

The Dynamics of Cities

Comparative Spatial Analysis in the Planning of Jerusalem

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The Situation in 1948

A review of the events leading up to the armistice agreement of 1949 is required in order to understand the changes which Jerusalem has undergone during the past fifty years. The urbanization which occurred during the first part of the 20th century was controlled by the planning concepts of the British Mandate. The civil and planning authorities were guided by a number of ideological concepts which developed over the years.

- The relevance of the Holy Land
- The uniqueness of Jerusalem
- The tradition of good governance
- The tradition of town and country planning
- The arts and crafts movement

These factors colored the decision-making processes in the city. They evolved through the various outline plans that were prepared by the local authorities, including Ashbee, Geddes, Maclean, Holliday and Kendall. The plans had in common the centrality of the Old City and the desire to create a buffer zone that would be designated as an archaeological zone and open space. The main developments were seen to the north, west and south and within the topographical limits of the city. The influence of the railway for the development to the south and west was still felt, identifying areas for commerce and industry. On the other hand, the public institutions were identified to the north on Mount Scopus, with the Hebrew University and Haddasa Hospital and to the south with the High Commissioner's Residence.

Kendall's 1948 work on Jerusalem summarized the plans during the period of the Mandate. In a foreword to that study, General Sir Alan Cunningham issued this appeal:

Let old Jerusalem stand firm, and new Jerusalem grow in grace! To this fervent prayer I add the hope that the accomplishments and the labors of the years covered in this book may be considered worthy to act as an inspiration and an example to the future generations in whose care our Holy City must rest.

The concepts of views and open space systems in the valleys were strengthened and became the main component of all the plans. The Planning and Building Ordinance, 1936, was the essential planning tool of the Mandate and developed a two-tier decision-making structure of District and Local Planning Commissions. Perhaps the paternalistic approach of the Mandate and the colonial traditions of Britain led to the semi-democratic

structure: “let the natives live” at the local level, while the critical decisions were made at the district level by the representatives of the Commissioner, the police and health officers and the planning advisor. This reflected the planning policies current in Britain during these years.

The Antiquities Ordinance was an important tool of the Mandate and a detailed list of sites in and around the Old City was prepared and published. This inventory continues to be the base line for further sites added after excavations.

One other aspect of the British Mandate in Jerusalem should be considered and this relates to the activities of the Pro-Jerusalem Society. This non-sectarian body has as its goal to promote the conservation and well being of the city. Its most important contribution was the development of crafts including, stone, glass and ceramics. This development impacted the urban design guidelines for the city plans. The attitudes of the local planners, such as Richard Kaufman and the academics such as Professor Boris Schatz, have been well documented, together with their relevant dialogues with Patrick Geddes and Charles Ashbee.

The Impact of Division

At the National Level

In the words of Ashbee, the first Civic Advisor to the British Mandate, the conservation of the city was helped by the fact that Jerusalem was well off the beaten track. This situation became accentuated during the period of division, with the city becoming the end of a regional cul-de-sac. The years immediately following the armistice agreement of 1949 saw little activity while each side learned to live with the new situation. Regional plans were developed independently for each side while the contacts were limited to the issues of health, such as the problems of sewage. Both Jordan and Israel updated their planning and building laws, but the changes were essentially cosmetic. It is interesting to note that in Britain the planning structure has been repeatedly adapted and changed to deal with current-day issues. Even the Antiquities Law, for both countries, remains static with the outer definition of an antiquity as the year 1700, an act of homage to Queen Anne.

In spite of the decision to establish the capital of Israel in Jerusalem and the transfer of the Knesset and Government offices, the west city remained stagnant and during the economic recession of 1965-1967 even registered a negative growth rate.

The Old City of Jerusalem was within the armistice lines of Jordan, and even though the site is the third most holy to Islam, that factor was not sufficient to provide for the necessary economic development of the city.

At the City Level

Decisions on both sides of the armistice line were affected by the lack of understanding of the space and inherent function of an historic city. As time elapsed these decisions

became more critical and resulted in unsalutary consequences:

The erection of high buildings in the west without the knowledge of the effect on the Jerusalem skyline from the east;

The development around the Old City without the understanding of the long term effect on the wider buffer zone for its conservation;

The stagnation of joint solutions for waste and sewage disposal.

