

## An Urban Transformation Example: Istanbul Tarlabası

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### ABSTRACT

Tarlabası is a neighborhood affiliated to Beyoğlu district located at western side of Istanbul, starting from the junction point of Taksim Square located at northeast region of Haliç and Cumhuriyet Street and extending along both sides of Tarlabası Boulevard and ending at British Embassy building, settled on the slopes doing down to Dolapdere. The neighborhood was established as the housing zone of employees working in workplaces and residences senior executives working in embassies who had settled in Beyoğlu as a result of the practice of having an intercountry embassy available that started by the French in 1535 as well as levantines and non-Muslims who lived in Beyoğlu According to Arseven, the neighborhood was named as “Tarlabası” (which means head of the field in Turkish) because the region had been covered by fields until the 16th century. It has become one of the important settlement units of Istanbul beginning from mid 19th century. It constitutes a source that is rich in terms of architecture and urban history with construction diversity that remained from late 19th century and early 20th century. When population rapidly increased and traffic became much heavier so the existing roads started to be insufficient while Istanbul was developing, mayor of the time Bedrettin Dalan had demolished the historical buildings along the route extending from the bosphorus to Tarlabası and Kasımpaşa during 1986- 1988 and approximately 350 buildings almost half of which are historical artifacts were destroyed during this period. In subsequent periods, this destruction process continued until urban transformation due to increasingly changing human profile and many other reasons. The study examines this urban transformation at the light of conservation concept by emphasizing the reports received from experts for Tarlabası.

**KEYWORDS:** Conservation and repair, Istanbul, Sustainability, Tarlabası, Turkey, Urban transformation

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### I. INTRODUCTION

The settlement has proceeded towards Tarlabası-Tepebaşı and gradually towards Dolapdere in Pera neighborhood population of which started to increase beginning from the 18th century. The importance of Tarlabası is that its settlement is a privileged region where the first Western style urbanization practices had been carried out in Istanbul [1]. Particularly, the structural and urban order have become more systematic after Beyoğlu fires and 1839 Imperial Edict of Reorganization. After the Pera fire dated 1870, the “New City” (Nouvelle Ville) project composed of streets, large squares, theaters and hotels has occurred in this neighborhood. Both sides of Tarlabası Street started to be occupied by 1870's and mercantile establishments most of which are foreign owned were opened here during this period [2]. The destructions started by April 1986 have continued until 1988, consequently Tarlabası Boulevard that currently connects Taksim and Tepebaşı to each other was revealed. This situation has disturbed the pattern of the neighborhood and the historical relation of Beyoğlu with Tarlabası was destroyed. The reason in implementation of this project was suggested as acquiring an urban transportation network and solution of existing jams in public opinion. However, local administrations had abstained from increasingly wearing down physical structure of Tarlabası and its conditions carrying slum characteristics since 1950's. This is because the neighborhood has taken the form of a residence character where an intensive illegal entertainment sector is employed during 1970's. Therefore, one of the purposes of destructions started by 1986 was to eliminate the slum outlook in this neighborhood. In spite of all these facts, Tarlabası is now a neighborhood that displays typical "slum" characteristics. This outlook naturally

differs in each quarter. In short, the destructions which had been made resulted in disappearance of 167 registered houses called as the “first order” which were historically significant and Tarlabası was not able to escape the character of being a collapse. The one-way traffic of Istiklal Street during 1980's has decreased traffic jam to some extent while it also decreased accessibility from Taksim to Tünel, so it resulted in collapse areas in the neighborhood. Some reasons such as low rentals etc. have given rise to development of manufacturing shops in the neighborhood that had become a collapse. Small manufacturing workshops have disseminated through all side streets and the side sector depending on this has developed in neighborhood quarters like Tarlabası. This fact accelerated the process of becoming slummy. Today Tarlabası is a neighborhood which displays “slum” characteristics where families from the Southeast and Eastern Anatolia are immigrating and holding short term jobs [2].

## **II. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHANGING POPULATION AND HISTORICAL STRUCTURES OF TARLABAŞI**

Living conditions in Tarlabası have become dangerous while some part of the population living here shift towards a social section engaging in illegal works and the neighborhood has gained some kind of slum character while the same danger has started to assert itself in historical buildings and the constructions with the nature of cultural asset have started to disappear rapidly as a result of circumstances from disrepair and improper use to vandalism and construction materials robbery. Beyoğlu Municipality started to seek some solutions in the name of urban transformation to reform and make this place safe and liveable and asked some experts who deal with Tarlabası to prepare a scientific and technical survey report with respect to the conservation status and carrier system about Tarlabası in cooperation with universities. These reports have been prepared within the framework of the legislation of MSFAU (Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University) directorate of revolving fund. It has been seen in surveys that many historical artifacts lost their originality.



**Figure 1. Facade of the building viewing the Tarlabası Boulevard** **Figure 2. Facade of the building viewing Dernek Avenue**

385 block, 3 parcel

## **III. TARLABAŞI REPORT EXAMPLE**

One example of the reports prepared for the immovable cultural asset located in Istanbul province, Beyoğlu district, Tarlabası Boulevard 386 block, 24 parcel is as follows:

Surveys and Determinations

As a result of the on-site survey performed on the building located in Istanbul Province, Beyoğlu District, Tarlabası Boulevard Eski Çeşme Avenue 386 Block and 24 Parcel, below specified characteristics have been determined:

Architecture and Facade

The building located at Eski çeşme Avenue is composed of a ground floor, a basement floor and two normal floors. It is in the form of attached buildings (Figure 3, 4).



