

BRUTALIST ARCHITECTURE: EXAMINING THE TASHKENT MODERNISM PROJECT AND DEVELOPING A CONSERVATION MODEL FOR TÜRKİYE

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Abstract

Brutalist architecture emerged as a significant architectural movement between the 1960s and 1980s, characterized by the expressive use of exposed concrete, monumental forms, and structural clarity. Although many Brutalist buildings were constructed during the mid-twentieth century, in recent decades these structures have increasingly been recognized as an important component of modern architectural heritage. However, rapid urban transformation processes and changing urban policies have led to the demolition or alteration of many Brutalist buildings, particularly in large metropolitan cities. This study examines Brutalist architecture through a comparative analysis of selected buildings in Tashkent and Istanbul within the framework of the Tashkent Modernism Project. Buildings such as the Alisher Navoi Cinema and Chorsu Hotel in Tashkent, and the Atatürk Cultural Center (AKM) and the former Tercüman Newspaper Building in Istanbul, are analyzed in order to identify common architectural characteristics and contextual differences. The architectural features observed in the Tashkent examples are used as analytical criteria to evaluate the Istanbul cases. In this context, the study does not propose Brutalism as a design model for new developments, but rather highlights its value as an important layer of twentieth-century architectural heritage that requires documentation and conservation.

Keywords: Brutalism, Brutalist Architecture, Tashkent Modernism, Reyner Banham, İstanbul Atatürk Cultural Center, 20th Century Architecture, Alisher Navoi Cinema

BRÜTALİST MİMARİ: TAŞKENT MODERNİZM PROJESİNİN İNCELENMESİ ve TÜRKİYE İÇİN KORUMA MODELİNİN GELİŞTİRİLMESİ

Özet

Brütalist mimari, 1960–1980 yılları arasında ortaya çıkan ve özellikle brüt beton kullanımı, anıtsal kütle düzeni ve yapısal ifadeyi öne çıkaran önemli bir mimari akımdır. Ancak bu yapılar günümüzde yalnızca belirli bir dönemin mimari üretimi olarak değil, aynı zamanda modern mimari mirasın önemli bir parçası olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Buna karşın, hızlı kentsel dönüşüm süreçleri ve değişen kent politikaları, birçok Brütalist yapının yıkılması ya da özgün karakterini kaybetmesi gibi sorunlara yol açmaktadır. Bu çalışma, Taşkent Modernizm Projesi çerçevesinde Taşkent ve İstanbul'daki seçilmiş yapılar üzerinden Brütalist mimariyi karşılaştırmalı bir yaklaşımla incelemektedir. Bu kapsamda Taşkent'teki Alisher Nevai Sineması ve Chorsu Otel, İstanbul'daki Atatürk Kültür Merkezi (AKM) ve yıkılmış olan Tercüman Gazetesi Binası analiz edilerek mimari özellikler ve bağlamsal farklılıklar ortaya konmuştur. Taşkent örneklerinde belirlenen mimari özellikler karşılaştırma kriterleri olarak kullanılmış ve İstanbul'daki yapılar bu kriterler doğrultusunda değerlendirilmiştir. Bu bağlamda çalışma, Brütalizmi yeni bir mimari tasarım modeli olarak önermek yerine, modern mimari mirasın korunması gereken bir katmanı olarak ele almaktadır.

Anahtar sözcükler: Brütalizm, Brütalist Mimari, Tashkent Modernism, , Reyner Banham, İstanbul Atatürk Kültür Merkezi, 20. Yüzyılın Mimarisi, Alisher Navoi Sineması

1. Introduction

Brutalist architecture emerged as a significant architectural movement during the mid-twentieth century, particularly between the 1960s and 1980s, characterized by the expressive use of exposed concrete, monumental forms, and structural clarity. In recent years, many Brutalist buildings have increasingly been recognized as important components of modern architectural heritage. However, rapid urban transformation processes and changing urban policies have led to the demolition or alteration of numerous modernist buildings in different cities (Banham, 1966).

The aim of this study is to examine the architectural characteristics of Brutalist buildings through a comparative analysis of selected examples in Tashkent the capital of Uzbek Lands and Istanbul one of the big city of Turks within the framework of the Tashkent Modernism Project, and to propose a conceptual model for the documentation and conservation of Brutalist architectural heritage in Türkiye.

The scope of the study focuses on selected cultural and public buildings representing Brutalist and modernist architectural production, including the Alisher Navoi Cinema and Chorsu Hotel in Tashkent, and the Atatürk Cultural Center (AKM) and the former Tercüman Newspaper Building in Istanbul.

The study adopts a comparative architectural analysis method. In this approach, the architectural characteristics identified in the Tashkent examples are used as analytical criteria to evaluate the selected buildings in Istanbul. Through this comparative framework, the study aims to identify similarities and contextual differences between the two urban contexts and to develop a conceptual model for the conservation of Brutalist architecture in Türkiye (Macdonald, 2011).

Brutalist architecture represents one of the most significant architectural movements of post-war modernism. Characterized by the

expressive use of exposed concrete and monumental architectural forms, Brutalism reflects both technological developments and socio-political conditions of the mid-twentieth century (Macdonald, 2011).

