

The Character of Old Jeddah and Place Identity: Harmonizing New Developments with the Historic District and the Outlook for the Future

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Abstract

A recent concern in urban development is how old traditional areas of cities could be developed to meet changing functional and technical needs while at the same time preserving the character and identity of historic districts. The purpose of the research is to investigate how new developments, rehabilitation and improvements of the built environment can be fitted into the Historic District of Old Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. What are the present concerns and the issues that need to be addressed? Old Jeddah was first developed in 646 AD (26 AH) by the third caliph 'Uthman ibn 'Affan as a sea port serving pilgrims traveling to Makkah. In 2014, it was registered by the UNESCO as a world heritage site. This research is based on field investigation. Fieldwork has focused on the review of the present conditions of the built environment in Old Jeddah, the character of the town form and how recent developments and building practices are made within the urban context of the Historic District. This research finds that the built environment in the Historic District of Jeddah is deteriorating. Recent developments within the urban fabric of the old area and on sites that are located in the immediate vicinity of the historic area, lack harmony with the identifiable character and quality of the traditional setting. Conclusions of this research emphasize that the development, conservation, and rehabilitation of the Historic District in Jeddah, and in other urban areas that houses historic sites in general, need to protect the character of the urban fabric and the identity of traditional places.

Keywords: Jeddah, historic district, identity, conservation, rehabilitation.

Introduction

Cities change physically as their economics undergo a transformation. In many Third World countries this creates conflict between new development projects and old, often traditional, areas. The conservation of historical and cultural heritage is occasionally accorded low priority and urban development policies tend to focus on property development (Engelhardt 1997; Stovel 2002). The supply of commercial spaces, especially in central business districts, to meet the needs of city dwellers occasionally calls for urban renewal and redevelopment of historic districts that are mostly located at central urban locations. In many cases, this leads

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to the demolition and replacement of old areas by commercial buildings, hotels, and various urban amenities. Across Saudi Arabia, many towns and settlements contain a traditional core, the relic of pre-modern urbanism. Often neglected and marginalized, these historic areas represent heritage districts. These places were formerly complete urban entities in their own right before the 20th century and later, after the oil boom in the mid-1970s (Wynbrandt 2010: 233), urbanization engulfed them, took over many of their functions and undermined their importance. Historically, a number of these habitats including Old Jeddah were walled and displaying distinct Arabic-Islamic settlements.

Following the establishment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932 (Wynbrandt 2010: 187) and during the early 1950s and 1960s many traditional settlements started to become sub-sections of new expanded cities, often sidetracked as the indigenous quarter, while economic, administrative and cultural functions moved to the newly emerging urban areas. Deprived of their earlier centrality and gradually abandoned by the local middle-class population, traditional areas became marginalized and neglected. In a number of cases, especially in urban areas, low-income people flow in as middle classes flow out to modern neighborhoods. In the Historic District of Jeddah, this movement has resulted in an increase of population. Overpopulation has led to the sub-division of residential buildings and the associated degradation of buildings and living conditions.

Literature review in the field of city assembly explains that cities should have a strong, independent image, character and identity for which individuals can develop strong identification and affection to attract and hold people (Lynch 1961, 1981; Oktay 1998; Mohamed 2014). Buildings and open spaces in urban areas include much of what one can see in the built environment. These elements should be taken into consideration with their own specific sets of functions in order to achieve a more identified human setting especially when one seeks to fit new buildings in the vicinity of old settings. Public outdoor spaces are major functional and visual components in determining urban quality; they mirror the culture of inhabitants and reflect the wellbeing of inhabitants. Therefore, the first step in studying human settlements starts by analyzing them. When development projects target places in old areas, historic districts, retention of traditional urban scale and existing urban fabric is crucial in the quest for quality.

Since the oil boom of the mid-1970s, the attention of the government of Saudi Arabia and the private sector has been focused on the desire for “modernization”. As a result, anything old or in a traditional style was considered of little value and was either demolished or ignored. In addition, the rapid growth in the size of most cities in Saudi Arabia along with the rapid transformation of cities’ economies has resulted in parallel damage in the spatial pattern of land uses, and inner cities started to become valuable for land uses other than housing. As a result, economic pressures led to continuous efforts to eliminate the older, often traditional, housing stock. Traditional areas that occasionally were located in the heart of cities in Saudi Arabia and included residential quarters received little attention. Gradually,

such areas started to decline, with their physical, social and economic functions disrupted and their present potential contribution to the cities' overall housing stock undermined. However, such areas often represent a unique historic link with the past, a physical manifestation of the social and cultural traditions of Saudi Arabia. Therefore, there is a need to study such areas. This also entails that historic areas need to be protected to continue to stand as a reference in the development of contemporary cities. On the other hand, the demolition and improper development of historic districts deprive societies of the opportunity to learn from the wisdom of building in traditional communities. One critical negative result of ill-adapted approaches to development in the vicinity of historic districts is a loss of identity.

