

**Monitoring according to Paragraph 169**

**of the Operational Guidelines**



**Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls (148)**

**Nominated 1981**

**State of Conservation Report 2015 Presented to**

**The World Heritage Committee**

## Introduction

Monitoring the state of conservation of the World Heritage Site of the Old City of Jerusalem is an obligation that follows the directives appearing on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Local authorities and agencies carry out initiatives which are consistent with the principles and policies set out in the strategic plan for revitalization and conservation of the Old City of Jerusalem.

Actions performed through 2015 portray an ongoing attempt to protect the site of the Old City while improving the lives of its inhabitants and its use by tourists. Continuing efforts have been taking place to further advance the infrastructure and public facilities, all in compliance with sustainable safeguarding of the outstanding cultural values, authenticity and integrity of the Old City. These include planning endeavours; infrastructure improvement; accessibility and signage; and cultural events.

The annual monitoring report surveys the ongoing actions and lists some new initiatives in the areas inside the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem – *Intra Muros* sites – as per the UNESCO declaration.

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## 1. TOWN PLANNING

### 1.1 Local Plans

#### *a. 195990 - New Scheme for the Jewish Quarter*

The comprehensive local plan for the Jewish Quarter in the Old City intends to set guidelines for the preservation and development of the quarter while also enhancing the value of its cultural, historical and archaeological assets and turning it to a distinctive and attractive urban environment for both residents and tourists.

The plan intends to update land use allocations and accommodate future infrastructure needs while also regulating future changes to the public realm. Three specific compounds are being planned with more detail: the Jewish Quarter designated parking lot, the Roman Cardo and the Hurva Synagogue piazza.

In March, 2015 the plan cleared compliance with threshold requirements of the Regional Planning committee.



**An illustration of the planned improvement of the area of the existing parking lot and Hatkuma park near the Walls.**

#### *b. 166249 and 166256 Residential Blocks Plans*

The local plan AM/9 for the Old City of Jerusalem adopted in 1976 is still valid in most parts of the Old City. The Residential Block Plans provide tools of management, conservation and development of the urban fabric and allow the issuance of building permits for local residents.

The plans for the two first urban blocks implement policies and guidelines for the safeguarding of the cultural heritage of the Old City, the conservation and rehabilitation of historic assets, and facilitate the issuance of building permits in these blocks. The plans have been coordinated with all the official bodies concerned and are now deposited at the Regional Committee. A professional summary of the research done so far, and which can

serve as planning guidelines, has been published and will be submitted as well. All documents have been translated into Arabic to enhance the process of public participation.

Initial work has been carried out for the planning of the next four blocks, including mapping and archaeological surveys.

## **1.2 Detailed Schemes in the Old City**

Detailed schemes in the Old City generally consist of requests for additional space or the approval of existing planning deviations. While no new residential units are allowed, the new guidelines of the Residential Blocks Plan provide minute tools for examining plans individually.

### *a. Scheme 11053 - The Liba (core) House*

The plan was returned to the planners for suggesting planning alternatives and discussed again at the Regional Planning Committee in October 2015. The plan is now awaiting validation.

### *b. Scheme 62950 - Tifferet Israel*

The plan received statutory validation in May 2015.

### *c. Scheme 193482*

The plan for an addition to an existing residential building has been objected by the Local Planning.

### *d. Scheme 105536*

A plan for the expansion of an existing housing unit has been submitted. There has been no change in status since 2014.

### *e. Scheme 188995*

A plan for approving a building deviation in an existing residential unit is being discussed before deposition at the Regional Planning Committee.

### *f. Scheme 201657*

A plan for the enlargement of an existing residential unit; there has been no change since 2014.

### *g. Scheme 246777*

A plan for replacing a residential unit which has been destroyed was filed in October 2015.

### *h. Scheme 152215*

A plan for a new residential unit has been filed in December 2015.

### *i. Scheme 171645*

A plan for the addition of 200 sqm built space has been filed in June 2015.

