

Revitalizing Forgotten Heritage: A Strategic Approach to Boosting Tourism in Algerian Urban Areas

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Abstract

Algeria's architectural heritage, characterized by its diversity and historical richness, is sadly neglected in some regions, requiring immediate revitalization efforts to unlock its tourism potential. This document undertakes a comprehensive strategic analysis focusing on Algeria, with the aim of developing sound strategies for the preservation of neglected urban heritage. Through investment in tourism infrastructure and the implementation of innovative marketing approaches, present opportunities to attract visitors and reinvigorate local economies. Highlighting the economic and cultural importance of heritage revitalization, this study underscores its essential role in preserving identity and benefiting future generations. Using holistic approaches that integrate meticulous assessment, proactive preservation measures and strategic promotion efforts, a vibrant tapestry of history and culture can transform the urban landscape. In so doing, it will enrich the lives of residents and visitors alike, offering unique experiences and stories that reflect the country's rich heritage and cultural legacy.

Keywords

Heritage revitalization; tourism development; community engagement; sustainable tourism; strategic approach.

Introduction

Historical architecture is a vital part of a society's history since it documents its evolution and reflects its culture and civilization (Khan, N. R., 2014). Since historical architecture captures the evolution of engineering, art, and culture over time, it is seen as an essential

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component of society's cultural legacy. However, over time, social, economic, and environmental reasons may cause these monuments to deteriorate. In this case, it is important to revive architectural heritage in order to maintain and enjoy these structures for the benefit of present and future generations. The process of revitalizing lost architectural legacy entails a number of steps, such as recording historical structures, researching their backgrounds and building techniques, putting precautions in place to guard against damage and deterioration, and rebuilding and restoring them in a way that preserves their original character (García, 2020; Park, 2014; Muhealddin, 2020; Galiana, 2015).

A growing number of communities around the world are promoting sustainable and cultural tourism as a way to revitalize a region's economy and its underappreciated architectural heritage. Algerian cities have a rich history and a legacy of ancient buildings that span multiple civilizations. Many cultural monuments have undergone periods of neglect and deterioration.

Restoring Algerian cities' lost architectural legacy is a fantastic chance to grow tourism and strengthen the local economy. By providing tourists with the chance to visit historic sites and old buildings, it fosters intercultural understanding and increases tourists' appreciation of history and culture.

This paper explores ways to revitalize neglected architectural heritage in order to promote tourism in urban Algeria. The key question is what are the strategies and methodology for revitalizing forgotten heritage.

2. Research methodology

The research methodology based on theoretical literature lecture: This lecture aims, first and foremost, to construct key concepts in order to address the fact that the topic of our research has not been extensively studied within the Algerian context. We seek to establish a set of fundamental terms and associated sub-themes. These terms can serve as initial focal points or pathways for further exploration within this context.

In the second part, we delve into exploring the relationship between neglected architectural heritage and its significance in promoting tourism, adopting a strategic approach.

Through an analysis of the classification of forgotten Algerian heritage and the application of the 5 Ws framework, we have formulated a proposal tailored to the Algerian context. This comprehensive approach outlines strategies for revitalizing neglected heritage sites, particularly in urban areas, with a focus on promoting tourism.

3. Theoretical background

3.1. Key concepts

Cultural heritage, as outlined UNESCO World Heritage Convention, represent collections of buildings and sites of exceptional global importance in terms of their historical, artistic, or scientific significance. According to Brandi's contemporary perspective, the essence of cultural heritage lies in its historical and aesthetic characteristics. In essence, a historic building constitutes a complex system composed of various elements including spaces, volumes, materials, surfaces, construction techniques, functions, and configurations, both past and present, illustrating their evolution over time. Each element of architectural heritage can be viewed as an "artifact," bearing witness to different cultures, individuals, or events that have influenced its history. Archival analysis plays a crucial role in studying architectural heritage, providing a comprehensive understanding of its development and evolution (Brusaporci, S., 2020).

