

The UNESCO site of the Casbah in the Master Plan of Algiers (PDAU^[1]): between heritage requirements and the need for coordination

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Abstract: This article addresses the question of how to protect those historical, urban sites, inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, from the negative impact of stress, caused by the urban dynamic. We put forward the hypothesis that, as part of a holistic vision of protection, safeguard measures must be integrated into the urban development plans for those towns in which these sites are an integral part. This will avoid conflict between the demands of development, and the safeguard measures. Through the example of the UNESCO site of the Casbah, we will examine the strategy of the PDAU of Algiers, to safeguard of the UNESCO site and its reintegration into the Algiers agglomeration. This article adopts a methodology based on a critical, comparative analysis of the strategic heritage plan, as laid down in the PDAU. It examines the proposed safeguarding measures and evaluates its coordination with the safeguarding plan. An examination of the solutions proposed by the PDAU reveals several morphological weaknesses and contradictory prescriptions, favoring a poor connection between the safeguard plan and the PDAU. Consequently, only an integrated approach to urban conservation will reinforce the protection of the site and ensure its reconnection with the Algiers metropolis.

Keywords: Casbah of Algiers, conflicts, development pressures, World Heritage Sites, buffer zone, Heritage

El sitio UNESCO de la Casbah en el Plan Director de Argel (PDAU): entre las exigencias patrimoniales y la necesidad de coordinación

Resumen: Este artículo aborda la cuestión de cómo proteger esos sitios históricos urbanos, inscritos en la Lista del Patrimonio Mundial de la UNESCO, del impacto negativo del estrés causado por la dinámica urbana. Planteamos la hipótesis de que, como parte de una visión holística de la protección, las medidas de salvaguarda deben integrarse en los planes de desarrollo urbano de aquellas localidades en las que estos sitios son parte integral. Esto evitará conflictos entre las exigencias del desarrollo y las medidas de salvaguarda. A través del ejemplo del sitio de la UNESCO de la Casbah, examinaremos la estrategia del PDAU de Argel, para salvaguardar el sitio de la UNESCO y su reintegración en la aglomeración de Argel. Este artículo adopta una metodología basada en un análisis crítico y comparativo del plan estratégico de patrimonio, tal como se establece en el PDAU. Examina las medidas de salvaguarda propuestas y evalúa su coordinación con el plan de salvaguarda. Un examen de las soluciones propuestas por el PDAU revela varias debilidades morfológicas y prescripciones contradictorias, favoreciendo una mala conexión entre el plan de salvaguarda y el PDAU. En consecuencia, solo un enfoque integrado de la conservación urbana reforzará la protección del sitio y garantizará su reconexión con la metrópoli de Argel.

Palabras clave: Casbah de Argel, conflictos, presiones de desarrollo, Patrimonio de la Humanidad, zona de amortiguamiento, patrimonio

O sítio da UNESCO de Casbah no Plano Diretor de Argel (PDAU): entre as exigências patrimoniais e a necessidade de coordenação

Resumo: Este artigo aborda a questão de como proteger os sítios históricos e urbanos, inscritos na Lista do Património Mundial da UNESCO, do impacto negativo do stress, causado pela dinâmica urbana. Apresentamos a hipótese de que, como parte de uma visão holística de protecção, as medidas de salvaguarda devem ser integradas nos planos de desenvolvimento urbano para as cidades nos quais estes sítios são parte integrante. Isto evitará o conflito entre as exigências do desenvolvimento e as medidas de salvaguarda. Através do exemplo do sítio da UNESCO de Casbah, iremos examinar a estratégia do PDAU de Argel, para salvaguardar o sítio da UNESCO e a sua reintegração na aglomeração de Argel. Este artigo adopta uma metodologia baseada numa análise crítica e comparativa

do plano estratégico do património, tal como estabelecido no PDAU. Examina as medidas de salvaguarda propostas e avalia a sua coordenação com o plano de salvaguarda. Uma análise das soluções propostas pelo PDAU revela várias fraquezas morfológicas e prescrições contraditórias, favorecendo uma ligação deficiente entre o plano de salvaguarda e o PDAU. Consequentemente, só uma abordagem integrada da conservação urbana reforçará a protecção do local e assegurará a sua reconexão com a metrópole de Argel.

Palavras-chave: Casbah de Argel, Conflitos, Pressões de desenvolvimento, Património da Humanidade, Zona tampão, Património

Introduction

The question of the protection and safeguard of historical centres, and their integration into the urban dynamic of the contemporary town, is the result of a shift in the general perspective of heritage, and the protection of historical monuments, towards the preservation of the whole urban setting (Neyret 2004).

However, concern for the conservation of the urban heritage is nothing new. It first appeared in the middle of the XIXth century in the writings of four writers: J. Ruskin, C. Sitte, Patrick Geddes and G. Giovannoni, whose principal work, "L'Urbanisme face aux villes anciennes", is considered as the first academic textbook of urban development, where the question of urban heritage, and the rehabilitation of historic centres, play an integral part in the global concept of urban planning. (Choay 2009: 168; Siravo 2011).

In addition, on the institutional level, interest in old urban areas was highlighted, on an international scale, at the UNESCO conference, in Nairobi, in 1976, on the "safeguarding of historical areas and their role in contemporary life", and on the need to protect them. In 1987, ICOMOS drew up a specific charter, "The Washington Charter", dedicated to the issue of preserving historical towns (ICOMOS 1987). In 2011, a new charter, called "The Valetta Principles for the safeguarding and management of historic cities, towns and urban areas", was adopted by ICOMOS. This addressed, for the first time, the question of buffer zones around the listed, historical site, the challenges associated with risk management and lasting development, as well as the introduction of a management plan as a tool to coordinate, and holistically support, management issues at the historical site (ICOMOS 2011). During the same year, UNESCO introduced the notion of the historic urban landscape which was intended to serve as a "holistic and integral" approach to the management of the "man-made environment" (UNESCO 2011).

In fact, throughout the last thirty years, several historic urban sites, inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, have experienced numerous problems caused by the stress of the urban dynamic of their own towns. Such stress is often reflected in urban renewal operations and controversial projects, either within the immediate environment of the listed urban site, or in their buffer zones, which have been judged deleterious to their integrity.

In this respect, several examples can be cited: the UNESCO site in Liverpool, in the United Kingdom – Maritime Mercantile City – which was placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger in 2012 because of the *Mann Island* development project (Gaillard & Rodwell 2015); the bridge over the River Elbe, in Dresde, Germany, which led to the town's exclusion from the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2009 (WHC 33COM7A.26S, 2009); the extremely controversial Pelli-Cajasol Tower, in Seville, Spain (Fernandez 2013: 118-129; Escobar 2013: 142-157); the project for thoroughfare T3, as well as the new memorial in the Place des Martyrs, in the heart of the Casbah: a project proposed in the new master plan for Algiers but later cancelled, due to pressure from UNESCO (WHC 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015).

