



المشاركة الشعبية
في القاهرة التاريخية
Citizen Participation
in Historic Cairo

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PRELIMINARY MASTERPLAN FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AL-HATTABA NEIGHBOURHOOD IN HISTORIC CAIRO

Presented by

جمعية الفكر العمراني
Built Environment Collective



in partnership with



In participation with



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Introduction

Historic Cairo has been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1979 in recognition of its historical, monumental and cultural significance. But some areas within its borders were registered by the Egyptian government as unsafe areas in 2011, among these areas is al-Hattaba. Within the framework of the governmental and international approach to sustainable development, which utilises all available resources using an integrated approach; any development or re-planning project in the historic city must approach all resources and stakeholders to reach optimal solutions in linking heritage preservation to tourism development by encouraging the continuation of intangible heritage activities for the proposes of economic development and improving standards of living in the area.

Within this framework, Athar Lina Initiative (under the management of the Built Environment Collective-Megawra) has been working in al-Khalifa neighbourhood within Historic Cairo since 2012. Athar Lina works in partnership with the Ministry of Antiquities and Cairo Governorate, and in collaboration with the local community to preserve and promote the heritage of the area while linking it to sustainable development, through restoration and re-use of monuments and historical buildings for community services, heritage education, tourism development, traditional craft development and the improvement of public space.

In accordance with the Ministry of Antiquities' Permanent Committee's approval to partner with the Built Environment Collective on March 16, 2018, on the Citizen Participation in Historic Cairo research project which included a study of al-Hattaba as a historic neighbourhood that has been registered as an informal settlement, a re-planning proposal for al-Hattaba has been prepared based on the following:

- The State adopting an integrated vision for heritage management, preservation as a tool for sustainable development through supporting heritage industries and tourism activities.
- The current work of the Ministry of Antiquities on an integrated framework for the management of Historic Cairo, which frames it as a living historic city, with its monuments as part of its urban fabric and intangible heritage.
- The State adopting an ambitious plan to deal with unsafe areas in order to provide safe housing and services to citizens.
- The State encouraging partnerships between government and communities to find optimal solutions for sustainable development.
- The State encouraging the cooperation of various government agencies and their coordination to efficiently work to develop state resources for the benefit of society.

The proposal is within the framework of international agreements signed by the Egyptian government for the purpose of heritage preservation and sustainable development, as well as current state strategies, for example, 2030 Egypt strategy. The re-planning proposal is based on local regulations and international standards, and bears in mind the historical specificity of the area. The proposal focuses on the optimal utilisation of all the resources of al-Hattaba to be converted into a tourist attraction and the production of traditional crafts, within the context of state plans, regulations and administrative frameworks. The initial proposal for the re-planning of al-Hattaba was approved by the Ministry of Antiquities' Permanent Committee on 24th of October 2018.

Study Area

Al-Hattaba is considered a representative example of Historic Cairo's urban fabric, due to its wealth of historical buildings and monuments that should be preserved and reused.

Moreover, its historical fabric has not changed since it was documented by the French Expedition in its "Description de l'Egypte" map in 1801. The study is limited to the southern sector of al-Hattaba municipality, which is adjacent to the Citadel and within its buffer zone. It is also the area within al-Hattaba registered as an informal settlement and of second degree risk by the Informal Settlements Development Fund. Its southern boundary is the Citadel and the Citadel's al-Bab al-Jadid (the New Gate), east is the vacant "Desert" area surrounding the Citadel's complex, north is Bab Al-Wada', and southwest is the National Archives Building. Al-Hattaba is characterised by a unique central location with a hilly topography uncommon to Cairo.

The history of the area is specifically significant due to its link with the history of the Citadel and its location on the Hajj caravan path. During the Ottoman period it became known for the trade of wood cutting changing the name of the area from "Taht al-Qal'a" (Under the Citadel) to "al-Hattaba" (The Wood Cutters). It remained an area known for crafts until Muhammad Ali added al-Bab al-Jadid to allow for the passage of his carriage and installed the National Archives Building to its east. Al-Bab al-Jadid was closed to tourism at the turn of the 21st century adversely affecting local economy. The study area includes seven registered monuments and five public buildings of high historical value, as well as many historical residential buildings. The area is relatively small, with only 500 families and about 2,000 inhabitants. The residents have a historical connection to the neighbourhood, where they have been there for generations. The area is characterised by traditional crafts - the most important of which are mother of pearl inlay, carpentry, and *khiyamiyya* (tent making). It should also be noted that these trades are closely linked to the surrounding areas as they are part of the production cycle of crafts through which raw materials and product supply are provided.

