

## Restitution process in conservation: Exploring the historical adventure of Derik former government building

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### Abstract

Derik Former Government Building, with its architectural structure, is one of the leading examples of civil architecture that reflects the local architecture and construction technique of Derik District of Mardin. The building was registered as the 1<sup>st</sup> Group in 2006 and is not being used today. It has been used in different functions by the local people until today and has taken its current form with the additions made in different periods. In the archive records scanning, no information or document was found that the restoration project was drawn. In this context, it is necessary to reveal the historical evolution of the building in order to ensure the sustainability of the building and to maintain its historical identity. The aim of the restitution research of the historical building is to determine the changes that the building has undergone until today, to find its original state based on scientific data, to find the periods it went through and to lay the groundwork for the restoration work. As a method in the study, comparative studies were made with examples of similar periods, and determinations were made about the structure in line with the existing traces in the building. In addition, oral interviews were conducted with the people living in the region in order to better understand the historical process of the building. In the results of the study, it was determined that there were two periods related to the structure. It is understood that the upper floor was built later, since the traces from the building, the door and window alignments, the construction technique and the wall alignments of the lower and upper floors are not in the same direction. It is not known exactly when the ground floor was built, but according to the inscription on the mosque next to it, it was built before 1846. It is estimated that the first floor was built at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## 1. Introduction

In the document announced at the end of the conference held in Nara by the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the problem of interventions in the restoration of historical buildings in many countries in the world without a thorough understanding of the historical layers, and historical buildings are not only considered as a work of art but also as a historical document stressed the need for protection. In the document, it is pointed out that repairs made to transfer the original state of a historical building to future generations should contain many sources of information

such as the spirit of the city and historical evolution [1]. Researchers investigating the restoration practices since the disclosure of the document state that the historical evolution of the building is still ignored and that more than half of the historical heritage in the world continues to be severely damaged as a result of interventions without a thorough understanding of the historical layers of the building [2-15].

The historical layer research covers the current state of the building and various researches on the historical-artistic documentation, technical and scientific documentation, maintenance and monitoring actions of the previous periods of the building (The Venice Charter;

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The Burra Charter). Restitution, one of the documentation methods, is research carried out to reveal the historical layers of the building, based on a scientific methodology, which helps to find the original state based on scientific data by determining the changes that the building has undergone until today. Friedman [16] emphasizes that the drawings of the building, the geological maps and the records of all the studies done on the structure should be examined in the restitution researches of the building.

Based on this requirement emphasized in the literature, the aim of the study is to investigate the historical phases of Derik Former Government Building, to reveal the data of the original state of the building and to lay the groundwork for restoration works. The building examined in the study is one of the leading examples of civil architecture in Derik district. The research was carried out on the basis of (1) those that were completed in line with the existing traces from the building, (2) those that were completed according to examples from similar periods, and (3) those whose existence was determined and determined during the surveying studies. In addition, information about the structure; old photographs, information obtained from

art historians, and verbal statements by people who lived in Derik for a long time were taken into account. A restitution project proposal was prepared by photographing, measuring and drawing using a laser total station, laser meter, normal meter, camera. In the restitution project and analysis work on the drawings obtained for this purpose, periods and appendices are indicated with various colorings.

Finally, it is understood that the upper floor was built later, since the traces from the building, the door and window alignments, the construction technique (the lower floor ceiling is vaulted, the upper floor ceiling is reinforced concrete flooring) and the wall alignments of the lower and upper floors are not in the same direction. It is not known exactly when the ground floor was built. However, according to the inscription on the mosque next to it, it was built before 1846. The first floor is XIX. It is estimated that it was built at the end of the century.

## 2. Study area

The historical building is located in the city of Mardin, in Derik district, in the address of Cevizpınar Mahallesi, 349 block, 2 parcel (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Location of Derik in Mardin, Türkiye

The exact date of the building is not known since there are no inscriptions and dates related to the history of the building, inside and outside the building. It has continued to be used in different functions by the local people until today, and it has taken its current form with the additions made in different periods. The building was registered as the 1st Group in 2006 and is not used today.

Restoration work of the building has started today. The building, which has an important place in the history of Derik District, has served the people of the district with its various functions over time. For more than 25 years the building has been empty and not used. The building, which has an important place in the history of Derik District, has served the people of the district with its various functions over time.

### 2.1. The current state and architectural features of the building

The building, which is designed as a total of two upper floors with a ground floor and a floor, is located on a sloping land.

