

ARCHITECTURE AND HERITAGE DESIGN OF A HOTEL: BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION IN DOWNTOWN AMMAN

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Abstract

Introduction. This study examines the transformation of a historic building in downtown Amman, Jordan, into a heritage hotel, aiming to preserve architectural and cultural identity while meeting modern hospitality standards. As urban areas experience increasing development pressure, the challenge lies in maintaining structural integrity and historical character while integrating essential contemporary amenities. This research addresses these challenges and highlights the role of sustainable design in heritage hotels. Downtown Amman, rich in cultural heritage, provides an ideal setting for exploring adaptive reuse in hotel design. The study seeks to balance preservation and modernization, emphasizing the importance of heritage in tourism and cultural continuity. Given the complexity of the urban environment, architectural preservation supports both local identity and economic growth. **Methods.** The study employs a mixed-method approach, including case studies, literature review, and field analysis, to examine sustainable design interventions in heritage hotels. Particular attention was given to adaptive reuse, green building techniques, and regulatory frameworks. Interviews with stakeholders and site assessments provided practical insights into the restoration and adaptation process. **Results.** The results indicate that heritage hotels can successfully integrate cultural preservation with functionality, creating a sustainable model for historic sites. The adaptive use of energy-efficient systems and locally sourced materials enabled the hotel to retain its historic character while meeting the needs of contemporary guests. This approach proved both culturally significant and economically viable. **Discussion.** This research highlights the dual importance of heritage preservation and economic viability in urban centers such as Amman. Key challenges include strict regulatory compliance and modern building standards. The study recommends adopting more flexible regulations to support innovative design solutions and involving local communities to foster cultural engagement. The Amman project serves as a model for other cities, demonstrating that adaptive reuse can enhance urban heritage while supporting sustainable tourism.

Keywords: architecture; heritage design; heritage hotels; downtown.

Introduction

Amman, similar to many rapidly growing cities around the world, contains a significant number of open spaces interspersed with various types of buildings. These centrally located and highly marketable areas are believed to play an essential role in contributing to an architectural revival or in restoring the country's rich traditions. Such efforts aim to further support the rehabilitation of the urban landscape, attract tourists from different regions, and foster social interaction among the local population. This multifaceted approach requires a clear and comprehensive understanding of how prospective architectural changes may influence the identity of specific locations, as well as their broader significance to the local community or the nation as a whole (Jawabreh et al., 2024a). The study of architectural completion is fundamental to this discourse before proposing the necessary strategies

for transforming the existing context into something new and vibrant. A well-conceived building design, therefore, is not merely an aesthetic pursuit; it is a thoughtful endeavor aimed at creating a structure that connects deeply with its inhabitants, resonates with their values, and meets the specific needs of the community. Within the field of architectural planning and design, the terminology used may not be new; however, the applications of these concepts have not always been articulated with the clarity and decisiveness required, particularly regarding their social implications. Conversely, heritage architecture can be appreciated for its ability to preserve not only physical structures and their names but also the significance of the places in which they are maintained. This preservation process often acts as a bridge between past and present, enabling a dialog that enriches the community's cultural fabric and ensures that the stories represented by these

buildings are shared and celebrated for generations to come (Abuarkub et al., 2024; Jawabreh et al., 2023; Merakchi et al., 2024).

Understanding and recognizing the central concept that underscores the key argument of this essay is also essential for maintaining and supporting the proposals presented in the text. The significance of heritage resources, building integrity, and national preservation strategies is evaluated in a manner that allows broader discussions to connect more coherently. Attempts to capitalize on negative cultural aspects of the city may hinder complex transformations within the construction and real estate markets and impede processes of urban change (Jawabreh et al., 2024b; Alhmoud et al., 2025b). Stakeholders involved in these developments require a carefully balanced approach that considers both the use of cultural advantages and the implications of various project-site alternatives. Consequently, the findings of this study may provide valuable guidance to stakeholders in building and manufacturing, serving as a framework through which they can refine their private strategies or managerial policies within a broader strategic context. Furthermore, integrating traditional architectural elements with modern requirements demonstrates the need to establish goals that serve as a central argument for ensuring sustainability in contemporary society. The process of adaptation should involve a connection that transcends purely psychological and material needs, linking the significance of a property to the descriptive and communicative values rooted in cultural identity. The reclamation of historic buildings must comply with today's comprehensive standards to effectively achieve the intended public service objectives. Thus, this study is particularly relevant to sustainable historic rehabilitation, especially in areas characterized by intense commercial and residential activities in downtown districts (Qureshi et al., 2022; Waheeb, 2023; Alhmoud et al., 2025a).

Background of the Study

Amman, the capital city of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, holds substantial cultural significance, preserved over the years by a society guided by a deep-rooted belief in cultural continuity and respect for history. Established in 7250 BC, the city was ruled by numerous ancient civilizations, including the Greeks, Romans, and Umayyads. Downtown Amman abounds with archaeological landmarks such as the Citadel, the Nymphaeum, and the Roman Theater (Al Fahmawee and Jawabreh, 2023; Esmail, 2023).

Architecture in Jordan has its own distinctive character, reflecting the influence of many civilizations and architectural styles. The result is a built environment that frequently combines locally developed forms with diverse architectural methods. Urban heritage, essentially the built

environment, represents what remains long after today's newspapers are forgotten and tomorrow's fashion trends have passed. Unlike the city's high-rise apartment buildings, superhighways, and shopping centers, urban heritage has proven its value beyond contemporary needs, products, and trends (Al Fahmawee, 2021). Historic buildings, monuments, and districts interact closely with the community's lifestyle. This interaction ensures the continuity of both cultural principles and the physical materials that embody them. In doing so, urban heritage sustains the ongoing renewal of the very concept of "culture" and reinforces the meaning of "community" and "identity" in notable ways. Preserving heritage is essential because it stands as a living testament to the city's history and cultural identity. The heterogeneities, alienation, and disorientation found in new urban tourism areas must be carefully managed; their uniqueness forms the lens through which economic and cultural growth emerges and attracts investment. Visitors' discovery and engagement with these heritage elements will distinguish historic urban areas from other tourism products and provide the foundation for social, cultural, and economic development.

