



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Preserving Heritage in NEOM: A New Strategy for Archaeological Conservation in Al-Bad, Al-Aqan Village, and Maqna

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Abstract

The conservation of the archaeological and architectural heritage sites of NEOM presents significant technical challenges, relating both to the climatic conditions, and the fragility and heterogeneity of construction materials and techniques.

In 2024, RC Heritage, in collaboration with Lefèvre Architectes, carried out a preliminary conservation study and drafted a rescue consolidation strategy to be implemented in the two sites of al-Bad' and al-Aqan village. These two sites encompass largely different periods of occupation and construction techniques, rock-hewn façades in al-Bad' and stone-masonry walls in al-Aqan, but face equally complex conservation issues.

The Nabatean tombs of al-Bad' are a major archaeological ensemble carved into a highly erodible soft sandstone deteriorating when exposed to water and wind. al-Aqan village, an early Saud period village of high-quality vernacular architecture, suffers from the consequence of its abandonment that accelerated its degradation requiring stabilization to prevent its eventual loss.

Their patrimonial value imposes conservation measures and is an opportunity to develop a model preservation methodology. The approach involves the comprehensive site analysis, addressing both material and immaterial aspects, the full understanding of the structural issues, the identification of the main degradation pathologies, highlighting their causes and consequences, and the implementation of emergency consolidation measures.

Keywords

Archaeological conservation, Diagnosis, Emergency interventions, Architecture, Arabia

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