

Part II Projects for the Bcharre Highlands

This part examines following priority projects selected by the previous master plan.

<Feasibility Study>

- Qadisha Cedars Planning and Management Program (B1)
- Crown Villages Destination Project (B3)

<In-depth Study>

- Bcharre Tourism Development Council Strengthening (B6)
- Cedars Ski Area

This material is contained in Chapters 7 through 10. Chapter 11 closes Part II with an economic and financial evaluation for these projects.

On Implementation

The Master Plan calls for creation of the Bcharre Tourism Action Council (BTAC) as a public-private mechanism to coordinate with the PIU for smooth implementation of all of the proposals for the Bcharre Highlands. The BTAC will be a creation of the existing private sector BTDC, the Qaza's trade group for tourism industries, with those municipalities of Bcharre involved in this master plan, to include Bcharre, Hadchit Hasroun, Hadath el Jibbe and others. Any local trade associations for arts and crafts, ski instructors, hotel and restaurant operators or similar business groups would be invited to join this council. The PIU will operate through its field officer, who will develop a close working relationship with the BTAC. In this way the PIU through this local partner, will guide the efforts of the various municipalities, and the involved NGOs in seeking funding, in planning projects and in implementation. The PIU and BTAC will also be centrally involved from the beginning in outreach to the local community groups.

It is the PIU-BTAC relationship that will provide for effective central-local follow-through within the Lebanese government, and also provide for public-private understanding and collaboration. In addition, in instances involving ministerial action, through the PIU's Advisory Committee, the PIU and BTAC will obtain the required decisions and timely resolution from any of the relevant central government ministries. Figure II-1 depicts the key working relationships that the PIU will rely on in the Bcharre area [Section 9.3 of the Master Plan Report]

