Yehuda Greenfield-Gilat
Karen Lee Bar-Sinai
In loving memory of Aya Shapira

Borders in transition

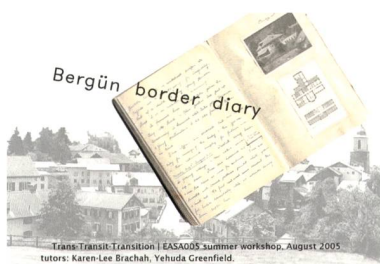## The EASA005 workshop 'Between Jerusalem and Bergün'

Figure 1
Yehuda Greenfield-Gilat and Karen Lee Bar-Sinai,
Bergün Border Diary, workshop booklet cover,
2005.

Figure 2
No man's land facing the Old City of Jerusalem,
2003, photo by Yehuda Greenfield-Gilat and
Karen Lee Bar-Sinai.

1 Workshop participants: Anni Hapuoja (Finland), Jovan Manic-Smetanjuk (UK), Karine A. Cone (Hungary), Lars Smedvig (Norway), Lorenzo Karase (Austria), Max Abele (Austria), Otto Katja (Finland), William P. C. Wang (UK), Zsofi Koczka (Hungary).

2 The *Geneva Accord* (2003), is a private, unofficial Israeli–Palestinian 'final agreement' initiative. It is an unprecedented, comprehensive agreement proposing a solution based roughly on the 1967 lines. For more information, go to the official website at: http://www.heskem.org.il.

3 Proposals which suggest making the Old City of Jerusalem as a 'special status' entity, such as in the *Old City Initative. New Directions for Deliberation and Dialogue*, (2005–2006). For more information, go to the official website at: http://www.windsor.ca/jerusaleminitiative.

4 ECF (Economic Cooperation Foundation) is a Tel-Aviv based NGO which supports Israel–Palestinian cooperations in the political, socio-economic and civil society spheres. The authors were commissioned in 2006 to do a research on regarding a possible inner-city border along Road 60 in Jerusalem.

The annual EASA005 workshop took place in Bergün, a village in the Alps of Switzerland. Arriving from all over Europe, a total of 400 workshop participants, tutors and organizers temporarily transformed two of the village's buildings overnight into mass dormitories. Their presence doubled the local population of Bergün, and their presence was significantly felt.

The aim of the workshop was to study and document the shift and creation of new boundaries following the 'invasion' of the students into the serene village.[1] Observing it as a microcosm of border production and change, the students studied the interactions among the participants as well as in relation to local residents. They examined tools and patterns that define borders and experimented with means of interventions. In order to link workshop activities to current, acute urban challenges in contested areas of the world – and the architect's role – parallel discussions took place centered on Jerusalem's precarious situation. The workshop summary outcome – the *Bergün Border Diary,* (Fig. 1) – can be read within a larger context of possible architectural ventures. In a similar manner, the *Borders in Transition Workshop* is to be discussed here within the larger context of Jerusalem borderprojects.

Architecture, borders and 'resolution planning'

Over the past few years, we have observed a growing interest and an increased cross-disciplinary discussion centered around borders and cross-border planning. This is especially apparent and highly relevant in the city of Jerusalem, where the current conflict demands resolution, the city itself destined to be a cornerstone in any future political agreement between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

Examination of the existing spatial knowledge on Jerusalem reveals the current ways architectural and planning-oriented projects approach this issue. The first is by means of *observation*: from a critical viewpoint, providing interpretation of the built condition and existing tensions, and often concluding with a text-based analysis of documents. The second is by means of *large-scale planning*: drawing from various political scenarios, providing outlined maps delineating possible future borderlines and the consequences of various possible agreements. These kinds of material have already been used in former negotiations and still assists decision makers today. Beyond this, there is a lack of knowledge and work concerning the effect of the large-scale planning on the urban–human dimension.

