

Site : **Ghazir**  
 Country : **Lebanon**



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## SYNTHESIS

In the XVIIIth and XIXth centuries, the town of Kesrouan played a significant role in the political history of Lebanon, and was used as headquarters by feudal lords. With the creation of the Lebanese Republic, the town lost its primary role. It has now become a secondary summer holiday resort. At the beginning of the 1975-1990 war, Christians moved towards Kesrouan: this great increase in population affected the site and its traditional urban fabric. The Municipality was totally unable to cope with a change of that extent.

Ghazir is a standard XVIIIth century town on Mount Lebanon, a headquarter for power long before the Tanzimats. One can find elementary rural houses, houses with iwan, as well as houses with central lobbies, common amongst the XIXth century aristocracy and local middle-class.



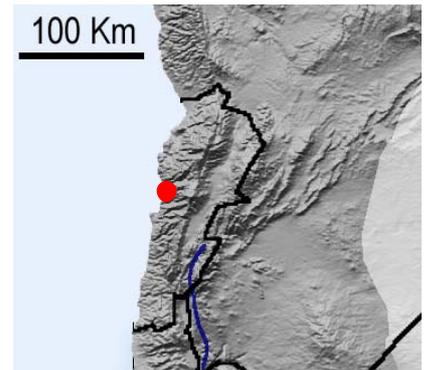
## ARCHITECTURAL TYPOLOGIES PRESENT

Elementary house, iwan, three arches.

## COUNTRY'S ACCEPTED SIGNIFICANT SITES

Baalbeck	Beirut	Choueir	Deir El Qamar	Derdghaya
Douma	<b>Ghazir</b>	Menjez	Ouadi Qadisha	
Saida	Tripoli	Tyr	Younine	

Country map



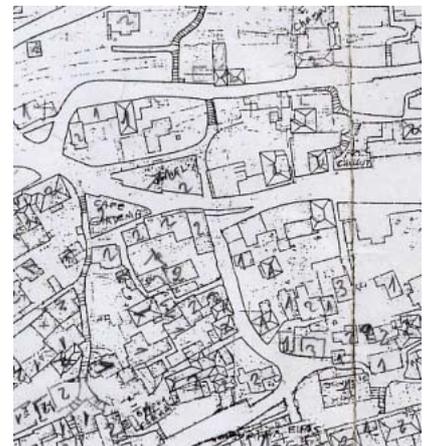
Regional scale



Local scale



Detail of the urban fabric



## HISTORY AND GENERAL INFORMATION

In the XIIIth century, the Mamelukes invaded Kesrouan and destroyed villages and towns, amongst which Ghazir. At the time, Ghazir was only a small village. In the XIVth century, the army of Soleiman Bin Arab the Turc settled in Ghazir to keep watch on the sea route between Tabarja and Nahr el Kalb. In 1516, Sélim, the ottoman sultan after vanquishing the Mamelukes, appointed Prince Assaf Turcoman governor of Kesrouan. The prince made Ghazir his capital and centre for his authority. Ghazir was then enriched with numerous constructions: a seraglio was built on the site of Saint-Francis convent, a mosque, gardens and baths. Hydraulic installations were also brought. After the death of Prince Assaf, in 1580, the Saifa family took over the town and drove out the Hobeich family, allied to the Assaf.

In 1711, the Chéhab, governors of the Mount Lebanon, came to power and settled in Ghazir. In 1804, prince Hassan Chéhab began the construction of a palace, a qaysaria and a souk for regional trade. Till the end of the XIXth century, Ghazir was a political and economic centre. Several typical XIXth century houses with three arches were built. In 1905, a new seraglio was built by Mouzaffar Bacha, the Ottoman moutassarif of Mount Lebanon. The town declined in the wake of the XXth century, when the whole territory was reorganized.

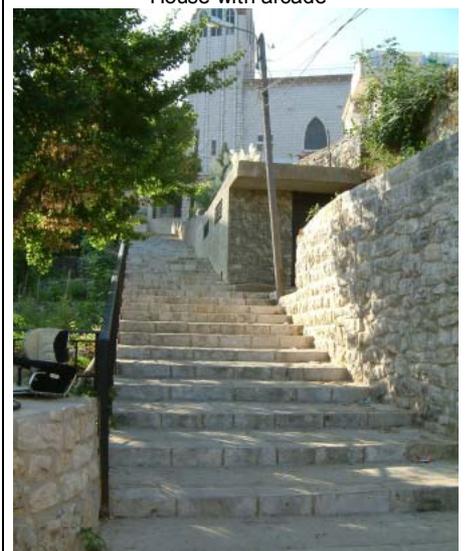
— <b>Surface area of the site</b>	535 Ha
— <b>Geographical co-ordinates</b>	
— <b>Height above sea level</b>	0 to 450 m
— <b>Lithology</b>	Regular limestone beds, marly limestone
— <b>Population</b>	27 000 inhab, 9.000 of whom are from Ghazir
— <b>Population density</b>	70 inhab/Ha
— <b>Average annual maximum temperatures</b>	22,3°C
— <b>Average annual minimum temperatures</b>	13,9°C
— <b>Average of maximum temperatures during the hottest month for ten years</b>	41,8°C
— <b>Average of maximum temperatures during the coldest month for ten years</b>	-2°C
— <b>Average rainfall</b>	1.071 mm
— <b>Average number of days of rain per year</b>	81 days
— <b>Specific characteristics</b>	Ghazir towers above the Jounieh bay, one of the most beautiful sites in Lebanon. The town has a bridge from Roman times, 19 old water mills, an Ottoman seraglio, a qaysariya and many hiking paths. Some monuments are listed and protected.
— <b>Traditional economic activities</b>	Silk production (now disappeared) and wine, tapestry, ironwork, straw chair manufacturing and oil presses.
— <b>New economic activities</b>	Summer resort, small businesses.
— <b>Site's communications with its territory</b>	Located in the mohafazat of Mount Lebanon, caza of Kesrouan, 27km north of Beirut.



General view



House with arcade



Pedestrian street

## CURRENT STATE OF VITALITY AND PRESERVATION

Being a summer resort, Ghazir is liveliest during summer. The consequences of real-estate speculation are a constant threat to the traditional harmony of the town. No heritage preservation policies or measures have been taken by local authorities of yet. Only a few buildings were classified by the Directorate-General of Antiquities. A few works of restoration were undertaken on a purely private level, without any respect for traditional know-how.

## TRANSFORMATION PROCESS

After the creation of the Lebanese Republic, Ghazir ceased being a local authority and lost its primary role in the hierarchy of mountain towns. During the 1975-1990 war, many modern buildings were built in Ghazir, destroying the traditional stylish heritage it had maintained till the 1960s.

The roads which now go through the old town were built in place of many traditional houses and part of the old souk. The continuity of traditional staircases between low and high districts was broken.

Furthermore, there is no rain water drainage, which regularly deteriorates the roadway system. In the short term, no global management policy seems to be considered.

## INTERVENTIONS AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMMES

Specific municipal preservation measures are in process to rehabilitate: the Prince Assagi mosque, the seraglio, the souk. These measures also include new street pavement and parks, but municipal means are insufficient for this deteriorating site.

## **Contacts**

Mr Roland Haddad, architect, restorer



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

## LEXICON

**Tanzimat:** Ottoman administrative reform program

**Qaysariya:** large square building organized around a court for the production and trade of silk.

**Moutasarraf:** Ottoman province governor.