In recent years, Brutalist architecture has increasingly been recognized as an important component of modern architectural heritage, leading to growing discussions on its conservation and reinterpretation. In the context of Türkiye, modern architecture developed within a complex interaction between international modernist influences and local cultural conditions. These discussions provide an important framework for understanding the architectural heritage represented by Brutalist buildings. (Bozdoğan, 2001).

Brutalist architecture has been widely discussed in architectural literature as one of the most influential movements of post-war modernism. Brutalism is an architectural approach characterized by the expressive use of raw concrete, structural honesty, and monumental forms. Later studies have examined Brutalism not only as a stylistic movement but also as a response to social, political, and economic conditions of the mid-twentieth century (Glendinning, 2019)

In recent years, the conservation of Brutalist architecture has become an important topic in architectural heritage studies. Several scholars emphasize that many Brutalist buildings are currently under threat due to negative public perception and rapid urban transformation. As a result, international organizations such as DOCOMOMO have highlighted the need for systematic documentation and preservation of modern architectural heritage (Anthony, 2012).

Within this context, research on modernist architecture in post-Soviet cities has gained increasing attention. Studies on the architectural heritage of Tashkent highlight the importance of modernist and Brutalist buildings constructed during the reconstruction period following the

1966 earthquake. These studies demonstrate that the architectural legacy of this period represents a significant component of twentieth-century architectural heritage (Del Curto, 2025).

Brutalist architecture emerged in the mid-twentieth century as a continuation and transformation of modernist architectural principles, particularly during the post-war reconstruction period of the 1950s and 1960s. The style is characterized by the expressive use of exposed construction materials, especially reinforced concrete, monumental geometric forms, and a strong emphasis on structural honesty and functionality. The term Brutalism derives from the French expression *béton brut*, meaning “raw concrete,” referring to the architectural practice of leaving concrete surfaces unfinished and visible as part of the building’s aesthetic and structural expression (Altun, 2016).

Brutalism developed partly as a reaction to earlier modernist tendencies that emphasized refinement and formal abstraction, promoting instead an architectural language based on clarity, functionality, and the truthful expression of materials. Architectural critic Reyner Banham played a significant role in defining the movement and identifying its main principles, including the legibility of architectural form, the clear expression of structural systems, and the direct use of materials “as found” (Mould, 2017).

The movement was strongly influenced by the work of Le Corbusier, particularly through projects such as the *Unité d’Habitation* in Marseille, which demonstrated how exposed concrete could function simultaneously as a structural and aesthetic element. At the same time, British architects Alison and Peter Smithson contributed to the development of the “New Brutalism,” emphasizing architectural honesty, functional clarity, and the social role of architecture in post-war reconstruction (Curtis, 1996).

As a result, Brutalist buildings are often recognized by their massive and monolithic appearance, geometric block-like compositions, repetitive modular systems, and minimal decorative elements. These characteristics reflect the movement’s broader architectural philosophy, which sought to express structure, material, and function directly rather than conceal them behind ornamental surfaces (Frampton, 2007).

The term gained recognition as architects from across Europe—particularly England—visited the building. Among these visitors were Alison and Peter Smithson, the architects most closely associated with Brutalism. They later applied the term to one of their earliest projects, a school in Hunstanton, Norfolk, England, completed in 1954. From this point forward, Brutalism began to take shape as a distinct architectural movement (Hatherley, 2011).

Though often criticized for being austere and imposing, Brutalism has seen a revival in contemporary architecture. Many architects and designers appreciate its honest materiality and bold forms, adapting it with modern materials and sustainability considerations. Brutalism remains a significant movement, influencing modern minimalism, industrial design, and adaptive reuse projects worldwide (Marino, 2025).

Brutalist architecture reflects engineering innovation, leveraging material science, structural physics, and energy efficiency. While its aesthetic remains divisive, scientific advancements in concrete and sustainability-driven modifications ensure its relevance in contemporary architectural discourse. New Brutalism was an architectural ethic that emphasized memorability, structural honesty, and the purity of materials. While materials played a crucial role, the term Brutalism became increasingly associated with raw concrete, partly due to the similarity between the English word Brutalism and the French term *béton brut*. This simplification was further reinforced by Le

Corbusier's iconic Unité d'Habitation in Marseille, which became a defining symbol of the Brutalist style (Macarthur, 2000).

The concept of architectural heritage has also evolved significantly over time, extending beyond traditional monuments to include modern and post-war architecture. International frameworks emphasize that heritage encompasses cultural, social, and historical values (UNESCO). Foundational documents such as the Venice Charter (ICOMOS) establish key conservation principles, particularly focusing on authenticity and integrity. However, applying these principles to modern architecture remains complex, as modern buildings are often not fully recognized within traditional heritage frameworks (Harrison, 2013).

In recent years, the conservation of modernist and Brutalist architecture has gained increasing attention in global discourse. The Tashkent Modernism XX/XXI project represents a significant initiative aimed at documenting and preserving Soviet modernist architecture in Central Asia. The project adopts strategies such as systematic documentation, digital archiving, and public engagement to enhance awareness and promote conservation. Studies on Soviet modernism further suggest that post-war architecture in regions such as Uzbekistan reflects hybrid cultural identities and therefore requires context-specific conservation approaches (Stronski, 2010).