Our work focuses on actual zoom in studies, utilizing architecture, and architectural methods and representations, for conflict resolution planning. It addresses the question of where, and more important, how a border may intersect a city,

and in so doing, provides a comprehensive methodology for treating borders as an integral part of a larger urban planning process. As a result, viable solutions can be formed. Most projects focus on defining the nature of borderline routes (e.g., agreement proposals like the *Geneva Accord*[2]) or special-status entities (often suggested for the Old City of Jerusalem[3]). These projects tend to conclude with proposals for a spatial-political product.

The *EASA* workshop provided an opportunity to explore some of these concepts within a local setting. The participating students were instructed to use the unique environment created in the village as a laboratory for studying newly formed and shifted boundaries.

Scales of Border Intervention

Border intervention occurs at: the urban scale (demarcation of a border line); the relational scale (integration of a border system); and the formal scale (execution of an architectural object).

There are three inevitable scales encountered when treating and interveening in borders. These are: The urban scale, the border as a system, and the separation detail.

1. The Urban Scale. Demarcation of a Border Line

A two sides of a border might not only differ in their nationality, but also in the way they inhabit, use and perceive a divided area. The reasons can be varied, but understanding them is crucial to sustainable planning.

In *A City Border along Road 60, Central Jerusalem* (2006) commissioned by the ECF[4], examines the final status agreement of a border-path. The proposed border segment runs along a major North–South route which currently serves both sides of the city. The research contained in this report outlines a proposal for the development of an infrastructure along the route, which would function as shared "spine" containing all the necessary border crossing facilities between Western and Eastern Jerusalem. Nevertheless, the proposed development is lopsided in its focus. It takes into account the different present and

Figure 3
Yehuda Greenfield-Gilat and Karen Lee Bar-Sinai, *Road 60* (Jerusalem) in a future final status agreement. Ground plan, 2006.
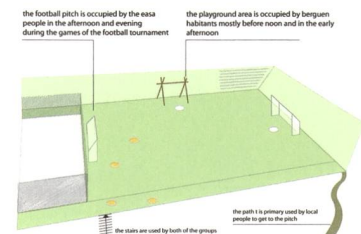Different roles for the Israeli (left) and Palestinian (right) sides.

Figure 4
Karine A. Cone, Lorenzo Karase, Zsofi Koczka (EASA workshop participants), *Two systems of use on the football field, type of drawing,* EASA005 Workshop, Bergün, 2005.

Figure 5
The joint football match between EASA and Bergün locals, photos by Yehuda Greenfield-Gilat and Karen Lee Bar-Sinai, and EASA workshop partcipants, 2005.

Figure 8
Aya Shapira, Yehuda Greenfield-Gilat, Karen Lee
Bar-Sinai, Interior of Damascus gate light rail
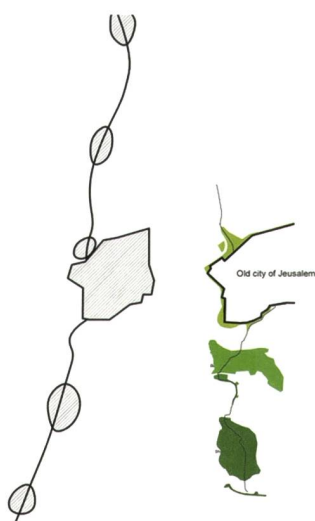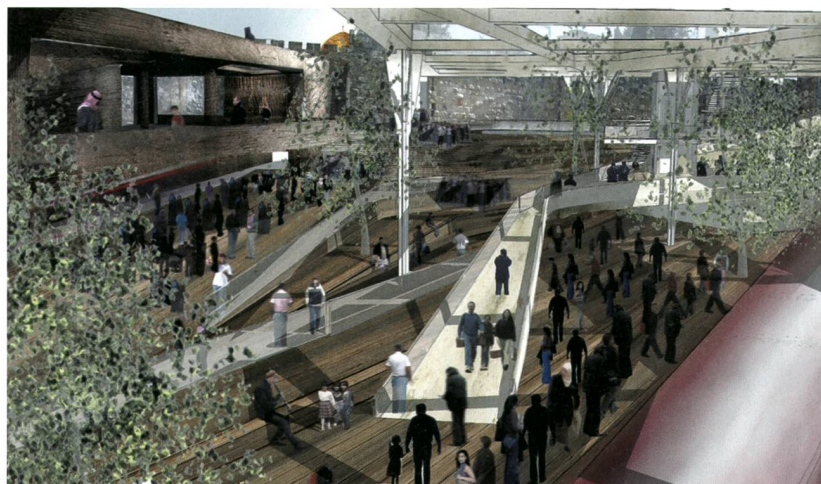station, Jerusalem, visualization, 2004.

