

Between tradition and modernity: Max Lock and the Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan

Tradition, Modernity, Planning, Architecture, Basra

/Abstract

Ubullah is a zoned neighbourhood to the north of Basra, which the British planner and architect Max Lock was commissioned to plan in 1956 by the Basra Port Directorate. This followed a series of separate but relatable plans in southern Iraq completed in plan form during the previous two years. This article critically assesses how the Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan straddles both tradition and modernity within Iraq's wider developing context, both through its physical architectural and townscape features, as well as its segregated location, away from the city centre. Owing to Basra's location, within Iraq yet close to the Gulf, it negotiates wider geographies than its national picture; Lock's plan acknowledged these through the scale to which he planned and the forms and types of building he aimed to procure through the publication of the Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan. This article further places the plan within its architectural and planning context, illustrating similar modern works within the Gulf, Iraq and Europe which forms Lock's professional context. Ultimately, the plan was doomed to failure; from the outset, it was a plan that made sense for Lock to complete due to his portfolio of work in Basra and southern Iraq, yet difficulties with the location's proximity to the city and its cut off nature meant Ubullah would be an isolated enclave on the periphery of the city. In addition, national politics and growing disquiet with the influence of the British within Iraq and neighbouring countries in the Gulf ensured the Ubullah plan by Lock was shelved.

/Author

Ben Tosland
NYU London
bt2269@nyu.edu

Dr. Ben Tosland holds a Ph.D. in architecture from the University of Kent where he studied the works and influences of European architects working in the Persian Gulf between 1956 and 1982. He has published works on the planner and architect, Max Lock, and his work in Basra and more widely in southern Iraq. He recently published a review of Lukas Stanek's *Architecture in Global Socialism: Eastern Europe, West Africa and the Middle East in the Cold War* in the EAHN's *Architecture Histories* journal. Other work forthcoming includes an article in the *Twentieth Century Society's* journal on British architects working abroad and a piece on Rifat Chadirji for the *Collective for Architecture Lebanon*. He is currently working on a project which involves the architects Gillian Hopwood and John Godwin's work in Nigeria throughout the twentieth century.



Introduction¹

Today historians widely accept that the narrative of modernism includes the global south, though this has not always been the case. Within this expanding chronicle, Max Lock's (1909-88) international work – particularly his master plans in southern Iraq, roles working for the UN in Iraq and Jordan, extensive lecture tours through India, Sri Lanka and South America as well as university teaching commitments – has been overlooked.² It was common practice for planning consultants to journey far for an array of government agencies in the post-war period, encapsulated in personal correspondence between Lock and a friend to which she commented 'while you travel all over the world I will not lead a stick-in-the-mud life!'.³ The commonality of peripatetic Western – predominantly British – planners and architects working in the Gulf during the 1950s resulted from the heavy-handed influence of capital, imperial interests in oil and trade routes through the region.⁴ In general, foreign experts worked on hierarchical, capital-led schemes, planting new pieces of urban fabric - a familiar narrative in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, established in existing literature, with specific reference to the work of Robert Home, Anthony King, Mark Crinson and Iain Jackson.⁵ In some respects, the status of the British expert abroad was sometimes self-congratulatory; the March 1957 edition of *Architectural Digest*, titled 'In the Middle East', Raglan Squire's haughty editorial declared that Britain 'led the way in town planning' and that 'serious architects seek to develop a regional style'.⁶

Combining both contemporary planning theory with the development of regionalism, Max Lock and Partners accepted a commission from the Basra Port Directorate for a neighbourhood plan, in an area known as Ubullah, in northern Basra in 1956. Through an international network of designers, and benefitting from the Iraqi British influenced, colonial system sympathetic to the Western expert, Lock gained several contracts in southern Iraq. The scheme for the small 365.5 acre site at Ubullah was mentioned in embryo in an earlier plan

1 Archive abbreviations used: MLA - Max Lock Archive, University of Westminster; FCO - Foreign and Commonwealth Office, papers from the National Archives at Kew; BP ARC – British Petroleum Archive, held at the University of Warwick. All other archives are denoted with their full title where necessary.

2 Several British officials sat on the Iraq Development Board, including M. G. Ionides, the former secretary of the British National Council of Building Material Producers and Director of Development in Jordan, meaning Lock had significant connections to gain work in Iraq, as well as being popular among the architectural and political elite at the time.

3 MLA 4.8, Letter: Rebecca to Max Lock (20th November 1957).

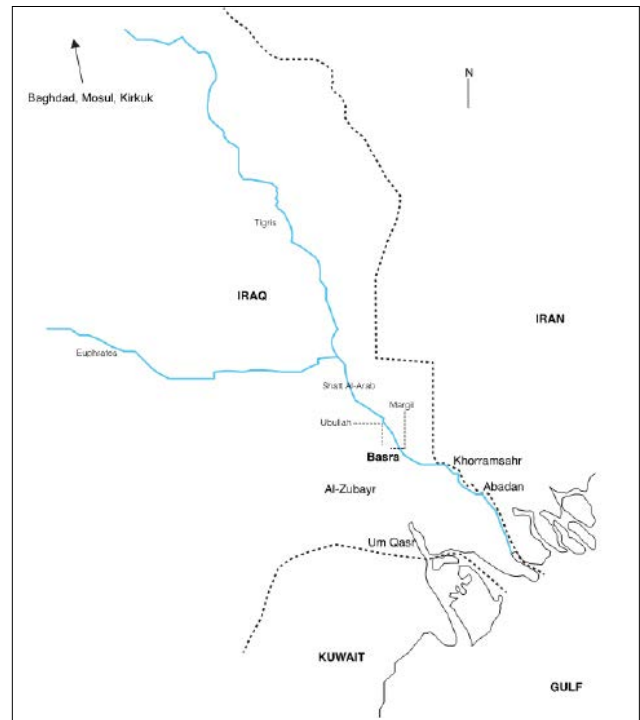
4 Gwendolyn Wright defined and etymologised the word 'peripatetic' as deriving from '*peripatētikos*, referring to Aristotle's practice of continually walking to and fro while teaching... strangers may notice qualities that locals don't see, whether because of overfamiliarity or simply being bogged down in the myriad details of specialised knowledge'; Gwendolyn Wright, "Architects as Migrants", in *The Arab City: Architecture and Representation*, eds. Amale Andraos and Nora Akawi (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 74.

5 Robert Home, *Of Planting and Planning: The Making of British Colonial Cities* (Oxford: Routledge, 1997); Lukas Stanek, *Architecture in Global Socialism: Eastern Europe, West Africa and the Middle East in the Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton: University Press, 2020); Iain Jackson, & Jessica Holland, *The Architecture of Edwin Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew* (London: Routledge, 2014); Anthony D. King, *Spaces of Global Cultures: Architecture, Urbanism and Identity* (London: Routledge, 2006); Mark Crinson, *Empire Building: Orientalism and Victorian Architecture* (London: Routledge, 1996); Mark Crinson, "Abadan: planning and architecture under the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company", *Planning Perspectives* 12, no. 3 (1997): 341-359.

6 Raglan Squire, ed., "In the Middle East", *Architectural Digest* (March 1957): 73–108. Full quote reads: 'serious architects seek to develop a regional style: perhaps within the next decade they will have found the way'.

for Margil (1955), by Lock, also in north Basra [Fig. 1], partly suggesting it made sense for Lock to undertake the commission.⁷ Added to this, Lock's practice worked on a major plan for Basra (1956) and for the port of Um Qasr (1955), with Lock exclaiming in a phone call to Squire that the addition of work in Ubullah would 'suit me very well!'.⁸ Lock's planning methodology was a departure from the top-down approach exhibited elsewhere in the world during this period. His pioneering, socially-led principles using specialist consultants and building specifically for 'artisans, junior clerical staff and workmen' exemplified this.⁹ Lock's objectives for the project, in his words, was to 'design one [neighbourhood] that is economical to build, that is sociologically integrated, that respects the tradition of living established among Iraqi families, and aims at minimizing extremes of climate' and as such, this article critically evaluates these objectives alongside the finalised plan within the wider context of development in the Arabian Gulf.¹⁰

The absence of interest in Lock's career until now is an oddity when considering his connections with politically powerful figures and members of the architectural establishment. He was an important figure in political circles, having designed a house for the director general of the Basra Port Directorate, Sami Fatur, and it is thought from correspondence that it is likely King Faisal II knew of Lock's architectural work.¹¹ On top of this, and prior to undertaking work in Iraq, he was commissioned in 1952 by Nehru – then president of India – to conduct a review into the progress of housing and town development in the country.¹² Notwithstanding these acquaintances, he worked with some of the most progressive thinkers, planners and sociologists of his day to produce his plans. Material uncovered in Lock's archive suggests that he mixed with leading modernist architects, including Serge Chermayeff, Josep Lluís Sert and Walter Gropius while working at Harvard University in 1957; professionally, he worked with Jacqueline Tyrwhitt, Griselda Rowntree and Ruth Glass who all – each in their own right – were imperative to establishing holistic



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Fig. 1

Map of southern Iraq, showing the locations in which Max Lock and Partners produced plans but also the proximity to both Iranian and Kuwaiti borders (Author, 2019)

7 Ben Tosland, "Planning southern Iraq: placing the progressive theories of Max Lock in Um Qasr, Margil, and Basra in the context of Iraqi national development, 1954-1956", *Planning Perspectives* 34, no. 6 (2019): 1023-1044.

