

Sustainable urban heritage conservation strategies – Case study of historic Jeddah districts

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ABSTRACT: Due to the economic boom in the Saudi kingdom during the seventies, the urban area of the economic capital of the kingdom and its historic main port were subject to a lot of modifications and expansions. Later, during the eighties, the city expanded dramatically to the north and the old city was deserted. During the nineties, preservation and conservation strategies were implemented to maintain the city's culture and heritage. Since then, governmental and civil society organisations have been engaged in maintaining and conserving the historic once-gated old city, known these days as Al-Balad District. Moreover, successful efforts have been made by the Saudi authorities to register the vast majority of the remains of this historic area as human race heritage through the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Culture Organization (UNESCO).

Through this, practitioners and researchers spent a lot of effort in developing and adopting strategies and policies to revive and preserve this heritage urban area. This research, as part of these efforts, aims to evaluate the applied urban conservation strategies and policies for Al-Balad District, to test their success in preserving the heritage while maintaining socio-physical, socio-cultural, and environmental aspects of the local community. To do this, benchmark case studies for developing and conserving historic urban areas were analysed and compared to the applied strategies. The research concludes with recommended policies to achieve the most sustainable conservation strategies in this valuable area that will fulfil the recent needs of the

Keywords: *Old Jeddah, Conservation, Sustainability, Socio-Cultural*

1 INTRODUCTION

During the last few decades, most cities all over the world have been facing the problem of deterioration of their historic districts caused by their rapid socio-economic development. Despite the economic benefits of this rapid development, it has affected the historic parts of the cities in a negative way. It has torn down the old urban fabric and character of the city, (Chohan, 2006) and directed the development towards new districts while neglecting the inner parts of the city, which has resulted in poor services and infrastructure in those parts. As a result, the residents have migrated to new districts, leaving their buildings abandoned, or they have tried to modernise their buildings with unplanned initiatives to cope with the recent requirements. Such initiatives tend to harm the historic districts. In the end, the result is the loss of identity, history and the collective memory of the city. (UNEP, 2016).

It is the permanent contest between new development and heritage conservation which has been the subject of research and study for a long time, in order to find the best solutions to create a balance between the changing needs and conserving the past.

The previous scenario happened in the Saudi cities, especially in Jeddah city, the main port and the second capital of the kingdom, due to the economic boom during the seventies. A lot of modifications and expansions happened to the city in ignorance of the historic Al-Balad District centre, which resulted in the loss of many important historic buildings.

Since then, governmental and civil society organisations have been engaged in maintaining and conserving the old city or Al-Balad District. Moreover, an application to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Culture Organization resulted in recognising the vast majority of the remains of the historic area as human race heritage.

Through this, practitioners and researchers spent a lot of effort developing and adopting strategies and policies to revive and preserve this heritage urban area. This research, as a part of these efforts, aims to evaluate the applied urban conservation strategies and policies for Al-Balad District, to test their success in preserving the heritage while maintaining socio-physical, socio-cultural, and environmental aspects of the local community. To do this, benchmark case studies for developing and conserving historic urban areas will be analysed and compared to the applied strategies. The research concludes with recommended policies to achieve the most sustainable conservation strategies for this valuable area that will fulfil the recent needs of the local community.

1.1 Research Problem

The research is directed to answer the following questions:

- What is the relation between historic conservation and sustainable development?
- What are the strategies of sustainable historic conservation?
- Are the conservation strategies used in Al-Balad District sustainable?

1.2 Research Objectives

The main aim of the research is to develop a sustainable strategy for historic conservation to guide the development in Al-Balad District in Jeddah city. This is achieved through a combination of sub-objectives as follows:

- Clarify the relation between historic conservation and sustainable development.
- Identify the strategies of sustainable historic conservation.
- Evaluate the impact of the applied strategies on the development of the historic area.
- Formulate a set of recommendations for developing Al-Balad District to achieve a sustainable development.

1.3 Research Methodology

The methodology is based on three approaches: theoretical, analytical and applied approach. The theoretical study aims to identify the concept of sustainable historic conservation. This is followed by an analytical study for benchmark case studies of historic conservation to understand the different strategies used in sustainable historic conservation. Then the applied study of Al-Balad District in Jeddah, KSA, and the evaluation of the applied urban conservation strategies and policies for Al-Balad District, to test their success in preserving the heritage while maintaining socio-physical, socio-cultural, and environmental aspects of the local community. Finally, the paper concludes with the recommended policies to achieve the most sustainable conservation strategies for this valuable area that will fulfil the recent needs of the local community.

