

A CONTEMPORARY INTERPRETATION OF VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE. THE ARCHITECTURE OF NAIL ÇAKIRHAN, TURKEY

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Abstract: *As a product of native masters of the vernacular and the accumulation of thousands of years of tradition, local architecture embodies the physical and sociocultural characteristics of the environment of which it is a part. This is an indigenous architecture that displays the character of multiple and unknown local contributors and openly reflects the traditions, culture, experience and customs of the people it serves. Vernacular architecture differs according to the physical conditions of each region, becoming an expression of the culture of that area. Underlying it is the ancient wisdom, experience, skills and mastery that is transferred from generation to generation. The vernacular in architecture is the direct and unconscious translation of a society's culture into physical substance within the framework of specified needs. It draws from tradition and with time, provides a social and cultural documentation that is passed on from one generation to the next. The aim of the study is to examine the residential works of the self-taught architect Nail Çakırhan, one of the most adamant defenders of vernacular architecture in Turkey and a recipient of the Aga Khan award in 1983, in the context of the house he built for himself using the local architectural materials of the region of Ula, where he was born, and the residential buildings he created in Akyaka, in an attempt to analyze Çakırhan's contemporary interpretation of local architecture.*

Keywords: *Vernacular architecture, Regionalism, Nail Çakırhan, Traditional Architecture, Architectural and Cultural Sustainability, Aga Khan Prize, Turkey.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Local architecture is referred to throughout the world as vernacular architecture. The word *vernacular* was first used in 1861 as a derivation of the Latin *vernaculus*, pertaining or specific to a local area/region [1]. Also known as architecture without an architect, spontaneous architecture, folk architecture, or rural architecture and regional architecture, the concept of the vernacular in architecture goes back as far as Vitruvius under the name of regionalism [2]. According to Vitruvius, regional differences in conditions result in the emergence of different types of buildings [3].

The changes occurring in mankind's relation to nature, the ability of human beings to adapt to different conditions and the culture of creating shelter in response to these needs can be traced over time through vernacular architecture. In the introduction to the International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), regional architecture is defined in terms of two fundamental qualities: being manmade or the products of time [4]. Vernacular architecture that reveals knowledge of the past accumulates in the historical passage of time. Among the factors determining vernacular architecture are climate, geography, natural building materials, lifestyles based on traditions and religious behavior, sociocultural structures and methods of production [5]. Vernacular architecture makes use of indigenous materials and local manpower while at the same time reflecting society's traditions, mores, beliefs, values and world view. In this architecture, factors such as natural materials, topographic and physical characteristics of the region and sociocultural aspects play a role in defining the form and structure of buildings. In harmony with the climate and natural conditions of their environment, these structures are generally able to expand through annexation. These are simple, definitive and comprehensible structures and there is generally a vernacular of local terms that are connected with their use in local architecture.

Rapoport defines the characteristics of vernacular architecture as making no claim to institutional or aesthetic norms, being in rapport with the environment and the climate, in synchronization with other structures in terms of the respect shown to the entire environment and carrying the capability of being open to change within a certain framework [6]. Rapoport asserts that cultural factors are more influential in determining the products of local architecture compared to physical factors, calling attention to the fact that architectural design must respond to cultural input, in other words, be specific to the culture [7]. The scholar believes that vernacular architecture is shaped not only by the physical environment but also by cultural values.

At the hands of master builders that have developed through the culture of master-apprenticeship under the traditions and customs that are a product of vernacular architecture, the most important output of this type of architecture is housing. Different ecological and geographical niches yield different settlement models and types of residences. The regional house is a structure that was produced as an outcome of the tradition of the region in which it is located, depending upon the historical, geographical, economic, social and societal factors unique to its situation. One of the most important parameters of the formation of local housing lies in fact in the tradition of building. The architectural culture that is stored in the historical memory of the region is transferred through the generations as a heritage and legacy.

Local architecture that is the outcome of cultural continuity is less affected by rapid cultural changes. Rapoport says that traditional houses are more conducive to carrying on the social habits of residences [8]. In general, they reflect thousands of years of accumulated culture and tradition. Since they are by their nature more resistant to changes in rural settlements, the impact of this reflection is much more intense. With time, a unique architectural identity is created for each region and culture.

2. METHOD

This article was put together in Akyaka, the location where Nail Çakırhan produced his architecture. In this article, we will explore the architecture of the lay, self-taught Turkish architect Nail Çakırhan, a defender of the sustainability of the vernacular in architecture as a quality that preserves the identity of a region. We will examine his approach of adhering to tradition not through imitation but by providing different interpretations to traditional forms

by recreating and to do this, we will analyze the architect's residential buildings to offer an assessment of Çakırhan's contemporary interpretation of local architecture.

Çakırhan advocates for regional architecture that echoes the cultural identity of the area. His regionalistic approach has at its foundation the dimensions of climate, geography, materials, labor, design, technology and culture. Çakırhan defends the view that the anonymous knowledge that is filtered down through the language of local architecture must not be lost. At the same time, rather than taking on a cumulative approach that is dependent on a stylistic reproduction of an eclectic, affected interpretation of history, Çakırhan's approach is one of redesigning traditional forms. While using traditional elements, he has never copied local housing typologies, instead producing different interpretations of both layouts and plan archetypes. In this way, his works are not stylistic imitations of the past. Regional styles are presented in a new form in Çakırhan's architecture. His regionalism and cultural continuity in architecture are never a repetition of past forms. Each of his structures are a reinterpretation of tradition. His architecture is manifested in variations of a main typology but these never reflect a single type. The structures should be evaluated as products of traditional, historical styles and approaches.

Up until the present, many scholars have studied Çakırhan's own residence, which won the *Aga Khan* prize so there are numerous references in the literature to this structure. On the other hand, there is only scant reference to what is called the "Çakırhan style" that the architect created in the region. This paper seeks to examine the typology of Nail Çakırhan's houses in Akyaka and to investigate the regional architectural elements used in these structures. In an effort to fill in the gaps in the literature, we attempt to analyze Çakırhan's contemporary interpretation of the use of the components of regional architecture.

