

The Old Mosque (Eski Camii) At Nimetli Village, Seben District Of Bolu And Its Conservation Problems

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ABSTRACT

This article is on the Old Mosque (Eski Camii) located in Bolu province, Seben district, Nimetli village which is compiled from the ongoing M. S. thesis, based on "Restoration Proposal Of Nimetli Village Old Mosque In Bolu Province, Seben District". The main objective of the study is to create a basis for the work to be done to transfer the structure to next generations by analyzing and documenting the current situation of the mosque and evaluating the information obtained. For this purpose, the problems and the potential of the structure is evaluated by examining the historical and architectural characteristics of the Old Mosque (Eski Camii) of Nimetli village.

Analysis and documentation is the first and important stage of the scientific restoration process of a historic building. In this context the article covers the results of the architectural survey which document the current status of Nimetli village Old Mosque, structural situation, detected missing and modified building elements, identification and definition of the deteriorated architectural elements and materials to determine the basis of the conservation proposal for the building.

Key Words: Bolu, Seben, Nimetli village Old Mosque, Preservation, Documentation

1. INTRODUCTION

Every part of the Anatolia is home to a rich cultural and architectural heritage. Most of the extant historical, architectural structures are away from the original states by experiencing a variety of interventions, or have kept completely deserted to collapse by natural conditions. Beyond individual efforts, there is a need for systematic and programmatic study to protect our architectural heritage. Extensive preservation efforts could not be made because of ignorance, indifference, financial difficulties, and lack of settled protection awareness until now.

Buildings in the city centers have had the priority in the protection because they are in daily life and publicly available. However, the value of the rural architecture, ties and diversity of the culture and life has been ignored with the impact of urban migration.

The Old Mosque located in the province of Bolu, Seben district, Nimetli village, is one of the examples of non-residential rural architecture that not only has the material characteristics of the Western Black Sea

region, but also gives clues about social life of its location. According to the inscription over the entrance gate, the mosque is built in 1845 (1261 in Muslim calendar) and reached today without any significant change, however it is abandoned because of a new concrete mosque built next to it. The structure which belongs to legal entity of the village was registered as immovable cultural asset to be protected by the Supreme Council of Immoveable Cultural and Natural Heritage of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism with the decision no: 428 and 12 October 1984 date[1].

No documentation and planning for the protection of the structure have been done so far.

The initial analysis were carried out prior to the start of the project, to identify the mosque's inherent potentials and a study strategy was developed in order to preserve all the potentials and possible solutions for the problems of the building. In this context, the below mentioned potentials and problems of the Nimetli Village Old Mosque and its location were verified as below:

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- Old Mosque of the Nimetli village is located in the village center, in a court where villagers can come together. It is easily accessible and perceptible from all over the village.
- The structure, as well as being a mosque, consists of two chambers with two floors contiguous to the “harim” from the north wall which are used for Quran course, gathering of villagers and waiting for prayer time. The mosque represents an important example with this unprecedented feature.
- Nimetli village has an easily accessible location to important frequently visited historical and touristic places such as stone houses from Phrygians, a church ruin from Byzantine period, Pavlu thermal springs, plateaus used for travel and recreation area by tourists[2].
- The mosque which is registered as a cultural asset to be protected has survived without significant changes and carries reference information regarding the changed or missing parts within itself.
- Most important point of the mosque is that the construction style is the same as the traditional houses of the village.

Apart from the potentials regarding the structure mentioned above, major problems are listed below.

- After the construction of new concrete mosque in the same court which is located at the east of the Old Mosque, unused Old Mosque is abandoned and used as storehouse. Deterioration process of the Old Mosque has accelerated due to neglecting and indifference.
- The lower windows of the mosque have been partially buried in the ground and window barriers disappeared because of the rise in the west side road.
- The roof of the mosque had taken water because of broken, slid and lost roof tiles. Cracks, rotting and deflection occurred in the wooden load-bearing structures of the roof.
- Expansion of the “mahfil” and plaster renovation in the “harim” of the mosque resulted in loss of authentic material and architectural elements.

Potentials and problems of the building have required a study that includes comprehensive documentation, building surveys, analysis and assessment. As a result

of findings, in order to maintain the stability and existence of the structure; forms of interference can be improved.

2. A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO NİMETLİ VILLAGE IN SEBEN PROVINCE

Geographically, Seben is situated in between 40° - 50° North parallel and 31° - 50° East Meridian. Although Seben is considered to be a town of Western Black Sea region, it is located at the border of Anatolia region as well. The town is located at the midst of, Kibriscık and Dörtdivan at the East, Mudurnu at the West, Bolu at the North and Nallıhan at the South [2]. Seben is 55 km far from Bolu, 208 km to Ankara and 320 km to İstanbul [3]. Nimetli village is in a short distance to Seben which takes 5 km from to its centrum (Figure 1). Nimetli village is a settlement where intensive population loss is seen. According to the 1985 census the population of the village was 273 in number, while constantly decreased in 2014 to 115 [4].

