

**NEO-VERNACULAR
TRENDS TOWARDS THE RECENT PAST IN GREECE**

by

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*to my father, Yiorgos
to my mother, Katina*

Aknowledgements

My thanks to Ed Robbins, for his guidance and invaluable support throughout my studies.

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Submitted to the Department of Architecture on May 16, 1986 in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
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Abstract

In economically advanced countries, fragments of the past are preserved, or new environments are created to match this past image. The reapropriation of old forms includes what can be called the neo-vernacular as a way to meet emotional demands, economic needs or as one mode of intellectual justification for architecture in our times.

The origins of the present preservation society and regionalism in Greece began in the 30's and was strengthened in the 70's. The movement has been connected to the natural environment, the quality of the cities and the loss of national cultural identity.

How the notion of vernacular enters to the neo-vernacular and how it affects the shape of the physical and ideological environment today, as well as which issues of the recent past have remained unchanged -in reference to the Greek environment- are things to be examined in the present thesis.

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INTRODUCTION

Culture - ideas, aspirations and conventionalized activities of a people, a way that generations act while being in a place; the things that have remained from the past and the things that are going to be given to the future as a way of living and a process of learning.

This sharing of a world view and value systems (and the "training" into these) makes possible the process of vernacular buildings and the how of their making.

Popper (Rowe & Koetter, Collage city) considers tradition as indispensable and related to a need for a structured social environment; it gives us something on which we can operate, we can criticise and change.

Past informs present action by experience which grows up out of the mental retention of very recent past, to a sense of historical continuity; "a group past and a group future, selecting, explaining, retaining, modifying" (Lynch, 1972).

The time span of three generations is what exists stronger as memory. Beyond that, time fades off into a "flat" past. It is this recent past that includes the surviving vernacular in Greece.

Space and time are associated and their interaction is made evident by the variable of change as a physical characteristic. And in this context enters architecture; it changes with time. The juxtaposition of old and new becomes the visible accumulation of the passage of time. Connection with the past can be done through places (their character and activities).

Carrying the memory of a more certain time, and the need to go back to something "human" and "natural" in the cities, is what has made preservation become important. After the 18th century the shift from valuing the "exceptional" to valuing also the regular, involved the general public, which on one hand appreciated the past for emotional reasons and on the other started to be motivated by its useability.

There has been an interchange of monumentalism and academism with creative new styles, according to the general trends of the society. In the mid 19th century the attempt was made to "systematize the Romantic experience, to extract 'scientific' formulae from its subjective enthusiasms" (C.Row, 1976). And today that the already existing styles have been used in their "neo" forms and something new is sought, we have the post- modernism or the neo-vernacular.

There could be different attitudes towards the past: - to de-value it and destroy it physically on the grounds of "progress", industrialization or involved expectations for the future. - to manipulate it and connect past culture to today's culture by creating a new style of architecture re-appropriating the old forms (like post-modern, an elitistic movement - or like neo- vernacular, a populist culture movement); or by adaptive re-use. - to accurately preserve it as it was historically.

"Preservation" serves to emphasize history by means of the physical form, to appreciate age as a concept in physical environments, to justify the present by referring to a valid past, to use the past within the new context in order to give identity to the place, or to retain its existing identity.

It is a feature of economically advanced countries to preserve fragments of the past or to create new environments to match this past image. Sometimes this is seen as an opportunity to strengthen the dramatic or idyllic effect of the environment. Motives like emotional needs, rejuvenation of national identity, economical interests, have an effect on new forms and an attitude towards the existing ones. They influence what gets built and what gets preserved (how, who and for whom).

The meaning and the way and reasons of inhabiting some settlements of vernacular architecture started gradually to change within the last years. Buildings have come to have associative values versus inherent architectural significance. Districts are re-created in order to keep alive the social and physical patterns of the past or to manipulate the way we want to remember it.

The difference between our attachment to the past and the previous ones is that we separate the concept of it from its objects and actively manipulate it instead of passively honoring it (replicas and re-creation). History as concept can give a rich environmental experience, re-affirm our identity and work as a source of inspiration for new architectural styles.

Remodeled pasts (both functionally and conceptually) to fit present day activities, are based on the knowledge and values of the present so the response to this past can either be transmitted, lost or modified. As Kostof said, the direct experience one gets by visiting places today is de-related of reality and preservation was referred to as "the design of memory".

The origins of the preservation society in Greece could be placed in the 70's, after the shortcomes of the application of the modern movement in its popularized form. Similarly, in the United States it was in the 60's, when urban renewal was occurring. In both cases, the movement was concerned with the natural environment, the quality of the cities and the loss of cultural identity.

"Neo-vernacular" is the conscious reproduction of vernacular forms, or their transformation into today shells. "Vernacular" (as refered especially in Greece) are considered to be the small scale buildings or settlement situations that have survived from the recent past, which were products of a process that involved emperical knowledge and handicraft and have the connotations of cultural identity.

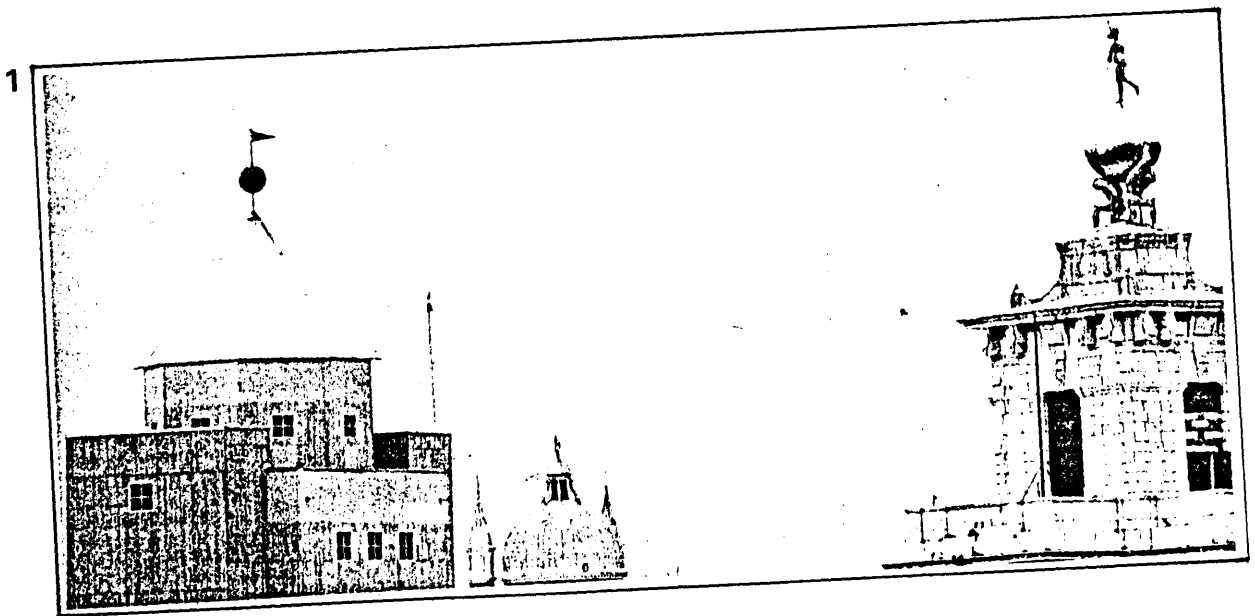
Neo-vernacular serves many different purposes. Part of its role is to act as a remembrance of the past, to produce symbols that give a sense of what this specific place means to its inhabitants and visitors over time. For some it is genuine nostalgia, for others it is commerce and speculation. Since today the physical change is more rapid in economically affluent countries, people have more opportunities to resist to the loss of the "historical" image of the environment, since they feel more secure and

familiar within a past that is known to them and want to retain these connections.

Neo-vernacular buildings have their own identity but also treat historic content as something livable that can be infused in segments into the material present. The neo-vernacular doesn't need the "genuine" in order to evoke the past. But is it creating a new version of the past or an old version of the present? In order to arrest the past, the solution of a similar image of its shells is chosen, while the circumstances that created that past cannot be reproduced.

There are things taken from the recent past (either as forms or as values), others are transformed and evolved. To locate what really does change, the specific issues that continue to exist (and not pseudo-presented as existing) and their form, can lead one to the essence of a settlement of a specific culture - since things that lie beyond the shells of the buildings are indispensable, desired and needed in terms of the physical and anthropological environment.

In view of this trend today towards the traditional, in Greece, I'd like to find where are the fine lines that link the vernacular with the neo-vernacular and the ones that distinguish them in terms of context and process; which are the issues that remain unchanged and give reasons for the new style to be characterized as neo-vernacular; how the notion of vernacular enters the neo-vernacular and how it affects the shape of the built environment today;



POST-MODERNISM AND NEOVERNACULAR

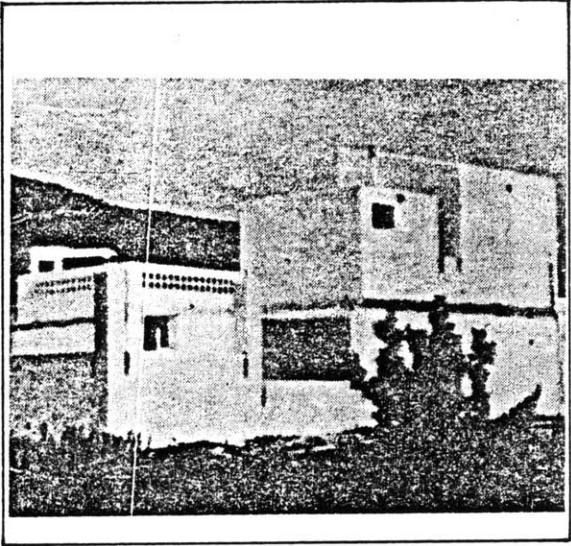
There are several directions in schools and in the circles of the designers like:

- Post-Modernism (where the attempt is to communicate with a concerned minority).
- Neo-Vernacular (which is more or less addressed to a general public).
- Conservative and compromised approaches (a little bit of everything with no desire for big statements).

On the other hand, the trends in the market include the desire to follow the beaten-track and the familiar forms of environment around or the desire to built something "new" and "different" that would have the implications of progress and of the "good life". The latter can be a mixture of any style (it has room for some genuine innovation and creative imagination, that is also true), as long as it could be similar to what could be seen in a magazine and could fulfil some vaguely accepted notion of what "new" is. In light of this market there is also the trend towards the vernacular (maybe in a less conscious way than in the case of the designers), which springs mainly out of a fear for the future on one hand and the economic incentives of the tourist industry on the other.

Post-modernism and neo-vernacular have in common that an eclectic process provides their basic elements; the construction of a new language of the fragments of previous ones. There is conscious and creative speculation of past forms , which are sources of authority and ideas for variation. They both extend to an extreme an already existing set of style, values ideas and forms, while searching for new symbols

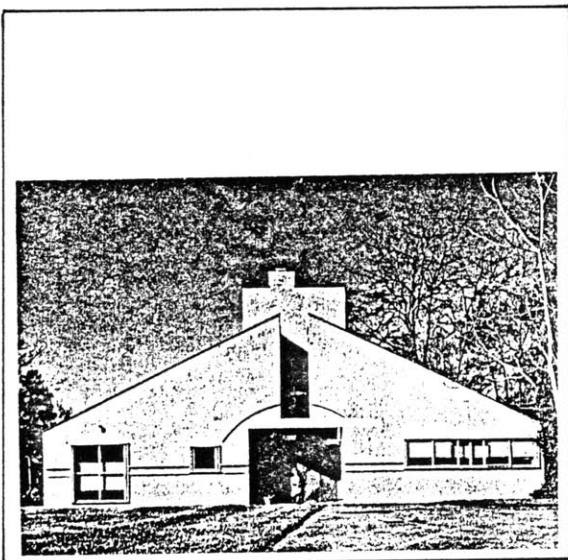
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and images. Solutions are often reached via ideological or regional needs, architects are expected to read implicit metaphors and meanings, while the public responds to the explicit messages.

There is an aparent superficiality (like lack of coherency between facade and plan) with exagerated or sometimes even banal forms. As Charles Jenks mentions (AD 5/6 1980) about Venturi's Trubek and Wislocki houses on Nantucket island, "a recurrent notion of Post-Modern Classicism as a return to primitive sources, before the canons of harmony and grace had set in, or before professional design had started." Similar applies for Neo-Vernacular.

Post-Modernism is keeping modern elements such as prefabrication and only uses classical elements or ordering principles (typology and symmetry), without accepting the integrated system, as in the past revivals. The same is valid for neo-vernacular. The post-modern style is pluralistic, eclectic and selective in its classical parts. In the same way the neo- vernacular chooses the grilled windows for example, and doesn't take the same interior arrangement. Both styles are applied to contemporaty circumstances.

Post-Modernism and Neo-Vernacular differ in that the latter forms are more integrated with the environment and act as a continuation of it, while the former have triumphal facades and even become a parody sometimes. In the neo-vernacular we also have exact reproduction (Popular Neighborhood in Nicosia) while in the post-modern the designers are liberated from the notion of a single norm.

WHY THE NEOERNACULAR

a) Nostalgia

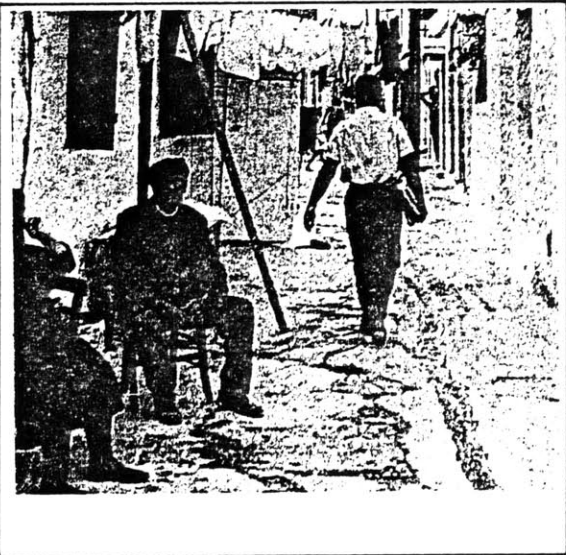
"But what is nature? Why is custom not natural? I greatly fear that this nature is itself only a first custom as custom is a second nature." Blaise Pascal (Collage City).

Things like forces of habit, inertia, conformity, the impact of our surroundings, keep us bound to the past. The growing rate of change in the environment today - or just the feeling of the potentiality of it - resulted in the considering as valuable artifacts even of only 30 years old. Recent past is a strong and meaningful concept, since it carries personal connections and remembrances. The aesthetic content of buildings is very much affected by associations with facts or people or just with a desired lifestyle.

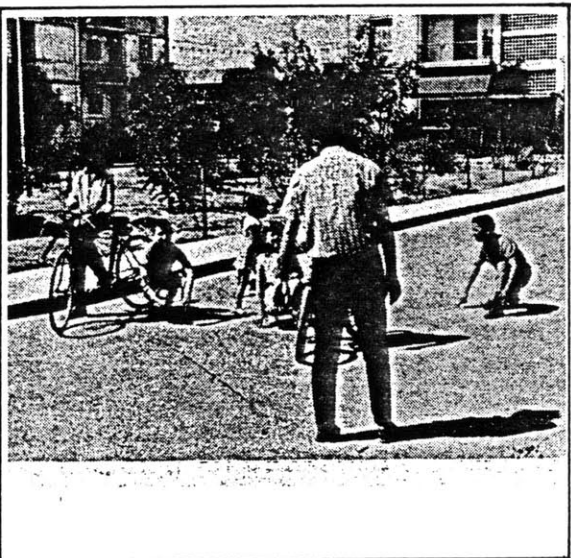
When the psychological stress of an uncertain future becomes unbearable, there appears attachment to a lifestyle that carries along familiar images of a known past that gives gives a sense of stability, security and some straight forward choices. Change that doesn't come natural is frightening sometimes, even if it is longed for, so there can be hesitancy for innovation and a desire to keep the existing (environment and customs) as it is. Since signs of age and human use are always capable of reaching an emotional nerve, we can be motivated by the properties of the old buildings and the uses and actions that they once sheltered. In this context, if the present environment gives stress to the inhabitants, people fall for the charm and vitality of the traditional forms. The unity of form and materials and the harmony with the landscape, in traditional settings generate an emotional response to newcomers also. But on the other hand we want to keep all the amenities the new buildings have.

Personal connections, personal experiences, personal imprints on the environment,

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become habits and memory and accumulate to the feeling that things shouldn't change, because they change for the worse. As Bachelard writes (Poetics of Space 1969), "over and beyond our memories, the house we were born in is physically inscribed in us. It is a group of organic habits"... "it has encraved within us the hierarchy of the various functions of inhabiting". The house, having more an aesthetic and symbolic nature, shows more clearly than other buildings the link between form and life patterns. Apart from secondary forces acting on its form (climate, construction etc), the primary ones (socio-cultural forces, family and clan structure, values and organization of society, vision of the ideal life) decide about spaces and their relationships. The choices are made through the taboos, customs and traditions of the cultural matrix.

Both the public and the architect live and are influenced by an environment of which a big part is inherited from others and the prevalent tends to be considered as right. But even though many want to enforce the local and continue the traditional, they are also in favour of importing solutions seen elsewhere, being thus in favour of a status quo, their own or an imported.

Since human activities are more crucial for the quality of place than the physical artifacts (buildings, streets etc), people look for an environment similar to the one that has once sheltered lifestyles that now are considered to be desirable. In this spirit, the return to "small town values" becomes something like "social preservation" and not only physical preservation. Living history (building as organism) came to replace history as artifact (as an exhibit, physically separated from the social life of the building) and the personal past leads to a personalized present and a search and hope for a common future. But even if in order to arrest the past the similar image of its shells is chosen as a solution, the circumstances that created that past cannot be reproduced.

There can also be nostalgia for the lost elements like diversity of scale, age and style of architecture and unplanned modes evolving over time, (alleys, courtyards, street

corners, unpredictable quality of building edge). All these are mingled and influenced by taste, political framework and spatial, visual and social function sought. Also, since money and power bring more easily drastic changes to the environment today, people have to react quickly and save what is left, even if the only justification for it is that it belongs to the previous generations.

