

Yesterday To Today: Bomonti Beer Factory

Dünden Bugüne: Bomonti Bira Fabrikası

Gökben PALAAZSÖZ - 0000-0002-8811-4920

Abstract

Production has been a continuous process since the beginning. It remains a fundamental element of human life. This process naturally evolves as the demands of production increase and is still ongoing today. The increase in production has led to the expansion of territory and the creation of densely populated areas. In this context, the Bomonti Brewery is an important example of industrial heritage. Its history dates from the Ottoman Empire to the present day.

The Bomonti Beer Factory has gone through different historical phases. It reflects the evolution of industrial processes from the Ottoman period to the present day. Its existence is the result of the accumulation of knowledge and experience in relation to these historical transformations. The factory has witnessed the development of different cultures and encapsulated these cultural aspects within its premises as it has witnessed the expansion of structural density in its surroundings.

This study explores the meaning of the concept of industrial heritage. It outlines the historical evolution of the Bomonti Brewery's structural and functional changes and highlights the importance of its re-functionalization and public accessibility as an exemplary case of industrial heritage.

Keywords: Industrial Heritage, The Bomonti Brewery, Historical Process.

Öz

Başlangıçtan itibaren devam eden bir süreç olan üretim, insan yaşamının temel bir unsuru olarak varlığını sürdürmektedir. Bu süreç, üretim gereksinimlerinin artmasıyla birlikte doğal olarak evrim geçirerek günümüzde de devam etmektedir. Artan üretim, yüzey alanının genişlemesine ve yoğun yerleşim bölgelerinin oluşmasına neden olmuştur. Bu bağlamda, Osmanlı Devleti döneminden günümüze uzanan bir geçmişi olan Bomonti Bira Fabrikası, endüstriyel mirasın önemli örneklerinden biridir.

Bomonti Bira Fabrikası, 19. yüzyılda Osmanlı Devleti döneminde kurulmuş ve zaman içinde çeşitli dönemlere tanıklık ederek günümüze ulaşmıştır. Fabrika, endüstriyel süreçlerin evrimini

yansıtarak geçmişten günümüze birikmiş bilgi ve deneyimleri bünyesinde barındırmaktadır. Ayrıca, çevresinde oluşan yapısal yoğunluk, yerleşim alanlarının gelişimine katkıda bulunmuş ve çeşitli kültürleri bir araya getirmiştir.

Bu çalışma, endüstriyel mirasın önemini ele almakta olup, Bomonti Bira Fabrikası'nın yapısal ve işlevsel değişimini tarihsel bir perspektifle incelemektedir. Fabrikanın geçirdiği süreçler ve içerisinde barındırdığı kültürel miras, bu yapıyı önemli kılmaktadır. Ayrıca, endüstriyel mirasın korunması, yeniden işlevlendirilmesi ve kamuya kazandırılması konuları vurgulanarak, bu mirasın sürdürülebilir bir şekilde değerlendirilmesinin önemi üzerinde durulmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Endüstriyel Miras, Bomonti Bira Fabrikası, Tarihsel Süreç.

1. Introduction

Throughout history, the development and transformation of industry has left its mark on various spaces, structures, settlements, cities, and cultures. While the process of industrialization continues, the preservation and use of industrial heritage continues in many places. In some regions, archaeological remains are all that remain of this historical process. This heritage not only provides information about production and technological processes, but also embodies the abstract heritage that sustains and expands cultures, memories, skills, and social life.

In recent years there has been a growing awareness of the need to conserve all industrial structures that are considered significant. The disciplined approach to conservation is of paramount importance. Issues such as non-registration due to poor documentation, uninformed approaches, avoidance of expert involvement, misunderstandings, environmental concerns, and profit-driven approaches threaten to erode the concept of industrial heritage. The priority should be to protect our existing industrial heritage.

The Bomonti Brewery is just one example of several very important industrial heritage sites with their historical legacy. The factory is an important part of the city's memory. It has a crucial role to play in transmitting this history to future generations. Its importance is underlined by the fact that it has been preserved and re-functionalized, transformed into a social and cultural space, and possesses structural features and materials that convey knowledge of the period.

