

Full Length Research Paper

Re-qualifying historical spaces: Usak historical train station

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Culture plays an important role as a means of communication and qualification of space determining people's relationships with their environment. Created elements of material culture are icons of social and cultural structure of an era. In this context, historical sites are cultural heritages that reflect our history, culture and social values. By providing quality to the historical cultural heritage, re-creating new urban spaces is important for the image of cities and moral values. By carrying value and revealing cultural identity, historical spaces that can adapt to the current conditions will live only as long as they can sustain their identity. In this study, the importance of re-evaluation and re-living the historical spaces have been evaluated with different concept plans on the Usak historical train station. In this study, 3 scenarios have been developed and recommendations are made for preserving one's architectural issue and open spaces, using 1890 Usak historical train station as a focal point for the functional transformation of cities.

Key words: Historical places, cultural heritage, cultural identity, Usak historical train station.

INTRODUCTION

Constant renewal and change of cities is as inevitable as living entity. In the process of urbanization some public areas that are once away from the city remain in the urban centers. Due to industry and business opportunities in the rapidly growing cities, historical buildings (due to the value of urban terrain and location) are seen as potential and value areas for the needs of urban spaces. Today, building and areas which reflect the culture of society have lost their original function partially or completely possibly due to the continuation of their habitation. For this reason, the areas with historical buildings must be recycled by changing function with current themes (Anil, 2007).

In the fast-developing and growing cities, the rich existing potential in terms of cultural heritage must be evaluated to gain the aging parts of the urban area. This can be done by installing new function in the area. Providing freshness and development to cities could mean big gain to them, socially and culturally (Sun and

Cui, 2012). With this process, urban living areas will turn into urban spaces, which are enjoyable spaces to live in with suitable functions for contemporary living condition (Kaya et al., 2007).

The aim of this study is to reveal the transformed effect and outcomes in cities by installing again meaning and task with current functions based on the planning of the Usak Historical Train Station, which is important to urban culture due to its primary function. In this respect, the study will be an example for giving values again to urban areas which had important function in time past, but lost it over time. Scenarios in the conclusion of the study are expected to gain the momentum for urban perception of Usak City's socio-cultural life.

Cultural heritage-living identity

In many cities of today, remains from old era preserved

historical spaces. These spaces are contemporary creation for eras made. However, changes in the socio-cultural structure changed the urban identity. Due to new requirements and demands of contemporary urban life, loss of identity has been experienced in these areas; it includes change in terms of functional effectiveness and timeliness. Historical places included in urban development with new ideas are a valid approach for preventing this kind of identification loss.

Identity is all common share that unifies the individuals and society. The identity of building environment, on one hand, creates an important part of the urban identity; on the other hand, it gives clues to the social and cultural life of the cities. The rich value that creates the identity of building environment is an expression of the wealth of the social and cultural life in the city. Historical buildings and environments which have architectural and vital features play an important role in cultural continuity and reshaping of urban identity (Neill, 1997).

The assessment of cultural heritages as an identity element in the urban structure image, location and meaning is an effective factor. Original visual effect generates structure, proportion, texture, iconic status and material of structure that creates image factor. Location factor has original location and effect in terms of structure relationships of building with other environmental elements, urban living area and other cultural environmental elements. Meaning factor occurs with the functional importance of building or original and symbolic value of the structure over the historical development of cities (Ocakçı, 1994). All of these important values of cultural heritage depend on the continuity of these values.

Living of cultural heritage prevents the physical structure under the socio-economical situation of today which reflects the socio-economical situation of past and has cultural values, by integrating with the contemporary development (Engin, 1997). To protect the cultural elements that lost their original function and importance in the historical process and transformed to the future generation, new preserve approach has adopted strategies which deal with present natural, cultural and historical values in the urban area for sustainability (Montgomery, 1995).

Functional undulation (curling-breaking point): Old area-new vision

The physical appearance and environmental quality of cities is an indicator for urban culture and quality of life. Today, several studies have been made on regaining this kind of space in terms of urban culture and value of urban space. In this process of participating to conserve areas of the urban life, tangible and intangible benefits of the protection brought a new movement to the protection actions. This movement is partially changing (curling) or completely changing (breaking) by installing different

functions to the old area with the new vision. The importance of the developed practices in line with the contemporary life condition has emerged to this undulation process in terms of physical, social and economical aspects. In this context, predictions have effective functions which carry memory of past to the present; and by interpreting the contemporary culture again, this ensures the continuity of urban identity and culture at the social and temporal dimensions.

