

RE-EXPLORING LATE OTTOMAN BUILDINGS IN TODAY'S ISTANBUL

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Abstract

The late-Ottoman early-Republican period had delineated a unique, heterogeneous stage in the course of Istanbul's transformation into a modern city. Istanbul at the turn of the 19th century, exhibited a setting under influence of political, ideological, historical, cultural and social factors. The active, long settlement history, imperial heritage, urban texture, cosmopolitan social structure, metropolitan growth, westernization, nationalism, demands of contemporary city life, the modern integrating with the existent local were among them. In this study, architecture of the late-Ottoman Istanbul will be explored through selected buildings that reflected the architectural/urban development of their time, held significance in terms of function, form/style, technology and urban features, represented leading architects' work, specific trends, and marked strategic locations. Consecutive part of the study will cover a re-exploration of these buildings in their current condition, after a century has passed since they were constructed. Such a comparison, besides providing a record of urban transformation in Istanbul, discloses different faces of the encounter with globalization, and points to contemporary local and global architectural problems of the metropolis in general.

Keywords: *Late-Ottoman architecture; Istanbul; modernity; urban transformation; historical significance.*

INTRODUCTION

The late-Ottoman early Republican period had delineated a unique, heterogeneous stage in the course of Istanbul's transformation into a modern city. The city at the turn of the 19th century exhibited a setting shaped under influence of various factors related to political, ideological, historical, cultural and social issues. The active and long settlement history and the imperial heritage the city housed, the urban texture, cosmopolitan social structure, metropolitan growth, westernization, nationalism, demands of the contemporary city life, the modern codes getting integrated with the existent local were among them.

The city had absorbed and reflected a heritage of multiple identities, cultural traces, urban and architectural features coming from the long history of settlements in the region. The dissolving power of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century, growing dominance of the European capital in economy, demand for reforms and a new regime were all parts of the setting. Almost throughout its whole history, Istanbul has housed citizens of different origins -a population composed of Turks, Greeks, Jews, Armenians, Europeans, Levantines, Persians and Arabs-keeping the city culturally and economically related to the outer world, mostly to the European culture, and therefore reserved a potential for variety and continuous change in means of socio-cultural life and physical environment (Tanyeli, 2004, p. 13). Groups of different ethnicity, religion, nationality forming the population did not display regular correspondence with the social structure in means of distribution of wealth and social status however these groups commonly preferred to settle in certain districts of the city. Istanbul has always been a harbor city within a trade network, having ties with other continents and cities. The urban development in Istanbul, reforms and efforts implemented in this area, resulted in population growth (between 1840-1900), new distribution patterns and physical growth of the city. Influence of westernization in social life and physical environment that had emerged in the 18th century became more distinct. Reforms of

1839 and 1908 had been important moves and the 19th century is accepted to define a border (Celik, 1998, p.28). Besides westernization, Turkish nationalism was a current issue. The wars and loss of land, the weakening political status of the empire evoked rising of nationalism, and nostalgia for the glorious past.

In this context, building the contemporary architecture in Istanbul had gone through various routes and styles. There had been conscious, canonical approaches as well as more spontaneous developments. Starting from the late 19th century, architecture produced, covered a wide range of styles including revivalist, eclectic, oriental, Seldjuk, Ottoman-Turkish features, vernacular and classical references, and a rational, functional architecture rooted in western modernism. It included works of numerous architects with varying backgrounds and tendencies, however their work may be considered on the common basis of search for a modern / contemporary and contextual architecture in harmony with the demands of the period.

Western influence, reforms, and Islamic ideals were all experienced together in the late 19th century Ottoman world. Foreigners and minority groups of the community held dominant roles in economical and cultural activities including architecture. Architecture was mostly produced by foreign professionals invited to the country, and locals of different origins, some of whom were not architects but master builders. In the schools of architecture, mostly foreign tutors taught. 19th century was not the first time traces of European styles and eclectic mixes were seen in the architecture of Ottoman Istanbul, they went back as far as the 17th and 18th centuries. In this period besides traditional architecture they were also seen in buildings holding new functions as the output of social and economical life, as the requirements of a modernizing society. New functions and new technologies were brought together with the western styles (Celik, 1998, p.101). Architecture of districts shaped in this period, displayed new materials and technologies together with features of revivalist, eclectic, oriental, and Art Nouveau styles. Specific buildings constructed between 1890-1910 by certain architects reflected a common attitude in architecture. These architects among whom Jasmund, Cuna & Ritter, Vallauri, and D'Aronco are reckoned, shared common features in their lives and practice. They had European origins and were trained in Europe, therefore they were used to the design traditions of Beaux Arts and neo-classicist and eclectic understanding in architecture. In their designs for Istanbul, they combined these with the local, architectural motifs, integrating Ottoman / Islamic references and formed an eclectic, oriental style. They had made interpretations of the local and traditional cultural context in their own way and the common theme in their work had been 'concern for local identity'.

