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A Polish village in Turkey: A spatial analysis of Polonezköy in the context of housing, city, and cultural relationships

Abstract

Polonezköy (Adampol) is a settlement in the Beykoz district of Istanbul, Turkey. Polonezköy was established in the mid-19th century as a result of historical and political relations between the Ottomans and Poland. The residences in Polonezköy attract attention with their structural and spatial characteristics. The issues to be examined in this article are the houses' design, planning, layout, and spatial features. Determining the parameters of the contact between houses in Polonezköy and nature, the criteria of local/regional style, design suitable for environmental conditions, use of natural materials, establishing sensory experience, and respectful stance towards nature will be evaluated. It has ecological features such as using local materials in the residences, including vegetation in the design, protecting the existing green area, and integrating the residence in harmony with nature. The cultural, and spatial characteristics of Polonezköy residential buildings differ from those of other buildings in the settlement. The method to be applied in the research is creating a historical record through field research, photographs of the buildings, determination of their features, and interviews with their users. It will present a spatial feature sheet regarding the spatial features created by the author in the research area. The research aims to reveal the relations between Turkey and Poland through architectural features and determine the current situation. In addition, important data will be presented for researchers, academicians, students, and those interested in the subject. The unique aspect of this research is that it reveals general literature on the subject and is current field research.

Key words: Polonezköy (Adampol), Istanbul, residential architecture, city, heritage

Introduction

Polonezköy (Adampol) is a significant destination for Istanbul and Turkey because of its natural structure, traditional lifestyle, and extensive historical and cultural qualities. Polonezköy, chosen as the research location, is a destination that has grown in strategic importance and has been maintained for generations. Although Polonezköy settlement is well connected to the city by transit, it is an important settlement in terms of lifestyle and socioeconomic conditions Polonezköy's preferability grows due to its ability to provide urban residents with a rural lifestyle from many cultures via tourism. Polonezköy's natural plant life, animals, traditional life, local products, cycling trails, su-

perior lodging facilities, and food and beverage establishments all contribute to the growth of tourism. Furthermore, preserving the historic village texture as well as natural and cultural features enhances its tourism attractiveness. Especially in immigrant settlements, religious beliefs are among the important socio-cultural factors that shape traditional life. In the settlement of Polonezköy, which has existed on these lands for centuries, the people of Polonezköy, despite the changing social environment, still preserve the places where they perform their religious rituals and worship in harmony. An example of this can be seen in the mutual positioning of the church and the mosque. The same example can be seen in Kuzgucuk, Istanbul, where the church, mosque, and synagogue are side by side, expressing unity and harmony for citizens of different ethnic backgrounds.

According to Marek Bodziany and Ahmet Köstekçi (2015), Poles who were forced to flee their homeland found safety

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in the Ottoman Empire, where the Ottomans protected them prior to the conflict. In 1842, the protected Poles were granted a field in Istanbul. Prince Adam Czartoryski constructed a village in the area. The village's Turkish name is "Polonezköy", and it is part of the Beykoz district (Bodzia-ny, Köstekçi 2015). Cihan Erdönmez and Seçil Erol (2009) examine the socioeconomic phases of Polonezköy. According to them, they analysed the phases of socioeconomic change in Polonezköy in three categories (Erdönmez, Erol 2009). These categories are: first period: 1842–1800's end of the years' pure agricultural society and income sources: agricultural production, livestock, hunting, aid from Poland; second phase: 1900's. It was defined as a transitional society in the early 1960s. In this period, retirement, agricultural production, animal husbandry, and trade were prominent. The third period is defined as a modern society. Also, tourism and recreation are the region's sources of income in this period (Erdönmez, Erol 2010).

