

The TRANSFORMATION STORY of a MANSION IN THE WALLED CITY of NICOSIA



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**The TRANSFORMATION STORY of
a MANSION IN THE WALLED CITY
of NICOSIA**

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Abbreviations

UCCTEA: Union of the Chambers of Cyprus Turkish Engineers and Architects
NMP: Nicosia Master Plan
UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
CPDC: Continual Professional Development Center

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Foreword, President

The pearl of the Eastern Mediterranean: Cyprus.
An island of legends, myths, civilizations, and layered histories.

You walk through the capital of the island – “Lefkoşa” in Turkish, “Lefkosia” in Greek, and, somehow confusingly, “Nicosia” in English.

As you enter the Walled City of Nicosia, you step into a city shaped by successive civilizations: first the Lusignans, later fortified by the Venetians, and subsequently ruled by the Ottoman and British Empires. Walking through its streets means walking through centuries of intertwined history.

At the heart of this historic walled city stands the Venetian Column. The column was brought from the legendary ancient city of Salamis near Famagusta – once one of the great centers of civilization in the Eastern Mediterranean until devastating earthquakes led to its decline.

As you pass by the column erected during Venetian rule, you notice the globe at its summit – a later replacement for the original Lion of Saint Mark statue of Venice, which was removed long ago.

Continuing onward, you pass the Courts Building, constructed at the beginning of the twentieth century on the site of the former Lusignan Palace – a building for which, remarkably, no architectural drawings have yet been found.

To your left, just beyond the Nicosia Courts Building, stands the restored former Shakespeare School Building. During the British colonial period, it became the final refuge of the legendary Shakespeare School – one of the pioneering educational institutions on the island to provide education in English. From 1950 to 1952, this building served as the last harbor of that historic institution.

More than a decade ago, this historic structure was rescued from ruin by the Chamber of Turkish Cypriot Architects. Its restoration was carried out through the expertise, dedication, and financial support of the Chamber, and since then the building has served as its headquarters.

We, as the Chamber of Turkish Cypriot Architects, take pride in being among the strongest advocates for cultural heritage in Cyprus, striving tirelessly on many fronts for its preservation and protection.

This building stands today as a testament to our belief in the importance of cultural heritage and to the work we continue to carry forward. As President of the Chamber of Architects, I am proud to present the English edition of the story of our building’s journey. We hope this publication will inspire many others to join our cause of preserving the cultural heritage of this jewel of an island.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those who collectively contributed to the restoration of this building and the creation of this book. Their efforts illuminate the path for future Turkish Cypriot architects and for all champions of cultural heritage in Cyprus.

Kind regards,

Onur Olguner
President
UCCTEA Chamber of Architects



Foreword

Before sharing my thoughts and feelings about such a meaningful work, I would like to state that I consider it a duty to thank everyone who contributed to bringing this building to life and to ensuring that this publication takes its place in the memory of the Chamber of Architects.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to our restoration consultant Prof. Dr. Nur Akın; to Prof. Dr. Suha Özkan, who made significant contributions to the interior furnishings; to the former chamber presidents, dear Azmi Öge and dear Türker Aktaş, and their executive boards; to Özge Özbek Eminoğlu and Nadire Ergin, who contributed to the architectural survey process; to the Chambers of Electrical and Civil Engineers; to the Chamber of Landscape Architects; to the craftsmen who labored in the construction of the building and all the workers; to our publication committee who worked hard to bring this book to life; to dear Devrim Yücel Besim; and of course, to our valued friend and colleague dear Aliye Menteş, who successfully carried out the coordination of both the building’s conservation design works and supervision as well as the realization of this book, contributing her positive energy and dedication at every stage—my heartfelt thanks to all.

In the content of this book, we will enjoy reading together how this mansion was transformed into the Chamber of Architects Central Office and Continuing Professional Development Center. As one of the people who has used the building most frequently since the day it opened, I observe that it has brought—and continues to bring—positive energy to the Walled City of Nicosia, to its street, and to its users. As someone born and raised in the Walled City of Nicosia, I would like to express how great a happiness this brings me.

In the days when the building was first put into service, the beginning of the restoration of the neighboring structure on its eastern boundary, which had been in a ruined state, and the news that a mansion located to the west on the same street would be converted into a public use, give the sense that this building has been—or will be—a spark in the development of the street on which it stands. As the Chamber of Architects community, we can proudly say that the spacious interiors of the mansion, its stone texture, wooden ceiling craftsmanship, and magnificent courtyard provide a unique energy in every season to those working in the office, its visitors, and participants in educational and social activities.

I believe that one of our most important responsibilities both for the next executive boards and members who will serve after us—is to protect our cultural heritage and ensure their continued life.

Once again, many thanks to everyone who has contributed to this valuable project.
With love and good health...

Respectfully,

Kozan Uzunoğlu
53rd and 54th Term President
UCCTEA Chamber of Architects



Foreword

Dear friends,

This building, an essential cornerstone of the historic urban fabric of Nicosia, is not only a fine example of traditional civil architecture in the Walled City of Nicosia, but also a mirror reflecting past ways of life and our culture.

From the very first moment we saw it, this structure filled us with great excitement. Bringing it into our professional community was a significant step in demonstrating the Chamber of Architects' commitment to preserving our culture and history. Rather than leaving such an important building abandoned and condemned to decay, our Chamber took responsibility for it, carried out a meticulous restoration process, and transformed it into a living space open for the use of our members.

By embracing this elegant structure—each corner of which bears traces of our past, history, and culture—the Chamber of Architects has, in fact, undertaken the mission of passing our heritage on to future generations.

As someone who had the honor and pride of completing the restoration and inaugurating the building, I would once again like to express my deepest gratitude to everyone who contributed to bringing this structure into the Chamber of Architects, who generously shared their knowledge and support throughout the restoration process, and who offered their efforts wholeheartedly without expecting anything in return.

With this book documenting the building's renewal process, I applaud all the efforts made in the name of preserving our culture and history, and I extend my thanks to the publication committee.

As long as this valuable structure continues to live on here, the Chamber of Architects will always remember you with gratitude.

Respectfully,

Türker Aktaş

51st and 52nd Term President
UCCTEA Chamber of Architects



Foreword

The restoration and repurposing of the Nuri Efendi Mansion, one of the important buildings within the historical fabric of Walled Nicosia, while it had been left half-ruined awaiting its fate, through the determination and initiative of the Chamber of Architects, carries a special significance.

Seeing the building reach its present state from the condition in which I first visited it together with my dear colleague Azmi Öge, who was then the President of the Chamber of Architects, has become an invaluable achievement not only for the urban texture of the Walled City but also in terms of preserving and utilizing this historic structure.

The mansion underwent a very important restoration process, which I personally witnessed. Beginning with the example beside it, it has served as a pioneering model for other historical buildings still awaiting their turn. Watching this project being embraced, developed, and successfully completed especially by the Chamber of Architects gives me a deep sense of pride.

After the restoration, I happily witnessed during the CPDC seminars I attended how actively and pleasantly the ground floor and courtyard of the mansion were being used. What more could be expected from a restored historical monument than to regain continuous use through such a valuable function?

Furthermore, transforming the importance, history, and restoration process of the building into a documented publication increases its permanence even more. Therefore, I cannot thank enough everyone who devoted themselves to this work, especially Devrim Yücel Besim and Aliye Menteş. The restoration and preservation of other historical examples that will follow this building will be extremely valuable for the texture of the Walled City. Once again, I sincerely congratulate everyone who contributed to this effort, and as the Chamber of Architects, I wish for the continuation of your pioneering, conscientious work and your success.

Prof. Dr. Nur Akın

Restoration Consultant



Preface by the Author

As the conservation and restoration coordinator of the project, I was involved in the entire process of preserving and restoring this historic mansion from beginning to end and had the privilege of working with highly valuable colleagues and teams. I consider it both a pleasure and a responsibility to share the key stages of this process and to pass on this collective memory through this publication.



The foundations of this book were actually laid with my article titled “Cultural Heritage Conservation, Restoration and Adaptive Reuse Project: The Story of Bringing the New Central Administrative Building of the UCCTEA Chamber of Architects to the Present Day,” which I wrote in 2018 and which was published in issue 86 of MİMARCA. The process of transforming it into a book began thanks to the encouragement of the Chamber of Architects’ executive board and publication committee. We managed to publish ‘Lefkoşa Surlar İçindeki Bir Konağın Dönüşüm Hikayesi’ in Turkish in 2021. After 5 years, with the request from the Chamber’s 55th/56th term executive board and president, today in 2026 I have translated and updated this publication into English to meet a wider audience.

This book aims to summarize the story of how a historic structure was brought back into public use, highlighting key stages of the process. In the Introduction section, a general overview is provided of projects contributing to the development of the Walled City of Nicosia, the main vision, the evolving socio-economic structure, and how these changes have influenced building uses. This is followed by a discussion of the initiatives of the Chamber of Architects in and around the Walled City of Nicosia and their contributions to the preservation of cultural heritage.

In the first chapter, information is provided on the background of the new use concept for the Nuri Efendi Street No. 3 Mansion, along with an explanation of the Continuing Professional Development Project and its content. In this project, where interdisciplinary collaboration is at the forefront, the importance of teamwork in cultural heritage conservation is emphasized. Given that the building is located in a unique historic urban context such as the Walled City of Nicosia, it was also essential to address the additional responsibilities and values this entails. In the section titled “Architectural Characteristics of Early 20th Century (First Period) Residential Buildings in Arabahmet Quarter in the Walled City of Nicosia” the architectural features of the period to which the mansion belongs are explained. In the following section, under the title “History, Significance and Previous Uses of The Mansion in Arabahmet Quarter” historical information obtained through research, along with the building’s values and previous uses, are presented.

In the final three chapters, which provide a summary of the restoration process, the key stages are examined under the headings: “Damage Assessment and Restoration Process of the Mansion”, “Repair and Implementation Works on Ironwork and Woodwork in the Mansion”, and “Determination of New Use Requirements and Re-evaluation of Spaces in the Mansion”. In these chapters (Chapters 4, 5, and 6), the restoration process is presented, and photographs taken during the implementation phase (between 2015–2018), along with relevant drawings, have been simplified, updated, and shared in accordance with the flow of the book.

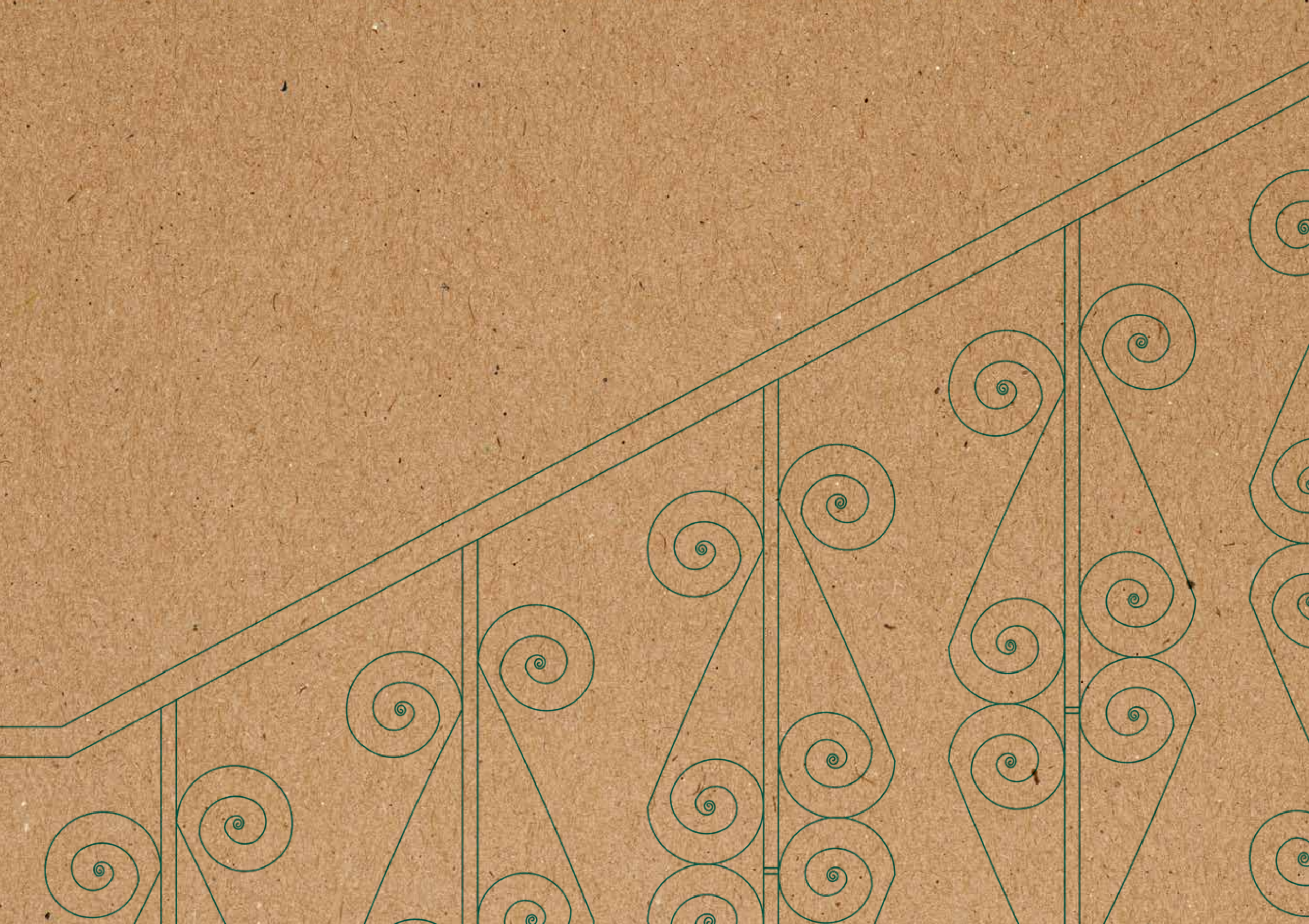
I would like to sincerely thank Devrim Yücel Besim, Chair of the 50th Term Publication Committee of the UCTCEA Chamber of Architects and an active member, whose constructive guidance and valuable suggestions greatly contributed to the shaping and maturation of this book during its preparation and publication process. I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to my colleagues Özge Özbek Eminoğlu and Nadire Ergin, with whom I shared a harmonious and disciplined team spirit before the restoration works began, spending long hours conducting the measured drawings and preparing the documentation of the building, and collaborating closely throughout the design process. It has been a great pleasure to work with colleagues who are deeply committed to the historic environment.

