

# Efficiency of Planning and Urban Guidelines of Urban Spaces and Public Squares: Study of Mutanabbi Square in Kut City

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## Article Info

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## Abstract:

The urban spaces reflect the general image of any city and an important component of any urban fabric, and it is one of the most important elements that reflect the relationship between man and the environment in which he lives. Many urban spaces lack planning and urban indicators in their design, which is the safety factor and accessibility. Al-Mutanabbi Square in Al-Kut is one of the most important and largest urban spaces. It was planned as a means of transportation as a public square and a main intersection in the city. The main roads leading to Baghdad, Nasiriya and Amara governorates, Which passes by most of the population in their daily mobility, and the result of the absence of planning and urban indicators, which led to poor efficiency of its traffic because of the interference of pedestrian traffic with the movement of vehicles as well as the loss of standards approved for use For entertainment. The research aims to study and analyze the design of the square to assess the current reality and develop the necessary proposals for the integration between being a means of transportation on the one hand and recreational means on the other.

**Keywords:** urban spaces, planning and urban indicators, urban guidelines

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## 1-General Research Framework

### 1-1 Introduction

The space is important in the process of design as a principle and a starting point, and a generator of relations between other design elements, and that the urban design starts out through it. Urban design of urban space is the link between architectural design and urban planning, and urban design must achieve three main objectives: relevance, durability, beauty in a timely manner and appropriate costs, so that the output design capable of meeting the needs of people and their wishes. The most important influence on extrapolation is the urban design elements of paths, areas, points of convergence or nodes, markers and boundaries. There are many orientations for the design of open spaces, and their design principles, which include axes, measures, unity and coherence, proportionality, sovereignty and control, simplicity,

character and appearance, repetition and diversification, sequence and amplitude, colors, contrast and harmony. The human scale is an important aspect of architectural and urban design, that is, man is the standard to be used in the built environment. The relationship of the space to man comes through the way he perceives it, as well as through the needs that the space fulfills to man. It is not limited to areas that are functionally required but must also satisfy the psychological state to perform the activity and achieve the appropriate personal space for performance

### 1-2 Problem Search.

The lack of interest in the planning and urban guidelines in the design of the urban space represented by the Mutanabbi Square in Kut, which is one of the largest squares in the city center, as it is a means of transportation on the one hand and a

recreational means on the other, which led to the failure to meet efficiently to the functional requirements that Plans for it.

### 1-3 Research Hypothesis

The lack of consideration of the planning and urban guidelines in the design of urban spaces leads to a defect in their performance

### 1-4 Research Objective

Studying the extent to which planning and urban guidelines have been achieved in the design of Al Mutanabbi Square in Al Kut as one of the largest and most important urban spaces in it, and developing a number of proposals to improve its performance.

### 1-5 Research Importance

The urban spaces in the cities are the respite of their inhabitants, as they are resorted to despite the lack of many of the basic design elements, as well as the number of them is a means of transportation on the one hand and recreational means on the other.

### 1-6 Research Methodology

The research was based on descriptive analysis of the design of the urban space and the extent to which the planning and urban guidelines was realized in its architectural design

## 2-The space ... and the Urban Space

Space is a three-dimensional sphere in which things and events occur, and have a position and direction in this space in order to perform a particular purpose or situation. While the urban space is any space between the buildings in the city and includes all the surrounding corridors and public squares and squares and water bodies and playgrounds and gardens and private and public parking and roads [1]. A space can also be defined as one of the elements that affect and are influenced by the social and economical contents of urban communities,

which qualifies it to represent social value and economic resource as an active dynamic element in cities and the embodiment of the types of interactions of interaction between the environment and man. [2].

### 2-1 The importance of urban spaces:

The importance of the urban space is as follows[3]:

1. They help in the development and organization of people's relationship with the space and the surrounding so that they affect each other.
2. They provide comfort to people and leisure users, meet their needs and connect them to their communities through design.
3. The physical environment available in the space itself affects the behavior of people because human behavior is circumstantial and is an integral part of the social, cultural and sensory content.
4. Linking the space with society, where it is difficult to have a space without social content and vice versa, as well as the community to develop and form spaces in various ways and methods.

