



The Architectural Facade Features of Traditional Nigde Houses That Are Influential in the Formation of Urban Identity

Kent Kimliğinin Oluşumunda Etkili Olan Geleneksel Niğde Evlerinin Mimari Cephe Özellikleri

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Öz

Kentlerin içerisinde yaşayan toplumların değişmesi, köyden kente göç, plansız şehirleşme, sosyo-ekonomik, sosyo-politik etkiler gibi faktörler, kentte yeni yerleşim alanlarının ortaya çıkmasına ancak aynı zamanda daha önce oluşmuş yerel mimari kimliğin hızlı değişim ve dönüşümüne de neden olmaktadır. Bu durum kentlerin özgün kimliklerinden uzaklaşarak, sıradanlaşmasına, birbirine benzemesine ve hatta aynı olmasına sebep olmaktadır. Kentin hafıza nesnesi olan ve kentin bir döneme ait kimlik öğelerini yansıtan en önemli parçalarından biri ise konut mimarisidir. Niğde evlerinin oluşturduğu eski ve özgün mahalle dokuları incelendiğinde merkezde Kayabaşı, Tepeviran ve Alaaddin tepelerinin üzerinde yerleşildiği görülmüştür. Tepelerden ovaya doğru ve arazi eğiminin kullanılarak bahçe duvarları ile evlerin yerleştirildiği, kimsenin manzara ve güneşine engel olmadan planlama yapıldığı ve böylece organik sokak dokularının ortaya çıktığı gözlenmiştir. Niğde ve yakın çevre köylerinin (Yeşilburç Köyü, Fertek Köyü v.b.) mimarisini oluşturan bahçe içinde ikişer katlı özgün taş evlerin ve organik sokak dokusunun, son yıllarda taşıt trafiği için açılan yollar nedeniyle yıkıldığı gözlenmektedir. Çalışma kapsamında Niğde kent kimliğini, Niğde kent dokusunu oluşturan ve kentin yaşam kurgusunun en büyük bileşenlerinden biri olan geleneksel Niğde evlerinin mimari elemanlarının kent kimliğine olan katkısının ortaya konması amaçlanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kent Kimliği, Kent İmajı, Niğde evleri, Taş evler, Yöresel Mimari

ABSTRACT

Factors such as the change of societies living in cities, migration from village to city, unplanned urbanization, socio-economic and socio-political effects cause the emergence of new settlements in the city, as well as the rapid change and transformation of the local architectural identity that has been formed before. This situation causes cities to become ordinary, similar to each other and even the same, distancing from their original identities. One of the most important parts of the city, which is the object of memory and reflects the identity elements of a period, is the residential architecture. When the old and original neighbourhood textures formed by the Nigde houses are reviewed, it is seen that it was settled on the Kayabasi, Tepeviran and Alaaddin hills in the centre. It was observed that the garden walls and houses were placed by using the slope of the land from the hills to the plain and the planning was made without blocking the view and the sun, thus organic street textures emerged. It is seen that the original two-storey stone houses and organic street texture in the gardens, which constitutes the architecture of Nigde and its nearby villages (Yesilburc Village, Fertek Village, etc.), have been demolished in recent years due to the roads opened for vehicle traffic. Within the scope of the study, it is aimed to reveal the contribution of the architectural elements of the traditional Nigde houses, which constitute the urban identity and urban texture of Nigde and which is one of the biggest components of the urban life setup, to the urban identity.

Key words: Urban Identity, City Image, Nigde Houses, Stone Houses, Vernacular Architecture

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INTRODUCTION:

The geography of the city of Nigde, which has hosted many civilizations in history, has been a preferred settlement by many civilizations for about ten thousand years with its climate, natural assets, ecological structure and sheltered structure between the mountains. One of the most important architectural components that makes Nigde unique with its original physical, cultural, socio-economic, historical and vital factors is the houses built with traditional materials and methods. Most of the traditional Nigde houses, which have an important contribution to the urban identity of Nigde, are one or two storey buildings. However, depending on the slope of the land on which it is settled, three-storey examples are also encountered. Houses surrounded by garden walls or houses settled in a courtyard become integrated and form a neighbourhood texture. People with different cultures, religions and different vital values in the region interact with each other, live together and intertwined. While the main floors that make up the plan scheme in traditional Nigde houses are generally used for activities such as daily sitting, hosting guests, sleeping at night, the spaces on the ground floor are functioned with utility areas that will meet all the needs of the house. For this reason, there are differences in floor plans. Since the facade formations are considered as the external reflection of the plan schemes, within the scope of this article, the houses in the centre of Nigde and the historical settlements in the surrounding towns and villages are examined and information about the building elements and decorative elements on the facade that depicts the architectural face is presented.

METHOD

The architectural features of Nigde houses, located in this precious geography that has been chosen to live for thousands of years, have been shaped by the vital and cultural values of the previous societies. Within the scope of the determined method, definitions such as urban culture, urban identity and its components and urban image were researched and opinions on this subject were summarized in the article. A field study was carried out in Kayabasi District in the city centre of Nigde and in the Fertek village and Yeşilburç village in the vicinity and the original housing samples with stone architecture were compiled. Plan schemes reflecting traditional Nigde houses are explained with examples of facade elements and architectural elements. This study consists of literature research, visual analysis (photographs, maps and personal observations), survey taking and data evaluation stages.

