

## A Different Approach to Representation: Trabzon ‘Tekel’ Cigarette Factory

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### Abstract

Although industrial buildings are important indicators of a country's socio-economic history, they often lose their functions due to rapid technological developments. The main subject of this article discussed is Trabzon Tekel Tobacco Factory which is built in two stages between the years 1951 to 1965 that is an industrial heritage and an important element of collective memory. According to the documents its function has been terminated in the 1990s but wanted to be revived in 2006 with a competition project in order to sustain the collective memory. However, during the competition and implementation phase, the building was completely demolished and rebuilt. In a world which we tend to create by destroying, it is expressed that we cannot ensure the sustainability of collective memory by demolishing the original and later building the exact copy of it at the same place or in another place.

**Keywords:** *Trabzon Tekel Tobacco Factory, Urban Memory, Collective Memory, Adaptive Reuse, Antiquity Value.*

### 1. Introduction

The functions of industrial structures, which have witnessed the socio-economic history of a country, often lose their importance due to rapid technological developments and are left to their fate. In the words of Loures these buildings are part of the human and place identity because they represent more than one time layer and cultural activity. These industrial buildings are more than just the building block that was built to produce, and they are the indicators that tell us about the technology of the time they were constructed and the ways in which people lived, their traditions and habits, in the most perceptible way (Loures, 2008). As Cengizkan mentions, since they often lose their functions due to rapid technological developments, as time passes they gain representation value and importance as a reference of the place and time they witness (Cengizkan, 2002). Rossi expresses ‘representation’ with ‘continuity’, and for him permanence’s in the city are not only ‘pathological’. At times they may be ‘propelling’. They serve to bring the past into the present, providing a past that can still be experienced (Rossi, 1984). According to Moore and Whelan, the basic idea behind the need to protect industrial heritage is that not only these city symbols are related to history, but they are also something more than history (Loures, 2008). For Rossi, the city is a theater of human events. This theater is no longer just a representation; it is a reality. It absorbs events and feelings, and every new event contains within it a memory of the past and a potential memory of the future (Rossi, 1984).

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The industry building that is the main element of discussion in this article is Trabzon Tekel Cigarette Factory which is originally designed as a tobacco care and process atelier. It is located at a place which can be considered central in Trabzon. To the south of the land is the Gülbahar Hatun Mosque and Tomb in Atapark, and to the east there is the historical fortification walls extending parallel to the building. Some parts of the walls were built during the Byzantine period and were repaired during the Ottoman period. Later a bastion called Zağnos Bastion and a door were added. Today, these premises are very near to the important areas of the city such as Trabzon Governorship building and Zagnos Valley Park (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2).

The total area of the parcel, in which the historical building was built in two stages between the years 1951 to 1965 is 13.299 m<sup>2</sup> and the occupation of the building is 11.303 m<sup>2</sup>. The building on the south (administration) (Building 1) has two story, the building right next to it has four story (factory production) (Building 2), and the building at the northern end of the site has five story (factory storages) (Building 4). There are refectory and some maintenance ateliers between the production and the storages (Building 3). The whole structure has an inward-oriented plan diagram with courtyards (Fig. 3).

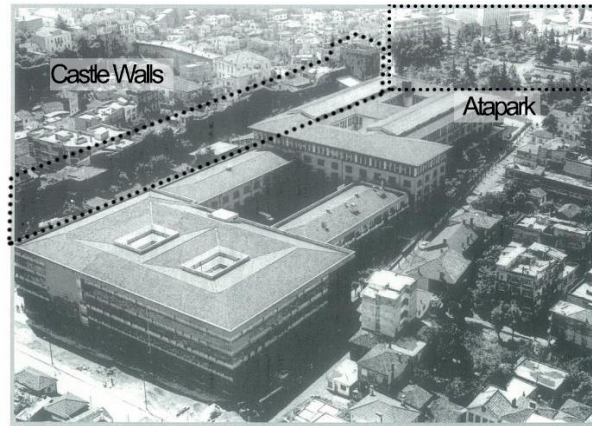
With the decrease of tobacco cultivation in the region, Trabzon Tekel Cigarette Factory has lost its function and become idle. The Cigarette Factory was registered with the decision of the Trabzon Regional Committee of The Conservation of Cultural and Natural Assets on March 1998. In the message sent to the Municipality by the second decision of the Board dated October 2005; it was stated that the conservation plan of the parcel and projects that would be prepared in this direction, which includes the surrounding of the parcel and the old fabric in its immediate vicinity, will be evaluated after the submission of the proposals. In a way, the Conservation Board leaves the issue of the cigarette factory flexible and leaves the decision on the initiative of the municipality. The municipality as the owner of the property decided to solve the problem by revitalizing the structure and its surroundings through an architectural competition and in this direction Trabzon Tekel Cigarette Factory Revitalization Architectural Project Competition was conducted on May 2006.



