

# Executive Summary



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### **State Party**

The State Party is the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

### **State, Province or region**

The nominated Property is located in the historic urban core of the City of As-Salt; it is considered part of Greater As-Salt Municipality (GSM) which is administratively part of Al-Balqa Governorate (one of Jordan's 12 Governorates). As-Salt City is considered the capital of the Al-Balqa Governorate.

### **Name of Property**

The name of the Property nominated for inscription on the List of World Heritage Sites is:

**As-Salt The Place of Tolerance and Urban Hospitality.**

### **Geographical Coordinates to the Nearest Second**

The following coordinate provides the latitude and longitude coordinates to the nearest second of a point at the approximate center (**C**) of the nominated property: **32° 02' 33.4" N – 35° 43' 41.9" E.**

The limits of the **nominated property** are identified by the following points:

- 1. 32° 02' 33.4" N – 35° 43' 41.9" E**
- 2. 32° 02' 10.3" N – 35° 43' 48.4" E**
- 3. 32° 02' 05.3" N – 35° 43' 41.2" E**
- 4. 32° 02' 16.4" N – 35° 43' 26.4" E**
- 5. 32° 02' 25.1" N – 35° 43' 21.7" E**

The limits of the **buffer zone** are identified by the following points:

- 6. 32° 02' 41.6" N – 35° 43' 31.1" E**
- 7. 32° 02' 12.5" N – 35° 43' 52.0" E**
- 8. 32° 01' 58.4" N – 35° 43' 59.2" E**
- 9. 32° 02' 15.7" N – 35° 43' 19.9" E**
- 10. 32° 02' 27.2" N – 35° 43' 11.6" E**
- 11. 32° 02' 28.7" N – 35° 43' 26.8" E**

## Textual Description of the Boundary of the Nominated Property

The nominated Property extends over an area of **24.68 ha**.

A buffer zone of **71.12** ha surrounds the nominated Property. The total area of the Property and Buffer Zone together is **95.80** ha.

The nominated Property includes the ensemble of the preserved architectural and urban fabric of the historic city core of As-Salt. As-Salt historic urban core represents an exceptional example of a living heritage and of a historic urban landscape with a strong link between its intangible and tangible attributes during a particular period in the development of the city known as the Golden Age ranging from the 1860s to the middle of the 1920s. The local cultural traits and practices represent a way of life that emerged out of a fusion between tribal/rural and migrating bourgeois merchants drawn to As-Salt from nearby Levantine cities of Palestine, Syria, and Lebanon after the Ottomans extended their rule, insured security, and implemented municipal and constitutional reforms in this Ottoman southern frontier city. Merchants' activities drew Transjordan into the regional economy of Ottoman Syria and the Mediterranean world beyond. Christian missionaries were another major catalyst of change in As-Salt. In addition to building churches, missionaries introduced modern education and medicine through the opening of

schools, clinics and hospitals.

The definition of the historic city core of As-Salt is based on an integrated urban approach where not only certain individual significant buildings are identified, but rather the ensemble of groups of buildings within their urban setting and morphology of steps, public spaces, urban nodes, streets, other. At the center of the Property are the historic Al Ain Plaza and Hammam Street which are surrounded by residential neighborhoods of Al Qal'a, Al Jad'a, and Al Salalem. The following is a summary of these tangible and intangible attributes: significant architecture as a result of cultural exchange and circulation of building types and technical know-how; tolerance, co-habitation, symbiosis and support between Muslim and Christian communities in the City transcending religious and ethnicities and producing a sense of community and belonging to a shared space; and a unique urban typology and morphology that links the residential neighborhoods on the City's various slopes with the public spaces and streets through a web of stairs, alleyways, and nodes.



**Map.1**  
*Map of the  
 Nominated Property  
 Showing Boundaries  
 and Buffer Zones*



Refer to Section 1.e (page 22) for an enlarged map (size A1) of the nominated property boundary and its buffer zone

## Criteria Under Which Property is Nominated

It is proposed to nominate the historic core of As-Salt to the World Heritage List under Criterion ii and Criterion iii.

*Criterion (ii): to exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;*

*Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;*

## Draft Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

### a. Brief Synthesis

As-Salt historic urban core represents an exceptional example of a living heritage and of a historic urban landscape with a strong link between its intangible attributes (tolerance and cohabitations among Muslim and Christian communities; urban hospitality; and socio-urban welfare system); and tangible attributes (significant architecture and urban morphology) during a particular period in the development of the city known as the Golden

Age ranging from the 1860s to the middle of the 1920s. The local cultural traits and practices represent a way of life that emerged out of a fusion between tribal/rural and migrating bourgeois merchants drawn to As-Salt from nearby Levantine cities of Palestine, Syria, and Lebanon after the Ottomans extended their rule, insured security, and implemented municipal and constitutional reforms in this Ottoman southern frontier city.