Furthermore, I would like to thank all team members who approached the restoration process with sensitivity and a strong sense of responsibility in developing and implementing the most appropriate solutions for the historic structure. My deepest gratitude goes to the UCTCEA Board of Directors and the Chamber Presidents, Mr. Azmi Öge, Mr. Türker Aktaş, and Mr. Kozan Uzunoğlu, for their unwavering support throughout this long and demanding process. The preservation of this historic building and the publication of this book in Turkish would not have been possible without their encouragement and support.

Finally, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to 55th/56th term executive board and the current president Mr Onur Olguner, who recognized and valued the extensive efforts and dedication invested in this project, and who shared the vision of bringing this document to a broader international readership through its publication in English.

Assist. Prof. Dr. Aliye Menteş

Restoration Coordinator of Nuri Efendi Street, No. 3 Mansion
Member of the Chamber of Architects
Publication Committee Member between 2015–2025



INTRODUCTION

Our historic cities, through their street fabric and their residential, commercial, administrative, and cultural buildings, embrace the lifestyles of past eras and pass on countless lessons to new generations. Due to the political issues experienced in Cyprus, the division of the island and the Walled City of Nicosia in 1974 led to significant changes in the social, cultural, and economic structure, which in turn deeply affected cultural heritage. For many years, numerous historic buildings remained vacant, resulting in serious physical deterioration.

The Nicosia Master Plan (NMP), a comprehensive action plan aimed at addressing the planning challenges of a divided city, was developed in 1981 by a bicomunal team of

experts with financial support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Within this framework, due to its historical, socio-cultural, architectural character, and potential, the Arabahmet Quarter became the first area in North Nicosia where efforts focused on social revitalization and heritage conservation were implemented.

The main objectives of the Arabahmet Area Project, which began in 1985, included the restoration of residential buildings with historical and architectural value, the creation of public and open spaces for community use, the redesign of traffic and pedestrian circulation, and the restoration and adaptive reuse of traditional civil architecture in line with



Figure 1a: Key landmarks of the Arabahmet Quarter within the Walled City of Nicosia: The Derviş Paşa Ethnography Museum (Menteş, 2020)



Figure 1b: Key landmarks of the Arabahmet Quarter within the Walled City of Nicosia: The Armenian Church (Menteş, 2020)

contemporary needs. Within this scope, the restoration of a historic theatre—brought back into use today as the Arabahmet Culture and Arts House—the conversion of the Derviş Paşa Mansion into an Ethnography Museum, and the restoration of the Armenian Church and its complex for educational and cultural purposes stand as valuable outcomes of the NMP and its vision.

The opening of the border crossings between the North and South in 2004 marked a significant turning point for the conservation and adaptive reuse of cultural heritage in the Walled City of Nicosia. In this period of change and development, early efforts focused on revitalizing the economy and, in parallel, commercial buildings. Steps to stimulate the local economy were taken collaboratively by local authorities and relevant institutions, while funding and incentives from Türkiye, as well as from major international organizations such as the European Union, the United



Figure 1b: Key landmarks of the Arabahmet Quarter within the Walled City of Nicosia: The Arabahmet Culture and Art House (Menteş, 2020)

Nations Development Programme, and United States Agency for International Development, began to increase.

With the vision initiated by the Nicosia Master Plan, projects centered on culture and tourism started to develop, bringing changes in building uses. This revitalization was not limited to the Arabahmet Quarter but spread throughout the entire Walled City. Important public spaces such as the Büyük Han, Bandabulya, and Bedesten were restored. Through these interventions, both the architectural and structural integrity of traditional buildings were preserved, and their socio-cultural and socio-economic roles were adapted to meet contemporary needs. In addition to the reuse of public buildings for cultural and commercial purposes, the increase in workshops, workplaces, cafés, and restaurants further accelerated the transformation of the Walled City.

However, despite this development process, which has continued intensively for over 16 years, it can be said that not all historic buildings have yet received the recognition and protection they deserve. Furthermore, after the Nicosia Master Plan, the continuity of maintenance and conservation for buildings restored in the 1980s was not adequately sustained, leading to renewed deterioration in many structures. Recognizing this situation and taking action once again is vital for the preservation and sustainability of the Walled City of Nicosia.

It is useful to briefly describe the historic residential buildings used by the Chamber of Architects (Figures 3 and 4):

The residence located at No. 7 Zahra Street in Arabahmet (Figures 3 and 4, 1) is a qualified example of an early 20th-century house (First Period, 1900–1925). It was restored in 2005. Between 2020 and 2021, it underwent maintenance and repairs to address deterioration over time. Efforts are ongoing to reassess its function, particularly by reorganizing its use as a library and archive.

The residence located at No. 3 Nuri Efendi Street in Arabahmet (Figures 3 and 4, 2) is also a qualified example from the first quarter of the 20th century (First Period, 1900–1925). It was restored between 2015 and 2017.

The residence located outside the walls, in the Çağlayan area (Figures 3 and 4, 3), is a qualified example from the second quarter of the 20th century (Second Period, 1926–1950). Survey documentation (measured drawings), restoration, and adaptive reuse projects have been prepared, and its implementation is currently at the planning stage.

The building examined and discussed in this book is the mansion located at No. 3 Nuri Efendi Street in Arabahmet. The Chamber of Architects leased this bay-windowed mansion—owned and administered by the Evkaf Administration—for a period of 30 years as its new central administrative building, ensuring its preservation after many years of disuse.



Figure 2: The first premises of the Building of UCCTEA Union Building, located in the Çağlayan Neighbourhood, Şehit İbrahim Ali Street, Nicosia (Menteş, 2020)

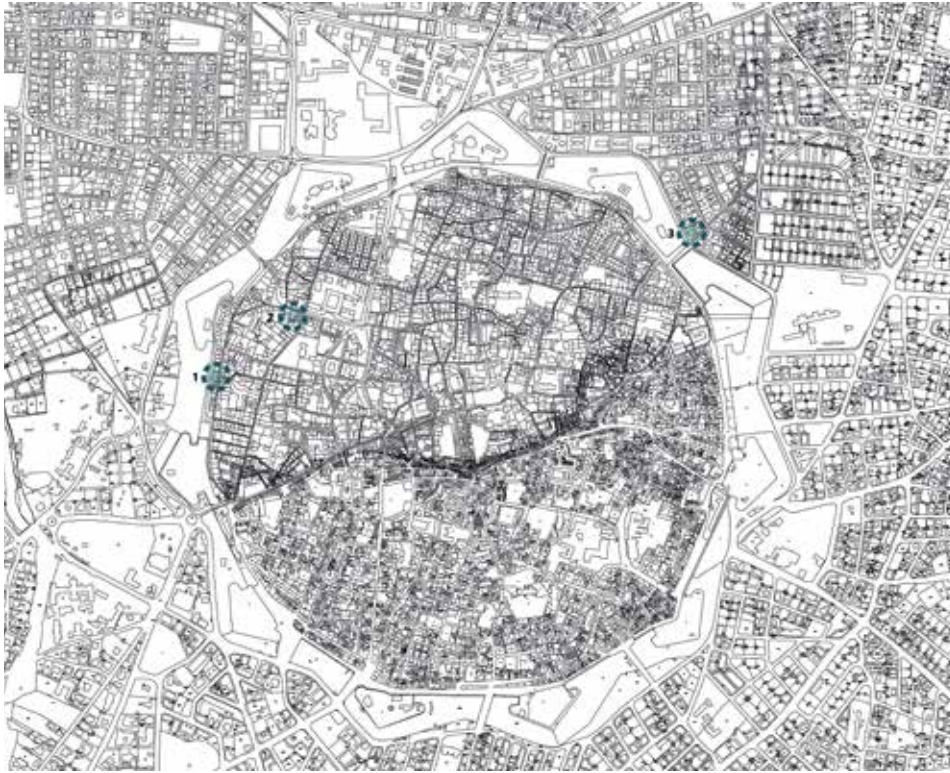


Figure 3. Map showing the locations of three historic buildings within and outside the Walled City of Nicosia currently used by the Chamber of Architects.



Figure 4c/d: One of the three historic residences under the use and protection of the UCCTEA Chamber of Architects and their immediate surroundings: Nuri Efendi Street No. 3, Arabahmet Quarter (Menteş, 2020)



Figure 4a/b: One of the three historic residences under the use and protection of the UCCTEA Chamber of Architects and their immediate surroundings: Zahra Street No. 7, Arabahmet Quarter (Menteş, 2020)

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND OF THE NEW USE IDEA FOR THE MANSION

Adaptive reuse is a contemporary and sustainable approach frequently employed in the conservation of buildings with documentary value. Structures that have lost their original functions can be sustained by assigning them new uses compatible with present-day conditions. The new function defined for this historic building by the administration of the Chamber of Architects was conceived as an investment in the future, with sustainability as a guiding principle.

It was planned that the building would serve two main functions. In addition to being a central venue for the Chamber's Board and committee meetings, it would also function as a public space hosting educational and social activities under the EU-supported CPDC (Continuing Professional Development Center) program. These significant functions and the activities they encompass were among the key factors shaping the decisions regarding the building's adaptation to its new use.

Simzer Kaya, a member of the Chamber's Board and Project Coordinator of the Continuing Professional Development initiative, explained in 2019 how the project emerged and which deficiencies it addressed:

"Adult education opportunities for architects in the Northern part of

Cyprus are limited. Until now, training has largely been unstructured and based on temporary needs and opportunities provided by the Chamber of Architects. In addition to the unorganized and limited nature of continuing professional education, the lack of a professional competency system is also a major issue. Architects registered with the Chamber are immediately admitted to practice without any qualification scoring system. This leads to deficiencies stemming from a lack of technical experience, insufficient knowledge of regulations, limited exposure to current and innovative design approaches, and weaknesses in management. All these factors result in overall architectural and construction quality standards remaining below the European average."

During the formation and preliminary planning of the CPDC program, extensive studies were conducted. Comparable international practices were examined, expert opinions were sought, and the project was structured around clearly defined objectives and expected outcomes. The Project Coordinator further elaborates:

"The CPDC program was established by a multi-stakeholder Professional Competency Council composed of Chamber representatives, qualified

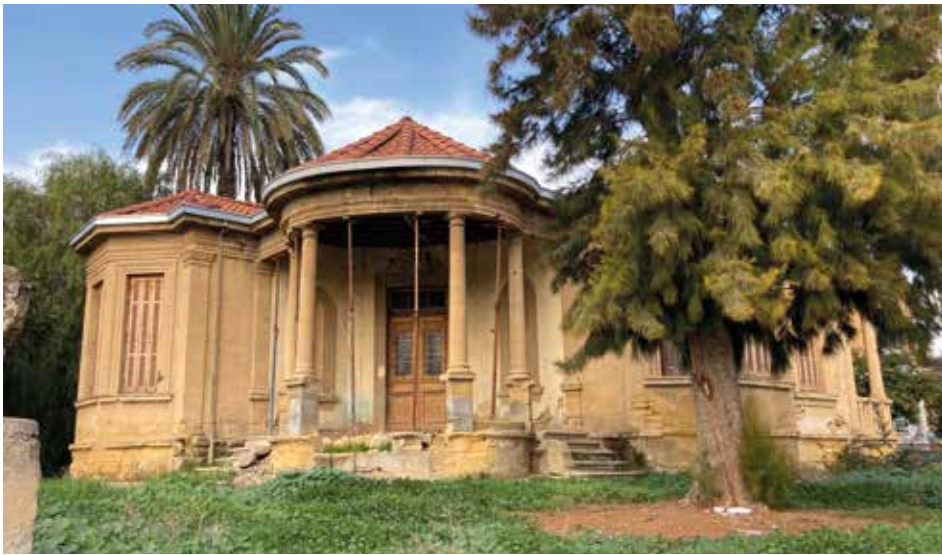


Figure 4e/f: One of the three historic residences under the use and protection of the UCCTEA Chamber of Architects and their immediate surroundings: Şehit Albay Karaoğlu Avenue, Çağlayan Neighbourhood (Menteş, 2020)

architects, and representatives from universities and relevant local bodies. This system has continued since its establishment. The target groups of the funded project were 360 practicing architects and 40 newly graduated architects. The Chamber of Architects represents all architects in northern Cyprus and therefore developed this project to improve the conditions of both its current and potential members.”

Continuing professional education is not only essential for the advancement of any profession but also plays a crucial role in the development of a city—and even a country. As part of revitalizing a historic area, educational and socio-cultural activities are vital for introducing a dynamic layer to urban life. Combining the preservation of cultural heritage with the enhancement of educational and economic capacity formed a key foundation for this project. The success of this initiative is evident both in the frequent use of the building by Chamber members across different age groups and in the strong and sustained interest in the training seminars held within the building.

The Importance of Cultural Heritage Conservation and Teamwork

Architecture is inherently a collaborative profession. Practicing architecture on the island of Cyprus also brings with it the responsibility to safeguard and preserve the cultural heritage of the many historical periods embedded in

these lands, and to approach it with a strong awareness of conservation. Work on historic buildings requires particular care, discipline, and interdisciplinary communication and collaboration. In conservation, restoration, and adaptive reuse projects—where multiple areas of expertise and diverse tasks intersect—the most critical starting point is the formation of the right team.

Within the scope of this project, the Chamber of Architects took significant steps by ensuring the active involvement of multiple stakeholders and fostering cooperation among related professional chambers. By combining its vision with a strong sense of conservation awareness, the Chamber aimed not only to restore a historic building but also to reintroduce it into public use within the Walled City of Nicosia through its new function.

This book is, therefore, the story of the transformation of a historic asset—achieved through collective effort and team spirit.



Sinan (Taken by: Devrim Yücel Besim)

CHAPTER 2

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF EARLY 20TH-CENTURY (FIRST PERIOD) RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS IN THE ARABAHMET QUARTER OF THE WALLED CITY OF NICOSIA

When discussing a building within the Walled City of Nicosia, it is essential to adopt a holistic perspective—one that internalizes its historical and architectural values and understands the contributions of different periods to the historic urban fabric. In this respect, the Walled City contains examples reflecting nearly all characteristics of Cypriot vernacular architecture.

Although the British Period in Cyprus spans from 1878 to 1960, the planning influences of the preceding Ottoman Period (1571–1878) are particularly evident in residential architecture. Buildings dating to the first quarter of the 20th century (1900–1925) are classified as the First Period. The residential architecture of this period largely reflects the general characteristics of Ottoman domestic architecture in Cyprus. These are typically two-story masonry buildings with an inner hall (sofa) plan type, commonly associated with the traditional Turkish house. The ground and upper floors usually share very similar plan layouts.

At the same time, early 20th-century houses in the Walled City of Nicosia display considerable diversity in both plan typologies and façade characteristics. In

terms of spatial organization, form, aesthetics, materials, and detailing, they contribute significantly to the character of the historic urban fabric. In the Arabahmet Quarter, two-story houses with bay windows (cumba) or balconies, arches, wooden doors and windows, timber details, and high boundary walls are key elements of traditional architecture. The coexistence of inward-oriented and outward-oriented houses reflects an important aspect of this architectural richness.