Visits to the region were made during the study and a personal investigation into Çakırhan's *Aga Khan* award-winning residence as well as the other houses of his creation was carried out with the aid of reliefs and photographs. It was unfortunately not possible to take a look inside of the buildings since most of them are only in seasonal use.

3. THE AGA KHAN AWARD; THE NAIL ÇAKIRHAN HOUSE

Born in the township of Ula, Muğla in 1910, Nail Çakırhan was 19 when he enrolled at Istanbul Medical Faculty. He dropped out however to pursue a career in journalism (Figure 1). In 1951, he traveled to Aslantaş to help his archeologist wife, Prof. Dr. Halet Çambel, in her archeological excavations at Adana Karatepe-Aslantaş. Despite the lack of a degree in architecture, Çakırhan oversaw the construction of the Karatepe open air museum designed by Turgut Cansever that had been left half-completed by the contractor, as well as the excavation building, the protective overhanging eaves of the excavation site, workshops, warehouses, forestry buildings, and the police precinct and elementary school located there [9]. Also working at the construction of Turgut Cansever's Turkish Historical Society building, Çakırhan thereafter contributed to the building of the German High School. Failing in health, in 1970, Çakırhan, upon the advice of his doctor, relocated to be close to the sea, settling in Akyaka, some 19 km. from Akyaka. Purchasing a plot of land of about 2 square kilometers, he built a residence for himself, inspired by the house he was born in and the houses in Ula that he loved so much.



Figure 1. Nail Çakırhan. Seated in front of his house (Çakırhan 2005: 63).

The house in Ula where Nail Çakırhan was born, which was the first to inspire him, was a property that his father had inherited from Çakırhan's grandfather (Figure 2). The house was located in one of the oldest neighborhoods in Ula, Alparslan, and with its regionally unique wicket gate, leaned on the northeastern wall of a large courtyard (*hayat*). This type of house was a two-story version of a much loved pentagonal layout with a middle hall, *sofa*, so popular in the dwellings of the region. The building is entered from the side and the pentagonal *sofa* is characteristic of the layout of both floors. On both floors, there are rooms facing each other, each one providing a bevelled entrance and the pentagonal central *sofa* with windows on each wall has a lower ceiling on the lower floor. On the top floor of the structure is the upper floor stair entrance of the house and a spacious and bright central space in the character of a *divanhane*, or central hall or *sofa*. There are interior elements in the rooms, including a hearth, bedding closet, clothes closet, a *serpenç*, or shelf, a lamp niche, and an ablution basin/bathing cubicle (*gusülhane*). There are wide eaves on the four sides of the structure which are called *teneketura* and are blinded off on the street side as an element of privacy that is a characteristic element used in the area. The courtyard, or *hayat*, of the house have flower beds and tied to these, a rectangular pool, a well and an annex.



Figure 2. The house of Grandfather of Nail Çakırhan (Source: Author).

Before starting on the construction of his residence, Nail Çakırhan first approaches the builders of Ula, asking them to build him a traditional house. His aim is to learn the techniques of traditional building from them and then to revitalize this traditional architecture using the elements of materials, construction techniques and decoration [10]. The construction of the house takes one year and Çakırhan works with Ula's woodworking masters, Ali Duru and Cafer Karaca.

In his book, Nail Çakırhan describes his own residence as; “*A house with 2 rooms with a wide divanhane (terrace) in front of the rooms that is the length of the house. The space in between the rooms, used as storage, was widened and converted into an octagonal sitting room with an abundance of windows. In one of the rooms on two sides of this space is a kitchen in the corner while the other one has a lavatory in the same area. The entrance to these two rooms is through a farisi, bevelled double-door that leads in from the divanhane or terrace. The door of the octagonal central space is in-between these two doors. At the center of the wall directly across from the doors of the rooms stands a hearth and double-wing closets on either side. One of the rooms has a double-windowed spacious bathroom with a shower and basin. This space, called the ‘gusülhane’ in traditional houses, is a closed closet with just enough space for a person to stand up in. The other closet is for laundry. On the opposite wall is a closet wide and tall enough to store bedding*” [11].

The Çakırhan residence has a wicket gate entrance of wood that is unique to the region. It is a single-story structure that is accessed through a courtyard called the *hayat* and has a room on each side, leading into an projecting polygonal *sofa*; a wooden roof with wide eaves (*teneketura*) hangs over a wood-columned terrace or portico (*hanay*) (Figure 3, 4). The rooms on the two sides of the *sofa* have two bevelled double-wing doors, each opening onto both the *sofa* and to a columned terrace (*hanay*).

