

I have unfortunately only had the occasion of being in your wonderful country for a few days, last year. Certainly, however, I can say that I was extremely impressed by the powerful overlay of the different civilizations and religions, particularly in the urban fabric of that splendid city, Istanbul. The agglomeration of different building typologies such as mosques, bazaars, tea houses, schools and bath houses gives the city a unique intermix which contributes to its extraordinary quality. Of course the highlights of this meeting point of East and West were for me the two superlative mosques of Hagia Sophia and the Blue Mosque. The interplay of light and shade, the extraordinary internal spatial volumes, provide a master-class lesson for any architect in space modulation as does also the external array of rising geometric forms of the minarets in relation to the soft docile curvilinear undulant dome structures.

Another space which I found to be most invigorating, not only in spatial terms but even more so in terms of its use, was the Bazaar area. Its labyrinthine spaces bustling and crowded with traders, locals and tourists, its pictorial images and exotic aromas make it an environment of the rarest quality both as a visual and sensual experience; qualities of intensity and warmth so lacking in today's contemporary world.

All this, including a brief visit to some of the great Hans or Caravenseraï, (perhaps predecessors on a smaller scale of the suqs or Bazaars) platforms of social trading, lodging and stabling, left me whetting my appetite for a further visit and a deeper knowledge of both the vernacular and more sophisticated architecture of Turkey. Obviously, high on my list would be a visit to Capadocia and of course the great Topkapi museum which regretfully I had to miss out on during my last visit due to the brevity of my visit.

In relation to new developments, in particular coastal tourist buildings; again, I have little on hand experience but would like to express a few overall thoughts in relation to the direction that these should take and issue some warning notes in order to avoid the common lethal pitfalls suffered by so many other countries. Let us never forget that tourist development, although a great asset for any country's economy, if not well handled could well end up killing the very goose which lays the golden egg. Too much of the Mediterranean coast has been already sacrificed to the money-making mercenary speculators interested solely in quick profits with no respect to quality and protection of the natural ambiance or existing environments.

With a country which boasts such a rich heritage as Turkey, I personally feel that it would be advisable to approach a tourist architecture with a philosophy of an architecture of 'continuity within change'; using the past as a springboard. While acknowledging the need of tourism from an economic point of view, it is imperative that architects and developers think in terms of a sustainable architecture to retain the character of the place and to respect the areas which they are building in. I would be in favour of an architecture of 'evolution' as opposed to one of 'revolution'; an architecture appropriate to place, respecting that place but relating specifically to the *zeitgeist* of our time.

If the definition of architecture of 'commodity, firmness and delight' still stands, let us focus on the 'delight' aspect in as far that we should give poetry to the pragmatic. Tourist architecture must provide not only holidays for the body but also holidays for the eyes and the spirit. Good manners should always prevail and the architect must constantly bear in mind that he must perform not only the designer of the future but also the defender of the past whether that past constitutes a built context or a natural ambiance. There is little doubt that

though we live in an era of celebration in terms of science and progress, we are also experiencing an age of loss. In terms of values of the spirit, our relationship with our fellow brethren and most of all our misunderstanding and complete rapture with nature are certainly great losses. We now have to re-learn what the ancients knew so well, that is to thread gently on our planet, for ultimately the job of the architect is to make the ordinary extraordinary. The new architecture of Turkey must be situational as opposed to universal, unique as opposed to standardized, and individual as opposed to collective. What must be avoided at all costs is the contemporary fashion of buildings looking drunk, warped and contorted. No 'isms' please! ...and it is better now for architects to think more of 'eco' than 'ego'.