There are many spaces in the building, where the number of floors is determined according to the topographic condition of the land. Currently, cement-based screeds are seen in the courtyard of the building. Plasters are visible on the existing stone walls.

The entrance to the building is provided by a round arched door on the northwest street. There is no trace of the original flooring on the ground floor and today it is a cement-based screed. Some traces of the original flooring remained on the upper floor. Today, some of it is cut

stone and cement-based screed. The ceiling of the upper floor collapsed over time and was supported by reinforced concrete beams and covered with a reinforced concrete screed.

There are window openings on the southeastern wall, some of which were destroyed. The terrace is the uppermost part and the last floor of the building. There is no parapet on the terrace floor, which has a square plan scheme (Figure 2). There is no building element on this floor.



Figure 2. Images of Derik former government building

### 3. Method

The study was carried out based on the exact information coming from the traces and samples in the building, the ones whose existence was determined and determined during the survey studies, and samples from similar periods. In addition, information about the structure; It has been documented by taking into account old photographs, information obtained from art historians, and oral expressions told by people who have lived in Derik for a long time. A restitution project proposal was prepared by photographing, measuring and drawing using a laser total station, laser meter, normal meter, camera. In the restitution project and analysis work on the drawings obtained for this purpose, periods and appendices are indicated with various colorings.

The sources used during the restitution study and the subjects on which these sources are used are listed as:

- I. Qualitative Research: In addition, in order to better understand the historical process of the building, writer Eyyüp Güven, who has been living in the region and has been researching the traditional architecture of Mardin and the history of Derik for many years, was reached and an oral interview was made with him.
- II. Precise information from traces and samples in the structure
  - ✗ In the building, some or all of the various structural elements were destroyed for various reasons, such as doors, windows, socket iron balustrades, which are examples of the same period; instead of the existing metal doors and windows, the original material of which is walnut woodwork and completed according to the details of a similar period example.

- III. Those whose existence is definitely known and whose existence has been determined during the survey studies
  - ✗ Cut stone and rubble stone walls
  - ✗ Existing original wooden joinery
  - ✗ Original lime-based mortars and plasters that have survived to the present day
  - ✗ Cut stone or rubble stones on stone walls covered with cement plaster
  - ✗ Rubble stones on ceiling and walls
  - ✗ Wooden window and metal railing on windows
  - ✗ Dam parapet stone wall finish
  - ✗ Parapet metal railing combination

## 4. Results and Discussion

It was determined that there were two periods related to the structure. It is understood that the upper floor was built later, since the traces from the building, the door and window alignments, the construction technique (the lower floor ceiling is vaulted, the upper floor ceiling is reinforced concrete flooring) and the wall alignments of the lower and upper floors are not in the same direction. It is not known exactly when the ground floor was built, but according to the inscription on the mosque next to it, it was built before 1846. It is estimated that the first floor was built at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### 4.1. Qualitative research

Since the building has not undergone much change, except for a few minor changes, it mostly preserves its original state. In order to better understand the historical process of the building, writer Eyyüp Güven, who has been living in the region and has been researching the traditional architecture of Mardin and the history of Derik for many years, was reached and an oral interview was made with him. Eyyüp Güven stated that the building was definitely built by Armenians.

Our interview with Eyyüp Güven continues as follows: "As a result of the researches done so far, it is seen that there are five schools in the district where Armenians teach. These schools provided 2 Armenian girls' schools, 1 girls' college for girls using Ottoman, French and Armenian languages, and 2 primary school which are Mektebi iptidai (kindergarten for beginners) and Mektebi sibyan (primary school education). These educational institutions were closed after the 1915 process and were offered to various institutions. One of the aforementioned educational institutions is the place called the old government house. This building was first used as a government mansion, then a prison and a public education center for a while. The building served as a girls' college, which was connected to the Armenian Catholic (Gregorian) church in the past, and was educated in Armenian, French and Ottoman languages, which was located right next to it and now serves as the Küçükpinar Central Mosque until 1915. At the same time, it was used as a small place of worship outside the church, where students performed their rituals."

Eyyüp Güven finally stated that there was a mosque structure near the building and that this building was

also built by the Armenians at the same time as the existing building and was converted into a mosque in the following periods. In the translation of the epitaph found in the mosque, which was made by Father Gabriel Akyüz, it is written that "The beautification (ornamentation) of the mosque sheriff built towards the north of the Qibla ended in 1263 (1846 according to the Gregorian calendar)". According to the date in the inscription, the first period of the building was built before 1846. From these data, it is estimated that the building, which was examined until 1915, was used as an Armenian Girls' School.

