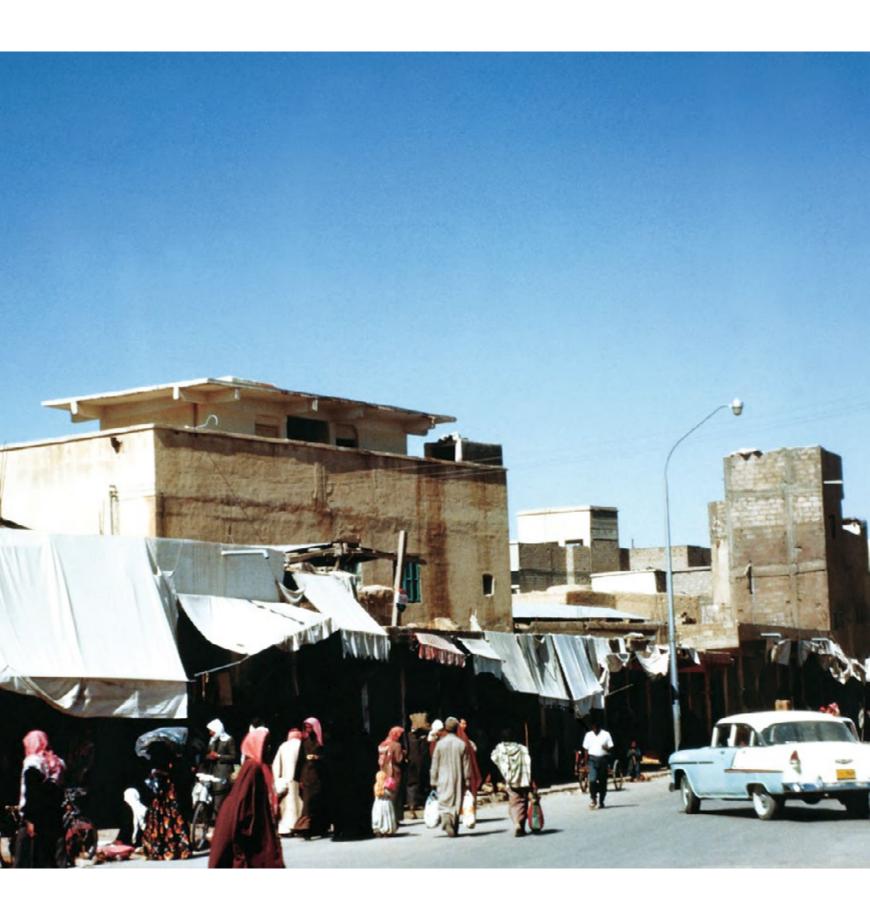






The beginning of the urban architectural development during the 1370's H saw the construction of modern establishments offering a wide range of services.

- 1. The Memorial School, built by the people of Riyadh to celebrate the return of King Abdulaziz from a state visit to Egypt in 1368H (1949) Source: Saudi Aramco.
- 2. An early hospital in Riyadh Source: Dr.Moller.
- 3. A communications tower 1368H (1949) Source: Life Magazine.







Public utilities projects, including the construction of roads, street lighting and water supply, as well the establishment of modern Government department headquarters were among early phases of the city's infrastructure growth. In particular, the introduction of motor vehicles came to play a major role in the life of many inhabitants.

- 1. Qaisariyat Ibn Kulaib, or Souq Ashaiqer, opposite the niche (Mihrab) of the Grand Mosque, separated by Ibn Suwailem Road Mid 1380's H (1960"s).
- 2. The Old Airport Road, with some Government Ministry offices Mid 1380's H (1960's) Source: Saudi Aramco.

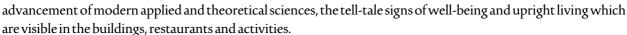


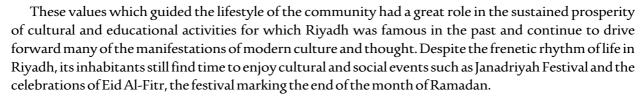


R iyadh is a city with a contemporary face that rejuvenates and gets a facelift overnight, studded with the traces of the ancient past, rich in languages and ethnicities from all corners of the globe set in an intimate Arabic ambiance - a miscellany of social tastes and a contemporary urban life marked and unified by a cultural azimuth and tranquility of behaviour.

The juxtaposition that Riyadh lives through, that is, between the ancient and the modern, the originality and the modernity, the private and the universal, makes it a city of heritage in a contemporary mould, redolent with the mixed scents of originality and history.

The cornerstone to Riyadh's authenticity is its inhabitants, for urbanism, events and activities are nothing but assorted demonstrations and features of an intellectual originality and upbringing. Values that colour the ethos of the society in its engagement in contemporary business pursuits,





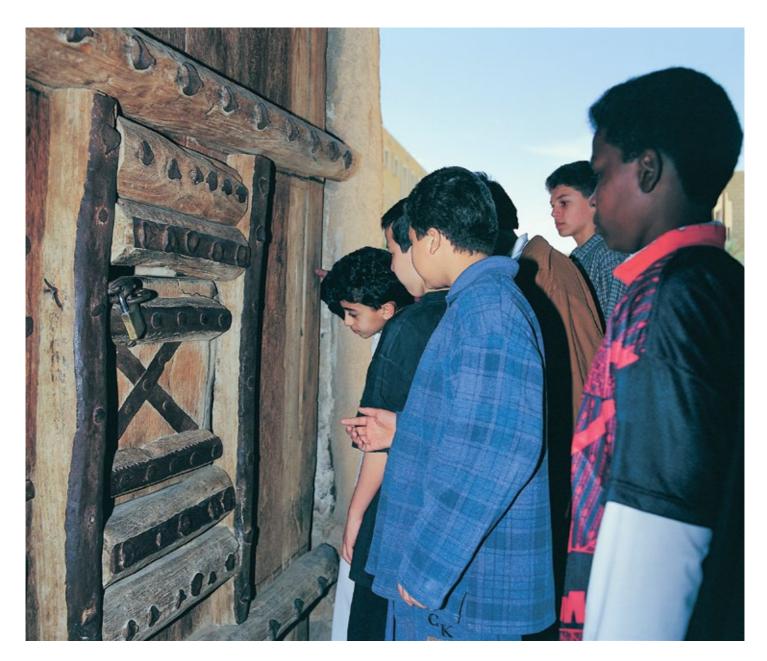
Riyadh's heritage architecture is an embodiment of its cultural and social distinctness. The old image of Riyadh was formed from mud houses of uniform architectural model that combines the design of the usual old Islamic cities, surrounded by high walls topped with towers and behind the walls are surrounded by green palm groves.

To a large extent the features of this unique architectural identity have been obliterated with the onslaught of the urbanization that Riyadh has experienced over the past decades. Some prominent monuments and neighbourhoods in the middle of the city have survived and with the passage of time these have acquired a highly symbolic value, in terms of their architectural, historical and sentimental value as tangible and concrete remnants

of historical Riyadh. Al–Masmak Citadel and the Government Palace (Qasr al-Hukm) evoke the early foundation and unification stages of the Kingdom, while Al–Murabba' Palace and the historical structures of King Abdulaziz Historical Centre are symbols of the Kingdom's subsequent administrative and urban construction stages.

The urban regeneration and development of the city's archaeological monuments have made them into cultural institutions that the public can relate to, and contribute to the cultural identity of future generations. These ancient buildings have also played a key role as a source of inspiration for modern architects, with the result that new buildings in both the private and public sector have design elements which clearly are drawn from the city's heritage architecture. In this way Riyadh is constantly regenerating and reinforcing its own unique architectural identity and heritage.





The history of Riyadh is a real national epic symbolizing the genuine meaning of heroism and ambition in a manner guaranteed to inspire younger generations.

A group of school children visiting Hisn (Fortress) al-Massmak, focusing upon the wicket gate in the main door, looking for the famous spear imprint made during the battle for the recapture of Riyadh in the morning of 5th Shawal 1319H (15th January 1902).



Historical Dirriyyah was the capital of first Saudi state, and the beacon of the reformist call that spread all over Islamic world. The rehabilitation project of Historical Dirriyyah unveil its patriotic importance to list it in UNSICO world heritage sites.

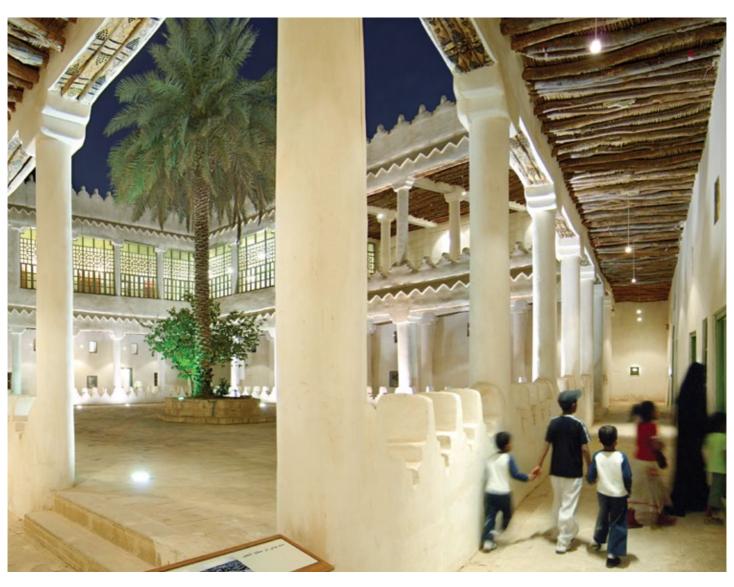








City programmes recounting remarkable events imply cultural dimensions. Such re-enactments are performed through museum heritage shows and are expressed in urban architectural development. Historical landmarks have been renovated and converted into public places.











The national historical landmarks of Riyadh cover the various phases of the Saudi State's modern advancement. Qasr al-Hukm and Hisn al-Massmak represent the foundation stage of the State and the amalgamation of the Kingdom's regions. The Qasr al-Murabba'a, with its traditional halls within Darat al-Malik Abdulaziz, symbolizes the formation of the State's principal offices and the launch of the urban construction development.

