



Transilvania University of Brasov,
Romania

13th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
“STANDARDIZATION, PROTOTYPES AND QUALITY:
A MEANS OF BALKAN COUNTRIES’ COLLABORATION”

Brasov, Romania, November 3 - 4, 2016

From Municipality Building to a City Museum in Trakia Region; A Case of Town Corlu

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Abstract

The town of Tekirdağ named as *Çorlu* located on the way to Europe, attracts attention by its important location where is being an entrance from Turkey to Europe. The people going to Europe can visit this small place and have an experience about the town. When they are having time in the location, they can also visit some places to have an idea of the city, environment and culture. One of the important places for visiting is the *City Museum* located in the center of the town. This paper considers the city museum of Çorlu town that was restored by the beginning of 2015, and being used from that time until now. The characteristics of the building will be performed in details with architectural sights. By this way, an intensive research on the city museum building was carried out in order to understand the relations of physical environment of the site and the cultural identity.

Keywords

Çorlu town, City Museums, restoration of Municipality building, historical buildings

1. Introduction

In the twenty first century, the role of culture has become central to the discourse on how increasingly global world can survive (Lohman, 2006). However it is clear for us that globalization has gained more rapid acceleration nowadays. In fact is it not a new phenomenon but on the last century on every field of science such as environment/architecture it gained a more speed. Therefore, investigation or expose of “Cultural knowledge” is an emerging study which versus globalization on architectural discourse also.

Many fields of knowledge that have made significant contribution to the understanding of cities from their own unique perspective. Indeed architecture is the top and most visible field of learning to have an idea about cities.

This paper represents a tangible approach for culture to the question of how cultural events/knowledge can be performed in the cities by some kinds of buildings. In this sense of culture that is intended to use for a model, from the point of cultural activities/memories/heritage are the buildings called as the “city museums”. In this paper an example of Corlu City Museum will be told for the rising of cultural knowledge in cities.

2. City Museums

The concept of city museum tries to express itself by accommodating various definitions. As one of the definition, the city museums are related with the social structure, political schemes, economic activity and development of residential areas of the city. Any space/venue establishing relationships with the city, define the content of the museum. Key points can be considered as a human being and space. The main focus of a city museum is to achieve human communities and being a common place for them (Danacıoğlu, 2001).

As a matter of fact, City museums are the cultural spaces/venues, where historical process and values of the city are performed/exhibited while teaching the values. People visiting city museums will have an idea about the city and be informed about it. City museums are the places which present; the city's history, geography, economics, agriculture, industry, culture, natural beauty, food and cuisine, as well as issues such as the ride of a barely held municipal services in technological environment to the visitors.

When we look at the purpose of establishing a city museum, which improves the urban identity and urban consciousness, of different ethnic groups living in the city; religious, cultural and mutual understanding between social structure, we see that they strengthen the culture of respect and common life. Inhabitants as a civil platform is located between institutions that play an active role protecting the historical heritage of the city. In addition to these exhibitions; theater, conference room and the library do not indicate to only one purpose but also many needs as well. This is an important step for future that these buildings serve many needs and introduce different cultures. This urban fabric also triggers ethnic groups. Beside them, City museums try to convey the history of city and experience with permanent exhibition, educational programs, through research, publications, through demonstrations and other events.

Today modern sense of the city museums are a kind of forum area. Each theme that concerns the city's people enter the work area with all the elements of social history of the city museum. City Museums are located in buildings which have a living memory or icons of the town. They describe the past while presenting present life and imagine about future. Also they provide to prepare scenarios for the future of the city.

2.1. City Museums in the World

In the world, the development of tourism, as well as due to the economic changes began a new search for identity in cities and towns. At this sense City museums have been established to create new identities in cities and towns. This museum tells the history of the institution they stand out as a geographic area while reflecting its history of the community. Therefore they are defined as reflecting social history and concentrated on the locality. Due to the definition of a city museum in the city, where both local and it can also be perceived as a social history museum about the history and experience of those living in the city (Köse, 2010).

However if we consider the complexity and size of major cities, City Museum concept is defined as "respect for cultural and ethnic diversity has been recognized as a powerful tool to enhance the value of cultural heritage and natural environment." (Hebditch, 2001).

Looking at the examples of city museums in the world, they carry the name of the city's historical, social, sociological, cultural, geographical, economic, political, ethnic, religious and local properties. They issue of heritage and characteristics of the area and hosts a collection for this concept. A new vision and strategy is created by a mission objectives with established or developing museum understanding on the basis of a certain function. Also by setting in this direction, such as social and social history on created an archive can be very useful (Köse, 2010).