Amman's topography and architectural landscape narrate the city's rich historical background, as illustrated in Fig. 1. The caves containing twenty-five-thousand-year-old evidence and artifacts do not represent the complete historical tapestry that Amman has inherited over centuries. From ancient Rabbath-Ammon and Roman-era Philadelphia to the early Islamic and Ottoman city of Amman, the city at each stage of its historical narrative embodied the dominant cultural heritage of the time (Al Fahmawee, 2021). Cultural and architectural influences that shaped Amman's historical context include the Hellenistic, Byzantine, Roman, and Islamic periods, as presented in Fig. 2. These cultural layers have contributed to forming the city's overall character and have left a lasting imprint on its landscape and its people. Archaeological sites and monuments near the study area, such as the Roman Theater, the Nymphaeum, and the Citadel, which is located on one of Amman's seven hills, further reflect the depth of this heritage (Abder-Rahman Gil, 2023; Al Fahmawee, 2021; Al Tal et al., 2024; Daher, 2024).

Architectural Evolution

The evolution of architecture in Amman is highly distinctive and can be observed through the various layers of architectural growth that have taken shape over time. Before urban expansion, Amman was primarily known for its Citadel, where the city's rich history originated, marked by a relatively small Islamic monument that stands in stark contrast to the larger Roman architecture that once dominated the region. The second significant phase of architectural development occurred between the First and Second

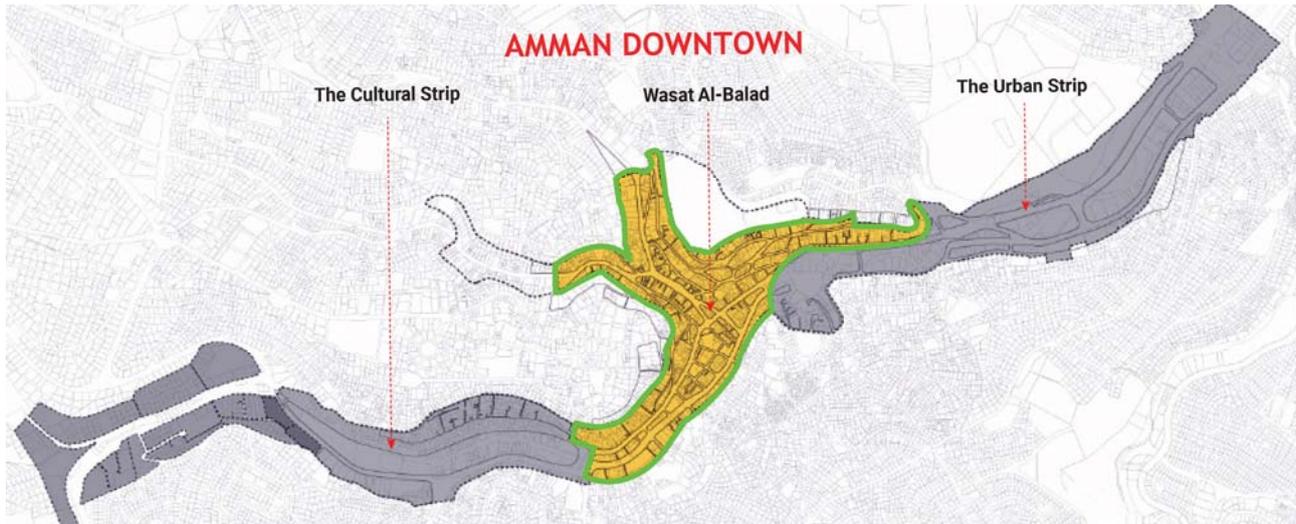


Fig. 1. Map of Amman downtown (source: the authors)

World Wars, when many settlers from Palestine and Syria began relocating to Amman in search of better opportunities. These settlers were primarily lower-class laborers and merchants seeking stability and livelihood in a growing city. As the old Citadel area, built mainly with local limestone, gradually expanded, the new inhabitants tended to live close

to their workplaces, which contributed to a noticeable transformation in the architectural landscape. They built their homes using clay and stones sourced directly from the surrounding hills, which reflected a strong connection to the land. Locally available materials — such as unhewn stones and local limestone from As-Salt — helped shape the



Fig. 2. A view of the heritage hotel buildings near the historic Roman amphitheater (source: the authors)

unique character of these early structures. Over time, Residents began using modern construction materials, introduced through globalization, in their building methods, illustrating an innovative blend of traditional techniques and contemporary influences within Amman's continuously evolving urban fabric (Alqub and Mellin, 2020; Abdeljawad and Nagy, 2023; Al Tal et al., 2024).

This duality gave Amman a distinctive identity when compared with other Jordanian cities that developed during the same period. Amman became a kind of cultural memory, reflecting the diverse stories embedded within the city. The architectural guidelines that shaped the urban fabric of Amman mirror the social, political, and economic shifts experienced by its inhabitants. Different architectural landmarks symbolize different categories of narratives. The architecture of downtown Amman is characterized by high-density streets, narrow sidewalks, and crowded shops. The steep slope extending from the North City Gate downtown to Qaza Circle in the Embassies Quarter was originally developed from the top of the hill downwards, with terraced formations and retaining walls built of local fieldstone. The resulting impression of Amman's architectural use reveals a distinctly modern, manually crafted urban route.