Forgotten architectural heritage is used to describe structures or sites of historical or cultural significance that are abandoned, neglected or decaying due to lack of attention, funding or maintenance. This can occur for various reasons, such as economic changes, conflicts, social changes, management issues, or simply a lack of awareness of its importance. According to Rafeiro J., Tomé, A. and Nazário, M (2024) it is defined to refer to those buildings, structures or other elements of the built environment that have suffered damage or changes over time, rendering them incapable of being fully appreciated through physical examination alone. On the other hand, many researchers share that it refers to historical and cultural buildings and structures that have been ignored or neglected over time. These may include old houses, palaces,

mosques, churches, traditional markets, public baths, and old schools. Some of the reasons for the neglect of this architectural heritage include natural deterioration due to time and weathering, abandonment in favour of modern buildings, destruction as a result of wars or natural disasters, or even insufficient attention before

Tourism development heritage refers to those sites, monuments, historic buildings or other elements of cultural heritage that are used as resources for tourism and contribute to the economic development of a region or country. These places may include UNESCO World Heritage sites, historical monuments, protected natural areas, cultural festivals, among others. Among others, promoting tourism as a means of economic development is a popular but complex policy, with potential benefits and drawbacks (Marcouiller, 2007; Iwersen-Sjoltsidis, 1996).

The term **tourist boosting approach** refers to plans and initiatives designed to grow the travel and tourism sector in a particular area or location. This strategy includes putting policies, plans, and initiatives into action with the goal of enhancing tourist experiences, diversifying the tourism offer, boosting destinations, and enhancing tourism infrastructure.

Given that our research topic hasn't been extensively explored in the Algerian context, we aim to delineate below a set of key terms and their corresponding subtopics. These terms can serve as initial focal points or pathways for further exploration within this context (Figure 1)

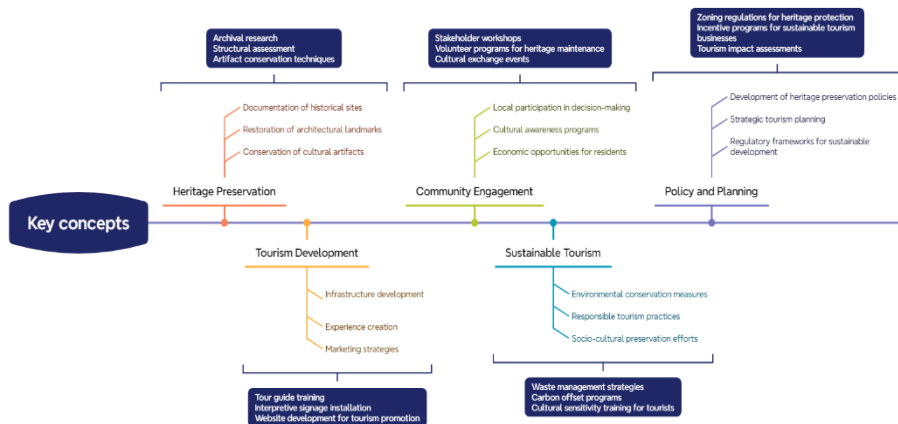


Figure 1: Main concepts of theoretical research (source: Author)

3.2. Architectural heritage

At UNESCO, architectural heritage is classified as a form of cultural heritage, a distinction that underlines the diversity and richness of the world's heritage. This classification distinguishes between tangible and intangible heritage, with a sub-categorization of tangible heritage into movable and immovable property. These distinctions are essential for a better understanding of heritage as a whole, and guide conservation and management practices to ensure its preservation for future generations.

The scope of heritage remains generally consistent with the framework established by the Council of Europe in 1975. However, the Burra Charter introduced three new terms to improve the management and understanding of heritage:

- Place: encompasses diverse elements such as sites, areas, buildings or other structures, together with their relevant content and environment. It emphasizes a holistic appreciation of heritage in its wider context.
- Cultural significance: refers to the aesthetic, historical, scientific or social value attributed to a place. It highlights the different ways in which heritage contributes to our collective identity and understanding.
- Fabric: encompassing all the physical material of a place, this term emphasizes the tangible aspects of heritage, highlighting the importance of physical preservation and conservation efforts (Dodds, J. D., 2002, Oman, J., 2017).

Furthermore, in various regions, "heritage sites" are recognized as an important factor. These sites include immovable physical remains of historical significance, such as archaeological sites, ruins, tombs, traditional architecture, rock temples, historic villages and towns. They offer invaluable information on the history and culture of mankind (Akande, O. K., 2015). Protecting physical structures is only one aspect of preserving architectural heritage; the other is preserving the essence of our shared history and identity. It becomes necessary to understand conservation approaches at many levels in order to pursue this admirable endeavour.

