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An Interdisciplinary Project: Controlled Urban Growth and Tourism Development Master Plan Study for Ajloun, Ain Janna and Anjara, Amman, Jordan¹

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Abstract

In this paper, World Bank Project prepared by different professional disciplines (City and Regional Planning, Architect, Landscape Architecture, Tourism, Infrastructure and Agriculture Experts, Economist etc.) between 2003-2005 "Controlled Urban Growth and Tourism Development Master Plan Study for Ajloun Tourism Development Area" planning and projecting studies, strategies and approaches will be summarized.

In Jordan, Ajloun Castle, 73 km north of the capital Amman and three settlements around it (Ajloun, Ain-Jenna, Anjara) were declared as "Tourism Area." These areas planned as "Natural and Cultural Environmental Protection" with World Bank loan. The planned residential areas are one of the oldest parts of Jordan. The basic components of planning work are "Controlled Urban Development" and "Eco-tourism Master Plan." Scenarios are developed to establish the "Sustainable Tourism" and "Conservation" balances and to prioritize the infrastructure of the settlements, pedestrianization and the restoration of various natural and historical values.

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Anahtar kelimeler:

Şehir planlama, kentsel büyüme, turizm gelişimi, kültürel miras, doğal çevre korunması, eko-turizm

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Disiplinlerarası Bir Proje: Amman, Ürdün’de Ajloun, Ain Jenna ve Anjara için Kontrollü Kentsel Büyüme ve Turizm Master Planı Çalışması²

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Öz

Bu yazı, 2003-2005 tarihleri arasında farklı meslek disiplinleri tarafından (Koruma Uzmanı, Şehir ve Bölge Planlama, Restoratör Mimar, Peyzaj Mimarı, Turizm, Altyapı ve Tarım Uzmanları, Ekonomist vd.) hazırlanan Dünya Bankası Projesi “Controlled Urban Growth and Tourism Development Master Plan Study For Ajloun Tourism Development Area” planlama ve projelendirme çalışmalarını, strateji ve yaklaşımlarını özetlemektedir.

Ürdün’de, Başkent Amman’ın 73 km kuzeyinde yer alan Ajloun Kalesi ve çevresindeki üç yerleşim (Ajloun, Ain-Jenna, Anjara) “Turizm Alanı” ilan edilmiştir. Bu alanlar bu proje kapsamında Dünya Bankası kredisi ile “Doğal ve Kültürel Çevre Koruma Amaçlı” olarak planlanmıştır. Planlanan yerleşim alanları Ürdün’ün en geri kalmış kesimlerinden biridir. Planlama çalışmasının temel bileşenleri, “Kontrollü Kentsel Gelişim” ve “Turizm Ana Planı” olarak belirlenmiştir. Senaryolar geliştirilerek, “Sürdürülebilir Turizm” ile “Koruma” dengesinin kurulması ve öncelikle yerleşmelerin altyapılarının iyileştirilmesine, yayalaştırma, çeşitli doğal ve tarihsel değerlerin onarım projelerine ağırlık verilmesi öngörülmüştür.

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Introduction

Jordan is a developing country with relatively few natural resources, a mostly arid desert climate, limited arable land and inadequate fresh water supplies. However, the Government of Jordan, with its economic reform programs and long-term efforts, has been working hard to improve productivity and living standards, to create and sustain a vibrant economy, and thus, to reach a relatively competitive position as a safe and welcoming country with a strong and positive national profile.

The main economic sector of the country is the diversified services sector, together with limited agriculture and specialized industry. Within the service sector, tourism has an essential importance. Tourism is almost the largest productive sector and a considerable contributor to national GDP in Jordan.

The country has set the promotion of its tourism sector as a priority and the urban heritage of Jordanian cities has been identified as one of the valuable assets on which the sector can promote itself. It should be noted that since the 1990s there have been several tourism projects in the Kingdom, such as the World Bank-funded First Priority Tourism Projects in Jerash and Karak and the Second Priority Tourism Projects in Jerash, Karak, and Mabada.

Objectives and Methodology

In this paper, main aim is to give short aims and results of "Controlled Urban Growth & Tourism Development Master Plan Study for Ajloun Tourism Development Area" (Ajloun Project), which was a World Bank Project where planning and projecting studies are carried by a consortium leading by a Consortium.³

The other aim of the paper is giving changing relationships with heritage and culture in the planning area. The conservation of heritage for tourism also has high importance in the project and this paper will give the examples of urban and archaeological heritage which need to restore and use for the aims of "Cultural Tourism."

A brief description of the Ajloun, Ain Janna and Anjara region is given in the paper; details of its natural and historical assets and their importance for the region and the country are described; and the socio-economic and urban development trends and land use decisions are reviewed.

³ Prof. Dr. Mehmet Tunçer worked as "Project Team Leader" of the "**Controlled Urban Growth and Tourism Development Master Plan Study for Ajloun Tourism Development Area**," in Amman, Jordan in this study which was prepared by a Consortium; G & G Consulting Ltd. (Turkey) and UTTA Planning, Urban Design and Consulting Co., and collaborated between Turkey and TIBAH Consultants (Jordan), Jordan River Foundation (Jordan) and TURATH Consultants (Jordan 2003, December – 2005, December). Some mass tourism areas and eco-tourism areas in Jordan were visited as part of this project.



Figure 1 Ajloun general view

Source: Tuncer, 2004

One of the aims of this paper is to analyze the relationships between the existing urban and rural development, directions and development load assigned by the Approved Land Use Plan and the assets of the area. The rationale of planning was the introduction of a protection regime and controlled urban growth within the Ajloun, Ain Janna and Anjara areas (Figure 1, 2, 3).



Figure 2 Ain Janna general view

Source: Tuncer, 2004



Figure 2 Anjara general view

Source: Tuncer, 2004

The required decisions for protection, urban growth control and tourism development in the area, together with the required actions to deal with the impacts of the declaration of a protection zone and an estimation of both the financial and socio-economic costs of the declaration of a protection zone are presented in the final section.

The specific objectives of the Study are (Tuncer, Nov. 2005):

- Preparation of a Master Plan for the Ajloun Tourism Development Area, within Ajloun Governorate, which will cover Ajloun Town, Anjara Town, Ajloun Castle and the surrounding areas.
- To identify protected zones, whose archaeological and/or agricultural use should be preserved.
- To identify and designate zones with tourism potential to be promoted for investment in recreational and natural tourism infrastructure.
- To update and improve zoning plans for the urban settlements.
- To identify opportunities for economic regeneration of the urban areas.

The Ajloun Project undertaking these tasks is to identify and describe the principal opportunities and constraints of the proposed tourism development zone.

Several field trips to Ajloun were undertaken between 2004 and 2006 as well as additional visits to the region by individual members of the study team.

Future Outcomes

- **“Branding” Ajloun’s heritage and natural resources** (developing & sustaining, together with the community, **an identity for the region**).
- This identity should stem not only from the Citadel and the woodlands, but from **the different traditional lifestyle, heritage reality, natural assets and local knowledge**.
- This identity include: **quaint historic environment, outdoor experience, farm life, genuine historic and cultural experience, rich bio-diversity, olive oil and a haven for the post-tourist**.
- **Urban regeneration and conservation** within the different historic urban cores. Strategies for urban regeneration will have to address both physical and non-physical interventions (Daher & Çetiner, 2004).

Jordan’s Tourism Sector and Planning Area

The National Tourism Strategy of Jordan aims to achieve a sustainable tourism economy through a partnership approach of the Government, the private sector and civil society. The Strategy targets the doubling of the tourism economy in real terms by the year 2010. Together with new entrepreneurial opportunities, such an achievement would lead to the creation of 51.000 new jobs in the tourism sector and thus contribute to the enhanced social well-being of the country (Tuncer, 4 - 7 April 2009).

The National Tourism Strategy describes Jordan as a “boutique” destination and the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MOTA) has been trying to create this boutique environment by means of Jordan’s unique and diverse natural and historical heritage assets and other tourism attractions. Along with the National Tourism Strategy and Second Priority Tourism Projects of the country, in Ajloun, one of the twelve governorates in Jordan, Ministry of Tourism (MOTA) is emphasizing the development of a regional tourism centre similar to other centres such as Kerak, Jerash and Petra.

The main objective of MOTA in Ajloun is the achievement of socio-economic development for the local community through a synergy between tourism, controlled urban growth, urban regeneration and rural development - a multi-sectoral approach to development.

This approach will provide new income-generating economic opportunities and employment for the local community while achieving tourism development, and it will also contribute to the controlling of growth within the historical urban fabrics, sustain natural environments and protect the archaeological and natural sites and assets. However, tourism activity is very limited

and is mainly in the form of journey-breaks at Ajloun Castle, one-day excursions or weekend visits to enjoy the natural habitat and temperate climate.

