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## Environmental’s Design Role in the Reviving and Preserving of Architectural Heritage

### Case Study (Catacombs of Kom El Shoqafa)

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#### Abstract

The catacombs of Kom el Shoqafa (meaning "Mound of Shards") is a historical archaeological site located in Alexandria, Egypt and is well-considered as one of the Seven Wonders of the Middle Ages. This paper is based on a case study, tries to highlight the concept of integrating environmental interior and graphical design methodologies in preserving the architectural heritage and emphasizing the role of design, advertising and media in attracting tourists, and how environmental design methodologies can help increase the public awareness to preserve the cultural identity through renovation and revival of the historical sites and conserving them.

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*Keywords:* Architecture heritage; Interior design; Kom el shoqafa ; Way finding; Environmental graphic design.

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#### 1. Introduction

The Catacombs in Alexandria, Egypt from the Greek-Roman era represent a cultural heritage of outstanding universal values. They suffer weathering, aging as well as other multiple problems that should be addressed by specialized scientists and organizations.

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This study revolves around interior design, landscaping and graphic environmental design in the catacombs sites. By visual examination of the current status of the location, it was found that the catacomb suffered lack of proper maintenance level, deteriorating infrastructure, lack of the essentials services and design aspects of a popular touristic location from the researches point of view.

The aim of the present study is investigation and documentation of the existing conditions of the site of Catacombs. in addition to define the site design problems and to propose the optimum solutions to transform the site into popular touristic location as well as an economically profitable project .Some of the proposed environmental interior design site ideas (indoor/outdoor) is having proper service areas, information zones, landscaping, outdoor seats, restrooms, gift shops, food court ...etc

Another aspect of this study is to propose an environmental graphic design proposal which would include, the location main site identity, Way finding, signage, graphic design ...etc.

## **2. Historical Background concerning the catacombs of Kom el Shoqafa**

The Catacombs of Kom el Shoqafa: Kom El-Shoqafa is an Arab interpretation of the name, LofusKiramaikos, signifying "Mound of Shards" or "Potsherds" in ancient Greek.

The tomb has Hellenistic and early Imperial Rome influences. It begins with a circular staircase that leads you down into a room boasting a mixture of Egyptian and Roman art. At the bottom of the stairs, to the left leads you into a funeral hall where the families and friends sit on stone couches and remember the deceased. The motif incorporates a classical shell design on the landing, with two benches carved into the wall. From that point we can see a rotunda with 6 pillars and a staircase descending another level filled with sculptures.

## **3. Objectives**

The primary research goals are to clarify the correlation between the three fundamental components which are: the architectural heritage - sustainable tourism development - civil society institutions within an approach comprising interior design strategies and environmental graphic design.

Taking advantages of the various methods in preserving the architectural heritage and achieving the development required through a sustainable design approach.

Reaching a methodology for initiating the role of environmental interior and graphic design in the revival of architectural heritage out of applying the essential design strategies through:

- Focused, detailed studies for interior design solutions addressing the problems found within the archaeological site and the catacombs.
- Identifying the particular standards for the environmental graphic design approach through creating a successful way finding system, signage system, site identity and advertisements.
- Comprehending the criteria needed for preserving the territory and increasing the national income.

## **4. Methodology**

The research methodology is based on an analytical experimental approach; where it undergoes a number of diversified data and information analysis and description concerning the archeological site and its heritage.

In addition to pursuing an experimental manner based on the information gathered initiating a design strategy appropriate with the acquired consequences. And thus following the problems mentioned above with regard to the historical site, the research methodology is oriented towards achieving a sequence of organized studies starting with diverse design solutions integrating sustainable interior design strategies and environmental graphic design aspects that would reinforce the built environment within the site. These enhancements would attract a considerable number of tourists and visitors that would raise the national income needed for a continuous preservation for the archeological site through a self- sufficiency approach.

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