

Modernization of colonial heritage in downtown Oran

Mazouz FATIMA

safarayane10@gmail.com • Department of Architecture, Faculty of Architecture and Civil Engineering, Mohamed Boudiaf University, Oran, Algeria

Received: July 2017 • Final Acceptance: July 2018

Abstract

Like other countries of the African continent, Algeria has endured the French colonization, during 132 years. After its independence, in 1962, the country has inherited an important built heritage, not testifying to its culture, but that of his colonizer. We worked on the case of downtown Oran, the most European city in the country, and by examining the different strata of development of its colonial built heritage, we set the problematic of its current becoming, combining both its conservation, its rehabilitation and its actualization by contemporary architecture. In order to make this research, we have developed a grid of characteristics of buildings in Oran, which served us as a basis for our typological analysis of buildings and to the evaluation of the heritage value of existing constructions, and the rate of inscription of current transformations into the existing landscape. We also conducted surveys and interviews, during the period between 2013 and 2016 in Oran downtown. This approach is characterized by the highlighting of the elements of the conceptual originality of the colonial heritage and the search for their future, in relation to the socio-cultural dimensions of the country.

We hold back that, of by its conception, the colonial heritage is admirable, nevertheless, its conservation is realized through an extremely complex process, conditioned by the policies of the State, the behavior of the users and the cultural and identity data of the country.

Keywords

Conservation, Contemporary architecture, Heritage, Identity, Rehabilitation.



1. Introduction

In the early 20th century, Gustavo Giovannoni has focused to demonstrate that the destruction of the built heritage entailed a cultural impoverishment: "Making our cities big centers [...] while respecting and valuing the admirable artistic heritage than have transmitted to us the centuries; or else compromise an ample development [...] we will lose what is beautiful and precious in our urban heritage" (Giovannoni, 1931, p. 38). This vision forged by Giovannoni is still current. But does it adapt to all the built heritage inherited by the societies, without exception? What about a colonized country, having inherited an heritage that hardly testifies to its culture, but that of its colonizer?

Like other African countries, Algeria has lived the French colonization, during 132 years. After its independence in 1962, the country has inherited an important built heritage. In order to ensure the preservation and management of this heritage, the Algerian State has set up a prevention device its dilapidation. In parallel, and to cope with the pressure of needs linked to demographic growth and population movements, the State has carried out an urban planning, essentially functionalist, focusing on the production of new lodgments, in peripheral areas - passing of 15,000 units per year in 1967, to more than 300,000 lodgments per year in 2008 and finally 650,000 units for the year 2014-. As for the colonial heritage, despite the definition of rules of its management, the park of occupied lodgments has posed problems of maintenance and conservation. Currently, the colonial heritage is aging badly and undergoes, already, total demolitions.

This proposition has for objective the examination of the colonial built heritage, under the triple form of its conception, its postcolonial use and its current becoming, in taking support on the case of downtown of Oran.

2. Conception of the colonial heritage

At the early of colonization, in 1831, Oran was composed of La Blanca and Derb districts (currently located in the

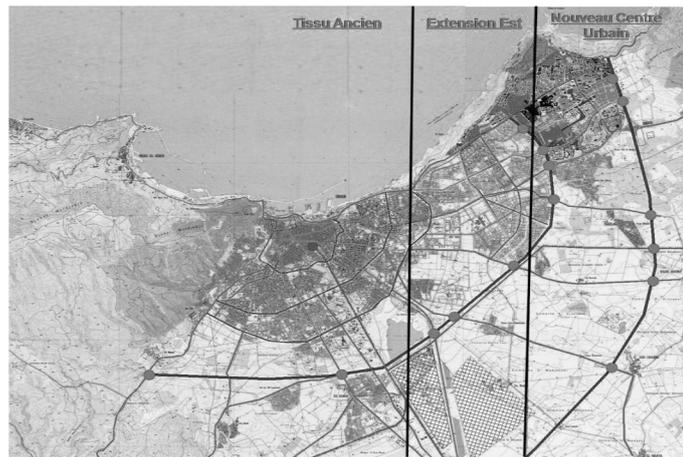


Figure 1. Situation of the downtown in the territory of Oran city.

historic district of Sidi El Houari). It was erected as a commune on January 31, 1848. It is within circumstance of the necessity of its extension towards the east¹, especially on the Karguentah plateau, that in 1880, was born the present downtown of Oran, incited by the reduction of territory of the initial site, but also by its rugged topography and its enclavement, which have prevented its growth (Figure 1).

