

The Trace of Change: Traditional House

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to set light to relationship between the city and traditional house via the concept of 'change'. In this direction, the main issue of this paper to discuss the reflections of change which lived bound to time in a traditional house area as a case. It is obvious that, the effects of change which is lived as a reality in many areas could not be thought apart from intellectual, cultural, social, economic and physical context.

Cities in Turkey –especially in historical areas-, it is gave place to different construction and renovation activities; and also these activities limited via laws. It is same for the traditional house areas. Nowadays, house areas are exposed to physical aging one hand and they don't answer the spatial requirements with changing life conditions on the other hand. When the limitation of house -which is the living area of users'- rehabilitation efforts take into account, it can be said that this kind of areas have one's share of destruction of time. The trace of 'change' with this direction can be observed in structure of family, living style and some social matter; the results of change in houses can be occurred with the shape of functional and spatial forces.

Consequently, the reflections of change in this study are examined in terms of design concepts on a selected sample area as a case in Turkey; in this sense various suggestions are presented.

KEYWORDS: Change, House, Traditional House, Functionality, Aesthetic, Safety.

1 INTRODUCTION: CHANGE AND SPACE

Change exists as a phenomenon that manifests itself in all dimensions in every field. Speaking of change requires mentioning a variety of traces/impacts of different areas and directions such as cultural, social, economic, physical, and intellectual as any change in any field has also an impact on other areas in that it reflects on a variety of traces.

Architecture discipline on the other hand, exists in a field where change is faced in a variety of areas through both, its inherent dynamics and where the human is the focus. Through this aspect, architecture could be considered as the form of influencing / being influenced in which the phenomenon of change is questioned and even creates a variety of traces for reasons such as cultural, social, economic and physical.

Throughout its dominant relationship with space, architecture can exist at many levels. Such levels are important even if they do not mention the relationship between space and change. Though the change of space usually makes us think of physical aspects such as aging, obsolescence, etc. at the first stage, causes of different levels and scale could also come in question.

Over many years, spatial change has been the subject of many studies where the impact of change on spaces of any type (contemporary, traditional, civil, religious, urban, rural, etc.) was analyzed in an effort to disclose their pros and cons (Dalkılıç, 2008; Sormaykan, 2008; Perker, 2012). In this regard, Teymur (1992) suggests that every change creates a difference in time and space, and that change in an environment with man-made structures could be discussed in terms of form, space, function, ideas, concept, discourse, context and relevant social, cultural and legal dimensions.

Establishing a relationship between change, space, and spatial change on the other hand also requires dealing with the concept of "space" and "identity." Studying the issue of "space" in the context of continuity and change, Göregenli (2010: 178) suggests that the essence of "place" contains a temporal dimension, which temporal dimension also includes the possibility of change. Gür (1996: 142) suggests that creating a "space" means to create places which assume a collective meaning with their context.

Since the relationship between change and space, which is based on these statements, brings up the matters of conveying into the future and keeping alive, it is facing the threat of the identity of "space" made up by the images which follow possible changes to vanish. For this reason, it could be said that the adaptation to our present day, and continuity of the spaces which are subject to change also involve a critical side because the way of handling the identity of space might lead to the users' rejection or acceptance of the place.

Considering the context of human life, culture and behavioral patterns, houses, which are positioned at the center of the relationship between space, identity and change, bring the traditional houses to one's mind. Many countries have traditional houses in the macro and micro scale among the rich housing typology around the world. The traditional house, which improves and changes, depending on both functional and cultural properties, is emerging in a variety of types which are nurtured by the cultural structure, climate, topographic properties, human requirements and lifestyles of the respective city/region.

As a consequence, the matters of change, space, place and identity discussed in this study have been tried to be exemplified over the field of the traditional house under the main topics of 'The Search for the Trace of Change' and 'The Trace of Change.' Therefore, while the search for change was based on a theoretical framework and certain presumptions, several considerations and opinions were used for keeping track of change over the houses in the Trabzon-Ortahisar region in Turkey.

2 THE SEARCH FOR THE TRACE OF CHANGE: SAFETY, FUNCTIONALITY, AESTHETICS

The theoretical framework set up in the context of the relationship between change and space has been based on Gür's (1996) classification of "the functions which should be provided by the spaces", and Vitruvius' (1960; 1990) "Utilitas, Firmitas and Venustas" trilogy, for the field of case study discussed in the chapter 'The Trace of Change.'

