Strategic Planning for Organizing of Urban Distressed Areas (Case Study: Shahidgah-Sheikh Safi Neighborhood in Ardabil City)

Nader Zaali*
Associate Professor, Department of Urbanization, University of Gilan, Iran
Majid Zareie
Assistant Professor, Department of Urbanization, Imam Khomeini International University, Qazvin, Iran
Saman Ebizadeh
Ph.D. student of Islamic urbanization, Islamic Art University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran
Farshid Hashemzadeh Ghalehjogh
M.Sc. of regional planning, University of Gilan, Iran

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Abstract: Currently, old textures are one of the main problems in many cities and even villages in our country. The specific feature of these textures makes it necessary to be considered from different aspects. This study is trying to find strategies to improve and organize old texture in the Shahidgah neighborhood of Ardabil. It also aims to plan and design in accordance with the existing status and consistent with strategic priorities. In this regard, using review of documents and field surveys, existing status of the neighborhood were evaluated using SWOT analysis and planning strategies. Continuing with the quantitative models used, organizing strategies are prioritized. Finally, five design alternatives presented in accordance with texture requirements. Findings indicate that the organizing of the studied area should adopt a systematic approach for 4 dimensions of physical, economic, social and environmental interventions to deal with. The preferred alternative has tried to organize and remove the ruined buildings in the middle of the area, a closeness be created and the central space is used to create a neighborhood center.

Keywords: Organizing, old texture, Strategic Planning, SWOT, Shahidgah neighborhood, Ardabil.
JEL Classification: N95, C63, Z10, C61

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*Corresponding author: nzali@guilan.ac.ir

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1- Introduction

Cities have experienced different eras during their lives; they are changing in order to continue their lives. Natural process of aging and urban decline, as time goes by and different incidents, the effects of changing ways of living, and technological growth, force cities to adopt inevitably ruling and changing conditions (Kahni, 2010). In other words, countries, including developed or developing ones, have been or will be faced with the phenomenon of increase in urban population in a course of time. The statistics indicate that more than half of the world populations live in cities and the majority of people were living in the cities in human history for the first time in 2007, and we consider many problems because of this concentration (Butala, 2010). This makes countries confront with fundamental problems because of costly ordinary plans of urban development. One of the most important consequences of such urbanization process, along with lack of providing suitable urban infrastructures for residents and immigrants to cities, is creating irregular and worn out tissues around and in the city (Abbasi and Razavi, 2006). Iran's cities, as one of the third world countries, have had very rapid growth in the last fifty years, particularly in the last two decades; in a way that currently, about 70 percent of Iran populations live in the cities and this trend is increasing rapidly (Barzegar, 2012). In fact, the process of urbanization in Iran is similar to other developing countries i.e. as the number of cities and people increases, physical structure of urban areas develops as well. Increasing process of urbanization in Iran has created some problems (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2014); in a way that these problems and deficiencies influenced all aspects of urbanization, and they sometimes disrupted city life. One of the main problems of older cities is distressed areas that is the beginning of many urban problems with socio-economic, physical-spatial, environmental, and security issues, and it has prepared the unsustainability ground in many cities (Ebrahimzadeh and Maleki, 2012). Currently, distressed and inefficient areas in our country are the main problems in different cities and even villages. Those areas that once were the center of population and economy have been changed into inefficient areas in urban economy. However, these areas, socially and culturally, because of the lower concentration of population, have been changed into insecure areas and crime centers (Nazeri and Rouhi Kalash, 2008). Policies and interventions in urban areas can be divided into three groups including rehabilitation, renovation, and reconstruction of the area based on loyalty to the past. The special entity of old urban areas makes it imperative to pay more attention to them from different aspects; economically, as it is the best place for settlement, culturally, as it is the origin of contemporary city, cultural relic, and eventually the resource of today's identity of the city, socially, as it can be the ground for accumulation and development of variety of social disorders, and physically, as it still enjoys many unique architectural and urban values (Majedi,

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2010). Generally, since the origin and identity of each city depend more on its old context, it is better to look to the future from now on, to select previous live and dynamic elements by scientific and realistic valuation, to revitalize and revive them in connection with modern element, and thereby to give them new life. The purpose of rehabilitation, renovation, reconstruction, and organizing is sustainable development of geographical environment (Firoozi, et.al., 2012). Thus, appropriate approach to old urban areas requires accurate approach and holistic attitude to old context and its features, and accordingly, accurate preparing and developing applicable plans and rehabilitation of old areas (Lotfi, et.al., 2010). Urban distressed areas are one of the proposed issues in all cities of country that each of which needs to intervene and modify in accordance with their human and natural conditions. The city of Ardebil is not also exempt from this issue, and it is faced with the phenomenon of old areas. Shahidgah neighborhood, located in the mausoleum of Sheikh Safi, is one of those mentioned areas that its spatial and physical organizing and empowerment of its residents need a systematic and holistic approach with macro planning. In this regard, this research tries to present solutions in order to organize and involve in this area. The main purpose is to plan and design in accordance with status in Shahidgah neighborhood. The main question is to answer how to present solutions compatible with key priorities of development in the area and how to maintain identity of Ardebil in old context.

2- Literature Review

The process of improving cities' distressed areas to enhance economic conditions, conducted activities to avoid urban decay process, and relevant practical measures in different countries have been proposed by mainly two development terms of redevelopment and urban renewal. There is no obvious difference between these two terms, but they are not quite the same. In domestic literature, different types of involvement in urban areas have been defined aiming to urban restoration in the form of strategies such as renovation, rehabilitation, and reconstruction that each of which suggests a special involvement, but all of them are defined in the form of general concept of urban renewal (Barakpour and Bahrami, 2011). Yet, various and important researches have been done regarding urban areas of cities in the country. The following can be mentioned among them:

Hosseini et.al. (2013) in a research, entitled "strategies of organizing distressed area of Qeytariyeh neighborhood" used planning matrix of quantitative strategies aiming to formulate strategies with time priority to facilitate in organizing this area. For this purpose, data were collected through library studies, survey, interview, and questionnaires. In the first step, comments and questionnaires were applied in planning matrix of quantitative strategies. The findings indicate that strategies to improve quality of life, civic participation, creating leisure and public

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space, applying new technologies and methods, visual landscape and sidewalks, and controlling plans are in line with organizing mentioned area as the highest priority strategies.

Sarvar (2011) in a research, entitled "studying the capacities of distressed area and its empowerment in the city of Bafgh" used ANP model to prioritize effective factors on inefficiency of distressed area. By using SWOT, he states that strategies and plans such as giving legal role to councils, supporting and encouraging the integration of fine parts, and granting financial facilities to residents in the issue of organizing had the most impact on ideal management of Bafgh distressed area.

