

Refunctioned Levantine Heritage in İzmir: A Study on Buca and Bornova

İzmir'de Yeniden İşlevlendirilen Levanten Mirası: Buca ve Bornova Üzerine Bir Araştırma

Şerife MUMCU¹, Gizem İzmir TUNAHAN²

Received: 03.06.2024 - Accepted: 01.10.2024

Abstract

The concept of refunctioning offers multifaceted advantages encompassing social, economic, and ecological dimensions. In contemporary times, the adaptive reuse of historical buildings has transitioned from being merely advantageous to an essential practice. This study examines refunctioned historical buildings, specifically focusing on Levantine mansions that are integral to the Levantine culture in İzmir. Structures were evaluated based on facade characteristics, structural integrity, historical information, garden usage, and newly assigned functions. Following this examination, the Matheys Mansion was analyzed in greater depth. Findings indicate that while restorations in Buca are primarily government-led and often neglect historical context, Bornova benefits from more private initiatives that prioritize cultural accessibility. The study emphasizes the importance of maintaining historical identity and suggests that new functions should align with the buildings' heritage to ensure ongoing community engagement and preservation.

Keywords: *Bornova, Buca, Historical heritage, Levantines, Re-functioning.*

Özet

Yeniden işlevlendirme kavramı; sosyal, ekonomik ve ekolojik boyutları kapsayan çok yönlü avantajlar sunar. Günümüzde tarihi yapıların farklı işlevlerle yeniden kullanımı, yalnızca avantajlı olmaktan olmazsa olmaz bir uygulamaya dönüşmüştür. Bu çalışma, özellikle İzmir'deki Levanten kültürünün ayrılmaz bir parçası olan Levanten konaklarına odaklanarak yeniden işlevlendirilmiş tarihi yapıları incelemektedir. Yapılar; cephe özellikleri, yapısal bütünlük, tarihi bilgiler, bahçe kullanımı ve yeni atanan işlevler temelinde değerlendirilmiştir. Bu incelemenin ardından Matheys Konağı daha derinlemesine analiz edilmiştir. Bulgular, Buca'daki restorasyonların öncelikle hükümet tarafından yönetildiğini ve genellikle tarihi bağlamı ihmal ettiğini; Bornova'nın ise kültürel erişilebilirliği önceliklendiren daha özel girişimlerden faydalandığını göstermektedir. Çalışma, tarihi kimliğin korunmasının önemini vurgulamakta ve devam eden topluluk katılımını ve korumayı sağlamak için yeni işlevlerin binaların mirasıyla uyumlu olması gerektiğini öne sürmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Bornova, Buca, Tarihi miras, Levantenler, Yeniden işlevlendirme.*

Atıf: Mumcu, Ş., & İzmir Tunahan, G. (2024). Levantine heritage in İzmir: A study on Buca and Bornova. *Modular Journal*, 7(1-2), 30-53. <https://doi.org/10.59389/modular.1495393>

¹ Dokuz Eylül University, Department of Architecture, serifemumcu@hotmail.com | ORCID: 0009-0008-2338-0057

² Dokuz Eylül University, Department of Architecture, gizem.izmirtunahan@deu.edu.tr | ORCID: 0000-0003-1473-9351

1. Introduction

Refunctioning is a concept that has benefits in many different aspects such as social, economic and ecological. Nowadays, re-functioning of historical buildings has become a necessity rather than a benefit. It is important to preserve the architectural value of a place by preserving its history and culture. A new function is important for the historical architectural work to continue its existence (Büyükarıslan & Güney, 2015). However, some issues need to be taken into consideration when performing this architectural transformation. Today, while there are projects that give due importance to these architectural transformations and undergo a transformation that respects the work, there are also projects that do not take this into consideration. The adaptive reuse of historical buildings is essential not only for preserving architectural heritage but also for revitalizing urban areas.

In İzmir, abandoned buildings present significant challenges, impacting the city socially, culturally, and from a security perspective. Among these, Levantine mansions, with their distinctive architectural features, draw particular attention in urban settings. Once vibrant symbols of cultural and historical significance, these mansions now stand neglected and in disrepair. The adverse effects of their abandonment are felt across various dimensions. However, re-functionalizing these buildings offers a pathway to revitalizing the city (Karaderi & Duman, 2022). Restoring and adapting these mansions can ensure their preservation and enable them to continue contributing to the urban fabric of İzmir.

1.1. Problem of Research

Most Levantine houses in İzmir are idle. In re-functioned cases, their re-functioning is disconnected from their history and context especially in regions such as Buca and Alsancak. There are also various functional changes in Levantine houses in different districts such as Bornova and Karşıyaka. Levantine mansions played a key role in İzmir's history, hosting distinguished guests and embodying the city's rich heritage. Since they are important in the urban memory of İzmir, they are buildings that affect the urban aesthetics and city skyline. For Levantine mansions to be recognized and actively integrated into contemporary society, their current idle state must first be addressed. This revitalization can be achieved either by preserving the building's original function or through adaptive reuse, whereby a new function is introduced. Repurposing historic buildings like the Levantine houses is vital for their preservation and for maintaining cultural values. However, challenges arise when the new function does not align with the building's original identity, potentially compromising architectural elements and historical context. It's essential to balance the need for refunctioning with preserving the building's heritage to keep its authenticity and cultural significance intact. For society to acknowledge and make use of the re-functioned Levantine mansions, they must be revitalized in a way that corresponds with their historical legacy. For İzmir's Levantine houses, ensuring that any refunctioning respects their historical heritage is crucial to prevent a disconnect between their original context and modern use. Striking this balance is vital to preserve the integrity and cultural value of these historical structures while adapting them to contemporary needs.

The main purpose of this study is to examine the positive and negative effects of the refunctioning of Levantine houses in Izmir, taking into account the architectural practices, facades and landscape perspectives. The aim is to suggest strategies that will reduce the negative effects of functional changes on these historical structures.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Refunctioning of Historical Buildings: Social, Economic and Ecological Perspectives

Guidance in the refunctioning process requires an understanding of the historical context of a building, including its architectural style, original purpose, and cultural value (Akyıldız & Olğun, 2022). Refunctioning initiatives can guarantee that the building's distinctive legacy is recognized and protected by including historical information. In order to preserve historical buildings' authenticity and character while they are being repurposed, architectural integrity is essential. It entails maintaining the original design components, building materials, and architectural details that add to the structure's historical significance (Çetin, 2021). Refunctioning projects can preserve a building's individuality while modifying it to meet modern requirements by honoring the architectural integrity of the building.

