

Vernacular Houses at Harar



Background

- Harari peoples national regional state is one of the nine regions in the country, which is located in the eastern part of the country with an approximate area of 343.2 sq.km.
- Harar city, the capital of the Harari peoples national regional state is located towards the western extreme of the region.
- It is found at about 526 km from Addis Ababa and 55 km from Dire Dawa.
- The climatic condition of Harar is remarkably mild.
- The geological map shows that it belongs to Weynadega (sub-tropical) climatic zone.
- The mean annual temperature ranges between 13 to 27 degree Celsius and relative humidity is of quite low according to the data obtained.

Background

- The highest was registered in March 20.6 while the lowest was registered in December 18.5.
- Harar is one of the historic tourist attraction sites of Ethiopia in general and eastern part of the country in particular.
- It is endowed with unique place called jugal, which is located at the center of the city harar.
- Recently it has celebrated its 1000 anniversary this year.

Background

- Harar considered as living museum for its vibrancy in social, cultural, religious and economic activities as well as for its unique physical, cultural and, social-economic character.
- Peoples of different culture and religious are living together in the town.
- Harari people predominantly inhabit it.
- For such values the UNESCO declared the area as the world heritage site.

What tourists find attractive about Harar

- The walled city
- The market
- colorful dresses
- Surrounding scenery
- Hyena feeding
- Historical buildings
- Museums
- Chat
- History and relaxed atmosphere of the city
- The old traditional houses

Harar-Jugol, the Fortified Historical Town (Ethiopia)

- The old ancient walled town, jugal, is built upon a kidney shaped piece of land. Its total area is not more than 48 hectares and the
- Length of its surrounding wall is 3.5Kms with an average height of 4 meters.
- The wall previously had five gates each for different purpose.
- There are approximately 6000harari cultural houses and 80 shrines.
- The houses and shrines are all of similar construction techniques.

Major historical buildings, besides the principal mosque and two main shrines are those major architectural features built in last century by Indian and Arab crafts man.

Harar-Jugol, the Fortified Historical Town (Ethiopia)

- It also includes the assembly and dining hall of Ras mokonnen and his treasury the sellase, Mohamed yousuf house, Mohammed Ali house, Faki yonis house, Menen house etc...

hMore than five museums in the city, which includes military museum, a museum housed in the house of the 19th century, French poet Arthur ram baud, the Harar national museum, the first private museum of the country and sherif museum.

- Traditional Harari houses comprise a major part of the architectural heritage of the city of Harar.

- These were symbols of Harari identity and their owners took, and still take, great pride in them, assuring their maintenance through history. In the zone that falls within the ramparts, that is to say 48 hectares, figure approximately 5115 houses.

Harar-Jugol, the Fortified Historical Town (Ethiopia)



Map showing the location of the town
Plan indiquant la localisation de la ville

Harar-Jugol, the Fortified Historical Town (Ethiopia)



Harar: Appraisal of properties for inclusion on the World Heritage List
A.S.P.A.C. 002, 72 rue de Tolouse, 75003 Paris, tel (33) 01 46 07 72 83 - 31 01 6204

1-3 AERIAL VIEW OF HARAR

scale : 1/10 000



Aerial view of the town

Located on a hilltop at 1885m,

Capital city of the administrative region of Harari in Ethiopia.

The nominated core zone consists of the entire fortified historic town.