All these examples show the problems that the conflict between the need for modern development, and the demands of heritage protection, can generate in these historic urban sites, threatening their survival and the continuity of their physical integrity. Thus, as the UNESCO recommendations of 2011, relating to the preservation of the historic urban landscape, stipulate, it becomes imperative to strive for a holistic approach which goes beyond the mere notion of the historical site, to include the larger urban context and its geographical framework (UNESCO 2011).

From this perspective, our article focuses on the issues concerning historic, urban sites, inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, and their relation to the contemporary town. We hypothesize, therefore, that, as part of this new, holistic view of protection, safeguard measures must be an important consideration in the urban development plans of the towns, in which these sites are an integral part (Gabrielli 2011). This will avoid the conflict between the demands of development and the safeguard action, guaranteeing controlled development of all the components of the town.

In fact, such a reflective approach was recommended in the European Charter for Architectural Heritage, drawn up in Amsterdam, in 1975, which states that "Integrated conservation must be one of the first considerations in all urban and regional planning", integral with functional social and economic factors (ICOMOS 1975). Moreover, the need for a coherent and balanced interrelation between the historic centre and the contemporary town has been promoted by several authors. Giovannoni was the first urbanist to propose a conservation approach based on

the principle of a harmonious and cohesive coexistence between the modern town and its historic centre (Choay 1998: 171-174; Rodwell 2007: 33-36). The development of urban studies in Italy, France and England, during the sixties and seventies, allowed for a fresh interpretation of urban forms, in general, and historic tissue, in particular (Bandarin 2012). Consequently, the notion of history and memory of place were introduced, into the study of urban phenomena, as an alternative approach to the principles of modern development, which have been judged responsible for the plight of the modern town (Conzen 66, Rossi 96, C.N. Schulz, 1980, Nora 1986, Spigai, 1989). In this framework, several master plans of urban development were piloted in Italy and France, for those towns with historic centres classed as UNESCO heritage sites (Siena, 1968; Rome 2000; Lyon 2005; Urbino 2007; Bordeaux 2007). The authors of these plans adopted an innovative approach, going beyond the conflict, historic centre/contemporary town, to propose - as in the case of Rome, for example- a shift in thinking, from historic centre to that of historic town. Thus, given that no area is devoid of history, the historic centre merged with the modern, peripheral parts of the town (Spigai 95; Gasparini 2000, 2001; Gabellini 2008). It should be specified, here, that this approach was in line with the UNESCO recommendations, laid down in 1998, (Feilden and Jokilehto 1998: 80) for an integrated conservation, presented as a new perspective in the management and development of urban, historical sites, which aspired to reconcile the demands of conservation with the objectives of urban planning. In 2011, the UNESCO recommendations on the historic, urban landscape upheld this vision as an innovative way of conserving and managing World heritage sites, allowing the historic centre to be reconnected with the rest of the modern agglomeration (Bandarin, Van Oers 2014: 6).

Through the example of the site of the Casbah, in Algiers, which has been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List since 1992, we will study the issue of heritage as is conveyed in the new Master Plan for Development and Urbanism in Algiers, actually in force, its role in the urban rehabilitation process and the guidelines for the projects envisaged. Ultimately, we will evaluate the strategy defined by the PDAU for the development of the Casbah site, as well as the solutions proposed for its rehabilitation and reintegration into the Algiers agglomeration.

The protection of the historic site of the Casbah, and its integration within the city of Algiers, has been the subject of several studies, notably those of (Lesbet 1984, 2006; Nacima Driss 2003; Ben-Hamouche 2013; Hadjri and Osmani 2004). All these works underline the historical and cultural importance of the site, warning against its degradation and decline, which still continue, despite the country's best efforts to preserve it. They advocate for a holistic approach, which includes the whole of the territory of the Casbah and its neighbouring regions within the framework of the historic urban landscape, recommended by UNESCO in 2011 (WHC 2015- 2017, 2019).

Methodology

The methodology, adopted in this article, is based on a critical and comparative study of the strategy, set down in the PDAU, for the development of the UNESCO site of the Casbah in Algiers, and includes:

- An examination of the heritage issue and its role within the proposed urban development plan.
- A critical analysis of the proposed solutions to reintegrate the Casbah into the Algiers agglomeration.
- An evaluation of the consistency and coordination between the projects of urban planning and the safeguard measures.

This article, ultimately, offers a few guidelines which could help establish an approach to an integrated urban conservation, allowing the historical centre to be reconnected to the Algiers metropolis.

— *The historical site of the Casbah in Algiers and its conservation plan (PPSMVSS)*

The Casbah in Algiers is the most iconic site in Algeria. Its inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List, in 1992, was based on criteria II and V. Its importance as a heritage site resides in the phenomenon of historical stratification; a stratification which dates back to 4 AD, and of which the last colonial phase was the most devastating (Cresti 1993). However, despite the colonial transformations carried out at the site, and seismic damage, the Casbah in Algiers, at least in its upper part, still retains its integrity. On the whole, its aesthetic character, its architectural elements, along with the materials used, still maintain their original aspect. Moreover, the Casbah bears witness to a remarkable authenticity, not only through its urban form, its architectural typology and its construction materials (marble, earthen bricks, mud and lime plasters, stone and wood) but also through its function (residential, commercial, religious) and its popular traditions.

- The Permanent Plan for the safeguard and development of the Safeguarded sector of the Casbah in Algiers (PPSMVSS).

The Permanent Plan for the safeguard and development of the safeguarded sector of the Casbah in Algiers is a tool for managing, protecting and developing the safeguarded sector of the Casbah in Algiers, which was established and defined by executive decree N 05-173, on May 3rd, 2005. The perimeter of the safeguarded sector of the Casbah covers a surface of 105ha and spreads out over four communes: the commune of the Casbah, the commune of Bab El-Oued, the commune of Oued Koreiche and the commune of central Algiers. In fact, the perimeter of the safeguarded sector is composed of the UNESCO world heritage site, with a surface area of 70ha, surrounded by a protection zone of 35ha, making up the total surface area of 105ha [Figure 1].