Past generations, settled long in one place, developed a personal attachment to it and when its unique built identity is threatened, the need to resurrect what is left or re-create it becomes imperative. Where there is no attachment to the locale, do we need to establish identity rooted in time, in order to fill a void in our current psychological well being?

Since the original has lost a dominant role in our material culture, there are motives to preserve architecture or to create new according to the old forms, even though it may only have commemorative value and not be important in itself, but for the memory it can evoke. age of a building. There are no objective properties in the built world but the "subjective" enters into which value, properties and objects we choose to respond to, depending on the cultural taste that has developed at that time, space and circumstances.

In economically advanced countries, fragments of the past are preserved, or new environments are created to match this past image. Sometimes this is seen as an opportunity to strengthen the dramatic or idyllic effect of the environment. The survival of some symbolic or historically significant locations in a city, even if rarely visited by the inhabitants, but mainly by tourists, conveys a sense of identity, security and continuity. People want to be able to refer to this stable background of the permanent setting while they are experiencing the fluid elements of human action.

Part of the role of the Neo-Vernacular is to act as a remembrance of the past, to produce symbols to a place's residents and visitors that give a sense of what this specific place means over time. It can be considered as a form of preservation, as far

as the qualities sought are concerned, like to commemorate past people or events, to put some emphasis in history by means of the physical form, to appreciate age as a concept, to use the past within the new context in order to give identity to the place, or to retain its existing identity.

The Neo-Vernacular buildings have also their own identity as a vital element and treat historic content as something livable and transformable. While some restorations of historic places are accurate attempts, the Neo-Vernacular doesn't need the "genuine" in order to evoke the past. The focus has been transferred from the object itself, to the message that it translates.

By the use of alteration of history -in all dimensions- the imaginary is created to suit ourselves and to give us the desired experiences. And this imaginative quality perhaps is the most strong point the Neo-Vernacular buildings present.

b) Shift to a Mass-Culture

Part of the reasons of keeping the past are also the aspects of profit and touristic development and a shift of the times from an elite perspective to a mass culture perspective.

Today, there is the trend of "glorifying" even the most humble and never-looked-at-before buildings of the past. It is almost taken for granted today, that something that comes from the past (either genuine or connotative), is valuable and people resent its destruction even if they are not personally involved with the specific structure. (The justification of preservation as being no longer an issue, was established by the end of the 19th century). Now it is considered desirable and successful to make connections with the past (or with a future of "status"). For example, within the air of rapid change, confusion and excitement in Central Boston, preservation -or rather a "collage" of new and old- is established in the general public's attitude.

By the 18th century a respect for the buildings of the past was an upper class fashion. The shift from valuing the "exceptional" to valuing also the "regular" has resulted in involving the general public, which becomes more and more concerned in environmental quality, appreciates the past and has started to be motivated by the useability of its architecture.

There are districts that are given a strong physical and social significance, together with the shift from "monuments " to "anti-monuments". The form of the environment has become an important issue and a matter of general interest. What was before archeology and a bias in favor of the upper-class urbane environment, has expanded to an everyday life issue and its value goes beyond the symbolic level. The cumulative attitudes towards "the old" through the means of economical and ethical reasoning, bring us today in situations like in Monemvasia (Greece) that everybody is

building stone arches now for the sake of the tourists.

In economically affluent countries, where the physical change is more rapid, people have more opportunities and financial motives to resist to the loss of the "historical" image of the environment (since they feel more secure and familiar within a known past and want to retain these connections). In non-developed countries, the forces of alteration are weaker and thus the environment more or less retains its traditional forms and the process that lies behind them and creates them.

The choice of what to preserve has become more complicated and pluralistic today. What the present day culture finds fulfilling, both conceptually and physically, is not necessarily the genuine thing, but it can also be something of similar appearance that evokes connotations with the past and is used in a different way.

Generally people respond to the idea of something being old, but resent a decayed appearance (for example recycling is a sought solution in such cases). In this sense, we respond to the replicas in similar ways as to the original or authentic and to the passage of time and the past being expressed through stylistic and conceptual ways.

The mass culture's taste has become an active ingredient in what we preserve or how. As a result, the private market rose in a controlling position about historic environments or environments that would be desirable to have some memories of the past, and the entrepreneurs (as initiators and regulators of change) have been added to the new group of the general public (marketability of the new mass mentality for turn towards tradition).

Different groups place different values on the physical environment and there are people that are primarily cultural/humanistic oriented, while others primarily market oriented. Age value, human use, picturesqueness started to be appreciated by people, either by genuine interest or by imitating what the "right people" think.

On the other side we can see a phenomenon of architects designing in a culture

other than their own and trying to give buildings that according to their interpretations are a continuum of this place's forms.

There is a mass appeal for collecting old things parallel to the aesthetic taste to reinforce the identity found in the past. Replicas and recreations, which are more easily available, can fulfil this desire and fill in the void. As a final result, a more freely shaping of reminiscences of the past, adjusts it into our molds.

c) Chauvinistic reasons

Same as ethnic pride and patriotic nationalism are put forward in order to re-establish the identity of a place in moments of discontinuity and stress, the turn to neo-Vernacular can sometimes be defined in itself as the need for identification with a specific historic context. Along with this goes the cultivated cultural taste (effort to convince the public that they care very much for what they really do not care in the least) and the moral belief that environments rich in connotative features of the recent past are more pleasant places to live in. The emergence of a sense of civic consciousness is connected with the old traditions but is responsive to the new character of the contemporary city. But popular art, detached from its communal setting lost much of its authenticity. In this image-crisis the stress is on the symbolic and not the utilitarian, in order to satisfy a non fulfilling present with a past that, according to the estimation now, was worth experiencing.

The phenomenon establishing a cultural identity through built form, by making links with tradition and by reinterpreting historic forms, has much to do with a surge of nationalism. An easy way to strive for the future, is to built it on its past. The historic value, a content which can give us intellectual, artistic and social information about the culture who created it, is frequently used by official policy strategies to uplift either economically or morally a society which is starting to dispute many already established values. The messages that the physical form of objects gives can communicate an impression of the past times, evoke a desired sense of identity (by retaining a little bit more of the built world we know) and fulfil the need of pride inhabitants need to have for their place.

The difference from past chauvinistic approaches is that there is an emphasis on the "anti-monuments", on the local and on the human, in a de-centralized attitude.

d) Touristic and Financial Motives

Today, the useability property has become an important motive and value for preservation. In this way the past is being extracted from the objects themselves, is manipulated and used to suit our present needs. Part of its value is how it can be integrated into our daily life. The two groups, those interested in "progress" (in whichever form it takes, the land speculators included) and those who want to preserve, may direct themselves to the same results of creating Neo-Vernacular types of buildings, the former because they have a sense for the pulse of the market and the latter because they contribute to their standpoint about the past.

Apart from the current aesthetic taste and the need for continuity, factors in favor of the Neo-Vernacular environments are economic considerations and the ever present element of responding to the demands of the market. Once this trend has been established, the construction industry comes up with standardized neo-vernacular elements, which in turn give an additional urge to this style of construction. Once the circle of production and demand has been completed, it gives the procedure more acceleration towards this direction.

America's attachment to the past did not include a nostalgia for picturesqueness or an emotional response to aging architecture but was focused on the recreation of history. Since the first half of the 20th century, the private market has been a very strong force and recently the adaptive re-use is related to the economic viability which useability value has come to have. (value of practicality, change of functions, for example the wharfs). The shift is from a passive use of preservation to a dynamic one. There is this trend of having a mixture of cultural and fantasy experience that goes along with economic incentives, and of making the historic site to work as a new episode of the past, for people to be entertained in it; Quincy Market, "a dosage of history and the sugar-coating of fun, food and fantasy" (Seronic, 1984).

Residents of a low-income, decaying but historic area, perceive their environment in a different way than the members of higher income groups who do not live there but are aware of its charm and its reference to the past. These outsiders may move towards occupying the place with the pretext of preservation and restoration. The outcome of this upgrading is of course the rise in prices, with the immediate result of a change in the social class of its residents and the different image and interpretation of the history of the place both in the past and in the present. Similarly, the houses of the rural poor of some decades ago were manifestations of poverty, but since the middle and upper class has taken control over them they have shifted their meaning to charming settlements of unique quality and texture.

Reconstructed environments exist today and not in the past time they imitate, filled with modern tourists whose mobility and lack of attachment to the settings, intrude into and destroy existing cultural patterns. Only their presence makes it evident that nothing is "the way it was" but the combination of fragments of the past and inspiration from it have resulted to a new design in order to accommodate the new activities. The commercial enterprises are oriented to the tourist, and the marketing reasons (entrepreneurs) for Neo-Vernacular and "historic" architecture are forcing it to stand for a new role.

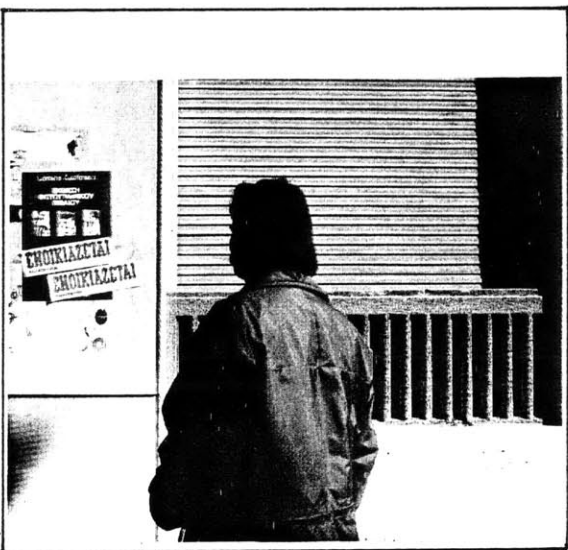
Everything is seen under a different angle than what it really represented in the past, since the tourists prefer to look the environment safely and from a distance rather than experiencing the true conditions that have created it, which are not always pleasant. They are attracted by a reproduced taste of the culture which can even be extended to "night-life", the sun and sea or the little souvenir shops.

A percentage of the tourists seek "primitivism" and even the picturesque of poverty. In Greece, the development of the place according to the desires of the inhabitants very often would be opposite to the preferences of the tourists.

The touristic volume and its resulting demand for space, makes it impossible to

maintain the site of the old settlements in its original scale; what is saved is self-contained in time and the uses have changed their orientation towards entertainment, with consequences in the functions of the old forms. The presence of outsiders or tourists transforms the social structure of the place with long-run consequences on the lifestyle. To cover the needs of the touristic boom in Greece, mass produced establishments take place most of the time, that have a vernacular touch, but nevertheless cannot be considered as neo-vernacular (touristic-vernacular would be a more likely characterization). The mania from profits deriving from the tourist industry lies before every other considerations. But since tourism is an important economic resource, all kinds of compromises are done on behalf of the inhabitants - even the artificial keeping of local customs that had recently faded away, with the aim to be an attraction for the tourists.

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e) Failure of other forms

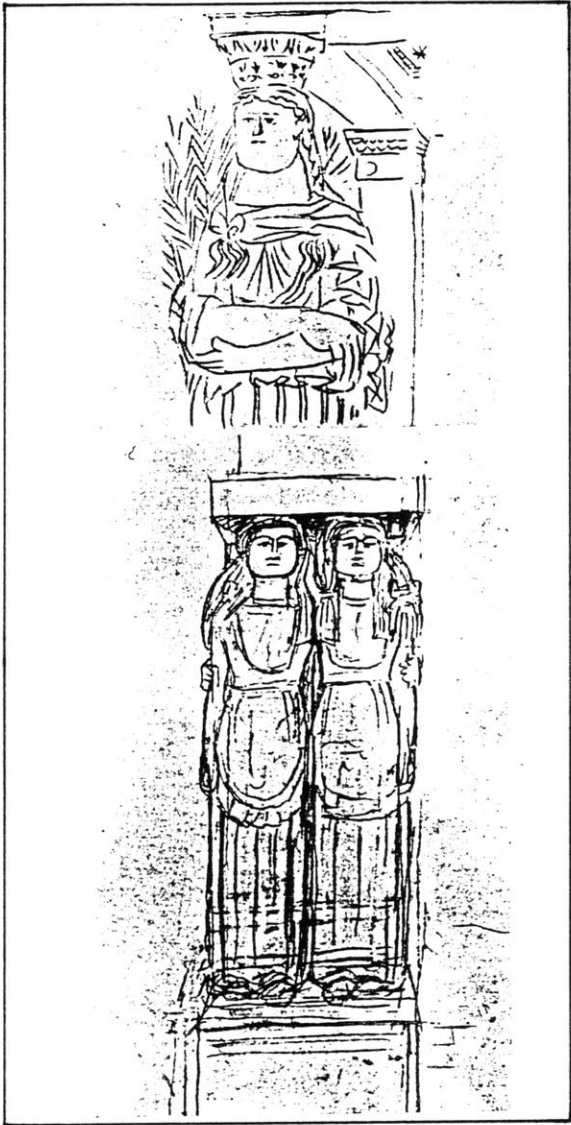
Social patterns, aesthetic taste, economic status-quo, have shaped the particular characteristics of the built world. But the failure to establish a new form of architecture without roots in the past led some architects to pioneer the re-introduction of vernacular forms.

Usually, environment and custom tell us how to act without us having to make a conscious choice. When place changes rapidly, in a way that its hints are not clearly comprehensible or they become unsatisfactory after a while, the result is a loose behavior with negative connotations. For social continuity to happen, it is useful to have the background of a positive environmental continuity. This is why when new forms contribute to a general feeling of insecurity, there is a trend towards the more familiar forms of the recent past.

Certainly there is no position of revolution today, no matter how inadequate some people feel the surrounding context is. On the other hand society is not any more delighted with any new invention. Historians claim that the failure of modern architecture makes it imperative that we should study the settlements created in the past under circumstances different from our own, but that had achieved an integrated pattern of life reflecting the social, economic, cultural and technological conditions then prevailing.

The "open plan" has never been accepted by the public and in general the international style is considered to be lacking human scale; people deny the identity it gives and search for it in the past. The stronger a statement this style had made in specific areas, the bigger the shift had been towards the past.

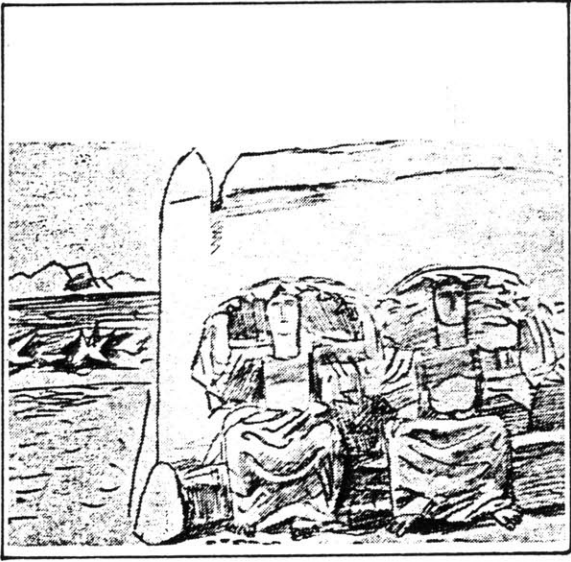
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WHEN THE NEO-VERNACULAR / WHAT IS ITS ROLE

Greece

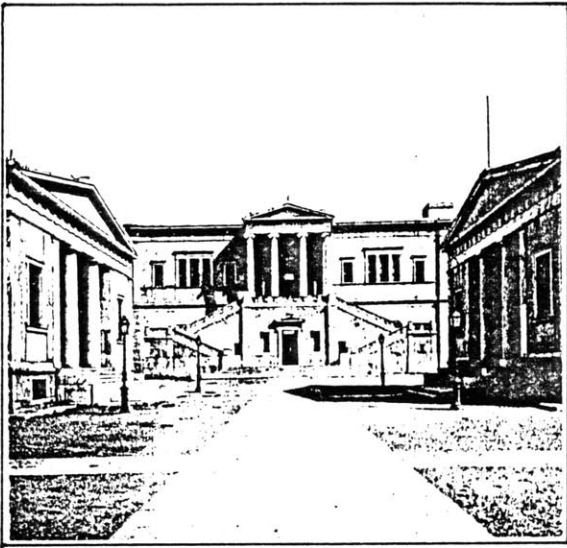
Choices upon the form of the built spaces are made on the basis of the major ideologies, prototypes and values set up by a society. Architecture has a powerful dimension as a symbol of culture (if by this we mean the dominant ideologies) and both designers and the public respond to the prevailing issues. This explains how "modernity" and "tradition" came to be the predominant values and images in the built environment of contemporary Greece.

Before 1821 A. Korais was combining the ideas of the greeks being descendants of the ancients, the issue of re-establishment of the byzantine theocracy. These two theories that are contradictory in essence, were behind the intellectual pursuits that followed. In 1884, the Hellenic Laographiki Eteria was established, with the purpose of documenting the epic tradition and describing the popular acts like the architecture of the house and its utensils. It was in this framework of typological taxonomy that the study of popular architecture and art was done. Around the 1930's architects (like Pikionis), painters and sculptors were publishing books related to popular architecture; this shows how spread was the interest then for the traditional.

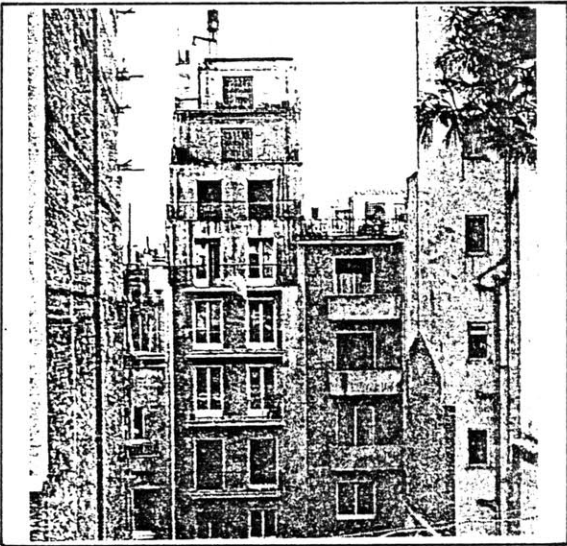
In the meantime, Greek culture and architecture of the 1920's (Greece being at the point of transition from a traditional to a bourgeois society) was receiving a flow of western intellectual, artistic, economic and social models. Local traditional prototypes were put aside, since they could not respond to the demands (in terms of scale and symbolism) of the new nation. Neoclassicism and Neo-Byzantinism were the readily available styles to lean on, since they were related to the wider change of prevailing ideologies and values.

