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Miniature Parks and the Sample of Miniatürk

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Abstract: Miniature parks are outdoor facilities where some of the historical and cultural heritages of a country are displayed as miniature models in specially-designed gardens. In this study, the significance of miniature parks, which form a new park area identity, carrying various cultural and social functions, is discussed in comparison with other urban recreational areas. The information concerning the design of Miniatürk, the first miniature park in Turkey, is presented as well as a thorough examination of other similar parks in the world. Some suggestions are also made about the planning and design principles of miniature parks.

Key words: Miniature parks, Miniatürk

INTRODUCTION

In today's cities people receive the newest facilities and may save time, the majority of working people depend on the city life. The vitality of accessible recreative areas in cities is steadily increasing for the people whose recreational needs are increasing and changing. Recreational areas in cities have significant roles in meeting daily and weekly recreational needs of people who have difficulty reaching the recreational areas especially those out of cities^[1]. Urban recreational areas include many areas, features of which are all different. Among them, park areas are the most important ones which provide people from any age group several activity opportunities such as resting, entertainment, playing, sport etc.

In a study about what is expected from green areas in 21st century was emphasized that their major mission is providing sites where personal and cultural differences are expressed^[2]. While the urban green areas have benefits for people from the social and physical aspect, they also make life more meaningful^[3]. Solecki and Welch^[4], focused on the advantages of the urban landscapes, stating that parks which are one of the most important parts of an urban landscape, are the areas designed for active and passive recreation. Since mid 1980s, in North America and Europe, administrators and planners have been performing some attempts to support sustainable development and improve life quality. Among them is the attempt to form recreational areas such as parks and playgrounds^[5].

In recent days, park areas designed in various sites and parks gain different identities. The River Torrens Linear Park in Adelaide, Australia, for instance, formed a new model for the parks constituted along a river^[6]. In another study evaluating users, parks and tourism together, it was stated that parks are among the areas to see in the aim of ecotourism^[7].

Parks are also modified as the needs and recreational habits of users change. Some areas functioning as the park areas roughly gain a new park area identity, having also different cultural and social functions. One of the best examples of these areas is miniature parks.

Learning about a city or country which has hosted various civilisations for thousands of years and managed to survive their own architectural and art works, requires quite a long time and has a lot of expense. Within a common sense that people have the right of knowing and seeing historical richness, miniature parks were formed in the aims of exhibiting the selected specimens of history and culture in many countries of the world to people by conserving their proportions and offering city people alternative recreational areas^[8]. Some of these parks designed were later associated under the roof of International Association of Miniature Parks (IAMP).

The aims of IAMP can be summarized as^[9]: To promote the cultural aspects of miniature parks as a platform for enhancing educational programs worldwide. To promote the concept of miniature parks worldwide within the travel and tourism industries. To represent its members before other international organisations. To provide an umbrella institution for its members, to watch

over, protect and further the rights and interests of members engaged in the business of miniature parks and to co-operate with those other associations in the world having similar aims and objectives. To assist and enable its members to act together in all matters appertaining to their trade interests; defining quality criteria and a quality label for miniature parks. To further the interchange of ideas and experiences between the amusement and leisure parks to establish and maintain a dialogue with governments and institutions and to actively lobby through appropriate government departments, national and international tourist authorities the interests of miniature parks. Proposals and other public matters affecting the industry and to take such action as may be deemed necessary.

The aim of this study was to offer some proposals of planning and designing of miniature parks by expressing the concept of miniature park and its functions.

The concept of miniature park: Miniature parks where countries exhibit their own historical and cultural richness via the miniature scaled copy of the monuments, are the recreational areas where historical and cultural monuments are introduced and the visitors amuse and leisure. Miniature parks are the open-to-people recreational areas where the miniature models are exhibited in a park environment. Today these areas are designed in the aims of education, recreation and tourism.

Miniature parks can be designed in various ways. While some are designed as a miniature model of a city or town, some are designed as the areas where the miniature structures are exhibited in a specially formed garden^[9]. The visitors utilising these parks have an advantage of knowing the history and culture of the country they visit in a very short time. The recreation areas formed for adults and children in the park areas enable visitors to amuse and leisure.

Significant miniature parks in the world: Miniature parks are thought to have been developed since the 1900's, as people put small miniature buildings and trains into their private gardens.

The first real miniature parks were those open to the public. The oldest original miniature park is Bekonscot, in England. Later, Madurodam in the Netherlands was opened and many more followed^[10]. In many parts of the world, for the same purposes, miniature parks began to be designed (Table 1).

