

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS IN PROTECTING URBAN SIT AREAS –THE MERSIN -CITY CENTER- EXAMPLE

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Abstract

In every settlement there are problems concerning environmental factors when the settlement, or parts of it, are designated a sit area. The most important characteristic that separates the problems of urban sit areas from other areas is that they have assets that cannot be renewed once they have been destroyed. While planning increased in the 1950s in our country, strategies were not produced to protect and develop areas in cities and towns with specific assets. This and similar situations resulted in the traditional housing fabric of the areas in which they were found being destroyed. While the planning / application problems, physical problems, social and economic problems in the urban sit areas where there are many cultural assets create important headlines, “tourism” too is a subject that has to be studied with all its ins and outs by itself. Tourism, it mustn't be forgotten, is inseparable from a nation's development and mistakes in management and where it isn't managed will damage cultural values. In the communiqué, the environmental factors that affect urban sits, existing laws, tourism policies, the need for constructing new buildings as an extension of tourism and the evaluation of cultural assets in contemporary life, various studies on an international and national scale, the search for solutions and Mersin the city that developed as an extension of the trade that increased in the eastern Mediterranean especially after the 19th century are studied.

Keywords: Environment, Tourism, Concept of Protection, Cultural Asset, Urban SIT, Mersin

Abstract (In Turkish)**Özet**

Her yerleşmede olduğu gibi sit alanı olarak tescil edilen yerleşme ya da yerleşme parçalarının da çevresel faktörler kapsamında sorunları bulunmaktadır. Kentsel sit alanlarındaki sorunları diğerlerinden ayıran en önemli özellik, onların yok olduğunda yenilenemeyecek değerlere sahip olmasıdır. Ülkemizde 1950'li yıllardan sonra artan planlama olgusu nedeniyle, kent ve kasabalarda belli değerler taşıyan alanların korunması ve geliştirilmesine yönelik stratejiler üretilmemiştir. Bu ve benzeri durumlar geleneksel konut dokusunun bulunduğu alanların zaman içinde bozulmasıyla sonuçlanmıştır. Kültürel değerlerin yoğun olarak bulunduğu kentsel sit alanlarında; planlama / uygulama sorunları, fiziksel sorunlar, sosyal ve ekonomik sorunlar önemli alt başlıklar oluştururken, “Turizm” de tüm girdi ve çıktıları ile başlı başına irdelenmesi gereken bir konudur. Turizm; ülke gelişiminin ayrılmaz bir parçası olmakla birlikte, yönetimindeki yanlışlıklar ve yönlendirilememe durumda kültürel değerlere zarar vereceği unutulmamalıdır. Bildiride; kentsel siteleri etkileyen çevresel faktörler, mevcut yasalar, turizm politikaları, turizmin uzantısı olarak yeni yapı yapma gereği ve Kültür varlığının çağdaş yaşamda değerlendirilmesi, uluslar arası ve ulusal ölçekte çeşitli çalışmalar, çözüm arayışları, özellikle 19.yy.dan sonra Doğu Akdeniz'de artan ticaret hayatının bir uzantısı ile gelişen Mersin kenti örneğinde irdelenmiştir.

Keywords (In Turkish)

Anahtar kelimeler: Çevre, Turizm, Koruma Kavramı, Kültürel Varlık, Kentsel Sit, Mersin

INTRODUCTION

Mersin developed during the early historic, Roman and Hellenistic periods thanks to its influential location in the Cilicia region but this was interrupted over the course of history and only re-established in the first half of the 1800s. The studies connected with the development of Mersin began with the Jansen plans of 1938. This period at the same time is known as the “planned period.”

Among the factors that ensured Mersin's development during the period when there was no planning were the changes that began to occur during the Tanzimat era and the use of a harbor, land and train network that made its geographical location a commercial center for the Cukurova region. Within this spatial formation Uray, Hastana, Cakmak and Silifke Boulevards became the main axes of communications (See Figure 1). Uray Boulevard and the formations in its vicinity occur in the Camii Serif district, one of the oldest districts in Mersin. Mesudiye, Nusratiye, Mahmudiye and Kiremithane districts make up the other areas. These create the urban sit areas (See Fig. 1).

