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## THE USE OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE TO ENHANCE THE BUILT ENVIRONMENTA STUDY OF THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, EGYPT

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## Abstract

The landscape architecture profession and its role in the planning process in Egypt are not clear and well defined. This led to the production of plans which lacks the existence of an obvious landscape strategy to both existing and new cities. A landscape planning concept which helps to maximize the contribution of the open spaces to the character and appearance of the city; conserve features and areas of historic interest; conserve and enhance existing features of wildlife interest and where appropriate create new habitats; facilitate public enjoyment and recreation in a way which respects the landscape and minimizes its erosion; to provide a linked network of safe, rich and varied open spaces for us all to enjoy and value throughout the city and to promote links with the surrounding countryside. The overall objective of this paper is to produce a set of guidelines for developing a landscape strategy for the Egyptian cities. This aims to ensure that the city's landscape is adequately protected and cared for, so that its extent, quality, biological diversity and contribution to the character and appearance of the city can be sustained and enriched for the benefit and enjoyment of the people and visitors. As well as addressing the need to restore a balance within the city's landscape, whereby the natural forces of change are managed, the damaging actions of people are limited and a climate is created to encourage the development of good quality landscape design throughout the city. This will be enhanced by using an analytical approach to focus on the city of Alexandria as an example of the Egyptian statues of landscape architecture, reaching the development of a landscape strategy check list.

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*Refaat, Mohammad H.<sup>1</sup>*

## **Abstract**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

*"Christopher Alexander was right: "A City is not a tree; it is A Landscape" Tom Turner 1996*

Landscape architecture is a professional design discipline that, in the broadest sense, deals with integrating people and their outdoor environment, in a manner beneficial to both. The paper deals with explaining the role of the landscape architecture profession in enhancing the urban environment. It explains the role of the landscape architecture in the planning process, emphasizing on how to integrate it with the whole process for the better production of a livable product. The paper will review the following aspects: Discusses the modern theories and approaches in the landscape architecture profession, and then demonstrates the Egyptian example which is the City of Alexandria in Egypt, leading to producing a blue print for developing a landscape strategy for the Egyptian cities.

## **ARE OUR CITIES IN A STATE OF A DILEMMA?**

The landscape architecture profession and its role in the planning process in Egypt are not clear and well defined. This led to the production of plans which lacks the existence of an obvious landscape strategy to both existing and new cities. A landscape planning concept which helps to maximize the contribution of the open spaces to the character and appearance of the city; conserve features and areas of historic interest; conserve and enhance

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existing features of wildlife interest and where appropriate create new habitats; facilitate public enjoyment and recreation in a way which respects the landscape and minimizes its erosion; to provide a linked network of safe, rich and varied open spaces for us all to enjoy and value throughout the city and to promote links with the surrounding countryside.

## **DO WE NEED NEW TOOLS FOR SHAPING OUR CITIES?**

The landscape of most of the Egyptian cities has reached a critical stage in its development. It is suffering from the effects of having been taken for granted and its long-term management neglected for the last fifty to a hundred years. Much of it has been well maintained on a day to day basis. However, it has been depleted gradually because people in the past have not planned for its adequate protection or renewal. We may summarize the symptoms of our cities as (Ahern, J. & Fabos, J. Gy. 1996)

### ***The Ageing Landscape***

The established landscapes in the older parts of the city comprise the settings to many of the listed buildings and are integral to the character of the city's conservation area. The visual impact of these landscapes derives mainly from the visually prominent, large tree species that grow within them. Many of these have reached maturity and are now in decline. There are few developing trees ready to take their place and those that are growing are either too young or of the wrong species to have the same immediate visual effect. Many of the older parks and gardens, (which were laid out in the 18th century and during Victorian times), have not retained their historical design detail and have lost much of their earlier vitality. Many of their impressive trees are also over-mature and more recent planting has concentrated on immediate and short-term effects rather than the planned replacement of these important landscape features. They are in need of protection and long-term management which caters for their renewal and repair (Fabos, J. G 1985).

### ***Development Pressure***

As they deteriorate, some of our established landscapes become more vulnerable to the pressures for development. The consequent premature loss of trees, the damage and loss of designed open space and the alteration of boundary walls, means that the pattern and character of the landscape is changed and depleted. As a result our landscape is being eroded more rapidly than by the natural forces of change alone. Also opportunities for landscape renewal and restoration are reduced considerably. The effects of pressure for new development are not felt just within our established landscapes. Throughout the city the scarcity of development land means that all open spaces are being scrutinized continuously for their development potential.

Green spaces which are overgrown, appear underused, or have few significant trees on them, are often the most vulnerable to development pressure. Yet many provide important habitats for wildlife have historical significance or have potential to contribute more effectively to the city's appearance. Once these spaces are developed such interest and potential is lost, or, at best, reduced.

### ***Managing the Landscape***

Many open areas remain vulnerable to damage and deterioration even though they are protected adequately from development. This is through inappropriate management, neglect or vandalism. Changes in agricultural methods, policies and subsidies, and the difficulties of farming on the edge of a densely populated urban area, have meant that traditional land management practices are no longer common within and around the city. Consequently the character and quality of some of these areas are deteriorating and they have become more prone to vandalism and the adverse effects of unmanaged public access. Important natural habitats are also being restricted and put at risk by this decline. Some farmland has been abandoned. In other areas it is the intensity of management which is proving restrictive, preventing a site from developing its full landscape potential and damaging its nature conservation interest (Forman, R.T., 1995).

