

Al-Kayed Palace

Site description: The palace is a witness to a significant historical period in the series of historical episodes that formed the integrated cultural landscape of the city of Sebastia; it is a model of the Ottoman architecture of the local style, and tells the political and social life that prevailed in Palestine in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries AD; when the central Ottoman authorities in Istanbul entrusted the management of economic life and local politics to several influential families, to collect taxes, and to provide the central authority with youth for military service in the Ottoman army, to participate in the wars and revolutions that were taking place in many regions of the sprawling Ottoman Empire. This new political system, which was called "Al-Iltizam" or the commitment system, resulted in the emergence of a new political class of local rulers, who held vast political and economic influence, helping them to establish headquarters commensurate with their wealth and power, and meet the security and social conditions of this class, especially since they entered an era of conflicts and alliances among themselves, that aimed to expand the influence and control of each Sheikhdome at the expense of other sheikhdoms. Thus a unique local style emerged for the headquarters of these rulers (sheikhdoms) called the Throne Villages in the Palestinian countryside. Sebastia was the Sheikhdome of the Al-Kayed family, whose influence extended in Sebastia and the villages of Wadi Al-Shaer, in partnership with the family of the Sheikhdome of Seif in Burqa, and the Sheikhdome of Al-Mashaqi in Yasid. Al Kayed Palace: It was built by Sheikh Ahmed Al-Kayed in 1858 AD in the center of Sebastia, tens of meters south of the Church of John the Baptist. The palace consists of two floors, the ground floor in the middle of which comprise several living rooms and storage surrounding a 100 square meters courtyard. The upper floor contained several sleeping rooms in a design consistent with the community's social and religious culture, which required separating the women's suite from the visitors to the palace. It is similar to the Ottoman Haramlik and Selamlik system, and the facade of the building received excellent care in terms of designing the wide gate, which is surmounted by a decorative stone arch, and equipped with two seats for guards on its right and left, reflecting the exceptional prestige of the building. The wooden gate was provided with a small, low additional entrance called (Al-Khokha), to preserve the privacy of the palace, and to block the eyes of passers-by when entering and leaving the palace. The palace was abandoned in the early fifties of the last century, and should have been addressed. It could collapse at any moment, given the importance of the palace, and its inclusion on the preliminary list of world heritage among the palaces of the Throne Villages. The site was restored and rehabilitated and used for the activities of the women's association in the town, especially the ground floor, while the upper floor was used as a guest house that includes eight reception rooms, and a guesthouse for local and foreign tourists.

Sites & Attractions: Type

- [A residential palace that adapted the local Ottoman architecture style](#)

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Address

It is located in the center of Sebastia, tens of meters south of the Church of John the Baptist. the center of the village, near the old mosque.
PS-NBS
Palestinian Territories

32.27686,35.19545
[View in Google Maps](#)

Booking On Site

No

Booking Online

No

Booking via Phone

Fee: Special Group Rate

No

No

Advance booking required

No

Agent Voucher Accepted

No

Handicap bathroom

No

Stairs

No

Wheelchair Friendly

No

Stroller Friendly

No