Transformation and Integration Through Interpretation

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Abstract
This article focuses on the re-examination and re-interpretation of a small but noteworthy pavilion designed and built in 1937. Compromising with the client's demands by creating a common ground and shared judgment, minimizing new resources and conserving energy by working with the local climate and conditions, the architect, in the late thirties, achieved an integrated design having both sentimental value and a raison d'être, that is to say, poetic and rational meanings of sustainability, which appear to be of significant value to contemporary design. The basic objective of this study is to rediscover, reinterpret and represent the architect's peculiar solution to the problem of addition and transformation, along with his conception of preservation and remodeling issues; to underscore the complex web of spatiotemporal relations the design establishes with various regional and global contexts through observations, analysis and survey studies in the framework of the concept of integration. This particular design, an evident example of sustainable design and timelessness; concepts not yet then on the agenda of architecture, reveals that sustainability is not an added concept, but rather should be an intrinsic part of any architectural design.

Keywords: integration; interpretation; design; context; reinterpretation

1. Introduction
Designed and built in 1936-37 by Sedad Hakkı ELDEM, one of the most pre-eminent architects of modern Turkish architecture, and set in a pastoral landscape, a structure on the Island of Büyükada in Istanbul was rediscovered as an original example of a house type, the köşk (pavilion/kiosk), consequent to a thorough examination.

The building in question encompasses many lessons for our time in terms of typology as well as of the complex web of spatio temporal relations it establishes with existing practice on the regional and global scale, with its resulting interpretation and sustainable details.

The importance of the building is augmented by the fact that both the architect and the client, former Turkish Prime Minister A.F. Okyar, were among the leading figures of the day in their fields. The building was declared a protected landmark by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism Board for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Treasures in 1994.

This study reassesses the fundamental principles which underlie this small but important building, its salient features and associations, and the way its design was influenced by the various factors which played a part.

The paper is based on a review of the literature as well as on observations, interviews, an examination of old photographs and documents, and an evaluation and reinterpretation of findings, associations and contexts obtained as the result of workshops and building survey studies.

The structure of köşk A consists of the remodelling of an old box-shaped orchard building, its enlargement with an annex, and the assembling of all parts pertaining to the design under one roof. Standing on a large, sloped plot of land, the L-shaped building has storage rooms, a cistern, kitchen and other service units on the lower level, while the upper level is devoted to the living quarters on one wing, with a corridor flanked by rooms, a bath along with a half-bath, and a single space on the other wing, used as a multi-purpose living room, which comprises the annex connected to the rooms in the old building via semi-open spaces.

A pillared veranda extends in the direction of the view and wraps around the entire structure, and on the entrance façade there is a semi-open corner space, again pillared, which acts as a welcoming area and entryway. The exterior aspect of the building is largely determined by the rhythmically ordered pillars and the broad eaves.

Apart from the arrangement of cypress trees, the garden has no road or path of monumental effect, nor any radical landscaping. The cypress trees, here
and there in rows, and the clump of pine trees are the dominant third-dimensional elements in the flora of the site. The landscaping basically features plants grown in flowerpots, for the traditional dwelling (also known as the Turkish House) a custom dating back to nomadic times. Just as in those traditional gardens, so in the immediate vicinity of the köşk there is a modest arrangement of potted flowers, small fruit trees, and low-growing garden plants.

In his book "The Noble Savage Le Corbusier," Vogt (1996) cites the writings of Le Corbusier, whom he also refers to by his initials LC. In view of how frequently they are repeated, in the present paper, too, A.F. Okyar House (the subject of this article) is denoted as köşk A, its architect Sedad Hakkı Eldem as SHE, and Le Corbusier again as LC.

2. Representation of The Design and Building

2.1 Köşk A in the Literature

The first pertinent article appeared in 1938 in the 5th and 6th issues of Arkitekt magazine. Including a plan, cross-section and views as well as pictures showing the building at that time, the article stated the following:

Situated on an island amid pine trees, the house enjoys a commanding view in all directions. The construction is largely of wood, and a spacious sitting room has been added on, as has the front balcony which girds three sides of the building. With the wide balconies he has built on the sides with a view, plus the slight, gentle slope imparted to the roof, the architect has succeeded in giving the building the character of a house perfect for repose. The building has been produced at little cost thanks to the manner of construction pursued in the remodelling. (Anon, 1938).

