



Degrading of Cities

Alexandria a severely degrading city

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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 km² between the two harbors



Laurent33ter

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.



Alexandria Corniche



Alexandria — The Boulevard Saad Zaghloul

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 leaving 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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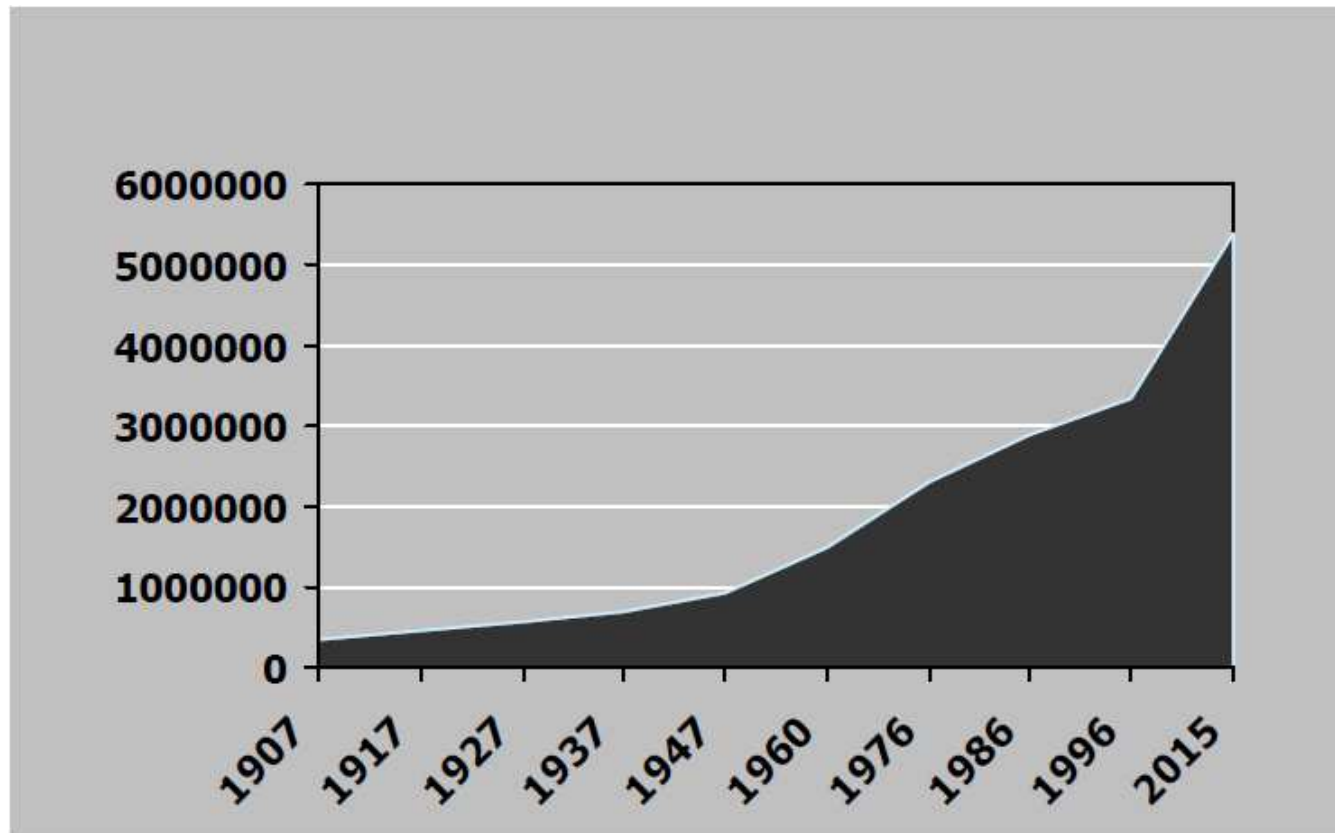


Figure 2. Population growth in Alexandria (1907-2015)

