

JUNE 2000  
KARAK TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PROJECT  
SURVEY REPORT  
BUILDINGS ALONG TOURISTS STREET

## TOURIST STREET

### LOCATION

Al Malik Hussein Street, one of the 3 major north-south streets in old Karak. Its width is approximately (12 m) including sidewalks. All of the above are one way traffic at present. The main commercial street in the city of Karak, King Hussein Street, divides the old city into two equal parts.

The project area for "tourist streets" leading to the castle starts at Al Mujamma Street, down to Al-Saraya Street & Al-Malik Hussein Street. (fig. 1).

Al-Saraya Street improvement was added to the TOR. It provides further attraction for more future tourism activities connecting the plaza project with Al Malik Hussein Street.

Improvement of Al-Maydan Street was cancelled from the project area for the following reasons:

- a - The walkway of Al-Maydan Street is already renovated and maintained in good conditions.
- b - Al-Maydan Street is important to traffic circulation in old Karak city, and traffic flows along the street all day leading to Al-Jami Al-Umari Street at the intersection of the statue of Salahdin and Al-Malik Hussein Street.

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Tourism Sector Development Project  
in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Executing Agency  
The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities  
The Ministry of Planning

SUB-PROJECT:  
Karak Tourism Development Project  
Tourist Street


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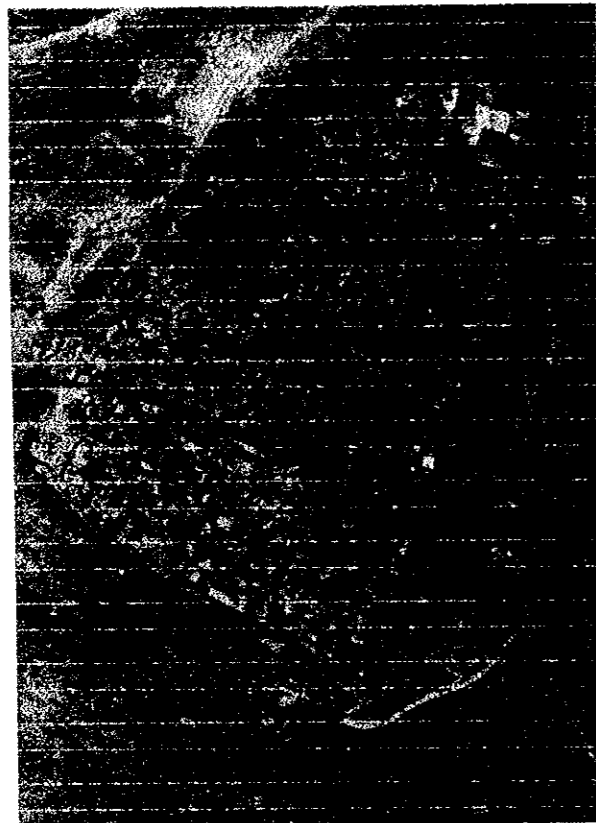
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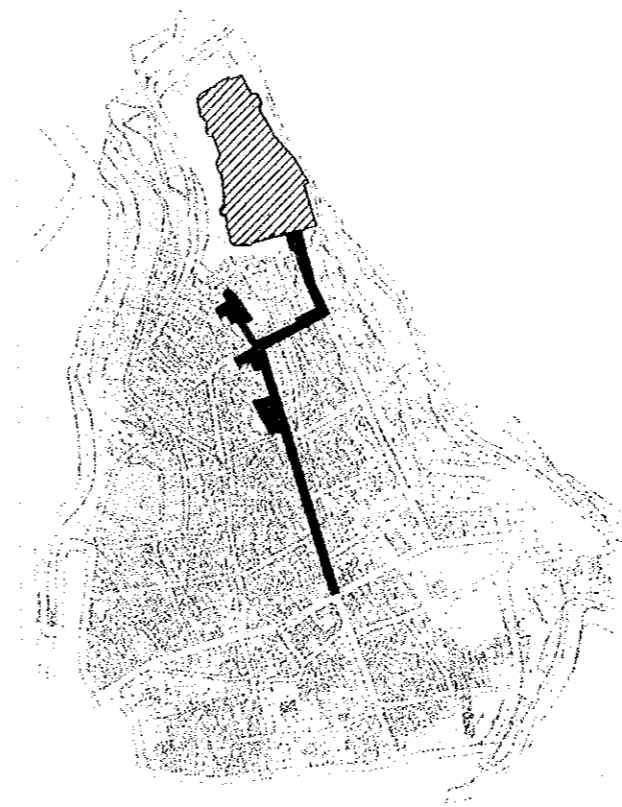
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KARAK CITY  
AERIAL VIEW 1954



KARAK CITY  
AERIAL VIEW 1992



LOCATION MAP OF THE PILOT PROJECT  
WITHIN THE CORE OF THE OLD CITY  
Fig. (01)

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## (2) Site Conditions

### A- ANALYSIS OF THE EXISTING SITUATION

#### History & Development

It is difficult to give an exact date of the built-up environment of the study area, or for the old commercial core in general. In trying to establish the criteria for the historical analysis of built-up heritage in the area, the following factors were taken into consideration.

1. The immigration of families to Karak.
2. Karak has a long history as an agricultural & trade city.
3. Architectural features

Two main facts are apparent in the construction method of the traditional building stock.

- Use of vaults & load bearing walls as the repetitive structural module.
- Use of flat roofs on railway I-sections after the establishment of the Hijazi - Railway at the beginning of this century.

The method of using cement as a building material for roofs while still maintaining the traditional load-bearing module was introduced into the construction field after the First World War and later spread after the Second World War. Using the above criteria to establish a historical reference could give an insight into a general historical development process.

After modernization and spread of technology, the character of the street has drastically changed to clearly show modern & regional influence in the new buildings.