The existence of the village dates back to prehistoric ages of which the former name is called Mamatlı. The first settlers to the region are the Phrygians. The carved rock houses at the surrounding villages are the solid indicators of the Phrygian’s existence. Then, Romans and Byzantines ruled the region. Seben, joined into Ottoman lands in 1324. In 1908, after Bolu became an independent “mutasarrıflık”, in 1911 Seben was established as a “Bucak” of Mudurnu in the name of Çarşamba. In 1946 became a town and connected to Bolu [5]. Thus Nimetli settlement also became the village of the Seben town.

The town is established on the slope of the mountain where the Aladağ stream flows along its skirts. The fertile land along the stream inhibits vegetable and apple orchards which are the important source of income of the village [6].

The traditional houses of the village are one or two story high simple buildings which are built by rubble masonry with wooden beams, plastered and whitewashed at the interior. The roofs are coated by traditional tiles. The first floor of the house is used for living, where the ground floor used as barn (Figure 2) [7].



Figure 1: Map of Seben district [2]



Figure 2: General view from the village

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE MOSQUE

3.1. Location

The building is located in the province of Bolu, Seben district, Nimetli village. Mosque is located in the west of the residential area of the village, on a hillside overlooking the settlement on a sloping land. There are

height differences at the east-west facades as well as north-south facades. There is a dirt road along side of the west front where entrance door is located (Figure 3-8) [7].



Figure 3: Nimetli village [8]



Figure 4: Old and new mosques



Figure 5: South-west façades



Figure 6: North façade



Figure 7: Entrance façade



Figure 8: East façade

3.2. Planning

The building consists of a rectangular “harim” at the ground floor, a village chamber contiguous to the north wall of the “harim”, and an entrance area which combines both. The main entrance is located in the west front which wooden bearing structure holds no wall. A wooden stair is located at the west side of the entrance area. This stair leads the way to the hall where entrance of the village chamber is located. There is a wooden outbuilding which was used as ablution place at the west of the upper floor stair hall. Wooden “mahfil” all

along to the western wall of the “harim” opens to the village chamber at the second floor. There are two rows of window on each of the south, west and east walls. The “mihrab” in the middle of the wall in the direction of Mecca is the form of a simple niche. Platforms at the both sides of the “mihrab” are wooden. There is a wooden dais at the corner of southern wall connects with eastern wall. The roof of the mosque is hipped roof and covered with traditional roof tiles. Wooden minaret from the northwest side has one “şerefe”/ balcony (Figure 9-17) [7].

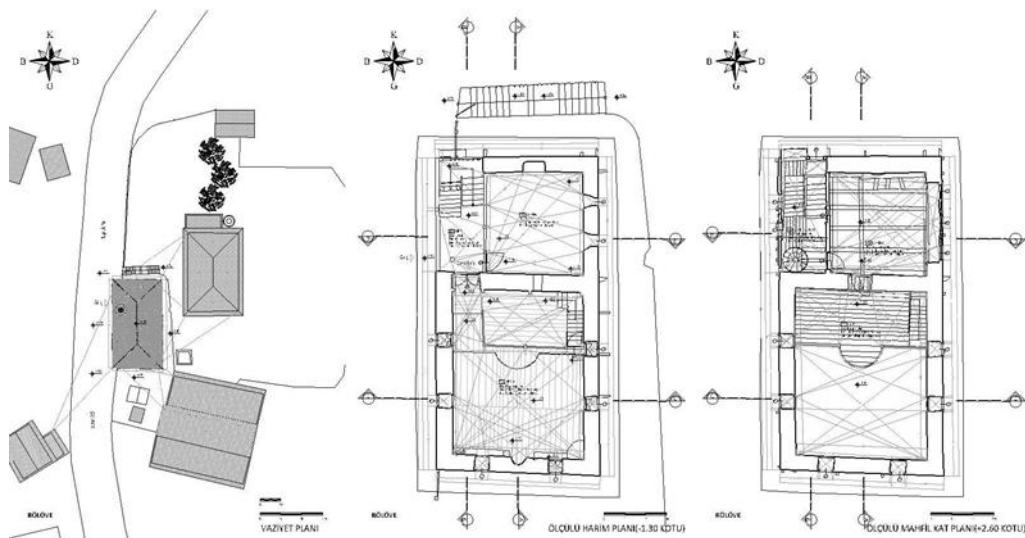


Figure 9: Architectural survey: Plans (Z.Ceylan)