Figure 6
Aya Shapira, Yehuda Greenfield-Gilat, Karen Lee
Bar-Sinai, *Border zones in Jerusalem along a
line*, a combined system general scheme (right),
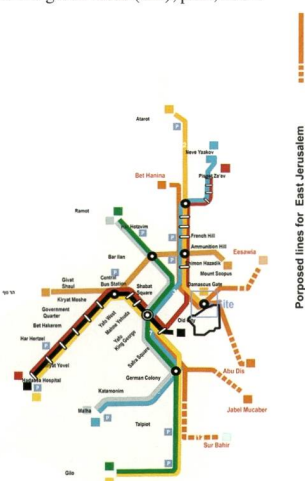applied to the green areas (left), plan, 2004.

Figure 7
Aya Shapira, Yehuda Greenfield-Gilat, Karen
Lee Bar-Sinai, Proposed lines for East Jerusalem,
proposed extension to the east of Jerusalem's light
rail system, 2004.

future roles the road plays for each side, proposing an urban plan accordingly. While the Israeli side would ultimately become an edge-city, the Palestinian side would serve as a central urban corridor, with great importance on the national scale. (Fig. 3)

One group in the *Borders in Transition* workshop mapped out the differing ways in which the local village facilities were used by its inhabitants and the visiting EASA students over the course of the workshop.[5] Despite the relatively small environment, they detected two separate systems of use, with seldom overlapped. For its intervention, the group chose the local football field – a part of the village normally used by local residents and visiting students at different hours of the day (Fig. 4). A football match set up between these two user groups created a new, until now non-existent space-time within the village, affectively connecting these two alien systems and their users. The game received considerable attention and was well attended by the EASA students and local residents of all ages. (Fig. 5)

2. Ralational Scale: Integration of a Border System

In order to transform an inner city border from a means of separation into a more complex 'urban system,' which serves both sides equally, it must function as an integral part of already existing systems.

An urban opportunity presents itself: instead of the default 'backyard' role, the entire border is visible and becomes a new kind of urban front, containing shared infrastructure and joint projects, providing an answer to various needs of the city. In many of our projects, we propsed a set of border zones which run along and mesh into already existing border lines..These zones can be based on a program of transportation, leisure, tourism, commerce, education, religion etc. (Fig. 6) The outcome is a continuous system comprised of newly defined zones which blend into already existing 'traditional' urban systems (public transportation routes, green areas, etc.).

