The Urban Regeneration of Historic Cairo
Towards a Management Plan for Conservation and Regeneration
The UNESCO technical assistance project

Daniele Pini
Department of Architecture, University of Ferrara (Italy)
Scientific Coordinator of the UNESCO Urban Regeneration of Historic Cairo Project

April 26, 2012
World Bank Headquarters, Washington, DC
UNESCO WHC - Urban Regeneration Project for Historic Cairo

Support the Egyptian authorities to:

- Outline a conservation and rehabilitation strategy based on a clear definition of the WH site and its buffer zone to preserve and enhance the heritage values and regenerate the physical and socio-economic environment.
- Establish a management system for the WH site with the contribution of all the concerned local administrations, based on a new and more effective institutional set-up and legal framework.
- Create an appropriate and shared information platform for urban conservation.
- Launch public awareness raising initiatives to promote and disseminate information about Historic Cairo.
The UNDP rehabilitation strategy (1997) and its implementation

The conservation projects carried out under the supervision of SCA since the late '90s (Historic Cairo Project).
The UNDP rehabilitation strategy (1997) and its implementation

Conservation projects carried out under the supervision of SCA since the late ’90s (Historic Cairo Project).
Current urban rehabilitation projects (SCA)
Current urban rehabilitation projects - El Mu’izz Street
Current urban rehabilitation interventions - El Mu’izz Street
Current urban rehabilitation interventions - El Mu’izz Street
Current urban rehabilitation projects - Gamaleya Street

Ruined areas in Jammaliya that affect the urban quality of the old city, most of them are owned by the Ministry of Waqfs.

The area around Al Hakim Mosque 12 acres with partially ruined structures of old wikalas to be transformed into new hotels with respect of the historic character of Cairo.

Wikalat Bab An Nasr Partially Ruined
Current urban rehabilitation projects - Gamaleya Street
Al Azhar Park and Derb Al Ahmar rehabilitation

An integrated project of urban regeneration, funded by the Agha Khan Trust

- The creation of the park on a former large waste disposal mound, as an opportunity for heritage preservation, environmental improvement, social enhancement, local development;
- The restoration of the city walls as a complement of the park, and an opportunity to create new connections with Derb El Ahmar;
- The regeneration of Derb El Ahmar as an opportunity to improve housing conditions and develop new activities linked to the conservation and rehabilitation interventions.
Al Azhar Park and Derb Al Ahmar rehabilitation
The Al Azhar Park
The Al Azhar Park and the Medieval Wall restoration
The Medieval Wall restoration and the Derb rehabilitation
The Derb Al Ahmar rehabilitation

for the local community.

Axonometric view of the proposed new scheme around Mahruq gate, which calls for a new connection between the nearby Midan Aslam and the Azhar Park.
(see also pgs. 52/53)
The Derb Al Ahmar rehabilitation

The monuments restoration
The Derb Al Ahmar rehabilitation

Housing rehabilitation
The Derb Al Ahmar rehabilitation

Cultural and training facilities
The Derb Al Ahmar rehabilitation

Public spaces rehabilitation
The Derb Al Ahmar rehabilitation
The Derb Al Ahmar rehabilitation … after January 2011
Historic Cairo WH site: the conservation issues

Important achievements in monuments restoration but …

• Lack of specific protection measures for the historic fabric: widespread renovation plot by plot
• Decrees of demolition and street realignment: abandon of old non listed buildings
• Total lack of control on building activities (after January 2011): diffusion of illegal high rise renovation and new building interventions
• Overall and progressive decay of liveability and environmental conditions (poor housing, lack of infrastructures and services, uncontrolled waste disposals …)
• Urgent need to rehabilitate and revitalise different derelict sections of the historic city
Historic Cairo WH site: the conservation issues

Housing renovation with street realignment and housing dilapidation (decrees of demolition)
Historic Cairo WH site: the conservation issues
Definition of the Historic Cairo WH site and its Buffer Zones

- Revise the Statement of the O.U.V. and the limits of the WH site Core Area and its Buffer Zone
- Identify Conservation Zones within the Core Areas, based on the assessment of the heritage value of the urban fabric, and establish some basic protection measures

