

Cultural Daily

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Morning Walk: Normality within Abnormality

Rick Meghiddo · Wednesday, July 20th, 2016

“Morning Walk” is a reflection of both my feelings as a former resident of Ramat Aviv (1992 – 2002) and as a daily walker at the present time. My observations through the lens of a camera try to capture some of the elements that define its success.

[embedvideo id="175407258? website="vimeo"]

Morning Walk from [Rick Meghiddo](#) on [Vimeo](#).

Ramat Aviv started its development during the 1950s as a popular neighborhood in the north portion of the city. Its buildings were 2-3 story high and modest in character (Golda Meir lived there.) During the 1960s and 1970s Ramat Aviv Bet was developed, which included mostly eight story high buildings. At its center was Neveh Avivim (a place where many notorious people lived, among them Prime Minister Ytzhak Rabin and President Shimon Peres.) During the 1980s and 1990s Ramat Aviv Gimel was developed, with some buildings reaching sixteen stories.

Besides being close to the sea, it has a powerful anchor: the Tel Aviv University campus, which serves as a magnet to a highly educated population. It is also strategically located next to important arteries of mobility, such as the Ayalon Freeway and the train northern line. Yet, important as these components are, they are not sufficient to guarantee success. What makes the difference is good planning. This includes:

1. **A continuity of open spaces.**
2. **High density with a good balance between buildings' footprints and open spaces.**
3. **Human scale.**
4. **High-quality landscape design.**
5. **An even distribution of small shopping centers that facilitate human interaction.**

Interestingly enough, its residential buildings do not excel for their architectural qualities. The better qualified architectural statements are peripheral (like the Eretz Israel Museum, Tsvi

Hecker's Beth Hapalmach, the Ramat Aviv Mall) or are located within the Tel Aviv University (in itself a "museum of architecture" with many buildings designed by some of Israel's best architects.)

Besides being a pleasant place to live in, Ramat Aviv sends a message that other cities can learn from. It offers an alternative between the multi-use of metropolitan areas and the sprawl of single-family residential "city-dormitories." Ramat Aviv brings in a sense of normality within abnormality.

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