The 1963 General Plan for Jerusalem

The Unrealized Vision for the Eastern Part of the City

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Abstract

This article attempts to analyze the comprehensive urban plan commissioned by the municipality of Jerusalem from Brown Engineers International in 1963 in light of the status of the city within Jordanian governance and politics, and also compared to earlier British plans. This plan was the basis for the 1966 town scheme submitted to the Jordanian government just one year before the 1967 war by Henry Kendall, who was in charge of city planning for the municipality between 1963 and 1966. Faced with the extreme reduction of the space for urban development after the division of the city, the plan ambitioned to lay the basis for a “complete city” and to compensate for the lack of vital infrastructures. For the Old City, the plan sought to further approaches to preservation initiated during the Mandate period, while calling for the creation of residential neighborhoods outside of it.

Keywords

Jerusalem; urban planning; housing; land use; parks; demographics; urban preservation; Jordan.

In today’s East Jerusalem, an estimated twenty thousand buildings are considered illegal structures according to the Israeli municipality, which has been issuing demolition orders each year, making hundreds of Palestinian families homeless. The municipality tries to justify these measures by the absence of master plans for Palestinian neighborhoods that could enable legal
construction, while systematically rejecting plans proposed by the inhabitants of these neighborhoods. However, a very detailed master plan for East Jerusalem actually does exist: it was developed between 1963 and 1966, though its implementation was cut short by the 1967 war and the Israeli occupation of the eastern part of the city.


In March 1962, five years before the abrupt end of the Jordanian administration of the city, the Municipality of Jerusalem entered an agreement with the New York-based firm Brown Engineers International to create a survey, concept study, and planning proposals for East Jerusalem. This comprehensive plan was commissioned by the municipal council and by Henry Kendall, who was in charge of city planning for the municipality from 1963 to 1966, after having been the town planning advisor for the British Mandate authorities from 1936 to 1948. The resulting 144-page document deals with all aspects of life in the city, including health, sanitation, education, housing, recreation, traffic, and transportation. According to the authors, this general plan resulted from extensive consultations with “responsible bodies, officials, officers
and notables concerned with the affairs and welfare of Jerusalem and its future” along with “sound principles of planning.” Its stated goal was to translate “community ideals and objectives into concrete proposals.”

Since the war of 1948 and the division of the city, the truncated eastern part of the city lacked vital infrastructure and economic opportunities. This was the result of Mandate-era planning and development favoring the western part of the city over its eastern segment, compounded by the subsequent division of the city. The ethnic cleansing of the western neighborhoods and villages in 1948–49 forced tens of thousands of Palestinians to seek refuge in the cramped Old City and adjacent neighborhoods. The municipality of East Jerusalem, under Jordanian control as of December 1948, was faced with a boundless number of immediate problems to be resolved before it could eventually turn its attention to urban planning.

Since most construction occurring at that period was located outside the planning area of approximately twelve square kilometers, one of the first recommendations of the 1963 plan was to expand the planning area to seventy-five square kilometers by including several adjacent villages. The plan paid particular attention to the restoration and protection of the Old City and proposed to create integrated residential neighborhoods for future developments outside of it. It contained a plan for constructing a civic neighborhood, concentrating local administration and cultural institutions, but official government buildings were conspicuously absent from the list of planned structures.

The 1963 plan and study was the basis of the “Jerusalem Jordan Regional Planning Proposals” submitted by town planner Kendall to the Jordanian government in the mid-1960s. Sometimes referred to as the plan of 1964, it was actually only adopted in 1966, just one year before the war and the Israeli military occupation of East Jerusalem. The 1963 plan has since become a historical document, kept in the private archives of the former Jordanian minister and urban planner Ahmad Dukhgan. Worth noting, in the 1960s in Jordan, Western-trained Jordanian planners such as Ahmad Dukhgan began to take the lead in regional and country planning within the Ministry of the Interior for Municipal and Rural Affairs, thus slowly easing the dependance on the British planners and experts who had been commissioned in the 1950s in the framework of the UN’s technical assistance program. In this respect, the continued reliance on a British planner in Jerusalem represents an exception to the rule within the Jordanian planning practice of the 1960s.

Considering planning as “an arm of the modern nation-state,” we aim to highlight the broad lines of the planning proposals put forth in 1963 and place them in their historical and political context. British Mandate-era plans form an important background for analyzing the underlying approach particularly to the Old City of Jerusalem, while Amman – as the political center of the Jordanian state encompassing the West Bank and East Jerusalem – constitutes another crucial point of reference. Due to time constraints, this article cannot speak to the debates around these plans in Jerusalem and Amman, either on the level of the municipality or on the level of the government, but we hope that future research will be able to build on the modest groundwork proposed here.
Despite the stifling division of the city, the 1963 plan set out to turn Jerusalem into a “complete city, with a balance among all of its functions.” On the social level, new residential neighborhoods were to play a crucial role in improving the quality of life for some Jerusalemites, while the dismantling of informal housing areas in the Old City entailed resettlement schemes without the same standards for others. On the political level, the plan emphasized the civic and cultural role of the city while furthering British Mandate-era conceptions of Jerusalem as a place defined by its religious centrality. Building on the 1963 plan, the 1966 town scheme subsequently developed by Kendall added an important shift concerning the role of Jerusalem as a socio-economic hub for the West Bank.