Various authors have discussed issues of concern in the study of the Historic District in Jeddah. Darwish (2017) has explained the morphology of residential buildings and the patterns of use of indoor space and lessons that can be learned from the traditional design of such buildings. Issa (2006 in Arabic) has discussed sustainability and the role of using a human-friendly approach in future efforts at rehabilitation that aim to develop the Historic District. Al-Shahri and Corbell (2016) have presented a descriptive and nostalgic explanation of the spatial and visual experience that can be observed during visits to Old Jeddah. They stressed the necessity of encouraging visitors and tourists to visit the site as a living traditional context. In comparison, this research aims to highlight the historic significance of the Historic District and emphasize the important role of promoting place identity as an inseparable component in the development of the built environment in the vicinity of Old Jeddah. Emphasis is placed on the discussion of conservation and planning approaches. This approach subscribes to the theoretical and philosophical debate in architecture and tries to bridge the gap between theory and practice in the development of the Historic District and its immediate surroundings.

Urban Development and Place Identity

Lynch (1981) defines identity as the extent to which a person can recognize or recall a place as being distinct from other places. In the built environment, the need for place identity, the distinguishing character of a place, was explained by Ralph (1976: 147) as follows:

A deep human need exists for associations with significant places. If we choose to ignore that need, and follow the forces of "placelessness" to continue unchallenged, then the future can only hold an environment in which places simply do not matter. If, on the other hand, we choose to respond to that need and transcend "placelessness", then the potential exists for the development of an environment in which places are for man, reflecting and enhancing the variety of human experience.

Identity is one of the essential goals that need to be addressed in the development of the built environment. (See Duncan 1981; Askew and Logan

1994; Lu 2011). Residents of communities should feel that the built environment belongs to them, individually and collectively. This is expected to foster the inhabitants' responsibility towards the built environment in urban areas. At the urban level, the environment needs to be developed in a way that encourages people to express themselves and to become involved in the creation of the character of the physical environment (Ettehad et al. 2014). Considering traditional built areas, the organizing elements of the physical environment are the buildings, streets and public open spaces. Place identity in historic districts is a result of the physical characteristics of buildings, streets and outdoor areas. However, this is in opposition to recent trends in contemporary city planning. For example, in Saudi Arabia, new urban developments, owing to local economic conditions, are usually oriented towards creating monuments, buildings and outdoor spaces that lend their character to western images and international styles. Consequently, buildings are designed with little concern for their relationship with each other or for the overall effect on the city. Spaces left between them have become undefined, undesirable, and useless and in some cases unlivable. In order to change this, there is a need to study the physical qualities of historic districts that are often described by researchers as user-friendly, inviting and sensitive to socio-cultural, economic and local climatic conditions (Hakim 1986).

Research Objectives

The purpose of this research is to investigate how new developments, rehabilitation, and improvements to the built environment in the Historic District of Jeddah in Saudi Arabia are made. What are the present conditions, concerns, and issues that need to be addressed? There is a need to study how the changing functional and technical needs of old Jeddah, and the development of its surroundings reflect on the character of this traditional setting.

Research Methodology

This research is based on field investigation. Fieldwork was carried out in old Jeddah and focused on the review of the present conditions of the built environment. This has included study of the character of the town form and how recent developments are made inside the historic district and buildings are built in the vicinity of the old area. This was also supported by interviews with government officials involved in development and planning decisions in the Municipality of Jeddah.

Old Jeddah: Past and Present

According to Pesce (1974), Jeddah was first built about 350 BC as a small primitive fishing settlement on the eastern coast of the Red Sea in the Arabian Peninsula (see also Bagader 2014 a). Later on, it was used as a station serving people traveling along the commercial trail leading to the settlements of both Mecca and Medina (Ibn Battuta 1992: vol 1:251; Al-Hamawi 1995: vol. 2, part 2:226; Al-Harethe 2015). Following the dawn of Islam, Muslim pilgrims traveling

by sea needed to land in Jeddah while going to Mecca, the Holy City of Islam, in order to perform Hajj (worship rituals that are required from every able-bodied Muslim at least once in a lifetime) or 'Umrah (optional features of worship that can be completed only in Al Haram Mosque in Mecca anytime year around). A number of authors involved in studying the history of the Arabian Peninsula and its human settlements, including (Al-Maqdisi 1991; Al-Fasi 1985: 141; Al-Rowethee 1997; Al-Harethe 2015; Al-Yafee 2014) have explained that after the third Muslim Caliph 'Uthman ibn 'Affan took over the caliphate (meaning came to power) in the year 646 AD / 26 AH (Islamic calendar) he was the first to develop Jeddah as a seaport serving Muslim pilgrims (Ibn Faraj 1997: 33).

The flourishing development of both Mecca and Medina in the following periods was served by the commercial shipments to both cities via Jeddah seaport. This along with the increased use of Jeddah seaport by Muslim pilgrims arriving by sea contributed to promoting Jeddah as an important Islamic city. Consequently, people living in Jeddah became active in trade, commerce and in building practices. Later on, this had resulted in the construction of residential buildings, elaborate houses serving the business elite- the merchants, Khan structures for buying and selling and for the overnight stay of travellers and their commodities, souq (meaning market) places and mosques (Al-Fakihi 1414 AH, vol. 3: 231).