Meanwhile, a nationalistic approach, a form of 'Ottoman Revivalism' often called the 'First National Style', exposed itself in the work of especially two leading architects; Kemaleddin and Vedat Tek (Bozdogan, 2002, p.31). Kemalettin, during his education, had been a student of Jasmund and Vedat Tek was trained in the Beaux Arts school of Paris. They had numerous followers. Between 1910s and 1930s, the style created buildings combining traditional Ottoman-Turkish architectural features with principles of classicism particularly in facade compositions. The preceding period of pluralism in architecture, hybrid, eclectic compositions of western styles had caused discomfort and fear of corruption and therefore 'a national contemporary architecture' became the new aim. It was a period that included the foundation years of a new nation-state out of a disintegrating Empire, war and struggle years.

Republican Turkey was established in 1923 and Ankara became the new capital the following year. To emphasize the continuity of the nation and evoke the power and the glory of the past was important. In such a context, the style had born. Forms and elements from the Ottoman and Seldjuk heritage were researched and combined with the classical orders and contemporary techniques. The First National Style had its applications in almost all cities of Republican Turkey. With official support, the style was collectively used in public administrative and service buildings and also in some of the residential buildings. The intention was "to reflect nationalistic senses" through 'classical Ottoman' elements (Aslanoglu, 2001, p. 31). Although often criticized for the contrary, the style is considered to have caused modernizing influence on Turkish architecture (Yavuz, 2009, p.15). Later in the Republican period, it was abandoned in

favor of a western-oriented 'modern' architecture. A rational, functional architecture open to international modernism superseded the former, in parallel to the newly established culture policies.

In both approaches; in the architecture of 'the First National Style' and the preceding architecture of 1890s produced by the foreign architects, architectural and decorative elements derived from the repertoire of the past, had been utilized. Besides housing, in public buildings with modern functions, contemporary techniques and materials were used together with implications and reinterpretations of the past styles. Certain architects' work and specific districts in the city had been prominent in means of revealing these architectural approaches and the contemporary public life modes of late-Ottoman Istanbul.

THE LATE-OTTOMAN ISTANBUL BUILDINGS

In this study, selected buildings constructed within a duration of thirty years (1890s-1920s) in Istanbul, that reflected the architectural and urban developments of their period, will be explored within two time frames: the first one belongs to when they were originally built, and the second belongs today. These buildings, namely Sirkeci (1890) and Haydarpaşa (1909) train stations, Casa Botter (1900), Cite de Pera (1876), Cercle d'Orient (1884), Majik Cinema, Public Debts Building (1897), Ottoman Bank Headquarters (1892), 4th Vakif Han (1911-26), Central Post Office (1909), Liman Han (1912), when they were built, held significance in terms of function, form/style, construction technology and urban features, represented leading architects' work and specific architectural approaches, and marked strategic locations in the city. Among them, Sirkeci and Haydarpaşa train stations, Casa Botter, Cite de Pera, Cercle d'Orient, Majik Cinema, Public Debts Building, Ottoman Bank Headquarters, had been designed by foreign architects as an output of the 'late-Ottoman' Istanbul life, while the 4th Vakif Han, Central Post Office, Liman Han are considered as examples for architecture of the Turkish nationalistic approach efficient in early decades of the 20th century.

Today, almost a century had passed since these buildings were constructed and they have gone through a series of changes. A re-exploration of these buildings in their latest condition, as expressed by their physical change, functional use, status within latest physical and social context and projects in progress concerning their future, seems essential. Each building subject to this study, will be investigated within its original setting and with its recent properties. Exploration of the building's first phase will be based on related sources by architectural historians, while for the second phase, visual observations and media arguments will be used.