According to Daghar (2020), is a seminal work that explores the complexities of preserving our architectural legacy at three different levels: the, the urban level, and the community level (Figure 2):

- a- Building-level: Building-level conservation strategies focus on the painstaking conservation and repair of specific buildings of historical or cultural significance. Beyond individual buildings, the urban scale offers unique possibilities and issues for conservation.
- b- Urban-level: Urban environments are dynamic landscapes where contemporary constructions coexist with older buildings, and where the needs of urbanisation and urban development must be balanced with the preservation of architectural heritage.
- c- Community-level: Conservation methods take into account the social and cultural fabric of neighbourhoods and communities as well as the physical structures.
- d- architectural legacy. Examining management techniques for heritage assets in the context of changing urban surroundings.

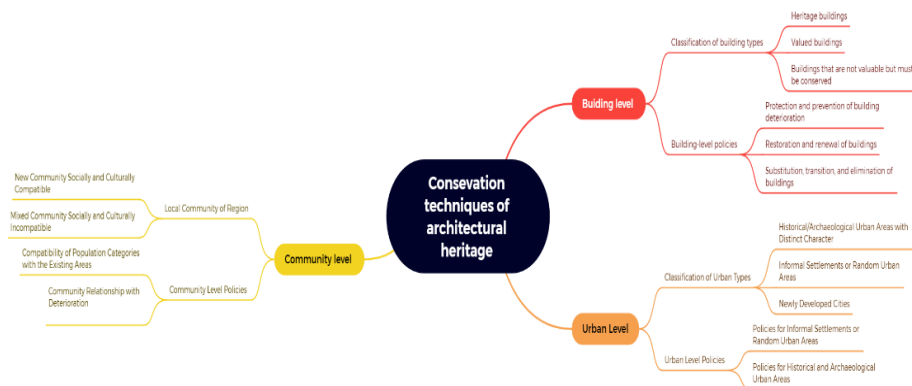


Figure 2: Conservation techniques of architectural heritage (source: Author)

3.3. Architectural heritage and strategic approach to boost tourism

Research on the architectural heritage of different regions has received significant attention. This heritage is invaluable, encompassing spiritual, cultural, social, and economic significance that cannot be replaced (Worthing, D., & Bond, S, 2008), and its value can act as a catalyst to increase tourism. Strategically leveraging this

resource entails a number of well-coordinated steps that can optimise its benefits to the tourism sector. These elements represent different perspectives of strategic stakeholders based on research conducted in different contexts, particularly in European regions, and are illustrated through abstract points:

- a- Identification and evaluation of architectural heritage:* It is essential to conduct a thorough inventory of the region's historically and culturally significant buildings, monuments, and architectural structures. This encompasses not just the well-known locations, including historic sites and famous buildings, but also more obscure yet no less noteworthy constructions and vernacular architecture.
- b- Conservation and restoration:* It's critical to protect and preserve the historical architecture. This include putting preventive conservation measures in place to stop future damage, repairing historic buildings, and putting policies in place to shield buildings from both human activity and natural calamities.
- c- Promotion and dissemination:* To bring the region's architectural heritage to the attention of both national and international audiences, an efficient promotion campaign must be carried out. This can involve producing promotional materials like flyers, travel guides, and specialty websites, in addition to planning cultural events and historical architecture-related exhibitions.
- d- Promotion du tourisme durable:* Il est essentiel d'encourager un tourisme responsable qui respecte et préserve le milieu naturel environnant et le patrimoine architectural. Cela peut se traduire par la mise en place de politiques de gestion des visiteurs, l'encouragement de pratiques touristiques durables et la sensibilisation à la nécessité de protéger le patrimoine culturel pour les générations futures.
- e- Public-private cooperation:* The efficiency of any tourism development plan based on architectural heritage depends on collaboration between the public sector, the private sector and non-profit organizations. The creation of alliances to finance conservation projects, management of tourist sites and joint promotion of the destination can be involved in this.