*The “official” delimitation of the WH site by the S.C.A. (2007)*
The initial "delimitation" of the WH site (1979) and the ongoing interventions in the so called "buffer zone"
Definition of the Historic Cairo WH site and its Buffer Zones

Cairo: delimitation of the WH site based on the historical analysis

1807 - 1888

1888 - 1948

1948 - 2006
Cairo: delimitation of the WH site based on the historical analysis

The proposed perimeter

The difference with the official perimeter
Cairo: the assessment of the urban fabric heritage values

Presence of buildings (listed and not listed) of architectural value

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0-1</th>
<th>No or rare buildings or parts of buildings with architectural merit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Image of Al Mansoueya" /> <img src="image2.png" alt="Image of Al Sheikh Rihan" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1-2</th>
<th>Some scattered buildings or parts of buildings with architectural merit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Image of Souk El Selah" /> <img src="image4.png" alt="Image of Clot Bey" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2-3</th>
<th>Street fronts, groups or ensembles of buildings of architectural merit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><img src="image5.png" alt="Image of El Gamaleya Haret el Sananeer" /> <img src="image6.png" alt="Image of Al Mushki" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cairo: the assessment of the urban fabric heritage values

Persistence of historic street fronts alignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0-1</th>
<th>Historic street fronts systematically modified by recent realignments with setback of reconstructed buildings preventing the perception of the historic street fronts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kamel Sediky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kamel Sediky al Saban</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1-2</th>
<th>Frequent recent setback and recesses of reconstructed building not completely preventing the perception of the historic street fronts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ismail Abu Tabel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Horec Borg Ali</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2-3</th>
<th>Few or no recent setbacks and recesses and persistence of historic street alignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>El Mueiz st, Karkhuda, Beshtak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hamzawy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cairo: the assessment of the urban fabric heritage values

Persistence of historic land subdivision pattern

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0</th>
<th>Historical and traditional land subdivision pattern completely altered by inconsistent building redevelopments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Historical or traditional land subdivision pattern preserved or modified but keeping the same &quot;texture&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Azhar St., Hussein Ghourya Side, Al Geish
- Darb El Lathana, Al Karka Al Murgaseya
Cairo: the assessment of the urban fabric heritage values

Compactness and continuity of the urban fabric
Cairo: the assessment of the urban fabric heritage values

Persistence (or presence) of community oriented activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0-1</th>
<th>No presence of community oriented activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|     | ![Image](image1)
|     | ![Image](image2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1-2</th>
<th>Few scattered community oriented activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|     | ![Image](image3)
|     | ![Image](image4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2-3</th>
<th>Community oriented activities forming “spines” or “cores”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|     | ![Image](image5)
|     | ![Image](image6)
The assessment of the urban fabric heritage values

Thematic Markets: Fresh Food

Activity Setting (b)
Street vending – vegetables

NON-RXIO feature elements:
Mohamed Abdi Street flanked by Tablita Market on one side and Talkeyat Abu Al-Dhahab on the other. The latter, a monument, is not currently in use and acts as an anchor to the appropriation exercised by street vendors; they set up their merchandise and pile up the waste along the sides of the monument.

RXIO-FIXED feature elements:
Street vendors set up their baskets propped up at a height suitable for clients to pick and choose. They have a scale for weighting that may be shared by more than one vendor, sometimes a small stool and/or a piece of cloth. They also often litter the space around them, usually away from the RoW, with waste such as discarded leaves and stems or packaging. The display baskets are usually themselves, the territorial markers of the appropriated space and sometimes additional storage baskets are utilized. Some do not leave territorial markers overnight, but most of them do and simply cover them with a cloth.

ACTORS:
Vendors: Street vendors mostly come from Giza rural areas.
Clients: Shoppers from Al-Darb Al-Ahmar northern shakhs and nearby Al-Ghourniya coming between 12:00 noon and 3:00 pm to buy ingredients to cook lunch, and later starting 6:00 pm to prepare dinner. All passersby are potential shoppers.
Passersby: Mostly residents of Al-Darb Al-Ahmar, students in Azhar University and some shoppers from Al-Ghourniya Market who know about the existence of the market.