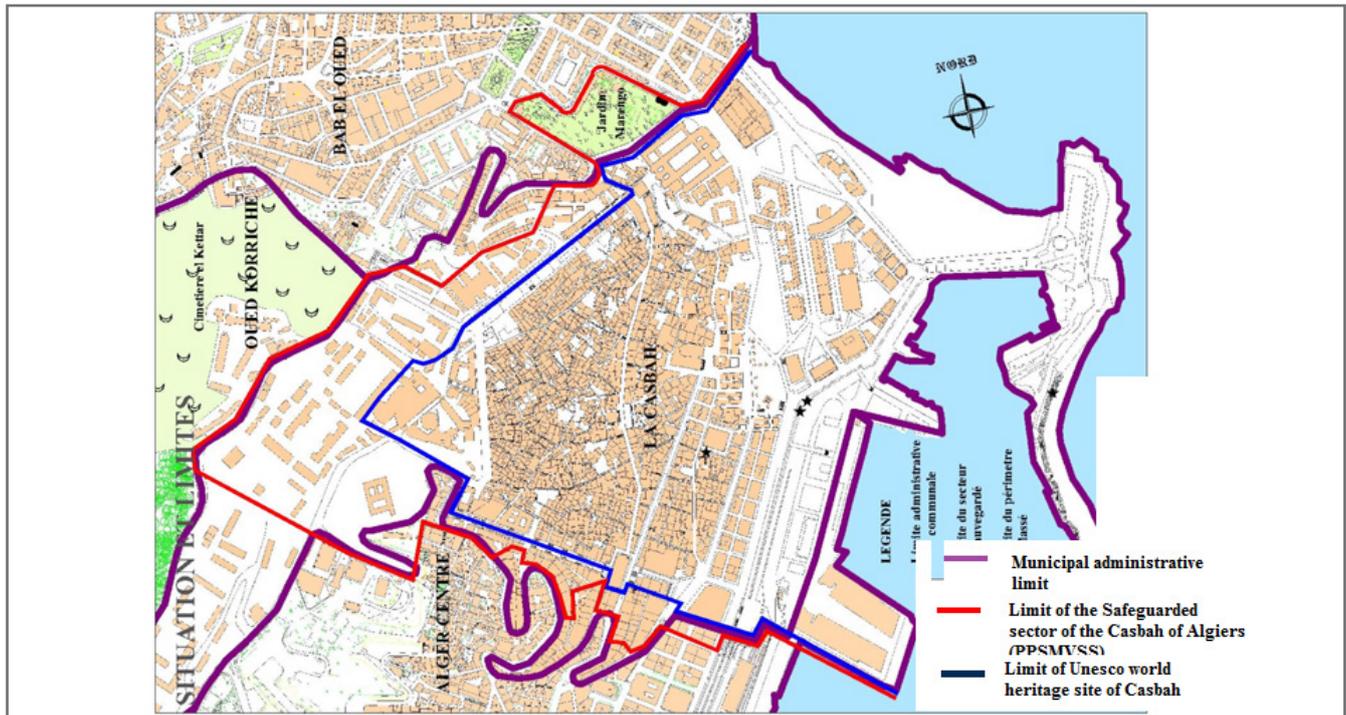


Figure 1.- Limit of the conservation area of the Casbah of Algiers. Source. PPSMVSS of the Casbah of Algiers.

The PPSMVSS, as a conservation plan, in essence, patrimonial, focuses on the protection and development of the safeguarded sector. Consequently, the terms of reference for its regulations significantly reflect the objectives related to the conservation of the site, and to its urban form ^[2].

The Casbah of Algiers in the newly- revised Master Plan for Development and Urban Planning of Algiers (PDAU) 2009-2035.

— *Presentation of the new PDAU of Algiers and its objectives*

In 2006, the Wilaya of Algiers hosted two international conferences. The first one focused on a revision of the Master Plan of Development and Urbanism, the second on a development plan for the Bay of Algiers, a coastal band of about 50km long. As an instrument of spatial planning and urban management, the PDAU highlights the development strategies put into place by the Wilaya of Algiers and focuses on its principal objectives which include restoring the city's international ranking, encouraging the development of the tertiary sector, controlling urban sprawl and enhance its environmental qualities (Parque Expo 2011: 19-21).

— *The issue of protection of the cultural heritage within the framework of the new PDAU: evidence of progress*

From independence to the present day, of all the master

plans successively drawn up by the Wilaya of Algiers, the new PDAU is the first one in which the treatment of the cultural heritage question has made undeniable headway. In fact, in the new plan, the heritage component is considered as a fundamental part of the development process and, as such, must contribute effectively to all aspects of future sustainable development - socio-economic, environmental and cultural - in the Wilaya of Algiers (Parque Expo 2011: 139).

Moreover, by going beyond the traditional view of cultural heritage, which limited protection to the World Heritage site of the Casbah and a few major edifices in the capital, already listed, and protected by the regulations, the new PDAU offers, today, a more holistic vision which encompasses both the major and minor elements (tissue; edifices; ruins) as well as public spaces of an urban nature or peripheral, heritage centres, such as the town centres of Birtouta and Rouiba.

— *The rehabilitation project in the historic central zone, and the problems surrounding the integration of the Casbah into the Algiers agglomeration*

The rehabilitation of the historic, central urban area is a major issue in the development strategy, adopted by the new PDAU of Algiers^[3]. Within this context, the first stage of the PDAU, called The Enhancement Phase, aimed to address the question of the renovation, and redevelopment, of the central urban zone, and find a way to integrate the historic site of the Casbah into the fabric of the city.



Figure 2.- Parque Expo. Structural streets subject to rehabilitation. Source: Vies de Villes review; special issue N°03, Algiers, July 2012.

-The Enhancement Phase (2009-2014)

Initially planned for the end of 2014^[4], the enhancement of the city of Algiers, especially its historical part, was of absolute priority in this phase of the project. The interventions undertaken, and the projects launched, throughout this five- year period, were divided, according to priority, into five different stages, of which the first two were the most important. Stage one focused on reclaiming the sea front and the recuperation of the relation between the sea and the town. Stage two was committed to the rehabilitation of the historic centre, by rebuilding public spaces, and through an evaluation and restoration of the existing heritage sites [Figure 2].

The restoration of the Casbah, and the rehabilitation of the historic centre, can be cited as examples of emergency interventions. For the PDAU, identification and safeguard of the image of the city of Algiers, was, undoubtedly, the major problem in the rehabilitation of the central urban area. Defined as a panoramic skyline linking the upper part of the town with the lower, this has been listed as heritage to be protected and valued. With this in mind, and as part of the emergency measures, development projects for the historic roads and main boulevards, totalling 47km in length, were put into place, aiming to give the city new centralities which would help to give it structure and ultimately contribute to its image [Figure 3].