In recent years around the world, established new new city museum were established at the end of the 19th and early 20th century in the period between the resulting first generation of city museums are renewing the content themselves with huge investments and are moving to much larger venues than in the past. For example, in the following order Venice, Sao Paolo, Volos, Cardiff, Essen, Cape Town and Toronto. Also they established a new museum in Beijing, Moscow, New York, Liverpool, Bristol, Rome, Singapore, Boston, Chicago, Essen. They take into account the different needs of large wind brought by the New Museology current restructuring to continue their work. This change in the last decade living in London, Seoul, Bogota, Montreal, Osaka, Sydney and Copenhagen examples are added to the list that exceeds the overall average of the museum sector, which is in rapid transformation (Köse 2010).

2.2. City Museums in Turkey

The establishment of the City Museum in Turkey begins in 1990 as the first Yıldız Palace Museum which is located in the Urban Garden by Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality.

At this point we can remember “The People’s Houses” that are established in 1930’s of Republican Turkey, having the same aims in ethnographic part and other activities. Perhaps the roots of City museums are built in People Houses so many years ago. But we are on city museum concept now.

Meanwhile, beginning in 2000, the various municipalities, in the fullest sense of the term, they attempt to establish the first city museum. The main purpose of this organization is the first museum to provide information related to the history of the city of Konya, Kastamonu, Kayseri, Bursa and Izmir. At present Antalya, Bartın, Edirne, Elazığ, Odemiş, Kütahya, Samsun, Tokat, Mardin, Kızılcahamam continues their work in establishing the city museum in this direction (Köse 2010). And at last in Çorlu Town city museum is opened at the beginning of 2015.

3. History of Corlu Town

The region dates back to the early Bronze Age because of obtaining prehistoric finds that belongs to that period. The oldest known name “Tzirall,” which calls Corlu is one of the colonial city entitled by Trako-Phrygian. The city has invaded by the Phrygian-Greek and Scythian-Persian-Macedonia-Roman and Byzantine at various times in the history. Occasionally the Huns, Avars and Pechenegs were also exposed to raids. It also suffered in the invasion of Arab armies on Istanbul regulate various expeditions (Corlu Municipality, 2015). In short; Corlu is affected by every invasion of Thrace region. In the Middle Ages where the presence of Tzirall castle used to protect the Byzantine has given more military importance to Corlu because of being on Istanbul direction/way.

In the Ottoman era, because of the accommodations on the road stretching from Anatolia to Rumelia it has been the scene of important historical events.

4. Old Corlu Municipality Building

Founded in 1877 Corlu Municipality, during “Suleyman Aga” mayor in 1903 after serving in various fields it was decided to make a new building and moved into the building in the same year. From 1903 to 1989, serving as a municipal service building and until recently has been used by various government agencies such as Corlu Vocational School and then served as Executive Vice President of Health.

In 2014 restoration period has begun and it was decided to be used as city museum. Restoration work carried out on the building, new installations was established under the wall drawings were made, new doors were installed, flooring is renewed and exterior façade is painted.

A concrete objectification of Early Republican Period of Turkey, “Old Corlu Municipality building” exemplifies the public buildings of cities in signifying the ideas of the State and architectural discourse. Because of this reason, this municipality building is not only as a transformed place but also as an architectural face of First Architectural Period in Turkey. The architectural development and settlement of the building, as well as the practices it has showed, maps the concepts of revivalism especially on facades, in a Turkish concept.

In the site plan of the building there is an important and big rectangle shaped square just in front of the entrance of the façade. The establishment of the square exemplified the spaces designed for meeting and speeches of Municipality leader given to public. Because the ideas or some knowledge which were to be told to the public were occurred in this space (Figure 1).

In the floor plans, from the main entrance, there is a big entrance hall with a staircase at the back. The staircase is four arms as it was in palaces of Ottoman period. There are rooms around this entrance hall. Another entrance for the building is for next building. But now this entrance is closed and inner door is used for entering this building (Figure 2). In the upper floor there are big halls and rooms for the chair of municipality. Today these rooms are used also by chair of municipality. He welcomes his foreign guests in this historical space (Figure 3).

