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Building Guidelines for a Restoration Project to Promote Public Awareness: The Nabulsi's Farmhouse in Ḥisbān - Jordan Partnering Architecture, Archaeology and Community Development

Half a century of excavation and research at Tall Ḥisbān has highlighted the continuity of certain traditions across time. These traditions represent the history of Jordan and its local communities. Building a new appreciation for their continuity at the site is a link to the lesson of history.

Tall Ḥisbān is located approximately 20km south-west of 'Ammān on the Kings' Highway. It is strategically located in the Mādabā plains region overlooking the Jordan Valley.

Amongst the general public, there is a certain perception about what archaeologists do. The perception is that archaeologists go to a place, dig holes, publish some articles and then leave.

The excavations at Ḥisbān started in 1968 as a biblical archaeological project (Boraas and Horn 1969, 1973, 1975; Boraas and Geraty 1976, 1978) and seemed destined to follow this pattern. However, a second phase of the work developed in the 1990s – an anthropologically oriented research project (LaBianca and Lacelle 1986; Ibach 1988; Geraty and LaBianca 1989; LaBianca 1990; Mitchel 1992; LaBianca and von den Driesch 1995; Ray 1996; Waterhouse 1998; LaBianca and Walker 2003). The anthropological orientation led members of the expedition outside the fenced archaeological site to embrace the entire village and its stories. This provided a means of breaking the pattern.

With the involvement of the local community as a major objective, the necessity of telling the interwoven stories of the archaeological site and modern village emerged; the research project then evolved into a community-led project (LaBianca and Ronza 2009; Ronza and LaBianca 2009).

The involvement of the local community is an important resource, especially for minor archaeological sites. Most commonly, a site is considered minor if it does not attract a large number of tourists. However, each site exists on three different levels: archaeological and historical, social and symbolic, and touristic.

Tourist potential is perceived as a major factor in evaluating the importance of archaeological sites. The archaeological and historical level is important to the scientific community, but it is the social and symbolic significance that has assured the preservation of sites across the centuries and represents a link towards a better understanding of our cultural traditions (Ronza 2011).

For this reason, historical sites are meaningful as places of life. They are the living memory of our past; the consciousness of being part of this living history is a means of achieving sustainable preservation of the sites. With this in mind, the main challenges at Ḥisbān are to increase public awareness and awaken the dormant historical conscience of the local community in order to reposition the site within the daily life of the village. The general tendency to protect historical sites from visitors over the last fifty years has alienated local communities from their sites and history, leading to a consequent loss of any local sense of ownership. Making museums out of sites effectively killed the historical and cultural heritage of local communities.

In an attempt to promote a positive perception of cultural heritage, we worked in two directions: (1) to improve the dialogue with institutions and (2) to create a better understanding of cultural roots from a global and local perspective (LaBianca 2007; LaBianca and Walker 2007).

Andrews University launched the first campaign in 1968 and worked at the site for more than forty years, building up new memories related to the archaeological site. Those memories played a fundamental role in consolidating the sense of appropriation and ownership of the villagers towards the site and its history.

The Ḥisbān projects stand as a rare example of good co-operation between international, national and local institutions. The Department of Antiquities of Jordan has been a major partner since the first campaign, giving support to the project with professional staff and cost-sharing during the restoration. The Municipality of Ḥisbān has actively contributed over the years to the success of the project, sharing the costs of the restoration project and assuring continuous site-maintenance thanks to an official agreement with the Department of Antiquities. When the Municipality of Ḥisbān joined Greater Amman Municipality, the co-operation continued and we found a new partner in the latter.

This synergy of forces had a big impact on the community and generated a new confidence in the institutions. The archaeological site gained a new social centrality in the life of the village as a means of unification and as a common ground to build new opportunities for dialogue between the community and public institutions.

What began to emerge was the idea of a locally managed cultural and educational centre that would respond to a need for better understanding of the complex history of a multi-period site such as Tall Ḥisbān. A natural location for such a centre was identified in the Nabulsi farmhouse, actually a complex of heritage houses of 20th century date located south-west of the archaeological site. The complex consists of several buildings, partially unexcavated, and a large courtyard. The houses sit on the foundations of ancient buildings and were built between 1910 and 1945. The constructions incorporate many re-used stones and architectural elements from the archaeological site. Furthermore, the architectural stratigraphy of the complex is very interesting and helps in understanding and tracing the modern history of the village.