#### b. Social & Economic Factors

One of the strong facts that emerged from the field study was that the continuity of the father's vocation through their children has become a lost tradition. Still, some of the youth help their fathers after school.

The current situation, of the empty buildings, expresses the continuous movement & migration of old Karak families to other new areas around the city. This would only mean that the general state of the buildings could easily fall into neglect.

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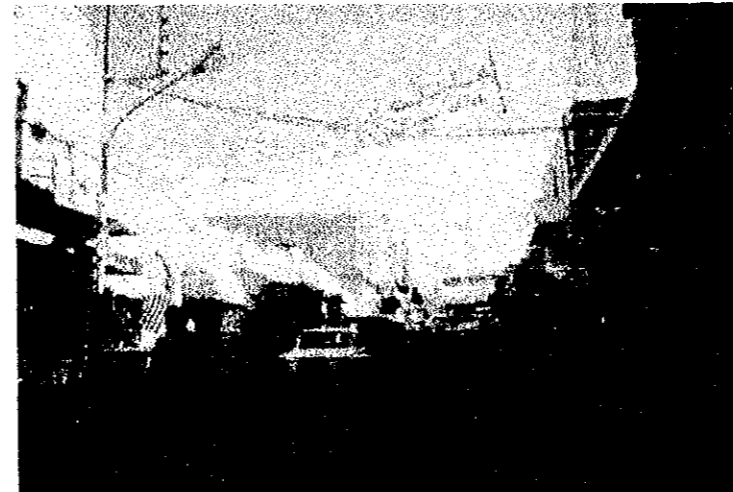
OLD STREET PAVEMENT  
FIG. (02)



MAIN VISTA TOWARDS THE STATUS  
FIG. (04)



DISCONTINUITY / URBAN FABRIC  
FIG. (05)



VSUAL POLLUTION  
FIG. (06)

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## C. MORPHOLOGY OF THE STREET

### 1. CIRCULATION PATTERN:

Parts of the project streets must have constituted one of the old major commercial & social cores; however as in the old town, it suffered set backs with the onslaught of modernization & social change. The street width for Al-Malik Hussein Street is 10m.

Traffic circulation is restricted to one-way traffic in the direction of Salahdin statue. In front of the visitors center, a major touristic bus stop is recommended. The off-street parked cars in front of the shops and tourist buses add to the congestion. This necessitates a better control of the vehicular movement & a better location for a public bus stop as well as a comprehensive traffic approach towards the vehicular & pedestrian movement in the old part of the city.

### 2. USERS & THE URBAN SPACE:

The street scene is bounded by sky, walls & roads. The sky is ever-changing, while the walls too express variation in the alternating aging texture and colour of stones and the shop fronts exposing the vivacity and appeal or drabness of the merchandise displayed. The floor is a monotone of tarmac.

The quality of the traditional sector of street varies from opening hours to night time. It is sometimes difficult to identify a particular shop after business hours owing to the radical change in the visual environment at night and sometimes the absence of external signs.

Change in the quality of the urban space, in relation to modernisation, is present in terms of the scale and heights architectural styles, signage system, etc.

This disrupts the continuity of the urban character of the streetscape, in contrast with the maintained character of Al-Saraya Street.