Refunctioning involves repurposing an existing building for a different function than its original design. This strategy is effective for improving the operational and commercial performance of buildings. It offers an appealing sustainable and circular economy alternative to new construction. In evaluating the refunctioning of historical buildings, it is crucial to consider the social, economic, and ecological impacts. When examined socially, it ensures that the historical heritage preserves its old values and is recognized by society. In addition, attention is paid to the compatibility of the new function with the existing structure. When examined economically, the restoration process for refunctioning is generally more affordable than demolishing and rebuilding. When examined ecologically, historical buildings containing durable materials such as concrete, wood, glass and steel survive longer when properly maintained (Büyükarıslan & Güney, 2015). When it is preferred to demolish and rebuild the structure, the energy consumed and the resulting carbon emissions increase significantly.

Re-functioning can be evaluated under several subheadings, including the prominent features of the building and its facade character. Additionally, it involves the architectural identity formed by factors such as the materials used, the changes between its original and new functions, and its relationship with the built environment. Furthermore, it considers the traces from its past and their place in public memory, as reflected in the level of legibility of these traces. In terms of architectural identity, several aspects can be examined: the spatial and volumetric structure that reflects its original state after refunctioning; the structural elements that have been partially or completely preserved despite damage over time; the scarcity of materials for the new project; and the preservation of the building shell, which initially draws attention and generally provides the most significant clues about its history. Since Levantine mansions were examined in this study, especially the facade characteristics, structural

integrity, the historical information the building provides, garden usage, and new functions were examined.

2.2. Levantine Heritage: Historical Background and Significance

Levantines came in the 18th century during the Ottoman period and settled down over time. It is a community that is mostly settled in major port cities, particularly Istanbul and Izmir (Figure 1). They are generally Italian, Dutch and French in origin.

The word Levantine etymologically comes from the French word ‘Lever’ which means sun rise and east (Oban Çakıcıoğlu, 2007). In the Turkish Encyclopedia, Levantine is defined as a person of European origin who settled in the Near Eastern countries and whose ancestry was mixed through intermarriage. They usually make their living by trading. Levantines are people who have integrated themselves religiously, socially and economically with the country they live in, preserving their European characteristics, way of thinking and lifestyle (Yıldız, 2012).

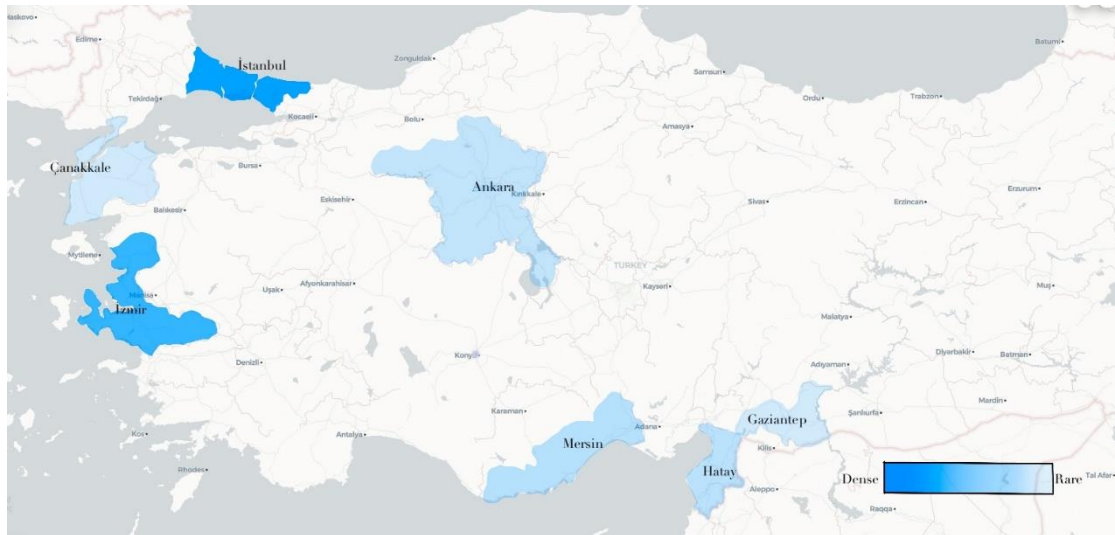


Figure 1. Distribution of Levantine Houses in Türkiye According to Density (prepared by the author).

The majority of Levantine houses were built in the late 19th century and early 20th century. In the 19th century, European communities settled in Istanbul, Izmir, Mersin, and Hatay due to rights granted by the Ottoman Empire for trade, religion, and education. This led to the formation of the Levantine identity, allowing them to express their unique cultural, local, and social attributes through distinctive architecture (Duran & Güneş Gölbe, 2022). The Levantines were among the city's high-income residents, primarily due to their involvement in maritime trade and industrial activities. Initially, they settled near the port to facilitate their trading enterprises. Owning a boat was a key indicator of their wealth, along with having homes featuring grand entrances, separate dining rooms and ballrooms, and dedicated library sections (Ergül & Demircan, 2021).

The Levantines, who settled in various residential areas beyond the coastal region, significantly influenced the development of summer resort settlements on the outskirts

of cities. In central residential areas, predominantly inhabited by Greek and British residents along with some locals, they built well-maintained houses with magnificent gardens. The most beautiful surviving examples of these houses can be frequently found in Izmir today (Duran & GüneşGölbey, 2022). They mostly settled in Buca, Bornova, Alsancak (Baydar & Yılmaz, 2022). It is possible to find examples of Levantine houses in other neighborhoods such as Karşıyaka. However, the bigger mansions usually found in Buca and Bornova because the Levantine families in that districts had higher social and economic status (Baydar & Yılmaz, 2022). Levantine mansions belonged to people of different nationalities, were located on hills or in large gardens, had marble doors, family coats of arms, and contained high walls and iron railings like English mansions (Uyanık, 2014). The arrival of the Levantines was also reflected in the venues, and during this period, opera houses, beer halls, restaurants, ballrooms, theatres, Austrian high schools and French high schools were established. For example, one of the four biggest opera houses in Europe was in Istanbul during that era. After the establishment of the Republic, most of the Levantines left these lands. The majority among the Levantine groups that came to the Ottoman Empire, those who settled in Izmir were focused on agriculture. The results obtained by scanning the sources showed that the mansions were most densely located in Bornova and Buca (Figure 2).

