

= Downtown Triangle (Jerusalem) =

The Downtown Triangle (Hebrew : מִשְׁלָּשׁ , Ha @-@ Meshulash , lit . " The Triangle ") is a central commercial and entertainment district in Jerusalem , Israel . Measuring 29 @,@ 000 square metres (310 @,@ 000 sq ft) , the area is bounded by Jaffa Road on the north , King George Street on the west , and Ben Yehuda Street on the southeast . Its vertices are the intersections of Jaffa Road and King George Street , King George and Ben Yehuda Streets , and Ben Yehuda Street and Jaffa Road (the latter known as Zion Square) .

From the mid @-@ 1940s through the 1960s , the Triangle was the commercial and cultural heart of Jerusalem , with many upscale shops and restaurants operated by German @-@ Jewish immigrant businessmen that appealed to an affluent clientele . Following the reunification of Jerusalem in 1967 and the expansion of the city away from the downtown core , the commercial viability of the Triangle declined . The area was revitalized by the conversion of Ben Yehuda Street and the interior streets of the Triangle to an open @-@ air pedestrian mall in 1982 . Over the next two decades , outdoor cafes and souvenir shops moved in , cementing the reputation of the Triangle as a popular shopping and entertainment venue for tourists and young Israelis .

= = History = =

Before the British Mandatory government took over in 1917 , the main commercial district in Jerusalem was in the Old City . With an eye to the continuing development of new neighborhoods outside the Old City Walls , the British drew up a master town plan that called for the establishment of two commercial hubs in the New City . The first commercial district to be built was the Downtown Triangle , although it was intended to play a secondary role to the other planned commercial district in the Mamilla area , which was closer to the Old City . However , the Mamilla development did not garner as much interest as the Triangle .

The land used for the Downtown Triangle had been purchased by the Jewish Colonization Association from the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate , which began selling off some of its holdings in Jerusalem after World War I. The British developed the field into a triangular district (hence its appellation , " The Triangle ") demarcated by Jaffa Road , Ben Yehuda Street (constructed by the British in 1922) and King George Street (constructed by the British in 1924) . Lots were sold to large companies and cooperatives as well as private businesses . Other streets adjacent to the Triangle ? Shlomzion Hamalka , Mamilla , Agron , and King David Streets ? were zoned for commercial and residential use .

= = = European ambience = = =

According to Jerusalem architectural historian David Kroyanker , the heyday of the Downtown Triangle lasted from the early 1930s to the 1970s . Many stores and restaurants were opened by German Jewish immigrants who sought to recreate a European ambience in the city center . Their upscale boutiques , coffeehouses , delicatessens , and exclusive restaurants were frequented by senior Mandate officials and wealthy , English @-@ speaking tourists . Unlike Israeli stores that sold all kinds of unrelated products under one roof , the Europeans introduced boutiques that featured only one item , such as gloves or ties . Some shops offered unique extras , such as coffeehouses that included an orchestra and dance floor , and a bookstore with a second @-@ floor library .

The European immigrant @-@ owned bookstores fueled the demand for detective fiction , historical reading , and periodicals from Germany and England . Steimatzky , which opened its first bookstore on Jaffa Road in the Triangle in 1925 , identified the growing taste for imported newspapers and magazines and bought the franchises for many of them . The European immigrants also created a market for cold cuts and cheeses , with three competing delicatessens on King George and Ben Yehuda Streets . For many years , the Triangle was also the only place where Jerusalem residents could purchase clothing , shoes , furniture , and household goods .

At its peak , the district was home to 14 cinemas screening the newest Hollywood fare . Located in

close proximity to one another , the cinemas would attract both adults and youth , who would afterwards patronize the coffeehouses and restaurants . The Downtown Triangle was the cultural heart of the city and the place " to see and be seen " .

= = = Architecture = = =

The cosmopolitan flavor of the Triangle extended to its buildings . The Sansur building , for example , has an " eclectic " design that combines " neo @-@ Renaissance and classicist elements " . Approximately 15 buildings in the Triangle were designed by architect Reuven Avraham Rabinowitz , who often added a row of roughly dressed stone to the facade to demarcate each story .

= = Decline and rebirth = =

Following the reunification of Jerusalem in 1967 , the city embarked on significant expansion . Large commercial centers were opened in the new , outlying neighborhoods of Talpote , Givat Shaul , and Malha , drawing customers away from the city center . Government offices began moving out as well , precipitating the economic decline of the Downtown Triangle in the 1970s . The clientele of the upscale European boutiques had also aged , and the neighborhoods adjacent to downtown became occupied by poor and Haredi Jews who did not patronize the Triangle . The elegant shops gave way to hummus restaurants , dollar stores , and money changers . The advent of television precipitated the closure of most of the Triangle 's cinemas .

