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## Planning and Protecting Historical Buildings in Kaleiçi Region of Edirne/Turkey

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# **PLANNING AND PROTECTING HISTORICAL BUILDINGS IN KALEIÇI REGION OF EDİRNE/TURKEY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Over a long history, the city of Edirne has been developing as an important settlement centre due to its geopolitical location. The importance of Edirne increased especially after it was conquered by the Ottoman Turks and served as the capital city of the Ottoman Empire for a long period of time. It is city of a peculiar character and identity with its many monuments and samples of civil architecture.

Kaleiçi, as the first settlement nucleus of Edirne, has still many historic houses which could manage to survive, reflecting the social and cultural life of the city around the end of 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries. The dwellings those reached up to the present in Kaleiçi neighborhood, which can be considered as the center of settlement in Edirne, are very few in number. The conditions that expedited the deformed look of present Edirne are as follows: the regulations which led way to the new reconstruction after the earthquakes and fires, the illegal practises in the area, the dense commerce in Saraçlar Avenue, in turn, the deterioration of the characteristics of the plan and facade of the area and problems resuled from changes in the dwelling owners.

Following a brief history of Edirne Kaleiçi, the objectives of this study are to determine and classify the characteristic of the plansand facades of traditional dwellings and to develop suggestions for the preservation of these houses and the spatial qualities of whole fabric of the area.

## GENERAL LOCATION

Turkey is a Mediterranean and Middle-East country, a part of which is located in Europe and a greater part of which is in Asia. This country, which is surrounded by the sea like a peninsula, is in the medium climatic zone and therefore this location provided various superiorities to the residents of these lands throughout the history. In this region, on which there were regional watering paths caravan paths combining China and India with the Mediterranean coast in the past, there have been the foundations of several civilizations. These lands, which are regarded as both a Mediterranean and Near-Eastern country due to its location and its features, have always been important throughout the history because of its abundances (Ana Britannica, s: 316), (Figure 1)



Figure 1. Location of Turkey



Figure 2. Location of Edirne

Turkey is one of the luckiest countries of the world as it is located on lands, which are abundant with types and examples of cultural heritage. This country, which is located on the lands of the Ottoman Empire of approximately 600 years, is an outdoor-museum (Figure 2).

Edirne is the border city located on European lands of Turkey and it is the second biggest city on these lands. Edirne has sustained its development as an important residential area with its geopolitical location throughout its historical development. It became the capital city of the Ottoman Empire for nearly a century, and it has constituted the historical tissue and identity that are peculiar to it with a lot of monuments and civil architecture examples.

## HISTORY OF “KALEİÇİ”



Figure 3. Location of the Kaleiçi in Edirne

Kaleiçi, which constitutes the first settlement core of Edirne city, covers approximately 26 ha-areas with the streets crossing each other vertically in a field in the form of a square surrounded by old ramparts, which have almost been destroyed today (Figure 3).

This district, which was damaged by big fires and severe earthquakes, was reconstructed by the Mayor of the city, Dilaver Bey, in accordance with the new construction plan prepared by French experts. The new order of Kaleiçi district, which was reconstructed in accordance with the new

settlement plan, was drafted considering the schema with Hippodamus characteristics having the features consisting of the properties of the old plan (Figure 4).

