

A Framework on urban design strategies for sustainability of cultural and historical dimension in urban landscape

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Abstract: Cultural heritage is the accumulation of tangible and intangible values stemming from human creativity and interaction between societies, since the beginning of human life on earth. Historical environments and historical city textures are tangible documents of cultural heritage which created and formed places. It is necessary to comprehend historical environment in which we live. Historical environments are like open space museums which exhibit their own selves. Cultural identity and cultural heritage are hidden in historical environment which is a major document demonstrating and reflecting cultural identity. It is time historical heritage should have been protected and cultural heritage should have been transmitted to the next generation. It is essential that planners, architectures, landscape architectures, and others whoever studies on urban issues should recognize the need to provide the sustainability of cultural identity. Cultural heritage should be transmitted to the next generation as it has been transmitted from past generation to the present. Both urban planning and every kind of design are the scenarios related to community or individuals. Thus, land use decisions and spatial decisions should consider current tendencies of community as much as it should take into account of transmitting of natural and cultural values to the future. Urban design is the best tool to provide sustainability of historical and cultural heritage. In this paper, a framework on urban design studies for sustainability of cultural heritage in historical environment has been presented. This framework has a systematic approach on urban design and sustainability point of view from the beginning to the end of the decision and design process.

Key words: cultural identity, cultural heritage, historical environment, sustainability, urban design.

1 Introduction

Historical environment is a major document which demonstrates and reflects cultural identity. In historical environment having spiritual values of the ancient times, architectural heritage has added physical and living value to the environment. Sensitivity of community about these values is related to the cultural structure. Conservation should have a content including integration of the architectural environment with the new urban environment to be constituted [1].

Turkey has a lot of settlements which are full of cultural and historical traces. It is time historical heritage should have been protected and cultural heritage should have been transmitted to the next generation. It is time to make a bridge between past and future. Settlements have become richer when a bridge is constituted between past and future.

Conservation is a process making man reconciled with his environment. The basic strategies of the renovations of historical city

textures are to enable integration of the historical environment with the urban environment [2].

Urban design is the major tool to provide sustainability of historical and cultural heritage. It is recommended that a framework should be built for design process. The framework guiding to urban design process make it easy and successful.

2. A Framework on Urban Design Studies in Historical Environment

There are three main processes guiding urban design studies, first of which is preparation process, the second is determination of the design policies or strategies and the other is design process:

1. Preparation process
2. Determination of the design strategies
3. Design process

Preparation process at the beginning is of gathering all data relevant to the case. This process also contains observation and perceiving of environment and the whole urban environment in

which the case area is. After preparation and gathering all data, it is time to determine design strategies.

Both preparation process and determination of the design strategies contain the approaches following:

- Understanding on the case
- Characteristics of the case area
- Aim of the study

2.1 Comprehension on cultural identity

Historical environments and historical city textures are tangible documents of cultural heritage which created and formed places. It is necessary to comprehend historical environment in which we live. Historical environments are like open space museums which exhibit their own selves. Cultural identity and cultural heritage are hidden in historical environment which is a major document demonstrating and reflecting cultural identity.

The concept of conservation or urban conservation has been come out at the result of a cultural process [3].

2.2 Characteristics of the case area

The answer of the question about where the case area is should be determined clearly. There are two scales to determine historical environment:

- On urban scale
- On neighbourhood scale

At both scales mentioned above, the location of the case area should be determined.

- Identity (function, utilization, architectural style)
- Features of textures (street, materials)
- Current land uses

Identity, characteristics of historical texture and current land uses are components describing the historical environment.

2.3 Decision process on sustainability of cultural heritage

It is essential that planners, architects, landscape architects, and others whoever studies on urban issues should recognize the need to provide the sustainability of cultural identity. Cultural heritage should be transmitted to the next generation as it has been transmitted from past generation to the present.

2.4 Urban design as a major tool

Urban design is the best tool to provide sustainability of historical and cultural heritage. Urban design is interface between planning and architecture.

Urban design selected as a guide by planners, architects, landscape architects and whoever considers urban form and urban quality, is a process contributing to physical design. In urban design process of historical environment, considering design elements, like color, texture, material, spatial rules to constitute a harmonic environment is determined.

2.5 Scenarios of sustainability

In both urban planning and every kind of urban design process, the scenarios related to community or individuals have been prepared. Thus, land use decisions and spatial decisions should consider current tendencies and necessities of community as much as it should take into account of transmitting of natural and cultural values to the future. All the scenarios in historical environment should aim to cover the necessities of society for sustainability.

2.5.1 Integration with urban identity

One of the best ways to sustain cultural heritage and to transmit from one generation to the next is to integrate it with the whole urban environment. Thus, scenario process should be built in a way including phrases below:

- Consideration of the historical urban texture (totalitarian approach)
- Identity of the case area (as a part of the whole)
- New identity to be affirmed by community
- Necessities in accordance with the new identity

2.5.2 Design guides

It is necessary that a design guide to guide selection of textures, materials, colorings and decision of facades, windows and the other architectural elements should be prepared in urban design process [2].