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.** -





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



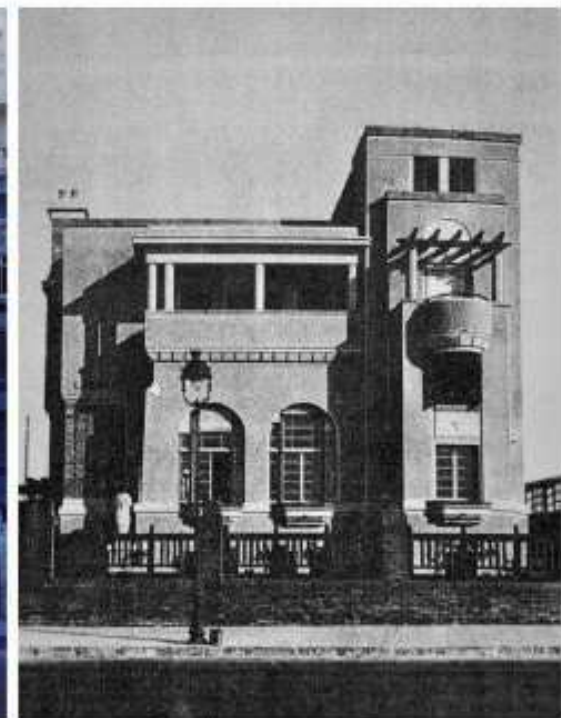
Building Encroachments to historical monuments

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Ref. Save Alex

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

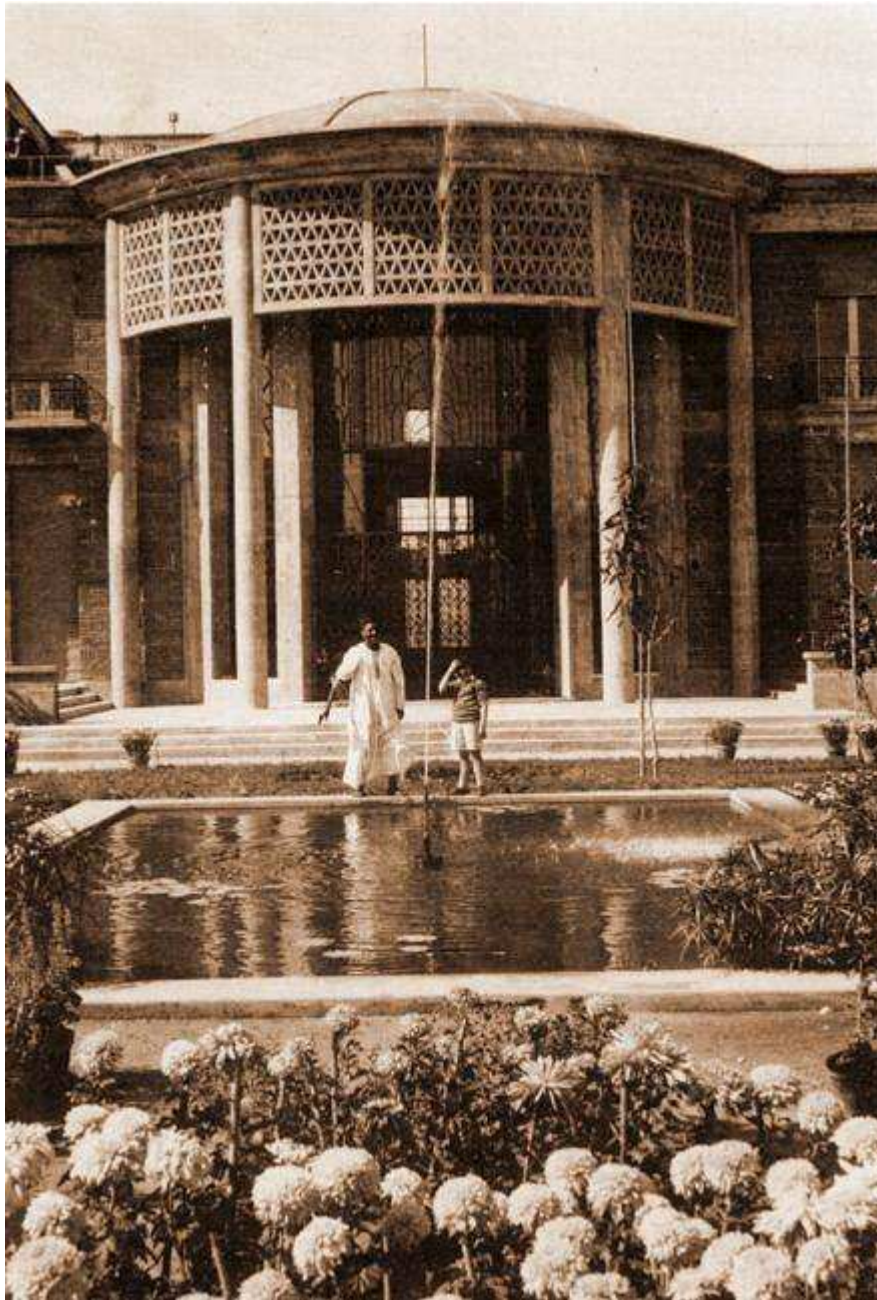


Save Alex
(انقذوا الإسكندرية)