**Jerusalem under Jordanian Administration**

Jerusalem’s division and the military occupation of the western part of the city in 1948 left only 11 percent of the municipal area of the city under the control of Jordan, which officially annexed the eastern part of the city along with the rest of the West Bank in 1950. As Michael Dumper points out, Jordanian policies concerning East Jerusalem were primarily concerned with integrating the city into the kingdom. The city held an important place in Jordanian politics from 1948 onwards, as did its holy places. Jordan sought to establish the legitimacy of its control, despite continued calls for internationalization. In this spirit, King Abdullah created the position of “Custodian of the Holy Places” in 1950, which became part of the responsibilities of the governor of Jerusalem after 1952. In 1955, King Husayn split the governor position in two: the custodian (muhafiz) was now in charge of the city and the holy places, whereas the governor (mutasarrif) was in charge of the district of Jerusalem, extending to neighboring towns such as Bethlehem.

This change occurred at a moment when calls increased in the Jordanian press and parliament for declaring Jerusalem the capital of Jordan or at least its second capital, as analyzed by Kimberly Katz. There was a sense of urgency ever since the Israeli government moved the president’s official residence to the city in 1952, which meant that diplomatic credentials had to be presented in West Jerusalem. When the British and U.S. ambassadors did so in 1954, Arab media outlets began to speculate about an upcoming move of the Jordanian foreign ministry to Jerusalem, a move that never actually happened. In 1960, however, Jordan’s parliament was convened in Jerusalem and on this exceptional and highly symbolic occasion, King Husayn welcomed the members of parliament to the “second capital of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.”

As early as December 1948, four months before Jordan’s official annexation, a municipal council under Jordanian control had been created for East Jerusalem. A decade later, just before the municipal elections in 1959, the city was granted the status of amana (trusteeship), making Jerusalem the only city in the kingdom to hold this title aside from Amman. That same year, the government also decided to build a royal palace in Jerusalem, the concrete skeleton of which still stands today in Bayt Hanina, a stark reminder of the interruption of all Jordanian plans for Jerusalem in June 1967.
The larger political context of the 1963 plan is thus constituted by the status that the Jordanian state attributed to Jerusalem, a status forged by the need to react to unilateral Israeli attempts to change the city’s status in contravention of international law. The small size of the territory and the absence of vital urban infrastructure was another crucial factor influencing the development of the eastern part of the city during the years of Jordanian administration: the main water reservoir, for instance, was in the western part of the city. In the words of Ruhi al-Khatib, mayor from 1957 to 1967, the situation in the city was dire in 1949: “Arab East Jerusalem was confined to the part inside the city walls and a few residential centers falling east, north, and south of the city. . . . Our heritage from the Mandate Government in this part of Jerusalem was a distressed city of shaking buildings, a paralyzed commerce and industry, devoid of any financial resources and without a government, water, or electricity.”

The demographics of the eastern part of the city had also been heavily impacted by the loss of the western neighborhoods and by the loss of the status as capital. Emigration was on the rise, since employment prospects had worsened. As Dumper writes of the situation:

“This emigration can be attributed partly to continuing difficulties over the provision of water and electricity supplies, partly to a Christian Arab exodus, and partly to the development of Amman as the political, administrative, and commercial center of the Kingdom at the expense of Jerusalem, which drew away the professional and middle classes of the city.”

This was the case in particular for professionals who had worked for the Mandate administration before 1948 and who now saw similar opportunities only in Amman. In the 1955 “Final Report of the United Nations Field Town Planner Jordan,” Amman was already described as the epicenter of Jordan. Aside from its function as an administrative center housing both the royal palaces and the government, it was also the “business center of the kingdom, serving as a clearing house for the country’s merchandise.” Although in 1959–60, there were discussions about building government offices in Jerusalem and thereby bolstering its status as the second capital of Jordan, they were never implemented and are absent from the 1963 plan.