Sirkeci and Haydarpaşa Train Stations

The two main train stations of the Ottoman capital were built in 1890 and 1909, following the construction of railway routes that connected the city to Europe and Anatolia. Sirkeci and Haydarpaşa terminals are located on the European and Asian sides of the Bosphorus, both near the shore. Sirkeci stood at the intersection of other transportation routes, provided easy access to tram and boat spots, while Haydarpaşa stood on a small peninsula with a ferry terminal in front of it, a Vedat Tek design, built in 1917-18.

Sirkeci Station on the European side, a steel construction building housing modern installation systems e.g. gas lighting and heating, was originally opened as 'the terminus of the Orient Express'. Its architecture reflected the duality of the local and western values that had by that time been a characteristic of Istanbul. The designer was August Jasmund, a German architect. Through his design, he had combined the Beaux-Arts design principles and a new version of "local" Islamic tradition, that actually included a mixture of elements from different sources, Islamic, Mughal, Andalucian, Gothic, Ottoman (Celik, 1998, p.116). These decorative elements had symbolized the style of "the Orient" as a whole to the designer. On the longitudinal facades, elements -high arches of varying shapes, rose windows, gothic lines, eight cornered stars, walls composed of bricks and stone- covered an image dictionary from Ottoman, Arab, Indian to Far East motifs, North African origins. Despite of the Orientalism, the building reflects

the classical design principles like order, symmetry, axially, and clarity. The roof element marking the entrance, creating a central, dominant, gathering effect along with the linearity of the railway building, is a lead covered monumental vault that stands for a dome, re-creating the image of a mosque together with the identical towers on the sides. Jasmund probably had two aims: creating an appropriate symbol for the final destination of the Orient Express and conforming to the classical Ottoman image of the city. The result was a contribution to the architectural pluralism of Istanbul. (Celik, 1998, p.116)

Haydarpasa Terminal on the Asian side, was built as a gift from the German Empire, as a part of the economical and military collaboration with the Ottoman Empire (Figure 1). A spectacular, imposing neoclassical style and an eclectic mixture of styles and motifs had been used by the German designers Cuna and Ritter. The building as a whole resembled a massive castle. The main facade overlooking the sea, is divided horizontally into three sections. The gables and corner towers with conical roofs are clear impressions of 19th century western architecture.

Through their architecture, these buildings conveyed messages about the image of the city: Sirkeci, on the European side, would welcome the travelers coming from Europe, introducing an “eastern” atmosphere, while Haydarpasa on the Asian side, would reflect and show the European face of the city to the travelers coming from Asia (Celik, 1998, p.83). These two buildings were efficient transportation buildings significant in urban scale, besides being historic, cultural landmarks.

Recently, due to decisions taken by the municipal council and the government, they are subject to change. At the end of 2009, a development project for a land of about one million sqm. including Haydarpasa and surroundings had been approved; a ‘world trade center’ project for Istanbul. The tender date would be 2010 and the complex would include hotel, office, congress, residence, marina and retail facilities, with the terminal marked as an area of tourism, culture and accommodation.



Figure 1: Haydarpasa Terminal (Source: Irem Maro Kiriş Archive).

Before action was taken on progress of the project, which still continues to evoke opposition, on November 28, 2010 Haydarpasa was severely damaged by a fire, and stopped functioning as a railroad station. The fire destroyed the roof and most of the upper levels of the building, that were repaired temporarily to protect the interior from winter conditions. In November 2011, another stage of the project had been approved (Ocak, 2012).

Sirkeci Station since November 2011 awaits an extensive 2-3 year lasting restoration project following the presentation to the Cultural and Natural Heritage Preservation Board for approval. Beginning from February 2011, train tours are being decreased gradually (Sirkeci Station awaits new restoration project, 2011).

Casa Botter

By the 19th century, there had been a remarkable contrast between the two sides of ‘the Golden Horn’ of Istanbul. Pera and Galata regions had become important centers of modern life. Pera housed the embassy buildings and most of the European, Levantine population of the city. Life was cosmopolitan and westernized there. The district had developed into a center of social, cultural activity, entertainment and retail functions. Rows of richly ornamented facades in neoclassical and Art Nouveau styles first appeared on ‘Grande Rue de Pera’, the cultural and commercial axis of Pera. Art Nouveau, as a new western style, was reflected especially on surface decorations, window details and iron railings of Pera buildings. Istanbul concurrent with the European cities became one of the major centers of Art Nouveau.