Population and Economy

The Planning Area has a population of 35.930 people (2003 est.) - a mainly young and urban population, with a 67% rate of urbanization. The population density of the Area is 289 p/ha, which is far higher than the national average of 62 p/ha since 88% of Jordan is mainly unpopulated desert land.

Therefore, an additional 16.529 people will be living in these three settlements in 16 years time, adding to the already strong pressure on the infrastructure, economy and services of the region. The primary economic activity in the Study Area is based on farming and olive tree plantations, which is also the base of its industrial activity of olive pressing and exporting. The area is mainly a tourism destination for Arabian tourists.

The crowded, noisy and polluted urban fabric of the three towns, which degrades and deteriorates the historical and cultural assets, adds to the low rates of visits and short stays within the area. Unemployment is above the national average, while the male economic activity rate is significantly lower than the national average. The main employment sectors in Ajloun are public services (41% of workforce), agriculture (15%), education (13%), retail and wholesale (9%), and health and social work.

Natural Environment and Natural Assets

The natural assets of Ajloun, Anjara and Ain Janna can be classified according to the priority that is given to them for preservation. Highly prioritized natural assets include pine forests, olive groves of more than an acre per parcel, water resources and streams, Nature Corridor, Wadi Al Tawaheen and natural caves in Ain Janna, Anjara and Ajloun. Moderately prioritized natural assets include fertile agricultural lands, fruit gardens and orchards, olive groves less than an acre per parcel and natural viewpoints.

The Ajloun, Ain Janna and Anjara area has a very rich natural environment with a unique flora and fauna including forests, olive groves, fertile agricultural lands, natural valleys, water springs, natural caves and natural panoramic viewpoints. In total, 75% of the area is covered by olive groves and forests, while urban land uses account for approximately 12% of the area.

Ajloun Governorate has a rich natural environment with its unique flora and fauna. 31% of the total agricultural land of Ajloun is government forests and rangelands covering an area of

approximately 32.391 acres: 45% of forest areas are oak forests; 19% are mixed forests; 2% are wild olives and some other minor species; and 1% is aleppo pine trees.

Established in 1988, Ajloun Woodland Nature Reserve (1300 sqm) is one of the few remaining evergreen oak forest areas in Jordan. The Reserve retains potentials for recreational and ecotourism activities, with its distinguished flora and fauna. In total, 172 plant species from 49 different families were recorded in the flora survey which underlined that 14 of these species have either an international or national "status."

Among the natural valleys, Wadi al Tawaheen is the major valley of Ajloun Governorate, which lies at the heart of the study area and very close to Ajloun city. Together with other archaeological remains, Wadi al Tawaheen is famous for several historical water mills (ranging from fifteen to twenty) which are unique not only for the region but for Jordan as well (Figure 4).

Furthermore, the Wadi has a rich biodiversity and unique natural views. The rich natural environment of Wadi al Tawaheen, nevertheless, is under the threat of solid waste and waste water pollution. Olive groves are mainly located in Wadi al Tawaheen (especially in the southern parts of the main water stream), in the north-northwest of Anjara, in the south of the road reaching Ajloun Castle and in the north-west of the Castle. Wadi al Safsaf, a very steep valley in the Governorate to the south of Anjara, can be considered as less damaged than Wadi al Tawaheen. Wadi Kofranja is another vital natural element in the Governorate. The valley contains more than twenty water mills that date back to the Late Mamluk era, and which are also important historical assets.

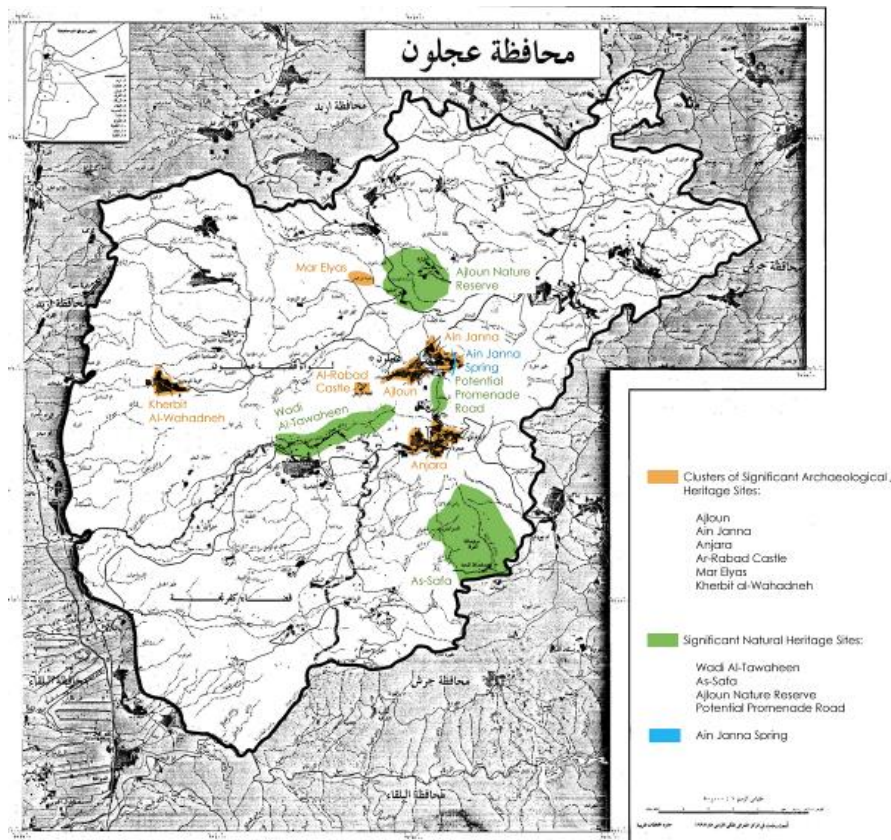


Figure 4 Map showing natural, archaeological / heritage sites of Ajloun Governate.

Source: Daher, 2004

Historical Context and Historical, Cultural and Heritage Assets

Ajloun was a very important centre for the northern and central Jordan during the Ottoman period (Centre of Qada'a) and today's Bilad al Sham, in the minds of Jordanians and even in contemporary Jordanian and Arabian historiographies.

Compared to Salt, Madaba, or Karak, the rich cultural and historical heritage of Ajloun, Ain Janna, and Anjara, have not been properly conserved and protected from deterioration. The area's historical assets are still present but suffering from lack of attention and priority for protection. Historical heritage assets of the study include significant mosques, churches, citadels, historic mausoleums, water mills, historical urban fabric, public places, vernacular architecture and various cultural landscapes and traditions (Daher, 2004).

In Ajloun, historical assets are placed in and around the historic core of the city (Jathr al Balad). They include the Ayyubi Mosque, the main central place with its famous Kina Tree, the Vegetable Market, Mausoleum (Maqam or mazar) of Sidi Badr, Farah Library, St. Gorgeous

Church, Dair al Latin Church, Mausoleum of Mohammad al Ba’aj, the Old Ottoman Serai (now part of the police station complex), several liwan and courtyard traditional houses in historical neighbourhoods such as al Maqatish, al Ba’aj, and some significant residential houses and complexes exists in Ajloun (Figure 5) (Daher, 2004).

The most important historical and archaeological asset of Ajloun, the Governorate and the study area is Ajloun Citadel (Qala’at al Rabad), a 12th century Arabian castle built in 1184 for a defence against the crusaders. The castle is surrounded by a moat and is in a reasonable state of repair. It represents a fine example of Islamic architecture.

In Ain Janna, significant heritage assets include the main mosque built in the early 1930s, the Momani Mausoleum, different water springs (Ain al Fawara, Ain Umm al Misrab, Ras al Ain) and Al Malek al Naser School (the oldest school in Ajloun) dating back to 1915, and several traditional residential buildings and corners.

In Anjara, the Church of Sayyedat al Jabal, the old historic Anjara Mosque, Al Ahnaf Bin Kess School and mosque, Anjara Latin Church, Roman Church, American Church, Christian Cemetery, several vernacular fellahin architecture houses such as house complex of Wade-i Al Zawaideh, former sites of olive pressing and wheat mills are main historical assets. The complex of Al Haj Yousef al Smadi in the historical core, Al Zghul Complex and Ahmad Al-Hamad Complex are also important.

