



## New Structuring in the Historic Environment: Investigation of Diyarbakır Yenikapı Street

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### Abstract

Historical textures are the representatives of cultural heritage that convey the way of life, economic and sociocultural structure of the people living in the past and the technology of that period. Many reasons such as urbanization problems, migration, war, natural disasters, epidemics, economic problems, new construction tendency, change in education and lack of awareness make it difficult to preserve the historical texture and transfer it to the future. The addition or reconstruction of new buildings within the historic fabric emerges as a design problem in terms of providing historical and cultural continuity. Diyarbakır, a historical city in southeastern Turkey, has been home to many civilizations from past to present. The Suriçi District of Diyarbakır, which has preserved its historical and physical texture for many years, underwent a major change after the armed conflict in 2015. Instead of the demolished buildings in the district, after a very rapid design process, the traditional street texture was destroyed and new buildings were designed that evoke the design styles of traditional houses. The aim of this study is to examine the new buildings designed as a result of the reconstruction of Yenikapı Street in Diyarbakır Suriçi District after 2016 in line with new building design approaches in the historical environment and to evaluate them within the criteria of new construction in the historical environment. In this context, in the research process; after conducting a literature research, the historical environment, new building in the historical environment and new building design approaches in the historical environment were examined, the situation of Yenikapı Street before and after the demolition was analyzed, and determinations were made in line with the criteria for new construction in the historical environment.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Historical textures, which exist in some parts of cities, are the representatives of cultural heritage that tell us about the way of life of people living in the past, the economic and sociocultural structure, and the technology of that period. Historical textures are successful areas in reflecting the harmony formed between these differences to the whole of the space, from a single building to the city scale, although they contain many different features of the periods in which they have been created since the past [1]. Historical textures bring great value to the places where they are located in terms of urban identity, and transfer the values referenced from the past to future generations as an accumulation [2].

Factors such as the change of users, ignorance of individuals, the failure of administrators to raise awareness and educate the society on conservation, and the failure of the state to produce adequate policies on conservation are the factors that cause conservation problems of historical environments [3].

After the Second World War, many cities in Europe became devastated and ruined. The gaps opened after the removal of the ruins in the cities, the protection of the urban fabric was opened to discussion and the search for solutions in environmental protection gained importance. The protection of the historic environment at the scale of a single building was first mentioned in the Athens Charter in 1931, and it was stated that new construction in the historic environment should be implemented in a way that respects the identity of the settlement. The 1933 Treaty of Athens mentions the aesthetic style of the past in new

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buildings and the prevention of backward copying. In the Venice Charter, the concept of monument is addressed within the urban settlement and the preservation of the existing traditional environment is emphasized. The use of war-torn and destroyed cities as a tool for the formation of national consciousness made the protection of historical environments necessary. In 1946, UNESCO was established under the United Nations, which was active in the universal importance of the protection of cultural heritage. In 1975, at the European Year of Architectural Heritage congress, in the 1987 Washington Charter and in all subsequent conservation charters and declarations, "for new building design in the historic environment, in integrated conservation, the scale, plot size and building material of new buildings should be compatible with the environment" [4],[5].

Historical textures are the representatives of cultural heritage that convey the way of life, economic and sociocultural structure of the people living in the past and the technology of that period. Many reasons such as urbanization problems, migration, war, natural disasters, epidemics, economic problems, new construction tendency, change in education and lack of awareness make it difficult to preserve the historical texture and transfer it to the future. The addition or reconstruction of new buildings within the historic fabric from past to present emerges as a design problem in terms of providing historical and cultural continuity. Today, one of the main problems in restoration practices in the historical environment is how to adapt the new to the existing texture/structure and how to establish the relationship between old and new [6].

New building designs in the historic environment are generally categorized under three main categories: imitation/repetition, interpretation and contrasting [5]. The question of whether contemporary additions and new buildings to be built in the historic fabric should be designed as replicas of their period, whether they should be designed as harmonious or similar buildings that reflect the qualities of the existing historic fabric, or whether they should be designed as contemporary buildings that reflect the architectural features of their age is one of the critical points that require designers to decide [7]. New buildings designed in historic environments should be in harmony with the surrounding historic fabric in terms of architectural style, scale, material selection and details to ensure authenticity and integrity. At this point, when designing a new building in the historic environment, the designer should interpret the physical and social characteristics, material and plan features, which constitute the identity of the historic fabric, by establishing a connection with the conservation values of the area [5],[8],[9],[10].

With the urban transformations that emerged at the beginning of the 20th century in the world, similar and contemporary approach interventions were introduced in the historical environment. After the 2nd World War, heavily damaged cities were built with physical repairs in the form of creating a new urban texture in the same or completely demolished old texture. In this period, the old and new urban areas were frequently brought to the agenda with new applications with modern techniques and imitation of the old. While Gustavo Giovannoni, Camillo Boito, Aldo Rossi, Christopher Alexander contributed to the preservation of the historic environment; architects such as Mies Van Der Rohe Le Corbusier opposed the imitation of the old and supported modern additions and construction in the historic environment [11],[12].

After the 1950s, the demolition and reconstruction of cities faced economic, social and cultural problems. After 1960, rehabilitation practices were preferred in cities and the awareness for the protection of cultural assets as human heritage began to emerge. In Turkey, after the 1990s, urban renewal has come to the forefront as a model that tries to ensure the sustainability of the texture in historical cities [13], but original applications were tried to be realized after 2000.

There are many legal regulations and universal decisions regarding the design of new buildings in the historic environment. Although the designs are limited by the Conservation Zoning Plans, this issue is directly related to the architect's skills, knowledge, attitude and awareness towards the historical environment. In this context, although the new building in the historical environment has been adopted within the original approach to the continuation of the traditional identity, it has led to an increase in imitation and contrasting structures that are far from tradition, do not carry references to the historical environment, as seen in the Urban Conservation Area Rehabilitation and Renewal works carried out in

settlements such as Fener-Balat, Side, Manavgat, Beyoğlu, Talas, Tarsus, Ankara, Antalya Kaleiçi, Eskişehir Odunpazarı [14],[15],[16].

Diyarbakır is a settlement in the Southeastern Anatolia Region of Turkey with a rich architectural heritage inherited by various cultures and urban settlements and buildings that are the concrete expressions of these cultures [17]. The city, which stands out with its historical texture and traditional architecture, is surrounded by walls dating back to the Roman and Byzantine periods. In this area, called Suriçi (Walled City), traditional houses, inns, mosques and churches are located in a narrow and organic street texture within the boundaries of the city walls. Diyarbakır's historical and traditional fabric reflects the city's rich history, cultural heritage, lifestyle, identity and character.

