



## Architect Kemalettin and Edirne Train Station Campus<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

During a time when Western influence was changing living conditions and state order, new types of buildings were needed. Architect Kemalettin rose to the occasion and designed train station buildings for the Rumelia and Oriental railways in Plovdiv, Thessaloniki, Sofia, and Edirne. Construction began in 1870, with the Edirne Train Station being built due to the inadequacy of the existing station building in Karaağaç, known as Little Paris. The grand architecture of the Edirne Train Station is reminiscent of the Sirkeci Train Station in terms of plan and facade layout. Unfortunately, its opening was delayed due to World War I and remained unused for many years. Today, it is the main building of the Faculty of Fine Arts of Trakya University.

The station campus also includes hangars, lodgings, warehouses, and other auxiliary buildings. While some of these buildings were considered units affiliated with the Faculty, even after restoration work was completed, some existing buildings are still out of use. Despite the availability of posters, articles, and research on the Edirne Train Station building, this study aims to provide information about the renovation and usage status of the buildings throughout the campus.

To obtain accurate data, the author used on-site observation methods to take measurements and photographs of each building and prepare plans and views. Literature research and archives from the Trakya University Department of Construction Affairs were also used to collect data on existing buildings' old and new conditions.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In an era where German architectural influence held great sway, Architect Kemalettin emerged as a leading figure in the 1st National Architecture movement, a response to the Westernization trend. Collaborating with German Architect August Jachmund, he oversaw the construction of Istanbul's Sirkeci Train Station, which marked the final stop of the Orient Express, connecting Europe and the East. As transportation technology and trade rapidly advanced, government institutions and transportation structures became increasingly diverse. Kemalettin's extensive education at Berlin's Charlottenburg Technische Hochschule paved the way for his successful design of numerous train station projects, including the Edirne Karaağaç station.

Located in the southwest of Edirne city lies the district of Karaağaç. Separated from the city center by the Tunca and Meriç rivers, reaching the old Edirne Train Station, currently serving as the Faculty of Fine Arts of Trakya University, can be done via Karaağaç Street, connected to the last part of the City Forest road. This road is also linked to the Pazarkule border gate. Additionally, two stone bridges from the end of Kaleiçi Saraçlar Street, the historical city center, can be taken to reach the campus. Situated near the Timurtaş Military Hospital to the east, the Greek border line passes approximately 2 km south of the campus.

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Edirne's urban development has undergone significant cultural and socio-economic changes. The completion of the Karagaç railway station complex in 1872 profoundly impacted Edirne's commercial landscape. The railway station was an important hub connecting Edirne with other significant cities and facilitating trade and travel. The interconnections contributed significantly to Edirne's prosperity and expansion in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Başar & Erdoğan, 2009). After the population exchange in 1923 and the relocation of the station building in 1977, the Karagaç region experienced a decline in population and economic activity. The population exchange between Greece and Turkey brought about significant demographic changes, with many Greek residents leaving Edirne and new Turkish residents arriving from Greece. This upheaval disrupted the region's social and economic fabric (Lamprou, 2023).

The shift of the station building caused further deterioration, reducing the area's significance as a transportation center. This led to the decline of economic activities that had once flourished around the station, resulting in a period of stagnation and regression for Karaağaç (Emekligil Erdoğan, 2013).

Establishing the Faculty of Fine Arts at Trakya University revitalized the Karagaç district. The University's presence attracted students, faculty, and visitors, bringing new life and economic activity to the area. This transformation positively impacted the urban and social fabric of the area, fostering a sense of community and cultural engagement (Emekligil Erdoğan, 2013; Güzelci et al., 2019). Revitalization efforts included restoring historic buildings and constructing new infrastructure to support educational and cultural efforts. These efforts preserved Karagaç's architectural heritage, created opportunities for local businesses to flourish, and supported the community's economic recovery (Esquinas & Pinto, 2014). In the past, Karaağaç was known as the "little Paris" due to the opening of the train station affiliated with the Rumelia Railways in 1872. However, with the relocation of the station building in 1977, it lost much of its population. The village became a farm and summer resort for Central district citizens. Its vitality was restored in 2011 with the settlement of the faculty. The Edirne Cultural Heritage Preservation Board registered and protected the campus and its buildings with a decision numbered 854, dated 14.02.2013.