The Tashkent case provides a valuable reference for developing conservation strategies, as it demonstrates how modern architectural heritage can be systematically documented, evaluated, and integrated into contemporary urban discourse. In particular, the emphasis on visibility and documentation offers a transferable model for other contexts facing similar challenges (Boris, 2024).

In Türkiye, Brutalist architecture emerged primarily between the 1960s and 1980s, shaped by local socio-political and cultural dynamics. Rather than being a direct imitation of Western

models, Brutalism in Türkiye developed as a localized interpretation of global modernism. Scholars such as highlight the relationship between modern architecture and nation-building processes in Türkiye, while emphasizing the lack of sufficient preservation strategies for modern architectural heritage (Balcı Öztürk & Şenyurt, 2024).

Recent studies also indicate that conservation practices in Türkiye remain inadequate in addressing the specific needs of modern architecture. The limited recognition of modern structures as heritage assets often results in demolition or inappropriate interventions. Although organizations such as DOCOMOMO Türkiye contribute to the documentation and advocacy of modern architectural heritage, these efforts are not always supported by comprehensive legal and institutional frameworks (Karakul, Özlem, & Ömür, 2018).

In this context, adaptive reuse has emerged as a key strategy for the sustainable conservation of modern architectural heritage. By enabling existing buildings to accommodate new functions while preserving their cultural significance, adaptive reuse offers a balanced approach between preservation and transformation. This strategy is particularly relevant for Brutalist structures, which frequently face functional obsolescence despite their architectural value.

Building upon these theoretical and empirical insights, this study adopts a comparative perspective by examining the Tashkent Modernism XX/XXI project as an international reference model and evaluating its applicability to the Turkish context. By identifying the gaps in current conservation practices in Türkiye, the research aims to develop a context-sensitive conservation model that integrates documentation, evaluation, legal protection, and adaptive reuse strategies. (Deo & Celli, 2025).

Brutalist architecture, as seen in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, can serve as a model for both

Brutalist and functional structures in Istanbul. However, developing this style in harmony with local culture and history offers a significant opportunity to transform the city both aesthetically and functionally. Such projects can be expected to contribute to Istanbul's rapidly growing and changing structure. The Tashkent Modernism Project aims to deeply examine the impact of Brutalist architecture in Uzbekistan, particularly in the city of Tashkent, and to reveal the connections between this movement's place in the post-Soviet era and global modernist movements. The project aims to explore how Brutalist design is integrated into urban planning and construction in Tashkent, and how this architectural style has evolved aesthetically, functionally, and culturally. Furthermore, comparing the influences of Brutalist architecture in Türkiye and globally to examine how this architectural movement has taken shape in the local context and how it is perceived by the public is a key objective of the project. Finally, Tashkent Modernism aims to understand the social and cultural impacts of modernist architecture, examining its transformation from the past to the present and its role in the world of architecture.

2. Material and Methods

This study employs a comparative architectural analysis method to examine Brutalist architecture within the framework of the Tashkent Modernism Project and selected examples from Türkiye. The research aims to analyze the architectural characteristics of Brutalist buildings and to identify similarities and differences between the examples in Uzbekistan and Türkiye.

The research framework of the study is presented in Figure 1. The Brutalist architectural characteristics identified in the Tashkent case studies were used to establish analytical criteria, which were subsequently applied to the selected buildings in Istanbul. This framework enables a systematic comparison between the two urban contexts.



Figure 1. The research framework of the study

The research process was conducted in four stages (Figure 2). In the first stage, a literature review was carried out to establish the theoretical background of Brutalist architecture. Academic publications, architectural archives, and previous studies related to modernist architecture and Brutalism were examined to define the historical development and architectural characteristics of the movement.

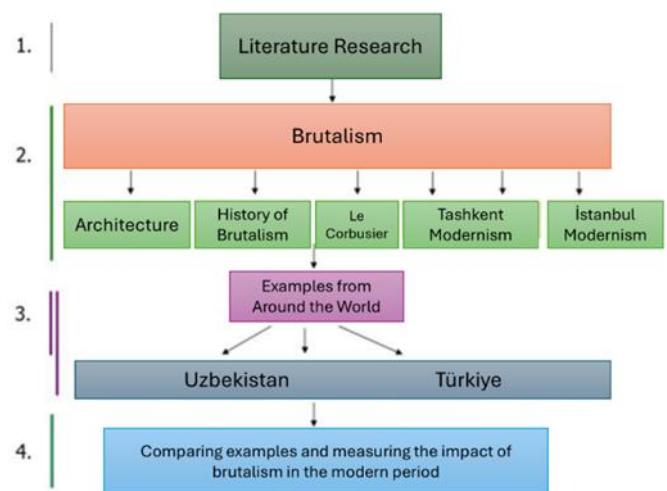


Figure 2. Working method flow chart

This study adopts a comparative architectural analysis method to examine Brutalist architecture in the contexts of Tashkent and Istanbul. In order to establish a systematic comparison, the Brutalist buildings in Tashkent were first analyzed to identify the main architectural characteristics associated with Brutalist architecture in the regional context.