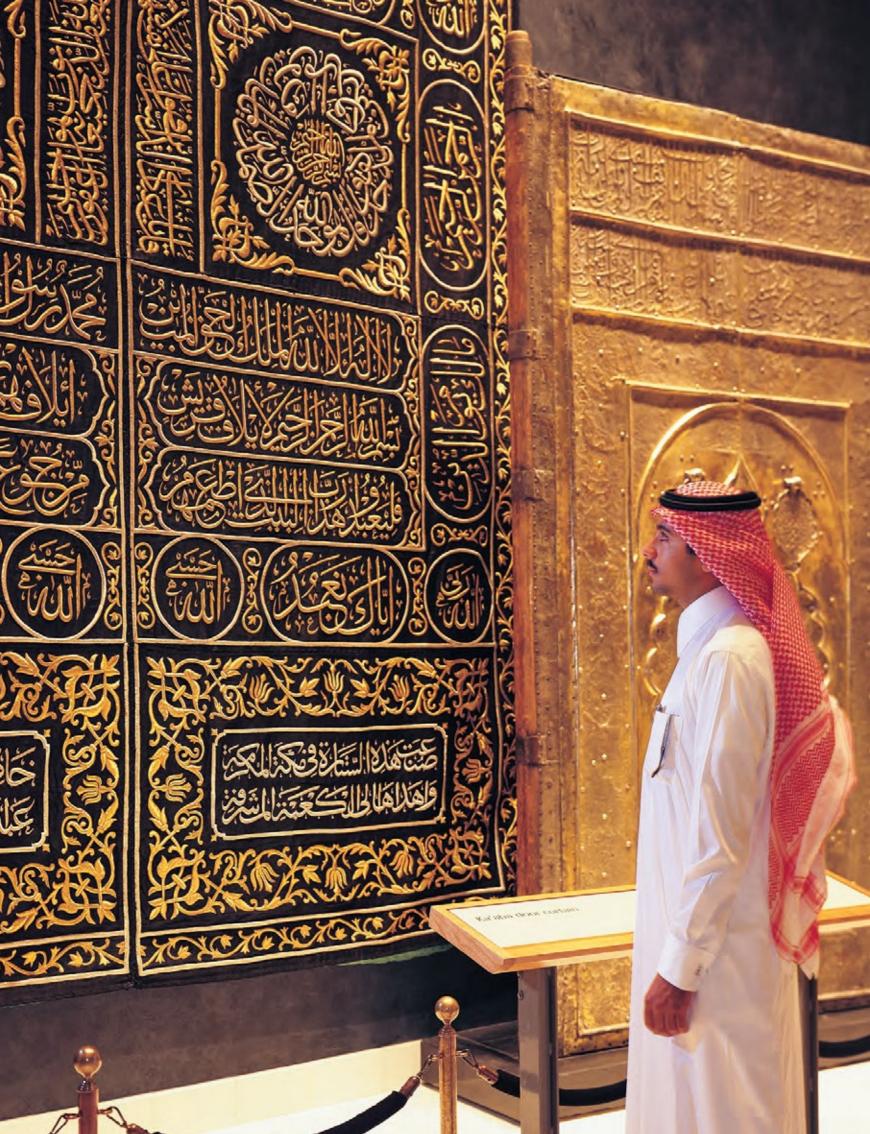
Left: King Abdulaziz's Memorial Hall at Darat al-Malik Abdulaziz.

- 1. Qasr Al Murabba.
- 2. King Abdulaziz's summer Majlis (Reception Hall) inside the Qasr.



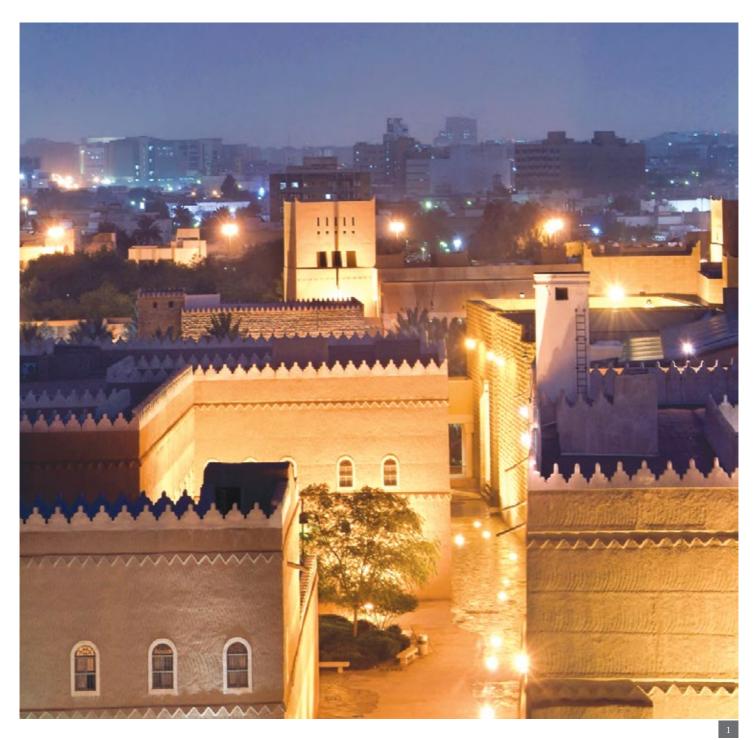
The National Museum is the most prominent cultural establishment in the King Abdulaziz Historical Centre, where the history of Arabia, from the creation of the universe to the present time, is illustrated in the light of divine purpose, the principles of Islam and the objectives of the Shariah, which serve to form the values by which society is to be governed, a healthy basis for competition for cultural pre-eminence among nations.











Traditional architecture is displayed in various patterns. There are traditional buildings which have been restored to their original design, with renovations to accommodate various activities. There are architectural landmarks decorating the various districts of the city and modern installations established for specific functions, all of which add a moral value.

The previous page: Maidan al-Adl (Justice Square) within Qasr al- Hukm

- 1. Residential palaces previously existing within Qasr al- Murabba'a, King Abdulaziz Historical Centre.
- 2. Wahat al-Nakheel (The Palm Trees Oasis) within the Centre, with its 100 palm trees commemorating the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the country's unification.
- 3. Part of Dkhana Gate and the old City Wall on Tariq Ibn Ziyad Road.







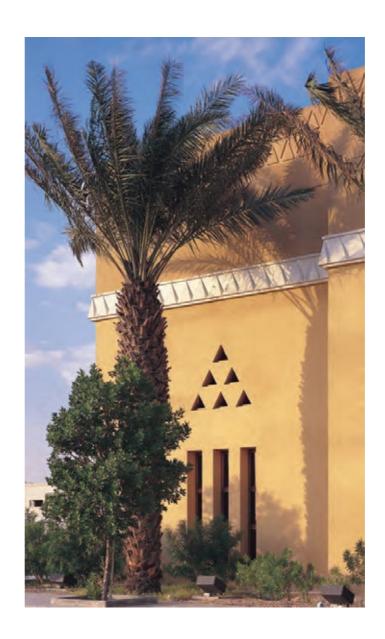




The city's seasonal celebrations are largely dominated by traditional displays, which are of a special sentimental value to the inhabitants. These are reflected in traditional costumes, dances and handicrafts. Such occasions culminate in the Janadriya Festival, an international traditional and cultural demonstration and an important item on the people's annual calendar.







The people of Riyadh have a great fondness and respect for their city's architectural heritage and, recognising this, private sector developers and business firms have embraced traditional values in marketing their products both in terms of design for shopping malls and private houses and in business promotional activities.



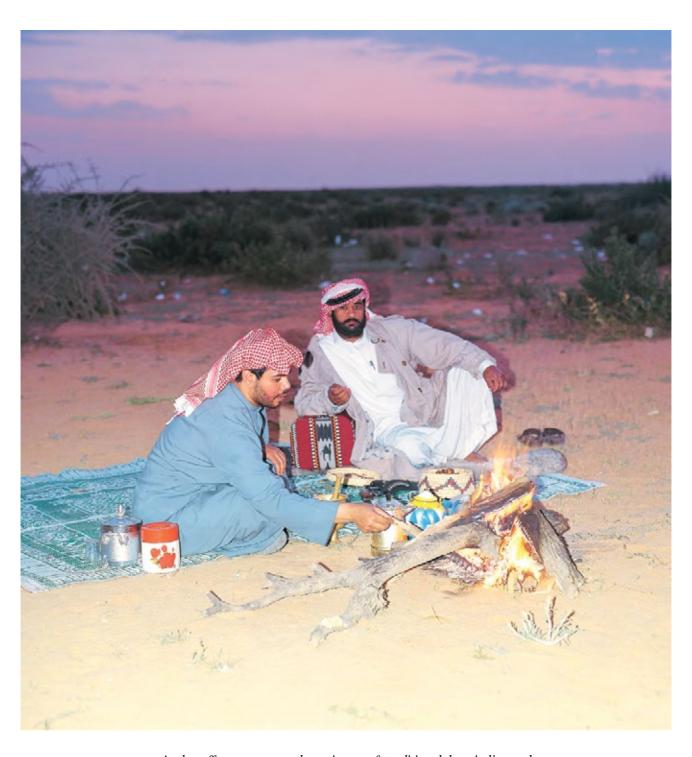


International trade is a special feature of Riyadh's economy, and a wide variety of commodities from the East and the West is available. However, a sense of nostalgia towards traditional shopping and towards conventional commodities is still felt and practiced by people. A good example is the record price of truffles which are sold in season.









Arab coffee represents the epitome of traditional hospitality and attentive service. A quiet, open-air desert evening enhances the savour and creates everlasting cherished memories.





R iyadhis set in a harsh desert environment, with scarce seasonal rains, but this drought holds no sway in the greenery of Wadi Hanifah Valley, with its surrounding gardens and groves. It hugs the City of Riyadh like a bracelet and it from this image that the city derives its name.

Since ancient times, agriculture was the main occupation of the local inhabitants and it still represents one of the pillars of the city's modern economy. In those days vegetation was limited to the farms that encircled the city but today greenery lines its streets, clads its plazas and courts and decorates its buildings.

Riyadh is blessed with its plenty of open space: Al-Thumamah Park alone exceeds 370 square kilometres, and there are many other open areas throughout the city and its suburbs, with gardens of various sizes and shapes scattered throughout the conurbation.



The sheer scale of these landscaped areas brings a corresponding challenge; the harsh local environment means that the maintenance of green areas is a tough and never-ending task. Herculean efforts are needed to maintain a level of vegetation which might occur naturally in many other cities, and to maintain this level of greenery while the parks are in constant use by the public only adds to the challenge.

Apart from the formal city parks, there are also natural areas of greenery, such as the evergreen Wadi Hanifah and the Rawdhat where the plains becomes green in the rainy seasons. The contours of the area are as varied, with knolls, larger hills, valleys, plains and plateaux. Between them they provide people with a wide range of areas in which to take a relaxing walk.



The major public parks are characterized by dense greenery, lakes and other water features and skillfully designed landscaping which make them a special weekly destination for almost all city residents. They are supplemented by neighbourhood parks that provide residents with more accessible opportunities to enjoy green open spaces with family, friends and neighbours. One of the most important components of the city's environmental programme has involved planting trees on the main thoroughfares, the major avenues of the city and bridge and causeway ramps. They play a prominent role in enhancing the environment of the city, minimizing traffic pollution and beautifying the overall image of the city.

