



Alexandria Preservation Trust APT - Alexandria, Egypt

## Conservation & Rehabilitation of Alexandria's City Center Gamal Abdel Nasser Avenue & Salah Salem Street (Fouad Ist Avenue & Sherif Pasha Street)

### Résumé

Ce projet d'étude préparé par l'Alexandria Preservation Trust (APT) en 1991 pour le gouvernorat a eu pour objectif de préserver et revitaliser l'environnement bâti et urbain du centre-ville d'Alexandrie.

L'étude se base sur la conservation de deux voies historiques et prestigieuses du centre-ville; la voie Canopique, existant depuis la fondation de la ville par Alexandre le Grand en 331 AV. J.C. (connue à travers les siècles aussi comme la rue Rosette, la rue Fouad I., l'avenue Horreya et Gamal Abd El Nasser), et son extension la rue Cherif (actuellement la rue Salah Salem).

Dans ce cadre, la création d'une unité pour la gestion du patrimoine dans le gouvernorat d'Alexandrie avait été proposée, afin de prendre en charge l'exécution du projet, et le futur développement et conservation du patrimoine alexandrin. Bien que cette unité n'ait jamais été créée, plusieurs projets de rénovation et de réhabilitation ont été réalisés. Quelques exemples sont examinés dans ce dossier soulignant les réalisations réussies et les défis associés au processus de conservation du patrimoine et aux expériences d'Alexandrie.

Mohamed AWAD





Introduction

Definition of the study area

The selected area has been chosen as a pilot project for the future redevelopment of the city center. The two kilometers of Gamal Abdel Nasser Avenue, which runs along the original Canopic Way, and its continuation along Salah Salem Street, approximately half a kilometer in length, cut across the heart of the modern European city and contain some of the city's most remarkable nineteenth and early twentieth century architecture. The ancient Canopic Way, existing since 331 BC when the city was founded by Alexander the Great, with its remarkable history and the few remaining archaeological sites, mostly cisterns, is also waiting to be evoked and reintegrated in the city's urban fabric. The importance of the chosen area is further emphasized by the variety of activities concentrated in the city center: administration, finance, commerce, leisure and habitat. The study area represents the main traffic axis of the city, acting as a link extending eastwards along Aboukir Road and westwards to the port area.



Figure 1  
Map showing the city center of Alexandria with Fouad I Av. & Sherif Street highlighted in red.

The character of the street, despite its present condition, remains representative of the high style architecture of the city's belle époque. The Latin and the Greek quarters contained the city's elitist residences, which have been more recently transformed into cultural centers, banks, and government and administrative offices. Despite a few individual attempts to preserve some of these buildings, a more effective approach of listing the buildings and preserving their collective character, while preventing further deterioration or destruction, remains of the highest priority. In the urban context, the project aims to complement façade renovations and lighting with urban upgrading, appropriate street furniture and accessories, as well as deal with some of the city center's traffic and parking problems. Potential sites for future development are to be chosen in an effort to stimulate and revive the economic and social potentials of the city center, while safeguarding the general character and quality of the built environment. The study area also included proposals for the renovation of the traditional and more popular district of Kom el-Dik as a complementary example to the elitist architecture of this avenue.

Project aims

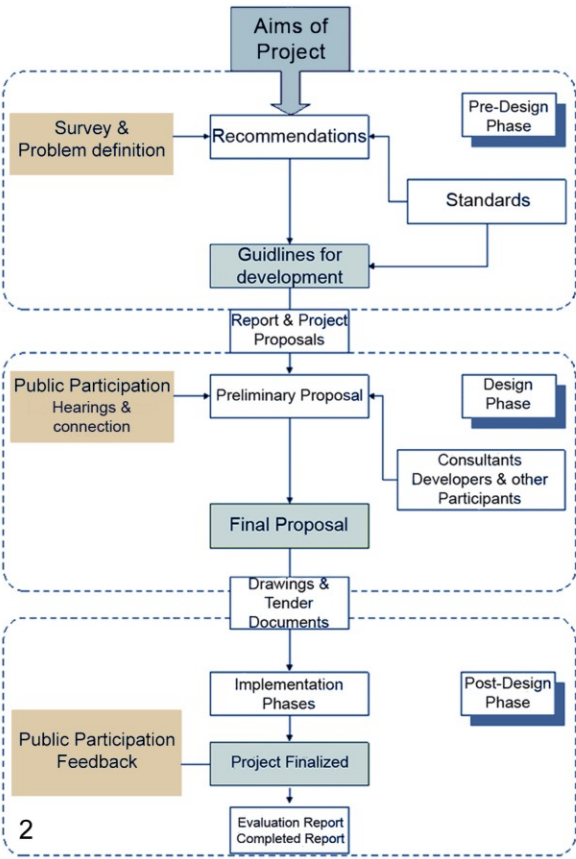
- To capitalize on the city's historic past by rehabilitating its archeological heritage and reintegrating it into the contemporary socio-economic and cultural context.
- To safeguard the nineteenth and early twentieth century architectural heritage by direct intervention through restoration, renovation and rehabilitation of selected outstanding buildings. This will be further enhanced by proper façade lighting and landscaping.
- To upgrade the quality of the urban environment by carrying out pavement renovation, installing new lighting and street furniture, and attending to landscaping. Some of the city center's traffic and transport problems will also be dealt with.
- To review potential and vacant sites for development and to propose a set of guideline policies for new development schemes. This will enhance the urban quality, while keeping the harmony and true character of the streets.
- To enhance the quality of living, work and

entertainment in the city center.

- To create a better environment for sustainable economic, social and cultural development by offering investment, employment and tourist opportunities.
- To promote the development of a collaborative partnership between governmental institutions, private investors and international aid agencies. The aim is to encourage sustainable growth and development in the city, while creating a favorable environment for effective public participation through the creation of a Heritage Management Unit (HM-Unit) in the Governorate of Alexandria with the participation of NGOs, such as the Friends of the Museum of Alexandria, Rotary Club and the Tenants Association of Sherif Street.