However, in its substantial development, the downtown has experienced two distinct phases. The first, which extends to the year 1940, is marked by its birth and its fabrication according to a classic European model of the nineteenth century. The second, unfolding until the independence of the country, in 1962, has seen the preponderance of the modern architectural model.

In its first phase, the urban and architectural landscape of the downtown is homogeneous.

Indeed, the keystone of birth and development of the downtown was the plan of alignment and embellishment, paired to a spatial combination based on the islet, the plot and built buildings.

Having benefited from the application of the provisions of the decree of 26 March 1832, relating to the streets of Paris, buildings were constructed in the French style: "Neither more beautiful nor uglier than elsewhere" (PDAU, 1998, p. 69). On the urban plan, buildings are aligned on streets, and rise up over four to five levels, in occupying a large part of parcels. They maintain simultaneously close relations with buildings which border them on the streets in addition to those surrounding

¹The presence of Mount Murdjadjo to the west and the Mediterranean Sea to the north, have oriented the extension of the city to the east.



Figure 2. View on eclectic buildings, located on Mohamed Boudiaf street.



Figure 3. View on buildings of modern style, located on the seafront boulevard.

them in the hearts of islets. Their architecture is sometimes in a neo-classical style and sometimes in an eclectic style, using columns, pilasters and cornices (Figure 2). They seem to be repeated along the streets, but they are distinguished by few accents in the drawing of their facades and the design of their differentiated angles. In fact, the concern for creativity has been exerted on detail in the form of the ornamentation and the expressiveness of the structure elements (capitals, columns, ...). In addition, regulations in effect, based on general provisions: alignment on street, the contiguity, the courtyard, the height of building proportional to street width, respected by the builders and the owners, has been at the origin of the production of a landscape of a great urban and architectural unity : "Urban architecture [...] depends until the twentieth century less from a cod-

ification by books than from the traditional knowledge of entrepreneurs and craftsmen, of respect of a simple regulations and the consensus that has been established on banal provisions : alignment, joint ownership, the role of the courtyard, etc. ... " (Panerai et al., 2009, p.104).

During this phase, the downtown of Oran is consecrated as the exclusively colonial place of residence. Not far from the center, was built the new town "Negro village", occupied by the indigenous-Muslim population², as designated by the settlers. This village was modestly designed, as described by the writer Desprez : " The indigenous houses were small and square, having generally a ground floor and whose courtyard is sheltered from the sun by a vineyard, houses painted white, blue or red " (Lespes, 2003, p. 184).

However, as of the year 1940, regulatory circumventions have occurred, incited by the use of reinforced concrete, in the construction of buildings, but also by speculation real estate supported by the new urbanism code.

During its second development phase, the character of the center is changed.

In fact, high-rise buildings, at modern style were introduced in the downtown (Figure 3). The implementation of the new urban planning code, has considerably transformed the aspect of certain districts of the center : "The seafront boulevard, Miramar district and new prefecture district, see themselves occupied by buildings sometimes exceeding 20 storeys [...] Private companies and public services, compete of initiative to give this part of the city a South American look " ((PDAU, 1998, p.72).

Modern buildings rise up over twelve levels and more. Their facades are simple, denuded of decor and symbol. Their reinforced concrete structure have been maintained set back from their outer-envelop, which allowed their façades to gain the depth, to the benefit of the insertion of loggias, terraces, and break-sun.

On this latter, the cornice is suppressed, as much as the entire anthropomorphic vertical hierarchy peculiar to the first buildings.