**Figure 3. Entrance facade of the building viewing Eski Çeşme Avenue Figure 4. Outlook of the bow window located on the front facade of the building 386 block, 24 parcel**

It is a masonry built of stone. It was constructed in early 20th century.

- The building has a style carrying neo-classic effects.
  - The facade is plaster coated.
  - Entrance door is original.
  - Wooden window works are partially original.
  - The original railing on the bay window is existing at the facade.
  - The original wrought iron butters is existing below the bow window.
  - Window iron railings are original at the ground floor.
  - The building facade conserves its architectural characteristics partially.
- Carrier System and Material
- The original carrier of the said building is a masonry system that has been constructed with clay brick.
  - The building is located on the 2nd earthquake zone.
  - According to Earthquake Regulations 2007, number of floors is restricted with 3 floors including ground floor for the buildings located at 2nd degree earthquake zone. Number of floors is in compliance with the floor restriction specified in the regulations.
  - The building is not in use, for that reason a substantial disrepair draws attention in the building.
  - The height of each floor must be maximum 3m from slab top to slab top in masonry constructions.
  - The construction was settled as an attached building in one aspect, namely jointing was not made between this and other buildings. For that reason, considering the building alone shall not give correct results while studying its earthquake behavior. Durability of buildings around it shall influence to earthquake resistance of the construction.
  - The construction is on its plan, and complies with the condition of organizing load bearing walls as regular as possible and symmetric or almost symmetric to the main axes required by the earthquake regulations. Any load bearing irregularity was not found in the construction plan.
  - The walls were adjusted in a way creating a arch form over the window and door apertures. It was aimed to transfer wall load of the upper floor to the walls near to the apertures.
  - The construction flooring is wooden. Wood is used for floor covering too.
  - There is a bay window at one floor. The bay window was supported by a steel butters in the original construction. However, this butters was completely rusted as a result of corrosion. Bay window floor is wooden floor on which timber-work coating is applied. The base of bay window is surrounded by steel profile. However, this profile has completely corroded.
  - The facade is coated with a thick cement plaster. Some cracks occurred particularly on the bay window part in the plaster. It is seen these cracks occurred as a result of weather conditions and disrepair. Any expression suggesting that the cracks have proceeded towards the internal structure was not found.
  - When the whole facade is viewed the windows, doors opening to the bay window and exterior door apertures are covering a large part of the facade. Limit values have been specified in the earthquake regulations for size of hollows that may open on the walls, distance between each other and distance to edges in masonry buildings. It is seen that the total length and distance of the apertures on both narrow and high two facades of the building which are open do not comply with these limit values. There is no beam support between apertures. In this case, it may said that construction walls have vulnerability in carrying horizontal loads. Evaluations

The construction is one of the original examples of its period both in terms of facade installation and material use. However, it is possible to say there are significant material problems on the structure when considering above specified general issues about the existing situation and construction materials of the devastated and disused building as a result of disrepair, corrosion and negligence.

The construction has been built as attached to adjacent buildings and there is no earthquake jointing between each other.

There are plaster and paint shedding and cracks on exterior wall surfaces of the building.

Since the buttresses have lost their carrying ability because of material problems, they remain insufficient in carrying the bay windows and so the bay windows are in danger of collapse.

Corrosions on the wooden sections, rusting on steel beams point out to the existence of significant material problems on the carrying system of the construction. It is seen that there are significant problems about carrying system, material and construction physics when considering above specified issues in general with respect to the existing situation, carrying element and construction materials of the building.

It may be said that performing a structural reinforcement may not give proper results because of the damage that occurred on the bearing system in time due to disrepair. It is considered appropriate to reinstall and evaluate the facade installation of the construction that has lost its originality while replacing the bearing system.



**Figure 5. The construction facade viewing the Tarlabası Boulevard**



**Figure 6. Facade of the building viewing the Dernek Avenue 385 block, 4 parcel**



**Figure 7. Old Tarlabası before the Urban Transformation [3]**



**Figure 8. Tarlabası Urban Renewal Project (Gap İnşaat) in which the employer is Beyoğlu Municipality [4]**

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The reports received from the relevant experts about Tarlabası (Dr. Sibel Hattap, Dr. Meltem Şahin, Dr. Cüneyt Diri) have been prepared in substantially good faith and by taking attention to avoid from disturbing the original architecture of Tarlabası and to preserve it with right restoration while a Tarlabası having a totally different character came to existence by the start of implementing the projects which are performed under the name of urban transformation. Tarlabası people have also been negatively affected because they had to leave their homes at this neighborhood before the project. The expropriations performed in scope of Tarlabası Urban Transformation under partnership of a construction firm and Beyoğlu Municipality were stopped by the Council of State 6th Office. According to news published by Elif İnce in newspaper Radikal, the Council of State cancelled the expropriations performed based on the renewal law No. 5366 of the Municipality by reason that 'there is not for public welfare'. Even though many historical artifacts located in Tarlabası lost their originality and came to a situation posing a danger in terms of materials and static, they should have been preserved without damaging their originality and people living here and engaging in illegal jobs should have been moved away from the region, then the neighborhood should have been sustained with minimum intervention possible.

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