HERITAGE-BASED SUSTAINABILITY IN PORT SAID: Classification of Styles and Future Development

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Abstract
This research is an attempt to specify the attributes in Port Said’s built heritage, most particularly that which was founded towards the end of 19th and early of 20th centuries. The city’s development not only interacts with European and Islamic architectural characteristics but it also illustrates the story of this development within unique architectural styles. By accurate conservation policies, this built heritage cannot only be saved, but can also help to improve local residents’ quality of life. The research aims to (a) outline an approach for exploring the architectural styles of Port Said; (b) present the desire of communities to conserve their built heritage through the community participation and (c) propose the challenges and opportunities for sustainable development. Finally, conclusions are drawn about the significance of discussing physical characteristics of built heritage together with environmental, economic and social aspects as a main concern of any sustainable development.

Keywords: architectural styles; built heritage; conservation policy; Port Said city; sustainable development.

INTRODUCTION
The subject of this paper is to discuss the challenges that arise when trying to propose sustainable development based on built heritage. Although the term heritage drew the international attention, it has different meanings that vary according to the user of this word. According to UNESCO World Heritage, cultural heritage reflects the traditions, and the achievements of people in a given place. The heritage is considered a priceless and unique assets that belongs to all humanity not only one nation. However, this heritage is very delicate and should be looked after otherwise it can be very easily damaged (Module, 2007; UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2012).

The study sets out to argue that knowing the historical and cultural value of Port Said will help in conservation policies, sustainability and tourism. In this small city you can see buildings of different architectural styles and several nationalities have lived in and each added its own style and taste. This made what we may call an open-air architectural museum; several architects left symbols, on old buildings, that clearly points to their origins from around the Mediterranean. In this context, heritage protection does not mean turning this city into museums; instead it calls for finding new socio-economic uses for its built heritage, and calls for maintaining what needs to be conserved in the form of sustainable active cycles. We may say that the conservation of the built heritage, in Port Said, is an essential issue in cultural societies, as it just needs a little effort to become a major tourist attraction. To establish the main claim, a detailed classification of built heritage in Port Said will take place in the following sections, in addition to highlight the principles of the conservation policies for these buildings and what national or local planning authorities have achieved so far.
LITERATURE REVIEW

A Perspective on Cultural Heritage

The interrelationships between tourism, cultural heritage and development have caught considerable attention, which transform culture into a product (Al-hagla, 2010; Nasser, 2008). The mission of undertaking the protection of natural, historic and cultural values within tourism should aim to improve local residents’ quality of life and environment. So, the importance of the discussing and researching physical characteristics of built heritage emphasizes together with cultural, social and economic aspects as a main concern in any successful sustainable development (Al-Hagla, 2010).

Most modern societies are precise keen on conserving their heritage; it attracts tourists who assist the local and national economy. Activities such as visits to historic sites, including built environments and urban areas, dominant are all forms of heritage tourism (Ebbe, 2009; Gultekin & Ucar, 2011). Port Said, like many Egyptian cities, made an effort to conserve the built heritage while adapting to rapid development. According to Egyptian Antiquities Information System (EAIS), Port Said has a wealth of Mediterranean architectural styles that span decades and need correct approaches to conserve (EAIS, 2007).

Historic Urban Fabric: An Analytical Overview

Port Said city established by the French engineer Ferdinand de Liceps in April 1859. A new cultural city, located northeast Egypt, has been found along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, north of the Suez Canal, and has been laying crossroads of the ancient continents and trading routes (Tahoun, 2007). For this advantage, it contains a unique architectural wealth, which will hopefully be saved by virtue of Cabinet Decrees in 2009 and 2011. The city adopted a European style in its earlier planning supervised by the Suez Canal Company that authorized building permits to protect the landscape. The governorate enjoys demographic and natural advantages qualifying it to be an attractive tourist area in the Middle East, besides its unique architectural wealth in the historic urban fabrics.