Finally, as from 1959, and in the context of the implementation of the "Plan

²At the arrival of the French, the Arab population, coming from the tribes of Douai and Zmelas, had slaves who were Negroes, whence the name of the new town, the "Negro village." (Source: <http://www.oran-memoire.fr/Village.html#nom>).

of Constantine”³, large ensembles are realized in the outskirts of the center. These latter respond to the principles of the bursting of space, the uniformity and reproducibility of architectural and urban solutions, whose bar and tower had prevailed (Molina, 2014, p.9).

During its development phases, Oran has been: “A large urban agglomeration, deeply European” (Lespes, 2003, p.424).

Since the country’s independence in 1962 and until 1990⁴, the two growth strata of the downtown remained legible. However, the various values of its heritage include as well age, the historicity and the aesthetics, which are indisputable, that other values which are inseparable from the users who recognize them (CBCQ, 2004, p.6), such as culture, education and the social aspect (Mason, 2002 : 9), which remain consequently, to be examined.

3. Post-colonial usage of the built heritage

During the colonial era, the indigenous-Muslims lived in the Negro-village. In 1962, after the departure of the Frenchs, they remained attached to their village; the colonial heritage of the center was then occupied, by average social strata, provening from the exodus of the populations of the neighboring small towns, notably Tlemcen, Mascara and Sidi Bel Abbés. From then on, a wide usage-value was granted to it.

Starting from 1966 - all the buildings declared vacant after independence were vested in the State -, the State was responsible for the maintenance of the buildings, but in view of the expenses invested in its maintenance, which exceeded by far the income that brought back its renting, the State changed its policy and decided to transfer its belongings to the tenants, from 1981 onwards. The end of the 1980s was also marked by the displacement of the average social strata, having occupied the colonial heritage, towards parcelings of terrain in self-construction, located in the periphery, with ceding their lodgements to social strata mostly poor. As soon, the economic and, in particular, symbolic value of heritage declined. The cession of the colonial heritage in favor of its occupants has

indeed had only negative consequences, as to its conservation and the responsabilization of its users vis-a-vis their heritage. Indeed, much of the colonial heritage is become unrecognizable. Anarchic and variable transformations were effected in the buildings. Despite the existence of rules of operation of the condominium, the common parts of the buildings have been neglected; the cellars and the terraces have been densified into precarious habitat ((MHU, 2008, p. 17). Inside the lodgements over-occupied by extended families, the kitchens have been converted into bedrooms and the bathrooms transformed into kitchens. For safety reasons, the modifications have even affected the facades, which appear assaulted and oppressed by grids preventing infractions through the balconies, windows and access-doors to buildings. In addition, the abusive use of water, in maintenance of lodgements and common areas of buildings, has constituted a factor that affected the conservation of colonial heritage and prompted its degradation.

This neglect of the colonial heritage, on plan of its maintenance and conservation, that when it comes to granting values is paradoxical. The colonial heritage is neither economically valued nor socially capitalized. The lack of means of its users, backed by their incomprehension of its usefulness, has been at the origin of its dramatic situation. However, the conservation of the colonial heritage can’t be reduced solely at its users, the State and the other actors of civil society⁵ should be involved.

4. Becoming of built colonial heritage

In Oran, in the face of the prejudices inflicted at the colonial heritage, the State intervened. In perspective of preserve this heritage, at first, for its users, the State has initiated a policy of conservation and prevention of its dilapidation, by means of a regulatory framework for its management. Parallel to this process, and as consideration its artistic, historical and age values, a policy of rehabilitation⁶ of the colonial heritage, as well as its actualization by contemporary architecture were conducted by the State.

³The “Constantine Plan” (1959-1963) provided for the construction of 200,000 lodgements in the suburbs of the large cities of Algeria, in form of large ensembles, which was eventually abandoned at the end of 1961.

⁴The choice of the democratic process, instituted by the Constitution of 23 February 1989, has brought about profound changes in the thinking about the prospects of urban development in cities in the face of new planning and urbanization requirements and has led to a new Policy of the real estate activity.