2 HISTORIC CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY CONCEPT

The general definition of conservation is the protection from loss and depletion for tangible and intangible elements, so historic conservation helps to extend places and values of the past into the present (Alison, 2007). The concept of historic conservation has existed since the 1960s (Elnokaly, 2013) and has become the core of cultural identity, and ownership of the past discourse over the last few decades (Alison, 2007).

The sustainability concept emerged in 1970 as a significant mode of thought in nearly every field, insisting that environmental quality, economic growth, and social and cultural values must be considered for viable long-term development strategies. Since then historic conservation became an important part of the sustainability agenda (Alison, 2007). Although their roots are different, conservation and sustainability share common ground (Elnokaly, 2013). Sustainability in this context means ensuring the continuing contribution of heritage to the present through the thoughtful management of change, responsive to the historic environment and to the social and cultural processes that created it. By creating the balance between change and continuity, between the old and the new, and when history is viewed as continuous change, it can be expanded into culturally responsive strategies that provide an alternative to imported solutions that do not relate to, or grow out of, the existing cultural context. Conservation can contribute to the sustainable environment (Alison, 2007).

2.1 Historic Conservation within the 3-Dimensional Sustainability

The most popular definition of sustainable development is the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) definition 1987, which defines sustainable development as *'the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'* (Chohan, 2005). In this context, it was made clear that sustainable development can only be achieved through the integration between the three main dimensions: environmental, economic and social (United Nation Environment Program, 2016). Historic conservation can lead a way to sustainable development through achieving

environmental upgrading, economic viability and social coherence, by the comprehensive policy for sustainable historic conservation (Chohan, 2005), as will be discussed.

2.1.1 Historic Conservation and Environmental Sustainability

The main focus of the environmental dimension is the reduction of harmful emissions and in reducing the consumption of non-renewable resources (Yung, 2012). So, environmental sustainability depends on the three Rs: 'reducing - reusing - recycling'. In order to make historic conservation environmentally sustainable, one should consider the reuse of the historic resources. Re-using historic buildings is a significant way to practise the three Rs. On a much bigger scale, a new life breathed into old buildings helps to reduce urban sprawl, conserve energy and promote sustainable communities. According to the Life Cycle Assessment (LCA), which examines the energy and material usage during the entire life of the building, it indicates that retaining and rehabilitating buildings is more environmentally friendly than new construction; it diverts waste, and reduces the consumption of materials, energy, and land for new development.

Aspects of traditional designs which take into account natural ventilation, heat retention and cooling treatments in historic buildings (Allison, 2003) can be expanded into environmentally responsive strategies, which provide an alternative to imported solutions that do not relate to, or grow out of, the existing cultural context (Allison, 2011). The same concept can be applied at the scale of urban design. A historic neighbourhood is by default a sustainable neighbourhood. The layout of these neighbourhoods placed stores, schools, jobs, and recreation in close proximity to one another. Encouraging people to walk reduces the dependency on the car and reduces the carbon footprint (Gilderbloom, 2009).

Therefore, the traditional strategies of designing buildings and neighbourhoods can help in developing local design strategies.

2.1.2 Historic Conservation and Economic Sustainability

Economic sustainability seeks to meet the service needs of the general public, particularly the poor, while enhancing the naturalness of the urban environment (Basiago, 1999). Historic conservation can be economically sustainable when it contributes in generating economic resources, and this can be achieved by providing job opportunities. The studies indicated that historic conservation results in more job creation than most other kinds of investments, whether in the restoration process or through the different activities which will exist in the area after development (Gilderbloom, 2009).

2.1.3 Historic Conservation and Social Sustainability

Social sustainability can be defined as a life-enhancing condition within communities, and a process within communities that can achieve that condition (McKenzie, 2004). The town centres, where socio-economic pressure is high, become a driving force, whose victims are working class residents. In order to make sustainable historic conservation, a specific focus has to be given to

social perspectives for the renewal of inner cities. Since 1996, within the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's (UNESCO) Management of Social Transformations (MOST) programme, many studies and initiatives have been made to improve socio-economic and cultural issues while improving the physical environment and buildings in historic districts. The main aim for conservation is how to restore and preserve historic districts as habitable areas where residents can enjoy the benefits of the revitalisation (UN-Habitat, 2016). Figure 1 summarises the strategies of sustainable historic conservation.