The project will involve the restoration and rehabilitation of these heritage houses, which are currently owned by the local Nabulsi family. Thanks to the family's generosity, Andrews University has been granted permission to survey, develop and make use of part of the property, including two partially unexcavated buildings and a large courtyard.

In order to allow this to happen, a local non-governmental organisation was established in 2010. The Ḥisbān Cultural Association was born thanks to the efforts of the major stakeholders from each level: *viz.* the international (Andrews University), the national (Department of Antiquities; professionals from 'Ammān) and the local (Municipality of Ḥisbān, the Nabulsi family and local citizens). Its purpose is to promote cultural, community and tourist development in the village and to explain and reveal the complex history of the *tall*.

Current work at the site involves developing an accurate ethnography and an architectural survey in order to trace the history of the buildings, as well as design work.

Concurrent with the development of the Ḥisbān Cultural Association has been the development of the project program with the input of local stakeholders. Program elements that have been identified include:

1. Creation of a visitors' centre with an information office and interpretation displays, a heritage and folklore market offering local products, and a restaurant offering thematic meals ('food across history').
2. Establishment of a cultural and educational center to serve local teachers and students, researchers, excavators and the villagers of Ḥisbān. It may include a specialized library on the history of Ḥisbān and the Nabulsi family, and a specialized archive. In addition, a section with lab-space for finds-processing will serve archaeological purposes.
3. A training center, in co-operation with local and national schools and with national and international universities, will promote cultural activities to train teachers and students. It may include a small dormitory or guest house with facilities to accommodate small groups of tourists, trainees and members of archaeological expeditions.

All this is of course contingent on business and management plans to sustain the development but, overall, the centre will improve the development of the community by placing Ḥisbān on the tourist map of Jordan and helping the long-term well-being of the residents.

Guidelines for Design

Sustainability Iinitiative ('Original Green')

I would like to make the case that heritage preservation starts with sustainability. Not technological sustainability, but true sustainability in the context of culture of place – a concept architects call 'original green' (Mouzon 2010).

Before the 'thermostat age', the places we built had no choice but to be green, otherwise people would freeze in winter, suffer from heat in sum-

mer or suffer diverse other discomforts. Today, as we are working to re-learn how to live sustainably, much of the focus is on the gadgetry of green: 'gizmo green'. The notion that we can simply invent more efficient mechanisms and so-called green materials is only a small part of real sustainability.

This is how 'original green' works. First, we must build sustainable places, because it does not matter what the carbon footprint of a building is if you have to drive everywhere in order to live there. The four foundations of sustainable places are 'nourishability', 'accessibility', 'serviceability' and 'securability'.

Only after the place has been made sustainable does it make sense to discuss sustainable buildings. The first of the four foundations of sustainable buildings is 'loveability', because it does not matter how efficiently the building performs if it is demolished and carted off as landfill in a generation or two because it cannot be loved. Only after a building is lovable can it go on to be sustainable by being 'durable', 'flexible' and 'frugal'.

So, the 'original green' makes sustainable buildings in sustainable places, but what is it really? The 'original green' is the collective intelligence behind those places. In simple terms, it's the sustainability all our great-grandparents knew by heart.

Living Traditions

Establish Patterns of the 'New Vernacular'

The operating system of the 'original green' is a 'living tradition'. It spreads the wisdom of sustainability in ways similar to how nature spreads genetic material. A 'living tradition' has as much resemblance to a historical tradition as a living creature has to a fossil. One is alive, while the other is not. Having said that, preservation is the act of ongoing sustainability, because how can we live sustainably if we keep throwing places and buildings away?

The best 'living traditions' are held by the public at large, rather than just a few people. If a 'living tradition' is to produce sustainability, it must involve everyone. Our behavior must improve, or our machines can't save us. In short, there is something for everyone to do. While 'gizmo green' solutions are hurt by economic downturns, 'original green' measures fare much better because most of them operate naturally.

Heritage Restoration.