The classical orders were accepted in the name of autochthonous values and

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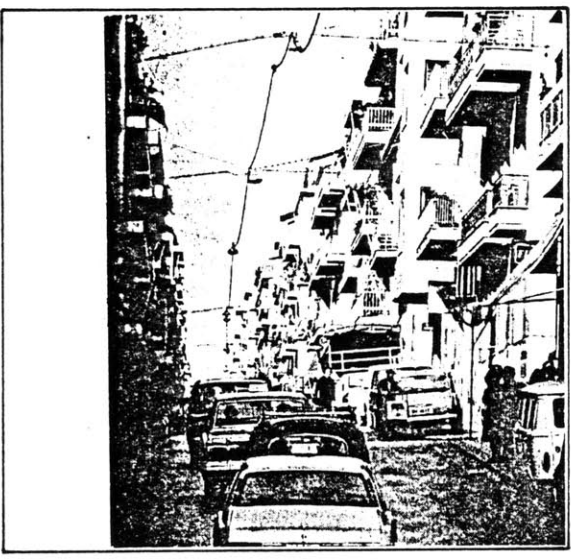


aspirations of freedom and unity, because they stood antidiometrically to the Turkish culture. Neoclassicism supplied a vision of progress, overcoming a world of misery enforced under the Ottoman regime. In the second half of the 19th century, grid patterns, (pedimented portico, stoa, propylea, pyramidal base), reverence for the right angle, the column, the regularity of openings became a representation of the social group, the iconographic embodiment of the ideal of progressiveness. But at the same time, after the 1922 catastrophe, historicist regionalism was seen as an anachronistic dogma, an expression of the interests of the urban elite. The events of the 20's indicated the need to create a new social structure and a populist unity to overcome the division between town and country. A receptiveness to the Modern Movement was made evident.

There exist gaps in the Athenian environment, which had experienced a sudden expansion from the state of a large village and had no time for architectural transitions. From the Neoclassical idiom it moved directly to a building boom expressed in Bauhaus and Central European forms of the mid twenties. "Cubism is akin to the Mediterranean sense of space...Mykonos and Santorini furnished the visual background that helped greek architects establish contact with the teachings of Purism." (Arch.in Greece, 1967).

During the first half of the 30's, within an educational reform, critical regionalism made its appearance as a critique to conservative regionalism (associated with the political conservatism of the times). It opposed the tendency for architecture to be conceived narrowly and nostalgically and be preoccupied with the apparent changes of fashion rather than with fundamental transformations in human relations. This was again related to the society as a whole; it could be noted that in the 30's the first attempt was made to exclude the purist greek language (katharevousa) from greek education, promoting the populist greek (demotiki). Conservative regionalism was also to be found in the folkish architecture of Nazi Germany; like the idealization of

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the German peasant as the prototype of the German citizen, the purpose was to equate the virtues of the folk people and art with the ideas that a scattered nation needed to acquire unity and moral substance.

From that point on, Greek culture carries the dichotomy of its being defined in terms of the autochthonous, the genuine Greek models (antiquity, byzantium and popular tradition) versus the imported, the developments of the Western World.

In the post-war period there was a pressing need of urban growth resulting to expansion or rebuilding of settlements, with its very clear implications on the construction industry and land transactions as major fields of speculation. Greece accepted the modern movement in an everyday level, since the forms had been somehow existing in the culture; cubic, orthogonal compositions were not far from the traditional whitewashed vernacular of the Cycladic Islands. A banal imitation of the Modern movement products became the commercial prototype for the "concrete boxes", the focuss being on quantitative issues rather than aesthetics or environmental quality. The modernization of the environment, the seek of the new above the old, was a major ideology of a wide social, economic and political base, both expressed in the official attitudes and in the mentality of people in everyday life.

In the 70's, after the shortcomes and problems of this development became evident in the low quality of living, concerns for cultural identity were put forward and it was a natural response to look back in the recent past and use its idealized images and qualities as substitutes for the failure of new ones. As opposed to the image of the mass produced, cheap, concrete boxes, the qualities of hand-craft, human scale and picturesqueness were evaluated and brought back again in the surface, in architecture as well as in other fields. There was a turn to the available body of anonymous traditional architecture, which still continued to exist as a physical presence and cultural memory. Populism became a more developed form of regionalism.

Apart from the sentimental values, peripheral issues such as tourism, with their

financial impacts and the possibility of giving new use to the traditional settings, contributed to this shift towards cultural identity in the ideology of the Greek society. But even though "Greekness", the search for greek roots, had turned to a preliminary concern, the result (same as in all fields of life) was a kind of half-way position of the neovernacular, a sort of "greek-touch" to the designs, the introduction of familiar images of a past reality to act as a lean-on for the present, without challenging or giving up the modern framework in its substance.

Although phenomena of nostalgia towards vernacular and the reproduction of the past were never absent in housing architecture, it is only in the recent years that it is taking the extensiveness of even official institutionalization, with regulation restrictions and even model proposals for some specific areas. Forms that acted as symbols were used before in monumental architecture of the Church or the State - references drawn from byzantium and antiquity respectively. Today it seems that since the two previous choices have been used and worn out already, the tendency is towards the direction of anonymous architecture and popular traditions, both in the academic and in practice. The neo-traditional appears as a shift towards the realm of the private and the everyday; it is not institutions but individuals that want that image for the place they live in.

"The more we try to clarify our ideas and reach the most basic and essential forms, the more we find ourselves reaching back towards tradition...in the architecture of my own flat... I found myself back at the forms which are the old traditional forms that created the classical Greek style and the Byzantine style, and which can still be seen in Greek villages and monasteries: the interplay of lighter and darker surfaces, together with the rhythmical formation of the lighted ones." (Doxiadis, 1974)

In Greece of the 70's and the 80's a rise in the standards of commercial prototypes (mostly regarding the quality of materials and details, space dimensions and

layout) appears, along with neo-vernacular overtones in housing of rural, resort and even urban areas. The latter are characterized primarily by the straight forward use of decorative and symbolic elements of traditional architecture (such as windows, balconies, roofs, stone or wood construction details etc.). The settings vary from being close to the scale and organization of the actual traditional prototypes, to just having a commercial and superficial exterior traditional-like articulation.

The trend towards the anonymous in the architectural practice today, hasn't avoided using the tradition in superficial ways; sometimes it is treated as nostalgia for the recent past, or as a means (within the framework of political and other circumstances) of finding a way to reject the ties with the classical past of Greece.

The above raise some crucial questions: how and with what potential the turn to tradition appears now in Greek architecture; how is the traditional precedent used as a point of reference; how is the relationship between the old and the new defined and how is the issue of greek character put in each approach.

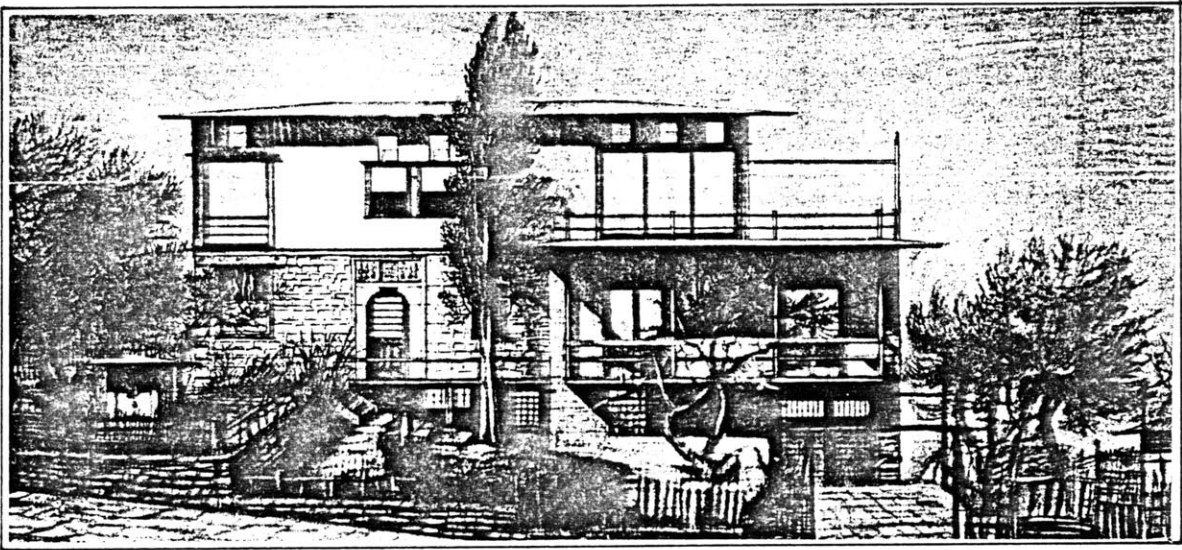
Is there any firm indication in Greece that the intellectual tradition in architecture has found ways to appropriate and elaborate the input of tradition and reach thus a level of autonomy in theoretical and formal expression?

Reference to the work and positions of greek architects who have dealt with the issue of contemporary greek architecture and its relation to tradition, such as Dimitris Pikionis, Aris Constantinides, the couple of Dimitris and Suzana Antonakakis, would be helpful in order to explore the above issues. In their designs they use precedents of traditional elements such as the interior courtyard, the grid, the pathway, scale and relation of volumes, the "hayati", the treatment of materials and colors, the ways the building forms and activities extend to the outdoors.

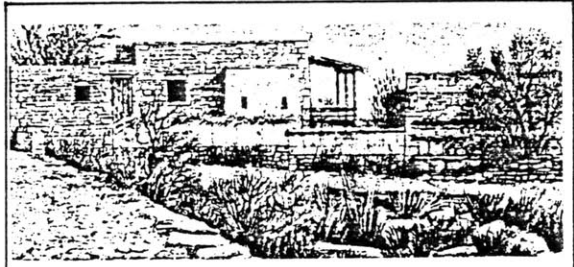
There are two ways in which solutions of traditional architecture are borrowed:
- they are used in an abstract way and the associations with tradition are similarly abstract and symbolic in the contemporary context - they are used as details, volumetric solutions and replicas of the exact old forms.

In both ways the tradition is used in a metaphorical way, since none of the circumstances that resulted to the old forms exists today.

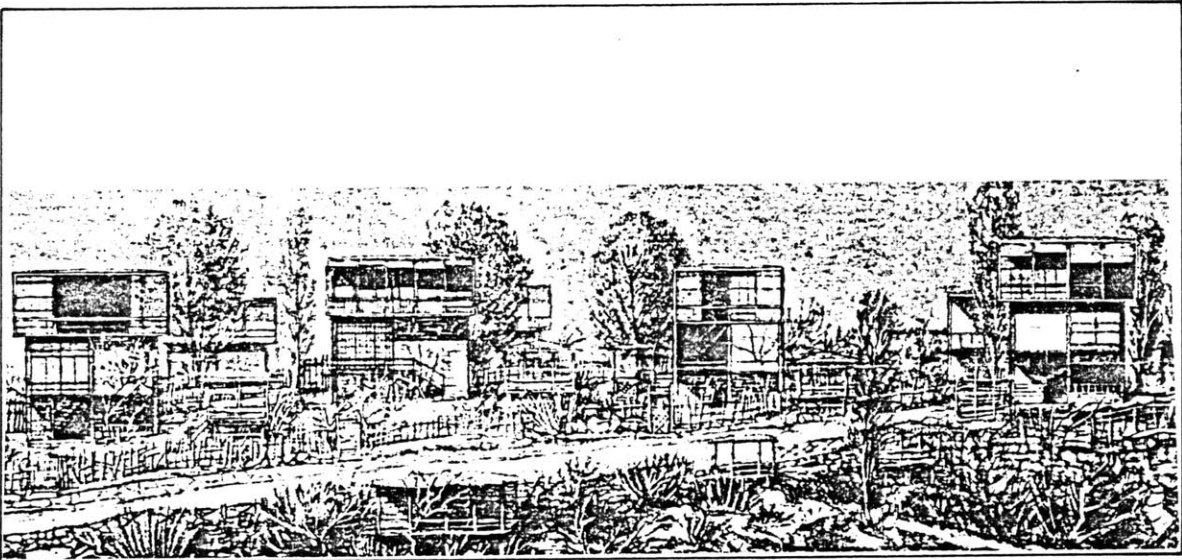
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HOW THE NEO-VERNACULAR / EXAMPLES

D. Pikionis

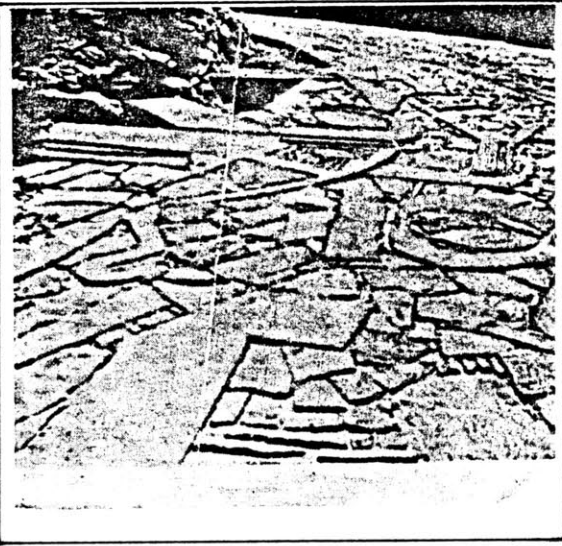
Pikionis was aware of the intellectual problems of his times but did not align to any formal, eclectic training in architectural schools.

He believed that each country finds the forms of expression of its particularities according to a deeper existential character. He saw greekness existing in the "simple people's hearts", in the anonymous tradition which he considered a bridge to some qualities of the past that today are lost, and the only reference for the continuity of these values. He believed that the popular tradition was the means for the culture's task to be fulfilled (power of the image and the symbol). He saw the anonymous artist as expressing the essential the necessary and the indispensable in his physical and intellectual life, and this is why he called tradition to be the true expression.

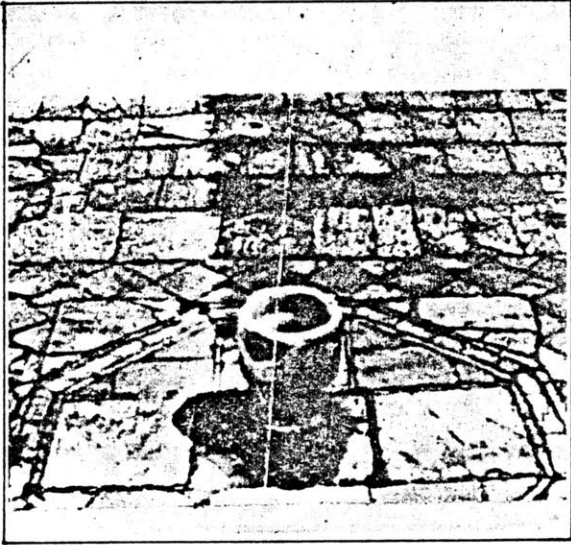
Instinctively he was driven away from modern architecture and was led to the study of popular vernacular. His motive though, was not the romantic desire to discover ready-made solutions assumed to be more valid. His approach was that popular art is not a matter of forms, but a whole attitude of life and mind. That's why he understood that instinct alone is not enough, but a combined mental and emotional effort was needed, since the same process of creation of popular architecture cannot be transposed as such into our times (the nature of problems has changed).

Pikionis reintroduced the courtyard which, throughout the ages had provided an intermediate space between the life of the interiors and of the public street, and which responded to conditions of light and climate (cool in summer, warm in winter). Besides that he used other precedents of traditional typological themes and elements, such as the out-leaning open or closed upper storey spaces (hayati), the wooden roof,

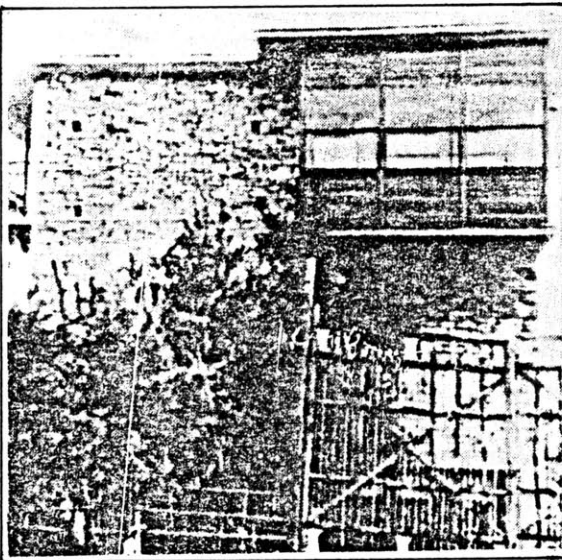
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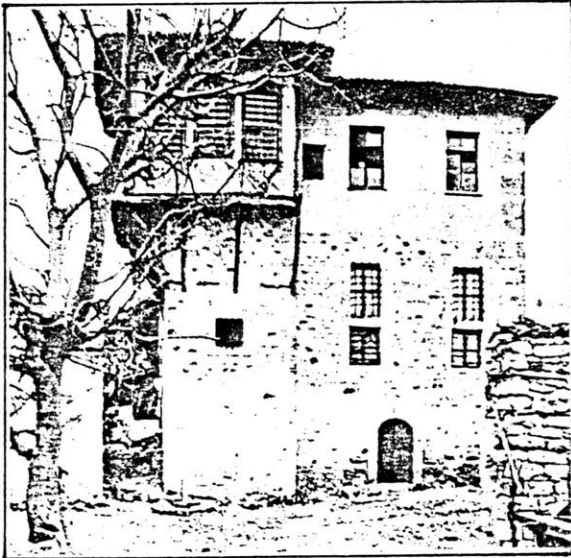
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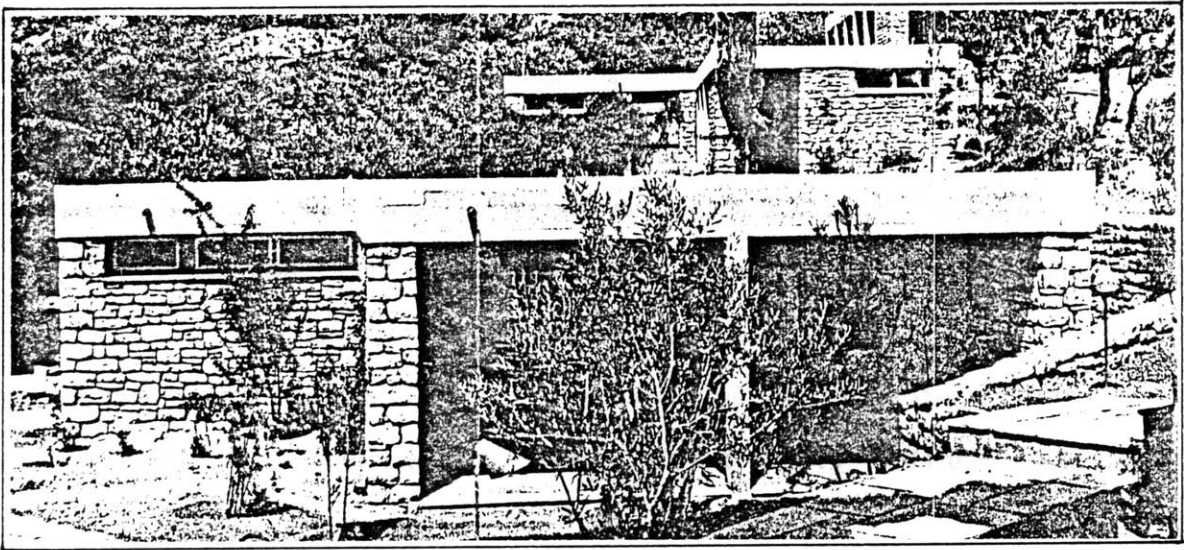
vernacular type openings, scale and relation of volumes, while at the same time he shifted to traditional techniques and to their elaboration of details.

