



# Degrading of Cities

**Alexandria .... a severely degrading city**

Faculty of Fine Arts  
University of Alexandria

Bauhaus-  
Universität  
Weimar

AUM  
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Alexandria founded in **331 BC** by **Alexander the Great** and was the capital of Egypt for over 1000 years. The city became the world's most magnificent center of trade, culture and learning under the Ptolemies



Alexandria has a **rich built form**, which have resulted from continual change witnessed by the city **rich historical background** traced through the Greco-Roman, Arab and Turkish periods



It witnessed a **continuous urban growth** from the beginning of the Mohammed Ali era (1805) up to the present time. In 1905, Alexandria's 370 thousand inhabitants lived in an area of about 4 km<sup>2</sup> between the two harbors



Laurent33ter

[www.delcampe.net](http://www.delcampe.net)

- Played an **important role in welcoming architectural experimentations** in the first half of the 20th century,
- This heritage should be **recognized as an essential part of the city's structure** despite the problems linked to accepting a painful historical past.



In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the city used to be **one of the Mediterranean's most cosmopolitan locations**, mixing Maltese, Greeks, Italians, Jews and Europeans in a heady blend .The city has expanded rapidly, eastwards and westwards, beyond its medieval walls.

## Alexandria ... a severely degrading city



Nowadays city of Alexandria has a very wide range of **urban development projects**, some of them has a major influence to the physical being of the city while others just have an interpretation to its characteristics.



The almost certainly more than 27,000 illegal buildings have sprouted in the city since Egypt's 2011 Revolution and since then the city ushered in an era of instability and void in authority.

**In the last decade there has been a slow and persistent destruction of Alexandria's architectural heritage and nowadays is facing demolition and construction violations**



Alexandria's construction mafias accelerate their illegal building by paying off residents or intimidated them in order to leave their heritage homes, tore out doors and windows and flooded entire buildings with water as a prelude to inviting the municipality around to declare them unfit for habitation

Ref. Save Alex

## At Alexandria's Water front Ugliness threatening Heritage



High rate of degradation and aggression of Alexandria's built environment in addition to the diversity and complexity of city problems .



**Everyone takes advantage to build illegally**

In recent years, thousands of turn-of-the-century villas and apartment blocks have been eliminated to make way for high-rise apartments



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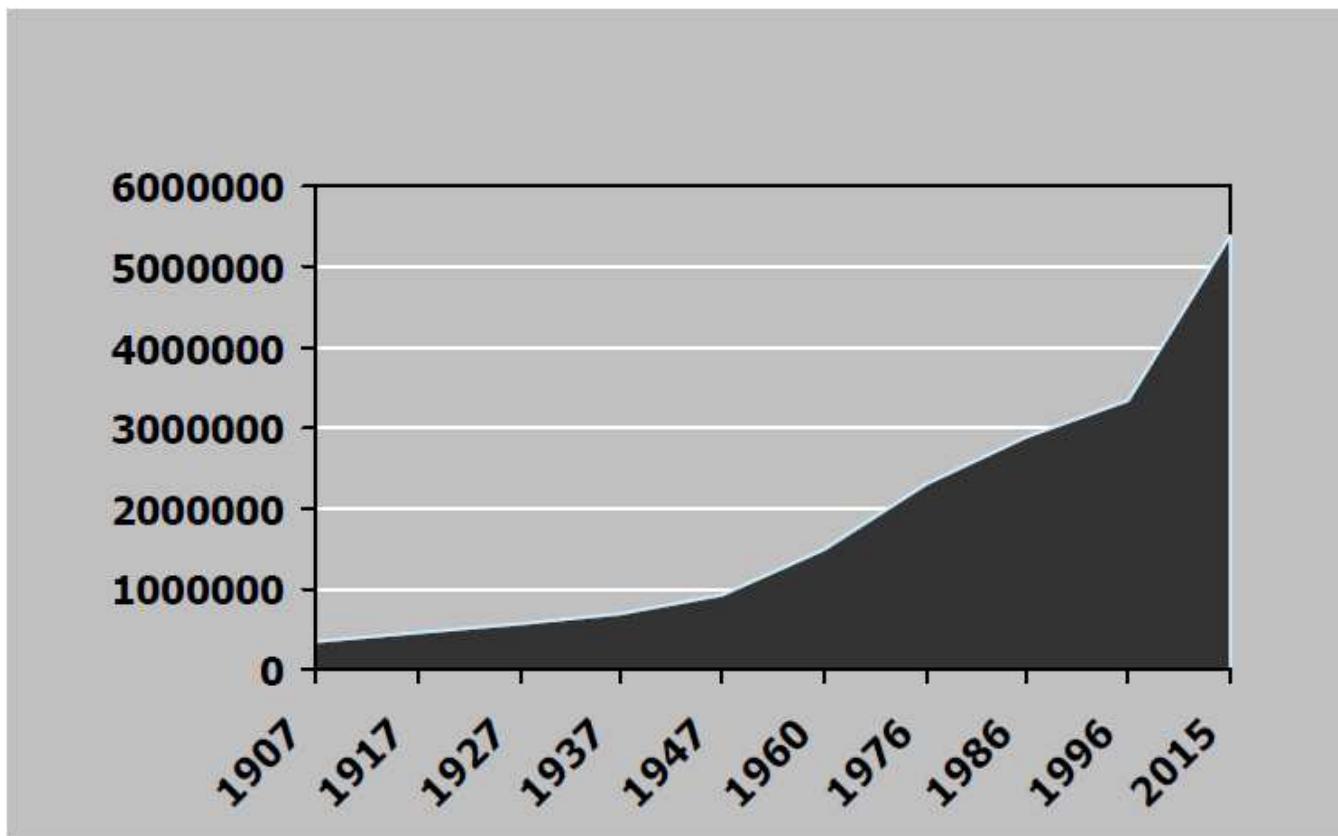