The green plazas, courtyards and areas surrounding the public buildings also play a role in increasing the city's green acreage. Riyadh seeks at all times to be a lush green paradise, and every area of planting, regardless of its scale or formality, contributes towards this overall goal.





Wadi Hanifa the cradle of civilization since the stone ages. The exclusive development program retrieves its vital role in the modern life of Riyadh's people. The valley restore its vital natural equilibrium, its normal flora, and became the preferred destination for picnicking.











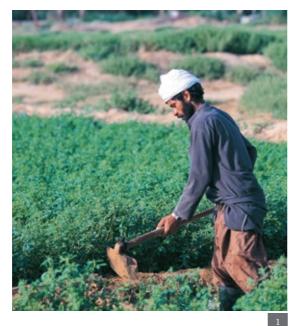
Although the natural surroundings of Riyadh seem inhospitable, they will with the grace of Allah spring to life in the rainy season. At one time, Wadi Hanifah was an artery of life. Today, the Wadi has gained in strategic importance and become a showground for business development with water running throughout the year.

- 1. A camel pasture within an-Nafud Desert surrounding Riyadh.
- 2. The Valley of Khuraym during a rainy season. Right: The Lakes District at the southern part of Wadi Hanifah.



Despite the variety of modern economic resources, agriculture is still as important an element as it has always been. While in previous years it was traditional in technology and limited to the banks of Wadi Hanifah, agriculture today covers almost all cultivated areas. Apart from their economic value, fields play an important environmental role and are a part of the green grassy areas surrounding the city.

- 1,3. Palm trees in Wadi Hanifah.
- 2. Wheat-growing fields in Deeraab.







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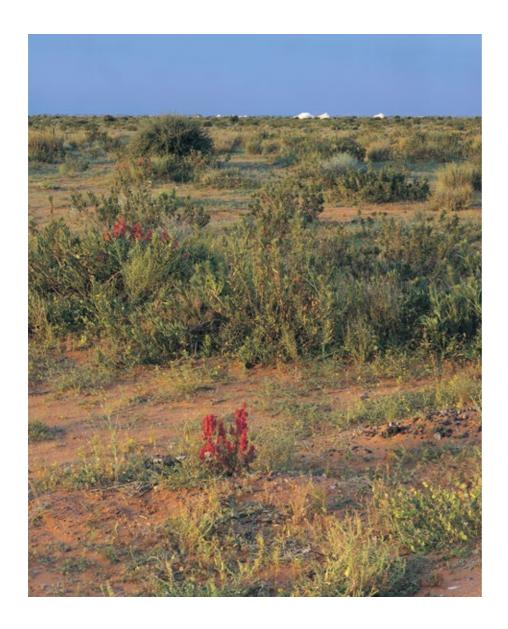






Al-Thumama is a name that means a lot for archaeologists. It was the site where 15,000 year-old human artefacts were excavated. For the people of Riyadh, though, it is the most important recreational suburb of the city and preferred place for picnicking and relaxation.

Recreational camps erected as a part of the experimental stages for developing the public park.



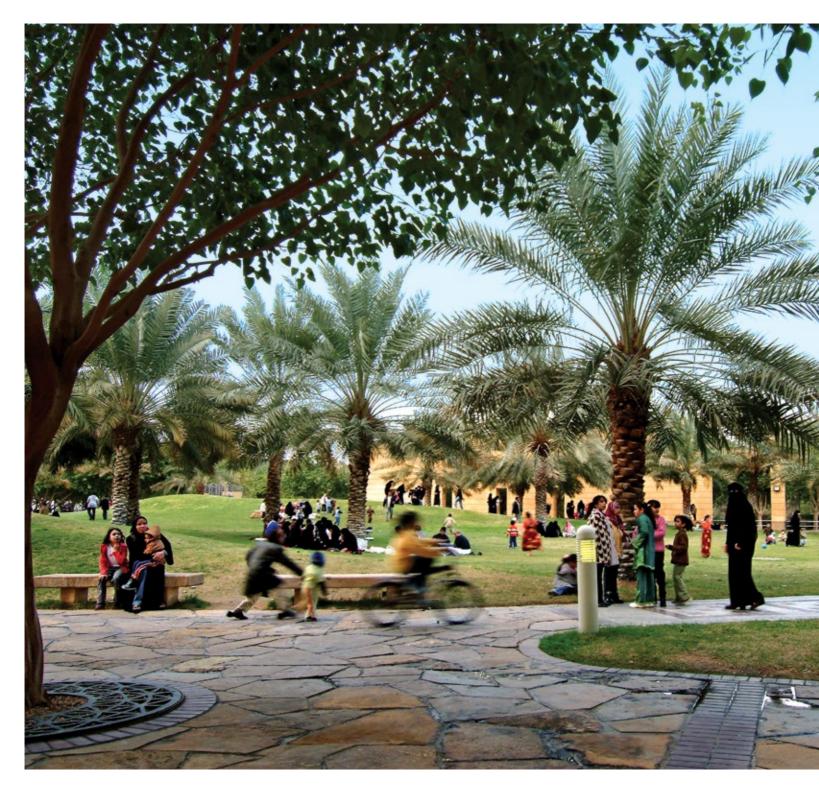
An annual meeting with the scent of lavender in the air and a refreshing breeze on an inviting green grassy area. At the end of each rainy season, the valleys around Riyadh become green, and people of the capital take this opportunity for family and group outings.











The cultivated public squares and parks are the gardens of the city. They combine greenery and open spaces, comprising aesthetic components and various children's playgrounds. They are provided with security, safety and modern services, and are easily accessible.







Previous page: Al Murabba' Square at King Abdulaziz Historic Centre and gardens of the Centre on a weekend.









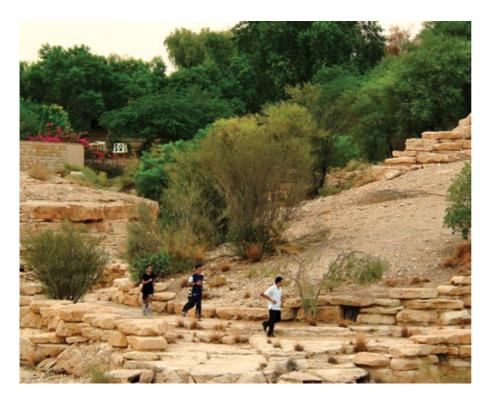




Gardens are an essential part of the green lung of the city. They are typical environments for positive social reaction of inhabitants that will contribute to social stability and tranquillity and to enhancing social solidarity links among residents. These are essential features of value for promoting the cultural performance of the city.

This and the previous page: Salam Park in central Riyadh.

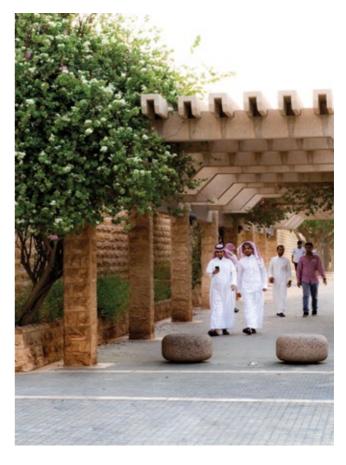


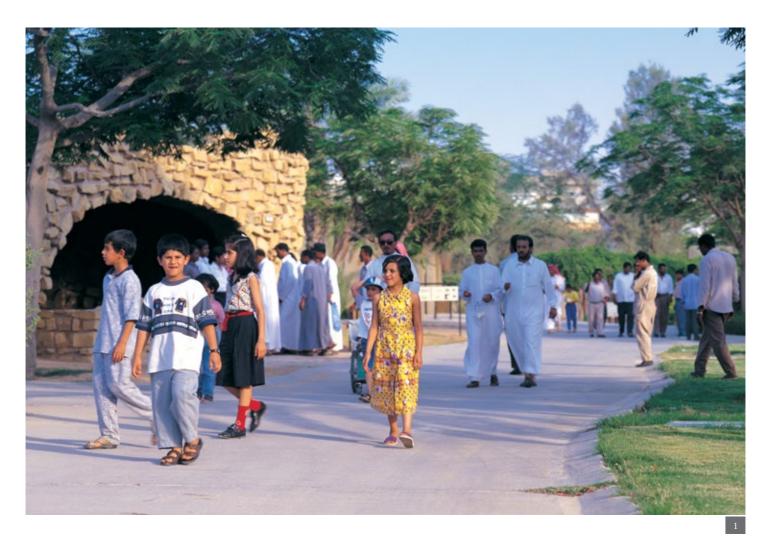


Another pattern of open area landscaping within residential districts is characterized by a semi-desert nature. A combination of desert environment with high capacity for sustainability, with no intensive care requirement;

Open areas within the Diplomatic Quarter.













The open green areas within the city's structure take a variety of forms. In addition to the large public parks there are landscaped areas associated with roadside restaurants and major office buildings are often set within their own landscaped grounds. There are also some local gardens with private, restricted access.

- 1. The Public Zoo.
- 2. Open areas within King Khalid Specialist Eye Hospital.
- 3. The garden of King Fahd National Library.
- 4. A garden in a residential district.

