

RESTORATION AND REHABILITATION OF THE HISTORICAL TEXTURE OF MOHTASHAM DISTRICT



TRADITION CONSERVATION ATTRACTIVENESS
CULTURAL WOMEN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT HISTORY
INTERGENERATIONAL PROMOTION HERITAGE

1. Context

The architectural style of the historical houses in the city has possessed a high rank in Iran's traditional architecture. Although many of these buildings have been destroyed during the last six decades, there are still many valuable and restorable units, approaching the improvement of cultural aspects of sustainable development of Kashan. Located in the historical core of Kashan, Mohtasham district an old district consisting of historical texture. Due to close proximity to bazaar and the existing valuable historical elements, it has got great importance. Following the growth of the city, most of the



original habitants of the district have moved away. Its historical dimension is strongly influenced by the inclusion of historical places such as mansions, cisterns and archways. The existence of Mohtasham Kashani's tomb in this district partly contributed to the selection of this region for the project. Mohtasham (1500-1588 AD) was the great poet of the Safavid period in composing ritual and religious poems. The restoration and rehabilitation of historical textures and archways not only causes the promotion of life quality in old districts, but also leads to the attraction of investors and subsequent tourism prosperity. While the preservation and revival of ancient civilization as well as introduction and transmission to the next generations, the implementation of this research-constructional Project prepares the context to share the valuable architectural elements of desert climate at national and international level.

THE PROJECT RESTORATION AND REHABILITATION OF THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF MOHTASHAM DISTRICT AIMS TO PRESERVE AND BEAUTIFY THE HISTORICAL TEXTURE ALONG WITH CREATING A TOURISM NETWORK INSIDE THIS AREA.

2. Kashan and culture

Kashan municipality is active in different areas and developed a plan in order to achieve sustainable development and increase public welfare. In order to fulfil these plans, it realised effective actions in tourism, economy and attracting investment to increase the level of public revenue. It also developed the commercial, residential and recreational areas. The project of restoration and rehabilitation of the historical context of Mohtasham district may be considered in relation to agenda 21 for culture in the following ways:

- Due to the existence of historical valuable elements, Mohtasham district is considered as a prominent tourism and cultural hub in Kashan.
- Applying a participative approach, the restoration of the area was carried out with cooperation of district habitant among which the following measures can be mentioned:



- The suggestion of establishing museum in Mirneshaneh underpass with the participation of land owner, a considerable action in terms of education and tourism
- The presentation of revival plan of Sesuk underpass shops in order for placement of handicraft products
- The restoration of Mirneshaneh holy shrine walls
- Changing the name of districts and alleys to their previous names.
- The project has influenced the social vitality of people of district. For instance, the open area in the pathway, once in no use, is now used as car parking and a place for children to gather and play
- Aim to create the climatic comfort of the people in this place, the actions taken are as follow:
 - To plan continuous frames in the pathways to inspire structural impact and create shadow
 - Applying indigenous and climatic building material such as brick, adobe, chaff and clay, etc.
- In order for being applicable for all of the people (in terms of age, gender and people with disabilities), some measures has been taken in the district as follow:
 - To correct the ramp steepness for the use of adults and people with disabilities
 - To restore access stairs
 - To make suitable the floor and walls of the open area for the children to gather and play and also parking application

THE RESTORATION AND REHABILITATION NOT ONLY PROMOTES LIFE QUALITY IN OLD DISTRICTS, BUT ALSO LEADS TO THE ATTRACTION OF INVESTORS AND TOURISM PROSPERITY.

3. Objectives and implementation of the project

1.1. Main goal

The project of restoration and rehabilitation of the historical context of Mohtasham district aims to preserve and beautify the historical texture along with creating a tourism network inside this area.