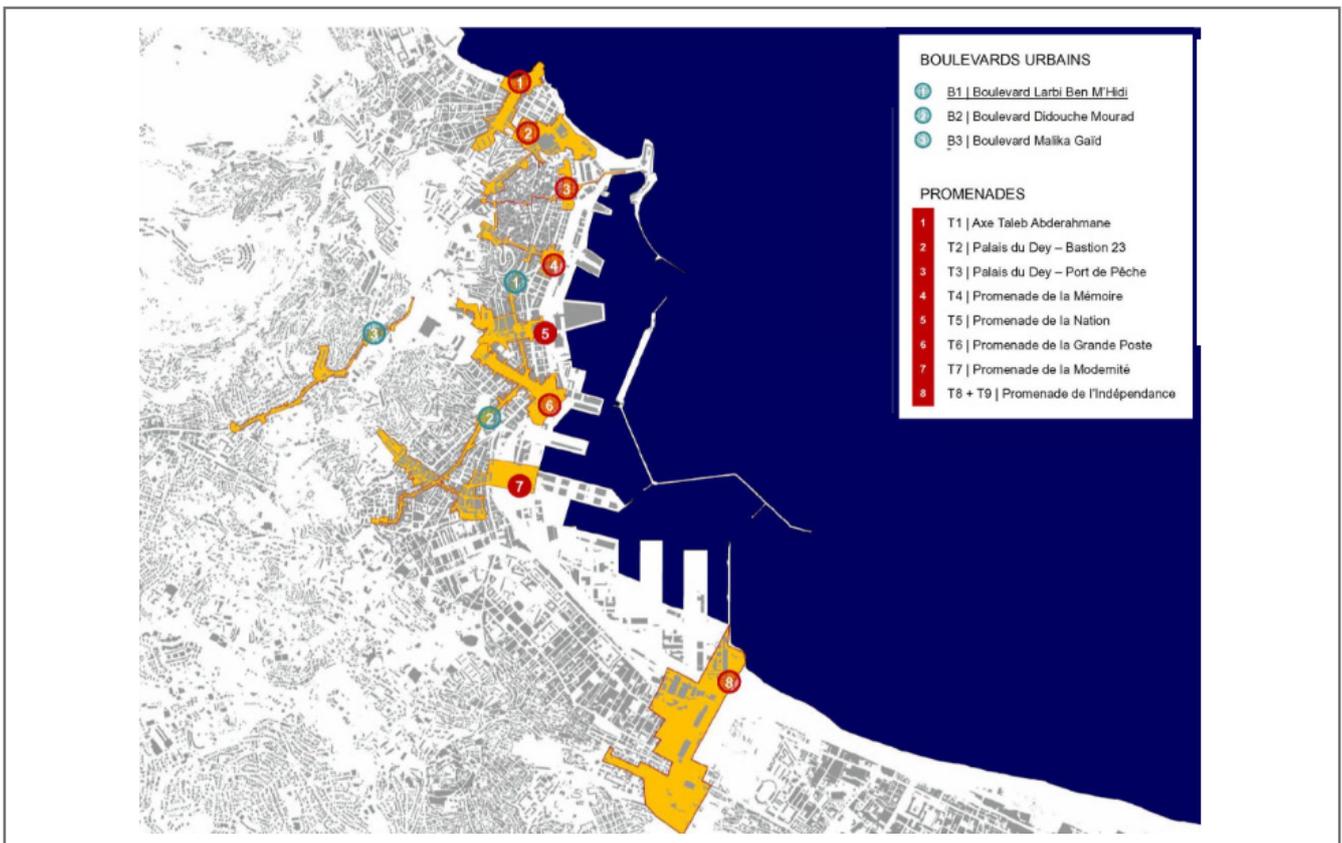


Figure 3.- PDAU Urgent projects. Source: master plan- project deliverable 12B. Strategies and development plans for public spaces and registered sites- built heritage. Parque Expo;2012 approved final version.

The problem of reintegrating the Casbah into the town of Algiers and the coordination between the PDAU and the PPSMVSS

— A review of the project for the thoroughfares T2 and T4

The question of integrating the historical site of the Casbah into the urban fabric of the Algiers agglomeration was addressed by the new PDAU and took the form of a rehabilitation project for the historic central urban area. Complying with the regulations laid down in the PPSMVSS, concerning the perimeter of the safeguarded area, the PDAU put forward a strategy to include it in the regeneration of the city centre. This consists of redeveloping the main roads, and junctions, that give the town its urban form. In fact, three, out of the eight thoroughfares, are linked to the safeguarded sector, of which two of them, one in the north, and one in the south, delineate its boundaries.

Furthermore, it is proposed that the strategy to reintegrate the safeguarded sector of the Casbah be achieved through the development of the two thoroughfares, Ouridad Medad Boulevard, in the north, and Hadad Abderzak Boulevard, in the south, and through the renovation of the coastal road leading to Che Guevara Boulevard and Ziroud Youcef Boulevard.

Consequently, a study of the project proposals for the two thoroughfares, as laid down in the PDAU, is of vital importance to our research, for the following reasons:

- Situated in tangent zones (buffer zones) between the safeguarded sector of the Casbah and the town of Algiers,

these thoroughfares represent veritable transition zones between the old historic centre and the rest of the town.

- A study of the solutions put forward in the project proposal will inform us how the new PDAU has treated, on the one hand, the question of coordination between the two regulatory tools, the PDAU and the PPSMVSS, and, on the other, the issue of continuity of the urban fabric, and the typo-morphological choice, within these buffer zones, in order to ensure a better integration of the historic centre within the Algiers agglomeration.

—The thoroughfare T2 from “Palais de Dey to Bastion 23”

The project drawn up for the thoroughfare T2 [Figure 4] is based on the concept of a specific relationship between the upper part of the city of Algiers and its lower part. It consists of redevelopment to link two main points: the two fortresses of Palais de Dey, in the upper part of the town, and the Bastion 23, in the lower part, near the port. It also includes the rehabilitation of those public spaces situated along the route, which are, today, either underused, or abandoned, by inserting various architectural elements (equipment, street furniture...) to ensure better use of the areas.

The route of the thoroughfare T2 starts at the Bastion 23, passes the Emir Abdelkader High School, crosses the Sidi Abderrahmane Road and the Hadad Abderzak Boulevard, to end near the Palais du Dey. An arrangement of overlapping platforms was adopted for the Hadad Abderzak section, a stepped boulevard which provides a link between the old region of the Casbah and the