The internal conflicts in Diyarbakır Suriçi in 2015-2016 significantly affected the historical fabric and cultural heritage of the region. Interventions during and after the clashes damaged the physical structure and historical heritage of Suriçi. Many historical buildings in Suriçi were destroyed or severely damaged. These include historic houses, mosques, churches, inns and baths. Many people have been forced to migrate from Suriçi due to the conflict. This has led to the deterioration of the cultural and social structure of the region. The process of reconstruction and restoration of Suriçi has become more complex in the aftermath of the conflicts. Large gaps, squares and buildings were constructed without considering social, cultural and climatic data.

The aim of this study is to examine the new buildings designed as a result of the reconstruction of Yenikapı Street in Diyarbakır Suriçi District after 2016 in line with the new building design approaches in the historical environment and to evaluate them within the criteria of new construction in the historical environment. In this context, in the research process; after conducting a literature research, historical environment, new building in historical environment and new building design approaches in historical environment were examined, the situation of Yenikapı Street before and after demolition was analyzed, and analyzes were made in line with the criteria for new construction in the historical environment.

### **1.1. New Building Design Approaches in the Historic Environment**

The gaps in historical environments bearing traces of traditional texture are filled by constructing new buildings in line with certain design criteria. While these gaps are sometimes gaps opened in the urban fabric as a result of the destruction of historical buildings for certain reasons, sometimes it is possible to have gaps that can be utilized with a building as a result of some changes, even if there was no building in the past [18]. The way in which new designs should be created in the historic environment has been a subject of debate since the past. In the light of these discussions, design criteria have been established with certain approaches. These are;

- Imitation/Repetition Approach
- Interpretation Approach
- Contrasting Approach [5],[4],[18].

The imitation/repetition approach is an approach that copies the historic environment in which the new building is located, imitating the traditional features and materials of historic buildings. This approach adopts the act of dressing modern buildings with traditional façades and is defined as facadism. Such approaches can generally be defined as conservative and are seen in social circles that adhere to their traditions [19],[20].

The contrasting approach is the most creative of the design criteria. However, it is the most difficult approach to design and to get society to accept it. Those who believe that the contrast between the old and the new will create an environment with a depth that no other period has been able to realize over time have argued that the integration of modern buildings into historical environments will be successful [21].

It is stated that imitation/repetition and contrasting approaches are extreme proposals for new buildings to be constructed in the historic environment and that a third approach, interpretation, is easier to produce and implement. This approach focuses on understanding the characteristics of the existing historic fabric

and adapting the new building to it. Architects need a detailed urban analysis and design process to construct new buildings that are compatible with the historic environment using contemporary technology and materials. When this process is not carried out with care, the result can be mediocre, eclectic products that detract from the quality of the environment [22].

### **1.1.1. Imitation/Repetition Approach**

In this approach, it is aimed to design the same of the buildings in the historical texture damaged due to various reasons, considering the building elements such as mass, material and façade, without making any changes. It is based on repeating the traditional architectural elements in the urban fabric and reflecting them exactly the same. While the façade of the new building is designed, it is seen that it is used without trying to differentiate while interpreting the forms and styles of the buildings in the historical texture without interpreting the architectural elements of its age. The façade of the new building is constructed as a decor. The reason for this is that there is no integrity between the interior of the building designed by imitating the architectural elements such as color, material and façade elements of historical buildings and the façade of the mass created [23]. From this point of view, it is understood that the imitated element is only the mass and façade, and that the interior of the new building can be designed with different functions than the original.

There are also those who disagree with this design approach. According to Bektaş, "A work that is a true product of its time can only be accompanied by a new creation that is truly contemporary. To replicate a building that was born under the conditions of a century ago, from the way of life of that day, from the construction methods of that day, with the principles valid that day, shows at least a hundred years of backwardness. It shows a failure to comprehend the past hundred years" [24].

### **1.1.2. Interpretation Approach**

It is an approach that establishes integrity by adapting to historical textures by interpreting the architectural elements, forms, layouts and principles that are mostly dominant in the existing historical texture as a result of analysis and reflecting them to new designs with the materials and technology of its age. New buildings designed with the interpretation of historical buildings are the approach that enables to combine old buildings in the historical texture with modern design understanding. A modern appearance emerges with the new building designed with inspiration from historical buildings [8].

New buildings designed with the interpretation approach are designed to resemble the façade and mass character, occupancy-void ratios, dominant or distinctive formal features of historic buildings. Based on the interpreted architectural elements, it is possible to repeat a certain rhythm, refer to the historical building, and create a visual and semantic relationship. This approach must necessarily include a contemporary interpretation. With the interpretation approach, it is aimed to reflect the features of the historical building to the design with contemporary interpretations without imitating the architectural elements of the historical building or some of these elements [25]. The buildings designed with this approach should be designed in the way required by their own era, otherwise it can easily turn into imitation.

### **1.1.3. Contrasting Approach**

In this approach, while designing new buildings in the historic environment, it is aimed to consciously contrast the technology, materials and textures of the era. The aim is to make the traditional buildings in the historic environment more prominent and visible through this contrast. Although the building is different from the architectural attitude of the historical environment, it allows the historical texture to be perceived by using large glass surfaces and reflective surfaces such as aluminum, as opposed to ignoring its surroundings. On the other hand, according to Brolin (1980), "Acting under the influence of two visually diametrically opposed tendencies does not always guarantee visual interest. The result can lead to completely independent, unrelated results that harm each other. The important thing is for the observer to distinguish between contrast-contrast and ignoring-ignoring." [7].

## 2. METHOD

Yenikapı Street, located in Diyarbakır Suriçi District and redesigned after the demolitions in 2015, constitutes the material of this study (Figure 1). First of all, a detailed literature search was conducted and the historical environment, new building in the historical environment and new building design approaches in the historical environment were explained. While conducting the literature research, magazines, books, articles, theses, yandex, google earth and on-site photographs were utilized and supported with visuals. In this context, selected examples from the world and Turkey are analyzed in terms of design approaches, and an evaluation is made by considering what kind of approach has been taken in Yenikapı Street and how successful it has been in this process.



*Figure 1. Yenikapı Street (Google Earth) [26]*

## 3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

### 3.1. Example Designs for Imitation/Repetition Approach

One of the best examples of the Imitation/Repetition approach at the urban scale is the imitation of the historical urban fabric of Warsaw, Poland, in order to revitalize it. During the 2nd World War, Warsaw's urban fabric was severely damaged and the damaged buildings were imitated and reconstructed in the same way. The main purpose here is to ensure the continuity of the urban fabric that has taken place in people's memories in the past and to unite the old and the new on a common ground by integrating the old buildings with the modern city (Table 1).

