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THE CONCEPT OF GENIUS LOCI IN ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION: AN ARCHITECTURAL STUDIO EXPERIENCE

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, architectural design, which does not bear the spirit of place where the relation of place is broken, has not been touched by the architectural features. Considering that one of the most important issues in architectural education is to expand the students' perspectives, this study argues that the awareness of the organic connection of the space and the spirit of the place at that arises from the interaction of these two can be gained through the education of architecture. The aim of this article is to investigate how the place is used as a contextual data in architectural design and how it is formed in an architectural structure through student projects. For this purpose, in order to enable students to think about the spirit of the place in the studios and to internalize the subject and increase their awareness by creating various projects. In this context, Konya Technical University Faculty of Architecture and Design, Department of Architecture 2018-2019 Fall Semester Studio 6 students were asked to design a boutique hotel project using location-specific data in Sille.

In this context, prior to the beginning of architectural project design, conceptual discussions and presentations on the subject and physical codes related to the ground (topography, vegetation, climate data, environmental texture and scale, local architecture, local material) and perceptual codes (tradition, socio-cultural data) were analyzed. By analyzing the students, Sille has taken socio-cultural, geographical, historical, natural and architectural features. They have developed spatial suggestions according to their analysis and needs program. At the end of the design process, it was seen that the students successfully interpreted the codes related to the location and transferred these data to the boutique hotel projects they designed.

Key Words: Design Education; Genius Loci; Place; Cultural Sustainability; Sille.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of “place“, which is the result of the interrelation of space and time, has become a common research topic of interest to sociology, anthropology, literature, geography and architecture. According to the dictionary meaning, space is defined as gap, space, space that something can occupy or occupied by anyone. [1] Space describes a structure that can be perceived as concrete and imagined as abstract, can be perceived and perceived with perception. The relationship between human and space is primarily related to the physical and pragmatic properties of space. Concrete spaces are abstracted by experiences and experiences in the human mind.[2]

Many architects, designers and thinkers, including Vitruvius, have explored and examined the phenomenon of place on an urban scale, in visual perception, in the distribution of functions and in social identity.

According to Roth, unlike other beings who build, people think when they build. Therefore, the building action of man is a conscious and intellectual action that embodies numerous decisions and choices. These are the features that separate man's structures from those of other beings. Non-human beings do so as a result of their genetic programs. People build structures to meet a requirement, but even when doing so, they give expression to values and emotions. [3]

Heidegger (1971), explaining the concept of “residence“ through the concept of place, states that man creates places where he can safely settle by using the distance between the sky and the earth throughout his life. [4]

The identity of an architectural product depends on its ability to feed from the ‘place’ to which it belongs. On the one hand, they contain tangible physical properties such as material, form, texture and color, while on the other hand they contain intangible socio-cultural and behavioral components formed by human. So, every places has a character and identity. The concept of place is a broad concept which also includes space. Norberg-Schulz (1980) argues that places have a spirit of its own (Genius Loci). The organic bond of place and space originates from the genius loci. [5]

According to Schulz (1980), ‘the embodiment of the spirit of the place is architecture. Human perceives the environment and makes it the focal point of architecture.’ He stated that the relationship between architecture and place is “place is the beginning and end point of our structural search”. Schulz's (1983) definition of “the spirit of the earth, is related to the criticism that Modern Architecture produces diagrammatic and functional circles that, in his own words, do not allow residence, that is, to eliminate the sense of belonging to the place where one lives.. [6] According to him, the task of architecture is to create meaningful places.

For this purpose, Konya Technical University Faculty of Architecture and Design, Department of Architecture 2018-2019 Fall Semester Studio 6 students were asked to design a boutique hotel project using location-specific data in Sille. Due to its characteristic features, Sille has always been a settlement center of civilizations. In Sille, an ancient Greek town, many small churches carved into soft volcanic rocks, Ottoman gravestones, Muslim and Greek houses have survived to the present day. Although its original structure has been damaged in recent years, the village and its surroundings have been accepted as protected areas and taken under protection. With a rich historical background and specific characteristic features, students have developed their sensitivity to the spirit of places “; natural / historical / social values in the context of awareness will allow.