⁵For example, associations acting in the protection of the built heritage. The city of Oran has only two: “Health Sidi El Houari”, founded in 1991, working for the restoration of the Turkish baths and the old hospital of Sidi El Houari as well as learning traditional trades; and “Bel Horizon”, created in 2001, working for the rehabilitation of the Oranese heritage dating from the colonial era.

⁶Decree No. 83-684 of 26 November 1983 deals with the management of dilapidated buildings in an existing urban fabric, amended and supplemented. According to Article 2, rehabilitation is defined as “an operation consisting in the modification of an immovable or a group of buildings or equipment with a view to giving them essential commodities”.

⁷Source : <https://www.lkeria.com/doc/lkeria-cession-des-biens-de-letat.pdf>

⁸At the national level, the number of vacant belongings left by colonization was in the order of 200,000 buildings.

⁹Source: <https://www.joradp.dz/hfr/>

¹⁰Source: <https://www.joradp.dz/hfr/>

¹¹This text expresses a distinct desire of renovation of the legal framework relative to the protection of the built heritage. It has broadened the definition of built heritage to include urban ensembles and has strengthened the protection regimes of heritage built by the sectors backed up, (source: <https://www.joradp.dz/hfr/>).

¹²OPGI is the local (national) abbreviation of: the Office of Promotion and Real Estate Management.



Figure 4. View on rehabilitation of buildings, located on Larbi Ben M'Hidi Street.

4.1. Conservation and prevention of the dilapidation of colonial heritage

Since independence, the State, as the owner of the patrimony, has set up co-ownership regulations (management of common parts in a collective apartment building), and located the maintenance responsibilities of those parts, until its transfer to its users through Law n° 81-01 of 7 February 1981⁷.

Indeed, this text allowed the privatization of a large number of collective buildings managed under the condominium regime. The city of Oran counted a real estate park of 20,000 buildings⁸ collective (URBOR, 2015, p.82), whose 50% have been affected by this law. Nevertheless, rules for managing the co-ownership have been defined. The provisions of Decree No. 83-666 of 12 November 1983⁹ have concerned the management body which is the administrator of the immovable. Currently, despite the existence of this legal framework defining the rules of operation of the co-ownership, the management bodies are generally not set up. This situation has led the buildings to the degradation of their common parts and to anarchic transformations. This device therefore remained inoperative. Its review shows weaknesses, particularly in terms of management funding. In addition, the State has tried again to re-emphasize the aesthetic dimension of buildings and their environments, through advertisements on the embellishments of cities. With reference to the provisions of Law No. 06-06¹⁰, incentives measures for heritage conservation have been taken, in particular Article 24 thereof, which stipulates : “ Each year, a day is called ‘Day of the city’, an annual prize entitled “Prize of the Republic” is awarded to the most

beautiful city of Algeria “. In parallel, the State organizes seminars of sensitization and popularization of regulatory texts, in order to awareness the co-owners, palliate their incivism and aspire to a co-conservation of the colonial heritage. In definitive, the State found itself in the obligation to launch operations for the rehabilitation of residential buildings.

4.2. Rehabilitation of colonial heritage

The first heritage rehabilitation operations date from before 1998, the year of the promulgation of the law¹¹ n°98-04 of 15 June 1998, on the protection of the cultural heritage – the first law dedicated to heritage -. These operations had concerned the old district of Sidi El Houari, where twenty-three dilapidated buildings have been taken over. While from this year on, thirty-three other buildings have been rehabilitated and did a new skin.

The rehabilitation of these buildings has been entrusted to the office for the promotion and management real estate (OPGI)¹², through which this office has had some experience in the field. However, in 2008, the State decided to launch a big program of rehabilitation of buildings, located in the centers of four major cities of the country, Algiers, Annaba, Constantine and especially that of Oran, which benefited from a project of rehabilitation of 600 buildings, long time neglected and currently nearing completion, which the Main roads - Mohamed Khemisti street and Larbi Ben M'Hidi street as well as the boulevard Maâta H'Bib- have been concerned (Figure 4). Given the large number of buildings to be rehabilitated, it has been done call on Italian and Spanish specialists. They have had for other mission to train Algerian craftsmen, specialists in the rehabilitation of buildings. Nevertheless, this number of rehabilitated buildings, nowadays in Oran, remains very limited, compared to the rate of dilapidated of registered heritage.