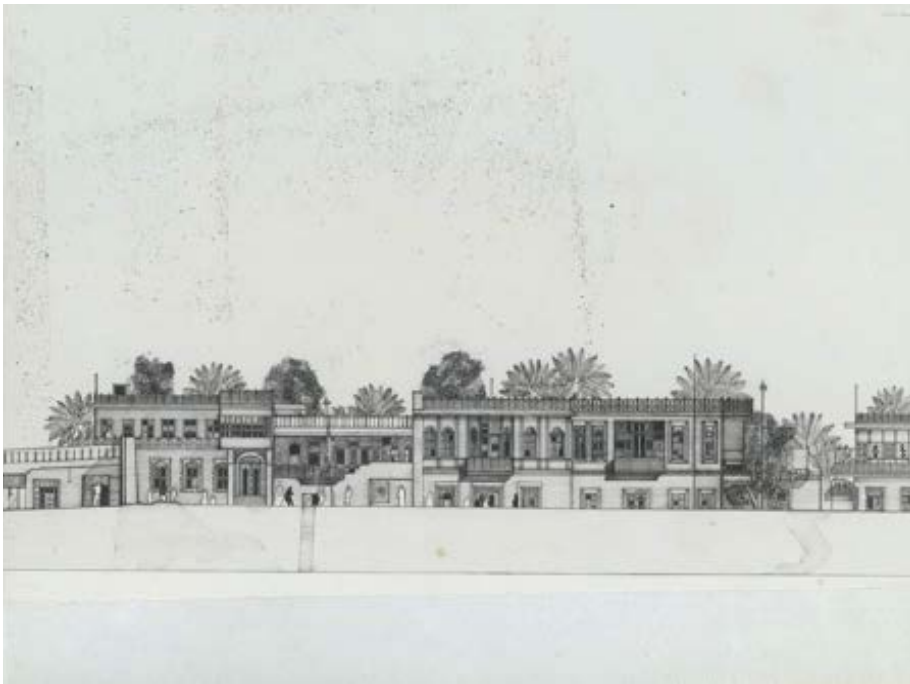
8 MLA 10.5, Letter: Max Lock to R. C. Kelt (OBE) of the Port Directorate, (4th Feb 1955). Lock said Squire was apparently 'anxious to get the work of planning Mosul but no longer particularly keen to step into the field of Basrah'

9 Esra Akcan, *Architecture in Translation: Germany, Turkey and the Modern House* (Duke: Duke University Press, 2012); MLA 6.20, Lock, M. (1956) *Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan*, (Unpublished Plan: Max Lock and Partners)

10 Lock, *Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan*, 11.

11 MLA 12.2, Letter: Max Lock to R. D. Gwyther of Coode and Partners, (27th May 1954); For Lock's biographical details, see: Tosland, "Planning southern Iraq", 1025-1026.

12 MLA 10.5, Letter: R. C. Kelt to Max Lock, Comments on the design for the Director General's House, (21st February 1955), the exact wording of the letter is as follows: 'I think you can assume that the scheme is for one building only and I know that the Director General (Sami Fatur) explained this scheme to His Majesty when he was in Baghdad recently'; MLA 10.5, Letter: Max Lock to R. C. Kelt (OBE) of the Port Directorate, (4th Feb 1955), in this long letter, Lock makes reference to designing a bedroom for the Crown Prince in the house for 'His Majesty'.



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sociologically led approaches to planning in the mid-twentieth century.¹³ Other contemporaries working in similarly sensitive fashions included the likes of Doxiadis Associates and Lewis Mumford, both of whom were influenced by Patrick Geddes.¹⁴ Crossovers between those he worked with and those who had similar methods were common, as such, Tyrwhitt worked with Lock on earlier iterations of the more well-known Middlesbrough Survey (1944) but also forged a professional relationship with Constantinos Doxiadis, with whom she cofounded and edited the influential journal, *Ekistics*, from 1955.¹⁵

Methodology

This essay builds largely upon an earlier published work in *Planning Perspectives* on Max Lock's trilogy of plans in southern Iraq, which neglected an in-depth study of the Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan owing to its position within the earlier plans for Margil and Basra.¹⁶ It further adds to the detailed commentary on the Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan within the PhD thesis *European architects at the confluence of tradition and modernity in the Persian Gulf, 1954-1982*; this essay is an important addition to this owing to its critical stance.¹⁷ When researching and writing about architectural and planning projects in the Gulf, numerous constraints present themselves dictating and limiting choices.

¹³ Ellen Shoshkes and Sy Adler, "Planning for healthy people/healthy places: lessons from midtwentieth century global discourse", *Planning Perspectives* 24, no. 2 (2009): 197–217; Tosland, "Planning southern Iraq", 1026.

¹⁴ Lefteris Theodosios, *Victory over Chaos? Constantinos A. Doxiadis and Ekistics 1945-1975*, (Unpublished PhD Thesis: Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, 2015), 205-208; Frank G. Novack, *Lewis Mumford and Patrick Geddes: The Correspondence* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Through the publication of a select 160 letters, Novack's work shows how Mumford was initially influenced by Geddes and developed his own planning methods independent of Geddes.

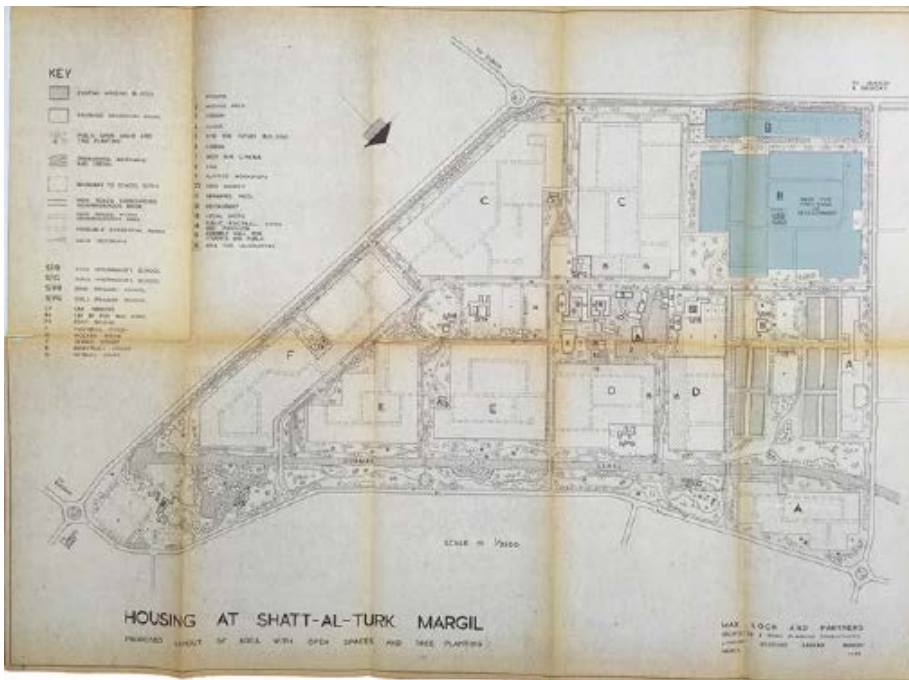
¹⁵ Ellen Shoshkes, "Martin Meyerson and Jacqueline Tyrwhitt and the Global Exchange of Planning Ideas", *Journal of Planning History* 9, no. 2 (2010): 75-94 (77).

¹⁶ Tosland, "Planning southern Iraq".

¹⁷ Tosland, *European architects at the confluence of tradition and modernity in the Persian Gulf, 1954-1982*.

Fig. 2

An example of Makiya's recording of traditional buildings in Baghdad, a method similar to Lock's in the recording of the built environment (ArchNet: taken from the Mohamed Makiya Archive, MIT)



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Importantly, by choosing a scheme located in the Gulf, this enables the context of other architects' work who are habitually overlooked in the literature, such as Mohamed Makiya, to be brought forward and studied showing the significance of these architects rather than the usual Western case studies by architects firmly in the zeitgeist deployed to appreciate lesser-known schemes. Makiya, in particular, with his team at the University of Baghdad sought to record the traditional buildings along the Tigris through detailed drawings [Fig. 2]; this likeness is seen in the photographs that Lock took and have illustrated this essay – it is clear what Lock was seeing in these photographs, as features such as mashrabiya, minarets and tall buildings alongside sleeping terraces in houses all feature within his proposals for Ubullah.

The most important and legible document which underpins this essay was the *Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan*; a twenty-four-page, A4 in size, document that features pull-out A2 size pages with drawings and diagrams to explain and contextualise Lock's proposals. Considering the plan was for a whole section of city, twenty-four-pages is scant, though it makes clear that it is to be read in conjunction with the earlier *New Basrah Plan*, the sociological and economic research of which was extensive.¹⁸ In addition, only Block B out of the seven blocks intended to make up the whole plan was in detail, and the remaining blocks marked on the masterplan in outline [Fig. 3].¹⁹ Ubullah was more or less built from a tabula rasa and Lock had spent months at a time residing in Basra assessing the sociological, economic and climatic factors that went into forming ideas for both plans.

