A taste of the Greek islands in the heart of ancient Athens

They built a new neighborhood, making it reminiscent of their Cycladic houses built house, and used some of the best land available in the capital, just under the Acropolis that boasts the Parthenon and other ancient buildings.

The move was technically illegal, but in the political upheaval that followed Otto's ouster in 1862 and the frenetic urbanization of the capital, especially after World War II, Anafiotika was left undisturbed.

And in a torch of irony, what was once illegal is now part of the Athens architectural heritage zealously safeguarded by the Greek ministry of culture.

The houses are tiny, mostly 50 square metres in size, girded by gardens, and are protected by strict restoration guidelines.

"It’s not easy living here," said Alexandra Kadouri, a 30-year resident and member of a local heritage committee.

"Not only must we abide by strict regulations, but we must also stay vigilant against efforts to turn the area into Airbnb rentals," she said.

(AFP-fig)

A general view of the Acropolis, the ancient citadel of Athens, under the Acropolis archaeological site.

A Greek national flag flies atop a church in the town Anafiotika, which Athens archaeological site on July 6.

To restore the city to a semblance of its classical glory fit for a state capital, Otto invited famed stonemasons from Naxi, one of the Cycladic islands in the Aegean Sea, to work on a grand rebuilding initiative.

That included his new palace, which is now the country’s parliament.

Looking for a place to lodge his families, the workmen decided to take matters into their own hands.

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