Project phases

1. The pre-design phase was concerned with the survey of existing historical and archeological sites, as well as architectural and urban conditions. The project aims and desired standards were set at this stage. This whole process identified problems and areas of concern, which eventually lead to policy formulations and guidelines for development. Open events and seminars presented the project in its survey and preliminary proposal stages to the public. Relevant comments and concerns solicited at this point were included in a final revised proposal. A preliminary cost and feasibility study also accompanied this stage.
2. In the design phase, the revised preliminary proposals will be discussed with participants and potential developers prior to the preparation of final drawings and tender documents. This will be accompanied with a detailed feasibility, finance and project implementation phase in the form of a final report, while the active participants, developers and contractors are identified.
3. The post-design phase is related to the actual implementation and project execution: site supervision and management to be developed within the framework of the Heritage Management Unit (HMU) to be created in the Governorate of Alexandria.



Survey and analysis

Historical analysis

The Canopic Way, today Gamal Abdel Nasser Avenue, ran from east to west and was the main street of the city as conceived in Dinocrate's original plan in 331 BC. From the city's two main gates, that of the sun and moon, it was lined with statues and columns, and paved with marble. It is believed that at its intersection with a perpendicular street running north to south (today's Nabi Daniel Street) was the Soma, believed to be Alexander the Great's burial place. The ancient city, abandoned during medieval times, remained in ruins until the early nineteenth century. The immense building activities during the reign of Mohamed Ali and of his successors eventually led to important excavation works undertaken by Mahmoud el Falaki, the Khedive Ismail's astronomer, in the 1860s. El Falaki records in his *Carte de l'Antique Alexandrie* published in 1866, that the Via Canopica was the main artery for access to important sites such as the Gymnasium, the Paneum, the Soma,

the Mouseion, a temple of Serapis (replaced by the Church of Saint Athanasius and today the Attarine Mosque) and later the Mosque of a Thousand Columns. These excavations were followed by Ferdinand Noack's investigations at the end of the nineteenth century. Breccia and Adriani's work at the beginning of the twentieth century revealed a few remaining water cisterns on the Canopic Way, possibly dating from the Islamic period. The revival of the old Canopic Way, known as rue Rosette during the second half of the nineteenth century with the expansion of the cosmopolitan city, came as a natural continuity of the growth of the European quarters, from the place des Consuls, later Mohamed Ali Square, towards suburban Ramleh. Among the important edifices along the rue Rosette was the Zizinia Theater (1863) and later, the city's first museum and the municipality in around 1890. Yet the most characteristic feature of the street's urban morphology was the presence of elitist residences, especially after the bombardment of the city in 1882 and the rebuilding boom that followed. Filippo Pini, an Italian, was the first promoter of this new Quartier Rosette and his house, built in 1880, is today the Spanish Consulate. His compatriots, the Aghion family, contracted the architect Antoine Lasciac to design a Palazzina in 1885, which is now the *Al-Ahram* building.

Other Italians — Luzzatto, Averino and Sinigallia — chose this area for their mansions and were joined by Levantines such as Sursock, Zogheb, Abou Shanab and Bassili, and Greeks like Benaki, Salvago and Valassopoulou. To this day, their residences testify to the extent of wealth and pluralism of the city's cosmopolitan society. By the turn of the century, Alexandria had established a reputation as Egypt's commercial and financial capital. Mohamed Ali Square, formerly known as the place des Consuls, and the adjacent Sherif Street, presently Salah Salem Street, were the seat of the Stock Exchange and many bank premises: the Anglo-Egyptian Bank, Lloyds Bank, the Bank of Athens and the elegant Banco di Roma designed by Henri Gorra in 1905 and inspired by the Palazzo Farnese in Rome. The burst of prosperity following the First World War fostered even further the elitist character of the rue Rosette which was now called Fouad I Street after the new king of Egypt. The era witnessed the development of a number of elegant apartment blocks such as the Paraskevas and Meclovez apartment block (1924); the Adda Complex (1927) designed by Gustave Nahman; the Cordahi Complex (1929) by Georges Parcq which included the Mohamed Ali Theater; and the elegant ensemble of buildings developed by Fumaroli (1929). The latter and the Paraskevas building received municipal awards for their

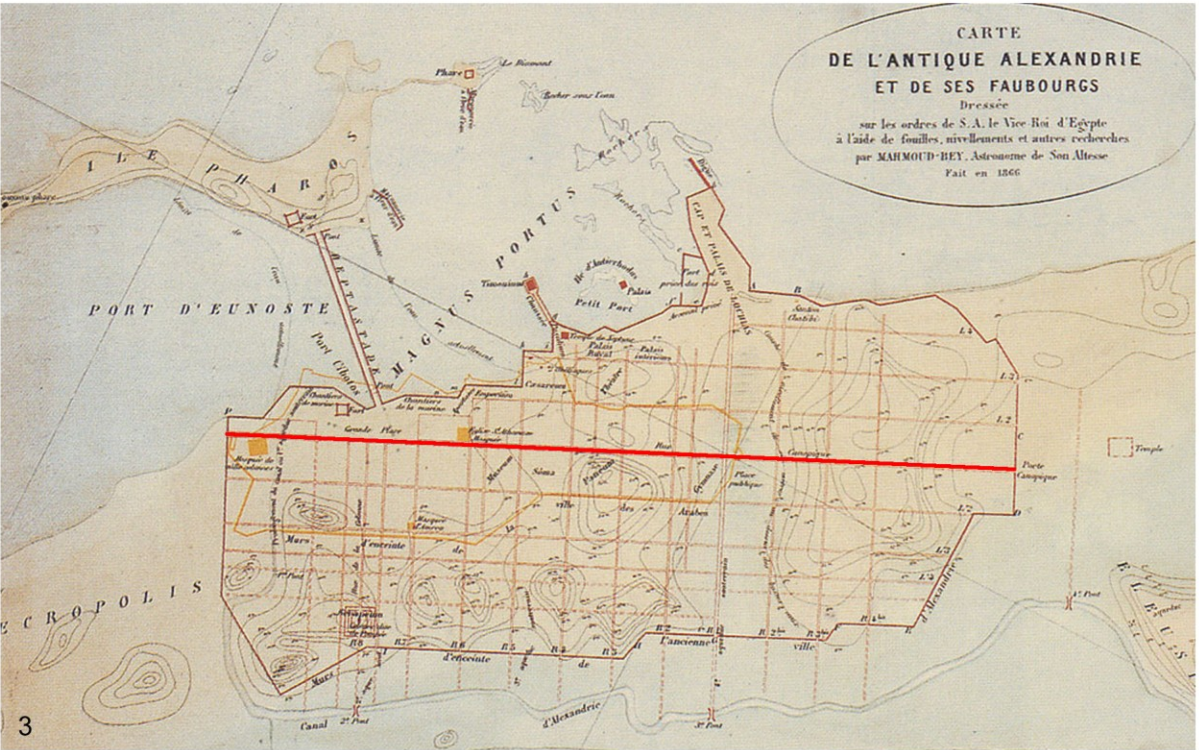


Figure 2  
Schematic diagram of the logical framework.  
Figure 3  
Alexandria in the third century BC as depicted in the map of Mahmoud El Falaki, 1866. The Canopic Way is the main artery of the city.