18 Lock, *Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan*, 11.

19 MLA 6.20, *Housing at Shatt-al-Turk: Proposed Layout of Area With Open Spaces and Tree Planting*, November 1956.

Fig. 3

Map of the layout of Ubullah, showing Area B in the top right (north-west) corner of the neighbourhood which was the only area planned in any sort of detail (MLA 6.20)

Iraq, Max Lock and the Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan

The Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan's publication came during a period of major change in Iraq. Architecture and planning were under the influence of the British-founded Iraq Development Board, which oversaw large changes to Baghdad and the employment of some of the world's leading architects intended to 'trailblaze' the way for contemporary architecture.²⁰ Fahim I. Qubain's illuminating study, *The Reconstruction of Iraq 1950-57* (1957), shows the financial workings of the Iraq Development Board in this period; crucially he presented the budgets for the 'Development Board Program for 1951-6', where 'Building' had earmarked eighteen million Iraqi Dinars out of a total proposed expenditure of 155 million. To emphasise how large this budget was, Qubain's evidence depicted that despite resolute efforts to spend it there remained a surplus at the end of each year, excusing this problem by suggesting that 'it is not easy to spend money in such magnitude, rapidly and efficiently, on a well-conceived development programme.'²¹ Qubain also demonstrated that the client who tendered the Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan, the Basra Port Directorate, was a subsidiary of the Iraq Development Board thus contributing to their development programmes in the form of Soviet style five-year plans.²² One of the overarching practical intentions of the period, not only to 'raise the standard of living of her [Iraq's] people' was to improve the infrastructural links between the former three distinct Ottoman Vilayets that made up Iraq, regardless of the cultural and geographic differences between the southern area, central and north.²³

The planning of towns and districts at the microscale, such as Ubullah, thus intended to fit with the macro-vision the Board had for the whole of Iraq.²⁴ Most schemes designed in the 1950s by Western architects and planners in Iraq remained unrealised, primarily because of the regime change in 1958, also prompting questions about where the eighteen million Iraqi Dinars set aside for building was being spent on, if it was not on material or labour in building?²⁵ Aside from expensive Western architects' fees, some contemporary sources suggest it might have been lost through bureaucratic corruption or by the Board

20 Tanis Hinchcliffe, "British Architects in the Gulf, 1950-1980", in *Architecture and Globalisation in the Persian Gulf Region*, ed. by Murray Fraser and Nasser Golzari (London: Routledge, 2013), 23-36.

21 Fahim Qubain, *The Reconstruction of Iraq: 1950-1957* (New York: Praeger, 1957), 40-41: it should also be noted that 70% of this budget was derived from the net revenues received from the oil companies (page 35).

22 Qubain, *The Reconstruction of Iraq*, 20: describes the Basrah Port Authority as being a 'semi-autonomous organisation' referring to the decades before the founding of the Iraq Development Board; FO 371/109887 Letter from D. A. Logan to C. T. E Ewart-Biggs, Foreign Office, 8th May 1954.

23 Qubain, *The Reconstruction of Iraq*, 35.

24 Arthur Salter, *The Iraq Development Board: A Plan of Action* (London: Caxton Press, 1955), 35. Infrastructural projects, including roads and railways, were of importance to the national picture fostered by the Iraq Development Board and the economic and infrastructural reports commissioned to Lord Salter, who had interests in road and infrastructure building both in Britain and Iraq. Growing dependence on Iraqi oil in Britain and the increasing output of oil in Basra further boosted prominence to international logistics within more localised plans at the time.

25 Lukas Stanek, "Miastoprojekt Goes Abroad: The Transfer of Architectural Labour from Socialist Poland to Iraq (1958-1989)", *The Journal of Architecture* 17, no. 3 (2012):361-386; Stanek, *Architecture in Global Socialism*: Following the scrapping of these proposals, schemes thought up by Eastern architects, primarily from Poland, became popular in the ensuing period due to the new political siding with the Soviet Union and the Eastern sphere of influence, as outlined by Łukas Stanek's chapter on Baghdad in *Architecture in Global Socialism* and his earlier articles on Miastoprojekt. However, in this period many of the clients working in Iraq were also Western, and it was events such as the Iraq Revolution that curtailed this trend.

merely being an 'instrument for foreign powers'.²⁶ Archival evidence looks to confirm the latter; in a report from 1953, the Board were founded to be more favourable in awarding contracts to British firms rather than keeping work inside Iraq, directly contradicting their own aims to train Iraqis to undertake work themselves.²⁷ Despite these obvious biases, the Board's outward politics sought to appease its critics, with its plan's stipulation that there was the need for education and public health programmes. Ultimately, the Board believed these would create 'more efficient human beings who would make greater contributions to the economic and political development of the nation': a self-thwarted, unsuccessful aim too interested in awarding contracts to their own compatriots.²⁸

One of the causes of foreign (primarily British) interest in Basra during the twentieth century was its strategic location that benefitted both trade and the military.²⁹ Conversely, for the developing nation of Iraq, its position meant it was - to alter a phrase describing the eighteenth century development of St. Petersburg - 'a window to the world'.³⁰ Basra is located on the Shatt al-Arab river with the Iranian border to its immediate east and Kuwait to the south; Ubullah is close to the major port area at Margil and Basra International Airport both in the north of the city. It had proximity to the Arabian Gulf, of which Iraq had a narrow coastline of just twenty-seven miles, and this period also saw the creation of a port at Um Qasr, which gave access to nautical routes south, east and west towards the Gulf of Aden and the Suez Canal beyond [Fig. 1].³¹ Lock's association with the earlier plan for Um Qasr ensured that he was aware of the economic aims of the Iraq Development Board, highlighting the national importance of the building of a sea port. Throughout the planning and production of that report numerous issues presented themselves, which Sami Fatur described as a 'stumbling block', specifically with the border between Iraq and Kuwait encouraging unease between the two nations.³² In spite of this, Basra's influence grew economically due to its links to the rest of Iraq, the Levant and

26 Stanelly J. Habermann, "The Iraq Development board: Administration and Program", *Economic Review* 1, no. 9 (1955): 179-186.

27 FO 371/104702, The National Archives, Unfair procedure of the Iraq Development board in awarding contracts, (1953); Qubain, *The Reconstruction of Iraq: 1950-1957*, 32.

28 Salter, *The Iraq Development Board: A Plan of Action*, 35; Haberman, *Economic Review*, 179-187: suggests that it was documented that in the creation of irrigation systems, the Board generally opted for American and British consultants while French and German contractors regularly won work because of attractive low bidding; contracts were rarely kept inside Iraq despite this being a public aim of the Development Board.

29 William L. Cleveland & Martin Bunton, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Philadelphia: Westview, 2016), 195-201.

30 Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts into Air* (London: Verso, 1982), 176-178. Berman writes: 'The building of St. Petersburg is probably the most dramatic instance in world history of modernization conceived and imposed draconically from above... The city was to be, as an early Italian visitor said, 'a window to Europe': in physical terms - for Europe was now accessible as it had never been - but, equally important, in symbolic language. First of all, Peter insisted on establishing Russia's capital here in this new city, with a window open to Europe, and scrapping Moscow, with all its centuries of tradition and religious aura.' Important similarities follow, with Berman describing St. Petersburg's geography as being based around islands and canals, comparing it to other historic merchant hubs such as Amsterdam and Venice, but also that its development was 'draconically' top down - both uncanny similarities to Basra and its development in the 1950s.

31 MLA 3.26, Max Lock, *Report on Um Qasr*, (Unpublished: Max Lock and Partners, 1955), 3.

32 MLA 10.5, Letter: Director General of Ports and Navigation to Max Lock, 2nd July 1954.

Europe beyond.³³ Resulting from economic growth, internal migration and the urbanisation of Iraq's previously rural-based economy, Basra's population rose sixty-one percent to 165,000 people between 1947 to 1957; the success of oil fields in towns like Az Zubayr and the export of its oil through Basra along the riverine links and the Gulf was the catalyst for Lock's various commissions.³⁴

Geographically, Ubullah was made up of 'virtually desert of alluvial sub-soil and sand, without trees', only marked by the earlier completion of 200 houses which were part of a failed attempt at building 3,000 dwellings for 15,000 people.³⁵ Lock took this plan, originally intended to be on a grid-iron of straight streets and altered it to become a more detailed 'township' which prioritised both socially contextual housing, within an area focusing significantly on the urban realm [Fig. 3]. Ubullah was a departure from previous Western designed Gulf company towns spatially, this is most notable when juxtaposed against the layouts of Abadan and Ahmadi by the aforementioned Wilson Mason and Partners whose work broadly characterised the actions of European architects in this region.³⁶ While not quite from nothing, one of the aims of the Ubullah scheme was to integrate the existing 'isolated' housing blocks within a plan that focused on the 'character of each housing community, to the landscaping and civic design [...] and the arrangement of open spaces and water courses'.

Lock's own ideological position drew upon Geddes' theory of conservative surgery to create his plans and architecture, using what he called *civic diagnosis*, a term coined with the aid of Glass.³⁷ The theory would imply that there would need to be some sort of malleable urban fabric to shape, yet the principles of it could still be applied to an area of land which was broadly featureless, as Ubullah was.³⁸ The edges of Ubullah are hard, with major thoroughfares encouraging traffic past the neighbourhood making it an impermeable urban block; because of this condition, Lock's plan sought for the new area to become semi-independent from the centre of Basra (fig. 3). Evidence of this is found in the retail strategy for the area, acknowledging that while Ubullah would not have the same scale of urban centre that Basra had, though this would be easily accessible through local transport links if the Ubullah neighbourhood's commercial centre did not suffice; the thinking being that Ubullah's core would adequately serve day-to-day needs. Ubullah would have internal traffic, however, though the 'residential

33 Adil A. Khattab, *Basra City: A Study in Urban Geography*, (Unpublished PhD Thesis: SOAS, 1972), 159. In addition to this, Basra boasted its own international airport – designed by British architects Wilson Mason and Partners, who had a strong colonial link with the designs of New Delhi having worked under Lutyens meaning it worked towards a collective British identity abroad through architecture.