Indeed, in 2010, the State proceeded to the expertise of colonial built heritage whose results have highlighted the dramatic state of a large part of this heritage, which the progressive degradation of

architectonic details - thereby the original identity of the buildings-, as well as the deterioration of structure elements of the buildings. Moreover, according to the local press, the downtown currently records annually, more than 200 collapses and 150 risks of collapse of buildings. The conservation of the colonial heritage displays problematic.

4.3. Demolition of colonial heritage

Considering that the life time of a building is estimated to average about 50 to 60 years (this estimate is different according to countries and standards of construction in force and may vary, for example, between 35 years in Japan and 80 years in Germany) (Berezowska, 2004, p. 8), colonial heritage is already qualified as old. Face to the imminent risk than constitutes the dilapidated of heritage for the safety of its occupiers, the State has proceeded to the rehousing of the users of the degraded colonial heritage, in new lodgements, after having previously concluded with them, a contract stipulating the transfer of their properties to its profit.

As has enlightened it Françoise Choay: "Demolition is the other face of the construction" (2011, p.120). Indeed, the table-rase was retained for large parts of centrals districts degraded - Sidi El Houari (old city-center), Yaghmouracen (formerly Saint-Pierre), Lamur and Mediouni. The terrains recovered after the demolition of the dilapidated heritage are sold to the profit of private promoters. It should be noted that this new policy of real estate activity, allowing to the State to transfer built or unbuilt buildings to private promoters, intended for use in construction operations was born¹³, from 1991. This unexpected turnaround occurred in the policy conducted by the State, which was the sole provider of new housing, since the independence of the country, has been at the origin of the emergence of the first operations of reconstruction of the colonial heritage.

4.4. Actualization of the colonial heritage by contemporary architecture

The attractiveness of the downtown generates annuities of location important for the operations of densification of enclaves, retrieved after demolition

of the dilapidated built heritage. For this reason, the operations of re-edification (Choay, 2007, p.187) of heritage have consisted mainly in investment equipments such as hotels, shopping centers, etc., but also residences of high standing.

In contrary to prescriptions of regulations retained in the urban plans, which defend the historical and artistic values of the built heritage, concretely, it is rather the economic quality with transformations of vocation, which is set in forward. The apport of new functions and services has incontestably revitalized the downtown and modernized its built heritage. Similarly, the newly built residences have welcomed a wealthy population, which induced a social mix in the center, where the colonial heritage was predominantly occupied by a poor population.

However, the examination of contemporary constructions reveals a rivalry between several trends of actualization of the colonial heritage by contemporary architecture (Paquin, 2014).

This distinction in the reconstruction of the dilapidated colonial heritage is linked to the aspirations of architects, to put their signatures on the buildings they realize, and over, to a need for affirmation, attested by the Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer: "In the countries of the Third-world to which I lend my collaboration, especially Algeria, if they lack an advanced technique, they still have a momentum, an incontestable desire of affirmation " (1974, p.4). Our approach is to present contemporary buildings, with the aim of locating the "elements of constancy" in link with surrounding heritage, otherwise the "evolutionary elements" in break with this heritage.

Our choice has concerned four different designs of the rebuilding dilapidated built heritage.

4.4.1. Insurance office "CNEP": Dissent with the context

In superseding a low uni-familial dwelling, the office of insurance "CNEP" is located on a main artery of the downtown (Figure 5).

This eight-level building has a uni-valent form. Its ground-floor raised on two levels above ground, coated of

¹³Legislative Decree No. 93-03 of 1 March 1993 concerned the actions competing to the renovation of real estate belongings (source: <https://www.joradp.dz/hjfr/>)



Figure 5. View on the insurance office “CNEP”, located on Larbi Ben M’Hidi street.



