

# The Analysis of the Morphological Transformation of a Public Node: The Case of Adana Atatürk Park

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Journal of Urban Research and  
Development  
2023, Vol. 4 37 - 48  
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<https://ojs.emu.edu.tr/>

## Abstract

Significant urban modernization developments took place in the city of Adana in the early Republican years of Turkey. Hermann Jansen, who had a crucial contribution to the urbanization development of Turkey, conducted planning studies between 1935 and 1940 in Adana. Although his development plans weren't implemented substantially, built areas within his plan remain as the most favorite areas in the city. Atatürk Park as one of the first implementations in the city center within the plan was designed as a green area in the newly-built environment. The Park has become a public node with its physical features and monumental structures and survived for almost 80 years by transforming. The purpose of the study is to document the morphological transformation of Atatürk Park and evaluate the effects of the transformation process in the modernization of the city. While the morphological transformation process of Atatürk Park gives significant clues about urban development process of the city, the findings of the study also revealed that focusing on an urban park as an urban element as a potential approach for urban morphology studies is beneficial in terms of evaluating relatively small areas since their imaginary values consist of a significant potential for obtaining crucial information about the development processes of cities.

## Keywords

Morphological Transformation, Public Node, Adana, Atatürk Park

## Introduction

In the early years of Republican Turkey, aiming to establish a civilized country in Anatolia accelerated modernization movements in many cities of Turkey. The city of Adana became one of those while economic and physical developments that were actualized in the pre-republican period already provided convenient circumstances to implement modern Republican policies. These policies concluded with rapid economic growth which also caused migration from surrounding cities. Regarding to these developments, the increment in population required new arrangements in the city,

and, in line with Republican principles, Hermann Jansen, who was entitled to prepare the master plan of the capital of Turkey also, was appointed to prepare master plans for Adana (Saban, 2017). In the initial development plan prepared by Jansen in 1935, the area between the new railway station and the existing city center was demonstrated as development area. Today, reflections of Jansen's planning principles are still barely seen in the urban texture with its street layouts, neighbourhoods, recreational areas and housing blocks (Saban, 2009, pp. 61-62). Atatürk Park, which still

survives, particularly had an essential place since it was the firstly implemented within the developmental plan (Seyhan Valiliği, 1938).

Although the park was built in a location where any organized urban settlement developed in those years, the park and its surroundings transformed rapidly in years due to the urban development. While its physical features as a void facilitate the park to have an urban image value, monumental buildings in the park have also been fundamental for it to be easily recognized. And its physical contrast emerged in years strengthened its uniqueness (Lynch, 2010, pp. 80-86). Having various public facilities and functions during transformation process, the park engraved in public memory. The news based on functions and utilisations of public facilities in the park such as the City Hotel, Ataturk Swimming Pool in past revealed the public's interest in the park (YAN archive<sup>9</sup>). Today, while Ataturk Park is valued with its green area utility, it's actively used and developments in the park are followed meticulously by the public. This study aims to analyze the morphological transformation of Ataturk Park as one of the first urban parks in the first planned urban area in Adana and to follow the traces of this modern development process within morphological analysis.

Moudon (1994) explains urban morphology as urban form and its transformation can be understood by analyzing urban elements in the context of place and time and defends the definiton of the urban elements vary based on different ecoles in the field (Conzen, 1960; Caniggia&Maffei, 2001). Moudon (1997) also indicates that morphologists mostly execute their studies based on the elements such as building, plot/lot, and street and their correspondent relations. And Kropf (2009) stresses that even though there's a common language for urban form definition, cities should be considered in the context of their complexity to find various approaches to identify and describe them yet it is still important to use the same set of terms for an effective comparison. And the town-plan analysis method developed by Conzen (1960) emphasizes that the spatial characteristics of an urban form may be systematically analyzed through time with townscape elements and the development of the cultural story of cities and the physical pattern of the settlement may be revealed within the analyzes of these elements. Within this context, the content of any morphological analysis should be determined depending on the features of the place and the purpose of the study. Ünlü's (2006, p. 179) statement which focuses on challenges for observing a transformation of urban form in big scale proposes to focus on a particular urban element as plot or street-block explains Conzen's (1960) emphasis

about determining the content of the study depending on the study field and the purpose. While the method of the study was determined within this understanding, various documents dated back between 1950 and 2022 were collected and Conzen's town-plan analysis method was used for morphological analysis.

The analysis revealed that while the essential transformations observed in the study field emerged between 1950 and 2000, the green area in the park increased with the destruction of many buildings in the park in the late 1990s- to the early 2000s. While these developments enhanced the park to contain more public and green areas, the housing parcels located in the northern part of the study field filled with denser buildings in years without any empty parcels. This development is directly related to the basic features of the rapid urban development that lasted in Adana until 2000 and its effects were obviously seen in the study field. And dense public functions in the study field facilitated the park to have a solid urban memory which provided to document existed buildings in the past in the study field.