**Figure 1.** Important areas in Trabzon

In the competition statement prepared by Trabzon Municipality APK Directorate, it is stated that the city developed having a single center due to the limited land facilities, and the aim is to create different centers for the revival of the city. The building subject to the competition is believed to become another center by installing a Municipality Service Building and a shopping mall which would contribute to the revitalization of its immediate vicinity. In summary, the subject of the competition takes into account the characteristics of the historical building and its surroundings, re-evaluating and planning the building in a way that it accommodates the Municipality Service Building and the shopping mall. As specified in Competition Statement, suggestions to be developed by the competitors are expected to relate the meaningful task of the building in the memories of the city that could be sustained in the future, and at the same time should give a new vision to the city of Trabzon.

As stated in the competition brief; while the main aim is to revitalize the historical cigarette factory and its surroundings in general, the diversity of architectural program suggestions and intervention solutions in the proposed projects are expected from the competitors. As it can be understood from the file of Questions and Answers for the Competition, the degree of antiquity value of the historical building has not been specified by the Conservation Board. On the other hand, which parts of the historical building should be preserved and which ones could be demolished has not been clearly defined in the statement. In the context of this flexible approach of the jury members led by the members of the Conservation Board, some valuable data contributions are expected to come from the competition proposals for the revitalization of the building and the site. A total of 16 projects participated in the competition were announced in August 2006.



**Figure 2.** Trabzon Tekel Cigarette Factory (C. Pirselim, archive 1980) <sup>3</sup>



**Figure 3.** Trabzon Tekel Cigarette Factory, 2002

1: administration, 2: production, 3: refectory, 4: storage

Below, the main design decisions of the project selected (MTF Project: Ozan Öztepe and Derya Ekim Öztepe) are explained first, and how the project applied in a different way from its main discourse at the beginning is discussed.

## 2. The Details of the First Prize

As stated in the winning design decisions of the project, Trabzon Tekel Cigarette Factory is in the urban memory with its 50 years of existence. Today, this decision is adopted as the main design principle to make the building not only visually and semantically related but also usable in the future. Project team; assuming that the average useful life of the reinforced concrete structures is 40 years, remarked the current structural status and the use of the cigarette factory in the near future as an important issue; and the building's place in the memory of the city with impracticability of current situation is considered as the dualism which the design is sprouted from. At the beginning the main aim of the designers was to keep the building as long as possible and to make it liveable in the long term. In this context, by making use of the flexibility advantage given by the jury members, the designers demolish the storage building on the north (Building 4) explaining as if it does not have any valuable architectural features, and they replace it with Municipal Service Building as requested in the

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.trabzonkultur.org.tr/s/eski-trabzon>

Statement. In the competition proposal of MTF Project for the Municipal Service Building, the new design has no similarity with the historical and neither a dialogue with the historical five-story Production Building in the south (Building 2). Besides, the Production Building (Building 2) is proposed in the design as a shopping mall by demolishing most of its parts except the load bearing walls. In the competition proposal, the middle block in the east (Building 3) is preserved together with the flooring systems and be functioned to be an exhibition hall as part of the mall (Fig. 4 and Fig. 5).



**Figure 4.** Building 3, flooring system (Competition Statement, 2006).



**Figure 5.** The Competition Proposal

1: Administration = Administration for Shopping Mall (the building is protected), 2: Production Department = Shopping Mall (only the outer shell of the building is protected), 3: Refectory = Exhibition Hall (the building is protected), 4: Storage = Municipality Service Building (completely demolished, a new design is built: different from the original) (Derya Ekim Öztepe archive, 2006).

The Administration Block in the south (Building 1) built between 1948 and 1951 and contains the characteristics of II. The National Architecture Period is extremely important for the designers and should to be preserved completely for its value of historical characteristics. The new function of this building, parallel to the original use, is considered as the administration of the shopping mall (Building 2), which is adjacent to it (Fig. 5).