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Case Study

Description of the Study Area

Sille, one of the first settlement areas of Konya, is located in the 8 km northwest of the city center. Sille, which has a rich history, has been a center of settlements for many civilizations due to its location in the middle of Anatolia and its characteristic features. It is an Anatolian settlement with a deep-rooted history where the Turks have lived as Orthodox-Christians and Muslims. Sille was a strong and developed settlement center commerce-economically and socio-economically until the first half of the 19th century. However, this has ended with the immigration of Rûms to Greece with the population exchange in line with the Treaty of Lausanne 1923. This exchange has affected the population of Sille adversely, accelerated the immigration in Sille and led to Sille's socio-economic decline. Many small churches carved into soft volcanic rocks, Ottoman tombstones, Muslim and Rûm houses in Sille have been able to survive until today. Even though its authentic structure has been damaged, the village and its surroundings have been accepted as an archeological site and been taken under preservation (Figure1).

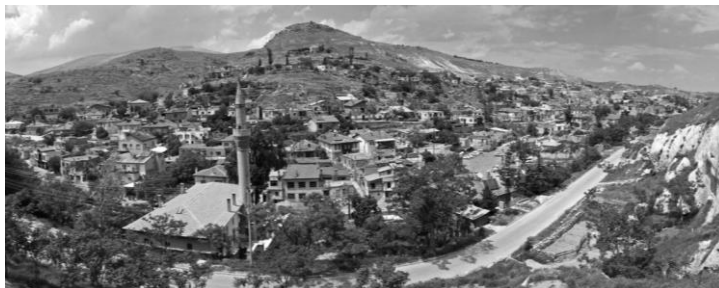


Figure 1. General View from Sille.

Sille was one of the few villages where the Cappadocian Greek language was spoken until 1922. It was inhabited by Greeks who had been living there in peaceful coexistence with the nearby Turks of Konya for over 800 years. In the barren rocky neighbourhood of the village, the remains of several medieval rock monasteries are worth visiting; they are very 'Cappadocian' in style. The monastery and rock churches still exist in the settlement (Figure 2). Sille being a witness of a rich history and culture exhibits this character in spatial variety. There are stonework churches, chapels, houses, Aya Elenia Museum (Figure 3), Tepe Chapel, mosques, baths, fountains, public laundries, public buildings, waterways and some sort of civil architectural buildings in Sille.



Figure 2. The Rock Churches.



Figure 3. Aya Elenia Museum.

There are two districts having different religious lives in Sille carrying valley settlement characteristics. However as different from similar other settlements there are districts in Sille where Muslims and non - Muslims live together. Sille brook (dried today) was a factor for the location of the dwellings and the mountain in the south of the brook obstructed the settlement to grow towards that direction. The original settlements under conservation form an arc in northeast - southwest direction. There are fountains in the intersection point of some streets covered by stone. Dwellings have generally double floors. The relationship of the dwellings located around twisted narrow streets with the exterior is provided directly with a door opened through the street the doors

and windows are small, low and narrow in the dwellings and there are rooms, storage and kitchen in the ground floor. On both floors the main spaces open to the sofa/transition space, there can be balconies in front of the spaces in upstairs or it can be possible to widen the usage areas, provide visual relationship with the outside and increase the view angle by the use of oriel. Kitchen shows generally a double space organization in ground floor. This formation can be named as cooking section and storage section. Storage areas generally carry appropriate conditions for food storage in rock carvings. In the scope of the space relationship from the religion angle, although the Muslim and Christian dwellings generally has formal similarity (material, silhouette, etc.), there are differences in the space transparency, permeability and the way it opens to the outside and the space. [7] The Sille andesite stone is probably the most important construction material which used in buildings (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Architecture of Sille Settlement.