## Material & Method

This study aims to examine the physical transformation of Ataturk Park between 1950 and 2022 within morphological analysis based on town-plan analysis method developed by M.R.G Conzen. The street-block that Ataturk Park located determined as the study field within this aim and initial development plan of Adana and the site plan of Ataturk Park prepared by Hermann Jansen in 1935, the aerial maps dated 1950, 1972, 1992 and 2022 were used for the analyzes. Archives of YAN were used and interviews conducted in order to detect the physical features and functions of the buildings in the park.

## Physical Development Process of Adana Atatürk Park

Ataturk Park locates in the city of Adana, in the borders of Kurtuluş neighbourhood. The park covers approximately 56 hectares and its East, South and West borders are Ataturk Avenue, Cumhuriyet Avenue and Ziyapaşa Boulevard in order (Fig. 1). The park was proposed in the initial development plan of Adana prepared by Hermann Jansen and opened in 1937 by Ataturk himself with the statue of Ataturk designed by Ali Hadi Bara in the east of the park in 1935 (Saban, 2021).

<sup>9</sup> Yeni Adana Newspaper is abbreviated as YAN.



Fig. 1. Adana Atatürk Park (Google Earth, 2021)

When Jansen's planning proposals for Adana between 1935-1940 were examined, it is seen that the new development area was determined as the area between the new railway station and the existing city center where today Reşatbey, Cemalpaşa, Kurtuluş, and Çınarlı Neighbourhoods locates. The initial proposal demonstrates the general planning approach which provides to see that the park was planned within a comprehensive system with its housing blocks supported by another park except for Atatürk park, a stadium, three schools, a theatre, and all the green and sports areas connected to each other and to the existing city center within a green axis (Fig. 2) (Saban 2009).

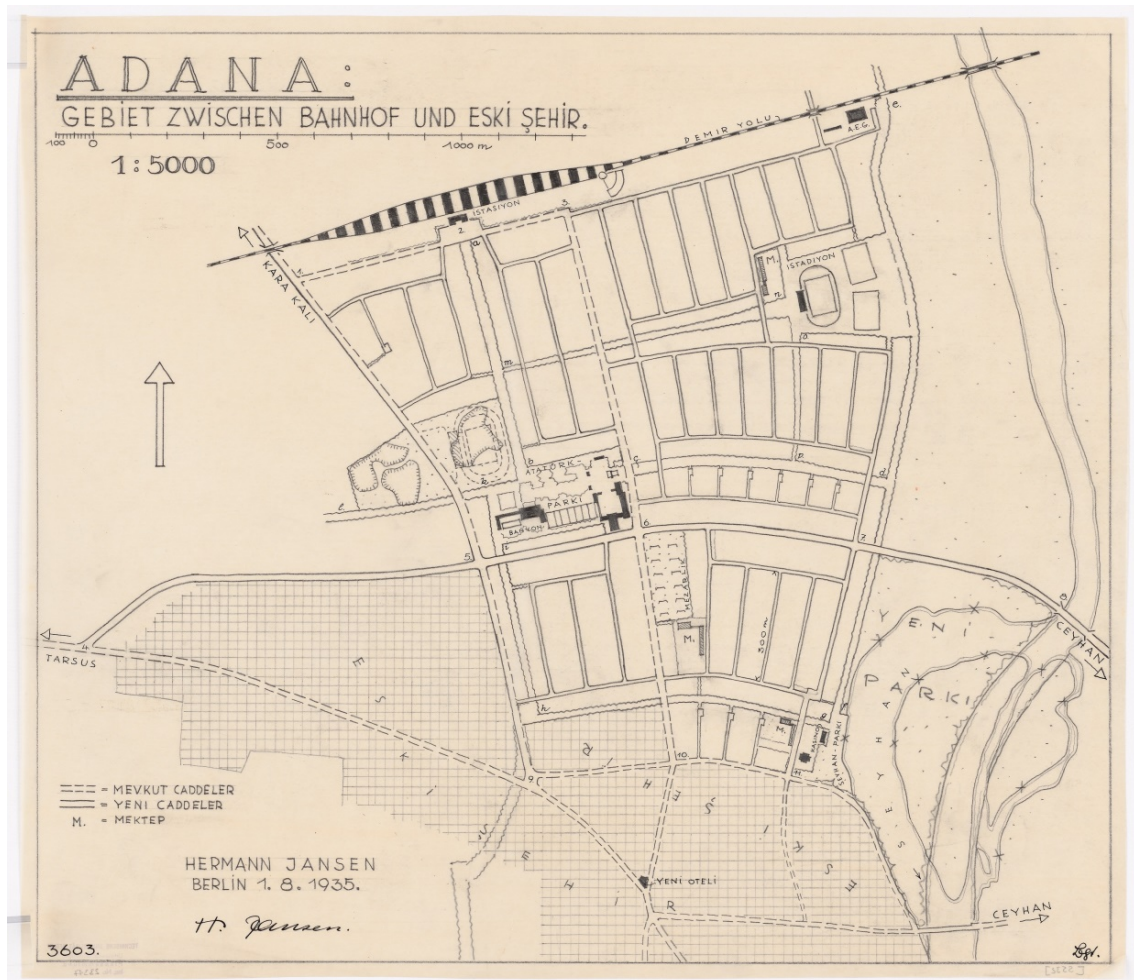


Fig. 2. Planning Proposal for Adana (Jansen, 1935)

Ataturk Park was effected by the urban development for years and the form of the park with the buildings in it transformed. This transformation matters since it gives clues about the features of urban development of the city. Formation, transformation, and destruction in the borders of the park and buildings

existed in the park were discussed. City (Municipality) Hotel, Ataturk Swimming Pool Complex, and Ataturk Youth (Sport) Center buildings were explained according to the collected data. Transformation of Ataturk Park was discussed under the morphological transformation title detailed.