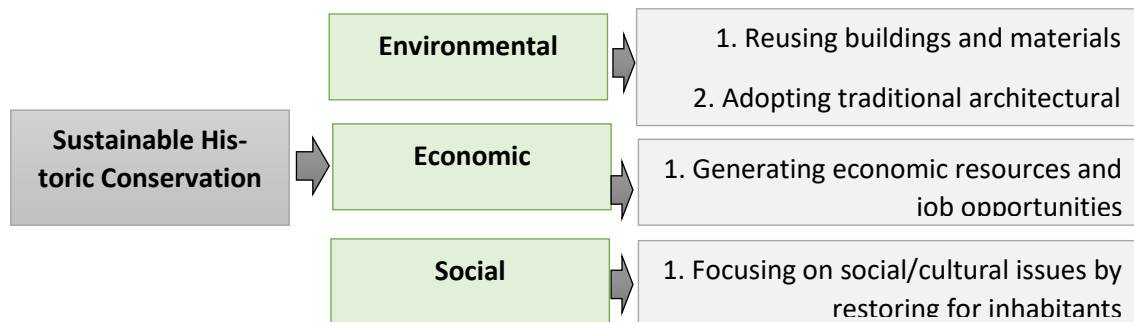


Figure 1 Sustainable historic conservation strategies.

3 BENCHMARK CASE STUDIES

3.1 *Palestine Rehabilitation of Historic Centres*

3.1.1 *Project Background*

During the period from 1991 until 2001, there was an increase in the rate of destruction and the loss of architectural heritage in Palestinian cities. In 1991 Riwaq was established to save Palestine's heritage and restore historic buildings. Riwaq started its programme by restoring chosen single buildings. By 2000, the programme recognised the need to develop its strategies to include the three dimensions of sustainability. The new focus was to make historic conservation an income generator and a source for jobs. From 2001, all renovation projects had large job opportunities, local workers were being trained and then employed in the restoration works, and up to 60% of the construction costs went to the employment of local labourers. The programme aimed to save a threatened cultural heritage in many ways, especially in the case of Israeli occupation. A generation is coming of age that no longer remembers the geography of historical Palestine: they know only a fragmented landscape, where villages are cut off from their rural hinterland by political zones, checkpoints and barriers (Lamprako, 2013).

3.1.2 *Birzeit Rehabilitation of Historic Centres*

Birzeit, located ten kilometres north of Ramallah, is one of the largest towns in the Ramallah area and is significant for its history. The historic centre of Birzeit lies on a small hill on the town's eastern side. The area of the site is about four hectares (ten acres). The historic centre encompasses 108 historic buildings. Most of these buildings date back to the Ottoman era (RIWAQ, 2016).



Figure 2 The location of Birzeit town (Lamprako, 2013).

After the 1967 war, the people of Birzeit abandoned the historic centre and moved to newly developed areas near the new regional road linking Ramallah and the northern village. In 1980 Birzeit University relocated its campus out of the historic centre. In turn, Birzeit lost its central role and had fell prey to rapid urbanisation. Several new housing projects, neighbourhoods, and cities were proposed in the region, causing a reshape of the area. Streets and public spaces were neglected (RIWAQ, 2016).

Riwaq started a five-year project to revive the decaying town of Birzeit (ARCHNET, 2016). Birzeit was chosen to be a pilot project for the revival of 50 other projects for the following reasons: proximity to Ramallah, the seat of the Palestinian authority; proximity to, and historical links with, Birzeit University; the presence of a supportive municipality and a number of active local NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations), including Rozana School; a diverse, but socially and economically disadvantaged, population (Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholics, and Muslims); a largely intact historic fabric, which was compromised by neglect and degradation; and the presence of diverse resources around the town, including archaeological sites, natural springs and olive groves (Lamprako, 2013).

