

# Urban Design in Transferring Cultural Heritage to the Future

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*Abstract:* - The aim of this paper is to present a case study in traditional urban texture of Bartın. The plans targeting at the maintenance of historical urban texture has not been successfully put into practice yet. Therefore, the historical urban texture could not be protected. Thus, there is an urgent need to utilize relevant design tools and design guides to protect, restore, re-functioning and to improve historical city structure of Bartın. In this case study, urban design approach aiming to create harmony between old and new buildings in the built environment has been presented. At first, physical conditions at historical urban texture has been researched. The problems have been determined and the solutions have been suggested in accordance with the potentialities. By means of suggested urban design applications, sustainable protection and sustainability of cultural heritage can be achieved and a bridge between the past and the future can be built.

*Key-Words:* - Cultural heritage, cultural identity, historical traces, urban design strategies

## 1 Introduction

As a result of the urban development, city centers are being transformed continuously. The humanitarian urban textures, neighborhoods and historical surroundings created by the pre-industrial society in the process of adaptation to nature are disappearing gradually. Along with this process, the human dimension in cities is neglected, historical traces created by the cultural identity are fading away and the bonds between the people and the changing faces of the cities are diminishing.

In the process of reconciling the human and the city, it is imperative to create modern cities that preserve their cultural identities and to transmit the cultural heritage to the future generations. Therefore, it has to be kept in mind that the richness of the historical structure heritage cannot be sacrificed to modern constructions [1].

## 2 The Role of Urban Design in the Process of Transferring Cultural Heritage to the Future

Historical settings are part of the cultural heritage that reflects the socio-economic and cultural structures, life-styles, architectural and aesthetic characteristics of past civilizations. Those settings should be protected in order to sustain the unique and universal cultures. Historical urban textures, urban spaces that take into consideration the human dimension, attract anyone with their rich

composition, narrow-curved streets and delicate labor-work. They are not only fascinating examples but also informative and instructive ones.

Therefore, the basic target of planning the historical settings is to promote the cultural heritage by protecting and developing them. Protection planning can be applied on a variety of scales, on a country in general, a single building or even city furniture in particular. The planning, applied on a country, a region, a neighborhood, a city, a street, a square and building groups is not only related to the city planning, but also the urban design.

Although professional architects concerned themselves with specific buildings and monuments, their work usually did not include communal design [2]. Both urban planning and urban design create a scenario related to communal life. Physical structure of the city, as a fundamental element of urban life, is of great importance. Planning and design frameworks should be used to control development in order to ensure that at any stage of their development cities are people friendly and have a positive environmental impact [3]. Forming city structure, urban design has a critical role it can play in achieving a sustainable city.

A successful urban design assists to improve the urban quality and to create a space that is suitable for human habitation. This can only happen by focusing on the formation of cities at both macro and micro levels, ranging from the shape, quality, and location of the city furniture to the dimension of space, the relationship between the elements involved in the space and their relationship with their vicinity [4].

In accordance with the principle of protection/maintenance/development, urban design activities are indispensable in achieving structural and spatial integration to improve the quality and attractiveness of cities. Urban design is the sole means to guarantee the reconstruction of historical settings by integrating them with the contemporary surroundings; therefore, it enables the sustainability of historical development.

The process of urban design requires an integrative approach same as the process of urban planning. In order to preserve the historical texture, every aspect and element of the city, from city to street dimension and from the building to street furniture, should be interrelated with its environment and the city as a whole.

With urban design applications, preservation, sanitation and re-functioning of the assets that have the qualifications of being a cultural heritage will be possible. Therefore, they will be transmitted to future generations [5]. In this process, urban design approach has to reach a synthesis that is appropriate to national conditions, local characteristics, diversity, possibilities and potentials.

### 3 Method

The methodology of the case study has been created at four stages.

The analysis of physical situation in the historical urban texture of Bartin has been done at the first stage. The problems have been determined at the second stage. Then the potentialities of the historical urban texture have been considered aiming it could be transmitted to the future. In accordance with the physical conditions, the problems and potentialities of the built environment in the historical urban texture, the solutions have been suggested and the urban design strategies have been improved at the last stage.

## 4 Physical Conditions

In this section, it has been mentioned that historical development and urban morphology of Bartin.