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

✉ save.alex.eg@gmail.com f انقذوا الإسكندرية - Save Alex @save_alex1 #save_alex

انقذوا الإسكندرية - انقذوا اللي اتبقى



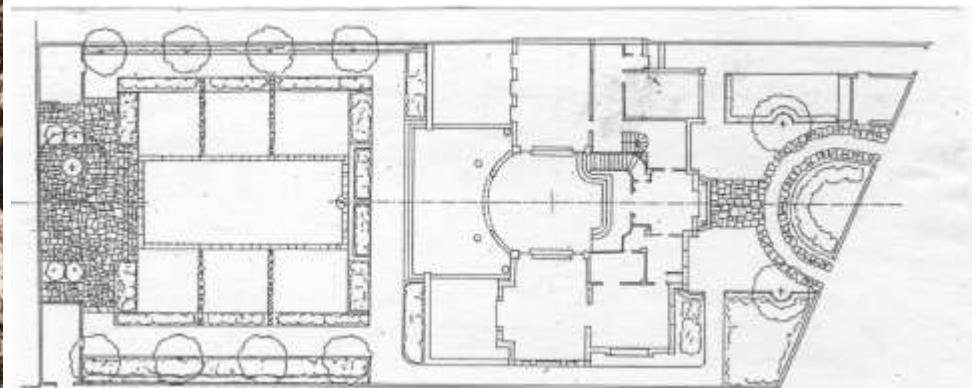
View of the rotunda on the garden, Alexandria

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 .

theguardian

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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**





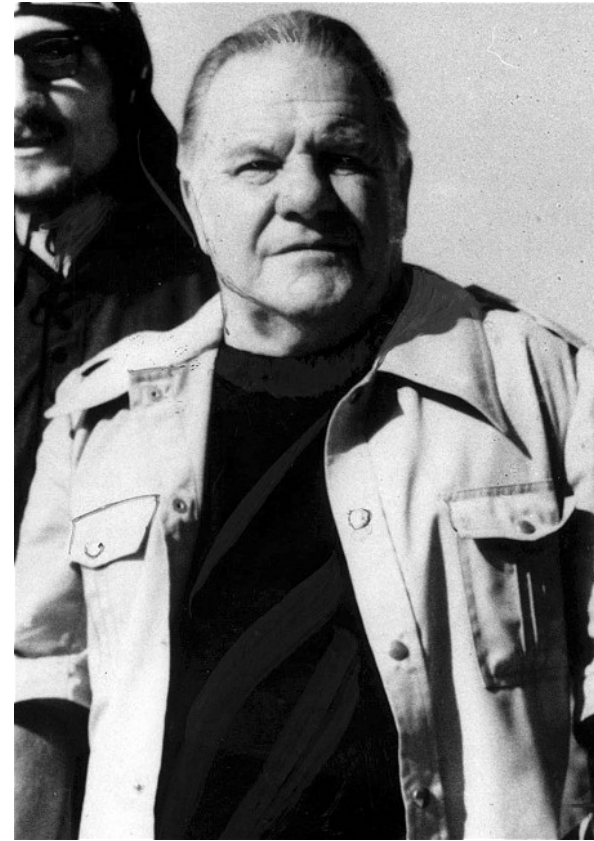
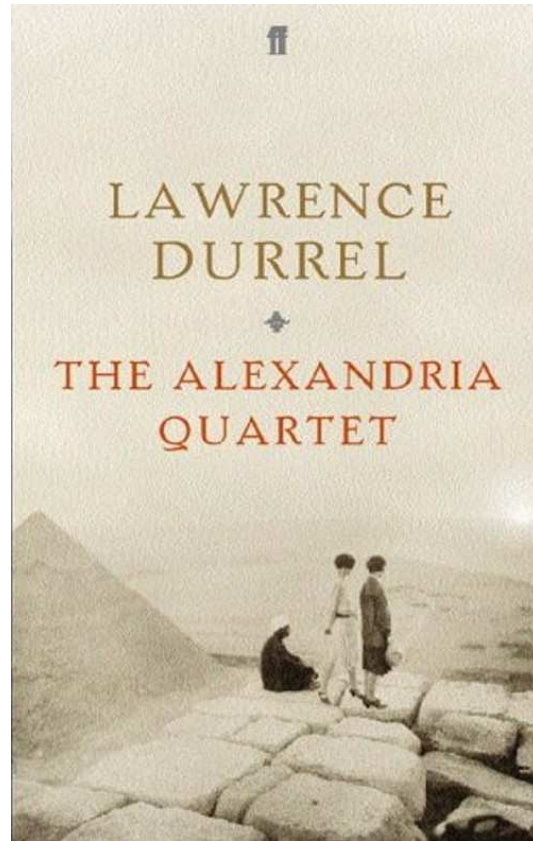
- Owner of historic villa, stated “ he will turn building to 'dust', despite order from Alexandria's mayor and French consulate “



