

# Re-habitation of Heritage Areas in As-Salt City and Its Effect on the Urban Identity Case Study: Oqba Bin Nafe' Project

Dema Ibrahim Khraisat  
Architecture Engineering Department, AL-Balqa Applied University.

## Abstract

The architectural heritage of the area represents a reversal identity and culture of the region and the link between past and present and the evidence is clear on the originality and authenticity, it must maintain this architectural heritage and rehabilitation to protect it and developed to suit the circumstances of the times and the ongoing transformation of civilization. This study aims to highlight the architectural and urban heritage in the city of Salt, and partly an attempt to document and detailed solutions to revive and re - private examples. This paper deals with the general definition of the terms of her problem and its importance and its objectives as well as the definition of the study area and also to identify assumptions study plan and methodology, while the theoretical framework of the study includes topics you talk about the architectural heritage and the other talking about preserving, and also deals with topics related to the central city of Salt in terms of their and evolution. And architectural elements and the factors which influenced and problems, and systematic study of references and books on these subjects are followed in this research. The study phase and analysis of the study area, a Salt downtown, especially the old ones the region, namely Uqba Among other things, it involves this stage detailed analysis of open spaces in the city center as well as an analytical study of these spaces currently, has been selected study area to the theme of revitalization of a number of historical reasons and civilization as well as a number of reasons for planning and architectural features and possibilities that the region has been followed the analytical descriptive approach in this steps to gain access to the results of applied research hypotheses. He graduated a number of study results based on all of the above, as well as develop a vision and general targets for maintaining operations and rehabilitation that must be applied to the old areas and develop strategies for the implementation and realization of this vision and these goals, and also graduated As well as a number of recommendations to the concerned authorities with regard to the revival of the old areas in general, and the revival of Uqba in particular.

**Keywords:** Re-habitation, Architectural Style & Construction, Random Sites, Visual Noise.

## 1. Introduction

As- salt city is located in Balqa District, Jordan at (35° 42' 4.233"N , y= 32° 2' 15.9786"E) according to UTM standards with an area of (48 km<sup>2</sup>) and a population of (88,900 in (2011)) (Source: The Greater Salt Municipality-ASCD) Old As-salt city - As salt city has a significance of style and a amphitheater of building's clusters where the buildings spreads over 3 hillside : Al Qala'a, Jada'a, and Al Salalem and competes the enclosure a small hill of Al Jadour.

The dense urban fabric of as salt city makes the city unique from any other city with its yellow lime stone buildings that go along the contours line, the buildings mainly go back to the late 18th century to the early 19th century "The Golden Era" in which the architectural style developed from the basic vernacular architecture to modernity which overlapped the previous layers and gave us a beautiful urban fabric.

The history of as salt city can be shorten as this: In the second half of the nineteenth century, Salt Became the administrative and economic centre for the whole region. The architectural style was thus transformed from rural to urban in character passing through five different stages of evolution.



Figure (1) As-Salt City / Source: ASCD

The migration which occurred in the middle of the twentieth century has drained the city of its economic core, thus changing the function of Salt from an administrative and economic centre for the whole region into a

dependent city where people live in but do not work in it. This has resulted in a lack of interest in the city and its economic status which had a great impact on the social and urban status of the city. The architectural heritage has therefore been under pressure of decay, deterioration, alteration, intrusion and demolition.

As many of these historic quarters became vacant, new residents moved in such as transient workers, migrants, minorities, and the poor. Furthermore, many facilities were used merely as storage areas for various goods, thereby leading to more deterioration and fragmentation of the historic fabric. Steinberg<sup>4</sup> elaborates on how the destruction of historic city cores in many Third World countries was driven by a desire for modernisation (Rami, 2006).

### *1.2. Problem of the Study*

Salt City, in general, suffer from congestion and overcrowding private buildings in the middle. Moreover, narrow streets and the severity of its decline and lack of public spaces and the positions of vehicles and random buildings erected in the city of Salt during the past decades mixed and informal employment, which leads to lack of specialized business areas are an obstacle area bin Nafie, one of the areas affecting negatively to what mentioned above.

### *1.3. Objectives of the Study*

After conducting this study it is expected to achieve the below objectives:

- Identify the city of Salt and the prevailing architectural style.
- Identify the factors that affected the architectural style in the city centre and the problems of the ones in general and to the problems of the region, in particular, the old core.
- Analysis of the success of the project Uqba in the rehabilitation of downtown Salt and analyse the success of the results achieved in the research hypothesis.
- Work on reaching targets for general operations and rehabilitation to preserve archaeological sites.