### 4.1 Historical development of Bartin settlement

Bartın, a settlement located in the North-west Black Sea region of Turkey with a population of 36.000, takes its name from the Bartın River. The river was named from “Pharthenius” that means “the God of Water” and “Young Virgin” in the years BC. Bartın,

which is encircled by greens, has a 59 km coastal line along the Black Sea.

Stretching 12 km from the sea to inside the land, Bartın River had enabled intense trade activities with the outside world and had played a crucial role in the formation, development and settlement structure of the city. Because of Bartın River’s convenience of transporting goods on its waterway, the region had been a highly active trade and market center. Then, it changed into a settlement as a result of the need for accommodation caused by trade activities. At that time, the river became a social space for cultural activities such as fairs to gather the local people. These cultural ceremonies should be alive and transmit to the future, besides historical and cultural heritage.

### 4.2 Urban morphology

The densely settled part of the city is on a peninsula surrounded by rivers and connected to its environs through bridges (Fig.1).



Fig.1 Land uses in the settled area of Bartin

The existing city center of Bartın, which has been an important commercial, production and cultural center since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, still keeps its characteristics of a traditional trade center. In the city center, there are examples of civil architecture and monumental buildings such as public fountains, commercial-accommodations (*khans*), Turkish baths and mosques. The city center is composed of brick-made buildings of 2, 3 or 4 stories. It was closed for

auto traffic and has become a pedestrian zone. Around the city center, in which trade activities take place, there are housing areas, however, their density declines when moving away from the center. Buildings in residential areas are composed of houses and apartment-complex with 4 or 5 stories.

## 5 The Problems

Although there has been a land use plan since 1982 targeting at the maintenance of historical urban texture, the built environment has not been successfully implemented. Therefore, the historical urban texture could not be protected. This land use plan attempts to protect the area by prohibiting any interference and by keeping it untouched have not been sufficient to maintain full-scale protection.

As a result, disharmony between the traditional architecture and the new buildings came into existence. Hence, human scale in built environment has been disappeared by day.

Thus, there is an urgent need to utilize relevant design tools and design guides to improve, restore and historical city structure of Bartin. Particularly, in the streets that have historical examples of civil architecture, it is imperative to create a bridge between the past and the future.

## 6 The Potentials and the Scenarios

The city has a tourism potential due to its natural, historical and cultural values.

The most dominant scenario relation to the city in the future is that the city has to be acquired a tourism identity all over it. There are some projects aiming this scenario. One of the most essential projects in this context is to keep the Bartin River alive and to integrate it into the daily life. This can be achieved by urban design projects that would allow the river correlate to the streets stretching to it.

The other projects, not only aiming this scenario but aiming conservation the historical urban texture, are urban design projects and urban design applications in urban restoration and urban conservation context.

Khans in the city center have some spatial potentialities for new uses in accordance with both the tourism potential of the city and current tendencies of the community. Both Khans used for accommodation in ancient times can be used as restaurant, café or both production and sale center of traditional handcrafts. Some of the samples of civil

architecture to be left by owners can be re-functioned as a café or a restaurant also.

## 7 Urban Design Strategies on a Case Street Reflecting the Historical Urban Texture of Bartin

Firstly, the characteristics of the case street selected for this study have been emphasized and in accordance with these characteristics, urban design suggestions have been improved.

### 7.1 The characteristics of Samancioglu street

Samancioglu Street, one of the streets in the historical urban texture, is close to the city center and stretches to the river (Fig.1). It has several old buildings, one of which is being restored and re-functioned to be used as a city ethnography museum. For that reason, this street was decided on the case study.

Almost all of the buildings on this street are used as residences and they are detached houses with gardens. Only in the two buildings situated on both sides of the street at the entrance from the city center, the whole land is used as the base land and the ground floors are used for commercial purposes. Except for these two buildings, the relation between the street and all of the buildings is executed by front gardens. The linear-structured street has wooden houses with two or three floors and bay windows or balconies. The houses exhibit a unique example of civil architecture peculiar to Bartin. The constructions of these 100, 150, 200-years-old houses consist of wooden pillars and beams. The surfaces of most of these examples of civil architecture having wooden constructions are covered with timber on all sides. Only one of them is covered with timber on one floor and plaster on another. The ground floors of these building are higher than the street level and have a single or a couple of stairs.

### 7.2 Urban design suggestions for Samancioglu street

Taking the current situation of the street, the typologies of the buildings, frontages, garden walls into account and considering the principles of conservation, re-animation, re-function, the urban design strategies regarding this street, which is a part of the historical city, were determined. From the community design point of view, in accordance with the spatial scenarios relation to the whole historical city, the suggestions were improved.