#### 4.2. 1<sup>st</sup> period of the building

As a result of the determinations made from the traces of the building and the determinations made during the survey studies, the existence of which is known for certain, the following findings were obtained regarding the plan and facade features of the 1st period of the building (Figure 3).

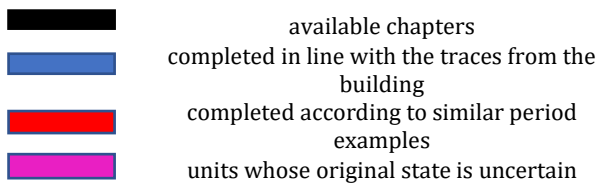


Figure 3. Legend of restitution proposal

There is no trace of the original flooring on the ground floor and today it is a cement-based screed. Ground floor coverings were completed according to the original floor coverings used in the upper floor of the building and similar structures. As a result, it has been determined that the floor coverings of indoor and outdoor spaces are a material characterized as cut stone (Figure 4a).

Terrace-Dam, on the other hand, is the uppermost part and the last floor of the building. There is no parapet on the terrace floor, which has a square plan scheme. There is no building element on this floor. The flooring on this floor was completed according to similar period examples (Figure 4b).

The door providing the passage to the courtyard on the southeast facade wall in the Z-01 Entrance-Hall and the windows on both sides were opened in line with the existing traces from the building (Figure 4c). The skylight on the northeast wall of the Z-02 classroom was opened in line with the existing traces from the building (Figure 4d). The wall on the southwest façade at the Z-04 Resting Area was completed in line with the existing tracks (Figure 4e).

The door on the northwest wall of Z-6 Courtyard and 2 windows on both sides were opened in line with the existing traces from the building. The partially destroyed window openings on the southeastern wall were completed in line with the existing traces from the building, and the iron railing and wooden joinery were completed based on examples from similar periods (Figure 4f).

The partially destroyed window opening on the northwest wall of the Z-07 Divan was completed in line with the existing traces from the building (Figure 4h). The window on the southwestern wall of the Z-08 monastery was opened in line with the existing traces from the building (Figure 4i).

The windows on the southwest wall of the Z-10 Teacher's Room were opened in line with the existing traces from the building. The door and window joinery in the building was completed on the basis of other door windows that preserved their originality and examples from similar periods. At the same time, iron railings were also completed based on comparative data.

A comparative study has concluded that the vaulted surfaces have a vault mesh filled with inkara plaster. It was concluded that the floor coverings were also limestone as a result of the comparative study with the examples of similar periods found in the building. In addition, in line with the existing traces in the building, it was determined that the whitewashed areas were rubble and cut stones. The entrance to the building is provided by a round arched door on the northwest street. Based on the examples found in Derik, the wooden door was restored to its original form (Figure 4j).

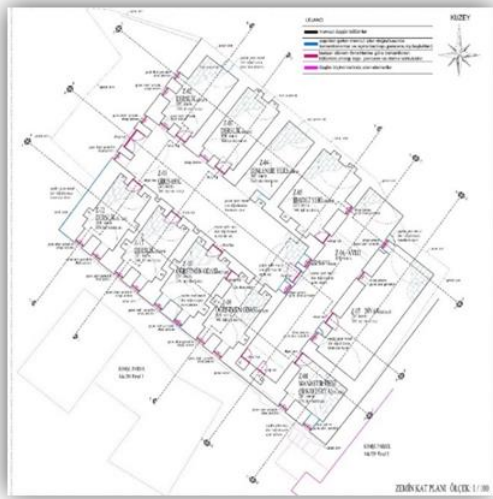
#### 4.3. 2<sup>nd</sup> period of the building

(1) As a result of the determinations made from the traces of the building and (2) the determinations made during the survey studies, the existence of which is known for certain, the following findings were obtained regarding the plan and facade features of the 2<sup>nd</sup> period of the building.

