

SZENT ISTVÁN UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Landscape Architecture

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MASTER OF ARTS IN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Urban Landscape Renewal Design
“Saadallah Al-Jabri Square. Aleppo, Syria”

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Abstract:

The aim of this paper is to present the renewal design strategy of a public square named Saadallah Al-Jabri Square in the city of Aleppo, Syria. This paper focuses on the ecological potentials of the proposed site and the feasibility of using the sustainable techniques for increasing the relevance of the redesigned (reconstructed) landscape and the urban development. While explaining the current situation of the existing square, a short-term strategy and solutions will be proposed as a first phase of the renovation process. This paper is developed in three sections: firstly, it asserts states that a redesigned landscape for the mentioned square should be treated as a potential development, emphasizing the historical value for Aleppo and the square itself as a main junction in the city fabric. Secondly, it elaborates the particularities of the site and the obstacles within the surroundings which are affecting the urban renovation. The paper then introduces the final version of the new proposed design as a result of a productive reaction to go beyond the critical conditions of the war towards a better future.

1. Introduction:

*“It is argued that the level of freedom a person experiences while walking around the city streets, is proof of how civilized the place is, a good urban place is one that offers the people the chance to move about the city in a free, safe and pleasant way,”*¹ (Sylvia Jaber, 2013).

1.1. Location Background:

Saadallah square is located in Aleppo city, in the northern part of Syria, 50 kilometers from the borders of Turkey in the north. Aleppo is the second largest city in Syria after the capital city Damascus. The major neighboring Syrian cities are Homs, Hama, and Latakia in the south and west. The city of Aleppo had an official population of 4.6 million in 2010, with an area of 190 square kilometer (70 sq. mi). The city has a regular semi flat topography with an Altitude/elevation of 384 m (1260 ft.). The city urban planning was a matter of development before the war period, according to Bianca, S. (2000). *Urban form in the Arab world: Past and present*. Thames & Hudson. mentioning the new master plan proposal of Aleppo 2025 “it did not provide a plan, but rather established both principles and proccess that should be prove useful beyond 2025 scope of the project”. Aleppo is located along a north-south valley (the Queik river bed). Within the city the river is passing the old city center on the west side, running from the north to the south of Aleppo. The river is partly in a concrete channel sourced from the Euphrates River. Its water is mostly used for irrigation and industrial use. A few kilometers of the river in the city center are maintained and designed for urban and aesthetical use among the touristic points of the city



Figure 1 Map showing location of Aleppo city (Maps Google, 2018)

¹ Jaber, Sylvia. *Urban Streets: Towards Sustainable Mobility in Arabic Cities*. S.n., 2013.

1.2. Square Overview

Saadallah Al-Jabri square is the central square of Aleppo city. It is the most important square in the city, experiencing most of the celebrations and festivals in Aleppo. Saadallah Al-Jabri square is definitely one of the most significant squares of Aleppo as an important joint for the traffic, pedestrians and open spaces. The square is at the intersection of a main traffic joint of Shoukri Al-Qouwatliy Street along the east to the west and Kamel al-Ghazzi Street from the north-west and Majd al-Deen al-Jabiri Street from the north. The square is surrounded by important buildings and main public facilities and adjacent to Aleppo Public Park from the north. It was named after Syrian patriotic leader and former Prime Minister Saadalla al-Jabri.



Figure 2 Saadallah Al-Jabri Square (photo from photos.aleppousblog.com)

1.3. Historical Overview:

1.3.1. History of Location:

The historical value of the square is demonstrated by knowing the different events and changes upon the area through history. By looking at the historical map of Aleppo Figure 3 we can recognize the importance of the location, a strong axis crossing through the old Aleppo districts centralized by the Aleppo citadel from the west leading to the western part which now became the new part of the city. The Figure3 shows the natural line of Quweiq River crossing from the north to south of the city and crossing the public park and passing throw square location.

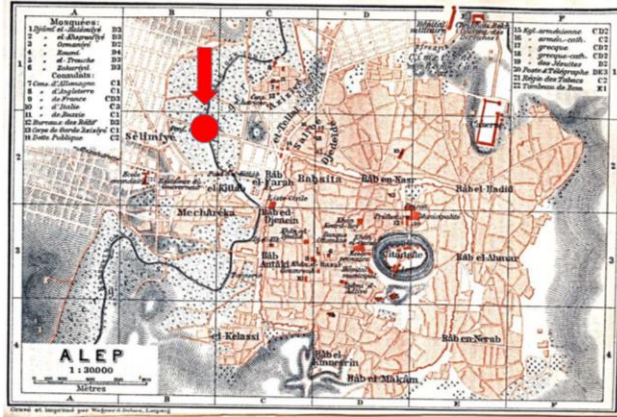


Figure 3 Historical map of Aleppo "Library of University of Texas website"

1.3.2. The Area During the Period 1920-1930:

As an important junction among the city fabric, the area of the current square had a completely different structure. Looking at the situation between the year 1920-1921 Figure 4 the main axis can be identified crossing over the uncovered Quweiq River by a Roman style bridge to link the two sides of the city allowing the traffic and pedestrians to reach both banks. This situation was considered as a solution with a clear and open river crossed by a wide bridge in order to preserve the Quweiq River as it was in its natural lane.

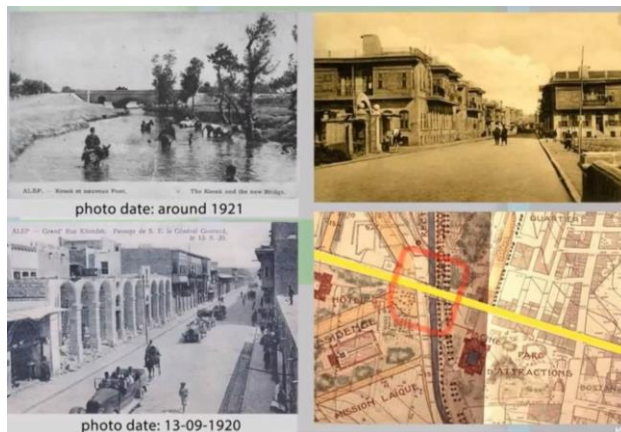


Figure 4 Old photos and map of the square area 1920-1921 (Map-collection Library of University of Texas website 2018)

1.3.3. The Area After 1945:

By the year 1945 the square had huge modification with a completely different design to follow the development movement in that period in the country. The area was designed as an official square as an urban open space for the city and a major point of intersection of traffic and tram-

lines. The main idea was to give the area the potentials to obtain the rectangular shape which is a symmetrical design influenced by the Islamic geometrical shapes and design (figure5). The main axis was kept to be linking the east with the west part of the city, a huge water surface was added to the square among a greenery area surrounded by paved surface. The Quweiq River was covered by the new design as an ecological solution of water flood in that area. This particular design of that period forms the first half of the square in current time.



Figure 5 Old Photos and map of the square area 1945 (Map-collection Library of University of Texas 2018)

1.4. Square Importance for the City:

There always were several expectations towards the square during its history, it had to serve transportation, representation and urban use and culture aspects. Providing open space for different events, hosting national festivals and occasional ceremonies. It's considered as a cultural major point for tourists and locals. Linking the old city (on the east) with the new city (in the west). The square has a very important and a critical location, Surrounded by the Central Park (Largest green area in the city).

1.5. Quweiq River background:

All the local rivers in Syria have been almost completely used for the benefit of the country. Two international basins mainly exist in Syria: the Euphrates and Yarmouk, these two basins are essential to the operation of Syria's economy. Most of the country's water resources are supplied by these two basins. These rivers are shared by several countries: Syria, Turkey, and Iraq. In Aleppo, the main two rivers are Sajour and Quweiq Rivers. Quweiq which is a 130 km long river "originates in Turkey. Aleppo's only water resource was the Quweiq River, a small, 130

kilometer-long stream that flowed out of the hills around Aintab (modern Gaziantep) to the north in Turkey. The river fed a thin Band of grain cultivation, orchards and kitchen gardens supplying just enough to attract settlement in an area otherwise deprived of water needed to supplement the low seasonal rainfall.”² (Ross Borns, 2017)

Taking into consideration that the Turkish government stopped the stream of the river to Syria for a dam project in the Turkish lands. The river Quweiq was well known to be a dry malodorous and filthy river in Aleppo, therefore, in 2006 and for the reason of the bad condition of the river and the negative influence of it towards the environment the Syrian government decided that the only solution was to supply Quweiq River by the Euphrates. The river was reopened and a huge development took place along the river line in northern part of Aleppo. In the northern part of Saadallah Al-Jabri square through the central park and the adjacent area to the park, there was a huge project to uncover the Quweiq River and expose the water surface to the sky, letting the city to get the advantage of its own potential green corridor. This development was decided as a solution for the high cost of the maintenance of the green roof covers the river all along the residential area of Al-Tawheed Street. The green roof covering the river was a concrete roof, by



time, the maintenance of the bridge and the rusted informants of the concrete was increasing, therefore, the development came up with the solution of exposing the underground river away from the 1950's old ecological previous solution.

Figure 6 Sequence of Quweiq River development (Al-Tawheed, 2003-2009)

² Burns, Ross (macquarie University, Sydney, Australia). *Aleppo - a History*. Taylor & Francis Inc, 2017.

2. Analysis:

2.1. Location:

The location as a general area is not indicated only by the outline of the square itself, however, a stronger relationship is necessarily with the surroundings to have a general character for the area as a whole. In order to have the strong connection of the identity between the square and its surroundings; a larger area borders is proposed for the renewal design of the square. Linking the square with the potential areas around it is one main aspect, to achieve a strong approach towards the square starting from the surrounding urban fabric of the city down to the outline of the square and ending with the square itself. The proposed borders are extended to further areas surrounding Saadallah Al-Jabri square to a total area of 1.8 ha which starts from the north side towards the Central Park and to the western side and extends further to the southern area (Saadallah Al-Jabri Park). As the map shows in figure 7 the proposed borders of the site location. The proposed site borders are not completely fixed in the design phase according to design aspects and conditions which have been taken into consideration to define the final identity of the renewal concept.

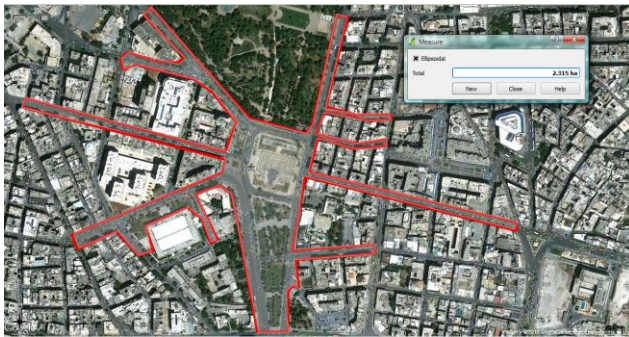


Figure 7 Aerial map showing the site borders (Google maps, 2018)

2.2. Current Condition of the Area:

In the 3rd of October 2012, a huge blasting occurred in the square area and led to critical damage to the historic buildings in the surrounding area (figure 8). The bombings appear to have taken place near a military officers' club and a historical hotel. A complete desolation occurred to the military officers' clubs land plot located on the western side of the square. A partial damage

occurred on the square itself, however, the main structure of the square wasn't highly affected.



Figure 8 Photo of the eastern side of Saadallah Square after the blast (BBC news website, 2012)

2.3. Climatically Condition of the City:

Aleppo is one of the Middle Eastern cities that semi stabled climate during the year, which affects the growth and development of economic activities. The changes in temperature and precipitation patterns are likely to affect the hydrologic processes and water resources available for agriculture, population and industry. In figure 9 the "mean daily maximum" (solid red line) shows the maximum temperature of an average day for every month for Aleppo. Likewise, "mean daily minimum" (solid blue line) shows the average minimum temperature. Hot days and cold nights (dashed red and blue lines) show the average of the hottest day and coldest night of each month of the last 30 years. For vacation planning, we can identify the mean temperatures, and be prepared for hotter and colder days.

