

THE APPLYING OF THE URBAN LOST SPACES IN OLD YAZD BY USING THE CONCEPT OF LEISURE TIME

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ABSTRACT:

Constructing new streets in the historic fabric of cities and impressing modernism and automobile have created undefined spaces without boundaries which are not related to the surrounding areas which can be considered as the Urban Lost Spaces. Vacant lands deteriorated urban areas and half - destroyed buildings in large and small sizes left from the construction of new streets within Old Yazd are lost spaces provided suitable situation for redevelopment Old Yazd. Movement and communication, increasingly is dominated on public space followed by missing a lot of cultural values and meanings. The concept of leisure time in Yazd is moving to outside of houses and neighborhood centers and new social demands have arisen from the new urban streets. So the threat of the urban lost spaces in Old Yazd can be changed to an opportunity to create vitality and dynamic urban spaces by making leisure - culture spaces and adapting to new recreational demands. For designing leisure-cultural places in urban lost space of the Basij Boulevard edge the factors are used such as maintaining continuity, controlling perspectives, restricting spaces, and the continuity of edges as well as the combination of inside and outside spaces.

KEYWORDS:

The Urban Lost Space, Leisure Time, The Cultural- Leisure Space, Old Yazd

INTRODUCTION

Changes in the historical fabric of cities coincided with the emergence of modernism in Iran. Construction of broad streets and squares in the cities, the destruction of old neighborhoods and constructing modern buildings, especially alongside the streets, cut old fabrics. Spatial organization and the hierarchy of access discontinued. The local residents left the central and old part of the city due to development and growing trend of constructing new parts. Abandoned large state-owned lands, vacant and not made lands, deformed spaces left between streets and buildings, blank spaces abandoned in the place, and urban spatial discontinuity are all contemporary spaces in the old fabric of the cities.

After developments in the Old Yazd, new streets play an important role in making a new face of the city by removing hierarchy and continuity, ignoring the local climate and density, and constructing squares as new elements in urban public spaces. Markets and commercial and even leisure spaces have been moved from the historical fabric to the streets. Lack of leisure spaces, parks and green spaces, social culture places are decreasing prosperity and vitality, and losing spaces with collective and identity memories.

This paper, noting the theory of urban lost spaces of Trancik and explaining abandoned lands in the Old Yazd and recognition leisure time and recreation concept in the city present the efficient

using of urban lost spaces and providing vitality and stability in these areas by the applying of leisure time concept. So, in this research, Basij Boulevard is chosen to study as one of the new streets in the Old Yazd.

The research framework

The concept of the space is not clear and evident by itself. It is far broader sense of the physical or natural space and is allocated to the three aspects of the outer world i.e. separation and distance among people, between people and objects and among objects [1]. Urban spaces are arisen from social relationship in the physical context and the meaningful field and required collective human functions [2].

At the beginning of the 20th century, along with modernism and renovation ideas, the concept of the urban spaces changed. Modernist movements with the emphasis on functionalism, geometry orientation, rationalism, the separation of the city elements, zoning of city into four main functions i.e. residence, work, leisure, and commuting caused the urban space was virtually forgotten [3]. Today, what can be seen in the cities include vacant spaces resulting from constructing the buildings next to each other and the remaining masses of the old buildings that bring to mind less sense and meaning.

Forgotten and lost spaces arising from modernism changed the environmental quality.



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These places in the fabric of the city are potentials which the development of the city is possible. Thus, the stability of such places and redevelopment of the urban space in the old fabric of cities is essential.

On the other hand, leisure spaces are functional urban spaces. Leisure time, which is highly variable according to social and cultural characteristics, influences the spaces and their shaping [1]. Therefore, the urban lost and recreation spaces are explained in a theoretical framework to be studied in the analysis of the research results of creating stability in these areas by transforming them to functional leisure spaces.

Urban lost spaces

The urban lost space is one of the theories in this field raised by Roger Trancik. The focus of this theory is on the spaces in the old fabric of cities resulting from modernism changes. There are many useless blank spaces made by cutting the streets, railways and etc. These changes along with other major developments in economy, industry, employment, and lifestyle have changed the business centers and brought development to periphery of the city. However, these changes have created an exceptional opportunity so that the old fabric and the city centers can be regenerated based on new social demands. As a result, people would return to the central and old fabric of the city [4].

