



A Comprehensive Appraisal of Elefteria Square's Renovation within its Historical Context in Cyprus

Kıbrıs'ta Elefteria Meydanı'nın Yenilenmesinin Tarihsel Bağlamı İçinde Kapsamlı Bir Değerlendirmesi

Doğa ÜZÜMCÜOĞLU¹, Gizem GÜVENBAŞ²

^{1,2}Rauf Denktas University, Department of Architecture, Nicosia, North Cyprus

ORCID:

D.Ü.: 0000-0001-8968-5103

G.G.: 0000-0003-1059-321X

Corresponding Author:

Doğa ÜZÜMCÜOĞLU

Email:

doga.uzumcuoglu@rdu.edu.tr

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Abstract

This research examines the comprehensive assessment of the revival initiatives implemented for Elefteria Square, a significant historical site in Cyprus's central region. This study thoroughly analyzes the various aspects of the square's renovation, considering its cultural importance, architectural authenticity, and involvement with the community. By thoroughly examining the Elefteria Square example, this study aims to elucidate the complex relationship between contemporary restoration methods and to conserve of a culturally significant historical environment. This study illuminates the intricate equilibrium between contemporary functioning and preserving historical elements by integrating architectural analysis, cultural heritage preservation, and stakeholder perspectives. The results offer valuable insights into the successful revitalization of Elefteria Square and present a broader framework for integrating cultural preservation with the modern requirements of urban spaces in historical settings.

Keywords: Square Design, Square Renovation, Historical Context, Elefteria Square, Lefkoşa (Nicosia)

Özet

Bu araştırma, Kıbrıs'ın merkez bölgesindeki önemli bir tarihi alan olan Elefteria Meydanı için uygulanan yenileme girişimlerinin kapsamlı değerlendirmesini incelemektedir. Bu çalışma, meydanın kültürel önemini, mimari özgünlüğünü ve toplumla ilişkisini göz önünde bulundurarak meydanın yenilenmesinin çeşitli yönlerini derinlemesine analiz ediyor. Ayrıca, Elefteria Meydanı örneğini derinlemesine inceleyerek, çağdaş yenileme yöntemleri arasındaki karmaşık ilişkiyi aydınlatmayı ve kültürel açıdan önemli bir tarihi çevredeki farklı yaklaşımları ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışma, mimari analiz, kültürel mirasın korunması ve paydaş bakış açılarını bütünleştirerek, çağdaş işlevsellik ile tarihi unsurların korunması arasındaki karmaşık dengeyi aydınlatmayı hedeflemektedir. Sonuçlar, Elefteria Meydanı'nın yeniden canlandırılmasına dair değerli bilgiler sunmakla birlikte, kültürel korumayı, tarihi ortamlardaki kentsel alanların modern gereklilikleriyle bütünleştirmek için daha geniş bir çerçeve göstermektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Meydan Tasarımı, Meydan Yenileme, Tarihi Bağlam, Elefteria Meydanı, Lefkoşa

1. INTRODUCTION

Historic squares, with their amalgamation of architectural grandeur, cultural heritage, and community significance, stand as living testaments to a bygone era's elegance. These urban gems bear witness to the evolution of societies, reflecting the dynamic interplay between tradition and modernity (Mehan, 2016; Sanetra-Szeliga, 2022). Cyprus, a land rich in historical narratives, is home to Elefteria Square, a captivating space nestled within the heart of its capital city, Lefkoşa (Nicosia). Elefteria Square embodies the essence of Cypriot history, serving as a touchstone for its cultural identity.

In recent years, Elefteria Square has undergone a transformative journey of renovation, propelled by a desire to restore its former glory while catering to the contemporary needs of a bustling urban environment. This endeavor prompts a fundamental question: Can a historic square be revitalized to harmoniously coexist with the demands of the present while preserving its historical essence?

This article embarks on a multidimensional inquiry, employing a mixed-methods research approach to address this question comprehensively. Our methodology is structured to encompass a variety of investigative tools, including architectural analysis and cultural heritage assessments. This multifaceted approach enables triangulating data from diverse sources, ensuring a holistic understanding of Elefteria Square's renovation within its historical context.

The primary aim of this study is to provide a comprehensive appraisal of Elefteria Square's renovation within its historical context. The following objectives were outlined to achieve this aim:

Architectural assessment: to evaluate the architectural changes made during the renovation process, focusing on their impact on the square's historical integrity; Cultural heritage preservation: to examine the measures taken to preserve the cultural heritage embodied by Elefteria Square and assess their effectiveness; and balancing tradition and modernity: to explore how the renovation strikes a balance between preserving the square's historical identity and meeting contemporary urban functionality requirements.

In pursuit of these objectives, this study poses the following research questions: what does the literature say about the new settings in a historical context? What are the principles for evaluating this kind of setting? What architectural alterations were made during the renovation of Elefteria Square, and how do these changes impact the square's historical authenticity? What measures were implemented to preserve and celebrate the cultural heritage embedded in Elefteria Square, and to what extent have they succeeded? To what extent has the renovation project achieved the delicate equilibrium between honoring historical tradition and meeting the functional requirements of a modern urban space?