**Area of the nominated area:
48 ha**



General view of the town



Asmadin Bari



Ramparts

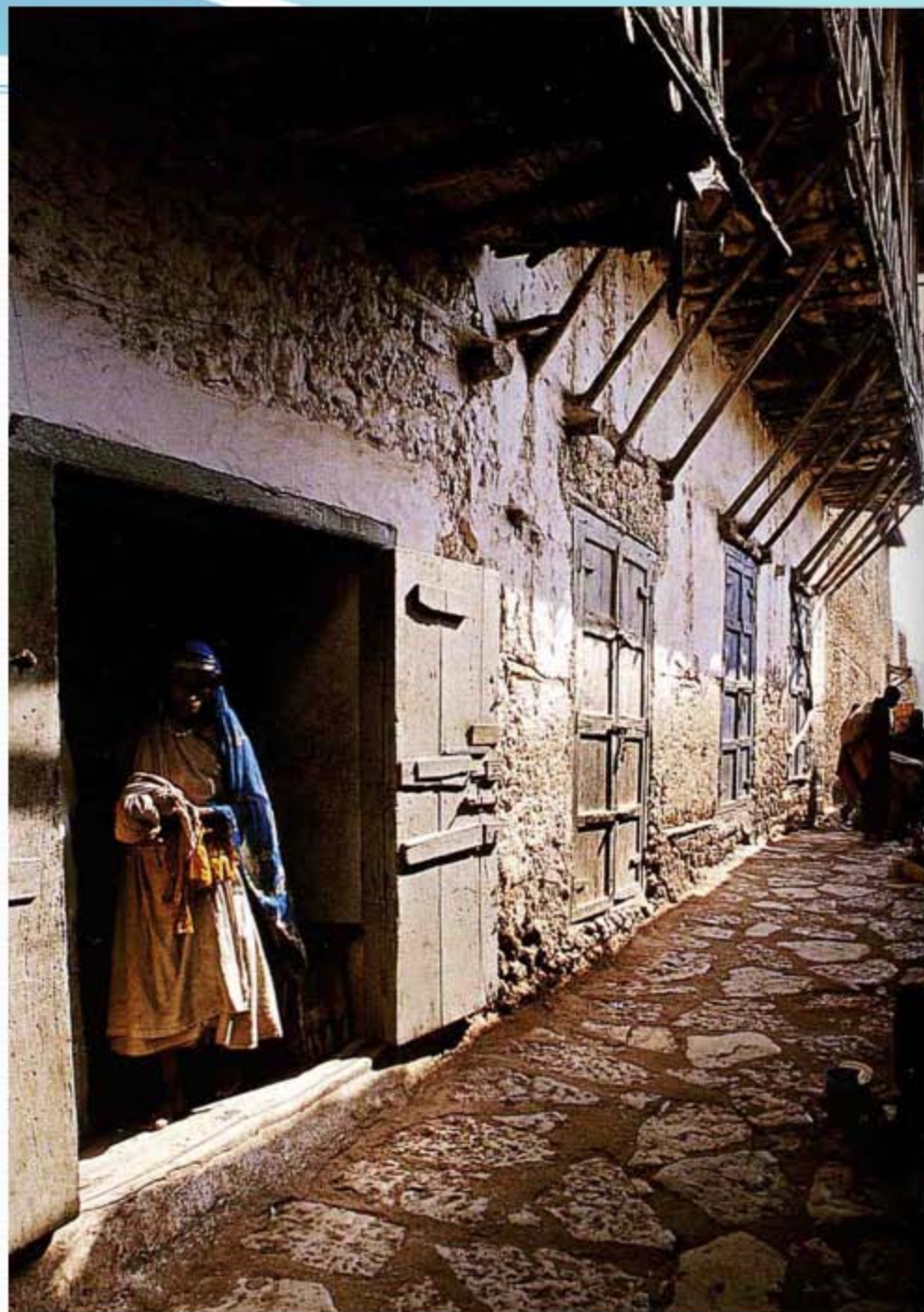
Streets



Emir Street

Streets

Makina Girigir



Market areas



The main market

Market areas



Andanya menget

Religious buildings

Aw Ansar Mosque