4. Algerian architectural heritage

4.1. Algeria's architectural heritage varies over time

Algeria has a diverse range of architecture, reflecting its complex history, cultural mix, and evolution over time. This diversity contributes significantly to Algeria's cultural identity and heritage. The following schema highlights some of this diversity:

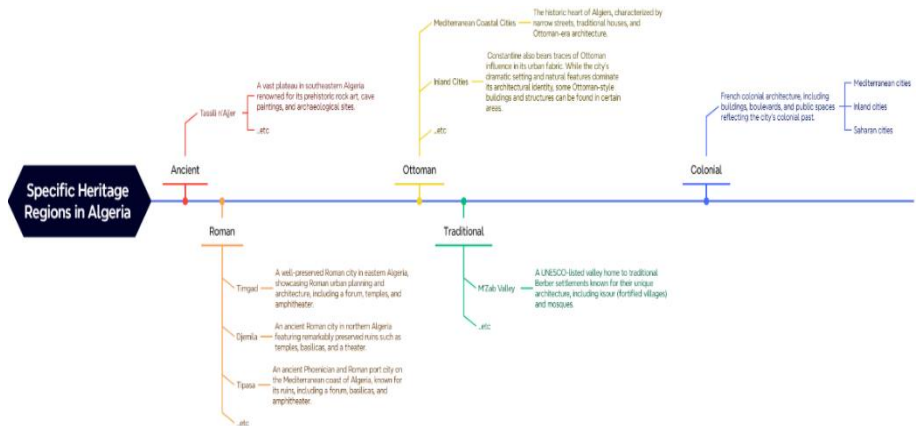


Figure 3: Specific heritage regions in Algeria (source: Author)



Figure 4: Algeria's Architectural Heritage Areas (source: хоуда Резиг, Ноурель, 2021)

4.2. Forgotten architectural heritage types

A treasure trove of diversity lies within the world of overlooked architectural heritage, reflecting a complex tapestry of cultures, histories and geographical nuances. In the Algerian context, this heritage is manifested through a large number of instances, as shown in Figure 3, which showcases different examples of neglected architectural heritage.



Figure 5: Forgotten Types of Architectural Heritage (source: Author)

5. A Strategic Approach to Boosting Tourism in Algerian Urban Areas

5.1. Approach to architectural heritage classification

In the rich tapestry of Algeria's cultural landscape, architectural heritage stands as a testament to the nation's storied history, diverse traditions, and dynamic urban evolution. Recognizing the importance of preserving this invaluable legacy, a comprehensive classification system becomes essential to understand, protect, and celebrate Algeria's architectural heritage across different levels: building, urban, and community. By delineating the various facets of architectural heritage and urban dynamics, this classification framework aims to guide conservation efforts, inform urban planning strategies, and foster community cohesion.

At the core of this classification system lies the categorization of building types, ranging from heritage landmarks steeped in historical significance to valued structures reflecting architectural excellence. Additionally, buildings that may lack intrinsic value but hold importance in the urban fabric are identified for conservation efforts, emphasizing the holistic approach needed to safeguard Algeria's architectural heritage.

- Building-level policies play a crucial role in ensuring the protection, preservation, and adaptive reuse of these structures, balancing the imperatives of conservation with the demands of

urban development. By delineating policies for protection, restoration, and adaptive reuse, this framework provides a roadmap for sustainable stewardship of Algeria's architectural treasures. Moving to the urban level, the classification extends to diverse urban typologies, including historical areas, informal settlements, and newly developed urban centers. Each urban type presents unique conservation challenges and opportunities, calling for tailored policies that balance heritage preservation with contemporary urban needs.

- Urban-level policies are designed to safeguard historical and archaeological urban areas while promoting the sustainable development of informal settlements and new urban centers. By fostering sensitive development practices and community-led initiatives, these policies seek to nurture vibrant, inclusive urban environments that honor Algeria's architectural heritage.
- At the community level, the classification delves into the social fabric of Algeria's neighborhoods and villages, recognizing the pivotal role of communities in preserving cultural identity and fostering social cohesion. Through the categorization of local and mixed communities, this framework underscores the importance of cultural integration, community engagement, and mutual respect in nurturing resilient, inclusive communities.