To conserve the richness and biological diversity of our landscapes for the future we need to manage them appropriately. Also we need to demonstrate their worth and promote a greater appreciation of their many facets amongst the people and visitors of the city.

### ***Ancient Landscapes***

With the passage of time, changes have masked many of the clues to the historic settlements and activities that the ancient landscapes hold. It is likely that much still remains hidden from us today and that there are ancient landscapes and landscape features still to be discovered and recognized. With the pressures of modern activities within the city and a lack of understanding of some of these landscapes, there is a danger that important aspects of the city's heritage could become marginalized and their significance lost to us forever.

We need to protect and manage historic and ancient landscapes and develop a greater awareness of the importance of such features to the understanding of the city(Steiner, F.(ed) 1991).

### ***Quality New Landscapes***

Few new landscapes of quality are being created within the city, either as part of the development process or as initiatives in their own right. Many developments maximise the development potential of each site leaving little room for any meaningful landscape design or planting. In some parts of the city, which have been developed, featureless open space has been created of little or no design quality, and remains underused and often abused as a result. In the Egyptian cities we have a very special landscape and yet we appear to be taking it for granted. We must not let the various forces of change erode its qualities and diversity. We must create new landscapes of quality and resist strongly the permanent loss of opportunities to do so (Forman, R.T., 1995).

The overall objective of this research is to produce a set of guidelines for developing a landscape strategy for the Egyptian cities. Which aims to, ensure that the city's landscape is adequately protected and cared for, so that its extent, quality, biological diversity and contribution to the character and appearance of the city can be sustained. As well as, enriching the benefit and enjoyment of the people and visitors.

## **URBAN LANDSCAPE STRATEGY AS A TOOL FOR SHAPING OUR CITIES**

### ***The Urban Landscape Strategy Setting Up***

The landscape strategy for a city is a plan of action which the City Council is developing to promote the better protection, enhancement and long-term management of the city's outdoor spaces and landscape features. It also seeks to develop a better understanding of the natural processes inherent in our landscape and the effects of people's activity upon them (Bell, S., 1999).

Through this plan the Government seeks to address the problems of continuous, but varied, change within the landscape, which is brought about by the natural forces of growth and ageing, of competition between species, disease, decay, and the actions of people. It seeks to cherish and celebrate the rich and varied landscape of the city by protecting that which is good and by enhancing that which is not so good. In developing the landscape strategy, the Government should be mindful of the many facets of the city's landscape and the different interests it holds for the residents and visitors.

The landscape we see today encompasses a rich mosaic of open, and largely green, spaces comprising parks, recreation grounds and allotments, the green spaces associated with housing estates and the rural surroundings. It includes public squares and designed historic parks and gardens, the grounds of our schools and other institutions. It also embraces private gardens, which in particular parts of the city are significantly large. Trees are important components the landscape. They grow singly, or in rows or clumps along the streets, in gardens and in nearly all of the public open spaces (Beavis, M. A., 1993).

The landscape strategy is not confined just to looking at the city's green spaces, nor just to land owned or managed by the Government. It addresses the whole of the city landscape and considers the role of the landscape outside the city, which provides the context. It considers the hard elements within the landscape such as the walls and paved finishes and embraces the city's hard urban spaces.

Through the landscape strategy the Government should undertake and promote action to conserve and maximize the contribution of the landscape to the character and appearance of the city and to conserve its biological diversity for future generations. At the same time, the City Council seeks to provide comfortable and attractive places for the people to use and enjoy.

### ***The Urban Landscape Strategy Aims and Objectives***

The overall aim of the landscape strategy is to:

- To initiate and review action to ensure that the city's landscape is adequately protected and cared for, so that its extent, quality, biological diversity and contribution to the character and appearance of the city can be sustained and enriched for the benefit and enjoyment of the people and visitors.
- The landscape strategy addresses the need to restore a balance within the city's landscape, whereby the natural forces of change are managed, the damaging actions of people are limited and a climate is created to encourage the development of good quality landscape design throughout the city.
- Through the landscape strategy, we aim to maximize and sustain the contribution of the landscape to the character and appearance of the city, whilst at the same time increase the enjoyment and appreciation of the environment by the local community.
- Encouraging all individuals, groups or organizations to be more aware of how our many activities might affect the well-being of the landscape and to participate in its care. It also seeks to help people develop a greater understanding of both our natural and designed landscapes, and to recognize that through imaginative design and creative management, many of these landscapes could meet our needs more effectively and improve the quality of all our lives.

# THE EGYPTIAN EXPERIENCE IN CITY LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

## *The City of Alexandria Green structure Planning*

The city of Alexandria was founded by Alexander the great in 333 BC. It is located on the north tip of the Nile Delta. Surrounded from the north with the Mediterranean sea, the south Mariout Lake. The city is leaner in shape extending for 60 km and depth does not exceed 5 km. in its widest areas. (Figure1)



Figure 1: The City of Alexandria, Egypt existing plan 2011

The city has passed through various planning stages in last few decades. As it is considered the second largest city in Egypt after Cairo, it suffered several development pressures which led to the loss of its distinguished urban character. The unique character of the city comes from the various types of medieval architecture buildings which decorates the cityscape. Also the various open spaces which gains its character from either the surrounding buildings or the artwork (Sculptures) which decorates its centers such as Al-Mansheyya Square, Misr Railway station Square, Saad Zaghlol Square.