*Table 1. Visuals of Warsaw - Old Town, Poland [27]*

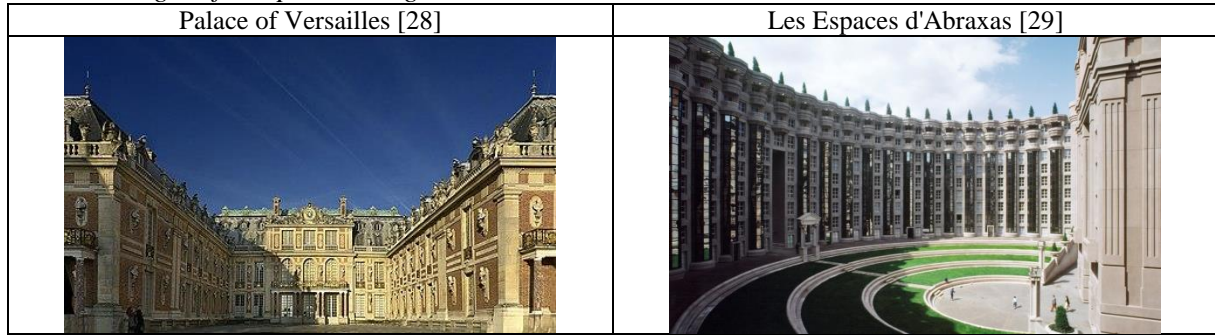
Urban fabric destroyed during World War 2	Renewed urban fabric

There are examples where some of the copies built as a result of imitation/repetition of existing buildings in the historical texture do not show the features required by the era and lose their originality. Designed



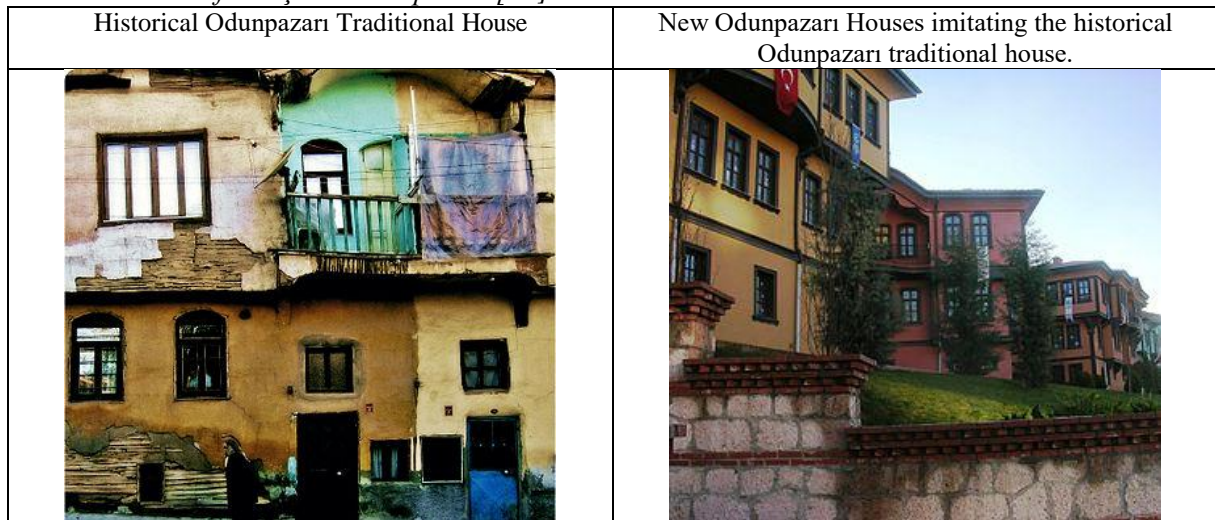
by Ricardo Bofill, the Abraxas mass housing buildings were built in Paris in the 1980s. Inspired by the Palace of Versailles, a baroque space was created by transforming classical forms rooted in French culture. A Greek amphitheater in the center of the building descends gradually like a staircase from the first floor on the plaza side to the stage, with a very high triumphal arch at the entrance. The façades of these residences are divided by extravagant columnar masses of prefabricated sections and glass. Although reinforced concrete, one of the construction techniques of its time, is used in this building, it is inconsistent in terms of façade design and many architectural elements (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Images of sample buildings in France



The majority of people think that the best approach in a historic fabric is not to incorporate new applications into the historic environment and to revitalize the entire deteriorated fabric. In our country, one of the best examples of imitation/repetition practices in order to ensure the historical and cultural continuity of the historical urban fabric is Eskişehir Odunpazarı houses. The historical Odunpazarı houses in the Odunpazarı district, which constitutes the first settlement of Eskişehir, are on the UNESCO world heritage list. Within the scope of a cultural center project by Eskişehir Metropolitan Municipality in an area overlooking Odunpazarı Square and visible from the road, the houses were built in reinforced concrete frame style with the original architecture and in this context, it was first opened as Eskişehir Museum of Contemporary Glass Arts on December 1, 2007 (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Visuals of Eskişehir Odunpazarı [30]



### 3.2. Example Designs for Interpretation Approach

An example of new buildings built with an interpretation approach in the historic environment is the additional educational building designed for the Faculty of Health Sciences of Semmelweis University in Budapest. The Faculty of Health Sciences organized a design competition in 2016 for the expansion of an educational building dating back to the early 1900s. Studio Fragment won the competition to create seminar rooms, demonstration rooms and 2 large conference rooms. The neighborhood where the university is located often includes important cultural and educational institutions built in the 19th and

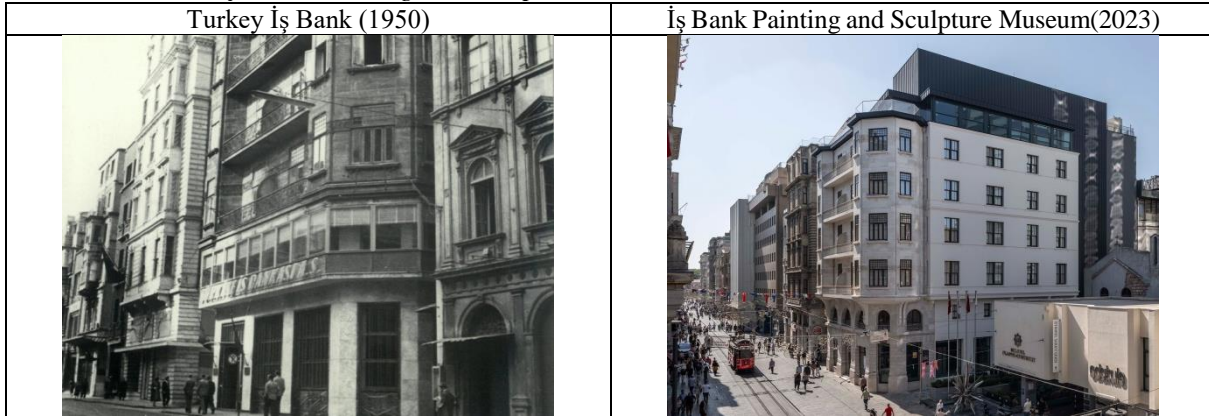
early 20th century. According to the main design concept, a new massing was designed to create a complex consistent with the existing building. Accordingly, the addition creates a completed inner courtyard and connects the two buildings at all levels. The building follows the strong characteristic rhythm of the façades of the surrounding buildings and matches the color of the existing building (Table 4).