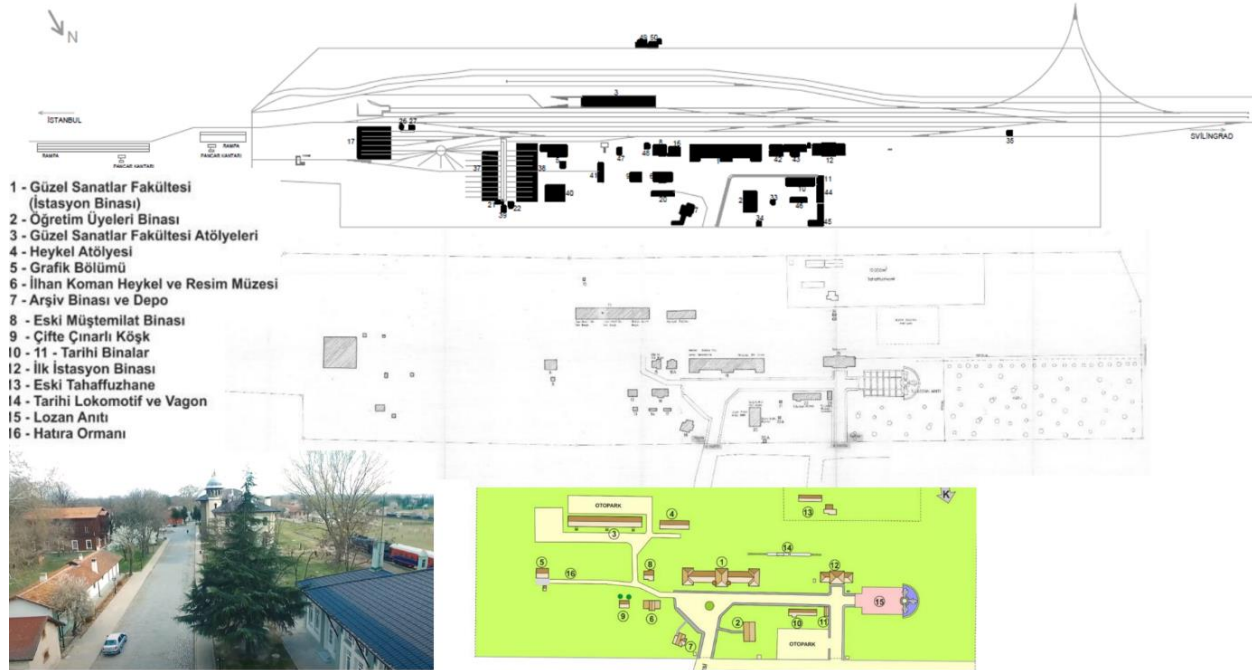


**Figure 1.** The urban location of the campus and the photograph of the connected street in 1906 (URL 1)

The urban features of the Edirne Karaağaç Station Complex underscore the importance of its adaptation as a campus. The transformation of the complex into infrastructure and a campus should be carefully assessed, considering Edirne's urban history and socio-cultural dynamics. The city's urban history encompasses numerous changes that have shaped the current use of the campus (Emekligil Erdoğan, 2013). During the 19th century, Edirne held significant strategic and commercial importance for the Ottoman Empire. The urban layout of Edirne underwent changes influenced by Westernization during this time. The Karaağaç area, in particular, emerged as a crucial hub for commerce and residential activities following the establishment of the railway station (Meral, 2016; Başar & Erdoğan, 2009).

In 2015, the current manager of Edirne Train Station, Ahmet Yıldırım, compared the maps obtained from the station's archive and the archive of Trakya University's Department of Construction Affairs. Figure 2 shows a comparison of the maps drawn at various times. The old map, which dates back to a

time before 1977 and whose exact date is unknown, shows the station building and auxiliary structures along the existing rail route. These structures were positioned according to the train's travel distance. Additionally, buildings such as lodging, archives, and personnel units not directly related to the train were arranged near the entrance, with a garden surrounding them. The second map, drawn after 1998 when the Lausanne Monument was built, does not include the locomotive depot, workshop building, and surrounding structures active when the station was used for its original purpose. However, the quarantine building, which was not shown on the old map, was present.



**Figure 2.** Maps of the campus drawn on different dates and a general photograph (Meral, 2016)

According to the site plan drawing created after 2011, when the Faculty of Fine Arts of Trakya University relocated to the campus, it appears that the campus buildings were renovated and utilized, while the larger auxiliary structures, such as the traction building and workshops, remained in the background as they were primarily related to the station function.

