ADOBE FABRIC AND THE FUTURE OF HERITAGE TOURISM

A CASE STUDY ANALYSIS OF

THE OLD HISTORICAL CITY OF ALULA, SAUDI ARABIA

by

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Adobe Fabric and the Future of Heritage Tourism: A Case Study Analysis of the Old Historical City of Alula, Saudi Arabia

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ABSTRACT

As historical districts become significant places for development in Saudi Arabia, especially the mud brick historical districts that are widely spread in the country, the need for a professional heritage tourism implementation plan becomes essential. This thesis address questions such as: what factors should contribute to the heritage preservation planning for an adobe urban fabric? How might such a district be valuable within tourism planning? Specifically, this research performs a case study of the historic district in Alula, focusing on the district's heritage tourism plan and its related aspects, taking into consideration the planning process, local community, government actions, collaboration and partnerships, and economic aspects that can shed new light on historic preservation practices in Saudi Arabia. Methodologically, this thesis identifies best practices and benchmarks from different scholarly sources that are similar to this case study in order to satisfy the research question.

The form and content of this abstract are approved. I recommend its publication.

Approved: Christopher Koziol
DEDICATION

To my father Abdulafattah Bay and my mother Kadijah Qari who have always supported me and continue to do so. To them, I owe the most debt and hope to make them proud

To my brothers Khalid, Osamah, Haneen and Majid, who also believed in me

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is fast becoming the biggest industry in the world, ‘The greatest show on earth’. The lifeblood of much of that industry is heritage (Boniface and Fowler 1993, ix).

Historic preservation is growing rapidly in Saudi Arabia, bringing benefits such as investments, energy efficiency, and tourism, while safeguarding the history and identity of historic places. In Saudi Arabia, preservation was once not a well-known term; however, in recent years, there are signs of awareness of the need for preservation and positive actions such as safeguarding and rehabilitation, especially from government organizations, since the establishment of the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities (SCTA)1 in 2000 (SCTA 2014). The government started to focus on the tourism and heritage sectors. The SCTA has been making immense efforts to promote tourism and safeguard heritage to advance the country in such fields. Furthermore, although the heritage and tourism sectors are now booming, a lack of experience, trained specialists, and education remains. There is also a lack of collaboration, partnership, and implementation of proper intervention techniques, despite Saudi Arabia’s diverse built heritage. Historic districts in Saudi Arabia have unique attributes that hold much potential for development if heritage tourism principles are incorporated correctly. This would have a huge economic impact, stimulating growth in local areas and the country overall.

In addition, there is a growing appreciation for and focus on historic urban settlements in the world. Through the efforts of The United Nations Educational, Scientific

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1 SCTA is the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities a government organization responsible for tourism and heritage in Saudi Arabia. Source: https://www.scta.gov.sa/en/Pages/default.aspx
and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)$^2$ and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)$^3$, cultural heritage has become an essential link between development and urban life (Orbasli 2000). Moreover, other institutions have emerged, such as English Heritage$^4$, the Getty Center Institute$^5$, and International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM)$^6$, and the Aga Khan Foundation$^7$. These have had a huge influence on nations’ perceptions and strategies of preserving built heritage. Hence, the government of Saudi Arabia is responding to a burgeoning commitment to preservation around the globe and dedicating significant efforts to preservation.

Figure 1.1: Diversity of built heritage in Saudi Arabia. Source: seta.org.sa

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$^3$ The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) is a non-governmental international organization dedicated to conservation of the world’s monuments and sites. Source: www.icomos.org/en/

$^4$ Exists to protect and promote England’s spectacular historic environment and ensure that its past is researched and understood. Source: http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/

$^5$ The J. Paul Getty Trust is a cultural and philanthropic institution dedicated to critical thinking in the presentation, conservation, and interpretation of the world’s artistic legacy. Source: getty.edu/about/

$^6$ International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property. Source: http://www.iccrom.org/

$^7$ The Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) focuses on a small number of specific development problems by forming intellectual and financial partnerships with organizations sharing its objectives. Source: akdn.org/akf.asp
In this paper, I address a case study of the historic district in Alula, focusing on the district's heritage tourism plan by examining the planning process government action, collaboration and partnerships with other governmental and non-governmental entities, local community, as well as private sector that can bring new insights into historic preservation practices in Saudi Arabia. Additionally, the concept of tourism in historic towns has arguably become essential to authorities as well as communities (Orbasli 2000). Heritage tourism can contribute much to historic districts by bringing revenue into their communities. Consequently, my research concentrates on the issues of heritage tourism, individually and conjunctively, outlining the best practices thereof. Furthermore, in the bulk of this paper, I illuminate the correlations between preservation and tourism in ways that might lead to new insights into preservation-led tourism for historic districts made from adobe. Ultimately, I aim to investigate and systematize the most important concepts to connect the adobe urban fabric in Alula with driving preservationist forces, such as government action and partnerships along with opportunities of value to tourism planning in the town.

Tourism has become vital for Alula, especially with its western location in Saudi Arabia, between the north and south of the ancient commerce road (Incense Road) in the Arabic Peninsula. Alula is famous for archaeological and heritage sites, some over two-thousand years old. In the past, this town was known as the gateway for merchants’ caravans between the north and south of the Arabic Peninsula (Alansari and Aboalhasan 2005). Geographically, the town consists of a huge valley and oasis, lying between sandstone mountains that have exotic geometric shapes (Alfaqeer 2008). Most importantly, Alula contains nearly fifty-five historical sites from different eras; Mada’in Salih is one of
the UNESCO world sites, listed in 2008, which brought so much attention to Alula. Within this context, the old district of Alula is currently receiving conservation intervention, and it awaits a substantial makeover to facilitate heritage tourism.

**Background of Research**

**Problem Statement**

Although the site at the old historical district of Alula has been witness to significant trends and events, such as the social tribe gathering (coffee house) (Mahfouz 2001) the Qanat water irrigation system (Naseef 1995), it remains quite fragile. The rapid deterioration of the adobe due to its impermanent nature is an essential problem that needs immediate and proper and intervention. However, inappropriate intervention might occur resulting from a lack of understanding of the integration between preservation techniques, policies, and output products. When sensitively applying tourism plans to heritage areas, a comprehensive preservation plan requires the necessary expertise and understanding. In Alula, there is an immediate need to implement a professional heritage tourism plan to maintain the site’s authenticity and identity while avoiding the wrong practices, which may compromise the site.

**Rationale and Justification**

Mud-brick urban edifices are the most widespread traditional vernacular buildings in Saudi Arabia; there are many villages in the country’s central region that share attributes through the application of mud bricks and mud-brick buildings with different attributes that extend to the south and north as well. Mud-brick buildings do not last long, deteriorating rapidly with a lack of maintenance or understanding of how to implement heritage tourism in such areas. Therefore, in this study, I focus on incorporating a solution that promotes
heritage tourism and brings revenue into these old villages. Extra attention is given to the policies and regulations that constitute the preservation of urban adobe architecture. Furthermore, the importance of the research derives from the desire to preserve and maintain historic districts, especially heritage sites made from impermanent mud bricks, for generations to come, rather than leaving them to deteriorate until they are vandalized or demolished. Hence, these abandoned areas can become important historic districts, attracting many tourists if the right strategies are incorporated.

These heritage sites are a source of history, identity, pride, and economic value for their respective countries if they are maintained and presented well. These heritage sites also provide insight into the fields of historic preservation, heritage tourism, and patriotism while also contributing to the regeneration process of historic cities. Furthermore, these sites build historical awareness, educating the public on the significance of their heritage, the necessity of their maintenance, and the proper use of heritage tourism. Finally, these sites can enhance development, drawing in tourists, who stimulate the local economy; in turn, this growth attracts investments from government agencies as well as national and global investors. Thus, partnership plans in collaboration with the government and other stakeholders are significant in order to foster and develop the heritage field.

The city of Alula has much potential in terms of heritage tourism, rehabilitation, adaptive reuse, and preservation, in that the town includes several historic structures and sites that represent many diverse historical eras. More importantly, these structures and sites are currently in poor condition and under the threat of collapse, which means that Alula risks losing some of its rich heritage. This heritage consists of a large, abandoned urban area (primarily residential structures), made from mud bricks, sandstone, timber, and
thatch. Furthermore, the old historical district of Alula is a vital heritage site due to its unique urban fabric. The city has distinctive features from the old urban areas in Islamic societies. Moreover, Alula’s urban fabric is indicative of the local climate and social culture, and it bears witness to the social trends and events that happened there (Alzhrani 2008).

Objectives of the Research

In order to clearly define the goals of the research, some additional questions might help to illuminate the main research questions for this project:

- What is the significance and value of a historical adobe district?
- How can an appropriate preservation plan be implemented?
- How to provide informed government actions and analyze its impacts?
- How can heritage tourism be promoted in historical districts?
- How can the heritage tourism plan be promoted in a historical adobe district?

In other words, this research will assess the significance and value of the historic adobe district. I will also assess the appropriate implementation of preservation plans. To that end, I will evaluate the process of advising a government in regards to preservation actions and demonstrate how to analyze their impact on a heritage site. In addition, I will consider how to promote heritage tourism in historic districts, specifically how to do so in a historic adobe district.
Research Question and Scenario

The research questions of the thesis are:

- What factors should contribute to the heritage preservation planning for an adobe urban fabric such as the old district of Alula?
- How might adobe fabric be valuable within the tourism planning for the town of Alula? See figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2: The old district of Alula: fragile adobe urban fabric. *Source: Abdulnaser Alzhrani*
Overview of the Methodology and Data Sources

The research methods for this project center around a case study of the historic district of Alula, Saudi Arabia. Specifically, I focused the case study through analysis of the city’s context, the old district context, the current plan, some related discussions in the heritage field, and similar successful experiences. In addition, I analyzed the adobe fabric of historic districts of sites similar to Alula as benchmarks for historic preservation in the latter. The first example is Turaif district in Diriyah, Saudi Arabia, also Taybet Zaman Village, Jordan, and Taos Pueblo and Taos Downtown Historical District, USA. Finally, I performed an intensive analysis of primary and secondary sources related to the heritage tourism and preservation literature in order to determine what scholarly arguments have been presented in this respect. However, this scholarly knowledge, in addition to the benchmarks analysis, will compose the bulk of my heritage tourism analysis as supporting evidence.
In terms of data sources and the acquisition thereof, I conducted a trip to Alula to collect data, performed a site analysis, and studied the area’s history and spatial context. I also collected data from the Heritage Management Department at King Saud University, through which several scientific expeditions to Alula have occurred, and from the experts and archives of the SCTA, the government agency that monitors the historic sites in Alula. I then performed a comprehensive analysis, using contextual books, articles, and reports in combination with the on-site data, and visual resources to achieve my research objectives.

**Scope and Limitations**

The research scope concentrates on the historic district of Alula, a primarily residential adobe fabric. The research addresses the site’s history and significance, as well as current preservation interventions and practices, all to assess the potential for heritage tourism in Alula. In addition, the research focuses on the most appropriate area within old Alula, one that is not fragile and contains significant architectural features and urban contextual value.

The historical district of Alula is divided into two sections: the west and the east. The locals used the east section in the summertime; however, it is extremely fragile and has been destroyed by deterioration and development pressure. The west section, which was inhabited by the people of old Alula in the wintertime, has maintained its integrity (See figure1.4). I clearly delineated that zone’s boundaries and size, which includes the most historically and architecturally significant parts of the city. I determined this while visiting the site and investigating the district. Finally, since mud-brick buildings in Saudi Arabia have distinct features and significant urban fabric, this research addresses the
feasibility of tourism in terms of local aspects, attributes unique to its urban context, and the potential for a heritage tourism plan and its management in such a context.

A lack of Arabic sources centrally connected to the preservation field and heritage tourism is the main limitation of this research. Moreover, certain procedures, such as interviews, further data collection, as well as site revisit and analysis, must be done at the site and other cities in Saudi Arabia. While I am conducting the research at the University of Colorado Denver, accessibility to the site was limited and travel arrangements were required.

Figure 1.4: The red zone contains the winter houses in old Alula, and it has still maintained its integrity; the yellow zone includes the summerhouses in old Alula and it appears fragile. The red zone included in-the scope of this research. Source: Google.com
Literature Review

History of Historic Preservation

The historic preservation field is diverse with many branches, and each branch is a specialized path. Nevertheless, the history of historic preservation is documented in three major publications. Françoise Choay (2001) has written one of the most important books on this topic, guiding the reader from antiquity through many different eras to current examples of historic preservation. Her book illustrates the establishment of historic preservation and care for historic monuments. She also discusses the establishment of heritage and preservation institutions around the world. Jukka Jokilehto’s book *History of Architectural Conservation* (2002) covers the same topic, drawing on his/her experience with UNESCO and ICOMOS. It is a significant reference due to the author’s invaluable experience in the most important and leading institutions in the world. Ultimately, inasmuch as the history of historic preservation provides perspective through a comprehensive list of preservationist methods and case studies, this topic is essential to contextualize any study of historic preservation. In this respect, this part of the literature aims to understand how and why heritage institutions are created. Knowledge drawn from the history of the historic preservation field is essential in order to bolster this research and has a proper transmission to a much smaller issue in old Alula.

Historic Preservation’s Theory, Heritage Management and Planning

To have a thorough understanding of heritage tourism, I must survey historic preservation’s theory and practice. One of the earlier publications in this section of the literature is James Fitch’s *Historic Preservation: Curatorial Management of the Built World* (1980). Fitch is considered a pioneer in the field of preservation and one of the first
people in the United States to establish many preservation concepts; he established the first historic preservation program at the University of Colombia in New York and provided many contributions to the field of historic preservation in the United States. Other important books in the field include Norman Tyler and Ted Ligibel’s (2009) *Historic Preservation: An Introduction to Its History, Principles, and Practice* and Aylin Orbasli’s (2007) *Architectural Conservation: Principles and Practice*. Both books serve as basic textbooks from two different backgrounds in the theory and practice of historic preservation. Norman Tyler and Ted Ligibel (2009) wrote their book from an American historic preservation perspective whereas Orbasli (2007) is a Turkish author trained in the UK preservation schools. For my project, historic preservation planning and management is the most important discourse within the field because it is central to heritage tourism. In other words, heritage tourism is based on historic preservation management and planning.