Traditional buildings display features which are “proper” in many aspects, which may be taken as an example by all actors in the field of education, and from which certain deductions may be made throughout the design process, from the whole to the details or from the details to the whole. It is clear that every research study conducted in order to understand “how” traditional architecture fulfills the needs and requirements of its users and meets high performance criteria, contributes to architectural education directly or indirectly. [8]

METHOD of STUDY

In order to produce the project “Boutique Hotel in Sille in the spirit of the place”, the students were first asked to read on the concept of the spirit of the place and make researches on the general characteristics of Sille. In parallel, the historical texture and local characteristics of Sille were analyzed and the land was introduced through field trips. Through these trips, students were able to experience Sille, walk through the streets, touch the walls of buildings and recognize materials, observe the behavior of the public and interact with the public.



Figure 5. Design Area.

The students synthesized their research and observations during the trip to Sille and made socio-cultural, geographical, economic and architectural analyzes of Sille. Throughout the semester, the studio process progressed every week in the form of critical taking and was completed with two open juries and a final submission. At the end of the semester, students developed different and unique boutique hotel projects in the spirit of the place in Sille, in the light of site-specific analyzes based on land data and needs program.

Student Practices

In this design studio it is aimed for students to design based on ‘place’ in Sille. The design problem is determined as “boutique hotel” in this area where is under conservation and has a unique traditional texture. Studio 6 project was organized in in 2018-2019 fall semester in Department of Architecture in Konya Technical University with a team consisting of 15 students under the supervision of Dr.Emine Yıldız Kuyrukçu and others. Firstly, a trip, study field of which was shown was organized and observations and meetings were

performed about the Silile architecture and history. In the first days of the study, information about surveying was given to the student. After that each student designed his or her own "boutique hotel project" in historical texture of Silile. Throughout the semester, students are given critical feedback every week to improve their projects.



Figure 6. Students Explaining Their Projects.

At the final submission of the student projects, it was seen that the students designed the new together with the local. While benefiting from the opportunities of technology in their projects, it was seen that they successfully interpreted 'place' elements such as local material, local architecture, using topography and respecting nature in their projects successfully. 5 examples selected from student projects are shown in the study.



Figure 5. İdris Yağmahan's Project.

