

**PRESERVATION OF THREATENED ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE
ON THE ISLAND OF MOZAMBIQUE**

*For the Aga Khan Program in Islamic Architecture at
The Massachusetts Institute of Technology*



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BACKGROUND

The Island of Mozambique is a small coral island three kilometers long and one-half kilometer wide located off the northern coast of Mozambique. It has a population of approximately 42,000 people. It is a United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Site and once served as the Portuguese seat of power in colonial Mozambique.

The Island was used by Arab merchants as a maritime trading centre from the 10th to the late 15th century. This Arab trading gave origin to a line of commercial city-states along the East-African coastline from Mogadishu in the north to the Island in the south. The common culture of these cities, known today as Swahili, grew out of a mixture of African, Arab, and Indian cultural elements. As the southernmost port of importance on the East African coast, the Island became a resting point for Portuguese traders headed to the East and another cultural influence was added. The Island is thus a living testimony of the meeting of these cultures. Although similar interactions between these cultures and ethnic groups occurred in several other places around the Indian Ocean, in Mozambique this interface led to the integration and emergence of a distinct, new culture unique to the Island. The living facets of this culture are directly recognizable in the Island's architecture.

Over seventy percent of the Island is urbanized. Part of that urban area is called "Macuti Town," which is comprised of African settlements constructed out of natural materials such as thatch. The rest of the area is a stone-built town, aptly called "Stone Town," with the Island's greatest concentration of buildings. The architectural character of the Stone Town, created over 400 years, is remarkable for its homogeneity. Over the centuries builders have used the same materials and building methods resulting in a town character that has remained unchanged since the late 1800s. This homogeneity, coupled with the Arabian and Indian influences, makes the town an architectural ensemble of exceptional uniqueness and value.

In the latter part of the 1800s, the opening of the Suez Canal and decline in the slave trade dealt a blow to the Island's economic importance. Many residents vacated the Island, leaving it in financial and structural decline. Today, the economic base of the Island is still weak. Increasingly, policymakers see tourism as the only viable alternative to spur economic development on the Island and nearby towns on the mainland.



Figure 1: Ilha de Moçambique in regional context
 Source: www.go2africa.com/mozambique/map.asp

RESEARCH FOCUS

Two principal observations have motivated this project. First, most scholars and professionals concentrate on the Island's Portuguese influence with regard to the many historical landmarks and Stone Town's architecture. Despite efforts by the Ministry of Culture, UNESCO, and the tourist industry to promote the cultural uniqueness of the Island, little attention is afforded to the Islamic influence found in its architecture.¹

Moreover, Portuguese forts are found elsewhere, such as India's Diu Island, but only on Ilha de Moçambique can one find such a compact and intact model of Swahili culture within a former Portuguese colony. Still, limited acknowledgement of these influences can be found. For instance, within the World Heritage application for the Island, Portuguese monuments are cited for preservation but nowhere is there mention of other architectural influences except for, "Arabian and Indian details can also be detected."² At the same time, the case is made that, "The Island of Mozambique bears in its urban structure and fabric a clear and recognizable testimony as being the link – the intermediate and obligatory station – between four different worlds."³ What is missing is a thorough documentation and investigation of the Islamic elements within this unique, multifaceted urban fabric.

Second, Mozambique is turning around its economy after two decades of civil war. It is the fastest growing country in Southern Africa, attracts massive amounts of foreign investment, and has one of the fastest growing tourism industries in the world.⁴ The World Bank and International Monetary Fund are calling for increased foreign investment and private sector activity for continued economic growth. Within this paradigm, the Island's State Housing Agency – criticized for maintaining overly strict property investment rules – is being pressured to relax property rights on the Island to facilitate foreign private investment, particularly for tourism development. Critics claim that if property rights were relaxed, foreigners could buy title deeds and have greater autonomy. This would in turn drive renovation, hotels, and tourist firms. These ideas were recently

¹ Government of Mozambique and UNESCO. "Nomination of Ilha de Moçambique for Inclusion in the World Heritage List 1990-1991." (Paris: UNESCO World Heritage Committee, 1991); Mary Fitzpatrick "Lonely Planet Mozambique". (Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd., 2000); Mozambique Ministry of Tourism. 2005. "Tourism". Available: <<http://www.mozambique.mz/turismo/eindex.htm>>

