

ISSN 1840-4855
e-ISSN 2233-0046

Original scientific article
<http://dx.doi.org/10.70102/afts.2026.1835.850>

VILLAGE ROOMS AS LIVING HERITAGE ARCHITECTURAL SPACE SOCIAL MEMORY AND INTANGIBLE PRACTICES IN RURAL TÜRKIYE

Melike Gürman¹, Dr. Şerife Ebru Okuyucu^{2*}

¹Master's Program in Art and Design, Afyon Kocatepe University, Afyonkarahisar, Türkiye. e-mail: melikegurman11@gmail.com, orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7619-4011>

^{2*}Professor, Interior Design and Environmental Design, Afyon Kocatepe University, Afyonkarahisar, Türkiye. e-mail: seokuyucu@aku.edu.tr, orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9507-5467>

Received: January 31, 2026; Revised: March 16, 2026; Accepted: May 05, 2026; Published: May 29, 2026

SUMMARY

Village rooms (*KÖY ODALARI*) in the village of SUSUZOSMANIYE/AFYONKARAHISAR are a significant feature of the rural heritage of Anatolia, combining architectural features and sociocultural values like hospitality, solidarity, collective memory, and local governance. Though the village rooms have been analyzed from an architectural and typological point of view, the analysis of the rooms as a hybrid heritage space (both tangible and intangible) has been relatively little discussed so far. The concept of *living heritage* is used to interpret various aspects of village rooms, their spatial organization, architectural continuity, and sociocultural functions in a larger context of heritage. The study area consists of two village rooms in SUSUZOSMANIYE Village, AFYONKARAHISAR, Türkiye (Ahmet Sadık Taşpınar and Emin Çavuş Village Rooms), which are currently in use. The research approach involves architectural documentation, measured drawings, spatial analysis, field observation, and the oral history interviews of local users and owners. The results showed that the village room is a space that has multiple functions as a place for welcoming guests to the village, as well as a space for multi-functional village governance, social interaction, cultural transmission, and collective decision-making. Although both buildings have undergone physical change and the rural life has changed, both buildings remain in use and retain their social and cultural importance. The study suggests that the village rooms are *living heritage* spaces that are closely linked to both tangible architecture and intangible social activities, which can be integrated into community-based approaches to rural heritage conservation and can be used in contemporary discussions on sustainable rural heritage conservation.

Key words: *living heritage, village rooms, rural heritage, tangible and intangible heritage, vernacular architecture, AFYONKARAHISAR.*

INTRODUCTION

The rural heritage is one of the key aspects of cultural heritage, which is vulnerable. It is not only about physical architecture but also social practices, collective memory, and daily activities, which have an impact on the cultural meaning of built environments. Increasingly, contemporary heritage scholarship has been questioning the distinction between tangible and intangible cultural heritage, highlighting the

value of the buildings in relation to social activities, instead of just their physical substance. This evolving outlook is reflected in the international conservation discourse and has stimulated more integrated understandings of heritage.

In this context, the idea of *living heritage* has been highlighted, which indicates that “heritage” is not something static but is a dynamic process that is carried on by participation, adaptation, and intergenerational transmission by the community [3][4]. The historic urban landscape approaches also assist to uphold a comprehensive approach to conservation where heritage is taken into account in broader social and environmental frameworks [5]. For rural and vernacular heritage, these views created for the urban context can be useful, as architecture is all but divorced from social living. Rural typology of Anatolia can provide a significant context of examining such grafting of heritage. The evolution of different civilizations, cultures and beliefs has over the years all been influencing this geography to form a complex area where architectural features and social activities go hand in hand. A hospitality tradition is one of the strongest manifestations of such relationship, and it is the heart of the Turkish cultural identity, founded on solidarity, generosity and collective responsibility. The spaces of this cultural ethos of a rural community are reflected in the structure of *köy odaları* (village rooms).

Village rooms were commonly used as communal areas of community hospitality, discourse, education and interaction. These were rooms that were more often attached to houses or planted in gardens or even on the streets of villages and were accessible to the villagers and visitors. Later became multi-purpose social institutions that served as communal food, storytelling, religious worship, de facto government and transmitting of knowledge [16]. Both are vital parts of the vernacular rural settlement pattern and socially are the main stores of oral history and collective memory. Village rooms are important culturally, but have often been researched as architectural typologies or as a subject of folklore research, often overlooking their physical appearance and constraining their sociocultural role. Existing scholarship generally fails to take an interdisciplinary approach that is able to simultaneously address their material and intangible aspects. This is particularly so in the literature on region specific studies such as AFYONKARAHISAR where there is a remarkable lack of integrated studies.

The paper will address this gap by contenting the integrative and multidisciplinary approach by examining and analyzing two dynamic village rooms in the SUSUZOSMANIYE Village, AFYONKARAHISAR. The research—that brings together architectural documentation, spatial analysis, and oral history interviews—takes a look at how material continuity and intangible cultural practices relate. This plan is aimed at providing the general picture of the process of interaction of architecture and social memory in order to promote the *living heritage* [6][15]. The findings reveal that the village rooms have traditionally been the tool to deliver the hospitality, the local government, the community bond, and the culture. Also demonstrate that the modifications undertaken to enhance the use of the building in the current day do not necessarily diminish the heritage values and in fact, adaptive transformation has the potential to enhance continuity where communal use still exists. In this perspective the village rooms may be considered as adaptive heritage infrastructures which are connected with the wider concept of the role-based conservation in countryside [1][17].

Lastly, the study recommends that village room protection should be grounded on the combined conservation plans that emphasize on protection of the intangible practices, active use and local engagement and the protection of the architecture. The significance of the village room as a hybrid heritage space is not just to preserve the vernacular architecture, but also to the memories, identity, and cultural continuity of the rural Anatolia.

This study has the following main objectives:

1. To analyze architecturally and spatially properties of Emin Çavuş, Ahmet Sadık Taşpınar's village rooms of SUSUZOSMANIYE Village in the light of vernacular rural architecture and to see their continuity.
2. To investigate the sociocultural functionality and intangible heritage relevance of the village rooms by interviewing oral history about their uses with consideration of their hospitality, local government, collective memory and community participation.

3. To test the correlation between tangible and intangible heritage attributes to consider village rooms as *living heritage* spaces, and to create community-based conservation plans to help sustainably conserve them.

