

A PROGRAM TO DEVELOP A NATIONAL REGISTER OF CULTURAL HERITAGE PROPERTIES FOR JORDAN

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1. INTRODUCTION

A. Project Summary

This document identifies the need for establishing a National Register of Cultural Heritage Properties in Jordan, recommends procedures for evaluating potential resources, and provides examples of the evaluation process using a variety of archaeological sites. Recommendations are also made for future phases in implementing this program.¹

Cultural Heritage Properties are those remnants of the past that illuminate human history. The recognition, preservation and interpretation of this cultural legacy is important for fostering a sense of continuity between historic and modern populations (UNESCO 1972a:167-8). The wealth of ancient archaeological sites, historic buildings and traditional cultures in Jordan is a source of national pride in testifying to the accomplishments of both ancestors and predecessors, and in containing unique scientific, educational and interpretive potential. Due to the recent rapid expansion of Jordan's population, technologies, and economy, modernization and development are destroying these precious and non-renewable cultural resources at an alarming rate.

Development of an official listing of sig-

nificant Cultural Heritage Properties is a logical next step in Jordan's development of procedures to manage its cultural resources. At present, only archaeological sites predating 1700 are specifically protected by law and responsibilities for the identification and interpretation of these sites are spread over several ministries. Under the proposed National Register, Cultural Heritage Properties are broadly defined to include archaeological sites, buildings, places of historic or cultural importance and landscapes (UNESCO 1972a). Individual resources are identified as being important because of one or more associated values: historical, architectural, scientific, artistic, or cultural. Other factors such as tourism potential and public interest can also increase the overall significance of a resource. For those resources which do not contain significant values, and therefore are not listed on the National Register of Cultural Heritage Properties, no further protection or study is required once they are identified and recorded.

By identifying Jordan's rich and diverse historic and cultural resources as one cohesive entity, a comprehensive National Register of Cultural Heritage Properties would:

1. provide a focus for legislative and ad-

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ministrative efforts designed to identify, protect, preserve and interpret this cultural heritage;

2. require interdisciplinary research efforts and the involvement of local and regional entities in the identification of significant cultural heritage resources;
3. facilitate the presentation and interpretation of the past to citizens and visitors by compiling a registry of important resources;
4. provide a ranked listing of Heritage Properties to guide the initiation of both internal and foreign-aid development projects; and
5. clearly identify that majority of resources which are not significant and therefore need no further management or protection.

B. Cultural Resource Management

Establishing a National Register of Cultural Heritage Properties is an important step in a larger process. Identification, preservation, and interpretation of endangered cultural properties are undertaken by enlightened governments for the benefit of their people through the enactment of pertinent laws, policies and development strategies. Such systematic, legalized and far-sighted stewardship is called Cultural Resource Management (CRM).

The first stage of CRM studies involves identifying and recording resources to determine the frequency and distribution of cultural property types. The second stage deals with distinguishing those properties of each type which are of such importance that their alteration or destruction would constitute a significant loss to the community or nation. For these "significant" sites, a third stage is required: the development of management plans to protect or recover those values which made the property important. For sites which lack significant values, no further management

is necessary beyond initial identification and recording.

In practice, these three steps – identification, evaluation, and management – are often merged into one another. Experts in certain types of cultural resources can frequently identify, evaluate and make management recommendations during an initial visit to a property, drawing on their accumulated knowledge of the resource type and the types of values associated with it. Other properties are more complicated, however, and require additional investigations before such assessments can be made.

It is proposed here that as part of Jordan's CRM process, those sites identified as containing significant values would be listed on the National Register of Cultural Heritage Properties.

2. RECOGNITION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE PROPERTIES

A. National Environment Strategy

In 1989 Jordan launched a National Environment Strategy Project, a study to identify the Kingdom's total environment and the measures required to safeguard and preserve that environment for future generations. In the final document, approved by the Government of Jordan on May 2, 1991, an entire chapter was devoted to "Antiquities and Cultural Resources" (McEachern 1991:205-214). The broad scope of both the analysis and recommendations reflected the participation of recognized experts on Jordan's archaeology, architecture, art and ethnography who represented relevant ministries, foreign entities, and the interested public.