**Urban Planning in Unnatural Circumstances**

The urban plan for East Jerusalem, prepared by Chief Planner Harry A. Anthony and Project Planner Warkentin Schroeter, includes a preliminary survey, topographic maps, a comprehensive concept study (including climate issues and social and economic life), planning proposals and policy, and effectuation recommendations. This study had been requested by the municipality of Jerusalem, which – during its course – also asked for advice on “urgent & immediate problems calling for interim solutions.” This mention of urgent problems hints at the precarious context in which this urban plan was commissioned, and at the continuing predicament of a municipality which could generally only propose interim solutions.
The document’s authors clearly express the difficulty of planning a city that has been divided and therefore lacking in vital infrastructure.\(^{30}\) In their words, “modern Jerusalem is largely the product of unnatural circumstances.”\(^{31}\) Nonetheless, they set out to enable this divided city to function as though it was complete.

Figure 2. Municipal Boundary and Planning Area in “Jerusalem General Plan,” 1963.

One of the first measures called for in the plan is the extension of the planning area, which counted approximately twelve square kilometers in 1963, with a municipal boundary of about six square kilometers. Noting that much construction in Jerusalem is located beyond the existing planning area, including the villages of Silwan (which was also within the municipal boundaries), al-Tur, al-‘Isawiyya, al-‘Ayzariya, and a small portion of Shu‘fat, they considered that the new limits of the planning area should also include Bayt Hanina, ‘Anata, Abu Dis, and the rest of al-Tur, Shu‘fat, al-‘Ayzariya, and al-‘Isawiyya, adding up to a total planning area of seventy-five square kilometers. The municipality had already filed a request with the Jordanian government to recognize such a planning area officially, but no change to the existing planning area of twelve square kilometers had been approved by the time the plan was handed over.\(^{32}\)
The almost forty-page concept study of the plan covers many factors including climate, existing land use, population, housing, health, sanitation, economic activities, education, recreation, religion, culture, traffic, transportation, utilities, and administration. While all of these topics deserve further study, we will limit ourselves here to a brief analysis of the demographic data and projections since they are closely linked with the question of land use and control.

In 1961, East Jerusalem counted 60,488 inhabitants, of which sixty percent lived in the Old City. The area that the plan calls the “inner circle of villages” consisted of Abu Dis, Sawahira, Shu‘fat, Sur Bahir, al-Tur, al-‘Ayzariya, and al-‘Isawiyya and contained an additional 18,401 inhabitants. The “outer circle of villages” including Qatanna, Qalandiya, Bayt Hanina, and Mishimishi, was home to 28,059 inhabitants. These three zones taken together constituted the “Jerusalem Census Subdistrict” with a total of 106,948 inhabitants, which are the data underlying the proposed planning area in the document. Unfortunately, none of this zoning is clearly apparent from the maps.

The authors note the unusually high proportion of children and young people in Jerusalem in particular (as in Jordan in general). Schooling for boys and girls was on the rise, while Jerusalem’s school system was already overloaded. More than half of the seventy-seven elementary, preparatory, and secondary schools in the city and the surrounding area were overcrowded to varying degrees, leading the authors to call for massive investment in the construction of schools and playgrounds.

In Jerusalem, men between twenty and sixty years constituted less than one-fifth of the population which, according to the authors, put much pressure on them to ensure the livelihood of the rest of the population. The demographic analysis also shows the relatively small size of this generation, almost 30 percent smaller than the previous generation, for men and women alike. The authors propose several possible reasons for this phenomenon – low birth rate, high infant mortality maybe due to epidemics of children’s diseases – but from a socio-historical perspective, additional possible causes could be the impact of the brutal British repression of the 1936–39 revolt and that of the 1948 war on this generation of young Palestinians. This was also a generation which – having founded families – was likely to have chosen to leave the city after 1948 when employment prospects began to dwindle drastically.

The planning proposals constitute the second half of the general plan, with twenty-five “sample administrative policy recommendations . . . offered as the basis for setting the course for systematic enhancement of Jerusalem.” The overall land use plan divides the area into the following districts: Old City, civic center, urban center, transportation center, Mount of Olives, Silwan, resettlement housing, hospital, urban residential, medium density, low density residential and, last but not least, an “open landscape district.” These divisions show the overall approach to the city, setting the Old City apart from the rest, along with the Mount of Olives, while revealing a functionalist approach to the rest of the city, with particular considerations for civic life, housing, education, transportation, and health.
Residential Neighborhoods as Safe Havens?

The plan calls for the creation of new residential neighborhoods with improved housing standards for different income groups. Based on the 1961 housing census in Jerusalem (counting 10,119 households within the municipality’s boundaries), the authors estimated that the average household size was almost six persons. They also found that the homes built after 1955 were primarily single-family dwellings and therefore based their own housing concept on this approach. 

Figure 3. Theoretical application of three typical residential neighborhoods in “Jerusalem General Plan,” 1963.