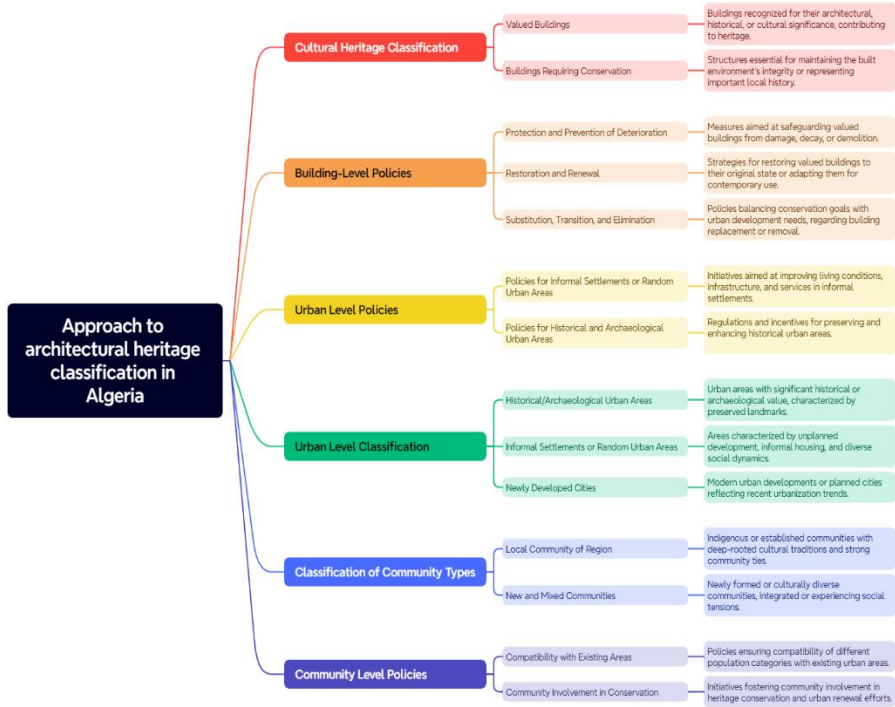


Figure 6: Approaches to Architectural Heritage classification (source: Author)

5.2. Approach to boosting tourism

Through the resuscitation of neglected legacy, Algeria's rich cultural past spanning millennia of civilizations offers a unique chance to harness the tourist potential of its metropolitan areas. Algeria can establish a strong cultural identity and attract tourists by conserving and exhibiting the architectural treasures left by many civilizations, such as Berber, Arab, Roman, Ottoman, and French.

Revitalizing neglected history as a strategic means of promoting tourism in Algerian urban areas has enormous potential to highlight the nation's rich cultural tradition, draw tourists, and foster economic growth. Algeria may become the region's top cultural tourist destination by protecting and marketing its historical landmarks and architectural marvels. Our strategy for increasing tourism in Algeria is shown in the schema below.

Cultural heritage assessment: An extensive investigation into Algeria's urban cultural legacy should be launched, with a particular emphasis on historically and culturally significant places and monuments that have

not gotten enough attention. Analyzing historical locations, historic structures, museums, parks, gardens, art galleries, etc. is part of this. Heritage Preservation: To save and maintain significant cultural assets in metropolitan settings, a thorough strategy needs to be created. Historic park preservation, monument restoration, historic building rehabilitation, and local history recording are a few examples of these initiatives.

