

## Preserving Heritage Areas within the Framework of Sustainable Investment for Historic Government Ministry Buildings after Their Move to the New Administrative Capital

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### Abstract:

The central Cairo area, known as the "Ministries Square," grapples with acute congestion attributed to the concentration of numerous ministries and government agencies. This area, frequented daily by a substantial number of citizens, including employees and workers, hosts government institutions of significant historical and archaeological value. Several of these institutions face deterioration and damage due to prolonged use and inadequate maintenance relative to their historical significance. This paper advocates for the repurposing of the Ministries Square in downtown Cairo, leveraging its prominent geographical location at the heart of the capital. The current uses of this area do not align with its inherent value, especially considering the ongoing relocation of government functions to the Administrative Capital. The research endeavours to present an institutional system geared towards fostering a competitive advantage for the Ministries Square area. The envisioned transformation involves establishing an open museum showcasing ancient historical areas and buildings, creatively utilizing them for unconventional purposes. The methodology encompasses outlining a general framework for preserving heritage areas and buildings, presenting visions and strategic plans for the Greater Cairo region and the New Administrative Capital over the next two decades, diagnosing the current state of the Ministries Square area, delineating existing challenges, and proposing an initial planning vision. Finally, the study puts forth a system of policies and mechanisms focused on preserving heritage government buildings in downtown Cairo, aligning with the sustainability concept to safeguard the values these structures hold for future generations while restoring their aesthetic and cultural significance.

### Keywords:

Heritage buildings, urban heritage, Ministries Square, Downtown Cairo

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### 1- Introduction:

The Ministries Square area holds pivotal significance due to the confluence of diverse and dense activities, including the House of Representatives, ministerial offices, and various ministries. The security and traffic demands of this area, coupled with the presence of additional departments and public interests, result in significant external foot traffic, leading to congestion and impeding traffic flow. This congestion contributes to increased environmental pollution, encompassing noise, vehicle emissions, and dust.

The proposed project, involving the relocation of ministries and the conversion of historical buildings into cultural hubs like museums and galleries, presents an opportunity to consolidate cultural activities in a singular locale. Additionally, this transformation lends an aesthetic and urban dimension to downtown Cairo.

This paper poses a crucial question: Can the repurposing of the Ministries Square area, post the relocation of ministry activities, be deemed the

optimal solution for alleviating a key urban issue in downtown Cairo? Our exploration of this query unfolds in three principal sections:

- Part One: Identification of the general framework for preserving heritage areas and buildings.
- Part Two: Analysis of visions and strategic plans to address urban expansion in the Greater Cairo region, including the impact of establishing a new administrative capital.
- Part Three: Attempting to answer the posed question by delineating the Ministries Square area and its anticipated planning concept within the comprehensive framework of urban development at the city level. The researcher concludes by proposing a system of policies and mechanisms tailored for handling heritage government buildings in the Ministries Square area of downtown Cairo.

### 2- The general framework for heritage areas and buildings

During the course of their development, international conventions and agreements have

produced general and specific frameworks for policies and trends for preserving architectural and urban heritage, which specify levels of intervention, starting with the preservation of valuable elements in the building. Then the preservation of the architectural heritage, represented by individual buildings, gradually progressing to urban preservation by protecting and supporting valuable areas, historical parks, and historic city centers, reaching the stage of dealing with the developmental, economic, and social dimensions in continuity with society, and among those international charters and agreements are the following [Abdeen, et al., 2008]:

- Venice International Charter for the Preservation of Historic Buildings and Sites, (1966), (ICOMOS).
- Florence Charter on Historic Gardens and Landscaping, (1982), (ICOMOS).
- Charter for the Preservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas, (1987), (ICOMOS).
- Charter for the Protection and Management of Heritage (ICOMOS).
- International Cultural Tourism Charter, (1999), (ICOMOS).
- Charter on The Built Vernacular Heritage, (1999), (ICOMOS).

The heritage preservation movement has gone through several stages that were linked to the development of the concept of preservation itself, as well as the general view of heritage. These stages can be summarized as follows [Abdel Salam, et al., 2006]:

- Collection and display of valuable antique objects
- Preserving distinctive signs and sites of associated value related to national heritage
- Preserving architectural heritage apart from the financial returns associated with it (individual buildings)
- Preservation of areas or clusters of buildings/an entire historic district
- Preservation Planning [UNESCO, 1970].

The last stage represents the most important contemporary trends in heritage preservation, which is the trend towards a more comprehensive interpretation of the concept of heritage preservation, which includes comprehensive consideration of all historical, cultural, and environmental elements and their connection to rehabilitation and successful planning for future needs. The improvement and rehabilitation of urban areas through planning to preserve heritage has been used as a realistic solution and an alternative to demolition methods for renewal, which have proven to be insufficient and exaggerate urban

problems. Although the overall approach to heritage preservation still emphasizes historical standards, it expands to include aesthetic, economic, social, environmental, and cultural factors and considers all elements that contribute positively to the human experience and are related to successful planning for future needs to ensure the continuation and success of development processes [Saeed, 1999].

From this standpoint, the concept of heritage preservation was that it was a compromise solution between the continuity of heritage and responding to development pressures and the requirements of development. Preservation constitutes one of the forms of integrated sustainable development of heritage areas that enables them to face renewable environmental challenges and bequeath their material stock to future generations.