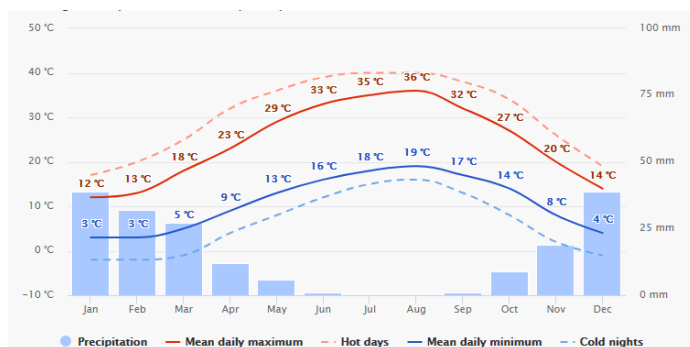


Figure 9 Graph indicates the average temperatures and precipitation of Aleppo (The meteoblue climate website)

The graph (figure 10) shows the monthly number of sunny, partly cloudy, overcast and precipitation days. Days with less than 20% cloud cover are considered as sunny, with 20-80%

cloud cover as partly cloudy and with more than 80% as overcast. While Reykjavík on Iceland has mostly cloudy days, Sossusvlei in the Namib Desert is one of the sunniest places on earth.

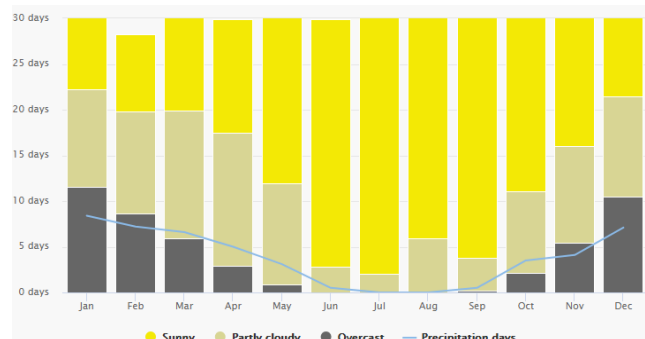


Figure 9 Graph indicates cloudy, sunny, and precipitation days (The meteoblue climate website)

2.4. Reachability and Transportation:

Saadallah Al-Jabri square is one of the main nodes of Aleppo which is reachable from various areas and connecting different districts, taking into confederation that the square is the connection between the new and the old part of Aleppo. The square hosts the starting points of public transportation buses lines towards to city districts and the bus stops of different lines crossing through the city. The square itself one of the main transportation points of Aleppo. The main axis crossing the square in the old situation as it was shown in figure 4 was blocked by the square latest design, that change affected the traffic directions around the square and broke the continuity of Shoukri Al Qouwatly Street linking the old part of the city in the east with the new side of it in the west, in which created a significant character of the square as a main node in Aleppo linking the two historical part of the city with the new. In the following figure 8, the streets with the orange color are the streets from the old situation which has been blocked, and the white colored streets are the traffic ways in the current situation.



Figure 10 Aerial map of the traffic situation (Made by the candidate)

2.5. Urban Greens:

The city currently has a green corridor among the green areas of Aleppo (figure 11) that was once created by river Quweik and its transformation into a new multifunctional city park. This linear park will contain most of the existing programs (rail tracks, existing parks, the main city square, urban agriculture, housing, industry etc), but cover them with a continuous linking of vegetation and paths, that would theoretically enable the visitor to cross the entire city from the northern part to the southern part. That particular linear park would be integrated with the design concept, taking into consideration the importance of the multifunctional square identity.

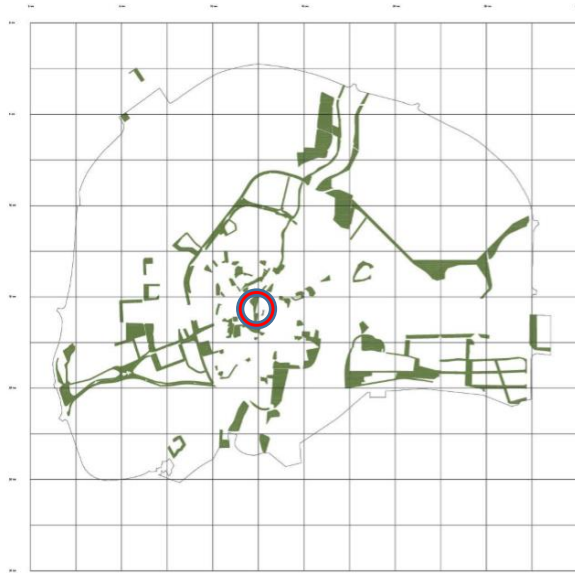


Figure 11 Map of the green areas of Aleppo (ALEPPO DIVERSE An Urban Vision for the Year 2025)

2.6. Functions of the Square:

There were always several expectations towards the square during its history, it had to serve transportation, representation, urban use and culture aspects. For that reason, a clear strategy is demanded to preserve the historical identity and to preserve the multifunctionality of the square. Saadallah Al-Jabri square provides open space for different events and it indicates a cultural major point for tourists and locals in the hearts of the city. The square hosts the main events and celebrations as an open space of the city. Furthermore, the square is functioning as the main traffic junction and a cross point of the pedestrians. The northern part of the square is covered by a green surface and two large water features surrounding the main visual element in the square which is the statue of Statue of Martyrs. The southern area is covered by symmetrical elevated grass beds, however, the southern area is covered by a different type of materials. The central

area of the square is the main open area following the identity of the square which is having enough capacity for hosting the largest amount of visitors for the cultural events and celebrations.

2.7. Adjacent Functions:

By analyzing the adjacent area of Saadallah Al-Jabri square it can be identified that the square is located in a very critical area among the city urban fabric. With main public facilities surrounding the area, touristic buildings and main public buildings approaching the square. Bus stops and transportation points are linking the different part of the city are crossing through the square, making it easy and reachable for people to get from and to the site location. The adjacent functions on a larger scale around the square are more diverse. In figure 12 we can recognize the different surrounding functions and types of buildings. Residential blocks are the general scheme surrounding the area, governmental buildings, cultural, services and open spaces are the main adjacent functions. Green and built edges are surrounding the square from different areas as a potential aspect of the location. The square is surrounded by the Central Park (largest green area in the city) from north and Saadalla Park in the south.

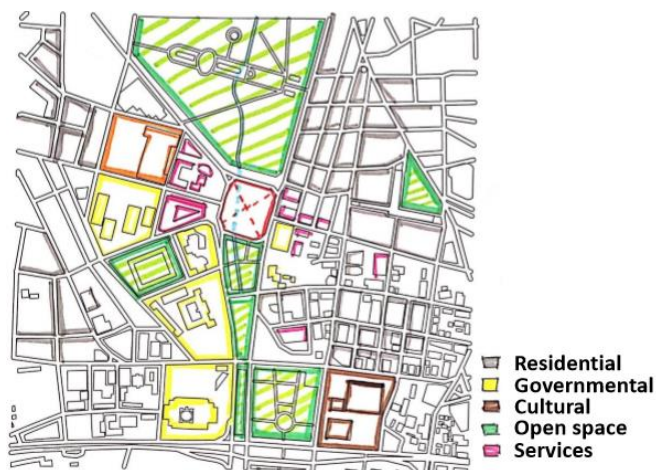


Figure 12 Map showing the adjacent functions of the square (My work collection)

2.8. Relevant Comparative:

In order to have a relative understanding of the square scale and measurements among the city fabric, a comparative example of the city of Budapest (Hero's Square) with a dominant importance among the city and an approximate area of Saadallah Al-Jabri square in Aleppo was the choice to conceive the scale and the openness of Saadallah Al-Jabri square. The total area of

the Hero's square is 12500 square meters while the area of Saadallah Al-jabri square is 8500 square meters which are in a way an approximate scale of both plazas. In figure 13 we can identify both sizes and general schemes of Saadallah Al-Jabri square and Hero's square.



Figure 13 Comparison between Saadallah Al-Jabri square and Hero's square of Budapest (My work collection)

3. Design:

3.1. Main Goals of the Project:

There were always several expectations towards the square during its history, it had to serve transportation, representation, urban use and culture aspects. Revealing the historical character of the place and to offer a flexible interactive space for the support of a wide variety of events and activities. One of the main design goals is to improve the quality and create a place full of cultural atmosphere for tourists and locals. Highlighting the character of this historic city and finding the balance between green and paved surfaces in order to reach the connection with the green spaces of the city. Improve the historical identity and values of the square. Analyzing the feasibility of developing the underground river.

3.2. Overview of the Square Future:

The outcome of the design process has to be based on a strong vision for the period approaching both the upcoming short-term and long-term phases of the area as a whole. In figure 13 a timetable shows the different time periods and events which the square experienced over the time. In the beginning, it shows the old situation of the square with the old bridge over the Quweiq River, in that period the river was exposed and not covered as the current situation. In 1945 a new development occurred in the square with a new design of the square covering the half side of the river with a public open space and water fountain and green area. In 1960 the square was completely covering the river under it by a newer development took place to have the shape and the structure of the current square that we are having now. In 2011 the Syrian revolution started the civil war started to take place in the Syrian cities as well. Sadly in 2012 a huge bombing occurred in the square causing critical damage to the square and the surroundings, the surroundings are hardly affected by the strike but the main structure of the square itself isn't hardly affected. The Syrian civil war didn't stop and here the first phase of the project starts. The first action will be the process of reopening the square for the public, cleaning the area and let the traffic to flow and the pedestrians to reuse the square, measuring and surveying the damage is a very important step in order to have a better understanding of the damage level. As the timeline figure shows; the next step after reopening the square will be the process of having the square friendly again for the people, that will happen by using various types of temporary solutions, mobile structures and attraction points for the people to rejoin their own square.

Afterward, the new phase will take place in the project and that will start by the people participation in the new renovation of the square, questionnaires and people opinions will be taking into consideration to have a better understanding of their needs and problems. New names will be given and chosen by the locals to give the feeling that the people themselves are participating in the new design of the new public open space.

Later on, a new approach of a new renewal concept with a new design of the area. The new design will have a completely different design that the current situation of the square with an improved quality as a place of cultural atmosphere for tourists and locals, a concept which emphasizes the historical identity and values of the square.

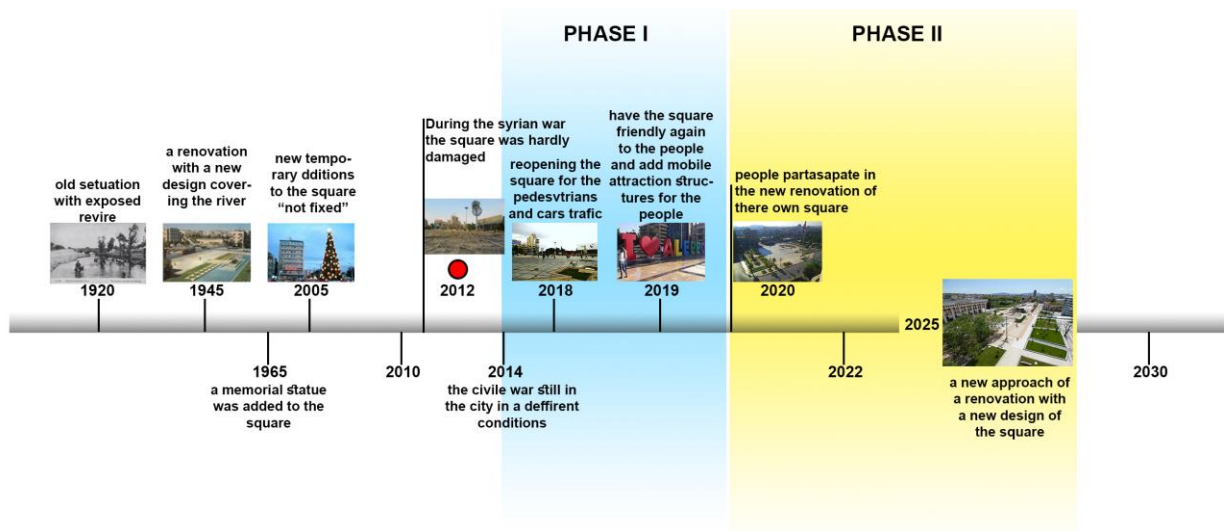


Figure 14 Project timeline identifying the different phases and time periods of the project (My work collection)

3.3. Project Phases:

In order to create an emphasized identity to and to balance the current situation with the future overview and expectations of the square, a two phases renewal design process is planned to be implemented in Saadallah Al-Jabri square.

