

Community-led Urban Strategies in Historic Towns (COMUS)



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**Rehabilitation of Old Goris Cave town**

**Preliminary Technical Assessment**

# Contents

- 1. Introduction..... 3
- 2. Executive Summary: the site and its management ..... 5
- 3. Administrative information ..... 6
- 4. Summary of condition ..... 7
- 5. Existing information ..... 8
- 6. Scope of the PTA ..... 14
- 7. The PTA..... 15
- 8. Documentation ..... 20
- 9. Authors..... 27

# 1. Introduction



Picture 1. Old Goris (Kyores) village

**1.1** Country of territory - Armenia

**1.2** Name of organisation compiling the information-

**1.3** Contact name - Hovhannes Sanamyan

**1.4** E-mail - hovhannessan@yahoo.com

**1.5** Name and address of building or site – Old Goris settlement - village

**1.6** Inventory reference number(s) – For the monument (state index) – 8.3.2

**1.7** Building/Monument/Site type: monument of republican significance

**1.8** Important dates

In 1625, the settlement is referred in a manuscript as Gores

In 1750, Goris became a site of melik (principality).

In 1805, according to the Treaty of Kyurakchay signed in the results of the Russian Persian War, Zangezur transferred under the Russian domination. Goris became a military base of the Russian Empire.

In 1813, by the treaty of Gyulistan, this reality got a new ratification.

In 1822, instead of Gharabakh khanate, Gharabakh province was established. Zangezur got included into the province as a melik division.

In 1823, Goris had a population of 119 households.

In 1826, when Russian-Persian war started, 3 divisions of the 42th Jaeger regiment of the Russian army were installed in Goris.

In 1828, by the treaty of Turkmenchay, the reality of Zangezur (Goris) being a part of Russian Empire got a new validation.

On April 10, 1840, the Gharabakh province was turned into Shushi province within the Caspian region. All the melik governed principalities were included in the Province of Shushi as a separate piece of the province. Goris became the centre of that new piece of province.

In 1849, Zangezur piece of province with the centre of Goris got included into the state of Yerevan.

In 1867, by the decree of the Russian imperator, Yelizavetpol (Gandzak) province (centre: Yelizavetpol) was created. On 25 February, 1868, Zangezur province was formed within the state, and Goris was proclaimed as its centre.

**1.9** Current use(s):

Caves and 19th-century residential houses are abandoned. Local people have built houses, which are mainly not harmonious to the environment of the monument-preserve. The St. Hripsime church is operating, and a cemetery is also available.

## **2. Executive Summary: the site and its management**

Monuments preserved from Old Goris that are valuable in epistemological, historical and architectural terms, natural and artificial shelters are almost abandoned and not used in the best way. The "natural" interesting spatial-planning structure of the habitat is considered to be lost irretrievably. Its panorama harmonized with its unique nature stays concealed and is not perceived from close distances.

The area is inhabited. Over the years, two-story houses were built with their plots and walls, and there are an increasing number of unauthorized constructions. St Hripsime Church was in a half-destructed state for a long time. However, it was rehabilitated in 2012 and is currently operating. Also the territory adjacent to the church and several cave dwellings was cleaned. The cemetery also is operating, and the limited area of the Old Goris preserve is being filled with new graves.

### **3. Administrative information**

#### **3.1 Responsible Authorities**

RoA Ministry of Culture, local self-government bodies, Goris Municipality

#### **3.2 Building/Site, Name and Address** - Old Goris Historical-Cultural Preserve

#### **3.3 Map reference** - 39° 30' 28" N, 46° 20' 19" E, 39.507778, 46.338611

#### **3.4 Type of monument** – A monument-dwelling-village of republican significance, historical-cultural preserve

#### **3.5 Ownership** – There are privatised residential houses in the area.

#### **3.6 Statutory Protection/Constraints**

Use of the land of the territory of Historical-Cultural Preserve can be allowed in the manner prescribed by the Republic of Armenia Legislation. Excavation, renovation and restoration of monuments can be carried out in the monuments' protection zones. Also new building can be constructed in these areas by the authorized consent of the body of protection of historical and cultural monuments. However the projecting tasks and plans shall be agreed with the authorized body.

