

# Contemporary Architecture in Egypt

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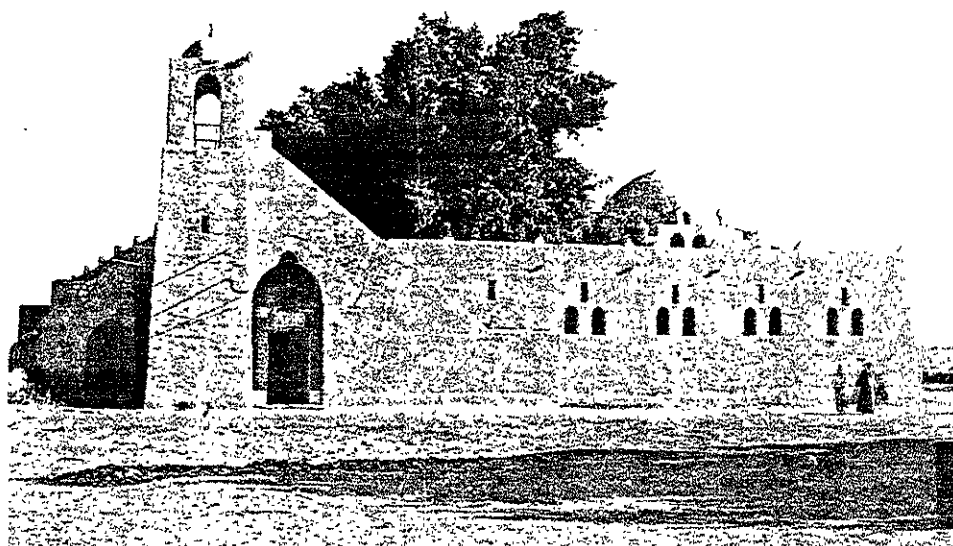
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**E**gypt as a part of the African and Arab World has been strongly influenced by both civilizations. Spiritually, and culturally it belongs to the Arab World, and geographically it belongs to Africa together with six other Arab countries. On the other hand, Egypt has been and will be at the crossroads where East and West meet. With the advancements of technology and communications beside previous invasions, Egypt, as any country in the third world, has been greatly influenced by the Western civilization. This has been reflected not only on architecture but also on the cultural and social aspects.

Architecture education in Egypt still follows the western pattern in theories and contents. This is due to the fact that most of the staff members at the architecture departments concluded their post-graduate studies in Western countries and are using most of the Western literature as references. This is besides the invasion of the architecture books and magazines published in Western countries on local libraries where there is a great vacuum of local architecture literature. Architecture education on the other hand, is still exercised the



