

LANDSCAPE DESIGN PROJECT OF HISTORICAL PLACES: CASE STUDY OF BIGA MUNICIPALITY

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Abstract

The army that frequently campaigned at the time of the Ottoman Empire performed the salaah at the open-air places founded for worship called Namazgah. Later, these places became the sea of points for the people who went on a pilgrimage or went to become soldiers, and used for isha or tarawih prayers, too. In this study, the stages of the project of Biga Municipality in order for Namazgah, which is a historical and cultural heritage from the Ottoman Era. For this purpose, having functional restoration and using the space close by as a recreation area have been explained. The detailed information about the project and its location have been obtained from the authorities of the Biga Municipality before designing this project. Furthermore, the expected problems and the main concept of the project have taken into consideration while running this project. In the results of this project, a new and restored landscape look has been given to the old Namazgah so that the residents of Hamidiye (Biga District) and its neighborhood could perform their worships easily after the completion of the project.

Key words: Biga Municipality, Canakkale, Namazgah (Open-Air Prayer Place), landscape project

INTRODUCTION

In past, many Namazgah and worshipping places have been built for the purpose to bring the common people together, share their daily activities as well as could perform their prayers and other religious duties. Such kinds of activities are still being continued from ancient age till today (Cayci et al., 2012). These venues have been constructed in the form of open as well as closed common places (Berktaş and Atasoy, 2007)

The concept and shape of worship vary among religions. Churches and synagogues have been constructed for ritual practices and ceremonies in Christianity and Judaism (Dikme, 2012). In Islam, it is often mentioned about the importance of prayer in the Qur'an as well as the Hadith. That is why, places have been built intended for this worship (MRA, 2014). Muslims, from the first age, used every clean place for worship (Sems, 2012). The last Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) also performed his prayers in clean open places. Sometimes, the Friday and Eid prayers were performed by the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) in open areas near the Masjid-e-Nabvi and later, these open places were converted into a Namazgah (Can, 2008). Islam was one of the dominant

religion of the Ottoman Empire along with other monotheistic religion such as Judaism and Christianity, where their followers continued to live without any hardship through a proper public system. A speedy increase began in the number of worship places at the beginning of the 16th century by the time of Yavuz Sultan Selim as a result of transfer of caliphate to Ottoman Dynasty (Bas, 2011). Ottoman Sultans, guided themselves to the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) in many aspects and continued their Namazgah tradition and constructed Namazgah in open areas next to the closed worship places. The Ottoman army that frequently campaigned, constituted Namazgah at appropriate places so that they could perform the salaah. After that, these places became the sea of points for those people who went on a pilgrimage or army training, and such places were also used for isha or tarawih prayers. These places have been established by taking consideration to the cities, towns, caravan routes, picnic points and the major intersections of army shipment along with the premises that eliminate the needs of common people. Fountains, wells and ablution lavatories must be added next to these places for proper cleanliness which is a precondition of worship in Islam religion. In summers, the areas where

large trees were found have been selected as Namazgah because they needed to be cool for worshipers. But those trees are not found further more for providing shades to the worshipers (Kurum, 2007; Bayraktar, 2012). That is why, new trees were planted in those area with the help of this project.

Biga has mostly undergone a calm process during the Ottoman domination. It has become a transit route and also led an important strategical position of Ottoman forces while moving to Rumelia and Western Anatolia. During the death of Chalabi Mehmed, it was decided to assemble the Anatolian Beylerbeyi forces in Biga before moving to Izmir Beyi walking on the Cuneyd Bey, and the movement has been started from here. Anatolian Beylerbeyi forces have been gathered in the Biga Plain for moving to Rumelia both during participating in navy campaigns as well as in the campaign conducted for European countries. The army, accommodated in Biga, would prepare itself for the campaign and performed their salaah (prayers) in open places. The remnant of a Namazgah, established in ancient times, is still found today in Hamdibey District (Biga Municipality, 2014).