## The City (Municipality) Hotel Building

When the site plan of Atatürk Park examined, there is seen a proposal for a monument pavilion in Northeast, the city hotel, concert area and a casino in Southeast, indoor and outdoor sport facilities in Southwest of the park (Fig 3).

Most of the structures within the plan, even if not with the proposed forms, was built however the park and the facilities transformed. The Hotel building project (Fig. 4) proposed by Seyfi Arkan in the southeast of the park can be seen in Figure 4. (Arkan, 1939, p. 76)

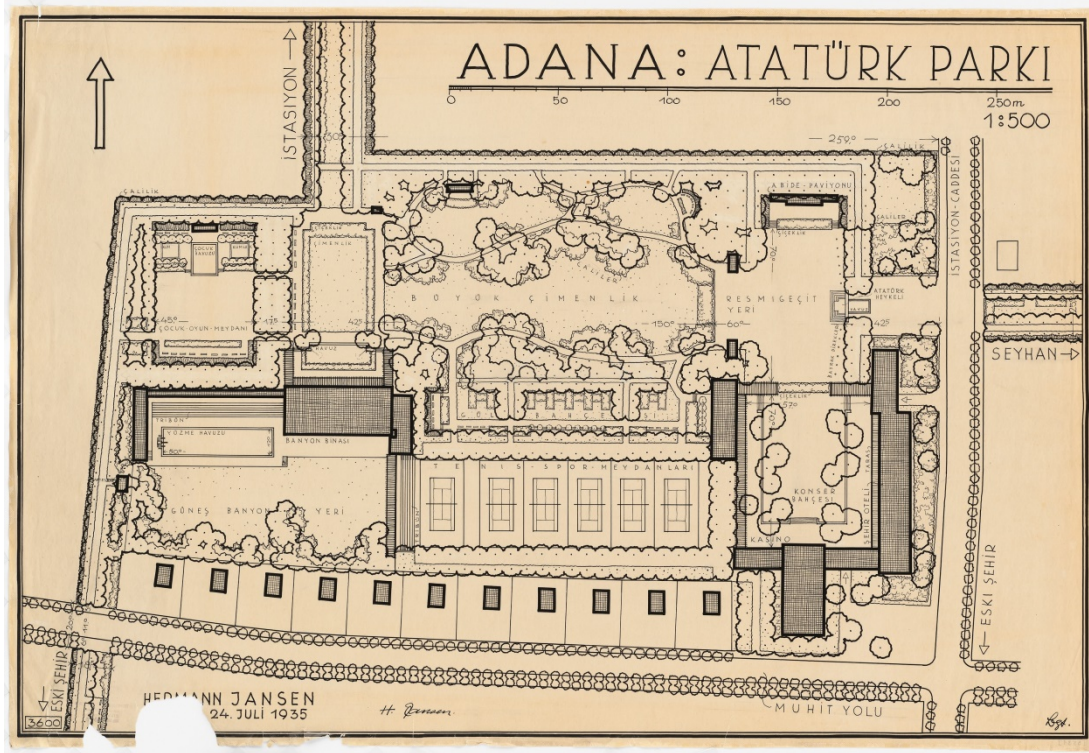


Fig. 3. Site Plan of Atatürk Park (Jansen, 1935)

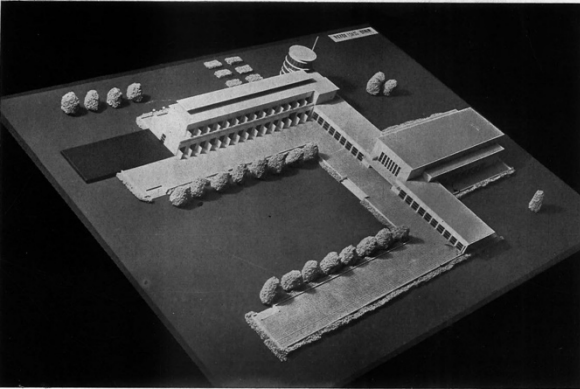


Fig. 4. The model of the City Hotel Project (Arkan, 1939, p. 77)

Although the project proposed by Arkan wasn't implemented with unknown reasons (Akar, 2013, p.70), the hotel building designed by the Muhittin Güreli was implemented in between 1994-1945 (Saban et al., 2006, p. 40). The building had the traces of the architectural eole of that period which was II. National Architecture movement with its colonnaded facades and monumental eaves (Hasol, 2021, p. 116) (Figure 5,6). It is remarkable that the building was mentioned

by the Mayor of Adana, Daniş Arıkoğlu, with its expensive and unfulfillable building process (YAN Archive, 1950) and similar news from close years also reveals the importance of the building for the public's interest (YAN Archive, 1950-1960). Research revealed that the City Hotel was used with the hotel function for a short while and used with various functions from the 1950s. It is known that the building was used as Cukurova College with Cukurova Club in same years and the L form of the building splitted for these apart functions. The longer part of the building which consists of hotel rooms located towards the west of the park used as college and the other part of the building was used by Çukurova Club. The building was also used Adana Academy of Economics and Commercial Sciences in 1970's (Fig. 5). After the academy function ended in 1979, there were several usages revealed in the building as Water and Sewer Department, Health Center, Marriage Office, Market, Cultural Center. The longer part of the building destroyed within the renovation works in the park in 1997 and the shorter part still remain and used as art gallery (Fig. 6) by Adana Metropolitan Municipality (Akar, 2013).