In another book partly devoted to the same subject, a terrace-fronted structure one end of which is semicircular (this structure is in the added-on part of the house) is likened to Villa in Carthage designed by LC. (Tanyeli, 2001).

Another publication in which discussion of the building appears is a book entitled "Sedad Eldem", which is the fruit of extensive research (Bozdoğan et al., 2005). In referring to one of the points that underlies the design of the building, this discussion mentions that the client's request for Japanese architecture was answered by SHE with the principle of lightness, upon which rests Turkish architecture as well.

Both the paper, which was presented in a symposium organized during the centennial of SHE’s birth in 2005 published in a book (Şahin, 2008), and a study on revitalization of the site of the köşk A based on a holistic approach (Şahin, 2009), consist of observations and findings concerning the building and design, provided the groundwork for this article.

With its lightness of structure, modularity, flexibility, and unity of exterior and interior, coupled to the use of intermediary space (semi-open spaces), suitable orientation, possibility of interior cross-ventilation, relation between facade organization and orientation, the fact that rainwater is collected from the roof for storage in a basement cistern, the use of wood as a
renewable material, and the comfort made available visually and in terms of use, it might be stated that the house is in harmony with the environment (Şahin, 2009).

2.2 The building & design

Thanks to the fact that it faces west and is sheltered behind a cape, the 23-acre property has a gentle microclimate and thus boasts flora as varied as that found in the Mediterranean climatic belt. Before the annex was built, the property was used as a self-sufficient farm complete with vineyard and orchard house, vegetable garden, fruit and olive trees, a chicken coop and animals large and small in their stables and barn. Drawn up in French and Turkish, the sales contract gives a floor-plan sketch of the old building (used as an orchard house) and shows the vineyard and vegetable garden together with the number and kinds of trees in the garden.

On the inclined property described above, which stretches the length of the shoreline, the two-storey building rises amid retaining walls. At an angle of 90 degrees to the northeasterly corner of the old orchard house SHE added a living room with a rounded end, wrapped a wooden veranda around both the old and the new structures all along the view-exposed façade, and collected the entire composition under a single roof. The result was a wooden-pillared L-shaped building entered via a semi-open space at the corner where the new and old structures meet.

The old building was used as an orchard house, and in the sketch depicting it, one sees a floor-plan sometimes called karnıyarık, which is basically "a major plan type of traditional Turkish domestic architecture, with a central hall or sofa transversely cutting across the house and giving access to rooms on both sides, as well as allowing for cross-ventilation" (Bozdoğan et al., 2005). Together with the annex design, this floor-plan has undergone a change, as the half-bath and bath were moved to the south-east corner of the building and a small walk-in closet added for each of the two bedrooms on the view-facing wall of the corridor that runs the length of the building and opens to the outdoors at both ends.

The new arrangement caused a disruption in this quarter of the cross-ventilation and visual connection between spaces. Outdoors, meanwhile, a note has been made on the sketch that there is a dilapidated balcony stretching the length of the view-facing façade and, as today, wrapping around the side façade before ending. In SHE's design this semi-open intermediary space/veranda was renovated and lengthened to take in the whole of the annex façade, while the wooden flooring of the veranda was replaced by wooden grillwork.

The presence in the old diagram of this wooden veranda (which one can assume to have been semi-open) may be thought of as a possible source of inspiration for the building's design. There is no extant document dealing with the third dimension of the old orchard house. However, we can make an educated guess (Fig.7.) about its form based on the fact that in the image of certain orchard houses there is a similar wooden veranda running along one façade on pilotis.

A large hall rounded at one end has been added to the northeastern corner of the main building at an angle of 90 degrees. With this design, SHE took an old orchard house and with an annex plus renovation converted it into a building which can be classified as a köşk. Distinguished from the many richly ornamented köşks on the island by its spare, modern lines, Köşk A enjoys the status of an original building thanks to this austere composition. In the section which was formerly an orchard house, SHE remade the bedrooms, the small room used in the winter as a drawing room, and the bathroom and toilet while placing a 50 sq-m living room in the hall which he had added on. On both the front façade and from the view-facing rear façade, these spaces are linked by semi-open spaces.

