

International Conservation Center

175 Ha-Hagana Street

Acre, Israel



Historic Assessment

draft prepared by

James Cocks

US/ICOMOS International Exchange

in association with the

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and

Old Acre Development Company

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The International Conservation Center (formerly known as the Lighthouse Youth Hostel) is a building in the Pisan Quarter of Old Acre, in northern Israel. The historic context, materials evidence, and architectural features were examined, and evidence suggests that an Ottoman-era building was constructed on top of the remains of a Crusader fortification, although additional evidence will be necessary to be conclusive.

Few historic primary sources were available for the creation of this report. Additional historic documentation may be found by tracing the primary sources that have since been transferred to different parts of the world, including present-day France, Lebanon, and Syria. Further research may also provide additional information on the broader historic context of the city and region.

Historic factors that led to different building campaigns, beginning with Crusader occupation, are examined, and comparisons are noted from the Crusader, Ottoman, and Modern times. The positive aspects of Acre's history are identified as times with the free exchange of ideas, a long-term flourishing economy, ethnic and cultural diversity, and legitimate opportunities for social status mobility. Negative points in Acre's history are identified with high rates of crime and illicit activity, poor sanitary conditions, homogeneity, monopolistic governance and economic policies, and a trend towards fanaticism.

The building has a long history of uses, additions, and alterations. Without primary documents, further evidence will be necessary to conclusively determine its historic uses and precise layout, particularly before the late 19th century. The building reportedly served as the Governor's Office during Bahá'u'lláh's stay in the Old City (1868-1877) and holds special meaning to the Bahá'í community. It has since been used as an Arab Christian family residence, a youth hostel, and the set of an Israeli television show.

The building materials incorporate a variety of aesthetic styles and decorative elements, including a prominent trefor window, a gabled roof with red tiling, and marble flooring and columns. Additional decorative finishes, as well as useful information on the architectural materials, may be recoverable from the interventions and modern coatings from the last 50 years.

The building is of Class-A Significance and is most worthy of preservation. Present conditions are causing accelerated deterioration, and the building is in urgent need of repair.

Rehabilitation of the building into the proposed educational institution appears to be appropriate to its historic context, as well as the social needs of today.

Methodology

This Historic Assessment was produced for the International Conservation Center in Acre. The report draft was written by James Cocks, as part of the US/ICOMOS International Exchange Program. Photographs taken for this report were by Maya Kapelushnik (attributed) and James Cocks (not attributed). It is hoped that this report will be useful on both the subject and for anyone wishing to perform further research.

Acknowledgements

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Research Methodology

With the exception of two photographs, no historic documents specific to the building were available at the time of writing. Research was necessary to develop a better understanding of the history, context, and significance of the building. A variety of written sources and visual observations, as well as input from specialists and local inhabitants, was considered. The draft was prepared with documents available in English, French, and German, with summaries of some Arab documents that had been translated or referenced in secondary sources. One method of expanding this report is to incorporate or consider documents, especially primary sources, available in Arabic and Hebrew.

The search for historic documentation began with locally available materials and expanded to more regional sources, starting with those found at the in-house libraries at the Old Acre Development Company and the Acre office of the Israel Antiquities Authority. These local sources provided a few maps and secondary sources that were of interest, outlined in the Annotated Bibliography. Previous work conducted by student-interns was also considered, as well as a variety of books and reports published on the city by foreign presses.

One of the striking aspects of researching this report was the limited amount of locally available information sources: the archaeological archives at the regional office of the Israel Antiquities Authority were destroyed by arson in 1997; the local public library, called the Canada-Akko Public Library, contained no relevant information; the Bahá'í archives were not made available for the research of this report, with the only Bahá'í document made available summarized through email. As a consequence of the limited locally available documentation, more regional sources were consulted for use.

The Rockefeller Library in Jerusalem was searched for publications and papers on Acre. The search yielded some articles and books to mention Acre, many of which were in English. A few useful archaeological and architectural reports are posted on the Internet. These, as well as other relevant sources used for the report, are summarized in the Annotated Bibliography or, if of secondary or tangential relevance, referenced as footnotes.

Additional research may reveal further information on both the building of this study and its broader historic context. One first place for investigation is the library at the University of Haifa. A more ambitious step is to research primary documents on Crusader Acre by tracing the archives transferred by the Hospitallers from Acre to Manosque, France in 1283 or, alternatively, to examine any existing Crusader-era records held by the Pisans. To research additional information on Acre, information available at the library of the American University in Beirut may be of use.¹ Finally, the archives available in Damascus may also provide further information, particularly from the Ottoman-era.²

Report Methodology

The report begins with the summary of historic research conducted on the building and its surroundings, titled "Historic Context." This is used as a guide for analyzing trends of building campaigns. Architectural materials were examined, although the most information-yielding aspects of the building—the roof and the basement—were off-limits for safety and insurance reasons. These two areas of the building, as well as the underlying stones obscured by modern finishes, should reveal further and more conclusive information once investigated.

Physical conditions of the site are supplemented in a separate report written in Hebrew by Conservation Engineer Yaacov Schaffer. Decorative features have been recorded by groups of Italian students in 2005 who produced drawings, photographs, and documents for the extant windows, doors, and finishes.

Finally, as a point of clarification, Akko and Acre have often been used interchangeably; however, for this report, the Old City will be referred to as Acre, as it is designed by UNESCO on the World Heritage List.

¹ Titles are available on their website, http://olib.aub.edu.lb/cgi-bin/jl_w207.sh, which shows many first hand accounts and studies that would be useful for expanding this report.

² This was one of the archives used by Thomas Philipps for *Acre: The Rise and Fall of a Palestinian City 1730-1831*.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

This section identifies trends during the last three major building campaigns of the city: Crusader (12th and 13th centuries), Ottoman (circa 17th through 19th centuries), and Modern (20th century). Although the surrounding area of Acre has been continuously inhabited for about 4,000 years, the Crusader era is the starting point for the historic context of this report. Economic trends, political circumstances, and events are identified, to determine relevant information on probable building campaigns. Particular emphasis is placed on Pisans and their quarter within the city during the Crusades, as this is the area where the building of study is located.

Crusader Periods: 1104 – 1291

Acre was an important and famous fortified city during the Crusades. From 1104 to 1291, aside from its surrender to Saladin in 1187 and reconquest in 1191, the city remained in Crusader control, and during the 13th century, became the capital of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. The population alone is estimated at peaking around 40,000,¹ ranking it as a large city compared with those in Western Europe at the time. It was an important port for the establishment of the Crusader orders in the Middle East and the securing of roads for merchants, pilgrims, and military activity.

First Crusader Occupation: 1104-1187

Nearly five years after the conquest of Jerusalem, Acre came under Crusader control. The natural defensive advantages of the port and surroundings established Acre as the official Port of Jerusalem, despite being a distance of roughly 200 kilometers. The majority of pilgrims bound for the holy places and arriving by ship passed through its port. It quickly became one of the most important commercial centers in the Latin Kingdom, ultimately second only to Constantinople in the eastern Mediterranean. It is from this commercial activity, primarily as a center for trading and a safe port of entry, that Acre became the wealthiest city in the Latin Kingdom.²

From this economic growth came also a rapid population growth, resulting in an intensely dense urban population in the second half of the 12th century. Narrow streets, overpopulation, and insufficient sanitation, particularly for sewage, resulted in epidemics and disease. Although the accounts of pilgrims should be taken cautiously, two in particular stand out as exemplifying the poor sanitary conditions observed by various travelers in the 12th century:

"Owing to the massive overcrowding of the residents of Ptolemais [Acre], the atmosphere is congested and rife with different sickness. This causes high mortality. The bodies of the dead

¹ An accurate population range is difficult to establish, with historians estimating between 30,000 to 60,000. It was, nevertheless, a large city by Medieval standards and larger than London at the time. More information is at Jaroslav Folda's *Crusader Manuscript Illumination at Saint-Jean d'Acre, 1275-1291* (published 1976), page 6.

² Distances and the relations of pilgrims are detailed in *Crusader Manuscript Illumination at St. Jean d'Acre 1275-1291*, page 4

give off a noxious smell and there is not much to be done to remedy this nuisance."
Byzantine Crusader Ynis Focas, who stayed in Acre between the years 1160-1170³

"In its greatness it resembles Constantinople. It is the focus of ships and caravans, and the meeting-place of Muslims and Christian merchants from all regions... There are no gardens around Acre. Fruit is brought to the city from the orchards that are in the neighborhood. At the eastern extremity of Acre is a torrent course (the Ne'eman river), along the banks of which extending to the sea is a sandy plain, than which I have seen no more beautiful sight. As a course for horses there is none to compare with it. Every morning and evening the Lord of the town rides over it, and the soldiers parade—destroy them, God. ... Unbelief and impiety there burn fiercely, and pigs (Christians) and crosses abound. It stinks and is filthy, being full of refuse and excrement."

Moorish sojourner, Ibn Jubayr, who arrived in Acre in 1184⁴

Surrender, Siege and Counter-Sieges: 1187-1191

Following the Crusaders' disastrous defeat at the Battle of Hattin, Acre surrendered to Saladin in 1187, in exchange for guarantees of the lives and possessions of its inhabitants.⁵ It is not clear how many inhabitants, such as indigenous Muslims or merchants, stayed in Acre after the surrender. Under Saladin's control, the city was renovated and refortified, and the subsequent Crusader Siege of Acre, begun in 1189, lasted off and on for nearly two years, during which both sides received many reinforcements, resulting in an extended siege would have incurred much damage on the city's building stock, although it is unclear how much of the city was left in ruin after the siege. Another aspect to the city's destruction was Richard I of England's massacre following the capture of Acre of over 2,000 Muslim prisoners, including women and children, after declaring a peace treaty with Saladin. It is unclear how much of this population had been present in the city before Saladin's takeover.



Figure 1 - Siege of Acre, 1189-1191.

Source: <http://crusades.boisestate.edu/>

³ Vered Raz-Romeo "A Selection of Crusader Sources on Akko", *Shared Heritage of Akko: Preliminary Draft Report Vol. 1* (2004)

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ The Battle of Hattin concluded on July 4, and the surrender of Acre occurred on July 10, 1187. It is unclear how long of a siege occurred, if any, at Acre during this time, and what damage, if any, this siege incurred on the city's buildings.

Another question about this time period is the role the Pisans played in the reconquest of the city. One source mentions that the Pisans provided aid to the reconquest of Acre, finally scaling the walls in 1191, and in exchange they received land next to the city's port.⁶ Another source indicates that the Pisans had previously provided maritime aid during the first Crusade and capture of Jerusalem in 1099, and in exchange had received land and tax benefits, along with other merchant colonies such as Genoa and Venice.⁷ It is therefore unclear whether the Pisans had received their land in Acre following the first Crusader occupation or following the Siege of Acre in 1191. Their involvement with the 1191 Siege may have either upgraded the size of an existing location on the harbor, or it may have provided relocation to an upgraded area; or it may have done nothing to improve their location within Acre. The proximity of the Pisan quarter to the Templar castle, however, implies that the two remained in close contact during the 13th century.

Acre's "Golden Age": 1191-1291

Once Acre was declared the capital of the Crusader Kingdom, it experienced a period of unequalled prosperity that marks its "Golden Age." During this period, the port and markets of Acre brought a lively interchange between east and west. The most powerful Italian trading centers, Venice, Pisa, and Genoa, had large quarters in the city. Over time confrontations between these centers escalated, leading to open conflict in 1255, and a combination of infighting, economic decline, and political instability contributed to its fall by the end of the century.

One of the positive qualities of Acre in this period was the relative social class mobility. The city consisted of Frankish nobility, most of whom were settlers, were largely intermarried with indigenous Christians whose offspring formed a class of *polains*, and whose "turcopoles," light cavalry, were partly native Christians or converts and partly half-castes. The general population mainly consisted of the indigenous Christians, most of whom were Arab-speaking and of the Orthodox Church.⁸

Adding to the flavor of Acre during its "Golden Age" was the tolerance for different religions. With thirty-eight known churches, Christians remained in the majority but had a wide variety of religious orders, including the Franciscans, Dominicans and Carmelites, as well as non-Frankish Christians, which included the Orthodox as well as Nestorians, Syrian Jacobites, and Syrian Melkites. Besides the Christians were also some Samaritans and a community of Jews. The Jewish population became one of the largest settlements in the Latin Kingdom at the time, with an estimated population around 200 or 800.⁹ Finally there were the Muslims, who not only were allowed to

⁶ Rotary Club, "Les Republiques Italiennes et Acre," 1969

⁷ Renouard, Yves (1969). *Les Villes d'Italie de la fin du Xe siècle au début du XIVe siècle*

⁸ Jaroslav Folda *Crusader Manuscript Illumination at Saint-Jean d'Acre, 1275-1291*, Princeton University Press (1976), page 5

⁹ "A Selection of Crusader Sources on Akko", *Shared Heritage of Akko: Preliminary Draft Report Vol. 1* (2004) translates one traveler, Benjamin of Tudela in 1173, who identifies about 200 Jews, which the author interprets as approximately 800 individuals, making it in theory one of the largest Jewish communities in the Crusader Kingdom. However, *Illuminations* (page 6) references a series of massacres of Jews in the 12th century, which caused their exodus and reduced the number of Jews until the 13th century. In either case, by the 13th century there was a fairly large Jewish population in Acre,

swear on the *Koran* in litigation, but also served as customs officials and tax collectors. There is also evidence that they had their own place of worship.¹⁰

Some of the positive aspects of the city are outlined by manuscripts historian Jaroslav Folda, who describes the city as a center of intellectual thought. His analysis of various Crusader manuscripts in their context concludes, "There can be no doubt that interchange, accommodation, and coexistence were the way of life for a Frank residing in Acre."¹¹ Acre, he argues, combined its political and economic significance, cosmopolitan ambience, naturally pleasant setting, and system of fortifications to provide a place for cultural, governmental, commercial, and military achievements. Perhaps the greatest contribution Acre made to the world was this relatively brief period of time in which it fostered the open and free exchange of ideas.

One traveler describes the city's diversity and urban landscape during its period of economic prosperity:

"The public squares, or streets, within the city were exceedingly neat, all the walls of the houses of like height with one another and built without exception of hewn stones, being wondrously adorned with glass windows and painting. Moreover, all the palaces and houses of the city were built not simply to serve ordinary needs but designed with a care for human comfort and enjoyment, being fitted up inside and decorated outside with glass, painting, hangings, and other ornament, as each man was able. The public places of the city were covered over with silken sheets or other splendid stuffs for shade. At every street corner stood a very strong tower protected by an iron door and chain. The nobility lived round the inner part of the city in exceedingly strong castles and palaces. In the centre of the city lived the craftsmen and merchants, every one in a special place according to his trade. ... Moreover, each [quarter] had full jurisdiction beside his own palace or castle, and, what is more, immunity from taxation. ... Not only the richest merchants but the most diverse folk dwelt there... all the strange and rare things which are to be found in the world were brought thither."

Ludolph of Suchem's 'Description of the Holy Land' in 1212¹²

Since the early 12th century, it was the economic function of Acre that largely accounted for the diversity found among its population. The relocation to Acre of the royal court, various ecclesiastical institutions, and numerous refugees from territories remaining under Muslim rule resulted in a substantial concentration in the city of nobility, clergy, and members of an educated elite consisting of notaries, lawyers, practitioners of the medical profession, and some teachers of the liberal arts and theology.¹³

Each of the mercantile quarters appeared to add some degree of architectural diversity to the city. In the Genoese quarter, six *palacia* or multistoried large buildings were recorded in 1248-50 to be foreign to indigenous architecture and were presumably similar to those being built around that time in Genoa proper. In 1286 Venice shipped 72 tons of ashlar and corbels to Acre for the repair and embellishment of the *fondaco*

so much so that a Jewish quarter existed near some land owned by the Teutonic Order, but it is not clear exactly where this was. No synagogue appears on any of the extant maps.

¹⁰ *Crusader Manuscript Illumination at Saint-Jean d'Acre, 1275-1291* page 6

¹¹ *Ibid*, page 6

¹² N. Makhoul and C.N. Johns *Guide to Acre*, 1946, page 40-41

¹³ David Jacoby "Society, Culture, and the Arts in Crusader Acre", published in *France and the Holy Land: Frankish Culture at the End of the Crusades* (2004), page 98

and other public structures located in its quarter. It has also been supposed that some architectural features found in Pisa also appeared in the Pisan quarter of Acre.¹⁴

Acre held many advantages as a capital over Jerusalem, including its important harbor and dynamic commerce, a major system of defensive fortifications that developed and expanded throughout the thirteenth century, and a growing population that made it the largest city in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem.¹⁵ Acre's population was, from the nature of its economic activity, very transient. Traveling merchants generally stayed no longer than a month, while the pilgrims tended to stay only a few days. Crusaders and military contingents were occasionally based in Acre for several months, sometimes longer. This transient population had a substantial impact on Acre, including the improved circulation of books, transfer of artifacts, the movement of artists and craftsmen, and the diffusion of Western social values and attitudes.¹⁶ Due to the nature and size of Acre, there was a permanent economic and social exchange on the individual level with the members of all communities.¹⁷

The large transient population also had its drawbacks. Over time, Acre became the hub for prostitution and, increasingly, criminals throughout the Mediterranean.¹⁸ One critical account is useful in considering the living conditions within the city walls:

"When I entered this horrible city and had found it full of countless disgraceful acts and evil deeds, I was very confused in my mind. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me and horror hath overwhelmed me, because I had received such 'a heavy burden and grievous to be borne' and I was about to give an account for these people to the stern Judge. Murders took place, both in public and private almost every day and night. ... The city was everywhere filled with prostitutes, and because these prostitutes paid higher rents for their lodgings than did other people, not only laymen but even churchmen and some members of the regular clergy rented out their lodgings to public prostitutes through the whole city."