The word for "Polonez" is related to Polish in Turkish, and "köy" means "village", hence the meaning is "Polish Village". The original name "Adampol" refers to the founder, Adam Czartoryski, and means "the land of Adam" (Erdönmez, Erol 2010). Despite being a centralized village, Polonezköy has had a remarkable evolution, as evidenced by many researchers (Adamska 2004; Antonowics-Bauer 2006; Latka 1991; 1992). The main sources related to the village of Polonezköy were the main sources of data for the preparation of the study (Karaköse 2018; Demirsar Arlı, Kaya 2017; Dopierała 1983). This study focuses on

the process of change in Polonezköy Village's housing and architectural design.

Methodology

Mixed methods were used in this study. The qualitative method involves researchers taking extensive field notes, observations, and interviews about what they encounter in the research field. The relevant fieldwork was conducted by the author in August 2024. The research area, Polonezköy, was archived and photographed by the author of the article. In addition, the headman of the settlement and residents of the settlement were observation and notes were taken. Information was obtained from individuals who have lived in Polonezköy for many years. The method to be applied in the research is to create a historical record through observation, determination of the current situation, and archival analysis. This article aims to investigate the architectural development of the houses in Polonezköy Village as well as their cultural and tourism potential.

Location of Polonezköy

Polonezköy is located in the Marmara Region, on Istanbul's Anatolian side. Polonezköy, often known as Adampol, is a neighbourhood in Istanbul's Beykoz district and municipality. The village is 15 km from the Bosphorus and 23 km from the Black Sea (Fig. 1). It is located within a forest (175 ha).



Fig. 1. Location map of Polonezköy village. Author created this map from the archives of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IBB 2024)

Il. 1. Położenie wioski Polonezköy. Opracowanie autorki na podstawie archiwów Metropolii Stambułu (IBB 2024)

Polonezköy Village Settlement Area Conservation Application Zoning Plan (Beykoz, İstanbul)

Polonezköy is a significant feature of Istanbul's natural and cultural heritage. The Conservation Purpose Implementation Zoning Plan aims to make conservation-oriented decisions for land use, building densities, reinforcement areas, and transportation networks that are consistent with the Polonezköy Nature Park Long-Term Development Plan's objectives. The plan seeks to establish common use spaces that encourage cultural activities, particularly those promoting the local population's Polish history, while also incorporating historical and ecological qualities into the social fabric. It also prioritizes the safeguarding of existing and projected investments, taking into account public and institutional criticism. Residential and tourism developments within the planning area are intended to be in accordance with the natural and historical framework, thereby protecting the region's ecological and cultural integrity.

Republic of Turkey Ministry of Environment Urbanization and Climate Change and The Governorship of Istanbul provides the following information about Polonezköy: *Polonezköy Nature Park contains all the natural plant species of Istanbul. For example, there are pine species, chestnut, hornbeam, oak, beech, linden, and in the lower layer there are laurel, big nuts, black nuts, cotoneaster, deer thorn, firethorn. There are Pheasant and Partridge Breeding Station and Deer and Roe Deer Breeding Station within the Natural Park. There are animals such as red deer, roe deer, wild boar, jackal, fox, squirrel, squirrel, marten, weasel, pheasant, partridge, hawk, falcon, blackbird, goldfinch, steppe, owl in the nature park* (CSB 2024). Academic and researchers' studies have been conducted on the planning, current transportation, and architecture of Polonezköy. In these studies, plans were prepared to present the region's potential (Figs. 2, 3).

Evaluation of the architectural features of Polonezköy

The information board of Aunt Zosia's memorial home (Dom Pamięci Cioci Zosi) features a text about Polonezköy dwellings. The first settlements associated with Polonezköy dwellings were said to be extremely basic, built on the ground without a foundation and mainly made of chestnut tree stumps with one room (Marszałek-Kawa, Burak 2016; Moser, Korstjens 2017). It is stated that benches made of cut chestnut trees and stumps were used for sitting in the houses. In the following years, a different construction technique was applied in the construction of the houses: the skeleton was reinforced with rafters placed laterally, longitudinally, and diagonally; poles driven into the ground were formed at the corners; and the walls were built of branches covered with clay. Roofs usually had four slopes. The ceilings, which were covered with straw for many years, were made with sticks covered with straw and clay; red clay was used as floor material. The windows in Polonezköy houses are small and consist of four panes of glass. The exterior and interior walls of the houses are