As a result of Jeddah growth as an important seaport and commercial centre on the Red Sea coast, it became the centre of attention to outside attackers. (Al-Hadrawi 2002: 34-36) has explained that at the beginning of the 16th Century the city was targeted numerous times by tribal Bedouins and by the Portuguese (see also Wynbrandt 2010; Bagader 2014). Consequently, during the Mamluk period, the Sultan Qansuh al-Ghuri in Cairo ordered his wali (meaning governor) in Jeddah Hussein al-Kurdi to build a fortified wall surrounding Jeddah in order to protect the city against enemies (Ibn Faraj 1997 : 40; Al-Nahrawali 1305 AH: 166 and 455). The wall as shown in Figure (1) was completed in 917 AH / 1511 AD) and played an important role in securing Jeddah against the aggressors of that time (Burckhardt 1968; Buchan 1980). This has also contributed to the protection of the distinct built heritage that is still observed in Old Jeddah today. The wall was fortified with massive strong defence towers that were placed at the wall corners and next to six gates (Burckhardt 1968: 8). The gates (Arabic *bab*) that were built along the wall included: Bab Mecca that was placed along the eastern side facing the direction to Mecca, Bab Jadid and Bab Sharif were located along the northern and southern sides of the wall respectively, and Bab al-Bunt and Bab al-Magharibah gates on the seaside to the west (see fig. 1), (see also Al-Hadrawi, 1327 AH: 35-36; Al-Nahrawali, 1305 AH: 445).

Inside the area that was encircled by the wall, the city was arranged in four residential quarters. Each quarter was locally called a "*hara*" or neighbourhood. This included Harat al-Sham located in the northeast, Harat al-Mazloun to the northwest, Harat al-Yemen to the southwest, and Harat al-Bahar located to the southwest (see fig. 1). In each *hara*, residential buildings were the most obvious

structures. They were marketed with excellence in design, construction and architectural details. Today, at the heart of the Historic District, for example, stands Bayt Nasseef (Nasseef House), the most elaborate residential building and a symbol of Jeddah's distinct past. As shown on the site plan (fig. 1), remarkable houses included: Ba'ashen House (building no. 12), Banajah (no. 23), Al-Batarji (nos. 24, 25), Al-Shurbatli (no. 28), Ba'ashen (no. 42), Al-Jokhendar (no. 70), Noor-Wali (no. 73), Banajah family palace (no. 80) and many other residential buildings. A number of other residential buildings were allocated for pilgrims to stay in (as rest houses) during their travels back and forth to Mecca during the yearly Hajj season that lasts for about 5 to 6 weeks (the Hajj rituals require pilgrims to stay in Mecca and the nearby holy sites "Mashā'ir" for a total of about eight days).

Residential buildings were occasionally grouped together into blocks. They were arranged along narrow irregular streets and alleyways (fig. 2) and sometimes surrounded semi-public outdoor spaces and cul-de-sacs. Thus, the urban fabric of old Jeddah was made of solids and voids that were designed with a delicate balance between buildings and outdoor areas. The scale of such outdoor spaces was quite intimate and harmonious with human scale. They were shaded by buildings that bordered them and made them suitable for sitting outdoors and for social interaction among residents and neighbors.

The Roshan (plural *rawashīn*) structure is the most elaborate and distinctive aesthetic element in the design of residential building facades in Old Jeddah (fig. 3). Historically, it was built using imported teak or Javan wood that was carved, ornamented and assembled in various shapes and sizes. The Roshan is a protruding (balcony-like) space that people used for sitting and watching the outside world. Its dimensions were occasionally about 2.4-2.8 m in width, 0.4-0.6 m in depth and 2.7-3.5 m in height. These dimensions were sufficient to allow people to use the Roshan indoor space for sitting, sleeping and standing. No glass panels were used in the Roshan. The latter were sometimes provided with sliding wood panels that included louver elements. The use of lattice wood elements in the vertical surfaces of the Roshan served additional functions that included the provision of natural light and ventilation.

Various authors have discussed the origin, etymology and idiom of the Roshan. Alitany et al. (2013) have explained that the term Roshan was used in Egypt and in North Africa around 1100 AD. Almurahem (2008: 53) has elaborated that the origin of the term Roshan is Persian. She explained that in the Persian language the term Roshan has the meanings of "illuminating", "shining", and "vivid", a place that shines with light and / or a place from which light emanates. In addition, mashrabiya elements were built on building facades in Old Jeddah. According to Al-Murahem (2008: 83) mashrabiya is an Arabic name to a Roshan-like structure that was smaller in size than the Roshan. The term was derived from the Arabic word (شرب), sh-r-b (to drink). Lattice wood material was used in the construction of the mashrabiya, and water containers of clay were occasionally placed inside in order to naturally cool drinking water by the blowing breeze.

Residential buildings varied from two to five stories in height. They were built with Walls made of locally quarried stones and reinforced with horizontal wooden beams locally called “Takālīl”. Teak wood used in various building elements was imported in large quantities from Southeast Asia, mainly India. Wooden beams were manufactured, decorated, and built by local craftsmen. Historically, the unique arrangement of the physical components of the residential quarters had served as a vehicle for strengthening the bonds between residents, and between people and their built environment (Al-Hathloul 1981; Hakim 1986). Research findings in the field of traditional architecture have shown that the identity of traditional built environments grows from the continuous relationship between the place and its residents (Rapoport 1976, 1989). The residential quarter or block is often considered the cultural creation of the residents and at the same time, a means for preserving the cultural continuity of the place.