Jacques de Vitry, chosen to serve as the bishop of Acre 1216-1225¹⁹

Although first hand accounts must be taken into consideration cautiously, as they frequently exaggerate and distort, this does provide some insight into the living conditions of the city and begins to explain the reasons for finding such heavily fortified structures within the city walls.

Another, more distanced account is used to describe the context surrounding the imprisonment of Marco Polo in Genoa, who began his famous journey to the Far East at Acre. Although again this should be reviewed cautiously, the annotation provides a similar context for conflict within the city:

A dispute which broke out at Acre in 1255 came to a head in a war which lasted for years, and was felt all over Syria. It began in a quarrel about a very old church called St. Sabba's, which stood on the common boundary of the Venetian and Genoese estates in Acre, and this flame

¹⁴ Jacoby "Society, Culture, and the Arts in Crusader Acre" page 114

¹⁵ Jaroslav Folda, "Before Louis IX: Aspects of Crusader Art at St. Jean d'Acre, 1191-1244," published in *France and the Holy Land: Frankish Culture at the End of the Crusades* (2004), page 139

¹⁶ Jacoby "Society, Culture, and the Arts in Crusader Acre" page 99-100

¹⁷ Ibid, page 107

¹⁸ "A Selection of Crusader Sources on Akko", *Shared Heritage of Akko: Preliminary Draft Report Vol. 1* (2004), page 98. See also Steve Levitt's *Freakonomics* (2005) for an economic analysis of untended or undesirable children (such as those borne by prostitutes) and the relation to violent crime.

¹⁹ Ibid. Also available at:

www.leeds.ac.uk/weblearning/MedievalHistoryTextCentre/James%20of%20Vitry.doc

was blown by other unlucky occurrences. Acre suffered grievously. Venice at this time generally kept the upper hand, beating Genoa by land and sea, and driving her from Acre altogether. Four ancient porphyry figures from St. Sabba's were sent in triumph to Venice, and with their strange devices still stand at the exterior corner of St. Mark's, towards the Ducal Palace. ... Mutual hate waxed fiercer than ever; no merchant fleet of either state could go to sea without convoy, and wherever their ships met they fought.

Annotation by Henry Yule, from *Travels of Marco Polo*, by Marco Polo and Rustichello of Pisa²⁰

This annotation illustrates the unstable internal conflicts that affected living conditions at Acre. The Genoese and Venetian quarters within Acre were adjacent to one another, and it can be expected that Pisans in Acre were also dragged into a variety of conflicts. While Acre had the distinguished quality of being a place of trade and commerce, the individual merchant colonies of Acre were almost constantly warring with each other. This is one explanation for the unusual thickness of walls within the city for Crusader-era buildings.

Another explanation for the thick masonry walls inside the Crusader city is in 1202, a heavy earthquake occurred, and likely caused damage to the existing structures.²¹ This would have encouraged thicker walls by reinforcing existing walls and reinforcing arches for seismic stabilization. Little additional information is available on the seismic history of 13th century Acre.

In summary, seismic concerns, safety issues among criminals, and warring merchant colonies all provide reasons for the very thick walls seen within Crusader-era Acre. As one final anecdote to the thickness and decoration of the buildings within the city, the only surviving European historian to witness the last days of Acre described the Templar palace on the southwest point of Acre, adjoining the Pisan quarter:

The Temple was the strongest place of the city, and was in a large area directly on the shore, like a castle, for it had at its entrance a strong high tower, and the walls were thick, 28 feet wide. On each side of the tower were smaller towers and on each of these smaller towers there was a lion *passant*, life-sized, gilded, which altogether, the four lions, the gold and the workmanship, cost 500 saracen bezants, and they were a great marvel to see.

The "Templar of Tyre," after the fall of Acre in 1291²²

Acre, during its "Golden Age" had many positive qualities, including religious, cultural, and ethnic diversity, some degree of social mobility between classes, a strong economy, and a constant interchange resulting in the exchange of ideas. Its negative qualities include overcrowding, poor sanitary conditions, a high rate of crime, and open conflict erupting in the streets between different individuals or quarters. Within each of the mercantile quarters were thick masonry walls, defensible architectural systems of fortifications, and a variety of decorative schemes. There does not appear to be any other time in the city's history that would have merited the construction of such thick walls for privately-owned buildings within the city walls.

²⁰ *The Travels of Marco Polo* is available in full at: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10636/10636-8.txt>

²¹ Zeev Goldmann *Akko in the Time of the Crusades*, page 11

²² Jacoby "Society, Culture, and the Arts in Crusader Acre" page 99

Decline, Fall, and Over Four Centuries of Neglect

The decline and fall of Crusader Acre was the result of a number of factors beyond the scope of this report. A few chronological events, however, will help bring into perspective the resulting decline and fall of Acre. It is also useful in determining the period of decline that would have led to fewer large-scale architectural constructions.

In 1255, open warfare erupted between the Venetians and the Genoese in the streets of Acre.

In 1263 Acre was attacked by the Mamluk Sultan Baybars, and although he was unable to take it, he managed to overtake numerous other Crusader sites, including Arsuf, 'Atlit (at the time called Castle Peregrinorum or "Castle of the Pilgrims"), Haifa, Safad, Jaffa, Ashkelon, and Caesarea. Thereafter, Baybars directed almost annual attacks against the coast, aimed at city suburbs, orchards, crops, and flocks with the intention of damaging the economies of Crusader states.²³ The surrounding roads would have been considerably less safe for pilgrims, another aspect that would have damaged the economy of Acre.

In 1283, the official archives of the city were transferred by the Hospitallers from Acre to Manosque, France. This was probably indicative of the acknowledgement of a weakening state, in preparation for the eventual loss or surrender of Acre.²⁴

In 1284 Pisa lost the Battle of Meloria against Genoa, causing the ruin of Pisa as a naval power. Venice also had a long history of conflict with Genoa,²⁵ and this division between the mercantile powers would have significantly damaged the combined naval defenses of Acre.

In 1291 Acre was once again attacked by and finally surrendered to the Mamluks. One eyewitness describes the fall of Acre:

"When the Muslims stormed Acre, some of its inhabitants took flight in ships... Then the sultan demanded the surrender of all who were holding out in the towers... and they were beheaded around Acre to the last man. Then at his command the city of Acre was demolished and razed to the ground."

Abu'l Fida in 1291²⁶

This gesture of beheading may have been in response to the 1191 civilian massacre by Richard I of England; it was also characteristic of the Mamluks to demand surrender and subsequently slaughter remaining survivors, including civilians. In any event, it is clear that no Crusaders survived and lived inside Acre to carry on tradition or customs established over the preceding century within the city. Following the takeover, Safad replaced Acre as the capital of the region, and Jaffa became the usual landing-place for pilgrims.

²³ Jonathan Riley-Smith, *Atlas of the Crusades*, Times Books, page 115

²⁴ At this point a number of Crusader strongholds had already fallen, including Crac des Chevaliers. See also "Society, Culture, and the Arts in Crusader Acre" for information on the implications of this transfer of archives.

²⁵ Venice would later lose a major naval battle to Genoa in 1298, which incidentally resulted in the capture of Marco Polo.

²⁶ Jonathan Riley-Smith, *Atlas of the Crusades*, page 114

Following Mamluk invasion, important decorative architectural features were either destroyed or removed from the city and relocated. One example includes An-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qalawun, later the Sultan of Egypt, who had the Gothic doorway of one of the churches transported to Egypt to adorn his tomb in Cairo.²⁷

Acre remained in a state of ruin for the next four and a half centuries. One observer in 1687 mentions "a large Khan, a mosque and a few poor cottages," with 300-400 inhabitants.²⁸ After important public buildings were toppled, flammable items burned, and the inhabitants, including its large transient population, removed, Acre became a vacant shadow its past self. Following initial Mamluk destruction and aside from the natural deterioration from neglect, no evidence of any substantial alteration to the built landscape is noted until the 18th century.



Figure 2 - The Hospitaller Castle as drawn in 1679. Photo source: Cornelius de Bruyne "Reyzen Door de Vrmaardste Deelen van Klein Asia" *Aegypten, Syrien en Palestina*, Delft 1698.²⁹

The Ottoman Era

Although travelers and historians describe the built landscape of Acre entering the Ottoman Era as a pile of rubble, this is an exaggeration. Once the Mamluks burned and toppled the important public structures of the city in 1291, they would have not invested more resources and manpower to lead to the complete physical destruction of the city.³⁰ The symbolic destruction of the Crusader capital and its inhabitants was the objective; optimizing resources by burning flammable materials, toppling important arches, and removing decorative features would have sufficed to discourage any further re-conquests. The complete removal of city streets, building foundations,

²⁷ Makhoul and Johns *Guide to Acre* (1946), page 42

²⁸ *Acre: Rise and Fall of a Palestinian City 1730-1831*, Appendix A: the Population of Acre, referencing Maundress, "Journey," 428, from 1687

²⁹ This is according to "Section 03: Historical Views" in *Nomination of the old city of Acre for the World Heritage List*, 2000.

³⁰ This can be particularly emphasized with the ambitious goals set by the Mamluks, particularly in securing the Middle East and defeating the remaining Crusader strongholds, including Tyre, Sidon, Haifa, and Beirut, before returning to Cairo.

underground tunnels and cisterns, and in some instances upper portions of buildings were beyond the scope of the city destruction, leaving large portions of the ground floors of buildings standing. Etchings and illustrations from the late 17th century further support this point, showing ruinous Crusader landscapes with standing foundations and walls.³¹ These walls, in addition to the rubble, served as the starting point for the reconstruction of Acre during the Ottoman period.

In 1730 Zāhīr al-'Umar decided to make Acre the center of his realm, precisely because of Acre's ruins: they provided cheap pre-cut building materials on location.³² When rebuilding the city, in particular during the earlier parts of the city's rejuvenation, the reuse of existing stones and building on existing foundations would consume the least amount of resources, including natural, human, and economic resources. When ruins or partially ruinous foundations were present, these would have served as the foundations for reconstructions. This is an important factor in determining the origins of undocumented buildings standing in Acre.

During the initial reconstruction of the city, limited resources and manpower would encourage the least amount of resources to be used. This would suggest that the first properties to be developed would be those with the most favorable site selections, such as coastal locations and seafront properties. These properties would also have the advantage of being closer to the port, allowing less resources to be consumed in transporting goods between the boat and the storehouse. In summary, Crusader ruins close to the port that were relatively intact would have been prime candidates to be among the first to be rebuilt. Standing Crusader buildings in the Pisan quarter, due to its location, appear to have been among the earliest to be rebuilt during this era.

The Second Golden Age: 1730 – 1831

In a recently published book Thomas Philipps, in *Acre: the Rise and Fall of a Palestinian City 1730-1831*, writes an extensive study of the economics, trade, and politics of Acre during the 18th and early 19th centuries. He describes Acre as the first city in the eastern Mediterranean to be tied into the modern world economy, initially through the demand for cotton in Europe, when the shipping business was in the hands of individual entrepreneurs of various religious and ethnic backgrounds. Although the end of the eighteenth century saw the first signs of political and economic decline in Acre, another boom phase followed with the highly profitable grain exports to Britain during the Napoleonic Wars. This second economic boom was also limited in duration, leading to the political and economic decline of Acre, despite the persisting European demand for cotton and grain.³³

During the 18th century, French merchants dominated the cotton trade, receiving unprocessed raw cotton from the region and shipping it to Marseille for processing and manufacturing. The governance of Acre prevented merchants from dealing directly with the cotton farmers themselves and instead required that they be purchased through the centralized government itself. It is from these monopolistic trade policies that the municipality of Acre was able to charge higher prices and taxes

³¹ *Guide to Acre*, pages 45 and 46

³² Thomas Philipps, *Acre: Rise and Fall of a Palestinian City 1730-1831*, Columbia University Press (2002), page 25

³³ *Acre: Rise and Fall of a Palestinian City 1730-1831*, page 1

necessary to fund the reconstruction of the city, as well as for a number of other expensive projects: the military expenses to enforce the centralized system; to make the regional roads safer for trade; to combat and take over nearby Ottoman cities; and to subsequently bribe officials within the Ottoman empire for reconciliation. Through the bribing of Ottoman officials in Damascus and Constantinople, as well as engaging in military action with nearby neighbors, the city of Acre retained some degree of autonomy from the Ottoman Empire, although the populace itself had less personal freedom and, at least during the time of Ahmad al-Jazzār, an unusually high rate of disfigurement.

Some societal aspects of Acre were similar to its boom during Crusader times. The population of Acre was estimated as peaked at about 30,000 inhabitants (for a city, which at the time, was contained in roughly half the land area of the 13th century) and is described as a "frontier city and society."³⁴ At least half the population during the 18th century was Christian, and the location of churches throughout the city indicates that the western half of the city, which includes the area formerly controlled by the Pisans, was predominantly Christian. The eastern half was predominantly Muslim during this time.³⁵

The outbreak of plague and diseases during the late 18th century also can tell us something about buildings of the time: the Christians were more likely to take measures against the spread of the plague by use of quarantine. In Christian households during times of disease, water was stored in private cisterns, and people stayed indoors to prevent the spread of disease. On the whole, the Muslim community took fewer measures (Al-Jazzār being one important exception), and suffered higher mortality rates during the outbreak of diseases.³⁶

Following the expulsion of French merchants from Acre in 1790 and, in conjunction with other factors, the cotton-trade economy of Acre slowed considerably. Recognizing that Acre had conceded the cotton trade, Al-Jazzār switched to the next cash crop that could support Acre's expensive infrastructure of war, bribery, and military architecture: grain trade to the British during the Napoleonic wars was in high demand and could generate high profits. After Napoleon's defeat at Acre in 1799, Al-Jazzār's successor, Sulayman Pasha, took measures to boost the regional economy by offering villages and lands tax-exemptions in the region of Shumar on the condition of settlement and cultivation of the land.³⁷

These measures assisted the economy for a brief period of time, but the political and economic infrastructure of the city was still, at its core, monopolistic and reliant on a single cash crop. When Acre could no longer hold absolute control of grain trading through the region, the associated decline in economic vitality contributed to a rise in fanaticism during early 19th century. During Abdullah Pasha's reign, Christians and Jews were murdered, robbed, or otherwise encouraged or forced to leave the city around the 1820s. This had the effect of making the city predominantly Muslim and,

³⁴ *Acre: Rise and Fall of a Palestinian City 1730-1831*, page 2

³⁵ The figures supporting this statement are shown in *Acre: The Rise and Fall of a Palestinian City: 1730-1831*, Appendix A. A detailed explanation is provided with a narrative throughout the book.

³⁶ See *Acre: The Rise and Fall of a Palestinian City: 1730-1831*, Appendix A.

³⁷ *Acre: Rise and Fall of a Palestinian City 1730-1831*, page 80

in conjunction with other factors detailed by Philipps, removed Acre from contributing to the world or European economy.

Thereafter, the siege and takeover by Ibrāhīm Pasha in 1831, the subsequent earthquake, and the final bombardment by the British in 1840 gives the impression that Acre was reduced "to what it had been 150 years earlier: a pile of rubble."³⁸ Another aspect of the city's destruction includes its population, which in the late 18th century had peaked somewhere around 30,000, in the early 19th century had hovered around 10,000, but after 1840, the population had dropped to around 2,000.³⁹

When looking back on Acre's century of resurgence, a few trends can be observed. Overall it was the monopolistic control of commerce by the governance to have temporarily caused the rise of the city from ruin. It was the result of changing regional circumstances, in conjunction with governing policies that were increasingly and adamantly monopolistic, that contributed to its decline and fall. During the prosperous period of the city's resurgence, Acre retained several of the positive qualities from Crusader reign: a diverse community of Christians, Jews, and Muslims; some degree of political autonomy; and economic prosperity through providing a specialized service not otherwise available in the region: the centralized and reliable transportation of a regional cash crop to sell to foreign merchants. The reliance on a single cash crop, cotton in the 18th century and grain in the early 19th century, reflected circumstances that were temporary and ultimately unsustainable. The negative aspects of this period included: monopolistic governance; weak political or societal power from the general populace; an unsustainable economy; a rising tendency towards fanaticism; and in the end a population that was relatively homogenous with few opportunities for social class mobility.

In terms of the building stock, a few observations can be made. Most of the religious buildings were built during the middle of the 18th century and reflected the increasing population of Acre.⁴⁰ The seafront properties were probably the first buildings to be reconstructed, as they were the most desirable, and would probably also receive the most attention. During this early period of cotton trading, it was predominantly French merchants trading with textile factories in Marseille who, more than other foreigners, would have had the greatest reason for being in Acre. After the expulsion of the French in 1790, it was the British merchants who were most interested in trading in Acre, particularly with grain during the Napoleonic wars. These European, predominantly Christian, merchants would have likely chosen to live in areas near Christian churches. The proximity to St. Andrew's Church, among other nearby churches, suggests that the area once called the Pisan quarter was, at least for the 18th century, largely Christian.