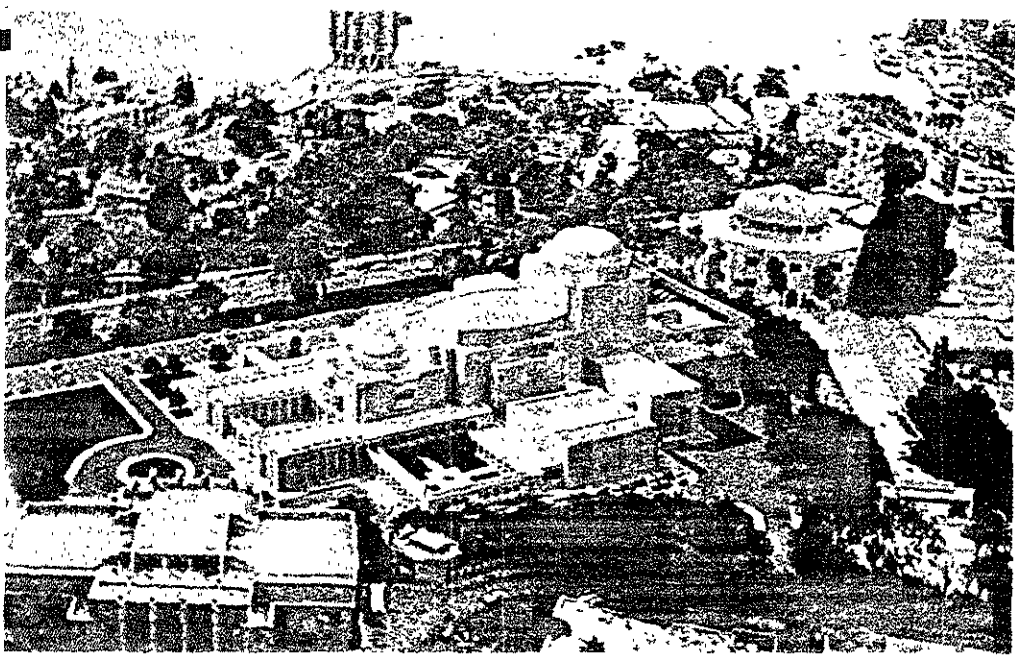
Mosque of El-Gorna Village

architecture departments within the curriculum of the faculties of engineering.

The architectural profession is partially controlled by the syndicate of engineers. The society of Egyptian architects plays a minimum role in architectural practice. There are over 20.000 national architects in Egypt but they lack well established and effective organizations.

There are general rules and regulations which might control the professional practice but they lack the legal status. The practice of Egyptian architects is confined mostly in residential buildings, shopping centers, office and sport buildings

beside other small projects. Very few architects have joint venture with other foreign architectural firms in the design of touristic villages, hotels and residential buildings for the rich. In the recent years many of the large projects in Egypt were designed by foreign architects. The Opera House was designed by a Japanese, the International Conference Hall by a Chinese, Alexandria library by a Norwegian, big hotels by Americans, Hospitals by British, Airport by a French and a Danish firm, Cairo stadium by a German and touristic resorts by other foreign architects. Foreign architects usually specify western building products in



Opera House ( Cairo - Egypt )

their designs which reflect western values.

The architecture magazine, Domus once published an article with the title "The architecture circus" referring to what have been designed by foreign architects in some Arab countries. Each architect tries to play with forms and imported building materials without any relevance to local culture or environment. Most of the Egyptian architects were attracted to this circus and tried to play the same games. Few of them

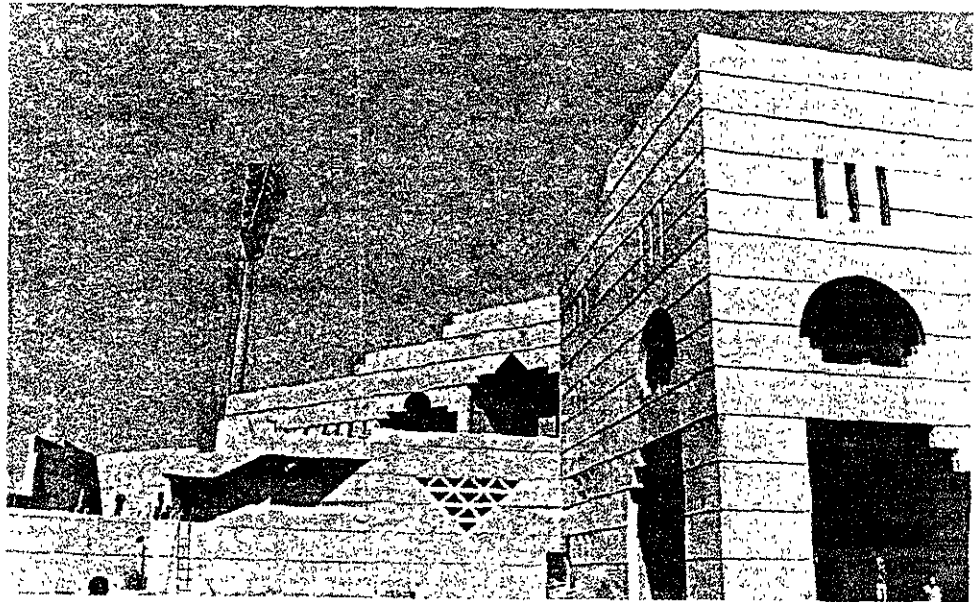
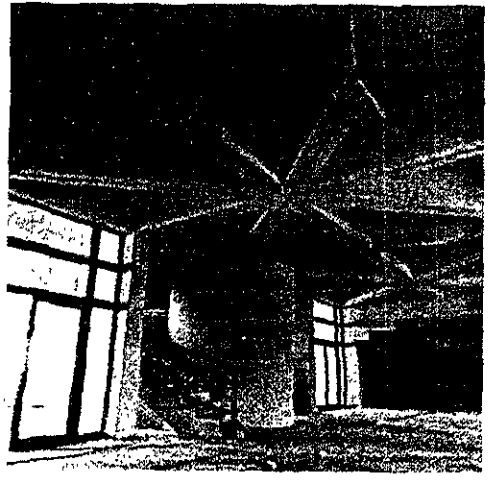
resented this attitude and tried to search for applying the values abstracted from the rich architectural heritage of Egypt. This trend was guided by the late Hassan Fathy who built master pieces of vernacular architecture for the poor in Upper Egypt and for the rich in Lower Egypt. Although the work of Hassan Fathy was well received and recognized by the west, he was not well received by his fellow men's in Egypt except after his death.