34 Basra's population grew from 368,799 in 1947 to 502,884 in 1957. (Qubain, *The Reconstruction of Iraq*, 7 and 263).

35 Lock, *Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan*, 1.

36 Crinson, "Abadan: planning and architecture under the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company", 341-359; Reem Alissa, *Building for Oil: Corporate Colonialism, Nationalism and Urban Modernity in Ahmadi, 1946-1992*, (Unpublished PhD Thesis: University of California, Berkeley, 2012).

37 Unknown, "Civic Diagnosis of the City of Hull", *Architects' Journal*, (29th July 1943):71; Ola Uduku, "Networking and strategic deal-making in the Caribbean: Using archives to examine Max Lock's 1950s planning adventures in the West Indies", *ABE Journal* (Online, 2013) <https://doi.org/10.4000/abe.3392> (last accessed October 27, 2021).

38 Tosland, "Planning southern Iraq", 1032.



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roads within these neighbourhoods are so arranged that they discourage through traffic from taking short cuts via the middle of the neighbourhood, the roads being routed in a circuitous fashion in the best way to serve the houses themselves'.³⁹

The neighbourhood planning concept, which underpinned Lock's Ubullah scheme is integral to understanding his work, with such theories being prominent in international exam-

ples of modernist architecture and master-planning. As established, Ubullah was a subdivided community, and on this small scale there is a clear comparison to the layout and distribution of buildings in Tema designed by Lasdun with Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew (1952) in the Gold Coast (modern day Ghana).⁴⁰ Like Ubullah's proximity to the port area in Basra on the Shatt Al-Arab, Tema is a small harbour that formed part of a wider plan for the Volta River project.⁴¹ Spatial distribution of buildings is important to this concept and varies from example-to-example on various scales. The houses in Tema 'were set around schools and recreation areas', a distribution similar to Ubullah's.⁴² Additional influences are found in the internationally renowned Chandigarh master plan, where Drew designed the city's Sector-22 with housing design contributions from Fry; it is known Lock visited these for his report on the progress of housing and town development in India, and subsequently influenced his work in Ubullah.⁴³

Vital to Lock's neighbourhood concept was creating a walkable, permeable interior. Lock designed the centre with community in mind, complete with facilities such as shops and a central mosque, which architecturally was to set a high standard for future building in Basra.⁴⁴ In terms of townscape, this centre would be legible in the narrow twelve-foot-wide-streets that surrounded it with the mosque's landmark minaret depicted in perspective views along enclosed

39 Unknown, "Civic Diagnosis of the City of Hull", 2-7.

40 Iain Jackson, "The planning of late colonial village housing in the tropics: Tema Manhean, Ghana", *Planning Perspectives* 29, no. 4 (2014): 475-499.

41 Michelle Provoost, "Tema: Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew", *Delft Architectural Studies on Housing* 12, no. 13 (2015). <http://dash-journal.com/tema-manhean/> (last accessed October 27, 2021);

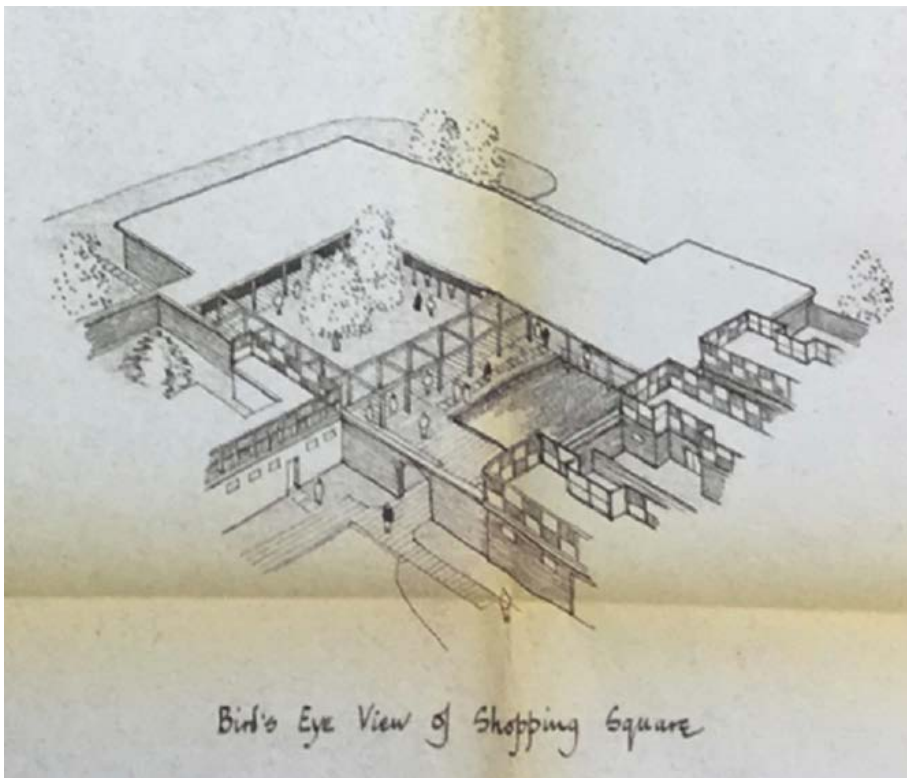
42 Jackson, "The planning of late colonial village housing in the tropics: Tema Manhean, Ghana", 479.

43 Iain Jackson, "Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew's early housing and neighbourhood planning in Sector-22, Chandigarh", *Planning Perspectives* 28, no. 1 (2013): 1-26.

44 Lock, *Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan*, 7.

Fig. 4

Civic centre with the education centre and health clinic terminating the view, with the reflective pools central to the image. Note also, decorative mashrabiya along the 'traditional' buildings to the left of the image (MLA 6.20, Lock, (1956) The New Basrah Plan)



thoroughfares [Fig. 4].⁴⁵ Its hierarchical position was to be clarified through the intended reflection of the mosque's elevation in an ornamental 'basin of water'.⁴⁶ Use of Minarets, or other religious buildings, at the centre of public space is commonplace in plans and is a configuration familiar throughout history, its position also provided a strong focal point for Lock's hand-drawn perspectives of the proposals. The mosque was intended not to be alone in this shimmering reflection, with an assembly hall for students, a library and a health clinic surrounding the mosque also visible in the water-ornament.⁴⁷ However, placing the traditional mosque alongside a health centre and education buildings – tangible symbols of science, education and by association, modernity – demonstrated the juxtaposition of a modernising society with conservative values as well as serving a specific, townscape purpose.

This makes clear that Lock's focus on the minaret was not wholly religious, but more for orientation as he demonstrated that his intentions for the centre of Ubullah was to be a functional, communal place, forming part of the built identity for the area. In wayfinding terms, to take Kevin Lynch's metaphor, the central minaret acts as 'the piles of stones along the Saharan *Medjbed*', which lines a route of hundreds of miles across the sand 'leading from water hole to water hole'.⁴⁸ In the *Kuwait Urbanization*, Saba George Shiber compounded the importance of the minaret within a low-rise townscape, typical of Gulf towns, saying that:

45 Gordon Cullen, *The Concise Townscape* (London: The Architectural Press, 1966), 133: Cullen famously said that 'If I were asked to define townscape I would say that one building is architecture but two buildings is townscape'; street widths for Ubullah are defined in: Lock, *Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan*, 3.

46 Lock, *Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan*, 7.

47 MLA 6.12, Report: Max Lock, *The New Basrah Plan* (Unpublished: Max Lock and Partners, 1956), fig. 30.

48 Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Boston: MIT Press, 1960) 130.

Fig. 5

The shopping square in the Ubullah Neighbourhood, showing a covered exterior with planting at the centre, arched entrance ways and reflective pools all in proximity to low-rise houses with sleeping terraces (MLA 6.20)

...These are the tall, vertical graceful and skyward looking minarets reaching upward into the firmament as if to remind one that there is something else to this world other than buildings and cars. And as these minarets point to the sky to a religious and functional need, they provide the strongest architectural contra-composition that Kuwait possesses... whatever the architectural merits of the mosque itself may be in any particular case, the minaret is a witness reminding one that architecture and civic design are not dependant on fussy design, expensive materials and extravagance but, rather, on the interplay of space, form and direction.⁴⁹

Situated between the large-scale forms of the mosques and the small scale of housing, sat the civic centre which Lock designed to be reminiscent in its forms of the centres of Harlow or Stevenage constructed in Britain during this period. While it includes social and visual clues that it is not a British 'New Town', through the inclusion of 'Tudor' arches, it comprises more subtle hints that it is a centre designed for a Gulf nation.⁵⁰ Included in the plans was an axonometric that depicted minimal openings on the elevations of buildings with open roof terraces above, highlighting slim walls traditionally made from reeds which allowed air to permeate the terrace while affording privacy. The civic centre is thus clearly mixed use, and not intended to be too large, especially that Lock, albeit unsuccessfully, was trying to incorporate the neighbourhood within the sphere of Margil and Basra's larger centres. The layout of the centre is similar to other concepts of Gulf architecture from the ensuing decades: there was a large



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49 Saba G. Shiber, *The Kuwait Urbanization* (Kuwait: Kuwait Government Printing Press, 1964), 392.