## **4. Summary of condition**

### **4.1 Summary of Physical Condition – very bad to good**

Very Bad

### **4.2 Condition Risk Assessment – graded A-H**

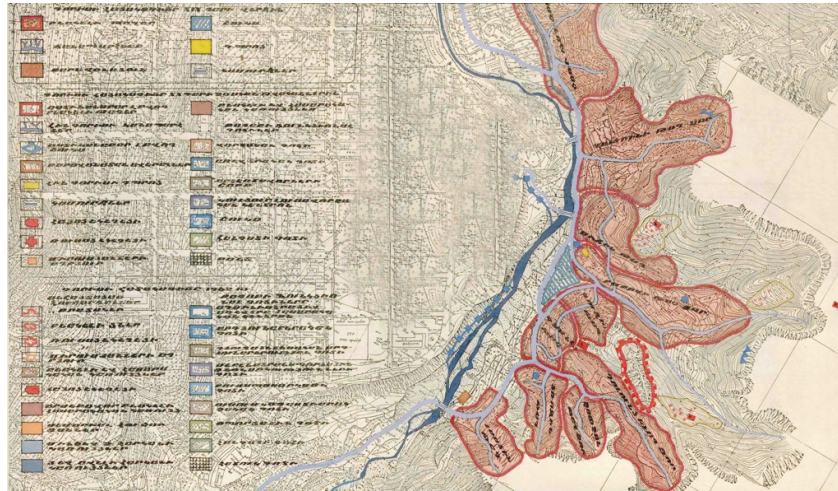
H

### **4.3 Priority for intervention – High/Medium/Low**

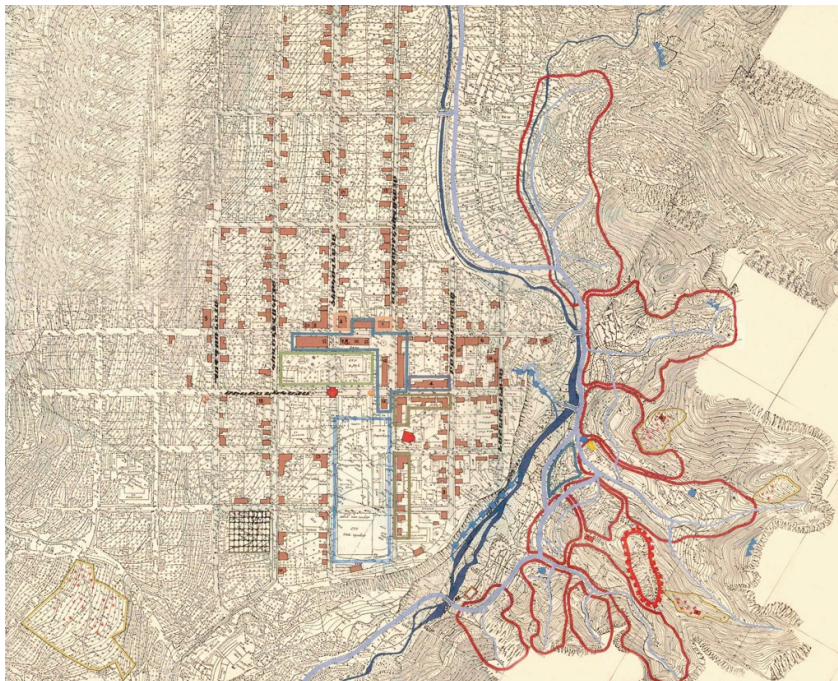
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## 5. Existing information

