

The Evaluation of Urban Historic Sites Rehabilitation Project for Tourism Destination: Case Study of Hamamonu/Ankara

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1 ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study is the evaluation of Hamamonu rehabilitation project from two viewpoints. First, Hamamonu district have been evaluated with urban identity and conservation. Hamamonu district reflects the effects of rehabilitation project on conservation historical values of old and unused parts of the city in Ankara. It also has been deemed worthy of 2011 European Destination of excellence award. Second, the site has been evaluated from the tourists' perspective giving some assessments and perceptions of users about the area.

The Altindag Municipality has been selected Hamamonu district as the rehabilitation project due to the historical values and urban regeneration necessities in central part of Ankara. Since 2006, Altindag Municipality have reconstructed or completely rebuilt many buildings and designed pedestrian zone in an area of around 210 hectares. The rehabilitation team tried to restore the original charm of the district which reflects traditional styles of Turkish Republic to attract inhabitants back and make the place an interesting destination for tourists.

Our study has been developed mainly based on field survey and questionnaire. Visitors (native and/or foreign) have analyzed and tried to evaluate their ideas about the district, as a tourism destination, post Hamamonu rehabilitation project with randomly selected questionnaire.

In summary, it has been tried to distinguish how much this project is successful in urban identity and historical values conservation beside its international successes.

2 INTRODUCTION

According to Lynch (1960) [3], "There seems to be public image of any city which is overlap of individual images". Related to psychological aspects, Lynch [3] analyzed cities as a memorable system of elements and organized structures. In addition, he believes that every city has its own specific memories resembled by its citizens in each period of time.

Today, beside the reduction of environmental and social life quality, the identity of every city is disappeared as well due to the pressure of urban development. This is not only a specific characteristic of developing countries, but it has also occurred in developed countries since 19th century influencing by rapid city transformation. Through these changes, demolition of old historical area impresses the characteristics of each city. As a result, relevant disciplines have found a particular solution to eliminate these hazards. Urban rehabilitation is a key concept propounded for this purpose.

Urban rehabilitation is a group of activities returning to reinstate the historical areas in which the deformation begins, but the original character of the area has not been lost. These actions preserve historical areas or buildings that form the identity of the cities in contrast to the rapid development. Historical areas contain huge amount of data presenting the local architecture and social identity of the places. Rehabilitation and improvement plans, projects, and related policies protect the historical environment from the urbanization, unlicensed construction and dilapidation. However, the protection of historical areas does not mean stopping the development. According to modernity concept, development is an inevitable phenomenon. In addition to development importance, protecting the historical areas is a significant concept.

Today, most of the historical-valued conservation areas are urban ruined areas that occupied by the groups with low incomes. Therefore, beside the preserving and restoring the cultural property conserving the

historical values, improving the life quality of the low income groups play an important role in this concept. Consequently, the protection does not only express the importance of preservation, but must also be selective and with the cooperation of the society in order to get the positive results (Tekeli 2009) [6]. High lightening this aim, Hamamonu rehabilitation project is chosen for our research.

3 MATERIALS AND METHODS

The main material of this study is Hamamonu district which is influenced by rapid urbanization, increasing population and growing economy and consequently turned to subsidence and unused area in the heart of Ankara. This area was chosen for the research because of the following reasons;

- It represents a specific historical period of time
- Historical structures are still existed
- Historical buildings are currently used by dwellers
- The rehabilitation projects are still in progress
- The rehabilitation project in Hamamonu is rewarded internationally as a tourism destination

In this article, two aspects of Hamamonu rehabilitation project are evaluated. First, Hamamonu district with urban identity and conservation is evaluated. For this purpose, the maps and plans of site prepared by the Altindag Municipality are analyzed. The site was visited for several times during the research and the data obtained from the site survey was interpreted.

Second, the site from the visitors' point of view is perused by giving some assessments and perceptions about the area. For this aim, the required information was selected and the questions were prepared based on the gathered information. In most of the questions, people are asked to rate their opinion according to the site status.

In order to express the results of the rehabilitation project investments from the visitors' point of view and distinguish the deficiency of the project, questionnaires have been utilized corresponded by 120 persons. There was lack of number of tourists due the season. So, most of the questionnaires were replied by the local visitors including students living in dormitories around and office workers. For getting exact results, half of the survey was filled during the week and the rest was completed during the weekend which was visitors mostly.

