

The Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies

Established by the Charles H. Revson Foundation

**A Policy for the Preservation and
Development of the Upper Kidron
Valley (Wadi Naar) – the Visual Basin
of the Old City of Jerusalem**

Edited by Israel Kimhi

Jerusalem, 2009

The JIIS Studies Series no. 122

A Policy for the Preservation and Development of the Upper Kidron Valley (Wadi Naar) – the Visual Basin of the Old City of Jerusalem

Edited by Israel Kimhi

This publication was made possible by funds granted by the Richard and Roda Goldman Foundation, San Francisco.

The statements made and the views expressed are solely the responsibility of the authors.

© 2009, The Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies
The Hay Elyachar House
20 Radak St., 92186 Jerusalem
<http://www.jiis.org.il>
E-mail: machon@jiis.org.il

Table of contents

- Introduction
- Summary of Recommendations
- The Physical Conditions of the Area
- The Historical Development of Jerusalem and the Kidron Valley
- Archaeology in the Kidron Valley
- The Geological and Morphological Conditions of the Kidron Valley
- The Residents of the Kidron Valley
- Urban Planning and its Effects on the Kidron Valley
- A Profile of the Arab Neighborhoods of the Kidron Valley
- “Landscape-Cultural Units” in the Upper Kidron Valley
- A History of the Development of the Build-up Area in the Kidron Valley.
- The Villages: Urbanization Processes in the Villages Situated in the Kidron Valley
- The Bedouin Population
- The Urban Areas
- Land-uses in the Kidron Valley
- The Old City’s Natural Visibility
- Potential Threats to the Kidron Valley’s Landscapes and Open Views
- Infrastructure in the Kidron Valley
- Future Directions: Sustainable Development
- Tourism Development in the Upper Kidron Valley Overlooking the Old City
- Transportation in the Kidron Valley
- Bibliography and Sources

Research & Planning Team

Israel Kimhi – Head of the team, and the report editor

Eran Avni – Infrastructure, Public Services and Tourist Sites

Amir Eidelman – Geology

Yair Assaf-Shapira – Statistics, Planning and GIS Mapping

Malka Greenberg-Ranan – Physical Planning, Development of the Built-up Area

Maya Choshen – Population and Society

Mike Turner – Physical Planning, Development of the Built-up Area, Visual Analysis, Recommendations for Future Development

Mohammed Nakhal – Resident Outreach, History, Profile of the Arab Neighborhoods

Michal Korach – Population and Society

Israel Kimhi – Recommendations for Future Development, Land-Uses, Transportation, Planning

Amnon Ramon – History, Religious Affairs, Heritage Sites

Acknowledgments

The team thanks the residents and representatives of the Upper Kidron Valley (Wadi Naar) and the Visual Basin of the Old City for their cooperation and their readiness to meet repeatedly with the research team. We wish to extend special thanks to our research team fellow, Mr. Mohammed Nakhal, who organized and arranged the meetings with the area's residents and their representatives.

We thank the following people for their kind assistance: John Seligman – Jerusalem District Archaeologist, Israel Antiquities Authority; Mr. Adi Ben-Nun – GIS Manager at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem ; Aharon Rosenberg – VP Water Systems, Hagihon Jerusalem Water Company; Louis Nabulsi – Supervisor of the Sewage and Drainage Technical Department, Hagihon Jerusalem Water Company; Ali Hammoud – East Jerusalem Electric Company ; Mr. Yaron Ergaz – Director of Tourism Planning, Ministry of Tourism; and, Mr. Udi. Ragonos of the Ir David Foundation.

The research team and the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies thank the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Foundation of San Francisco and their representative in Israel for their generous financial support and productive advice throughout the project.

Introduction

The "Visual Basin of the Old City" denotes the upper area of the Kidron Valley (*Wadi Naar*) spanning across the mountain ridges that overlook the Old City Walls and are visible from them. The Basin's borders run along Mount Scopus on the North, the Mount of Olives from the East, Armon Hanatziv on the South, and the watershed axis on the West. The Kidron Valley is made up of two parts: the upper section starts at *Wadi Al-Goz*, North of the Old City, and ends at the south-east municipal border of Jerusalem; the lower section extends outside of Jerusalem's city limits and across the Judean Desert and ends at its erosive foothills in the Dead Sea.