## **2. PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE - DESIGN AND EXECUTION**

### **2.1 Upgrading of Infrastructure**

#### *a. Hagai (El Wad) Street*

The extensive work along one of the main commercial and touristic streets crossing the Old City is ending. In 2015, a special pilot was carried out on Via Dolorsa, where parts of the carriageway was installed with a special concrete base, to achieve an even easier travel than on pavement.

Throughout the project, emphasis was given to the accessibility of the street, including entrances to the many sites along it. The works were conducted with special attention to minimizing disturbance to daily activity and through dialogue with the local residents and shopkeepers.

#### *b. The Christian Quarter*

As part of the ongoing upgrading of storefronts in the Christian Quarter, a detailed plan has been prepared for the Muristan plaza. Special attention given to an archaeological survey of the fountain and its rehabilitation as well as the vaults in the main entrances to the plaza.



**Illustration of planned lighting detail**



### *c. The New Gate and Damascus Gate*

The main targets of the streetscape improvement plans for the New Gate include traffic regulation and abolishment of intruding parking spaces, removal of infrastructure lines, which are out of use, and hiding of functioning ones, open space seating plan and lighting. The new designs follow the recently published streetscape design manual for the Old City. The plan has been finalized and awaiting execution.

Damascus Gate compound includes both the inner and the outer plazas, both currently undergoing improvement. Works include gentle cleaning of stones, abolishment of dead infrastructure cables, adaptation of store fronts to the design manual, addition of street furniture accordingly.

The plan is ready for execution tender.

### *d. Galicia roofs*

The complex, which is composed of the roofs of buildings in the intersection between the Jewish, Moslem and Christian Quarters, has undergone careful treatment of maintenance and upkeep, including addition of safety railways, missing stairs and fixing loose and broken stones.



**before**



**After**

#### *e. The Armenian Patriarch street (Armenian Quarter)*

The plan for improving the infrastructure of the street connecting Jaffa Gate to Zion Gate through the Armenian quarter gives priority to pedestrians in the narrow street, including the abolishment of dangerous parking spaces and the addition of safe resting areas along the road. Additionally, the facades will be improved and designated lighting added. The plans are carefully monitored by the Antiquities Authority with particular attention to the vaults which are built along the street.

The planning has been completed and a tender for execution of the first stage (from the Qishle near Jaffa gate to the entrance to the Armenian Quarter) is expected to begin in January 2016.

#### *f. Dung Gate*

Works conducted in the inner plaza, composing the main access to both the Western Wall and Haram al-Sharif, include improvement of accessibility and shading. Further works are planned mainly for the purpose of easing traffic passing through the gate, which composes a major entrance into the Old City. The plan includes regulation of traffic and parking bays and widening of pedestrian sidewalks.

At this point, traffic alternatives are being considered.

#### *g. Gan HaTekuma*

A run-down open space outside the Jewish Quarter, along the City Walls, south of Zion Gate, is destined for improvement. The first stage will include the installation of playground facilities.

#### *h. Sabeel improvements*

Unique attention has been paid to the ancient *sabeels* (water fountains from the Mamluk period) scattered around the Old City. The sabeels are being restored under the supervision of the Antiquities Authority and a modern pipe system installed with the help of Gihon, the Jerusalem municipal water company.

In 2015 the Lions' Gate and the Shalsholet (the Chain) street sabeels were treated; in 2016 el Wad street sabeell will be treated as well.

#### *i. Rehabilitation of wooden doors*

The wooden doors in the Damascus Gate, Lions' Gate and the entrance to David Citadel have been ordered for rehabilitation.

#### *j. Storefront Upgrading*

Various improvement projects going on within the Old City, including the New Gate, Damascus Gate and the Christian Quarter all include storefront upgrading. All work is done

according to the manual for the orderly upgrading of storefronts, which was prepared and published in 2014.