Vison Statement

Revitalising historical and heritage buildings, tourist routes and traditional crafts while maintaining the urban fabric and character of al-Hattaba.

Master Plan Focus

The project addresses three basic developmental areas of focus:

1. **Touristic heritage** with a focus on developing a tourist route.
2. **Crafts** with a focus on new workshops and centres for design, craft development and training.
3. **Social development** with a focus on improving the quality of urban and public spaces and provision of services.

Summary of Masterplan

Within the framework of the research project exploring methodologies for the regeneration of Historic Cairo with the participation of the community, al-Hattaba was studied as an example of deteriorated historic areas registered as informal settlements. The team conducted a field study followed by a workshop during September 2018. The workshop included participants from the following institutions:

1. Ministry of Antiquities (Islamic and Coptic Antiquities Sector and Historic Cairo Department)
2. Cairo Governorate (Heritage Preservation Department, Urban Upgrade Unit and Planning Department)
3. Ministry of Housing (Informal Settlements Development Fund)

The proposed preliminary master plan is based on the workshop findings, and the second step towards the development of al-Hattaba. It will be followed by a detailed proposal for the area accompanied by a limited number of pilot projects. This will be followed by fundraising for implementation. The implementation phase will be in accordance to the state plan and available resources, both governmental and non-governmental.

Foundational Principles of the Methodology

A general vision and preliminary plan for the development of al-Hattaba as a tourist, handicraft and residential area was achieved during the workshop. This plan is within the framework of the following principles:

1. Historic Cairo is a world heritage site and al-Hattaba's significance as a heritage neighbourhood is recorded as above normal by UNESCO.
2. Al-Hattaba is made up of privately-owned land within the buffer zone of the Citadel which is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Antiquities.
3. Al-Hattaba is marked as re-planning area within the framework of the Cairo Governorate plan to rezone risk areas of second-degree classification.
4. Al-Hattaba is a historical area with historical urban fabric and traditional crafts, which is being dealt with within the framework of the National Organization for Urban Harmony.
5. Linking heritage management to sustainable development.

Summary of Masterplan

1. Develop a touristic route through al-Hattaba
 - a. Beginning at Citadel's al-Bab al-Jadid, it reaches a cluster of historic buildings including the al-Shurafa Mausoleum (monument number 357). The mausoleum will be rehabilitated into a cultural design centre providing a platform for innovation in the production of handicrafts.
 - b. Further down the route, is the crafts touristic complex. The complex is made up of interactive workshops and cafes overlooking the desert esplanade which leads to al-Khanqah al-Nizamiyya.
 - c. From there, the path descends to the museum complex consisting of four monuments reused as exhibition halls:
 - i. Sabil al-Amir Shaykhu (monument number 144) [Museum of the History of Hajj]
 - ii. Sabil and Trough of 'Abd al-Rahman Katkhuda (monument number 260) [Museum of Water in the History of Cairo]
 - iii. Dome of al-Amir Yunus al-Dawadar (monument number 139) [Museum of the History of Cairo's Cemeteries]
 - iv. Manjak al-Yusufi Complex (monument number 138) [Crafts Museum and Exhibition]
 - d. Re-enter al-Hattaba to visit the al-Hattaba garden and the Crafts Centre and/or descend south-west towards Salah al-Din square (Citadel square) to continue to the rest of Historic Cairo.

2. Conversion of empty plots, and unsafe and dilapidated buildings into workshops following a simple historic style in harmony with the context and accordance with the requirements and regulations of the Ministry of Antiquities.
3. Three training and cultural centres for the development of craft production.
4. Community services including transforming a number of empty plots into green spaces and converting the abandoned Shaykh Shahin School into a community centre with family services.
5. Improving the urban quality through paving and lighting, and the removal of infracting storeys in new buildings, and in cooperation with residents repainting façades following a proposed colour palette.