Within this framework, selected buildings in Tashkent, including the Chorsu Hotel and Alisher Navoi Cinema, were examined to determine key architectural principles such as monumental massing, the expressive use of reinforced concrete, structural articulation, and the relationship between architecture and urban space. These characteristics were used to establish a set of analytical criteria.

The identified criteria were subsequently applied to selected examples in Istanbul, including the Atatürk Cultural Center (AKM) and the former Tercüman Newspaper Building, in order to evaluate whether these buildings reflect similar architectural characteristics.

In the second stage, the main architectural principles of Brutalism were identified through the analysis of representative architects and buildings associated with the movement. This stage focused on determining the fundamental design characteristics of Brutalist architecture, including the use of exposed concrete, monumental forms, structural expression, and functional spatial organization.

In the third stage, case study areas were determined and representative buildings were selected for analysis. The research focuses on two primary study areas: Tashkent (Uzbekistan) and Istanbul (Türkiye) (Figure 3).

Tashkent was selected as a case study because it represents one of the most significant centers of Soviet modernist architecture, particularly following the extensive reconstruction process after the 1966 earthquake. During this period, the city became an important experimental environment for

modernist urban planning and Brutalist architecture.

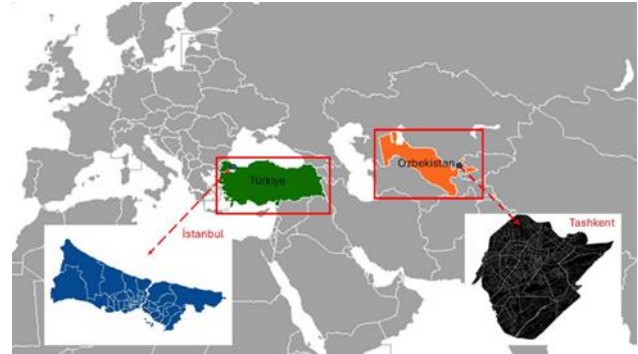


Figure 3. General location of the project area

Istanbul was selected as a comparative case because it contains significant examples of modernist and Brutalist buildings constructed during the second half of the twentieth century. These buildings reflect the architectural production of Türkiye within a different political and cultural context compared to the Soviet system.

The buildings included in the analysis were selected according to the following criteria:

representation of Brutalist architectural characteristics construction during the period when Brutalism was influential (approximately 1960–1980). Architectural and urban significance within their context availability of visual and documentary sources.

In the final stage, the selected buildings were examined through comparative architectural analysis. The analysis focused on architectural form, material use, spatial organization, and the relationship between the buildings and their surrounding urban environment.

3. Findings

3.1. Case Selection and Methodology

This study is structured around a comparative analysis of two significant examples of modern architecture in Türkiye: The Atatürk Cultural Center (AKM) and Tercüman Gazetesi Binası. The selection of these cases is not arbitrary but based on specific academic criteria.

Firstly, both buildings are representative examples of modern architectural production in Türkiye and reflect key characteristics associated with Brutalist architecture. Secondly, these cases illustrate two contrasting trajectories: one has undergone demolition and reconstruction, while the other has been completely demolished. This contrast allows for a comparative evaluation of different approaches to the conservation—or loss—of modern architectural heritage.

The study adopts a qualitative research methodology and employs a comparative case study approach. Each case is analyzed in terms of its architectural characteristics, historical development, and the nature of interventions it has undergone.

▪ *Atatürk Cultural Center (AKM)*

The Atatürk Cultural Center (AKM) Merkezi is widely recognized as one of the most important public buildings representing modern architecture in Türkiye. Constructed in the second half of the 20th century, the building reflects key principles associated with modernist and Brutalist architectural approaches, including functional clarity, structural expression, and formal simplicity (Söylemez, 2022).

Beyond its architectural qualities, AKM holds a significant place in the cultural memory of Istanbul. It functioned not only as a cultural venue but also as a symbolic landmark representing modernization and public life. Over time, however, the building became the subject of political, economic, and cultural debates, remaining unused for an extended period. The eventual demolition and reconstruction of AKM sparked intense discussions regarding the conservation of modern architectural heritage. While the original structure was physically lost, the new building attempts to maintain certain functional and symbolic continuities. This case raises critical questions about the limits of conservation and suggests that preservation should be evaluated not only in terms of material

authenticity but also through continuity of use and meaning.

▪ *Tercüman Newspaper Building*

The Tercüman Gazetesi Binası was considered a notable example of Brutalist architecture in Türkiye. The building exhibited characteristic features of the style, including exposed concrete surfaces and strong geometric forms, reflecting an emphasis on material honesty and structural expression. However, the building also represents the challenges associated with the preservation of modern architectural heritage. Due to the lack of adequate conservation awareness and protective mechanisms, the structure was demolished. This outcome highlights the vulnerability of modern buildings, which are often not sufficiently recognized as heritage assets. The demolition of the Tercüman Building signifies more than the loss of a physical structure; it represents the disappearance of a layer of architectural and cultural memory. As such, this case illustrates the shortcomings of existing conservation frameworks and underscores the fragile status of modern architectural heritage in Türkiye (Korkmaz & Gül, 2026).