*k. "The Right of Way"*

"The Right of Way: The Streetscape Design Manual for the Old City of Jerusalem" was translated into Arabic and is now freely accessible on the Web:

<https://www.jerusalem.muni.il/ar/Business/Cityplanning/cityplanning/Pages/OldCityPlanningGuide.aspx>



This Design Manual presents a comprehensive guide that lays out the rules for the design and upgrading of the public space with an emphasis on conserving its historical and cultural heritage as well as the esthetic values that are drawn from the spirit of this place. This guide also incorporates current regulations, standards and codes. Great effort was invested in finding solutions for accessibility and compliance with legal standards particularly where this involved addressing the steep alleyways and the stairways of the Old City.

*l. Lighting*

Implementation of the Old City Lighting masterplan is continuing, enhancing the appearance of cultural heritage landmarks in the Old City and its vicinity. Installation of lighting infrastructure is incorporated in the separate street improvement projects. The Monuments' lighting project is carried out under collaboration with the stakeholders. In 2015, lighting work was carried out around the Dormition Abbey on Mt. Zion and in the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in the Christian Quarter. Around the city Walls, a pilot was carried out around the Jaffa Gate area, and the works will continue.

*m. Interpretation and Orientation Signage*

Interpretation panels at tourist sites, as well as way-finding and orientation signage contribute to the enrichment of the tourist experience. In the previous years, regional maps had been presented in major areas, pointing the direction to the three main tourist sites; information pointing towards public toilets and police stations; and local signage with short information regarding specific sites. Signage has been added along main routes. The enhancement of the signage project will consist of peripheral signs, pointing towards the Old City from sites nearby.

The next stage will be the preparation of three-dimensional models of the Old City. These will be situated outside the city Gates in order to provide basic initiation.

## **2.2 Maintenance and Site Management**

a. Enhanced cleaning and maintenance services in the Old City is provided through an outsourcing contract. The four-year contract was renewed last year. The works done on a daily basis are conducted according to changing needs and with close cooperation with the local population

b. A special project is continuing for deploying central garbage collection spots throughout the old city. This is done in close cooperation with the inhabitants.

## **2.3 Dangerous Structures**

In the course of 2015 engineers identified structures that carry a potential risk to public safety and have declared 6 buildings within the Old City as dangerous structures. The owners and tenants were notified of the measures required to eliminate the danger.

## **2.4 Traffic and Transportation**

Ongoing works at the New Gate, at Lions' Gate and at Dung Gate, complying with a traffic scheme, are intended to minimize vehicular movement within the Old City. The daily operation of a new public minibus service has begun in 2014, including a shuttle circulating the Old City and operating daily, departing from "park and ride" facilities.

In order to ease on the traffic and parking of tourist buses, which line up around the Old City daily, two new parking lots intended for tourist buses are planned for development on its eastern side.

## **2.5 Accessibility for the Disabled**

The accessibility master-plan for the Old City, published in 2011, determined the key projects being implemented around the Old City today, and its guidelines are integrated in the various urban improvement projects. Initiatives are in place to improve accessibility in the public domain on various streets and thoroughfares in all four quarters.

Accessibility improvement works and installation of directional signage for accessible routes have continued through 2015. Each action is pre-coordinated with the Israel Antiquities Authority and every measure is taken to protect the authenticity and integrity of the treated sites.

In 2015 more emphasis was put on compounds rather than on streets, where accessibility improvements were integrated within the infrastructure improvement schemes in the Latin

Quarter (around the New Gate), Lions' Gate (both inside and out) and Damascus Gate. The next planned stage is to connect existing accessible routes by filling in means of accessibility in adjoining streets. In addition, local improvements have been carried out, such as the concrete carriageway in Via Dolorosa described above, and a similar operation on HaMa'ach street in the Armenian quarter.

Further measures are taken to ease the access of the disabled by enhancing the signage system, including the preparation of an accessibility map which can be accessed on-line and easily updated. The map will also be lined to the accessible routes which can be downloaded from the internet. The map is expected to come out in early 2016.



