Programme Scope/Objectives

The scope of programme activities includes documentation, the conservation of historic public and private buildings, and the rehabilitation of historic landscape and recreation of green open spaces. Also involved are the upgrading of basic infrastructure, the development of craft skills, and the promotion of activities intended to improve household incomes. Support for neighbourhood planning initiatives, technical assistance to institutions responsible for planning and urban management, and support for professional development are also part of the intervention.

The city of Kabul is thought to have grown around a Buddhist settlement mentioned by Ptolemy in AD 150. The fortified Citadel of Bala Hisar bears witness to its turbulent history, as do the defences along the ridge of the Sher Darwaza Mountain to the south, dating in part to the period of Hindu rule prior to the advent of Islam in AD 871. Kabul seems to have remained little more than a military outpost during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when the cities of Ghazni and Herat witnessed significant prosperity and architectural innovation. It was not until the early sixteenth century, when the founder of the Mughal Empire Babur visited and laid out several gardens in and around the city (including the newly rehabilitated park now known as Bagh-e Babur), that Kabul seems to have grown in importance. While based in India, Babur’s successors continued to show an interest in Kabul, with Shah Jahan’s governor, Ali Mardan Khan, building the covered Char Chatta bazaar in the centre of the commercial quarters in the mid-seventeenth century. By the time that Timur Shah moved his capital from Qandahar to Kabul in the late eighteenth century, Kabul was home to approximately 60,000 people.

Accounts from nineteenth-century travellers to Kabul describe a dense settlement of traditional dwellings, accessed by means of narrow alleyways and divided into distinct quarters, some of which were walled. The only neighbourhoods in which this dense urban fabric has survived are Asheqan wa Arefan and Chindawal. Apart from the imposing brick Mausoleum of Timur Shah, built in the late eighteenth century, and the royal residences and walled gardens within the citadel, the bazaars and serais seem to have been the principal landmarks in the city. The Char Chatta bazaar was the target of a punitive raid on Kabul in 1842 by British troops, who returned in 1880 to destroy Bala Hisar Citadel, which until then had been the seat of power.

Shortly after this event, Amir Abdur Rahman Khan laid out a new palace north of the Kabul River, outside the confines of the historic city, whose population had by then risen to about 500,000. Merchant families who had previously lived close to the bazaars in the city centre began at this time to move to more spacious new homes built on market gardens to the north and west. Zamegar Park, now in the centre of modern Kabul, formed part of a walled orchard in which a number of residences and pavilions used by the royal family and members of the court stood. The earliest suburbs of Kabul began to develop after the
Asheqan wa Arefan shows restored external street view within the project cluster in historic quarters of the Old City. A typical traditional housing stock in the war-affected 1920s, when foreign architectural forms and styles began to prevail, most notably in the development by Amanullah Khan of a new government enclave at Darulaman, well to the south. As part of subsequent efforts to modernize Kabul, the boulevard of Jade Maiwand was driven through the historic fabric in the 1940s, followed by further roads cut through Shor bazaar and Chindawol, in response to anti-government unrest in the late 1970s. The utopian Kabul Master Plan, originally drawn up in 1967, indicates multi-storey blocks in place of the historic fabric, with wide highways replacing the network of narrow alleys. The reality on the ground, however, remained one that differed little from nineteenth-century accounts, and it was in the traditional fabric of the Old City that much of the inter- factional street fighting took place in 1993–94, which forced the population to flee their homes. It was not until 1995 that families were able to return and reconstruct their war-damaged homes, after the area had been cleared of landmines.

It was in the war-affected historic quarters of Asheqan wa Arefan, Chindawol, Pakhtafurushi, Shanasazi and Kuche Kharabat, which together are home to some 18,000 people, that the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) has undertaken a range of planning, conservation, rehabilitation in and upgrading around Bagh-e Babur. AKTC works with Afghan institutions and residents to prepare neighbourhood plans to guide reconstruction and development within specific quarters, while ensuring that such initiatives are consistent with wider planning processes for the metropolitan area of Kabul. An important contribution to the planning process was made through the formulation in 2005 of a joint planning framework for the residential neighbourhood of Chindawol, which remains under intense pressure from commercial development and technical issues. Its efforts to contribute to the process of planning, development and technical issues. Its efforts to contribute to the process of planning, development by Amanullah Khan of a new government enclave at Darulaman, well to the south.