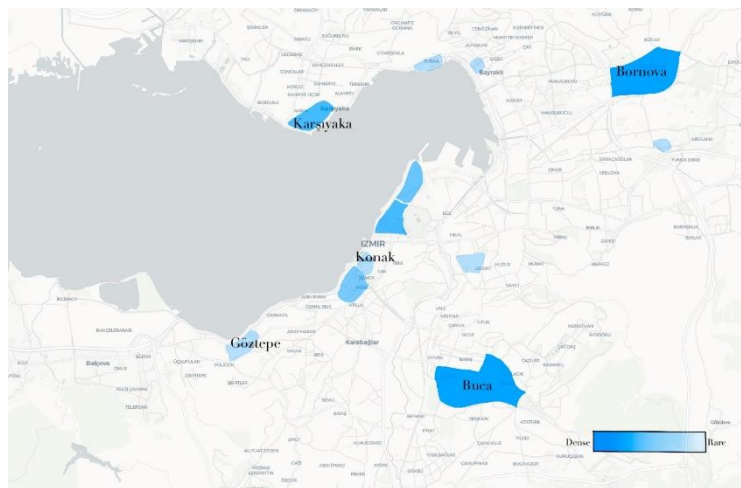


Figure 2. Distribution of Levantine Houses in Izmir According to Density (prepared by the author).

Since the 17th century, western groups have made the Buca area, which dates back to the 6th century BC as their summer retreat. Buca was home to Turkish and Greek people during the Ottoman Empire era. After the 1688 Izmir earthquake, the French consulate was temporarily moved to Buca, which caused Buca, where the Greek population was concentrated, to be discovered by the Levantines. Buca, initially favored as a summer resort due to its cool climate and abundant gardens, later emerged as a prominent British settlement alongside Bornova as more people established residences there (Uyanık, 2014). After the Izmir-Aydın railway line connected in 1860, it became the primary residential neighborhood for railway managers and certain Levantine families. In the second half of the 19th century, it grew to become one of the major suburbs of Izmir (Bırol Akkurt & Avcı Özkaban, 2010). Most of the Levantine

population left the country and settlements in the 1940 - 1950 period. Levantine mansions left behind in these settlements typically occupy large tracts of land, and their surroundings are rich in historical texture. Although the mansions have their characteristic qualifications and their history and the position of the land, they eventually have turned into prestigious, idle areas (Birol Akkurt & Avcı Özkaban, 2010). Some of these lands were kept under state ownership for ten years in accordance with the laws of the time, and they were used for public purposes like health and education. However, during the period from 1965 to 1970, portions of these lands came into the possession of educated urban elites who were not local residents (Birol Akkurt & Avcı Özkaban, 2010). Classical Levantine houses in Izmir appear as buildings where you can enter the house by climbing a few steps and the upper floors have bay windows (Figure 3). Examples of these facades, as depicted in Figure 3, can be found throughout various streets in İzmir (Figure 4).

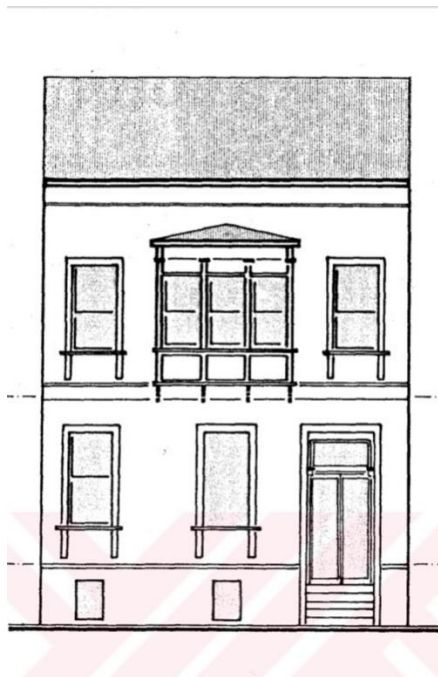


Figure 3. Classic Levantine House Facade Example Scheme (Akyüz, 1993)



Figure 4. Classic Levantine House Facade from Konak (Author's archive, 2024)

Another notable feature of Levantine mansions is their expansive and intricately designed gardens. The Levantine community placed significant emphasis on landscaping their gardens in line with Western customs and tastes (Birol Akkurt, 2004). Landmarks such as the Levantine mansions in İzmir are actively renovated and refunctioned by public entities such as universities and local administrations. Involving the public, determining acceptable uses for these locations, and developing funding plans to assist in their rehabilitation are all part of their work (Abdou, 2017). Private groups like the Levantine Heritage Foundation and private individuals also make substantial contributions to the preservation of historical assets, especially by recording history. While organizations concentrate on recording and supporting cultural

preservation efforts, owners frequently take on restoration initiatives for their own usage (Abdou, 2017).

For restoration efforts to be successful, cooperation between these public and private organizations is crucial. Private organizations contribute innovation, resources, and specialized knowledge, while public institutions supply the required governance, finance, and regulatory guidance. When used in tandem, they guarantee that historically significant buildings are adapted in a way that respects their cultural worth and meets modern demands (Macdonald and Cheong, 2014).

3. Methodology

The literature review identifies the locations of Levantine houses, revealing that numerous mansions are concentrated in the districts of Bornova and Buca within Izmir province, as illustrated in Figure 2. Based on this finding, the research focuses on these two districts.

In order to list the Levantine houses in Izmir, the Cultural Inventory and Levantine Heritage Foundation websites serve as key resources for selecting buildings. Structures on the Cultural Inventory website are filtered using the #Izmir and #Levantine tags. Due to the higher density of buildings in Buca and Bornova, the study concentrates on these areas. Filtered buildings are listed, and after excluding idle structures, those undergoing re-functionalization, and religious buildings, 5 buildings in Buca and 13 in Bornova are chosen for further examination. These structures are documented through photography, and on-site observations are conducted.

The listed structures undergo analysis based on various architectural values, with the support of relevant literature. The remaining buildings are assessed and scored according to structural integrity, historical information, facade condition, garden usage, and current function. Facade characteristics focus on the preservation of the building's architectural identity and its integration within the historical urban context, while structural integrity ensures the mansion's stability and suitability for contemporary use. Historical information is assessed to determine the extent to which the building's past is preserved and communicated, providing cultural continuity. Garden usage is included to analyze the relationship between the architecture of the mansion and the surrounding landscape, highlighting the importance of external spaces in the overall historical and spatial experience. Lastly, the evaluation of newly assigned functions examines the appropriateness of the new uses in maintaining the building's historical significance and ensuring its relevance to contemporary society. These criteria collectively offer a holistic approach to understanding the adaptive reuse of Levantine mansions, balancing preservation with modern functionality. Further eliminations take place based on specific criteria, excluding small-scale mansions from the list. The building with the highest score is selected for a detailed evaluation. The re-functionalization process of the selected building is then examined, comparing its condition before and after transformation.

4. Results

4.1. Detailed analysis of refunctioned Mansions in Buca

Buca, a settlement inhabited since the 6th century BC, served as a residence for both Turkish and Greek citizens during the Ottoman period. Since the 17th century, it has also been one of the summer resorts favored by Westerners living in the city (Bırol Akkurt & Avcı Özkaban, 2010). Due to the Levantine settlement in Buca by the end of the 17th century and the abundance of architectural works, it is possible to see rowed Levantine houses that are still used as residences in various neighborhoods. It is possible to see them especially around Governor Rahmi Bey and Dumlupınar area (Figure 5).