Pikionis's attitude was not supported by the greek society at that point and his architecture did not avoid the danger to remain attached to its models, to become picturesque and to influence others into solutions where imitation and reproduction dominated. Although he was a pioneer of the critique of modernism, his work often slips into soft reconstructions and sometimes it even regresses into a sentimental, nationalistic regionalism with a specific appeal to conservative groups. In a way, it promotes a more superficial and crude emotional response to architecture as nostalgia for the traditional, a lost and idealized condition, a vision which could only work in the cultural condition that didn't exist anymore. From the previous context only the forms were kept while meaning and relations have changed.

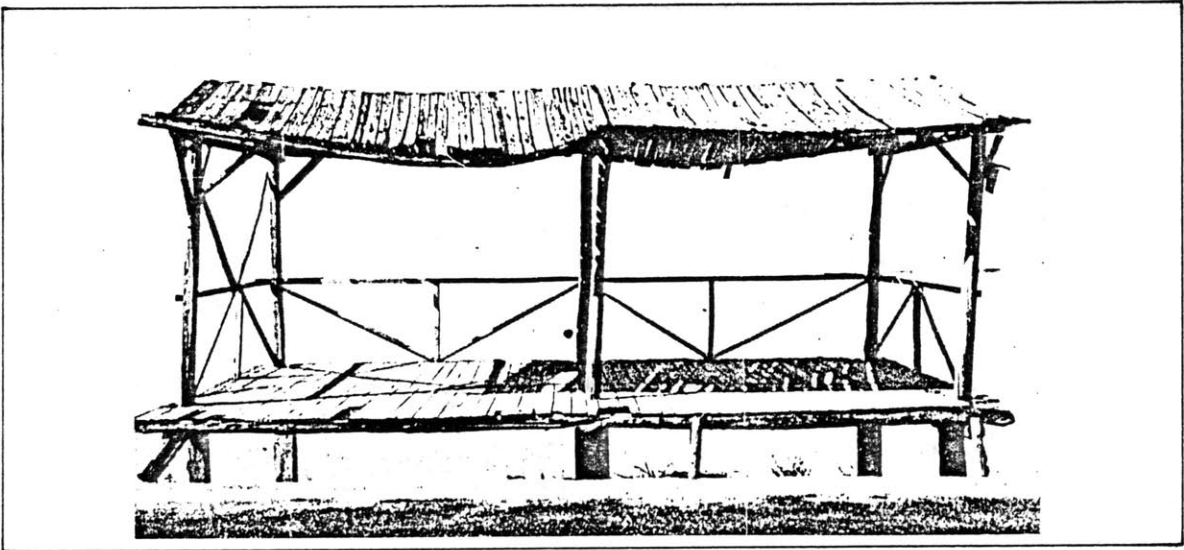
He believed in natural growth and tried to solve the problem of expression. This is what made his work a significant point of reference for the following generation of architects.

The vehicular and walk-ways to the Acropolis, validly co-exist and even compliment, the monuments of greek antiquity. Along with that, the 1958 landscaping of the Philopappus Hill, in Athens, combine in a unique way the tragic and critical spirit of his times. The pedestrian way was free of the technological exhibitionism typical of the 50's and was conceived as a chain of lived-in spaces and situations unfolding around the hill and creating intimate spaces as well as places for big assemblies. He appropriated certain place components from folk architecture, but this was not based on nostalgia; he sought for these spaces to be used in every sense and to supply that feeling of continuity of human values which contemporary architecture of everyday life did not. He saw this research into local elements a pre-condition for reaching the concrete and the real, and for the rehumanization of architecture.

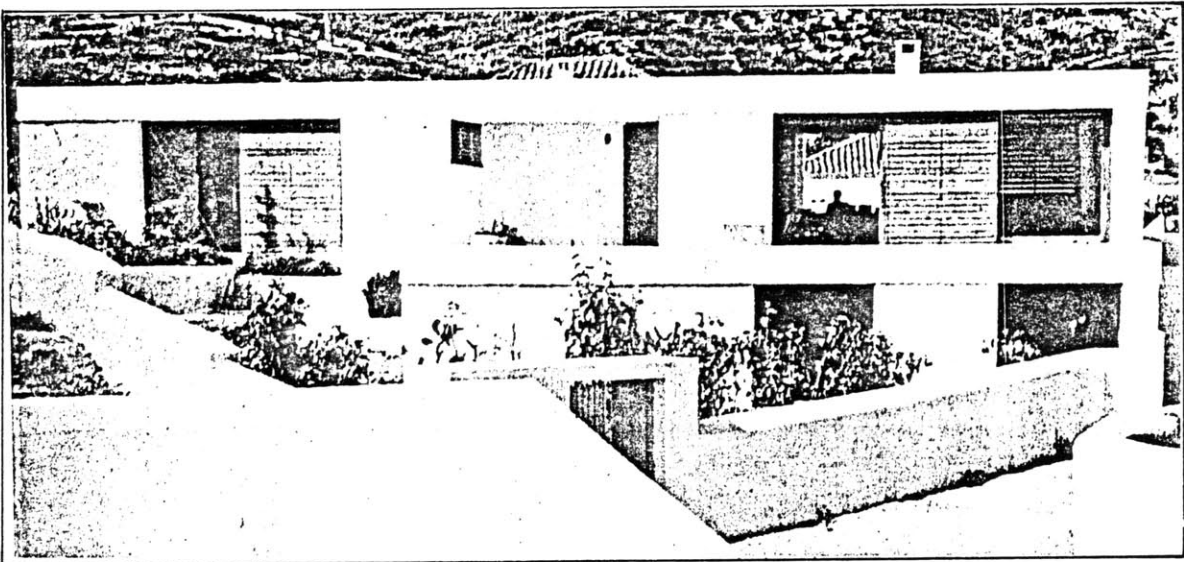
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A. Konstantinidis

Konstantinidis sought to formulate the essence of a genuine Greek architecture. His conception of architecture as inseparable from its place was accompanied with the notion that "true" architecture can find diverse expressions in different times and places, while holding at the same time a universal and diachronic validity. As he wrote, there are truths and eternal values which every era re-discovers and what we do today with our own means, is what people did at old times with their own technique.

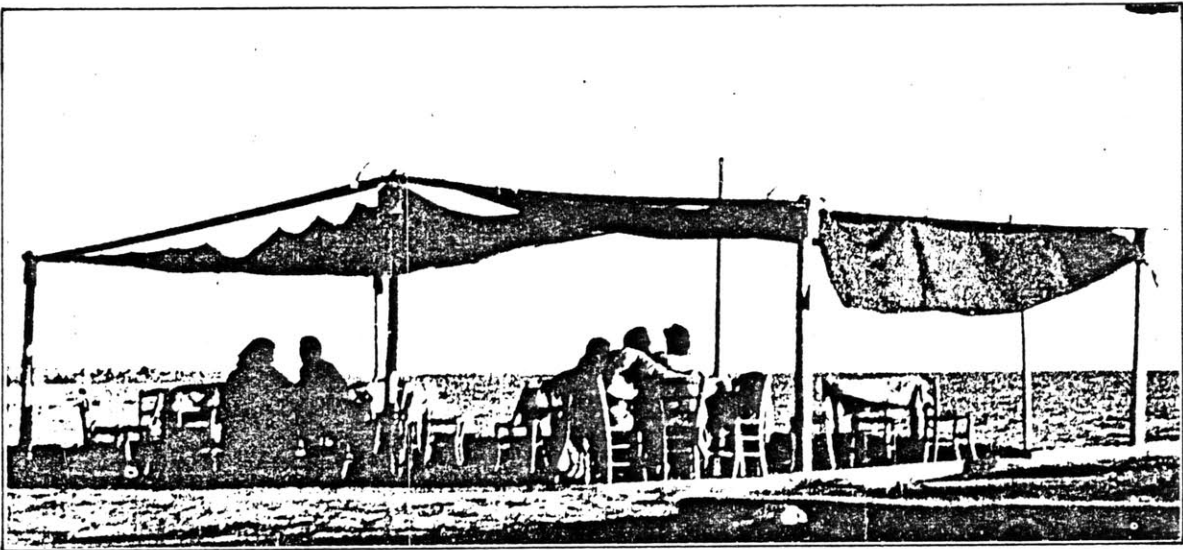
He sees the climate as an important determinant of architectural solutions adopted, as well as of the shaping of human character (features that characterize the concept of anonymous architecture as is now defined). For him, Greek architecture has been an architecture of "outdoors" (shaping only the external form) and this is why he stresses the importance of the "indoors" and "outdoors" to be organized as a continuous, integrated space.

Transitional, semi-covered spaces have been an organic compositional element of Greek architecture (Knossos, Byzantine monasteries, villages). These spaces have been not only transitional areas, but also very important links of the dwellings with the countryside. Their mere existence confirms their importance, since vernacular architecture had no luxury inputs or spaces that were not utilized.

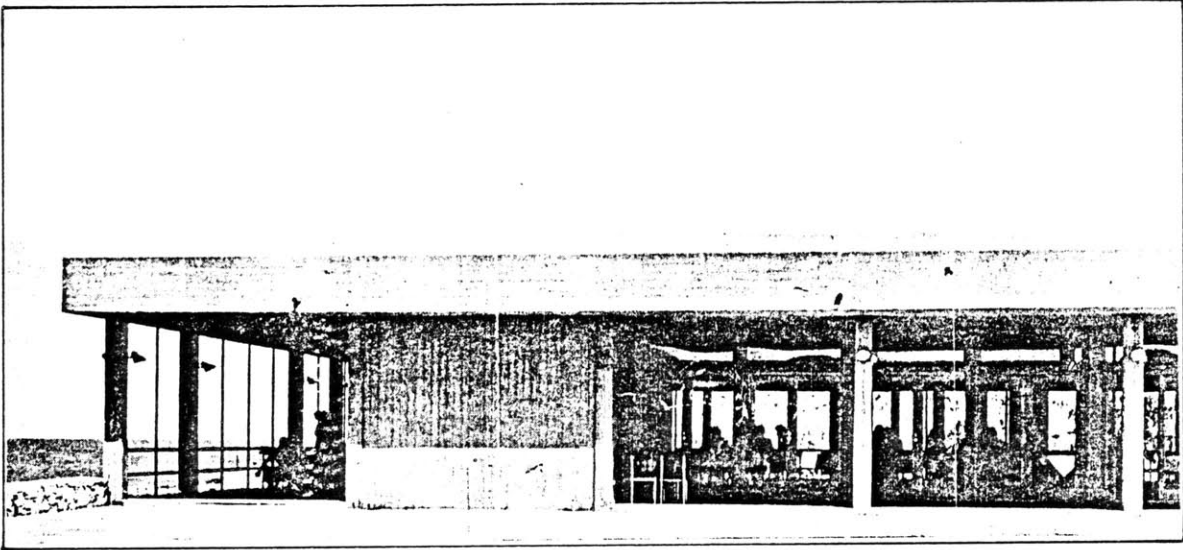
His architecture becomes the organization and interplay of enclosed, semi-covered and open-air spaces, rooms, courtyards, porticos, patios and loggias. Keeping always the emphasis on those transitional semi-covered spaces.

As he wrote, the 'open' is embedded in the culture. At Easter (Anastasis), the most important part of the liturgy of this most important religious time of the Greek Orthodoxy is held in the outdoors just out of the church -same as the ancient Greeks were going through religious rituals outside the Parthenon.

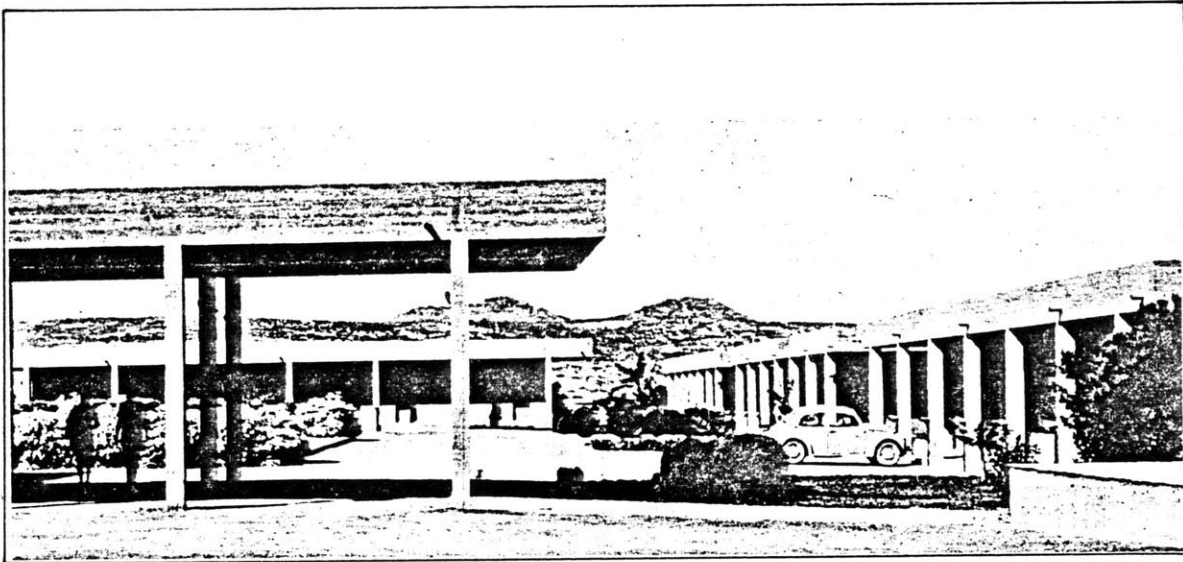
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For him the true Greek architecture would be a simple, modest, beautiful and light structure (out of any material) that could organize the "indoors" and the "outdoors" in one space, in a "life-vessel". "This has always been their 'tradition', which we are rediscovering for ourselves today; for as we are trying with our own methods and materials to achieve a certain quality, we stumble upon the same solutions that man had used from time immemorial to fit a certain specific landscape and climate."... "Since life in Greece is conducted mainly in the open air, atria, open loggias and large windows become permanent design features of our Xenia hotels". (1967)

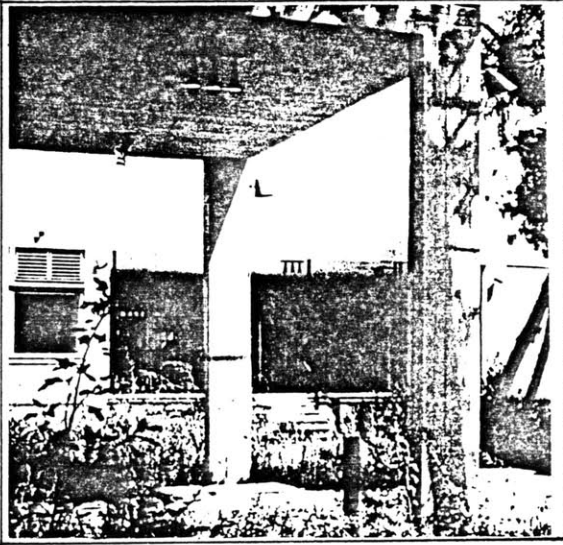
For him tradition means to be always contemporary. The principle that things have to work with the means and for the needs of the present conditions, make change and originality integral elements of his conception on new architecture.