According to Gür's classification, any space should be free of any problems in terms of the relations between functional convenience, safety, utility/functionality, social interaction, symbolism, formal aesthetics, education, and the functions of locations, as well as the social relation-setting aspects of the physical system. Based on this classification, a space should perform the aforesaid functions.

According to Vitruvius, utility, durability and beauty are the principal characteristics a space should offer. Despite certain changes and improvements in various areas such as the methods of design, technology, and material, this fundamental approach, which is also discussed in the "Ten Books on

Architecture” among the most recognizable books on architecture since the ancient times, still maintains its timeliness regardless of the changes of priority from time to time. (Kuloglu and Asasoglu, 2011).

Therefore, both classification types discussed above were found suitable in the study of the residential area within the framework of the relationship between change and space, and the common topics of these classifications were selected for use in the assessment. Using the terminology of both authors, the common topics can be also categorized as Safety/Utility, Utility -Functionality/Suitability and Formal Aesthetics/Beauty. Headings preferred within the study scope however have been defined as Safety, Functionality and Aesthetics. Now, the statements are available over the selected topics.

2.1 Safety

Discussing the sections of architecture, Vitruvius (1960; 1990) suggests that the opinion that any arrangements should be based on the “utility, suitability and beauty” trilogy dates back to before Christ. Durability in its current form suggests the robustness of the space. After many centuries, Maslow (1943) would suggest that safety is among the most fundamental human needs because safety ranks second in Maslow's pyramid (Maslow, 1943).

The need for safety in today's world suggests that a space must be safe no matter what. Good dwelling conditions and physical comfort are among the fundamental requirements of safety. Individuals require feeling safe against climatic conditions, and geophysical and psycho-social aspects (Gür, 1996). In a nutshell, a place should be well balanced and protected against natural disasters and undesired creatures. There should be enough space for everyone, and the place must be safe against fire and terror. Measures must be taken against any kind of accidents at structural scale, and any arrangements should be made for the handicapped. Otherwise, any areas which lack these arrangements would result in negative impact on individuals.

Safety as one of the most significant problems faced in traditional housing areas is an issue which results from the delay of optimization of the spaces (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Examples from the Traditional Houses in Tirilye-Bursa (N. Kuloglu, 2007)

2.2 Functionality

Function can be described as the “fulfillment of the respective tasks by each component of the whole”, “being fit for a particular purpose in terms of use or functionality” (Gür, 1996: 129; Hasol, 1990: 254). Functionality of a space however, is described as “making possible a social or technical activity expected in that specific space” (Gür, 1996: 132).

Discussing the relationship between design and functionality Bielefeld and Khouli (2011) suggest that taking function as a basis would be a method which is being implemented since the modern era. They define the concepts of functionality which they emphasize as meeting user requirements, spatial interior distribution and interior organization.

Each space is designed in accordance with its function. However, time changes certain things, thereby making the change of space inevitable. Any condition where the needs become impossible to meet makes the change of space indispensable. The aspect of change might need to be questioned in cases where it is difficult to adapt the space to the new condition, as the space may lack the flexibility required

for adaptation. Therefore, flexibility emerges as a highly crucial criterion when considered in the context of conveying into the future and keeping alive of traditional places.

Functionality also embodies the function of a structure. When considered in the context of traditional house, the visual impression of the user should match up with that of the house image (Figure 2)



Figure 2: Examples from the Traditional Houses in Gaziantep (N. Kuloglu, 2011)

2.3 Aesthetics

Facing aesthetic sense as a phenomenon which gains value is inevitable in the course of keeping track of change. After considering the comments of various thinkers on aesthetics in her book, "Multiple Aesthetics", Erzen (2011: 164) defined the notion of aesthetics as: "The term aesthetics explains how an individual evaluates an object he/she likes and perceives, and the meanings attributed to such object...".

When considered in terms of a specific location, aesthetic sense emerges as a concept relevant to the individuals' perception of the space and whether or not they like to be there. In other words, a space should create a sense of taste beyond meeting our needs. According to Gür (1996), admiration of a certain space may vary depending on its sensory qualities – plasticity, past experiences of the individual, the individual's status, and the relationship between context and aesthetics.