The Upper Kidron Valley is the subject of this study. The area contains most of Jerusalem's historic landmark sites and many of the holiest sites of the three monotheistic religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The area's religious, historic and archaeological importance is enhanced by its prominent location, breathtaking landscape panoramas, colorful communities and rapid rate of development. However, increasing modernization and urbanization pressures present a threat to the Upper Kidron Valley's landscape and landmark sites, and subsequently, caution and careful consideration are called for in the planning and development of the area if its unique character is to be preserved and protected.

The present study aims to portray the present condition and historic, geographic, social and economic character of the Upper Kidron Valley in order to present a balanced and sustainable policy for the future development and preservation of the area. Additionally, the study aims to create a large database that may serve Jerusalem's municipal planning authorities in the preparation of more detailed plans for the area. This study outlines guiding principles that may be used to develop the Upper Kidron Valley and increase its economic viability in a way that is also conducive to its inherent character. These principles aim to channel the development in the area to its least vulnerable parts in order to limit the damage to its natural treasures and cultural heritage. This study will not focus upon geopolitical issues though the researchers are aware of the area's special significance stemming from its prominent location at the heart of Jerusalem, and subsequently, at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The present study concludes two years of work. The areas local residents were actively engaged and the researchers met with representatives of all of the neighborhoods included in the study: Abu Tur, Jabel Mukaber, Wadi Kadum, Silwan, Ras al-Amud, Wadi Joz, and A-Tur. The research team visited the area and studied the changes it is undergoing firsthand. The interdisciplinary research team included scholars and urban planners, some of whom were Arab and intimately familiar with the area. We extend our warm gratitude to the Arab researchers for introducing the rest of the team members to the living conditions and physical conditions in the neighborhoods situated in the Upper Kidron Valley.

Summary of Recommendations

The Upper Kidron Valley encompassing and overlooking the Old City of Jerusalem is exceedingly vulnerable due to the many threats to its visual, landscape, religious, historical, archaeological, sentimental, and political character. It is the heart of Jerusalem and it is under constant development pressures, pressures which began even before the unification of the City.

All the master plans for Jerusalem have sought to protect the Old City and its surroundings from unsustainable development pressures that might harm its long-valued and much cherished scenic landscape. Toward this end, protective regulations, which included strips of undeveloped land and restrictive regulations on construction, were instituted. Nevertheless, these regulations were only partially successful. Forty years ago the Visual Basin was still mostly undeveloped and its pristine natural landscape still served as an appropriate backdrop for the Old City and its surrounding hilltops. Today, the area is mostly built-up with dense urban construction that is changing the face of the Visual Basin beyond recognition. The following recommendations do not aim to halt the development of the area, but rather to offer ways to develop it in a thoughtful, sober and sustainable manner that will preserve its visual character and natural beauty.

1. Principles of Planning

The planning principles that have been in place for over 90 years should be maintained:

- ❖ The natural horizon along the ridgelines encompassing the Old City should be preserved. This ridgeline plays an important role in shaping the City's image and therefore, tall buildings that abruptly protrude above the ridgeline should not be allowed.
- ❖ Special care should be taken to preserve the ridgeline of Armon Hanatziv (Jabel Mukaber). The policy that guided the construction of the East-Talpiot neighborhood is the appropriate policy: concealing the construction behind and south of the ridgeline so that it does not protrude above the ridgeline.

Construction along the ridgeline may change the character of the entire Visual Basin.

- ❖ The open, panoramic views to the Old City that can be seen from the three Armon Hanatziv promenades – the Goldman, Haas, and Sherover promenades – should not be obstructed.
- ❖ Large installations should not be permitted along the Armon Hanatziv ridgeline in the areas that can be seen from the Old City. These include airlifts and hovercrafts, tall or wide electricity towers and high power lines, raised power supply stations, communication lines, etc.
- ❖ Construction along the slopes overlooking the Old City should be minimized as much as possible: Armon Hanatziv, Mount of Olives, *Har Hamashchit*, and Mount Scopus.
- ❖ The surfaces of the ridgeline surrounding the Old City should be preserved and protected against exposing the earth through any digging activities.
- ❖ The gardens and parks surrounding the Old City should continue to be maintained.

