

RE-FUNCTIONING THE ITALIAN EMBASSY BUILDING IN MACKA

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ABSTRACT

Giving the use of various state institutions under the new needs of old buildings is a common approach to present-day Turkey from the Ottoman Empire. Allocations are generally made across the country in line with the need for building and use.

Istanbul is a place where allocations are more common, probably due to building stock and usage density. Particularly most of the large programmed buildings have been allocated and re-functionalized.

The Italian Embassy is one of these buildings. The building was designed as the Italian embassy, but construction was not completed and could not be used for this function. The purpose of this paper is to examine the allocation process of the structure, to determine the applications and the authenticity of the structure. For this purpose, researches have been carried out with the permission of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the archives of Regional Council for the Conservation of Cultural Property Istanbul II. In addition, document research was carried out at the T.C. Presidential Republic Archive.

In 1938, as stated in the article 2/9363 of the T.C. Directorate of Judicial Decisions, while the building was under construction the Republic of Turkey was agreed with the Italian Government and 150.000 TL was purchased in two installments and the building was transferred to the Real Estate Agency. President Kemal Atatürk's signature is in the official letter (30-18-1-2 / 84-71-2, The Presidency State Archives of the Republic of Turkey).

In a document in 1942, it was reported that the building was sold to Milli Reasurans by the Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Head of Istanbul Provincial Administration Committee (490-1-0-0 / 1721-995-2, The Presidency State Archives of the Republic of Turkey). In this process, the announcement of the sale of the structure appeared in the newspapers with the title "Land for Sale in Macka" (Tasviri Efkâr Newspaper, September 22, 1942).

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During this process, on September 25, 1942, Istanbul Governor and Mayor Dr. Lütfü Kırdar asked the Ministry of Finance to transfer the building to a conservatory or a city club (30-10-00-00 / 81-535-8, The Presidency State Archives of the Republic of Turkey).

After all the allocation processes, today, the structure is re-functioned for educational usage as Maçka Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School.

Within the scope of this research, it is aimed to determine the allocation phases of the building, the transformations of it after the re-functionalization processes and to evaluate these determinations in terms of conservation theories.

Key words: Conservation, Educational Buildings, Allocation, 19th Century Buildings, Italian Embassy Office.

1. INTRODUCTION

A process of modernization and renewal was initiated with the establishment of the Republic in 1923. The newly established state began to form a new organization and administrative operation. These modernization movements have also been seen in the architectural and cultural environment. One of the consequences of this change is the need for a series of large-scale structures in the urban area within the framework of new needs.

In cases where the state's new building program was limited by budgetary constraints and new buildings could not be built, the reuse of the buildings that were built in the previous periods came into question. The refunctionalization of these buildings, which were not seen as architectural heritage in the early years of the Republic, at that time was carried out in order to prevent the construction of new buildings and to meet the needs beyond the purpose of preserving the old ones.

Maçka Technical and Industrial Vocational High School, which was originally planned as the Italian Embassy in Vişnezade neighborhood of Beşiktaş district of Istanbul, is one of these structures that has been reused with the new function. The building is located on block number 703 and plot number 4. The building has been officially registered with the decision of the Board dated 16.04.1997 and numbered 8587, and it is within the urban protected area with the decision dated 23.01.2009 and numbered 2338 (The decision of the İstanbul Cultural and Natural Assets Conservation Regional Board No. II of Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Republic of Turkey dated 13.02.2009 and numbered 2397).

The construction of the building planned as the Italian Embassy in order to replace the Venetian Palace, which came under the sovereignty of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, was not completed due to the fact that the empire was

destroyed during World War I and the reign of the Venetian Palace was recaptured by the Italians. At the end of the 1940s, the structure was used as a tobacco warehouse under the General Directorate of Monopolies (Tekel Genel Müdürlüğü). The interior of the building was built in the early 1950s with the function of conservatoire. As a result of the implementations made in 1970, two [sc1]were added to [sc2] of the building (The document of the İstanbul Cultural and Natural Assets Conservation Regional Board No. II of Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Republic of Turkey numbered 489, BoyutPedia, Boyut Publishing Group).