3.1.3 *The Project Vision and Principles*

The project aimed to rehabilitate the historic fabric of the town to create a sense of value, and use this as a basis for revitalisation and development. The goal was to keep people living in the old town, and to create new interest and investment, making it a desirable place to live, work, do business, and pursue leisure and entertainment (Lamprako, 2013). The project vision

was therefore to create a lively centre which is attractive to its residents, investors and visitors, within a mixed-land use context, and which is respectful of its identity and cultural heritage (Aga Khan Award for Architecture, 2013), Riwaq's conservation work involves: a) conservation/upgrading of the public realm; and b) restoration of selected buildings with public/community functions to act as catalysts for further interest and development (Lamprako, 2013)

The development principles included: improving the quality of life for the inhabitants and the users of the centre, the protection of the tangible cultural heritage as a space for socio-economic development, encouraging investment through the creation of key projects to make the place suitable for contemporary life, and promoting the historic centre as a cultural and touristic centre. The objectives of the project are obtained through a wide involvement of the community, which was encouraged from the start, including local NGOs, the private sector, owners, tenants and users (Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage).

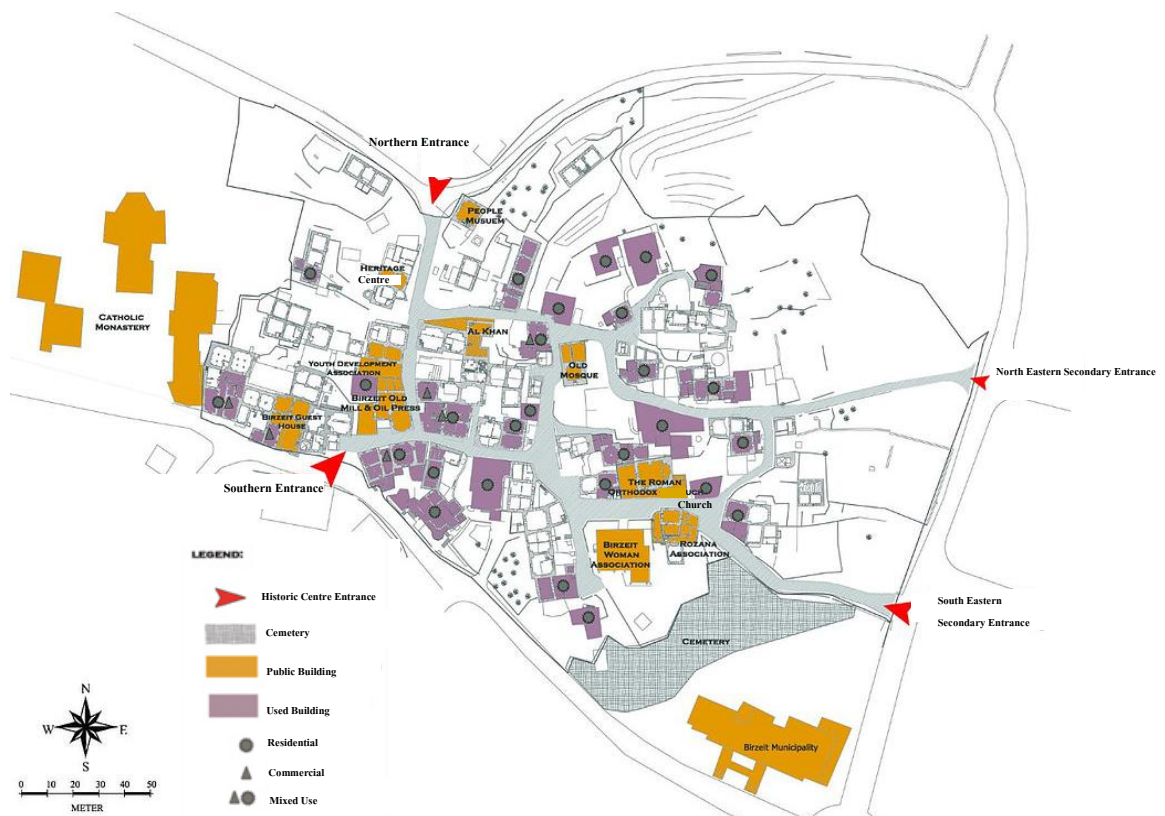


Figure 3 Map for the historic centre of Birzeit (State of Conservation Report, 2015).