In 1982 , the city attempted to revitalize the downtown district by closing Ben Yehuda Street and the Triangle 's interior streets (Luncz , Dorot Rishonim , Yavetz , Ben Hillel , and HaHistadrut Streets) to traffic , and converting the entire area to an open @-@ air pedestrian mall . Though taxi companies demonstrated against the renovation and merchants claimed it would fail , the idea proved successful . Outdoor cafes , pizzerias , and fast @-@ food restaurants moved into the Triangle , together with shops selling souvenirs , Judaica , and jewelry to tourists . Street musicians , street artists , political promoters , and tables manned by Chabad and Breslov Hasidim add to the lively nature of the mall . The pedestrian mall restored the Triangle 's reputation as the " heart " of the city , although the formerly upscale , European tone was replaced by a more populist image . The introduction of the Jerusalem Light Rail in December 2011 further increased local and visitor traffic : estimates show that 36 @,@ 000 pedestrians per day visited the Triangle in April 2012 , up from 16 @,@ 000 per day in April 2004 . The mall is especially busy on Saturday nights , as eateries that have closed for Shabbat reopen and the streets are crowded with young Israelis from Jerusalem and Tel Aviv .

Beginning in the late 1990s , the pedestrian mall became noted for hosting a growing presence of at @-@ risk and homeless youth . Three youth centers ? Hameshulash , Hezroni 's Squat , and The Zone ? operate in the vicinity of Zion Square .

= = = Bombing attacks = = =

Due to its centrality and large concentration of visitors and entertainment venues , the Downtown Triangle has been the target of numerous bombing attacks and attempted attacks . On 22 February 1948 , three British Army trucks led by an armored car driven by Arab irregulars and British deserters exploded on Ben Yehuda Street , killing 58 Jewish civilians and injuring 140 . On 4 July 1975 , a refrigerator containing 5 kilograms (11 lb) of explosives detonated in Zion Square , killing 15 and wounding 77 . On 24 March 1979 , a bomb exploded in a trash can in Zion Square , killing one and wounding 13 .

During the suicide bomber era in the late 1990s , three suicide bombers stationed at different points on Ben Yehuda Street exploded themselves almost simultaneously , causing eight deaths and 277 injuries . A similar " relay " bombing attack took place on 1 December 2001 : Police and emergency medical personnel were rushing to the scene of a double suicide bombing attack in the Triangle when a car bomb exploded ; 20 died and 150 were wounded . Earlier , in August , a Sbarro

restaurant at the corner of Jaffa Road and King George Street , packed with lunchtime customers , was bombed ; 15 people died and 90 were wounded .

In February 2014 , in response to lobbying by terror victims groups , the Jerusalem municipality held a ceremony and mounted a memorial plaque at the site of the 1948 bombing on Ben Yehuda Street .

= = Landmarks = =

The tallest building in the Triangle is the seven @-@ story , 5 @,@ 000 square metres (54 @,@ 000 sq ft) Hamashbir Lazarchan department store , which opened on the eastern side of Zion Square in 2011 . It is the largest department store in Israel and the flagship store of the 38 @-@ store chain . Hamashbir is intimately associated with the Downtown Triangle , as the first Hamashbir store was established across the street from its current location in 1947 , and moved to another vertex of the Triangle , at King George and Ben Yehuda Streets , from 1970 to 2010 .

Freimann and Bein (50 Jaffa Road) was the first luxury shoe store in Israel . Founded by German @-@ Jewish immigrants , it imported quality leather shoes from Europe and attracted a clientele of British officers and Arab sheikhs . The store originally opened in the Generali Building further east on Jaffa Road in 1935 and moved to 50 Jaffa Road in 1947 . It closed in 2014 . Khalifa Shoes (44 Jaffa Road) , founded in 1954 , is a Jewish family @-@ owned business specializing in Israeli @-@ made shoes and sandals .

The longest @-@ lasting dining establishments in the Triangle were Atara Cafe and Fink 's Bar . Atara Cafe operated at 7 Ben Yehuda Street from 1938 to 1996 . The European @-@ style coffeehouse was a favorite of Mandate officers , pre @-@ state paramilitary groups , and Israeli politicians , journalists , and bohemians . Fink 's Bar , at the corner of King George and HaHistadrut Streets , was open from 1936 to 2006 . The intimate , exclusive restaurant was one of the most prestigious dining addresses in Jerusalem . Specializing in European cuisine , the restaurant / bar made its kitchen kosher in 2003 in order to overcome several years of declining business and broaden its customer base beyond " politicians , journalists and diplomats " .

The Downtown Triangle includes two hotels . Kikar Zion Hotel (Zion Square Hotel) , which faces Zion Square from the south , occupies the site of the former Zion Cinema that gave the square its name . The cinema was demolished in 1972 and a high @-@ rise building containing the Kikar Zion Hotel (on the upper floors) and a branch of Bank Hapoalim (on the lower floors) was erected . As of 2016 , the hotel is being renovated for reopening as the Herbert Samuel Hotel . On the northern side of Zion Square stands the Jerusalem Hostel . This lodging opened as the Tel Aviv Hotel in 1926 and later became known as the Ron Hotel . Menachem Begin stood on one of the hotel 's balconies on 3 August 1948 , to announce the dissolution of the Irgun and the sign @-@ up of his soldiers with the Israel Defense Forces .