

“İZMİR REJİ TOBACCO FACTORY” AS ONE OF THE INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE REMAINS OF THE CITY

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Abstract

The “İzmir Reji Tobacco Factory” was first established in 1884 as a complex which demonstrates the industrial structures of the period and their working principles with classical spatial organization and construction system used within the buildings. The Complex is a unique industrial establishment, defined by 12 buildings in various sizes. The settlement is located in the Alsancak district of İzmir, very close to the İzmir Port, neighbouring the Alsancak Train Station and this situation grants the significance of the settlement. This paper aims to emphasize the protection of the industrial heritage structures through the periodization of architectural history of İzmir Reji Tobacco Factory as an important issue of the sustainable development.

Key Words: industrial heritage, preservation, İzmir.

Introduction

Industrial heritage refers to the physical remains of the history of technology and industry. The scientific study of such remains is called the “Industrial archaeology”. The conservation of industrial heritage was first championed in the 1960s by the eminent archaeologists then prominent in the Council for British Archaeology (CBA). Consequently, it came to be seen in the UK as a branch of archaeology, although many practitioners have in fact come from a variety of backgrounds including architectural studies, history, geography, engineering and planning. A number of factories, warehouses, power plants and other industrial buildings, built since the beginning of Industrial Revolution in the second half of the eighteenth century has been registered as the industrial heritage buildings. These structures are mostly significant architectural, historic and technological values a common heritage of the World. They often form part of the urban landscape and provide the cityscape with visual historical landmarks. Lauferts, M. & Mavunganidze, J., 2009)

Understanding the Architectural Features of Industrial Heritage Structures

When compared to other Architectural Heritage Values, Industrial heritage structures have some different architectural features such as;

- Each individual building is one of the components of a whole production facility disposed within the campus area. (Factory buildings, their depots, houses of the workers, railway network, etc.)
- The structure systems of these buildings are very unique systems defining the characteristics of 19th century. The main walls are made of stone. They have clay tile arched floor system which is supported by iron cast columns and beams.
- They are unique engineering structures.

So these structures may have different approaches both in documentation process and conservation process.

Assessment of Industrial heritage buildings and re-use of these structures is becoming a more and more important and frequent engineering task. General principles of sustainable development regularly lead to the need for extension of the life of a structure. That is why the assessment of industrial heritage structures often requires application of sophisticated methods, when compared to the traditional civil architecture buildings design codes.

In order to work on these structures; some basic skills are needed which are common to many disciplines and include a capacity to study maps and documents, an understanding of topography and the ability to survey sites and record standing structures. In addition to these, work on industrial sites also requires some understanding of the technology and economic background of particular industries, as well as the production process, not just to make an adequate record but also to interpret sites in their regional, national or even international context.

Industrial sites that survive as un-roofed monuments or redundant engineering structures can pose particularly difficult conservation issues.

Adaptive re-use can be a solution for many redundant industrial buildings, provided that it is underpinned by a proper historical understanding of the site and its contribution to the overall character of its surroundings. When out of use, the industrial heritage buildings are degrading and often turning into ruins, and mostly to urban sprawl. Re-use and adaptation of such buildings allow for integration of the industrial heritage buildings into a modern urban lifestyle and help to protect cities cultural heritage. (Zhang, S.,2007)

Protection of the industrial heritage structures is an important issue of the sustainable development. More specifically, it has been recognised in that the protection and re-use may positively contribute to the sustainable development by:

- Preservation of the cultural values and identity of locations,
- Recycling of all potential resources and avoiding wasting energy, making use of existing infrastructures,
- Facilitating the economic regeneration of regions (Zhang, S.,2007)

Izmir Reji Tobacco Factory is one of the most important Industrial Heritage mains of the city as a very well preserved settlement with all its uniqueness and features.

Explanation of the Case: Izmir Reji Tobacco Factory

Turkish tobacco was an important industrial crop, where its cultivation and manufacture were monopolies under capitulations of the Ottoman Empire. The tobacco and cigarette trade was controlled by two French companies the "Regie Compagnie interessee des tabacs de l'empire Ottoman", and "Narquileh tobacco. (Stanford, Shaw, 2002.) "These companies founded as a monopoly in 1862 by the Ottoman government for the payment of its international debt. Original purpose of the company was to deal with tobacco products. It later became a part of an even greater monopoly, REJI, which controlled all trade, finance, and manufacturing in the empire (Martal A., 1999)

