

THE GOALS AND MEANS OF PRESERVING VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE

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The future of vernacular architecture which creates a substantial part of cultural heritage depends on various factors which develop in connection with the economic, social and cultural life of each country. Current development brings with it fundamental changes in human activities and in living standards in almost all regions both rural and urban. One part of the peasant population is migrating to towns and cities, another part is building new dwellings at new locations in the countryside; many old homesteads and villages have been abandoned. The increasing concentration of the population in urban agglomerations entails a great demand on building sites not only in centres of cities but also in suburban areas. Many sites are being cleared or clearance is contemplated. Consequently much of the old vernacular architecture is under threat.

Seeking effective methods of preserving vernacular architecture is therefore one of the current urgent tasks of historic preservation. It can only be managed in collaboration with a wide range of experts including architects. The role of architects in this field does not only consist in designing the restoration.

The destiny of vernacular architecture may be affected by architects in various ways. Their work is mostly focused on the renovation of a building, on its integration in contemporary life or on the improvement of the surrounding area. However, ways to the desired goal may differ. The question of how to solve the concrete situation should be answered in connection with two others: 1) what means should be used with regard to the goal given and, 2) what goal should be set with regard to the available means. The problem is in that the goals and means are determined by the conditions existing within the prevailing economic, social, technical, juridical and cultural systems. Thus the architect's choice is limited. The effective preservation of vernacular architecture may be affected by the teamwork of competent experts, initiated in time, dealing with problems in adequate relations and recommending a desirable implementation.

Let us consider three characteristic situations, which are to be solved in order to preserve a vernacular building:

- A) the need of the renovation,
- B) the need of the adequate use,
- C) the need of the improvement of the adjacent area.

The stated situations are asserted according to the scope of the affected system. In situation "A", only one item of vernacular architecture is in question. The chief goals of solving situation "A" are usually predetermined within the framework of situation "B" or "C". Similarly the resolution of situation "B" or "C" depends on the main conditions in a broader context. Consequently, if a lower-level situation is being solved without the knowledge of the means and demands within broader systems an incorrect issue may be reached. It is therefore useful to study the relations between renovation on the one hand and the nature of the use and the general context on the other, i.e. the integration of the respective building in the adjacent area. This will be the subject of this study.

It is not the purpose of this study to discuss such cases when vernacular architecture is destroyed owing to complete lack of interest in its cultural values. This study is interested only in such projects which treat vernacular architecture as a substantial part of the cultural heritage. Let us consider only those buildings and ensembles of vernacular architecture, whose historical, aesthetic and other cultural values warrant their inclusion in a historic preservation program, i.e. such as are protected as buildings of outstanding historic and artistic interest or as historical monuments.

This does not mean that any and every item of vernacular architecture should be dealt with as a historical monument. Taking into account the number of vernacular houses and the available means for their preservation, a specific approach should be taken which involves diverse degrees of meeting the historic requirements for conservation. The correct approach complies with the general aims of historic preservation in a broader social context. Considering the purpose of the present study the main goal of historic preservation in the field of vernacular architecture may be stated as follows: in order to preserve the greatest number of monuments and ensembles of vernacular architecture, provisions should be made for the enhancement of their historical and aesthetical values and for improving conditions for their continuous existence and optimal influence on the society.

THE NEED OF THE RENOVATION

It is not necessary to emphasize that the renovation of a vernacular house is mostly more complicated than the renovation of a modern building, namely, if the monument of vernacular architecture is being or should be integrated into modern life, its renovation should have several different purposes, which can be harmonized only with greatest effort. To start with, let us follow a plain renovation which comprises the consolidation of bearing structures and the repair of dilapidated building surfaces. In this case no other problems have to be solved; the fundamental prerequisites for starting

the renovation have been fulfilled, i.e. financial means, skilled workers and material needed are available, an appropriate use has been determined. As concerns the demands on operation no alterations of the structure and spatial distribution are required. From the technical point of view the main goal of a plain renovation is the enhancement of the mechanical and insulation functions of building elements and structures.

There are various repair techniques which may be used for the stabilisation of deteriorating structures and for the improvement of defective building surfaces. The choice depends on many circumstances, namely on the material of the dilapidating elements and structures, on the deteriorating factors, on the available means and on the technical level of workers, who will perform the repair. In the field of historic preservation the repair techniques are modified by aesthetic and historic requirements, their ranking depends on the functional hierarchy of elements within the architectural form.

One of the simplest procedures of a plain renovation is the replacement of defective elements and the provision of missing ones. If the work is carried out by skilled artisans and if original materials have been used the resulting architectural form is acceptable not only from the technical but also from the aesthetical points of view. Such renovation, however, does not satisfy historic interests. Owing to the substitution of original elements and the repair of original surfaces the renewed structure cannot serve as evidence of historical development.