Through this comprehensive investigation, the aim is to shed light on the intricate interplay between historical preservation and contemporary urban development, offering insights that extend beyond the boundaries of Elefteria Square to inform similar endeavors worldwide.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Contemporary urban design in historical contexts is a complex and delicate undertaking that aims to strike a balance between preserving the historical fabric of a place and accommodating the evolving needs of contemporary society.

Several fundamental principles guide such designs, like respecting historical context. Contemporary urban designs in historical settings must respect and respond to the existing historical context (Ragheb et al., 2022; Palermo & Ponzini, 2015). It includes understanding the architectural styles, materials, and spatial layouts of the area and ensuring that new developments

harmonize with these elements. Besides, the preservation of cultural heritage is paramount. Historical structures, landmarks, and artifacts should be protected, restored, or adaptively reused whenever possible (Bandarin & Oers, 2012). It not only maintains the area's cultural identity but also contributes to its uniqueness. In addition, urban designs should prioritize inclusivity and accessibility for all residents and visitors. It includes ensuring that historic sites and public spaces are easily accessible to people with disabilities and that they accommodate diverse communities (Akkar Ercan & Memlük, 2015; Szaszák & Kecskés, 2020). Also, sustainability is a crucial principle of contemporary urban design. It includes sustainable building materials, energy-efficient infrastructure, and green spaces (Yawer & Bakr, 2023). Sustainability efforts can both preserve the historical context and contribute to a healthier urban environment. Besides, design should prioritize the needs and experiences of the people who will use the space. It involves creating walkable neighborhoods, providing green spaces for recreation, and fostering a sense of community (Chitrakar, 2023). In addition, historical structures should be adaptively reused for contemporary purposes, which is more feasible. This approach honors the past while reducing the need for new construction and preserving embodied energy (Stone, 2023). Apart from this, contemporary urban design should integrate modern amenities such as public transportation, technology, and infrastructure while being mindful of how these elements visually and functionally fit into the historical context (González et al., 2023). Aside from this, promoting mixed-use development can create vibrant, dynamic urban environments. Combining residential, commercial, and cultural spaces can revitalize historic districts and reduce the need for car-dependent suburbs (Furlan et al., 2023). Besides, involving the local community in the design and decision-making process is crucial. It ensures that the design meets the needs and aspirations of the people who live in and around the historical area (Swapan, 2016; Baffoe & Roy, 2022). Also, designs should be flexible and adaptable to accommodate changing needs over time. Historical contexts can evolve, and urban design should allow for adjustments without compromising the area's integrity (Milojević & Kuvač, 2021). In addition, leveraging the historical context for heritage tourism can contribute to the economic vitality of an area (Yawer & Bakr, 2023; Lucia & Pashkevich, 2023). Careful planning can ensure that tourism benefits the community and keeps the historical site manageable. Apart from this, effective zoning and regulatory frameworks should be in place to guide urban development in historical contexts (Carmona et al., 2023). These regulations should be flexible enough to allow for innovation while preserving historical character.

In summary, contemporary urban design in historical contexts requires a nuanced approach that respects history while meeting the needs of the present and future. Successful designs integrate the principles of preservation, sustainability, inclusivity, and community engagement to create vibrant, livable, and culturally rich urban spaces.

The historical context of a place or situation carries significant implications that can shape how it is understood, managed, and developed. These implications can affect various aspects of society, culture, and decision-making.

Historical context is fundamental to a region's cultural identity. It influences traditions, values, and practices, shaping the collective memory of a community or nation (Al-Hammadi & Grchev, 2023; Neill, 2004). Recognizing and preserving this identity can foster a sense of continuity and pride. Besides, historical context often includes physical structures, artifacts, and sites of cultural significance (Megeirhi et al., 2020). Preserving these elements is crucial for maintaining a connection to the past and for passing on cultural heritage to future generations. Also, historical context plays a pivotal role in urban planning and development. It can influence zoning regulations, architectural styles, and land use policies (Wang et al., 2019). Urban planners must balance modernization with the preservation of historical character. In addition, historical sites