Figure 5. A Street and Rows of Levantine Houses in Vali Rahmi Bey, Buca (Author archive, 2024)

After scanning the sources obtained in the literature review, the distribution of Levantine mansions located in the center of Buca was shown on the map (Figure 6).

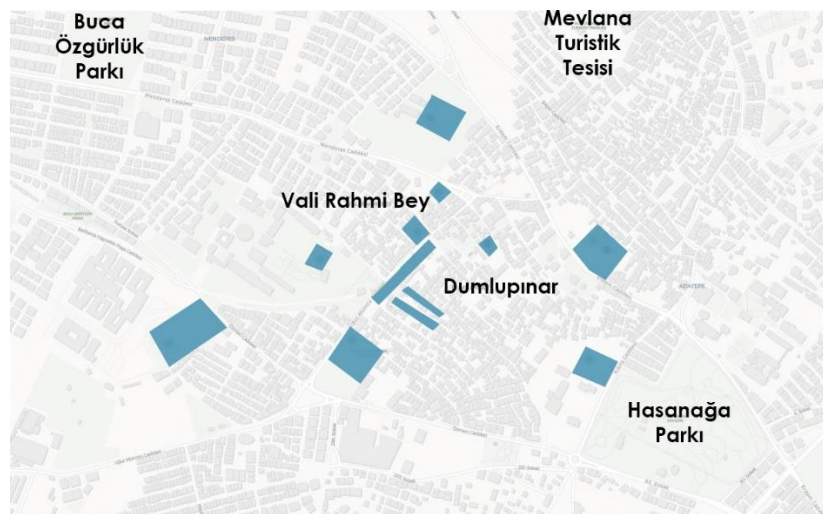







Figure 6. Distribution of Levantine Houses in Buca According to Density (prepared by the author)

Among the structures found, those refunctioned in Buca were selected and listed. Subsequently, general information about them was obtained (Table 1). The name of the structures, their year of construction, renovation date, and new function were specified and added to the table along with their images. The Rees Mansion has not been evaluated as the restoration work is still ongoing. The denominational school has also been excluded. Limited information has been obtained on the Denominational School, as it is a more special structure due to its current function.

Table 1. Re-Functioned Mansions in Buca

#	General Information	The Building	#	General Information	The Building
1	Name: Gavrilli Mansion Date of Construction: 1905 Date of Renovation: 2021 New Function: Restaurant		4	Name: De Jongh Mansion Date of Construction: 1900 ~ Date of Renovation: - New Function: Branch of SGK	
2	Name: Hanson Mansion Date of Construction: 1876 Date of Renovation: - New Function: Private Teaching Institution		5	Name: Baltazzi Mansion Date of Construction: 19th century Date of Renovation: - New Function: Highschool	
3	Name: Gabriel Russo Mansion Date of Construction: 1900 Date of Renovation: - New Function: Ziraat Bank				
Sources: Number 1-2-3-5 Provided from Author's Archive Number 4 Provided from visitizmir.com					

Gavrilli Mansion was built by Architect Vafiadis in 1905. It is known that the Pengelli Family also used the building as a residence, after the Gavrilli family from which it was named. It was later used as a guesthouse of Yapı Kredi Bank and remained idle for a while due to lack of maintenance. The ownership of the building changed in 2008, and it is used as a restaurant after being restored. The building has three floors and includes wooden pediments on the roof. There are circular arches above the windows. Unlike some buildings, very bright colors were avoided in exterior paint. The sign of the restaurant is located separately from the building at the entrance, and it is positioned on

the blind wall of the building in a way that does not harm the integrity of the building. No information was found about the building.

Hanson Mansion is a building made of unplastered stones and bricks. It attracts attention with the horizontal architectural design preferred on its facade. In the interior, living spaces frequently used by users are located on the first floor, while less frequently used spaces such as guesthouses are planned on the upper floors. The building is used as a private teaching institution today. For this reason, external access is limited. As a result of being an educational institution, the garden was changed to meet the requirements of a school garden. The new building located close to the building negatively affects the legibility of the Levantine mansion.

The Gabriel Russo Mansion has been used as a state bank since 1990 and continues to serve this function today (levantineheritage, n.d). Although the façade color of the building was previously used as cream color, it is now used as pink. Unlike other mansions in Buca, attention has been paid to formality. Although no specific movement is mentioned, it has elements from different periods such as Baroque and Art Nouveau.

The building currently used by SGK, social security institution, is known as the De Jongh Mansion and is thought to have been built in the early 1900s. In 1944, the mansion was transferred to the state and used as a sanatorium for a while, then today it is used as a Branch of SGK (Biol Akkurt, 2004). De Jongh Mansion's facade features are detailed stone and brickwork, large arched windows with decorative frames, and an overall symmetrical design that reflects the wealth of its era. In terms of structural integrity, the pavilion has preserved much of its original form, with a central staircase that stands out in the interior. However, it is noted that a service staircase has been added, which was not part of the original design. The building does not provide information about its history. The property historically featured a large garden to accommodate outdoor events. This garden included an ornamental pool and, until the 1930s, housed a tennis club in the southwest section. Consequently, this area has maintained its greenery over the years. Since it is a state institution, it is only open to access during working hours, and therefore access is limited.

After its function as a residence, Baltazzi Mansion was used as an orphanage for a time (Biol Akkurt, 2004). Its current usage is High School. The facades of the building are in a state of disrepair. The original Baltazzi mansion also has wooden pediments on the roof. The facade features a combination of features such as ornate stonework, arched windows. The original Aphrodite Statue of Papazian, which was previously in the garden, was moved to the Dokuz Eylül University campus as a work of art. Since the building is currently used as a high school, access from outside is limited. Rees mansion is currently located within the faculty of education campus of Dokuz Eylül University. The building was used as a deanery by Dokuz Eylül University, but it is not currently accessible because the renovation started in 2024.

In Buca, rows of Levantine houses can be found alongside larger mansions. Refunctioning efforts in Buca have predominantly been led by public institutions, with the exteriors of these buildings largely preserved, although many facades exhibit signs of neglect. In some cases, added signage fails to respect the architectural identity, and

there is a general absence of historical information. Private transformations primarily involve educational facilities and restaurants, yet many of these structures show signs of deterioration over time.

4.2. Detailed Analysis of Refunctioned Mansions in Bornova

As in Buca, Bornova was used as a secondary residence by Levantine families in Bornova. However, after the 1800s, this settlement turned into the main living area (Figure 7) (Birol Akkurt, 2004).