In addition to the multi-story residential buildings, Old Jeddah was marked with important historical mosques (see Ibn Jubayr 1980) and distinct souqs (marketplaces) (see also Al-Hadrawi 2002; Alawi 1993; Burkhardt 1986). Among the most notable mosques was Al-Shafi‘i Mosque (Jami‘) that was built in the seventh Islamic century (see fig.1 Bldg. no. 53, and fig. 4) and the Uthman ibn ‘Affan Mosque. Other mosque buildings included: Faraj Yusr no. 10, Abu Inabah no. 36, Al-Mi‘mar no.74, Akash no. 75, Abu Bakr no. 78, Al-Hanafi no. 82, and Al-Basha Mosque no. 88 (Ibn Faraj 1997: 47-56). Moreover, Old Jeddah was known to contain a number of traditional markets (souqs) that historically evolved as popular places for commercial activities (Al-Hadrawi 2002: 31). This included Al-Alawi Market (see fig. 5), the Bedouin Market, the Jami‘i Market, and the Al-Nada and Al-Khaskiyah Markets. It is important to mention that in the course of the history of Jeddah following the dawn of Islam, the annual Hajj gave Jeddah a cosmopolitan demographic where people came from various countries around the world. Until the late 1940s it was possible for pilgrims willing to stay in Jeddah following the Hajj season to live and work in the Historic District. These people made a contribution to the development and prosperity of Jeddah.

At present, the Historic District in Jeddah city is also called “Old Jeddah”. It is located at the heart of the contemporary city in what is locally called “Al-Balad” and surrounded by the central business district. The area of the Historic District is about one square kilometer and its population is estimated at about 30,000 inhabitants. Unfortunately, the wall that once stood and served to protect the old city was demolished in 1947 in order to permit the urban growth of the Historic District (Daghistani 1991). There are about 1500 buildings within the boundaries of the Historic District. This includes 600 traditional buildings that continue to stand as historic ones. The rest of the buildings are either new developments or dilapidated structures. There are about 50 vacant sites within the urban fabric of Old Jeddah, each has an area of about 400 to 500 square meters. About 15-25 years ago these sites were occupied by traditional buildings that have either collapsed because of the lack of proper maintenance or demolished by owners because of neglect and ignorance of the historic value of such buildings.

On 21 June 2014, the Historic District in Jeddah was inscribed by UNESCO as a world heritage site (Elfadaly et al. 2020, see also <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1361>). Such a historic decision testifies to both the historical significance of the Historic District and to its universal value. This poses a challenge to what needs to be done in order to protect the local identity of Old Jeddah.

At present Old Jeddah is at a critical turning point in its history. Traditional buildings and the entire urban fabric of the historic district are faced with many difficulties. Many buildings are deserted and lack maintenance. Therefore, the structural conditions of such buildings are in danger, and numerous buildings have serious cracks (fig. 6). The ground floors of many buildings are occupied by commercial activities. Owners of such commercial places have practiced many ill-adapted modifications and changes to the physical characteristics of the historic buildings. This has resulted in the change of the original image of traditional buildings.

Importance of this Study

This study explains the historical significance of the built heritage in Old Jeddah and contributes to the knowledge that is needed to protect the character of the historic image and identity of the historic District. There is a need to introduce development measures that will govern the introduction of new projects in the setting of Old Jeddah. This needs to consider architectural identity as one of the essential goals of place development. The traditional setting and the inherited qualities of the built environment that is still observed in Old Jeddah is a reflection of the history and socio-cultural values of the early builders. This built heritage continues to stand today as a mirror to the cultural values of the Islamic society of Saudi Arabia. Therefore, it needs to be considered as a source of inspiration to the development of an authentic contemporary built environment. In other words, this study argues that the protection of the character and identity of the Historic District is necessary in order to bridge the socio-physical and cultural gap between the past and the present in the evolving rush of Saudi Arabian society toward modernity. Therefore, there is a need to introduce rules and regulations that aim to guide the introduction of area-specific design solutions that maintain and enhance the overall harmony of the built heritage in Old Jeddah, and its immediate surroundings. Finally, the following section presents a brief explanation of the conservation and planning strategies that need to be considered in order to explain those ideas.

The Outlook for the Future

Recent construction in the historic district is poorly controlled by building regulations. There is no clear policy about how new buildings should be fitted in the vicinity of the Historic District. As a result, there is a total lack of harmony between the old and new. Moving outward, recent development in the immediate areas that surround the Historic District pays little attention to the character of Old Jeddah. Building forms, heights, materials, and architectural design ignore the

historic context of this place. Lack of proper municipal laws that aim to control how new buildings should be fitted in juxtaposition with the historic buildings permits the image of contemporary buildings to override the character of the historic context of Old Jeddah. Public awareness of the important role of historic areas in contemporary cities, especially in Saudi Arabia, needs to be guided by municipal laws.

A number of authors (Rghei and Nelson 1994; Train 1993; Train 1995; Sedky 2009; Elnokaly and Elseragy 2013) have discussed the predicament and the future prospects of Islamic historic settlements in North Africa, such as Old Cairo, the Qasabah of Algiers and the Medina of Tunis. They explained a number of conservation or heritage planning options that are necessary to protect these places. Arguably, many ideas presented by these authors apply to Old Jeddah as well as to other traditional settings in Saudi Arabia. Given the recent decline, marginalization, and degradation of the historic cores of urban areas in Saudi Arabia, what should be done about them? Conservation and planning approaches have fallen into three main categories:

Restoration. This approach concentrates on the restoration of individually significant buildings and often results in the production of a “museum town” for tourists rather than for residents.