Design Principles in Heritage Hotels

Keeping these detailed descriptions of cultural heritage in mind, one of the fundamental design principles for any captive-market heritage hotel seeking to revitalize historical buildings is to identify effective ways to encapsulate and convey the appealing elements of these significant features within the overall experience and presentation of the facility itself. The essential principles center on several key goals: reviving or reconstructing a richly historical atmosphere, harmonizing a variety of elements that capture attention and spark imagination, and integrating these with the comfort and welcoming environments expected by modern travelers. Furthermore, it is critical to strike a balance between preserving the appeal — or the “essence” — of history and providing the necessary comforts associated with the “essence” of the contemporary hotel industry. To successfully offer guests an “authentic experience”, designers must skillfully utilize and present the physical environment in a way that reflects how local culture has historically expressed itself. In this context, it becomes vital to recreate the architectural and commercial culture of not just one but two distinct historical periods. In other words, the nuances of heritage design achieve the dual objectives of preserving and commodifying an appealing, persuasive, and potentially transformative past, enabling guests to connect deeply with history while still enjoying modern comforts (Rahaman et al., 2023; Tritto, 2020).

In such interventions, particularly where the physical environment of the past is still present, developing hybrid products that combine historical authenticity in interior spaces with spa and technological touchpoints in service areas represents a significant component of heritage design and construction. In other cases, creating this type of ambiance occurs through design and hotel management practices, such as lobby décor or cuisine that incorporates traditional cultural elements. Spas sometimes rely heavily on water features to create a desired atmosphere, even in settings where such elements may not be inherently meaningful or effective. Depending on the target clientele, spas often become central elements in constructing a genuinely authentic and/or luxurious design hotel, especially considering the number of Jordanian visitors. At the same time, the luxury market in Amman is expanding, with newly marketed luxury boutique hotels emerging from properties that were previously oriented toward a more local customer base.

Preservation vs. Modernization

It is always a recurring and thought-provoking question of how to approach the critical task of designing around an old building that holds historical significance. Several appealing options exist; one of the most common is to keep the building as it is, cherishing its original charm and maintaining it in as close to its original form as possible, while making only the necessary functional updates to enhance usability and the overall user experience. However, many historic structures are in urgent need of extensive facility and service upgrades that cannot be practically accommodated within the existing building envelope due to modern technological demands and standards. Some individuals strongly oppose the idea of integrating modern technology and contemporary facilities into an old building, arguing that such additions inevitably diminish the original atmosphere it once possessed in its days of glory. Thus, there is a strong expectation that designers must propose inventive and creative solutions that give heritage a renewed presence while ensuring that technological advancements and comfort can be harmoniously incorporated, preserving the character and essence of the original structure (Ribera et al., 2020; Zhong and Christopoulos, 2022; Ismail and Abd Elkader 2023; Jawabreh et al. 2025).

Some contemporary historians, when addressing similar cases of integrating new facilities without straying too far from the original fabric, consider this phase of a building's evolution to be worth preserving in its own right. At times, modern interventions even become catalysts for cultural or functional renewal. For example, an architect commissioned to design additions for a historic mosque initially proposed constructing a new, separate bathroom block to

avoid disrupting the integrity of the existing structure. During design workshops, however, the community asked whether incorporating the bathrooms inside the mosque could be an option, as such a facility had never previously existed there. The architect subsequently restructured the building and added an interior bathroom block, which became an important part of the project because it helped preserve the mosque's primary function and associated rituals. This example demonstrates that values related to historic and cultural significance are shaped not only by regulations and evolving standards but also by the ethics and needs of the community itself.

Challenges and Opportunities in Construction

The construction of heritage hotels — often undertaken strategically to maximize the inherent potential of neglected areas of the city — aims to revitalize these districts by making them eligible for ongoing development incentives such as tax breaks and expanded career opportunities for the local community. However, embarking on the construction of heritage hotels presents a wide range of challenges that must be navigated with care. One of the primary difficulties arises from the need for a high level of integration among multiple specialized professions. This integration is crucial because it involves experts who understand the intricacies and specific requirements associated with the construction and rehabilitation of historical structures (Al Fahmawee and Jawabreh, 2022b). In addition, the scale and nature of these projects demand a deep appreciation of archaeology, conservation design practices, and extensive specialized studies related to historic buildings and research methodologies used to document and analyze them. Moreover, the preservation regulations governing such projects are often perceived as exceptionally strict, creating significant obstacles that are closely tied to architecturally defined principles. Unfortunately, these rules do not always incorporate broader perspectives on value creation, which can further complicate the decision-making process. In practice, such constraints contribute to slow and often protracted decision-making, causing delays that can hinder investor engagement. These challenges are compounded by the substantial risks inherent in construction and the potential for high interest rates, which together limit investors' capacity to pursue projects focusing on historical preservation. Additionally, regulations related to conservation and preservation within urban planning frameworks can create an excessive number of procedural hurdles, making it extremely difficult — or at times nearly impossible — to secure the necessary approvals for development. This combination of challenges underscores the complexity of establishing heritage hotels that honor and preserve the integrity of a city's historical fabric (Al-Arab and Abbawi, 2023; Al

Fahmawee and Jawabreh, 2022a; Eyyamoğlu and Akçay, 2022; Fabi et al., 2021).

Conversely, integrating a historic building or group of buildings into the broader management of the city also presents significant opportunities. It allows once-neglected areas to be revitalized and reimagined within an entirely new economic context. Although this process requires time and specialized expertise, it can generate opportunities for broader community participation and engagement in local governance. Furthermore, sustainable development encourages collaboration across sectors, helping to break down narrow operational silos and fostering shared interests among stakeholders. The planning and implementation of such heritage hotel projects are inherently complex and may require government landowners to grant permits that allow developers to complete essential preparatory work — at least at the level of restoration concepts and feasibility studies (Al Fahmawee, 2018). Heritage hotel projects demand significant effort and financial investment to restore buildings to professional historic-quality standards. In many cases, collaboration between local government entities and investors has supported and enabled independent design concepts that align with project goals while meeting the specific requirements of heritage facilities.

