Heliopolis Horse Racing: The Unspoken Reality

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Abstract:

Equestrian activities have been one of the main land use activities in East Cairo, Egypt since the construction of Heliopolis (i.e. The City of the Sun) in 1905. It went through various transformation and relocation with specific reference to the ongoing political economy shift since the 1952 Revolution. Like any other land use activities, equestrian activities have its own planning principles that guarantee its boom and success in achieving its goals. Such principles could be represented in three main interlocking domains that are the physical settings, the natural environment and the horsemanship community. Nevertheless, the current location, physical and community settings indicate some serious defects and negative impacts that affect the equestrian activities itself as well as the surrounding community.

This paper aims to explore, analyze and document the history and development of equestrian activities in Heliopolis area. It also sheds the light on the vivid gap between theory and practice in relation to the urban planning and community relations. Finally, it alerts decision makers on the current situation of equestrian activities in Heliopolis area and its impact on surrounding communities.

Keywords: Horse Industry, Horse Racing, Heliopolis, urban transformation, community relations.

1. INTRODUCTION

> "… and ALLAH took a handful of southerly wind, blew His breath over it, and created the horse" (Anonymous Bedouin legend cited in Hedenborg 2014)

The horse industry is diverse and widely spread that supports a large various number of activities including: equestrian activities[1], training, racing, breeding, horse shows, events, competitions, riding, leisure, trading etc. It also provides a wide range of economic and business activities that support city management and is proved to be a major contributor to countries' economies all over the World (Liljenstolpe 2009; USEF 2017).

Archaeological evidence shows that mankind drove and rode horses since 4000 BC. Primitive art records and written documents indicate that horse races were held as early as the 11th century BC. Horse racing became an extremely popular sport activity during the 8th century BC all over the Greek Empire where special arenas have been built for racing events known as the Greek hippodrome. Horse races also took place in the large market squares and/or in special arenas in every main city of the Roman Empire. The most famous of all was the Circus Maximus outside of Rome. It has also been widely documented that Arabian horses were used extensively for racing and transportation in the Arabian Peninsula (Chevenix 1970).

During the middle ages till the 19th century in Europe, horses were used extensively in agriculture, transportation, hunting and battles. Major competitions similar to the Olympic Games were arranged for mounted racing and chariot racing. Nevertheless, Mangan (2001) points out that it was not until the late 18th century that jockey clubs were first established in England and Ireland. Such clubs joined forces to formulate the first ever race regulations, and horses, jockey, trainers and owners registration records. In France, although the first Jockey Club was established in 1834, the first official races were not held until the mid-19th century. The USA had its first jockey clubs in 1894 and jockey clubs were being formed in Africa (including Egypt followed the British occupation in 1882) and Asia as well during the late 19th century (Hemingway 2004).

The importance of the horse in everyday life (e.g. transportation, agriculture, forestry, war etc) declined with the extensive usage of engines and machines in the 20th century especially after the WW1 (1914-1918). Nevertheless, horse racing has continued blossoming as a global sport especially in the Arab countries. Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI)[2] was formed in 1921 and the World Arabian Horse Organization (WAHO)[3] was established in 1970.

To date, some documented statistics, although rare, provide the magnitude of the horse industry worldwide and how important it is to be focused on, encouraged and developed by local and national governments. In USA, there are more than 6.9 million horses with 7.1 million Americans involved in the industry annually earning an average of $50,000/horse owing household and spending an average of $1800/horse. In 2002, the horse industry produced goods and services of $25.3 billion with a total impact of $112.1 billion on the US GDP, 10% out of which from horse

[1] Equestrian activities in Egypt refer to show jumping, dressage, tent pegging, and endurance (EEF 2017) and though, horse racing is not recognized as an official equestrian activity.

[2] For Further detailed information visit https://www.fei.org/

[3] For further detailed information visit http://www.waho.org/

racing activities (USEF 2002). In Europe, the total number of horses exceeds 5 million horses in 2009 that produced direct goods and services of EUR 2.6 billion and sales of EUR 5 billion in Germany alone. It is estimated that every 5-7 horses in the UK and 3-4 horses in Germany provide one full-time job (EU Equus 2001; AHC 2005; Liljenstolpe 2009). The United States Equestrian Federation (2017) states:

> " … The horse industry's contribution to the US GDP is greater than the motion picture services, railroad transportation, furniture and fixture manufacturing and tobacco products manufacturing" (*ibid* 2017)

There is a common agreement between scholars, academics, and practitioners that horse racing facilities must meet some strict planning guidelines and design standards to ensure economic blossoming and balanced and sustainable city development. Guidelines and standards are related to two main interlocking domains that are: the spatial settings and horse community (DAFM 2017; FAWAC 2017; Charnwood 2016; UCDAVIS 2014; NZTR 2013; Elgaker 2011; BHA 2010; Garkovich *et al* 2009; Atkinson 2007; Gallent *et al* 2004; Allen 2003; Naveh 2001; Ravenscroft 1994).