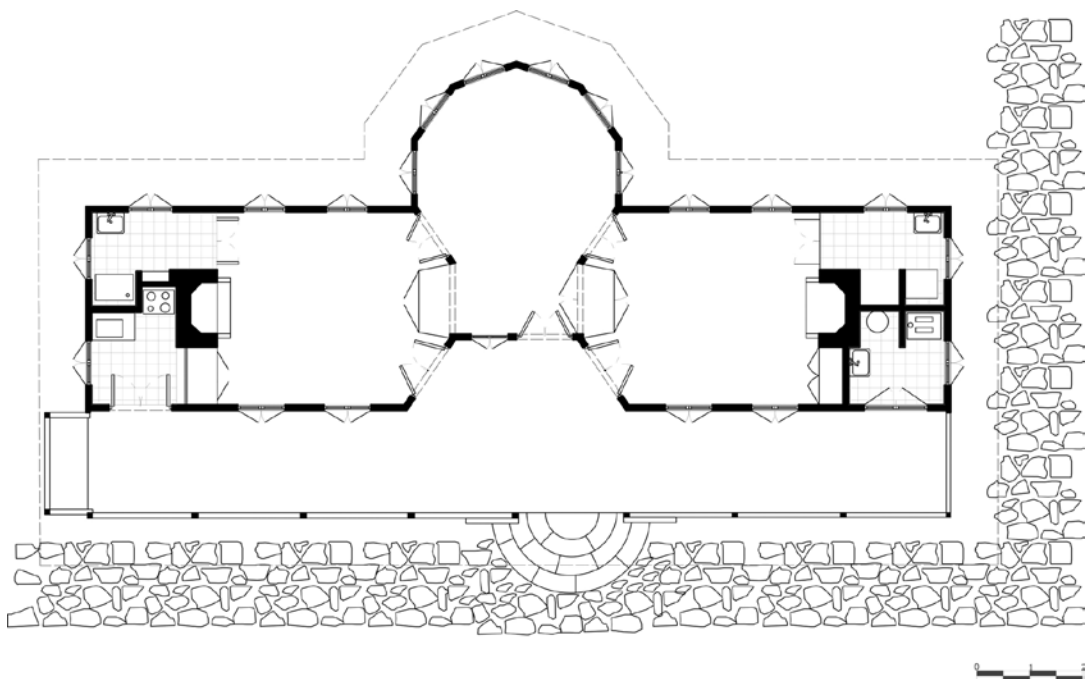


Figure 3. Plan of Nail Çakırhan House (Source: Author).



Figure 4. Nail Çakırhan House (Source: Author).

Nail Çakırhan calls this space *divanhane* (central space) since it is the main center of circulation in the house [12]. Both rooms, each serving as a bedroom-sitting room have a hearth in the center of the wall across from the entrance and on one side of the hearth is a bathroom, complete with shower and basin, with a wooden door; on the other side is a closet space again with a wooden door that serves as a clothes closet (Figure 5). On the opposite wall across from the hearth is a wide and tall bedding closet. Next to one of the rooms outside is a kitchen, entered through a columned terrace (*hanay*) and adjacent to the other room is a lavatory that is again accessed through the columned terrace (*hanay*). Standing between the two rooms, the *sofa* looks out on the courtyard and this is a bright, airy and spacious space with windows on each of its walls (Figure 6, 7). There are shelves (*serpenç*) winding along across the top of the windows and along the top of the doors of the sofa and rooms. The ceilings of the windows are decorated in the *çitakari* technique and the *sofa* ceiling's central molding as well as the doors, closets and window shutters carry the traces of regional woodworking. There are no pieces of movable furniture in the structure. The davenport and cushions placed along the windows are the house's elements of interior design. The courtyard of the house has a pool that again is typical of Ula houses. The roof of the house, constructed by using the traditional wooden-frame system has a hipped roof made of alaturka tiles with *teneketura*, or wide eaves [13]. Another striking architectural feature on the roof is the famed Muğla chimney. The position of the house provides a spectacular view of Gökova Bay.



Figure 5: Nail Çakırhan House. Interior organisation (Source: Author).



Figure 6: Nail Çakırhan House. Oktogonal *Sofa* (Source: Author).



Figure 7. Nail Çakırhan House. Wooden Ceiling of Oktogonal Sofa (Source: Author).



The Aga Khan Award for Architecture

is presented to

Nail Çakırhan
for
Nail Çakırhan Residence

An Outstanding Contribution to Architecture for Muslims

on this day
27 bhu-l-Qeda 1403
4 September 1983

by
His Highness The Aga Khan
in Istanbul, Turkey
upon recommendation of
The Master Jury.

Aga Khan

Figure 8. The *Aga Khan* Award for Architecture (Çakırhan 2005: 63).

Nail Çakırhan's residence is a full reflection of traditional Ula domestic architecture. By combining the regionally popular *mabeyn* plan and the polygonal middle *sofa*, Çakırhan has created a new type of layout here. The house contains both a polygonal *sofa* and an open columned portico or terrace (*hanay*) [14]. This is despite the fact that houses in the region exhibit different archetypes of having a polygonal middle *sofa* with wooded columns covered by wide eaves (*teneketura*) or a vaulted columned portico (*hanay*). By placing the polygonal *sofa* between the two rooms with bevelled doors, Çakırhan has added on a wood-vaulted portico/terrace (*hanay*) covered with wide eaves (*teneketura*) to create a new type of plan. In the tradition of this archetype in the region, the polygonal central *sofa* is accessed by a side entrance that opens onto the *sofa*. Nail Çakırhan however has re-interpreted this too and provided the entrance to the house from the edge of the *sofa*. Thus he has not only combined the traditional architecture of the region but also devised a brand new type of layout.

Çakırhan was inspired by the traditional Ula houses in building this structure and in 1983 he received the *Aga Khan* architectural award for his work (Figure 8). The jury's decision was based on his extraordinary success in blending the house into the environment, keeping alive simple elements of traditional design and decoration while still manifesting a style that transcends the repetition of the past and is conducive to the multipurpose requirements of modern life [15].

4. AKYAKA AND THE NAIL ÇAKIRHAN HOUSES

When Nail Çakırhan received the *Aga Khan* award in 1983, his fame in the region spread. Before being awarded the *Aga Khan* prize, Çakırhan had worked on close to 30 residential projects but the orders he received started increasing at an accelerated pace after that. The "*Akyaka Houses*" were born of this momentum and became a recognized architectural movement.

Up until then Akyaka had been a small town earning a livelihood from agriculture and animal husbandry but it began to evolve moving forward. Beginning in 1983, Nail Çakırhan worked with hotels, boarding houses and cooperatives and, together with local artisans, created an architectural style that was a reinterpretation of regional and local elements of the traditional architectural language and one that would reflect cultural sustainability. Çakırhan worked with a prominent team of architects that included the architect Oktay Ekinci. The region soon gained a touristic identity and in 1988 was pronounced a “special environmentally protected area” after which zoning laws were applied to Gökova and the particular style of Akyaka landscaping was created. This was done just as Çakırhan wanted--by preserving and sustaining the architectural identity of the region.