### *1.4. Hypotheses of the Study*

This study was based on the below hypothesis:

- Salt constitutes more traditional areas of the central problems and service-social.
- Suffer from the problems of the city centre in architectural terms and in particular as suffering from integration problems between the old areas and modern.
- Do Uqba project helped ease the congestion caused confusion in the region and secure open spaces necessary social activities, entertainment and the provision of specialized commercial areas and restore architectural harmony in the region.

### *1.5. Methodology*

The approach taken in the study is the (descriptive analytical method) data is crisis collect and organize the data and analysis to reach the project goals and the factors that control them and thus draw conclusions can be generalized in the future and the interpretation of these results reached both upheld or deny certain suggestions made by imposing at the beginning.

Beside this section, the following section will discuss the townscape, while Artechetural style and construction are discussed in the third section. The fourth section will show the design presentation, then recommendations will be mentioned in the fifth section. Last but not least, the sixth section will summarize the work and draw conclusions.

## **2. Townscape**

The old town is contained within the three hills of Al -Qal'a al-Jada'a and As- Salalem, with the small tree-covered hill of Al-Jadour giving additional enclosure to the south. The old castle of the city, Al-Qal'a, dominated the city and indeed still has the remains of the medieval castle. The floor of the Valley was once covered with fields running right up to the edge of the city.

The most characteristic townscape features of the city are the walls of yellow stone buildings which reinforce the closely-spaced contours of the three hills, especially when seen from below. The dense urban nature of the building complexes, and their siting on such steep slopes, emphasize the close-knit pedestrian scale of the city. This was a traditional town composed of a web of footpaths and stairways running across the slope, with a limited number of roads following the slopes where the contours allowed (JICA,2003).

## **3. Architectural Style & Construction.**

- Construction Material.

Most of the old buildings of As-Salt were built using Yellow limestone which was extracted from the quarries of

As-Salt since 1863. These buildings represent the main cultural asset of As-Salt.

- Architectural Style

There are two main building styles in the city of As-Salt:

- Traditional-style buildings occupy most of the city. These are, primarily, the households constructed 50 or more years ago. The look -and-feel of the buildings bears resemblance to those of the early Ottoman Empire.

Distinctive features include the use of arched window, balconies, detailed embellished facades and soft earthy color tones. Buildings also tend to be low-rise (comprising only of one or two stories), thus preserving As-Salt's mountainous landscape.

- Contemporary-style buildings tend to be constructed more recently [less than 50 years ago].

Distinctive features include clean box-like shaped buildings and larger rectangular windows. These buildings tend to be taller than their predecessors [often four stories or more], and so create an uneven city skyline.

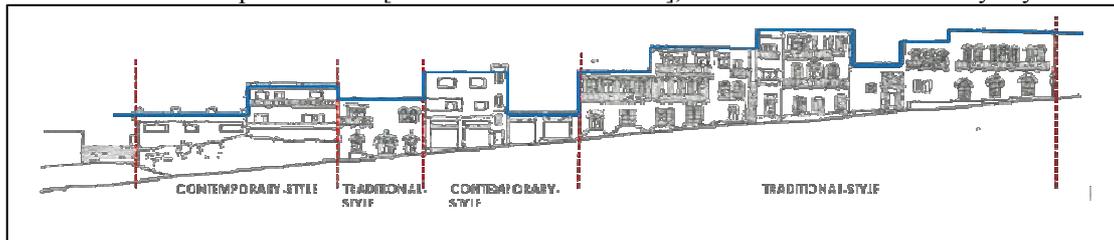


Figure (2) Dar Al Handasah and Partners,2014, Upgrading and Rehabilitation of Al -Salt City Center, ASCD.