Nastaran and Hooshmandfar (2010) in their study, entitled "strategic planning to organize part of Uremia distressed area" used SWOT technique that is one of the most widely used models in strategic planning and the process of strategy analysis. The results indicated that the area was highly vulnerable regarding weaknesses; yet, it had optimal opportunities to take advantage and archive to ideal point.

Mohammadi et.al. (2014) in "analysis of spatial-physical structure of Dogonbadan distressed areas with the approach of renovation and rehabilitation" identified the most important weaknesses, strengths, opportunities, and threats in the course of organizing, renovation, and rehabilitation of mentioned area by using SWOT, ANP, and Expertchoice software, and they finally presented strategies for improvement of Dogonbadan distressed area.

Zanganeh et.al. (2013) in a study entitled "explanation and prioritization of involvement in urban distressed areas by using AHP in the holy city of Mashhad," considering necessities to distressed areas, identified the purpose and prioritize distressed areas. They prioritized studied areas based on quantitative and qualitative criterions and by using AHP method. Selected criterions include area of property, permeability of pathways, land uses, quality of buildings and historical-cultural spaces. Finally, by analyzing data, it was specified that the impact of economic index (area of the property) placed in the first and environmental-physical factor placed in the second rank compared to other factors.

Izadi and Sheykhha (2008) did a research entitled "studying the role of government's supportive and encouraging policies in renovation of urban distressed areas (case study: city of Shiraz). In fact, this research addressed to evaluate encouraging policies and develop regulations that are adopted as an alternative to organize distressed area in order to scrutinize its positive and negative aspects, obstacles, and problems facing these policies. Some of these policies are granting facilities without subsidiary deposit for construction, purchase, restoration of residential units, discounts on license fees, basic density and surplus, building license up 60% in excess of the base density, and free supply of available infrastructure services. The role and impact of government's supportive and encouraging policies in rehabilitation of Shiraz

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distressed areas were investigated and analyzed by collecting library documents and particularly field studies. The results of this research indicate that adopted policies in the city of Shiraz did not achieve to expected results because of different reasons, and their impact on renovation of distressed area was very insignificant.

3- Theoretical Principles

Definitions and Concepts

Context: It is a linked area that is formed during urban life in the area of a city or its suburbs (Zivyar, 2010). This area can be formed by buildings, roads, complexes, spaces, infrastructures, and urban facilities or a combination of them. Its variants are as follows: context with urban heritages (historical), urban contexts (without urban heritages), suburban contexts (informal settlements) (Koolabadi, 2008).

Decay: It is one of the most important issues related to urban space leading to disorganization, imbalance, contradiction and disproportion (Daviran et.al., 2012). Decay means inefficiency and reduction in the performance of a context compared to other urban contexts. These contexts have been changed into a dilemma for decision-makers, managers, and people in historical cities. In these contexts, country's latent cultural and civic values are in the bottleneck of context inability to adapt to the needs of new life (Lotfi et.al., 2010). Therefore, it can be said that distressed area is an urban context that qualitative values of human environment, including physically, functionally, environmentally, economically, and socially, are reduced due to different factors and elements in it, renewal in the context is stopped by reducing residential values, and willingness to migration is increased among residents (Ebrahimzadeh and Maleki, 2012).

Determinants Criteria of Distressed Area

In 2006, Iran's High Council for Urban Planning and Architecture announced the indices of distressed area including fine textures, instability, and impermeability. In this regard, those contexts are examined and approved that have all the three indexes (Farshidi, 2010):

1. Those blocks that more than 50 percent of its buildings are instable and distressed.

2. Those blocks that more than 50 percent of its streets are less than 6 meters.

3. Those blocks that more than 50 percent of its buildings are less than 200 square meters (Adibi Saeidinejad, 2010).

Distressed areas are faced with special features because of passage of time and lack of necessary investment in the maintenance of them (Lotfi, et.al., 2010). Some of the features of distressed areas are lack of access to its inside, lack of appropriate infrastructures, environmental problems, high volume of contamination, lack of facilities for leisure time, poverty and deprivation, vulnerability to earthquakes, low per capita of services, large population (high population density), less durable building density, insecurity and social problems (Jahanshahi, 2003).

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Involvement in urban distressed areas has a centuries-old history in the world countries. In Iran, this is being done in a modern form for decades because of cities with old contexts. So far, in the world and in Iran, many models and methods were used in line with intervention in urban distressed areas (Arabi and Entezar Yazdi, 2008). In different views, intervention methods can be divided into five general categories including sanitary-protective, protective-decorative, urban regeneration, subject-topic, and comprehensive method of urban restoration (Manoochehri, 2010). These five categories can be in three groups of rehabilitation, renovation, and reconstruction that each of which includes wide range of measures as required (Faraji Molaei, 2010). Rehabilitation is special for those areas having historical-cultural values, and it should be done by observing all principles and regulations of Cultural Heritages Organization. In the meantime, renewal is to restore urban life of each context through renovation, empowerment, and restoration. Finally, there is no necessity to maintain previous context in reconstruction, but intervention in the area is done by demolition, cleanup and rebuilding (Abbasi and Razavi, 2006). Its main three actors are government, developers and homeowners (Hao et al., 2011). In this regard, it can be said that attention to rehabilitation and improvement of urban areas and neighborhoods dates back to the early 19th in the Europe, particularly England and France. At this time, with the advent of the industrial revolution a great deal of functional diversity occurred in cities, and cities were faced with the challenge of function change and deformation caused by it; therefore, it was necessary to pay attention to old contexts because of respect to maintain urban space and solving problems of disagreements between the areas with new functions created as a result of the industrial revolution (Mohammadi and Nozari, 2008).

Approaches of Intervention in Urban Areas

Historical and urban distressed areas need intervention in order to present current living condition. Different types of intervention methods and dealing in experienced urban distressed areas can be divided into three following general approaches:

1. Organizing distressed area
2. Protecting distressed area
3. Intervention in distressed area

Each of these approaches and interventions follows different purposes with various measures. Facing any urban context at the outset and after identifying the problems and causes of burnout, one or some ways can be applied in the form of intervention strategy (Farshidi, 2010). In table1, the purposes and ways of measure in different types of intervention in distressed area have been presented.