4 HISTORY OF HAMAMONU

Ankara is a very old city and its surroundings history stretches back to Hittite civilization of Bronze Age [2]. There are various Hittite, Phrygian, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman archaeological sites in the city. But only a few historic structures surrounding the old citadel of the city have survived to present day. Ankara gained prominence under the leadership of Ataturk and it has been declared as the capital of new Turkish Republic on October 13th 1923 [1].

The development plan of Ankara was prepared in 1929-1930 to modify the Ottoman town to a modern city (Tankut 1990) [5]. However, limited financial facilities and unexpected population augmentation caused unplanned urbanization in the city [1]. Our research region, Hamamonu, is one of the historical parts suffered from destruction and unplanned urban development. Such a rapid change caused deterioration of environmental conditions and influencing the social group living there and made social transformation abusively. As a result of these changes, most of the inhabitants left the area and the region was occupied by low-income group of people.

5 LOCATION OF HAMAMONU

Hamamonu is located in Altindag district in central part of Ankara in the north of the historic Ankara Castle beside the Talatpasa Boulevard which is shown in Figure 1.

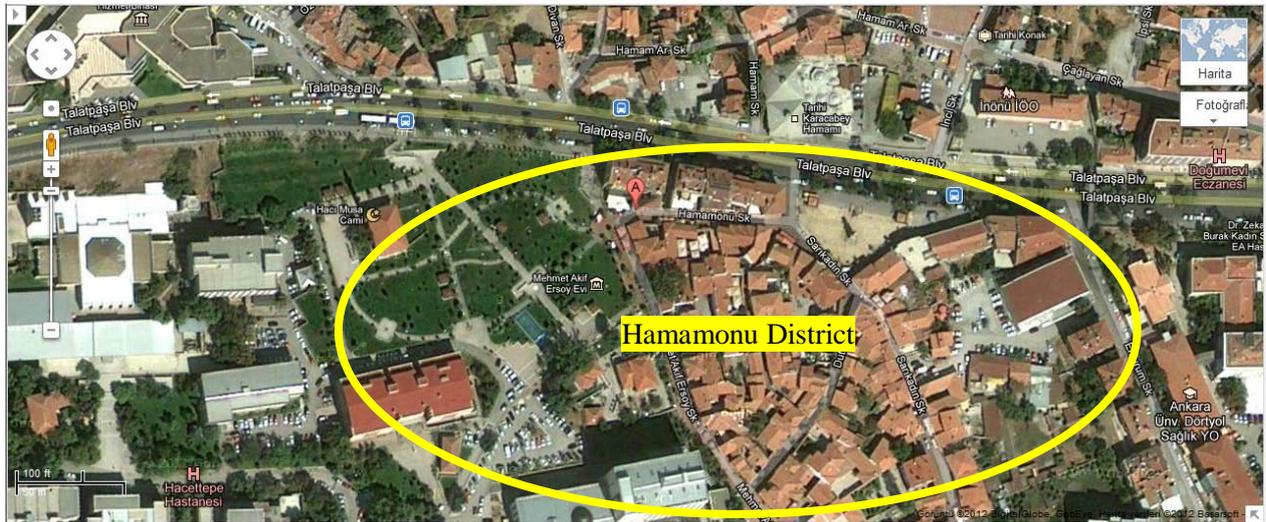


Figure1, Hamamonu district location in Google Erath

6 PROPERTIES AND STRUCTURE OF HAMAMONU DISTRICT BEFORE THE REHABILITATION PROJECT

Buildings and houses located in Hamamonu district reflects the traditional style of Turkish houses. Over the passage of time, most of the old buildings ruined or lost their pervious properties. Different parts of buildings such as windows, doors and etc. have been modified with modern materials.

In addition, abusive condition of buildings and streets made these places become dangerous and unsafe suburbs which affected the life of the dwellers. Therefore, most of the houses and shops have been abandoned. The number of vacant and unused buildings increased rapidly, caused destruction significantly. Figure 2, demonstrates Hamamonu district structure before rehabilitation project. Besides the alteration of buildings structure in the district, the form and construction of the streets also have been changed. In order to transport the vehicle traffic, most of the streets were extended and covered by asphalts. As a result, social and structural form of district changed completely and most of the buildings with historical values come to the brink of destruction over the years.



Figure 2, Hamamonu district structure before the rehabilitation project

7 REHABILITATION PROJECT PROCESS AND INVESTMENTS

The Altındag Municipality, selected Hamamonu district as a rehabilitation project due to the historical values and urban regeneration necessities. Since 2006, Altındag Municipality reconstructed or, in some cases, completely rebuilt many of the buildings and design pedestrian zone in a 210 hectares area [7]. The main aim of the rehabilitation project team was restoring the original charm of the district in order to attract inhabitants back and make the place a spectacular environment for tourists.