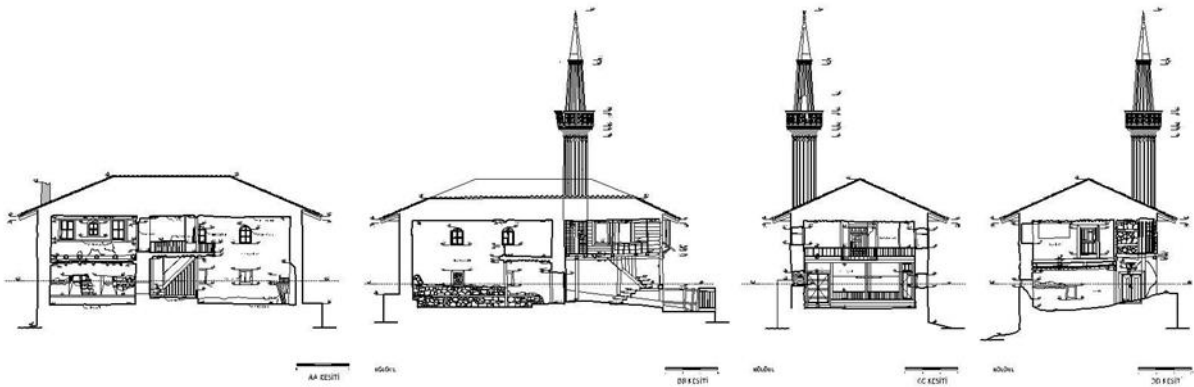


Figure 10: Architectural survey: sections (Z.Ceylan)

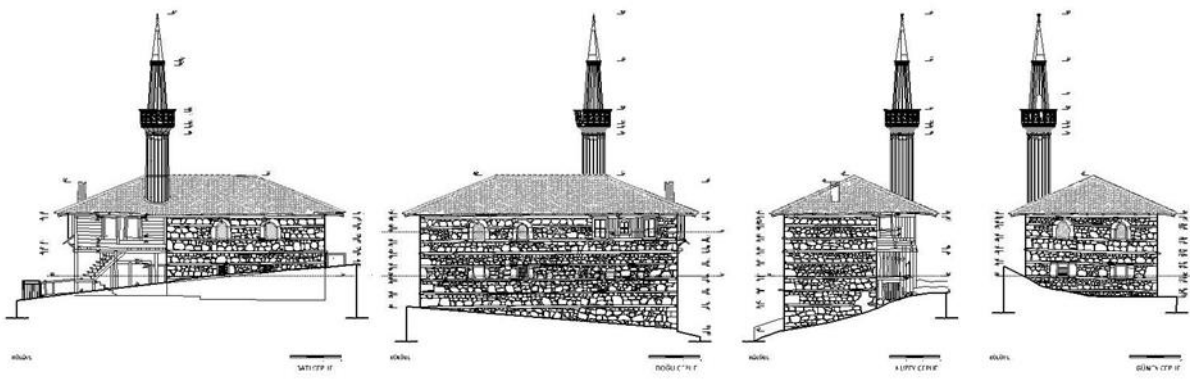


Figure 11: Architectural survey: façades (Z.Ceylan)



Figure 12: "Harim"



Figure 13: "Harim"



Figure 14: "Harim"



Figure 15: Village chamber (Downstairs)



Figure 16: Village chamber (Upstairs)



Figure 17: Stair hall

3.3. Façades

Main outer walls of the Old Mosque of the Nimetli Village are rubble masonry with wooden beams. Large and clean - cut stones are used in the corners of the walls. Landing platforms at the west side of the north facade and the north side of the west facade are timber cover with wooden structure. Rafters of the roof are

visible. Wooden projection on the north facade resembles bathing cubicles of the traditional houses [9]. This projection is considered as providing evacuation of the water used for ablution to the garden (Figure 18-20) [7].



Figure 18: Wooden projection Figure 19: Wooden projection Figure 20: Wooden projection

3.4. Construction System

Main outer walls of the Old Mosque of the Nimetli Village are built with rubble masonry with wooden beams, interior walls are plastered and whitewashed, exterior walls are not plastered. Distances between the beams are different from each other. Wooden beams are connected with lap joints in the corners. Wooden posts and wooden joists in the northwest corner of the mosque construct a shelf formed by wooden bearing structure. Wooden boom of the minaret is located over

the 50cm northwest of the main entrance door of the Mosque. Wooden posts forming the body of the minaret starts around the boom after the shelf. Steps between boom and outer posts provide horizontal connection. Minaret construction is installed between posts by cross-links and minaret body is formed by timber cover from outside (Figure 21-23) [7].



Figure 21: Minaret



Figure 22: Minaret



Figure 23: Minaret

3.5. Architectural Elements

Doors: Entrance gate of the “harim” is double-wing and wings are wood frame construction. Chamber doors of the structure are wooden frame construction with one wing and opens to the inside of the chamber. Back side of the doors was secured with horizontal battens and braces.