In 2019, the building's surveying, restitution and restoration projects were prepared.¹ Implementation studies have not started yet.

2. METHODOLOGY

Italian Embassy (Figure 1): Although it seems to be a historical building that has preserved its originality and oldness value considering the facade characteristics, its interior features create contrasts with these qualities. A systematic study on why and how this contradictory situation arises was aimed to be conducted, structure was examined, photographed and sketched at the site by obtaining permissions from İstanbul Provincial Directorate of National Education, İstanbul Governor's Office and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Republic of Turkey; research has been carried out at the İstanbul Cultural and Natural Assets Conservation Regional Board No. II. As a result of these researches, the ground floor plan, 1st floor plan, 1 section and the western facade sketch of the structure was prepared as the present state and restitution state.²

¹ The archives of the İstanbul Cultural and Natural Assets Conservation Regional Board No. II of Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Republic of Turkey, Period Analysis of Maçka Akif Tuncel Technical and Industrial Vocational High School's Survey, Restitution, Restoration, Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Landscape Projects Preparation, Project Owner Anfora Architecture Restoration Design Consultancy and Construction LC.

² While the survey and restitution sketches are being prepared, the studies carried out in the building in 2017 and the archives of the İstanbul Cultural and Natural Assets Conservation Regional Board No. II of Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Republic of Turkey, Period Analysis of Maçka Akif Tuncel Technical and Industrial Vocational High School's Survey, Restitution, Restoration, Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Landscape Projects Preparation, Project Owner Anfora Architecture Restoration Design Consultancy and Construction LC's Projects and restitution decisions were taken into consideration.



Figure 1: Western Facade, Photograph by author, September 2017.

3. ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES

The architect of the building is Guilio Mongeri and the construction technique is masonry. The 6-storey building is accessed from Maçka Street. The entrance area of the structure, which has a prismatic mass structure, is in the west direction. The entrance is connected to the corridor with stairs in the east-west direction. These stairs lead to the basement and upper floors. Although the plan scheme in the basement is largely coherent with the ground floor, the corridor scheme extending in the east-west direction turns into rooms on this floor.

The stairs at the western end of the other larger corridor extending parallel to this corridor provide access to the upper floors. The offices are mainly located in the spaces located on the ground floor. The mezzanine is reached through a spiral staircase that is hidden in the space, which is located in the north-west direction (Sketch 1).

The first floor plan scheme shows different features from the ground floor. The wide corridor on the ground floor extending east-west and the corridor connected to the entrance to the south of it turned into rooms on this floor (Figure 2). The space located in the projection of the entrance space and the adjacent spaces constitute the classes. The mezzanine on the 1st floor is not original. This floor has rooms and classrooms. The 2nd floor plan scheme is largely original. Large spaces were divided to create classrooms (Sketch 2).

In the 3rd floor plan scheme, there are spaces where partition walls had been removed in order to obtain large spaces.

The 4th floor plan scheme, in its original form, consisted of two spaces at the east and west ends and the corridor, which connected these spaces. Today, the roof system between these two spaces had been removed and spaces had been added to this space and the corridor (Sketch 3). Although the addition of mezzanines and attic floor to the structure and some areas due to the change of function caused differentiation in section and facade characteristics, the preservation of the general features caused this variation to remain low. The implementations of the load-bearing system of the later period added to the construction was reflected in the section of the structure.

The facades were completed during the construction of the building and the interior was built in later periods. For this reason, the facade features are original except for the spaces added to the attic.

During the completion of the unfinished construction in the 1950s, reinforced concrete construction was added to the structure, which has originally masonry construction system. The stairs were constructed of reinforced concrete and it is possible to see the floorings made of reinforced concrete.