4.1. The Local Architectural Elements

Nail Çakırhan’s aim in implementing a practical twist to regional architecture was to establish a tradition of architecture that was suitable to the local climate, in harmony with nature, using local materials, traditional techniques that incorporated elements indigenous to the local culture. With this aim in mind, Çakırhan used in the layouts of his structures design elements that were traditional in the houses of Ula such as wide eaves (*teneketura*) with wooden columns or the arched portico/terrace (*hanay*), the polygonal middle space (*sofa* or *divanhane*), semicircular stairs, polygonal niches (*iwan*) with balustrades of wooden arches, bevelled doors, a wicket gate, semicircular stairs, single- or double-winged doors (*kuzulu kapı*), a courtyard with a pool (*hayat*), bay windows and a hipped roof covered with alaturka tiles with wide eaves (*teneketura*) on four sides. Another architectural element Çakırhan used in his structures was the gazebo or *cihannüma* that had been a characteristic of the stone houses of 18th century Ula. The last complementary element that had an impact on the general appearance of the structures was the slanted hipped roof covered with locally produced alaturka tiles with a Muğla chimney on top. The elements inside were again native to the region, featuring ceilings with central moldings of woodwork in the *çitakari* technique, bedding closets, wooden cabinet doors, a *serpenç*, lamp niches and bevelled room doors (Figure 9). Çakırhan used local references on the facades of the structures as well. The structures were painted white and built according to traditional construction systems and were to a large extent made of a framework of brick-filled wood or brick masonry. In the back, the buildings faced Sakartepe Mountain while the facades and courtyards or gardens looked out toward the sea.

LOCAL ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS USED BY NAIL ÇAKIRHAN

- Wide wooden eaves (*teneketura*)
- Open columned or arched portico (*hanay*)
- Polygonal middle space (*sofa* or *divanhane*)
- Polygonal niches (*iwan*) with balustrades of wooden arches
- Semicircular doors
- Chamfered doors
- Single- or double-winged doors (*kuzulu kapı*)
- Courtyards with fountains (*hayat*)
- Bay windows (*cumba*)
- Octagonal gazebos (*cihannüma*)
- Muğla chimney
- Çitakari technique

- Shelves (*serpenç*)
- Lamp niches
- Chamfered room doors
- Arced wooden balustrades
- Traditional construction system
- White facades

Figure 9. Local architectural elements used by Nail Çakırhan.

The buildings were situated such that they would not invade the privacy of the house next door nor spoil its view. The types of plan and the measurements of the houses varied according to the needs of their users.

The dominant and characteristic style of Nail Çakırhan's structures is the use of polygonal forms in spaces and facades [16]. The main polygonal mass and the bevelled and overhanging volumes in the corners are an interpretation of Ula's traditional polygonal central *sofas*. This is an element that gives the structures the semblance of wavy, massive back-and-forth movement. The structures always have bevelled corners. This is a reflection of the bevelled doors used in the general organization of mass in the structures in the region. Although most of the windows of the houses are wooden, double-winged and latticed, there are rare occasions where rounded arches have been used. The two-story structures have projecting upper floors.

One of the elements of interior decoration that Nail Çakırhan uses in his structures is the sitting rooms situated on a polygonal plan and the arched wooden balustrade native to the region that he has added to the front of the niches (Figure 10). These wooden arches are used abundantly and lovingly above entrance porticos and pergolas. Another element Çakırhan uses in his interiors is the balustraded gallery corridor with a wooden arch that stretches out in front of the upper story rooms in his two-story structures (Figure 11). These arched and balustraded galleries also surround the polygonal middle space (*sofa* or *divanhane*) in the center of lower floors and represent an interior interpretation of the wooden columns on the wide eaves (*teneketura*) and the arched outer hall.



Figure 10: Sitting areas with wooden arches (Çakırhan 2005: 132).

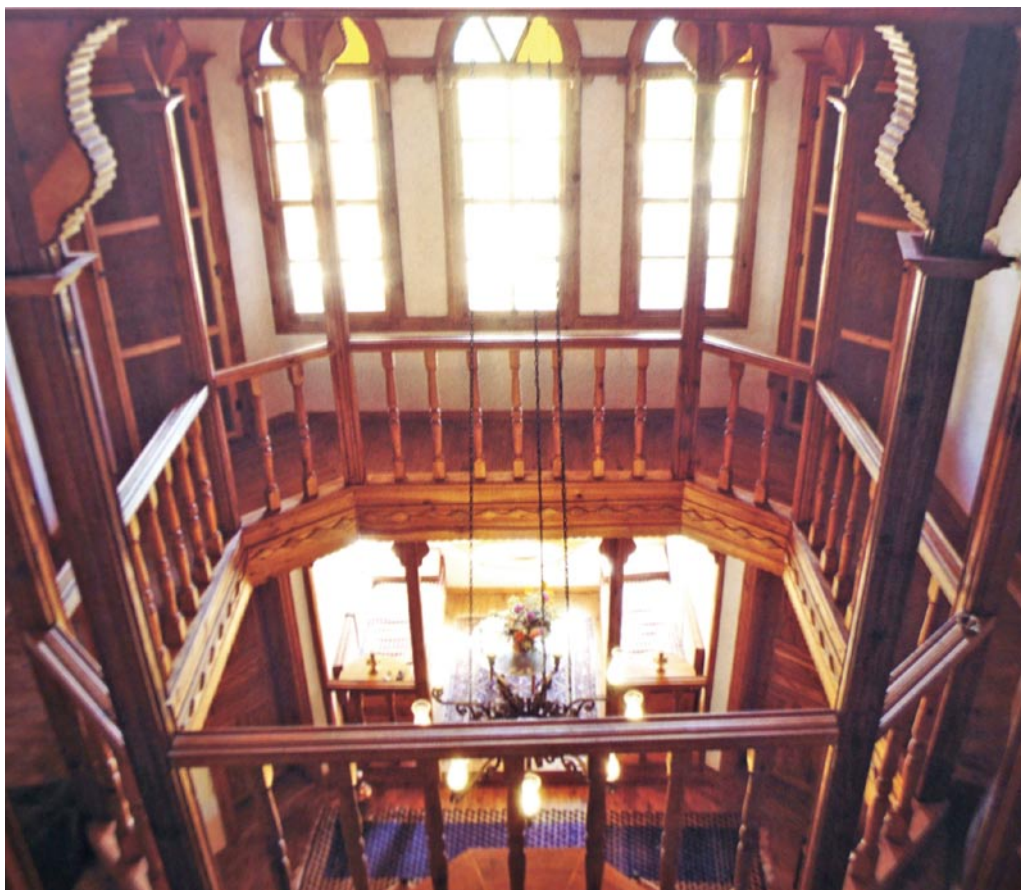


Figure 11. Gallery corridor with wooden arched (Çakırhan 2005: 133).