The concept of the residential neighborhood set out in the 1963 plan for East Jerusalem is of particular interest. Conceived for five thousand to ten thousand persons, it would be characterized by the absence of major streets within its limits and the presence of a “central area for elementary schools, neighborhood stores, places
of worship, a center of assembly, and a clinic, all arranged in a campus-like manner, with an abundance of trees, large playing fields, and with smaller recreational areas closer to the houses for the smaller children.” The authors proposed a large square neighborhood (made up of nine small squares) to maximize land use, considering the provision of open areas for playgrounds and other public facilities as a means of reducing the size of individual parcels for houses.\(^{38}\) This entire concept takes into account the limited space on which East Jerusalem could develop and the general situation of the city, but nonetheless tries to create an ideal setting for families and children:

Recognizing that the capacity of such a neighborhood would be about 8,000 people, it would require eight nursery schools. Therefore, a public open space, or playground, of about four dunums has been set aside and reserved at the center of each of the eight residential squares. It will further be noted that all of the tiny children living within the square are able to walk to their playground or nursery school without having to cross a single street.\(^{39}\)

In spite of the wholly unnatural circumstances in which inhabitants of East Jerusalem had to lead their lives, this plan set out to create safe havens for families with the utmost sensibility to the needs of small children.

There is a dissonance between these plans and the resettlement schemes for Old City residents referred to in the plan. The residents of overcrowded areas of the Old City were to be resettled in “basic shell public housing units (leaving the interior finishing to be completed by the occupants),” a proposal of a very different standard of living, far from the concept of the integrated residential neighborhood that sought to cater to people’s daily needs, from childcare to grocery shopping. The stated objective was to “facilitate the rehousing of the inhabitants in the Old City of destroyed or deteriorating housing and temporary structures which have been erected in courtyards, in order to further facilitate the removal of such temporary structures and the reconstruction of such destroyed areas.”\(^{40}\)

There are no clear indications as to the location of these resettlement areas in the text, but one of the maps shows the western part of al-‘Isawiyya, south of Shu‘fat, as the primary site, whereas the eastern part of al-‘Isawiyya was designated as an “urban residential district.”\(^{41}\)

While there are no details of the type of urban setting this resettlement area was supposed to represent, this approach to resettlement in housing units providing only the bare minimum of comfort resembles that concerning the resettlement of inhabitants of the informal Mu‘askar camp in the Old City’s Hay al-Sharaf area. Planned and executed by UNRWA, the housing provided in the newly created camp in Shu‘fat in the mid-1960s was among “the cheapest, smallest and lowest quality” of UNRWA shelters in use during that period.\(^{42}\)
Succession: A New Plan Building on Older Plans

A section entitled “Understanding the General Plan” sets out the view on which the plan is based, combining “sound principles of planning” with an effort to reply to the “common aspirations of the populace.”43 As a long-range general plan, it ambitioned to serve as “a guide to the Municipality in their formulation of day-to-day and year-to-year decisions,” while taking into account all the plans that have preceded it,44 particularly the 1944 Kendall plan whose philosophies, standards and regulations are considered just as applicable today as they were then.45

Indeed, the first truly comprehensive plan for Jerusalem had been proposed in 1944 by Henry Kendall who imagined a capital city “with administrative, political, and scientific-educational functions rather than with industrial ones.” A PASSIA analysis of this plan describes it as “a comprehensive plan . . . which envisioned reasonably equitable development to both the east and west of the Old City. His 1944 plan provided for modernization along industrial and urban lines based on the arterial routes leading west towards the coastal plain as well as those running north-south to serve the Palestinian markets and towns of what would become the West Bank.”

The 1963 plan reproduces the broad lines of the 1944 plan while adapting the surface on which it was deployed, now reduced to only 11 percent of what constituted the city’s space before 1948. In 1963, the main zone of development comprised only 2.5 square kilometers, including one square kilometer in the Old City. The other significant difference between the 1944 and the 1963 plan is the loss of political function, which Jerusalem no longer held under Jordanian rule. The 1963 plan does, however, place a particular emphasis on the civic and cultural life of the city, a point we will return to later.

The 1963 plan calls for several major development projects, including the establishment of a new industrial area outside the city for the relocation of heavy industries and “objectionable service activities” (in ‘Anata) which recalls the approach of all British Mandate planners, including Kendall. In terms of major infrastructure, the creation of additional water supplies and an obligation for cisterns to be included in any new building plans echo the precarious hydraulic supply of East Jerusalem, which, on the other hand, suffered from sewage flow originating in the western part of the city. Last but not least, the plan also advocates the enlargement of Jerusalem Airport to handle jet aircraft. The Jerusalem airport located in Qalandiya to the north of the city was indeed the airport used by two thirds of all tourists heading to Jordan in the mid-1960s.