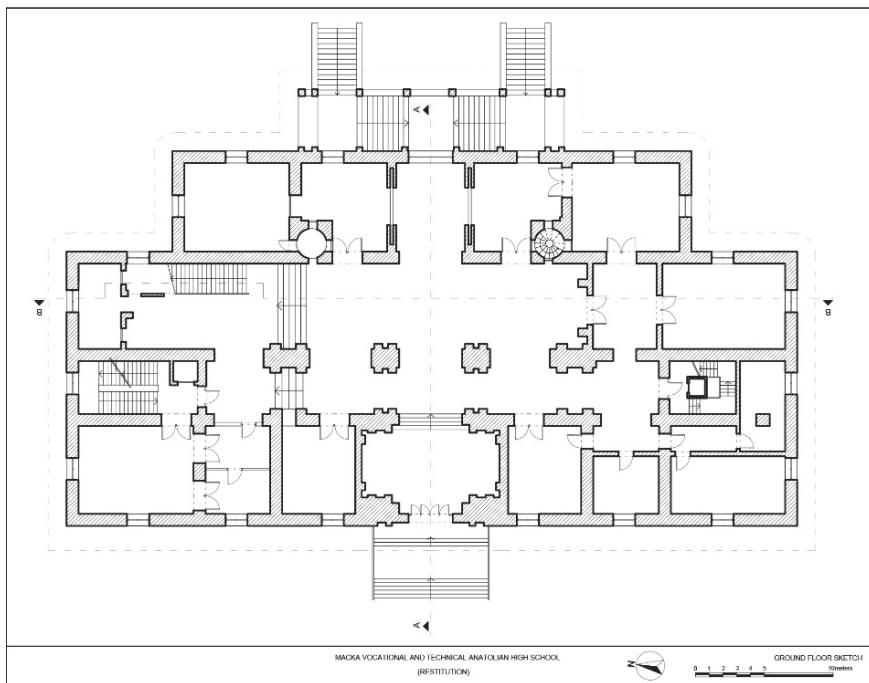
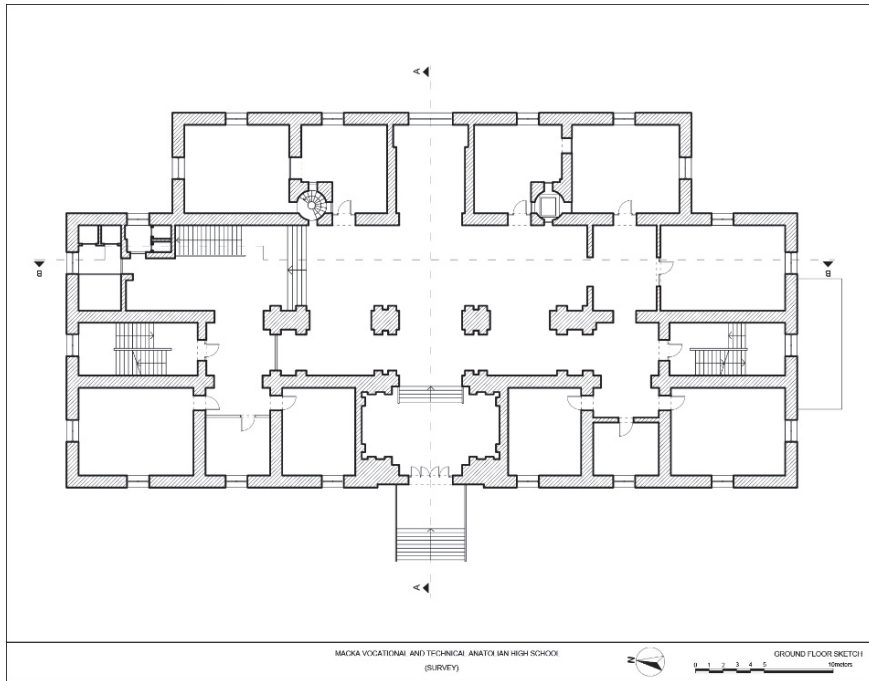
Cut stone material was used on the facades (Figure 3). The façade, which was planned symmetrically with respect to the entrance axle, was designed to be more spectacular than the other facades (Sketch 4).



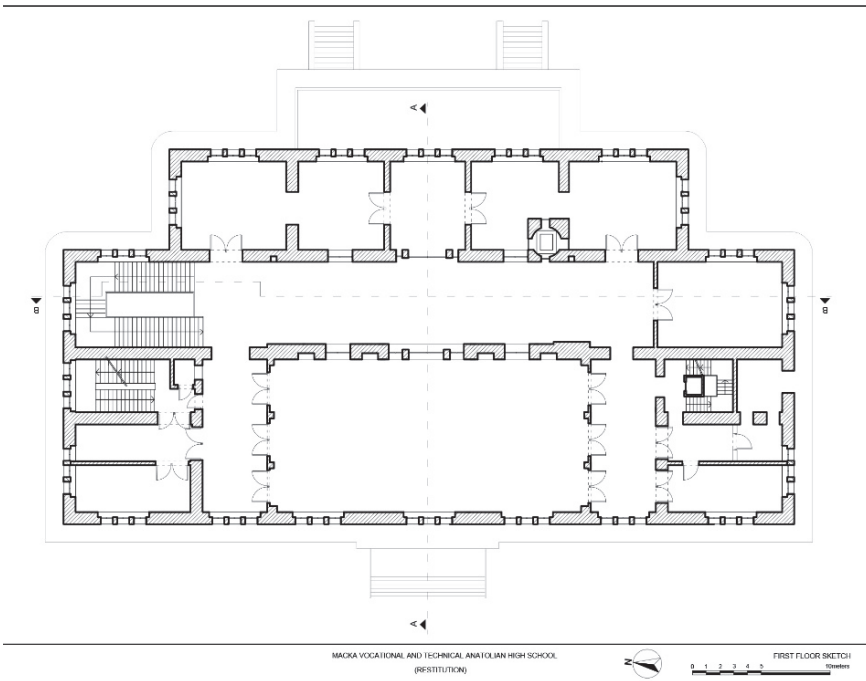
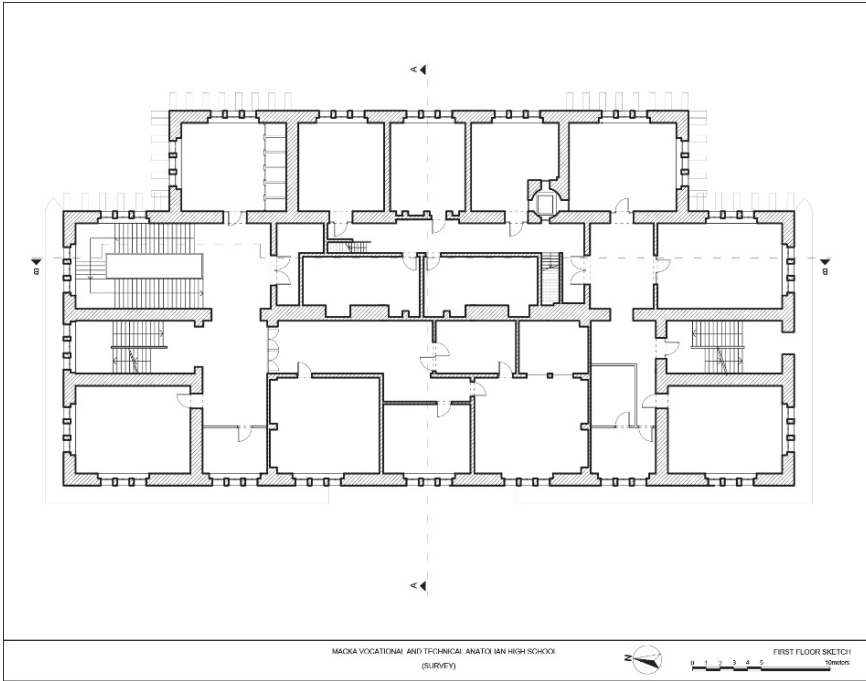
Figure 2: Interior-Ground Floor, Photograph by author, September 2017.



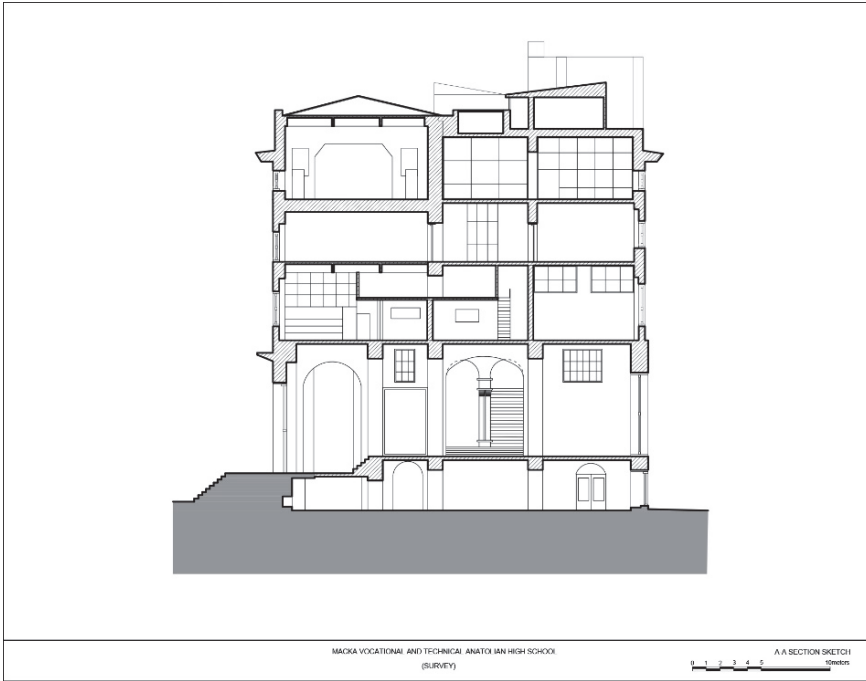
Figure 3: Eastern Façade, Photograph by author, September 2017.



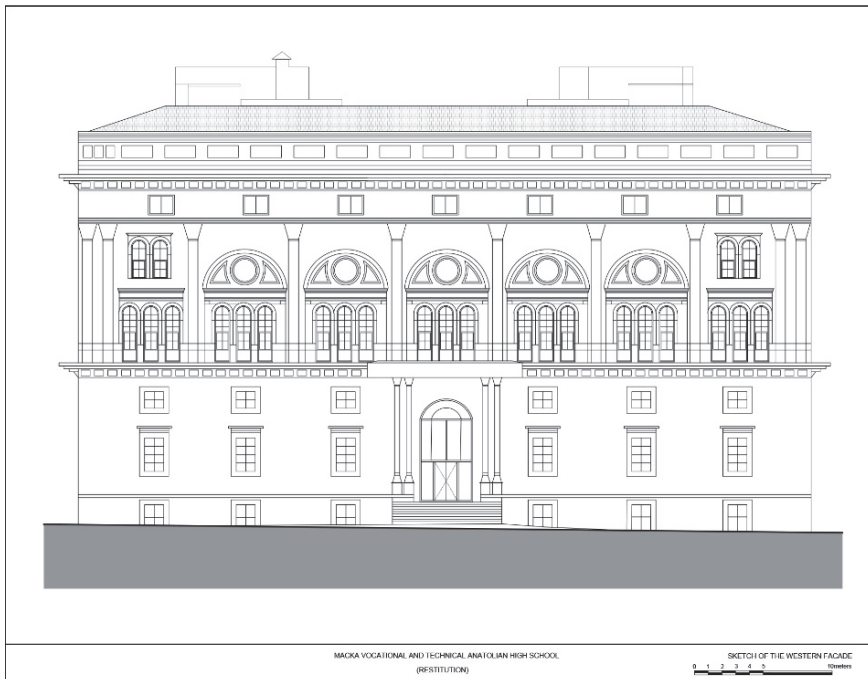
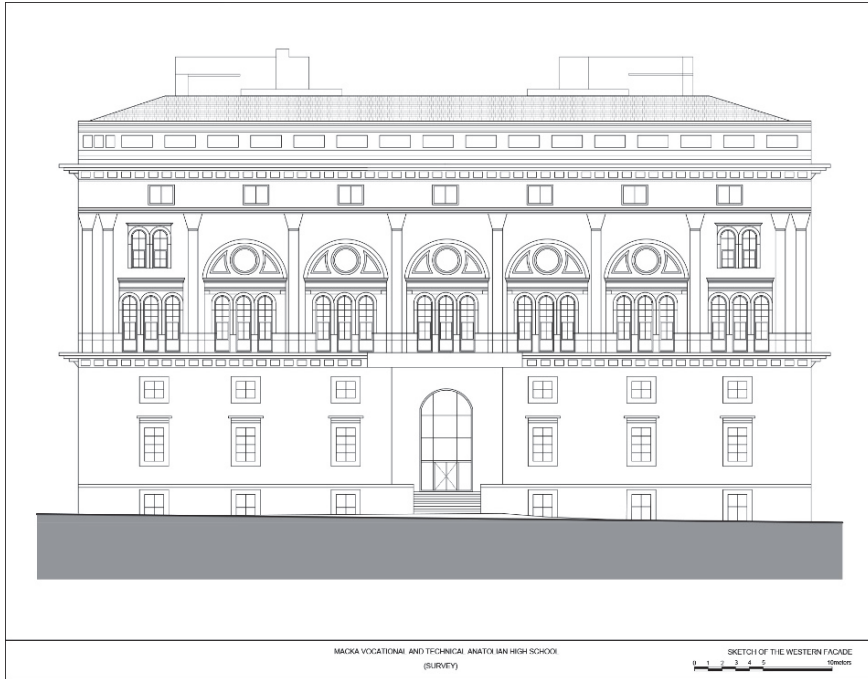
Sketch 1: Ground floor sketch; survey-restitution.