Renovation. This approach may be necessary if buildings in the historic area collapse and have to be cleared, as one can notice in Old Jeddah. Renovation can mean rebuilding in the vernacular architectural style. Much of the effort practiced now by the Municipality of Jeddah to protect Old Jeddah falls within this category.

Rehabilitation. This third approach seeks to rehabilitate the society of historic districts as it recently was, and does not aim to recreate the past. The focus in this approach is on entire quarters instead of concentrating on individual buildings. The total built environment is deemed to be as important as individual traditional buildings. Therefore, there is a need also in this approach to invite the residents of traditional areas to participate in the decision-making process of rehabilitation works. Obviously, this approach highlights the role that the wider urban fabric plays as the supporting fabric of significant traditional buildings. Thus, the entire urban form of the historic district endeavors to emulate the human habitat of the past (Davidson 1998).

In order to apply the discussion of conservation approaches to the present conditions of Old Jeddah a number of questions need to be addressed. This includes the following questions. What should be safeguarded and for whom? How can we preserve and rehabilitate the cultural heritage represented by the historic area without reinforcing the tourism potential of the traditional area? Will rehabilitation merely create a kind of Heritage Park out of what had declined into an in-migrant reception area? Can gentrification of traditional residential buildings be avoided or is it indeed an unavoidable method of rehabilitation?

The general situation of the Historic District in Jeddah is less than satisfactory. The partial collapse and potential total collapse of many buildings observed in old Jeddah today is a result, at least in part, of either active efforts at clearance

practiced by building owners in favor of building new structures, or passive policies of doing nothing to halt the slow deterioration and decline of such areas. If this neglect continues, the Historic District of Jeddah may be reduced to fragments of the traditional built environment remain.

In summary, the following issues are identified and must be taken into account in the efforts to protect and develop this Historic District:

- (1) Degradation in the quality of life of the inhabitants resulting from excessive pressures due to rapid urban development.
- (2) Overcrowding in the residential setting due to the migration of house owners to new urban neighborhoods, and the occupation of traditional buildings by low-income expatriate workers and illegal migrants. Changes in the way of life, as compared with the traditional way of life in the traditional settings in Saudi Arabia, have led to new requirements in housing and services which adversely affect the conservation and maintenance of the historic fabric.
- (3) Focus on the restoration of a number of buildings, without due consideration of the sites, areas and other elements of the historic environment and their setting which together function to make up the special character of Old Jeddah.

Neglect of a proper interrelationship between the historic area and the surrounding urban context.

There is a need, therefore, to introduce guidelines that address these issues. This will require, of course, a strong political will that aims to support such efforts.

There is a need to introduce renovation, rehabilitation, and adaptive re-use strategies that aim to avoid the idea of static preservation that attempts to “fossilize” the past and convert it into some kind of open-air museum. A continuous and organic approach to revitalization is needed. There is a need to encourage building owners to rehabilitate traditional buildings to serve new functions such as hotels, restaurants, and offices while maintaining the essential character and qualities of traditional buildings and the urban fabric. Building inside the Historic District and on the sites that surround this area need to be guided by clear development objectives, policies, and strategies that aim to protect and enhance the historic context of Old Jeddah. New developments need to take into consideration users’ needs, promote the quality of life and enhance the awareness of the general public about the value of protecting the legacy of the past.

The Character of Old Jeddah and Urban Conservation

Recent urban growth has left Old Jeddah as a relatively small portion of the sprawling metropolis of about 3.4 million people, small in area and population terms but of major importance in heritage terms. Many areas in the Historic District of Jeddah currently retain a distinct traditional character. Several residential buildings dominate its townscape.

However, one can also notice that there are nontraditional buildings that interrupt the urban form of the Historic District. Following the 1970s, a number of house owners have demolished their traditional buildings to replace them with

modern three- and four-story buildings. The urban form was thus disturbed but within the long-established street pattern and the traditional framework of landownership. Moreover, the flourishing economy of Saudi Arabia and rapidly expanding urban development have brought about the construction of commercial buildings of sometimes up to 13 stories in the vicinity of the Historic District in Jeddah, thus changing the character of the traditional urban setting and altering patterns of land use. Such processes of urban development are widening the gap between a number of traditional residential areas, with little relevance to the traditional urban fabric. Land-use changes from residential to commercial are introducing additional problems. This includes traffic congestion, pollution, noise and waste, as well as serving to degrade the historic area. More generally, Old Jeddah is characterized by a decaying housing stock, lack of proper development to spaces between buildings, especially the sites of many, demolished traditional buildings and increased population densities. The deteriorating urban fabric can be partly attributed to traffic problems, lack of proper parking places, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient service provision. Other traditional buildings have been modified through the addition of rooms, walls and the use of modern building materials.