Lost spaces include lost lands at the bottom of the tall towers, vacant and abandoned spaces of squares far from pedestrians commuting, large surfaces of parking lots which surround the core of the large cities and cut the contact of commercial centers and residential areas. the rarely used lands without ownership along the highways, abandoned spaces on the sides of channels, the space around the rail ways, vacant military sites and the industrial complexes moved to the periphery of the city in order to a better access and perhaps paying less tax, the remaining space between commercial edges with an irrelevant combination made as the result of citizens lack of awareness. In general, urban lost spaces are considered as poor and inappropriate areas of the city and have no positive impacts on the surrounding spaces and people [4].

Trancik presents the factors of shaping the urban lost spaces as follows:

- The construction of highways, streets and crossing splits in old fabrics resulting from increasing dependence on the automobiles.
- Modern architects inclination to design open and large spaces
- Zoning and land use policies related to renewal that lead to divisions of cities.
- The disinclination of contemporary public and private companies toward commitment and accountability about public spaces
- Abandoning industrial, military or commercial lands in the core of cities.

The dependence on cars plays the main role in making these problems among the above factors. Since this old problem has deeply influenced human life, you can see its impact on the urban spaces, such as highways, main roads, and parking. Movement and communication increasingly dominate public space and as a result a lot of cultural meanings and human goals are missing. A large percentage of lands in modern cities have been allocated to cars and storage. So, the separated buildings that are surround by vast streets without considering required pedestrian usage play as a communicative factor without regarding social values [4]. Rager Trancik offers some guidelines from the spatial approach to improve the quality of urban environment and urban stability. He believes in departing the amorphous, random, and remaining spaces to the positive and meaningful spaces. Considering five factors of maintaining movement continuity (to communicate) surrounding of spaces, continuity of edges, and perspective and also mixed inside and outside spaces is essential to overcome the problem of urban spaces in particular [5].

Functional urban space: recreation and leisure time

Urban spaces are one of the spatial construction elements and the main core of cultural, social, leisure, economic, and political different activities [6]. The urban spaces are studied according to the behaviors of people who use them. Any human activity essentially relies on the culture. The Culture results from the conventional regulations, customs, traditions, styles, and practices. It includes patterns of behaviors that determine how people use the urban spaces [7].

Therefore, the utilization of the space is different according to the cultures. The leisure space can be considered as a culture space made by community members over time and those are people who make their culture and social space. Any space has different obvious suitability, logic, and the structure of necessity due to its defining content. This space is created and also creates the structure that belongs to it. Cities and urban spaces are effective cultural and economical potential for growth of abilities and social promotion [8].

Meaning and function of public spaces are not fixed and universal. That is all people do not have the same sense of space according to the categories such as public and private, work, and recreation spaces. In many cases, people challenge the meaning and the use of recreational spaces like sidewalks, parks and squares. What distinguishes leisure from other activities is trying to have fun and a pleasure. Today, looking for the joy and happiness is one of the basic features of leisure time [9].

Formation of the new concept of recreation is a recent phenomenon that has a mutual interaction with the organizing new time based on work. The recreational space has been changed to one of the



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largest and most profitable economic spaces and has changed the city completely. So the cities try to create spaces for recreational areas to attract more tourists and guests. The recreational space department is highly providing urban space [1].

Today, these areas include larger urban spaces that can be mentioned as follows:

- Eating spaces such as restaurants, cafés.
- stadiums and sport spaces, gyms, fitness clubs, neighborhood fields
- Game spaces such as clubs, game nets, and intellectual games spaces within the city, schools and universities
- Cultural spaces such as concert halls, theaters, movies, libraries, museums, exhibitions.
- Different recreational spaces such as parks, sightseeing and historical place [1].

RESULTS

The effect of the automobiles on urban spaces and people lives has been always in conflict with the traditional fabric of the cities in Iran. Cars can change urban values. First Pahlavi period is called the historical fabric renovation in Iran. Many important cities in Iran have been completely changed after constructing crossroads, squares, buildings and new complexes. The streets connect different parts across the city in order to quick access into crowded urban fabrics without regard to the communication and city norms.