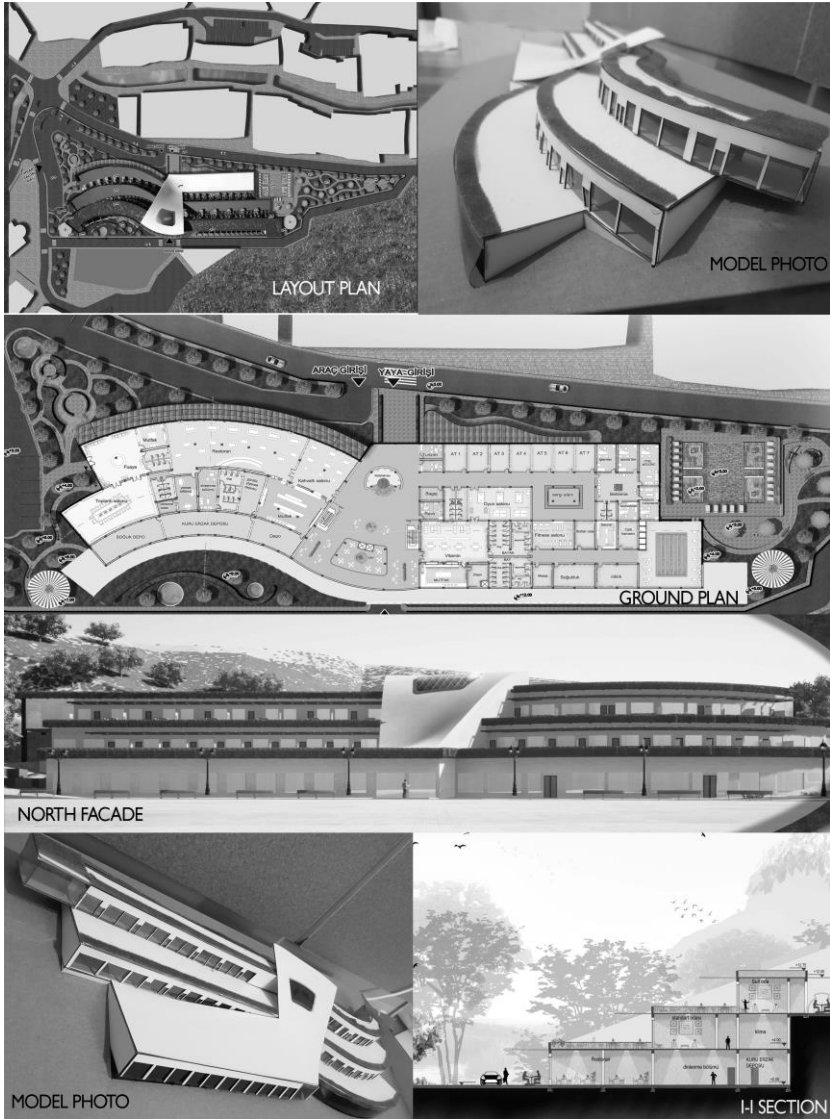


Figure 6. Nour Atrash's Project.

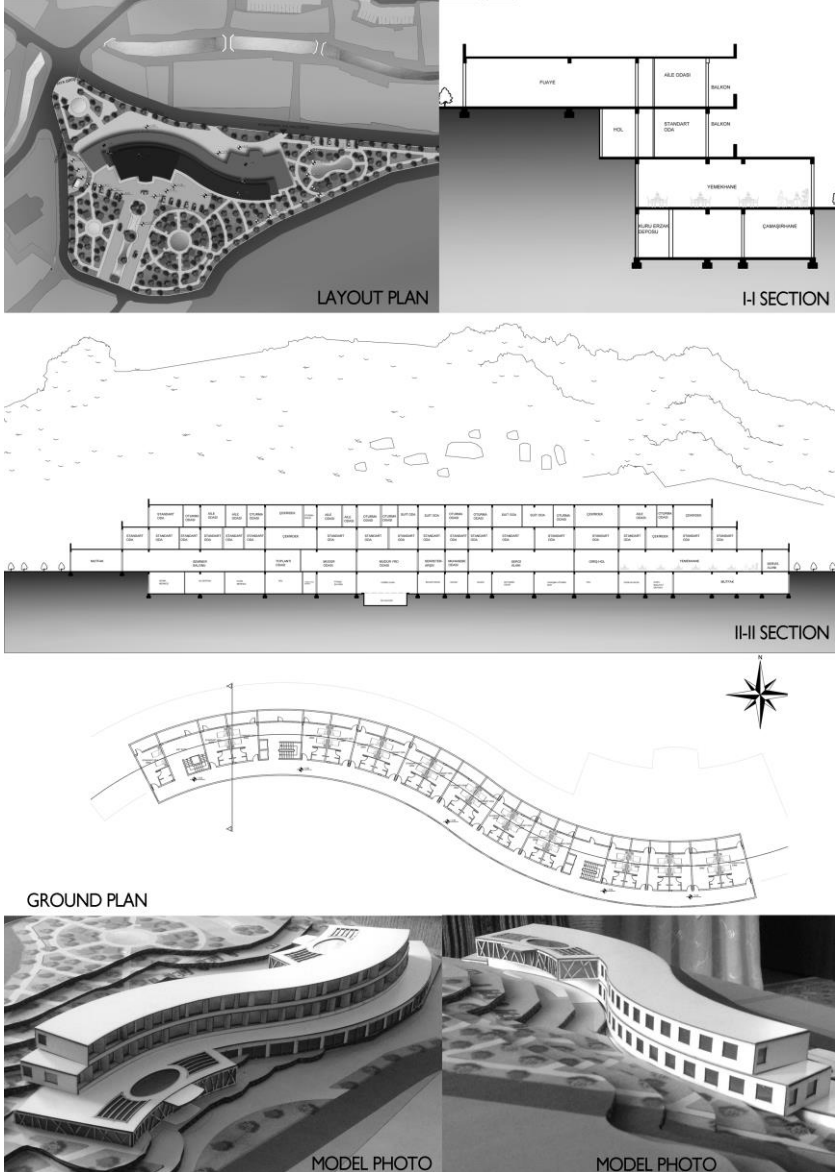


Figure 7. Muhammed Şeref İsen's Project.