The enlargement of the Jerusalem Airport is linked to the important place attributed to the promotion of tourism in this plan, and recognizes its crucial role for the economics of the city and the livelihoods of its inhabitants, while asserting that the latters’ needs should come first. In the realm of tourism, there was a certain reversal of roles between Jerusalem and Amman, hinted at in the 1955 report of the UN Field Town Planner Jordan mentioned earlier: “Amman can be considered as a tourist centre, being the transit place for visitors and pilgrims bound for Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Jericho, and Jerash.” Although designated as a tourist center, Amman appears here mainly as a transit station for tourists heading primarily to Jerusalem and the West Bank, making it secondary to Jerusalem.

For the plan’s authors, Jerusalem was at a crossroads where it still could “choose between organized development and metropolitan sprawl.” Given the limited space and resources available to the city, they advocated for organized development, which was also very much in the spirit of earlier British plans that had divided the city into various functional zones, albeit in very different political circumstances.
Déjà vu: Jerusalem as a Religious Capital and a Garden City

The stated objective of the 1963 plan was “to assure the preservation and enhancement of the Holy City, and to relate the unique role of this old and venerated human settlement to the family of other great cities throughout the world.” The authors believe that this particularity of the city would assure it support for its preservation and development “for the entire Moslem and Christian world can rightfully be called upon to render assistance to this religious capital.”

The tone was thereby set: Jerusalem was defined as a holy city and as a unique witness of the history of humanity while being destined to join the world’s other great cities through a special regime of development. This is particularly evident in the status attributed to the Old City that was considered apart from the rest of the urban entity, having “resisted modernization up to now.”

The authors note that the lack of space and upkeep in the Old City imply insufficient sunlight and air for inhabitants and an atmosphere of decay in the streets. They therefore call for the removal of “temporary structures in courtyards,” whose inhabitants would be resettled in shell public housing units. They do not provide the number of structures or the number of persons who would be part of this permanent resettlement program, nor the areas of the Old City that were primarily concerned.

The existence of these temporary structures was, of course, intimately linked to the ethnic cleansing of the western neighborhoods of Jerusalem in 1948, which forced around thirty thousand Palestinian inhabitants of these neighborhood to seek refuge in the Old City and the neighborhoods on its east, as well as in the rest of the West Bank and surrounding Arab countries, namely Jordan.

This concern for living conditions within the Old City is coupled with the ambition to preserve the “present character of the Old City with firm architectural control and judicious restriction on building heights.” The following measures echo the ideas of Ronald Storrs, Charles Ashbee, Patrick Geddes, and other British planners, while bringing them up to date in terms of technological advances:

- Encouragement for the repair and restoration of oriel windows and balconies overhanging public streets.
- Encouragement for the removal of corrugated iron shop canopies and their replacement with softly-colored canvas awnings.
- Installation of traditional tile street names signs on all corner buildings.
- Reconstruction of destroyed areas along lines similar to the original.
- Systematic enhancement of the many exceptionally fine architectural details in the Old City by the removal or re-arrangement of encumbrances, such as signs, posters, wires, and pipes.
- Requirement that roof-top TV antennas be prohibited in the Old City and that future TV users be supplied from a common public antenna system.

All of the above measures result from a heritage-centered approach to the Old City, meant to remain true, or rather to become truer, to its medieval architecture. Signs of modernity are discarded to preserve the Old City as an open-air museum – well
ordered, but not partaking in the contemporary development of the rest of the city in any visible way.\textsuperscript{61} The ideas of British planners resonate strongly in this approach. Still, there were also some original measures in the 1963 plan, such as the transformation of the Pool of Hezekiah into a children’s playground with a swimming pool.

The other echo of British planning tendencies can be found in the next section about “gardens and vistas.”\textsuperscript{62} The authors call for the protection of the skylines, particularly the Old City walls and gates, the Mount of Olives and the minarets, towers, and domes of the many religious buildings. They urge the extension of public gardens around the Old City wall, adding to the existing green belt – created in the early Mandate period – and the transformation of archeological sites into public garden areas and cemeteries into small forests.\textsuperscript{63} The presence of antiquities should thus serve as a basis for additional open areas with trees, paths and benches, for the benefit of residents, tourists and pilgrims.\textsuperscript{64} They consider the public garden begun around Damascus Gate as a good example to follow.\textsuperscript{65}

In the concept study section of the 1963 plan, the authors paint the vision of the Jerusalem they were aspiring to create:

\begin{quote}
In the usual sense of the term, Jerusalem has no parks. But in a unique sense, all of Jerusalem has a park-like character. . . . In dreaminess and poetic thought, one can visualize the Haram-area, following the advent of an abundant water supply for Jerusalem, with broad expanses of lawns evenly rolled, walkways carefully trimmed, an occasional well-tended flower garden, and shade trees throughout. Above this carpet one sees the magnificence of the architecture of the many domes, minarets, prayer niches, and arcades growing out of the dignified stone pavements upon which man walks and worships, as nowhere else this side of Paradise.\textsuperscript{66}
\end{quote}