Paper Organization

The structure of the paper is as follows: In Section 1 (Introduction), the research problem, objectives, and significance relating to the concept of village rooms as living rural heritage spaces are introduced; Section 2 (Theoretical Framework) discusses the relevant literature on tangible and intangible heritage, *living heritage* theory, and vernacular rural conservation; Section 3 (Materials and Methods) explains the case study selection, architectural documentation process, oral history interviews, and integrated analytical framework used in the research; Section 4 (Analysis) presents the comparative spatial examination and sociocultural examination of the two village rooms; Section 5 (Results) summarizes the key findings concerning the issues of architectural continuity, social functions, adaptation, and heritage sustainability; Section 6 (Discussion) interprets the findings in the context of broader debates on *living heritage* and rural conservation approaches; and Section 7 (Conclusion) highlights the main contributions of the study and makes recommendations for future research and community-based conservation strategies for sustaining the village rooms as hybrid heritage environments.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Research on heritage in recent years has challenged the dichotomy between tangible and intangible cultural heritage and emphasized that cultural value is not solely expressed through materiality but through continuous interaction of the material, social and collective memory [21][22]. The change is a reflection of a wider trend from a focus on conservation for architectural authenticity towards a more dynamic conception of the nature of heritage as a socially constructed and dynamic process [23]. The integrated perspective is important and has been facilitated by international heritage frameworks, in particular the UNESCO conventions on cultural and intangible heritage [21].

Intangible cultural heritage, as described in the Convention adopted by UNESCO in 2003, comprises practices, expressions, knowledge, and skills that are identified by the community and are transmitted from one generation to the next [21]. This knowledge is very similar to *living heritage*, which involves continuity, adaptability, and active involvement of the community as key elements for sustainable conservation [3][4]. Likewise, the approach of Historic Urban Landscape is a way of advocating for an integrated way of understanding heritage, where cultural heritage is seen in the context of its wider environment, economy, and social setting [22][5]. Though it was created in urban environments, this framework can be used to gain insights into rural and vernacular heritage, especially when the architecture is still connected to the everyday lives of its community members [6].

In this theoretical framework, village guest rooms (*KÖY ODALARI*) are considered a unique heritage in Anatolian villages. Vernacular architectural structures, which not only represent material building traditions but also social relationships, cultural values, and local identity [1][2]. Their importance is that serve as places and institutions that mediate community practice both physical and social [16].

The traditional village community in Anatolia was organized in terms of the agricultural economy, close interpersonal relations, and collective forms of social organization. In this context, the village guest rooms developed as multi-functional communal spaces, used by the villagers for meetings, exchange of information, reception of guests, and decision-making. Have evolved in the course of time in line with the other traditions of hospitality and collective moralities that shaped the rural life in Turkey as well, and their institutional forms of solidarity are similar to that of the historical AKHISM system [9].

Often, village guest rooms were given the name of their founders or owners, thereby personalizing and familiarizing the architecture of the room. Historically taken care of by the host families, which took care of their guests and the continuity of the customs of local hospitality. This helped to bind the villagers together and to make the village rooms familiar expressions of generosity and the responsibilities of neighbors [16].

The rooms of the village were designed in a flexible and multifunctional way, that is, an interior space that would hold different social functions. Their plan designs were usually designed around a main meeting room with traditional features like *SEDIR* (inbuilt seating platforms), *YÜKLÜK* (storage cupboards), *SERGEN* (shelves), and heating facilities. Through these architectural elements, a variety of activities were able to be accommodated, such as communal meals, overnight accommodation, storytelling, education, prayer, and informal assemblies [8].

The origins of these can be found in nomadic cultures and institutional structures like *ZAVIYES*, providing shelter, food, and cultural exchange in a time before a well-developed network of transportation. History of travel texts also reveals that were open and hospitable places that served to bolster cultural exchange and social learning. Other related precedents, such as *Yaren* rooms, illustrate how architecture has been used in the past to support systems of education, discipline and social control [10].

The guest rooms in villages are also an important location of intangible cultural heritage as well as their physical appearance. Oral traditions, festive practices, storytelling and social values are transmitted through a perpetual flow of communal utilization, thus promoting the survival of collective memory and the local identity [22][15]. Practices such as these are what render architecture a living cultural medium and thus constantly replicate the knowledge and values [11].

The village guest rooms also serve to preserve communal activities like religious festivals, weddings, common meals, burials and military leave-taking ceremonies. In the process, uphold wider ethical norms of solidarity, reciprocity, and mutual support and traditional systems of knowledge around hospitality and informal governance [4][14].

The village guest rooms have been facing a growing threat as a result of urbanization, rural depopulation, and spread of individualized communication technologies. These developments have reduced the possibilities of holding meetings together, and rendered the traditional social networks less efficient. However, nowadays there are still lots of village rooms where family reunions, celebrations, and cultural recollection events take place and which remain applicable as *living heritage* areas [19].

This continuity stresses the significance of the village guest rooms being regarded as hybrid heritage spaces where tangible and intangible are not distinguishable. Therefore, in order to preserve them, one should implement strategies, which are founded on using the area, the participation of the local people, and adaptive role of the area, rather than just the physical preservation [22][3][6]. Preserving and protecting these spaces involves preserving and protecting the social practices that underpin the cultural significance of these spaces. In this regard, rural heritage conservation should not only be concerned with the conservation of material forms of heritage but also be concerned about maintaining the living relationships with it so that heritage can be socially active and culturally relevant.

Research Gap

Studies on the Anatolian village rooms have been mostly confined to the architectural typology, construction methods, and vernacular aspects, and their sociocultural functions have been studied individually in the context of folkloric or ethnographic research. This separation has constrained a thorough view of village rooms as hybrid heritage environments with both tangible form and intangible cultural practices living side by side and influencing each other. Furthermore, there is not much interdisciplinary study that focuses on the continuity of space in respect of *living heritage* in the living rural environments, especially in the region-specific environment of AFYONKARAHISAR. This study fills this void by combining architectural documentation, spatial analysis, and oral history for a critical assessment of the village rooms as the "*living heritage spaces*."

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Case Study Selection

This research was conducted in SUSUZOSMANIYE Village of the district of İHSANIYE, AFYONKARAHISAR Province in Türkiye. The village has been selected since it has various levels of traditional village houses which have varying levels of conservation and usage [7]. Emin Çavuş and Ahmet Sadik Taşpini were selected as the main case studies in these village rooms, as both of them do not lose their architectural integrity and sociocultural relevance and remain in use by the local people.

With these two examples, a comparative study of how tangible and intangible heritage interact in a rural setting can be carried out and the tangible architectural characteristics and intangible cultural practices can be compared. Their continuity in use offers the opportunity of studying the relation of material continuity, adaptive transformation and how the heritage has been sustained in the community viewpoint [6][16].