1. ASSESSMENTS ON URBAN IDENTITY AND ITS COMPONENTS

The components that make up the urban identity can be evaluated with the elements of the natural and artefactual physical environment. Natural beauties and landscapes, historical and cultural values are important assets that surround the human environment. Climatic conditions, topography, geography and historical environmental values and economic, sociological and cultural factors define human living spaces, and these factors make cities have their own characteristics. In urban identity, natural environment data, cultural diversity, activities and lifestyles of people living in the city play a role in harmony and integrity. People contribute to the formation of the identity of the city by mutually influencing each other socially. At the same time, the natural, physical, cultural, socio-economic and historical data characteristics of each city, which have unique characteristics, play a great role in the differentiation of that city from the others, extending from the past to the future.

Lynch (1960) explains identity as the state of being original and different from other objects and argues that identity is not equal to anything else, it is unique. In his study, Lynch identified roads, borders, regions, focal points and landmarks as effective elements as artificial environmental elements that are important in the formation of urban identity and recognition of the image of the city.

Relph (1976) explains the meaning of place by examining people's experiences on the place. According to Relph, who tries to define the relationship between space and place by researching the basic behaviours of people in the earth, the quality of a place is largely dependent on human thoughts, behaviours and experiences. Therefore, he expresses the identity of a place not only by the differences of the individual places, but also by the similarities between different places. Cultural characteristics may show similar effects in different geographies. Different cultural characteristics may be seen in places where geographies show similar characteristics. Thus, the identity of a place is the constant similarities and associations that make the place different from others. Relph attributes the identity formed in this similarity and togetherness to a large extent with the interactions and experiences of people with that place.

Norberg-Schulz (1979) emphasizes that each place has a different spirit and argues that the identity of the place actually emerges from necessities. Norberg-Schulz's concept of "genius loci" (spirit of the place) is still used today to describe the distinctive atmosphere of a building or place in the process of transforming space into place. The character of a place or a space is a fact that depends on the colour, texture and form that occurs together with environmental factors. When these features come together, they form a characteristic environment of that place. Overall, the place has its own atmosphere. Any situation of physical characteristics, many factors such as the colour, texture, light-shadow, condition of the building created by the climate, sun, night and day differences on the ground combine and reflect as a spirit belonging to the city and create a memory in the individual. According to Norberg-Schulz, environmental factors are one of the most important factors affecting the identity of the city and people living in this environment add their own culture and lifestyle to the city over time, ensuring that the city takes place in memory.

Lynch (1981), in his reworking of the case, defined the content of the urban image with five elements which are roads, edges, regions, borders and reference points. He emphasizes the relationships and interactions between the natural, social and built environment that make up the identity of the city and differentiate it from the others.

In the work of Wiberg (1993), identity, structure and meaning, which Lynch (1960) describes as the triad of environmental image, are transformed into the concept of identity, profile and image that define the character of cities. While the identity, which is one of these concepts that characterize a city, is shaped over a long period of time, the city's geographical conditions, cultural values, architecture, local traditions and lifestyle create a unique quality blended. The social and economic structure of the city shapes the profile of the city. According to Wiberg, the image of the city is the reflection of the mixture of identity and profile elements in the city and the attractiveness of the city is especially dependent on the image of the city.

Rowland (1996) states that the culture originating from the artificial environment within the framework of urban identity also determines the quality of urban life and values, urbanization and being an urbanite and the way of life in the city. According to Rowland, culture is also the most important element that provides continuity between the past and the future of cities.

Morley & Robins (1997) argue that the continuity of identity can be sustained by "collective memory and shared traditions, sense of shared and lived history" and relates culture to identity. According to Morley and Robins, who argue that identity is based on a certain cultural accumulation, in addition to environmental factors such as climate and technology, cultural factors also take place in the creation of a structure. Among the cultural factors affecting the building environment, family structure, kinship relations, habits, language-religious characteristics, environmental privacy and density can be counted. Morley and Robins state that these variable factors make the environment unique and create the cultural identity of that environment.

Ardoin (2007), like Norberg-Schulz, emphasizes the spirit of the place and states that there are four different dimensions in urban identity. According to Ardoin, these are the biophysical structure or physical structures that the buildings and natural environment are affected by an individual psychological state that develops depending on the physical condition of the place, socio-cultural elements in social communities and linked to cultural concepts and political and economic elements that develop as a reflection of local processes.

According to Kaypak (2010), urban consciousness is that the people living in the city have an identity that can be identified with the city they live in, as well as the different identities that exist. When people attribute some values to the place they live in, become attached to it and start to make some sacrifices for these values, that place has a meaningful identity.

2. THE FACTORS THAT FORM THE URBAN IDENTITY OF NIGDE

All vital criteria such as the natural environment data (climate, topography, vegetation, etc.) that make up the urban identity of Nigde, the vital traces left by the people living in the city until today, the cultural diversity of the people, their beliefs, forms of worship, rituals, livelihoods, neighbourhood relations, education styles, morals and common decency have shaped both their homes, their neighbourhoods and their cities. Although there are other factors such as monuments, borders, roads, regions, reference points, viewpoints and landscape aspects that play an important role in the urban identity, this study focuses on the contribution of Nigde House architecture to the urban identity.