The inherent link between the notion of a holy city and the emphasis on green spaces is tangible in this paragraph, made explicit in reference to paradise. Beyond the space of the Noble Sanctuary, all of the city was tinted in green, with afforestation efforts along the slopes of the Mount of Olives and planting of street trees in conjunction with construction of sidewalks.\textsuperscript{67} The authors imagine Jerusalem as one of the world’s garden cities,\textsuperscript{68} provided that future development follows the regulations proposed in the plan:

\begin{quote}
The vast open spaces now easily accessible to the population will disappear as the city expands – unless areas are consciously designated and set aside as permanent open spaces. The broad vistas from most parts of the city will disappear – unless building heights and volumes are judiciously controlled.\textsuperscript{69}
\end{quote}

This vision echoes the ideas that guided Henry Kendall in his twelve-year tenure as town planning adviser under the British Mandate. He emphasized the presence of open spaces, careful zoning, firm elevation controls, and building use conformity, and was concerned with the country’s “aesthetic importance” and its ancient monuments, convinced that planning in Palestine should be more protective than constructive.\textsuperscript{70}
Jerusalem as a Civic Center and a Locus of Cultural Leadership: A Possible Niche?

The overall land use plan featured in the 1963 plan divided the city according to various functions and characteristics. The Old City and the Mount of Olives were set apart as monumental sites of historical interest framed by green spaces. The urban center was the modern commercial heart of the city, whereas the transportation center district to be created would serve the city’s inhabitants as well as tourists. The civic center district involved the construction of a municipal administrative center and auditorium west of Nablus Road and the reservation of the area between Salah al-Din Road and Nablus Road as a predominantly open area for institutions and cultural activities.

Moreover, the plan called for the construction of an amphitheater outside the southeast corner of the Old City wall and for that of a “National University” near the airport “to assure and maintain the cultural leadership for Jerusalem throughout the Middle East.” This university was envisioned as a four-year university and was an integral part of a strategy of enhancing the position of Jerusalem in terms of “cultural leadership and prominence within the Nation.”

While the absence of government institutions clearly signified Jerusalem’s lack of official political status, this plan seems to attribute a different sort of leadership role to the city, namely in the realms of culture and higher education. Was this then the possible niche that Jerusalem was to hold within the Hashemite Kingdom? Coupled with the civic center district concept, this approach seems to be an attempt to attribute a particular status to the city and to its inhabitants.

In the section devoted to the city’s administration, the authors call for the establishment of a planning department within the municipality and for the primacy of local planning initiatives: “Ideally, planning should be initiated at the local level. Following this local initiation of a plan, a review could subsequently be made at the national level to ascertain that the general policies and programs established for the country as a whole have been incorporated therein.” Read together with the idea of establishing a civic center district, this recommendation hints at the importance the plan’s authors attribute to the municipality’s role for the future of the city.

Kendall’s 1966 Town Scheme: Jerusalem as “the Socio-Economic Hub of the West Bank”

Based on the 1963 plan, town planner Kendall produced a town scheme that he submitted to the municipal council and the Jordanian government as part of the “Jerusalem Jordan Regional Planning Proposals.” Kendall’s four-page introduction to the 1966 town scheme reads like an extremely objective and pragmatic document and could have been written about any city in the world. It begins with a very sober description of Jerusalem’s situation after 1948, without any reference to the war or the division of the city. Indeed, the approach is technical and neutral, while in the 1963 plan, the particular predicaments of the city are identified as the direct results of the division of the city.
Kendall’s town scheme confirms the planning goals set by the 1963 study, but goes beyond the enlargement of the planning area foreseen by the latter. Kendall recommends a 139-square-kilometer planning area including the Jerusalem airport in the north, the ‘Ayn Farah spring and the junction of the Jericho road in the east, as well as Sur Bahir in the south. Kendall explains that this northward focus of development
is the result of the main road linking Jerusalem to Bethlehem and Hebron being “cut,” but again does not refer to the occupation or the division of the city. He advocates for the afforestation of the area east of Jerusalem, expanding the existing forest reserve in order to preserve the city’s view (sic!) from the road linking Amman to Jerusalem. As for the four-square-kilometer residential areas to be developed, he projects the first ones in the airport area, al-Ram, Bayt Hanina (north), Bayt Hanina (central), Bayt Hanina (south), Shu‘fat, ‘Anata, Bethany, Bethany/al-‘Ayzariya (east), Abu Dis, and Sur Bahir. At a second stage, such neighborhoods should also be developed in Rafat, Bir Nabala, and Hizma.