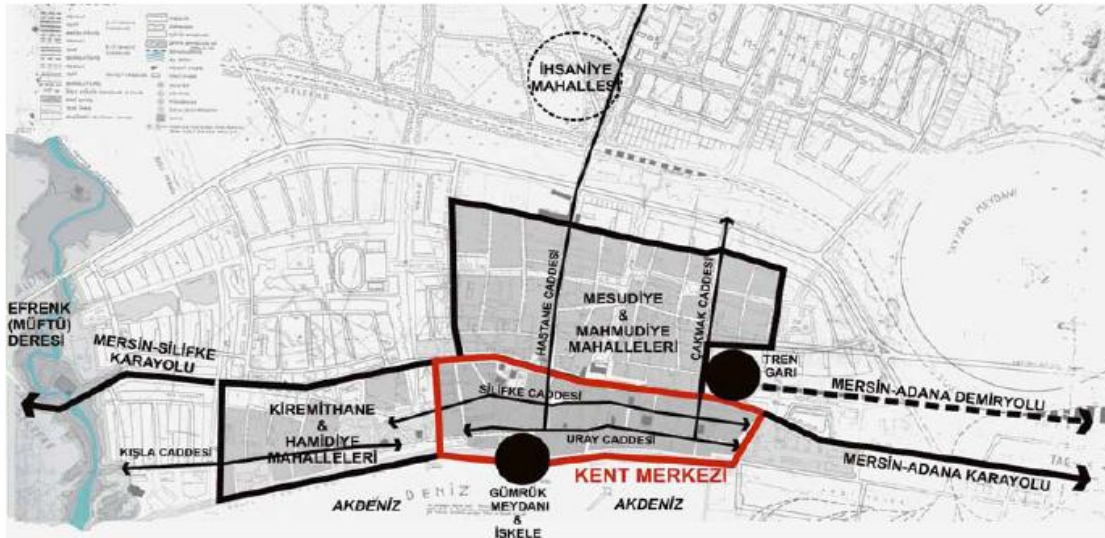


Fig.1 The physical development of the city of Mersin at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries (Unlu, 2007).

With the Jansen plans Mersin was divided into two main sections - the “old city” and the “development regions.” The old city preserved its existing character and avoided any intervention in its urban fabric ensuring that its cultural heritage remained to today. The city of Mersin since 1993 has been divided into three sub-municipalities. The Mediterranean municipality, which is one of these, began applying the protection plan of 1998 in the urban sit area in the center of Mersin (Unlu, 2007).

DEFINITIONS

Cultural Asset and Sit Area

The general definition is as follows: “A cultural asset that is found connected with science, culture, religion and the fine arts that belong to prehistoric and historic periods or were the subject of social life in prehistoric or historic periods. They are all the assets, moveable or immovable, that are above ground, on the ground and below ground that have genuine value from the scientific and cultural point of view. (Principal decision by the High Commission for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Assets, Ministry of Culture). Concerning the aforementioned definition, cultural assets are witnesses that provide us with information about past life. Sits are one of the cultural assets that have to be protected and they have to be examined in two groups as individual buildings and as sits. Sits are defined as the city that has come down from prehistory until today, which carries social, economic, architectural, etc. characteristics of the periods through which it has passed, and the remains of cities and special features of nature where important historical events have taken place (Principal Decision of the High Commission for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Assets, Ministry of Culture).

Urban Sit Area

Urban sit areas are defined as the city that carries the social, economic, architectural, etc. characteristics of the periods through which it lived. Among the principal decisions on cultural and natural assets (1996-419) it was declared that “physical features that show urban and regional characteristics from the point of view of architecture and art history and the socio-economic, socio-cultural make-up of the environment created by these characteristics should reflect the life style of the areas found in one place and from this point of view show the integrity of the fabric.

” In addition it was stressed as an appendage to the legal conditions that there has to be a clear density of structures within the area in order for an area to be an urban sit and must show architectural and historical integrity.

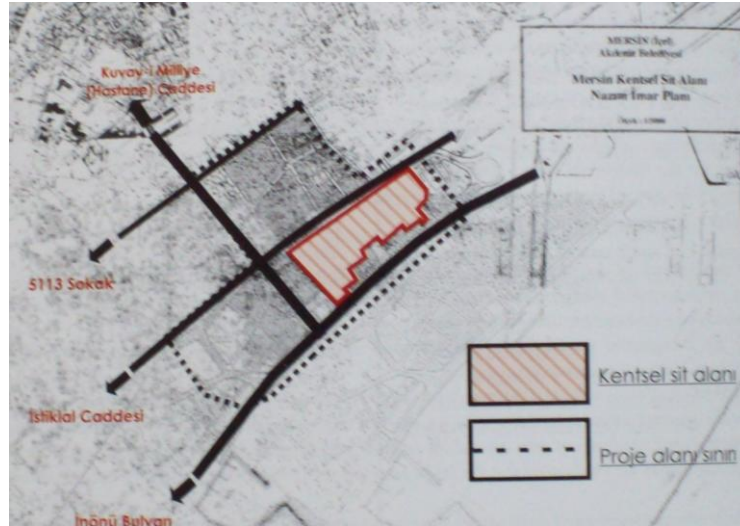


Figure2 Within the limits of the project the development plan to protect the city of Mersin shows the urban sit area (Ucar and others, 2005).

THE PROBLEMS OF THE MERSIN SIT AREAS

Planning and Application Problems

The lack of planning in 1973 brought about the sit definition and the definition of city planning that had protection as its goal in 1983. In Mersin protective planning began to be applied in 1993 and the length of the planning and approval processes, the disproportionate increase in urban unearned income and the local administrations' lack of sensitivity to the traditional fabric were the reasons why areas were spoiled. Generally it was observable that the functions assigned were different from the functions characteristic of the traditional buildings in the center of the city and could be portable (See Pictures 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9.). The lack of organization in the increase in the city's density in certain regions and in the scattering of this density to other parts of the city increases the spoiled areas in the traditional urban fabric. The greater and more serious function that resulted from decisions regarding the city development plan is the reason why the form and dimensions of the parcels were changed and the proposed new communications axes and the spoiling of the fabric paralleled this thanks to the plan.

