



Reuse of a Special House; Manor of Mizzi on Prince Island in Istanbul

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ABSTRACT

During the second half of the 19th century, Malta originated George Mizzi supported the construction of a unique middle age caste like palazzio on the biggest Prince island of Istanbul for his name, which has no common point neither with the Ottoman-Turkish kiosk tradition nor with the traditional British cottage. With its'non-classified unique architectural style, without doubt it is one of the important architectural examples of the early modern- late classical Ottoman architecture on the capital city, Istanbul. The second owner of the building, Giovanni Mizzi, the son of George Mizzi, supported the construction of the annex observatory at the top of this tower, which is glass in material. It is known that there is a telescope located on the middle of this observatory. And the other premise speciality of this space is that this annex observatory can be turned 360 degree around its' axle. The building was used as a hotel during ten years in between 1930- 1940. It remained as a close building during the 2nd World War and a bit more till after 1952, till then it is rented by an island lover families to spend their summer in there. IKSU (Istanbul Culture & Art Foundation) selected this building as one of the main exhibition halls of the "Salt Water" thema based 14th Istanbul Biental especially to make the aware of the new generations not only about the contemporary arts, but also make them aware of the important historical buildings of Ottoman capital city Istanbul. Manor



of Mizzi, today is opened for a short time maybe, but it is for sure as one of the unique examples of the Prince Islands' big sized old houses, needs to have a comprehensive restoration soon. Thus, the paper will be focused on ideas of the renovation and reuse criterias of this unique and magnificent building.

Keywords: reuse, renovation, late classical Ottoman architecture, unique manor

INTRODUCTION

It is very important that the new function determined in the reuse of historical buildings to be compatible with the location, spatial characteristics and environment of the building and its social, economic and cultural benefits to society. Besides, it is necessary to stay away from the approach which will harm the original architectural characteristics of the historical buildings and which will be in conflict with them. A modern and innovative design to be built within the existing historical texture must be based on scientific foundations. The purpose of architectural conservation is to preserve the symbolic and monumental values of the building as well as its physical texture. Just being functional is not a sufficient reason for the conservation. The cultural positions of the buildings also signify the collective history and memory of the society in the environment. Historical buildings that allow the community to establish a physical connection with the past and the urban texture created by them also fulfil some significant social and psychological needs. As Dogan Kuban points out, even if new structures are more striking in daily use, historical structures are much more important when considering the emotional content of the urban environment (Kuban, 1984). The Manor of Mizzi, which is examined in the context of this article, is located on the largest one of the five islands (known as Prince Islands in Istanbul) in the Sea of Marmara. One of the modern Ottoman architectural products built at the end of the 19th Century, the manor house preserved its originality until today. Having the chance of hosting many visitors with the occasion of the Biennial in 2015, the manor house has been remembered and re-introduced. While the restoration and repair work is continuing, it has been the first example in its category with its short-term re-functioning.

ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES OF MANOR OF MIZZI

Built in the second half of the 19th Century by Malta-origin George Mizzi, this manor house is located in the Cankaya Nizam Street of Buyukada in Istanbul. Located on an area of approximately 2085 square meters, the manor house is a well-known building on the island through its architecture as well as the stories about.

The manor with a distinctive architectural identity within the wooden architectural texture of Istanbul, especially the Prince Islands, was built entirely in the masonry construction system. The walls of the three-storey masonry, one of which is basement, are built with red pressed bricks. The exterior surfaces of some walls are not plastered, but the elaborate brickwork is reflected in the facade. The entrance to the manor house is located on the veranda pulled back from the facade. Three basic arches sitting on the marble pillars are placed over the opening of the veranda, and the ionic capitals are placed on the pillars. The main entrance door leading to the veranda and the windows next to it are of round-arched types. There is one for each spidery and flat arched window on both sides of the veranda.

When viewed from the entrance frontage, on the left of the house a square planned-tall tower with dominated reddish colour brick is distinguished. There is a square based middle-ages palazzo tower with donjons surrounded around at the top of it. It might be the most interesting touch of the architect on the main façade of the building. The tower, which is very dominant all over the facade, can also be seen from distant places thus plays an active role in street architecture (figure 1). The facade design of the tower section differs by the facade of the manor. On the ground floor facade there is a window bay with no window inside but a flat arch, also eaves and a balcony are located on the mezzanine floor. Narrow and high windows arranged side by side are distinguished on the top floor.