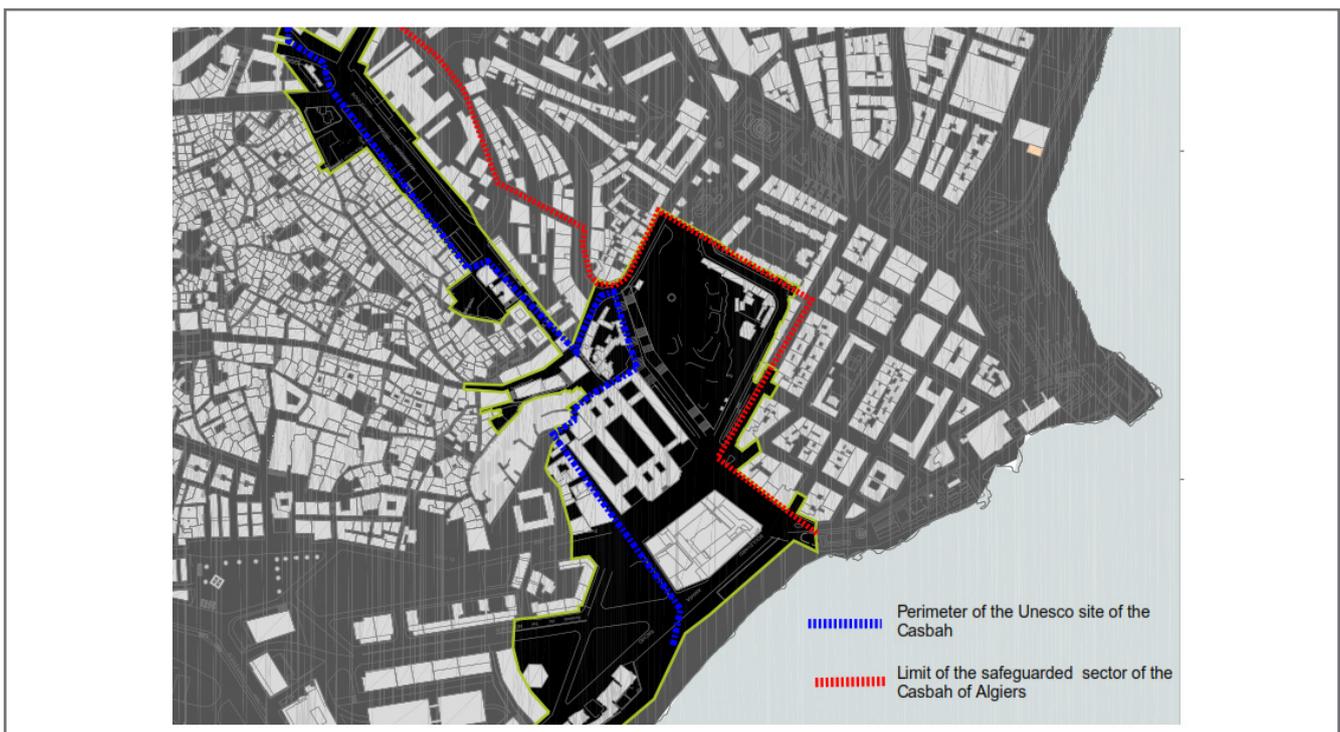


Figure 4.- Plan of the location of the Thoroughfare T2: Palais de Dey-Bastion 23. Source: PDAU of Algiers. Parque Expo.

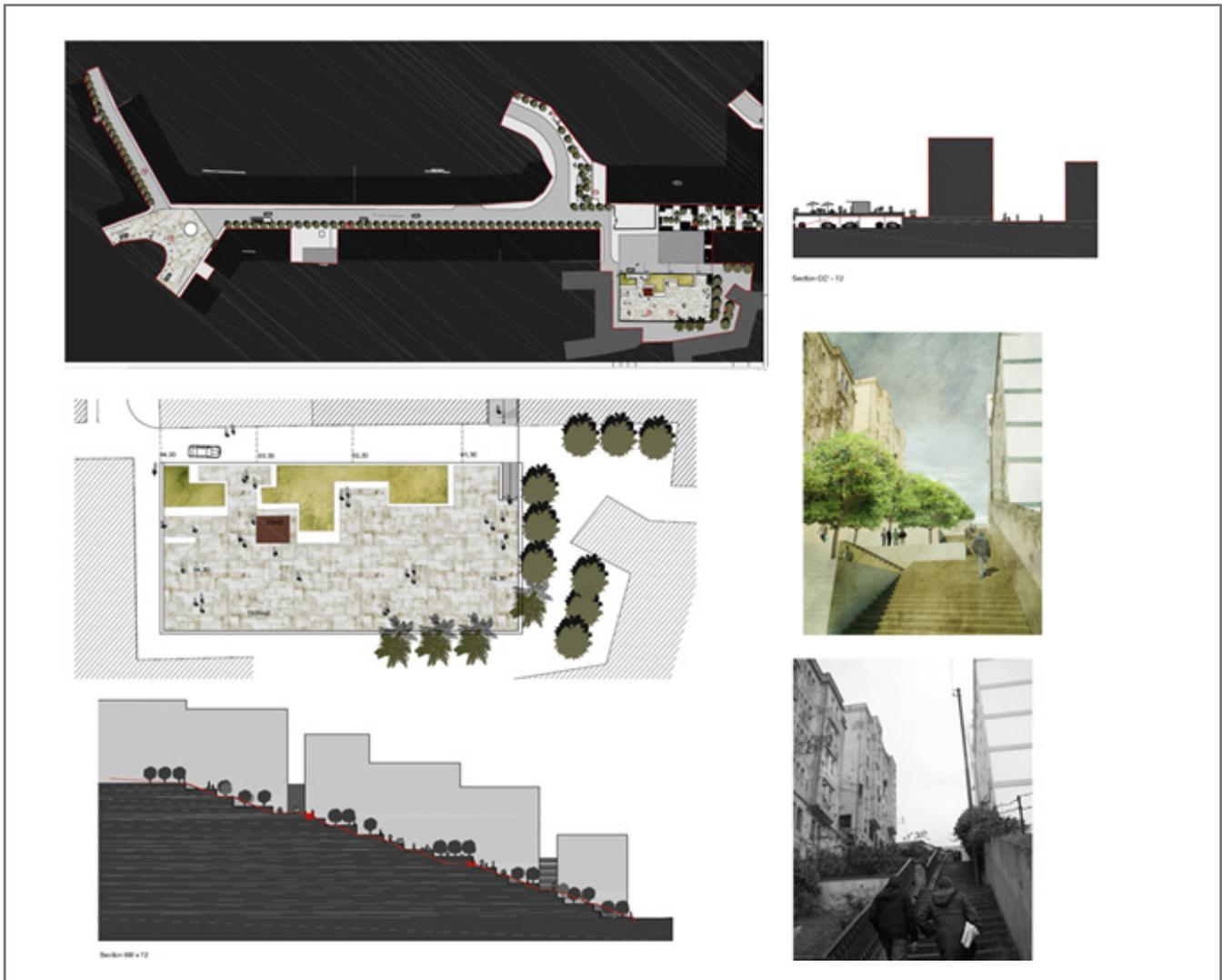


Figure 5.- Development project for Hadad Abderzak Boulevard. Source: PDAU of Algiers Parque Expo.

European district of Bab El Oued, in the west. In addition, opposite the Aissat Idir Hospital, on an empty plot of land, once the site of derelict housing but used, today, as an unofficial carpark, the project proposes to build a semi-underground carpark with a surface area of 1500m², whose terraced roof, dotted with kiosks, is to be used as a promenade or belvedere [Figure 5].

A critical evaluation of the project for the thoroughfare T2 in relation to the question of coordination between the PDAU and the PPSMVSS.

An examination of the project proposals, laid down in the PDAU, for the development and regeneration of the Palais de Dey – Bastion 23 thoroughfare, has allowed us to draw the following conclusions:

1) Aware that they are working in an area steeped in layers of history, and that every intervention must recognise and evaluate the existing heritage, the Parque Expo team based their project on the concept of the contextual relationship

between the public spaces, and on the requalification of the perceptual vision as the composition principle of the urban form (PDAU, CPS 2010: 12). However, the issue of establishing and ensuring a morphological link between the safeguarded sector of the Casbah and the rest of the town has never been clearly expressed. Given that the zone of development for the thoroughfare T2 essentially overlaps the line of ancient pre-colonial, and colonial, fortresses, the planning, and the connection with the European district of Bab Al-Oued, is still problematic.

2) The Legislative Framework

Most of the development work, for the thoroughfare T2, focuses on four subsectors within the safeguarded sector of the Casbah [Figure 6]:

- Subsectors USS1 and USS3C, which are part of the site inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.
- Subsectors USS2 and USS3B, which are protected as part of the conservation plan PPSMVSS.