Changes of this, especially in the historical cities such as Yazd caused a lot of physical and special changes in the old fabric of the city. Creating abandoned and lost spaces in these areas results to erosion and loss of valuable historical fabric vitality and urban environment quality. One of the goals of this paper is promoting urban space quality and the lost space stability within Old Yazd applying leisure spaces stability. Thus, Basij Boulevard is chosen to study and analyze as the street cut the old fabric and made many lost spaces in the edge.

Urban lost spaces in old Yazd

You can see vacant and abandoned spaces used as parking lots for neighborhood buildings in Old Yazd. These spaces are created as a result of destroying deteriorated old buildings but left abandoned since they were not profitable for their owners. In some cases, these old houses were destroyed to construct new buildings but since there are too many construction regulations in the historical fabric, they are left and today there is nothing else than their ruins. In many cases, passing a new street among the historical fabric of the city destroyed adjacent spaces; however, there is no planning to use them.

These cruciform streets started in the first Pahlavi. Former Pahlavi street, as the first street of Yazd, cut some old walls of the city by crossing through the historical fabric, and Qiam street, the second street in this city, not only split the residential fabric of neighborhoods also the biggest

Bazaar of Yazd, which was the major passageway and the economical, religious, and cultural space previously. Some parts of this Bazaar have no economic activity due to the created split. Figure 1 displays a photo of the cruciform streets in 1957.



Fig 1: The crossways streets in Yazd 1957.

During recent decades, the construction of wide and long streets has been continued and the historical fabric of the city is gradually dying out. The last case in Yazd is Basij Boulevard with nearly 30 meters width. This boulevard passed through Tal and Zoroastrians neighborhoods and destroyed a large area and also cut some communication in the worst possible way. Figure 2 displays a satellite image of crossing Basij Boulevard in the historical fabric.



Fig 2: a satellite image of Basij Boulevard and the adjacent neighborhoods, 2012

So, the new streets have an important effect on making a new face in the city by removing continuity and hierarchy, ignoring the climate and density, and developing new proportions for surrounding streets. Thus, the changes which started by constructing single buildings and houses with a new function are applied in the urban planning.

The most prominent example is the traditional city of Yazd. Its construction can present the spatial combination of an Iranian-Islamic city despite making major changes in 40 decade and later [10]. The lost spaces in the historical fabric and alongside



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the created streets can be converted to spaces with appropriate functions and quality according to a proper function definition and planes based on special quality of the historical fabric and residents demands and can attract a lot of tourists as well as the residents of the neighborhood.

Although, Yazd has much potential to attract tourists, there are not good facilities for their reception, especially in the central parts of the city near historical places. By using recreation concept in Yazd, urban environment quality can be promoted by converting urban lost spaces to recreational spaces

The concept of leisure time in Yazd

Kavir inhabitants have interval personality which has discouraged them enjoying collective and individual leisure spaces until recently. Modern world created special cultural-social behaviors by releasing a part of people time [11].

The examples are building a lot of pizza shops, catering, fast foods, and coffee shops in recent years that are accepted by Yazd people (especially late at night and on weekends). However, there was a different definition of concept of recreation in the urban spaces in Yazd. You should get acquainted with the concept of recreation to use leisure spaces in order to stabilize urban lost spaces.

Leisure time in the private spaces

Many people believe that Yazd city has no concept of public areas [12]. Therefore the private spaces were the only spaces for leisure time before the period of renovation in Iran. Recreation in this way that is called home recreation [1] is the most common way of having fun. The families get together in the backyards of the houses and enjoy chatting. The large numbers of people who live in the same house and neighborhood also provide required social potential for recreation.

Leisure time in the public and semi-public spaces

- Gardens: Some evidence in historical texts indicate semi-public spaces were used as leisure spaces such as large private gardens. Their rich owners let the citizens use them as public space in special days. These gardens were changed to functional parks used for leisure time [13].

- Neighborhood public spaces: One of the other public recreation spaces were neighborhood collective spaces and groups such as traditional market places, mosques, Husseiniye (religious mourning places), the entrance of public baths provided suitable areas for residents to visit each other in some parts of the day. Today, they are still common places for the elderly and adults to chat [11].

- Religious ritual: Most of traditional Yazd citizens spend their free and leisure time in religious

speeches [13]. However, there is no apparent relation between Rozekhane (commemoration of the martyrs of Karbala) and happiness, but it can be studied due to its hidden semi-public nature. Rozekhane is held periodically in different neighborhoods not only in Muharram and Safar months but also in the other months of the year. The yards of the houses are covered and turned to a public space [11].