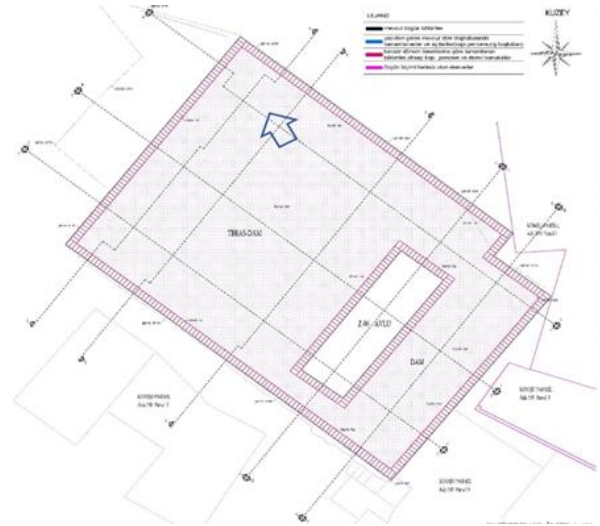
Another floor was added to the existing first period building at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Since the municipality organization was established in Derik in 1874, the establishment date of the government office is not known, but it is estimated that it was founded at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The lower floor of the building was used as a court-prison and the upper floor was used as a government office (District office) (Figure 5).

The door and window joinery in the building was completed on the basis of other door windows that preserve their originality. At the same time, iron railings were also completed based on comparative data. As a result of the comparative study, it was concluded that the floor slabs were limestone.

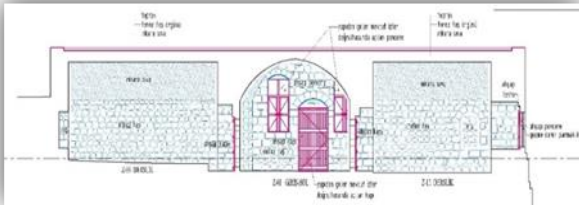
The ground floor of the building was used as a court-prison. Since no data about the building could be reached, it was completed by obtaining information from the people who lived there for many years and in line with the existing traces from the building (Figure 6a). The main entrance to the prison is through the round arched door in the northwest. In addition, the entrance of the prisoners is provided through the door on the southwest facade, which was used as a window in the 1st period. The wooden door has been restored to its original form based on the examples found in Derik (Figure 6b).



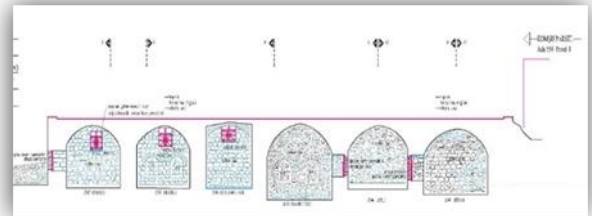
(a)



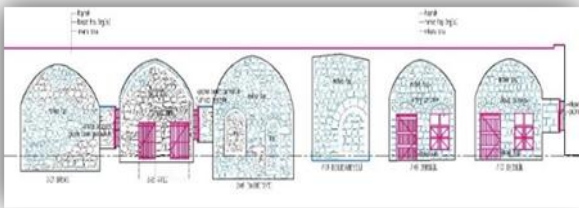
(b)



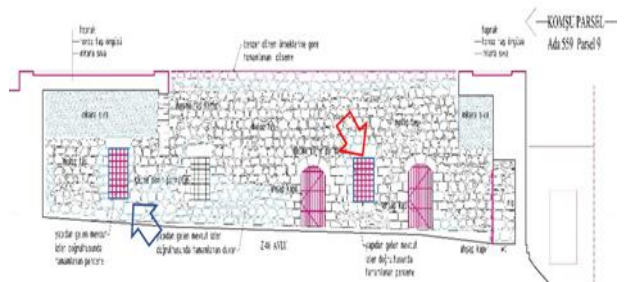
(c)



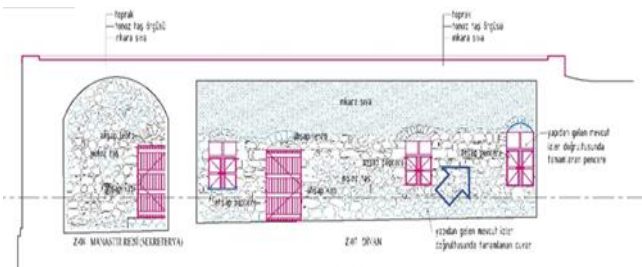
(d)



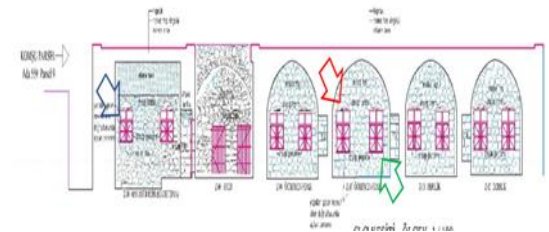
(e)



