

Museum of Decorative Arts, Isfahan, Iran

This report includes the Storage Condition Report (Phase 2) for the Museum of Decorative Arts, Isfahan, Iran. This was one of the field projects carried out as part of the ICCROM-UNESCO partnership while the RE-ORG material was under development.

Main author and coordination

Mojdeh Momenzadeh

Material tested

RE-ORG Phase 2: 'Storage Condition Report'.

Abstract

This report contains a sample Storage Condition Report produced by the team of the Museum of Decorative Arts, Isfahan, Iran.

Disclaimer

At the time this report was produced the Storage Condition Report (now Phase 2) was called "Phase 1."

Note: The text of this report is presented as it was submitted by the author. It has not been edited or modified in any way. Be aware that the terminology used is not necessarily consistent with that found in the current version of RE-ORG.



**THE UNESCO-ICCROM
STORAGE RE-ORGANIZATION PILOT PROJECT**

Condition Report

**Re-organizing storage at
MUSEUM OF DECORATIVE ARTS
ISFAHAN, IRAN**

Prepared by:

Mojdeh Momenzadeh

Conservator, Research Centre for Conservation of Cultural Relics (RCCCR),

Tehran, Iran

m-m@rcccr.org

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More information on <http://tinyurl.com/Isfahan-museum>

Address: Ostandari Ave., Opposite to Isfahan Art University, Isfahan, Iran

Telephone number: + 98 311 221 86 06

Working hours for visit

(CURRENTLY CLOSED TO PUBLIC)

Saturday to Wednesday

8.00am to 1.00pm

Thursday

8.00am – 12.00 noon

Facilities to groups:

- FREE for Retired seniors, students, university students with introduction letter
- HALF PRICE for Schools, cultural – artistic centers, with introduction letters
- Renting out of the galleries for exhibitions (according to the rules of the museum), printing of posters, catalogues, welcome ceremonies, etc

Introduction

The starting point of this project was a specialized course on preventive conservation for collections in storages organized by ICCROM which took place in January 2008, in Rome. This course was as part of the ICCROM-UNESCO partnership framework for the preventive conservation of the endangered museum collection in developing countries. The 3 main goals of this course were a) to refine a common methodology for storage reorganization and the related training approach, b) To review and select relevant tools, including the self-assessment checklist produced in 2007 and c) To define the plan of actions for 2008-2009. Participants from 12 countries attended this workshop and together evolved a best practice methodology for carrying out a reorganization project. As part of this effort, a reorganization project was split into 3 key phases and questionnaires and schemes for these phases were developed.

Following this course and in order to apply, test and refine the common methodology which was developed during the course in a medium size museum, it was decided to implement a few pilot projects and proposals were invited from countries represented by the participants. Proposals from Iran and Argentina were selected.

From Iran, the Museum of Decorative Arts was chosen as a pilot project candidate due to its significance, the challenges it presents and the visibility it provides.

- It is a small/medium museum with a good variety of collections. The collections chart an important period of the Persian history, from Safavid - which is the glory of Islamic art and Western influence on Iranian Art- to present.
- It is located in the historical area of a World Heritage Site.
- The museum building is currently under repair following a major incident of water leakage and collapse of the roof of the main storage room which happened after a snow and rain in winter and spring 2007. Currently all the museum collections are removed from the exhibition halls and kept in temporary storage rooms. This presents a great opportunity for reorganizing storage.

- Any success in this museum can be extended to the rest of the Middle-East, mainly because Iran is considered an important centre for conservation activities in the region.
- The museum is located adjacent to two other museums and a very important Safavid site of Chehelsotun. It is also opposite to the Isfahan's University of Art with faculty of conservation- restoration which is in a close relation with this museum for BA and MA thesis.

The phase 1 of the project was formally started on April 2008. The project team organized meetings and presentations with key decision makers to obtain the necessary approvals to initiate this project.

Two missions were held in Isfahan for meeting with museum staff, gathering data, taking pictures in order to evaluate the current state of the collection, the quality and depth of the management team and staff and also identify some of the key challenges. All of this is elaborated in the subsequent sections of this report.

All the gathered information and mission results have been shared with ICCROM and the Task Force team.

Methodology

The following activities were carried out as part of this project phase:

- Two missions to Isfahan and interview with the head of museum and its staff.
- Meeting with museum staff to explain the project, its phases, first phase in detail, expectations from them etc.
- Filling the User-Friendly Assessment Tool, by the help of a group of 5, 2 from Tehran and 3 local museum staff to score the current situation.
- Sharing the result with the Task Force team through ICCROM.
- Continues telephone calls for gathering the missing information.
- For gathering data: we consulted the chapter “*Care and Preservation of Collections*” by Stefan Michalski, *Running a museum, a practical handbook*, ed. P.Boylan, 51-91, Paris, ICOM and UNESCO, 2004. The most useful part was “**Table 1: Nine Agents of Deterioration**”.
- For taking appropriate pictures: we consulted the ‘**the visible facts: A suggested survey path, basic set of observations, and set of photographs**’, excerpt from the chapter and book referenced above.
- Designing 4 cards according to all the lessons from the ICCROM course of January 2008 for the first phase scheme. Samples are attached in Annexure 2.

History

For more pictures refer to Annexure 3

The *Emarat-e Rakib khane* (the building of the museum) was built in early 11th century *Hijri Qamari*, almost 400 years back, during the reign of Shah Abbas I. It was built for keeping imperial equestrian and horsemanship tools and it fell with the fall of the Safavid dominion. It was later restored and extended in the Qajar period by order of Mirza Zal-al Soltan, (son of Naser-al-din Shah) who used this building as a private residence and courtyard (*andarooni*).

Later, in Pahlavid period, the building served as the Statistics, Census and Registration office. At this time again some renovation took place, most of the renovations toward the western side of the building.

After the Islamic Revolution, following the decision of Higher Council of Urbanization and Architecture of Iran, Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization (ICHHTO) decided to restore the building and use it as a cultural complex. This restoration took two years and cost almost 1 billion Iranian Rials (~70,000 Euros). By transferring about 4000 museum objects from the Museum of Decoration Arts of Tehran and some other museums, this building changed to the current state as the “Museum of Decoration Arts of Isfahan” in 19 August 1996.



It is spread across 2600 sqm and has about 1200 sqm of usable space. It contains seven permanent sections as well as side galleries. Seven sections are:

1. Calligraphy and Manuscript Collection Section: Pages and books of Quran, Leather covers, etc.
2. Lacquer Collection Section: Pen boxes, mirror frames, Rolls and Parchment's frames, other boxes, paper weights, photo album covers etc.
3. Textile Collection Section: Hand-made textiles, purses, tablecloths, pen covers, curtains, garments, etc.
4. Painting Collection Section: Miniature, water color and oil color portraits, landscapes from the most famous painters of Safavid period (like Reza Abbasi) etc.
5. Metal Collection Section: Gold and silver jewellery, belt and buckles, boxes, locks, knives, gunpowder boxes, daggers, scissors, trays, other weapons etc.
6. Wood Collection Section: Mirror frame, Qoran holder and box, pen box, make up box, spoon and scoop, box, etc. through different arts such as inlaid, marquetry, fretwork, mosaic etc.
7. Glass, Pottery and Porcelain Collection Section: Bottles, glasses, trays, plates etc.

Unique objects:

Some of the objects in this museum are among unique pieces of decorative arts. For instance, some textile objects such as gold filigrees (*malileh doozi*), velvets, *termeh*, some of calligraphy belonging to *Miremad*, the most famous calligrapher of Safavid period, and some of the glass objects belonging to the 3rd to 9th century Qamari.



