**Keywords**

Architectural heritage, buffer/transition areas, perception of cultural heritage, Healthy and sustainable urban development

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**Introduction and scope of study**

There is an increasing global acknowledgement that cultural heritage is necessary for a sustainable development of societies. This has been reflected by the attempts for the preservation of cultural heritage. The need for the embodiment of cultural artifacts seems to have made their presence crucial in architecture as well as urbanism. And since cultural heritage is facing many contemporary challenges, it has become a necessity to manage the changes the contemporary life brings into the heritage sites. Especially new architecture that is placed in context of a World Heritage Monument has been subject for global debate both under architects and urbanists. This project investigates how new architecture in cultural heritage context is perceived by locals, in order to unveil the role of the so called buffer/transition areas and their architectural guidelines in the redesign of a healthier city.

This phd research will be a comparative study between two transition areas in terms of both the human perception as well as the guidelines for the new addition to the existing built environment. Thus the contribution of this research will be on two levels; first the human-centric level that is investigating the perceptions of new architecture in the transition areas. Second is the comparison between the different guidelines for the two chosen transition areas. The research will conclude if the two different levels of the results can contribute to a healthy and sustainable development of the areas. (The first site is my hometown Erbil in Iraq, and for the second perhaps we can choose The Amsterdam Canal Ring Area in the Netherlands)

**Research questions:**

What is the role of buffer areas in a healthy and sustainable development of cities?

1. How do buffer areas from World Heritage Monuments develop differently from other areas in terms of newly built architecture?
2. How are these developments perceived by the locals?
3. How can the management of development of cultural heritage sites contribute to mental health of locals?

These questions may represent the General case, while in this stage the researcher has to make sure that this case is researchable.