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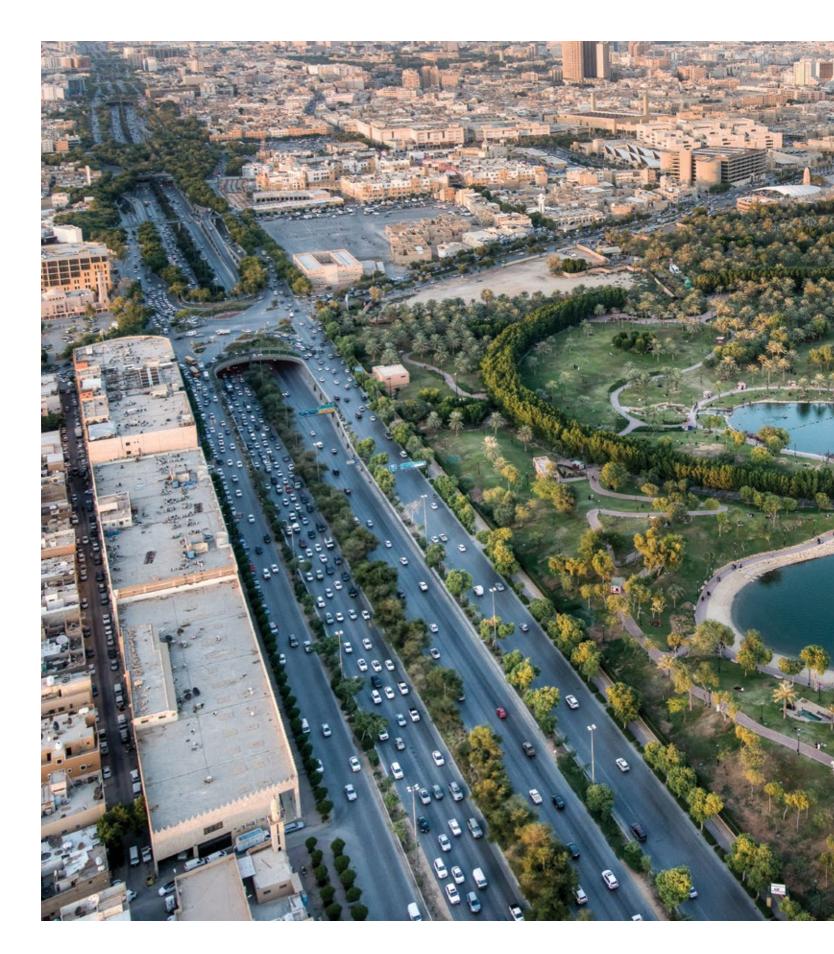




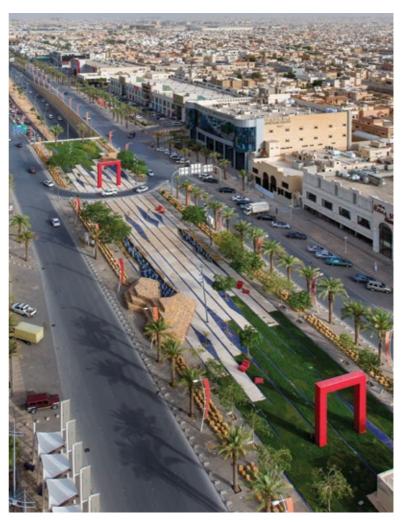




The roads take up almost 40 percent of the city's construction costs. Apart from serving a large number of vehicles, they hold the greatest part of the city's green lung within their islands and shoulders. They play a major role in eliminating the intensity of pollution resulting from traffic and contribute to the overall beautification of the city.







Green grassy areas are irrigated through an automated independent water network and are supplied by surface water treatment stations, where waste water is recycled and purified for reuse. The underground water level reduction system under King Fahd Highway subways consists of 1,000 wells. Surface water is pumped to the two treatment stations after which the water is used for irrigating the green grassy areas on the Highway's shoulders and service corridors, as well as for irrigating 12 gardens over the main road junction subways.

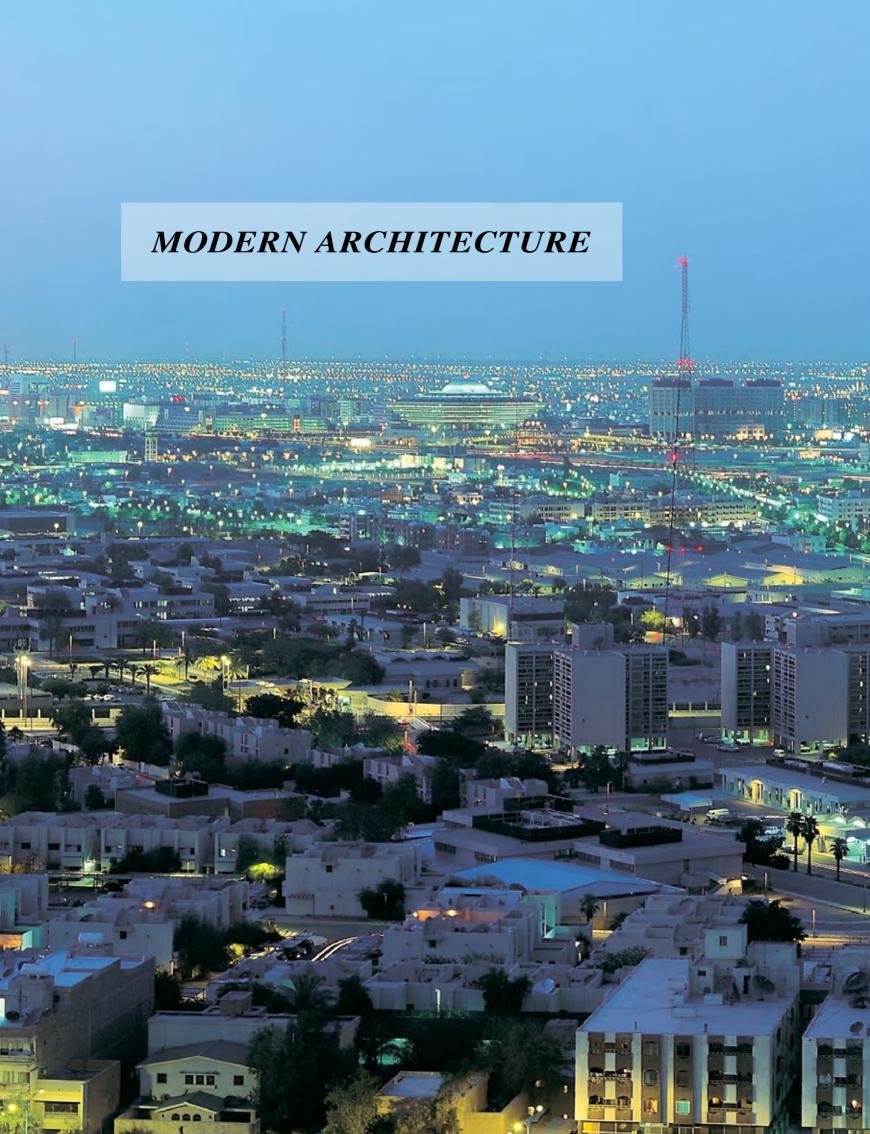




Pedestrian walkways are important features of the open areas, with walking becoming a increasingly popular form of exercise. These walkways have already provided a return in the form of improved fitness and health. The appeal of the walkways lies in the quality of construction, tree-plantings and lighting, while security, safety and complete isolation from traffic movement also contribute to their popularity with pedestrians.





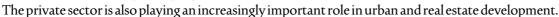




A s Riyadh expands there is a non-stop race to ensure that provision of infrastructure and services keeps pace with its growth. Once modern roads and infrastructure are constructed in the new areas of desert surrounding the city, urban development follows, with all its accompanying rich diversity of human activity.

The urban development of Riyadh is a response to its high rate of population growth. Fortunately, the city's economic potential and prosperity has kept pace with the expanding population and Riyadh has been able to avoid the housing shortages that other major cities usually suffer from.

There are some major drivers behind the city's active urban expansion. Most important of these are the programme for granting land plots to citizens, the loans of the Real Estate Development Fund (REDF) and the successive urban development programmes carried out by the Government.



Riyadh's urban development went through several basic phases. At the beginning the city was a coherent collection of adobe buildings similar in construction and form, and surrounded by walls. This represented Riyadh's distinguishing urban character. As the city became the capital of the Kingdom, a new phase of urban development kicked off, overspilling its walls and spreading modern buildings and new residential districts. This phase witnessed the birth of most down-town districts with their cobweb-like fabric and adoption of a more international architecture.

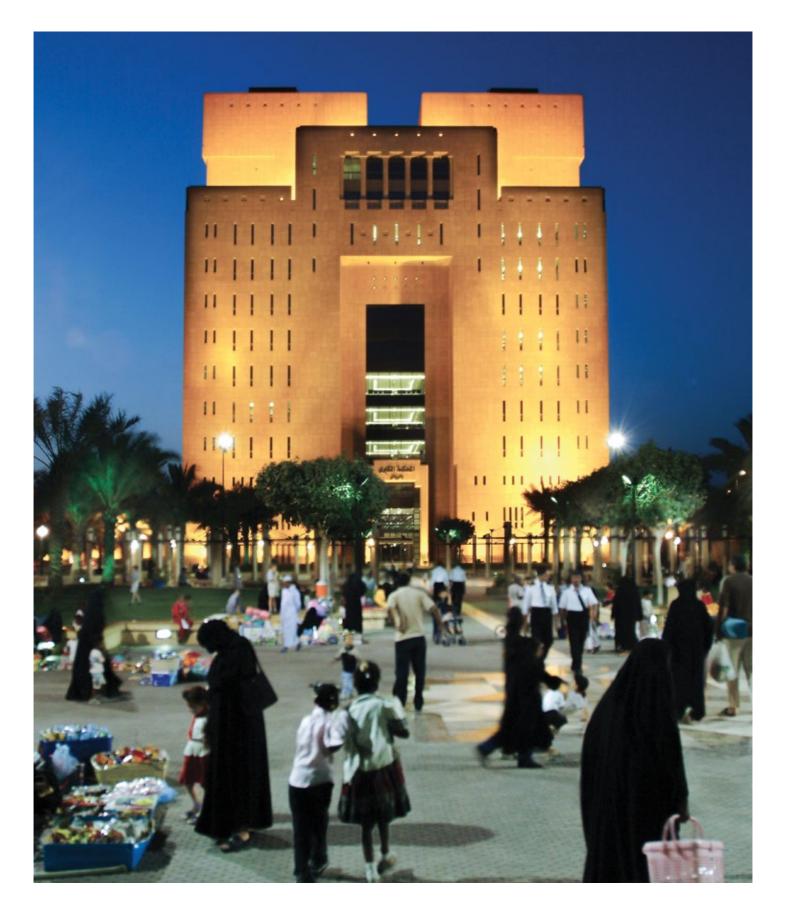
During a third phase the Government implemented urban development projects for its ministries and

