TOWARDS A NEW ARCHITECTURAL STYLE AT AMMAN CITY

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Abstract- Amman city, the capital of Jordan, has witnessed several architectural styles since the beginning of the 20th century and throughout its development until the year 2006. Those styles vary from traditional to modern to post- modern. In the year 2006 the redevelopment site of Abdali, in the heart of the capital of Jordan, Amman, near the city center began with a new trend in architecture, the high technology style (Hi-Tec style). The project nearly completed in 2016. The site which was originally being used for administrative buildings for the army has an area of around 350,000 square meters, with a developed built up area of over 1.8 million square meters. The project cost exceeded US$ one billion. The project took a long time to complete due to the international recession after 2007, which affected Jordan as well. The buildings inside the site are nearly 22% occupied.

The site is a mix of residential, office buildings and shops. It also hosts the highest building in Amman of 220 meters in height. The site has a well-designed plaza within a pedestrian spine connecting the eastern section of the site to the western part with a length of about 330 meters. This paper will shed light on the architectural style of the buildings of the Abdali Project and will investigate inhabitants and users opinion in this new style through a survey for both and will end with a number of conclusions about this new trend in architecture at Amman.

Index Terms- Abdali, Amman, trend, style.

I. INTRODUCTION

Amman architecture started to develop at the beginning of the 20th century as local and traditional styles, although its origin goes back to B.C.3000. The Roman amphitheatre at the city center of Amman is an evidence of the old civilization existed at Amman site (fig 1). Amman is a hilly city, nearly seven mountains occupy its site, and most of traditional buildings were built in harmony with nature as seen in figures number 2 and 3. Jordan at the beginning of the 21st century started an economic reform process to improve the economy. The Abdali urban regeneration project near the city center, is an example from the city of Amman of foreign investment projects that will be examined in this paper in terms of its architectural style. The emerging international styles in architecture at Jordan, is becoming obvious to international visitors and local inhabitants. Incorporating international mega-structures and developments within the city context has energized development of the city [1].



Fig 1: The Amphitheatre at the city center of Amman.

Source: https://www.google.jo/search?q=Amman+images&espv=2&biw=1366&bih=613&site=webhp&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjPpMTumuzRAhWBPxoKHfUTAVYQ_AUIBigB#imgrc=Tq5419mPrr5ASM%3A, visited on 31-1-2017.



Fig 2: Amman hilly site.

Source: https://www.google.jo/search?q=Amman+images&espv=2&biw=1366&bih=613&site=webhp&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjPpMTumuzRAhWBPxoKHfUTAVYQ_AUIBigB&dpr=1#imgrc=t30lFOQKnfzqnM%3A, visited on 31-1-2017.



Fig 3: View of traditional Amman City

Source:
https://www.google.jo/search?q=Amman+images&espv=2&biw=1366&bih=613&site=webhp&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjPpMTumuzRAhWBPxoKHfUTAVYQ_AUIBigB&dpr=1#imgrc=mOe5DpN5uOcLdM%3A

Abdali project (fig 4), has followed distinctive development project that reflected both the interactions of global forces and local community. Taylor argues that the global force is the competitive international environment engendered by economic globalization that moves the city towards an attractive location for investment and this competition is manifested in city marketing strategies [2]. Amman's situation is determined by the planning vision of attracting foreign investment. Abdali project is the largest mixed use development project in Jordan. It consists of residential apartments offices, retail architecture, hotels, serviced apartments and medical use [3].



Fig 4. Abdali Project image.

Source:
http://www.abdali.jo/index.php?r=site/page&id=4
visited on 30-1-2017.

Abdali project has an international high technology style where new building materials are used and also new building techniques are applied for the first time in Amman (fig 5). Sustainable buildings and architecture are the main concern for the developers where grey water treatment is one of the major solutions that have been adopted by constructors which are collected from showers, sinks and swimming pools and used again for flushing and irrigation after treatment. Energy efficiency is another kind of sustainability where heating and cooling plant from one resource distribute to multiple buildings, which reduce power consumption. Hundreds of solar energy collectors are applied with a total area of about 11,000 square meters on the roof of the mall, which is constructed within the site of the Abdali Project (fig 6). Transparent large tent supported by steel frames and cables is also used for the first time at Amman City with some openings to allow for natural light and ventilation. Materials such as stone, aluminum and steel are also used in the construction (fig 7). The project also seeks LEED certificate after completion [4].