Additionally, there are numerous publications from around the world addressing this topic. For instance, Harry Coccossis (1995) discusses tourism and conservation scenarios within the framework of medieval towns. Coccossis does not use this scenario approach to find an optimal solution but to enhance debate on environmental issues and the achievement of sustainability through suggested alternatives that would offer future knowledge about opportunities and constraints. This literature is important because it represents different chronicles, which evolve, emphasize certain patterns and support the most influential practices in the field of historic preservation theory and management. This research can benefit from the agreed upon implementation plans and aspects that remain well-established throughout various scholarly works in this field.
Another key element of the preservation field is preservation institutions and collaborative global initiatives such as the Getty Center, ICOMOS, UNESCO, ICCROM, and English Heritage. These institutions have published numerous books, articles, and reports about preservation planning, heritage assessment, heritage management, and guidelines for best practices. For instance, Feilden and Jokilehto authored *Management Guidelines for World Cultural Heritage Sites* (1998). This book identifies best practices in heritage management, according to a well-known institution and respected authors in the field of preservation. Again, this could benefit my research because these authors contribute to the literature from their hands-on experience as experts and consultants with prestigious institutes.

Finally, it is essential to understand the field of policy and regulation, as applied to government actions and partnerships. The main source for this field is *Preserving the Built Heritage: Tools for Implementation*, by Schuster and de Monchaux (1997), which offers a deep understanding of the logic behind government actions and partnership, in addition to how these actions coordinate with preservation and tourism. In *Cultural Tourism: The Partnership between Tourism and Cultural Heritage Management* (2002), Bob McKercher and Hilary du Cros discuss the importance of partnership between tourism and cultural management. The book examines the definition of cultural heritage and work to understand how tourism works. Then, the authors explore cultural heritage management of different aspects of both tangible and intangible heritage in addition to marketing, assessment, auditing and presentation of heritage assets. This research is site-specific, with special aspects and attributes, and can build upon the literature of heritage management and both

governmental and non-governmental actions while focusing on the special issues regarding adobe historical districts and the context of Saudi Arabia.

Heritage Tourism Phenomena

This branch of the literature emphasizes the relationship between historic districts and tourism phenomena. This topic is pertinent to my research on the implementation of proper planning and management procedures in a historic district for tourism. Some sources in this branch of the literature present fundamental theories while others touch on contemporary issues related to heritage tourism. For example, Aylin Orbasli in *Tourists in Historic Towns: Urban Conservation and Heritage Management* (2000), Ashworth and Tunbridge in *The Tourist-Historic City: Retrospect and Prospect of Managing the Heritage City* (2001), are all central to this paper. Orbasli discusses the idea of a historic town, demonstrating what historic towns need to implement and take into consideration during the tourism and preservation planning process. In the same respect, Ashworth and Tunbridge (2001) illustrate the concept of the tourist-historic city, uses of the tourist-historic city, users of the tourist-historic city, and the planning, management, and marketing of the tourist-historic city. Both books provide invaluable resources on and recommendations about best practices of tourist-historic cities. However, this case study is focused on a smaller historical district that is no longer functioning. In other words, it is completely abandoned, so some practices suggested in these literatures are appropriate while others are not. My research will evaluate the tourist-historic city idea and its management implementation in order to adapt it to the size and attributes of the old district of Alula.
Additionally, Dallen Timothy wrote *Tourism and the Personal Heritage Experience* (1997), an article about personal experience seeing visitors encountering a heritage site. Timothy focuses on the demand in tourism, as manifested in the visitors’ experiences, and how it gives more insight into heritage tourism literature. Moreover, Dallen wrote *Heritage Tourism* (2003) with Stephen Boyd and *Cultural Heritage and Tourism: An Introduction* (2011). In the first book, Dallen and Boyd lay out basic principles about heritage tourism, the definition of heritage, the emerging demand for heritage tourism, preservation, heritage tourism management, heritage politics, and future development of the field. This book is a good source for understanding the basics behind heritage tourism and developing a strong grasp of its aspects. My research will benefit from best practices on this topic and apply them to the historical adobe district of Alula. Before writing their second book, Dallen Timothy and Stephen Boyd composed their first article when the *Journal of Heritage Tourism* was established. Their article “Heritage Tourism in the 21st Century: Valued Traditions and New Perspectives” (2006) emphasized the significance of the heritage tourism field and solidified the creation of the journal. The article highlighted the current literature related to heritage tourism and identified potential emerging literature that needed more research. The second book by Dallen (2011) is a more recent publication that analyzes cross-disciplinary issues and is divided into two sections. The first section explores contemporary preservation and planning issues in heritage tourism, such as demand, experience, heritage supply, authenticity, politics, legislation, conservation organizations, marketing, managing visitors, and interpretation. The second section focuses on emerging issues in heritage tourism as well as future directions for the field: museum studies, religious sites, pilgrimage, and dark tourism, for example. The
literature by Dallen Timothy is central to my research because it provides principles, planning strategies, and insight related to heritage tourism while aiding me in identifying the location of my own research within the literature of heritage tourism.

Additional work has been done concerning heritage tourism, such as Melanie Smith’s *Issues in Cultural Tourism Studies* (2009), which touches on contemporary issues concerning heritage tourism such as global cultural tourism studies, politics, heritage tourism and museums, indigenous cultural tourism, arts and festivals of cultural tourism, creative tourism, and cultural tourism and urban regeneration. Smith made an innovative contribution to the field by emphasizing the idea of creative cultural tourism built on more interactive activities, and advanced technology. In addition, Smith highlighted the relations between cultural tourism and urban regeneration, which cultural tourism can use as a catalyst for city development. Hence, these topic provide insight into my research in terms of the creative tourism industry. Moreover, how issues like interpretation, innovative media representation, and visitor activity involvement can play a significant role. Also how elevating this field contribute a bigger picture with the city development in topics such as economic benefits. Furthermore, another contribution comes from Luigi Fusco and Peter Nijkamp, who edited *Cultural Tourism and Sustainable Local Development* (2009), which also touches on sustainable issues in cultural tourism and how it can bring substantial economic benefit while having negative impacts as well. Examples of these negative impacts include congestion, decline in quality of life, and loss of local identity. The discussion in this book aimed to solve this dilemma by establishing strategies, addressing policies in this regard, and analyzing case studies. The impact on the local community is
an area of concern in my paper, and I intend to respond to that by using literature that tackles this issue.

Moreover, Erve Chambers in *Native Tours: The Anthropology of Travel and Tourism* (2010) provides a solid understanding of the anthropology of tourism in general. Chambers addresses many issues concerning sustainable tourism, such as the local community and economic benefits. This source is central to my research in terms of the overall understanding of sustainable tourism and what needs to be taken into consideration in this respect. Finally, the *Annals of Tourism Research*, and the *Journal of Heritage Tourism* are the main periodicals that contribute to this research as well as some articles from other journal with related studies were investigated such as the *Association for Preservation Technology International*, APA journal. Authors such as (Millar 1989; Timothy 1997, 2008; Teo and Yeoh 1997; Poria et al. 2003, 2009; Garrod and Fyall 2000; Harrill and Thomas 2003; Nasser 2003) also contribute greatly to the literature on heritage or cultural tourism, as have other authors and publications listed in the bibliography of this project. These periodical articles varies in their topic such as tourists’ experience, heritage politics, heritage tourism management, direction for future researches and analysis of cases studies. My research consulted articles that contribute either to heritage tourism management or to tourism planning in historic district.

**Context of Heritage Tourism and Historic Preservation in Saudi Arabia**

Researchers have conducted some studies on the topic of preservation and heritage tourism in Saudi Arabia, but they are relatively few in number. This is evident in the lack of publications in the Arab world in general and Saudi Arabia in particular. However, useful reports have been published on different historic areas in Saudi Arabia, from
archaeological, planning, and architectural points of view. Moreover, some research exists in Arab countries, concentrating on the vital factors in the rehabilitation of urban areas, though few specifically focus on mud-brick urban areas. There are also some sources from the SCTA in Saudi Arabia, promoting heritage and tourism in general. For example, the SCTA has produced technical and marketing reports on how to promote tourism in Saudi Arabian heritage districts. Some Arabic books discuss principles and theories of historic preservation; these materials are helpful but limited in number and need to be enriched with further publications in this domain. In Saudi Arabia, Abdulnaser Alzhrani (2008, 2009, and 2012) has carried out several invaluable research projects and has published books on heritage resources management and urban heritage management and planning. Mainly, these publications focus on material assessments of mud-brick buildings in Saudi Arabia and a critical evaluation of the current situations of some historical districts in Saudi Arabia from condition status, heritage management and tourism status points of view. Some authors address building conditions, deterioration, and solutions in Saudi Arabia such as Muhsen Algrni (2012) who proposed a rehabilitation plan for historic towns in Saudi Arabia in his dissertation. In addition, Kabbashi Qaseemah (2008) has conducted research on this topic in Saudi Arabia and the Sudan, where he focused on cultural resource and heritage management.

Recently, the SCTA in Saudi Arabia carried out an ambitious historic preservation movement. The movement included annual conferences (2011, 2012, 2013), research and practical reports, and actual management and planning initiatives for heritage and historic sites. Thus, the SCTA has made valuable contributions to the Saudi Arabian context for historic preservation since its establishment in 2000. It has become a key player in Saudi
Arabian heritage (SCTA 2014). For example, reports about the rehabilitation of historic districts and tourism investment in the city of Alula by Alzhrani and Kabbashi (2008) are central to my research. Much of my research was based on that report in its analysis of the current situation of the city of Alula as well as the old historical district of Alula.

**Context of the City of Alula and the Old Historical District of Alula**

Finally, the literature on Alula is notable, but only a few publications pertain to the city’s preservation, and even fewer to the historic district of Alula. Both Alzhrani and Kabbashi (2008), as mentioned earlier, conducted research and reports about Alula and the investment in tourism planning, including details about the historic district of Alula. In his Ph.D. dissertation, Algrni (2012) used old Alula as an example of a site in Saudi Arabia where SCTA offered heritage development. Mainly, this literature benefits my research in regards to the current situation of the city of Alula and the historical district of Alula. Other authors have written about the geography of and tourism in Alula, including Alfaqeer (2006, 2008); Alansari (2005); and Aboalhasan (2005). Almhfoz (2001) and Naseef (1995) have written about the archaeology and anthropology of Alula. This part of the literature helped me establish my empirical work in order to understand the potential of the city of Alula and the historical district as well as other disciplines that can benefit heritage tourism planning.

Part of my research will focus on an analysis of benchmarks pertaining to the Alula historical district. Precedents from around the world including projects in Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and an international example from America are key source for further analysis. Specifically, there are a few analyses on the Turaif historical district in Saudi Arabia and Taybet Zamman Village in Jordan, either in dissertations or in reports (Alamri 2009; Algrni
2012; Azhrani 2008; ADA 2009; Bendakir 2012), in addition to the Taos historical district, which websites’ information retrieved and analyzed such as *Historic Taos: A Self-Guided Walking Tour of 22 Historic Taos Landmarks* from town of Taos and revision 2020. Both the Turaif historical district and the historic Taos analysis rely on the UNESCO website, which has valuable information about the history and significance of these locations. For my case study, I draw on similarities to the cases presented in these studies. Additionally, lessons learned are highlighted in the findings and discussion sections as invaluable data that help me answer my research question.
CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

AND HERITAGE OF THE CITY OF ALULA

Historical Background

Within Saudi Arabia, Alula is in the northwest, in the province of Madinah. It stands on a north–south plain, and mountains surround it from the east and west. These mountains are sandstone, eroded throughout the ages to create very aesthetic shapes. The plain is a huge valley, receiving water from many streams that come from the nearby mountains (Alansari and Abu Alhasan 2005). According to (Imarat Madinah region 2014) the population of Alula city in 2014 is 69,429 people and the area of the city is 29261 km², whereas the overall population was approximately 3000 people in 2004 (Alfaqeer 2006).

Starting in the pre-Islamic eras, Alula was a civic and commercial center due to its unique location on the trade routes that linked the Arabic Peninsula to Iraq, the Mediterranean, and Egypt. More precisely, Alula was on the famous north–south caravan road (Albukhor road) or incense road.8 Thus, Alula’s strategic location on this road played a key role in the successive making and remaking of the city through its historical eras. In addition, the abundance of natural waterways provided sustenance, and the mountains that surround the city were a natural defense (Alfaqeer 2006; 2008). See figure 2.1 and 2.2.

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8 Highly prized incense, such as frankincense and myrrh, was produced in southern Arabia and transported in caravans to Egypt, Mesopotamia, Iran, and the Mediterranean world. Cities along the trade routes grew considerably prosperous by heavily taxing the caravans. Source: Raby n.d. www.roadsofarabia.com
Figure 2.1: Location of Alula in the context of the Middle East. Source: Bing.com with researcher adjustment

Figure 2.2: The Incense road paths passing through Alula. Source: roadofarabia.com/exhibition/
In the later Islamic eras, the city continued to thrive, especially as a way station for pilgrims from Egypt, Iraq, and Syria. See figure 2.3. This role was reinforced during the rule of the Ottoman Empire, when the train station was built in Alula to link the north and south. Today, the city’s importance has decreased, especially when the main roads and airports in other cities were built; Alula is no longer the traveler’s link that it used to be.