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.

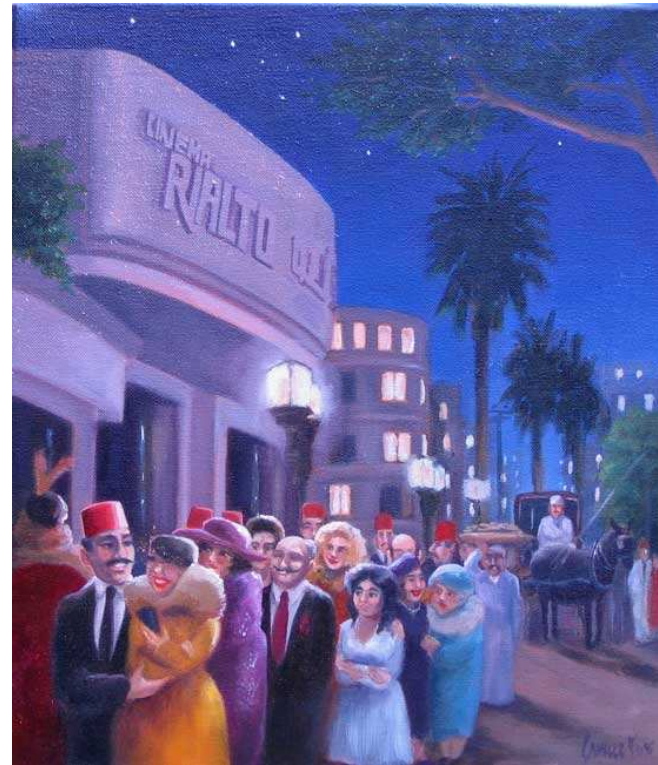


In the house itself, whole floors have given way, the neo-classical veranda is cracked and stone balustrades lie broken amid the bird droppings. But the stonework is largely sound, enough of the curling staircases remain to reach the roof and Durrell's Tower is still just about intact.