2. Industrial Heritage Concept

The Industrial Revolution in the 18th century marked a transformative development that influenced the course of life globally. Alongside the changes in industry, the proliferation of industrial structures and their significance after losing their functionality became a notable concern. Subsequently, the concept of preserving industrial structures emerged, with the initial awareness of this issue originating in Britain. The notion of industrial heritage gained prominence as the approach to conserving old industrial structures acquired an international dimension, asserting that industrial monuments and sites are components of not only national but also international heritage (Saner, 2012, p. 53).

In the United Kingdom, Neil Cossons, a prominent expert and the director of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum from 1971 to 1983, proposed the idea that led to the convening of the First International Congress on the Conservation of Industrial Monuments (FICCIM) in 1973. Sixty-one delegates from eight countries participated in this congress (Trinder, 2000). Following Cossons's initiative and the development and acceptance of the industrial heritage concept, organizations emerged, such as TICCIH (The International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage), ERIH (European Route of Industrial Heritage), E-FAITH (European Federation of Associations of Industrial and Technical Heritage), and DOCOMOMO (International Committee for Documentation and Conservation of Buildings, Sites, and Neighbourhoods of the Modern Movement).

In the Ottoman Empire, where industrialization increased in the 19th century, significant developments primarily occurred in Istanbul and its surroundings. One reason for this was Istanbul's provision of the necessary transportation network for the movement of manufactured goods. Especially after 1850, Istanbul became the center of Ottoman Empire industry. Although the number of industrial structures reached 256 in the 19th century, it has now dwindled to 43, awaiting preservation as architectural, historical, and technological heritage. Detailed documentation studies for industrial structures, some still functional and others having lost their functionality after the mid-20th century, have not yet been undertaken (Köksal and Ahunbay, 2006, p. 126).

The nationalization of the industrial heritage concept and its inclusion within cultural heritage are crucial points. Industrial structures are reconsidered within this framework, allowing for their adaptive reuse and/or designation as monumental values. Although the

emergence of these concepts as relatively new in contemporary Turkey may be considered a disadvantage, the undeniable presence of local studies is noteworthy.

2.1. Bomonti Beer Factory in the Context of the Industrial Heritage Concept

The closure or loss of functionality of historic factories for reasons such as inefficient operation, technological inadequacy and environmental pollution is a common global occurrence (Föhl, 1995, p. 47). It is not an appropriate approach to leave these historically valuable structures to their fate. Therefore, the preservation of these structures and the prevention of their deterioration is of great importance. Reconsidering these structures to benefit local economic development, the city and the public is crucial. In addition to the traces they bear of the past, industrial heritage sites are also valuable in terms of shedding light on the construction techniques and processes used in their respective eras.

3. Bomonti Beer Factory

The factory owned by the Swiss Bomonti brothers, which made it possible to produce beer using the top fermentation method, was established in 1890. Although some sources suggest that it started as a smaller production facility in Feriköy and was later moved to its current known location in 1902, the depiction of the factory's presence at its current location on the 1895 Hueber map (Figure 1) contradicts this claim.