Both sides were suffering economic depression in the years prior to 1967. Water was pumped to Jerusalem from the National Carrier in Israel giving a consistent supply to the citizens, while the supply of water from Solomon's Pools was intermittent and, at the best, available three days a week. In the two Municipalities, the regulation of providing cisterns in all new building projects was enforced. The electricity was provided by the two carriers--the East Jerusalem Electricity Company and the Israel Electric Company. No comprehensive sewage system was in place for either side of the municipality and the raw sewage for the most part went downhill, untreated.

Jordan. The growth of Jerusalem during the period of division was minimal. The city suffered from its distance from the administrative center and capital, Amman. In addition the city hinterland was developed on a north-south axis to Ramalla and Nablus in the north and Bethlehem and Hebron to the south. The natural southern route was cut off from the Jordanian side, and a proposal for a new by-pass road was under construction at the time of the 1967 unification. Plans for the eastern part of the city were developed by Kendall himself who was hired by the authorities to prepare detailed plans of the neighborhoods to the north including Bet Hanina. The Brown proposal of the early sixties was in the format of an action plan and identified the problems and necessary actions to be taken in the Old City and in the main built-up area of the municipality. It is of interest to note that the Jordanians during the period of their rule did not revoke the Kendall plan of 1944.

The proposed residential areas related to different social groups--the urban, Bedouin and fellahin communities, intertwined with Christians and Muslims. The natural growth rates were not high and the growth of the city was limited.

The industrial areas were situated as in the original Kendall plan of 1944 to the east of the city, being the correct climatic location for these functions. The commercial center developed at the Damascus and Herod's Gate, along the streets to the north. Some larger scale developments were proposed, including the Intercontinental Hotel on Mount of Olives

Israel. With the division of the city, the obvious effects of the new border and the unstable political situation created an urban blight on both sides of the new boundary. The immediate reaction was still to consider the city as a whole and this can be seen in the proposed plan of Heinz Rau of 1949. *It was a visionary proposal for a unified city.*

But the reality was soon to arrive and the new proposed Outline Plan, approved in 1959 related to the area only within the armistice boundaries. But this plan still lingered after the unified city, and the plan was to be a revision to, and not a cancellation of, the Kendall plan of 1944.

The plan essentially determined the main public areas including a Government Precinct, which was to be part of a wider public zone of the University Campus in Givat Ram and the Israel Museum. This center moved the focus of the West city dramatically towards the entrance on Jaffa Street and the high representative ground of the Binyanei Haooma, which was to be the site of the Knesset. Considering security matters, the Haddasa Hospital was located in Ein Karem, in addition strengthening the urban area of Jerusalem. The open space system was continued in this plan although the area around the Old City remained somewhat in limbo. The residential areas were at densities of up to 12 units per net dunam representing some 120% building rights. The commercial activity of the centre was perceived as a single linear form along the Jaffa Road, with buildings designated at up to five stories. The parallel Agrippa Street was seen in the previous plan of Rau as the representative entrance, bringing people towards the Jewish Agency buildings, and other institutions proposed in the area, and from there to the Old City. This concept was changed with the creation of the Government Precinct. Some large scale developments were being proposed in the central area including a number of high-rise buildings.

The main planning changes proposed after the division of the city related to the cemeteries and industrial areas. Architectural easements were also proposed regarding the use of stone in particular areas.

It was in 1966 that a new master plan was prepared for the city of Jerusalem, but with the possible vision of a unified city. This was to come about the following year.

The Consequences of Unification

The first reaction was to encourage the process of unification by offering incentives for people to live and work in Jerusalem with special reference to the many civil servants living in the Tel-Aviv region. The Master Plan team, on the basis of the immediate census, extended the plan and presented it in 1968. The Ministry of Interior, concerned with the quality of decision-making in the municipality administration created a special planning zone called The Old City and its Environs and prepared a conservation plan to preserve the unique qualities of the city. Parallel to the preparation of this plan a team was set up to plan the Central Business District.

The growth of the city was impressive. The migration towards the city, from internal and external sources was matched by the greatest natural growth in Israel. Social patterns combined with the medical resources of Israel to yield one of the lowest infant mortality rates. This gave rise to an increased demand for housing, for better standards of services, for a change in social patterns and for a higher level of infrastructure.

It is of interest to note that in 1981 Jordan nominated the Old City of Jerusalem and its Ramparts to the World Heritage List and later in 1982, after its inscription, requested that it be put on the list of World Heritage Sites in Danger. While Israel only acceded to the convention some three years ago, it has presented a proposal to extend the site to include Mount Zion and a buffer zone to be determined according to the operational guidelines of the convention. The United Nations legal advisor was asked to give his opinion and this has been presented to UNESCO. This paves the way to re-present the sites of all cultures in Jerusalem that were previously excluded, such as Gethsemane, the Virgin's Well, the Siloam Pool and the City of David together with the surrounding necropolis of universal significance.