The first miniature park in Turkey: Miniaturk: The first miniature park in Turkey is Miniaturk. It is a member of the IAMP. Miniaturk, which is defined as 'the area where all

the periods and the places of Anatolia are exhibited together' and the first miniature park of Turkey, is a part of three-stage improvement project to be applied in Haliç, which is known as "Golden Horn" all over the world and houses the history of various civilisations. Miniaturk has become one of the most important recreational areas in Istanbul, which was designed as a part of the 2nd stage of the improvement project to purify Golden Horn and give it its old appearance to introduce historical and cultural values to the tourists visiting the city. A scale of 1/25 was used, as in all miniature park models in the world. In an area of 1.5 ha of Miniaturk, which was constructed on an area of 6 ha is auto parks and other facilities. On the area where 104 structures are exhibited, 107 models are planned to exhibit.

Design principles of Miniaturk: Miniaturk project consists of three main sections where models from Anatolia, Istanbul and old Ottoman geography are exhibited. Sections are separated by landscape designs and continued in whole structure. A circulation line guiding the visitors was formed by this planning. Access is provided with a ramp in order that visitors can have a sense of different areas and an overview terrace has been formed to see the area by bird view. Two main cycles, first of which is the walking way that offers the opportunity of examining the models closely and the other is railway that offers a quicker tour and aims to pull the attention of children, were formed separately. One of the most important elements in the project is a 1/25 scaled model of Bosphorus Bridge of 42 m, over which visitors can walk. While passing over the bridge which is rising over an artificial mini-lake, Kiz Kulesi (tower), Ottoman Kadirga (a kind of old fighting boat) and other sailing devices and the structures on the both sides can be seen^[8].

Miniaturk, which was formed by the models which were selected by considering both historical and architectural features of the original forms, pulls attraction for successful land-use. The site consists of structural and green areas. The circulation line in the area was formed by pavements and railway designed for children. The environment of each unit and structure was covered by green areas. The green area system of the area was formed by miniature trees, shrubs, flowers and ground-covering plants. Plants were used in the area, within miniature forms.

In the miniature park there are miniature models, seats (modular pergolas), playgrounds, toilets, cafeteria (outdoor-indoor), amphitheatre, water surface, auto parks, cinema, library, exhibition hall, shopping centre where the books, postcards, puzzle, souvenirs and CD about Miniaturk are sold.