2.1 Natural Values (Geography, Climate, Vegetation, Topography)

The geography of the city of Nigde, which has hosted many civilizations in history, has been a preferred settlement by many civilizations for about ten thousand years with its climate, natural assets, ecological structure and sheltered structure between the mountains. It is located in the region known as Cappadocia in Central Anatolia. Bolkar Mountain, Aladaglar and the old volcanic Melendiz Mountains and Golludag are located around the settlement, which is approximately 1250 meters above sea level. The livelihood of the people is agriculture and animal husbandry. World-famous potatoes and sugar beet are mostly grown in Misli, Melendiz, Altinhisar and Bor plains. In the region, which has a continental climate and is not very rich in terms of vegetation, very good quality apples and cabbage grow, but there are few pine, fir and juniper trees in its forest areas. It is also an important tourism centre in the Cappadocia region with its thermal resources.

2.2. History

From the archaeological excavations carried out in Nigde and its surroundings, founded on the skirts of Golludag, one of the largest volcanoes in Central Anatolia, the "Hattis", who were found to have lived in the region in the 3rd millennium BC, are one of the oldest known peoples of the Anatolian peninsula (nigde.ktb.gov.tr). The Hittites, one of the Indo-European tribes that started to invade Anatolia from the 2nd millennium BC, captured the Hatti city principalities one by one and settled in the region. The local culture of the region is so strong that the Hittites continue to use the name "Land of Hatti" when talking about their new homeland. The name Nigde is first encountered as "Nakhita" in Hittite documents, in later periods, it is also seen that it is called "Nakhida", "Nekide" in different written sources. Until 330 BC, Phrygian and Persian domination is seen in the region. In the Hellenistic period, it is known that the Kingdom of Cappadocia (332 BC - 17 AD) ruled in the region. While Tyana (today's Kemerhisar) was an important centre during the Roman and Byzantine periods, the region was exposed to Arab raids. After 1166, the region passed under the rule of Anatolian Seljuks and later on, it was also subject to the rule of Ilhanli, Eretna Principality and Karamanogullari. It was a sanjak of

Konya Province in the Ottoman Period and gained the status of a province after the establishment of the Republic.

2.3. Socio-Cultural Life

Although it is known that the Greek population lived in the city before the population exchange in 1923, the Greek and Muslim-Turkish populations lived together in the region for centuries. There are very important historical artifacts from the civilizations that lived in the past in the region. Tyana ancient city fragments and aqueducts from the Roman period, the Roman Pool, the Andaval Church (Andabalis Church), which is about 1500 years old, Gumusler Monastery estimated to have been built in the 8th-12th centuries, the Kus Kayasi Rock Tombs in the town of Karatli and many underground cities are some of them. Among the most important monuments of Nigde that are still standing today, there are also works made during the Anatolian Seljuk and Principalities Periods. Nigde Castle (13th century) and castle clock tower, Alaaddin Mosque (13th century), Hudavent Hatun Tomb (14th century), Gundogdu Tomb (14th century), Sungur Bey Mosque (14th century), Ak Madrasa (beginning of the 15th century) are the most monumental works. In the Ottoman Period, among the works that added value to Nigde are the Disari Mosque (16th century), Kigili Mosque (18th century), Murat Pasha Complex (17th century) and Bedesten (covered bazaar) (17th century).

In addition, there are dozens of other churches in the city such as Greek Church (19th century) in the centre, the Virgin Mary Church (19th century) in Kayabasi district, Fertek Chapel in Fertek village (end of 19th century), Fertek Church (19th century), Yesilburc Church (early 19th century) in Yesilburc village, Taslica Church in Taslica village (end of 19th century), Armenian Church in Eski Saray District (19th century), Kucukkoy Church (early 19th century), Aktas Church (19th century), Ovacik Semendere Church (18th century), Uluagac Andrando Church (19th century).

Considering the traditional Nigde houses, which have an effect on the urban identity, as the subject of this study, although the majority of the masters who built the traditional houses were Greek, Turkish masters also took part in the region. Since most of the magnificent stone structures that have survived to the present day have inscriptions with the date of construction on the entrance door, the construction date of most of the houses examined within the scope of this research refers to the range of 1852-1905 (Altuner, 1999).



Figure 1. Nigde in the 1950s. In the aerial photograph, Kayabasi is seen towards Alaaddin Mosque and Derbent. Visible behind are Bucak Meadow, the Sari Bridge and Tepe Vineyards (Oldless Nigde, Nigde Municipality, undated).

3. ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES OF TRADITIONAL NIGDE HOUSES WHICH AFFECT IN NIGDE URBAN IDENTITY

In Nigde houses, the ground floor and the courtyard or garden have a very close functional relationship. One of the most dominant factors in urban structuring is the continental climate prevailing in the region. After the hot and dry months in the summer season, the cold and snowy months in the winter season required shelter against the climate in architecture. The second major issue that forms the structuring is the way of life, which is shaped by the world view. Privacy is important in the introverted lifestyle and the high walls preferred in Nigde houses respond to this need. At the same time, the presence of functions such as kitchen, winery, cellar, warehouse, storeroom, haystack, barn in the use of the ground floor caused the ground floor walls to be applied as blind walls with few windows. Since the houses are surrounded by high garden walls, the life in the garden cannot be seen from the outside. For this reason, most of the stone houses that make up the traditional architectural face of Nigde are planned as a single or two storeys with courtyard or garden. As the facade architecture, features such as prominent courtyard / garden entrance or direct entrance from the street, the ground floor is quite plain and the main floor has a more elaborate and ornate appearance, cantilevers placed on stone consoles, rectangular windows, ornate lanterns (skylight), geometric patterned cymatium, flat roof draw attention at first glance (Figures 2 and 3).