### 2-2 Classification of urban spaces:

Urban spaces are classified into two main sections:

#### First: Natural spaces:

They are the spaces formed by natural factors and elements without human intervention, such as mountains, rivers and valleys. They help in the formation of natural identity. There is a difference between one city and another through its topography, which gives it to the city itself. For example, a strip is located between two mountains, while other cities are central to its collection around a focus resulting from the natural terrain it formed, as well as another may be divided by river or sea to determine its dependents.

## Second: Urban spaces:

Are man-made spaces such as artificial parks, squares and lakes, in order to meet his social and psychological needs, and to add the joy and beauty of the city, the man-made spaces are divided into the following sections:

1. Public spaces: They are the spaces that serve man in public areas, including
  - Tracks: The spaces through which people can find out about the shops and buildings which are sidewalks, streets and places of waiting.
  - Public parks and green areas: the green and extended spaces, areas of rest and recreation, and in some of them are allocated part of them for children.
  - Playgrounds: are areas prepared for the practice of sport in all its forms and types.
  - Open spaces: They are spacious, extensive spaces for short summer excursions such as waterfalls and forests.
2. General public spaces: Physical spaces built by human beings such as museums, libraries, transport services and train stations.
3. Semi-public interior and exterior spaces: public spaces where people engage in various activities such as restaurants and shopping centers.

## 2-3 Conditions for the success of the urban space:

Five conditions have to be considered for successful urban environment [4]:

1. Vital: it is the compatibility between the nature of the place with the needs and functions of members of the community.
2. Sense: sense of space and space and connect them with time to ensure its organization
3. Relevance: it is the appropriateness of the place, its form and its capacity with the actions of users.

4. Access :it is the access to all that is needed and available in the space services and information and others.
5. Control: it is the ability to access the place and its activities by controlling the movement of people within the space.

## 2-4 Humanitarian activities in the urban space

The human activities of urban or urban spaces give their personality, character, characteristics and characteristics, and human activities in urban spaces can be divided into:

1. The activities of the movement: The movement of vehicles and the movement of pedestrians in all its forms, there are factors that urge movement and other movement, as the factors that encourage movement[5], is clearly the goal to access and accessibility, as well as attraction and suspense, the factors that prevent the movement of gravity In access
2. Stability activities: They are the human sock in the space, which is the activities of rest and sit and social interviews and talk and gather around gardens and fountains, so must be empty elements attractive to attract the attention of people[6], and divide the activities of stability to the activities of parking and sitting activities

## 3-Design foundations for open areas:

Although different approaches and approaches to design visions of open areas differ from one location to another due to many variables, there are also elements that represent the foundations of open area design[7]:

1. The axes: The open area must be designed by the nature of the entrances and their gradations from main to secondary, and each axis should have a beginning and an end
2. Scale: The scale of elements must be determined in proportion to spatial space and

- reflect the nature of activity and behavioral patterns of users of the area
3. Unity and coherence: Site coordination should reflect unity and coherence through the intended repetition of formatting elements.
  4. Proportionality: All parts and components of the open space should be balanced and balanced, taking into account the size, types and characteristics of the plants and their afforestation in order to conform to the nature and design of the origin.
  5. Sovereignty and control: Some elements and components of coordination take into account the design of open spaces employ placement of the site in order to maximize the sovereignty of the establishment or statement of unique value on the site.
  6. Simplicity: Selection of a limited number of types and types of elements of the coordination of the site Avoid congestion of the open space with trees and shrubs or buildings and facilities to facilitate the operations of service and maintenance.
  7. Character and appearance: Characteristic of the shape of the space in general, and each space features that are formed by the facilities that highlight his independent personality.