3.1.4 The Development Projects

The development projects targeted mainly the real needs of the population. Those projects included: upgrading infrastructure for the existing water system and the provision of a future sewer system; paving streets and the provision of street naming and signage project (those names were based on local memory and narratives); the creation of a heritage walkways and a map; planting trees; the rehabilitation of public spaces and the creation of new ones (streets, courtyards, gardens); the conservation of stone facades and walls lining the public space; and the restoration and reuse of selected buildings, such as for several restaurants, an Internet café, and a science museum devoted to children's science and environmental education as a way to communicate to children the links between past and future, and between built and

natural environments. The Circus School has occupied a former university building; it offers training in modern circus techniques to young boys and girls from across Palestine; also, the Birzeit Guest House, which is used as a small hotel. The old town is slowly becoming a destination for residents, university students, and local and foreign tourists (Lamprako, 2013 & NG Architects 2016).

Figure 4 Birzeit Guest House before and after development (Aga Khan Award for Architecture, 2013).



Figure 5 Birzeit streets before and after development (Lamprako, 2013).

3.1.5 Local Architectural Character, Structure, Materials, and Technology

The development projects respect the architectural and material characteristics of the historic centre. The material used is generally local limestone, lime mortar and lime plaster. Most buildings in the historic centre are one storey in height. The traditional house consists of one or more square modules, each covered by a dome (*qubba*). In addition to houses, the old town includes a number of religious structures, including the Greek Orthodox Church, the Latin Catholic Church and a mosque. The project focused on providing training workshops for local craftsmen; 90% of the labour was local labourers (Lamprako, 2013 & NG Architects 2016).



Figure 6 Local labourers are trained, and worked on the project (Aga Khan Award for Architecture, 2013).

3.1.6 Sustainability Issues

The projects demonstrate several sustainable dimensions: environmental, social, and economic. The dimensions Table below summarises the different strategies and the achieved sustainability objectives.

Table 1 The conservation of historic areas. Response to historic area issues using three sustainability axes.

Sustainability Dimensions	Sustainability Strategies	Birzeit Sustainability Strategies
Environmental	1. Reusing buildings and materials. 2. Adopt traditional architectural and urban design aspects	Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage. (2012). Submitted report to UNICCO property value, <i>Historic Jeddah, the gate to Makkah</i> . State of Conservation Report, November 2015. Available online: http://archnet.org/system/publications/contents/2570/original/FLS3269.pdf?1384764408 . Last accessed June 2016.
Economic	1. Generating economic resources and job opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of job opportunities through training the local labourers and promoting the traditional crafts • Provision of variety of activities which provide job opportunities • Encourage local trades
Social/Cultural	1. Focusing on social/cultural issues by restoring for inhabitants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saving and restoring historic centre to promote awareness of the old social and cultural bonds • Creation of series of open spaces that act as socio-cultural hubs • Using cultural and historic values in naming the streets • Promoting the traditional crafts helps in saving culture

3.2 Conclusion of Regional Experience

After analysing four urban conservation projects (which were awarded some prestigious awards like the Aga Khan and other national and international awards in four different countries), Enokaly and Elseragy were able to conclude that conservation success factors are: *'Public participation and awareness at early stages of the project; an implicit approach of integrated urban conservation; employing many of the concepts underlying cultural sustainability; preserving the basic pattern and morphology of the urban fabric and the use of space; minimal interventions following a scrutinized analysis and assessment of the monuments or buildings involved; a bottom up approach and involving all stakeholders from the beginning of the projects; restoring buildings to their original form using traditional decorative features and motifs. Another key feature that led to success of most of these revitalisation projects is high impact propaganda that helped in mobilizing and selling the idea of rehabilitation to the residents'* (Enokaly, 2013). From analysing the Birzeit rehabilitation project and the literature review analysed projects, sustainable urban conservation of historic towns and cities follows a comprehensive approach, that combines conserving historic buildings and their physical urban context along with the their socio-economic environment. This means utilising policies and programmes to mitigate the local community's needs, such as reducing poverty, increasing employment, and upgrading local communal services. Enabling the local community to positively participate in the planning and management of their area guarantees a sustainable conservation.

In all reviewed previous projects, community participation, training of local professionals and local institution-building, public awareness campaigns were the key factors in achieving sustainable conservation.