² UNESCO, 1991.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Investment Promotion Center. "Mozambique Tourism Registers Largest Growth in the World". (Maputo, Mozambique: Centro de Promoção de Investimentos: Mozambique Business – Daily Investor Intelligence., 2006) Accessed February 8, 2006. Available:< <http://www.cpi.co.mz/news.php>>

underscored by an article in the influential *Economist* magazine that urged the new Mozambican president, Armando Guebuza, to use the Island as a property rights experiment for the rest of the country.⁵

The economic climate and strong voices calling for reform on the Island are cause for alarm. The Mozambican government sees tourism as part of its growth plan and one of its hugest assets would be the Island. Private investment and tourism could benefit the Island's inhabitants economically, but it could also be injurious to the Islamic architecture if left unmonitored or unregulated. The danger is that Islamic influences on the Island are minor and may be disproportionately harmed, and at the same time they are critical pieces to its unique story and cultural mix. Preservation of what makes the Island special is essential to sustainable, successful tourism. This study's goals were to identify 1) the types and frequency of Islamic influenced architecture on the Island; 2) the extent to which the Mozambican government is aware of these items' critical role in historic preservation and sustainable tourism development; and 3) if any policies and programs speak directly to the preservation and/or restoration of Islamic influenced architecture. The report concludes with some recommendations on how the Island can approach preserving Islamic influenced architecture and how it can be incorporated into an overall tourism development strategy.

THE ISLAND'S HISTORY

Ilha de Moçambique was mentioned in Arab writings as early as 900 A.D.⁶ The country of Mozambique derives its name from the Island's first Arab ruler, Sheik Mussa Ben Mbiki (that to the Portuguese sounded like '*Moçambique*'). Thus, from inception, the Island has had an indelible influence on the country. Arabs began settling here in the 10th century and trading with other posts in their route, namely the Islamic Sultanate of Gujarat and the region of Goa – both in India. Although the Island did not reach the commercial prominence of some of its northern neighbors such as Sofala and Zanzibar, its port was invaluable and became the gold trade's focal point between the Rhodesian interior and Indian Ocean sea routes.

⁵ "The Rights to Prosper – Moçambique Island." *The Economist*, Feb 5, 2005, Vol. 374, Issue 8412. (London: The Economist Group, 2005)

⁶ UNESCO, 1991.

In its early years the Island served mainly as a ship refuge. In fact, at that time the Island was devoid of drinking water and was somewhat inhospitable.⁷ When Vasco Da Gama arrived in 1498 Africans were still absent from the island. At first the Portuguese influence was minimal; they engaged in moderate trade and that only with the Arabs. During the 16th century the Island was divided along cultural lines with the Portuguese settling in the North while the Arabs settled in the South. As trade flourished on the Island and markets for goods expanded into central Mozambique and Zambezia, a rich and active bourgeoisie developed and the Portuguese began to dominate trade.⁸

The 17th century was both an era of recovery and riches. After the Dutch invaded and burned the Island practically to the ground (though they were unsuccessful in their attempts to conquer it), the settlement had to be painfully rebuilt. Portuguese power wavered and was highly dependent on the economic conditions in Goa, India, from where Portugal's Indian Ocean colonial posts were governed. The conditions worsened and threat of attack from other Colonial powers increased in the mid-1740s. The Island had to re-organize itself from scratch with a Captaincy-General who reported directly to Lisbon; trade was liberalized and the Island's major urban development began. This helped the Island give it the wealth and stability it needed and indeed much of the built environment was constructed during this period.

In the early 1800s the slave trade's abolition, catalyzed by Brazil's independence, dealt an enormous economic blow to Island residents; average incomes dropped to one-eighth of their normal level and emigration escalated.⁹ Gradually the Island opened itself up to the general African population, which would have significant socio-cultural and architectural implications. The southern half of the Island expanded, resulting in a dense community of African mainlanders with inadequate urban infrastructure. The economic & structural decline continued as trade routes shifted following the decision to move Mozambique's capital to Lorenço Marques, modern day Maputo, in the country's south.

⁷ Luis Phillippe Pereira "Ilha de Moçambique: Ponto de Encontro de Civilizações" (Maputo: Banco de Moçambique 1992)

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

MOZAMBIQUE'S CURRENT ECONOMIC POLICIES

Mozambique has an increasingly open economy. It is a “price taker” on world commodity markets and has largely liberalized its markets for goods and capital. This makes it highly vulnerable to price swings. Its economy is small, even with respect to the rest of Southern Africa. Its economy suffered from a 19-year civil war. Today, major blows to the economy come from annual flooding. These difficulties have made Mozambique one of the poorest countries in the world – gross domestic product (GDP) stands at less than US \$250 per capita. At the same time, Mozambique is one of the fastest growing countries in the world; GDP growth averages at 8 percent per year. However, most of this growth is driven by foreign direct investment (FDI), especially in the aluminum sector.¹⁰