Architecture tells us about itself almost as if it is speaking. It tells us about what is happening and it can symbolically represent an attitude about what is taking place inside (Salama, 2007). Port Said architecture is rich, eclectic and contemporary. The influences of Arab world and Europe still found in Port Said architecture, both on their own or blended with other architectural styles. While the built heritage at Port Said has a recent history compared to other Egyptian cities, the historians and conservationists worry about the future of the historic urban fabrics (Kamal, 2010; Orr, 2001). The city is witnessing a construction boom which is rapidly changing the urban fabric, initiating to growing threats to the historical built heritage. Recently, the city is comprised of seven quarters/districts; however, the historic urban fabric can be distributed mainly into three quarters according to the typology of buildings and usage; the European quarter, the Arab quarter and the garden city of Port Fouad (Figure 1).

• **The European quarter (Al-Sharg).** It has a regular layout in the form of a right-angled triangle, combining European city planning and architectural styles. There is also the Old Lighthouse and Suez Canal Authority Building in an Islamic architectural style.
• **The Arab quarter (Al-Arab).** It has also a regular layout and it is famous with old timber buildings, most of these buildings built toward the end of 19th and early of 20th centuries with local influences and materials.
• **The garden city of Port Fouad.** It is located and established on the Asian bank in 1926. It was planned with a radial layout and designed by the European styles for the employees of the Suez Canal administration (EAIS, 2007; Orr, 2001; Tahoun, 2007). Later, the city witnessed a construction boom that gave birth to a unique architecture merging European city planning with Arab and Islamic influences.
Figure 1: The historic urban fabric within the administrative districts in Port Said: (1) the European quarter; (2) the Arab quarter; and (3) the garden city of Port Fouad (Source: Author).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
In order to fully understand Port Said's built heritage and propose the conservation efforts to ensure the sustainable development, the study first classifies and analyses the architectural styles. The study divides the city's architectural styles into the European and Islamic ones. The findings are based on the field surveys conducted from January to May 2012 and depending on EAIS database with comparative analysis of similar architectural styles found in different Mediterranean cities. The survey includes interviews with the 63 residents, 18 planners and architects, on-site photography, and finally, analytical sketches supplemented by a selection of articles from local newspapers to grant insight into the ongoing discussion developed by the author as a part of the analytical study.

The Influences of European architectural styles
Historic villas and many public buildings of Port Said remain the signs of the Europeans who lived in the city after digging the Suez Canal; the French who brought the Rococo, the British who reintroduced the Gothic, and the Italians who represented the Renaissance, with some exceptions and many hybrid forms. Some of these European styles can be classified in the chronological order as the following points (Figure 2).

- **Gothic Revival.** It is inspired by medieval architecture, but different from earlier styles in that it was more symmetrical and orderly. The style has common features as pointed arched windows with decorative trim; often have towers, battlements and pinnacles. Sometimes this style has a cloverleaf window, steeply pitched roof, gables, decorated verge boards and open cornices with rafters exposed.

- **Colonial Revival.** In the early 20th century, people became nostalgic for the past and architects looked to the past for inspiration and thus began creating designs based on old houses built by English and French (Wilson, 2004).
• **Craftsman.** It appears in some Suez Canal's villas in Port Fouad, with low-pitched roofs, overhanging eaves and exposed roof rafters, but with corner pilasters and porch supported by large columns that extend to the ground level.

• **Art Deco.** The facades are crowned with ziggurats or get narrower towards the top to add a vertical emphasis.

• There are also some other examples built in hybrid forms and influenced by Neo-Renaissance or Beaux-Arts styles, which found in the European quarter in different scales.

Figure 2: European architectural styles, Port Said (Source: Author after EAIS, 2011).
The Influences of Arab and Islamic architectural styles
In addition to the European influence, there are some architectural styles with unique Islamic design and details (Figure 3). It is an example to create a new cultural heritage that blends the past and present in one single entity.