**Table 4. Hungary, Budapest [31]**



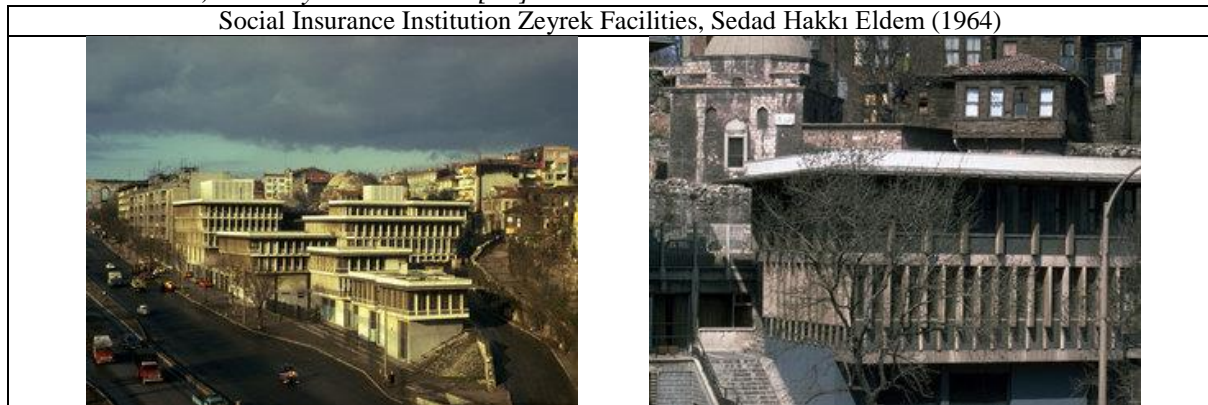
Located on İstiklal Street, next to the Odakule Passage, the museum building was designed in 1907 as the Bodvi Apartment. In the 1950s, the building was purchased by Turkey İş Bank, and the ground and first floors of the building, which was previously a store, were structurally transformed to function as a bank branch until the 2010s. The upper floors, which consisted of a series of rooms attached to the façade and were residential, were left in their original state and used as offices. In 2023, the building was completed as the İşbank Painting and Sculpture Museum with some additions. While the façade, which deteriorated in the 1950s, was reconstructed according to its original form, the rest of the materials and ornaments were preserved as they were (Table 5).

**Table 5. Istanbul, İş Bank Painting and Sculpture Museum [32]**



Designed by Sedad Hakkı Eldem, one of the most important architects of the Republican era, in 1962 and built between 1962 and 1964, SSK Zeyrek Facilities has a very important place in the history of Turkish architecture. Sedad Hakkı Eldem was awarded the Aga Khan Architecture Award in 1986 for this design. Built in the historical texture and reflecting the modern architectural elements of its period, this building was designed with an approach that is far from imitation by adapting to its surroundings. It adapted to the topography by interpreting the mass movements of the traditional houses in its surroundings and harmonized with its surroundings without overpowering the historical buildings (Table 6).



**Table 6.** *Istanbul, SSK Zeyrek Facilities [33]*

### 3.3. Example Designs for the Contrasting Approach

An example of this approach is the modernization of the Main Building of the Wybrzeże Theater in Gdańsk, completed in 2023 by WAPA Warsztat Architektury Pracownia Autorska. The building was constructed in the early 1960s on the ruins of a pre-war building and is located within the historical fabric of the city. It is one of the best examples of how a modern building can contrast and blend into the historic environment, with a simple and transparent massing designed with contemporary materials such as glass and steel. It is successful in reflecting the architectural characteristics of its period with the construction technique and materials used, and thanks to its glass surfaces, it allows the perception of the surrounding historical buildings. At the same time, the height of the building is respectful to the surrounding historical buildings, creating a contrast and harmony with the historical texture (Table 7).

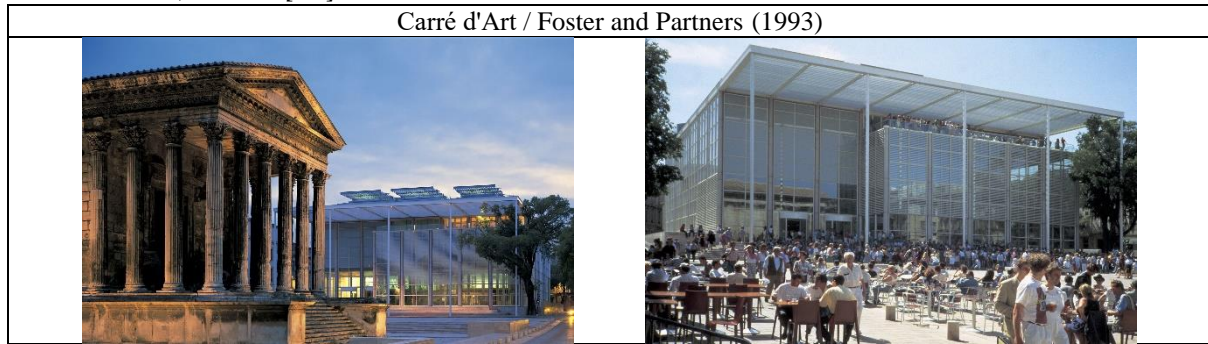
**Table 7.** *Poland, Gdansk Wybrzeże Theater [34]*

Built in 2023 by Christ & Gantenbein in Paris, Vaugirard Social Housing is an example of a building designed to contrast the historic environment. This residential design is the product of a contemporary idea of urban revitalization. Elegantly complementing the traditional residential area, the project is presented as a series of volumes characterized by setbacks and carved recesses that form a frame in a sculpted volume with a moving long façade. A metal façade wraps the exterior and the transparent lacquered steel references Parisian roofs while maintaining a raw touch. Adopting elements of the city's traditional roofing, familiar elements are reinterpreted to come together in the historical and cultural context of the city. The building is designed with contemporary materials to contrast with its surroundings, while the height of its massing allows its characteristic features to emerge without overwhelming the surrounding historic buildings (Table 8).