The most important and the oldest known Art Nouveau building of Istanbul is located on ‘Grande Rue de Pera’, today Istiklal Avenue of Beyoglu. Casa Botter (1900) is a distinguished work of the Italian architect Raimondo D’Aronco (Figure 2). It had been built as a large family house, a workshop and retail space at low level, for Jean Botter, the Dutch chief tailor of the palace. It stood for a new multifunctional residential type. A fashion house was built in the fashion style of the period (Batur, 1994, p.313). The design of the seven storey building, with its narrow front facade, interior courtyard, elliptical stair hall, curved stairs and landings, was distinctive. With its medalions, floral plantlike motifs, mascarades, plasters, turrets, tendrils on balcony railings, its facade brought novelty to the facades of Pera. Arrangement of the facade reflects both classical and Art Nouveau understanding; neo-baroque forms are combined with floral motifs of the Vienna Sezession.

The building for a while in 1960s, had housed bank offices when all its Art Nouveau interior decoration was lost. The upper floors were deserted long before the retail space on the ground level. It served as a music instrument shop until the beginning of 2000s. It is known that the building is owned by a large corporation and 2009 dated news is that, following renovation, it would be converted into a hotel (Tas, 2009). No action had been taken for years until October 2012 when it was observed that the building had been closed to access due to renovation works.



Figure 2: Casa Botter (Source: Irem Maro Kırış Archive).

Cite de Pera

Cite de Pera (1876) located on 'Grande Rue de Pera' / Istiklal Avenue, had been designed as a combination of shopping arcade, apartments, and offices by the Greek Ottoman architect Cleanthe Zannos. The owner was banker Hristaki Zografos. The multifunctional complex with its arcade had set an Istanbulian example for the common building type of the 19th century European cities. In this period, numerous shopping arcades creating alternative circulation routes, had emerged in the Pera region.

The L-shaped internal street of Cite de Pera, integrated into the multi-story complex, connects the main avenue to secondary streets –Nevizade and Sahne streets- and ends with a vaulted glazed roof with a dome at the junction of the two wings. The internal four-story facades of the arcade are decorated with pilasters, friezes, French windows and balconies. The ground floor housed a mezzanine with arched windows. Second Empire style is recognized on the building's main facade, defined by the projecting gables, bay-windows, curved corners and balconies (Celik,1998, p.109).

At the end of 1970s, the building had collapsed out of neglect and was rebuilt in 1988. Following the restoration, the passage that used to house shops of various kinds together with pubs and winehouses, was reopened as a galleria of uniform pubs and restaurants. Today it survives with the same function. The shop interiors and facades have lost some of their original architectural features. The gallery opening at roof level is covered with a simple, unembellished skylight. The upper floors that used to serve as residence and office space still preserve the same functions however they are not impressive places for wealthy users anymore. In spite of the changes, Cite de Pera today, preserves its main spatial structure, integration with its surroundings, circulation routes, its significance and activeness as a public space.

Cercle d'Orient

Cercle d'Orient (1884) by Alexandre Vallauri, is a large building of masonry that used to house a new function when it was constructed; a social club whose members were Levantines and minorities. Shops were located at the ground level above which a low level of rooms used from inside the passage and two upper floors housing the club rooms, took place. The building's wide front facade of 45 meter length, is composed of a central part emphasizing a passage entrance and five units on both sides, while the Yesilcam Street facade is divided into three units. The facades are arranged symmetrically and treated with eclectic decoration. The building is known to have survived two fires, the second in 1970s had destroyed the upper floors partially. (Can, 1994, p. 409)

Vallauri's building since 1930s, shares the same block with Melek and Isketinj apartments, and two movie theaters, Ipek (Opera between 1924-32, Ipek between 1932-55, later Ruya) and Emek. The upper floors of Cercle d'Orient building had been deserted for a long time, while the low levels including the arcade, housed retail, office and movie theater spaces. Among all of the related buildings, Vallauri's Cercle d'Orient is listed as a historically significant 'group I' building and the others are considered as included in the secondary group. Emek Cinema –named 'Melek' when constructed in 1924- with its hall for 875, baroque and rococo ornamentations, is listed in DOCOMOMO (Documentation and Conservation of Buildings, Sites and Neighborhoods of the Modern Movement) as an element of historical heritage due to its cultural, industrial, technological significance.