As stated in the jury report; the first prize preserving the shell of Building 2 and using it for shopping, redesigning Municipality Service Building with a modern design approach, the attention paid to the existing heights and the heights of the fortification walls are all welcomed. On the other hand, it was requested that Building 3, which is proposed to be an exhibition hall protected by its project, was found negative by the jury and that this section was solved under the ground level. In the implementation phase of the project, not only these recommendations of the jury but also with the requests of the administration, the project have been applied in a different way than the first discourse of the designer. Below are the details of this application.

### 3. The Differences Between Competition Project And The Project Implemented

Upon the request of the Municipality after the competition, the Chamber of Civil Engineers was requested a report about the strength of the building and it was stated in the technical reports both in October 2007 and November 2007 that “the immovable had completed its economic life”. Based on this decision, the Trabzon Regional Board for the Conservation of Cultural and Natural Property decided that the entire registered building could be demolished and rebuilt in accordance with the original version of Building 1 and Building 2. As a result of all this, the whole of Tekel Cigarette Factory was demolished and the project was constructed in a different way than the rhetoric of the designer and even the jury (Fig. 6 and Fig. 7).

As proposed at the beginning, Building 4 is removed and Municipal Service Building is designed exactly as projected. Respecting the comments of the jury, during the application of the winning project, Building 3 is removed but applied different from the design and an assembly hall with a floor high is constructed to the place. In the designers’ report the load bearing walls of Building 2 is preserved, but in the practice the whole building is completely swept away (Fig.8, Fig. 9 and Fig. 10).

In the designed project, Municipality Service Building and the Shopping Mall (Building 2) are disconnected with a narrow passage in between. With this application, unlike the original, the structure is two different buildings standing in two different urban parcels. In parallel with the jury recommendations, the pedestrian passage between the two buildings is extended in the application (Fig. 11).

In the competition project, the proposed public / semi-public space between the shopping mall block (Building 2) and the Municipality Service Building have some quotations from the historical urban structure. However, in the project implemented, this outdoor usage is not as planned. The one-story structure proposes a different character and the outdoor space encircled by the Assembly Hall are used by cars rather than pedestrians (Fig. 12....and Fig. 15).

Although in the competition design the two-story building in the south (Building 1) is suggested to be saved and used in a manner similar to the original, it was completely demolished and rebuilt by resembling what was in place (Fig. 16 and Fig. 17).

As stated above, while in the competition project Building 2 is expected to be maintained by protecting its’ load bearing walls, in practice they are completely demolished and reconstructed to host its new function which is the shopping mall. The new walls of the building have white frosted glass boxes at the exact place that the previous historical building had openings before. It is as if the building as a whole seems to be protected with a different understanding. The main reason of having these solid boxes is to control the light inside the shopping mall (Fig. 18, Fig. 19 and Fig. 20).





**Figure 6.** Trabzon Tekel Cigarette Factory land, construction phase 2009 (wowturkey.com photograph :Volkan Soner)



**Figure 7.** Trabzon Tekel Cigarette Factory land, shopping mall construction phase 2009 (wowturkey.com photograph:Volkan Soner)

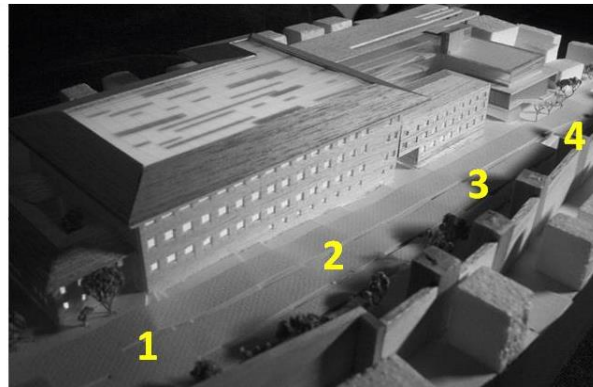


**Şekil 8.** The project applied

1: Administration = Administration for Shopping Mall (completely demolished, rebuilt similar to the original), 2: Production Department = Shopping Mall (completely demolished, rebuilt similar to the original), 3: Refectory = Assembly Hall (completely demolished, built a new design: different from the original and the project designed), 4: Storage = Municipality Service Building (completely demolished, a new design is built: different from the original).