It is known that Giovanni Mizzi, the second owner of the manor house, constructed an observatory tower with a telescope, covered with glass and rotating around on the top of the tower. In some sources, it was noted that Mizzi, who was keen on astronomy, was staring at the stars with telescope during the summer nights when the sky was clear (Tuğlacı, 1989). The observatory architecture can be seen in the photograph of the manor house taken in 1930 (figure 2), but today this part was removed.



Figure 1. Manor of Mizzi, (photo. G. Benli, September 2015)



Figure 2. Manor of Mizzi, 1930, (ref. Gülersoy, 1997, pp. 45)

FROM THE 1930s TO THE PRESENT DAY; THE MANOR OF MIZZI

The date of construction of the manor house passing from George Mizzi the first owner to his son Giovanni Mizzi a lawyer is uncertain. In his book Tuglaci says that the property was bought by Mary daughter of Joseph, the 5th owner in May 1889 (Tuğlacı, 1989). Thus, it can be estimated that the manor house was constructed between 1860 and 1870. In some sources it is stated that the manor, which was damaged in the earthquake, have been restored by the Italian architect Raimondo D'Aronco (Gülersoy, 1997). Metal luminaries referring to the form of the dragon signed by architect D'Aronco decorates the entrance stairways of the Manor of Mizzi with geometric and self-repetitive forms (figure 3).

The manor house, which was used as a hotel with the name of "San Remo" or "Al Palas" in the time of Levon Servicen known as the 8th owner (between 1930 and 1940), was closed during and after World War II (Tanman, 1994). It was reopened in 1952 by

Jantile, Donna and JakBeyo known as the last owners and the rooms were rented to families in the summer months (Tuğlacı, 1989).

Some of restoration work of the manor house, which has been quite worn in recent years, started in 2014. The restoration of the manor house continued in 2015 and it hosted the 14th Istanbul Biennial which was held in the same year, thus it has been re-activated and gained functionality for a short period of time.



Figure 3. Dragon luminaries signed by architect D'Aronco (photo. G. Benli, 2015)

ISTANBUL BIENNIAL AND THE MANOR OF MIZZI WHICH HAS GAINED FUNCTIONALITY WITHIN THIS PERIOD

The 14th Istanbul Biennial, which is among the world's most prestigious art events, was organized by the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (IKSV) between September 5th and November 1st, 2015. One of the most prestigious of its kind among other similar biennials such as Venice, Sao Paulo and Sydney, the Istanbul Biennial prefers an exhibition model that provides artists to establish dialogue with each other and with the audience via the works of artists.

The Istanbul Biennial, which is the most extensive international art exhibition held in our country as well as in our geographical region, plays an important role in the international recognition of the contemporary artist not only from Turkey but also from many different countries and their invitation to various events. Exhibitions within the scope of the biennial as well as panels, conferences and workshops held in simultaneous translation order, which were organized within the scope of the exhibition provides monitoring and being aware of the artistic developments and current debates in the world and thus a complementary education opportunity to both the general audience and the art students.



Biennial has been shaped in a series of collaborations with the title of "SALT WATER: A Theory on Way of Thinking" by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev. At the 14th Istanbul Biennial, work of more than 80 participants from Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, Middle East, Latin America and North America met with visitors on more than 30 places in the Europe and Anatolia sides of Istanbul Bosphorus. Because of the restoration works of the manor house which was re-used within the scope of the Biennial, only the garden, the veranda and the ground floor parts were opened for visitors.

SOUND INSTALLATION EXPERIENCE AT THE MANOR OF MIZZI

The project "Elettra" by artist Susan Philipsz on the ground floor of the Manor of Mizzi is based on the underwater remains of the sunken ship Elettra belonging to Guglielmo Marconi, one of the first inventors of the radio.

The historic, old and worn building with the broken glasses and worn mortar has a fascinating influence by the visitors via its cultural and historical architecture. Outside of the exhibition, the architecture of the manor is worth watching. Before entering the exhibition in the Manor of Mizzi, the fine-grained sand that has been poured into the garden ground is almost like a sign telling you entering a distinctive and unusual space. Susan Philipsz, the artist who has caught the spirit of true lives in the history, once again reveals the artist's sensitivity to the art by executing her artwork while giving particular importance to the historical building.

