



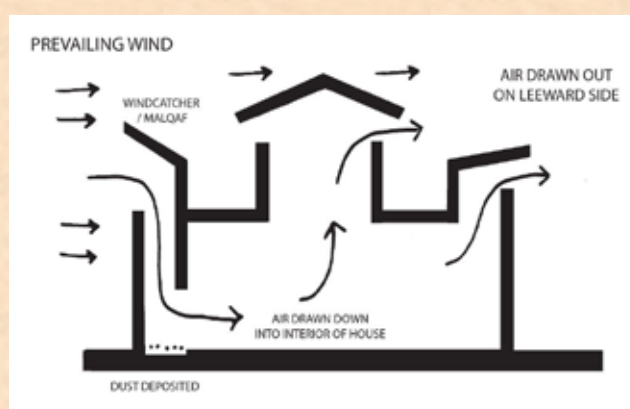
Elements of Culture

The Wind Tower Ancient Architecture

A wind tower or *Barjeel* is the traditional architecture found throughout the Arabian Gulf, in particular Dubai & Bahrain, and also throughout Persia, parts of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Its origins go as far back as Ancient Egypt, with examples of wind tower construction dating back to 3100BC. In arid climates the wind tower acts as a ventilation system allowing hot air to rise out the top of it, and cooler directed winds to flow down into the home. Wind tower houses along the Dubai Creek were constructed of palm fronds known as *Bait Areesh* and were mostly used pre-1900's, as well as the Coral or Sea Stone called *Bait Morjan* which date back to the late 1800's.



Al Areesh with Barjeel, Dubai Museum



Wind Tower Technology



*Windtowers made of Sea Stone,
Coral Sand and Mud*

Dubai's Barjeels

These buildings were considered to be the best type of home, and in the early 1900's only a few landmarks, such as the Sheikh Saeed Al Maktoum House in Al Shindaga were built of sea stone and coral using wind tower technology. In the past these types of buildings signified wealth and status. The later homes were built with a central courtyard or majlis, and the wind towers would be situated on one or more exterior rooms. This type of construction became more common as merchants and traders settled along the Dubai Creek and their living conditions gradually improved.

Architectural Preservation

In the 1980's a restoration project began to preserve these original homes along the Dubai Creek. The area known as Al Fahidi Historic District, (Al Bastakiya) is the center of the restoration effort and the neighborhood, open to the public contains more than 55 homes. The Sheikh Mohammed Centre for Cultural Understanding has called this neighborhood home since 2004, and occupies one of the original wind tower houses. Visitors can take a tour of the neighborhood with the centre year round.

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