An ideal and timeless dimension of architecture reconciling Human and Nature, need and pleasure, with minimum and simple means, becomes the link between Konstantinidis beliefs and the definition of indigenous architecture;"... we have the moral obligation to give even our most ordinary actions form, beauty and human measure, so that our works will stand equal in quality to the older ones they are called to replace". (1967)

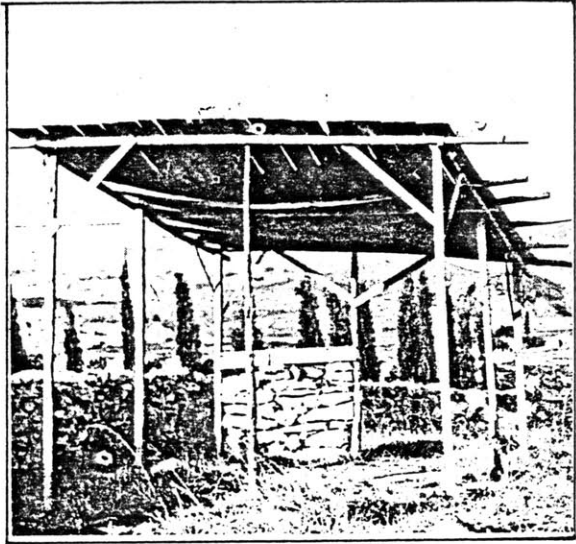
For Konstantinidis traditional architecture was impulsive and self-explanatory, had a common language demonstrating a common way of life, was accessible to all and understood by all."...good, 'genuine' architecture should always be one for all, in spirit and content and quality, so that each individual needs and wants correspond to what everyone needs and wants". (1967)

His 1950's studies on old Athenian houses, were an attitude in Greece. For Pikionis and Konstantinidis alike, Greek vernacular houses from the turn of the century were able to unite both the native masonry tradition of the earthwork with the lightweight timber superstructure of the Ottoman empire."It does not matter

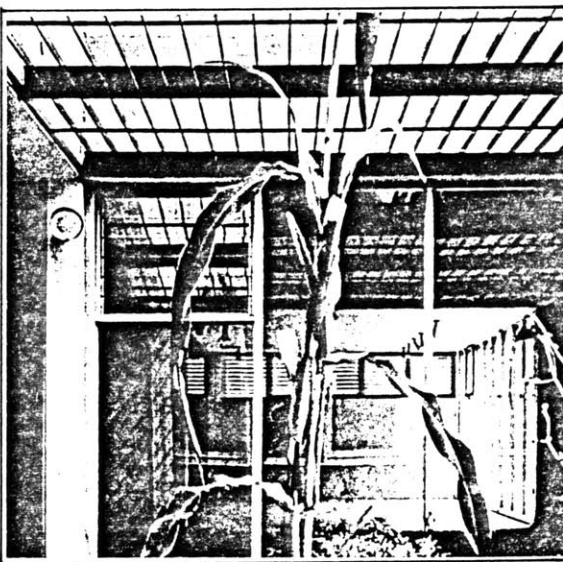
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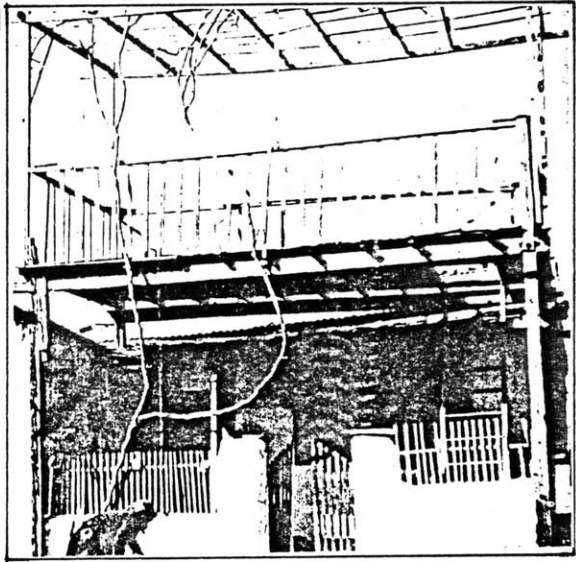
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whether what we built is new or original, but whether it is genuine and necessary...So that architecture becomes something alive, in which we work and live, and which we can each time adapt to new needs." (1967)

He worked with natural, abstract and diachronic qualities of traditional architecture, such as the treatment of climate and landscape, rather than the resolution of modes of living (eg. the relation of the private and public). This is reflected on his designs by the use of the semi-open spaces, by the ways the buildings' forms and activities extend to the open areas around them, by their relation to the landscape, by the scale and composition of the volumes, by the use of color as an important element of the synthesis and by his choices and articulation of materials which are freely and roughly treated. The latter are both contemporary and traditional, concrete and steel together with stone and wood.

In the house in the island of Spetses the exterior load-bearing walls are made of local stone, the ceilings of exposed reinforced concrete the interior partitions of brick and has sliding balcony doors and windows.

The presence of grid patterns, the column, the regularity of openings and the right angle, in reduced non-stylistic form, had their influence on the 50's generation of architects.

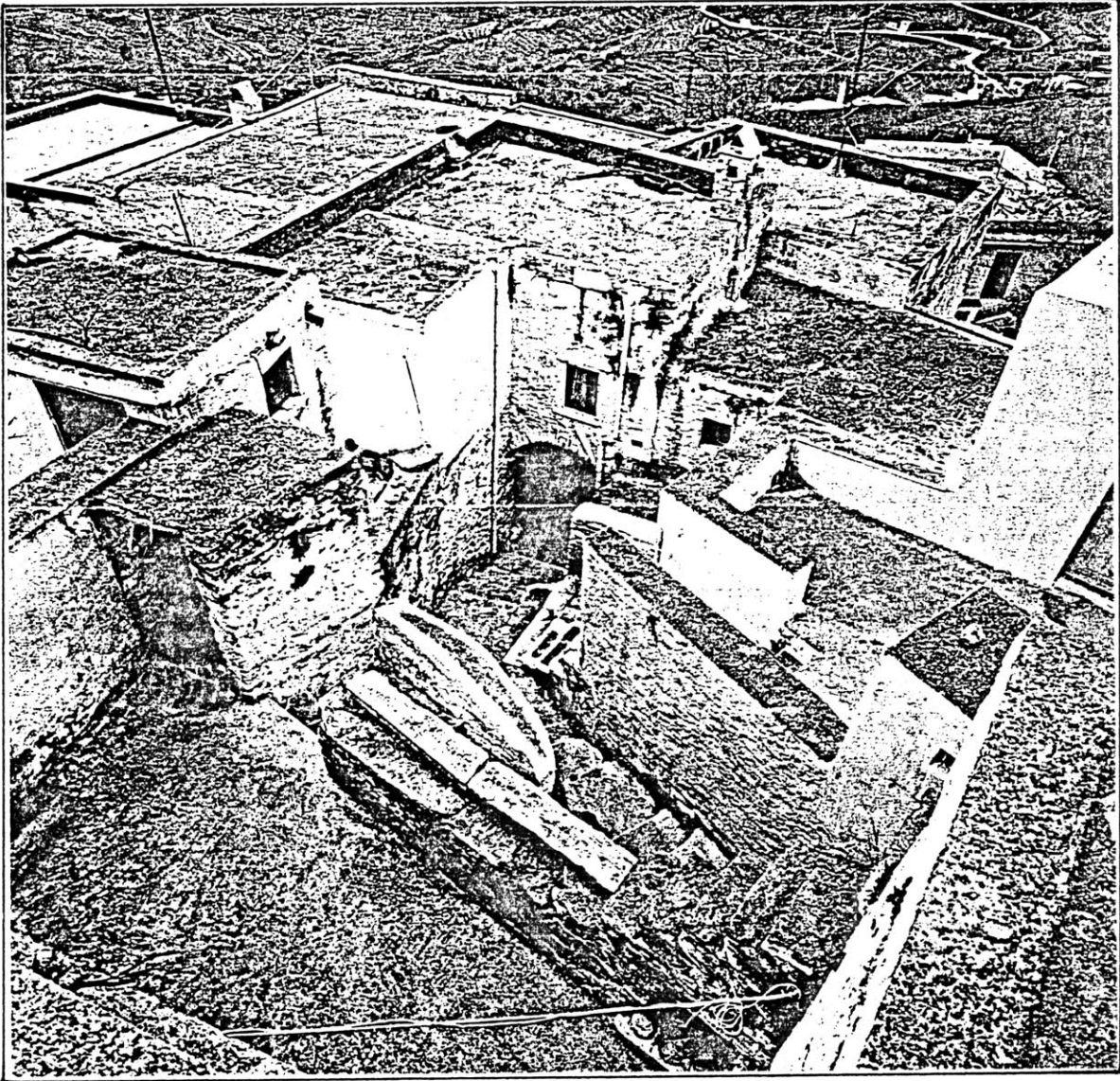
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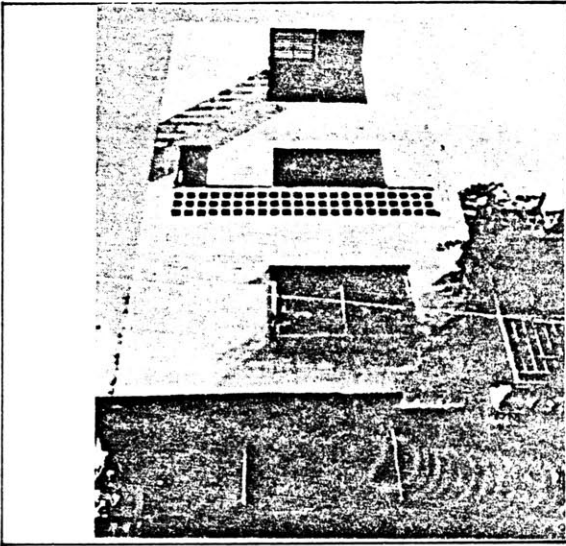
D. and S. Antonakakis

K. Frampton mentions (1985) that the architecture of Dimitris and Suzana Antonakakis can be described as Greek Modernist, but at the same time manages to avoid "commercialism and exhaustion to which modern architecture has been so prone in recent years". Influenced by the critical attitude of the regionalists D. Pikionis and A. Konstantinidis, taking the pathway from the former and the grid from the latter, they created a new statement, being being at the same time influenced by the "beton brut manner of Le Corbusier, the Structuralism of Aldo van Eyck and the reinterpreted classicism of Mies Van der Rohe's elements (house at Chaidari). The results are glyptic forms and designs which are zoned according to use, privacy and micro-climate. Their work has been structured around the paradigm of the courtyard house," where grid (structural frame) and pathway (paved threshold) come together.

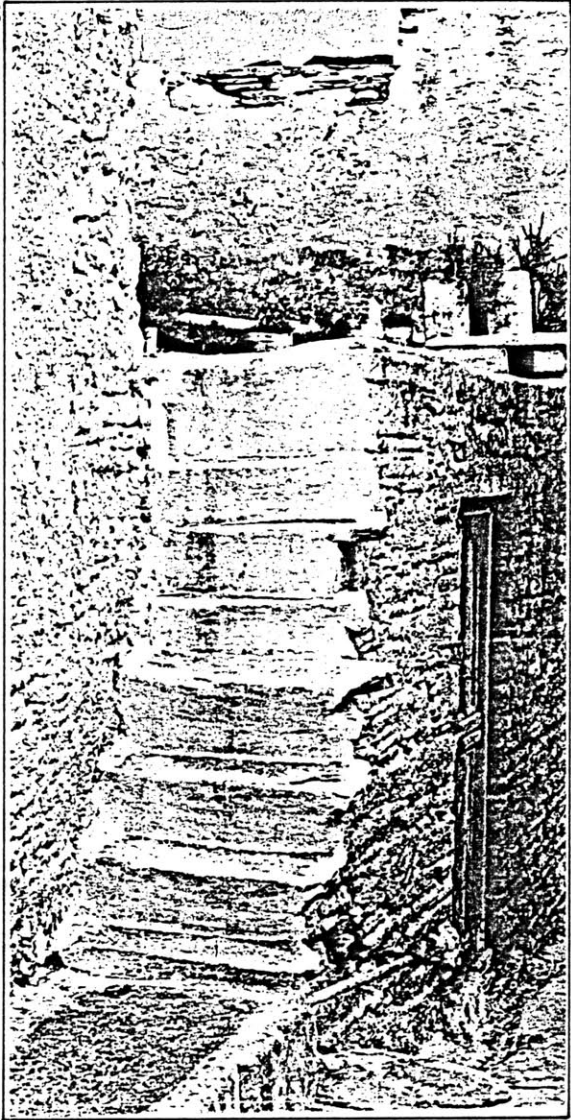
In Antonakakis's work the grid pattern survives in the organization of the structural elements and the functional zones. The domestic works are dimensionally ordered, and at the same time identify areas in order to accommodate living activities. Often, organization of activities and space appropriation take precedence over the grid as the ordering device, which reflects now local, social, environmental and functional aspects (expression of regional characteristics).

In some cases the path becomes the predominant organizing force of the plan. For them like for Pikionis, the path is a cultural object, "a commentary about contemporary architecture, life and society, a protest against the dissolution of human contact, the turning of meeting into human transaction. Along to architecture that grows out of movement and encounter, goes the preoccupation with process and stasis. Like Pikionis's pedestrian way, the Antonakakis pathway is made up of concrete, lived-in spaces for meeting that we find in local popular architecture (doorsteps, passages, courts of recognizable shape). Even if these devices or compromises set up

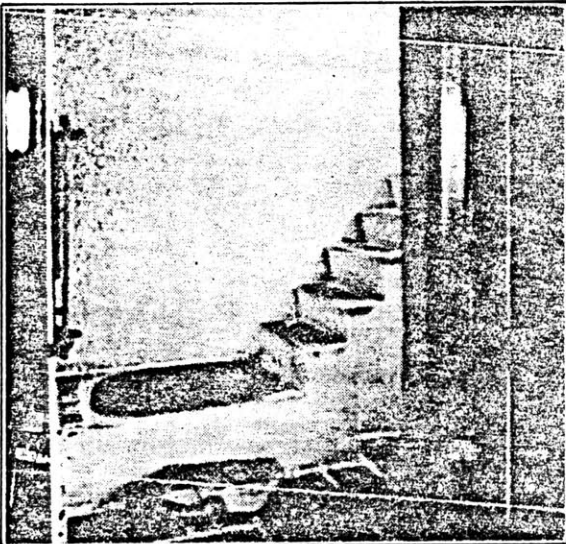
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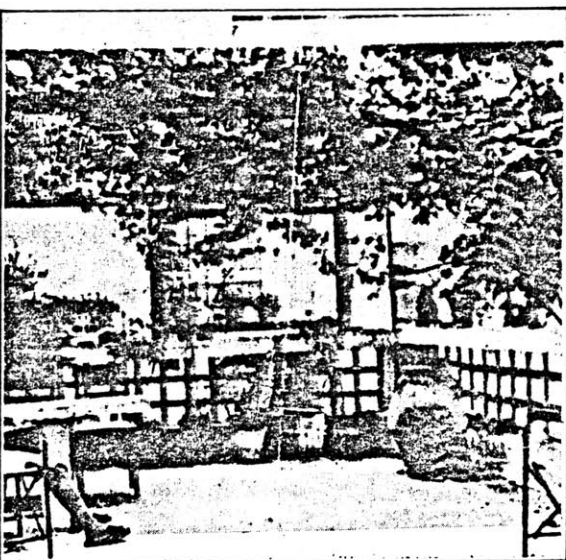
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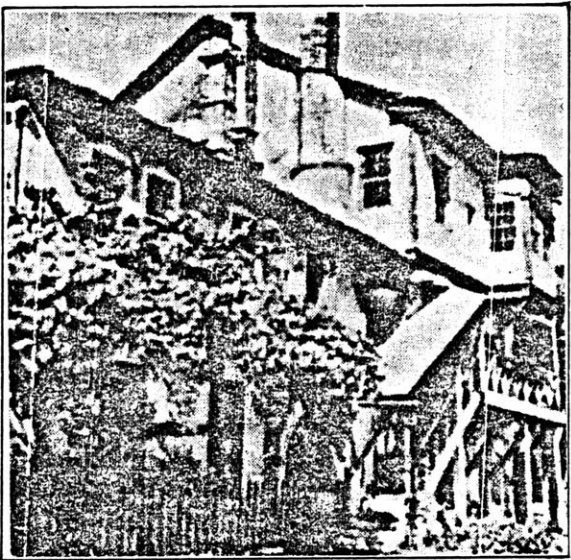
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implicit comments on social life and human activity but they don't have the power of a "social reformism" or to change the existing habits.

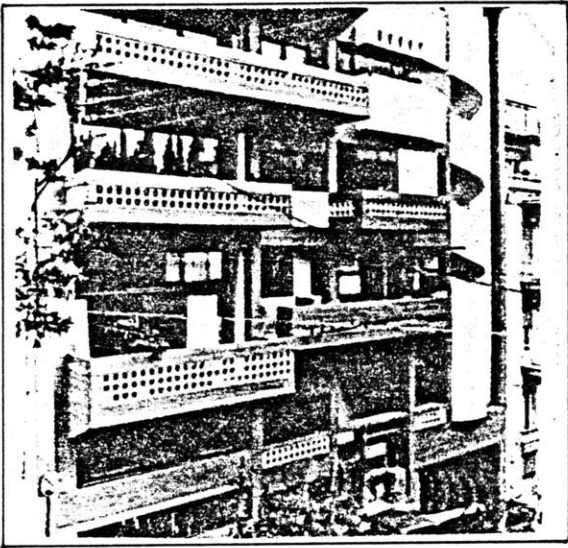
The quality of the grid and the corridor-passage (which becomes the dominant structural and experiential element of their spaces), together with the sensitivity to human scale, the play with small volumetric and level differences and the carefully elaborated details, can be considered typical of the traditional architecture. But the planned ambiguity and the deliberate element of surprise and informality in the total organization differentiates their architecture of the from its vernacular prototypes, where the above risen emotions were genuine.