Ultimately, the guide steers clear of overt references to architectural style. To promote architectural character, it requires proposals to demonstrate to competence in understanding the principles of architectural composition and form—the ‘regulating lines’ and proportional relationships that guide the best architecture [4].

3. Case Study

A case study containing basic approaches mentioned above was conducted in Safranbolu which is a settlement in the list of world heritage.

3.1 The settlement of Safranbolu

Safranbolu added to the World Heritage List in 1994, is situated on the Black Sea Region in Turkey. It is 65 km far from the sea. Safranbolu is a historical settlement protecting cultural heritage with the past traces reflecting all the living style of Turkish community. With the historical characteristics of ancient times, it hosted several civilizations. It has been estimated that communal life in Safranbolu has originated from 3000 BC. In Homeros iliad, this region is mentioned with the name of Paphlagonia.

Safranbolu has an interesting geological structure. Constituting three different canyons passing through the city, Gumus, Akcasu ve Bulak Streams run into Arac River. As the study area, old leather factory region is situated in the trade center of the settlement. It is surrounded with canyons Gumus stream goes through. This region enabled trade activities in the settlement to improve from the leather sector point of view.

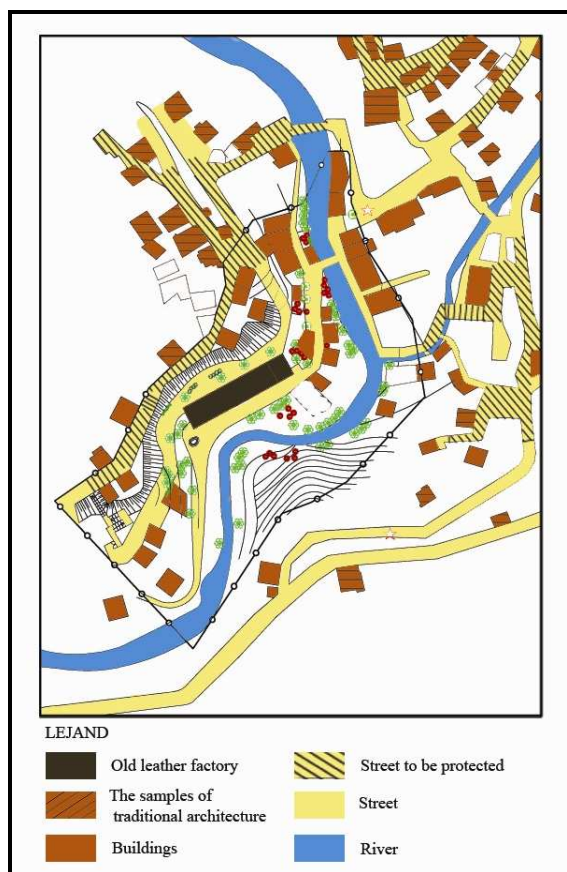


Figure 1. Case area and its environ

3.1 The aim of the study

The topic of the project is “urban restoration and urban landscape design in a district used leather

production in historical city texture of Safranbolu included world heritage list”.

The aim of the study is to enable the case area to have an attractive function in both district and the settlement of Safranbolu. For the aim mentioned above, several scenarios were considered and evaluated.

3.2 The scenarios for the case area

Considering of the historical urban texture and identity of the case area as a part of the whole by totalitarian approach, several scenarios were improved.

Basic Approaches for scenarios are:

1. Reanimation of the original function of the district
2. Re-functioning for a new utilization for community
3. A brand-new identity in urban environment

After all, the necessities should be determined in accordance with the scenarios related to the new identity.

The basic approach guiding all the scenarios is to emphasize old leather factory by giving the major function in all the scenarios.

A1: major building as a main component to make a link between case area and urban environment

A2, A3, A4, A5,...A(n): the others to be assessed and to be given functioned for the new urban identity of the district.

In accordance with main approaches and principles the following scenarios were built.

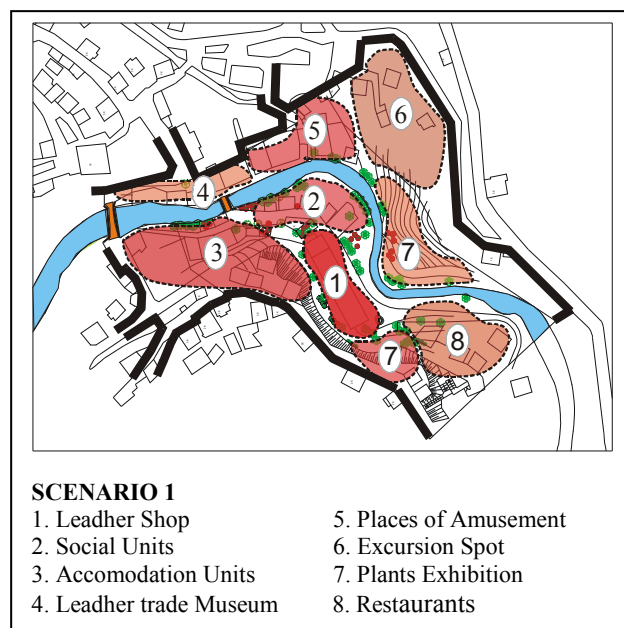


Figure 2. The scenario on leather center

Scenario 1. New spatial identity related to original function of the case area is leather center. One of the main approaches to determine a new identity and a new function is to consider tourism concept and tourism potential of the Safranbolu which takes part in the world heritage list.