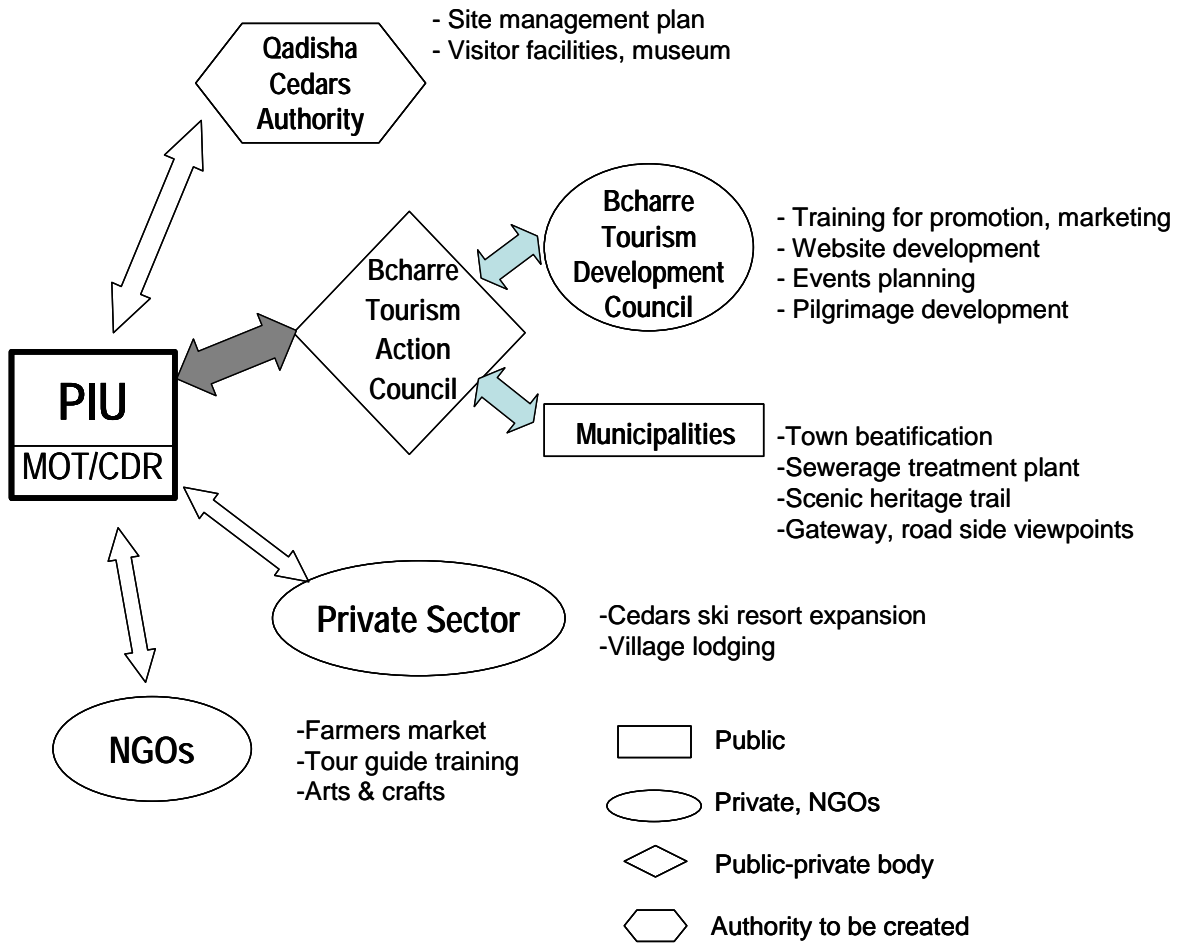


Figure II.1 Diagram of PIU's Key Working Relationships - Bcharre

Chapter 7 Qadisha Cedars Planning and Management Program (B1)

7.1 Project Brief

The program is to establish a definitive framework for the effective management of the heritage areas of the Qadisha Valley and Cedars of the Lord for the purposes of their effective preservation and development of fully sustainable forms of recreation and tourism.

A site management plan is to be prepared at the outset to define this framework and to show the responsible organizations a clear approach for sustainable management. This approach is to reinforce the efforts under way by the Patriarchate and UNESCO for proper management of this heritage site.

1. Project Code/Title	B1 Qadisha Cedars Planning and Management Program
2. Objectives	(1) To comprehensively protect and promote these World Heritage sites. (2) To establish a formal organizational structure to manage both areas – Qadisha Valley & Cedars Grove involving all stakeholders, i.e., Patriarchate, government, local communities. (3) To increase visitor volume, economically strengthen the surrounding villages.
3. Project Components	1 Donor funding - CDR with MOE, MOC, MOT receives donor grant to establish framework for creating a site management plan 2 Policy and Staffing - Planning includes decisions on policy-making body and status as nature reserve, structure for community participation, structure for technical staffing 3 Visitor management – Plan includes circulation strategy from the visitors center for vehicular and pedestrian movement to and through the site including a trails plan and road improvements, 4 Promotion and Education – Visitors Center, Interpretation (signage, brochure, web site), Heritage Area 5 Training – Staffing and community involvement (conservation, operation, etc.)
4. Location	Qadisha Valley and Cedars of the Lord World Heritage Sites, Bcharre
5. Main Implementing Organization	PIU of MOT/CDR with MOE/MOC GEF UNESCO Government of Japan Patriarchate
6. Main Beneficiaries	* Local communities * Government (national level) * International heritage (universal patrimony as World Heritage site)
7. Possible Donor Support	Swedish Aid Agency, Germany (GTZ), EU (refer to Table 7.7.1)
8. Project Cost	Total: US\$1.62 million for Site Management Framework and Infrastructure Implementation
9. Implementation	2004 – 2007 <u>2004-2005</u> - Donor funds obtained

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management framework agreed upon through participatory planning process (including boundary survey, documentation, master planning) - Management unit established through law (government involvement through nature reserve or national park, local concessionaire contract/ involvement through shareholding company for fund management and staffing) <p><u>2005-2006</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training program for management unit (including local guides program) - Facilities design including visitors center, parking, roads, adaptive reuse of Saydet, etc. - Interpretation design <p><u>2006-2007</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Construction of facilities - Opening 2007
10. Description	
Activities	<p>B1.1 Donor grant (CDR with Ministries) for Planning</p> <p>B1.2 Plan to include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) conservation strategy (cultural significance to include articulation of values, documentation, inventory) (2) operations strategy for organized decision-making to balance protection and visitation, to include concession contract and visitation fee (3) visitor management and circulation (parking, bus system, hiking trails, etc.) (4) visitor interpretation (visitors center, exhibition galleries, signage, web, brochure, video, etc.) (5) staff training program <p>B1.3 Policy body and Local Management Company established</p> <p>B1.4 Management activities to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • entrance fee collection • visitor center operation • park and ride system/transport operation • guided tours within the site • agro-processing products • café, site shop, exhibition galleries, rural gite
Expected Results	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased Local jobs and income, with some poverty alleviation 2. Adequate funding for sustained natural & cultural heritage conservation 3. Growing local production of handicrafts and agro-products in micro businesses
Staffing and Management	<p>Qadisha and Cedars Management Unit</p> <p>Staffing to create site management framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • site director/finance • visitors center manager • conservator/archaeologists • admissions staff • exhibition gallery curator • shop manager • café manager and wait staff • local guides • maintenance staff
Training	<p>Training by ICCROM, Rome, or York University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conservation • operation • visitor management • visitor interpretation • guides, ranger skills

7.2 Product Design

7.2.1 Design Considerations

(1) Target Markets/clientele

The program would provide a comprehensive management framework for the Qadisha Valley and the *Cedars of the Lord* World Heritage site, and therefore, all the segments of cultural, religious, nature-based and recreational tourism markets would be included as target markets.