Architectural Documentation and Spatial Analysis

The architectural documentation was made in detail by field surveys, by the arrangement of detailed measured rollover drawings, and by photographic documentation. Special attention was paid to the spatial organization, typologies of plan, construction technique, material characteristics, and traditional interior architectural elements [1] [8].

Particular attention was given to elements of architecture that allow for communal use, such as the *SEDİR* (built-in seating platform), heating system, storage units, and auxiliary service spaces. The emphasis of spatial analysis was the analysis of how these architectural configurations enable multi-functionality, social interaction, and shared use patterns.

Moreover, visible changes due to repairs, renovations, and material changes were also recorded in a systematic way to assess the impact of adaptive physical interventions on architecture continuity and heritage sustainability [13].

Oral History Interviews and Sociocultural Data Collection

Oral history interviews (semi-structured oral history interview) of room owners, residents of the village for many years, and frequent users of the village rooms were conducted to unravel the intangible cultural features of the village rooms. Questions in the interview were primarily focused on the social role of the village rooms in both past and present including hospitality, social ritual, seasonal celebrations, decision making processes, and cultural memories transmission.

Oral testimony was regarded as an important way to grasp the social meaning as it is experienced in the architecture and how cultural practices still inform the identity of these spaces. This qualitative approach enabled observation of local knowledge and narrative based on experiences that are not observed using architectural analysis alone [15] [17].

Integrated Analytical Framework

The information gathered through the architecture and sociocultural components were put into their analysis through an integrated interpretive framework that incorporates both tangible and intangible elements of heritage [21][22]. This strategy is founded on the *living heritage* theory and models of participatory conservation that emphasize on the continuity of the heritage, social use of the heritage and community participation, as all interconnected in maintaining the value of the heritage [3][4].

The outcomes of the architectural work were examined along with the interviews in oral history and the spatial arrangements examined concerning the way support and improve cultural practice [6]. The synoptic analysis made possible the evaluation of the rooms of a village as hybrid *living heritage* spaces in which material form and social function are each other.

This was a move towards a relational interpretation rather than descriptive documentation and can be used as an instrument to assess the continuity, adaptations and sustainability questions in rural vernacular settings [18][20].

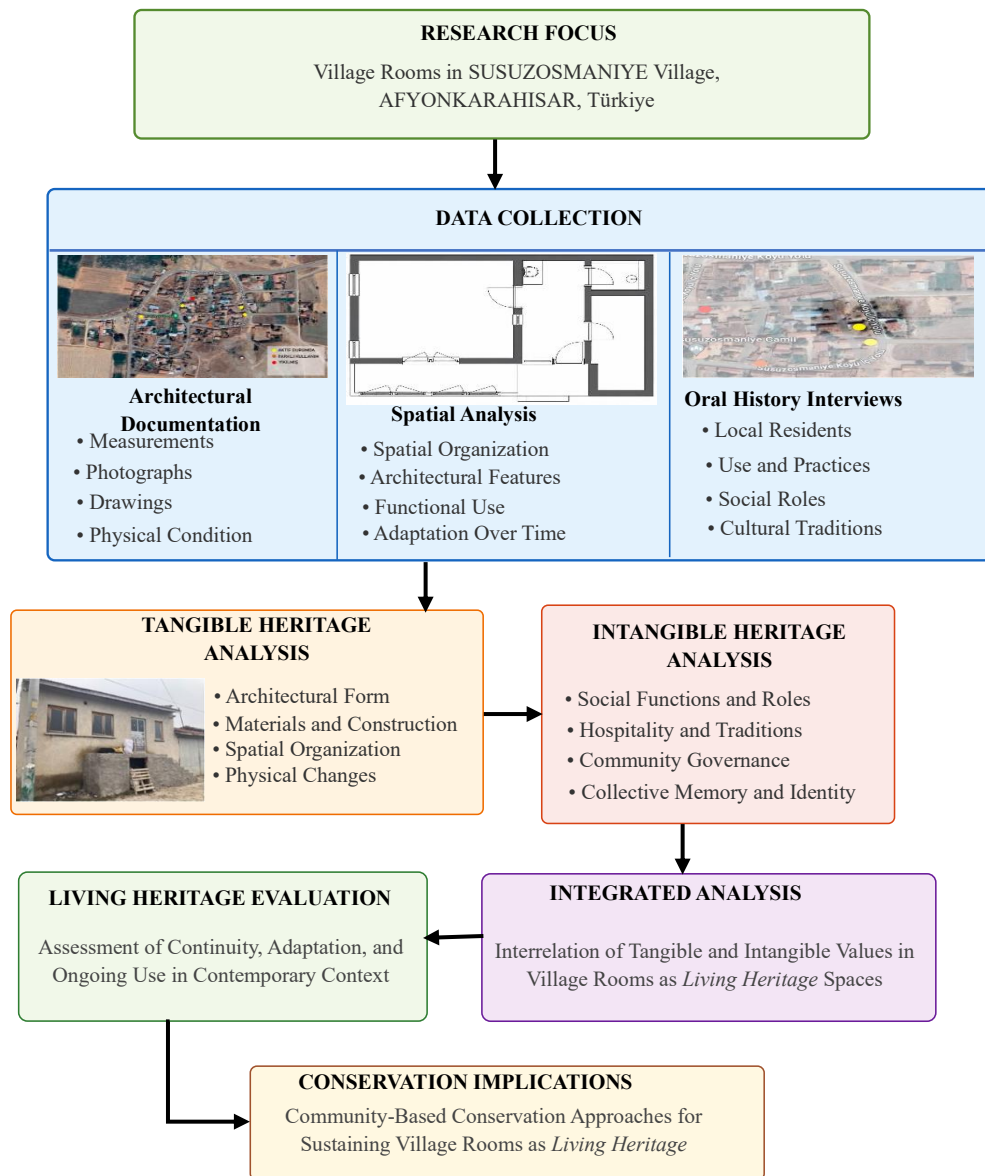


Figure 1. Integrated analytical framework of the study

The integrated analytical framework used in this study in order to analyze the village rooms as *living heritage* spaces in SUSUZOSMANIYE Village, AFYONKARAHISAR, is given in figure 1. The framework comprises three primary methods of data collection: architectural documentation, spatial analysis, and oral history interviews that are employed to evaluate both tangible and intangible heritage of the case studies that have been selected. The architectural documentation is mainly concerned with the physical characteristics, material conditions, and continuity of the structures; the spatial analysis with the organization of the layout and the functional adaptability and vernacular design logic. Oral history interviews offer perspectives on the sociocultural practices, collective memory, roles of governance, and hospitality of village rooms. The two analytical dimensions are combined, as illustrated in figure 1, to understand how architectural form and social practice are intertwined and to derive the notion of '*living heritage*' as a hybrid village room environment. The framework serves as a tool for assessing continuity, adaptation, and active use as key factors in determining heritage sustainability and as a foundation for formulating community-based conservation measures for rural vernacular heritage in the long term.