During Ahmad al-Jazzār's reign, beginning around 1770, expenditures were largely made to fortify the city and enhance its economic facilities.⁴¹ These expenditures were centralized, required high levels of taxation, and would have reduced the amount of spending capital of the private sector. In other words, while the government by the later parts of the 18th century was building large city walls, less was being invested in

³⁸ *Acre: the Rise and Fall of a Palestinian City 1730-1831*, page 27

³⁹ *Ibid*, Appendix A

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, page 27

⁴¹ *Ibid*, page 27

privately-owned buildings. This is compounded by the outbreaks of bubonic plague in 1760 (killing one-third of the population), several famines and the nearly total exodus of the population in 1775, and another outbreak of plague in 1785/86 (killing half the returned Muslim population).⁴² Overall this resulted in a very transient population that likely would have been adverse to long-term investments with high opportunity costs, such as one-time financing of large-scale architectural projects. It appears instead that there would have been small, gradual changes to buildings that would have adjusted existing properties to the new building owners. It is in this manner that we can expect to see a long history of gradual additions to privately-held buildings in Acre during this time.

Compared to the Crusades, Ottoman-era Acre saw a dramatic change in both building technology and living conditions. While the Crusaders were building very thick walls inside the various quarters, at least partly to defend from conflicts between the different merchant centers, conflicts in Ottoman-era Acre were much more based on exterior threats. There was less of a need to fortify buildings within the city walls and more of a need to fortify the city walls themselves. This, combined with building technology that would have allowed thinner walls and larger openings to be constructed, resulted in Ottoman-era floors to be lighter, consume fewer materials, and be considerably thinner.

After 1790, when the French merchants were expelled by Al-Jazzār, the economy was much more turbulent, government spending increased, and private capital available for improving or adapting buildings declined. This corresponded with an overall decline in population and economy, due largely from outbreaks of plague, external conflict and siege attempts, famines, and regional decentralization of trade. Although Acre in 1799 caught world attention for successfully defeating Napoleon's siege, Acre's living conditions during this time period represents an almost ideal case study of a Malthusian Catastrophe.

Further outbreaks of plague contributed to a declining population, along with fewer economic opportunities for the private sector and increasingly monopolistic governance. For instance, an 1813 outbreak of plague was reported to have killed one-fourth to one-half of all the Muslims, reducing the population to approximately 3,500.⁴³ This is also in sharp contrast to the 15,000 to 20,000 inhabitants estimated just 15 years earlier.⁴⁴

Bombardment and Partial Recovery: 1831-1918

After the bombardment in 1831, the population of Acre was estimated at 2,000 people. Thousands of shells were reportedly thrown into Acre, resulting in much damage to the built landscape. One observer notes of the 1831 bombardment: "Not a single habitation has escaped uninjured... Whole streets are blocked up with half demolished houses, and towers are filled to the first story with fractured remnants of roofs and floors. Every door and window has been torn down and consumed for fuel, shattered arches and tottering walls still seem to menace destruction; and narrow passages through heaps of rubbish afford the only access to various parts of the

⁴² *Acre: Rise and Fall of a Palestinian City: 1730-1831*, page 173

⁴³ *Ibid*, Appendix A

⁴⁴ *Ibid*.

town."⁴⁵ Although this may have been an exaggeration, as many of the first-hand accounts appear to vary widely in their descriptions and figures of the city's many waves of supposed complete destruction, it is useful for determining some measure of the damage caused during this particular decade. It is unknown how much of preceding architectural decorative materials, such as doors, windows, and finishes, actually survived this decade of destruction.



Figure 3 – Acre in ruins, as drawn in 1833. Photo source: Bartlett, W.H.: *Footsteps by our Lord and his Apostles*, London 1851.⁴⁶

Acre's population remained around 2,000 in 1849 and stabilized in 1887 to a level of around 10,000 inhabitants. As a point of comparison, Beirut increased during this time from 6,000 inhabitants around 1820 to 150,000 in 1905.⁴⁷ Very little information was available at the time of writing for Acre during the remainder of the mid-to-late 19th and early 20th centuries. However, it is noted that the economy and political influence of Acre was considerably weaker by this time, largely denigrating the city to the regional trade of fish and grain, this time without the same monopolistic governance or ability to make considerable overhead for either public or private sector gains.⁴⁸ It was from this loss of revenue that we can expect significantly less private construction to have occurred, and government-funded building construction would have been more subdued and comparatively less expensive. This also indicates that additions or repairs from this time period were less decorated or of less expensive materials.

After the 1840 bombardment, the Turks returned to Acre, and they restored the city walls, a project that took 10 years and would have required significant expenditure. The governance was not able to gain monopolistic control over the regional grain

⁴⁵ "Notes on Akka and its Defences Under Ibrahim Pasha," by Asad J. Rustum of the American University of Beirut, prepared for the Archaeological Congress of Syria and Palestine, April 1926. Pages 24-25

⁴⁶ This is according to "Section 03: Historical Views" in *Nomination of the old city of Acre for the World Heritage List*, 2000.

⁴⁷ Phillips hints at many of the reasons why, economically, Beirut should rise to become the prominent port on the Syrian coast at this time. For more details, see *Acre: Rise and Fall of a Palestinian City 1730-1831*, page 132

⁴⁸ For further information, see: Natan Schur, *A History of Acre*, published by Nathan Schur and Dvir Publishing House, Tel Aviv, Israel, 1990. (Hebrew)

export again, preventing it from becoming once again an international economic and political power. Although the late 19th century is a period of the city's history meriting greater study, it is clear that the city's population, economic activity, and political sway were nowhere close to their strength during the mid-18th to early 19th centuries. The decline in population and economic power, however, would have allowed the consolidation of existing, relatively autonomous structures into larger mansions for the wealthy elite, a point of relevance to the building of study.

Old Acre was forbidden to expand beyond the city walls until either 1910 or 1918.⁴⁹ In 1910, the Turks made two openings in the northern city wall (what is today Rehov Weisman and Rehov HaHagana Streets), allowing easier access to the city.⁵⁰ It was from the opening of the city walls that the expanded, new section of Acre could begin to develop.

Modern Acre as a Recreational Center: 1918-Present

When the British controlled Acre starting in 1918, they began to develop the city and study methods for future development. After beginning to develop new portions of Acre to the north, more or less following the guidelines in Ebenezer Howard's *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* (1902),⁵¹ the population doubled, from 8,165 in 1931 to 15,000-16,000 in 1943.⁵² The city, facing further expansion with the construction of factories and preparing for the development of tourism, developed a Master Plan in 1944, called "Acre Report," by Percy H. Winter, also referred to as the *Winter Report*. The report's tone is summarized in a few short words of the first sentence: "existing conditions in the Old Town are appalling."⁵³ The report describes Acre as a medieval slum that is overcrowded, poor, and unsanitary, but contains great architectural and archaeological monuments worthy of preservation. Further descriptions and photographs depict a poor fishing village with the potential to become a great resort town. The report concludes, however with an important and foreshadowing statement:

Acre must be thought of primarily as a living town and not as a museum. Archeological interest usually requires looking backward to gain its best ends whereas a scheme of development is primarily a looking-forward gesture. Compromise will at times be called for and it will be a question to what extent antiquarian interest should give place to the needs of living interest. Given a broad-minded attitude on the part of the antiquarian and a sympathetic approach combining with knowledge and competency on the part of the architect, the two interests may often happily and usefully be reconciled.⁵⁴

Plans are suggested for building an adjoining New City to depopulate the historic core, invest in public infrastructure to improve sanitation, and construct factories to

⁴⁹ One recent source indicates that 1910 (Shared Heritage vol 1, page 150), while another source, a British guide published in 1946, indicates 1918 (Guide to Acre, page 64). Neither source cites primary documents or evidence. It remains clear, however, that little development occurred outside the city walls until the period following 1918.

⁵⁰ *Shared Heritage Vol 1*, page 150. "Akko in the 18th and 19th Centuries Based on Notes of Endowment" by Ron Beer. Note no references to this were provided.

⁵¹ A far more critical analysis of urban planning in Israel and Palestinian cities can be found in *A Civilian Occupation: The Politics of Israeli Architecture*, edited by Rafi Segal & Eyal Weizman, Babel and Verso 2003.

⁵² *The Winter Report*, page 96

⁵³ *The Winter Report*, page 1

⁵⁴ *The Winter Report*, page 130

provide blue-collar jobs for the residents. The overarching theme of the report identifies Acre as a potential recreational destination and outlines its transformation into a clean city friendly to western culture. This goal appears to be planned for implementation soon after the conclusion of World War II. Following the War, Acre was designated as part of the Arab State in the UN General Assembly Resolution 181.

The Israel War of Independence in 1948 contributed to another population shift in Acre: many of the residents fled the country; vacated or unclaimed property was seized by the State of Israel; and portions of the Old City were used to house Jews and an undetermined number of Arabs for an indefinite short-term period of time. Years following, the Jewish population gradually abandoned the Old City, and the old historic core became receptive to primarily underprivileged Arab constituents. Reports on the population and demographics of the Old City vary widely, although it appears that it presently houses somewhere around 5,000-7,000 individuals, most of whom are Muslim, with a small but substantive Christian population. Some Jews work in the Old City, but it appears that no Jews are presently living in the Old City. The Bahai holds property in the city and has a continued presence.

As of 2000, 85% of property in Old Acre was owned by the Israeli Land Administration, 10% owned by religious entities, and 5% in private ownership.⁵⁵ Heavy industry in the vicinity has caused substantial pollution,⁵⁶ and unemployment within the city walls has remained high.⁵⁷ Some of the light industry, such as the textile factories within city walls, were closed following the Peace Treaty signed with Jordan in 1994, as goods could be manufactured at a lower price in Jordan. As the result of chemical processing, steel mills, and power plants in the vicinity, Acre's bay has been described as among the most polluted in the world.⁵⁸



⁵⁵ UNESCO Nomination, page 46, Section 4a, Management

⁵⁶ UNESCO Nomination, page 55, Section 5a, Factors Affecting the Property

⁵⁷ No figures were able to be located for unemployment exclusively within the Old City. However, oral statements estimated by the local population hover around 40%.

⁵⁸ It is interesting to note that, in addition to Acre's heavy chemical processing plants, the Bedouins have also been listed as one of Israel's top ecological threats. One critique is found in an article by Rebecca Manski, "Bedouin Vilified Among Top 10 Environmental Hazards in Israel", published by The Alternative Information Center, April 18, 2007: <http://www.alternativenews.org/news/english/bedouin-vilified-among-top-10-environmental-hazards-in-israel-20070418.html>.

The general trend of the city's urban planning over the past 60 years, with a few limited exceptions, is to develop Acre into a recreational destination. This is documented clearly with the master urban plans, beginning with the *Winter Report*, and continuing with the establishment of the Old Acre Development Company (OADC), which was "entrusted with a mandate from the Ministry of Tourism to develop and advance the city as a tourist attraction."⁵⁹ Inside the Old City the OADC has the power and the goal to "build hotels, museums, shops and restaurants, with authorized plans, and rent out any property it so wishes. The company also enhances the infrastructure of the city, and develops new touristic routes in the city."⁶⁰ Indeed, the goals of establishing Acre as a tourist destination and having a real tourist-driven economy have seemed to be, from some perspectives, the ultimate panacea for Acre as an all-around revenue generator. One publication criticizes the city planning policy as follows:

"Old Akko has suffered for many years from neglect on the part of government authorities and until recently only a localized and misguided approach was adopted regarding the city's development. The authorities were concerned with only the tourist sites and not the general urban tapestry. The change in approach, which is manifested in the guidelines set down by the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin at the beginning of the 1990s, is meant to provide the city with a program that will address and treat all of its severe problems."⁶¹

These criticisms have been partially addressed by the acknowledgement of the existing community in the development of the city, although tourism has continued to be the dominating goal for development. The goals outlined in the Nomination of Acre to the UNESCO World Heritage List specify the objective of community-based tourism:

"The master plan for the old city of Acre comes to give the solutions for developing the tourism in the city while emphasizing the development of tours in the city, sleeping accommodations, relevant commerce, traffic circulation, and parking both inside and outside the old city. All the development will be made while balancing the needs of the tourists with the needs of the local population. ... There is no exact number of inhabitants [or census figures] due to the fact that they are constantly on the move."

Nomination of the old city of Acre for the World Heritage List, "Section 5a: Factors Affecting the Property", 2000.

Compounding the social and environmental issues in today's Acre are the influx of illegal recreational drugs and the resulting organized drug trade. There are a variety of published speculations as to why this is the case,⁶² but the combination of high unemployment, few opportunities for social class mobility, and the large, vacant monuments and city walls left unused and largely unused at night all have likely contributed to the rise of the drug trade in Acre.⁶³

⁵⁹ *UNESCO WHL Nomination*, page 47, Section 4d, Management

⁶⁰ *UNESCO WHL Nomination*, page 47, Section 4d, Management

⁶¹ *Shared Heritage Vol 1*, p 235, "The Serai – A Center for Social Activity" by Hanaa Abu-Uqsa

⁶² One reported rumor among the Arab population in Old Acre explains why the Israeli authorities accept drug trafficking: they want the Arabs to sink into addiction. For more details, see: <http://www.worldpress.org/Europe/1751.cfm>. See also the CIA World Factbook for more information about the drug trade in Israel, at: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/is.html>

⁶³ This last point, covering illicit activities around monuments in urban environments, is discussed extensively by Jane Jacobs in the 1960s, a point which appears to have relevance to the urban planning



In Old Acre, the only ATM (left) is covered with protective bars, and a prominently located restaurant by the lighthouse (right) has been destroyed by an unsolved case of arson. Both illustrate some of the societal issues facing Acre today.

Although guidelines for development suggest otherwise, one aspect of Old Acre should be acknowledged: it has unequivocally become a recreational destination. During the daytime, it hosts tour buses and shoppers, but at night it hosts a very different type of recreational activity. Although not the typical upper-middle class tourist center of hotels and ample daytime parking, many of the poorer classes visit Acre by night for the trading of recreational drugs. Acre in this sense is fulfilling what it has done so well in the past: providing a specialized service—harboring and exchanging of goods in demand—to a sector of society. Distressing is that these currently traded goods have the potential to cause individuals to spiral into addiction, and they carry a wide range of undesirable social consequences. It would seem, however, that even despite these limitations, illicit activity is occurring due to the potential for social status mobility among the populace.⁶⁴ Another aspect of the drug trade is that it is inexorably linked to the surrounding market-economy, and while demand continues to exist, centralized organization within this illicit trade can continue to extract profits and provide some degree of social class mobility for people with otherwise very limited options.

Historic Analysis

In the broader historical context, Acre was at its worst a city of unsustainable government monopoly, filled with war, crime, disease, and famine, eventually becoming destitute and ruinous. At its best, it was a center for the exchange of ideas, ethnically and culturally diverse, an economic powerhouse, and relatively autonomous. In both time periods the city flourished when it was offering specialized services and the surrounding roads, of both communication and transportation, were open and safe. The city has had a long history of a transient population, which has over time brought both benefits and problems.

It may take some time to view the events and shifts of the recent past into a broader historical perspective, although a few comparisons can be made to past historic trends

in Acre. Although focusing on American cities, her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* uses a variety of case studies to illustrate many of the same problems that have emerged in Acre.

⁶⁴ Perhaps the most comprehensive economic analysis of the drug trade was performed by Steven Levitt and is summarized in his book, *Freakonomics*, first published in 2005 by William Morrow.

within city walls. The Acre of today bears resemblance to the Acre under Ottoman control, particularly during the years of 1730-1831, when a powerful government system and politically weak population encouraged the use of one cash crop to drive the economy. Although in today's case, the government-imposed cash crop is tourism and not cotton, many of the same problems exist, particularly when considering the overall sustainability of the system. In both cases, the city could find economic stagnation when the surrounding roads become less safe, when the affluent classes renounce conspicuous consumption,⁶⁵ or when the cost of traveling in the region increases, as it may in the future through increasing fuel and energy prices. During the later stages of the grain-trade era during Ottoman control, Old Acre today also has some parallels, particularly in terms of the relative socioeconomic and cultural homogeneity, as well as the lack of opportunities for legitimate social class mobility. Drawing parallels to the Crusader times today are the descriptions of pollution and squalor, as well as the increase in crime and illicit activity. Today's wave of illicit activity, which includes the drug trade and organized crime, offers, like the Crusader economy but in a very conflicted way, some of the few opportunities available for social status mobility.

It is hoped that as Acre evolves through time, it will begin to retain more of the positive qualities of each age, such as the free exchange of ideas, a long-term flourishing economy, and legitimate opportunities for social status mobility. Future developments should continue to further these goals, particularly the development and exchange of information and ideas.⁶⁶ Creating development that is sustainable in the long term, economically and ecologically, should be the paramount goal for present and future plans.

An educational institution, such as the proposed International Conservation Center, could help sustain the more positive aspects of the city, including fostering the exchange of ideas and providing for both residents and foreigners specialized opportunities with means for legitimate social mobility. A forum for the discussion cultural heritage conservation, including both the tangible and intangible aspects, is important and needed. Establishing a specialized training institution, such as the proposed International Conservation Center, appears to be an excellent and appropriate direction for one aspect of developing Old Acre.

⁶⁵ Trends of flouting conspicuous consumption have been identified in recent books to discuss contemporary sociology, by Robert Wright *Nonzero: the Logic of Human Destiny* (2000) and David Brooks, *Bobos in Paradise: the New Upper Class and How they Got There* (2000).