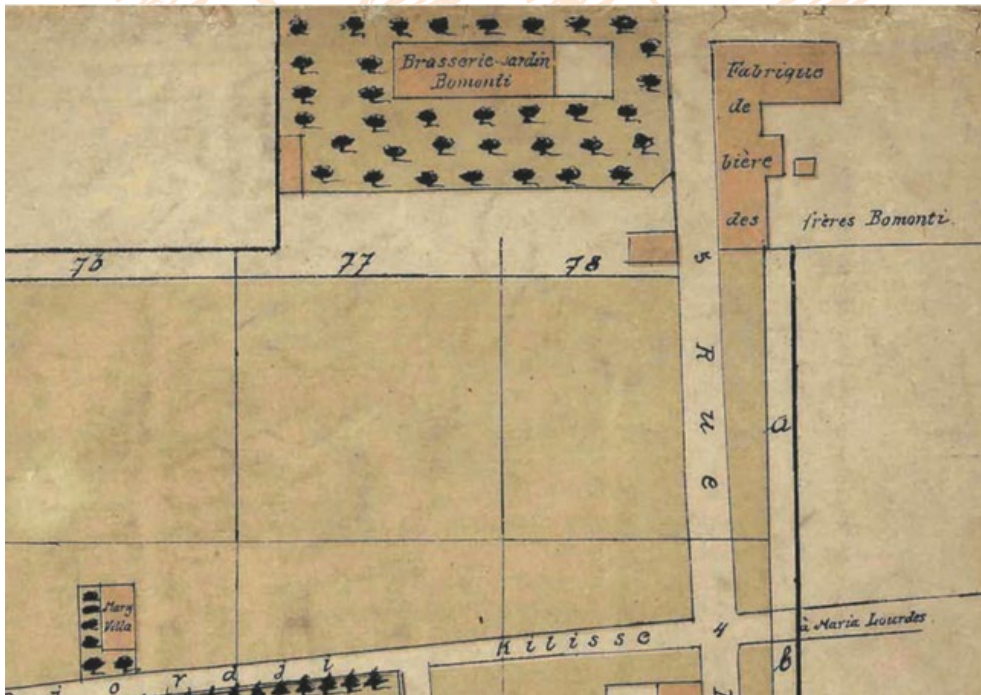


Figure 1. Hueber Map dated 1895 (Istanbul Atatürk Library Old Maps Collection)

The Bomonti beer factory was established in 1890. A Greek named Vasil immediately opened a small brewery in Şişli using the top fermentation method. However, unable to compete with the Bomonti brewery, which quickly switched to large-scale production, Vasil had to close his business (Zat 1994: 296). Over time, the factory has been expanded with the addition of new production units, and currently covers an area of 40 hectares. The introduction of a cold store in 1908 marked the beginning of lager beer production using the bottom fermentation method.

In 1909, the Nektar Beer Factory was established in Büyükdere. It started to compete with the Bomonti Factory and continued its production for three years. In 1912, the Bomonti and Nektar factories joined forces under the name of Bomonti-Nektar Beer Factory. This joint venture was a major contributor to the supply of a significant part of the beer production in Istanbul and Izmir. In 1938 (Sağlam, 2017, p. 37), a law was enacted that led to the takeover of the company by the Tekel administration. As a result, the factory stopped production for two years. It resumed production in 1940 under the management of the Tekel administration.

The factory continued to operate from 1940 to 1980. It faced challenges following the social and economic consequences of the 1980 coup. The factory ceased production in 1994 as part of the privatisation scheme for financially troubled public institutions. In recognition of its cultural significance, the Istanbul Cultural and Natural Assets Protection Board registered the Bomonti Beer Factory as a cultural heritage site on 25 February 1998 (Köksal, 2005, p. 51).

The Bomonti Beer Factory, which has witnessed more than a century of history, not only bears the traces of the different cultures and values it has encountered. It also has the function of reflecting these values. Over the years, the factory has undergone many changes and interventions. At the same time, its surrounding area has also undergone macroscopic transformations, as evidenced by the structural expansions observed (Figure 2).