Windows: The lower windows of the “harim” have double-leaf shutters on the interior side of the wall. The lower windows have wooden barriers on the outer face

of the wall. Upper windows of the “harim” are arched and glazed on inner face of the wall. Gaps in the outer surface of the window are covered with wire. There are no frames in the windows of the downstairs village chamber. There are three sliding sash windows of the upstairs village chamber. Two of the sliding sash windows are rectangular shape, one is arched. There are also window gaps without woodwork on the landing (Figure 24-27) [7].



Fig. 24: "Harim" window



Fig. 25: Door



Fig. 26: "Harim" door



Fig. 27: "Harim" window

"Mahfil" section (women's gallery of the mosque used during the prayers): There is an outbuilding in the middle of "mahfil" which continues alongside of the "harim" wall. The portion facing the "harim" is separated with guard rails. There is a wooden door opened to the village chamber in the middle of the west wall of the "mahfil". It is believed that, "mahfil" section was expanded through "harim" in a different period.

Floor: Floor of the "harim" and upper village chamber is wood siding. Floor of the entrance hall and lower village chamber is earth.

Ceiling: Ceiling of the "harim" is made of one side groove joint with wood siding, having a circular center point in the middle. Upper floor village chamber ceiling

is also one side groove joint with wood siding. Ground floor village chamber's ceiling is sided with wide woods between the beams.

Roof: Roof of the structure is covered with pantiles over wooden construction.

Minaret: Minaret rising from the northwest of the roof has cylindrical body. There are partition joints on the wooden body. Upper side of the balcony of the minaret is also wood sided; cylindrical minaret is tightened to the up side and ends with cone plate.

Ornaments: Walls of the upper floor village chamber have hand carved figures (Figure 28-30) [7].



Figure 28: Ornaments



Figure 29: Ornaments



Figure 30: Ornaments

4. STRUCTURAL CONDITION

Beside deterioration in materials under the influence of climatic conditions, deteriorations caused by locals influence are also observed in the Old Mosque of the Nimetli Village. Major change made by locals is expanding the original "mahfil" section through "harim". Other human interventions are cement based plasters instead of original plasters, oil paint on dais and wooden window frames (Figure 31) [7]. In addition, deteriorations on architectural elements and construction materials are as follows: loss of stone wall pointing, swelling and cracks on original plaster, color and texture deteriorations on wooden structures, degradability and slipping on tiles.

Main outer wall is made by rubble stones, however, a big portion of loss of the soil mixtures is observed on the sides open to external effects. In some places wall pointing covers the stone surface visibly (Figure 32) [7]. There are losses of rubble stone on the main northern

wall close to ground level. There are color and texture deteriorations, cracks and corrosion on the wooden beams in the walls as a result of external weather conditions (Figure 33) [7]. Interior sides of the walls are plastered; however, original plasters of the village chambers are swelled and cracked arising from moisture and pollution (Figure 34) [7]. Wooden construction at the entrance of the structure exposed to color and texture deteriorations under the influence of rain, snow, sun and wind. Color deteriorations are defined as change, losing and darkening in color, texture deteriorations are defined as roughening, leakage and swelling on surface. Beside color and texture deteriorations on all external sides of the minaret, there is loss of decoration elements and fragments on upper side of the minaret "şerefe"/ balcony (Figure 35) [7]. Fragments on pantiles, changing places and deformations are seen on the roof. Quality loss on tiles as a result of being exposed to water resulted in leakage. Because of the leakage of the tiles, there are problems

occurred with wooden roof board and roof bearer construction. Some deflections of the roof are

symptoms of the not functioning of bearer construction (Figure 36) [7].



Figure 31: Deteriorations



Figure 32: Deteriorations



Figure 33: Deteriorations



Figure 34: Deteriorations



Figure 35: Deteriorations



Figure 36: Deteriorations

5. THE RESULT

Old Mosque of Nimetli Village; reflects the characteristics of rural architecture in Western Anatolia in terms of the materials used, construction technique, and the diversity of use. The structure draws attention with its relationship with the environment and solutions for needs which are most economically provided by the setting. Besides being an architectural record, it is also important and worth protecting in terms of the cultural continuity of village life.

Although the mosque is one of the cultural values that reflects the Anatolian rural architecture, its importance and studies regarding its preservation have been pushed into the background by the effects of urban migration. Trough out the study, first step has been realized by measuring, documenting and analyzing the building in order to put forward conservation decision. Measured drawings of the structure is prepared, structural condition is examined, changed and missing parts are determined, deteriorations of the architectural elements and materials are identified.

In the light of these data, restitution project and restoration proposal including physical interventions to

prevent deteriorations can be prepared, and the structure can be put into practice, brought into service and preserved.

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