How can we reconcile the technical, aesthetical and historic requirements on the renovation of a historical monument? This is the problem of conservation or restoration, which has been dealt with in many studies. This study is, however, focused on the broader conditions and relations of the preservation of vernacular architecture. The question of the reconciliation of technical and historic requirements involves a particular dependence which deserves our consideration.

If a defective element supplying an important mechanical function within the bearing structure represents a valuable item of historic interest and its substitution with a new one is therefore impossible, the solution lies in changing its function. There are two basic ways of removing the load from a building element:

- 1) To exclude its mechanical function by adequate reinforcement or reconstruction of the adjacent bearing structure,
- 2) To reduce or to change the operative function of the respective part of the building.

The former often results in substantial changes in architectural form. Therefore, the theory of restoring monuments prefers the latter approach, which satisfies both the historic and artistic interests. In practice, however, any major reduction of the operative function requires changes in the practical use of the building. Any substantial change in the practical use of a building ought to be approved by the house-owner (or by any other person responsible for the renovation), who can enforce a completely different concept of the further purpose of the building. Consequently a disagreeable situation often arises,

which mostly influences the way of renovation. As a result of the feeling of uncertainty in the search for new financial sources the historic requirements are usually abandoned. A similar development should be expected whenever the renovation involves alterations arising from the conversion of the building to practical uses.

As concerns the four factors: "architectural form", "historic values", "practical use" and "financial sources" in determining the renovation, we have to cope with the fact that particularly in the field of preserving vernacular architecture the available financial sources only rarely suffice to meet the historic requirements on the conservation. If a vernacular building of high historic value is to be renewed, there is in most cases no other possibility, but to exclude it from practical life and to convert it into cultural facilities. Owing to the scarcity of financial means the general aims of preserving vernacular architecture ought to be differentiated depending on the historic value of building or ensemble. Considering the vast number of vernacular buildings, which are to be preserved without being excluded from practical life, main attention should be paid to the correct renovation of their architectural forms. The enhancement of aesthetic values should be determined as the main goal of the renovation of the great majority of vernacular architecture. If a vernacular building is to be renovated as a single unit and the neighbouring objects remain in bad repair, the enhancement of its visual impact is almost impossible, because this depends on the environmental qualities in the surroundings. Therefore vernacular architecture should be preserved in whole groups of buildings and ensembles, the aesthetical impact of them may be enhanced by the scenic beauty of the adjacent area. Moreover the renovation of an ensemble allows a better installation of utilities facilitating the practical use of the renewed buildings.

The conclusion may be arrived at is that the effective renovation of a vernacular building is conditional on its conversion to a suitable use and by the level of amenities in surroundings.

THE NEED OF THE ADEQUATE USE AND OF THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE ADJACENT AREA

In general terms it may be said that the prevalent cause of the current deterioration of vernacular architecture is not caused by the limited durability of the structures, but rather by the loss of its original use. If a building of vernacular architecture serves only occasionally and for various second-rate purposes, its owner or occupier has no urgent reason for its regular maintenance. Why are so many buildings of vernacular architecture being deprived of their initial use? There are three causes of this phenomenon:

- 1) Contemporary human activities as well as the living standards (which differ from those of the past) require a new lay-out and advanced technical and sanitary equipment;
- 2) Substantial alterations of vernacular houses and other buildings to meet the said requirements are very difficult due to restricted capacity of their spaces and bearing structures;

3) The conditions for a convenient use and the relevant equipment are limited by the level of public facilities in the adjacent area.

For these reasons the appropriate use of a derelict vernacular building cannot be decided upon so easily, without deeper study. The objective, i.e., the integration of the building in the current life may only be attained when the building arouses the serious interest of the potential occupier, who has sufficient means, and who does not desire more than the building can offer. The matter is complicated by the fact that most vernacular buildings of outstanding historic and artistic interest are scattered, that they are located in the countryside far away from communications and urban centers; in towns and cities they are lost in blighted areas.

Therefore it should be added that if a building is converted, it should be considered whether the new use is compatible with the historic and architectural character of the building. This happens only very rarely.

Is there any probability that a derelict vernacular house should be chosen for conversion? Can anything be in favour of vernacular architecture?

The natural beauty of the surrounding area may be regarded as being the major factor stimulating interest of potential occupiers of vernacular buildings. In recent years the increasing possibilities of leisure, recreation and motoring promote general interest in the second home in beautiful country-side.

Similarly the conversion of a vernacular building located in a town or a city may be feasible in view of the environmental qualities in its surrounding area, especially if a whole ensemble of vernacular architecture requires renovation and the installation of utilities.