- **Moorish Revival.** It is a commingling of inspiration from the countries that border the Mediterranean. It includes geometric patterns and bright colors, most notably in tiles and courtyards with lush gardens. The Former Law Courts building is a fine example of this style, Port Fouad.
- **Neoclassical styles with wooden structure.** The facades are complicated by the integration of elements, decorated window frames and festoons along with Mashrabiya to create a beautiful dialogue between cultures. Most of these facades are modified to satisfy the local hot-humid climate (Al Shark and Al Arab quarter). Unfortunately, they are sadly neglected and in need of emergency conservation measures with accurate restoration.

![Figure 3: Arab and Islamic architectural styles: (1) The Former Law Courts building with Moorish Revival style; and (2) unique old houses with Neoclassical facade and wooden structure. (Source: Author).](image)

The Mediterranean architectural dialogue
To illustrate this dialogue, based on field survey and interviews, the research chooses the case-study buildings in Port Fouad that have characterized by the European and Islamic architectural styles. The criteria of case selection are based on their representative of characteristics in Port Said’s history, unique architecture products which combining the old colonial revival villas with the Islamic buildings and landmarks. The case-study consists of four components in a chronological order; Suez Canal's villas, The Former Law Courts building, Islamic Compound Mosque and Al-Azaher Experimentally School (Figure 4).

By the mid-1930s, some international architects had made an effort to emphasize Port Fouad identity by using the structures and elements of Islamic architecture. This idea can be seen clearly in the Former Law Courts building by using decorative corbels, green and red tiles as an...
attempt to simulate European villas in some other features, but with Islamic design in terms of its masses and details. The Former Law Courts building with its Moorish Revival architectural style has an inner courtyard with circular arches; the tower corner simulates the Islamic *Muqarnas*. In addition, this Islamic identity was asserted by the end of 1980s by the Islamic Compound Mosque and Al-Azaher experimentally school, Port Fouad. Contemporary regulations and ongoing development of the built environment, due to cultural changes and population growth, have changed the landscape; however, the unique style is still valuable and needs to be conserved.

![Figure 4: Case-study buildings, Port Fouad: (1) Islamic Compound Mosque; (2) Al-Azher Experimentally School; (3) Suez Canal's villas; and (4) The Former Law Courts building (Source: Author).](image)

**ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

**Common Mediterranean design features for future development**

There is an urgent need to develop new appropriate design linkages with the past and at the same time relevant to the present. From the classification of the city’s architectural styles and the case-study analysis, we will notice common-design features found in the historic urban fabrics, and could be as an inspiration for architects (Figure 5). Many buildings characterized by casement windows, full height shutters; board verandas and continuous arcades are adapted to the hot-humid climate and found in different architectural styles. In addition, there are other features found in different buildings types and scales; decorated corbels, brackets, overhanging eaves and attached colored tiles. Also, wood details play a role with railings and decorative handrails. In brief, the Mediterranean architecture in Port Said is a unique collection of various architectural styles which strongly shapes the current urban fabric. This fine collection could be used by architects to sustain the uniqueness of the city and encourage heritage tourism. Recent tourism projects elect some of the Mediterranean architectural styles; *Marhaba* village is a good example.
Challenges facing historic urban fabric

The built heritage shows that although Port Said is less than two hundred years old, it could be considered as a cultural heritage city and one of the significant examples of European and Islamic architecture. While it's unique architecture, a wide range of Mediterranean architectural styles remains poorly documented.

The historic urban fabric is a non-renewable resource that needs to be handled with care to maintain its originality. The conservation of the historic buildings is the way to protect their physical
authenticity that represents a society’s history and root (Mohd-Isa et al., 2011). However, the historic urban fabric encounters various challenges that prevent carrying out more integrated conservation policies. First, there is an essential need for a critical definition and appreciation of the built heritage. Secondly, there is a lack of incorporating urban heritage conservation and management into planning processes to achieve sustainability (Daher, 2010). Although, the architectural landmarks of Port Said entitle the city to become an area of international heritage status, until recently, no legislation protected its historic buildings, especially those less than a hundred years old (Ezzat, 2011; GIS Center, 2010). However, there is an increasing awareness of the importance of preserving historic areas in Egypt, an awareness illustrated in the following sections.