beautifully rendered façades. The 1940s and 1950s were marked by important contributions from insurance companies both in Fouad I and Sherif Street. The entertainment and leisure functions of the street are exemplified by the introduction of cinemas, the Amir managed by Twentieth Century Fox and the Rio by Gaumont, and the numerous salons de thé and pastry shops such as Pastroudis, Baudrot and Unica. As a consequence of the 1952 revolution, old street names were replaced by new revolutionary names: Gamal Abdel Nasser replacing Fouad I, and Salah Salem replacing Sherif Pasha. The sequestration and confiscation of foreign and elitist property following the socialist changes of society in the 1960s and the mass exodus of Europeans from Egypt resulted in property being transformed into schools, governmental offices and public utilities. These buildings and the surrounding environment suffered the consequences of neglect, misuse, ill-conceived additions and remodelings.

Archeological survey

There are a number of historical monuments and archeological sites situated in the project area. Some are still standing and constitute part of the contemporary city: the great archeological site of Kom el-Dik with a Roman theater and baths, the Attarine Mosque, and a dozen cisterns dating from the Islamic period. Others, despite having vanished, remain important for Alexandria's legendary past: a temple of Serapis at the site of the Attarine Mosque, the Mouseion, the ancient Tribunal, the Paneum, the Canopic Gates and the Soma (Alexander the Great's presumed burial place). This project underlines the necessity of both preserving existing sites and evoking others that, despite having disappeared, made Alexandria one of the greatest cities of antiquity. As little trace of Alexandria's ancient splendor has survived, it is today difficult to grasp the importance and beauty of this city in ancient times. The unique nineteenth and early twentieth architecture remains, but most vestiges of the ancient city have gone. This project considers the importance of Alexandria's past and proposes to reintegrate or evoke some of its vanished grandeur into the contemporary urban environment. The construction of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina has been widely publicized, as has the work of underwater archaeologists in search of the sunken traces of the Pharos and Cleopatra's

Palace. Excavations continue at Kom el-Dik and a part of the ancient necropolis was recently unearthed in the west of the city during the construction of a new motorway access to the port.

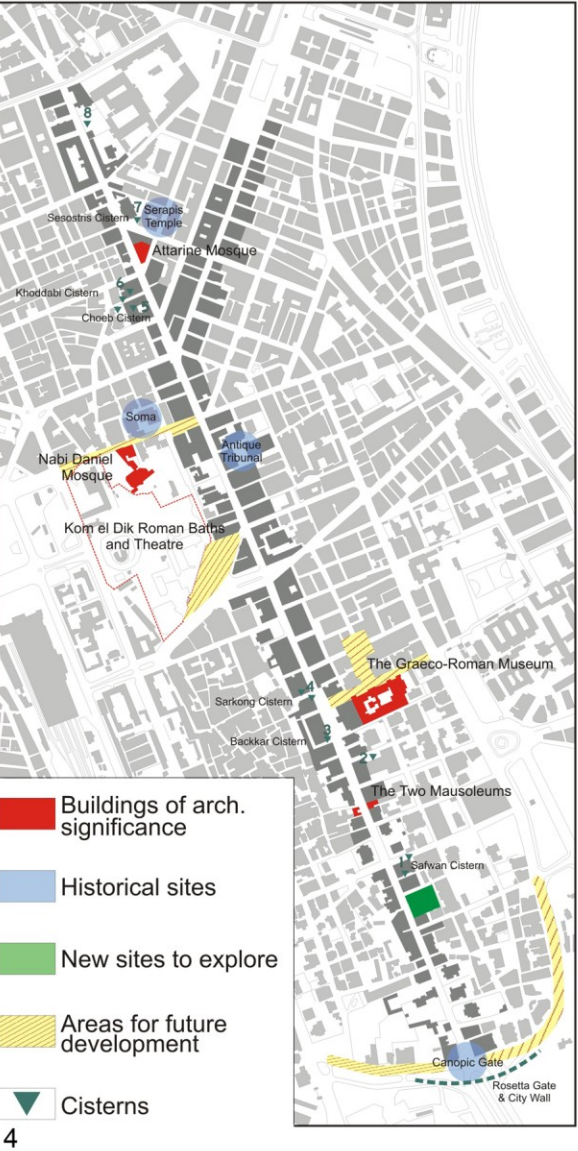


Figure 4 Map showing the archeological & historical sites. Figure 5 The Rosetta Gate at the turn of the century.

The site of Kom el-Dik

The site of Kom el-Dik lies south of Gamal Abdel Nasser Avenue but at present its access is facing the railway station, away from the city center. There is certainly a need to rearrange the site's entry from Gamal Abdel Nasser Avenue, taking into consideration parking facilities for tourist vehicles and the embellishment of the entrance with vegetation and columns and statues from the Greco-Roman Museum's collection. Other considerations will include signage, lighting and street furniture. Kom el-Dik, formerly a hillock on which the French built a fort during Bonaparte's expedition of 1798, remained undiscovered as an archaeological site until the late 1960s, when a team of Polish and Egyptian archeologists found the remains of a Roman theater dating from fifth century AD, Roman baths dating from the second century AD and a school consisting of lecture rooms, the sole example of a Roman-Byzantine school in Alexandria. This complex has become the most important archeological site in the city center. The area of Kom el-Dik is one of the few areas where we can see the remains of the old Turkish order and the hybridization of Islamic and European architecture. It is the birthplace and former home of Sayed Darwish, Egypt's most celebrated modern composer, and was formerly inhabited by the Egyptian working class society, to which he belonged. The site retains its local character of public spaces and narrow winding lanes; however it is now a very depressed area and faces serious pressure in terms of demographics as well as development. Sayed Darwish's house is half demolished and on the verge of disappearing. The aim is to upgrade the quality of life in the area by involving local groups in cleaning and gardening projects. The project also aims to carry out the preservation of the unutilized cisterns in the area. As an essential part of the city's Islamic (and possibly earlier) monuments, the renovated cisterns will open to the public a view on Alexandria's many layers and serve as spaces for both education and recreation. Moreover, the cisterns of Kom el-Dik will be placed within their context of a larger system of fresh water cisterns, including the Saffwan Cistern located at the base of the hill under the corner with Gamal Abdel Nasser Avenue. In linking the cisterns with the revitalization of the whole area, the project would bring to light the full extent of Alexandria's unique tangible and intangible

