

2011 International Conference on Green Buildings and Sustainable Cities

## Heritage rehabilitation in sustainable development policy for a better environment quality in small historical coastal cities: the case of Cherchell in Algeria

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### Abstract

In this paper we will demonstrate that the architectural and urban heritage of a historical coastal city must play a decisive role in the sustainable development strategy, otherwise, this heritage can be degraded and even destroyed. We start by identifying the heritage resources in order to spot the problems which are facing it. It helps us recognize the vocation of the city and the solutions found by our ancestors to adapt to their environment, in order to use them as a model for future sustainable development of the city. It is within this context that we will formulate our recommendations for implementing such a project.

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*Keywords:* heritage; sustainable development; historical coastal city

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### 1. Introduction

Heritage and sustainable development are, nowadays, two consensual notions used both by the specialists of patrimony and urbanism

Heritage (architectural and urban) and sustainable development are two notions that presents many analogies as they express the same desire to better integrate the temporal dimension and to make a better link between the past, the present and the future of societies in the objective of transmission and intergenerational solidarity. Built heritage can be considered as a non-renewable resource that has to be saved and valorized. The reference to heritage and its necessary preservation and transmission became

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one of the preferred modes of legitimation of sustainability in global specialist speech [1]. Heritage is a symbolic resource, closely linked to the question of memory and identity. But also an economic resource particularly in terms of tourism, as the heritage represents a solution to enhance an “abandoned” area.

Small historic coastal cities represent a dual challenge in a sustainable development policy. Covering different types of heritage resources, they represent an interface country between land and sea, concealing a multitude of treasures: Natural, Historical and Urban ones.

The challenges of development of these cities equal the height of their treasures, and can generate a vulnerability sources to natural, urban and historic resources that should be protected. To be sustainable, their development must respect the delicate balance between the desire to transform the city and the landscape to facilitate people's lives, and worry about losing track in this transformation of natural and cultural world that created what we are today.

In this paper, to illustrate the dangers that threaten the heritage resources [2] of small historic coastal cities and sustainable development policies that can handle them, we will study the case of the city of Cherchell (typical Algerian historic coastal city that shelter many heritage resources).

Our goal is not to give solutions or recipes for a successful sustainable development project in a small historical Coastal city, but to highlight the mistakes committed in our case-study to serve as an example and to avoid making the same mistakes. Even if there is no miracle solution, because the success of a method used in a specific geographical and social context can not necessarily be found if you change the circumstances. There are principles of action or precautionary action that can be exchanged with mutual benefit because, for example, certain choices or behaviors almost always produce negative effects whose consequences can be reduced if we try to identify the causes.

## 2. Presentation of Cherchell

### Geographical situation

Cherchell is a small harbor city located 100 km on the Mediterranean west coast of Algiers, along the feet of the hills; it is characterized by a mild climate, healthy and refreshed in summer by the sea breeze.

Cherchell is crossed from east to west by the RN 11 (national road), which connects the entire coastline of the Wilaya (department), which gave it a linear configuration, because of the presence of two barriers that block its extension: the sea in the north (natural barrier), and Barracks in the south (artificial barrier).

### 2.1. Historical Background on Cherchell

Over two millennia history, the ancient Caesarea is a rich historical coastal city with heritage resources. Cherchell has its history going back to the 5th century B.C when it was populated by the Phoenician then it was named IOL capital of a Berber kingdom.

Then, Juba II, who was appointed by Augustus King of Mauretania, sets IOL as the capital of his government and named it Caesarea. The city had an urban classic grid pattern. However, one district of the city did not fit in this scheme; it is probably inherited from a plot of the old IOL and followed the direction of the path leading from the ridge to the sea [3].

In 1300, Arabs took control of it and was baptized Cherchell. The history of Cherchell during the Arab era could be divided into two distinct periods:

- A period of crisis and stratum that lasted till the end of the 15th century.
- A second one of a relative renaissance witch the coincided with the arrival of Andalusians and Ottomans [4].

After that, as all the Algerian territory, Cherchell was colonized by the French in 1842. During this

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