This research investigates the renovation process and current utilization of the Edirne Karaağaç Station Complex as a campus. By incorporating existing literature on railway systems and buildings, this paper aims to clarify its position within the current body of work. (Başar & Erdoğan, 2009; Güzelci et al., 2019; Emekligil Erdoğan, 2013; Meral, 2016)

## 2. METHOD

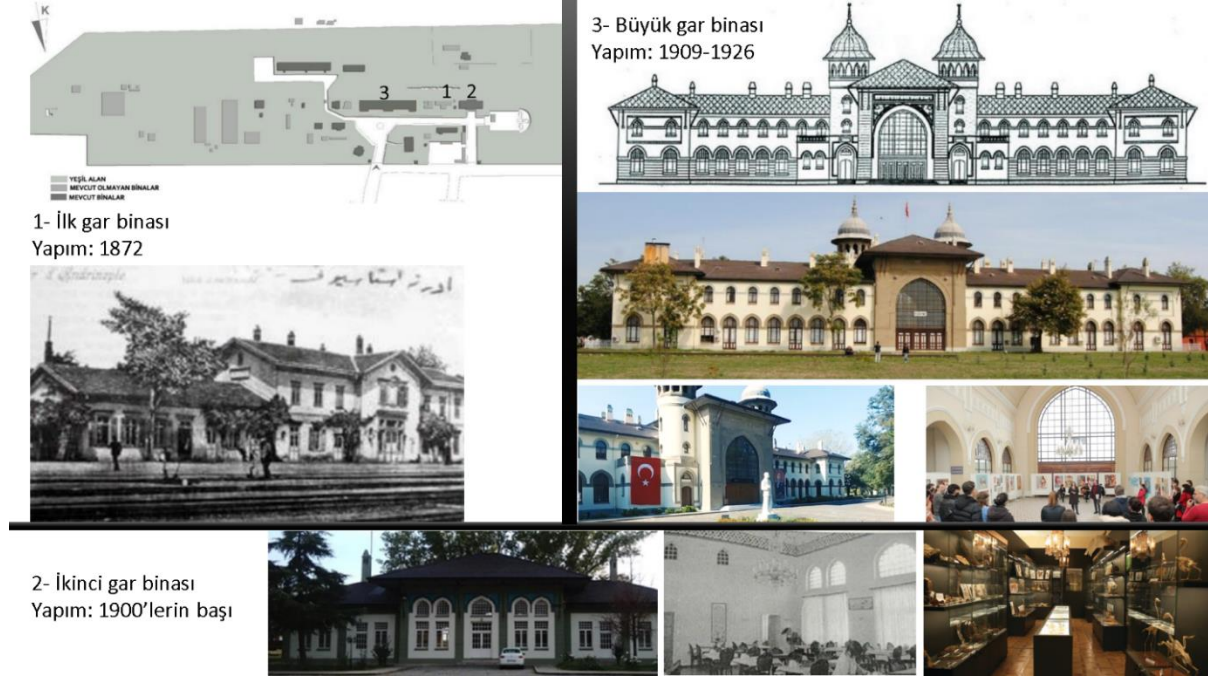
This research is focused on exploring the history of railways, examining old buildings from the past, and investigating railway designs from the same period. The researchers delved into the history of Edirne, now a border town, and examined what the Karaağaç district was like when the railway was first built. They compared maps of the railway area from back then to now and obtained old photos and plans from archives. Based on this information, they conducted an inventory check and suggested ways to repurpose these structures for modern use.

## 3. EXISTING BUILDINGS IN THE CAMPUS

The inventory of the campus buildings was prepared after gathering information. Figure 3 shows the buildings that made up the Edirne Karaağaç Train Station campus from its inception until today. The original station building was constructed in 1872 but no longer exists. A photograph taken in 1890 of the Edirne train station shows the original building, but it was replaced by a new building located in the west