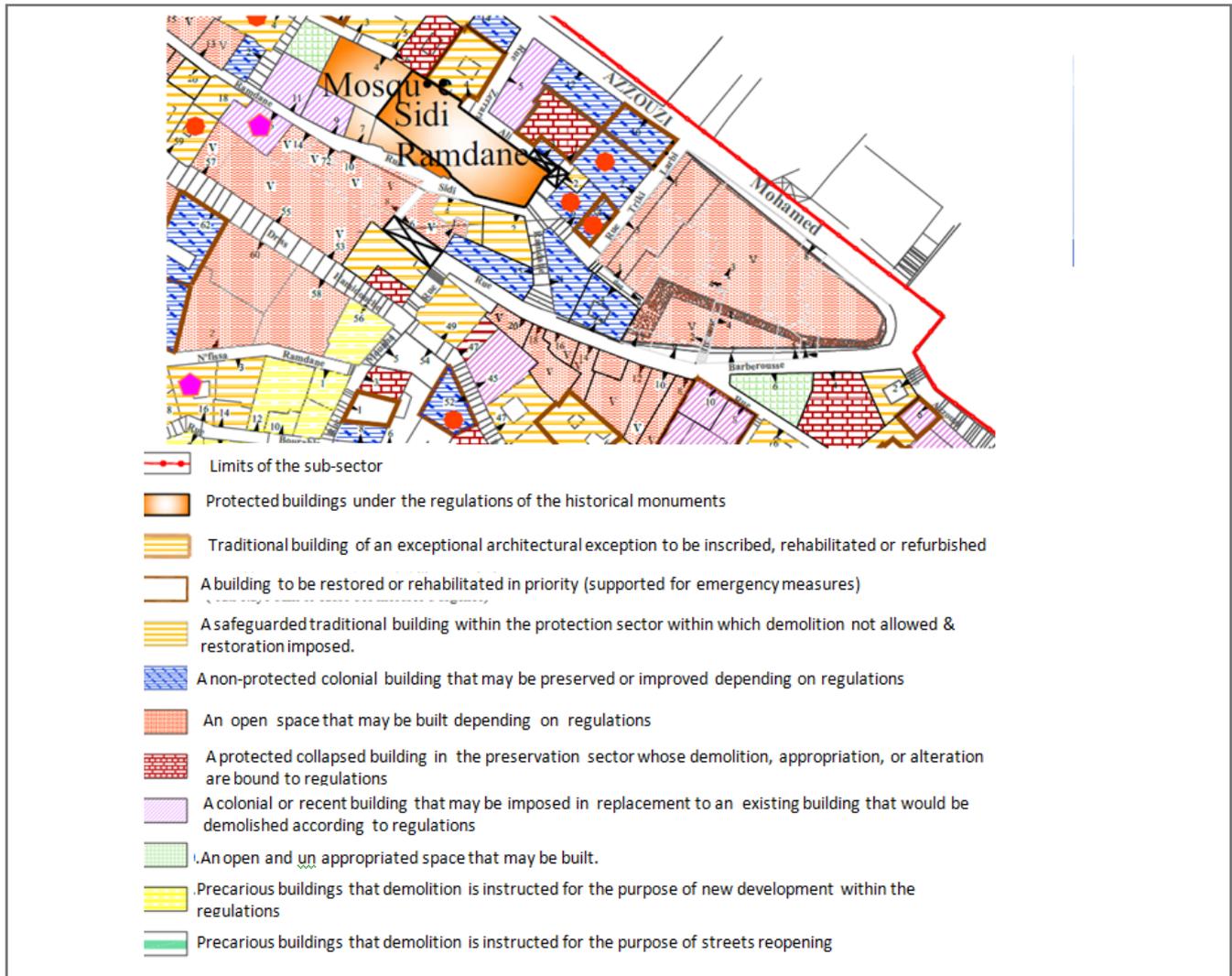


Figure 6.- Extract from PPSMVSS USS1. Source: PPSMVSS Casbah of Algiers.

Hence, the areas concerned with the development proposals, put forward in the PDAU, do not fall within its jurisdiction, but within that of the PPSMVSS. This constitutes the main legal difficulty posed by the PDAU and it could seriously hamper the implementation of the project. Moreover, the whole controversy resides in the fact that the PDAU recognises, in article N°42, that, within the safeguarded sector, the rules laid down by the PPSMVSS take precedence over its own but it, nevertheless, proposes development projects inside this area, without any regulatory, or technical, justification.

Consequently, this situation has revealed a real problem of cumulation and conflict, engendered by an overlap of the regulatory requirements of the two documents, the PDAU and the PPSMVSS, which, legally, should not overlap, and whose regulations, concerning urban planning and the cultural heritage, have not yet managed to resolve the problems arising from this conflict of jurisdiction. In order to avoid an overlap in the regulations of the two plans, for the same zone, does the answer lie in the suspensive effect of the PPSMVSS within its own jurisdiction, and, if so, how can it be, legally, justified?

Moreover, do these questions reflect the need to examine the problem of coordination between the two legal documents (the PDAU/PPSMVSS) relating to this historical territory (Boukader and Chennaoui 2019)? If so, would such an analysis lead to a solution that favours better regulatory coordination, and would it ensure greater consistency and harmony between the regulations and their terms of reference?

3) Choice of project and technical quality of the interventions.

With regard to the proposed interventions, it can be seen that the projects put forward by Parque Expo are in direct conflict with the regulations of the PPSMVSS. In fact, this is evident in the following cases:

a) In the case of the car park and belvedere on Hadad Abderazak Boulevard, it is to be built on a site which was once occupied by 17 buildings, which have collapsed today, but whose outlines are still known [Figure 6]. It should be noted here that the regulations of the PPSMVSS, for this zone, which is part of subsection USS1, are the following:

- Traditional houses N°2 and N°4 must be protected as part of the PPSMVSS and their restoration is mandatory.
- Building N°6: an empty plot, resulting from the collapse of the building, designated for construction.
- For the 14 demolished buildings, situated between Berbarousse Road, Triki larbi Road and Azzouzi Mohamed Road, the PPSMVSS specifies that they should be rebuilt according to the regulations.

By erecting this new building in the sector USS1, essentially composed of pre-colonial structures, it is clear that the new project has failed to recognize the requirements laid down in articles 1.5.1 and 1.9, concerning the need to respect alignment, or, in other words, the formal continuity expressed, in the PPSMVSS, as “the line of development of the urban envelopes along roads” (PPSMVSS regulations 2009, p.18). Moreover, the restoration of the traditional structure of these residential buildings is strongly recommended in the development guidelines defined in the regulations of the PPSMVSS (PPSMVSS regulations 2009: 173).

b) Similarly, the proposal to insert, into the organic fabric of the Casbah, a rectangular structure of more than 50m long and 28m wide, with a flat terrace, is non-compliant with article 1.6 concerning the respect of contours and the need to reconstruct the gradient of the sloping terraces, which is one of the fundamental characteristics of the Casbah.

c) The failure to rebuild on the empty plot, resulting from the complete collapse of building N°6, is a breach of article 1.4 (PPSMVSS regulations 2009: 17), which makes reconstruction of the site mandatory in order to mitigate the risk of collapse of building N°2, which is object of restoration.

d) The introduction of vegetation (trees) as street furniture,

in the alleys created by the development project, is in conflict with the typology of the public spaces, especially of the streets and alleyways, because, in this pre-colonial part of the Casbah, elements of vegetation were to be found inside, rather than outside, the houses and palaces.