Historical spaces depend on having the right functions for serving the social work always and for healthy living with the original structures. With social objective, historical spaces can be addressed to the wider audience by preserving the spaces for living. Creating spaces for people to spend more time in these spaces is an important tool for the awareness and consciousness of protection (Urak, 2002). Forming identity through re-evaluation can increase the perception of historical values. Also gained from functional conversion of historical spaces is economical income that can protect, maintain and repair these spaces.

The mobility of urban space has been formed from components of different activities. Generally, the most lively and interesting side of small cities is diversity of socio-cultural spaces. These areas are the most attractive points of the city. Diversity reflects and defines a range of social, cultural and commercial activities. In this context re-evaluation of historical spaces is the most important factor for making various urban activities. Functional conversions with regard to the economical, social and spatial aspects in such areas have a major role in increasing the urban landscape and quality of environment. The implemented projects have enriched the perception of the city, on one hand, and ensured protection of values, created new business opportunities and new living space for urban people, on the other hand.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Usak historical train station is the main material of the study. To define the boundaries of the study area and to analyze the connections with the environment, Ikonos satellite image from 2004 year and photographs taken from areas was used as an auxiliary material. Determination of the boundary of study area and geographical rectification was carried out by using ArcGIS 9.2 software. The study area is 44.252 m². The construction covers 4.715 m² areas and open area covers 39.537 m². According to the conclusion of the analyzed work formed in the area, three scenarios were made for the study area under different concepts. With predicted scenarios, decisions of land use have been shown at the planning. Photoshop CS5 software was used for the visualization of the scenarios.

FINDINGS

Study area

The study area in the Usak province is located in Aegean



Figure 1. The study area location in Turkey.

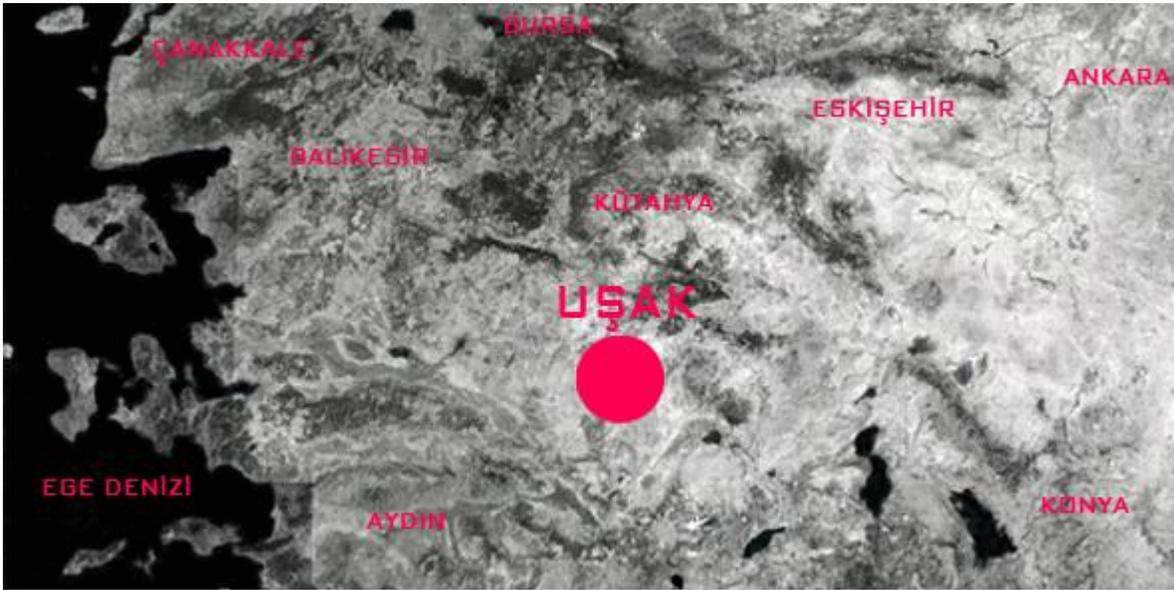


Figure 2. The location of Usak City and its neighboring.