4.2. Plan Types

Nail Çakırhan generally uses three main layouts in his Akyaka residences. None of these three layouts however resemble each other. Each structure displays one of three different plans and the same element appears in a different form in each house. The first of these programs is the broad scheme that expands widthwise which Nail Çakırhan used in his own residence as well. In this type of horizontally expanding layout, the structure is one-story. As he has done in the Watchman's House, Çakırhan uses this layout as his interpretation of the popular *mabeyn* plan, adding the household bath to the space adjacent to the *mabeyn* (kitchen) between the two rooms with the bevelled doors. Another application is, instead of the polygonal hall or sofa, the use of a large room with bevelled doors and a hearth, along with the arched niches that have been added to it. Still another is a central rectangular area designed with rooms on two sides that look out over the courtyard and the scenery, which are set out in pentagonal projecting forms. An example of another horizontal layout is a motif made up of iwans (niches), arched or unarched, used as sitting units and added onto the polygonal central sofa on two ends, where two sections are utilized side by side as they stand across from each other leading down in two directions along a transit corridor with wooden columns of arches (Figure 12).

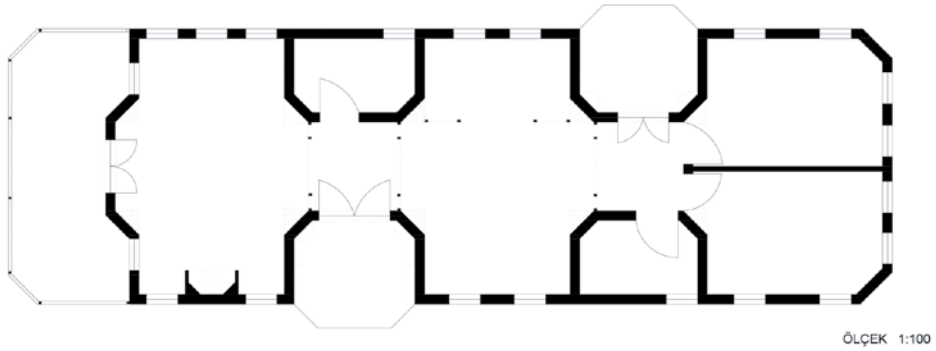


Figure 12. Refia Şemin House (Source: Author).

In this horizontal plan, the most important element is the open columned portico (*hanay*) with its wooden arches and wide eaves (*teneketura*) in front. Çakırhan however uses this open columned portico in different forms rather than as an open hall that stretches out along the entire front facade of the house, as can be seen in his own residence and in other houses in the region. Çakırhan never uses the same plan or architectural element in his houses, adding a different interpretation to each. In his first use of the columned portico (*hanay*), he made this area smaller, turning it into a space with two entrances from each side and equal to or exceeding the width of the central area (Figure 13). Another use of this space is the presence of a portico (*hanay*) with columns or arches stretching out along the side facade of the house. In this case, the house is accessed by the open *sofa* on the side of the building (Figure 12). Another application is one where the exterior sofa has been placed at a corner of the building. Sometimes the wooden arched or columned open portico (*hanay*) projects beyond the building while sometimes it is drawn in toward the side rooms on the two sides or is in alignment with these rooms, creating movement in the mass as a whole. This horizontal plan that Çakırhan devised to include an open columned portico (*hanay*) accessed with circular stairs as peculiar to the region was used in structures besides his own residence, specifically in the Bekçi Evi (Watchman's House) built in 1971, the Saniye-Hüsamettin Güneyman Residence built in 1973, the Minu İnkaya Residence built in 1975, the Beril Eyüpoğlu residence built in 1979, the Heike-Thomas Thol-Schmitz residence built in 1995, and the Refia Şemin residence built in 1981 (Figure 13).



Figure 13. Minu İnkaya House (Çakırhan 2005: 63).

The second scheme that Nail Çakırhan uses in his house is the centralized plan. In this concept, which is used in two-story houses, there is a large central/centralized space (divanhane) of a polygonal form (usually octagonal) in the center of the structure. The octagonal form is none other than a reinterpretation of the pentagonal and octagonal *sofas* that Çakırhan so admired in the traditional homes of Ula. This central area is sometimes used as a dining room, sometimes as an area of circulation, and other times as a sitting room (Figure 14-15). Çakırhan at times has thought of the central space as an interior courtyard and has placed a pool there. On the ground floors of these two-story houses is a mid-gallery space. Around this central space can be found rectangular or otherwise polygonal areas with bevelled doors with sitting areas that are sometimes open, sometimes formed in a polygonal niche (iwans) with balustrades of wooden arches. These wooden arched niches are surrounded by storage rooms and laundry collection areas. Sometimes Çakırhan adds wood-ceilinged iwans (niches) with wooden arches to the polygonal areas. The spaces surrounding the central area are usually symmetrical. The sizes of the rooms are different and the living room is not always the largest room in the house. In this type of plan, Nail Çakırhan uses another element he likes to employ--polygonal iwans (niches) with arches of wood in front that are situated in 4 directions from the octagonal central area (*divanhane*). In the corners of the iwans (niches), he adds polygonal spaces with bevelled entrances to create another plan popular in Turkish architecture--the 4-iwan central *sofa* (Figure 16). Though rare, sometimes this plan uses wide eaves (*teneketura*) with wood arches and an open columned portico or terrace (*hanay*) that stretches over the entire facade (Figure 14).