built environmental heritage. From the underground cisterns to the top of the hill, the project aims to renovate the buildings and public spaces, and thereby improve the quality of life for local residents by putting in place a system and plan for the future sustainable development of the area.

Greco-Roman Museum

The Greco-Roman Museum, designed by Dietrich Bey and Leon Stienon in 1891 was inaugurated in 1895. It was built especially to house the collections of Greco-Roman artifacts found in Alexandria and to display the ancient city's civilization. As the most important archeological museum in the city it plays a prominent role and is visited by tourists and local inhabitants alike. The access to the museum from the intersection of Museum Street with Gamal Abdel Nasser Avenue should be punctuated with vegetation and architectural artifacts, such as columns, to give the impression that the museum spreads into or is part of the city. The museum is expected to undergo complete renovation and reorganization from September 2005.

Attarine Mosque

It is believed that in antiquity, the site of the Attarine Mosque is believed to have held a temple to Serapis, Alexandria's most honored divinity. During the Christian period, the church of St Athanasius replaced the temple, and later, with the Arab conquest, the church was transformed into a great square mosque, as shown on the engravings of Bonaparte's expedition in 1798. The team accompanying the expedition also noted three columns positioned opposite the mosque and a colossal statue of porphyry was found nearby in 1870. An ancient sarcophagus, once believed to be Alexander's, was taken away from the site in 1801, when the British occupied Alexandria, and transported to the British Museum in London. The present mosque, a renovation dating to the turn of the twentieth century, is a typical example of the Abbas Helmi period, designed by the Ministry for Religious Endowments' (Waqf) technical office.

The Two Mausoleums

The mausoleums of Sidi Abdallah and Sidi Yacoub, standing opposite each other on Gamal Abdel Nasser Avenue, were incorporated into



apartment blocks in the 1920s by the Ministry for Religious Endowments. Such juxtaposition of tombs and residences, although interesting, was not a novelty. Examples exist in medieval and Ottoman Islamic architecture. The façades of the apartment blocks, as well as the two mausoleums need complete renovation, while some structural restoration is needed in the case of projecting balconies and molding details.

Cisterns

A number of cisterns, mostly dating from the Islamic period, have been preserved. Some of these cisterns were used as shelters during the Second World War, but most are now closed to the public and not in use. Among the most impressive in the study area is the Saffwan Cistern. Lying under street level at the intersection of Gamal Abdel Nasser Avenue and Battalsa Street, it is composed of two storeys supported by columns with decorative capitals. Another group of three cisterns exists under the building known as Paraskevas opposite the Municipality. Two smaller examples can be found near the Alexandria Water Company, and further into the Attarine district a third group is situated in a small alley, which used to be called Cistern Street. All these cisterns need renovation and could be rehabilitated, possibly as annexes to the Greco-Roman Museum for special collections, or as antique or gift shops, or as restaurants, etc...

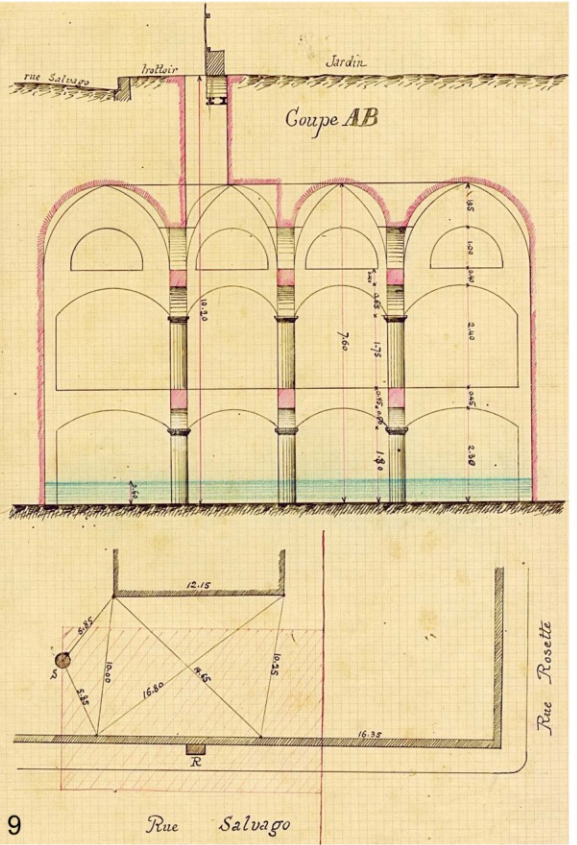


Figure 6 The Piazza of Kom el-Dik. Figure 7 The Greco-Roman Museum, designed in 1898 by Dietrich Bey and L. Stienon. Figure 8 Attarine Mosque. Figure 9 Section and plan of the Saffwan Cistern found under the Toriel building on Fouad I Av. as surveyed by engineer Kamil. Archives of the Greco-Roman Museum.





Figure 10  
The Société Immobilière building; among the most elegant buildings on Gamal Abdel Nasser Ave., designed in 1928 by P. Gripari.

Architectural survey

The architectural survey of the two streets identified fifty-one buildings, thirty-five on Gamal Abdel Nasser Avenue and sixteen on Salah Salem Street, intended for conservation and renovation. The information concerning each building was compiled from two distinctive sources. Historical material concerning buildings' owners, architects, styles, periods of erection was available from the Alexandria Preservation Trust, whereas information concerning ownership of the buildings from 1895 was compiled from the archives of the Alexandria Water Company.

