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## **“Towards Sustainable Approaches of Reconstructing the Historical Buildings”**

### **Cases Study “The Legislative Council Building in Gaza”**

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#### **ABSTRACT:**

*Wars have caused damage at all levels of economic, social and cultural life. But perhaps the damage of the architectural buildings which represent the memory and the identity of nations are the most important.*

*The researcher looks at this situation in Gaza Strip, especially after the recent war in January 2009 and the effect of this war on humanity and urban destinations. This war caused damage for many valuable buildings in Gaza.*

*One of these historical and valuable symbols is the Palestinian legislative council which considers the first council represents the Palestinian people. This building was bombarded by Israel in 2008.*

*So, at this research, the researcher will try to display all the possible approaches of reconstructing this building to find a more sustainable and safer scenario.*

*This research divided into three parts: **The first part** (theoretical part) contains definitions for valuable buildings, the influence of wars on historical buildings. **The second part** common and futuristic strategies of dealing with the historical buildings. **Third part** (case study), then recommendations and futuristic studies.*

#### **Keywords:**

**Valuable Buildings - Strategies of Reconstruction**

### **1. INTRODUCTION:**

#### **1.1 Sustainable Development**

International policies have increasingly placed major emphasis on the need for integration between economic, social and environmental aspects of development to deliver the concept of "sustainable development". Sustainable development is an over-arching theme that lies at the

heart of national and local government policy. And as known the historic built environment is a finite and non-renewable resource. So the preservation and continued use of built heritage may be enjoyed today and passed on to future generations. Avoiding neglect and loss of key built heritage and promoting the efficient use and Re-use of land and buildings, are two ways. (Falkirk Council, 2006).

## **1.2 Gaza Heritage Deterioration**

One war is enough for destroying the effort of building cities for centuries. In the creativity of art and the development of civilizations, war creates havoc on both the material and moral. The most obvious risk is the destruction of heritage as a result of armed conflict.

In 1954, UNESCO adopted a Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, known as the Hague Convention. To date, some 102 Member States have accepted its obligations. These are, first and foremost, reactive measures: the States undertake to renounce the destruction, pillaging or dangerous use of cultural property, whether movable or immovable which "is of great importance for the cultural heritage of peoples" and to prevent such dangers. Both architectural and archaeological sites are involved as well as collections and museums. The Convention also comprises proactive and preventive measures such as taking inventories, identifying major assets, and establishing of storage facilities for special protection. (UNESCO, 2005)

## **2. Research Questions**

**Building beside the history considers a big challenge for the architect. As it is a very hard equation for him, so the researcher will try to answer the following questions:**

- How to deal with a destroyed historical building?
- How to build in a historical area?
- How to present and represent the historical building?
- How to rebirth the historical building and area?
- How to add a new value to a place to confirm the present and the future without hurting the past?
- How to move the time in the historical places?
- How to make a new image for the historical building?
- How to build with a freedom besides the historical building?

So in order to answer all these questions, the researcher made a survey to find all the possible approaches of reconstructing inside or beside the historical building and concluded that there are common approaches as shown in figure 1 and futuristic approaches as shown in figure 3.

The research will discuss the futuristic approaches through the applied part.

