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Strategies on Sustainability of Historical and Cultural Heritage in Amasra, Turkey

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Abstract

In our country, historical settlements, in which several civilizations lived in different historical periods, are spatial evidences transmitting from past social, economic and cultural characteristics to today. In the context of sustainability, in order to preserve and transmit of our own historical and cultural heritage to the future generations, it is essential that historical environments should be renovated in regard to the needs of today's generation, should be re-functioned, and should be taken into account from protection-renovation-development principles point of view. In this paper, urban policy approaches, planning and urban design strategies on sustainability of historical, cultural and natural heritage in Amasra, and an urban design case study have been presented. A 3000 year old settlement, Amasra was added to the UNESCO list, as a candidate, due to the fortifications built in Genoese period. Therefore, sustainability strategies regarding to Amasra have gained more significance.

Keywords: Amasra, conservation-planning-urban design, historical and cultural heritage, sustainability.



Introduction

There is an urgent need for taking care of some settlements having natural, historical and cultural heritage in order to determine what can be done for sustainability of them and which strategies should be adopted. The theory of conservation evolved in time from a focus on only monuments to the whole of historical environment (Erkan, 2011). Holistic conservation of historical environments with all components is an important issue adopted all around the world. Especially when it comes to the candidateship for UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) list of a settlement due to possessed historical and cultural values, the issue gains more significance. As well as sustainability aims and strategies to be determined and adopted are of great importance for guiding to the future of historical settlements, however, UNESCO conventions become a major guide for protection and sustainability. Considering natural and cultural values of Amasra, some UNESCO indicators to be evaluated become prominent. Mixed cultural and natural heritage, outstanding universal value, integrity and authenticity are major indicators emphasized in Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention of UNESCO, in 2015.

- Mixed Cultural and Natural Heritage; “Properties shall be considered as "mixed cultural and natural heritage" if they satisfy a part or the whole of the definitions of both cultural and natural heritage” (UNESCO, 2015).
- Outstanding Universal Value; “Outstanding Universal Value means cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity. As such, the permanent protection of this heritage is of the highest importance to the international community as a whole” (UNESCO, 2015).
- Authenticity; “Properties nominated under criteria mentioned in convention must meet the conditions of authenticity” (UNESCO, 2015).
- Integrity; “All properties nominated for inscription on the World Heritage List shall satisfy the conditions of integrity. Integrity is a measure of the wholeness and intactness of the natural and/or cultural heritage and its attributes” (UNESCO, 2015).

In addition to these indicators to be investigated and evaluated, it is necessary to organize a management system which contains all strategies and urban policies to guide and determine the future of the places, settlements, and the whole cities.

- “The purpose of a management system is to ensure the effective protection of the nominated property for present and future generations” (UNESCO, 2015). “An effective management system depends on the, characteristics and needs of the nominated property and its cultural and natural content. Management systems may be varied according to different cultural perspectives” (UNESCO, 2015). “An appropriate management plan or other management system is essential and shall be provided in the nomination. Sustainable development principles should be integrated into the management system” (UNESCO, 2015).

The settlement of Amasra

Geographical Location

One of the towns of Bartın Province, Amasra is located in Black Sea Region of Turkey (Figure 1). It is laying the heaven which is waiting to be explored with its history and natural



beauties in the middle of Black Sea. It captivates its visitors with its sapphire blue water and work of arts left from glorious civilizations (<http://www.amasra.bel.tr/amasra.html>).



Figure 1. Location of Amasra in Turkey.

Seven Hill that make Amasra exotic is heavenly like forest cover which is formed of one peninsula, two islands and two gulfs. Because of these qualities, it has started tourism in 1940 and has been the first tourism town of Turkey (<http://www.amasra.bel.tr/amasra.html>). Amasra is the place where Fatih Sultan Mehmet, who was the one of the padishahes of Ottoman Empire, said to his male servant in charge of him “*lala, is this place çeşm-i cihan?*” (eyes of the world?) (Figure 2).