**Government policies and conservation efforts**

When tracing the term conservation in the literature that has been developed over the last two decades one can find that it has several interventions (Salama, 2000). However, recent literature depends on Sutton and Fahmi (2002) that classify the interventions in historical cities into three main categories: restoration, renovation and rehabilitation; extending them beyond the physical setting to the rehabilitation of the society and the economy. They highlight the importance of rehabilitation as a comprehensive understanding to achieve the social objectives of urban conservation. Tweed and Sutherland (2007) claim also that the importance of conservation extends beyond just the physical state of the built environment, arguing for its importance to the community and cultural identity (Tweed & Sutherland, 2007). Obviously, it is more than just an architectural consideration; or in other words, we need the two paralleled conservation approaches, fabric-centered and people-centered, approaches to achieve the holistic strategy.

**Fabric-centered approach: laws and legislation**

The fabric-centered approach is considered the traditional approach of conservation that is based on top-down approaches adopted by the government which is the mostly policy making procedure in Egypt (Gharib, 2011). Theoretically, old urban fabric needs in most cases to be served by the restoration approach based on the application of modern technologies and science. The restoration approach could apply to all old buildings, but in practice it tends to be localized focusing on certain individual significant buildings while neglecting the lesser buildings among the monuments (Sutton & Fahmi, 2002). The restoration work undertakes is the first step towards a comprehensive conservation policy, it should integrate with other conservation policies within a holistic strategy for a continuous sustainable development.

According to the Euro-Mediterranean cultural heritage program (EUROMED), Egypt is one of ten partners that have opportunities to emphasize its cultural heritage (EUROMED, 2007). The last decade witnessed the declaration of two related laws and the initiation of the National Organization for Urban Harmony (NOUH). The two main laws that control urban development activities in heritage areas are law No. 144 (2006) and law 119 (2008). The first prohibits violation of any listed historic building and the second states that the NOUH is the responsible authority for built heritage in Egypt. Until recently, particular in 2006, and according to Egyptian Antiquities Protection Law, there were no legislation protects historic buildings less than a hundred years old from demolition (Gharib, 2010).

According to the Cabinet Decree No. l947 (2009), some of Port Said’s architectural heritage was protected. This decree specified a list of 139 buildings in Port Fouad. In addition, the Cabinet Decree No. l096 (2011l) has specified a list of 505 buildings classified as historic based on their unique architectural styles and age. The total of the registered buildings reached up to 644 buildings and are distributed across the historic urban fabrics (Fig. 6). Also, the Cabinet Decree envisages putting an end to all attempts to demolish such buildings that replaced by high-rises which not only mar the general view, but also overload the existing utilities (EAIS, 2011; Ezzat, 2011; NOUH, 2011; Port Said governorate, 2010).

Most of villas owned by Suez Canal Authority are served by means of conservation policies under its full supervision. On the other hand, despite previous decrees issued by the Cabinet after
a long public campaign, obtaining the demolition permits and violations of listed historic buildings still take place (Khaled, 2012). The government must find a solution that gives the owners a chance to benefit from those buildings, their property after all. The suggestion to engage the local community in the process of identifying and nominating historic buildings for conservation is an important issue rather than mere consultation.