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Table1. The purposes and methods of measure in different types of intervention in distressed areas

Types of Intervention	Purpose of intervention	Methods of action (types of plan)
Organizing	Guidance and control of development	Developing guiding documents (terms and regulations)
Protection	Protection (absolute)	Developing guiding documents (terms and regulations) and necessary measure by organization in charge
Intervention (Constructive)	Rehabilitation, reconstruction, reform and revitalization of urban spaces, protected (active)	Preparing plan, guiding documents, organizing and investment plan
Intervention (Fundamental)	Renovation, protection (active), creating space and modern urban structures	Preparing design and plan (action), organizing and investment

Reference: (Farshidi, 2010)

4- Research Method

This research is applied because of its main purpose. Research method is descriptive-analytical. It has been composed of two theoretical and design parts. In theoretical part, communication norm is proposed in the main center of urban structure by using descriptive method. In analytical part, data were collected by using library information, including books, journals, articles, available documents, and other scientifically relevant references), and field studies (observation and questionnaire) from case study (Shahidgah neighborhood located in the mausoleum of Sheikh Safi in Ardabil), and status of the area were evaluated and analyzed by using SWOT. Finally, by applying experts' view, weighting and ranking of organizing strategies in accordance with internal and external factors of SWOT matrix are done and top intervention strategies with priority in the mentioned area are determined based on the importance and total weight rating. In the case study, appropriate plan in accordance with comprehensive and defensible criteria with has been described practically the plan with value system of physical and functional organizing by developing a framework in line with explaining implementation reasons. Thus, a method used in this research is descriptive-analytical according to the subject and purposes.

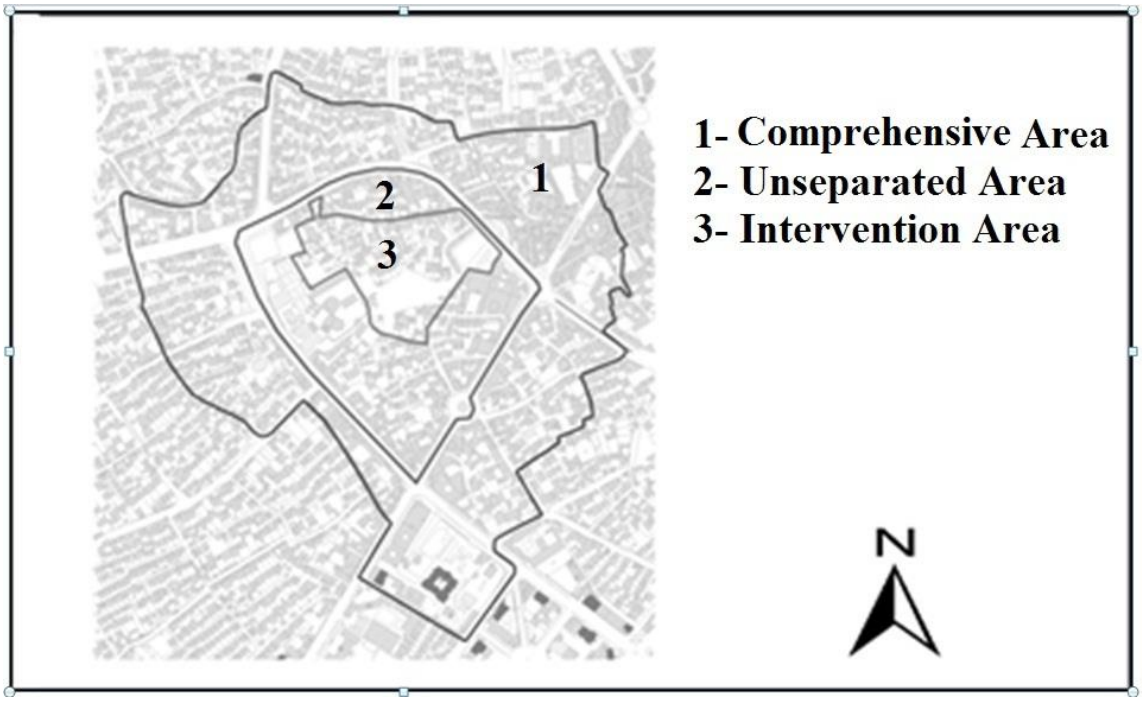
Introducing Spatial Domain of the Research

Research domain has been located in the northern half of the city of Ardabil and in the center of the 96-hectare area of old area of Ardebil. The main range of the research is around Imam Khomeini Avenue that is a part of the first avenue in the city of Ardebil, built in 1991 to connect city gate from Tabriz to Astara. Kashani Avenue is also a part of the second built street in the city of Ardebil

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in 1967. Apart from the fact that both of the studied areas are important and fundamental avenues of the city of Ardebil, regarding traffic and crowd, they are very influential in the recent years by becoming one-way of the studied area in Imam Khomeini Avenue between Imam Hossein Square to Fajr Square and traffic ban for private cars from the south to the north, and studied area in Kashani Street, between Imam Hossein Square to Pir Abdolmalek Square, from the west to the east became one-sided, as a main street in connecting north of the city to the south; Astara gate to Tabriz gate. Studied area in Fajr Square is connected with Fajr Square to Ali Qapoo square i.e. 30-meter of Taleqani and Fajr Square to Pir Abdolmalek Square i.e. eastern 30-meter of Taleqani, particularly with Fajr square; Sarcheshmeh square and Imam Khomeini crossroad. It is connected to Pir Abdolmalek from the northeast with Ayatollah Shahid Madani Street, and from the southwest with 30-meter Taleqani Avenue. While Shahid Madani Avenue is counted as one of the less important avenue in the city of Ardebil and it is not crowded, thirty-meter Taleqani Ave. is crowded with high traffic.



Map1. The location of Shahidgah neighborhood- the mausoleum of Sheikh Safi in Ardebil
Reference: (researchers' findings)

5- Research Findings

The Study and Evaluation of Shahidgah Neighborhood in the city of Ardebil

Studies indicate that not only old area of Ardebil city has specific structure and hierarchy, but it also has physically particular features. Observing hierarchy in the road network, turning in main and long transits, definition of rest spaces and

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neighborhood centers, hierarchy in the arenas, the ratio of width to height of streets, and type of architecture and used materials all have created particularly physical features that separates old part of Ardebil from new one. These features emphasize more on this distinction along with quality of building, age, shape of land parts, and type of properties that it is sometimes along with particular complexities.

According to these perceptions in the studied area, the quality and value of existing buildings in the area are divided into five categories including under construction and new ones, maintenance, repairing, demolition and ruined. According to the conducted studies, currently, the most frequency belongs to safe and usable buildings in the historical area of Shahidgah in Ardebil. However, new buildings have been ranked in the second place because of their frequency. Restoration, destruction and ruined buildings are in the next ranks respectively. Regarding the issue of space closeness and number of buildings floors in the area, it should be noted that the width of streets and their ratio to the walls is an issue that is influential in the way of experiencing space by users. In the historical area, the width of streets is usually between 1.5 to 3 meters. This is despite the fact that the height of buildings is more than the width; there is at least a proportion of one by one and in some cases, the proportion of two to one between walls and width. In return, street width of new area is long. It is usually between 12 to 20 meters and buildings are high, causing have more shadow in the alley of Ardebil new area. The width of new alleys is not less than 8 meters; it rarely happens that the sun shines directly in the longitudinal direction of the alley. In addition, through it, no circulation can be made to change the angle of radiation, so new alleys have much shadow in hot season, and deprived from sun light in cold season to melt snow and ice. Used materials in old area have high necessities. Mud, thatch, plaster, tile, brick, ceramics, and wood are considered as the most important traditional materials in the old city of Ardabil. High thermal capacity of these materials slows down heat transfer to the building.