4 THE CASE STUDY – AL-BALAD AREA

4.1 *Relative Importance of the Case Study*

Jeddah, with its three million population, is the second largest Saudi city. It belongs to what can be called the Red Sea civilisation. Historic Jeddah consists of urban property extending over an area of seventeen hectares, composing the heart of nowadays Jeddah city. Its architectural style is characterised by the tower houses, decorated by large wooden *Roshans* that were built in the late 19th century by the city's mercantile elite. Figure 6 shows some of these houses with their *Roshans*. The outstanding universal value of the area relates to its unique development of the Red Sea architectural style and to its preserved urban fabric. It can be considered as being the last surviving urban centre of this cultural region that still preserves its original urban fabric. An extraordinary pre-modern urban environment is shown in the map in Figure 7, where tower houses, lower coral stone houses, mosques, Rabats, souks and small public squares compose a vibrant space, inhabited by a multicultural population that still plays a major symbolic and economic role in the life of the modern metropolis.



Figure 6 The architecture style of the area where buildings are decorated by large wooden *Roshans*.

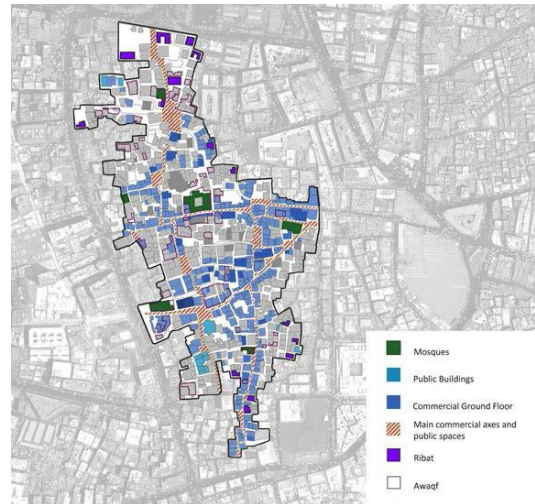


Figure 7 Public spaces and commercial activities within the area.

4.2 Development of the Historical Area

As mentioned before, the historic area that was once a whole gated city, is now only a small district within the city itself. This was the result of several factors affecting the area through the past fifty years. After the old city walls were demolished in 1948, due to the creation of the modern port of Jeddah on reclaimed nearby land, the airport, the new road axis and the high-rise buildings were constructed. Dahab street in the heart of the old city was opened, and later in the 1970s, new types of modern buildings like shopping malls and office buildings were constructed. The old city of Jeddah has lost entire sectors of its original urban fabric, mostly replaced by the new high-rise structures in the Bahr Quarter, next to the original coastline. It should be noted that large areas of the Yemen, Mazloun and Sham quarters are still preserved to their overall original structure. Figure 8 illustrates the rapid growth of Jeddah city and its modern metropolis through the last fifty years.

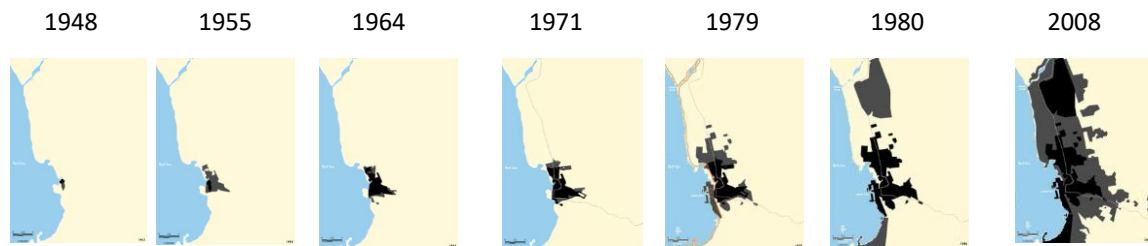


Figure 8 Set of maps show the rapid growth of the metropolitan area of modern Jeddah city through the last fifty years.

The historic area quarters shown in Figure 9 preserve a very evident coherence at urban, architectural, economic and social levels. Therefore, it can be said that the existing historic area, though covering only part of the original walled-in city, contains the ensemble of the attributes that convey its outstanding universal value.