▪ *Comparative Evaluation*

The cases of AKM and the Tercüman Newspaper Building represent two divergent trajectories in the treatment of modern architectural heritage in Türkiye. While AKM underwent a process of reconstruction that attempts to preserve its symbolic and functional roles, the Tercüman Building was entirely lost. This comparison reveals an inconsistent and fragmented approach to conservation practices. On the one hand, reconstruction is sometimes accepted as a valid form of preservation; on the other hand, the complete demolition of significant structures indicates the absence of a coherent conservation strategy.

Both cases demonstrate that modern architectural heritage, particularly Brutalist buildings, is not yet fully integrated into

established conservation frameworks. This suggests a need for more comprehensive policies that recognize the cultural, historical, and architectural significance of such structures. The Tashkent Modernism Project is an international research and documentation initiative focusing on the modernist architectural heritage of Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The project was initiated in the late 2010s and gained wider recognition through exhibitions, publications, and research collaborations aimed at documenting the city's twentieth-century architectural heritage. One of the most important outputs of the project is the publication *Tashkent Modernism XX/XXI*, edited by Boris Chukhovich, Davide Curto, and Ekaterina Guseva (Del Curto, 2025).

The Tashkent Modernism Project is a project that investigates the effects of Brutalist architecture in Tashkent and the traces of the city's structure shaped by modernism. Brutalist architecture is a movement that gained popularity in the mid-20th century and is particularly known for its strong use of concrete, simple forms, and emphasis on functionality. This project aims to understand how the modern architectural heritage and Brutalist designs in Uzbekistan were shaped and how they create a link between the past and the present (Celli, 2025).

This project evaluates the global impact of Brutalist architecture in Uzbekistan, particularly through structures in Tashkent, while also examining similar influences in other countries such as Türkiye. Brutalism played a significant role in Uzbekistan's post-Soviet transformation, modernizing cities by emphasizing the use of concrete and steel materials. (Figure 4).

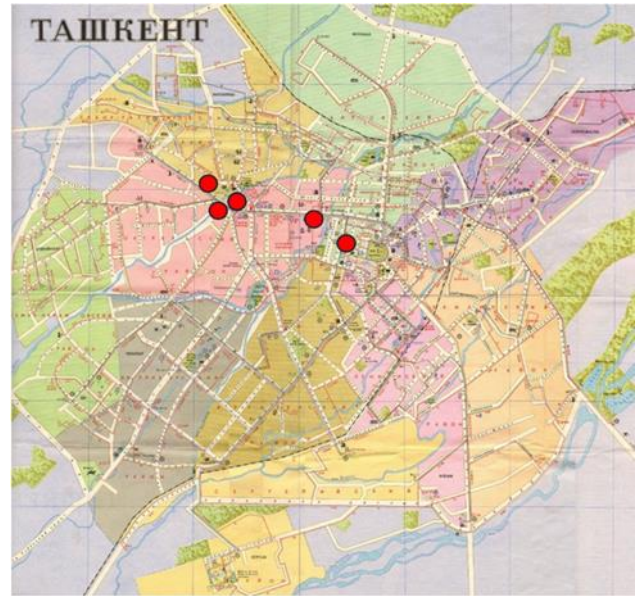


Figure 4. General location of the project area Tashkent (1-Chorsu Hotel, 2-Chorsu Bazaar, 3-Tashkent Circus, 4-History Museum, 5-Alisher Navoi Cinema.) (Source: Google Earth, 2025)

Tashkent Modernism examines Brutalist structures not only from an aesthetic perspective but also within their social and cultural context, focusing on how this architectural movement was adopted and perceived by the public in the region. The effects of modernism continue to this day in Tashkent through important public buildings, residences, and urban planning. This project reveals the unique formation of Brutalist architecture in Uzbekistan while also exploring how global influences of modernism are blended with local conditions. This offers an important perspective on the fact that Brutalist architecture, beyond being a global movement, carries a regional identity and meaning (Christian, 2012).



Figure 5. General location of the project area Istanbul (1-Atatürk Cultural Center (AKM), 2-Hilton İstanbul Bosphorus, 3-Harbiye Orduevi, 4-The İstanbul Advertisement Building, 5-Tercuman Newspaper Building) (Source: Google Earth, 2025)

As we can see from structures such as the the Tercüman Newspaper Building (1972) (Figure 5) and the Atatürk Cultural Center (AKM) (1969), Brutalist buildings in Türkiye have generally not been adequately preserved and have lost their functionality or original designs over time. However, these structures should now be considered historical heritage because they reflect the architectural understanding and social values of an era. But the Tercüman Newspaper Building (1972) was demolished in 2023 due to earthquake risk, and this shows more of a standard building behavior from the perspective of heritage for Brutalist structures in Türkiye. (Tanyeli, 2017).

Tercuman Newspaper Building



Figure 6. Tercüman Newspaper Building throw a year

Taking the demolition of the Tercüman Newspaper Building as an example, preserving the Atatürk Cultural Center (AKM) in accordance with its original Brutalist form would be an important step in protecting architectural heritage and keeping the value of Brutalism alive. Such projects carry the design sensibilities of an era into the future while also offering structures with functional and aesthetic value to society. By emphasizing the minimalist and durable characteristics of Brutalism, this building would both strengthen Istanbul's cultural identity and symbolize the connection between modern architecture and the past. This approach could be an inspiring example in terms of sustainability, historical awareness, and aesthetic diversity in architecture.



