



8th IAHH INTERNATIONAL STUDENT
DESIGN COMPETITION 2010
URBAN VITALISATION OF THE OLD CITY,
MARDİN

ARCHITECTURAL REPORT

Mardin takes the first place among the accommodations of Turkey with its local nature and its building made out of local ingredients. Mardin's own significant historical background and the characteristic of the area differs Mardin from other accommodations. When we overview its historical background and its unique identity which is really hard to be recreated, we come up with the fact that it is a necessity to underline some basic issues.

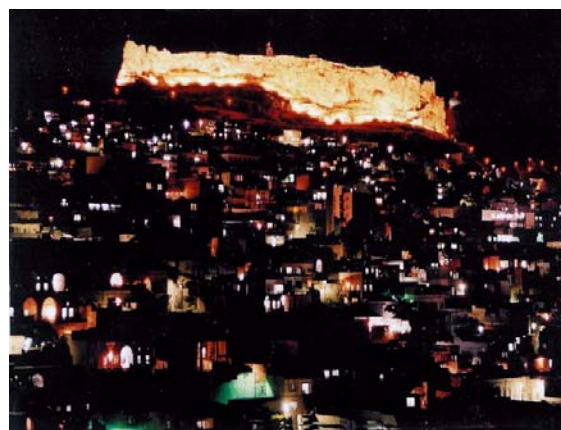
Mardin is one of the rare cities that could save its own historical richness despite all turmoils so far. Besides its privilege by the means of topographic location, Mardin could achieved to save its own exclusive building texture thanks to durable and qualified stone workmanship and tradition of eyvan, arched abode architecture. With its houses on both sides of narrow and tortuous streets and many historical structures, it still protects the original view in the travel books of the city substantially. In the middle of 20th century, the city seemed as if it is built by a skillful architect. This outstanding feature was differing Mardin from other cities.



In the past, Mardin was a city location on a plateau 1325 meters height. It can be called as the centre of Mesopotamia savanna. There is no definite date about first settlement in Mardin but it is estimated that the beginning of settlement may be 4000 BC. Mardin is in the very northern point of area where the original Mesopotamia traditions are represented. It hosted many civilizations such as Sumerians, Akkad's, Huris, Arameans and Assyrians. The roads connecting Mesopotamia both to Eastern Mediterranean sea and Anatolia pass through Mardin, so, besides its economical power, Mardin also has a strategically importance. In forthcoming years, if archeological digging and investigations can still continue, not only Mardin's but also former Asian history may be revealed drastically and thus the cultural importance of the settlement may increase.

URBAN STRUCTURE

Mardin whose urban structure could be protected so far, is an outstanding city with its structure materials, urban structure, monumental buildings and the residential area on the outskirts of the castle. Within the borders of its historical development, Mardin draws attention of the visitors with its strategically castle and urban structure. The city has been the topic of historical and scientific investigations such as the importance of monumental buildings before 2nd Century architecture, Turkish structures and sample structure of architecture and general characteristic. There were built a few of modern structure and done some amateur restorations. This situation had done harm to the urban structure. But in 1970s, with the SIT law and municipal, these are prohibited and urban structure could be protected.



GENERAL DEVELOPMENT

Mardin can be spitted in two parts. One of these is the castle and the other is the residential area within the bulwarks of the castle which do not exist anymore. We see two main roads at first sight. These roads were built because of the need of the public. Apart from these roads, there are no vehicles admitted in other alleys. In the process of general development, the city spreads through the southern outskirts and to savanna. And thus the ancient structures stay in the circle of this development. The city lies on a steep slope. There is the castle on the top of the hill, and Mesopotamia savanna on the bottom. And all of these structures face to southern Mesopotamia savanna.

GENERAL FEATURES OF THE BUILDINGS AND MATERIALS

Apart from some governmental and private buildings, all the buildings in Mardin are traditionally built out of hewn stones. The stones are chalky stones which are really easy to engrave and can cool in a really short period after they are taken out of the stove. In each period of Mardin's history, these stones have been used. A house which is built today may be assumed an old building unless there are no official documents about building process. There are really few wooden materials used in the buildings as the workmanship of hewn stones has been a tradition for ages in Mardin. It is a weak possibility to come up with a tree on the street in Mardin. But there are some groves around the city.