Professional Library:

The museum has almost 1500 volume of books on Arts

Side programmes:

- Different artistic exhibitions, auditorium for speeches and professional panels
- Famous artists have cooperated with the museum and held their exhibitions in this museum. Some of the held exhibitions:
 - Paintings of Haj Mosavar-ol Molk
 - Qajaried curtains
 - Portrait of Constitutional Men
 - Paintings of Bezaad in his commemoration
 - Imperial rules from Safavid to Qajar
 - Armenian Cloths (with cooperation of Hungry Embassy)
 - 5 Centuries Calligraphy in Iran (from 8th to 13th)
 - Iranian Painting from 9th century to 13th century
 - Islamic Potteries

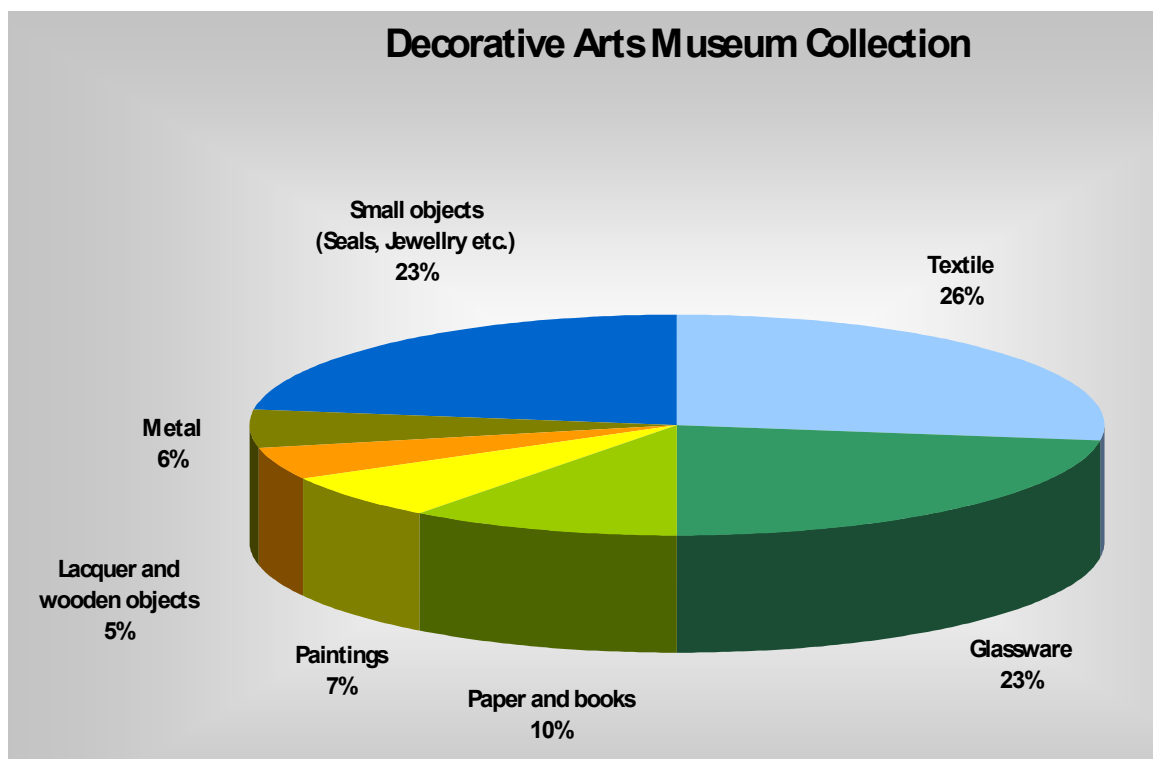
Collection

For more pictures refer to Annexure 3

Qualitative and Quantitative

The museum houses 4400 objects mostly belonging from the Safavid¹ to Qajar² period which are two important historical periods of Iran from an artistic point of view. A number of objects also belong to a more contemporary period. About 800 of the 4400 objects are generally on exhibition and the remaining 3800 in storage. At the moment all the objects are in storage rooms. There is no current plan for a circular exhibition of the objects.

The museum collection has broadly seven types of objects as follows:



¹ * The cultural growth in Safavid period was accompanied by considerable development in all forms of art. The art of literature, architecture, art crafts like Persian carpets, miniature paintings, calligraphy, pictorial decorations in Kashi (ceramic), metal and glass thrived. Although largely nourished by Persian culture, the Safavid art was also influenced by the Turkmen culture (due to the origins of the dynasty), as well as Chinese, Ottoman and Western cultures

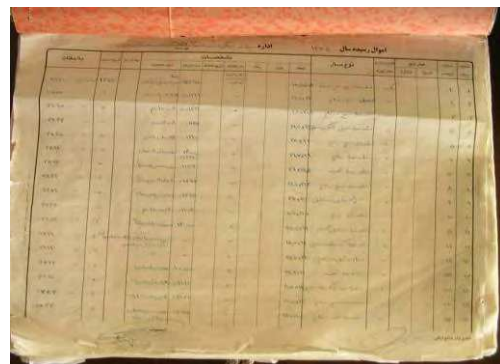
² Qajar art refers to the art and art-forms of the Qajar dynasty of the Persian Empire, which existed from 1781 to 1925. Most notably, Qajar art is recognizable for its distinctive style of portraiture. The boom in artistic expression that occurred during the Qajar era was the fortunate side-effect of the period of relative peace that accompanied the rule of Agha Muhammad Khan and his descendants. With his ascension, the bloody turmoil that had been the eighteenth century in Persia came to an end, and made it possible for the peacetime arts to flourish again

Type	Description and examples	Quantity
Textile	Hand-made stitched and woven pieces, purses, tablecloths, pen covers, curtains, garments, ...	1200
Glassware, Pottery, Porcelain	Bottles, Glasses, Trays, Plates (Porcelain collection is not Iranian. They are mostly from the UK and Netherland)	1000
Calligraphy, Manuscripts, Book and leather	Quran books, Quran pages, Leather Quran covers, Manuscripts, Poem books, ...	450
Paintings	Miniature, Water color, Oil color, famous Persian Ghave-khaneyee paintings	300
Lacquer and wooden objects	Pen boxes, Mirror frames, Rolls and Parchment's frames, Weights, Photo album covers, Doors, Quran holder and boxes, Make up boxes, Spoon and scoops, ...	200
Metal	Gold and silver jewellery, Belt and buckles, Boxes, Locks, Knives, Gun powder boxes, Daggers, Scissors, Trays, Weapons, ...	250
Small objects	Seals, Solitaires, jewellery	1000

The most precious collections are textile and papers. Porcelain collection does not contain Persian objects; these are mainly objects from the UK and Netherland.

Essential documentation for inventory

All the objects have inventory numbers, except a collection of approximately 300 glass objects that are not studied as yet and it is not clear if they have value as museum objects. All the other objects have a number for identification (although the labels are not always attached to the objects according to conservation rules) with a corresponding reference note in the museum register. This reference note contains type of object, dimension, weight, color, historical period, how the object was acquired by the museum and the date, value in Iranian Rial, and other specific information e.g. name of the artist etc.



At the moment museum is closed to public due to repair work in entire museum. All the collections are kept in storage rooms, not in a good condition. All the collection crammed in boxes and there are only a few shelves. There is no label or numbering system for storage room shelves and units and the location of each object in the storage area is not recorded in the documentation. Objects are kept over each other (see picture below) and the access and manner to handle them is very poor.



Apart from this, there are 4 other paper forms³ to document additional information on the collections (please see Annexure 3 for samples). They are:

1. **Statement of transmit – Temporary Delivery:** a form that records the intent for transferring objects to and from the museum and covers information like object identification, type of object, approximate value and key dates.
2. **Statement of transmit – Definitive Delivery:** A form similar to above, but filled once the transfer has been formalized.
3. **Statement of belongings of ICHHTO** (Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism of Isfahan: Two forms that catalog the details of the collection held at the museum for central administrative purposes. This form is prepared by the Ministry of Treasury.
4. **Identification card for movable cultural-historical objects:** A form that captures information about an object in great detail, including conservation condition and references to other relevant documents about the object.

³ Please note that there are specific forms for different types of objects in order to capture relevant information about an object.

Fragility and condition

Due to the ongoing refurbishment in the entire museum building, and after the incident of the main storage roof collapsing [explained more in the following section], currently all the collections are in 3 storage rooms and not in a good condition.

- **Textile collection:** In 2006, a preventive conservation project was implemented for the textile collection. It is currently kept in a better condition, in one of the northern storage rooms. The garments are kept on hangers and are covered with Polyethylene plastic sheets. Big objects are rolled and kept in the shelves. The shelves



- are without door but the collection is covered by Polyethylene plastics sheets, which are dusty. Small objects are kept individually in board packets.
- **Painting collection:** Painting collection is kept in one of southern side rooms. In the painting storage room, almost all the paintings are not covered.
- **Glassware, Pottery and Porcelain collection:** Some of the objects are kept on the shelves without any cover in the temporary storage room. Some of them are kept in boxes and their condition cannot be examined.
- **Calligraphy, Manuscript, book and leather:** This entire collection is packed in boxes and their fragility and condition cannot be examined. But due to fluctuations in temperature in the rooms during day and night, it can be assumed that they are not in proper condition.
- **Lacquer and wooden collection:** Some big wooden objects like doors and windows are kept with the painting collection, without covers and on the floor and not in an appropriate conservation situation. Some of them are kept in the temporary storage room, uncovered and on the shelves. The remaining collection consists of lacquer objects like pen boxes that are small and kept in temporary boxes. So examining their fragility and condition is yet again nearly impossible.

- **Metal collection:** Some of them like big dishes and two large weapons are kept on the shelves and don't seem to be in a bad conservation condition. The remaining ones are kept in boxes and it is impractical to observe their condition at present.
- **Small objects:** Small objects such as seals, solitaires and jewellery are packed in small boxes (10×15 cm) and then kept in big ones. There are some small boxes and it is again impossible to access them and examine their situation.
- Most of the objects are crammed in boxes and on top of each other. They are gathering dust and cleaning is difficult and rarely done.
- Examining the collection and cleanliness does not occur regularly and presently lots of dust can be seen on the shelves.