(2) Key Resources to be Utilized/enhanced

The program physically covers the World Heritage site, where the prime resources are the Qadisha Valley and the *Cedars of the Lord* grove. They represent not only physical but also religious/spiritual, environmental and cultural assets to be enhanced through the program implementation. The Qadisha's ancient monasteries of the Maronite Church with their farmed terraces and facilities constitute another vital resource to be enhanced.

(3) Social Considerations

There exist many active stakeholders concerned about the area, including municipalities, international organizations, NGOs and local business communities as well as the Patriarchate. Some of them do not necessarily agree on various issues related to the development and conservation of the area. The program aims at cultivating social consensus among them for effective site management.

(4) Environmental Impact

By virtue of its World Heritage status, the environmental impact must be kept to the absolute minimum. Wastewater treatment would be treated by another project [B3] of this master plan. The program would contribute to enhancing environmental awareness among local people through their participation in the site management, planning and implementation.

(5) Management Considerations

Improved site management is the prime aim of the program. This would involve all the stakeholders, including local people and communities. Their hospitality to visitors would be expressed in part through better management of common community spaces and tourism facilities. The program would support also more specific management training in vital areas like park planning, site management, visitor and recreation management and operation of visitors center and related facilities.

(6) Institutional Aspects

A local management institution should be established for, and strengthened through, participatory site management planning. The institutional mechanism for central-local cooperative operation with the PIU of MOT/CDR should be established and

strengthened in steps. The program would support the establishment of a local shareholding company to operate part of the site management, including entrance fee collection, visitors center operation, and management of other private sector activities.

7.2.2 Product Formulation

The main products of the program are the comprehensive site management plan, and effective management structures to be established and strengthened through participatory site management planning. The site management plan would cover conservation strategy, operations strategy, visitor management and circulation, visitor interpretation, and training. The management organizations would encompass the local management unit, the Project Implementation Unit at the central level, and the central-local cooperative mechanism.

As a means to effect sound site management, the program would provide essential tourism facilities and tools. They include one visitors center with café, shops, exhibition galleries and others, paved entrance, trails, site furnishings, signage, brochure and website.

Product formulation for different user groups is summarized in Table 7.2.2. User groups are listed in the table more or less in the order of significance in terms of visitor volume, and relevant activities/products are indicated for each group.

Table 7.2.2 Product Formulation for Target User Groups – Qadisha Cedars

Target Users [visitor focus]	Key themes [product focus]	Relevant Activities, product [matching <i>experiences</i>]	Travel pattern
Beirutis, expats leisure	1 natural beauty	1 nature walks, scenic overlooks & viewpoints, interpretive signage	A] weekend, holiday
	2 living heritage	2 monasteries, visitor centers, crafts shops, events of religious, historic themes like <i>Mar Charbel festival, Apple festival, Cedars festival</i> .	B] extended stays with local families
	3 relaxation	3 souvenir shopping, restaurants, carriage rides, sight-seeing	
Religious visitors	devotional experiences	religious services at the monasteries, processions in Qadisha & Cedars, addition of monuments & shrines in Qadisha, reuse of Saydet el Karm for overnight lodging near Qannoubine	-parish groups on feast days -family excursions
Cultural [tour packages]	1 natural beauty	1 nature walks, scenic overlooks & viewpoints, interpretive signage	A] full-day stop on inclusive tours [IT]
	2 living heritage	2 monasteries, visitor centers, crafts shops, events of religious, historic themes like <i>Mar Charbel festival, Apple festival, Cedars festival</i> .	B] overnight stop on IT
Diaspora	1 natural beauty	1 nature walks, scenic overlooks & viewpoints, interpretive signage	A] weekend, holiday
	2 living heritage	2 monasteries, visitor centers, crafts shops, events of religious, historic	B] extended stays

	3 relaxation	themes like <i>Mar Charbel festival, Apple festival, Cedars festival.</i> 3 souvenir shopping, restaurants, carriage rides, sight-seeing	with local families C] overnight stop on IT
Nature based	1 natural beauty 2 hiking, camping 3 living heritage	1 & 2 nature walks, scenic overlooks & viewpoints, interpretive signage, picnic & campgrounds 3 monasteries, visitor centers	<i>Soft adventure</i> tour packages
School & youth groups	1 living heritage 2 natural beauty 3 hiking, camping	1 monasteries, visitor centers 2 & 3 nature walks, scenic overlooks & viewpoints, interpretive signage, picnic & campgrounds	Seasonal programs with schools, youth organizations
Winter skiers [ski season]	1 natural beauty 2 living heritage	1 touring Cedars grove 2 <i>Cedars Village</i> visitor center, crafts village and services	Random visits during ski season
Regional Arab leisure [summer & winter; from Beirut, Damascus, Jordan]	1 natural beauty 2 relaxation 3 living heritage	1 nature walks, scenic overlooks & viewpoints, interpretive signage 2 souvenir shopping, restaurants 3 visitor centers, crafts shops, events of historic & cultural themes like <i>Apple festival, Cedars festival.</i>	A] family motor trips B] IT groups for part day visits

Source: JICA study team

7.3 Preliminary Design

This facilities planning involves the construction of a visitors center and some facilities for the Qadisha Valley visitors. The work program is described below in detail.