Kitchen and storage rooms have been installed on the lower level, as have the servant's room and bathroom, while the cistern beneath the old orchard house has been retained. There are two stairways which link the upper and lower levels. The stories are mainly connected by a single-hand-railed wooden stairway on the exterior, which is located at the mid-point of the inner corner of the L, where the square courtyard is wrapped around by a veranda with pilotis. The other one, far from sight, is mainly reserved for access to the kitchen.

In contrast to the lucid floor-plan, the roof is hipped and incorporates quite complex details. The structure of this roof is visible only from the entrance hall.
and from the veranda. Vogt (1996), who has studied buildings raised on pilotis (or stilts) in different regions and climatic belts, and who stresses the background motives for building in this way, draws a comparison between traditional Turkish architecture and LC. Vogt, on the other hand, points out that Turkish wooden architecture matches three of LC's five principles: Pilotis, long windows, and la façade libre. All present in köşk A, these features are dealt with in detail in the pertinent later chapters.

3. Reinterpretation of Köşk A

While interpreting the main character of the building along with the assumed view which the designer had regarding the annex and conservation, plus the form composition that arose from this view, the nature of function and organization in this instance, and last but not least the structure and interior with their sustainable features, an attempt has also been made to analyze, under these headings, Turkish and Japanese traditional architecture as suggested by the building along with its ties to the design and buildings of LC and the period.

3.1 Attitude and Form Composition:

SHE's Conception of Conservation and Addition

SHE is, in fact, a very he-architect. Although his designs incorporate various references, it may be observed that he always imposed a distinct architectural character in which he had a one-lane, masculine attitude. SHE could have torn down the ruined orchard house and put up a new building in its place, but instead he chose to renovate it, through slight changes and additions, and thus incorporate it in his design. The basic principle lying behind the conservation of this SHE design is not a static convention based on addition/subtraction and/or differentiation between the existing structure and the annex, but rather a contextual interpretation that draws on the pre-existing material (the building and its information). It is virtually as if the old wooden box form with its balcony had preserved its character while acquiring the shape of an L.

The form of the building has been altered and developed in harmony with this interpretation. The design is such that the joint is not apparent, as the old building plays a role equal to that of the other coexisting components of the new design. The final design bears marks of the design it has incorporated, but constitutes a new whole reflecting its own dominant identity. This attitude is not so much traditional as it is close to the approach seen today toward form production based on transformation.

Köşk A is a project of adding on and converting, and its final design preserves the old while making it an essential part in a process of integration which one does not grasp at first glance. It almost seems as if the pre-existing/old structure had been preserved just so it could become part of SHE's new project. Here one of the salient features of traditional architecture comes to mind, to wit the principle of frugality. The basic quality of the architecture of addition is the fact that the line of joining is imperceptible, that the old and new are connected by semi-open spaces, and that the two different buildings are integrated in a single design and physical structure.

3.2 A Multifaceted Interpretation

With its service spaces on the lower level and living areas on the upper level, the habit of open, semi-open and closed spaces, and the fact that the stairway is an external element, coupled to the interior features and the spatial hierarchy, the building retains the scheme of a traditional dwelling while at the same time being shaped parallel to the design principles of LC. The hierarchical order of all the volumes is as follows: open space/semi-open space/closed space/semi-open space/open space. At the entrance, in the corner of the L, between the main living room (i.e., the annex) and the structure housing the rooms and bath, there is a "genkan" or "threshold" area, a semi-open space which functions as an "eyvan" in the Anatolian House, is placed among the closed areas to welcome and sometimes entertain arriving guests. Covered by a roof and serving both to unite and separate the exterior and the interior, this entrance to the house is well summarized in the following generalization: "The open hall or vestibule plays a central role in Turkish house... The vestibule on a terrace is at all times an in-between zone, open and closed, public and private, inside or outside at the same time, and one can pass through it or stay in it."(Bammer, 1996). Perpendicular to this space and lying behind it there is a "main room" that gives onto a view, is generally somewhat modern in appearance, and has an original interior design. When the door to this room stands open, both its architecturally sculptural space and its pleasantly windowed side lend visual continuity to the ensemble, again a characteristic of Japanese architecture.