⁶⁶ One possibility is to encourage the development of intellectual property. Although it is beyond the scope of this report to assess the full associated economic impact, one potential development for Acre is to repeat, under a contemporary interpretation, the tax-exemptions by Sulayman Pasha on grain exports or the tax exemptions for merchants during the Crusader era. One example of such an interpretation would be to declare one of the Khans a tax-free zone for the development of intellectual property, while using the market-driven price of rent to determine lease value.

BUILDING HISTORY

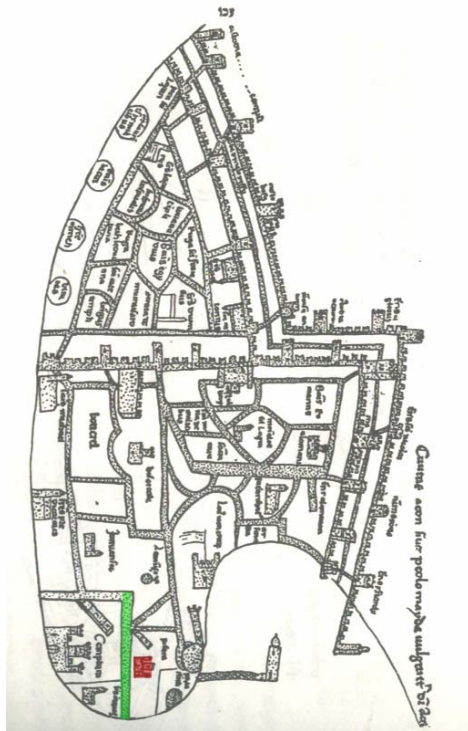
At the time of writing, very few documents were available that specifically mention the building of study. Until further primary sources are obtained, much of the building history analysis remains in question or is at least contestable, particularly before the late 19th century. This section should be considered an attempt to explain a series of observations of the existing materials, consideration of the historic context of its surroundings, and integration of the little existing documentation available on the building. It is hoped to provide suggestions for potential areas of further research, as well as identify some present conditions of materials.

In reviewing the Historic Context, we see that war has had a large impact—and toll—on the development of the city. During the Crusader era, warring mercantile quarters resulted in thick, defensible walls. During Ottoman rule, concern for exterior conflict far outweighed the concern for interior conflict, at least among most private citizens. Consequently public resources were emphasized for the creation of thick city walls, while the walls of buildings within the city were constructed at this time significantly thinner and more delicately. These are useful pieces of information that can begin to differentiate portions of the building to their respective eras.

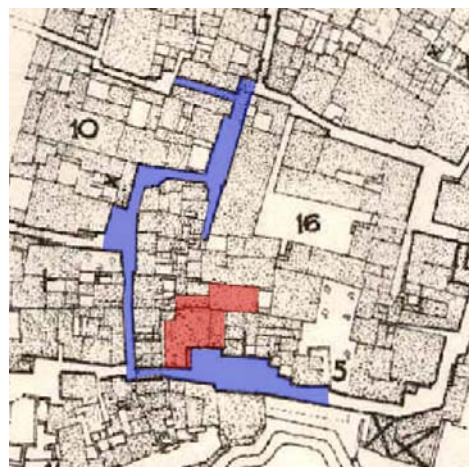
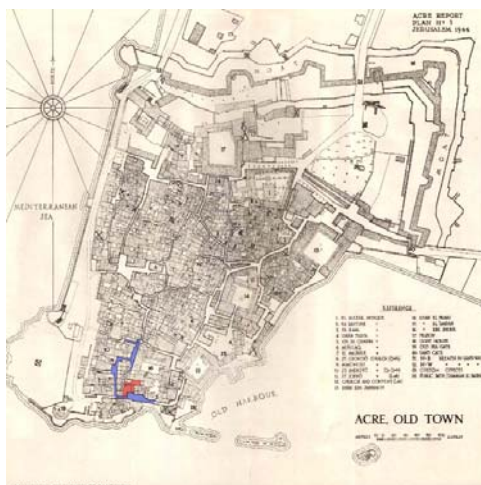
Crusader Times: 1104-1291

After Mamluk invasion in 1291, most important Crusader buildings in Acre were toppled or partially destroyed. It is unclear the extent to which each building in particular was materially destroyed, although it is likely that foundations, thicker portions of walls, and underground portions would have survived both the invasion and subsequent 450 years of natural weathering. This is an important aspect to which we shall return.

During the Crusades, the Pisan quarter was identified as adjoining the Templar Castle, having port access, and connecting a large fortification via a north-south road. The general district of the Pisan quarter is identified as including the building of study, although neither the north-south road nor the fortification have yet been verifiably identified. Although the road's depiction in maps may be schematic by nature, it is nonetheless unlikely that, given the context of the city's history and development, the road would be completely annihilated by Mamluk invasion and natural weathering. Building foundations and in particular roads are likely to have existed after invasion and to have survived in some form or another, then later obscured during Ottoman-era development. Portions of the road might have been eventually redirected, used as semiprivate courtyards, or fully enclosed. This has been suggested in other reports about Acre, such as the *Winter Report* and Kesten's study. A comparison between Crusader-era depictions, the development of surrounding courtyards, and the arrangement of existing materials reveal some interesting and relevant information.



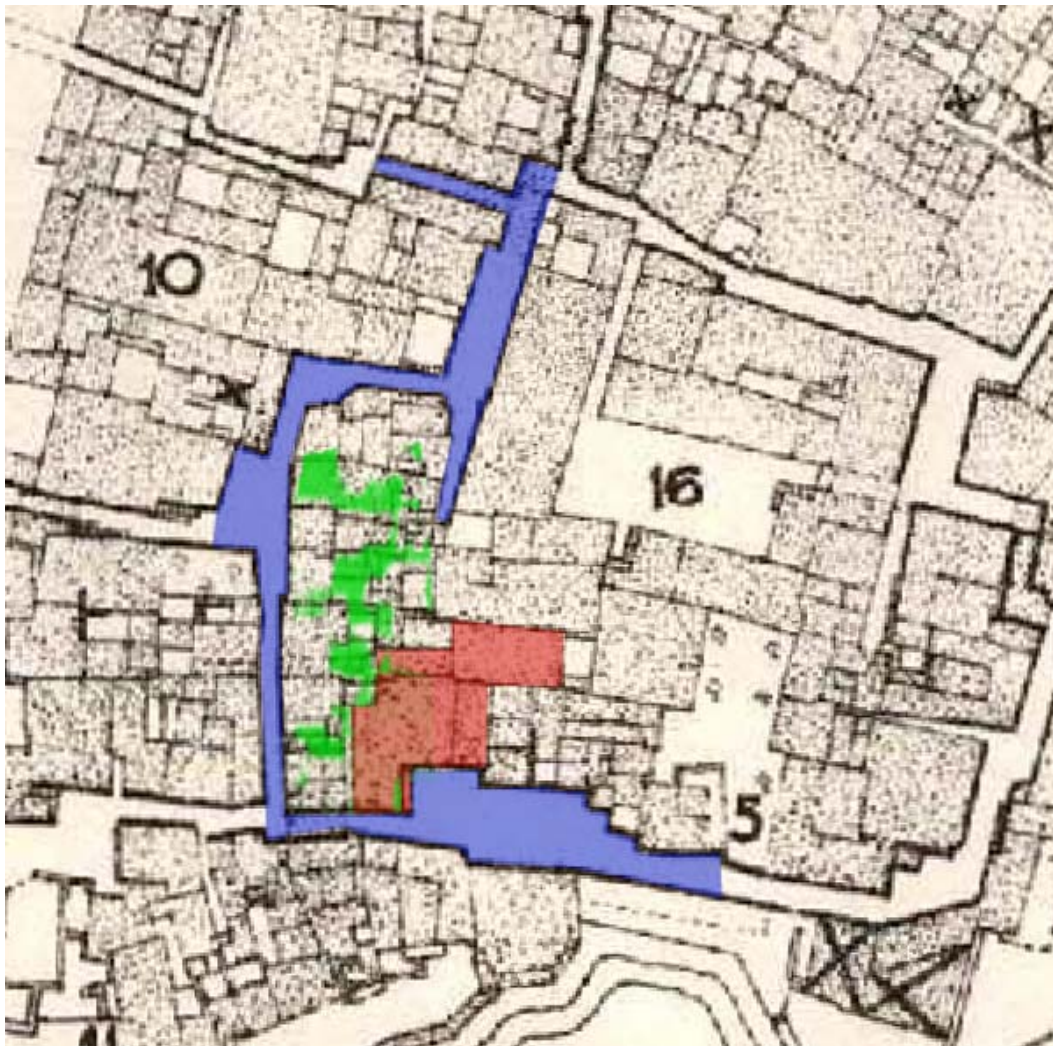
Marin Sanudo's rough, schematic plan of Crusader Acre, 1291, illustrating road (green) and fortified structure (red) in the Pisan quarter. Source: *Secreta Fidelium Crucis*, in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, as listed in UNESCO WHL Nomination, Archival Appendix: Historical Views.



Winter's Map of Acre from 1944, with current roads (blue) and building of study (red). Source: *Winter Report* Appendix.



Aerial photography from 1923 (left) and 1945 (right), with roads from Winter's map in blue, building in red and alignment of courtyards (as indicated by shadows) in green. The green alignment suggests a general north-south road leading to the western edge of the building. Photo source: Old Acre Development Company.



Enlarged view of Winter's Map, with approximate courtyard patterns (green), streets (blue), and building (red).

As a point of reference, Kesten's analysis of maps suggest that the road highlighted in blue continued through and inside the building of study. But close analysis of the building suggests something different: the idea of a Crusader-era road to the west of the building, roughly along the aligned courtyards (in green). Three pieces of material evidence within the building suggest this theory:

1. the large arch remaining along the southern end of the west wall;
2. the form of an arrow-slit facing west on the northern portion of the west wall;
3. the remnants of a pointed arch in the cistern, aligned east-west.



Plan of the Ground Floor, with suspected Crusader-era materials highlighted in red.

All three pieces of evidence suggest that this building was originally a fortification that faced a road to its west. Although additional evidence is necessary to validate this theory, it remains a possibility that portions of the ground floor are of the castle fortification indicated on the map of the Pisan quarter.

Is this a wild proposition? Consider that the thicker walls of a fortification from the Crusader-era were more likely to have survived partially intact following Mamluk invasion, particularly if the building were not of the highest importance, like the since-obliterated Templar castle. The thicker remaining walls of a second-tier fortification, such as a Pisan one, would have made good foundations for building above; implying that it may have been among the first developments of its kind in the mid-18th century. It also appears likely that the thickest Crusader walls would have stood the best chance of surviving the subsequent sieges and bombardments.

Most of the ground level during the Crusades was significantly lower than the present-day, extending underground, possibly to the level of the building's present-day cistern. It is also possible that during Crusader times, underground systems for sewage, water storage, and communication with the Templars would have been constructed, revealing an even deeper underground system of passageways. Excavation and further research will be key to understanding the extent to which these infrastructures from Crusader times remains today. But for now, let us look more closely at the pieces of evidence suggestive of a Crusader fortification.

1. The West Wall Arch



Photos: Maya Kapelushnik

The very thick arch, since overlayed with additional arches, begins in the southernmost room of the west wall (left) and is presently obscured by the white bathroom wall. The arch continues into the adjacent room (right).

One striking aspect of these two southernmost rooms along the west wall is the thickness of the underlying arch. The westernmost arch, running north-south between the two rooms, is very large and out of proportion with the ground, suggesting that ground level originally continues below the present-day floor. The arch is also considerably thicker than the majority of existing walls.



2. The Arrow Slit

Just north of the massive north-south aligned arch, in the present-day kitchen area along the west wall, is a peculiar arrangement of materials. Also very thick, the shape of this wall implies the remains of an arrow slit, although the modern cementitious coating obscures information about the stone. This possible arrow-slit is also facing west, further supporting the idea that it was facing something that needed to be defended, such as a north-south public road during the Crusades.

Photos: Maya Kapelushnik

3. The Cistern



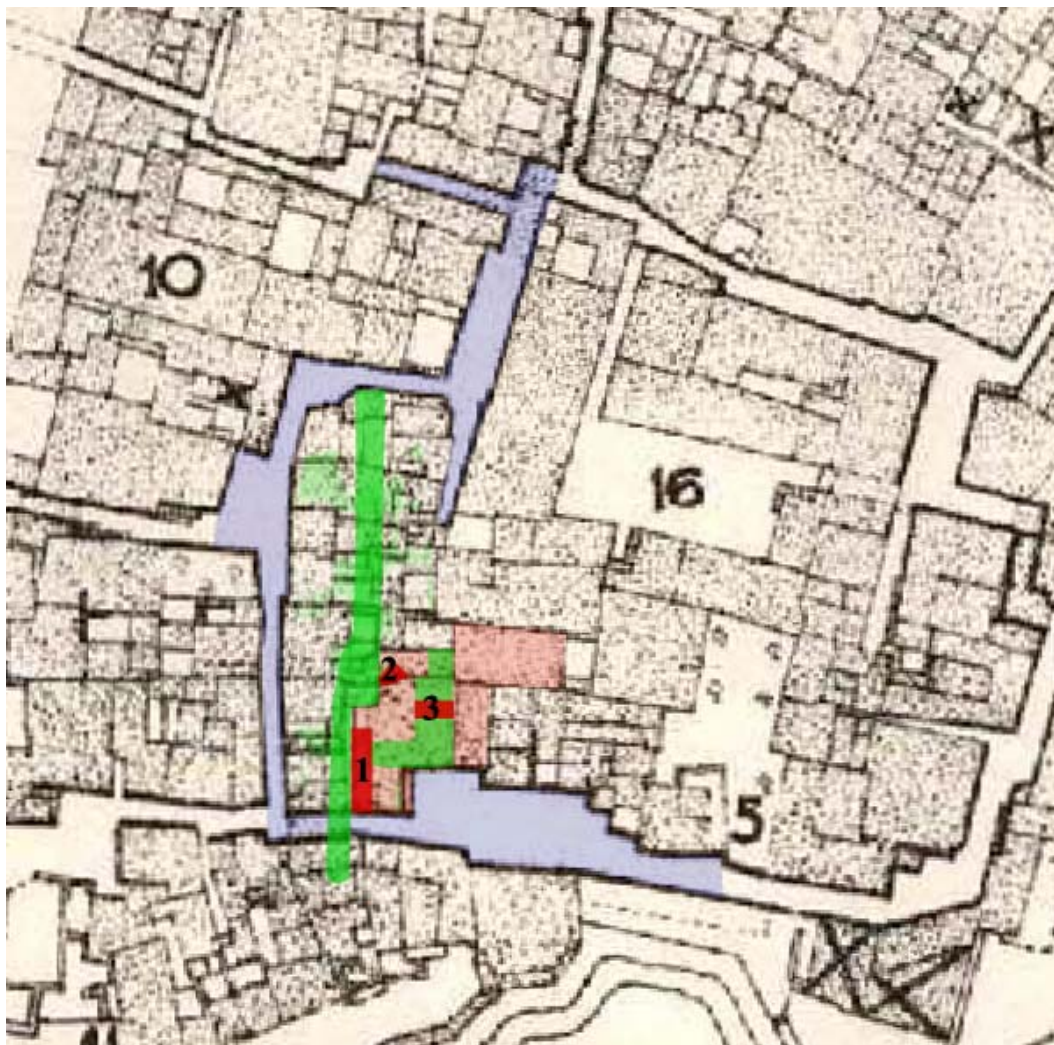
The bottom of the cistern (left) contains sand, trash and intact plaster. A close look at the south-facing wall (right) shows part of an arch leading to an area obscured from view.

The cistern is another aspect of the building that merits closer study. At the time of writing, access to the cistern was not permitted, precluding an up-close inspection for this report. Beneath the present-day concrete bottleneck, the opening on the ground floor reveals a vertical shaft, square in section, that leads to a large opening supported by a divided arch. The cistern has intact plaster and is partially filled with sand, permitting excavation at some point in the future. As a point of comparison, a recent study on the excavation of a separate Crusader-era well in Acre measured the opening at .95m in diameter.¹ This appears to be the approximate width of the cistern below its concrete bottleneck.

¹ Yaacov Nir "Excavation of the Courthouse Site at 'Akko: The Crusader-Period Well in Area TA" *'Atiqot, Volume XXXI, 'Akko (Acre): Excavation Reports and Historical Studies*, Israel Antiquities Authority, Jerusalem 1997

It appears unlikely that the cistern was constructed from scratch during the Ottoman era; rather it appears more likely (ie requiring less expense or resources) that it expanded upon an existing structure or was partially excavated during this time. The excavation, documentation, and conservation of the cistern may be a potentially exciting student project for the International Conservation Center, in addition to yielding further information about the history of the quarter and building.

In summary, some of the materials remaining in the building suggest that it was a Crusader fortification. The context, surroundings, and materials suggest that a road—presently obscured by more recent modifications to the surrounding built landscape—once traveled adjacent to the west and perhaps through the building. Although further evidence will need to be uncovered to verify these findings, it appears that a road, a grand entrance, and a defendable fortification may have once converged at the building of study.



A second look at Winter's Map, with possible Crusader-era road (bright green), leading into Crusader fortress, indicated by numbered sections (bright red). The current streets (blue), courtyard patterns (green), and building layout (red) are faded.

Probable and Confirmed Uses: circa 1730-1968

Starting around the mid-18th century, the ruins of Crusader Acre were first used as foundations and building materials for merchants exporting cotton. Existing ruins, particularly those in the best condition (likely those with the thickest walls) were the least expensive to build upon, and therefore probably among the first, to be restored. The location of the building of study was close to the port, probably near an open street and among other nearby ruinous vaults.