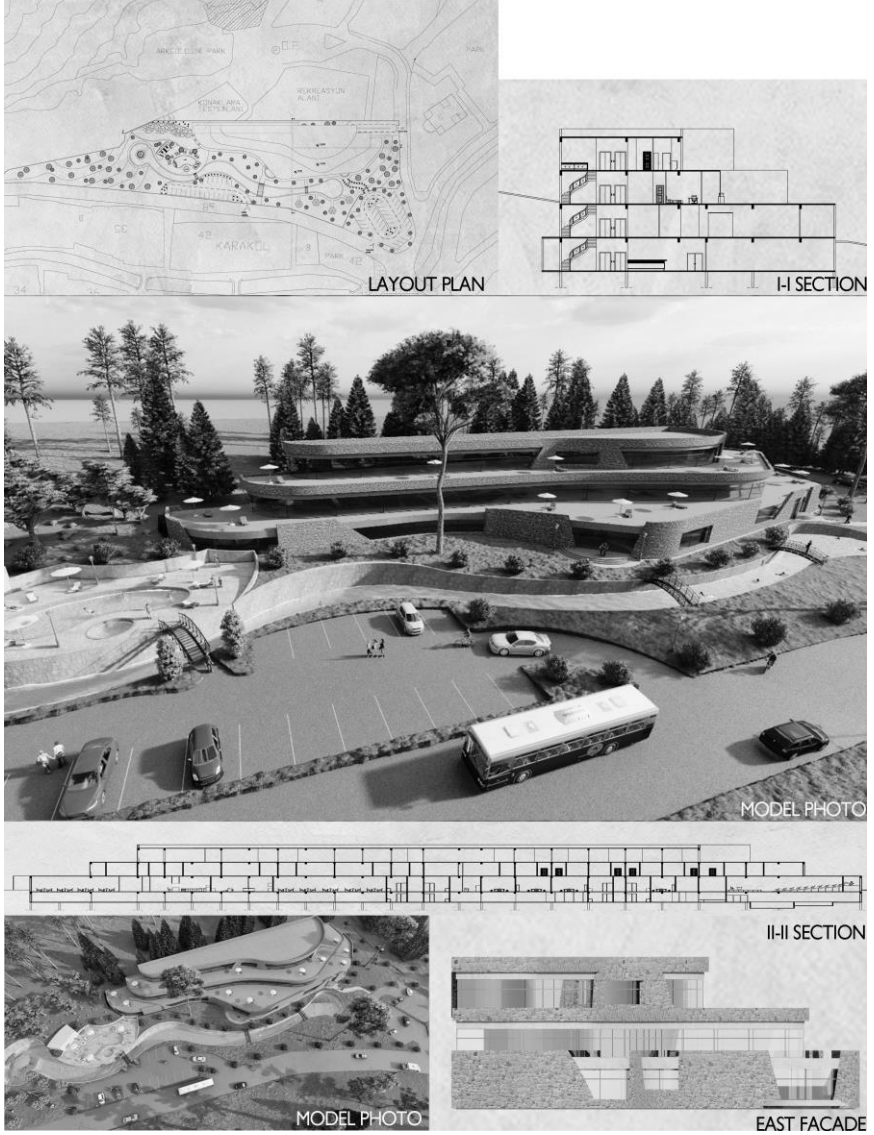


Figure 8. Hind Ahmet's Project.