The project is divided into two main phases as a part of the renewal development of the square. Phase I and phase II are the two time periods to clarify and articulate the different stages of the thesis structure. In phase one there will be explained ideas for temporary solutions of the square with adding new temporary structure, tools and applications to be implemented in the becoming

time period after the strike which happened in the square and caused a critical damage to the surroundings and to the square itself.

As it was described in figure 14, there will be two different phases of the project. Phase I is the beginning of the process of reopening the square, inviting the people back to the area and make it friendlier for the locals and the visitors. The first phase will focus more on the existing situation of the square, improve it and get the maximum advantage of the cultural situations and aspects. The first phase will be the connection in which the people will have the enough understanding and to be ready for the complete renovation of the second phase. The first phase will be as the preparation for the community to welcome the new era and leave all the pain and bad memories of the war period. The second phase of the project will be the major change and the new approach of the area in general. With an improved identity of the historical values and a developed quality of the public open space of the city. Phase II is the result of the deep analysis and the study of the square structure and the conditions of the surrounding areas combined with social aspects and events, in addition, the second phase with the new open space design will have the heavier weight of this diploma thesis emphasizing on different new approaches and solutions regarding the design problems of the current situation.

3.4. Phases Comparative Strategies:

Each phase has a different approach based of different aspects and element. For that reason a clear start was important to have a better understanding of the process of the different phases. In figure 15 we can compare the two phases based on the different Mind Map of each phase. Each content of each mind map has the main aspects and factors to be considered in the upcoming levels such as Damage survey and people participation for the Phase I, Historical Identity and main structures for Phase II.

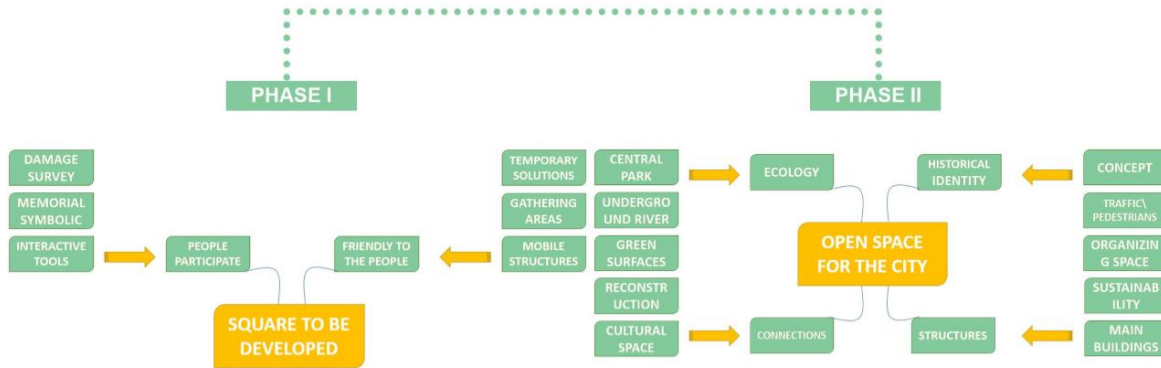


Figure 15 Graph showing Mind Maps of Phase I and Phase II (My work collection)

Different approaches to each phase lead to having different types of goals. The different users and visitors to the square can be identified in figure 15 in which the types of users in the Phase I are mostly locals and visitors from the surrounding neighborhoods, while the types of visitors in Phase II are more varied with workers and tourists as well.



Figure 16 Diagram of the different types of users of Phase I and Phase II (My work collection)

The pedestrian's paths and the flow of people are developing in Phase II. As an improvement of the current situation a new connection and a new path for pedestrians is created for the central

park in the north. Figure 17 shows the different types of paths and the people flow in both phases I and Phase II.



Figure 17 Diagram of the different types of pedestrians flow in Phase I and Phase II (My work collection)

3.5. Phase I:

The Main Concept of phase I is to create a temporary space structure. Using small trees which been planted in boxes on wheels that can be moved around to make a comfortable atmosphere. To combat the heat of Aleppo's summers, a shelter should be devised by pieces of recycled materials which are placed in such a way as to cover parts of the square. Small boxes for storing tools and items of street furniture will be placed for the public, to allow the people to participate and form their own urban furniture. Different types of temporary furniture can be used, for example: Recycled materials, shadings, kiosks, benches, mobile tree boxes, container coffee shops and exhibition in the outdoor.

3.5.1. Analysis and proposals:

In order to arrange these new temporary structures in the square, we need to have a good understanding of the situation of the inner functions and to analyze the active and passive points among Saadallah Al-Jabri square. The square in the current situation has a major active point in the middle. The areas on the edges are less active, but we cannot call them passive areas because the square as a whole is an active place for the people. In figure 18 we can recognize the main active points and the points in which less activities are taking place in the Saadallah Al-Jabri square.



Figure 18 Diagram showing the Active areas of the square (My work collection)

Based on the previous analysis on the square, it's possible to find the point of each new function which would be added to the square. The different types of furniture and mobile elements are arranged in a way to have the maximum benefit of the square and to invite the people back to their own square after the hard times of the war. In figure 19 the zoning concept of the temporary elements and furniture and the zones in the square of Phase I. As a conclusion of Phase I main goal we can say that the aim is to create a space where people speak about the future!.

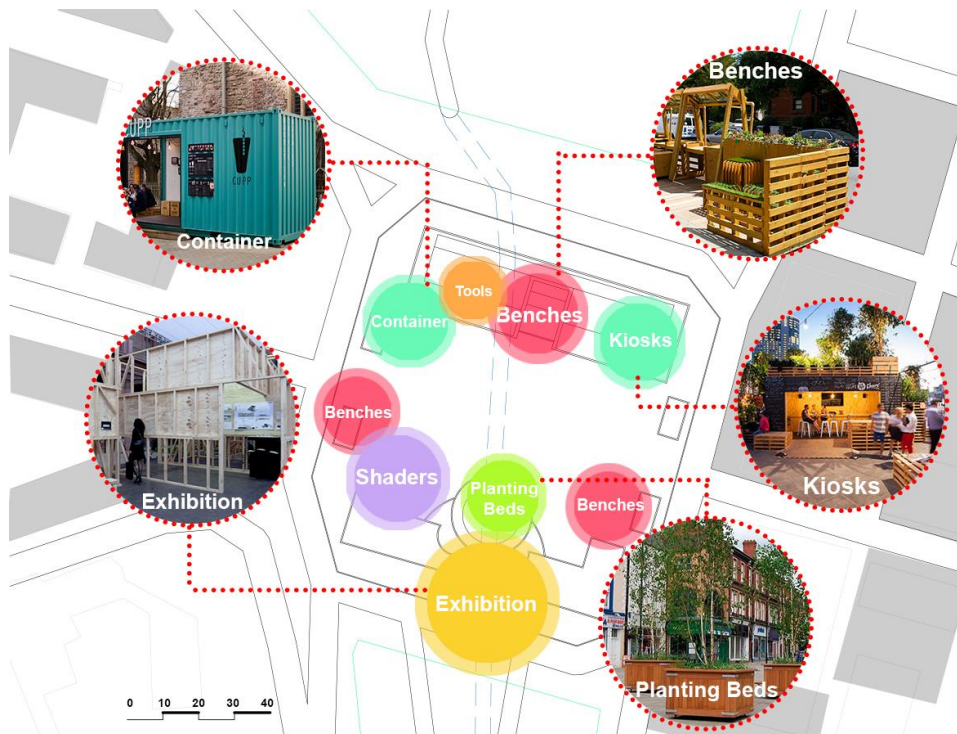


Figure 19 Map of the temporary zoning of the mobile elements (Phase I) (My work collection)

3.6. Phase II:

After the temporary solutions and the participation of the locals with creating the shape of their own zone and deciding the new names and the new approach of their own square, a new phase is taking place in the area. A new phase with a new identity and new way of thinking in order to improve the current situation of the square. The main goal of Phase II is to create a renewed open space for the city. That will need a different methods and approaches such as surveying the square and locating (elements, structures, materials, views...), creating a direct connection with the central park, improving the quality as a place of cultural atmosphere for tourists and locals, an emphasized historical identity and values of the square and balancing between green and paved surfaces in the square to reach the connection with the lines of the city fabric.

3.6.1. Square survey:

According to the main concept and in order to have a strong connection with improving the historical identity and values, there should be a clear analysis and survey of the existing structures in the square. Figure 20 is a chart of the existing element and the action would be taken regarding each element. Surveying the square and locating (elements, structures, materials, views...etc. It can be recognized that the statue is one of the main valuable and historical related structure to keep in the square to emphasize the importance and the value of the square.

According to Aronson, S., Halprin, L., Jacobs, P., & Helphand, K. I. (1998). *Shlomo Aronson: Making peace with the land: Designing Israel's landscape*. Spacemaker Press. “*Any element here is not by chance. But all the elements could be just the whims of somebody, but it was here. I don’t know which period it was, but it was here.*” Therefore, the historical values and identity is

what makes the renewal design meaningful and close to the people. Floor pattern is an important texture to keep to have a relation between the old and the new design.

ELEMENT	CONDITION 1-5	KEEP	REUSE	DEMOLISH
STATUE	4	✗		
GRASS BEDS	3			✗
FLOWER BEDS	1			✗
TREES BEDS	3			✗
LIGHTING COLUMNS	4		✗	
FOUNTAINS	2			✗
DIRECTIONS SIGNS	2		✗	
ADV. SIGNS	3		✗	
STONE BENCHES	4		✗	
WOODEN BENCHES	2			✗
PATTERN TILES	4	✗		
PAVILIONS	3			✗
FLAG BASE	5		✗	
KIOSKS	3			✗
TRASH CANS	3		✗	
ADV. PILLARS	4		✗	
HIGH LIGHT PILLARS	4		✗	
RIVER LINE	-	✗		
PARK FINCE	2			✗
PARK ADV. SIGN	4			✗
SERVICE TRAFFIC	3			✗
WATER SURFACE	3			✗
TRAFFIC SIGNS	2			✗

Figure 20 Survey chart of the existing elements (My work collection)

3.6.2. Connection with the central park:

The location of the square has a very important potential point which is the direct adjacency with the largest green area of Aleppo. The central park of Aleppo is surrounding the square from the northern area, while the Saadallah Park which is another green area is surrounding the Saadallah Al-Jabri square from the southern area. This scientific location among the green corridor will affect the design strategy and concept to connect this green without disturbing the main function of the square. In such a potential location it was important to have a new direct connection with the green corridor of Aleppo. A new axis will connect the square with central park with a new gate of the park to have a direct access to the square. In Figure 21 we can identify the green corridor of the area approaching all the way with Quweiq River banks from the north going to the south of Aleppo



Figure 21 Map showing the green corridor of Quweiq River (My work collection)

3.6.3. The water rill:

The underground river beneath the square was a big question among the design phase. The feasibility of uncovering the Quweiq River and make it exposed to the surface was one of the main decisions to match the needs and the expectation of Saadallah Al-Jabri square towards the city. The old solution of covering the rivers in the 60's was an ecological way to solve the problems of the water floods and to protect the surrounding buildings from the water. That solution is not the best solution anymore. If we take a look at the advantages of exposing the river we can find many advantages for example: adding an aesthetical value to the city, giving the people the chance for enjoying their own city potentials, the touristic attraction and the improvements of the air quality. In the northern part of the central park, there was a huge development project of exposing the river line along Al-Tawheed Street for almost 3 kilometers long. That decision was made as a solution for the high cost of the maintenance of the green roof covering the river all along the residential area of Al-Tawheed Street. The green roof covering the river was a concrete roof, by time, the maintenance of the bridge and the rusted informants of the concrete was increasing, therefore, the development came up with the solution of exposing the underground river. In Saadallah Al-Jabri square the situation is different, the length of the square is approximately 90 meters, which is not the long area to have a high cost and expenses to maintain the roof covering the square. Another important point is Saadallah Al-Jabri square was always a square for the public gatherings and the point of hosting the biggest festivals of Aleppo which needs a wide and open area as its character in the current situation. By exposing the river we will create a very strong edge splitting the square into two parts which will make each part a smaller area and that will lead to the point of losing the historical identity of the square. For that reason, a new idea is approaching to create an element on the surface in which it refers to the

underground river. That element is a simple Rill of water crossing the square with the same natural river line from the north to the south. Making the people wonder about that strong element and why does it exist. Taking into consideration that according to a questionnaire survey with the locals of Aleppo: 45% of the questioned persons didn't know about the existence of a river under Saadallah Al-Jabri square. In this case, we are emphasizing the historical values of the square without disturbance of the main function of the square. In Figure 22 different types of water rills concepts in public squares.