**Table 8.** Paris, France [35]

Built in 1993 by Foster and Partners in the historic French city of Nimes, the Carré d'Art Media Library is another example of this approach. The site is located right next to the Maison Carrée, a perfectly preserved Roman temple. Contemporary materials such as glass and steel were used in the design of the building to contrast with the historic fabric. The mass, façade and height of this building, which has the architectural characteristics of its era, respect the historical texture and make the surrounding historical buildings more perceptible with its transparent surface. Carré d'Art has successfully interpreted the architectural elements of the historic Roman temple Maison Carrée, and in doing so, it has utilized the technology of its time, while at the same time creating a contrast with the historical texture. The greatest importance of this design is to relate the new to the old, but at the same time to create a building that fully represents its era (Table 9).

**Table 9.** Nimes, France [36]

### 3.4. History of Diyarbakır Suriçi District - Yenikapı Street

Diyarbakır Suriçi District was declared a Grade 1 Urban Conservation Area by the Diyarbakır Regional Board for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage in 1988 and a Conservation Plan was prepared in 1990. In 2008, the Conservation Zoning Plan was suspended for revision and an Urban Renewal (Slum Transformation) Project was signed between TOKİ and the Governorship of Diyarbakır in the southwest of the Suriçi District. At the same time, as the entire Suriçi District was under renovation for the KAIP, work in the south-west of the district was postponed until after the approval of the Conservation Zoning Plan. In 2012, the new Conservation Plan was approved [37]. In 2014, it was decided to conduct a Street Sanitization Study for Yenikapı Street. In 2015, the city walls and the Hevsel Gardens to the south of the historic city were included in the World Heritage List. In 2014, it was decided to carry out the street rehabilitation work, which aimed to organize the street for pedestrian access and preserve the width of the street, except for the obligatory vehicle entrances. The demolition of unlicensed multi-storey buildings in the area and the construction of no more than two storey buildings in accordance with traditional Diyarbakır residential architecture were also included in the scope of this work. However, due to the conflicts in 2015, the work was halted and reconstruction work started in 2016 (Table 10).

**Table 10.** Historical processes in the Suriçi District of Diyarbakır (Table prepared by the author)

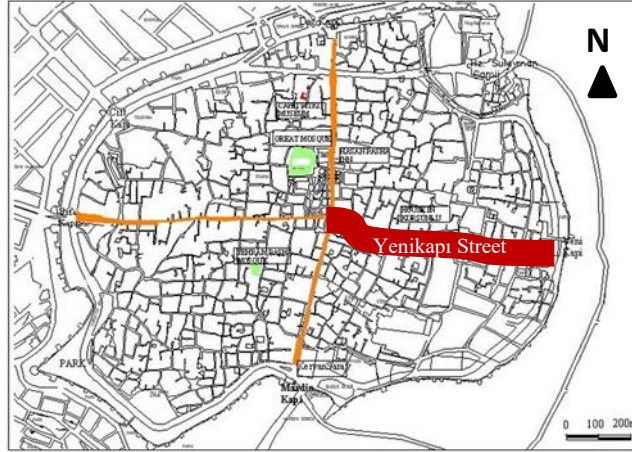
Suriçi Region was declared a Grade 1 Urban Conservation Area.	A Conservation Plan for the Suriçi was prepared.	The Conservation Development Plan (KAİP) was suspended for revision.	Urban Renewal (Slum Transformation) Project was signed in the south west area of Suriçi.	The new Conservation Development Plan (KAİP) was approved.	Street Sanitization Work was initiated in Yenikapı.	The city walls and the Hevsel Gardens to the south of the historic city were included in the World Heritage List.	As a result of the conflicts and migration, the traditional street texture was lost in the eastern part of the city where Yenikapı Street is located.	The Conservation Development Plan (KAİP) was revised. Construction work has begun in the area.
1988	1990	2008	2008	2012	2014	2015	2015	2016

Diyarbakır's historical urban area, the Suriçi, preserved its traditional texture to a great extent until the 1940s. However, since the 1950s, the physical structure of the city, which started to expand outside the city walls, began to change. With this process, migration and population growth led to unplanned urbanization, and the Suriçi District began to lose its original character in social and architectural terms [38]. In the 1950s, a commercial axis was created on Gazi Street and İnönü Street, which were characterized as the main axis in the city, with the demolition of traditional residences. In 1990, with the migration from the village to the city due to the terrorist incidents, the existing parcels in the Suriçi District were divided within themselves and the population density increased [39]. Due to this increase in density and with the widespread use of reinforced concrete construction techniques throughout the country, users in Suriçi started to make some additions to traditional stone houses. Reinforced concrete additions, which were perceived as a sign of wealth by the users of the period, caused the deterioration of the historical texture and as a result, places without identity began to form (Figure 2).

**Figure2.** Buildings on Yenikapı Street (2014) [40]

Yenikapı Street, which starts from Yeni Kapı, one of the four main entrances on the city walls, and extends to Balıkçılarbaşı PTT Branch, has preserved its street texture for many years, even though it has undergone physical changes over time (Figure 3) [41]. Starting from the entrance of the street and heading in the east direction, many historical buildings such as Balıkçılarbaşı PTT Branch, Şeyh Mutahhar Mosque, Four-legged Minaret, Mar Petyun Chaldean Church, Surp Giregos Church, Pasha Bath and Süleyman Nazif Primary School are encountered (Figure 3; Table 12).