As they mentioned, during their education they were influenced by the two prevailing trends: the first was oriented towards the international scene, and was influenced by teachers like T. Michelis, the Cubist painter N.Engonopoulos and the architect D. Fatouros. The second influence, which was the strongest, was the teaching and works of D.Pikionis and A. Konstantinidis. Gradually the presence of regional historicist elements in their work fades away and a memory of it remains as a discipline for arranging elements."Greatly influenced and motivated by our education, as well as through our immediate contact with the reality of Greek life, we struggled to create our own point of view, that is, a life attitude, an atmosphere and a poetry emerging from our place, in the broad sense of the term; an effort to imitate our roots and liberate ourselves from them at the same time." (1985)

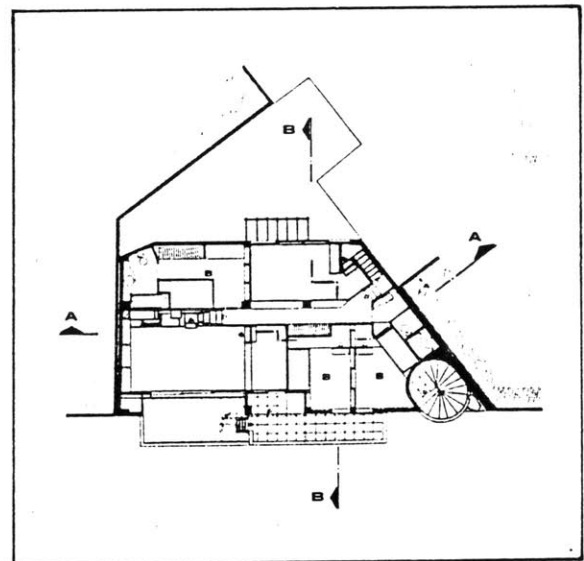
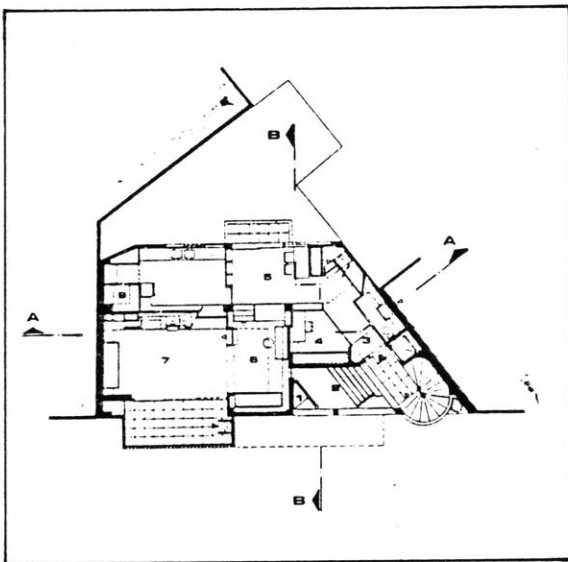
The additions in the house at P.Phaliro (1967) had the limitation of the user living in the house under construction, which at the same time gave it its character as a living organism. Regarding that they say:"The initial dwelling-unit, like a living cell, can grow, expand, gain in height, or occasionally split into two units as an expression of its continuous interaction with specific people and specific needs".

In residential forms they sought a plasticity, movement and life, internal circulation, "an expression of clarity and complexity". The courtyard aspect is

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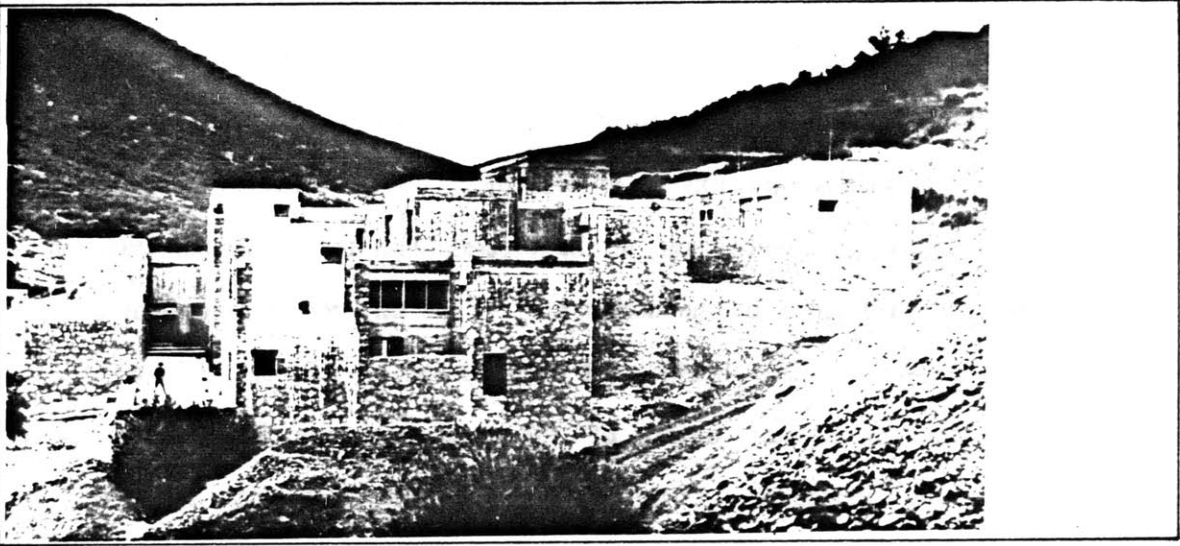


transformed into the labyrinthine network of thresholds, ramps, balconies and places for stasis in the interior of the apartment building in Em. Benaki street in Athens (1973) and is also expressed in its perforated facade. For them "the house remains the domain where the individual attempts to redeem the ravaged quality of everyday life". There lies a difference, in ideology and in the process, with the vernacular tradition.

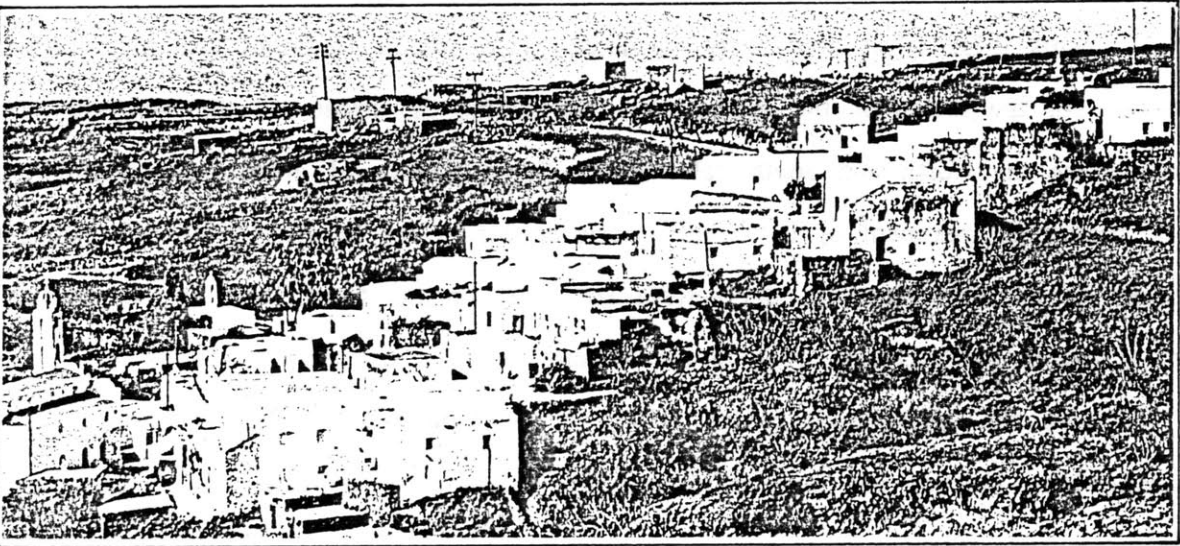
The underlying principles of the design are: - The different arrangement of each apartment to respond to the lifestyle of each owner. - Effort to connect the dwellings with the immediate context of the road and the back-lot courtyard. Parallelism with the connection of the outdoors of the vernacular tradition. The tendency for the building to turn outwards is maintained in all the floors. - In all apartments there is a large cross-ventilated space (which functions like an internal atrium for the spaces of the apartments), overlooking the street and the backyard and connecting the North and South balconies. - Small pockets of green space resembling the traditional treatment of it. Green inserts appear in the facade, in the two balcony levels on the first floor, in the pergola for vines on the fourth and in the planting of a tree in the backyard. Also in the balcony over the entrance.

Since the Antonakakis couple belong to a strongly politicized generation, their architectural practice has been influenced and directed by political and socio-cultural activities and beliefs. Their aim is to have a wholistic approach, from the level of theoretical positions to that of the existing system of financing and construction, for qualitative new directions of architecture in the context of contemporary Greece; They look for a plural and diverse architecture which is not to be controlled by the designer but can offer new experiences to the life of its users, while allowing them at the same time to appropriate and transform it (a stress is put in the quality of the everyday). For them, appreciating and learning from one's roots, the traditional architecture, is viewed as a valuable tool since it was formed historically, is surviving as memory and contains a source of knowledge about qualities and solutions which can

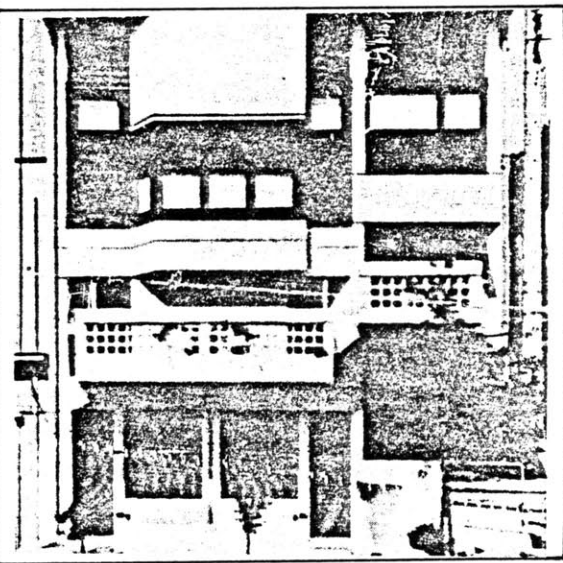
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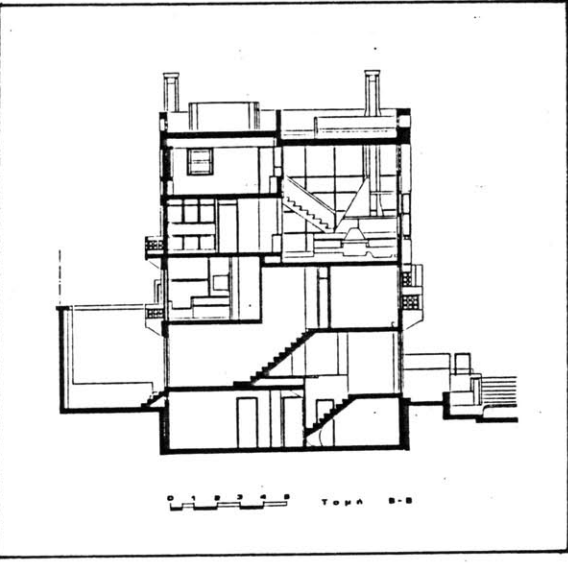
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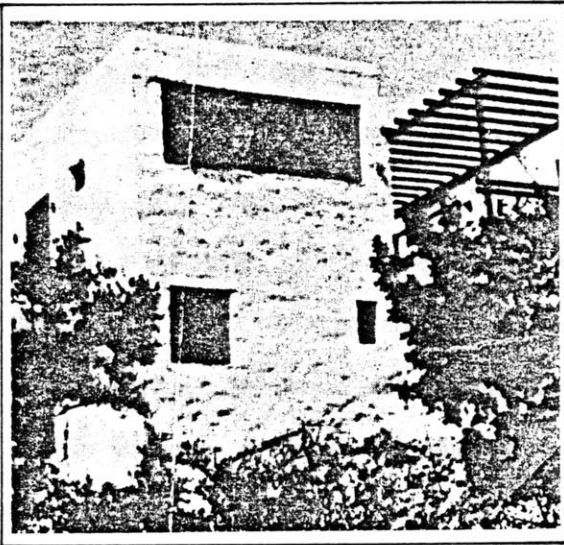


be transformed into a today-space.

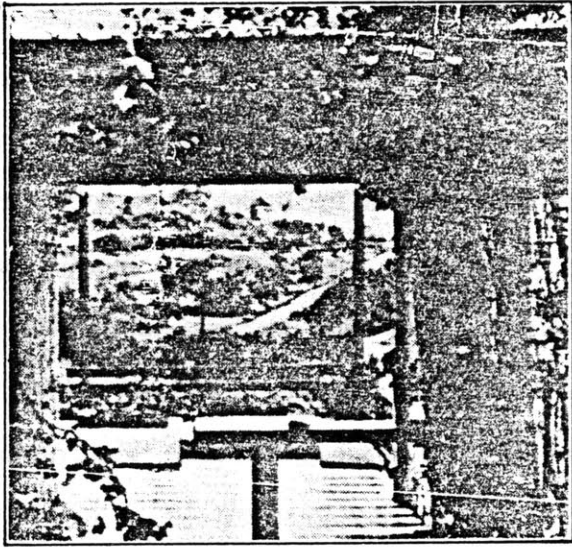
In the Housing Settlement at Distomon (1969) they considered that solution as "the appropriate socio-cultural character for a worker's settlement". They developed a series of smooth transitions from public to private, from dark to light, from indoors to outdoors; A combination of a limited number of types which are often modified by different component elements (doors and windows). It reinterprets the rubble stone and reinforced concrete vocabulary which Konstantinidis developed for his designs of the 50's. "We watched the urban space around us become bereft of symbols, of points of reference...the total dissolution of the 'city'...We saw quality fade -we saw the disappearance of those gradations, contradictions, and traces of life that we had read in the Greek landscape"... "on the one hand there stood our memories, our contact with traditional architecture and life, and on the other...the immediate environment: destitution, shallowness, commercialized everyday life, bureaucracy, and consumer mania." (1985)

The surrounding area of the House near the Acropolis, (Athens, 1978), consists of small houses with traditional backyards, some modern apartment buildings and a few remaining villas from the Neoclassical period. Their approach was of a dwelling in which to live and work, that would contain continuous activities. "The main stair, as it ascends, intermingles light and view, movement and rest, open and closed space". There are spaces with diverse heights, activities intersect, materials common in everyday architectural construction (reinforced concrete, wood, rough or smooth plaster). "It is a simple construction that has been assiduously elaborated in order to reveal an underlying rhythm, a prism which is complemented by the presence of life" (1985). "...we relived and incorporated Cretan palaces, the archaic kouroi and sanctuaries, the Hellenic house, the Classical and Hellenistic agoras, the Byzantine churches and monasteries, the 17th c. settlements as they came down to us...Thus we were revealed to the mystery of the threshold, the dialogue of closed and open spaces, the ambiguity

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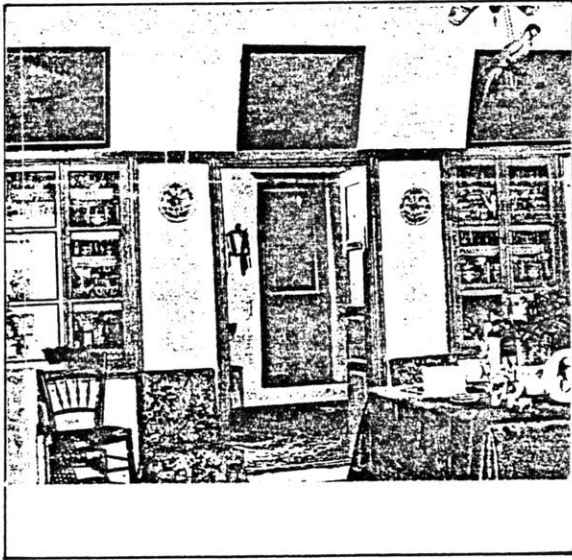
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of transitory spaces, the surprise of the paradox, differentiated repetition, the joy of the unexpected, the warmth of familiar space, the intimacy of touch" (1985).

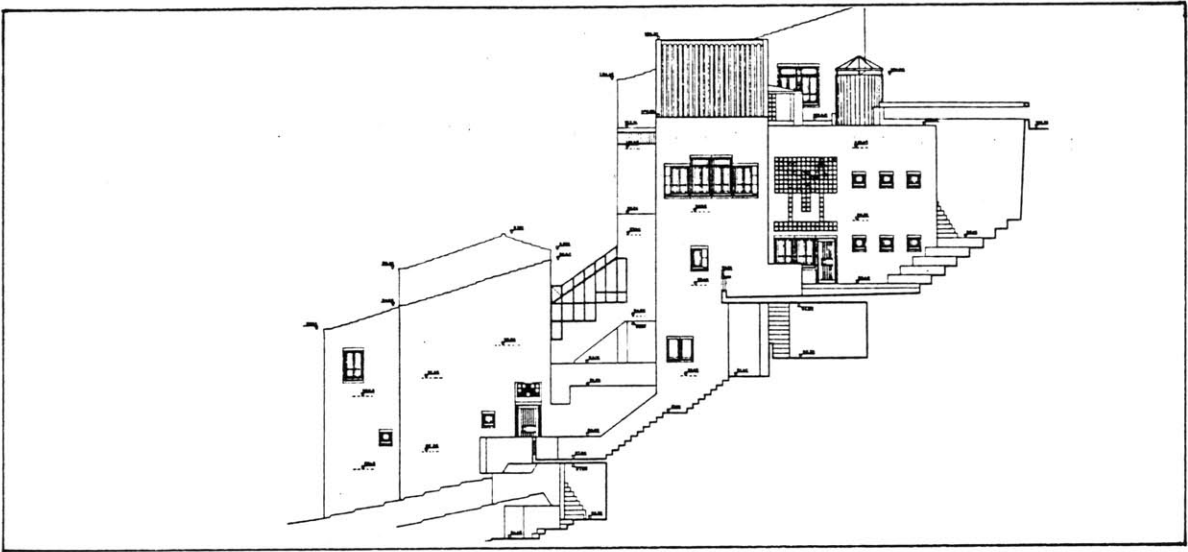
The vacation house at Porto-Heli (1967) has traditional greek building materials - above all the whitewashed stonework to cover modernistic connotations. The internal spaces have immediate contact with the outdoors by a number of terraces, while the external spaces, determined by the built volume, function as open-air rooms.

Vacation house at Oxyolithos (Euboea, 1973); where three zones of open and semi covered spaces, create the frame for the zoning of indoor spaces, and offer different points of view and orientation.

