

Restoration of Mendelssohn Street, an urban rehabilitation model in the White City of Tel Aviv

MSc thesis by

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Engineering | Master of Science in Architectural Design and History

Academic year 2020/2021

List of drawings

Board 1. The White City of Tel Aviv

Board 2. The Geddes Plan

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Abstract.

Founded in 1909 by a group of only sixty families, Tel Aviv hosts a large-scale ensemble of Bauhaus buildings. Besides its extension, one of the attributes that make this complex outstanding is the adaptation of the international style to the particular conditions of Tel Aviv. The set of Jewish architects that built the White City, trained by the great European masters, skilfully translated the Bauhaus ideals to an entirely new cultural context. Furthermore, the avant-garde urban plan proposed by Sir Geddes Patrick in 1925 originated a unique urban grid that is still preserved nowadays.

Despite the undeniable value of the White City, the road to preservation has been complex. The abandonment of the properties and the lack of regulations for their conservation have caused a high level of deterioration. Only in the 1990's, the municipality of Tel Aviv took action to recover and protect the ensemble.

This project is an urban rehabilitation model aiming to revert the degradation of the properties, and to recover the enjoyability of the public spaces. The first part of the work constitutes a historical, physical, and morphological analysis of the White City, including the study of the Geddes plan with its main elements.

After detecting the urban issues of the study area, a decay analysis of the facades was performed. Based on archive research, the 1930's projects of the street were recovered and redrawn. The façade rehabilitation project was conducted aiming at preserving the original shape as much as possible, introducing additional levels that follow the regulations of the municipality. The final part of the project is an urban intervention to provide a wider and more inviting space to pedestrians by enlarging the corners creating resting spots and recovering the green areas.

The restoration of Mendelssohn Street, an example of the deterioration of the White City area, is proposed according to the principle that the recovery and revalorisation of Tel Aviv is only possible through a respectful urban evolution that adapts to the current needs of the inhabitants.