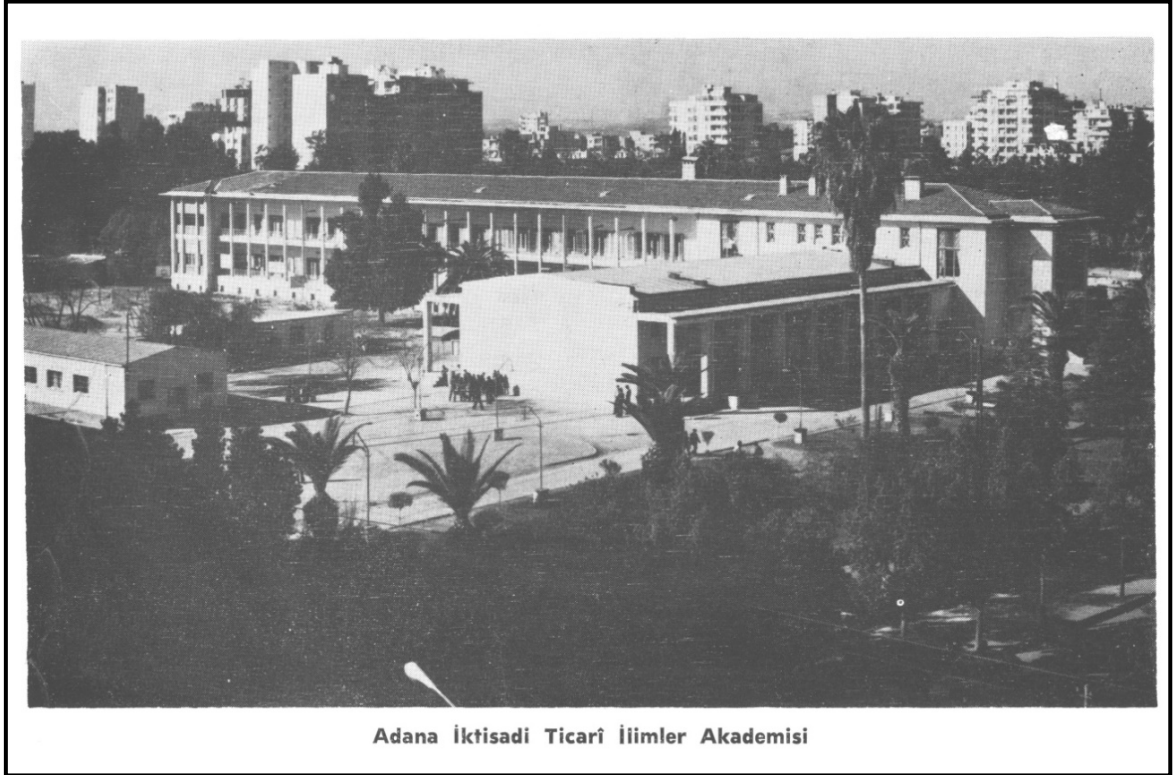


Fig. 5. Adana Economic and Administrative Sciences Academy Building (Adana İl Yıllığı, 1973, p. 44)



Fig. 6. 75. Yıl Art Gallery (Author's archive)

### **Ataturk Swimming Pool Complex**

The second building examined within the study, Ataturk Swimming Pool complex still remain in the same location, in the West of the Ataturk Park, but the physical structure of the complex completely changed

in years. The pool was opened by Turhan Cemal Beriker -who was the mayor of Adana- in 1938 (Adana İl Yıllığı, 1973). The pool is seen in the borders of Ataturk Park in the aerial map of 1950 but after the opening of Ziyapaşa Boulevard in 1960s (Saban, 2021,



p. 5) the borders changed and the pool complex excluded from the park (Fig 18).

The physical transformation of the Ataturk Swimming Pool Complex was obviously seen when old photographs were compared however these materials didn't consist of significant references to make exact determinations about the complex. So, an interview was conducted with Mr. Behçet Kurtiç, who was a user of the complex in the past that witnessed

different periods of the complex with different roles ranging from a record-holder swimmer to the manager of the complex. The interview was conducted based on old photographs and the problem was that the buildings in each photograph were different while the diving board was the common structure in each of them. The diving board as the main reference of the photographs also showed that the photographs were taken from Ziyapaşa Boulevard (Figure 7).