Only after considering sustainability and the 'living traditions' needed to create it can we consider the academic principles behind the act of restoration:

1. Site and building restoration activities should be conducted according to the principles established by the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) charters and documents, and accepted standards of the heritage preservation community.
2. Because this project is on a heritage site rather than on an archaeological site and because it is first and foremost a community development project, the community has 'enabling consent' over (1) above. This means the local stakeholders must consent to actions for them to be implemented. Restoration activities that do not have this consent will not be sustainable.

I would like to include a brief discussion here about the Venice Charter. There is interest within the architectural community concerning the now infamous ICOMOS Venice Charter 1964 statement in Article 9: "extra work which is indispensable must be distinct from the architectural composition and must bear a contemporary stamp". Regarding new construction, this statement reveals a bias toward Modernism in historical settings and has lead to many incongruous, contrasting interventions. In the 1960s, Modernism was seen as the culmination of evolution in architectural thought; it was thought that the Modernist aesthetic would be normative in contemporary building culture forever. However, over the last two decades, we have seen the emergence of a 'new' architectural mindset, based on traditional patterns, forms and typologies that can bridge the gap between historical and contemporary design. A "contemporary stamp" no longer means Modernist.

The "distinct...and contemporary stamp" can be seen as developing new work which shares the same 'generative principles' for space, form, proportion, structure and character. In this sense, the generative principles of the Nabulsi farm can be found in the Jordanian vernacular of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This idea is consistent with more recent ICOMOS documents such as the Charter on the Built Vernacular Heritage (1999) Principles of Conservation No. 2: "Contemporary work on vernacular buildings, groups and settlements should respect their cultural values and their traditional character".

Thus, new work is to be made distinct and contemporary, but in the sense of the 'new vernacular'.

Traditional character is to be respected, consistency of expression maintained and the same generative process shared.

Guidelines (Patterns) for Design

The construction of vernacular buildings is not based on the unique expression of an academically trained architect. They are the result of 'patterns' passed down through time. Similarly, the 'new vernacular' is based on the identification of a pattern language to guide the design. We have identified over 40 patterns.

There are two main themes in the development of the design:

1. Development of a community space, i.e. the public courtyard which serves the buildings and is the focus of community activities.
2. Development of building restorations and new constructions which have a 'socially useful purpose' and are consistent with the Guidelines for Buildings.

Building Design

The design starts with developing patterns which define public space and the arrangement of entrances (FIG. 1).

The 'stables' has been identified as the first building to be restored. It is the only reasonably intact building within the initial site boundaries and has good potential for restoration. The most interesting features of the 'stables' are the Roman arches along its eastern edge. This will become the public entrance, but care must be taken to ensure that they remain visible from the courtyard. It will be necessary to create a flow-through circulation pattern, as well as a parallel circulation path around the outside of the building.

Functionally, the main entrance will house exhibitions interpreting the *tall* and the recent living history of the village. Next, there will be a series of exhibition spaces focusing on the people and the work of archaeology. Finally, there will be a lecture hall with audio-visual technology (FIG. 2).

