

3.6 SHARAFAT

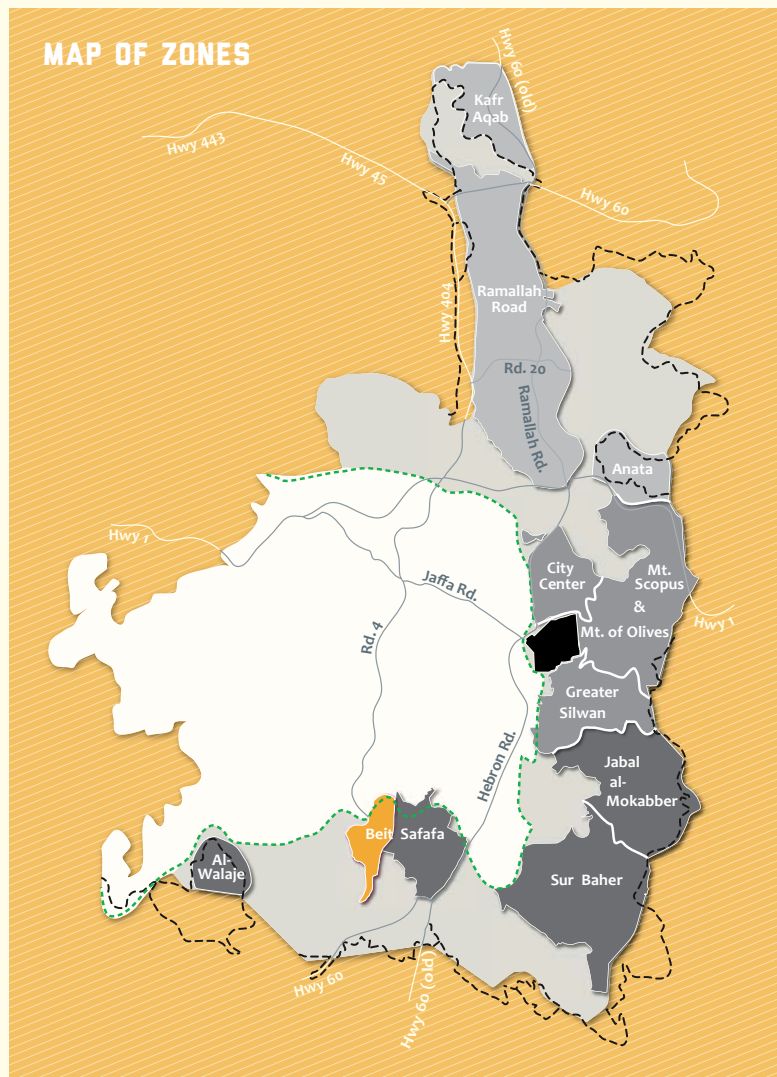
ABOUT THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Located in southern Jerusalem, Sharafat, along with Beit Safafa, is not contiguous with the other Palestinian neighborhoods of East Jerusalem. Sharafat sits on the slope descending from the post-1967 Israeli neighborhood of Gilo, built in part on lands expropriated from the village. Its borders are delineated by Dov Yosef Road (“the road up to Gilo”) to the east, the Green Line (which runs through the Refaim Valley) to the north, the open areas marking the edge of the built-up area of the city are to the west, and Gilo lies to the south. The Jerusalem Municipality views Sharafat and Beit Safafa as a single unit; indeed they share an old master plan (which has undergone many changes over the years), a community center, and educational institutions. However, since the 1970s the neighborhoods have been physically disconnected from one another by Dov Yosef Road, under which there is a small tunnel allowing vehicular and pedestrian access from one side to the other.

Up until 1967, Sharafat was a small agricultural village sitting on the route of the Refaim Valley, stretching

over two hills and the gentle valley between them. The village’s name literally means “balconies,” and, indeed, Sharafat sits like a balcony looking eastward over Beit Safafa and northward over the Refaim Valley. Sharafat’s historical center is located on the southern hill, and, beginning in the 1970s, another center developed on the northern hill (ath-Thahrah). Today, Sharafat has a lot of vacant area in comparison with other Palestinian neighborhoods in East Jerusalem, and in recent years it has seen accelerated construction and development on the slopes connecting the two hills, as well as southwards, towards Gilo.