The building's proximity to the Church of Saint Andrew suggests that the residents, starting in the early-to-mid 18th century, were Christian. Its proximity to the port and ample room for storage also suggest that the early residents were connected with the trading of goods, possibly merchants. Whether or not these potential merchants in the mid-18th century were French, indigenous, or of other nationalities is yet to be determined, although we know that the French had a strong presence and interest in Acre at the time.

Considering the historic context, we know the greatest economic incentives to develop densely populated structures was when Acre was exporting high-value cash crops, especially cotton from 1731-1790, and when the Old City's population was highest, peaking around 30,000 circa 1770. As the Old City was confined to more or less its present-day walls, it appears that dwellings would have been relatively small in size to increase population density, would have tried to maximize surface area exposed to natural light and ventilation for health and comfort, and would have consisted of a variety of different people more or less crammed together.

The historic context also tells us that due to bombardment in 1831, the subsequent earthquake, and the siege of 1840, the building probably sustained some damage, and many decorative or delicate features, such as wood, were probably removed or destroyed. We also know that the city's economic importance and population decreased, allowing wealthy families to acquire surrounding parcels cheaply and consolidate them into mansions. Walls, particularly thinner (ie Ottoman-era) ones, and decorative features could have been reconfigured at this time. Economic circumstances would have encouraged additions and decorations to have been of lighter or cheaper materials, such as wood, or to be mass-produced, such as fabricated columns and veneered marble floors. It appears likely, then, that the exposed decorative features of the building are from post-1840.

According to Bahá'í sources, the building served as the Governor's Office during part of the period of Bahá'u'lláh's stay in the Old City (1868-1877).² At some unspecified later date, it transferred hands into the Ha'wa family, an Arab Christian family that owned and operated the building for family functions until its partial acquisition by the Old Akko Development Company in 1968.³ At the time of writing, no one from the Ha'wa family was available to interview, but two historic photographs of the building were uncovered from the report of an enthusiastic urban planner of the 1940s.

² This is based on an oral statement by a Bahá'í, the transcription of which is held in the archives of the Bahá'í, currently overseen by Albert Lincoln.

³ Records of this transaction are located at the Old Acre Development Company, as well as contact information for the Ha'wa family.

Historic Photographs circa 1944

The two historic photographs of the building available at the time of writing were from the early 20th century, circa 1944.



The only two historic photographs of the building, circa 1944, before changing hands to the OADC and becoming a youth hostel. Source: *Winter Report*, Appendix VII, Photos 43 & 81.

These photographs reveal important information. Let's start with the one on the right. This photograph shows that at this time, the southern wall with the trefor windows used to have a balcony that was being used to dry clothes. The photograph also shows that some stones were left exposed, although the lower sections appear to be covered with some sort of coating—a lime plaster, perhaps. The windows, like today, are rectangular, but a close examination reveals that they consisted of divided lites and had hinged exterior shutters for blocking sunlight, a feature since abandoned in the building but beginning to be suggested again in sustainable building practices.⁴ The current windows also do not feature divided lites or shutters, showing that they are replacements.

The photograph on the left gives a very significant and unexpected find. A large extension to the building is shown to the south on the western side of the building. This addition, since demolished, still leaves traces of its existence on the western portion of the southern wall, including providing a reason for the walled-in central window on the southern façade of the second floor. The remaining columns and arches south of the building are also very thick, particularly aligned with the western wall, suggesting that they may have also been constructed during Crusader times.

⁴ See the Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design (LEED) guidelines from the US Green Building Council (USGBC) for more information on this subject.



The southern façade of the west wing shows a vertical arrangement of stones and joints, revealing the outline of the past wing since removed.



South of the building continues the arrangement of thick arches and vaults (left) suggested along the western wall of the building. Behind the arches is a large mound of sand—perhaps from hundreds of years of post-Crusader-era wind-blowing. Additional north-south aligned passageways (right) extend below current ground level, also suggestive of Crusader origins and a parallel road to its west.

Again, these finds do not reveal conclusive evidence, but they do merit closer consideration and could, like the cistern, become exciting excavations. But let us now turn our attention to the arrangement of materials found inside the building, and what they can tell us about its past layout.

Material Evidence of Additions

The grandest, most decorated area of the building is the central room on the second floor. The staircase opens into it from the north, and all the other rooms radiate from it. A close look at its materials reveals that this room was constructed in stages.



Photo: Maya Kapelushnik

The southern half of the room has a higher ceiling, while the northern half of the room has a lower one. The roof further emphasizes this difference. The east-west arch progression is stepped, suggesting a recessed window was once present. The northern arches are not stepped.



Examining the floor of this room, we find the southern half is constructed of a solid barrel vault, while the northern half is constructed of timber. This newer, lighter, cheaper building technology, when related to the historic context, implies that the northern half of the room was constructed at a later date, probably after 1840.



Photos: Maya Kapelushnik

Northern half of the central room, below, is constructed of timber members. Beneath these are windows, further suggesting that the area was once open-air. Note also white overspray on right beam.



In other words, we have evidence of two distinct layouts of the building: one with an open courtyard, the other with an addition that encloses most of the ground floor. When we consider the historic context of the area and the economic and population boom of the mid-18th century, the historic photograph indicating the previous southern addition, and the materials evidence of the open courtyard in the central room, we begin to have a picture of how the complex of buildings was at one point arranged. When looking closely at each of the different units, at a time when housing was in short supply, we can see how each of these semi-autonomous housing units may have related to one another.



Probable schematic layout of second floor in mid-18th century.

Visualizing these units as separate entities also begins to explain why certain rooms are at slightly different levels or have different entrances. While not conclusive or precise, thinking of the complex in its early stages in this manner begins to explain the questions raised by the seemingly irrational series of arches, walls, and building technologies.

After the fall of Acre as an economic and political power following the 1830s, the population dropped, and it was considerably easier (ie cheaper) to purchase larger amounts of property and consolidate it into one building. So the economic climate of the time would have encouraged once semi-autonomous houses to be joined, and in this case, to construct a large addition to the southern Bridge-House with the lighter, cheaper building technology, such as timber-beams, checkered marble-veneer flooring, and manufactured decorative columns. From the historic context of the building, we know that the building was used as a government house between 1868 and 1877. Perhaps this expansion occurred during this period. Or it might have occurred when it was in the hands of the Ha'wa family thereafter. Again, further evidence will be necessary to be conclusive about precise dates.



Schematic of building following expansion and consolidation, probably in the late 19th century.

Just north of the square central room of this now "Apartment House" was a smaller open-air area. Its existence is supported by both contextual and material evidence. On a contextual level, complete closure of the ground-floor to open air would have seriously inhibited air circulation or natural lighting to the ground floor, decreasing the quality of indoor conditions. On a material level, several factors illustrate that this "Open Air" section existed and was a later addition. This material evidence will be discussed after considering the context and uses of the subsequent time.

Modern Years: Backpackers & Television, circa 1968-2000

Before examining the complete progression of building additions and alterations, a few contextual developments explain a few things, such as the introduction of modern building materials and techniques, the further stifling of natural light and ventilation, and the covering, removal, or poor imitation of decorative materials.

On August 16th, 1968, the Old Akko Development Company (OADC) bought partial ownership of the house from Labiba Ha'wa.⁵ The arrangement gave 2/3 ownership and control of the rental arrangement of the house to OADC, allowing the OADC to rent out the building as it so pleased.

The Youth Hostel

The OADC subsidized the building for use as a youth hostel, in line of its goals of encouraging tourism. A bidding process led to the National Israeli Youth Hostel Association to operate the building, and they expanded it by incorporating part of the Khan esh Shuna as a dining room (on the northeast corner of the ground floor). This youth hostel company eventually declared bankruptcy, and a new bidding process began circa 1988. Wallid bought rights to make a youth hostel until also forgoing circa 2000.⁶ In 2006, the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) purchased the remaining 1/3 of the value of the building, for a sum of \$200,000, from the Ha'wa family.⁷ As of 2006, the Municipality of Akko agreed to pay utilities and the property taxes of the building, with the intention of making the building into a training center for architectural conservation, called the International Conservation Center.

Its significance as a youth hostel can be illustrated by *Let's Go Travel Guide*, assembled in 2000. It describes the building as such:

Lighthouse Hostel ... at the end of Ha-Hagana St., a few minutes before the lighthouse. This gorgeous Turkish mansion is the place to stay in Akko. The huge dorms may be plain, but they are clean. The large, airy lounge with marble pillars can make even the grimmest backpacker feel like a sultan.

Let's Go: Israel & the Palestinian Territories, St. Martin's Press (2003) page 223

The Television Set

During its time as a youth hostel, the interior of the building was occasionally used as a set for a television show after its acquisition by the OADC. The program, called "Michel Ezra Safra V'Banav" or "Michel Ezra Safra & His Sons," was produced in 1983 by the Israel Broadcasting Authority (IBA).⁸ Obtaining permission to view this television show may be useful for determining further information on the building at that point in its history. It may also explain the presence of florescent lights along the arches of the center room, which are commonly used as "Keystone lights" in the film and television industry.

⁵ It is not clear if the result of the 1967 Six Day War had an effect on the Ha'wa family's decision to sell the house. It is, however, intriguing that they sold it at this time.

⁶ Documents are available at the Old Acre Development Company in Hebrew on the subject. Wallid now owns and operates a smaller youth hostel, the Akko Gate Youth Hostel, on Saladin Street.

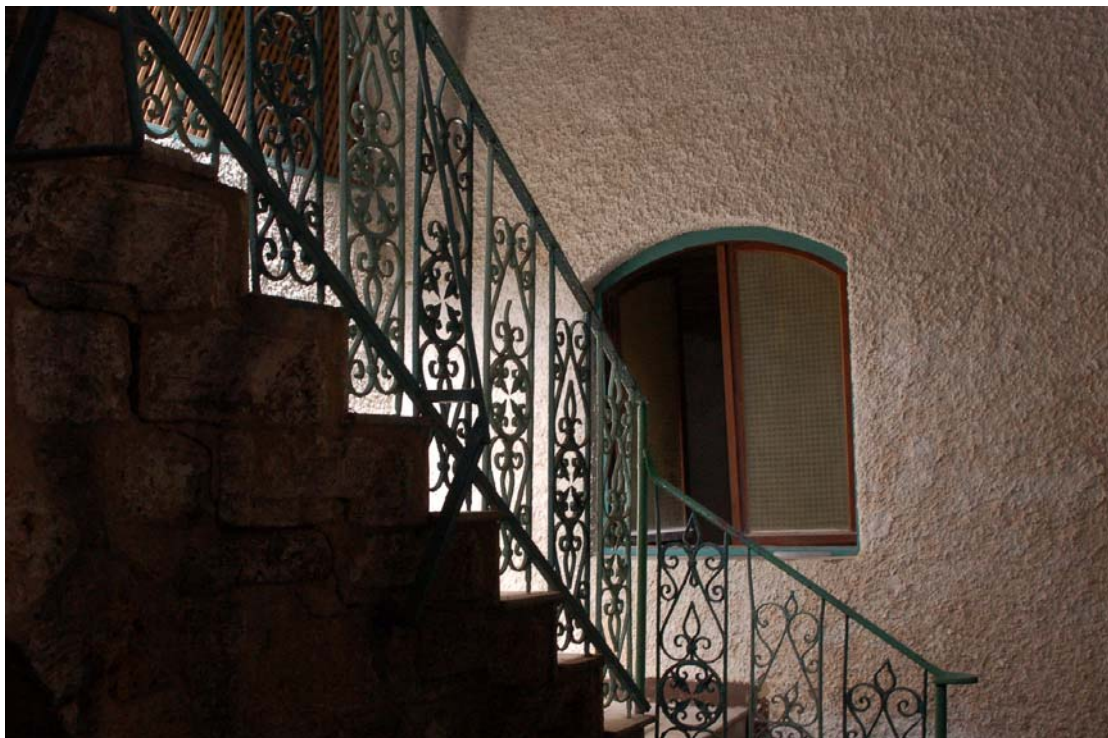
⁷ The last remaining member of the Ha'wa family allegedly sold it to fund a critical medical treatment.

⁸ See <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0151557/> for further details. The IBA holds an archive of the show in its Jerusalem-based office; however, at the time of writing, the video was not available for viewing.

During these "Modern Years," the building underwent another group of alterations. New materials began to be used, such as modern reinforced concrete, a relatively recent building technology introduced to Acre during the second half of the 20th century.



On the ground level and looking on to the staircase is a window, made obsolete by the above addition. The ground floor now receives close to no natural light or ventilation.



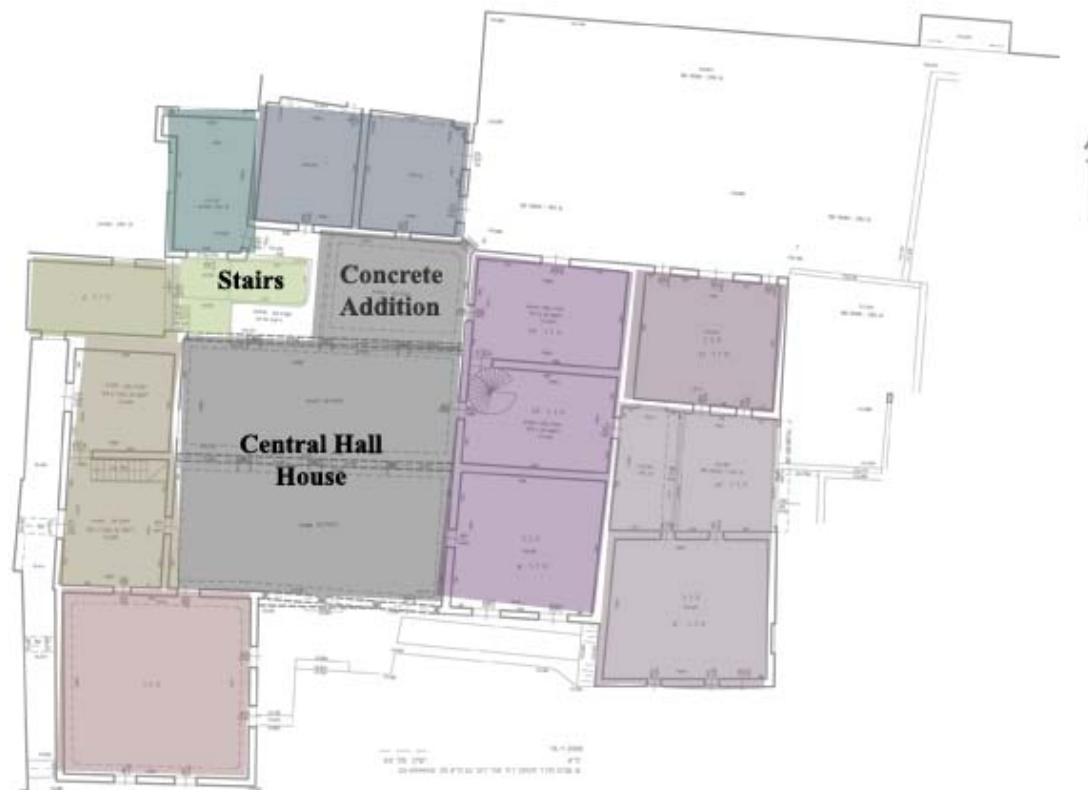
The arrangement of ceilings on the north end of the room also suggests later additions. Consider the ceiling on the northeast corner, which is milled differently than the ceiling adjacent to the south. The ceiling on the northwest corner is at a higher level and also of different materials, suggesting an even later addition.



The complete enclosure of open air on the second floor has also led to dramatically reduced natural lighting and ventilation on both the ground and upper floors. This encourage use of electric lighting and fans or air conditioning, technologies that can pose special challenges for low energy usage and long-term building conservation.



From this arrangement of materials and considering its context, we can suggest a revised layout close to this (note: the roof enclosure over the stairs was probably an even later addition).



Although, again, this plan is schematic by nature, it illustrates the filling in of remaining open spaces, compromising the original natural lighting and ventilation systems. A complete room-by-room survey of materials, documenting materials especially those currently obscured by the recent cementitious stucco coatings, will evidence what other additions were made during this time period.

A number of other changes were made to the building during this modern-era, including concrete block additions to the east, the splitting of rooms to contain mezzanine levels, and the truncating of original ceilings with I-beams and reinforced concrete. It appears also at this time that cementitious stucco and modern pigments were used to cover traditional materials, resulting in both short life-cycles for the modern materials themselves as well as compromising the original traditional materials. Compounding the issue is the poor condition of the roofs, both flat concrete and portions of the red tile-clad gable, that are encouraging moisture penetration. These problems are compounding from one another and require urgent attention. If left untreated, the cumulative effect of these deficiencies will cause the building to continue to deteriorate at an accelerated rate.



Photos: Maya Kapelushnik

Example of I-beam and modern concrete roof atop stone walls. Note delamination of concrete from stone (above), encouraging moisture to penetrate into walls below. The inside modern finishes also compound moisture retention issues by being impermeable, encouraging failure of and damage to both the historic stone and modern coatings (below).





Photos: Maya Kapelushnik

This concrete addition partially slices through existing circular windows (above), probably once used for air circulation but since used as decoration, consisting of glass painted with modern pigments to imitate stained glass. Water staining can be noted in the cementitious stucco (below), along with a long history of repair and replastering. Note also fissures below window, further encouraging water damage and accelerated weathering.





