

Sustainable Urban preservation methods towards reviving the heritage village of Shali, Siwa Oasis

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Research summary:

The preservation approach of urban heritage areas is essential as it represents nation's heritage, historical, economic and cultural values. It became necessary to find balance between protecting the urban heritage and urban sustainability development as well.

Whereas community participation is one of the most important means towards sustainable urban development in our time, in developing and developed countries.

This study represents the role of institutions of civil society in conserving heritage to reach sustainable development from both a theoretical and a practical point of view.

The main objectives of this research is to highlight the role of civil society in planning strategies of heritage conservation where it targets to benefit from different ways used for heritage sustainable conservation in addition to reaching a methodology to activate the role of institutions of civil society in heritage conservation and extracting bases and standards of persevere urban heritage which can be applied on the case study area "Shali heritage village "in Siwa Oasis.

The research also highlights that the absence of awareness is one of the main reasons of deterioration of urban heritage. Also, achieving sustainable development in heritage areas can be done by community participation and activating the role of institutions in preserving heritage, its development and upgrade either in the phase of planning or construction of conservation projects with the existence of the governmental and private sectors. Through studying developing urban designs for conservation projects and reviving "Shali heritage village of Siwa Oasis " extracting some basis and standards for design to be followed in this project.

▪ **Keywords:** Urban sustainability, Preservation methods, Civil society, Sustainable urban heritage

Introduction:

Cities' urban heritage is an indicator that reflects the development of human civilization through history. Meanwhile, the heritage areas in many countries have been subjected to cultural and social changes leading to their deterioration. However, the studies and researches in the last decade showed great attention to the importance of the preservation of these urban heritage areas. Since these areas are considered heritage, historical, cultural, economic, and social national wealth.

Egypt is one of those countries characterized by the variety and diversity of its urban, natural and cultural heritage, stemming from the natural environment within Egypt throughout its history. In addition, the presence of more than a third of the world's monuments.

The research analyzed the methods of preserving sustainable urban heritage towards designing preservation and reviving projects for the heritage of Shali city in Siwa oasis. Shali city is one of the oldest cities in the oasis in the Libyan desert in Egypt, and also one of the most famous landmarks. On the other hand, the city suffers from the deterioration of the urban and cultural heritage due to the migration of citizens to the cities' traditional buildings. In addition to the urban sprawl of the cities' new buildings and slums. The research ends with a recommended methodology to activate the role of civil societies institutions and community participation to contribute in solving the problems facing the preservation process of Shali heritage village in Siwa oasis.

Research problem:

The problem of the research can be summarized in achieving a balance between the preservation of urban heritage and sustainable development. Through the activation of civil societies institutions' role in the urban heritage and sustainable development preservation policies towards upgrading the heritage of Shali city in Siwa oasis. (fig 1)

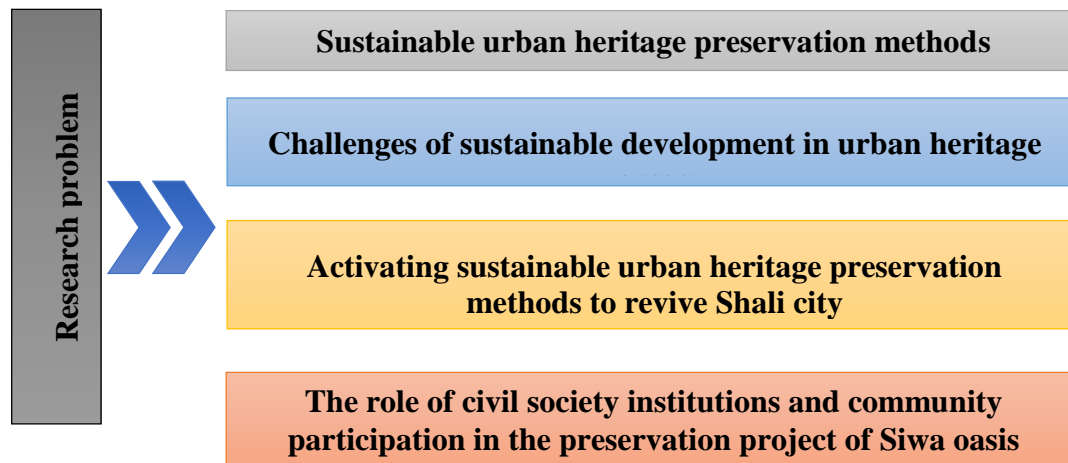


Fig 1 : policies and plans for sustainable urban heritage preservation

Research objective:

The research aims to study the methods of preserving sustainable urban heritage, in addition to designing a project to preserve and revitalize the city of Shali in Siwa Oasis. In an attempt to develop a methodology to activate the role of civil society, empowered by community participation role in the sustainable development of these heritage areas, through the proposed methods to solve problems. In addition, control the process of preserving sustainable urban heritage, and work to respect the policies and plans for the preservation of sustainable urban heritage.