2. Construction

The following guidelines should be maintained:

- ❖ New building complexes should not exceed the standard size of 300 meters in diameter.
- ❖ Stilt-raised buildings with open spaces under them should not be allowed.
- ❖ Only natural, chiseled square stone, and not smooth cut stone, should be used for the façades of buildings and fences.
- ❖ Large, square cinder block housing projects should not be built throughout the Visual Basin. Scattered, private construction in irregular clusters should be preferred.
- ❖ The "fifth façades" of the buildings should receive special attention: satellite dishes, TV and other communication antennas, miniature Eiffel Towers, black

water tanks (which no longer serve any specific purpose), etc., should not be allowed on the rooftops.

- ❖ Roof tiling should not be used.
- ❖ Use of stone façades on the rooftops should be encouraged.

3. Improving the Housing Conditions, Public Services, and Infrastructure

- ❖ Immediate steps should be taken to improve housing conditions in the Upper Kidron Valley's rundown areas, which include Wadi Kadum, Silwan, and parts of Ras al-Amud and Jabel Mukaber. Building permits for additional housing units should be assigned with care so that the new construction does not obstruct the view, does not look like typical housing and is not situated on steep slopes.
- ❖ Immediate steps should be taken to address the severe infrastructure problems afflicting the Upper Kidron Valley, the most pressing of which is the insufficiently-treated sewage that flows freely in the lower parts of the Kidron Valley. Plans to build a sewage treatment plant in the area should be advanced. Drainage problems are another hazard that needs to be addressed by setting up drainage systems where they do not already exist and unclogging blocked drainage receptors throughout the Valley.
- ❖ The faulty roads and lack of sidewalks are another sore point. Potholes in the roads increase the wear and tear on private vehicles and buses, and in many neighborhoods, schoolchildren are forced to walk to school on the roads for lack of sidewalks and thus endanger their lives on a daily basis.
- ❖ The entire area suffers from a severe shortage of public services. There is even a shortage of preschool and school classrooms in Ras al-Amud, Wadi Kadum, Silwan, and Abu Tur. The Mater Plan for Education in East Jerusalem¹ recommended that a large educational campus be built in Wadi Kadum. An appropriate site has already been located for this campus and the land should

¹ Choshen M., Kimhi I., Nakhla M., Piamenta B., *Mater Plan for Education in East Jerusalem*, Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, December 2002.

be expropriated to allow for the establishment of a new central educational campus (Israeli law allows the government to expropriate up to 40% of a person's private property without compensation for specific public uses).

- ❖ There is a great shortage of recreational, public open spaces and children's playgrounds. The residents have already agreed to allocate sections of their land for such uses under the condition that the land remains listed under their names and is not registered under the city's name.
- ❖ Formal land registrations need to be conducted in all of the areas that have not yet been registered. In the absence of such land registrations, it is in many cases not possible to execute proper planning procedures and to issue building licenses.
- ❖ A master plan for the entire Upper Kidron Valley needs to be drafted without delay. Detailed sub-plans for sections of the Valley should then be drafted on the basis of the master plan. These plans should call attention to solutions for insufficient and faulty public services, transportation systems, and safe access to private homes.
- ❖ The problem of access to private homes in Silwan needs to be addressed immediately. Not infrequently, it is impossible to send handicapped children to school or elderly patients to the hospital. Plans to build roads, which have been put off for many years, despite having been approved, should be implemented without delay.
- ❖ The sanitation and cleanliness conditions in the southern parts of the Upper Kidron Valley, in Wadi Kadum, Jabel Mukaber, Silwan, and the City of David are particularly deficient. Solutions for sanitation problems in these neighborhoods need to be developed: these may include hiring private sanitation contractors, developing special methods for garbage collection and disposal, or simply increasing the frequency of garbage collection activities already in use today. We recommend authorizing a team of local residents to collect, sort and recycle the solid waste. Serious consideration should be given to the possibility of buying the waste from the residents after it has already been sorted. The possibility of recycling construction waste that covers every undeveloped plot in the area should also be examined.

