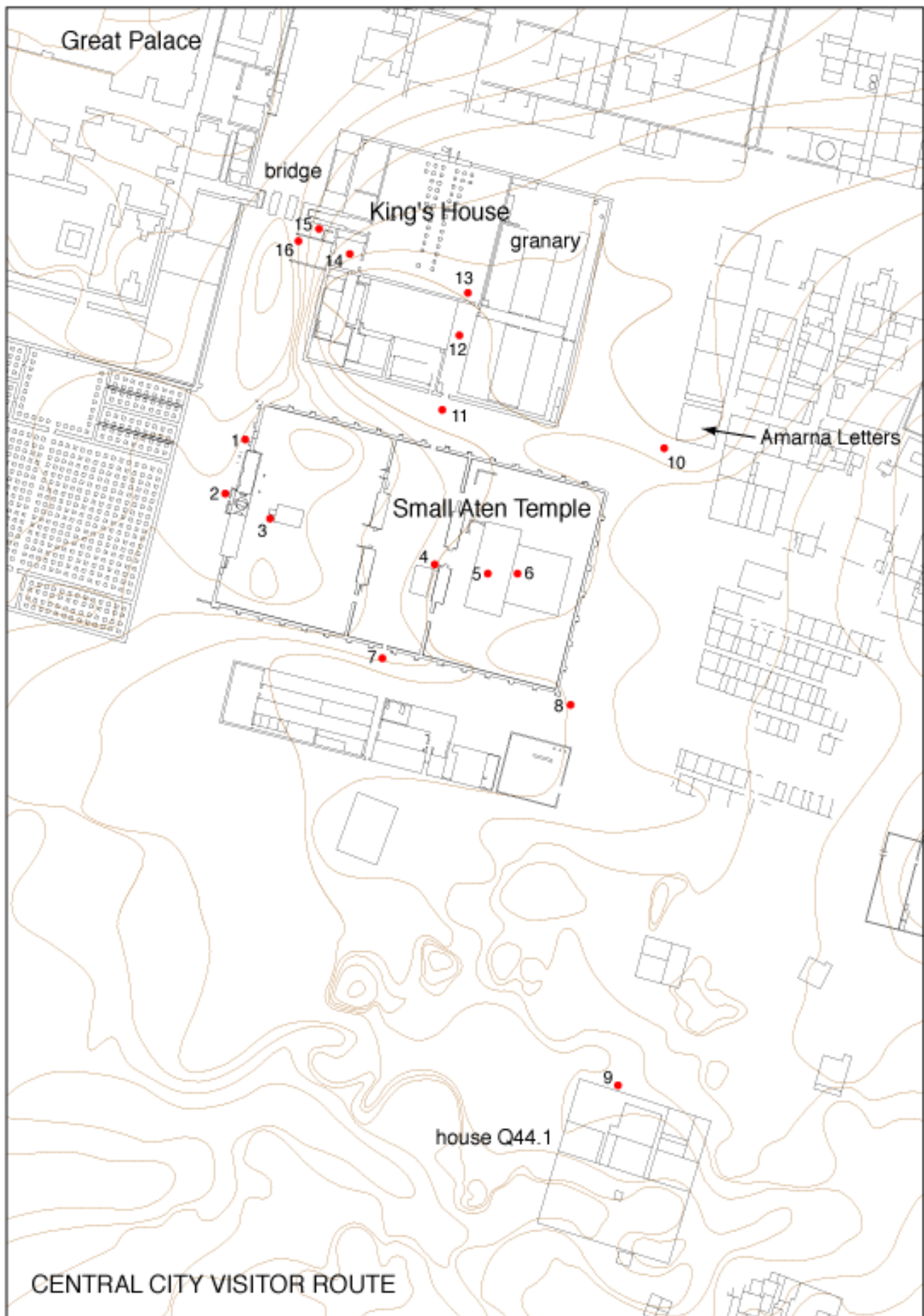


# **Visitor route around the Central City at Amarna**



## Marker 1



At marker 1

At the front of the Small Aten Temple, in front of the northern brick tower of the outer pylon and within the barbed-wire fence which protects the front of the temple from passing traffic. The modern road follows the line of Amarna's principal thoroughfare, Royal Road (so-called in modern times).

The enclosure around the Small Aten Temple was built from sun-dried mud bricks. The main entrance was in the centre of the west side, between two pylons, each measuring 14 x 8 metres. Akhenaten kept the tradition of erecting vertical wooden poles against the front faces of the pylons, each one set within a vertical slot in the brickwork. Pictures in the tombs show that cloth streamers were tied to the tops of the poles. Each pylon had two poles, represented by two deep vertical grooves in the brickwork, visible as you walk past the pylon on the left.

Walk towards the gap between the two pylons.

## Marker 2



At marker 2

In front of the main entrance to the temple. The arrow points along the main axis of the temple.