Countries began to realize the importance of preservation in the late eighteenth century and during the twentieth century. Countries began to compete in reviving their heritage. There are many concepts for dealing with the material preservation of heritage areas and buildings. Preservation as a concept is an umbrella that includes many ideas and methods that depend on the condition of the region and buildings, their importance, and their location relative to the surrounding urban area, these methods and techniques can be explained as follows [Ibrahim et al., 2006]:

- **Preservation:** This means protecting historical buildings in their existing natural state without adding or deleting their aesthetic values.
- **Restoration:** It means restoring historical buildings to the condition in which they were created, and it is an approach complementary to the direction of preservation, as some historical buildings need to carry out some restoration of demolished or damaged parts of these buildings in a way that is suitable for use.
- **Conservation:** It means preserving the style of existing historical areas and buildings and ensuring continuity in the performance of their structure and style. That is, the concept of preservation is not an attempt to reach the origin of the old building when it was constructed as much as preserving what is existing and current, by doing everything that prevents erosion or damage to these areas and buildings.
- **Reconstruction:** It means reassembling the parts of the historical building, whether in its place or a new place, containing important national archaeological sites, or giving

importance to the new place, such as the Philae and Abu Simbel temples in Aswan.

- **Modification and reuse Adaptive use:** This means reusing historical buildings in another new function, so these buildings are dealt with by changing their function and using them for another use that does not harm the building by preserving the external form and composition to emphasize its continuity, role, and value in forming the urban fabric of the historical area, with internal changes to suit the new use.

### 3- Visions and strategic plans for the Greater Cairo region

In light of the previous planning studies for the Greater Cairo region that were prepared in the last two decades, and the developments that occurred in the field of urbanization that led to a rapid growth of urbanization, a group of planning studies were prepared for the Cairo region, whose general goal was to guide and plan economic developments. Urbanism and prepare the region to accommodate its economic, urban, and population demands. The most important of these planning studies can be summarized as follows:

- Initial planning visualization project for the Ministries Square area in Cairo (College of Regional and Urban Planning, 2006): Dealing with the Greater Cairo region through four main urban sectors separated by a Mono-Pole main center system with multi-center nuclei and activating the role of new cities as major competing poles for the existing central urban area -Fig. 1

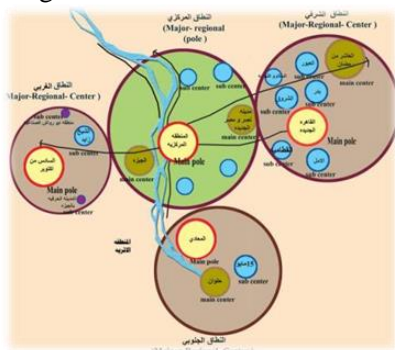


Fig. 1. A vision of the future of Functional centers of the Greater Cairo region. (College of Regional and Urban Planning)

- The long-term strategic plan for the development of the Greater Cairo region until 2027 (Planning Authority & JICA, 2008): It aims to stimulate the development of new urban communities in respect to the proposed goals, which are achieving sustainable social/economic development within the scope of the study area, and achieving balanced and integrated urban development - Fig. 2
- The strategic plan for the Greater Cairo region 2050 (Planning Authority, 2012): It aims to limit the growth of Greater Cairo by setting a ceiling for its population at 24 million people, in addition to presenting a vision of Cairo as an environmentally friendly city capable of preserving its cultural and historical heritage and benefiting from it.
- The New Administrative Capital: In March 2015, Egypt announced a proposal for a new capital located to the east of the current capital along the corridor between Cairo and the Red Sea. The site will be a natural extension of Cairo as it is located on its eastern border. Fig. 3. It is expected that its population will reach 5.0 million people, on an area of 700 km<sup>2</sup>, to be the largest capital built for this purpose. The estimated cost is \$45 billion for the first phase of construction (expected to take 5-7 years), and the total cost of completing it is \$300 billion. The main reason, as announced, is to reduce congestion and overpopulation in the old capital over the next 40 years. (BBC, 2015).

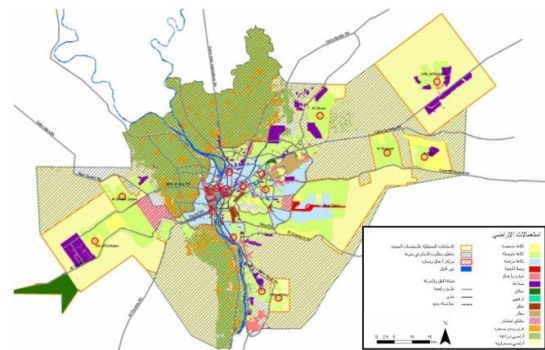


Fig. 2. Land uses in the Greater Cairo region in 2027 (General Authority for Urban Planning, 2008)

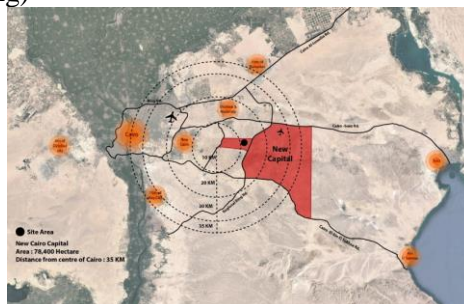


Fig.3 Location of the New Administrative Capital in relation to Old Cairo (<http://www.acud.eg/index.php>)

The plan was prepared for the new administrative capital to be a model of a modern city in the region. The Egyptian Parliament, government ministries, and foreign embassies will be moved to the new capital (Clinch, 2015). The city's promotional character is that it is a "smart", "sustainable" city while providing "a quality of life for all segments of Egyptian society", in addition to being a center for new job opportunities (more than a million job opportunities are expected to be created) (Kingsley, 2015). Its main component is the Administrative Government District of Egypt in the city center, as well as urban neighborhoods for all categories and a business center. And the diversity of land uses, the city program contains 21 residential neighborhoods, a total of 40,000 hotel rooms, 1,250 religious buildings, shops, cafes, schools, and public parks (Clinch, 2015).