The responsive building styles following the 1882 British bombardment of the city and the rebuilding boom that followed were historic revivalist and eclectic. Early eclecticism, pre-First World War, is identified as being less articulate in form than in the inter war period. Two good examples displaying these characteristics are the ensemble of the Société des Immeubles d'Égypte on Salah Salem Street, designed by Antoine Lasciac in 1885, and the Cordahi Complex on Gamal Abdel Nasser Avenue, designed by G. Parcq in the 1920s. The post-First World War period witnessed the growing popularity of the decorative styles: Art Nouveau and Art Deco. These are illustrated by the Luzzatto apartment building (1914) designed by Sinigaglia, the Sayed Darwish Theater (1921, originally the Mohamed Ali Theater) designed by G. Parcq, and some of the pastry shops and department stores such as Pastroudis and Salon Vert, the latter designed by Lessous.

The eclectic revivalist styles of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century perfectly expressed an architectural pluralism and the pro-European cosmopolitanism that prevailed in the city. Between the two world wars and in the immediate post-Second War period, the most favored architectural expressions became the decorative style and the early modern international style. The most popular eclectic style was the neo-Renaissance, with thirty buildings in the two streets. There are also, however, some rare examples of eclectic neo-classic trends — the Alexandria Water Company building and the Averoff Girls' School, designed in 1895 by N. Paraskevas, and even of neo-Romanesque styles such as the Adriana Pinto apartment block by G. Loria.

Local revivalist styles are mostly present in the form of exoticism, as seen in the Moorish architecture of the Tawa apartment block on Salah Salem Street. Revivalist neo-Islamic trends

are also significant in mosque designs, as in the Attarine Mosque (1901) and the mausoleums of Sidi Yacoub and Sidi Abdallah (1920), all designed by the technical offices of the Ministry of Waqf. Art Deco is highlighted in examples such as the Pastroudis pastry shop and Cinema Amir (Twentieth Century Fox) and in such buildings as the Menasce apartment block designed by G. Aghion.

Although the modern international style became predominant within Alexandria in the period between the two world wars, very few buildings representing this architectural style can be found in our project area, this sector being already well built up by then. Most striking, however, are the large apartment buildings of the Société des Immeubles d'Égypte on Gamal Abdel Nasser Avenue and the Bassili and Sadek buildings, all designed by Henri Bernau who was an advocate of modernism. Another example of this style can be seen in the Insurance buildings of the 1950s, designed by the Egyptian architects Ali Thabet and Ali Nour el Din Nassar.

Problem identification & guidelines for conservation

Problem Identification

The project area in Alexandria's city center can be considered well preserved as most of the original buildings of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century have survived demolition. However, these buildings do suffer from neglect, lack of maintenance, ill-conceived additions, remodeling and deformation affecting their original styles. Despite the general air of neglect, some buildings, such as the Municipality, the Bassili residence and the Alexandria Water Company's head office, all situated on Gamal Abdel Nasser Avenue, have been successfully restored, whereas others are still waiting for their turn. From the fifty-one buildings selected in our project area, eight are already restored, two are currently under restoration and forty-one are in need of restoration.

Recent restorations have proved to be more harmful than beneficial when the use of inappropriate materials, wrong colors, or the bad restoration of detailed moldings have disfigured the original style of the building. This is the case of the Luzzatto residence — today the Bilquis

School — and of the Pini residence which is now the Health and Sanitation Office. The most visible threat to the architectural environment is related to advertisement signage and decorations depicting commercial activities, usually found on the ground floor of buildings.

One of the specific features of Salah Salem Street is the uniformity of building height. Respecting this uniformity, as well as the unified treatment of the façades, should be one of the main priorities for future development of the street. However, the mixed height and diverse development features of Gamal Abdel Nasser Avenue require a partial or individual approach to new developments, conforming to the height and style of adjacent buildings.

The most serious problem facing conservation remains the degradation of the building stock due to the lack of maintenance and repair as a result of the freezing and devaluation of rents (rents have been blocked in Egypt since the 1940s). Demographic pressure has also taken its toll on the city as informal habitats spread into the center, and rooftops have been occupied by haphazard constructions. High density and crowding are also created by the subdivision of floor space and apartments. Many such spaces have been transformed for petty commercial activities and industries, contributing to the pollution and general environmental degradation of the city center.

Moreover, the intensity of the traffic and the absence of adequate parking facilities remain among the major problems that need to be addressed in a comprehensive preservation policy for Alexandria's city center.

Principle guidelines for architectural conservation

1. It is recommended that the process of listing of buildings and groups of buildings of architectural significance or merit should be encouraged and consolidated with scientific surveys and documentation.
2. Public awareness and concern for conservation should be promoted with the help and contribution of public organizations, the press and media, and private interest groups.
3. The maintenance, repair and safeguarding of the built environment will demand an urgent review of building and zoning laws and regulations concerning additions, extensions, materials, styles, building heights and colors, the use of signage, air conditioners and so on. Zoning laws and regulations should consider new development land uses and

- building lines.
4. The upgrading of building laws must involve provision for periodical maintenance and repair involving owners and tenants' associations. The expropriation of buildings for public welfare or utility and compensation to property owners and their encouragement in conservation should be considered in the light of property and ownership rights. Procedures such as exemption from taxation, building permits and exchange of property procedures could also be considered.
  5. New land uses or re-use should be considered within the actual architectural and urban suitability. Infill should therefore conform to present zoning and the current uses of the different sections and identified activities of the building, street and area.
  6. Renovation and restoration of buildings will have to take into consideration structural failures, inappropriate use of building materials and colors, bad workmanship, damage due to failure in services, such as leaking pipes, menace due to vandalism, a general lack of awareness, disregard and disinterest in the qualitative and aesthetic values of the built environment such as the commercial use of signage, advertisements and decorations inappropriate to the original styles of the buildings.
  7. It is therefore recommended not only to ensure the use of professional expertise and the appropriate technologies for the process of restoration and renovation, but equally important is the mobilization and the effective management resources again involving the general public, users and interest groups together with public and governmental agencies.
  8. Gamal Abdel Nasser Avenue and Salah Salem Street are identified as part of the for what has been called European city. It is therefore recommended to view their conservation and regeneration within their context. Specific legislation must therefore take into consideration the special character of the area. This should include regulations to control typology, style, building heights and so on.