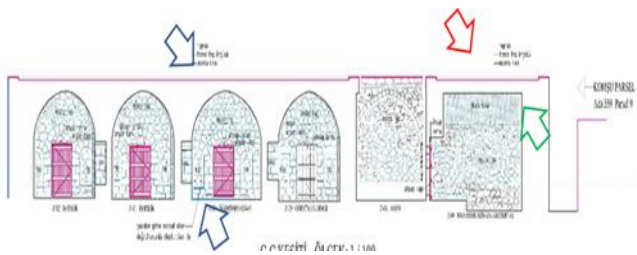
(f)



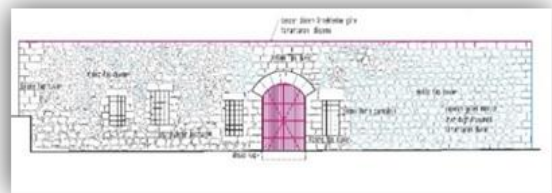
(g)



(h)

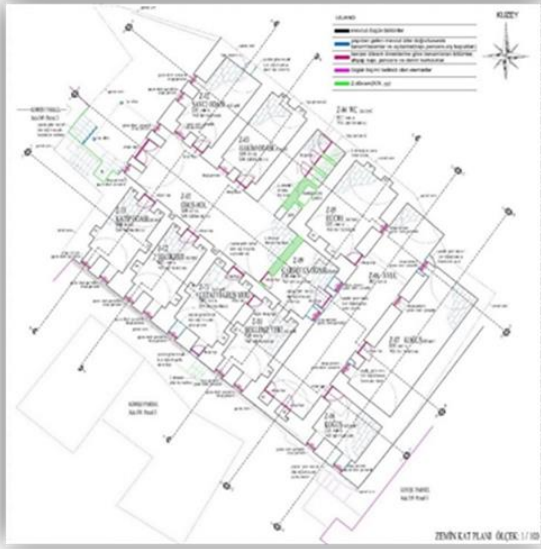


(i)

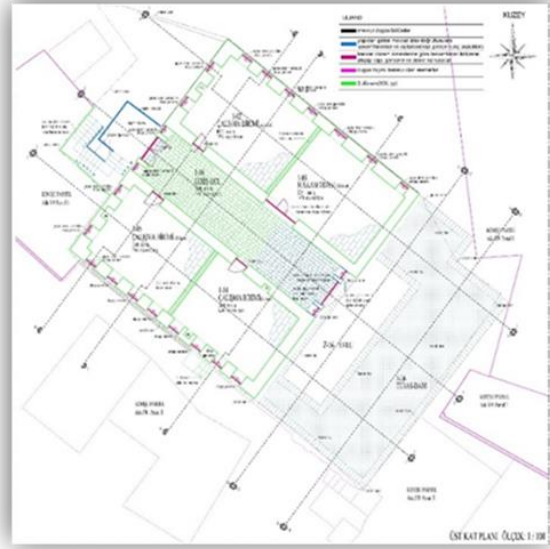


(j)

Figure 4. Floor plans and sections of the building



(a) Ground Floor Plan



(b) 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Plan

**Figure 5.** Floor plans, sections and facades of the second period of the building

In the Z-01 Entrance-Hall, a stone wall was added to the southwest side both to separate the prisoners and to obtain the Warden's Room (Z-09) (Figure 6c). The pointed arched niche in the northwest in the Z-01 Entrance-Hall was lowered to the ground according to the existing traces to provide the entrance to the warehouse (Figure 6d). In Z-04 Wc, 3 separate WCs were created with briquette walls according to the existing traces from the building. In addition, a sewer pit was created in Z-04 Wc to collect the toilet expenses (Figure 6e).

It is the uppermost part and the last floor of the building. There is no parapet on the terrace floor, which has a square plan scheme. There is no building element on this floor. The upper floor was used as the government house. Some traces of the original flooring remained on the upper floor, and today, some of it is cut stone and cement-based screed. Floor coverings were completed according to the original floor coverings used in the entrance-hall of the building and similar structures. As a result, it has been determined that the floor coverings of the spaces are a material that is considered as cut stone. The ceiling of the upper floor collapsed over time and was supported by reinforced concrete beams and covered with a reinforced concrete screed. The ceiling slab, which was a reinforced concrete screed, was removed and replaced with wood-beamed slab, which was completed with soil, according to the information obtained from examples from similar periods and the people around the building (Figure 7).