**Figure 3.** Location of Yenikapı Street in the Suriçi District [41]

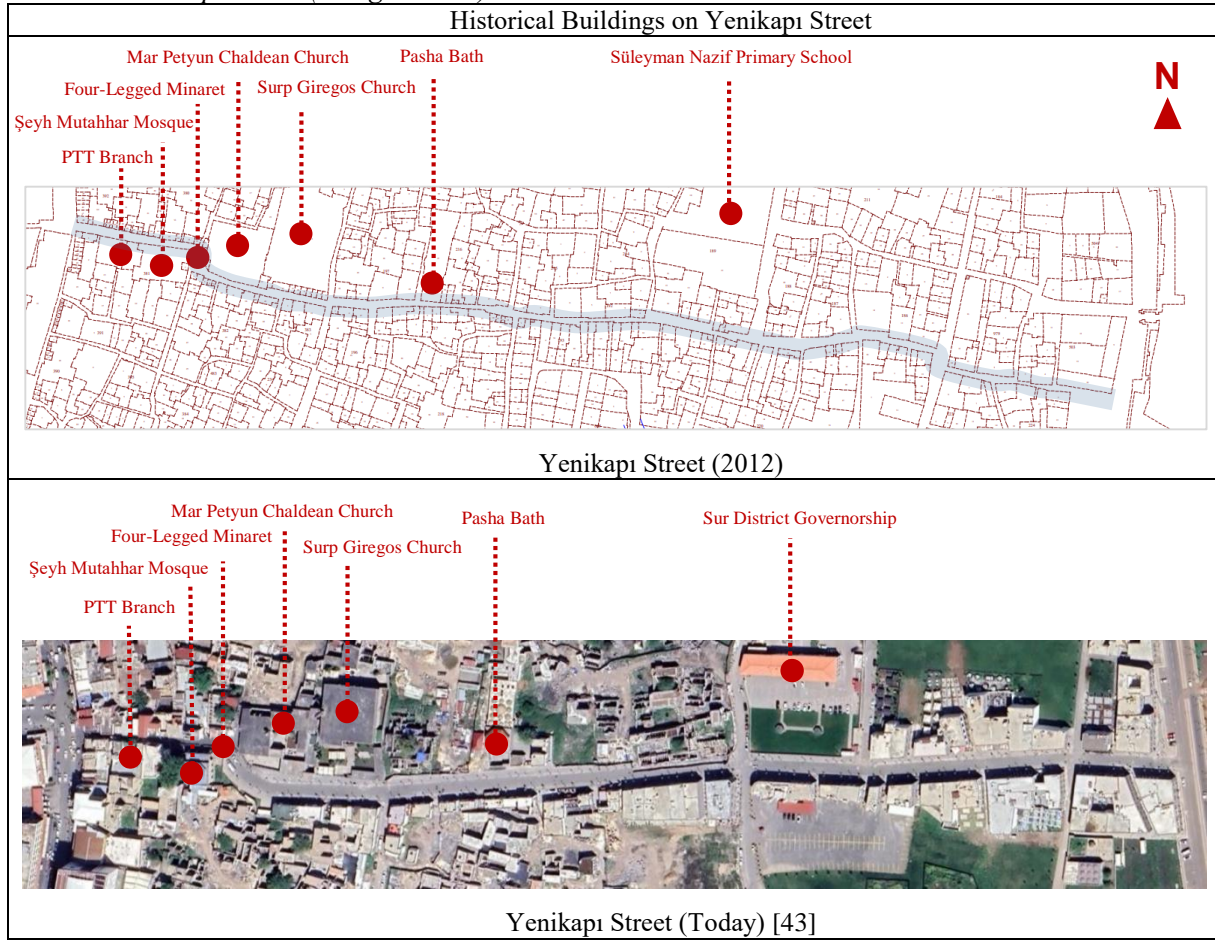
### 3.4. Analysis of the Design of Yenikapı Street

After the demolition in 2015, many buildings on Yenikapı Street were damaged or completely destroyed. The street texture that existed before the demolition has been disrupted and turned into a linear road that has lost its original form. The texture that once formed an ecological space with its narrow and dead-end streets and courtyard walls has completely disappeared (Table 11).

**Table 11.** Changes in Suriçi District, Diyarbakır [42]

Aerial Photograph of Suriçi District (2015, Before Demolition)	Aerial Photograph of Suriçi District (2016, After Demolition)
	
Yenikapı Street Old Street Texture (2015)	Yenikapı Street (Today)
	

In the street analysis conducted within the scope of this study, some historical buildings on Yenikapı Street were marked and certain focal points were created to analyze the change (Table 12).

**Table 12.** Yenikapı Street (Google Earth)

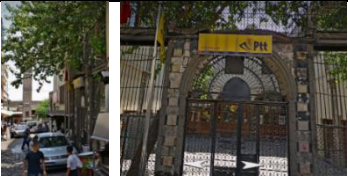





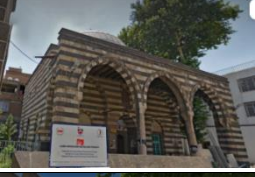




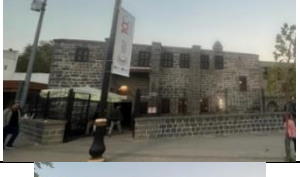






Digital resources were utilized to reveal the extent of the change. As a result of the research, when the year 2014 was selected from "Yandex Map", images of Yenikapı Street before the demolition in 2015 were accessed. Yenikapı Street is accessed from Gazi Street, the oldest artery of the city. When entering Yenikapı Street from Gazi Street, the Balıkçılarbaşı PTT Branch, the first post office building of the Late Ottoman and Early Republican Period, the Şeyh Mutahhar Mosque and the Four-Legged Minaret are located in the south of the street. The texture and color of the original material of all three of these monumental buildings have been contaminated due to natural causes. To the north of the PTT building are reinforced concrete commercial and residential buildings built in the 1950s. On the street following the buildings, a traditional house has been converted into a cafeteria. To the north of the Four-Legged Minaret are the Mar Petyun Chaldean Church and Surp Giragos Church. In 2014, due to the commercial spaces around the churches, the churches cannot be perceived as they are integrated with the narrow streets. Moving eastwards along the street, one can see the historical Pasha Hammam to the north of the street and the plastered and painted façade of Süleyman Nazif Primary School, which was originally a Latin Church.



In 2024, the change of Yenikapı Street was photographed by considering the angles of the 2014 images. When the buildings are analyzed in order; the building belonging to Balıkçılarbaşı PTT Branch and the buildings that merge with the Gazi Street axis to the north, Şeyh Mutahhar Mosque and Four-Legged Minaret were not affected by the demolition in 2015. It was observed that the façades of the historical buildings were cleaned to reveal the color and texture of the original material, while the plaster and paint of the reinforced concrete buildings were renewed. Mar Petyun Chaldean Church and Surp Giragos Church were restored. With the removal of the commercial spaces around these religious buildings, the churches have become perceptible from the street. The historical Pasha Bath was restored after the damages it had suffered. The original stone material was used for the wall, which was completed by cleaning the plaster. Before 2015, the building belonged to Süleyman Nazif Primary School, but after the



restoration works, the plasters were removed, the stone masonry was exposed, and the building was reused as Sur District Governor's Office (Table 13).