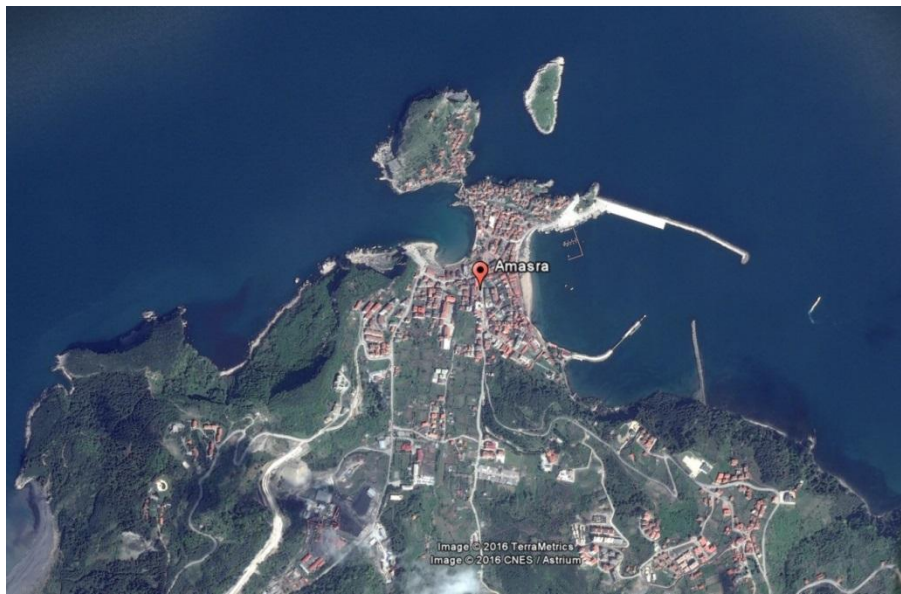


Figure 2. Location of Amasra near of Black Sea (Google Earth, 2016)

Historical Story

The name of the city in archaic times was ‘Seamos’ which means sesame. The name of the woman leader (Amastris) who governed Amasra in the 3rd century BC had been an inspiration to Ottomans and ever after the city called ‘Amasra’ (<http://www.amasra.bel.tr/amasra.html>). Amazons were the first people lived in Amasra. After Amazons, Phoenicians, Ionians, Carrions, Aka peoples, Persians following Amastris Period, Pontus People, Romans, Byzantines, Genoese and Ottomans lived in Amasra (Sakaoğlu, 1999). As a 3000 years old settlement, with its rich contents having architectural elements of Romans, Byzantin, Genoese and Ottoman period, Amasra is one of the unique settlements in



Turkey, and also in the world. Although there are lots of tangible cultural heritages in regard to these periods, due to the fortifications of Genoese period, Amasra has been added to the UNESCO list, as a candidate, in the context of “the Genoese settlements with fortifications” (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Current Fortification Walls (Güngör, 2014)



Figure 4. Some Genoese Emblems on the Fortification Walls



Figure 5. Some Genoese Emblems on the Fortification Walls



Genoese emblems on the fortification walls are tangible evidences of Genoese period in Amasra (Figure 4, 5). On these emblems, there are blazons of popular Genoese Doc families like Adorno, Fregoso, Poggio etc. (Sakaoğlu, 1999).

Sustainability Strategies on Amasra

Being a candidate for UNESCO list, it gains more significance that all strategies, planning and design decisions should be determined in accordance with the UNESCO indicators, so that historical, cultural and natural heritage in Amasra could be protected, developed and transmitted to the future generations. From the sustainability point of view, there should be some major strategies to guide for all organizations. First of them is holistic management guiding from the planning to design and application processes.

Management Strategies

Highlights of management strategies;

- Area management
- Management planning
- Good governance and participatory management
- Collaboration of the actors shaping urban landscape

In accordance with application guide in the context of UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, areas to be added to the candidate list of UNESCO should have an area management plan. Management plan is one of the basic planning and application tools in order to provide balance between conservation and utilization-evaluation. Management plans are guiding tools to administrators and institutions for planning and management of the historical areas. With the aim of effective conservation of natural and cultural heritage of Amasra, it is essential that area management and management planning should be conducted in the frame of a participatory strategy. Participatory management plans are tools to determine policy, strategy and management programs of conservation areas with sustainability aims (Güneş, 2011). Sustainability needs multidisciplinary works and collaboration of the actors shaping urban landscape.

