

## The Impact of Rehabilitation through Urban Regeneration on cultural dimensions for the old markets: the case of Souk Al Sokar, Amman, Jordan

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**Abstract:** This research addresses rehabilitation and conservation of old inner-city urban center and historic markets in Amman, Jordan. The need for urban rehabilitation and adaptive re-use is discussed to develop and to regenerate the urban centers, a delineation of the concept is provided, and social aspects of rehabilitation are discussed. The research concludes the need for Souk al-Soukar rehabilitation and revitalization which maintain the typical urban tissue and essential qualities of the historic site and the life of communities working there. Moreover, it can adapt the physical structures and organize the activities to some of the recent requirements. In terms of urban center, it is important to be seen as part of conservation areas, and that their sustainability and revitalization will be most feasible if they are integrated into new rehabilitation program.

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### 1. Introduction

Architectural heritage is that inventories of cultural property and cultural nation, which reflects the life of our forefathers and technical innovations. The cultural and heritage is a proof in the architectural buildings, which are usually vulnerable to damage by factors of time and human use. Therefore, there is a need of the rescue and conservation of the remaining of this heritage, thus the relevant artists from architects and thinkers formulate the plans to document these buildings which have historical, cultural and religious value, and then maintain and rehabilitate to suit the contemporary uses and achieved durability by the new post and harmony with the original post of the building value and respect the traditional, historical and religious particularities.

In Jordan, especially in the past twenty years, the interaction of the official and popular response to the importance of architectural heritage to make many of the legislation was shown. In addition to the regulations and laws that contribute to the preservation of heritage and architectural interest.

Through this research we will focus on the study of the community needs in one of the oldest market in Amman (Souk Al-Soukar) in terms of understanding the local community and emphasizing on local participation.

### 2. Research Importance

Souk Al- Soukar is considered one of the most important historical markets and social hub in

Amman. It is formed between Al-Hussaini's Mosque and Rasheed Al Madfa'e Street that suffers from lack of maintenance. Its location plays an attractive role to tourists, which insist the cooperation of the community to improve and protect the market.

### 3. Research Methodology

Analytical and descriptive approach by studying what has been noticed on the site and interviewing the owners of Souq Al- Soukar shops.

### 4. Research Aims

The historical, social, economic functional and living structure of Souq Al- Soukar must be protected from being polluted. As an example of an ingenious way of life and work, this cultural fabric must be saved whatever happens and supported by its local community.

### 5. Research Objectives

- Protecting downtown centers from lack of maintenance through studying the community needs.
- Conserve the shops characteristic, fabric and setting while guiding future development and reuse.
- Protect and enhance open spaces.

### 6. Urban heritage

Urban heritage is usually a concern in intangible "monuments", i.e. churches, temples, all sorts of Religious buildings, palaces, castles, fortresses, historic city walls and gates and other Types of institutional buildings (e.g. Of education, science, administration, or other Social purposes). Historic residential areas and historic city centers, and in Non-

tangible elements, such as customs and beliefs, which play a role in the articulation of space use and the built environment.

([http://www.icomos.org/~fleblanc/documents/terminology/doc\\_terminology\\_e.html](http://www.icomos.org/~fleblanc/documents/terminology/doc_terminology_e.html)).

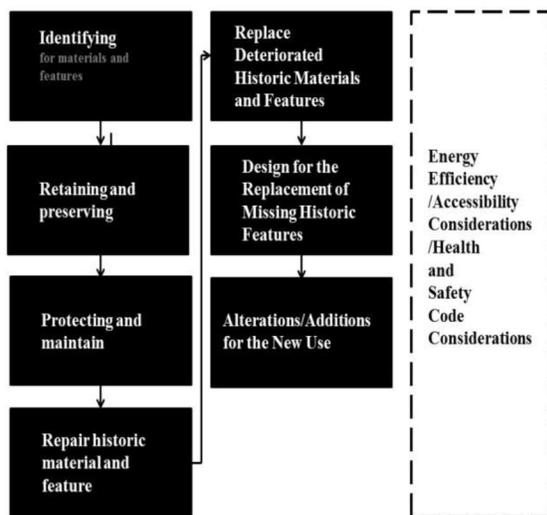
The Process for preserving urban heritage are on the large size and to manage it we to deal with something on a small level to give the desired result. And that can happen through the process of neighborhood conservation, which is one of the Heritage Preservation methods in this study the historic neighborhood is our concern.