The facades of the building is almost shows “First National Architectural” character of Turkey during the beginning of 1900’s in Turkey. Over the main entrance there exists a balcony for speeches of the leader. Over the balcony to emphasize the entrance there is a portal at the top. This represents an entrance to a public building.

The windows and doors are surrounded with decorations around. They are cantilevers coming out made of small bricks with a regular line-up. Also they are made of timber with decorations on doors. The moldings around the floors on the façade are evident very attractively (Figures 4 and 5).



Fig. 1. Site plan of Corlu City Museum (Corlu Municipality Archive)

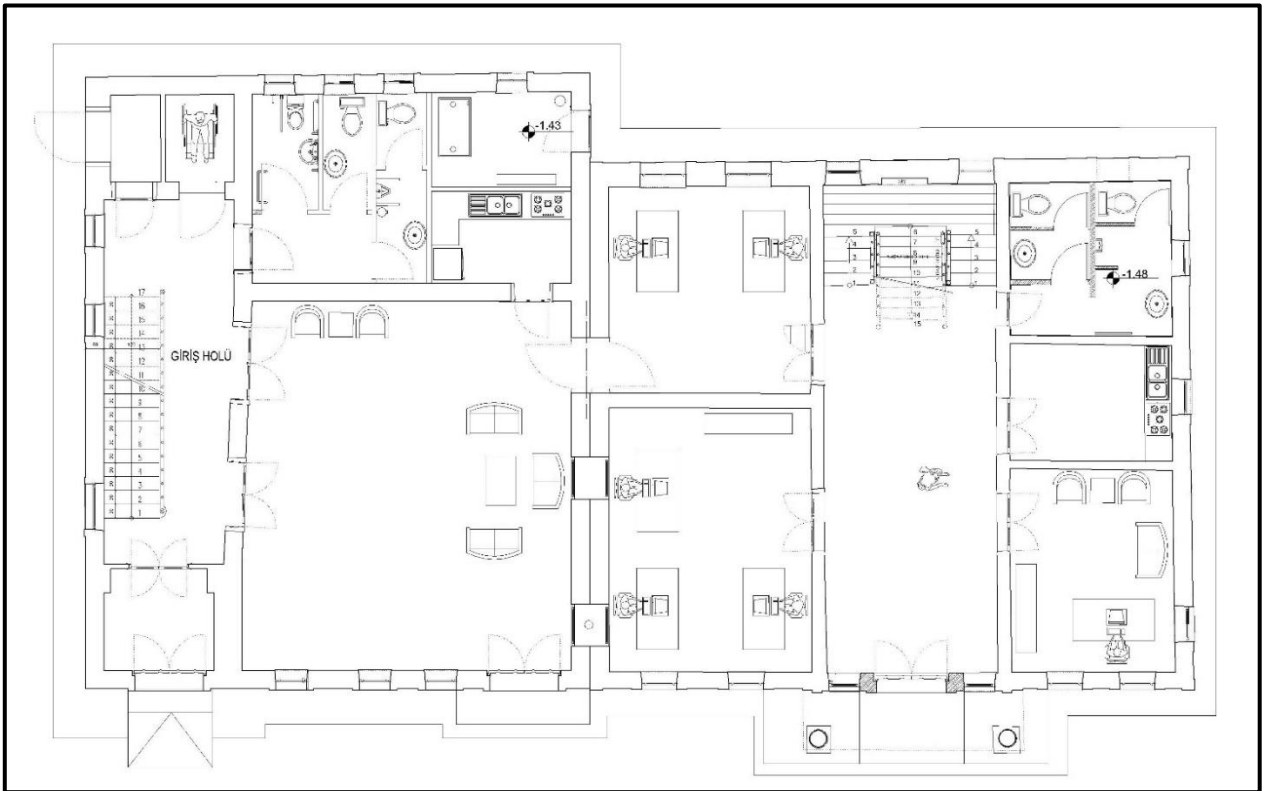


Fig. 2. Basement Plan of Cultural Center (Corlu Municipality Archive)

Fig. 3. Upper floor Plan of Corlu Cultural Center (Corlu Municipality Archive)

Fig. 4. Front (South) Facade (Corlu Municipality Archive)

The building is totally 305 square meters with a covered area including a presidential room, meeting room, waiting room, security room and two offices. On the ground floor of 60 square meters, in the second part of the building, it is located on the top floor and 90 square meters of exhibition and event hall. The mayors at in the past welcomed many Turkish leaders (Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, İsmet İnönü, Adnan Menderes, Demirel, Ecevit, Turgut Ozal, Necmettin Erbakan and Alparslan Türkeş) and presidents before the year 1989.

protected its memory by this building. As an architectural sight, the building shows the “First National Architectural Period” characteristics and properties individually with its symmetric façade and arrangement of windows.