Table 1: Some of the important miniature parks in the world

Miniature parks in the world	Country	Features of the miniature parks
Miniaturk*	Turkey	The miniature park where the historical and cultural models of Turkey are exhibited.
Minimundus*	Austria	In 1958 it was designed in a very small size and now it is an area where 171 miniatures (of original material) from 5 continents are exhibited ^[1] .
Mini Europe*	Belgium	Mini Europe, the second example of miniature cities, is a miniature city application constructed by European Union. It represents the historical and the cultural diversities of Europe with the miniature models selected from 15 different countries ^[1] .
Mini Israel*	Israel	The park designed as a model of Israel; represent the country within a miniature park design ^[11] .
Parc des Mini Chateaux*	France	It is a road line of 1.5 km surrounded by a park area of 2 ha. In the area, there are 6 miniature railways and a tripping boat. Forty four models are exhibited. There are dwarfed trees and shrubs (bonsai) over 2000 and leisure and amusement areas for every age group ^[12] .
France Miniature*	France	The area where the important historical remains of France are exhibited is the largest miniature park of Europe with its area of 5 ha. The longest miniature railroad is in this park and the most famous 150 historical models of France are in it. The area where 20000 miniature trees shelter also has large water surface (miniature rivers) to perform water sports ^[11] .
Swiss Miniatur*	Switzerland	The area, which was selected for its suitable landscape and climate and represents 120 models, contains 1550 various plants and 15000 flowers ^[11] .
Bekonscot Model Village*	UK.	The area where 6 miniature villages were located also contains a miniature railroad, a zoo and forms like beaches. The village formed in 1929 by Rolland Callingham as a hobby is the most original model village ^[11] .
Babbacombe Model Village	UK.	In this model village in England the most important models of the country are exhibited with their perfect details. In the model village there are houses made of rush and buildings constructed in Georgia style ^[13] .
Miniatur park Klein Erzgebirge*	Germany	The park areas where 161 miniatures are exhibited is about 12000 m ² ^[11] .
Ruegen Park*	Germany	The park area where 70 interesting models are exhibited ^[11] .
Italia en Miniatura*	Italy	The area where 272 models throughout Italy are exhibited. The scales of the miniature models vary from 1:25 to 1:50. It is the most important tourism centre of Italy ^[11] .
Sardegna Miniatura*	Italy	It is a miniature park area where the visitors can learn everything about Sardegna Island. There are units in such as auto parks, terraces, playgrounds, picnic areas and conference halls in the park area of 30000 m ² ^[11] .
Capri-Island Miniatura	Italy	It is a park where the historical models and cultural life are exhibited ^[14] .
Tobuland	Japan	It is a miniature park where the models in Japan are exhibited.
Madurodam B. V.*	Netherlands	In the Miniature city, the canal houses of Amsterdam minimized in the scale of 1/25, Alkmaar cheese bazaar and some parts of Delta Models are exhibited. All models exhibited are located in the designed gardens ^[11] .
Miniatur park Appelscha*	Netherlands	A miniature park where the models that represent the cities of Friesland, Groningen and Drenthe, Netherlands are exhibited together ^[11] .
Miniatur Walcheren*	Netherlands	In the park 350 models, 30 boats and 200 mini vehicles take place. A zoo hosting various animals takes place in the park ^[11] .
Miniature World*	Canada	Victoria is one of the most famous tourism centers in Canada. About 80 miniature models are exhibited in the area where people from every age group can amuse and leisure ^[11] .
Catalunya en Miniatura	Spain	It is the primary miniature park in Spain. The models representing various, historical structures, buildings and the country itself are exhibited ^[15] .
Pueblochico-Tenerife*	Spain	The miniature design of the Canary Islands. It displays the architectural tissue, fauna and flora of the islands ^[11] .
Cockington Green	Australia	It is a holiday village where miniature structures are ornamented with miniature gardens and displayed together. The park area opened in 1979. Lots of trees, shrubs and perennial and annual flowers that gain forms by dwarfing attribute the prettiness of the areas ^[16] .

* Members of International Association of Miniature Parks (IAMP)

Miniaturk is visited especially at weekends. The pavements of the park visited by people from every age group are sometimes insufficient for large crowds. Because the visitors have to walk in one-way direction, it affects perceiving the areas and pedestrian traffic negatively.

DISCUSSION

Park concepts have gained new aspects depending on the changes in the dynamics which define a city. Today, park areas which basically have a function of recreation and in addition to that contribute the introduction of country's history, culture and education, began to be constituted. The best examples of them are

miniature parks. Miniature parks are the recreation areas which have an important role in the introduction of the culture and history of countries. The functions of miniature parks may be ordered as following;

- Miniature parks are alternative recreational areas for cities and their surroundings.
- They are the park areas where cultural and historical richness of countries are exhibited on either national or international platform. Historical and cultural models formed in a scale of 1/25 can be examined in detail in these park areas. Miniature parks are in a position of outdoor museums exhibiting historical and cultural heritage. These areas permit the visitors to know closely rich heritage of countries.

- They offer alternative green areas for the countries where green area amount per person is insufficient. They perform all the functions of green areas.
- They are aesthetic and functional green areas between structural areas.
- Waste areas gain functions by these areas evaluated in the improvement projects.
- They provide the opportunities of seeing the miniature models together which can be seen with only great expenses and long travels.
- They are the areas where the original examples of miniature models and miniature garden designs are exhibited.
- They are recreational areas which offer education, play and leisure to children and education and leisure to adults.

It is obvious that these parks are important education, tourism and recreational areas. Miniature parks which exhibit history and culture of countries can be designed in the scales of city, region and country.

Recommendations: Following proposals should be considered while designing and planning of miniature parks:

- In every season they must be used.
- The size of the area must be planned based on the models exhibited and the visiting potential.
- They must be planning and designing in urban or regional green area system.
- Park areas must be located near main roads.
- The number of auto parks must be efficient.
- The circulation line must be designed to direct the visitors.
- Miniature park must contain equipment elements to meet the needs of people from every age group.
- The plantation in the areas must be designed considering the miniature forms of the models exhibited and the models should not be hidden in the plants.
- The introductory equipments of the models must be used.
- The visitor numbers and carrying capacity of the Miniature parks must be controlled.

Miniature parks, where the historical and cultural values of countries are exhibited are significant recreational and tourism areas. They must be planned and designed in cities, regions and countries.

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