The temple had three large courtyards arranged one behind the other. The gateways between the pylons were unusually wide, and had originally been floored with limestone blocks. These had been removed shortly after the end of the Amarna Period. We know this from the remains of gypsum foundation layers which have survived in these positions, and which still bear the imprints of the lowest layer of blocks. The gypsum layer in this outer gateway was particularly well preserved. A central raised portion showed that it had supported a central feature at a higher level, perhaps a pedestal for a pavilion reached by steps. The present limestone blocks are a modern restoration.

Walk across the limestone floor towards the foundations of the mud-brick altar.

### Marker 3



At marker 3

Beside the outline of a large platform or altar of mud bricks.

The brickwork, a layer of new mud bricks laid over an ancient foundation layer, marks the outline of a large altar belonging to the first phase of the temple, which had been built on a smaller scale than the temple enclosure which you now see standing. Both the earlier temple and the altar were subsequently demolished, leaving only the bottom of foundations. The altar seems to have had a set of steps or a ramp leading up to it on the west side. Pictures in the tombs show altars of this kind heaped with offerings, with figures of Akhenaten and his family praying to the Aten.

Beyond and to the east lies the second pair of pylons flanking a broad gateway also originally paved with stone. The present limestone blocks are a modern restoration. They bring out the way that the ground level of the temple rises from front to back. This required that ramps were constructed in front of each of the gateways.

Walk around the altar and towards and across the limestone pavement between the towers of the second pylon and continue towards the limestone pavement between the towers of the third pylon.



Between marker 3 and 4

## Marker 4



At marker 4

In front of the third pair of pylons lies a small brick building, called in modern times the 'Priest's House'. The arrow points towards it.

When first excavated the building was already very ruined although the plan was almost complete. Much of the visible brickwork, including the brick floors, are modern. The purpose of the building is not properly understood. The main room contained a small brick dais on its north side, with a central projection for a narrow staircase.

Walk across the limestone pavement between the towers of the third pylon and towards the columns.

## Marker 5



Between markers 4 & 5

In front of the Sanctuary of the Small Aten Temple.

In the centre of the third court there originally stood a monumental stone building, the Sanctuary. This would have been decorated with scenes in the Amarna style, carved and brightly painted. After the end of the Amarna Period most of the stonework was removed. What remained behind was a large spread of gypsum foundation mortar bearing the impressions of the lowest course of stone blocks. From this it is possible to reconstruct the outline of the Sanctuary, and this has been done using new limestone blocks. Some large pieces of the original sandstone columns and other architectural elements were left behind and these are displayed. On the basis of the pieces of column a complete example has been erected using modern materials, to give an idea of the original height of the building.

Behind the columns lay a stone pylon and then courtyards filled with stone offering-tables.

Walk between the columns to marker no. 6.



## Marker 6



At marker 6

On the axis of the temple, slightly beyond the foundations of the fourth pylon which, unlike the others, had been built of limestone blocks. The doorway between the pylons had probably contained a doorframe made of large sandstone blocks. Part of one of these has been set on top of modern limestone blocks on the south side of the doorway. It bears the top of a cartouche of the Aten carved on a gigantic scale. On the opposite (northern) side of the doorway is a sandstone block from the lintel or from a cornice connected with the columns. It originally bore the cartouche of Nefertiti but this has been chiseled out in readiness for the carving of a replacement name. The recarving was never done.

From marker no. 6 turn back and walk diagonally from the Sanctuary to a side doorway in the southern enclosure wall. Pass through the doorway and so leave the temple enclosure.

## Marker 7



At marker 7

Just outside the doorway in the south enclosure wall. Turn left and follow the arrow, walking along the outside of the Small Aten Temple enclosure wall, to marker number 8. As you walk beside the wall note the thick buttresses at regular intervals.

## Marker 8



At marker 8

A reference marker which offers two directions, towards markers nos. 9 and 10. First follow the arrow to no. 9, a longer walk towards the conspicuous modern viewing platform which has a triangular profile.

