

PARKLET IDEAS MAKING SMALL STREET URBAN SPACES WITH BIG IMPACTS

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 21 December 2019
Received in revised form 20 August 2020
Accepted 24 August 2020
Available online 15 September 2020

Keywords:

Urban street design;
Design considerations;
Community life; Jazan City; Metered parking; Parklet design; Cityscape; Streetscape.

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses parklets, an idea of simple solutions that can solve some social issues and respond to environmental conditions, at the same time. The study approaches both theoretical and case study to represent an innovative approach to street design that redistributes street spaces more safe and comfortable for all users and, covers elements that can help to create friendly places to enhance community life. We can define parklets as, small removable, physical intervention platforms made available to the public for recreational use that takes the place of two or more on-street parking spaces, widening the sidewalk. Parklets symbolize the desire to create a more enjoyable, communal, healthy, and vibrant public realm. Transforming excess street space into a cost-effective, small park that can have an enormous impact. Designing a successful parklet requires a variety of considerations. The study shows that small spaces can make a massive difference on the street by creating new public spaces and pedestrian areas that improve the quality of life. After reviewing and analyzing many models of parklets in the world, the paper reaches some standards of parklets design, which can correspond to the streets of downtown Jazan City as a case study that can be applied in all cities of the Saudi Kingdom and the world.

Disciplinary: Urban and City Design, Landscape Ecology and Environmental Aesthetic Management.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Streets and sidewalks occupied about twenty-five percent of the city's land area, and are an integral part of our daily experience. The close connection between the quality of urban city spaces, people's use of these spaces, and the degree of concern for the human dimension is a prevalent rule that can show at all levels. Transit-friendly streets provide high-quality pedestrian communication services about high-capacity public transport. Low noise and high activity of pedestrians are the key

dominants (Prelovskaya & Levashev, 2016).

The parklet serves as the front porch of the community and provides the amenities to stop, eat, sit, talk, play, read, and enjoy their street life (City of Richmond, 2016). Because public parklets are built on the public road, they are open to the public regardless of who built them, this dynamic is not new, nor is it unique in the West. The study comprises three parts, the first section has been prepared to summarize the background information of Parklets and to guide the development of the streetscape, and urban design guidelines through vision and guiding principles. In the second section of the paper, concerned on the streets of downtown Jazan City, as a case study, in the final segment, we evaluate inherent interventions for urban Parklets, such as adaptive reuse of infrastructure, mindful of lessons from the American experience.

2 PARKLET BACKGROUND

The first parklet built-in 2005 by converting a single metered parking space into a temporary public park in downtown San Francisco. Rebar, a San Francisco art and design studio created parklets to provide buffer areas between traffic lanes and the sidewalk, to enhance the pedestrian environment which can help make the people feel more safe and comfortable (San Francisco Parklet Program, 2020). This parklet contains some turf, potted trees, and one bench that occupied a single parking space for two hours. That urban intervention spread to cities around the world.

San Francisco is a pioneer in making parklets into a constant part of the cityscape catching on as a way to improve the human experience with a small cost to the city. This urban intervention has since spread to cities around the world. By making the commercial areas in existing places more livable and attractive, streetscape urban projects can initiate regeneration to dramatically change the opportunities for the infrastructure that supports the eco-gentrification (The City of Charlotte, 2017). Parklets create the diversity and creativity of the people and organizations that sponsor and design them. They reflect the people's commitment to be a part of a change to strengthen our communities.

3 CASE STUDY: THE SUNSET TRIANGLE PLAZA, LOS ANGELES

The Streets for People pilot initiative resulted in arguably the first large-scale and longer-term parklet in Los Angeles. This parklet called the Sunset Triangle Plaza, opened in March 2012, its origins occurred years earlier when community activists within the group Living Streets in Los Angeles met to discuss pilot project interventions that would improve the streets. The inspiration came from the conversion of New York City's Times Square into a pedestrian plaza. First alternative: "Garden Space Parklet": Convert redundant travel lane, a closing street with planters, as used at the Sunset Triangle Plaza, installed with raised beds for community gardening. The second alternative is "Active Recreation Parklet": Convert unnecessary travel lane, a closing street with planters, as used at the Sunset Triangle Plaza, and allow pedestrians and cyclists to travel safely through the area without vehicular traffic.