In spite of all the preservation regulations, the whole building block was proclaimed to become subject to 'development' in 2006. Then in 2009, a preliminary project had been approved by the authorities in charge. The proposal included a shopping mall construction on the spot, with additional top and basement floors and moving the Emek Cinema to a high level in this complex. This project was met with public opposition, especially regarding the demolition and displacement of the historic cinema space. Chamber of Architects brought the matter before court in 2010 (Emek Sinemasi davasiyla ilgili belgeler, 2012). In September 2009, Emek, and in May 2010,

Ruya movie theaters were closed down. Only five of the shops including Inci Patisserie on Istiklal Avenue still functions. Today Cercle d'Orient complex as a whole, awaits its destiny, there are unpredictable aspects regarding its future. It seems Vallauri's building will be restored in order to serve as a large component of the planned complex.

Majik Cinema

Located on Siraselviler Avenue, in Beyoglu, the Majik building had been designed as an early purpose-built movie theater by Giulio Mongeri and constructed in 1910s. Previously, films used to be shown either in private mansions or public places like beer houses, accompanied by other shows. Majik had been a special hall for 2 000 spectators, with its elaborate interior design, private lodges, orchestra pit, and installations. It was distinctive on Siraselviler by its wide entrance facade, the only part of the building that had survived unchanged until 2012. Majik in 1930s, had functioned as a movie theater under different names, and then in 70s and 80s housed the state theater until 3-4 years earlier.

Recently a property company applied for planning permission to build a multi-storey hotel and office block on the site occupied by the cinema, a music hall space no longer in use and the car park behind it. Plans for the new development were approved. It has been proclaimed that the planned high-density complex includes the cinema function. Today the building is under construction.

Public Debts Building / Duyun-u Umumiye

Public Debts Building / Duyun-u Umumiye (1899) in Eminonu region, by Alexandre Vallauri, was originally built as the headquarters of the European institution, formed to follow debts and to control economical resources of the bankrupt Ottoman government (Figure 3). The building having functioned as a control center of the foreign capital is not only important with its architecture but also with its political and historical weight (Celik, 1998, p.116).



Figure 3: Public Debts Building / Duyun-u Umumiye (Source: Irem Maro Kırış Archive).

It stands as a linear, massive edifice with its monumental entrance, spacious front and back yards. Vallauri's approach was creating a kind of neo-Ottoman style for this extensive building. He had used a combination of classicism and motifs taken from local architecture. Wide eaves, bay windows, timber grills, window details are from residential Turkish architecture. Material use, high doors and window patterns repeat themes of the monumental Ottoman architecture. Corridors lit by skylights, glass blocks in the floor and the fanlights of the high doors reflect use of contemporary materials in his architecture. Vallauri had also designed a central dome with glazed

coffers over the interior marble staircase, that contributed to the magnificence of the interior, however it is not seen from outside. The building is considered as one of the buildings that define the passage to the nationalistic style (Batur, 1994, p.112).

During the early-Republican period in 1932, upon Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's demand, Istanbul High school had moved into the Public Debts Building. Today the building still houses the school. In 1984 an additional dormitory building, and in 1996 a new building for the newly opened primary school had been constructed within the complex borders. The building is preserved in good condition, except for today's problems of approach and access to a populated school located in a busy environment with heavy vehicle and pedestrian traffic.

Imperial Ottoman Bank Headquarters

Imperial Ottoman Bank Headquarters (1892), at the commercial center Bankalar Avenue in Karakoy, is another office building designed by Vallauri. It used to house the most powerful bank of the period. It was supposed to be the first modern bank building in the district, and with its magnitude and architectural style, one of the most spectacular looking buildings in the city in 1890s. It is considered that duality of east and west was reflected on its architecture through style features. The facade looking towards Beyoğlu is neoclassical -a highly ornate neo-Renaissance facade- and the facade overlooking the old city on Halic side, recalls Orientalism.

The building today is owned by Garanti Bank. Its renovation has recently been completed and since 2011 it houses SALT, a cultural institution funded by the bank. Exhibition and conference halls, offices, library and archives for public use, take place in the building.

4th Vakif Han

The most distinguished one of a series of office buildings by Kemalettin, is the 4th Vakif Han (1911-26), a large, seven-storey office block located in the business district Sirkeci. The building had been constructed in steel skeleton system and the facades were covered with cut-stone. Shops had been designed at the ground and mezzanine levels, and offices, at the top floors. The facade with its coloured tiles, variety of windows -different form and arrangement for each floor- the ordering and proportioning lines and articulation, demonstrates the style's principles. Towers are emphasized at the corners, that end with domes at the top (Yavuz, 2009 , p.91). Corner domes besides finalizing the roof and marking the corners, accentuated the offices and they were being used as additional office space.