## Marker 9



At marker 9

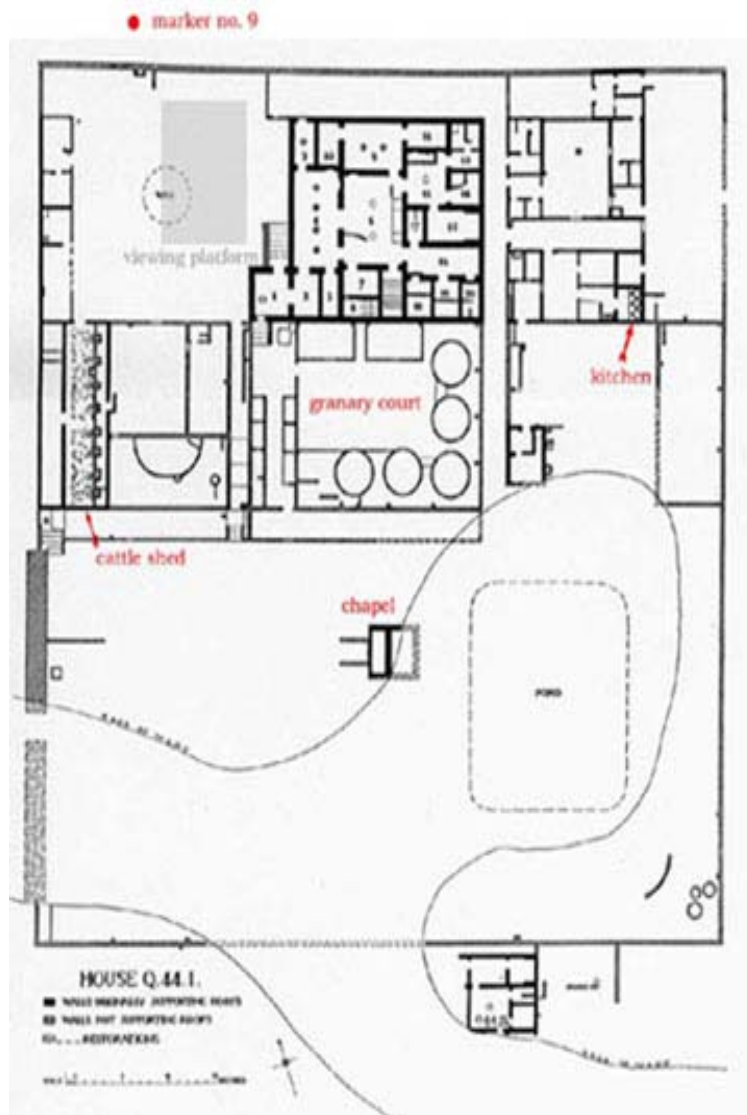
In front of the staircase leading to the top of the modern viewing platform in front of a large private house which has the registration number Q44.1. The name of the owner is not known. Climb the staircase to the top of the viewing platform.



House Q44.1 after clearance with the long antechamber with reconstructed column bases in the foreground

To judge from its size, the house must have belonged to a senior official. It illustrates the typical urban villa of the wealthier inhabitants of Amarna. Close to the foot of the viewing platform, towards the right-hand (southern) end is the wide ramp leading up to the front door of the house and its porch. This in turn leads to a long ante-chamber with four column bases. These are modern replacements of the original column bases found in place in 1924 when the house was excavated. A door in the centre of the ante-chamber opens into the central reception room, at the back of which is a low bench flanked with broad arm-rests. It is likely that the bench supported chairs where the owner and his wife sat to receive guests. Various doors lead out from the central room. That on the right and towards the

rear leads to a brick staircase which probably gave access to one or two upper floors.



Plan of house Q44.1

Outside the house the barbed-wire fence follows the line of the wall which enclosed the grounds of the house. This contained kitchens, a well (now covered by a spoil heap in the south-east corner of the enclosure), a nearby chapel, and facilities for storing agricultural produce. Immediately south of the house is a group of circular foundations for storage bins for barley and emmer-wheat. To the south-west of the viewing platform a long narrow space paved with stone cobbles belongs to a building where cattle were kept. The cattle had been fed from low brick mangers which were found well preserved in 1924.



View through house Q44.1 with the granary court in the background



House Q44.1 at the end of the 1923 excavation, viewed to the north. The east wall of the house is on the left. In front are the walls of kitchens and perhaps servants' houses. EES neg. 23/20.



House Q44.1 at the end of the 1923 excavation, viewed towards the north-west. The south wall of the house is in the background. In front are the lowest courses of brickwork belonging to the circular grain silos. EES neg. 23/21.





House Q44.1 at the end of the 1923 excavation, viewed towards the north-east. The south-west corner of the house, with the entrance lobby, is in the background. In front are low walls belonging to courts adjacent to the cattle shed and which might also have served for the keeping of animals. EES neg. 23/23.



House Q44.1, a closer view to the east into the interior of the house. Against the rear wall of the central room is a well preserved low brick bench provided (unusually) with thick end walls. EES neg. 23/25.



House Q44.1 at the end of the 1923 excavation. The view, towards the south-west, is of the cattle shed. The rough stone floor and brick mangers were well preserved. EES neg. 23/31.



House Q44.1, a view to the east into the interior of the house. Against the rear wall of the central room is a well preserved low brick bench provided (unusually) with thick end walls. EES neg. 23/24.



General view towards the north-east of the excavation of Q44.1 in progress. Only the walls of the house have been exposed. The courtyard containing the granaries lies in front, not yet excavated. The walls of the house were thicker and had therefore been preserved to a greater height. EES neg. 23/17.