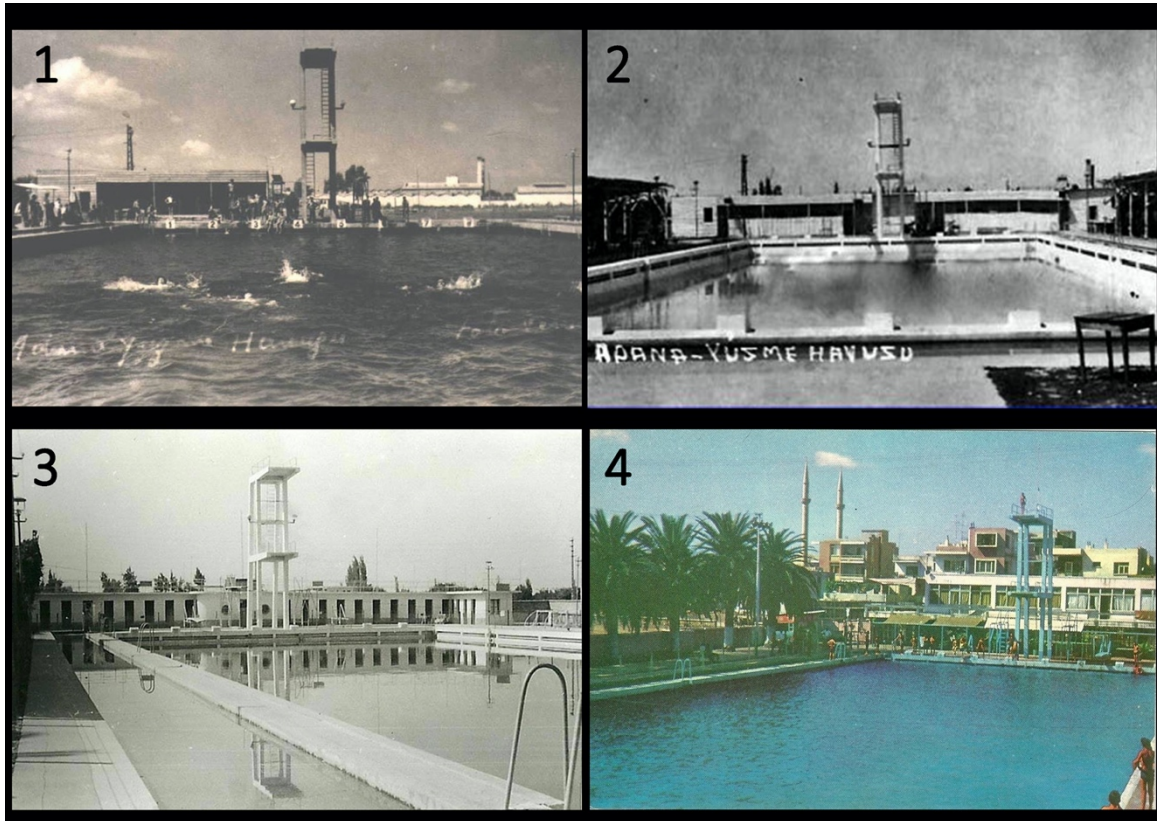


Fig. 7. Ataturk Swimming Pool in different years (Anonymous 1949, A,B,C in order, edited by the author)

Mr. Kurtiç stated that the building behind the diving board in the first photograph (Anonymous, 1949)- was built in 1939 and was used for changing rooms and management. While the building in the second photograph is also behind the same diving board but in a complete different form, it wasn't clearly recognized by Mr. Kurtiç and his assumptions were pointing out that it was belonged to 1940s. Even if the exact period of the building couldn't be detected, the building in the third photograph clarifies that it didn't survive for a long while. The building in third photograph was explained by Mr. Kurtiç as it served with management, changing rooms, security and lavatory functions between 1950s and 1980s. These statements can be interpreted as the building in second photograph may be existed in early 1950's for a short while. Finally, the building in the fourth photograph was elucidated by Mr. Kurtiç, as it was built - after the destruction of the building in the third photograph-

with a basement floor for technical requirements, ground floor for changing rooms and services, and first floor for management and guest house in the early 1980s (Fig. 7).

While other indoor and outdoor swimming pool structures in the same location are seen in Figure 9, their traces were firstly seen in the aerial photograph of 1985 (Fig. 8). According to Mr. Kurtiç's statements, the indoor swimming pool building was used only for training and not for competitions since its physical conditions didn't comply with FINA's (Fédération Internationale De Natation) requirements. The swimming pool complex was destructed in 2008 and a new swimming pool complex opened in the same parcel with the same functions in 2009. Figure 10 displays one of the new buildings and pools in the complex.



Fig. 8. Swimming pool's Location in 1985 (edited with Duygu Saban's archive)



Fig. 9. Ataturk Swimming Pool Complex in late 2000's (Anonymous D)



Fig. 10. Ataturk Swimming Pool Complex (İşisağ, 2015)

## Ataturk Youth Center

Another facility located in the southwest of Ataturk Park was Ataturk Youth Center which was designed by Demirtaş Ceyhun and built in 1964 (Yüreğir, 2008, p. 402). Since there was limited information about the building, another interview also conducted within the study with Mr. Aydın Sihay who was one of the active users of the facility in late 1960s. Few photographs taken in past and Mr. Sihay's sketch prepared for 'Muştı' magazine published by the student members of the center were one of the important documents (Fig 11, 13, 14, 15) that revealed the physical features of the building. The interview also

enabled to reveal the plan scheme of the buildings (Fig 12) and its connection with its surroundings.