The actual city green structure is formed from several parks which were constructed in the middle ages such as AL-Shallalat gardens and Al-Nozha specialized gardens, such as Antoniadis garden. Also, there are various palaces with their gardens as Al-Montaza Palace and Ras Al-Teen. In addition to, new housing estate projects at King Marriout. The city has a cornice which extends for more than 18 Km, linking from Al-Montaza at the east to the Qaytbay Castle at the west. In addition at the mid-west of the Cornish the famous Alexandria library Bibliothica is located. Also, the city has a historical centre in the areas of Al-Mansheyya, Zanca Al-Settat and the Morsy Abo Al-Abbas Mosque area. (Figure 2)



Figure 2: Alexandria Urban Fabric and Character

## *The City Landscape Process*

In the last decade, the city has struggled to keep its shape under the various development pressures. This led to an overall transformation of the city in the form of a "FACELIFTING" operation. These developments were the reconstruction of the city Cornish, enlargements and re-landscaping it. Also, the re-landscaping of several squares specially, in the districts of Smouha and Gleem. In addition to, the re-landscaping of the city main entrance from the Cairo-Alexandria axis. This process depended on the public participation and donations. (Figure 3)

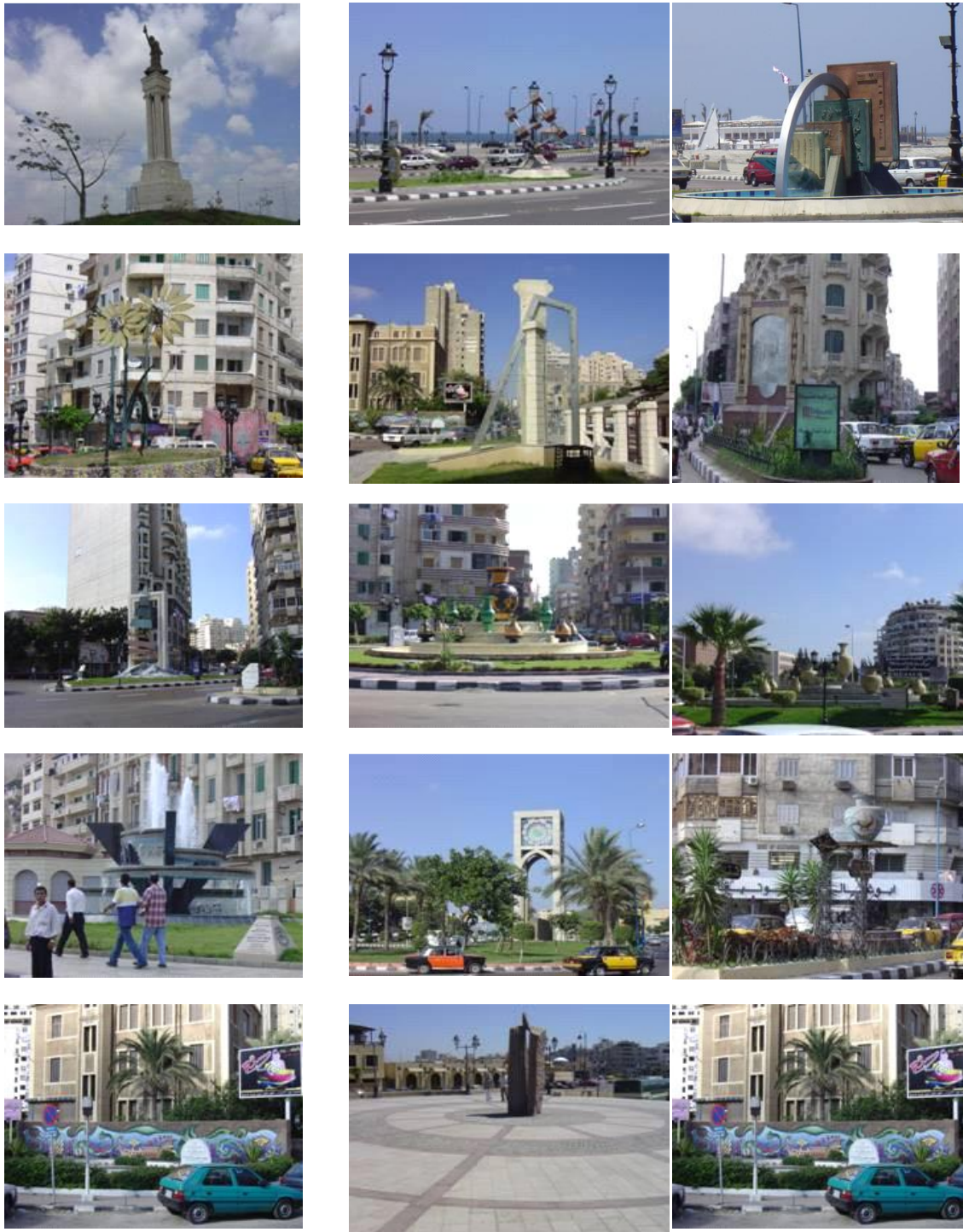


Figure 3: Some examples showing the pressures on Alexandria city Urban landscape Fabric and Character

Although the output of this re-landscaping process might be satisfactory to the common people but, from our point of view the process lost track in taking the following aspects into consideration:

- The Local government did not consider that landscape stems from the importance it attaches to conserving, and where necessary, improving the city's environment for all who work and live within the city, and those who visit. When taking account of the changing needs of the landscape we must also take account of the changing needs of the people. Such an approach demands an understanding of the city's complex character, the importance of its views and the role of the landscape in helping to determine the character and appearance of the city. It therefore demands strong guidance from the Governorate.
- It is important that the Governorate continues to be clear and firm about protecting the features and characteristics of value in our landscape. It should provide guidance to landowners and developers so that they understand which characteristics are important, and what measures are necessary to protect and enhance them. The council should also encourage landowners and developers to consider landscape issues at the earliest stage and to develop new landscape proposals of quality for a site as part of an integrated design and planning.
- The governorate did not take into account the importance of creating identity and providing a sense of place with new housing development. This is important with any new development within the city. Through the sensitive and imaginative co-ordination of natural features, such as vegetation, landform and water, together with details of paving, walls, lighting and street furniture, a layout for new development can be created to provide complimentary and well integrated spaces which are attractive, safe, and functional and which maximize the site's positive contribution to the overall character and appearance of the city.
- The Governorate should seek to maximize the opportunities that new development can provide to improve the quality of an area, to help renew or rejuvenate damaged or ageing landscapes and to contribute to the creation of new imaginative landscapes of quality in parts of the city which require improvement. This demands a positive approach and strong guidance on how we wish to shape the city's landscape for the future.
- New development proposals were brought forward with inadequately thought out proposals for the open parts of the site. This lack of concern and consideration for the landscape means that not only are existing landscape features and characteristics lost or put at risk, but also that good landscape design is more difficult to secure, because basic decisions on layout design have been made already. The quality of landscape design is as important as the quality of building design. The two should be integrated for new development from the early planning stages of a project. They can both affect the appearance of the development and its relationship to its surroundings.

To conclude, the experience proved that there is a great failure in addressing the need to restore a balance within the city's landscape. Whereby the natural forces of change are not managed, the damaging actions of people are enormous, and there is no climate created to encourage the development of good quality landscape design throughout the city. (Figure 4)



**Figure 4: The Landscape attempts which were done in Alexandria, showing the entrance, several squares and landmarks, with total neglecting to the city urban landscape character.**

In addition to there is a minimum contribution of the landscape to the character and appearance of the city, whilst at the same time there is a decrease in the enjoyment and appreciation of the environment by the local community. Besides, discouraging all individuals, groups or organizations to be more aware of how our many activities might affect the well-being of the landscape and to participate in its care. Over and above, there is minimum effort to help people to develop a greater understanding of both our natural and designed landscapes, and to recognize that through imaginative design and creative management, many of these landscapes could meet their needs more effectively and improve the quality of all their lives. (Figure 5)





Figure 5: Example for some of the successful attempts in the landscape design process of the squares

## URBAN LANDSCAPE STRATEGY BLUE PRINT FOR DEVELOPMENT

The main principles of the urban strategy should focus on enhancing the following aspects:

- Protect, renew and enrich the character and appearance the city heritage and rural fringe landscapes, that is, the "setting" of the city, by identifying, protecting and conserving their key characteristics.
- Improve the suburban and commercial parts of the city by protecting and improving existing green spaces, and creating new landscapes of quality within them.
- Provide for wildlife throughout the city by protecting existing sites of importance, enhancing the wildlife potential of others and creating new habitats.
- Protect, renew and develop the full landscape potential of key landscape features within the city, giving particular attention to: important green spaces, parks, gardens, sites of particular historic interest; the river and canal corridors; the main approach roads into the city; specific individual trees and hedgerows.
- Develop partnerships with the community and between the public, private and voluntary sectors to encourage the greater involvement and participation of the people in caring for their city's landscape.
- Monitor the condition of the city's landscape and the success of the proposed action and review the strategy proposals to address any changes identified.

### *The Urban Landscape Strategy Structure*

There are five main themes on which forms the pillars of the landscape strategy. Which are as follows:

#### **Caring for our Trees**

In the Egyptian Cities, the visual impact of the trees makes a particularly important contribution to the city overall character and the appearance of its high quality rural landscape setting. The role of trees in enhancing the visual appearance of the city, in providing for recreation and as a home for wildlife is important.

Throughout the city the pressure for development threatens the life and well-being of many of our trees. Designs for new development often fail to take account of the needs of existing trees and many proposals require their removal. Even those that are meant to be retained often fail to thrive because they are damaged during the construction process, or because the soil around them has become so compacted that their roots cannot feed or breathe properly. They may not die immediately, but they do die prematurely as a result. Such losses are avoidable. Many losses are brought about by inadequate planning, carelessness or ignorance (Parlange, Mary. August 1998).

There are opportunities to strengthen the linear landscape features within the city, such as the river, the canal, and our main entrance routes, with strong planting. In this way a significant new landscape framework can be created for parts of the city which need improvement.(Figure 6)