**Before**



**After**

### **3. Archaeology**

#### **3.1 Archaeology on Temple Mount**

a. Dome of the Rock: Ongoing conservation works continued through 2015. Preservation of dome mosaics and marble tiles cladding in the inner walls is conducted by Waqf employees and Italian conservationists.

- b. Digging for the repair of fire hydrants and leaking water pipes, which required shallow excavation, was conducted under Israel Antiquities Authority supervision.
- c. Solomon's Stables: Ongoing conservation work of the complex was conducted under Israel Antiquities Authority and engineering supervision.
- d. Police checkpoint: The structure, which was burnt down in the 2014 riots, was restored and is now serving as a checkpoint again. Restoration and preservation were carried out by the Waqf under Israel Antiquities Authority supervision.
- e. Repairs of paved surfaces in the compound: Shallow digging was carried out in the ground, to allow paving of stone surfaces. Works were carried out by the Waqf with archeological supervision of Israel Antiquities Authority.
- f. Golden Gate (Gate of Mercy): Cleaning was carried out on graffiti which were painted on the outer wall. Works were carried out by a conservation team of Israel Antiquities Authority, with supervision of Israeli police and the Waqf.

It should be mentioned that the doors and furniture of Al-Aqsa Mosque were damaged following many insurgent activities in the Temple Mount this year.

### **3.2 Conservation Activity**

This chapter describes the conservation works undertaken in the Old City by the Israel Antiquities Authority or under its supervision during 2015. All work was carried out by Israel Antiquities Authority unless otherwise specified.

#### *a. The Western Wall Compound*

- a. Archeological site beneath the Ohel Yitzhak Synagogue: The vault structure located east of the synagogue is dated to medieval times. The structure was threatened by water and sewage seepage from the Muslim quarter. The structural works done were required to stabilize the piers of the structure. This is one of the most complex and expensive conservation projects to have been undertaken in Israel. The solutions were designed by a group of Israeli and non-Israeli engineers. The site is now open to visitors.
- b. Strauss building- Salvage excavations continued during the construction site of an additional wing. The excavations are concurrent with the construction of the building itself. The excavations are being accompanied by a group of conservationists, who supervise stucco stabilizing of the walls. The excavations uncovered remains of dwellings dated Ayoubi era, dirt fillings dated Abassid and Fatimid eras as well as a monumental structure dated Roman era.
- c. Western Wall tunnels, room 22: Works were carried out to clean the facade of an Herodian structure as well as walls of a Byzantine structure. These included conservation and stabilizing works on an adjacent dome.

d. Western Wall southern part: Works were carried out in the Wall to seal cracks and take care of the supporting system (including in the Davidson exit). Also, all modern conservation interventions were marked.

e. Western Wall tunnels – the tunnel: Conservation works to cover electric infrastructure took place.

f. Western Wall tunnels – The Main Hall: Cleaning and excavation of the large Mameluke pool was completed, as well as opening of the southern entrance

#### *b. Church of the Holy Sepulcher*

a. Various works of construction, restoration and maintenance were carried out in the St. Abraham convent, in the eastern wing of the Church, and on the rooftop, all conducted by the Greek Orthodox Patriarchy of Jerusalem. Works continued also in the Prison of Christ, which involved damage to the chapel's stones.

b. Chapel of the Franks (Church of the Holy Sepulchre): The front of the Chapel, as well as the wall frescoes in the Franciscan compound underwent cleaning. The work was done by a team from the Custodia di Terra Santa, and supervised by Israel Antiquities Authority.

c. The Rotunda: Documentation and engineering inspections were carried out by the Greek Orthodox Patriarchy of Jerusalem, due to concerns raised regarding the historical and physical condition of the historical structure.

d. The Coptic Chapel: Following a partial collapse of one of the domes (located in a room adjacent to Constantine's rotunda), strenuous conservation, restoration and mapping works were carried out to avoid further damage on the site.

e. The Chapel of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste: Works were carried out by the Greek Orthodox Patriarchy of Jerusalem, involving damage to antiques.