Discussing the change within the scope of the relationship between context and aesthetics gains importance when the matters of conveyance into the future and keeping alive are considered since how such change should be is a crucial question in the circles of architecture. The traditional one has an existing status, thus, the change it undergoes also to the change of its current state (Figure 3).



Figure 3: Examples from the Traditional Houses of the Trabzon/Ortamahalle District (N. Kuloglu, 2010)

3 THE TRACE OF CHANGE: TRABZON-ORTAHISAR DISTRICT

Trabzon as the province subject to the field study is a city with a historical legacy, and which is located in the Eastern Black Sea region of Turkey. Such historical legacy encompasses a variety of

religious and civil examples of architecture. Various protective laws in effect were insufficient to convey past values to our present day, eventually leading to the loss of a variety of the city's assets. The most striking example would be the Opera Building which is reported to have been demolished during the 1950's (URL 1) (Table 4).

The area subject to the study is Ortahisar which is located near the old city center. This region is a central location harboring large scale structures including the former Government Mansion, the former Penitentiary, and the old Church (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Opera Building (URL-2); Trabzon-Ortahisar, N. Kuloglu, 2012

Eighteen houses¹ which were analyzed in 1994 for the first time are shaded on the drawing (Kuloglu, 1994) (Image 1). Although damaged, the houses have not been demolished as the area is still protected to date. However, owners were unable to restore their properties due to the lack of support. No optimization of the area, which was reviewed within the scope of this study, was identified while on the contrary, the current state of the houses was observed to become worse. The changes to the traditional house site which is subject to the study are sampled through the tracing of the Safety, Functionality, and Aesthetic concepts according to the brief information supplied on the city's history.

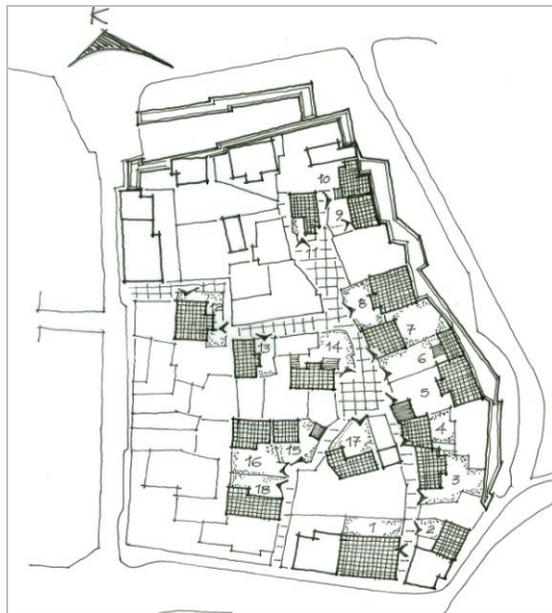


Figure 5: Trabzon-Ortahisar, Subject area

¹ All surveys and drawings of the study area are the property of Nilgün Kuloglu's archive.

3.1 Safety

As mentioned above, safety is among the most fundamental needs of house areas. However, it was observed that many houses on the study area were incapable of meeting this need. As an example, the house Nr. 7 on the area was bearing the traces of being worn out over many years, thereby posing a serious safety threat for both the inhabitants and the neighborhood (Figure 6).

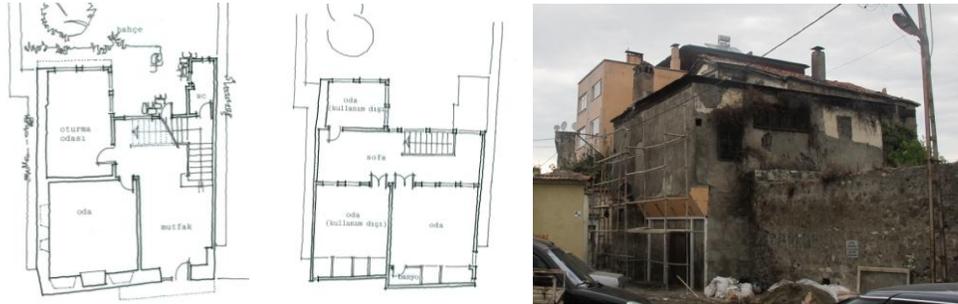


Figure 6: Plans and Layout of the House Nr. 7

A similar case is also observed in the example of the House Nr. 4. The house appears inhabitable and all structural components are posing a serious threat due to aging. Insufficient spatial usability is also the proof for a highly poor safety criterion (Figure 7).