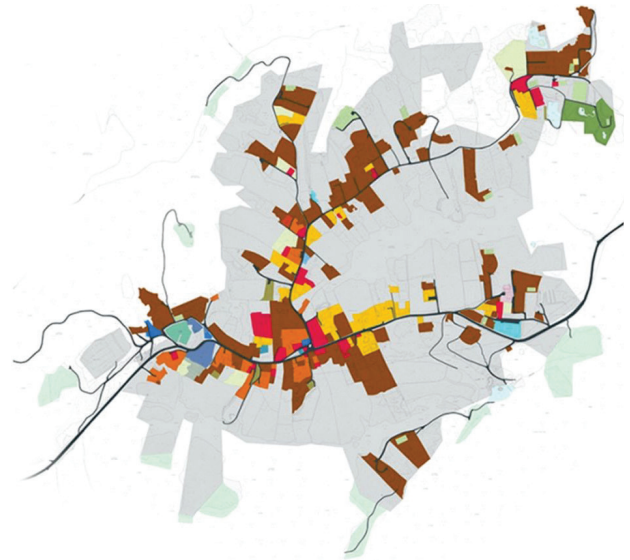


Fig. 2. Current situation analysis of Polonezköy (Adampol) in Beykoz, Istanbul (source: Promer 2014)

II. 2. Analiza aktualnej sytuacji Polonezköy (Adampol) w Beykoz w Stambule (źródło: Promer 2014)



Fig. 3. 1/5000 Scale Conservation Master Plan of Polonezköy (Adampol) in Beykoz, Istanbul (source: Promer 2014)

II. 3. Plan zagospodarowania przestrzennego w strefie ochronnej Polonezköy (Adampol) w dzielnicy Beykoz w Stambule, w skali 1:5000 (źródło: Promer 2014)

painted white, as in Poland, and the interior walls up to half a meter from the ground are painted with red clay.

The houses were built with these techniques over the years. In later years, larger houses with porches and vestibules in front and wooden floors began to be built. The roofs were covered in sheet metal or tiles starting in the middle of the 20th century. Large orchards, fruit trees, and flowers built from chestnut tree wood surrounded the residences,

which were set back from the road. Flower gardens adorned the front of the house. A well sat in the centre of the garden, and behind the house were the farm buildings, barn, and chicken house. Livestock was reared, and crops such as potatoes, rye, corn, and wheat were grown. There was production of charcoal. Originally, people and commodities were transported by foot or horse-drawn carriages; but thereafter, people and goods were transported in cars. The architectural features of Adampol traditional houses (*domy adampolskie*) are written on a panel on the wall and Adampol's traditional house plan can be seen in a 1/100 scale. The architectural features of Adampol traditional houses (*domy adampolskie*) are written on a panel on the wall¹.

¹ *Adampol Houses: The huts of the first settlers were very simple, built directly on the ground, without a foundation, from massive chestnut trunks, usually single-roomed. Heaters were used for sleeping, tree trunks and carved benches for sitting. Later, a half-timbered construction was used. The framework was formed by pillars driven into the ground at the corners, reinforced with transverse, longitudinal, and diagonal beams. The walls were formed by interlaced branches clad in clay. For many years, the roofs, mostly hipped, were covered only with straw, while the fascia was made of straw and clay-laden rods. The floor was made of clay – a threshing floor made of red clay. Windows were small and four-paned. Houses and interiors were whitewashed as in Poland; the interiors were painted (at 0.5 m from the bottom) with red clay. Houses were erected in this way for several decades. Then larger buildings were built, with porches, vestibules, and plank floors. From the 1930s onward, roofs were covered with tiles or sheet metal, and the last straw thatches disappeared in the village in the 1970s. The houses, which were erected at some distance from the road, were surrounded by extensive gardens, fruit orchards, and chestnut wood fences. The farmyards were decorated with flower gardens. Outbuildings were placed at the back, behind the residential house. In the middle of the yard was a well. Crops grown included wheat, oats, corn, rye, and potatoes. The following were raised: pigs, sheep, cattle, and poultry. Charcoal was burned. Transport was initially carried out on foot or by horse. Later, ladder carts were built for transporting goods and chardaks (carts with a special seat on springs and a canvas canopy) for transporting people. There was no local costume, in the summer the residents went barefoot, in the winter they wore boarskin boots with the hair on the outside (Zofia Rizi Memorial House's archive, photo by E.B. Burkut, 2024).*