4. Promoting Employment and the Local Economy

- ❖ The southern section of the Upper Kidron Valley features several advantages that can be transformed into economic assets and developed in a joint effort with the area's local residents. One of the area's advantages is its proximity to the Judean Desert and the fact that it is part of a geographical basin which extends all the way to the Dead Sea. Sites with special significance for the Christian world and desert tourist attractions are scattered along the Lower Kidron Valley. The Upper Kidron Valley in Jerusalem can serve as a point of departure for desert riding trips, hikes or pilgrimage tours that start at the holy sites in the Old City and end at the Theodosius and Mar Saba monasteries in the Kidron Valley.
- ❖ The area still has large plots of undeveloped land that could be used for organic urban agriculture. The treated wastewater, which will be made available in the future once the sewage treatment plant is built, could be used to nurture gardens, orchards, and organic agriculture, and the produce could be marketed by the residents in farmers' markets, which are themselves tourist attractions.
- ❖ As the area's residents are mostly of Bedouin origin, tourist attractions based on traditional Bedouin hospitality customs can be developed, which may include tents and traditional delicacies, etc., similar to tourist attractions in the Judean Desert and the Negev.
- ❖ A portion of the treated and purified wastewater could be set aside for a future recreational park – "the Kidron Park". The park's dimensions will be determined by the amount of available treated water and land resources that will specified in the detailed plans.
- ❖ In order for these plans to be realized, they will need to be examined in greater detail for their economic and social viability in a master plan, without which they cannot be expected to be carried out.
- ❖ A municipal governing body (the Kidron Valley Authority) needs to be established to promote advanced planning, initiate new economic and tourist projects, and develop the area's physical infrastructures and various tourist sites. We recommend that the Kidron Valley Authority be attached to and

associated with the Jerusalem Development Authority and the City Engineer Department of the Jerusalem municipality.

An effort should be made to make use of local residents' initiative and skills in implementing projects that are aimed at improving their quality of life.

5. Community Involvement

Meetings Held with the Local Residents

The planning team met several times with the area's local residents and their representatives. The meetings, which were held in the neighborhoods, furthered the team's understanding of the residents' living conditions, special needs, feelings, and demands for improving the situation. The planning team assigned a great deal of importance to including the local residents in the planning process and would like to encourage decision-makers to continue the involvement and participation of the local residents, who naturally have a better idea of their own needs than any other party.

Alternative Modes of Action

In light of the present situation and the minimal public development over the past 40 years, we offer the following alternatives:

- 1. Leaving the situation in its present condition:** Without substantial intervention to correct the situation, the physical and social deterioration in the neighborhoods of the Upper Kidron Valley will continue, the frustration and disappointment of the residents will increase, and inequality and polarization between Jerusalem's populations will be augmented. The situation in the area's rundown neighborhoods, which are home to a majority of the Upper Kidron Valley's population, will thus be perpetuated. This situation, along with the local governance vacuum will feed tensions and increase the distrust of the municipal authorities and may thereby trigger violent outbursts.

- 2. Government assistance:** The Upper Kidron Valley is in need of large-scale investments in many areas that fall within the responsibility of the Jerusalem Municipal Authority and the Israeli government, who control the area. Nevertheless, following severe shortages in Jerusalem's municipal budget, the City is unable to provide significant assistance to the Kidron Valley area. Appeals for the necessary resources should therefore be directed to national authorities, such as government ministries and Israel's state lottery. Public foundations such as the Jerusalem Foundation and other international bodies may contribute to the promotion of the local residents' welfare.

According to the local residents, the most pressing needs are as follows:

- ❖ A clear vision and planning policy for the development of the Upper Kidron Valley, with the aim of applying the City's accepted standards in this part of the city as well;
- ❖ A reassessment of the existing municipal master plan for the area;
- ❖ Construction of new school buildings in accordance with the Master Plan for Education in East Jerusalem or any other up-to-date plan;
- ❖ Local infrastructure including road networks, sidewalks, sewage, drainage, electrical and communication systems should be rehabilitated or put in place wherever they are not yet available;
- ❖ Public services in the areas of education, culture and leisure should be enhanced, as for example by building community centers, post offices and banks, playgrounds and public gardens;
- ❖ Policing and Municipal monitoring activities should be increased in order to improve service to the residents;
- ❖ Solid waste collection and the area's cleanliness should be improved by either increasing the frequency of garbage collection by the city's sanitation workers or by creating independent sanitation teams from the local residents.