The proposed Master Plan was presented to the Jerusalem Committee. This Committee was established by Mayor Teddy Kollek in an effort to provide an international sounding board for the many issues facing the rapid-growing city. The first reaction was that there should be a reappraisal of the extended road system and greater emphasis on the planning and design qualities of the city. Their comments were heard and it was recommended that an architect and not an engineer should head the planning department. Since then there have been two attempts to provide a comprehensive and legal document for the city but to no avail. The complex ownership issues and the political ramifications have stymied the approval of such a plan.

The effects of the on-going political decisions have created a gap between vision and reality resulting in a dissonance of the physical planning between the development of the Jewish and Arab sectors. Public transportation is an interesting example: the Ministry of Transport did not allow the sherut taxi service in Jerusalem the sherut taxi as it had permitted in Tel Aviv; the reality of the Arab sector with a low car ownership resulted in an illegal laissez-faire of a taxi service which affected the patterns of development and the structure of the focal points of the city. The proposed light-rail system to be developed by 2006 will give a proportionately greater service to the Jewish than the Arab community although that this is a result of the problems of topography and density of the areas served.

In 1998, the Municipality commissioned a Strategic Plan which was presented to the council, and this, in turn, has given way to another effort in the approval of a statutory Outline Plan for the city. This has been paralleled with the preparation of a detailed plan of the Old City based on the principles of conservation, as approved in the Old City and Environs plan.

The border has once again become a potential site for development, although the political boundary has been substituted with a traffic boundary.

The changes in the development of the city include the social structure, for Jews, Christians and Muslims, and their socio-economic base. But the developments of the divided city were such that the new changes could not dominate. The developments in Bet Hanina; the university and hospital campuses, all pointed to a new poly-nuclear city

extending some 13 kilometers north to south, from the entrance to Ramalla to the entrance of Bethlehem.

New Intensities and Densities

The development over the years of unification has resulted in an unprecedented growth rate in the two communities. The process of synoecism has brought the villages and outer suburbs of Arab-a-Sawahra, Ein Karem, Bayit Vegan, Ramat Rahal and Bet Hanina into one urban mass. Land availability and designation, at times, fell behind the demand and resulted in decisions that have affected the land pattern and densities of the neighbourhoods. Birth rates, while changing over the years now remain at 37 per thousand for the Arab community and 25 per thousand for the Jewish community. These figures need to be understood within local context. The Haredi community among the Jews and the Christian community among the Arabs reveal, respectively, patterns above and below the averages.

The basic statistics of the overall densities demonstrate the urban form. The urban densities for the Jewish neighborhoods are 5.9 units per dunam while in the Arab neighborhoods it is only 1.9 units per dunam. Once again the local differences are important to identify. The Muslim quarter has sections reaching 86 units per dunam; Shuafat 32; while the Haredi neighborhood of Mea Shearim has over 10 units per dunam; and Nayot at 1.0 unit per neighborhood dunam. These discrepancies are the essence of the spirit and possible quality of the urban fabric of the city. There can be no condoning of overcrowding and no acceptance of underdeveloped land with urban potential.

In short, the visual image through the urban fabric and architecture of Jerusalem has dramatically changed during the period of unification, and a reappraisal needs to be made in the light of the evolving demands of the community. The biblical image of the historic area, the Old City and its environs, needs reinterpretation as does the regional landscapes meeting the city with the Judean Hills in the west and the desert in the east.

Remaking the City Spaces

The city spaces are being remade at various levels and by the different segments of the community. These actions are not always the result of a plan or design but by the development of needs and necessity. The changing roles of the individual, shared and common spaces are the basis of the urban needs of the city. These roles are detailed to reveal the complex and dynamic social patterns that should be integrated in any practical physical solution.

Individual Space

The individual spaces are becoming fewer and smaller with the growing densities of the city. The private space that was the result of individual houses is fast disappearing. They now can be understood within the context of institutions and agricultural land and their

effect on the form of the city is great. Jerusalem has always been a city of culture and religion attracting many public activities and this has left a legacy of synagogues, churches and mosques with their architecture and compounds. At the periphery, the farming, terraces and grazing land create the differentiation between town and country.