In inward-oriented houses, courtyards are enclosed by high adobe walls, and privacy is emphasized through the design of high ground-floor windows and projecting bay windows on the upper floors. Spatial organization typically consists of rooms and a central hall (sofa) that connects them. On the ground floor, the sofa is flanked by living, dining, and service spaces, while the upper floor is generally reserved for sleeping areas. In some cases, service spaces are also located in separate structures within the courtyard.

As building materials, sandstone (locally known as “saritaş”) and adobe are commonly used. These materials are locally sourced, easily accessible, and valued for their

energy-efficient properties, which further enhance the significance of preserving such traditional buildings. Roof construction typically includes wooden rafters, reed matting, earth layers, and clay tiles. Flooring materials consist of earth, Cyprus marble, or locally known Kiracıköy stone.

Plaster is frequently used as a finishing material. The proportions and detailing of wooden doors and windows contribute to the authenticity of these buildings, while decorative ceiling work, railings, and niches reflect the socio-economic conditions of the period.



Figure 5: Arabahmet Neighbourhood, Tanzimat Street (Menteş, 2021)



Figure 6: Hafız Hasan Efendi Street, forming the southern boundary of the Arabahmet Neighbourhood, (Menteş, 2021)

CHAPTER 3

HISTORY, SIGNIFICANCE AND PREVIOUS USES OF THE MANSION IN ARABAHMET QUARTER

The adobe and stone buildings in the Arabahmet area—an important part of the cultural heritage of Nicosia and Cyprus—provide valuable insights into the construction practices, materials, and techniques of their time. At the same time, they offer clues about the social, cultural, and economic life specific to traditional Nicosia. Like other historic cities in Cyprus such as Kyrenia, Famagusta, Lefke, and Güzelyurt, the cultural heritage of historic Nicosia has endured various transformations in its effort to survive to the present day. Nuri Efendi No. 3 is one of the buildings within this fabric that carries these traces.

The mansion located on Nuri Efendi Street in the Arabahmet Quarter of the Walled City of Nicosia (Figures 7 and 8) dates to the first quarter of the 1900s and reflects the characteristics of First Period traditional architecture. This two-story building with a projecting bay window (cumba) follows an inward-oriented plan typology. Its courtyard, enclosed by high walls, contains a hamam (bath structure) and a toilet unit added at a later stage.

On the ground floor, there is a central hall (sofa) with one room on each side. After exiting through an arched door, an additional room is accessed from the courtyard on the left. The upper floor follows a similar plan layout, with an additional room opening onto a

balcony (located above the room accessed externally on the ground floor). The presence of two date palm trees in the courtyard also represents one of the significant elements where architectural and socio-cultural life intersect in the Walled City of Nicosia.

While investigating the historical value and significance of the building, local residents stated that this historic structure was used in the 1950s as a crafts school where woodworking and metalworking workshops were held, along with practical training courses. In later years, the building served different functions and, in the late 1950s, was used as the Şerife Hanım – Hafız Mehmet Emin Foundation. Prior to its period of abandonment, the building's last known use was as the Human Rights Association headquarters.

In addition to this information, the building was also known at one time as the Shakespeare School. In his article “A Philosopher and a Shakespeare School Passed Through Cyprus,” archaeologist Tuncer Bağışkan describes the private English-language Shakespeare School established in the 1920s by philosopher Necmi Sagıp Bodamyalızade. It is noted that the school was initially located at No. 15 İdadi Street and later moved in 1950 to the bay-windowed house at No. 3 Nuri Efendi Street (Figure 10). It is also stated that this house was rented

by Bodamyalızade—known as “the Philosopher”—from Mustafa Efendi, also known as “Hocacıklar,” who was blind.

The building, which has an important historical background in the Walled City of Nicosia, remained unused for many years and deteriorated due to neglect. Under the leadership of the 49th/50th and 51st/52nd term presidents of the UCCTEA Chamber of Architects (Azmi Öge and Türker Aktaş), and through the efforts of the executive board, the Chamber of Architects took responsibility for this building. The

aim was to preserve both tangible and intangible cultural heritage together—protecting the physical structure while also sustaining the memories of the local community.

The conservation/restoration process of the mansion began in 2014 and, as a result of three years of dedicated effort, it was reintegrated into the historic street silhouette and the urban fabric of the Walled City. The members and teams supporting the restoration process were appointed during the 50th term, and the work was carried out entirely on a voluntary basis.

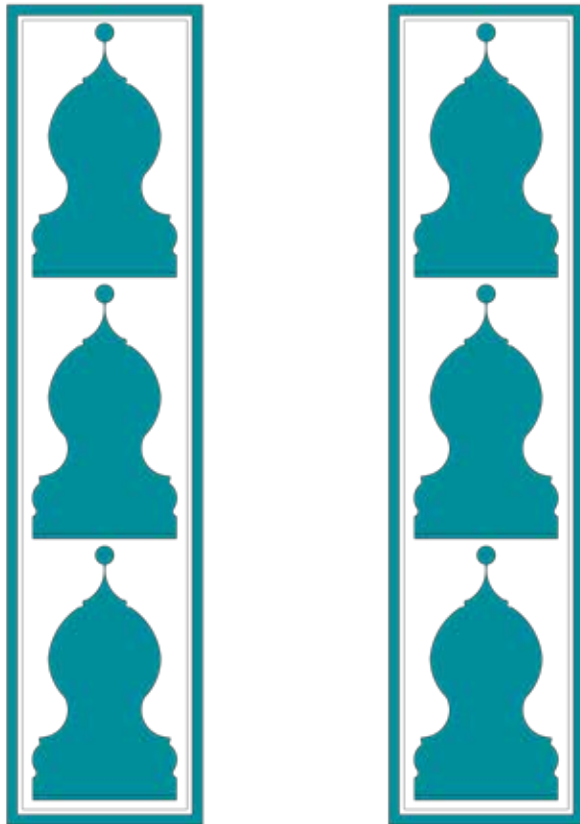


Figure 7: Location of Nuri Efendi Street No. 3 in the Arabahmet Quarter of the Walled City of Nicosia.



Figure 8: The location of Nuri Efendi Street No. 3 and its immediate surroundings.

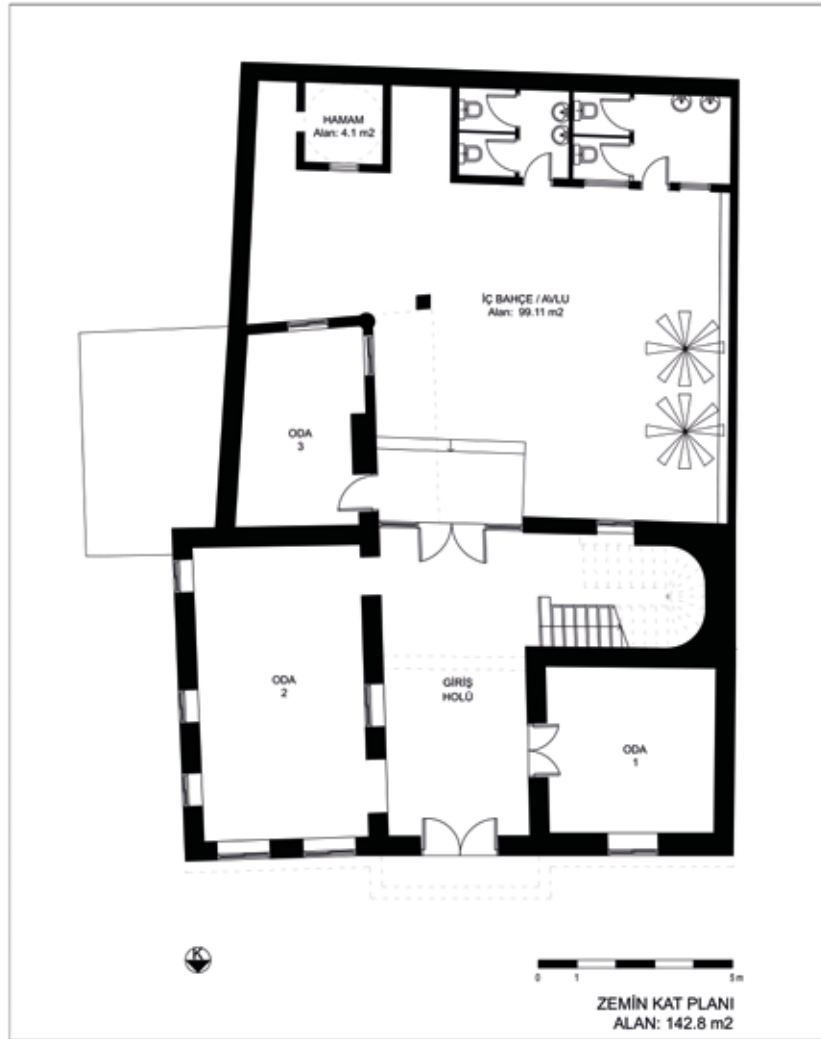


Figure 9a: Pre-restoration condition of the mansion, schematic ground floor releve plan drawing (Özge Özbek Eminoğlu, Nadire Ergin, Aliye Menteş, 2015)

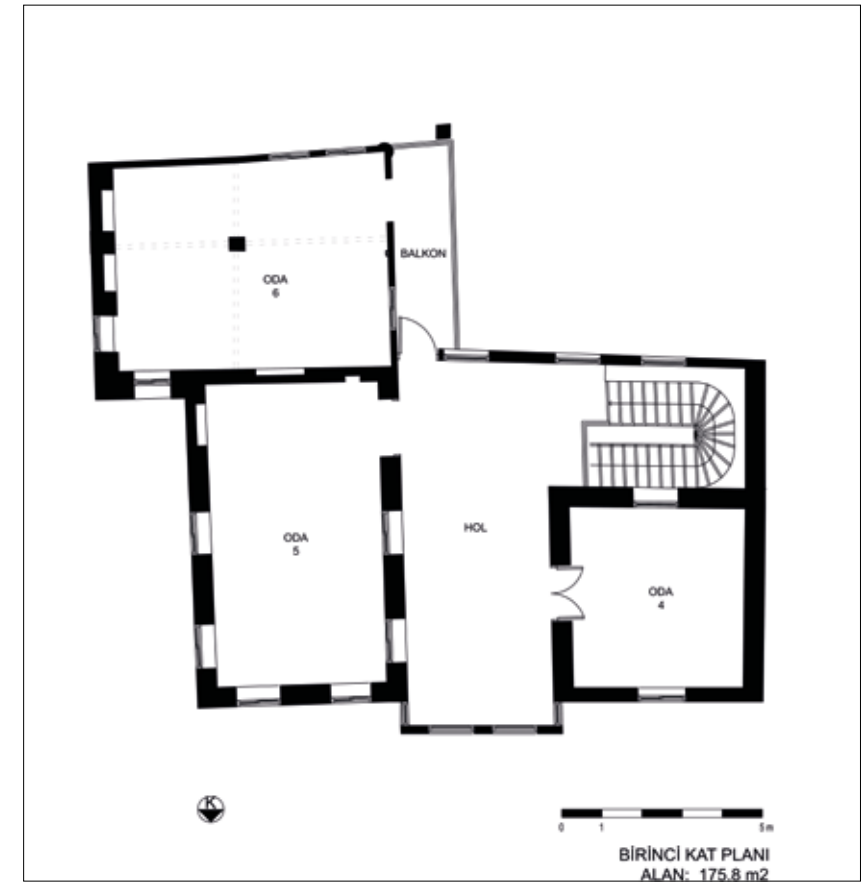


Figure 9b: Pre-restoration condition of the mansion, schematic first floor releve plan drawing (Özge Özbek Eminoğlu, Nadire Ergin, Aliye Menteş, 2015)



Figure 10. Appearance of Nuri Efendi Street No. 3 in the 1980s; the bay-windowed house where the Shakespeare School relocated in 1950 (Tuncer Bağışkan, 2018)

CHAPTER 4

DAMAGE ASSESSMENT AND RESTORATION PROCESS OF THE MANSION

As in every conservation and restoration project, the first step involved a detailed research and documentation study, followed by an examination of the building's existing condition. Subsequently, damage assessments were carried out and the building's needs were identified. Restoration decisions, as well as proposed repair interventions and methods, were determined based on these findings and tailored specifically to the historic structure. Throughout this process, the primary objective—aligned with the fundamental principles of conservation science—was to preserve the original character and integrity of the building.

The traditional structure had previously undergone various maintenance, repair, and strengthening interventions during its earlier periods of use, some of which were relatively recent but undocumented. Some of these interventions, using inappropriate materials, led to deterioration. Other contributing factors included prolonged neglect, weathering of building elements exposed to harsh climatic conditions, and water infiltration into interior spaces.

The masonry structure consists of adobe, sandstone (sarıtaş), and timber. On the upper floor, where a timber lath (bağdadi) system was also used, both interior and exterior walls had been plastered prior to restoration. Water stains

visible on the plaster surfaces and the persistent smell of dampness throughout the building indicated the severity of the damage.

According to damage assessment analyses conducted by structural engineers and restoration specialists, partial settlement occurred in the foundation due to water infiltration from the roof at the western corner of the front façade, causing serious structural damage. Following a three-month monitoring period (Appendices, Appendix 1 and 2), it was observed that cracks in the walls had expanded, affecting both floors and posing a risk of partial collapse. Cracks were also identified on the north and west façades, and reinforcement using timber stitching was deemed appropriate. As Taneri (2015) notes:

“As a result of damage on the wall to the left of the entrance door, an outward bulging occurred. To prevent collapse, the wall was urgently stabilized by anchoring it to adjacent sound walls using steel ties, which were gradually tightened until the issue was resolved. During this process, window jambs were also gradually repositioned to their original alignment.”

WALLS

After the restoration works began, the condition of the building's exterior façades became visible once the plaster had fallen



Figure 11a: The pre-restoration condition of the front façade (Menteş, 2015)

off. On the façade facing the courtyard, it was observed that a reinforced concrete column beneath the balcony remained as a trace of previous interventions. In the courtyard, the dome of the bathhouse showed heavy soiling caused by biological and botanical growth (Figure 11).