The first salaah, during the conquest of Biga (1344-1354-1364, the conquest of Biga is stated as different in various sources but the year of 1354 is largely being considered), was performed in this Namazgah due to none availability of Masjid in Biga. An original Mihrab which was made out of marble is found into the wall of Qibla. Until recently sound stairs of the Minbar (pulpit) couldn't get through to the present day. In Namazgah, a single decorated marble stone was found between Minbar and Mihrab which is inserted into the masonry wall. Having a water-filled pot onto it provided for the consumption of birds. As embossment, it is similar to a badge motif. In past, this stone has been brought and fixed there aimed to stop the stealing attempts into the territory of Namazgah. That stone has been placed upside and down before this project but it has been put in a correct and suitable place after the restoration of the Namazgah. After that the birds have lost the water supply functional setup (Anonymous, 2014).

The extant, this place carrying historical and cultural heritage characteristics has been destroyed, and it has lost the feature of a Namazgah. In this study, it is aimed to give information about the prepared landscape project that ensures the performance of the salaah worship again in this area by protecting the aesthetic and materialistic features of the area. Design phases of the project and its usage has been included in these phases when becoming a part of this project.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study area is located within 90 km from the center of Çanakkale province in Biga (Figure 1). The area, situated in Hamdibey District, is 0.5 km away from the center of Biga and 64 m above from sea level. The project area is surrounded by Hıdır and Namazlık Street in north, Şehitlik and Sümer Street in south, Yaprak Street in west and Asmalı Street in its eastern side.



Figure 1. Location of the Study Area (Original picture taken by the author in 2014)

In this study; topographic data and coordinate information of the area have been obtained from the Housing Authority of Biga Municipality by measuring the field with a GPS station due to the insufficient slope and plan data related to the project area. The data relating to the previous history of the study area as well as the location of the Biga have also been examined. The documents relating to the construction features and the short histories of Namazgah were utilized. The information have been obtained by interviewing with the municipal authorities and the taken photographs related to project area were also used as materials. Autodesk, AutoCAD 2014

and Sketchup Pro 2012 programs were used during the creation of project.

The methodology of this study has consisted in observation, assessment, data collection and analysis phases. The studies regarding to our project have been elaborated with 6 subheadings, given below, taking help and benefits from the following studies: of Korkut (Korkut, 2002) landscape architecture studies have been done of Korkut (Korkut, 2002), landscape design process of Uckumbet Parki of Yilmaz and Yilmaz (Yilmaz and Yilmaz, 2009), outdoor spaces of the public offices and institutes examined of Atabeyoglu and Bulut (Atabeyoglu and Bulut, 2007), design of the parking and ceremonial areas of Tekirdag Governorship handled of Sisman et al (Sisman et al., 2008), design process of the Rector's House of Bartın University operated of Celikyay (Celikyay, 2011), the landscape design of the office of Erzurum Metropolitan Municipality of Turgut (Turgut, 2011), landscape designing in the gardens of primary education level schools of Kiper and Karakaya (Kiper and Karakaya, 2013), design of the campus of Social Sciences Vocational High School handled of Atabeyoglu (Atabeyoglu, 2014) and opportunities for design approaches in landscape planning described of Bartlett et al (Bartlett et al., 2014).

- Requirements determination of project's owner
- Site selection, objectives and identification of problems
- Data collection intended to determine the current situation (survey and literature studies)
- Legal status, problems originating from area, identification of limitations related to the construction and financial matters and sharing them with project's owner
- Creating functional schemes with analysis of area and its surroundings
- Application project (structural and planting design)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The basic aim of this project work is to redesign and restart the activities of the Namazgah that is being found idle for a long time and facing a continuous destruction and

open for looting by the unknown people. The different phases of this study are given below in detail:

Requirements determination of project's owner

It is required to re-arrange and regulate the Namazgah along with its surroundings where the first salaah was performed during the conquest of Biga, and also being used frequently for prayers in the Ottoman period. It is required that the properties of Namazgah should be adhered to its actual form and used materials till the formation of places during the restoration to its former function of this idle area.