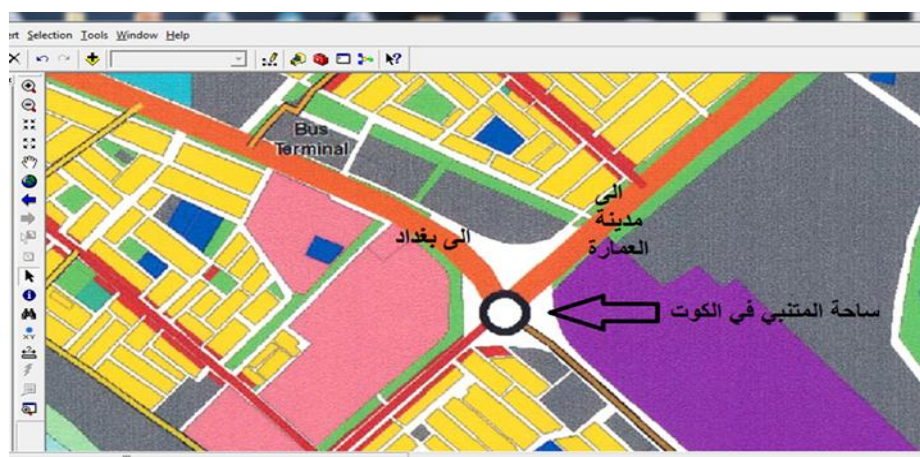
8. Repetition and Diversification: It is useful to follow the repetition of some elements and components of the urban space, so that the sequence is achieved without interruption to connect its parts.
9. Sequence and amplitude: Sequence means the arrangement of the elements of the coordination of the site to be seen in a visual sequence in order to achieve aesthetic format in one system.
10. Colors and their degree of compatibility: When designing urban blanks, careful study of plant colors, types and surfaces of different design elements should be carried out to suit each other.

#### 4-Case Study (Al Mutanabbi Square in Kut City)

##### 4-1 Stages of development of Al Mutanabbi Square in Kut City

Al Mutanabbi Square is a major road junction in Kut City, where the main roads leading to and from Baghdad governorate are separated from the north of the city and the governorate of Maysan and from there to the province of Basra from the south-east and the province of Dhi Qar and from there to Basra also from the southwest Being the main gateway to the city. As shown in Figure (1-1.)

Figure (1-1) the location of the Mutanabbi Square in relation to the master plan of Kut City



Reference: Researcher based on GIS program

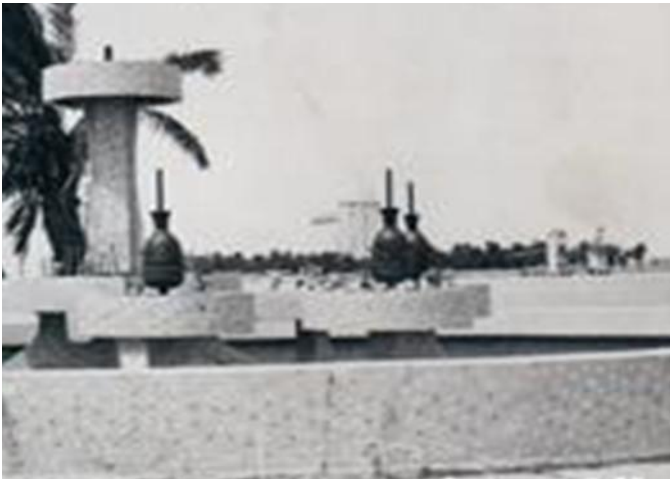
The purpose of the construction was to set up the transport and communication function as a main



junction, in which the movement was divided in different directions. In terms of design, it was surrounded by a side ramp, a one meter walkway and a fencing fence surrounded by the green grass. .

In the late 1980s, a concrete monument was erected in the form of a fortress in the middle of the square, and a smaller number were located on the perimeter of the square. These monuments were connected by 4 m. Corridors, which were covered with concrete, and were later paved with colored concrete tiles. The central monument towards the monument placed on the edges of the square radially divided the scene into parts planted with green grass and a few palm trees, Fig. (1 - 2)

Figure (1-2) The concrete monument in the middle of the square[10]



Reference

<http://www.alkutnet.com/vb/showthread.php/17718>

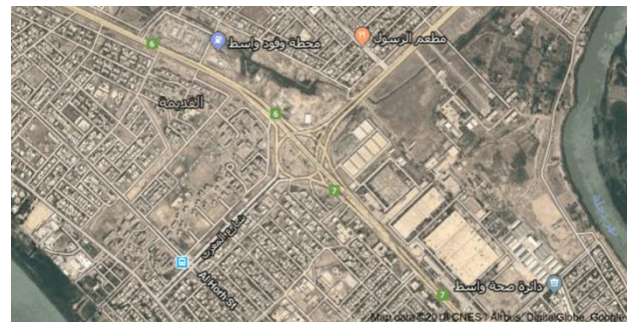
In the late nineties the monument was moved from the square of the worker from the center of Kut City to the center of Al Mutanabbi Square, where was erected at the top of the concrete section of the central fortress in the square, this monument was composed of two parts, the first part of the symbol of the missile that fell on of Kut City In 5/2/1991 , the second part of the monument consists of the ground base that was surrounded by the names of the martyrs of the bombing .The local administration in the province held a central celebration annually to remember the incident and in this celebration the

rehabilitation of the scene painted concrete parts of the monument with pigments as well as the cultivation of a number of roses and ornamental trees. After 2003, the municipality planted the clock palm trees to the entire perimeter of the square to give the aesthetic green.