Susan Philipsz's multi-channel sound installation named "Elettra" and photos were placed in the room behind the broken glasses and they were presented to the audience via mysterious and hoarse sound recordings. The "Elettra" was built in a shipyard in Scotland for the Austrian Archduchess Maria Theresa in 1904. The vessel, which was seized by the British Naval Forces Command to be used as a minesweeper during the World War One, was acquired by Marconi in 1919 and renamed as "Elettra". Marconi transformed it into a floating radio lab and most of the radio experiments were carried out on the ship which anchored to the bay of Santa Margherita di Ligure near Genoa. It was sold to the Italian Government after the death of Marconi and joined the German Navy in 1943 - when equipped with heavy weapons, the radio equipment inside was removed and its name changed to G-107. It was destroyed by the torpedoes on the shores of Dalmatian coast in 1944. The Elettra grounded on the shore in need of repair and eventually broken to pieces. Today these pieces are located in various places of the northern Italy and beyond being scattered. Philipsz traveled everywhere the pieces were and produced a series of images of each piece; he intends to integrate these parts at different stages of the project. (ref: <http://14b.iksv.org/works.asp?id=93> - date of access: 04.07.2017).

In addition to the sound installation forming the exhibition, the black and white photographs used are placed in different sections of the same place. These large photographs were not hanged on the walls, being aware of the fact that they were housed in a historic place, but were left only on the floor against the wall (figure 4 and 5).

Being a part of the Biennial during the ongoing restoration work is very positive in terms of reviving the awareness of social benefit and civil protection. The perception of the architecture of the building, the restoration technique applied and the baldness of the materials were quite harmonious with the main theme of the exhibition. The exhibition of the photo frames without wall hanging is a correct application in terms of approach to the preservation. A curiosity and desire to get more information about the building is aroused because of having access only to the garden and the ground floor. Therefore it is also important to read messages from the past, getting to know the past and even adopting the past.



Figure 4. Susan Philipsz works, (photo. G. Benli, September 2015)



Figure 5. Ground floor entrance hall (ref: <http://www.artfulliving.com.tr/sanat/bir-tuzlu-su-hikayesi-buyukadai-i-3907>, date of access 18.07.2017)

CONCLUSION

Re-use or re-functioning of the buildings that have lost their function but retain their architectural identity has been a matter of considerable debate in recent years in our country. Historical buildings whose function is to be changed or re-activated to meet today's needs should be preserved on the basis of conservation criteria, technique and method. Otherwise, they lose their original architectural identities and they cannot remain as original works conveyed to future generations. However, the cultural environment in which the country is located, the vision and aims of the building owner are also influential in the implementation of the re-functioning. Local authorities often re-use historic heritage structures as tourism objects or local pride in order to serve a variety of economic purposes, as is often the case in our country. Functioning of the Pasha Mansions or mansions of famous families in the past as Ethnography Museum are of the first examples to come to mind. These practices are often based not on the desire to restore the historical conservation purpose or to reclaim the value it deserves, but on economic growth, tourism rationing, and sometimes even the competition between local governments. In such cases, wrong protection-use-re functioning decisions may sometimes lead to anachronism.

There are many factors involved in reuse process. Many criteria such as the extension of the building life, the continuity of its architectural aesthetic value with historical, economical and cultural values and the reactivation with these values, creation of new and sustainable dynamics (e.g. cultural tourism) and the retrieving of the building in urban texture should be considered together.

In the case of re-functioning of the Manor of Mizzi, although all conservation-use dynamics have not yet been identified, it has been a very positive example in terms of reunion of the manor house with the society with minimal intervention. The re-



functioning of this significant building, which has not been used for years and is left to the weariness of time, led to both building the consciousness of history and hosting a very important artistic activity. Preservation and maintenance of the building and the creation of the historical consciousness as a restoration principle, as well as keeping the building spirit alive has been provided through the re-functioning work. At the same time, it led to perception and understanding of the presence of the manor house by younger generation and the satisfactory creation of civil participation models. It has been a model architectural practice to provide the re-evaluation of many historical buildings inventory in Buyukada.

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