A Transportation Border Zone, Damascus Gate, Jerusalem [6] demonstrates this idea. Following the *Geneva Accord*, the border line is placed along the city's former demarcation line once separating East from West Jerusalem and serving today as an unofficial border. The chosen site is the last vacant lot in the vicinity of the Old City, providing clear evidence of the former no-man's land. Addressing a real need in the city, the project proposes a transportation terminal.[7] At present, two separate systems of transportation exist in the city. They are neither connected nor shared by the two sides. A new light rail system, currently under construction, only plans to serve the western side of the city. The project proposes to extend this light rail system by adding lines to the east
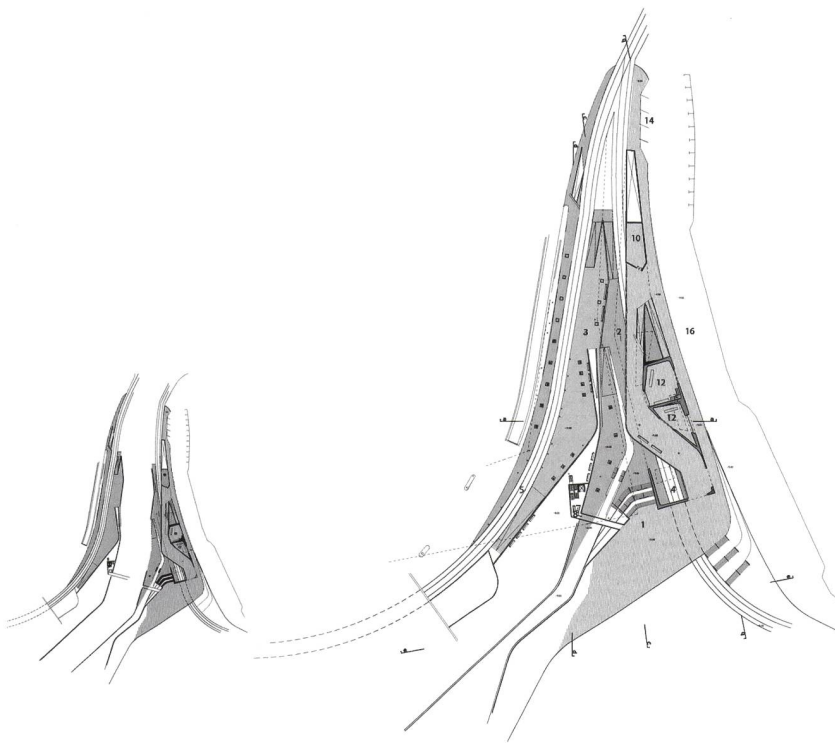
Figure 12
Aya Shapira, Yehuda Greenfield-Gilat, Karen Lee Bar-Sinai, *Damascus gate light rail station*, proposal for a flexible terminal plan enabling separation and unification, Jerusalem, ground plan, 2004.
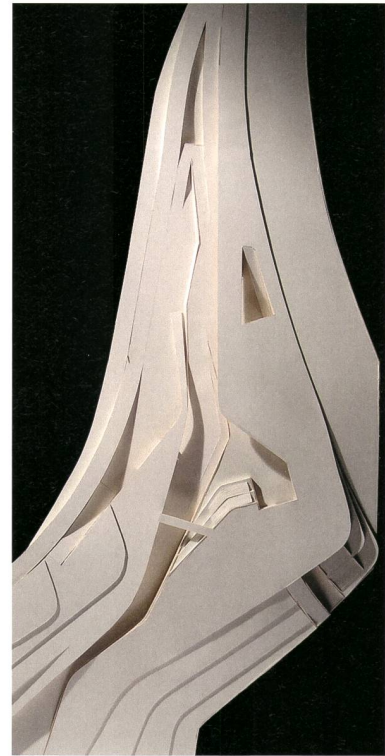

Figure 13
Aya Shapira, Yehuda Greenfield-Gilat, and Karen Bar-Sinai, proposal for *Damascus gate light rail station*, Jerusalem, model, 2004.
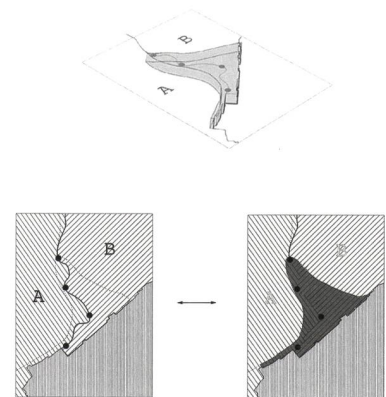

Figure 11
Aya Shapira, Yehuda Greenfield-Gilat, and Karen Lee Bar-Sinai, *Damascus gate light rail station*, Jerusalem, a flexible scheme enabling separation and unification, 2004.

and by constructing a set of connecting terminals, which would serve as points of interchange and border passing (Fig. 7). The chosen site is to function as such a node, carrying the potential of becoming a key point of connection in a more stable future. Its proximity to the old city would enable it to become the most important link between east and west for the local citizens, as well as visitors and tourists. The outcome would be a border which lives and breathes as a result of the movement, activity and vitality coursing through its 'spine' of demarcation (Fig. 8).