Figure 11  
Detail from the Société Immobilière building.



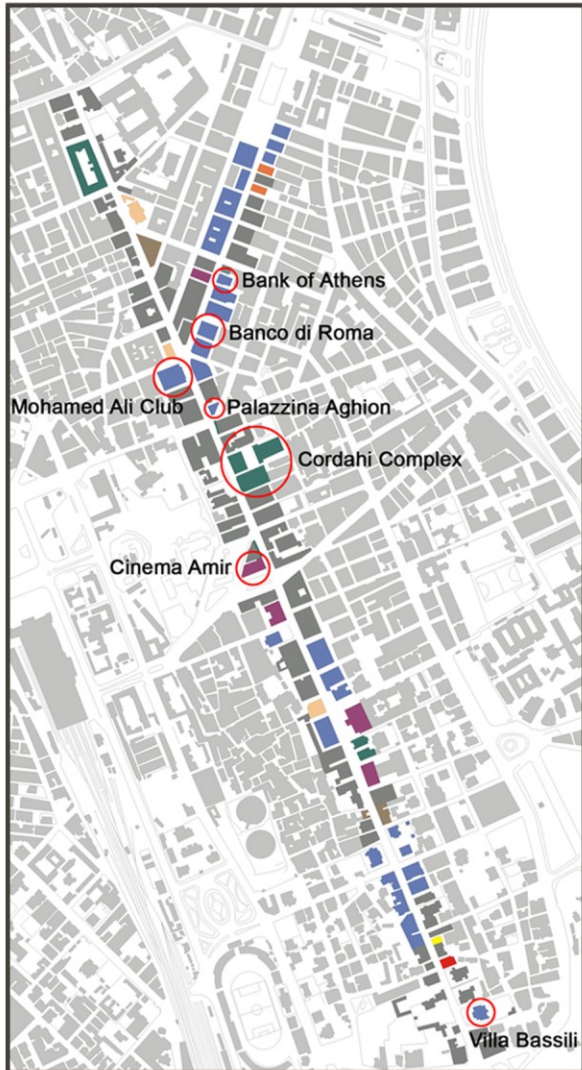


Figure 12  
Map showing the architectural styles along Fouad I Av. and Sherif Pasha Street, done by the APT.  
Figure 13 & 14  
Villa Bassili before and after renovation.

Implementation Phase

The architectural restoration and renovation process started in 1999. Involved initiatives were promoted by an initial study prepared by the Alexandria Preservation Trust (Awad and Partners) for the Governorate of Alexandria. The governor's personal interest in renovating and upgrading the street façades was crucial to initiate public interest and private developers to participate in the development process. However, the Ministry of Culture's interest was also equally important in restoring the Mohamed Ali Theater to its former glory, in transforming the Bassili residence into the city's National Museum and the former Mohamed Ali Club into the Alexandria Innovation Center, known as the Horreya Cultural Center.

Other institutional developments included the renovation of the former Banco di Roma, presently the National Bank of Egypt, and the Palazzina Aghion which now houses the *Al-Ahram* newspaper's head office in Alexandria. Renovations undertaken by such institutions encouraged a further renovation process in adjacent buildings, notably banks such as the Central Bank and Bank Misr, and cultural centers such as the American Center and the Goethe Institute.

However, little effort has gone towards the improvement of lighting, pavements, street furniture and vegetation, which are neglected because of

the lack of coordination and absence of effective management.

Other buildings such as the Toriel buildings on Fouad I Sreet have been restored by the governor's personal initiative in order to convince the adjacent developer to repaint the complex as a contribution to the city. In the case of the two mausoleums of Sidi Yacoub and Sidi Abdallah, the renovations, also done by private initiatives, possibly did more harm than good to the restored buildings due to the lack of technical control.

Selected examples of recent architectural restoration and renovation projects:

Villa Bassili — Alexandria National Museum (reuse)

The property was designed in 1929–31 by V. Erlanger. The American Consulate bought the property from the successors of A. Bassili in 1960 and sold it to the Ministry of Culture in 1997 at a price of 12 million LE. The project of transforming the building into the Alexandria National Museum started in 2001, and it was inaugurated in September 2003. The Italian architect Maurizio de Paulo was in charge of the museum's interior.

The renovation project in the context of its new

use as a museum was certainly a good example of preservation, since its showcases and displaced objects did not interfere with the original setting and décor of the original building, which has remained well preserved.

Rehabilitation and Restoration of the Mohamed Ali Theater, included within the Cordahi Complex (upgrading and restoration)

The Mohamed Ali Theater, owned by G. Cordahi, was designed by the architect G. Parcq in 1921 on the location where the old Zizinia Theater used to exist. The surrounding two apartment buildings were designed by the same architect (round the same time, 1928). In 2003 the whole complex was restored and additional structures were attached to the backstage area of the theater to provide better performance facilities.

The project highlights the importance of considering the urban context of the restored edifice, since the surrounding buildings, the piazza and the entrance gallery were all restored within the process of renovating the theater.

However, incomplete pre-design inception, unrealistic initial budgeting and constant replacement of consulting services and related drawing and specifications resulted in the disruption of site work and the inflation of costs from 3.5 to 25 million LE.

Mohamed Ali Club (renovation & reuse)

Originally known as Club Mohamed Ali, this building was erected about the 1890s for the Alexandria Exchange Company and was known as the Bourse Toussoun. Today it is a government property, called the Horreya Cultural Center. Varied cultural events are held there including lectures, exhibitions, music concerts and seminars, etc. The original club was renovated in 2001 under the direction of Dr. Adel Mokhtar. The renovation process seems to have been more concerned with introducing novelty than preservation. Additional features to the original exterior architecture have disfigured the original character of the building, yet the more serious problems associated with the post construction phase seem to have been related to technical specifications and control of the execution of services, such as air-conditioning, acoustics, lighting, etc...



Figure 15 & 16  
Cordahi Building I before and after renovation.  
Figure 17 & 18  
The passage through Cordahi Building I leading to Mohamed Ali Theater before and after renovation.  
Figure 19 & 20  
Piazza and main façade of Mohamed Ali Theater before and after renovation.