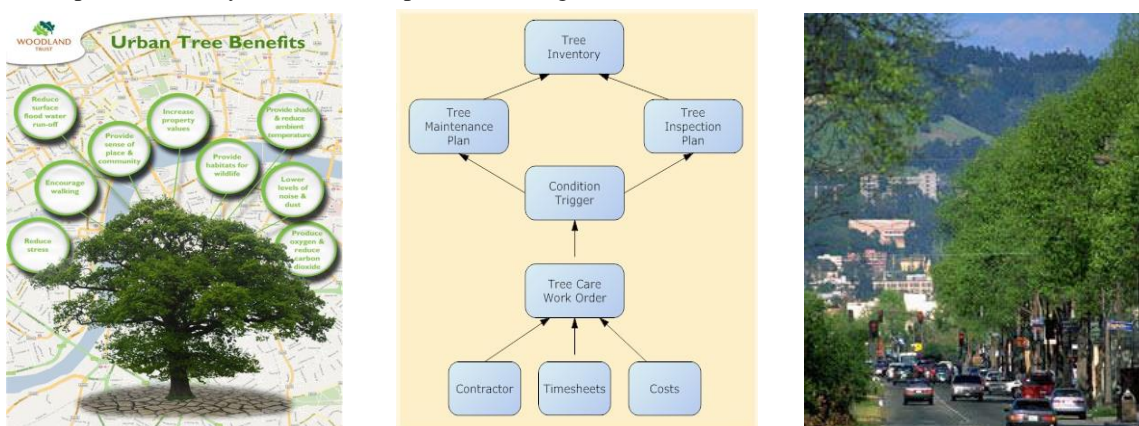


Figure 6: First theme of the Urban Landscape Strategy is to take care of our city trees.

As the local government has the statutory power to make tree preservation orders by the power of the environmental law 4 year 1994. The purpose of these is to protect trees for the public's enjoyment. This is particularly important where trees are in immediate danger. The City Council also has a statutory duty to keep a register of works to trees in the conservation area. Anyone wishing to cut down, top, lop or uproot trees within the conservation area generally must first give the council six weeks notice of their intention. This allows the council to consider the visual importance of a tree and to protect it under a tree preservation order where necessary. It is important that the City Council continues to use its statutory powers and duties effectively, and to develop them where possible, to protect the city's important trees (Steiner, F. (ed) 1991).

The objectives behind the proposed key action for the future care of our trees are outlined as follows:

- To lessen the impact on the city's overall landscape of the decline of our ageing trees by protecting and prolonging the life of healthy mature trees for as long as possible and by planting and caring for new trees capable of having the same effect.
- To increase the number of trees in the city and increase species diversity.
- To develop an uneven aged tree population of the right proportions to sustain and increase long-term tree cover of the appropriate character within the city.
- To promote sound long-term management of all vegetation within the city for the benefit of its health and visual appearance, its enjoyment and responsible use by the public and for the benefit of wildlife.

To meet the objectives of the strategy and its policies the City Council should:

- Identify key trees within the city and seek their appropriate protection and management
- Develop identified landscape character zones within the city, and identify the role, or potential role of trees, in preserving and/or enhancing the character of each area.
- Promote the active care of trees throughout the city and promote appropriate new tree planting.

### **Managing our Parks and Public Spaces**

This theme considers open space within the city which is owned or managed by the government and is accessible to the public. It excludes the open space areas of our housing estates.

Some open spaces make a particularly significant contribution to the city's landscape because they support the large species trees which are important and characteristic features of our more established landscapes. They provide a soft green counterpoint to city's architecture. Other public Parks, are also extensive in area and form significant landscape features in their own right. However, some make only a local contribution but they are valued and enjoyed because of their closeness to people's homes and their ready accessibility. They provide vital greenery and open air places in an otherwise close urban environment. We value them as places for relaxation, for recreation and sport, for their floral displays and, in some cases, for their closeness to nature (Kubat, A.S., Eyüboğlu, E., Ertekin, Ö. 2003).

The government tried to protect the Egyptian city's open spaces from development. However, the landscapes of our parks and public open spaces are not static. They undergo the continuous change as a result of vegetation growth and ageing, and in response to human activity. Protection against development alone will not ensure their continued well-being, nor will it retain or enhance the contribution they make to the city's overall landscape.

Our parks and green spaces have always been well cared for on a day to day basis, but they have been vulnerable to design fashions and, perhaps, to the individual interests of park keepers. Many have not been managed in accordance with any long-term plans to help retain their essential character or original design concepts. The hard urban spaces of the city have suffered from the intrusion of traffic and from the lack of a coherent and comprehensive approach to tackling the design issues associated with this. The responsibility for their maintenance and management falls to a number of different agencies and the lack of co-ordination has resulted in the decline of the quality of these spaces. Many of the parks and open spaces deserve a higher level of investment than has hitherto been granted. They all need long-term plans or prescriptions, to guide their management into the future.

The condition of some of our older parks and gardens, is at a critical stage. Some have lost their earlier vitality and richness, whilst in others the original designs have been eroded or masked by poor quality repairs, misguided "improvements" and later additions. The increasing pressure to accommodate traffic in the centre of the city also has eroded the quality of some of our historic parks and gardens. Such a use detracts from the visual quality of the park and disrupts important views and vistas within it.

Some suburban open spaces are relatively isolated and form discreet green space in otherwise densely developed parts of the city. Others offer particular opportunities to link with other nearby sites. In Egypt some elements penetrate into the centre of the city such as the river, the canal and the Linear Park, run through its developed areas. There is opportunity therefore to create a network of linked open spaces which can also link with the countryside beyond. This could include the environmental upgrading and improvement of footpaths and suburban streets which already link or go near open spaces and should embrace the linear features which already link the urban areas with the surrounding countryside (Kubat, A.S., Eyüboğlu, E., Ertekin, Ö., 2003).

The objectives of the proposed key action for the future management of our public open spaces are outlined as follows:

- To promote the landscape diversity and landscape importance of the city's parks and public open space;
- To establish good practice in the long term management of our parks and public open spaces which addresses the continuous changes experienced by the landscape and which seeks to:
- Maximize the contribution of the open spaces to the character and appearance of the city;
- Conserve features and areas of historic interest;
- Conserve and enhance existing features of wildlife interest and where appropriate create new habitats;
- Facilitate public enjoyment and recreation in a way which respects the landscape and minimizes its erosion;
- To provide a linked network of safe, rich and varied open spaces for us all to enjoy and value throughout the city and to promote links with the surrounding countryside.