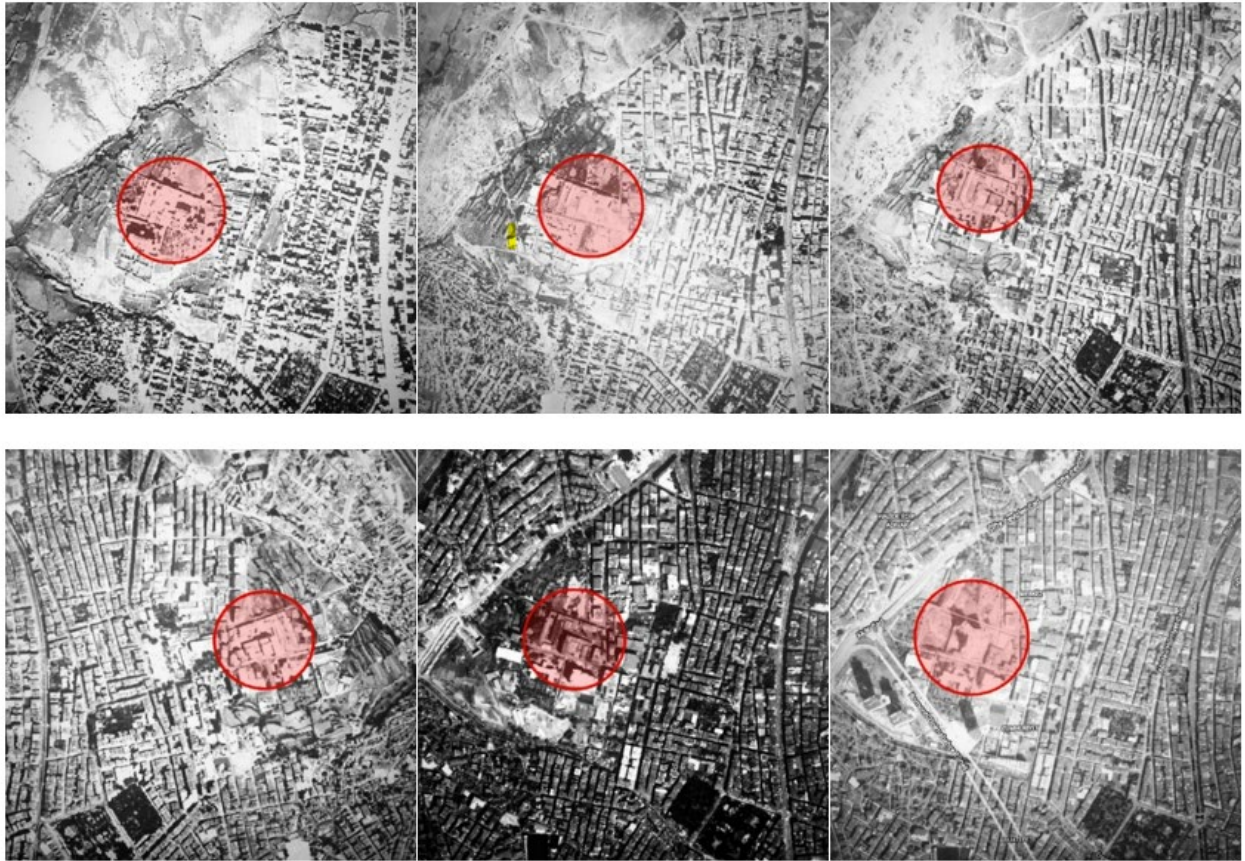


Figure 2. 1946, 1966, 1970, 1982, 2006 and 2011, Bomonti Aerial Photograph (Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Map Archives) (Adapted to the study.)

3.1. Historical Evolution of Bomonti Beer Factory

The historical evolution of the Bomonti Beer Factory, when considered in terms of architectural changes, can be examined in five distinct periods:

First Period (1893-1895): This initial phase encompasses the establishment years, representing the formative years of the factory.

The second period (1910s): Bottom fermentation was added to top fermentation during this period. During this period, the capacity of the factory was increased. The transition was made to large-scale production.

Third Period (1924): Based on historical sources, this period signifies the implementation of various additions (Figure 3).

Fourth Period (1940-1965): This period corresponds to the time when the management of the factory was taken over by the Tekel Administration.

Fifth Period (1965-1994): The final stage includes the construction of reinforced concrete additions on the Bomonti Island from 1965 until the cessation of production in 1994.



Figure 3. Sebah-Joallier photograph showing Bomonti Beer Factory, 1920-1930
(Salt Arařtırma)

3.2. 1890-1895 Years

The history of the Bomonti district begins with the Bavarian 'Bomonti brothers', as the name suggests. Bavaria, their place of origin, is in the south-east of Germany. Bavaria is recognized worldwide as the birthplace of the first mass production in the beer industry. This makes it a remarkable place in the history of beer. Although the sources do not provide information on how the Bomonti brothers decided to come to Istanbul and embarked on this journey, the transformation of the neighborhood known as Feriköy into Bomonti began in 1890.