#### 4- A study of the Ministries Square area in central Cairo

This part discusses one of the planning studies (College of Planning, 2006) to prepare the first planning concept for the Ministries Square area in the heart of Cairo, considering that it as an integrated part with the heart of the city area, as follows:

##### 4-1 Study area:

The Ministerial Square area is located near the center of Cairo, with an area of about 94 feddans, bounded by 4 main streets: in the east, Nubar Street, in the west, Al-Qasr Al-Aini Street, in the north, Sheikh Rayhan Street, and in the south, Mubtadiyan Street, Fig.4. It includes administrative uses (companies - government buildings) and residential and inter-residential uses, as well as tourist uses and service uses (educational and health - Fig.5, while the presence of recreational use and commercial use, which were present in a small percentage - has disappeared - Fig. 5. Fig. 6 and Table.1 areas and percentages of distribution of government and private uses



Fig. 4 Location of the Ministries Square area in downtown Cairo (College of Regional and Urban Planning, 2006)

##### 4-1-1 Detailed government land uses:

- Business center areas are the dominant government use in the Ministries Square area, as business centers in the area represent 55.3% of the total government use in the study area and are represented by government agencies and ministries such as (the Ministry of Interior- the Ministry of Housing- the Ministry of Finance).
- Sovereign business areas come in second place in terms of percentage of government uses, representing 17.31%. They are located on the People's Assembly Road and Al-Qasr Al-Aini Road and are represented by the House of Representatives and the Council of Ministers.

- Government educational services are also spread in the Ministries Square area on the main axes of the region, such as Sheikh Rayhan Street, Nubar Street, and Al-Mubtadiyan Street, at a rate of 6.23%. The rest of the government uses are spread in the Ministries Square area, including government health services, archaeological and cultural areas, and embassies, as they are located on the internal roads of the region.

Governmental uses affect the increase in traffic flow in the area, which affects congestion, especially on Al-Qasr Al-Aini Street.

##### 4-1-2 Detailed private land uses:

The private uses of the Ministries Square area are residential, commercial, private educational services, companies, and vacant lands.

- Residential and commercial use represents the dominant use in the region, representing 74.47% of the total private uses, and most of it is concentrated in the center of the region on Al-Falaki Street and Al-Qasr Al-Aini Street. The percentage of private educational services comes second in terms of private uses,

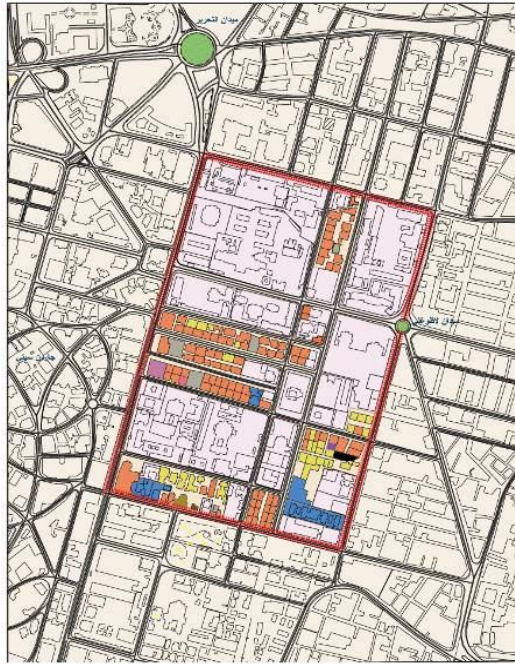


Fig. 5 Land uses in the region (College of Regional and Urban Planning, 2006)

- The rest of the private uses are spread, which is represented by commercial uses, CIB Bank, gas station, and vacant and private lands,

representing 9.82% of the total. Private uses such as Baby Garden School, Alamuddin Private School, and Amoun Private School. Private educational services are concentrated in the south of the area on Al-Mubtadiyan Street.

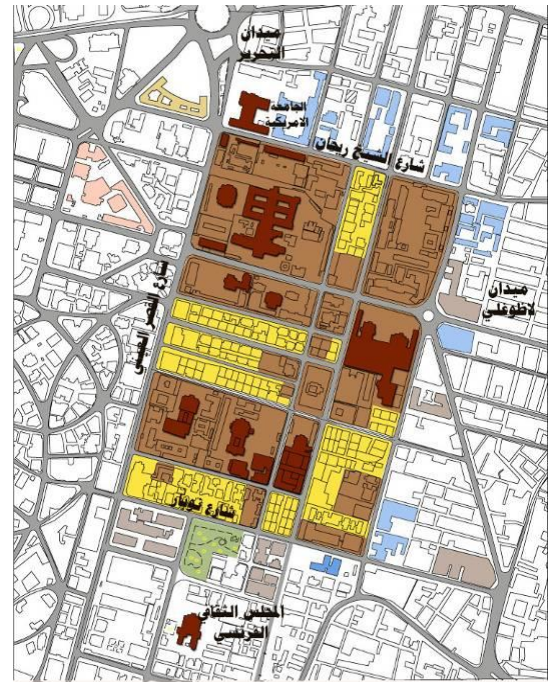


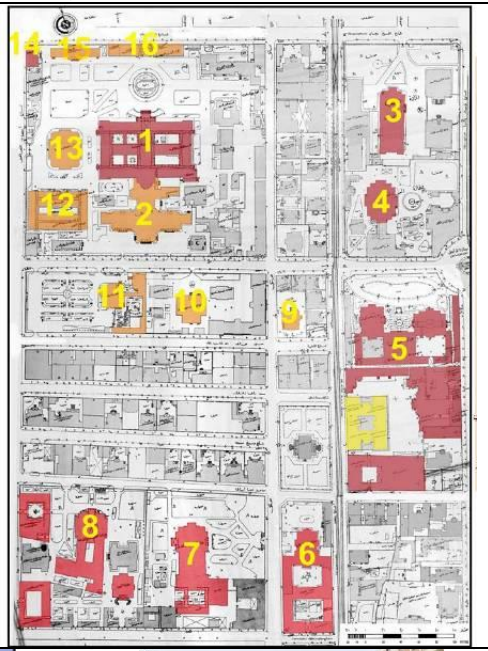
Fig. 6 Uses of government and private lands (College of Regional and Urban Planning, 2006) which represent 15.71% of the private land uses.

