



Sustainable development in historic areas: Adaptive re-use challenges in traditional houses in Sanliurfa, Turkey

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A B S T R A C T

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The adaptive re-use of buildings is an approach for developing historical areas, and it extends the life of historical patterns. However, adaptive re-use is applied to development projects in different ways including compatible re-use and most appropriate re-use, both of which contribute to the sustainability of historic areas. The present study discusses the challenges associated with the compatible re-use and most appropriate re-use approaches for commercial and community development. In the case of commercial development, re-use is generally initiated by private entrepreneurship and is typically a new activity intended to generate income to sufficiently cover restoration and maintenance costs. Examples include the re-using as restaurants and hotels. Community re-use, which is mostly initiated by governmental involvement or development trusts, does not generate sufficient income to cover restoration and maintenance costs, but it does provide social benefits to the community. The present study demonstrates that design criteria can emphasise the significance of cultural heritage through adaptive-reuse. The research methodology used is tested through six selected case studies analysing sustainable development activities involving the traditional houses of Sanliurfa in Turkey. The aim of analysing the changes and their effects on the traditional houses of Sanliurfa and their historical environment is to highlight the challenges and approaches to re-use in terms of development involving historical patterns and conservation areas to provide guidelines for future projects.

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Introduction

Historical areas can undergo rapid changes in terms of scientific, aesthetic and architectural values. While many traditions and values have been lost, much has also been invented and revived (Clifford, 1988). This cultural process influences housing settlements and their environments. The cultural environment is composed of a variety of elements, each affecting the evolution of culture. These components include religion, belief systems, ecology, economy and social aspects such as family structures, gender roles, kinship and cultural interactions. Traditional architecture is a manifestation and physical representation of the culture of a people, and it includes dwellings and all other buildings. All forms of traditional architecture are built to meet specific needs, accommodating values and economies (Lim, 2007). Conserving the character of suburbs and districts is the only way to conserve cultural heritage in its context. Heritage conservation, in turn, contributes to ecologically sustainable development (Pearson & Sullivan, 1999).

The organisation of an urban area is greatly influenced by the culture to which it belongs. It reflects religious beliefs, family structure, everyday activities and social relationships. Houses possess certain authentic and interesting inherited values; they shape our cities and towns, affecting our whole environment. Traditional houses in the historic city of Sanliurfa, which were designed for suitability to the local climate, construction materials and socio-cultural structures, have mostly been abandoned by their owners in favour of contemporary structures. Changes in the socio-cultural life have caused owners to leave these houses. These dwellings were designed for patriarchal families and to foster closer neighbourhood relationships. To combat the functional obsolescence brought about by these vacancies, new uses are being found for some of these traditional Sanliurfa houses. These houses are often poorly managed or occupied by lower-income groups, a condition that leads to building deterioration and under-priced properties. The increasing pressure of recycling costs and a growing interest in the sustainability has brought adaptive re-use to the forefront (Bullen & Love, 2010). Conservation of historical sites, involves two different approaches to adaptive re-use of historical patterns: compatible re-use and most appropriate re-use (Pearson & Sullivan, 1999).

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The aim of the present study is to contribute to optimising the re-use of buildings in terms of compatible re-use and most appropriate re-use, which contribute to the sustainable development of historic areas. Efforts have been made to analyse these types of re-use for traditional houses, which promote the sustainability of the built environment.

This paper proposes a methodology for the identification of the challenges of the adaptive re-use approaches in addressing historical patterns. The proposed methodology is assessed in four steps that evaluate: (1) the location of the buildings, (2) the condition of the historical patterns, (3) re-use alternatives and constraints and (4) the challenges of types of re-use. The challenges were then compared and findings discussed using detailed examples of re-use.

The methodology was applied to the case of traditional Sanliurfa houses in Turkey. Six re-used traditional houses were investigated in terms of their new functions. The houses were selected from the historical district near the city centre, which includes the city's castle and legendary lakes. The adaptive types of re-use applied to these houses were evaluated through the development initiatives of private entrepreneurs, development trusts and governmental involvement.

Literature review on adaptive re-use

This literature review presents solutions to problems related to the approaches to the re-use of historical patterns. The goal of this review is to help decision makers implement management plans for maintaining historical structures.

The most important aspect of the preservation movement is the recycling of old buildings by adapting them to uses different from those for which they were originally intended. Creative adaptation contributes to pride in our heritage, creating a link to the past and an opportunity for architectural innovation and problem solving (Diamonstein, 1978). Buildings lose their function due to obsolescence or changes in the housing demand. Langston proposed physical, economical, functional, technological, social and legal obsolescence criteria to understand this problem (Langston, Wong, Hui, & Shen, 2008). New requirements imposed by social and economical change, necessitate the re-use of historical structures

(Arabacıoğlu & Aydemir, 2007). The lack of ability of urban space to meet daily needs, economic factors and environmental factors in particular, make re-use projects essential (Çevik, Vural, Tavşan, & Aşık, 2008). Old buildings are potential resources that provide cheap and appropriate structures. For this reason, buildings have been altered, enlarged and adapted for new uses throughout history (Cunnington, 1988). Buildings have been adapted to all sorts of uses because the structures tend to outlive their function (Cantacuzino, 1989). Deterioration can be halted through appropriate re-use (Eley & Worthington, 1984). Adaptive re-use helps to extend the life of historical structures by adapting their functions in response to contemporary needs (Pimonsathean, 2002).

A conservation plan must be accompanied by a management plan. The management plan determines what is required at a site by focussing on the significance of the location and considering how the site should be developed (Worthing & Bond, 2007). The Burra Charter of ICOMOS, Australia (1999), suggested that if a place is to have a new use, it should be a compatible use. Any use that can fulfil its function without damaging the historical fabric of a site may be compatible (Worthing & Bond, 2007). However, the debate on compatible re-use and most appropriate re-use is ongoing. Compatible re-use is re-use that will not damage a place or its cultural significance, whereas a most appropriate use will be not only compatible but will also reinforce and maximise the understanding of the cultural significance of a historical place (Pearson & Sullivan, 1999). The most appropriate use would better promote the understanding of the work practices of vernacular housing. Moreover, most appropriate re-use revives or allows for the continuation of traditional use. In some cases a manager will be unable to implement most appropriate use because the proposed use may not be economically viable. This dilemma has been faced by managers in a diversity of places (Pearson & Sullivan, 1999).

The Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, UNESCO, 2008) suggested that world heritage properties may support proposed uses that are culturally sustainable. By definition sustainability is "to meet the needs of present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"



Fig. 1. Sanliurfa in Southeast of Turkey on traditional pilgrimage routes.

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