The National Environment Strategy (NES) was the result of efforts that began in 1982 with the formation of the National Environment Commission under the honorary chairmanship of Her Majesty Queen Noor. As an outgrowth, in 1985, the Prime Min-

ister convened a governmental committee to prepare an environmental protection strategy for Jordan, and in 1988 the Council of Ministers agreed to initiate the strategy process under the direction of the Ministry of Municipal, Rural Affairs and the Environment. The final NES document was produced through an agreement with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources and was funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

NES Recommendations on Policy and Management for Antiquities and Cultural Resources (McEachern 1991:211-213) include suggestions for improving the integration of cultural resource studies into early planning stages of development projects. Germane to the creation of a National Register of Cultural Heritage Properties, the NES Recommendations call for additional planning and zoning controls around sites "of outstanding national importance" that would protect the identified values of those sites. Recommended also is development of governmental policies and procedures to identify, conserve and rehabilitate traditional buildings and sites, currently unprotected by the Antiquities Law. Reference is also made here to an authoritative "catalogue of traditional sites" which would be protected by specific legislation. The Recommendations also call for development of public interest and support by incorporating curricula on archaeology and traditional heritage in the schools, and by promoting heritage-oriented non governmental societies.

These recommendations were enthusiastically supported in the Final Resolutions of the 1992 Conference on Cultural Resources Management in Jordan, sponsored by the Department of Antiquities of Jordan and the American Center of Oriental Research (ACOR), under the Patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan

Bin Talal (ACOR 1992).

As a direct result of recommendations made in the NES, a draft of the Jordan Environment Act has been submitted and is pending final approval (Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment 1992). This legislation would establish an independent General Environment Corporation to manage all environmental matters in the Kingdom. The Corporation would consist of a High Council consisting of the heads of both concerned ministries and non-governmental societies and associations. Its work would be financed through the establishment of an Environment Protection Fund. Under Chapter 6, Article 20, the Act addresses heritage properties:

"The corporation shall prepare, in coordination with the authorities concerned, a national plan to survey and classify, the Kingdom lands according to their uses on the basis of ... the existence of antiquities or historical or cultural sites."

B. Definition of Cultural Heritage Properties

A broad, inclusive view of cultural properties — which includes archaeological, historical, architectural and traditional cultural sites — is in concord with that of the UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Protection, at National Level, of the Cultural and Natural Heritage (UNESCO 1972a). Here, "cultural heritage" is defined as (*ibid.*:168):

"monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, including cave dwellings and inscriptions, and elements, groups of elements or structures of special value from the point of view of archaeology, history, art or science; Groups of Buildings: groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their ho-

mogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of special value from the point of view of history, art or science; Sites: topographical areas, the combined works of man and nature, which are of special value by reason of their beauty or their interest from the archaeological, historical, ethnological or anthropological points of view."

This definition is virtually identical to that of the UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (UNESCO 1972b), to which Jordan is a signatory.

The groundwork for this comprehensive view of cultural resources has already been laid in Jordan's existing laws, acts, and strategies. "Antiquities" are defined in the sweeping Antiquities Law of 1976 (English version, 1988, Article 2, Section 4):

- "A. Any object, whether movable or immovable, which has been constructed, shaped, inscribed, erected, excavated, or otherwise produced or modified by humankind earlier than the year 1700 A.D. including caves, sculpture, coins, pottery, manuscripts and all sorts of artifact that indicate the rise and development of sciences, art, manufactures, religions, and traditions relating to previous cultures or any part added thereto, reconstructed or restored at a later date.
- B. Any object, moveable or immovable, as defined in the previous subsection referring to a date subsequent to the year 1700 A.D., which the Minister may declare to be antique by order published in the Official Gazette.
- C. Human, plant and animal remains going back to a date earlier than the year 600 A.D. "

All such antiquities are legally protected by the Department of Antiquities which also has the responsibility of evaluating,

managing, and interpreting these resources. Part A most directly describes archaeological sites and artifacts, limiting legal coverage to those predating 1700. Part B, however, provides a vehicle for recognizing sites and other resources which may be less than 300 years old. In Section 5, immediately following, properties of historic importance are also included in an expanded definition of an "archaeological site":

"B. Any other area which the Minister decides contains antiquities, or is associated with important historical events; provided such decision is published in the Official Gazette."