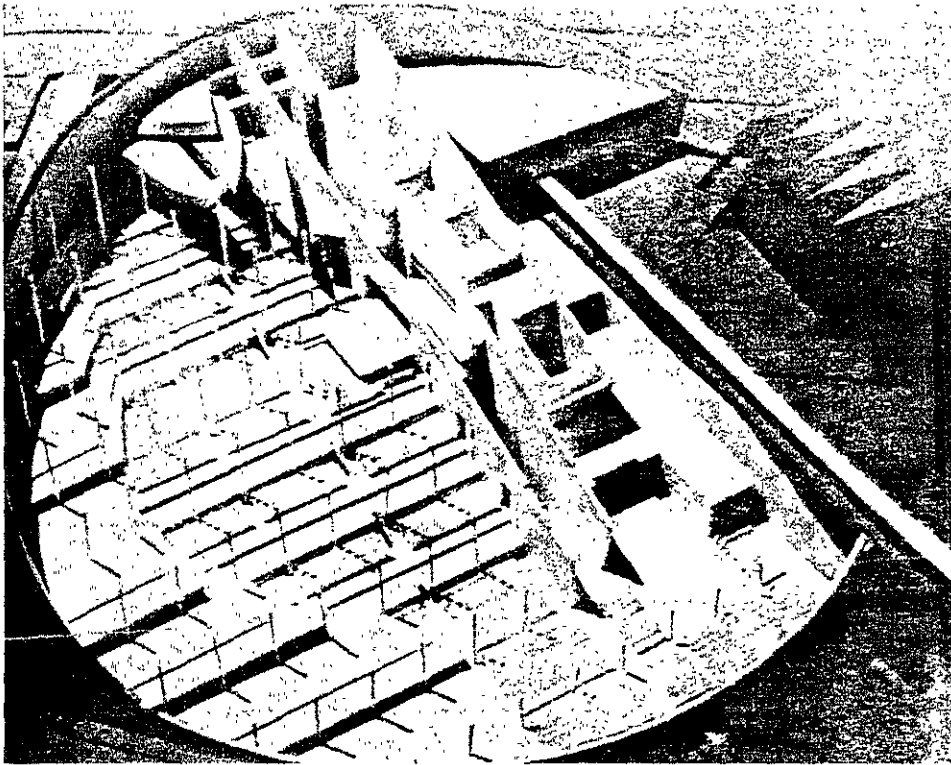
This trend was not appreciated by

most of the Egyptian architects who wanted to play modern with reference to Western values and theories. There are three main architectural trends on going in architectural market in Egypt. The first, which is applied by the majority of architects who try to satisfy the client without consideration to the professional ethics. They are those who shape the urban forms of towns in Egypt. They could be called building engineers more than architects. The second trend by architects who try to search for new forms mainly from foreign examples without consideration to any local values or constrains. This trend became attractive to clients who are westernized or who search for program and advertisement. This trend is reflected in some office buildings, shopping malls and second houses for the rich. The third trend applied by few architects who search for the revival of local and historical values in contemporary forms through the genuine understanding of historical heritage. This