Figure 2. Traditional Nigde houses from Kadioglu Street in Kayabasi District in Nigde (author archive, 2022)



Figure 3. Traditional Nigde houses in Yesilburc Village, (author archive, 2022)

3.1. Construction Material

The yellowish coloured trachyte stone extracted from the region was used in the majority of Nigde houses and in the vast majority of other monuments in the region. While rubble stone masonry is preferred on the ground floor, the main floor walls are generally built with cut stone masonry (Figure 4). It is seen that black basalt stones are used in between. Basalt stone, which is quite strong, was generally used in ground floor corners, door jambs and consoles carrying overhangs. Stone material has also been used in garden walls, garden flooring, outdoor and basement stairs. On the other hand, wooden material was used as a beam between masonry, in door lintels, doors and windows, overhangs, and in interior ceilings, cabinets and closets, stairs and decorations. Rubble stone masonry and cut stone masonry are seen in the masonry construction system on the garden walls. A large amount of cut stone weave is observed particularly around the garden gate in the corner joints and in the coping parts. The coping on the garden wall protrudes approximately 8-12 cm from the wall thickness in both directions. The coping on the garden wall protrudes approximately 8-12 cm from the wall thickness in both directions. The cut stone coping that covers the wall and prevents rain and snow water from accumulating on the wall has a triangular cross-section by angling from both directions.



Figure4. Traditional Nigde houses with gardens from Fertek Village (Fertek houses, in general, attract attention with their plain facades, first the entrance to the garden, then the entrance to the houses from the garden, large gardens or courtyards, interior facades with hanay and flat roofs) (author archive, 2022)

3.2. Plan Formation

Traditional Nigde houses are physical products that reflect the socio-cultural social life. Since the privacy of the family is prioritized, introverted plan schemes have been formed in the houses. The ground floor has little contact with the street and therefore has high walls and few very small windows. The opening of the houses is towards the garden or the courtyard. They are usually single or two storey houses. In the single-storey examples, the room and service areas of the house in the large garden (such as bread house, pantry, barn, warehouse, toilet) are spread over a wide area at the floor and there is a middle sofa in the centre of the house. In the two-storey examples, the service areas are on the ground floor and the rooms are on the first floor.

In the examples of large-organized mansion type houses, there are many rooms and service and utility areas that meet many functions due to the coexistence of several generations of the family. In this type of mansions, other utility structures such as tandoori house, toilet, barn and outbuildings are located adjacent to each other and as a single storey around the mansion, which can be seen with all its majesty when entered through the garden gate opening to the street. The mansion is accessed from the courtyard. In most of them, the hanay part, which goes up with steps, is connected with the first floor of the building. When you enter inside, the anteroom is located in the centre and the distribution is provided from the anteroom to the rooms.

The houses built with stone architecture in the region after 1930 were both small in size and planned without an anteroom arrangement, since they had to be settled on small plots.

Different anteroom types have been formed depending on the relationship between room and utility areas applied in traditional Nigde houses. Plan typology examples with outer anteroom, inner anteroom or central anteroom can be seen in Nigde centre and nearby villages. The facades shaped according to this typology determined the architectural character of the house. The architecture of the street is formed by houses of different character. When examined on a holistic scale, the architectural identity of the street, then the neighbourhood and finally the city emerged.

3.3. Ground Floor Architecture and Garden Usage

Garden walls are a natural boundary that surrounds and defines houses, separating them from their neighbours and street life. The entrances of the houses with gardens from the street are provided through the wooden winged door opening to the garden wall. The entrance to the houses with gardens is provided through the garden. The garden doors of the houses opening to the street are usually framed with profiled cymatium made of wide and nested stone material in order to be a benchmark that can be perceived even from a distance. Life takes place in the garden in all periods when the

climate permits in Nigde. Products such as apples, grapes, apricots and tarhana and kofter that are widely grown in the region are dried in the gardens of Nigde Houses. The elders of the house are playing around the garden with their grandchildren. Laundry and drying activities take place in the garden.

The structure in figure 5 can be shown for the examples of houses with anteroom found in Nigde. The ground floor of the house, which is directly entered from the street, has utility (pantry, patio, bake house) areas. When you go up to the first storey, there is a transition from the anteroom to the rooms on both sides. The facade is symmetrical and the middle part protrudes outward. It has a rich facade decoration with its foiled arches on the windows and the colonnades between the windows.