Figure 6. View on Residence Clementine, located on Mohamed Boudiaf Street.

beige stone, marks the entrance to the building. Above this base, the building rises on six other levels, its outer-envelope is completely glazed, expressing the nature of its function and its need for the maximum light. The metal structure of the building has been maintained setback to create the curtain wall, which the effect of drawing highlights level of each floor forming the office, assimilated on the facades of pre-existing buildings, marked on the one, by the cordons and in the other by the protrusions of balconies. The transparent façade of this building is in dissent with the masonry wall pierced with windows of surrounding buildings. It should be emphasized that: “the Building with continuous glazed wall is a fruit of the American technological culture” (Fanelli, 2008, p.39).

A sharp contrast of material and color is marked between the new building and that old. But this maximum transparency of the envelope on street is confronted to closure high side walls delimiting the plot, consequence of the compulsory alignment of buildings along the street. The great office height destroys the effect of perspective on street, whereas continuity between the inside and the outside of the building is developed. Behind the glass-envelope, the internal spaces answer to an opened organization, in essence. The office is a synthesis between its interior space and its exterior envelopp, expressing a modern architecture not comply with the limits set by the urban structure of context.

The significant elevation of the building shows that the architect-designer lost in this building, his role of “intercessor”, as pointed by Choay (2007, p. 185), between the building and its context.

4.4.2. Residence Clementine: Building exceeding any compromise with the context

The residence is built on the corner of two streets, and consists of a ground floor completely opened on street and a compact body no-affixed thereto the existing contiguous buildings (Figure 6). A pedestrian passage, transversal to the main street, includes commercial premises. Research on the character of the envelope is fundamental in the design of this building, not settled by the bilateral symmetry, like the surrounding buildings. On the first five levels, an apparent reinforced-concrete structure joins the recess of the ground floor to the compactness of the massive body of the residence, reaffirming the continuity between the two contrasting components of the building, and revealing its aesthetic nature, not-bearing. The bulky body is slightly offset from the alignment of adjoining buildings, its setback from the left separative limit, gives it a monolithic appearance. Object isolated, of smooth surface, coated of beige stone and with facades all equal in design. These later don't include openings, with the exception of the corners, where the advanced of sectors partially glazed, arranged di-

agonally, articulated each floor level in simulation of corner treatments of surrounding buildings, whose the weight effect of the building. The clear distinction in the relationship of empty and full between the “new” and the “old” building is accentuated. As an expression of its time, the corner of the building at the intersection of two streets is no longer seen in the first glance, it is not the part of building where all the consistence of the construction appears, like the surrounding buildings. The building is modern and unique.

4.4.3. Hotel Oran-center: A hybrid appearance

This hotel ten levels, was built at the corner of two streets in unequal importance. Its first two levels form the base from which the compact body of the hotel emerges, composed of a succession of repeated storeys. Between neo-classical and modern styles of the downtown, the hotel proposes a hybrid appearance, resulting by a superposition of ideas, like its reinforced-concrete structure, in setback of its facades, remaining unexpressed on the envelope, whose the coating of cement mortar is in groove.

The advance of the building in cantilevered, increased the thickness of its facades of 150 cm, winning at each level, a surplus of surface, and a fully open facade more enlightened on the narrow transverse street. On its outer envelope, the openings are pierced, in a traditional way, skilfully superimposed over the whole height of the building. Their size and design do not express any space particularity. In contrast to the “CNEP” office, the exterior of the hotel assumes the full without creation and translates the horizontal closing, whose the continuity between the inside and outside of the building. The imposing height of the building, transgresses the urban regulations in force, and doesn't change from one street to another (Figure 7). The rounded corner of the building is designed without any special features. An effect of verticality of the casing is accentuated, to the detriment of the perspective effect on street. In appearance, the building is simple, integrated, but it is also shifted, it seems to have always existed in



Figure 7. View on the hotel “Oran-Center”, located on Larbi Ben M’Hidi Street.



Figure 8. View on the Residence “Colonel-Lotfi”, located on Larbi Ben M’Hidi Street.

this locus, it doesn't exclude the past, but hesitates to “go ahead.” It doesn't express surely its time.