During the *Borders in Transition* workshop, one assignment focused on understanding the unique dynamics of a defined space, and the mechanisms and tools by which its borders can be affected. One group focused on a party taking place in the same building housing the workshop.[8] The group of students mapped out and traced the 'edges' of the party's zones and defined strategies for altering them. For their act of intervention, they chose to project a video image of the party onto a wall in an unused area of the basement (Fig 9). This spatial and perceptual manipulation resulted in a virtual extension of the party beyond established boundaries created by the basement walls (Fig 10).

3. Formal Scale: Execution of an Architectural Object

This scale refers to the nature of the barrier itself. A border can be executed in many ways, conveying different messages, which then variously affect the surrounding atmosphere. For this reason, a few important attributes should be noted when addressing this level:

Flexibility: When planning a border, its possible future removal should be taken into account. For this reason, *A Transportation Border Zone, Damascus Gate, Jerusalem*, proposes a flexible scheme. The scheme proposes treating the binational transportation border zone as a whole unit (in terms of management, landscaping, and design) while still enabling the insertion of a border line, as required (Fig. 11). This solution enables the terminal to be divided or connected as needed without damaging the nature of the site or its urban role.

5 Project done by Karine A. Cone / Lorenzo Karase / Zsofi Koczka.
6 *Transportation Border Zone. Damascus Gate. Jerusalem* was designed by Aya Shapira / Yehuda Greenfield-Gilat / Karen Lee Brachah, 2004.
7 Michael Sorkin, "Introduction. Thinking About Jerusalem," in: idem (Ed.), *The Next Jerusalem. Sharing the Divided City*, New York: The Monacelli Press 2002, p. 20.
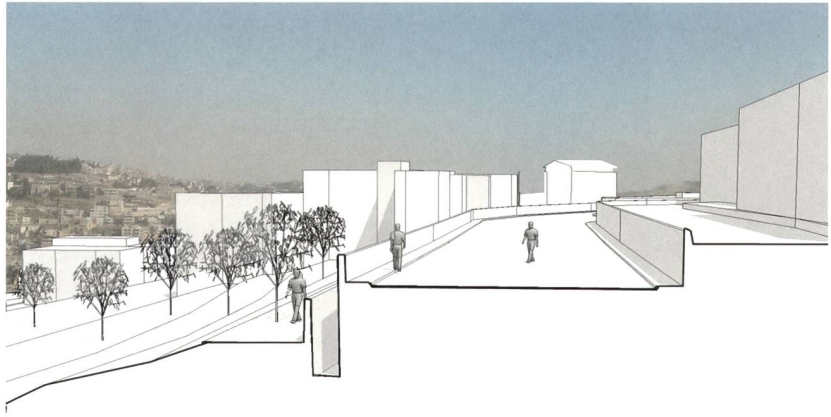8 Project done by Jovan Manic-Smetanjuk and William P. C. Wang.

Figure 15
Yehuda Greenfield, Karen Lee Bar-Sinai, proposal for a *promenade in Abu-Tor*, Jerusalem, detail-section of the border, 2004.
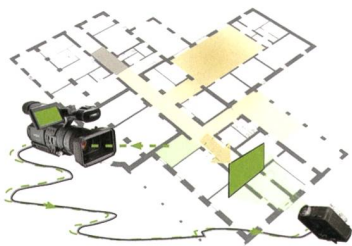

Figure 9
Jovan Manic-Smetanjuk and William P. C. Wang, *Act of intervention: the 'virtual' extension of a party by means of projection*, Bergün, 2005.