4.3 Urban and Architecture Characteristics

Historic Jeddah is a living urban environment primarily hosting residential and wholesale commercial activities, with some mosques. In the immediate surroundings of the area some traditional and cheap hotels and accommodations for pilgrims can be found. The traditional infrastructures created for the reception of pilgrims, the *ribats*, and the ground floors of private houses, that used to be rented out to pilgrims, are now mostly empty or replaced by other commercial activities. The historic mosques within the area perimeter have maintained their function and role for the community and most of their original features.

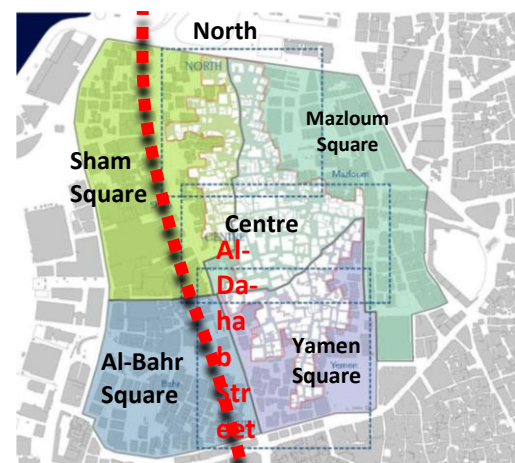


Figure 9 Historic Jeddah quarters.

4.4 Administrative Structure

Since the 1980s the four quarters have been reduced to two districts, but the traditional *Umdahs* continue to exist and to play an important role for the residents. Though contemporary Saudi society has also developed other management administrative structures, both at the local and central levels, this traditional management system is still active and has even been revitalised in the recent past.

4.5 Cultural and Economic Life

It is a traditional urban environment, where there are still concentrated the headquarters of century-old economic enterprises, retail shops, traditional souks, small cafés, popular restaurants, street food sellers and semi-legal fruit market stalls. A surprisingly rich human environment exists where Yemeni, Sudanese, Somali, Pakistani and Indian immigrant workers buy and sell their products to Saudi and non-Saudi clients in crowded 'traditional' souks, as shown in Figure 10. This is an area where even the food shows multiple influences: Indian spiced rice and Red Sea colourful fishes, as in the past, constitute the menu of many traditional restaurants where old immigrants, newcomers and Saudi clients convene in the hot evenings.



Figure 10 Historic Jeddah crowded 'traditional' souks.

4.6 Social Character

The major transformation that occurred in the last 50 years in Jeddah, is that poor newcomers have progressively replaced the rich local families who themselves do not reside anymore in their traditional family houses, but who look for modern comfort in the rich suburbs. Though this phenomenon is extremely common in many other cities, there are two specificities that distinguish historic Jeddah:

- 1) Most of the original merchant families that abandoned their houses have often kept their headquarters of their commercial companies in their old properties.
- 2) The poorer newcomers that have progressively replaced the merchant families are not coming from the local rural areas, as in other countries, but from neighbouring Islamic poor countries.

These two specificities created the city identity, a merchant and multicultural city, at the social and economic levels. The functional and social identity of the area is therefore fully authentic, even though the city, like any living urban environment, has continued to evolve and change, mirroring the evolution of the Saudi society (Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage, 2012).

5 ANALYSIS OF PRESENT STATUS OF THE AREA

In its present state, the urban environment is no longer able to provide the comfort required by the Saudi families. The replacement of its original residents that moved to the rich modern suburbs has gradually transformed the heart of the city into a low-class ghetto, mostly rented out to poor foreign immigrants. Favours in turn the accelerated deterioration and the collapse of many of its traditional coral masonry houses.

The area has deteriorated with the passage of time, by the transformation of their inhabitants, and with the fragility of their structure system. Pictures in Figure 11 show the condition of some of the buildings of the historic area. Some of the buildings have been changed by modern additions and some in-depth transformations that affected their form and substance, as shown in Figure 12.



Figure 11 Deteriorated buildings and urban fabric in historic Jeddah.



Figure 12 Buildings facing modifications that affect their condition and style.

6 CONSERVATION EFFORTS

The historic area of Jeddah city was subject to many studies, development and conservation projects. Being listed on the World Heritage List inspired even more efforts from the private sector, municipality and Saudi Commission of Tourism and Antiquities (Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage, 2012).

