

## **Upgrading commercial streets: Planning, Tools and design solutions Case study: Khlousi street, Shubra misr, Cairo, Egypt**

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### **Abstract**

Commercial streets worldwide are considered an essential component of cities urban context. Over the course of years, that type of streets has evolved and developed and its organic growth proved to be one successful approach of city urban spaces and development. It also continued to develop and formed a type of architecture space within the buildings which contributed significantly on social, cultural and economic aspects. In addition to innovative urban design solutions.

In recent years, components of cities have changed noticeably towards creating a new type of urban public spaces within modern types of mixed-use buildings and commercial streets are now a prominent part of it. It is noticeable now that people are started to lean towards the experience of commercial streets rather than commercial markets. Unlike markets, commercial streets provide a richer experience in terms of social, economic, cultural and recreational aspects.

The aim of this research is to study the possibility of upgrading such commercial streets to be not only an urban space for residents but also a touristic attraction area and a recreational area by highlighting the current obstacles, challenges and violations on such urban space. The current challenges are; unplanned mixed-uses, traffic congestion and high-density population which are present mainly because of lacking strategic vision to develop and upgrade streets like this.

This research proposes a methodology to study and assess the current situation of Khlousi street in Shurba Misr as a commercial street and analyze current challenges to propose a set of urban tactics and design solutions for urban context problems.

### **Keywords:**

Commercial streets, urbanism, shopping streets, urban development.

### **Introduction**

One of the most important aspects of planning and design solutions for the upgrading of commercial streets is the use of sustainability principles through the application of values and concepts related to social, economic, urban and environmental conditions, and therefore to find the best architectural, urban and environmental solutions for them, as one of the most important goals of sustainability is the development of commercial streets and the upgrading of urban space and existing urban fabric and achieving its current and future needs, Egypt is currently facing planning and design problems for commercial streets, and commercial activities are one of the most important areas that have been affected by these problems. Commercial activities on the street, and the lack of visual perception of the elements of attraction and coordination of

the commercial street, which leads to weakening of the mental image, and it requires a careful pause to address this issue, while trying to monitor the planning and design problems of commercial streets, laying the foundations and planning and design standards for the development of commercial streets, to be commensurate with our Egyptian reality which stems from the needs and possibilities, so that commercial streets can become an attractive element within the urban fabric, and to gain a cultural, environmental, economic and aesthetic role in reviving and developing its urban space. this relies on a scientific approach to reach a better level while linking it to the urban fabric. Therefore, it is important to study the mechanisms and planning and design solutions for commercial streets (1).

### **Research Problem**

The commercial streets in the urban fabric became full of congestion and high densities, whether for street vendors or for vehicular movement and pedestrians, the city lost its urban space, which leads to defects in its functions and became inappropriate, this is an attempt to find solutions that take advantage of the available capabilities, and help in solving planning and design problems. Commercial streets are an urban void, hence the importance of the study, as urban spaces suffer from many negative repercussions, as a result of the concentration of many different activities and uses in high intensity, especially in commercial streets, which negatively affects the traffic movement and causes traffic jams, and this requires re-checking the status of mechanisms Planning and design solutions for upgrading commercial streets.

### **1.2 Research Aims**

The main objective of the research is to reach tools, planning and design solutions for upgrading commercial streets, and the possibility of converting them into an element of attraction within the urban fabric, shedding light on problems and infringements on commercial streets, and contributing to solving these problems through appropriate foundations and standards for the urban space in commercial streets, leading to the results and suggested general recommendations.

### **Define commercial streets**

Commercial streets have been known throughout the Arab world as areas containing multiple shops in the form of gatherings and meeting points, as commercial streets enhance social and economic ties between individuals who share the commercial street daily, especially if the commercial street is of high visual quality, as it increases positive emotions and the aesthetic values of individuals, as recent studies have shown that the civilized environment in which there are no manifestations of visual pollution has improved the well-being of individuals and helped them focus. Simplicity and harmony are necessary features for reading commercial streets, and the concept or form of commercial streets did not differ except in some modifications. As a result of the increase in population density and the development of means of transportation.



Figure (1)-fig(2) :socio-economic ties between daily commercial streets users  
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### Upgrading commercial streets: criteria for choosing Khlousi street.

The commercial street "Khlousi Street" in Shubra neighborhood was chosen as the case of the applied study, because for its importance as one of the arteries of the important commercial streets in Shubra, and it intersects with Al-Teraa' Al-Bulaqia Street and Shubra Main Street, which attracts visitors from the area and outside, whether for shopping or picnicking, so it is one of the Commercial streets that need to be developed in line with the needs of pedestrians and shop owners, and land use is predominant, which is commercial use, which causes the presence of large numbers of users in the various axes of movement, and where it causes continuous congestion and disruption of vehicular movement and pedestrians at risk, Figure No.(3).