![Figure 2.3: The Pilgrimage roads passing through Alula. Source: roadsofarabia.com/exhibition/](http://www.roadsofarabia.com/exhibition/)

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9 When the Prophet Muhammad traveled from Mecca to Medina in 622 CE, he performed the first hajj or pilgrimage. The journey became one of the five pillars of Islam and a principal duty of all Muslims. As Islam spread from the Arabian Peninsula to the rest of the Near East and into North Africa, an elaborate network of roads, way stations, and towns developed to accommodate the ever-growing number of pilgrims on their way to Mecca (http://www.roadsofarabia.com/exhibition/).
The people of Alula consisted of small tribes that branched from two major groups called the Alhelf and Alshaqeq. For many decades, Alula received newcomers from nearby rural areas and other regions, such as Najd and Hejaz, as well as people from Iraq, Syria, Jordan, and Morocco. Nowadays, Alula continues to receive newcomers due to advancements in tourism and urban sprawl (Alfaqeer 2006). International travelers, such as the French travelers Anton Jaussen and Rafael Savignac who visited Alula three times (1907, 1909, and 1910) (Nassef 1995), mentioned Alkurabah as the place where the Dedanites and Liyanites settled. In addition, Anton Jaussen and Rafael Savignac discussed the inscriptions from the Dedanites and Liyanites eras and described Alula as the city of milk and honey.
Antiquities and Built Heritage of Alula

Pre-Islamic Eras

Dedanite Kingdom

The ancient inscriptions in Alula, some of them located in the Ekmah Mountain, Alkurabah archaeological site, with others scattered all around Alula, indicate that the Dedanite kingdom existed between the sixth and seventh centuries BCE, wherein Alula or Dadan was the capital city. Another ancient inscription refers to the Dedanite Kingdom as a nation of political, economic, and military power, a nation that participated in many conflicts with its neighbors (Alfaqeer 2006).

Lihyan Kingdom

At about 500 BCE, the Lihyanite kingdom surpassed the Dedanites. The Lihyanite kingdom lasted for another five centuries. This era flourished under a stable political system (a parliamentary council) with advancements in architecture and the arts. In addition, commercial and agricultural production thrived, especially during the second and third centuries BCE. However, this kingdom ended in the middle of the first century BCE, when the Nabataeans conquered their land and moved the capital city to Mada’in Salih (Alfaqeer 2006).
Nabataeans Kingdom

Mada’in Salih, also known as Alhijr, is another ancient site, located about 22 km north of Alula.¹⁰ The first people to inhabit this place were the Thamudis in approximately 700 BCE. Then, the Nabataeans inhabited Alhijr in the first century BCE, with a kingdom that extended from Petra, their former capital city, to Mada’in Salih, their second capital city. This kingdom ended in 106 CE, when the Roman Empire conquered the Nabataean lands.

The site of Mada’in Salih, which is attached to Alula today, is famous for the tomb groups that the Nabataeans carved into the mountains. These tombs, particularly their façades, demonstrate a high level of engineering and architectural skill. In addition, the level of aesthetic detail in the ornamentation enriches the religious symbolism there. Most of these tombs have inscriptions about the builders, owners, currencies, names of kings, and burial and anti-theft laws (Alfaqeer 2006).

![Mada’in Salih, world heritage site](image.png)

Figure 2.5: Mada’in Salih, world heritage site

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¹⁰ In 2008, the archaeological site of Alhijr (Mada’in Salih) became the first world heritage property in Saudi Arabia (UNESCO 2008).
Alkuraibah Archaeological Site

Frequent excavations have revealed that Alkuraibah, the ancient heart of present-day Alula, has multiple architectural layers, dating back to the Dedanites and Lihyanites. The site contains valuable features, such as a cistern made from sandstone. The cistern is 4 m in diameter and 2 m deep and has a capacity of 24,000 L. It functioned as a washing pool that people used before praying at the adjacent Lihyanite temple (Alansari and Abu Alhasan 2005). Statues of various sizes were also found at the site. These relate to both the Dedanite and Lihyanite eras. In addition, archaeologists have found a great deal of artifacts such as household tools, ceramic pieces, and artistic ceramics; a ceramics factory was also discovered near the mountain of Dadan, along with ancient ashes and debris. Archaeologists have also found pieces of Greek pottery at Alula, which bears witness to the trade between these cultures (Alfaqeer 2008). See figure 2.6.

Other important archaeological sites are the tombs carved in the mountain of Dadan on the edge of the Alkuraibah archaeological site. These tombs, for groups or individuals, were part of the Dedanite and Lihyanite cultures. At the top of the tombs are inscriptions referring to the owners and their wishes (Alfaqeer 2008). One of the most famous tombs has statues of lions at the top, hence the name, Lions’ Tomb.\footnote{According to an old local myth, these lions protect and guard the tombs.}

The remnants of a famous Dedanite temple are located at the top of the Aum Daraj Mountain, on the outskirts of Alula. The temple is accessible via old stairs. Inasmuch as temples were architecturally popular in the ancient world, demonstrating the significance of religion to ancient cultures, the excavated temple forms an essential part of Alula's ancient heritage (Alfaqeer 2008).
Inscriptions and Drawings

Ancient inscriptions are abundant in the Alula area; these represent social, religious, economic, and political information from the pre-Islamic eras, and they offer the names of kings, tribes, gods, and religious hierarchies of the temples. The most common place for these inscriptions are in the Ekmah Mountain, southwest of Alula, mostly dating from the Lihyanite era (Alansari and Abu Alhasan 2005). Alrezaiqah Mountain, located to the south of Alula, also has many ancient drawings and inscriptions carved into the rock. In addition, it has some carved tombs on the cliff-face, which are very similar to the ones at the Alkurabah site (Alansari and Abu Alhasan 2005). There are also many inscriptions in the Aum Daraj Mountain, again dating from the Lihyanite era. Some of these inscriptions were carved into small stones that were later moved by the people of the old town, who incorporated these boards into their houses as decorative features (Alansari and Abu Alhasan 2005). Furthermore, many drawings of animals associated with agriculture;
humans associated with social activities, celebrations, and dances; and musical instruments, such as local stringed instruments, bear witness to the level of civilization at that time (Al-faqeer 2008).

![Figure 2.7: Inscriptions in Ekmah Mountain](image)

**Islamic Eras**

With the advent of Islam, the name of the city changed from Dadan to the Valley of Villages; this valley was the link between the Mediterranean and centers in the south and west of the Arabian Peninsula, such as Madinah and Yemen. Small villages existed throughout the valley, and their inhabitants were a mix of several Arab and Jewish tribes of farmers. However, in the early days of Islam, Alula flourished because of the pilgrims passing through from Egypt, Iraq, and Syria to Mecca. Wells and agricultural development helped the city’s commerce flourish, and by the thirteenth century CE, the developed area
became known as Alula, whereby the name ‘Villages' Valley’ gradually disappeared, except in local literature. The main advancements of the city occurred during the Ottoman Empire (1301–1922). Hence, the most famous buildings in the Alula area are the old town from that era and the Ottoman castles scattered within and throughout the city (Alfaqeer 2008).

Hejaz Railroad

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Ottoman Empire constructed the Hejaz railroad between Damascus and Madinah to assist the pilgrims journeying to Mecca (Alfaqeer 2008). The main railroad station, called Alatheeb, is located 10 km north of Alula, and the other stations are located to the south of the city. These stations reflect the city’s traditional local architecture, even though the work was a collaboration between an Austrian and a Turkish architect (Alfaqeer 2008).
Qurh (Almabbiat) Archaeological Site

Located about 22 km south of Alula, this site appeared after the termination of the Alhijr inhabitant’s era before Islam and extended after Islam. It dates from the seventh to the thirteenth centuries CE and reached its utmost development in the tenth century. Recent excavations have led to the discovery of some architectural ruins, such as city walls, internal walls, flooring patterns, and canals systems (Alfaqeer 2006). These are the ruins of an Islamic city famous for its markets, agricultural activity, canal systems, and position along the pilgrimage routes. Furthermore, recent excavations have revealed a hidden route behind the eastern mountains, linking Al-Mabbiayat with Mada’in Salih, where many early Islamic inscriptions have been found (Alansari and Abu Alhasan 2005). Al-Mabbiayat ended in the thirteenth century.

Figure 2.9: Qurh (Almabbiat) archaeological site
Natural Resources of Alula

Hurrat Alawaired

This feature rises more than 2000 feet above sea level and is one of the biggest plateaus in Saudi Arabia. The Hurrat Alawaired is approximately 140 × 40 km, equal to 5,600 km², and is one of several famous volcanic plateaus in the Alula area. Recently, Alula began construction on a road that leads to the top of the Hurrat Alawaired, opening it to the public as a national park. The plateau provides a magnificent view of the city (Alansari and Abu Alhasan 2005).

Figure 2.10: View from Alawaired plateau
Mountains’ Morphology

The mountain forms surrounding Alula are very distinctive; natural erosion has shaped them into an extraordinary landscape. One of the most famous mountains has the shape of an elephant (Figure 2.11, on the right-hand side).

Figure 2.11: Mountain morphology in Alula city

Current Situation of Tourism in Alula

For years, the fertile soil of Alula has made agriculture a good source of revenue for the people there. Today, tourism can play an important role in bringing new revenue to the city, especially now that Mada’in Salih has been listed as a UNESCO world historical site in 2008.

Alula has many potential tourist attractions, such as historic sites, natural resources, farms, an appealing climate, and wildlife. More importantly, heritage tourism is attractive due to the diversity and quality of the historic sites in and around Alula. However, even though Alula has great potential for tourism, its economic sector remains small, meaning there is not much demand for tourism and there is insufficient marketing and preparation for tourism. Hence, there is an immediate need for tourist development to renovate the city.
for its people, specifically through an initiative to rehabilitate local heritage sites. In addition, this development requires improvements to the facilities associated with these historic sites, as well as local lodgings, infrastructure, human resources in tourism, and tourist information centers.

In 1974, the population of Alula was 17,718; it increased to 29,302 in 2004 and then to 69,429 people in 2014. The urban areas expanded from roughly 15,000 km² in 1974 to 29,261 km² in 2014 (Alfaqeer 2006, Imarat Madinah Region 2014). The driving forces behind the development of tourism in Alula are international recognition, promotion of national identity, economic improvement, and residual stimulation of development throughout the country. Hence, the growth in population and urban scale has led to the desire for more development in tourism.

Alfaqeer (2006) has studied the general tourist potential of Alula; his focus is on the provision of facilities to meet tourist demands. In terms of facilities, he explained that proximity to other attractions can play a significant role in creating a successful venue for tourism. Hence, toward preserving the integrity of the built heritage and taking advantage of the surroundings opportunities, tourism in Alula can flourish. Alfaqeer also suggested a link between Alula tourism and the Hajj and Umrah season, which would allow many pilgrims to travel to Alula. Moreover, Alula tourism could work in collaboration with Jordan and Egypt. Egypt has adjacent shores and resorts with ferries that can transport tourists to Alula. Furthermore, Jordan has the historic site of Petra, which was the

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12 Inhabited since prehistory, this Nabataean caravan-city, situated between the Red Sea and the Dead Sea, was an important crossroads between Arabia, Egypt, and Syria-Phoenicia. Petra is half-built, half-carved into the rock and is surrounded by mountains riddled with passages and gorges. It is one of the world's most famous archaeological sites, where ancient Eastern traditions blend with Hellenistic architecture (http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/326).
northern part of the Nabataean kingdom. While the south part (Mada’in Salih) of the Nabataean civilization is located a few minutes away from Alula by bus, tourists who wish to see Petra can see its southern counterpart while staying in Alula.

Infrastructure is equally important to stimulating tourism. Tourist cities need a flexible transportation system to circulate tourists as well as goods and supplies. Alula has been fairly isolated since World War I, when the Hejaz railroad was destroyed. Thus, accessibility has become very limited, worsened by the fact that new highways avoid Alula, except through connecting minor roads. Furthermore, infrastructure includes high quality communications, energy, water, sewage, proper health care facilities, and security, all of which are critical in order to develop tourism (Alfaqeer 2006). The current communication, energy, water, sewage, health care, and security situations in Alula lack professionalism and fall below tourists’ expectations, yet Alula still attracts many visitors every year.

Tourism facilities are essential, one of the most significant being hospitality. Hospitalities, such as food, drinks, social gatherings, and guest security, are major factors in promoting better tourism. In this respect, Alula is still progressing very slowly, which has had a negative influence on tourists through inconvenience. Because it is difficult to reach Alula, tourists think twice before coming to the city. Furthermore, at present, Alula has only two four-star hotels and approximately ten inns, and it only has a few modest restaurants. In addition, tourism services such as museums, shopping centers, and banks are important to promote tourism but are still evolving (Alfaqeer 2008).

It is worth mentioning that Alula has been experiencing strong renovations such as establishing a tourism collage at the branch of Taibah University in Alula. More inns have
started to emerge—Mada’in Salih’s improvements after Alula became a world heritage site. In addition, the recent domestic airport construction in Alula is a major advancement.

To evaluate the current tourism situation in Alula properly, an intensive survey must be conducted on the historic and natural sites. Additionally, increased awareness for locals about the significance of heritage and education is necessary to show the community how to participate in the development and evaluation of a tourism plan. Moreover, studies of the demands for and marketing of tourism are necessary to evaluate tourists’ desires and the effectiveness of services to meet tourists’ expectations (Alfaqeer 2006). Ultimately, conducting a demand analysis is crucial to anticipate the future of tourism in Alula, allowing stakeholders to tackle identified challenges. In Alula, it is difficult to attain accurate statistics due to limited access to information, especially to hotels and other inns, which do not give up that kind of information in order to maintain customer privacy. However, it can be said that the demand in Alula is low compared to what the city can offer tourists. As Alfaqeer (2006) noted, the main problems are limited rehabilitated resources, an absence of marketing, no coordination between the SCTA and educational institutes concerning official holidays, and more importantly, no sensitivity to security and its relation to tourism. One of the dramatic drops in Alula tourism occurred in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, an impact that was felt globally, which reduced the number of visitors to the area from roughly 19,000 to 5000 a year—even before the existence of appropriate tourism services in the city. The other major obstacles are the lack of advertising, undeveloped tourist products, and the difficulty for tourists to attain visas for travel in Saudi Arabia. Presently, the most significant resources spent on tourism in Alula are allocated as follows: 40% for historic sites, 30% for natural resources, and the
remaining 30% for facilities and services (Alfaqeer 2008).