Figure 22 Water rill concepts in different public squares (fountains.co.uk more-London website)

In order to have a stronger relationship with the Syrian identity of the area there should be a traditional touch on the main element of the square. The water rill itself will be ornamented from both sides with the traditional Syrian ornaments as in Figure 23. Different levels of ornaments with different intensity and details of the Mozaic little stones with the bright colors will give the traditional touch and will strengthen the relationship between the history and the contemporary design.

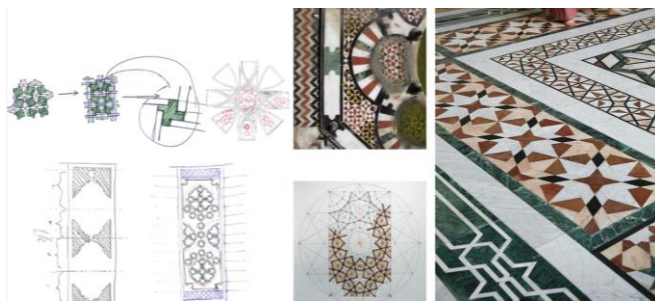


Figure 23 Syrian traditional ornaments ([Muslimheritage website](http://muslimheritage.com))

3.6.4. Design Strategy:

The main strategy of Saadallah Al-Jabri new design is based on different levels and circles with different scales as it be recognized in Figure24. Starting from the biggest circle (The city) and its traditional style. The city of Aleppo has its own historical identity and its old Islamic architecture style hosting the main square for the public use and cultural representation. That special identity of the city is the main influence on the concept and the way it will develop through the different stages. Moving into the smaller circle which is the urban fabric surrounding Saadallah Al-Jabri square, the adjacent areas, the entrance of the central park and the connection with the green area in the south taking into consideration the open areas in the western adjacent part of the square which have the advantage of creating one large character connected with the square. The design strategy is also based on the green perception of the area as a whole, as mentioned before the green corridor of Quweiq River from the north along to the south and the central park with its dense trees in the northern area of the square and the southern Saadallah Park. The green surroundings from the north and south are creating a dense of green with an empty paved island in the middle. The way of dealing with such a situation will affect the concept approach to have a better solution for balancing the green and the paved surfaces. For that reason, a new strategy of the plantation in the square will be implemented in the design plan. These different levels are the approach keywords to the concept of creating a new design with a harmony not only with the location but with the city as a whole.

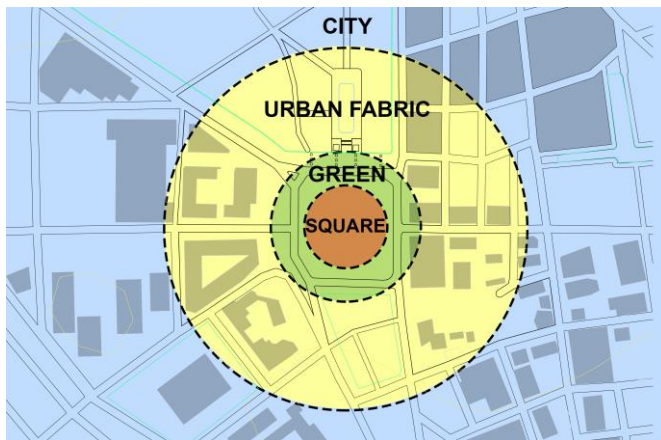


Figure 24 Diagram of the design strategy (My work collection)

3.6.5. Design Concept:

The concept is to create a contemporary design of the square with a relationship with the traditional and historical and Islamic identity of the city of Aleppo. The idea's origin is based on the Islamic ornament's geometry, which is a different linear rays originated from a central point in different angles. These rays are creating the geometrical shapes of the Islamic ornaments in which the Syrian ornaments are influenced by.

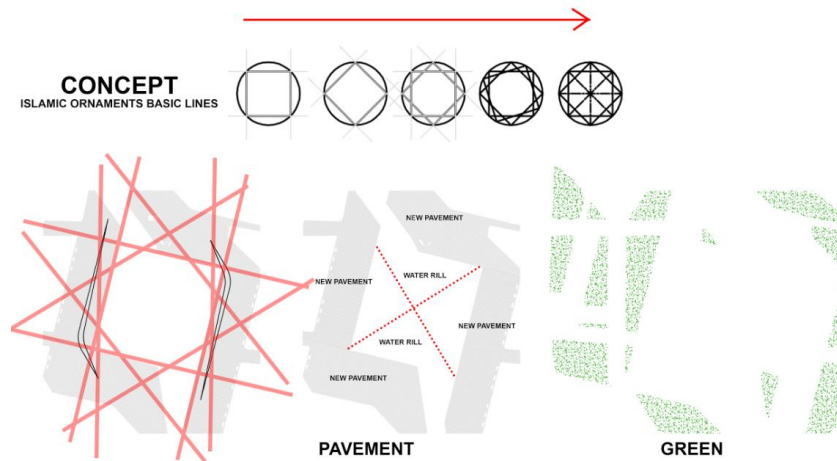


Figure 25 Concept Diagram (My work collection)

The sequence of the design is starting from the urban fabric and its contents (buildings, axis, views, green areas, paved areas, etc.). Reaching the green edges which are the central park and Saadallah park, after that a green outline will be created in the square in order to isolate the square and to emphasize the connection with the green and the city fabric. In the middle of the square is placed the strong linear element which is the water rill crossing from the north to the south. In figure 25 it's shown how the concept is developing with a sequence from the left to right. The concept is focusing on the different levels as the design strategy was described in the previous paragraph.

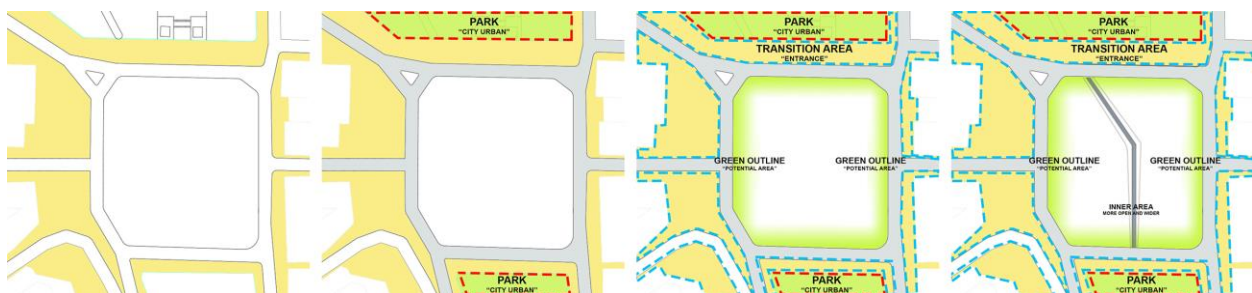


Figure 26 Concept sequence diagram (My work collection)

3.6.6. Functions and Zoning:

The new design has a new order for the functions and the zones in the square. The inner area is the active zone with an openness atmosphere to host the major gatherings and activities. The sides of the square are the zones of peace and quiet, for resting and seating areas with the classical types of benches. In the outline of the square is the green belt with green surfaces surrounding the square to have a continuity with the green corridor of Quweiq River. These green areas will have the access points to the square to organize an order the entering points for the pedestrians by adding the Zebra lines on the roads to make it more clear for the people to cross and enter the square. The area in front of the central park is one of the important areas in the new design. We can call that area (Transition area). It is approaching the central park with a new gate for the park and a new open pathway along the Quweiq River, creating a strong connection with the square. In the transition area, there will be a semi promenade for the pedestrians with green areas and paved pathways and other different functions in the transition zone. In Figure 27 we can identify the zones with the different functions and users.



Figure 27 Functions and zoning Diagram (My work collection)

3.6.7. Master Plan:

The new Master Plan of Saadallah Al-Jabri square is a result of the deep analysis and study of the structural, historical, cultural and special aspects of the area and the city as a whole. The concept as it was described in the previous paragraph is based on the Islamic ornaments geometry, starting from a central point with different directions to create the contemporary Islamic geometry of the square.

The new plan is focusing on creating a contemporary design with a relationship with the historical Islamic identity of Aleppo. The main visual element is the water rill, crossing the square from the north to the south with the natural line of the underground river. The water rill is creating a reference of what exists underneath. A new gate for the central park is created to have a direct and strong connection with the square. In addition, the Quweiq River bank in the central park is opened as a walkway for the people with another gate leading to Saadallah Al-Jabri square. These two new connection are emphasizing the ne Axis between the major green area of the city and the main square of it, in order to encourage the pedestrians to cross from and into the square.

New green islands on the surrounding areas which have been cut by the roads are creating the sense of continuity of the square itself out of the rectangular structure. In the western area, new gathering points are created with the same type of benches, in order to strengthen the relationship and the unity of the area. The plantations and the trees positions are made in an order to create the gradient change of the trees density from all the sides towards the heart of the square which has less density of trees, for instance, the central park in the north (dens trees) towards the square which is less dens as its described in the Appendices, Sections Chapter. The figure 28 shows an illustration of the new Master Plan of Saadallah Al-Jabri square.

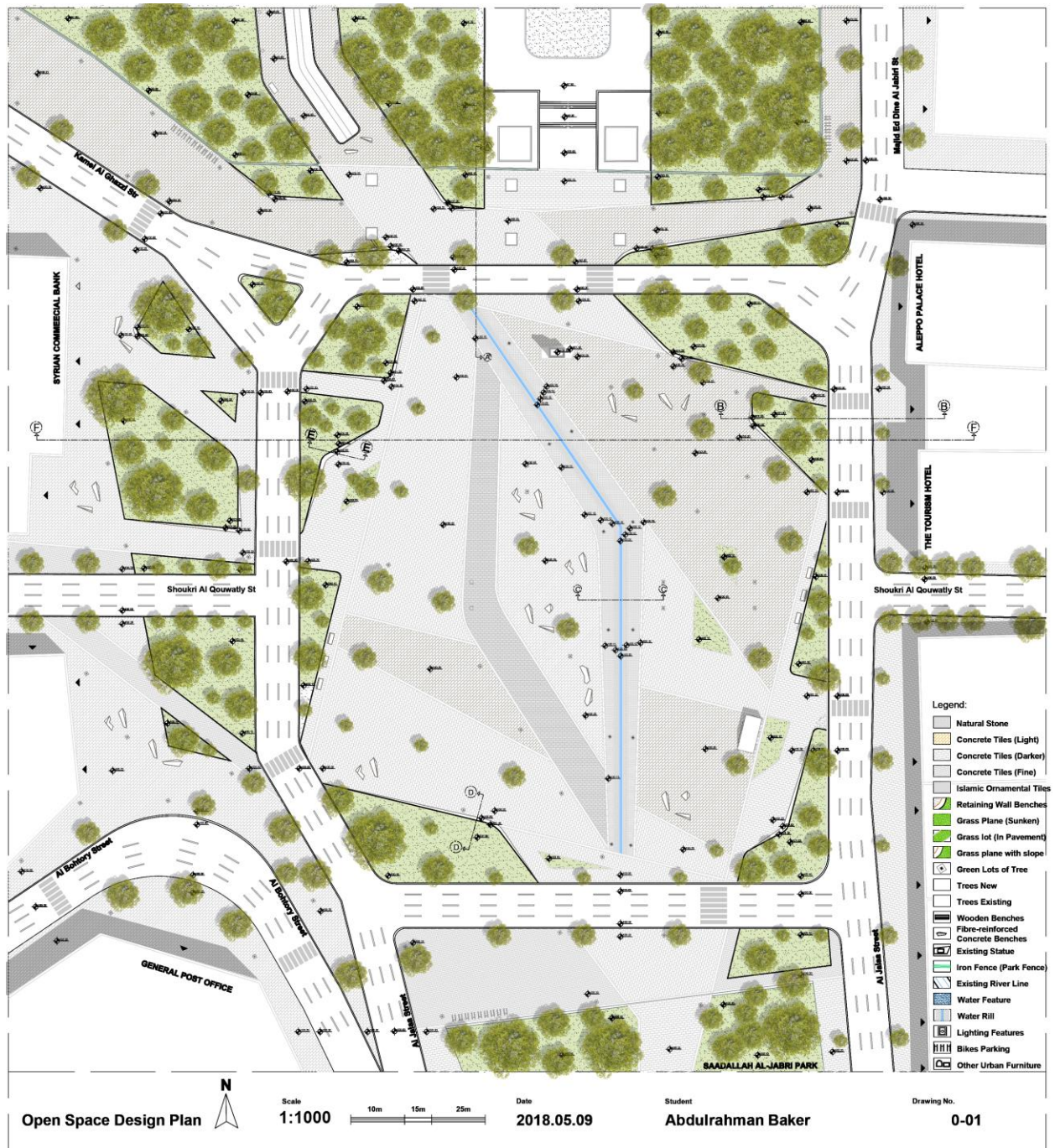


Figure 28 the new Master Plan of Saadallah Al-Jabri square (My work collection)