Data for these years is limited due to the unavailability of original documents and projects related to the factory. However, informative sources for dating are the characteristics of the bricks in the rubble structures and the French and Ottoman seals on them. While the building blocks of the complex were initially arranged in a continuous sequence in the street silhouette (Figure 4), the disjointed arrangement in the center of the building block is attributed to the addition of various technical (Figure 5) and functional elements during the factory's initial settlement and operation.

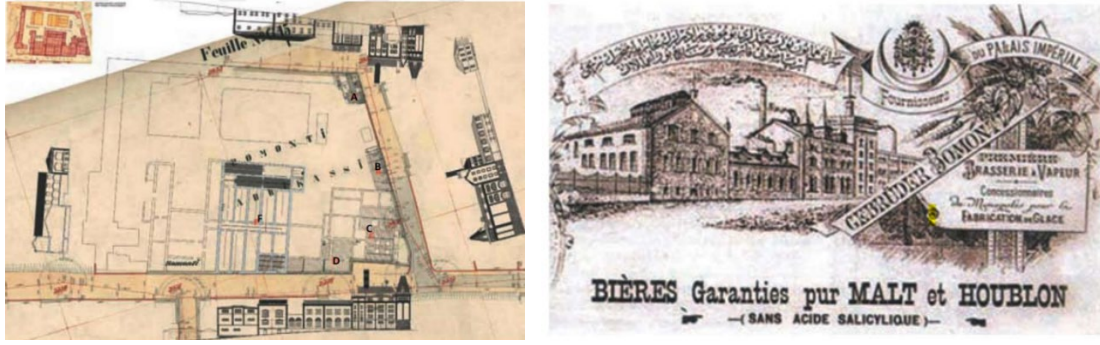


Figure 4. Bomonti Beer Factory Restitution Site Plan (Tanyeli and İkiz, 2009)

Figure 5. The first years of construction of Bomonti Beer Factory A drawing by 1893-1900 (Anonymous)

3.3 1895-1910 Years

Between 1895 and 1910, Bomonti was one of the most important industrial structures in the region. This was before 1955. During this period, the only other significant establishment in the area, apart from Bomonti, was the Mısırlı Trikotaj, which began operations in 1923. After the Bomonti Beer Factory was established in 1892, the Bomonti brothers increased its capacity, especially in response to Vasil, a Greek who began producing beer in the area using the top fermentation method. In 1908, the Bomonti brothers introduced the production of lager beer using the bottom fermentation method, with the addition of a cold store. The Bomonti brothers also signed an agreement with the Istanbul Municipality to formalise their production within the city limits. This officially brought them under the Tekel administration. In 1909, the establishment of Nektar Biracılık in Büyükdere (Figure 6) provided a significant competitor to the factory, and both establishments suffered financial losses.



Figure 6. Nektar Beer Factory General View (Büyükdere Nektar Beer Factory Restoration Project)

3.4. 1910-1924 Years

In the 1910s, to meet the growing needs, a residential building was added to the facility (Figure 7). The structure, consisting of a basement, ground floor, first floor, and attic, underwent gradual revisions over time. Balconies and stairs were added, altering its spatial configuration. The rubble structure is built with a solid brick weave (Figure 8).