The traditional masonry system required different interventions depending on the various materials

used in the structure. Wall materials were cleaned, strengthened, and conserved according to their specific characteristics and condition assessments. All plaster was removed where necessary, and appropriate material repairs and structural reinforcements were carried out. Stone masonry walls were left exposed to allow the material and its texture to “breathe.” After removing cement-based mortars used in

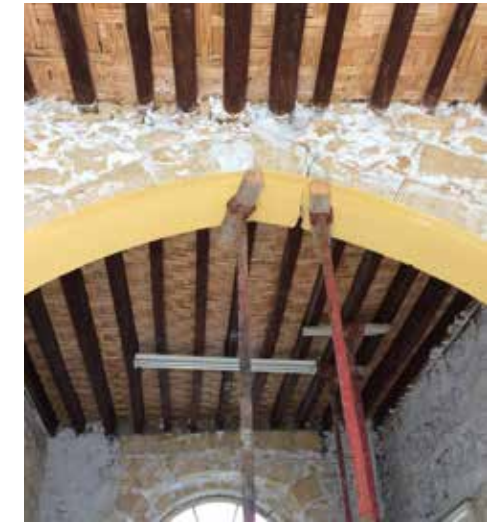


Figure 11b/c/d/e: The pre-restoration condition of the façades (Menteş, 2015)

Figure 12a/b/c/d/e/f: The pre-restoration condition of the hamam (Turkish bath) and the interior elements of the mansion (Menteş, 2015)



Figure 12g: The pre-restoration condition of the front door
(Menteş, 2015)

earlier inappropriate repairs, a compatible hydraulic lime-based mortar was applied in accordance with the historic fabric and material properties. In adobe (kerpiç) walls, necessary material repairs were completed, wire mesh reinforcement was applied, and the surfaces were re-plastered with gypsum.

In the upper floor, where the timber lath (bağdadi) system exists, missing stones between timber elements were repaired, and new stones matching the original material were placed where losses had occurred.

CEILING AND RAFTERS

The wooden rafters in the ceiling were found to be in good condition. After cleaning, chemical treatment, and repainting, no further structural intervention was required. The reed matting (hasır) elements in the ceiling were also preserved through cleaning and maintenance only.

FLOORING

The flooring system is addressed in two categories: timber floors and stone (marble) floors.

The ground floor, paved mainly with Cyprus marble, was largely in good condition; however, settlement was identified in some areas. In the affected zones, the marble



Figure 13: Example of original Cyprus marble used in the building
(Menteş, 2015)

slabs were carefully removed, the subfloor level was corrected, and the stones were reinstalled.

On the upper floor, the marble flooring in the entrance hall was generally in poor and broken condition. Therefore, the existing

marble was removed, the electrical installations were renewed, and new marble flooring compatible with the original material was laid. Only one of the rooms on the upper floor had a timber floor. This non-original wooden flooring was found to be decayed and was removed.

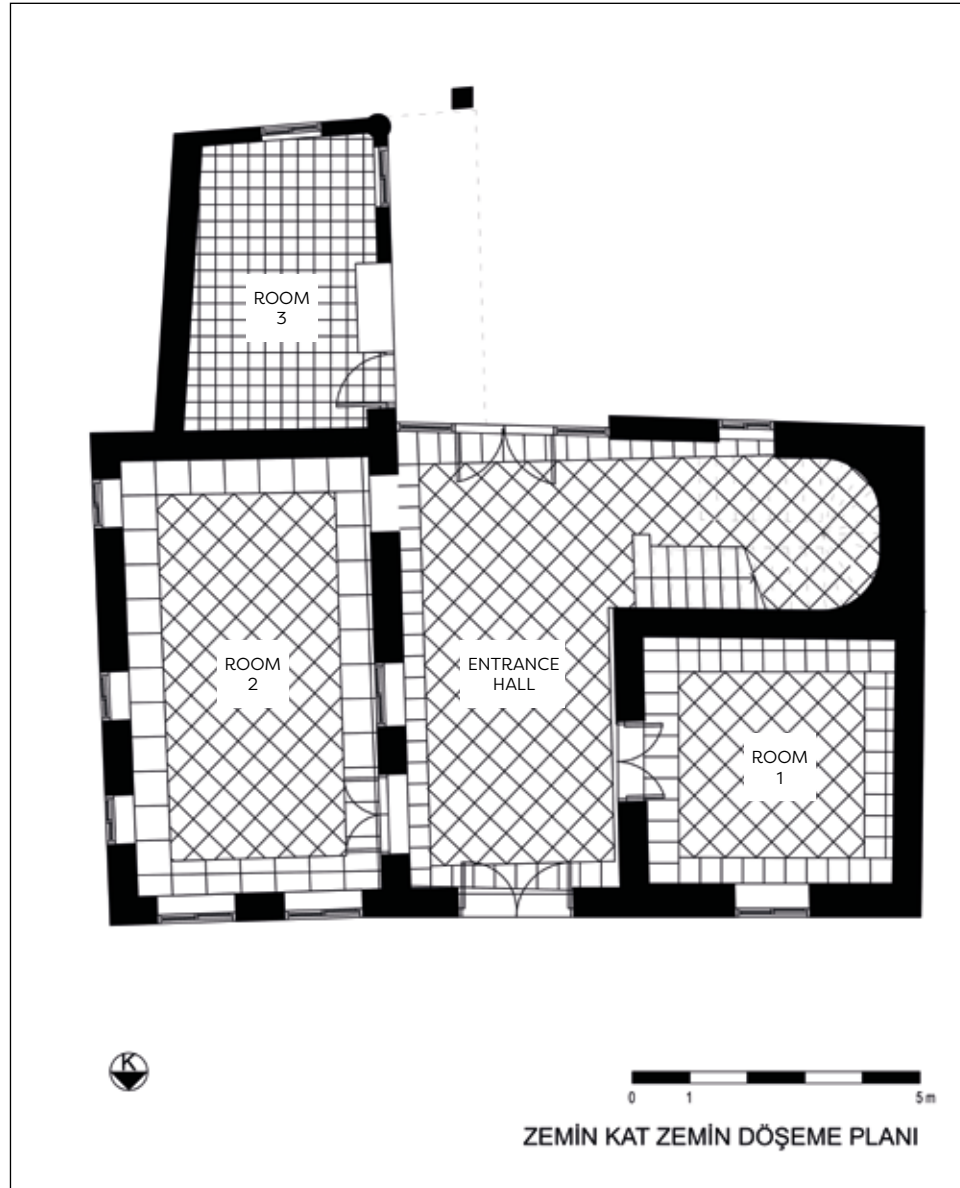


Figure 14a: Ground floor plan drawing showing the flooring materials of the building (Özge ÖzbekEminoğlu, Nadire Ergin, Aliye Menteş, 2015).

Following the new functional programme, this room—designated as Board Room (Room 5)—had its electrical system updated and was refloored with new timber flooring designed in accordance with the original character (Figures 14 and 15).

The original and non-original flooring materials of the ground and upper floors were documented schematically on the plan drawings (Figure 14), and their condition according to each room is presented in a table (Table 1).

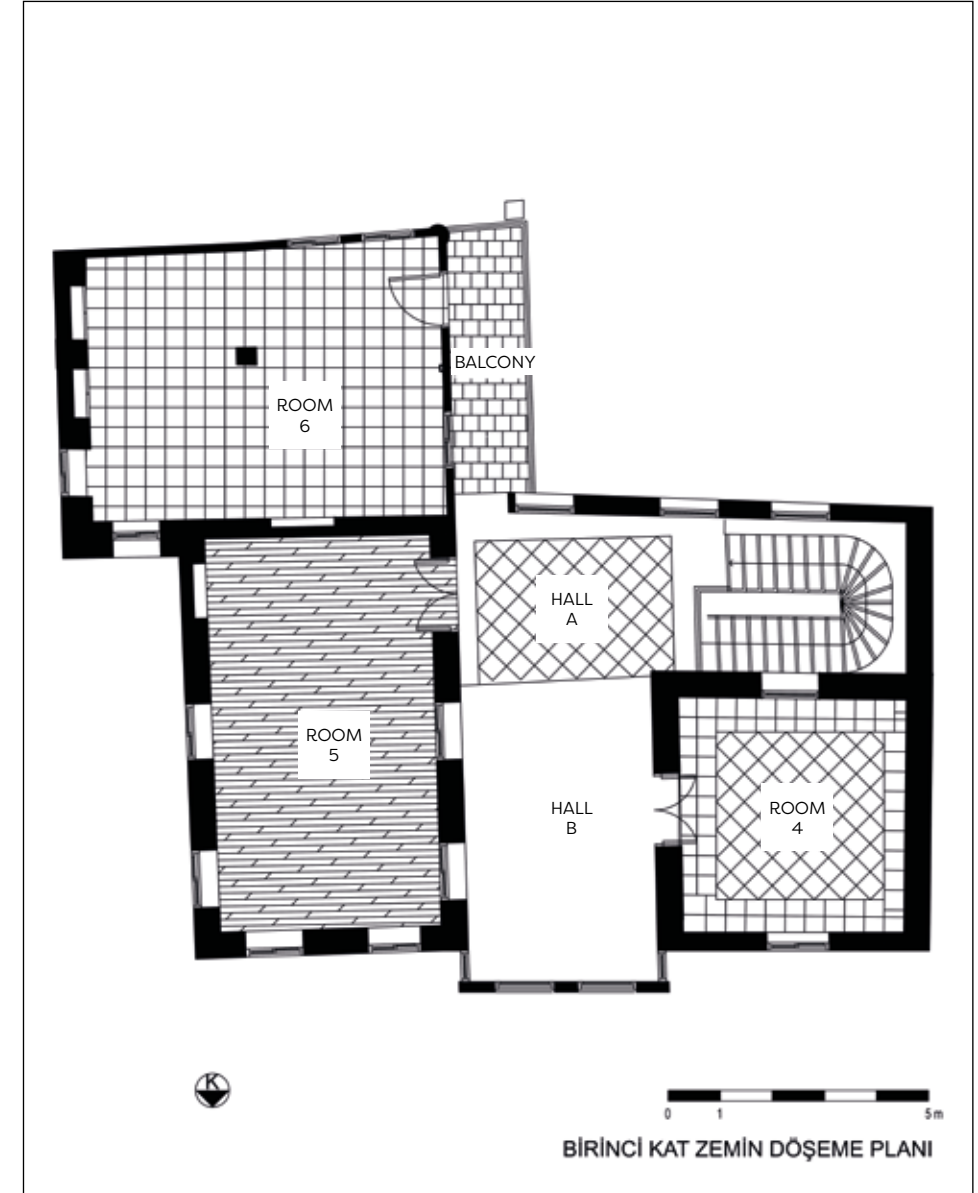


Figure 14b: First floor plan drawing showing the flooring materials of the building (Özge Özbek Eminoğlu, Nadire Ergin, Aliye Menteş, 2015).

Table 1: Flooring materials and conditions according to rooms (Menteş, 2020).

Ground Floor	FLOORING MATERIAL	CONDITION
Room 1	Cyprus Marble	Good
Room 2	Cyprus Marble	Good, partial settlement in some areas
Room 3	20x20 orange terrazzo mosaic	Not original, in good condition
Entrance Hall	Cyprus Marble	Good, partial settlement in some areas
Staircase	Cyprus Marble	Good
First Floor	FLOORING MATERIAL	CONDITION
Room 4	Cyprus Marble	Good
Room 5	Parquet	Not original, rotten/in bad condition
Room 6	Cyprus Marble	Good
Hall A	Cyprus Marble	Broken in some areas, in bad condition
Hall B	Broken Cyprus Marble under carpet	Broken
Balcony	Cyprus Marble	Good



Figure 15a/b/c: Condition of Cyprus marble floors on the ground floor and preparatory works before restoration: Entrance hall (Menteş, 2016)



Figure 16a/b/c/d: Removal of damaged Cyprus marble flooring in the first-floor entrance hall and deteriorated non-original timber elements in Room 5 (Menteş, 2016)

CHAPTER 5

REPAIR AND IMPLEMENTATION WORKS ON IRONWORK AND WOODWORK IN THE MANSION

The previous section described the overall condition identified during the damage assessment carried out before the restoration intervention, including key causes of deterioration and the resulting damages. Wall systems composed of different materials, ceiling structures, rafters, and flooring systems were also discussed. This section focuses on ironwork and woodwork, listing significant architectural elements and illustrating major repair and restoration interventions with supporting visuals.

Ironwork Repairs and Interventions
All iron elements were cleaned, repaired where necessary, and painted black after conservation treatments. These include the original ironwork of the staircase

railing, door and window grilles, and the decorative iron elements above the main entrance door (Figure 18).

Woodwork Repairs and Interventions



Figure 17a/b/c Staircase iron railings and decorative ironwork of the entrance door (Menteş, 2017)

Woodwork interventions include the main entrance door (Figure 18a/b), the arched courtyard door (Figures 19a/b, 20a/b), interior room doors, window frames and shutters (Figure 21), interior niches (Figure 22), staircase and balcony railings, ceiling timbers and rafters (Figure 23a/b), and roof eaves.

New timber works include the wooden flooring of the ground floor, bookshelves and storage units designed for the archive room, timber elements of the courtyard/garden arrangement, and the auxiliary toilet structure in the courtyard.

The original entrance door and arched courtyard door were cleaned, repaired, and repainted before being reinstalled. Some interior room doors had broken panels, which were reconstructed in accordance with the originals.

The bay window timber elements, roof eaves, all window frames and shutters were conserved through careful maintenance. Wooden niches, ceiling beams and rafters, staircase and balcony railings were repaired and preserved.

Among the new timber elements are the archive room shelving system, partition walls, wooden elements of the courtyard landscaping, and all timber components of the new toilet structure.

The external timber elements of the building used a green color commonly found in the typology of the Walled City of Nicosia. A different tone of green was selected for exterior surfaces, while interior timber elements were painted in grey, another frequently observed color in the Walled City that is also compatible with the character and new function of the building.



Figure 18a/b: Exterior and interior views of the entrance door before and after restoration (Menteş, 2017)



Figure 19a/b: Exterior and interior views of the arched courtyard door before and after restoration (Menteş, 2015)



Figure 20a/b: Exterior and interior views of the arched courtyard door after restoration (Menteş, 2015)



Figure 21: Shutters after restoration, before installation (Menteş, 2017)



Figure 22: Wooden niche in the upper-floor room after restoration (Menteş, 2017)

The master craftsman responsible for the woodwork of the historic mansion was Ahmet Mişon, one of the old carpenters of Nicosia, who generously shared his craft throughout the restoration process. His work included maintenance, repair, and reconstruction of doors, windows, shutters and their frames, staircase trims, skirting boards, partition walls and shelving for the archive room, the new pergola in the courtyard, and all timber works of the toilet structure.

Among the key observations highlighted by the master during the execution of the works was the severely deteriorated condition

of the shutters, which required a difficult and meticulous process of repair and restoration. Broken and missing parts were completed using the same material—pine wood—reconstructed in accordance with the original design.

The paint layers on the shutters were carefully burnt off in order to inspect the underlying timber and determine whether decay was present. Where rot was detected, those sections were replaced. In the window frames, decay caused by wood-boring insects was cleaned and treated; depending on their condition, the frames were either patched or entirely renewed.