The Thoroughfare T4 « La Promenade de la Mémoire » : Ouridah Medad Boulevard.

The thoroughfare T4, known as « La Promenade de la Mémoire » is an important structural element in the town of Algiers, serving, on the one hand, as a divide between the pre-colonial Casbah and nineteenth century Algiers, and, on the other, as a road, ensuring a link between the upper and lower parts of the town.

The development project for thoroughfare T4 (Ouridah Medad Boulevard) has set the following targets (PDAU CPS 2010: 3.4.):

- To rehabilitate three specific facilities which can be found along its length: the Palais de Dey (listed pre-colonial heritage), Bouzerina Market and the Algerian National Theatre (Colonial buildings).
- To develop the concept of the promenade extending its importance, and its use, beyond the district, to the town.
- To reinforce the National Theatre in Algiers as a cultural centre.

The “Promenade de la Memoire” thoroughfare follows a sloping route, starting at the Debih Cherif Road, near the Palais de Dey, in the upper part of the town, passing through Ouridah Medad Boulevard (a stepped road) to end in Mohamed Touri Road, where the building of the Algerian National Theatre can be found (ANT) [Figure 7].

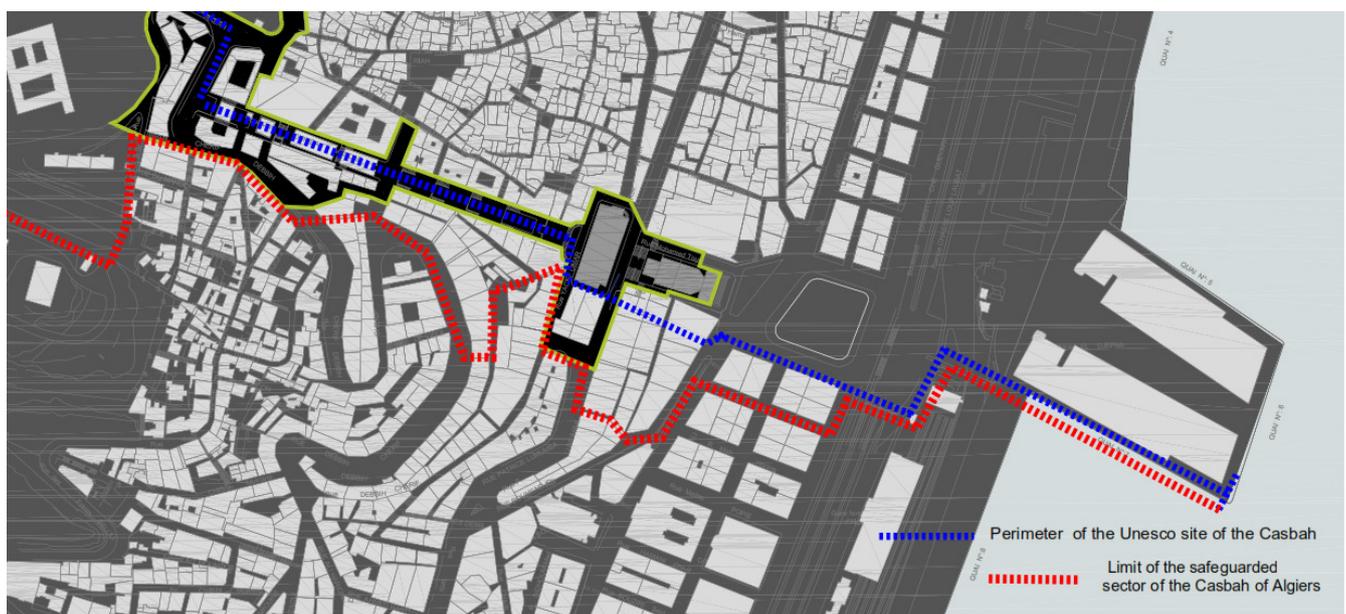


Figure 7.- Plan of the location of thoroughfare T4. Source: PDAU of Algiers Parque Expo.

A study of this route has shown that this thoroughfare suffers from the same problems as the thoroughfare T2. These include a lack of upkeep of public places, an absence of street furniture, run-down or badly preserved facades of the buildings along its length and precarious constructions, to name just a few. Hence, the regeneration project

proposed for the upper part of this thoroughfare includes the demolition of the informal dwellings, as well as those buildings of little value, to the north of Debih Cherif Road, and the construction of a five- storey hotel on the plot bordered by Mohamed Berain Road, near the Palais de Dey [Figure 8].



Figure 8.- Redevelopment proposal for the Ouridah Medad Boulevard. General plan of the public space . Source: PDAU of Algiers. Parque Expo. Pre-project summary, 2009.

A critical evaluation of the project for the thoroughfare T4 in relation to the question of coordination between the PDAU and the PPSMVSS

A study of the different measures proposed by the two legal documents, the PDAU and the PPSMVSS, shows that several conflicts exist between their objectives and the development proposals for this contact zone.

—The objectives of the intervention

In addition to the conservation, and restoration, of those traditional urban structures that have historic and symbolic value, which remains the primary and fundamental objective of its undertakings, the conservation plan of the

Casbah (PPSMVSS), aims to reintegrate the Casbah into the urban fabric of the town of Algiers. It plans to achieve this through two types of measures: socio-economic and spatial.

a) The socio-economic measures address the enhancement of services and the revival of commercial activities related to craftsmanship and the tertiary sector, as well as the establishment of modern activities (cultural facilities) across the town.

b) The measures of a spatial nature that are of interest to our research include the development of the said zone between the Casbah and the nineteenth century town of Algiers both in the south and to the north of the town.

For its part, the development project for the thoroughfare

T4 (Ouridah Medad Boulevard) aims to regenerate the stepped boulevard, Ouridah Medad, by developing a link between the upper and lower parts of central Algiers, as well as to rehabilitate the three unique facilities situated along its length: the Palais de Dey; the Bouzerina Market and the Algerian National theatre.

— *Legal framework*

Furthermore, the perimeter of the thoroughfare T4, first drafted in the original architectural plans, corresponded, almost entirely, to the perimeter of the intervention area, defined by the PPSMVSS, as a homogeneous “divide” [C2] between the traditional urban fabric and the European district of Isly. However, VRD records show a second perimeter, appearing on all the charts in the pre-project summary, which was very different from the first. This second perimeter is bordered in the west by Debih Cherif Road and only includes the part of the Ouridah Medad Boulevard from the front of the buildings to the Bouzerina market. Like thoroughfare T2, thoroughfare T4 is located almost entirely within the safeguarded sector of the Casbah and, as such, falls under the jurisdiction of the PPSMVSS. This constitutes another case of cumulation and conflict, caused by an overlap of the perimeters of the two documents, the PDAU and the PPSMVSS, which, legally, should never overlap [Figure 7].