To meet the objectives of the strategy and its policies the government should:

- Undertake a landscape assessment of all parks and public open spaces within the city and work up a planned program to prepare and implement landscape improvement/restoration and long-term management plans.
- Take account of the following when bringing forward and implementing landscape improvement/restoration and long-term management plans for the city's parks and public open spaces and in undertaking day to day maintenance:
- The site's historical significance or special designed layout; bringing forward proposals which seek to reinstate or conserve these aspects through the application of correct historical detail, high quality landscape design and the use of quality materials;
- Any existing wildlife interest on the site; enhancing, wherever practical, this interest by adopting sympathetic management practices, including the reduction wherever possible of the use of all pesticides and artificial fertilizers;
- The visual significance of the site in the wider city landscape; identifying opportunities and making proposals to conserve or enhance the site's contribution, including considering the planned replacement of maturing trees;
- Opportunities for habitat creation; identifying and making proposals for them where appropriate;
- The need to adopt high standards of landscape design, and good quality materials generally, and seeking to create or conserve a sense of identity to each site.
- The need to involve local residents in the process and consulting with the wider public as appropriate;
- Public and personal safety; in any new designs and management measures to address safety issues.
- Identify opportunities to create safe green links between public open spaces and with the countryside.
- Review the distribution of publicly accessible open space within the city, devising standards for provision and identifying areas of deficiency.
- Identify opportunities to create new areas of public open space or increase public accessibility to open space areas, and seek to secure their ownership, designation and improvement at the earliest opportunity.

### **Conserving our Historic Landscapes**

The historic landscapes and features which may be recognized to provide historical information of the city are of immense value. It helps us to understand the historical and social context of the city and its internationally important landscape and townscape qualities. Others provide only glimpses of former human activities within and around the city. They present clues which demand further research and investigation before their true significance can be understood fully. Many of our historic landscapes and spaces are embraced by the city's conservation area imposes a duty on a Local Planning Authority to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area in the exercise of planning functions. The Government should take the view that our historic landscapes - the parks, gardens, and urban open spaces of the Egyptian city - make an important and integral contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. It should seek to use its landscape and conservation area policies to protect them from the adverse effects of development.

More careful consideration of existing site conditions and characteristics will help to protect site and features of importance. It might help also to reduce attempts to over-develop sites, and avoid the disadvantages of infill development by making prospective applicants more aware of some of the environmental limitations of their sites. It should also encourage better landscape design, as opportunities to focus new development on specific features might be recognized and appreciated more readily (Spirn, Anne Whiston. 1998). The objectives behind the proposed key action for making development work are outlined as follows:

- To ensure that the landscape quality of the city, and important landscape features and characteristics within it, are preserved and protected from the adverse effects of development;

- To ensure that new development within the city maximizes the opportunities for landscape improvement and/or landscape renewal and rejuvenation through the application of high standard and imaginative landscape design;
- To ensure that, wherever appropriate, new development within the city makes a significant contribution to the creation of new, quality landscapes of city-wide significance.

To meet the objectives of the strategy and its policies the Government should:

- Encourage the early consideration of landscape issues in all planning matters, particularly with individual planning applications, by:
- Continuing to identify key landscape considerations and issues when preparing site development briefs or planning framework guides;
- Defining landscape character zones and identifying key landscape features within the city and publishing guidance notes on their key characteristics and policies for their conservation and/or improvement; giving priority to the conservation area
- Encouraging landowners and developers to discuss landscape issues with City Council officers prior to making an application for planning consent and engaging appropriate landscape professionals to advise them;
- Only accepting applications for consideration for planning approval where regard has been given to the Landscape Elements Checklist and the information required by it has been submitted.
- Promote high standards of imaginative landscape design in association with new development including its implementation and subsequent management.
- Seek to secure the adequate protection of landscape features and important characteristics on development sites, particularly during the construction phase.

#### 4.2.4. Providing for Nature in the City

This theme focuses on nature conservation throughout the city. It highlights specific sites of importance and promotes the adoption of good nature conservation practice, monitoring and habitat creation whenever possible in all green spaces. It considers both private and public land and waterways. The more natural parts of the city and many of its green spaces have been well protected from most types of development for a long time. Although this has been to protect the landscape setting of the city, it has also helped to protect some of their nature conservation interest. However, some development is permissible within these areas and whilst this may not be damaging to the visual quality of the city's landscape, it can be highly damaging to wildlife. Development pressure is always a significant potential threat to nature conservation, but perhaps the main threat in the Egyptian cities is the way we look after our green spaces (Parlange, Mary1998).

It is important to introduce the appropriate management on sites of nature conservation importance to retain the rich diversity of habitat within the city.

Providing for nature in the city is not just about protecting and looking after the rich places that we have. It is also about seeking ways to improve the less interesting places and to create new habitats. This does not mean that all our green spaces will be, or even should be, turned into wildernesses overnight. Very simple changes could increase their ability to support wildlife. Few would change dramatically in appearance (Forman, R. & Gordon, M. 1986). The objectives behind the proposed key action for providing for nature in the city are outlined as follows:

- To protect, and sustain as a minimum, the existing individual species, habitats and sites of nature conservation interest within the city from the damaging effects of any activity, but in particular from development, pollution, inappropriate management, and neglect.
- To promote the benefits of urban nature conservation and to develop a greater knowledge and understanding of the wildlife of the city amongst the people.
- To promote and encourage the creation of new habitats within the city, the enhancement of existing ones and the establishment of a network of habitats throughout the city.