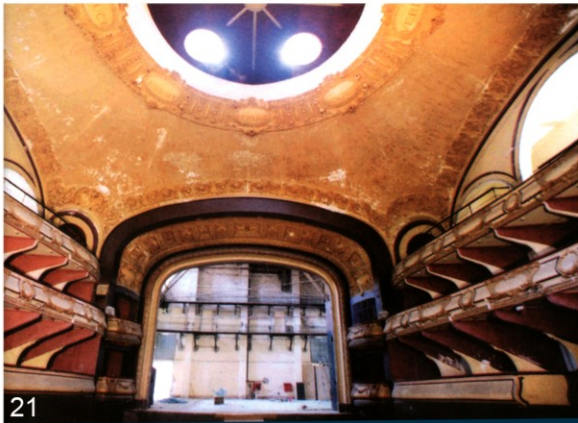


The branches of the National Bank of Egypt (renovation and restoration)

The National Bank of Egypt took the initiative of renovating two of its branches on Salah Salem Street, the former Sherif Street. The first, originally the Banco di Roma, was designed in 1905 by the architect H. Gorra in neo-Renaissance style. The internal reorganization of the bank seems to have not disrupted the designs, since most of the original interiors were preserved, whilst most of the furniture was replaced and disposed of. The exterior restoration carefully retained the original features of the building which still remains one of the most distinguished buildings of Alexandria's city center. The restoration work started in 1997 under the consultancy of Aboul Fadl, El Hadari and El Kholy, with an estimated budget of 8 million L.E., and the restored premises were inaugurated in 2001 at a final cost of 11 million LE.

The second branch of the National Bank of Egypt, formerly the Bank of Athens, was designed by N. Paraskevas and P. Gripari in around 1918. It was restored and renovated under the directions of Moharem and Backhoum Consultants, originally a civil engineering firm. Unfortunately the renovation process, though preserving the main features of the façade, entailed a complete destruction of the original interior spaces and detailing within the newly introduced modern renovations.

While these two examples belong to the same client and were renovated nearly simultaneously, it is obvious that the two approaches to conservation were quite diverse.



Palazzina Aghion (renovation and reuse)

Originally belonging to the Aghion family, the Palazzina Aghion was built in 1887, when the Aghions had to move to the Rosetta Gate district after the British bombardment of Alexandria in 1882. It was designed by the Italian architect Antoine Lasciac, following an eclectic Neo-Renaissance and mannerist style.

The ownership of the building moved later to the Takla family. Nowadays the property is occupied by the Al-Ahram newspaper, which added a roof floor to the structure. More recently, a study for the complete renovation of the premises was prepared by Awad & Partners. However, the actual execution of work not only entailed no professional supervision, but the client also exercised management

Figure 21 & 22  
The interior of Mo-  
hamed Ali Theater  
before and after  
renovation.  
Figure 23 & 24  
Mohamed Ali Club  
before and after  
renovation.  
Figure 25 & 26  
Bank of Athens  
before and after  
renovation.

of the renovation process, making changes to specifications and drawings with the aim of reducing costs. In this particular case most of the proposed works were dismissed and the building only received some cleaning and a fresh coat of paint applied to its façades and interiors.

Cinema Amir- Twentieth Century Fox (transformation)

Cinema Amir is a beautiful example of the grand cinema traditions of Alexandria's Art Deco period. It was designed by the American architects John & Drew Aberson for Mr. G. Geordanou, the promoter and owner of several similar establishments in Alexandria.

Managed by Twentieth Century Fox, the cinema was subdivided into several smaller cinemas in 2002 by the Italian architect Violante Claudio. While the decorative original roof was protected and covered by a new false ceiling, the cinemas' interiors and elegant cafeteria in the basement were sacrificed to fit the new space requirements.

Proposal for the Implementation of a Heritage Management Unit (HM-Unit) at Alexandria Governorate

The aim is to create an Urban Heritage Management Unit (HM-Unit) in the Governorate of Alexandria. The intention is to upgrade the structure and function of the Governorate, in an effort to preserve and regenerate Alexandria's unique architectural and urban heritage.

Donors and Participants

UNDP — Beneficiary, provision of legal and political framework of reference, main financial support.

UNESCO — Technical and financial support (library documentation, expert training, and project development partnership).

CULTNAT (The National Center for Documentation of Cultural and Natural Heritage) — Consulting partnership in capacity building and coordination.

APT (Alexandria Preservation Trust) — Private consultants, providing databases, documentation, technical training, partnership and consulting for project development.



Figure 27 & 28  
Banco di Roma  
before and after  
renovation.  
Figure 29 & 30  
Palazzina Aghion  
before after reno-  
vation.  
Figure 31  
The interior of  
Cinema Amir's hall  
before the subdivi-  
sion.  
Figure 32  
The interior of the  
entrance lobby of  
Cinema Amir  
before renovation.



Organizational framework of HM-Unit:

I. Management of Technical Resources and Functions

- I.1 Research & documentation
- I.2 Education (public & professional)
- I.3 Legislation & standards
- I.4 Communication & public relations
- I.5 Monitoring & evaluation