2. HORSE RACING: PLANNING GUIDELINES AND DESIGN STANDARDS

Horse racing is considered to be an industry rather than a mere sport. It requires spatial as well as specific community settings to achieve its economic and consequent city development contributions. The spatial standards include those of location, site accessibility, racing arena, stables, infrastructure, and pollution control within and surrounding the site (i.e. air, water and soil). The horse racing community to flourish and achieve high level of community relations and economic connections requires some effective guidelines that include horse racing events, education and awareness, and training, medical and breeding services.

2.1 The Spatial and Environmental Guidelines and Standards

The horse racing compound site should be a well-drained site and not subject to flooding. It must be located on high grounds as possible while designed to achieve high level of sheltering and protection of prevailing cold wind. The site must be well connected to main roads with a minimum of four access points (i.e. spectators, horse owners, horse brocks, and stables and services). Internal road network must be easy to ride through in terms of signage and width. As seen from table (1), paving width must not be less than 6 m and of minimum internal and external curbs radius 5.5 and 12 m respectively to accommodate the movement of horse farm machinery, horse brocks, trucks and trailers.

The racecourse ground could be turf (i.e. grass), synthetic all weather, and/or mud (i.e. dirt). The racecourse width must not be less than 20 m with minimum bends radius of 135 m depending on the type and rank of the race (e.g. all weather flat racing, turf flat racing, turf hurdle racing, Turf Steeplechase Racing, etc.) as well as the racing horse breed (e.g. Arabian, thoroughbred, etc.). The minimum circuit length is 1 mile and 2 furlongs (2012 m) and the maximum is 2 miles (3218 m). The circuit should ideally have a straight allowing 5 furlongs (1006 m) and 6 furlongs (1207 m) races that reflects the minimum official straight race length. Marks of furlong distances must be clearly erected and measured 1.8 m from the permanent inside running rail as shown in figure (1). The racecourse must have draining system to minimize the risk of waterlogging and all round 2 m

erected internal and external colored running rail, solid fencing and/or crowd barrier. It also must have emergency service road to provide access to all parts of the racecourse that includes medical services for human and horses. Moreover, it must provide canter downs of 3 m minimum width for training, floodlighting, and automated irrigation system.

Table (1): Dimensions and Outer Turning Diameters for Some Common Types of Farm Vehicles

Type	**Overall Dimensions (m)**			**Outer Turning**
	Width	**Height**	**Length**	**Diameter (m)**
Saloon Car	1.8	1.5	4.0	11.0
Pick-up	1.8	1.6	4.8	11.5
Light Delivery Van	2.1	2.4	6.0	12.0
Two-Axle Lorry	2.6	3.4	10.0	23.5
Tractor	2.3	2.8	4.3	10.0
Tractor with Trailer	2.4	2.8	12.0	13.0
Tractor with Two Trailers	2.4	2.8	20.0	15.0