50 John Boughton, *Municipal Dreams: The Rise and Fall of Council Housing* (London: Verso, 2018), 77: Boughton further says that 'The New Towns embody much of the social idealism of this post-war era, particularly of its hopes for greater mixing between classes', which as will be explained, was not necessarily the case in Ubullah, and was more similar to the pit-villages of Durham which he further described as being 'not so much towns as barracks: not the refuge of a civilisation but the barracks of an industry'; this industry, being coal, draws obvious parallels to the growing importance of the ports in southern Iraq and oil economy that funded Basra's growth.

Fig. 6

Lock's photos of the low-rise landscape of sarifa developments that his plan sought to alleviate due to the belief that they were unsanitary (MLA 6.12)

roof without the terraces which covers retail space, with a flat roof and simple columns creating a loggia surrounding a planted square [Fig. 5]. Lock suggested that the buildings in the civic centre were to be 'utilitarian', but they follow the traditional forms of the 'suq pattern', fronting onto covered arcades with 'service courtyards' at the back of stalls with independent access for trade vehicles.⁵¹ Due to Lock's professional network of Tyrwhitt, Fry and Drew during this period, it is likely that this shaded loggia has precedents in Fry and Drew's Sector-22 Chandigarh with the Public Works Department there, but also in the fact that shading walkways is a historic, and sensible, precedent for urban design in hot countries.⁵² Lock asserted that it would be of a similar material palette to the residential areas allowing for 'colourwash' and brickwork, used throughout, thus creating a visual language and identity for the neighbourhood.⁵³

Socially, forty-two percent of the growing population resided in sarifas, which provided 'unsanitary living conditions' for a modernising society and with the aid of Lock's various plans it was aimed to redistribute this population to a net density of around '91 persons per acre' [Fig. 6].⁵⁴ This did not come to fruition quick enough, with acts of social unrest throughout the 1950s, Qubain commented that 'Iraq was on the brink of a revolutionary upheaval which would fundamentally change its political and social order [...] in short, the issue resolved itself into a race between reform and revolution', with housing issues a *raison d'être* for protests.⁵⁵ Essential reforms came second in this race, with the Iraq Revolution occurring ten weeks after the publication of Qubain's study.⁵⁶

For this redistributed population, house design complemented the urban centre Lock sought to create while focusing on spaces between houses was at the forefront of the neighbourhood plan. Of this, Lock stated that:

'the houses too, are not strung out along these residential roads in military fashion, but are grouped in small squares and courtyards inter-con-



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Fig. 7

The traditional urban space in Basra, with a landmark for guidance as the clock tower, a covered loggia to the left, awnings for shade to the right and a tightly enclosed street moving away from the riverway. Roof terraces with reed coverings for privacy are also clearly seen in the distance (MLA 6.20)

Fig. 8

Example of a realised Doxiadis scheme of housing, showing 'Gossip Square' in West Baghdad (c.1958), which utilised earthy materials such as stone and bricks, while introverting the spaces to look inwards (Pyla, P 'Back to the Future: Doxiadis's Plans for Baghdad')

51 Lock, *Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan*, 1-7.

52 Jackson, "Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew's early housing and neighbourhood planning in Sector-22, Chandigarh", 1-26.

53 Lock, *Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan*, 20.

54 Qubain, *The Reconstruction of Iraq, 197*, gives the stats for existing sarifa dwellers in 1957 in Basra; Lock, *Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan*, 8-10: shows the aim for redistribution of population with a gross density of '41 persons per acre' (houses, parks, schools etc.), a net density of '91 persons per acre' (net being the space devoted to houses, courtyards and internal roads).

55 Qubain, *The Reconstruction of Iraq*, 31.

56 Michael G. Ionides, "Review of: The Reconstruction of Iraq: 1950-1957. by Fahim I. Qubain", *International Affairs* 35, no. 4 (1959): 485-486. While this review by the former member of the Iraq Development Board says this, it is noted that Robert Strausz-Hupés' 'Foreword' in the first edition of the book contextualises the following chapters with information on the 'military coup'.



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nected by quite narrow streets (16' and sometimes 12'), so that a number of enclaves are formed, each different in design and character, and by their arrangement provide a social homogeneity that a long, straight monotonous street is not able to give.⁵⁷

Arguably, the focus on not constructing 'straight and monotonous streets' was a spatial, critical, response to much of the town planning in the years prior to the introduction of the Town and Country Planning Act (1947), partly brought in to curb monotonous sprawl and the perceived blighting of the English landscape.⁵⁸ Twinning this concern, which focuses on much larger scale infrastructure, with the creation of small squares and courtyards, demonstrated a vital contrast of scales and issues that Lock aimed to solve through spatial praxis.

There are further likenesses and contrasts to schemes in the Gulf from the time, with Lock's focus on the smaller scale contrasting the town planning visions of Minoprio, Spencely and Macfarlane in both Baghdad (1956), but

57 Lock, *Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan*, 3.

58 William G. Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape* (London: Hodder and Stoughton); F.M.L. Thompson, (1982) *The Rise of Suburbia* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1955).

Fig. 9

A development in Riyadh showing dwellings on a 'pedestrian' street in a traditional style, constructed from imported materials (DOXSAU-A2: 23305)



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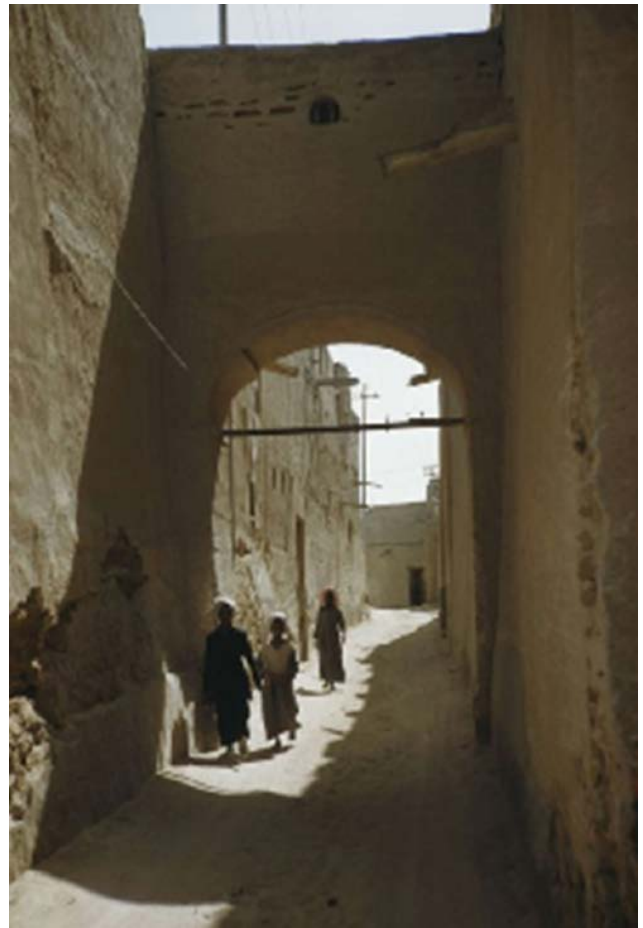
more importantly Kuwait City (1952). In these plans, there was little in the way of research and detail, moreover, they looked to raze city fabric and zone the areas with large-scale highways dividing up blocks.⁵⁹ Doxiadis Associates' work in Baghdad, specifically with the implemented master plan at Sadr City (1955-8), better contextualises Lock's Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan, through its breakdown of scale. It is an urban block within the wider city - like Ubullah is to Basra - and Doxiadis' key focus was the design of housing units within public squares (figs. 8 and 9). On completion, photographs show narrow enclosed streets, with vital nodes within the townscape for stopping and meeting, enabled through

59 Stanek, *Architecture in Global Socialism*, 177.

Fig. 10
Max Lock's photograph of a 'traditional' Basra street, with detailed overhanging Mashrabiya over the street (MLA 6.12)



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well-designed street furniture and objects that created shade.⁶⁰ Lock's plan for Ubullah was similar, in the plan he stated:

'Within these small squares trees would be planted and seats provided in the shade; there would also be drinking fountains. Some of the narrower streets can be arched in the local tradition, as exemplified in the nearby town of Zobair (*Az Zubayr*), the object being to get as much shade as possible during the six hot months, and to break the cold winds during the winter.'⁶¹

Lock's proposed urban layout of Ubullah fused elements of tradition and modernity: this idea was at the core of the *New Basrah Plan* (1956), the Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan, and Lock's theory of *civic diagnosis* itself.⁶² Lock's other reports look specifically at the Ottoman influence on Iraqi architecture, with images of mashrabiya and detailed woodwork on cantilevered bays hanging over the street [Figs. 10-11].⁶³ In Ubullah, he proposed that due to the narrow street widths it would be possible to have 'arched streets', which he said was

Fig. 11
Detail on one of the Ottoman style mashrabiya that Lock noted as being common in Basra (MLA 6.12)

Fig. 12
Arched street in Kuwait, a common feature that Lock would have noticed when he spent time in the city (Magnum Photos: George Rodger's Kuwait archive, 1952)

60 Paniota Pyla, "Back to the Future: Doxiadis's Plans for Baghdad", *Journal of Planning History* 7, no. 1 (2008): 3-19.