Religious buildings



Neighborhood Mosque

Religious buildings



Tomb of Abdelkader El Djilani

Religious buildings



Medhane Church

Houses in harar

• Typologies of houses in harar

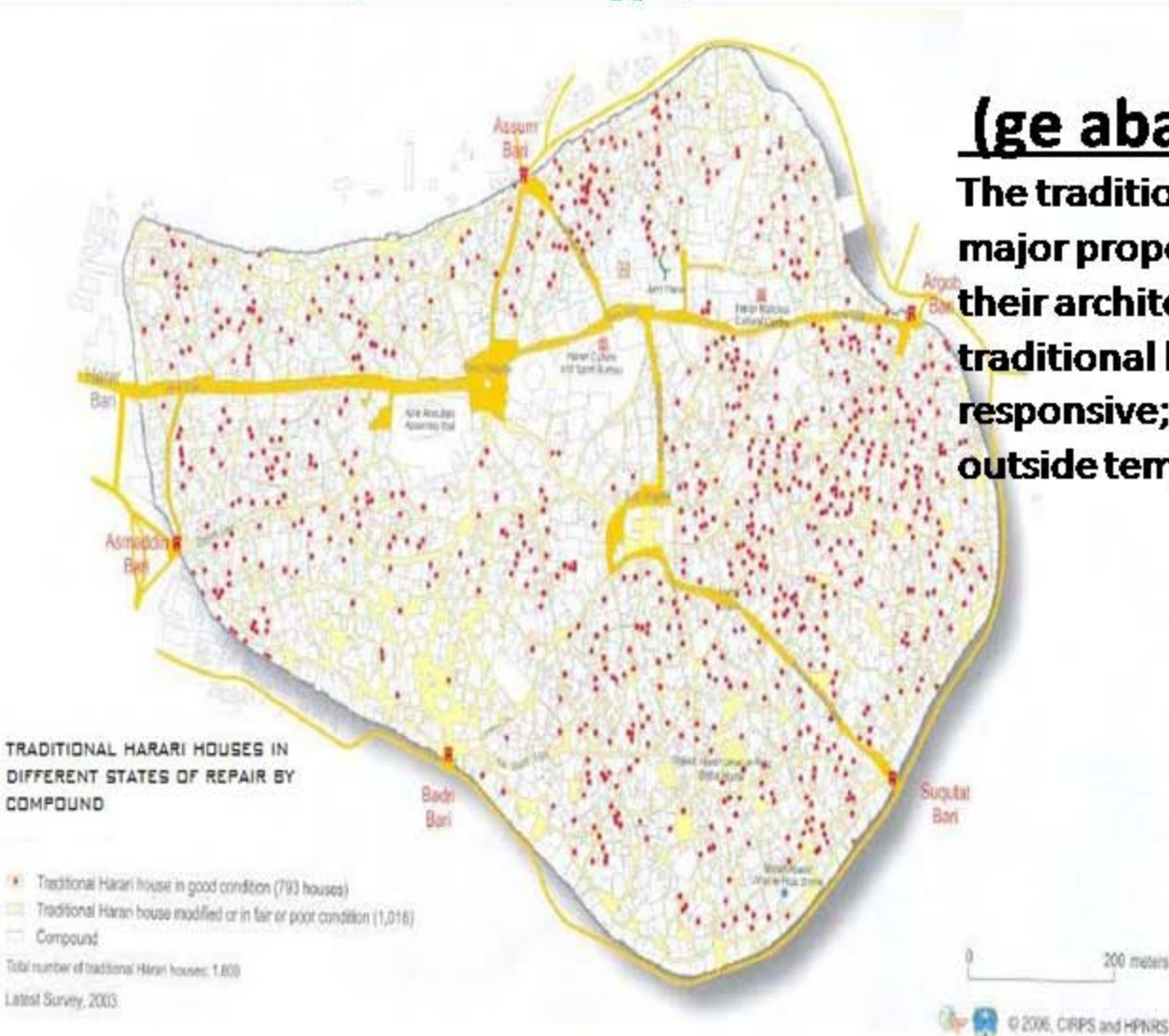
The residential fabric is first of all made up of two principal architectural types