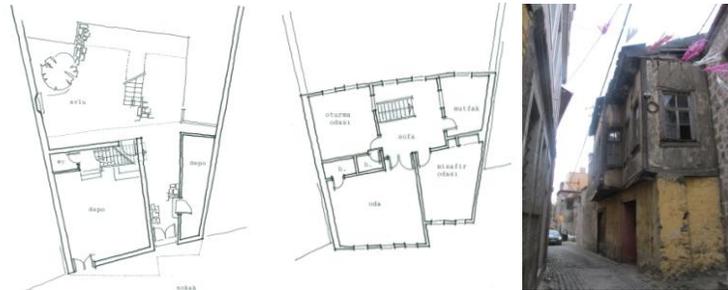


Figure 7: Plans and Layout of the House Nr. 4

3.2 Functionality

The negative impact of transformation of the houses on the quality of the space is defined in the functionality section. These changes are linked to a variety of reasons; family structure, lifestyle, and some changes in the context of social issues, which can be summarized as the cause of spatial change.

For example, the traces of change in the family structure are clearly apparent in house Nr. 2. The two story building, which was initially designed in accordance with the patriarchal family structure, underwent a conversion for divided use as a result of the transformation into core family. This condition is also evident by the supplements and divisions made to the building. Access to both stories requires the use of the base floor. The staircase is not suitable for entrance, additional kitchens and forced wet floors appear to be the most fundamental spatial deadlocks in the house (Figure 8).



Figure 8: Plans and Layout of the House Nr. 2

Another example where functionality is damaged to the highest extent is the house Nr. 9. The apartment house built in the garden of house at a later stage removed the garden and resulted in the access to one of the houses only through the apartment building's stairway. Again, transition to the core family led to the division of the house, eventually resulting in divided and supplemented spaces in both floors. The problem is particularly obvious in the kitchen, bathroom and toilet. The division makes meeting individual space requirement more difficult, which in turn, results in impaired privacy (Figure 9).

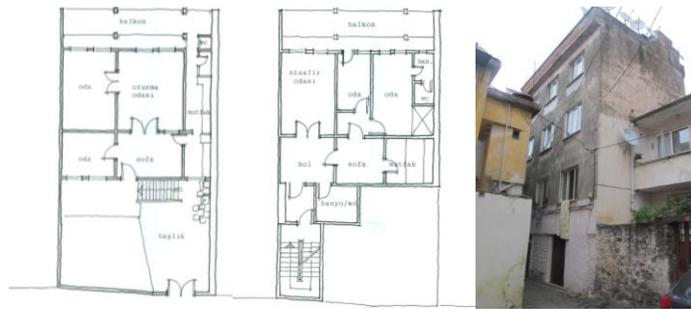


Figure 9: Plans and Layout of the House Nr. 9

3.3 Aesthetics

The concept of aesthetics cannot be separated from the context of house areas which require particular protection. Many factors including the existing pattern, changes to the existing pattern, new additions, changes in construction material, and aging assume an important role in visual perception and aesthetics.

In this sense, aging is the most noticeable problem on the study area. Some of the houses are unusable and their building surfaces are seriously damaged. In addition, supplements and interventions to the structures result in visual pollution. These supplements not only cause spatial problems as pointed out in the functionality section, but also result in negative impact on the aesthetic sense.

The houses Nr. 14 and Nr. 11 on the study area have undergone transitions which are exemplifying this case. In both examples, the houses were divided to create stairways and additional spaces. While these supplements impair the functionality of the houses, the associated problems reflect on the buildings in the form of changes and damage to the facades, thereby impairing the visual appeal (Figure 10–11).