Shared Space

The shared space is that part of the whole which belongs to an individual. There is ample evidence of the dramatic changes taking place in the Arab neighborhoods, with the individual building transposing into the condominium. These patterns of living are becoming the norm. While these changes are a result of a number of issues – political, topographic and land ownership – the resulting urban form leaves much to be desired. The added densities without the comprehensive planning and land assembly, has created communities without the necessary physical and social structure for modern living. This form of living in the shikun or 'bayit meshutaph', accepted in Jewish urban society, is facing a crisis with the pressure of “the American dream” of an individual private house in the suburbs. These issues will have to be addressed in the immediate future to prevent social and economic upheaval within and between the communities.

Common Space

These spaces can be defined as belonging to the community--free to be used by everyone. The streets, the roads, the parks the squares are part of this urban heritage. These spaces are being reduced as privatization and an economic crisis of the Municipality leads us towards new planning policies. The questions now are: Who uses the common spaces? Are our cities safer more defensible? Are we becoming xenophobic now that these common spaces no longer can fulfill their idyllic role? Even our roads belong to those that can afford cars, while the parks have become the turf of sectorial groups.

The Lessons for Weaving the Urban Fabric

What are the lessons to be learned for re-integrating the urban fabric and what are socio-economic implications? It is impossible to isolate the physical and socio-economic issues from the political reality; nevertheless the lessons to be learned are not only from the outer world, but from the city itself during the period of unification. Chief among the lessons are these:

- Planning and architecture need tolerance, and this means that there should be gentle changes in grain and form;
- The urban uses must allow the equality of opportunity;
- Public spaces should accept democratic processes in their identity;
- Local community needs, especially through the Community Centres should be fostered;

- There needs to be a perception of fairness of the allocation of resources.

The meaning of unification was not extended to planning and architecture. The new Jewish neighborhoods of Neve Yaacov, Pisgat Zeev, Giva Zarfatit, Ramot, Talpiot Misrach and Gilo were condominium islands of comprehensive development in a sea of individual piece-meal growth and change. These new urban forms of higher densities could be serviced with ease, including the provision of schools, roads, opens spaces and infrastructure. On the other hand, this could not match the possible upgrade of infrastructure that might be provided for existing Arab neighborhoods of lower density.

The Implication of the Alternative Scenarios

The alternative scenarios are not those of the Master Plan, Strategic Plan or Outline Plan of the Municipality. Essentially, the alternatives relate to the physical form and development actions and can divide into two parts: the first relating to the actions at the points of contact, and the second, those relating to the outer areas of the two communities. The points of contact will now have to address, not only the border between Jordan and Israel during the divided years, but the new points of contact created by the isolated neighborhood planning of the Ministry of Housing during the years of unification. The design interpretation of the definition of edges, boundaries and limits will have to be evaluated both at the conceptual level and at the detailed level.

It is of interest to consider three possible patterns for the spaces of no-man's-land between the communities: an overlap, a contact and an insert. The overlap insinuates a blurring of identities; the contact allows each community to touch the other, while the insert is the addition of a neutral function allowing the two communities to meet on neutral ground.

The urban functions that are common, shared or those that remain the domain of the individual will be redefined in the context of the possible scenarios. It is not proposed to recommend a preferred scenario but to identify the common, non-changeable parts of the alternatives and the potential for change that can be harnessed for future action.

Note should be made of the World Heritage status of Jerusalem. The wider responsibility of the local community and citizens should bring about a civic pride transcending the partisan battle lines. The space of the Old City, the Ancient City and the historic hinterland including the most hallowed necropolis for the three monotheistic religions should be redefined. This will allow the city to accept a unique element in its heart and reduce tension. Heritage could be the consensus and not the *casus belli* that will provide a neutral insert which can change the perception of division.

The Coherence of Duality or Unification

Le mieux est l'ennemi du bien (The best is the enemy of the good) Voltaire

While it can be accepted that Jerusalem has no sense as a divided city, there exists two forms for the development of the city-entity that can be used individually or in tandem according to necessity. The approaches of duality or unification have their own physical and spatial patterns. It is a paradox that during the years of unification the duality was strengthened. The polarization of the communities and among themselves has given rise to parallel services--buses for Haredim and Arabs, sherut-taxis for the hinterland of Bet Shemesh and Bet Hanina; business activities on the Jaffa Road for the main-streamers, Shivtei Yisrael for the Haredim, Salah-a-Din for the Arab, Emek Refaim for the young and professional are just a few of the examples. The city has become poly-nuclear. The idyllic proposal of unification might be changed for the coherence of duality: the acceptance of two forms and patterns that can work together within a common consensus. This consensus should relate to the heritage of Jerusalem, its infrastructure and above all, in the words of Ashbee – its dignity.

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