- Gymnasium (Zurkhane): The traditional clubs, dedicated to the men are considered as male recreation spaces. The exercises and the actions done in these gyms are common in all fields, Uniforms (dressing the same), rhythm and music, hierarchy from Morshed (the senior) to the lowest workers, photos, poems, customs and rituals such as bowing, asking permission (Rokhsat) and thanksgiving [14]. Today, these clubs are replaced with numerous stadiums and there are only a few active Zurkhane mostly in the old neighborhoods. Old ladies public baths also can be considered as leisure spaces to use as a place for eating lunch and snacks, ladies making up, narrating by a woman, and so on, during the day.

- Cemetery: The new cemetery (after the Islamic revolution) in Yazd is the first public space where meets the demands of this group. Unlike the previous cemeteries, the new cemetery is made outside the town and become popular so quickly due to its desired green space based on people taste. The cemetery yard changed to a place where Yazd inhabitants can meet their relatives and friends. So, considering these behaviors, the previous claim of defining modern parks as old graveyards is not strange and surprising. The most significant evidence is Bagh Melli park built on the old cemetery in the first Pahlavi [11], or changing a part of "HorHorJuy" cemetery to Vahshi Bafghipark [15].

- Urban green spaces and squares: the utilization of recreational spaces such as the first parks which have been made by changing large private gardens like Dolat Abad garden, were not enough and responsive to the growing demands arisen from releasing people time as a result of modernism and technical achievements. The lack of collective leisure spaces appeared suddenly in the inclination to the squares. So squares are changed to the community for inhabitants due to the qualities such as extend green space [11].

- Villas outside the city: Shirkuh Mountain near Yazd and adjacent villages on its slope has long been of interest of residents for leisure. Most people in Yazd spend summer in these second homes before the popularity of automobiles. But today, cars cause people spend only few hours of weekends in this scenic nature [11].

Cultural- leisure track in urban lost space of the Basij Boulevard edge

Basij Blvd provides a spectacular unique view of nearby buildings around its walls and can attract



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many tourists because of the created gap within the historical fabric of the city. This street which is located on the connecting road of the bus station and the train station to Old Yazd was built in late 1980s and passed through Tal and Zoroastrian neighborhoods. The length of boulevard and the total blank margins are about 870 meters and 25000 Sq.m. Figure 3 displays an aerial image of demolished area to build Basij Blvd and new buildings in 1957.



Fig 3: an aerial image of destroyed area for building Basij Blvd and new buildings, 1957.

Constructing several private and public buildings such as Yazd Central Library has destroyed most parts of the historical fabric. This street cut Tal (in north) and Zoroastrian (in south) neighborhoods passing through the heart of the historical fabric. In figure 4 an aerial image of the Blvd and adjacent destroyed spaces is shown.

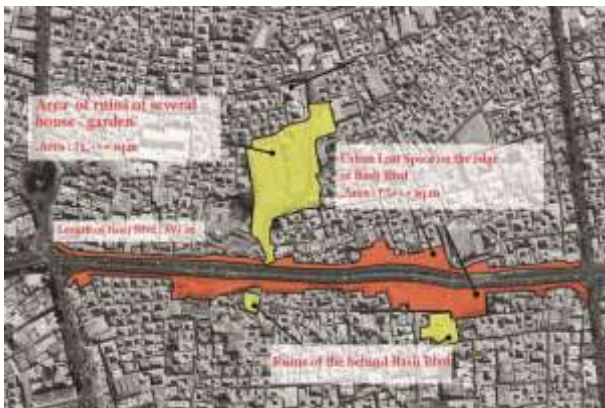


Figure 4: A satellite image of Basij Blvd, 2012.

Today, a number of houses and gardens around this street have been changed to the land use of hotels and restaurants. In recent years, new made buildings inappropriate with the historical fabric have been created on Basij Blvd, so that the height of Yazd central library which is building alongside boulevard prevents to record historical fabric of the city in world historical places. Figure 5 shows the structure of this building.



Fig 5: the entrance of Tal neighborhood from Basij Blvd and the sight of the central library, 2012.