However this is not the reason for wooden materials' being used less. It is because of this tradition's being fundamental tradition. This is such tradition that in Mardin, buildings made of cement are considered bizarre.



PROBLEMS AND REASONS FOR DEFORMATION

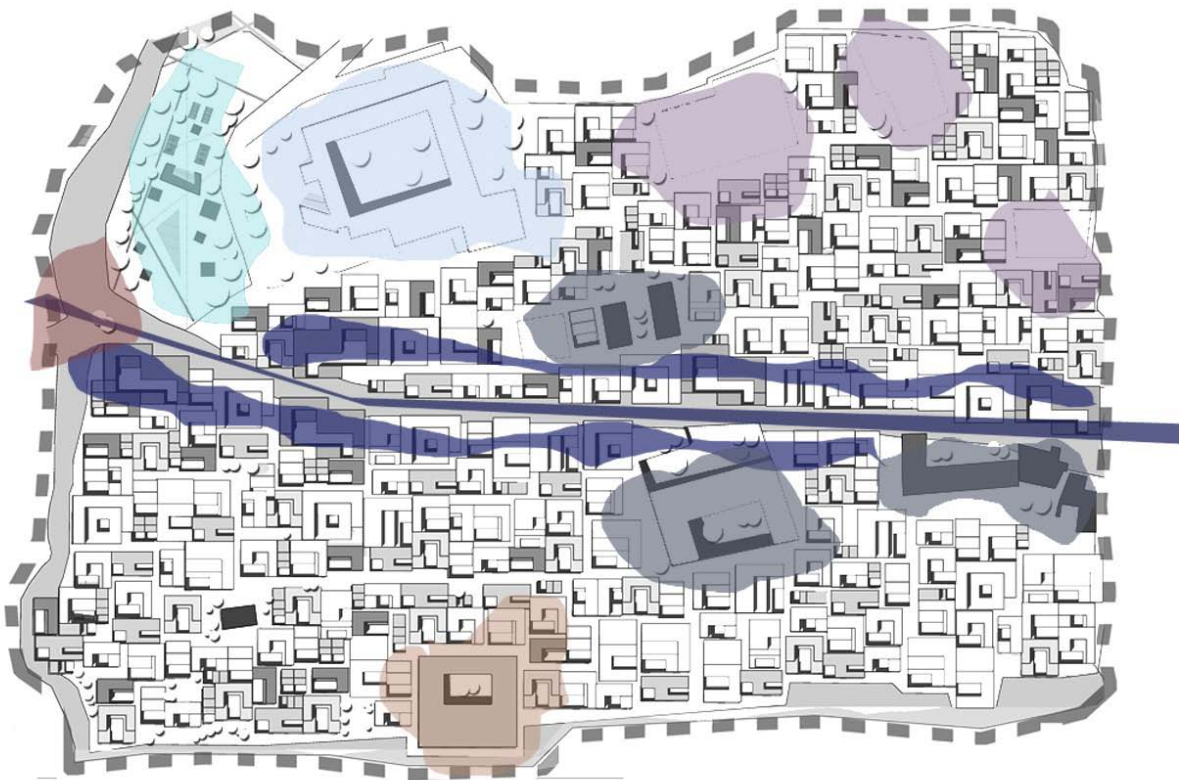
In the course of time, along with the population changes, this unique residential area which had been occurred in thousand years has been facing the danger of deformation. So, the possibility of living the beauty of past in present diminishes. With the increase of the population, people started to build houses made out of cement and restore the historical places ignorantly. Today, when we look at the old traditional building, it is possible to see deformed buildings along with the ones which stay originally. Mardin's traditional houses made out of stone remained too small for Mardin's families whom prefer to live altogether and they started to build outbuilding. However building an outbuilding was limited and the traditional houses were not comfortable. So the city started to spread to northern west and this place was called as "new city". But in the period of settlement into the new city, there were no urban planning for this new place and all houses are armored concrete. We have two different types of Mardin: one with unique traditional houses and one does not even have an identity.