Mr. Sihay stated that the Ataturk Youth Center was established to offer socio-cultural activities to successful students in the city and it had an interactive connection with the sport areas around it. According to his statements, its public usage ended in 1970s and used as sport center which clarifies the Ataturk Sports Center definition in the Provincial Annual of 1973 (Fig. 14). He also mentioned the terrace in the west facade of the building was used for watching matches, the building number two was used for table tennis matches and the building number one was a house of the maintenance personnel of these facilities. The plan scheme of the Ataturk Youth Center also revealed that there were a piano room, hobby (chess) room and library in the building (Fig. 12).

While white plastered surfaces, wide windows and terrace roof of the building display the features of modern movement, the concrete structure in the center of the roof may be interpreted as the symbol of the 1960s, which were the period of questing against the monotony of modernism (Hasol, 2021, p. 156) (Fig. 14). As material distinctions were emphasized in the sketch (Fig. 13) drawn by Mr. Sihay, he also indicated there were glass, brick and wood materials used in the building. The building is assumed as it was destroyed in the late 1990s while its physical traces are seen in the aerial photograph of 1992 but not in 2000 (Fig 18).



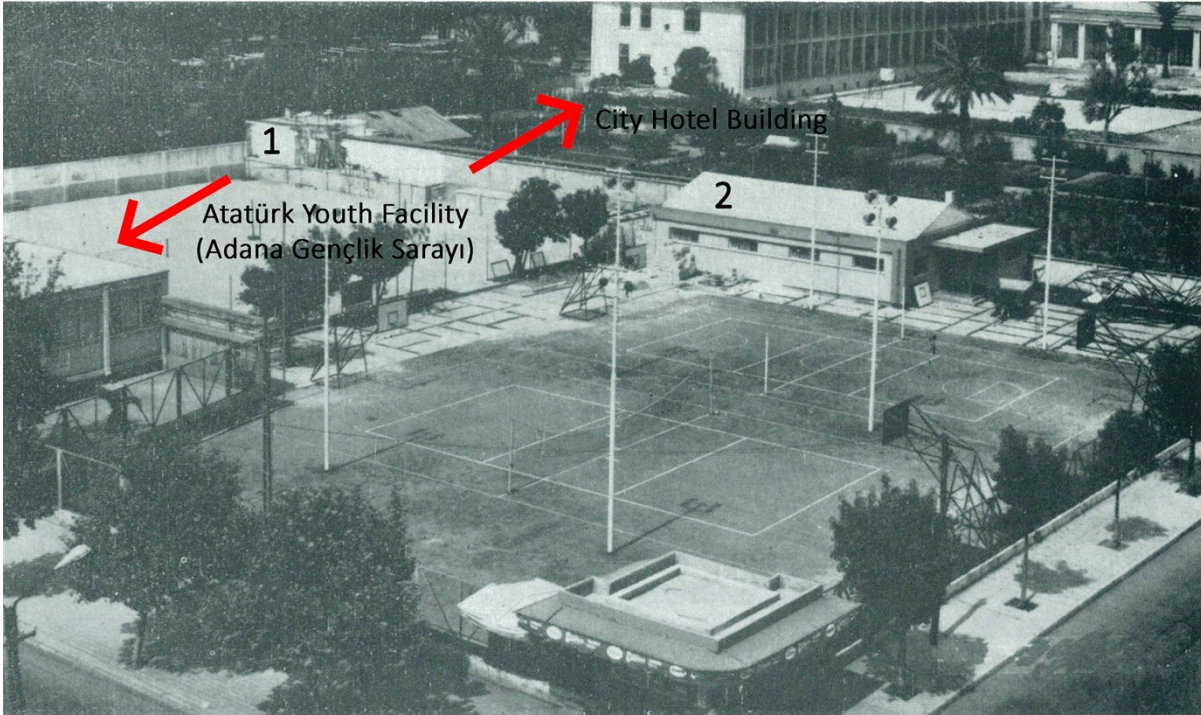


Fig. 11. Atatürk Youth Center and its surroundings (Adana İl Yıllığı, 1973, p. 202)