**Figure 9.** The eastern facade, (competition statement, 2006)



**Figure 10.** The competition visual, Eastern Facade (Derya Ekim Öztepe archive)



**Figure 11.** The eastern facade of the present shopping mall ([www.varlibasavm.com](http://www.varlibasavm.com))

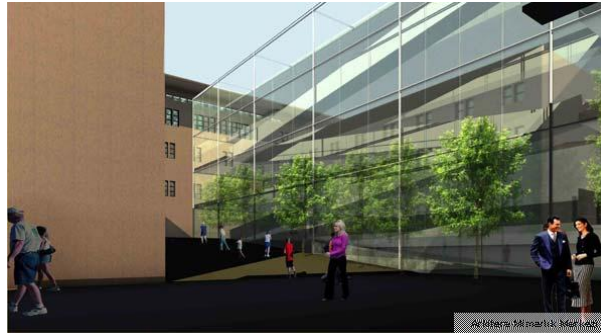


**Figure 12.** The pedestrian passage between Municipal Service Building and the Shopping Mall (view from east and west) (Yusuf Bera Bilici archive, 2018)





**Figure 13.** The competition visual (Derya Ekim Öztepe archive)



**Figure 14.** The competition visual (Derya Ekim Öztepe archive)



**Figure 15.** The pedestrian passage between Municipal Service Building and the Shopping Mall (Müberra Kabataş archive, 2019)



**Figure 16.** Building 1 before demolition, 2006 (Competition Statement, 2006)



**Figure 17.** Building 1, 2018 (Yusuf Bera Bilici archive, 2018)



**Figure 18.** The eastern facade (competition statement, 2006)



**Figure 19.** Shopping mall eastern facade (Müberra Kabataş archive, 2019)



**Figure 20.** The Western facade and the window detail (Yusuf Bera Bilici archive, 2018)

Although the plan scheme of this shopping mall seems to have inspired from the plan scheme of the Tekel Cigarette Factory, at present there is nothing offered different than the traditional shopping mall plan type with an atrium. In other words, it is an example of an atrium bazaar type but with its exterior, tries to repeat the history (Fig. 21 and Fig. 22).

The competition criteria of the designers and hence the priority criterion of the competition jury is that the protection of the old Cigarette Factory's Production Building (Building 2) with its load bearing walls to adapt the shopping mall function inside. In practice, perhaps in terms of ease of implementation, everything that was anticipated to be conserved have been demolished and replaced with imitations. In this way, urban memory is tried to be kept not by the existence of the original but by simulations. The traces in collective memory have to be invoked with this apparent but not the real thing.



**Figure 21.** Production building (building 1) (competition statement, 2006).



**Figure 22.** Shopping mall interior (Yusuf Bera Bilici archive, 2018)

#### **4. Evaluation**

The area at present is in the heart of the city of Trabzon, as it was in the 1960s. The former Cigarette Factory is a large-scale project in the name of creating a second center in town together with Zagnos Valley and Atapark. The building is located at the intersection of two important city axes of Trabzon and the relationship between the city axis and the Municipality Service Building, which is located on the north wing of the land, is extremely important. Lowering the Eastern Road and using the site between the fortification walls and the historical complex as a recreation purposes might also be considered as a positive contribution to urban transformation. Despite the urban success of the project, the continuity of urban memory has been seen as a serious case needs to be questioned. The industrial heritage, which has lost its function with the development of technology and has been abandoned, is in fact a cultural fabric that needs to be preserved.

Borsi describes industrial space as; "the texture of the natural or agricultural texture as a result of the careful and systematic activity of man in order to develop industrial activities". This definition allows the whole texture to be seen as a single element

(Loures, 2008). At the beginning, in the competition statement of Trabzon Tekel Cigarette Factory, although the building complex as a whole is wanted to be saved intact in the memory of the city, the ‘flexible approaches’ during the competition process caused the destruction of the whole structure, gradually eliminating the possibility of sustaining the traces in memory. In the implementation process, the approaches of the administration and the jury to the project are believed to be not based on the preservation of the whole, but the preservation of some parts which has been the attitudes gradually damage the memory of the city. Due to its historical value, Trabzon Tekel Cigarette Factory is a valuable structure and has memory in the society as it represents the lives of the laborers of a certain period, but today it is only remembered with ‘materialistic connotations’. This has some parallelism to the re-production technique, or in other words the ‘historical materialism’ approach, mentioned by Benjamin (Benjamin, 2012). Today, it is a reality that the fake repetitions which are created by destroying the aura of a historical texture are increasing day by day. In fact, within the framework of the ideological approaches of the authority, the nostalgic materialist attitudes revealed by these interventions aiming to bring back the longing for nostalgia, create a contradiction in the credibility of the audience (Kütük and Akalın, 2018). Susan Stewart writes that nostalgia is the repetition that mourns the inauthenticity of all repetitions and denies the repetition's capacity to define identity (Boym, 2001).