— *The choice of project and the technical quality of the interventions*

The third element of disagreement concerns the development recommendations, and the project choices, laid down in the two documents, for the thoroughfare T4.

The PPSMVSS, for its part, recommends development measures to regenerate this transition zone, linking the traditional fabric of the UNESCO site of the Casbah with the colonial fabric of nineteenth century Isly, in the town of Algiers. The PPSMVSS recommends:

- A restoration project and classification proposal for Bastion VIII, including the redevelopment of its surrounding area into public spaces, the restitution of a part of its ramparts and its moats, and its appropriation for commercial activity.
- Redevelopment of the empty spaces to be found on Oussadi Road, an inroad into the densely populated district, through the introduction of cultural and leisure facilities.
- The regeneration of Rabah Riah Street by developing artisanal and commercial activities and by the removal of informal vendors.

In contrast, with the exception of the project to construct a hotel to the north of Debih Cherif Road, the main part of the regeneration project for the thoroughfare T4, as laid down

in the preliminary reports of the PDAU, consists of the rehabilitation of Ouridah Medad Boulevard by enlarging its steps, renovating its road surfaces and restoring the fronts of those houses overlooking the boulevard.

However, it should be noted that, whilst approving the concept to renovate the town by regenerating its structural arteries, in our opinion, to reduce the intervention project, on the Ouridah Medad Boulevard to a simple operation of renovating the road surfaces and the facades, as is presented in the pre-project summary, is unsatisfactory.

In addition, the project proposal, put forward by the Parque Expo group, to recuperate (through demolition and reconstruction) an area of poor-quality housing, to the south of the Debih Cherif Road, excludes the strategic, empty space, adjacent to the Casbah, within Bab Djedid. Since this area contains ruins of Bastion VIII and a fragment of the pre-colonial, Turkish enclosure of the town, this proposal is absolutely unjustified .

To reintegrate, therefore, the district of the Casbah into the town of Algiers, or, more precisely, to reduce the conflict between the pre-colonial fabric and the nineteenth century town, must, imperatively, in our opinion, hinge on a redefinition of the buffer zone between the two entities. This must exceed the intrinsic space occupied by the Ouridah Medad Boulevard, and by the homogenous zone C2, defined in the conservation plan, since such a morphologic criterion cannot, alone, incorporate all the issues relating to the boundaries of the two differing urban fabrics.

Furthermore, the connection between the two urban fabrics must be defined by a new, flexible perimeter where the Ouridah Medad Boulevard serves as the backbone on which all the strategic points, within the two entities, are connected, on both sides, by one structural artery. These places, or strategic points, depending on land availability, will be assigned for public use which, once connected, will serve as anchor points linking the two entities together.

Conclusion

A study of both the written, and graphic, documents of the PDAU, shows that, for the first time, in Algeria, the question related to the protection of the cultural heritage has been treated with such importance by an instrument for urban management and development.

In fact, in the new plan, the cultural heritage plays an important role in the process of management, and sustainable development, laid down for the Wilaya of Algiers. The proposals of the PDAU, effectively, go beyond the classical and traditional view, which limits protection measures to the Casbah itself, or to a few isolated monuments, towards a more global and holistic approach, which encompasses, for the first time, the Casbah, the

nineteenth century, colonial urban fabric, the minor centres of small towns and villages on the outskirts, as well as the image of the Bay of Algiers

Moreover, the question of rehabilitating these historic centres has been addressed through a regeneration of all the principal streets and thoroughfares, and it is within this framework, that the PDAU has approached the question of the Casbah.

In fact, while respecting the recommendations, relating to the safeguard of the Casbah, laid down in the PPSMVSS, the PDAU has tried to address the issue of its reintegration into the Algiers agglomeration. To this end, it has put forward three project proposals: two for the thoroughfares along the periphery of the Casbah, and a third for the one running through its centre, from the citadel to the naval fishing port.

With the exception of the project concerning thoroughfare T3, which has been judged deleterious to the integrity of the site, and subsequently rejected by both the authorities and UNESCO, the other development proposals, for the thoroughfares T2 and T4, are limited simply to the renovation of road surfaces and the restoration of the facades of those buildings found along their routes. There are one or two new project proposals for the development of the empty spaces but these in no way clearly address the issue of coordination and morphological connection between the two different entities of the town: the Casbah and the nineteenth century town of Algiers.

Furthermore, it can also be seen that the site, relating to the two project proposals, comes wholly under the jurisdiction of the PPSMVSS. The PDAU neither addresses this question nor clarifies the implementing regulations for the project proposals, and under whose jurisdiction they will be managed. Does this mean, then, that the application of the regulations laid down in the PPSMVSS, should be suspended, or constrained, within an area which, by rights, falls under its own jurisdiction? This denotes a real problem of coordination between the two documents of urban planning (PPSMVSS and PDAU), especially since the solutions laid down in the project proposals are in contradiction with the recommendations of the PPSMVSS.

In addition, given the importance of the buffer zone as an extra ring of protection around the UNESCO site, the question of its boundaries deserves, in our opinion, further reflection. It is also necessary to define the criteria by which the authorized interventions, around the safeguarded sector, can be controlled, to allow for a better protection of the site, and its integration into the urban agglomeration.

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Notes

[1] PDAU: acronym The Master Plan for Development and Urban Planning.

[2] Several measures have been put forward in the safeguard plan, including the dedensification of the urban fabric, and improvement in the living, and working conditions of the population; improved access to the Casbah with better traffic control both within the perimeter of the site and with the rest of the town; the re-establishment of spatial, and visual, unity between the different districts of the Casbah and a requalification of its relation with the sea etc...Refer to all the measures and guidelines recommended in the Guidance Report: PPSMVSS, CNERU, Final phase, Algiers, 2009, 172.

[3] In the PDAU, the strategy for development in the Wilaya of Algiers, over the next twenty years, has been divided into four main stages in order to ensure a gradual execution of all the structural projects, according to priority, with a view to establishing the territorial model which will, thus, contribute to the future development of Algiers. The four different stages are as follows: 2009-2014: the Enhancement Phase; 2015-2019: The Redevelopment Phase for the Bay of Algiers; 2020-2024: The Requalification Phase for the Peripheral area; 2025-2035: The Consolidation Phase.

[4] The measures proposed for this stage have been delayed, due mostly to budgetary difficulties, resulting from the precarious economic conditions (fall in the price of petrol) in the country since 2013.

[5] This is true, especially since this space is indicated in the development project as an area connected to the Casbah. See file "Promenade de la Memoire"; general plan of the public space in the pre-project summary, chart N°L02 22E 00PAY.AP. PL 001.B.1 Parque Expo PDAU Algiers 2009.

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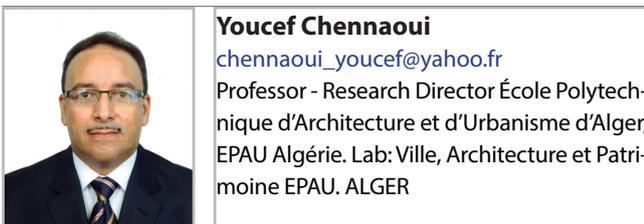
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