#### *c. Along the Old City Walls*

a. The promenade and garden, south of the Walls: The open space surrounding the Old City is one of its main characteristics. In 2015, development works began in the part from Zion Gate to the east, along the Walls. Works included making the area accessible for disabled, paving a promenade along the Walls and some gardening works. Rescue excavation took place in one location.

b. Graffiti cleaning in the part between Zion Gate and Dung Gate was undertaken by a team of Israel Antiquities Authority conservationists

c. The Bet Shalom Promenade between Zion Gate and Dung Gate: Maintenance of the site, mainly weeding and stabilizing loose stones was undertaken.

#### *d. Other conservation work in the Old City*

a. The Steps Pool, the Jewish Quarter - Remains of a *mikveh* (ritual bathing pool), dated to the Second Temple Period, exposed in the 1970s are incorporated in the basement of a

modern building. Preliminary conservation actions were conducted, intending to develop the space as an information center. Ongoing works include stucco stabilizing, removal of risk elements and partial archeological excavations.

b. Bab Huta neighborhood: The Israel Antiquities Authority closely supervises the upgrading of the infrastructure systems in the neighborhood, which has been carried out for the last four years by JDA (Jerusalem Development Authority).

c. Hagai (el-Wad) Street: The vast infrastructure upgrade project, as well as restoration of facades, along Hagai (el-Wad) street stretching from Damascus Gate to The Western Wall plaza has been closely supervised by the Israel Antiquities Authority. Simultaneously, a comprehensive conservation survey which focuses on the street facades is taking place.

d. The Citadel "Kishle" - Removal of the evacuation spoil continued into 2013, coordinated with, and inspected by, the Israel Antiquities Authority. The site has now been developed into a visitors' center, run by the Tower of David Museum. In addition, the Israel Antiquities Authority supervised conservation works carried out by a team of the Tower of David on some of the ancient walls within the tower.

e. Hamam beneath the Jaffa Gate: This impressive site was excavated in the 1990s, revealing remains of a Byzantine bathhouse, part of the upper aqueduct of Jerusalem, a major road and a row of shops. The process of development and conservation of the site was completed in 2014 in coordination with the Israel Antiquities Authority. Minor maintenance works were carried out in 2015.

f. Haldiah-el Kirmi dangerous structure: Restoration works on the Mamluk Madrasse, currently used for dwelling, were completed in 2015. The first stage consisted of constructing metal beams. Simultaneously, the Waqf and Jerusalem municipality are preparing a structural and conservation plan for the compound under Israel Antiquities Authority professional supervision.

g. Turbat Seadia: Restoration and conservation works in the Mamluk burial site (currently used for dwelling) have been completed by a constructor appointed by the Waqf. Works are supervised by Israel Antiquities Authority.

h. The Mahkamah building: Ongoing conservation works of the old fountain in the structure, which borders the Western Wall plaza, include treatment of deteriorated stone and structural stabilization. The building currently serves as a police station.

i. Sabeel Hamam el Ain: Conservation work conducted as part of the Hagai (el Wad) street infrastructure upgrading project was completed and the Sabeel has been put in use.

j. Jewish Quarter, Birkat Torah Yeshiva – As part of reconstruction work in the Yeshiva, salvage excavations and conservation were carried out by Israel Antiquities Authority.

k. 46 Maalot Hamidrasha Street: Conservation work, carried out by the Waqf and supervised by the Israel Antiquities Authority, is currently taking place at Ribat Bairam Gauish.



l. Othmania Madrasse: Restoration and conservation works of the madrasse (used for dwelling) is carried out by the Waqf and supervised by a team of Israel Antiquities Authority conservationists and archeologists.

