

Towards heritage design guidelines for new constructions in Heritage districts in Egypt

Case study: El-Mokhtalat District in Mansoura city

Raghda Abdel Kader Mahmoud

Demonstrator at Architectural Engineering, Future Higher Institute for Engineering and Technology in Mansoura, Egypt

Mohanad Ali Mohamed Fouda

Assistant Professor at Architectural Engineering, faculty of Engineering Mansoura university, and a Head of Architectural engineering, Future Higher Institute for Engineering and Technology in Mansoura, Egypt

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Abstract:

Mansoura city which is located at Northeast of Cairo is considered one of the Egyptian cities that has urban heritage sites and heritage assets that resulted from different periods from the date of the city's construction in 1219 until the mid of 20th century, as well as, the fusion of the cultures of the Egyptian and the foreign communities who had been accommodated the city when it was an intermediary center for the trade of agricultural crops in the Delta region. The unique urban heritage fabric of the city center of Mansoura has the features of the both of European architectural styles and traditional Egyptian architectural styles. Until September 2019, Mansoura city has 142 listed heritage buildings that have been listed by the ministry of culture and three monuments listed by the ministry of antiquities. The city also has urban heritage sites such as El-Sekka ElGedida, El-Hossinyia, El-Abbassi and El-Mokhtalat districts.

Recently, the urban fabric of these urban heritage sites has been threatened by building new constructions in these sites, that their facades have architectural designs don't compatible with the heritage character of the heritage site or the adjacent heritage buildings. This distorts the character of the heritage areas as a whole, cuts off their homogeneity, distorts their distinctive features, and losses their values. The inventory Committee of Ad-dakahlyia governorate has recommended to list two heritage areas in Mansoura city as heritage sites (one of them is El-Mokhtalat district that is the case study of the research), the recommendations of the committee have included developing design guidelines for the new constructions within these areas after the approval of listing these sites.

The research highlights on the problem of designing the façades of the new constructions in the heritage sites in Egypt, the research adopted El-Mokhtalt district in Mansoura as a case study and a model for the heritage sites in Egypt. The unique values of these sites require an appreciation and understanding of the structure of the urban heritage fabric, good management, and practice in designing the façades of the new constructions by set design guidelines for them, that ensure preservation of the homogeneous of the character of the heritage site and the protection of the unique spirit of the site from any unplanned interventions that may threaten it or cause visual disharmony of it or causing to loss its values and features.

The research aims to preserve the heritage character of the heritage sites and its visual harmony by reviving the elements of the heritage architectural styles in the facades of new buildings by developing heritage design guidelines that can be used for new constructions.

The research highlights on the basic rules of the new constructions within the heritage districts, then, the research conducted a comparative study of the approved design guidelines for three heritage sites (Khedive Cairo district, Alexandria city, Port Fuad city) of total eight heritage sites that have been set recently for the first time in Egypt by the national organization for urban harmony (NOUH) which has been affiliated to the Ministry of culture. The research selects these three sites because they are located in different sized cities, they are similar in being waterfronts "river Nile for khedive Cairo, Mediterranean Sea for Alexandria, Suez Canal for Port Fuad", and most of their heritage buildings belonging to European architectural styles which also are characterized the heritage buildings of El-Mokhtalat district in Mansoura that is also a waterfront overlooking the river Nile.

The outputs of the comparative study has applied to the case study (El-Mokhtalt district) after analyzing the design and architectural elements of the facades of its heritage buildings to set design guidelines of new constructions within the district such as (buildings' heights, buildings' ratio, setbacks, façade architectural styles, the shape of openings, corbels, handrails, building's roof, columns, the pediment of facades, and ornaments) to preserve the heritage character and achieve visual harmony of the heritage district.

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