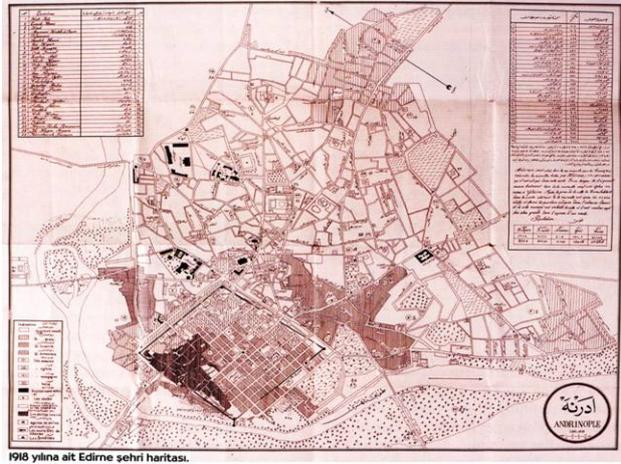


Figure 4. Old map of Kaleiçi

The city had almost this settlement plan when it was conquered by the Turks. After the Turks had lived in this city for a period, they left this district to the non-Muslims and constructed new districts for themselves outside the rampart. Seyyah Evliya Çelebi who visited Edirne in 1653 wrote that there were total 16 districts 2 of which is Moslem, 4 of which is Jew and 10 of which is Greek inside the rampart.

All of the historic works in these districts were destroyed by earthquakes and fires. It is, today, a settlement where mostly Turks live as some of the Jews settled in Istanbul and Israel; and Greeks fled due to the population exchange.

## HISTORICAL HOUSES IN KALEİÇİ

Houses, which were generally planned to be adjacent and with backyard, were built on the square and rectangle plots of land according to the Hippodamus settlement plan.

All of the houses were in a row and were built in the way that they faced the street. Houses in a row, unusual in the Ottoman city pattern, appeared as the architecture of the minority and reflected the socioeconomic characteristics of the era. (Batur ve diğ., 1979, s.185-203), (Figure 5, 6). 4 pairs of houses, designed as twin houses, took place in the area of settlement (Akansel, 1990, s.34).



Figure 5. View from the houses



Figure 6. View from the house

Historical houses in Kaleiçi the entrances of which open directly to the street have generally two floors and a basement but no main floor that traditional Turkish houses have (Figure 8, 9)



Figure 7. Views of Traditional Kaleiçi Houses in Edirne



Figure 8. View from the house



Figure 9. View from the house

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PLAN

Following items had an effective role in making plans and schemas of the historical houses in Kaleiçi;

- House's being in an adjacent pattern and having a backyard
- Location of the hall (its being located in the middle or beside)
- Location of the stairs (its being located opposite the entrance or within the line of the rooms)
- Layout of the rooms
- The relation of the hall downstairs with the garden
- The place of the service areas in the basement

Kaleiçi historical houses and traditional Turkish houses are similar in their plans with inner hall. Sub-types of this schema which was also called “split-belly” except from “eyvanlı” type and the type with “side hall” were applied in this region (Eldem, 1968).

ODA SAYISI	SOFA ORTADA		SOFA YANDA		ODA SAYISI	SOFA ORTADA		SOFA YANDA	
	ODA DİZİSİNDE	SOFADA	ODA DİZİSİNDE	SOFADA		ODA DİZİSİNDE	SOFADA	ODA DİZİSİNDE	SOFADA
2					1				
3					2				
4					3				
					4				
					5				

Figure 10. Plans of the houses

When the historical houses in Kaleiçi were examined, two different plan schemas were determined considering the relation between room and hall. These are the plan types according to the layout of the rooms in which hall is located “in the middle” or “in the side”. The most important factor determining the choice between the houses of one or two floors and those two plans is the size of the plot which the house is on (Figure 10).

One of the factors determining the plan choices in the houses with two floors and a basement is the location of the stairs. The stairs is located;

- Opposite the entrance in the hall,
- Between the two rooms,
- At the end of the row of the rooms

Within the settlement, the four-room option is mostly observed. Although the arrangement of the rooms are the same in the basement and upstairs, the location and size of the halls upstairs were changed in some houses in order to direct more rooms towards the street. In the historical houses of Kaleiçi, the location of the service areas (such as toilet and kitchen) in the original planning could not be determined exactly. They are generally considered to be located next to the house or connected to the house from outside. Today, they are located by the inner additions inside the house.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FACADE AND PROFILE

Historical houses in the Kaleiçi settlement have one or two floors. There is a basement in all of these houses. The use of basement is totally independent of the use of the inner house and has entrance from the garden or the street or from the house inside (Figure 11, 12).