### 5.2 Documentary sources

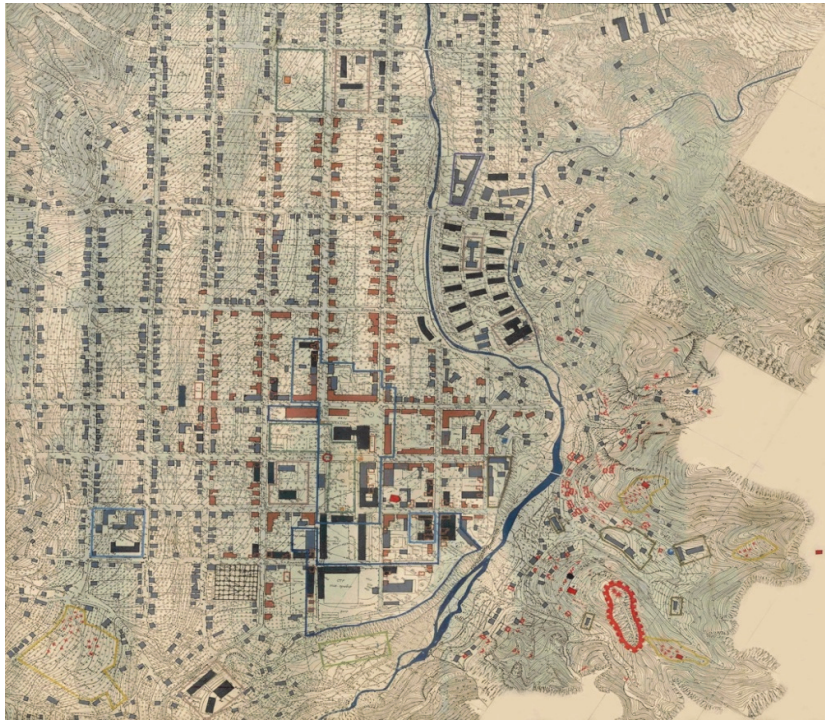


Picture 2. Scheme, according to archival documents and information provided by S. Khanzadyan