Evaluation of the architectural features of Polonezköy (Adampol)

According to Bakırcı's (2015) study, Polonezköy's spatial structure, sociocultural changes, and development of housing are categorized into four stages. The table shows the features of each spatial development category (Table 1).

The settlement expands into the woodland region to meet all residential needs. However, the village has two main streets, and the fact that they connect them is the most obvious limiting factor for the village's future. These main streets are lined with private residences of Polish and Turkish citizens (some of which are used to accommodate tourists), a picnic area, hotels, restaurants, shops, and traditional houses in the village square.

Zofia Rizi Memorial House

The Zofia Rizi (Zofia Ryży) Memorial House, one of the oldest houses in Polonezköy, is open to the public. This house was used to store photographs and records about the village and the family. Wincenty Rizi, Zofia Rizi's father, built the Memorial House between 1881 and 1883. The Rizi family owned one of the most opulent residences in the village. This house, which embodies the typical Polish village house architecture of the time, has retained all of its originality (Fig. 5).

This house, which is seen as a symbol of friendliness in Polish-Turkish relations, has also hosted official visits to Polonezköy. The Zofia Rizi Memorial House is frequently visited by Turkish and Polish government representatives during official visits to Polonezköy. It is also a popular destination for tourists from Poland and other countries, with mentions on the internet, in books, and on sightseeing tours. Michał Czajkowski was the originator of this concept, which was realized with the establishment of the House of Remembrance in Polonezköy in the 1940s. Wincenty Ryży, who had returned from captivity in Siberia,

Table 1. Spatial changes of Polonezköy village house in periods (elaborated by E.B. Burkut based on Bakırcı 2015)

Tabela 1. Zmiany przestrzenne domu wiejskiego w Polonezköy w różnych okresach (oprac. E.B. Burkut na podstawie Bakırcı 2015)

1842–1900	Between 1842 and 1900, homes and their extensions were built solely to suit the community's fundamental necessities. Residences were built only, and their slanted roofs, which resembled Polish rural residence architecture, were covered in grass (Fig. 4). During this time, land was organized for agricultural and livestock production in accordance with traditional Polish practice.
1901–1970	From 1900 until 1970, new homes were built as lodging houses, or old ones were remodelled. Residents were not allowed to possess land at this time, and the number of houses that could be built was limited to those where a need could be shown. Therefore, guest cottages were occasionally made out of barns and storage buildings.
1971–1994	The village's residential architecture and land use saw significant modifications during the third stage, which lasted from 1970 to 1994. Multi-story reinforced concrete homes, or villas, took the role of traditional homes, which had low fences surrounding them, gardens, steeply sloping roofs, and were typically two stories.
1995–2024	The main reason for of change was [...] <i>the locals' decision to build second homes based on their aesthetic tastes on land purchased from Polonezköy homeowners</i> [...] in this period (Bakırcı 2015, 162). These dwellings were almost completely separated from village life because they were only used for a few months of the year and were disconnected from the community framework. Also, these periods built hotels and apartment buildings. Also, after 1994, the previous period's fast restructuring slowed when the community and its surroundings were named a Natural Park. In addition, natural park restrictions limit house construction along obvious lines.