61 Lock, *Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan*, 3.

62 MLA 6.12, Lock, *New Basrah Plan*; Tosland, 'Planning southern Iraq', 1023-1044.

63 Tosland, "Planning southern Iraq", 1023-1044.



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'in the local tradition'.⁶⁴ In Az Zubayr, the arched streets worked in tandem with their characteristics, such as exhibiting 'bends, twists and narrowness', for full environmental impact.⁶⁵ The form of the archway is also apparent in Kuwait City, a place where Lock spent time conducting site visits to Ahmadi, a Kuwait Oil Company built town to the south of the city [Fig. 12].⁶⁶ Ubullah's urban form was generated from the shapes of houses and the requirements for cooler streets; instead of planting trees for shade, the natural form of the city was to enclose areas with these narrow streets. In addition to these environmental credentials, the archways contributed to the social function of the city in that they provided a shaded space in the summer months for people to meet as well as somewhere to shelter in the wind and rain of the winter.⁶⁷

Another notable use of these archways in a modern idiom was by Fry Drew and Partners.⁶⁸ In 1959, they designed parabolic arches for their streets in Gachsaran, Iran, carrying forth the trend of building urban archways in hot countries in planned neighbourhoods.⁶⁹ The arches, as Iain Jackson noted in his study on Fry and Drew, were used in Chandigarh to create a 'village setting' described as 'intimate', 'secluded' and 'personal'; the tradition of which was intended to shield those within the development from the outside.⁷⁰ While these forms were not entirely for aesthetic, those built by Fry and Drew suggest an engineered

64 Lock, *Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan*, 4.

65 Firas S. A. Al-Qatrani, (2015) "The old city of Al Zubair. The emergence and physical reality (1571-1882 Iraq)", *Bulletin of Geography* 27, no. 1 (2015): 28.

66 MLA 18.17, 'Box Headed: Please Return to Max Lock, Kuwait 1961': Lock produced plans for the Kuwait waterfront which were never realised, this box in the MLA depicts various photos of Kuwait; other notes from the archive indicate field work in Ahmadi looking at the flora that successfully grew in the city.

67 Al-Qatrani, "The old city of Al Zubair", 28-29.

68 Jackson, "Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew's early housing and neighbourhood planning in Sector-22, Chandigarh", 19.

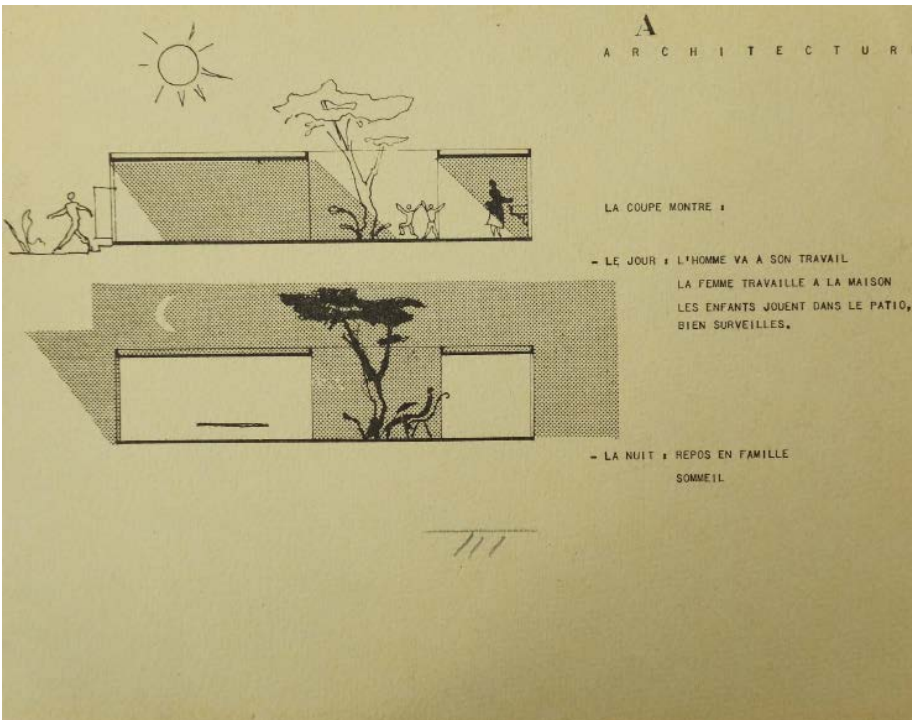
69 MLA 12.2, Letter: Max Lock to R. D. Gwyther of Coode and Partners, (27th May 1954): The three cities Lock toured and lectured in, at the request of Nehru, were Chandigarh, Faridabad and Nilokheri.

70 Jackson & Holland, *The Architecture of Edwin Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew*, 235.

Fig. 13
Tudor' arches in Al Zubayr
(c.1940s) (Alqatrani, 'The old
city of Al Zubair')



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element to them; incorporating visual variety in contrast to Lock's, who would have intended them to be as economical as possible.⁷¹ Materially, the historic arches in Az Zubayr are constructed from *al tub*, evidenced by the textures on the elevation and the breaking off of material on the elevations around it [Fig. 13].⁷² Conversely, Fry Drew and Partners' arches in Gachsaran were built from stone and are more representative of the surrounding mountainous landscape in which it is located [Fig. 14].⁷³ Both iterations are a response to the local environment through their traditional forms, but this is even more apparent in the materials they used.

71 Lock, *Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan*, 11.

72 *Al Tub* translates to a specific type of 'adobe' construction typical of traditional building typologies in the global south; adobe itself is from the Spanish and the material has further similarities to vernacular forms found in Britain and more northern countries in the building of cob and rammed earth structures.

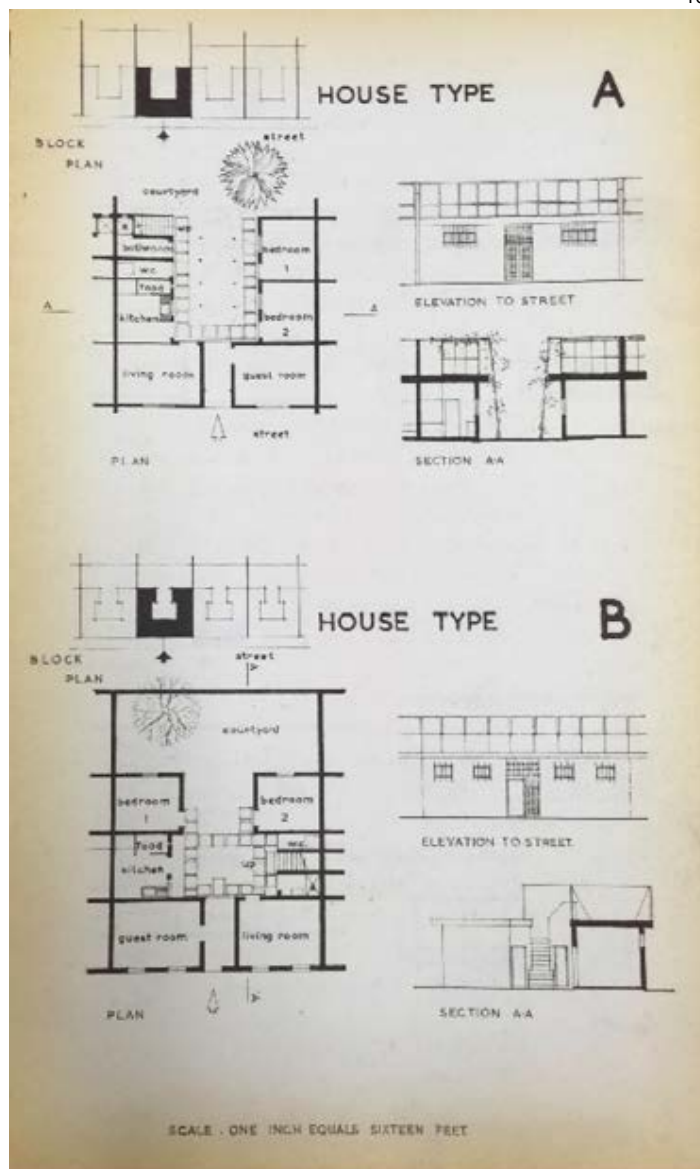
73 RIBA Library, FRY780-FRY825, 46 Photo transparencies, 'Gachsaran new town for the Iranian Oil Exploration and Production Company, Iran, designed in 1959 by Fry Drew & Partners'.

Fig. 14
Parabolic arch designed by Fry Drew and Partners for Gachsaran (1959) (RIBA Pix)

Fig. 15
Diagram for the intended usage of the worker dwellings Candilis-Josic-Woods designed in Abadan (1956). The annotation translated reads: 'The cut shows: The day: the man goes to his work; The woman works at home; Infants play in the patio, well watched; At night: the rest of the family sleep' (Shadrach Woods Archive: Box 05 Folder 03B)

As Ubullah's role within the development of Basra was to redistribute the population who relied on sarifa developments, housing solutions were imperative; in solving this, Lock designed six separate house types within the report.⁷⁴ This was not without issue, and by aiming to build specifically for the lower-classes of the oil companies in a 'redistributed' area it meant that the Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan was a zoned location away from the city centre.⁷⁵ These problems allude to underlying racism and classism, given that the plan was formed under the assumption that the neighbourhood would house lower status Iraqi workers, who required a town layout and houses that spatially represent Iraqi traditions.⁷⁶ Classism was deeply endemic in Europe and specifically Britain in this era. Well-known commentators, including George Orwell, published criticism regarding the British middle-classes' snobbery and hatred towards the working classes, as exemplified in his pithy adage '*the lower classes smell*'.⁷⁷ Despite this, Lock had written in a letter to friend and colleague, Ben Polk, that 'every job has to be considered on its merits and there are some planners who do their planning from a taxi and others who spend months probing about 'among sites and smells which neither Brahmin nor Britain has schooled themselves to endure', the latter half Lock was quoting Geddes.⁷⁸ While Lock's bottom-up methods were uncommon among the planning elite in which he mixed, the overarching aims to segregate the population from above was certainly classist, and as such Lock's work was complicit in fuelling archaic prejudices.

