

ذاكرة



Memory
Re-Gathering Syria.



Credits: Pexels

Premise

War is the most serious reason for causing the damage to both artificial and natural landscape. Syria, one of the oldest civilizations in the world is entering its another year of debilitating violence at a moment of geopolitical flux. It has been and remains a crucible in the geopolitics of the Middle East; a flash point in great power play; a source of instability; and a devastating human tragedy. The international response to Syria has dealt with those aspects in that order rather than prioritizing the human suffering.

Looking at the current dynamics - the dissent between rebellion - the Government along with other spectating powers of the world involved in the war, it is far from being solved. A huge deficit that is created in Syria, including corruption and chaos, the place has lost a lot more than what it had. What it means for the people now that a top-down approach in solving this crisis is way too far from the population it is intended for.



Credits: Samer Daboul

Challenge : Rebuilding a **Memory**

Challenge: The **first step of this cooperation** begins by **A. Creating a memory** with a **B. Function** by the **C. Citizens of the place** in one of the damaged/destroyed yet **D. Important site(s) of Syria.**

A. Memory? To accept the catastrophe that has happened today and rebuilds here on. A memory is a precursor to the hope. It can be a precursor of Anguish. A memory precedes stimuli of never repeating the same mistakes again. Similarly Rage, Anger, Trust, Remembrance, Glory, Potential, Reminding people there's always a way back, A memory that motivates to do better than before - the aim here is to use Architecture as a vessel to infuse memory.

Visualizing memory as a gateway to gather people and connecting past to future. Memory as seen above; is a multi-dimensional concept and not limited to only mourning - neither it should be.

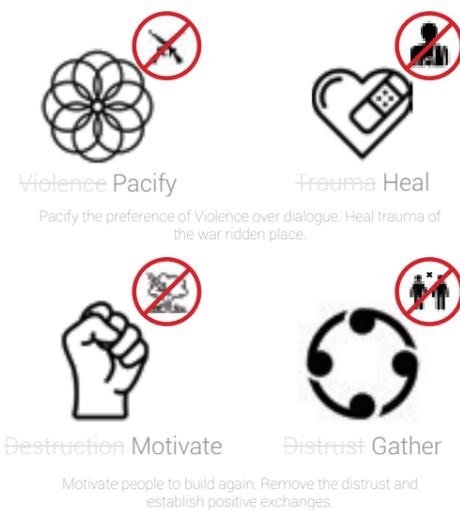


Painting of Citadel, Aleppo - Aerial View: Nasuh Al-Matrank

With a much larger debt to begin with - and Syrian economy already in jeopardy, public architecture with a **functional purpose** will help the quantitative needs of the place. The function can be derived from the **need of the place** by understanding the past dynamics - or can be **re-analyzed from a point of today** where the question of what people need has completely changed.

The function shall be derived by putting people first instead of a political approach, of the **immediate locality**. This attempt of a qualitative blend with needs on ground will **benchmark all the upcoming architecture** in the immediate place and sow new seeds of hope in Syria.

