The Citadel of Aleppo is one of the remarkable examples of military architecture in the Middle East. The recently discovered Temple of the Storm God dates human use of the hill from the beginning of the third millennium BC. The Citadel of Aleppo, which has been built on a natural limestone hill, is the result of numerous constructive phases, large changes and destruction. The record of these changes is still recognizable in a few structures. Most of what remains today is from the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods. The monument represents a unique cultural heritage for the quality of the architecture, the variety and quality of the materials, and for the complexity of the historical stratifications.

The Citadel rises above the Old City of Aleppo, which since 1986 has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In the same time, the Citadel is the landmark for the new Aleppo, a city with almost two million inhabitants that attests to a strong symbolic value to the Citadel. Indeed, the site is one of the most famous monuments of Islamic architecture and one of the most visited sites in Syria.

The Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) signed a ‘Memorandum of Understanding’ with the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums in Syria (DGAM) on 1 December 1999 to propose support in the restoration of three citadels in Syria (Aleppo, Masyaf and Salah al-Din).

The Citadel of Aleppo is a very large complex containing a series of buildings and monuments with different historical features, which call for a diversified approach and different forms of conservation and maintenance targeted to the specific requirements of each structure or category of structures. These can be listed as the bridge and the main gateway; the ring walls and the towers; the mosques; the cisterns; the palace complex; the arsenal; the barracks; the tunnels; the new theatre. Three major axes of implementation were developed by AKTC from 2000 to 2008, after the finalization of the Master Plan in 2000.

The main goal of the Trust was to develop several levels of intervention: upgrade the local staff in the preservation of the masonry; the development of a real tourist infrastructure; and intervention in place of the local Directorate of Antiquities when foreign expertise was needed.

The goals of the restoration project were to train local Antiquities staff, engineers, conservationists and craftsmen in up-to-date conservation techniques. The programme provides guidance on proper environmental protection and management of complete sites, the creation of visitor routes of tourist interest in neglected areas, and the creation of a visitor centre, equipped with documentation and guidebooks for visitors.
status. During these years in fact detailed surveys were carried out with the analysis of materials and systems of decay. The reconstruction or restoration of structures has sought to avoid the creation of facsimiles of how they might once have appeared as much as possible. The limited reconstruction of specific elements has been carried out only where it was absolutely necessary.

AKTC’s work started in 2000 on one of the towers of the ring walls. From 2000 to 2008 the Trust initiated a large mission of surveys, to obtain documentation on the complete site. From 2001 to 2004 the Trust carried out sizeable works on large sections of the walls, including underpinning and important structural stabilization, as well as the consolidation of the northern advanced tower. During the years 2001 and 2002 the western area was the subject of a mission of archaeological excavation and conservation of the Ottoman remains discovered. In 2002 and 2003 pilot projects were developed on some major gullies located on the glacis. From 2002 to 2004 an important effort was made on the preservation of the Ayyubid Palace, a large complex including residential and reception functions. During these works the pavement of the central part of the main reception hall was restored. From 2002 to 2006 efforts were also concentrated on the development of the visitor infrastructure. In 2005 a reinforcement of the cladding stone of the glacis was implemented. From 2002 to 2007 the Trust worked on the conservation of the Ayyubid cistern and well, tasks that included structural reinforcement as well as architectural interventions. In 2007 the portal of the throne hall was completely cleaned. During 2008 a large mission of upgrading and cleaning the site was undertaken. The World Monuments Fund provided support for the work on the Ayyubid complex, some intervention on the ring walls, and participated in the archaeological excavations in the area of the temple, the Ayyubid cistern and the portal of the throne hall.

The Trust finalized its intervention by the definition of a cultural site management plan for the DGAM: a maintenance programme includes the routine upkeep of the structures and periodic checks to ensure that all mechanical systems are in working order, as well as repairs to materials and components that are subject to predictable wear and tear. But it was also important to include unplanned maintenance in this programme, in case
Recent excavations and subsequent conservation work have preserved substantial elements of the historic and cultural heritage. The site's western half was occupied by the ancient city of Aleppo, which was recognized as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1986. Situated on top of a natural limestone hill, the Citadel rises some 40 metres above its surroundings. Its walls, impressing entry-bridge and great gateways remain largely intact, and continue to dominate the Aleppo skyline, a powerful symbol of the city’s heroic past. The earliest archaeological evidence of occupation found in the Citadel dates to the third millennium BC. Although it is likely that the site was occupied even earlier. Most of what remains today are the ruins of military, ceremonial and residential structures built by the city of Ayyubid (11th to 13th centuries) and Mamluk (13th to 16th centuries) rulers. The main structures are the Ayyubid complex, the Storm God Temple. Here the excavations are now almost concluded with the last remnants of old buildings, was covered with earth, debris and overgrown vegetation.