### 3. Strategies of Dealing with Heritage Areas:

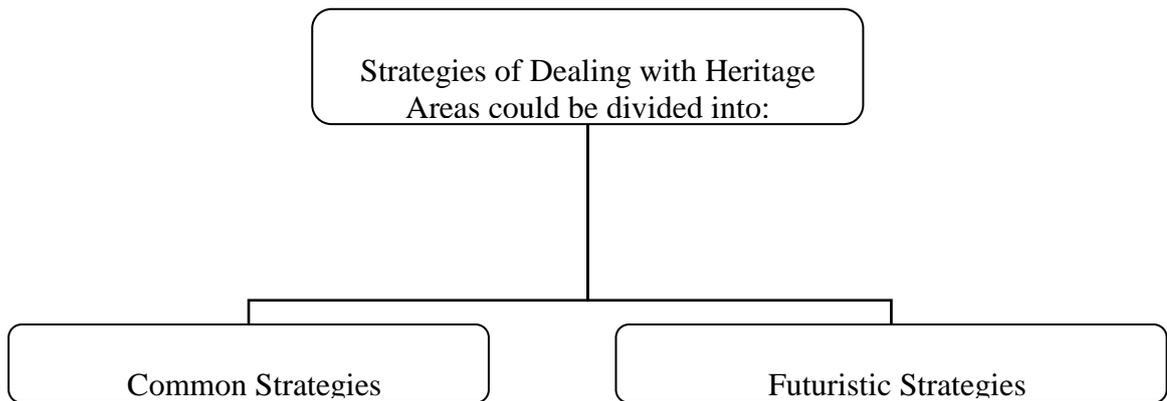


Figure 1: Shows the classification of the heritage strategies.

#### 3.1.1 Common strategies of Dealing with Heritage Areas:

The common strategies are depending on keeping a cultural/historic property in its existing state by applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity and materials. It should generally be focused upon the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features. Examples for common strategies (Preservation, Restoration, Protection, Maintenance Adaptive Re-use, Rehabilitation, Conservation,....etc)

#### 3.1.2 Futuristic Strategies of Dealing with Heritage Areas:

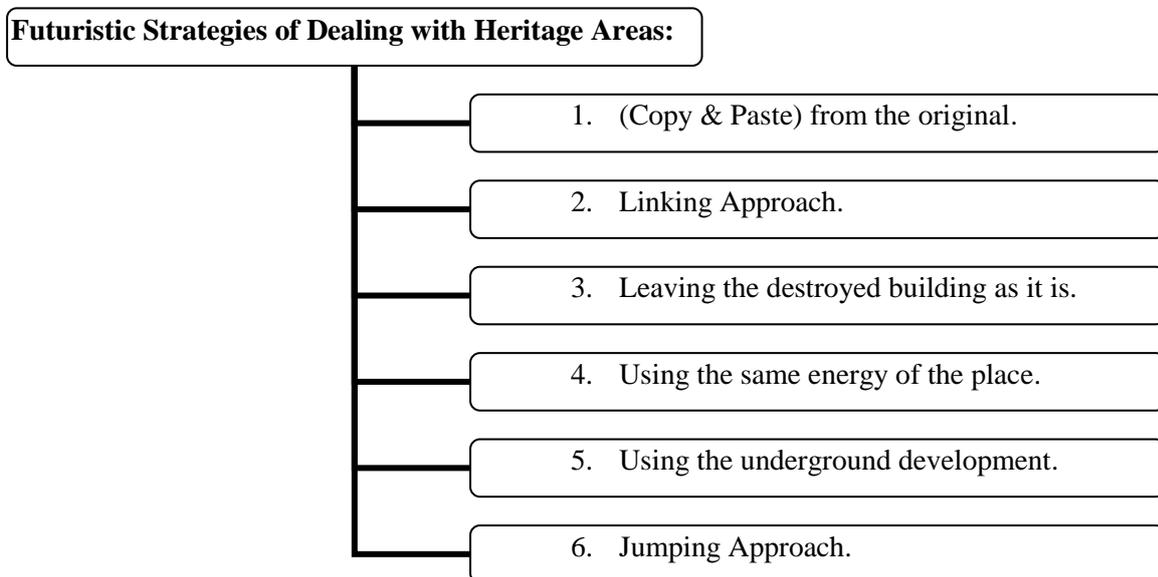


Figure 2. Shows Futuristic Strategies of Dealing with Heritage Areas

## 4. Cases Study "The Legislative Council Building in Gaza"

### 4.1 Historical Background

#### Palestinian Legislative Council

This building considers a historical symbol for the Palestinian people characterized by its geographical location in Gaza Strip. On March 15, 1958, the building was founded in the era of the Egyptian administration of Gaza Strip. It was the first Palestinian legislative council opened in Gaza strip by Anwar al Sadat on behalf of the Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser.