3.6.8. Plantation:

The proposed site is adjacent to the largest green area of Aleppo. For that reason, the area is very rich of huge diversity of plants species. In the Figure 29 we can recognize the different types of species and plantations in each location according to the new design proposal.

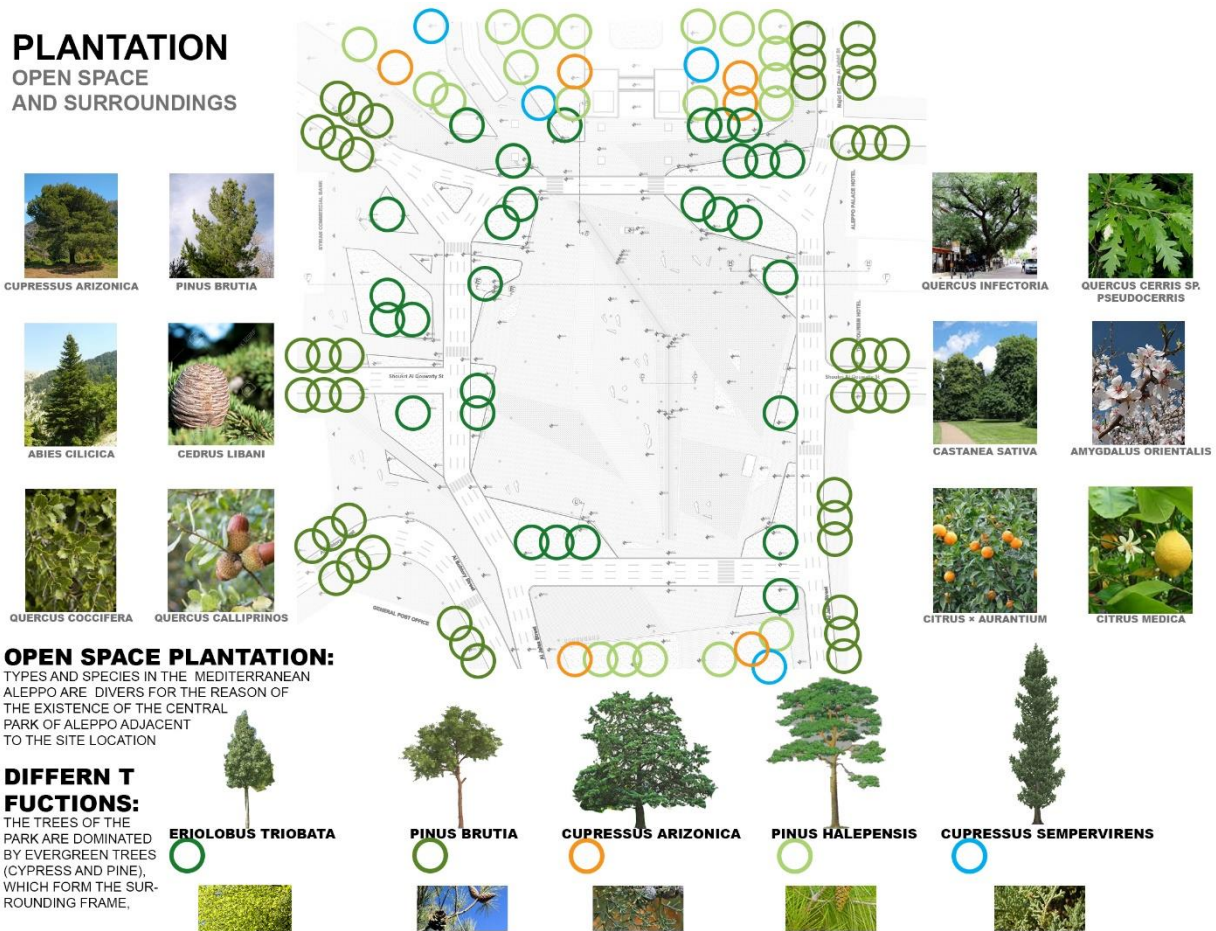


Figure 29 Plantation plan identifying the plant species in the site and surroundings (My work collection).

3.6.9. Furniture:

Saadallah Al-Jabri square's new design approach with its contemporary touch made a step towards a new way of thinking in the urban open space designs of Aleppo. For that reason, a new furniture is proposed to be implemented in the square, such as benches and lighting features. In Figure 29 the new types of furniture that were implemented in the new design. We can recognize in the Masterplan Figure 28, that classical benches of the existing period are preserved and reused to keep the historical identity of the square. The new proposed lighting features in Figure 30 have both the historical classical design (for the outer poles) and the contemporary (for the inner poles).

BENCHES OPEN SPACE FURNITURE

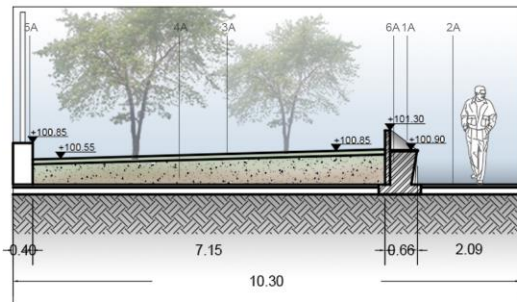
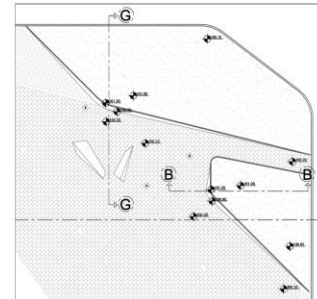


L: 2500 mm
W: 1450 mm
H: 680 mm
W: 600 kg

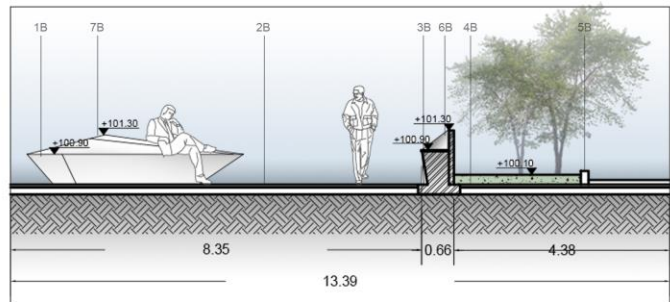
MATERIAL:
WHITE GRANITE.

FINISHING: SANDBLASTED
WITH POLISHED
SEAT SURFACE

WHITE GRANITE.
GRANITO BIANCO



A1 BACKSEAT OF CONCRETE BENCE WITH POLISHED SEAT SURFACE IN AN ANGLE.
A2 60*60 CM BRIGHT GRAY CONCRETE TILES.
A3 NOSING EDGE OF WHITE GRANITE AND CURVED FINISHING.
A4 SOIL BED WITH GRASS TOP COVERING.
A5 CONCRETE PARAPET CLOSING EDGING FOR THE GREEN BED.
A6 CONCRETE BASE FIXING THE RETAINING WALL BENCE BENCH.



B1 WHITE GRANITE BENCE WITH POLISHED SEAT SURFACE.
B2 60*60 CM BRIGHT GRAY CONCRETE TILES.
B3 NOSING EDGE OF WHITE GRANITE AND CURVED FINISHING.
B4 SOIL BED WITH GRASS TOP COVERING.
B5 CLOSING STONE EDGING FOR THE GREEN BED.
B6 BACKSEAT OF CONCRETE BENCE WITH POLISHED SEAT SURFACE IN AN ANGLE.
B7 RSED BACKSEAT OF WHITE GRANITE WITH POLISHED SEAT SURFACE.

Figure 30 Detailed drawings and information of the new benches implemented in the new design (My work collection)

LIGHTING FEATURES

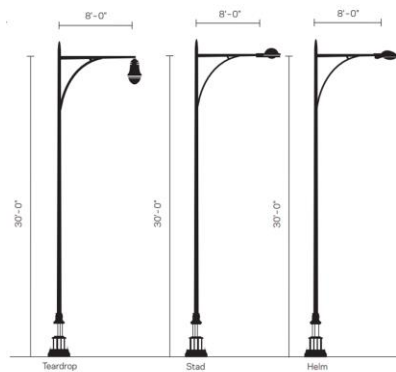
OPEN SPACE LIGHTING

LIGHTING FEATURES AVENUE POLE

APPLICATIONS
COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL
STREETS.

SINGLE OR TWIN MOUNTING.

(CENTER MEDIANS) STREETS
WITH ROADWAY WIDTH OF 36
FEET OR MORE.



FLATBUSH AVENUE POLE WITH VARIOUS LU- MINAIRES:

THE TEARDROP (LED) AND
SHIELDED TEARDROP (LED)
ARE ACCEPTABLE FOR COMBI-
NATION WITH THE FLATBUSH
AVENUE POLE. THE HELM AND
STAD LUMINAIRES ARE ELIGI-
BLE FOR IN-KIND REPLACE-
MENT, AND MAY BE CONSID-
ERED IN THE FUTURE IF VER-
SIONS WITH LED LAMPS
BECOME AVAILABLE.

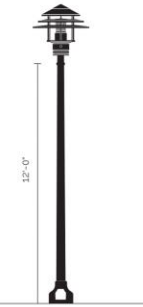


FLATBUSH POLE AND HISTORIC
TEARDROP LUMINAIRE

LIGHTING FEATURES FLUSHING LUMINAIRE POLE

APPLICATIONS
PARKS, PLAZAS, WALKWAYS,
AND BIKEWAYS.

LAMP/OPTICS
75W LED
IES TYPE III OR V
FLUSHING MEADOWS HEAD



FLUSHING MEADOWS
LUMINAIRE AND POLE

Figure 31 Detailed drawings and information of the new lighting features implemented in the new design (My work collection)

3.6.10. Pavement:

The use of pavements in Saadallah Al-jabri square is affected by the by the historical identity of the area. As a public square, Longevity and authenticity of the materials used are two keywords for the designer. Using natural materials in harmony with artificial and identical materials is symbolizing the origin of the area and the new approach towards the contemporary designs. Different concrete tiles with different textures and orders are implemented in the square. In addition, a natural granite tiling with Syrian ornaments is surrounding the Water Rill in the middle of the square. These ornaments are inspired by the Islamic geometry as I previously described in the paragraph (The water rill). In Figure 32 we can identify the different types of materials and the different orders used for each zone in the new design of the square.