![Image](source)

**Figure 6**: The percentage of registered buildings, Port Said (Source: Author).

**People-centered approach: community participation in built heritage conservation**

Local people must have channels to take part in the city development programs as the demand for participation reflects broader social trends, particularly the quest for sustainable development. In this approach those people become the experts on the situation via a bottom-up or action-oriented methods (Garstka, 2010; Yung & Chan, 2012). In this contest, community participation has become a worldwide issue across the field of heritage conservation with a multi-dimensional perspective to preserve social tradition and culture by fully understanding the needs of the residents (Hiyari, 2012; Yung & Chan, 2012). However, in developing countries, local community participation in the decision-making process is limited (Eshliki & Kaboudi, 2012). Such a perspective does not necessarily mean deprecating fabric-based approaches entirely, but instead seeks to sustain the cultural heritage by converting it to new uses, for new users, following new agenda (Howard & Pinder, 2003).

Recently, the adaptive reuse of historic buildings has increasingly emerged in urban conservation, in the developing countries in particular as an approach for developing historical areas and extends the life of historical patterns (Yung & Chan, 2012). So far, there have only been a few examples of conservation with adaptive reuse of some Suez Canal's Villas, Port Fouad. Their adaptive uses include community associations and health care centers (Table 1). Adaptive reuse helps societies avoid the problem of demolition waste and saves the embodied energy (Yung & Chan, 2012). Sadly, according to these definitions and the results obtained from a field survey; the adaptive reuse in the case-study buildings, Port Fouad, has not achieved its potential to prevent the partial demolition or maintain a good-looking. There is not a holistic approach that promotes heritage management, attracts the participants and stakeholders or indicates sustainable benefits to the public. Despite such examples, there are clear signs that conservation leading to a
long-term economic sustainability is an extremely challenging goal. However, by the increasing awareness this process could be hastened.

Table 1: Examples of some adaptive reuse in the case-study buildings, Port Fouad (Source: Author).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historic building</th>
<th>New uses</th>
<th>Type of new operator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Public library and social enterprises.</td>
<td>Political parties, quasi-public organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Medical and health care centers.</td>
<td>Political parties, private developers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Medical and health care centers.</td>
<td>Governmental organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Social and community association.</td>
<td>Governmental organizations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **International and regional awareness.** In recent years, the field of architectural surveying and representation has taken advantage from the use of information technology (Luca et al., 2011). The governments should encourage the use of this technology for total documenting, full understanding and easy presenting of the complex layering of urban areas and their constituent components in order to communicate with all sectors of society so as to encourage their participation (UNESCO, 2011). According to these recommendations, international and regional awareness are already achieving many positive points to the conservation process in Port Said. The city was selected as one of the first pioneers to study by: (a) the Center for Documentation of Cultural and Natural Heritage (CULTNAT) to document the 19th and early of 20th century architectural heritage of Egypt by using Geographic Information Systems (CULTNAT, 2012); and (b) a French Architecture University concerned with the study of historic buildings with the participation of Alliance Fracaise and EUROMED (EAIS, 2011; GIS Center, 2010).

- **Community efforts and awareness.** The unique architectural wealth, which will hopefully be saved by the Cabinet Decrees in 2009 and 2011, was declared after a long public campaign
titled 'The Civil Campaign for Protecting Port Said's Built heritage'. In 2003, the Port Said-based French Cultural Association started on a documentation project of the city's heritage. In addition, the association organized cultural-awareness workshops to establish an advocacy force to preserve the city's architectural wealth (Mahmoud, 2012). Unfortunately, following Egypt's January 25 Revolution, 2011, the absence of security and law enforcement together along with the absence of municipal supervision have allowed increasing encroachments upon the city's properties. As a result, protesters held signs upward condemning the removal of many historical buildings they are calling for to be listed.