The inappropriate constructions of new buildings in the historical fabric, without observing urban design principle (figure 6), widespread destruction of the historical buildings on the edge of Blvd (figure 7) and wall discontinuity and abandoned lands are continuing and creating unsuitable sights in the central part of the city.



Figure 6: New buildings near historical fabric, 2012



Fig 7: demolished historical buildings in the edge of Basij Blvd, 2012.

However, the functionality and special features of the street provides the possibility of changing this part to an attractive and unique center resulting passing through residential neighborhoods in the historical fabric.



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The buildings quality in the edge of Basij Blvd are mostly old (in use) and abandoned (require restoration) which are used for residency. Currently, construction of wall construction for some abandoned buildings on Basij Blvd has already started and partly covers their dilapidated view. Although, they cannot remove lost spaces, and these potentials should be used to improve urban environment quality and stability. Building and spaces quality situation in the edge of Basij Blvd is shown in figure 8.



Fig 8: the quality of buildings and spaces on the edge of Basij Blvd

Alternatives

Using of urban lost spaces and changing them to functional spaces provides vitality and prosperity, especially adaptable functions with local conditions and needs, including cultural-leisure and recreational spaces, abandoned spaces on the edge of Basij Blvd. The utilization of recreational concept can be defined as follows:

Recreation and Leisure Spaces

- Green spaces which are created by using proper cover and trees
- Fountains and channels
- Adequate welfare facilities
- Providing suitable places to sit and chat
- Creating space for individual and group exercises such as :
 - ✓ special road bike or skateboard
 - ✓ feasibility of construction of a traditional gym, Zurkhane, in convenient place
 - ✓ fields appropriate for group games such as football, volleyball
- Cultural spaces
 - ✓ Enclosure spaces for the group celebration (including municipalities)
 - ✓ Amphitheater, outdoor galleries
 - ✓ Suitable locations for watching the historical fabric (the second story of current dilapidated building, etc.)

Coffee Shops, Restaurants or Fast Foods in Small Sizes

It should be noted the largest area is suggested to create cultural leisure spaces and only a small portion should be allocated to other activities.

To establish some culture leisure spaces on the edge of boulevard and also to create lively urban spaces appropriate with suggested functions, architectural ideas can be used.

The main ideas for revival the edge of Boulevard and changing it to lively urban space and also different, are using of cut buildings that were destroyed during constricting boulevard. These buildings are often old houses dating back to the late Qajar and early Pahlavi and can be used as boulevard edge by using architectural ideas. Figure 9 shows Basij Blvd edge in the currently condition that can be changed to a lively space by using architectural ideas in figure 10.

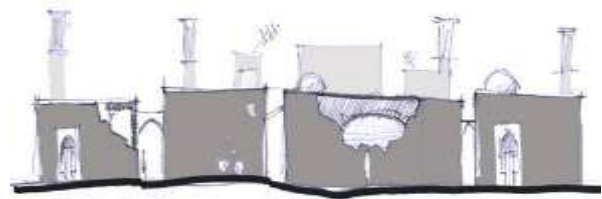


Fig 9: the existing city edge on Basij Blvd



Fig 10: The use of interior space of old houses yards as a part of city edge.

There is old and valuable furniture in the yards of most historical residential buildings moving to outside of the buildings is not possible. This furniture can be used as urban furniture by destroying the yard walls of the half destroyed houses and making communication between the interior spaces and the yard of houses (Figure 11).

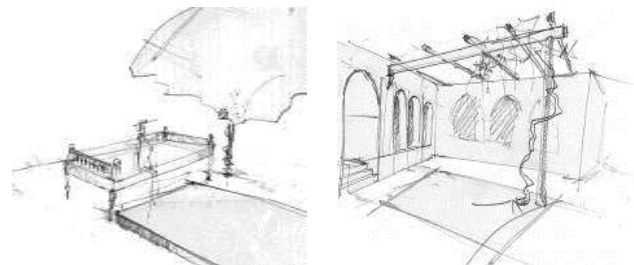


Fig 11: using interior furniture as urban furniture

Only a small part of most buildings in the edge of Basij Blvd is remained and the created walls prevent to access them. So, the easiest way to improve urban landscape is dropping the visibility of ruins created by opening the street.