The further use of vernacular buildings in towns and cities will be enhanced by the variety of the contemporary urban life which offers them a wide range of possible uses, namely for various social and cultural purposes.

From the view-point of historic preservation the need for finding a suitable use for a vernacular building mostly arises when a building of outstanding historic and artistic interest is under threat. The most frequent cases are, when the building

- 1) is derelict and its owner or occupier are showing no interest in its renewal;

- 2) is serving second-rate purposes without proper up-keep;

- 3) is serving a use incompatible with its cultural value;

- 4) is destined for demolition with a new building to be built on the vacated site (or in case the site is cleared for redevelopment).

In many cases a vernacular building which is in danger of total delapidation may be saved when the owner-occupier is given a new dwelling and is reimbursed for his house.

A new use of an endangered building cannot be solved solely as the relation between the building and the user. A suitable re-use of a vernacular building is conditioned by many circumstances of which the most important are following:

- 1) The effect of the intended use on the conservation of architectural elements of historic and artistic interest and on the preservation, possibly on the restoration, of the original spatial lay-out;
- 2) The effect of the intended use on the visual impact of the architectural and historical elements on the visitors;
- 3) The effects of the environmental qualities of the surrounding area on the use of the building and on the visual impact of its architectural forms;
- 4) Local conditions for attaining the required level of amenities and public services (green areas, sewage system, power and water supply, waste collection and disposal);
- 5) The possibility of commuting to the centres of the respective catchment area (shopping centers, catering services, health centres and other services).

The solution of the first two problems is within the power of historic preservation bodies. They can reject an unsuitable use of the respective building or, on the other hand, they can withdraw their demand on the consistent conservation of historical and architectural elements in the interest of preserving the historical monument as an entity with regard to the impact of its architectural form in the adjacent area. They usually assess the matter also from the point of view of the effective use of available means; the restoration of a historical monument, which will be accessible to the general public, is usually preferred.

The dependence of a vernacular building on its surroundings, as expressed under points 3-5, usually exceeds the authority of historic preservation bodies. This does not, however, mean that these bodies should not deal with these problems. With regard to the fact that it is these broader relations that condition the future fate of vernacular architecture it is indispensable that historic preservation bodies should undertake the systematic preparation of recommendations and proposals stating their intentions and means in this respect.

It is evident that primary attention should be devoted to such buildings and ensembles of vernacular architecture which are most precious for their historic and artistic values and which for one reason or another are in greatest danger of being damaged or destroyed. It is usually required that their conservation and restoration should be undertaken without any compromises. The integration of such buildings of outstanding historic and artistic values in contemporary life is usually conducted in a very specific manner, i.e., they are excluded from practical use and become the exclusive object of cultural interest. Their conversion into a museum facilitates their effective protection from damage and secures their regular upkeep by specialists. The problem is in that the dependence of the respective building on its environment very rarely allows its restoration in its place of origin. Insofar as conditions are created for the conservation of a complete ensemble of monuments in their original integration in the terrain and natural environment, such a project may be considered as being a supreme achievement of historic preservation. This is because the historic and artistic values of the ensemble are enhanced by their inter-relations. In view of the random occurrence of

preserved buildings representing regional and functional types of vernacular architecture it is usually necessary to secure their documentary function by transferring them to in-door museums in which are installed only their most valuable elements, or to open-air museums where they are re-established including their interior furnishings. All this becomes the task of museum institutions and does not fall into the sphere of the activities of historic preservation bodies. It is therefore necessary to put the work of the said institutions into harmony.

The institutions of historic preservation focus their attention on those monuments of vernacular architecture which are to be preserved in their place of origin and which will continue to be put to practical use in everyday life. It is therefore all the more urgent that they suggest which buildings and which ensembles of vernacular architecture are to be preserved and rehabilitated together with their surrounding area, with regard to their values and to the condition existing for their social use. This work is designed for well organized teams of specialists of the respective qualifications, among them the architects, urban planners and economists. Their consistent cooperation with the respective authorities responsible for decision making on the development of settlement, on the reconstruction of towns and cities, and on the siting of public amenities and community services, is of major importance for the success of their work. The outcome of such cooperation should be a long-term programme of the protection, restoration and use of buildings and ensembles of vernacular architecture. The preservation programme should be based on an in-depth knowledge of the state and values of the preserved stock of vernacular architecture, on the analysis of local conditions for the renewal and use of the individual buildings and ensembles, on the critical evaluation of the probable interest of various social groups in their use, on a realistic estimate of means which will be available for the attainment of the given objectives; this including the assessment of the efficiency of administrative instruments which may serve the given purpose.