During the mid-1980s the Ministry of Urban and Rural Affairs introduced the Department of Cultural Heritage. The main task of this department has been to identify buildings and places of historic significance and work with local municipal authorities to protect such places from being demolished. Little was done to introduce conservation policies, development objectives and strategies that aim to integrate such areas in urban development. The role of local municipal authorities has been limited to suggesting building techniques that can serve to prevent the collapse of deteriorating buildings, advising owners to conserve the images of traditional buildings in any development, and promoting efforts to rehabilitate historic buildings. Public participation in the decision-making pertaining to historic areas development is lacking. While actions of local municipal authorities in urban areas often include paving and maintenance of streets and pedestrian walkways, little intervention is made to educate and support building owners about methods and ways of conservation, rehabilitation and adaptive re-use (see, for example, Macdonald and Cheong 2014).

There are no comprehensive plans for the development of many traditional sites or efforts to include people living in such areas in the decision-making pertaining to development projects in these areas. In other words, public participation in the decision-making process of municipal authorities is lacking. Administration of the Historic District is an office that is now present in Old Jeddah. It was established during the late 1980s and associated with the Municipality of Jeddah and the Ministry of Urban and Rural Affairs. The role of this office has been limited to provide data about the conditions of important residential buildings and vacant sites. Its efforts sometimes include restoring individual buildings in a piecemeal manner. The aim of conserving clusters of buildings to preserve their essential ambiance has not been adopted. The development and upgrading of the Historic

District of Jeddah call for immediate action. There is a need to introduce policy guidelines that will address the following:

- (1) Preserve the traditional fabric through regulations to control building. This needs to be combined with the development of open spaces and the improvement of infrastructure services along with a similar improvement of the street network through imposing restrictions on vehicular access (see for example Allison 2011).
- (2) The conservation of distinct buildings with their reuse for various social and cultural purposes (see for example Khan 2015).
- (3) Upgrade the surrounding built environment.
- (4) Development of housing and public services such as sewers and garbage disposal systems. Plus, the introduction of tourist facilities.
- (5) Removal of encroaching and poor non-traditional buildings. Parking areas need to be kept away from the Historic District. Efforts must be made to improve public outdoor spaces that set the Historic District to the best possible visual effect. A vacant land tax could be introduced in order to encourage owners to develop vacant sites inside the Historic District. Conservation policies introduced elsewhere (UNDP 1997) stressed that conserving and revitalizing historic areas involve the related upgrading of its urban setting (see also Yung and Chan 2012).

Conservation as a Tool for Development

The practice of building construction and the rehabilitation of buildings in the vicinity of the Historic District in Jeddah must respect the character and external aspects of the traditional setting. The surrounding buildings should be given special consideration. Even certain groupings and a number of buildings that are characterized by picturesque perspectives should be preserved. According to Yuen (2005), urban conservation generates civic pride and economic benefits as the uniqueness of cultural heritage contributes to the enhancement of urban compatibility. By encouraging tourism and supporting the economic base of historic areas, urban conservation and the protection of the character of historic areas is expected to function as one of the effective tools for city development.

A number of authors (Skea 1996; Jokilehto 1999; Pickard 2001; Tweed and Sutherland 2007; Bagader 2014 b; Huq et al. 2017) have explained that urban conservation is an important component in city development. They highlighted that the conservation of historic areas must allow alterations to accommodate new uses and that emphasis needs to be shifted from considering individual buildings to area-based and integrated methods of conservation (Elewa 2018). This also implies that architectural conservation depends upon its integration into the lived environment of citizens and therefore it has to be incorporated into policies of urban planning (see also ICOMOS 1987; Pickard 2001).

Tweed and Sutherland (2007) have elaborated that the aim of urban conservations is to maintain the historic urban fabric as a whole. They stressed the need to consider the urban heritage in a holistic approach and that areas that are

not considered worthy to be conservation areas, called “urban fragments”, usually have unique population density or cultural features. The loss of integrity and urban compatibility often results from the exclusion of such urban fragments. Past experiences in improving old areas in urban settings (Train 1993; UNDP 1997) have also shown that conserving and upgrading central historic areas requires the pedestrianization of such areas, the transfer of polluting activities and the improvement of access to residential quarters.

Urban Conservation and Public Participation

During the first Habitat Meeting in 1976 (see UN-Habitat 1976) that was held in Vancouver, Canada, public participation was recognized as a key element in sustainable city development. Participants in this meeting stressed the need for creating possibilities for effective participation by the local residents in the planning, building, and management of their human settlements (see also Panos 2000; and Fisher 2001). According to the World Bank (Fisher 2001), public participation is the process by which people can exercise influence over policy formulation, design alternatives, investment choices, management and monitoring of development interventions in communities. In other words, it is a process of decision-making and problem-solving involving individuals and groups who act for the good of all affected by the decisions they make and the actions that follow. It is about learning to respect and listen to the opinions, feelings, and knowledge of people in local communities. Public participation and the involvement of residents living in historic districts are essential for the success of conservation programs (see for example Foroudi et al. 2020).

Conservation of the urban fabric including buildings and outdoor spaces in Old Jeddah is necessary in order to protect the impressive atmosphere of this Historic District. This is also expected to foster tourism and develop related businesses and services. Thus, the way of living, such as traditional businesses and food, should be maintained and supported. Local people should have a channel to take part in the development programs, and cooperation among groups of people and governmental bodies should be introduced. Urban conservation generates income which helps to support the economic base of local communities.