Other materials (non-collection)

All the storage areas, even the temporary ones are reserved only for storing the museum collection and there are no other objects such as furniture, publications, packing materials, etc.

Additional information

- At the moment it is nearly impossible to know anything more about the collection beyond the basic information covered in above sections. This is because most of the objects are packed and kept in big boxes in the storage room and access to them is impossible.
- Even for the textile and painting collections, which are kept in permanent rooms, access and visibility is very poor.
- Any kind of movement of the objects inside or outside of the museum, such as loan to other museums or transferring to the Conservation-Restoration faculty will be documented. (See Annexure 3)

Collections Summary

Area / Step	Quick facts
Qualitative and quantitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 4400 objects from the Safavid period (1300AD) to present. The most precious collections are textile and manuscripts. ▪ Textiles, Glassware and small objects dominate the collection. ▪ Porcelain collection does not contain Persian objects, but comprises of objects from the UK and Netherland.
Essential Documents ready for inventory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All objects except the 300 glass objects have identification numbers with references in the museum register. ▪ Labels are not attached to objects strictly in accordance with conservation norms (adhesive used). ▪ The storage units and shelves are not numbered; hence the location information is not available.
Fragility and condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Currently repair is going on and all the collections are kept in boxes in temporary storage rooms
Other materials (not collection)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not other objects stored with the collection.
Additional information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Very little information as collections are not easily accessible.

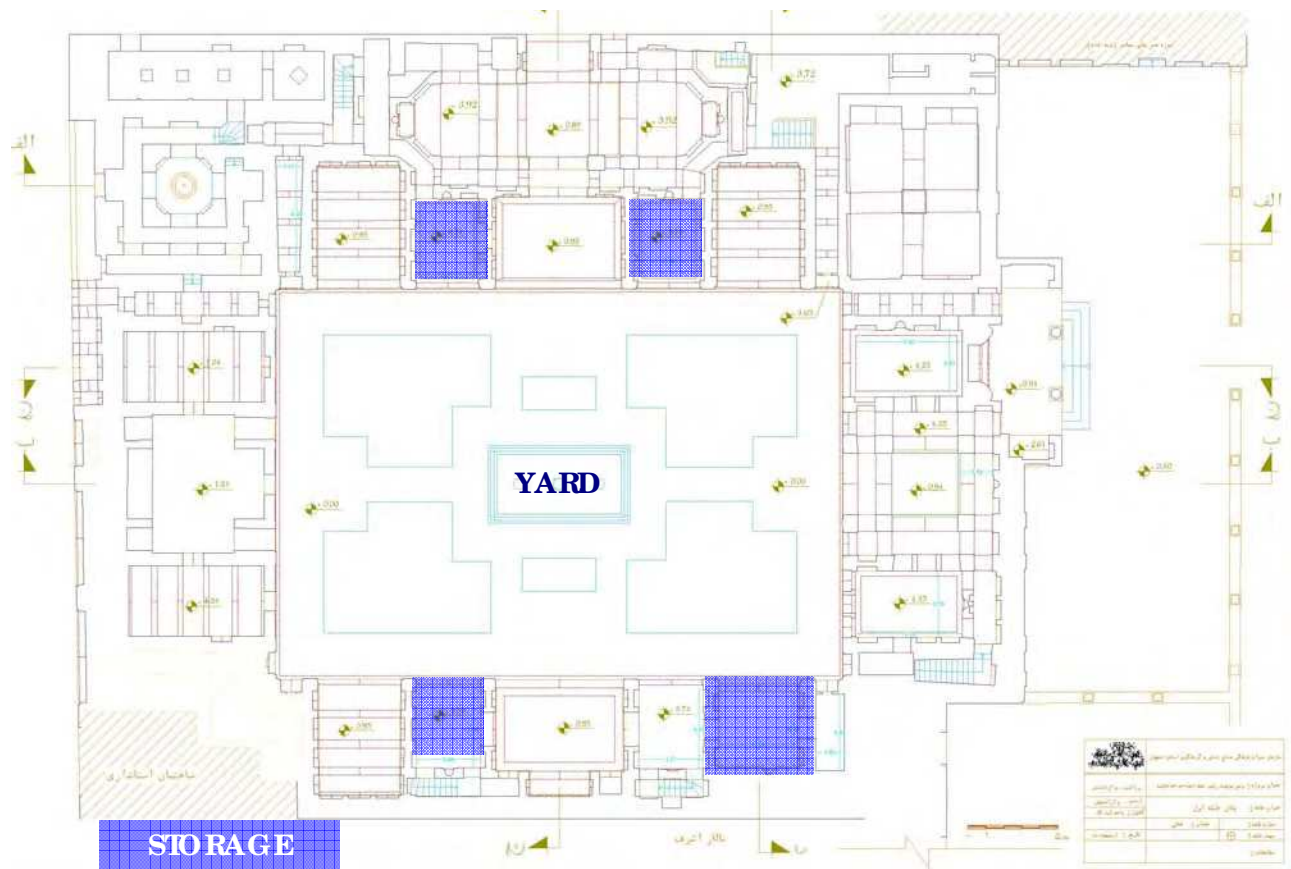
For more pictures refer to Annexure 3

Building and Space

For more pictures refer to Annexure 3

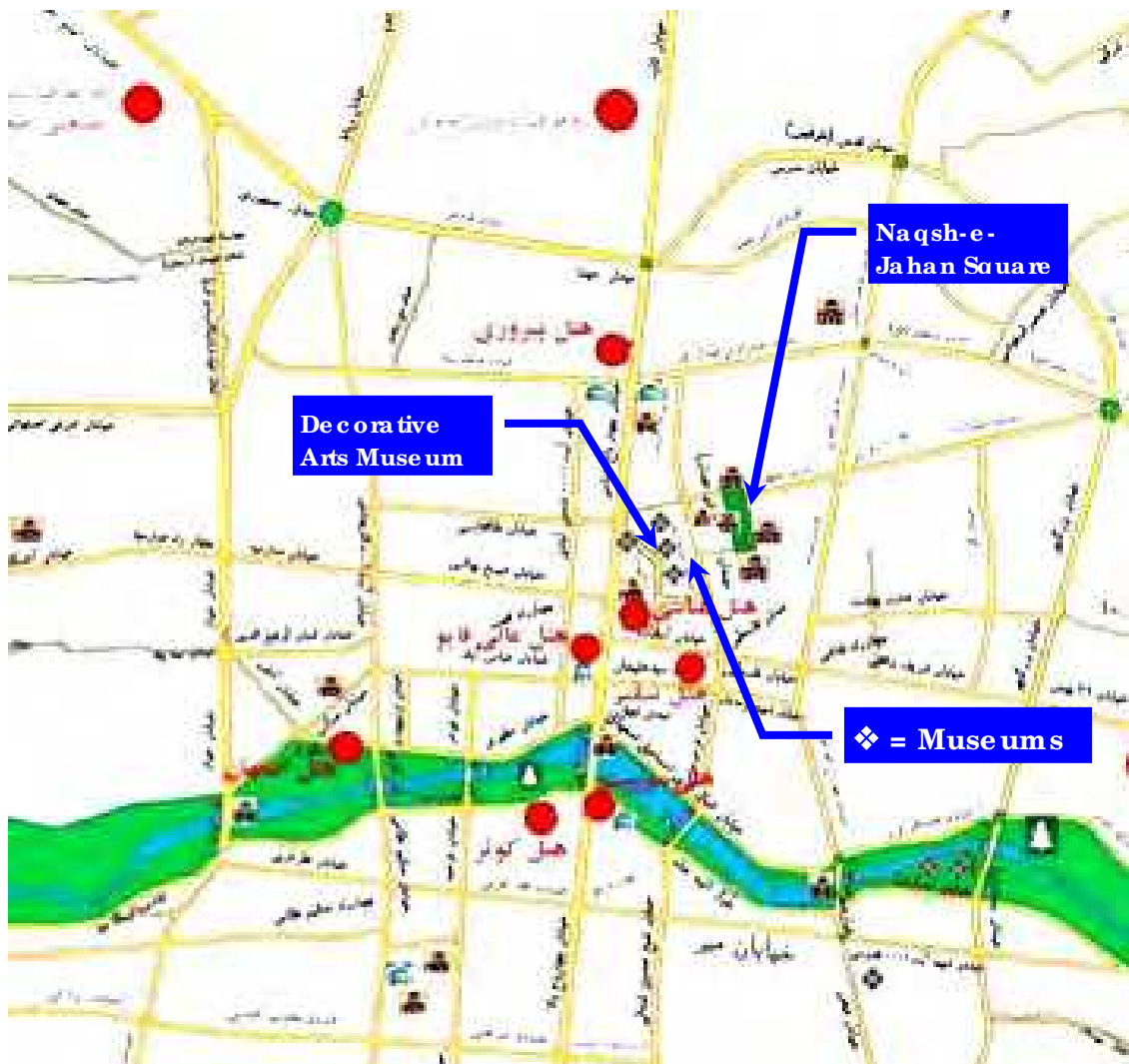
Plans

In May 2007, the Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization of Isfahan supervised a project to document the current condition of *Rakib khaneh* (the old house in which the Museum of Decorative Arts of Isfahan is situated) building and structure. The plans of the basement, first floor and tower and then section elevation of the building are now described. The key plans are available in Annexure 3. Some pictures are included here to provide some context.