In order to study existing land uses in this area, the context and activity of the area were investigated. In the old area of Shahidgah, residential density is high. About 12 percent of them are ruined buildings. Residential land use has devoted the most percent of the area to itself. This percentage is on average among total country average in different cities and even in other parts of the city. As it was mentioned before, about 12 percent of the area is ruined and 3 percent is deserted. Thus, about 15 percent of this area can be considered as a potential for devoting to required land use in the process of designing. Another land use that devoted a major part of intervention area is religious land use. However, this issue is not impossible in an area such as old area of Ardebil since public places have had the most audiences in old cities considered as the social center of gravity i.e. religious spaces including mosques. Haj Ali Akbar, Gazeran, Haj Fakhr, Shah Soleyman mosques, Feast of Imam

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Khomeini and Imam Zadeh Saleh are the major religious land uses in this area devoted a major part of this area to them. Religious land uses have solely devoted 10 percent of the area to themselves. Another important land use in this area is commercial one. Commercial land use in Shahidgah area does not have its previous prosperity. Currently, the amount of commercial land uses for main streets is acceptable, but it is very slight for Sheykh Safi area; this should be considered in designing the area. The results of social studies of the studied area indicate that the population of historical area was 11278 in 1986, 13615 in 1996 and 14985 in 2006. Thus, the population of historical area of Shahidgah had 0.8 percent growth on average in a ten-year period during 1986 to 1996. This figure is 0.9 percent for the next ten-year period. In the following table, numbers are listed and compared for the entire city and the historical context.

Table2. Population trend of historical area of Shahidgah compared to the entire city during 1986 to 2006

Year / Population	1986	1996	2006
Mentioned area	11278	13615	14985
City of Ardebil	281973	340386	398638

Reference: (researchers' findings)

Population structure of the area, age, and gender composition of a region present a lot of information about the status and future process of socio-economic variables of the area. According to the census in 1991, about 32 percent of population in the historical area was less than 10 years old. In 1996, with slight growth, this age group was 33 percent of total population in the historical area. However, in 1991, the population between 15 to 64 years old in the historical area, counted as active potential population, were 58.3 percent of total population. This figure reached to 38 percent in 1996 indicating a significant difference of sending immigrants in the historical area during 1991 to 1996. Considering gender, it can be said that males reduce than females during 1991 to 1996. Population growth rate, considering the average of annual population growth of the historical area, was 0.8 percent during a ten-year period of 1986 to 1996 indicating 2 percent migration regarding natural growth of the city in 1996. According to the results of census in 1996, about 80 percent of the populations in the old area of the city of Ardebil were born in Ardebil itself, the rest of them entered from outside of the city. The percent of external immigrants entered to the distressed area is less than similar cases in the city of Ardebil. This

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combination indicates that the old area of Ardebil is less attractive than other areas for rural people and immigrants. This may be due to high cost of purchase price and rental housing in this area compared to other new townships in this city, except from Azadi and Hafez townships.

The results of economic studies indicate that the historical area, because of having many economic entities, has particular economic performance for the city of Ardebil and the beyond range. Old Bazaar of Ardebil in the historical area has created a dense collection of shops, stores and workshops that its scope is not limited to Ardebil affecting a wider range. Previously, Shahidgah neighborhood enjoyed economic boom, but with the passage of time and street construction around commercial centers, it gradually stretched to the main avenue. Economically, this place has lost its prosperity.

Today, Ardebil has two types of physical entities; old and new ones that each of which has its specific values and issues. In the access sector, the results indicate that old area is integrated, compact, with narrow passages, and difficult access into the area while new one is discrete with wide streets.

SWOT Analysis and Providing Planning Strategies in the Context

SWOT analysis is an important tool to develop strategies. It is based on internal factors (weaknesses and strengths) and external ones (opportunities and threats) to develop and adjust strategies. After identifying these factors, the strategies are developed and extended that they may be arranged by focusing on strengths, removing weaknesses, using opportunities or dealing with threats (Mohammad Pur & Alem Tabriz, 2012). In fact, this technique, as a powerful tool for strategic analysis, is used to identify strategically internal and external key factors. The remarkable step of the analysis identifies strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Finally, it presents the best-combined strategy by maximizing strengths and opportunities, and minimizing weaknesses and threats (Shahabi et al., 2014).

In the following, we will discuss about strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of organizing Shahidgah neighborhood in environmental, economic, social, and physical-user aspects considering determined purposes (table3).

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Table3. SWOT analysis of Shahidgah neighborhood-Ardebil

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Environmental	• Locating the area in the relatively calm region regarding infrastructure • Having suitable position in terms of visual and physical access	• Lack of suitable green space in the area • Crowd and traffic of passengers and drivers have created environmental pollution (air and noise pollution) • Environmental pollution because of rubbish in ruined parts	• Open spaces and possibility to design green space in them • Expanding tourism activities in the area because of valuable buildings and appropriate view to Sabalan Mountain	• Limitation of using public and urban spaces because of environmental problems in winter • Lack of appropriate system of waste collection and its accumulation in the ruined areas • Damage to the old area and historical monuments because of created vibrations because of too much traffic
Economic	• Presence of different economic activities together and presence of active economic land uses • Presence of Bazaar in the northern part has created attractive complexes. • Presence of historical monuments creates tourism activities in the city	• Presence of heterogeneous economic sectors in the area disrupts economic balance in the area	• Revival of tourism activities and attracting tourists considering attractiveness, cultural values, and special identity • Economic boom and collection of homogeneous uses together as commercial center	• Too much crowd and traffic in rush hours disturbed the residents' tranquility because of economic sectors • Residents' immigration and unwillingness to return number of old residents because of lack of appropriate life
Social	• Having long experience of residence and social origins • Market and economic activities in the area creating social presence and interactions	• Hangouts, social bases have been formed in more spontaneous sectors, and they do not have ideal situation spatially. • Performance vitality and residential houses existed in the past changed into ruined places and parking lots	• Open land behind Sheykh Safi; an open space for cultural and social activities • The existence of valuable houses with the ability to become cultural spaces	• Disintegration of social structure from insecure conditions and ruined residential houses • Inappropriate and unknown condition of streets has created life-threatening risks for passengers.
Physical-user	• Having sustainable values • Different land uses in the area underlies presence and social interactions	• Lack of appropriate and defined space in providing suitable paths for different land uses due to cross paths • Lack of attention to new buildings to area identity	• Openness of views to natural elements and proposed point of the city • Lack of stop and visual disrupt by stands • Doing many different activities in space	• Infamous physical elements lead to forget collective memories, sense of place, citizens' mental image

Reference: (Researchers' findings)

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Neighborhood Planning Strategies

In this part, considering the study of obvious features, available potentials, and identifying four factors of strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities, some strategies have been developed in order to organize neighborhood in four fields including environmental, economic, social, and physical-user ones in line with research perspective and purposes (table 4).

