Hybrid Living space in the context of Balat, Istanbul

Illinois Institute of Technology. Spring 2010
Masters Project . Tim Brown Studio
Nezihe Merve Unal
What point does a thing becomes more than shared becomes public?

My interest in this project is to question these social and cultural uses in terms of quality and quantity of integration between people and neighborhood. And find a pattern that could reflect the future of Balat.
Balat, Istanbul

Fener-Balat district are among the most prominent historical and cultural sites in Istanbul due to their location in historical peninsula. The residential district surrounded by Byzantium city walls from 5th century AD to the west, the golden horn to the north has an exceptional Ottoman and European architectural characteristics creates a rich architectural and cultural heritage to the whole city of Istanbul.

During the ottoman period, Fener-Balat district have accommodate profile of upper classes and bourgeoisie in various ethnic groups such as Greeks, Jews and Armenians who held high government positions in Ottoman Empire’s governmental frame. Till 1930, Balat keep its higher residential profile; urban plan made for the district in 1930 by planner H. Post, turn the coastline into industrial zone by replacing the residences with chanderies and factories which changed the socio-economic structure of the Balat district completely. This change let the replacement of higher income minority groups by the lower status rural in-immigrants. The social and economic conditions worsened. As a result, single-family houses were divided into smaller units, where more than one family began to live with lower rents under inadequate conditions. In addition new users could not keep the buildings in a good condition. According to the survey in 1980s, some buildings were completely demolished and the %20 of the rest was not in a good conditions. Furthermore Balat district was listed as a World Heritage site by UNESCO on 1990. Within this announcement, in late 1990s the rehabilitation of Fener-Balat district program, a 7 million euro investment project funded by European Commission and implemented in partnership with Fatih Municipality that involves the rehabilitation of around 200 selected houses between 2004 and 2006, has began.

Earlier urban rehabilitation/transformation projects in Istanbul generally aimed to improve quality of life, increase economic inequalities and prevent housing storage. However all the current urban renewal projects has been fail to achieve this goal. Instead of focusing on the needs of local residents who are generally from low-income groups, these transformed neighborhoods opened up to middle and high income groups in order to reach contemporary living standards. Therefore this gentrification process changed the socio-economic status with the cultural texture of the neighborhood drastically. In order to prevent gentrification and restore the socio-economic structure of the Balat district to its original quality, the Balat rehabilitation project designed as a pilot project which included active participation of the local residents.

The program focused on four topics: Restoration of houses, social rehabilitation, renovation of the historical Balat Market and establishment of a waste management strategy. Within the framework, the finish houses can only be given to existing home owners that have brought their property before 1997 in order to create a recipe forgentrification. Furthermore the program aims for the socio-economic regeneration and sustainable rehabilitation of Balat district, create economic activity for the members of the community, and strengthen the technical capacity of Fatih Municipality and to create a replicable, successful model of urban rehabilitation.

Within the framework of the rehabilitation program, new parcels opened up to new construction under restrictions in order to keep the socio-economic structure of the district completely. Fatih Municipality allows new projects which successfully integrate community space with low income housing, also encourages new job opportunities like providing support for small-scale investments by the locals under social schemes. In order to realize this pilot study, my project aims to create a prototype housing project not only incorporate community space with commercial and residential units, but also creating an architectural language that could engage the existing users with new users as a whole community of Balat.

In order to achieve my goals, creating an architectural recipe for creating interacting neighborhood between old and new residents is the key aspect of my project. Creating a communal medium that can accommodate all aspects of residents’ lifestyles and also let them create new habits and traditions could be the solution for the interaction problems. Among the socio-economic characteristics, average income of household and neighborhood satisfaction, as a variable in the behavior characteristic will have a strong impact of creation of the housing units and the creative ways to interact them. Finally, this housing project aims to create architectural language for housing that could accommodate all the aspects of life for two distinct user profiles without destroying the cultural and social structure; nevertheless creating event spaces that improve the social life of the neighborhood in Balat.

Project Description
**Balat, Istanbul**

**Byzantine city walls**

Today, Fener and Balat districts look like dilapidated areas and face the danger of total ruin. Some buildings are already in ruins and about 20% of the construction is in poor condition. Out of the 1401 lots on the selected perimeter, there are 103 unoccupied lots (7%), 68 vacant buildings (5.4%) and 124 partially empty ones (8.7%). One of the reasons for this impoverishment is the move of naval industry from the Golden Horn to Tuzla. After that, the social and economic condition of the inhabitants worsened as well as the situation of the buildings. Due to low rents, Fener and Balat districts continue to hold a key position in the adaptation to the urban environment of a population that is poor and lacking economic resources to carry out the necessary repair and maintenance of the architectural structure.

**Balat**

Surrounded by Byzantine city walls from the 5th century AD to the west, the Golden Horn to the north, Fener and Balat districts are located on the historical peninsula of Istanbul. Once a focal point of the social and cultural lives of Greeks, Armenians and Jews, the Fener and Balat districts are presently inhabited by a mostly Muslim population that immigrated from other cities and rural areas.
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**History**

Balat became the residence of upper-class families and bourgeoisie with its heavy stone buildings and richly ornamented house facades.

The new internal migrant families with lower income started to take over the place. There was a sharp fall in socio-economic status of the quarter. Small family houses were divided into smaller units, where more than one family began to live with lower rents in inadequate conditions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>17th</th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1997</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16th</td>
<td>20th</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An important segment of Greeks who lived in Balat who were well-educated and fluent in several languages, held high government positions interpreting or diplomat; hold an important role in Istanbul’s socio-economic frame by dealing with money-changing, trading, navigation and commission brokerage.

New urban plan changed the socio-economic structure of the district. The shoreline replaced by the industrial building and factories. As the high-income group left the neighborhood, the resident type started to change.

The already poor social and economic conditions worsened when trade activity was curbed by the relocation of the industry in the Golden Horn.

The program worked under four titles: Restoration of 200 houses, social rehabilitation, renovation of historical Balat market and establishment of a waste management strategy.
My interest in this project to create hybrid living environment that can define the quality and quality of integration between the multiple cultural social profiles and spaces that come together in this neighborhood. I search the potential spaces that can redefine the quality and the quantity of integration between multiple cultural social profiles and spaces that come together because of the distinct characteristic of Balat.
Hybrid Living Space in the Context of Balat, Istanbul

Stakeholders

**Leadership**
- Government
- Tax Payers
- Mayer
- Architect
- Social Housing Services Corporation

**Direct Stakeholders**
- Land owners
- Occupants
- Visitors
- Neighborhood
- Investors
- Context

**Indirect Stakeholders**
- Operations
- Maintenance
- Children
- Future Users
- Primary City
- Finance
- Master Plan

**General Stakeholders**
- Energy Use
- Environment
- Community
- Economy
- Planning

Organizational Parameters

Society
Till 1930, Balat kept its higher residential profile; urban plan
made for the district in 1930 by planner H. Port, turned the
coastline into industrial zone by replacing the residence with
chandleries and factories which changed the socio-economic struc-
ture of the Balat district completely. This change let the replace-
ment of higher income minority groups by the lower status rural
in-immigrants.

Existing Historical Context

An important segment of Greeks who lived in Balat
Who were well-educated and fluent in several languages; held high gov-
ernment positions interpreters or diplomats held an important role in
Istanbul’s socio-economic frame by dealing with money changing, trading,
navigation and commission brokerage.

* IMAGINE A CONTEXT THAT HAS THE ABILITY TO ACCOMMODATE DIFFERENT LIVING PATTERNS FOR OVER 400 YEARS.
* BALAT DISTRICT ARE THE MOST PROMINENT HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL SITE IN ISTANBUL.
* MY INTEREST IN THIS PROJECT IS TO QUESTION THESE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL USES IN TERMS OF QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF INTEGRATION BETWEEN PEOPLE AND NEIGHBORHOOD. AND FIND A PATTERN THAT COULD REFLECT THE FUTURE OF BALAT.
**CUMBA** can be defined as a literary an extension of home that directly related to public life. It could be defined as the public space in a extreme private environment. It was the space of social integration in the home.

An important segment of Greeks who lived in Balat who were well-educated and fluent in several languages, held high government positions interpreters or diplomats held an important role in Istanbul’s socio-economic frame by dealing with money changings, trading, navigation and commission brokage.

The Turkish house in an urban setting was a reflection of the requirements of family life. The women were excluded from public life and their existence was confined within the walls of a single house. The various domestic chores performed jointly by the women of the extended family required the organization of the house around open interior spaces, enclosed and hidden from the outside world. The front of the houses facing the street were blank or had very few windows. An upstairs room with view of the street had windows concealed by wooden lattice-work screens so that women could observe the activities on the street without being seen.
• **CUMBA** can be defined as a literary an extension of home that directly related to public life. It could be defined as the public space in a extreme private environment. It was the space of social integration in the home.

• The only social access connection with the rest of the neighborhood.

• **CUMBA** is the one individual subject that bounds the home in the traditional Turkish architecture.

**CUMBA** is the expression of public space in a extreme public environment.
Single-family houses were divided into smaller units, where more than one family began to live with lower rents under inadequate conditions. This created a segregation cumba which was the individual subject that bounded the home. This transaction resulted in extreme public use of the street. Street became the place for the recognition and expression of public interaction. This single social adaptation of the street made it possible to introduce new ways of using the public space and the social integration within them.

Till 1930, Balat kept its higher residential profile urban plan made for the district in 1930 by planner H. Posti, turned the coastline into industrial zone by replacing the residences with chanduries and factories which changed the socio-economic structure of the Balat district completely. This change let the replacement of higher income minority groups by the lower status rural immigrants. The social and economic conditions worsened. As a result, single-family houses were divided into smaller units, where more than one family began to live with lower rents under inadequate conditions.
The User Profiles: The use of House, Cumba and Street

Existing users: Potential users

Diagram of the space use for different profiles in terms of activity and occupancy.

Weekdays

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Use of Space</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Occupancy [%]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00-10:00</td>
<td>Morning chores</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00-12:00</td>
<td>Working</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00-13:00</td>
<td>Midday breaks</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:00-16:00</td>
<td>Afternoon chores</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:00-20:00</td>
<td>Evening chores</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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Weekends

<table>
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1997

POPLAR: Slum without users as a WHOSE MaNAGE site.

Reutilization of strategies and tactics with social and cultural uses in order to orient the positioning of Cumba in the neighborhood.
In order to active my goal, I started to search the way to reintroduce cumba again to home. Principle process was to superposition cumba with public space and private space in order to create a space that can integrate a greater diversity of social profiles and age groups and can be used different time of the day. It can also be stated as repositioning cumba in extreme private and public space.
Street Becomes a extension of Cumba... The sense community from the street fills the space of Cumba.

Private activities in Extreme public ground

Transaction of the socio economic structure of the neighborhood resulted as extreme public use of the street... Street became the place for the recognition and expression of public interaction. This single social adaptation of the street made it possible to introduce new ways of using the public space and the social integration within them.
*In order to create these hybrid spaces, my strategy was to introduce extreme public use of street program to the home.
*Private activities in extreme public ground
*And create a sequence between private and public uses,
*Hybrid places are literally a extension of home that can introduce new ways of using space with using the existing layers of Balat.
*The whole project is the experimentation of these hybrid places within the context of their different site.
* The second and the narrow site had the potential to integrate street with existing backyard park with 16 used by neighborhood.

* The first and biggest site had the potential to address a courtyard that can suck the street life in. The technique was to juxtapositioning Street with private life and experiment with the superposition of these spaces.

* The last and the smallest site is located adjacent to the busiest dense main street in the neighborhood where commercial use is higher than the rest of the sites.
* Also within these overlapping spaces try to create a vertical sequence between extreme public and private.
* Try to search the potential of spaces where they integrate different levels of public and private use.
As we can see in the plans ground floor is the juxtaposition of street and community space within the residential unit. Also within these overlapping spaces try to create a vertical sequence between extreme public and private.
* Try to search the potential of spaces where they integrate different levels of public and private use.
* I try to play the existing structure of the street vertically with interference with extreme private space, home.
* The second and the narrow site had the potential to integrate street with existing backyard park with is used by neighborhood.
*My first strategy was to cut a public access through the site in to the park. Because of the narrowness of the site, the transition between private to public worked like fragmentation of different levels of shared use. This fragmentation allowed possibility of spaces that can share different activities of semi-private and semi-public use within a public volume.*
*This created a overlapping of public and private activities with a visual connection to the street.

*Integration of multiple social profiles within the different hierarchy of public and private use.

*The last and the smallest site is located adjacent to the busiest dense main street in the neighborhood where commercial use is higher than the rest of the sites.
The strategy was to connect the neighborhood with the main street with a public use cut through the site.
Because this site is so compact, I focused on more the representation of shared space between private units. While experimenting with the shared space, also look at the possibilities of where and how these shared spaces interact with each other.
The ground floor served as a connector between commercial space and the communal space of the neighborhood. Furthermore, the public cut through the site could link the neighborhood with the main street within the context of retail and community spaces.
Overall within three different sites, I search the potential spaces that can redefine the quality and the quantity of integration between multiple cultural social profiles and spaces that come together because of the distinct characteristic of Balat.
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Bibliography