Table 1: Foreign direct investment inflows to Mozambique, 1998-2003

FDI inflows to Mozambique (US\$ millions)						
<i>Year</i>	<i>1998</i>	<i>1999</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2003</i>
Mozambique	235	382	139	255	380	342

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit 2006

Mozambique's economy relies to a large degree on its wealthier neighbor, South Africa. Mozambique imports a great deal from South Africa, especially for construction needs. In turn, South Africa invests a great deal in Mozambique. Mozambique is a member of the Southern African Development Community whose main goal is to create a free trade area by 2008.¹¹

Mozambique has increased public spending but with mixed results. Objectives have been to increase spending on social services while increasing government revenues; the latter part has been lagging. Priority has been given to education, health, and infrastructure spending. Though cost-benefit analyses come under scrutiny because they cannot measure certain intangible benefits, most analysts conclude that the government does not get a decent return on its spending. They attribute this unevenness to institutional inability.¹²

¹⁰ Economist Intelligence Unit. Mozambique Country Report. (London: The Economist Group, 2005)

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Heltberg, Rasmus, Kenneth Simler and Finn Tarp. Public Spending and Poverty in Mozambique. *International Food Policy Research Institute Food Consumption and Nutrition Division*. Discussion Paper 167, 2003.

Development aid to Mozambique equals 30 percent of GDP, making it one of Africa's largest recipients of foreign aid. Most of the more than \$2 billion in net foreign aid in 2002 was bilateral – between a foreign nation and Mozambique. The largest single donor was the United States, followed closely by Germany.¹³ In terms of multilateral aid, international development associations were the largest donor followed closely by the EU. Donors have recently made it a point to channel funds directly through the state budget rather than through foreign aid projects. The country accumulated a great deal of debt from Russia and more recently the World Bank and IMF.¹⁴

MOZAMBIQUE'S NATIONAL TOURISM POLICY

Tourism is one of Mozambique's primary strategies for economic growth. Outlined in the *National Policy and Strategy of Tourism* are some priorities that, when coupled with the economic liberalization policies described above, raise concerns for Islamic architecture's preservation. They include: 1) "Promotion of investment initiatives that may lead to employment creation"; 2) "Increase revenue of external origins"; and 3) "Increase external investments."¹⁵ It also calls for the protection of regional architecture and monuments. However, given the discernable decline in the country's built heritage and the staggering level of the tourism sector's foreign investment (particularly South African), it is very possible that capital attraction will be given priority over preservation.

A United Nations Development Program (UNDP) document calls for eliminating ambiguity in laws governing foreign investment. With a view toward attracting the foreign investor, it calls for better investment processing, protection, and guarantees with a particular focus on reducing political and expropriation risk.¹⁶ This is concerning because capital seeks profits and not necessarily preservation, "There are clearly no grounds for expecting the private sector to involve itself in conservation except in special cases of public support."¹⁷ Additionally, international capital is not always culturally sensitive – what may be a country's historical hallmark could instead be seen as an opportunity for rapid investment turnaround. Consider the heightened concern in Zanzibar when

¹³ EIU, 2005

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Mozambique Ministry of Tourism, 2005.

¹⁶ Carducci, Guido. "Legislation" In *Ilha de Moçambique: A Program for Sustainable Human Development and Integral Conservation Global Report*. (UNESCO and UNDP, 1998)

¹⁷ Kuban, Dogan. "Conservation of the Historic Environment for Cultural Survival" In *Architecture and Community*. (Geneva: Aga Khan Award for Architecture, 1983)

private-sector led development was being considered: “It raises the related problem of control, how to ensure that in private-sector led development, the scramble for tourist dollars does not lead to quick and cheap repair, a rash of guest houses, and the loss of the essence that makes the stone town unique.”¹⁸ This dichotomy of increased macroeconomic openness and development driven tourism policy prompted a heightened concern for the Island’s particularly vulnerable Islamic architecture.

THE ISLAND’S BUILT HERITAGE

The Island is three kilometers long, on average 300 meters wide, and completely urbanized. The Portuguese stone built town encompasses more than half of the Island while the remainder consists of the thatch and stone “Macuti Town” and Saint Sebastian fortress.