Source: FAO, 2017

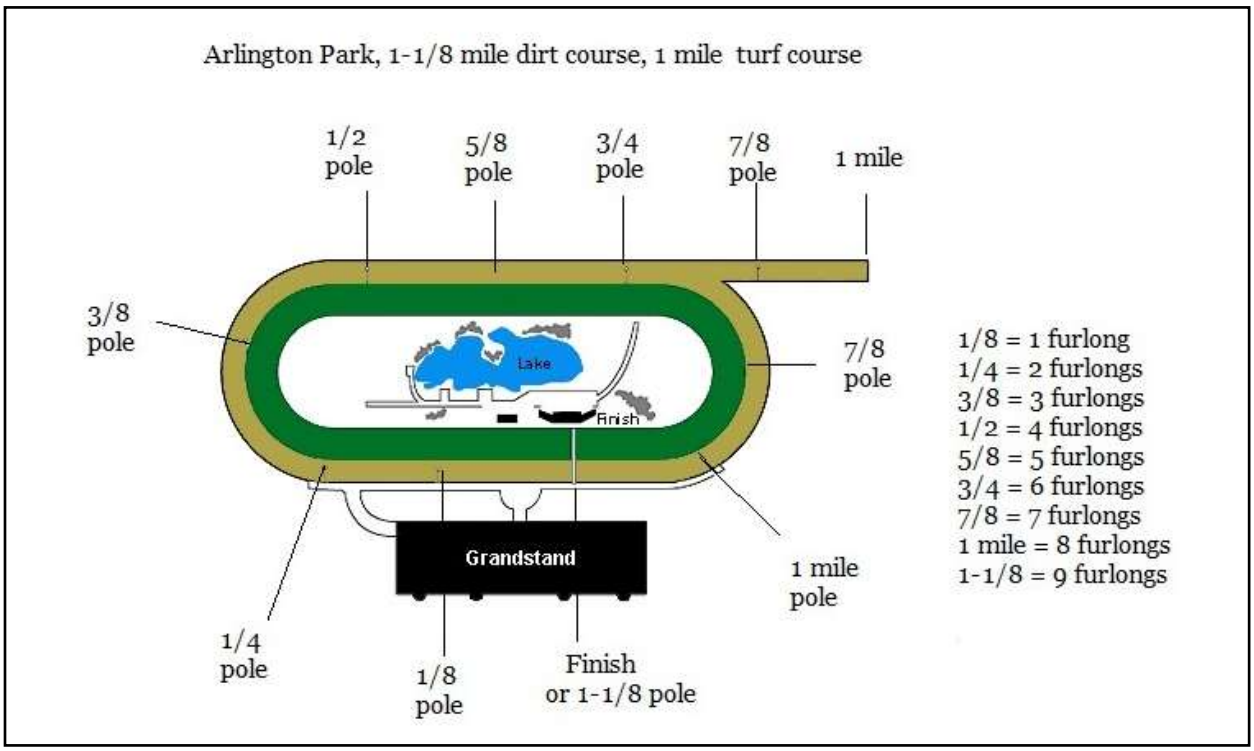


Figure (1): An Example of Race Circuit Furlong Marks

Source: Jockey World, 2017

In any given horse racing compound there are two types of stables that are the official stables complex and the horse owners stables. The two types share the very same underpinning design and planning standards while they are different in terms of location. While the official stables complex is directly connected to the race starting gates, the Jockey Club, the medical and administrative facilities; the owners' stables are located on the other side of the grandstand as seen in figure (2).

Figure (2): The location of the official stables and owners stables

Source: adapted from http://www.visualdictionaryonline.com

Horses are extremely sensitive t006F cold wind as well as heat hence stables must face the East-Southeast direction (i.e. E-SE). Consequently, the ventilation opening faces west – Northwest direction to avoid cold winter wind and make the most of summer breath. As seen from text box (1), although the area size of horse' boxes varies according to the size of the horse, the average area of horse box is 12 m with 3 m minimum side length. Each horse box must have a source of clean drinking water, a manger (i.e. a feeding tray), lighting, a tying ring, a ceiling fan in hot environment (air conditions and heaters are preferred in extreme weather environments), a solid box ground (i.e. interlocks, concrete, etc.), 2.4 m high and 1.2 m wide box door, and 30 cm * 30 cm minimum ventilation inlet opening located 2 m+ above finish floor levels and ventilation outlet opening located 1 m over the inlet opening.

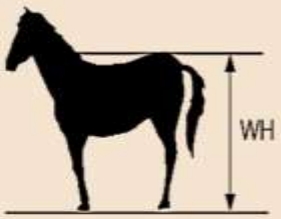
Each stable must have some facilities that complement horse training and maintenance. Facilities such as: 2 m wide working apron (a space where horse are cleaned and showered) with 1-1.5 m wide extended roof or canopy, food storage(s), saddles room, pharmacy room with a fridge, workers residence that accommodates a total number of workers based on the 1 worker per 5-7 horses standard with facilities, 20*20 m minimum horse paddock(s)/each, and visitors space with facilities are essential.