Figure 2. Population growth in Alexandria (1907-2015)

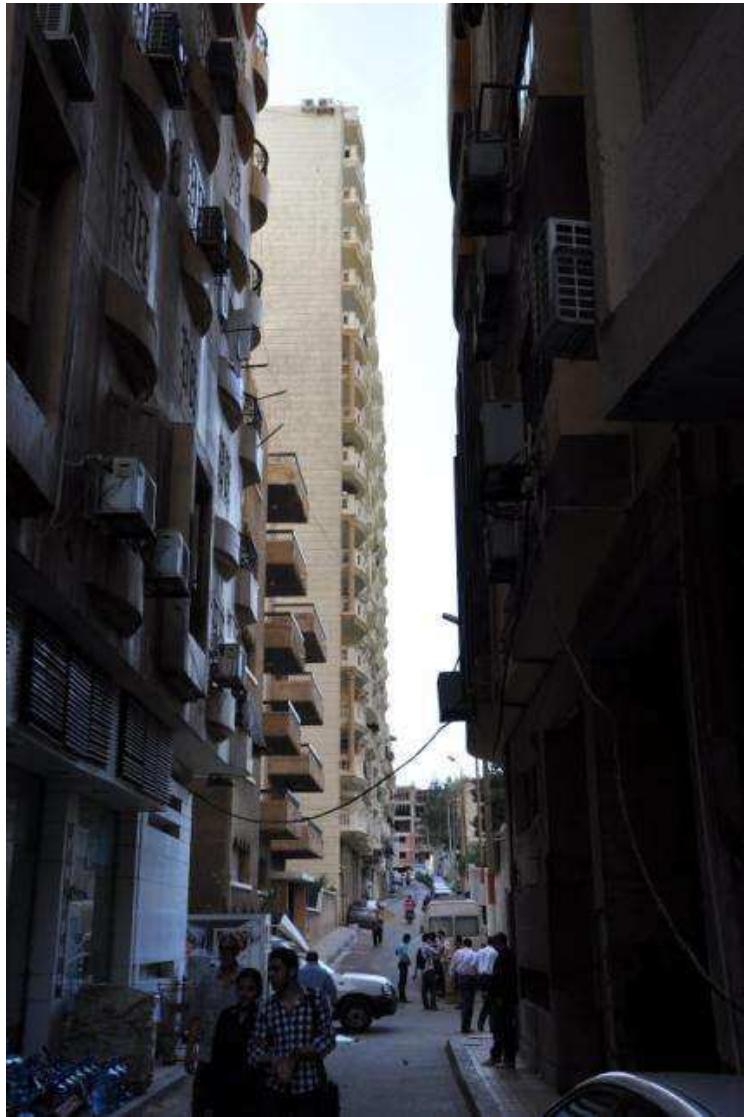
The spectacular rise in the population of Alexandria these last 30 years has overrun the city, which counted only 232,000 inhabitants in the early 20th century but today represents almost **5 million**



**Rapid population** generated greater demand for high rise buildings, and the city's residents have paid the cost, sometimes with their lives, **when the poorly-structured where buildings collapse.** -



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50 Meters building looking over 6 m street  
Saba Basha street