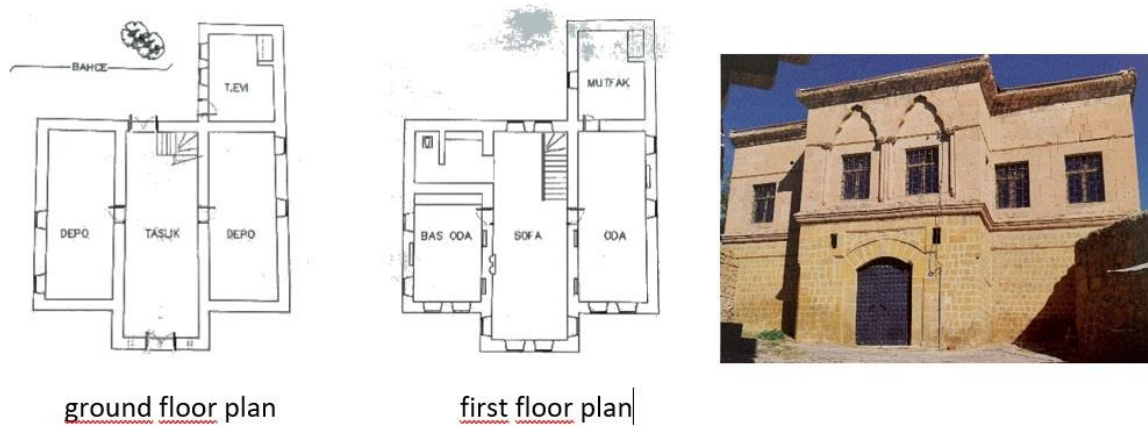


Figure 5. The drawing and photograph of the building at Kadioglu Street No 38 belong to H. Altuner (Altuner, 2018).

The structure in figure 6 can be shown for the examples of houses with central anteroom found in Nigde. The building has a single storey and has a central plan scheme. This multi-roomed house is the type of a large mansion. The building is entered through the garden. Utility areas (pantry, gizzard, bake house, warehouse, toilet) are planned adjacent to the rooms and surround the central anteroom. The anteroom is a large hall that connects these spaces with each other. Daily life takes place in the hall. At bedtime, family members retreat to their rooms. On the south side of the anteroom, there is a selamlik section raised by four steps. Selamlik makes a cantilever towards the landscape. The cantilever has windows in three directions. The windows in the selamlik meet the light and air needs of the anteroom.



Figure 6. The drawing and photograph of the building at Polat Street No 4 belong to H. Altuner (Altuner, 2018).

The main building material of Nigde houses is stone. The ground floors, which are formed with a large rubble stone wall mesh system, usually contain few windows. The wooden beams inside the ground floor walls, which look like full walls, were placed visible from the facade and besides the structural benefit of spreading the earthquake load to the high walls, they also give the facade a horizontal effect.

Partially large cut stones were used for durability in some large houses or on the corners of the ground floors of the houses located on the street corners. Although most of the ground floor masonry was built as a rubble stone wall, the corners turning to the street were not right-angled but chamfered. It is seen that the ground floor windows are opened on the exterior without any particular order depending on the functions in the interior (kitchen, winery, cellar, warehouse, storeroom, hayloft, barn, etc.). The ground floor windows are quite small and are opened at the required points according to the function in the interior. Ground floor windows usually do not have joinery, only iron grids are included to ventilate the interior. However, it is common in the region that these small windows were enlarged over time.

3.4. Main Floor Architecture

Mostly cut stone masonry was applied on the main floors rising above the rubble stone masonry on the ground floor. Thus, the importance given to the interior of the house is also reflected on the exterior. Yellow trachyte stone, which is the main building material of the houses, was used on the main floors as well. It is observed that the wall thickness on the main floors is kept thinner than on the ground floor. Properly knitted cut stones and rectangular windows forming a series create architectural integrity on the facade in perfect harmony. Everyday guests are hosted in the garden or in the open area called “Hanay” overlooking the garden. The Hanay place is available in many houses and was built as part of the local architecture. The arid climate has also affected the use of the garden. There are not many trees in the garden, instead there are grapevine plants that grow even in arid places. This plant, which has very dense leaves, offers shade and coolness under the area it covers. The pollinated inflorescences of the grapevine plant, which is usually spread on the arbour, turn into grape bunches and feed the people with its fruit in the autumn months. In the plan example of the house with hanay shown in Figure 7, the house has two floors, and the hanay is located at a point overlooking the courtyard. Bake house, cellar and rooms were drawn as far as can be detected in the building. The high garden walls, which were actually 2.5-3 meters, have been demolished today.

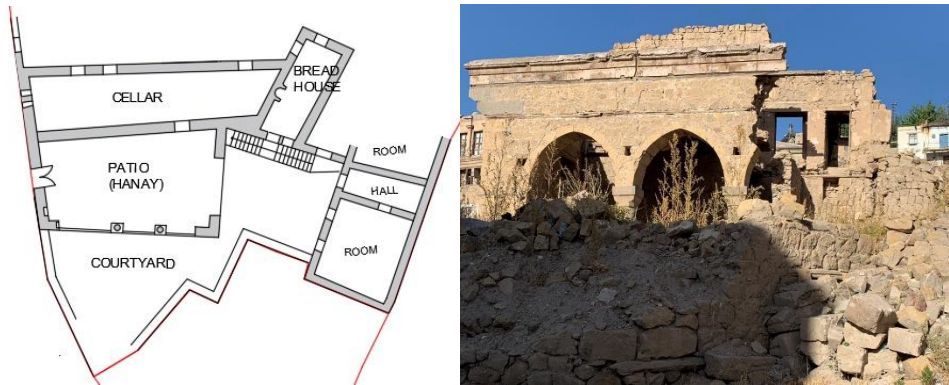


Figure 7. An example of a house with hanay on the corner of Malik Street in Kayabasi district (the sketch belongs to the author). Partial survey could be taken as part of the house was destroyed, September 2022 (author archive)