1.2. Key stages

The main actions taken in order for restoration and rehabilitation of Mohtasham district can be divided in 4 categories:

1. Structural – Spatial measures
 - Design a gateway in the joint place of the main axis to Mohtasham Street in order to make the district more distinguished.
 - Plan of restoration of underpass shops
 - Embellish the external sections of the texture to increase the visual quality of strict and create a continuity along the axis
 - Create different applications and structures to create spatial diversity
 - Create various structural patterns for passing routes and stop places
 - Devise proper places for placing information boards
 - Strengthen and improve vision to distinguished elements in order for the site to get more visibility
 - Use run-down buildings and open land to provide needed parking
2. Cultural – Historical measures
 - Identify valuable sites that have the potential to be restored and attract more tourists Social measures
 - Establish museum in Mirneshaneh underpass with the participation of land owner, an action which is considerable in terms of educational and tourism concerns
 - Present the revival plan of Sesuk underpass shops in order for placing handicraft products
 - Present the plan of changing the usage of out of service cisterns through Sesuk archway to temporary Gallery
3. Social measures
 - Change the name of districts and alleys to their previous names such as Paghapan Archway, Mirneshaneh alley, etc.
 - Present the plan of green environments in wastelands along the axis
 - Make native population turn back to the district through financial supports
 - Consult with the custodian of Mirneshaneh shrine in order for restoring walls of shrine
 - Consult with the custodian of the tomb located in place in order for restoration and change of usage to celebrity museum

- Visit the contractor of clinic under construction and design a facade fitting to the restoration pattern of axis
- Prepare the primary plans and present to land owners in order to change the facade of their building
- 4. Economic measures
 - Plan the restoration of abandoned shops in the area of Sesuk archway
 - Place and sale handicrafts

The project was led by the Municipality of Kashan, with the collaboration of the Construction and Rehabilitation of Old Texture Association, the Iran Urban Construction and Rehabilitation Organization, the Ministry of Roads and Urban Developments, the Iranian Urban Development & Revitalization Corporation, and the Sefahan company of Maskan Sazan.

This project has been beneficial to the inhabitants of the district, Kashan citizens, local and foreign tourists, the university students in art and architecture majors, etc.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS PROJECT LEADS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO PRESERVE THE HISTORICAL TEXTURE AND ALLOCATE SPECIAL BUDGET TO THE HERITAGE OF THE CITY.

4. Impacts

1.1. Direct impacts

Impacts on the local government

The implementation of this project leads the local government to preserve the historical texture and allocate special budget to the heritage of the city.

Impact on culture and local cultural actors of the city/territory

- Creation of the conditions of holding festivals on the theme of culture and literature in historical texture
- Revival of the forgotten arts in the field of art crafts
- Preparation of news and articles regarding the origins of ancient architecture of the city
- Effort of cultural institutions to hold international congresses on the theme of Mohtasham Kashani

Impact on the territory and its population

- Urban life promotion
- Creation of hope and motivation to preserve historical heritage
- Promotion of Kashan as a successful city in preserving and restoring historical textures
- Increase of the attention of citizens to provide more desirable services to tourists

1.2. Transversal impacts

- Revival of the production and introduction of forgotten crafts of Kashan in national and international markets
- Creation of opportunities for women to establish the crafts workshops
- Improvement of the women and young girls employment who are working crafts
- Creation of the conditions for using the intellectual capacities of university students majoring Art and Architecture
- Special measures to create climatic comfort of people in the district
- Special measures to create social vitality

1.3. Evaluation

- Setting of an evaluation committee comprised of various government and public agencies to identify strengths and weaknesses of project and develop a consensus based on subjective measures
- Positive feedback in the visual and text media as well as social networks, including Trip Advisor Website.

1.4. Continuity

- Setting up of a special branch of municipality for historical and old texture of the city
- Signature of a contract with Coffor for Heritage Rehabilitation and Exploitation regarding repair and restoration of old textures
- Allocation of facilities and special discounts for residence in the old and historical texture which documents the urban management's determination to restore texture.

5. Further information

The city of Kashan was a nominated candidate for the second 'UCLG International Award – Mexico City – Culture 21' (January-May 2016). The awards jury produced a final report in June 2016 and asked the UCLG Committee on Culture to promote this project as a practical example for the implementation of Agenda 21 for Culture.

Text approved in December 2016.

Good practice published in January 2016.

This factsheet was put together by Mehdi Houshmandi Nejad, Director of Construction and Rehabilitation of Old Texture Association, Kashan, Islamic Republic of Iran.

Contact: Ccia.Kashan (at) gmail.com

Main website: www.Kashan.ir