Conclusion

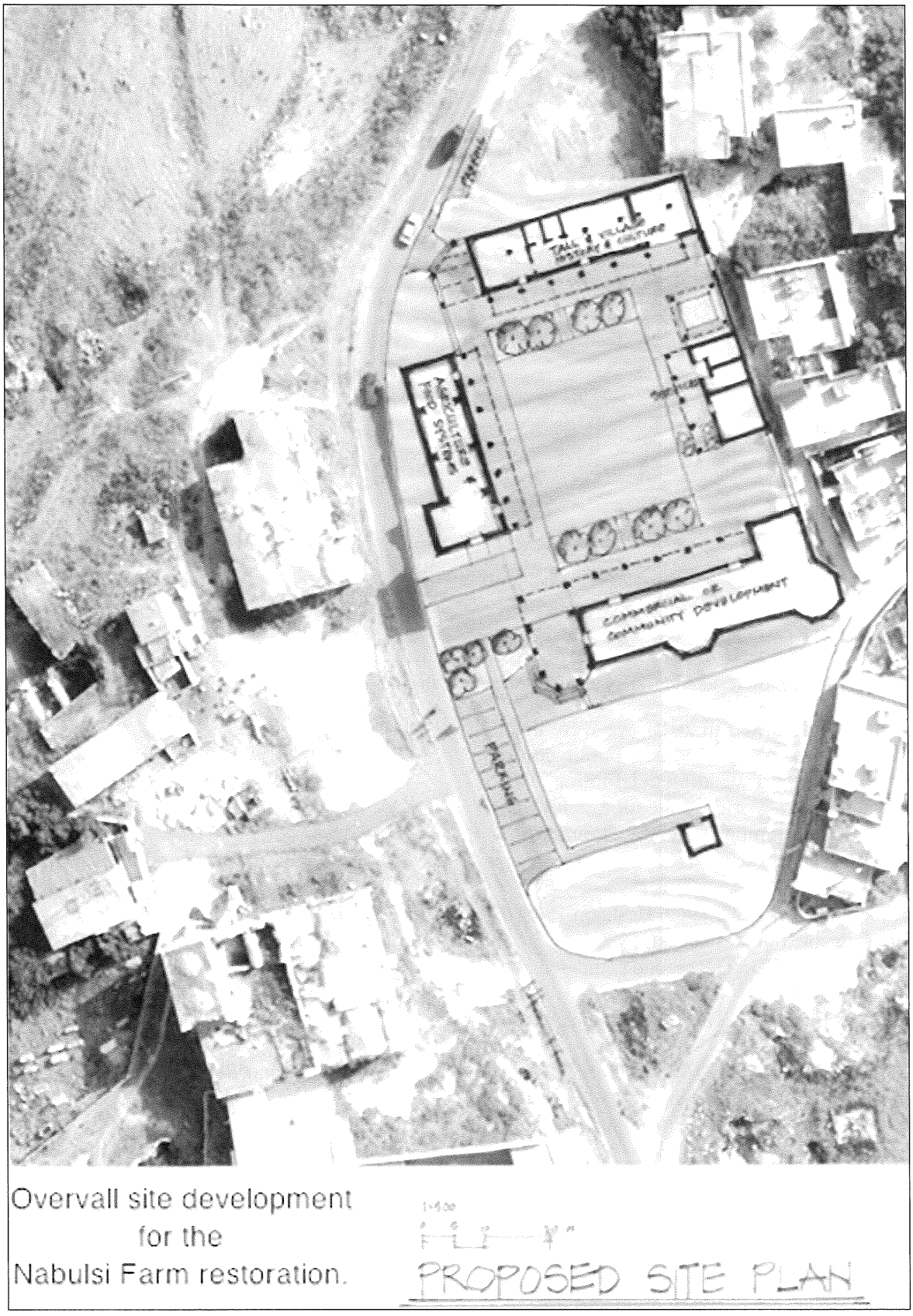
Finally, we have to make sure that we don't just leave holes in the ground. The development of the Ḥisbān Cultural Association should ensure this, but we also need a project implementation plan. The final stage of our work this season was to establish such a plan. It consists of four stages, with the intention of getting an initial stage started at minimal cost TABLE 1.

In summary, by expanding the boundaries of a site beyond the fence and by involving the local community in development efforts, the potential for sustainable preservation of minor sites is improved.

Three-level co-operation (international, national and local) has already begun to yield results at Ḥisbān. In 2009, as part of the community planning workshop, it was decided to clean up the main courtyard; large stones, debris and vegetation were duly removed. The courtyard had been a desolate, wasted