- 3. Explore solutions that will lead to greater municipal autonomy:** Many residents expressed bitter frustration with the Jerusalem Municipality's treatment of their neighborhoods. Some even expressed their desire to "take

things into their own hands", e.g., by collecting the city taxes and reinvesting them in the neighborhood. A solution along these lines could be achieved by strengthening the local Community Administrations or by creating semi-autonomous municipal quarters. This could be done by delegating the authorities specified in the municipal laws regarding public services to Community Administrations (following Rotterdam, Stockholm and other cities in the world).

4. **Construction in the Upper Kidron Valley is problematic** for several reasons. Firstly, in past years the large demand has been answered by unplanned and often unauthorized construction. This development is harming the area's character and its potential for further development in the future. The neglect in this regard is likely to exact a heavy toll from the City. The municipal master plan should be re-examined and adjusted to allow for better regulation of the development in the area and the installation and implementation of proper and functioning public services and infrastructure.
5. **Formal land ownership registration** is necessary for the proper development of the area. Therefore, steps should be taken to conduct a comprehensive registration of private land ownership in the Upper Kidron Valley. The faster this lengthy and difficult process is completed, the better, as without it, it will be almost impossible to institute proper planning methods and viable and sustainable development in the area.
6. **Empowerment of the local community** is an end in and of itself. Residents should be encouraged to establish local organizations so that they may help themselves, and frameworks for dialogue and cooperation should be established in order to check the emergence of radical force. Such organizations have already been established in a few of the neighborhoods but so far they have had rather insignificant influence. Furthermore, the Jerusalem Municipality should strengthen its relationship with the local residents by identifying community leaders that can foster it. This would help to improve the residents' feelings toward the Municipal Authorities and to consolidate the influence of the community leaders.

Future Directions: Sustainable Development

The cultural significance and importance of the Historic Basin of Jerusalem

The Historic Basin of Jerusalem carries a special significance on two accounts. The visual basin still preserves historical landmarks of religious and national significance as well as the general historical landscape. The Old City walls, the holy sites, the pilgrimage roads and the many churches, monasteries, mosques and synagogues lend the Historic Basin its unique character and significance, which has been the subject of countless pastoral, biblical landscape paintings created by the many artists and pilgrims who visited Jerusalem. The cultural landscape has indeed changed since then but its key components have nevertheless been preserved: the topographic landscape, the Old City, the holy sites and the cemeteries have all preserved their character.

Secondly, the visual basin still mirrors the different forms of human activity in the area from antiquity until today. Thousands of years of history are imprinted in the landscape where traditional forms of human settlement of past generations are still discernible. The uses of different water collection techniques and construction materials, changing vernacular building traditions, burial caves, the development of different forms of settlement in antiquity and contemporary history, the nomadic, agricultural and urban lifestyles, traditional agricultural and irrigation techniques, such as terraces – all of these are but a few examples of the evidence of human activity that should be preserved for the benefit of future generations.

Synocicism

The concept of Synocicism originated in ancient Greece, where it described a process by which several small towns and villages merge together to form a larger urban community. The Kidron Valley is undergoing a similar process. The many distinct "cultural-landscape" units that have traditionally inhabited the area are recently being joined together by strips of new construction that have been

filling the gaps that formerly separated the inhabited areas. These changes in the geographical landscape have also triggered cultural changes: the residents of the Kidron Valley are in the midst of an urbanization process that is gradually erasing cultural differences between different communities and changing employment patterns as well as tribal cultural structures.

These processes raise the following questions: What is the new nature and character taking form in this district? Is it defined? Should the unique traditions of the local populations be actively preserved? Should traditional characteristics be preserved during times of great change and danger of loss of identity?