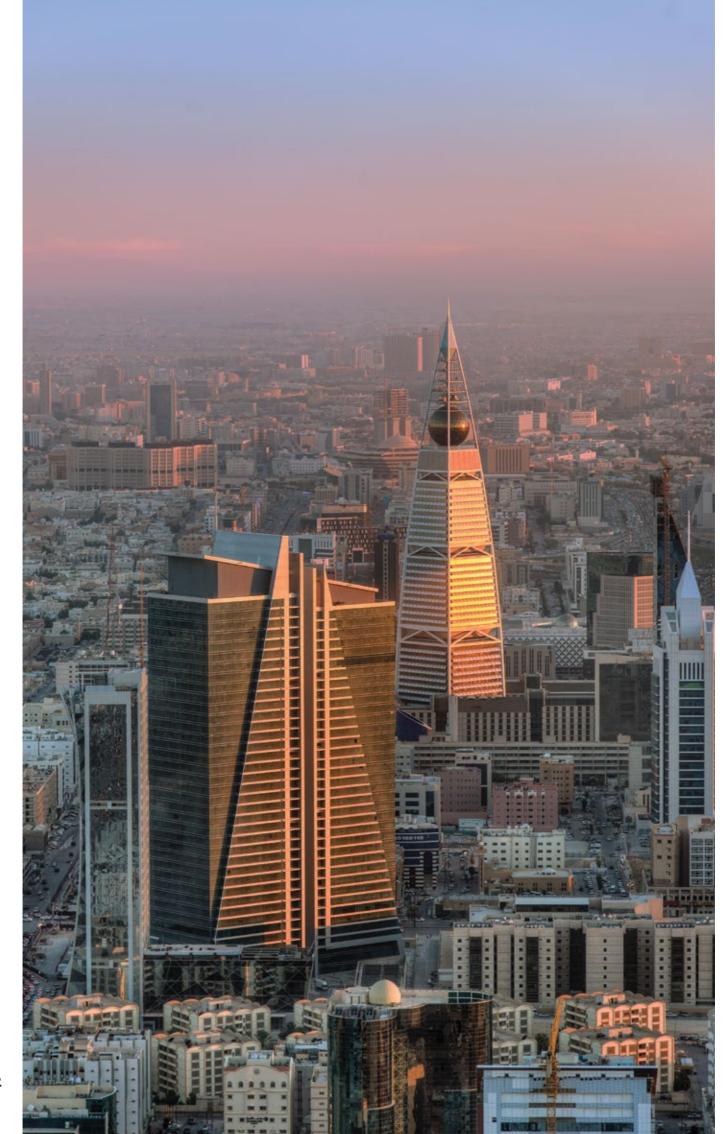


government establishments, universities, medical complexes and King Khalid International Airport. A major characteristic of this phase was that environmental and social requirements were taken into consideration when erecting such installations, and the high-quality and distinct urban style of those installations soon came to reflect the city's architectural character. Such identity further crystallized with the implementation of major urban development projects in the Government Palace Area, the city's central area and King Abdulaziz Historical Centre, as well as the implementation of the Dir'iyyah Development Programme.

These projects helped introduce a special concept of local architecture in Riyadh, a concept that reflects its identity and distinct character. Importantly, however, this special architectural idiom is not at odds with modern technical requirements, and this meant that it has been embraced enthusiastically by the private sector also.



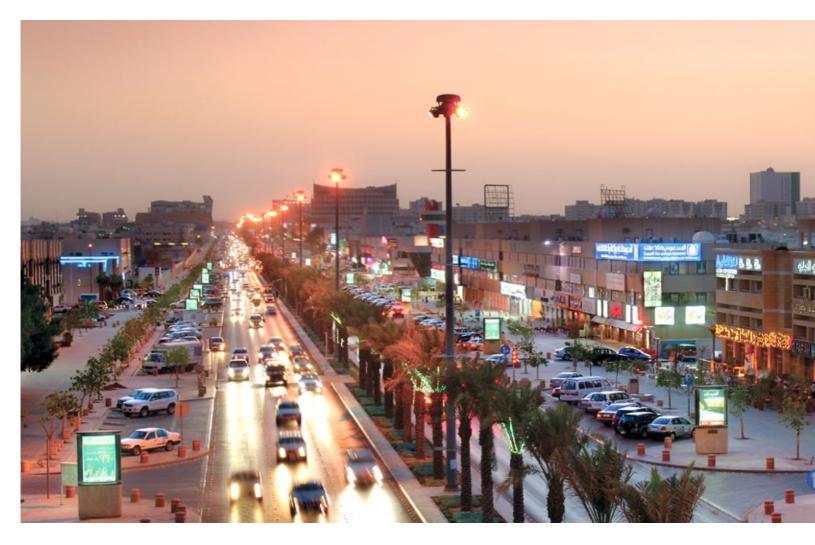








The city's general pattern of low to mid-rise construction on extensive plots is punctuated by business focal centres that are characterized by tall buildings. The most important of these business "nerve centres" is the area extending northwardly between King Fahd and Al-Ulaya Highways.



The main roads are prominent structural components and landmarks of the city. According to their traffic-carrying capacity and pre-planning, they determine the pattern of adjacent construction and land use.

- 1. Prince Mohammed Ibn Abdulaziz Road with its wide pedestrian walkways and modern coffee shops has become a favourite venue for the city's young people..
- 2. An-Nahdha Road is distinguished by its design in which its central reservation is extended to separate a dual carriageway and to form a complex of gardens, open squares and landscaped features.
- 3. Amr Ibn Umaya al-Dhamri Road in the Diplomatic Quarter: the palm trees and the design of buildings on both sides symbolize the modern architectural identity of modern Riyadh.











The residential complexes provided for Government staff and the executives of leading businesses are characterized by a high standard of design, quality of construction, availability of services and environmental considerations. They also provide residents with opportunity for socialising.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs staff residential complex.









Private houses form the largest portion of the city's built environment. They are mainly detached residential units (villas). They reflect the desire for privacy and through their variety of design and co-ordination contribute to the overall architectural picture of Riyadh as a spread-out city, designed to work in a difficult environment.



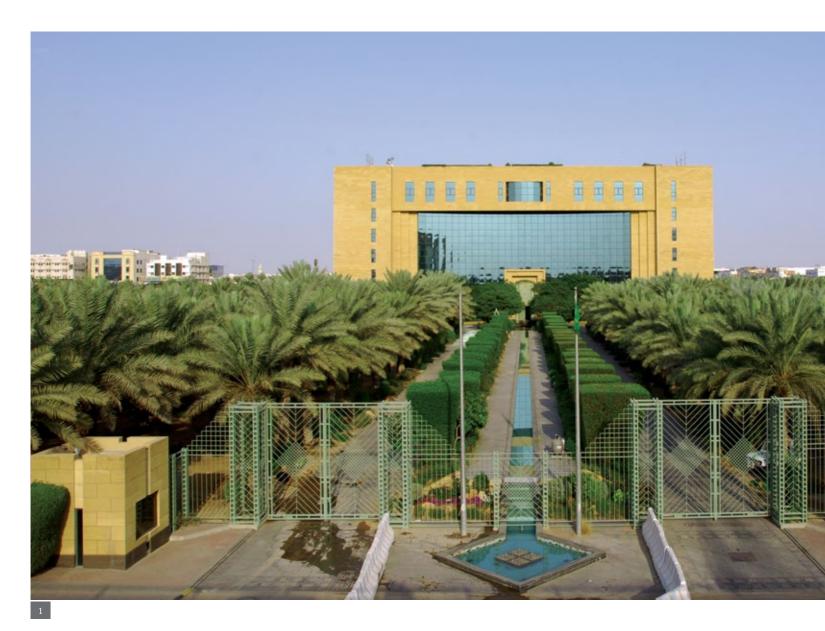




The modern headquarters of the Government's ministries head the list of the city's architectural landmarks. The varying architectural layouts and designs reflect the independent functional identity of each establishment, adding an element of diversity to the city's luxurious and modern attractions.

- 1. The headquarters of the Ministry of the Interior.
- 2. The headquarters of the Ministry of Petroleum & Mineral Resources.

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The architectural planning of the city's landmarks and selection of their locations enhances the overall city and its neighbourhoods. The aesthetics of the buildings are impressive and the sense of solidity and stature that they create helps to encourage a sense of national and regional pride.

- 1. The Ministry of Municipality & Rural Affairs
- 2. The Riyadh Gateway seen when coming from the Airport.
- 3. The King Fahd National Library.
- 4. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs.













The design of each Government office and commercial building varies according to its function, but they do all share a high quality of construction and pleasing design. From right: The main lobby of King Saud University; King Khalid Specialist Eye Hospital.





No voice takes precedence over that of the call to prayer. During prayer time, all other activities throughout the city come to a standstill. The mosques are close to the hearts of all residents – young and old, men and women, and it is no wonder that mosques are the city's most important educational centres. The architectural design and the large number of mosques reflect their extreme spiritual value. The mosques are the common denominator among all parts of the city, whether functional, administrative, service, business or residential. Wherever there are people, there is a mosque.







From the absolutely uniform traditional adobe buildings of the old city to the wide variety of internationally inspired modern buildings with their state-of-the-art construction technologies; the city displays an architectural diversity which works well in its unique zoning structure, and demonstrates its ability and willingness to adapt to new influences. The headquarters of the General Secretariat of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC), Headquarters of some embassies.









The city's unique architectural culture is evident in upmarket real estate projects which show the strength of the real estate sector and confirm the underlying vigour of the city's economy.















Riyadh is an open museum of high technological and sophisticated architecture, including multi-cultural and multi-standard architecture.

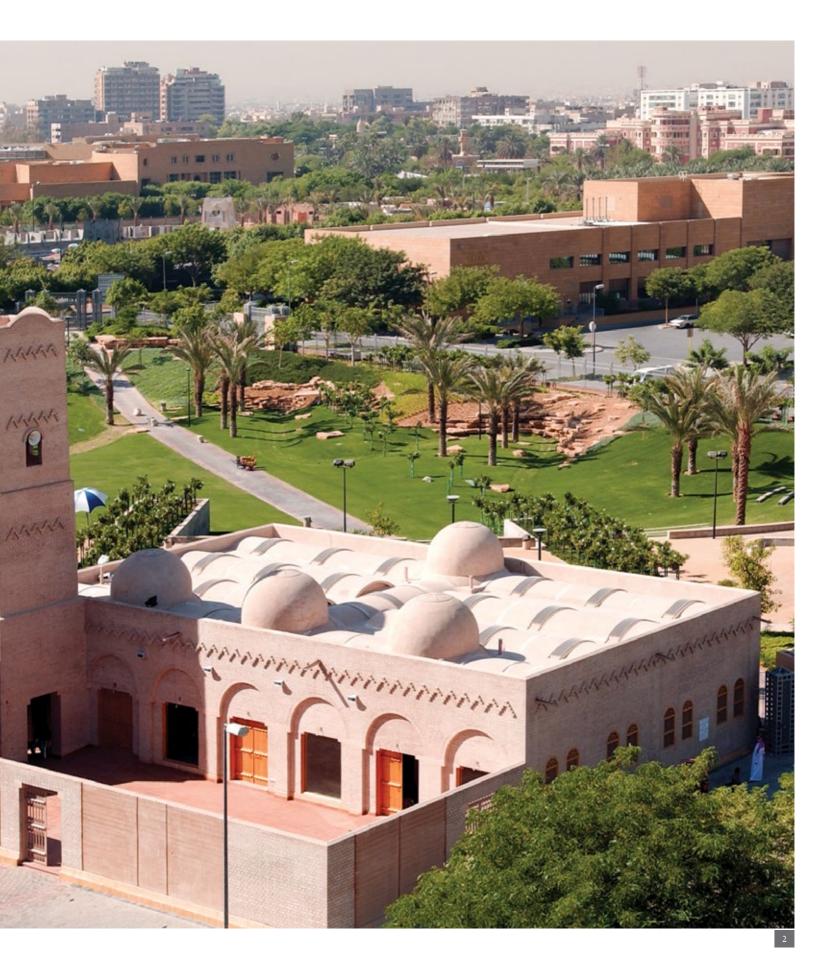
Apart from thousands of traditional buildings, Riyadh has fine modern buildings with local traditional features, drawing on the city's heritage and traditions while meeting the modern building code requirements and standards of comfort.