and contexts can be a magnet for tourism and economic development. They can provide opportunities for job creation, revenue generation, and the revitalization of local economies (Shahzad et al., 2017). Apart from this, historical context serves as a valuable educational resource. It helps people understand the evolution of societies, political movements, technological advancements, and more (Bahar & Kurak Açııcı, 2021). Historical knowledge can inform decision-making and social progress. Aside from this, historical context often includes events, figures, and experiences that are commemorated through memorials, museums, and monuments (Hussein et al., 2020). These serve as reminders of past achievements, struggles, and sacrifices. Besides, understanding historical context can foster a sense of social cohesion and shared identity (Izadi et al., 2020). It can help communities come to terms with past injustices, reconcile differences, and build a more inclusive society. Also, historical context is frequently at the core of conflicts, as disputes over territory, resources, and identities often have deep historical roots. Understanding these historical factors is crucial for effective conflict resolution (Lindblom et al., 2022). In addition, legal systems often consider historical context when addressing issues related to property rights, reparations, and cultural preservation (Clark, 2021). Ethical considerations, such as restitution of cultural artifacts, are also influenced by historical context. Aside from this, historical land use practices can have enduring environmental consequences. Recognizing historical context is vital when addressing issues like land contamination or the protection of ecologically sensitive areas (Ukabi & Akçay, 2023). Apart from this, historical context is central to archaeological and anthropological research. It guides excavations, helps interpret findings, and contributes to our understanding of ancient civilizations and cultures (Khayutina, 2021). Besides, historical context informs policy development in areas such as heritage preservation, education, and urban planning. Policies that acknowledge historical significance can help guide responsible decision-making (Clark, 2021).

In summary, historical context is a multidimensional concept with far-reaching implications for society, culture, and governance. Recognizing and respecting historical context is essential for preserving cultural heritage, fostering social cohesion, making informed decisions, and understanding the complex tapestry of human history.

Contemporary urban design has profound implications for the way cities and communities' function, develop, and evolve. These implications touch on various aspects of urban life and development.

Contemporary urban design places a strong emphasis on sustainability, with implications for environmental, social, and economic factors. It can lead to reduced carbon emissions, energy efficiency, and improved resource management (Sodiq et al., 2019). Well-designed urban spaces enhance the quality of life for residents. They can provide green spaces, recreational opportunities, and safe and walkable neighborhoods, contributing to physical and mental well-being (Vogt et al., 2020). Urban design can stimulate economic growth by attracting businesses, tourism, and investment. It can also lead to job creation and increased property values in well-designed areas (Rahmafritria et al., 2020). Besides, accessibility is a crucial implication of contemporary urban design (Mandeli, 2019). Well-designed cities prioritize public transportation, pedestrian and cyclist-friendly infrastructure, and reduced dependence on cars, making urban areas more accessible to all residents (Knowles & Ferbrache, 2019). Also, inclusivity is a central theme in contemporary urban design. It aims to create cities that accommodate diverse populations, including people of different ages, abilities, and socioeconomic backgrounds (Madanipour, 2021). In addition, contemporary urban design can foster community cohesion by creating public spaces that encourage social interaction, cultural exchange, and a sense of belonging (Ellery & Ellery, 2019). Apart from this, urban design can have significant implications for public health. Well-

designed cities promote physical activity, reduce pollution, and provide access to healthcare services (Fathi et al., 2020). Aside from this, designing cities to be resilient to natural disasters and climate change is a critical implication of contemporary urban design. It involves considerations such as flood-resistant infrastructure and climate-responsive planning (Shi, 2020). Urban design can celebrate and preserve cultural identity by incorporating local aesthetics, historical references, and cultural symbols into the built environment (Jiang et al., 2022). Thoughtful urban design can enhance public safety by reducing crime through measures like improved lighting, clear sightlines, and well-designed public spaces (Abdul-Kadhüm Al-Ghiyadh & Neamah Al-Khafaji, 2021). Besides, efficient land use is an essential implication of urban design. It involves minimizing urban sprawl, optimizing land for various purposes, and preventing the overuse of resources (Lazaro Peter & Yang, 2019). Also, contemporary urban design often integrates technology into city planning, leading to smart cities with advanced infrastructure for communication, transportation, and energy management (Sánchez-Corcuera et al., 2019). Urban design can have significant environmental implications. Sustainable design practices aim to reduce the ecological footprint of cities, including energy consumption, water usage, and waste production (Sodiq et al., 2019). Urban design can either exacerbate or alleviate economic inequalities within a city. It has the potential to create opportunities for all residents or contribute to disparities in access to resources and services (Meerow et al., 2019). In addition, well-designed public spaces can facilitate civic engagement and participatory governance, encouraging residents to take an active role in shaping their communities (Li et al., 2020). Contemporary urban design often promotes efficient and environmentally friendly transportation systems, which can reduce congestion, improve air quality, and enhance mobility (Shah et al., 2021).

In conclusion, contemporary urban design has far-reaching implications that extend beyond the physical appearance of cities. It influences the way people live, work, and interact in urban environments. It plays a crucial role in addressing the challenges of the 21st century, from sustainability and resilience to inclusivity and quality of life.

3. A FRAMEWORK FOR NEW DESIGNS IN HISTORIC CONTEXTS

Theoretical research on historical context, contemporary urban design, and novel design in historical context led to the development of a number of indicators. Figure 1 illustrates that each of these aspects possesses both shared and distinct focal points. The theoretical investigation of this study reveals that in order to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of contemporary urban design approaches in historical contexts, it is necessary to consider each of them prior to, during, and subsequent to the application process.

Undoubtedly, every urban design has its own set of concerns, priorities, hesitations, issues, and requirements. However, these indicators will illuminate the need to identify resilient, sustainable, and all-encompassing urban development strategies.