Region Department of Internal Western Anatolia; with 38°13' and 38°56' latitude and 28°48' and 29°57' longitude. The city is located between the capital Ankara and Izmir as a transition area (Figures 1 and 2).

Usak has been used as a residential area since BC.4000. The city was captured by the Lydians in BC.700. The Lydians use the money for the first time in the world conducted in the West of Usak to make historical "King's Road" which connected with Aegean Region to the nearest east. In this historical context of "Treasures of Croesus" (found as 40.000 historical parts so far), which are the most important historical relics,

other historical relics and traces of culture have been accessible in the city.

According to the population data from 2008, 217.567 people live in the city (Usak, 2010).

Usak historical train station

Usak is one of the first provinces with advantageous railway in the Turkey. Connected with Izmir-Ankara, the railway is used for cargo rather than passenger transport. Products produced in the Usak city (the industrial city)



Figure 3. The location of Usak Historical Train Station in the city.



Figure 4. A view of current surrounding of station.



Figure 5. Restored station building.

are shipped out in domestic and international market via railway.

Since the beginning of the station and its surrounding are attractive spaces for people, bazaars and markets have been located around the station. During the early years, the station was located outside of the urban, but today the station is located in the urban center because of the urban sprawl (Figures 3 and 4).

Built in 1890 by the French and protecting its historical structure, Usak station building still continues its current function in the present (Figure 5).

With historical and visual importance of the station building, its open areas have been the home of many artistic events so far. Other historical buildings and open spaces in the station are not in active use today (Figures 6, 7 and 8).

Usak Historical Train Station buildings are as follows:

Single storey buildings

- One small-storey buildings (7)
- One medium -storey buildings (7)
- One big-storey buildings (6)
- One medium renovated -storey buildings (2)
- One big renovated-storey buildings (4)
- Two Storey Buildings
- Two medium -storey building (1)
- Two big renovated -storey building (1)

Other buildings

- One high workshop building
- One high cargo store
- One swivel bridge
- Two-storey water tank (1)
- One-storey restored wc building (1)



Figure 6. A view of non-restored other station buildings.



Figure 7. A view of open spaces in station.

Conclusion

The main aim of the functional transformation scenario of the Usak historical train station is to enable the physical renovation of the area and to create an attractive point for the city. If project completely identifies with the city, architectural, cultural and social values will live by protection and importance of these values will increase national and international platform. Based on the adequacy and location of the area and direction of the

city and its need including right and diversity, dynamic program has been considered in these scenarios.

In this context, main planning decisions of the scenarios are:

- 1) Having visual and cultural values to create attractive point for local people and tourist in the urban center.
- 2) Living 24 h to create habitat
- 3) To contribute to the city socially and culturally
- 4) To protect the traditional and cultural identity in order



Figure 8. A view of lost their function old trains in the study area.

to transport it to the future generations

5) By ensuring the common use of the area effectively, which is currently not actively used by the urban people

6) By evaluating open areas and their close environment with totalitarian approach in order to contribute to urban open area system and to increase the landscape quality of urban.

Scenario 1: Civilization station

Vision: In this scenario, the area has been developed on theme which is brought to the fore and kept alive the civilizations that shaped the history of city. In this context, the area was considered as “civilization station” (Figure 9) in the Scenario 1.

Programme elements of scenario 1 are:

1. Multi-purpose social facility
2. Garden exhibitions
3. Cafe-restaurants
4. Open green space
5. Museums (archeology, ethnography, treasures of Croesus, the railway museum)
6. Museum park

With the scenario, the future of the area has been imagined as an attractive point by pressing the international antique remains (especially Lydia Period)

which exist in the city. This concept is thought to affect mainly domestic and foreign visitors coming to the area. “Richness” is a connotation that determines the starting point of this scenario. Reflecting the “Wealth of Croesus” on the design fiction of an area is an important component for the functioning of the scenario. The priority spaces are devoted to creating different museum areas in the area under the concept. These museums are archeology, ethnography, treasures of Croesus and the railway museums. Other historical buildings were considered as a multi-purpose social facility and café-restaurants. Scenario area was completed with garden exhibition, Museum park and open green spaces.

Scenario 2: Youth-science station

Vision: In this scenario, the potential of the area was considered for evaluating the younger population. In this context, the area was envisaged as “youth-science station” (Figure 10) in Scenario 2.