Urban Planning Regulations

Jordan's recent urban planning strategies and regulations concerning the preservation of historical sites represent two pivotal legal frameworks that have played a crucial role in protecting and maintaining numerous significant heritage locations throughout the region. These historical preservation sites are categorized into three main types: archaeological, religious, and military land. Each category is carefully supervised by specialists who serve on dedicated committees established within the relevant governmental departments. In addition, there is a specific commission responsible for overseeing ancient and traditional structures located in the heart of the downtown area. The reconsideration of these regulations, especially regarding buildings constructed after 1927, has attracted substantial interest and debate. In cases where violations occur, penalties such as fines, demolition of structures, or both may be imposed by the court to ensure compliance with the prescribed regulations. At times, however, the strict application of rules aimed at safeguarding the old city can hinder essential drivers of urban development. Although these measures are rooted in the intention to preserve historical integrity, they may make it difficult — particularly for health and safety reasons — to convert a deteriorated structure into a functional space that meets modern needs when regulations are enforced without flexibility. While the purpose behind such laws and regulations is commendable, they can inadvertently impede

economic efficiency and business operations. This can lead to significant consequences, including reduced interest from investors and business owners who may feel constrained by the regulatory environment. Therefore, achieving a careful balance between preserving cultural heritage and fostering conditions that support urban growth and economic vitality is essential (Alnsour et al., 2023; Salameh et al., 2022; Al Maani and Mubaideen, 2024).

There is a local government office responsible for providing urban services in every province of the country. The Ministry of Interior oversees these offices to ensure the proper delivery of services. Within the urban development departments of these offices, urban planners are directly appointed by senior officials. Consequently, before any construction begins, planning staff must review the architectural plans for landscapes, urban development zones, and real estate projects. Service offices verify the plans using accurate map coordinates and evaluate whether the proposed work is authorized. Only offices equipped with specific authority may engage in these duties. Four case studies in the downtown area demonstrate where the construction of a heritage-design hotel is viable and where it is not. Collaborative efforts that involve the community, along with other professional practices, can help develop new regulations that strike a balance between preservation and development.

Case Studies of Heritage Hotels: Heritage Conservation Challenges in Downtown Amman

Preserving original structures: One of the main challenges is maintaining the structural integrity of older buildings while meeting modern safety and hospitality standards. **Balancing modernity and tradition:** Hotels must provide contemporary amenities such as air conditioning, plumbing, and technological systems while preserving the building's historical character. **Urban development pressure:** With the rapid urbanization of Amman, heritage areas face continual pressure from new construction and increasingly tall contemporary buildings.

Le Royal Hotel, Amman. Architect: Richard Martinet — Modern Interpretation of Cultural Heritage

Introduction & project overview: Le Royal Hotel is one of Amman's most iconic architectural landmarks, strategically positioned atop Jabal Amman and overlooking the city's heritage district. Its elliptical form, inspired by the spiral minaret of Samarra, reflects a fusion of traditional Arab influences with modern engineering. Constructed using local stone and reinforced concrete, the hotel functions as a luxury hospitality destination, commercial center, and entertainment hub. Covering a land area of 12 dunums, the tower rises 110 meters above ground and comprises 31 floors, 6 of which are underground. With a total construction cost of approximately \$190 million, the project commenced in 1998 and was

completed in 2002. **Design concept:** The architectural approach emphasizes simplicity and elegance, ensuring that the elliptical structure maximizes panoramic views of the city. This form is enhanced by two grand spiral staircases extending from the second to the tenth floor, leading to a rooftop terrace that offers a breathtaking 360-degree view of Amman. The interior design blends Art Deco elements with contemporary aesthetics, incorporating stained glass panels, intricate mosaics, bronze and wood finishes, and geometric patterns that contribute to the hotel's distinctive grandeur. **Functional layout:** Le Royal Hotel integrates hospitality, retail, and entertainment functions within its multi-level structure.

The basement levels house essential services, including parking facilities, storage areas, and Jordan's largest banquet hall, which spans 1,400 square meters and accommodates up to 1,500 guests. The ground and lower floors feature a grand commercial atrium with luxury retail stores and reception areas designed for hotel guests and visitors. Entertainment and dining facilities are distributed across several floors, including a state-of-the-art cinema complex, fine-dining restaurants, and an expansive fitness and wellness center measuring 7,000 square meters. Guest accommodations, located between the 13th and 21st floors, include a mix of suites and standard rooms that offer both city and atrium views. The uppermost levels are dedicated to exclusive dining venues, a rooftop terrace, and essential technical service spaces. **Architectural & technological features:** Le Royal Hotel incorporates advanced technology and sustainable design features to enhance guest comfort and operational efficiency. The building is equipped with 31 high-speed elevators, a smart climate-control system, and energy-efficient lighting. Its façade is clad in locally quarried limestone in a warm yellow-beige tone, harmonizing with Amman's traditional architectural character while maintaining a distinctive and recognizable presence. The limited use of glass enhances privacy and reinforces the hotel's integration with its cultural surroundings. **Conclusion:** Le Royal Hotel stands as a remarkable example of modern Jordanian architecture, successfully blending heritage-inspired design with contemporary luxury. By integrating hospitality, business, and leisure functions within a single structure, it has become a symbol of urban development in Amman, offering residents and visitors a distinctive experience that reflects the city's rich cultural and architectural legacy, as shown in Figs. 3–4.

W Amman Hotel, Abdali, near Amman downtown Modern Interpretation of Cultural Heritage

Heritage & architecture: W Amman is a modern interpretation of Jordanian architecture. Although it is not a historic hotel, its futuristic design draws



Fig. 3. A — The site plan of Le Royal Hotel (source: https://onkoshdor.blogspot.com/2017/08/blog-post_31.html). B — The spiral minaret of Samarra, which inspired the design of Le Royal Hotel (source: https://onkoshdor.blogspot.com/2017/08/blog-post_31.html). C — Le Royal Hotel's elliptical spiral structure as a significant architectural landmark in Amman (source: <https://amman.leroyal.com>)

inspiration from Jordan's cultural heritage and natural landscapes, including the rock formations of Petra, as shown in Fig. 4. The juxtaposition of historical and contemporary architecture in downtown Amman creates a striking contrast due to their close proximity (Al Fahmawee, 2022).