RULES:
The street vendors situated along Mohamed Abdi Street along the boundary of the Tablita Market are licensed and pay rent to the Market Administration in the District. Those across from the market along the monument are not licensed; they are perceived to restrict the RoW and may deter clients from entering the market itself. Tablita market vendors did not perceive conflict when street vendors sold complementary items such as herbs or spices, but when those vendors increased in number and started selling the same vegetables as inside market vendors, there was perceived conflict.
The assessment of the urban fabric heritage values

Clustered Workshops

History of Qassabet Radwan

Qassabet Radwan is the name of all the area around the palace of Radwan Bey, who founded close to his palace the covered street known as the tannery-makers' Bazaar 'Kheyaimey'. Shops, apartment units, two small mosques, and a school. Handicraft workshops have filled the void created by the collapsed historic mansions. The historic building remains in ruins and suffers neglect by authorities. It is squatted in by a family and it is said not to be connected to electricity. In the vacant area of the ruins, 23 workshops and 11 storage spaces were built incrementally. There are different types of workshops, such as carpentry, wood carving, bead pods, shoe making, 'kheyaimey', printing, leather, and handmade glass and mirror carving. Some carpentry workshops use heavy machinery that bothers other workshops. The craftsmen themselves in the Qassabet see the potential for using the ruined monument as a café and restaurant for tourists, and realize that their handicrafts can be a real attraction as there are some traditional as well as innovative handicrafts. They expect many tourists and local visitors to be interested in watching handmade production as long as it does not include heavy machinery or much noise.

Relation to Surroundings

Qassabet Radwan is an enclosed space with a special entrance that is totally isolated from its surroundings, although adjacent RoW Al-Muzif street is extremely public and tourists come to it since it includes the 'kheyaimey' bazaar, and Bab Zblela. This spine is considered a pedestrian route in which cars and small trucks could enter if needed for transportation of merchandise.

Activity Settings within the Pattern

Setting (c1):

Case Study: Qassabet Radwan

Modality of Appropriation

Qassabet Radwan itself can be considered an appropriation of space since workshops were built incrementally around the ruins that serve as an anchor. The masqala structure exists with 33 spaces around 3 stand-and-alleys and a central space is evidence of an incremental modality of appropriation ruled solely by providing access ventilation is insignificant and maintaining use of space is the rule of themselves. Workshops appropriate space in front of them or on both sides of narrow passages according to the affordances of the space. They have also created the potential for vertical expansion, as there are stairs in different parts of the structure that lead to the roofs of the workshops.
The assessment of the urban fabric heritage values

Moulid: Temporary Residence
Activity Setting (a) Living enclosure

**FIXED feature elements:**
In front of the mosque the outdoor stretch of tiled space affords the space needed, and protection from passersby, that encourages it appropriation for setting up temporary residence. The talaa inside the mosque serves this activity setting as well, before renovation it used to be flanked from both one side by a short wall and from the other by a small fenced garden, not it has short walls designed for seating at both ends.

**NON-FIXED feature elements:**
Previous and current design of the tiled forecourt serve as props against which wooden poles are set up. In the traditional shelter, or "sowon" made to form one big enclosure, under which pilgrims sleep, eat and sit most of the day. This zone remains quiet, like a refuge, from the rowdy Moulid activities that dominate the rest of the square.

**ACTORS:**
- Pilgrims: Coming from villages and small provincial towns, they put up camp in front of Ashur Square and go to Fatima Al-Nabawyya shrine for short visits.
- Residents/business owners: Some of them assist with in-kind contributions to the setting up of the traditional shelter and/or of the daily undone of the pilgrims. Others make an extra income and ask the pilgrims for a rent.