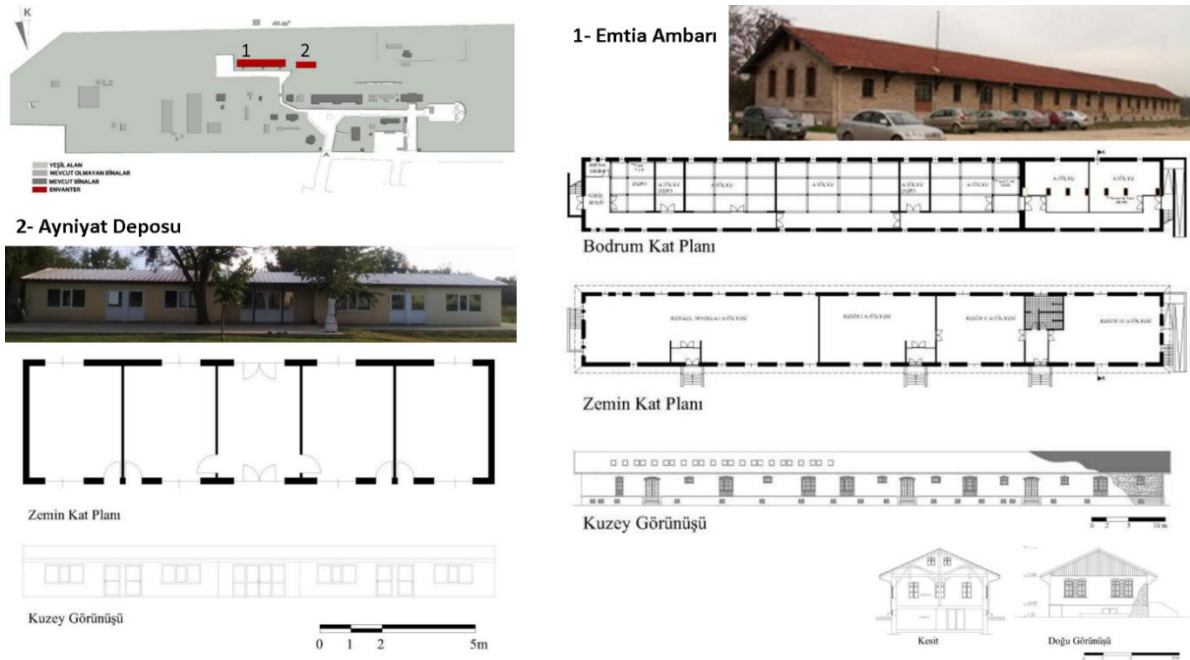
due to its inadequacy. The second station building, which is also no longer standing, was used until the construction of the current large station building designed by architect Kemalettin. The building of the current station started in 1909 but was halted due to the war. The second station building was far west of the campus, closest to the current Lausanne Monument. According to the classification made by Başar and Erdoğan, the second station building was of the type "symmetrical plan with a high entrance and single-story sides." It was used as a TCDD (Republic of Turkey State Railways) restaurant building for a time, and after being transferred to the faculty, it was turned into a canteen. It is currently home to the Natural History Museum. (Başar & Erdoğan, 2009).



**Figure 3.** Station buildings used to date (Author's archive)

The building currently serves as the deanery of Trakya University was previously a train station and then reserved for the Rectorate and administrative units of the university from 1998 to 2011. During the same period, the rooms on the upper floor were used as guesthouses and were converted into lodgings with separate wet areas during a renovation in 1959. The building has a corridor on both floors, facing north towards Karaağaç and opening only to the rooms in the south direction. The corner parts of the corridor are highlighted, and the stairs that provide access to the floors are positioned in these corners on the north facade. The building's façade structure is inspired by Seljuk architecture, and the transparent crown door interpretation on the main entrance façade, which faces the campus, is supported by wide eaves, higher than normal floor height, and towers on both sides. The front and rear facades of the building are 80 meters long, the only difference between them are the towers on the front facade and the terraces next to them. The neo-classical Turkish architecture is reflected by pointed arched windows, moldings, sashes, rosettes, and hourglass motifs that narrow as you go up to the upper floors. In the middle of the building, towards the entrance, there is a box office hall about two and a half stories high and connected to both facades. Currently, this hall serves as both the entrance to the deanery and an area where exhibitions and various collective events are held.

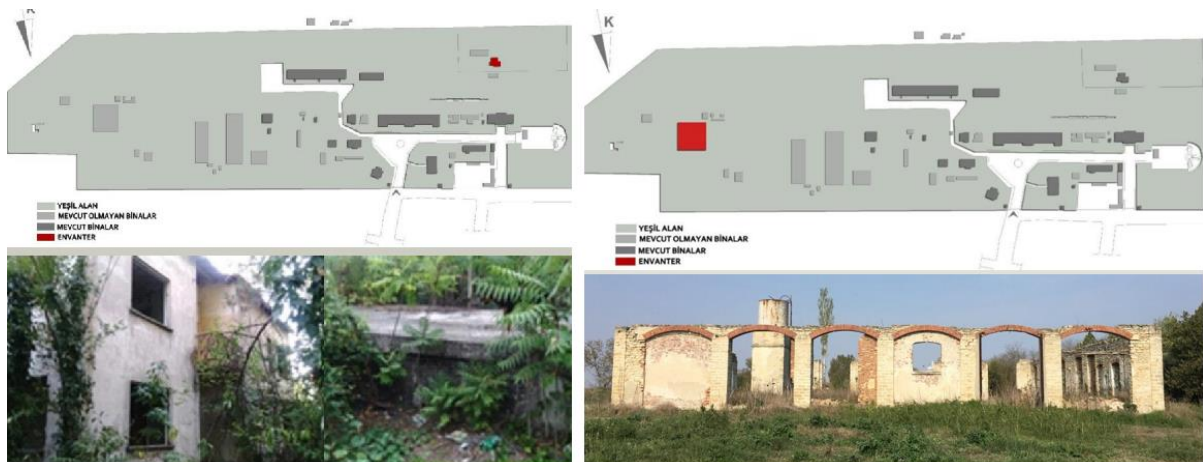
The Commodity Warehouse was a storage facility for Trakya University's Administrative Financial Affairs and Construction Works departments from 2001 to 2011. The building was designed to be built at a certain height above the ground, allowing for the direct unloading of goods from arriving trains. (Figure 4) This design also protected the stored goods from potential damage caused by floods. The basement floor, which houses storage and personnel offices, receives light from the areaway. The rectangular building, which measures 78.80 m x 10.00 m, underwent repairs in 1998 and 2001. As part of the renovations, some of the doors on the south-facing façade were filled into the parapet level and converted into windows. The roof is supported by wooden construction, and no flooring is beneath it, making it visible from inside the building. Today, the building is used as a workshop for faculty units.