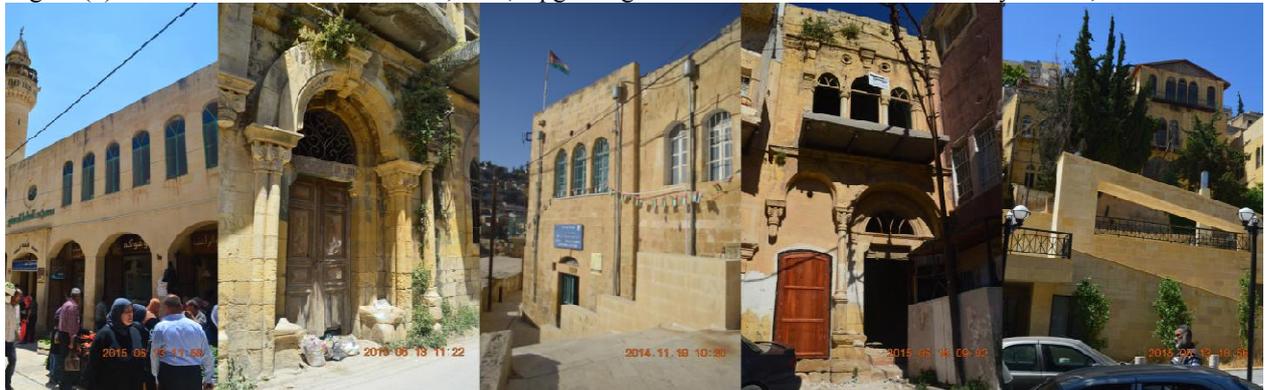


Figure (3) Source: researcher

#### 4. Design Presentation

Upgrading and Rehabilitation of Al-salt City Center a technical commentary to the project “Upgrading and Rehabilitation of As-Salt City Centre” prepared by Darv Al-Handasah and submitted to the Municipality of As-Salt in September 2014.

##### 4.1.Site Location:

Situated in the Balqa'a Highland, about 790–1100 meters above sea level, the city is built in the crook of three hills, Al-Qal'a Al-Jada'a and As-Salalem. As-Salt is rich in its springs and water sources - Three springs are located across the valley.

As-Salt city is a crowded city with dense urban fabric, open areas was always a problem, the city needs green and open spaces to breath, the location of the project is the center of the city and in the vally -lowest point in the city- where it is visible to all the local people

The geography of the site is almost flat with a difference in level of approximately 4 meters along the north-south axis.

The site is classified by As-Salt Municipality, as a park.

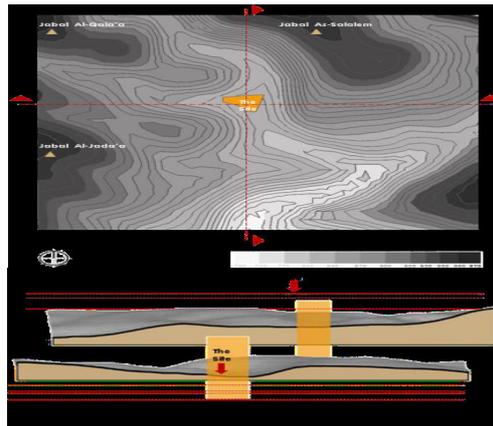


Figure (4) Site Location / Source: Dar Al Handase presentation

#### 4.2. Previous site use:

the site and surroundings contains a highly vibrant commercial buildings and after the demolition of oqba school, the empty space was used as an open parking for cars considering one of the major problem that faces salt is parking lots.



Figure (5) Oqba school before demolition  
source: ASCD Office

#### 4.3. Site history:

the site in ancient time was an agricultural field with a virtual soil that irritate from water spring (Ain) that comes from the Qal'a mountain and crosses the site and goes down.

The problem within the old condition of the site was that all of the buildings in the site were new buildings that do not harmonies with the city cultural landscape and because they are respectively high comparing to their surroundings they blocked the view of the salt golden age architecture behind them so the municipality decided to demolish them and redesign the area.

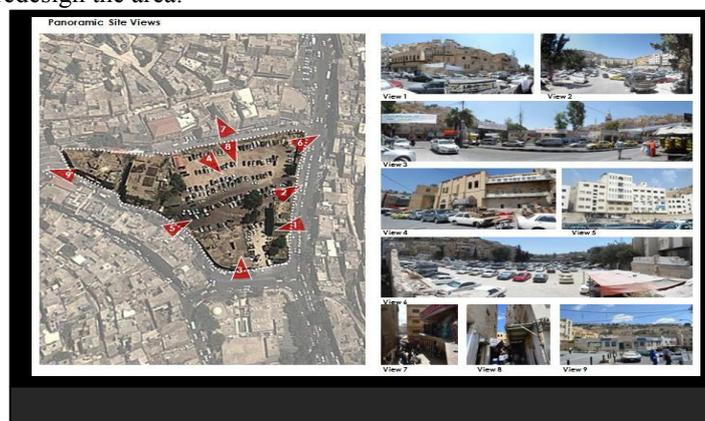


Figure (6) Source: Dar Al Handase presentation

#### 4.4. Demolition works:

The project aims is the regeneration of a central area in As-Salt, by providing all of an underground parking area and improving traffic circulation, as well as replacing the pre-existing commercial facilities that have been

removed through the demolition of a block of buildings in the area known as Al -Maydan.