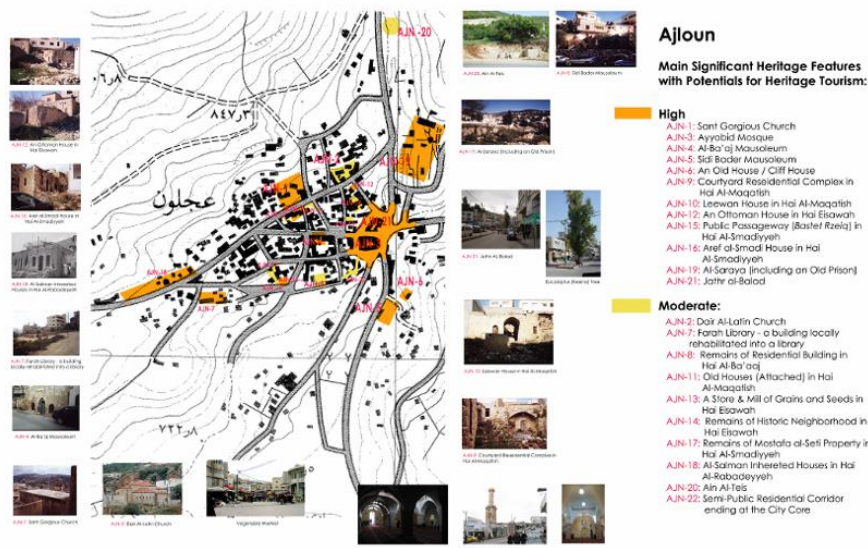


Figure 5 Map showing main significant heritage features with potentials for heritage tourism in Ajloun.

Source: Daher, 2004

Urban Pattern

The urban settlement pattern of three towns is one of a very scattered layout of buildings, constructed and sprawling towards the rural areas threatening the forests, olive groves, natural valleys and other fertile lands (Figures 1, 2). Residential areas closer to the town centers are all very dense. The centers, then, have a very poor visual outlook, as well as problems such as noise, air and water pollution. The area has inadequate drinking water provision, a low quality water network, water pollution due to the close proximity of industrial workshops and urban settlements to water resources, limited coverage of the drainage system, inefficient solid waste collection because of inadequate equipment, frequent electricity cut offs, an inefficient transportation network with narrow roads, lack of parking and pedestrian routes, unsuitable pavements, lighting and signage and a limited telecommunications network.

The threat arising from existing and approved land use decisions and urban expansion towards the area's natural, historical and heritage assets is also to have serious damaging effects on the development prospects of the tourism sector in Ajloun, Ain Janna and Anjara region.

Land Use and Needs to Control of Urban Growth

The most significant land use inside the Ajloun Tourism Master Plan Area is for pine groves and olive groves, accounting for 55.6 percent (30.11 hectare) of land. Housing areas account for 11.6 percent (6.26 He) of land use.

The ratio of pine groves and olive groves in the Anjara town planning area and near environs is also one of the highest at 51.4 percent (93.84 he). Housing areas take up 15.23 percent (27.78 He) and urban areas spread much more than in Ajloun - especially towards to the southern hills up to 1000 m. (Figure 6-7).

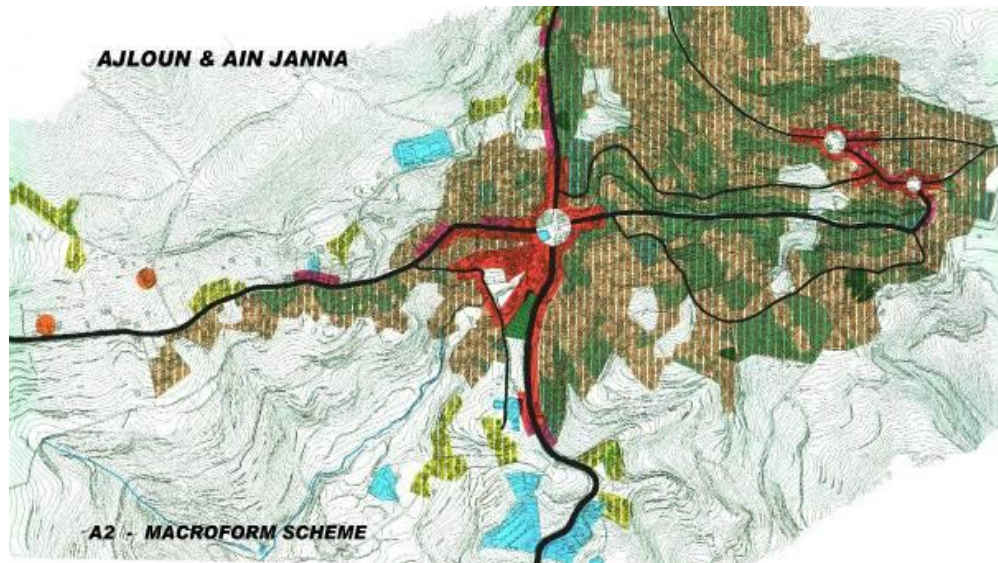


Figure 6 Ajloun and Ain Janna macroform
Source: Tuncer, 2005

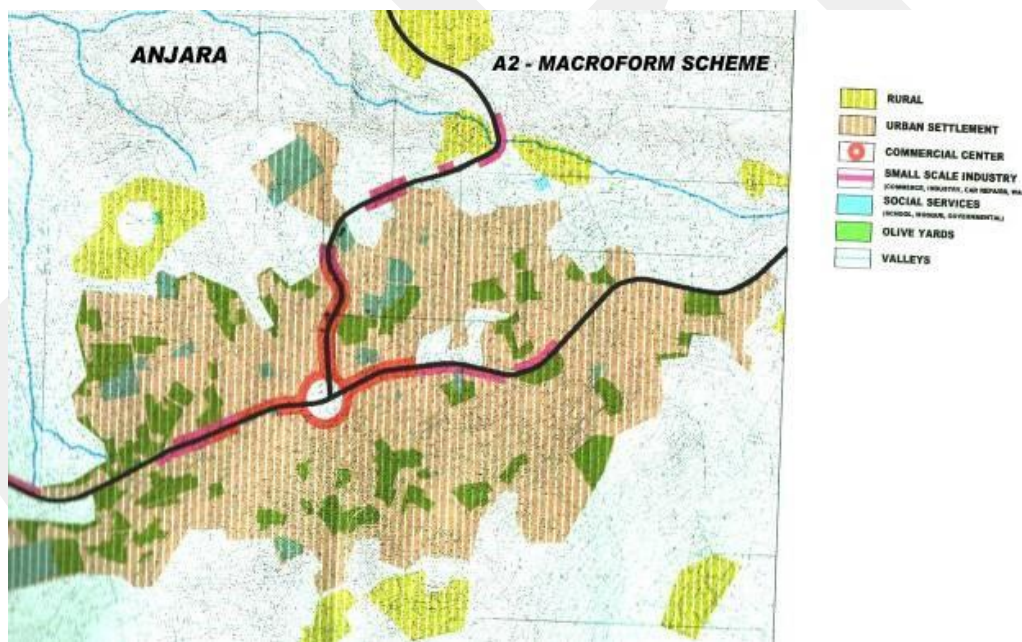


Figure 7 Anjara macroform
Source: Tuncer, 2005

The Ajloun, Ain Janna and Anjara area increasingly needs the introduction of measures to control urban growth and to preserve natural and historical assets, in order to secure its rich natural and historical environment, rehabilitate its historical sites and regenerate its economy

with alternative tourism activities. The natural beauty, environmental assets and rich historical and archaeological heritage of Ajloun, Ain Janna and Anjara are all under a serious threat of being lost.

The degree of this threat is serious since the Approved Land Use Plan (ALUP) of Ajloun, Ain Janna and Anjara has allocated approximately 86% of available land for additional residential developments. However, within the existing land use structure, only 27,5% of the area allocated by the ALUP for different types of residential developments (except rural residential uses) have been settled (Figure 8).

In addition to this over-planning, the area allocated for rural residential uses in the ALUP is almost equivalent to more than half of the existing total area of olive groves. The existing forest areas and natural valleys will also be lost if the assigned growth in the ALUP takes place. Therefore, residential development decisions and their growth directions endanger the olive groves and forests in Ajloun, Ain Janna and Anjara.

Tourism in the Ajloun

The Ajloun, Anjara and Ain Janna study area, with its pleasant nature, appropriate climate, important historical, cultural and archaeological heritages and its close location to and road links with Amman, has a potentially dynamic tourism environment. The main activity comprises nature tourism, cultural and archaeological tourism, recreation and holiday tourism, especially in the summer. Within the peak period – April, May and August – the majority of visitors to Ajloun are Jordanian citizens, followed by Arabs and Europeans. However, foreign tourist arrivals to Ajloun have been declining since 2000, especially from Europe and America, reflecting a national trend. Ajloun is one of the major historical tourism destinations in Jordan with Ajloun Castle and other historical remains. The number of Jordanian visitors to historical places again shows higher numbers than the number of foreign visitors to Ajloun.