Picture 3. Goris Plan, 20th Century, 20s

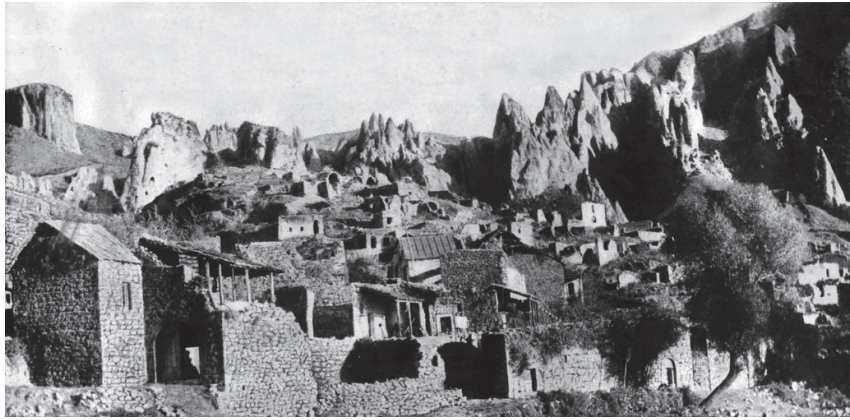




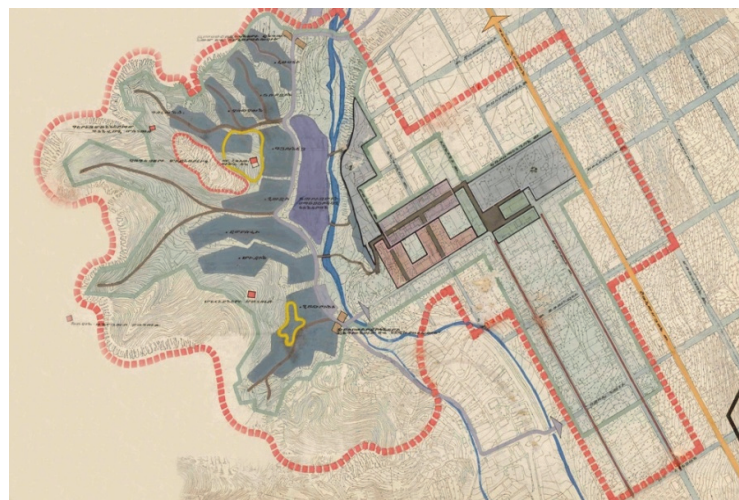
Picture 4. Goris Plan, 1980s



Picture 5. Goris Panorama, End of the 19th Century



Picture 6. A Piece of Old Goris, End of the 19th Century

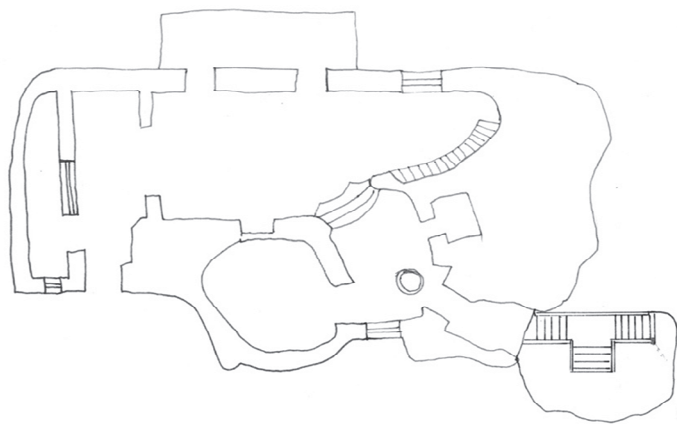


Picture 7. Goris City Historical-Cultural Preserve



Picture 8. Pottery of the 19th Century

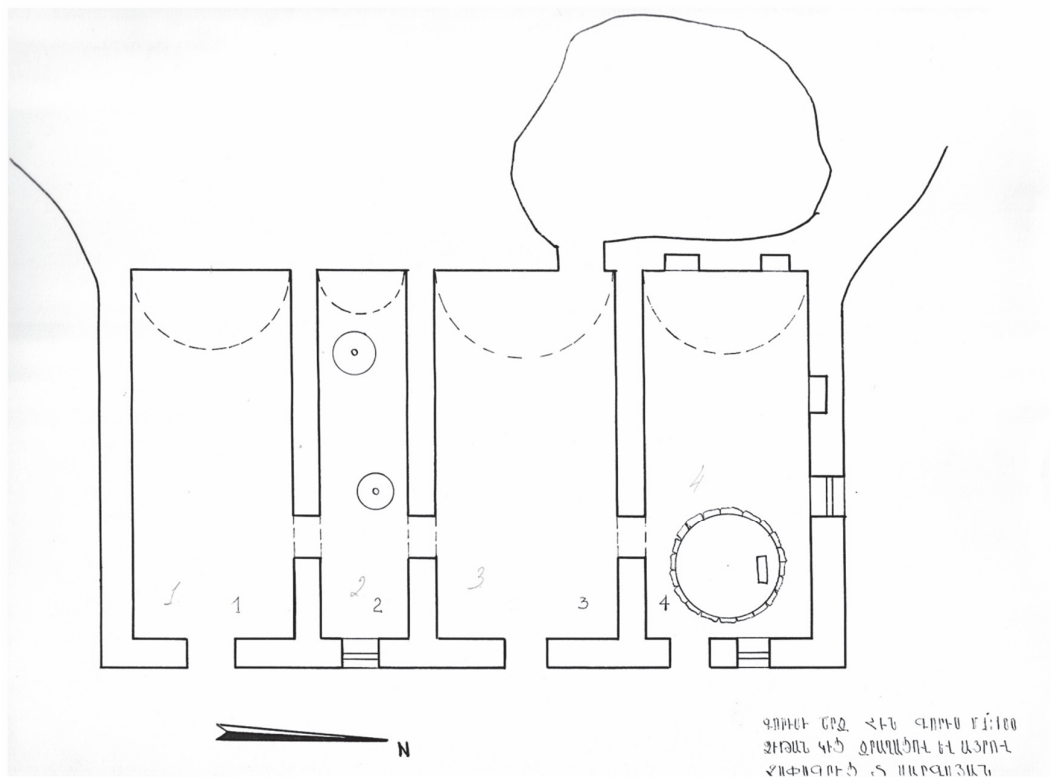
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Picture 9. Residential Cavern, Plan



Picture 10. Residential Cavern



Picture 11. Oil presser, adjacent wells and cavern, plan



Picture 12. Oil presser, adjacent wells and cavern

## 5.2 Bibliography

- Goris city historic-cultural foundation project, RoA Ministry of Culture, Historical and Cultural Heritage Research Centre, Yerevan 2011
- Hakhverdyan S., Summary History of Goris, Yerevan, 2005
- Orbelyan St., Syunik History, Yerevan, 1986
- Abraham Kretatsi, History, Yerevan, 1973
- Papukhyan N., Popular Architecture of Syunik, Yerevan, 1972
- Lisitsyan St., Armenians of Zangezur, Yerevan, 1969

## 5.3 Fieldwork already conducted

In 2010, archaeological excavations were carried out in the neighbourhood of St. Hripsime Church of the Old Goris village area.

In 2009-2013, St. Hripsime Church of the Old Goris village area was restored due to the sponsorship of "Land and Culture" and "Vienne Goris" organizations and the city of Vienne (see Picture 14, 15)

## 5.4 Projects in progress

"Land and Culture" organization is performing Melik Ohan Palace excavation works in Old Goris.

## 5.5 Projects already planned

"Land and Culture" organization plans to rehabilitate the Malik Ohan Palace in Old Goris, clean and improve the area adjacent to St. Hripsime Church.

## **6. Scope of the PTA**

### **6.1 Extent/Nature of the assessment**

Hovhannes Sanamyan– Architect, Associate Professor of Architecture

Nanar Kalantaryan – Architect

Around fifteen days were spent to complete the work.

### **6.2 Limitations of the study**

The study of documents was mainly not problematic. The only problem arose during the field studies, when in the study area a sector was fenced by a metal grid and the entrance was locked.