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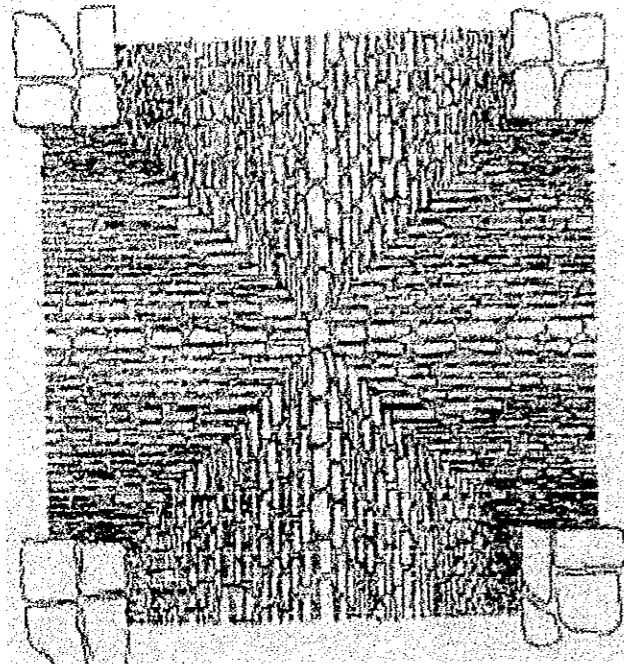
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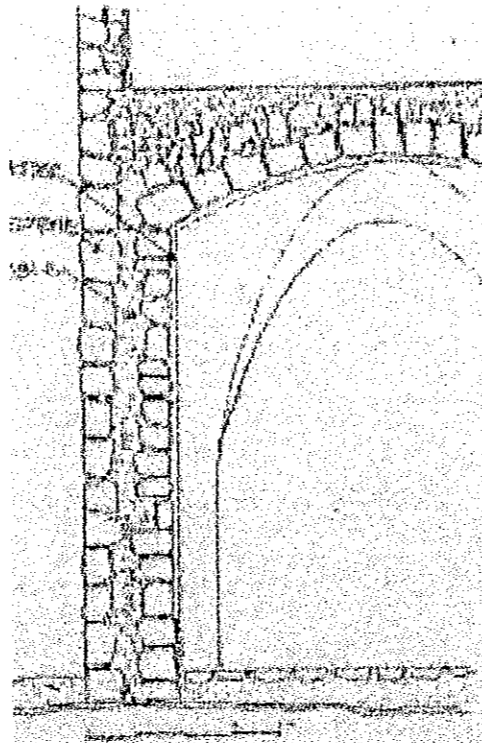
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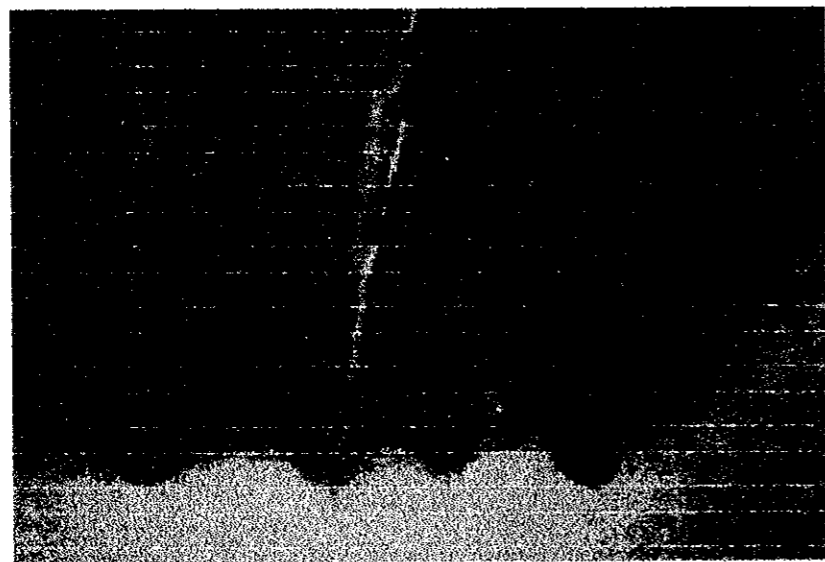
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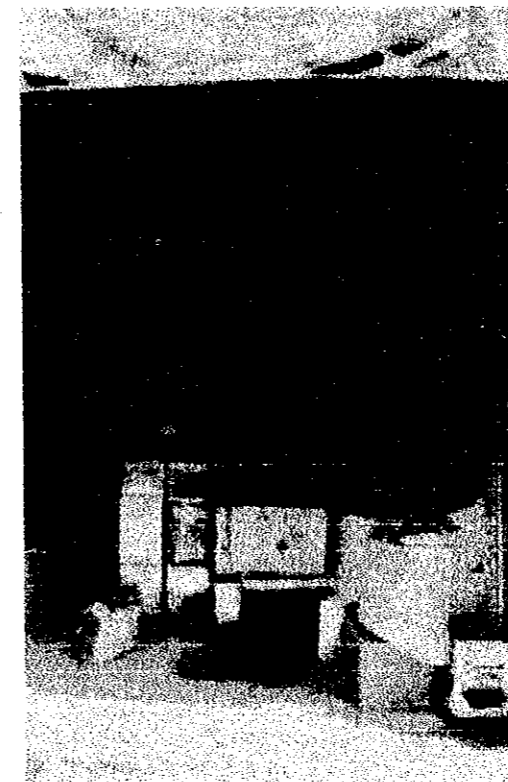
PLAN LOOKING UP SHOWING THE KEYSTONE  
FIG. (07)



THE MAIN WALLS IN THE UNIT  
WERE BUILT OF TWO FACES OF STONE  
FILLED IN BETWEEN WITH MORTAR AND  
PIECES OF ROUGH STONE  
FIG. (08)



USED WOODEN STRUCTURAL BEAMS WITH BAMBOO LAYER,  
LIGHT CRUSHED STONE, ASH & MUD ARRANGED ON TOP  
FIG. (09)



TRADITIONAL STRUCTURAL SYSTEM  
(CROSS VAULTS)  
FIG. (10)

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### 3. Structural System & Technology:

The traditional structural module making up the commercial ground floor of the street scene is expressed by the use of load-bearing walls covered with cross vaults (fig. 08). Wooden structural beams were used with a bamboo layer, light crushed stone, ash & mud arranged on top (fig. 09). At a later stage, the railway steel i-sections were used in the construction with traditional ceiling components and then with cement.

On these monolithic wall constructions rose the structure of the residential units above, which varied in height from one to two stories. In many cases the method of construction of the upper levels was restored using flat roofs carried on steel I-sections.

The wall thickness varied from 60-100 cm, where stones were dressed for the exterior wall sections.

The transformation of the character of the wall is evident as the inhabitants have continued to repair, add, delete, extend or decorate their buildings.

The modern buildings of the street related, in great part depend on reinforced concrete technology & related structural systems with stone as a cladding material only.

### 4. Physical & Visual Relationships to Residential Buildings & Other Public Buildings in the Area:

Such a relationship coexists on different levels, it is not just a visual or a physical interpretation that is being addressed, but a spiritual & cultural theme. The location of the religious building at Al-Saraya Street, Al-Khader & Al-Maydan Street and at Saladine statue square adds to the intrinsic qualities of the commercial space. Thus this spiritual link is felt & seen in the practices & spiritual exercises of the inhabitants, daily prayers at Al Umari mosque and Al Hamedy mosque.

The commercial units occupy the ground floor of the King Hussein Street, on top of which the residential units were built. It has not been a tradition to have the shopkeepers living directly above their work, & so no direct physical link was established between the unit & the house above. Apart from the structural dependence, the entries to the houses are usually through the staircases off the street, while the Saraya Street has basically a residential use.

The modern and aggressive signage system, including the new heights of buildings pollutes the visual context of the street.

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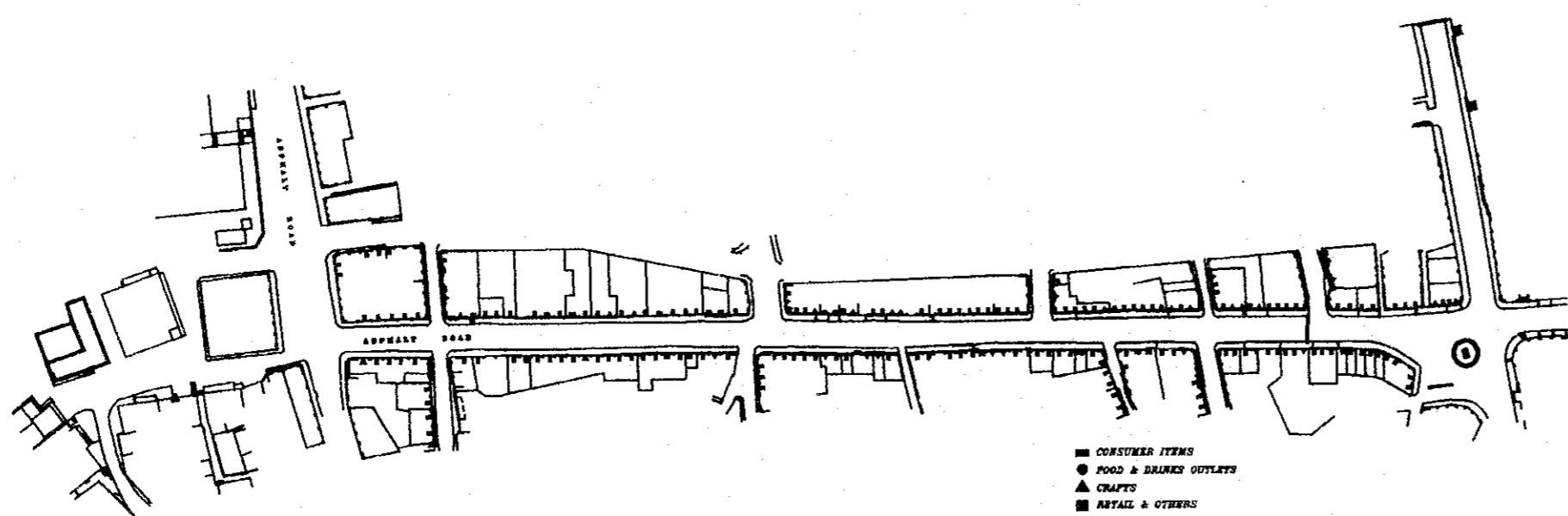
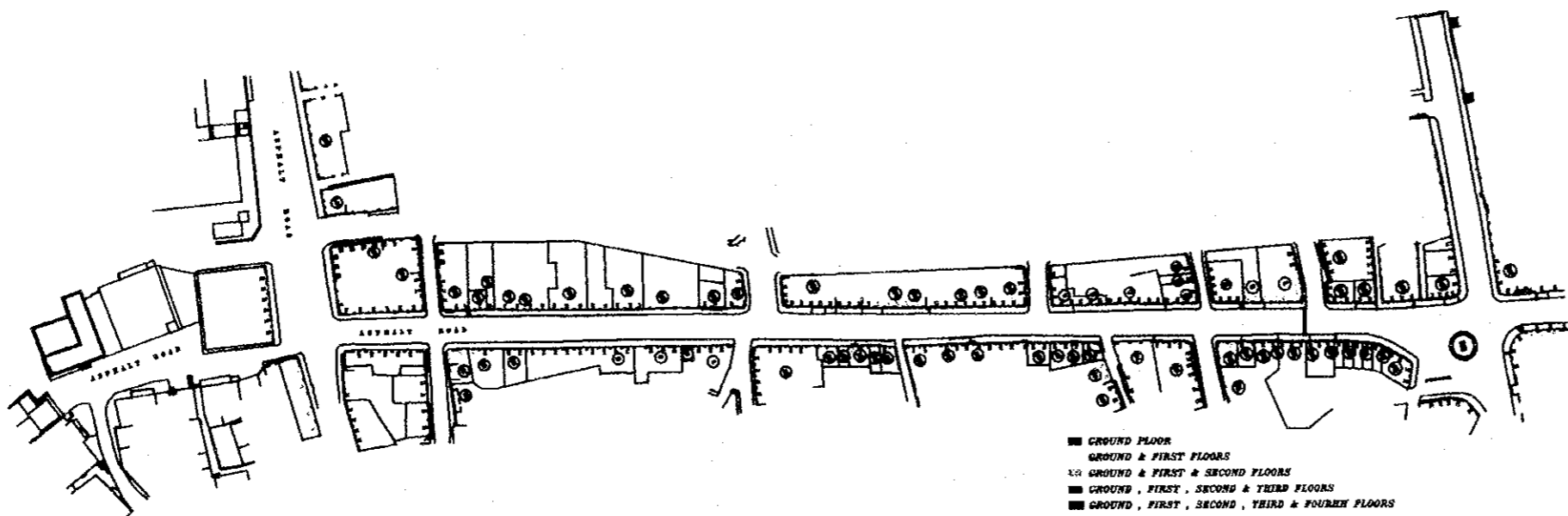
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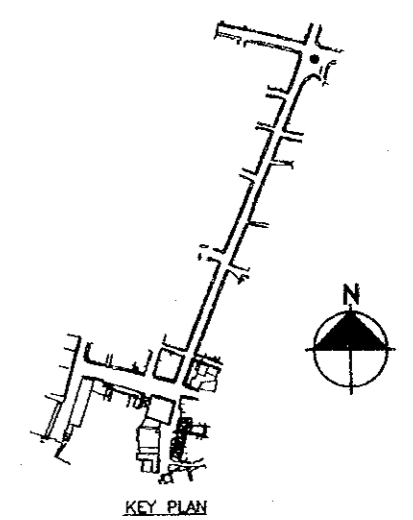
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### 5. Existing Commercial Use:

In investigating the commercial activity which was taking place in the study area, the following categories were apparent.

- Out of 283 shop units investigated, 5 shops were empty, 278 were used as stores.
- The commercial activity ranged between groceries, green groceries, butchers, tailors, ... etc. (Fig. 12).

### 6. PATTERN OF OWNERSHIP & TENURE:

In an attempt to identify major owners in the area of study, and in order to determine their potential & future willingness to be involved in a general enhancement and conservation efforts, the following resulting pattern was clear.

- The major owners are Al-Shamayleh & Al-Maaytah who are represented by several heirs.
- Others are small owners.

In investigating the 'tenants' pattern of occupation the following was clear

- Tenants pattern of occupation represents the main type in the area.
- Three owner-occupiers were identified in the street.

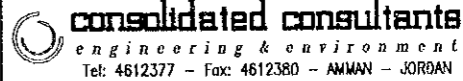
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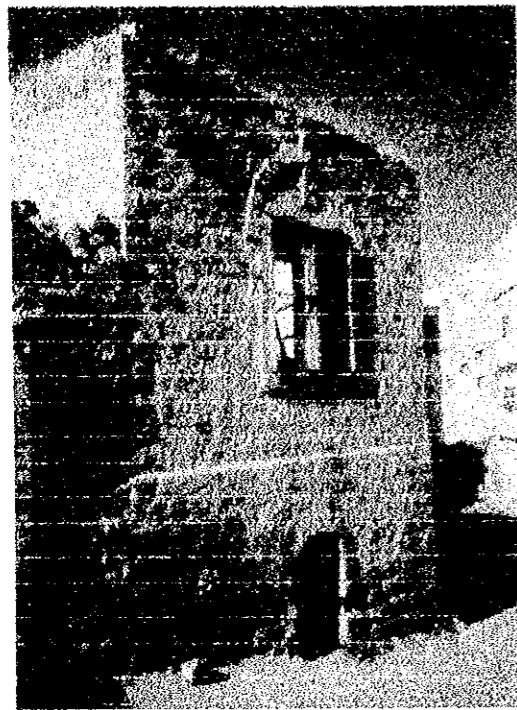
Our preliminary survey identified several architecture styles:

In the late mid nineteenth century residential buildings were built around open courts using wooden logs on a bamboo mattress with mud, ash and hay on top (fig. 09), with semi circular twin arched windows (fig. 13) and using local building materials.

Later buildings (late 19th century and early twentieth century) used cross vaults, and later on metal I-sections for balconies. Residential urban buildings rose on top of shops with tripartite window openings and projected balconies (figs. 14, 15).

New building technology, using concrete slabs on top of metal I sections, with simpler openings and stone framed windows followed (fig. 16).

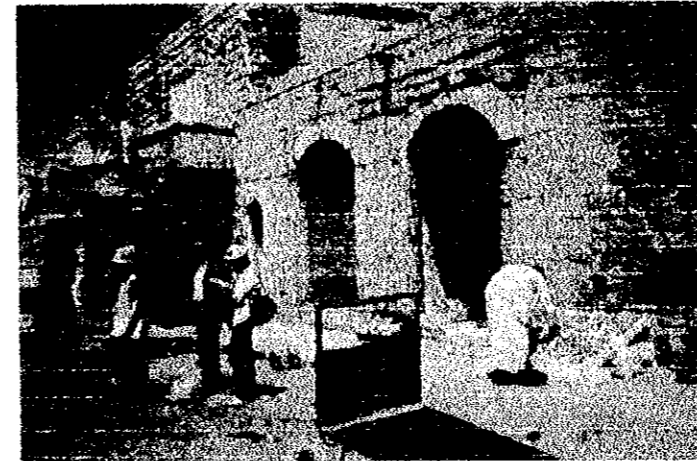
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MIDDLE & LATE 19th CENTURY  
FIG. (13)



MIDDLE & LATE 19th CENTURY &  
EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY  
FIG. (14)



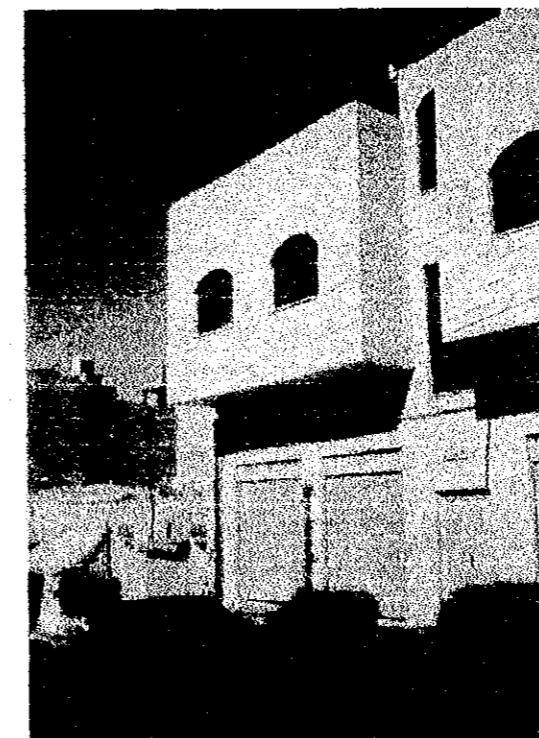
BEGINING OF THIS CENTURY  
FIG. (15)



EARLY THIS CENTURY  
USE OF CONCRETE SLABS ON METAL SECTIONS  
FIG. (16)



AFTER MODERNIZATION (90'S)  
FIG. (17)



AFTER MODERNIZATION (90'S)  
FIG. (18)

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After the Second World War and with the spread of reinforced concrete technology, buildings were constructed using flat arches with wider openings and in line with the new International Style.

With the advent and revival of regionalism in Jordan in the eighties, new buildings were built using arches and reinforced concrete technology with stone as a cladding material (fig. 18).

Traditional modern buildings along the street present a register of different architectural styles. The architectural designs of old buildings express the geometry of the shop opening & doorways of varied shapes as well as the residential function & its aesthetic requirements of smaller openings. The shop fronts; because of age, humidity & lack of care have deteriorated, and in most cases have been replaced by new metal shutters. The replacement is not, generally, sympathetic to the quality of the wall. Rolling shutters, being fixed onto the external wall face, mar the shape & quality of the openings at many shop fronts.

Awnings are another particular aspect of the architectural features of the facades. These vary in length and overlap along the length of a street or hang independently at various heights. The corrugated metal sheets, rusted with time are in need of renewal and maintenance.

The structure of the awnings is usually a metal frame attached to the wall surface. At certain times, temporary cloth awnings are used.

The exposure of the structural slabs and the existence of a string course and the fall pipes makes another feature of the wall. Graffiti adds to the visual appeal of the living environment while the wirescape along the streets has its own attraction. However, the great numbers of poles in a narrow street disturb the visual experience of the street scene.

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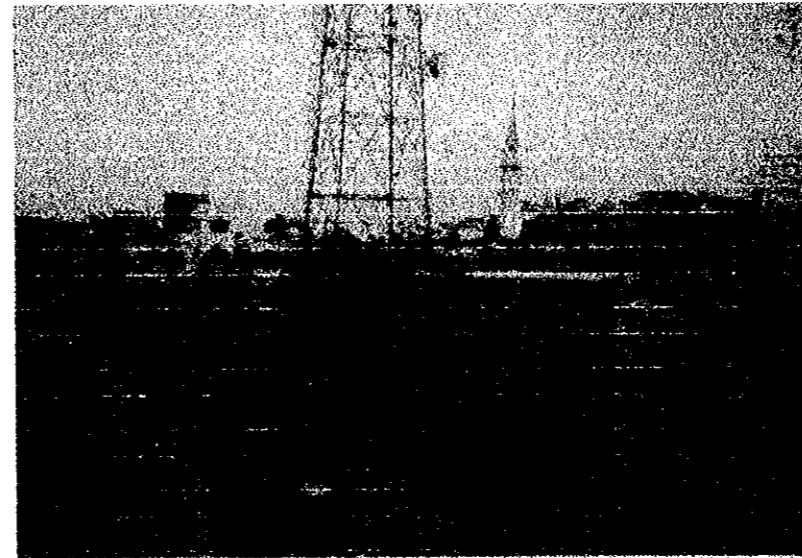
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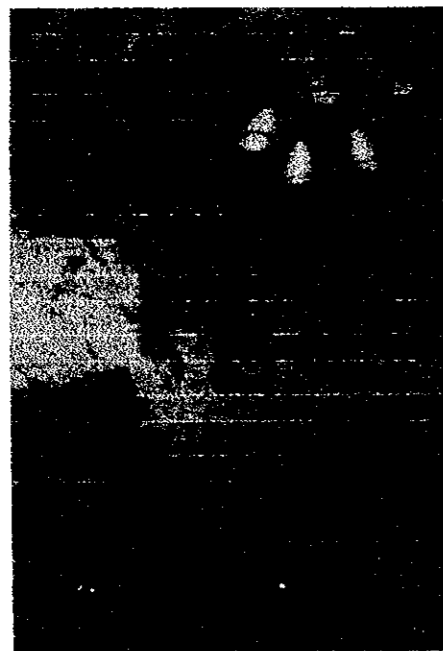
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SOCIOLOGICAL CHANGE  
FIG. (19)



GOVERNMENTAL INTERVENTIONS  
FIG. (20)



LAK OF MAINTNERANCE  
FIG. (21)



MODERNIZATION  
FIG. (22)



LACK OF PROPER LEGISLATION  
FIG. (23)

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## B- Present Architectural Status

The majority of the units under study were in a fair to an average condition, two were classified as poor.

### Deterioration of the Building Stock

The general deterioration of the physical building stock is closely related to:

- \* Neglect
- \* Changing of Building Use
- \* Depreciation of the traditional buildings against the new architecture
- \* New human aspiration, low value put on maintenance and evaluation of the state of buildings

Deterioration and problems are due to:

#### Human Factors:

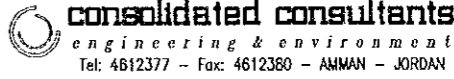
- \* Problems related to sociological change
  - Modernization (Fig. 22)
  - Existing pattern of occupiers
  - Lack of awareness
  - Types of use & changes of ownership
- \* Problems related to economical change (Fig. 21)
- \* Governmental interventions (Fig. 20)
- \* Lack of legislation (Figs. 23, 24)
- \* Lack of maintenance and faulty maintenance (Figs. 21, 25, 26)

#### Natural Agents of Deterioration:

- \* Decay of joints in the external masonry (Fig. 27)
- \* Water penetration through roofs (Fig. 28)
- \* Water penetration through walls
- \* Vegetation growth (Fig. 31)
- \* Decay of building material (Figs. 29, 30)
- \* Structural failures (Fig. 32)

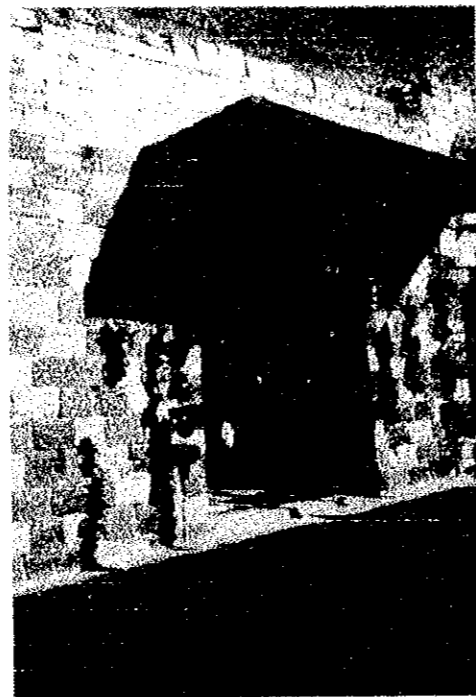
### (3) Constraints

1. Parking and pedestrianisation of Malik Hussein Street.
2. There are no developed tourist attractions or facilities between the Visitor Center and the Salahdin Statue.
3. There is very limited off street parking space. Most cars are parked on street. Those who visit the governorate buildings, etc. park in front of the compound. In addition, some vehicles park in front of the rest house. According to jett, the space in front of the rest house can accommodate approximately 5 buses.
4. The local inhabitants need to be in close partnership with the projects components, and the study should have need to address such issues .

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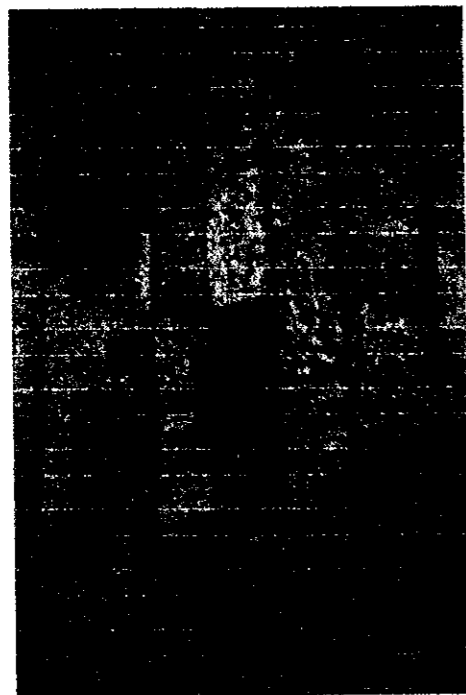
LACK OF PROPER LEGISLATION  
FIG. (24)



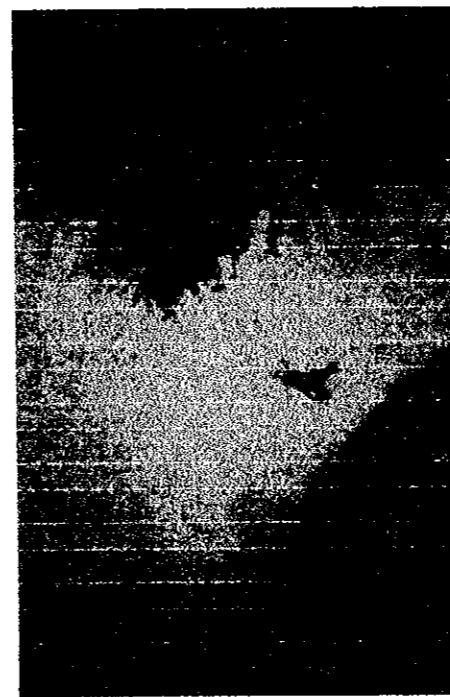
FAULTY MAINTNERANCE  
FIG. (25)



FAULTY MAINTNERANCE  
FIG. (26)



DECAY OF JOINTS  
FIG. (27)



WATER PENETRATION  
FIG. (28)

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REQUIREMENT FOR TRANSPORT FACILITIES

**Parking Space for Tourists:**

Parking space for tourist buses can be created either by demolishing the government building in front of the rest house or by utilising the existing open space between the two buildings, the area of which is approximately 1,000 sq.m, enough to accommodate the parking as well as unloading & loading space.

It is noted that the space neighbouring the castle should not be used for parking but should be regarded as part of the castle.

**Basic Traffic Conditions:**

No major redundant road space can be identified in old Karak. Any considerable reduction of road space will cause traffic congestion. Therefore, it is required to keep enough space at major bus stops by physical improvement such as creating bus bays wherever possible and by improvement of traffic management such as road markings.

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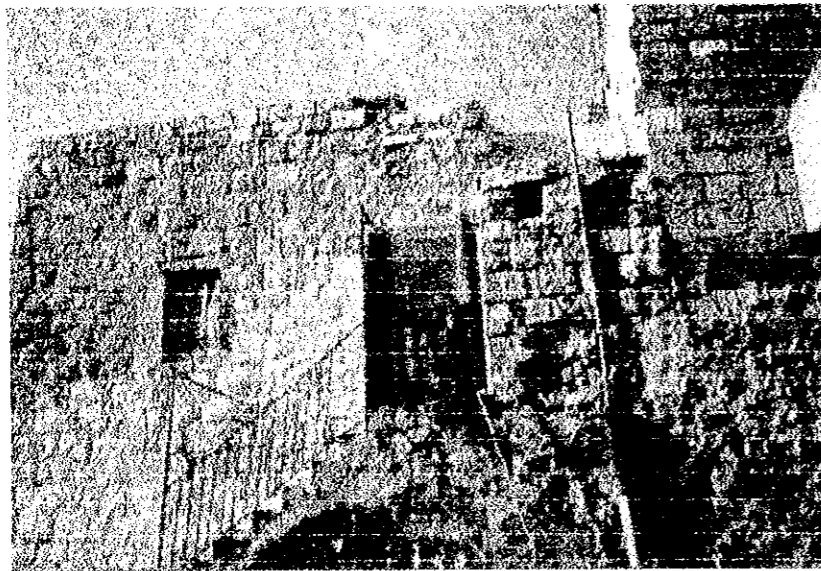


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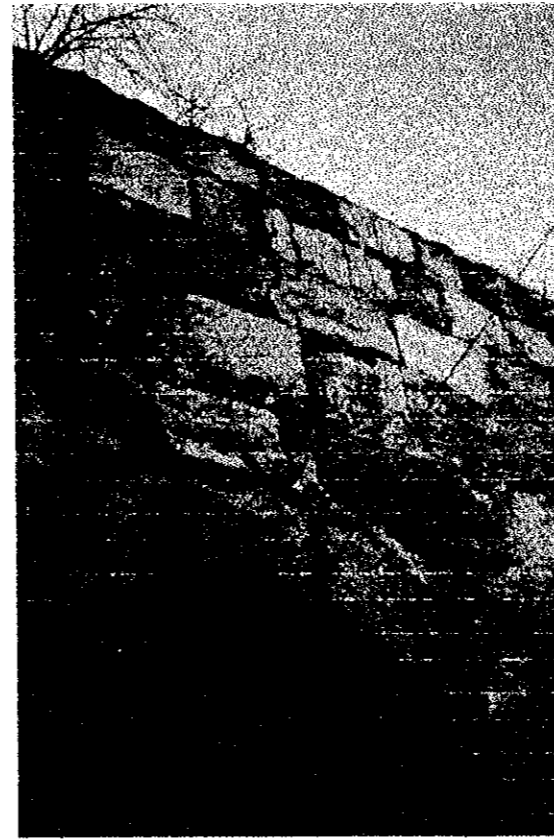
DECAY OF BUILDING MATERIAL  
FIG. (29)



DECAY OF BUILDING MATERIAL  
FIG. (30)



VEGETATION PROBLEMS  
FIG. (31)



STRUCTURAL FAILURE  
FIG. (32)

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## RECOMMENDATION GUIDE LINES FOR PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF STREET

The antiquities law for the year 1988 defines the cultural resources as antiquities and is the only one dating to before the year AD 1700 present legislation for protection.

All cultural resources after AD 1700 including buildings and the urban fabric is under no status of protection. Thus the following recommendations are only general guidelines advocating some practical measures in the light of the absence of relevant legislation and institutions administering its implementation.

Within the present legislation for cities and villages, planning and building provisional law for the year 1968, recommendation for developing building controls for the area under study is the only practical measure to safeguard the continuity and sustainance of this architectural heritage.

The following is a proposed criteria for developing building control tools advocating some aspects for the protection of the essence of the "tourist sheet", in the light of the limitation of the present term of reference and scope of work of this project.

### - RECOMMENDATION FOR BUILDING HEIGHTS

To limit the height of the buildings to be constructed in future in order to cope with the heights of the traditional old buildings .

### - RECOMMENDATION FOR BUILDING LANDUSE

To encourage the variety of commercial use to serve both , the visitors and the inhabitants

### - RECOMMENDATION FOR BUILDING DESIGN AND CONTROL TOOLS FOR NEW ADDITIONS IN TERMS OF MATERIALS, COLORS,...ETC.

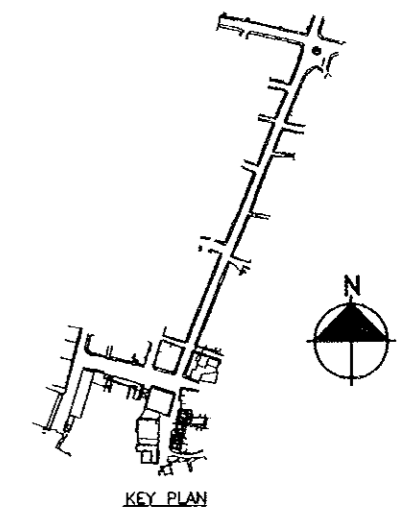
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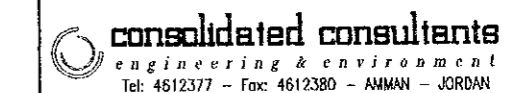
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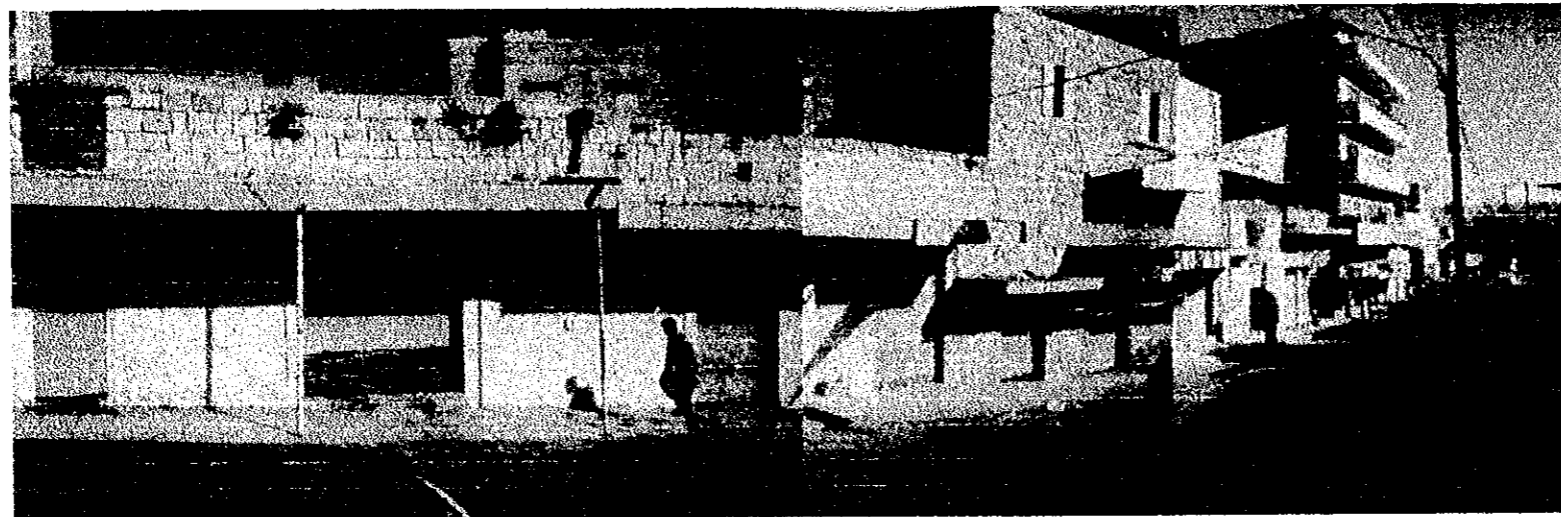
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PARKING AREA INFRONT OF  
VISITOR'S CENTER  
FIG. (33)



TOURIST BUS PARKING SHOULD BE  
REGARDED AS PART OF THE CASTLE  
FIG. (34)



BEFORE

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