For this purpose, rotten places of exterior building walls were scraped and painted with the original structure in the street consolidation project [7]. The collapsed parts on the walls also rebuilt with original materials including the details.

The wooden parts of buildings were cleaned and painted. The deformed ones were also replaced with the original forms. The major structured part, includes stove pipes that were out of the windows or walls. In rehabilitation project, new chimneys have been constructed to get rid of the hazards for the environment [7]. Furthermore, damaged tiles on the roofs, wooden girders covering parts and rain gutters have been changed with new materials [7]. There are approximately 250 structures existing in streets of district in which the applications have been completed (Figure 3).



Figure 3, Hamamonu district structure after rehabilitation project

Through the rehabilitation project, specific pedestrian zone in an area of around 210 hectares were designed by the Altindag Municipality. In addition, most of the streets were closed to the vehicle traffic and the pavement of streets has been changed to bricks instead of asphalt. The communication and electric lines were restored underground consequently. The rehabilitation project applications deduced the appearance of historical forms of the streets belonging to old Ankara again which exists long and narrow form.

The nodes are the strategic points of every city and usually located at the intersection of the main arteries[3]. At the same time, they are the gathering and meeting point of the people. Altindag Municipality analyzed the district as a touristic destination and determined some nodes in district. Mehmet Akif Ersoy Park and Square are the most important nodes of the district. Beside the node constructions, the Altindag Municipality also established cultural and art centers in different parts of district to attract tourists.

Landmarks as well, have an important role identifying the cities and districts[3]. Generally, landmarks are demonstrated by their size, position, contractual materials and architectural features. In Hamamonu district the Clock Tower and some other buildings (such as Karacabey, Hacı Musa and Srikadin mosques) can be defined as landmarks of district (Figure 4). During the rehabilitation project these landmarks renewed and reconstructed according to their original form.

After the restoration project, some of the buildings in Hamamonu district have been registered as cultural heritage including Karacabey, Sarikadi, Hacı Seyyit, Hacı Musa, Hacettepe, Celebi Mehmet mosques.



Figure 4, The Clock Tower and Karacabey mosques.

8 THE ASSESSMENTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Totally 120 persons were participated in the questionnaire in which 65 of them were women and the rest were men. The basic information of participation is illustrated in table 1.

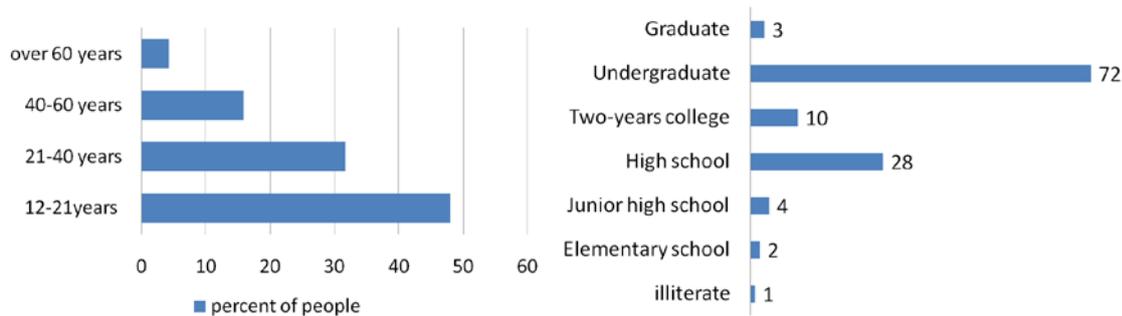


Table 1, The information of participants' age and educational level

In table 2, the evaluation of the design and restoration after the rehabilitation project according to the questionnaire is presented. The assessment includes the participants' opinions about the rehabilitation project in detail. The responses are graded in points from 1 representing the less to 5 representing the most. According to the result, buildings' facade and lighting elements of district after rehabilitation project have got high score from the visitors' point of view.

