

Features of Interior Space Components in the Traditional Turkish House: Konya Houses

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Abstract: The formation of components in a room of a traditional Turkish house is intensive in terms of functional variety but in order to avoid making the space too narrow, the basic pragmatic necessities which are behind the structural success in the integration of the spatial components need to be explored. Turkish rooms can be transformed into different functional structures at different times of the day. The fact that the fixed furniture is positioned in such a way that it can answer any functional change in the room shows that the layout of the room, serving more than one function, is based on the fixed components which are contained within itself.

Key words: Components • Interior Space • Konya Houses • Traditional Turkish House

INTRODUCTION

The components of interior spaces in Turkish houses and the specific rooms therein consist of spatial components which contribute to form and enrich its functionally. These components give the room in which they exist a rich functional variety while supporting the clarity of the room as fixed on the wall and ceiling.

As the elements of the Turkish home interior space components are classified, it is necessary to associate them with the building components on which the components of interior space are based. It is necessary to place the components considered here together in the analysis because of their classification as a part of spatial elements in the room. However, the interior space of Turkish houses generally consists of the spaces in the house and the structural elements and components forming it.

From the general sophisticated structural elements used in interior space:

- Windows and doors

From the components and finishing elements in the Turkish house:

- Flooring, components related to flooring and the finishing elements of flooring,

- Walls, components related to walls and the finishing elements of walls
- Ceilings, components used on the surface of ceilings and finishing elements of ceilings are identified as interior space component elements.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

It is necessary to examine the interior space of the traditional Turkish room, which will reveal the walls and the component characteristics of the Turkish house interior space in detail [1]. Walls and the components to which walls belong are shown in Figure 1.1 and Figure 1.2 by giving examples of the houses in Safranbolu and Konya.

- It is explained how interior space component elements form the walls of traditional Turkish room according to the characteristic features of the “Turkish house” interior space wall.

Traditional Turkish rooms have a square or nearly square shape and their walls have distinctive component elements and functions. Therefore, the room is shaped according to the original component(s) on its wall(s). When it is considered that the components on the wall

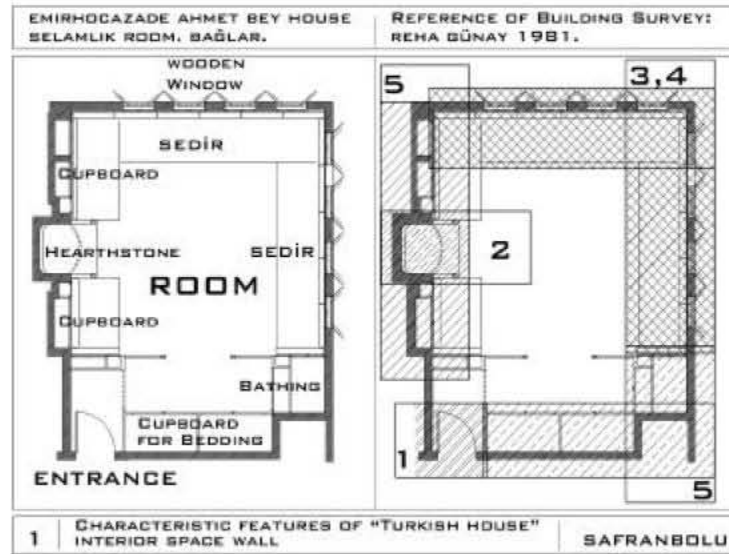


Fig. 1.1: Characteristic features of "Turkish house" interior space wall; Safranbolu

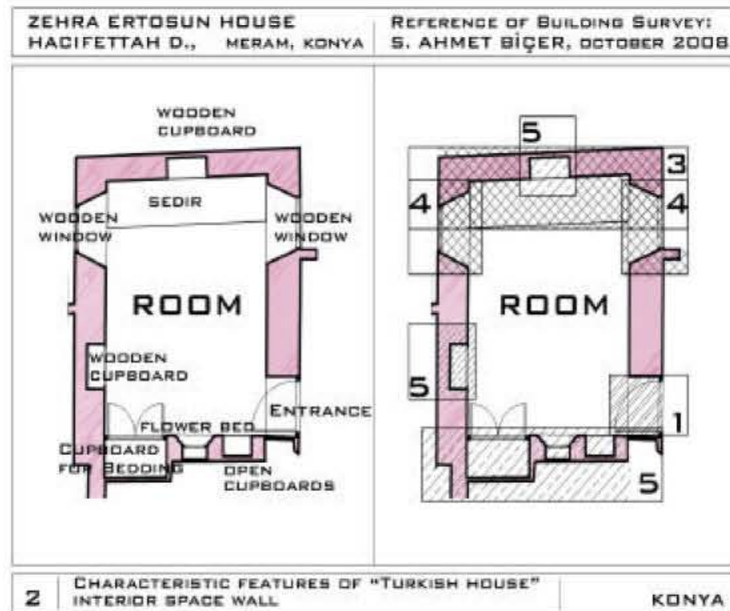


Fig. 1.2: Characteristic features of "Turkish house" interior space wall; Konya

play an active role in the formation of one or several walls of the door and they reflect a fixtural characteristic that is special to that wall, the room wall consists of these features in general meaning [2-7,12]:

- Entrance, entrance wall and passage to the room (1): The entrance to the rooms from the patio (sofa/hayat) consists of a two-stage passage. In the first stage, there is an entrance to the under-terrace through the patio and later from the under-terrace to the rooms. The under-terrace provides a front

entrance at this point. This part, called an under-terrace, is usually positioned one step below the terrace. The under-terrace consists of a closet and various wooden poles through the short side of the room. All of the walls combine with the combination of cupboards which serve various functions and the door which provides an entrance function to the room. Passage to the room(s) from the patio is through the under-terrace, where the door providing entrance and the combination of cupboards are together.

The most significant element in the combination of cupboards on this wall is the large cupboard for bedding which has various widths on the external wall and the bathing cubicle which is found by opening the cover under the large bedding cupboard. Sometimes the use of a hearthstone next to the bedding cupboards provides a facility for bathing cubicles because it has a shower function to reach the hot water. Sometimes the bedding cupboard component is next to the place used as a bathing cubicle. The base of this cupboard is spared of firewood and other materials. Flower beds, cabinets and pockets are the other components used on this wall.

- **Hearthstone wall (2):** Although it is not common, it may be seen that a wall is separated into a hearthstone and the components related to a hearthstone. There are wooden cover cabinets, inserted or carved cupboards and pockets for matches and lamps on both sides of the hearthstone. Hearthstones are featured by emphasising according to the significance of wooden accessories and wooden accessories work together to make the room more stylish.
- **“Sedir” wall (3):** Sedirs are raised upholsteries which have a significant place in the traditional sitting style in Turkish rooms (sitting cross-legged) and are positioned in front of the windows which are opened to the front or the garden near the outbuilding. Since sedirs are made as to be sitting spaces, they can be arranged into I, L and U shapes. Thus, there isn’t a wall spared only for sedir seating. There are also some samples available as the lower parts of sedirs are used as cupboards.
- **Window wall (4):** Windows are arranged in a way that they don’t intercept the view of people sitting or standing. Big windows under the shelves are arranged as opening to the street or patio in order to lighten the room efficiently. In the houses where the height of the room is taller, there are top windows over the shelves.
- **Wall, spared for cupboards (5):** Various combinations are created on the wall by the components of covered cabinets, pockets and open cupboards as built-ins on the walls according to the needs of the room. As other cupboards are positioned on the other walls according to the needs of the room, pockets/open cupboards and covered or glass cabinets are the components used most commonly. Shelves, which encircle the room, are identified as the

last point for the house owner or the craftsman, defined as useful part are the component elements which are seen on the walls.

- The fixtural features that make a Turkish house multi-functional have been going on as “characteristic features of the Turkish house.” However, the use of the components and social forms has been changing according to culture. Besides the main characteristic feature of the Turkish house, its external appearance is plain; the interior space is fitted in a simple but smart way. Users’ wishes and needs are the most significant factors in creating the space in a traditional Turkish house.

In-room components help the facilities to meet particular actions, such as sitting, dining, studying, resting and sleeping -which are the most significant features of the traditional Turkish house. Since the rooms in Turkish house are used as living units, they don’t have mobile furniture; instead they have fixed components in which the furniture of the room meets more than one purpose. These places consist of fixed wooden furniture and components like shelves with doors or not and beside them, cupboards for bedding and cells which keep the things needed in the space. Besides the cupboard for bedding, cupboards, shelves and cells have multi-functional tasks; they are used according to the mobility of the furniture used [3].

It is seen in the components which are included in classification work that one or several of them are used often and this shows that the association of components is built very well, which provides various functions which are performed together in the room. This fact reflects the characteristic features of the component used and its structural parts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Rooms in Konya houses are usually plainly furnished; however, like the rooms in Turkish houses, their interior space component is performed as they meet several functions. There are usually one or two main rooms which contain more components than others and an outbuilding to expand the space in the houses. This room is usually built at the side which is overlooking the outside but not the road. The main room (a room for guests) is built in an important part of the house with intensive components [8].