ANALYSIS

This section aims to present a comparative and thematic analysis of Emin Çavuş and Ahmet Sadık Taşpınar's village rooms and to examine the correlation between architecture and social practices of everyday life that enable the rooms to function as *living heritage* spaces. Instead of analyzing every case as an architectural case, the focus is laid on common spatial and sociocultural patterns, which prove the hybrid nature of the village rooms, where tangible and intangible heritage are indissolubly linked.

The analysis takes into account the connection between the different architectural continuities, architectural adaptations and social uses and specifically how the active communal use has contributed towards the preservation of the village rooms as valuable cultural spaces. Particular attention is given to how the space design could facilitate the hospitality practices, social communication, shared memory, and convey the local traditions.

Analysis of Village Guest Rooms in SUSUZOSMANIYE Village, AFYONKARAHISAR

SUSUZOSMANIYE Village is about 35 km away from the center of AFYONKARAHISAR and 7 km away from the center of the İHSANIYE district. The settlement is a place with a seasonal migratory population, as part of the general population movements seen in rural Anatolian communities during the summer.

Within SUSUZOSMANIYE, the spatial arrangement of the rooms in the villages is seen as a more or less continuous and transformed process. There are a number of guest rooms in the village, some of which are still useable today and others which are only preserved but not so much. As can be seen in figure 2, the village has several guest rooms, some of which are preserved and used today while the others are preserved but not used.

There are six records of village rooms, four of which are still in use, one repurposed, and one demolished. The distribution shows the continuity and fragility of the rural communal heritage in the process of social and environmental change.

Some village rooms are still in use, suggesting that village rooms have a cultural significance greater than their standing structures. Require not only architectural preservation but also the continuity of social modes of action to support their communal role for their survival. In this regard, SUSUZOSMANIYE is a signatory example for the consideration of how rural heritage works in the context of today's conditions while maintaining fundamental characteristics of the identity and collective memory of the region.

In this study, special attention is given to the Emin Çavuş and Ahmed Sadık Taşpınar village rooms, as two rooms still in use as social spaces, which retain important architectural and cultural features. Continuous uses offer a glimpse into the interplay between the adaptation of materials and the continuity of their sociocultural contexts in maintaining environments of *living heritage*.

In the framework of this study, two village guest rooms, which are still fulfilling their original communal role, Emin Çavuş and Ahmet Sadık Taşpınar village rooms, were chosen and examined in detail in spatial and sociocultural dimensions. Their ongoing use allows them to explore concepts of architectural continuity and social practice in order to sustain *living heritage* in the context of a modern rural environment.



Figure 2. Location and current status of village rooms in SUSUZOSMANIYE village

Emin Çavuş Village Guest Room






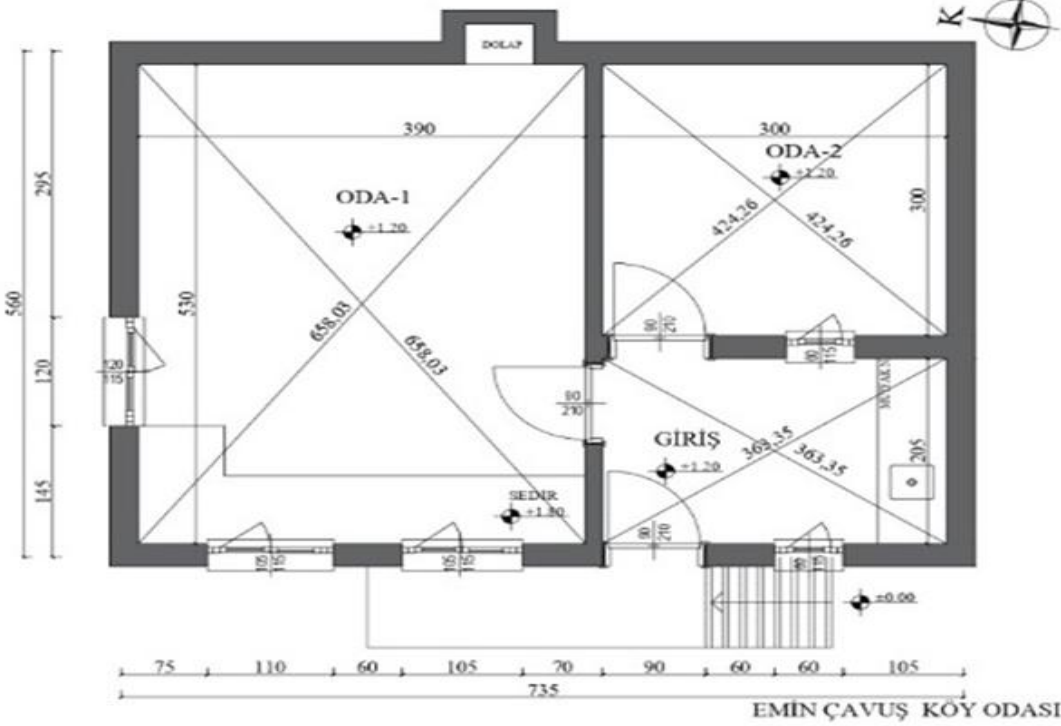
The Emin Çavuş Village Guest Room is on the west side of the village mosque and is in the middle of the village (Figure 2). The structure is structured as a single story, with a rectangular shape along the north-south axis.

The original building dates to 1947-48 and was originally a two-story wooden building. The building was totally burned in 2003 and rebuilt with reinforced concrete building methods. Although this building underwent such a material change, the reconstructed building maintains the original spatial structure and still serves the historical communal function. The building has been provided with access through an 8-step staircase, which is built in the foundation level, which is raised to about 1.20 m above the ground level in the reconstruction. The building's elevation is able to distinguish it from its surrounding neighbors while forming a prominent feature at the village center.

Internally it is divided into a kitchen niche to the south, a primary gathering room (Oda-1) to the north, and a secondary room (Oda-2) to the east (Table 1). This represents the traditional "function" of the Anatolian village guest rooms, which is the spatial arrangement to facilitate hospitality and gathering as well as flexible social functions.

The Emin Çavuş Village Guest Room is reconstructed from contemporary materials, but at the same time, the continuity of the culture is maintained. The spatial hierarchy and social uses, which are still being realized, show its preserved spatial hierarchy and its continuous social function, and thus its heritage significance is not only maintained in terms of material authenticity but also in the fact that social activities are still being carried out in the architectural space.