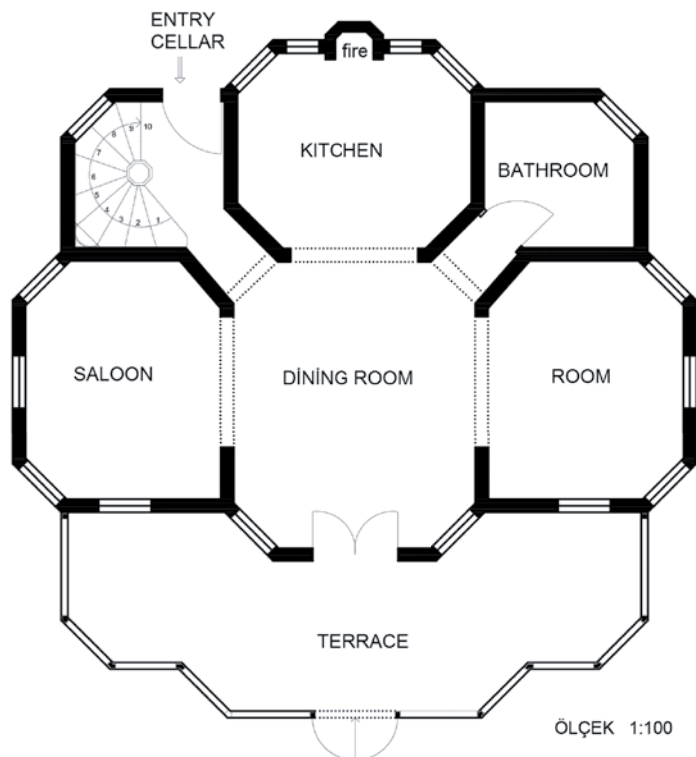


Figure 14. Ünal Eşiyok House (Source: Author).

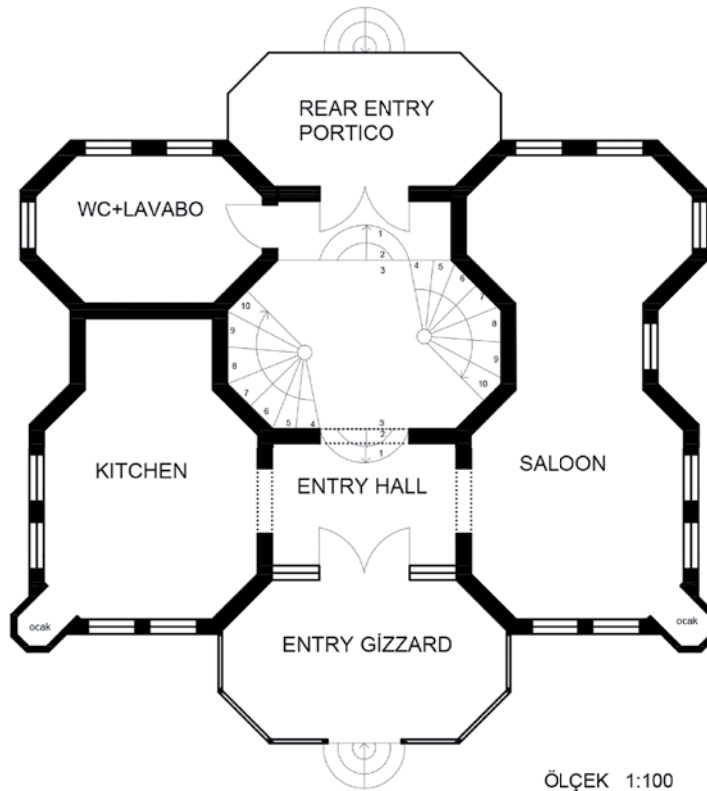


Figure 15. Sevgi Öncü House (Source: Author).

The plan includes an entrance door that sometimes opens onto an entrance hall in front or directly into a middle space (*divanhane*) (Figure 15, 16). In front of the entry of the house is usually a terrace or stone-paved grounds with wooden columns and wide eaves (*teneketura*). All of the units are employed as projecting masses and all facades have windows. Even in the rare instances of rectangular spaces, corners are always bevelled. As far as the distribution of floor functions is concerned, there is no sharp differentiation. On the lower floor may be found a kitchen, living room, dining room, bath, toilet, laundry room and storage room as well as bedrooms. On the upper floor can be found a spatial organization of bedrooms, sleeping niches with wooden arches, baths and toilets as well as “daily rooms” in the words of the architect. The interior decoration again is a collection of traditional elements such as wooden ceilings with central moldings, wooden cabinets and window shutters and shelves (*serpenç*) that have been used as decorative elements. A hearth is not necessarily to be found in every room. In some of the buildings using this plan, the stove is placed in a corner instead of at the center of the wall of the room and the structure has been designed in a polygonal form that projects outwards (Figure 16). As in the traditional houses of Ula, the wide eaves (*teneketura*) over the structures in this plan are not simply designed but a separate eave appears on top of each unit in sections (Figure 17). This gives the structure the appearance of movement.

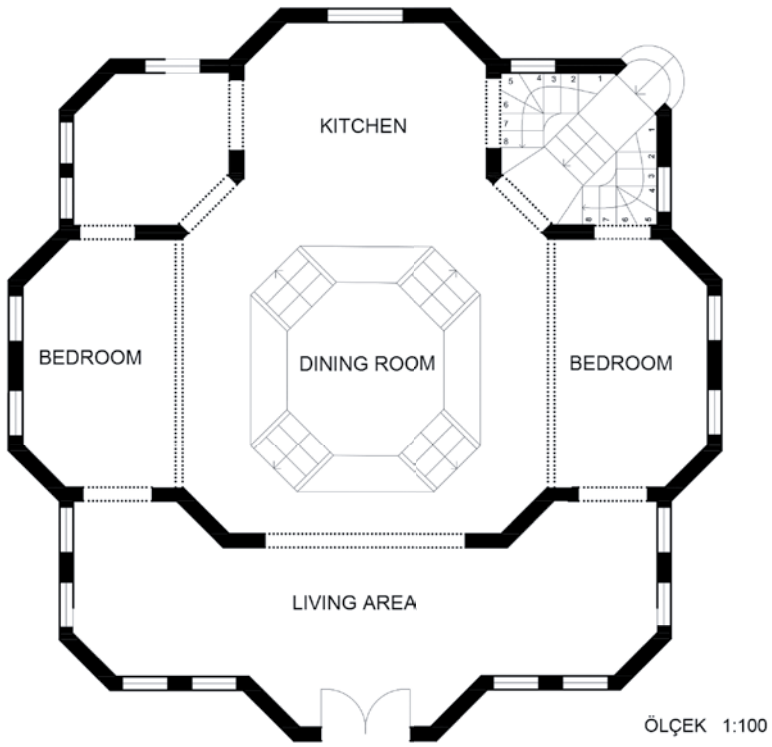


Figure 16. Ayşe Orhon House (Source: Author).