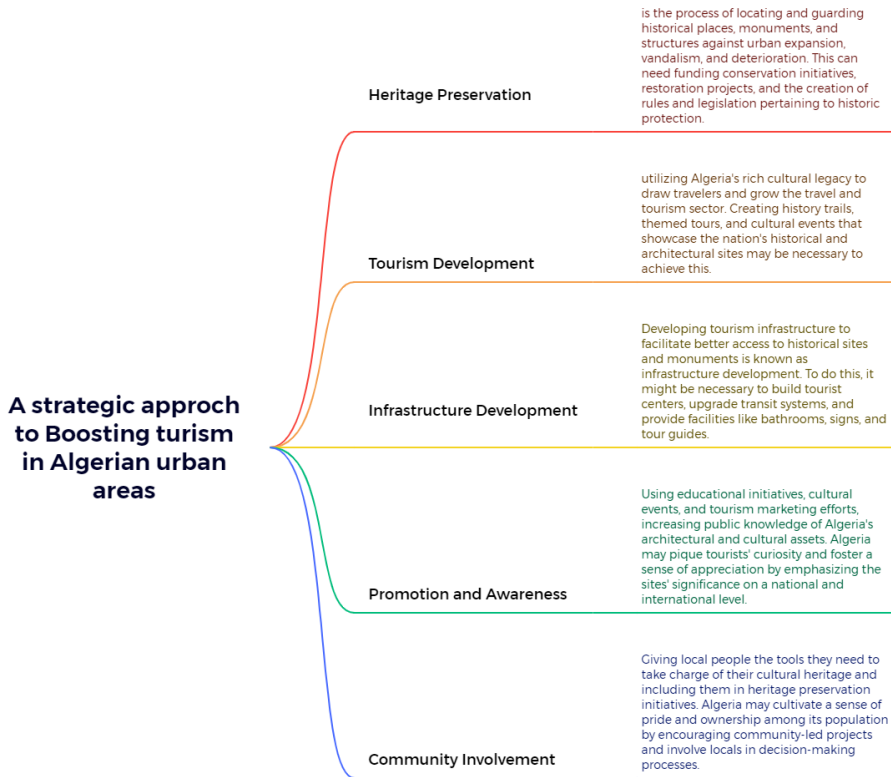


Figure 7: Proposing a strategic approach to boosting tourism for Algeria context (source: Author)

Cultural Marketing: In order to draw in cultural tourists and people with an interest in history, the arts, and culture, marketing campaigns highlighting Algeria's cultural heritage should be created. Websites,

cultural events, and social media can all be utilized to support these initiatives.

Infrastructure development: To draw tourists, money must be spent on enhancing urban infrastructure, which includes building hotels, restaurants, and other tourist attractions as well as enhancing public transportation and roads.

Promoting innovation: Creative endeavors and creative endeavors that fuse modern art with cultural heritage can be promoted, which helps draw a variety of visitor types.

5.3. FiveWs approach

Algeria's forgotten heritage is waiting to be rediscovered and revitalised. From ancient palaces to historic mosques, Algeria's architectural treasures have long been ignored, yet they hold enormous potential to revitalise the country's tourism sector. Figure 4 shows a strategic approach to breathe new life into Algeria's forgotten heritage, using the classic 5W approach to delve into key questions: *Who*, *What*, *What*, *When*, *Where*, *When*, *Where*, and *Why*.

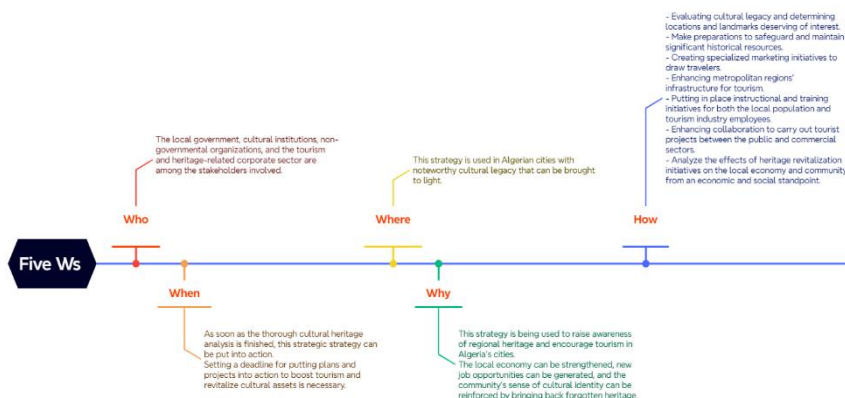


Figure 8: Five Ws to boost tourism by reviving forgotten (source: Author)

Conclusion

The paper draws with an in-depth exploration of the challenges and opportunities involved in revitalizing Algeria's forgotten architectural heritage with a view to boosting tourism in urban areas. We looked at the diversity of Algeria's architectural heritage, reflecting its complex history and cultural richness, as well as the types of heritage that are often neglected yet rich in tourism potential.

Our proposed strategy is based on a holistic approach, from comprehensive assessment of cultural heritage to its preservation and promotion through innovative cultural marketing initiatives. By investing in the development of tourism infrastructure and promoting creativity in heritage enhancement, we firmly believe that Algeria can fully exploit its architectural heritage to attract a steady flow of national and international visitors.

Through the implementation of this strategy, and with the ongoing commitment of the stakeholders involved, we can look forward to seeing Algeria's urban landscape transformed, offering visitors an experience rich in history, culture and authenticity. Revitalizing forgotten architectural heritage is not only an economic opportunity, but also an act of preserving Algeria's cultural identity and collective memory for future generations.

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