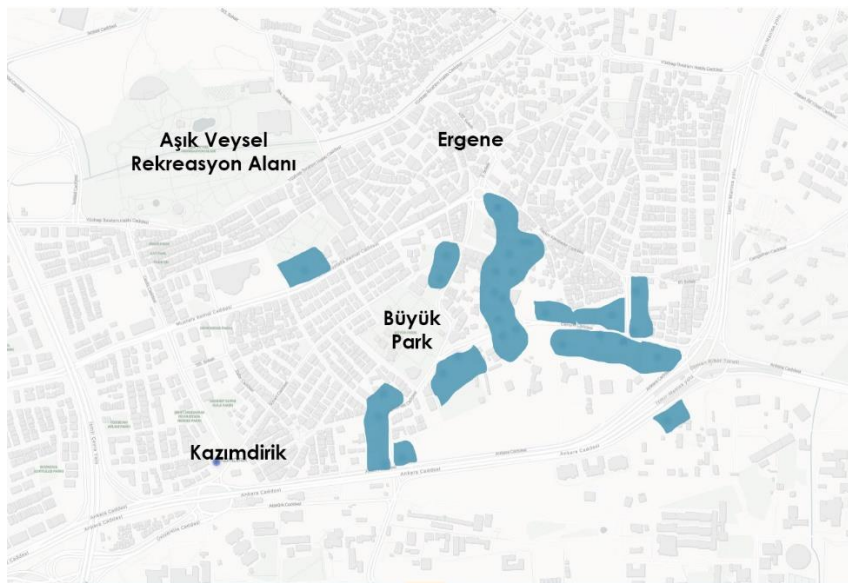















Figure 7. Distribution of Levantine Houses in Bornova According to Density (prepared by the author)

Among the buildings found, those that were re-functioned in Bornova were selected and listed, and their general information was obtained (Table 2).

Table 2. Mansions in Bornova

#	General Information	The Building	#	General Information	The Building
1	<p>Name: Izmir Literature Museum</p> <p>Date of Construction: 19th century</p> <p>Date of Renovation: 2021</p> <p>New Function: Library & Museum</p>		8	<p>Name: Kuyulu Ev</p> <p>Date of Construction: 19th century</p> <p>Date of Renovation: 1990</p> <p>New Function: Ege University Paper and Book Arts Museum</p>	

<p>2</p> <p>Name: Fernand Pagy Mansion</p> <p>Date of Construction: 1800</p> <p>Date of Renovation: -</p> <p>New Function: Culture&Art Center (Bayetav Sanat)</p>		<p>9</p> <p>Name: Murat Mansion</p> <p>Date of Construction: 19th century</p> <p>Date of Renovation: -</p> <p>New Function: Izmir Survey and Monuments Directorate</p>	
<p>3</p> <p>Name: Michel Topuz</p> <p>Date of Construction: 1822~</p> <p>Date of Renovation: -</p> <p>New Function: Dental treatment clinic</p>		<p>10</p> <p>Name: La Fontaine Mansion</p> <p>Date of Construction: 19th century</p> <p>Date of Renovation: -</p> <p>New Function: EgeUniversity Ataturk Principles and Revolution History Application and Research Center</p>	
<p>4</p> <p>Name: Varipati Mansion</p> <p>Date of Construction: 19th century</p> <p>Date of Renovation: -</p> <p>New Function: veterinary building</p>		<p>11</p> <p>Name: Wilkinson Mansion</p> <p>Date of Construction: 19th century</p> <p>Date of Renovation: -</p> <p>New Function: Ege University 50th Anniversary Mansion Art Gallery</p>	
<p>5</p> <p>Name: Maltass Mansion</p> <p>Date of Construction: 1880</p> <p>Date of Renovation: -</p> <p>New</p>		<p>12</p> <p>Name: Büyük Ev</p> <p>Date of Construction: 19th century</p> <p>Date of Renovation: -</p> <p>New Function: EgeUniversity</p>	

	Function: Hotel			rectorate building	
6	Name: Steinbuechel Mansion Date of Construction: 1860 Date of Renovation: 2023 New Function: Culture&Art Center (Mattheys Mansion)		13	Name: Arkas Sea History Center Date of Construction: 19th century Date of Renovation: - New Function: Museum	
7	Name: Pasquali Mansion Date of Construction: 1835-1840 Date of Renovation: - New Function: Restaurant				
Sources: Number 1-3-6-13 Provided from Author's Archive Number 2-4-5-7-8-9-10-11-12 Provided From rehber.bornova.bel.tr					

The building currently known as the Izmir Literature Museum is actually the Tristram Mansion, which was constructed in 1904. The facade of the mansion showcases a blend of styles: the side facing the road reflects local architectural traditions, while the garden side displays Western influences, indicating the owners' integration of both local and Western identities. The mansion constructed with materials imported from Europe and the UK, maintains its structural integrity despite undergoing seven changes (Biral Akkurt, 2004). The mansion was formerly known as the Insect Museum. On the condition that the 37 m² space occupied by the 'Directorate of Plant Protection Central Research Institute' on the first floor remains in use, the area was allocated to the Ministry in 2012. After restoration, it was deemed suitable to be converted into the 'Izmir Literature Museum Library.

The Fernand Pagy Mansion was built in the 1800s. Its structural integrity has been preserved over the years. Currently, the Fernand Pagy Mansion has been restored and is used for cultural purposes. The general condition of the mansion has been preserved, except for some changes that will allow for exhibition areas. The new museum also includes the Levantine Culture Exhibition Areas, which provide information about the culture of the building. The mansion's garden contains many plants and flowers, increasing the attractiveness of the mansion.

Michel Topuz Mansion was originally constructed by the Aliotti Family in the early 1800s. Since 2015, the mansion has functioned as a dental clinic, a use that contrasts with its historical origins. Unfortunately, the building currently provides no information about its rich past, and the choice of its new function bears no connection to the mansion's historical significance.

Varipati mansion was used as Bornova Middle School for a time after 1936. While the building has thick rectangular reinforced concrete columns on the lower floor, more elegant columns with Corinthian decorations at the ends can be seen on the upper floor balcony. Today, it is one of the service buildings of the Bornova Veterinary Control Institute. The limited information available about the history of the mansion has made it difficult to uncover historical details within the building.

Maltass Mansion, constructed in the 1880s, was originally owned by the Marre family. Over the years, the mansion changed ownership multiple times and eventually fell into disrepair. It is a small-scale mansion when compared with other mansions in Bornova. The building attracts attention with its high garden walls, the density of plants protruding outwards, and the columns in front of the high entrance of the building. It was later purchased and meticulously restored by a former Mayor of Izmir Metropolitan Municipality. After its restoration, the mansion served as the residence for the mayor's family for a period. Since 2015, it has been repurposed and is now home to a wellness and beauty center.