Site selection, objectives and identification of problems

The most important limiting factor for a designer is the need of large openings to Namazgah. In the project area, it is not possible to create further place/structure fiction by giving patterns with ground materials. In case of excessive slope of some sections in the outside rest area of Namazgah causes difficulties. Also created sufficient area for the usage of common people. Although the high impact of view; transportation and wind factors were also found among necessary problems. And then put some solution to solve such problems. Investigations were carried out in the area prior to start the project work. For this purpose the requirements and desires of municipality have been taken into account. The major problems which have been faced during planning this project are given below:

- The inter-street access roads are narrow and winding because of the area is at a distance near to the city center. The crowd tries to reach this area for performing their daily worships collectively (that is called 'Cemaat' in Turkish).
- There is no sufficient space for parking around the area.
- Recreational area outside of the Namazgah, and the closed and semi-open places of this area must be constructed by taking into account the sloppiness of the area. This situation plays a limiting role in some points of the area.

- Some historical remnants are found with a portion of the boundary wall that needs to be preserved. Such a condition creates limitations while designing the area.

- Security vulnerabilities, like falling and slipping, are found in such recreational areas where the effect of view is much high.

- The necessity of leaving open space for salaah along with making pausing points, and the circulation will be created by new comers to the area along with the people waiting for salaah, and those who taking ablution and doing preliminary preparation for salaah inside the Namazgah create opponent interaction.

- It reveals the necessity of appropriate use of the project period, selection of natural materials and an area having historical features.

- It brings the necessity of making slope supporting walls in both areas (Namazgah and recreational).

- Creating terraces in the recreational area by getting benefit from slope in order to prevent the reduction of the effect of project site.

- Inadequacy of enlargement of the roads and other places found in project area and its vicinity.

- There would be bottlenecks related to the project i.e.; drainage and runoff caused by rain in the project area.

Data collection intended to determine the current situation (survey and literature studies)

Figure 2 shows the area where the data have been collected and also used as area of this project.



Figure 2. Study Area and Its Vicinity (Google Earth)

Access to area has been provided with the help of different street links. In spite of that, the

structure and widths of the road by using one-way applications. Shrinking of different places created problems and made impossible the construction of maneuver of project area. Figure 3 shows the location of project area situated on a sloping hill that has been called as an “angle of the excellent”. This location had been used by the army personnel for preparation before any war campaign during the Ottoman Period. Despite of slope, the Ottoman Empire army does not link with the information for the ground about its suitable characteristics. The location is with a constant breeze. In the present, lighting is very insufficient and security weaknesses are constituted.



Figure 3. A View from the Study Area (Original picture taken by the author in 2014)

Legal status, problems originating from area, identification of limitations of construction, financial matters and sharing them with project's owner

In the 6th Article of No. 2863 Law of Protection of Cultural and Natural Assets, the conservation required immovable and natural heritage are described as follows:

a) Immovable properties were made up to the end of the 19th century with conservation required natural assets,

b) Immovable properties were made after the determined data in terms of their importance and characteristics are required to be protected by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism,

c) Immovable cultural properties situated within a protected area,

d) Buildings and common places were considered as the great historical assets of the National Defense authority. The establishment of the Republic of Turkey along with those

historical houses related to the founder of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal ATATÜRK without the concept of time and registration. The measurements of our national history would be considered to be determined by the help of this project.

However, the architectural, historical, aesthetic, archaeological and other important features of the Namazgah and its vicinities are required to be protected under the terms of the decision of Protection Councils. They were not counted as conservation of required immovable cultural assets. Rock tombs, written, pictorial and embossed rocks, illustrated caves, mound, tumuli, historical sites, acropolis and necropolises; castles, fortresses, bastion, rampart, historical military posts, redoubt and barracks with fixed weapons found inside them; ruins, caravanserais, inns, baths and madrasahs; domes, shrines and inscriptions, bridges, aqueducts, waterways, cistern and wells; remnants of historical routes, milestones, perforated stones indicating the old boundaries, stone monument; altar, shipyards, docks; historical palaces, mansions, houses, waterside residences and villas; mosques, masjids, musallas, namazgah; public fountains, alms house, mint, hospital, place for timekeeper, dervish lodges; graveyards, ottoman bazaar, covered turkish bazaar, grand bazaar, synagogues, temples, covered markets, basilicas, churches, monasteries; mosque complexes, ancient monuments and ruin walls; wall paintings, embossments, mosaics, fairy chimneys and other similar properties are included among the examples of immovable cultural properties.