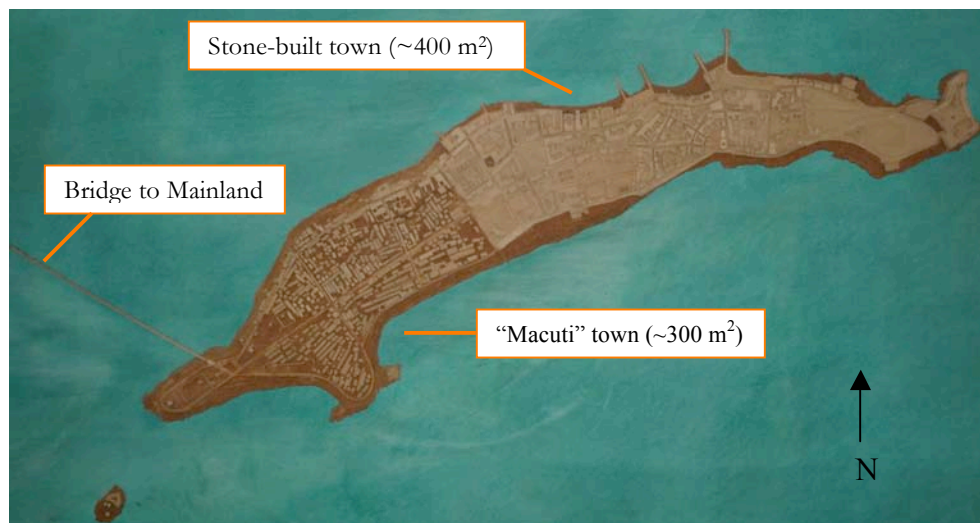


Figure 2: Ilha de Moçambique
Source: Architect Jose Forjaz

“Stone Town”, constructed primarily by the Portuguese, is a mix of residential, administrative, and commercial buildings. Plazas, courtyards, statues, and defunct fountains dot the Stone Town and small, tree-lined streets give it a colonial feel. The architectural character of the Stone Town, created over 400 years, is remarkable for being homogeneous and pristine.

¹⁸ Battle, Stephen. 1991. “Heritage: Zanzibar Revisited.” In *MIMAR 41: Architecture in Development*. London: Concept Media Ltd.

Homogeneity exists because over the years builders have used the same materials (limestone and wooden beams), building methods (surface treatment of render and lime), window and cornice detailing, and window placements in restrained wall surfaces.¹⁹ Additionally, water collection methods are characterized by rainwater catchments on flat roofs because the Island lacks a natural water source. The majority of historical monuments are located in Stone Town. However, many feel the Stone Town's real value lies in the many quaint, fused residences and former palaces.

When the Portuguese built the Stone Town they extracted limestone in the south of the Island creating a wide, shallow quarry. The start of this quarry serves as an abrupt break in the Island's urban fabric. When the Africans were permitted to move to the Island in 1868 they built their homes in the quarry giving the area, known as Macuti Town, a distinct cultural feel. Macuti Town's plan arrangement is remarkably similar to the one Stone Town used over 300 years ago. The façade and plan arrangements are identical across the entire island and most homes are limestone constructed. This spatial and architectural cohesiveness across the Island, despite the vastly different construction periods by two distinct populations, gives the Island noteworthy value.²⁰

PROPERTY RIGHTS IN MOZAMBIQUE

Since independence in 1976 *land* ownership in Mozambique has been the exclusive right of the State and it cannot be sold or disposed of in any form. Private persons only have the right to use the land acquired through occupation, in good faith – in other words productive use for living, commercial, or public service – for a period fixed by the government. The right to use land can only be transferred via familial heritage or from one living person to another with prior authorization.²¹ Unlike most asset transfer practices worldwide, property in the Island is passed from generation to generation by women.

As regards housing the law has changed since its inception in 1976. Originally, only the family living quarters was guaranteed as private property while the State became the sole owner of almost all buildings, including those belonging to foreigners outside Mozambique, Mozambican nationals living abroad, and unoccupied structures. Fifteen years later, in 1991, State institutions as well as individuals and societies were permitted to *construct* buildings for sale and rental, as well as for

¹⁹ UNESCO, 1991

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Carducci, 1998

other activities subject to prior authorization.²² In the Island's case, most buildings have already been constructed and therefore are still property of the State, however, they can now be sold to private individuals if so desired. In the case of foreign ownership, if a building remains uninhabited for 2 to 3 years, the State can expropriate the building. In the State's view, this avoids speculation and keeps the building maintained.²³

