



The windtower



Location of the National Museum



The lush garden

Government of Ras al-Khaimah



Department of
Antiquities
and Museums

www.rakmuseum.gov.ae



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Ras al-Khaimah Heritage

National Museum



National Museum of Ras al-Khaimah



The old tower with its large foundation

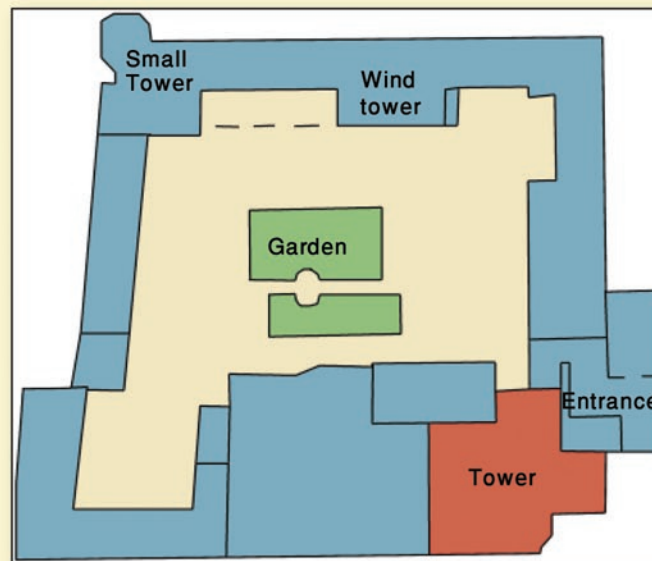
The National Museum is located in the historical Fort ("Husn") in old Ras al-Khaimah, close to the sea. Founded in the 18th century, it has been rebuilt and added to extensively over the last 200 years to meet the needs of the day. Originally erected as a defence structure, it has also served as the residence of the ruling Quwasim family since the 20th century, before being converted into a museum in 1987.

Today, many rooms exhibiting historical, ethnographic and archaeological material relating to this emirate, are open to the public. The artefacts and collections were donated by the ruling Quwasim family and residents of Ras al-Khaimah. Archaeological excavations, surveys and various scientific research projects have provided further material and information about the history and traditions of the area.

All traditional houses of Ras al-Khaimah old town, including the Fort, were originally constructed from coral stone, a fossil building material originating from the sea. Although fairly light-weight, it has excellent insulation qualities, keeping buildings cool in summer and warm in winter. The massive rectangular tower is the oldest part of the fort. Its foundations and lower parts originate from around 1800, while the rest of the tower was rebuilt after the British attacks of 1819. In those days it only served as a defensive structure and, unlike today, stood outside the perimeter of the old town of Ras al-Khaimah. All further additions took place after the peace treaty was signed in 1820, when the single defence tower was enlarged into a fort.

The picture we get today is that of a charming conglomerate of two-story buildings surrounding an inner courtyard with a lush garden. The big rectangular tower is still the most impressive feature, while a much smaller tower occupies the opposite corner of the fort.

Another prominent building is the wind tower, the traditional "airconditioner" of the past. Its open sides



Plan of the museum



A traditional door in the National Museum

are designed to catch the breeze from any direction and funnel it down into the room below to keep it cool and ventilated, especially during hot summer months. The wind tower could be blocked with matting, or specially cut pieces of wood, during the winter, when the weather was much cooler with occasional rainfall.

Situated all around the courtyard garden are traditional wooden doors with beautiful carved designs, which now lead to the various museum display rooms. These contain a rich variety of archaeological finds, historical information and aspects of the cultural heritage of this emirate.