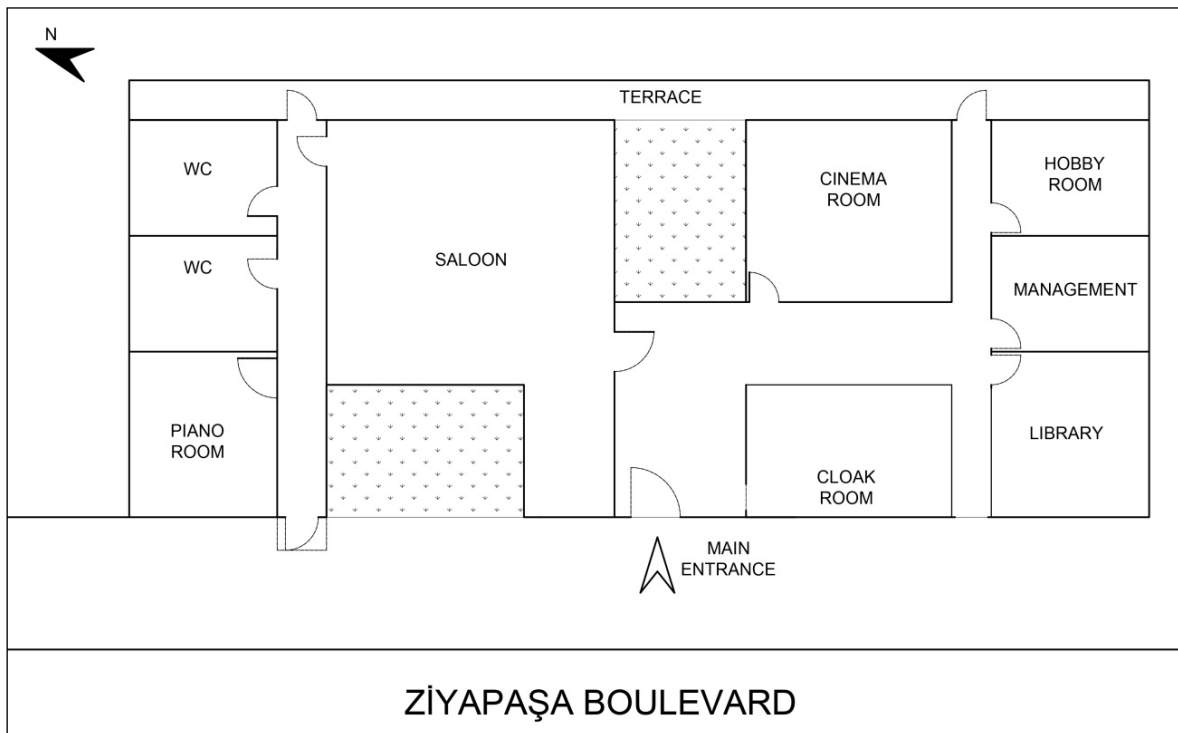


Fig. 12. Plan scheme of Atatürk Youth Center (prepared by the author)





Fig. 13. Sketch of Ataturk Youth Center (Sihay, 1967)

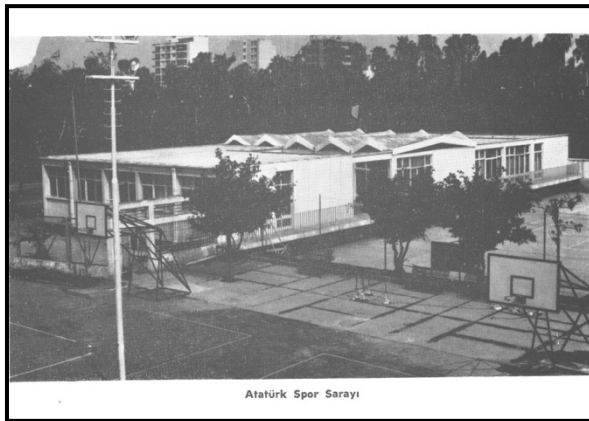


Fig. 14. Ataturk Youth Center (Adana İl Yıllığı, 1973, p. 203)



Fig. 15. The entrance facade of Ataturk Youth Center (Anonymous E)

The survival and transformation of these buildings reveal that sports and cultural facilities in the park were operated in the western part of the park between 1940 and 1960 and after the opening of Ziyapaşa Boulevard these facilities were located in the southwestern part of the park. Even if the borders of the park and functional uses differed over time, it is obvious that Jansen's approach to the park for cultural facilities was taken into consideration in the way of building the park. Today, an art gallery building, a public lavatory, a building for the Çınarlı neighbourhood, and another building used by service

departments of Adana Metropolitan Municipality (Fig. 16) located in the park.



Fig. 16. (In order) 75. Yıl Art Gallery, Public Lavatory, Çınarlı Neighborhood Management Building, Buildings used by Adana Metropolitan Municipality (Author's archive)

### Morphological Transformation of Atatürk Park

Morphological transformation in the study field examined within the town-plan analysis approach developed by M.R.G. Conzen, and the border of the study field determined as street block that Atatürk Park located. Atatürk Park is seen in the street-block numbered 14322 in the development plan prepared by Seyhan Municipality. However, the northern side of the park is at the borders of the residential parcels, and this intersection doesn't consist of a street surface but a green area included in the park. Since this intersection doesn't fit into definition of the street line that Conzen (1960, p.5) emphasizes, housing parcels included to the study field with the park and the borders of the study field comply with the method of the study can be seen in Figure 17. Physical transformation of the border and the figure-ground pattern of the study field in 1950, 1973, 1992, 2007 and 2000 were examined within the study, and required diagrams prepared with the help of aerial and city maps of the related year.