A public Housing Agency administers the rent and maintenance of all buildings. This institution allocates 70 percent of the received rent to the Ministry of Finance and keeps the other 30 percent for administrative and maintenance expenses.²⁴ These conditions often render existing human and capital resources insufficient for proper maintenance and restoration. The Island's government has made it a priority in the past to rent houses in ruin in the hopes that tenants will make repairs and perhaps even restore structures; the policy has had little success. Many point to the lack of legal instruments and urban plans as the reason for this practice's failure. These same critics appeal for privatization, specifically joint ventures between Mozambican nationals and foreign investors, as a solution. They point to the well maintained Macuti Town, where private individuals are allowed ownership, as an example of private ownership's leading to well-maintained structures. Stone Town's renters, however, fail to make repairs or restore structures because of their very low incomes.²⁵ Thus, whereas Macuti Town homes are owned by local islanders, the capital required to restore Stone Town will have to come from Mozambican businesspersons in Maputo or abroad – two investor classes that have less local knowledge and perhaps less affiliation with or obligation to the Island's Islamic architecture.

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND PRESERVATION STATE

The majority of Island residents lack formal employment and live precarious lives. Most men, both adults and youth not in school, are involved in fishing using simple dhow boats and nets. Women are often employed in small-scale farming on the mainland a few kilometers away by road.²⁶ Additionally, many adult household heads work far from the Island in restaurants or other service industries in tourist centers and send money back home to sustain their families.

²² Carducci, 1998

²³ Mamudo, Gulamo. Personal interview. May 30, 2005.

²⁴ Carducci, 1998

²⁵ Mamudo, 2005

²⁶ Hadfield, Maureen. Socio-economic Overview. In *Ilha de Moçambique: A Program for Sustainable Human Development and Integral Conservation Global Report*. (UNESCO and UNDP, 1998).

The Island's water is provided by two primary sources: large cisterns and a pipe system connecting the mainland water supply to the Island. The Stone Town has many private connections while the Macuti Town relies on privately managed stand-posts and a few working cisterns. Sewerage is in disrepair and 70-90 percent of Macuti Town residents defecate on the beach – a potential roadblock to successful tourism development.²⁷ A coherent drainage system in Macuti Town is also non-existent. Street drainage in Stone Town is adequate but could be upgraded while roof drainage is in disrepair and contributes greatly to structural decay. The roads function rather well. They are limited but well positioned.²⁸ Electricity is available island-wide with greater access in the Stone Town, though service can still be intermittent.

The present state of preservation is disconcerting. One-third of buildings are in ruin while another third are in an advanced state of decay. Lack of economic opportunity since the early 1800s caused people to emigrate and abandon their homes. During the recent civil war swaths of mainland refugees converged on the Island and began squatting in buildings, which further wore down already decayed structures. The greatest problem affecting structural integrity today is the condition of roofs. If roofs are not kept waterproof water penetrates the limestone walls causing gaps that allows the ubiquitous wild fig to penetrate and crack walls. This is a common occurrence throughout Stone Town.²⁹ Water penetration also rots the wooden beams that support the roofs. As the beams weaken and water collects on the roofs, the structure collapses.

The walls are extremely durable and have withstood age and neglect more successfully than the roofs. Still, the roofs' pressure eventually comes to bear on the masonry walls, which begin to crumble. The doors and windows that still exist – many were stolen or removed – are in fair condition.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

In his work, *A Policy for Architectural Conservation*, Sherban Cantacuzino describes a five-part policy for successful architectural reuse and preservation in which the first step calls for an inventory of the building stock: “Without this fundamental information no meaningful action is possible.”³⁰ Several studies have thoroughly documented the Portuguese architectural influence on the Island.

²⁷ Mutal, Sylvio. 1998. Water, Sanitation, and Environment. In *Ilha de Moçambique: A Program for Sustainable Human Development and Integral Conservation Global Report*. UNESCO and UNDP.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Cantacuzino, Sherban. “A Policy for Architectural Conservation.” *Architectural and Urban Conservation in the Islamic World*. Abu H. Imamuddin and Karen R. Longeteig, eds. (Geneva: The Aga Khan Trust for Culture: 1990)

However, this report specifically documents the extent of the Islamic influenced architecture on the Island. A thorough search of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Harvard University libraries and hundreds of architecture journals in the Avery Index of Architecture Periodicals and *Index Islamicus* found nothing about Islamic, Arabian, or Indian influenced architecture on the Island. A thorough search of the World Wide Web, ArchNet, and visual archives in MIT's Architecture Department also came up empty. Still, tourism sources, including the official Island website and popular *Lonely Planet* guide tout how Arabian influenced architecture adds to the Island's cultural and historical quality.³¹