Overall, Alula holds a great deal of potential in the form of antiquities, historical attractions, natural resources, climate, and location as well as proximity to other attractions, in addition to the important historical incense and pilgrimage routes. Moreover, the establishment of the new airport, the new University branch and the increase in housing capacity are aspects that increasing the population rate as well as improving visitors’ number. However, a lack of transportation, facilities, rehabilitation plans, tourism services, marketing, visa difficulties, absence of souvenirs, absence of tourism commodities and information centers have great negative impact on Alula tourism. Hence, the heritage tourism seems to be a significant sector in the city of Alula. And the needs for a collaborative efforts from governmental and non-governmental agencies to restore and advance tourism as ever become essential and viable.
CHAPTER III

THE OLD HISTORICAL DISTRICTS OF ALULA:

URBAN BUILT HERITAGE AND MANAGEMENT PLAN (CASE STUDY)

For many tourists, visiting international heritage attractions is a way of appreciating universal civilization and achieving some degree of human unity (Moulin 1990, 3; In Tourism and the personal experience. Timothy, 1997).

Historical Background and Development

The old district of Alula, or Aldirah as locals like to call it, dating back to the thirteenth century, is a brilliant example of a traditional Arab-Islamic city. The location was carefully selected, positioned on a rectangular plateau at the narrowest point of the valley, giving the city an advantage for defense and a safety measure against flooding. In the middle of the district stands Alula Castle on top of a hill. Otherwise, the historical district consists mainly of residential houses, mosques, and markets. Buildings are attached to each other, forming a wall that isolates the city, save the fourteen gates within the wall (Nassef 1995). Furthermore, the houses of Alula do not have windows or other apertures at the ground floor on the side(s) in direct contact with the street(s); this was for privacy and security purposes. However, windows exist on the upper stories to provide daylight and ventilation, and the roofs consist of palm tree logs and layers of mud.

The roads of Alula are tiled with stone to facilitate transportation (Alansari and Abu Alhasan 2005). Jaussen and Savignac (1909) mentioned that the roads of the old town are very narrow and winding. See figure 3.1. Furthermore, Charles Doughty visited Alula in 1976-1977 and described the old town as having very clean, tight roads, but he noted that they were dark due to the structures looming above the roads. However, nowadays, the roads are fragile and in a constant state of deterioration. The Alula historical district is
currently located within the modern city of Alula, so the site has access to all the city’s services as well as other historical attractions. Moreover, the Alula historical district is a few minutes away from the Mada’in Salih world heritage site and the new domestic airport. See figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Location of Old Alula within the context of the City of Alula, Mada’in Salih and the New Airport. Source: Google.com (with the researcher adjustment).
Figure 3.2: Map of Old Alula by Jaussen and Savignac 1909. Source: Mission Archaeology in Arabia.
Site’s Architecture and Urban Features (Identifying the Built Heritage)

Urban Fabric

Old Alula has a magnificent urban fabric representative of a traditional Islamic city, combining religious, social, economic, defensive, and environmental aspects. This combination is further enriched with many architectural patterns, such as domiciles, religious buildings, and defensive elements, the latter represented by the castle in the middle of the district. All these patterns link together through the consistent use of adobe (Alzhrani 2008). Furthermore, the urban spaces of Alula work on axes, to facilitate the circulation of traffic, distribution of goods, and connectivity at social gatherings. Despite
the tightness between buildings, individual houses have their privacy too because of social traditions that promoted privacy and gender separation (Alfaqeer 2006).

![Figure 3.4: Map of Old Alula. Source: google/map.com](image)

**Roads and Gates**

Although, the internal roads are very tight, with the buildings attached to one other, a great deal of light and ventilation still enters the streets due to internal courtyards for houses and open public spaces. Furthermore, in some parts of the narrow network of roads, roofs hang over the street, providing shade (Alfaqeer 2006). Further still, most of the roads are tiled to a width of 2 m, except for bigger spaces in which local products were sold. These roads also have a gradual slope toward the east where the farms are located, thus facilitating the distribution of rainwater for agricultural production. This strategy illustrates the astute planning of the site, with knowledge of the environment and precipitation for its optimal usage to irrigate their farms (Alzhrani 2008). Finally, there are fourteen gates to
the district, which were opened during the day and completely closed at sunset (Alzhrani 2008). Thus, the image of the walled city persists because of the gates that provide egress through the walls.

![Figure 3.5: Example of roads within the old Alula](image)

**Residential Houses**

There are 870 houses in the district, each one having two or three stories, and most being attached to each other on three of the four walls, reducing construction costs. The typical two-story house had a floor area of $6 \times 8$ m, and daylight entered a residence through an open courtyard or skylight in the stairwell. The front door, leading into the courtyard, was made of logs, and the courtyard was part of the ground-floor complex, which included storage for animals and grains. Off the courtyard, a staircase made of sandstone, adobe, and palm logs would lead to the first floor, which usually had two large rooms, with a bedroom and living room for men. Beneath the staircase was storage or, in larger homes, a
room for social gatherings where the elite would discuss the events of the day.\textsuperscript{13} The stairs would then lead up to the second story, which typically consisted of a kitchen, bathroom, and a room with a fireplace and an opening above the fireplace, allowing for ventilation and light (Alfaqeer 2006). Furthermore, some residents extended their houses by laying out palm logs over to the house across the street, creating another room called the Altyarah (Fig. 3.5) (Alzhrani 2008). This added room provided shade for the road, extra space for residents, and security. In sum, these houses were simple, elegant expressions of privacy and shelter.

\textsuperscript{13} A social gathering, in Arabic Almaqahy, which literally means “coffee house,” would occur in a tribal chief’s house in order to solve social, commercial, organizational, and other everyday problems. This feature will be addressed in more detail later in this chapter.
Figure 3.6: Altyarah is an extra room above roads to provide space and shade.
Figure 3.7: Residential houses in old Alula

The Castle, Mosques, Markets and Altantorah (Sundial)

There are also several major elements within the district. First, Mousa Bin Nusair’s castle stands in the middle of the district, as noted, on top of a hill. This castle dates back to the early years of Islam, belonging to the military leader Mousa Bin Nusair, who conquered Spain (Andalusia) from roughly 700 to 800 CE. This castle also played a significant role in the town’s security (Alfaqeer 2006). Second, mosques exist in any Islamic city, serving religious and social purposes. Thus, in old Alula, there were five mosques scattered in the now historic district (Alzhrani 2008). Third, there was a large market (Souk) in the district. Between the mountain to the west and the houses to the east, it stands as a rectangular plaza called Aldor or Almanakha (Alzhrani 2008). This market also functioned as a plaza for celebrations and special events. Finally, one of the important
landmarks in old Alula is the sundial. Located south of the old town, this sundial identified the seasons, located the stars, and divided the water shares between farmers (Alfaqeer 2006).

Figure 3.8: Castle Mousa Bin Nusair after rehabilitation. Source: sandramuench.com/Saudi_Arabia_23.html
Figure 3.9: Open space where the old market (Souk) used to be in old Alula

Figure 3.10: Altantorah (Sundial)
Traditional Materials

Mud is a pervasive building material in Saudi Arabia. Since Alula has an abundance of water, fertile soil, and organic sediment, mud was an ideal material, having the added benefits of insulating against heat and sound, being easy to shape, and providing warmth in the winter (Alzhrani 2008). Alzhrani specifically studied the use of that material in old Alula. The people of Alula used mud in different construction methods, such as erecting a frame against which the pre-formed adobe was laid by hand. Straw or thatch would then be applied because drying out the mud was essential to maximize the walls’ durability. Furthermore, Alzhrani (2008) mentioned that the people of old Alula wisely used mud in conjunction with stone and timber. Stone was used for the purposes of constructing foundations, columns, stairs, wells, and canals. Timber was commonly used for roofs, stairs, and sometimes doors and windows.

Additionally, plaster from nearby areas could be applied to a house’s exterior. It was not a necessary step, but it improved the building’s energy efficiency and filled in cracks. Sometimes, the walls were decorated with stucco or colorations, especially a red pigment that came from local sandstone. The combination of sandstone and mud brick allowed for organized or unorganized surface patterns to create variety in the architecture. Limestone was used as well, but not as much as the combination of mud brick and sandstone. The people of old Alula would also use sandstone that was already cut for other historical sites in the area. More importantly, they brought some of the ancient inscribed rocks from the Alkurabah site and incorporated those rocks within the structures of their town, usually for decoration purposes. Furthermore, the sandstone brought from nearby areas was usually used to support foundations, columns, and ground floor structures to
resist water flow (Alzhrani 2008). Finally, the roofs were made from a layer of logs with palm leaves draped atop the logs. These were then secured with rope, and mud was poured over the roof. Usually, the ground floor was constructed from sandstone brought in from nearby mountain quarries, and the rest was from mud bricks.

Figure 3.11: Usage of sandstone that has an inscription from nearby archaeological sites for decoration purposes. Sources: (Alansari and Abu Alhasan 2005).

Value and Significance

The preservation of old Alula is highly significant because it demonstrates a source of pride for the nation of Saudi Arabia as well as a source of culture and identity for the country’s future generations. The heritage of old Alula bears witness to human artistry and civilization. Thus, the significance of preserving old Alula also comes from it being a city where architecture and history combine. Its traits should not be ignored, for it is a unique mixture of urbanity and agricultural and social trends (Alzhrani 2008).
Architectural Features

Old Alula is a typical old Islamic city. The houses embody the architectural character of adobe construction, but in combination with stone architecture situated in an original urban fabric. Furthermore, the historic district holds the most significant part of its urban setting and fabric, and the integrity of the site is well maintained.

Figure 3.12: Interior decoration inside adobe buildings in old Alula. Source: SCTA
Figure 3.13: The architecture style of the adobe buildings in old Alula. Source: Retlaw Snellac, Flicker.com

Figure 3.14: Adobe building at the market area in old Alula
Social Significance: Social Gathering (Coffee Houses)

Coffee houses were one of the most significant trends that played an important role in societal configurations of Alula’s old town. From 1686 to 1925, almost 44 of these social coffee houses were sought for consultation in order to solve security, social and economic issues. Moreover, some of the discussions involved economic issues, such as wells and water management, that played significant roles in agricultural advancement. Another example was discussion of security issues, such as maintaining order in the city. Some discussions included establishing regulations, consultancy, preparing for weddings, solving people’s conflicts, and giving verdicts on punishment. In general, the place where such discussions occurred was considered a social and recreational facility where people could meet, socialize, and drink Arabic coffee. However, the main purpose for these social
gathering places was to solve social issues as well as meet friends and family from the same tribe. All these issues were discussed in such a way because of the absence of government authority that kept security and maintained order. Many of these social gatherings were documented by the participants themselves; one of the old Alula tribes had 800 documents from these social gatherings, and many more of these documents were lost due to neglect, fire and moving locals to other settlements. These social gathering places were allocated to the elites of each tribe; one of the people would host the event and provide for the gathering’s needs. In term of architecture, the place was usually the most spacious room in the host’s house (Mahfouz 2001). The gathering place, usually at a tribal leader’s house, was a big room on the ground floor, and it opened into the road. Built from sandstone, some of the ancient rocks from nearby historic sites were incorporated as decorative features in these gathering places (Alzhrani 2008).

**Irrigation System, Aintadul (Underground Canals and Wells)**

The canals in the old town of Alula are one of the most significant waterways in the ancient world. These underground canals extracted water from natural sources, using a very sophisticated system for its time. The system was comprised of a horizontal canal with a slight slope that linked the main well to other wells, and the internal walls of these canals were tiled in stone to make them watertight. This technology allowed the people of Alula to distribute the water from wells to different farms. Aintadul, one of the irrigation systems located northwest of Alula and connected to the north part of the historical district of Alula, existed in the ancient world and served Alula up until 40 years ago, when it was abandoned (Alansari and Abu Alhasan 2005). Jaussen and Savignac (1909) mentioned that the people of Alula used this system as well as hollowed palm tree logs as pipes to irrigate their farms.
They would lay out a network of aboveground canals to distribute water equally to other parts of the farms (Alansari and Abu Alhasan 2005).

![Figure 3.16: General concept of the Qanat irrigation system. Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qanat](image)

**Current Situation of Heritage Tourism in Alula Historical District**

The site will likely face continuous deterioration due to vandalism and natural factors, which has led to the destruction of many architectural features. In particular, with the massive development of the oil industry in Saudi Arabia, most people have moved from traditional domiciles and settled in modern houses in big cities, leaving places like old Alula to suffer a cumulative negative impact on its built heritage. The main reasons for the site’s deterioration, beyond the natural elements and neglect, are developmental pressure due to the fast track construction, the consequent impact of building new homes, and the construction of major new roads. Ultimately, as Alzhrani (2008) demonstrates, the negative human factors are as follows:

- Locals migrating to modern places
• The absence of restoration and proper rehabilitation plans
• Lack of awareness of the built heritage and its significance
• Lack of incorporation between the built heritage and new master plans
• Lack of policies and regulations that preserve the built heritage
• Lack of specialists in preservation and conservation
• Lack of press campaigns for preserving and investing in heritage

Nevertheless, natural factors, such as climate, precipitation, and insects, have negatively affected the adobe and timber structures in Alula, eventually leading to collapsed buildings (Alzhrani 2008).