Through the 1970s, the population of the village reached no more than 100 people, but since the 1980s and 1990s, the population has grown significantly, mainly due to inward migration. Sharafat, like Beit Safafa, is a neighborhood of choice for Palestinian citizens of Israel who have moved to Jerusalem. Moreover, since the construction of the Separation Barrier, many East Jerusalem Palestinians, have moved to the Palestinian neighborhoods that remained on the Israeli side of the barrier, including Sharafat.



FACTS

Population 3,000
Area 973 dunam



MAP LEGEND

East Jerusalem	Old City
Expropriated Land	Green Line
Northern Zones	Separation Barrier
Central Zones	Roads
Southern Zones	West Jerusalem

MAIN PROBLEMS IN SHARAFAT

Road 4 South

At the time of writing (2013), intensive construction work is underway in the middle of Sharafat to complete the final segment of the municipal freeway known as Road 4 (also known as Begin Road) – a six-lane highway connecting Road 60 in the south (the so-called Tunnels Road, which leads to Gush Etzion in the West Bank) and Road 443 in the north, which runs beyond and parallel to the Green Line, toward the coastal plain. Thus, the settlements to the north of the city and the settlements to the south of the city will be connected by a single freeway. The southern section of Road 4 is divided into three sections: the first, from the Golomb Junction to the train tracks; the second (the Sharafat segment), from the train tracks to Dov Yosef Road; and the third (the Beit Safafa segment), from Dov Yosef Road to the Rosmarin Junction in Gilo, where it spills into Road 60. Detailed plans for the first segment were submitted and approved following public review, but no such plans were submitted for the Beit Safafa and Sharafat segments, with the exception of a small section in the north (near the train tracks) and a small section in the south (near the Rosmarin Junction).

During the years prior to construction, many lands were expropriated from Sharafat and Beit Safafa residents, for the construction of the road. If and when completed, the Sharafat section of the road will split the neighborhood in two and severely damage the fabric and

quality of life therein, as well as the village's connections with Beit Safafa. Children will no longer be able to reach their schools (located in the northern part of Beit Safafa) via the neighborhood roads, and will have to go all the way to Gilo to cross the highway, thus also increasing the children's exposure to traffic-related dangers. After the completion of the road, the two parts of Sharafat are to be connected by a bridge. In the plan, the bridge abuts an existing house (which was built several years ago with the proper building permits from the Jerusalem Municipality), thus damaging the quality of life of the residents and lowering the value of their property. Meanwhile, an existing road (Sharafat Road) is being used as a temporary crossing during construction. Residents of Sharafat and Beit Safafa have challenged Road 4 South via public and legal channels, reaching as far as the Supreme Court.

The Jerusalem 2000 Outline Plan

The Jerusalem 2000 Outline Plan, awaiting deposition for public review since 2009, proposes the addition of housing units in Sharafat, both by increasing building rights in the neighborhood and by providing a small expansion area. According to the outline plan, residential construction in the neighborhood will be allowed up to six storeys, though subject to the stipulation of no more than two additional storeys on an existing structure. In recent years, on the areas designated for densification, several detail plans have been approved, taking advantage of the additional

building rights proposed in the outline plan. The outline plan also proposes an expansion area of about 70 dunam for Sharafat. Of these, about 20 dunam were zoned in previous neighborhood plans as open spaces, while some areas were never planned at all. Like the expansions of the Israeli neighborhoods of Gilo, Malha, and Givat Masu'a, Sharafat's expansion area in effect demarcates the western edge of Jerusalem's built-up area. The above-mentioned expansion areas abut a strip of undeveloped land that extends from the west deep into the municipal area, along the channel of the Refaim Valley. This strip is planned as a metropolitan park, which is currently in advanced stages of planning and even in initial implementation stages (see following). While the outline plan does allocate a small chunk of this strip for the benefit of the development of Sharafat, this piece of land is small in comparison to those allocated to the Israeli neighborhoods that run along it. Sharafat is not densely populated, but a more significant expansion area would provide much-needed housing relief for residents of the densely populated neighborhoods in other parts of East Jerusalem, especially Beit Safafa.