## 7. Rehabilitation

The action or process of making possible a continuing or compatible contemporary use of a historic place or an individual component, through repair, alterations, and/or additions, while protecting its heritage value. (In Parks Canada Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada.

([http://www.icomos.org/~fleblanc/documents/terminology/doc\\_terminology\\_e.html](http://www.icomos.org/~fleblanc/documents/terminology/doc_terminology_e.html))

## 8. The process of the Rehabilitation is:



**Figure 1.** The process of rehabilitation. Resource: (Goussous, 2015)

At the identifying stage we define the character of the historic building by the form and detailing of exterior materials, such as masonry, wood, and metal; exterior features, such as roofs, porches, and windows; interior materials, such as plaster and paint; and interior features, such as moldings and stairways, room configuration and spatial relationships, as well as structural and mechanical systems. After we identify the character we have to protect materials and features of the building, but in limited and least degree of intervention. We should maintain on the original elements through treatments, limited paint removal,

and re-application of protecting coating. And if the element were deteriorated or missing some parts we substitute the original with the same material if it was available, or use similar materials convey the visual appearance of the remaining parts of the feature and finish. If the level of deterioration or damage of materials precludes repair, then the appropriate solution is the replacement of the entire feature in kind to be technically and economically feasible. The replacement of a new feature should base on an adequate historical, pictorial, and physical documentation. Some alterations or additions in the interior or exterior of the historic building is needed to assure its continued use, but that should be avoided unless these actions are referenced within specific sections of the Rehabilitation guidelines. (Jonh, 2005).

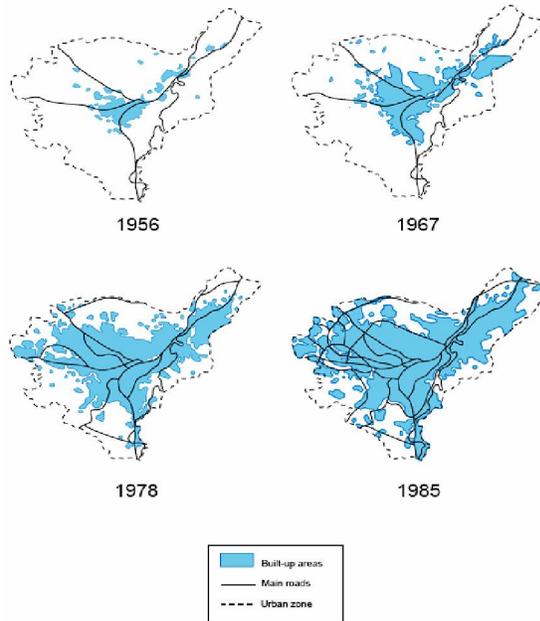
## 9. The formation of Amman City

Amman, the capital city of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, currently has a population in excess of 9 million according to the population and housing census in 2015, but in 1924, it consisted of little more than a handful of dwellings. This overview sets out to document and explain the phenomenal expansion of this fast growing Arab city. The physical geography of the urban region and the early growth of the city are considered at the outset and this leads directly to a consideration of the highly polarized social structuring that characterizes contemporary Amman. This examination is facilitated by new data derived from the Greater Amman Municipality's Geographical Information System. These data exemplify the essential modernity of the city of Amman. The employment and industrial bases of the contemporary city and a range of pressing contemporary issues are then considered, including transport and congestion, the provision of urban water under conditions of water stress and privatization, and urban and regional development planning. The paper concludes by emphasizing the growing regional and international geopolitical importance of the city of Amman at the present time.