Recently, the SCTA made a significant effort to reconstruct and restore parts of the site, especially the castle and houses that represent its architectural heritage. This step is a positive step toward Alula’s future tourism planning and rehabilitation. In addition, Alzhrani (2008) suggested an integrated conservation policy to preserve old Alula. This plan highlights the following elements of integration:

• The SCTA’s reconstruction efforts
• The local community’s efforts and participation in the preservation plan
• Advocates who raise local communities’ awareness of their heritage
• Incorporation of a heritage management plan for old Alula, with clearly demarcates programs for preservation
• Achievement of sustainability through renovation, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse at the site
• The use of international standards and conventions

Alzhrani also suggested the following methods to achieve an effective preservation plan:
- Documentation and surveying for all data that represents the district’s current situation
- Performing the necessary restoration treatment, despite the cost, in order for the site to maintain its character
- Incorporating the rehabilitation plan and adaptive reuse of new functions, such as an open-air museum
- Incorporating historic preservation with social, economic, and national stakeholders
- Listing old Alula as a UNESCO world heritage site

Recently, the SCTA has drafted some initiatives for the Alula historical district including restoration work. Currently, there are ongoing rehabilitation works and proposed development plans that highlight the idea of a heritage inn as well as open-air museum projects. Algrni (2012) who is the executive manager of built heritage in SCTA pointed out that there are partnerships between related entities such as the minister of rural affairs, the city of Madinah, homeowners, local community and private investors. According to Algrni (2012), this partnership is what the project will rely on the future. The main goal for this plan is to create sustainable revenue for the local community as well as safeguard the built heritage. Furthermore, the plan needs further steps in order to achieve its development goals:

- Preparing a survey and detailed maps with the participation of the local community that the future development will be based on.
- Establishing a partnership between government agencies and the local community with the distribution of roles in the development process.
• Helping the local community to establish local association that collaborates and facilitates investment in Alula historic district as well as resolve ownership issues.

• The SCTA is taking the initiative to rehabilitate one housing space to make a visitor center along with paved major roads and paths in the site.

• The SCTA is encouraging local contractors to participate in the restoration process and has recruited local contractors and provided proper training for them.

• The municipality of Alula took the initiative to pave the main public areas and plazas in the Alula historical district.
According to Algrni (2012), local community participation is still limited and more engagement is needed as well as funding for the rehabilitation project, which mainly needs contribution from investors. Additionally, there is lack of comprehensive collaboration, and among current partnerships, there is no strong order for the process.

On the other hand, the plan should highlight specific areas for development in order to facilitate investors’ participation. For instance, the rehabilitation of the castle and two houses as an information center is one potential area for development.
Figure 3.18: Detailed map of initial development along major axes. Source: SCTA

The Alula historical district has magnificent traits, opportunities, and potential, for comprehensive rehabilitation implementation and proper heritage tourism strategies. The Alula historical district has unique urban fabric features that can be reused as an open-air museum, a heritage hotel, and other appropriate functions. In terms of agricultural and social significance, the site can gain more significance if these trends are highlighted and retrieved. These two categories need special attention, and I would recommend incorporating them into the development plan of Alula historical district. Additionally, Alula is growing, and it has witnessed major establishments such as the new airport, which
is a strong source of transportation and facilitates visitors’ movement. Moreover, the Alula historical district is fortunate to be proximate to other historical and natural resource sites, which are catalysts for the creation and development of the Alula historical district and enhance the heritage tourism plan. The Alula historical district plan should incorporate these advantages with the current and future plans by network analysis, transportation services, and the creation of trail experience between different sites and the Alula historical district. A comprehensive management plan and strategic policies should promote the heritage tourism plan in the Alula historical district.
CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF PRECEDENTS PERTAINING TO OLD ALULA

(BENCHMARKS)

National Level Example, Turaif District in Diriyah, Saudi Arabia

Background

This property was the first capital of the Saudi Dynasty, in the heart of the Arabian Peninsula, north-west of Riyadh. Founded in the 15th century, it bears witness to the Najdi architectural style, which is specific to the center of the Arabian Peninsula. In the 18th and early 19th century, its political and religious role increased, and the citadel at at-Turaif became the center of the temporal power of the House of Saud and the spread of the Wahhabi reform inside the Muslim religion. The property includes the remains of many palaces and an urban ensemble built on the edge of the ad-Diriyah oasis (UNESCO.org 2014).

Figure 4.1: Aerial view of old Diriyah, Saudi Arabia. Source: The High Commission for the Development of Arriyadh
The Turaif district in Diriyah, Saudi Arabia became a UNESCO world heritage site in 2010. It is a strong example of adobe architecture not only in central Saudi Arabia but also in the whole country. Furthermore, a significant attribute of the site is that Diriyah is close to Riyadh, the capital city of Saudi Arabia.

Distinctive Features of Diriyah

As with Alula, the urban fabric of Diriyah consists of narrow roads, collided buildings. In this type of traditional urban environment, the buildings came together spontaneously as a reaction to the climate. Another attribute for this type of urban fabric is the generation of shadows on the roads and the reduction in surfaces exposed to sunlight. This was achieved by creating internal courtyards inside buildings. Furthermore, the buildings in Diriyah typically consist of one or two stories. These vernacular buildings are combinations of mud bricks, palm logs, and wood-beam roofs covered in dried palm leaves; the walls are 60 cm thick to insulate the house from the external heat of the climate. Further still, courtyards there are very significant elements in the vernacular architecture, providing ventilation and light to regulate temperatures inside the house. In addition, windows there are small and seldom on the ground floor, for privacy, and they are always triangular. Privacy was also an issue with the houses’ entrances. One general entrance was for men, while the second entrance for the rest of the family would, on some occasions, include a wall before the door, blocking visual contact with the street. Finally, decorations were generally simple and concentrated to the upper edges and corners of the building. On the interior, the walls were sculpted with voids for shelving.
One of the important architectural characteristics of at-Turaif comes from the high quality of the mud brick masonry. This is laid on limestone foundations which rise above ground level, resulting in impressive palaces. They reveal the architectural details of an earlier historic period, such as a toilet tower, stone columns, column capitals, keel arches, pilasters and decorated wood beams and doors. These are all significant features of the local architecture and will strongly contribute to the world’s cultural diversity. The site offers a whole range of typologies and preservation conditions, ranging from ruins to free-standing walls, from original to reconstructed palaces, and from traditional dwellings to modern mud houses. However there is an extraordinary unity in the color, shape and building materials. The citadel was protected by fortified walls surrounding the entire city, with fortified towers and gates. (Bendakir 2012, 37).
Figure 4.3: Urban fabric of the Turaif District in Diriyah, Saudi Arabia. Source: www.ada.gov.sa
Value and Significance

The whole district is constructed from mud bricks, and it has Islamic features typical in mud-brick architecture, such as internal courtyards and limited openings for privacy. In this context, the criteria that UNESCO identified for world heritage status emphasize the aspects by which historical districts can be signified:

“Criterion (iv): The citadel of Turaif is representative of a diversified and fortified urban ensemble within an oasis. It comprises many palaces and is an outstanding example of the Najdi architectural and decorative style characteristic of the center of the Arabian Peninsula. It bears witness to a building method that is well adapted to its environment, to the use of adobe in major palatial complexes, along with a remarkable sense of geometrical decoration.

Criterion (v): The site of at-Turaif District in ad-Diriyah illustrates a significant phase in the human settlement of the central Arabian plateau, when in the mid-18th century Ad-Diriyah became the capital of an independent Arab State and an important religious center. At-Turaif District
in Ad-Diriyah is an outstanding example of traditional human settlement in a desert environment.

**Criterion (vi):** The At-Turaif District was the first historic center with a unifying power in the Arabian Peninsula. Its influence was greatly strengthened by the teachings of Sheikh Mohammad Bin Abdul Wahhab, a great reformer of Sunni Islam who lived, preached and died in the city. After his enduring alliance with the Saudi Dynasty, in the middle of the 18th century, it is from ad-Diriyah that the message of Wahhabism spread throughout the Arabian Peninsula and the Muslim world (UNESCO.org 2014).

**District Development**

Since 1976, the property has been under the protection of the Antiquities Act 26M, 1392 (1972). This law protects the moveable and immoveable ancient heritage registered as "antiquity", a term that can apply to vestiges, which are at least two-hundred years old. The Ministry of Education and the Council of Antiquities are responsible for enforcement of the law. This is strengthened by a police department under the responsibility of the governor. A new bill that systematically provides for a protection zone of 200 m around the boundaries of the property is pending approval (UNESCO.org 2014).

As in any mud-brick buildings, issues such as fragility, poor conditions, and lack of conservation skills make it challenging to maintain. The complexity of this project made Saudi authorities seek international experience from different heritage expert groups, which has had a positive impact on historic preservation in Saudi Arabia. The first phase was established by the High Commission for the Development of Arriyadh and focused on studying, assessing, documenting, training, and testing to set up a database and collect the necessary data.

The old district has been divided into certain zones. For instance, the Turaif district was assigned multiple museums due to its buildings’ potential to function for this purpose. Other parts of the old district were assigned as a visitors’ center, an open-air museum, artisanal stores, heritage inns, plazas, gardens, and for the purposes of commerce.
Additionally, they were planning to rehabilitate an attached valley (Hanifah Valley) to add aesthetic value to the entire site (Alamri 2009). The High Commission for the Development of Arriyadh,¹⁴ in collaboration with the SCTA, the Diriyah municipality, the city of Diriyah, and Darrat King Abdulziz, sets a good example for partnerships and government action to preserve an area such as old Diriyah. Now, authorities are developing huge investment plans to attract private investors for long-term partnerships. Ultimately, the preservation and rehabilitation project of old Diriyah started in 2005, developing to 1.6 km² (ada.gov.sa 2014).

“...A detailed global management plan of the property is being prepared by the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities (SCTA) and the designers of the Living Heritage Museum, the future management structure of the property. This should give priority to the organization and monitoring of the conservation of the different historic components comprising the property. A scientific conservation committee must be established with broad powers to define, supervise and monitor the work program and projects for the property.” (UNESCO.org 2014).

The High Commission for the Development of Arriyadh (2009) set some major goals for the development of Diriyah, such as providing a cultural and tourist center and an example of an oasis city (with the city’s proximity to Hanifah Valley). Furthermore, preserving the adobe style in the central region, stimulating economic growth, and focusing on sustainability and ecological aspects have brought environmental balance to the area. Further still, the commission defined different levels of development. First, on a local level, the commission considered the local community, its rehabilitation, and infrastructure to promote the lives of the people of Diriyah. Second, the commission solidified, on the

¹⁴ This commission is dedicated to developing the city of Riyadh in all economic, social, cultural, architectural, and environmental aspects. The commission is also responsible for drawing up policies and procedures aimed at raising the efficiency of services and facilities there. These, in turn, connect with raising the standard of living and welfare of citizens there (http://www.arriyadh.com).
national level, its concern for significant historical events embodied in Diriyah, thereby performing intensive preservation. Third, the commission sought international recognition by having UNESCO identify old Diriyah as a unique site of world heritage. Thus, the development of the Turaif district went through a documentation phase of planning for preservation, identifying artifacts, restoring and rehabilitating the environment, and making good use of the Hanifah Valley near the old district. Another phase was the creation of museums, such as the Salwa Museum, the Museum of Social Life in Diriyah, the Military Museum, the Arabian Horse Museum, the Old Commerce Museum, modern media interpretation, the Management Center, the Documentation Center, the market (Souk), and a visitors’ center. Finally, there was intensive work on the infrastructure, constructing roads and parking lots to facilitate visitor experience.

Figure 4.5: Part of the restoration work in the Turaif District, Diriyah, Saudi Arabia. Source: Bendakir, 2012
Figure 4.6: Rehabilitation plan for museums’ distribution in the Turaif District, Diriyah, Saudi Arabia. 
Source: www.ada.gov.sa

Figure 4.7: Zones A, B, C, and D is the market (Souk) that have food-related functions, traditional crafts venders, and other related things, Turaif District, Diriyah, Saudi Arabia. Source: www.ada.gov.sa
Findings

In addition to the historical significance in Diriyah, the surrounding environment can play a significant role in the preservation plan, in that nearby Hanifah Valley contributed to the restoration of old Diriyah and was part of the tourism planning. Thus, the preservation of an old district can sustain the local environment as well as the architecture of built heritage. Furthermore, economic benefits are a major incentive for participation in heritage preservation among local communities and the surrounding area in general (Alamri 2009). The project highlighted the possibility of adaptive reuse functions, which was demonstrated in the museums and open-air museum, which is a huge catalyst for blight districts.
Regional Example, Taybet Zaman Village, Jordan

Background

Located 7 km from the Petra world heritage site, Taybet Zaman is another example of a historic adobe district with a distinct architectural style. The local community owns the village, and they are well aware of the tourists invested in it (Alamri 2009). The village stands on a mountain with an excellent view of local farms and other mountains. The establishment of the village dates back to the nineteenth century, and it was used for housing until the beginning of the twentieth century. The villagers depended on farming, which impacted their building methods, and the surrounding morphology, whereby locals reshaped the mountains to create flat areas for agriculture (Algrni 2012).

Figure 4.9: The figure on the right shows the location of Taybet Zaman Village in relation to Petra and Old Alula in relation to Mada’in Salih. Source: www.google.com with addition from the researcher. The figure on the left is a Petra world Heritage Site similar to Mada’in Salih. Source: http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/326/gallery/
Distinctive Features of Taybet Zaman Village

Taybet Zaman is an example of a rural architectural style among Jordanian mountain villages. The community is comprised of about 85 houses, and the village is distinct from organic urban fabrics, which create tight paths and public urban spaces (Algrni 2012). The buildings consist of stone, wood, and adobe; the structural system involves walls with minimal windows to provide ventilation and privacy (Algrni 2012).

District Development

The project was initiated in 1991 with the addition of a five-star hotel to attract elite guests, such as King Hussain of Jordan, the king of Spain, former president Bill Clinton, Queen Elizabeth II of England, and more. Every year, 500,000 visitors explore Petra nearby. Hence, there has been an increasing demand to accommodate these visitors, and the development of Taybet Zaman was a response to that demand. The main goals were to reuse the village as a tourist heritage resort, to preserve the site for future generations, to establish a tourist product with international criteria, to stimulate tourist diversity, to see a return on investment for the local community, and to create local job opportunities. Other objectives included extending tourist stays in Jordan by providing other tourist destinations, encouraging artisanship, and emphasizing vernacular architecture as a source of identity. Additionally, preserving the built heritage and increasing tourism revenue in general drew talented and motivated people to the jobs available at the local site (Alamri 2009).