The significant architecture within the historic city core emerged as a result of cultural exchange and circulation, by migrating urban bourgeois merchants, of building types of early-modern vernacular architecture (Central Hallway 3-Bay House) and its skilful adaptation to local contexts and urban morphology by exceptional skilful local and migrating master builders producing a mix of vernacular regional and high-class architecture. Another significant attribute of the city is its unique urban typology and morphology with its steep folded topography producing a dense urban fabric where residential neighbourhoods on the city's slopes are connected to the public spaces and streets on the lower slopes through a web of stairs, alleyways and nodes. This urban reality supports an exceptional socio-urban welfare system facilitated by the dense urban morphology resulting in a high degree of social and religious spatial integration and support between neighbours of different ethnicities and sects. The city of As-Salt most significant attribute is the prevailing of tolerance,

cohabitation and support between Muslim and Christian communities of the city transcending religions and ethnicities and producing a sense of community and belonging to a shared space. In addition, the city is unique for offering to the rest of the world a unique system of urban hospitality taking the form of Madafas (places where each family hosts guests and visitors) resulting from the fusion between tribal traditions and urban merchants' social norms.

### b. Justification for Criteria

*Criterion (ii):*

As-Salt is an example of cultural exchange between the City on one hand and the different cities within the Levant, the circulation of urban bourgeois migrants, ideas and acts of reform by Ottoman officials and Christian missionaries, architectural types, images, and building techniques; together with the fusion of tribal-rural and urban sophistication of merchants was manifested in a strong link between the tangible attributes of this place (vernacular-regional & high class architecture and a unique urban morphology) on one hand, and the its tangible realities of tolerance & cohabitation between Muslims and Christians; the honor of urban hospitality; and a unique socio-urban welfare system on the other. As-Salt is instrumental to our understanding of the regional networks within Bilad Al Sham (Levant) that linked the Levantine coast to



its hinterland. Exhibiting a significant interchange of human values; the city, and through socio-urban transformations on its way to modernization during the Golden Age (1860s to 1920s) demonstrated an exceptional example of the circulation of an architectural typology of early-modern vernacular architecture (Central Hallway (3-Bay) House); and its skilful adaptation to the city's local contexts and urban morphology.

*Criterion (iii):*

As-Salt demonstrates an exceptional example of a continuation of traditions and cultural traits within the historic urban core of the City, with its significant buildings, web of stairs and nodes, traditions of tolerance and cohabitation, and traditions of urban hospitality; which have existed during the Golden Age period of the City and are continued into the present defining a way of life for the residents. The essence of the argument for tolerance, symbiosis, and support between Muslim and Christian communities in the city of As-Salt is not based on the fact that such tolerance existed only in As-Salt; but while this tolerance might have existed in other Levantine cities such as Damascus, Aleppo, Jerusalem, and Nablus; in As-Salt it was different and unique in terms of its: a) intensity and various forms of manifestation: such as sharing each other's religious festivals, sharing responsibilities, brotherhood (e.g., through breast feeding) and fraternity, shared businesses; and the joining together in the veneration and visitation of

certain local saints; b) continuity of such traditions into the present: such traditions are still part of everyday life practices, and c) absence of segregated neighborhoods by sect: which existed in other Levantine cities such as Jerusalem and Damascus; on the contrary, families of different religions lived in close proximity to each other resulting in a lack of sectarian divisions within the urban setting of in the proliferation of urban social welfare systems amongst the community at large.

The tradition and practice of hospitality is continued into the future taking similar but also transformed forms of urban hospitality and family social welfare where new forms of Madafas (locally called Dawaween) emerged all around the historic core as the city expanded. Residents of the city are still strongly engaged with the city's historic public spaces (Sahet Al Ain) and its commercial arteries (Hammam and Al Khader). As-Salt historic core is an example of a living historic urban center in the region, and these cultural trails and practices constitute a way for life for the local residents of the City. Finally, these valuable messages to the world of tolerance, co-habitation and support between Muslims and Christians; together with this urban hospitality facilitated through this specific urban morphology are unique to As-Salt within this region of the Levant and to the world at large. They deserve conservation, protection, and transmission to future generations as they are important and even crucial today to the whole of humanity.