One of the main drawbacks of the tourism sector in the area is its undeveloped tourism infrastructure - two 2-star hotels with 60 rooms, three tourist guides, Ajloun Tourist Office with limited activities, existing tourism service facilities (cafes, restaurants, and entertainment activities like bars and nightclubs) of insufficient quality and quantity and unorganized recreational and resting areas. Moreover, heavy motor vehicle traffic in town centres, absence of organized car parking facilities, noisy and polluted central areas with difficulties in pedestrian access, all affect the development of tourism negatively in the study area.

Because of all these internal factors, together with the unstable political situation in the Middle East and in the region, foreign tourist arrivals to the area have been decreasing and the area is not perceived as being safe or rich in activity for international tour operators. Visits are either

one-day excursions, weekend visits to woodlands, or just stops to see the Ajloun Castle. Therefore, hotel occupancy rates are very low.

Tourism estimations for Ajloun report a total number of 504.000 tourist arrivals for the year 2015. While the daily visitors are expected to be in high numbers, the area is expected to be an important tourism destination for Arabian tourists. When tourists are met with an appropriate tourism infrastructure, including different sorts of accommodation and diversity of tourism alternatives, their nights spent is assumed to rise.



Figure 8 Land Use Plan of Ajloun and Ain Janna showing over-planning destroying natural assets towards to The Wadi - Al Tawaheen

Source: Archives of General Directorate for Civil Defense of Amman, 2004

Development Scenarios

Main Assumptions about the Ajloun Tourism Development Area

The Second Phase of the project has focussed on preparing “Developing Scenarios” and this work has been based on a set of underlying assumptions:

- ASSUMPTION 1: Natural and historical/cultural heritage and assets must be preserved in and around the Ajloun Tourism Master Plan Area and this must be reflected in the tourism and urban scenarios.
- ASSUMPTION 2: The high population growth of the Ajloun Tourism Master Plan Area needs to be controlled and decentralized if the targets of preservation of the natural and historical heritage are to be achieved.
- ASSUMPTION 3: If we are to achieve the targets for preservation and controlled urban development then the Master Plan needs to be based on sustainable development principles.
- ASSUMPTION 4: Concerning tourism development, there is a need to develop plan decisions about “eco-tourism” and “cultural-tourism” in order to achieve preservation targets.

Main Targets of the Alternative Scenarios

The Main Targets developed for the alternative scenarios are summarized below:

Natural and Historic/ Cultural Environmental Targets:

- Preservation of Natural Heritage,
- Preservation of Historical / Cultural Heritage,
- Urban Environment,
- Wadi Al-Tawaheen,
- Ajloun Castle,

Physical Targets:

- Revision And Development of Settlements with Preservation of Natural Resources,
- Development of Settlement Areas in a Manner Convenient to Physical Indicators,
- Development of Technical Infrastructure Services,

Population Targets:

- Controlled Population,

Economic Targets:

- Increasing Income Level in Ajloun, Ain Janna and Anjara,
- Preservation and Development of Agricultural Areas with the Protection of Environmental Assets,
- Development of Tourism And Recreation

Social Targets:

- Development of Education, Cultural and Health Services,

Settlement Pattern Targets:

- Planning of Urban Settlements,
- The Reduction of Urbanization Costs and Increasing of Living Conditions Quality,
- Targets about Rural Settlements (Tuncer, 4 - 7 Nisan 2009).

Development of the Alternative Scenarios

Scenario development approaches in master planning practice usually produce three alternatives. The chosen scale is 10.000, in order review the whole Ajloun Tourism Development Master Plan Area and the three scenarios are developed as a “Structural Master Plan” (Scheme). All natural and historical heritage potentials, problems, restrictions and bottlenecks for each town (Ajloun, Ain Janna and Anjara) were evaluated and also development potentials (population, physical and economic) were fully reviewed while developing Scenarios.

Each scenario developed in a Master Planning Study has to:

- Be a base for the sub-scaled plans, urban designs and other pilot projects,
- Contain the correct targets and policies for the preservation of natural and cultural/historical assets,
- Be based on sustainable urban development policies.

While developing alternative scenarios for the controlled urban growth and tourism development area up to the year 2015, all targets, strategies and policies were based on sustainable development planning principles. In this work, planning team has developed three Alternative Scenarios, namely:

1. GREEN SCENARIO: Strict Preservation of Natural and Historical Environment and Eco-Tourism

2. ORANGE SCENARIO: Sustainable and Environmentally Sensitive Development and Eco and Heritage Tourism
3. RED SCENARIO: Rapid Development with Sustainable Tourism

Scenario 1 - Green Scenario - NATURE PARK PROJECT

This scenario is about the strict preservation of Ajloun's environment, its natural and historical heritage and eco-tourism, while stopping urban growth and slowing the pace of unplanned socio-economic development (Figure 9).

In this scenario:

- STRICT PRESERVATION OF NATURAL and CULTURAL / HISTORICAL ASSETS: Strict preservation of natural heritage and assets with high precautions and developing an alternative NATURE PARK PROJECT,
- Especially, all natural and historical heritage in and around Wadi Al-Tawaheen and Ajloun Castle will be strictly preserved in this Nature Park Project,
- Forests and olive groves will be strictly preserved,
- All archaeological and urban heritage strictly preserved,
- Strict preservation, renovation and restoration of historic buildings for heritage tourism,
- URBAN DEVELOPMENTS: No more development of urban and manmade environment - in order to preserve ecology (flora and fauna). All settlements in Ajloun, Ain Jenna and Anjara will be strictly in Preservation Area, such as some parts will be refined and cleared while the other parts will be planned with the "Natural Resources" kept in mind.

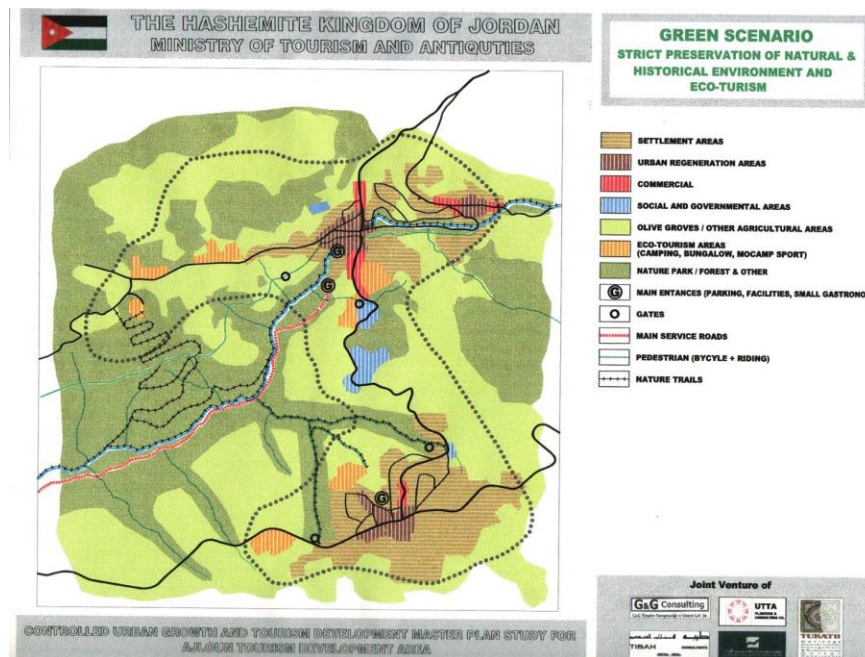


Figure 9 Green Scenario Nature Park Project

Source: Tuncer, 2005

Scenario 2 - Orange Scenario - SUSTAINABLE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE DEVELOPMENT AND ECO AND HERITAGE TOURISM PROJECT

- Strict preservation and regulation of development of natural heritage, combining sustainable tourism with controlled urban growth and socio-economic development (Figure 10).
- Natural assets will be preserved within the preservation borders and land uses will be stabilised. For this reason, Forests, olive groves and the Wadi Al-Tawaheen will be preserved as “1st DEGREE OF NATURAL SITES”. The areas where their natural character will be protected are to be identified (with an exception of the forests and olive groves) and these areas will be planned as low intensive “gardens and orchards”.
- Sustainable conservation and rehabilitation of urban and archaeological heritage, new uses for old vernacular architecture (houses), Urban Regeneration Areas will be preserved as “1st DEGREE OF URBAN SITES⁴”. All the urban conservation project areas focus on the old complexes (housing). The urban conservation areas will be identified and will be the subject of “Heritage Tourism”

⁴ **Definition of Urban Site and Designation of Boundaries:** Due to its urban and local (vernacular) characteristics, its physical characteristics according to the view of architectural and history of art and with the help of these features. The reflection on its environment in the context of economic, socio-cultural establishment, life style and from this point of view a texture unity is seen at these areas.