4.4.4. Residence Colonel Lotfi: Adequacy with the context

This residence at eleven levels is located at the end of Ben M’Hidi Street. Their first four levels form the base of the residence, from which emerges the body of the residence. The composition of its outer-envelope responds to the tradition of the first buildings at coronation. This latter follows the profile of the plot. Its reinforced-concrete structure is maintained setback, to produce the elaborated articulation of the building. In the compactness of the envelope, rhythmmed hollow creates shadows on the facade, interrupting the continuity of the envelope of the building (Figure 8).



Figure 9. View of a pseudo-historical contemporary building, the “Royal” hotel, located on Boulevard de la Soummam.



Figure 10. View on the Hotel «El HadeF».

The corner of the building is treated in structure apparent, enriched by balconies. The coronation of the building extends over two levels; on the side of the main street and is reduced to a single level on the secondary street. The residence contains administrations in its first four levels and lodgements in the others. The design of the outer-envelope reflects the functional organization of spaces and separate character of each level. The residence is in adequacy with its immediate environment. Examination of these contemporary buildings shows the rivalry between three trends rebuilding of the dilapidated colonial heritage:

A first trend oriented towards dissidence with the surrounding context, associating more than one style, distinct from each other, expressing the individual options of architect-designers¹⁴, in search of the drafting of a new architectural style in the downtown, daring and contemporary, not taking into account all the parameters of the context, just like the insurance office “CNEP”.

Second trend is more rather oriented toward an agreement with the neighboring buildings, where contemporary constructions come to exclude the present and the progress recorded in the construction, as the hotel Oran-center. But thus, the new build-

ings remain not only, enclosed in the past, but also miss, of commitment in the present.

This stylistic choice doesn't line up with the provisions of Article 7 of the Vienna Memorandum on “the world-heritage and the contemporary-architecture”, adopted in May 2005, and which stipulate that the contemporary architecture and the preservation of the urban landscape, should avoid all forms of pseudo-historical design, in so far as they constitute a simultaneous rejection of the historical and the contemporary aspects (Figure 9).

The third trend reflects a competence to edify (2007, p.184). As described by Choay: “The capacity to articulate between themselves and with their context, on the scale of the body, the full or empty elements, solidary and never autonomous”. Contemporary constructions have a coherent relationship with the buildings surrounding them in the patrimonial context, while being carriers of contemporaneity. Like the hotel “El HadeF”, located on the seafront boulevard. This latter follows the profile of the parcel and respects the parameters of the context, and is in adequacy with its immediate environment (Figure 10).

The terrains recovered after demolition of the dilapidated colonial heritage are densified, but in addition, the parameters of the context are not always respected.

According to Victor Hugo, the history of development of a center and its architectural inscription are highly dependent: “Architecture writes the history” (Chemetov et al., 1984, p. 9). By neglecting the parameters of the heritage context, and in the apparent absence of cultural references, the architects-designers of the contemporary constructions have developed distinct visions, and have sometimes missed this opportunity to write correctly the contemporary history of the downtown of Oran. Attitudes that go against the current logic and also the statements of the director of the UNESCO World Heritage Center, Francesco Bandarin in Vienna, dated May 10, 2005: “The centers of cities that have developed over the centuries need to remain legible, each stratum of their

¹⁴For example: architect Oscar Niemeyer believes: “architecture as a very personal thing”.

development testifying to the culture and development of the city “.

Also, the taking of consideration of “an already-there” is primordial. Nevertheless, it should under no circumstances, aiming the reproduction by mimicry, as precised by Stein (2003, p.19), but rather serve to define the articulation of new constructions with the existing patrimonial ensembles. Locally, the identity remains a process of becoming (Joaquin, 1988, p.28).

4. Conclusion

In Oran, beyond the register of conservation, the colonial heritage has progressed. According to Choay, no heritage can escape to the demolition, either by the wear and tear of time, by wars, or by the utility of modernization: “Demolition is a historical necessity”, it is also, the other side of the construction. However, the importance of the context remains paramount, as enlightened by Giovannoni: “The heritage value of pieces of town is much more than the result of a concentration of buildings or the prolongation of architecture; It is the very structure of the ensembles which is carrier of sens and which therefore takes a heritage value “.