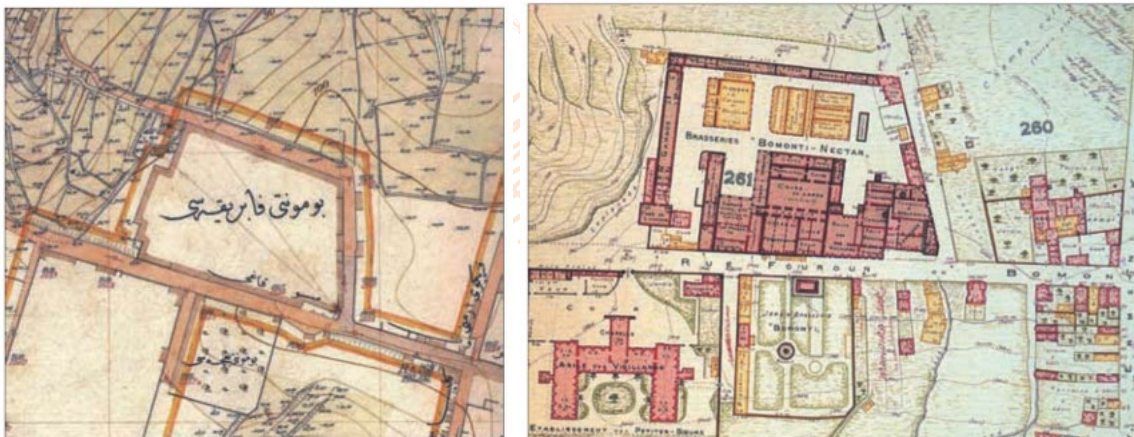


Figure 7. Istanbul dating back to the 1910s Bomonti Beer on Rumelia Region Map Factory and its immediate surroundings (Dağdelen 2005)

Figure 8. Plan Cadastral d'Assurances of 1924 Pervititch Map, Şişli II region (İTÜ Çevre ve Şehircilik Uygulama-Araştırma Merkezi)

In 1912, the Bomonti and Nektar breweries merged their interests to form the "Bomonti-Nektar United Beer Factories Company". The amalgamated factory became one of the most important in industrial statistics between 1913 and 1915 (Figure 9). According to the records, Bomonti's factories had six steam engines. They had a total of 915 horsepower. In 1913, the factory employed 118 workers. It produced 99,262 hectolitres of beer with a value of 15,718,700 kuruş (Ökçün, 1971).



Figure 9. Postcard Edited by Max Frunchtermann, Dated 1915-1916
(Osmanlı Bankası Arşiv ve Araştırma Merkezi)

The oldest structure in the factory is the block housing the barley silo and malt kiln. With the adoption of the bottom fermentation technique, the complex expanded to incorporate functions such as mashing and boiling tanks, as malt and beer were produced in the same building but in different main sections. Spatially integrated into the floor plan, these functions include a milling facility, mashing section, boiling section, tower structure, and administrative section.

The building was constructed using the rubble technique. It has a basement, a ground floor, four normal floors and an attic. The administrative annex was built in the 1920s. It

consists of a ground floor, mezzanine and first floor. It has also been used as the main entrance to the facility. An extension was added to the north side of the building to meet evolving needs. The window and door openings were modified.

3.5. 1940-1965 Years

During the indefinite period from 1945 to 1965 (Figure 10), various additions were made to the factory complex. These included the construction of an old brine and carbon dioxide department, a rest building, and a laboratory building. The various extensions to the factory complex at different times resulted in differences in construction techniques. The old brine and carbon dioxide department uses a reinforced concrete frame system, due to the use of construction techniques and details specific to the developing and changing times. On the other hand, the rest and laboratory building are of reinforced concrete construction. In the 1960s, a new structure was added to the north side of the building. The supporting north wall was partially demolished and replaced by a reinforced concrete structure.

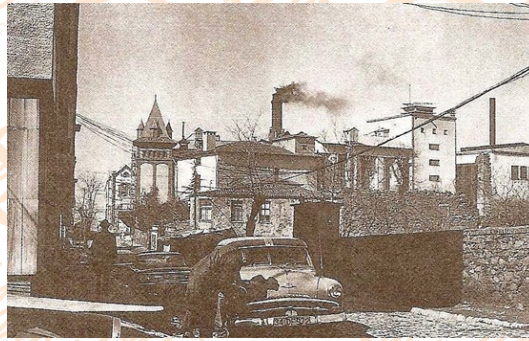


Figure 10. Bomonti in the 1950s

(İstanbul İnsan ve Mekân, Erol Tümertekin, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları)

3.6. 1965-1994 Years

Termed as the final period, this era spans from 1965 to the year 1994 when the factory ceased production. During this phase, the building complex underwent numerous additions with reinforced concrete supports. Most of the building complex's space was observed to be filled. In this period, the addition of a machine room and a new boiling tank resulted in the complete disappearance of construction techniques and material integrity within the building complex (Figure 11).