Photos: Maya Kapelushnik

The modern concrete roofs and moisture-impermeable modern finishes have encouraged water penetration to cause surface delamination. This type of water penetration causes damage to the underlying materials, in addition to causing failure to the modern finishes.





Above, concrete blocks, metal spiral staircases, and sloppy painting are all indicative of its past use and are relatively easy to identify. Below, a concrete floor has been placed on top of a decorative checkered marble floor.





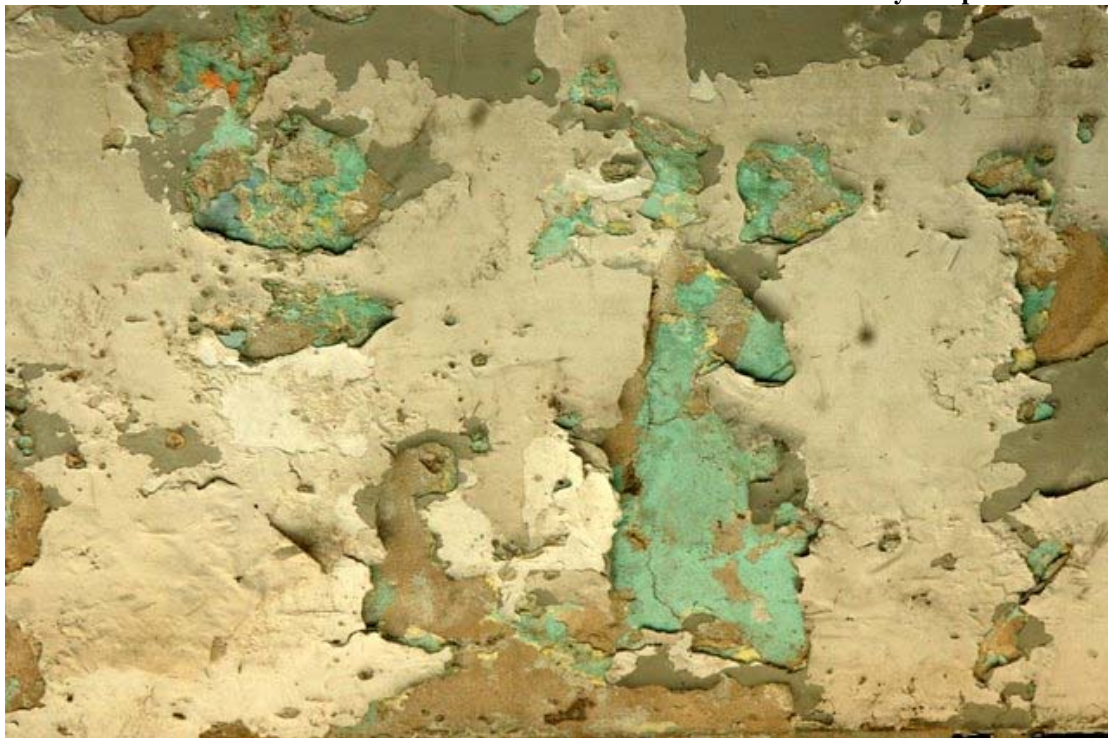
Photo: Maya Kapelushnik

In addition to the moisture penetration issues mentioned, the poor condition of the roof has caused further damage to interior finishes and stone. Note efflorescence, staining, and stone deterioration below roof failure along the left side of the trefor window and main entrance to the building.



Directly below the roof failure, water damage is causing accelerated deterioration of the underlying stone and interior finishes. Most of the frieze (above) has been replaced with modern sheet metal and the wood ceiling has become warped. Modern finishes (below) have been delaminating, also due to water infiltration.

Photo: Maya Kapelushnik



Some Final Thoughts on the Building History

With the long history of gradual alterations and additions, it becomes exceedingly difficult to classify the building as one "type."⁹ It appears to have been used at different points in its history as a fortress, a road, a set of semi-autonomous houses, a government house, a private mansion, a youth hostel, and a television set. At different points, portions of the building appear to have fit the typologies of a courtyard house, a bridge house, a central hall, a captain's house, an apartment house, and a storage warehouse. It appears that at different times in its history, different portions of the building were used and constructed as different, somewhat autonomous pieces, and then later merged.

The most damaging interventions have occurred over the past 50 years or so. These more recent developments are relatively easy to spot: the use of cement and steel are clear giveaways, as are elastomeric paints, cementitious stucco, and other moisture-impermeable modern coatings. These modern interventions typically show the most water-related damage, causing cracking, spalling, delamination of coatings, and efflorescence of the original building materials. Modern interventions, such as the covering of ancient materials with moisture-impermeable coatings, are both damaging to and obscuring information about the underlying stone. Removal of these coatings will uncover more evidence about the building's history, particularly with its relation to Crusader times, and if done correctly will stabilize the underlying historic materials. Careful written and photographic documentation should take place when the building undergoes construction or treatment.

It is unclear the extent to which historic finishes exist today, and investigation will be necessary to uncover underlying materials and decoration. Removal of moisture-impermeable coatings, such as cementitious stucco, will allow closer observation of the stone or traditional finishes and will assist in its conservation. Replacement of finishes with a more historically and materially sensitive coating, such as a local lime plaster, will assist with the room's long-term preservation.

On a larger architectural level, these modern additions intervene in a manner that compromises the passive systems for natural ventilation and lighting. For the grand majority of the building's long history, it has had a very low carbon and energy footprint, using natural ventilation and cross breezes, being constructed of local building materials and craftsmanship, and having an arrangement of materials in a manner to encourage longevity. Following the modern interventions, beginning in the mid-20th century, the building has experienced accelerated weathering and decay, detriment to the original building materials, and a loss of the intangible aspects of its cultural heritage, including the traditional craftsmanship required to alter or maintain the building.

On a contextual level, most of the additions and interventions of the past 50 years have been made using the cheapest, most readily-accessible building materials available. Their application, typically sloppy with overspray or drip-marks, is also indicative of this trend. But given the building's historic context, it makes sense that

⁹ See "Typologies of the Residential Buildings in Old Akko", by Faina Milstein and Yael Fuhrmann-Na'aman http://www.iaa-conservation.org.il/article_Item_eng.asp?subject_id=31&id=66

this type of development would occur. When a subsidy and an authoritarian mandate are given to offer only certain types of low-profit businesses, the incentive for the building operator is to make alterations in the least expensive manner, and in this case to maximize the number of rooms available to rent. The difficulties of maintaining such a business is illustrated by the bankruptcy declared twice in 30 years, despite government subsidies, and the need to rent out the building as a television set. The forced use of the building, in this case, encouraged hasty, sloppy, and short-sighted alterations to occur.

Throughout the majority of the building's long history of alterations and additions, most interventions had not compromised the building to future generations. Modern additions and changes of the last 50 years have made a sharp turn in the opposite direction, reducing the building's value to future generations and its stability in the long term.

Following the second bankruptcy of the youth hostel in 2000, the building has been abandoned and fallen out of use. Its footprint is large and its neglect has a significant impact on its immediate surroundings. The building has both an urgent need for use, as well as for stabilization of materials.



Photo: Maya Kapelushnik

Local children, graffiti, and fishing equipment presently adorn the front of the building, since its having fallen out of use in 2000.

BUILDING DESCRIPTION

This section provides a general architectural description of the building. A complete room-by-room architectural description, photographic documentation, and conditions assessment should accompany future interventions before treatment, and conditions should be documented during and after treatment.

This two-story building has an irregular, asymmetrical footprint formed by a series of intersecting rectangular spaces. At first glance, the collection of arches, vaults, and arch-remains appears indiscernible, but after close inspection, the materials suggest a long history of gradual additions and alterations. The building is easiest to visualize as a series of two-story semi-autonomous buildings joined together around a common courtyard. Over time, this courtyard was gradually closed by a large rectangular room on the second floor. Several of the rooms, particularly on the second floor, have been divided into two levels with wooden constructions, and appear to have been modern additions to increase dorm capacity while used as a youth hostel. Partially covering the flat roof is an L-shaped gable, clad with red tiling. The majority of the ground floor and cistern levels are built of stone, while the second floor is constructed of stone, wood, and reinforced concrete. Most historic finishes, if extant, are obscured by cementitious stucco, paints, or other modern coatings. European influences can be observed in the remaining decoration, such as the marble columns located on the second floor, the trefoil windows facing south, the marble-veneer flooring, and wooden doors. These decorations appear to be for the most part mass-produced and dating from the late 19th to early 20th centuries.

Different portions of the structure, throughout its long history of repairs and additions, fit different building classifications. Currently, it most closely follows the Central House Plan, as defined in "Typologies of the Residential Buildings in Old Akko."¹ Many hands have contributed to its long history of gradual additions and alterations.

¹ Faina Milstein and Yael Fuhrmann-Na'aman, "Typologies of the Residential Buildings in Old Akko," http://www.iaa-conservation.org.il/article_Item_eng.asp?subject_id=31&id=66, Israel Antiquities Authority, 2005.

Statement of Significance

The levels of significance follow those outlined in the *Nomination of the Old City of Acre for World Heritage List*, for UNESCO (Appendix B).

Under Criterion I, as a Monument, the building fits grades A, B & C: (A) it is a structure that appears to include archaeological remains above the ground level from the Crusader era; (B) it appears to include archaeological remains below the surface of the earth, at its cistern-level; and (C) it has been used during a later period as a public building of religious significance to the Bahai community, as well as cultural significance, from its use as a youth hostel and as a television set.

Under Criterion II, as a Dwelling, different portions of the building receive Grades A, B & C. As a Grade A building: (1) it was at one point a "Home of the Wealthy"; (2) the exterior has been specifically used in past urban surveys as "typical architecture" of the city¹; and (3) it has architectural elements typical of Acre such as checkered marble floors, trifor windows, and ceilings or walls that were at one point probably embellished with murals. As a Grade B building: (1) the building at multiple points in its history was used for municipal purposes, as a Governor's house in the late 19th century and as a youth hostel and television set in the late 20th century; (2) different portions of the building in different parts of its history appear to have been of different typological character, such as a Captain's House, a Bridge Building, a Courtyard House, a Central Hall, an Apartment House, and a Storage Warehouse. As a Grade C building: (1) the building is not freestanding but rather is connected to buildings to the west, east, north, and formerly to the south; (3) most of the original decorative finishes are currently obscured by modern coatings, and many elements are in a bad state of conservation, compromising its original grandeur; (4) many portions of the building are in a poor state of conservation and have been altered, particularly in the last 50 years with new additions, coatings, and modern building materials.

Under Criterion III, as a building or part of a building due for demolition: (1) part of the structure has blocked alleyways and public/semi private courtyards, since closed off and covered; (2a) late additions have been injurious to the completeness of the structure; and (2c) much of the building has been subject to modern materials, such as cementitious stucco, elastomeric coatings, and reinforced concrete.

Attempting to offer a clear "Statement of Significance" is, as these guidelines has shown, very difficult, due to the complexity of the structure itself. One might rather ask, "Is there a more architecturally interesting building in Acre?" Certainly some structures are more grandiose or decorated, but perhaps none have such a progression of material usage that so well tells the story of Acre's history. Due to the complexity of the building's materials, history, and usage, perhaps there is also not another building that so beautifully—and comprehensively—illustrates the difficulty attempting to establish absolute levels of significance.

When offering historically sensitive guidelines for the rehabilitation of the building, it is difficult to suggest the absolute appropriate action. On the one hand, the building holds archaeological, architectural, and contextual significance and, some may argue,

¹ See: *Winter Report*, Appendix VII, Photos 43 & 81.

deserves conservation treatment as a museum piece. On the other hand, the building has a long history of repairs by both skilled and the unskilled masons, as well as informed and uninformed architects about traditional constructions and materials. The building has a wide range of uses throughout its history, but has in recent years been abandoned. Its place holds a use-vacuum for its area of the city, contributing to an inefficient use of space that encourages further negligence in its surroundings. Probably the most appropriate guidelines that can be suggested are to encourage its use and to continue the progression of a long history of gradual alterations, while making sure that any present interventions do not compromise the future. In this sense, the use of the building as an educational center, particularly for architectural conservation, seems in its historic and present context most appropriate, providing one type of opportunity for social status mobility among residents. In the material sense, past repairs damaging to the traditional underlying materials and foundations, such as the cementitious layers upon sandstone, seem most appropriately removed and replaced with traditional techniques, using local labor and materials. With this philosophy, past additions not causing damage to the prior materials in the long-term, such as wood upon stone, should remain and could be incorporated with future additions. Newer sustainable building technologies, such as green roofs or solar paneling, could also be incorporated with this philosophy and would have the effect of continuing the long history of gradual additions and alterations.

The building and place holds a great deal of embodied energy—ranging from the sweat of hand-chiseling those massive arches by Crusader masons, to the generational carving and stacking of smaller stones by the Ottoman-era craftsmen, to the high-energy materials of cement and steel added during its modern years. Optimizing this existing legacy of embodied energy, and reducing requirements for future energy consumption for its day-to-day use, maintenance, and future additions, appears to be the most appropriate guideline for its rehabilitation.

Annotated Bibliography

The following sources were useful in assembling this report, particularly in writing the Historic Context. It is hoped that these materials, particularly the books to focus on Acre, be made publicly available in Acre for future studies and analysis, as well as for local educational resources. The digitization and availability through the Internet of archival resources would also be useful in furthering these goals of education and information accessibility.

Materials are listed by each category in order of publication date.

Published Books

N. Makhoul and C. N. Johns *Guide to Acre*, Government of Palestine, Department of Antiquities. Jerusalem, 1946

Source: Old Acre Development Company

Provides an historical summary of Acre, with particular emphasis on military history and the construction of fortifications. Lists several monuments in the city and discusses its condition and perceived historic uses.

A. Kestern *Acre: the old city, survey and planning*, Prime Minister's Office, Department for Landscaping and the Preservation of Historical Sites, 1962
Second Edition published by Old Acre Development Company, 1993

Source: Rockefeller Library, Jerusalem

Often cited as an excellent source for the architectural heritage of Acre, the Kestern Report is rarely questioned for its accuracy, despite its few referenced or verifiable materials. The report focuses on Crusader buildings in Acre but gives very little attention to the Pisan quarter.

B. Dichter, *The Maps of Acre: An Historical Cartography*, Published by the Municipality of Acre, Israel, 1973

Source: Israel Antiquities Authority, Acre Office

A collection of maps, ranging from Medieval manuscripts to 20th century scaled drawings. Includes numerous historical accounts on the city's layout. Also contains a long narrative on existing building footprints, and their significance in determining the original Crusader layout.

Jaroslav Folda *Crusader Manuscript Illumination at Saint-Jean d'Acre, 1275-1291*, Princeton University Press, 1976

Source: Rockefeller Library, Jerusalem

Academic analysis of manuscripts referencing Acre near the end of its "Golden Age." Also provides historical analysis of Acre during Crusader reign and suggests that Acre may have been the intellectual center of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, in addition to being the center for commercial, military, and pilgrim-related activity.

Thomas Philipp *Acre: The Rise and Fall of A Palestinian City 1730-1831*, Columbia University Press, 2002

Source: Columbia University Press

Describes Ottoman-era Acre through the eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries. A thorough work analyzing differing historic accounts, economic data, trade routes, and political scenarios. Researched in Marseilles and Damascus, finding little information available in or near Acre itself, the book links Acre's then-prosperity to Europe's demand for cotton and grain. The description of monopolistic government policies and demographic trends are useful for understanding Acre's built landscape.

France and the Holy Land: Frankish Culture at the End of the Crusades, edited by Daniel H. Weiss and Lisa Mahoney, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004

Source: Rockefeller Library, Jerusalem

Contains a series of essays that discuss Crusader-era culture, two of which focus on Acre. "Society, Culture, and the Arts in Crusader Acre," by David Jacoby, examines cultural and artistic trends, particularly with the procuring or fabrication of luxury objects and manuscripts. "Before Louis IX: Aspects of Crusader Art at S. Jean d'Acre 1191-1244," by Jaroslav Folda, discusses Acre as a capital of the art trade for the Latin Kingdom, with a particular emphasis on paintings.

Shared Heritage of Akko: Preliminary Draft Report Vol. 1 (2004)

Assembled by the Israel Antiquities Authority, Zinman Institute of Archaeology and the University of Haifa for the Wye River People-to-People Project and the US Department of State

Source: Israel Antiquities Authority, Acre Office

A collection of papers assembled to document the cultural heritage of the city, with a special emphasis on intangible heritage, such as oral histories, historic accounts of the city, and interviews with the population about recent developments, identifying criticisms and suggestions for improvement.

Archival Resources

British Mandate Record Files

Digital copies on file at Israel Antiquities Authority, Acre Office

A collection of many first-hand reports, historic photographs, and maps of old Acre, dating until the 1940s. Includes some early aerial photographs of Acre, as well as conditions assessments and imagery of various monuments. Special emphasis on military structures.

Percy H. Winter, *Acre Report: Preservation and Restoration of Acre Survey and Report*, Government of Palestine Public Works Department, Palestine Museum Library Copy, 1944

Digital copies on file at Israel Antiquities Authority, Acre Office

Also called *The Winter Report*, this document identifies Acre as an overcrowded, unsanitary slum with outstanding tourism potential. The report outlines plans for slum clearance, widening of streets, and improvements to public health conditions. An extensive collection of historic photographs, drawings, and maps make this outstanding reference material for city planning during the first half of the 20th century.

