

## AL-DIRA' TRADITIONAL QUARTER AS A GUIDE TO RESPONSIVE DEVELOPMENT

*Attia, Maged K.<sup>1</sup>*

### **Abstract**

*Between traditional and contemporary there are two contradictory visions. The first adopts originality and returning to the traditional, while the second advocates modernity and liberation from the old. The present paper discusses how to benefit from the present facilities without losing features of the past when developing new neighbourhoods. Al-Dira', a traditional quarter in Al-Jouf, Saudi Arabia, is elected as a case study within which the housing unit and the urban pattern are analysed. Visual documentation, surveying, mapping, and interviews constitute essential tools to get an insight on the traditional planning and design process. On the other side, Al-Rabwa, a typical contemporary officially planned district, is investigated. It is concluded that the need for modernization should be balanced with originality. Understanding forces that shaped traditional quarters and are still embedded in the community offers a stream of information that can be utilized in contemporary development. A responsive development needs to consider local identity while formulating compact low rise buildings with courtyards and carefully positioned openings, small scale open space system, straight roads for cars and protected walkways for pedestrians, well distributed parking lots, and integrated relationship between housing, mosque and market.*

---

<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Architecture, Faculty of Engineering, Helwan University, Egypt  
mattia@kau.edu.sa