Research Methodology:

The research depends on collecting data and analyzing the information through field study. Through the analytical method to study the methods of preservation of the urban heritage and achieving sustainable development. Towards reviving the heritage of Shali city and reaching a

methodology to activate the civil societies role. In addition to community participation in the preservation process through a framework that highlights the main guidelines of preserving the sustainable urban heritage in Siwa Oasis.

Selection justification of the study area (Shali heritage village in Siwa oasis):

Shali heritage village is characterized by its significant cultural and urban heritage, thus the research study focused on the different features of this village. Shali is being subjected to cultural and social deterioration, in addition to the deterioration of its traditional buildings. On the other hand, Shali has a lot of archaeological and historical areas that belong to different periods. Meanwhile, the location of this city provides relative privacy and isolation from the surrounding communities. All of the previously mentioned characteristics and factors lead to a strong society within the city with a significant identity relative to the housing prototypes, costumes, accessories, tools, utilities, and the local products of the citizens. In addition, the civil society institutions and the community groups lead a significant role in the preservation of this heritage in Siwa oasis. (fig 2)



Shali village 2020



Shali village 1929

Fig 2 : Shali village between the past and present [13]

The urban fabric in the study area (Shali heritage village in Siwa oasis):

The urban fabric of Shali appears as the oldest part of Siwa oasis. The village was built on a high hill as a single building of a fortified castle with no openings or passages except for one passage. The old city’s windows are small triangular openings, and the buildings formed eight layers all over the city. The heavy rains in 1919 caused the melting of the local kerchief building material that was used in all the city’s buildings. Although there is nothing left of the ancient village of Shali, however, these ruins form an attraction point for the tourists to discover how the heritage city looks years ago. Thus, Shali village is currently being revived to preserve its urban heritage. (fig 3)



Shali village layout



3D view for Shali

Fig 3 : Shali village urban fabric [15]

The Urban Design of Shali village preservation and revitalization project in Siwa Oasis:

The project started in February 2018 and continued until late 2020, and was funded by the European Union (EU) and EQI SME Company. The project's aim is to restore and preserve the archeological site of Shali village and the surrounding area that was built in Karsheif.

The project's aim:

The project aims to stimulate the local economy of the city through branding the village to be a leading eco-touristic destination.

▪ The project aims to focus on the sustainable development of Siwa's local community through the following mechanisms:

- Using the old buildings and spaces of the archeological site through the restoration and preservation process, to elevate the city as a cultural touristic city and attraction point. Through training the local communities to participate in the preservation process with their traditional construction mechanisms. (fig 4)
- The preservation of heritage sites, developing, and improving the city's environment will stimulate the local economy.
- Building a health care unit for women and child care to respond to social, economic, and health care needs for the oasis citizen.



Fig 4 : preservation and reusing of old building in Shali heritage village [13]

Government and civil organizations role in the preservation process of Shali village in Siwa oasis:

Preservation entities and committees were established by an external fund from international entities to be responsible for the revival of Shali village. These entities were supported through the European Union (EU) and EQI SME Company initiative.

Main findings:

1-Preserving the sustainable urban heritage:

- The Arab countries lately show interest in the preservation of urban heritage and sustainable development of historical cities, in addition to reviving the authentic aesthetic values.
- The decreased public awareness of urban heritage and preservation process leads to the deterioration of sustainable urban heritage.

- Activating the urban heritage preservation process needs to be through collecting data and information about the targeted sites, determining the objectives from the preservation process. Thus, reaching the desired policies and preserving architectural and urban heritage.
- The importance of community participation and civil society institutions' role awareness and training in many international declarations to preserve the urban heritage.
- Community participation is one of the most important principles of sustainable urban heritage preservation.

2-Activating the role of civil society institutions and community participation in sustainable urban heritage preservation:

- Promoting the role of community participation to support citizens forming community groups and institutions to lead the developing and reviving process and bear its burdens.
- Lack of funding and cultural awareness are the main factors affecting the role of community participation and also leading to the withdrawal of individuals from volunteering in civil society institutions.
- Promoting the role of civil society institutions and community participation in the preservation and reviving processes of urban heritage.
- Promoting partnership with the private sector and governmental institutions to solve problems facing the civil society institutions and guarantee the continuity of technical and financial assist.

Recommendations:

- Studying the importance of civil society institutions role in achieving the sustainable urban heritage development.
- Assuring the government's role in forming an organization responsible for the preservation process of the urban and cultural heritage of Shali village. These organization must include representatives from the citizens, private sector, developers, civil society institutions, and all those interested in the development of Shali heritage in Siwa oasis.
- Supporting local economy through promoting and activating the role of traditional local industries and products that affect the sustainable development of the village.
- Promoting financial fund for the urban heritage preservation and maintenance process.
- Shali village is a significant example for heritage and cultural preservation.
- Promoting a comprehensive vision for the preservation process of Shali's heritage in Siwa oasis connecting both current and future vision of sustainable urban heritage.

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