**Figure 4.** Commodity Warehouse and Goods Warehouse (Meral, 2016)

The warehouse for goods, located right beside the commodity warehouse, is a single-story building that was added to the university's campus. It was built prefabricated on a reinforced concrete platform and doesn't have a basement. Nowadays, this building is used as a sculpture workshop. It has three entrances from the campus and was constructed symmetrically. The building has a double-sided central hall with a workshop on both sides and additional workshops at the corners that can be entered from outside.

Figure 5 shows a photograph of a quarantine building. The building's construction system is reinforced concrete, and the façade structure is simple, with a wide window opening and no decorative features. It can be understood that the building was added later but was abandoned and unused after losing its station status. The shelter is used to keep animals that are brought from other places in transportation complexes. The animals undergo health checks; if needed, they are kept for a while and provided with veterinary services. Various elements like troughs, mangers, barns, and wagon-high ramps are created to cater to the needs of animals. Additionally, the building includes a staircase connecting the basement, ground, and ordinary floors, as well as wet areas, doctor's rooms, offices, and storage units on the basement floor.

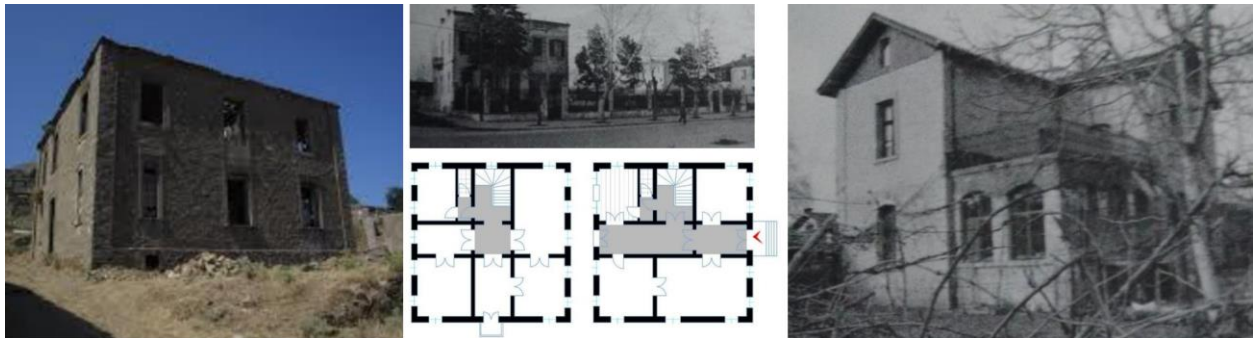


**Figure 5.** Tahaffuzhane and hangar (traction) buildings (Trakya University Department of Construction Affairs archive)

The hangar, also known as the traction building, has a near-square plan and serves as a storage facility for wagons that are not in use. If necessary, these wagons are taken for repair in the workshops opposite the hangar through the rotating bridge in front of it. The building is far from the passenger transit route, and logistics services are provided by the surrounding water reservoirs, locomotive depots, transporters, rotating bridges, workers' rooms, wet volumes, and warehouses to ensure smooth transportation. The hangar used to be one of the large-span buildings, but it lost its function when the campus changed from being a train station. It was built with a masonry stone system, and its wide door and window openings are covered with a single row of brick flat arches. It may have been covered with two consecutive rows of gable roofs, similar to other structures. As of December 2023, Trakya University Department of Construction Affairs has decided to restore the hangar and give it a new function affiliated with the faculty. The work for this restoration has begun.

Most buildings on the campus have only one or two floors above the basement. The Karaağaç district, located close to the border of Edirne, used to experience floods from time to time until an additional canal was built on the Meriç River. This is one of the reasons why buildings in this area have subgrades. The basement is used for shelter and storage and has become a necessity for the village, especially in residences, considering the wood-on-stone construction systems of the period. The only exceptions are the repair shops and some small storage units.