Fig 5: Architectural style at Abdali Project.

Source:
http://www.abdali.jo/index.php?r=site/page&id=26



Fig 6: View to the roof structure of the Abdali Mall

Source: http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/ap/article-3678353.html



Fig 7: Materials used at Abdali Project.

Source: Author, 2017.



Fig 8: The spine inside Abdali Project.

Source:
https://www.google.jo/search?q=abdali+mall&espv=2&biw=1366&bih=613&site=webhp&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjgpf-pouzRAhUH6xoKHaPMBkkQ_AUIBigB#tbm=isch&q=abdali+project&imgrc=Qq4tTncVZVp8rM%3A
visited on 31-1-2017.

II. Problem statement and methodology:

The framework of this study is based on investigating the international (Hi-Tec) architectural style of the Abdali Project. The methodology of this research is

based upon utilizing a survey of public opinion from individual inhabitants at Abdali district and users. This will be achieved by distributing a questionnaire among them. A standard procedure is followed in administering the questions in numerical order to achieve rational results. The sample consists of 500 inhabitant and 500 users randomly selected with an equal percentage of males and females, and . The questionnaire took almost one week to complete, where four trained researchers, in addition to the authors helped in its distribution and analysis. The survey was conducted at the mid of January of the year 2017. Participants voluntarily agreed to make the interview and fill out the questionnaire as presented in table 1, and were thanked at end.

Table 1: Questionnaire on Abdali Project where total for each cell is 500 participant. Source: Author, 2017.

No	Question	local	User
		Y%	Y%
1.	Do you like the style of Abdali project?	35	48
2.	Do you like the design of buildings?	38	51
3.	Do you like the facades of buildings?	37	53
4.	Do you like the pedestrian spine?	62	73
5.	Do you like new materials used?	28	39
6.	Do you like the roof cover	24	42
7.	Do you think that this style is appropriate for Amman?	12	30
8.	Do you like to see more buildings like this?	11	32
9.	Do you like the sustainability in this project?	58	76

II. DISCUSSION

As seen from table number one question number one, only 35% of the locals or inhabitants around the project area like the style of the Abdali Project, where the percentage rises to 48% for the users and visitors of the Abdali Project. The reason behind that might be the type of visitors to the project. The cost of renting a shop or an office or even a flat is very high if compared to other areas of Amman. This is also seen as one of the constrains of the project. In question number two, which is about the design of the project, only 38% and 51% of the inhabitants and users respectively see a good design project. This is also applicable for the design of the facades as only 37% and 53% of the inhabitants and users see a good façade design as seen in question number three. For the pedestrian route inside the project both the inhabitants and users see a good design pedestrian route, where the percentages are 62% and 73% for inhabitants and users respectively as seen in question number four. In question number five, which is about the materials used in building the project, only 28% of the inhabitants see a good material, and 39% of the users see that. For the design of the roof cover only 24% of the inhabitants see a good quality of design and only 42% of the users see a good quality. This may be due to the problems associated with such roof covers where the rain may cause a problem in terms of its accuracy. Most of the two samples see that this style is inappropriate for Amman City as evident in question number seven, where the percentages are 12% and 30% respectively for inhabitants and users. Even inhabitants do not like to see more buildings with such an international style as seen from question number eight where the percentages are 11% and 32% respectively for inhabitants and users. A look at the previous literature review may explain this as City of Amman style is quite different from this new image as seen from figures one and two. In question number nine, which is about the sustainability used in Abdai Project most of the two samples like this with a percentages of 58% and 76% respectively from both samples inhabitants and users

III. RESULTS

It is obvious that both the inhabitants and users of the Abdali Project do not like the overall design of the project and the architectural style used. The City of Amman and throughout its development did not make use of strange materials or styles. The traditional local architecture dominated its urban fabric and skyline. A look at the city center seen in figure one and also other near development explain this. The international architectural style as seen in many cities is not the answer to our new projects. Many architects see the international style as a bad idea for many new development projects around the World, where this study emphasis this trend.

Other positive factor such as the pedestrian route inside the project which is admired by the inhabitants and users that facilitate for social interactions do not help in solving the problem of its international style that do not belong to Amman City.

The international style of the Abdali project that seems to be not admired by the inhabitants and users as seen in table number should not be encouraged into future projects at Amman City.

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