- The urban regulations approved by the municipality in 2012 set a new, much needed legislative framework, providing the legal tools permitting the control of the speculative moves that have caused the loss of many historic buildings in the past. The map in Figure 13 presents the preserved area, in addition to its surrounding buffer that was divided into four different categories. Each of these buffer areas has its own building regulations.

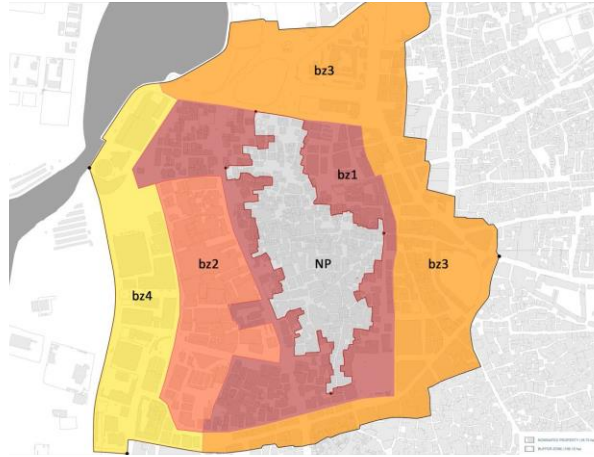


Figure 13 Subdivision of historic area according to urban regulations.

- Cultural and seasonal activities managed by the SCTA to raise the awareness of the importance of the cultural value of the area. Traditional shows are performed and local street food is served to native and foreign visitors. Plazas and famous buildings are lit and opened to give a festival atmosphere. Figure 14 illustrates the annual festival atmosphere.



Figure 14 The annual festival of traditional activities in the historic area.

- The renewal efforts of the SCTA and the municipality of Jeddah for the conservation and restoration projects of main houses and mosques, under the joint control of the municipality and the SCTA, are actively countering the decay processes. The picture in Figure 15 shows Al Shafee' mosque during its restoration process.



Figure 15 Restoration of Al Shafee' mosque.

- The urban fabric of the listed area is in relatively good condition and the deterioration impact is being tackled by the concerned authorities, as per the preservation strategy proposed in the management plan of the area. Lighting was replaced with decorative lighting, road pavement was replaced by traditional tiles and street furniture was replaced with designed ones.



Figure 16 Improving built environment conditions to help conservation efforts.

7 ASSESSING CONSERVATION EFFORTS OF THE AREA IN THE SHADOW OF SUSTAINABILITY

- Working sites, directed by Jeddah professionals and municipality engineers with the support of foreign consultants, have used compatible traditional materials and techniques, and have been an opportunity to redevelop traditional constructive skills.
- Existing commercial activities did not enrich the social life of the area.
- Facilitating an economic base will help in achieving sustainable conservation and regeneration of the Jeddah historic area.
- Lack of adequate services and failing to accommodate modern communication and transportation is still preventing native families from returning permanently.
- Cultural activities increase the sense of belonging and ownership for Jeddah's inhabitants.
- Municipality efforts in regenerating the urban environment along with the conservation efforts is very useful to maintain a sustainable conservation.

8 CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Regional successful interventions in conserving historic centres started from an overall vision, but they did not proceed as per the planned schemes. Intervention efforts should be based on incremental development as a response to tangible requirements, perceived from real site experience. The decision-making process should be based on the assessment of the local needs and requirements. An overall strategic vision concerned with heritage conservation and urban regeneration can result in achieving sustainable development.

Heritage buildings conservation and restoration should be integrated with their urban context sustainable regeneration, combining interactively many different disciplines. Conserving heritage is a good tool for sustainable tourism. Utilising cultural activities would enhance the spirit of belonging and ownership of the inhabitants. The conservation initiative gives to local inhabitants a strong sense of belonging and ownership of their social, cultural and historical values.

Involving the local authorities, local community and different interest groups is very important for the success of heritage conservation. The community involvement in any urban heritage conservation is a general expression which needs comprehensive strategies for preservation. Despite legal and institutional framework importance, local community and local authorities play the key role in achieving sustainable results in the urban development. Authorities should spend effort in involving the community and motivating other stakeholders, community professionals and volunteers to work for sustaining their heritage that could be a symbol of pride and give a sense of belonging and ownership to the coming generations.

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