## **7. The PTA**

### **7.1 Background: Form, Function and Evolution**

#### **7.1.1 Summary description of the building/site, with comments on its urban or rural context if appropriate.**

Goris city is established in Zangezur, 250 km south-east from Yerevan. It is situated in the province of Haband of the Syunik state of the historical Armenia, on the left bank of Vararak River, in the valley of Dzagedzor. It covers 60 hectares and is enclosed by the following boundaries:

By Shorin gorge from the north, Lachin crag from the east, northern slop of Lasti hill from the south and the western flor of the gorge of Vararak River from the west.

Old Goris's originality is particularly due to the surrounding nature - with conical steep cliffs. It was fully inhibited since ancient times, until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The dimensional spatial structure of the whole area replicated the forms of the natural terrain (see Picture 1, 4, 5).

#### **7.1.2 Summary historic development and evolution of the building or site, from the earliest times until the present day.**

Until the 18th century, in Goris caves were serving as residential houses, which were called 'krataks', were dug in the cliffs of the mountains, on the hills with big slopes, in the conical rocks. Krataks were mainly composed of one big room, though sometimes they also had adjacent cavern (hollow) rooms.

In Dzagedzor, there were also built-in special caves which had purely a defensive role, where one can climb through the ropes only.

In Goris, there were also sporadic cave-dwellings, consisting of several adjacent floors and with internal corridors, the upper rooms of which used to have wooden balconies hanging over the cliffs. Through time the caves were completed and made more comfortable. Vaulted halls with arched openings were built in front of those, which had a lot of facilities – fireplace, tonir (oven), cupboards, etc.

Since 19th century, they started to build ordinary stone houses in Old Goris, and the krataks were serving as an economic part.

The hills situated above the Gyune and Central districts were marked up with the small volumes of the St. Hripsime Church and the Meliks' Chapel. It is believed that St. Hripsime Church was built in the 4th century, in the place of a pagan temple; the church was rebuilt in the 16th century.

During the Soviet years, the Church was turned into a club. In 2009-2013 the church was restored and operates today.

Meliks chapel (17th century) is located in the northern part of the cemetery situated in the eastern part of the Middle district of Old Goris. It is a vaulted, stone basilica structure, built in fractured basalt. The chapel served as a mausoleum for Meliks in Old Goris.

In Goris, there were a large number of mills and were mainly divided into two categories: The first group was located on the right bank of Vararak, in front of the Old Goris Zopchun and Lasti districts. The second group was composed of four wells and built on the edge of the road stretching from the Mirakents Bridge to the Komitas Street. Groundwater was used there. Currently one of these mills is preserved, which is a rectangular of 4x5 meters with a double-bent raft covered structure.

Out of the three oil pressers – Mirum's, Mirak's and the one below of Troz district- only Mirum's oil pressor was maintained.

There also were operating potteries in Old Goris, and today only Ghatrin gorge pottery has been maintained.

### **7.2 Significance**

#### **7.2.1 Summary statement of significance/historical and heritage importance.**

During the long-lasting history of the Goris settlement, valuable artefacts have been created, which add a value to Goris along with the unique nature in Zangezur. The availability of natural and historical monuments, out of which the natural and artificial caves and residential houses and the city's unique architecture provide an appropriate basis for the development of cultural functions in the city, which in turn will contribute to the development of local and foreign tourism.

The presence of oil pressers and pottery workshops and their re-use will allow not only developing the crafts, but also promoting the tourism development.

### **7.2.2 Checklist of categories which may be considered in the evaluation.**

This is a Historical-Cultural Preserve of republican significance, which presents itself both as a natural and architectural monument. The state inventory list of the RoA historical and cultural intangible monuments includes the St. Hripsime Church, Meliks' Chapel, 52 resided caves, cave theatre, caravansary, residential stone hill complex, castle Dzagedzor, oil pressure, a bridge over the Vararak river, 9 residential houses, a cemetery, tombstones and cross stones.

### **7.3 Vulnerability/Risk assessment**

Today, out of the old settlement, the St. Hripsime Church (restored in 2012), Meliks' Chapel, valuable carved tombstones, an oil presser, a mill and many "Kratok" apartments and ruins of residential houses have remained. Monuments preserved from Old Goris that are of epistemological, historical and architectural value and the natural and artificial shelters are almost non-operational and are not used in the best way. In addition, its interesting spatial-planning structure of the habitat is considered to be lost irretrievably. Its panorama harmonized with its unique nature stays concealed and is not perceived from close distances.