Figure 7. Chorsu Hotel throw a year

The Chorsu Hotel, an example of late Soviet Brutalist and modernist hotel architecture, held a significant place in the architectural narrative of Tashkent Modernism, but a demolition order was issued in 2024. However, its location near the historic Chorsu Bazaar was designed as a mediator between Tashkent's traditional urban fabric and its modernist redevelopment agenda. This strategic positioning underscores its dual role as both a functional urban landmark and a symbolic representation of modernization.

The adaptation of the Tashkent Modernism project to the context of Istanbul Modernism is grounded in contemporary

debates on the conservation of twentieth-century architectural heritage. International frameworks developed by organizations such as DOCOMOMO and ICOMOS emphasize that modernist and Brutalist buildings constitute a critical yet fragile layer of the built environment, often threatened by rapid urban transformation and negative public perception. Within this theoretical context, Brutalism is increasingly understood not as a stylistic anomaly, but as a culturally embedded and socially responsive architectural practice.

Tashkent Modernism provides a compelling theoretical reference due to its origin in post-earthquake reconstruction and its subsequent recognition as modern architectural heritage. The re-evaluation of Tashkent's Brutalist buildings demonstrates how structures once associated with ideological narratives can be reframed through heritage discourse, adaptive reuse, and public engagement. This shift aligns with critical regionalism theories, which advocate for the reinterpretation of universal architectural languages through local conditions, rather than their wholesale rejection or replication.

Istanbul faces parallel challenges, including seismic risk, accelerated redevelopment, and the systematic undervaluation of modernist architecture. The adaptation of Tashkent Modernism to Istanbul is therefore conceptualized as a heritage-oriented model that prioritizes documentation, reinterpretation, and contextual conservation. Instead of formal imitation, the project draws on theoretical principles such as material honesty, structural rationality, and the social production of space, positioning Brutalist buildings as active participants in urban life.

Within this framework, Brutalist architecture is approached as a living heritage that requires critical conservation strategies rather than static preservation. By integrating contemporary sustainability criteria and participatory design processes, the adapted

model seeks to bridge the gap between modernist heritage theory and present-day urban practice. Consequently, the project contributes to a broader discourse on how cities like Istanbul can protect, reinterpret, and sustain their Brutalist architectural legacy.

The demolition of the Chorsu Hotel in Tashkent (2024) and the Tercüman Newspaper Building in Istanbul (2023) puts other Brutalist structures at risk, reflecting a broader pattern of vulnerability affecting Brutalist and modernist architecture in rapidly changing urban contexts. Despite their architectural, structural, and cultural significance, both buildings are often perceived as outdated or incompatible with contemporary development agendas. This underscores the urgent need for a critical conservation framework that can express their value beyond traditional heritage criteria.

The Tashkent–Istanbul Modernism project offers a comparative and trans-contextual approach that can function as a compelling argument for the preservation of these structures. The Chorsu Hotel represents a key example of Tashkent Modernism, where Brutalist architecture mediates between historical urban fabric and modernist redevelopment. Its potential demolition would result not only in the loss of a single building but also in the erasure of an important narrative linking post-earthquake reconstruction, modernist ideology, and urban identity.

Similarly, the Tercüman Newspaper Building, demolished in 2023 due to earthquake risk, stands out as an important but not sufficiently recognized example of Istanbul's modernist and Brutalist architectural heritage. A product of a specific socio-political and media context, the building embodies the relationship between architecture, public discourse, and urban representation. Its endangered state demonstrates how vulnerable twentieth-century buildings, lacking formal heritage protection, are to market-driven redevelopment projects. (Türeli, 2018).

By positioning these two buildings within a shared modernist and Brutalist discourse, the project reframes them as components of a transnational architectural heritage rather than isolated local cases. This comparative perspective strengthens the argument for preservation by demonstrating that the challenges faced by Brutalist buildings are not context-specific anomalies but systemic issues requiring coordinated theoretical and practical responses.

In this regard, the project can serve as a catalyst for preservation by promoting alternative strategies such as adaptive reuse, heritage-based urban integration, and public awareness. Rather than treating demolition as an inevitable outcome, the Tashkent–Istanbul Modernism framework advocates for the reactivation of these buildings as socially and culturally productive spaces. Consequently, the project provides not only an academic contribution but also a practical justification for the protection and re-evaluation of the Atatürk Cultural Center (AKM) within contemporary urban discourse.

In a city as rich in history and culture as Istanbul, re-evaluating Brutalist architecture could be an interesting way to give the city a modern identity. Buildings in Istanbul, especially with its dense population and rapidly developing urbanization process, could draw inspiration from Brutalist architecture. Inspiration from modernist and Brutalist approaches in Tashkent could offer functional and aesthetic solutions that better reflect Istanbul's social structure. The use of concrete as a natural material, particularly in rapidly urbanizing and densely populated areas of Istanbul, could be both aesthetically and economically feasible. However, in Brutalist projects to be implemented in Istanbul, maintaining a balance between historical fabric and modern structures is of paramount importance. Lessons learned from Brutalist examples in Tashkent should be blended with the right design and material usage to avoid damaging the historical heritage in Istanbul. In

this regard, developing a Brutalist model for Istanbul is crucial to modernize the city in a way that is compatible with both its past and its future.