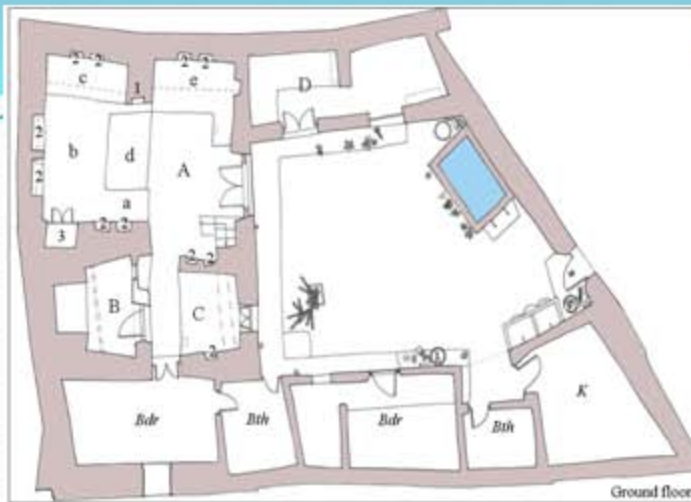
- **The Harari type** – the most prevalent
- **The Indian type** – more sporadic and rare located preferably in the heights of the city
- **The mixed type** – has as basic nucleus the Harari type with an extension that is either vertical or horizontal , but of Indian influence

1. The Harari type

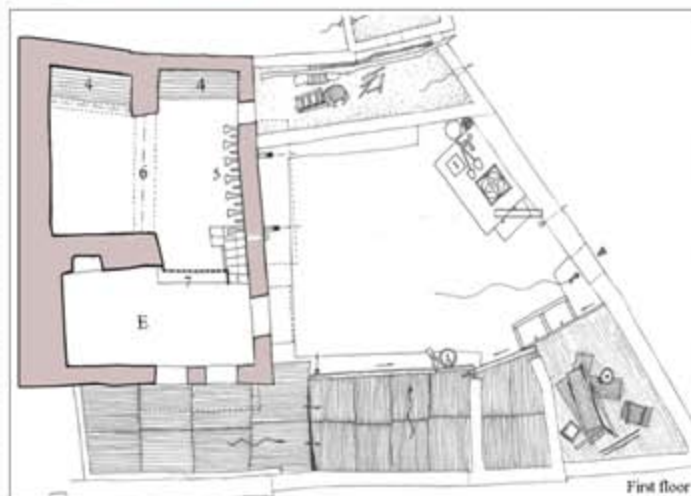
(ge abad)

The traditional Harari house is one of the major property of the Hararies which show their architecture and social structure. These traditional houses are also environmentally responsive; which provide moderate inside and outside temperature at different times





Ground floor



First floor

▲ Nord

TRADITIONAL ROOMS AND ELEMENTS

A Gidir Gar	b Soutri nadaba	3 Nadaba dera
B Dera	c Amir nadaba	4 Marabaraba
C Kirtat	d Ti nadaba	5 Wontafinchi
D Ti Gar	e Gebti her nadaba	6 Hamil
E Quti qala	1 Makhazu	7 Manderu
a Gidir nadaba	2 Niches	