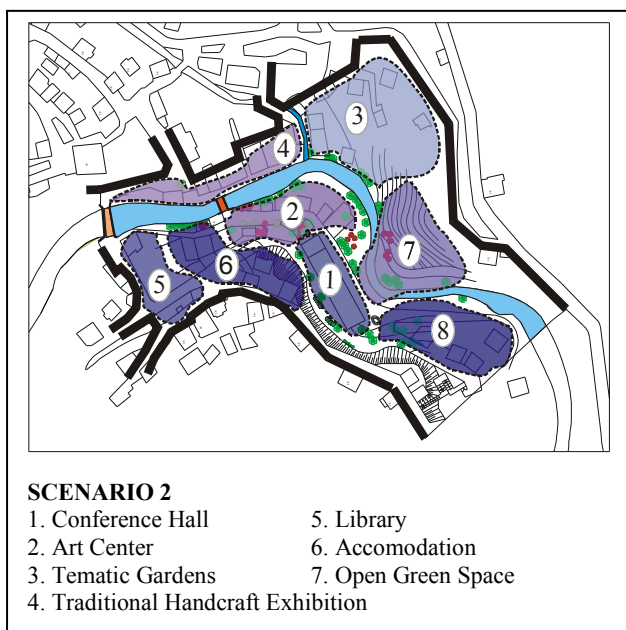


Figure 3. The scenario on congress center

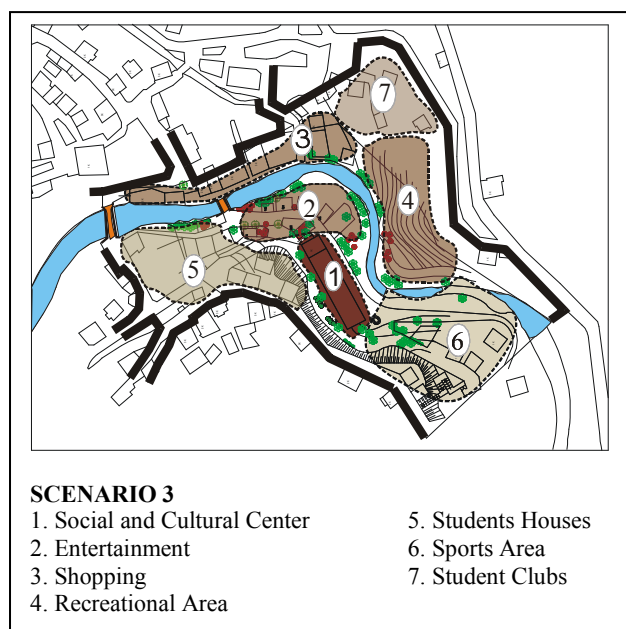


Figure 4. The scenario on student district

Scenario 2. Determination of a new and needed function and the result is congress center.

It is necessary to build a congress center for conferences, symposiums, as an auditorium to serve

for people at urban scale. Old leather factory is suitable for congress center due to spatial possibilities.

Scenario 3. The result of determination of a new but not needed function from the urban point of view is student district.

This is a new utilization for the district. This function will enable the new part of the settlement to be attractive for students living in Safranbolu. This new identity adding student life to district can integrate urban environment with the whole urban environment in Safranbolu.

These three urban design approaches, one of the principles guiding urban design is to sustain architectural styles and traditional forms of the buildings in this district. All the study has contained the suggestions for texture, material and scales of the buildings and streets to be sustained.

4 Conclusion

The aim of conservation is to protect historical environment being destroyed and to integrate cultural heritage with actual life [5]. Conservation and sustainability of historical city textures can be realized when considered sustainability of living in this environment. Because the necessities of living styles and the action styles of humans in the environment have changed. All these facts should be considered and be reflected to the spatial resolutions.

For both conservation and integration historical city texture with the whole urban environment, strategic action plans are needed, to provide a context for local urban design and local development frameworks [6].

Frameworks are of importance at the beginning of design process and make easy to design. In order to conduct a successful urban design process and create urban quality, it is essential to build a framework guiding design process.

Enabling urban aesthetic and urban form urban design has a definite role to play and is the basic toll for urban quality. It considers both a part of urban environment and the whole environment. Urban design produces a spatial resolution for an urban part taking into account the whole.

The components creating urban and historical environment considered by urban design is culture. That's because culture creates buildings, streets, cities and urban form.

Recently, communal culture has become the major issue of urban design [7]. There is a way in urban design process to integrate conservation

strategies with tourism development strategies for utilization of cultural environment. It is possible to mention cultural sustainability when the culture and spaces created by ancient cultures can be taken part in today's life.

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