The building, following a period of neglect, had been restored between 2005-2009 and it is being used as a luxury hotel today. The shops at low levels still serve as retail space. The building's exterior and facades are preserved in accordance with the original except for the roof, while the interior was changed and adapted according to the needs of the hotel.

Central Post Office Building

The Central Post Office Building (1909), a major work of Vedat Tek, is a massive building, its architecture featured with Ottoman architectural elements such as pointed arches, tiles, overhanging eaves mostly as decoration, together with western motifs like mouldings, plasters, Corinthian capitals, in a classical symmetrical facade composition. A 15m high glazed central court introduces light to the interior. On both sides of the raised, arcaded main entrance, protruding, domed parts of the building serve as identical entrances to administrative spaces. Today the building still serves as the main post office building of Istanbul and houses a museum of history of post, telegraph and telephone services.

Liman Han/Mesadet Han

Liman Han / Mesadet Han (1912) by Vedat Tek, is a five storey office building with reinforced concrete structure, located in Eminonu region (Figure 4). A row of shops with a mezzanine floor took place at the ground level, while office space associated with sea transportation used to be located in the upper floors. The main facade on Yalikosku Avenue bears style characteristics of

the nationalistic architecture period. The arched entrance with ornamented, tiled columns on both sides is not placed symmetrically however it is emphasized above with the cylindrical protrusion of the façade. Plasters on the sides, end as modest turrets at the roof level. Tiles in blue tones as a distinctive element in facade ornamentation continue above and between the windows. Windows at each level reveal differences in terms of form, size and ornamentation. Narrow eaves at the shops' ceiling level and the roof level follow the wide main façade. The spacious entrance is defined by a stair hall in marble, lined with colored tiles on the walls, and a cast iron, ornamented elevator case.



Figure 4: Liman Han / Mesadet Han (Source: Irem Maro Kiriş Archive).

Liman Han office floors had gone through certain adaptations and been used as office space for various purposes until the beginning of 2000s. According to 2006 dated news, Liman Han and neighboring two buildings Gunes Han and Nuh I Han would be united in a new complex of hotel and congress center. The building was evacuated completely in 2007 due to its insecure conditions. The building has declined three degrees in the sea –north- direction that reveals risks of serious structural damage and collapsing. (Liman Han projesi icin CED raporu yayinlandi, 2012)

DISCUSSION

The data above reveal the buildings subject to this study, in terms of their physical and functional change, their status within physical and social context and relevant projects in progress –or speculative projects- concerning their future (Table 1). Their original features when constructed and their current properties are compared in order to interpret the ongoing urban transformation they represent.

Haydarpasa train station, Casa Botter, Cercle d'Orient and Liman Han, in their recent and current conditions, are abandoned public buildings –Casa Botter used to house both public and private functions originally. They seem to have been left to deteriorate due to time and neglect. Liman Han today is threatened by demolition due to neglect and structural damage. Haydarpasa Station following the fire of 2010, is in a similar state. Sirkeci station building functions partially today, its future is related with Haydarpasa and the whole railway system of the city. It seems that Sirkeci and Haydarpasa are not planned to function as train stations anymore. As can be followed

in the media, future plans for all these buildings involve commercial functions and large, extended complexes. Projects concerning their future are not reliable and clear in terms of duration and function.

Majik Cinema, following a period of 3-4 year neglect is under construction today, in scope of a similar project. Today, Cercle d'Orient and Majik in Beyoglu region, both are involved in projects in which distinguished cinema halls of historic, architectural and cultural significance, are lost. The new proposals include chain cinema halls as minor parts of large hotel and mall complexes.

Pera/Beyoglu buildings Casa Botter, Cercle d'Orient, Cite de Pera reserve their physical context without much change as far as the main axis Istiklal Avenue, connected streets and the building blocks of rowhouse order are considered. Regarding the social change in the area, they have lost their property of representing an elite and elegant life mode of the late-Ottoman Istanbul. Pedestrianization of the Istiklal axis has increased public interaction. The region today is still a cosmopolitan and busy center of Istanbul with its characteristic functions of entertainment and shopping. Restaurants and cafes, residences, offices, embassies, schools and religious buildings are still part of the physical environment; numerous buildings being renovated are part of today's Beyoglu scenes.