**Figure 3. shows an ancient photo for the building in 1958.**

After the 1967 war, Israel has controlled the building and destroyed parts of it. Then, in May 15, 1995 the building had been restored in the era of President Yasser Arafat, and re-runs as the legislative council of the Palestinian people. Then in 2002, the government constructed a new building beside the old one to accommodate a larger numbers of offices.



**Figure 4 shows both the new and the old building**

In 2008, Israel bombarded the buildings and destroyed it completely.



**Figure 5. Shows the buildings after the destruction.**

In light of the reconstruction of Gaza, the researcher will try to apply the previous futuristic approaches of dealing with historical areas as follows:

## **4.2 The Purposed Approaches of Reconstructing the Palestinian Legislative council.**

### **4.2.1-The First Approach..... (Copy & Paste) From the Original**

#### **4.2.1.1 Introduction**

this approach depends on returning the building back to its original form by constructing the destroyed building as it was before.

The main principle of this architecture approach is to defy the reality and to prove the ability to challenge the difficulties and the shape of time. It's kind of saving the identity and the history of the place after the destruction.

#### **4.2.1.2 Building Analysis.**

The building consists of 5 floors constructed of reinforced concrete and clad in stone and glass as shown in figure (6).

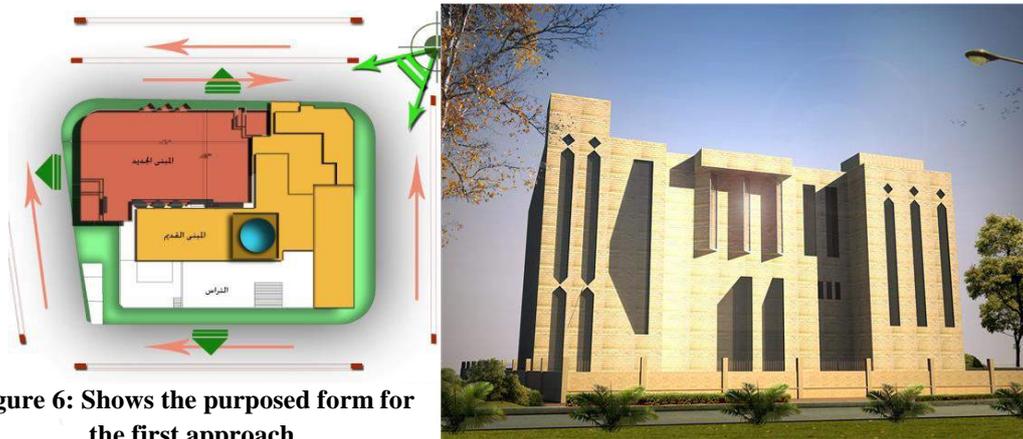


Figure 6: Shows the purposed form for the first approach

In the exterior, the openings have several forms, depending on wind direction and the proportion of lighting required within the halls.