As recognised in Lock's objectives for the Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan, traditional forms and modern standards of sanitation influenced the scheme. The houses were to be 'sturdier and more permanent' than the



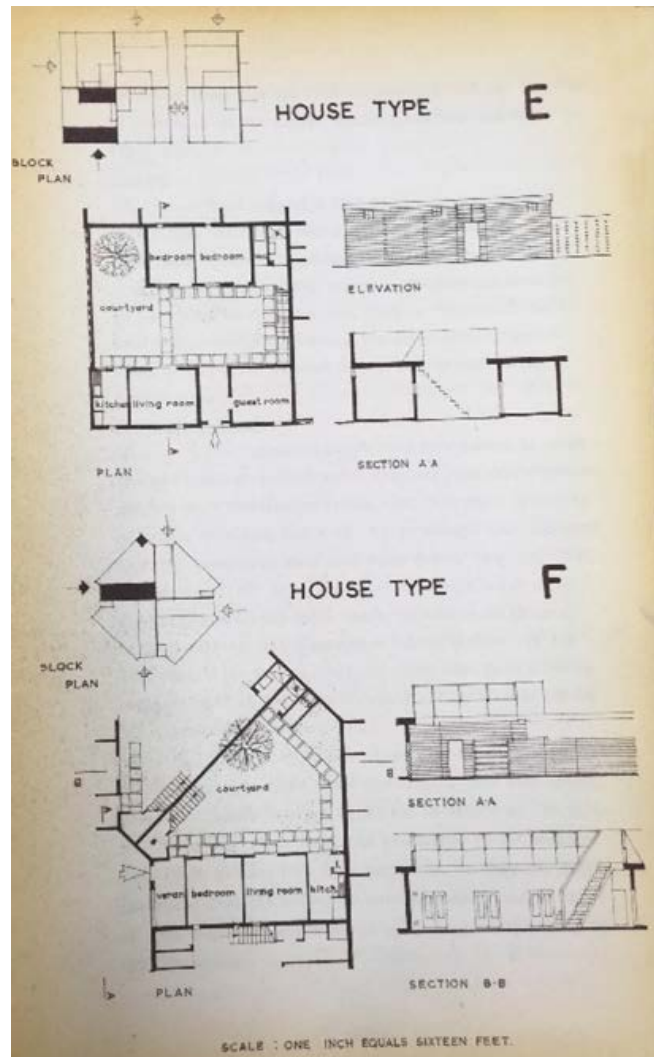
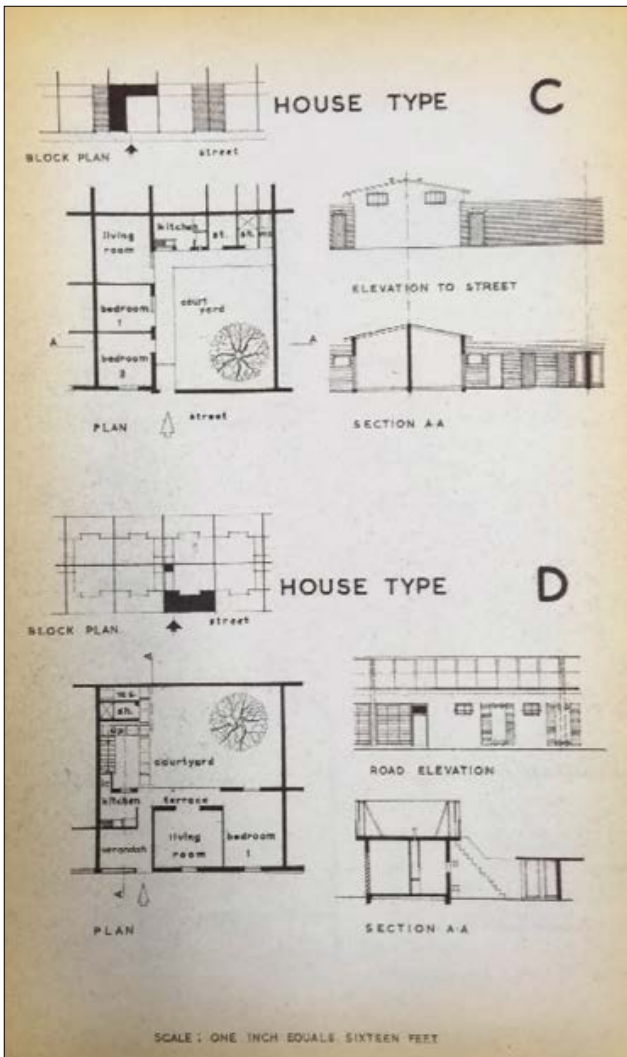
74 Lock, *Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan*, 20.

75 Lefèbvre described urban life as a lived opportunity for 'meetings, the confrontation of differences, reciprocal knowledge and acknowledgement (including ideological and political confrontation), ways of living patterns' which coexist in the city; Farah Al Nakib, argued that this quote argues against zoning and segregation of classes within the city, and thus 'eliminates unexpected confrontations'. (Farah Al Nakib, *Kuwait Transformed: A History of Oil and Urban Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), 14 and 199).

76 Neveen T. H. Abdelrehim, *Oil Nationalisation and Managerial Disclosure: The Case of Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, 1933-1951*, (Unpublished PhD Thesis: University of York, 2010), 84: Abdelrehim summarised this as being 'Housing for the British was outstandingly superior to that provided for the Iranians and this was always the case because Iranians were not promoted above a certain level and housing was based on employee position at work.'

77 George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier* (London: Penguin, 1937), 119.

78 MLA 12.2, Letter: Max Lock to Ben Polk, 18th January 1957.



working class sarifa dwellings, offering traditional modes of private out of doors living based on the established classist and racist Western company structures that prevailed in the region. Such ideas were not unique to Lock, other Western experts working in the Gulf during this period actively sought this mix of traditional but modern typology including Candilis-Josic-Woods' housing proposals in Abadan.⁷⁹ Candilis-Josic-Woods provided extensive diagrams to show how their schemes were socially influenced, with modern looking people for scale living a domestically modern – though apparently Western – lifestyle, acting, as Henri Lefebvre put it, as a reducer of reality to a 'graphic synthesis' of the 'modality of an accepted (i.e. imposed) 'lifestyle' in these particular types of worker housing [Fig. 15].

Continuing with Lefebvre, elements of the Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan, particularly with regards to housing, looked to produce the 'lowest possible threshold of tolerability' for its inhabitants.⁸⁰ Lock was concerned with budgets and it is clear the Plan was not well funded by the Basra Port Directorate and he specifically mentioned in the Plan's conclusion that 'these six house types have

Fig. 16-17-18

The six types of house Lock designed for Neighbourhood B in the Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan; all, apart from Type C have roof terraces for sleeping and feature courtyards to encourage the traditional out of doors living. The diwannia and harim are not segregated, as was the traditional custom, meaning the male would have to conduct business elsewhere perhaps in one of the new public spaces Lock's team accounted for. (MLA 6.20)

⁷⁹ Ben Tosland, *European Architects at the Confluence of Tradition and Modernity in the Persian Gulf, 1954-1982* (Unpublished PhD Thesis: University of Kent, 2020), 109-149.

⁸⁰ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1974), 338 and 316.



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been designed primarily with a view to combining practicability with economy' [Figs. 16-17-18].⁸¹ Apropos facades, Lock assessed the role of his house designs within the townscape, carefully considering the materials from which they would be built. In the report he suggested that 'all the houses are faced with the local brick, but a number of them will be colour-washed in carefully selected colours to give a variety, freshness and life to the individual street composition', the materiality thus reflecting that of the civic centre in the creation of a new visual language and identity. Climatically, these carefully chosen colours would be 'light' to 'help reflect the heat from the walls'. While a greater influence was placed upon the external appearance of these houses, little effort was evident in their interiors with 'internal finishes being kept to a minimum' and the consideration that 'it will not be possible to plaster the walls of the habitable rooms'.⁸² It is implausible that the interior walls could not have been plastered for financial reasons, especially given the large surplus in the Iraq Development Board's budget at this time and its close relationship to the Basra Port Directorate.⁸³

As Qubain alluded to, events like the Al Wathbah uprising in 1948, contributed to the growing anti-Imperial and anti-British sentiment within the wider Iraqi population, who were tired of Western influence over the economy and politics.⁸⁴ Elsewhere, there had been direct unrest from the Iranian populace regarding the treatment of oil workers by the Anglo Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) leading to the renaming of the company to the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) in 1948, in large part, as Neveen Talaat Hassan Abdelrehim and Rasmus Christian Elling's work has shown, this was to do with the quality of housing and the hierarchical, racial, structure of the company, though imperial attitudes remained.⁸⁵ In Basra, the sustained discontent in the early 1950s, came to a head in the oil and dock worker strike in 1953, where the British fired guns upon protesters maiming eight and murdering one.⁸⁶ Despite these contemptible events, the British-backed companies wrongly perceived their own actions as being benevolent

81 Lock, *Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan*, 23.

82 Lock, *Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan*, 3-20.

83 Qubain, *The Reconstruction of Iraq: 1950-1957*, 40-41.

84 Qubain, *The Reconstruction of Iraq: 1950-1957*, 37.

85 Abdelrehim, *Oil Nationalisation and Managerial Disclosure*, 84; Rasmus Christian Elling, "War of Clubs: Struggle for space in Abadan and the 1946 Oil Strike", in *Violence and the city in the Modern Middle East*, ed. Nelida Fuccaro (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), 189-211.