Text Box (1): The Minimum Dimensions for Horse enclosures (boxes)

Minimum dimensions for individual enclosures, examples for 3 withers heights	Withers heights 1.30 m	1.48 m	1.68 m
Stable area for individual horse	6.76 m^2	8.76 m^2	11.29 m^2
Stable area for a mare with a foal	8.94 m^2	11.59 m^2	14.93 m^2
Minimum length for the shortest side of the stable	2.28 m	2.59 m	2.94 m
Height of separation wall with retrofitted grid	1.69 m	1.92 m	2.18 m
Height of external stable doors or sliding doors	1.82 m	2.07 m	2.20 m
Height of the lower half of an external stable door	1.04 m	1.18 m	1.34 m
Area for small roaming enclosure	6.76 m^2	8.76 m^2	11.29 m^2

RECOMMENDED STANDARD DIMENSIONS FOR HORSE STABLES (WITHERS HEIGHT = WH)

Ceiling clearance:	1.5 x WH
Stable area for individual horse:	$(2 \times WH)^2$
Stable area for a mare with a foal:	$(2.3 \times WH)^2$
Height of feed trough (base plate):	0.33 x WH
Height of watering unit (water level):	0.3 x WH



Source: GROWI, 2017

The infrastructure provision in horse stables are essential, huge, and yet complicated. This mainly includes electricity, water, sewerage, and waste disposal. Buildings are not preferred be located 35 m of the center of any overhead power line. Horse stables should be well lit to permit proper observation of all horses. Any light source within a stable should be positioned so that it is inaccessible to the reach of horses. The average horse drinks 5 to 10 gallons (100-200 liters) of fresh water per day and an average of 5 times this amount for bathing and cleaning. Consequently an average horse needs 30-60 gallons/day of fresh clean water. Moreover, an average horse produces approximately the following waste shown in table (2). Consequently, any miscalculation, neglect, and/or ignorance of such standards and needs would be catastrophic for both the inter and intra built environments as well as the natural environment[4].

[4] For Further details on the effect of horses on the built environment and nature with specific reference to pollution go to https://enviroliteracy.org/environment-society/transportation/the-horse-the-urban-environment/ ; https://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/06/09/when-horses-posed-a-public-health-hazard/comment-page-1/; http://www.banhdc.org/archives/ch-hist-19711000.html;
and http://nautil.us/issue/7/waste/did-cars-save-our-cities-from-horses

Table (2) the waste produced daily by an average horse (450-500 kg)

Contaminant load	Per day	Per year
Solid (wet) manure	15 kilograms	5.5 tonnes
Urine	15 litres	5.5 kilolitres
Nitrogen (N)	170 grams	62 kilograms
Phosphorus (P)	15 grams	5.5 kilograms

Source: WRC, 2002

* A horse uses an average of 15 kg of bedding per day (e.g. hay, wood shavings, etc.)

2.2 Horse Racing Community

The horse racing community is a very closed and competitive one. It requires continuous awareness, support, and clear guidelines and regulations by governing bodies. Special attention is given to awareness with specific reference to animal rights, health and safety, breeding ethics, horse registration, and training protocols. Animal welfare awareness (also called the five freedoms) includes: 1. freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition, 2. Freedom from discomfort, 3. Freedom from pain, injury and disease, 4. Freedom to express normal patterns of behavior, and 5. Freedom from fear and distress. Health and safety awareness is more related to vaccinations and infections protocols, fire systems, first aid, handling risk, penalties, and banned substances and steroids. Breeding ethics and horse registration are related to breeds purity, animal rights, respect of breeders and owners privacy, and the official registration of race horses.

Support by governing bodies is extremely essential in organizing events, competitions, gatherings, and discussions. Its role in resolving conflicts between horse owners, breeders, and government institutions is of great importance. Guidelines and regulations related to races, training, judging, medical protocols, jockeys registration, horse sales, broadcasting and media, sponsorship protocols, and coordination with other international governing bodies. Community also extends to include fans and consequently betting activities which is rather huge given the amount of money involved as explained before. A code of ethics and attached penalties protocol and petitions procedures as well as supporting laws are essential and must.

Over the coming section this paper provides an insight into the horse racing activities in Heliopolis, Cairo. It tends to analyze the current physical as well as community settings against the theoretical standards and guidelines provided in section (2).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As a first step in the exploration, analysis and documentation of the current context of the horse racing activities in Heliopolis, the authors divided the study into five distinct groups: Government officials (i.e. Ministry of Youth and Sports, The Borough Infrastructure Authorities, the Egyptian Equestrian Federation, The Jockey Club of Egypt), surrounding residents, workers of the horse racing activities, academics, and finally NGOs and CBOs. The fieldwork was carried during March and April 2017. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect primary qualitative data to a sample selected through different sampling techniques (see Table 3). Semi-structured interviews, direct observation and group discussions techniques were judged more appropriate than structured

interviews due to security and other resource limitations (i.e. time, funding, safety and security context), as well as the type of data required.