To meet the objectives of the strategy and its policies the government should:

- Continue to identify record and monitor important places for nature conservation in the city.
- Continue to afford maximum protection against development to sites of particular interest to nature conservation and to wildlife in general throughout the city by:
- Ensuring that a Landscape Elements Checklist is completed for each planning application and strongly resisting any development on sites where wildlife interest is noted, unless it can be demonstrated by the submission of a detailed ecological assessment of the site, that the development and its construction will not adversely affect the site's wildlife value;
- Requiring all owners of sites important to wildlife and where development has been permitted, to submit as part of their detailed proposals measures to protect and enhance the wildlife value of the site;
- Strongly resist the removal and destruction of natural hedgerows and other ribbons of natural vegetation which help link sites of wildlife interest when considering any development proposal and seek through

conditions on planning consents where appropriate the establishment of new links and the creation of new habitats.

- Seek to develop a greater understanding and active appreciation of the city's wildlife by:
- Bringing forward proposals for the establishment and long-term management of a Local Nature Reserve within the city
- Publishing information leaflets, or disseminating those of other organizations, on the city's wildlife and how individuals could enhance and improve it; and giving talks and holding exhibitions or supporting others in doing the same; giving priority to schools and the work of others in schools;
- Supporting or initiating local activities, particularly in schools, which help people appreciate and learn more about the nature conservation interest of their neighborhood.
- Supporting and promoting local community initiatives, particularly in schools, which seek to undertake practical projects to conserve or enhance the wildlife interest of an area, by way of advice, grant-aid or linking with other sources of funding and practical assistance.
- Providing information on the wildlife interest of particular sites within the city, including where appropriate the erection of site notice boards and the identification of sites of particular wildlife interest.
- Define and develop the concept of wildlife or natural corridors and identify where they are, how they should be protected and where new ones could be created effectively.

### **Working in Partnership with the Community**

This theme promotes the active involvement of the voluntary and private sectors in helping to care for the city's landscape. The Government should recognize that the task of effectively protecting and managing the whole city's landscape is not one which it can perform on its own. Large parts are held in private ownership or are owned by other public bodies. These are areas over which the government has little direct involvement or control, other than as the Local Planning Authority. The landscape issues which face the owners of these private landscapes and green spaces are no different to those which face the Government on its own land. Many of the more mature landscapes have been taken for granted in the past and have been managed inadequately. Now they are going into decline, they are in need of urgent restoration and planned management to bring about their long-term renewal and replacement to ensure their continued contribution to the city's landscape in the future (Spirn, Anne Whiston. 1984).

The Nile River or any of its streams is an important natural landscape feature and an important wildlife habitat and corridor in most of the Egyptian cities. Yet its visual contribution to the present landscape of the city is minimal and public access to it is limited. Its habitat value in certain stretches is depleted because of the character of the riverside development and the action of individual riparian owners along its length. The significance of this feature has been diluted because of the multitude of ownerships and divided responsibilities over its management.

It is important to illustrate the benefits of good landscape management and improvement to all landowners. For example, the creation of a more attractive external working environment to business premises will not only contribute to the local neighborhood environment, it will also attract other benefits to the business. Similarly the reorganization of space as part of an environmental improvement scheme could also result in the more efficient and effective use of limited space for car parking and other users. The role of the voluntary sector is crucial to the success of many environmental initiatives throughout the country. Such groups vary from a small group of individuals who get together for a specific project to the more established groups. All have a different role to play or have different main interests, but all are important to the success of the landscape strategy. The value of the voluntary sector must be recognized. The Government can do much to support these groups and can make greater use of their resources through partnership working and by helping to establish links between the private, public and voluntary sectors (Kubat, A.S., Eyüboğlu, E., Ertekin, Ö., 2003).

The objectives of the proposed key action to work in partnership with the community, the voluntary sector and other landowners are outlined as follows:-

- To persuade and support private landowners and landholding public bodies within the city to undertake active conservation management and landscape improvement of their landholdings which seek to conserve the important landscape character and features of the land, including its wildlife interest, and to maximize the land's contribution to the city's overall landscape.
- To raise awareness, understanding and enjoyment of neighborhood landscapes and their role in the city's overall landscape.
- To encourage and facilitate the active participation and involvement of local communities in landscape conservation and landscape improvements within the city.
- To encourage and facilitate an active debate amongst all sectors of the community on landscape issues affecting the city and the long-term development of the landscape strategy.
- To establish new ways of working with people outside the Governmental bodies which effectively meet the objectives of the government and which help local people become involved in and contribute to the care of the city's landscape.

- To establish and maintain links for effective working between the public, private and voluntary sectors including networking with other bodies.