Fig. 4. Thatch roof house in Polonezköy and image of a dwelling from the early settlement in Polonezköy's house (at the end of the 1800s) (source: Latka 1992, 110)

Il. 4. Dom kryty strzechą i zdjęcie gospodarstwa z czasów wczesnego osadnictwa w Polonezköy (koniec XIX w.) (źródło: Latka 1992, 110)



Fig. 5. Zofia Rizi Memorial House: a) signage, b) entrance (photo by E.B. Burkut, 2024)

Il. 5. Dom Pamięci Zofii Rizi: a) oznakowanie, b) wejście (fot. E.B. Burkut, 2024)

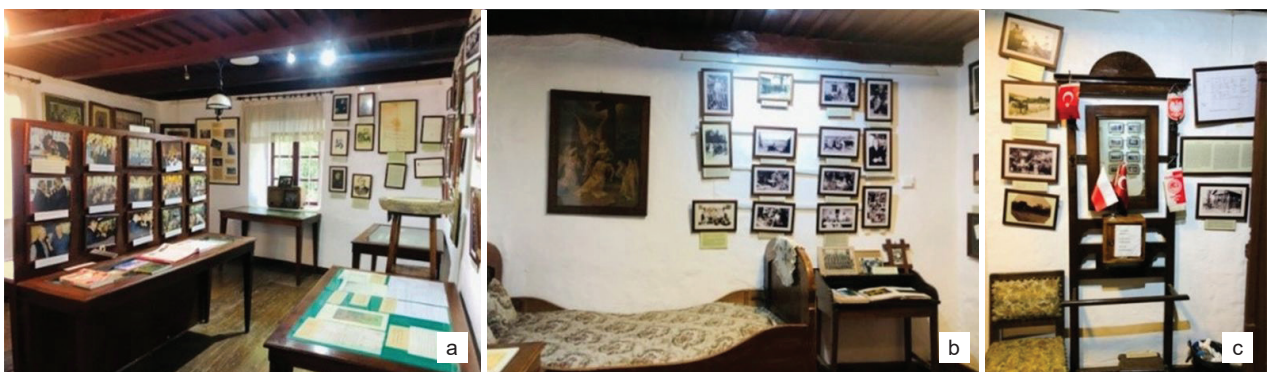


Fig. 6. Zofia Rizi Memorial House interior of the house: a) living room, b) bedroom, c) hall (photo by E.B. Burkut, 2024)

Il. 6. Dom Pamięci Zofii Rizi – wnętrze: a) salon, b) sypialnia, c) hol (fot. E.B. Burkut, 2024)

kept Polish customs alive at his house. It is appreciated by tourists to the village and has an attractive garden. The Zofia Rizi Memorial House houses records, photographs, books, memories, and remembrances from Polonezköy's history (Fig. 6).

Polonezköy Culture House

Polonezköy Culture House, located right beyond the Polonezköy plaza on the side of the main road, is home to the “Polart Gallery” and “Polonezköy Library,” as well as



Fig. 7. POLDER Polonezköy Culture House building: a) front façade and garden, b) entrance (photo by E.B. Burkut, 2024), c) cherry festival and Polish dance ((source: www.polonezkoy.com))

Il. 7. Dom Kultury POLDER w Polonezköy: a) fasada frontowa i ogród, b) wejście (fot. E.B. Burkut, 2024), c) święto wiśni i polski taniec (źródło: <https://polonezkoy.com>)

many cultural and social activities held throughout the year. The Cherry Festival, considered to be one of Istanbul's significant festivals, is held annually in June at Polonezköy's Culture House (Fig. 7). A range of cultural events, exhibitions, and concerts are held throughout the festival, in addition to performances by Polish folklore teams. An essential revenue stream for Polonezköy is tourism. Beyond these, some other noteworthy places are Polonezköy's Natural Park, Corn Maze Istanbul, County Club, Polonezköy Zoo Park, Polonezköy Open Air Wood Arts Exhibition, Polonezköy Mosque (Masjid Rogalijd), Polonezköy Church (Czestochowa's Mother Mary Church), and Glass Workshop. Polonezköy's urban and geographical features contribute to its popularity with national and international tourists, institutions, and organizations for events like symposiums, seminars, and conferences.