Table 3: Study population, methods and sampling techniques

Study Population		Methods	Sampling technique
Government Officials	Ministry of Youth and Sports The Borough Infrastructure Authorities the Egyptian Equestrian Federation The Jockey Club of Egypt	Semi-structured interviews	Purposeful then snow-balling
Residents	Surrounding residents of the racing complex	Semi-structured interviews Direct observation Group discussions	Purposeful Stratified random sampling then snow-balling
Workers	Beside grooms, vets, vet pharmacists, farriers, trainers, stables managers, jockeys, etc.	Semi-structured interviews Direct observation Group discussions	Stratified random sampling then snow-balling
Academics	Academics	Semi-structured interviews	Purposeful then snowballing
NGOs and CBOs	Heliopolis Services Development Society The Horse Owners Club Amateur horse owners	Semi-structured interviews	Purposeful then snowballing

Briefly, a total of 72 interviewees of all groups were interviewed. This was in addition to direct observation and group discussions over a total period of 2 months. The researchers have also made use of several secondary data sources, mainly documentation and archival records, while seeking to triangulate data to confirm the validity and reliability of both primary and secondary data collected.

4. HELIOPOLIS: HORSE RACING AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Although the first horse race, as we know today, took place in 1863 during Khedive Ismail Era in *Al-Rydania Desert* (i.e. *Abbassiah* District), it was not until 1882 that the Khedive Club (i.e. *Al Jazeera* Club) horse racecourse was established and officially had its first race in 1883. In 1890, the horse racing activities officially started in Alexandria Sports Club (i.e. Sporting Club). The organization committees in the two clubs coordinated the establishment of the Egyptian Jockey Club based on the British model in 1890, four years before the first USA Jockey Club (JCE 2017).

4.1 Granada Horse Racing Complex

As a direct result of the growth in the number of foreigners, both residents and tourists, as well as the economic boom at the time (1897-1907), a new suburb named Heliopolis (i.e. the Sun City), 12 kilometers far from the centre of Cairo was initiated in 1905. Heliopolis was a unique creation by the Belgian Empian Baron of an ‘oasis within the desert’ that revolves around creating garden

cities, while celebrating an architecture that marries oriental and European styles (Hussien and Attalah 2005).

Heliopolis, a reminiscence of a romanticized hideout from the chaos of Cairo's old quarters, presented a European life-style in a magical oriental context. (Hussien and Attalah 2005). Consequently, new social, entertainment and recreational activities had to be included within the suburb construction plan. The hippodrome or the racecourse was one of buzzing and famous landmarks of the new suburb and the meeting point for race goers every Sunday. The horse racing complex was known as Granada City (i.e. *madenet ghernata*) yet the name was usually referred to the royal Cabin, the Grandstand, and the famous Tower. Although the race course was exclusive to the foreigners and the upper social class, people from everywhere and every social class used to come and watch the races from outside, as they could not afford the price of the tickets (El-Ghitany 2005; Shetawy and Dief Allah 2013). The entry tickets and betting kiosks were at the building of Cinema Roxy today (i.e. Luna Park Casino back then) while the horse owners' stables were located in the area between the now known Nehru and Andalus Streets on the other side of the grandstand alongside the racecourse ass seen in photo (1) (Archive Egypt, 2017).