Figure 17. Şadan Dinçer House (Çakırhan 2005: 99).

Another commonly used architectural element in these types of structures in the region is the decorative arches reminiscent of those used in Bursa, covered by generous eaves (*teneketura*) with wooden columns on four sides, the circular or polygonal balconies, the *teneketura*-covered entrance porticos with wooden columns or arches, and the pergolas that have been designed in the same way. As in the general application, each of the eaves on top of these units has a different design, accounting for an abundance of movement in the shaping of the body of the outer mass of the structure. Beneath the wood arched balconies on the upper floor are sometimes the balcony on the lower floor but sometimes an empty space instead of a balcony. In the same way, the wide overhangs above the balconies are sometimes drawn back and at others serve as masses projecting beyond the facade. The balconies on the front of the buildings are generally positioned over the entrance portico in the center of the structure (Figure 18). The wide wooden eaves (*teneketura*) carry the ceiling ornamentation that reflects the woodworking of the region. The polygonal plan and the balconies with their wide overhangs, wooden or arched columns is again a representation of the polygonal open outside hall (*hanay*) covered with its wide eaves that is typical of the region. The use of mass in the plans and facades incorporates wide eaves (*teneketura*) with wooden columns hanging over circular or polygonal balconies, combined with polygonal rooms/spaces, again with generous eaves (*teneketura*) over them. This reflects a disposition to integrate interior with exterior spaces.



Figure 18. Sevgi Öncü House (Source: Author).

One of the elements that is frequently used in Nail Çakırhan's houses built on a centralized plan is the *cihannuma*, or gazebo, on the roofs. As seen in Ula's most well-known residence built in 1904, the Melek Hanım Mansion, an octagonal plan was used on which each facade had windows and the *cihannuma*, as in the Nail Çakırhan buildings with a centralized layout, is an observation deck with a wooden bannister that is accessed from the second floor and has windows facing each direction, covered by wide eaves or *tenekura* of wood. Although *cihannümas* are generally octagonal, there are examples where they appear as ten or more-sided structures (Figure 18).

The wooden roof with the wide eave on top of the *cihannüma* is entirely Çakırhan's own design. The best-known examples of this type are applied in the Dr. Ünal Eşiyok Residence (1979), Ayşe Orhon Residence (1981), Orhan-Nuran İskit Residence (1984), Cahit Güneyman Residence (1981), İdris Gürpınar Residence (1979), and in the Özen-Utku Gürgen (1982), Selen Büke (1991) and Sevgi Öncü (1995) residences (Figure 20, 21). Çakırhan never repeated the same layout in any of the structures he designed using the centralized scheme.



Figure 19. Gazebo or *Cihannüma*. Özen-Utku Gürgen House (Source: Author).



Figure 20. İdris Gürpınar House (Source: Author).



Figure 21. Özen-Utku Gürgen House (Source: Author).

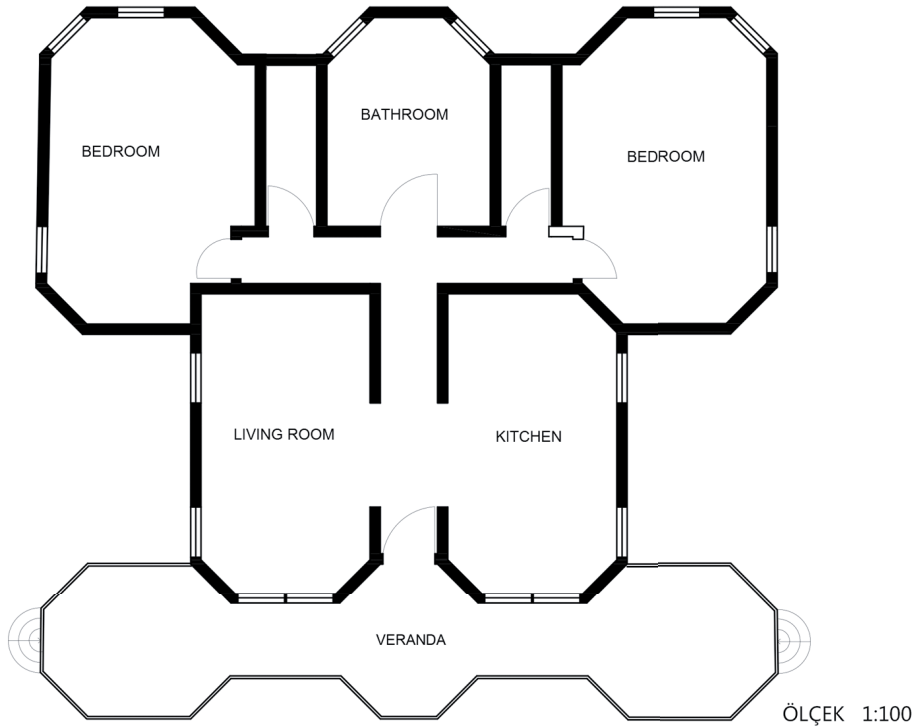


Figure 22. Third plan.

The third plan Çakırhan uses in his houses is a type of plan in which there is no centralization but a form where two polygonal rooms of almost the same size are placed side by side or in different wings of the structure (Figure 22). Nail Çakırhan has a different interpretation of this scheme in every house and sometimes he places stairs in between the two rooms. In front of the upper floor rooms are balconies with *teneketura* and in this case, a small kitchen, toilet or kitchen opens out onto the rooms. The best example of this is seen in the twin houses of Ahmet-Ali Şahin, dated 1985; the striking aspect of this plan in this house is that there is no living room. This plan has no central space and sometimes the rooms are situated in different directions of the house. In some cases, one of the rooms has an arched sleeping niche. In the single-story versions of this type of plan, the entrance to the house may contain a wood columned wide eave (*teneketura*) over an open columned or arched portico (*hanay*). The Beril Eyüpoğlu residence dated to 1977-79 is a twin application of this type.