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development seeks to place limits on human activity, to force human society to respect cultural and natural resources, and to subject development activities to considerations of the future needs of future generations. This attitude harbors the understanding that regional planning extends beyond demarcated borders and is part of a wider and more comprehensive unit in which it is not possible to isolate specific components such as for example heritage sites. Sustainable development is a comprehensive approach that takes into account the complex interface between heritage and preservation principles, economic demands, physical conditions, sociodemographic constellations, religious and cultural traditions, and the holistic and ecological relations with neighboring regions. In developing a region, it is always necessary to consider the possibility that the external forces instigating change may also tip the delicate balance in the region and subsequently harm its future resources. In the upper section of the Kidron Valley, emphasis should be placed on growth and development that preserve the region's unique character, the needs of the Valley's residents as well as the local natural, historical and other universal resources.

Striking a balance between development and the preservation of local sustainable resources presents a considerable challenge, especially in a region that is subject to accelerated urbanization processes that stamp out signs of historical development patterns and impair the region's future prospects. Local construction should take into account the landscape constraints, the need to preserve agricultural fields (which accounted for 1.5 km²), the character of

traditional forms of construction as well as, of course, the needs and interests of the residents. This should all be done without abusing local sustainable resources.

Following are several proposals and suggestions for sustainable development in the Kidron Valley:

The Kidron Valley as a Source of Livelihood

Due to its unique characteristics as well as its location within direct view from the Old City, the development of the pooling basin of the Kidron River is restricted and heavily-regulated. On the other hand, its attractive location presents many economic opportunities tapping into the proximity and connection to the Old City that may pave the way establishing profitable new tourism businesses. Situated not far from the Western part of Jerusalem, this area mirrors the urban neighborhoods developed west of Jerusalem's watershed line.

Market Gardening

One potential source of development is organic produce, such as vegetables, fruit, spices, medicinal herbs and flowers. These crops are appropriate for the relatively small land plots in the area. The produce can be sold in local farmer markets that will be set up for this purpose and will also provide tourist attractions. The business potential of this form of development will also make use of the local supply of cheap labor and unskilled women's labor.

The Kidron Valley houses 1.5 km² of farmed land. As the Kidron Valley is a natural drainage area for a large pooling area, the irrigation needs of its farmed lands can be accommodated with treated wastewater to be supplied by a wastewater treatment plant that is planned to be built at the edge of the district. The treated wastewater can be used both for agriculture and perhaps a new recreational park.

Eco-Tourism and Pilgrimage

Eco-tourism is defined as environmental and responsible tourism that increases the welfare of the local resident population and balances tourism needs, preservation

needs and the needs of the local population. Eco-tourism is founded on several principles:

1. Minimizing the impact on the environment. Examples of this include hotel construction that does not harm the landscape, environmental treatment of tourist waste, preservation of local nature and wildlife, etc.
2. Increasing awareness and respect for the local environment and culture.
3. Ensuring a positive experience for both hosts and guests.
4. Designing direct economic incentives for the promotion of preservation needs.
5. Economic incentives and empowerment of the local resident population.
6. Raising awareness for the political, social and environmental climate of the host country.

Israel's Ministry of Tourism estimates that there is presently a shortage of hotel rooms in Jerusalem. A variety of country hospitality, lodging and bed-and-breakfast inns can be created that will blend in the local landscape and offer unique and traditional hospitality opportunities in an attractive location that is near Jerusalem's leading tourist attractions.

Developing Pilgrimage Routes

The Kidron Valley lies at the border of the Judean Desert and is thus optimally positioned to serve as a point of exit for desert tourism trips. A network of tours through recommended Christian pilgrimage sites can be developed around the historical Christian sites in the Judean Desert. These tours can be routed through the Kidron Valley and along its basin and can connect the different holy Christian sites.

The desert pilgrimage tours can include the following sites:

1. Bethlehem;
2. St. Theodosius Monastery;
3. Mar Saba Greek Orthodox Monastery;

4. Jabel Muntar;
5. Hurkania Fortress and Nebi Mussa Tomb;
6. Jeronimos Monastery and the 'Ain Hajla spring;
7. The dipping spot in the Jordan River;
8. The Dead Sea area which includes natural springs and archaeological sites;
9. Jericho and the sites surrounding her;
10. Wadi Qelt and its unique monasteries.