As a conclusion, the transformation of a municipality building of Corlu to a city museum is a valuable example for the conservation of historic buildings of cities as cultural values of public and country.

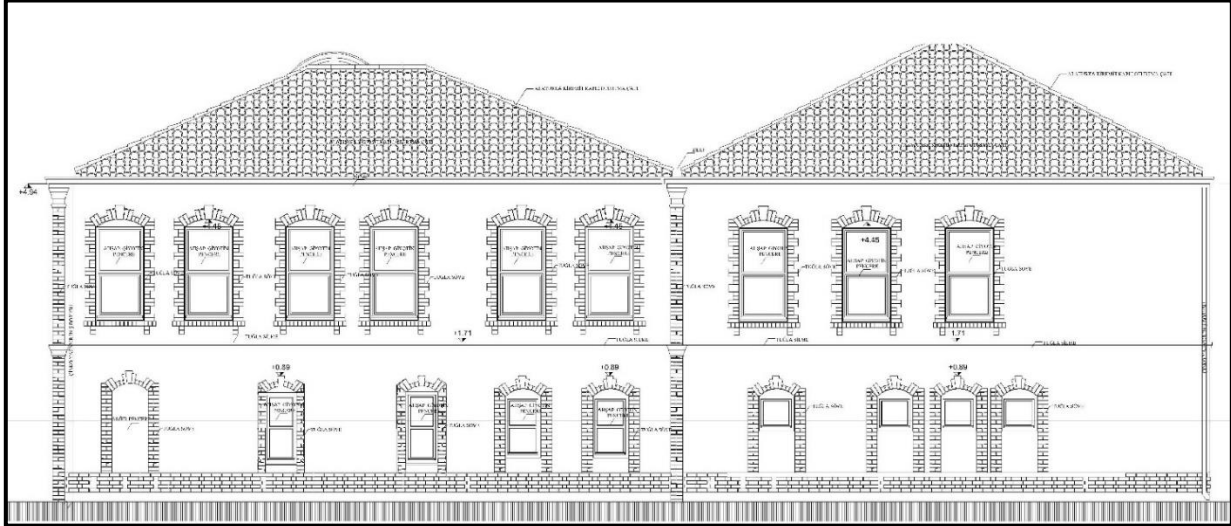


Fig. 5. Back (North) Facade (Corlu Municipality Archive)



Fig. 6. Front (South) Facade (Corlu Municipality Archive)

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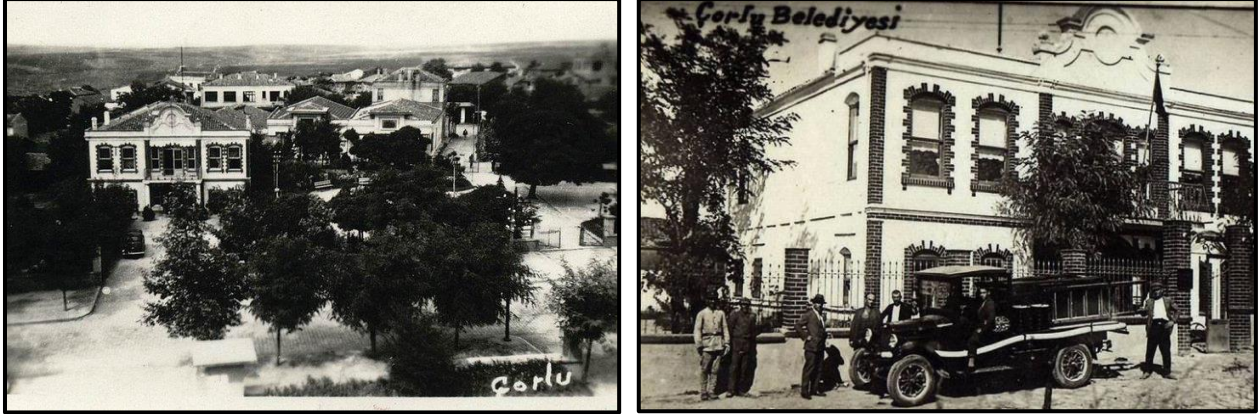


Fig. 7. Old pictures of Municipality Building (Corlu Municipality Archive)

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