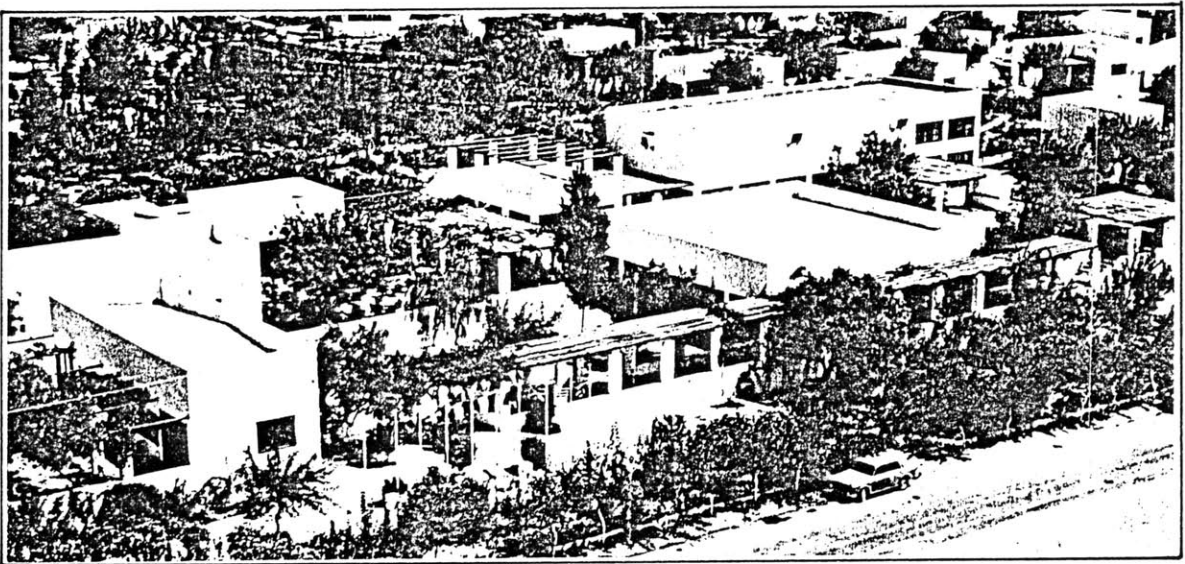
But even though their major source of inspiration and enrichment becomes the precedent of the immediate and past traditional architecture, their attitude implies a different view both of the contemporary as well as of the traditional, since the various aspects of the economic-socio-cultural context are changing and redefined in time. As they mention, they created their own vocabulary, open to constant renewal, enrichment and revision and their propositions have been tested over time by being exposed to the rigours of life and to the interventions of inhabitants.

They distinguish among the building/object to the building/place of life, "from space where time is absent, to place, where time is present and readable." They try to adapt international practice to the particularities of Greece in an effort to "humanize" architecture. They took from Modern Movement the concept of building being a complete and explicit organization that starts and ends in itself. Their first projects have rather pure geometrical forms, but from a strictly modular plan they go to a mode of construction which can define places and interpret activities. They break their plans into small recognizable units, and then combine them with transitional and sometimes ambiguous spaces. The configuration is disciplined, but relatively free, in a sequence of open and closed spaces, places with multi-purpose uses, places used for the scaling of privacy.

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They work with the quality of internal circulation, irrespective of the right angle, which conveys and disperses activities, abolishing the fragmentary character of functional units. Spaces go from one situation to another, "internal and external, closed and open, light and shadow, movement and rest, space and non-space, continuity and discontinuity". They also work with the incidental, many decisions and solutions are taken together with the craftsmen on the site. Their architecture gives a rough and warm feeling and accepts everyday life signs to be added and complete it.

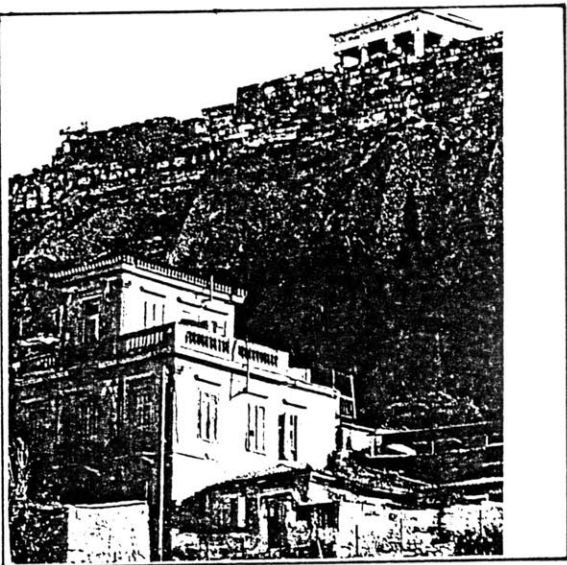
In the Student Hostel, Laggadia (1977), they combined into organic assemblies the rationalistic modern forms by which they have been inspired. It is designed so as to harmonize with the general residential fabric of the village and the natural physiognomy of the site; typology, repetition of small units. "We tried to create an everyday environment which would not only allow for a certain freedom in interpretation, but also promote a level of spontaneous participation on the part of the children."

When solutions of traditional architecture are borrowed, such as details, volumes, openings, they are turned abstract, avoiding readable similarities with the original form, and are integrated in the new whole. Along with the similarities of scale, volumetric composition, materials, colors, details, the association with the traditional can be made by analogy and with a degree of abstraction, even for large scale projects like the Hotel Complex in Hermionis (1965).

They want to "create spaces filled with love, where one can find...adventure, recognition, passion" and they "attempt to discover the meaning, the poetry lost in an eroded and oversimplified architectural vocabulary"... "not by borrowing words from older phases of the Greek language, but through transformations..." (1985).

"The span of time within the work must have -and indeed has- such flexibility, that the moment may be contained in history and history may be contained in the moment" (1985).

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Plaka neighborhood (Athens)

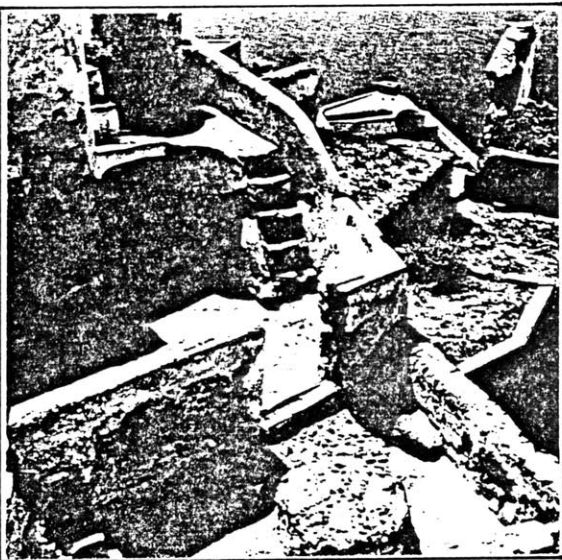
Athens was never inhabited by more than 200,000 people and suddenly, within a 75 year period it mushroomed to contain almost half of the population of Greece. The political circumstances and the refugee population from Asia Minor contributed to that.

A part of Plaka neighborhood, the "Anafliotika", just below the Acropolis, was one of the illegal housing areas, evoking somehow feelings of contempt among the conservative middle and upper classes. Today, it is considered fortunate that no drastic actions were taken to "upgrade" it, since it came to be one of the most complete sections of the old town of Athens surviving today and perhaps the most "charming". Houses and street alignments that at a certain point seemed to be valueless, have become now a source of fascination and inspiration.

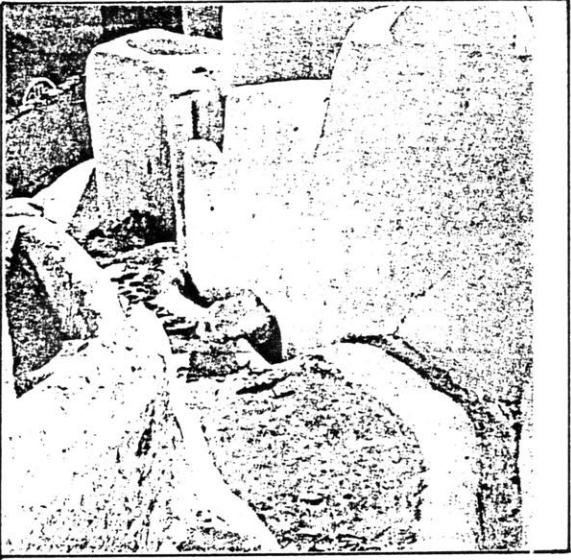
It can be considered a neo-vernacular setting, since the old forms are validated now by completely different aspects of behavior and lifestyle than in the past. They stand for their useability marketability and prestige value, above all other concepts. They address directly the tourist industry and the intellectual circles of the architectural profession.

Since the late sixties there have been efforts by the Ministry of Public Works to conserve as much as possible of this area, while emphasizing the total aesthetic ambience. Within the context of the rapid built of Athens, many of its inhabitants applied for for construction permits in the area. The housing department of the Ministry stopped the construction procedure, having the standpoint that this was a threat for the character of this area, and proposed ways of keeping it as is. The economic and social transformations of the recent years accelerated though its commercialized character.

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Santorini island (Greece)

Where man was forced to struggle constantly against earthquakes and eruptions; impressive geomorphology, parched soil and pumice stone, a limited amount of building materials, water and vegetation, a mild climate with high winds and bright colors of sea and sky, were the givens. In spite of its Minoan, Greek and Byzantine past, as well as its domination periods by Turks, Latins and others, the remaining built environment is what is called a vernacular setting; a picturesque, irregular mesh, covered alleys, volumes with uneven exterior surfaces, cast structures which result to the overt plasticity and succession of surprises.

In the periphery of the settlements the peasant houses were located, either built or dug-out. The town houses were irregular and multi-storeyed, packed in a densely inhabited centre. The mansions, being introduced by the mercantile marine class, were found in the center of the settlements and incorporated morphological traits of island classicism (which were gradually merged with the pre-existing folk elements).

Same as in many other islands, shipping was the main occupation and the source of its wealth. The shift of economic activities towards the major urban centers of Greece deprived the architecture of Santorini of further development. The traditional had given way to the newest masscult buildings and to the neo- vernacular. The built environment remains for its great part the same, but the circumstances that created it and the uses have changed. Before, everything was organized around a closed cluster of life activities, always related to the sea. Now everything has suddenly expanded to an international touristic level with its economic and environmental implications and transformations. The issue of the vernacular is on the surface and is used in varied ways.

If we accept that it is the lifestyle that gives meaning and explains the forms, is there really a continuation in the setting, or the shells are fundamentally different,

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even though they may have the same layout and appearance? The simple dwellings had a whole set of rules not easily comprehensible by the outsiders and which were totally different than today's rules. It is difficult to interpret forms outside the context of their cultural time setting.

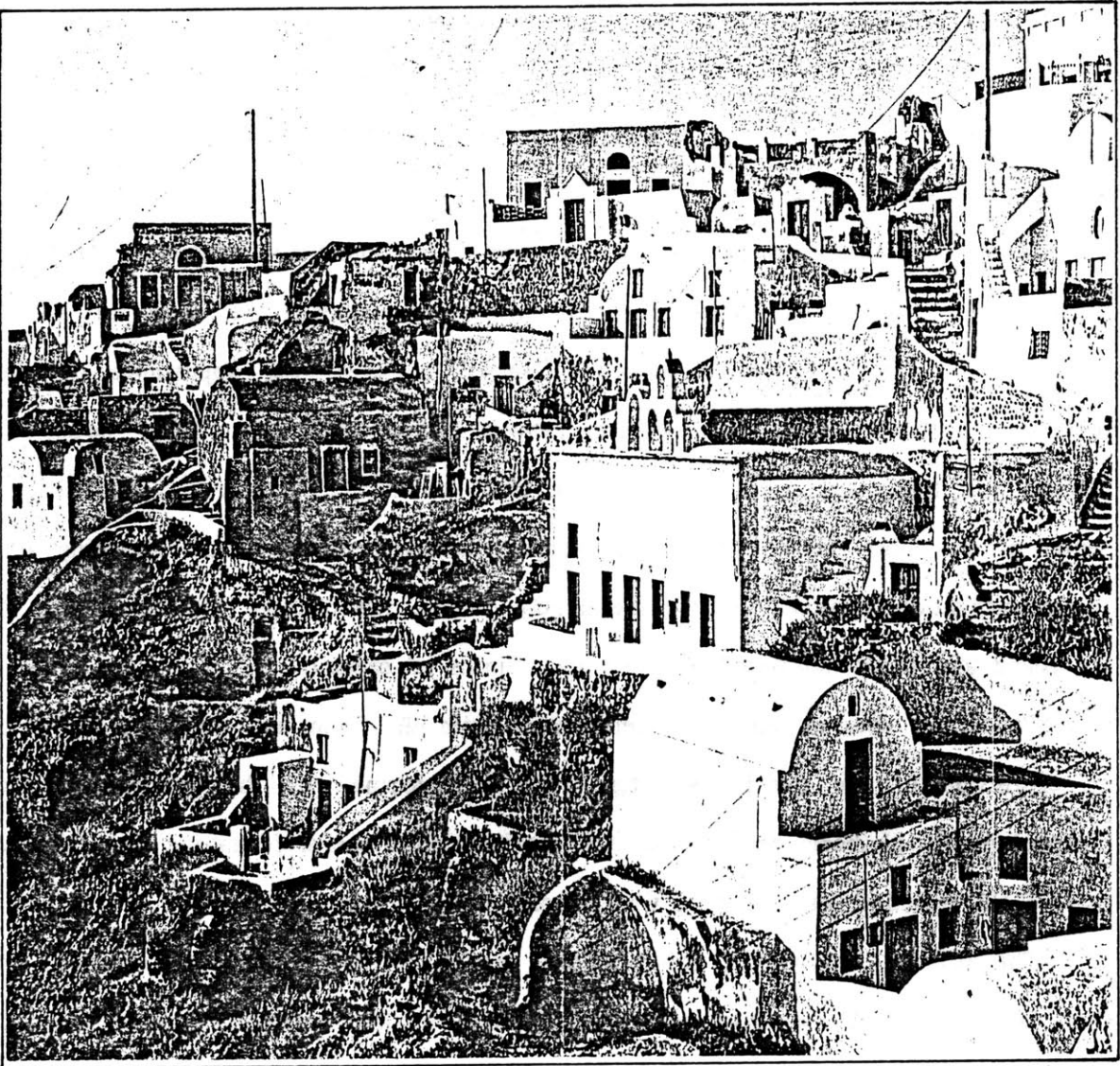
In spite of the fact that public common areas sometimes existed, there were limited (economically and politically) capabilities of making the most of them. Wherever the historic issue of insecurity seized to exist, the appearance of the settlements started gradually to evolve towards other directions. Trade began to flourish and the street emerged as a prime place of social interaction; it became the center of the most relaxed and direct everyday communication. Today, crowding and commercialization, especially during the holiday season, has changed the atmosphere of the island and public spaces are used in their limits of capacity.

Today, we have an epidermic relationship with the form and we don't see it as an expression of the interior structure. We are charmed by the aesthetically and morphologically plethoric character of the previous times shells, forgetting that the life these shells included was not what we fantasize today it was.

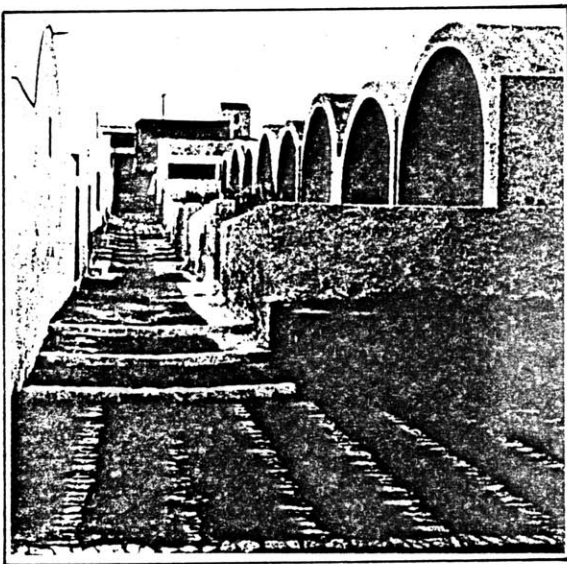
The original inhabitants, for example, tended to desire the transformation of their house following the urban prototypes, having "modern" materials (concrete, brick, rolling windows) and amenities, as far as they had the means for it. The new morphology of the house was something like a status-symbol, a way to make explicit the escape from poverty and a non-desired way of living. But, on the other hand, after the establishment of tourism, the local population changed attitude to the direction of preserving the traditional image of the environment and being proud of it.

After the earthquakes of 1956, there was a rebuilt of many settlements (governmental support), with geometrical forms of reinforced concrete. These forms

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were considered by G.Lavas (1972) to be an aesthetic failure, a monotonous repetition of elements and unsuccessful shaping of the open spaces, while in the traditional settlement of Phera there were winding alignments of streets, various and non-canonical morphological elements and a mingling of open spaces.

Contaratos, the architect in charge for some of the above projects, took the standpoint that the creator is free to approach the design in a culturally enriched built environment any way he wants. Since forms (structural patterns or stylistic manner) are justified insofar they can function in their physical and social framework, no reference to a prototype can save an artless creation. But, nevertheless, he considered the reference to the prototype as imposed on them by the circumstances. The limitations of the outcome, he claims, were due to the standardization of construction (which had resulted from the nature and scale of the problem, the necessity to built hundreds of low-cost houses in a short time). The types and grouping of the design were based on modern criteria. Here, the neo-vernacular forms work only as reminiscents of the island's tradition, but probably anything that would have been built under this givens, would have similar limitations.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE GENERAL CONTEXT OF VERNACULAR FORMS AND NEO-VERNACULAR ONES

"Though the landscape should have the imprint human events and seem connected with living persons, the imprints and connections must eventually fade away and be forgotten, just as human memories and generations fade. The old men of the Isleta Reservation retell the ancient stories but will not write them down. 'When the stories are no longer told, there will no longer be a need for them'." (Lynch, 1972)

There is a parallel similarity with vernacular and neo- vernacular buildings. Once the latter are produced by a conscious transformation of the former, the context has changed. It ceases to be tradition any more. Even if the original shell still exists or is recreated a new, it can not be considered to be the same as the one of the past.