4 METHODOLOGY

The main question of the paper is how street urban spaces can invite city life? And how the renovation of a small single space can draw people to a new pattern of use? To answer these questions, a field study was conducted in January 2019, and the research shows that the design meets

the standards of parklet design, which improves placemaking to the streets of downtown Jazan City of the Saudi Kingdom, located in the south region as a case study.

5 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Parklets symbolize the desire to create a healthy, enjoyable, and vibrant public realm. Transforming excess street space into a cost-effective, small park can have a significant impact. Identifying the ideal location and community partner must first be selected according to location criteria (San Francisco Parklet Program, 2015; National Endowment for the Arts, 2008). Designing a successful Parklet requires a variety of considerations, especially for wheelchair users:

- Parklets must be located on streets with parking lanes, and cannot be located in a travel lane.
- Parklets should take two or three on-street parking spots.
- The parking lane must be more extensive than the parklet zone
- The parklet zone should not be longer than the frontage of the applicant's property line.
- The sidewalk-facing side of the parklet should have access to pedestrians.
- Parklets may have wheel stops installed near the curb.
- Parklets must be safe, accessible to disabled users.
- Parklets should have visible elements to pass vehicles without obstructing views.
- Parklets must be visible with reflective elements in their design at night and must include soft hit edges.
- Regardless of who sponsors the parklet, it must be public spaces

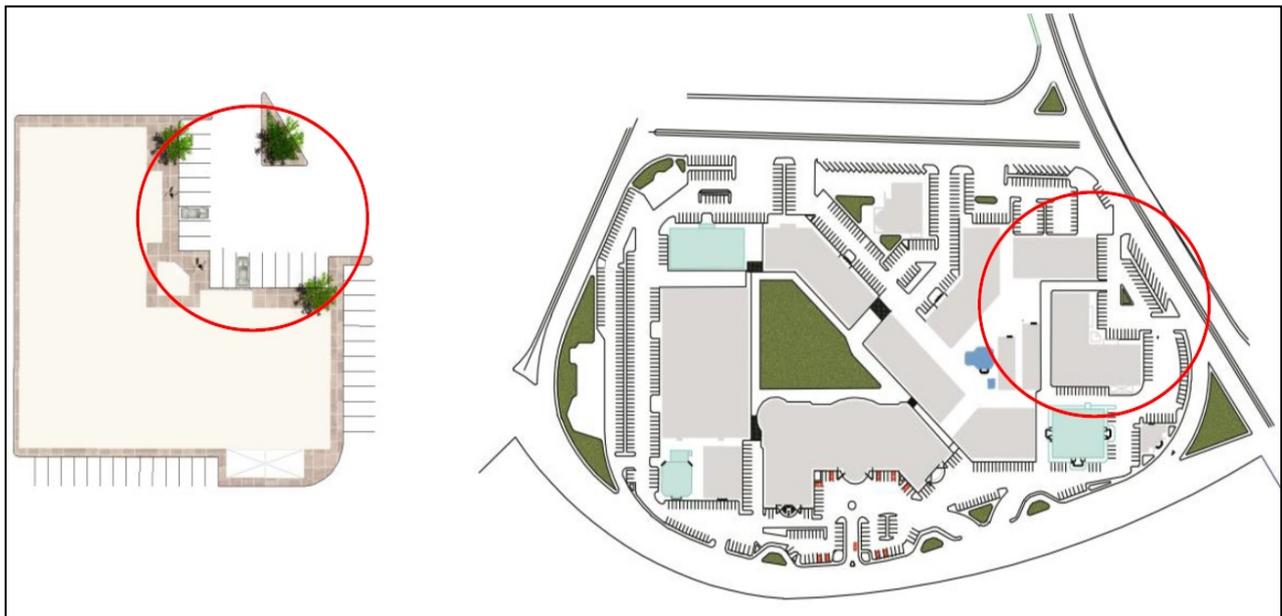


Figure 1: A site plan of the selected area (left), the existing buildings, street, and sidewalk (right).