The NES reflects the UNESCO Convention and Recommendation cited above in calling for a unified approach to the environment that integrates both natural and cultural resources. It augments the existing definition of "antiquity" by defining "traditional buildings" as :

"Architectural units, building complexes and urban forms like streets, alleys and plazas that are not included in the Antiquities Law and that have religious, architectural, or social significance and that altogether form the architectural heritage of Jordan (A.D. 1700-1950)" (McEachern 1991:205).

Although traditional cultural sites are not explicitly mentioned in the NES, the term "cultural sites" is included in the 1992 Jordan Environmental Act and may be interpreted to encompass sites of importance to populations of today.

3. THE NEED FOR ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL REGISTER OF CULTURAL HERITAGE PROPERTIES

A National Register of Cultural Heritage Properties will facilitate legal protection and management of significant resources, strengthen the people's sense of national identity, enhance the economic development of sites for tourism, and assist in

countering the rapid destruction of Jordan's cultural heritage as a result of modern development. Establishment of a priority listing of sites has been recommended or alluded to in virtually all studies of Jordan's present cultural heritage program (Daher 1993:7; Dunn and Aslan 1993; McEachern 1991:209, 210; Palumbo, Aslan, *et al.* 1993:4-5; Palumbo, Dayyeh, *et al.* 1993: 81).

A. Facilitate Legal Protection and Management

Critical to implementation of the NES is the construction of a legal framework for environmental management (McEachern 1991: xiii). To accomplish this, general inventories of archaeological sites, and traditional buildings and sites, need to be compiled. Beyond these lists, however, the NES and other studies recognize that there must be a system for ranking, or evaluating, these resources according to their relative significance. Comprehensive inventories of resources need to be subjected to qualitative assessments identifying those that are most important, so that realistic management plans can be developed. For example, while all archaeological sites predating 1700 are protected by law, every one of these sites does not need to be purchased, protected, and interpreted. Similarly, it is neither warranted nor reasonable that all buildings identified during an architectural survey be preserved through acquisition, or protected through special constraints on demolition and renovation.

A National Register of Cultural Properties, containing resources determined significant according to established criteria and procedures, will:

1. identify which cultural resources warrant special legal protection;
2. facilitate legal compliance by government ministries and private development agencies to environmental laws by pro-

viding a "one-stop shop" for the identification of protected cultural properties; and

3. consolidate the interests of preservists, forming a more powerful coalition of architects, archaeologists, art historians, ethnographers, historians and cultural resource specialists.

In arguing why a particular resource is eligible for listing in the National Register, the specific values for which a property is significant will be identified. These values will guide the subsequent formation of a management plan for that site. For example:

- an archaeological site overlain by a traditional village may constitute a cultural property that is important for both the scientific information which lies underground and the historic architecture standing on its surface;
- a sacred tree (*wali*) at the entrance to a village may need to be protected for traditional cultural values as well as for contributing to the historic townscape;
- a building of modest architectural value may gain significance as the home of an historically important figure or as the location of an important historical event.

The significant values identified for each site will guide decisions on how a site is studied, preserved, or interpreted. For a site where no values are identified beyond those realized through identification and recording, no further study or protection of the site will be necessary.

Those properties which are listed on the Register will be ranked from least to most important. Management decisions about a site or resource will be influenced by its relative significance. Register Properties are additionally evaluated as to their educational potential, rarity, importance to the public, and other interpretive aspects. Jordan has two sites which have been rec-

ognized as being of international importance: Petra and Quşayr 'Amra. These and the Old City of Jerusalem have been designated World Heritage sites by UNESCO (Goodland and Webb 1987:79).