Table4. Strategies of organizing Shahidgah neighborhood

	Macro Goals	Suggested Strategies
Environmental	Environmental improvement	-Improvement health status and environmental cleanliness of the area -Try to protect natural and environmental resources of the area -Prettification of the area -Forecasting necessary measures to improve social and personal living situation
Economic	Improvement of economic activities	-Development and extension of tourism in order to appropriate use of the environment and avoiding to destroy historical area -Try to increase labor force efficiency and productivity -Presenting appropriate financial resources and credits to improve economic structure of neighborhoods -Attracting private investors for macro-investment in the area -Diversification of facilities, activities, and services fitting historical performances of the area in rehabilitation and renovation
Social	Social-cultural improvement and local capacities	-Try to increase sense of belonging to the environment, social links, and giving identity -Try to increase and improve residents' awareness, capacity, and social power -Try to improve socio-cultural relations -Creating an atmosphere to collect and increase social interactions -Appropriate distribution of population considering existing facilities in each neighborhood and population capacities
Physical-user	Physical improvement	-Using abandoned spaces, without uses, ruined buildings for physical renovation and rehabilitation of complex to increase spatial quality -Revival of the area and establishing links between its different elements by physical intervention and modifying the performance of different sectors -Using appropriate rules and regulations in urban design guidance to increase supervision on buildings in the area and therefore increasing physical-environmental quality in the field of intervention -Creating policies to facilitate land use change

Reference: (Researchers' findings)

Prioritization and Selection of Top Strategies

Generally, in SWOT analysis, the weights of factors are calculated based on the principle that the factors are independent from each other. Changes in the weight of factors can lead to changes in the strategic priorities; therefore, it is necessary to apply methods that measure possible dependence among these factors and use them for SWOT analysis (Shariatmadari et al., 2013). In this regard, and in order to select top strategies, it has been tried in this part to quantify strategic planning model and extract factors and strategies with the highest scores (weights). For this purpose, by using measurement model of Hunger and David, based on results and obtained scores of factors and organizing strategies of neighborhood via designed and distributed questionnaires among related experts, internal and external factors and

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organizing factors of the neighborhood were studied (tables 5 to 8).

In these tables, internal and external factors, and development strategies that previously extracted and developed SWOT analysis matrix are presented. The coefficients of factors of strategies have been presented based on their location and share in all internal and external factors in the quantitative form. In this matrix, strategies have been compared, people rank them, then these scores are multiplied in this coefficient, collective score or rank is obtained, and finally total collective score is written below the matrix.

Table5. Scoring environmental strategies

Factors		Coefficient	Strategy 1		Strategy 2		Strategy 3		Strategy 4	
			Rank	Total	Rank	Total	Rank	Total	Rank	Total
Strength	Locating the area in a relatively calm range in terms of infrastructure	0.10	1	0.10	2	0.20	1	0.10	2	0.20
	Having suitable condition in terms of location and physical access	0.40	1	0.40	3	1.20	3	1.20	3	1.20
Weakness	Lack of suitable green space in the area	0.20	2	0.40	1	0.20	2	0.40	3	0.60
	Crowd and traffic of passengers and drivers have created environmental pollution (air and noise pollution)	0.60	4	2.40	2	1.20	2	1.20	4	2.40
	Environmental pollution from waste collection in the ruined and deserted areas	0.15	4	0.60	1	0.15	3	0.45	4	0.60
Opportunity	Open spaces and possibility to design green space in them	0.25	3	0.75	2	0.50	3	0.75	3	0.75
	The extension of tourism activities in the area because of valuable buildings and suitable view to Sabalan Mountain	0.30	2	0.60	4	1.20	4	1.20	4	1.20
Threat	Limitation of using urban and public spaces because of climate problems in winter	0.15	1	0.15	2	0.30	2	0.30	2	0.30
	Lack of suitable system of waste collection and its accumulation in the ruined areas	0.15	3	0.45	1	0.15	1	0.15	2	0.30
	The damage of old area and historical monuments due to created vibrations because of vehicles	0.15	2	0.30	2	0.30	3	0.45	3	0.45
Total				6.15		5.40		6.20		8

Reference: (Researchers' findings)

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Table6. Scoring of economic strategies

Factors		Coefficient	Strategy 1		Strategy 2		Strategy 3		Strategy 4		Strategy 5	
			Rank	Total	Rank	Total	Rank	Total	Rank	Total	Rank	Total
Strength	Presence of different economic activities together and the existence of active economic land uses	0.35	1	0.35	3	1.05	3	1.05	1	0.35	3	1.05
	The existence if market in the northern part of the area has created attractive complexes.	0.25	2	0.50	3	0.75	3	0.75	2	0.50	3	0.75
	The existence of historical monuments creating tourism activities in the city	0.20	4	0.80	2	0.40	4	0.80	4	0.80	2	0.40
Weakness	Presence of heterogeneous economic sectors in the area has leaded to disrupt economic balance in the area	0.20	1	0.20	2	0.20	2	0.40	2	0.40	3	0.60
Opportunity	Revival of economic activities and attracting tourists because of having cultural attractions and values and special identity	0.35	4	1.40	2	0.70	3	1.05	1	0.35	2	0.70
	Economic boom and collecting homogeneous land uses together as commercial center	0.20	3	0.60	1	0.20	3	0.60	2	0.40	4	0.80
Threat	Too much crowd and traffic in rush hours because of economic sectors disturbed residents' tranquility	0.25	1	0.25	1	0.25	1	0.25	1	0.25	1	0.25
	Residents' immigration and unwillingness to return a number of old residents to the city due to lack of suitable life	0.20	1	0.20	2	0.40	3	0.60	1	0.20	1	0.20
	Total			4.30		3.95		5.50		3.25		4.75

Reference: (Researchers' findings)

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Table7. Scoring social strategies