The urban design suggestions improved for this street can also be considered for the other streets reflecting historical identity in historical urban texture of the city.

**7.2.1 The street as a public space**

It is space production and consumption that promote changes in the character of public space and citizens' participation in public life [6]. Street is a public space where its inhabitants meet each other and interact as they come across with one another when going out of their private spaces. Streets of Bartin constitute the historical urban texture of the city, thus, they are not only passages for city dwellers, but also a space for living and meeting for inhabitants of that particular street.



Fig.2 Samancioglu street and city museum with garden

In accordance with urban design project presented in this paper shortly, Samancioglu street should be re-organized as a pedestrian street and the motor vehicles should not be allowed in. Street ground should be covered by granite cobble-stones or bricks, which would keep the harmony with the stones used in the traditional street texture (Fig.2).

In the future, many people will visit the street due to the city museum. For this reason, all the buildings on the street should be rehabilitated immediately so that they will demonstrate themselves as the samples of traditional architecture of Bartin. Therefore, some of the buildings in the street can be re-functioned in tourism potential context as a café or a restaurant.

**7.2.2 Building frontages and garden walls determining the borders of private spaces**

Borders both determine an area and describe its identity [7]. Building frontages and garden walls determine not only the borders of private and public spaces, but also the relations between these spaces. Bay windows and balconies, vertical and horizontal elements, details and equipments on the frontages of the buildings constitute an interface between public

and private spaces. They are also the spatial elements that reflect the relationship between the building and its vicinity, as well as the life style in the period it was built.

The wooden houses in Samancioglu street are the documents of the unique architectural style that formed the historical urban texture of Bartin. Therefore, when implementing a design project for the buildings on this street, this peculiar architectural typology has to be taken into account. For instance, in the traditional building frontages the ratio of the window dimension is  $\frac{1}{2}$ . The windows are opened by sliding from bottom to top. Accordingly, new arrangements were suggested for new building frontages that are in harmony with the fullness-emptiness ratio, scales and materials of the traditional ones (Fig.3).

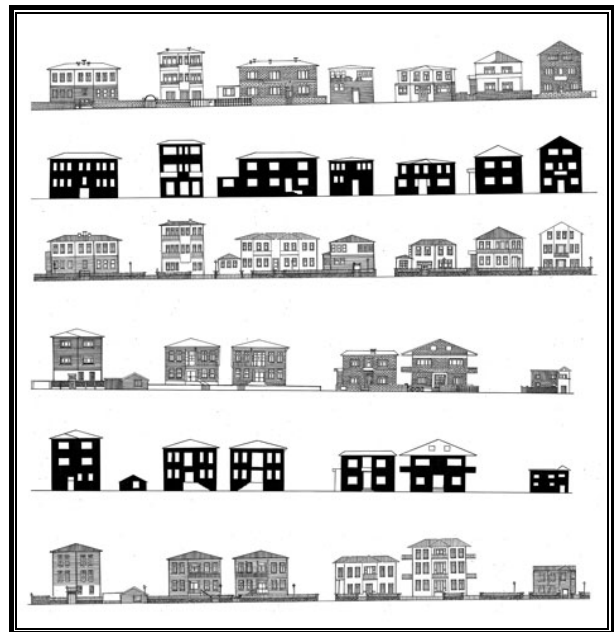


Fig.3 Present and alternative frontages on Samancioglu street

Regarding the garden walls, in order to perpetuate the extroverted life style and to form a structural integration, all of the garden walls should be designed below the eye level and they should be either built by stones or bricks. On top of the garden walls, wooden or patterned iron fences that do not block the eye-sight should be placed.

**7.2.3 Semi-private and semi-public spaces: house gardens**

House gardens are private spaces in terms of ownership. However, in societies where privacy and secrecy are not primordial, house gardens are semi-public spaces, since they can be seen by other people passing by the street. Therefore, as being spaces that

supply visual data for the occupants of the public space, house gardens should be designed with great care and their structural and plant design should be done accordingly.

Planting trees in the front gardens of these houses in Samancioglu street would enable the passers-by to see the nature in its structural environment and contribute to the green outlook of the city. In the selection of the colors, shapes and sizes of the plants in the front gardens of these wooden houses, plant design should be done so as to allow a better sight of both building frontages and plant clusters.