Nomination of the Old City of Acre for World Heritage List

Submitted to UNESCO in 2000

Digital copies on file at Old Acre Development Company

A summary of the history of Acre, its monuments and buildings, and master plan for development, with a particular emphasis on the development of tourism. The report outlines criteria for evaluating significance of buildings and describes plans for community development.

Internet Resources

Ofer Cohen and Ram Shoaf

"The Rehabilitation of a Building Slated for Conservation (Building 50, Block 10)"

http://www.iaa-conservation.org.il/article_Item_eng.asp?subject_id=31

Israel Antiquities Authority

Provides a summary of results in the rehabilitation pilot project for 12 buildings in Acre. Explicitly recommends further documentation and investigation prior to commencing construction.

Ofer Cohen and Yael F. Na'aman

"Technological and Structural Aspects in the Conservation of Old Akko"

http://www.iaa-conservation.org.il/article_Item_eng.asp?subject_id=69

Israel Antiquities Authority

Summarizes the two main factors causing decay of building materials in Acre: natural decay and man-induced damage. Identifies types of materials and problems inherent to different constructions and begins to classify different wall types. Concludes: "The most significant factor in the state of the physical preservation is the long-term absence of proper maintenance and the lack of awareness."

Faina Milstein and Yael Fuhrmann-Na'aman

"Typologies of the Residential Buildings in Old Akko"

http://www.iaa-conservation.org.il/article_Item_eng.asp?subject_id=31&id=66

Israel Antiquities Authority

Identifies five different types of floor plans in the buildings Acre: the courtyard house, the central hall house plan, the captain's house, apartment house, and the bridge house. In addition to these there are the mixed type, which incorporates two or more of the mentioned building types, and an Arab vernacular, which conforms to the living requirements of the poor. Examples are included of different building types within Acre.

ICOMOS Advisory Panel for UNESCO designation for World Heritage Status

"Acre (Israel), No 1042", June 2000

http://whc.unesco.org/archive/advisory_body_evaluation/1042.pdf

Summarizes the historic and architectural significance of Acre, providing reasons for supporting designation as a World Heritage Status. Includes recommendations for management of the Old City, particularly with zoning and control of development.

"Old City of Acre" World Heritage List

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1042>

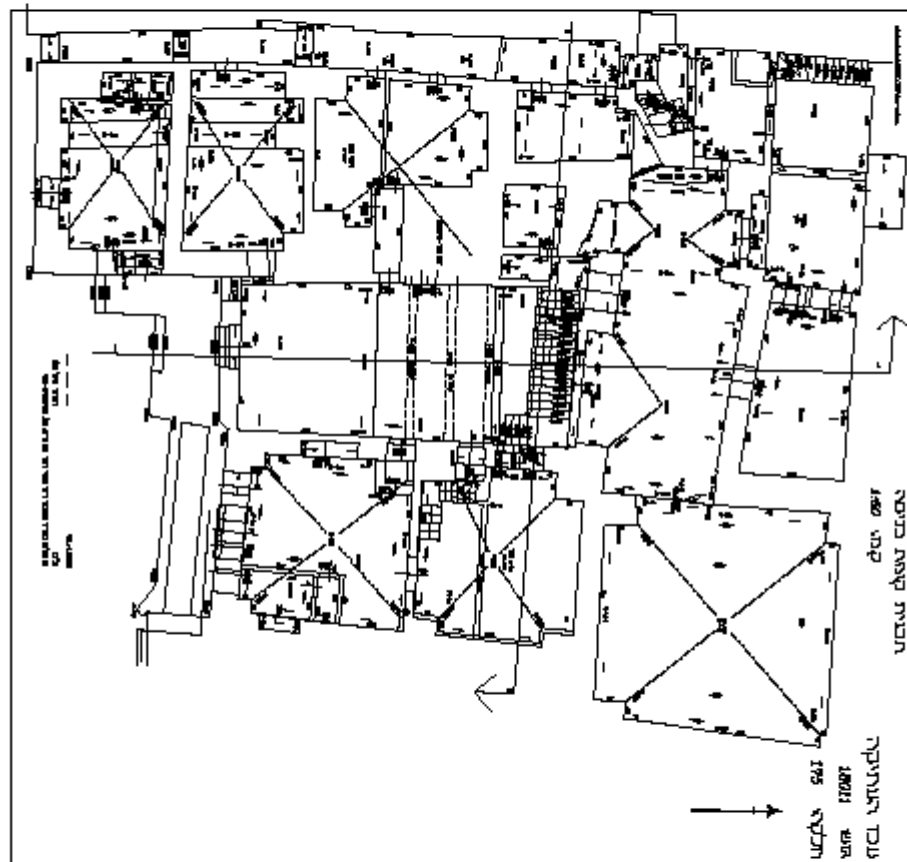
Provides a summary of Acre, its geographical data, and reasons for WHL listing.

APPENDIX A:

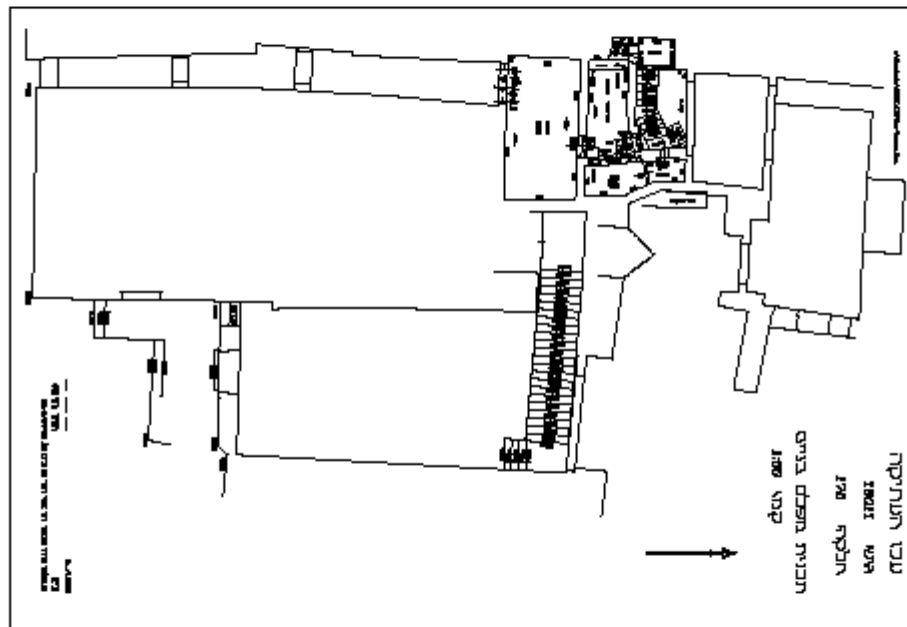
EXISTING CONDITIONS DRAWINGS

These drawings were prepared by architect Ram Shoeff. The set includes plans, starting with the ground floor, as well as elevations, of existing conditions, prior to rehabilitation. The markings are in Hebrew.

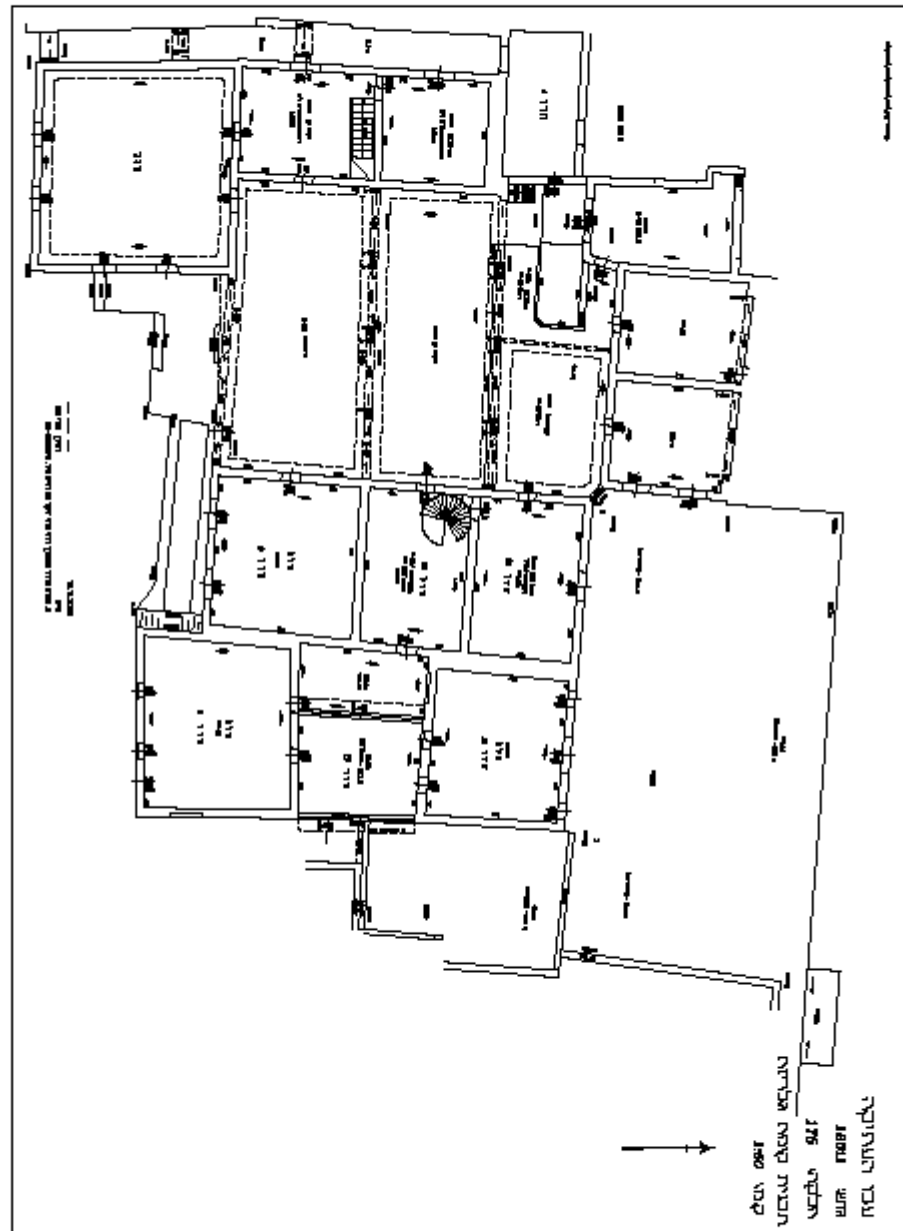
Plan-1: Ground Floor with Vaulted Ceilings