Ref. Save Alex



55 Meters building looking over 8 m street  
Gleem



Ref. Save Alex

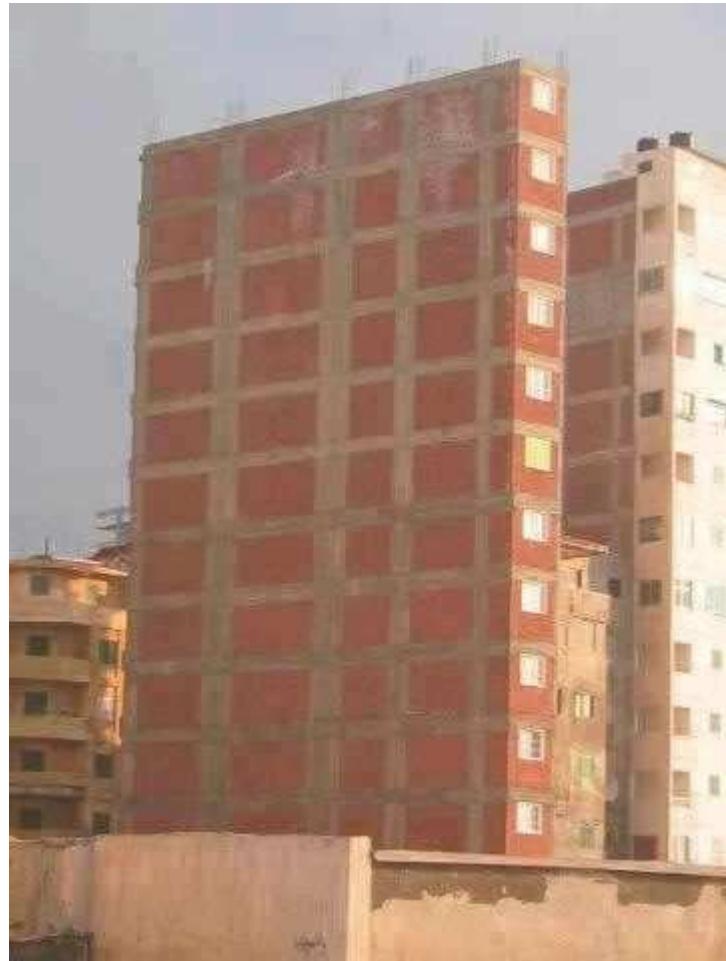
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Building Encroachments to historical monuments

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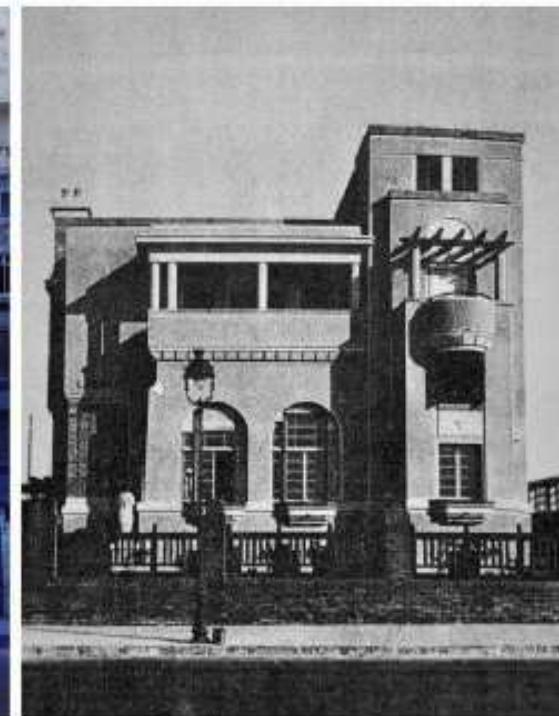
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## 36 historic Properties deleted from the heritage list in Alexandria and have been demolished in the last five years by Court permissions

