Explore Lab

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Project goal

- **Problem description**

The declaration of Tel Aviv as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2003 started a trend of renovation in Tel Aviv and renewed appreciation for the Modern buildings that shaped the city in its early years. The listed buildings and urban plan are an expression of the culture and architecture of the period.

The major growth of the city happened in the years 1930 – 1950. In those years the city has grown from a suburb to a city with architecture as a leading element in the forming of the city. The modern architects of the time were busy in building a city that is based on aesthetical functionality and social values. Much like the modernism in Europe, where they were educated and by which they were inspired, the architecture of the “white city” of Tel Aviv was trying to form a new society. Enhanced by the political ideologies of the Zionist society in Tel Aviv and in combination with the urban plan made by Sir Patrick Geddes in 1925 (approved in 1929, construction began in 1931 and in 1938 amended to fit the unexpected sudden growth of the city), the city became a network of buildings in the International Style and modern town planning.

In the 1980’s the city began to realize the importance of the architecture in the old city centre as a narrator of the history. With the declaration of UNESCO and with stimulated by the municipality, private owners began to restore the listed buildings. Due to the financial implications and limitations included in the renovation and restoration process, and in order to repay the investment, most of the apartment buildings were turned into large lofts suited for the upper class, boutique hotels or private villas. That brought an acknowledgement to the value of the modern architecture in the history of the city of Tel Aviv but at the same time turned the listed status of a building into a consumption label, alienating it from the organic fabric of the city and pushing it further from the original concepts of modern society.

In recent years, the term sustainable architecture has also become a label declaring a building more valuable; but the importance of sustainable architecture still remains – designing in a way that would last longer in order to relieve the pressure on natural resources and adapt easily to changes in society, new materiality and building standards and requirements. Renovation in this case is already a sustainable measure – taking a building and reusing it with or without changing its function. The hypothesis of this project is that the concepts of modern architecture used in Tel Aviv in the 1930s are in the same spirit of the concepts of sustainable architecture today. “Green” renovations of the buildings of Tel Aviv will then not only preserve the architecture of the period but will enhance the concept of the original architects on both the physical adaptation to climate and the social concept.
- **Project goal**
  
  o **Research goal**
    - Analysis of the Urban Plan by Sir Patrick Geddes for the city; His biological and social background and how he incorporated those ideas into the planning of the city.
    - Research into the materiality and principles leading the construction of the city in the 30’s in order to identify the historical value and the material qualities.
    - Research the possible tools that can be used to renovate and adapt the buildings to the standards of sustainable architecture.
  
  o **Design goal**
    - The renovation and adaptation of The Habima Housing complex to sustainable architecture standards.
    - A case study on green renovation and the integration of buildings in the city and the community.

- **Research question**

  **Hypothesis:**
  The city centre of Tel Aviv, originally designed by sir Patrick Geddes and built in the International style, contains most of the elements of a sustainable according to the current standards.

  ![](image)

  *To what extent is there a correlation between the concepts of architecture and city planning that were used in building the city of Tel Aviv in the 1930’s and the current concepts of sustainable building methods?*
- What is the meaning of the concept of sustainability in terms of architecture and urbanism?
- What is the weight of the historical value of the buildings in the process of renovation and what is the weight of the sustainable interventions.
- What role plays the social development of the city in the process of renovation

- **Research method**

Phase 1: Analysis to the original concepts and existing conditions of the buildings and city planning in the area defined as ‘Geddes Plan’ in Tel Aviv and evaluating them according to the standards of sustainable architecture in the three categories: People, Planet, Profit.

Phase 2: Defining the relationship between the process of renovation and the process of adaptation. The historical value and the future development of the building: where do the two coexist and which aspect wins in each category.

Phase 3: Development of a tool set for architects and future developers to be able to evaluate what can be preserved and where improvements can be made with minimal damage to the existing building, while preserving its historical value.

**Design proposal**

- A study to the house for the performing artists of the Habima Theatre. A complex containing dwellings for actors and directors with practice rooms, originally designed for the “Habima” company (the national theatre company).
  
  The buildings in the complex are typical international style buildings in Tel Aviv; individual buildings, 3-5 stories high, partially elevated from the ground by columns.
- Restoration and renovation with additional volumes
- Location: Tel Aviv centre, Frug – Gordon – Dov Hoz
- (main) Architects: Genia Awerbuch and Zeev Rechter

Current situation:
The Complex consists of 11 individual buildings vary between 3 to 5 stories high. Original plans included apartments, work studios and one general rehearsal hall used by all members for practice and education. Nowadays the complex contains mostly dwelling units with a few exceptions as galleries and offices on the ground floor.

Intervention:
Renovation of the complex and restoration of the original idea to house as a living environment for a theatre group. The complex should contain a combination of dwellings, practice spaces and facilities in a range of public scale. Physical demands should be made to comply with changing needs for energy consumption, climate control and density in the city.
Organization

- Mentors:
  o Main mentor: Sang Lee
  o Research mentor(s): Tahl Kaminer, Kristel Aalbers
  o Technical mentor: Jan van de Voort

- Travel plans:
  o March 2012 – location research and initial research in the city of Tel Aviv. In order to acquire literature and expert advise
  o August 2012 – further research in Tel Aviv. Further registration of the existing situation and investigation of existing local systems and trends in construction.

Bibliography

Books

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- Yudelson, Jerry, Green Building Trends, Island Press, 2009, Washington DC

Magazines

- Documomo journal no. 44

Websites

- www.tel-aviv.gov.il

Other

- Modi Bar-On – 3 part documentary of the city of Tel Aviv from 1909-2009
- UNESCO declaration of the White City, 2003