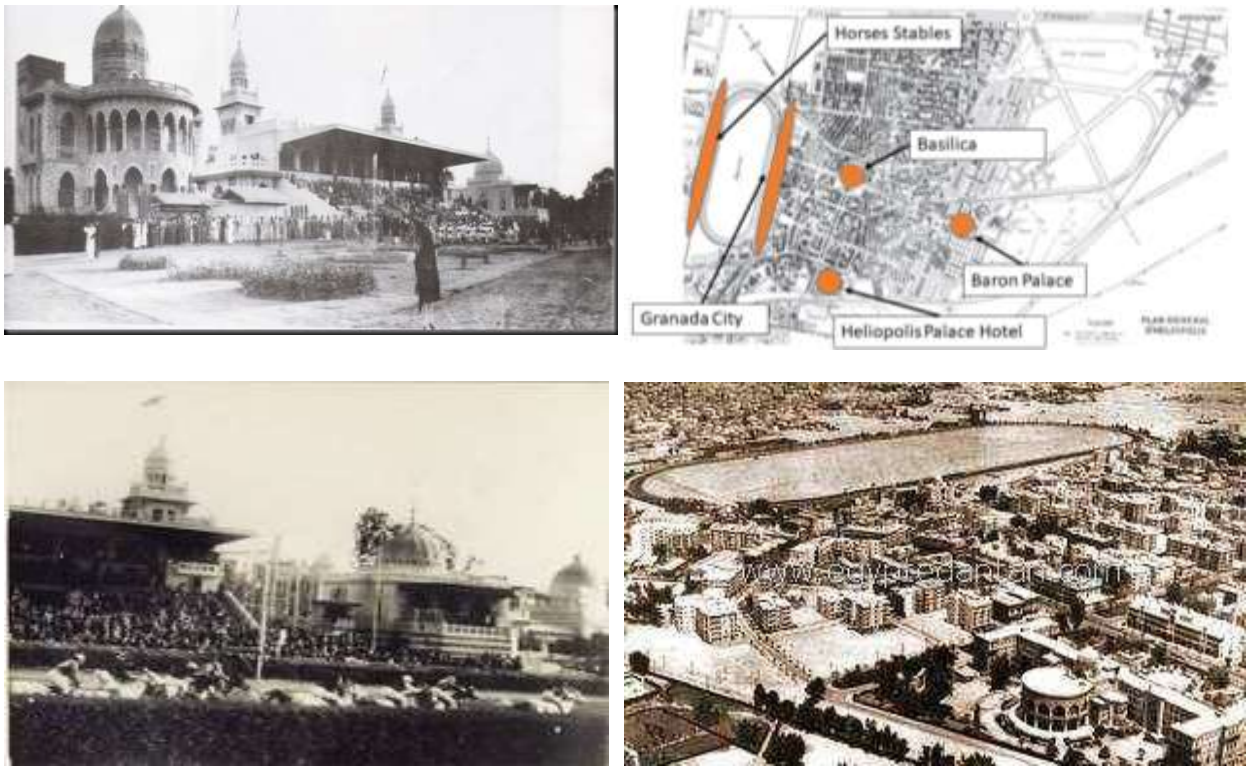


Photo (1): The Granada City Horse Racing Complex (1905-1960)

The pre-revolution era (after 1952) came with very high-beat waves of change within Heliopolis context. Heliopolis Oasis Company (FOC), like many Foreign companies, was to be nationalized and re-named 'Heliopolis Company for Housing and Development'. Most of the foreign population left the country, and new Egyptian residents from different social classes flogged to Heliopolis. Following the bold ideologies of nationalization, the nationalized Heliopolis Company based its policies throughout the 1960s on attracting national investment through decreasing the

land prices. Activities revolved around economic buildings to serve the masses contributed to the change in the general outlook of Heliopolis. As a result, any empty plots of land and open spaces served widely to achieve the company's clear policies (e.g. the construction of an entire residential area on area that used to be Heliopolis's Golf course- *Almazah*) (Herzog, 2010).

Fortunately, the open space of the horse race court was saved from this housing construction invasion. However, the once famous horse race court was to be closed by Nasser's government. Based on the common view of nationalist, its closure was based on the concept that 'it does not coincide with our traditions... it is gambling'. As a result, the race course was to be turned into a public park (i.e. Merryland Park) in the early 1960s and the once royal and elegant buildings to be abandoned and neglected till today as seen in photo (2). The last races held on the Granada racecourse were in the 1960-61 race season before starting again in the newly established El - Shams Club horse racing complex in the 1968-69 race season. Horse stables and services were demolished and luxury houses overlooking the newly established park. The horse rack was paved and used as a part of the new road network (El-Ghitany, 2005).

Photo (1): The Current Condition of Granada City Horse Racing Complex

4.2 El-Shams Club Horse Racing Complex (ECHRC)

Heliopolis Housing and Development Company (HHDC) was founded in 1906 to manage and direct the development activities in Heliopolis area. Consequently, it was the agency responsible of constructing and managing ECHRC in 1968. Although there was no racing activities in Heliopolis during the period of 1960 – 1968, the managing of the racing activities was assigned to the Horse Owners Club (HOC) in 1956 under the supervision of the Egyptian Equestrian

Federation and The Jockey Club of Egypt. The site was rented to HOC while giving it the right to sub-rent facilities, stables, and buildings within site. However, the management of all lands surrounding the complex facilities was assigned to the managing board of El-Shams Club resulted in the ongoing conflicts and court cases over land management and right of rent. Rent contracts between HHDC and El-Shams Sports Club and HOC are extremely vague and general; and although the rent period is only for 50 years - to be finished in 2018 – every single agency of them acts like the sole undisputed owner of site and surrounding lands. Figure (3) shows the current land use activities within and surrounding El-Shams horse race complex.