6 PARKLET DESIGN IN JAZAN CITY CENTRE

This study summarizes the information for the study area and guide the development of the streetscape through vision and guiding principles. The study is to build on the city center's improvements and strengths upon its weaknesses by further celebrating culture, promote a connected design, and to ensure stimulate an active streetscape, and high quality, aesthetically pleasing

environment. Jazan is one of the thirteen administrative regions of Saudi Arabia, located in the farthest southwest of Saudi Arabia. Jazan region situated on the furthestmost southwest on Saudi Arabia, denominated by longitudes 42°43' E and latitudes 16°17' N. The weather of Jazan region is hot in the summer and wet in the winter. The average temperature is 25-23 Celsius throughout the year. Jazan City is currently witnessing tremendous economic, cultural, educational, and healthcare development. The concentration of commercial activities, shopping malls, vehicles, and pedestrian movements can pose a threat to the possibility of a healthy environment and streetscape.

How can we develop Jazan City Centre to be a place for people, a place to walk, shop, spend time as an individual or as a family? By inviting pedestrian area that is comfortable for people of all ages, economic classes, circumstances, and physical abilities. Its atmosphere encourages extended visits and returns visits, with a streetscape that sends the message that "people's comfort and positive experiences are a top priority. The study area (Figures 1 & 2) focused upon a portion of Prince Mohamed bin Nasser Street to the south/east being comprised of the commercial zone and bounded by Street No. 6 to the north-east. The character area plan identifies a distinct commercial area that is recognizable and different from neighboring places. The character area results in differences in the type and style of building, density, and land-use patterns.



Figure 2: The study area in Jazan City Centre.

Designing parklets to bring awareness to nature and healthy living while making it comfortable and relaxing to sit (Welldorado, 2018). To ensure that design directions and guidelines align with the vision statement a series of overarching principles were created and are as follows:

- Promote the Economic vitality of the area,
- Embrace culture and heritage,
- Foster a dynamic and livable city center,
- Inspire high- quality design, and
- Encourage environmental sustainability.



Figure 3: The selected parklet site in Jazan City.