Asheqan wa Arefan, Chindawol and Kuche Kharabat; clearance for Timur Shah park; conservation; rehabilitation and upgrading in District 7, including Taza Yat.

Asheqan wa Arefan, Shanasazi and Pakhtafurushi; landscaping of Timur Shah park; rehabilitation of Queen’s Palace in Bagh-e Babur; establishment of Bagh-e Babur Trust.

Left, AKTC is working to preserve traditional housing stock in the war-affected historic quarters of the Old City. A typical street view within the project cluster in Asheqan wa Arefan shows restored external facades and access improvements.

In the context of a process of urban recovery that since 2002 has been largely ad hoc and uncontrolled, AKTC works with Afghan institutions and residents to prepare neighbourhood plans to guide reconstruction and development within specific quarters, while ensuring that such initiatives are consistent with wider planning processes for the metropolitan area of Kabul. An important contribution to the planning process was made through the formulation in 2005 of a joint planning framework for the residential neighbourhood of Chindawol, which remains under intense pressure from commercial development and technical issues. Its efforts to contribute to the process of planning, development and technical issues. Its efforts to contribute to the process of planning, development.

As pressure on urban land and housing mounts, and uncontrolled ‘development’ encroaches on the surviving historic fabric, the future of the Old City requires action at a variety of levels: formulation of effective national policy on urban heritage; promotion of consultative processes of planning; more effective urban management; enhancement of professional and craft skills; technical support for families to repair or upgrade their homes through a system of small-scale grants. This conservation work has provided an enabling platform for consultations between professionals and residents on critical development and technical issues. Its efforts to contribute to the process of planning, however, have been less successful, due both to a lack of professional capacity and persistent institutional rivalries. As pressure on urban land and housing mounts, and uncontrolled ‘development’ encroaches on the surviving historic fabric, the future of the Old City requires action at a variety of levels: formulation of effective national policy on urban heritage; promotion of consultative processes of planning; more effective urban management; enhancement of professional and craft skills; technical support for families to repair or upgrade their homes through a system of small-scale grants. This conservation work has provided opportunities for on-the-job training for more than a hundred carpenters, plasterers and masons, many of whom live in the historic quarters.

Much of the fragile stock of traditional housing in the Old City is subdivided and resides, half of whom are tenants, has access to only the most rudimentary services, due to decades of under-investment and neglect, as well as more recent conflict-related damage. In order to address the abject conditions facing the majority of residents in this area, AKTC has invested in repairs or construction of drains, paving of alleys and streets, and safer water supplies, benefiting nearly 20,000 inhabitants since 2002. These interventions have generated significant employment within the resident communities, who have also benefited from a range of measures aimed at promoting small-scale economic activity, especially among women. Together with the jobs created through conservation projects, these investments have contributed to the process of recovery across these quarters, where self-built repairs and infill construction are on the increase. In the context of a process of urban recovery that since 2002 has been largely ad hoc and uncontrolled, AKTC works with Afghan institutions and residents to prepare neighbourhood plans to guide reconstruction and development within specific quarters, while ensuring that such initiatives are consistent with wider planning processes for the metropolitan area of Kabul. An important contribution to the planning process was made through the formulation in 2005 of a joint planning framework for the residential neighbourhood of Chindawol, which remains under intense pressure from commercial development and technical issues. Its efforts to contribute to the process of planning, development and technical issues. Its efforts to contribute to the process of planning, however, have been less successful, due both to a lack of professional capacity and persistent institutional rivalries. As pressure on urban land and housing mounts, and uncontrolled ‘development’ encroaches on the surviving historic fabric, the future of the Old City requires action at a variety of levels: formulation of effective national policy on urban heritage; promotion of consultative processes of planning; more effective urban management; enhancement of professional and craft skills; technical support for families to repair or upgrade their homes through a system of small-scale grants. This conservation work has provided opportunities for on-the-job training for more than a hundred carpenters, plasterers and masons, many of whom live in the historic quarters.

