



FACULTY OF ENGINEERING
ALEXANDRIA UNIVERSITY

Alexandria University
Alexandria Engineering Journal

www.elsevier.com/locate/aej
www.sciencedirect.com



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The World Heritage Centre's approaches to the conservation of New Gournia Village, and the assessment of its authenticity and integrity



Ayman G. Abdel Tawab *

Department of Architectural Engineering, Faculty of Engineering, Tanta University, Tanta, Egypt

Received 19 November 2012; revised 23 October 2013; accepted 22 January 2014

Available online 28 May 2014

KEYWORDS

Architectural conservation;
Authenticity and integrity
assessment;
Earthen heritage;
Hassan Fathy;
New Gournia Village;
World Heritage Sites

Abstract New Gournia Village, which is located inside one of the World Heritage Sites in Egypt, has never been recognized as an element contributing to the site's Outstanding Universal Value. The recognition of the village as a contributing element is reliant on the successful assessment of its authenticity and integrity. Responding to the dramatically declining integrity of the village, the World Heritage Centre has carried out an architectural study to guide the potential conservation works in the property. The study has recommended that a group of objectives and two approaches to the conservation of the village should be adopted. One of these two approaches has been concerned with the conservation of the village according to the architect's original intentions and principles. The previous approach can be called the principles-based approach. The main aim of this study was to examine the agreement of the World Heritage Centre's objectives and their proposed principles-based approach to the conservation of the village with the aim to improve its chance in meeting the conditions of authenticity and integrity. The study approached the previous aim by assessing, by means of a proposed methodology; the level of significance, authenticity and integrity of the property. Based on the previous assessment, a list of conservation interventions was proposed to improve the property's chance in meeting the conditions of authenticity and integrity. Finally, the World Heritage Centre's recommended approaches and objectives were examined against the previous proposed conservation interventions. The findings indicated the possibility to adopt the principles-based approach to the conservation of New Gournia Village, as well as the other World Heritage Centre's objectives, without limiting the property's chance in meeting the conditions of

* Address: 23 Alphrid Liean Street, Roshdi, Alexandria 21311, Egypt.

Tel.: +20 3 5420760 (home), mobile: +20 1023018833.

E-mail address: a_g_a_abdeltawab@yahoo.co.uk.

Peer review under responsibility of Faculty of Engineering, Alexandria University.



Production and hosting by Elsevier

authenticity and integrity. The study recommends to carry out further studies that are concerned with the identification of the architect's philosophy and architectural principles that should be the key reference of all the potential conservation interventions in the village.

© 2014 Production and hosting by Elsevier B.V. on behalf of Faculty of Engineering, Alexandria University.

1. Introduction

New Gournia Village, which can be considered Hassan Fathy's key community project, represents an outstanding heritage resource in Egypt and on the international level. The village represents an early trial to develop a model for Egypt's rural settlements that are responsive to their socio-cultural, economic and environmental contexts. From the perspective of many scholars [1,2], Hassan Fathy's works, in general, can be considered an early trial to introduce sustainable architecture. New Gournia Village, which has been designed around 1945 [3], also represents one of the outstanding examples of Egypt's recent and vernacular heritage resources. Both patterns of cultural heritage, which are recent and vernacular heritage, represent two of the under-represented patterns of World Heritage Sites. According to a study commissioned by the World Heritage Centre, the heritage resources of some of the UNESCO's regions, as well as some patterns of heritage resources have been found under-represented on the World Heritage List. Among the under-represented regions is the Arab States region where Egypt is located, and among the under-represented patterns of heritage resources are the vernacular and recent heritage patterns. To address these representational gaps, the World Heritage Committee has adopted a strategy that is called the Global Strategy in 1994 [4]. Accordingly, the World Heritage Committee has urged the nomination for inscription on the World Heritage List of properties representing the under-represented patterns of cultural heritage and also representing the under-represented UNESCO's regions.

New Gournia Village is located inside one of the Egyptian World Heritage Sites, which is Ancient Thebes with its Necropolis World Heritage Site in Luxor. The previous property is the only World Heritage Site in Egypt that incorporates within its boundary elements representing recent and vernacular heritage [5]. Although the village is located inside the previous World Heritage Site, it is not recognized as one of the elements that contribute to the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site. The World Heritage Site in Luxor has been inscribed mainly because of its outstanding archaeological value [6]. The property's nomination document has discussed the justifications for the inscription of the property on the World Heritage List. The features that the nomination document has addressed in order to justify the property's Outstanding Universal Value have been limited to the archaeological sites in the property; such as the temples of Karnak, Luxor and Deir al Bahari [7]. The ICOMOS justifications of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, and its inscription on the World Heritage List, have also focused on its archaeological value [8]. The reason why the other elements representing recent and vernacular heritage in the property, such as New Gournia Village, have not been recognized as contributing elements might be the then limited

recognition of recent heritage as a significant pattern of cultural heritage that deserves the inscription on the World Heritage List. At the time when the World Heritage Site in Luxor was nominated for inscription on the World Heritage List, when Hassan Fathy himself was still alive, it could have never been possible to recognize his works in Luxor as heritage resources.

Responding to the Global Strategy, it might be of interest to the World Heritage Centre and to Egypt to re-consider the inscription of the World Heritage Site in Luxor in order to recognize New Gournia Village as one of the elements that contribute to the property's Outstanding Universal Value. To recognize the village as a contributing element it should enjoy an Outstanding Universal Value and should satisfy the conditions of authenticity and integrity [9]. The original buildings of the village, which have been designed by Hassan Fathy and constructed mainly using earth bricks, suffer seriously from the decline of their integrity and from the many physical alterations carried out to them, which resulted in the decline of their authenticity. Many of the original buildings in the village have been demolished and replaced by unsympathetic high rise buildings constructed using concrete. Due to its declining condition, the preservation of New Gournia Village has become very urgent. Consequently, an international campaign has been launched to preserve New Gournia Village, as well as the rest of Hassan Fathy's works. The campaign led to the establishment of an international association concerned with the preservation of the works of Hassan Fathy in 2008. The association contacted the World Heritage Centre and the World Monuments Fund [10], who responded positively. Subsequently, both organizations embarked upon two studies on New Gournia Village. The first of these studies has been a socio-economic study, while the second has been an architectural study. The architectural study recommended that two approaches to the conservation of the village, as well as a group of conservation guidelines, should be adopted [6]. Adopting these approaches to the conservation of the village as well as the proposed guidelines is expected to have significant effects on any future assessment of the authenticity and integrity of the village.

2. The aim and the method of the study

The main aim of the study was to examine the contribution of the World Heritage Centre's proposed guidelines and approaches to the conservation of New Gournia Village to the improvement of the assessment of the village's authenticity and integrity. To achieve the previous aim, the level of significance of the heritage values that the village enjoys and its authenticity and integrity had to be assessed. To assess the level of significance of these values, a typology of values had to be adopted. The adopted typology was largely based on Feilden's typology [11]. The previous typology was modified

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/816194>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/816194>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)