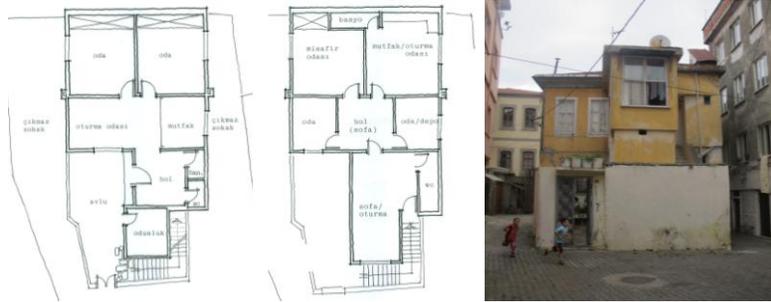


Figure 10: Plans and Layout of the House Nr. 11

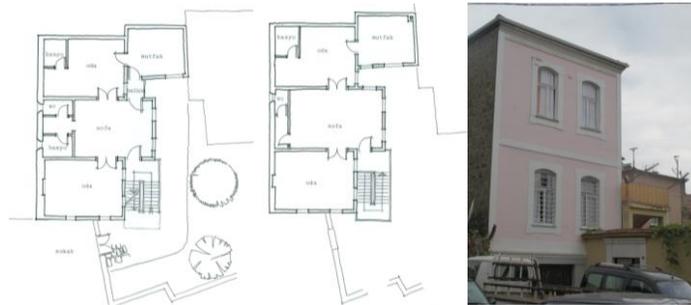


Figure 11: Plans and Layout of the House Nr. 14

4 LAST WORDS

As an attempt of a definition and assessment in terms of the relationship between change and house, this study exemplifies the change over the topics/concepts of safety, functionality and aesthetics. All changes to the selected house areas in the Trabzon - Ortahisar district were found to result in impairment.

The traces of change on the study site can be discussed in 3 main sections. These are the changes in the family structure, changes of lifestyle and changes of concept. The traces indicate an increased need for individual space, space for technological devices and different levels of activity. Moreover, the traces also reveal the emergence of unused spaces and that gender specific spaces have lost their relevance. These results indicate that the traditional house spaces are problematic in terms of "safety", "functionality", and "aesthetics" (Table 1).

Considering the entire process as a whole, many problems of the physical structure are perceived as spatial issues resulting from user interference with the structure. Interventions for the aging of the structure–environment and convenience cause the local inhabitants face difficulties in meeting the requirements of neighborhood, living in a garden house and particularly, commitment, identity, and affiliation.

The problems resulting from interventions done without seeking expert opinion can be seen as primitive solutions developed by the users themselves. However, considering that the physical-spatial problems can be solved by expert opinion, it should be noted that the physical and social continuity is required and important in terms of sustaining the traditional urban patterns / elements in Ortahisar and similar areas with a predominantly traditional pattern. Ensuring the physical sustainability is possible through the adaptation of the traditional structures and structural groups in the same and similar urban fragments to the modern day life, and inspection of the new construction processes in that region.

The small urban house fragments and their inhabitants are integrated, and face the threats of disintegration from their context and user and the loss of identity when assigned with different functions. When considered from the perspective social sustainability, the adaptation of the urban elements/fragment against such dangers would result in a pattern which requires the consideration of the economic, social

and physical needs of the population. The most realistic assumption would be that these areas should be occupied by groups of individuals with similar characteristics (Kuloglu, 1994).

Nowadays, traditional residential areas meet the spatial requirements to a lesser extent due to both, exposure to physical aging and the changing conditions of life. This research, however, reveals the types of the changes caused by user intervention in that it defines the reflections of social-cultural changes on the space. For this reason, it should be noted that instant solutions developed by users without resorting to expert opinion will result in architectural cause problems at different scales.

Table 1 The Traces of Change (Adapted from Kuloglu, 1994, p. 101)

TRACES		PAST	PRESENT	PROBLEMS
FAMILY STRUCTURE	Mutual Life	Individual Life	SAFETY	
	Patriarchal Family	Core Family		
	Housewife	Working woman		
LIFESTYLE	Traditional Behaviour	Contemporary Behaviour	FUNCTIONALITY	
	Life: inside House	Life: outside House		
	Adaptable Behaviour	Inadaptable Behaviour		
CONCEPTS	Common Space Need	Individual Space Need	AESTHETICTS	
	Privacy Elements	Changing Privacy Elements		
	Female-Male Living Separate	Female-Male Living Together		

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