The locals have already inhabited some of the buildings, enacting an agreement with the government and investors. Investors conserved the architecture, following international standards, so that the buildings could be reused as hotels. The conservation
plans are a combination of international charters, locally approved and under municipal supervision, and the local community performed the construction. The investors also implemented a training program for the locals to participate in hotel jobs. Finally, the government’s role was to construct infrastructure and set regulations that ensure the site’s preservation (Alamri 2009).

The key element to developing the site was the partnership between private investors, the local community, and government agencies. The project development had to follow certain procedures, such as an agreement between investors and the local community under the supervision of the municipality, preparing plans that met international charters. The local community participated in the plans’ approval, constructing the actual project, and the project’s management ran through the investors’ and local community’s representatives (Algrni 2012).

The local community has contributed much to the site since the project’s beginning. When the locals participated in executing the project, they were part of the 200 jobs for the artisanship, and they filled 125 of the 171 jobs in the project’s facilities after construction. In fact, the contracts stipulated that local owners would lease their properties for investors and that the contracts may change every five years in terms of financial returns, depending on price inflation, according to the Central Bank of Jordan. Moreover, investors offered the locals jobs in construction and management, whereby 6% of net revenues are returned to the local community and 18% go to the village council (Algrni 2012).

The buildings of Taybet Zaman are in separate, purpose-specific zones, and the main site, the five-star hotel, includes 114 rooms, an open theatre, swimming pool, gymnasium, restaurants, a market for artisans and vernacular activity, and parking. In
addition, the development incorporated a rock wall around the site, which has the same flattened agricultural tiers like those in the traditional village, except that the tiers present lush gardens rather than farmers' fields (Algrni 2012).

In two decades, Jordan has witnessed a huge official and local people awareness, and efforts to preserve the significance of built heritage. The partnership organization for Taybet Zaman’s built heritage consists of collaborations between governmental and non-governmental agencies. For example, the Minister of Rural Affairs established the Built Heritage Department in 1996 to assess buildings under the minister's purview. Another participating agency is the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, which has a built heritage department focusing on the development of human resources and heritage investment development. However, most of the projects under that ministry are not in collaboration with the Minister of Rural Affairs due to a slow pace of action and bureaucracy, which leads to reduced sustainability. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities does
collaborate with the Japanese International Cooperation Agency, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and the World Bank. These collaborations are a cornerstone for built heritage site development because of the funds available and the extensive international experience to draw upon. Furthermore, there are other contributing agencies, such as the Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Islamic Monuments, Antiquities Friends Society, Torab Society, and Jordanian Society for Preserving Built Heritage. Finally, the private sector is essential in this composition because private investors provide funding; in contrast, the municipality of Taybet Zaman is responsible for monitoring the development and the management of the site in addition to setting regulations, policies, and permits (Algrni 2012).

Figure 4.11: Taybet Zaman Village after development. Source: www.kenwoodtravel.co.uk
Findings

Economic benefits are essential to sustainability through job creation, investment in environment creation, preservation of the sites’ regional economies, limitations of immigration from heritage sites to major cities, and development expansion (Alamri 2009).
Taybet Zaman is near Petra, a world heritage site, which is historically an extension of the Mada’in Salih world heritage site. Taybet Zaman has taken advantage of that proximity to rehabilitate the area and draw visitors to their site. Consequently, a heritage hotel dominates the site, providing a heritage experience for tourists interested in Petra. Furthermore, there are distinct similarities between Taybet Zaman and Alula. Both are situated near a world heritage site from the same era, the Nabataean kingdom. In addition, the building methods are similar—adobe, with additional usage of sandstone in Alula (Algrni 2012).

Partnerships and collaborations between governmental agencies, non-profit agencies, local communities, and investors are a key aspect for successful rehabilitation and tourism planning. These kinds of projects also contribute to job creation, improved infrastructure, and greater sustainability in the overall area (Algrni 2012). There are, however, several negative effects, such as seasonality and its influence on the sites’ economics. For instance, work on the site might be limited to three months out of the year, while the maintenance and operational costs for the rest of the year erode the investment value. Furthermore, a lack of fully functional collaborations between governments agencies can slow the progress of a preservation plan. Finally, the concentration, if not surplus, of tourists visiting a site can have long-term effects on the site’s sustainability and, thus, the local community (Algrni 2012).
International Example, Taos Pueblo and Taos Downtown Historical District, USA

Background

“Taos Pueblo is the only living Native American community designated both a World Heritage Site by UNESCO and a National Historic Landmark. The multi-story adobe buildings have been continuously inhabited for over a 1,000 years. The Pueblo is 3 miles northeast of Taos Plaza. Ancient ruins in the Taos Valley indicate our people lived here nearly 1000 years ago. The main part of the present buildings were most likely constructed between 1000 and 1450 A.D. The appeared much as they do today when the first Spanish explorers arrived in Northern New Mexico in 1540 and believed that the Pueblo was one of the fabled golden cities of Cibola. The two structures called Hlauuma (north house) and Hlaukwima (south house) are said to be of similar age. They are considered to be the oldest continuously inhabited communities in the USA.” (taos.org 2014).

The Taos historical downtown was established between 1780 and 1800, which makes it one of the oldest European settlements in the area. Taos historical downtown consists of central public space and residential buildings constructed from adobe, and Taos was a Spanish-fortified plaza with residential buildings around it. Eventually, the growth extended past the fort’s wall because of trade on the Santa Fe Trail. In the late 19th century, artists came to the town and settled around the plaza, which contributed to the town’s extension and growth (National Park Service 2014).

Figure 4.14: Taos Pueblo adobe historical buildings. Source: UNESCO by David Muench.
Figure 4.15: Map of Taos Pueblo and the Taos historical downtown. Source: Taos 2014 vacation guide.
Distinctive Features of Taos Historical District and Taos Pueblo

The Spanish colonial, Territorial, Mission Revival and Pueblo Revival styles are evident in Taos historical downtown. While the Pueblo is made entirely of adobe -- earth mixed with water and straw, then either poured into forms or made into sun-dried bricks. The walls are frequently several feet thick. The roofs of each of the five stories are supported by vigas—large timbers hauled down from the mountain forests. Smaller pieces of wood—pine or aspen latillas—are placed side-by-side on top of the vigas; the whole roof is covered with packed dirt. The outside surfaces of the Pueblo are continuously maintained by re-plastering with thick layers of mud. Interior walls are carefully coated with thin washes of white earth to keep them clean and bright. The Pueblo is actually many individual homes, built side-by-side and in layers, with common walls but no connecting doorways. In earlier days, there were no doors or windows, and entry was gained only from the top (taos.org 2014).

District Development

“The majority of businesses in Taos depend on tourism. The historic Taos Plaza is certainly one of the most visited destinations for tourists, but it has lost its appeal to local residents. Revitalizing the downtown will be a high priority in the Historic Preservation Element.” (Town of Taos, 8).
It is an interesting case due to the massive planning work done, such as the vision master plan in 1990, the revision to the master plan that responds to development updates and changes, and Taos’ smart growth implementation assistance. In addition, the city has another development plan called the arts and cultural district. Moreover, there is a continuous tourism marketing study, such as Marketing Taos in FY 2014 by the town of Taos’ Tourism Marketing. The city of Taos collaborated extensively with different non-profits and other agencies.

“Taos is a great place, but it did not become a great place by accident. The traditional development patterns in historic Taos originated from the Law of the Indies, a 17th century collection of laws which applied to new communities that were developed by Spanish colonizers in the New World. The Law of the Indies allocated land uses and contained very specific development regulations. It allocated land for residential uses, food production, waste management, ceremony, and transportation. The Land Use Element allocates land uses to develop Taos as a collection of complete and compact neighborhoods. The Land Use Map identifies each distinct neighborhood while the goals, policies, and objectives offer clear guidance for development decisions.” (Re-vision 2020 by City of Taos, 2).

Jill Sweet (1990) noted that Pueblo Indian communities managed to grapple with and regulate their relationships with tourists. She attributed this to the gradual development and the local community’s perception of tourism. Another major factor is how local communities perceive outside key players in promoting Native American culture for their benefits. Lujan (1993) said that the local community has a positive attitude towards tourism; they see tourism as catalyst that will eventually bring them economic benefits. In addition, Taos Pueblo festivals bring benefits to nearby towns by accommodating tourists, which fuels competition. Hence, these examples indicate the powerful impact of tourism on a local level as well as how Pueblo’s local community has a positive attitude toward introducing their culture gradually and handling tourists (Chambers 2010).
Figure 4.17: Taos historical district guide map. *Source: Taos.org*

Figure 4.18: Taos historical district blue trail guide map. *Source: Taos.org*
Findings

Taos historical district and historic Taos Pueblo represent examples of historical sites taking advantage of proximity and opportunities, such as the linkage between the Taos Pueblo and the historical downtown. Furthermore, the city of Taos has implemented a protection plan and promotes the Taos Pueblo world heritage site continuously. Moreover, the city focuses on the implementation of a heritage tourism plan and managing visitors, which seems to be successful in attracting tourists and growing the economy. In addition, Taos historical sites demonstrate high levels of collaboration between different entities in efficient ways by producing multiple visioning plans, tourism studies, cultural studies and market analysis. The city of Taos published guide maps for historical attractions, in addition to brochures including brief information about the history and value of each attraction. It is evident that the city of Taos has created documents that include suggested trails and information about historical sites, which seems successful in facilitating visitor experience as well as advertising.
CHAPTER V
HERITAGE TOURISM IN
THE OLD HISTORICAL DISTRICT OF ALULA

Cultural heritage tourism—defined as travel concerned with experiencing the visual and performing arts, heritage buildings, areas, landscapes, and special lifestyles, values, traditions and events—has become a major force in the tourism industry. It includes handicrafts, language, gastronomy, art and music, architecture, sense of place, historic sites, festivals and events, heritage resources, the nature of the work environment and technology, religion, education, and dress (Jamieson 1998, 65). The National Trust for Historic Preservation defined heritage tourism as “Traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes historic, cultural and natural resources” (NTHP 2014). The following criteria is drawn from the findings identified so far. They are what heritage tourism relies on in order to succeed. Hence, the discussion will focus on each criteria and provides evidences that support the argument.

Tourism Planning and Strategic Issues

Orbasli (2000) discussed the implementation of a heritage tourism plan that each historical city should address. This involves a plethora of issues, such as the effectiveness of managing visitors, the extent of pedestrian areas and car parking, and, most importantly, the work with promotional concerns for the city. Orbasli emphasizes authenticity as a source of identity and development as a loss to a historic town’s spirit if tourism overtakes the urban community’s needs. As she mentions, remodeling urban heritage for the benefits of visitors is nothing but constructing a new heritage theme park, which has severe
implications for the site’s history, culture, and community.

Brown (1994, 20) suggests an important guideline for creating attractions in historic towns. Integral to a citywide visitor management plan, attraction development must be sustainable for and relevant to the local community. Attractions should be authentic and enhance the quality of local heritage. Finally, attractions should be significantly scaled to affect a visitor’s experience, and they must provide all facilities expected to accommodate them. Jamieson (1998) noted that a balance between visitors’ interest and enjoyment would enhance economic and social development as well as heritage and cultural value. Visitors are attracted to cultural landscapes and uncommon local identities. Thus, the potential loss of local identities can lead to a loss of tourism (Coccossis and Mexa 1995).

There are key strategic approaches for tourism planning at historic sites. First, the plan must respond to morphological qualities, such as urban morphology, other natural and geological morphology, and the community and its planning process. Second, the plan must study the target visitor markets. Third, the plan must address the objectives of long-term sustainable growth, maximizing local income and achieving cultural continuity. Thus, the main point of planning is to improve quality for both residents and visitors. To that end, it is important to create a marketplace for tourism and conservation development (Orbasli 2000). The growing number of tourists will require changes to the urban space, urban morphology, patterns, physical structures, and functions of public spaces at the site (Nasser 2003). Furthermore, they will demand modern facilities and services to accommodate their lifestyles (Ashworth and Tunbridge 1990).

Coccossis and Nikamp (1995) refer to some aspects of preservation planning, such as impact assessment, economic evaluation, cost–benefit analysis, balancing multiple
objectives, and reflecting on the plan itself. These aspects can lead to more effective public policy-making in heritage planning. Furthermore, managing cultural tourism involves community planning, heritage development, preservation techniques, site management, marketing, community involvement, and an understanding of partnerships (Jamieson 1998). Additionally, as Orbasli (2000) points out, tourism development planning is a framework that guides strategic thinking and vision. The ideal practical plan should incorporate 25 to 30 years of vision and objectives. More immediately, this should include a five-year forward-looking plan and an annual list of revisions and checkups. Such issues need to be considered as action planning, responding to immediate needs and demands, implementing plans to guide positive site development, and establishing a long-term vision and strategic objectives.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation (2014) created five basic principles and four strategic steps for heritage tourism projects. It is important to explore the heritage tourism practice of such organizations for further benefits; this research will present them briefly. To start with, here are the five basic principles:

- Collaborate (Partnership between agencies and organizations)
- Find the Fit (Local community’s considerations and balancing the needs of residents and visitors)
- Make Sites and Programs Come Alive (Good interpretation)
- Focus on Quality and Authenticity (Uniqueness)
- Preserve and Protect (Implement preservation’s best practices)

In addition, the National Trust for Historic Preservation established four major strategic steps when initiating heritage tourism:
• Assess the Potential
  • Attractions
  • Visitor Services
  • Organizational Capabilities
  • Protection
  • Marketing

• Plan and Organize (Make good use of human and financial resources)

• Prepare, Protect, and Manage

• Market for Success
  • Public Relations
  • Advertising
  • Graphic Materials
  • Promotions
In addition to planning for reactions to immediate needs, preservation plans must be collaborative while continuously considering initiatives for sustainable and balanced development in a strategic and visionary future. Furthermore, strategic planning should incorporate more creative approaches, such as global and non-linear planning. This would break down established time barriers, bringing together disciplines, organizations, and individuals through partnerships, and incorporating continuous assessments of quality controls in response to the needs of the community, user, and client (Orbasli 2000). Moreover, long-term planning with integral and continuous conservation policies is
important in order to ensure a quality experience for visitors (Millar 1989).