B. Importance to National Identity

The cultural heritage properties of Jordan provide a unique and vital link between the present population and the rich history of the lands on which they live. Pride in, and ownership of, the past is essential if modern peoples, drawn into an increasingly dehumanized industrial and economic world, are to maintain a sense of historic connectedness with each other and with their homeland. The importance of developing a healthy root system for a society, grounded in ancestral soils, is recognized by UNESCO (1972a):

"Considering that, in a society where living conditions are changing at an accelerated pace, it is essential for [the people's] equilibrium and development to preserve .. a fitting setting in which to live, ... remain[...ing] in contact with nature and the evidences of civilization bequeathed by past generations, and that, to this end it is appropriate to give the cultural and natural heritage an active function in community life and to integrate into an overall policy the achievements of our time, the values of the past and the beauty of nature Considering that such integration into social and economic life must be one of the fundamental aspects of regional development and national planning at every level."

The World Bank also identifies the following as one of the primary reasons why economic development should preserve and encourage the study of cultural property (Goodland and Webb 1987:12):

"...A knowledge and understanding of a people's past can help present in-

habitants to develop and sustain national identity and to appreciate the value of their own culture and heritage. This knowledge and understanding enriches the lives of a nation's citizens and enables them to manage contemporary problems more successfully".

The NES recognizes that the ultimate safeguard to Jordan's environment — both cultural and natural—is "public knowledge, awareness, support, and activism" (McEachern 1991: xv). A National Register of Cultural Heritage Properties, by identifying significant elements of the past, could facilitate public education by identifying these properties through informative signs and publication of lists, descriptions, and locational maps. Recognition of and visits to these sites could be encouraged as part of the school curriculum, instilling a sense of historical continuity in both the children and the community.

Direct public involvement in heritage resources can be advanced by encouraging the identification of significant properties through public hearings, interviews with knowledgeable local persons, and involvement of local and regional governmental and non-governmental agencies and societies. Direct participation on the local and regional level is not only vital to the identification and evaluation of cultural resources, but to the long-term stewardship of these properties.

C. Valuable Economic Resource for Tourism

The rich abundance of ancient and traditional cultural properties in Jordan is one of the Kingdom's most important economic resources. The value of these heritage resources has been recognized by international agencies such as USAID and the World Bank who have provided funding for the development of Jordan's cultural re-

sources to promote tourism.

A National Register of Cultural Heritage Properties would assist the government in long-range planning by identifying significant historic properties throughout the Kingdom. Distinguishing sites of local, regional, and national significance will assist in diversifying attention from a few sites — Petra and Jerash — to a broader geographic area. This will not only reduce the pressure on these over-visited antiquities, but will expose the visitor to the diversity of Jordan's cultural past, and spread tourist money over a wider area.

An established National Register of significant properties can be used to develop tourist guide books on Jordan with uniform identification and signage. These distinguished properties can form the focus of educational and interpretive programs for both Jordanian citizens and visitors.

D. Rapid Disappearance from Development and Modernization

The imperative to record and protect Jordan's cultural heritage is made more urgent by the rate at which it is being destroyed through development and modernization. Stated succinctly by the World Bank:

".. Much of our responsibility to preserve cultural property stems from the fact that the present generation, like no past generation, is uniquely able to destroy much of that legacy within the lifetime of our children. Exponential population growth, coupled with powerful technologies and industrialization, is causing a serious cultural crisis, akin to the crisis of decreasing biological diversity. The loss of cultural property is particularly acute in areas rich in preserved cultural artifacts, such as the Middle East. Around the world, but particularly in these areas, irreplaceable cultural

sites are damaged daily. ... With every destroyed site, an opportunity is lost forever for future generations to be enriched by their cultural history" (Goodland and Webb 1987:3).