Table 1. Emin çavuş village room

Emin Çavuş Village Room		
Location	Entrance Façade	
		
Interior View Showing Seating Arrangement (<i>sedir</i>) and Stove.		
		
Plan		
		

The architectural characteristics of the Emin Çavuş Village Guest Room are summarized in table 2.

Table 2. Architectural characteristics of the emin çavuş village guest room

Category	Details
Location	SUSUZOSMANIYE Village
Name of Guest Room	Emin Çavuş Village Guest Room
Owner	Özcan Yılmaz (1985)
Construction Date	1947–48 (Renovated in 2003)
Building Layout	Detached ✓ / Attached –
Number of Floors	Single-story ✓ / Two-story –
Construction Technique	Load-bearing adobe ✓ / Reinforced concrete –
Materials	Adobe ✓ / Reinforced concrete –
Flooring	Wooden ✓ / Concrete –
Ceiling Technique	Flat ceiling ✓ / Beam-supported ceiling –
Interior Furnishings	Hearth – / Niche – / Cupboard ✓ / Raised platform (Seki) ✓

Spatial and Sociocultural Analysis of the Emin Çavuş Village Guest Room (1947/2003)

Spatial Context

The Emin Çavuş Village Guest Room has certain features that are typical of the traditional Anatolian village guest rooms in the context of spatial analysis. The identity of the structure is determined by the person who commissioned its construction, and it is customary to give them the name, as it is the same for the village guest rooms in collective memory. This association enhances the built space, the family history, and the local culture. In terms of space size, the biggest interior volume (Oda 1) is used as the main guest room and main meeting place and highlights the cultural significance of sharing and hospitality in the organization of architecture. The multi-layered and overlapping structure of the spaces indicates the influence of social life and communal use on the traditional way of design in villages.

The layout within the house also demonstrates a focus on functionality and flexibility. Seating platforms (*SEDİR*), which are continuous along the enclosing walls and around the window openings; cupboards (*DOLAP*) built into the walls; and wall-mounted shelves (*Sergen*) allow the room to function for conversation, eating, sleeping, and visitors without the need for movable furniture. The stove and the other services in the room also emphasize the function of the room as a meeting point of hospitality and care for the community. Although it has been rebuilt and materials changed, the conservation of its spatial layout suggests that the heritage value of the structure may be not only in the physical fabric but also in the continuity of the spatial logic, which supports the traditional communal activities. The continuity shows the adaptive resilience of the living cultural heritage settings, the village guest rooms.

Sociological Context

The existing owner, Özcan Yılmaz, and the oral information obtained during the interviews with the people who used the Emin Çavuş Village Guest Room in the long term demonstrate that the building remains to be socially significant and the ways it has been used change. The guest room has always been open to all guests, as it is the duty of every rural person to be hospitable, says Yılmaz. The original two-story wood building built in 1947-1948 was destroyed in a major fire in 2003 but has been rebuilt on the same parcel and still serves its communal purpose. Memories of the previous building include a stable on the bottom floor and a big room up there, reached by a staircase. This top floor consisted of three cupboards, the one being the medicines of Emin Çavuş and occasionally acted as a mini pharmacy to the villagers in their simple necessities like aspirin. The house was also versatile with a smaller room attached to it and used to store bedding and blankets and equipment used in hunting. The initial design of the building, according to oral sources, was constructed by an artisan called Carpenter Mehmet Usta who also carved a sun shape above the inscription Welcome written on the door thereby symbolically enhancing the identity of the building to be a place of welcome.

The guest room was also linked with social activities which were seasonal and ceremonial. The Bayram prayer would be followed by the villagers, who would collectively gather during religious holidays to share in the SUTLU CORBA (milk soup) in a room, where everybody would rejoice and take care of

each other, Yılmaz said. During winter when the crop was not at full blast, the room was taken over by men in the evenings, who gathered together frequently to have a chat, exchange food and play board games such as dominoes and okey. Not only was the room used by the local community, but also travelers and traders who transited the room on their way to the nearby ANITKAYA Market was a testament that the room was a traditional guesthouse and was linked to other networks of the movement in the region. The repetition of these social functions demonstrates that space in architecture did not just offer hospitality but aided in establishing a social unity and continuity of culture in the village life.

In addition to its social and ceremonial role, the Emin Çavuş Village Guest Room had an important administrative and judicial role, too, as revealed by oral histories. Emin Çavuş himself used the room, which was remembered as an important source of influence among the leaders of the village, to supervise farm work, and to organize work in the village. Interviewees also said that the guest room was frequently used as a place to resolve disagreements by the Muhtar and the council of elders, making the guest room an informal community court. A local anecdote tells of a villager who, when bitten by a dog, killed it with a shot and was put in the so-called Ayan room (room for disciplining) for his misdeed by the traditional village government. This administrative position continued with his descendants as well; Emin Çavuş' descendants, including Özcan Yılmaz, served as Muhtar. Village records also attest to the fact that conflict resolution was often handled within the village itself, avoiding state-run systems like courts or the gendarmerie, just as the guest room's history suggests, and that this was a common practice in this village.

Contemporary Use and Condition






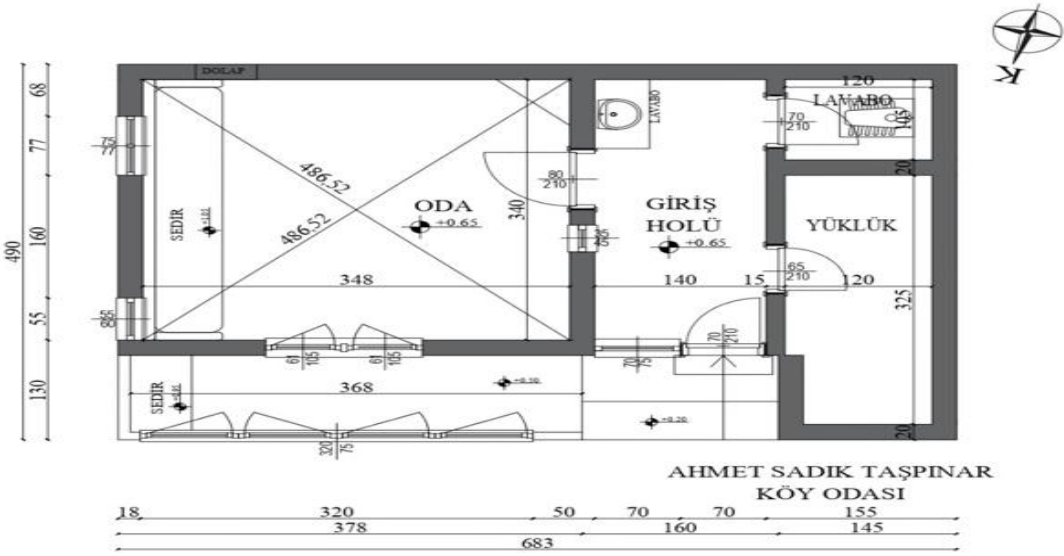
The Emin Çavuş Guest Room is used as a social and cultural center by the village residents. The structure is still utilized to receive visitors, to eat together and to assemble the men particularly in the evenings during winter. Even now the guest room fulfills the role of religious rituals, celebrations: on religious holidays the members of the community come to the guest room after the morning prayer. All these activities are still going on, and, therefore, the building is still a crucial cultural landscape, and traditional activities and social interaction are still actively maintained.