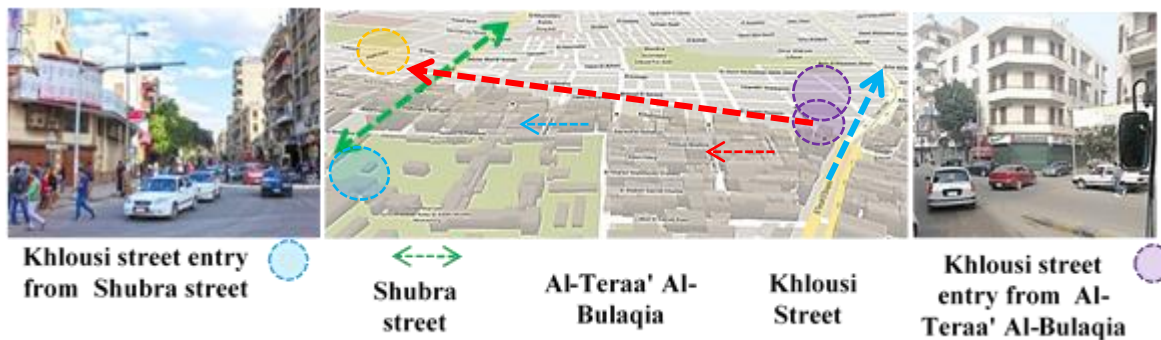


Figure (3): khlousi street as an important commercial street in shubra misr  
 Source: Field research-author

### Planning and design proposal for the development of the commercial street "Khlousi Street"

The proposal depends on the planning and design of the open commercial space of Khlousi Street, in accordance with the needs of pedestrian and motorized traffic, with the addition of the necessary furniture elements and taking into account the urban, social, economic and environmental aspects.

#### Urban aspects of the spatial formation of the street.

- Paying attention to buildings of historical value, and renovation of the storefronts to revive the urban character of the commercial street (Figure 4).
- Removing dilapidated buildings and redesigning them to be urban spaces, and open green spaces that permeate the commercial street, and to have a recreational and cultural role and linking these spaces with pedestrian paths.



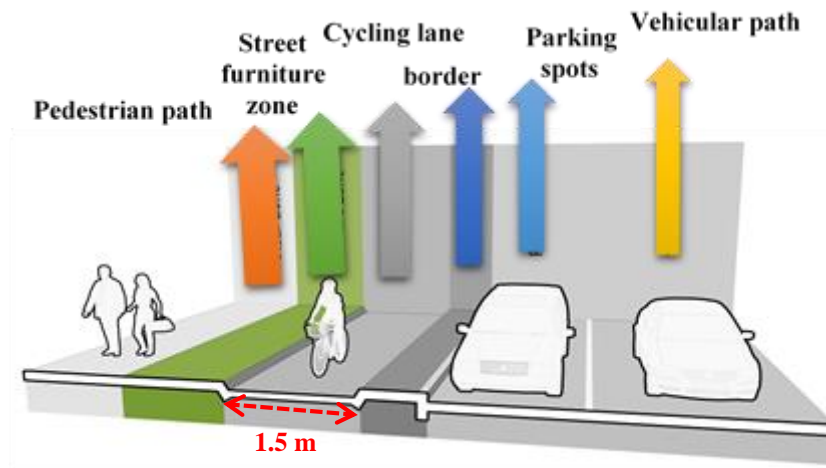
**Figure 4: renovation of valuable buildings, upgrading shops and standardizing the advertising banners.**  
Source: field study

### Urban aspects of the visual perception of the street.

Improving the visual image by designing visually distinctive signs for the street, which helps to strengthen the visual image of the place.

### Design considerations for the street furniture.

- Designing wooden benches suitable for the street, while providing the seats with umbrellas to protect the occupants from the intensity of sun rays.
- Providing the street with lighting poles, whether designated for pedestrian traffic or designated for motorized traffic.
- The proposed design for the width of the bicycle floors so that it is approximately 1.5 meters, and it is stipulated that the floors used should be suitable for the specifications of their implementation Fig (5)..



**Figure 5: The proposed design for the width of the bicycle lanes to be approximately 1.5 meters, and the separation of the lane designated for bicycles from the space designated for pedestrians and motorized movement, Source: the author**

### The social aspects assigned to the proposed design of the street.

- Planning and designing urban spaces, whether for recreational or cultural use, that are suitable for all ages of commercial street users.
- The importance of providing seating areas along the street to help social cohesion.

**Environmental aspects assigned to the proposed street design.**

- The use of landscaping elements and water bodies to moderate the intensity of sun rays, and the use of some architectural treatments such as shaded paths.

**The economic aspects assigned to the proposed design of the street.**

- Establishing restaurants and cafeterias on the street to help increase the economic capacity.
- Providing opportunities to set up shops to display products and handicrafts to reflect the originality of the place.

**Findings and recommendations:****Results:**

It is possible to extract the general results of the research study, which reflects the needs of the users of the street and the commercial space, and the problems that result from not following the planning and design principles of the commercial street, and the achievement of these results are as follows:

- Commercial streets need the intervention of specialists, whether urban designers or executive leaders, because they suffer from many problems, and the need for cooperation from business owners to solve these problems.
- Commercial streets need to provide urban spaces, which are an outlet for users of commercial space and owners of shops in the commercial street.

**Commercial streets suffer from planning and design problems and can be classified as follows:****First: Planning problems in commercial streets.**

- Commercial streets lose their character as a result of automated traffic infiltrated by them, especially if it is an arterial street, which leads to the location being unsuitable for commercial activities.
- Not studying the planning of commercial streets to accommodate pedestrian and vehicular movement.

**Second: Design problems in commercial streets.**

- Commercial streets have lost their character as a result of the lack of determinants to treat the storefronts, in terms of colors or materials used.
- The commercial streets lack afforestation, water elements, and umbrellas that complement the commercial space, to reduce the heat of sun rays.

**Recommendations**

The research study recommends the following:

- Taking into account, urban design principles that result from environmental conditions and the human scale, which is what our current commercial streets are missing.
- Follow a method for developing commercial streets to provide new urban spaces, which are the outlet for users of commercial streets, as they constitute an element of attracting and reviving commercial traffic.

- Taking into account in the planning and design of commercial streets the hierarchy to suit the urban fabric of the city.
- Determine the design of advertising banners that are commensurate with the shape, colors and sizes with the planning and design of commercial streets.

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