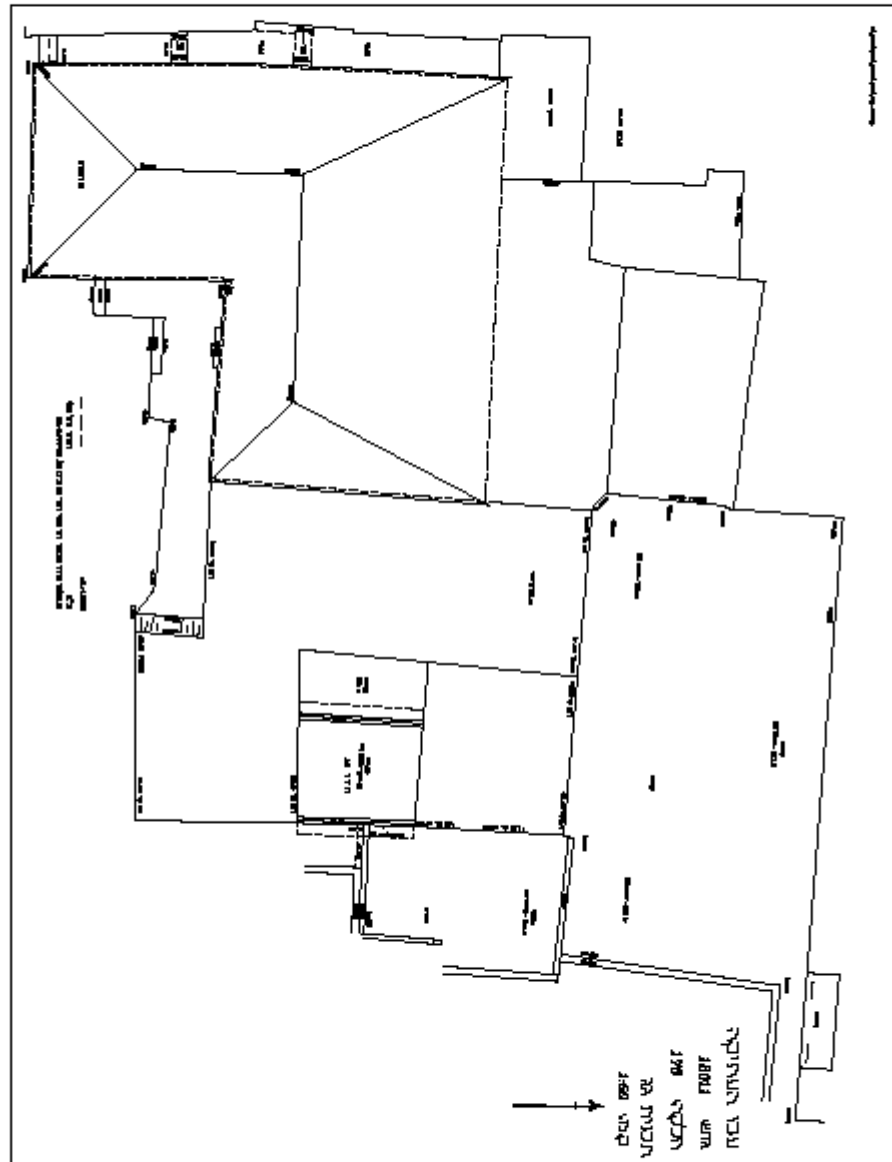
Plan-3: Mezzanine Level and Staircase



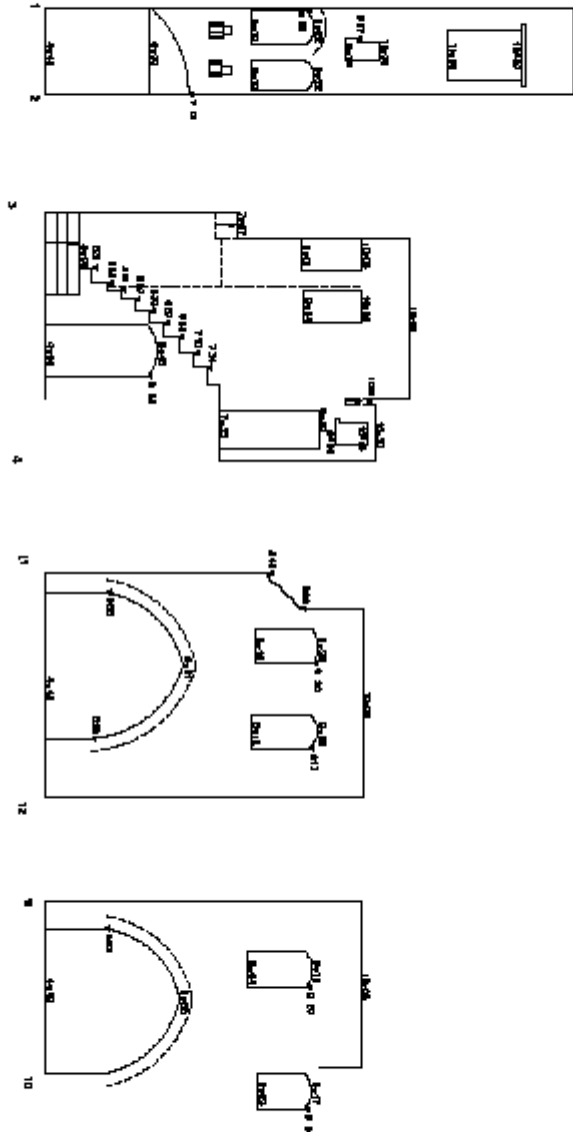
Plan-4: Ceiling Plan for Upper Floors



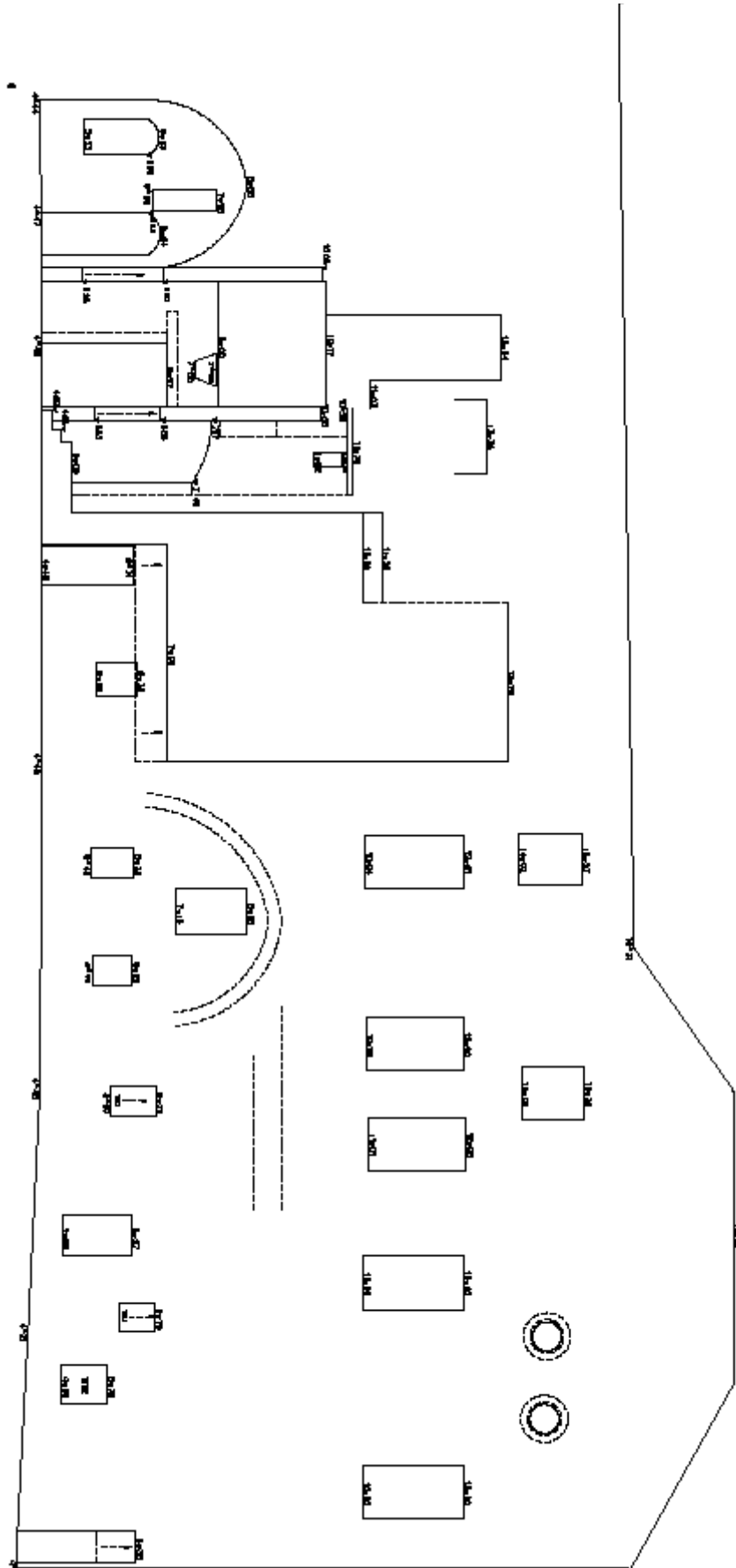
Plan-5: Roof



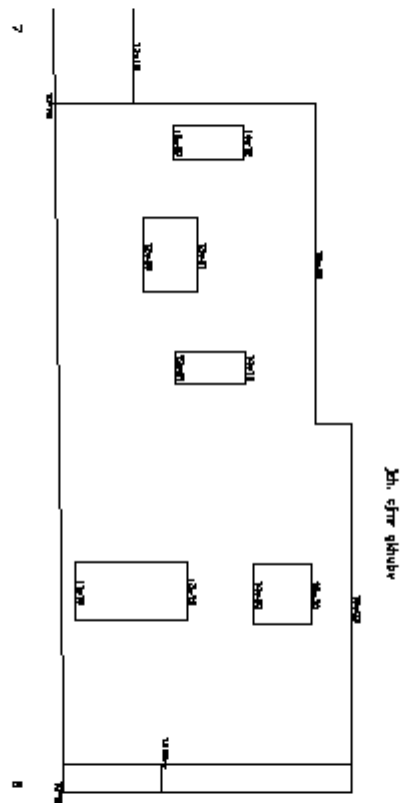
Elevation 1-10



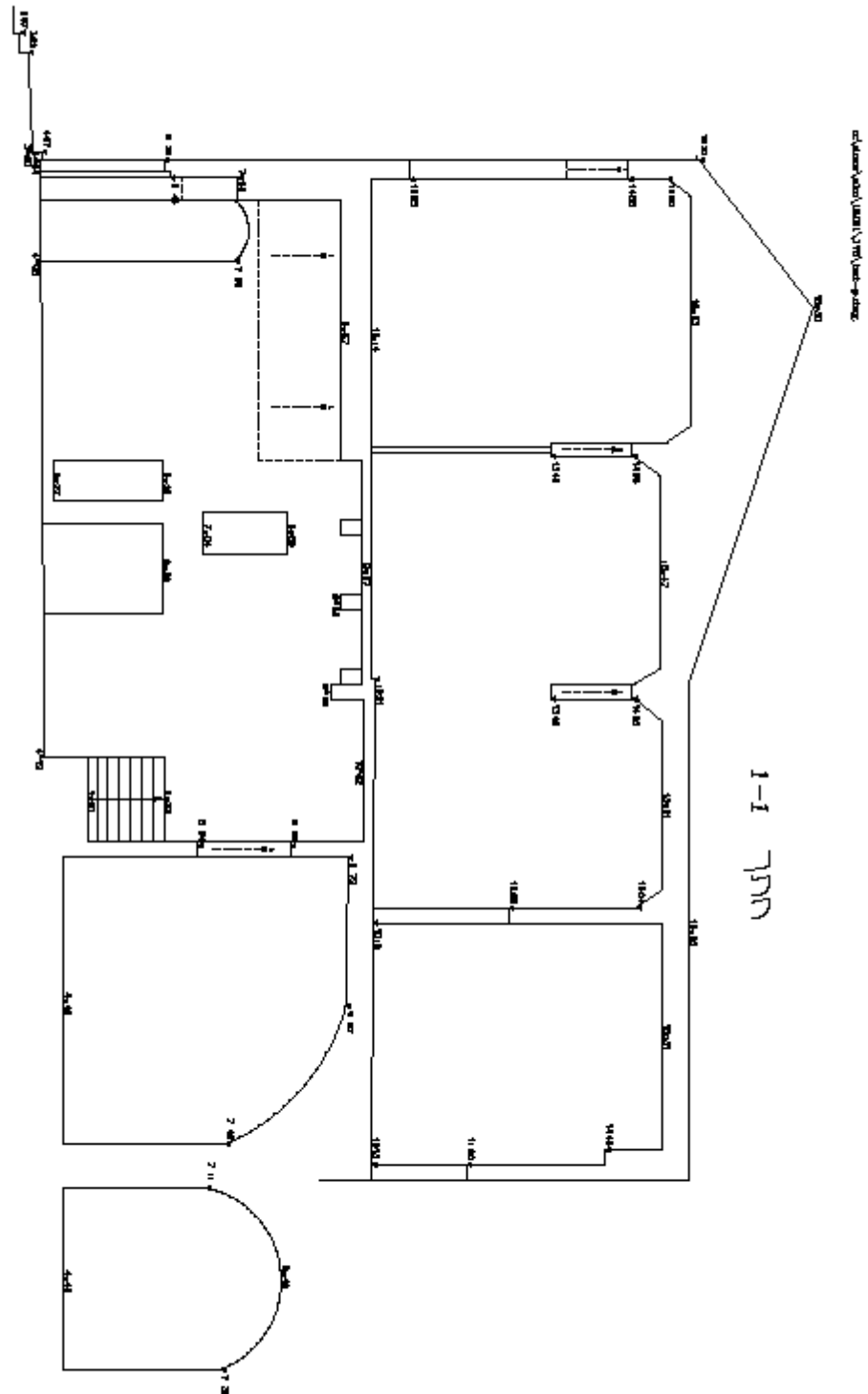
Elevation 5-6



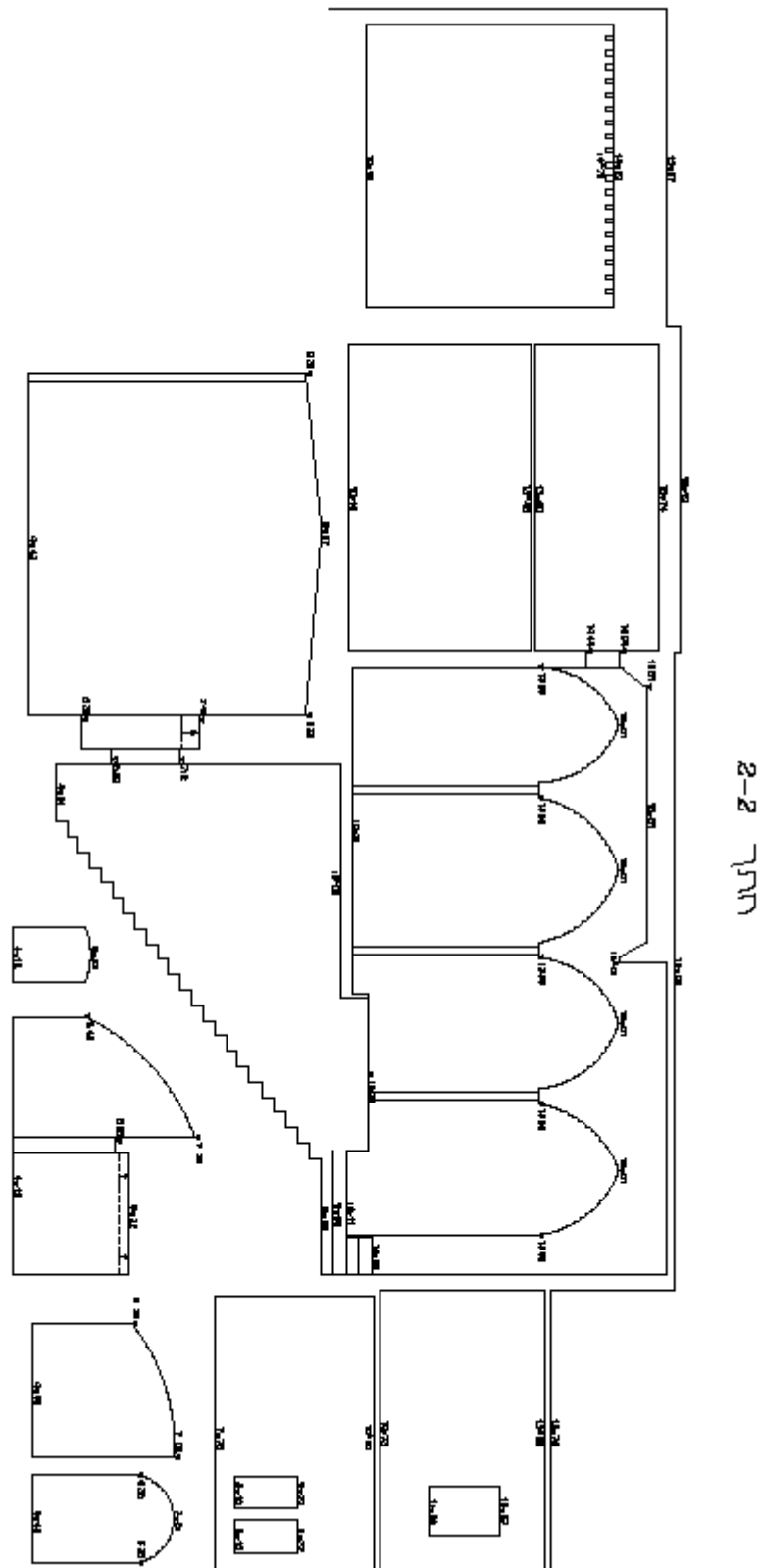
Elevation 7-8



Section 1-1



Section 2-2



APPENDIX B:

CRITERIA FOR SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria for basing the "Statement of Significance" in this report was based on the guidelines included for the Nomination of the Old City of Acre for the World Heritage List to UNESCO in 2000. These guidelines were used for the Master Plan for the Old City of Acre. They are included in full attached in this appendix.

Complementary Survey for the Conservation Appendix

For the Master Plan for the Old City of Acre

The appendix on conservation to “the Outline Plan for Old City of Acre” contains planning procedures. The following is an account of the survey that was made in order to provide a basis for formulating a set of guidelines for conservation.

Objectives:

The appendix on conservation has to provide answers to the following two questions:

A – What should be preserved, if *details* are what gives the city its special value?

B – How should it be preserved? How should the traditional characteristics of a modern city be preserved?

The process of conducting the survey:

A methodical process in stages was required in order to enable the formulation of conservation guidelines for the old city of Acre:

1 – Gathering data in the field – A field (street) survey intended to form an up to date, reliable and accurate basis.

2 – Analysis and evaluation of the data for the purpose of identifying significant characteristics.

3 – The formulation of planning procedures for the purposes of preserving the aforesaid characteristics. This includes a set of guidelines for intervention according to grade, inspection and a committee for conservation and development and inspection.

Survey limitations:

Budget limitations prevented the execution of a comprehensive and inclusive survey. Such a survey is necessary in order to formulate a full set of guidelines.

We therefore chose to carry out a reduced survey of the area around Genoa Square, with the intention of using it to reach conclusions regarding other parts of the city.

The area was chosen due to the wide range of urban, architectural and historical elements in its composition.

A more detailed analysis of the results of the survey is in preparation, for publication in the future.

Collecting data and its evaluation:

Structures and their surroundings were visited and data registered on survey cards according to pre set criteria. The results list the existing elements in the field.

The data together with a comparison of a structure with other structures provide the basis for grading the structure, thereby indicating the level of intervention that is possible and required.

The Principles of classification and grading in the conservation of buildings:
Preserving a historical city whilst enabling daily life to continue unhindered poses complex challenges.

In order to attain that middle path, various levels of intervention have been determined regarding; research, conservation, renovation, reconstruction and recycling.

Each level emphasizes certain values, for example: research and conservation enhance the heritage value whilst renovation and adaptation of the buildings according to the developing needs of the residents serve to enhance the living city.

The levels of intervention are determined by grading buildings into groups, each group having its own parameters that determine the level at which each building is to be preserved.

This framework provides the basis for active intervention.

Classification:	<u>Housing</u>	<u>Monuments</u>
Parameters:	*Urban value *Quality of original planning and construction *Quantity and quality of architectural elements *Degree of conservation of the original	*Building that includes archaeological remains of high conservation value *Public/religious building of cultural community value
Level of conservation:	Grade A Grade B Grade C Buildings for demolition	Buildings of high <u>Conservation value</u>

The following table demonstrates the correspondence between level of intervention and level of conservation. It may be seen that the main emphasis in relating to archaeological remains is that of research. However for buildings in level C (housing), there is a greater emphasis on renovation and adaptation to the needs of residents. There are also intermediate levels.

The relativity between levels of intervention and levels of conservation

Archeological remains of high conservation value				
Public buildings – monuments				
Grade A buildings				
Grade B buildings				
Grade C buildings				
Grade of building	<u>Renovation</u>	Reconstruction	Conservation	Research
Level of Intervention				

Grades of Conservation:

I. Monuments:

- A – A structure that includes archaeological remains above ground level.
- B – Archaeological remains below the surface of the earth.
- C – Public buildings of cultural/religious importance from a late period.

II. Dwellings:

A - Grade A – “Homes of the wealthy” of exceptional architectural value that stand out on the urban landscape.

- 1 – Structures actively used for municipal purposes that are landmarks, such as a building that marks out a square or central thoroughfare etc.
- 2 – Structures of high quality in their construction, originality, style and definite typological character such as: buildings surrounding an inner space, *Captain houses*, buildings with an inner courtyard.
- 3 – Structures rich in original architectural elements, grand and typical of Acre such as:
marble floors, embellished ceilings, trifor windows, high quality or unusual elements such as: murals, special detailed stonework etc.
- 4 – A fine and clear state of conservation of a structural plan with its original elements.

B – Grade B – Buildings of high architectural value.

- 1 – Buildings actively used for municipal purposes.
- 2 - Structures of high quality in their construction, originality, style and possessing a definite typological character, such as buildings surrounding an inner space, *Captain houses*, *Bridge buildings* etc.
- 3 - Structures of quality with original architectural elements, typical of Acre such as: marble floors, embellished ceilings, trifor windows.
- 4 – A good state of conservation but less than that specified in grade A, perhaps alterations have been made but not so as to prevent the building plan and original elements from being identifiable.

C – Grade C – “Ordinary” structures that comprise the majority of the city’s buildings.

- 1 – From the urban perspective, these are not free standing buildings rather they are part of a block.
- 2 – Buildings that do not possess any special characteristics of planning or construction quality.
- 3 – Buildings that do not possess original elements or have few original architectural elements or elements in a bad state of conservation and whose general appearance lacks any grandeur.
- 4 – A poor state of conservation with alterations at all levels: blocked apertures or new apertures, additions, replacement of original elements by modern ones and use of modern building materials.

III. Structures/parts of buildings due for demolition.

1 – Structures or parts of structures that detract from the urban landscape, such as by blocking alleyways and public/semi private thoroughfares, jutting on to squares, closing off courtyards.

2 – Original building planning of low quality:

A) – Late additions that are injurious to the completeness of a structures such as Grade A monuments or buildings.

B)– Poorly constructed buildings such as tin shacks and huts.

C) – Use of modern building materials such as: concrete, asbestos, plastic etc.

3 – Buildings lacking original historic elements.

4 - Buildings in a dangerous physical state for which reconstruction is not justified.

Survey Cards:

An example of an “empty” survey card, for detailing the survey matter, evaluation and grading of intervention for conservation. Other types of card exist.

SURVEY CARD				
		Address		1. General description
		Location		
		Usage		
		Storeys		2. Architectural description
		Dimensions		
		Location of entrance		
		Type of stairs		
		Relation to surroundings		
		Type of plan		
		Facades		
		Ceilings		
		Roof structure		
		Architectural elements		
		State of conservation		3. Physical description
		Physical/structural state		
		4. Historical/archaeological data		
		5. Infill/demolition possibilities		
		6. Evaluation and grading		
Grade:				
For demolition	A	B	C	Monument