Location

The Museum of Decorative Arts of Isfahan (Moseye Honarhaye Tazeeni Isfahan) is located in an old house named *Rakib khaneh*. It is situated at Ostandari Ave., west of the historical area of the famous World Heritage Site of Naqsh-e Jahan Square and opposite the Isfahan Art University. The museum is surrounded by three other museums viz. Museum of Natural Science, Chehelsotoun Historical Complex & Museum and Museum of Contemporary Arts.



Building

The museum is situated inside a two floor old historical building belonging to the Safavid dynasty⁴. As per the typical architecture of the Safavid period, the museum building has a main yard surrounded by the building structure.

- Four rooms have been allocated for storage and are all located on the second floor. There are 2 rooms (15 Sqm, each) on the north side, 2 rooms (one 15, one 40 Sqm divided further into 3 smaller rooms) on the south side. The only access to these rooms is through the narrow steep steps.
- All the rooms have full-length Persian windows (*Orosi*). All the windows open into the yard. Currently all of them are covered with thick canvas curtains from outside which have created a rather ugly view from the yard.



⁴ During the Safavid dynasty (1502-1737) the same period as the Mongols and the Timurids, North-western Iran went through a different historical development. The pinnacle of Safavid glory was the time of the reign of Shah Abbas I (1571-1629), who encouraged relations and trade with Europe and transformed his new capital, Isfahan, into one of the most magnificent cities of Persia. The presence at the Safavid court of foreign envoys and the growing number of merchants and travelers in Iran was later to have a great influence on the arts and literature in Europe.

- All the exhibition halls are on the first floor. Administration offices are distributed between first and second floors. There is traditional workshop of Golabatoon doozi (Purl/Fret Art) handicraft art in one of the basement rooms.
- Access to second floor is through tough steep steps, which is a common element for this architecture, but are not very safe for the current use.
- Moving objects frequently to a different area is not easy, especially for large objects. For example: in situations where big paintings or wooden doors are being transferred, it is impossible to transfer them via the staircase. Such large objects are then transferred via the windows onto the first floor. This can be potentially very dangerous for such precious objects and also for health & safety reasons.
- Currently there is no specific area outside the storage rooms dedicated for temporary holding, preparation of collection and for research and consultation. However, there is enough space in the museum close to the storage rooms which can be designed and used for these purposes. For example: Two of storage rooms open onto a long corridor and a big open space that looks over the central exhibition hall. There are also some empty rooms as well that can be used for temporary holding, preparation and consultation etc.



Entrance:

Each of the main or temporary storage rooms have just one entrance which opens onto the corridors. *Except this entrance, there is a possibility to enter through windows, but as they are very old, it is very difficult or even impossible to enter through them.*

Walls:

All the storage room walls are plastered and painted in some places. Currently after the repair of the roof of two main storage room, they are plastered again but not painted yet. Due to the climate condition of Isfahan, where dust is always floating in the air, these

plastered walls will need to be painted soon. In many places signs of seepage from rain and snow are clearly visible.

Roof:

The roofs of the building have been newly repaired following several roof collapses



caused by rain and snowing during last two years. Currently the two sections on the eastern side and northern side are being completed. The entire roof is water proofed using Isogam sheets to prevent water seepage through the ceilings. However the roof is not insulated (with Fiber glass or any other material) which is a concern because the roof and storage rooms get

exceptionally hot during peak summer.

Ceiling:

The ceiling in all storage rooms is plastered, but in many places patches of dampness from rain and snow are clearly visible.



Floors:

All the floors are brick covered, which due to the dusty climate of the city and museum is not appropriate.



Space occupation of surface ground and surface height

Again due to the repair work and temporary nature of storage, it is impossible to remark how the space is utilized on the ground and vertical surfaces. As it is mentioned, currently objects are packed in the boxes and few in the shelves and few on the floor. Now the entire ground surface is occupied by boxes.

Although the storage is poorly organized and even access to the storages is difficult but it is believed once storages are organized, and according to the present rate of acquiring new collections to the museum, there should be enough room for collections and accessibility to them, even for the next 5 years.

Protection:

Climate:

As the building is very old and the rooms have many windows – the climatic condition of the rooms is not appropriate for storing museum objects. Through most part of the year and especially during summer, the temperatures in this region get very high. Currently there is no climate control in the museum and during summers, it is difficult even for the staff to enter the storage rooms. During winter, the storage room roof is exposed to damage because of the snow and water seeping through. Inspection for water leakages during winter is the only climate control action taken at present.

Light:

As mentioned previously, storage room windows are covered with thick canvas curtains hung on the exterior to protect the collection from direct sunlight radiation. These canvas curtains however are extremely unsightly – especially when the museum is opened to visitors. Windows are also secured from inside with wooden venetian blinds. This makes the rooms completely dark even during day time. But there is still the problem of the light which is provided by fluorescent lamps and these lamps are kept on continuously to provide visibility for the closed circuit cameras. Entrance of light from the doors is almost blocked.



Dust and pollution:

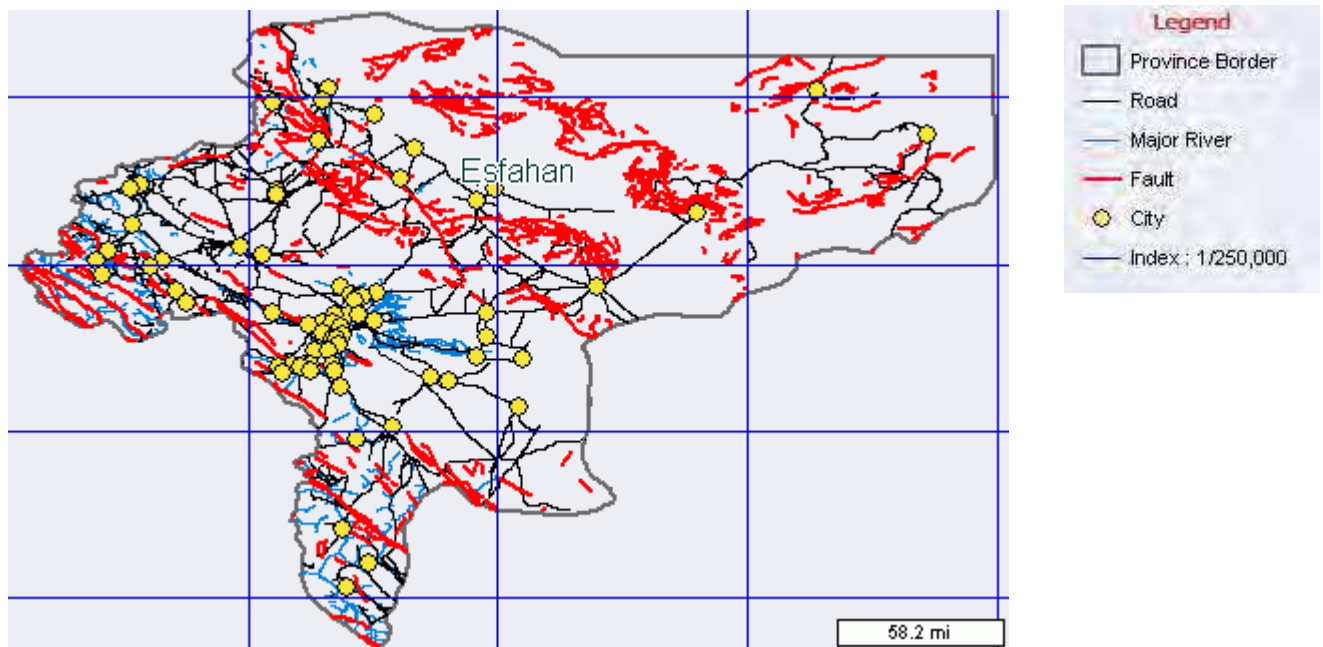
Although the curtains and blinds prevent the storage rooms from direct sunlight, they don't fully prevent dust from entering the building, especially as the climate in Isfahan is polluted and dusty for most parts of the year. The floor of the storage rooms is made of bare bricks and some parts of the walls and ceiling is not painted due to repair work. This adds to the dust in the storage rooms.

Natural disasters:

There is no risk of flooding in the whole Isfahan region; no such disasters have been recorded till now.

Risk of earthquake is high in entire Iran, including Isfahan. But to date no earthquake has been recorded around the museum and its surrounding region.