Rapid economic expansion in developing countries like Jordan is often accompanied by a tendency to reject traditional culture as "old-fashioned" and to embrace foreign cultural values as well as technologies. Not only are ancient sites and historic buildings often regarded as impediments to modernization, but traditional village plazas, urban streetscapes, market areas and gardens are often rashly sacrificed for redevelopment. Urban centers tear out their historic cores and devour the adjacent countryside, while rural landscapes disappear under a pocking of isolated suburban homes. Identification and protection of Jordan's significant sites, buildings, landscapes and cultural properties cannot be delayed.

4. CURRENT IDENTIFICATION OF CULTURAL PROPERTIES

Jordan is unique in the Middle East, and advanced among developing nations, for taking steps toward a program to manage its cultural resources. These first efforts have been aimed largely at inventorying and recording historical properties.

A. Archaeological Resources

Archaeological resources have received the most attention, benefiting from the presence of a long-established Department of Antiquities of Jordan with roots dating back to 1923. The earliest archaeological work focused on development of the largest sites, beginning in Jarash and Karak in 1925. In 1953, Law No. 133 first specified an "antiquity" as any cultural object or site predating 1700, and gave the Department of Antiquities exclusive jurisdiction to license excavations. A royal decree in 1967 rec-

ognized the interpretive value of sites by creating a joint Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. Since Provisional Law No. 13 of 1976, the Department of Antiquities has assumed all authority and responsibility for identifying, recording, evaluating, and managing the Kingdom's archaeological sites.

In 1987 the Department of Antiquities of Jordan through ACOR and funded by USAID, initiated a Cultural Resource Management (CRM) program. Although identification, recording, evaluation and management of sites had been carried out in Jordan since the 1940s, by the late 1970s the escalating pace of development was beginning to outdistance archaeologists' ability to record and excavate sites before they were destroyed. The new CRM program aimed at establishing coordination between the Department of Antiquities and government development agencies so that inventories and evaluations of sites could be carried out prior to the arrival of bulldozers (Palumbo, Dayyeh, *et al.* 1993).

Now in its final year of funding, after which the program is scheduled to be turned over entirely to the Department of Antiquities, the ACOR CRM program has seen some success. A computer data base of all currently known archaeological sites is nearing completion. This Jordan Antiquities Database and Information System (JADIS) already contains over 6,500 sites, with another 3,000 waiting to be entered. Although virtually all of the presently recorded properties are archaeological sites, the system has been designed to incorporate other types of cultural resources.

While the inventory stage of the CRM program is well underway, so far there has been little effort made to evaluate the relative importance of individual sites, or types of sites, except on a case-by-case basis for emergency salvage operations. The legal protection which embraces all archaeological sites in Jordan has precluded

the necessity of developing qualitative assessments of resources as part of the CRM process. On the JADIS coding sheet, however, is a field for "Inventory rating," a 1-9 point scale which indicates sites which are destroyed or damaged (0,1), the necessity for excavation (2, 3, 4), recommendations for preservation (5, 6) and if the site is already protected (9).

Ministerial coordination within the Jordanian Government concerning the management of cultural resources has also been advanced by the CRM program. A cooperative agreement was signed in December of 1992 between the Natural Resources Authority (1992) and the Department of Antiquities identifying their overlapping interests and responsibilities. A joint agreement between the Ministry of Public Works and Housing (1993) and the Ministry of Tourism and the Department of Antiquities has also been drawn up and is awaiting signatures. This document will require that cultural resource investigations take place during early stages of project development and that they be paid for out of development funds. In this document, the scope of cultural resources has been broadly defined (Ministry of Public Works and Housing 1993):

"...The term 'cultural heritage site' applies to immovable property with archaeological, historic, architectural, or scientific value, whether a site, a structure, or a group of structures, whether religious or secular, and including traditional structures and historic areas in urban or rural centers. It applies to archaeological ruins existing above the earth as well as to remains found within the earth. The term includes the environmental setting of cultural heritage sites, which is defined as 'cultural landscape:' ... the integration of the ancient, historic, and traditional human and natural environments."

Other project-specific agreements between the Department of Antiquities and other ministries are on-going.