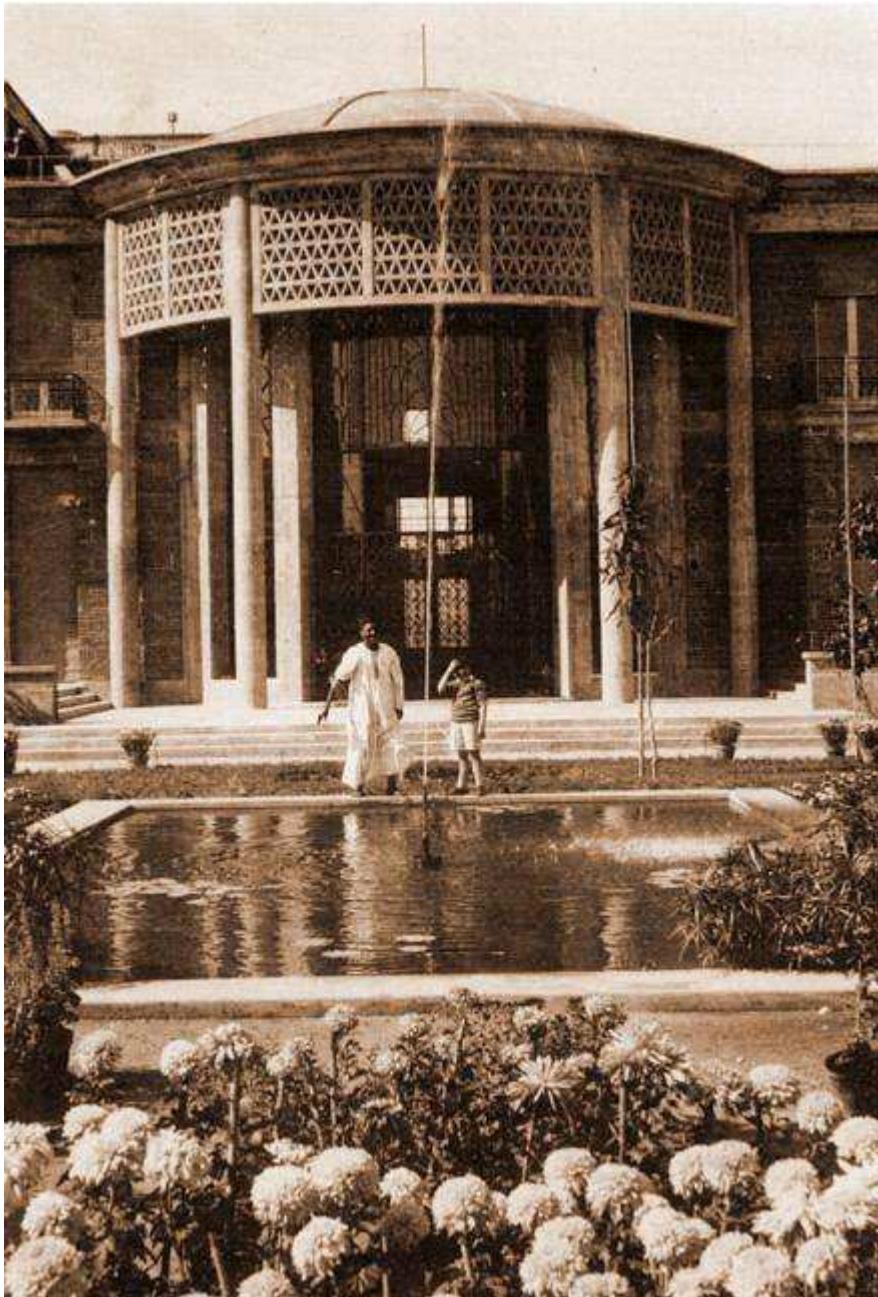


Save Alex  
(انقذوا الإسكندرية)

✉ save.alex.eg@gmail.com  Save Alex  @save\_alex1 :: #save\_alex

فيلا من تصميم المعماري مصطفى فهمي (1886-1972) اللي كان كبير مهندسي شرف القصور الملكية وكبير مهندسين وزارة الأشغال العامة، وهو اللي صمم واحد من أهم معالم اسكندرية... كوبري المنتزة

انقذوا الإسكندرية - انقذوا اللي اتبقى



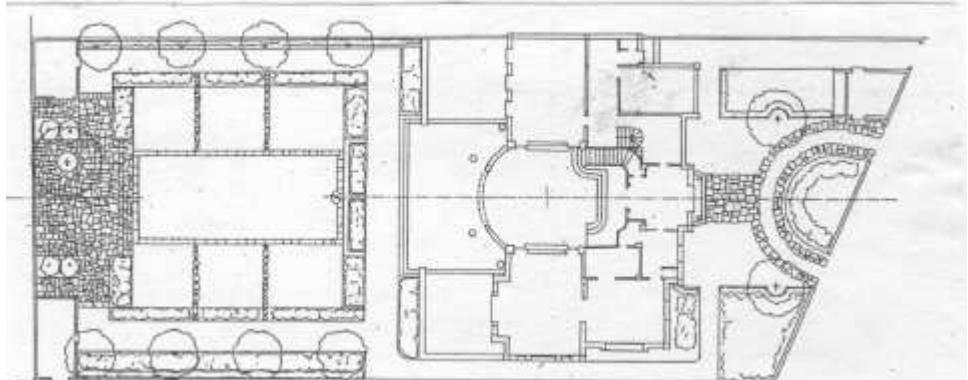
View of the rotunda on the garden, Alexandria