5. CONCLUSION

As one of Turkey's foremost representatives of vernacular and regionalist architecture, Nail Çakırhan made use of the stylistic components of regional architecture in Akyaka, creating a unique architectural genre in the area. This genre is now called the "*Akyaka*" or "*Nail Çakırhan style*." With this school of architecture that he introduced into Akyaka, Çakırhan reinforced and reflected the unique regional architectural identity, creating a language of architecture that could be transferred to generations to come. As a matter of fact, Akyaka was included in Cittaslow thanks to this style that Çakırhan had created that was so much in harmony with nature and based on the influences of regional architecture and the old Ula houses.

Nail Çakırhan's aim in implementing a practical twist to regional architecture was to establish a tradition of architecture that was suitable to the local climate, in harmony with nature, using local materials, traditional techniques that incorporated elements indigenous to the local culture. The residences, hotels, motels and boardinghouses that he built in Akyaka, an area that with time evolved into a center of tourism, harbored the plans and elements of design that distinguished the local architecture and traditional Ula houses.

Çakırhan's plan typologies also reflect the layouts traditionally used in the houses of Ula. Never repeating the same plan in any of his structures, Çakırhan created layouts that were based on three main constructs, using the same element but with different interpretations. The use of polygonal accents in spaces and facades is a dominant character of Nail Çakırhan's architecture and the polygonal and chamfered projections in the main masses of the buildings are an interpretation of the polygonal central *sofa* of Ula houses.

It is striking to note that all of the buildings Çakırhan designed in the region have their backs to Sakartepe Mountain while the facades and courtyards (gardens) are poised to look out onto the sea and the landscape. Additionally, all of the buildings have been situated in such a way as to protect the privacy and the view enjoyed by the houses next door. The harmony struck between the structures and the environment, the insistence on maintaining the traditional in design and decoration are shared characteristics of the region and the culture.

Nail Çakırhan tells us that we have a rich architectural history that has come down to us through the ages and reminds us of the need to protect vernacular and traditional architecture and keep it alive. He rejects the concept of breaking away from our own culture and roots in the name of modernity and regards imitation in architecture as a type of cancer. His architecture carries a traditional identity. This is why he has created a cultural atmosphere in the region that has not broken ties with tradition. Çakırhan sees continuity in tradition as an element of culture.

Traditions are the carriers of cultural knowledge and this is where cultural transformations can be seen. He does not however view tradition as stagnation. For this reason, in searching for tradition and architectural continuity, he does not veer away from modern architecture. His aim has been to create an architecture that combines together the search for modern innovation as well as traditional norms.

He rejects an architecture that does not reflect the vernacular or the region's culture and defends cultural authenticity. One of his goals is to bring the individualistic side of cultures to the forefront. But his adherence to the vernacular is far from conservatism. He suggests that each element of culture and knowledge derived from each era of experience should become a benchmark in combining these with our own tradition and conventions, declaring that his architecture is the product of this thought and concern as much as it is a cry to be heard. Using the stylistic components of the local fabric to create a style of architecture that is unique to the region, resulting in the "Akyaka style" the "Nail Çakırhan style," Çakırhan has brought to life a regional identity in multidimensional architectural consciousness. Standing out as a center of tourism since the beginning of the 1990's, Akyaka's "school of Çakırhan" in architecture continues to be reflected in the town's villa residences, hotels, motels and boardinghouses. If an architect's aim is to bring out the uniquely local identity of the region and use the language of architecture to transmit this identity to future generations, Nail Çakırhan has more than succeeded in accomplishing this vision.

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Figure 1. **ÇAKIRHAN, N.**, Geleneklerimizde Evler ve Ustalar. In: A. Boratav (ed), *Yapı Sanatında Yarım Yüz Yıl. Geleneksel Mimarinin Şiiri. The Poetry of Traditional Architecture. Half A Century in the Art of Building*, pp. 21-24. Ege Yayınları, İstanbul, 2005.

Figure 8. **ÇAKIRHAN, N.**, Geleneklerimizde Evler ve Ustalar. In: A. Boratav (ed), *Yapı Sanatında Yarım Yüz Yıl. Geleneksel Mimarinin Şiiri. The Poetry of Traditional Architecture. Half A Century in the Art of Building*, pp. 21-24. Ege Yayınları, İstanbul, 2005.

Figure 10. **ÇAKIRHAN, N.**, Geleneklerimizde Evler ve Ustalar. In: A. Boratav (ed), *Yapı Sanatında Yarım Yüz Yıl. Geleneksel Mimarinin Şiiri. The Poetry of Traditional Architecture. Half A Century in the Art of Building*, pp. 21-24. Ege Yayınları, İstanbul, 2005.

Figure 11. **ÇAKIRHAN, N.**, Geleneklerimizde Evler ve Ustalar. In: A. Boratav (ed), *Yapı Sanatında Yarım Yüz Yıl. Geleneksel Mimarinin Şiiri. The Poetry of Traditional Architecture. Half A Century in the Art of Building*, pp. 21-24. Ege Yayınları, İstanbul, 2005.

Figure 13. **ÇAKIRHAN, N.**, Geleneklerimizde Evler ve Ustalar. In: A. Boratav (ed), *Yapı Sanatında Yarım Yüz Yıl. Geleneksel Mimarinin Şiiri. The Poetry of Traditional Architecture. Half A Century in the Art of Building*, pp. 21-24. Ege Yayınları, İstanbul, 2005.

Figure 17. **ÇAKIRHAN, N.**, Geleneklerimizde Evler ve Ustalar. In: A. Boratav (ed), *Yapı Sanatında Yarım Yüz Yıl. Geleneksel Mimarinin Şiiri. The Poetry of Traditional Architecture. Half A Century in the Art of Building*, pp. 21-24. Ege Yayınları, İstanbul, 2005.

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