#### **7.2.4 Street equipment**

Sitting equipments, waste-bins, lightening elements and public fountains to be placed on the street are all considered as street equipments. In the design and selection of these items, the foremost principle should be to keep the harmony with the historical urban texture and the architectural identity of the area. The practicality, durability and the ease of maintenance should also be taken into consideration. Sitting equipment to be placed on the relevant plots on the street should have a wrought iron construction and should be covered with impregnated timber.

Street illumination equipments should be preferably 2.5 meters high. Illumination for the houses should be provided by lambs placed on the garden walls and on both sides of the entrance gates. The original fountain made of iron in front of Samancioglu house, the details of the house given below, should be preserved. On the same street, the other fountain should be restored complementing the other.

#### **7.2.5 A landmark: Kemal Samancioglu City Museum**

The house of Kemal Samacioglu, a well-known house belonging to Samancioglu family, is now being restored to be used as Bartin City Museum. Kemal Samancioglu is the former mayor of Bartin, who left his name in the history of Bartin by his distinguished urban projects. Giving this building a new function as a museum will make it a landmark both at street and at urban scale.

The garden design of the museum has been applied in accordance with the needs of the visitors. Traditional building elements in the garden like a bakery, the well and the stand for washing clothes are intended to be revitalized; and thus new functions may be suggested for these items. To provide the illumination of the museum and the garden at night, appropriate projectors and

lightening equipments will be placed on the building, the garden and the yard. Accordingly, lightening equipments of 1.5 – 2.5 meters and ground illumination should be utilized.

#### **7.2.6 Connections: integrating Samancioglu street to the river**

As it has been mentioned above, Samancioglu street is a street that reflects the historical city structure of Bartin and stretches to the river. The urban restoration of Samancioglu street is one of the major components of the whole urban design project on historical city structure. Revitalizing the Bartin River with tourism and recreation activities and making a connecting link between streets and the river are major decisions in the whole urban design project. Accordingly, as in ancient times, a wharf could be constructed by the river upright towards the street. The wharf would facilitate the visitors to reach the street through the river.

## **8 Conclusion**

Today, as a result of the development and the growth of the built environment, it has been hard to protect and maintain both the historical traces that shape the cultural identity and the historical urban texture that constitutes a significant part of the cultural heritage. In order to avoid disappearance of the historical urban texture and to transmit it to the future, urban design applications are crucial in the restoration and reconstruction process. For this reason, there is a need to utilize certain design tools and design guides for orienting the design applications at urban and street scale. Urban design is as important as urban planning on behalf of the community design. Since, while settling the spatial rules in the course of urban design, community design is also realized. Of course the urban design is the appropriate instrument for creating the spatial facilities of the urban life and the social life of a community.

Therefore, integrative approach should be the only criterion in both low-scale and high-scale planning and design. It is necessary to integrate the area and the elements under focus into its vicinity and the city as a whole. This has to be done from city to street scale and from buildings to street equipment. All in all, the historical urban texture has to be restored by taking into consideration the traditional architectural typology.

Urban conservation and urban design suggestions should be applied on the street scale not only in the areas which constitute the historical city structure, but also the ones that are excluded from the borders of historical urban texture. In these regions, innovative

city furniture designs should be developed. In the selection and design of city equipment (sitting elements, lightening elements, flower beds, phone boxes, garden walls, waste bins etc.) the materials to be used should be in harmony with the color and structure of the historical urban texture.

Urban Design Strategies in historical urban texture of Bartın:

- Determination of a protective land-use policy in planning and application process.
- Adoption of the principles of conservation, restoration, re-animation, re-function and sustainability.
- Restoration of the historical buildings damaged.
- Protection of the historical traces and maintenance the traditional architecture.
- Re-function of some buildings in the historical urban texture in tourism potential context.
- Integration of the new buildings with the traditional ones.
- Production of the typologies for new buildings to provide suitability with the cultural identity and traditional architecture.
- Creation of the new spatial usages for pedestrians.
- Close of some of the streets for auto traffic and reduce the negative effects of it on the streets.
- Correlation of the river to the streets stretching it with the wharfs.
- Preparation of the urban design guides.

Finally, in this paper, urban design suggestions have been presented concerning the renewal and restoration of Samancıoğlu street. This particular street is a symbol reflecting historical urban texture

of Bartın. By means of suggested urban design applications and urban design guides to be prepared, sustainable protection and sustainability of cultural heritage can be achieved and a bridge between the past and the future can be built.

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