The last occurred Instrument Earthquake of Isfahan province has been recorded in 10/4/2003. Its magnitude is 3.8 in Mb scale, recorded by NAO.



Seismic Zone Map by National Geo science Database of Iran

Water leakage:

There are no water taps close to the storage space. However, as the storage rooms are located upstairs, all exterior roof drainage pipes are installed on the walls of these rooms. Moreover, there is the danger of rain water seeping through during monsoon and winter (rain and snow). **As mentioned previously there has been a leakage through the roof every year, but there were two major ones. A heavy snow in winter 1996 and a heavy rain in May 1997 which finally caused the roof collapse of the storage room on 18th May (which was the International Day of Museum). Fortunately the entire museum staff, with help of colleagues from other museums, acted quickly**

and removed all the objects to the temporary rooms in northern side. Following that, major repair of the roof has now started.

Air conditioner:

- Storage rooms do not have ventilation system. Windows can provide some natural ventilation, however they are secured to prevent light and dust.
- The museum staff has mentioned that air tends to get locked inside the room and is quite a big problem, especially in summer when the temperature inside the room sometimes goes up to 45°C. Note: there is no thermometer or any other equipment to measure the climatic condition (temperature / humidity) inside the storage rooms.



Biological / Pests:

- As the museum is not operational at the moment and repair work is being carried out, there is no organized system for monitoring and protection against any biological threats.
- The only pest protection activity carried out recently was to put some cyanide in the walls to prevent against insects.
- Generally, owing to the dry climate in this region, little biological infest has been observed in the museum and on the collections (*anecdotal – needs to be confirmed*), except for a trace of termite activity a couple of years back, which was then controlled. The experts said there is no pest infested object now in the museum.
- All the trees are pest free. The wet walls of the basement, due to the irrigation of the yard, can be a factor for biological threats. Fortunately all the storage rooms are free from this treat, as they are located in the second floor.
- Pest control for the collection has been discontinued as the objects are all crammed together in the storage rooms and it is difficult to implement any pest control.

Fire:

- Museum has installed a smoke and fire detection alarm system, but it does not work at present.
- The only fire suppression system in the museum is two standard fire extinguishers (20 kgs) and a few smaller capsules, which are water and powder based. All the capsules are checked and recharged annually.



Security

- Access to storage space is controlled and can be authorized by only one official, who acts as the trustee of collections. Museum has a closed circuit camera system that is used for monitoring; however the recording system is currently out of order.
- Each storage room has only one door for access. All the storage room doors are wooden and fitted with 3 metal security locks.
- The doors also have burglar alarms that work properly. The trustee of objects is the only person who has the right to open the door and disable the burglar alarms. She locks and seals the doors after exit.
- The movement of objects and transfers occur on the presence of Trustee of objects.
- The windows are very old and extremely difficult to open. However, there is no grilling to secure the windows. As the alarm system is only for the doors and not for the entire room, these unsecured windows represent a potential security risk.



Physical security / Guards:

- Museum is surrounded by 3 other museum and risk of burglary is very low. There are six soldiers (completing their obligatory military service as per Iranian civil policy) who guard the museum round the clock (1 guard per 4 hour shift x 6 shifts). There are also three guards for monitoring the closed circuit cameras round the clock

Building and Space Summary:

Area / Step	Quick facts
Read and draw floor plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All the floor plans are available in Annexure 3. ▪ According to activities of the museum and estimates for future increase in inventory, it is clear that space availability will not be an issue for the next 5 years.
Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Four storage rooms have been allocated for the collection. ▪ These rooms are on the second (top) floor of the building and access is difficult due to the narrow, steep steps. ▪ Rooms have full length Persian windows (Orosi) that are covered with thick canvas curtains. ▪ An open corridor space connecting the rooms can be potentially converted into a space for temporary holding, studying objects and carrying out minor restoration work. ▪ Repair, plastering and painting work is currently ongoing but nearing completion
Space utilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Owing to the repair work and collapsing of one of the storage room roofs, the collections are now packed and kept in temporary rooms. ▪ There are no shelves or units to fully utilize the room space – vertically or the floor.
Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Summarized separately in the table below.

For more pictures refer to Annexure 3

Protection summary:

Agent of Deterioration	Level of Risk	Hazards (Sources and Attractants of the Agent)
Direct physical forces	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Temporary nature of the current storage, where objects have been crammed into boxes without adequate packing against force. - Inadequate handling equipment, narrow steps and small entrances for moving big objects - Risk of earthquake is high in Isfahan, like the entire country of Iran. <i>However, there is no record of earthquake around the museum and in surrounding region</i>
Thieves, vandals, displacers	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building is surrounded by 3 other museums - Staff knows their duty well - There are security guards round-the-clock.
Fire	Has never happened	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - But there is not strong system of detection and suppression
Water	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Roof of the storage rooms collapsed several times due to snow and rain, however repair underway - There is no risk of flood or storm
Pests	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No pests are seen currently, except a small trace which is controlled, but there is no monitoring process - There is a main yard in the building with a fountain. Plus the museum is surrounded by three other museums with gardens.
Contaminants	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - building is located in a crowded area with the usual threats of urban pollution
Radiation	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural light is controlled but florescent lights are always on for cctv.
Incorrect temperature	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The temperature fluctuates quite a lot between day and night and especially in summers and winters. - There is no temperature monitoring and controlling system to address this fluctuation.
Incorrect Relative Humidity	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inadequate ventilation - Water leakage

Furniture

For more pictures refer to Annexure 3

Storage units:

- As it is mentioned before there are no organized shelves and units in the storage rooms due to the ongoing repairs in the museum and all collections, except the textile collection (explained below) are kept in makeshift storage boxes made of cardboard and metal.
- The museum has bought 18 shelves including 7 map file cabinets and 11 closed cabinets with moveable shelves. These are not yet installed due to the current repair works. All of them are metallic coated and pest-proofed. However it seems that not enough attention was paid for the suitability of the dimensions of these storage units during purchase. Moreover there are about 15 open shelves in the storage rooms, which are now being used.
- At the current situation, most of the objects are packed in big metal and wooden boxes or in disposal cartons of televisions, computers etc with packing materials such as shredded paper and bubble wrap. Small objects, which are more fragile and flexible, are packed in small boxes and then packed inside big ones. There are some small boxes (10×15 cm) for keeping jewellery and small objects.
- Some of the objects are stored directly on the shelves without any cover and some of them are kept directly in the ground. In painting area, almost all the objects are not covered.

Textile collection

In 2006, a preventive conservation project was implemented on the textile collection. It is currently kept in a better condition compared to other collections. The garments are kept on hangers and are covered with Polyethylene plastic sheets. Big objects are rolled and kept in the shelves. The shelves are



without doors but the collection is covered in Polyethylene plastics sheets. Small objects are kept individually in board packets. The objects have their numbers but there is no shelf labeling system. Access to the big rolled objects is not easy because all the objects are stacked over one other. Examining the collection and cleanliness does not occur regularly and presently lots of dust can be seen on the shelves.



Small equipment, support and padding:

There is no standard equipment, support or padding allocated for the storage units (except a dozen small boxes for jewelry). Equipment such as small trays, trolleys, ladders etc. are available on site but belong to the repair contractors.



Furniture and Small Equipments Summary:

Area / Step	Quick facts
Storage units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some storage units have been purchased, but not used as yet due to repair work. The units were purchased without detailed planning regarding size & dimensions, storage organization etc.
Support and padding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None available
Small equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None available

For more pictures refer to Annexure 3

Management

For more pictures refer to Annexure 3

Personnel

- There are 5 fixed personnel who work in the museum:
 - Head of the Museum,
 - Trustee of the Objects and Curator and
 - Curator
 - Librarian
 - Secretary

They are all well trained, experienced and well aware of their roles and responsibilities. Moreover, there are some other additional temporary personnel such as the security guards, gardener, and cleaner.

Ms Asefeh Badr, Head of the museum

She is officially responsible for all the museum activities. She has BA degree in museology.

Ms. Poursan Shamee, Trustee of Objects and Curator

She has higher diploma in museology and BA in management. She, as the trustee of objects, is responsible for the entire collection, although she has not been official designated on paper. All the storage rooms can be opened only in her presence. All the movements and transfers are done in her presence and she makes a note in the register.

Ms Zoya Khachatoor, Curator

She is holding higher diploma degree on traditional handicrafts.

Ms Nahid Moghare Abed, Librarian

Ms Afsaneh Dehghani, Secretary

Additional information

- There is no specific conservation department in the museum. In some cases, there are some joint projects between museum and conservation-restoration faculty at the Art University, for conservation-restoration of some objects. The MA and BA students work on the collections of the museum for their thesis.
- Museum works under the immediate supervision of Isfahan Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism of Isfahan which belongs to the Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization, headed by the Deputy President of Iran.
- There was a specific Museum Friends Club for Museum of Decorative Arts of Isfahan with membership of several prominent artists and people inside and outside the country. One of the principal members was the owner of one big museum (Malek Museum) in Tehran. They are not currently very active in this museum, but it is hoped that they can become active again. With the donations from these members, the mentioned small project for *Reorganization of Textile Collection of the Museum (2005)* and one training workshop on *Conservation-restoration of Oil painting, Textile and Paper (2006)* has been held in this museum. Therefore these members are informed, interested and have shown willingness to help in the past.