Design focus: The hotel incorporates subtle references to Jordan's past, such as interior elements inspired by the rose-red stone of Petra and furnishings that reflect Bedouin cultural influences.

Construction: The hotel is a contemporary tower designed to respect Amman's historical context while contributing to the city's modern skyline.

These case studies illustrate how heritage hotels in Amman successfully blend traditional architectural

influences with modern hospitality, preserving the city's cultural identity while meeting the expectations of contemporary travelers.

Accommodation in the form of a heritage hotel — built within old buildings, historic neighborhoods, historical sites, or architecturally unique structures — reflects the identity of a place and creates opportunities for both community and heritage development through innovative management aligned with modern hotel standards. **Conclusion:** The case studies demonstrate that the integration of heritage-focused design within local contexts — particularly in specific districts, cities, historic restorations, and the adaptive reuse of commercial buildings — is essential. Restaurants and



Fig. 4. View of Le Royal Hotel and W Amman Hotel in a panoramic view of Amman's skyline as prominent architectural landmarks (source: www.outthere.travel/w-amman-amman-jordan)

recreational spaces help preserve cultural values, shape meaningful urban landscapes, and create tourist attractions that foster cultural appreciation, environmental stewardship, and sustainable economic benefits. The management approach also involves collaborating with local residents and communities across a variety of activities.

- *Locanda Boutique Hotel* — Transformation of a Heritage Building into a Modern Hotel in Downtown Amman

Locanda Boutique Hotel, located in the heart of Amman's cultural district, serves as a prime example of adaptive reuse in heritage conservation. Originally one of the oldest buildings in the area, the structure has long been a landmark of culture, entertainment, and hospitality in Amman. Converted into a hotel in the early 1970s, it underwent comprehensive rehabilitation and renovation in 2015, with a focus on preserving its architectural and historical identity while enhancing its functionality as a contemporary boutique hotel. As Jordan's first boutique hotel, Locanda has evolved into a vibrant cultural hub, combining heritage hospitality with the arts, as shown in Fig. 5. Its concept extends beyond accommodation, embracing a cultural mission that promotes the legacy of Arab music and musicians. The hotel features 14 uniquely themed rooms, each named after a renowned Arab musician who

contributed to the development of Arabic music. Every room is meticulously designed to reflect the musician's personality, history, and artistic legacy, as illustrated in Fig. 6. Through carefully selected colors, furnishings, and decorative elements, the interior spaces create an immersive experience that allows guests to connect with Arab musical heritage. The individualized design approach at Locanda aligns with the narrative hotel concept, where each room tells a distinct story, offering guests a unique cultural experience (Al Fahmawee and Jawabreh, 2022b). This innovative design philosophy seeks to redefine the heritage hotel experience by transforming the property into a cultural haven where travelers, art enthusiasts, and local residents can engage with historical narratives and contemporary expressions.

The preservation of traditional architectural elements combined with modern hospitality standards ensures that Locanda Boutique Hotel remains both historically significant and functionally relevant. The design maintains a balance between authenticity and innovation, presenting a contemporary yet distinctly Arab aesthetic that offers foreign visitors a compelling insight into the region's culture. To further expand its cultural role, the hotel has incorporated a dedicated cinema that showcases classic Arab concerts and films, reinforcing its position as a cultural

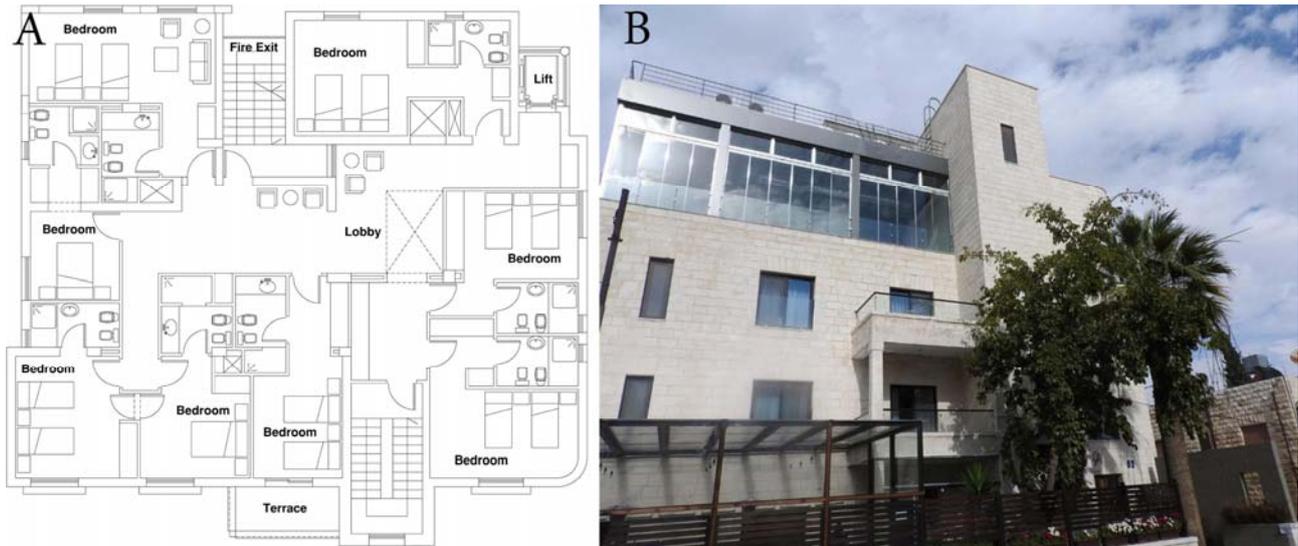


Fig. 5. A — Second-floor plan of the guest rooms. B — Locanda Hotel building after facade modification and the addition of glass surfaces (source: <https://locandahotel.com/en/>)

and artistic landmark. This addition enhances the multifunctionality of the space, positioning the hotel not only as a heritage conservation project but also as an active contributor to Amman’s artistic and intellectual landscape. Locanda Boutique Hotel exemplifies how heritage buildings can be revitalized to serve modern needs without compromising their historical essence. By blending hospitality with cultural heritage, it has created a destination that celebrates Arab identity, making it a model for future heritage hotel projects in Amman and beyond.