**Table 13. Yenikapı Street**

Structure	2014 (Before Demolition) [40]	Experienced Change	Today
PTT Branch		Balıkçılarbaşı PTT Branch has regained its historical texture by renewing its plaster and paint with cleaning works.	
Reinforced Concrete Structures at Entrance		It was not affected by the demolition in 2015 and has survived to the present day in its current condition. The plaster and paint of the façade of the buildings have been renewed.	
Four-Legged Minaret		The Four-Legged Minaret was cleaned to reveal the color and texture of its original material.	
Şeyh Mutahhar Mosque		Şeyh Mutahhar Mosque was cleaned the colour and texture of the original material is revealed.	
Southeast of the Four-Legged Minaret		The existing buildings were demolished and replaced by a large square.	
Mar Petyun Chaldean Church		The Mar Petyun Chaldean Church was restored and the surrounding buildings were demolished, making it visible from the street.	
Surp Giragos Church		With the cleaning and restoration works carried out after the demolition, it is seen that the entrance of the church has become perceptible from the outside.	
Pasha Bath		When the bath was restored as a result of the damages, the plasters were cleaned and the wall was completed with the original stone material.	
Sur District Governorship		Before 2015, the building belonged to Süleyman Nazif Primary School. After the restoration works, the plaster was removed, the stone masonry was exposed and the building was re-functioned as Sur District Governorship.	

View of Yenikapı Street		<p>By increasing the distances between the newly designed buildings, the street texture was destroyed and transformed into a wider avenue.</p>	
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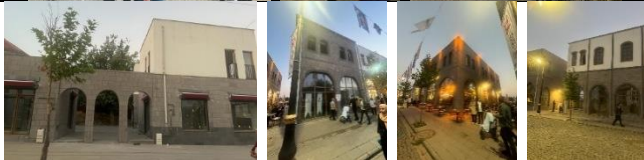

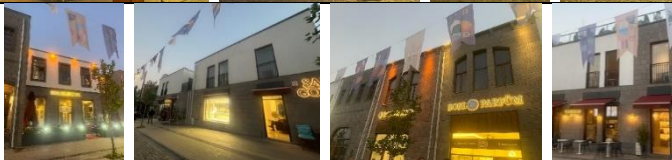
Before the 2015 demolition, Yenikapı Street was transformed into a smaller scale commercial axis following Gazi Street. During this period, the ground floors were used for commercial purposes and the upper floors were used for residential purposes, while on the new street designed after the demolition, two-storey buildings used only for commercial purposes were built. Before 2014, the function of this street, which was a traditional bazaar with shops developing within the original texture, was changed and turned into cafeterias, restaurants, clothing stores and chain markets (Figure 4).

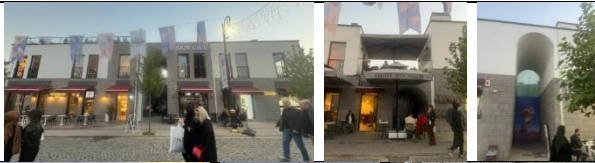



Figure 4. New Buildings on Yenikapı Street (Today)

In the design of the completely changed streets and new buildings in the historical area where Yenikapı Street is located, the design was influenced by the use of bay windows, arches, iwan, skylights, cabalt and basalt materials found in traditional Diyarbakır houses (Table 14).

Table 14. New Design of Yenikapı Street

Traditional Structure Effect	Existing Structure Images
Cumba Effect	
Arch Effect	
Eyvan Effect	
Window at the top Effect	

<b>Kabaltı Effect</b>	
<b>Basalt Material Effect</b>	

With the changes made in this context, traditional houses;

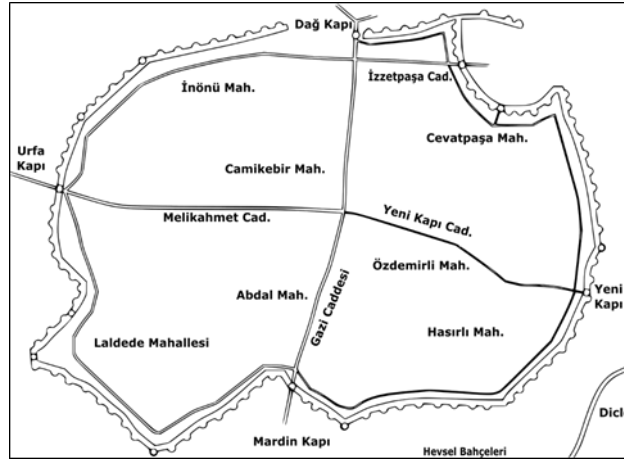
- The upper floor was influenced by cumbas on the street façade,
- Arched transitions inspired by the arched openings created on the façades,
- Inspired by the pointed and flat arched windows, windows of larger sizes were made,
- The courtyard façade uses storey windows with flat lintels like the window at the top in the upper part of the high walls,
- Influenced by the eyvans, which are used as semi-open spaces, semi-open seating areas are also built in cafes and restaurants,
- The high arched passageways between the new buildings are similar to the kabaltıs commonly used in the old street fabric,
- Although the new buildings are built with reinforced concrete construction technique, basalt stone cladding material is used on the façades to remind the traditional structure,
- It is observed that the heights of all buildings are generally built at the same level and terminated with a thin parapet molding (Table 14).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The walls of Diyarbakır and the Hevsel Gardens to the south of the historic city were included on the World Heritage List in 2015. The Suriçi District, which harbors the historical texture of the walled city, was designated as a buffer zone. In late 2015, armed clashes in the city caused the destruction of many buildings. The city, which preserved its original texture until the 1950s, preserved its traditional texture despite the migration and change of users in the 1980s and 1990s. However, the recent destruction has increased the destruction of the texture.

The Suriçi District of Diyarbakır is unique in that it is surrounded by walls that preserve the integrity of its historical texture, has a continuous settlement area, and is home to different religions, languages and cultures. The Yenikapı, also known as the Water Gate, which is one of the four gates connecting the city walls to the outside, is located in the east, has a flattened arch and a single entrance and has been used throughout history as it connects the city to the Tigris River. As a result of the surveys conducted in the Suriçi District, it was observed that Yenikapı Street is located as a commercial axis extending from the Four-Legged Minaret to the Yenikapı (Dicle-Irmak-Shat Gate) (Figure 5).






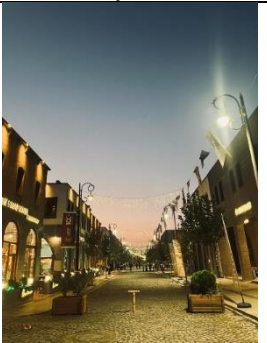


**Figure 5.** Gates Located in the Suriçi District [44]

After 2015, major changes have occurred in the east of the city due to the demolitions. As a result of these changes, it is seen that the design of Yenikapı Street was made without considering the relationships between the street and building layouts that make up the original urban fabric. Before 2015, from the intersection of two main arteries, Melikahmet Street and Gazi Street, towards Yenikapı Street, the street, which had an organic texture in accordance with the topography with its traditional houses and monumental buildings, has nowadays taken the appearance of a widened ordinary street. It is seen that the new design does not reflect the character of the historical texture and the spirit of the place, does not contain original features in a void, and has an identity-less appearance.