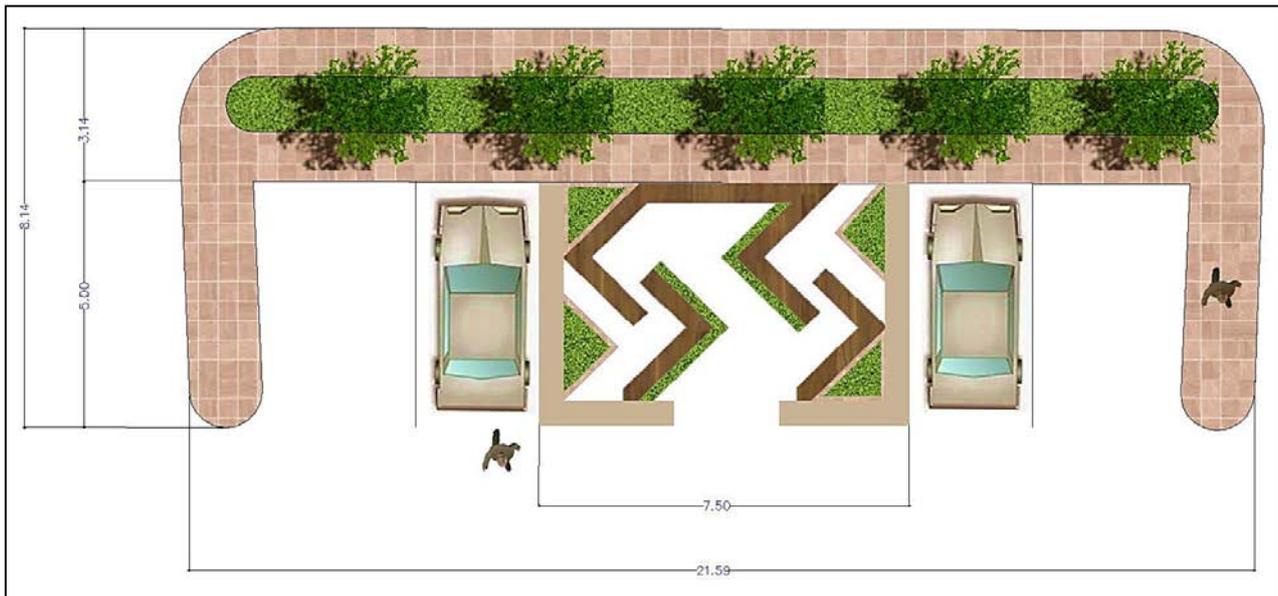


Figure 4: A proposal of a small parklet design on the pavement to extend the sidewalk space.

These principles evolved through inventory and analysis of the site engagement and review of previous studies, and current trends in streetscape design. The vision and guiding principles will guide all future design decisions, strategies, and recommendations. Parklets are typically created by building a platform on the pavement to extend the sidewalk space and retrofitting it with benches, planters, tables and chairs, umbrellas, and bike racks. Planting in the street furniture articulates and strengthens the landscape, providing a visual the transition from objects to objects and place to place (Adedokun & Mniterp, 2013). These small spaces (Figure 3 & 4) can make an extent difference with pedestrian areas and open spaces that provide the quality of life in the central part of Jazan City and commercial corridors. This parklet expresses the character of the area, celebrating the sense of place.

7 CONCLUSION

Parklets symbolize the desire to create a more enjoyable, healthy, communal, and vibrant public realm. Transforming streetscape into a cost-effective, small park can have a significant impact. Parklets are a low-cost, easily implementable approach to achieving a better balance for all users of the street. Parklet sponsors seeking to install a parklet are responsible for designing, funding, and constructing them. They also have liability for the parklet and ensure the parklet is well-maintained. The parklet must be designed for safety, comfort, and to provide an enjoyable public space to socialize, rest, or exercise and should be selected based on cost, aesthetic appearance, and durability considerations. By making the commercial areas in existing cities more attractive and livable, urban humanization projects can initiate regeneration to dramatically change the opportunities for the infrastructure that supports the quality of life. Parklets reflect the creativity and diversity of the people and organizations. They also reflect the residents' commitment to encouraging quality of life which strengthens all communities. There is no right solution that would produce a suitable streetscape every time, each proposal must be contextually responsive and specific. Finally, the sustainable, suitable streetscape is not just about creating green areas but are about implementing a design that can benefit both humans and ecosystems. Parklets could base on the following characteristics (Loukaitou-Sideris et al., 2012): **site:** Parklets could occupy former parking spaces, street medians,

traffic triangles, redesign travel lanes, and parking spaces or excess asphalt zone at angled intersections, **land uses**: commercial or residential, **space**: from a two to three of parking of spaces, to spaces along the block length, to entire parts of a block, **shape**: regular or irregular, **time**: from a few hours to a part of the year, **activity**: commercial or recreation.

8 AVAILABILITY OF DATA AND MATERIAL

Data can be made available by contacting the corresponding author.

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Note: The original of this article was reviewed, accepted, and presented at the 4th International Conference-Workshop on Sustainable Architecture and Urban Design (ICWSAUD2019), a joint conference with the 4th International Conference on Engineering, Innovation, & Technology (ICEIT 2019) held in Penang, Malaysia during 24-26 June 2019.