

_MEAP-4-0073

BUILDING MEMORY IN CASABLANCA, MOROCCO (1917-1980)

Your Guide into the archives

1. Current State:

To successfully execute the project of enhancing the municipal archives in Casablanca, we began with a review of these archives. Although all participating architects are experienced with Casablanca's municipal archives, we deemed this review essential. We started with the microfilm filing boxes, the available on-site documentation, and the paper-format plans. Then, we examined the efforts of the on-site municipal employee team in preserving and protecting information to the best of their ability.

2. Composition of the Work Team:

Primarily composed of architects, the MAMMA team benefits from a vast network, enabling collaboration with colleagues for assistance and specialized expertise. We also sought assistance from ANAPEC (national agency for employment and skills promotion) to recruit young, skilled individuals for digital data entry tasks. Our association hired two individuals to enter data into pre-designed Excel spreadsheets by an architect-coordinator of the inventory project. Under a collaboration contract, an architect with over six years of experience was responsible for continuous supervision and verification of the entered data.

3. Analysis and Breakdown of the Archiving Method:

To transfer data to a digital format without risking loss or misinterpretation, we thoroughly understood the archives' structure. Analyzing and comprehending the archiving method used in the Casablanca municipal archives guided us to adopt a table format (see the section: inventory content) for starting data entry.

4. Organization of the Archives:

This analysis revealed that all archival information is stored and organized in drawer boxes. These drawers hold small folders, resembling cases, each containing microfilm sheets. This method, adopted since the 1970s, ensures the preservation of data such as classification numbers, owner's name and surname, address, and land references, if available. Each microfilm sheet is cataloged in a box with a unique number. Occasionally, a single folder (jacket) may contain multiple microfilm sheets.

5. Data and Work Methodology:

For years, to prevent information loss in the archives, municipal archivists began transcribing the microfilm sheet details into manual registers. Therefore, our primary goal is to convert all manually entered information into a digital format, enhancing data protection and accessibility. Utilizing computer tools, we aim to uncover new data analysis and exploration methods. The initial challenge in this near-automatic data entry process was to minimize reading errors, as some writings were challenging to decipher. With three registers, each containing between 4,000 and 5,000 lines, we assigned a different individual to each register. Data entry into Excel was conducted in batches of 1,000 lines, approximately 300 lines per day, at a rate of eight pages per week. Subsequently, the data entrant had to cross-reference the microfilm sheets in the boxes with the information in the registers.

Data Verification:

The first verification step involved identifying data entry errors and omissions. Before assembling the entered data, a second verification was necessary. Therefore, bi-weekly meetings were held, pausing daily entry for three days to focus on verification. In the final phase, we unified and corrected spelling errors to address frequent inconsistencies in the file, often resulting from transcription errors. Without this process, the file would remain minimally usable.

6. Inventory Content:

The table is structured around three primary collections labeled in the "collection" column as C-1, C-2, and C-3. Collection 04 (C-4) comprises cases where the address and owner's details on the microfilm sheet were unclear. We plan to complete these fields after scanning begins.

Each line includes:

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|----------------|------------------|--------------|---------------|------------------|----------|-------------|----------------|------------------|------------|
| classification | number of fiches | Owner | land title | box number | address | entry by | date of entry | validated by | Collection |
| رقم التصنيف | عدد الأوراق | اسم المالك | رقم البقعة | رقم الصندوق | العنوان | ادخل من طرف | تاريخ الإدخال | تم التحقق من طرف | المجموعة |
| classement | nombre de fiches | propriétaire | titre foncier | numéro du casier | adresse | saisie par | date de saisie | validé par | Collection |
| 14711 | 1 | med azizi | n/a | 87 | arrago | CTO | April, 2023 | JHA | C- 1 |
| 43351 | 1 | ste micham | 16733 d | 87 | ain diab | CTO | April, 2023 | JHA | C- 1 |

1. **Classification number:** facilitating easier location of the microfilm sheet.
2. **The number of sheets:** indicating if multiple sheets are in the same folder (jacket) under the same classification number.

3. **Owner's name:** usually the building's first owner, aiding in quicker archival searches.
4. **Land title:** not always available but useful for newer buildings (post-1950s).
5. **Box number:** helping archivists quickly locate the microfilm sheet.
6. **Address:** address of the property which may require verification against current records.
7. **Entered by:** the initials of the person who inputted the data, allowing for correction tracking.
8. **Entry date:** indicating the file's latest update.
9. **Validated by:** the initials of the person who last checked the line, useful for internal team tracking.
10. **Collection:** representing the division of work across different collections.

Work-in-progress Section:

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|----------|-----|-------------|-----|------|
| n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | 88 | ain diab | CTO | April, 2023 | JHA | C- 1 |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|----------|-----|-------------|-----|------|

Lines in yellow indicate microfilm sheets with missing column information, located using the classification number. Post-scanning, these lines will be updated.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|--------------|-----|----|------|-----|-------------|-----|------|
| 14 | ! | driss lahlau | n/a | 13 | anfa | CTO | April, 2023 | JHA | C- 1 |
|----|---|--------------|-----|----|------|-----|-------------|-----|------|

Lines in orange represent sheets found in the register but not in the boxes. According to on-site archivists, these sheets might have been mixed after a flood. Prioritizing existing entries, we plan to locate and update these sheets later.