(1) Construction of Visitors Center at Formal Entrance to Qadisha

This building is planned to be located at the cross junction roads of the access road to the Qadisha Valley and a road linking the crown villages, providing straight view to St Saba Church, which is a symbolic Church of Bcharre, and a panoramic view to the valley (see Figure 7.3.BM for proposed site). It is planned as a two-storey building, having total floor area of approximately 1,100 square meters. As the planned location is on the edge of the valley, walls and roof colors of this building are planned to be harmonized with the surrounding landscape. Figure 7.3.BE shows entrance side elevation, and Figure 7.3.BL is a perspective of this building from the Bcharre town center. The center will have a panoramic view of the Qadisha Valley.

This building is to be constructed on a sloping site. In order to minimize the cost of land leveling work, half of the site area would be embedded in the ground, and another half would be supported by reinforced concrete structure.

Floor plans: This building has an entrance hall, exhibition halls, seminar/ meeting room, café, shop and storage rooms. Uses of these spaces are described in detail in Table 7.3.1, and architectural plans are shown in Exhibits 7.3.BP1 and 7.3.BP2.

Table 7.3.1 Space Plan for the Qadisha Visitors Center

Room	Approx. Floor Area(sqm)	Notes
Entrance Hall	88	Place for giving out visitor information
Shop	42	Place for selling local products and souvenirs
Café & Kitchen	80	Place for dining is additionally provided outside of the building (café terrace).
Exhibition Halls, including video	420	Total area of ground and first floors
Seminar/ meeting room	65	Place for lectures on local culture to any visitors
Administration Office	18	Office for administration staff, and place of ticketing for exhibition halls. Some permanent staff would be allocated.
Storage	105	Total area of ground and first floors
Observatory Hall	130	Free zone for any visitors
Toilets	25	Provided for staff and visitors
Others	130	Staircases and halls
Total	1,100	

Source: JICA study team

Parking space is provided within and outside of this building site. Within the site 15 cars space is provided, and a large parking space of 1,500 square meters is provided in the opposite side of the road.

As the ancillary facilities, a simple structure for a farmers market, an admission fee kiosk and a signboard are provided on this building site. Details of these facilities are described in Table 7.3.2. and how these facilities are allocated is shown in Figure 7.3.BL.

Table 7.3.2 Other Facilities in the Qadisha Visitors Center Site

Facilities	Notes
Farmers market	Provided in a small space of approximately 20 square meters. Farmers' products would be sold in this facility.
Admission fee kiosk	Kiosk type unit (4m*4m), Some staff are permanently stationed.
One signage fabrication	Directional sign to the Qadisha Valley

Source: JICA study team

(2) Construction of Other Facilities for the Qadisha Valley Visitors

To serve visitors using trails in the Qadisha Valley, some toilets and landscape furniture are provided on the trails. Specifics are described in detail in Table 7.3.3. Exact location and design of the visitor center should be finalized through the initial site management planning.

Table 7.3.3 Programs of Facilities Development for the Qadisha Valley Visitors

Programs	Notes
Trail system	Selected implement, expectation with signage
Construction of site toilets	2 toilets with septic tanks are installed along the trails.
Installation of site furniture	2 sets of benches are installed along the trails.

Source: JICA study team

Additional overnight accommodations can be offered in some of the outfitted old and idle houses in the valley such as the Saydet el Qarm group of structures near the Qannoubine Monastery or those just below Qannoubine.