Management plan of an area to be protected has to include following issues;

- Vision in regard to the future of the protected area
- Main targets on protection of the area and planned development
- Basic strategies
- Actions and projects
- Application tools

The main vision is natural, cultural and historical heritage of Amasra, as a tourism city, should be protected, sustained and transmitted to the next generations. So, the main target is protection, transmitting and sustainability of natural, cultural and historical heritage of Amasra.



Planning Strategies

- An inventory of historical, cultural and natural values
- Holistic approach with ecological planning principles
- Master plan based on conservation and urban ecology
- Conservation plan for castle district
- Building bylaws for conservation areas

Inventory

At the beginning of decision making process at every scale, it is necessary that an inventory contains natural, historical and cultural values should be prepared. Although there is a huge storage of historical and cultural heritage in Amasra, there is an unavoidable challenge between planning and urban design studies regarding to settlement, due to the lack of detailed and holistic inventory. It is recommended that determination of historical heritage and current problems, and analyzing of them should be conducted so that Amasra can be added to UNESCO list as a permanent participator.

From UNESCO indicators point of view, mixed cultural and natural heritage that Amasra has is the whole of both cultural and natural heritage. Although authenticity is also characteristics of cultural and natural heritage in Amasra, it is possible to say that there is lack of integrity. This is the main issue and target to provide wholeness and intactness of the natural and/or cultural heritage and its attributes, as one of the UNESCO indicators (UNESCO, 2015).

Ecological and conservation planning

Ecology and conservation should be major approaches and principles to provide sustainability of the places having historical and cultural traces from the past. Both principles make connection with all parts to the whole. Planning issues are not only technical but also political and public administrative issues. Urban management policies on Amasra, like all historical settlements, should be determined on the bases of good governance. Ecological and conservation approaches and principles will guide to planners, designers, architects, administrators, and whoever works and makes decisions on the future of Amasra. From holistic approach, urban ecology is therefore necessary to be adopted firstly at upper scale. Focusing to city center and historical center in the settled area, conservation areas to be planned must be determined.

Priority actions include followings;

- Conservation planning for determined areas, and determination of the conservation challenges from upper scale to subscale.
- In planning process, taking into account outstanding universal value, integrity and authenticity indicators which are main concepts and indicators for UNESCO conventions
- Consideration of different historical period (Rome, byzantine, Genoese, Ottoman period) guiding spatial formation of Amasra



- Determination of historical landscape characteristics
- Transformation of third archaeological site area to first archaeological site area and beginning to the digs
- Consideration of ecological planning and human focused urban design principle for the whole city of Amasra
- Planning of bikeways on the coastland

Organization of action process with two phrases;

- Genoese castle and fortification district (in the short time)
- Amastris antique city (in the long time)

In this action process context, firstly Genoese castle should be revealed. This district can be reconciled with the history of the city by means of minor interventions. Frescos in Fatih Mosque which was church before Ottoman period can be revealed in a short time.

Amasra, as a maritime city, has some special characteristics which should be protected, kept the values alive, and should be transmitted to the next generations. This issue should be considered in planning process. Lighthouse and port remains can be revealed by digs in antique seaport region. Antique theatre and columned road are the other antique districts to be revealed. Surrounding of Amastris Stream is another needy area to be considered.

Design Strategies

There are two major dimensions to be considered in order to bridge between planning and design. Urban design and architectural design

Urban design strategies

To create livable and sustainable settlements, environmental and cultural values have to be protected. Change and transformation are needed so that integration and sustainability can be enabled.

Following highlights guide to desirable change;

- Protection and sustainability of historical and cultural identity and natural values
- Ecological urban design
- Spatial organization of the urban fabric
- Reconstruction of streets, avenues and squares as public living places
- Creation of landmarks in public spaces
- Adding culture and art dimension to the uses of public spaces
- Ergonomic design of spaces and ergonomic urban elements for pedestrians
- Visual quality in urban spaces
- Green spaces and vegetation design suitable for urban ecology



- Urban design and landscape design guides

With the guiding of highlights above, fortification district can be evolved by urban design projects which aim to urban conservation. Visual quality can be increased by landscape design studies.

Architectural design strategies



Figure 6. Architectural Characteristics of the Buildings

Current architectural styles give idea about the regional and local characteristics of traditional architecture (Figure 6). In order to enable new buildings to be built harmonic with traditional architectural styles, typologies have to be determined. Analyzing traditional facades and proportions of the windows, proposals can be evolved so that built environment includes cultural identity.