Factors		Coefficient	Strategy 1		Strategy 2		Strategy 3		Strategy 4		Strategy 5	
			Rank	Total	Rank	Total	Rank	Total	Rank	Total	Rank	Total
Strength	Having long experience of residence and social origins	0.25	4	1	2	0.50	2	0.50	1	0.25	2	0.55
	Market and economic activities in the area creating presence and social interactions	0.35	2	0.70	3	1.05	4	1.40	2	0.70	1	0.35
Weakness	Hangouts and social bases have been established spontaneously and they do not have ideal situation spatially	0.25	2	0.50	3	0.75	4	1	3	0.75	1	0.25
	Vitality of performance and residential houses existed before have changed into ruined area and parking lot	0.15	2	0.30	1	0.15	2	0.30	2	0.30	2	0.30
Opportunity	Open land of Sheykh Safi; an open space for cultural and social activities	0.25	3	0.75	3	0.75	3	0.75	3	0.75	1	0.25
	The existence of precious houses with the ability to change into cultural spaces	0.35	3	1.05	2	0.70	3	1.05	4	1.40	1	0.35
Threat	Heterogeneity of social structure because of insecure conditions and ruined residential houses	0.25	1	0.25	1	0.25	1	0.25	1	0.25	3	0.25
	Inappropriate and unclear condition of streets have created life-threatening dangers for passengers	0.15	2	0.30	1	0.15	1	0.15	1	0.15	2	0.15
Total				4.85		4.30		5.40		4.55		2.40

Reference: (Researchers' findings)

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Table8. Scoring physical-user strategies

Factors		Coefficient	Strategy 1		Strategy 2		Strategy 3		Strategy 4	
			Rank	Total	Rank	Total	Rank	Total	Rank	Total
Strength	Having sustainable values	0.25	3	0.75	3	0.75	4	1	3	0.75
	Different land uses in the area creating wide presence and social interactions	0.20	2	0.40	3	0.60	3	0.60	3	0.60
Weakness	Lack of suitable and defined space in providing appropriate ways for different land uses because of cross paths	0.30	2	0.60	2	0.60	2	0.60	2	0.60
	Lack of attention of new buildings to the area identity	0.25	3	0.75	2	0.50	4	1	2	0.50
Opportunity	Openness of views to natural elements and prominent areas of the city	0.15	3	0.45	3	0.45	3	0.45	1	0.15
	View disturbance by stands	0.20	1	0.20	2	0.40	1	0.20	1	0.20
	The possibility of doing different activities in the space	0.25	3	0.75	4	1	1	0.75	3	0.75
Threat	Not being prominent of physical elements leading to forget collective memories, sense of the place, and citizens' mental image	0.40	3	1.20	3	1.20	2	0.80	1	0.40
Total				5.10		5.50		5.40		3.95

Reference: (Researchers' findings)

According to the results and data in the above tables that were the result of scoring and ranking of organizing strategies of Shahidgah neighborhood based on effectively internal and external factors, the priority of organizing strategies of Shahidgah neighborhood in the mausoleum of Sheikh Safi in Ardabil is extracted and determined in four fileds including physical-user, economic, social, and environmental ones as presented in table9.

Table9. Priority of development-design strategies of organizing Shahidgah area

	Strategies	Score	Ranking
Physical	❖Revival of the area and communicating between its different elements by physical intervention and modifying the performance of different sectors	5.50	First
	❖Applying appropriate rules and regulations in urban design in order to increase supervision on buildings in the area; therefore, increase environmental-physical quality in the field of intervention	5.40	Second
	❖Using isolated spaces without land uses, ruined areas for physical renovation and rehabilitation of the complex in order to increase spatial quality	5.10	Third
	❖Creating policies to facilitate land use change	3.95	Fourth
Economic	❖Granting suitable resources and financial credits to improve economic structure of neighborhoods	5.50	First
	❖Diversity of facilities, activities, and services in accordance with the functions of historical area during rehabilitation and renovation	4.75	Second
	❖Development and expansion of tourism in order to appropriate use of the environment and avoiding to destroy historical area	4.30	Third
	❖Attempt to increase productivity and efficiency of labor force	3.95	Fourth
	❖Attracting private investors for macro investment in the area	3.25	Fifth
Social	❖Attempt to improve socio-cultural relations	5.40	First
	❖Attempt to increase sense of belonging to the environment, social links, and giving identity	4.85	Second
	❖Creating a space to increase social interactions	4.55	Third
	❖Attempt to increase and improve residents' awareness, capacity, and social power	4.30	Fourth
	❖Appropriate distribution of population according to available facilities in each neighborhood and population capacities	2.40	Fifth
Environmental	❖Forecasting necessary measures to improve personal and social living situation	8	First
	❖Prettification of the area	6.20	Second
	❖Improvement of environmental sanitary and health situation of the area	6.15	Third
	❖Try to protect natural and environmental resources of the area	5.40	Fourth

Reference: (Researchers' findings)

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Assessment and analysis of data that are based on scoring to organize strategies indicate that in physical aspect, the strategy of "revival of the area and establishment of communication between its different elements by physical intervention and modifying the performance of different sectors" and "applying appropriate rules and regulations in urban design in order to increase supervision on buildings in the area; therefore, increase environmental-physical quality in the field of intervention" are main strategies with the highest scores. However, economically, "granting suitable resources and financial credits to improve economic structure of neighborhoods" and "diversity of facilities, activities, and services in accordance with the functions of historical area during rehabilitation and renovation" are more acceptable, and they should be on the top of economic development plans. Socially, "attempt to improve socio-cultural relations" and "attempt to increase sense of belonging to the environment, social links, and giving identity" are the most suitable strategies dealing with the distressed area. Environmentally, "forecasting necessary measures to improve personal and social living situation" and "prettification of the area" are key strategies in organizing the studied area. It has been tried to determine strategies with priority and to use and consider them in designing plan and presenting alternatives of organizing area.

6- Conclusion and Suggestion

Strategic planning is considered as a key instrument in facing with urban dilemmas and access to social, economic, cultural, and environmental sustainable development. It is a process to arrange and develop strategies by mutual identification and analysis of internal and external environment. For strategic analysis, a full analysis of internal and external ones should be done first. Many approaches and techniques can be used to analyze internal and external environments, strategic issues, and developing strategy. Among them, SWOT analysis matrix that evaluates environmental strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats is more common and popular. The main purpose of this research is to study and analyze the organization of distressed area of Shahidgah neighborhood, the mausoleum of Sheikh Safi Addin in Ardebil. In this regard and according to the available documents and field studies, physical, social, economic, and environmental existing status of the mentioned area was analyzed. By using SWOT technique, the studies of current situation were summed up and planning strategies were developed and presented. By quantifying used strategic planning model in analysis of research findings, strategic and key priorities of organizing studied area were specified and determined, and become a base for presenting suggestions in the form of organizing options and designing Shahidgah neighborhood.