Within the scope of this study, Tashkent Modernism has been examined through the spatial, structural, and socio-cultural dimensions of Brutalist architecture. The findings are evaluated in relation to their potential contribution to the development of a contextual architectural model for Türkiye.

The analysis of modernist buildings constructed in Tashkent between the 1960s and 1980s reveals that Brutalism was not merely adopted as a stylistic or ideological expression, but rather as a response to local conditions. The extensive use of reinforced concrete emerged from structural necessities such as seismic risk, climatic demands, and the rapid urbanization process following the 1966 Tashkent earthquake. In this respect, Brutalism functioned as a rational and adaptive architectural approach, balancing technical requirements with expressive form.

A significant finding of the study is the central role of public space in Tashkent's Brutalist architecture. Cultural institutions, educational buildings, and housing complexes were designed with large spans, modular planning principles, and semi-open transitional spaces that encouraged collective use. These spatial strategies indicate that Brutalism in Tashkent extended beyond formal expression, operating as a socially oriented architectural model that prioritized public life and community interaction.

From an aesthetic perspective, Tashkent Modernism is characterized by monumental mass compositions, exposed concrete surfaces, and sculptural forms that have contributed to a strong urban identity. While initially associated with Soviet modernization ideals, these buildings have gradually acquired cultural and architectural heritage value. This shift highlights the evolving perception of Brutalist architecture

and its capacity to be re-evaluated beyond its original political context.

The findings suggest that Tashkent Modernism offers a transferable framework for contemporary architectural practice in Türkiye. Principles such as climate-responsive concrete design, the prioritization of public and collective spaces, and the reinterpretation of local cultural references within a modernist language present valuable insights. Accordingly, the Tashkent case demonstrates that Brutalism can be reconsidered in Türkiye as a contextual, sustainable, and socially responsive architectural approach rather than a rigid historical style.

Proposed Model for the Conservation of Brutalist Architecture in Türkiye.

The comparative examination of selected Brutalist and modernist buildings in Tashkent and Istanbul reveals important similarities and differences in the interpretation of modern architectural principles. The examples analyzed in this study, including the Alisher Navoi Cinema and Chorsu Hotel in Tashkent, and the Atatürk Cultural Center (AKM) and the former Tercüman Newspaper Building in Istanbul, demonstrate how modern architectural ideas were adapted to different political, social, and urban contexts.

The buildings in Tashkent represent an important part of the architectural heritage developed during the Soviet modernization period. Structures such as the Chorsu Hotel and Alisher Navoi Cinema are characterized by monumental architectural forms, expressive structural elements, and the use of reinforced concrete, which are typical features of Brutalist architecture. In recent years, these buildings have increasingly been recognized as part of the modern architectural heritage of Central Asia.

In contrast, examples in Istanbul illustrate a different trajectory of modern architectural development. Buildings such as the Atatürk Cultural Center (AKM) played a significant role in the cultural life of the city and represent the influence of modernist architectural principles in

Türkiye. However, the demolition of structures such as the Tercüman Newspaper Building (1972) highlights the vulnerability of modern architectural heritage in rapidly transforming urban environments. (Gürel, 2016).

The loss of the Tercüman Newspaper Building demonstrates the lack of systematic documentation and conservation strategies for twentieth-century architectural heritage in Türkiye. This situation reveals the necessity of developing a structured framework for identifying, evaluating, and protecting Brutalist architectural heritage. Based on the comparative analysis carried out in this study, a conceptual model for the conservation of Brutalist architecture in Türkiye is proposed. The model consists of four main stages:

- *Documentation and Inventory*

Identification and mapping of Brutalist buildings in different cities in Türkiye in order to establish a comprehensive architectural inventory.

- *Architectural Value Assessment*

Evaluation of buildings according to architectural, historical, and cultural criteria such as material use, structural expression, and urban significance.

- *Conservation and Adaptive Reuse Strategies*

Development of conservation approaches that preserve the architectural character of Brutalist buildings while allowing their integration into contemporary urban life.

- *Public Awareness and Cultural Recognition*

Increasing awareness of modern architectural heritage through exhibitions, academic studies, and architectural heritage routes.

This model aims to provide a systematic approach to the preservation and reinterpretation of Brutalist architecture in Türkiye and to prevent the loss of significant modernist buildings in the future.

4. Conclusion

This study aimed to evaluate Brutalist architecture within the context of modern architectural heritage and conservation approaches in Türkiye, through a comparative analysis of the Atatürk Cultural Center (AKM) and Tercüman Gazetesi Binası. The findings indicate that approaches to the conservation of Brutalist structures in Türkiye remain underdeveloped and inconsistent, often shaped by aesthetic perceptions, economic pressures, and political decisions.

