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Abandoned Palestinian village near Jerusalem escapes redevelopment

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(<http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/.a/6a00d8341c630a53ef0168e6dea241970c-pi>)

REPORTING FROM JERUSALEM — An abandoned Palestinian village that is believed to be the last remaining example of a pre-1948 Arab town will not be redeveloped into new apartments, according to an Israeli judge's ruling Monday.

Lifta, on the edge of Jerusalem, had become a battleground (<http://articles.latimes.com/2011/apr/07/world/la-fg-palestinian-village-20110407>) between developers and former residents of the village, who went to court to block the city's plans to use the site for luxury housing.

The judge avoided ruling on the broader issue of whether the Palestinian families had the right to reclaim their homes and instead voided a pending development proposal on a technicality, saying the plans had changed too much from their original idea and therefore the developers needed to start over, according (<http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/israel-s-last-remaining-abandoned-arab-village-lifta-gets-reprieve-as-judge-voids-development-plans-1.411447>) to the Haaretz newspaper.

Lifta was one of hundreds of Palestinian villages abandoned or destroyed during Israel's war of independence. Residents were barred from returning home.

Today Lifta is used as a public park, but many of the original structures, including an olive press and mosque, stand as some of the only reminders of the Palestinian displacement. Preservationists are seeking to restore the village.

ALSO:

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In Syria, a once-quiet village tips into revolution (<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-syria-village-20120207,0,3460879.story>)

Egypt names 43 targeted in democracy groups inquiry (<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-egypt-americans-20120207,0,3609215.story>)

-- Edmund Sanders

Photo: The abandoned village of Lifta on the edge of Jerusalem. Credit: Edmund Sanders / Los Angeles Times

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