Adobe brick which is found easily in the region due to the climate feature has been chosen as a building material for the house. The most distinctive feature of Konya houses is that even though the external appearances of adobe brick houses are plain and homely, inner spaces are fitted and provide simple solutions [9-11].

“Windows” and “doors” as general sophisticated structural elements in the Turkish house are examined. When we examine the behaviour of windows and doors in Konya houses we obtain these features:

Windows: The number of windows in the rooms in Konya houses is not more than three in one face; or if there is a side facing outside they are found on more than one wall. The fact that the thickness of adobe wall is between 50 and 70 cm allows the windows to be built as alcoves, which are built towards the exterior surface of the building. The reason that alcoves are built as their two faces expand inward in a sloping way is to lighten the inner space more. The bottom and upper parts of the alcoves are covered by wooden material and side faces are covered by polishing the surface with white earth. Windows are encircled by wooden frames. This frame is attached to the wooden beam which goes through the room from its bottom and upper parts [11].

The fact that windows have wooden doors in their inner faces makes their appearances inside like cupboards. Moreover, although they are seen rarely in the group with patios, sliding windows can be seen in Konya houses. Lattice windows are not common in Konya houses. This is because of the fact that the yard/patios of the houses are encircled by high walls. However, iron window guards are generally seen in almost every house, sometimes in even more than one window [11].

Doors: Room doors in Konya houses consist of wood which is not very high and attachments to each other in their upper middle and bottom parts.

Besides their simple structures, doors constitute entrance to the room by integrating with open cupboards, flower beds and cupboards for bedding which are just in the entrance of the room. The wooden frame encircling the doors ensures the integrity in the room by becoming attached in its upper and bottom parts to the wooden beam which goes through the room.

CONCLUSION

When classifying the components in Konya houses such as flooring, wall and ceiling according to the classification of the interior space component elements:

- Terrace, under-terrace and divans related to flooring
- Cupboard, large cupboard for bedding, bathing cubicle, pockets (open cupboards), flower bed and stern-board related to the walls
- While the plane panel stripped ceilings are seen, in some houses there are wooden ceiling roses and ornamental hand drawn ceilings.

During the daytime in the rooms of Konya houses, there is nothing other than mattress and pillows on low divans and rush mats, carpet and cushions as flooring upholstery. There is a divan component across the room from the entrance and there are pillows, side-rest pillows, back-rest pillows and clean covers on them. Dining is performed by laying the dining stall, called “sini” and dining clothes at certain times during the day. The room providing sitting and dining facilities during the day transforms to provide a sleeping facility at nights. Mattress, pillows and quilts which are kept in the large cupboard for bedding are laid down to provide a sleeping facility.

Fixed furniture is embedded in the walls in Konya houses too, as in traditional Turkish houses. However, the fact that mobile furniture used in our time entered into Konya houses as into traditional Turkish houses shows that these fixed components have been changed.

Entrance to the room is through a wooden door, which is in the corner of the room. Since the components such as large cupboards for bedding and flower beds which make the door become an alcove are in cupboard integrity, the entrance is transformed to an under-terrace. The pocket on the wall (“takcagoz”) across the door is identified by names regarding its function to keep quilted turbans, tarboosh and earthenware water jugs.

The walls of the room consist of several cupboards called cupboards, shelves and open cupboards (“agziacik”). Wedding-chests of new brides are kept in these open cupboards. Both sides of the open cupboards are decorated with wooden materials or cupboards. This wooden system is attached to a horizontal and vertical wooden skeleton by starting from the bottom and upper parts of all components in the form of a beam and integrating to the upper parts of the window and the door. Wood carvings here are identified with yellow studs called “kabara.” Wooden elements and components are left in their unpolished natural colours, those made during our time, however, are coloured by oil-paint [11].

Cupboards, shelves and open cupboards are positioned accordingly with the needs on the walls on which there is no window. Inner faces of some cupboards

are plastered so they provide a chance for copper or earthenware water jugs to be kept. Large cupboards for bedding are the deepest. The doors of the large cupboards for bedding are fixed to the beams by three hammered iron joints. The component of flower bed is in the room as the highest component in terms of its size. They are used by building a cupboard for a flower bed underneath. Sometimes glass is used inside the flower beds and the cupboard door of shelves inside is glass.

As a result, the features of the rooms in Konya houses fulfilling different functions and requirements in different time periods of daily life are related to the components. Especially it is seen that, the existence of the functional aimed fixed components on the wall and floor as building component increases the usage value of the room. The comparison between the arrangements depending on the components in Konya houses and the arrangements in dwellings of today and the evaluation of the location and functionality of the components of today in the space are the subjects of the studies in the future. It is necessary to handle the functional and usage value of the space and the component/components in that space as the concepts to be considered basically.

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