This work comprises a selection of the authors contributions to international conferences and symposia, during the past five years or so. The idea behind its editing and presentation, to the interested factions in Egypt and Third World countries, evolved and enhanced through three convictions, namely:

1- To attempt to illustrate the features of the planning and housing contexts in Egypt and to formulate them into a rather comprehensive structure spanning goals & objectives, approaches and methodologies on one hand and determinants, alternatives policies and strategies on the other.

2- To attempt to effectively justify the authors view that: the growing gap between theory and practice in developing nations is not necessarily a permanent feature of the development context and related processes and hence it is possible to bridge and breach it.

3- To allow researchers and scholars together with those involved and interested in housing and physical planning in developing nations to review a sequence of closely related contributions that are scattered in an unlimited number of international publications and proceedings, a fact that makes it rather costly to refer to them separately and collectively in terms of time and effort.

In editing this work many options were possible (i.e. for organization and presentation of its contents) including chronological and sequential assimilation, classification by events and thematic or contextual levels organization.

The present work is organized thematically and its structure comprises three consecutive physical levels, namely:

- Housing Units morphology,
- Site Planning,
- Physical and Macro-setting.

The term physical is taken to refer to the environment characterised and dominated by man made features and additions, in mans drive to achieve his birth rights and goals and which extends to span mans habitat, clusters and settlements.

The research notes, studies and papers are classified under these three physical levels in three separate parts.
Part One addresses housing units, typology, variations and features and comprises four closely related sections (papers). The first presents modular patterns for the design of housing projects. It shows the steps taken to formulate a systematic approach to design. An approach that enables the designer to collectively combine industrialization orders and modularity together with design variations and complexities.

The second work critically reviews the various options for developing housing schemes, i.e. land parcellization & plots, mass housing projects and mixtures, with emphasis on the features of housing types in each. It also highlights possibilities of interchangeability during the development phases.

The paper on housing for a new settlement in Sinai, the third in Part 1, proposes alternative designs for expandable houses that could be erected with standard components, to facilitate and enable users participation in the construction activities.

The fourth study in Part 1 discusses the major aspects affecting physical development and effective users participation in the design and implementation of the initial growth stage in one of Egypt's towns.

Part Two includes seven papers covering various aspects of site planning and housing layouts. The first paper in this part, presents a systematic approach for planning housing layouts, through the use of a set of modular patterns representing the recommended routes for the infrastructures and axes for the delineation of physical form and its components. The paper also shows the flexibility of the developed tool and its ability to provide the base for the generation of alternatives and various solutions for housing layouts.

The second paper presents means of analysis of residential districts and allows the understanding of its structure and tissue's components and interrelations.

The suggested approach enables the designer to compare and evaluate the efficiency of layouts' alternatives with special reference to circulation network and infrastructure.

Another tool for the analysis of existing urban tissue is presented in the 3rd paper which allows the recording of plot areas & dimensions, the intervals between successive axes of infrastructure.
together with the quantitative features of the buildings and the connective tissues. Means of evaluating the recorded material and developing criteria for the design and planning of new communities are then outlined.

The fourth paper addresses the issue of residential density and calls for tolerant attitudes towards high density living in newly developed communities. It briefly reviews current thoughts on activity and physical density and closely looks into Egyptian planning and building laws & regulations handling of density. The inadequacy of density as a design and environmental quality control tool is further stressed at the closing section of the paper.

The space-between features and the environmental quality of low income housing areas interrelation are briefly highlighted and means of improving the quality of the external environment in residential areas are presented in the fifth paper of the 3rd part.

The following paper looks into climate and urban form and discusses the relative importance of climate as a physical planning determinant. The paper presents the view, that: "the effect of climate depends on the emergence of the third dimension, therefore in structure and urban planning processes, climatic considerations are of a rather limited effect and its influence and role positively increases with the presence of three dimensional decisions in site planning & urban design".

The last paper in this part reviews the complex issue of low cost housing aesthetics and visual qualities. It points out potentialities and limitations of current practices and graphically illustrates the design criteria for facades aesthetics.

The Third part shifts to the larger context and physical setting, it comprises five studies and research papers dealing with development and planning contexts and related concepts, rationales and approaches.

The first paper reviews the role of architects and planners in the development process and re-examines the complex interrelation between the designers & community. The paper highlights current thoughts on comprehensive development with emphasis on physical
aspects of development and means of rephrasing the designer's roles in the development drive with special reference to housing.

The following paper briefly reviews urban housing context in Egypt, it highlights endeavours, promising conceptions and actions, seeking solutions to the problem of housing low income families. The paper falls into a sequence of five notes on the problem, outlining its boundaries and pinpointing contextually aware solutions and strategies to surmount it.

The third paper in this part critically reviews the concept, context and features of urban conservation which provides an important tool in the physical development of existing cities. It outlines problem areas and limitations on: the process application and implementation of conservation policies with special reference to older housing areas. Means of appropriating urban conservation processes in those areas are then presented in the form of an open guidelines checklist.

The fourth work in this part turns to the problem of urban form generation for new communities and suggests a modified approach for plan formulation in urban form generation rationales namely: "to enhance the sequential and synthesizing nature of the generative process with emphasis on the evolution of alternative forms rather than on sieving, selection and elimination of options".

The closing theme which the fifth paper in Part 3 undertakes is, architectural & urban character for existing and new communities with emphasis on the latter.

The paper falls into an introduction and three related sections reviewing the features of physical character and means of securing a distinct character for newly developed communities.

The above brief review of the contents of the present work clearly indicates the extents of its range and spectrum which are in turn the collective product of the components, thoughts, views, suggested tools and approaches it comprises.

The rational framework and the continuous stream of conceptions & convictions this work presents were developed through the academic work, applied research and practice undertaken by the authors in the realms of architecture, housing & physical planning during the past two decades or so, and which is reasonably registered in the present selection of published work, dating back to the last
quarter of that period.

The sustained integration between theory and practice, thoughts and application attempted and maintained by the authors throughout their career (professional and academic) is basically what made the present work possible with the context limitations and constraints in mind.