Figure 10
Jovan Manic-Smetanjuk and William P. C. Wang, *Result of intervention: 'virtually' enlarged party space*, Bergün, 2005, photo by Yehuda Greenfield-Gilat and Karen Lee Bar-Sinai.

9 Georg Simmel, "Bridge and Door", in: Neal Leach (Ed.), *Rethinking Architecture. A Reader in Cultural Theory*, London: Routledge 1997, p. 65–69.
10 Yehuda Greenfield-Gilat and Karen Lee Bar-Sinai. Study commissioned by ECF (Economic Cooperation Foundation), Tel Aviv, to develop alternative configurations for a border in Jerusalem on the basis of the Green Line and in light of the demographic spread, December 2004.

Bridge vs. door: Discussing separation and connection naturally raises the notions of bridges and doors. It is therefore important to understand the essential difference between the terms. According to Georg Simmel, "Whereas the bridge tends to emphasize connectedness, the door emphasizes how separating and connecting are only two sides of precisely the same act,"[9] this can be applied to the practice of designing flexible borders: rather than a 'bridge,' disabled in times of separation, the boder becomes a 'door' functioning interchangeably as a corridor or barrier. This is exemplified in the terminal plan and interior design of a *Transportation Border Zone* (Fig. 12). The plan easily enables the division of the space into two terminals. The natural height difference between two platforms created by the sculptured interior becomes an ideal location for inserting a dual functioning corridor or barrier (Fig. 13).

Functional Dividers: Separation is often the outcome of our surroundings: e.g., a wall divides two rooms, a rail divides lanes of a road. Locating the border in such contexts utilizes the need for division for a national purpose, helps to avoid the threatening affect of a forced separation, and reduces alienation between people on both sides. The light rail terminal proposed in *A Transportation Border Zone* offers a built-in division between two platforms headed in different directions. In this way the separation between the Israeli and Palestinian sides is established on a functional basis. *Jerusalem Separation Barrier Study*[10] examines separation within a built neighborhood. Proposing to turn the divided street into a promenade (Fig. 14). The street offers a spectacular panorama view of the Old City of Jerusalem, and is topographically higher than the street. Given this setting, it is proposed that the promenade fencing – which would be located in any case at the end of the lookout point – function as a border (Fig. 15).

New Realms in the Practice of Architecture

Many still long for a utopia, free of fences and borders. Nevertheless boundaries can only be removed there where they are no longer needed, where national self-definition and identity are so well detended, agreed upon and uncontested that there is no need for their physical demarcation. Unfortunately, this is not the case in present-day Jerusalem. Instead of a clear definition between the

Figure 16
Aya Shapira, Yehuda Greenfield-Gilat, Karen Lee Bar-Sinai,
A transportation terminal facing Damascus gate, Old City of
Jerusalem (type of illustration), 2004.

Open space
Toilets
Information
Food
Shops
Services
Observatory
Border control

Eastern (Palestinian) and Western (Israeli) cities, there are many contested definitions among them, for escape the unilaterally declared Israeli municipal line, and the in famous separation barrier. The debate regarding its future borders is therefore acute. How will a border intersect this city? What will be the spatial consequences? What kind of urban surrounding will develop as a result? Can it divide the city while retaining respect for all of its inhabitants, both sides of the border? Can it be conceptualized, planned, and designed in a manner that will truly enable a shared public space? These are all architectural and urban challenges. This is not a coincidence. After all, architecture plays an instrumental role in the political struggle over space.

Decision makers involved in forming peace agreements often view architecture as a process confined to the final stages of implementation. Architects are called upon to design and detail delineated solutions. And yet, architectural involvement in the initial conceptual stages can contribute not only to the data bank policy makers draw upon, but also to the manner in which these decisions are made. Approaching a political problem as a planning challenge allows replacing the traditional 'security oriented' concepts with a broader and more comprehensive methodology. Treating borders as an urban issue can bring about a larger set of objectives and yet properly address security issues.