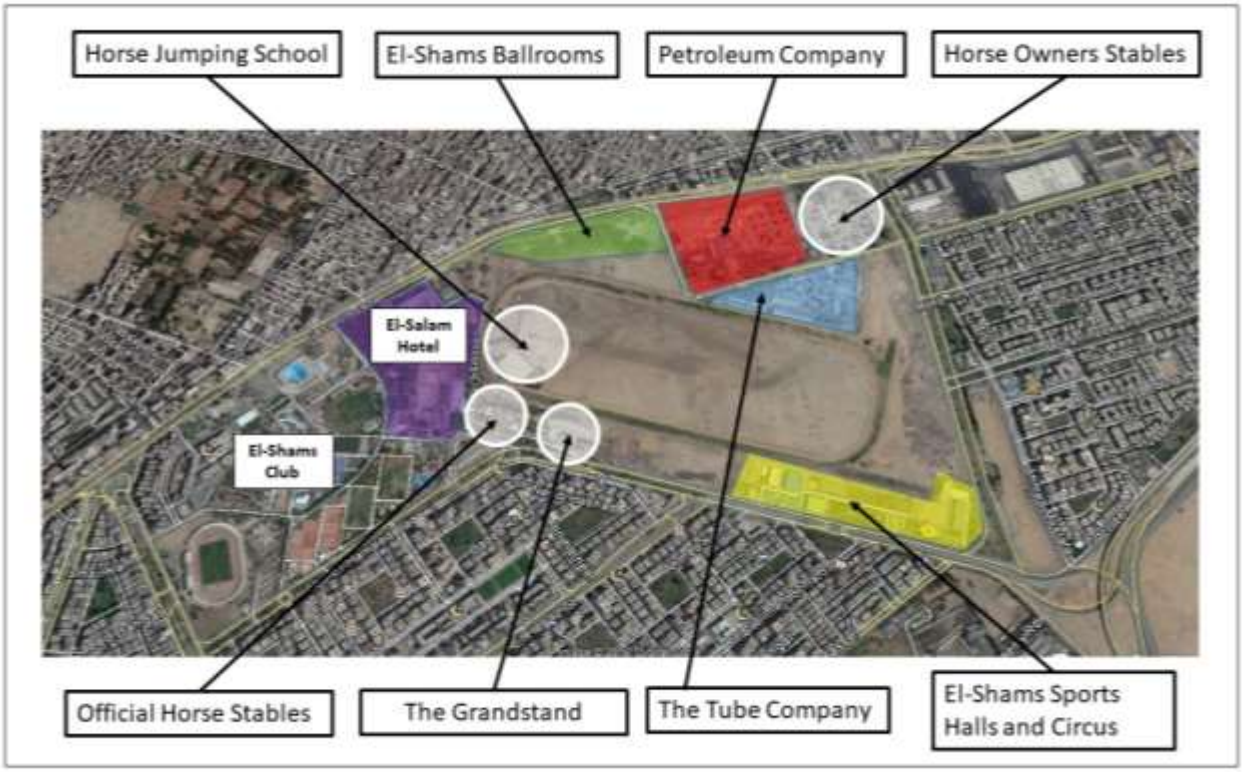


Figure (3) The Current Land Use Activities within and surrounding El-Shams Horse Race Complex

Acting as the owner of site, El-Shams Club rented a large piece of land touching the race track to the Egyptian Underground Agency to establish a prefabricated concrete station to support the construction of the 4th tube line running through Gisr El-Suez Street. As noticed from Figure (4), there is a vivid conflict between such activity (i.e. the tube concrete station) and the horse racing in terms of air and noise pollution as well as race health and safety standards on the north side of the track. El-Shams Club also constructed the sports halls complex and rented the current circus site also touching the southern side of the race track. The rented site of the petroleum company as well as the newly constructed El-Shams Ballrooms resulted in transforming the road separating the owners stables from the race track from a service road to a heavily used traffic road that affects the safety of horses as well as jockeys while crossing the road to enter the race track as seen from figures (3) and (4). It is also the case on the western side of the track where the Hotel fence is very close to the track curb as seen in figure (3). The eastern side of the track is also besieged by huge

amounts of construction waste and rubble as well as dead horses' carcasses and horse bedding garbage as seen in figure (5).