The Kendall town plan “posited a single urban development scheme for the population centers lying between Bethlehem and Ramallah, with the Old City and existing municipal area at its center,” according to a PASSIA analysis. It also had an important economic dimension:

By placing within the city limits the airport to the north, as well as a ring of industrial zones, the Kendall Plan not only stood to boost the flagging economic life of the city, but to return it to its rightful and historic status as the socio-economic hub of Palestinian life. Direct and immediate development was extended to the limits of the city so as to place the towns of Bethlehem and Ramallah within the remit of anticipated growth. In this sense, the scheme took up the challenge of recreating an integrated and cohesive Palestinian development base for the whole West Bank. Indeed, while the plan incorporated the existing centrality of the Amman link to the east, it simultaneously presented a distinctly Palestinian view of Jerusalem’s future, acknowledging the importance of communication lines to the Jordanian capital, while drawing the outlying West Bank economy and infrastructure back into harmony with the Palestinian capital’s development.

This analysis emphasizes an important aspect of the Kendall plan: indeed, this plan was a compromise between the ambition to incorporate East Jerusalem and the West Bank into the Hashemite Kingdom and thus subordinate Jerusalem to Amman, and the necessity to bolster the status and economic viability of the truncated former capital of Mandate Palestine within its immediate environment, the West Bank.

Conclusion

The 1963 plan commissioned by the municipal council of East Jerusalem owes much to the older plans devised by British town planners, just like Israeli plans after the military occupation of the eastern part of the city in 1967. As Michael Dumper points out, “The Jordanian government was anxious to continue the planning priorities laid down by the British and, in the main, the basic outlines persisted. It is perhaps ironic that as a result of this policy, it was an Arab government that continued the preservation of the Old City as a cultural monument.”
Setting the issue of the Old City aside for a moment, it is clear that according to the 1963 urban plan and the Kendall town scheme based on it, Jerusalem was to become a very green city, foreshadowing more recent international planning orientations gaining momentum because of the acute climate crisis. In some ways, this is the latent image of Jerusalem we can distill from this plan, an image that has been holding sway for a century now, ever since the McLean plan. While aesthetically pleasing and ecologically beneficial, a question remains concerning the place of the inhabitants of the city and their right to shape the environment in which they live “as real people with real lives,” to use Rana Barakat’s words. The plan, however, also foresees the provision of additional housing in residential neighborhoods conceived for families and children, addressing a vital need of Jerusalemites, which remains unanswered until today. Overall, it seems that the plan tried to strike a balance between the needs of Jerusalemites and those of visitors coming from abroad.

The plans of 1963 and the town scheme adopted in 1966 were interrupted by war, military occupation, and colonial policies of ethnic cleansing and expropriation. Not knowing what was ahead, the authors of the plan set a large horizon for the implementation of their proposals: “A recommendation need not necessarily be feasible before it is included in the overall plan. If the objective is a desirable one, the time may arrive when its implementation will become feasible.”

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Endnotes
4 According to Michael Dumper, the municipal boundaries created in 1927 mostly included neighborhoods and villages located to the west of Jerusalem; Michael Dumper, The Politics of Jerusalem since 1967 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 27.
5 PASSIA, “The Kendall Town Scheme 1966,”
online at www.passia.org/maps/view/58 (accessed 29 October 2022).
7 The authors wish to thank Vincent Lemire for providing them with some images of this document.
8 Wendy Pullan and Maximilian Sternberg, “The Making of Jerusalem’s ‘Holy Basin’,” Planning Perspectives 27, no. 2 (April 2012): 38. Elisha Efrat (former head of national and regional plans in the Israeli Ministry of the Interior) and Allen Noble present that plan as follows: “A master plan for Arab Jerusalem was promulgated in 1964. Great emphasis was placed on improving living conditions and standards of public services. New residential areas were proposed to the north; the ones already on the northern edge of the Old City were converted to commercial use to supplement the activities in the Old City. Other features of the plan were an industrial zone in the Anata locality and arterial roads to Amman, Ramallah, and Bethlehem. The plan was the work of Henry Kendall.” Elisha Efrat and Allen G. Noble, “Planning Jerusalem,” American Geographical Society 78, no. 4 (October 1988): 398.
9 PASSIA, “Kendall Town Scheme 1966.”
10 This plan does not currently seem to be available in any public archives in Jordan.
13 “Jerusalem General Plan,” 51.
14 Dumper, Politics of Jerusalem, 91.
15 Dumper, Politics of Jerusalem, 33.
17 Katz, Jordanian Jerusalem, 83.
19 Dumper, Politics of Jerusalem, 33.
20 Katz, Jordanian Jerusalem, 85–86.
21 Katz, Jordanian Jerusalem, 88.
23 Katz, Jordanian Jerusalem, 87. See the cover of this issue.
24 Dumper, Politics of Jerusalem, 91.
26 Dumper, Politics of Jerusalem, 69.
28 Dumper, Politics of Jerusalem, 33.
30 “Jerusalem General Plan,” 7. This situation even rendered the production of maps arduous, since the topographic survey was limited due to security constraints for aerial photographs, for example; “Jerusalem General Plan,” 10.
32 “Jerusalem General Plan.”
33 “Jerusalem General Plan,” 28–33.
34 “Jerusalem General Plan,” 19.
35 “Jerusalem General Plan,” 22.
36 “Jerusalem General Plan,” 63.
37 “Jerusalem General Plan,” 24. It is interesting to place this census in the context of the housing situation of Jordan (including the West Bank), analyzed in the report on the “Economic Development of Jordan,” 1957. This report highlighted the inadequacy of housing and public facilities and the high population densities in significant districts. Districts like Hebron, Jerusalem, and Nablus were described as highly populated, with old towns in which “lack of security in the past has contributed to crowded conditions.” For example, in the district of Jerusalem, the Housing Standards of 1952 show an average of nineteen persons per structure, while Amman had eight persons per structure (“Economic Development of Jordan, Report of a Mission Organized by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development at the Request of the Government of Jordan,” 1957, 24), and this after having absorbed tens of thousands of Palestinian refugees as a result of the 1948 Nakba. The housing situation was thus particularly dire in East Jerusalem and in
the Jerusalem district, a situation which can be largely attributed to the overcrowding of the Old City, exacerbated after the 1948 war.