The EASA *Borders in Transition* workshop provided a way to demonstrate and impart a possible new direction for architecture, aimed at increasing involvement in planning and shaping borders and contested territories. In spite of their traditional political and military connotation, it is important to bare in mind that borders also enable the possibility for encounter and exchange. Borders have the potential of becoming the basis for new designs and means of connecting people. A renewed sense of architecture's potential to shape divided cities can bring about growing professional involvement in the field and genuine sustainable planning for their future.
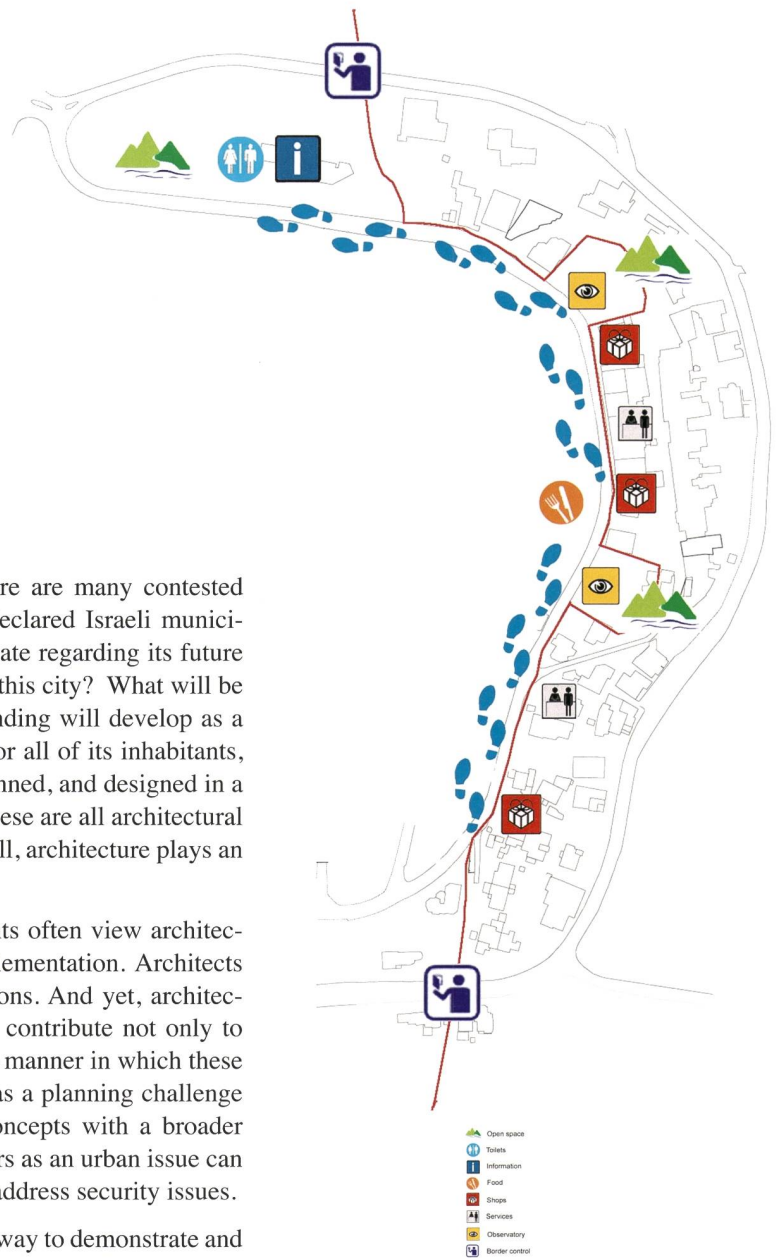
Figure 14
Yehuda Greenfield-Gilat and Karen Lee Bar-Sinai,
Promenade in Abu-Tor, Jerusalem, proposal,
ground plan depicting designated uses, 2005.