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Background
BRIEF HISTORY OF PROGRAMME AREA
Settled since the 1st Century AD, Kabul did not develop as a major city until the 16th Century. By the late 18th Century the city comprised a series of defensible enclaves that were home to some 65,000 people. By the late 19th Century the urban population had grown to 500,000 with settlement expanding beyond the historic quarters, to the north of the Kabul River. There was significant development in District 7 during the 1960s, but few investments in infrastructure in Dist-

Challenges
PROGRAMME RISKS
While significant physical gains have been made in conservation of historic property and upgrading of community infrastructure, and self-built residential (sh) construction is widespread, the process is largely ad hoc and rarely conforms to the outdated Master Plans that continue to serve as an official reference for urban development.

SITE CONDITIONS
Districts 1 and 7 have some of the highest densities in the city, and access is primarily by means of narrow alleys between fragile traditional homes or on steep hillsides. This poses a challenge for both conservation and upgrading works, as do the clearance of un-

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS
With extensive war damage and limited access to basic infrastructure and services for those living in informal areas, environmental conditions are generally poor.

INFRASTRUCTURE
A legacy of under-investment in drainage, water supply and electrical networks, coupled with extensive war damage, requires significant investments to achieve even the most basic levels of service coverage for the fast-growing population of Districts 1 and 7.

ACCESS TO OPEN SPACE
Deterioration of and encroachment on key open spaces is widespread. Public parks or open spaces have generally not been effectively maintained, and are often used for parking or the disposal of domestic waste. With many areas of the Old City laid waste as a result of factional fighting, property disputes are common and encroachment on public open spaces is widespread.

BUILDING CONDITIONS
The combination of lack of maintenance and war-related damage means that the bulk of the housing stock, which is largely traditional, is in a poor state of repair. Added to this, high levels of occupancy in subdivided property has continued, although investment in repair has continued since the 1st century AD, Kabul did not develop as a major city until the 16th Century. By the late 18th Century the city comprised a series of defensible enclaves that were home to some 65,000 people. By the late 19th Century the urban population had grown to 500,000 with settlement expanding beyond the historic quarters, to the north of the Kabul River. There was significant development in District 7 during the 1960s, but few investments in infrastructure in Dist-

bazaars in the commercial area of District 1.

Within the programme area there are several major government health facilities to which residents have access if they can afford care and medicines. Recorded government health facilities to which residents have

STATUS OF HEALTH AND EDUCATION
Nearly half of households occupy rented property, with

HOUSEHOLD ECONOMY
A high level of household occupancy rented property, with two thirds of families dependent on a single income (usually derived from casual labour) and often in debt.

DISTRIBUTION OF WATER SOURCES
For improvements in household sanitation have been

QUALITY OF LIFE
It has been addressed through investments in urban

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CONSERVATION ASPECTS
Significant progress has been made since 2003 in the conservation of a cluster of historic buildings situated between the Timur Shah Mausoleum, on the banks of the Kabul River, and the neighbourhood of Asheman near the Badakhshan. These buildings have been conserved during the rehabilitation programme in Bagh-e Bala between 2000 and 2009.

Significant Issues and Impact
MASTER PLANNING PROCESS
The historic fabric within District 1 is designated for comprehensive ‘redevelopment’ in the various Master Plans drawn up for Kabul since the 1960s, but is now widely acknowledged to merit ‘special heritage zone’ status – even though there is no urban heritage policy in frame. Along with adjoining areas, a new plan for District 7 has been under formulation since 2005.

PLANNING ISSUES
While several proposals for the rehabilitation of the his-
toric quarters of Kabul have been drawn up since 2003, none has been formally adopted, nor have ‘neighbour-

BASELINE STANDARDS
Since 2005, baseline surveys have been conducted in residential areas of Districts 1 and 7, covering more than 30,000 people. In addition to the monitoring of physical transformations in the area, several surveys of informal commercial activity have been undertaken in District 1 since 2004.

Socio-Economic Initiatives
In addition to some 200 craftsmen trained through apprenticeships during the course of conservation works in Districts 1 and 7, more than 100 women continue to take part in vocational training aimed at improving household livelihoods in the programme area. The generation of employment through conservation and upgrading activities, as well as development of skills within communities in Districts 1 and 7, continues to be a priority within ARTIC’s programme.

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