Cairo Stadium Enterance ▷

▽ Cairo - Stadium Sports Complex





Alexandria International Library

## Synopsis

### Subject of the Issue :

#### The historical and design background for hotels construction

One of the greatest challenges facing the designer is the repeated plan for a hotel because it represents around 65 to 85 % of the total space. Any waste or saving in the plan will be repeated many times according to the number of floors .

Taking into consideration this matter the designer tries to increase the rooms spaces to the maximum and lessen the corridors spaces to the minimum.

The designer has to make all the necessary studies concerning the surrounding aspects, environmental electromechanical and other aspects affecting the building economically etc in order to attain the utmost benefit required in a hotel building (P.10)

### Projects of the Issue :

#### - Paradise Village Project - Sharm El-Sheikh Arch. Adel Mokhtar

The project is located in the area of Neama Gulf. It is distinguished by the local environmental character of Nuba. Its rooms were assembled in such a way as to give an impression for any person that he is walking in one of city roads in the oasis desert.

The project mainly consists of : the main building, guest room, workers habitation, health club, tennis courts, athletic courts. (P. 18)

#### - "Switzerland" Hotel

Arch. Burkhalter & Sumi

It is considered a model of the regional hotels in Switzerland, it consists of a main building plus an annex building connected underneath the ground by a tunnel. The main building style is appropriate to the old architectural building styles in Switzerland. But the annex building has a new design matching with the nature in Switzerland using wood as a structural aspect in the front. Also, the hotel rounded shape gives the residents a feeling of privacy in addition to providing the different services in the hotel. (P. 23)

#### - New York Hotel Paris

Arch. Michael Graves

The hotel space is nearly 50,000 sq.m. overlooking the lake "American". The hotel gives an impression of a habitable city with its numerous buildings. It includes 575 rooms, halls, meeting rooms, health club, two swimming pools, one of them is open and the other covered, also a number of halls used in festivals, and tennis courts. (P. 26)

#### - Marilyn Hotel - Malizia

Arch. A.B.C Office & Arch. Sesosheen

The hotel is a model for architectural development in Malizia. It consists of 20 floors and includes 300 rooms. This height gives a wide view of the city. In the fourth floor the hotel provides sufficient places for recreational purposes such as music halls, restaurant, health club, swimming pool, since first level is being used as garages. (P. 32)

### Interior Design :

#### Villa in Los Angeles

The villa is more likely to be a museum. The owners have a large number of antiques that are related to the old Indian civilization with its remarkable folklore. The owners wanted to have a place expressing the spirit and style of the old civilization. We find a rectangular reception leading to the dining room which is squared shaped, this is applicable to the rest of the place showing the simplicity of the design. (P. 30)

### Technical Article :

#### Grid Analysis (G.A )

Dr. Gouda Ghanim. (P. 35)

standing of historical heritage. This trend is appreciated by the cultured clients. In many cases this trend is superficially applied by using the architectural vocabulary or features as cosmetics on modern forms. The three trends affected the Egyptian urban form which lost its character and identity .

The architects who search for the revival of local and historical values in architecture follow three distinct groups. The first group tries to copy the architecture of the historical buildings and build them with modern materials and means of construction without any consideration of the time gap. The second group tries to analyze the vocabulary to historical

architecture and introduce them in new forms and with new materials and, to express the culture continuity of Islamic architecture. Hassan Fathy tried to achieve this target in his buildings using the appropriate building technology complimented by the human factor. The third group tries to find architecture in Islam by analyzing the teachings of Islam and how to express them in the suitable architecture form. This approach is based on the belief that Islam is not limited to a time or a place. Its values are constant but the form is variable according to time and place. This concept is what I tried to explain in my book. The Islamic perspective of the architecture theory. ❁