**RULES:**
The pilgrims bring cooking equipment, blankets and other support items but also depend a lot on charity of surrounding residents and business owners for their daily provisions during the days of the Moulid. Some residents and business owners see the Moulid pilgrims as an opportunity for charity but others see this outdoor camping as unseemly and negatively affecting the cleanliness of the square.
The assessment of the urban fabric heritage values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qism</th>
<th>Shyakha Name</th>
<th>Street Code</th>
<th>Street</th>
<th>Criteria Grading</th>
<th>Av. Shyakha</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AL Azbakeya</td>
<td>CLOT BEY [ref. A.1]</td>
<td>A.1_01</td>
<td>Clot Bey</td>
<td>2 2 1 2 2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A.1_02</td>
<td>Al-Shomboky</td>
<td>2 3 1 2 2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A.1_03</td>
<td>Bab el Bahr</td>
<td>1 2 1 2 2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A.1_04</td>
<td>Kamel Sedky</td>
<td>1 1 0 2 2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We are here on the border of the defined core area, on the old path that connected the city with the port of bulq and with the river bank, where once was therefore located the water gate or the sea gate (Bab el Bahr). Nowadays the shyaka is still a "gate" to the city since its northern border opens on the square of Cairo main station: Ramsis. Now in the area, aside from a consistent number of small size hotels and hostels, is located the wider wholesale of stationary items in the Historic city. The Shyaka also witness one of the historic opening of new streets: Clot Bey, which integrity and typical features are still integral today. Clot Bey is in fact caracterized by covered pedestrian passageways along the buildings with arcades integrated in the groundfloors. Generally spaking, Clot bey excluded the level of integrity in the Shyaka is lower on the spines and higher in the inner fabric.
Assessment and conservation zoning with protection measures
Work in progress: establish a shared information platform

Current tasks:
- Drafting a socio-demographic and socio-economic profile of the population;
- Assessing the housing condition;
- Investigating the traffic and environmental issues;
- Integrating the existing database on “listed buildings” with a systematic information on the urban fabric (buildings and open spaces).
Work in progress: sector studies

Population density in 2006 (red=highest, green=medium, blue = lower)
Work in progress: sector studies

Illiteracy rates in 2006 (red=highest, green=medium, blue = lower)

Unemployment rates in 2006 (red=highest, green=medium, blue = lower)
Work in progress: sector studies

Building Conditions:
- Good: 44%
- Deteriorating: 14%
- Poor: 35%
- Partial Ruin/Total Ruin: 7%

Type of Construction:
- Traditional: 38%
- Modern: 46%
- Mixed: 9%
- Partial Ruin/Total Ruin: 7%

ADAA Survey Results in 2005-2006
Work in progress: sector studies
Work in progress: sector studies
Next steps: Strategic and Management Planning

- Definition of a strategy of urban conservation to be adopted for Historic Cairo, in coordination with all the concerned administrations, which should be based on the assessment of recent and on-going rehabilitation programmes and respond to the most critical regeneration issues (action projects)
- Definition of a Management System (or Management Plan) to be adopted in order to implement the urban conservation strategy, focussing on governance and tools (regulatory, technical, financial …)
- Implementation of Protocols of Cooperation established with the different governmental administrations concerned by the development of the Project
Next steps: dissemination and awareness raising

- Implementation of a GIS for the collection and dissemination of the information from the field survey (i.e. photographic documentation of the “streets of Cairo”)
- Initiatives aimed at promoting the involvement of academic and professional groups, residents and larger public to diffuse information and increase awareness about the Project’s goals and objectives
Application of the UNESCO recommendation on Historic Urban Landscape to the Management Plans of World Heritage Cities

• Clear identification of the property and definition of its Outstanding Universal Values
• Identify the Challenges and Opportunities, to define a “strategic vision” for the WH site with reference to the national, regional, urban context
• Evaluate, complement and integrate the existing tools; define the new tools to be created (planning, financial, legal …)
• Develop actions to improve research, documentation and capacity building
• Define an appropriate and efficient governance system, with clear responsibilities for the management of the WH site, including the stakeholders consultation and community involvement to define priorities and action plans
• Establish an efficient monitoring system, with accountable indicators considering the physical, socio-economic and environmental achievements