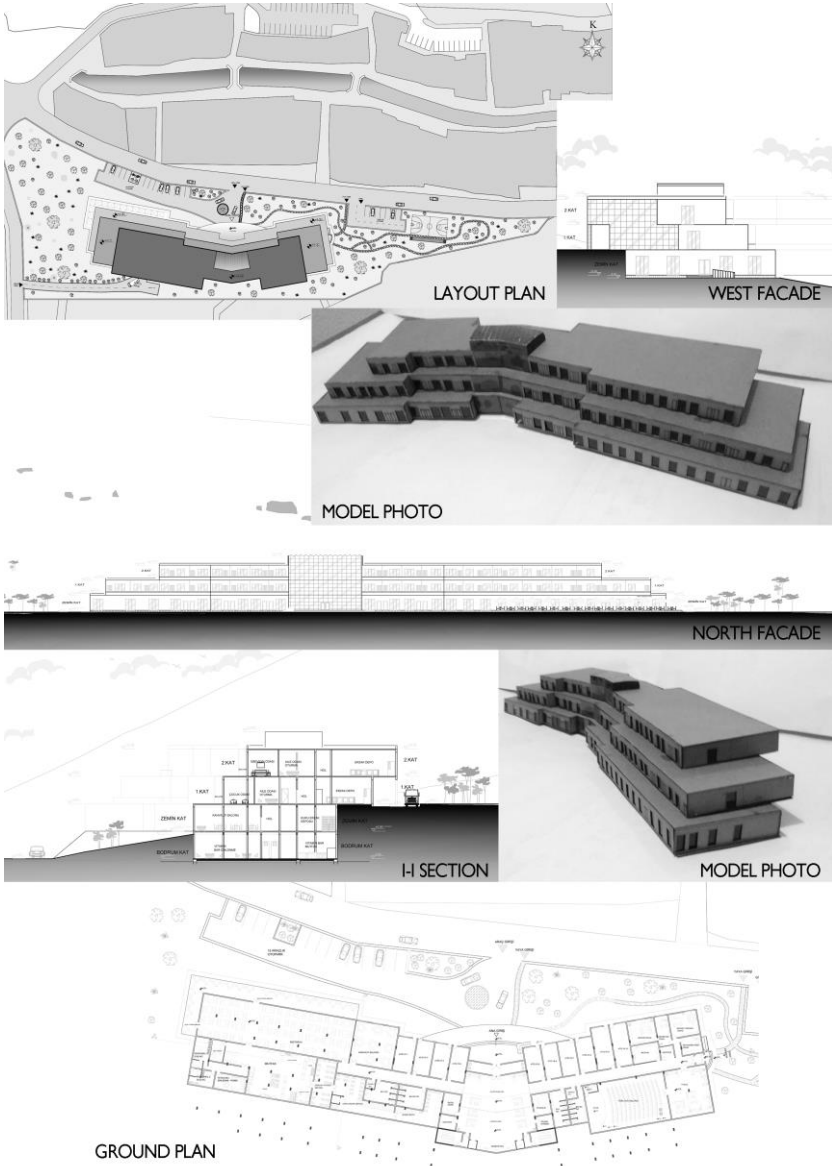


Figure 9. Kadir Güven Aygen's Project.

CONCLUSION

The spirit of the place is described as the secret force underlying the conditions of culture and traditional architecture and environmental conditions in that place. The spaces designed on the singularity of the place emerge in different styles in different geographies, and with their local strength, the place affects the places to be built on and therefore people. It has different values from past to future with its history, geography, contribution to economy, local characteristics, folkloric inputs, architecture, art and life style. In this context, searching for the spirit of the place in Sille has provided a different learning and teaching experience.

It is very important studying in area where is under conservation and has a unique traditional texture for architectural design education. It is seen that in this study students evaluated Sille original architecture, topography, traditional material (Sille stone) and socio-cultural characteristic in their boutique hotel projects.

The architecture, along with the place are. The place is building architecture and architecture is transforming the place. Architectural design is a combination of belonging, identity and identities. The identity of the place is a premise for architectural design. This study emphasis that 'place' is very important and significant for architecture education context of original design that must take care topography, material and original architecture.

As a result, we think that it is valuable and necessary to consider the spirit of place as a part of the academic education process and also in the education process of architecture.

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