Nasser (2003) notes that there are four objectives for the tourism, conservation, and planning relationship: 1) long-term planning; 2) protection of cultural heritage as a natural resource; 3) acceptance of change and development to allow for continuity; and 4) equitable access to heritage resources among local and tourist users. Furthermore, Hakim (2007) argues that a generative process based on certain codes and components can guarantee a strong revitalization practice for historic towns and heritage districts. His approach ensures that authenticity and a sense of place are maintained if the uniqueness of the site, its history, and its culture inspire the process. For instance, the ethical meta-principles that impede the site must be respected. Additionally, private and public rights and responsibilities should be clear and assigned accordingly. Traditional rules and codes are solid sources for maintaining authenticity, bearing in mind the compatibility of traditional and new uses of buildings and institutions. Ultimately, tourism development can have a negative impact on an old urban area if the tourism and heritage management plans do not comply with the sensibilities of the historic towns (Orbasli 2000).

The practice of heritage tourism planning are an essential part of large configuration processes in the old historical district of Alula. Efforts should start by assessing, evaluating and implementing effective management for cultural resources. Then, attention should be paid to the documentation practices, restoration, and rehabilitation planning. Next, protection plans, frequent maintenance, and monitoring are important in order to ensure sustainability at the site. After that, preparation should focus on tourism promotion, marketing, and visitor management. With a comprehensive plan that coordinates with other aspects of heritage tourism, the historical district of Alula can develop dramatically.
Economic Benefits

The city council is faced with the task of managing visitors, encouraging longer-staying, better-spending tourism, possibly increasing the attraction base to do so and promoting retail against regional competition. At the same time, it is obliged to diversify the economic base of the city, to ensure it is desirable place to live and market it as such (Orbasli 2000, 74).

Studies have shown that heritage travelers stay longer and spend more money than other kind of travelers. Additionally, heritage tourism works as a revitalization strategy as it promotes economic development by using historic structures and landscapes to attract visitors and serve them (NTHP 2008). Strauss and Lord (2001) conducted a study on 13 historic sites in southwestern Pennsylvania, monitoring the economic impact from 1986 to 1998. The 88.2 million USD investment generated 289.4 million USD. This result is a general indicator of potential economic benefits accompanied by best practices in heritage tourism. Tourism can bring economic development at local, regional, and national levels. It can also create jobs and draw foreign income into the local community. However, the revenue streams must be carefully managed for equitable distribution to all sectors of the local community, which will enhance the entire local area (Nasser 2003). In sum, market forces shape tourist destinations as sites of economic growth (Pearce 2005).

The tourist industry’s economy has a strong connection to the sustainability of the local communities where tourist sites are located, assuming that one applies the right approaches. Although tourism can revitalize a local economy, there is a tendency for economic analyses to disregard social and cultural variables in pursuit of profit measurements. Thus, tourism through revitalization should be carefully monitored and properly implemented to protect the social and cultural interests of the local community. Chambers (2010) refers to economic factors significant to tourism development as leakage.
Leakage is the economic gain from tourism through foreign facilities, imported goods and transportation, and non-local employees. Profits resulting from these elements circumvent the local community to the benefit of international stakeholders. Therefore, foreign investment should be regulated, and proper policy should be implemented to deal with this issue. For instance, regulations should encourage sustainable approaches at tourist destinations and for their local goods; regulations should also restrict foreign employment, curb foreign investments, and strike a balance between first-class tourists and backpackers, the latter more willing to rely on local sources than imported goods. Moreover, economists recommend the multiplier effect, which promotes the redistribution of profits among those in the local community. This would include increased opportunities for wage employment or the possibility of additional small-scale entrepreneurial activities. A truly effective solution for the multiplier reverse concept is using price inflation to focus on investment when cost opportunities are low and expected profits are high. Yet another approach is to use public funds for investments in tourism and developing tourism through partnerships with or tax incentives for local entrepreneurs.

Moreover, a lack of heritage economic awareness results in diminished maintenance and repairs for historic sites. The absence of this awareness discourages investors from contributing, which further deteriorates the heritage sites. To offset this risk, it has been suggested that admission fees help to manage tourists’ numbers and provide funding for maintenance and conservation repairs (Garrod and Fyall 2000).

The Alula historical district is awaiting this huge economic impact on the local community and the site of old Alula as well as general improvement of the city. The argument for economic benefits is well established; however, pursuing economic growth
without monitoring the negative impact on identity, local community, and authenticity could transform the built heritage into commodity, which does not serve the main goals of the development and heritage tourism agenda. Alula needs serious strategies for encountering and regulating the negative impacts while at the same time maintain the flow of funding. In other words, Alula needs to obtain the necessary funds, but regulations should be implemented as well in order to maintain sustainability.

**Sustainability of the Local Community**

Conflicts might arise from pressure to succeed in the tourism industry. For example, conflicts can hinder policies for new development or conservation action, or it can hinder the balance between the needs of tourists and the local community. Furthermore, conflicts can develop over the balance between the maintenance of a heritage site and the quantity of tourists visiting that site (Orbasli 2000). In that respect, developments that meet tourist expectations can not only change the conditions of historic cities but can also take away indigenous lifestyles and cultures (Boniface and Fowler 1993). Nevertheless, a successful tourism plan can give the local community economic benefits in addition to other advantages, such as pride in their preserved culture and the international reputation garnered as a result. It can also give the local community access to education about their cultural heritage and recreational time to explore that heritage as a result of the economic development, if only because that development was given priority over the plans for local sustainability (Garrod and Fyall 2000).

Others might argue that futurity should not be achieved at the expense of equity in the pursuit of sustainable development. If the present generation is denied access to the heritage property, then it will just as surely cease to be a relevant part of their heritage (Garrod and Fyall 2000, 703).
Urban conservation development of small-scale sites with locally owned activities will generate tourism that does not consume many local resources while benefiting the local community and preserving choice elements within their built heritage (Furze, De Lacy, and Birckhead 1996). In other words, small-scale sites need fewer financial investments, less infrastructure, and higher incorporation among local agents, products, and labor. As a result, fewer multinational stakeholders invest and fewer international tourists come, but the local community benefits more directly from their tourist industry’s returns (Cater 1994). Furthermore, local involvement makes the community appreciate their own resources (Furze, De Lacy, and Birckhead 1996), which puts greater emphasis on sustainability, local employment, and respect for local culture. Conversely, non-local investors have a greater stake in the profits to be gained (Nasser 2003).

Ultimately, paying attention to community needs and raising awareness of the value and significance of local cultural resources are essential steps in preservation planning. This can be done by implementing the adaptive reuse of historical structures as part of good tourism management (Nasser 2003). A local community directly attached to its site of cultural heritage will have a positive attitude toward heritage tourism development (Uriely et al. 2002).

The Alula historical district has made positive steps toward proper rehabilitation, and the local community in general has positive attitudes toward the development of their old houses. However, effort is still needed and the urge to establish community association and representatives are essential. More importantly, development of the site, investment considerations and implementation strategies must coordinate with the local community in order to maintain sustainability.
Government Actions and Partnership

Preservation is a costly process, and the need to use public funding is essential. However, tourism revenues can fulfill the maintenance needs once the initial investment has set the industry in motion (Boniface 1995). To account for this funding, it is essential to consider decision-making procedures with overlapping paradigms. These procedures include a legislation framework, which deals with relationships between national, state, and local governments. Furthermore, a participatory relationship is advantageous between private investors and local facilitators, those who initiate the development and those who realize it. Finally, a financial partnership between key local advocates and a global tourism market is also beneficial. To have strong tourism development and an efficient decision-making process, certain issues must be addressed and analyzed, including studies of global tourism markets, the role of national and local governments, the role of non-profit organizations, the role of the private sector, the role of the users, and conflict resolutions between different sectors. The local government in particular must provide services essential to maintaining tourism, such as economic regeneration, planning and conservation, housing, tourism, traffic, public health, infrastructure, social services, and security. Granted, urban spaces do not have a single owner; on the contrary, they have multiple owners with different interests and conflicts. Nevertheless, it is the local authority’s duty to represent all interests and facilitate trans-regional and multi-level cultural policies to ensure that those policies encompass conservation and tourism (Orbasli 2000).
“Heritage can enrich the lived-in environment, as long as a delicate balance is reached between tourism development and conservation priorities. Success will depend on attitude, support and investment from the local government powers, private and public initiatives and the industry at large (Orbasli 2000, 122). “

Orbasli’s (2000) recommendations are for governmental and non-governmental agencies, non-profits, the local community, and investors together to work through decision-making issues, including local-level decision-making, strategic thinking, partnerships, and active roles for the community in the decision-making process. Jamieson (1998) also emphasizes coordination between policy and action among different levels of government. Additionally, cooperation between the local site, local financial organizations, investors, and tourism operators is important as a partnership strategy.

Another significant aspect is the regular assessment and monitoring of evaluation plans that measure the pace of development and its effect on the community. This technique produces data and enhances preservation practices, which can elevate the industry. Finally, education and training are important on local and regional levels because they enhance the knowledge of the community in ways that contribute to the dissemination of knowledge to tourists. However, too much legislation and too many restrictions might limit development, especially in the adaptive reuse of buildings and their changing functionality (Nasser 2003). Thus, a balance must be struck between regulations and adaptations.

This section is highly important in heritage tourism development in historic districts. In fact, it is the core factor in helping historic districts evolve and flourish. As demonstrated earlier, the Alula historical district has experienced such concepts through the SCTA’s efforts to collaborate with the local community, other governmental agencies such as the municipality of Alula, the minister of rural affairs, the and city of Madinah. To
be more efficient, the SCTA must establish policies that constitute inter-governmental collaboration efficiently to avoid a staggered pace of action. The notion of non-profit agencies is absent in Alula, which is something the local community, in collaboration with the SCTA, should work on.

**Future Intervention**

Heritage environments function not only to draw tourists' spending from those wishing to experience the past, but also to provide a setting for entertainment, relaxation, or shopping. Hence, spaces and buildings are carefully planned to incorporate these pursuits and to supply a sense of the past through the use of cobbled lanes, wooden-floors, roughly hewn sandstone, narrow streets, and heritage colors (Waitt 2000, 836).

Orbasli (2000, 99) suggests a framework to ensure that a tourist town remains a town and not a museum. In terms of scale in old Alula, this framework can function as effective tourism management practice. At the local level, it has to control opening times for tourist facilities. Furthermore, local authorities must make choices on events and take a proactive role in guiding such activities. The local presence and decision-making stakeholders must also have representation in regards to organizing committees for events. Then, at a national level, these authorities must promote the site through marketing and distribution of its interests to other nearby attractions, while also ensuring that tourism revenues return to the city to mitigate the environmental damage of the industry.

The adaptive reuse approach is one direct benefit to the old districts, ensuring that historic buildings are restored, providing a current function for historic buildings, and decreasing the number of vacant properties, thus providing a more desirable and growing environment. This helps historic places retain their unique qualities (Orbasli 2000). Furthermore, the function of adaptive reuse protects cultural places for future generations.

To that end, such sites maintain a sense of place through the authenticity of maintaining a
continuum from the past to the present for the future to enjoy (Nasser 2003).

Finally, it is essential to respond to visitors’ needs in order for tourism to succeed. These needs include information, validation, entertainment, security, and comfort, and are thus essential requirements for marketing campaigns for historic sites (Boniface 1995). Heritage interpretations and presentations through marketing materials for tourists are key elements in a successful policy that enhances a tourist's understanding of a site's legacy (Millar 1989).

**Information Center**

The information center is a visitor’s first impression of a heritage site; it offers important directions for the visitor’s orientation and ability to feel like part of the site. Visitor management is crucial to this process, as a large mass of visitors can influence the site negatively (Orbasli 2000). Signage and information thus require a certain level of quality and recognizable formatting while providing appropriate information for the visitor (Boniface 1995). In addition, the information center should contain an archival library that documents the history of and topics related to Alula. Therefore, a visitor center plays a significant role as the first impression of a site. It can contribute greatly if new interpretation and technologies are incorporated, such as innovative labels, multimedia, and, most importantly, a well-trained staff.

**The Heritage Inn**

As was demonstrated in Taybet Zaman Village, the heritage hotel concept is a successful strategy. Part of the current proposal plan in the Alula historical district is a heritage inn, which is a series of appropriate houses along the main axes in the urban fabric. This project has much potential due to the increase in the number of tourists after Mada’in
Salih was listed as a world heritage site by UNESCO and the opening of the new airport, which affected other historical sites in Alula. However, accommodations in Alula consist of two four-star hotels in addition to a few inns. Therefore, the proposal for having a heritage inn in the Alula historical district is a brilliant idea that creates jobs, safeguards buildings, improves the economy, provides housing accommodations to visitors, and provides visitors with an authentic experience. See figure 3.18.

**Cultural Festivals**

Local clothes attendants and demonstrations of traditional activities are appealing to and entertaining for visitors, enhancing their understanding of the heritage associated with a site (Boniface 1995). Tourism planners and developers need to take cultural aspects into consideration, and heritage tourism can flourish when indigenous cultural elements are recognized. Hence, the marketing of indigenous arts and crafts, local performances, festivals, and sites associated with the local people’s heritage has become a major movement in the tourism industry (Chambers 2010). From the Taos example, cultural festivals are an essential part of the town’s tourism experience. Such activities in the Alula historical district can enhance the tourist experience and attract more visitors to the site, but these activities must be scheduled according to a seasonality timeframe.

**Open Air Museum**

Urban heritage is not a return to a certain period in history; on the contrary, it is a cultural framework for present-day life. Historic buildings are part of human, urban and social history and form part of a common heritage. At times, pressures for development, growth, modernization and continuity of the urban environment make these buildings redundant and obsolete as they become obstacles to continuity, and the need for development becomes greater than the value of the vernacular. The collective loss of this heritage is an historic and cultural loss to society today and to future generations. In such circumstances, the heritage museum can act as a savior of physical fabric, providing more material evidence than would be possible through
recording, even if only through a select number of examples (Orbasli 2000, 87).