Historical caves, rock shelters; trees and group of trees that show some kind of special characteristics are from the examples of immovable natural heritages.

The municipal authorities were informed about the identified problems related to area along with the relevant legal regulations, and the necessary permissions intended for construction and restoration have been provided. Financial concerns and application based building difficulties have also been submitted to the relevant authorities according to the results of the survey work by considering the physical properties of the area.

Creating functional schemes with analysis of area and its surroundings

The usage areas will be created during the design phase that have been identified within the need-based program, in the light of results of obtained data from written documents and observations made on the spot. The utilizations, according to different needs, include the fitting solutions and the shaped place are given below:

- Flat and wide hard ground to be made inside of Namazgah for performing the salaah
- Fountain
- Mihrab
- Minbar (Pulpit)
- Minaret
- Restoration of the Namazgah boundary wall
- Waiting place before salaah
- Historical archway
- Planting intended for Shade
- Allowing the parking maneuver and parking for vehicles such as buses, those coming to the area, if necessary.
- Planting to reduce the effect of wind on the recreational area
- Semi-closed sitting and resting units
- Walking and strolling tracks

Application project

The application project has been prepared in order to ensure the protection of the historical and cultural texture of the revised Namazgah and elaboration with intended to the implementation of recreational areas that found on the sloping area next to Namazgah (Figure 4 & 5).

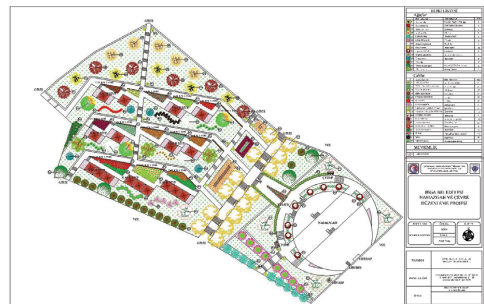


Figure 4. Application Project (by Authors)

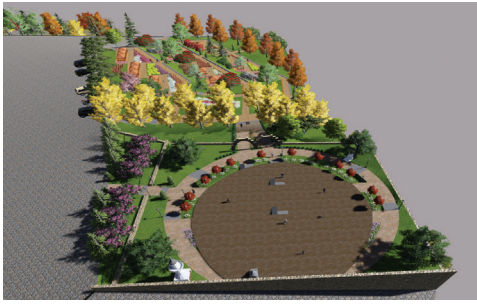


Figure 5. Application Project 3D (by Authors)

A crescent-shaped axle has been designed in the Namazgah area consisted of 3027 m² for its internal transportation. This axle is connected to the junction of Sümer and Şehitlik Streets from its southwest and to the recreational area with an arched entrance from its northwest direction. The center of the crescent has been divided into 3 levels including obstructed ramp and stairs, and left as hard ground (Figure 6).

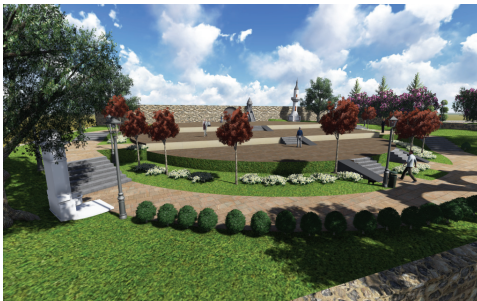


Figure 6. A View from the Area of Namazgah (by Authors)

A fountain was placed for ablution on the left side of the entrance to recreational area, and designed from marble and natural stone by considering the direction of Qibla and preserving the original locations of mihrab and minbar. A minaret has been placed beside the minbar symbolically. The walls with most of their destroyed parts and surrounding the Namazgah were constructed again over the entire area by protecting their original heights. *Ginkgo biloba* (Maidenhair tree) is used on both sides and *Robinia pseudoacacia* (False acacia/Black locust) only on the left side of the arched door in transition to Namazgah from the recreational area (Figure 7). At the central part of the entrance of Namazgah an islet has been

formed with the cultivation of the *Rosa sp.* (Rose) that is the symbol of affection, heard from the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) in Islam religion. *Buxus sempervirens* (Common box) was used as the boundary element along a line in the section of this part up to the first stairs. Roses (*Rosa sp.*) have been given place in between the *Lagerstroemia indica* (Crape myrtle) which planted inside of crescent without making narrow the area that is used for performing salaah.