- Archaeological Areas will be preserved as “1st DEGREE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES”. Ajloun Castle and Wadi Al-Tawaheen will be this type of Archaeological conservation sites.
- URBAN DEVELOPMENTS: Sustainable and controlled urban development to meet human social and economic needs. The settlements in the Conservation Area will be planned and developed in terms of the sub-level, with the natural resources kept in mind and on the basis of plan assumptions. The settlements (Ajloun, Ain Janna and Anjara) will be developed to be sympathetic with physical indicators and natural resources. Valleys, hills and natural assets will also be strictly preserved in this scenario.

This scenario is the “**Chosen Scenario**” because it has both “Sustainable”, “Environmentally Sensitive” and “Eco & heritage Tourism” aspects together. Planning the Wadi Al-Tawaheen and Ajloun Castle to become a “Nature Park” is also possible in this scenario (Figure 10).

Scenario 3 - Red Scenario - RAPID DEVELOPMENT WITH SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND ECO AND HERITAGE TOURISM PROJECT

In this scenario there will be no strict preservation and all the planning and implementation efforts will aim to achieve rapid socio-economic development and mass tourism investments. But rapid development will cause some damage to the natural and historical heritage and assets.

There will be no strict control and renewing some parts of the towns for the needs of tourism and development. Some urban redevelopment projects can be in old historic parts and renewing historic buildings can be possible for new commercial and other uses. Around Ajloun Castle there will be some tourism developments with the development of a high amount of bed capacity. Population growth that will have minimum harm on natural assets will be maintained parallel to high socio-economic development rate.

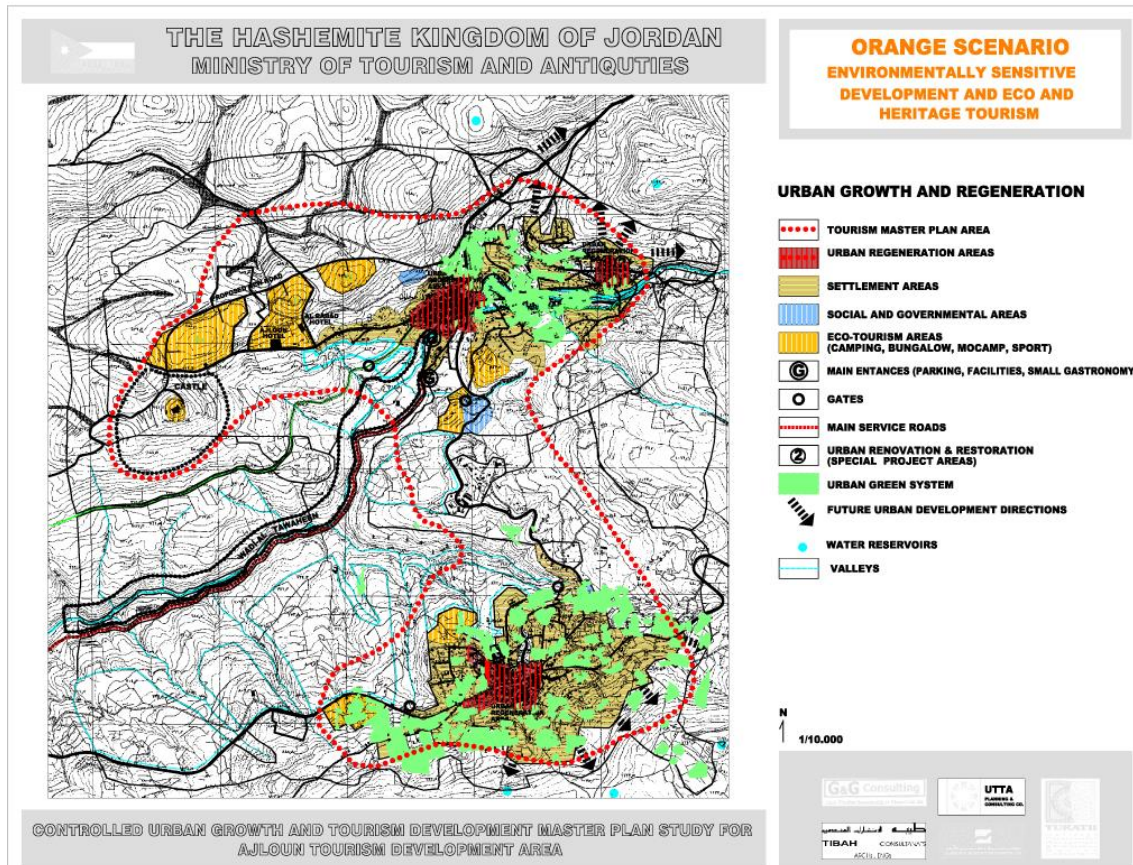


Figure 10 Orange Scenario Rapid Development with Sustainable Tourism
 Source: Tuncer, 2005

Conclusions: The Relationships between Approved Land Use Plan, Existing Land Use and Natural and Historical Assets in Ajloun, Ain Janna and Anjara

After comparing the Approved Land Use Plan (ALUP), existing land use and the natural and historical heritage assets of the Planning Area, the most important reality is the continuing loss of natural and heritage assets to urban sprawl. This increasing urbanisation will also accelerate if the assigned over-uses and densities in the ALUP are implemented. In total, 3149 hectares of land containing highly prioritized and moderately prioritized natural and historical assets are planned for residential development. 732 hectares of this land contains highly prioritized natural and historical assets, and an additional 2.417 hectares include moderately prioritized natural and historical assets (Figure 11).

By looking at the plan decisions in detail it can be concluded that approximately 400 hectares are reserved for residential type C, 318 hectares for residential type D and 15 hectares for residential type H in the 732 hectares of land with highly prioritized natural and historical assets.

Located especially around Ajloun Castle, in Wadi-Al-Tawaheen, along the Nature Corridor, in forest areas and olive groves in Ain Janna and Anjara, this land will be subject to a development mixture of 500sqm, 250sqm and 170sqm parcels with high densities ranging from 256 to 384 people per hectare.

