Abstract- In many countries tourism is the major sector influencing the sustainability of a cultural setting. A touristic setting is a place constructed for pleasurable experiences. In cultural touristic settings, the feeling of pleasure is conveyed through cultural attractions that involve cultural identity in accordance with cultural meanings. The study aims to evaluate the interior environments of authentic settings. The majority of cultural heritage settings are reconstructed for touristic visits. In this reconstruction process multifaceted problems occur. Thus, reconstructing a space influences both functional and the socio-cultural aspects of an interior.

Cultural motivation of a tourist has many different dimensions; from object based authenticity to existential authenticity. In a cultural setting the interior itself becomes the object that is exhibited. This is an object that has the function of both exhibiting the cultural heritage as well as serving for exhibition. This is a dilemma; that the space is the stage for tourists along with also being an authentic object itself. This process can be named as ‘Staged Authenticity’ which is a concept introduced by Dean McCannell. Through staged authenticity many problems occur namely; in representing the true meaning; identity of both intangible and tangible dimension of a cultural heritage. Representing the authenticity is a multiphase problem in sustainability of a specific culture. This study focuses on the authenticity dimensions of an interior space. The study aims to set this interior design problem in a context and to consider ways of sustainability the authenticity value of a setting from the point of both the tangible and the intangible heritage. As a case, traditional Turkish house interiors that are converted to restaurants are selected.

Key Words: Interior Space, Authenticity, Cultural Heritage

I. INTRODUCTION

In order to preserve a place that has a cultural value, it is not sufficient to discuss only its material attributes. When a place is regarded as a cultural heritage are many different aspects in the creation of its intrinsic value. This study focuses on the interior space values of cultural heritage. An interior space creates a place that can represent our past, present and even our future. It is the main container that captures the cultural identity in itself. The interior space shapes the way we live.

There is a strong and multifaceted interaction between the interior and the user. In this way, human as the creator of culture experiences a strong relation between culture and environment. Altman and Chemers, in their book Culture and Environment, present examples relating to the interaction between environment and culture.[9] Before introducing these examples, they state that different people living in different cultures have diverse spatial perceptions. The authors then go on to establish that culture, environment and the individual constitute a whole. They argue that the parts of this whole cannot be discussed independently of each other and conclude that these interactions altogether constitute a social system.

In this system, by designing appropriate spaces, a designer can influence whether a culture value survives or becomes lost in peoples’ memories. Interior designer as a professional tries to resolve issues of functionality, aesthetics, cultural identity and soon on. IFI (International Federation of Interior Architects and Interior Designers) that is widely known as an international committee of interior designers define the profession as:

“As a creative enterprise, interior design and interior architecture are a mode of cultural production. They are a place-maker that interprets, translates, and edits cultural capital. In a global world, interior design and interior architecture must play a role in facilitating the retention of cultural diversity.” [10]

In a way, the designer is able to crystallize the cultural value, or help it survive with contemporary living habits. Recently, under the intense effect of globalization and standardization cultural settings have lost their authentic identities, As Hyung Yu [15] defined the cultural setting, “the heritage setting potentially plays a significant role as a specific social space within which individuals are able to conceive, define and reconstruct elements of national consciousness”. That means the sustainability of a cultural identity, is in relation with the sustainability of a setting/space that contains the identity.
From this standpoint the study focuses on staged authentic Traditional Turkish house interiors. These houses are converted to restaurants that serve tourists. They all have been rearranged for a different function. The study discusses, the sustainability of tangible and intangible part of a cultural interior setting during this reconstruction process.

II. SPACE, PLACE, AND AUTHENTICITY

When the aspect of authenticity is considered in a space the concept of place emerges. Place includes space, time and people. According to Hay [7], when the human element comes into space, space becomes more of a place than a space. Law and Altman [2], have defined the place concept as the space which is given meaning through individual, group or cultural processes. “Place is an essential notion in architectural theory that is full of cultural meaning and social activities” [12]. In other words, people can transform spaces into places over a period. Thus, over the usage process, people create their own place identities and this transforms spaces into their own places. This process is defined in the relevant literature as “place identity”. By this definition, identity is described as a biological organisation which develops through adjustment (settlement), assimilation and assessing the social world; and moves over time [11]. Through this identification the interior environment gains its intrinsic value of authenticity. In cultural tourism the authenticity of a setting is the main consideration. “authenticity connotes traditional culture and origin, a sense of genuinity, the real or the unique” [17]. Authenticity is defined as an international/universal value and an essential motivation of tourists to distinct places [3]. Whereas, the act of tourism has emerged from a basic binary division between the ordinary everyday and experiencing the extraordinary. Cultural tourism is defined as “the movement of people to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experience to satisfy their cultural needs (Tourism Trends for Europe, 2006, p.5). Similarly, a cultural tourist is termed as “someone who visits, or intends to visit, a cultural tourism attraction, art gallery, museum or historic site, attends a performance or festival” McKercher.