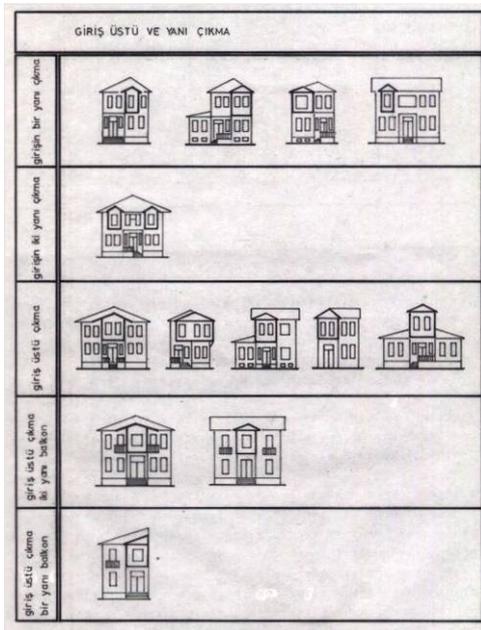


Figure 11. View from the houses

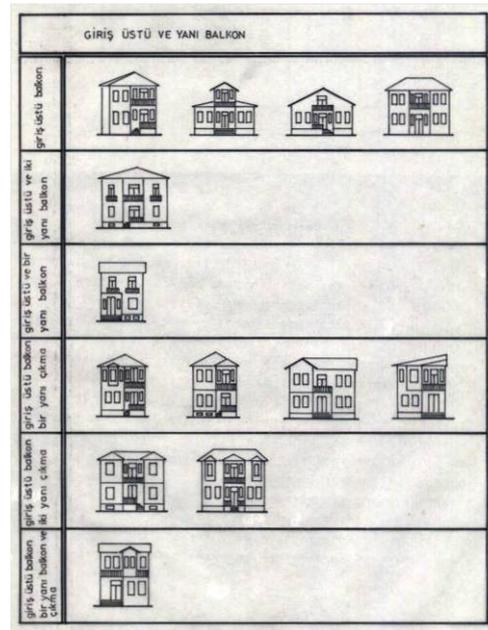


Figure 12. View from the houses

A roof terrace was also available both in the one-floor and two-floor houses although it was not used very frequently. There are also times when these were located in the attic storey in one-floor houses (Figure 13, 14, 15).

In the silhouette of the streets, another factor that increases the visual impact is the material used which are wood, stone, plaster and tile. These materials are perceived outside and reflect the traditional technology. Wood that is used in bay, balcony, door, window, console, support, landing of the entrance, balcony banister and decoration of the eaves is either painted or kept

in its original appearance. Iron which is used in patches in banisters of balcony and entrance landing, and support adds special visual values to the appearance of the house even though it tarnishes in the long run. Plastered surfaces and some of the wood coverings in the exterior of some houses were painted in various colors.



Figure 13. View from the house



Figure 14. View from the house



Figure 15. View from the house

In all of the historical houses in Kaleiçi, the entrance was included inside by a recess. Windows were built above and near the entrance door in order to lighten the hall more and to control the entrance. The location of the stairs arranged to go from the entrance to the street increases the alternatives of the entrance (Figure 16).

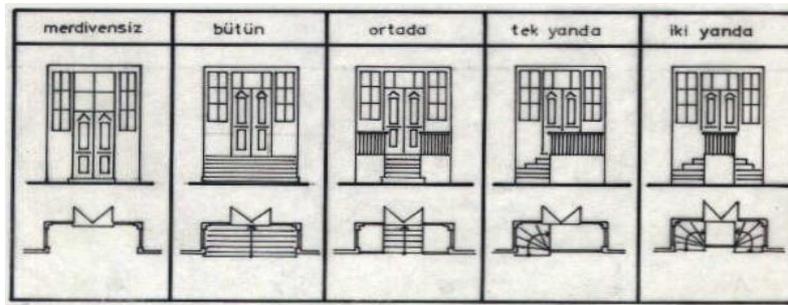


Figure 16. Enter of the houses

Historical houses in Kaleiçi have windows which face generally the street or the backyard due to their adjacent design. It is also possible to have a third facade in the houses on the corner plot and with a garden at the side of them.