3.5. Hanay / Anteroom with Sofa

The semi-open living space, as a sofa (an open-front anteroom), adds a multi-featured value to the main floor plan typology. This open space, which adds an architectural richness and privilege to the facades of the houses facing the courtyard, is called “Hanay” in the region (Figure 8, 9). Hanay is a place where you can live in all four seasons and it offers alternative sitting area, especially on warm days. Hanay is reached from the outside by a stone-stepped staircase and the upper floor entrance of the house is provided from the hanay. This semi-open space, which is intertwined with the garden or courtyard, makes Niğde houses very unique. Even the steps to reach here were made with care. A very

solid type of stone, black basalt, was preferred for Hanay stairs and columns. The facades of Hanay facing the courtyard have a portico layout (Figures 9, 10). The portico order is formed by columns and arches connecting them. The columns supporting the arches are monolithic and mostly made of solid basalt stone. Almost all column headings are decorated with geometric ornaments, animal heads (ram etc.) motifs (Figure 10). The stone balustrades on the front and side facades of the portico are quite low. This open living area is covered with a flat roof mounted on columns.



Figure 8. Hanay examples (author archive, 2022)



Figure 9. Profile detail of the stone steps leading to Hanay (author archive, 2022)



Figure 10. Ram-like figures engraved on the capitals of the columns surrounding the Hanay area (author archive, 2022)

Recesses or niches were applied to put some objects on the wall on the facades of the houses facing the garden or courtyard, especially on the hanay wall, (Figure 11).



Figure 11. Examples of niches from Hanay areas (author archive, 2022)

4. CONSTRUCTION ELEMENTS THAT DEFINE THE FACADE

4.1. Entrance Doors

4.1.1 Garden or courtyard entrance doors

The garden doors of the houses opening to the street are emphasized with a frame like a benchmark that can be perceived even from a distance. Garden doors are made of wood and are double-winged. Wooden door wings are formed by combining large parts vertically side by side and have a plain and unadorned appearance. Wing dimensions are generally 65-80 cm wide and 180-210 cm high. In the doorway, a wide and long wooden or stone lintel passes from one end to the other and sits on the cut stones on both sides (Fig. 12). In some examples, at the corners of these lintels, human face figures, flowers or geometric patterns were found (Figure 13). It was also found that the wooden wings of some entrance doors were covered with sheet metal over time. The doors are usually surrounded by wide and intertwined profiled stone mouldings. In some examples, triangular pediments, rigging and lintel inside, rams or flower motifs are applied on the lower inner corners. In some other examples, there are colonnades on both sides of the door. Door frames sit on rather large cut stones on both sides. Column headings carrying the hanay are also details that have been given special attention in the region and rams or geometric patterns are embroidered in many column heading examples.



Figure 12. Garden entrance door examples (author archive, 2022)



Figure 13. Decorations seen on the garden entrance door lintel (author archive, 2022)

4.1.2 House entrance doors

Wooden or stone lintels are used in these examples as well if the houses do not have a garden opening to the street and have a direct entrance from the street. There are large cut stones on both sides of the door. The doors to which wooden wings are applied are double or single winged. Mostly there is a skylight above the door (Fig. 14). This window provides light and air to the hall or anteroom behind it, there is an iron railing in front of them for security purposes.



Figure 14. Examples of house doors with direct entrance from the street (author archive, 2022)

4.2. Windows

Rooms facing the street usually have two or three vertical rectangular windows. Wooden joinery windows have guillotine or vertical wing opening. In some examples, it is observed that the double opening winged joinery is divided by horizontal laths and the glass surface is reduced. In some other examples, there is a fixed wooden post in the middle of the window joinery and the upper part, and the lower part are designed as double opening separately. Window joinery is made of wood material. In some examples, there are stone jambs of approximately 10-12 cm wide surrounding the windows. There is an angled cut keystone on the lintel of the jamb. Half-colonnade decorations draw attention in the corners of the facades or between the windows of some special houses in the region. These half colonnades, which usually have bases and upper headings, brought a lot of dynamism to the facade. Contrary to the simplicity of the ground floor, this dynamism on the main floor facades can probably be perceived as an expression of the life, belief and socio-economic status of the user of the house. The type of iron grating with boxing used outside the windows appears as the oldest and original examples in the region. Iron gratings are located outside the wooden joinery in the window space. Since the room windows are generally rectangular in size, they are formed by tiling of flat iron bars in 7-9 rows vertically and 5-6 rows horizontally. In the last 20-30 years, gratings with boxing have been replaced with the half gratings and wrought irons (Figure 15).