B. Function: Programme

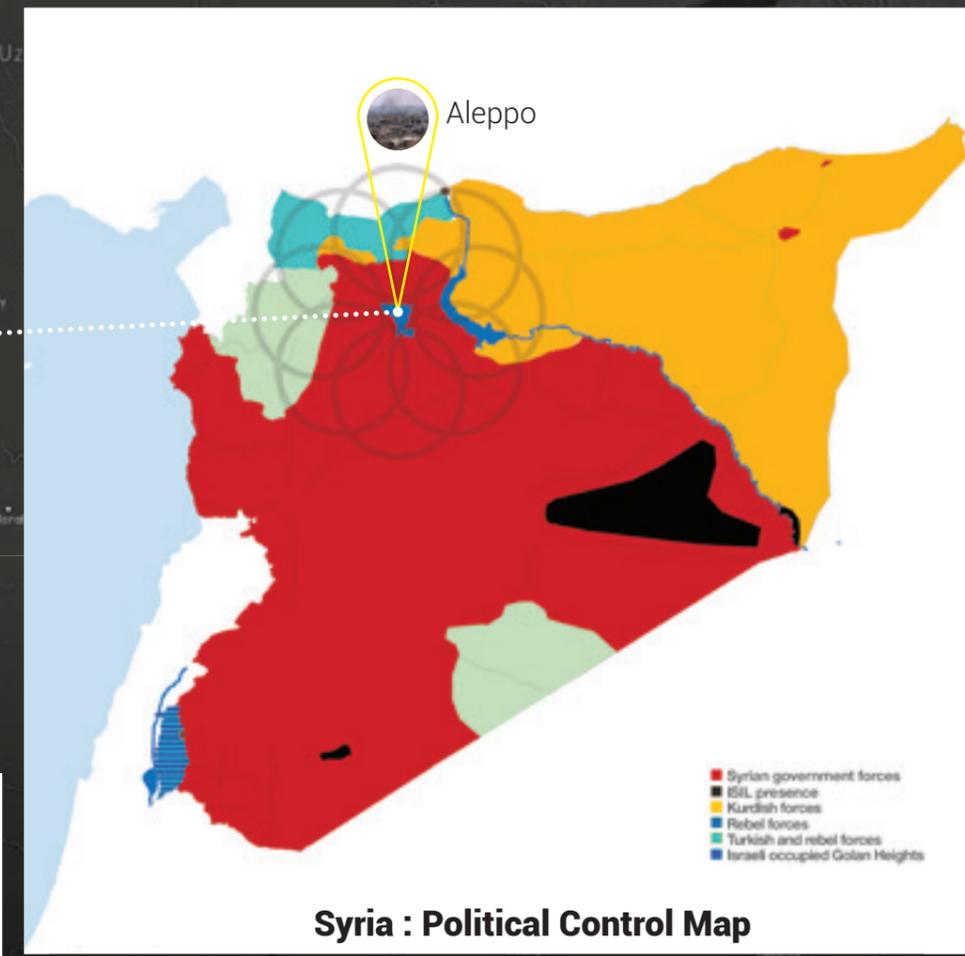


Attempts to restores public life

An outlook to new architecture that begins again at Syria, should be aimed towards reestablishing public life back again.



Daily life : **Regrows**



Credits: AJ Labs, Aljazeera, Liveuamap - Last updated on September 6, 2018

C. Citizens of place: **Aleppo**

Aleppo, one of the oldest cities in the world and home to the oldest world heritage sites stated by UNESCO, has been one of the key battlefields of the war. However, the same has been at the centre of crossfire with massive damages incurred on its built and social heritage. As people are moving back to the city to rebuild their lives again, the damage to begin with has been huge. Covered markets, Mosques, bustling neighbourhoods with blooming public life a decade ago are heavily impaired.

Being one of the oldest inhabited city in the World, Aleppo has witnessed various Dynasties - Wars - Empires - Cultures throughout history. That has also earmarked its essential place in the silk route where its influence extended in countries beyond its geographic borders. **Historically; one of the most desired places in terms of quality of life and trade, this place has been a clear example in history no matter how many times it has been destroyed, it has been built back again yet.**

Aleppo is the hotspot of the political tussle at large considering the control map of Syria. If a truce of peace begins at Aleppo, it has the most probability to heal the communal division at large through Syria.