Physical Problems

The foremost physical problem originates in the desire for new buildings and results in spoiling the balance between new and traditional buildings. So in the Mersin example the idea that the traditional structures couldn't meet today's needs became the reason for ignoring the existing building stock and not providing for its protection (See Pictures 10-11).

Social and Economic Problems

In protecting urban sit areas the importance of the physical dimension as well as the social and economic dimensions create the main headings in listing problems and solutions. At the head of the problems characterized as social, the conscience and sensitivity of the people about preservation carry priority. On topics such as cultural assets, protection, repair and public sector benefit, an insufficiently informed people puts various problems on the agenda. In places where those who were living in areas of traditional fabric abandoned them for various reasons, the mass of people who are without a conscience and settle in those regions influence the social structure of the area negatively. These areas where the rent is generally lower are shared by people who have difficulty making a living and because these areas can't be looked after in an orderly fashion they are ruined over time (See Pictures 10-11).

Relations with Tourism

Tourism with its resource creation is an inseparable part of a country's development. It creates an important input for the speedy preservations of cultural and natural assets by providing profit. Urban quality and an environment that is taken care of are a leading condition for both tourism and traditional settlements and are concepts that make up an inseparable whole. Rather than traditional buildings remaining functionless and their continuation endangered, tourism assumes an important role by offering the possibility of new and different uses. In contrast to all these positive aspects, tourism may produce the following: Intense pressure and development that cannot be managed can damage cultural and natural assets.

We can research the negative effects of tourism activities on cultural assets in the following way:

- Because of the need for new construction, where supervisory mechanisms are insufficient and in a city that is rich in archaeology like Mersin, tourism may open the way to cultural and natural destruction.
- The periodic substructure of the traditional area may be insufficient to meet the demands of modern, intense tourism and additions in the neighborhood of the immovable cultural asset or to its interior space could damage its special character.
- The effect of rent in the case of tourism can add a dimension toward new construction; however, this situation can become a disadvantage for the traditional fabric.
- That new buildings have to be protected may become why there are various problems in the harmony between the existing fabric and the new building.
- Environmental values that are aspects of tourism and can't be abandoned can turn into negative conditions like pollution and noise for traditional buildings.
- The intensive usage tourism creates can be the reason why the values that make up the traditional environment are destroyed, are not perceived and create an effect beyond their goal and irreversible damage.

THE EVALUATION OF CULTURAL ASSETS IN MODERN LIFE, REUSES, PROPOSALS

Aside from traditional houses very few cultural assets continue in their original function. So according to today's national and international standards of evaluation, it can't be escaped that buildings valued as cultural and historical heritage are being used for new and contemporary functions. However most of these buildings can't meet the requirements of modern life and in this situation the need for spatial additions is felt. Giving traditional buildings new functions has to be done from basic principles of approach.

- All of the building's architectural characteristics during the time it functioned must be protected.
- Traditional buildings may be shouldered with specific functions although the potentials of the buildings mustn't be forgotten.
- The projected materials for the new use mustn't be beyond a certain capacity, and it mustn't be forgotten that the building's being exhibited is a necessary element.
- The technical equipment required for the new function must be of a character and measure that it won't damage the structure.
- The new function must not be such that it blocks the whole of the mass and space, wrecks the characteristic outline and prevents one from seeing the architectural and decorative elements. It has to be possible to remove the projected physical intervention and while modern materials and building techniques are used in the interventions, it must be ensured that they are different from the original structure of the building.

As for policies developed for tourism:

- In order to develop tourism policies development plans have to be prepared. These plans have to be protection and tourism focused.
- A portion of the income derived from tourism must be put into funds related to protection.
- Within tourism policies the shape of local life, culture and history has to be discussed and educational programs organized for that purpose.
- To the extent possible new man-made buildings must be avoided.
- Policies and administration related to the development and maintenance of tourism have to be created.

In the recommendation of one of the international documents accepted by the European Council’s Ministers Committee, it is stated that cultural tourism has become an inseparable part of development, that it has played an important role in the economic, social and cultural development of local societies and in this connection in protecting cultural assets local administrations, the people, protection experts, the owners of cultural assets and the users have to share joint responsibility vis-à-vis what has been debated. It is not enough to protect buildings and sit areas alone during the process of protecting cultural values. Respect has to be shown for the lives of the people who live in that area and for what they are accustomed to. Permission should not be given so that the local people in the vicinity are estranged and social and cultural values should not degenerate in the services that have been designed according to tourists.



P. 1



P. 2

Functional changes and structural distortions in the traditional structure the urban site area.



P. 3

The traditional structure and difference function



P. 4



P.5

The traditional structure - change of function and discharging plug or setup



P.6



P.7

The monumental gate and loss of qualified



P.8



P.9

The traditional structure of the function change and distortions



P.10



P.11

Left and deterioration of the traditional structure

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