CONCLUSION

With regard to the decisive factors which in most countries currently determine the possibilities of historic preservation, namely the lack of funds, qualified specialists and craftsmen, lack of suitable sites, it will hardly be possible to preserve all buildings of vernacular architecture which have by any coincidence been preserved to our times. Unless the objectives of historic preservation are modified for such a situation and unless available funds are used purposefully and realistically the results of the exerted effort will not correspond to social needs and many cultural values will probably be lost. An adequate solution to the problem will rest in the differentiation of the strategic goals of the restoration and re-use of vernacular buildings according to the historic and artistic values of the respective buildings or ensembles, local conditions existing for their preservation, adequate functional use and their aesthetically affective integration in the urban

or rural environment. If the implementation of this general principle in diverse local conditions is to be secured it is necessary to draw up long-term programmes for the protection, restoration and re-use of vernacular architecture, such as would safeguard the optimal distribution of funds by the priority ranking of the set goals.

YÖRE MİMARLIĞI ÖRNEKLERİNİ KORUMANIN AMAC VE ARAÇLARI

ÖZET

Çoğu ülkede günümüzde görülen ekonomik ve toplumsal gelişmeler insan etkinliklerinde ve yaşam koşullarında önemli değişiklikleri de birlikte getirmektedirler. Kırsal alanlardan kentlere akan nüfus, yeni yerleşme bölgelerinde kendi konutlarını kendileri yapmak zorunda olan insanlar, terkedilen, boşalan kırsal yerleşmeler bu değişikliklerin fiziksel görüntüsünü veriyorlar. Öte yandan, kentler hızlı bir yeniden yapım zorunluluğu ile karşı karşıya kalmaktalar. Yalnız kentlerin özeklerinde değil çeperlerde de büyük ölçekte yenilenme sonucunda varolan yöre mimarlığı örneklerinin sürekli biçimde yitirildikleri görülüyor. Bu yüzden, yöre mimarlığının korunması sorumlular için öncelikli bir zorunluluk olmaktadır. Bu zorunluluğun ancak çeşitli uğraşı dallarının katılması ile üstesinden gelinebileceği açıktır. Mimarların paylarına düşen yalnızca yapıların tasarımı ya da onarımlarının biçimlendirilmesi de olmamak gerekir.

Bu yazıda, yöre mimarlığı örneklerinin kültürel değer yargılarının değişmesi sonucu yitirilmeleri kadar korunmaları zorunluluğu üzerinde durulmaktadır. Bu açıdan, koruma eylemlerinin kaynaklandığı kavramların kapsamına alınabilmeleri için konulacak amaçlar ve bunu sağlamaya yönelik araçların tartışılması yapılmaktadır.

Teknik bakımdan, yöre mimarlığının korunması için işlevsel yararlılığın sağlanması ve sürdürülmesi gerekir. Bunun için eksik ya da yetersiz kısım ve öğelerin tamamlanması, yenilenmesi önerilecektir.

Ancak, teknik yaklaşımlar tek başlarına yeterli olmayacaklardır. Onarım-sağlıklaştırma-yenileme çabaları, estetik ve tarihsel değerlendirmeler bakımından da başarılı bulunmalıdır.

'Mimari biçim', 'tarihsel değer', 'kullanım değeri', 'parasal kaynak' gibi noktalardan konuya bakıldığında yöre mimarlığının korunması için parasal kaynağın en önemli sorun oluşturduğu görülüyor. Ayrıca, bir yapı topluluğu içinde onarımı ve sağlıklılaştırılması yapılabilen bir kaç yapı kendi başlarına anlamsız kalacaklarından, sorun bir çevre korunması olarak ele alınmak zorundadır. Bu işe daha büyük parasal sorunlar demektir. Ancak, alt yapı vb. ortak harcamaların paylaşılması ile sorunun bir oranda hafifletilebileceği gerçeği de gözden ırak tutulmamalıdır.

Yöre mimarlığı örneklerinden özgün işlevlerini yitirdikleri için yok olanlar çoğunluktadırlar. Gereken korumanın sağlanabilmesi yapı için uygun bir işlevin bulunmasına ve bu işlevin tüm çevrenin işleyişiyle uyumlu olmasına büyük ölçüde bağlıdır. Korunmaları ancak ve zorunlu olarak 'müzecilik' anlayışıyla gerçekleştirilebilecek örnekler dışında yöre mimarlığının günlük yaşam içinde işlerlik kazandırılarak korunması için başta mimarlar, plancılar ve economiciler olmak üzere çok sayıda ilgili uğraşı dalı elele vererek çalışmalıdırlar. Yapılacak iş programı yapıların derinlemesine incelenmelerini, değer ve sorunlarının saptanmasını, yerel koşulların iyi belirlenmesini, önerilecek onarım ve kullanım biçimi ile sağlanacak amacın doğru konmasını gerektirecektir.