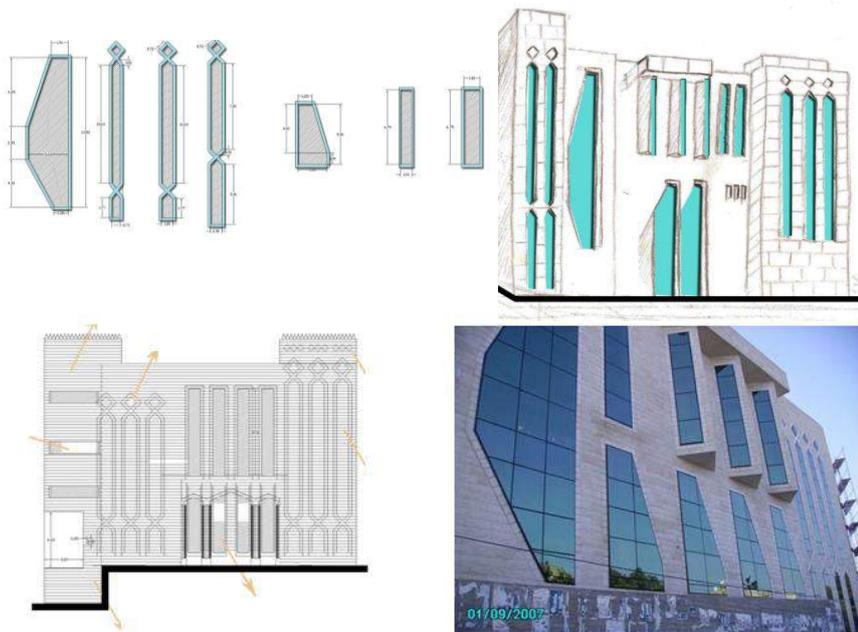


Figure 7. Sketches for the building

Diversity in the use of openings and spaces to achieve the best lighting and ventilation, according to the function of each space, gives a type of music and rhythm in the elevation

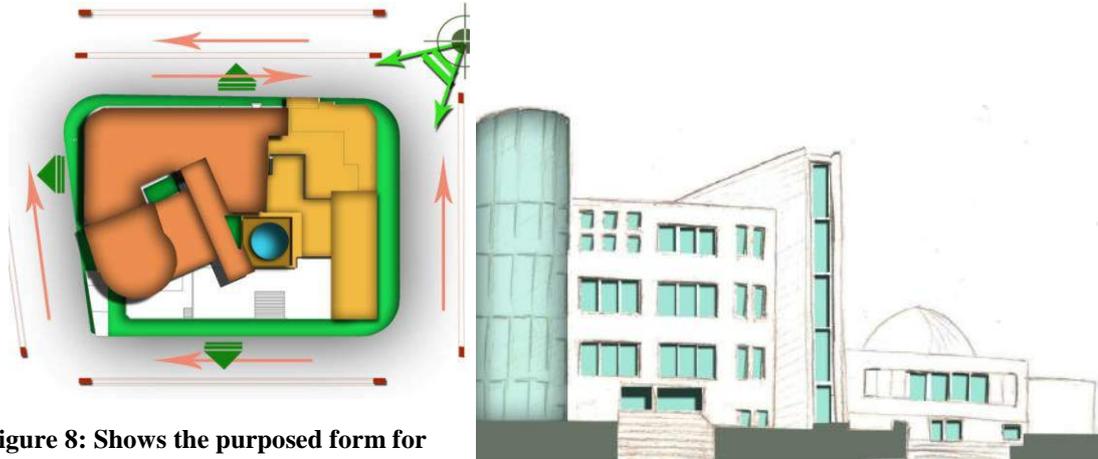
## **4.2.2 The Second Approach..... (Linking Approach)...Post Modern**

### **4.2.2.1 Introduction**

Linking approach means to link between the history and the future without hurting the old and without ignoring the time factor that we live in a digital age in which everything changes in alarming speed.

The architect should respect the Physical Environment, and respond to the local Character. That means, he should respect the architectural character of the nearest historical building and integrate his work with the existing Townscape Character in order to respect the Contextual Character. The architect can use different methods of structure and materials to create his new form.

### 4.2.2.2 Form Analysis.



**Figure 8: Shows the purposed form for the second approach**

The new building designed to modernity, consists of 4 floors high and 3 underground floors, to accommodate the largest possible number of deputies and visitors. Also there are two basic approaches of the Legislative Council the main entrance, which is mediating the new building and the other entrance is secondary located in the corner.

The Dome covers the conference hall so as to give a fingerprint combination of the ancient and the modern building.



As shown in figure (9), the building construction considers a new trend towards the use of glass surfaces at this area.

**Figure 9: Shows 3d exterior view for the both buildings.**

### 4.2.2.3 Summary for the above approach

The linking approach for redesigning the Legislative Council, is attempting to combine the old building with its identity and heritage with modernity building in order to show the evolution of the architecture without affecting the identity and the memory of the place.