Conclusion

Obviously, the processes of urban dynamics have changed the social, cultural and morphological formation of spatial organization in the Historic District of Jeddah and its immediate surroundings. Consequently, the present situation of many areas inside Old Jeddah is questionable in terms of sustaining the authenticity of the historic core, sense of place and identity. The cohesive structure of Old Jeddah is gradually being replaced by a scattered distribution of old and new buildings, which in some quarters can hardly be recognized as a totality, and the boundaries of the Historic District are hardly noticeable. Present conditions in Old Jeddah highlight that the issue is no longer how to prevent change, but how to manage change so that new development takes account of what is there, and seeks

to work with the existing conditions rather than against them.

Old Jeddah needs to be rehabilitated and developed according to certain priorities. First, it should be rehabilitated for residential purposes, and residents should be consulted and encouraged to participate in decision-making processes. Secondly, Old Jeddah should be rehabilitated for the citizens of Jeddah City and Saudi Arabia because it represents an important example of the heritage of their built environment, albeit not always appreciated as such. Lastly, Old Jeddah should be rehabilitated for visiting tourists, both local and international. Therefore, rehabilitation must concentrate on socio-cultural aspects as much as on buildings and open spaces. It is inappropriate, of course, to conserve old buildings without making them functional again. Therefore, a variety of community uses, commercial uses, and tourist functions could be introduced to help perpetuate the heritage of the built environment. Community involvement can be promoted through reform of local governance to establish conservation and development-oriented committees. Local people and house owners should be dominant in such groups. One ultimate goal should be to enable the people of Jeddah to enjoy the historical and cultural environment of the Historic District while preserving the integrity of the traditional buildings and stimulating economic development within the local community.

Conservation, rehabilitation, adaptive re-use and development projects in the context of the Historic District of Jeddah, and in many other traditional areas that have similar conditions in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere, must take into consideration a number of issues. This includes political, cultural, social, economic and urbanization aspects. Political aspects need to address the role of formal authorities including generation and maintenance of political support; introduction of national policies; and public participation. Cultural aspects ought to consider the contribution made by the rehabilitation of traditional buildings to the strengthening of local cultural traditions and the role of historic areas in the maintenance of the social life of inhabitants. Social aspects need to take into account the role of local residents in the rehabilitation process and protect against the impact of “gentrification”. Economic aspects require that financial aid is made available. This may include some form of public-private partnership. The economic role of tourism generation should not be ignored. Urbanization aspects must address how the urban fabric of traditional areas be preserved and harmonized with development projects that may happen along the borders of the traditional area. It should also care for the adaptation of the traditional area to the various requirements of contemporary urban life and changes in land use.

Decision-makers and municipal authorities in Jeddah are invited today to play an important role in introducing conservation, rehabilitation and development policies. These should give prominence to the perceptual richness and use of the spatial environment in the Historic District and pay specific attention to the traditional characteristics. These characteristics include the cohesive and identifiable residential quarters and the organic network of streets and alleyways that leads to contained outdoor spaces. Obviously, there is a crucial need to

introduce legislative frameworks that can guide development and growth in the vicinity of Old Jeddah to be sensitive to the historical context and sympathetic to the needs of user groups. This is expected to accomplish sustainable solutions to the problems encountered in present developments.

This study has implications for the study of other traditional sites in Saudi Arabia and in other countries.