In Oran, of by its conception, the colonial heritage is admirable. The replacement of the built colonial heritage has revitalized the central urban fabric of the city and the contemporary constructions have given it a better attractiveness, by the contribution of new functions and services. Nevertheless, the examination of the modes of integration of operations of replacement of the dilapidated heritage in the central urban dynamic, has shown that they were sometimes made, in a retreat towards the old models, if not in an opening to transformation. Between a colonization having exceeded the century and an independence of hardly half a century, the transformations of heritage oscillate between an aspiration to modernity and the safeguarding of socio-cultural references. It is retained that in a country that has inherited a colonial heritage, Its conservation is carried out through an extremely complex process, conditioned by the policies of the State, the behavior of the users and the cultural and identity data of the country.

References

Berezowska, A. (2004), Pour une gestion intégrée du recyclage territorial. Journée d'étude sur la problématique urbaine dans la ville d'Oran. Université des sciences et de la Technologie d'Oran, Oran.

Chemetov, P., Marrey, B. (1984). L'architecture du XIXe siècle de Paris, Edition Le seuil, Paris.

Choay, F. (2007). L'allégorie du patrimoine. Edition Le Seuil, Paris.

Choay, F. (2011). De la démolition. Revue Architecture d'Aujourd'hui AA, 386, 119- 125.

CBCQ -Commission des biens culturels du Québec-. (2004). « La gestion par les valeurs : exploration d'un modèle », Québec, publication de la commission.

Direction de l'urbanisme et de la construction d'Oran. (1998). Document écrit du Plan Directeur d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme (PDAU) du groupement urbain d'Oran, Sidi Chahmi, Es-sénia et Bir El Djir, publication de la Direction.

Fanelli, G., Gargiani, R. (2008). Histoire de l'architecture moderne, structure et revêtement, Presses polytechniques et universitaires romandes, Lausanne.

Giovannoni, G. (1931). Vecchie città ed edilizia nuova. Réédition en 1998 ; traduction française : L'urbanisme face aux villes anciennes. Edition Le Seuil Paris.

Joaquin, N. (1988). Culture et Histoire. Notes occasionnelles sur le devenir des Philippines. Edition de Metro Manila, Solar Publishing Corporation.

Lespes, R. (2003). Oran, Etude de géographie et Histoire urbaines. Edition de l'association Bel Horizon, Oran.

Mason, R. (2002). Assessing Values in Conservation Planning : Methodological Issues and Choices. Assessing the Values of Cultural Heritage. Research Report, Los Angeles, the Getty Conservation Institute.

MHU-Ministère de l'habitat et de l'urbanisme-. (2008). Il faut réorienter l'acte de bâtir. La revue de l'habitat, 01, 13-21

Molina, G. (2014). Distinction et conformisme des architectes-urbanistes de la « star system », France.

Niemeyer, O. (1974). Extraits de l'in-

terview accordée par Oscar Niemeyer aux journaux brésiliens. *Revue d'architecture d'aujourd'hui* AA. 171, 3-5.

Panerai, P., Depaule, J.-C., & Demorgon, M. (2009). *Analyse urbaine*, Edition Parenthèses, Marseille.

Paquin, A.G. (2014). *Actualiser le patrimoine par l'architecture contemporaine*, Edition des Presses de l'université du Québec, Québec.

Stein, V. (2003). *La reconquête du centre-ville : du patrimoine à l'espace*

public, Thèse de Doctorat, faculté de sciences économiques sociales, université de Genève, Genève.

URBOR -Centre d'Etudes et de Réalisations en Urbanisme-. (2015). *Document écrit portant révision du Plan Directeur d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme du groupement des communes d'Oran, Bir El Djir, Es Senia, Sidi Chahmi et El Kerma*. Publication de la Direction de l'urbanisme, de l'architecture et de la construction d'Oran.