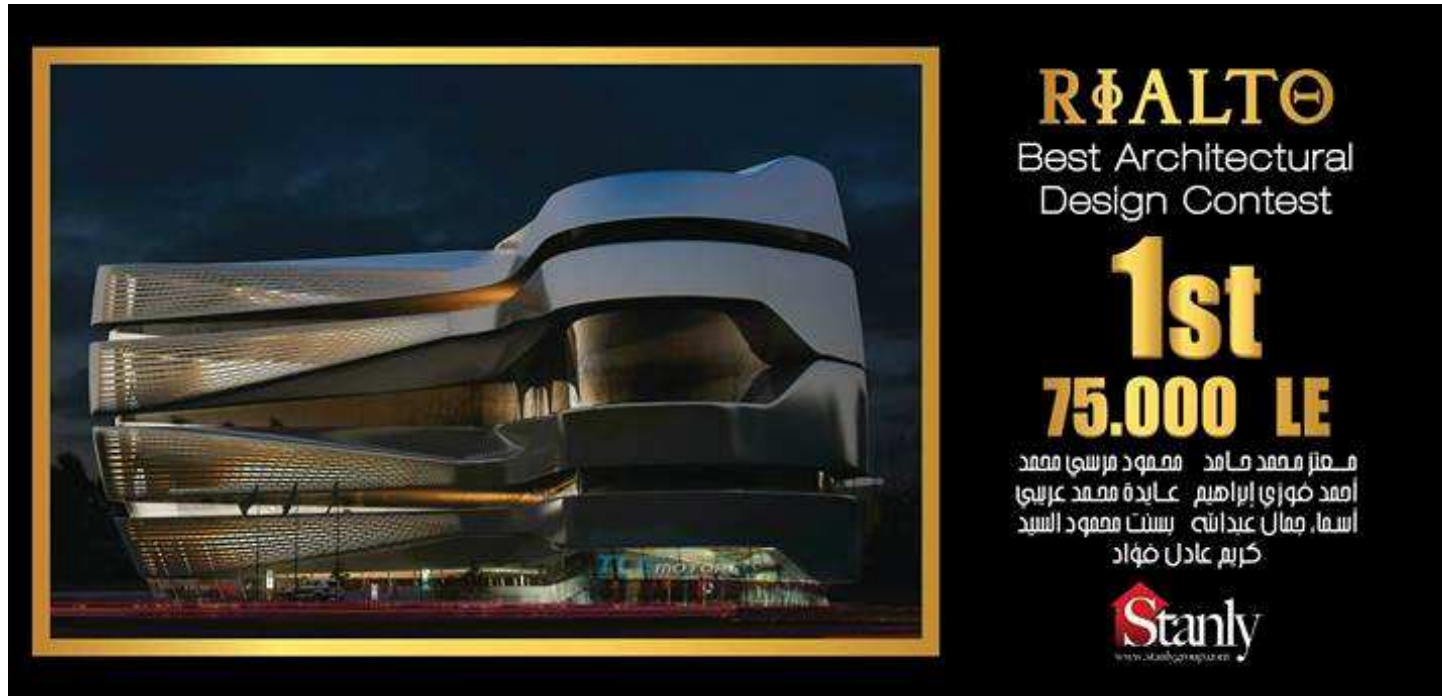
It is Mr Abdulaziz who wants now to knock it down. "Yes, we know Lawrence Durrell has many friends," he said. "If they want to buy the villa they are most welcome. "I have to say they know and love Durrell and appreciate his life and work. But they don't do anything for him. If they appreciate him so 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 is 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



Urban minorities 3 . Madaba / Amman . Jordon 2014

the **Majestic Hotel**, where
the writer EM Forster stayed,



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تستمر المهزلة - مبنى ماجيستك كما هو !

في تحد صارخ لكن سكان المدينة -وحيث أنها التقليدية- وحشهم في أولها وبعد البدء في إزالة الدورين المائلين في تحرك سريع من قبل محافظة الإسكندرية حفاظاً على التراث واستجابة للافات سكان المدينة ينفذ الآن مبنى فندق ماجيستك الشهير "سابقاً مشوهاً كما هو.
الدورين المائلان للقانون كما هما وكان إزالته لم تحدث وكان غريباً لم يكن - فإثر المحافظة من هذا ومن المسئول عن هذا العبث! وفي أي مدينة تعيش!
" تؤكد المبادرة على إتباعها متابعة هذا التعدي الصارخ وأنها مستعدة للتنسيق مع أية جهة رسمية أو شعبية وتوفر كافة الاستشارات الفنية والمتخصصة اللازمة لتبني المبنى حال الإضاح له!"

Photo courtesy: Patrick Kingsley

Ref. Save Alex



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



Save Alex أنقذوا الإسكندرية



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



The people wants their city back

- 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



Ref. Save Alex

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Facebook page for "Save Alex" (أنقذوا الإسكندرية). The page shows 84,448 likes (circled in red) and 2,741 comments. The page is managed by Ahmed Hassan Moustafa. The page content includes a post about the 10th anniversary of the 2013 protests, a "Get More Likes" section, a "Pages to Watch" section, and an "Invite Friends" section. Below the page content is a large image of a woman holding a yellow banner with the Arabic text "الشعب يريد مدينته" (The people want their city). The banner is held in front of a man in a white shirt. In the bottom left corner of the image, there is a small inset photo of a building. At the bottom of the page, there are social media links for Facebook, Twitter (@save_alex1), and a hashtag #save_alex.

Ref. Save Alex

Urban minorities 3 . Madaba / Amman . Jordon 2014

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



THANK YOU