In addition, the project foresees new tourist facilities, such as an information centre, and a public plaza, which includes a pedestrian street once open to vehicular traffic.

According to Dar al handase "the project achieves an urban breathing space and an interactive centre for both local people and tourists with a complete area of 8800m<sup>2</sup> where the project gives an entrance points for tourists that are coming to the city by providing a visitors centre with an area of 200 m<sup>2</sup> and the project also provides a commercial shops at the edges of the site in order to create an enclosure in the middle for a public plaza with also a basement floor for the parking and commercial shops the project also contains many interactive points for the local people like the amphitheater, playgrounds, pedestrian walkways, and tourists exterior parking lots



Figure (7) Demolition work / Source: Researcher at the ASCD office

#### 4.5. design concept of project:

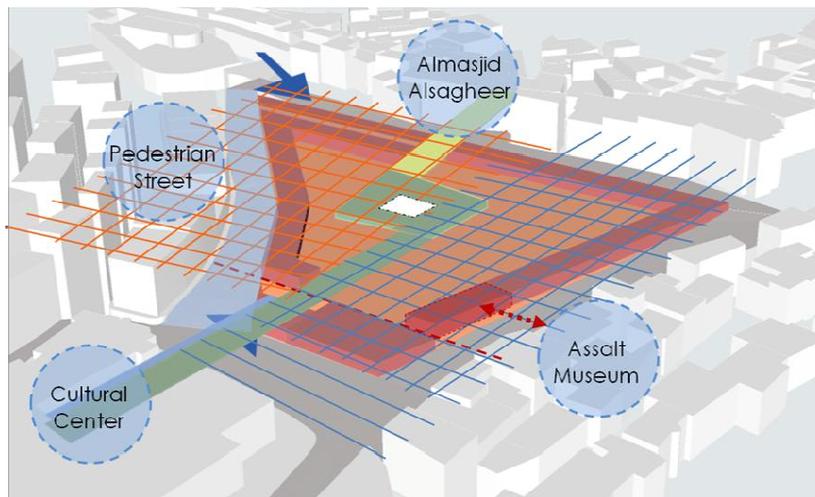


Figure (8) Source: Dar al handase / ASCD office

two grids of 3x3 m each, aligned along two main axes, guided the design and the overall plan and two main axes that connect landmarks around the site: one is the cultural center with the small mosque and the other connects as salt museum with the pedestrian street

- The Basement has a built-up area of 7,250 m<sup>2</sup>: It consists of:
  - Underground Parking of 137 lots.
  - Open market.
  - Storages for the shops above.
  - Water tanks and pumps.
  - Electromechanical spaces.
  - Washrooms.
- The Ground floor has a built-up area of 1,550 m<sup>2</sup>. It consists of:
  - Retail shops.
  - Food and Beverages.
  - Visitor Centre.
  - Washrooms.