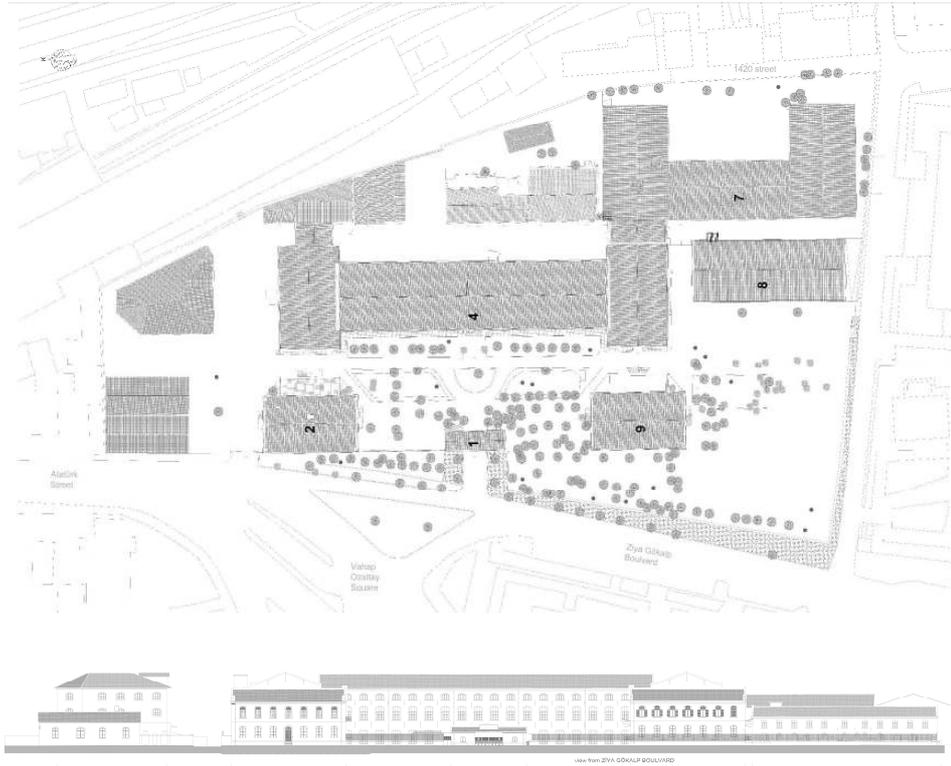


Fig.1: Layout of the Settlement

Throughout the 19th century, tobacco was the leading export item of the late Ottoman period and later in the early times of Republican Turkey. (Martal A., 1999) REJI, as factory founded in 1884, was a company which produced tobacco in the Alsancak district of Izmir by the French.

In 1924, it was assigned to the Republic of Turkey from the Reji and been nationalized. Initially fine-cut tobacco was produced, in 1910s handmade cigarettes were produced and in 1940 mechanical production began. In 1986 privatization process began. This process was completed in 2002 and the facility was assigned to the Ministry of Culture in 2006. During its active times, between 2500 and 3000 workers were working in this cigarette factory in two shifts. Besides the production facilities, the factory was an integrated facility including various departments ranging from the iron foundries to the day care centres, from administrative units to the tailor house, from the depots to the shelter. It was a school for the employees.

Tobacco Expert Mustafa Önder defines the settlement; “There were courses for foreign languages, theatre, and folk dance. Tekel Theatre was used to perform stage plays regularly. The folk dance group was used to participate national and international tours. The athletes were used to attend the games. It has a clubhouse too. The name of this tradition and culture is TEKEL.”

This complex is a unique industrial establishment, defined by 12 buildings of varying sizes. It's located very close to Izmir Port, neighbouring Alsancak Train Station and Anglican Church. This situation grants the significance of the settlement.

The main factory building is an exclusive example of the modern Industrial architecture technically and aesthetically with its perfect static and symmetric layout within the whole settlement. It is also distinctive with its dimensions when compared to the other 11 buildings among the complex. The other 11 buildings have different functions such as refectory, depots, houses of the administrators, offices, compensating the process of the tobacco production.



Fig.2:Reji Tobacco Factory-The Entrance Building, The Administration Building and the Garden - 1920's (Archive of Gayrimenkul A.Ş.) **Fig.3:**The Main factory Building (Archive of Gayrimenkul A.Ş.)



Fig.4:The Main factory Building (Archive of Gayrimenkul A.Ş.), **Fig.5:** The Woman Workers in front of the main entrance of the Factory Building (Archive of Gayrimenkul A.Ş.)



Fig.6:Reji Tobacco Factory-The Main Factory Building and the Entrance Building -1920's (Archive of Gayrimenkul A.Ş.)