Polonezköy houses and architectural features

Polonezköy residences are currently used as a holiday destination. This proposal is an ecological site with 22 dwellings maintaining a green texture. Inspired by the architect houses, these houses feature chimneys, fireplaces, large tin tanks with heating functions, wooden façade elements, tile roofs, shutters, and arched small windows. They are organic structures in the green and forest, and many trees were planted during the project to respect nature (Salihoğlu, Şenyurt 2023). The project's residences are highly compact and modest, with ground and mezzanine floors, yet have a spatial arrangement that contains all fundamental functions and can easily accommodate a family for an extended period. Polonezköy Houses is more of a weekend chalet than a summer home, with single, row, and twin houses that resemble a little mountain village. The dwellings created in the green texture established by the architect in the project are made of stone and wood. They were, nevertheless, designed to work in harmony with nature. The project is located in a forest and is a green area. When the project's floor plans are studied, they reveal an octagonal plan type for the base floor and an upper plan type. The ground level features an open and closed terrace, kitchen, living room, master bedroom, hall, shower, and WC. On the upper floor, there are two bedrooms and a toilet.

Summary

To summarize, considering the criteria examined in this research, the region has many advantages. Pinar Bollukcu and Gökçe Zevit (2018) evaluated the tourism of Polonezköy in their research. Accordingly, Polonezköy supports cultural tourism with cultural events such as the Cherry Festival organized in the past and its exemplary structure where Turkish-Polish cultures live in harmony. Traditional handicraft production and the partially preserved settlement texture offer an authentic atmosphere, while the continuation of agricultural activities provides opportunities for eco-tourism. Offering a relaxing environment to visitors with its daily recreation areas, Polonezköy is a valuable destination for sustainable tourism where natural and cultural richness is blended. Its important features include:

1. Production of Handicrafts: Unique local crafts that reflect the region's cultural heritage.
2. Harmonious Coexistence of Polish and Turkish Cultures: A multicultural environment showcasing a blend of traditions and lifestyles.
3. Partial Preservation of Traditional Settlement Texture: Retained architectural and settlement patterns that add charm and authenticity.
4. Partial Continuation of Traditional Way of Life: Elements of traditional living still practiced by the community.
5. Spaces for Daily Recreational Activities: Facilities for relaxation, picnics, and family outings.
6. Agricultural Activities: Active farming that supports agrotourism and maintains a rural atmosphere.
7. Natural Structure: Polonezköy has a natural structure surrounded by forests and is suitable for nature tourism.
8. Traditional Lifestyle: Traditional lifestyle and cultural elements are preserved, offering visitors an authentic experience.
9. Rich History and Culture: It is an important attraction centre for both local and foreign tourists with its historical and cultural values.
10. Proximity to Istanbul: Being a well-known tourism and recreation centre within Istanbul provides easy access.
11. Transportation Infrastructure: Access is easy thanks to its proximity to major transportation hubs and adequate infrastructure.

12. Proximity to Bosphorus and Other Touristic Points: It is close to the Bosphorus and popular tourist spots such as Riva, Ağva, and Şile.

13. Potential for Cooperation with Poland: Opportunities to host visitors from Poland and develop cooperation projects with Poland.

14. Environmental Conditions: The lifestyle and environmental conditions outside the metropolis provide a quiet and peaceful alternative.