In heritage tourism, considerations regarding multifaceted tourism action, the meaning of authenticity has become a complex phenomenon. Due to this problem, the understanding of authenticity is defined and categorized in the literature from different aspects. Wang, in his comprehensive study about authenticity, classified the concept in three main categories. These are existential authenticity, objective authenticity, and constructive authenticity. In this categorization the term existential authenticity stands for the being of a participant in touristic activity. Actually it is an action of experience. Whereas, the objective authenticity stands for objects’ original authenticity and the constructive authenticity, is the symbol of the original. In literature, the constructive authenticity concept has been defined for the first time as staged authenticity by Mc Cannell in 1973. Mc Cannell set the term as “arrangement of social space in tourist setting”. Tourist setting is considered as a “stage set” arranged according to tourist demands. Front stage is the setting that hosts the tourist and the back of the stage is the setting for preparation [5]. Moreover, the concept is defined according to how tourists perceive authenticity. According to Gouling, there are three different tourist categories, namely;

“Existential visitors: emphasizes the importance of enjoyment and escape and mainly perceives authenticity through exhibited artefacts. Aesthetical visitors: perceive history mainly trough art. Social visitors: emphasised the importance of learning and social and are especially interested in watching demonstrations and making purchases in museum shops.”

Actually these categorizations are not independent form each other. Tourists can also intend to perceive all experiences in one route. For each of these categories the place has a potential role in defining a specific culture. A case study carried out by [19], demonstrated that there is a two way influence between object based authenticity, existential authenticity and cultural motivation. Cultural motivation is considered as “ a set of cultural motives which are shifting towards a more general interest in culture”

In the context of reconstructing a cultural place, the interior space acts as an authentic object. In other words it can be defined under the concept of staged authenticity. However, in the course of an interior that has a cultural value, the preservation of that specific value become important. In a cultural setting, sustainability of a cultural value stands in how the value is presented to the tourist.

Cultural tourism is the main sector staged in a cultural setting. Creating a renovated image for various forms of cultural heritage has played a crucial role in the regeneration of declining urban, industrial and rural areas through tourism and conservation programs [11]. According to Uzzell [11], “interpretation needs to be planned and designed with that outcome in mind”. Uzzell also states that “both the motivations to visit and the kind of benefits derived from visiting heritage sites can be seen in terms of individuals seeking to identify with a place and, as a consequence, deriving from that identification a positive self-image.”

The study considers authenticity in a constructive; staged authenticity view point. In most of the interior spaces the problem of expressing the intrinsic value of culture occurs.
As expressed in the figures above, authenticity is an essential factor in the sustainability of a cultural setting. In the first figure the cultural identity conveys through authenticity of the original. In the second figure, this time, the cultural identity reflected with the staged authenticity. In the first figure the sustainability of cultural setting is directly provided. However, in the second figure the sustainability of a cultural setting cannot be directly provided. Moreover, in cultural settings the identity is conveys through authenticity. The next part of the study focuses on the typical features of a specific interior space that creates intrinsic authenticity.

III. TYPICAL INTERIOR SPACE ELEMENTS IN TRADITIONAL TURKISH HOUSE

Element of interior space are the major entities that give meaning to space. Elements of interior space take role in defining the space; create boundaries, and also take a prominent role in defining the function of a space. Especially these elements give identity and authenticity to the interior space.

The authenticity of traditional Turkish house derives from its cultural origins. The typical formation has been derived from the nomadic culture in 15th century. According to Küçükerman belonging to a nomadic culture creates a disconnection between the feeling of belonging and the land, in a way this leads to an abstract formation of living environment [14]. Nomadic Turks have settled in Anatolia after they adapted Islam as their religion. Deriving from a nomadic culture, adapting to Islam and the environmental characteristics of Anatolia became the main factors effecting the formation of authentic Turkish House. Throughout centuries some of the features in the house reformed but major elements survived and these elements have formed what is now known as the typical features of the Traditional Turkish House.

The formation of the house is introverted. That means the exterior and the interior relation of the house is limited. The ground floor formed its shape according to the formation of the street but the visual relation between the street and the interior of the house is limited. The upper floor formation acts independently from the ground floor. Mostly, experiencing the outside is via an interior courtyard.

The house is mainly divided into two parts: harem which are areas reserved for female members of the family and selamlık which are areas reserved for male members of the family. According to Islamic beliefs, areas of the house for men and women are separate. Basically, house arrangement is limited to one storey; where the top floor is always accepted as the most important part of the house.

There are 2 main elements in the formation of typical traditional Turkish house these are; room, and the sofa (hayat). Sofa is the main hall that all the rooms are arranged around. Mainly, it is a circulation area between rooms. Moreover, it is used as a social area that contains sitting units. According to Küçükerman sofa is the “most important element of the form of the Turkish house and which influences its whole shape” [14].

Another typical element of the house is the room. The room is the main unit that contains different functions. Each room contains basic living requirements such as; sleeping, eating, sitting, working and resting. “Every room becomes a single living space for a core family.” (Aktaş,2011:3). Mostly, the plan diagrams of the rooms are square and each wall is a medium for a different activity. One wall of room can contain storage means, another one can contain fireplace, a sitting unit (sedir) or even a bathroom. On this account Yürekli and Yürekli named the room as a single unit “house” (2007). There are also other specific functions for a single room such as a master room which is the main area and is used as a guest room for the head of the family. [20].