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It can be done by reusing these buildings as commercial, leisure, and cultural functions, so they can be changed to functional, practical, and safe spaces. Four side forms of houses in these areas caused a full side and some parts of the other sides remained half destroyed after demolishing. Implementing the above idea, the remained U-shaped space would provide appropriate quality and condition to create commercial- leisure spaces with different attitude and communication. Destroyed walls and ceilings present the structure, arranging pieces of clay bricks and also roof construction such as false roof built by straw and hemp. Thus, the viewer would get information about not only the quality of inside of the building but also creativity used in the structure.



Fig 12: a half destroyed building on the edge of Basij Boulevard

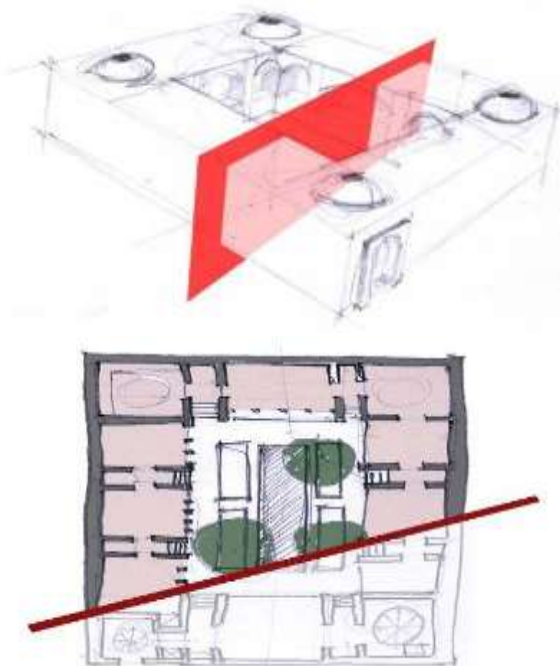


Fig 13: The existing place of a half destroyed building on the edge of Basij Boulevard.

Figure 12 displays a half-destroyed on the edge of Basij Boulevard. The existing space shown in

figure 13 changed to a lively public space with commercial leisure function by using architectural ideas in figure 14.

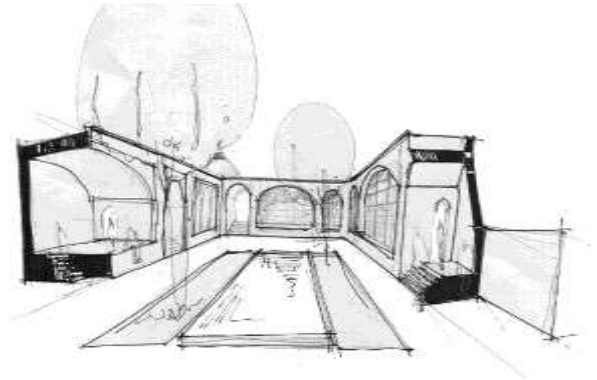


Fig 14: The use of blank space left from half destroyed buildings as a public space.

CONCLUSION

Basij Boulevard is one the new street passes through urban historical fabric and splitted two historical neighborhoods, Tal and Zoroastrian. Passing this street through the historical and residential fabric of Yazd, caused widespread destruction of the historical and old spaces particularly residential buildings as well as lost abandoned spaces and half destroyed buildings remained within the fabric on the edge of Basij Boulevard.

Such abandoned spaces, half destroyed buildings and vacant lands left from complete destruction of building, threat and engender neighborhood residents. Continuing process of deteriorating, diminishing of collective memories, prosperity and losing identity and the value of such historical spaces will not be compensated. On the other hand, the culture values and the whole sprite of Yazd have been changed by developing modernism renovation and changing the physical fabric. The concept of recreation and leisure time moved from house and neighborhood centers to outside and creating modern tourism leisure time spaces is a serious demand.

Therefore, the threat of urban lost and abandoned space can convert to an opportunity to create and develop modern tourism leisure spaces within the historical fabric of the city; so many tourists will be attracted. The utilization of created conditions in the historical fabric and existing potentials causes to develop a desired space and also provides the growth of this area.

Architectural ideas are useful and effective suggestions to create stability in the urban lost spaces on Basij Boulevard. It should be done by maintaining and improving communications within the public space along the boulevard, enclosing blank and abandoned spaces, creating continuity, keeping visibility into valuable historic buildings and



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even surrounding neighborhoods and combining inside and outside spaces within half destroyed buildings.

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