In 1950 (Fig. 19), it is seen that the borders of the study field sided with Atatürk Avenue in the east, Cumhuriyet Avenue in the south. And the northern and the western borders of the field don't have regular forms like the other sides. Differentiating from the situation in 1940, it is also seen that Atatürk Swimming Pool in the east seems included in the landscape of the park and Ziyapaşa Boulevard ended in the northern part of the park. The construction of the City Hotel also changed the landscape of the park when compared to the situation in 1940 since a new landscape is seen in 1950. The central part of the study field in the east-west direction is distinguished with its green texture however the northern and the southern part of the study

field isn't. Finally, the separate buildings in the northern part are assumed as dwellings related to the new developmental plan.



Fig. 17. Borders of the study field (prepared with Anonymous F)

In 1973 (Fig. 19), the dense texture of buildings is remarkable and it displays the rapid development in and around the study field. Besides being a reflection of the new developmental plan, the density is also related to the rapid economic growth and increment of the population in the city during that period of time (Çopuroğlu, 2009). Another physical change in 1973 was realized in the study field with the opening of the Ziyapaşa Boulevard in the 1960s, so, the western border of the study field changed and the park became enclosed by 3 main axes of the city. The southern part of the park in 1973 was distinct with the increasement of the buildings, too. Ataturk Youth Facility and City Hotel building –used as Academy in those years- is seen and the study field has 3 exact functional areas; housing parcels in the north, a city park in the center, cultural and educational facilities in South. Although it may be interpreted as the study field consisting of socio-cultural public functions in a newly developed neighbourhood, it was also detected from the newspapers that there was an entrance fee in 1970s since there was a zoo in the park (YAN, 1978).

In 1992 as (Fig. 19), it is seen the northern side of the study field changed with the opening of a new street among new apartments appeared in the street block and

the second major change is seen in the landscape of the City Hotel building. Two buildings located in the south of the Hotel Building seen in 1973 doesn't exist in 1992 and the landscape seems to consist of more vegetation. It is assumed that the change in this landscape was related to the end of the Academy usage in 1979 (Akar, 2013, p.70) after the establishment of Çukurova University in Adana (Adana İl Yıllığı, 1973).

While it is seen that the borders of the study field remained the same from 1992 to 2007, the building pattern in the northern part got denser and the figure-ground pattern in the southern part significantly changed. The first major change in the southern part is the destruction of the longer part of the old City Hotel building that is located towards the West of the park. It is known that it was destroyed in 1997 within the renovation works by the metropolitan municipality (Akar, 2013, p. 71). Secondly, Ataturk Youth Center and the buildings behind destroyed and their lands seem included in the park as green areas. Although the exact year of the destruction couldn't be detected, the satellite map of 2000 provides determine the destruction period was between 1992 and 2000 since the facility also seem absent in the map of 2000 (Fig. 18).

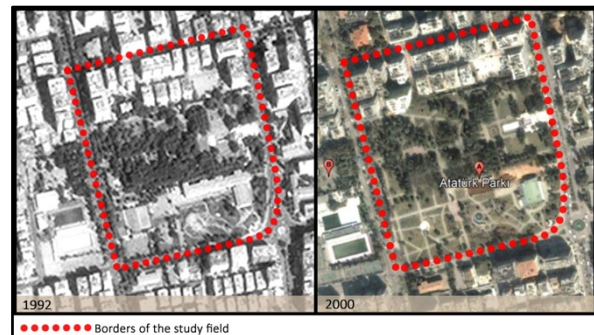


Fig. 18. Study field in 1992 and 2000 (prepared with Duygu Saban's archive and Google Earth 2000)

In 2007, it was detected from that there was a public lavatory, a building used by municipal service departments, a building for Çınarlı neighbourhood management and the survived part of City Hotel building used as art gallery (Fig. 16). All the buildings except for the public lavatory survived and remained the same today.





Fig 19. Borders and the figure-ground pattern of the study field (prepared with Duygu Saban's archive and Google Earth 2007, 2022)

## Conclusions

The study was carried out in a limited area but still had been helpful to identify important data for a specified period. Inferred data from this study confirms Conzen's (1960, p. 6) argument that the pattern of an urban element is an accumulated record of the urban development.

As a result of attempts to establish a modern city in Adana, an urban park was initially designed and implemented in the development area as a contributor

to modern life and became a central place that urban needs were met. Although there wasn't an organized and developed settlement in the study field until the 1950s, the establishment of cultural and sport facilities in the park may be considered as the manifestation of the significance of the study field. Rapid urban growth occurred particularly from the 1950's accelerated transformations in and around the study field and essential changes in the study field observed during the period between 1950 and 2000. Even if the dense

texture of buildings in the park started to decrease in the 1990s, the density continued to increase in the housing parcels in the North of the study field. The overlap of the period of the decline in the density occurred in the study field in the beginning of the 2000s and the repletion period of the urban growth in the city of Adana (Çopuroğlu, 2009) is not a coincidence and is related.

While the study revealed the various public functions evolved over time which enabled the public to have a solid memory of the study field since it was experienced actively, intensifying urban texture over years also strengthened the image value of the park. This strong urban memory of the park played a crucial role to detect the physical and functional features of buildings as Ataturk Youth Center and Ataturk Swimming Pool complexes. This study shows while focusing on urban elements as a potential approach for urban morphology studies is beneficial in terms of evaluating relatively small areas, their imaginary values consist of a significant potential for obtaining crucial information about the development processes of cities.

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