When furniture in the room are considered, the build in wardrobes are one of the main elements in the room used for storage purposes. The cupboards contain the equipments for daily use; such as beds, rugs, cups etc. These cupboards are the main elements in the interior façade that gives an aesthetic value to the general atmosphere of the room. Most of the examples are made of carved wooden elements. Another typical unit is the fireplace that adds authenticity to the room.
The fireplace is used for heating purposes. In some of the houses it is intensively decorated and adds extra value to the overall atmosphere of the interior.

The sedir is the main sitting unit in the room. Mostly these units are located under windows. They continuously surround the room and are elevated from the ground. The ground cover is also an important element in the interior environment. The importance is derived from its function. Most of the functions take place on the ground [14]. “If a respected visitor should arrive and there is no room on the sedir, the younger members of the family will give up their seats on the sedir and sit on the floor” (Günay, 2005:113). All the ground is covered with carpet, kilim or cushion. These carpets express the typical aesthetic values regarding traditional Anatolian motifs that also add authenticity to the interior environment.

Despite these furniture, the ceiling is also an important interior element with its typical ornamentations. Ceiling decoration is built up of polygonal pendant wood elements fixed one on top of the other. On the walls there is a horizontal element that limits the height of doors and windows and can also be used as a shelf unit. This horizontal timber unit is a very typical element in the room. All furniture in the room is limited under this horizontal line. “the basic principle that utility areas should not exceed human stature brought about a tangible, visible upper limit” [14].

The authenticity of the interior is derived from these typical elements. These typical elements are vital in users’ experience in a way that these typical elements reflect an image in the users’ cognition. The cognitive process is formed by traditional types that are shaped through history. According to Schutz, people perceive the world through types and these types structure our cognitive schemes [8]. From this point of view, Auburn and Barnes summarize the approach as follows:

“the person’s representation or stock of knowledge of the world, first, is social in that its typified content arises in and through the community and its history. Furthermore, typification is underpinned by language, or more precisely the ‘vernacular of the collectivity’…”. [5]

IV. STAGED AUTHENTIC TRADITIONAL TURKISH HOUSE INTERIOR

In recent years, some of these typical traditional houses have started to be used as touristic settings all around the country. In these examples, the original function of the house has changed mostly into becoming a restaurant. Mainly these approaches focus on representing authentic cultural values. In this reconstruction of authenticity process, the true image of cultural identity cannot be reflected. Unfortunately, these touristic affords ended up with reflecting false meanings. According to preservation regulation in the country, the exterior facade of these buildings are reconstructed in respect to its original. However, in the reconstruction of the interior space, there are no regulations.
The example photographs are taken from a staged authentic tourist setting in Ankara (capital city of Turkey). This typical traditional Turkish house was converted to a restaurant. Firstly because of its new function, the interior space has had just opportunity to reflect cuisine of the country. Both intangible and tangible cultural heritage derived from living habits have been undermined beforehand. In this case, the existential authenticity has diluted, totally. The tourist can just experience the authenticity through objects. Unfortunately, the organization and the types of furniture do not reflect the eating culture of its origins. The table and chair organization in the space prevent the wholistic volume expression of the typical interior of a traditional Turkish house. Moreover, the stylistic origins of furniture do not reflected the Turkish traditions either. In this case, the object authenticity cannot be truly reflected as well. The case in result is a total constructive/staged authenticity that is far from reflecting the original cultural heritage of the country.

Also photographs above are taken from another Traditional Turkish House interior converted to a restaurant in Ankara. In addition to the given example beforehand, the decorative elements are also different from the origins of the Traditional Turkish house. General atmosphere totally rejects its original roots. The staged authenticity does not reflect the true formations and meaning of Turkish culture. Under the restrictions of regulations, the exterior of the house is preserved but the interior space behaves independently from the original cultural identity. However, the tourist experiences a totally false authenticity via reconstructed interiors.

V. CONCLUSION

In a cultural tourist setting, it is definite that the environment is the main factor that reflects the cultural heritage of the country. In the case of interior environments that are used by the tourist is a medium both for experiencing the tangible and intangible cultural heritage. By staging the authentic values and meanings of these cultural heritage changes, these values can transmitted to new generations correctly. UNESCO (2003) defines intangible cultural heritage from many different aspects, such as “processes and practices rather than end products”, defined as "sources of identity, creativity, diversity and social cohesion”.

The interior space does not have to be totally preserved in its original formation. It can be reinterpreted. The living conditions are changing. The main point is to reinterpret it with the help of its typical features. The staged authenticity cannot be constructed without original typical characteristics. UNESCO claims that, “to be kept alive, intangible cultural heritage must be relevant to its community, continuously re-created and transmitted from one generation to another” [1]

It is a responsibility to fulfill the need to achieve culturally unique semantic content through the typical characteristics of the interior space. By doing this, there is a chance to sustain of a cultural heritage.

REFERENCES