The ring wall foundations of the Citadel were in poor condition. Most of the area within the walls, including remnants of old buildings, was covered with earth, debris and overgrown vegetation. The medieval drainage was full of debris and the long, irregularly-shaped surface drains resulted in major leakage at the foot of the ring walls. The main structures are the Ayyubid complex, the Storm God Temple. Here the excavations are now almost concluded with the last remnants of old buildings, was covered with earth, debris and overgrown vegetation. The western area, southern part of the ring walls, Ayyubid palace, royal apartments, gate (continuation), entrance tower, restoration of discovered metal pieces, surveys. The western area, northern part of the ring walls, Ayyubid palace, royal apartments, gate (continuation), entrance tower, restoration of discovered metal pieces, surveys. The eastern half of the site. The settlement was occupied even earlier. Most of what remains today are the ruins of military, ceremonial and residential buildings.

Significant Issues and Impact

**BACKGROUND**

**BRIEF HISTORY OF PROJECT SITE**

The Citadel of Aleppo stands at the centre of the Old City of Aleppo, which was recognized as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1986. Situated on top of a natural limestone hill, the Citadel rises some 40 metres above its surroundings. Its walls, impressing entry-bridge and great gateways remain largely intact, and continue to dominate the Aleppo skyline, a powerful symbol of the city’s heroic past. The earliest archaeological evidence of occupation found in the Citadel dates to the third millennium BC. Although it is likely that the site was occupied even earlier. Most of what remains today are the ruins of military, ceremonial and residential structures built by the city of Ayyubid (11th to 13th centuries) and Mamluk (13th to 16th centuries) rulers.

**SIGNIFICANT ISSUES AND IMPACT**

**PLANNING ISSUES**

Prior to the work, a Master Plan was defined for future interventions. The plan was based on strategies related to emergency measures, drainage problems, archaeological issues, tourism infrastructure and the psychological impact on the visitors.

**PROJECT RISKS**

In addition to its status as a cultural and tourist attraction, the Citadel of Aleppo, site, and will continue to be an archaeological site of great importance. These require different but compatible strategies concerning architectural preservation, structural safety, archaeological excavations, tourism, cultural events and maintenance.

**SITE CONDITIONS**

The ring wall foundations of the Citadel were in poor condition. Most of the area within the walls, including remnants of old buildings, was covered with earth, debris and overgrown vegetation.

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

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**BUILDING CONDITIONS**

A succession of invasions, bombardments and earthquakes have taken their toll on the area within the ring walls, but amongst the ruins stand two fine mosques, a harbour and the remains of a palace and houses, dating to the Zengid, Ayyubid, Mamluk and Ottoman periods.

**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT/PROGRAMME**

At the project's outset, meetings were held with the DGAM of Syria to define and agree on interventions for the Citadel's major historical areas.

**VOCATIONAL TRAINING/CAPACITY BUILDING**

AKTC initiated training sessions and programmes to provide the DGAM of Syria, contractors and craftsmen with instruction in methodologies for documentation and conservation. Specialized and accredited international and local experts conducted the training.

**CONTRACTING METHODS**

The choice of contractors was based on tender procedures after selected invitations.

**RELEVANT CODES/STANDARDS ADOPTED**

Local codes and international standards.

**PARTNERS**

Public Partners

Avanos/Baradla (continuation), Al-Hamra (continuation), Al-Tawashi Palace, the Ayyubid cistern, the well and the medieval structures. The monument's preservation entailed the consideration of the historical and archaeological significance of the site. The project's success is attributable to the work of the DGAM of Syria, AKTC, the Caritas Centre and the Municipality of Aleppo.

**Donors**

World Monuments Fund.

**Authoritative Framework**

On 1 December 1999, AKTC signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums of Syria for providing support and expertise to the ‘Restoration of Three Citadel in Syria’. One of these sites was the Citadel of Aleppo.

**NEW BUILDING FACILITIES**

Prior to AKTC interventions, there were no suitable structures for tourists. In cooperation with the DGAM of Syria, AKTC equipped the Citadel with a visitor centre and upgraded sanitation facilities in addition to rehabilitating the courtyards located within the Citadel walls.

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