#### 4-2 Projects to develop the Square to perform the traffic function

In the last quarter of 2008, the Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works started the construction of the concrete bridge, which consists of two bridges with two levels. The first bridge covers the square with two lanes, width of 8 meters for each lane between the two sides of Baghdad and Kut 650 meters long with approaches and at an altitude of 7 meters from the surface of the earth. The second bridge connects the area leading to Maysan province (south-east) in Kut city and 820 meters in length with the approaches of one lane with a width of 8 meters and a height of 15 meters from the surface of the earth. The work of this project led to the removal of the concrete parts (the central monument in the center of the square) and the other monuments that were on the perimeter because of its conflict with the location of the pillars of bridges, as well as the removal of palm trees that were on the perimeter of the square, has been completed work in the project after 3 years and opening in the first quarter of 2012. As shown in Figure (1-3).

Figure (1-3) Aerial photograph of Mutanabbi Square in Kut[9]



Reference : Directorate of Urban Planning in Wasit[9]

### 3-4 Develop the square to give entertainment to it

After the completion of the bridge construction project, the local administration in Kut has started to develop Al Mutanabbi Square to create its entertainment. Where the implementation of the electric fountain bright color laser within the square area of 4735 square meters, which required the establishment of an artificial lake in depth suitable for this purpose and designed in a modern and interspersed the square corridors as well as the placement of shaded seating terraces in addition to a room to manage and operate the fountain and the music associated with it surrounded the square with a new iron fence according to a design designed for this purpose. The development of Al Mutanabbi Square is part of the development of Mohammed Al Qasim Street leading to it. The fountain was completed and opened in the square in 2014. The fountain contains a water screen with dimensions (6 \* 12) m and (10) high-quality lamps and reaches the water up to a height of 16 meters in different movements, as shown in Figure (1-4).



Reference : Governorate of Wasit[8]

Figure (1-4) Mutanabbi Square[8]

After 2013, the local administration in Kut City started the construction of a monument to the Family martyr in Al Mutanabbi Square in Kut in the eastern side of the bridge, which was inaugurated on the day of the martyr Faily 4/4/2016, fig (1-5).

Figure (1-5) Monument of the Martyr Faily in Mutanabbi Square[8]



Reference : Governorate of Wasit[8]

And as it progressed...

After the establishment of these various activities in the square it became clear that there is a trend towards the introduction of entertainment to the scene in addition to the traffic function that planned

for it. Therefore, the festival is witnessing the establishment of these activities with large celebrations interspersed with fireworks, as well as running the dancing fountain accompanying the music on various occasions throughout the year, such as New Year's Eve, holidays and national

events as well as weekends, which leads to difficulty in the movement of passers-by to and from the square being located in the intersection of major streets in the city center, fig (1-6), (1-7).

Figure (1-6) Fountain dancing at night[8]



Reference : Governorate of Wasit

figure (1-7) Night dancing fountain, another design of fountain water flow[8]



Reference : Governorate of Wasit

## 5- Descriptive analysis

Some of the urban spaces in Kut city have been poorly organized in order to serve the growing number of its visitors. This was due to its lack of design and planning for recreational purposes, but the recreational feature was added to its original traffic function, including Al Mutanabbi Square. That the distribution of urban spaces in the city of Kut, especially to achieve the entertainment attribute is concentrated in the northern part of the city center, forcing many residents of the southern half to leave