The Pasquali mansion, constructed by merchant Giuseppe Pasquali between 1835 and 1840, also known as the Barry Mansion, has a rich history. Nationalized in 1941, the building once served as the Bornova Agricultural School, though it lost a portion of its garden due to road widening projects. Today, the mansion has been repurposed as a restaurant, a new function that opens its doors to the broader community, allowing them to experience this historical site in a contemporary setting.

Kuyulu Ev, also known as the English Club, is located next to the Big House land. Since 2012, it has been used as the Paper and Book Arts Museum. Access to the museum is limited and requires a ticket. Although the new function of the building allows the mansion to be visited by the public, the building does not contain sufficient information about the history of the building itself.

The Murat mansion was constructed in 1880, it was nationalized by the government in 1980. In 2001, the Child Protection Institution allocated it to the Izmir Metropolitan Municipality for restoration. Following renovations in 2003, the mansion served various roles: a social service center for university students, the Ege University Community Center in 2005, and a cafeteria for student groups. During periods of inactivity, it was also known as a haunted house by the locals. Today, the mansion is home to the Izmir Directorate of Surveying and Monuments. Access to the mansion is limited.

Steinbuchel Mansion constructed in 1780 by John Maltass, Mattheys Mansion, also known as Steinbuchel Mansion, is now a museum. A private organization undertook the mansion's transformation, and it currently features a permanent exhibition of Anatolian carpets. As a result of the re-functioning of the building, the garden was rearranged and

made meticulous. Inside the building, there is information about the history of the building and the Levantine culture

La Fontaine Mansion, situated next to Murat Mansion, was acquired in 1963 to meet the needs of Ege University. This Levantine house has served various purposes over the years, including housing the university's Department of Construction and Science Affairs until 1975, as well as the School of the Blind, Gendarmerie Battalion and Artillery Brigade Commands, and the Institute of Public Health. In 1996, the mansion was officially allocated to Ege University (bornova.bel, nd). Compared to other mansions, it features a more understated and less ornate facade, lacking the elaborate columns seen in some of its counterparts. The entrance door of the mansion is located in a semi-open niche on the facade. The mansion does not contain sufficient information about the history of the building itself. Following its restoration in 2010, it now functions as the Atatürk's Principles and Revolution History Application and Research Center and Museum.

The Wilkinson Mansion, situated in the Ege University Rectorate Garden, was constructed in 1865. The facade of the building is notable for its striking wooden details, though it lacks the Corinthian columns commonly seen in many Levantine mansions and features a simpler structural design. Nationalized for Ege University in 1997, the mansion was restored in 2005 to mark the university's 50th anniversary (bornova.bel, nd). It currently houses the EÜ 50th Year Mansion Art Gallery and the EÜ International Relations and EU Office. However, information about the building's history remains limited.

The Big house is also known as the C. Whittall Mansion. Originally built as a convent by the Whittall family, the building was converted into a family residence in the early 19th century (rehber.bornova, nd). Additions made to the two facades of the building for new functions have obscured its original design. However, the entrance terrace with its long columns and the elevated stairs, which are preserved architectural features on the entrance facade, are among the building's most striking characteristics. In terms of structural integrity, the visual value of the building has been compromised by these changes. Additionally, there is a lack of information regarding the building's history and significance. While much of the original landscaping has been lost, the large cypress trees have remained intact due to their size. Nevertheless, the alterations to the interior, facade, and garden to accommodate the building's new function have resulted in the loss of its unique characteristics. The mansion was nationalized in 1948 and is currently used as the Ege University Rectorate.

Arkas Maritime History Center, also known as the Victor Whittall Mansion, is a historic mansion dating back to the 19th century. Despite the original entrance being demolished during roadworks, the building's meticulously maintained Levantine garden remains intact. This garden, featuring a variety of plants, trees, and a pergola, continues to reflect the building's historical charm. Comprehensive information is available about the building's history and its current owners. The building has been repurposed as a maritime history museum; a decision influenced by its current owner. The museum houses models, paintings, and various nautical artifacts. Access to the museum is limited and requires a ticket.

In Bornova, private organizations have undertaken more re-functional projects than state-led efforts. While state-led transformations exist, private sector conversions, often focused on art and culture, are more prevalent. Functions such as museums, art houses, and libraries make these buildings more accessible to the public. Additionally, the Levantine mansions in Bornova emphasize the use of gardens and landscaping.

4.3. Case study: Mattheys Mansion

Among the structures evaluated, eliminations were made according to certain characteristics. Small-scale mansions were removed from the list. Then, the building to be examined was scored according to the following headings and the most suitable structure was selected: Structural Integrity, Information about the past, Facade integrity, Garden usage and current use (Table 3).

Table 3. Scoring For Selecting the Mansion to be Examined

#	Name of the Building	Location	Structural Integrity	Information About the Past	Facade Integrity	Garden Usage	Current Use	Total Score
1	Gavrilli Mansion	Buca	o	x	o	o	o	4
2	Hanson Mansion	Buca	o	x	x	x	o	2
3	Gabriel Russo Mansion	Buca	o	x	o	o	o	4
4	De Jongh Mansion	Buca	o	x	o	x	o	3
5	Baltazzi Mansion	Buca	o	x	x	x	o	2
6	Izmir Literature Museum	Bornova	o	x	o	x	o	3
7	Fernand Pagy Mansion	Bornova	o	x	o	x	o	3
8	Steinbuchel Mansion	Bornova	o	o	o	o	o	5
9	Murat Mansion	Bornova	o	x	o	o	o	4
10	Arkas Sea History Center	Bornova	o	x	o	o	o	4

Mattheys Mansion was built in Bornova in 1780 by John Maltass. It is also known as Steinbuchel Mansion. The building is currently used as a museum. The transformation of the mansion was carried out by a private organization. There is an exhibition of Anatolian carpets as a permanent exhibition in the museum (Figure 8-9).



Figure 8. Mattheys Mansion Turkish Carpets Exhibition (Provided from author’s archive)



Figure 9. Mattheys Mansion Turkish Carpets Exhibition Entrance (Provided from author’s archive)

The change of the Mattheys mansion before and after restoration is shown in the table (Table 4). It is removed from the plants that appear spontaneously on the entry tag. During its idle period, its outer coverings such as plaster at the entrance were destroyed. The recent restoration has effectively reinstated the building's historical integrity while concurrently addressing essential preservation requirements. The structure was carefully repaired and repainted in a light white shade, closely mirroring its original facade. This color choice not only highlights the architectural style typical of Levantine houses but also complements the surrounding environment. Throughout the restoration, great care was taken to preserve the building’s structural integrity. Any unwanted vegetation that had grown during the building’s period of disuse was meticulously removed to avoid damage to the original materials. This careful approach emphasizes the importance of maintaining the authenticity of architectural elements while ensuring the structure's durability. A notable aspect of Levantine architecture is its integration with the landscape. The restoration project enhanced this characteristic by improving the connection between the building and its exterior environment. The entrance path, once a simple soil surface, was upgraded with stone paving, which defines the entrance and adds a tactile element to the approach, encouraging visitor engagement with the space.