The previous page: Al-Kindi Square and Tuwaiq Palace in the Diplomatic Quarter.



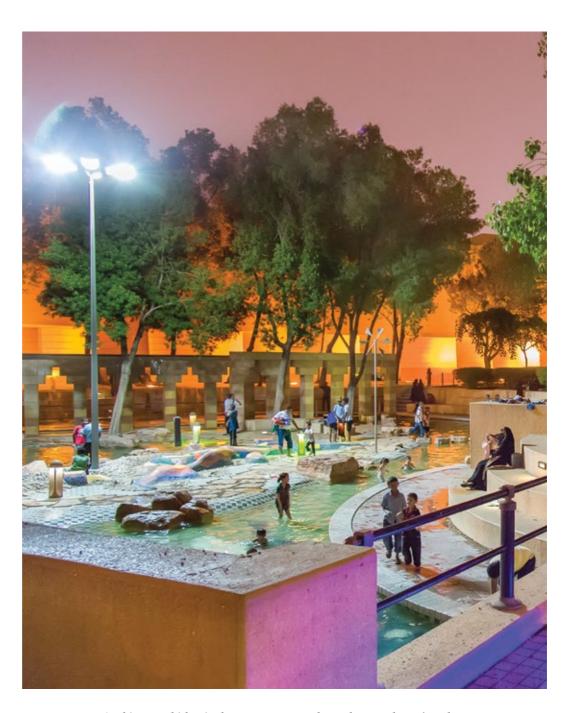
Environmental architecture: utilization of available materials to innovate a structure that will serve the people and respect the place; these are modern architectural structures taking into consideration such important factors as sustainability, rationalization of resources, energy preservation, environmental development and considerations of personal privacy.

- 1. Shaikh Mohammed Ibn Abdulwahab Mosque in the historical town of Dir'iyyah.
- 2. Al-Medi Mosque at King Abdulaziz Historical Centre in which compressed sand brick technology was used.









Architectural identity began to emerge through a number of modern public buildings which have proved their high worth and aesthetic value. They have become a pattern guiding private construction to create various modern forms. They well suit the place and reflect the people's culture, regardless of shape and composition.





The rhythm of life in Riyadh is regulated by the academic calendar. It is neither the warm or cold weather that sets the pace, nor the ordinary calendar year with its months and crescents that is pre-eminent. Nor is it the patterns of trade and commerce in the city's marketplaces, or the celebrations of the major religious holidays, despite their importance. None of these have control over the life of the city in the manner that the academic schedule does. Riyadh is always in one of two seasons: academic year or holidays!

Every activity of the city is regulated with reference to the academic terms and holidays. Business picks up at the beginning of the academic year while the tourism sector has its peak period of bookings towards the end of the academic year. Festivals and other activities take place during holidays; even social occasions, such as weddings and family re-unions have no alternative but to respect the schedule of the academic year.



This domination of the educational sector over other spheres of life is due to the fact that more than half of the city's population are below 15 years of age and are participating in the education system. The young people of the city attend educational establishments of a wide variety at every level, and this wealth of educational facilities is another major factor, in some cases the main factor, in attracting new residents to Riyadh.

In the early days, education was provided by Quran teachers for children and through tutorials for adults. Though limited, this old method of education produced most of today's leaders of the various public and private schools and colleges. Then, as now, Riyadh was a leading centre of education, attracting students from afar.

The beginning of a more formal provision of education in the early 1950's was the most important milestone in the city's educational development. Education was made available for boys and girls, and programmes for the eradication of adult illiteracy were initiated. Higher education establishments, colleges and universities gradually followed.

The wealth of higher education facilities in Riyadh is one of the city's special features. A complete picture of



education shows universities, an applied science city, modern civil and military colleges, tens of institutes, technical and vocational training schools and, of course, primary and secondary education schools. Education is the main sector of the city after administration and commerce.

Diversified education was the foundation for, among other things, enhancing the city's health services that are provided through world-class medical centres. Higher education and medical care both contribute significantly towards the overall performance of Riyadh as a city and towards its economic growth and its appeal to visitors from other cities.

The abundance of scientific institutions has generated a variety of activities as well as religious and cultural education. There are tens of newspapers and specialized periodicals published in Riyadh, and hundreds of Shariah seminars are regularly held. Throughout the year, seminars, lectures and conferences are organized to address various aspects of knowledge. Riyadh retains an educational ambience all daylong.





Education is one of the greatest gifts granted by Allah to the country. Many of the city's children have available from a tender age a model educational environment, combining quality of facilities, integration of resources, strong curricula and competent teaching staff.





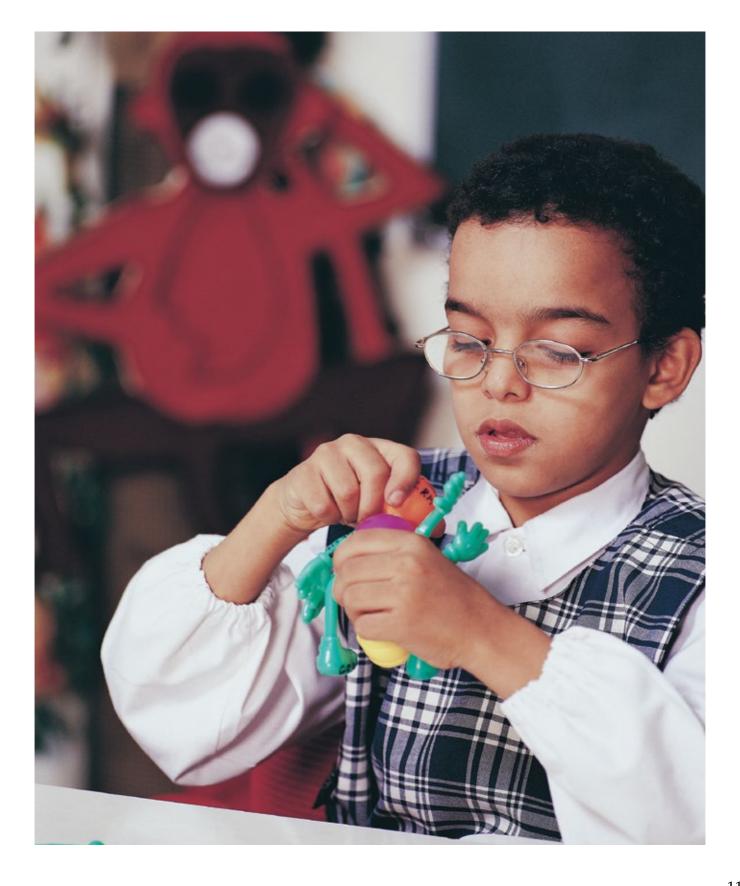




Play is an important means of learning, especially in childhood and youth. Cultural traditions concerning the education of children advises: "Play with them for seven years, educate them for seven years and accompany them for seven years". In modern times, it is said: "A sound mind in a sound body".



Children with special needs have their own special educational facilities, which cover needs such as academic learning, vocational training and personal upbringing. These citizens must have the opportunity to contribute to the welfare of the country and to earn respect for themselves in the future city of Riyadh. These facilities are financed by benefactors and philanthropists.









The beginning and end of the school day are times of peak time activity and regulators of the rhythm of life in the city. As the day gets under way, hundreds of thousands of students from the various parts of the city make their way to their schools. With the quitting bell, students return home and then can enjoy the different range of activities available in the evening.





With the large number of students graduating from the Saudi educational system, the unique Saudi experiment in providing independent regular education for boys and girls has proved to be extremely successful overcoming many educational setbacks and barriers. It has proved to be flexible and capable of adopting new developments in education.







Excellent educational programmes in terms of reliable resources and an expansion in the inculcation of religious beliefs, cultural precepts and behavioural education, form a real foundation for shaping the upright individual and serve as a rational safety valve for society's youth and as a paramount motivating force for the nation to progress and develop.



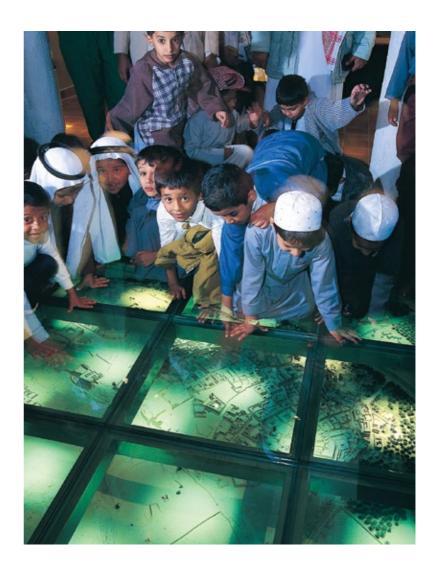


Teaching aids, such as laboratories, libraries and multimedia, are important elements of modern education in schools, institutes and colleges, and remain the best learning support. An old Arab proverb says that "the best lifetime companion is a book".

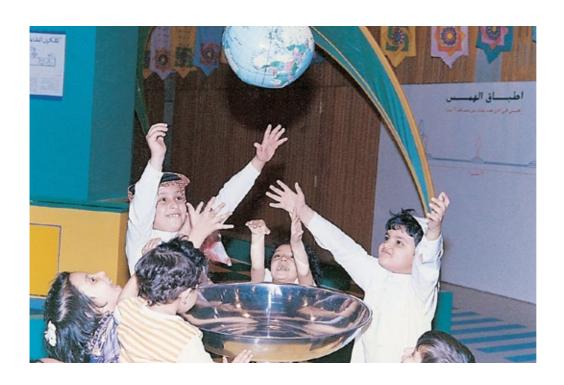




Education goes beyond schools and homes. It is also received through other educational establishments in the city, including museums and libraries. However, the most important informal educational establishments are the mosques, in view of their educational value and due to the privilege of learning and reciting the Glorious Quran after Asr (afternoon) prayers, where tutorials are held in almost all mosques.









Observational, experimental and discovery learning, as well as out-of-school reading are approaches adopted by non-scholastic educational establishments, such as public libraries, museums and scientific centres.

The Scientific Oasis at the Diplomatic Area, and King Abdulaziz Public Library.













The King Saud University and Imam Mohammed Ibn Saud Islamic University are the largest educational establishments in Riyadh. They stand as models for modern, highly-equipped universities. They offer a range of sophisticated scientific disciplines and are attended by students from Riyadh, other parts of Saudi Arabia and also from various parts of the Islamic World. Additionally, the campuses of these universities form an important part of the city's development.