**c. Statement of Integrity**

The spirit and feeling of the place reside in the fusion between the tangible (buildings, houses, churches, mosques, Madafas, urban nodes, steps) and the intangible (e.g., cohabitation, visiting a Maqam, shopping at Hammam Street, spending leisure time at Sahet Al Ain, support urban social welfare between neighbours) attributes of the city. The people of As-Salt, value significantly their heritage and traditions. At the level of wholeness; the property includes the main elements and most of the attributes to express the historic core's outstanding universal value. Many significant historic buildings from the Golden Age, with the web of stairs and other urban public spaces that connect them together forming this unique morphology, are maintained, visible, and represent a holistic ensemble. Also, in the case of As-Salt, the property is of an adequate size to represent the different values and significance. At the level of intactness; tangible and intangible attributes are still present and are a reflection of the values of the property. As-Salt Greater Municipality is exercising control over future development and alternations to the architectural and urban heritage of the historic core and are mitigating any potential threats.

#### **d. Statement of Authenticity**

In the case of the historic city core of As-Salt, it is very evident that authenticity of form and design is very high, the historic buildings have maintained their character; and change through the years have been very minimal. The various contemporary projects of adaptive reuse add a positive value to the buildings and have mainly sustained original materials and design. The yellow sand stone that As-Salt is famous for adorns the historic core and grants its historic buildings a special character while granting also a distinction between these historic houses from the Golden Age and newer buildings. Furthermore, and at the scale of urban public spaces, steps, and alleyways; they also maintain a high level of form authenticity. The various place enhancement projects that took place within the public domain only worked to maintain these various urban spaces and to enhance them without any changes to their form or design.

Many of the historic uses of buildings and functions have been sustained (e.g., residential use for most of the buildings have been sustained in addition to the fact that many shops in Hammam Street still sell similar products with some minor variations). The usage of the public buildings (mosques, churches, schools) have been sustained as well. In fact, there is a strong continuity of use and function and in how even the public places (e.g., Al Ain City square) are being transformed within As-Salt historic core

(e.g., the elderly playing Maqala in Sahet al Ain, the ordinary citizens of As-Salt, are still buying their daily needs from the shops in Hammam or around Sahet al Ain, Maqam al Khader is still visited by Christians and Muslims, many of the schools (e.g., Latin School; As-Salt high school) are still maintaining their same functions. The setting authenticity within the core area is very strong; due to sustaining the relationship between the lower slopes of the residential areas and the valleys where the public spaces and streets are located; both are still connected through a web of steps and urban nodes which the various place enhancement projects did not change and have only enhanced.

#### **e. Requirements for Protection and Management**

In As-Salt, it is obvious that there is an official and a popular commitment to foresee architectural and urban heritage management. As-Salt Municipality had already made considerable steps in terms of inventories, designation, planning and heritage regulations, processes for permits (demolition, change, alterations, and conservation techniques). In addition, the Municipality had also been doing considerable efforts concerning eliminating visual pollution from the historic city core. In terms of urban heritage management, a key development was the establishment in 2005 of the As-Salt City Development Projects Unit (ASCDP) within the

As-Salt Greater Municipality (GSM). The main mission of this office is to coordinate efforts for the safeguarding, conservation, and management of the historic city.

One of the key regulatory tools that had been developed so far was the City Core Special Regulations project which covered several historic towns in Jordan of which As-Salt was one. The City Core Special Regulations were endorsed by the Ministry of Municipalities and Rural Affairs, the Higher City Planning Council of Jordan, and the As-Salt Greater Municipality, in September 2014. These special regulations addressed special urban places, heritage buildings designation and grading for historic buildings, guidelines for buildings conservation and new interventions, and also guidelines for public spaces design and enhancement. As-Salt Greater Municipality has also adopted a designation and a grading system for the City's historic buildings that is based on 5 tiers: Grade 1 through 5. These different grades are translated into different values for the buildings, and also with diverse levels of interventions. Furthermore, As-Salt City Development Projects Unit (ASCDP) of the As-Salt Greater Municipality had developed also a regulated process for permits of demolition, alterations and conservation and rehabilitation works within the historic city core and beyond.

The conservation management plan objective is to preserve the Outstanding Universal Value of the Property through the implementing of different

processes and levels of interventions leading to the continuity of traditions and protection and conservation of this exceptional historic city core of As-Salt for future generations. Such processes and different levels of intervention will entail measures and actions related to protection, conservation, interpretation and presentation of this most valuable cultural heritage site in addition to processes related to visitor management and creating awareness about the specificity of this historic core in order to convey its important messages to the general public and to humanity at large.

## **Name and Contact Information of Official Local Institution**

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