Editorial

Reconstruction of Old Buildings based on Landscape Narratives

Landscape has been considered the meeting point of history and geography. The landscape transcends the place and is an infusion of what is seen and what can be interpreted. Through the lens of the landscape, place is not just a form; it has a meaning and an identity. In other words, each architectural element can have a special existential narrative, history, and philosophy in addition to its physical, appearance, and situational features. Such concepts together create the landscape narrative of the element. Landscape narratives can add up to tourist attractions for viewers and visitors, and these narratives and stories stick in visitors' memory and encourage them to have similar experiences or describe them to others. Many architectural elements that existed in old Iranian cities have lost their uses over time due to the advancement of technology, lifestyle changes, and a variety of reasons, and in the best case, they serve as tourist attractions. They are visited by tourists (in many cases, these places are destroyed or subject to destruction due to lack of use). In some cases, these architectural elements have been reconstructed and have had different uses. Examples of such changes can be a caravanserai that has been converted into a hotel, a public bath that has been used as a restaurant, or a reservoir whose roof has been renovated into a warehouse. In some of these reconstructions, the original identity and narrative of the element have been taken for granted, and an attempt has been made to take advantage of the place and its available physical features to make it possible for visitors to reuse buildings. Changing the use of each place can be investigated from different perspectives. In addition to serving as a historical place, its most important advantage is to prevent the destruction of its architectural space. Reconstructing or using places preserves the physical structures that can be visited and used in the future. On the other hand, this issue can overshadow their original identities and narratives. Over time, they might completely disappear and be forgotten. If this reconstruction is only focused on the physical structures, their identities, and narratives will be separated and faded away. Especially if the new uses change some architectural features fundamentally. In other words, the issues of the use of historical places and old architectural elements, such as castles, caravanserais, baths, etc., are quite sophisticated, and their ignorance can lead to the destruction of identities. The most important concern in this reconstruction is the preservation of the narratives and identities of the original buildings to help present visitors understand what main and secondary uses each place used to have before the reconstruction and realize the characteristics of identity. If this concern is addressed, not only the restoration and preservation of the buildings can be done, but their identity will also be respected, and this will attract their attractiveness to visitors. This can be done by telling the story visually, orally, and even by restoring parts of the space to their former form. For example, in a hotel in Yazd, which is an old house bath (pool section) have been completely restored in their original form, and in addition to the old photos, the narration is also done by guides. This helps visitors have a pleasant stay in a hotel with modern facilities, get to know the original story of the old house of an ancient city, travel to the history of the previous period, and interact with a geographical historical situation. This is what the landscape narratives intend to do.

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