The upper floor is reached by a stone-stepped staircase in the northwest wing, which is completed according to the existing traces and the column capital found in the building. The entrance to the building is through the pointed arched door in the northwest. Based on examples from the similar period, the wooden door was converted to its original form. The pointed arched iwan on the southeast façade wall in 1-01 Entrance-Hall and the windows on both sides were opened in line with the existing traces from the building. Based on examples

from similar periods, the wooden joinery was converted to its original form (Figure 8, Figure 5g).

The stone wall, which was built later, which provided the passage to 1-03 office room on the northeast facade wall of 1-01 Entrance-Hall, was removed and wooden joinery was used based on examples from similar periods (Figure 9).

## 5. Conclusion

The structure examined in the study has an important place in the history of Derik District, and the structure has served the people of the district with its various functions over time. For more than 25 years the building has been empty and not used. The aim of the historical building restitution research in the Derik district of Mardin is to determine the changes that the building has undergone until today, to find its original state based on scientific data, to find the periods it went through and to lay the groundwork for the restoration work. For this purpose, the data collected from field research, photographic documentation and interviews were synthesized and presented in the structure. First of all, the information about the building was documented by taking into account old photographs, information obtained from art historians, and oral expressions told by people who lived in Derik for a long time.

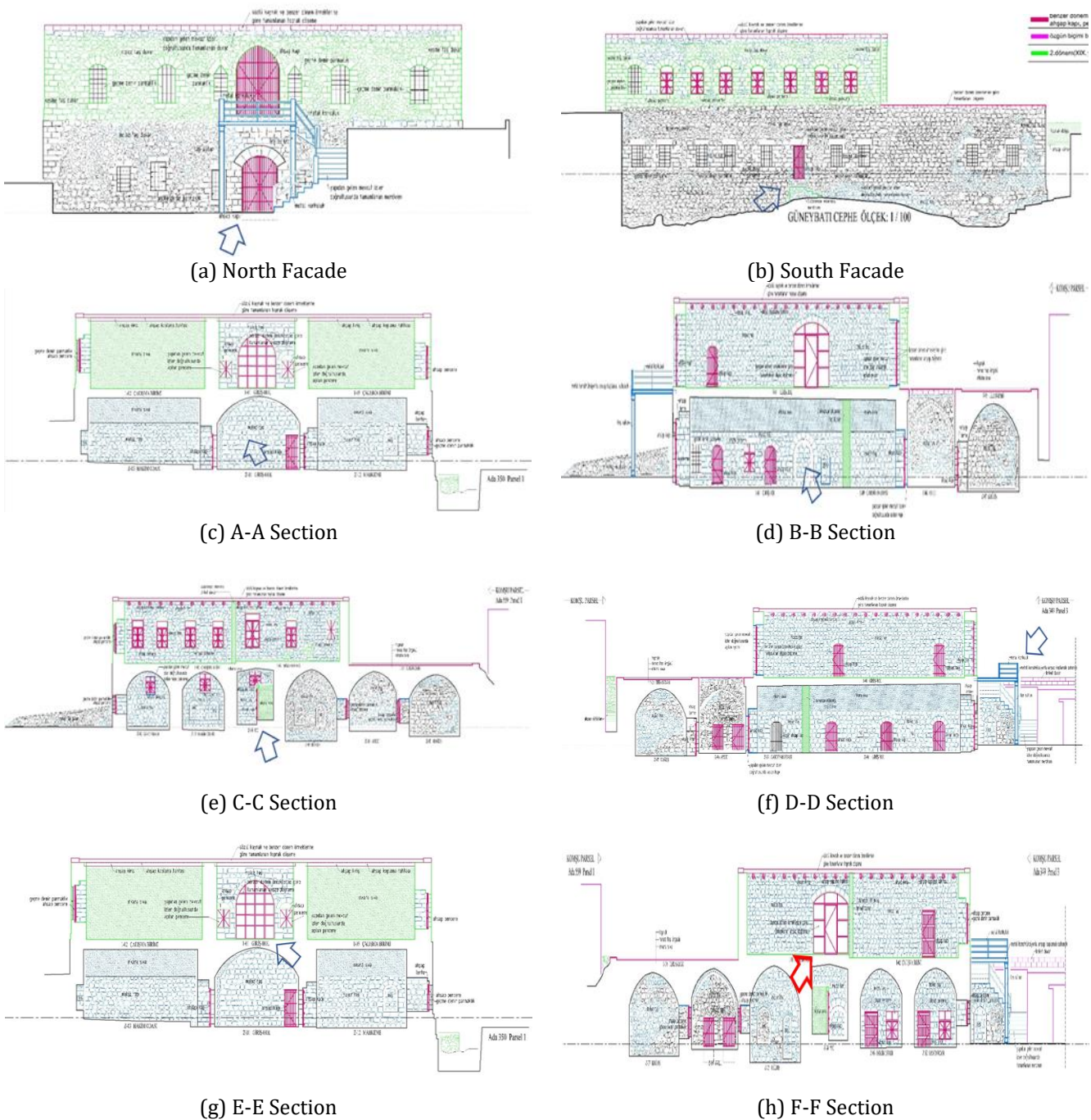
It has been prepared according to the periods of the building, historical sources, previous researches, archival documents, examinations of the building and oral interviews. In addition, the building was photographed using laser total station, laser meter, normal meter, camera, and analogical survey drawings of the building were prepared by measuring and drawing. In the restitution studies, the information obtained from the building and the finds in the historical documents play complementary roles.