THE REASONS FOR CHOOSING THIS AREA AND DESIGN PLANS

The reason leading us to choose ancient Mardin to help this unique city to get rid of irrelevant outbuildings and other irrelevant structures, so that we can reveal the historical beauty of the area; and to develop a design which can both help residents to live comfortably in these houses and protect these houses' original structure.

The main income source in the city is handicrafts. The divisions are created by transforming the divisions called workshops in the conventional houses and including housewives to contribute to the economy in the designation that has been prepared. So the conventional handicraft shall be preserved and also it shall bring economical movement to the district. Then registered premises included in the area are preserved and some premises that are being used have gained new functions. The old society for protection of children that takes place in the northern west of the area has been turned into hospital because it is close to the main road. There is a health facility in the old Mardin. The area that the premise is placed and the main road are the entrance of old city. There is a crooked structuring on the left of this road. It is quite difficult to place a leisure centre in the narrow structure of old Mardin and it will be strange for the structure. So we decided to prepare the unqualified area in the entrance of the city as leisure centre. Handicrafts and Mardin customs museum and the two areas that the courses are thought placed in the main road are given the purpose of public education centers to improve the development of the district. The main street is also the trade stem of the district. The houses placed on this stem will have the divisions with trading purposes and workshops are to be created that the products are produced pertaining to selling so these premises are designed to be big. They are single floor 2 floors and 3 floors. They all look to the south as conventional Mardin houses and do not cut off each other's scenes. There are 13 types of houses in various scales. These houses will be made from stone to be in compliance with the environment. They are derived from 4.2 meters grids and have the same qualities with conventional Mardin houses.



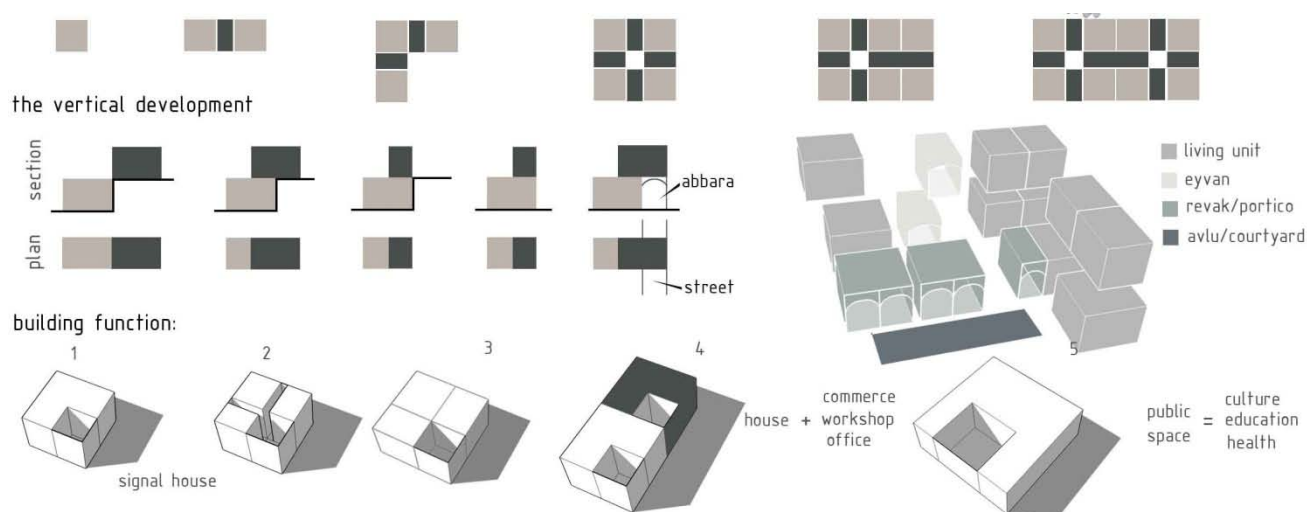
- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| protected buildings | culture |
| health | entrance of the city |
| commerce | education |
| recreation | |