Physically the building has relatively little deterioration, as it has been in use and under maintenance for many years. Nevertheless, it has undergone some modifications in order to suit the contemporary requirements. To increase the heat loss during winter, a round window was also introduced at the west elevation to provide ventilation and the floor on the inside of the concrete is not covered. Therefore, the heating system of a stove is typically sufficient only to heat the main area and causes a thermal inconvenience in the other ones. These interventions demonstrate how the retention and updating of the building to modern functions and preservation of the architectural character of the original building are constantly interacting.

Ahmet Sadık Taşpınar Village Guest Room

The village mosque is to the east of the settlement center, and the Ahmet Sadık TAŞPIRİN Village Guest Room is a one-story building to the northeast of the mosque, connected to the house of the owner. It is oriented in north south direction, is a rectangular structure made of the traditional adobe masonry with a hipped roof design. It was built in 1912 and acquired its present look after a thorough renovation in 1952. The ground floor has been raised about 0.65 m above road level, and there is a short flight of steps that leads to the entrance on the north façade. Internally, the main foyer is found on the east side, and a wash hand basin and counter section are on the south façade. The guest room of the Ahmet Sadık Taşpınar Village can be seen as an example of the continuity of vernacular architectural logic in the interior and spatial arrangement of the traditional village guest rooms of Anatolia, which are an architectural form that emphasizes functionality and simplicity while having the ability to be shared by the community (Table 3).

Table 3. Ahmet sadik taşpınar village room

Ahmet Sadık Taşpınar Village Room	
Location	Entrance Façade
	
Interior View Showing Seating Arrangement (SEDZIR) and Stove.	
	
	
Plan	
	

The architectural characteristics of the Ahmet Sadık Taşpınar Village Guest Room are summarized in table 4.

Table 4. Architectural and spatial characteristics of the ahmet sadik taşpınar village guest room

Category	Details
Location	SUSUZOSMANIYE Village
Name of Guest Room	Ahmet Sadık Taşpınar Village Guest Room
Owner	Ahmet Taşpınar (1942)
Construction Date	1912 (Renovated in 1952)
Building Layout	Detached - / Attached ✓
Number of Floors	Single-story ✓ / Two-story -
Construction Technique	Load-bearing adobe ✓ / Reinforced concrete -
Materials	Adobe ✓ / Reinforced concrete -
Flooring	Wooden ✓ / Concrete -
Ceiling Technique	Flat ceiling - / Beam-supported ceiling ✓
Interior Furnishings	Hearth - / Niche - / Cupboard ✓ / Raised platform (seki) ✓

Spatial and Sociocultural Analysis of the Ahmet Sadık Taşpınar Village Guest Room (1912)

Spatial Context

The Ahmet Sadık Taşpınar Village Guest Room's architectural features are summarized in table 4. From a spatial perspective, the room displays several elements of traditional guest rooms of the villages in Anatolia. Like many vernacular buildings, it is named after its builder and as such is a reminder of the relationships between architecture and space, family identity, and collective memory. The interior space that is the biggest is referred to as the principal guest room (*MISAFİR ODASI*), in line with the traditional orientation of rural domestic architecture towards hospitality. Continuous built-in seating platforms (*SEDİR*) on three sides of the space and the integrated cupboard (*YÜKLÜK*) reinforce the functionality of the space, and provide ease in flexible use of the space with the simplicity of vernacular space organization. The presence of a stove and hearth also suggests that the room was used for hospitality and accommodation, providing warmth and comfort for guests, especially in the winter. The architectures highlight the continuity of vernacular spatial logic, and the material organization of the room continues to serve its social and cultural functions as a *living heritage* space.

Sociological Context

The owner and local users have been interviewed, and the sociocultural significance of the Ahmet Sadık Taşpınar Village Guest Room has been revealed. The presence of a *KORCU*, an assistant of the Muhtar, employed collectively by villagers, to ensure order in the guest room and the whole village, existed in the traditional village life, Emine Yılmaz said. The administrative role of the guest room went beyond its social role with the *KORCU* (custodian of the fields and pastures), who monitored the fields and pastures for damage or shortage. Yılmaz also mentioned that travelers who came from far away on horseback used to stay overnight in the room and that the villagers gave away food, water was poured for horses, and straw was placed in the box until their horses started their journey at dawn. childhood recollections also include the evening when the men would gather to play games, talk, and drink tea with her, and when her father and father-in-law would go around the room talking to the men. The guest room is still in use today intergenerational communal use is still evident as the owner's grandchildren stay and use the room as a place for rest and socializing. The original owner was also a traditional craftsman (*Keçeci*), and his craft of felt making (*KEÇECİLİK*) added to the cultural prestige of the room in the village. The present physical condition of the building, based on the observations, indicates that there is some loss of plaster from the exterior façade and that there has been some external restoration, but the interior walls are mostly covered with wooden paneling installed in the 1952 rehabilitation. As is common in the traditional village rooms, there is no fixed floor covering; rugs and kilims are preferred, and the house features a toilet within and a closed sitting space in the front, which can be opened to the outside and is furnished with *SEDİR* seating, showing the adaptation of vernacular architecture to the modern functional requirements without altering its social and cultural character.

RESULTS

The fact that both Emin Çavuş Village Guest Rooms and Ahmet Sadık Taşpınar Village Guest Rooms are still used and their cultural and social activities are still continuing shows that still have a value and importance in terms of maintaining the continuity of rural cultural heritage. Their present state of physical health and their role in society from a comparative perspective are tabulated in table 5.