Following highlights guide to design studies;

- Architectural style
- Typologies
- Proposal facades and silhouettes
- Restoration and restitution projects
- Design guides



- Details

An urban Design Project for Sustainability of Amasra

Kaleiçi Street having cultural and historical symbols from the past is of importance from both urban design and landscape design point of view (Figure 7). There are some houses on this street demonstrating traditional architecture in the region. Genoese castle, Fatih Mosque, small chapel, fortification walls are on this district. Therefore, this street and surroundings were selected for urban design study in order to present some design proposals for sustainability of cultural and historical heritage in this district of Amasra.

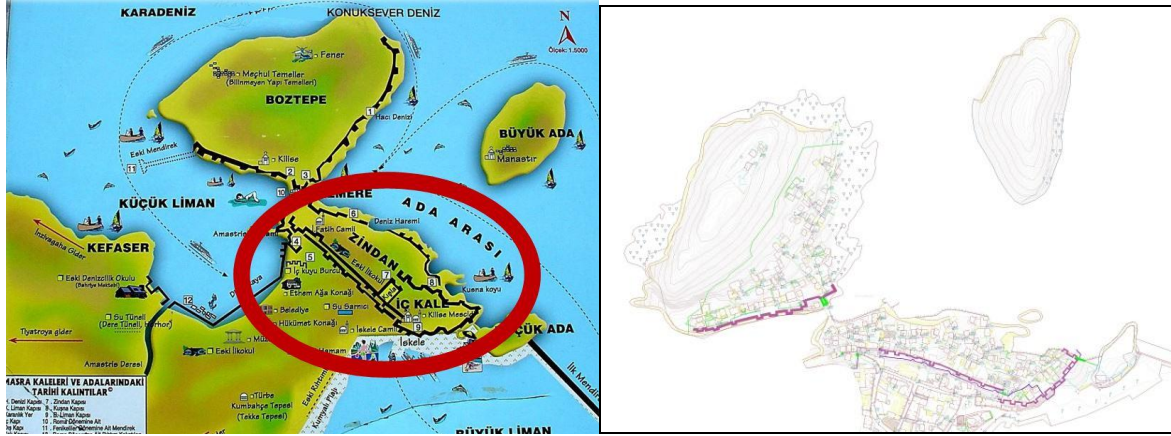


Figure 7. Kaleiçi Street in Fortifications District



Figure 8. Image Analysis of Fortification District

Image analysis is of importance for urban design studies to change the urban environment. Current elements forming the perception of public spaces were determined. Urban elements defining the relation between public and private spaces were investigated. Besides house gardens to be designed with vegetation elements, minor green spaces out of private spaces were proposed for public uses.

The little square in front of Fatih Mosque was proposed as an arranged pedestrian area with ergonomic urban elements.

Determining actual facades of all buildings on Kaleiçi Street, Nöbethane Street and Uçpalamar Street, decisions were made in regard to what can be new facades in accordance with the characteristics of historical and cultural heritage. Proposal facades were developed, in addition, a lot of details of windows, doors, colors and materials of facades, garden walls, lightning elements and design styles of them were considered (Figure 9-13).