PAVEMENT

URBAN PAVEMENTS

MATERIALS USED:
 CONCRETE TILES
 GRANITE TILES
 POLISHED CONCRETE
 HONED BLUESTONE

DIMENTIONS & SIZES:
 900 x 600mm
 600 x 600mm
 900 x 200mm

WATER RILL TILING MATERIALS:
 INSPIRED BY THE ISLAMIC PATTERNS

MATERIALS:
 GRANITE NATURAL STRIPE TILING
 POLISHED CONCRETE

DIMENTIONS:
 900 x 300mm

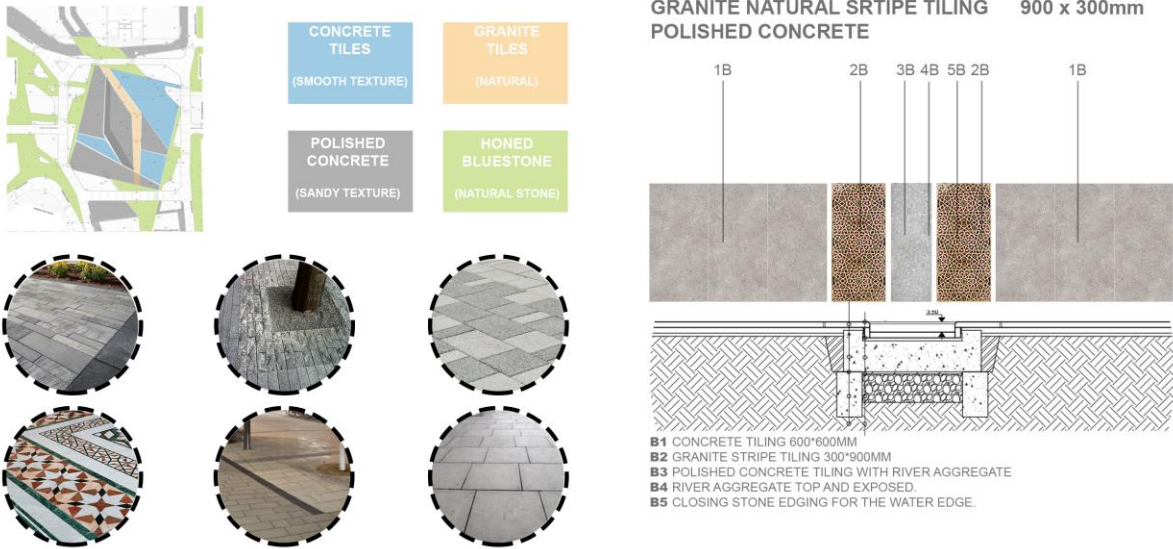


Figure 32 Detailed drawings and information of the new Pavement materials implemented in the new design (My work collection)

Summary:

The aim of this diploma project is to recognize the importance of the public open spaces in the Syrian cities after the war and to create a new step towards the contemporary design into the urban public plazas of Aleppo. Identifying the historical values with creating a new public space for the people after the tragic events that occurred in the square during the war period, in order to make the square friendly for the people and invite them again to their own zone before and after the improvements and the developments of the quality of the area.

The site was partly damaged and the surrounding buildings were more affected and damaged, though, Saadallah Al-Jabri square was always the main major point of Aleppo during the years, such a tragic event during the war will not be enough to stop the story of that square of being the core point of Aleppo. In order to achieve that goal, it was important to work on a sequence of actions and to divide this diploma project into two phases. Starting with Phase I in which the sentimental part was playing the main role in that phase, however, the focus of Phase I was the reopening the square and make it more welcoming and friendly for the people. Reaching the Phase II in which a completely new design approach is proposed with a new identity (the contemporary Islamic approach) of the square and the city as a whole.

The site has many potentials that were carefully analyzed and taken into consideration as a base to achieve the new design result. The central park in the north helped me to create a new Axis instead of the old and abandoned situation of the connection area between Saadallah Al-Jabri square and the central park of Aleppo. That axis was emphasized by a new gate to access the central park from the square, in addition, a new walkway along the Quweiq Riverbank was opened to continue the linear path of the river. Quweiq River is one of the keywords of the new design approach, the debate of exposing the river in the square upon the benefit of the multifunctionality of the square made the decision of creating an alternative solution of The

Water Rill that is crossing the square from the north to the south putting in the mind of the visitors the question of the existence of the underground river.

An appropriate vegetation choice will improve ecological quality of the site, and the new outdoor furniture will let the visitors spend their time comfortably in the public open space. All these factors have impacts on the city fabric. The people of Aleppo needed new public space to stay away from the bad memories of the war period, the city as well needs these green spaces to restore itself. Finally, the visual materials and results demonstrate that this design proposal has achieved the goals.

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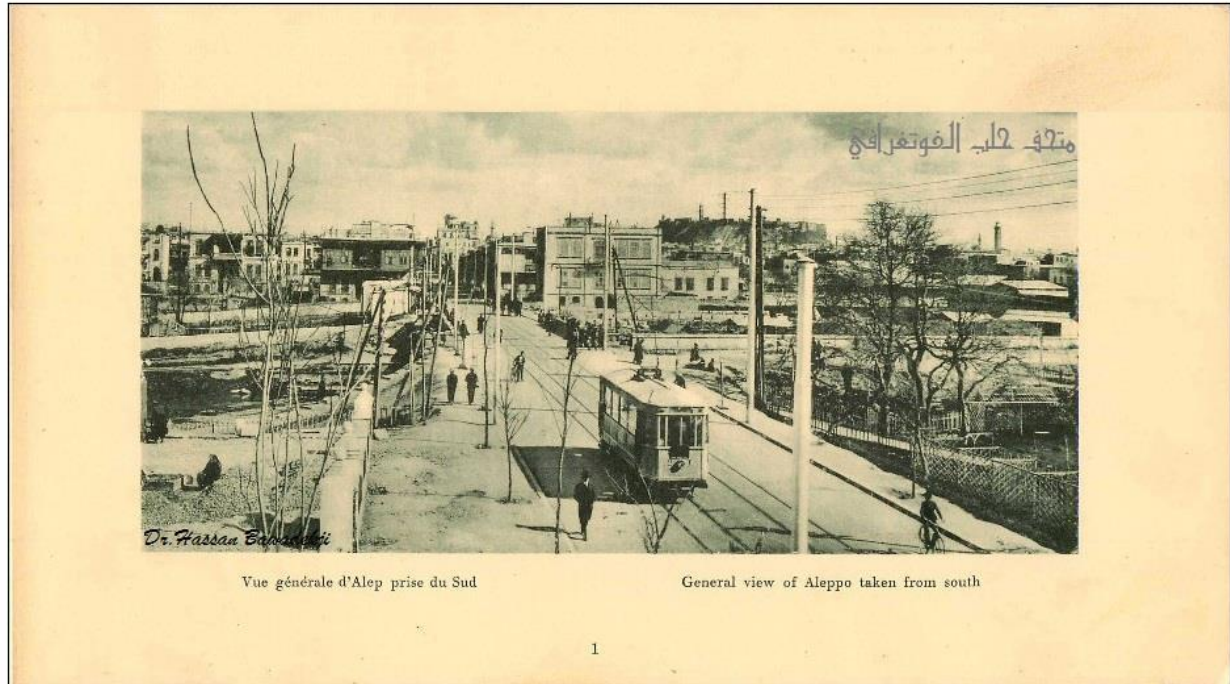
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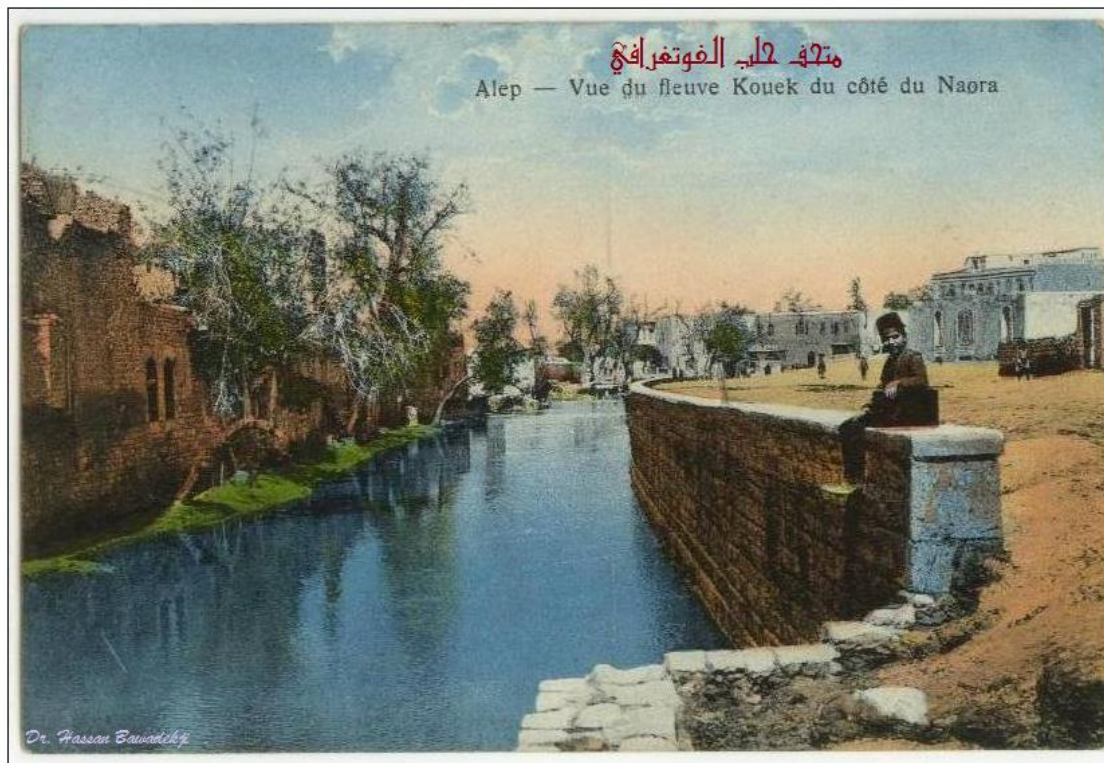
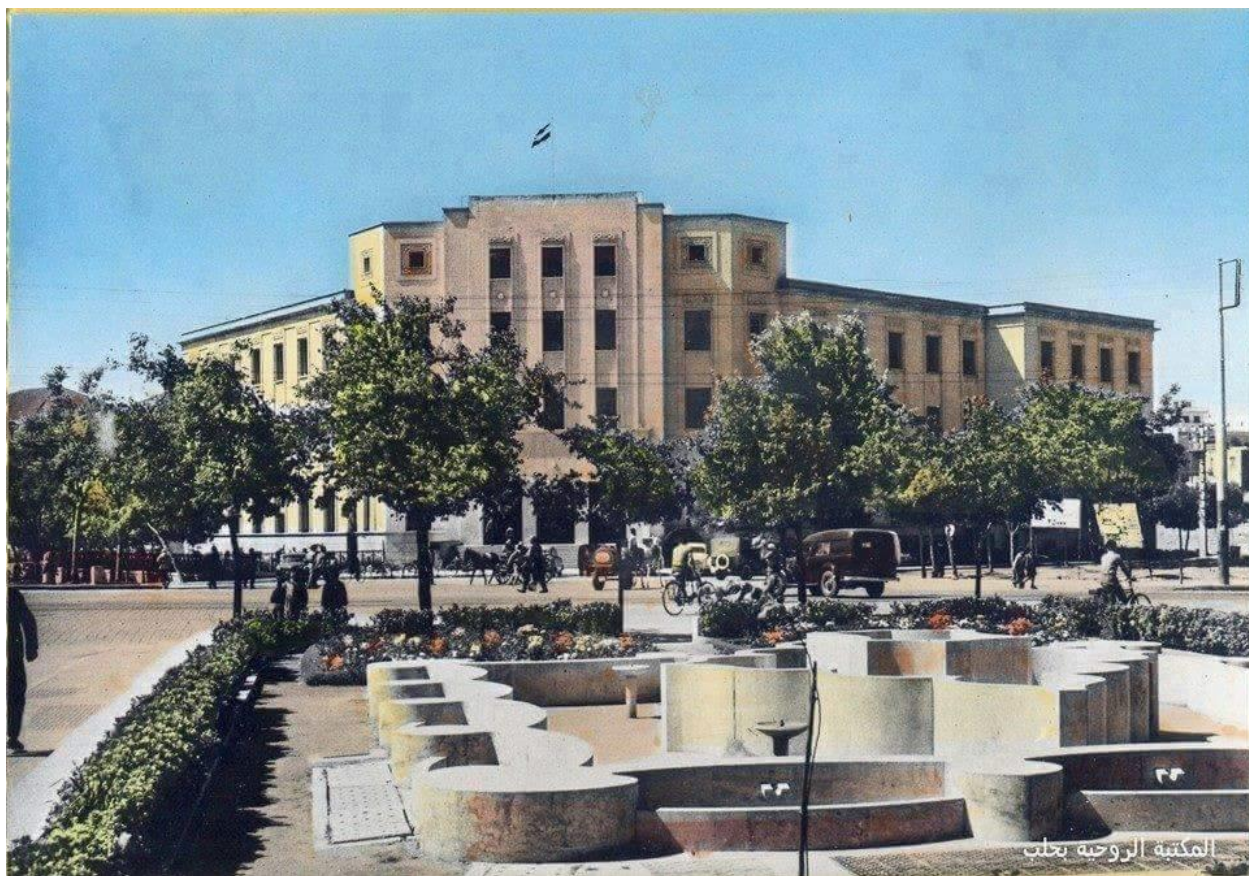
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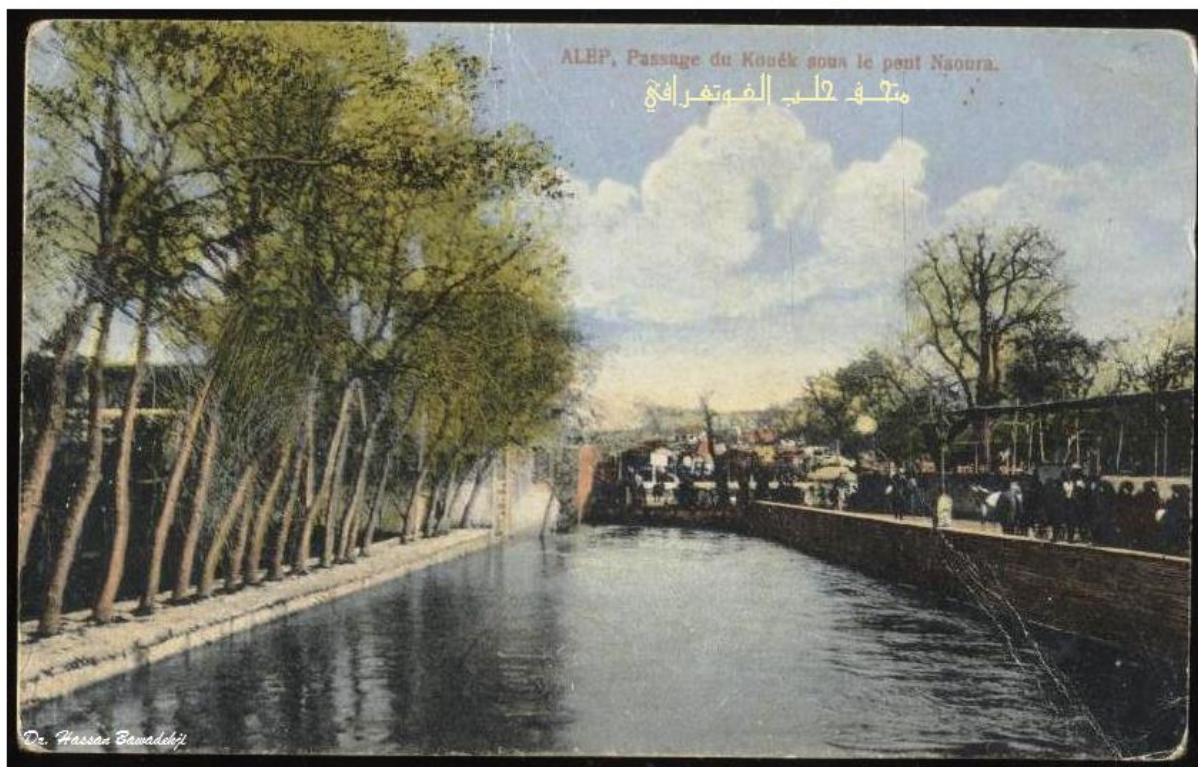
<http://photos.aleppousblog.com/2012/12/saadallah-al-jaberi-square-aleppo.html>