TABLE1: Areas and percentages of distribution of government and private land uses in the Ministries Square area (College of Regional and Urban Planning, 2006)

Government land uses			Private land uses		
land uses	Area (Fadden)	Ratio %	land uses	Area (Fadden)	Ratio %
Business Centres	31.24	55.3%	residential	4.04	19.55%
heritage buildings	6.69	11.85%	Residential Commercial	11.37	54.92%
Sovereign uses	9.81	17.37%	educational	2.03	9.82%
Cultural uses	0.38	0.67%	Administrative	0.05	0.24%
Turkish Embassy	0.59	1.05%	Vacant lands	2.19	10.58%
educational services	3.52	6.23%	Companies	0.1	0.49%
Radio and TV Magazine	0.16	0.28%	Gas station	0.45	2.20%
Health services	2.25	3.99%	CIB Bank	0.22	1.08%
Bank of Alexandria	0.07	0.13%	Printing press	0.09	0.45%
Vacant lands for the army	0.71	1.26%	Building construction under	0.14	0.67%
Medical complex	1.05	1.86			
Total	56.49	100%		20.7	100%

TABLE 2: Distribution of heritage buildings in the Ministries Square area in downtown Cairo (College of Regional and Urban Planning, 2006)

Current name	Original name
1 Ministry of Public Works	School for Noble Girls
2 House of Representatives	Parliament building
3 Ministry of Interior Bl.	Northern Saraya
4 Ministry of Justice Bl.	Central Saraya
5 Ministry of Finance Bl.	Southern Saraya
6 Ministry of Military	Mansour Pasha Palace
7 Ministry of Education Bl.	Princess Faiqa Palace
8 Ministry of Trade and	Princess Jamila Palace
9 Turkish Legation Bl.	
10 Ministry of Health Bl.	Ministry of
11 Council of Ministers'	Turkish Legation Bl.
12 Ministry of Ministry of	
13 Geographical Society Bl.	Geographical Society
14 Egy. Scientific Complex	Egy. Scientific
15 Geological Museum Bl.	Geological Museum
16 Ministry of Social Affairs	Ministry of Social



Parliament building



Ministry of Military Production bl.



Ministry of Education bl.

#### 4-2 Current problem of the situation in the Ministries Square

The Ministers Square area suffers from several problems, the most important of which can be summarized as:

- Economic: Commercial transactions are harmed due to the increased congestion in the city center (the high density of motorized traffic, transit traffic, pedestrian traffic, the conflict between them, and the lack of sufficient parking spaces). There is a shortage of spaces needed to expand administrative offices in the city center, which forces companies to open their headquarters in residential buildings (This led to the demolition and deterioration of many heritage buildings in the area).
- Political/social: The quality of life deteriorates due to excessive density in one area (lack of green spaces and open areas for pedestrians, deterioration of the urban and architectural character of the area, and the spread of pollution of all kinds). Qualified people don't live near work areas (for example, commuting to the city center from Heliopolis, Nasr City, or Maadi takes more than 30 minutes)
- Sustainable development: The intrusion of administrative offices within the city center

impinges upon cultural heritage sites (the appearance of many urban distortions, such as advertisements, banners, etc.). The lack of an alternative center of attraction led to severe congestion in the city center (randomness of uses and deterioration of their standard).

- The city center area lacks pedestrian traffic axes that connect important sites and squares, so that one can, for example, reach the banks of the Nile, archaeological or museum sites, or various visiting sites easily and conveniently, by jogging on walkways that have a special, distinctive character...

#### 4-3 Opportunities and determinants of investment Attractiveness in the Ministries Square

By determining the relationships between applications and surrounding activities in the ministries square - Fig. 7, it becomes clear that there are activities that are necessary to be present in the study area, for example:

- Cultural activities, which are present in all areas close to Ministries Square.
- It is necessary to provide open green areas, due to their scarcity in the surrounding area, to create green corridors towards the Nile River.
- Business centers that spread on a distance of 1.0-1.5 km, in addition to customer service

centers such as banks, stock exchanges, embassies, and hotels.

- Tourism activities which is entirely dependent on opening of some axes in the area separating the study area from the Nile
- Commercial activities, as the downtown area lacks high-level commercial investment activities. To change demand requires looking at system of commercial activities and shopping across the entire spectrum

#### 4-4 General directions for dealing with the region

A set of urban frameworks can be identified through which alternatives for dealing with the region are proposed, which are considered as the basic effective decisions that define urban thought for dealing with the region - Fig. 8, which can be summarized in:

- The heritage buildings that need to be preserved to restore the cultural side and highlight the historical monuments of this nation, represented by the group of palaces and sarayas dating back to a historical era that has a reflection on the construction of this region.