### **4.2.3. The Third Approach..... (Leaving the Destroyed Building as It is).**

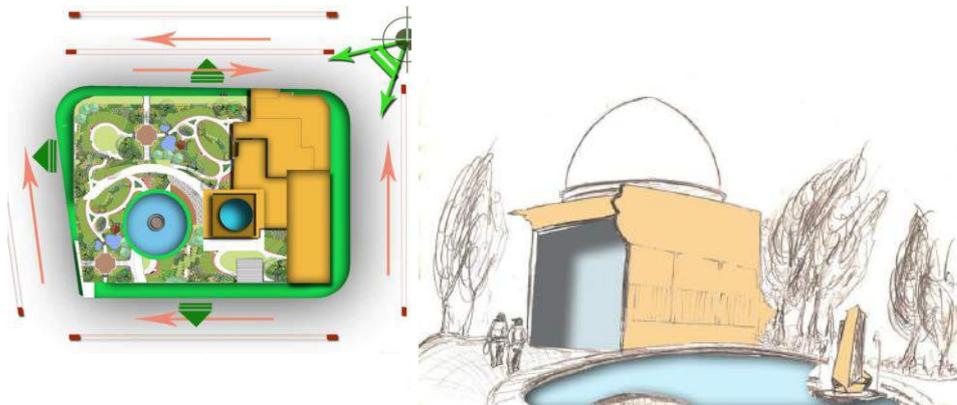
#### **4.2.3.1 Introduction**

It means that there is no re-construction for the destroyed building it will remain as a witness to the devastation.

The building will remain a part of the city memory and will act as a tourist destination. Also a redesign of the open spaces in front of the building had been made at this approach.

Note: This model depends on transferring the Legislative Council to another site.

#### **4.2.3.2 Form Analysis.**



**Figure 10: The dome and a part of the old building remain as a war memorial.**

This design arranged all the landscape elements to establish the surrounded garden in harmony and agree to meet the design objectives while providing consistency and coherence among it and the destroyed building.

**Figure 11. : Shows that the damaged site became a tourist destination**



The most important features used in this form is thinking out of the blocks and affording the green spaces to serve the city center of Gaza. An Example of such a model in the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, Japan,

#### **4.2.4 The Fourth Approach..... (Using the Same Energy of the Place).**

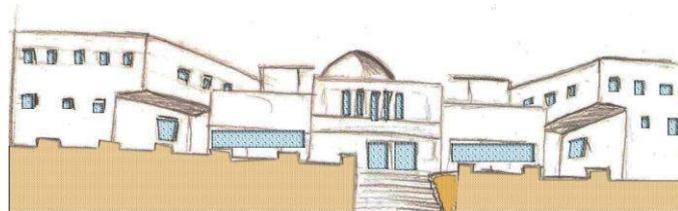
##### **4.2.4.1 Introduction:**

Using the same energy of a place means using the same soul of the past (original building) there is no conflict, the new building is not dominant or in a competition with the historical building.

It is preferred to use the same form and treatments which used in the historical building as much as possible. Also architects should respond to the local architectural character. It means that they should respect the architectural character of the nearest historical building and integrate the new form with the existing Townscape Character in order to respect the Contextual Character.

##### **4.2.4.2 Form Analysis.**

**Figure 12. Shows the purposed form for the fourth approach**



The architect redesigned the Legislative Council with the same spirit of the old building whether in its style, openings, textures, materials or skyline.

This approach gives more respect for the historical building, which is necessary for that building particularly.