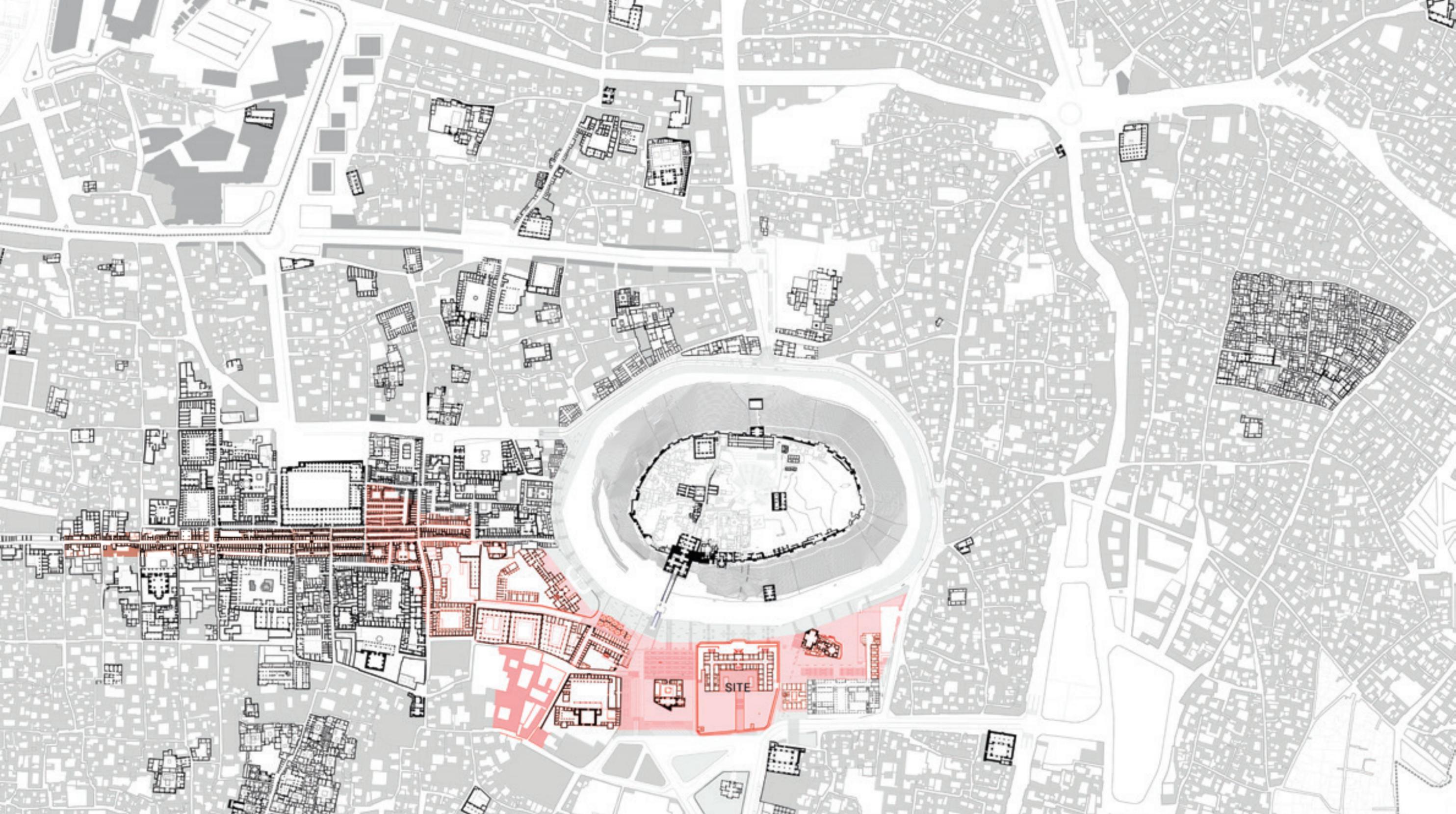
D. Important site(s) of Syria.

Grand Serail of Aleppo

Originally conceived to be the seat of Governor of the Government, the Grand Serail (Also known as New Serail) held its place in history as an important structure in citadel periphery in the past century. During various war clashes, conflicting forces demolished this historic structure by an underground tunnel bomb explosion. The site sits right next to the citadel of Aleppo and is at the heart of the walled city historic precinct.

Refer to the drawing in additional material for exact site.