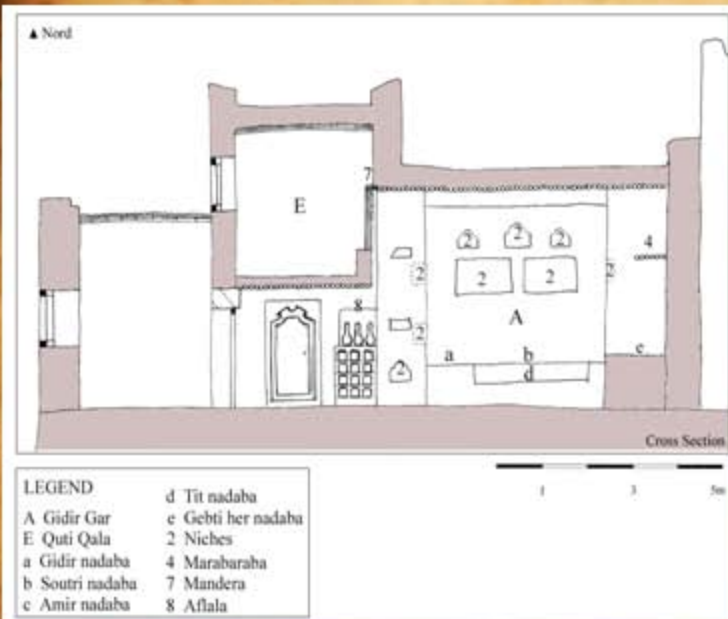
ADDITIONAL ROOMS

Bth Bathroom
Bdr Bedroom
K Kitchen



The *ge abad* is made up of a principal rectangular unit, *ge gar*, comprising three rooms on the ground floor, the *gidir gar*, the *kirtat* and the *dera*, as well as a room called *quti qala* upstairs

- A simple door, often ajar during the day, separates the street from the courtyard.
- the courtyard is the heart of life in the home,
- The parcel or concession, *ge abad*, groups several structures oriented around the courtyard.
- It is organized around two volumes. The first, accessible by the front door constitutes the principal space, *gidir gar*, subdivided in two, the entrance – hall part, and the seating part, *nadebas*.



The front door of the ge gar is the only element enhanced by the decoration of its frame and its opening panels.

1.1.1 The ge gar (or gidir gar)

The *gidir gar* is the main reception room of the house. Entry is through a door of high and wide dimension. The entrance door to the *gidir gar* is the only outdoor element that is subject to decoration—in fact the door is of significant importance and reflects the social standing of the inhabitant and his family. Old doors (before the conquest of Menelik II) were composed of double doors made of wooden boards from a single slab. The more recent doors (made from the end of the 19th century) are carved and sculpted with floral motifs according to a generalized tradition known on the Swahili coast, in Iran and India, classified as “Indo-Iranian” and imported by Indian traders from the end of the 19th century. The room is lighted by this door and





Item of a traditional door



Traditional door

THE NADABA



doesn't have any other opening, with the exception of a small window that lights the room upstairs.

Function

- Receiving visitors or guests (weddings, funerals, holiday celebrations, neighborhood gettogethers, *afocha* reunions, practicing the *bercha*—reunion of friends during which guests partake of *qat*, tea, coffee and smoke)
- Eating meals
- Nighttime space (for the men)
- Workspace for the women (embroidery, basket-weaving)
- Entertainment

More than half the interior space of the room is taken up by raised platforms outfitted as seating and called *nadaba*. The seats, just as the floor of the room are painted a red color that recalls, in a symbolical way, the memory of the many ge usu killed in the Battle of Chalenko (that allowed Menelik II to take over the city). This type of coating is called *qeh afar*, which means literally "red earth."



THE KIRTAT

The *kirtat* is in fact sort of an alcove partially open onto the main room, which is used for storage

This is the nuptial chamber used at the beginning of married life, and for the first-born child. It is also the room in which the mother gives birth.

52 It has a platform of masonry, *kirtat nadab*, on which the women sleep. It is an intimate space in which a sick person might come to rest and also the where girls are excised. (Today this practice tends to be disappearing).

It is a nighttime space for women, young children, and young girls.

It happens that nowadays this room might be occupied and furnished by a family member, in which case a curtain closes off the room.

1. THE DERA

The *dera* is a room closed by a door that faces the *kirtat*. As in the previous case, its ceiling is half the height of that of the *gidir gar* since it is beneath the room upstairs. It is used to store everyday objects, especially women's affairs. It is used also as a nuptial chamber for the young married couple until the conception or

birth of the first child. A cupboard inserted in the wall communicates with the *gidir gar* when the doors are open—this is the *nadaba dera* in which clothes and fabric are kept.

It is a windowless room opposite the preceding one. In some families, it has been transformed into a bedroom. Most often however, it is used as a junk room or place for storage.