Cottage Industries

These include the development of handcrafts that are particularly suited to women: weaving, traditional embroidery, Bedouin handcrafts, jewelry and olive oil and cheese food products. It is also possible to develop tourist tourism routes around olive harvesting and oil production, cheese manufacture and local markets for handcrafts.

Social and Commercial Activity Centers

One of the main problems resulting from the geographic conditions of the Kidron Valley is the absence of local town centers in which the residents can congregate, receive services and conduct their commercial activities. This problem arose from an uneven residential development that was not accompanied by an adequate development of the communal and commercial local needs.

Possible locations for activity centers will be determined based on geographical constraints and the residents' needs. Centers can be developed either in the lower valley, along the ridge or midway on the slope—depending on the topographic, road, population and accessibility conditions. Centers may be developed along central road intersections running along the dry Kidron riverbed, thus transforming it into a hub of economic and social activity. Additional community activities such as schools or informal educational community centers may be concentrated along that route as well. The advantage of such centrally located centers would be their accessibility to different population groups. Centers placed along the ridgeline would be internal centers situated within specific landscape-cultural units.

Residential Development Policy

New construction in the visual basin should avoid the following:

- ❖ Damaging important landmarks and structures in the Old City and its surrounding area.
- ❖ Blocking observation points in the Old City.
- ❖ Blocking the open view to the Old City from the surrounding hilltops.

Construction in the visual basin should be limited to relatively small buildings in order to avoid disrupting the delicate balance between the natural landscape and the developed areas. The interaction between the natural and the man-made is a signature hallmark of Jerusalem's landscape, and therefore no building should be allowed to pierce the skyline above the Temple Mount. The skyline surrounding the Old City is extremely important and therefore only buildings of national or symbolic significance should be permitted to obtrude on it, but not residential buildings.

We recommend that single residential plots do not exceed 1500 m² and that residential complexes do not exceed 4.000 m² this restriction should be relaxed in cases where land plots are being used to house several generations of an extended family (*Hamula*) on a family land plot.

In those areas of the valley where construction will be approved according to detailed plans, there is special importance to enforcing restrictions for the buildings' "fifth façades". Rooftops should be flat and should serve as additional living space for the residents. The rooftops of new buildings in existing residential clusters should be built to blend into their surroundings. Tiled and wooden rooftops are uncommon in the area and generally should not be allowed.

Construction along the ridgeline surrounding the Old City has a greater impact on the landscape than the construction along the slopes and valleys. It is therefore particularly important that it should preserve the skyline. If buildings are to be built along the ridgeline, than they should be of some symbolic or public significance that will justify their prominent position against the Historical Basin's skyline. Nevertheless, as a rule, construction along the ridgeline and the upper sections of the slopes should generally be avoided.

Building Styles

Layered Construction

The traditional building style in the Arab villages was layered; younger generations would build their apartments on top of the residences of older generations to form what is known as a "shared Palestinian house". Contemporary building styles have since greatly changed. Today, bulldozers leveled the land and construction starts from zero. Whereas the traditional Arab building style was respectful of the past and left different building styles from different eras exposed, modern construction tears down older layers and obliterates the past. Consequently, a homogenous layer takes shape and the traditional built landscape ceases to develop.

Another problem arises from inappropriate regulations presented by modern planning policies that restrict development in non-urban areas to low-density development and place restrictions on building height. Development master plans lower the number of housing units per area, thus causing urban sprawl. The increased expanse of the residential neighborhoods causes wastewater drainage problems and raises the installation and maintenance costs of the infrastructure.

The Kidron Valley district has been subject to political pressures. The responsible authorities have failed miserably to address the needs of the local residents and to properly regulate land ownership issues and to provide viable development plans for the area. Subsequently, most of the local residents become frustrated with the municipal authorities and give up any hope of obtaining building-permits. The inevitable consequence is illegal and rushed construction that impairs the prospects of regulating the development in the area in the future and the ability to pave roads and to provide necessary public services. Ultimately, the local residents will be the ones to suffer from these predicaments and the municipal authorities will be forced to cover the increased costs for the maintenance and rational development of the area.