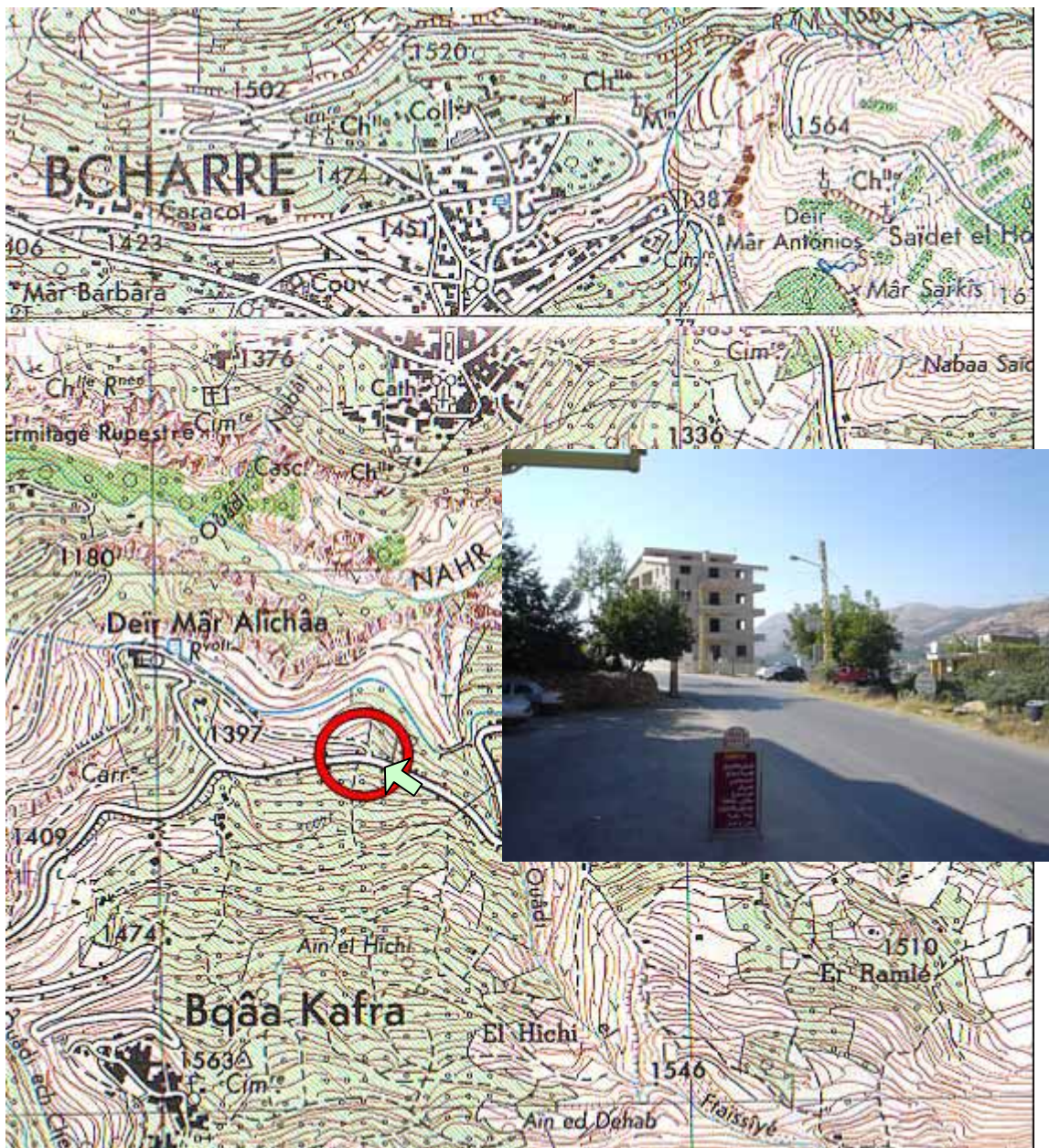
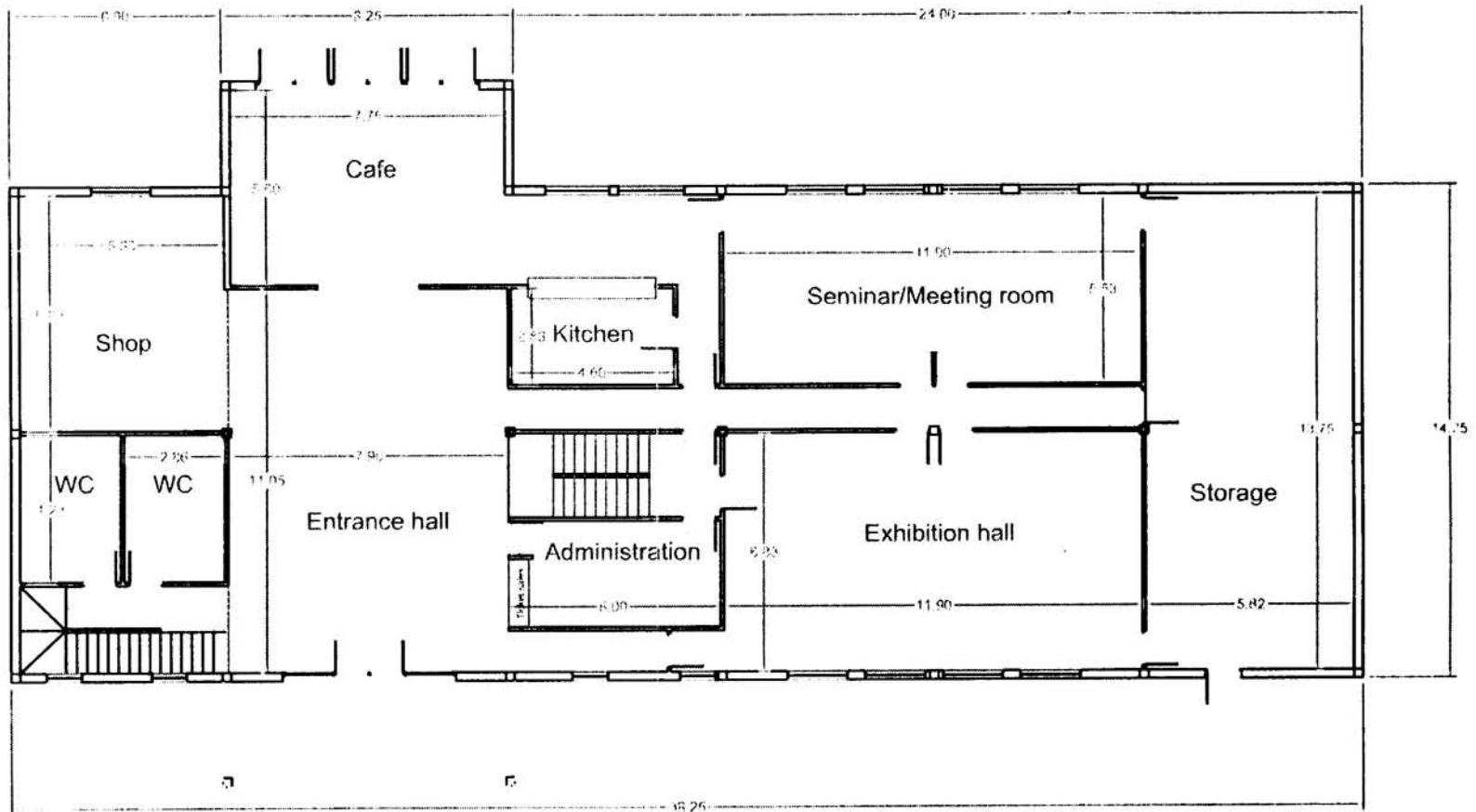