Residential houses were built in this territory which continues to extend. It is necessary to forbid the private construction in this territory and remove the houses which are not harmonious with the environment.

Today the old cemetery burials are still continued in Goris. It is necessary to ban the burials and remove the newly installed fences.

### **7.4 Technical condition**

The Old Goris preserve is abandoned and is gradually being destructed and falling apart. The caves, as opposed to the residential houses of the 19<sup>th</sup> century are in better conditions. The houses are falling apart both due to natural climate conditions and the careless attitude of the local people.

### **7.5 Outline summary of required repairs**

One of the important tasks is the restoration and repair of the roads in their old form – local stone slabs. It is necessary to carry out excavation and cleaning works in the cave preserve of the Old Goris, restore and re-use the residential houses, restore the bridge on Vararak River and built new ones, recreating the connection between Old Goris preserve and the city of Goris.

### **7.6 Conservation/rehabilitation policy and proposals**

#### **7.6.1 Broad summary of the vision for the site, and its sustainability, at this preliminary stage.**

The historical and architectural monuments and natural caves and krataks situated on the territory of Old Goris complete the urban environment by their interesting and unique forms and give it a new artistic quality. Currently, in order to make the role of Old Goris more active, it is necessary to ensure and improve the way it is conceived from the sections that are not constructed and stretch on the left and right banks of the Vararak river, particularly from the platform "Kalin Bash" on the right bank that has an especially high position, as well as from Japaridze, Grigor of Tatev, Komitas and A. Gusan streets. Ensuring the perception from the above-mentioned streets is important in order to reinforce the mutual compositional connection between the Old and New Gorises. It is appropriate not to make constructions in the parts on the right bank of the Vararak River and use them as viewing platforms.

#### **7.6.2 Conservation philosophy**

The area is located within a protection zone, and all the interventions shall be made with a view of protecting the already formed artificial landscape, historical and cultural complex and its historical



environment. The religious buildings, that are well preserved, shall be rehabilitated. The residential houses shall be restored in line with the current requirements and give them a new function.

It is also necessary to highlight the role of culture and crafts in Old Goris. The cave theatre of Old Goris is preserved, and by restoring it will be possible to organize events and performances there (see Picture 19, 20).

### **7.6.3 Conservation philosophy**

It is not reasonable or is even impossible to restore the territory of Old Goris the way it was in order to be utilized according the requirements of modern life, and inhibit it with people who have modern requirements from today's life.

It is recommended to, based in the spatial planning structure of the Old Goris, to some extend by a wish to restore it, creating a tourism centre servicing the Zangezur region with various directions (ethnical tourism, ecotourism, agro tourism, etc.).

In the former districts of the historical settlement, tourism districts with the same names – Lasti, Trozin, Zopchun, Dolunts, Gyunei, Ghuzi, Ymbovi, Mijin, Ghatrin and Shorin – which will be connected with each other and the public centre of the complex through the formerly existing roads. The old trade road shall be used as the main road of the tourism complex, out of which the roads leading to the tourism districts are extending, and through which the whole complex is connected to the city.

### **7.6.4 Preliminary proposals for appropriate uses, as applicable.**

The priority is to repair the road taking to Old Goris and restore the engineering communications, protecting the historical environment.

It is necessary to place an information map-panel at the beginning of the settlement, where all the public facilities, monuments, tourism sites and roads will be marked for the visitors.

On the edge of the village, in the place of the former caravansary, a centre to greet and guide (accept and distribute) the tourists can be placed.

In the tourism districts it is proposed to organize three types of stations:

A. kratak stations (ethnic tourism) – tourists who want to learn about the interesting life style in Old Goris can use these stations. Krataks are restored, furnished with former pottery and staff and provided to tourists. The supplementary facilities – bathroom, toilet, and kitchen – that will be common for the use of several stations can be organized outside of the krataks, in the restored popular houses "Gharadams".

B. popular house stations (ethnic tourism, ecotourism) – these stations are organized in the popular houses building in Old Goris in 18-19th centuries – in Gharadams". The Old Goris popular houses are reconstructed, complemented with supplementary facilities and provided to tourists.

c. Modern comfortable stations – these can be organized in the area of Old Goris, through rehabilitation and reconstruction of the urban type residential houses of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and partly also in new modern structures, which shall be built based on the healthy architectural traditions of the Old Goris – construction principles, scales, stylistic features, etc. Each of those stations shall be equipped by modern and high-level service with all the facilities.

It is desirable to restore and maintain a group of krataks and gharadams in the tourism complex to serve as ethnographic museums. A part of them can be provided to the popular craftsmen.

