



colourful metamorphosis of the area by the people which powerfully illustrated the potential for the garden's adaptive reuse that could extend beyond the *moulid*.

Such are the ingredients that provided inspiration for the transformation of the park. The organisation and form of the park was drawn from the interpretation of the spiral form of the minarets of the Ibn Tulun mosque. Clearly visible from the site, the minaret's spiral symbolised the idea of growth and was taken as the main theme for the children's park, giving form to what is common to both children and parks - growth and life. Reinforcing this theme is the evocative imagery of a tree provided by the Ibn Tulun minaret. Looking down from the minaret into the magnificent serenity of the mosque's courtyard, with its majestic arches and compassionate shade, one is re-

THE CULTURAL PARK FOR CHILDREN IN CAIRO, LOCATED IN ONE OF THE OLDEST AND MOST DENSELY POPULATED QUARTERS OF THE CITY.



LEFT: THE FORMAL LAYOUT OF THE PARK ORGANISED THE MAIN COMPONENTS AROUND THE PALM-TREE PROMENADE.

RIGHT: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT INSPIRED CONFIDENCE THAT DWELLINGS ADJACENT TO THE PARK WOULD NOT BE DEMOLISHED, AND PEOPLE SET ABOUT REPAIRING THEIR APARTMENTS.

minded of a *rawdah*, or garden, as the image of paradise. Resting in the middle of the courtyard is the fountain for ablutions, whose water reaffirms the symbolic and functional image of the garden. Here the metaphor between a mosque and garden becomes inescapable.

Looking out in the other direction from the minaret, however, the illusion quickly loses its effect. The garden is strangled on all sides by buildings. The terrific imbalance in the structure of the community is striking. In designing the park, the question became how to reforge this balance and translate the organising principle of growth concretely: in short, how to develop an architectural scheme that is ordered in accordance with community symbols and patterns. The response was to make the design process itself accretionary. The plan contained two layers of design thought.

The first layer is the formal layout inspired by the spiral pattern whereby the components of the project are organised around the palm-tree promenade. The existing trees of the earlier Al-Hod Al-Marsoud garden were maintained and reinforced, becoming the main axis for the conceived geometry of the park. Every tree became a pole, a point in the matrix; the whole is turned in a field of energy activated by the power of the transformed symbol of the Ibn Tulun