1. THE QUTI QALA

Room upstairs, that originally was intended to be a storage room for agricultural products (fruit, coffee). Nowadays, that function has disappeared and this room has discovered new uses, such as for storage and catch-all. Most often, it has been transformed into a bedroom, used either a couple or by the eldest child in the family. In the first case, the furniture consists of a double bed, a wardrobe, a bedside table and a dressing table. When an adolescent occupies it its furnishings reveal its exclusive appropriation and it's here that Friends get together.

1. Wall decoration

Traditionally only the wall opposite the entryway is covered with decorative dishes, wicker ware and wooden salad bowls. Nowadays, all the walls of most living rooms are decorated with traditional wicker (*darat*) often hung in pairs, with wooden bowls varnished with black oil paint, the *gabata*. These dishes are hung on the walls in a perfectly symmetrical fashion and aligned around the wall niches.



decoration

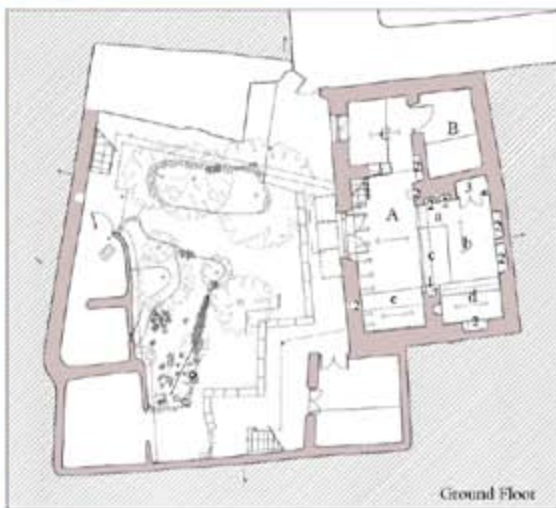
1.the Indian type



They are simple rectangular two stories buildings whose main characteristic is their first floor wooden veranda of the main façade overlooking the street or the courtyard. They are covered with a roof and are higher than the average Harari houses and dominate the city landscape. The most beautiful.

1.The Rimbaud House

The Rimbaud house is the most remarkable example of this type of architecture in Ethiopia. It had been built about 1890 by Indian trader, Jivagee Nazarela. It has been serving different functions since now. It is today a cultural center with a library and a permanent exhibition of Arthur Rimbaud. Besides the fact that the Indian and the mixed houses are different from the Harari traditional one, even opposed to it (the Indian house is widely opened to the landscape as



LEGEND

TRADITIONAL ROOMS AND ELEMENTS

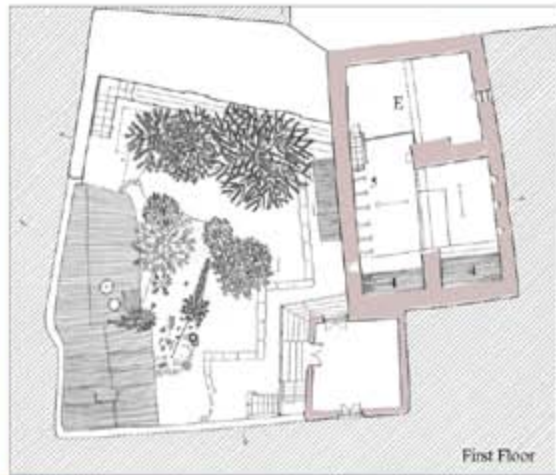
- A Gidir Gar
- B Dera
- C Kirat
- D Ti Gar
- E Quti qala
- a Gidir nadaba
- b Soutri nadaba
- c Amir nadaba
- d Ti nadaba
- e Gebbi her nadaba
- 1 Makham
- 2 Niches
- 3 Nadaba dera
- 4 Maraburaba
- 5 Wontafinchi
- 6 Hamil
- 7 Mandem

ADDITIONAL ROOMS

- Bib Bathroom
- Bab Bedroom
- K Kitchen

Ground Floor

▲ Nord



First Floor

opposed to the Harari one which is a very introverted enclosed space), we have to consider these two housing types as part of the architectural heritage of the city.