m. Jewish quarter – Tiferet Israel synagogue: Upon completion of the archaeological digging, preliminary conservation works were carried out. Currently, the Company for Reconstruction and Development of the Jewish quarter are preparing plans for conservation and design of the antiques as well as the historical building.

n. Turba el Kalinia: Restoration and conservation works took place in this Mameluke monument, initiated by UNDP and supervised by Israel Antiquities Authority.

o. Jewelers' Market: Restoration and conservation works at this Crusaders' era market took place, initiated by UNDP and supervised by Israel Antiquities Authority.

p. Hamam el-Ayin and Hamam a-Shifa: Restoration and conservation works in both Mameluke Hamams took place, initiated by UNDP and supervised by Israel Antiquities Authority.

q. Putting in use of Sabeels: As part of the Action Plan of this project, works began to put in use the Sabeel structures in and around the Old City. This was led by Jerusalem Development Authority and Israel Antiquities Authority with the cooperation of Hagihon water company. The works, carried out by an Israel Antiquities Authority conservation team, consist of methodical treatment of the Sabeels, mainly cleaning and conservation. So far the works have been carried out in the Sabeels of the Sultan's Pool, Lion Gate, Khalidi Library, and the Chain Street.

### **3.3 Archaeological Excavations in the Old City and along the Walls**

In the course of 2015, several salvage excavations were undertaken prior to implementation of civil infrastructure and rehabilitation works. All excavations were managed by archaeologists from the Israel Antiquities Authority unless otherwise noted.

#### *a. Research Excavations in the Jerusalem Archaeological Park*

a. Western Wall foundations: An excavation along the foundations of the Western Wall, built on bedrock, revealed ruins of earlier facilities which will help understand the building procedure of the Temple Mount during the Second Temple period.

#### *b. The Western Wall Tunnels*

a. Strauss Building – Excavations have commenced in the intended building site of the new section. In addition, the building of wooden stilts, intended to carry the floor, was completed. The building of the structure is at an advanced stage. All work is accompanied by constant conservation activities.

- b. The Herodian Hall: Salvage Excavations were completed. A large Byzantine cistern was uncovered, as well as the foundations of a Cross-shaped Mamluk structure, which was constructed in the cistern.
- c. Wilson's Arch: Excavations are taking place to expose the area between the Western Wall and the arch's western pillar.

#### *c. Salvage excavations in the Jewish Quarter*

- a. Tifferet Israel Synagogue: The synagogue was demolished in the course of the War of Independence (1948). Salvage excavations were undertaken prior to the planned reconstruction of the building. The excavations, conducted under the direction of Israel Antiquities Authority, exposed a unique underground system of ritual baths and remains of medieval walls. These archeological findings will be preserved and integrated into the synagogue building.
- b. Ararat road: Excavations beneath a dwelling's basement revealed remains of a late Roman pool and washing basins.
- c. Chabad road: Excavations in a private house, following some damage done to antiquities, revealed Muslim and Byzantine remains.
- d. Birkat Torah Yeshiva: Salvage excavations were carried out as part of restoration works in the Yeshiva. The excavations revealed Ottoman remains, including a bakery.

#### *d. Salvage excavations in the Moslem Quarter*

- a. Kirmi road: 1. Excavations following some damage done to antiquities, revealed remains of an Ottoman structure as well as Abbasid buildings. 2. Excavation following unauthorized works in the structure. Remains of Muslim walls and floors, attached to the Al-Karramiyya Madrassa, were exposed. It is possible that the Madrassa's appearance was determined by the exposed structure.
- b. 60 Saraya road: Excavations following some damage done to antiquities revealed an impressive vault structure, presumably Ottoman, as well as Roman findings.
- c. The Catholic Armenian Church, Via Dolorosa: Excavations following damage done to antiquities. During archeological excavations, the building's foundations, dated to Ottoman era, as well as parts of the previous road levels, were exposed.
- d. Ash Shawish 18 : Salvage excavation took place to document damage caused by unauthorized digging. A cut mosaic was exposed as well as a staircase and an entrance.