- Heritage buildings that need to be preserved
- Public property areas whose use is being reconsidered
- Private property areas are being replanted and repurposed
- Lands to be reused for investment
- Axes and open green areas
- Eastern Path (People's Assembly)
- Important squares that are being developed
- Open pedestrian movement axes
- Development of Al-Qasr Al-Aini Street (create a tunnel)

Fig. 7 General directions for dealing with the region (College of Regional and Urban Planning, 2006)

#### 4-5 Alternatives to dealing with the region

There is no doubt that there are various visions, sometimes compatible and often conflicting, that can guide the formulation of the program required to deal with the region - Table. 3

- Green axes that can be activated, all or some of them, according to the proposed idea, which achieves interconnection and harmony between heritage buildings at the region level, and interconnection and harmony with the urban surroundings of the Ministries Complex area as a vital part that served as the heart of Old Cairo at the beginning of the twentieth-century.
- The scope of private properties which need a special vision to deal with them in light of their overlap with the public properties of the region as well as the extent of the ability of the proposed idea to achieve the quality and efficiency expected from this region, in addition to the region's proximity to areas of special sensitivity such as Garden City and Tahrir Square and important squares such as Tahrir Square. Lazoghly, the Corniche, and some valuable buildings nearby, such as the old building of the American University overlooking Tahrir Square, some green points such as Dar Al Uloom Park, and important axes such as the axis of Al Qasr Al Aini Street



- A cultural and heritage hub with a strong impact on the project area
- Possibility of connection with cultural places near the project
- School concentration area as a factor influencing the ministries square
- Embassy and business areas (an attraction for the investment sector)
- The possibility of making vertical connecting axes on the Nile River
- Recreational and tourism uses along the Nile River
- Embassies that require security requirements hindering investment
- Small-height buildings that do not obstruct the view of the Nile
- The need to create pedestrian paths
- High density crosswalks (congestion pressure in the area)

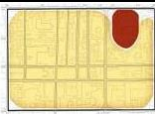
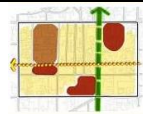
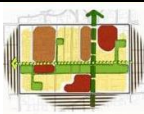
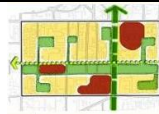
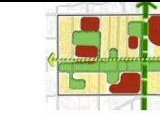
Fig. 8 Opportunities and determinants of investment attractiveness in the Ministries Square (College of Regional and Urban Planning, 2006)

These visions agree on the necessity of preserving valuable historical buildings and removing all other public and private buildings. However, they differ greatly in proposing the method of land use, with the least possible real estate investment being the

use of the entire land surrounding the historical buildings in establishing a large public park which includes a few limited cultural and recreational activities, to the reuse of the land in a large building complex, which is the maximum possible real estate investment, which includes hotels, tourist residential units, and distinct administrative areas designated for international companies, in addition to commercial areas and services, etc. There is no doubt that the first alternative achieves the maximum social feasibility, and responds to the

needs of addressing the overcrowding of buildings in Cairo, as well as the lack of sufficient open and green areas, but it does not achieve economic feasibility for the project. The second alternative, it achieves great and certain economic feasibility, but it adds unlimited new loads. Perhaps it would be better for the project to include some of this and that, to achieve social and economic feasibility at the same time.

Table. 3 Alternatives for dealing with the Ministries Square area in downtown Cairo (College of Regional and Urban Planning, 2006)

	1	2	3	4	5
	Pure real estate investment	Real estate investment	Cultural investment	Cultural	Cultural/civilizational environmental
					
1st-General features of alternative	Intensive investment in ministries' plots of land, expropriation of residential lands, and putting them up for investment	Investing in some ministries' plots of land, repurposing some heritage buildings, and investing in some private lands	Preserving heritage buildings, providing open and green areas, investing in public lands, and replanning private properties within the site or on its borders.	Preserving some heritage buildings, creating open areas, and investing in some historical buildings	Complete preservation of heritage buildings, cultural uses, creation of parks and open areas
2nd- Comparison standards					
- Spending on developing the road and traffic network	xxx	xx	xx	✓	✓✓
- Spending on facilities development	xx	x	x	✓	✓
- Spending on expropriation and compensation	xxx	x	xxx	✓	✓
- Preserving the main building of Parliament	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
- Preserving heritage buildings	xxx	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓
- Creating open areas and gardens	xxx	x	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓
- Pure financial return	✓✓✓✓	✓	✓	xx	xxx
- Possibility of financing the transfer of ministries	✓✓✓✓	✓	✓	xx	xxx
- Flexibility of direction and possibility of implementation	xx	✓	x	✓	✓✓
3rd- Recommendation	Unacceptable	Scope for developing solution alternatives			Unrealistic



#### 4-6 The proposed planning concept for the Ministries Square area:

The proposed planning concept - Fig. 9, seeks to achieve compatibility between realizing the project idea and fulfilling vital requirements for the city of Cairo, which should not result in additional loads and pressures on the city, leading to maximizing the size of the already existing urban problems. Rather, the realization of that project should lead to The occurrence of a tangible breakthrough in the range of the few spaces available within the city, resulting from the high degree of building densities and use, and the most important features of this proposal are:

- Evacuate all historical buildings and reuse them, except for buildings associated with functions that have a special status, which are the Geographic Society / the Mausoleum of Saad Pasha Zaghoul and the attached museum/ the Embassy of Turkey, as well as buildings located within the area, such as the historic palace occupied by the American University/ Lycée School/ The Egyptian Museum/ Omar Makram Mosque/ The Tahrir Complex building after its repurposing.
- Transferring the uses of some buildings belonging to the Ministry of Culture, located in the Zamalek neighborhood, to the project area and settling them in the aforementioned historical buildings, as the nucleus of the cultural structure in that area so that the buildings that will be vacated by the Ministry of Culture can also be reinvested.
- The lands and buildings that are scheduled to be reused are collected and re-planned into large plots of land, allowing them to be offered for investment and rehabilitation, within the framework of urban controls determined by the concerned administration.
- It is also worth considering reinvesting a group of lands surrounding the Ministries Complex area, on the basis that it represents the urban framework surrounding the area that must be rehabilitated, to create a suitable urban environment and improve the economic feasibility of the project.
- Establishing a large cultural park in the heart of the region, with an area of about 28 feddans, representing half the area of Al-Azhar Park, extending from Bab Al-Louq to the French Cultural Institute in Al-Munira. The park includes a limited number of selected cultural and recreational uses.
- Establishing several smaller parks connected to the main park, through green crossings passing over the road paths that intercept them.