The joint Department of Antiquities/ACOR-CRM team has made some recommendations for future efforts. Among these are the incorporation of architectural expertise and concerns in the CRM process, and the establishment of a National Register of Cultural Heritage which would identify the Kingdom's most significant sites and monuments (Palumbo, Dayyeh *et al.* 1993:80-81; Palumbo, Aslan, *et al.* 1993:5).

B. Traditional Buildings and Sites

No explicit legal protection or recognition has been defined for more recent cultural resources — buildings, traditional cultural properties and sites of historic importance dating to after AD 1700 — and they have therefore not received the preservation and management attention accorded to archaeological sites. Nevertheless, descriptions, analyses and some evaluative studies of historic buildings and urban settings have been increasing in recent years. As yet, there is no compiled bibliography or overall assessment of these projects; interested researchers are directed to the libraries of the Departments of Architecture at the University of Jordan, the Jordan University of Science and Technology and Yarmouk University in Irbid, where relevant literature is archived. The following is a brief comment on general research trends and examples of completed studies.

In the Irbid area, architectural inventories and studies of traditional architecture have been conducted since the 1980s by the British Institute at Amman for Archaeology and History, and the Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology at Yarmouk University, producing articles and several MA theses (McQuitty and Lenzen 1989). The fifth conference on the History and Archaeology of Jordan, held in Irbid in 1992, featured an entire session dedicated to vernacular architecture.

Faculties at the Department of Architecture of the University of Jordan have also been involved in studies of vernacular and more formal building styles both in and around 'Ammān, which have resulted in several MA theses. Among the most notable of these student projects are the study of 1920-1930s houses in 'Ammān (Rifaa'i and Kan'aan 1987) and the studies of the villages of 'Irāq al-Amīr/al-Bardun (Rifaa'i 1988), Sūf (Faqih *et al.* 1989) and Samara (Mahadin and Fethi 1992). Studies have also been conducted on traditional homes in the West Bank (Amery and Tamari 1989) and the Jordan Valley (Mundy 1990).

Many of these investigations address the village as an integrated whole, include concepts of historic development and use, and incorporate concepts such as "streetscapes" and historic "core" areas. One village study is unique in also including descriptions of *wali* (sacred) sites of local cultural importance (Khammash 1986).

Some thematic architectural studies have also been addressed, such as that on the Ottoman Hajj forts (Peterson 1989) and the proposed overview of the Hijaz Railway (Daher 1993).

Virtually all of these studies, being academic and not management documents, are limited to descriptions and analyses of architecture; they do not attempt to evaluate the relative significance of individual houses or groups of houses. The major exception to this is the development plan of Salt carried out by the Royal Scientific Society and funded by USIA (Salt Development Corporation 1990). A total of 657 urban buildings were inventoried, and then evaluated according to four criteria: architectural quality, historic interest, townscape value, and condition. 78 buildings were determined to be "Grade 1," and 57 of these were incorporated into an historic district that was recommended for preservation and restoration. For a number of reasons, how-

ever, implementation of the plan has been delayed.

The National Environment Strategy for Jordan also includes a section on Traditional Buildings and Sites. A comprehensive catalogue of these resources is advocated and importantly, a list of criteria for inclusion on a "significant properties" list is presented (McEachern 1991:210) and includes considerations of:

- age (pre-1914);
- architectural character and quality;
- historical associations with famous persons or events;
- association with a nationally important archaeological site;
- examples of social and economic development;
- urban patterns and fabrics; and technical innovations of historic importance.

C. Multi-Disciplinary Assessments

An encouraging recent example of multi-disciplinary project assessment is found in

the development of the new Dana National Biodiversity Reserve (located south of Karak) by the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature. An architectural survey of the park by architect Michelle Biewers has resulted in a recommendation to preserve and restore the pristine traditional village of Dana. Ethnographic studies are being carried out by ethnographer William Lancaster, former director of the British Institute, while the archaeological survey will be conducted by ACOR. Coordination between the teams will facilitate a comprehensive assessment of cultural resources and a balanced management plan.

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