Figure 15. Main floor window examples (author archive, 2022)

4.3. Lantern / Skylights

Lanterns are located in the anteroom area of the building, in the room defined as the main room or selamlık, above the main floor windows, at the top level, close to the roof. It is generally in the form of a circle or an ellipse and there is a decorative iron grid with curved forms on the surface close to the exterior facade. It is also seen that it is applied in star form in some special examples. In many examples in the region, there is no joinery, only an iron grid, while in some examples there are both joinery and iron grids. When the windows are completely closed, the light and oxygen that enters creates a healthy indoor environment for the inhabitants (Figure 16).



Figure 16. Lantern / Skylight examples (author archive, 2022)

4.4. Bay windows and Cantilevers

The main floor facade, which is placed on the ground floor or mezzanine, has emphasizing decoration elements in the reflection of Niğde houses on the street. Therefore, the side-by-side cantilevered houses have been very influential in the formation of the impressive street silhouette. In areas exhibiting organic street texture, it is seen that the ground floor plan, which is not regular diagonal, is generally transformed into a regular rectangle in the interior with the cantilever made outwards on the main floor. There are also examples of regular rooms on the main floor with two cantilevers positioned side by side at the angled rotating points of the street in the region. The cantilevers are the building elements that enrich the facades most visually. The form of the cantilever in the Niğde houses also shows the external reflection of the main floor plan. Depending on the size of the house, in some examples the head room forms as a cantilever to the street, in some it is a corner room and in some examples is an anteroom or selamlık. The element of the cantilevers that protrude at the middle of the front is called the bay window. Bay windows generally protrude 70-75 cm from the facade. There are narrow windows on both sides of the bay windows. In this way, daylight enters the interior by being refracted from different angles and creates a difference in the indoor environment, while those living

in the house sit on the anterom in the cantilever, better observe the life on the street and become aware of the daily life outside (Figure 17).

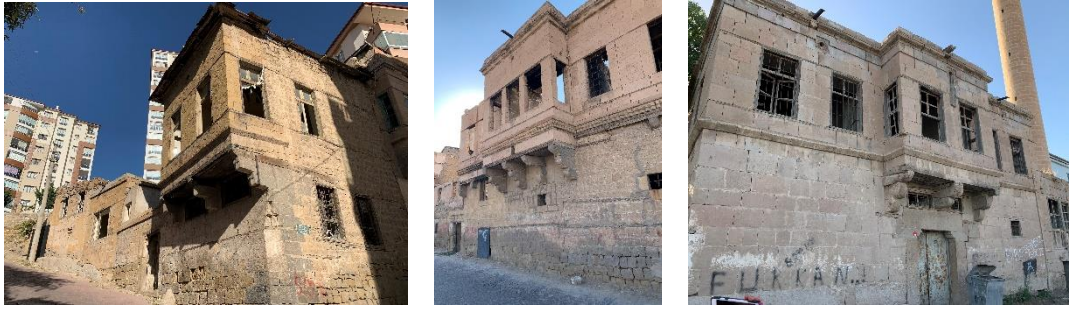


Figure 17. Bay window, cantilever examples (author archive, 2022)

4.5. Consoles

The consoles that structurally support the cantilever bases and bear the cantilevers are mostly made of two or three rows of stone or wooden beams. Most of the stone beams are black basalt. These beams, whose cross-sections are very wide, have square cross-sections and are generally 22-28 cm X 22-28 cm in size and 60-80 cm in length. The faces of these consoles, which are placed on top of each other, facing the street have “S” or “C” curved forms. This architecture of the consoles, which presents the image of a gradual transition element between the main cantilever located on the ground floor, makes the cantilever-facades of Nigde houses very special (Figure 18).



Figure 18. Examples of lap-stone consoles (author archive, 2022)

4.6. Cornices

Generally, the profiled cornice on the facade defines the floor level between the main floor and the ground floor. Although the cornice height differs in the buildings, it generally consists of triangular form series or convex profiles with a total height of 20-22 cm. In the large mansion buildings, there are successive decorations in the form of a Turkish triangle between the profiles. As an indicator of stone carving art in Nigde, the cornice adds great richness to the facade (Fig. 19).

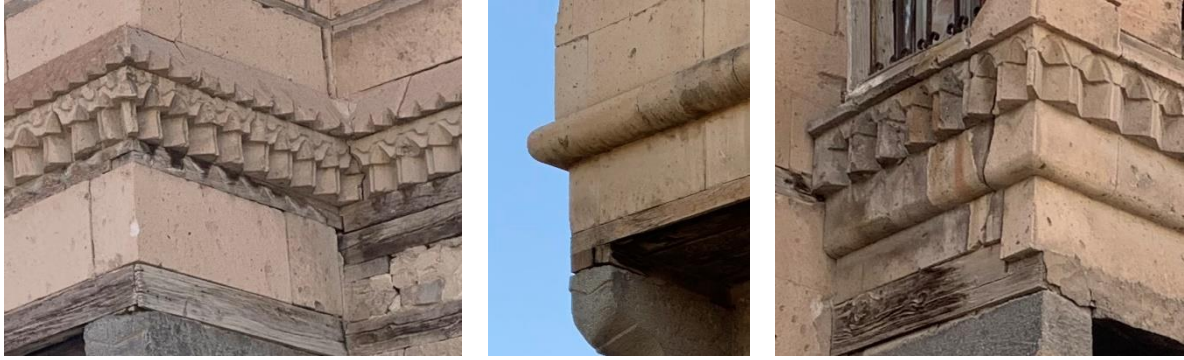


Figure 19. Cornice examples (author archive, 2022)