In Old Goris spaces can be provided to put tents and organize different international and local events ("Falcon", scout camps, etc.) and for individual tourists who travel with tents.

### **7.6.5 Opportunities for social uses and sustainable development**

Restoration of Old Goris Preserve will serve to the development of tourism, vitalization of the urban life; will create new jobs for the local population. More importantly, an environment will be created where the monuments will be preserved and used.

### **7.6.6 Broad assessment of priorities for consolidation/covering, repair, restoration, rehabilitation, conservation,**

Repair of the street taking to Old Goris.

Recovery of communications.  
Creation of tourist routes.  
Establishment of cultural centres.  
Establishment of hotels and guest houses.

#### **7.6.7 Public access**

Restoration and re-utilization of the Old Goris district can be of both community and cultural benefit. Private investors can also benefit from this project.

#### **7.6.8 Other benefits**

-

### **7.7 Finance**

#### **7.7.1 Broad assessment of budgetary needs and phasing**

Restoration of the road – m<sup>2</sup> - 40000 AMD (75 EUR)

The total road to be repaired would be 3000 m: Slabbing would cost 720.000.000 AMD (1.350.000 EUR)

The project cost will be 72.000.000 AMD (135.000 EUR)

Restoration of caves – m<sup>2</sup> - 400000 AMD (755 EUR) about 75 caves are registered. Area of a medium cave is 25 u<sup>2</sup>. Cost of restoring one cave will be 10.000.000 AMD (10.019.000 EUR)

Cost of restoring 75 caves will be 750.000.000 AMD (751.425.000 EUR)

The project cost will be 75.000.000 AMD (75.142.500 EUR)

Restoration of half-destroyed buildings – m<sup>2</sup> – 1.000.000 AMD (1887 EUR)

About 50 half-destroyed residential houses are preserved with a medium area of 200 m<sup>2</sup>

Cost of restoring one house will be 200.000.000 AMD (377.400 EUR)

Cost of restoring 50 residential houses will be 10.000.000.000 AMD (18.870.000 EUR)

The project cost will be 1.000.000.000 AMD (1.887.000 EUR)

It is also recommended to ensure the following work phases:

- Restoration of communication
- Construction of the road
- Restoration of cave dwellings
- Restoration of Old Goris residential houses

It is possible to restore 5-10 caves and residential houses in each phase.

#### **7.7.2 Assessment of (real) possibilities for attracting investments**

Some restoration works can be carried out by state resources, especially communication. It is also possible to apply to organisations working in the sphere of cultural heritage. It is also necessary to involve other organisations and private individuals to make investments in the project. The "Land and Culture" organisation is already performing monument restoration and preservation works in Goris. It is possible that in the future more of similar works are initiated. Vienne is the sister city of Goris and is continuing communication for about 20 years. It is also possible to involve Vienne Municipality in the sphere of cultural heritage protection.

#### **7.7.3 Assessment of (real) possibilities for recovering investments**

The World Bank, IDEA foundation

#### **7.7.4 Have you already tried to raise funds for this site or monument? If so, provide details**

The World Bank, Land and Culture, Vienne Municipality

#### **7.7.5 Have you already received funds for this site or monument? If so, provide details.**

-

## **7.8 Management**

The rehabilitation and re-utilization of Old Goris is a long term project.

It should be implemented in phases. In case of a joint project and programme, through some time, it can become the centre of tourism and culture of the city of Goris.