Programme elements of Scenario 2 are:

1. Accommodation unit
2. Open green space
3. Social clubs
4. Library and computer halls
5. Congress-conference units
6. Café-restaurant

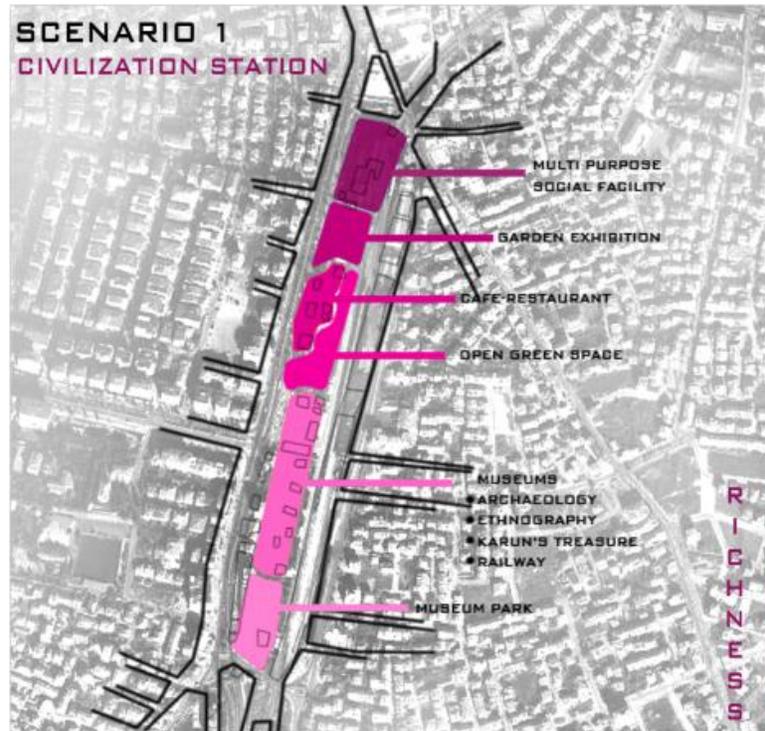


Figure 9. The land use planning for Scenario 1.

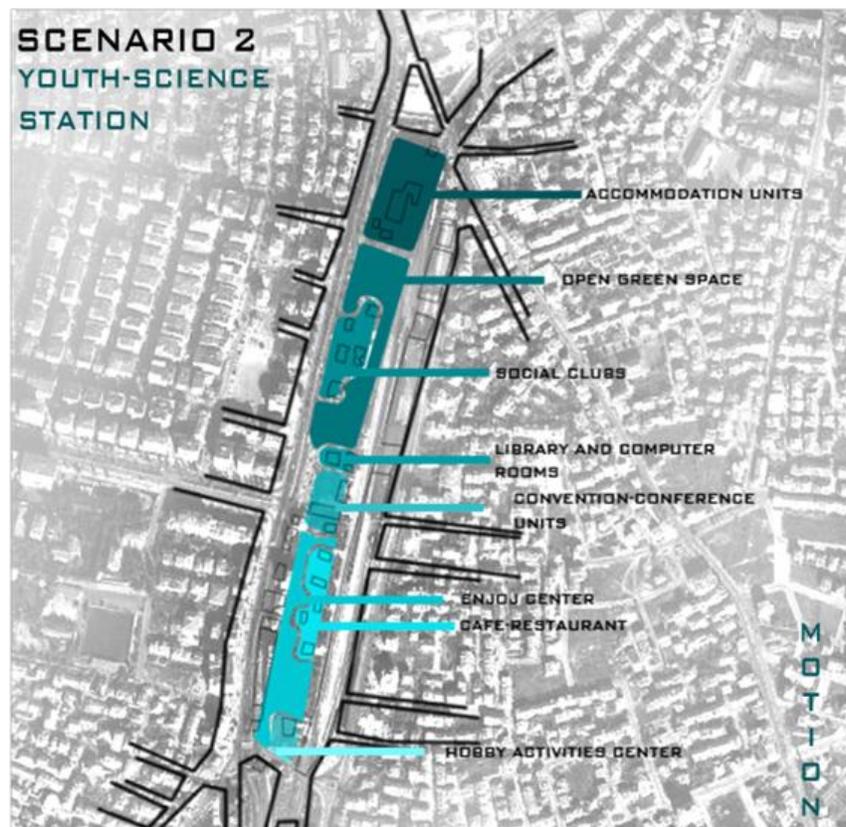


Figure 10. The land use planning for Scenario 2.