During the early 20th century in Edirne, the construction of summer homes for consulate staff increased the population. Many citizens of European origin, mostly Greek, Armenian, Jewish, or Bulgarian, settled here and engaged in trade. The train station also played a significant role in the area's growth. (Emekligil Erdoğan, 2013) Before the 1923 population exchange, most of the inhabitants residing in Karaağaç were not Muslim, accounting for over 90% of the population. The houses they lived in were constructed based on their own beliefs and lifestyles. These homes had distinct features such as a large number of window openings on the façade facing the street, a square-shaped plan, a single door entrance opening directly to the street, the absence of shutters, with only a shade on the windows, wet areas located inside the house and bathrooms not included in the rooms. These features distinguish Karaağaç homes from the typical Muslim housing typology. (Figure 6)



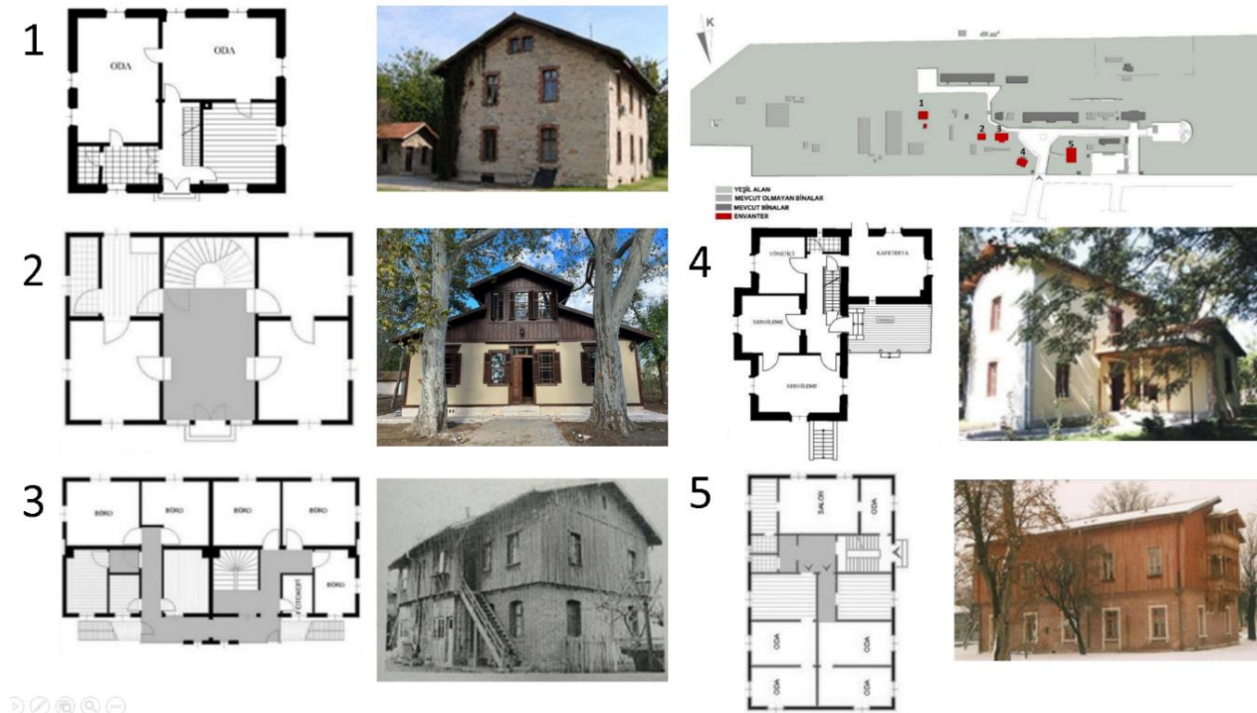
**Figure 6.** Examples of a Greek house and Karaağaç houses in Gökçeada (Meral, 2016)

There are different types of accommodations available at the Karaağaç railway station. The station building has a guesthouse/hotel, and auxiliary personnel units are located towards the Lausanne Monument. Additionally, there are lodgings for administrative personnel, which are closer to the campus entrance from the village and are positioned further back from the station's function. The plans and façades of these buildings have various designs. However, they are similar to the residences of non-Muslim citizens, considered indigenous people of Karaağaç at that time.