Presenting design alternatives in Shahidgah area

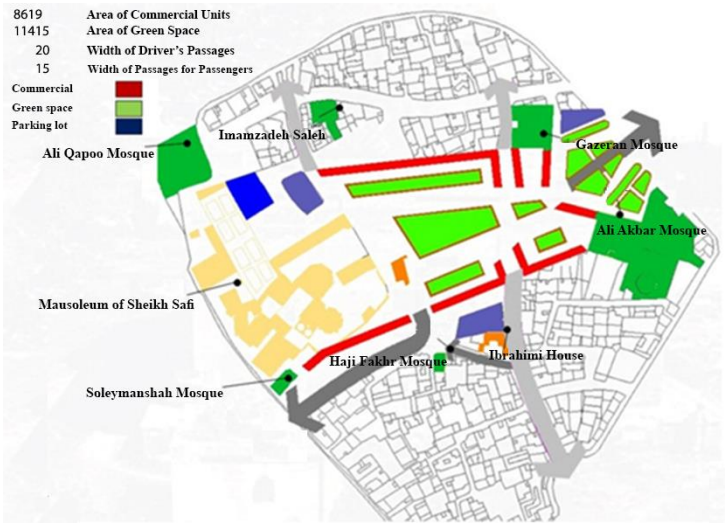
Finally, according to the presented prioritized strategies, some alternatives have been presented to design the studied area (Shahidgah) aiming to organize the

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area and they are evaluated based on proposed orientations in suggested strategies part:

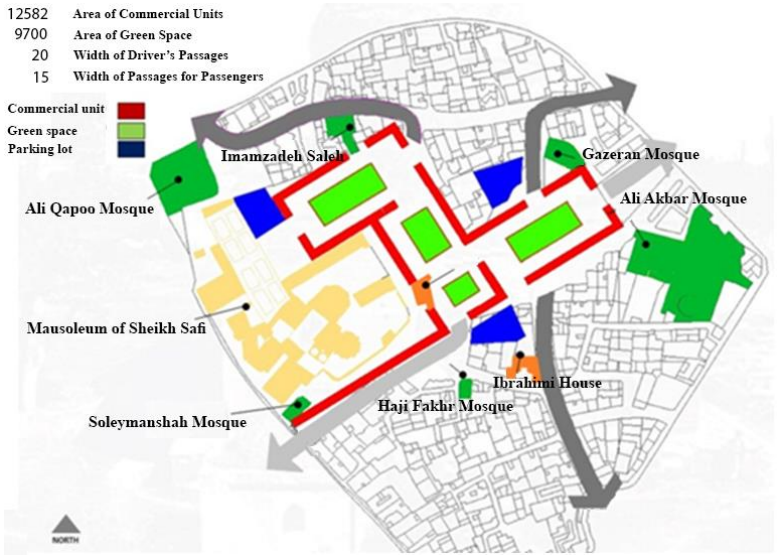
The first alternative of designing: merging Mirza Ali Akbar Mosque on Gazeran Mosque and stretching their similar sides can design a convex mode for the center of neighborhood. A porch is considered for the entrance, after entering from a porch, Sheykh Safi is seen bigger and more glorious.



Shape1. Diagram plan of the first alternative of designing
Reference: (Researchers' findings)

This option is rejected since it changes the area, leading to ruin and not being appropriate with identity of the city.

The second alternative: By putting rooms with porch, traditional mode of the area is kept. The designed center in this alternative has special order.



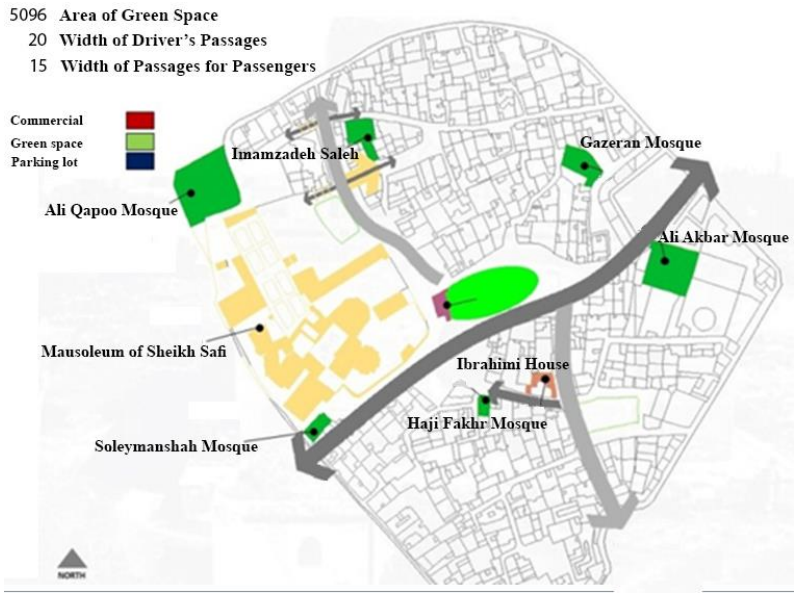
Shape2. Diagram plan of the second alternative of designing
Reference: (Researchers' findings)

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This design is rejected because of removing the total area, disorder, and imbalance.

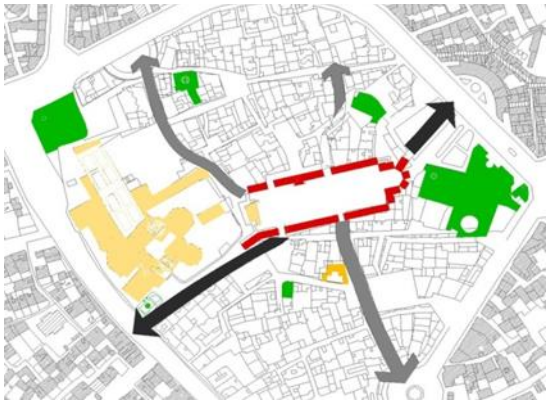
The third alternative: wide alleys to facilitate traffic have been suggested. Business and service centers can be located and created near the square.



Shape3. Diagram plan of the third alternative of designing
Reference: (Researchers' findings)

This alternative is rejected since it increases traffic in the center of the area, and it creates air and environmental pollution.

The fourth alternative: it has been tried to decrease the number of ruined buildings and to remove un-usable buildings in the middle of the area.