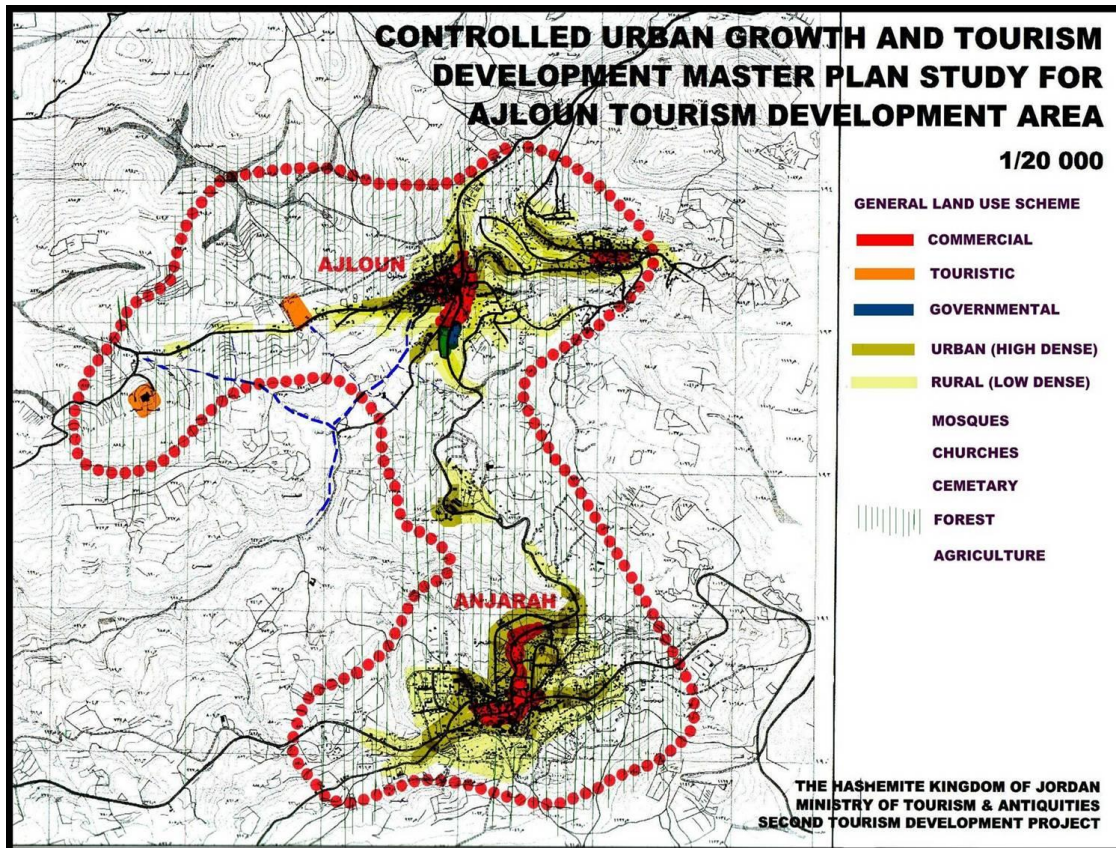


Figure 11 Ajloun Tourism Area Concept Plan

Source: Tuncer, 2005

In summary, the evidence suggests the Study Area will lose a substantial amount of its existing forests, olive groves and agricultural land. Valleys, forest areas and olive groves will be overtaken by residential development, especially along the Ajloun-Anjarah road and in Wadi al Tawaheen. The ALUP assigned densities will also lead to the complete degradation of historical assets, archaeological sites, panoramic views, valleys and other greenery, historical urban fabric and architectural remains under such a heavy development pressure (Figure 12).

Within such a picture, there seems to be very little possibility to develop nature and historical tourism. Indeed, the natural and historical assets of the study area are not being effectively

considered as tourism assets in the ALUP. Besides the loss of natural and historical assets, this over-planning will necessitate all kinds of social and technical infrastructure investments, placing an additional load on public investment budgets.

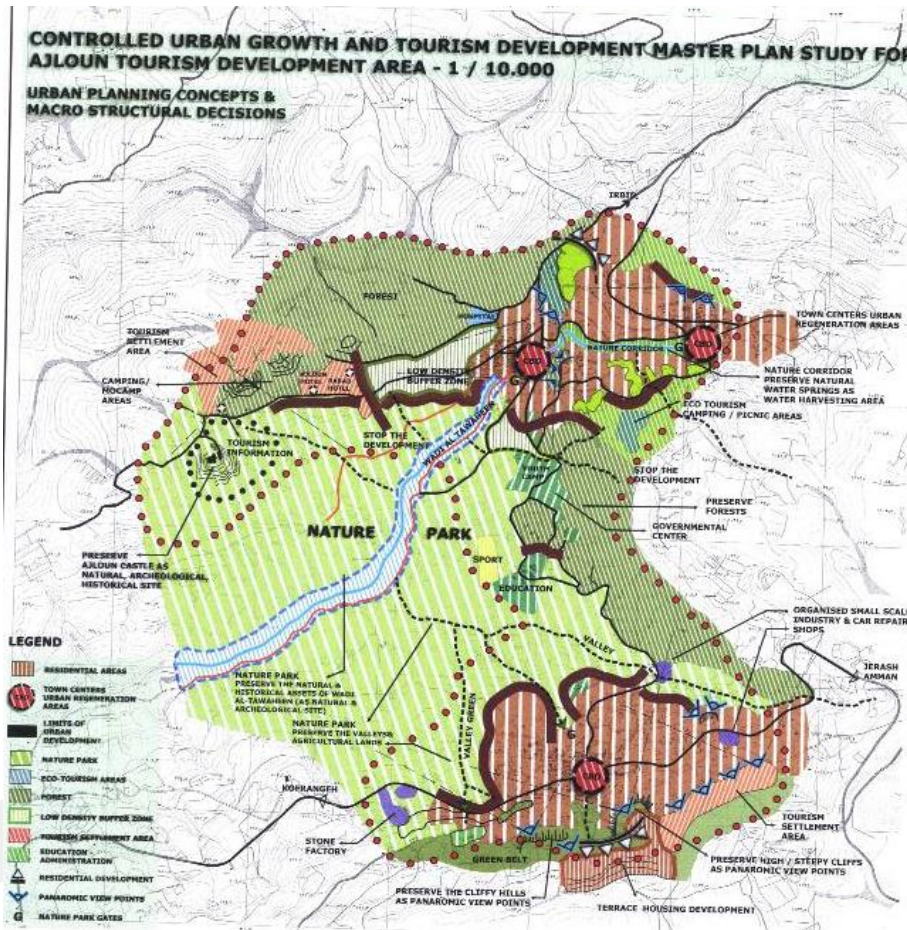


Figure 12 Ajloun Urban Planning Concepts and Macro Structural Decisions

Source: Tuncer, 2005

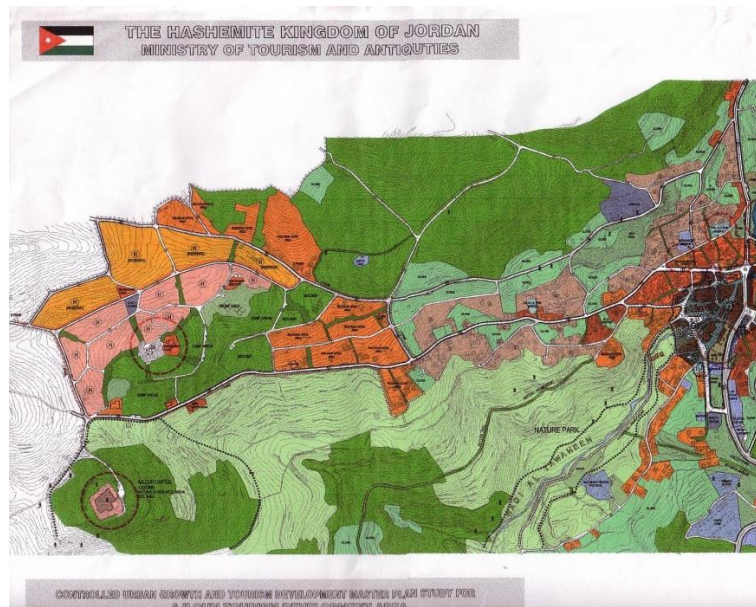


Figure 13 Implementation Plan of Ajloun Eco Tourism Areas around the Ajloun Castle (1/1000)
Source: Tuncer & Cetiner, 2005

The Need for a Protection Regime in Ajloun, Ain Janna and Anjara Area

The Rationale for the Introduction of a Protection Regime

The Government of Jordan, through the MOTA, places significant and continuing priority on the development of the tourism sector. Jordan has a peaceful environment and welcoming approach to international tourists, with many superb attractions to offer, such as Petra, Wadi Rum and the Dead Sea. The country is especially attractive for tourists from Arabian countries.

The proximity of Ajloun to Amman and Jerash offers a market for developing short-break holidays and weekend tourism. Most importantly, the region has strong potential for eco-tourism, agro-tourism and other types of thematic tourism, based on the region's natural richness and historical heritage.

The scale of the loss has been increasing with the uncontrolled and over-planned dense and high rise developments taking place within and towards olive groves, forests, valleys and around the historical town centres. There is therefore a clear need to declare the Study Area as a **"Special Protection Zone"** and then to deal with its problems through a well-planned strategy for the region.

The natural and historical assets of the region are the backbones of and potentials for the development of agriculture and a tourism economy. The natural environment and olive groves provide high quality agricultural production of olives and olive oil in the region. Together with forests, natural valleys, reserves, woodlands and fauna, if protected and efficient management perspectives are introduced, the region accommodates its own potential towards eco-tourism, agro-tourism and tourism for nature lovers. In addition, the region has the potential to build a stronger economy based on agricultural production.

Overall, the declaration of Ajloun, Ain Janna and Anjara as a special protection zone will contribute to the objectives of the National Tourism Strategy for the diversification of tourism products. In this respect, the declaration of a protection regime and controlled urban and tourism development of Ajloun, Ain Janna and Anjara represents a multi-faceted approach that will eventually lead to a parallel upgrading of various sectors including the environment, heritage, urban regeneration, tourism, agriculture and human resources, so leading to rural and socio-economic revitalization. Such an approach should be framed by sustainable development principles and policies.

Natural Protection Zones

First, within the protection regime, areas prioritized according to their natural values are designated as **natural protection zones**, which are to be preserved because of their unique characteristics, natural beauty and rarity - including forests, olive groves, caves and valleys. Areas of outstanding natural beauty and originality should only be used for scientific exploration of the environment and no physical interventions should be permitted (Tuncer M. , Nov. 2005). (Figure 13).

