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Reviewing the role of urban landscape and vision on improving environmental quality (Case Study: Sa'di Street – Semnan)

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Abstract

Quality of urban areas and improvement of it have always been considered as one of the main issues in the process of urbanization. It might be possible to consider this importance as the result of fundamental changes in intellectual patterns during the past two decades in one side and its proposal in all aspects of human life on the other side; though this is one of the main influential concepts in urban landscape and vision, and there are various approaches available regarding this matter. These approaches have decreased the nature of landscape concept to simple decorating concept and even considering it equal to any type of interaction between human and environment and it identification. So there are several results for each definition in terms of planning and management. Urban landscape – as the objective of city – is the most impressive urban index for human beings. The issue of lack of attention to city vision and landscape, and efforts in identifying and creating of it, is one of the most important problems of cities. Increase in Population as a threat to city life, migration of rural population to urban areas and large cities, traffic, air pollution, open space, green space and playgrounds and several other issues, are among the items that have been discussed relatively more than issue of urban landscape and its problems and more papers and books have been written on it. Urban landscape is in fact all the elements that can be seen in the city and can be watched by human eyes. These items form urban landscape when they are integrated and combined with several factors in every moment. This article seeks to enhance the environmental quality to organize urban landscape in Sa'di Street through discovery of historical meanings, cultural codes and local architectural terms in visual landscape of the city, and giving sense to it in physical and visual formats. Therefor with review of Store street in New York – as an foreign sample - and Hamze street in Isfahan – as a domestic sample – the existing situation of Sa'di street is reviewed and SWOT analysis is then implemented for examining the weaknesses and strength factors and regulating the urban landscape of this street through field-documentary studies.

Key Words:*Urban Landscape, Designing and Organizing, Identity and beauty, environmental quality, Sa'di Street*

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Introduction

The City, as a part of nature and outcome of culture, individual and group, illusions and experience, is in fact, a humanity concept. As stated by Aldorosi "The city is nothing more a synchronized History." The human environment is not only natural factors such as trees, hills and plains, but also made of the factors or what in English is called a man-made environment which provides major part of the living environment; (Mozayani, 1:1389) or in the statement of Kevin Linch expressing that "The City is a maquette of History which is made of brick, concrete, glass, stone etc.", the theme lies inside; That the urban landscape is able to demonstrate different historical seasons of an urban community (Golkar 40:1385). Urban landscape, or in other words, the inner-city streets, roads, squares, spaces, etc. are the result of a historical range and is affected by human tradition and culture (Aliabadi 6:1382). The entrance of each city as a symbol of that city represents the culture and identity of the city in the minds of its residents and visitors (Davodpour & Moghareh 76:1387-88)

The city is a dynamic and evolving phenomenon, hence its overall landscape and vision has the same features and will be constantly changing. These changes - under the influence of social and cultural situations – are sometimes fast and sometimes slow. Tibaldez has also emphasized on the point that "Cities and Urban Environments, are intrinsically and constantly changing. These environments are Dynamic and not static, and accordingly this issue should be considered in the process of design, production and management (Tibaldez 111:1383)

The identity of each city is recognized by the visual properties of the environmental and the artificial environment of cities is the result of human thoughts and ideas, so beauty and ugliness of it is influenced by the culture and behavior of its citizens, as Lynch believes that "We as humans, can design our own cities, although the tis design might not be complete (Lynch, Colin, 1374, S327)

According to Lynch the purpose of urban landscape or intellectual imagination is in fact an interconnected unity of symbols and signs which give reality to concepts, values, meanings (Pakzad 21:1385). Urban landscapes that leave a clear picture of it behind can increase the collective memory and group communication (Habib 48:1385). In fact items like permeability can be searched through morphology of contexture, beauty and identity in historical or symbolic elements of the city, readability in the edge of the city and unity of all above can be searched in the urban landscape of the city. Thus, city is one of the issues that have a great role in identifying how desirable urban spaces are. (Vahabzadeh Naghmeh, 1385, P94). When talking about city identity in Iran, this is evident in the city landscape because it represents the culture, art, religion, and economy, of that city. Thus this topic provides one of the essentials of this research. What we see in a picture consists of mass and space between buildings and their facades. Perhaps it could be said that the physical identity of a city draws its urban landscape. This urban landscape is not the product of a specific time, but a dynamic and continues transformation throughout the city life. In this study, the data have been collected for the analysis of the existing situation, and are prepared after initial descriptions for analysis phase.