## 8. Documentation



Picture 13. Old Goris Panorama



Picture 14. Old Goris Panorama, Cemetery



Picture 15. St. Hripsime Church



Picture 16. St. Hripsime Church



Picture 17. Meliks' Chapel



Picture 18. Old Goris Residential Houses



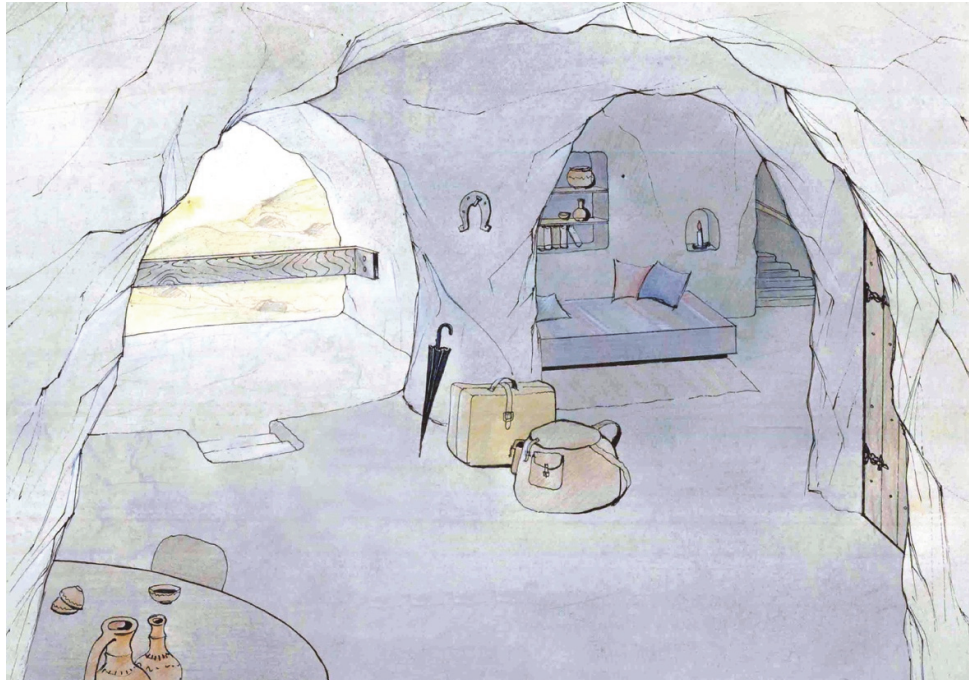
Picture 19. Old Goris, caves



Picture 20. Old Goris, Cave Theatre

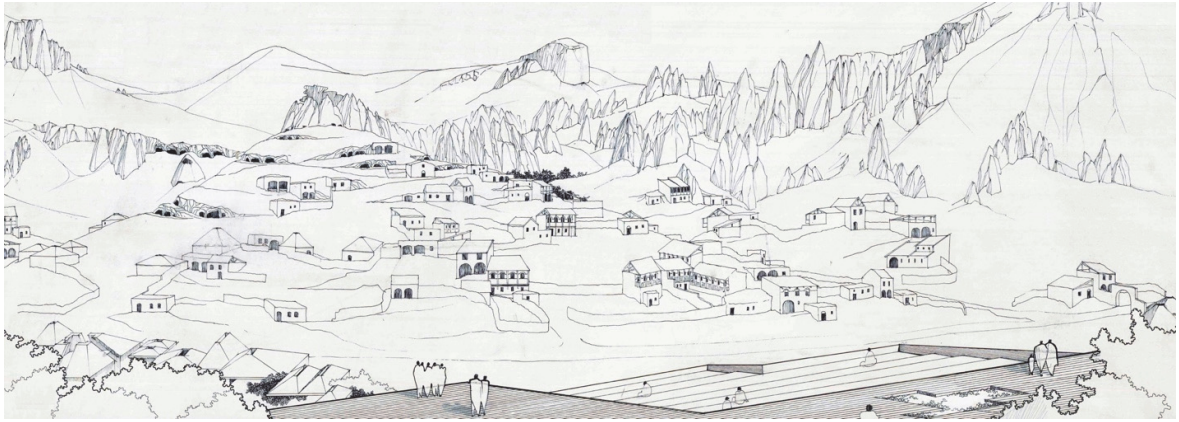


Picture 20. Old Goris, Cave Theatre



Picture 21. Old Goris Cave Rehabilitation Concept Proposal, 1982  
Authors: A. Grigoryan, H. Sanamyan, A. Gyulamiryan





Picture 22. Old Goris Rehabilitation Concept Proposal, 1982,  
Authors: A. Grigoryan, H. Sanamyan, A. Gyulamiryan



Picture 23. An Example of reuse of a cave city, Louresse-Rochemenier, France  
<http://io9.gizmodo.com/remarkable-cave-houses-including-the-homes-that-inspir-502255017>



Picture 24. An Example of reuse of a cave city, Turkey, Cappadocia  
<http://io9.gizmodo.com/remarkable-cave-houses-including-the-homes-that-inspir-502255017>



Picture 25. An Example of reuse of a cave city, Turkey, Cappadocia  
<http://io9.gizmodo.com/remarkable-cave-houses-including-the-homes-that-inspir-502255017>



Picture 26. An example of rehabilitation of a cave city, Louresse-Rochemenier, France, <http://io9.gizmodo.com/remarkable-cave-houses-including-the-homes-that-inspir-502255017>

## 9. Authors

PTA was performed by: Hovhannes Sanamyan, Nanar Kalantaryan