Among all buildings studied, the Ottoman Bank Headquarters and the Public Debts buildings stand as the only examples that are preserved in good condition and prestigious status in terms of physical and social context, while housing new functions. It has been remarkable to have buildings of commercial function being converted into culture facilities, an arts center and a school.

4th Vakif Han, the office building with retail units, following a period of neglect, had been converted into a hotel. Additional facilities at roof level and alterations made inside had caused inconvenience.

While Cite de Pera reserves similar retail and restaurant spaces with its earlier properties and functions, Central Post Office is the only building that survives with its original function and physical properties after a century has passed.

CONCLUSION

These buildings had been constructed as representatives of "contemporary" Istanbul, as faces of encounter with the modern during the late 19th, early 20th century. Almost a century has passed since they had been built. Re-exploring them today, in their current condition, as expressed by physical and functional change, status within physical and social context and projects in progress concerning their future, reveal that they all are considered as buildings of historic, architectural and cultural significance and protected by regulations, however about 50% of the buildings are in abandoned state. They are not being used today; they have not been used for a considerable while. Mostly they have undergone changes due to time and neglect; they have been kept in inappropriate conditions, without conservation, restoration and proper maintenance.

The study reveals that after a century has passed, very few of the buildings with different functions –mostly public functions- constructed in late-Ottoman Istanbul, were able to keep their original functions, and their architectural and physical properties. Some functioning buildings have survived the century in good state.

In the last decade, there is a tendency to transform buildings of historic significance in central locations and utilize them as a part of large building complexes of especially commercial and retail use. Among the studied buildings, the buildings that seem deserted are declared to be under engagement of similar projects. Their value seems to be related with their prestigious, central locations. While most of the extended capacity of the site, as proposed in these projects, is used for commercial purposes, there is scarce potential for cultural facilities. Projects in progress concerning Cercle d'Orient and Majik, with the loss of original cinema halls of the region, seem to involve probable damaging alterations and imply an impact on the local, cultural and architectural character of Beyoglu.

It is possible to consider the Istanbul case represented by the above examples within and as part of the global scene, and the new development projects based on long-term neglected historical buildings/sites, as a consequence and alternative expression of rant-oriented architecture driven by local and global agencies of the 21st century.

Table 1. The Features of the Studied Buildings (Source: Author).

Name of Building	Architect	Compl. in	Location	Original Function	Current Status	Physical Change	Project for future
Sirkeci Train Station	August Jachmund	1890	Sirkeci/ (Eminonu*) Fatih	Train Station	Partially functions	-	Restoration Project in progress
Haydarpasa Train Station	Otto Ritter& Helmut Cuna	1909	Haydarpasa/ Kadikoy	Train Station	Abandoned	Damaged by fire	Project in progress for hotel
Casa Botter	Raimondo D'Aronco	1900	Istiklal Avenue/ Beyoglu	Retail and Residence Building	Abandoned/ under construction lately (Oct 2012)	Damaged due to time	Unknown function (Hotel)
Cite de Pera	Cleanthe Zannos	1876	Istiklal Avenue/ Beyoglu	Retail and Residence Building	Retail and Restaurants	Damaged by fire and restored	-
Cercle d'Orient	Alexandre Vallauri	1884	Istiklal Avenue/ Beyoglu	Retail and Club Building	Abandoned	Damaged due to time	Development including surroundings
Majik Cinema	Giulio Mongeri	1910	Beyoglu	Entertainment	Abandoned / under construction	Damaged due to time	Hotel, Office, Cinema Complex
Public Debts Building	Alexandre Vallauri	1899	Cagaloglu/ (Eminonu) Fatih	Building for Public Debts	Culture/ Education	-	-
Imperial Ottoman Headquarter	Alexandre Vallauri	1892	Karakoy/ Beyoglu	Bank Headquarter	Exhibition and Conference Center	Restorated	-
4.Vakif Han	Mimar Kemalettin	1926	Sirkeci/ (Eminonu) Fatih	Office Building	Hotel	Restorated	-
Istanbul Central Post Office	Vedat Tek	1909	Sirkeci/ (Eminonu) Fatih	Post Office	Post Office / Post Museum	Restorated	-
Liman Han	Vedat Tek	1912	Sirkeci/ (Eminonu) Fatih	Office and Retail Building	Abandoned	Damaged due to time	Hotel

*In March 2008 Eminönü Municipality was bound to Fatih Municipality

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