To meet the objectives of the strategy and its policies the City Council will:

- Promote good landscape management of key landscapes in private ownership to meet landscape strategy objectives by:
  - Identifying key landscapes and landscape features and the owner(s) of them;
  - Seeking the participation of the owners in protecting, managing and improving their landholdings through negotiation, advice, management agreements and grant-aid or advising on other sources of advice and funding;
  - Establishing regular liaison with key landowners to monitor, guide and assist them in the long-term management of their landholdings;
  - Devising a strategy for targeting and prioritizing grant-aid, including campaigns of approach and linking with the initiatives and grants of other bodies e.g. Countryside Commission, Forestry Authority, English Nature.
- Promote links between other public bodies, the private and voluntary sectors and the community to facilitate action which will meet the objectives of the landscape strategy, by:
  - Keeping up to date on the activities of various local and national bodies and organizations and their local campaigns and disseminating this information on making new contacts;
  - Attending meeting events which seek to co-ordinate the activities of the voluntary and public sectors within and around Bath;
  - Networking between local community and voluntary groups and local companies to help match sponsorships with suitable projects and promote volunteer support where feasible;
  - Supporting activities which promote the establishment and maintenance of links between the various sectors and the dissemination of information about various environmental, organizations, funding campaigns and initiatives.

Seek to raise awareness, understanding and enjoyment of neighborhood landscapes by:

- Initiating and supporting (through grant aid, ideas, advice and information) projects and local activities and events which help people find out more about their local environments and what they value about them;
- Encouraging people to explore the potential of their local landscapes and to identify and discuss local landscape issues, through the production of locally based information leaflets, the giving of talks and the networking with other groups;

Support and encourage local community initiatives for landscape conservation and improvement by:

- Providing information on "how to go about it" in the form of information packs, giving direct advice or creating links with other organizations;
- Helping people to form themselves into representative community groups if none already exist, to facilitate the development of local initiatives for environmental works;
- Providing grant aid (or advise on other sources of funding) for specific projects;
- Providing technical and professional advice (or advise on how to get it);
- Responding positively to local initiatives involving council owned or managed land;
- Encouraging and helping to develop a network of community groups and organizations to more effectively spread information and other relevant skills.

Inform and provide opportunities for local communities to participate in council-led landscape projects by:

- Making early contact with local community groups to introduce new landscape projects and initiatives and to keep them regularly informed of progress throughout through public meetings, exhibitions, leafleting or through an event;
- Building into project timetables the time to work with the community, to allow them to become actively involved in the development of a scheme, to give their comments and ideas, to visit examples of similar projects and to find out how they might help or how the project might affect them;
- Organizing community days or events to encourage the local community to participate in practical projects. For example, planting trees and shrubs, building walls and fences or making paths. (Figure 7)

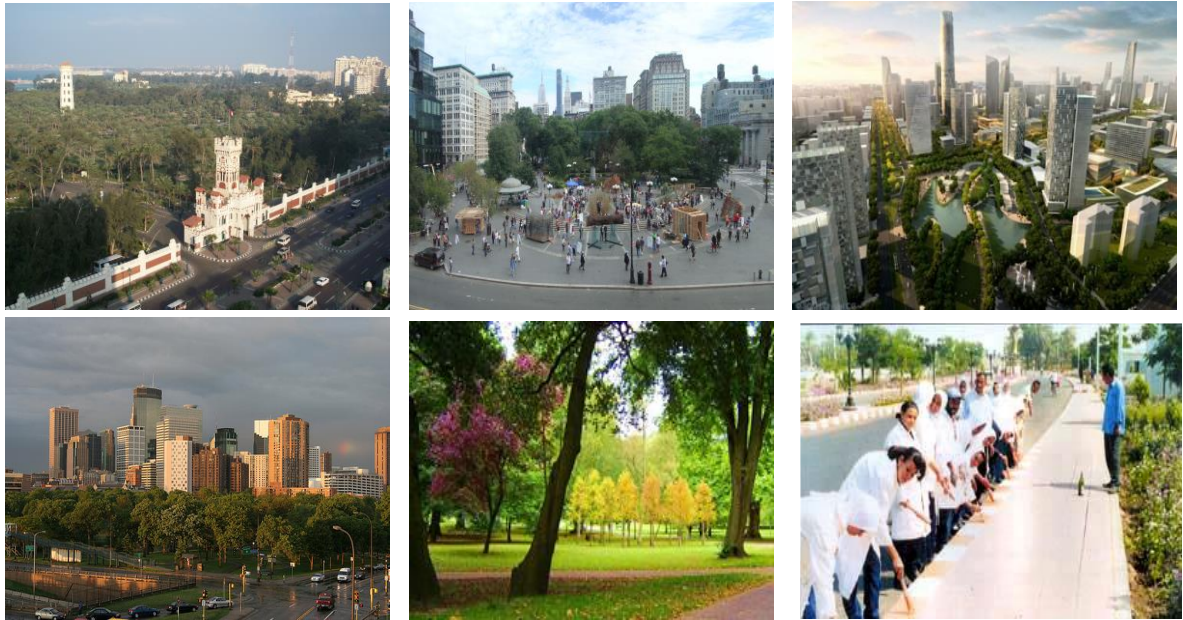


Figure 7: The various themes of the Urban Landscape Strategy from management of parks and public spaces, to conservation of historic landscapes, to providing nature in the city and above all enhancing public participation.

## CONCLUSION:

At The end we may conclude that our cities suffer from various symptoms and there is an urgent need for a cure. Providing a landscape strategy may be a part of the cure. As the landscape strategy provides a detailed framework for action and, in particular, advocates the setting up of various landscape information databases to direct landscape strategy action and monitor landscape and habitat change in the future. Also, it is an additional measure to the care of the city's landscape. The landscape strategy should not be a statutory document, it has to be the subject of widespread consultation and the views of many individuals and organizations should have been taken on board. It is also seen as an important component of a broader environmental approach which has to be adopted by the government for the wealth of the future generations.

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