Natural protection sites should be designated as areas/zones of either primary or secondary protection. Wadi Al-Tawaheen, Nature Corridor, Ajloun Castle and its surrounding forests and olive groves, and some areas inhabiting forests, olive groves, natural valleys, water resources, caves and historical mills should be preserved by declaring those areas as **Primary Degree Natural Protection Zones**. **Wadi Al-Tawaheen**, one of the most important natural and historical heritage areas of Ajloun region, Wadi-Al Tawaheen should be declared as a **Primary Degree Natural and Historical Protection Zone**.

The developments taking place towards the Castle should be halted and the area should be declared as a **Primary Degree Natural and Historical Protection Zone**. Any developments towards the olive groves on both sides of the main road should be controlled.

Together with the declaration of the area as **Primary Degree Natural Protection Zone**, the implementation of **the Nature Corridor Action Project** is vital for the preservation of the natural

character of this area. One of the valuable forest areas of the region that must be preserved as a **Primary Degree Natural Protection Site** is located in the vicinity of governmental buildings and the area needs to be planned as an urban design and landscape project to protect the forests and topographical features.

The decisions and measures that should be taken into consideration and implemented for **Primary Degree Natural Protection Zones** can be summarized as follows (Figure 13) (Tuncer, 4 - 7 Nisan 2009; Daher & Çetiner, 2004):

- The areas will never be given development rights and the assigned development rights will be given no permission to use;
- Any existing construction will not be given rights for further development;
- No actions to destroy the fauna and flora, topography or no silhouette damaging effects are to be permitted;
- Development of recreational facilities (e.g. restaurants, kiosks, cafes, footpaths, nature trails, toilets, car parks etc. and infrastructure services) can only be undertaken with the prior permission of the Conservation Council and/or MOTA. No project will be allowed to be undertaken without preparing a 1/1.000 - 1/500 implementation plan first, according to the specific characteristics of the site;
- Fire precautions should be taken in forest areas by the relevant institutions (Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Forests);
- No tree cutting is permitted other than when necessary, according to the Forest Law (with prior permission from the Department of Forests);

Fertile agricultural lands, fruit gardens and orchards in or nearby urban and rural settlement areas and olive groves less than an acre per parcel should be preserved by declaring the area as a **Secondary Degree Natural Protection Zone**. However, the area has unique and rich forests, olive groves and fruit orchards that should be designated as **Secondary Degree Natural Protection Zones**. **Action projects for Natural Protection** should be planned and the **Ajloun Nature Corridor** should be created, using the path of the natural valley as the main stream, starting from a natural spring in Ain Janna and flowing through Ajloun and Wadi el Tawaheen.

Historical/Archaeological Protection Zones

Second, sites where historical, cultural and architectural remains (on the ground or underground remains) reflect the social, economic and cultural characteristics of the area

should be designated as **Historical/Archaeological Protection Zones**, which may again be divided into primary and secondary categories (Figures 12-13) (Tuncer, Nov. 2005).

Ajloun Castle and the areas in its close vicinity, and some parts of Wadi Al- Tawaheen, should to be designated as **Primary Degree Historical/Archaeological Protection Zones**. The decisions and measures that should be taken into consideration and implemented for **Primary Degree Historical/Archaeological Protection Zones** are:

- Within their determined protection zone boundaries, no building or other form of intervention should be permitted,
- Except for the necessary conservation of cultural property, existing new buildings in these areas should be demolished and/or removed to new locations away from the site. These new locations should be provided by the Ajloun Municipality,
- No excavations should be permitted unless they have the specific purpose of being scientifically-based excavations,
- Special permission from the Department of Antiquities (or Conservation Council if it exists) should be required for infrastructure implementations undertaken by public or private institutions,
- Permission from the MOTA/ Department of Antiquities (or the Conservation Council) will be needed when constructing roads, public squares, car parks or toilets that do not require excavations,
- With the approval of MOTA and/or the Conservation Council, permission may be granted for interventions supporting tourism activities - such as car parks, ticket booths, lavatories and footpaths,
- Dividing land into parcels and/or the unification of lots that do not cause damage to cultural property should be allowed with the permission of the Conservation Council and/or MOTA.

There should be decisions to preserve areas of significance, due to their urban and local vernacular architectural and physical characteristics, which are in need of renewal and regeneration. All of the urban renewal and regeneration areas will be designated as **Secondary Degree Historical/Archaeological Protection Zones which will be dealt with in a project level through “special projects”** and detailed designs will be prepared for each of them (Tuncer, Nov. 2005).

Urban design (1/1000, 1/500), landscape design projects (1/500, 1/200), rehabilitation, restoration, renovation and architectural projects (1/100, 1/50, 1/1) should be prepared by

MOTA and/or the Municipality of Ajloun. After the preparation of urban design projects at the scale of 1/500, and also after the preparation of implementation plans, such as 'urban design' or 'landscape' projects at the scale of 1/200, 1/50...1/1, and the opinion of Ajloun Municipality should be taken. No implementation should be performed without the approval of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities.

In general, for urban conservation, renewal and regeneration projects, vehicular and pedestrian arrangements, infrastructure and urban furniture elements (lighting, electricity, rain and waste water infrastructure, signposts, street furniture etc.) should all be designed before implementation. In all urban design projects, electricity, telephone, drinking water and waste water networks should be located underground. These projects should also be regulated and supervised by Ajloun Municipality. For fire precaution, a fire management and prevention system should be implemented.

The basic principles that should be obeyed during the transition period in each **conservation, renewal and regeneration project area** are as follows:

No division of land is to be allowed in order to create new development plots. However, unification of lots (parcels) should be permitted to improve boundaries, access roads etc.

- No new buildings should be permitted if density and urban services decisions proposed in the conservation plan are not clearly justified,
- New buildings will not be taller than the officially registered historical buildings (determined by registration) in the same parcel or in the same street,
- Information about any proposed new building development on a plot, together with information about protected buildings within its environment and a draft project proposal (including photographs), should to be submitted for evaluation by the Conservation Commission or MOTA prior to any construction activity.

The main examples of these types of projects can be designed in the historical urban core and commercial centres of Ajloun, Anjara and Ain Janna within the boundaries of the protection regime.

In the Ajloun town centre, two action projects having potential for income generation for the Municipality, and rehabilitation, renovation and restoration to promote historical and cultural heritage tourism, can be designed. The projects are expected to deal with:

In this framework, another action project is the **Bus Terminal, Vegetable Market and Ayyubi Mosque Surroundings Rehabilitation Project** in the town centre of Ajloun. It aims to implement a new design that would bring order and investment to this chaotic but strategically located area (Tuncer, 4 - 7 Nisan 2009).

The bus terminal is the connection point between Ajloun, its surroundings and the rest of the country. A Tourist Bus lane and a visitors /information centre within the Terminal Building should be developed. The Vegetable Market is one of the vital elements of downtown Ajloun but the market and its surroundings constitute an irregular and unorganized zone with uncertain pedestrian and vehicular relationships. Its existing structure should be upgraded to enhance the lively atmosphere of this busy street. This area should be seen as an important destination along the Nature Corridor and should be a focus for new and diversified activities. These activities will highlight the historic and cultural core of the town centre and should attract private sector investments. The area has a potential to be a distinct tourist attraction. The following actions are proposed in this area:

- the re-formation of the disordered fruit, vegetable and grocery market into a more organized and hygienic place,
- the protection of traditional usages such as glassware, pastries, sundries and notion sellers etc. is vital, in conjunction with having a more professional method of portrayal and presentation,
- turning the main axle into a pedestrian zone,
- better shop fronts and displays, if necessary covering the tops to form a covered bazaar,
- A maximum height of 3 meters for development and the use of local Ajloun stone as the cladding material.
- A tourist bus lane with an adequate visitors/ information centre within the Terminal building should be developed.
- Concerning the historical commercial shops, the open spaces (windows, doors) in parts of buildings that sustain commercial activities should be transformed into their original forms; shop sign boards should only be located above the shop doors parallel to the building. The placement of electricity and advertisement notice boards (and their associated equipment) will be determined by the MOTA and Ajloun Municipality.
- In the pedestrian areas of the vegetable market, mobile wooden workbenches should be installed - with a maximum width of 100 cm - so as to exhibit products in the facade of the buildings. These workbenches should be located in positions that will not prevent the circulation of pedestrians.

The objective of these Action Projects is to adapt and rehabilitate the significant urban heritage sites in the historic core for income generating tourism projects. These projects could be financed by local inhabitants themselves or by an outside investor.

Overall, the urban regeneration and renewal projects which are then to be followed by urban historical heritage conservation measures are as listed below. They are important buildings (archeological and architectural remains) within the historical urban cores of the three towns.