Gardens will be established in Tahrir Square, with an area of about 13 feddans and in Bab El Louk, Garden City, as well as the deteriorated area next to the metro station line south of the site, with an area of about 8 feddans

- The location of the main park and the subsidiary parks represents a pivotal station in the pedestrian movement network system that is to be established so that pedestrians can move from one location to another within the city center with ease, safety, comfort, and enjoyment... and thus the city's main landmarks are connected, such as the connection of the Nile River to the Tahrir square with its contents, such as the Egyptian Museum, hotels, the League of Arab States, the Foreign Affairs Museum, and the Tahrir Complex after its repurposing, as well as the connection to Abdeen Square, the Majar al-Oyoun area, the Religious Complex in ancient Egypt, and perhaps also the Fustat area that is being developed, in addition to the areas of Fatimid Cairo, Al-Muski, Ataba Square, the Opera, and Al-Azbakeya Park.
- Developing the car traffic network in the region and the broader scope. The proposal here specifically is to establish a tunnel under Al-Qasr Al-Aini Street, provided that its location is carefully studied, in the area confined between the wall of the Al-Ayoun stream, Tahrir Square, and Ramses Street. This tunnel aims to facilitate motorized traffic in East, south, and north directions, for those crossing the central area of the city, which is suffering from enormous and growing traffic pressure.
- In the context of reorganizing traffic in the arteries of movement surrounding the area's land, the large width of Khairat Street, which connects Lazoghli Square to Sayyeda Zeinab Square, is being utilized, where there is a regulation line that makes the width of the street more than 30 meters. Mansour Street, which is located to the east of the land, is also extended in the direction of the south after opening its closed end, so that it connects to Al-Khaleej Street, then Port Said Street, and ultimately leads to Old Helwan Road as an alternative axis to both Kasr Al-Aini Street and the Nile Corniche, in addition to confirming the axis that starts from the Qasr Al-Nil Bridge, passing through Tahrir Square, then Tahrir Street to Bab al-Louq ending in Abdeen Square. And developing the car parking system. The proposal is to establish three car

parking sites below the surface of the ground “under the gardens”.

- It also considered how to create green extensions that pass through the Garden City area, starting from the project area, connected to the Nile Corniche.



Heritage buildings to be preserved	Heritage buildings to be rehabilitated	New buildings to be preserved	Liberation complex
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1. The parliament	11. Hotel (formerly Ismail Al-Muftish pasha Palace)	16. Tahrir complex	Government lands and buildings are offered for investment (88,600 m <sup>2</sup> - 21 feddans) Publicly owned lands and buildings offered for investment (50,680 m <sup>2</sup> – 12 feddans) Rehabilitation and investment of rear urban areas Improving the built environment of the rear urban areas Parking area (covered underground garages)
2. Geographical Society	12. Urban Planning Authority	17. Cabinet annex	
3. Council of Ministers	13. The Ministry of Education	18. Ministry of Housing building	
4. The American University building	14. Ministry of Military Production	19. League of Arab States	
5. Egyptian Museum	15. Ministry of Health	20. Ministry of Social Affairs	
6. Omar Makram Mosque		21. Specialized medical councils	
7. Mausoleum of Saad Zaghloul Pasha		22. CIB	
8. Turkish Legation		23. Nile Hilton Hotel	
9. Lycée School		24. A building belonging to the parliament	
10. Saad Zaghloul Museum			

Fig. 9 The proposed planning concept for the Ministries Square area (College of Regional and Urban Planning, 2006)

### 5- Proposed system of policies and mechanisms for preserving heritage buildings in the Ministries Square area:

In light of the general and specific frameworks of policies and trends for preserving architectural and urban heritage, which determine the levels of intervention, starting with the preservation of valuable elements in the building. Then the preservation of the architectural heritage, represented by individual buildings, gradually progressing to urban preservation by protecting valuable areas and reaching the stage of dealing with the developmental, economic, and social dimensions in relation with society. The concept of

heritage preservation becomes a compromise solution between the continuity of heritage and responding to development pressures as well as the requirements of development. Preservation constitutes one of the forms of integrated sustainable development of heritage areas that enables them to face renewed environmental challenges and pass on their material stock to future generations.

The study proposes a system of interrelated policies and mechanisms as an approach to preserving heritage areas and buildings in the Ministries Square area in downtown Cairo, aiming to take advantage of the available opportunities, and relying on three basic pillars, which are as follows:

### 5-1 First pillar: Legislation: The policies and mechanisms are as follows:

- a) Activating current laws and enacting the necessary laws to enable the governorate/National Organization for Urban Coordination to preserve heritage areas and buildings in the Ministries Square area in downtown Cairo.
- b) Supporting the Heritage Preservation Department in Cairo Governorate with the trained cadres it needs and the means to enable it to follow up and implement the requirements for preserving heritage buildings, and by implementing the following tasks:
  - Coordination between the various executive authorities (the ministries of housing, finance, planning, the Urban Coordination Agency, the Cairo Governorate, etc.) to develop the infrastructure works for the region and the maintenance of heritage buildings so that they keep pace with the needs of improving the human environment.
  - Leading the process of sustainable urban development in the region in an integrated manner. And spreading what is called the "culture of development" by increasing citizens' awareness of the goals of preserving heritage buildings and the expected return on them.
  - Benefiting from the applications and experiences of countries to preserve heritage and valuable buildings and choose the appropriate ones for application in the Ministries Square area.
  - Creating demand for proposed conservation projects for heritage buildings - among the local and foreign business community by creating the business environment, setting general policies and rules, and determining incentives and advantages that attract investment.
  - Promoting projects to preserve heritage buildings at the local, Arab, and foreign levels and with donor agencies and bodies.
  - Applying a new concept to follow up on urban environment development projects based on the early identification of problems and the use of feedback during all stages of the plan.
  - Carry out negotiation work with residents and agree on appropriate types of compensation, or contribution by agreement to the project in cases of evacuating residential areas in the project area, by following the method of expropriation for the public benefit.

### 5-2 Second pillar: financing

The government sector in Egypt cannot preserve heritage areas and buildings while its role is limited

to places where the climate will not be suitable for private sector investments. Therefore, the goal is to provide a mix of the government and private sectors in projects to preserve heritage areas and buildings and to encourage private sector investments by making programs to promote and market for investment opportunities in heritage areas and buildings, where local market mechanisms can achieve sustainability and efficiency in operation. Also proposing procedures and mechanisms that determine ways and sources of allocating funding and material support for heritage building preservation projects according to specific priorities, financing and implementation time strict programs through:

- a) Establishing a joint-stock company under the name (Asset Transfer) to conduct an inventory of the buildings of ministries and government agencies that will be transferred to the Administrative Capital, and transfer their ownership and management to the new company, which has the right to deal with them. The book value of the assets will be established and then their market value will be determined.
- b) Phased development so that the costs incurred from any development are recovered and developers must pay the additional costs of connecting and extending public facilities.
- c) Encouraging the private sector to invest in the establishment of public services and touristic, cultural, and recreational facilities, which will then be rented to those entities for specific periods, and their ownership will then be transferred to the state, provided that the rental value ensures lucrative returns for the investing parties.

### 5-3 Third pillar: A detailed plan to preserve heritage buildings in the Ministries Square area

The most important policies and mechanisms are:

- Develop a vision for dealing with the buildings of ministries and government agencies that will move to the New Administrative Capital, especially since most of most of them are registered heritage or buildings of architectural value or cultural style, and classify the areas into (neighborhood, area, square, street, or part thereof) and heritage buildings into Three main categories: (A), (B), and (C) depending on the importance of the heritage values associated with them. Heritage buildings are also classified according to their condition into several levels: good, partially deteriorated, and completely deteriorated [Urban Coordination, 2009].
- In light of the results of the meetings and workshops to identify heritage buildings in the

region (which were monitored and analyzed in the monitoring lists through the permanent committee for heritage preservation in the governorate and the associated goals and priority projects), alternatives for intervention policies are presented (maintenance, restoration and repair, revival, repurposing and rehabilitation, development...etc.), to obtain the approval of development partners on the best priority intervention policy alternatives, and to choose the best alternative based on an evaluation of the benefits achieved by each alternative and the extent to which this is reflected in the future vision of the region and the city center which is done on two levels:

1st: The first level: The heritage area, which does not mean freezing it because the heritage area must enjoy life and activity within the framework of its classification into three levels according to the required protection priorities as follows [Civilizational Coordination, 2009]:

- Heritage or valuable area, level (A): maximum protection area.
- Heritage or valuable area, level (B): medium protection area.
- A heritage or valuable area, level (C), a transitional area between the (maximum/medium) and normal areas.

2nd: The second level: Priorities for dealing with heritage buildings, so that the most important buildings are placed at the top of the priorities of preservation plans, and different levels of intervention for heritage buildings can be determined based on what is decided by architectural heritage and restoration experts depending on their category as follows [Civilizational Coordination, 2009]:

- Category A heritage building: Restoring it without making any internal or external modifications except to a limited extent. Such as preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of the Ministry of Finance building.
- Category B heritage building: A degree of flexibility is allowed in making some internal modifications. Such as preservation, and rehabilitation of the Geographical Society building.
- Category C heritage building: A great deal of flexibility is available, up to demolition while retaining the structure or exterior facade of the building only and rehabilitating or rebuilding the building from the inside completely, such as rehabilitation of the scientific complex.

Heritage areas and buildings are registered after determining their scope, and a balanced distribution approach is created for heritage preservation

projects and valuable buildings. This integrated approach includes three approaches:

- The first approach (the eclectic approach): - It was called the eclectic because it deals with heritage from the standpoint that it is a source of formulas, vocabulary, and plastic and spatial relationships, so it borrows and selects this vocabulary, and tries to formulate or paste them into contemporary architectural production [Ahmed, 1999, p. 150]. Be careful not to confuse the modern with the ancient.
- The second approach (the explicit revival approach): - The architects of this approach carry out a process of explicit revival of the architectural heritage by designing projects that carry the same vocabulary and spatial and formal formulations of heritage architecture, in an attempt to produce a distinctive architectural character for the city as a whole in general, regardless of the governing concepts and factors. Social, cultural, and climatic impact on those areas.
- The third entry (formulating heritage in a modern form): - This entry deals with the architectural heritage in a more in-depth way. It attempts to analyze the ruling thought and the concepts that form the architectural product - whether they are visual, functional, or social - and then works to reformulate these concepts and governing laws in a way That is compatible with the times, technological progress and new materials [Ahmed, 1999, p. 153].
- Taken together, this step constitutes a general framework to guide the process of formulating and dealing with the urban and architectural heritage in the Ministries Square area. It is formulated in a map called the map for the preservation of heritage areas and buildings, on which is illustrated its executive plan, which includes general and detailed preservation policies and setting rules and requirements to be followed, guided by the charters. International schools and international schools interested in preservation are presented and approved so that the necessary measures for protection and preservation can be taken by the nature and privacy of the area or building.