Figure (4): The Tube Prefabricated Concrete Station

Figure (5): The Eastern Side and Entrance to the Race Track

The race track is in bad condition. The grass is patchy apart from the straight side in front of the grandstand, the inner track rail is damaged and fallen apart in many parts, shrapnel and nails are sticking out of the inner rail, no outer track rail existing, no trail for safety vehicles surrounding

the race track, the marks of race distance are not complete, no flood lights, no security cameras, no irrigation system, and the inner part of the track is merely desert with patches of grass every now and then apart from the zone assigned to the horse jumping school seen in figure (6). T

Figure (6): The Race Track

Figure (7): The Official Stables

The official horse stables and related facilities are no difference of neglect and deterioration. Horse boxes, walker, access to water and food storage standards, safety and security measures and animal rights in bad shape that could force the whole complex to be shut down and managing body to be persecuted. There is no fire-fighting plan, no evacuation plan, no training sessions, no awareness

sessions, no external auditing, and no health and safety protocol. Figure (7) shows the level of neglect and deterioration of the official stables.

The grandstand, the tower, the betting offices and the race steroids and drugs check offices are not taken care of to the standards level in terms of health and safety and fire-fighting. However, they are the best zone taken care of as a result of regular visits from spectators, horse owners, management, and visitors as seen in figure (8). It is also seen as the façade of the complex where horse owners from other race complexes in Giza and Alexandria are comparing facilities.

Figure (8): The Grandstand and the Tower

Figure (9): The owners Stables

Finally, the horse owners stables. Although in better condition than the official stables, yet it is deteriorating rapidly due to the lack of funding, lack of maintenance, and deterioration of infrastructure networks, road networks, and services. Ass seen from figure (9), horse boxes and food storage facilities do not follow standards. The sewage blockage and drinking water cut off are normal events. Burning horse beddings and washing horses in the internal roads are common practice for the small stables. No in site managing body exist and no auditing visits. No health and safety and fire-fighting protocols, no infection protocol, no pharmacy, and no vet clinic exists. No jockeys training sessions, no awareness campaigns, no common rooms and event halls in site. The site became a source of pollution and diseases as well as drugs and arms dealing and nightlife activities according to the owners and surrounding residents.

5. CONCLUSION

Horse racing industry can be one of pillars of the national economy of any country. It can contribute greatly to the GDP and raise the standards of living of involved community. However, in order for this to be achieved, standards and specifications with respect to the built environment as well as the involved community have to be strictly followed. Although Egypt established its national Jockey Club four years before the USA, and current comparison would be of national shame in terms of facilities, laws, regulations, protocols, achievements, and financial gains. The neglect and deterioration of and horse racing and stables facilities within the built environment has catastrophic effect such as pollution levels, epidemics spread, infrastructure and road networks deterioration, and health and safety measures on people within and surrounding the site.

Established to be the heart of entertainment industry and the residence of most of foreigners in Cairo, Heliopolis was initiated in 1905. One of the first and most famous activities was Granada Horse Racing Complex that was the mecca of visitors, foreigners, and elites. It was even one of the preferred visiting place of King Farouk. After the 1952, betting activities were considered foreign to society beliefs and decision was taken to move the racing complex to the outskirt of Heliopolis next to El-shams club. The complex was shut down after the 1960-1961 racing season.

The new then El-Shams racing complex had its first race in 1968-1969 racing season and since then the complex is deteriorating in a fast pace. The betting activities gains are first priority over horses and jockeys welfare, and health and safety. The effects is even greater on the built environment and communities within and surrounding the site. Over the time the site became a source of pollution, diseases, crime, drug dealing, arms dealing, and sex industry. The complex not only affects the built environment and communities within and surrounding the site but also has no solid and decent financial gains that can even supports horse owners expenses. The race prize is 4000 l.e. ($200) half of which paid to the HOC and El-Shams Sports Club and the rest is handed to the horse owner and jockey while the cost of horse maintenance is 1500-2000 l.e./month. Consequently, the racing activities turned into financially consuming activities, yet merely a hobby, with no actual rewards.

This papers sheds light on the actual conditions on the horse racing activities in Heliopolis in order to guide as well as alert decision makers, locally and nationally, on the effect of this facility has on surrounding and inside communities and built environment. It is to clearly say: either renew, upgrade, modernize and manage the complex according to the international standards or just shut it down for the sake of horses and communities.

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