- Ajloun, Ayyubi Mosque Environs – refurbishment and environmental upgrading
- Farah Library Environs - refurbishment and environmental upgrading
- Ajloun The Vegetable Market – rehabilitation
- Sidi Bader Environs – refurbishment and environmental upgrading
- Hai Al Maqateesh Complex – renewal (Figure 14)
- Hai Al Rabadiyeh Complex – renewal
- Hai Eisawah Complex – renewal
- Al Zghul Complex – renewal
- Ajloun Latine Church Environs – refurbishment and environmental upgrading
- Anjara Latine Church Environs – refurbishment and environmental upgrading
- Wade-I Al Zawaydeh House And Old Complex – renewal
- Ahmad Al-Hamad Complex – renewal
- Al Ahnaf Bin Kess School And Mosque – renewal
- Anjara, Hajj Yousef Old Complex – renewal
- Ain Janna, Malek al Nasser School – renewal



Figure 14 Ajloun Hai Al Maqateesh Urban Analyses Site Plan and Sketch Plan (1/1000)

Source: Daher, 2006

For all those projects, rehabilitation, restoration and facade arrangements of buildings which are to be designated as historical and cultural assets should be undertaken within certain conditions. In general, all buildings within the town centres (especially in Ajloun) should be redesigned to meet the needs of eco tourism and heritage tourism (Figure 14).

When elevations of building complexes are determined, restoration, sanitary and facade rehabilitation projects should be prepared (including detailed reports and photographs). For projects of re-use and renewal, a report and technical drawings should be prepared for infrastructural interventions (hygienic conditions - especially drinking/usage water, sewage

system, electricity/ lighting, air-conditioning & heating etc) for buildings that will be restored, renewed or re-used.

Commerce and handicraft activities should also be preserved at the project sites. Education, production, exhibitions and sales units should be created in order to preserve, improve and influence these functions. The upper floors of the historical buildings in the conservation projects should be designated for training and production, while the ground floors should be re-arranged for exhibition, retail and marketing/display. New proposals for family lodgings should also be made.

Better pedestrian access and street beautification is needed in the town centres of Ajloun, Ain Janna and Anjara and street beautification and landscaping is needed on the main road in Anjara leading to Ajloun. The environs of Ayyubi Mosque and the Vegetable Market, Ain Janna and Anjara town centres need more pedestrian access. These streets might be transformed into areas where traditional buildings and healthy urban spaces will be designed as special project areas.

In all urban design projects, electricity, telecommunication, water and sewage networks should be located underground in town centres. Pollution should be avoided with the help of projects that are in harmony with water and sewage network installation techniques. These projects should be regulated and supervised by Ajloun Municipality, with the assistance of MOTA (Figures 15-16-17-18).

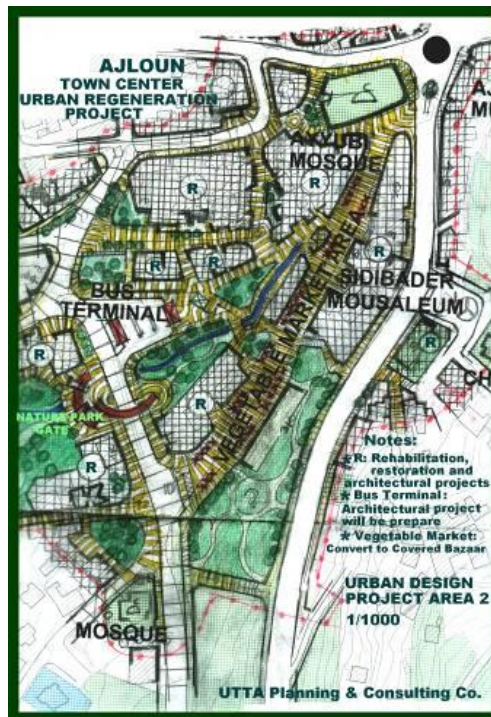


Figure 15 Ajloun Town Center Urban Regeneration Project
 Source: Turkoglu & Tuncer, 2005

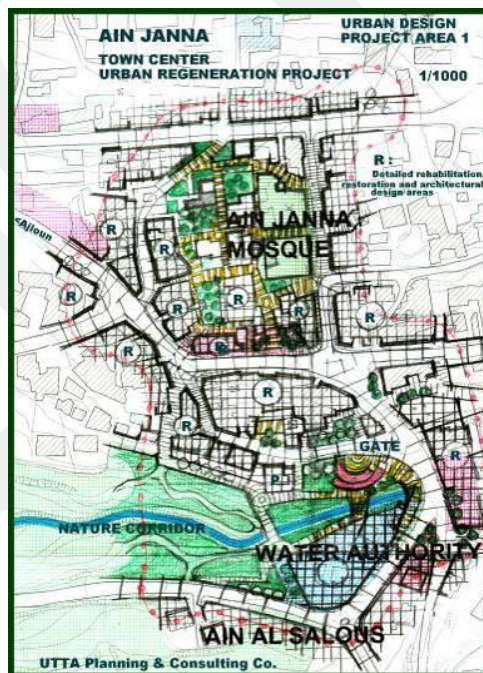


Figure 16 Ain Janna Town Center Urban Regeneration Project
 Source: Turkoglu & Tuncer, 2005

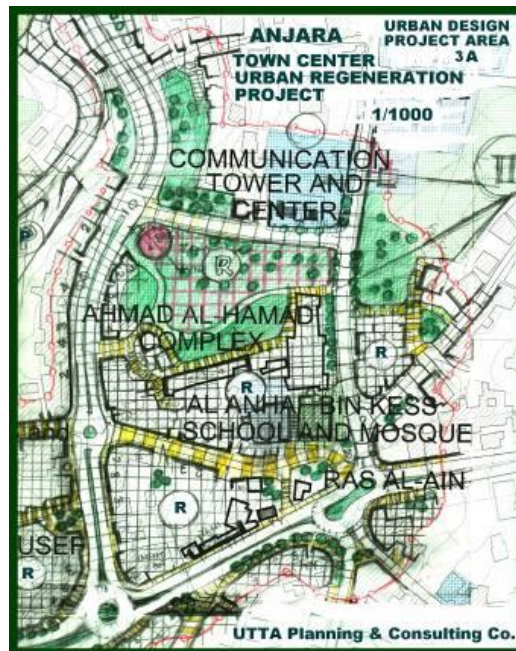


Figure 17 Anjara Town Center Urban Regeneration Project
 Source: Turkoglu & Tuncer, 2005

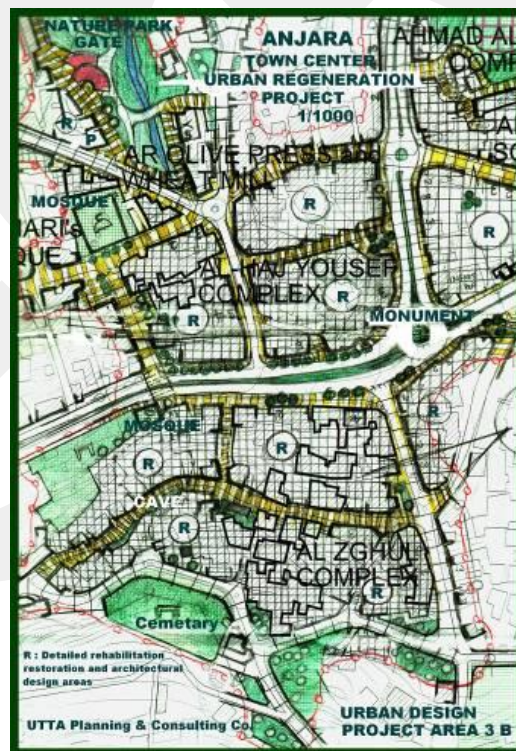


Figure 18 Anjara Town Center Urban Regeneration Project
 Source: Turkoglu & Tuncer, 2005

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Biography of the Author

*Prof. Dr. Mehmet Tunçer graduated from Middle East Technical University, Ankara, City and Regional Planning Department in 1980. Completed his MsC in METU Restoration Dep.; then continued Ankara University, Public Administration and Political Sciences Dep. (Urban and Environmental Sciences) completed PhD Thesis. In 1999, he received the title of "Associate Professor of Urban Conservation" and became Professor in 2009.

He has worked as a project manager and consultant in the many fields of urban and regional planning, especially in conservation and renewal plans and projects, urban design and landscape projects since 35 years.

He has 7 books published, 14 joint books on urbanization, environmental protection policies, around more than 70 papers presented and published in international and national scientific meetings, and numerous articles.

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