Table 4. Mattheys Mansion Before and After Restoration

	BEFORE RESTORATION	AFTER REFUNCTION TRANSFORMATION
Entrance		

**Entrance
Path**



**Entrance
Facade**



Facades



(Provided from cercimimarlik.com).

(Provided from author's archive).

There is historical information as well as ruins from the building's past. It is mandatory to purchase a ticket to visit the building. After the box office, the first place you enter before entering is the time tunnel about the history of the building. This area contains information about the history and identity of the building. In the garden of the building, there are models of the Levantine mansions in Bornova. Local vegetation was used in plant selection and landscape design. Plants belonging to Izmir, such as lemon cypress and olive trees, were used in the landscape (Figure 10-11). The landscape of the building is also decorated with statues. A design language that included elements of Bornova's Levantine culture, such as golf, was used. The building also houses a museum and café, among other uses. It was noted that visitors spent time in this complex as well as visiting the exhibition in the museum.



Figure 10. Mattheys Mansion Garden
(Provided from author's archive).



Figure 11. Mattheys Mansion Garden
(Provided from author's archive).

5. Discussion

When the refunctioned Levantine houses in Buca and Bornova are examined, some similarities and differences stand out. On historical aspects, both Buca and Bornova have a rich historical background, with many historical buildings that date back to the 19th century. These buildings were constructed during the period of Westernization in Türkiye, which led to the growth of these districts as centers of trade and commerce (Ergünet et al., 2023).

Apart from the large mansions in Buca, there are also rows of Levantine houses in various streets. Some examples are in; Vali Rahmi Street and Dumlupınar neighborhood (Bırol Akkurt & Avcı Özkaban, 2010). However, they were not included in the review because some of them are still used as residences, and some remain idle. Although the Forbes mansion was used for a different function for a while, it has not been added to the list because it is now idle again. The refunctions examined in Buca were mostly carried out by public institutions. Although the Levantine mansion users are from different cultures, they are also affected by the geography and society they live in, and as a result, they are affected by both their own past and local culture. It has been observed that different styles are used together on the facades of the buildings as a reflection of this situation. The exteriors of the buildings have been largely preserved, but no improvements have generally been made to the facades. Although there was not much intervention on the facades, the signs added to the building were placed without considering the architectural identity of the building. There is no information about the history of the building in any of the buildings. In most mansions, living areas frequently used in daily life are located on the upper floors in their original state. Most of the buildings examined in the transformations carried out in Buca include the transformations of state-owned buildings. In private transformations, educational buildings such as schools and commercial functions such as restaurants stand out. It can be seen that the facades of the buildings are in a neglected state due to the passage of time since the transformation.

When the Levantine houses in Bornova are examined, it is seen that there are more re-functional projects carried out by private organizations compared to Buca. Although state-led transformations have been implemented in Bornova, private sector conversions are more common. It has been observed that the new functions chosen for refunctioning in Bornova are more art and culture oriented. Since functions such as museums, art

houses and libraries are chosen, it is easier for the public to access the buildings from the outside. Another aspect where the Levantine mansions in Bornova stand out is their landscape and garden use. In this regard, it has been observed that the mansions in Bornova place greater importance on the use of gardens. In Buca, especially in examples such as the De Jong Mansion and the Baltazzi Mansion, we see a more left-to-itself use of gardens and landscape design. However, in Bornova, this situation is observed less frequently.

Among the 20 buildings examined, the one that stood out in the scoring according to the determined criteria was Mattheys Mansion. Mattheys mansion was examined in more detail thanks to it meets the criteria and was a relatively new transformation compared to other examples. It bears traces from the building's past and contains elements explaining its history. The landscape design incorporates local plants and elements of Levantine culture, such as golf, reflecting Bornova's heritage. The building now functions as both a museum and a café, attracting visitors who come to explore the exhibitions and enjoy the space. Admission to the building requires a ticket which helps both the safety and protection of the building and the economic development of the mansion. The restoration of Mattheys Mansion exemplifies a commitment to architectural preservation and landscape integration. By addressing structural issues and emphasizing traditional design elements, the project not only honors the building's historical significance but also revitalizes its presence in the community. This balance of preservation and innovation serves as a model for future restoration efforts in the region.

6. Conclusion

In the 19th and early 20th centuries the right climate has led to a large influx of immigrants into İzmir, which has a rich cultural heritage. Levantines are among the groups that contributed to this cultural diversity and have significant historical roles in İzmir. The İzmir city, with its ports and railways facilitating transportation, has become one of the most favored destinations for Levantines due to its suitability for trade. For this reason, the city of İzmir, when examined specifically in terms of Levantine houses, serves as an example to examine and analyze the transformations of the renovated buildings. The modifications made to the Levantine mansions in Buca and Bornova were analyzed, and the obtained results were evaluated based on facade characteristics, structural integrity, the historical information the building provides, garden usage, and new functions. Subsequently, the Mattheys Mansion, selected from the list of buildings in Bornova and Buca, was examined in greater detail as a case study.

Many parallels and distinctions may be seen between the operational Levantine homes in Buca and Bornova. In addition to massive mansions, rows of Levantine houses can be seen in Buca on streets like Vali Rahmi and in the Dumlupınar district; however, many of these are vacant or still in use and were left out of the evaluation. A prevalent issue in the restoration and adaptive reuse of historic mansions is the high cost associated with repairs, largely due to the expansive area these structures cover. These increased costs often lead to delays or even cancellations of restoration projects, leaving the mansions vulnerable to deterioration over time. Consequently, many of these

significant buildings suffer further damage, compounding the challenges of preservation. Notably, governmental institutions carried out the majority of Buca's rehabilitation, maintaining the building's exteriors but frequently ignoring the facade and architectural character. The facade of the buildings has been neglected over time, and little information about their history is usually available. State-owned buildings are usually the target of private conversions, which concentrate on commercial and educational applications, such as restaurants and schools. Although the buildings' operation as a state institution ensures its preservation, their valuable features, such as their expansive garden and historical significance, are not fully utilized. Access is restricted to working hours, limiting visits to those with official business. As a result, they have become sites visited only by individuals with specific purposes. It is crucial to prevent situations where historical structures are neglected or obscured. Ensuring that these works are visible and appreciable to the public highlights the importance of the functions assigned to them. New functions integrated into historical buildings should align with both their surroundings and their historical significance. Selecting functions that are incongruent with or unrelated to the building's identity can lead to problematic interventions, compromising the structure's integrity and heritage.