Doors that were missing or completely decayed were reconstructed. The new doors were designed in a way that remains compatible with the originals but with reduced detailing, so that they can be distinguished from the historic fabric.

Due to operational safety concerns and usability issues, it was also decided to replace the difficult-to-operate and unsafe sash windows in the bay window and upper floor with opening glazed window units. This was considered both a necessary and important decision for the building's contemporary use.

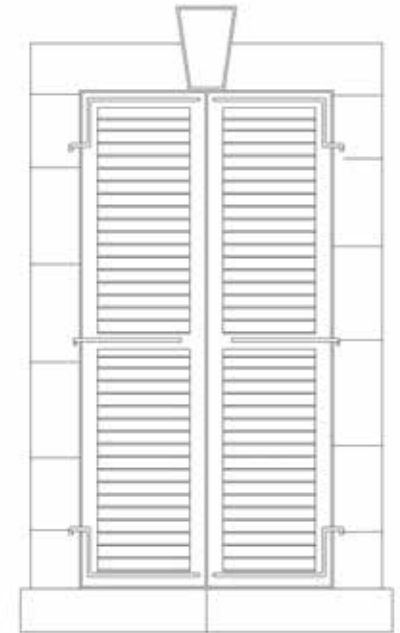


Figure 23a/b: Condition of timber ceiling, rafters, and woven cane after conservation (Menteş, 2017)



Figure 24: Local wood craftsman Ahmet Mişon working on the building's timber elements (Menteş, 2016)



CHAPTER 6

DETERMINATION OF NEW USE REQUIREMENTS AND RE-EVALUATION OF SPACES IN THE MANSION

Adaptive reuse is a contemporary and sustainable approach frequently used in the conservation of buildings with documentary value. It is possible to sustain a building that has lost its original function by assigning it a new use appropriate to present-day conditions.

In the adaptive reuse of historic buildings, key factors include preserving the building's values, designing spatial arrangements with minimal intervention that does not damage the historic fabric, and ensuring compatibility between the historic space and the new function. The identification of spatial requirements for the new use, the characteristics of the existing structure, and the compatibility between old and new functions directly influence the success of the adaptation process.

Within this framework, based on research, documentation studies, and the new use program prepared for the Nuri Efendi Mansion, spatial requirements were defined; new functions were listed; and these functions were matched with the existing spaces (Figure 27).

Following these decisions, the ground floor and courtyard were primarily organized for educational, social, and service functions. On the

ground floor, the two rooms located to the right and left of the entrance hall (sofa) (Figure 25a, Room 1 and Room 2) were opened as the CPDC (Continuing Professional Development Center) seminar room and coordination office (Figure 25a). The rear courtyard room (Figure 25a, Room 3) continued to function as a kitchen, while the former toilet annex was renovated and converted into female, male and disabled facilities.

The historic bath structure in the courtyard was restored and continues to provide references to the traditional domestic character of the building within the courtyard setting.

The upper floor was designed for more private functions. The upper-floor hall (sofa) was used as the administrative secretary and waiting area (Figure 25b). The four rooms on this floor were adapted into a president's office (Figure 25b, Room 4), board meeting room (Figure 25b, Room 5), committee meeting room (Figure 25b, Room 6), and archive room (Figure 25b, Room 7).

Thus, the ground floor was designed for social and public functions, while the upper floor was transformed into an administrative center.

Table 2: Definition of new functions according to original spatial organization of the historic building (Menteş, 2020)

	FLOOR	THE ORIGINAL SPATIAL CONFIGURATION FROM ITS PERIOD OF USE AS A MANSION	NEW FUNCTION
	Ground Floor	Ground Floor	Ground Floor
NO. IN PLAN	Entrance hall (Sofa)	Sofa	Entrance hall
	Right of Sofa	Living room	CPDC coordination office
ROOM 1	Left of Sofa	Living room	CPDC seminar/training room
ROOM 2	Annex at courtyard	Kitchen	Kitchen
ROOM 3	Courtyard	Open air daily activities	Social activities and meetings
	Annex structure at courtyard	Toilets	2 female toilets, 1 male/disabled toilet
	First Floor	First Floor	First Floor
	Hall /Sofa	Hall/Sofa	Secretary and reception
ROOM 4	Right of Sofa	Bedroom	President's office
ROOM 5	Left of Sofa	Bedroom	Board meeting room
ROOM 6	1st Room connected to Balcony	Bedroom	Committee meeting room
ROOM 7	2nd Room connected to Balcony		Archive

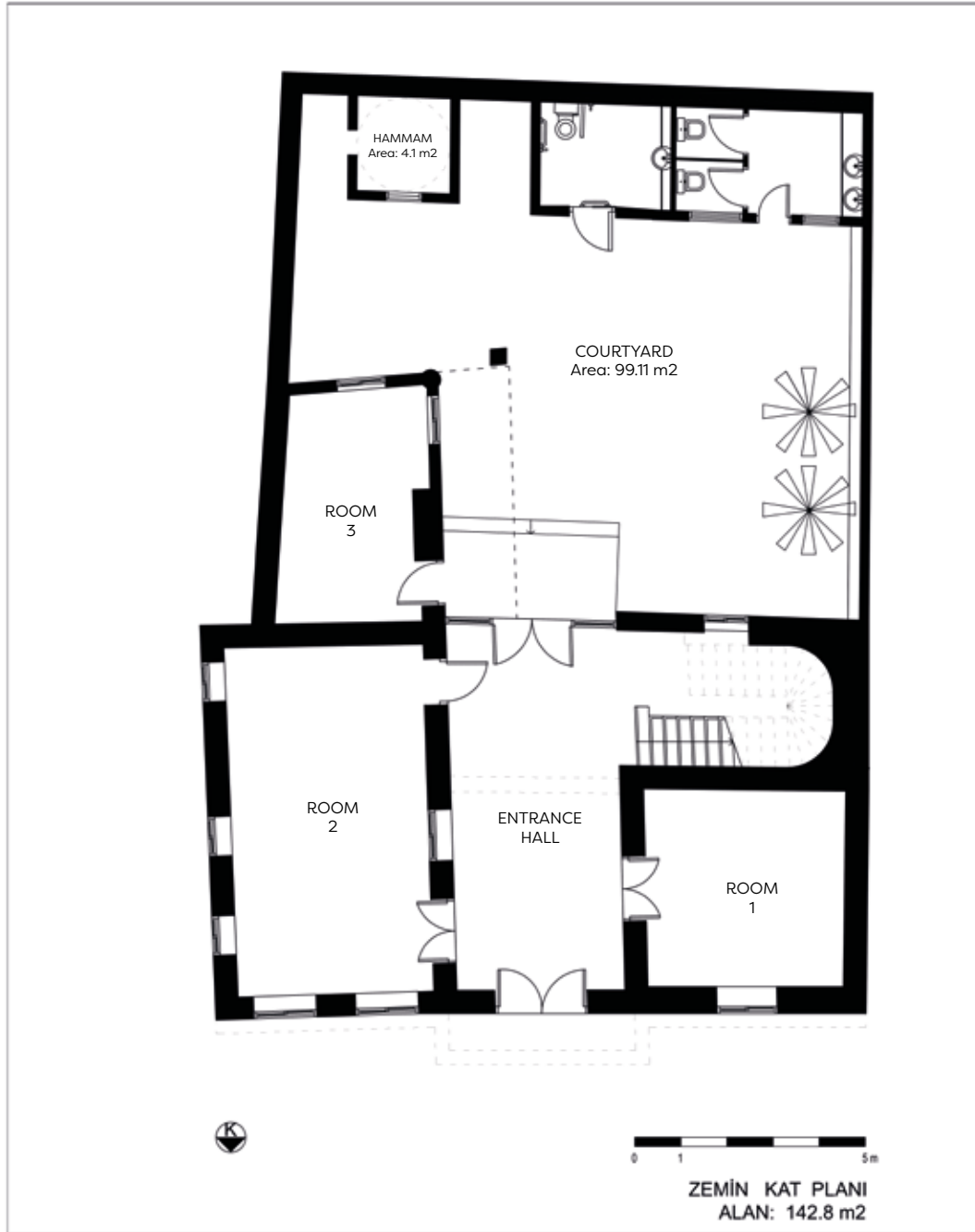


Figure 25a: Schematic ground floor plan according to the new use of the historic building (Özge Özbek Eminoğlu, Nadire Ergin, Aliye Menteş, 2015)

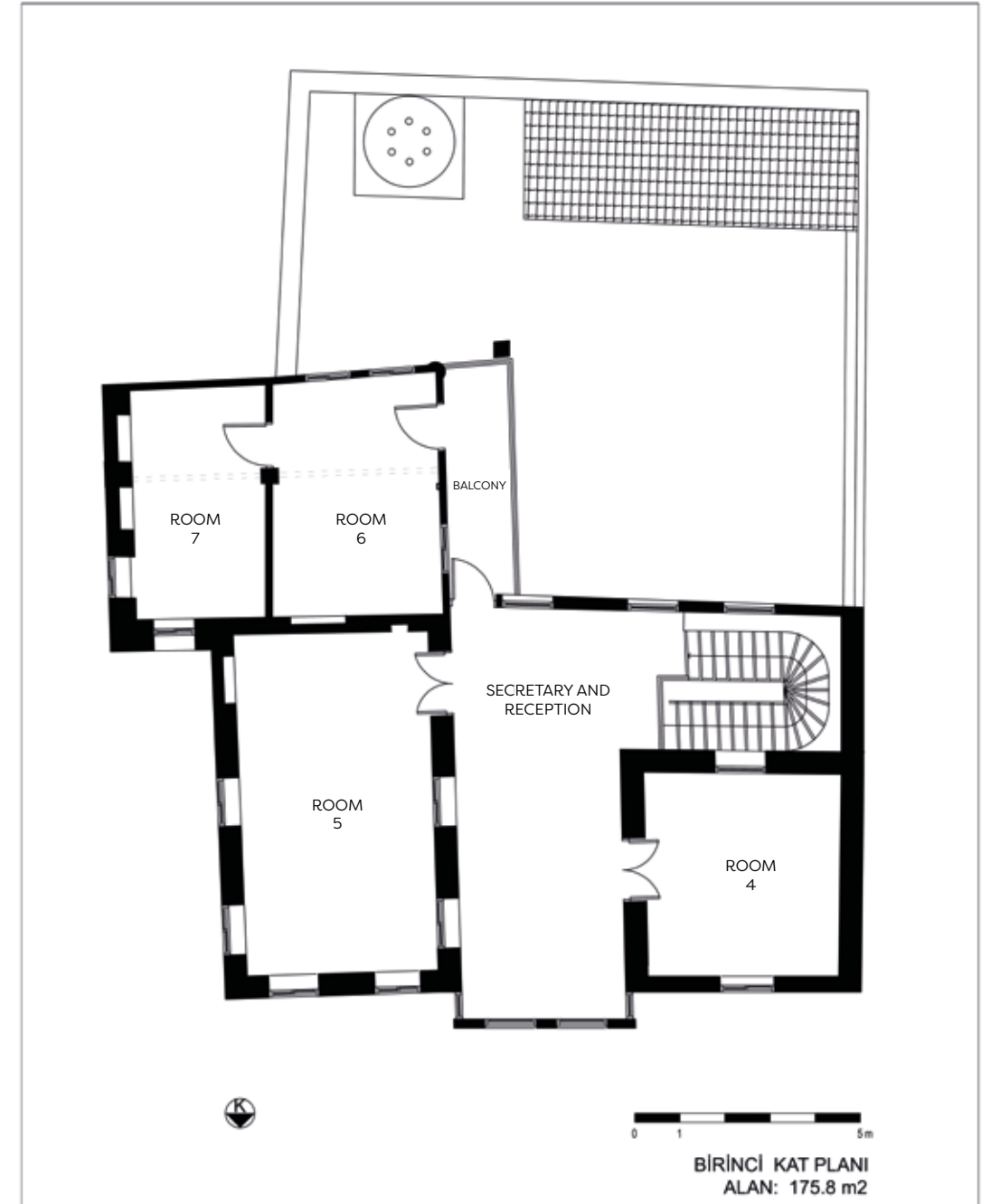


Figure 25b: Schematic first floor plan according to the new use of the historic building (Özge Özbek Eminoğlu, Nadire Ergin, Aliye Menteş, 2015)



Figure 26a/b: Post-restoration condition and new use of the ground floor spaces: Entrance hall and CPDC office (Menteş, 2017)

Figure 26c/d: Post-restoration condition and new use of the ground floor spaces: CPDC seminar/training room



Figure 27 a/b: Post-restoration condition and new use of the first floor spaces: Secretary and reception (Menteş, 2017).

Figure 27c/d: Post-restoration condition and new use of the first floor spaces: Meeting rooms (Menteş, 2017).



Figure 28c: Front façade of the mansion post-restoration (Mimarca, 2018)



Figure 28a/b: The view of the mansion post-restoration from the Nuri Efendi Street (Mimarca, 2018)



Figure 29a: Opening day of the building, 30th June 2017 (published by Chamber of Architects, 2017).