- Eco-Camps in the Wadi Rum Protected Area

Wadi Rum Protected Area is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and the headquarters for conservation and eco-tourism in the region is located in Rum Village. Captain’s Desert Camp has received consistently high traveler ratings, reflecting its popularity among visitors. The tents at the camp are decorated in traditional Bedouin style, featuring warm interiors and access to shared bathroom facilities. Many units offer scenic mountain views. Captain’s Desert Camp (Fig. 7) also provides a 24-hour front desk and barbecue facilities for guests.

Another example is the Wadi Rum Night Luxury Camp within the Wadi Rum Protected Area. It integrates the natural scenery of rock and sand into its design and minimizes environmental impact by confining all interventions to a limited footprint, while ensuring unobstructed scenic viewpoints for visitors through the use of eco-friendly stargazing dome tents. All tent lodges also incorporate passive solar heating, natural insulation, windward ventilation, and nighttime radiative cooling.

Results and Discussion

Sustainability is crucial in the construction of new hotels, restaurants, and cafés. Most effective strategies for project sustainability are equally valuable in restoration and adaptive reuse projects as they are in newly constructed hotels. Energy-efficient windows, for example, can serve both sustainability goals and the need to maintain visual compatibility with heritage designs. White roof coatings, high-quality insulation, renewable and recycled materials, low-flow fixtures, and high-efficiency boilers and heating systems are applicable in structures regardless of whether heritage



Fig. 6. Locanda Boutique Hotel room designs inspired by Arab musicians (source: <https://locandahotel.com/en/>)



Fig. 7. Captain's Desert Camp featuring tents adorned with authentic Bedouin designs, reflecting the region's rich cultural heritage (source: <https://www.captains.jo/page.aspx?s=3&l=1&pg=9&ai=6&md=photos>)

considerations are involved. In fact, wood windows and other cost-effective, environmentally friendly choices are particularly appropriate for such hotels.

However, attempting to construct a building entirely in the traditional way while expecting it to achieve high levels of sustainability is inherently flawed. Such a building is unlikely to be sustainable from a construction standpoint. A structure that requires significant amounts of energy merely to maintain its physical integrity cannot be considered sustainably built; when combined with expensive technical solutions, the initial cost often outweighs any potential long-term economic return. This is partly due to ongoing maintenance expenses and partly because of compromises required to preserve the historic building fabric, resulting in a consistently high energy-use index. Nevertheless, economic sustainability remains achievable, and it is good practice to implement thoughtful design strategies with such benchmarks in mind. Today, several hotels are being developed according to sustainable design principles, attracting tourists for whom environmental performance is appealing, though not always the primary concern.

Many construction decisions and methods relate directly to how well the chosen approach aligns with local culture, utilizes regionally available materials and craftspeople, and integrates the architecture into the broader geographical landscape. Energy consumption in such structures can be reduced by orienting the building appropriately within its environment, shading and screening openings, and using traditional features such as pointed arches. Insulation — through double-height spaces, appropriate roofing, and suitable wall materials — also has significant impact. Techniques that reduce the use of scarce resources and minimize waste in both materials and craftsmanship are essential for supporting the local community. Although modern construction benefits from extensive technological, engineering, and architectural research and development, many concepts related to contemporary green technologies — particularly in energy-efficient building envelope design and materials — play an important role in advancing environmentally responsible design.

Several measures and considerations demonstrate how high-tech solutions can be combined with traditional approaches. Modern technology plays an important role in preserving historical and heritage buildings; however, certain acceptable modifications that improve overall performance may also be viable. Green building techniques that are both technically sound and culturally appropriate can empower local craftspeople and create unique selling points through distinctive stylistic elements and low environmental impact. Contemporary architectural culture can sometimes appear superficial, treating the built environment merely as a consumable product — much like a designer sofa — rather than as an integral part of cultural identity. Certification programs, such as those awarding four-star environmental labels, can help integrate building technologies with local and regional preferences, cultural traditions, and regulatory requirements. Similarly, programs awarding energy-efficiency labels demonstrate to heritage hotel developers what can be achieved in terms of environmentally responsible design, performance, and production that align with current European standards.

- Many heritage buildings retain inherent green qualities, including the use of durable, renewable, biodegradable, recyclable, and locally sourced materials.

- Several hotels adopt measures prompted by tourism-sector development to protect the environment. A large percentage of heritage hotels and their managing authorities prioritize water-saving efforts and limit the environmental impact of their operations. The use of environmentally friendly materials reflects a clear intent to operate as sustainably as possible.

- Many sites provide bicycle storage facilities as an alternative to private car travel.

A number of constructions are uniquely designed and well known for their reliance on traditional, ecologically and culturally appropriate, and energy-efficient materials and technologies. Development costs and financial feasibility assessments for heritage sites increasingly incorporate recognized green

label standards. Green technologies therefore play a crucial role in validating the sustainability of heritage preservation and tourism-related projects. Today, green philosophy is gradually merging with green construction and maintenance practices. Ultimately, these methods require significant investment in cultural integrity, recognition, enhanced knowledge, and meaningful content.

This paper has begun to explore the role that design and heritage elements play in shaping the visitor experience within hotels. The value of hotels embedding local culture, history, urban fabric, and architectural identity has been clearly identified. Visiting a heritage site is often described as “a journey into the past — a sensory and tactile experience”. Creating a “period setting” aligns with the expectations of the growing number of heritage tourists. As such, heritage hotels actively construct this experiential environment in situ, within a context that extends beyond the immediate boundaries of the hotel itself.