Higher education establishments are not limited to universities, autonomous colleges of technology, military sciences and or the many institutes and academies. There is an integrated 'city' within Riyadh for research and technologies, as well as specialized scientific research centres independent of educational establishments.

Previous page: Cadets of a military academy.

- 1. King Faysal Specialized Hospital Research Centre.
- 2. King Abdulaziz City for Science & Technology.

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Riyadh's specialist hospitals are well known for their high standards of care and also serve as active medical research centres. They are also recognized as providers of scientific programmes of medical studies. With their exclusivity and variety of services, they form a sector of considerable economic potential.





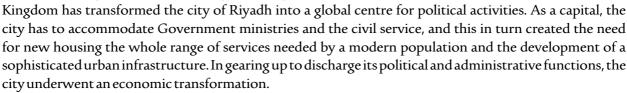




Riyadh is a flourishing global financial and business centre fed by huge financial resources, supported by a continuously developing and expanding infrastructure, and directed by highly qualified managers from around the world. This economic prosperity provides employment opportunities commensurate with the growth of the city's population and ensures a high standard of living and quality of life. It has made Riyadh an attractive destination for investment.

In earlier times the strategic location of the city stemmed from its surrounding farmland which yielded crops that were not only surplus to the needs of its own inhabitants but also sufficient to meet the demand for wheat from other population centres throughout the Arabian Peninsula.

Since it has become the capital of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh's strategic nature has changed. The political status of the



As the city's economy prospered it attracted increasing numbers of highly qualified new residents, and with the skills brought in by these newcomers the scope of business expanded beyond agriculture to include local and international trade, modern industries and increasingly sophisticated services. The economic transformation of Riyadh, in turn, has played a significant role in changing the cultural face of the city.

Economic prosperity led to a confident, flourishing society, and to the requirement for well-educated specialists to occupy newly emerged positions. It resulted in a greatly increased emphasis on education and within a few decades, illiteracy among the city's inhabitants was eradicated and new technical skills were acquired by natives of Riyadh.

The public sector continues to be the most important component of the Kingdom's economy and

absorbs the majority part of qualified nationals in the workforce. This class forms the mainstay of the city's various activities, which include Government development projects, and are principal supporters of the city's business and industrial sectors, along with the Government and other agencies which finance business, agricultural and industrial activities and develop human resources.

The demand for quality in the labour market has attracted qualified manpower from within and outside the country. More than one third of the workforce in the city is made up of highly qualified professionals, and there are also thousands of academics in educational disciplines such as engineering and natural, technological sciences, the humanities and Shariah Law. The internal migration of Saudi nationals to Riyadh from other regions of the Kingdom is chiefly attributable to the excellent employment opportunities which the city offers.

The most outstanding feature of the city's economy is the ability to host the various modern economic activities and the strength of human and financial resources that ensure the vigorous economy of Riyadh.







Public transport project is the latest and the most ambitious strategical project of the city. It covers all city fabric, with the most sophisticated integrated public transport facilities, that include subway electric auto - trains. Above its transport privileges it works as an economy leavers, and environment protection effective measure.















Human resources are the most valuable assets of the city's economy, and the city is fortunate to have a large pool of workers qualified to work across a wide range of occupations and vocations. More than one-third of the workforce have specialized qualifications. The Government sector absorbs the elite in managerial and specialized technical positions. The private sector also provides employment for managers and technicians, as well as for the majority of manual labourers.



Much of the commercial activity of the city is concentrated along the main roads. They are bustling throughout the day and night. There is the old, with an increasing importance and accentuated economic value, and the modern, which absorbs the latest in the world of trade.

- 1. Al-Ulaya Road.
- 2. Al-Batha Road.

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The large number of shopping malls is an indicator of the city's strong economy, and they do much to attract visitors from outside Riyadh. The common denominators of these shopping centres are their huge scale, luxurious finish, attractive design, wide variety of goods and excellent levels of service. Shopping in these malls is an enjoyable experience and an outing for all members of the family.









Riyadh is a year-round display of every type of product from all over the world. The city's reputation as a shopping centre has attracted suppliers from every corner of the world, and shoppers are presented with a dazzling array of enticing goods. The special features of the city's retail sector include the quality of display, innovative promotional ideas, inviting ambience, comfortable surroundings and the impressive services provided for shoppers.









The economic strength of the city and the activity in its markets depend on an efficient infrastructure, which continues to grow in proportion to the city's expansion and economic performance. The landmarks of such infrastructure are reflected in transportation and telecommunications, as well as in a modern international airport and in a major railway terminal.







Business flourishes throughout the year, with shopping festivals organized according to seasons. These include the back-to-school sales and special shopping events associated with Ramadan, Eid Al-Fitr (end of Ramadan) and the summer holidays.

Right: An open market held in Qasr al-Hukm squares.









Quality of life is conspicuously expressed throughout the city in architecture, and experienced by international diplomatic missions and by local communities, some of which have inhabited Riyadh for successive decades, in restaurants and in other food outlets. Riyadh offers excellent Arab, Asian and European kitchens. Their highly favoured dishes are reflected not only in the quality of savoury food but also in the appealing eating environments and mode of service.











Despite the competition that they face from the city's new breed of luxurious shopping malls, traditional local Souqs continue to flourish and have become one of Riyadh's tourist attractions.

The previous page: Traditional market in the city centre.





Life in Riyadh has two faces: one serious and solemn for the day, burdened with business, responsibilities, crowded busy schedules, with tight agendas and fast relentless rhythm; and another more interesting nocturnal life with a multitude of recreations, celebrations and an intimate ambiance - leisure time that is enjoyed by all - men and women alike, the young and the old. This night-time environment is suffused with a host of scents and flavours that emanate from all corners of the city; from the houses and streets, parks, plazas and markets.

In earlier times life was lived within the constraints of the available hours of daylight. At first light people would pick their way to their farms and marketplaces and then, with the sunset, life in Riyadh would settle down with it. Markets closed down, the streets and alleys grew empty. Today, by contrast, as the sun sinks below the horizon, another version of Riyadh



awakens, characterized by its own unique businesses and social, cultural and recreational activities. The result is that some parts of the city are more active and vibrant during the evening than in daylight hours.

The outward manifestations of daily life in Riyadh are a reflection of the needs of the city residents, of their values and traditions. Moral values and religious rituals are the most important determinants of life for the city's residents. Prayers are an integral part of life, and at prayer time all other activities are suspended, with the result that other activities during the day and night are scheduled around these times. Throughout the day, the week and the year prayer time is a constant in the sense that it is the primary source of social interaction for the residents of any neighbourhood, bringing them together time after time in a constant cycle. During Ramadan and Eid seasons, the pattern of prayers becomes even more pervasive in the lives of the population. Prayer times are manifestations of social fraternity, solidarity and compassion, and prayers are also an integral part of people's most significant and major social celebrations and gatherings.

Family and social bonds take second place. Most residents are organized in large extended families or, alternatively, newly founded families. Family gatherings and the obligations of blood ties account for much of an individual's time throughout the week. The requirements of social bonds and family patterns have an



impact on the city's service facilities, cultural centres, marketplaces and recreational attractions. Indeed, the Saudi culture of the privacy of the family is the most important factor in the design and management of shopping and recreational activities.

Shopping complexes and malls are one of the most prominent features of the city and the fastest growing of its economic sectors, and are a reflection of the economic prosperity of Riyadh and the high disposable incomes of its residents. The city has a veritable wealth of mega-malls and smaller shopping centres, all of which are marked by the quality of their design and services and diversity of goods on display.

While Saudi values, religious rituals and social structure are the chief determinants of life in the City of Riyadh, its climate and weather set the tone for many of its activities. Winter and the rainy season are marked by plenty of country outings, while in clement weather the city's plazas, courtyards and even the pavements are thronged with residents taking their ease.









A relaxing get-together with friends and family is the perfect antidote to the stress and fatigue caused by the hectic pace of the working day. An open air setting for these informal gatherings makes them even more enjoyable and therapeutic.



In the old days, streets were forums for people. Today, modern cafes with their excellent services have become get-together places for city residents and preferred evening spots for young people.







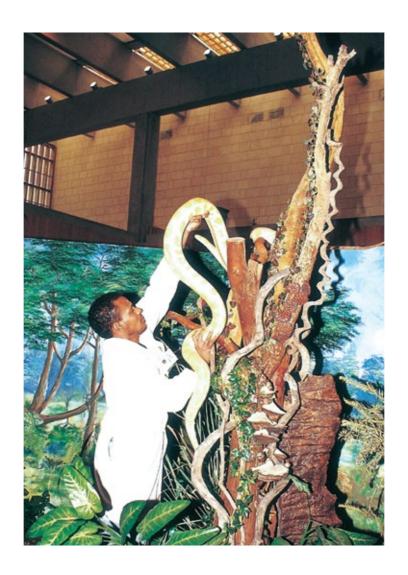




The intellectual life of the city includes regular lectures, seminars and cultural evenings that are attended by enthusiastic and appreciative audiences in well-equipped community facilities.







The variety of events in the city encourages people to join in. Such events combine fascinating and interesting attractions, enjoyment and learning.









Riyadh's cultural sector includes a number of fine museums, which are home to impressive and well-presented collections. These museums are in central locations within residential districts for easy accessibility and offer visitors a wide range of cultural and educational services.

- 1. Sagr al-Jazira Aviation Museum.
- 2. First and second Saudi states gallary at the National Museum.

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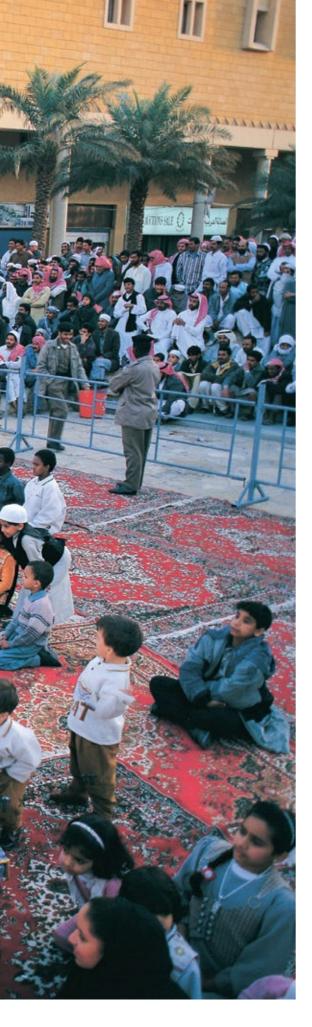




Traditional culture is highly appreciated by the people of the city and is enjoyed by young and adults alike. These events frequently attract large crowds of people, including spectators from the city's expatriate communities.