Appendices:

Chapter 1: Old pictures of Saadallah Al-Jabri Square









Chapter 2: Saadallah Al-Jabri square before the war







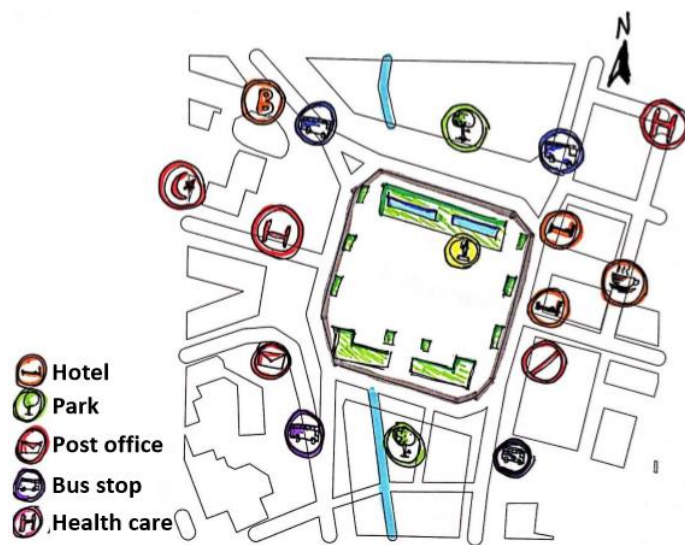
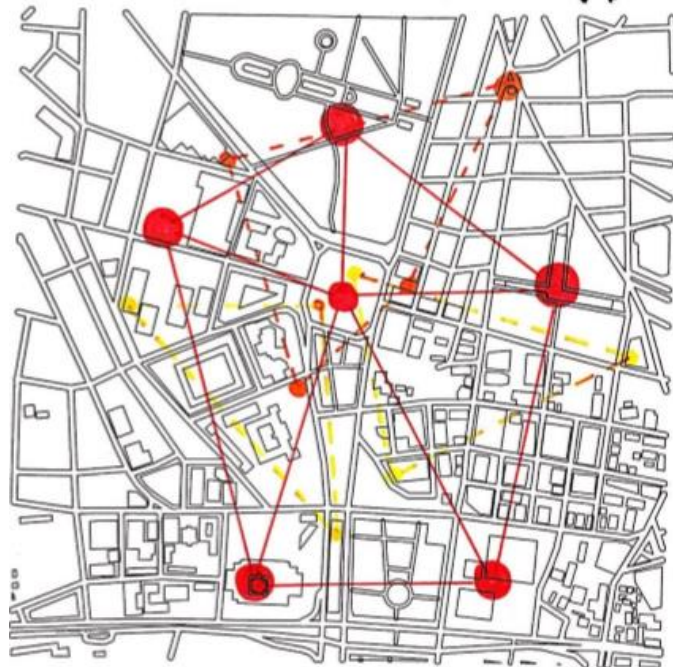
Chapter 3: Saadallah Al-Jabri square during the war (2012)

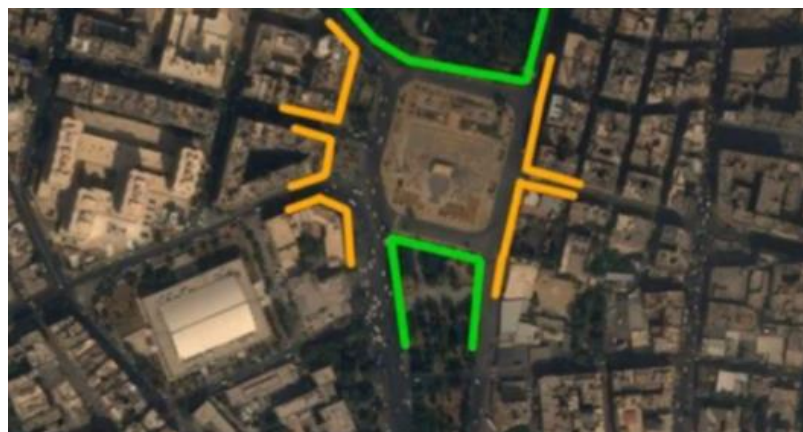
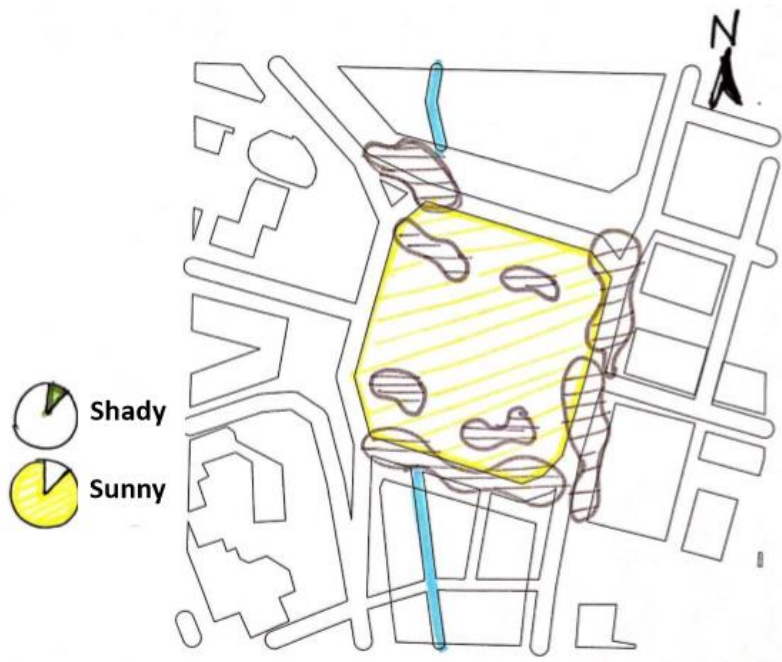