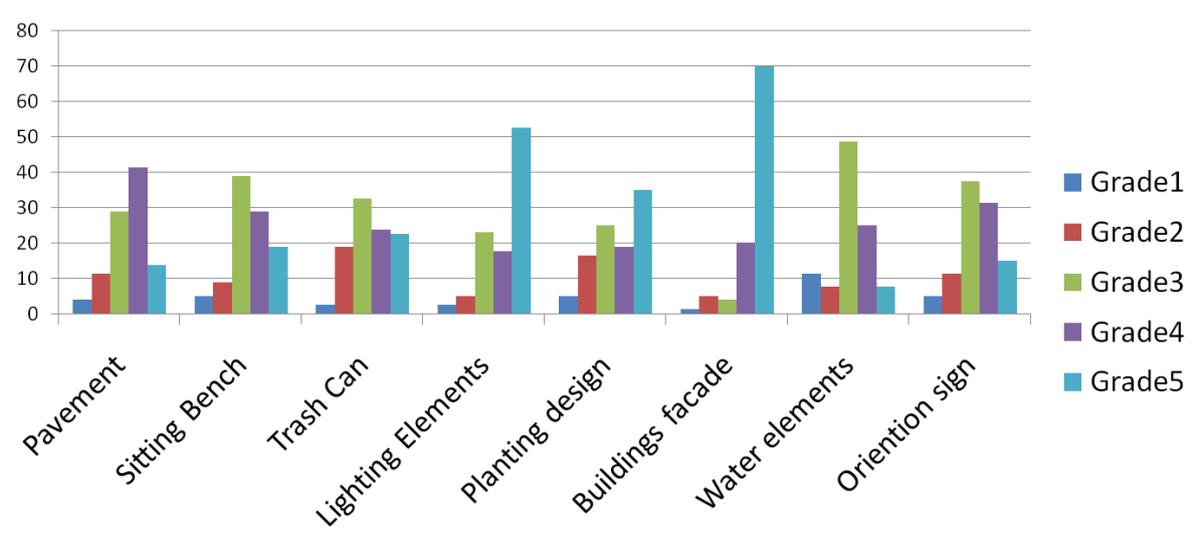


Table 2, The evaluation of design and restoration after the rehabilitation project according to the questionnaire

The participants were also asked to comment about the identity of the district. As described before, the renewal team tried to restore the original form of the district. Based on the responses illustrated in table 3, it is obvious that visitors believe that the original form is protected.

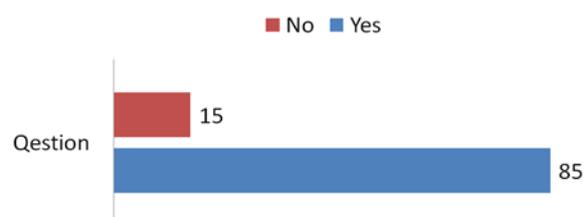


Table 3, The evaluation of the identity protection

As another question exists in the questionnaire the people were asked to evaluate the structure and problems related to design of the project. According to the result of first question, most of the people believed that the

district have a unique design. In the second one, accessibility of the different parts of district is evaluated. Question C involves the answer replied to the question related to the synchronization of vegetative and constructional design with each other. Part D, illustrates that the project reflects the original form of the district from the tourists' point of view. More than half of the visitors believe that there are some architectural furnitures which are not synchronized with the historical parts in the next question. They also believe that the existing social activities are suitable for the Hamamonu structure. According to part G, there is a lack of green and open spaces in the project. Approximately half of the participants opinion is that the vegetative design of the district does not reflect the historical form of the place based on the answers pointed in part H. The results of the questions are shown below in table 4.