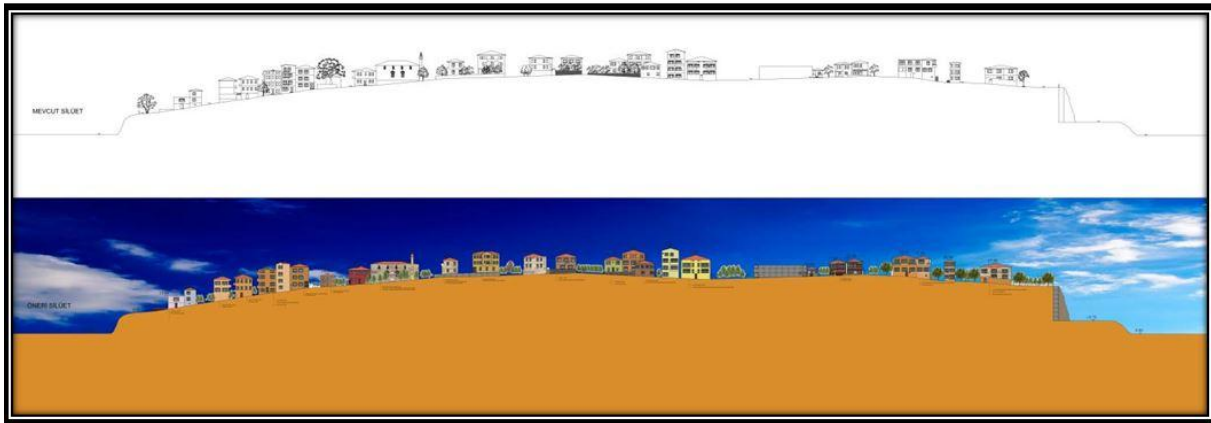


Figure 9. Actual and Proposal Northern Silhouettes of Kaleiçi Street

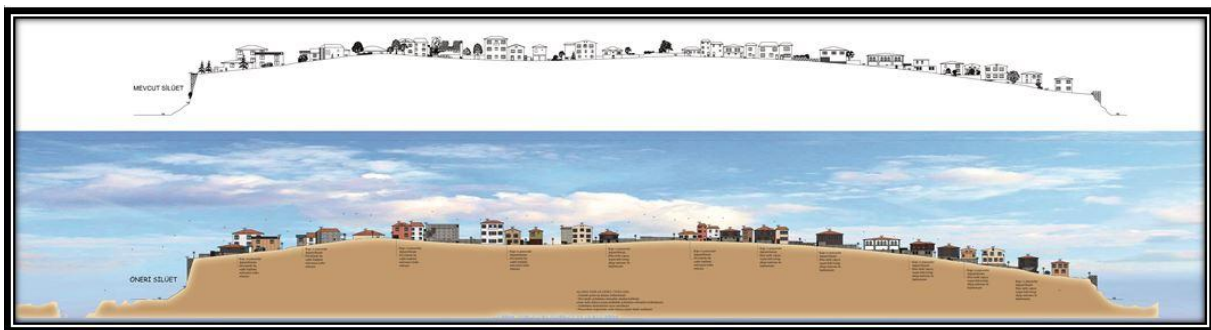


Figure 10. Actual and Proposal Southern Silhouettes of Kaleiçi Street



Figure 11. Actual and Proposal Eastern Silhouettes of Nöbethane Street

Traditional texture and cultural identity are main factors to determine spatial rules in urban design studies. As shown in silhouettes, from the building materials, colors, proportions of the windows to balcony parapets and garden walls, a lot of spatial details were proposed for every building on Kaleiçi, Nöbethane and Uçpalamar Streets.