Figure 11. Bomonti Beer Factory Layout Plan 1997 (Akyurtlaklı, 1997)

4. Restoration of Bomonti Beer Factory

The transformation process of the facility, which began to deteriorate due to neglect after losing its production function, commenced with the privatization of Tekel. In 2007, through the build-operate-transfer model, the factory was leased to IC Holding for a period of 49 years (Nart, 2015, p. 122). The historical factory, which had been present for over a century on the building complex (Figure 12), was leased to the Doğuş Group, initiating efforts to conduct cultural, artistic, and entertainment activities, and to make it accessible to the public.

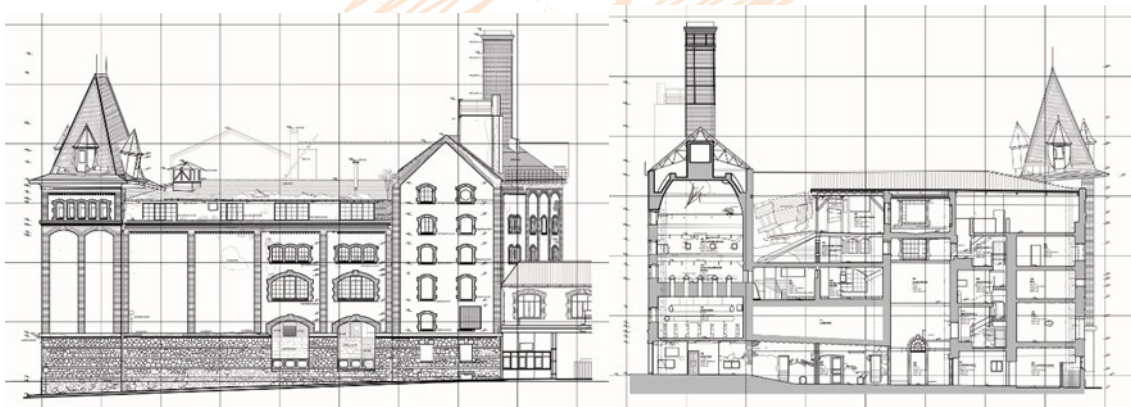


Figure 12. Sections of the Restoration of Bomonti Beer Factory (URL 1)

The reinforcement and restoration projects for the building were carried out by Koşok Construction, and the design process was the responsibility of architect Han Tümertekin.

Tümertekin stated that his aim at the beginning of the project was to work on the spatial structure of the building complex as a whole, with an adjacent order silhouette (Figure 13). Accordingly, he identified the openings in the complex as circulatory networks suited to composing the space.

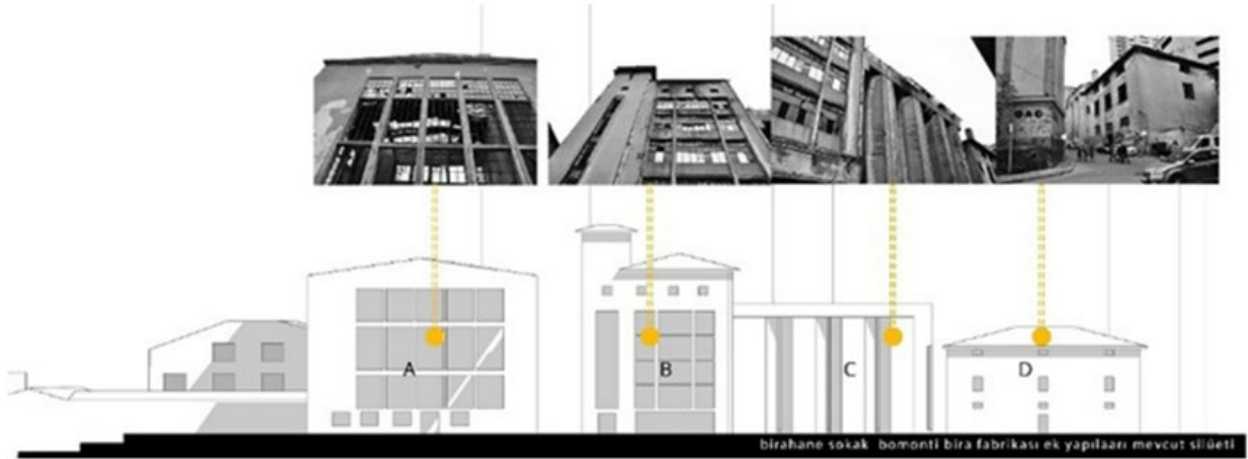


Figure 13. Bomonti Beer Factory Street Silhouette (Fatma Zeynep Altınbaşlı URL 2)

A new courtyard was created with a steel canopy, referencing the central courtyard the factory had in the past (Figure 14).