I conducted background research on Islamic architecture preservation with particular reference to East Africa at MIT. On arrival in Maputo I met with Francisco Pereira, who is the head of "The Association of Mozambique Island's Friends," an interest group that disseminates information about the Island and works for its protection. I continued background research in Maputo for one week with architect Jose Forjaz, an expert on the Island who has an extensive collection of written works about the Island in both English and Portuguese. On arrival at the Island, I conducted a photo-documentation inventory of the Stone Town's landmarks. I investigated the area block by block. The area of investigation is approximately 1300 square meters. Using a map, tape recorder, and camera I kept three simultaneous records of (1) the number of occurrences of Islamic influence in the architecture, (2) the quantity of each that exists, and (3) the general condition of each based on a three-point index I devised. I also marked the map with the exact location of each item. In addition to this inventory, I conducted interviews with Gulamo Mamudo, the Island's mayor, as well as private investors.

DESCRIPTION OF FINDINGS

After searching the Island for one week, 34 items exhibiting Islamic influence in architecture were found, many of which are exclusively Islamic, such as mosques. The items that were found were placed into the following three categories: i) Doors, gates, or windows (51 percent); ii) religious structures (34 percent); and iii) houses or buildings (14 percent). The quality of the architecture varies greatly with 43 percent receiving a subjective rating of "Good condition" (=1), 26 percent receiving a subjective rating of "Stable, may need attention in the near future" (=2), and another 31

³¹ Mary Fitzpatrick, *Lonely Planet Mozambique*. (Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd. 2000) ; Mozambique Ministry of Tourism, 2005

percent receiving a subjective rating of “Critical condition, needs immediate attention” (=3). Photos of items can be found in Appendix A.

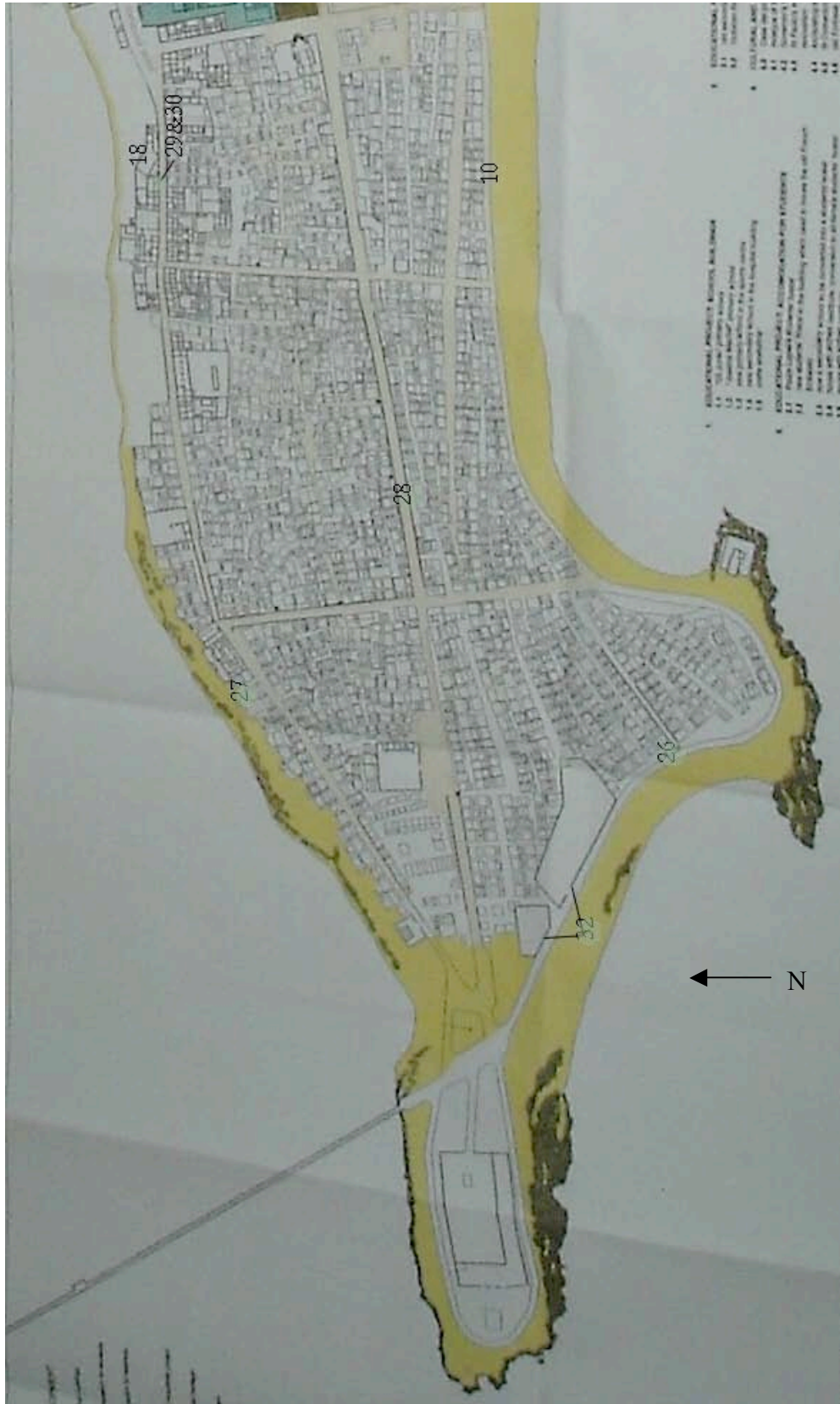
Table 2: List of Islamic influenced architecture on Ilha de Moçambique