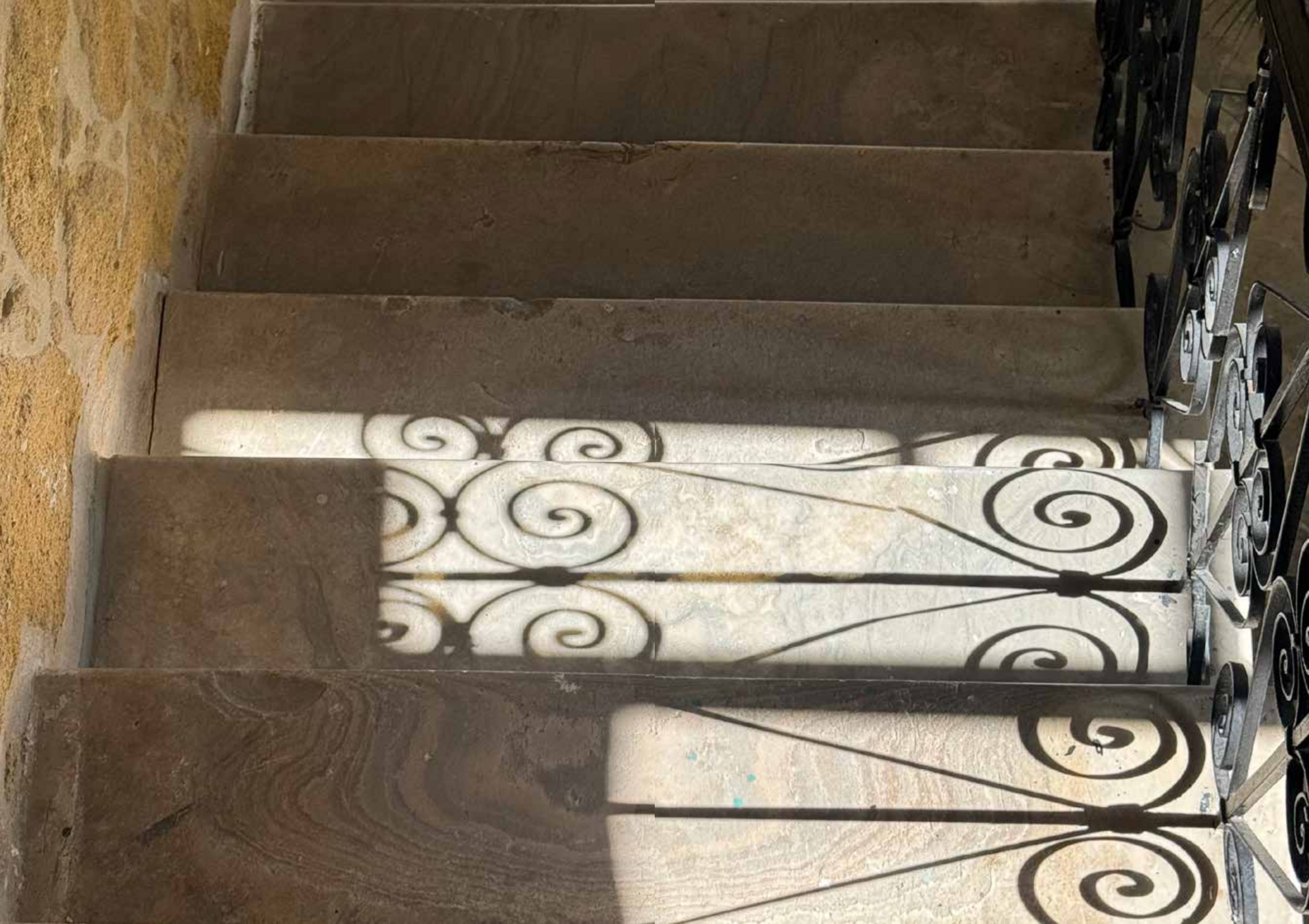




Figure 29b/c: Opening day of the building from the courtyard
(published by Chamber of Architects, 2017).



Figure 29d/e: Opening day of the building from the courtyard
(published by Chamber of Architects, 2017).



Figure 29f: Entrance hall at the opening day of the building (2017).



Figure 31: CPDC events at the building (2019)



Figure 30: Mimarca Mekan Anlatımı Kompozisyon Yarışması (Spatial Narrative Composition Competition) award ceremony (2019).



Figure 32: Mimarca Spatial Narrative Composition Competition award ceremony (2024).

Final Remarks

The conservation of cultural heritage and the adaptation of a historic building to contemporary life without losing its originality, integrity, and values is of great importance. While preserving its architectural, structural, and aesthetic qualities, the greatest achievement of this restored mansion is its contribution to the social, cultural, and educational life of its street and surroundings, as well as the awareness it has created.

Both its contribution to the continuity of the street fabric and silhouette, and the services it provides to the members of the Chamber of Architects, have produced positive outcomes for the revitalization of the Walled City.

One of the major deficiencies in Northern Cyprus is the lack of archiving and systematic documentation. This issue, which is vital for cultural heritage conservation, must be addressed through digitalization and wider accessibility under current conditions. In this sense, this book will provide meaningful contributions for future

generations. Its role as a reference for other buildings in the Walled City of Nicosia, its contribution to inventory formation, and its support for raising conservation awareness are among its most significant outcomes.

The preservation of the cultural heritage of our island can only be achieved through sensitivity, awareness, and informed understanding of historic environments. In light of what we learn from traditional architecture, reflecting on and interpreting the requirements of contemporary life also brings a deeper level of maturity.

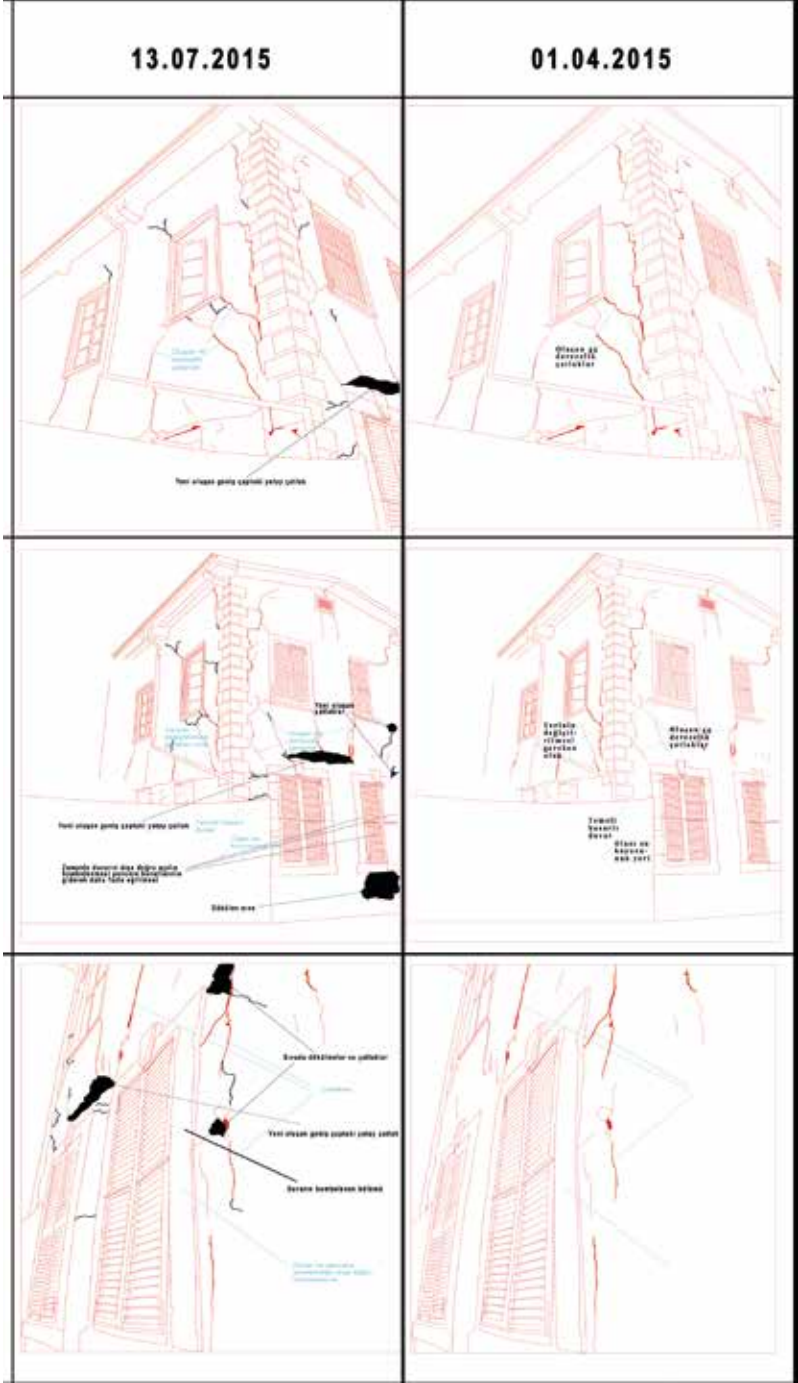
The protection and continuation of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage in Cyprus will be made possible through sensitive, aware, and ethically grounded professionals and architects.

By 2026, the value and use of this building have continued to grow. With its revival, the Chamber of Architects has been able to achieve its educational, social, and cultural objectives more realistically and with increasing momentum.

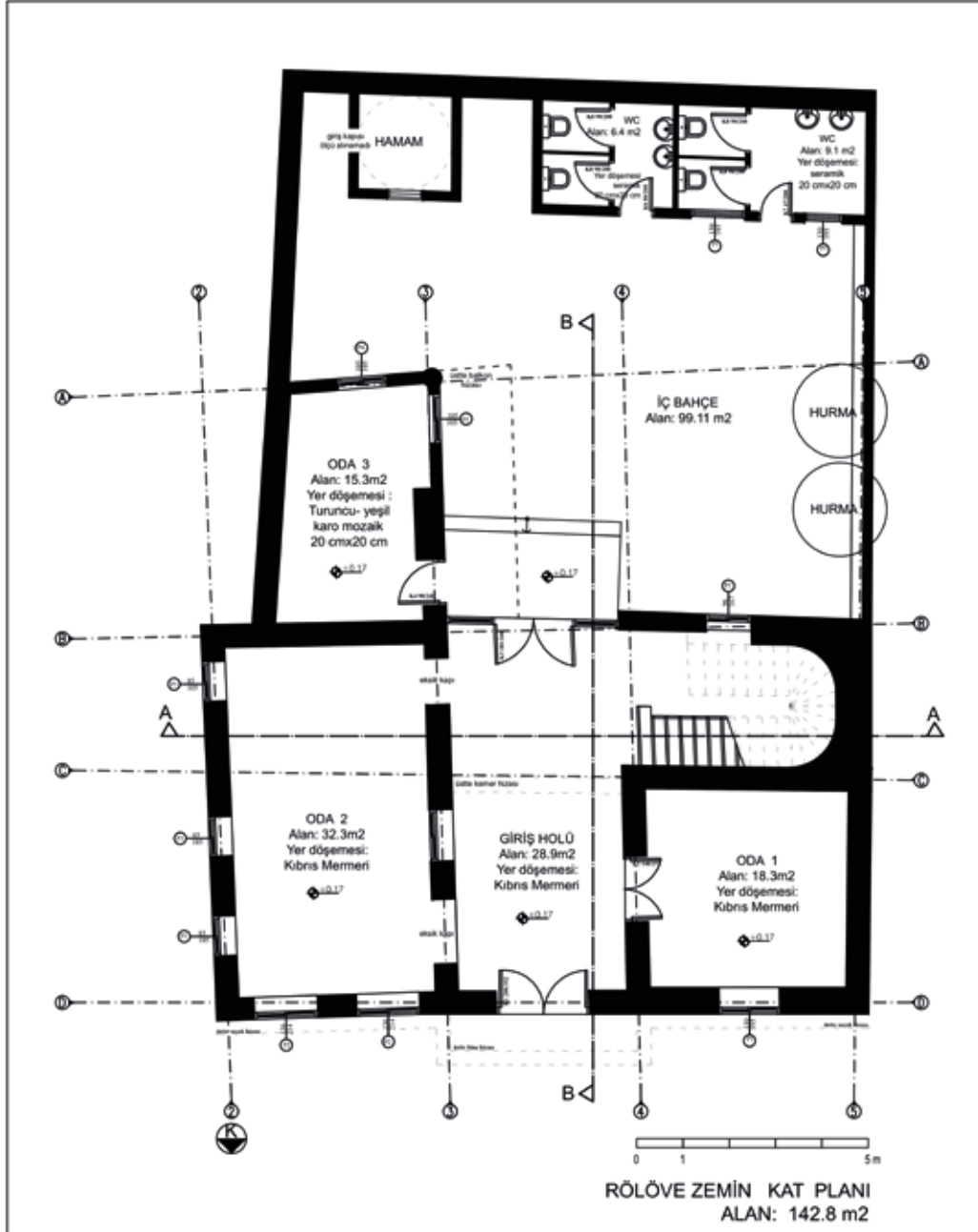
Appendix 1: Damage assessment conducted by the civil engineer in April 2015 (Taneri, 2015)



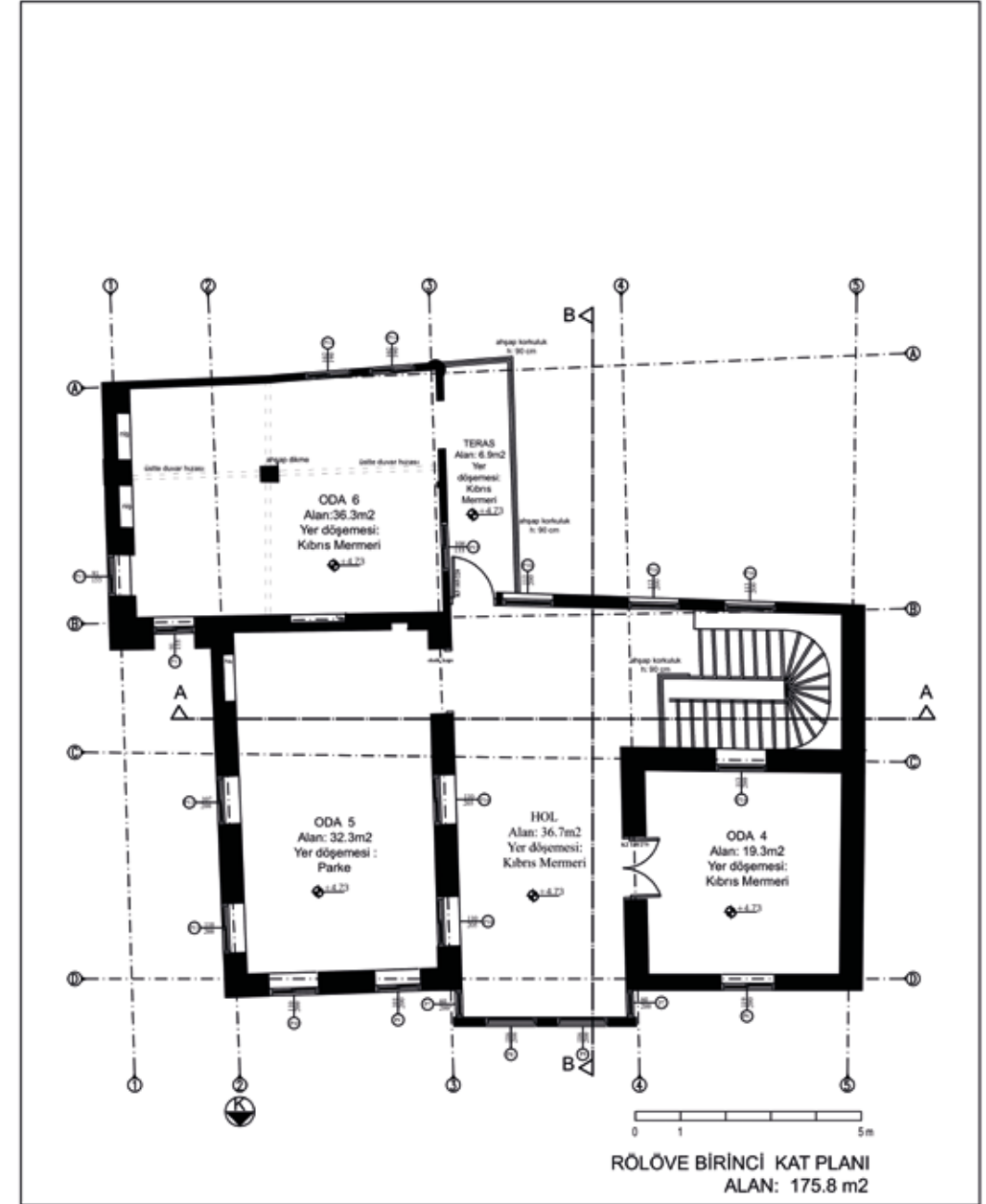
Appendix 2: Comparative damage assessment conducted in April and July 2015 by the civil engineer(Taneri, 2015)