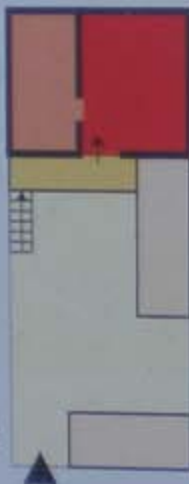
1. THE MIXED TYPE

A parcel is described of mixed type if it includes one ge gar to which has been added a construction of Indian influence, either directly above, or next to it. Seldom in case of a parcel do these two types of extension coexist.

When the new rooms have been added above the traditional type they are accessible by a wooden gallery open to the court yard or to the street. This type is relatively common and many traditional Harari houses, *Ge Gar*, have been enlarged and extended without being transformed. Therefore the original house is kept whereas the new parts are inspired by the Indian model. It

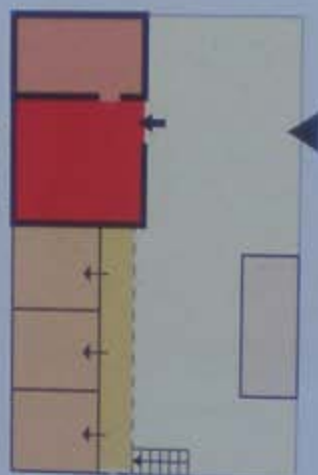
Type MIXTE

Par surélévation /
by building up:
Extension verticale
(étage)



Ex : maison
Fatima Youssef

Par contiguïté /
by contiguity:
Extension
horizontale



Ex : maison
Asha Saabit

seems that in the enlargement process the traditional house is not modified since the solution is to build a house, or new rooms, without touching the existing. Then the house becomes a "double house" in which one can find the *Harari* traditional type associated with the new Indian building.



The mixed house



The mixed house

1. The materials and construction techniques

All the mosques in Harar are built of stone (granite and limestone), a material which is plentiful in the region, and which is assembled with a mud mortar, called *gogoba*. The doors and the structure of the prayer room are in juniper wood, the *wanza inchi*, known for its resistance to termites.

The four walls of an average height of four metres are made of limestone, the lightness and porosity of which ensure protection against earthquakes and dampness. Every metre, a plank of horizontal wood is set in to consolidate the masonry. The walls are white washed. Inside, two pillars of a diameter of 80 cm on average support an intermediary beam, the *hamil*, roughly 5 meters long, parallel to the wall of the *qibla*. Rafters are supported by this beam and the two parallel walls (north and south). In order to fix them to the beam a mixture of small stones and mud is applied between each rafter. This stage in the construction of the structure is called the *mersa*. Then, perpendicular to the rafters, wooden logs known as *kebel* are laid; finally, a layer of dried grass is applied to improve water tightness. This traditional structure which is found in all the traditional buildings in the town is known as the *darbi*. The last stage is to cover the terrace with a mud mortar, the *gogoba*.

The terrace roof slopes slightly to enable the rain water to run off. A parapet 50 centimeters high protects the wall from infiltrations and the roof from erosion. The maintenance which takes place twice a year consists in removing the weeds and applying a new layer of mud mortar.

•General design approach

The design approach is to build houses which is related to the traditional housing typologies by its use of materials(also as UNESCO requirements) while keeping the houses inside jugal unique.the proposed typologies have modern functional layout but are to be built out of traditional materials in which the society is already accustomed to.

Our interest not to repeat the traditional housing typologies which are present inside jugal is aroused to make the historic place (jugal) a unique source of surprise. And also not to decrease the value of the architectural heritage which were symbols of Harari identity.

But even if we didn't repeat the typologies we proposed modern houses using the "gidir gar"and nadabas as a core organization element.