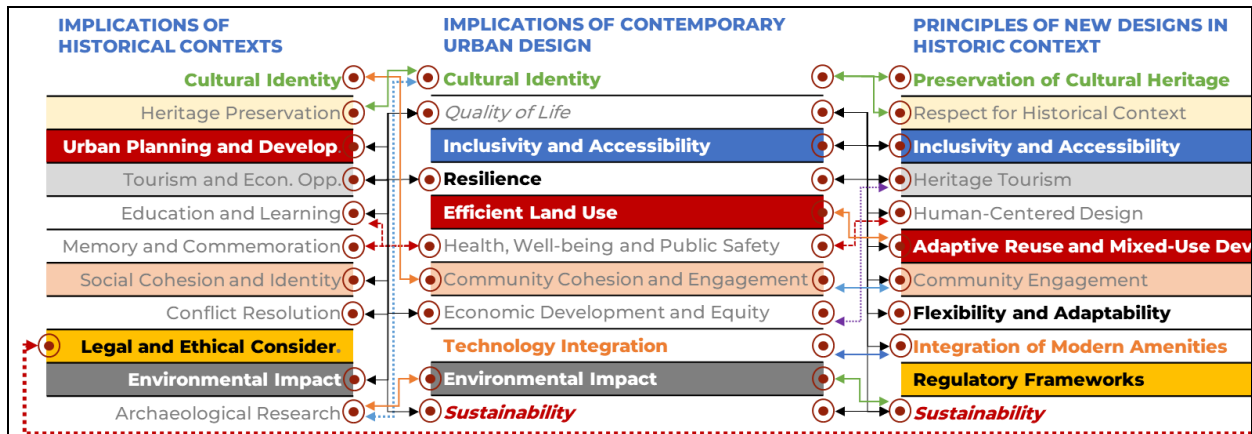


Figure 1. The Correlation Between Theoretical Indicators of Historical Context and Contemporary Urban Design (Authors)

4. MATERIAL AND METHOD

Study Site and Contextual Background; Elefteria Square, Lefkoşa (Nicosia): The primary focus of this study is Elefteria Square, located in the historic heart of Lefkoşa (Nicosia), Cyprus. The square's historical context, including architectural heritage and cultural significance, forms the basis for the comprehensive appraisal.

Architectural Documentation: An extensive review of historical archives, including architectural plans, photographs, and documents related to Lefkoşa (Nicosia) and Elefteria Square, was conducted. This archival research provides insights into the evolution of Lefkoşa (Nicosia) and its impact on Elefteria Square over time.

Literature Review on Contemporary Urban Design Principles in Historical Context: A thorough literature review was undertaken to establish theoretical frameworks and best practices in urban design within historical settings. It includes scholarly articles, books, and international guidelines related to the preservation of historic urban spaces.

Visual Documentation: Detailed visual documentation, including photographs and architectural drawings, was compiled to analyze the physical changes in the city and Elefteria Square. This documentation serves as a basis for evaluating alterations in architectural elements and spatial configurations.

Cultural Preservation Strategies: The study examined the strategies employed to preserve the cultural heritage of Elefteria Square. It involved assessing the conservation of historical elements, artworks, and cultural symbols present within the square.

Qualitative Analysis: Qualitative data from architectural analyses was subjected to thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns, key themes, and insights.

Scope: The study acknowledges limitations, particularly regarding the availability of historical records. The scope is limited to the information accessible up to the date of the study.

The outlined methodology provides a comprehensive approach to appraising the renovation of Elefteria Square, combining archival research, architectural analysis, and cultural heritage assessment. This multifaceted methodology aims to offer a holistic understanding of the square's transformation within its historical context in Cyprus.

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

5.1. Lefkoşa (Nicosia) Walled City

The capital city of Cyprus, Lefkoşa (Nicosia), possesses a substantial historical background and holds great importance. Throughout its historical periods, the city underwent substantial transformations. Figure 2 illustrates that during the Lusignan Period, the city was enclosed by walls that differ in appearance from the walls that surround it today. During the Venetian era, however, the fortifications were reconstructed in the form of bastions and circular forms, reflecting the architectural style of the Venetians. Moreover, during the British era, new structures began to be constructed outside the walled city as the city's interior became densely populated. Figure 2 further illustrates the rapid evolution of Lefkoşa (Nicosia) in the vicinity of the walled city.

Each era's imprint is discernible in the fortified city of Lefkoşa (Nicosia), which is an asset for the city. Contemporary structures and renovations, in addition to Lusignan houses, Venetian fortifications, columns, squares, Ottoman bazaars, houses, and British structures, are contributing to the formation of a cultural mosaic that defines the identity of the city.