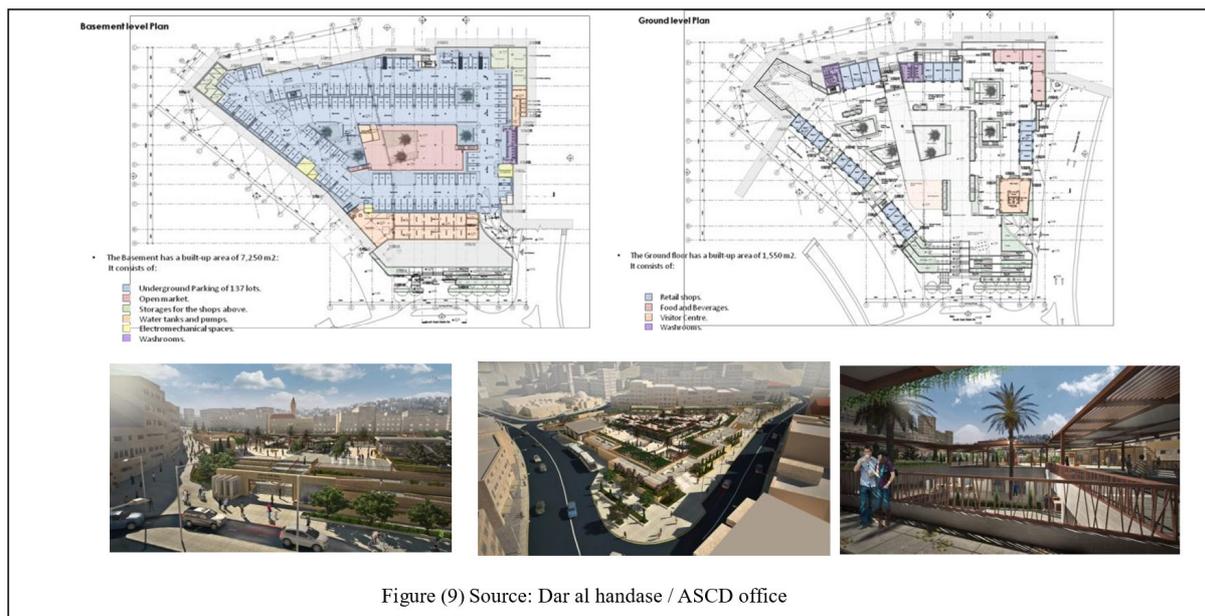


Figure (9) Source: Dar al handase / ASCD office

Figure (9) Source: Dar al handase / ASCD office

## 5. Recommendations:

- Attempt to invest in Salt public areas, especially in the work of the projects that are working to revitalize the old area and heritage conservation in the old village area.
- Attempt acquisition of old buildings with high value and distinctive heritage sites as well as trying to land acquisition and areas that serve to revive the old Salt zone process.
- Work on the provision of infrastructure and services of the old area and facilitate access to it.
- The use of the owners of expertise and competence in the field of conservation, restoration in subjects related to projects concerning the old area, and take advantage of studies that work in this regard. Examples include the study.
- Work to increase citizens' awareness of the importance of heritage in the city and the need to preserve it by organizing lectures for people of all age groups to host specialists in the subject, both in interview or in schools to deliver awareness of this issue in the new generation as well.
- Attempt to bring the provision of funding for projects that work on the revival of the
- old area of the city and private actors and institutions that support and finance such projects.

## 6. Conclusion

- The desired vision to revive the operations of the old areas of the city in Salt access to the old areas live in all parts and integrated with modern and effective in those cities and rooted for the architectural heritage of Jordan and the authentic way to keep it as much as possible fabric.
- You should aim revitalization those operations to revitalize, use the abandoned parts, and strengthen the effectiveness of the parts used in the old areas and the service sectors and improve the situation and the infrastructure.
- Should work revitalization to find the elements of attraction inside the old areas to encourage parents to-limits and to encourage the survival of its inhabitants where by providing a shortage suffered by the city center in the urban spaces qualifying and in public buildings and private service-and the social and cultural ones within these ancient areas operations.
- Must seek revitalization to find solutions to strengthen and enhance the contact points between the old solutions operations and areas between the modern part of the Ocean and encourage the entry and the transition from the old to the modern, and also must seek to find a way to connect Between the old areas and the extension and expansion and it was not adjacent to the old areas.
- Solve the problems of the old areas as a whole, which often include roads and alleys, infrastructure and the provision of a lack of public and social buildings and that the re-use of old buildings abandoned public buildings one of the solutions, as well as the provision of urban spaces and qualified solutions residential areas abandoned, preservation, restoration, and renovation. And maintenance of buildings used and maintained in accordance with the rules of preservation and restoration.

- Work on creating spaces and urban areas and points of eligible public and attract and serve all categories of the revival of the central points of the old urban squares and rehabilitation, especially in light of the shortage experienced in its current state in such areas And urban spaces and points.

### **References**

- Rami Farouk Daher, 2006, urban development for oqba bin nafe' project and its role to keep the identity of as salt city, Routledge.
- JICA,2003, Salt "Nomination of Properties for Inclusion on the World Heritage List.
- Dar Al Hadassah and Partners,2014, Upgrading and Rehabilitation of Al -Salt City Centre , ASCD.
- COTECNO, 2005l. Third Tourism Development Project. Secondary Cities Revitalization Project. Salt. Annex 4: Limited Environmental Assessment. Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.
- COTECNO, 2005m. Third Tourism Development Project. Secondary Cities Revitalization Project. Salt. Annex 1: Detailed Description of the City Revitalization Program. Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.
- COTECNO, 2005r. Third Tourism Development Project. Secondary Cities Revitalization Project. Salt. Annex 2: Social Assessment. Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.