**Villa Aghion** under threat in Alexandria -

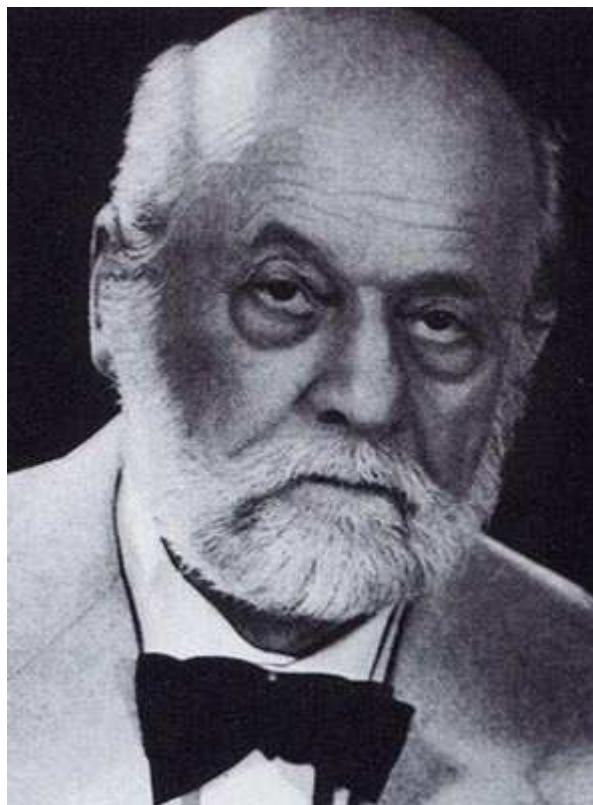
**Initial Owner : Edouard Aghion**

located in one of the wealthiest neighborhoods of 19th century Alexandria,  
**Wabour El-Maya**

Designed by **Auguste Perret (1874-1954)** and  
**Gustave Perret (1876-1952)**



The French architect **Auguste Perret** (1874 - 1954), one of the most important and the world's most famous architect, and pioneering the use of reinforced concrete in the construction of buildings. One famous architect professors to Le Corbusier.





## Importance

- It is considered an important modernist villa **reflecting Alexandria's society and Egypt's architectural cultural heritage**
- The first of two other architectural projects carried out in Alexandria which helps to understand the importance of the traces left by Auguste and Gustave Perret on the architectural and patrimonial history of the city and a perfect example of Perret architecture applied to a private commission
- Up until its destruction, the villa attracted thousands of visitors each year.



The house was sold after the Nasser revolution and the departure of the owners. **Present Owner : Metwalli Mahmoud**

As the owners and real estate developers will erect **4 buildings on the property instead because of** lack of housing and the land now is **worth millions**.



**Slow process of deterioration is chosen by the owner which probably allowed the building, after the fateful gutting, to be declared a future, perhaps immediate, safety hazard and require its destruction.**





This type of action is in fact frequently practiced so that a developer can obtain the demolition of a property which is supposed to “be protected”.



Rumor says that **intelligence services department** next to it are interested in acquiring the land which is directly adjacent to their headquarters here in Alexandria for future expansion

Although it is in the list of protected monuments recently **issued by Egyptian authorities under law 144**, nothing has been done however and no surveys have been possible and Developers have begun to demolishing it since **August 28th 2009** gutted by bulldozers, in total disregard of Egyptian law





Permission to destroy 5  
January 2014

The owner used the country's ongoing political turmoil to his advantage, finding a legal loophole which allowed him to **remove the villa from the heritage list and get demolition permits issued by COURT ORDER**



**The Governor visits the villa  
AFTER its partial demolition**



**French consulate in Alexandria  
demands halt to razing of Aghion  
Villa**

The Governor , French consul and his  
consultant meeting

Lack of cooperation and concern from the inactive local government with inadequate management , technical skills and legal framework .

## Demolition of Alexandria architectural gem begins

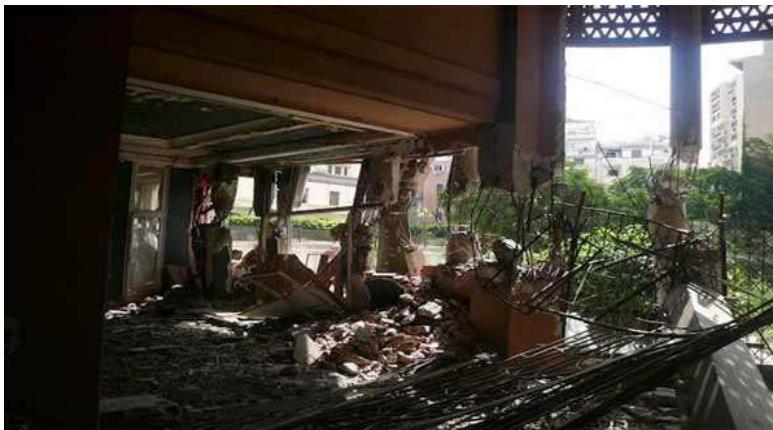
Owner of Villa Aghion, a landmark from city's 1920s heyday, blames foreign governments and groups who declined to help fund restoration

Patrick Kingsley in Cairo  
The Guardian, Thursday 6 February 2014 15.32 GMT



- Lately the building have been subjected to a decision from the government to be a **resource shared by citizens and a public right**