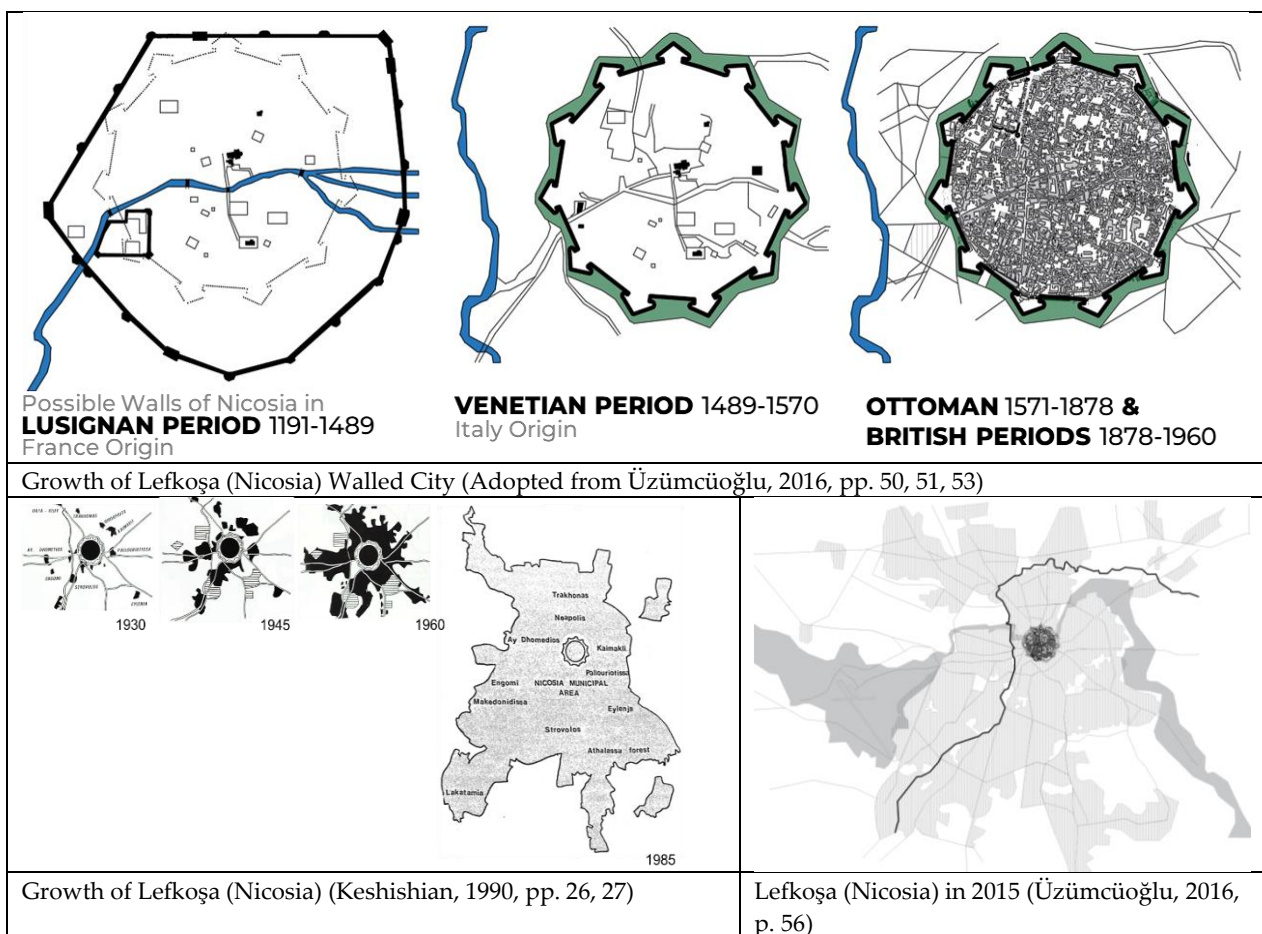


Figure 2. Evolution of Lefkoşa (Nicosia)

In the ever-evolving tapestry of today, the city stands as a dynamic canvas undergoing rapid transformations. Notably, Lefkoşa (Nicosia) holds a unique global distinction as the last divided capital in the world. The poignant legacy of division is manifest in the buffer zone that currently bisects the walled city, a tangible testament to the complex historical and political narratives that have shaped the region. The buffer zone, acting as a spatial demarcation, splits the heart of the city into two halves (Güvenbaş & Polay, 2023). Crossing points within the buffer zone play a crucial role in fostering communication and mobility between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities. They serve as conduits of connection and provide avenues for interaction and understanding. One such pivotal crossing point is the Ledra Crossing Point, strategically situated

within the historic confines of the walled city of Lefkoşa (Nicosia). This crossing links Eleftheria Square to the significant arterial pathway commencing at Kyrenia Gate, which symbolizes a metaphorical bridge between communities (Figure 3).

5.2. Elefteria Square

Initially, Elefteria Square needed to be integrated into the construction of the Venetian wall. During the late 19th century period, known as the British Cyprus era, its initial form was that of a bridge. As the city expanded beyond its medieval walls, transportation was facilitated through the construction of wooden bridges. The Hajisavvas Opening, which was initially built of wood in 1882, underwent a subsequent replacement with a resilient concrete structure, which remains in good condition to this day.