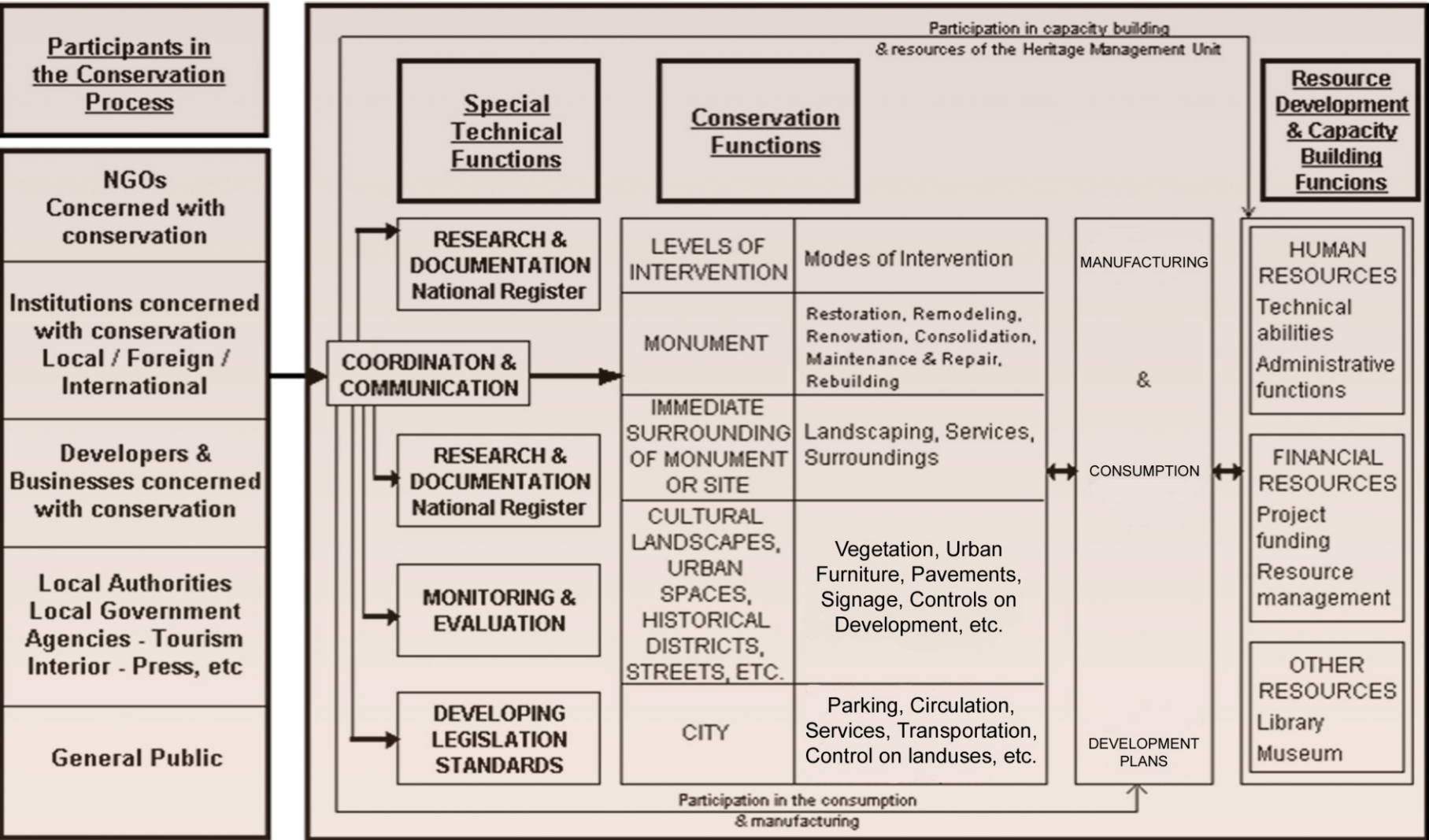
II. Management of the Conservation Process

- II.1 Conservation of historic buildings, districts and cities of the 19th and 20th century.
- II.2 Development projects, adaptive reuse and upgrading

III. Management of Resources and Capacity Building

- III.1 Human resources
- III.2 Financial resources
- III.3 Other resources, i.e: equipment, storage facilities, etc.

Proposed structure and function:



Selected interiors



Goals and mission

The HM Unit should aim at achieving the preservation and the sustainable development of the Alexandrian built environment by:

1. Surveying and documenting Alexandria's historic, architectural and urban heritage:
  - Listing and surveying historic buildings and districts.
  - Retrieving archives.
  - Publishing architectural and urban conservation manuals.
2. Planning and resource management of the conservation process:
  - Formulating conservation policy, setting standards and developing legislation.
  - Identifying threats (e.g. risk maps), constraints and opportunities.
  - Monitoring, evaluating and correcting the conservation process.
3. Implementing redevelopment projects:
  - Initiating pilot projects for conservation and redevelopment of historic buildings, streets, districts and parks.
  - Redevelopment programs for housing renovation and refurbishment.
  - Development and upgrading of historic sites and monuments.
4. Capacity building, technical assistance and training for conservation:
  - Providing consulting for conservation projects.
  - Technical training in the field of conservation, aimed at architects, contractors and specialists in conservation.
  - Experience sharing with educational institutions and research centers.

Resource financing and funding

- Within such a sustainable framework the HM-Unit may gather funding from such diverse sources as:
- Consultancy fees for developing guidelines for development, coordinating development projects, reviewing projects and monitoring their implementation.
  - Organizing training courses for professionals and other participants in the conservation process.
  - Providing lists of consultants, professionals and contracting services in conservation.
  - Organizing exhibitions and promotion of products, techniques and services related to conservation.
  - Publications, manuals and documentaries related to conservation.
  - Organizing professionally guided tours for visitors and the general public interested in heritage and conservation.
  - International organizations and donors, and

explore programs such as those of UNESCO, the European Community, and UNDP. It was also recommended that the HM-Unit should receive a seed fund to establish the unit and support its initiation and activities for the first three years. By the end of this period, it should have developed its own resources and funds for the continuity of its activities and development.

Legal framework

The HM-Unit needs a governmental decree for its establishment after approval from the Ministry of Local Government. The legal framework should include:

- Its relations with the ministries concerned, such as the Ministries of Tourism (development agency), of the Interior (enforcement of codes, standards and legislation), of Housing, and of Culture along with its Supreme Council of Antiquities.
- The promotion of the roles and contribution of local committees, NGOs and businesses related to conservation.
- Allowing the active participation and collaboration of international organizations and agencies related to conservation including UNESCO, UNDP and ICOMOS.
- The freeing of salaries and consultancy fees from public sector bureaucratic restrictions and regulatory procedures.

The HM-Unit proposal sponsored by a UNDP fund was presented to the Governorate of Alexandria and was introduced to the civil society and business community in a public hearing. No further implementation action has been undertaken by the Governorate.

Conclusion

1. Alexandria's preservation experiences, while demonstrating the richness and diversity of its heritage, also exemplify the fragility and the vulnerability of its conservation.
2. Many problems related to conservation arise from the socio-economic, political and environmental conditions prevalent in the society — good governmental practices, the rule of law, public awareness and poverty.
3. Alexandria's most recent heritage remains unprotected because of the lack of legislation and effective management, hence there is an urgent need to develop mechanisms for its protection.

Selected Interiors:

- Figure 33  
The Alexandria National Museum (Villa Bassili).
- Figure 34  
The entrance hall of the Alexandria Opera House (Mohamed Ali Theater).
- Figure 35  
A lecture hall in the Horreya Cultural Center (Mohamed Ali Club).