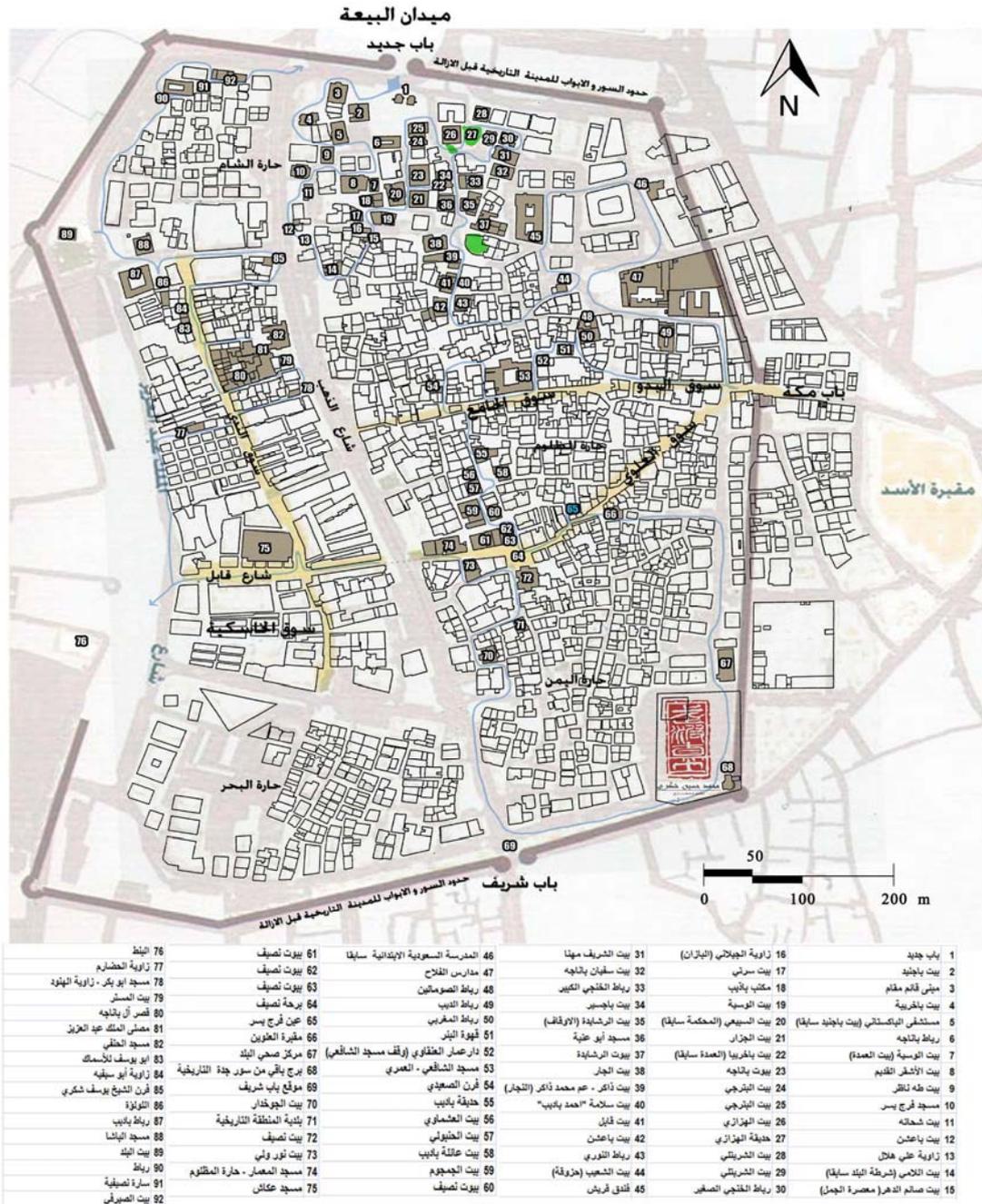




Figure 2. View of a residential block that is bisected by narrow irregular streets. Urban compactness was shaped by narrow zigzagged alleys.



Figure 3. View showing elevations of residential buildings that were richly decorated by wooden balconies called Rawasheen (sing. Roshan) and Mashrabiya elements. The artistic elegance of these elements adds to the romantic uniqueness of the building and city. These buildings are considered to be in good condition.



**Figure 4. Exterior and interior views of Al-Shafi'i Mosque (Jami').
(See also fig. 1- Building no. 53).**



Figure 5. View in Souq Al-Alawi. Commercial activities in the various traditional souqs in Old Jeddah attract buyers and sellers of various origins and age groups.



Figure 6. View showing one example of a deteriorating residential building. It is also marked with serious cracks.

Notes

- 1) All photographs included in this paper were taken by the author. *
- 2) The source for the site plan (fig. 1) is the Municipality of Jeddah. Traditional buildings were numbered by Mohammad Shukre.

سِمةُ جدّةِ القديمة وهويّة المكان: مواعمةُ التطوير الجديّد مع المنطقة التاريخيّة، نظرةً مستقبليّة

توفيق محمود ابوغزوه

ملخص

من الاعتبارات الحالية في مشاريع التطوير الحضري كيف يمكن تطوير المناطق التقليديّة القديمة بحيث تواكبُ متطلبات تلك المناطق الوظيفيّة المتغيّرة، بينما تستمرّ في الوقت نفسه في المحافظة على طابع المنطقة التاريخيّة وهويّتها. وعليه، فيهدف هذا البحث الى تحريّ كيف يمكن لأعمال التطوير الجديدة وإعادة تأهيل البيئّة المبنية وتحسينها أن تدمج في منطقة جدّة التاريخيّة القديمة في المملكة العربيّة السعوديّة؛ ويذا، فما الاعتبارات الحاليّة والموضوعات ذات العلاقة التي يجب تناولها؟ أول من طوّر بناء جدّة القديمة هو الخليفة المسلم الثالث عثمانُ بنُ عفّانَ عام 646 ميلادي (26 هجري) فجعلها ميناءً بحريّاً لخدمة الحجاج المسافرين إلى مكّة، وفي عام 2014 م سجّلتها اليونسكو ضمن مواقع التراث العالمي. وقد اعتمد هذا البحث على الدراسة الميدانيّة؛ حيث ركّز العمل الميدانيّ على دراسة الوضع الحاليّ للبيئّة المبنية في جدّة القديمة، وعلى سمة التشكيل العمرانيّ وكيف تجري أعمال البناء والتطوير ضمن المحتوى التاريخيّ للمنطقة التاريخيّة. وتوضّح نتائج البحث أنّ البيئّة المبنية في المنطقة التاريخيّة تتعرّض إلى التدهور؛ حيث تفتقر أعمال البناء والتطوير داخل حدود المنطقة التاريخيّة وفي محيطها العمرانيّ إلى الانسجام مع السّمة والتوعية المميّزة لمحتوى المنطقة التاريخيّة العمرانيّ. وتوكّد نتائج البحث أنّ أعمال المحافظة المنطقة التاريخيّة في مدينة جدّة والمناطق الحضرية المحيطة وإعادة تأهيلها وتطويرها يجب أن تعمل على حماية السّمة التاريخيّة للنسيج العمرانيّ وعلى المحافظة على هويّة المنطقة التاريخيّة.

الكلمات الدالّة: هويّة، الحفاظ، إعادة التأهيل، سِمة، جدّة.

1 كلية الهندسة، قسم هندسة العمارة، الجامعة الاردنية.
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