Over the past few decades, the municipality has experienced an expansion of initiatives that prioritize the restoration of historic structures, the safeguarding of cultural heritage, and the development of new conceptualizations along the perimeter and the historic fortification walls. The renovation of Elefteria Square, a vital connection between the old town and the contemporary city beyond the fortifications, serves as an illustration. International renowned Zaha Hadid Architecture Studio won the project in 2005 following an architectural competition. Their contemporary solution involved the integration of the Venetian walls, the moat, and the demarcation lines that separated the two parts of the city. Under the direction of relevant authorities, the project effectively converted the moat into a verdant park that complemented the refurbished Venetian walls (Cozzolino et al., 2020). The upper portion of the park was reconfigured into the central core, featuring a contemporary pedestrianized plaza and areas designated for cultural events, sports, and art exhibitions (Figure 3).

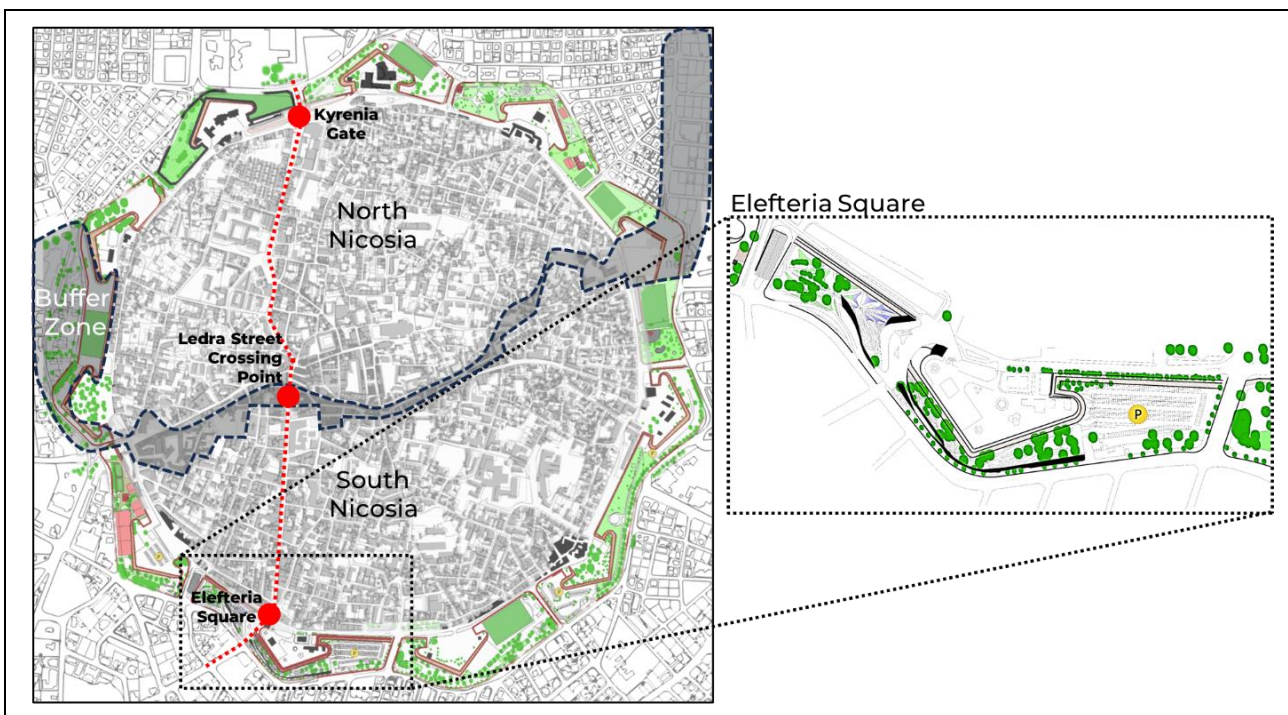


Figure 3. Current Condition of Lefkoşa (Nicosia) Walled City and Elefteria Square (Adopted from Üzümcüoğlu, 2016)

Within the enchanting expanse of the moat area, a myriad of amenities await, creating a dynamic and inviting environment for residents and visitors alike. These amenities are not merely functional but are meticulously adorned with distinctive landscaping elements, transforming the space into a harmonious blend of nature and human ingenuity. Seating areas are strategically placed, providing tranquil spots for contemplation or social interaction amidst the beauty of the