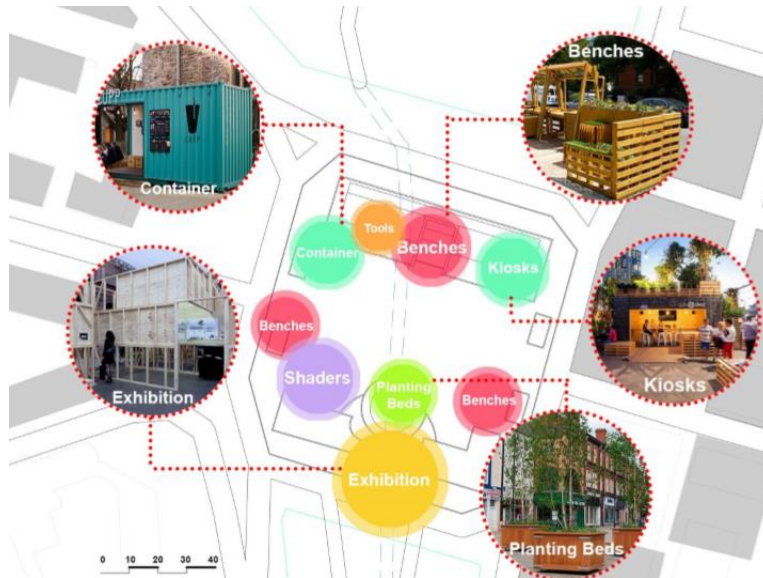
Chapter 4: Analysis Sheets



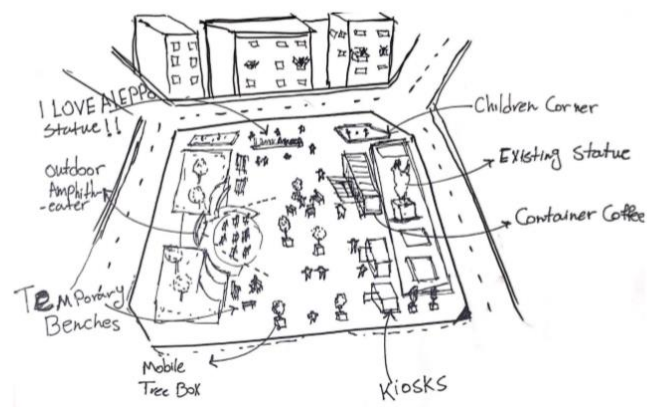


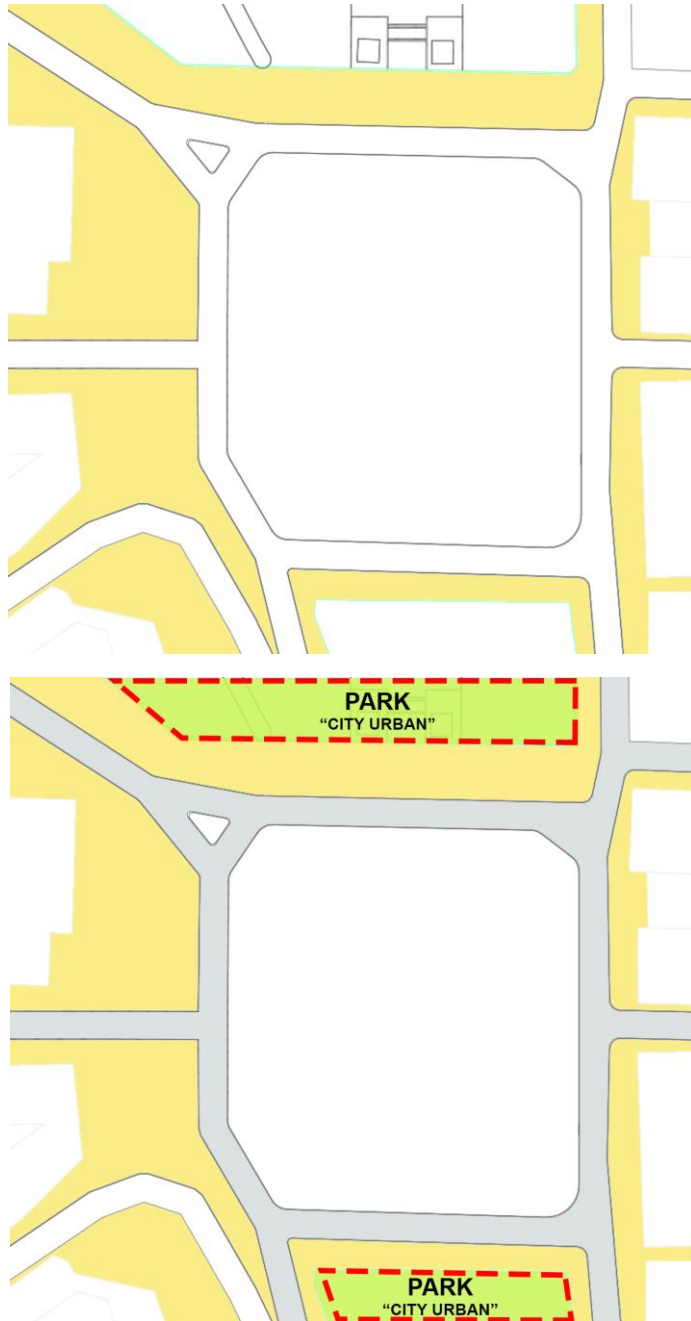
Chapter 5: Concepts and Design Plans:

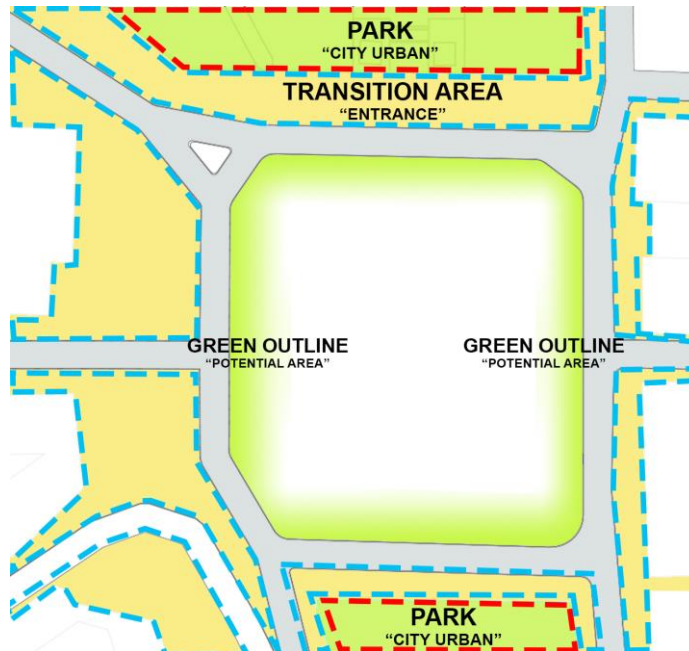


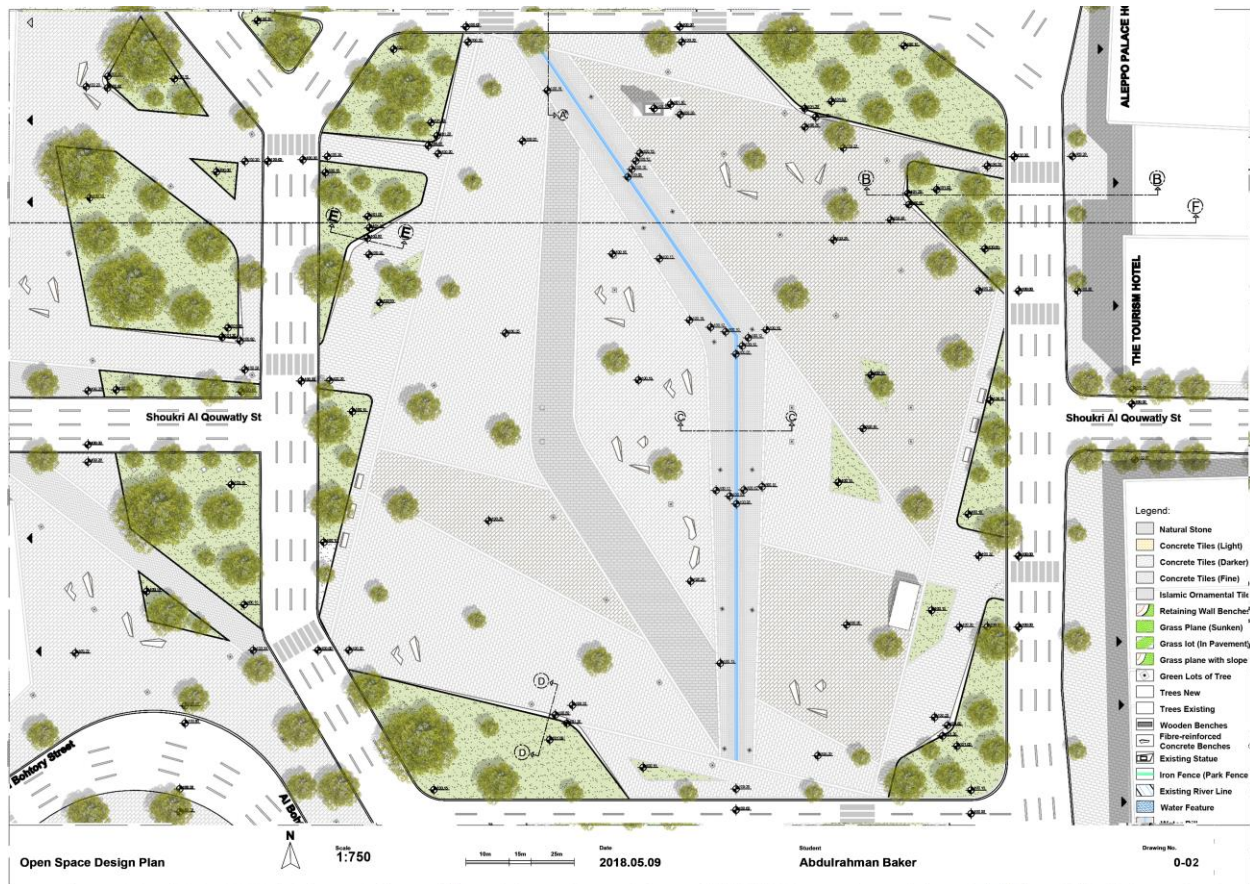


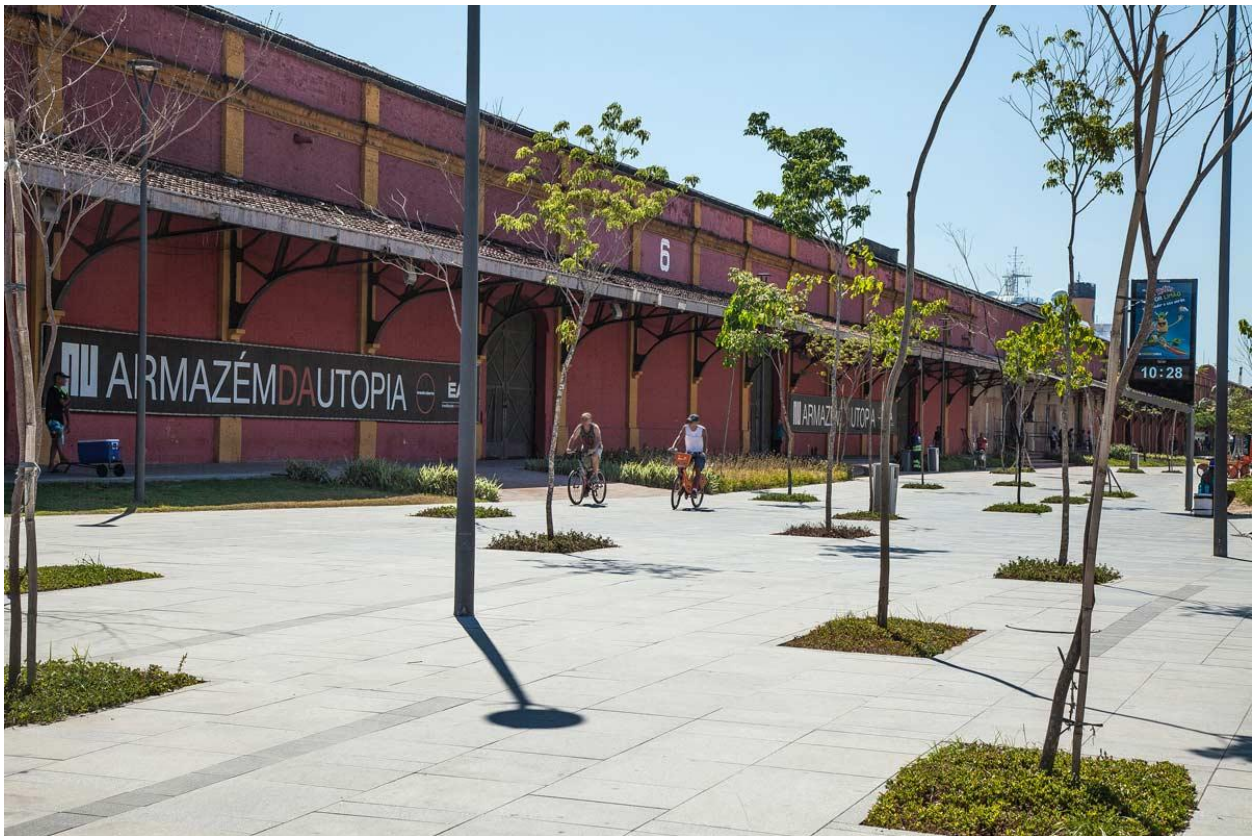
Creating a space where people speak about the future!











Chapter 6: Sections



GRADIENT SHADING
"FROM PARK TO SQUARE"



TRANSITION AREA
"PARK PROMENADE"



WATER RILL
"CENTRAL AREA"



BENCHS
"IN RETAINING WALL"



BENCHS
"IN RETAINING WALL"



CROSSING CONNECTION
"ZEBRA LINE"