Conclusion

This article examines Polonezköy's cultural heritage, residential architecture, and spatial characteristics. The architectural structure of Polonezköy has preserved its traditional texture for many years, and differentiations in construction systems are observed with modernization. Despite this, it is seen that the urban architectural and structural texture of Polonezköy is preserved, and high-rise buildings are not included. In harmony with nature, it has become a place frequently visited by local and international tourists. In recent years, it has become a remarkable settlement with recreational areas such as hotels, pensions, walking areas, and a zoo. Within the scope of this research, interviews were conducted with local people, the mukhtar, business owners, and venue users. Most of the visuals of the places were taken by the author. It might be argued that the area has its own historical, cultural, and social strata and is a settlement worth studying. For future research, it is advised that the

area host programs that support its historical texture, cultural texture, and inter-country ties. Furthermore, it is feasible to state that the friendship between the two countries, cultural communication, and the culture of coexistence of the two peoples have persisted for many years. The number of projects being developed to promote relations between Poland and Turkey, as well as interactions between the two nations' peoples, should expand.

Polonezköy has emphasized land settlement, design solutions that are consistent with summer and winter climatic conditions, and spatial uses that are connected with nature. Cultural attachment has been noticed throughout the historical process through the usage of particular textures and materials. In the spatial focus, the desire to establish visual contact with nature, which goes hand in hand with the desire to get away from the city and bring it indoors as much as possible, the desire to establish continuity between spaces, the goal of organic construction that disappears in the green, and the goal of creating social spaces were all prominent. In this study, the criteria examined will contribute to the architectural and interdisciplinary academic literature on the dynamics of nature, people, and interior space in terms of historical conditions, planning, and architectural parameters. The future should aim to increase the number of increasingly intense economic contacts, labour market and educational cooperation between Turkey and Poland shared by the countries in this region, political and international social and cultural contacts, and research to strengthen cultural relationships between Turkey and Poland.

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during the Erasmus education process. In addition, it can be said that Polish-Turkish relations have been maintained in harmony for centuries and that they still uphold historical ties today. This article is intended to contribute to researchers in the field.

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Streszczenie

Polska miejscowość w Turcji: analiza przestrzenna Polonezköy w zakresie zabudowy mieszkaniowej, związków kulturowych i miasta

Polonezköy (Adampol) to osada wchodząca w obręb dzielnicy Beykoz w Stambule w Turcji. Powstała w połowie XIX w. w wyniku historycznych i politycznych kontaktów między Imperium Osmańskim a Polską. Zabudowa mieszkalna Polonezköy przyciąga uwagę swoją strukturą i charakterystyką przestrzenną. Kwestie, które przeanalizowano w tym artykule, to rozplanowanie domów, projektowanie, układ i cechy przestrzenne. Kluczowymi czynnikami ocenianymi w relacjach domów z Polonezköy z naturą są takie elementy jak regionalny styl, projektowanie zgodne z warunkami środowiskowymi, wykorzystanie naturalnych materiałów, wpływ na wrażenia zmysłowe i szacunek do natury. Budownictwo to ma wiele cech ekologicznych, takich jak wykorzystanie lokalnych materiałów w zespołach mieszkalnych, łącznie z projektowaną zielenią, ochrona istniejących założeń zieleni i połączenie założeń w harmonijny sposób z naturą. Cechy kulturowe i przestrzenne budynków mieszkalnych w Polonezköy różnią się od cech innych budynków w mieście. W trakcie prac wykonano badania terenowe i fotografie, określono cechy budynków i przeprowadzono wywiady z ich użytkownikami. W wyniku tych działań autorka opracowała zestawienie architektonicznych i przestrzennych cech osady. Badania mają na celu ukazanie relacji między Turcją a Polską poprzez cechy architektoniczne i określenie obecnej sytuacji. Ponadto zawarto w pracy ważne dane dla badaczy, pracowników naukowych, studentów i osób zainteresowanych tematem. Walorem pracy jest zebranie literatury przedmiotu i przedstawienie badań terenowych.

Słowa kluczowe: Polonezköy (Adampol), Stambuł, architektura mieszkaniowa, miasto, dziedzictwo