Before the demolition in 2015, while the protrusions on the street façade of the buildings and the elevation differences between the heights of the buildings provided shaded areas on the street, the shaded areas on the street disappeared due to the fact that the newly designed buildings were on the same elevation and the distance between them increased. With the widening of the street and the increase in the distances between the buildings, gaps have been created that are not suitable for the hot and dry summer climate of the city (Table 15).

**Table 15.** Changes in Yenikapı Street

Old street texture of Yenikapı Street (2014) [32]		Yenikapı Street as it is today	
			

Cities, which are becoming more and more standardized with the development of technology, create differences between other cities with their historical textures. In this context, historic cities provide a link between past, present and future generations [45]. New buildings in the historic environment can encourage contemporary architectural expression while respecting the historic environment by using modern and traditional construction techniques and materials to help preserve the character and texture of the environment. Poorly organized renovation projects in the historic environment can lead to loss of identity, disruption of social continuity and loss of urban memory. New construction in the historic environment is practiced through imitation/repetition, interpretation and contrasting approaches to new construction in the historic fabric. However, sometimes these approaches can be used together.





**Figure 6.** Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı House, which can be given as an example of traditional Diyarbakır Houses [46]

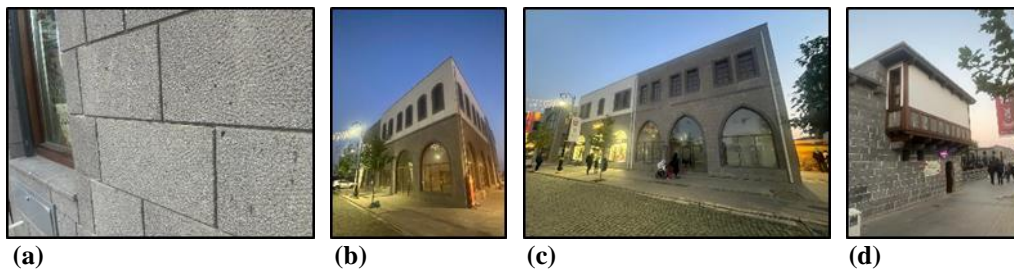
The commercial spaces on Yenikapı Street were designed to mimic elements of Diyarbakır's traditional building culture. Arched and flat windows, iwan openings, bay windows and cabriolets, which are the most common architectural elements seen on the façades of buildings in the historical texture, are used in the newly designed buildings by changing their shapes and proportions. While the elevation differences in traditional buildings due to climatic effects give an aesthetic quality to the city silhouette, in the new buildings all upper elevations are equal and uniform (Figure 7).



**Figure 7.** Façade designs of new buildings on Yenikapı Street

When the designs of the commercial spaces on Yenikapı Street are examined, basalt stone, which is a traditional material, is used as a coating on the reinforced concrete surface in the façade design. It is seen that an attempt is made to imitate the old in terms of material, but problems arise due to improper use of stone sizes and joints (Figure 8a).

In the imitation approach, building elements such as mass, material and façade of the buildings in the historical texture are designed in the same way without any changes. If we look at the new buildings designed today, it is seen that the elements used in the façades of traditional buildings are not the same as the old ones and a complex façade design is created by changing only the proportions, dimensions, locations and functions of the openings (Figure 8b, 8c). On the other hand, it is a common practice in the historical fabric to restore the damaged buildings and give them new functions in addition to new construction. When the monumental buildings on the street are examined, it is a positive approach that the restoration and renovation works have opened up the perimeter of the buildings so that they can be perceived from the outside (Figure 8d).



**Figure 8.** Sample images Yenikapı Street

## **The Last Word...**

Historic environments carry different styles and forms, social relations, historical, aesthetic and symbolic values as witnesses of the past [47]. The buildings in these areas define the space design, construction materials and techniques, and architectural character of the region [48],[49],[50],[51]. It argues that conservation works carried out in the historical environment should have integrity and include sustainable practices, and that problem identification and analysis should be carried out in conservation-related research [52].

The relationship between the new design and the traditional fabric in the historic environment varies according to the historical, architectural and technical characteristics of the original fabric and the textural, structural and contextual qualities of the area [53]. By respecting the historic fabric and heritage of the area, the development aims to preserve the architectural style and fabric of the surrounding area, while encouraging the preservation and reuse of existing historic buildings. In cases where new building construction is mandatory, designs should be made in a way that respects the historical character and identity of traditional architecture and cares about the protection of cultural heritage [54].

The design of new buildings in historic environments is considered as a design criterion within the contemporary conservation concept in order to preserve the historical and cultural continuity of the physical environment and transfer it to the future. In this type of construction approach, preservation of the historical heritage is essential.

When constructing new buildings in historic environments, it is important to preserve and restore historic buildings, to harmonize with the traditional texture in terms of scale, height and style, to use traditional materials, and to preserve or recreate open and green areas.

New buildings in the historic environment should be integrated aesthetically, functionally and structurally with the original texture. This integration should be achieved through traditional or contemporary techniques and materials, rather than repetition and imitation of the architectural style of the past [4],[47]. “Analogies” created within the traditional approach, which do not have any specific value, should be avoided as they can lead to misleading conclusions [55].

International treaties and conventions emphasize that interventions in the historic fabric should reflect the urban and architectural characteristics of each period. For this reason, imitations are generally opposed, except in cases of major disasters or special situations created in society. In the design of new buildings in the historic fabric, the acceptance of the historic environment as a design data, the preservation of the texture and character of the historic environment, and the transfer of the traces of the past to future generations are the criteria that should be taken into consideration in interventions. In this direction, if the buildings built on Yenikapı Street are analyzed in terms of new building design criteria in the historical environment;

- New buildings are not designed in accordance with the silhouette and settlement texture of the historical texture,
- The mass features of the buildings in terms of height and width are not integrated with the historical texture,
- The façade features of new buildings damage the authenticity of the historic fabric in which they are located,
- The new street design is not designed in a way that is respectful and appropriate to the spirit of the place,
- The new buildings examined in terms of their periodic legibility lack creative interpretation and elements that emphasize the contemporary,
- New buildings do not contribute to the cultural continuity of the historical texture in terms of spatial integrity, [56]
- That new buildings cannot be part of the urban architecture,

- The city has a uniform appearance apart from its unique architecture,
- Loss of social and demographic structure,
- In the design of the commercial buildings on the street, it is seen that there is an imitation within the reconstruction and that the attempt to imitate the old is not successful.

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