## 6- Conclusion

The state established the New Administrative Capital to solve the problems of the Greater Cairo region. The downtown area represents one of the oldest areas in the world and one of the most valuable historically, heritage, and culturally. It includes 750 buildings registered in a distinctive

architectural style, which obliges the government to make optimal use of this area in a way that befits it in every way on all levels, The Ministries Square area in central Cairo , which includes 18 heritage buildings after it was evacuated and moved to the New Administrative Capital , must be used in the best way through profitable projects that serve the nation, provided that they are within a well-studied scope, as it is a cultural and historical center, where it is necessary to develop a mechanism to restore that historical area as a heritage area, and re-use the buildings in the form of hotels, galleries and museums in this heritage area, and currently methods for its development, care and maintenance of the buildings that were damaged are researched and a plan for its touristic, archaeological and economic exploitation, preserving its ancient archaeological appearance is being put forth. The study concluded with the following results:

- 1st. The central Cairo area, especially the Ministries Square area, is characterized by the presence of an urban heritage that expresses various imported cultures that mixed with the local culture (social, political, economic, and environmental) in a specific historical period (reflecting the thought, society, and politics that prevailed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Egypt), the result of which was this distinguished urban pattern.
- 2nd. The lack of plan to preserve valuable heritage areas and buildings in the Ministries Square area, to protect them from encroachments, and to preserve their unique architectural identity, which exposes them to neglect and harm.
- 3rd. The decrease in urban and architectural heritage, and perhaps its disappearance one day, is linked to several natural challenges (internal and external) and human challenges (intentional and unintentional), and the damage to heritage is shared by detractors and its supporters, along with the owners of inherited buildings and some specialists, with the lack of community awareness of the importance of heritage.
- 4th. Developing an appropriate method/preservation strategy (maintenance, restoration, etc.) for the heritage areas and buildings in the Ministries Square area, considering it is an integral part of the entity of downtown Cairo, and sustaining its development within the framework of preparing sustainable urban strategic plans.
- 5th. It is not possible to prepare a planning vision for the Ministries Square area in central Cairo without affecting the surrounding area, where cultural activities and business centers are spread over a distance ranging from 1.0-1.5 km, in addition to business center services such as banks, stock exchange, embassies, hotels and the system

of commercial activities on the broader level of the region which interacts and affects the Ministries Square area, and without whom, there cannot be logical solutions.

- 6th. Preserving the area and the heritage buildings can provide the opportunity to attract various investment and service projects as an alternative to government buildings within the framework of the Greater Cairo region, which will positively affect the urban structure of the central Cairo region and the developmental returns at the local and regional levels, with the establishment of a set of legislation and planning requirements to preserve Development and prevent land speculation.

Within the context of articulating the proposed planning vision for the Ministries Square area, this research strives to achieve a harmonious balance between the realization of the project's objectives and the essential requisites of the city of Cairo. The objective is to avoid imposing additional burdens on the city center, thereby mitigating the exacerbation of pre-existing urban challenges. The effective implementation of this project should result in a discernible amelioration of the limited spaces available within the city, which currently grapple with heightened building densities and utilization. Numerous recommendations emerge in this regard:

- 1st. Preservation and Development Plan: Formulate a comprehensive plan to preserve, develop, and invest in the Ministries Square area and heritage government buildings within the Historic Cairo Plan. This initiative aims to restore the civilizational essence of the ancient capital, concurrently addressing persistent issues such as car congestion, high traffic, violations, and occupancy that have adversely impacted archaeological structures and the surrounding area.
- 2nd. Infrastructure Enhancement: Establish a robust foundation of services and facilities for the project area, prioritizing the reinforcement of movement networks. Proposals include the creation of auxiliary movement axes parallel and perpendicular to Al-Qasr Al-Aini Street. Additionally, explore the feasibility of constructing a tunnel beneath Al-Qasr Al-Aini Street, potentially originating at the Al-Ayoun stream wall and terminating at Tahrir Square, with provisions for an underground parking facility beneath the Ministries Complex grounds.
- 3rd. Repurposing of Tahrir Complex: Consider repurposing the Tahrir Complex for complementary functions aligned with the new project's objectives. Allocate substantial portions of the available land for gardens, an open-air

museum, and spaces for cultural expressions, including folk arts, theatrical performances, and musical events. These amenities would cater to the needs of both residents and visitors to the city center.

- 4th. Architectural Heritage Integration: Acknowledge the urban and architectural heritage of the Ministries Square area as a source of design formulations, vocabulary, and spatial relationships. Integrate these historical elements into contemporary architectural and urban production, emphasizing the interconnectedness of architectural heritage with its environmental, social, and economic dimensions. Advocate for its activation not merely as a historical artifact but as a societal asset contributing to sustainable development.
- 5th. Tourism Enhancement: Implement facilities to boost tourism activity in the heritage area. Support the region with distinctive cultural, recreational, or commercial activities, such as leasing spaces to major investment companies or banks, provided these activities align with the values and heritage of the area and are compatible with the characteristics and traditions of the local residents.
- 6th. Community Engagement: Involve the local community and citizens in decision-making processes related to historical and heritage areas. This engagement is crucial in the formulation of detailed plans for the area, as these decisions directly impact the vitality of the region, the characteristics of the residential environment, and employment opportunities in the vicinity.

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