Experiencing a house with two wings in Tokyo, Alain de Botton associates "the necessity of walking outside in order to pass between the living and sleeping areas with Zen in origin." (Botton, 2006) Botton, on the basis of the aforesaid philosophy, states that this kind of spatial division reminds "the occupants of their connections to, and dependence on nature, and of the unity of all living things..." (Botton, 2006) It is hardly evident that the architect of köşk A had a deliberate intent of making an association with such philosophy in his design. Similarly, in Anatolian culture, it is not the house itself that should be kept warm, but the human being in it, the occupants. Therefore, mostly there is no heating system in the Anatolian House except for a fireplace or oven. People, no matter where they are, whether in an inner or outer space, mostly dress considering the weather conditions. Köşk A's occupants, not complaining of the division of
functions, state that the situation does not cause them any discomfort, and walking through open and semi-open links (pathways) seems not to be a necessity for them, but rather an act which has turned out to be a refreshing ritual in time, in rapport with the identity peculiar to the house.

In the Anatolian House more units of the building are used in the summer and fewer in the winter, and this practice is also carried out in the building under discussion. During the winter, when the door to the old orchard house (i.e., to the building that contains the small rooms) is closed, the large living room can be left unused and only this structure heated and used.

Many of the features mentioned by SHE regarding the house type with external sofa (A type which he states, belongs to the 1st period) are found in reinterpreted form in this design. "This type of house was two-storied, with low ceilings on the lower floor which contained the winter quarters and service areas. Over these, on the first floor, was the pillared terrace-hall-sofa. The sofa or hall, where ever possible was arranged with a view to the south. The pillared facade of the hall was a focal point of the house... Houses in which the living quarters were on the first floor, set over a basement, had an outside staircase which gave access to the living quarters through the centre of the hall facade." (Bammer, 1996; 234). When it is placed on the side of the house facing the yard, the sofa has a pillared semi-open space running its entire length. The room known as the main room is physically separated from the other rooms by an eyvan. Distinguished from the other rooms by its size and decoration as well, this room boasts a fireplace. "The lower level is low-ceiled, the upper spacious and airy... It definitely looks in one direction, toward the sun and downhill, that is, toward the view." (Eldem, 1986) With these generalizations, SHE virtually summed up köşk A.

From the standpoint of structure the most fundamental characteristic of the building, i.e. the separation of load-bearing and dividing elements (one of LC's principles), has here been accomplished not in a skeleton construction but in one of masonry construction. The structure has three layers. On the outside of the building stretches a wooden modular, pillared, continuous veranda. The intermediary outer walls are of solid brick and stone, while the interior dividing walls are of the light wooden skeleton type. Wrapping around the entire building, this engawa-like veranda with its wooden pilotis, when coupled to the broad eaves calls up associations with Japanese architecture, Anatolian traditional architecture, and the columned buildings of the local köşks and orchard houses.

It can be maintained that one sign of the contextual link established by köşk A with its surroundings is the fact that features of the previous orchard house are carried over into the annex, which also reflects the timber-framed architecture with pilotis that predominates on the island. In addition to buildings of great typological, structural and stylistic variety, köşks entirely of wood or with wooden verandas are common on the island, where one frequently encounters examples reminiscent of the building under discussion (i.e., that communicate with the surroundings via semi-open spaces on pilotis), and which are similarly spare or more richly ornamented.

Having visual and spatial similarities, horse-carriages, houses in the island and köşk A display a poetic expressiveness of totality, a strong and dynamic sense of "lightness" and "Gestalt quality" (Fig.8.).

There is a balcony on one side of which runs a row of pillars while on the other stretches the main body; between these two surfaces, and covered by eaves, the wooden-floored balcony composition (Fig.9.) lies in the rear of the main body and, just as in a yacht or ship, grows to become a sitting area with the form of a deck, reminiscent of the deck architecture praised by LC and found in his designs. "Architects note: the value of a long gallery or promenade-satisfying and interesting volume; unity in materials; a fine grouping of the constructional elements, sanely exhibited and rationally assembled." (Le Corbusier, 1986).

A 1903-built ferry, named "Neveser" which means new work, which had slender posts lined up along its periphery, was one of the few ferries plying the route to the Islands during the years of design and construction of the building (Fig.10.c).

Another architect who like SHE went to Europe on a grant after graduating, and at roughly the same time (1935-36), was Seyfi Arkan. He executed a floating Presidential Summer Residence at Florya, a suburb of the city stretching along the coast of the Marmara Sea, which, although the floor-plan is different, in a way has a similar impact.

