Rehabilitation, Preserving and Development, El Quseir, Egypt

Comment of the Holcim Awards 2005 jury for Africa Middle East

This project is meant for its entreprenurial effort to rehabilitate a coastal region with outstanding approaches in construction technology as well as innovative concepts for design. The author advances a responsible concern for ensuring that tourism-driven development of the context will take place in a way that is responsive to the Islamic culture and architectural heritage of the city, both of which now stand threatened by purely profit-focused development. To be commended is the systematic approach that covers the overall scale of the urban environment, neighborhood planning, as well as proposed redevelopment and preservation strategies for particular buildings. Along with maintaining a strong sense of cultural identity, the project would certainly contribute to the reuse of existing stock of buildings and other structures. From an economic perspective, such a well considered proposal for urban and building renewal enhances tourism, which in turn provides a boost to the economic and livelihood opportunities of the residents. Providing a convincing inspiration for cultural identity, the project demonstrates a high degree of sensitivity and skill in formulating interactions between regional development and cultural awareness.

Relevance to target issues (by author)

Ecological quality and energy conservation

The concept work with the historic and existing functions will reactivate the old fabric. It shows an economical and sustainable usage of resources. The example of rehabilitation and new implementation for dwellings demonstrate to deal with local materials and construction designs as well as with naturally climatic solutions in a modern way.

Economic performance and compatibility

The programmatic structure enable a quick adaption to changing conditions. The matrix of the programs allows a high flexibility. The proposed small projects are a base to finance more projects and prevent the dependance by big corporations. The gentle boom creates new local employments and in long-term planning by itself. The small actions be able to develop by different financial carriers.

Contextual response and aesthetic impact

The concept work with the regional and urban context in relation with upgrading tourism. It describes the interaction between tourism and region by the demonstrate project. It is an answer for identification in Egypt. The work follows the question whether a lasting tourism is possible and how can one these reach. With El Quseir an example are be analyzed the changes and development prospects by the tourism. The detailed analysis offers a better understanding of the situation + the development of solutions, which based on it. The design gives a base for contention in the conflict between tradition and modernity: it shows a use of old in a modern context and do not to work with historicization. Fast plantings are large-scal ed, profit-oriented and does not deal with the needs of the local population.

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Project data

- Type of project: Urban, action planning, program
- Start of construction: not forseen

Author

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- Profession: Student
- City, Country: Berlin, Germany

Project description by author

Quseir is a small city at the Red Sea with a long history. It was a place as starting point for expeditions and for trade. This history can be found still at many places. The oldest recordings originate from the 10th Dynasty. Later the port was an important starting point for pilgrims to Mecca. You can find many examples of old Islamic architecture, like details worked wooden terraces and mashrabiyas. Today most inhabitants earn their living costs by fishing and informal trade. Many hope that the tourism bring new jobs.

Quseir has 35,000 inhabitants and due to its situation in the structure of the tourism development will get an economic upswing, and an increase in the population. For the development planning it is important to look at the old structures, the character, the history and the urban structure as well.

The plans of the government to enlarge the coast to the “Rivera Red Sea” are the starting point for this work. The place until today from the development boom exempted, requires a sustainable development, in order to avoid the errors, which were made in other places. The boom at the coast carries out itself only under the criterion of the economic maximum profit. In order to this there are an un-controlled development, environmental degradation and a displacement to that the locals, as well as the loss of the arab traditions. By the development of the coastal area and the future plans it will come a rise of the tourism. Quseir will have no longer this calm character. There will change the needs of the place. In this coherence it needs an improvement and a strategy, in order to accommodate new functions, to animate the historical core, to secure investments and to improve the living conditions of the inhabitants lasting.

The work is divided into 3 section

1. Context and analysis
2. Strategy and action plan
3. Projects and actions examples

Purpose of the analysis is the representation of the place in the present situation and in the regional context. The analysis is the base for the sustainable programs and for structural development as well as in a special regard to the different, often contradictory complexity of rehabilitation and structural progressive change, which can be expected.

The strategic action plan for careful town development refers a prognostic factors and at concrete and strategically important projects it is demonstrated.

As example with a high synergy in relation with the rehabilitation follows a example for restoration and integration of new buildings. The selected area is very runed and it gives less inhabited houses. An improvement of the conditions in the context of the town preservation is here very important. The stabilisation and improvement of the dwelling will affect lastingly the historical area.

Relevance to target issues (by author)

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Reimbursement of target issues (by author)

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