86 Samira Haj, *The Making of Iraq, 1900-1963: Capital, Power and Ideology* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1997), 106.

Fig. 19

An example of 'hovels' the AIOC showed to justify the creation of new dwellings for workers (BP ARC 68184 Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, (1952) AIOC Workers' Terms Bettered Iran's Labour Law. (London: AIOC).



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and in the NIOC's own condescending published material from 1952 the British had referred to the traditional vernacular of the region as 'hovels', while presenting their newly – albeit economically built – structures as being 'proper houses' [Figs. 19-20].⁸⁷ Despite this context, Lock's requirement to drive for economy shows the continual lack of concern from British actors in the provision for adequate housing in the region for workers. Worker housing across the region was, if indirectly, aligned to the notion of *habitat du plus grand nombre*. Formally presented at CIAM IX (1953), it built upon the 'vague concept' of habitat discussed at CIAM VII (1949) having direct links to other architects working in the Gulf at this time, including Georges Candilis, whose theoretical roots were founded in Michel Écochard's schemes in north Africa, France and Syria.⁸⁸ While this concept was predominantly related to European urban centres recovering in the post-war period, the application of its principles were sought in schemes built from nothing in Gulf oil towns.

Considering clients' apathy in spending money on adequate materials for worker housing, all Lock could do about climatic sensibilities was spatial and aesthetic. While the climate was at the centre of choosing the colour scheme on the exterior, roof insulation to 'mitigate summer heat' was not up to standard so for the buildings to stay cool Lock relied upon the 'arrangement of the dwellings themselves in close terrace formation [...] a considerable factor in keeping the rooms cool in summer and warm in winter.' He mentions elsewhere, explicitly, about the 'low standard of insulation' and suggests other spatial methods to protect the interiors from the outside heat in the summer months. These included: 'Overhanging roofs of 1' 6" inches will shade the wells from the sun and in a number of cases use should be made of projecting brick pattern work; this will help to shade the wells, at the same time creating a pleasant effect in the strong sunlight'. Economy further drove the design choices in House Type 'C', which instead of having a roof terrace for sleeping, featured a pitched roof over the living room and bedrooms to 'give variety to the layout as a whole' but 'serves also as an experiment to find out whether this type of construction

Fig. 20

The new workers' housing provided by the AIOC intended to better the conditions of workers BP ARC 68184 Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, (1952) AIOC Workers' Terms Bettered Iran's Labour Law. (London: AIOC).

87 BP ARC 68184, Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, *AIOC Workers' Terms Bettered Iran's Labour Law*, (London: AIOC, 1952).

88 Tom Avermaete & Joan Ockman, *Another modern: The postwar architecture and urbanism of Candilis-Josic-Woods* (Rotterdam: NAI, 2005), 139.

is in fact cheaper'.⁸⁹ Direct comparison to Fry and Drew's worker housing in Gachsaran is possible, where their buildings, largely founded upon their climatic research in Africa, featured mono-pitched, inaccessible roofs.⁹⁰ Their work, however, did have benefits allowing for more space in the courtyard-houses, higher ceilings, addition of filtered light to darker lit areas and greater air circulation with the addition of vents placed high in the ceiling, acting like the traditional *bādgīrha*, or wind catcher, the forms of which are featured in Bernard Rudofsky's *Architecture Without Architects* (1967) [Fig. 21].⁹¹

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Conclusion

If, like Lefebvre said, city life was dependent on 'the confrontation of differences', Lock's neighbourhood zoned away from the historic centre of Basra would not have succeeded if realised.⁹² Perhaps more importantly, within the Geddesian context from which Lock's planning theory emanated from, the Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan would almost certainly have been a hybrid of Geddes' thoughts on organicism and morphology. Geddes talked of the city as being a 'specialized organ of social transmission' – he added further that the city 'accumulates and embodies the cultural heritage of a region and combines it [...] with the cultural heritage of larger units, national, racial, religious, human [...] it is the instrument primarily of the regional memory, but serves also as the

89 Lock, *Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan*, 20-23.

90 Jane Drew, "Housing in Iran" in 'In the Middle East', *Architectural Digest* (March 1957) : 73-108.)

91 Bernard Rudofsky, *Architecture Without Architects: A short introduction to Non-Pedigreed Architecture* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1965).

92 Al-Nakib, *Kuwait Transformed: A History of Oil and Urban Life*, 14 and 199.

Fig. 21

An image from *Architecture without Architects* showing *bādgīrha* creating a distinctive skyline, but something from which Western architects often drew influence from in their works in the Gulf (Rudofsky, *Architecture without Architects*)

memory of larger groups'.⁹³ In this sense, where Lock combined traditional forms with modern thinking and the creation of a new part of city fabric, there was an attempt to pool the abstract ideas behind cultural heritage and imagined communities; though the fact remains, the Ubullah community would have been segregated and homogenous given its intended role within the redistribution of the population of sarifa dwellers in the economically developing centre of Basra.⁹⁴ In understanding the Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan as a fragment of the wider city, its condition - hemmed in by roads and purposefully designed to ensure people stayed in the neighbourhood as much as possible -- shows that it would not have been a successful, organic addition to Basra in the Geddesian sense, with a major flaw within its thinking being the compromise between existing traditions and the desired modernity.

In addition to its urban condition and the physical plan itself, viewing the Neighbourhood Plan within its wider, national political and economic context, there were bureaucratic issues with central funding and surpluses un-relinquished for the plan. This problem was widespread within other colonies of sorts at the time, particularly where companies – like the AIOC in southern Iran – owned large swathes of land and actively sought to repress local populations while planning and building for their own higher income workers. While Lock's work sought to alleviate what was viewed as social problems with the sarifa dwellings, the new, modern, alternative would not have been 'better', it just would have redistributed the population out of sight in the northern reaches of the city where people would require either the ownership of a car or the money for a bus fare to get to the centre of Basra. Additionally, this would require a functioning public transport system, something which is not covered within the twenty-four-page plan for the Ubullah Neighbourhood. Car ownership, however, was considered and eighteen garages with small amounts of parking in public squares and in the centre was given – though for a population supposedly of 15,000 people, this is miniscule and indicates further that Ubullah would have been an isolated neighbourhood within the larger city.⁹⁵ The British-led Iraq Development Board were far more concerned with national infrastructure projects at the time, including a programme of dam building, construction of power stations, improvement of roads and railways, mostly to further the efficiencies of business within Iraq and its position within the ailing British Empire to be too worried about the shortfalls of Lock's plan within the growth of Basra.

As shown, the Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan had obvious theoretical and practical flaws. There is no doubt Lock's intentions were sociologically compassionate

93 Volker M. Welter, *Biopolis: Patrick Geddes and the City of Life* (Boston: MIT Press, 2002), 92-93. For Welter, his understanding of Geddes' approach to the city's production was neither 'an accidental human product nor the result of conscious design to create it' – the Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan was clearly conscious and obviously not an accident.

94 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983); Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978): Said devotes a whole section of the chapter 'Scope of Orientalism' to the idea that communities are an imagined concept through literature and art that encourages a commonality between people who have never met.

95 Lock, *Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan*, 17.

but misplaced; the plan was entirely complicit in consolidating the existing discriminatory company structures that prevailed in southern Iraq at the time, influencing the physical morphology of the city and as such can only be considered as a failed piece of planning. Regarding Basra, there had been considerable interest in its historic narrow streets in the British architectural press and Lock's own photographs show an idealised version of the Ottoman influenced architecture in the city. Lock's apparent enthusiasm for retaining – or in Ubullah's case drawing from – existing nearby fabric was by no means sentimental if it meant social improvements. Linguistically, there was an air of superiority and belief of benevolence through the 'profane act of cleaning up the place' and 'restoring some historical splendour' in earlier plans of Iraqi cities, which Iain Jackson called a 'well-rehearsed description of colonial prejudice coupled with a fascination for the exotic and technological adaptations to the extreme conditions'.⁹⁶ At a glance, the traditional sleeping terraces of the houses, the arched streetways, vistas of minarets are all contextual additions to the proposed new townscape and contribute to abstract ideas and images of the national and regional forms of building. Where the Ubullah Neighbourhood Plan failed, was its dismal attempt to combine this within the modernising city, leaving Ubullah as a lower-class remote outcrop and its working class local populace housed out of sight away from the contemporary centre of Basra.

⁹⁶ Iain Jackson, "The architecture of the British Mandate in Iraq: nation-building and state creation", *The Journal of Architecture* 21, no. 3 (2016): 383.

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