Fig.7:Entrance Façade of the Main Factory Building-2015

The factory building (Building 4) has a classic spatial organization, (Fig8) demonstrates a sense of arrangement that is in harmony with the period's industrial structures and their working principles. The entrance of the building is located in the centre of the longitudinal facade. The main stair case is arranged against the main entrance door, dividing the building symmetrically into two, combining the 3 floors. (Fig 2-3-4-5-6-7-9-10)

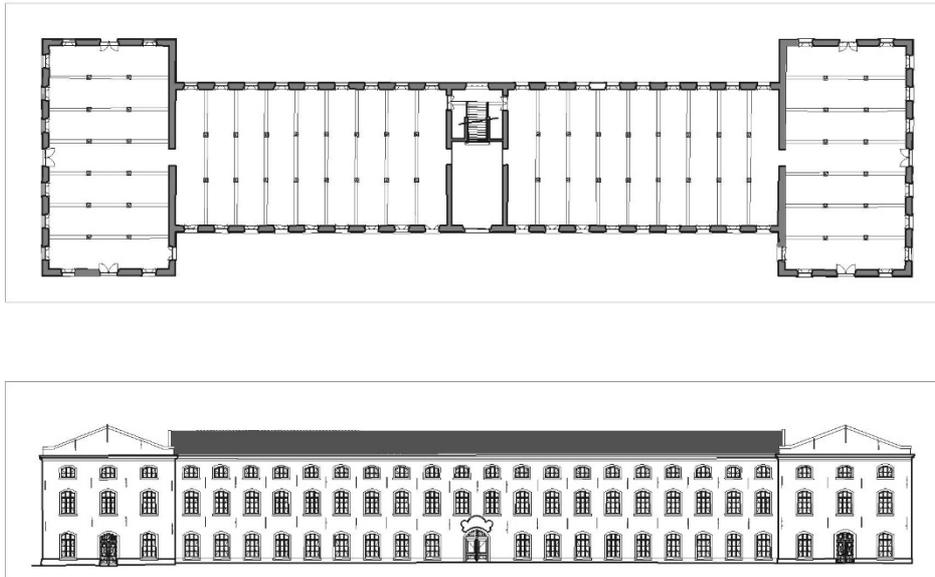


Fig.8: The Plan Layout and the Entrance Façade of Main Factory Building

The structure system of the factory building is a composite one, with stone masonry envelope supported by cast iron beams and columns. Within this system floors are constructed with a clay tile arched technique, the roof trusses which have 16 meters' span are made of iron and are the representative construction elements of 19th century.

Monolithic cast pillars, electrical installation, Marseilles tiles are the remarkable elements of construction and materials. It has a large and nice garden with the poolside, the pergolas, the plant cover composed of several trees and flower types, the design and layout integrated with the building. The main entrance building is significant as well with its canopy and iron fences decorated with tobacco plant leaf. (Building 1).



Fig.9-10:A view from the interior-2013-A view from the interior-1944 (Archive of Gayrimenkul A.Ş.)

The symmetrically located two buildings on the site just in front of the main factory building are significant two buildings of the compound established in the same period with the main factory building and served as the administration buildings of the factory compound. (buildings2-9) These two buildings have similar plan layouts when they were first built but transformed during the period. The architectural features of the building are neoclassical style. The spatial organization of these two similar buildings has been transformed during the time according to the needs of the usage. One of them transformed into the “lodging building” for the directors of the factory after 1940’s. One of them is transformed as the “club” of the factory again after 1940’s and the space organization of the building has been changed during the usage, and an individual entrance has been formed as well, from the main street to this club building. (Fig.11-12)



Fig.11-12: The symmetrically localized administration buildings (Building number 2-9)

Despite these two symmetrically localized buildings, another important building of the compound is the “mess hall” of the workers of the factory. (Building 8) The two storied classical façade building was the heart of the compound, the social life of the workers occurred in this building. (Fig.13-14-15).