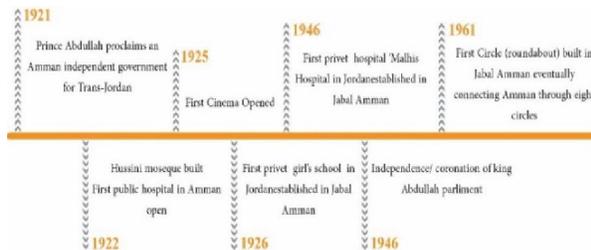
The growth of Amman from the 1920s to the present has been phenomenal; in terms of its population, physical extent and regional geopolitical importance. Al-Asad (2005) has referred to what he describes as "ever-growing Amman". What was in the early 1920s a small town of little more than 2000-3000 people is today a major regional city with a recorded population of 2.17 million (Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan 2006). The phenomenal growth of the urban area in both size and significance has occurred in "drastic growth spurts that have transformed the look and feel of the city...and its connections with the outside world" (Al-Asad, 2005).

Such growth spurts have also meant that although geopolitically Amman currently stands as

one of the most important cities in the modern Arab world, one of its major characteristics is that it is, for the most part, a contemporary metropolis. Thus, Ham and Greenway (2003: 98) comment that “Amman is a modern Arab city rather than a great, ancient metropolis of the Orient: it has never rivalled Damascus or Cairo as a grand Islamic city of antiquity.”



**Figure 2.** The physical expansion of Amman 1956-1985 (adapted from Amman Municipality, 1987 and Abu-Dayyeh, 2004).



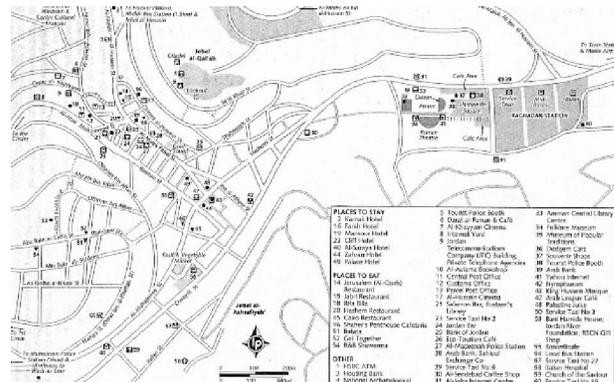
**Figure 3.** Time line of Amman-Jordan history (Jara association in Jabal Amman) edited by researcher

**10. Downtown**

Al- Balad is the oldest section of the city, it was originally inhabited during the Neolithic period around 6500 B.C. Downtown was the oldest trading center in Amman, it was where the whole city came together. It housed a number of the city’s public institutions ranging from governmental offices to Al-Husayni Mosque, which for many years served as Jordan’s primary mosque. Most of Amman’s cinemas and many of its restaurants also were located there.

Moreover, before the Amman Intercontinental Hotel was constructed during the early 1960s, between Jabal Amman’s Second and Third circles, the downtown area also had the city’s only modern hotel, Philadelphia Hotel, which unfortunately was torn down during the 1980s after a prolonged period of slow decline.

With the advent of the 1970s, the character of the downtown area underwent considerable change as many of the public and commercial institutions located there moved outwards. Since then, the area primarily has come to house low-budget shops. In spite of this downscaling, it has remained a very vibrant and active - yet over-crowded - part of Amman. Also it is one of the few districts in the city where the automobile has not completely taken over. Parking is not allowed along most of its streets; it has relatively decent sidewalks; and in spite of its heavy traffic, the movement of vehicles for the most part remains slow-paced.