**Figure 13. Shows 3d exterior view for the both**

##### **Notes:**

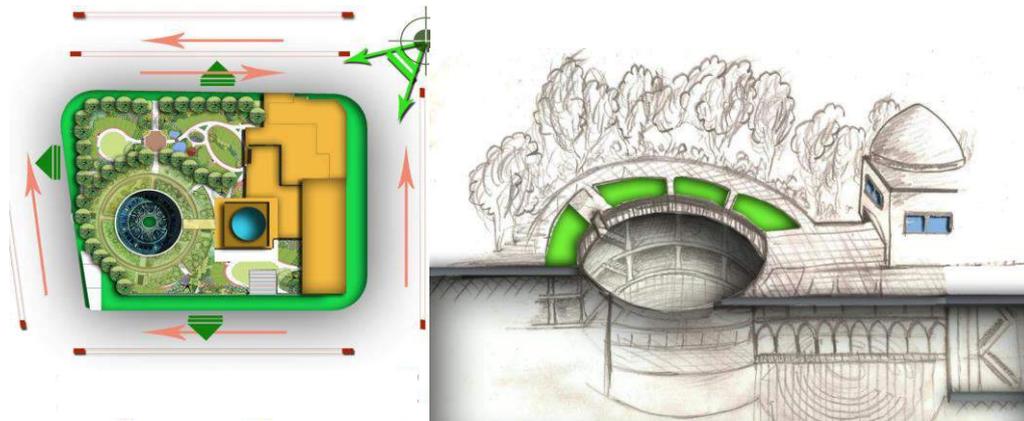
- The Pentagon in the United States and the Shura Council building in Egypt are examples for different projects used the same approach.
- Materials used in this model, especially sandstone, stone and concrete are available in Gaza Strip with affordable prices.

### **4.2.5-The Fifth Approach..... (Using the Underground Development and Repairing the Old One)**

#### **4.2.5.1 Introduction**

It is a stretch horizontally to the building under the ground, "Underground Building", and the exploitation of the earth in the process of expansion of the old building, and take advantage of the surface parcels green.

The advantage of such ideal in several aspects "economy and security "In terms of lack of land area in Gaza Strip. The use of the ground in the future has its positive benefits and gives opportunities to the underground expansion.



**Figure 14: shows the purposed form for the fifth approach**

The building is a cylindrical shape, consisting of 7 levels and contains all level on the vacuum council offices and public services, the building between human life and the natural environment through the provision of natural lighting and ventilation.

The design of this model is an extension of the old building and compatible with its context.

Note:

It's a kind of sustainable design safe and secure as Gaza under the military operations all the time.



**Figure 15: Shows 3d exterior view for the both buildings.**

**4.2.6. The Sixth Approach..... (Jumping Approach .....Architecture of Disorder....Architecture of Fuzzy Form)**

Jumping approach means that the new building is in a contrast and conflict with the history. It means that the architect is deviant. Architect isn't caring for the history just thinking about the future and how to identify the present to be a good history.

The jumping project could be built at any place without any care for the architectural context, style or character.



**Figure 16: shows the use of deviant approach and style in the construction of the new building, and out of the ordinary in design.**

The project consists of 6 blocks different in heights to provide ventilation and shadows; inside the building it also makes the form more dynamic

The use of the modern materials such as glass and aluminum reflects the architect's futuristic approach.

The new building is completely different than the old one however in its surface articulation, concept or construction.

**Figure 17: Shows 3d exterior view for the both buildings.**



## **5. Conclusions and Recommendations.**

1. The research discussed a critical point in the architectural heritage development and called to change the look to the historical eras.
2. Building beside the history considers a big challenge for the architect. As it is a very hard equation for him, so, this research tried to find answers for several questions like; How to build in a historical site, how to give a new image for the historical site? And how to give a meaning and identity to the new building?
3. The research concluded that there are already six approaches to build by the history which are; Using the Same Energy Approach, Linking Approach and Jumping Approach, (Copy & Paste) from the original, Using the underground development and leaving the destroyed building as it is.
4. There should be a partnership with the authorities and the relevant heritage bodies to explore ways to conserve and renew our built heritage with new strategies and new way of thinking in order to:
  - Adapting historic buildings to exceed the economic purposes
  - Revitalizing communities and neighborhoods
  - New cultural facilities and visitor attractions.
5. It should make the best use of the others experiments and experiences in the field of building by the history. Especially the British and the French experiments at that field.
6. It is the time to re-link between the past, present and future.
7. The historic environment should be accessible to everybody.
8. Architects should be encouraged from the authorities to change the images of the historical eras and to think freely by the history.

**Finally, it should Think positively about the present and the future and remember Ruskin argument about the building as it is like the human body Live for a while and dead and you can't revive the dead body but think positively in the future.**

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