Documentation, Rules and procedures:

Background information:

There are some generic guidelines which are prepared by the Central Administrative Office, head quartered in Tehran and part of the Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization (ICHHTO). Except the fixed personnel of the museum, the other staff members never get a chance to read, learn and implement any of these guidelines due to their short term work in the museum. It is expected that each museum will tailor these guidelines according to its collection, environmental condition, potential risks or weakness.

- The general layout plan of different sections of the building has been prepared last year and it is now available in the documentation office of the ICHHTO/Isfahan. A copy is attached to this report.
- Any transfer to or out of the museum for e.g. to universities, other museums etc. is allowed only after the signature of the head of the Isfahan Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization and the Financial Comptroller.
- Any transfer inside the museum is by a transaction between the Head of Museum, Trustee of Objects and the Related Section.
- There is a generic written procedure for carrying out the storage activities, such as cleaning, entering numbers, etc and also a generic emergency preparedness plan. Both these were written by the Headquarters in Tehran and have not yet been tailored for this museum in particular.
- There is not a written procedure to manage the inflow and movement of museum visitors. There is no written procedure for managing labourers, but generally these activities are supervised by the curator and trustee of the collection.

Management summary:

Area / Step	Quick facts
Resources and Capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 5 full time employees and 3-4 temporary staff. ▪ Additional access to expertise at ICCHTO and <i>friends</i>-network.
Rules and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ General procedures from the central headquarters in Tehran available, however yet to be tailor specifically for this museum. ▪ Procedures exist to control the movement of objects
Use of collection for exhibition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is no usage as the museum is currently closed to public.

For more pictures refer to Annexure 3

Conclusion

The first phase of the pilot project identifies some unique opportunities to test out the common methodology. The museum is under repair and has the collection in various stages of storage – some in permanent storage and some stacked and crammed in temporary storage facilities. Even the permanent storage rooms do not have aisles clearly marked or easy accessibility to the objects.

The ongoing repair of the building presents danger to the collection, but also offers an opportunity to organize storage from the beginning. There are no specific procedures written for the museum, however it has a very good relationship with the university faculty of conservation-restoration. The museum management, staff and governing organizations of Isfahan and Tehran are keen to support this project, but securing the necessary budget to implement will be challenging.

With such contrasts, the subsequent project phases will surely be a thorough test of the common methodology.

Annexure 1: Useful information for subsequent phases

Key potential challenges:

As can be seen from the current state of the museum and its storage facility, several challenges will need addressing as part of the reorganization project:

- First and foremost, the museum in general and the storage areas in particular are under repair. This makes the true assessment of the collection condition difficult and impractical.
- There is currently no area for inspection and carrying out temporary restoration work (although there is sufficient space that can be converted into such a facility). Therefore any attempts to observe the condition of the collection need to be handed efficiently to protect the objects from potential threats due to ongoing repairs, existence of dust and absence of protection systems (fire, pests, security).
- The approval for funds is taking more than normal time due to recent changes in the decision making team and such delays need to be factored into the implementation plan.
- Most of the procedures that exist are generic and hence any specific procedures will need to be implemented from scratch. The museum staff will need to be trained as well.

Why is this a good opportunity?

- The current repair work on the museum building can also be used as a good opportunity to reorganize the storage for these precious objects.
- Significance of the museum collection to the Persian and World History, especially as the collection represents the glory of Islamic art and western influence on Iranian arts during Qajar period can provide excellent exposure to our pilot project.
- Implementing a successful project in Isfahan can have a much larger impact, not just within Iran, but extending to the rest of the Middle-East.

- One of the biggest conservation academy centres in Iran is located in Isfahan, just opposite the museum. It is therefore possible to leverage benefits from / of the University for this Project. A wide array of students studying various topics in conservation and restoration can also be made available throughout the different phases of the project.
- The museum is located adjacent to two other museums (Museum of natural science- belonging to Ministry of Science) and (Museum of Contemporary Arts, belonging to the Municipality) and a very important Safavid site of Chehelsotun (belonging to ICHHTO). All these 3 other places have storage spaces and are interested in benefiting from this experience, so they are among potential partners for sponsorship the project.
- There is also an opportunity to not just carry out the reorganization of storage, but also to conduct training workshops and onsite demonstrations during the pilot project. Given Isfahan's significance, museum experts from all over the country are often visiting the city and this can be used as a good opportunity to train a wider audience and thus achieve wide-spread learning and awareness of the proposed methodology for museum storage.
- Within the ICHHTO, there is a major long term objective for re-organization of museum objects. After implementation of this project, we can easily expand our experience and knowledge for the other storage collections, through the above programme.

Annexure 2: Information gathering template



THE UNESCO-ICCROM STORAGE RE-ORGANIZATION PILOT PROJECT

Proposal for Re-organizing storage at MUSUEM OF DECORATIVE ARTS ISFAHAN, IRAN

Phase I : Storage Condition Report, Information Gathering Template

Management:

Step	Box	Explanation	Photo if required
A	Staff		
	<i>Number of Training/expertise</i>		
	<i>Job description</i>		
B	Rules and Procedures		
B	Use of collections		
	Etc		

Report writer:



**THE UNESCO-ICCRUM
STORAGE RE-ORGANIZATION PILOT PROJECT**

**Proposal for Re-organizing storage at MUSUEM OF DECORATIVE ARTS ISFAHAN, IRAN
Phase I : Storage Condition Report, Information Gathering Template**

Building and Space:

Step	Box	Explanation	Photo if required
1	Read and Draw Floor Plans		
	Buildings		
2	<i>Number, Location, Access</i>		
	<i>Use</i>		
	<i>Condition</i>		
	<i>Surface</i>		
	<i>Height</i>		
	<i>Openings</i>		
2	Space occupation of surface ground and surface height		
	Protection		
	<i>Climate</i>		
	<i>Dust</i>		
	<i>Pollution</i>		
	<i>Theft</i>		
	<i>Fire</i>		
	<i>Pests</i>		
<i>Water</i>			
<i>Etc</i>			



**THE UNESCO-ICCRUM
STORAGE RE-ORGANIZATION PILOT PROJECT**

Proposal for Re-organizing storage at MUSUEM OF DECORATIVE ARTS ISFAHAN, IRAN

Phase I : Storage Condition Report, Information Gathering Template

Collections:

Step	Box	Explanation	Photo if required
1	Inventory systems		
2	Qualitative and quantitative		
3	Essential Documents ready for inventory		
3	Fragility and condition		
3	Other materials (not collection)		
	Etc		

Report writer:



**THE UNESCO-ICCROM
STORAGE RE-ORGANIZATION PILOT PROJECT**

Proposal for Re-organizing storage at MUSUEM OF DECORATIVE ARTS ISFAHAN, IRAN

Phase I : Storage Condition Report, Information Gathering Template

Furniture and Small Equipments:

Step	Box	Explanation	Photo if required
1	Storage units		
	<i>Type</i>		
	<i>Quantity</i>		
	<i>Surface used</i>		
	<i>Surface/ground</i>		
1	Support and Padding		
1	Small equipment		
	<i>Ladder</i>		
	<i>Trolleys</i>		
	<i>Vacuum cleaner</i>		
	<i>Table</i>		
	<i>Chairs</i>		
	<i>Dust bin</i>		
	<i>Etc</i>		
	Etc		



The museum is located in the historical and cultural capital of Iran - Isfahan

ISFAHAN, IRAN



Isfahan is most renowned for NAQSH-E-JAHAN SQUARE, a World Heritage Site with historical and cultural significance



NAQSH-E-JAHAN SQUARE



The museum is very close to the world heritage site of Naqsh-e-Jahan square.