Wrapped all round by a steel-pillared terrace, this

Fig.7. Close Similarity and Proximity between the Horse-Carriages, Houses and köşk A

Fig.9. Balcony Composition
building too features a rhythm punctuated by doors on a blind side, while the other side has plentiful windows and, at one end, a broad terrace (Fig.11.).

The köşk at Florya was designed for Atatürk, the founder of the Republic of Turkey, who was president at the time, and the köşk in question for his close friend A.F. Okyar, a prominent figure in Turkish politics.

One of the elements which give the building sustainability is the semi-open wooden spaces which gird it. In buildings built in our day with the aim of functioning ecologically, a frequently encountered approach is to use semi-open spaces to provide a connection with nature in the desired quarters.

The other elements which enable the building to be environmentally sensitive are cross-ventilation, the collecting of rainwater in a basement cistern via drainpipes and a special eave detail, the orienting of the building in positive directions, the use of shuttered windows where necessary, and the flexibility gained through the organization of all structures and their close connection with the exterior. The photograph shows the old drainpipes and detail changed in the course of repairs (Fig.12.).

In Anatolia, a shelf-like continuous element, which is generally called "sergen" or "terek" (Şahin, 2008), brings the high-ceilinged space down near to the human scale, by creating a horizontal effect. In Köşk A too this border, judging by old pictures, is in the multipurpose living room and has been designed as a shelf. It is commonly known that an approach similar to this vertical division of the space by a horizontal element is seen in Japanese architecture and F. L. Wright. The interior of Köşk A has undergone slight changes over time, one of which is a bookcase built above the existing continuous shelf near the ceiling. (Fig.13.)
Yürekli and Yürekli (2007) speak of the positive effects of the concept of lightness in the traditional dwelling, and indulge in a conceptual elucidation of the word lightness. The use of wood has had a considerable impact on the form and appearance of the building. The lightness which marks wood as a material in the traditional dwelling, together with the intermediate space attached to the front of the broad building and uniting with it thanks to the roof, in köşk A too constitutes the basic element of the building’s visual identity.

The grill arrangement of the wooden flooring in the veranda ensures that the material will have a long life, resolves any potential problem of water, and at the same time reinforces the impression of lightness. Although LC’s integrating of movement and transition through the "promenade architectural" is not a thematic concern in either his design or construction, it is a concept used much earlier in the Turkish House but never named or recognized (Yürekli & Yürekli, 2007). The fact that all interior spaces relate with the exterior and that the stairway is on the outside, the use of pilotis in the architecture, and the horizontal rhythm of windows in the living room: these are the design elements which mean that the traditional schema overlaps with modern concepts. The veranda’s closely set row of posts and the façade that stretches behind it create an effect of two planes one behind the other, such as that seen in the Çinili Köşk of Topkapi Palace, or in the Marble Köşk.

Combining rationality and duality in the same composition, the design brings together in a single spatial setting and in one face characteristics of vernacular architecture (the Traditional Anatolian House plus the Traditional Japanese Dwelling) and modern architectural features (the design principles of LC coupled to Bauhaus influences and early modern practice). (Şahin, 2008)

When one considers the interval between posts (ranging from 1.55 to 2.15 cm), the other measurements and scales, the use of materials, the lightness of construction elements, and the spatial and organizational structure, it emerges that the connection with Japanese architecture is partial and largely associational.

4. Epilogue

The design of the building in question retains a "multiple focus", which has an expression reflecting different layers of meaning in a single face, a spatial combination of traditional architecture, modern architecture (Şahin, 2008), various contextual qualities and environmental considerations.

By complying with the client’s demands, the scheme of the existing old structure, traditional architecture, the local climate and image of the place, and succeeding in creating a unique composition and innovative solution, the structure of köşk A is a good example of integrated design, hence proving that sustainability can be provided by suitable design principles rather than using contemporary high-technologies.

Also, by creating responsiveness, addressing the senses most commonly ignored today, and combining the technical aspects of architecture with a poetic sense, the building exhibits a pleasing space and a stage for events as a unique representation of the concept of the "promenade architectural".

All in all, the fact that sustainability, another expression of integration, is not an added value, but exists inherently in the essence of a coherent design, might be substantiated by reinterpretation of köşk A. Any product of architecture is expected to acquire the quality of integration as the design of köşk A does, which responds to the function, site considerations, climate and culture, sustaining the existing tangible and intangible material, and updating and transforming them into a new product through an innovative interpretation.

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