As illustrated in Figure 7, the building known as residence number 1, presently utilized as the Graphics Department, is located at the highest end of the campus. The structure comprises a basement floor, a ground floor, a typical floor, and a roof. Access to the central hall is through the entrance from the ground floor, which leads into the kitchen and toilet area. The standard floor is accessible by a single-arm staircase, and the end of the corridor leads to a room that connects to another room through a door. On the regular floor, four rooms are arranged to receive light from the outside and share a common wet area. The



rooms around the chimney are connected and can be used for heating purposes towards the kitchen on the ground floor. Moreover, between the sloping surfaces of the gable roof, there are two separate rooms.

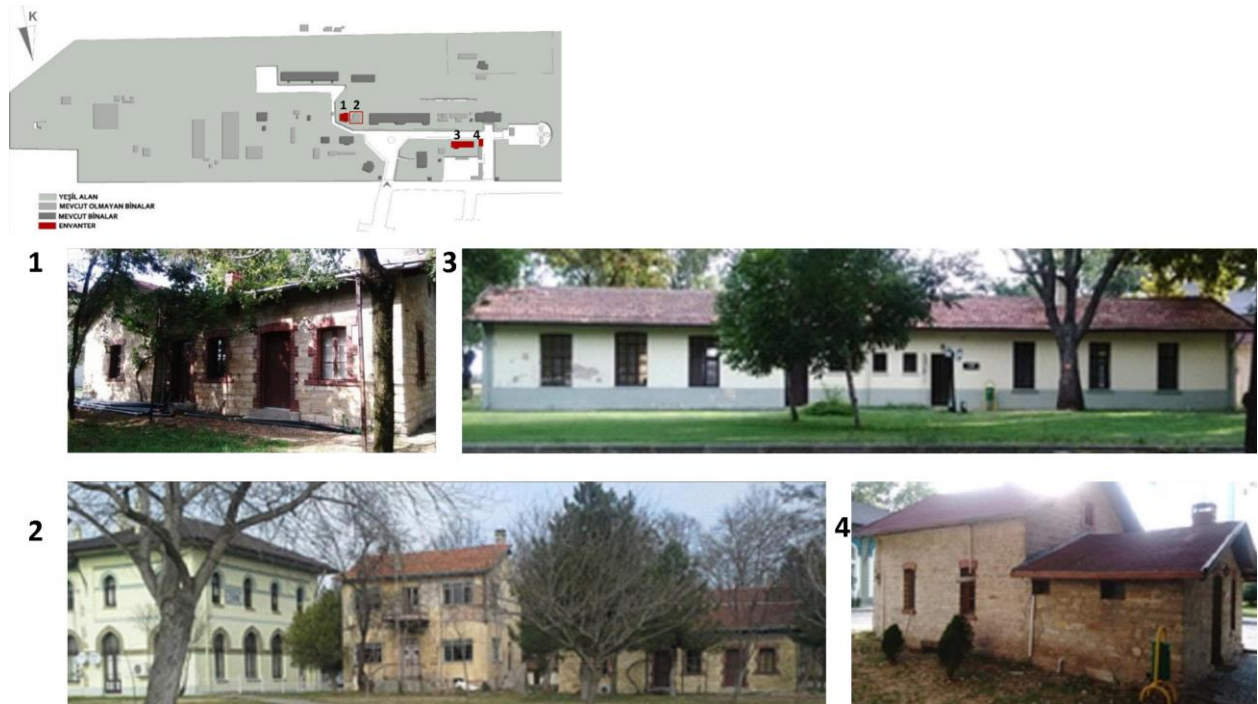


**Figure 7.** Lodging buildings (Edited accordingly T.U. Department of Construction Affairs Archives)

Building number 2, also known as Çifte Çınarlı Mansion, was the TCDD Garden Science Director's Residence from 1914 to 1977. Maps obtained from the archives of Trakya University's Department of Construction Affairs show that the building has a double-winged main entrance door on the south side, opposite the warehouse building. The building has a central hall plan type that can be accessed through three steps. Upon entering the outer door, you can access the world part via the balanced staircase climbed after a door. Apart from three interconnected rooms and a wet area, the wide central hall is also accessible. The purpose for which the building was recently restored in 2023 has not yet been determined.

Building number 3 in Figure 7, which currently houses the İlhan Koman Sculpture and Painting Museum, is closest to the Station building and at the corner of the large square in front of it. The building was constructed using the masonry brick system, and its normal floor façade is covered with wood over brick. The ground floor and normal floors have separate stairs and double entrance doors. However, today, access between floors is provided by a balanced staircase located on one side of the interior. Although the window edges lack brick jambs, there is a single brick keystone on the flat arches on the ground floor.