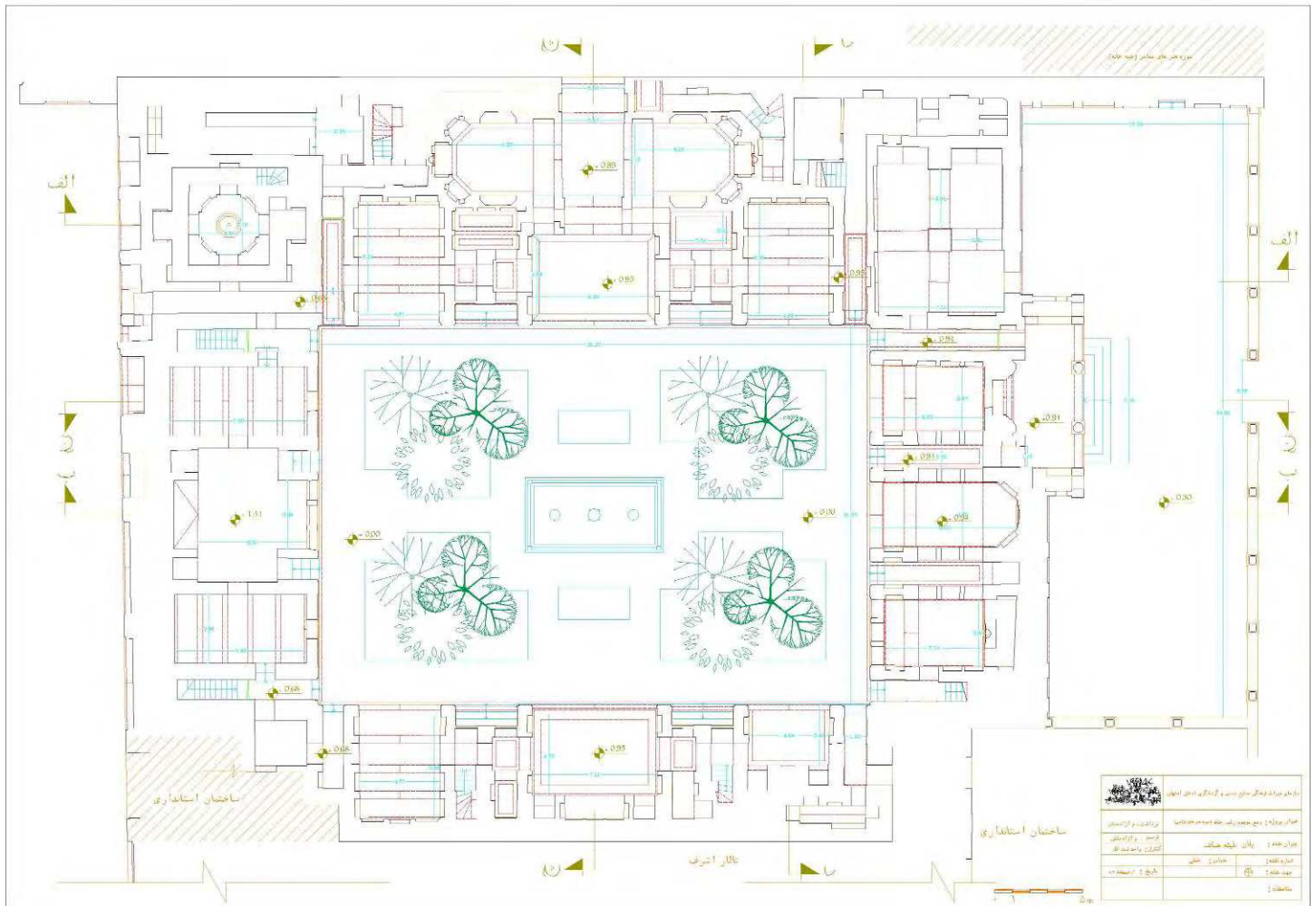
MUSEUM OF DECORATIVE ARTS, ISFAHAN



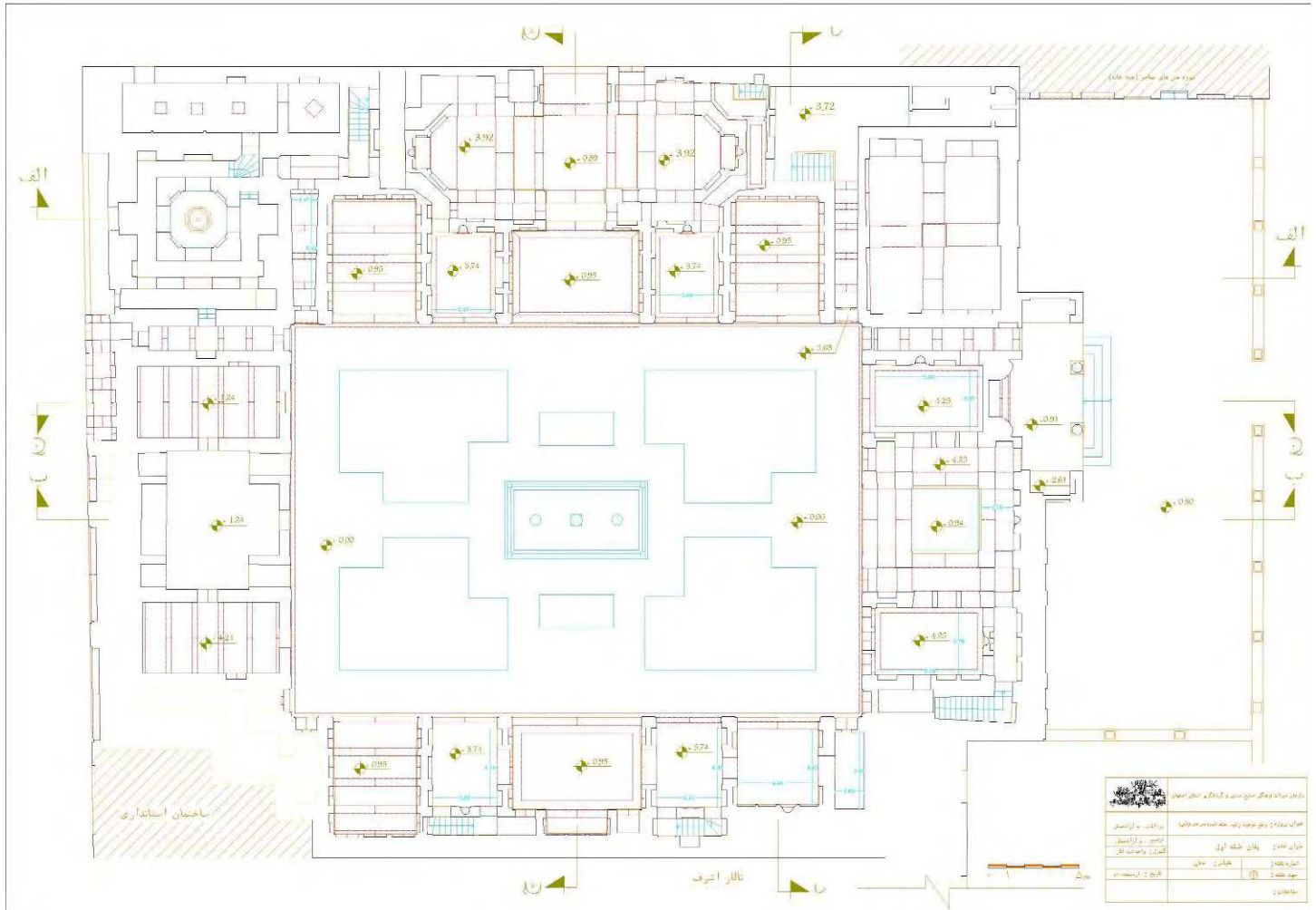
The view from the museum yard, before (left) and now (below) with the thick white canvas shielding the windows from direct sunlight.



PLAN OF FIRST FLOOR
 (Museum exhibition halls are located at this level)



PLAN OF SECOND FLOOR
 (Museum storage rooms are located at this level)



SECTION ELEVATIONS OF RAKHIB KHANEH





Office of Trustee of objects and curators



The current state of the main exhibition hall (right) and pictures of the same hall before repairs started (below).





The roof is currently under repair, after it collapsed last May ('07)



Water proofing being done, however no thermal insulation



State of the storage rooms during roof collapse



State of the collection during roof collapse and objects being transferred to temporary storage





Signs of water seepage as observed on the storage room ceilings





Steep narrow steps and narrow corridors (top) are characteristic of the Safavid architecture. Storage room windows (right) are used sometimes to move large objects...





Doors with locks



Only one room has a ventilator for air circulation



Parts of walls are not plastered or painted



Steep steps



Open tiled floors generate dust



Air conditioning units fitted in some rooms



Doors fitted with alarm system



Windows have wooden blinds to prevent light, however florescent lamps are kept on for CCTV



Arched windows fitted with a cut-out to shield sunlight



Ceilings with sprinkler systems



The paintings are stored in one of the permanent storage rooms.. ...but are closely stacked together making access and inspection difficult





The textile collection is kept in a much better condition following a preventive conservation project in 2006. However, big objects are rolled together and inspecting is difficult. Dust is also observed on the polythene covers.





File cabinets



New shelf units – bought but not yet assembled for use



Small boxes for storing small objects



Wall of a smaller storage room. Good for hanging stuff...



Storage units kept in the aisles

The storage space in the temporary space is not fully utilized and...



...most of the objects are stacked in the centre of the room.