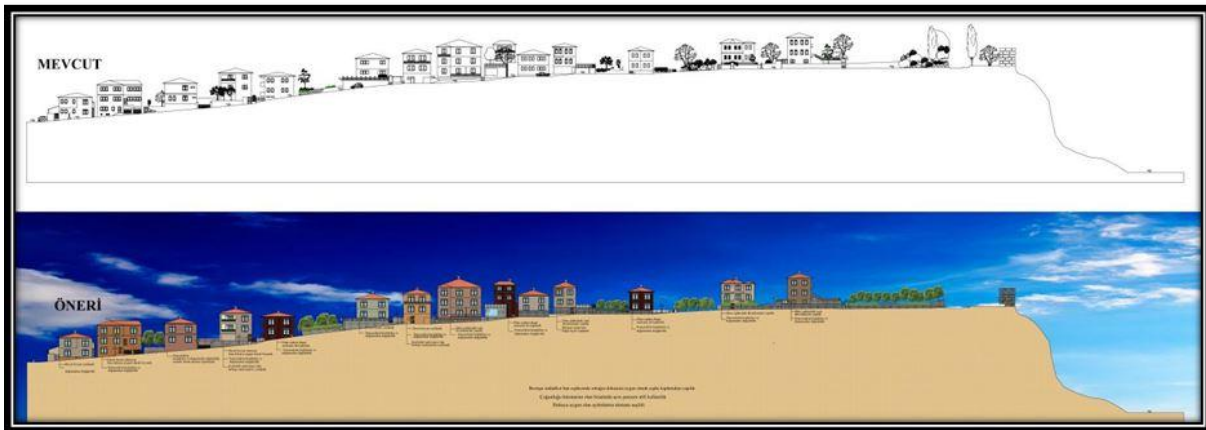


Figure 12. Actual and Proposal Western Silhouettes of Nöbethane Street

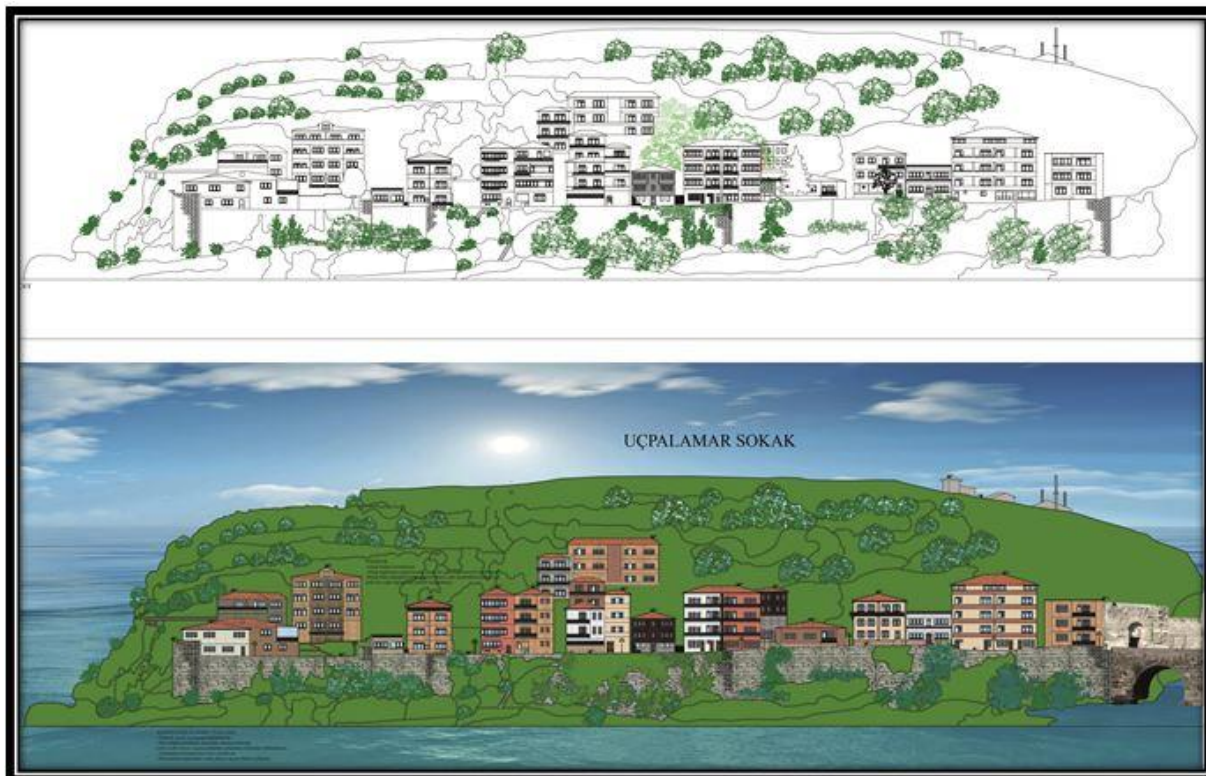


Figure 13. Actual and proposal silhouettes of Uçpalamar Street



Conclusions

As a framework presented in this paper, from planning to design and application process, there are a lot of actions and studies under the topic of sustainability, which includes management system, basic strategies and applications tools. As well as emphasized in “UNESCO convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage”, taking into account that parts of the cultural, historical and natural heritage in Amasra are of outstanding interest and therefore these values need to be preserved as part of the world heritage of mankind as a whole.

When it comes to shortly emphasize, management plans which are application tools of management systems should include;

- Planning
- Urban design and landscape design projects
- Architectural projects and restoration projects
- Design guides
- Building bylaws

In the context of management system to guide to the future of Amasra, in addition to ecological master plans, conservation plans, urban design and landscape design projects and design guides, preparation of building bylaws to guide to application process is also compulsory. The aim of conservation and sustainability of cultural, historical and natural heritage can be realized only if holistic management system with all plans and application tools are adopted by all actors of urban policy.

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Web Resources

<http://www.amasra.bel.tr/amasra.html>