Figure 7.3.BM Proposed Site of the Qadisha Visitors Center



Proposed Site of the Qadisha Visitors Center

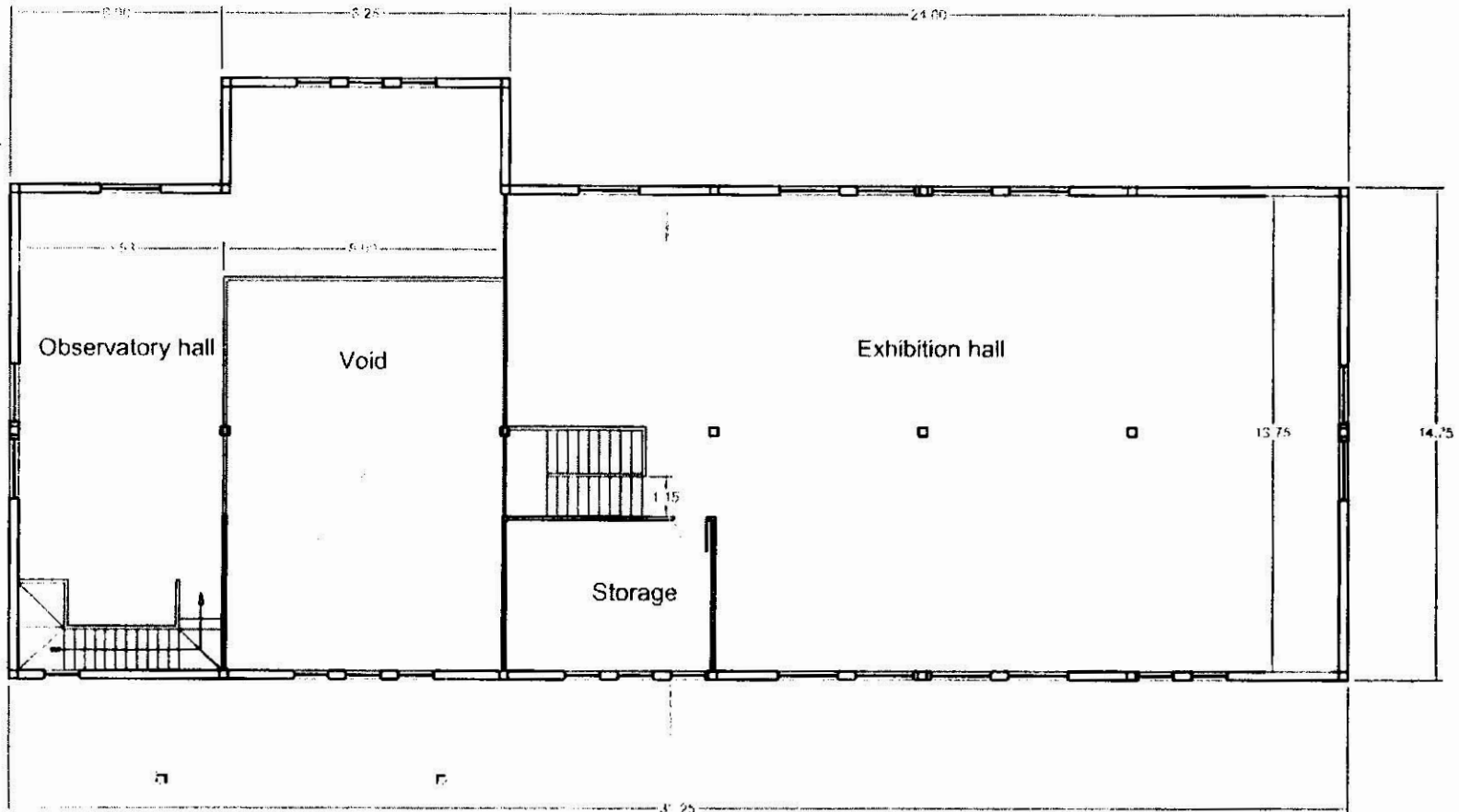


7.3.BP1