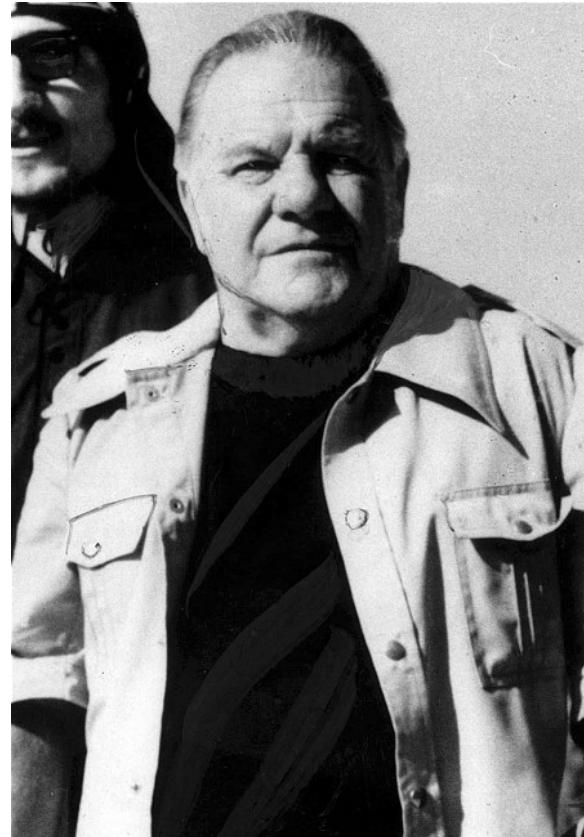
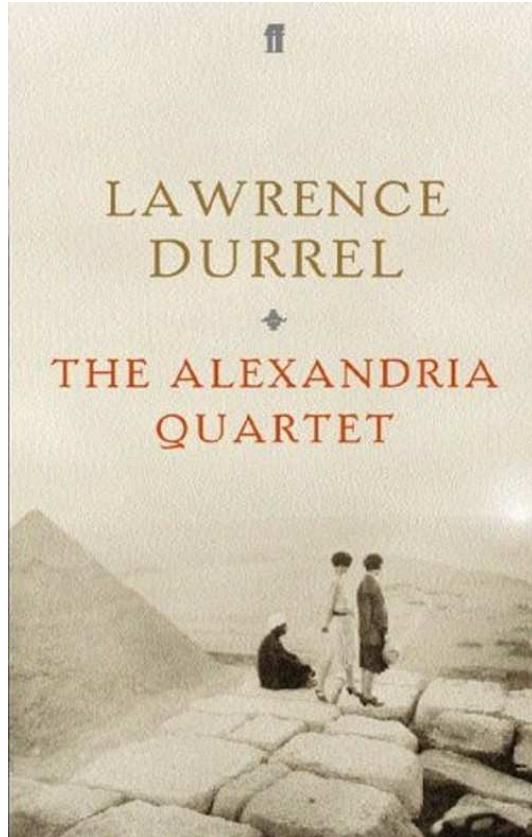
- Owner of historic villa, stated “ he will turn building to 'dust', despite order from Alexandria's mayor and French consulate “



OMA-designed exhibition in Paris celebrates the work of architect **Auguste Perret** 'Eight Masterpieces' in Feb 2014 !!!!!



**Neglect has brought the famous Villa Ambron to its knees. Will it escape demolition?**



The Egyptian home that inspired Lawrence Durrell to write **his Alexandria Quartet novels** who lived in the house during the Second World War

The Ambron's son, Emilio, sold the house to a local developer, Abdulaziz Ahmed Abdulaziz.



The owner, who has already built two blocks of flats over the house's wooded gardens, says he has obtained a permit from the local courts to knock the villa down, despite its being listed by the city government.

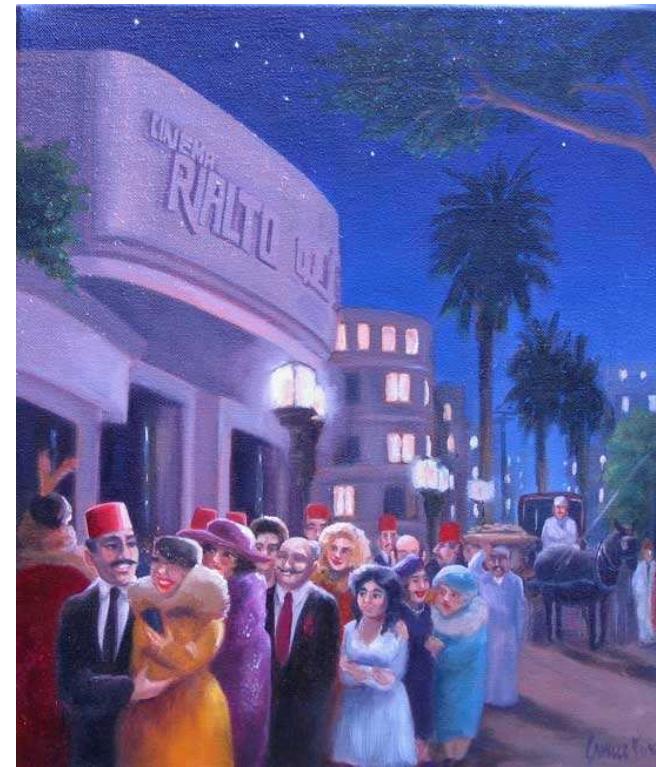


In the house itself, whole floors have given way, the neo-classical veranda is cracked and stone balustrades lie broken amid the bird droppings. But the stonework is largely sound, enough of the curling staircases remain to reach the roof and Durrell's Tower is still just about intact.