The Cultural Coordination Authority is responsible to raise awareness among the general public about the value of historical sites. Recently, the government has provided some channels for the public and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to participate through the organization of workshops, forums, consultation events with academicians which taken place in Port Said and summarized in the following points:

- Workshops with emphasis on historical city held by Architecture and Urban Planning Department, Faculty of Engineering, Port Said University with the collaboration of other architecture departments in Egypt and Greece. They took place on 21-29 September 2011, Port Said. In addition, other scientific workshops held by the Egyptian Engineers Syndicate on 28 October 2011, Port Said.
- Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), Community Based Organizations (CBOs), activists protest and some of the Port Said residents protested in front of one of the historic buildings, asking to save Port Said's built heritage, September 2012.
- As a result of previous realization, community awareness and the collaboration of CSOs, Port Said Governorate held three conferences from 2010 to 2012 in economics and the future of built heritage in Port Said.

Probably the best way to explain different levels of participation in terms of community participation is through understanding Arnstein’s ‘A Ladder of Citizen Participation’ that was proposed in 1969. The ladder has eight hierarchies each corresponding to a different level of participation: manipulation, therapy, informing, consulting, placation, partnership, delegated power and citizen control. The levels are divided into three levels as citizen power, tokenism and non-participation (Arnstein, 1969; Hiyari, 2012; Yung & Chan, 2012). This ladder can be used to examine the relative balance of power and control between the participants and authority. Some techniques are appropriate for more than one level of participation, but not all stakeholders may want to participate using the same tool, at the time or in the same stage.

Heritage conservation provides a long-term strategy for achieving community improvement and development goals. The extent of public participation in Port Said during the past few years has already begun but still will reap benefits after some time. This recent participation can be classified as at more than Tokenism level in Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizen Participation and hopefully will reach higher levels. However, the scene of participatory approach is not always optimistic; there is a recent debate about community participation. Some opinions stand against this approach and believe that it may have conflicts or may slow down the development, by having various priorities even of those who are not aware of development processes, or those who have their own agendas. However increasing awareness, understanding and responsibility at all community levels will reduce the risk of unwanted issues.

CONSERVATION POLICIES AS A TOOL FOR HERITAGE-BASED SUSTAINABILITY
The integration of social, physical, and environmental dimensions in conservation represents an integrated approach toward successful conservation (Salama, 2000). The social dimension of sustainable development stresses the need to improve the quality of life for all residents. This dimension is most relevant to the need to consider built heritage as a part of sustainable development (Tweed & Sutherland, 2007). By encouraging more bottom-up approaches, the outcomes would have been more appropriate for communities’ enhancement, rather than focusing on an open-air architectural museum and losing the inherited city’s sense (Gharib, 2011).
Port Said has become a modern city with all sorts of services, commercial leisure activities and facilities available for residents, guests and tourists and finally plays a role in enhancing the city's sense of place along with social circumstances, which need to be considered to achieve a higher degree of conservation and sustainability. Heritage conservation should not mean the transformation of cities into an open-air architectural museum but searching for different related aspects of holistic development (environmental, economic, and social) as the basic prerequisites of heritage-based sustainability (Figure 7).

The paper has classified some heritage buildings that are found in Port Said, which tell the story of built development through the current dialogue among Mediterranean architectural styles. However, the ongoing demolition of Port Said's historical buildings has put the built heritage in some hazard. The lack of an effective public participation mechanism can cause future obstacles, thus hopefully after some time along with interactive community involvement the situation will differ and change for the better. Local residents should directly benefit from the various approaches of the heritage conservation.

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

The research shows that built heritage constructed during old periods still telling the residents, visitors and tourists the history of international port after the digging of Suez Canal. In addition, any attempt to substitute new architecture, without taking into account the values that the older forms held; consider a failure to adopt modern attitudes. However, it is evident from the field survey that the historic image of some heritage buildings is under threat due to the unplanned development in the adjacent areas; yet this may directly threaten heritage-based sustainability. By accurate conservation, physical structures cannot only be saved, but can also help to sustain the economy, environment and culture for future generations. One further, conservation policies should be taken after detailed diagnostic and accurate feasibility studies, within the two complementary approaches; top-down and bottom-up. These policies should include pilot projects to encourage community participation along with the coexisting awareness by architects and planners.
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