their place of residence for the purpose of spending their leisure and away from the areas of their housing, which carries them a lot of burdens and costs. Therefore, it was necessary to develop some of the perceptions and suggestions to contribute to achieve a balance in the achievement of the entertainment attribute of urban spaces taking into account the population distribution in the city . In order to improve the urban spaces in Kut City, the situation should be studied well and analyzed by building the users of these places and learn the latest science to the desire of design in this area and then apply on the ground. In order to improve the urban spaces in the city of Kut , the study of the status quo requires a good study and analysis according to the desire of the users to these places and the latest knowledge in this field and then apply on the ground. To this end, several strategies have been proposed on the major problems of traffic and the interplay of vehicular traffic often with pedestrian movement. As the organization of spaces in open spaces in the city of Kut has a significant impact in obtaining the greatest benefit from these spaces. The provision of garden furniture has a great impact on the success of any urban space if the shapes and colors were chosen carefully, and the distribution and coordination on the basis of sound engineering. One of the most important things to be studied and addressed in the design and development of urban places is the green areas and different types of trees to choose what works and cultivation according to the nature of the use of the space. Water elements have a special dynamic that should not be overlooked. It is important in the urban spaces to take into account people with special needs, and prepare space for them by providing the slopes and furniture required according to international standards. The facades of buildings overlooking the urban spaces are the container containing these spaces, so they must be carefully studied in order to play their complementary role for the success of that space

## 6- Conclusions

### 6-1 General results



1. Lack of adequate follow-up by the official institutions of urban spaces in the city, and not to discuss ways to develop and prepare them by using researchers and specialists.
2. Design incompatibility of some design elements of urban spaces with humanitarian requirements

## 6-2 Results for the case study

1. The loss of the human scale when designing Mutanabbi Square in Kut for recreational purposes and the aesthetic aspect of it, as it is difficult to achieve safe access to and from the square because of the overlap of traffic of cars and pedestrians and the sense of congestion resulting from the size of traffic and high traffic density as a result of mediation in the intersection of streets Main in the city.
2. Absence of the planning and urban dimensions & guidelines in addition to the entertainment attribute, which led to poor efficiency of its traffic function because of the interference of pedestrian traffic with the movement of vehicles as well as the loss of standards adopted for recreational uses.
3. Loss of human coexistence in the square due to lack of seating.
4. Lack of awareness among the users and pioneers of the square in how to preserve them and not pollute them or leave their residues on the sidewalks or green areas.
5. Inadequate design of the elements and elements of the site coordination of the climatic aspects.
6. Failure to provide the necessary requirements for the use of people with special needs.

## 7- Recommendations

1. The need to conduct studies that seek to strengthen the relationship between urban design and the fields of psychology and human behavior in order to employ them in

- the design of urban spaces to integrate with its function
2. Preparation of urban programs that are compatible with the wishes of users and in line with their cultures, behavior and habits and the development of standards and considerations and design principles.
3. The concerned authorities should raise the awareness of the population and encourage them to maintain public facilities by all means and methods.
4. Re-planning and development of urban spaces through architectural competition for its importance in terms of traffic, visual and commercial, in order to come out with the best designs suitable for its planning status, taking into account the connection visually and visually with the nearby historical sites.
5. The necessity of adapting urban public spaces to the needs of people with special needs.
6. Design seats to fit the place in the place, and increase the number and study the places of distribution
7. Interest in night lighting and diversification in the shapes and colors of lighting units.
8. Take care of children's requirements by providing and maintaining their own games periodically.
9. Attention to security elements such as barriers and obstacles, especially around the spaces overlooking the streets with heavy traffic.
10. Increase the water elements because they give the dynamic spirit of the place, in addition to its aesthetic and climatic effects.
11. Increase green areas and interest in their maintenance.
12. Use solar energy in open spaces especially to provide night lighting
13. Exploitation of the reuse principle for the production of some elements of furnishing the space, in order to establish the principle and drew people's attention to it, such as the use of tree trunks as places to sit.



## 8- Proposals

Through the analysis of Mutanabbi Square as the largest public square in the center of Kut City , by the researcher, will be addressed proposals for upgrading, as follows:

1. Close some streets in front of the movement of vehicles and turn them into tracks for pedestrians on occasions and holidays. If this is not possible, it is possible to do this partially by setting certain hours for traffic.
2. The importance of establishing pedestrian barriers to ensure that pedestrians do not encroach on the vehicular route.
3. Consider the establishment of tunnels and bridges dedicated to vehicles or pedestrians in crowded places, as they contribute significantly to the regulation of traffic and ease congestion

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