In the middle distance to the east, the closer and larger of the ruined houses belonged to the High Priest Panehsy, the owner also of rock tomb no. 6 of the North Tombs.

To the south of Q44.1 stretches the main residential area of Amarna, all the way to the distant line of trees and modern tombs.

Return to marker no. 8 and then follow the arrow to marker no. 10.



## Marker 10



At marker 10

The marker has two arrows. The unnumbered arrow points to the building where the Amarna Letters were found. It lies in a slight depression on the far side of the nearest spoil heap.

The walls of this modest and now very ruined building included bricks stamped with the words 'Bureau of Correspondence of Pharaoh'. It was here, in a pit in the floor, that local villagers discovered a deposit of clay tablets around the year 1888.



Aerial photograph of the 'Bureau of Correspondence of Pharaoh', the poorly preserved building in the very centre of the image surrounded by undulating spoil heaps along its western, southern and eastern faces (north corresponds, approximately, to the top of the image)

The tablets were inscribed with the cuneiform script, used to write the Akkadian language of ancient Iraq. When translated the tablets were found to be diplomatic letters from the reigns of Amenhetep III and Akhenaten. Mostly they had been sent to Egypt from the courts of the kingdoms of Mitanni, Babylonia, Assyria and Cyprus, and from Egypt's vassal states in Palestine and Syria. Most of the letters are now divided amongst the Egyptian Museum (Cairo), the Berlin Museum and the British Museum (London). The letters provide a unique view of the realities of Egypt's empire at this time.



Example of a cuneiform tablet

Return to marker no. 10 and follow the arrow to marker no. 11. The route takes you along the wide street which separates the north side of the Small Aten Temple from the south side of the King's House. Much of the surface of the street is covered with modern excavator's spoil heaps.

## Marker 11



At marker 11

The marker points northwards. Turn right to follow the arrow and climb to the top of the long embankment of spoil from the 1931 excavations of John Pendlebury which runs northwards through the middle of the enclosure of the King's House.

## Marker 12



At marker 12

The marker is on top of the embankment, half way along.

Turn and look to the left (west). Below lie the walls of the King's House which seems to be a small and private palace for Akhenaten. The rooms immediately across from the marker seem to be personal rooms for members of the royal family. In 1892, on the wall of one of them, the archaeologist W. Flinders Petrie found part of a wall painting which showed Akhenaten and Nefertiti relaxing, with their daughters seated at their feet. Petrie removed a part which showed two of the daughters. This is now in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. The arrow marks the original place of the painting, which was on the far side of the wall.



The remains of the King's House showing the location of the wall painting of the royal family discovered by Flinders Petrie

Turn and look to the east. The ground is subdivided by two sets of parallel brick walls on either side of a courtyard. These belong to storerooms which were probably used mainly for grain (wheat and barley). This was a large private store of agricultural wealth at the disposal of the king.



Parallel lines of mud-brick walls: the royal storerooms

From marker no. 12 continue northwards along the embankment and descend to marker no. 13.



At marker 12 with marker 13 in the top right of the image



At marker 13

A reference marker. Turn left (west) and follow the direction of the arrow towards the distant electricity pylon. The route passes along the north side of the King's House.

## Marker 14



At marker 14

A reference marker. Follow the direction of the arrow towards the mass of brickwork close to the modern electricity pylon.

## Marker 15



At marker 15

Beside the thick side wall of a ramp which led up to a massive bridge which crossed the line of Royal Road and so joined the King's House to the Great Palace on the far side. The ramp consists of two parallel walls which retained a fill of sand and gravel. This was removed during the 1931 excavation. The ramp is 9 metres wide. As you walk beside the wall notice the deep horizontal grooves in the face of the brickwork. These mark the places where beams of wood were laid in the brickwork in order to bind it together and reduce the likelihood of cracking.



## Marker 16



At marker 16

Marker no. 16 is the last of the series and points back towards start of the route. Before leaving turn and examine the end face of the ramp and the brick pier beside the road which supported the bridge. Notice how the wooden beams have become even more closely set, appearing in every alternate course of bricks. They had to help the brickwork bear the weight of the bridge, which must have been supported on heavy massive timbers.

Across the road lies the remains of the huge Great Palace. There is little currently visible of this building. Much of it had been built from stone, but this was all removed after the end of the Amarna Period. Because the palace lies close to the road and to the modern fields the parts of mud brick have been severely eroded.

A short distance to the north of the bridge, on the left (west) side of the road, some brick walls are visible, surrounding a tall spoil heap. They are the remains of a small museum built by W. Flinders Petrie in 1892 to cover two large areas of painted floor. Subsequently the floors were damaged. The surviving pieces are now displayed in the main hall of the ground floor of the Egyptian Museum, Cairo.