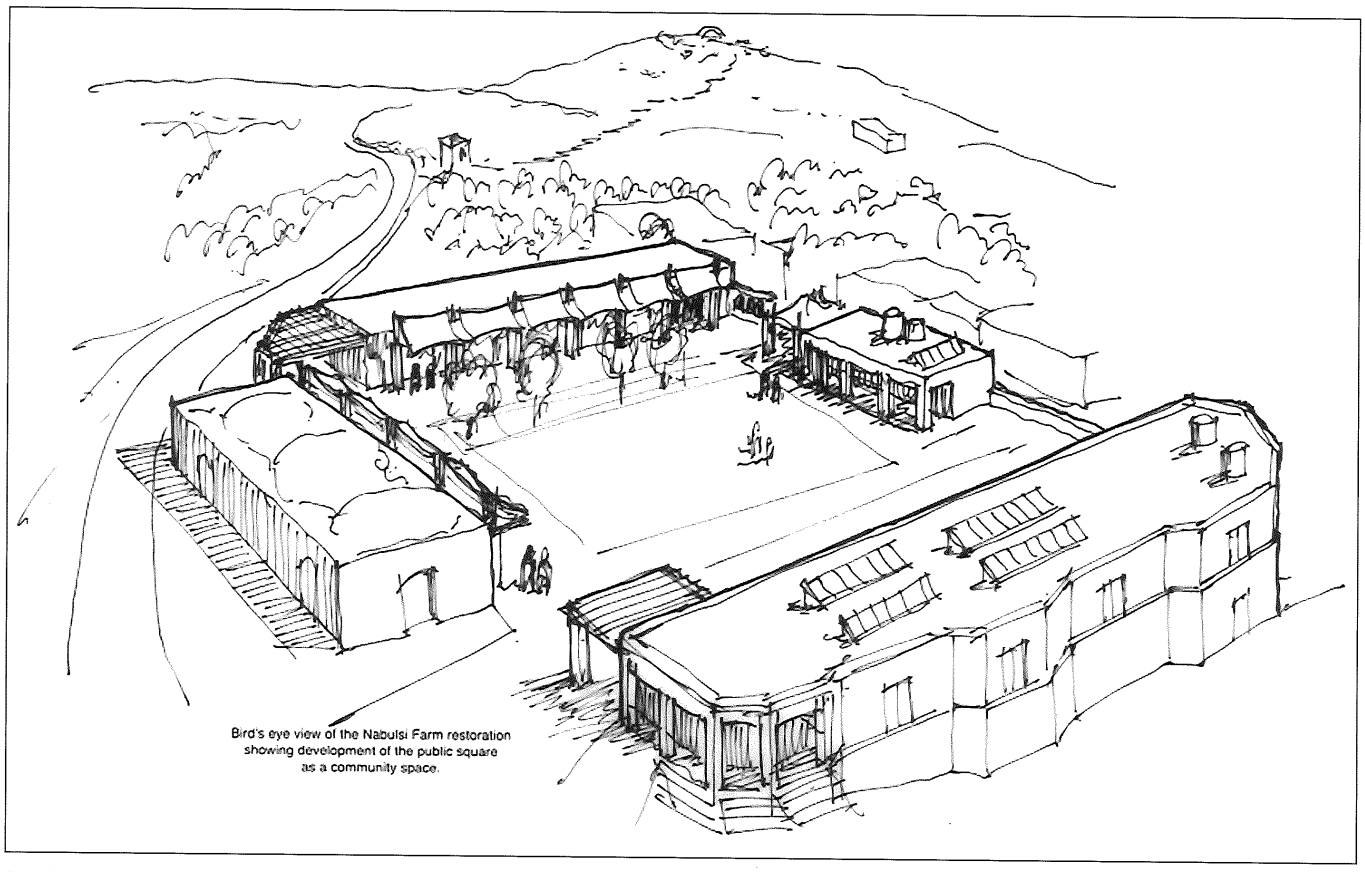
Table 1. Phase 1: Stables and public courtyard.

Phase 1: stables and public courtyard	
Stage 1 (2010 - 2011)	1.1 Planning, assessment and documentation 1.2 Site and building preparation for workshops and conservation
Stage 2 (2011)	2.1 Building conservation 2.2 Seismic improvements 2.3 Improve existing toilet facilities at the archaeology park as an interim facility for the cultural center 2.4 Utilities and infrastructure
Stage 3 (date to be confirmed)	3.1 Install first exhibit
Stage 4 (date to be confirmed)	4.1 Complete interpretative exhibitions 4.2 Complete new services building 4.3 Complete public courtyard construction 4.4 Complete 'green building' initiatives 4.5 Complete exhibit technology



Overvall site development
for the
Nabulsi Farm restoration.

1. Overall site development for the Nabulsi farm restoration.



2. View of the Nabulsi farm restoration, showing development of the public courtyard as a community space.

space. When we returned in 2010, we were thrilled to see the courtyard being used as a public community space, set up for a wedding celebration. This is evidence of the real-world application – no matter how modest – of community-led development.

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