**Figure 4.** Downtown landmarks map (adapted and revised from Lavergne, 2004)

Since this transformation of the 1970s, the nature of the downtown area has not changed drastically. If anything, its character as a low-budget shopping district has more strongly taken hold. The heart of the downtown district consists of the areas surrounding Al-Husayni Mosque and the King Faysal Square Such as Souq Al bokharyeh, Souq mango, Souq Al Blabseh and Souq Al sokar. It is packed with shops selling a dazzlingly wide array of products. One’s senses are overwhelmed by the crowds of people walking along its sidewalks, the noise generated by cars and pedestrians, as well as the colors and shapes of the extensive variety of products sold there, which seem to almost burst out of the shop windows. The area might be overcrowded, overwhelming with sensory stimuli, and it is authentic, unpretentious, and is full of life and energy.



**Figure 5.** Panoramic view for downtown, Recourse the Researcher

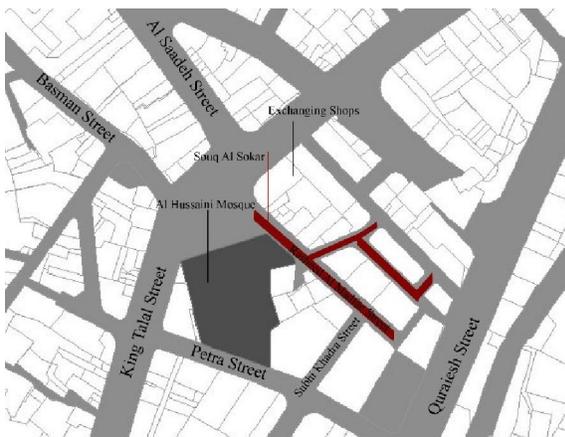
### 11. Brief history of Souq Al-Soukar

Al Soukar market was named after the basic substance that was sold which is an old sugar; as the market in the seventies of the twentieth century was a closed warehouses where sugar, rice and pulses are stored. The market had previously specialized in the sale of foodstuffs such as beans, spices and nuts.



**Figure 6.** View from Souk Al Sokar (Rasheed Al Madfa'e St.), Recourse the Researcher

### 12. The significant of Souq Al-Sokar



**Figure 7.** Souk Al Sokar location map, Recourse the Researcher

Souq Al-Soukar is a popular Old Market is located in Downtown Amman city, it established in

1957. Souq Al-Soukar basically was a twenty shops selling foodstuffs and spices, and the Department of little shops selling fabrics. It is also the most important founders of this market: Haider Arafat Trading Company, Nouredine Al masri shops, Palestinian trading company, Muhammad Ali Badi shops, Darwaza and Kayali shops. The market is one of main open markets in Amman, it is not just an open market it is one of the social interaction spaces, and it form an urban phenomena because of its location between the building (Al Hussein Mosque and exchanging shops).



**Figure 7.** Views inside Souq Al Soukar, Recourse the Researcher

### 13. The problems in Souq Al Sokar



**Figure 8.** Stalls in Souq Al Sokar, Recourse the Researcher

Souq Al Sokar like other places has its advantages and disadvantages. Starting with disadvantages; low rent conditions and the absence of authorities in the past few years caused an increase in stalls amount dominantly, and the dilapidated infrastructure forced most of the original shop owners to move. The market is in inferior condition as it became paved irregularly, it has random heights and widths, although, shops have encroachments on the

street and lack of lighting in the market at night is also considered a major issue. According to the cleaning level, we noticed serious dereliction; all markets mainly caused by vegetables stalls. Random locations of those stalls are causing crowdedness in the market comparing to the pedestrian scale.

#### 14. Results

According to previous analysis the history of Souq Al Sokar and its social sustainability through combining different social layers; rehabilitation of this historic, touristic and valuable market is a societal treasure and we should consider the following suggestions:

- Create radical solutions for stalls location to improve the pedestrian circulation.
- Unifying the signage system of the shops to create a poetic atmosphere.
- Consider the sustainable solutions for vegetables waste.
- Maintain the infrastructure of the market.
- Create shading system which suites the location and conditions of the market.
- To avoid random pedestrian circulation we should think about determinate the entrances and the exits of the market.
- Emphasis on highlighting the market's identity and highlighting of its historical background.

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