Congregation of the units, usage of courtyard, terracing, half-opened places are created according to traditional Mardin houses. The unique narrow streets of Mardin are protected and new borders of new street building lot are designed according to trails of old streets. One of the significant features in Mardin's structure is the streets in organic order. There is no gradation in building roads within the homorganic dispersion of urban structure. There is not order of importance neither in the sizing or the direction of the roads. Streets are shaped in decisiveness of area's parceling. In public transportation, pedestrians take the first place on building streets. Not only for human but also for animals used for transportation such as horses, donkeys are taken into consideration while building these roads. Streets are settles towards west-east- and north-south. The hillside where city lays on, the streets which lay from east to west are sometime horizontal and sometimes slopped. The streets which lay from north to south are getting cascaded because of the slope and this situation made them look like

stairs. When there is a well or when many streets come across with each other, there occurs a square. These squares are seen as the space between unconstructed areas and courtyard of the houses.

THE MAIN FEATURES OF MARDIN HOUSES

In Mardin, deterministic of the architecture is its topographic features. The planning of the house is determined due to the fact that slope of the area's being horizontal or slant. Besides, there are no cubic duplexes or triplexes among Mardin houses. Slope of the area is taken into the consideration and multi-storey houses can be built due to the slope of the field. In general, Mardin's being relevant to the settlement and having enough building lot prevent city from having too cramped plan, thus there occurs a terracing design. In this structure which may be seen as big stairs, the houses are built in such way that they do not close each other's fronts. The constructions on the area play significant role in the homorganic structure of the city. It can be said that the houses were built to gain an empty space on the organic shaped building lots. There are "abbaras" at the end of the building lot. These "abbaras" are built between houses of relatives and this situation also supplies interesting sociological information about the area.



Besides having single storey houses, there are mostly multi storey houses in Mardin. Deterministic of the floor amount of the traditional house is elevation difference at the beginning and at the end of building lot. It is pretty hard to determine the average values for floor heights. But the heights may be determined according to some special cases. For instance, floor heights of the houses of rich families are higher than the other ones. So we can say that sociological differences may be a deterministic.

It can be seen from some architectural details that construction of Mardin houses cannot be finished in only one construction period. Thus, it is concluded that ground floor is the main building and the other floors are the outbuildings which are built in time of need. In the houses where same kind of process took place, the common feature is the function of the ground floor. On the ground floor each room has a different function. There are places such as bedrooms, kitchen, stock, toilet etc. When we consider the recent facts, we can see that these rooms are splitted into different grounds because of their functions. Courtyard takes the main place in the construction period.

Upper floor which can be reached by stone stairs which is adjacent to courtyard's wall has different functions. Upper floor is composed of places such as living areas, storeroom and workshop. Living areas are the place where people live, eat, sleep, have shower etc. in some cases, workshops which is linked to the same living area can be used as the cooling place to sit in summer time.

Traditional house reaches the final condition with the addition of constructional structures in accordance with the way of raising children of the patriarchal family which is based on the male infant. As the creation of the structures will take its place in time, finding a formulation or design decision is pretty hard for us. However the common features of covered, half-opened and opened places are taken into the consideration. Living area is considered as the basic place because of its architectural structure. These all have the outfits which can supply the need of immediate family which is the part of patriarchal society.

The divisions in the houses are 4*4 or 5*5 scales because of the sizes of the materials to be used. The divisions that we use are comprised of 4.2 meters squares. When the two housing divisions come side to side, "eyvan" is brought which is a semi-open area in order to preserve the privacy. Two closed areas take place in the planning as to be in compliance with the open area principle. The divisions to the living areas are done from eyvan.

In Mardin houses the most prominent aspects are courtyard and platform. The courtyard takes place in the design in different scales as in compliance with the parcel placed on the entrance of mostly every house. They are open areas that the daily house works are done. In the upper floors, the courtyard is replaced with platforms. Platforms and the roof of the first floor are the places that the seasonal foods are grown.