#### *e. Salvage excavations in the Christian Quarter*

- a. Church of the Redeemer - Salvage Excavations were carried out by Austrian students as part of preparing the planned museum. Findings were limited, dating to the Ottoman era.
- b. Station Seven, Beit HaBad st.: Salvage excavation requested by the Custodia Terra Santa who wishes to expand the visitors' area. Excavations revealed part of a soap factory, which was built in the domes of the Mameluke "al Fakher" market.

c. Saint Charalambos monastery: Salvage excavation in a dwelling, following a request to lower the floor. Remains of Othman walls were found, and beneath them a large aqueduct which probably flows into an impressive cistern in the yard.

d. St. George st.: Salvage excavation, initiated and funded by UNDP, designed to document damage made to antiques above the western walls of the Hezekia's Pool. The Excavation revealed a pillar and wall, probably dated Mameluke era.

e. As-Sayyida: Excavations in a dwelling owned by the Franciscan Order took place due to the identification of an ancient wall during development works. The excavation revealed a number of medieval pillars.

f. St. John's Church, Muristan: Salvage excavation due to damage done during unauthorized works carried out by the Greek Patriarchy. Remains of several structures and facilities were exposed, from Byzantine to Ottoman era.

*f. Salvage excavations in the Armenian Quarter*

a. The Christian Visitor Centre: Salvage excavation in the basement, as part of the renovations carried out by the Franciscan Order. The Excavation revealed large cisterns as well as other facilities, all dated Ottoman era.

#### **4. Tourism and Cultural Events**

*a. 'Light in Jerusalem' event (Jerusalem Festival of Light)*

This year, about 30 installations were on display, drawing some 350,000 visitors, the majority of them from outside Jerusalem. The project, which like others is carried out with great caution regarding the authenticity and integrity of the Old City, is especially sensitive to the needs of the inhabitants and the merchants in the markets as extra effort is made in order to avoid unnecessary disturbance to daily routine.

This year's event took place in June, enhancing the activities along the exciting routes while also extending into the close vicinity of the Old City. The project was linked to a two-day event in Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, 'City after dark: Illuminating the Urban Nightscape', an International Conference hosting city mayors from Israel and lighting professionals from abroad. The conference comprised part of the UNESCO's Official Activities Program for the International Year of Light 2015 (UNESCO ILY2015).



## **Old City Walls, Festival of Light**

### *b. 'The Sounds of Jerusalem'*

The successful festival which has now become an annual tradition brings different music genres into the four quarters of the Old City. Visitors are invited to follow a circular route where concerts are performed in various sites and spaces, offering new ways to experience the City. The festival took place in March, 2015 drawing some 100,000 visitors.

### *c. 'Open-House' event*

For one weekend in October, Jerusalem opens up venues all over the city including private houses, urban villas, unique synagogues, architecturally significant public buildings, curious construction sites, plazas and gardens. During the weekend, the public can visit, explore and discuss these sites. New sites in the Old City are being added annually, courtesy of institutional and private proprietors.

### *d. 'Hamshushalayim'*

During the winter, over four consecutive 'Hamshushalayim' weekends, outdoor events take place all over the city, including within the Old City Walls. Museums are open across the city and music and theatrical shows take place. Many of the shows are free. This endeavor brings life to the Old City during evening times, assisting also in easing the pressure during the busy weekends.

### *e. Jerusalem International Film Festival*

For the third year in a row, a cooperation has been established with the long-running Jerusalem International Film Festival. Three sites within the Old City will host special screenings: Jaffa gate Plaza, Gan HaTekuma and the Muristan, as always suited to the local sensitivities and existing restrictions.

### *f. Local festivities*

A new initiation of the Jerusalem Municipality took place this year, preparing together with the city's inhabitants for the holidays. Festivities, cooperated with the Old City's merchants, took place in Damascus gate during the Ramadan nights. A festive handout of Christmas trees also took place in Jaffa Gate.