Threatened by Parks

Even before its planning has begun, Sharafat's expansion area is already threatened. A plan for the Refaim Valley Metropolitan Park – which was approved in June 2013 after having been stalled as a result of residents' petitions to the court demanding to have the plans translated to Arabic – contradicts the Jerusalem 2000 Outline Plan, reducing the size of Sharafat's expansion area by about 20 dunam. Meanwhile, the western side of the metropolitan park includes lands that are designated for a national park. If approved, this park will stretch beyond the Green Line, thereby nationalizing lands that currently belong to the Palestinian villages of Walaje, Batir, and Beit Jala.

In addition, a narrow strip of land on the steep slope and in the valley, to the west and south of the village core, is marked in the Jerusalem 2000 Outline Plan as a district park. The northern part of the strip is demarcated on one side by Sharafat homes, and on the other side by the above-mentioned metropolitan park. Once the park enters the vicinity of Gilo, the strip expands to the width of the entire

channel of the valley, thereby annexing one family home (see inset) as well as agricultural lands that are presently cultivated by residents of Sharafat, to the park. Looking at the topography of the strip, which is not suited for the intensive development of a district park, it seems that its entire purpose is to create a barrier between the Palestinian neighborhood and the Israeli neighborhood.

Antiquities and the Village Core

Archeological finds from different periods have been located in Sharafat, and several archeological areas are marked in Outline Plan # 4552 for the southern part of Sharafat, which includes the village core and an area zoned for public institutions abutting the village core. In 2007, the Israel Antiquities Authority conducted an archeological excavation in the neighborhood, on the northern slope that descends into the Refaim Valley. During the dig, two archeological layers were identified: a recent layer of agricultural terraces, which served Beit Safafa and Sharafat over the last hundred years; and a quarry with an agricultural facility that may have served as a wine press in the Roman-Byzantine period. Earlier excavations in and around the village core exposed findings from the ancient Roman era (a ritual bath, wine press, and caves). The village core itself, much like the historical cores of other Palestinian villages in East Jerusalem, contains many abandoned structures of historical and cultural value. And yet, it has been zoned for intensive development, in complete disregard of the need to preserve the area. All of the archeological layers, as well as the extant structures in the village core, are of potential community and touristic value and are worthy of being preserved in such a way as to leverage and not limit the development of the village.

Infrastructure and Services

Like other Palestinian neighborhoods in East Jerusalem, Sharafat suffers from a lack of infrastructure. This stems from the fact that the neighborhood has practically no statutory roads, which are a prerequisite for the laying of infrastructure and provision of municipal services. The physical state of the existing roads is disgraceful, and there is almost no garbage removal, no street lighting, and not a single public bus line that goes through the neighborhood. This is in glaring contrast to neighboring Gilo, which has all of the necessary infrastructure and municipal services (see inset).