Figure 14. Bomontiada building block drawing (Sanalarc URL 3)

As a recent addition to the building complex, a winter garden and an elevator tower have been incorporated, utilizing materials such as steel and glass (Figure 15).



Figure 15. Bomonti Beer Factory from the inner courtyard (Author's archive, 19.03.2023)

During the restoration process, the essential components of the building's identity, including the stone wall texture, have been preserved (Figure 16). In some areas, shotcrete application has been implemented. However, in certain areas the shotcrete was not applied to preserve the original texture of the structure. For this purpose, it was left exposed.



Figure 16. Photo of the Original Stone Texture (Author's archive, 19.03.2023)

Some of the factory's industrial equipment has been preserved. It has been integrated into the transformation process. During its more than 100 years of existence, the site has undergone changes. It reflects different historical periods and is characterized by previous

extensions. Today, it serves as a cultural, artistic and entertainment space. At the same time, efforts are being made to preserve its manufacturing identity (Figure 17).



Figure 17. Current photo of Bomonti Beer Factory (İbrahim Özbunar URL 4)

The main building, now used by the Hilton Hotel, functions as a café/bar, concert venue, and Ara Güler Museum. On the other hand, additional structures such as silos, malt building, barley cleaning building, and boiler room, situated in front of the factory building, were transferred to the Presidency of Religious Affairs by the Cultural Heritage Preservation Regional Board on October 13, 2019. Unfortunately, these additional buildings were demolished in 2020 (Figure 18) (Er, 2021, p. 70).



Figure 18. First and second Photos of the 2020 Destruction

(From Eda Yiğit Archive, Photo: Orhan Cem Çetin, 2020; URL 5)

5. Conclusion and Evaluation

Although the concept of conservation in Turkey is supported by a comprehensive legal and administrative framework, including laws, regulations, and by-laws, the development of conservation awareness and its effective implementation remain complex issues that are intertwined with a wide range of factors. Within this context, it is frequently observed that many

industrial heritage sites and structures have not been placed under protection in previous years, and those that were protected have become irreparably damaged and unusable due to neglect.

Both functional and economic factors contribute to hindering these transformations, as the high costs associated with restoration processes often make their implementation unfeasible. The transformation of industrial heritage is defined by its unique and distinctive nature, which stems not only from its historical significance and role, but also from the potential to preserve this historical value within the context of contemporary conditions. In this regard, the perception of these sites as symbols of profit constitutes a major threat.

Industrial heritage structures, as historically significant symbols, should be capable of reflecting their inherent value, undergoing transformation through appropriate interventions, being preserved and sustained, and contributing added value to the communities they serve.

There are examples of structures that have survived to the present day in a country where the concept of industrial heritage has not been fully embraced and its requirements have not been met. The Bomonti brewery is an example of industrial heritage that has undergone periodic transformations, including additions in the production phases. These changes reflect different construction techniques and materials. Although the factory is not considered to be fully conserved, the restoration project preserves traces of the past by maintaining the regional authenticity of the building materials, due to its exposure to extensions and its demolition in 2020. Industrial heritage structures are important in defining the past. They are home to different cultures and eras. Documenting industrial heritage, identifying it through inventories and including it in conservation plans is the first step in preserving such structures and building complexes. Interdisciplinary cooperation in the evaluation and re-use of industrial heritage structures, in the creation of joint solutions and in making them accessible to the public is also of crucial importance. The meticulous execution of the work by well-equipped professionals in the field is essential for the proper execution of the process. In this context, it will be very helpful to encourage the initiation and continuation of academic studies and programs. A crucial role in motivating the necessary steps is also played by educational institutions. Given the reflection of historical values, the preservation of urban memory is of great importance.

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