surroundings. Water features, carefully integrated into the landscape, add a soothing and aesthetically pleasing dimension to the environment. The gentle murmur of water complements the visual richness of the surroundings, creating a serene atmosphere that invites individuals to immerse themselves in the sensory experience of the space. A diverse array of plants further enhances the natural beauty, introducing colors, textures, and fragrances that contribute to the overall vibrancy of the moat area. Informational plaques strategically positioned throughout the space serve as educational touchpoints, providing insights into the historical significance and cultural context of the surroundings. These plaques not only contribute to the intellectual enrichment of visitors but also foster a deeper connection with Lefkoşa (Nicosia)'s heritage. Shading elements, as depicted in Figure 4, are incorporated to offer respite from the sun, ensuring that the moat area remains a comfortable and inviting destination throughout the day. These elements not only serve a practical purpose but also add to the visual allure of the space, creating a play of light and shadow that enhances the overall aesthetic. In alignment with the vision for a comprehensive urban renewal, the restoration of eastern Solomon Square introduces a new bus station and parking structure. These additions not only address practical considerations related to transportation but also seamlessly integrate into the broader revitalization efforts, enhancing the functionality and connectivity of the area. At the core of this transformative project lies a central concept inspired by the current condition of Lefkoşa (Nicosia). This capital city stands as the last city to be partitioned on the continent. The project is a testament to the commitment to preserving and celebrating the city's unique identity, weaving together its historical tapestry with the contemporary aspirations of its inhabitants. Through this thoughtful integration of amenities and restoration efforts, the moat area becomes a living testament to the city's resilience and the continuous evolution of its urban landscape.



Within the moat area, one will find an information center, a playground for children, a cafeteria, kiosks, an espresso bar, an open-air amphitheater, and additional amenities adorned with distinctive landscaping components such as seating areas, water features, diverse trees, informational plaques, and shading elements.

Figure 4. Elefteria Square and the Moat Landscaping (Authors)

Navigating the city is made effortlessly convenient with the inclusion of informational plaques strategically placed to guide residents and visitors alike. These plaques not only offer unambiguous directions to vital services within the city but also provide a comprehensive overview of the Lefkoşa (Nicosia) Municipality. Detailed information about the Central Business District of Lefkoşa (Nicosia) is also featured, ensuring that individuals can quickly locate and access critical economic and commercial areas. In addition to textual guidance, a thoughtfully designed map accompanies the informational plaques, offering a visual representation of the city's

essential services and their precise locations within the moat vicinity. This map serves as a valuable resource, aiding individuals in understanding the layout of operational facilities, thereby enhancing their overall experience of navigating Lefkoşa (Nicosia). The panorama within the moat vicinity is a harmonious blend of modernity and history. A contemporary bridge spans across the landscape, connecting various parts of the city and symbolizing the seamless integration of the old and the new. Surrounding this bridge is a unique arrangement of landscaping, creating an aesthetically pleasing environment that adds to the city's charm. Functional facilities strategically situated in this area contribute to the overall efficiency and accessibility of essential services. Moreover, the fortification of historic walls, standing as a testament to the city's rich cultural heritage, serves as a captivating backdrop to contemporary developments, creating a captivating juxtaposition that encapsulates the essence of Lefkoşa (Nicosia) (Figure 5). Together, these elements form a captivating vista that not only facilitates practical navigation but also provides a visual feast for those exploring the city's diverse facets.



Plaques of information contain directions to the city's fundamental services, a synopsis of the Lefkoşa (Nicosia) Municipality, and details about the Central Business District of Lefkoşa (Nicosia). In addition, the supplied map indicates the precise locations of existing functions within the moat area.



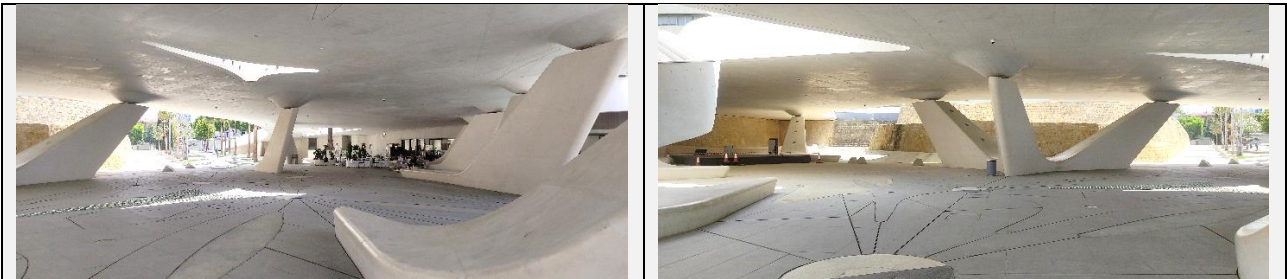
The panorama encompasses a modern bridge, a distinctive landscaping arrangement, utilitarian facilities, and the fortification of historic walls.

Figure 5. The Bridge that Connects the Modern and Historical Districts of the City (Authors)

The architectural design of the area is thoughtfully crafted with inclusivity in mind, seamlessly integrating universal design principles to ensure accessibility for all. Tactile paving, strategically incorporated into the ground surface, provides a sensory guide for individuals with visual impairments, enhancing their ability to navigate the surroundings independently. Ramps, carefully integrated into the bridge's structure and pathways, not only comply with accessibility standards but also facilitate easy movement for individuals with mobility challenges. The commitment to inclusivity extends to the realm of urban lighting, where a diverse array of lighting options is employed. These options not only serve practical purposes, illuminating pathways and

critical areas for safety and visibility, but also cater to the varied needs of different users, including those with sensory sensitivities. The interplay of light and shadow enhances the aesthetic appeal of the space while maintaining a user-friendly environment for everyone.