Adult interest in national traditional folklore evokes memories of the past, and for the younger generation such events help them to understand their own culture in its historical context.







Eid Al-Fitr, the festival marking the end of the fasting month of Ramadan, is celebrated as a major annual event in Riyadh. Eid celebrations are organized throughout the city in Qasr al-Hukm squares. Festivities start immediately after afternoon prayers on the first day of the Eid and last for three days, and include traditional dancing, competitions and special programmes for children.







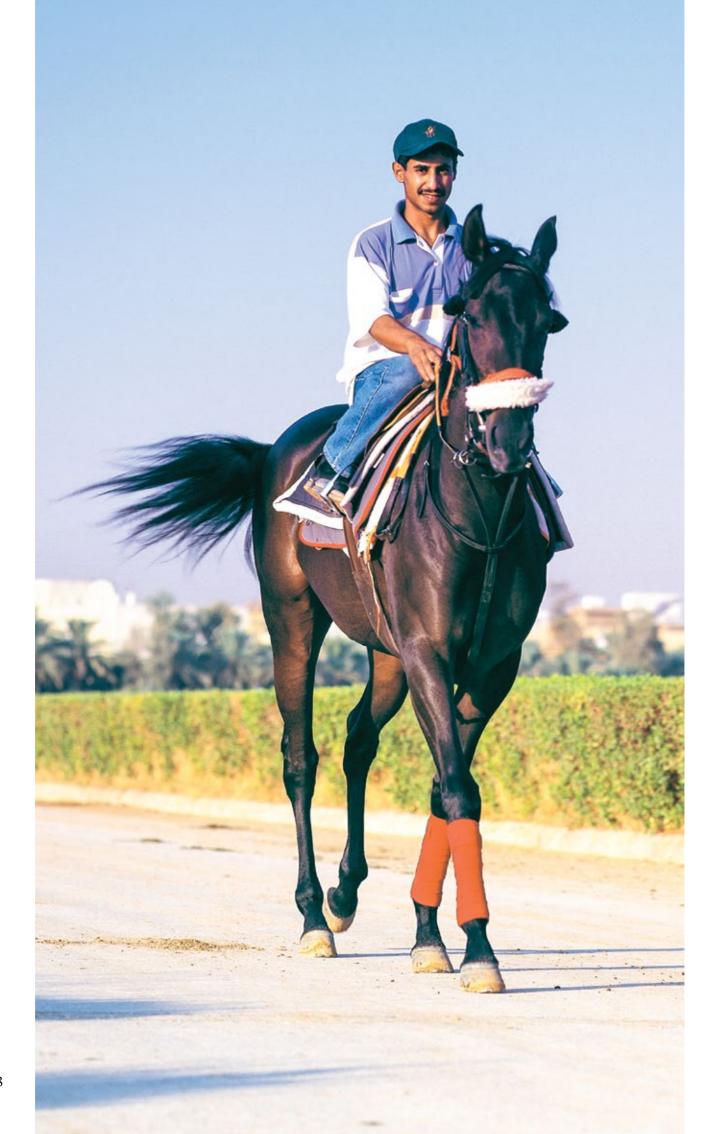
One of the few times when Riyadh's busy roads are quiet is when major football matches are being played. Sport is the number one activity for the youth, and football is pre-eminent both as a participant and as a spectator sport. This passion for the game is well served, with two major football stadiums, modern facilities for four premium-class clubs and tens of open air or indoor sports halls.

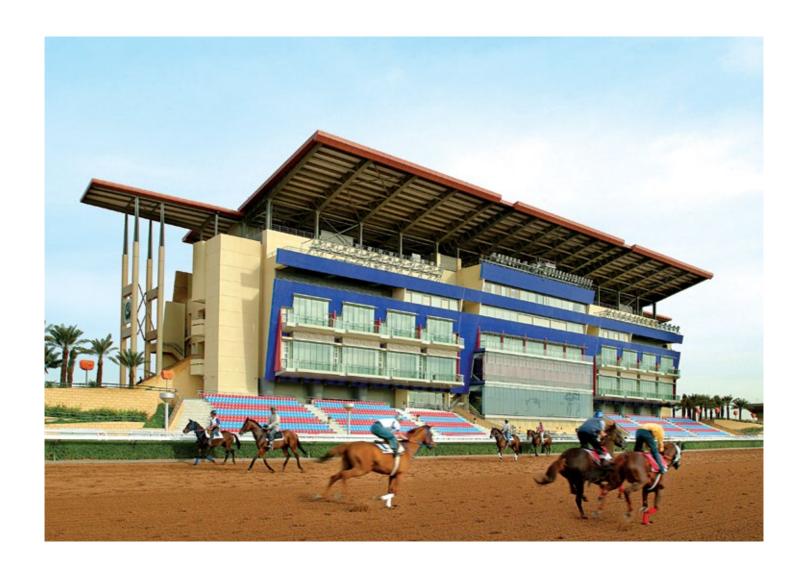
The previous page: King Fahd International Stadium.











For centuries, the Nejd (Riyadh) region has been the habitat of thoroughbred horses, from which the famous Arabian horse breed has been propagated worldwide. The city still holds firmly to this great heritage, with world-class stables and a number of equestrian clubs.

King Abdulaziz Equestrian Centre.







Public parks have been provided in key locations throughout the city and so are easily accessible for family outings. The well-thought-out layout and attractive design of these parks make them popular with the city's families, and with children in particular.

- 1. The Zoo.
- 2. Abumkharoug Park.
- 3. Salam Park.



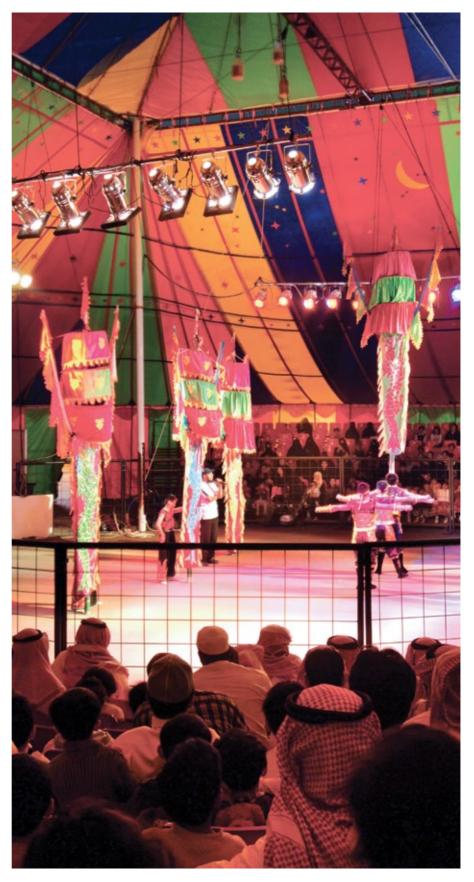






Children's playgrounds are a familiar part of the city's landscape and are to be found at schools, fast food restaurants, shopping malls and of course in public parks.







From ancient times, a friendly relationship has developed between the residents of the city and the sand dunes surrounding their dwelling structures and life activities. This affection is expressed by modern youth in various ways, including spending enjoyable times there, employing all their available potential, and taking unpredictable risks.







## PROMISING FUTURE

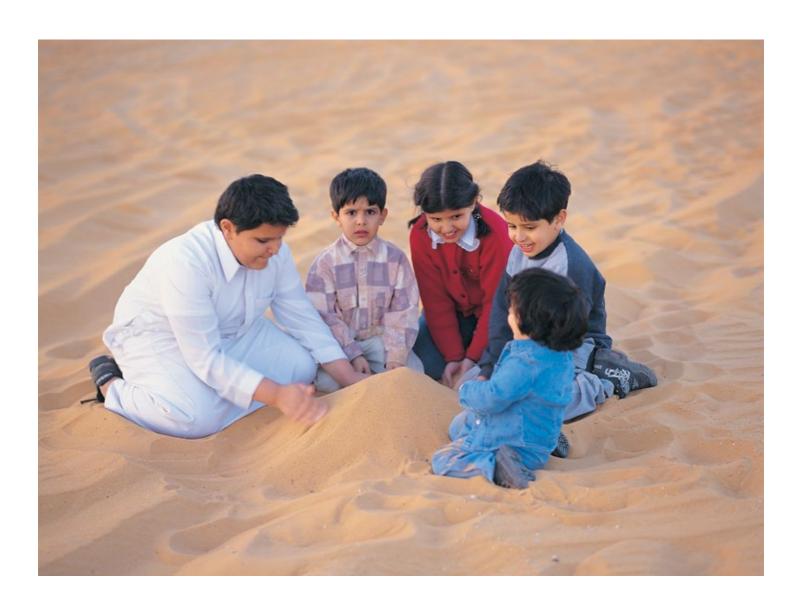
Riyadh has been endowed with a strong infrastructure that promises an exciting future – international eminence, competent national administration, a vigorous economy, dynamic modern architecture, efficient public utilities and a responsive service sector. These are all continually expanded and upgraded, regenerating natural resources, and building on a successful development history. All urban and economic indicators point clearly towards a promising, if challenging, future.

However, the most important ingredient of the city's future growth lies in its inhabitants, the future generation. Young people account for more than half of the population. They thus represent half of the current city and the entirety of its future. Riyadh pins its hopes on its youth, and it is for their sake that the city plans its future and continues to develop its various urban sectors. It provides them with security and a fulfilling life and trains them in positive attitudes and constructive leadership.

Strategic plans have been laid down to direct the city's construction, economic and social sectors, public utilities, service facilities and natural environment towards a future vision, ensuring that Riyadh is fit to be the capital of the Kingdom that hosts the Two Holy Mosques, and a leading international centre for political, cultural and historical functions. Moreover, it should continue to be a city that responds to worthy human aspirations and comfortable living requirements. These are reflected in an atmosphere that ensures priority to humans, guarantees the security and safety of residents, strengthens the social bonds and encourages the ties of solidarity among residents. Riyadh aspires to remain a leading city in educational and health services, a focus of knowledge, assuming a leading role in research and technologies; to be a beautiful city with distinctive built environment that is appropriate to the city's social and cultural life and realistically reflects a special architectural identity and a centre for Islamic culture and arts. It also will stand as a vigorous financial and business competitive global centre complementing its political and economic role at both national and regional domains; a contemporary oasis preserving its natural world, rationalizing its resources, and investing in technology and urban planning for a sustainable environment.

The development programmes covering all aspects in Riyadh are designed and intended to shape the city into its future outlook. The results are encouraging and many key goals have been achieved already, promising a bright prospect for the future.





Fifty percent of the present generation and 100 per cent of the future generation look at Ar-Riyadh entirely optimistically and confidently. The city's future is being designed to serve them, and the city will count on them second only to their reliance on Allah.