Shelves are not numbered and accessibility is difficult







Different objects in the temporary storage rooms



Objects packed in boxes with limited protection



During a small project some the inappropriate labels (LEFT) were removed and now they are in better condition (RIGHT)



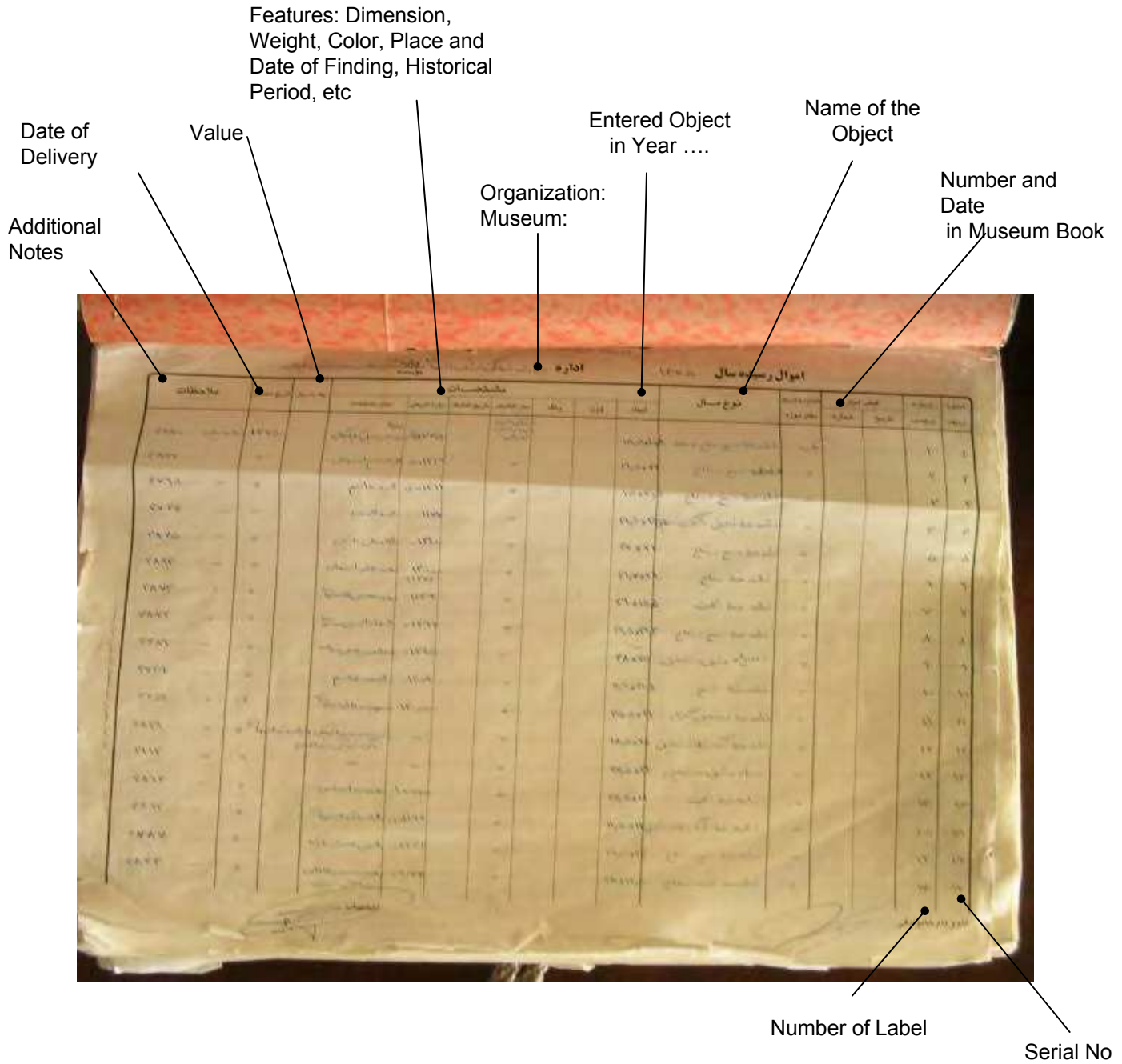
Conference hall



Museum of contemporary arts, one of the neighboring museums



Proposed Space for study and preparing collections for exhibition



MUSEUM INVENTORY REGISTER

بسمه تعالی

وزارت
صورتجلسه و اگذاری امانی یا موقت مال از موسسه
اموال سازمان

به واحد

فرم ۱۸ « صورتحساب فرستاده »

شماره برجسب	ردیف	سال ثبت رسیده	نوع مال	شرح مشخصات مطابق رسیده	تعداد	شماره مجوز		بهای		ملاحظات
						خرید	ارزایی	خرید	ارزایی	
۲۰۴۰			نوع مال							

For movement: Temporary delivery
Statement of transmit:

- Number of label,
- Category, year of registration, type of object,
- Description, quantity, value etc.
- Signature of Head of Isfahan-ICHHTO and Financial Controller

مال مشروحه بالا را به موجب حکم دستور در تاریخ خانم آقای که بموجب حکم شماره جهت تحویل مال معرفی گردیده است بصورت امانت تا تاریخ تحویل گردید. طرفین بایستی مراتب را به موقع به مسئولین واحد های ذیربط گزارش نمایند. مسئولین مربوطه در سازمان تحویل گیرنده بدون حق تصرف مالکانه مسئول اتخاذ تدابیر لازم بمنظور حفظ و حراست و نگهداری حساب مال مذکور می باشند و فهرست مال مزبور را بایستی حداکثر ظرف ۵ روز پس از تحویل به وزارت امور اقتصادی و دارائی ارسال و عین مال را پس از رفع نیاز به سازمان تحویل دهنده ارسال و مراتب را به وزارتخانه مذکور اطلاع دهد.

نام و نام خانوادگی تحویل دهنده سمت امضاء نام و نام خانوادگی تحویل گیرنده سمت امضاء نام و نام خانوادگی بالاترین مقام اجرائی دستگاه انتقال دهنده یا مقام مجاز از طرف ایشان سمت امضاء نام و نام خانوادگی رئیس اداره تحویل دهنده سمت امضاء نام و نام خانوادگی رئیس سازمان تحویل دهنده سمت امضاء نام و نام خانوادگی بالاترین مقام اجرائی دستگاه انتقال دهنده یا مقام مجاز از طرف ایشان سمت امضاء

پروانه خروج:

(این قسمت صرفاً برای خروج مال مشروحه فوق از درب خروج واحد انتقال دهنده باید تکمیل شود)

اجازه داده می شود مال مشروحه فوق بوسیله آقای سمت محل کار سمت امضاء از درب خروج، خارج شود. تاریخ ساعت نام و نام خانوادگی بالاترین مقام اجرائی دستگاه انتقال دهنده یا مقام مجاز از طرف ایشان سمت امضاء نام و نام خانوادگی نگهبان کشیک سمت امضاء نام و نام خانوادگی خارج کننده مال اموال نام و نام خانوادگی امین اموال واحد انتقال دهنده سمت امضاء

بسمه تعالی

شماره: _____ تاریخ: _____

سند انتقال قطعی مال از وزارت امور سازمان به وزارت موسسه سازمان واحد

« صورتحساب فرستاده » فرم ۱۹

ملاحظات	بهاء		شماره مجوز	تعداد	شرح مشخصات مال (مطابق فرم رسیده)	نوع مال	سال ثبت رسیده	طبقه	شماره برجسب
	ارزبانی	خرید							
<p>For movement: Definitive transfer Statement of transmit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of label, • Category, year of registration, type of object, • Description, quantity, price, etc) • Signature of Head of Isfahan-ICHHTO and Financial Controller 									

مال مشروحه بالا را به موجب حکم در تاریخ _____ به خانم _____ سمت _____ که بموجب نامه _____ از _____ معرفی گردیده بصورت قطعی تحویل گردید. تحویل گیرنده ملزم به رعایت مقررات در حفظ و حراست و تهیه و نگهداری حساب مال تحویلی مذکور می باشد و طرفین بایستی مراتب را برابر مقررات مربوطه به موقع به مسئولین ذیربط گزارش نمایند.

نام و نام خانوادگی تحویل دهنده _____ سمت _____ امضاء _____ نام و نام خانوادگی رئیس اداره تحویل دهنده _____ امضاء _____

نام و نام خانوادگی تحویل گیرنده _____ سمت _____ امضاء _____ نام و نام خانوادگی ذی حساب واحد تحویل گیرنده _____ امضاء _____

پروانه خروج:

(این قسمت صرفاً برای خروج مال مشروحه فوق از درب خروج واحد انتقال دهنده باید تکمیل شود)

اجازه داده می شود مال مشروحه فوق بوسیله آقای _____ محل کار _____ بمنظور انتقال قطعی تاریخ _____ ساعت _____ از درب خروج، خارج شود.

نام و نام خانوادگی بالاترین مقام اجرائی دستگاه انتقال دهنده یا مقام مجاز از طرف ایشان _____ امضاء _____

نام و نام خانوادگی نگهبان کشیک _____ امضاء _____

نام و نام خانوادگی امین اموال واحد انتقال دهنده _____ امضاء _____