Item	Type	Rating	Photo Number / Cumulative count
Well carved door (Casa Branca)	Door / Gate	1	1
Well carved door (new)	Door / Gate	1	2
Pulpit carved in India	Religious	1	3
First mosque on the Island and in the Republic of Mozambique	Religious	2	4
Damodar House (Gujarati details)	House / Building	3	5
Damodar gates (Vasco da Gama gates) one main gate and four supporting doors for a total of 5 gates / doors	Door / Gate	3	6
Juma Nanji (Former Aga Khan residence)	House / Building	3	7
Old Ismaili Mosque (currently a primary school)	House / Building	2	8
Sign "Unidos Pela Ilha" ("United for the Island")	Religious	1	9
Mosque Bilal	Religious	1	10
Well carved door (new)	Door / Gate	1	11
Rounded wooden gates/doors	Door / Gate	2	12
Madressa	Religious	2	13
Grand Mosque	Religious	1	14
Arab influenced doors and windows with white plaster detail	Door / Gate & Windows	3	15
Well carved door (greenish hue with tree branch blocking entrance)	Door / Gate	3	16
Well carved large brown door	Door / Gate	2	17
Well carved brown door in house owned by foreign private investor	Door / Gate	1	18
Well carved older door with concrete ramp	Door / Gate	3	19
Well carved door	Door / Gate	1	20
Well carved door in poor condition	Door / Gate	3	21
Well carved door in poor condition	Door / Gate	3	22
Well carved door with iron gate	Door / Gate	3	23
Well carved door in with mini-door inset	Door / Gate	2	24
Casa Nizar (Earliest Indian-Muslim merchant store)	House / Building	1	25
Nur Mosque	Religious	1	26
Quadria Mosque	Religious	2	27
Anonymous mosque	Religious	3	28
Abu Bakre A Sidik Madressa	Religious	1	29
Abu Bakre A Sidik Mosque	Religious	1	30
Damodar gate (new, refurbished)	Door / Gate	1	31
Muslim cemetery	Religious	3	32
Wooden door with brass ring door handles	Door / Gate	2	33
Wooden door with red marking	House / Building	2	34

Figure 3: Islamic architecture in Stone Town



Figure 4: Islamic architecture in Macuti Town



WHAT THE FINDINGS MEAN FOR THE ISLAND'S DEVELOPMENT

One assumption of this research is that the extent of Islamic influenced architecture is unknown and that, regardless of its extent, Portuguese influenced architecture is given primacy with respect to preservation. At the same time, Islamic influence on the Island is publicized widely by tourism publications and sites. The study's objective was to help determine the extent of Islamic influenced architecture on the Island and promote its preservation through surveying and documentation in the face of increased private investment. We now have a better idea of the typologies, quantities, and condition of Islamic influenced architecture on the Island. The majority of Islamic architecture emerges in details – doors, windows, and arches – within the greater fabric of the Portuguese-built Stone Town. To a certain degree the literature is correct to say that the Islamic influenced architecture is “Arabian and Indian details,” however, the level of Islamic religious and cultural architecture is significant, especially in the Macuti Town, and has not been given due consideration. Much of it is in structural decay. The wall of the Islamic cemetery is one example of a structure that is at risk and should be preserved. Muslim visitors, both within Mozambique and from abroad, may be particularly pleased to discover the strong influence Islam had on the Island and the nation of Mozambique.