38 “Jerusalem General Plan,” 134.
39 “Jerusalem General Plan,” 35.
40 “Jerusalem General Plan,” 78.
45 “Jerusalem General Plan,” 17.
46 Efrat and Noble, “Planning Jerusalem,” 394.
47 PASSIA, “Kendall Town Scheme 1966.”
48 “Jerusalem General Plan,” 53.
50 “Jerusalem General Plan,” 27.
52 “Jerusalem General Plan,” 52.
53 “Jerusalem General Plan,” 52.
56 “Jerusalem General Plan,” 60.
57 See the contribution of Maria Chiara Rioli and Vincent Lemire to this special issue which highlights the way these ideas became more concrete in the Kendall plan that built on the 1963 General Plan.
58 Rochelle Davis, “The Growth of the Western Communities,” 52.
60 “Jerusalem General Plan,” 60.
63 “Jerusalem General Plan,” 62.
64 “Jerusalem General Plan,” 59.
65 “Jerusalem General Plan,” 72. From 1929, the efforts of the town planning commission had concentrated on the city’s walls and gates and on “the clearance of undesirable buildings.” The latter occurred in several phases: in 1936, there was a wave of expropriations and subsequent demolition of buildings around Damascus Gate, and after the 1941 earthquake, stores outside Jaffa Gate were declared dangerous and were similarly expropriated for demolition (Barakat, “Urban Planning,” 31).
68 “Jerusalem General Plan,” 51.
70 Roza El-Eini, Mandated Landscape: British Imperial Rule in Palestine, 1929–1948 (London: Routledge, 2006), 48–51. The quest for a particular aesthetic of Jerusalem, largely inspired by biblical imaginaries, had been an important element of British policy in the city from the outset, leading to the preparation of six development plans. The first two urban development plans for the city were produced under the auspices of the Pro-Jerusalem Society founded by military governor Ronald Storrs. The town engineer of Alexandria, William H. McLean, prepared a scheme that set the “medieval” Old City apart from the rest of the city by surrounding it with a green belt; he did not propose any clear vision for the new city in the west, but it was to be the site of future development. The latter was outlined in the second urban scheme for Jerusalem, developed in 1919 by Patrick Geddes. Though initially conceived as a report on the McLean Plan by the Military Administration, Geddes focused his efforts on Jerusalem’s Jewish suburbs and on Mount Scopus at the request of the Zionist Commission. Benjamin Hyman, “British Planners in Palestine, 1918–1936” (PhD diss., London School of Economics, 1994), 51, 123–24. On Geddes, see Nazmi Jubeh, “Patrick Geddes: Luminary or Prophet of Demonic Planning?” Jerusalem Quarterly 80 (Winter 2019): 23–40.
71 “Jerusalem General Plan,” 55.
72 “Jerusalem General Plan,” 66.
73 “Jerusalem General Plan,” 36.
74 “Jerusalem General Plan,” 50.
75 PASSIA, “Kendall Town Scheme 1966.”
76 PASSIA, “Kendall Town Scheme 1966.”
78 Dumper, Politics of Jerusalem, 91–92.
80 “Jerusalem General Plan,” 51.