In Figure 6, the visual representation highlights the seamless integration of historical and contemporary elements within the landscape. The bridge, acting as a symbolic link between the past and the present, becomes a focal point that embodies the interconnectedness of Lefkoşa (Nicosia)'s rich history and its vibrant modernity. The landscaping surrounding the bridge further accentuates this harmonious blend, creating a visual narrative that celebrates the city's evolution over time. This commitment to universal design not only ensures physical accessibility but also fosters a sense of community and belonging by creating spaces that are welcoming to individuals of all abilities. The incorporation of these thoughtful design elements not only serves a practical purpose but also contributes to the overall aesthetic and cultural richness of the urban landscape.



An appealing vista of historical walls, an original landscaping arrangement, and functions can be observed from beneath the bridge.



An aerial perspective of the bridge's landscaping composition offers insight into the convergence of the historical and contemporary sections of the city.



Visible are distinctive seating elements, ground lighting elements, street lighting elements, observation balconies, staircases, ramps, and tactile paving designed to accommodate disabled pedestrians.

Figure 6. The Eleferia Square and the Bridge's Landscaping from an Overall View (Authors)

The renovation of Elefteria Square involved significant architectural transformations, including the introduction of modern structures and alterations to the spatial layout. While some changes aligned with contemporary design principles, others raised questions about their compatibility with the historical aesthetics of the square. Visual documentation and comparative analysis revealed that certain architectural elements of historical significance were carefully restored during the renovation. The study identified commendable efforts in cultural heritage preservation, notably in the conservation of historical artifacts and the integration of modern interpretative elements explaining the cultural significance and contemporary richness of the square. It contributed to creating a sense of continuity between the historical and contemporary aspects of Elefteria Square. Architectural analysis revealed instances where the renovation successfully incorporated modern elements without compromising the integrity of existing cultural heritage. New design in historic context strategies was observed, showcasing a thoughtful approach to repurposing historical structures for contemporary functions. Challenges encountered during the renovation included balancing diverse stakeholder interests, ensuring the seamless integration of modern amenities, and addressing concerns related to the preservation of historical authenticity. These challenges highlighted the complex nature of urban design in historical settings. Lessons learned from Elefteria Square's renovation emphasized the need for adaptive strategies, continuous community dialogue, and a nuanced approach to modernization. The case study contributes insights applicable to future urban design projects seeking to balance historical preservation with contemporary functionality.

These case-based findings offer a nuanced understanding of Elefteria Square's renovation, incorporating architectural, community, and cultural perspectives within its historical context in Cyprus.

CONCLUSION

Theoretical findings regarding new urban designs in historical settings are derived from research, analysis, and urban planning principles. These findings help shape the theoretical framework for approaching urban design in historical contexts. New urban designs in historical settings should demonstrate a high degree of contextual sensitivity. It means understanding and respecting the historical, architectural, and cultural context of the area. The theoretical principle is that new developments should be in harmony with the existing fabric. Besides, theoretical findings stress the importance of considering scale and proportion in new urban designs. Buildings and spaces should relate to each other in terms of size and scale, preserving the historical sense of place. Also, mixed-use development is often advocated in theoretical approaches to urban design. Combining residential, commercial, and cultural spaces fosters a vibrant, active, and sustainable urban environment. In addition, the creation of well-designed public spaces is a theoretical cornerstone. Public squares, parks, and pedestrian-friendly areas contribute to community well-being and social interaction. Apart from this, theoretical findings emphasize inclusivity in new urban designs. Inclusive design principles promote accessibility for all, regardless of age, ability, or background. Aside from this, theoretical findings often suggest phasing new developments and incorporating flexibility into designs. This allows for incremental changes over time while maintaining the historical character of the place. Besides, theoretical discussions acknowledge the role of technology in urban design, particularly in preserving and interpreting historical contexts. Digital tools, augmented reality, and historical databases can enhance the understanding and presentation of history in urban spaces. These theoretical findings provide a foundation for approaching urban design in historical settings. While the specific application of these principles may vary based on the unique characteristics of each historical context, they serve as guiding principles for creating sustainable, culturally rich, and contextually sensitive urban environments.

Eleftheria Square, centrally located in Lefkoşa (Nicosia), the capital city of Cyprus, holds significance as a historically crucial public space. Playing a pivotal role in the city's development over the years, the square, designed by Zaha Hadid Architects, is a crucial addition to the area, complementing the historic Venetian Walls of Lefkoşa (Nicosia). Positioned within a portion of the dry moat dividing the oldest district from newer neighborhoods, Eleftheria Square features multi-levels, incorporating tree-lined promenades, paved plazas, green spaces, and water features. Zaha Hadid Architects aimed to transform this once inaccessible space into a vibrant park, intending for it to serve as the cornerstone of a "green belt" encircling the old city. The organization describes its work as a synthesis of Lefkoşa (Nicosia)'s rich history and an optimistic vision for the city's future.

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