



Landuse Planning

Project

Development and Preservation Plan for the cultural and natural landscape of Ajloun, Jordan

Client

Royal Society for Conservation of Nature (RSCN) and Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA)

Background

Jordan's RSCN and MoTA had secured World Bank funding to examine the cultural and natural value of the landscape. This area, of over 100 km², lies in the north of the country and contains one of the largest areas of semi-natural woodland in Jordan. The landscape is under immense pressure from development and inappropriate management. Landmark was commissioned to undertake a full study of the area and to deliver a workable "Development Plan" that would identify and protect fragile areas, whilst allowing and encouraging appropriate development.

Description

Ajloun lies in a hilly district to the east of the Jordan Rift Valley, and not far from the World-famous Roman City of Jerash. Its high ground encourages levels of precipitation above the country's typical Middle-Eastern norm, resulting in a Mediterranean landscape with large forests of Aleppo pine interspersed with olive groves and divided by deep wadis.

The landscape, whilst appearing almost "Tuscan" has many land-use conflicts; an increase in local population and especially a desire for new building plots is detracting from the landscape and its cultural heritage. At its heart lies a ruined crusader castle.

Landmark's project commenced with detailed surveys of the study area and its regional setting, analysing data from landscape assessments as well as reviewing information from the many ministries and NGOs. We also reviewed the legal planning framework to understand how any new Development Plan could become a recognised planning control tool. Regular dialogue and frequent meetings with stakeholders and the client's steering group has been crucial to the understanding of Ajloun's working landscape.

Client benefits

Once adopted, this will become the first Development and Preservation Plan of its kind in the country and could be used as a model for managing and protecting other fragile areas, both in Jordan and other countries.