4.7. Roof, Gargoyle and Cornice of the Roof

It is seen that flat roof type roofing is preferred in Nigde Houses, as in other places in Anatolia where traditional residential architecture can be seen (Figure 19). To create the roof, wooden beams are laid in the short direction and two layers of rush mat are laid on it. Brushes called “curtain” are laid on the rush mat and the soil consisting of a salty clay mud mixture called “bişirik” in the region is laid and plastered with mud called “suva”. The thick earthen roofs completed by compacting with Yuvak (stone roller) were built with a slight slope to prevent the accumulation of snow and rainwater (Buyukmihci, 2000).

Since traditional Nigde Houses did not have a building element such as a ladder or cover that can reach flat roofs, it was possible to climb to the roofs with a portable ladder in order to remove the snow from the roof during the winter months. In the summer months, the soil on the roof loosened in the winter was compacted with stone roller and the roof was insulated and maintained. Sitting, sleeping and vegetable drying activities performed on the roofs of houses located in temperate climates are not seen in Nigde Houses. Stone and profiled gargoyles, which they applied to drain the snow water accumulated on the earthen roof-houses with wooden beam system, are also remarkable items. The gargoyle is a U-shaped stone gutter extending outward from the eaves around the roof (Fig. 20). It was also observed that some animal figures (such as ram's head or dragon's head) were carved into stone on the ends of some gargoyles, of which very few examples remained in the region. The cornice examples were formed by placing rows of straight and inclined cut stones by protruding approximately 20-25 cm from the facade surface. The cornice units draw attention as a unique line separating the facade and the roof and highly profiled ones were applied in some samples (Figures 20, 21).



Figure 20. Round cross-section wooden beams and earthen roof forming the roof structure (author archive, 2022)



Figure 21. Examples of monolithic gargoyles (author archive, 2022)

5. CONCLUSION

As spaces change and transform, this change also spreads to memory and memory also changes with the city. These changes and transformations in the city are realized through structures bearing the traces of memory. However, the disappearance of the existing texture creates a gap in urban memory. If the physical environment, experiences, events, stories and memories are not passed on to the next generation by those living in the city, the transmission stops, if the transmission stops, the memory disappears and as the memory disappears, the urban identity and belonging are faced with the situation of extinction. Based on this approach, Forty (2001) deduces that the changes made in the city will not only cause physical change, but will also interrupt the mental continuity of the citizens living there and this view is important in terms of understanding the ties that individuals establish with the cities they live in. Urban identity, which expresses the unique characteristics and personality of the city, is an important part of the existence and functioning of the city.

According to Sakar & Unlu (2019), each new historical process brings with it some elements from the previous ones, each new spatial need from the previous needs and each newly formed culture brings together some elements of the lifestyle of the previous culture and as a result, cities are provided to take their present state.

As in Nigde, there are many structures and building groups that need to be preserved in the region that has been inhabited by many civilizations. While the chance of monuments is a little higher, the transformation of stone houses with traditional architecture in Nigde has been quite rapid. It was observed that the unique architectural texture is rapidly disappearing, as the unique stone houses and organic street formation in and around Nigde, a rare city with large gardens and mostly two-storey stone houses, have been sacrificed to roads opened for vehicle traffic or to zoning areas in recent years (Figure 22, 23).

It should be aimed to develop protection policies for the traditional houses of Nigde without losing their identity on an urban scale and to prepare a conservation plan and site management plan on a holistic scale. For this reason, it is important to integrate culturally sensitive and protective planning approaches with urban stories that convey information about its historical memory. In order to understand a city, it is necessary not only to understand the values that reflect the collective memory, but also to understand the relationships established by each element throughout the city and with each other. The “spirit of the place”, which can be seen as a product of this relationship, should be the main component of urban renewal, which can be seen as a collection of memorable values for the city.



Figure 22. Kayabasi District under the pressure of apartment building (author archive, 2022)



Figure 23. Kayabasi District under the pressure of apartment building (author archive, 2022)

The large number of cities with identity is an important wealth of the society, as it takes a very long time for cities to gain their unique spatial identities. For this reason, making historical textures a part of urban life is important in terms of ensuring the continuity of identity by transferring it to future generations. Cultural identity, which is formed in societies that adopt their cultures and is transferred to the next generations by developing, must be sustained in order not to lose its essence. This depends only on the extent to which societies can keep their own cultures alive. Urban identity should be considered as a legacy that should be passed on to future generations, in order for today's generations to know their own values, living cultures and to protect them in the integrity of the natural environment. At the same time, the preservation of urban identity should also include urban strategic management planning and management. In order to ensure development while preserving the urban identity, it should not be overlooked that while the requirements of the economy of that period are fulfilled in the development plans, on the other hand, ecological, social, cultural and aesthetic dimensions of the development should be handled together with the existing urban identity, thus holistic planning is needed.

Compliance with the Ethical Standard

Conflict of Interest: *There is no conflict of interest between the authors or any third-party individuals or institutions.*

Ethics Committee Permission: *Ethics committee approval is not required for this study.*

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