It is Mr Abdulaziz who wants now to knock it down. "Yes, we know Lawrence Durrell has many friends," he said. "If they want to buy the villa they are most welcome. "I have to say they know and love Durrell and appreciate his life and work. But they don't do anything for him. If they appreciate him so much and his contribution, why don't they buy the place? They can **collect the money from Durrell lovers everywhere.**"

## An attempt to destroy the collective memory of the city Cinema Rialto



The city which held

- The first cinema show in Egypt in 1896
- The first depiction of the film footage in 1897
- First Egyptian filming studio in 1907
- The first Journal of cinematic in 1919



**RIALTO**  
Best Architectural  
Design Contest

**1st**  
**75.000 LE**

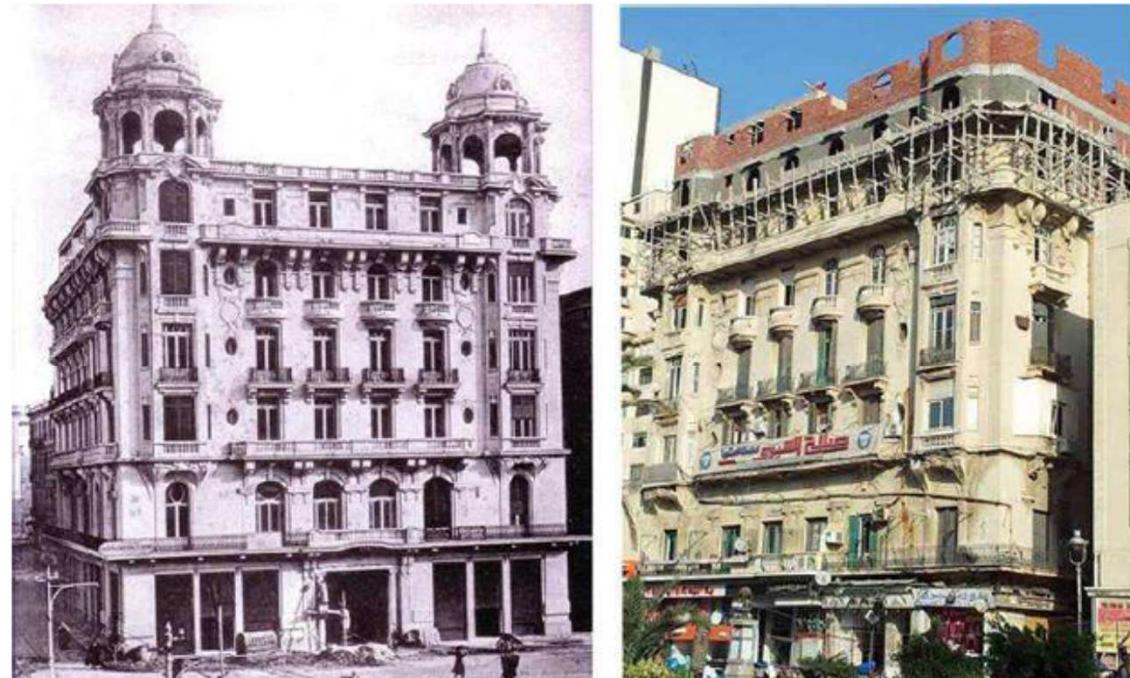
فائز ممدد ماد ممدد ماسبي ممدد  
أحمد فوزي إبراهيم عابدة ممدد عربى  
أسما، مهال عدانت، سنت ممدد السيد  
كريم عادل ففاد

**Stanly**  
www.StanlyMiddleEast.com



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the Majestic Hotel, where the writer EM Forster stayed,