DREAMING OF A HOUSE WITH ELECTRICITY

The disparity between the infrastructure in Sharafat and that in adjacent Gilo is particularly stark for the residents of an isolated house on the edge of the neighborhood. The house was built between 1967 and 1970 on the private lands of a family from the village, and it is located on the eastern slope of the valley to the south of the historical village core. After the 1967 war, as Israeli law was applied to East Jerusalem, construction became forbidden in places without an approved plan. This was the case for the house in question. The first plan in the area (Outline Plan # 1905 for Gilo, approved in 1977) designated the land on which this Sharafat home was built as open public area while the adjacent land was zoned as a residential block. A detail plan (# 2506) for this block (Block A in compound 10 – Shamir Street) was approved in 1980 and slated the Sharafat home for demolition. This plan included two rows of private homes on the slope, based on the original outline plan which had been drawn in general lines, allowing flexibility in the subsequent detail plans. For example, the lower row of private homes was expanded into the open public area that had been marked on the first plan. Nonetheless, the Palestinian home remained outside of the allotted residential area. At the same time, an outline plan was drawn up for Beit Safafa and Sharafat, which was approved in 1990. In this plan, too, the area of the house was not zoned as residential. In 2000, Detail Plan # 5322 for a JNF forest in the valley was approved, and the land designation was changed to "special open public area – forest." Thus, the house has never received planning formalization. When the large private homes of Shamir Street were built on the slope, the Sharafat home was not demolished, nor did it receive a demolition order. And yet, the lower retaining wall of the Gilo houses was built right next to the house, blocking it from one side. The house is accessible only via a dirt road from the center of Sharafat. Despite all the development in the Israeli neighborhood that grew up around it, the house remained unconnected to the necessary infrastructures, including electricity. The family asked the electric company time and again to be connected to the grid, but in vain, the excuse being that the house has no building permit. Thus a young family – the mother, a Palestinian-Israeli citizen from Beit Safafa, the father, a Jerusalem resident from Sharafat, and their two young children – lived in the house without basic heating, refrigeration, or lighting for many years. Following a drawn-out and persistent struggle, and with the help of civil society organizations, the house was finally connected to the municipal electrical grid.



Sharafat Road (photo Bimkom)



The Tunnel to Beit Safafa (photo Bimkom)

APPROVED PLANS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Part of Outline Plan # 2317 for Beit Safafa and Sharafat	636.9 dunam
Part of Outline Plan # 3365 for ath-Thahrah	179.5 dunam
Part of Local Outline Plan # 62 for West Jerusalem	37.3 dunam
Part of Detail Plan # 5322 for the JNF forest	48.4 dunam
Total planned area	902.1 dunam
Unplanned area	70.9 dunam
Total area in the neighborhood	973.0 dunam

An additional outline plan (# 4552) was approved, changing Outline Plan # 2317. Some seven detail plans were approved (one on an area of about 33 dunam), mostly changing the outline plan for ath-Thahrah, with no added area for the neighborhood.

ZONING STRUCTURE ACCORDING TO APPROVED PLANS ▪ DESIGNATION VS. USE

Designation	Plans		Land Use
	dunam	%	
Residential*	330	34	On most of the area of the neighborhood, relatively sparse construction is permitted. In the village core, and on both sides of the route of Road 4, slightly denser construction is allowed. Although the scope of construction does not exceed allotted building rights, construction sometimes takes place without a permit as a result of incomplete land registration and problems in proving land ownership. In recent years several residential projects have been built, and detail plans with enlarged building rights were approved.
Open Spaces	341	35	The neighborhood plans designate two large areas as open scenic areas. These areas run along the western and southern borders of the neighborhood. Some of these lands are used for agriculture. In addition, about 11 small plots were designated as open public areas, but with the exception of one plot, which serves as a basketball court, these were not developed. Likewise, a number of existing neighborhood streets are marked on the plans as open public area.
Roads	177	18	While large areas of the neighborhood were zoned for roads, few of these planned roads have actually been built, and they do not correspond, for the most part, with the existing streets in the neighborhood. These roads are often not implementable because their route runs on top of existing houses. The existing roads (statutory and un-statutory alike) are not maintained and pose a danger for the residents. Instead of improving and upgrading the existing neighborhood roads, the Jerusalem Municipality is working to build a main traffic artery through the neighborhood, which will severely damage the quality of life of the neighborhood's residents (see: Road 4 South).
Public Buildings and Institutions	45	5	There are six plots for public buildings and three for institutions. Of the ones for institutions, one is home to a church compound and another to the neighborhood mosque. None of the plots for public buildings have been developed, for no apparent reason. There are no municipal schools or kindergartens in Sharafat; the children mostly go to school in Beit Safafa.
Other	80	8	Includes unplanned areas.
Total	973	100	

* In most of ath-Thahrah, a 50% building ratio is allowed, with sparse construction of up to two storeys. In the strip that encloses Sharafat to the west and south, a 70% building ratio is allowed, with two storeys. In the historical center of the village, the permitted building rights are comprised of a ratio of 90% with three storeys, and in the areas to the north and south of Road 4, a 120% building ratio with four storeys is permitted.