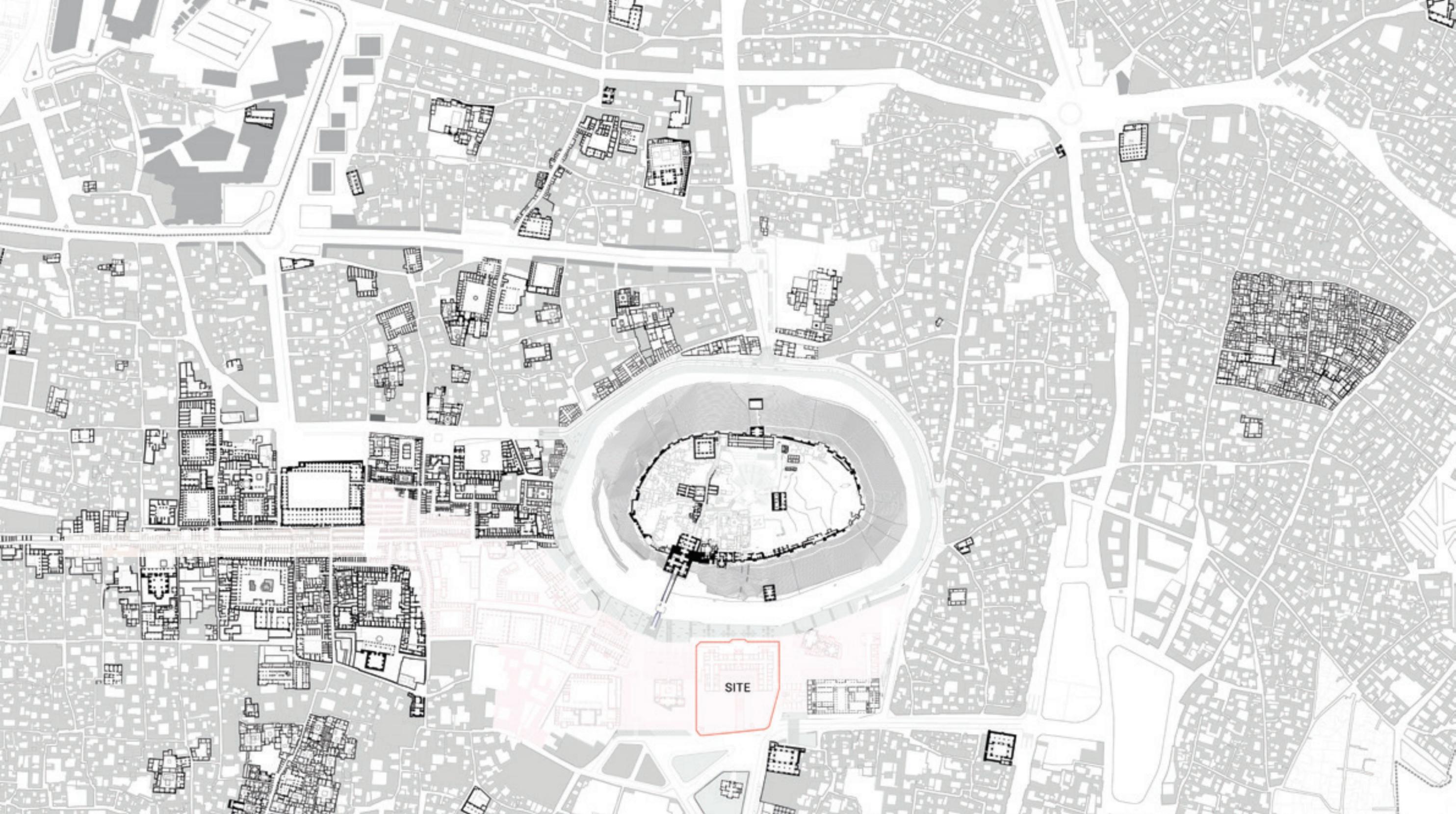


Destroyed Buildings

The demolished buildings marked in Citadel periphery

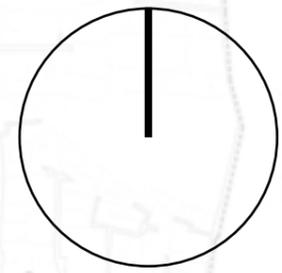
Affected areas cover a major portion of covered market and important buildings in the peripheral locations of the Citadel.





Site

Site Area: 11,211sq.m (2.77 Acres)
Coordinates: 36°11'50.45"N, 37° 9' 46.37"E
Location: Site of Grand Serail, Aleppo, Syria
Pre-destruction land use: Government Infrastructure - Repurposed to Hotel
Only regulations to be followed: Height restrictions - 45m (5m less than Citadel), Set backs of 7.5m on all 4 sides.





The Catch : Vacuum

Country level: As the war has been assumed to reach a cooldown, the political tensions on ground are far from being resolved. All the factions / groups are holding their territories/interests intact even after the war and will collide again in due course of time. Behind this conflict, what does not meet the eye is that a significant part of the population of Syria does not want to engage in the war. But none of the predominant conflict fronts is representing these at all. As they come back to their homes across the country, **how will you frame the vision of the citizens; the ones who need a place to make their unheard voices represented as a priority?**

City Level: As the Government of Syria is just one of the major front of conflict today, the demolished Grand Serail site has lost its essence as a unanimous seat of power. The place requires a re-framed answer in the context of today. We use this opportunity/place to address the vacuum of power - to use this place for the people of Aleppo. **Any front attacking this place will be labelled as the one against the voice of peace/people. How will you frame the programme addressing this deadlock?**

Site: With a lot of war damage delivered, the walled city lost its charm of a place for Tourism and Trade. The need of the hour has been shifted to more basic levels of infrastructure. Hence, the intended pre-war re-purposing of New Serai, which was a hotel is not relevant anymore. **What will your response to the site be in a crossfire of interests, prone to attacks & siege - at the same time is a symbol of hope for people of Aleppo and Syria?**

About

UFUSE

UNFUSE Serves as a unit block for UNI in the field of Architecture. It intends to break the fusion of traditional design barriers and methodologies by making it a platform for experimentation and conceptual exchange of ideas in architecture, urbanism, society, culture and ecology. It is a research initiative dedicated to providing opportunities for designers from all domains to explore ideas that go beyond the boundaries of architectural discipline and enrich our built environment; thereby opening up possibilities for promotion of architectural thought at a global level.

Learn more here:

http://unfuse.uni.xyz/about_unfuse.html



Pre-Civil War Aerial View of Citadel complex with site.

ذاكرة



Regathering Syria.

Memory