As Bauman defines, time is a tense concept between non-viable past and non-existent future (Bauman, 2003). This state of tension has been suspended in a vague field that cannot be described for centuries because it cannot provide a definite break. However, in this situation where progress is inevitable, people cannot go back to the past, neither cannot avoid getting away from the point where they are (Kütük and Akalın, 2018). According to Walter Benjamin, what we call progress is actually a storm (Benjamin, 2012). As the distance to the past of the displacements in time and space with this storm increases, the longing of the people to this place and nostalgia increases. The shopping mall of Trabzon (Building 1 and Building 2) today hosts this ambiguity. After the transformation, the past traces used in the facade are now being connoted with a shopping mall concept.

Luis Loures says; “Cultural landscapes give us a sense of place and reveal our relationship with the land over. They are special places that contain aspects of our origin and development through their forms, features, and history of use” (Loures, 2008). As seen in the expression of Loures, the texture and form are not sufficient criteria for the preservation of the whole, and the use history is an inevitable necessity for continuity. In *Functionalism Today*, Theodore W. Adorno emphasizes the importance of the current function of a building by saying that each structure has a social function and aesthetic dimension, and according to him it is not possible to distinguish functionality from style, because the rejection of a style is another style in itself (Adorno, 2005). Although it is a view supported by many theoreticians / practitioners by maintaining its aura and its originality with its own function, this happy body-aura togetherness is unfortunately not in the case where the function, like industrial structures, is no longer active. In case



the function cannot be activated, the protection of the original name will contribute to the continuity of the structure in collective memory. Unfortunately, neither the function nor the name explains the true identity of Trabzon Tekel Cigarette Factory.

Svetlana Boym expresses nostalgia as the curtain memories of inhabitants of the city, the projections of controversial remembrances (Boym, 2001). Cities exist beyond their physical structures by accumulating the experiences of those who live in them, and by these accumulated memories they feel themselves as part of that city. This memory-based relationship with the city is in fact a relation of 'belonging'. Aristoteles emphasizes the inextricable status of this belonging relationship mentioning that "to transfer memories to objects would preserve them from mental decay" (Forty, 2001). The fact that space takes place in the personal and collective memory is the format of production of the images belonging to that space and the position in the memory. In the interviews, the former employees of Tekel Building and those who know the previous building stated that there are similarities in terms of the form in the applied project, but nothing from their memories is left out. They are able to recognize the difference but they are concerned that this won't be the case for the younger generations. In the study of Trabzon Tekel Cigarette Factory of Topaloğlu and Beşgen the meaning of the building for different group of people is investigated (Topaloğlu and Beşgen, 2017). The building is no longer a place of work for its employees who have a direct relationship with itself, but it is the 'home' of the employees with the established spatial ties. For the tobacco producers, who have a secondary level relationship with the Trabzon Tekel Cigarette Factory, the building is a way of earning money where they receive the equivalent of the products they produce all year round. For the individuals who make a relationship with the factory in a third level, it is an important physical reference point in the city with its mass size. For the public this 'production site' is a representation of labor in the memories, where tobacco trade is carried out.

Art historian Alois Riegl, who introduced the concept of industrial archeology, defined a number of criteria to determine whether an industrial structure carries a monumental value. Riegl says "...each successive step implies its predecessor and could not have happened as it did without that earlier step" (Riegl, 2015). The industrial structures, which have witnessed a certain period of history and contributed to the way in which the society lived, even if they become dysfunctional, embody the collective memory, common traditions and common sense of history of individuals. Urban memory, in this context, is the living witness of public memory, unifying in both social and temporal dimensions. One of the Riegl's values, 'value of remembrance' as 'oldness value'; is the feeling that is left on people who experience it with aging of the material, or in other words, physical aging of the object. Riegl argues that, even though it was made for different purposes, the value of antiquity combined society with a common denominator; each period includes a certain period of time, society, experiences and emotions. From this point of view, any touch to the buildings defined as industrial heritage will damage the traces in the community memory. Selfslagh states that it is impossible to rebuild or renew the cultural heritage (Selfslagh, 2002). The reason for



that is there is no way to rebuild cultural heritages which is already destroyed. Therefore, industrial heritage which is part of cultural heritage needs specific consideration to preserve by transforming its authenticity to our future generation. Cultural heritage as part of our past history, which belongs to our ancestors should be preserved.



**Figure 23.** Tobacco processing room and working tobacco workers (representative photos)  
(Bulletin of the Tobacco Experts Association) (Doğruel, 2000)

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