Information has been collected based on the theory of sustainable locations, in three areas of performance, experimental, aesthetic. However, general information, introduction of limitations, identification of strategic and local areas, and study of superior designs and … are among other interesting study topics in parallel to recognition phase. Analysis of the existing situation is done through regulation of tables. A list of strength, weakness, opportunities and threats will help making future decisions based on more in-depth analysis. This is the useful method for collecting and

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organizing data.

Definitions

Landscape: City landscape is a group of natural and artificial factors that is formed under influence of specific natural, cultural, social and economic characteristics of the city, and is a place for objectively showing the specifications of the city. City landscape is one of the main issues in the quality and popularity of cities, and is the result of Understanding the various tangible manifestations of the city including buildings, spaces, activities, sounds, smells, when a city resident is faced with them in various scales such as visiting city from far away or being in a specific building. (Mahmali Abyaneh, Hamidreza, 1390, P96). Urban landscape is a total composition of city contexture, its order & establishment, mass construction, the main open spaces, colors, shape, skyline or natural elements (Teymouri Mahmoud, 1386)

City Landscape: All the urban factors and elements that are visible can be seen by eyes and can be formed in the mind and human memory. (Tehran Beautification Organization website, 1391)

Urban landscape is totally dependent to imagination and perception of each person from his surrounding environment and though the imaginations of different people from one urban location might be different and even antithetical which can be justified by considering the relation between urban landscape and cultural, historical and social imaginations of each person from and specific location. There are Five factors involved with creation of urban landscape image in people's mind: 1) Roads – as a factor with which potential movement becomes actual and must be "distinctive" through the type of stone carpets, lights, parks, impressive buildings, clear directions of movement, road quality, … 2) Edge - Linear factor that differs with road in the view of observer. Edge is a split along two continuous parts of the city. It must have specific characteristics and must link two close neighborhood area. 3) Node: The more sensitive parts of the city, the place of origin and the destination for domestic trips, such as terminals and... The node must have borders and its memory not to be forgotten. 4) Neighborhoods: Parts of a large of small city that is recognizable due to its common properties and its profile is distinctive from other neighborhoods. No neighborhoods can be recognized without these characteristics and its contexture must be clear. 5) Signs and Marks: are turning points in cities and factors for recognizing different parts of city which the visitor cannot find a way through. Among the main properties is being unique and having a clear form. (Tavallaei 112:1386)

Organizing: is the collection of activities for policy making, designing, planning and execution, which municipalities do in order to enhance the quantitative and qualitative properties of urban landscape in cooperation with other authorities and areas. (Tehran Beautification Organization website, 1391). In line with the tasks assigned in accordance with article 30 of the fourth development plan, dated 1369/08/28 of the Iranian Supreme Council for urban planning and architecture, the rules and regulations of the urban landscape for enhancing the quality of urban landscape was approved including the following sections:

Scope of application

This legislation is Forced from the date of notification for all architects, urban designers, prepare and approve and supervise the implementation of urban development plans and the municipalities and other bodies issuing the end of construction work and other relevant institutions and other engineering organizations.

1-2 The scope of inclusion

The developments of future towns, new towns, new residential settlements from the time of notification, are all included in this legislation. For the existing contextures, local organizing plans will be prepared based on the priority. These plans will be prepared ac-

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cording to the schedule and within maximum 5 years from the notification date.

1-1 Objective

The objective and purpose of this legislation:

A- Optimizing the usage of sources and providing health and welfare of the residents.

B- Organizing the urban landscape in cities, villages and other residential complexes in country and efforts in creating right living conditions.

C- The revival of the country's past rich architecture and urban planning culture.

D- Preventing the occurrence of visual and functional dissonances in urban spaces and activities.

E- Increasing social interactions and attempts to regulate the flow of civil life. (Supreme Council of urban development and architecture)

Theories about the coherence and coordination of urban architectural and urban landscape

In the following table different opinions regarding the importance of social and cultural formation of urban landscape are expressed:

The expression of the issue and the necessity of study

Today, the major cities in the world are competing with each other over attracting investment and staffing innovative human resources. The recent studies show that in this competition, urban designing has become an effective tool of interest (Golkar, 1383). Public places like streets, squares, and city nodes, have gained valuable position in urban designing and planning. The reduction in the quality indicators of public spaces, is one of the problems is that the cities of today are faced with, and since urban spaces show the peak manifestation of urban life and the presence of citizens, the decrease of urban space quality in degradation of urban life quality, can make the dimensions and depth of this problem more clear. Improving the quality of public spaces in cities affects the daily activities of citizens and thiese effects can be best seen in sidewalks or closed motor traffic spaces and according to Jane Jacobes, the city can be recognized by its streets (Gehl, 1987:4). So promotion the streets images by increasing the number of pedestrians can enhance the urban landscape and intellectual images of people. If the streets are more attracting, they give this feeling to the whole city. From his point of view sidewalks must be lively to attract more people toward themselves (Jacobs,1961: 27). Today in many cities around the word, sidewalks are used to hold exhibitions and other social events, festivals, commercial advertisements, and are even widely used in tourist brochures and advertisements (Brambila & Longo,1977:27).Streets have dual nature: as a Crossing way and Destination. In European countries streets are people's destinations which mean a place for social contacts, spending free times, and using various services, in many cases streets are dedicated to pedestrians and cars are forbidden to enter. In Iran cities, content and city face are vague and often random and distinguishing between various types of cities is not possible. In brief the necessity of study is the following reasons:

1-Importance of Street Space

- Allocation of more city area to streets
- Streets as the Main city form
- City as a connecting location for urban spaces and activities.
- Street as a cultural symbol (street activities somehow represent the social culture)

2-Dysfunctional and lack of identity of streets as urban spaces in Iran:

- Attitudes of urban planners toward western orientations and values and giving absolute value to the car. (Contrast with the concept which considers street as urban space.)
- Not applying architechural patterns that are consistent with the values and collective identity.
- Visual problems which are result of Uncoordinated combination of structures that have been established gradually in the streets, signs, benches, lights, stations and elements

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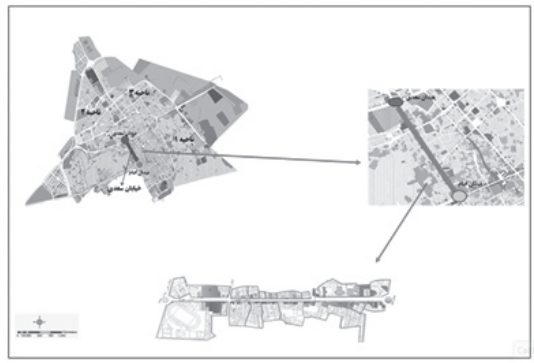
Theorist	Shaping the urban landscape
Tristan Edwards	Refers to the necessity of observing the physical culture in the area due to concerns on the intellectual developments of the era of modernism and modern architecture. Tristan Edwards expressed modern impact on urban landscape. His main worry and concern was pointed to the building which was towards each other and the streets and are unresponsive with each other. Such a behavior is called "Bad behaviors in architecture". Edwards in his book preface ask about the relationship of buildings with each other. He differs between selfish and rude buildings from polite and socializes buildings. Edwards at the same time wanrs about the failure of Modern architecture in urban design. (Edwards, 1924:45) Edwards points to occurrence of tedium and tells that this is not the result of contiguous buildings but the result of repeating the elements. And finally mentioned that designers should consider their building alongside with other buildings and not only the quality of it alone.
Hedman & Yazoski	Sometimes ignorance and negligence towards the coordination of new buildings is a designed opposition, in a way that the viewer might conclude that the aim of the designer was to ignore all other buildings (Hedman, 1387:17). A building for being fitted with background and supporting the visual unity of the area, does not need exact imitation of form and shape of other buildings but must have some common and fundamental characteristics. Hedman believes that designing to fit the context is a protective tool because the buildings can be protected and kept in this way. In this regard urban and Field-oriented architecture is itself a cultural element and helps preserving the pas culture in the face of present physical urban landscape. (same 15)
Brent Brolin (12:1980)	In the book (Field-oriented architecture) the reason for incompatibility of today buildings with context and creation of heterogeneous and confusing urban landscape is believed to be the modern time pint of view. Cities with a consistent framework are generally a result of consistent society or in other words culture and custom creates such consistency though Social Monitoring. Therefore the result of urban designing will be a structure which is both accepted by people and designers. Such a situation has been an outstanding characteristic of traditional Islamic societies. So as Lang has stated, "a group of unwritten laws from Quran has been dominating the elements of designing an area and has guaranteed a unified entity.
Basim Salim Hakim (1381)	Regarding the fundamentals of of architecture and urban planning from Islamic point of view, there are few noteworthy points that can be expressed as the below general principles: Preventing loss, creating connection and Interdependence, self-adjustment of social behavior, respecting people's privacy, Rights of initial operation, Building height in the realm of civil rights, Respect for the property of others, Pre-emption, considering the minimum street width, Non-blocking passages, non-proximity to pollution sources.

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like these.
3-Using city features (as a set of buildings, activities and people, etc.) for induction of social, cultural, Concepts and meanings
- Ability of cities as a "Unity" in production of equipment more the demand of them, capability of receiving Visual aesthetics from a set of building rather a single structure.
- Induction of concepts and meanings like importance or holiness, of a building or behavior through creating a series or hierarchy of changes in rhythm and grit of buildings.

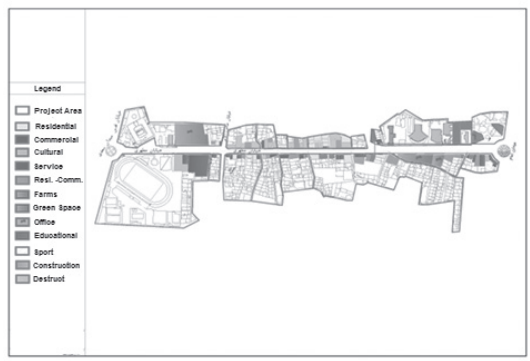
Positions area of study

Semnan City has three districts. District 1 cover the whole area of 17th Shahrivar and Ghods Streets and generally corresponds to the old city of Semnan. The study area is locates in district No. 1 of Semnan city which is one of the three main districts of Semnan according to the Detailed plan of city. District numbers 3, 4 & 14 cover the whole study area. The old city of Semnan is in district number 3 & 4 which is under the supervision of Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization. The population of this area is around 5,000 people. Part 5 of area 1, is an area around 509,000 cubic meter which is limited from north by Ghods Street, from south by Shohada Street, from east bu 7th Tir Street and from West by Motahhari Street which is totally located near the old center and commercial core of the city. The population of this area is currently around 6,100 people. Part 14 of this Detailed plan, is an area around 107,930 cubic meter is limited from north by 17th-Shahrivar Boulevard, Street, from south by Hakim Elahi Boulevard, from east bu Motahhari Street and from West border of area 15 of Detailed plan, which most part of it is located out of Comprehensive Plan area. The population of this area is around 5,800 people. In general the area of study is limited from north by Saadi Square and from south by Emam Square, from West by Yaghma intersection, and from east by Saheb-ol-amr intersection. Saadi Street is located in Old City where the Semsnan Bazar is also located there and is one of the most crowded cities in Semnan.



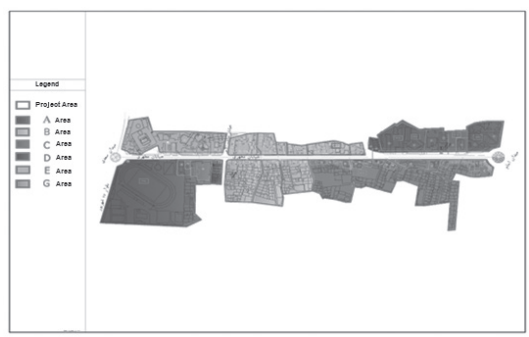
Map-1. Location of Saadi Street in City and Detailed Plan Area

Land use around Saadi Street is complex and includes Housing, Commercial, Official, Polic, Green Space, Cultural, etc. the whole area of study is 34 hectares.



Map-2. Land use allocation in study area

This area includes Saadi Street which starts from Saadi Square and end in Emem Square. The area covers 17 blocks and 95 sections.



Map-3: The physical aspects of study area

Importance of Structural physical position of Saadi Street in Semnan Street;
1- West border: Historical section of Semnan

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Building Quality	Qty.	Percentage %
In Production	3	2/6
Maintainable	84	75
Newly Built	4	3/5
Renewed	1	0/89
To be Destroyed	20	17/85
Total	112	100

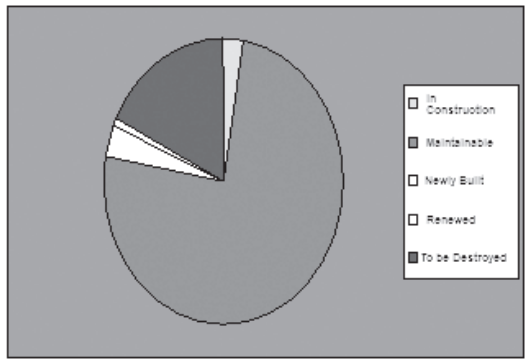


Table and Fig1. Buildings' Quality status in Saadi Street





Map-4: The Historical part of the city; Map-5: The garden area around Saadi Street





Map-6: Presence of Saadi Square in Norht and Emam Square in South; Map-7: Structural position of Area

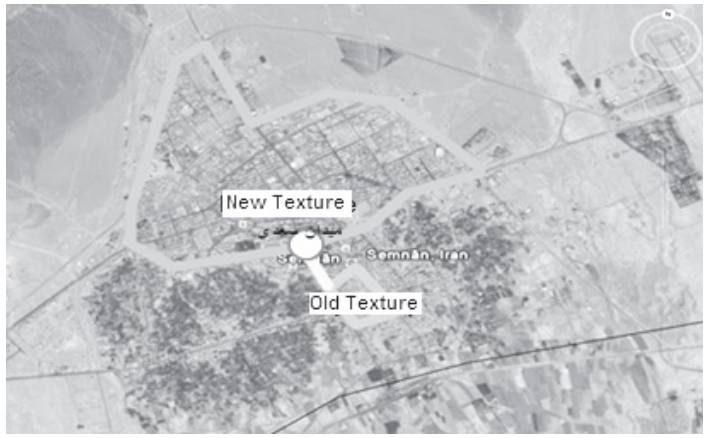
city.

2- East Border: Group of Gardens in Semnan city.

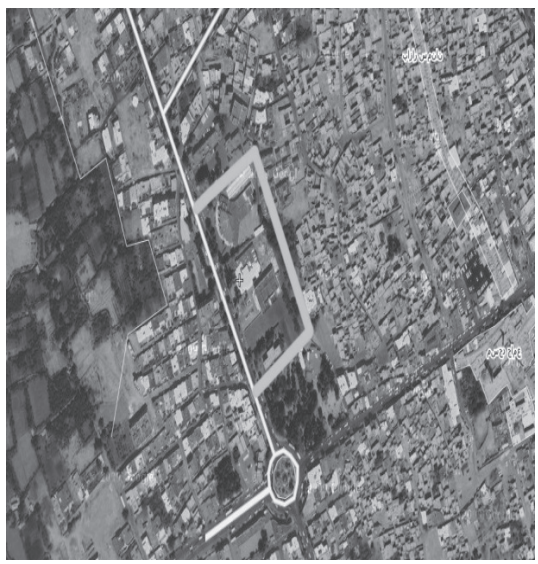
3- Presence of two nodes in beginning and ending. Saadi Square (as Modern City area) and Emam Square (as Traditional City area)

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Map-8: New texture of city in North of Saadi Square and Old Texture in South part of it





Map-8: Placement of municipality in the immediate body; Map-9: Sport Stadium and municipality in Semnan

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3- The structural position of this street is the main part of organizing City Center Cross Section. (Cross of Emam & Hakim Streets)

4- Main Corridor between new and old textures.

5- Placement of main land uses in the immediate body of the city which is required for the formation of central urban spaces like: two main city halls, public library, sport stadium.

Problems and issues of Saadi Street:

1- Traffic jam of cars and pedestrian movements;

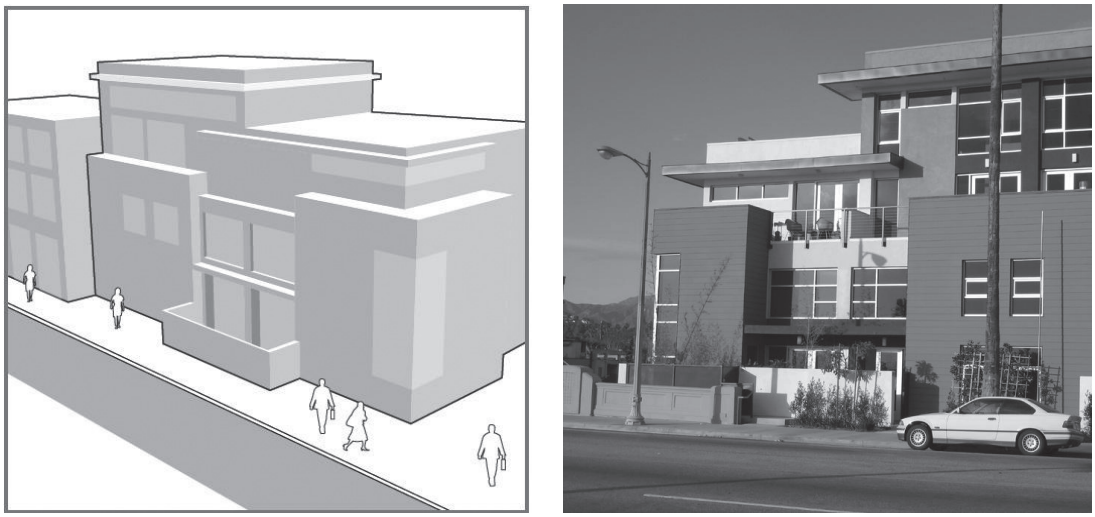
2- Low quality of public and visual characteristics of the street.

Comparison of domestic and foreign cases in organizing urban landscape:

Foreign Case: New York – Store Street

- Utilizing of texture, color, coordinated materials but varied in architecture aspects with specific characteristics to create visual appeal
- Adding scale and appeal to the building's view in varied volume if each building
- Strengthening the existing rhythm of architectural elements with Street frontage.
- Decreasing from the empty massive walls and without design, architectural elements, window design, lighting design, planting and designing signs can make street view more pleasant from people's point of view.
- Dedicating 75% of ground floor to shop windows.
- Using the covering elements like canopy,

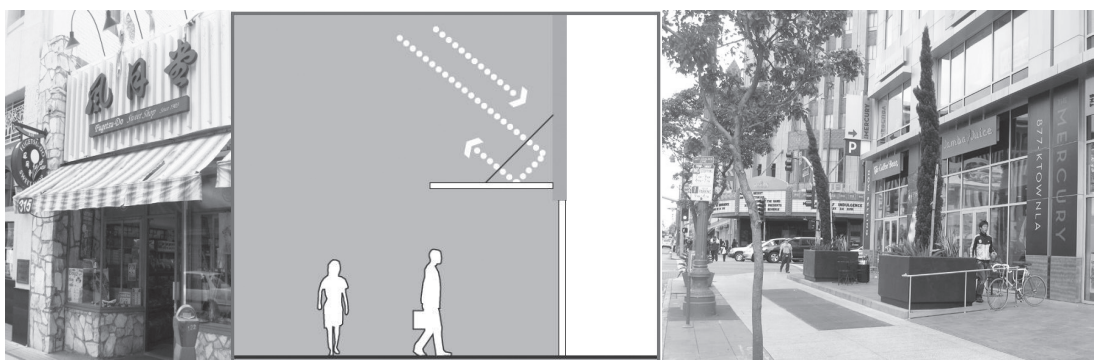
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Picture-1: Store Street (making visual interest and variety in buildings' volumes)



Picture-2: Strengthening the rhythm in buildings and using urban landscape elements



Picture-3: Shop windows toward pedestrian and use of roofing elements

awning, porch roof, cornice and ... to make shades and protection from atmospheric conditions.

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Before Designing (Store Steet)



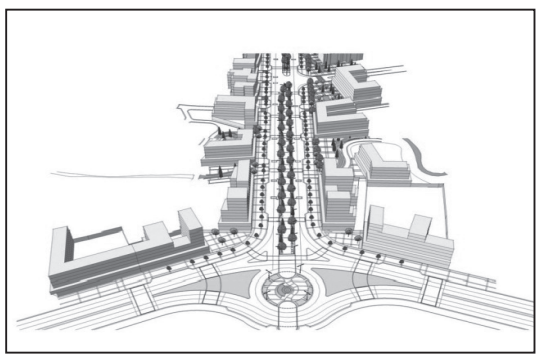
Picture-4: Store Street before designing and organizing

After designing



Picture-5: Store Street after designing and organizing

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Picture-6: Hamze Street Area

Domestic Case: Isfahan – Hamze Isfahani Street

Hamze Street in district 4 of Isfahan city is introduced as an urban main item in detailed city plan. Along the sides of this street, areas for providing urban services has been considered and at the same time from traffic point of view, it is considered as a grade 2 street. The main reason of establishing this street, is connecting Jey and Moshtagh and reducing the traffic problem over this area. Moreover this street in parallel with Bozorgmehr Street

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Picture-7: Whole Hamze Street area in 3D view; Source: Urban landscape organizing plan for Hamze Street





Picture-8: Hamze Street and considering sky line; Source: Urban landscape organizing plan for Hamze Street





Picture-9: Samples of pedestrian walk in Hamze Isfahan.

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can absorb most traffic of the area. (Bagh Andisheh, 1388, P9)

Pedestrians are passages with highest social role which can bring enthusiasm and vitality to central city area, and encourage people to volunteer presence in cities and as the result ensure the sustainability of urban centers. Therefore the human freedom to stop, pause, change direction and direct contact with other people is very high. These spaces have valuable position in enhancing Environmental quality in city centers both in terms of physical spaces and communication. These spaces according to their nature, the perception of spatial identity, a sense of belonging to the environment and aesthetics are critical reception and with absorbing a huge range of social groups, can empower the sense of convergence, interactivity,… along with variety of Insights, feelings, desires.

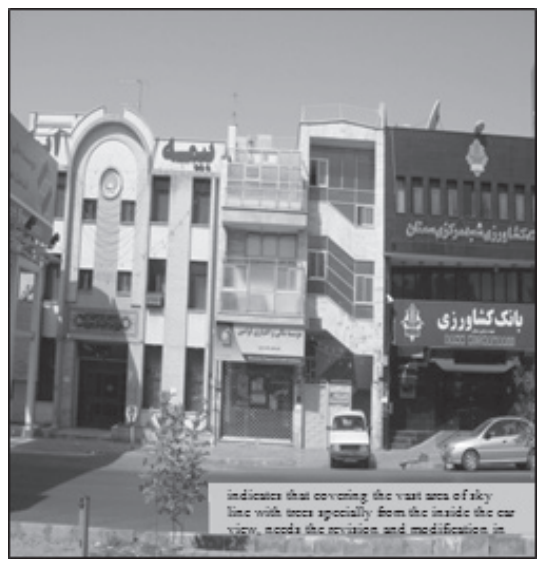
Regulatory review of urban street Saadi Semnan

The major purpose of this study is presentation of an optimized practical plan for project site, in comparison with city limitations, in order to optimized designing of Saadi Street in Semnan. The minor purpose of the study, is returning the previous position and identity of Saadi to this street and also widening the street in order to solve the traffic problem in this area.

According to the results of this study and the following pictures, the items considered about the urban landscape of Saadi Street are as below:

- Picture 1: Indicates the criteria, different type of materials used on building frontage, has turned the urban landscape to a shell without identity.
- Picture 2: indicates that covering the vast area of sky line with trees especially from the inside the car view, needs the revision and modification in Vegetation. In fact sky line is as an element of urban landscape composition, which is almost not defined in urban areas. The focused study on collective symbols shows how the cohesion of the city visual elements can be shown as a symbol.
- Picture no. 10 shows that not considering the parking location in various land uses, can make car traffic problem.
- Picture no.11 shows that the narrow width of pedestrian has not allowed having a dedicated motor and bicycle way. But the presence of bikes in pedestrian can decrease the function of it. Moreover because of eductionla land use (2 high schools) in Saadi Street, there is not enough space for traffic and transit.





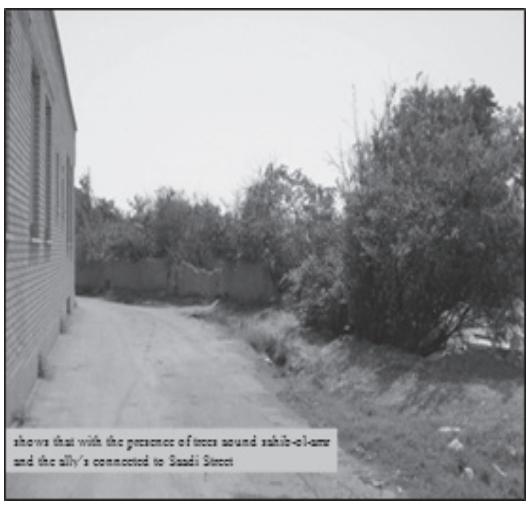
Picture-10: Saadi Street; Picture-11: Saadi Street; Source: the writer

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Picture-12: Saadi Street; Picture-13: Saadi Street





Picture-13: Saadi Street; Picture-15: Saadi Street

- Picture 13 shows that with the presence of trees aound sahib-ol-amr and the ally are connected to Saadi Street, these gardens have deep urban structure and need background protection and preservation.
- Picture No. 6 shows that the shop windows toward street can make pedestrians more attractive. So all the above indicate the need for organizing the Saadi Street for enhancing the urban space quality of Semnan. According to SWOT, the required strategies in this street will be as below table:

Conclusion and offers

In Iran, following trauma to the old structure of the city, fading social life, failure modern thinking and designs that were implemented following the modern machine using pattern of cities, returning back to the fundamentals and criteria of urban designing was paid attention to. Accordingly, organizing Saadi Street as an important location in city with the aim of revival and process of traditional architecture and its valuable frontage was highlighted. Urban designing is a creation of a culture, since through this designing the urban landscape of the city and the contact level between people and city will be managed and organized.

Urban designer must by focusing on similarity points and preserving the new structural characteristics, create a space in which there are clues of the past and also symbols of present time. Edition of The rules and regulations dominating on construction is the main solutions for organizing the urban landscape of

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Strength Points	Weak points	Threatens	Opportunities
Presence of old historical area in Saadi photo album, and also sport spaces. Using the variety of land uses (Educational, Office, cultural in the body of streets or neqrby streets; High potential of the arae for creating Park.	Increase in number of parking in case we don't supply car parking. The formation of business users in body entirely street Increased cost of commercial and residential street in the body	Losing old identity of street Descrying some historical items in streets Not appropriate pedestrian pave correction Using the Construction materials without nay identity in some streets.	Impact on traffic Destroying old building and their renewal Widening the roads Homogeneous traffic network Making all Streets ad double ways.

Table2: SWOT parameters for organizing urban landscape of Saadi Street

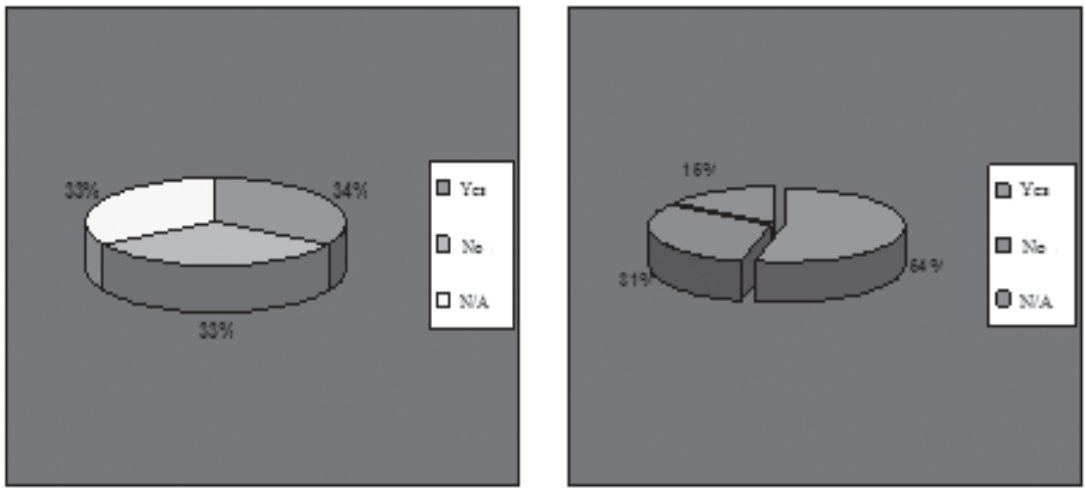


Diagram1. Opinions about widening Saadi Street; Opinions about using Firebricks

city in such situation. With the help of this tool, the urban designer tries to enhance the environment's visual quality or at least prevent the visual harshness.

So, the opinions of people (on designing and organizing urban landscape in Saadi Street) have been gathered through questionnaires which the result is as blow:

- The right side of the city is dedicated to commercial use.
- The green space of nearly streets to be increased.
- Streets become unified.
- The designs shall be modern and up to date with Stylish buildings.
- Paint of shop doors to be chosen from happy colors.

The experts and executive managers point of view with different with people on widening the street.

- Purchase of property.

The attitude of people is measurable in two levels:

- A: at intellectual level – 95% agree with widening.
- B: at practical level where there is prevention in the process. 95% of people believe the impact of people on completion of projects.
- Majority of people believe the main problem of Saadi Street is ita traffic (40%)
- Around 70% of people have agreed with the usage of Firebrick in streets.
- Most people advise using commercial & commercial-residential uses in street.

Urban management proposes the citizens as the first solution for citizenship responsibilities and efforts for enhancing the environment quality such as urban landscape. The awareness of citizens of their citizenship rights and asking of it in logical ways, along with enhancing the level of knowledge and insight about qualitative aspects of urban architecture and

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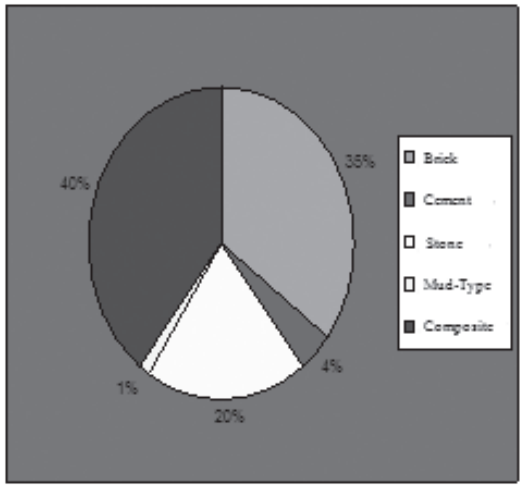


Diagram 2. People survey for building frontage of Saadi Street neighborhoods

urban planning, are among the fundamentals of creating sustainable quality in urban spaces. Following these guidelines it can be expressed that the basics of management and policy making (like municipality, Housing and Urban Development, and organizations related to urban construction issues.) can provide a base for changing the current chaotic situation through Laws and regulations to improve the quality of the environment in terms of urban landscape and guidance and Supervisory of the authorities in order to Reinforce implementation of the laws and using Incentive and even punitive tools (like discount on Urban taxes or paying fine).

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