Architecture and design effects may be understood along two dimensions. The first relates to their function as physical artifacts that heritage tourists directly engage with. The second underscores the role of hotels as both artifacts and cultural exploration spaces, rooted in local knowledge and expertise. In heritage hotels, the concept of destination design — defined as the integration of functional and aesthetic requirements tailored to a combination of tangible heritage resources and intangible traditional values — must also be addressed.

Two essential themes consistently emerge throughout the secondary literature on heritage hotel design. The first is the concept of cultural immersion and the overarching aim of crafting guest experiences that convey a sense of authenticity. The second concerns service quality, particularly the effect of credible, knowledgeable staff engagement on guest satisfaction. In contemporary hotel design, authenticity has overtaken location as the primary determinant of value. The degree to which a hotel can transport and immerse guests in the character of its setting has become a central benchmark. A sense of meaningful authenticity is achieved when the design roots the hotel firmly within its environment and reflects an understanding of its cultural origins. Good design assimilates local tradition rather than superimposing it. With respect to service delivery, hotel operators who commit to multidimensional staff training significantly increase their ability to command premium pricing from satisfied guests.

In terms of architecture and design, the expression of culture and local conventions often shifts depending on the scale of intervention. Some international hotel professionals may view ground-floor areas — such as restaurants, lobbies, and gardens — as the primary guest interface points

and therefore place particular emphasis on their visual appeal and design ethos. In contrast, major room and floor refurbishments may require a more explicit integration and articulation of cultural vernaculars. For hotel developers, designers, and managers, the central challenge in creating an authentic guest experience lies in incorporating visual and cultural references that appear intuitive and unforced. Displays of local art, history, and tradition allow hotel lobbies to embody a sense of place, serving as both cultural touchpoints for residents and emotional drawcards for returning domestic travelers. When well-informed concierges and tour-desk staff share local knowledge with pride, they use cultural artifacts and stories as interpretive tools, enhancing the guest experience and fostering deeper engagement.

However, the careful integration of cultural elements into architectural design must not compromise guest comfort and convenience. Much of modern architecture resists local specificity through its uniformity and superficial differences. Generic architectural solutions can create a disconnect between guests and the spaces they inhabit, as such designs appear imposed rather than organically rooted in their surroundings. Interviews with several hoteliers revealed extensive discussion about their design philosophies and the manner in which they integrate and reference local culture. It is entirely possible that evolving guest demographics and shifting tourism preferences will influence the success of locally designed hotels in the future. For example, a cherished mid-century modern aesthetic in a Tuscan village may become less desirable when travelers — driven by new economic realities — shift en masse to emerging low-budget destinations near yet-undiscovered coastal areas. For the purposes of this discussion, the challenge lies in examining how local design can subtly enhance the guest experience without overshadowing comfort, while continuing to offer a meaningful and memorable temporary residence.

Economic Benefits of Heritage Hotels In addition to the inherent cultural value of historic buildings, heritage hotels can — when successfully managed — generate significant monetary value. A heritage accommodation business can bring several key financial benefits to a community. One of the primary advantages of converting historic buildings into heritage hotels is their ability to attract visitors to a district, thereby promoting and conserving its character. These establishments also stimulate local economies by generating additional expenditure for surrounding businesses. In a downtown context, converting a historic public building into a heritage-design hotel could positively impact nearby commercial activities. Tour companies, for instance, could include the hotel in their itineraries of historic attractions. In addition, the

presence of such accommodation could increase property values for other businesses along the surrounding streets.

A major economic benefit of heritage hotels is their ability to generate employment opportunities, particularly in larger establishments. While job creation is one motivation for converting the Telephone Exchange building into a heritage hotel, stakeholders also aim to maintain the building as an active component of Newcastle's urban fabric, rather than simply preserving it as a static relic. Another important economic advantage is that heritage hotels promote sustainability at both local and regional levels. By attracting visitors from within the region, across the country, and overseas, these hotels help strengthen the visibility and economic resilience of their respective areas. In many cities, numerous historic buildings have been adapted for commercial use, including conversion into hotels.

This growing trend in adaptive reuse helps counteract urban decline by encouraging investment and revitalization. Heritage hotels generate revenue through a combination of lodging, dining, guided tours, and social or corporate events. The most successful heritage venues provide all of these services. Attendance at historic sites, tours, restaurants, and related activities has steadily increased. "Heritage tourists" — travelers with a particular interest in cultural and historical destinations — tend to be experienced, well-educated, and higher-than-average earners. They frequently seek out small family-owned restaurants, local cuisine, and cultural exhibitions, contributing to the rise in services connected to heritage lodges.

The average length of stay in smaller lodges and historic inns has increased, even when overall visitor numbers are lower, as nature-based and heritage tourists often plan multi-stop trips that include various cultural sites. Reports indicate that 20–25 % of leisure travel spending is directed toward heritage-related services and accommodation. Observations of local businesses support these findings. Several studies highlight the importance of effective marketing and management in heritage hotels, emphasizing their potential to offer unique and distinctive services. Combining strong heritage management practices with evocative marketing campaigns helps communicate the cultural value and differentiation of a heritage venue or product. Research in heritage events management has revealed similar patterns. For example, one tourism study and a cultural heritage seminar identified commercial opportunities that arise from linking heritage venues with targeted marketing and media campaigns. Moreover, multiple reports indicate that heritage properties can see revenue increases of around 10 % when hosting events. In many contexts, conferences organized by local businesses can attract commercial partners

and strengthen connections between stakeholders. The owners of the land and facilities that host such events benefit directly from new partnerships and from the influx of visitors.