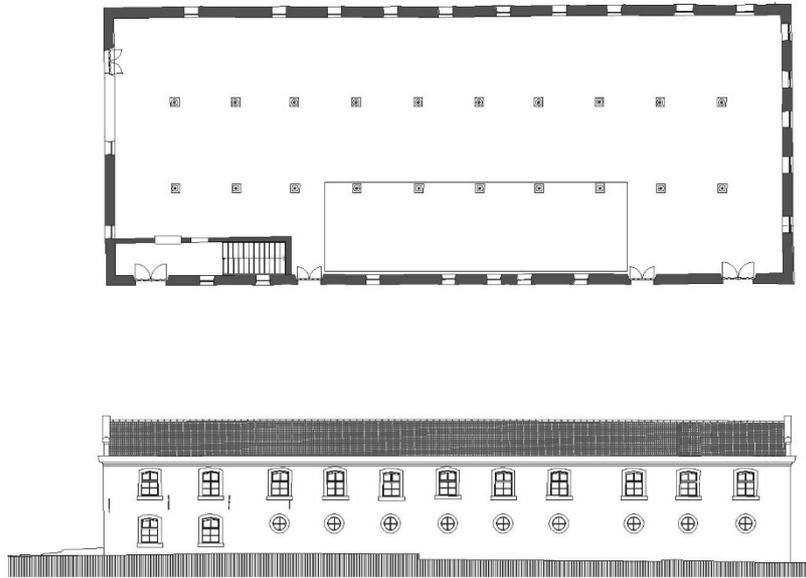


Fig.13: The Plan Layout and the Façade of Mess Hall Building



Fig.14-15: The Façade of Mess Hall Building and the interior of the building dating back to 1940's

A “U” shaped building with its individual courtyard was established in the compound just a little after the factory building has been established in the settlement just behind the mess hall which is building number 7. This building was for the production of special kind of cigars, stogies or coronas. (Fig.16). After 1951 a 6 storied building was built in the courtyard of Building 7 and demolished buildings 7's original courtyard façade.

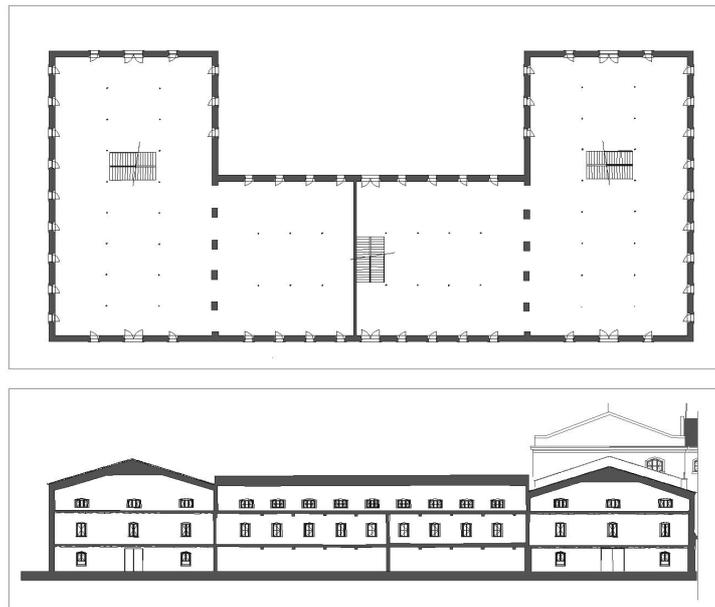


Fig.16: The Plan Layout and Section of “U” Shaped Building (Building number 7)

The other buildings in the campus area are the depots, houses of the workers and etc. The subtle monumentalism of the main building, unique to grand industrial structures, and the level of attention in the organization of minor buildings create a cohesive image.

Conclusion

This very unique industrial complex establishment in 1884, defined by 12 buildings of varying sizes has great significance and importance within the city as cultural heritage buildings and each individual building is one of the components of a whole production facility disposed within the campus area. They are the remembrance of the past and a very important building stock in the very heart of the city. The structure systems of these buildings are very unique systems defining the characteristics of 19th century. The core structure of the buildings is mostly well protected but the whole complex is redundant, and forms a redundant site in the very centre of the city.

The regeneration of the historical Reji Tobacco Factory will be a very important attempt that will lead the reductant compound to preservation of cultural values and regaining the identity of the city, and recycling of all potential resources such as making use of the existing infrastructures, and facilitating the economic regeneration of the region.

The regeneration of Reji Tobacco Factory as a multi-functional cultural complex through repairs will be a great value for Izmir and meet these very unique industrial heritage buildings with locals, the locals with their past. The main concept of the restoration works should be preserving the entire unique stratum, all the individual industrial heritage traces as it was built defining the industrial sites integrity. The aim of the regeneration work should be to bring the redundant industrial buildings back to life targeting of meeting with public.

It is for this reason that the main buildings in the complex, whose core structure has not been spoiled by auxiliary buildings, can be easily protected, and can meet again with society.

Acknowledgements

The study was done on behalf of a “Periodization Project” of the settlement directed by the authors, we would like to thank to the working team of the project who were involved in the study.

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