Cedrus deodora has been used in its southwest entrance for the prevention of pollution and noise originating from vehicle transition as well as creating wind screen. *Cercis siliquastrum* was given place in the lower elevation of the same area along the row. *Cupressus mac. goldcrest* "Spiral" has been used in two points to highlight the entrance. *Magnolia grandiflora* was planted on the four corners of the area in order to create shadowed spaces, and grass fields were also created here.



Figure 7. A View from the Area of Namazgah (by Authors)

Recreational area

The area allocated for the purpose of recreation is 5170 m². Four stages were made in the project area where the inclination of the area has been found into its peak. The first three stages were aimed to design for sitting and strolling and the last one is only intended for planting. A total of 17 arbors were placed in the area with the size of 4x4m, including 9 in the first stage and each 4 in the second and third stages (Figure 8).

The area is separated by a road that connects the Namazgah and the Sümer Street to Namazlık Street. Three connection paths have been created along this road for access to the

area. Plots containing *Gaura lindheimeri* (Gaura) and *Rosa sp.* (Rose) plants have been designed in rectangular form in the area found between these two roads. A single entrance was given to the area from its south. *Robinia pseudoacacia* (False acacia) has been added to the spaces along the street by protecting the existing pine species. Spaces found in the backside of arbors for sitting and strolling purposes have been arranged with different plant species by considering the differences of colors, textures and designs. In these spaces; *Berberis thunbergii atropurpurea* (Japanese barberry), *Cotinus coggygria* (Smoke tree/smoke bush), *Forsythia intermedia* (Lynwood gold), *Viburnum opulus* (Guelder rose), *Spiraea vanhouttei* (Pink ice), *Cornus alba* (Dogwood) shrubs and trees were planted by using spiral pattern. *Tilia tomentosa*, *Albizia julibrissin*, *Eleagnus angustifolia*, and *Picea pungens* trees were used as solitary (Figure 9). *Cupressus mac. goldcrest "Spiral"* has been placed reciprocally along the middle transportation road in the area. The area found in the lowest level was planted by using *Acer negundo*, *Acer platanoides* and *Betula pendula* tree species (Figure 10).



Figure 8. A View from Recreational Area (by Authors)



Figure 9. A View from Recreational Area (by Authors)



Figure 10. Plantation Design of Namazgah and its Surroundings (by Authors)

CONCLUSIONS

Our country possesses an important historical and cultural background and a state her roots are based on long years. Despite of hosting many historical legacies, some of them were not protected by showing the necessary importance, and have reached to the point of extinction. Namazgah, one of the historical entrust of our nation over the years, have also not been protected. The area of Namazgah that situated in Hamidiye District of Biga town in Çanakkale had being used for accommodation, performing the salaah and other religious activities in time of the Ottoman Empire; and then in spite of its use by the local people, it has undergone to various damages until today.

We aimed to start the activities of this area again and protecting its historical texture. The area, found beside it, has been designed by taking benefit from its incline feature, also supported with sitting units consisted from arbor systems.

Latest materials in combination with the old designs of the Namazgah is tried to restore in this project. The project materials have been selected in the lights of the directions of the Turkish Ministry of the Protection of History and Cultural Heritages without their least side effects to nature. The vicinities and neighborhood areas of the Namazgah was being faced many difficulties before this project. This project was aimed to eliminate such problems and difficulties in the lights of their structural solutions by taking help from the information related to the project location from the authority of the Biga Municipality.

Firstly, this project was prepared and secondly presented to the authorized personnel of the Biga Municipality of Canakkale Province. Consequently, the residents of the above mentioned municipality started their collective worships easily, particularly in religious holidays and special occasions, in the newly restored Namazgah after the completion of this project. Moreover, the open public places, park site and other recreational activities were started next to the surroundings of Namazgah with the help of this project.

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