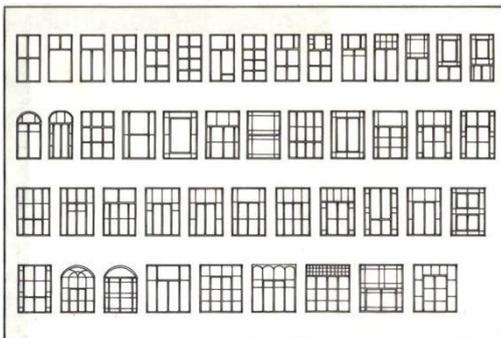


Figure 17. Windows of the houses

According to the location of the plan schema, the number of the windows in the rooms on the one or both side of the entrance was two. When the land is small, the number of the windows decreases to one however its size does not change. The windows are designed differently in order to emphasize the places upstairs in the open and closed bays. Their size varies from 0.80m to 2.30 m. (Figure 17).

In the historical houses in Kaleiçi, open and

closed bays designed to increase the light and sight, provide ventilation and more space upstairs than on the ground floor create richer facade alternatives.

Exterior decorations of the houses reflect Turkish architecture with the help of 19. century decoration art. Although the samples of pediments and capitals are seen mostly in the houses made of stone, similar applications of decoration are also seen in some of the wooden houses.

## CONCLUSION

Edirne, which is neglected in terms of historical values except for its monuments, has lost its historical houses which are the samples of civilian architecture.

After the fires and earthquakes, 5 or 6-floor buildings destroying the traditional patterns and appearance have been built as a result of the regulations allowing construction and illegal applications (Figure 18, 19, 20).



Figure 18. View from the house



Figure 19. View from the house



Figure 20. View from the house

The settlement, having a historical pattern until 1970s, has encountered a structuring against physical and local form of its original historical pattern as a result of the new life style brought by the changes in the period in which economic, technologic, social and physical transformations took place.



Figure 21. View from the house

The changes mentioned have mainly affected the historical pattern. These houses, considered to be the sample of civilian architecture, either destroyed and more dense buildings were built instead: or left in a bad condition within the framework of the power of protection rules because modern life conditions could not be provided. Because of the reasons such as the insufficiency in the economic and social structure of the users of these ruined houses, we have some problems waiting to be solved such as that these houses left their liveliness and some of the houses near to the trade region were put into the function of trade; and need

for the car park and vehicular traffic (Figure 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28)



Figure 22. View from the house



Figure 23. View from the house



Figure 24. View from the house



Figure 25. View from the house



Figure 26. View from the house



Figure 27.. View from the house



Figure 28. View from the house

Facilities to use the kaleiçi historical houses in today conditions by protecting the original pattern and conditions to make use of the houses as the present building stock should be put into effect urgently.

Here are the suggestions for this;

- Protective improvement plan, which is renovator, protective and able to integrate the old and the new, provides solutions and considers restoration and present conditions, should be prepared by using scientific and technologic techniques in order to protect original pattern and the houses in Kaleiçi which are the examples of civilian architecture.
- “A guide of design” prepared by making use of the typological features of the historical houses in the settlement with the aim of protecting the entire pattern could be effective in increasing the image of the city.
- Houses in Kaleiçi should be put into service by making arrangements in their environment and imposing cultural, social and tourism-targeted functions considering their touristic potential and developments to be a city with a university.
- Funds providing financial support to the owners of these houses in the settlement should be set up in order to protect these houses.
- Public activities should be given support in order to make the settlement attractive and prestigious; and those living in the settlement should be made conscious of the protection of these houses.

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