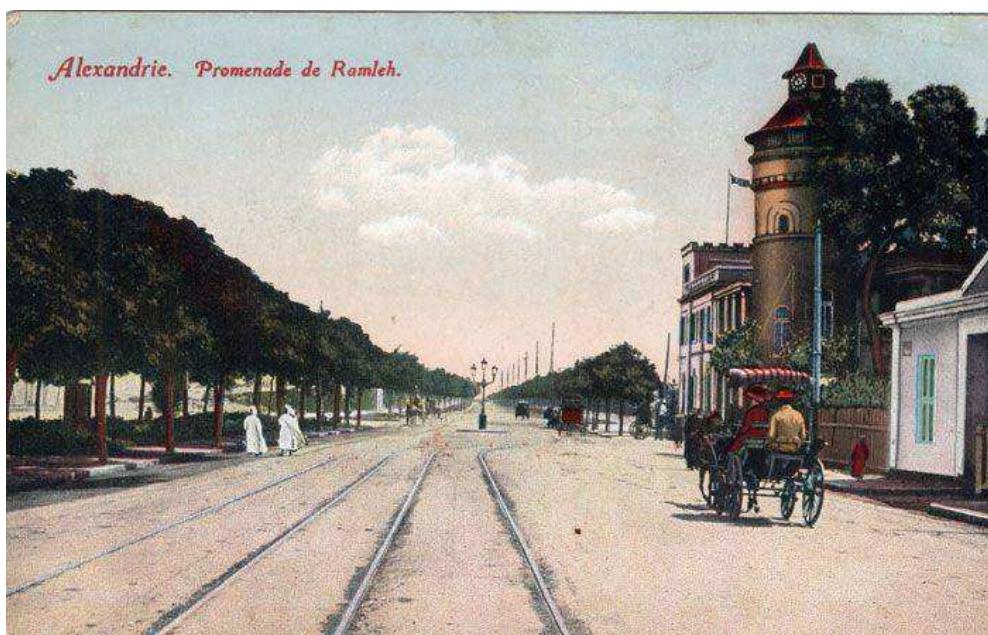
البلاغ

تستمر المهرلة - مبني ماجيستيك كما هو !

في تعدد صارخ لكن سكان المدينة - وحياتها التertiية - وحيثما في زرائها وبعد انتهاء في زيارة الدورين لمخالفين في تحرك سريع من قبل محافظة الإسكندرية  
حفاظاً على التراث واستجابة لطلبات سكان المدينة يقف الآذ من قدق ماجيستيك الشريع سابقاً مشوهاً كما هو .  
الدورين لمخالفان لقانون كما هما وكان إزاله لم تحدث وفان شيئاً يكن - فإن المحافظة من هذا ومن المسئول عن هذا العبث؟ في أي مدينة تعيش  
\* يؤكد المبادرة على إلتزامها بمناهضة هذا التعدى الصارخ وأثها مستعدة للتنويق مع أي جهة مسؤولة أو تertiية وذو صفة كافية والمتضمنة الازمة لعمم البنين حال الاحتياج لها!

Photo credit: Birt & Kingsley

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			Total
<b>Properties deleted from the heritage list and get demolition permits issued by COURT ORDER</b>			4
<b>Properties demolished till June 2012</b>	8 Before Revolution	16 After Revolution	24
<b>Heritage buildings subjected to distortion</b>			3
<b>Heritage buildings intentionally destroyed</b>			11
<b>Listed monuments</b>			1
<b>Total</b>			43



The apartment where he spent his last 35 years, in Lepsius Street -, has been made over into a museum honoring the life and works of the great Alexandrian poet." Cavafy"

The Cavafy Museum is run under the auspices of the Cultural Section of the Greek Embassy in Cairo



**How is it possible to allow such destruction and progressive  
denial of national heritage without any reaction ?**



أنقذوا الإسكندرية Save Alex



save.alex.eg@gmail.com



@save\_alex1

#save\_alex

Save Alex is an initiative and a pressure group aiming to have a positive impact in the realm of its interests , increasing public awareness and involvement of what is left of Alexandria's rich urban and architectural heritage

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The people wants their city back

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- Field trips
- Educational and Awareness events
- Protest Stands
- Providing Information
- Media and international pressure
- Reports and contact with officials

**From architects to activists//**  
stepping down from the pedestal and taking action



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Facebook Save Alex

You are posting, commenting, and liking as أنتقدوا الإسكندرية Save Alex — Change to Ahmed Hassan Moustafa

10,500 likes 84,448 posts 2,741 comments

10 مايو 2013 (منذ ما يقارب السنة أشهر)

لنس واقع قبيح بل كارثة محتشدة

Get More Likes See Likes Pages to Watch Add Pages Invite Friends See All

Create an ad to get more people to like your Page.

Anycity Save ... 9,249 like this. Community Sponsored

Promote Page

New! Pages to Watch + Add 5 Pages

Track the progress on any Pages you want to watch. You'll see how many likes they get so you can keep up.

Page Insights has moved

Salah Sallam ... لكنني نتفق الاسكندرية لا بد من تفعيل القوائم

Hisham El-Tawil If you need a copy of cv in Arabic, it is av...

Mostafa Adel Negm Maro Elmaghribi Samih Semir Ola Shahba

الشعب يريد مدينته

facebook :: Save Alex :: twitter :: @save\_alex1 #save\_alex

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## Recommendations

- There is a need for a comprehensive assessment of legislative , institutional and financial gaps
- Value Recognize from Owner / people / architects
- Jointly approved policy and agenda between the public and private sector
- Managing strategies needed to ensure urban conservation in our context
- Networking with other cities , sharing methodologies and case studies and learn from Local /western experience
- Promote documentation and monitoring
- Conservation practices, urban development and the initiation of Adaptive reuse projects



-taymawr senfel

**THANK YOU**

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