The name Khartoum comes from the Arabic word “Res-el-hartum,” or “end of the elephant trunk,” which the city’s outline resembles on the map. Christian Norborg-Schultz, in *Genius Loci*, describes Khartoum “as a city with a strong quality of space, burning sun and immense sky, all these elements helped to create a powerful environment.”

It was founded in 1821 as an Egyptian military post for captured territory in the Sudan. It is the chief administrative city and the center of transportation. It is divided by the great life-giving Nile River into three towns, Khartoum city, Omdurman city and Khartoum North city, where three different worlds meet. Khartoum-the colonial wide street city, the labyrinthine world of Arabic Omdurman and the world of a present day industrial city, Khartoum North.

Geographically, Khartoum is in the center of the Sudan, it is flat and surrounded by infinite expanses of scarcely populated deserts and savannah. The only prominent structure is the Nile which cuts through the country from the South to the North. In Khartoum the pure abstract abstraction of Islam meets the magic world of Africa, so it is located at the center of several worlds, the eternal order of the Nile valley to the North, the world of black Africa to the South, the infinite desert to the West, and the harsh mountains of Ethiopia to the East.

The colonial town is characterized by its horizontal development which is the existential dimension of the desert. Arabs in fact, have always preferred low, horizontally extended buildings, and the only vertical element was the minarets of the mosques.
The character of Khartoum is determined by the appearance of concrete, and sand which is the most prominent element that represents the desert that surrounds the city. Sand is presented not only as material, but as color and texture.

The architecture of Khartoum represents an interesting combination of Arabic and African character, where the enclosure of the private domain is in accordance with the social structure of the Arabs. However the plastic modeling and the soft details that are found in the use of small windows that could have a circular shape, the use of mud or sun-dried brick, and also the burned brick is African more than Arabic. As Norburg-Schultz mentioned in his *Genius Loci*, that "the Arabic architecture of North Africa in fact gives more emphasis to the regularity and geometrization."

The architecture is more to do with obeying "the low" of the natural environment, which is expressed by color and materials.

The vernacular architecture in the three towns depends mainly on the usage of local materials as mud, or sun-dried brick and burned bricks. The houses consist mainly, as any Muslim house, of the perimeter wall, which is usually built before the dwelling, it is continuous and an enclosing element.

The wall encloses a courtyard that is surrounded by "several or one room", *Genius Loci*, which is free standing, or attached to the perimeter internally; the wall prevents the feel of desert entering. The courtyard will create a pleasant environment by having green areas and the shadows of the rooms which will replace the burning sun and the sand color of the exterior world. This arrangement is commonly used in Omdurman.

In the colonial Khartoum, houses are more open to the environment and the enclosing wall is substituted by a transparent fence.

Two basic types of urban structures are found in Khartoum city, the labyrinthine world of the desert settlement, which represents the original vernacular solution (Tuti Island), and the geometric pattern of "Baroque", which symbolize a general ideological system.

Geometrically, Khartoum is a geometrical network, with which landmarks and nodes are distributed according to their functional and symbolic role. Khartoum North is less distinct. The three towns are united by the blue-green belt of the Nile.
The density is less and the streets are more defined and wider. At the level of buildings and houses, columns, arches and architraves substitute the wall. The columns take different shapes, for example, Ionic prefabricated of concrete. Currently Khartoum city is expressed by the interaction of the Arabic, African and European styles and colors, but maintain the same Arabic social structure in more developed sequence.

Khartoum city, in the beginning did not follow the Islamic city porticoes as much, because it was planned by the British Lord Kitchener in the shape of the Union Jack.