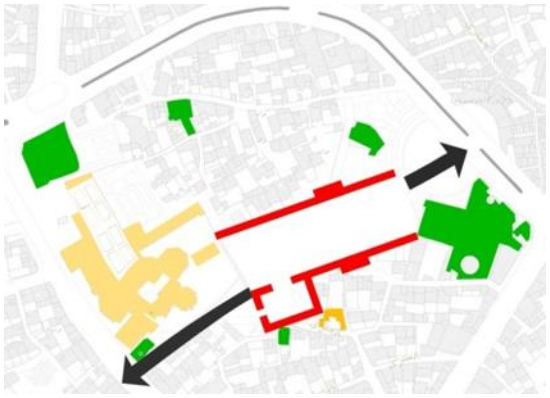
Shape4. Diagram plan of the fourth alternative of designing
Reference: (Researchers' findings)

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The fourth alternative transfers the traffic to the main avenues leading to improve street situation in the area, residents' willingness to renovate and rehabilitate near old buildings of Sheykh Safi.

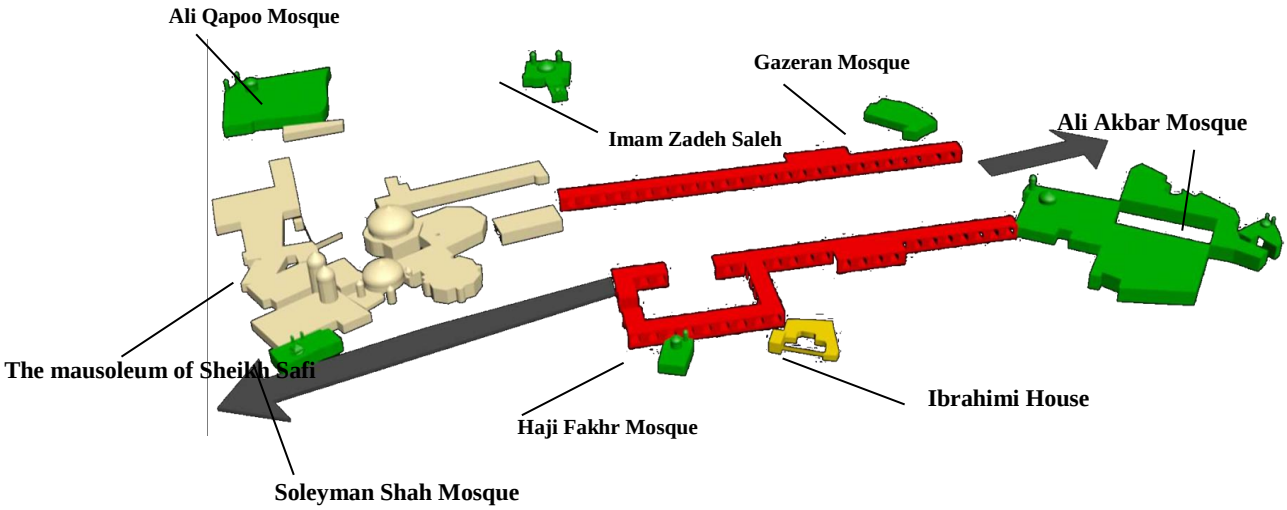
The fifth alternative: It has been tried to use a middle space to create the center of the area. It has been tried that Clock Tower that is one of urban indices and symbols in the area to become more prominent.



Shape5. Diagram plan of the fifth alternative of designing
Reference: (Researchers' findings)

In this alternative, by reducing traffic, a set of possible damages is kept. Organizing the central part of the complex can restore dynamism and vitality to the mentioned area.

Briefly, the fifth alternative has been considered as the top and suitable one, and a base for design model of the neighborhood in each of five alternatives, their evaluation compared to the current situation of intervention, and research priorities. Diagram of shape6 indicates suggested design that is superior compared to the others.



Shape6. Diagram of the fifth designed alternative
Reference: (Researchers' findings)

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Only suggestion and approval of a plan cannot guarantee its implementation though it has been done based on accurate studies with full understanding of needs and facilities of the area since implementation methods of plans should be considered, and ground for its implementation should be prepared. From this perspective as well as protecting, the identity and the main body of the area, principles, criteria, and suggested general policies in accordance with designed alternative of the area in line with research objectives and strategies are presented as follows so that it has been tried in presenting and developing intervention policies in the area to consider basic needs of the area fitting with purposes and landscape of the design and avoid unnecessary issues:

1. Keeping physical, spatial, and architectural identity and values in the area is one of the most important research purposes that following implementation strategies and policies can be suggested:

- avoiding to ruin valuable buildings, and restoring and reconstructing them

- People's awareness of existing architectural and spatial values in the area that can be increased by advertisement and cultural measures

- organizing plans of distressed area are considered as particular detailed plans that should be prepared and implemented based on dominant principles on the process of urban design; therefore, applying the principles of urbanization and urban design in renovation and reconstruction of the studied area is one of the main administrative policies.

- Realizing domestic principles on existing residential buildings in the area and their effectiveness on climatic, cultural and social factors

2. Visual organization, creating visual perspective, and appropriate volume in the area:

- arranging ideally visual perspective, using rules and regulations of construction, and suggesting appropriate models of architecture and urbanization are some of the most important issues proposed in creating suitable view in the area that area identity can be kept in the design emphasizing on them.

- Improving readability of physical and functional signs as well as entrances from surrounding emphasizing on keeping their identity such as Clock Tower

- Creating suitable entrances of the area by using identity elements

- Designing internal elements and public arenas, pedestrians, cultural-commercial centers related to design purposes and creating coherence among different parts of the area

- Suitable lighting of elements in the area aiming to improve readability and their position at night, creating adequate light in places that natural light is not enough in them in order to adjust clients' acceptance to different parts of the area

- Prettification of public landscapes such as defining and creating city center, new functional areas in terms of granting identity to them

- Desirable flooring of neighborhood center and suggested walking paths by using homogeneous and indigenous materials existing in the area emphasizing

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on visual quality in accordance with the environment

3. Designing access and communication network based on physical features of old area:

- Defining access hierarchy to inside the area

-Creating appropriate facilities to increase safety level of passengers and drivers

- Particular emphasis to remove traffic problems in the area

Finally, three basic and influential factors on planning and implementation of suggested plans can be mentioned that they are in fact integral and necessary elements of all types of planning:

First, particular attention to public participation including residents in designing and rehabilitation of the area since there is a close relationship between realization of plans and participation. Definitely, if a plan does not take advantage of public participation, it will not be possible to be realized.

Secondly, emphasis on using governmental aids and facilities in order to finance economically the implementation of suggested plans and designs

Thirdly, interaction, cooperation, and coordination of all managerial and executive systems related to planning, area design, and using a set of urban experts, architectures, archeologists, economists, sociologists, geography and restoration experts in presenting plans because of economic, social, and cultural factors in the entire area.

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