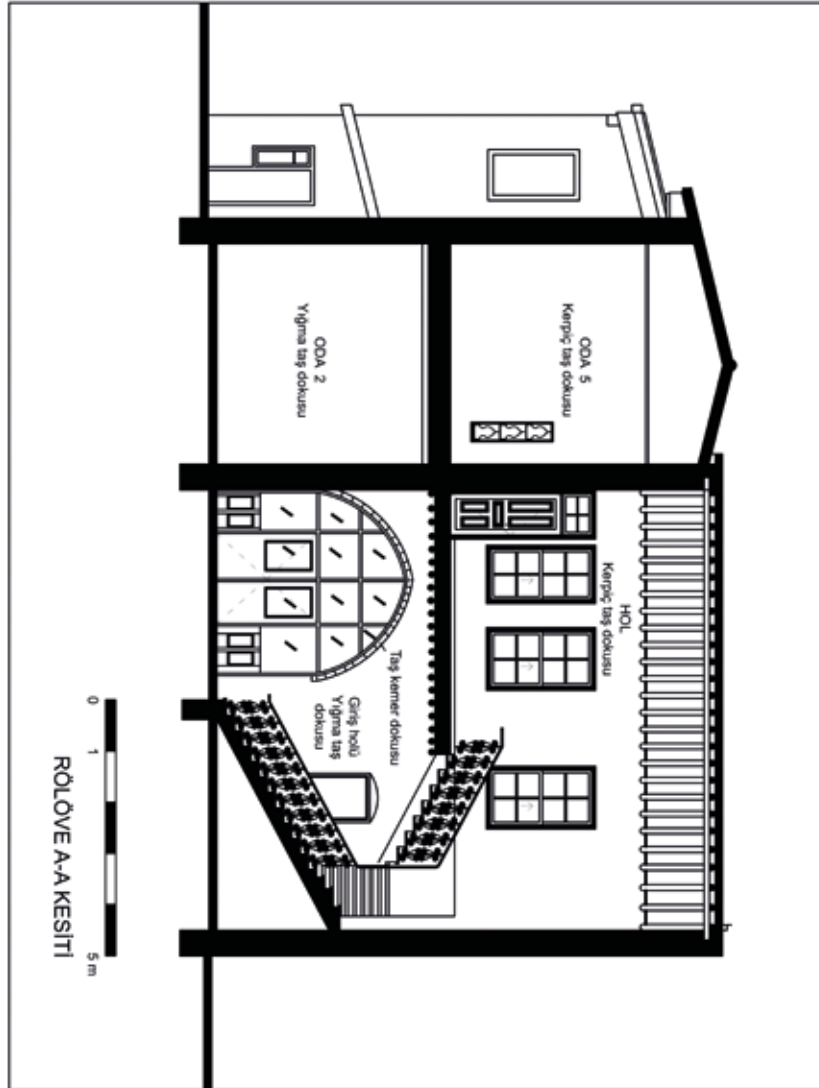
Appendix 3: Releve- Measured Survey drawings of the mansion
(Özge Özbek Eminoğlu, Nadire Ergin, Aliye Menteş, 2015).



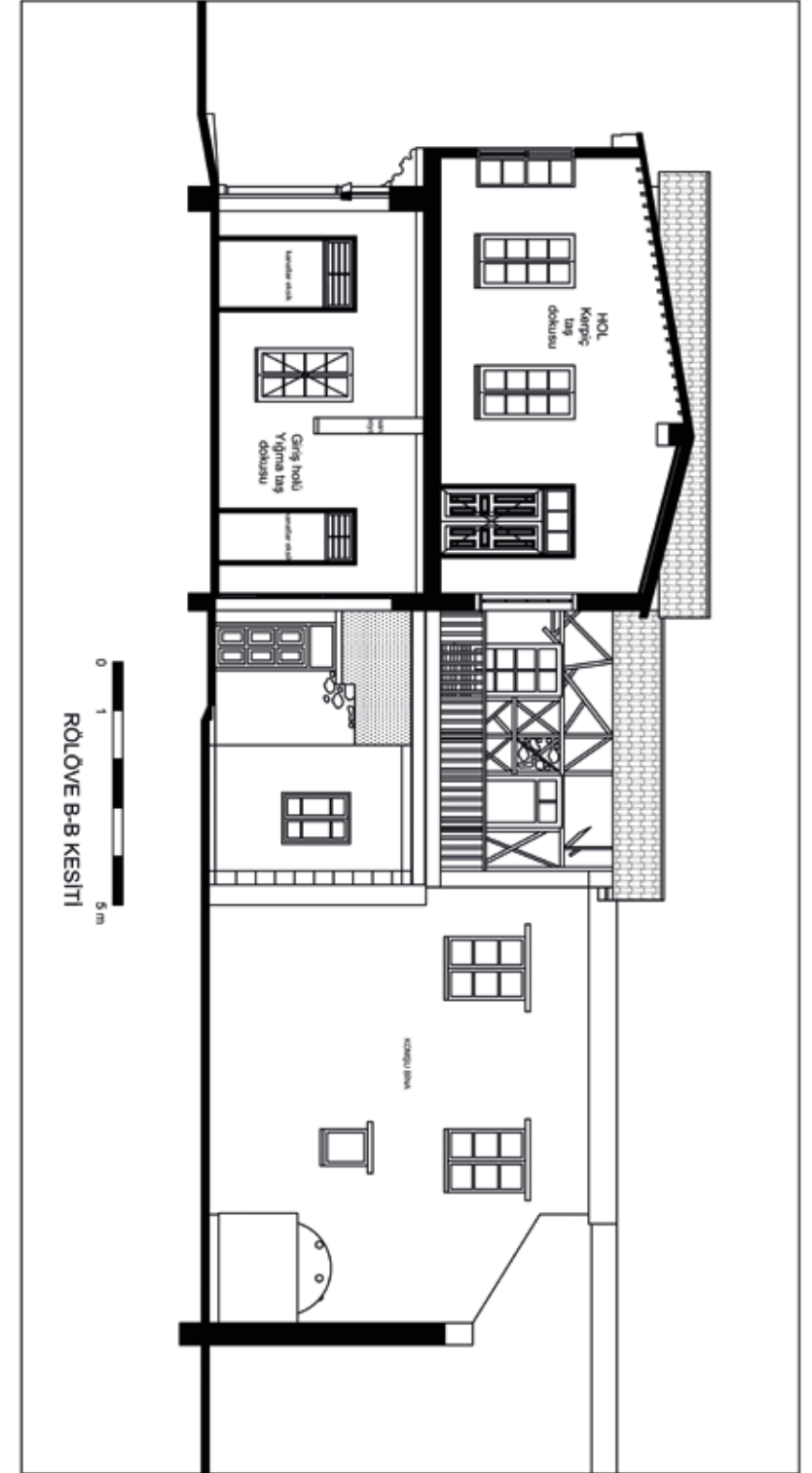
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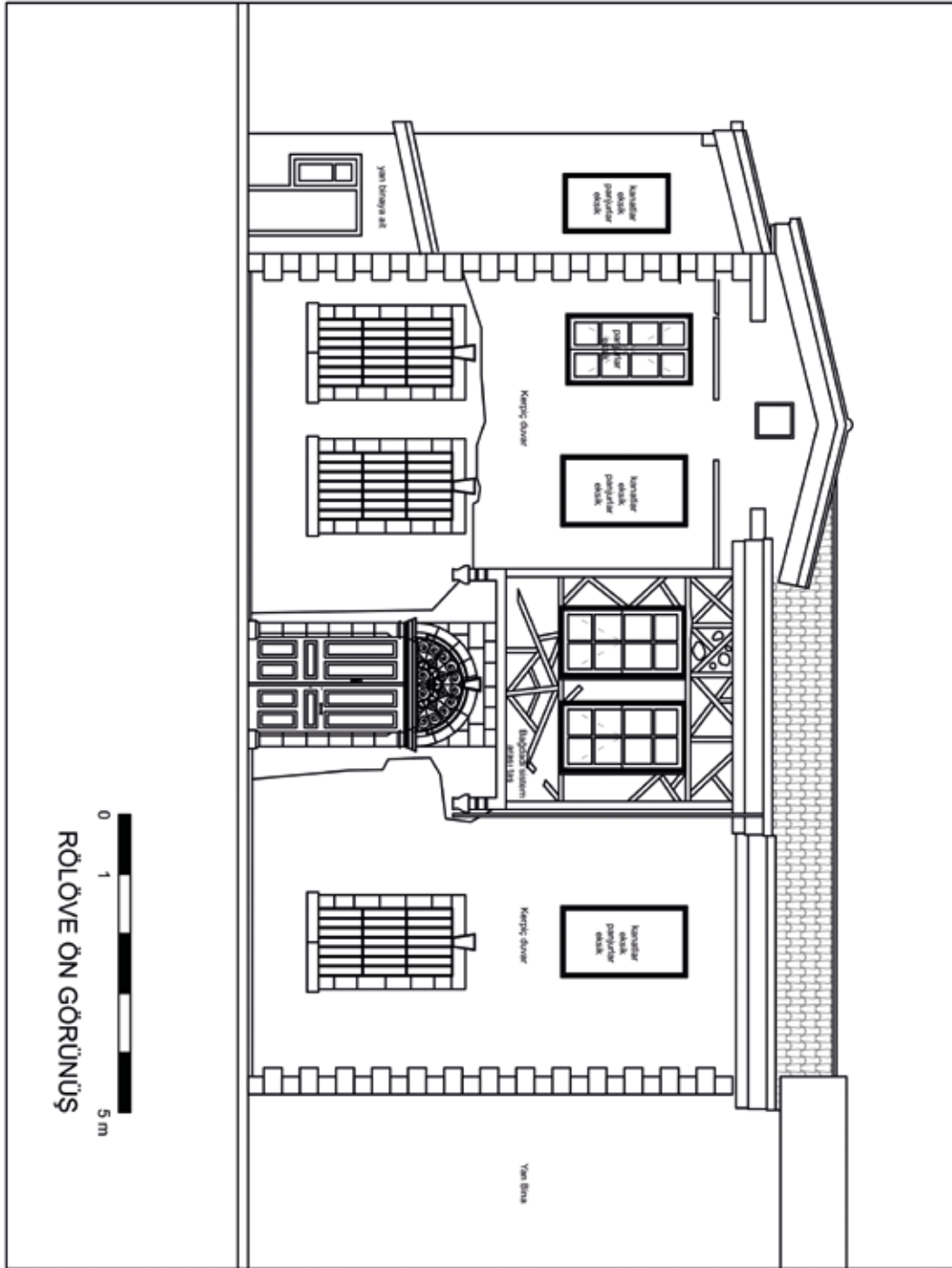
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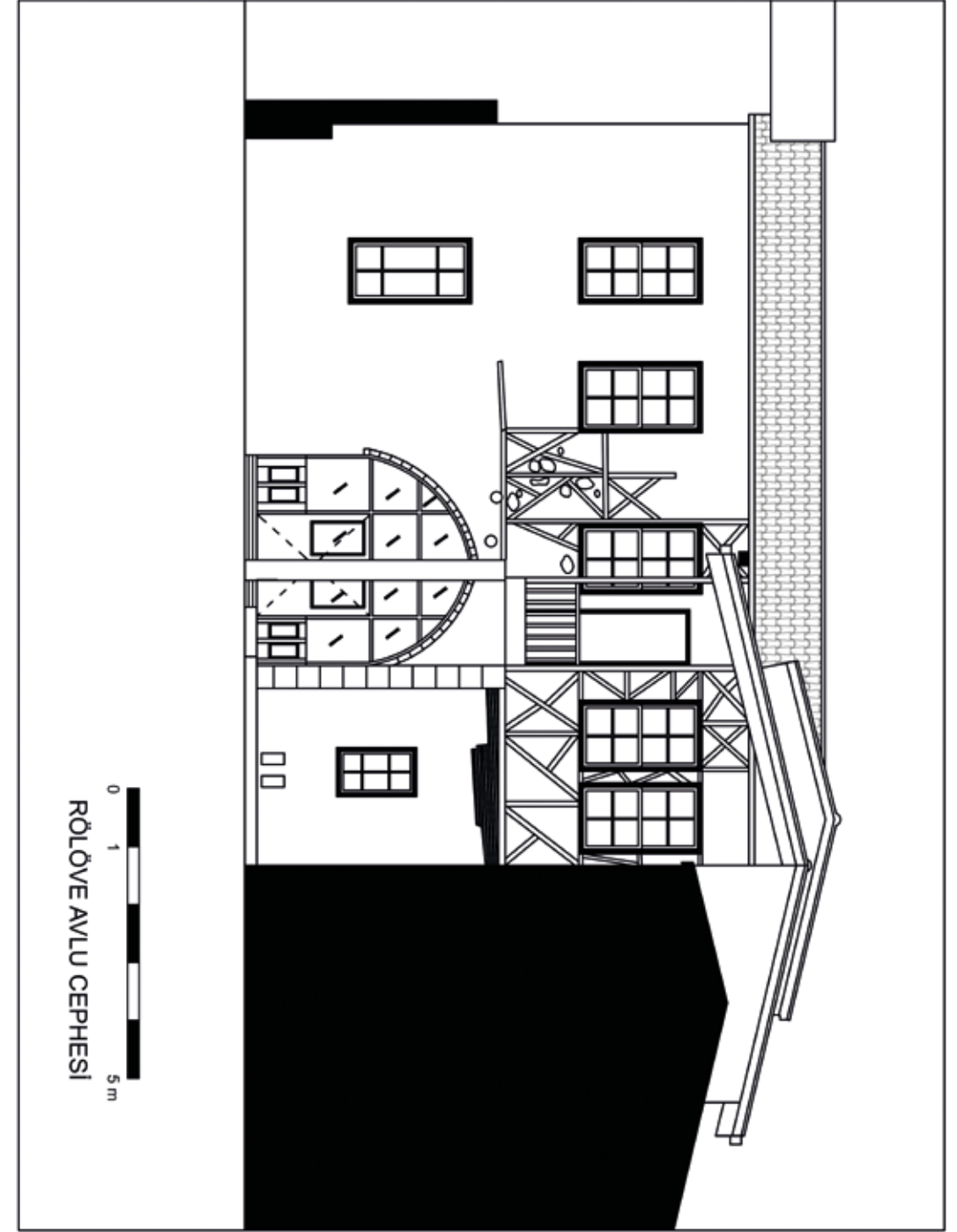
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YENİ TUVALETLER