Process, Scale and Context

The folk tradition is the unself-conscious, direct translation into form of the needs, values and dreams of a people. Vernacular settlements sprang from the lifestyle, the potentials of the physical setting, local materials available, climate and knowledge base of the community. Today, even though form is still related to lifestyle (and in any case refers to cultural preferences and norms), it does so in a totally different context. The choice of materials and forms is made along different criteria and under different physical circumstances.

Rapoport (1969) referred to the vernacular design process as one of models and adjustments or variations. Its unspecialized, open-ended nature, so different from the closed, final form typical of most high-style design buildings, helps it to accept changes and additions, which would destroy a high-style design visually and conceptually. The variety of traditional forms, have the common denominator that

changes happen within a frame of a given common heritage and hierarchy of values, reflected in the building types.

In both vernacular and neo-vernacular instances, choices and decisions are made and creation is taking place. But in the former case, personal taste in a more "crude" way is a strong component and decisions are unconscious in terms of intellectual pursuits, versus the latter case's conceptualized design and theoretical associations. In the Vernacular buildings, design is the result and not the process (question of what), while in the N.Vernacular design is conscious (question of why).

The picturesque that results from the relationship of the vernacular buildings with nature and landscape was an unforced process, while in neo-vernacular settings it is regulated. Similar with devices like colors, details, planting, finishings etc, which are denotative in the neo-vernacular and do not emerge from the way the structure is put together.

In every society there is a selection of its cultural institutions and a stress on specific values (like money, technology, afterlife, age etc.). Religion, belief and custom, both influence and reflect human conditions. Changes in incomes, technology and habits result to an expansion and new types of needs, which in turn impose changes in the facilities provided by a house. Which are the mechanisms of today? What do today's societies stress as opposed to past traditional ones?

Many times the vernacular is defined in terms of process - how it is designed and built. In pre-industrial societies there were prescribed ways of doing and not doing things and a diffused knowledge of everything concerning construction and building by all. Certain forms were taken for granted and strongly resisted change. Labor was not so much divided; of course the skilled masons existed, but each person contributed to the building of his own house more or less in equal terms with the technician. Today there is a shift from handicraft to industry, and the number of people and issues participating directly or indirectly in the building becomes larger and

larger. It also incorporates products from many parts of the world. Economics, social sciences, political and administrative forces, technology and aesthetics influence the whole "industrial" production. We have decision makers, designers, developers and masons and the public opinion that influences, as always, the results. The architect has vanished from the building site and has moved in the office.

The use of traditional methods and materials today, doesn't give the same result even if the form is similar to the past, since it has come to have a different status meaning. Since we are not any more in the era of the handicraft it is treated as a special and valuable privilege.

The vernacular architecture doesn't go through the cycles of fashion and trends, as do contemporary environments. Settlements were more authentic and were left to take their own course of action. Now there seems to be too much eagerness in planning (as related also to economical factors) that sometimes it can impose hectic solutions. From "an art of the people, by the people, for the people" has taken the form of "the public" versus a concerned minority. Forms are designed for the popular taste and not by it.

A shared image of life, an accepted model of buildings and settlement pattern acts as a discipline that gives "tradition" the power to have collective control. Today, tradition as a regulator has disappeared because of the bigger number of building types and the loss of the previous accepted and shared hierarchy. Our culture puts a premium on the seek for originality, while in traditional culture novelty was regarded as undesirable. But at the same time imitation of what is considered as an advance towards a more elitistic way of living could be a contemporary consensus. Style is differentiated from the general trend as being a genuinely progressive proposed solution.

The decisions of change or preserving the existing in vernacular settings were made on different grounds. Many times change was welcomed and innovation was sought in the form of showing-off, same as today. If buildings were the way they

were, it was because people didn't know any different, or they didn't think they had a reason to change them. As the context was changing, the environment was changing too.

Population growth, industrialization and transportation have led to Urbanization as distinct from rural or small-town open space architecture which identifies more with handicrafts than with mass production. The scale of the architectural environment is changing rapidly and doesn't have the apparently static physical expression traditional settlements seem to transmit.

Everything was individually oriented, but nevertheless, everything was operating in an accepted framework. The economy was working in a different way than today and there was not much speculation upon land and buildings.

Before, towns had a single overall character (the monumental part being a highest expression), materials, construction techniques and architecture was total and consistent, while now it is differentiated into memories of the past, facts of today and efforts for a new future.

Lifestyle (in Greece)

As in most undeveloped societies, more emphasis was given on ceremonial activities and rituals as compared to today. Now, everyday activities have been transformed as rituals to fulfil that need. Timing has also changed. Before, the pace of life was simple and repetitive in cycles, while now so many things seem to be going on at the same time, which impose their own "wants" to the environment. The times of the day and night that different parts of the settlements are experienced have changed. People used to wake up with the first light of dawn and go to sleep very early in the night, while now, with the change of economy, technology and the "migration" of new users, the 24 hours of the day can be divided into different cycles and the setting can be vivid and transformed in each one of them.

Holidays, feasts (like weddings) and seasons progressively lost their special character and are grouped with the standard leisure periods of the weekend and the vacation. There are also differences in the amount and disposition of leisure time (or "fun-time) available. At the same time there was not so much mobility. The issue of going away for the weekend didn't exist. Trips were considered a sign of unhappiness; in the Greek islands for example, men left only to earn their living abroad.

In these same environments you can see different lifestyles and images through time. For example my father's generation kids used to play in the same streets that today tourists in alien "outfits" (and of a lighter complexion generally) move around.

Before there was stress on personal relations in a different level and context, affecting both the house form and the organization of the settlement. Now the house is used more and its decoration and division of functions is given more emphasis than the piazza or cafe, which in turn are used in a different context and with a higher density of people.

Change in communication means (like telephone) has marked also the functions

of the public areas. In vernacular settings information and gossip were spread by words of mouth and not by media.

In traditional Greek settlements the meeting place was the well for the women, the cafe for the men, the walls and steps, the church. Preindustrial people stressed religion (nothing to do with spirituality, but more with material things). The church was a meeting place, a spot where you could socialize. Differences in points of emphasis, from stress to religion –sacred part of the town– to the secular.

Even marriage customs affect the form of dwellings. In Greece the house belongs to the woman and is primarily related to her (issue of dowry).

In Greece, the periodic promenades or gatherings, during which the social area expands over a larger area than normally used, is a temporal spatial utilization, an important and complex aspect of the urban setting.

In vernacular situations there was there was no life at night, or what existed was in a different context (eg gambling or celebrations or weddings etc) and from different groups of people (local versus tourists). Time went "slowest" or more controled in the old days of Mykonos, while now there is the shift of nights into "action" and the days are devoted to the touristic industry. The cycle of the seasons is still valid, but for other purposes – hot ones and not.

House

Built form is the shell of patterns of behavior. The house is a culturally defined way in which some basic needs (eating, sleeping, family and social intercourse) are handled with regard to built forms. The question is how much form can affect behavior and lifestyle or vice-versa and whether a designer can change people's way of living by giving them a type of house different than the one they were used to.

In Greece today, the family has lost its productive role and became a unit of consumption and the needs for personal comfort and social prestige appeared. The house followed this change, its rooms multiplied and became specialized, showing a new pattern of family structure.

A simplified relationship of everyday life and the form of buildings is reflected in the whole treatment of traditional setting, in the exteriors as much as in the interiors (the feeling that ornamentation gives, the combination of functions in the rooms). Today we see the signs of intentional resemblance to a certain style each time (either this would be modern, or neo-traditional). The building of a house was the big event in the life of a family (even though emotional and material surplus was reserved for monuments) and within the framework of limited social and economic needs and expectations, the simple dwelling came to express the relation of the human with the land. Today the house still continues to have some importance, (it does constitute the bulk of the built environment) but the attitudes towards it are changing. In traditional societies most, if not all people, have houses, while now it is perfectly acceptable even for people belonging to the middle or upper class to live in rented apartments. How did they utilize their houses then and now?

The house form is part of the general social context. As long as common values are strong and shared, there exist only variations on a general type; once they are multiplied there is a bigger variety in the environment and many times contradictory

shapes are created. But today we can say that we are in a parallel situation as in Vernacular settings, because the environment looks very much the same in each part of a town with the exception of some "voids" of the past.

Man lives both in the house and in the total settlement and the way he relates with and uses the latter affects house form. The setting and context of the house can be indicative of the extend and range of activities that take place inside or in its yard, or in the street or plaza. The neo-vernacular basically deals with the outside of the house, while keeping the inside according to contemporary demands.

Settlement

"There have generally been two traditions of concentrated settlement. In one the whole settlement has been considered as the setting for life, and the dwelling merely as a more private, enclosed, and sheltered part of it. In the other the dwelling has essentially been regarded as the total setting for the living realm"...we may consider the Latin, Mediterranean village or town as typical of the first type, and the Anglo-American city as typical of the second...the vernacular tradition as typical of the first, and the grand design tradition as typical of the second" (Rapoport, 1969).

"outdoor sleeping - whether on the roof, in the court, or in the shaded verandahs... two kitchens, one indoors for winter use and one outdoors for summer use... summer living takes place largely outdoors, and the house become a storage space rather than a dwelling." (Rapoport, 1969).

The neo-vernacular dwellings in Greece are more self-contained in relation to the settlement than the vernacular ones. The street still serves social functions but the ephemeral presence of visitors makes it lose its prime importance as a meeting place. Another relevant point is that vernacular architecture is somehow complete in itself. One feels nice in such a setting, even if there are no people moving or activities taking place.

In the centre of the town, retail and residential uses used to be mingled. Life-work-religion were mixed together and there was a "diffusion" of space and little differentiation of areas (houses, bazaar, church). Also many times home and economic unit was one and the same. There was no periphery, or better, the issue of center did not exist. The old neighborhoods were the only ones existing, while now they are labeled as "historic centers". (Together goes the classification of contemporary and landmark buildings). The concept of "fashionable" areas emerged, locations change

within one city, depending on social rather than physical factors, proving that modern symbols related to the house are as strong as those of the past, and still take precedence over physical aspects - they are only different. We have complexity, differentiation of building types and urban space, separation of uses, zoning. The neovernacular forms give a "hard" impression versus the "soft" forms of the vernacular.

In pre-industrial vernacular buildings it is easier to judge the relative importance of physical and cultural forces as form determinants as opposed to the grand design tradition. There was more homogeneity in the shared image of the good life and its values. Today forces and pressures are more complex and the links among form, culture and behavior are more difficult to trace and establish.

In rural settlement in Greece of one century ago, the politically and socially suppressed life was reflected in the lack of extensive public space. Now due to tourism the opposite is happening together with the change in its population structure.

Symbolism, Qualities, Meaning, Role of the designer

Our age is a time of strongly conscious intellectual pursuits and almost everything tries to be related with the social sciences. Vernacular forms are given now a symbolism and a meaning they didn't have before, being valued as more than utilitarian shells. What used to be the "popular" buildings, became the "high-style", which is by all means valid since there is a need for that. The inconsistency though is that the word "recycle" doesn't refer to the meaning or the context but to the form.

Analogously to an increasing preference for info versus vision, tastes are transferred from the original -the object- to the fascimile -the concept of the past. At some point not long ago, there existed an original and natural approach , when conception and realization of a building were one process and the architect and builder were the same person. Now we have come back to a fusion of art, science, design and execution, but in a different level. The designer has shifted from being a good craftsman to being a visioner. There existed a long process of selection and evolution of forms to create a style. It was carried out at the level of the whole society, and led to forms acceptable by the whole society. This process is no longer in the hands of the master builders, but of the architects who want to create styles; Anonymous buildings being a product of the group rather than of the individual versus the magalomania of the architects; new solutions versus right solutions "what was simply allowed to happen in the past must now be consciously created" (Doxiadis, 1974).

Many times we tend to beautify the traditional forms and we underestimate the effect of their improvisity and lack of amenities, which are very stricking elements for the users and for the simple-mind observer of some times ago. S.Sinos (19) mentions that many of the city inhabitants don't understand or appreciate the rural

houses in Cyprus because their aesthetic appearance is not impressive and they don't represent for them any sought image; he claims that they have lost the direct relation with the construction, while in the traditional settings (life being so simple) the relation of the people with the structure comes from an everyday interaction with the land and its materials. It's true that the people in these settings are more closely related to the building as a structure but what is doubtful is whether they like it any better than the outsiders or even less. It is important to take rational account of the values that exist and not dogmatic standpoints about the intrinsic goodness of old things. Post attributed attitudes are given now to the vernacular which didn't exist before for the users.

Typical disadvantages of old over new structures: poor utilities, a cramped floor plan, expensive maintenance. But probably they have a richer form (the impress of many occupants), an adjusted fit between activity and form, intimate scale, mellowed surfaces and details. How are these qualities being reproduced ? Can new development equal or better those qualities?

The mix of new and old in Boston tries to tell something for the past, and on the other hand it denotes something about the future. The fixed reading of the vernacular has been transformed into an open-ended reading for the neo-vernacular.

Some neo-vernacular forms have a complete reversal of their historical role and meaning of the elements they took from vernacular forms. For example a secluded courtyard of a traditional house can be used as the public space of a shop or a restaurant; the street, from a means of entertainment could be considered as a nuisance.

All the above make clear that there are differences, as well as similarities, between the vernacular and the neo-vernacular approach to buildings. In order not to have misconceptions about where these differences lie and to know exactly for what

purpose each form is adopted anew, simple parallelisms and comparisons can be made between the past and the present, which can result to a comprehensive view and taxonomy of the issues.

CONCLUSION

The neo-vernacular seems to be a transitional phase, for the Greek reality of today, same as all the styles that take references directly from a specific past and are created in order to stabilize an unstable cultural and political present. Eras that were confined of their ability to create new things, were not concerned about preservation.

Following what W.Churchill said, "we shape our buildings, thereafter they shape us" (Doxiadis, 1974), it was found to be an attractive and comprehensive alternative to turn back to an indigenous type of vision;"as a derivative of the late eighteenth century picturesque; and as it implicated all that love of disorder, cultivation of the individual, distaste for the rational, passion for the various, pleasure in the idiosyncratic and suspicion of the generalized..." (Rowe and Koetter, Collage city).

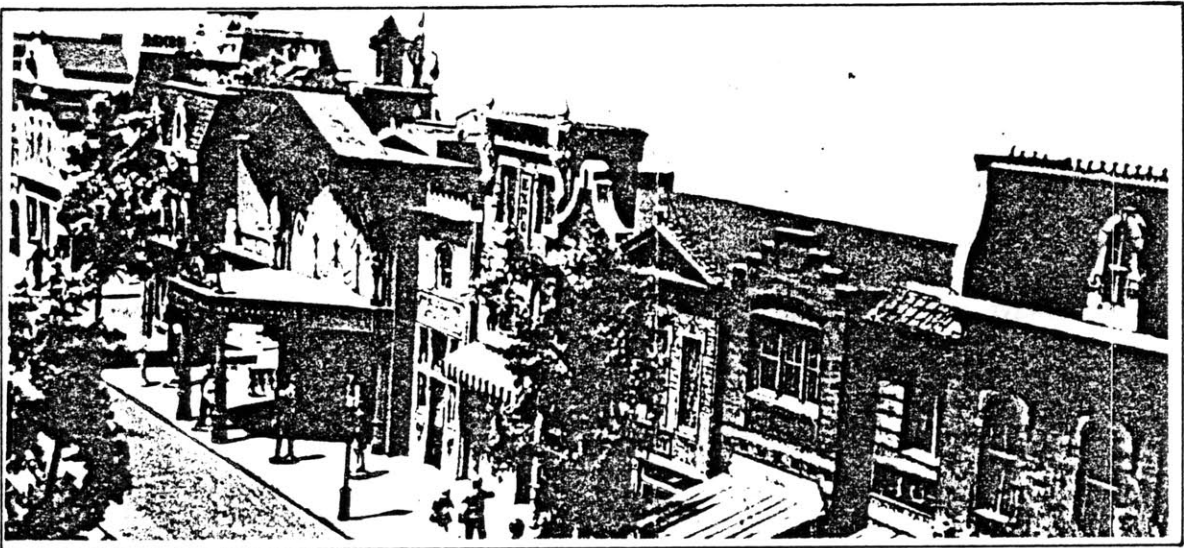
The neo-vernacular doesn't aim to a true living tradition since, by definition, the creator is self-conscious of having to make a statement regarding tradition; Of course, we can always talk in circles, saying that since going back to a specific vernacular is becoming a popularised trend -with decreasing intellectual consciousness- it could be considered as today's tradition and a sign of historical continuity.

Tradition's use enters in the aspects of the picturesque, of objects conceived to be typical, transformed by their new context and retaining their original implications.

But there is also the thread of mistreat of this tradition. Since there is no inherent meaning in form, different associations with the past can be made according to what one wants to read. The emphasis thus, is not in the solutions, but on the route it takes to reach there and the means with which it is accomplished.

Selection and even creation of the past, poses the question of what percentage it is the artistic creation that we try to convey (the forms) or a whole network of social connections that we cannot easily reconstruct (the functions). Can the value of something new be justified in the reasoning of the neo-vernacular? The process of

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enriching a system with elements drawn from another, creates the difficulties of achieving both coherency and appropriateness of the outcome.

There is a parallelism between what Rowe and Koetter wrote (Collage City) about the Disney World and the neo-vernacular style: "...and if Disney World proceeds from a commercial exploitation of the needs...then, perhaps, the only outstanding difference concerns the quality of the action or its source of origin..." "...the only outstanding difference relates to a conception of society...Disney World is the product of a social situation where the evidence of the public realm was never very highly assertive..." "...visit the air conditioned Cinderella's castle..." "...Disney World deals with the crude and the obvious; and this is both its virtue and limitation. Its images are not complex; and, thus, Disney World's Main Street is not so much an idealization of the real thing as it is a filtering and packaging operation, involving the elimination of unpleasantness, of tragedy, of time and of blemish." "...But the real Main Street, the authentic nineteenth century thing is neither so facile nor so felicitous. It registers, instead an optimistic desperation." "...the real Main Street,...an exhibition of a reserved and scarcely agreeable reality, of a reality which engages specularive curiosity, which stimulates the imagination... In the real Main Street there is, inevitably, a two-way commerce between the observer and the observed; but the Disney World version cannot seriously emulate its enigmatic original."

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