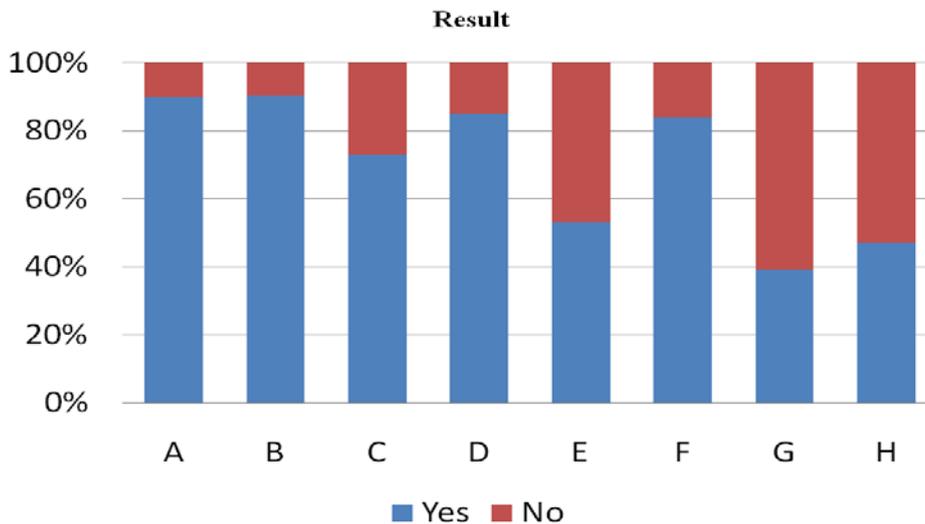


Table 4, The evaluation of the problems related to design of the district

The assessment also includes the questions about the deficiency of the rehabilitation project in the district corresponded by the visitors. According to the responses, some of the results are explained in this part. Lack of green and open space is one the most important ones. Generally, visitors prefer to see more landscape designs in the district. Lack of the water elements such as pool and sprinkler is another important factor from the visitors' point of view. Another problem refers to the lack of parking lots in which effects the transportation abusively. In every touristic destination, orientation signs have an effective role to guide the tourists. In Hamamonu district, most of the visitors suffer by the lack of them.

9 REHABILITATION PROJECT PROBLEMS AND DISADVANTAGES

One of the most important aims in every urban rehabilitation project is process development while preserving the sociality and identification of districts. For this purpose, urban rehabilitation project must be planned and participated with the current residents and entrepreneurs. Planners must reach an agreement with residents and entrepreneurs about the aims of the rehabilitation project. In the Hamamonu case study, living conditions of district were completely changed after the rehabilitation project. The rehabilitation project could not return most of the dwellers back to their houses. The first reason is that the increasing price of the houses after rehabilitation project in district encouraged low income groups of district to sell their houses. However, it does not mean that the local people are not satisfied with the changes. They believe that neighborhood relationships absolutely have been changed after the rehabilitation project. The second reason is due to the changes in the usage of the buildings. Nowadays, large amount of buildings is used for commercial and cultural purposes such as restaurants, cafes and craft fairs illustrated in table 5.

Streets	Business and Shops	Residences
Hamamonu	21	2
Inali	5	4
Firin	3	17
Dutlu	7	8
Sarikadin	22	4
Mehmet Akif Ersoy	10	6
Tanis	1	-
Zulufllu	-	22
Akbaba	-	7
Saka	-	11
Silivri	-	6
Kalem	2	10
Erzurum	2	7
Yan	1	6
Van	1	5

Table 5, Usage of buildings in different streets of Hamamonu (Kale 2011) [1]

In each rehabilitation project, specific characters of districts must be preserved. The physical situation must be preserved by minimum demolition protecting the whole structure of district, green development in courtyards and decoration of facades. In Hamamonu district, the Altindag Municipality has renewed the facades of houses and buildings according to their original forms signifying the propounded points. On the other hand, gardens and inside parts of private houses were not included to the rehabilitation project (Figure 5). Continuing the project in the same way, causes distortion of yards and building insides over the passage of time. To prevent this, the rehabilitation project should cover the inside of the houses beside the outside coverage.



Figure 5, View of the private and public houses courtyards

Rehabilitation project must reply the social needs of the local people living there. In Hamamonu rehabilitation project, public facilities such as streets, squares and parks also renewed and preserved in accordance with the public needs. However, there is still a lack of playground for children and parking lots in the district.

Urban rehabilitation project for tourism destination must also include a social planning in order to make the dwellers educate how to manner in a touristic place. Decisions and goals related to the urban rehabilitation project must be explained in an open way and preferably be discussed in the location with the obligatory participation of dwellers. One of the problems in Hamamonu case study is the lack of preparation of dwellers for the social modifications applying the project.

10 CONCLUSION

One of the main purposes in every rehabilitation project is preserving and developing the project in a synchronized way. For this aim, the rehabilitation project should include both of the goals. Hamamonu rehabilitation project has an effective role renewing the historical parts of Ankara. Also, has significant

benefits in economics and social aspects attracting tourists to the district. However, there is still lack of appropriate procedures in order to encourage the dwellers return back. Beside that, the policy of the rehabilitation project could not provide educational processes for a tourism destination. It is claimed that public education and consciousness is necessary with the support of non-governmental organizations [4]. The Hamamonu rehabilitation project have modified the situation of the district. The renewing process is completed successfully, although the sustainable development processes are not provided based on the main purpose.

According to the site survey and assessments related to it, the Hamamonu rehabilitation project satisfies the tourists' needs. However, there is a lack of accomodation places with a historical view which can be attractive place for tourists stay there.

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