Table 5. Comparative evaluation of the village guest rooms

Feature	Emin Çavuş Guest Room	Ahmet Sadık Taşpınar Guest Room
Primary Function	Guest room	Guest room
Interior Condition	No significant deterioration	Minor cracks and color changes
Exterior Condition	Plaster swelling	Cracks, surface loss, additional units
Community Contribution	Muhtar's office; informal local justice space; substitute health center	Muhtar's office
Social Role	Bayram gatherings, youth meetings, weddings, communal dining rituals	Family gatherings, social interaction, recreation

Spatial Organization and Architectural Continuity

The spatial structure of both village rooms is typical for traditional rural architecture in Anatolia: starting with an entrance room, an intermediate gathering room is placed at the center. This spatial organization is a reflection of the social value of the main room as the center for welcoming guests and for socializing and living. Enhancing the spatial flexibility are built-in seating platforms (*SEDIR*) that are arranged along the perimeter and make it possible for the room to be used for conversation, communal dining, rest, and hosting overnight visitors.

The two buildings differ, however, in such aspects as the date of construction and the period of their maintenance, but the original logic of the space is preserved in both. The interior organization of the Ahmet Sadik TAŞPINAR Village Guest Room (made of traditional adobe masonry) has been maintained with the minimum of modifications and is an extension of vernacular building practices [2]. Emin Çavuş Village Guest Room, however, had been totally reconstructed following the fire in 2003 and strengthened concrete structural components and refurbishing were introduced. Despite these material changes, the original layout and functioning as a community have been preserved. This illustrates how the continuity of heritage can be maintained while at the same time adapting the building to its new purpose through retaining the spatial organization and social use [3][13].

Social Functions and Intangible Cultural Practices

Oral history interviews show that both village rooms were originally multi-purpose community rooms that served purposes other than providing guest rooms. These were used to make collective decisions, hold seasonal festivals, practice hospitality, provide informal education and exchange with the generations, and foster the values of solidarity, reciprocity, and communal responsibility [4][15]. The Emin Çavuş Village Guest Room has a very close relationship with the concept of governance, as interviewees stated it was used as the working place of the Muhtar in the village, a place where the informal justice system was exercised and where the disputes were solved within the village. It was an administrative office whose task was to make the guest room the hub of local authority and collective regulation. By contrast, the Ahmet Sadık Taşpınar Village Guest Room primarily worked to promote social cohesion by holding evenings, storytelling, sharing meals, playing games, and interacting with families. Both examples show how the village rooms nurture less tangible cultural practices in different ways by offering spatial structures that enable the social, ethical, and cultural norms and values that make up the community and its sense of identity to be reproduced [12][17]. These results reveal that the village rooms are living repositories of intangible cultural heritage—and architecture is a medium that can help to maintain the collective memory and continuity of the culture.

Physical Condition, Adaptation, and Continued Use

Field observations indicate physical degradation and interventions in the guest rooms to various levels, which are caused by exposure to the environment, the need to maintain, and the dynamic functional needs. The Ahmet Sadık Taşpınar Village Guest Room is cracked and abraded on the surface with certain loss of material and the Emin Çavuş Village Guest Room that has been highly renovated following reconstruction has comparatively less damage on exterior.

Despite the physical transformation that has occurred, the two buildings continue to be in active use as meeting places, seasonal events, places to entertain visitors, and places to make decisions within the community. The ongoing social use of these buildings provides evidence that a heritage value is not necessarily reliant on the physical authenticity but can also be maintained through continued use [3][6]. The results align with the current heritage theory, which focuses on adaptive continuity: though the use of the buildings has been modified, the communal use is still present, and therefore the adaptation of the buildings has a positive impact on the sustainability of the culture.

It seems that the strength of the village rooms is that able to change and maintain their social function. In this way, adaptation doesn't necessarily pose a challenge to authenticity; rather, it shows itself as a means by which *living heritage* can remain socially relevant from generation to generation.

DISCUSSION

The results show that the continuity of village rooms is not only related to the material continuity of the architecture but also related to the continuity of spatial organization and the continuation of its functions. Because of their unique characteristics as centrally organized main gathering rooms and interior dispositions, these buildings are still socially relevant in the rural landscape, despite the fact that the building materials and building technologies have changed with the passing years. This lends itself to current heritage discourses that focus upon an interdependence between place and social action in the creation of cultural value [3][5].

Emin Çavuş Village Guest Room is a good case in point of how reconstructive interventions do not necessarily lead to the devaluation of the heritage. The continuity of the spatial hierarchy and the communal functions have maintained its cultural significance, even though the original wooden structure was lost after the fire in 2003 and rebuilt with reinforced concrete elements. This brings to the fore issues that question traditional conservation strategies that focus on material authenticity as the key sign of heritage values. Rather, it is proposed that adaptation that is sensitive to community needs can have a positive impact on the continuity of heritage, where the overall spatial logic and social functions have not been disrupted [13][17].

The oral history data also show that the rooms of a village are important bearers of intangible cultural heritage. The design of the guest room is the key to communal decision-making, hospitality rituals, stories, conflict resolution, and social events held during the year. By doing so, these practices recreate social memory, reassert moral rules, and contribute to the perpetuation of collective identity in rural communities by repetition. By doing so the building is not merely a box but a thought-provoking building that assists in acting out and passing on a culture [11][15].

The village rooms need to be seen through the lens of the *living heritage* theory and, therefore, be perceived as hybrid heritage spaces, which support each other in terms of both tangible and intangible values. Significant not only to the conservation of the material, but also to the interaction of the built form and lived practice. The slow disappearance of the village rooms as an element of the rural heritage demonstrates the vulnerability of such a non-monumental heritage and also dictates the need to have conservation plans more geared towards continued use, community engagement and cultural value as opposed to physical conservation alone due to the demographic shift, rural depopulation and shifting social habits [4][6].

This perspective also opens up new possibilities on new multidisciplinary research in the future. Future research involving collaboration with the disciplines of architecture, anthropology, sociology, cultural geography and heritage management would add more information regarding the development and adaptation of rural communal space in the current context. Theoretical discussions on adaptive continuity, vernacular resiliency, and conservation of *living heritage* could also be expanded by comparing the similar communal buildings in other areas of Anatolia and the world in general.