The main advantage of this idea is that there is no need to build new structures as the current structures provide perfect spaces through the adaptive reuse strategy, creating jobs and safeguarding old buildings. One of Alzhrani and Kabbashi’s (2008) suggestions for facilitating this opportunity is an open-air museum that incorporates new uses for the site’s buildings and spaces. As seen from historic Diriyah, Taos’ downtown examples as well as the current plan proposed by the SCTA illuminate the idea of an open-air museum. Spaces that are created by roads, houses and plazas seem to be ideal for an open-air museum setting. In other words, the site holds potential for adaptation as an open-air museum. Another suggestion for this open-air museum coordinates well with other implementations, such as the guide map in the Taos example, brochures, as well as paths and tourist trails that visitors can follow. Craftsmanship in Alula is rich and can be enhance the experience of an open-air museum. Additionally, this kind of reuse works nicely with other facilities and services— for instance, public rest areas, restaurants, cash machines, advanced media, and interpretation technologies, as Smith (2009) names the creative cultural tourism where advanced technology and visitors participation activities exist.

This plan also requires marketing for the heritage site by highlighting festivals, folklore, souvenir shops and artisan shows. In addition, this project would function better if the local community was engaged in the planning process as well as in the administration and supply jobs. Alzhrani and Kabbashi (2008) proposed that an open-air museum in the Alula historical district might have the activities and functions listed below:

- Demonstration of the daily life of the people of old Alula in one of the appropriate houses
• Demonstration of the agricultural experience of the people of old Alula

• Illustration of the folklore and traditional aspects of the area, such as dancing, basic tools associated with historic life, traditional dresses, traditional music, old medicine methods, and craftsman shows.

The Future of Heritage Tourism:

Analysis of Findings and Further Discussion

“Tourism can have positive attributes for conservation and development in heritage places. For planners, the principal goal is to create strategies for minimizing adverse impacts and maximizing gains from tourism. This would have to include the management of the cultural resources and quality of new development, the uses and activities the built environment sustains, and the integration of both these factors with the sociocultural needs of the local community” (Nasser 2003, 478).

Location within a global context also contributes to the tourist’s perception of a place in ways that are usable in cultural tourism. A town’s accessibility to means of mass transportation, such as airports, railways, or major roads, plays a significant role in enhancing successful tourism (Orbasli 2000). Urban spatial uses also play a significant role in attracting tourists. An association with other proximate areas of importance can enhance a site’s tourism as well. In that sense, the proximate sites can increase their mutual attractiveness to tourists through the concept of added value; presenting a broader local region to serve more visitor needs as well as the themes and packages associated with combined attractions are a useful marketing tool to attract thrifty tourists (Boniface and Fowler 1993). Because the site of old Alula is proximate to the world heritage site at Mada’in Salih, it has the opportunity to attract and enable global tourists to visit distant places. However, the interpretation of these distant places is what elevates the meaning of a site by properly presenting a culture or a heritage perception to someone not from that
locality (Boniface and Fowler 1993).

Historic towns have many attributes that make them good tourist attractions, mostly because of their beautiful architectural styles, urban fabrics, and cultural aspects and activities. Tourism can be an essential source for economic benefits and revitalization in these places. However, tourism can also negatively affect the site’s environment, community, and identity. Moreover, it is not ideal when the main objectives of urban conservation are tourism development rather than cultural continuity. Thus, urban conservation under the influence of tourist expansion has many negative consequences. These include the following: gentrification of residential neighborhoods and shopping facilities; other general changes to the urban space and its physical patterns; the introduction of recreational or invented history, streetscapes, or themes; and the local feeling of loss (Orbasli 2000).

The major factors that anthropologists identify as contributing to social and cultural complexity are the kinds of tourism available, the variety of communities and regions, and the mediation of tourism by individuals, institutions, and places. Community-based tourism is essential and should replace other tourism practices, as communities need to reap the full benefits of the tourism process rather than losing their local resources through exploitation. Nevertheless, one approach to tourism might be beneficial to a particular area, even though that same approach would devastate another area. This is because each locality has its unique attributes that should be addressed accordingly. Tourism development results in cost–benefit analyses that factor in a variety of issues affecting a community.

One of the main issues is the impact of tourism on the local population. Another factor is employment and how that contributes to the local economy. These aspects count
toward the sustainability of a site, and planners should create the appropriate policies and regulations for sustainable tourism. Additionally, rapid cycles of tourism development and decline also contribute to the attraction of transient workers who take those cyclical job opportunities (Chambers 2010). Another significant factor for tourism development in need of regulation is environmental issues, such as sewage discharge, vehicle emissions, compaction of soils, erosion, depletion of water resources, disturbances to wildlife, damage to vegetation, and visual pollution. Furthermore, an increase in visitors increases the level of noise and light pollution at a site; similarly, fast development and competition can lead to the suffering and displacement of the local community. In regions where environmental controls are not in effect, fast development consumes the full capacity of local infrastructure in order to support new construction and facilities. These aspects can lower the quality of life for local inhabitants and gradually reduce the attractiveness of the environment for visitors (Chambers 2010). Inappropriate interventions might also result in destruction, ultimately threatening the economics of the community. Moreover, development might change the social, physical, and cultural values of the community. These negative impacts include traffic issues, price inflation, housing costs, and the replacement of authenticity with income development. Hence, proper planning action is required. These actions involve maintaining authenticity and cultural integrity, especially in terms of heritage resources used, the establishment of protection and monitoring strategies within the urban fabric, and the awareness and preservation of community values (Jamieson 1998). Therefore, the planning process in the historical district of Alula should address and respond to issues that promote sustainability and ecotourism for the area.

Financing heritage for the purpose of tourism is profitable and usually involves the
private sector and non-local stakeholders. However, private funding might cause local authorities to challenge control of the development, leading to conflicts and limitations on development (Orbasli 2000). Collaborative knowledge and understanding of the resources and objectives are significant to proper planning intervention. In return, greater balance between environmental, socio-cultural, and economic interests should be fostered. Thus, the objectives of heritage planning should address these issues. They should maintain the long-term benefits and sustainability of tourism activities, develop a high-quality product with the right target market, and maximize the benefits and minimize the detriments of that product through competent management (Orbasli 2000).

The primary attraction in historic towns is the narrow, winding cobblestone streets, with charming vistas glimpsed through the urban fabric and its textures created through a wealth of architectural facades and open squares (Orbasli 2000). Furthermore, the main attractions in an urban historic district lie within the physical buildings, streetscapes, townscapes, vistas, corridors, light craft-type industries, the human scale, walkability, occasions for communication, and the opportunity to become part of a new urban life (Orbasli 2000). Furthermore, redundant buildings can always function as accommodations for tourists, and a good conservation plan allows for minimal maintenance of preserved buildings so that future funds can focus on the preservation of more buildings. Finally, it is through the actual development of such historic places that opportunities for cross-cultural communication occur (Orbasli 2000). These attributes exist in the historical district of Alula, and the assessment and planning process should consider these in order to maximize benefits.

Tourism has become a catalyst for maintaining historic places, stimulating
conservation at the urban level. Competition has always had a positive impact on tourism, driving the development of heritage sites to attract more visitors (Chambers 2010). The rehabilitation process also improves different kinds of activities through adaptive reuse and economic influx. Thus, tourism can play a significant role for the future of historic urban districts. Moreover, visitor appreciation stimulates the local population’s concern for conservation and their awareness of the urban environment. This, in turn, can lead to the formation of local community awareness groups and civic associations. In addition, appreciation for the tourism industry must be considered through employment, for example, improving local awareness of cross-cultural relationships, occupying redundant buildings, and raising funds and investments (Orbasli 2000). Other issues in need of consideration include pressure from receiving a large number of visitors, overcrowding, traffic and parking pressures, pressure to develop, high-maintenance services and infrastructure, and locals’ attitudes toward tourists and tourism (Orbasli 2000). Changes such as price inflation, tainted landscapes, pollution, traffic, and overcrowding are detrimental effects of the tourism industry (Orbasli 2000).

There is a significant relationship between tourists and heritage. Tourists’ behaviors, motivations, and perceptions in regards to heritage affect their visitation patterns. Hence, heritage tourism management should understand not only the presence of visitors but also their perception of the site’s heritage (Poria et al. 2003). Some tourists travel for sightseeing and others for an emotional experience (Urry 1990). Poria et al. (2003) argue that heritage tourism is a phenomenon that demands more than the object itself, which, is impacted by multiple aspects. This understanding is useful for historic site management and can lead to better marketing and interpretation of the historical district of
Challenges are major concerns that exist in each project, and they appear more in such historical district projects because of conflicts and contestation. For instance, tourism development can have negative impacts, such as destroying the qualities that attract visitors. Second, visitors can affect local communities negatively, and the need to satisfy infrastructural needs, such as roads, airports, the water supply, security and fire protection, is challenging. The historical district of Alula needs competent personnel in different jobs and locations with the site and its links in order to operate professionally. Heritage tourism can also be exploited through heritagization and manipulation of the past to serve social and ideological agendas. In contrast, preservation practices enhance appreciation and urban conservation in order to enrich culture. Hence, heritage tourism should be managed responsibly with an awareness of its possible negative effects (Poria and Ashworth 2009).

Any sustainable future for historic contexts, therefore, must be intrinsically linked to its past, not just in the continuity of the built heritage and urban spaces but also in the living culture that created, and is still shaping, the distinct townscape, or genius loci, that characterizes heritage places (Nasser 2003, 468).

The showing case of culture and history can create antagonisms, especially if it is left completely in the hands of marketers to decide what to represent. Local forces are important and can temper market forces from obliterating deliberately or accidently the heritage and culture of a place. The need to appreciate the local histories and memories of ordinary people who live, work, and use a place must become a reality for there to be a workable global-local nexus to prevent further insensitive commodification of places for the sake of tourism (Teo and Yeoh 1997, 210).

The findings that have been explored so far direct the conclusion of this research to major aspects or strategies. These major aspects are equally important to the development agenda, and they are linked to each other. These aspects include the local community, economic benefits or strategies, heritage tourism planning and management, and
government actions and partnership. Each aspect consists of further details that help to answer the research question of this thesis. To summarize this comprehensive strategic policy proposal, the research shows the following diagram.

![Comprehensive Policy Proposal for Heritage Tourism](image)

**Figure 5.2: Comprehensive Policy Proposal for Heritage Tourism**

**Conclusion**

No one can argue against the benefits and profits of tourism development. The historic district of Alula has a great deal of potential, and its significance is undeniable. Identifying this potential is extremely important in evaluating the feasibility of successful tourism development. This potential includes special architectural attributes, unique urban fabric, cultural authenticity, social significance, agricultural significance, proximity to
other attractions, and the applicability of adaptive reuse due to the good standing of the buildings. This research has identified potential opportunities and recommends building on them in the heritage tourism plan for the historical district of Alula.

However, other issues need to be taken into consideration. These issues include the sustainability of the local community, its economy, environmental issues, and hospitality, all of which can contribute to the promotion of ecotourism and can offer greater benefits throughout the region. It is essential that the local community serve as an important player in the historical district of Alula by being involved in the planning process and participating in different stages of the project to foster more sustainable development. Nevertheless, a successful tourism plan can give the local community an economic benefits and other benefits too, such as pride in their preserved culture and the international reputation garnered as a result. It can also give the local community access to education about their cultural heritage, educate them about the planning process itself, preparing them for jobs that involved with the project and provide recreational time to explore that heritage, if only that development was given priority over the plans for local sustainability.

Economic strategies are significant as well because they focus on the economic return to the city and community, regulate and manage foreign investment, manage leakage, manage multiplier and negative impacts, and balance economic gain and the preservation of culture and authenticity. These variables are major economic aspects that require professional management in order to both maximize benefits to the site and the local community and to minimize negative impacts on the historic district of Alula.

Proper policies and regulations are essential, specifically government actions represented by the SCTA and their collaborations with other governmental and non-
governmental agencies as well as the local community. The SCTA’s role is crucial in order to bring different entities together, setting the table between stakeholders, raising funds, promote investment, maintain a proper heritage tourism plan, and ensure good tourism management while implementing proper restoration and rehabilitation interventions in addition to providing specialists in the preservation and conservation field through training, recruitment and education.

Moreover, the SCTA has established some efforts for protection and has created a master plan for the district as well as proposals for development. Hence, there is already work that has been initiated, and the comprehensive policy proposal diagram included in this research can work as a guide for further improvement. Furthermore, marketing, meeting visitors’ expectations for quality and services, and press campaigns seem to be essential for enhancing audience’s attitudes toward preservation and the significance of cultural heritage. It seems that dividing up the project into multiple phases and levels would work with all aspects in the comprehensive policy proposal and would verify that the heritage tourism plan is working consistent with the growth and development that is happening in the city of Alula.

Good heritage tourism planning is one of the most important aspects of the heritage tourism process in the historical district of Alula. It is essential to follow other successful experiences and pay attention to experts’ contributions, as presented in this research, starting with the feasibility studies, assessment and evaluation.

Conducting the documentation stage, restoration, rehabilitation plan and assigning appropriate adaptive reuse are essential stages to follow during the heritage tourism plan. Professional execution, good heritage resource management, professional interpretation,
tourism management, maintenance, implementation of protection plan, and monitoring are important heritage management skills that enhance the heritage tourism plan. Most importantly, the task of linking the heritage tourism plan with other economical, government actions and the sustainability of the local community is essential in order to create a cohesive comprehensive work in the historical district of Alula and to overcome the conflicts and complexity of the project.

Therefore, the comprehensive implementation plan is equally important to enact in the historical district of Alula in order to ensure successful heritage tourism plan. Granted, many of these factors involve competing ideologies that hinder the heritage tourism process, but they all need to be addressed before implementing a plan. Other aspects, such as the site’s uniqueness and cultural obstacles, must also be evaluated. In the end, it is a complicated process, with plenty of driving forces that affect heritage tourism. But a good heritage plan, and the effective management thereof, is what matters. Thus, some level of compromise will always be necessary.
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