Giriş kapısı
Ölçü alınmadı

HAMAM

WC
Engelli ve evlat
Alan: 6.4 m²
Yer döşemesi
seramik
20 cmx20 cm

WC kadın
Alan: 9.1 m²
Yer döşemesi
seramik
20 cm x 20 cm

Yeni engelli alanı

Yeni paravan

HURMA

HURMA

ODA 3
Alan: 15.3m²
Yer döşemesi:
Turuncu, yeşil
karomozak
20 cmx20 cm
±0.17

İÇ BAHÇE
Alan: 99.11 m²

ODA 2
Alan: 32.3m²
Yer döşemesi :
Kibris Mermeri
±0.17

GİRİŞ HOLÜ
Alan: 28.9m²
Yer döşemesi :
Kibris Mermeri
±0.17

ODA 1
Alan: 18.3m²
Yer döşemesi :
Kibris Mermeri
±0.17

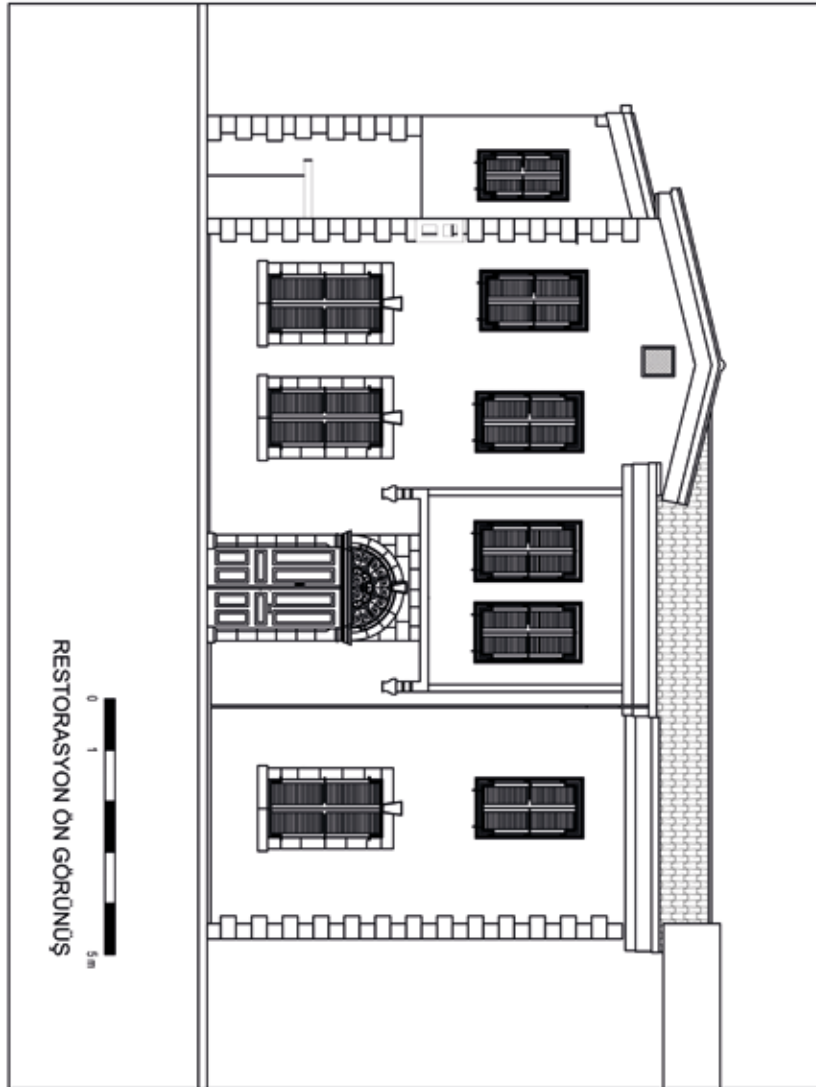
5m

RESTORASYON ZEMİN KAT PLANI
ALAN: 142.8 m²

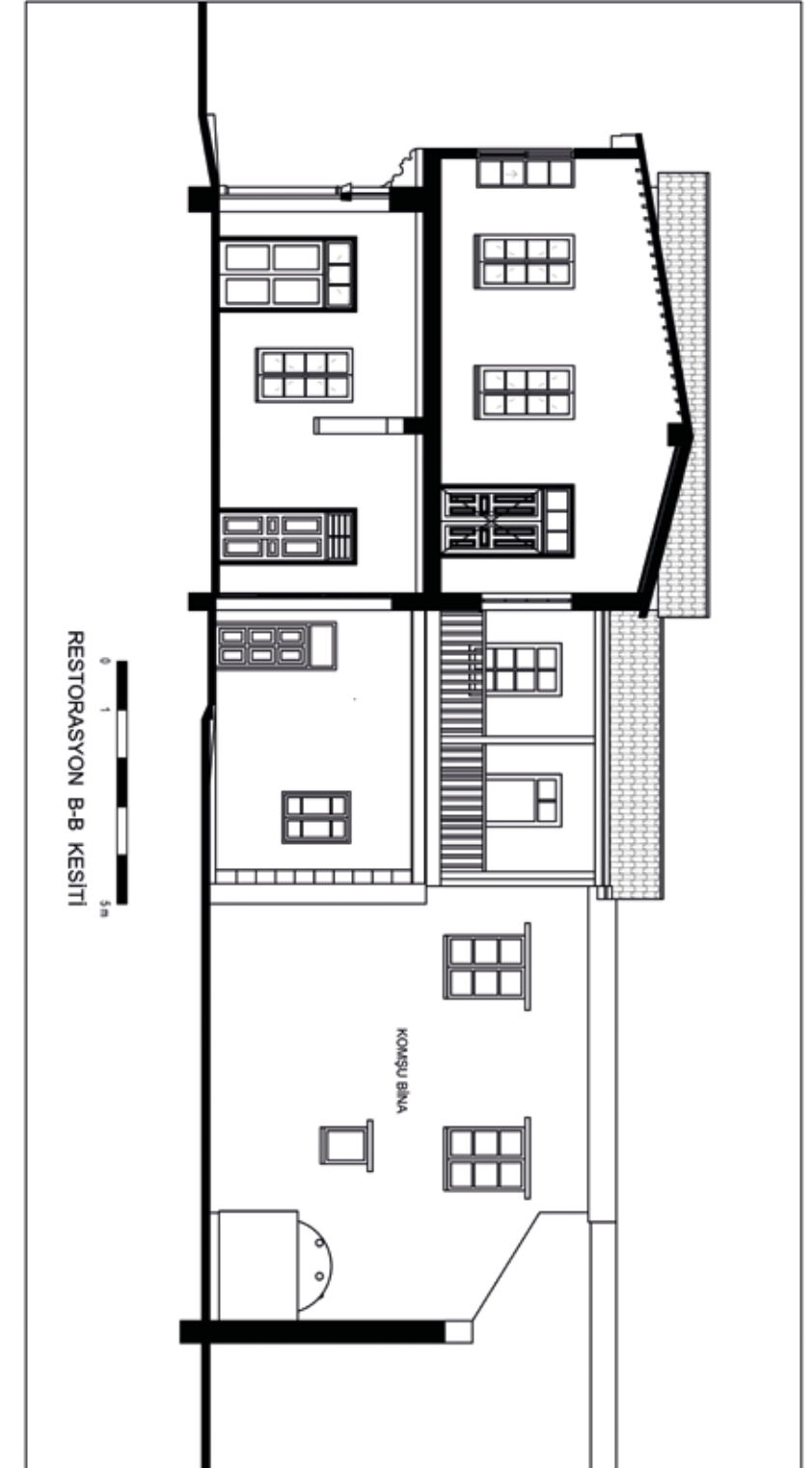
Architectural floor plan of the first floor of a restoration project. The plan shows four rooms: ODA 4 (19.3m², Kibris Mermeri), ODA 5 (32.3m², Parke), ODA 6 (36.3m², Kibris Mermeri), and a HOL (36.7m², Halı). A Teras (6.9m², Kibris Mermeri) is attached to ODA 6. A staircase is located between ODA 4 and ODA 5. The plan includes a grid system (1-5, A-B), a north arrow, and a scale bar (0-5m).

RESTORASYON BİRİNCİ KAT PLANI
ALAN: 175.8 m2

Appendix 4: Restoration drawings of the mansion
(Özge Özbek Eminoğlu, Nadire Ergin, Aliye Menteş, 2015).

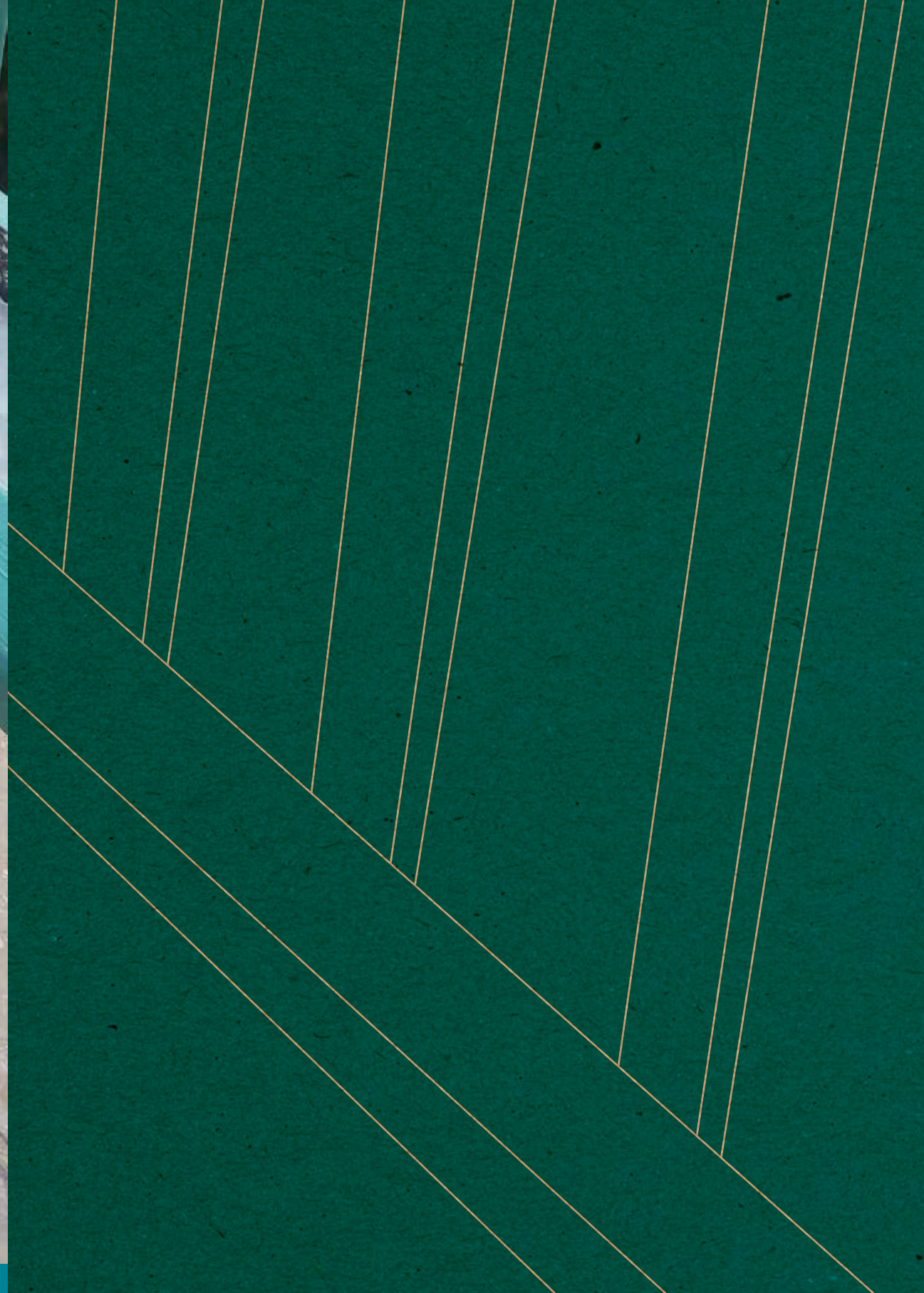


Appendix 4: Restoration drawings of the mansion
(Özge Özbek Eminoğlu, Nadire Ergin, Aliye Menteş, 2015).





Sinan (Taken by: Devrim Yücel Besim)



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BIOGRAPHY

Aliye Menteş graduated from the Faculty of Architecture at Eastern Mediterranean University in 2005. She continued her academic studies in the United Kingdom, completing her master's degree between 2005-2006 in the MSc Historic Conservation program jointly run by Oxford Brookes University and University of Oxford. For her thesis, she studied the restoration and adaptive reuse of historic hans in Istanbul, Bursa, and Nicosia.

Following her master's degree, she worked for three years in various architectural offices in London. During this time, she also served as a research member at SAVE Britain's Heritage, one of the UK's earliest heritage conservation trusts, contributing to the Buildings at Risk Register project. She took part in the preparation and publication of the 2007 Buildings at Risk Catalogue. In 2009, she decided to continue her academic career and began her doctoral studies at Oxford Brookes University. Her PhD research focused on historic Eastern Mediterranean villages, exploring rural regeneration and conservation through sustainable tourism. She conducted fieldwork in Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus. Alongside her academic work, she remained actively involved in practical cultural heritage projects. Between 2011-2012, she worked on an important project in collaboration with Jersey Heritage

Trust on the Island of Jersey (British Channel Island), under the direction of Prof. Dr. Aylin Orbaşlı, contributing to the reassessment and inventory of approximately 3,500 listed buildings on the island. In 2016, she worked with Dr. A. Ege Yıldırım at Heritage Planning as a sustainable tourism and conservation consultant within the site management team for the İvriz Hittite Rock Monument and Cultural Landscape in Konya/Ereğli. Subsequently, between 2016-2019, she continued her work in İvriz village as Rural Regeneration Coordinator within Dr. Çiğdem Maner's KEYAR project (funded by Arçelik and Koç University).

Since 2015, Menteş has continued her academic career in Cyprus as a faculty member in different Universities. Since 2022 she has been working at Arkin University of Creative Arts and Design (ARUCAD). She has presented papers and delivered talks on cultural heritage, conservation and adaptive re-use at numerous international and national congresses, conferences, and seminars. She has also participated in conservation and restoration projects in Cyprus, Turkey, and the United Kingdom. She continues her commitment to cultural heritage and the historic environment through voluntary work in national and international conservation organizations.





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