Though the insights gained as a result of this study are valuable, the results are limited to the two case studies and the regional context. Future research should therefore be expanded to cover a comparative scope, and further research into the relationship between architectural adaptation, social transformation, and continuity of heritage should be pursued. This would help develop a more holistic perspective on the village rooms as a *living heritage* environment and create a more solid base for the sustainable conservation of such environments in rural areas.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above, the conclusion of this study is that the village rooms are *living heritage* spaces that are inseparable between form and function, both tangible and intangible. The study shows that the Emin Çavuş and Ahmet Sadık Taşpınar village rooms in SUSUZOSMANIYE Village in AFYONKARAHISAR are hybrid in that can be considered cultural heritage environments, and architectural continuity and communal use support each other in terms of cultural heritage. The results

show that the village room has been a multi-purpose communal space in the past that is used for hosting, managing societal affairs, passing on cultural heritage, and promoting social cohesion. Their spatial qualities the centrally configured space of the main room and the flexible organization of the interior have allowed them to adapt to the changing social and material needs whilst maintaining their central communal function. Oral history also indicates that these spaces continue to maintain the collective memory, ethics, and intergenerational identity in rural society. The study also reveals that heritage continuity is not necessarily dependent on absolute material authenticity but needs to be related to the continuous social use of space. From both case studies, adaptive transformations are seen, which shows that architectural transformation does not mean heritage value has been reduced, but in any case, where spatial logic and communal function have been preserved, adaptation can make a contribution to the long-term sustainability. This assists in promoting the conservation approaches that emphasize continuity of purpose as opposed to mere conservation of cloth and on an active community role. This study is an architectural analysis mixed with the theory of *living heritage* which is engaged in conservation of sustainable rural heritage in general. It highlights the need to create interdisciplinary conservation policies which respect the fact that there is a two-way relationship between built form and social practice, and it offers a vital instrument to the conservation of the rural vernacular heritage as an active and dynamic cultural resource, rather than a historical relic.

REFERENCES

- [1] Hasgül E, Olgun İ, Karakoç E. Vernacular rural heritage in Turkey: an intuitional overview for a new living experience. *Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development*. 2021 Oct 20;11(4):440-56. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JCHMSD-01-2020-0021>
- [2] Ağbaba T, Kozlu HH. Traditional houses in Ürgüp/Ayvalı rural heritage area: Vernacular architecture, spirit of place and local identity. *Cultural Heritage and Science*. 2025 Jun 6;6(1):29-44. <https://doi.org/10.58598/cuhes.1621013>
- [3] Poullos I. Moving beyond a values-based approach to heritage conservation. *Conservation and management of Archaeological Sites*. 2010 May 1;12(2):170-85. <https://doi.org/10.1179/175355210X12792909186539>
- [4] Rosetti I, Bertrand Cabral C, Pereira Roders A, Jacobs M, Albuquerque R. Heritage and sustainability: Regulating participation. *Sustainability*. 2022 Jan 31;14(3):1674. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14031674>
- [5] Veldpauw L, Pereira Roders AR, Colenbrander BJ. Urban heritage: putting the past into the future. *The Historic Environment: Policy & Practice*. 2013 Apr 1;4(1):3-18. <https://doi.org/10.1179/1756750513Z.00000000022>
- [6] Ekici SC, Özçakır Ö, Bilgin Altınöz AG. Sustainability of historic rural settlements based on participatory conservation approach: Kemer Village in Turkey. *Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development*. 2024 Jun 18;14(4):497-520. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JCHMSD-05-2021-0087>
- [7] Soykök Ede B, Taş M, Taş N. Sustainable management of rural architectural heritage through rural tourism: İznik (Turkey) case study. *Sustainability*. 2025 Apr 14;17(8):3520. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su17083520>
- [8] Eken E, Kul FN. Traditional Dwellings of Gölde (İncesu): A Rural Heritage in the Process of Change. *Vernacular Architecture*. 2021 Jan 1;52(1):41-62. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03055477.2021.1981593>
- [9] Arslan EN, Dişli G. Architectural heritage and traditional knowledge systems: insights from the ancient settlement of Kilistra, Türkiye#. *Sustainable Communities*. 2025 Dec 31;2(1):2477145. <https://doi.org/10.1080/29931282.2025.2477145>
- [10] Güler S, Uştuk O, Yüceer H. Tracing the Values of Fading Rural Architectural Heritage: The Case of Cold-Water Baths in Western Anatolia. *Heritage*. 2025 May 28;8(6):193. <https://doi.org/10.3390/heritage8060193>
- [11] Cankurt Semiz SN, Özsoy FA. Transmission of spatial experience in the context of sustainability of urban memory. *Sustainability*. 2024 Nov 13;16(22):9910. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su16229910>
- [12] Ergöz Karahan E, Göçer Ö, Boyacıoğlu D, Shrestha P. Measuring “sustainable development” in vernacular settlements: a case study Behramkale, Türkiye. *Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development*. 2025 May 14;15(3):613-32. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JCHMSD-06-2022-0100>
- [13] Gök D, Durmuş G, Özkılavuz B, Acar E, Gündoğdu S. A holistic and critical exploration of cultural significance of a reconstructed heritage site: Bursa mevlevi lodge. *Buildings*. 2025 Feb 12;15(4):568. <https://doi.org/10.3390/buildings15040568>
- [14] Durukan A, Ertaş Beşir Ş, Koç Altuntaş S, Açikel M. Evaluation of sustainability principles in adaptable re-functioning: traditional residences in Demirel complex. *Sustainability*. 2021 Feb 26;13(5):2514. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13052514>
- [15] Guven Ulusoy FO. Integrated documentation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage in urban historical sites. *The International Archives of the Photogrammetry, Remote Sensing and Spatial Information Sciences*. 2023 Jun 24; 48:701-7. <https://doi.org/10.5194/isprs-archives-XLVIII-M-2-2023-701-2023>

- [16] Mutlu İ, Akın ES. Village chambers and their architectural features in Turkish culture: The villages of Keskin, Kırıkkale. Ordu Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Sosyal Bilimler Araştırmaları Dergisi. 2025 Dec 1;15(4):2416-46. <https://doi.org/10.48146/odusobiad.1619587>
- [17] Aykan B. From “Living in History” to “Ghost Town”: Hasankeyf’s Lost Social Values. Heritage & Society. 2024 Oct 2:1-26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2159032X.2024.2409048>
- [18] Xie K, Zhang Y, Han W. Architectural heritage preservation for rural revitalization: Typical case of traditional village Retrofitting in China. Sustainability. 2024 Jan 12;16(2):681. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su16020681>
- [19] Moosavi SM, Cornadó C, Askarizad R, Garau C. The social life of residential architecture: a systematic review on identifying the hidden patterns within the spatial configuration of historic houses. Buildings. 2025 Jun 18;15(12):2120. <https://doi.org/10.3390/buildings15122120>
- [20] Karataş E, Özköse A, Heyik MA. Sustainable heritage planning for urban mass tourism and rural abandonment: an integrated approach to the Safranbolu–Amasra eco-cultural route. Sustainability. 2025 Apr 2;17(7):3157. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su17073157>
- [21] UNESCO. (1972). *Convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage*. UNESCO.
- [22] UNESCO. (2003). *Convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage*. UNESCO.
- [23] UNESCO. (2011). *Recommendation on the historic urban landscape*. UNESCO.