The literature review demonstrates that Brutalism should not be understood merely as an aesthetic movement, but as a significant architectural expression reflecting the social, cultural, and economic conditions of its time. Accordingly, modern architectural works should be evaluated within the broader framework of cultural heritage. However, the case studies reveal a gap between this theoretical understanding and its practical implementation in Türkiye.

The case of the Atatürk Cultural Center (AKM) illustrates an approach in which demolition and reconstruction are positioned as a form of conservation. While the physical continuity of the original structure was interrupted, its functional and symbolic continuity was, to some extent, maintained. This example suggests that conservation should not be limited to material authenticity alone, but also consider continuity in use and cultural meaning.

In contrast, the case of the Tercüman Gazetesi Binası highlights the vulnerabilities of modern architectural heritage in Türkiye. The demolition of the building represents not only the loss of a physical structure but also the erasure of a specific architectural and cultural memory. This case demonstrates that modern buildings are still not widely recognized as heritage assets, and therefore often remain outside the scope of conservation policies.

When considered together, these two cases reveal a fragmented and inconsistent

approach to the conservation of modern architectural heritage in Türkiye. While reconstruction is sometimes accepted as a legitimate conservation strategy, the complete loss of other structures indicates significant theoretical and practical gaps in the field.

In this context, there is a clear need for more comprehensive and coherent conservation policies addressing Brutalist architecture. Increasing awareness of modern architectural heritage is essential, alongside the development of evaluation criteria that go beyond physical authenticity to include cultural, historical, and social values.

Furthermore, adaptive reuse emerges as a key strategy for the sustainable conservation of Brutalist structures. By enabling existing buildings to accommodate new functions, this approach supports both the preservation of physical fabric and the continuation of cultural relevance. Aligning local conservation practices with international principles while responding to specific local conditions is therefore crucial.

In conclusion, Brutalist architecture in Türkiye has yet to be fully recognized as a legitimate category of cultural heritage. The cases discussed in this study underscore the necessity of rethinking current conservation approaches and highlight the urgent need for more integrated, consistent, and sustainable strategies in preserving modern architectural heritage.

Brutalist architecture represents an important component of twentieth-century architectural heritage and reflects the social, political, and technological conditions of the post-war period. The comparative analysis of selected buildings in Tashkent and Istanbul demonstrates that although these structures were produced in different political and cultural environments, they share similar architectural characteristics associated with modernist and Brutalist design principles.

The examples examined in this study highlight both the architectural significance of

Brutalist buildings and the challenges associated with their preservation. While buildings such as the Chorsu Hotel and Alisher Navoi Cinema in Tashkent have increasingly been recognized as part of the city's modern architectural heritage, the demolition of the Tercüman Newspaper Building in Istanbul illustrates the fragility of similar structures in Türkiye.

These findings indicate that modern architectural heritage in Türkiye requires a more systematic approach to documentation, evaluation, and conservation. The model proposed in this study aims to contribute to this process by providing a conceptual framework for the identification and protection of Brutalist architecture.

By integrating comparative architectural analysis with heritage conservation strategies, the study contributes to the broader discussion on the preservation of twentieth-century modern architecture and highlights the importance of recognizing Brutalist buildings as valuable components of urban cultural heritage.

This study has explored Tashkent Modernism as a contextual interpretation of Brutalist architecture, demonstrating that Brutalism functioned not merely as a stylistic or ideological expression but as an adaptive architectural response shaped by structural, climatic, and socio-cultural conditions. The findings indicate that the Brutalist buildings of Tashkent represent a hybrid modernist approach in which universal architectural principles were reinterpreted through local realities.

A critical discussion emerging from the analysis concerns the role of public space in Brutalist architecture. In contrast to widespread critiques that associate Brutalism with spatial rigidity and social alienation, the Tashkent case illustrates an alternative model in which collective use and social interaction were central design drivers. Semi-open spaces, monumental yet permeable forms, and integrated public functions reveal that Brutalism can actively

contribute to urban vitality when contextualized appropriately.

From a heritage and conservation perspective, the study highlights the shifting perception of Brutalist architecture over time. Buildings initially conceived as symbols of Soviet modernization have increasingly been recognized as components of architectural and cultural heritage. This transformation invites a broader discussion on the preservation of modernist and Brutalist structures, particularly in contexts where such buildings are vulnerable to demolition due to aesthetic bias or redevelopment pressures. In the case of Türkiye, similar challenges persist, suggesting that the Tashkent experience offers important lessons for re-evaluating twentieth-century architectural heritage.

The discussion further suggests that Tashkent Modernism provides a transferable conceptual framework rather than a formal model for Türkiye. Instead of replicating Brutalist forms, architectural practice should focus on underlying principles such as climate-responsive concrete design, seismic resilience, and the prioritization of inclusive public spaces. When combined with contemporary sustainability strategies and participatory design approaches, these principles can inform a renewed architectural discourse that aligns modernist heritage with present-day urban needs.

In conclusion, the Tashkent case demonstrates that Brutalism possesses a latent flexibility often overlooked in conventional architectural narratives. By shifting the focus from stylistic interpretation to contextual adaptation, Brutalist architecture can be repositioned as a viable and socially responsive framework for contemporary architectural production in Türkiye. This perspective encourages a critical rethinking of both modernist heritage and future architectural strategies within rapidly transforming urban environments.

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