It is not possible to obtain very detailed information about the historical development of the building, since sufficient resources and data about the building are not

available. It is not known by whom and when the building was built. By following the traces in the building, it is understood that there are two periods. According to the findings obtained from the study, it is understood that the building is important in itself with its architectural and plan features and Derik is an important cultural heritage as building architecture. It is very important to interpret the traces on the structure correctly and to find a hidden basis to support the claims regarding previous periods or interventions. The history of the Derik Former Government Building is a complex example to deal with, layers, interventions and additions, but provided a very instructive process and experience to understand how to explore the inside and outside of a cultural property. While the archive documents are extremely important in terms of forming the historical narrative of the library, the structure also has clues that will guide the

researches. The results of the study also revealed important clues about the past of the building, the repairs or additions made within it. These clues can be read in the differences in materials, construction techniques or space organization.

As a result, this study is extremely important in terms of documenting the characteristic and originality of the building and discussing it with all its layers. The results of the study will be useful as a source document at the point of ensuring the originality of the structure during the restoration phase with the restitution proposals for this stone structure, which is one of the examples of civil architecture. In the project design and implementation phase of the building, efforts should be made to preserve its originality and to apply traditional materials, techniques and construction systems [17-19].

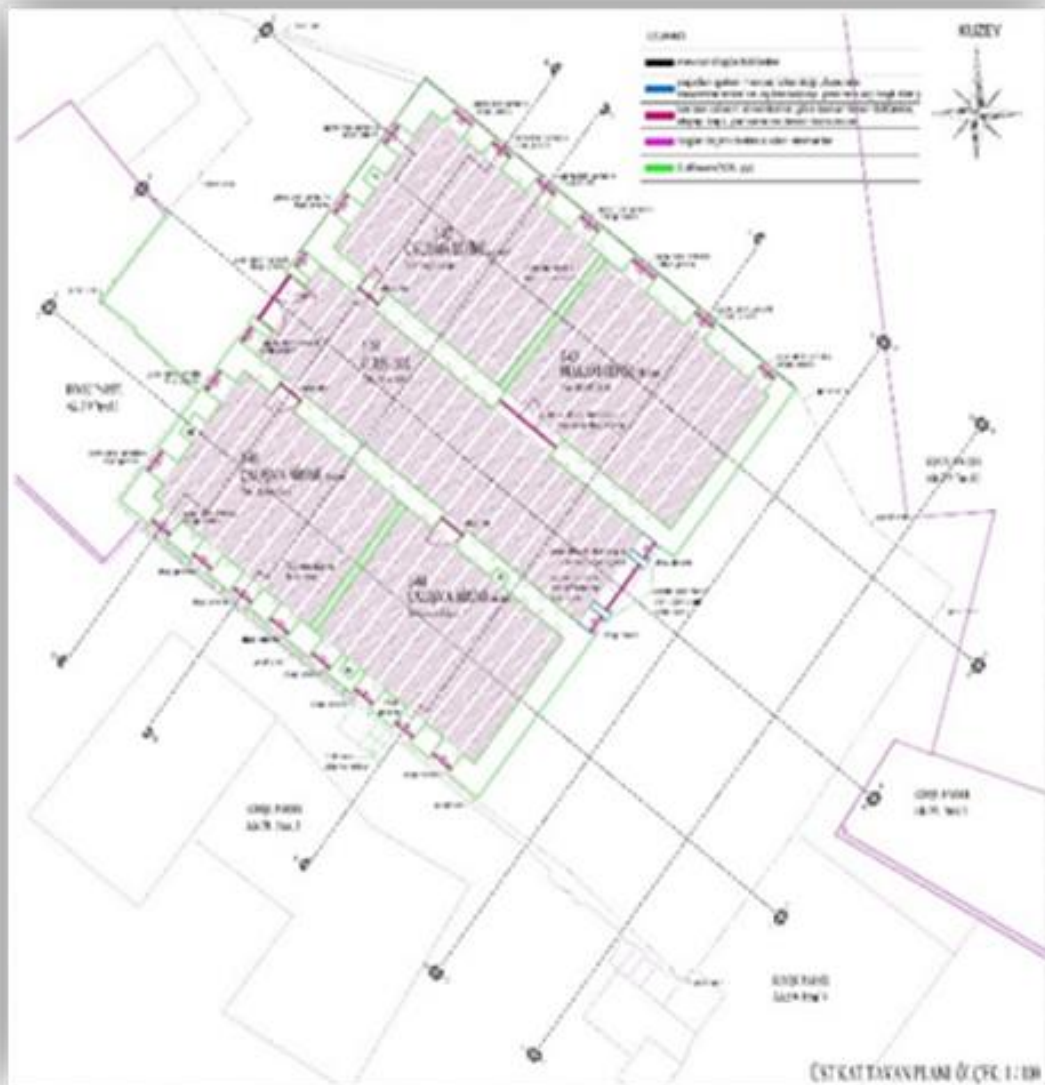


(g) E-E Section (h) F-F Section  
**Figure 6.** The ground floors, sections and facades of the second period of the building



(a) (Mehmet Karahan House)-A similar period example

(b) (Kesra Kanco House)- A similar period example



(c)

**Figure 7.** The wooden beamed floor completed according to the information obtained from the examples of similar periods and the people around the building



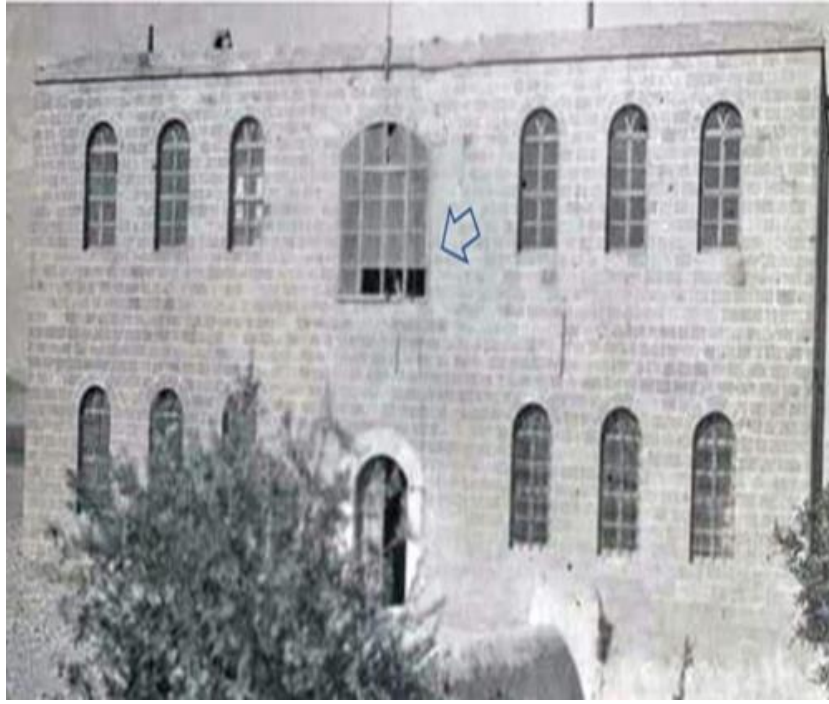


Figure 8. Wooden joinery found in a similar building sample (Former Kızıltepe Government Building)



Figure 9. The stone wall, which was built later, that provides the transition to 1-03 office room on the northeast facade wall of 1-01 Entrance-Hall

#### Author contributions

**Lale Karataş:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Software, Field study **Murat Dal:** Writing-Original draft preparation, Software **Aydın Alptekin:** Data curation, Writing-Original draft preparation, Software, Validation., Field study **Murat Yakar:** Visualization, Investigation, Writing-Reviewing and Editing.

#### Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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