Ground Floor Plan, Visitors Center, Qadisha

Scale 1:200.

Notes:

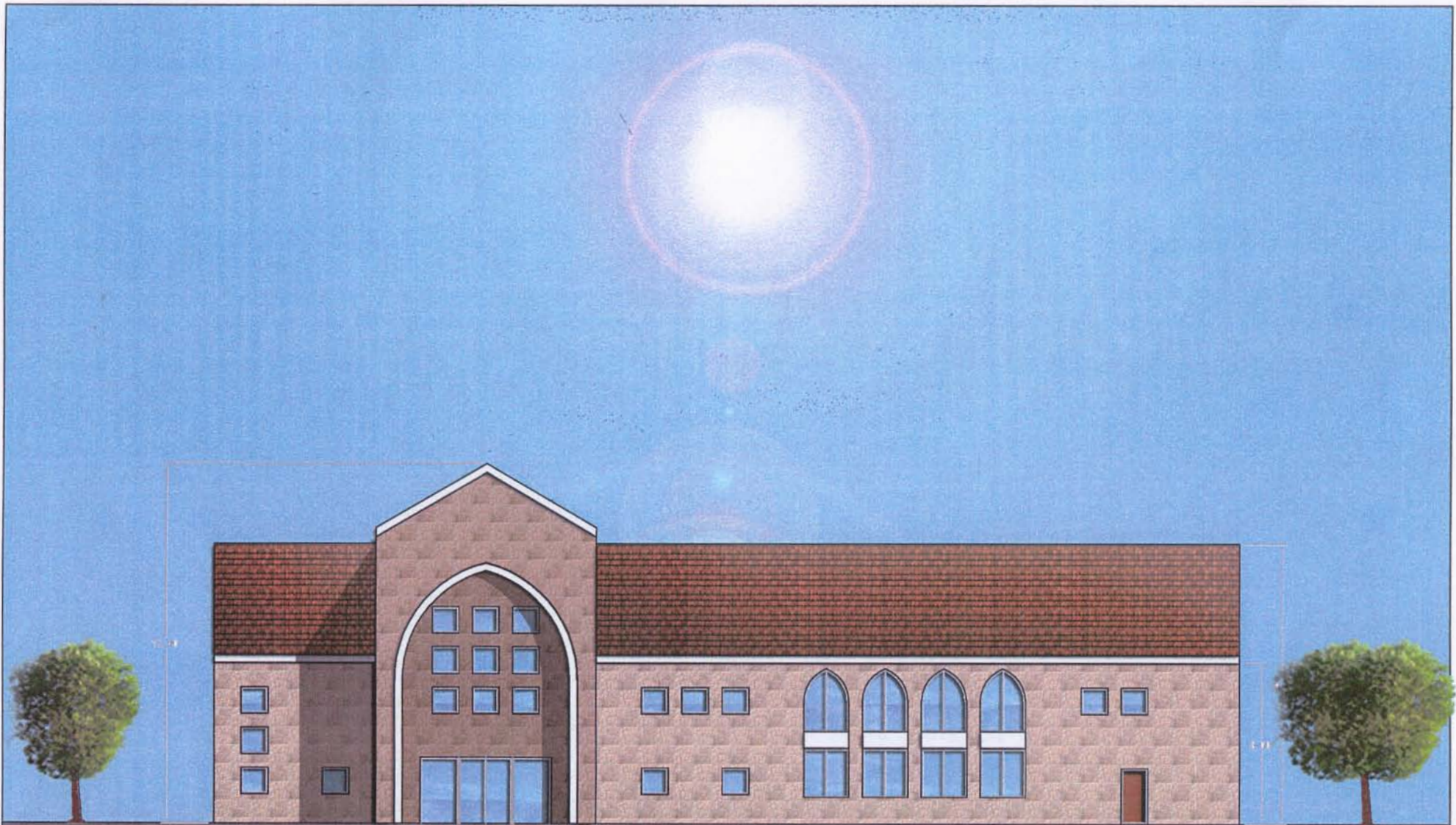


7.3.BP2

First Floor Plan, Visitors Center, Qadisha

Scale 1:200.