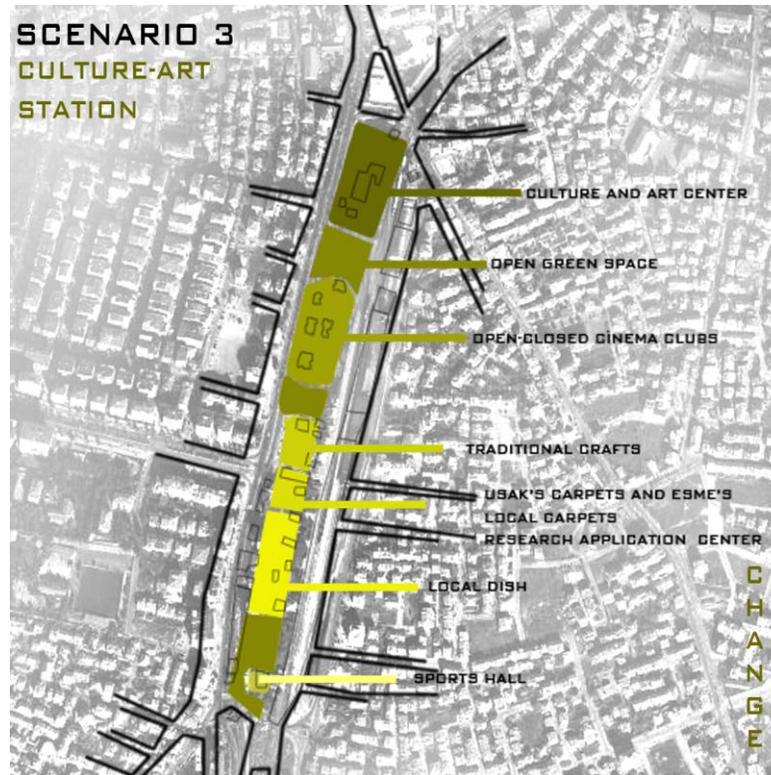


Figure 11. The land use planning for Scenario 3.

7. Fun centers
8. Hobby activities

In recent years, the young people of the city have increased due to the university. The areas are required for this population in the city center, where not only science activities are done but also entertainment. In this context, the area developed as an environment reflecting the ability of young people physically and mentally, and this way young people may provide more benefits to urban and humanity. "Motion" is a connotation that determines the starting point of this scenario. The motion of youths regarding the use of the design fiction in the area for active activities will affect the functioning of the scenario. In this context, assessment of the historical building in the area as congress and conference hall, library-computer hall, accommodation unit, social clubs and café-restaurant is suitable. Open green spaces have been allocated for the hobby activities in the building area.

Scenario 3: Culture-art station

Vision: In this scenario, the area was envisaged to preserve the culture from past to present, and to learn and develop new culture under the theme concept. In this

context, the area was envisaged as "culture-art station" (Figure 11) in Scenario 3. Programme elements of scenario 3 are;

1. Culture-art center
2. Open green space
3. Open-closed cinema clubs
4. Traditional handicrafts
5. Usak carpet, Esme local carpet research and application center
6. Traditional home cooking
7. Sport halls

The main aim of this scenario is to develop the local carpet, which is important for the local culture of the city and to ensure the continuity of local handicrafts and weaving, which are the starting point of industrial enterprises in the city. In the scenario, the future of the area has been imagined as a center involving a combination of art and culture. Ataturk Cultural Center which is the only place for creating artistic activities in the city will ensure continuity of culture-art axis as connected areas. "Change" is a connotation that determines the starting point of this scenario. Protecting the existing culture in the changed world and adapting the new culture to capture the change is an important stage. In this scenario, performing design project in the area to

spread culture and art, shifting focus from the environment will affect the functioning of the concept. The primary space of the area is culture-art center in this scenario. In addition, the research and application center of Usak carpets and Esme local carpets, traditional handicrafts, open-closed cinema clubs and sport hall were considered under the scenario concept. Local home cooking was considered as dinner in the area and the area was completed with open green spaces.

Developing Usak Historical Train Station scenarios has been considered and will be integrated into the modern, economic and social life; it will lead to interesting contribution to the urban and urban people.

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