Conclusion

Several insights have emerged from this paper, which has sought to analyze the most significant issues related to architecture and heritage hotel design. Architecture and heritage hotel design converge into a form of architectural refinement shaped by established conceptions of architectural practice. Constructing a hotel building in downtown Amman can be associated with both architectural and construction innovations; however, this process also presents a series of creative contradictions. The formal design and construction challenges specific to such architectural experimentation include preserving the urban context, integrating regional and site-specific aesthetics, and harmonizing modern technologies with long-standing traditions. Additional challenges arise from the need to translate ancestral architectural aesthetics into contemporary hospitality functions — functions that evolve constantly — and from creating intimate, residential-feeling spaces suitable for accommodating the temporary needs of guests. Although these issues are recognized, long-term solutions depend on strategic planning and creative leadership within heritage conservation projects. The primary contribution of this paper is to advance the ongoing discourse on context in contemporary architecture, offering an example that enriches counter-arguments in the field. Challenges undoubtedly remain in preserving and incorporating architectural heritage as a dynamic system within retail design and hotel development. Further work on heritage hotels in different cities will continue to reveal, address, and resolve such challenges. Heritage enhancement is becoming increasingly essential for urban environments under threat. Developments in heritage hotel construction constitute a viable strategy for investment and conservation, and patterns emerging from this study offer meaningful insight. Future recommendations may help stakeholders better understand the multifaceted requirements of a successful heritage hotel, particularly with regard to integrating sustainable development principles. Continued debate is necessary to determine the types of applications through which design principles may be effectively tested. Buildings that utilize such approaches are likely to employ significant amounts of eco-friendly materials. For heritage hotels, successful architecture and design must involve not only commercial urban regeneration but also a reinterpretation of heritage in the urban environment. Heritage contributes to the visitor experience for both local residents and international guests. Hotel

designs that preserve local heritage not only attract a diverse audience but also contribute directly to the methodologies that underpin their success.

A persistent focus in heritage hotel construction is the incorporation of sustainability. Environmentally responsible design practices will become increasingly expected as the field continues to evolve and integrate new technological advancements. One of the most significant operational changes in the future will be the broader application of technologies that assist with reducing energy loss, improving building performance, and enhancing visitor engagement. Additional technological features — such as mobile check-ins and interactive storytelling — can substantially improve operational efficiency. Cultural storytelling through design will become even more prevalent, immersing guests and helping them feel grounded and connected to the building and its context. Adaptive reuse is not a new trend, but it remains a powerful concept influencing emerging markets globally. It fulfills commercial, residential,

and hospitality needs while preserving significant buildings.

The local community will also play an essential role in shaping the future of heritage hospitality in the city. Recent initiatives by the local municipalities to gather community input aim to craft design and development solutions for urban revitalization. Community involvement ensures that local stories are visible and shared with tourists and that local interests are represented. Greater emphasis will be placed on historic artifacts, traditional building methods, and genuine appreciation for handcrafted elements. Existing trends — such as the shift toward authenticity and genuinely local experiences — will continue. As consumers increasingly prioritize health-conscious lifestyles and meaningful spaces, these tendencies will shape future design directions. Ongoing community participation in construction, renovation, and revitalization efforts helps create a “my home is your home” atmosphere that benefits both residents and visitors.

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АРХИТЕКТУРА И ПРОЕКТИРОВАНИЕ ГОСТИНИЦ В ИСТОРИЧЕСКОЙ СРЕДЕ: СТРОИТЕЛЬСТВО И РЕКОНСТРУКЦИЯ В ЦЕНТРЕ АММАНА

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Аннотация

Введение. В данном исследовании рассматривается адаптивное преобразование исторического здания в центре Аммана (Иордания) под функции современного отеля. Цель проекта — сохранить архитектурную и культурную идентичность объекта, одновременно обеспечив соответствие современным стандартам индустрии гостеприимства. В условиях нарастающего градостроительного давления ключевая задача заключается в сохранении конструктивной целостности и исторического облика здания при интеграции необходимых современных удобств. Исследование посвящено анализу этих проблем и подчеркивает важность устойчивых проектных решений при адаптации исторических зданий под гостиничные функции. Центр Аммана, обладающий богатым культурным наследием, представляет собой идеальную среду для изучения практики адаптивного использования зданий в гостиничном дизайне. Работа направлена на поиск баланса между сохранением исторической среды и ее модернизацией, подчеркивая значимость культурного наследия для туризма и поддержания культурной преемственности. В условиях сложной городской среды сохранение архитектурного наследия одновременно укрепляет локальную идентичность и способствует экономическому развитию. **Методы.** В исследовании применяется смешанный методологический подход, включающий анализ кейсов, обзор литературы и полевые исследования, позволяющий изучить устойчивые проектные решения при адаптации исторических зданий под гостиничные функции. Отдельное внимание уделено адаптивному использованию исторических зданий, зеленым строительным технологиям и регуляторным требованиям. Интервью с заинтересованными сторонами и обследование объектов обеспечили практическое понимание процессов восстановления и адаптации зданий. **Результаты.** Полученные данные показывают, что отели, размещенные в исторических зданиях, способны эффективно сочетать сохранение культурного наследия с функциональностью, формируя устойчивую модель использования исторических объектов. Применение энергоэффективных систем и использование местных строительных материалов позволило сохранить исторический характер зданий, одновременно обеспечив соответствие современным требованиям гостей. Такой подход оказался как культурно значимым, так и экономически жизнеспособным. **Обсуждение.** Исследование подчеркивает, что для городских центров, таких как центр Аммана, одинаково значимы как сохранение культурного наследия, так и экономическая эффективность. Основными трудностями являются строгие регуляторные требования и современные строительные стандарты. Исследование указывает на необходимость введения более гибких нормативов, поддерживающих инновационные проектные решения, а также активного участия местного сообщества в культурных процессах. Проект в Аммане служит примером для других городов, демонстрируя, что адаптивное использование исторических зданий способствует сохранению городского наследия и развитию устойчивого туризма.

Ключевые слова: архитектура; дизайн объектов культурного наследия; отель в историческом здании; центр города.