Notes:

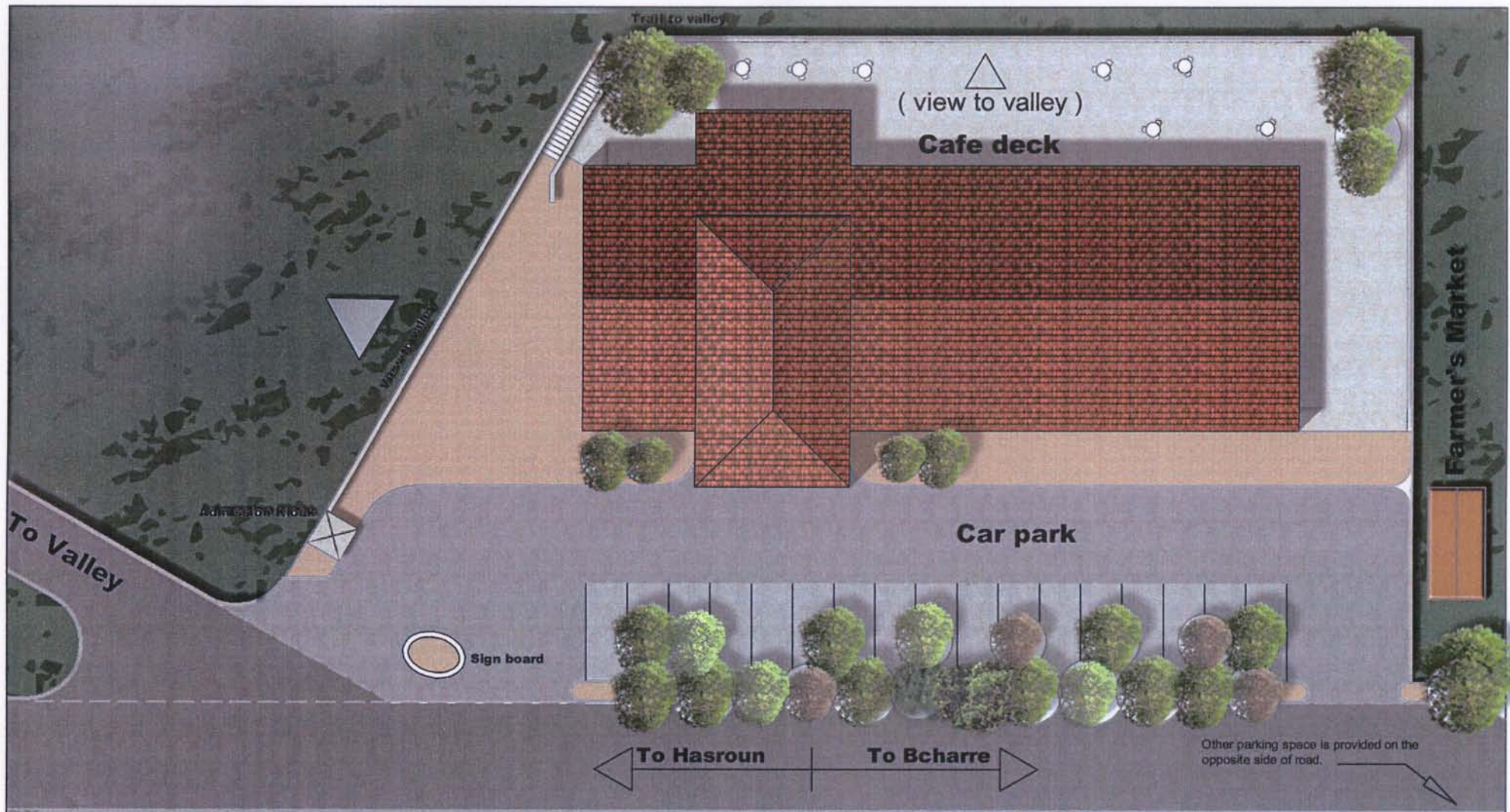


7.3.BE1

Entrance side elevation, visitor center, Qadisha

Scale 1:200.

Notes:



7.3BL1 Landscape plan, visitor centre, Qadisha.

Notes: