

The Importance of Urban Pattern and Planting Design in Urban Transformation Projects

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Abstract : This study deals with real application of an urban transformation project in Trabzon, Turkey. It aims to highlight the significance of using native species in terms of planting design of transformation projects which will also promote sustainability of urban identity. Urban identity is a phenomenon shaped not only by physical, but also by natural, spatial, social, historical and cultural factors. Urban areas face with continuous change which can be whether positive or negative way. If it occurs in a negative way that may have some destructive effects on urban identity. To solve this problematic issue, urban renewal movements initially started after 1840s around the world especially in the cities with ports. This process later followed by the places where people suffered a lot from fires and has expanded to all over the world. In Turkey, those processes have been experienced mostly after 1980s as country experienced the worst effects of unplanned urbanization especially in 1950-1990 period. Also old squares, streets, meeting points, green areas, Ottoman bazaars have changed slowly. This change was resulted in alienation of inhabitants to their environments. As a solution, several actions were taken like Mass Housing Laws which was enacted in 1981 and 1984 or urban transformation projects. Although projects between 1990-2000 were tried to satisfy the expectations of local inhabitants by the help of several design solutions to promote cultural identity; unfortunately those modern projects has also been resulted in alienation of urban environments to the inhabitants. Those projects were initially done by TOKI (Housing Development Administration of Turkey) and later followed by the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization after 2011. Although they had significant potentials to create healthy urban environments, they could not use this opportunity in an effective way. The reason for their failure is that their architectural styles and planting designs are unrespectful to local identity and environments. Generally, it can be said that the most of the urban transformation projects implementing in Turkey nearly have no concerns about the locality. However, those projects can be used as a positive tool for enhancing the urban identity of cities by means of local planting material. For instance, Kyoto can be identified by Japanese Maple trees or Seattle can be specified by Dahlia. In the same way, in Turkey, Istanbul city can be identified by Judas and Stone Pine trees or Giresun city can be identified by Cherry trees. Thus, in this paper, the importance of conserving urban identity is discussed specifically with the help of using local planting elements. After revealing the mistakes that are made during urban transformation projects, the techniques and design criterias for preserving and promoting urban identity are examined. In the end, it is emphasized that every city should have their own original, local character and specific planting design which can be used for highlighting its identity as well as architectural elements.

Keywords : urban identity, urban transformation, planting design, landscape architecture

Conference Title : ICSAUD 2015 : International Conference on Sustainable Architecture and Urban Design

Conference Location : Kyoto, Japan

Conference Dates : November 12-13, 2015