Also, the Islamic influenced items that do exist – precisely because they exist in details – are at a great deal of risk. Doors and gates can be used for firewood or stolen. Private investors may overlook Islamic influences during renovations or upgrading. The municipal government must ensure that these items are protected because they are more vulnerable than the overall limestone structures. At the same time, they contribute significantly to the Island's multicultural feel. Interviews with tourists uncovered a significant affection for the many doors and gates that provided tangible evidence of an Arabian and Indian presence on the Island. It fit the historical image they had of the place and many would have been disappointed if Portuguese architecture was all they had discovered upon arrival.

TOURISM AND PRESERVATION OF THE ISLAMIC INFLUENCED ARCHITECTURE

Private sector investment has taken several forms, from renovating Island homes for private use to converting former commercial and administrative structures into tourist lodges. Some promising practices have taken shape such as Arabian replica doors and gates on private homes to Arabian and Indian décor in tourist facilities. Tourists' affection for this architecture has also led to some less promising practices such as commercialization of the original doors and gates. Many

doors have been stolen out of the country, mostly by road into South Africa. Residents themselves are also beginning to recognize these pieces' commercial value. For example, an owner of one famous gate offered to sell it to me while I documented its condition. Islamic influenced architecture can be a valuable asset to the Island's overall tourism development if it is protected and adapted into new structures in a culturally appropriate way.

This report has taken the first step – documentation. The Island, or a non-governmental entity interested in preservation, must now take the additional steps:

- Lobby international institutions that continue to support the Island's preservation for increased support for Islamic influenced architecture
- Target tourist publications that appeal to “niche” markets, such as tourism groups interested in African history, instead of mass tourism
- Rehabilitate at-risk structures
- Ensure that further theft and loss does not occur
- Require that no Islamic influenced architectural details be destroyed during the development process
- Encourage, through education or financial incentives, private investors to re-use or introduce Islamic influenced architecture into their new developments
- Create an “Islamic Ilha” tourist guide and map that leads tourists through the Islamic cultural and built heritage on the Island
- Train local youth to serve as tourist guides as the number of visitors increase
- Increase awareness of the built heritage and religious monuments in the Macuti Town

In addition to the above recommendations aimed at the preservation of Islamic architecture, there are some prerequisites that the Island must take to support a sustainable level of tourism. First, mass tourism cannot be supported. The Island has limited infrastructure and space for large hotels and mass tourism facilities. Second, both water and sanitation infrastructure must be improved if the Island wants to attract a significant number of tourists for sustainable economic development. The Island has no natural water source and cisterns on the Island can hardly meet current demand. Piped water from the mainland serves Stone Town fairly well but Macuti Town still has large service gaps and must rely only on a few standpipes. The sanitation situation is bleak with Macuti Town residents using the beach for their personal needs. This has resulted in the lack of a proper beach for locals or tourists. Third, reaching the Island is difficult. Currently the large majority of international flights into Mozambique are through Maputo. Two improvements can be made. International flights from major African countries, such as South Africa and Kenya, to

Nampula can be increased. This would reduce flying time and cut costs significantly. Improving road and rail conditions from Malawi and Zimbabwe could help budget and student travelers reach Nampula more affordably and faster.

CONCLUSION

In the past decade Mozambique has greatly liberalized its markets and attracted massive amounts of foreign investment into its economy. Its tourism policy forthrightly calls for increased revenues of “foreign origin” and external investments for tourism development. The Island has little option except to develop its economy through tourism. At the same time, despite tourism sources lauding the Island for its multi-cultural built environment, Portuguese architecture, especially large monuments such as the Saint Sebastian Fortress, receives the majority of attention from preservationists. This study aimed at discovering the typologies and extent of Islamic influenced architecture on the Island as a first step towards its preservation in the face of increased foreign capital for tourism development. It found that the Islamic architecture in the Stone Town consists largely of “details,” such as doors and gates, but it still warrants preservation. It also found significant religious built heritage in Macuti Town, some in an advanced state of decay, which should be preserved both for the indigenous population’s use and possible tourism development. Islamic influenced architecture contributes significantly to the Island’s life and can also enhance tourism. First, however, policymakers and the international preservation community must give Islamic influenced architecture its deserved attention.

APPENDIX A: Photos of Islamic influenced items in Ilha de Moçambique

1



2



3



4



5



6a



6b



6c



7



8



9



10a



10b



11



12a



12b



13



14a



14b



15



16



17



18a



18b



19



20



21



22



25a

23



25b

24



26a



26b



27



28 & 29



31a



31b



31c



32



33



34



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