The structure marked with the number 4 in Figure 7 and situated closest to the campus entrance currently serves as an archive and warehouse. Previously, it was used as Trakya University's Strategy Development Department from 2000 to 2011 and as a faculty office for a year after that. The building, which comprises a basement, ground floor, normal floors, and an attic, has a total area of 370 m<sup>2</sup>. The south terrace has three steps leading up to it, providing access to the building. Additionally, there is a basement entrance on the west side. The rectangular planned hall is the primary access point to all spaces, and a single-arm staircase facilitates the transition between floors.



**Figure 8.** Revision Office, Old PTT Building, Glass Workshop (former Lausanne Museum), and Guard Shack (Author's archive)

The old revision office, now an outbuilding, is number 1 in Figure 8. It is situated east of the large station building, at the corner of the road leading to the sculpture workshops. This building has contributed to forming a secondary historical square on the campus and surrounding structures. The building is a single-story structure with two rooms not connected to the wet volumes inside and open to the rail section. Two additional rooms with an internal passage connected to a central hall can be accessed from the campus. These rooms also have wet volumes. The old PTT building, identified as number 2, no longer exists today.

The Glass Workshop, depicted in Figure 8 number 3, served as the Lausanne Museum from 2000 to 2013. The building is a single-story structure with two entrances that open into the same main hall. In addition to the wet areas connected to this hall, there are interconnecting rooms and a separate room. The windows of the building are made with wooden segmented construction, while the building itself was constructed with a masonry brick system.

Building number 4, on the other hand, was used as a guard hut during the station period and is distinguished by its two height levels on its façade. The building has a narrow entrance leading to kitchen and bathroom units, with a large room on the rising side. The flat arched window edges of the building were built using brick jambs, and the building itself was constructed with a stone masonry structure.



**Figure 9.** Train wagon and Lausanne Monument (Author's archive)



In 2002, an old train wagon was brought from Sakarya and placed in the old railway direction of the large station building. Its interior was designed as a restaurant (as shown in Figure 9 (Trakya Üniversitesi, 2002)). However, since it remains within the educational campus today, its restaurant function has been excluded from evaluation and only opened for nostalgic touristic purposes. The Lausanne Monument was built on March 29, 1998, and opened on July 19. It consists of three columns on which the figure of a young girl holds a dove and a document representing the agreement's text. The first column is 36.45 m long and symbolizes Anatolia; the second is 31.95 m long and symbolizes Thrace; the third is 17.45 m long and symbolizes Karaağaç, which was won in the Treaty of Lausanne. The concrete circle on the ground symbolizes unity. The monument is located in the westernmost part of the campus, at the level of the second entrance, which is not used today, creating a square in front of it.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The study assesses the historical and architectural features of the Edirne Karaağaç Station Complex, as well as its urban characteristics and current use. It integrates literature on railway systems and buildings to establish its position within existing research. The study also examines the urban and social context of the campus in light of Edirne's historical transformations.

The railway is a significant milestone in the history of the world that has had numerous social, economic, and physical impacts. Railways in the early 19th century made international communication and transportation easier and faster. This led to a period of rapid development and progress. The impact of the railways is visible in the urban areas where they are located and the architectural styles around them. The station buildings, which are a new type of building and are considered a symbol of the region in which they are located, reflect the technological and cultural values of the period. The surrounding buildings also express the same values.

Industrial buildings, including railway structures, are being studied more seriously in architectural history and conservation. Previously, railway structures were not considered important in architecture and urban identity, but now they are being taken more seriously and included in architectural discourse (Güzelci et al., 2019). Railway buildings are significant structures representing the historical process of their construction period. They symbolize the change they brought to the city after their construction and the new urban area they created. The Karaağaç Train Station and campus buildings are the subject of the study of the principle of Ottomanism, which was put forward in the 19th century, and its reflections on architecture. Different styles came together in building groups with different functions.

The Edirne Karaağaç Station Complex is an example of urban transformation from the Ottoman period to the present. Its architectural and urban characteristics reflect the socio-economic and cultural dynamics of the time. Future studies on similar structures will benefit from this analysis, guiding the preservation and evaluation of historical assets.

The Train Station building is located at the furthest point of Turkish territory, opening to the Balkans and Europe. Many personnel living in residences built in the style of old Greek houses serve in and around the building. It was built in the 1st National Architectural style with Seljuk motifs. Although preserving these buildings' purpose is impossible due to current political and geological reasons, their geopolitical position is still significant. The campus is like an open-air museum, all buildings reflecting a particular ideology. To maintain and reinforce this ideology, it is important to restore all structures with the least possible intervention and to function them in a way that does not damage the original skeletal system. This aligns with the educational mission it carries today and the urban environment to which it is connected. By doing so, the educational institution can efficiently meet its space needs while ensuring that our historical assets are sustained responsibly.

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