Bornova, on the other hand, has seen a great deal of state-initiated modifications together with a greater number of operational initiatives by private enterprises. In order to make buildings more accessible to the public as museums, art galleries, and libraries, art and culture focused rehabilitation projects usually take place in Bornova. By selecting a new function that generates revenue or offsets operational costs, the building's use can be perpetuated, thereby ensuring its continued maintenance and preservation. This strategy aids in preventing historic buildings from being abandoned or falling into decay because of financial difficulties. A self-funded strategy can also guarantee that the building keeps contributing to the community and enhancing the area around it.

Furthermore, compared to Buca, the Levantine homes in Bornova place a higher value on the utilization of gardens and landscapes. Mansions in Bornova pay greater attention to their gardens than Buca's, including those at the De Jong and Baltazzi palaces, which are sometimes neglected.

Public institutions can maintain the authenticity and cultural significance of historical structures by minimizing alterations to the original form, during refunctioning projects. It is important to understand that successful refunctioning requires more than just maintaining the original facades and structure. To enlighten the audience about its cultural value, historical details about the building are equally crucial. Incorporating historical characteristics into the process of restoring the building can improve the building's overall experience.

Author Contribution Rate

Order	Name Surname	ORCID	Contribution to Writing*
1	Şerife MUMCU	0009-0008-2338-0057	1, 2, 3, 4
2	Gizem İZMİR TUNAHAN	0000-0003-1473-9351	1, 5

*Write the number(s) corresponding to the relevant explanation in the contribution section.

1. Designing the study
2. Collecting the data
3. Analysis and interpretation of the data
4. Writing the article
5. Critical revision

Conflict of Interest

The authors reported no conflict of interest related to this article.

References

- Abdou, M. (2017). Cultural heritage conservation and the rise of the private sector: Hopes and concerns. *Governance*, 2(1), 1-25.
- Akyıldız, N. A., & Olğun, T. N. (2022). An evaluation on the importance of history research in architectural conservation applications. *4th International Göbeklitepe Scientific Research Congress*.
- Akyüz, E. (1993). *Traditional housing architecture in İzmir* [Doctoral dissertation, Dokuz Eylül University]. YÖK Tez Veritabanı, Thesis No. 28970.
- Arkas Academia. (n.d.). *Arkas Academia*. Retrieved December 24, 2024, from <https://arkasacademia.com/>
- Atalarımızın Toprakları. (n.d.). *Atalarımızın Toprakları*. Retrieved December 24, 2024, from <https://www.atalarimizintopraklari.com/>
- Baydar, A. İ., & Yılmaz, C. (2022). The presentation of Levantine identity in the context of everyday life. *Sosyoloji Notları*, 6(2), 24–53.
- Akkurt, B. H. (2004). *Consideration of spatial identity of Levantine residences in Bornova and Buca, in the 19th century westernization process* [Doctoral dissertation, Dokuz Eylül University]. YÖK Tez Veritabanı, Thesis No. 150458.
- Biröl Akkurt, H., & Avcı Özkaban, F. (2010). The decentralization of modernist housing production: İzmir-Buca example. *Mimarlık*, 353, 71–76.

Bornova Belediyesi. (n.d.). *Bornova rehberi*. Retrieved December 24, 2024, from <https://rehber.bornova.bel.tr/>

Buca Belediyesi. (n.d.). *Buca hakkında - Tarihi yapılar*. Accessed December 24, 2024, from <https://www.buca.bel.tr/Buca-Hakkinda/tarihi-yapilar.html>

Büyükarıslan, B., & Güney, E. D. (2015). The process of re-functioning industrial heritage buildings and the example of the Istanbul Salt Warehouse. *Beykent University Journal of Science and Engineering*, 6(2), 31–57.

Çerçi Mimarlık. (n.d.). *Steinbachel Köşkü*. Retrieved December 24, 2024, from <https://cercimimarlik.com.tr/steinbachel-kosku>

Çetin, C. İ. (2021). Concept-function harmony in re-designed buildings: Adaptation of historical buildings and gallery space. *International Journal of Social and Humanities Sciences (IJSHS)*, 5(3), 177–208.

Duran, P., & Güneş Gölbe, A. (2022). Evaluation of Levantine gardens in the context of cultural heritage awareness. *Journal of Near Architecture*, 6(1), 192–211.

Ergül, E., & Demircan, B. (2021). A Levantine mansion: Buca Guidance and Research Center. *Pearson Journal*, 6(10), 152–167. <https://doi.org/10.46872/pj.215>

Ergün, R., Bekar, İ., & Kutlu, İ. (2023). A Levantine structure in Mersin: The former 3 Ocak Primary School (Capuchin Fathers Church Lodge). *Art History Journal*, 32(1), 141–167. <https://doi.org/10.29135/std.1119831>

İzmir İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü. (n.d.). *Bornova*. Retrieved December 24, 2024, from <https://izmir.ktb.gov.tr/EN-110150/bornova.html>

Karaderi, Ş., & Duman, Ü. (2022). An example for the reuse of historic residential buildings as cafes: Zahra Street. *YDÜ Faculty of Architecture Journal*, 4(2), 73–86. <https://doi.org/10.32955/neujfa202342660>

Kültür Envanteri. (n.d.). *Kültür Envanteri*. Retrieved December 24, 2024, from <https://kulturenvanteri.com/tr/>

Levantine Heritage Foundation. (n.d.). *Levantine Heritage Foundation*. Retrieved December 24, 2024, from <http://www.levantineheritage.com/>

Macdonald, S., & Cheong, C. (2014). *The role of public-private partnerships and the third sector in conserving heritage buildings, sites, and historic urban areas*. Getty Conservation Institute.

Oban Çakıcıoğlu, R. (2007). The concept of Levantine and an examination of Levantines. *Selçuk University Journal of Turkic Studies*, 22, 337–356.

Tarih Gezisi. (n.d.). *Özel Mekânlar - 19139*. Retrieved December 24, 2024, from <https://tarihgezisi.com/ozel-mekanlar/19139/>

Uyanık, E. (2014). The effects of Levantines on the socio-economic life of Buca. In *From the Past to the Present Buca Symposium: "Dokuz Eylül Buca'yı Konuşuyor"* (pp. 11-18). İzmir, Turkey.

Visit İzmir. (n.d.). *İzmir Destinasyonu - 8820*. Accessed December 24, 2024, from <https://www.visitizmir.org/tr/Destinasyon/8820#gallery-7>

Yıldız, M. (2012). A study on İzmir Levantines. *Turan Strategic Research Center Journal*, 4(13), 36–54.