Sketch 2: First floor sketch; survey-restitution.



Sketch 3: A-A section sketch; survey-restitution.



Sketch 4: Sketch of the western facade; survey-restitution.

4. PROCESS OF ALLOCATION AND REFUNCTIONING OF THE BUILDING

The period between the beginning of the construction of the building as an Italian Embassy and its use as Maçka Technical and Industrial Vocational High School covers a wide range of time period.

Allocation process associated with the structure began with plot allocated in 1929 on the ground that there was no way to transport the materials needed to sustain the construction that was left unfinished during the World War I (30-18-1-2 / 5-46-9, The Presidency State Archives of the Republic of Turkey).

The structure, which started to be constructed in 1900s and remained incomplete until 1950s, was refunctionalized in line with the needs of different institutions.

On 27 February 1947, the draft law titled "The draft law on the sale of the Treasury building on the Tramway street in Maçka neighborhood of İstanbul and the reports from committees on Internal Affairs, Finance and Budget" was submitted to the Grand National Assembly together with the justifications. In the justification, it was stated "...While the real estate was about to be sold by the Bank, it was allocated to the said Ministry to be used in the exhibitions of the fine arts and receptions that will be hold by domestic and guest corporations and to be widely benefited by the İstanbul Conservatory upon the proposal of the Ministry of National Education.

Subsequently, it was reported from the said Ministry that it is necessary to make an expense of 1.5 million liras to make the building suitable for use in these matters and that it is not possible to spend this money regarding the emergency situation, and it is stated that the transfer of the building to the Municipality would be favorable, in order to allow the İstanbul Conservatory to benefit from it... Considering that the said building will respond to a need of the İstanbul Municipality, to be a benefit to the said municipality, it was decided that the building will be sold at a price much lower than its current value for 300 thousand liras". The bill was accepted on April 28, 1947 and its transfer to İstanbul Municipality for 300 thousand liras was approved (Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi, Tutanaklar, 10.01.2020).

In this context, the former Italian Embassy building in Maçka, intended to be used as a conservatory building by the İstanbul Municipality, was transferred to the Turkish Monopoly Administration (Tekel İdaresi) in 1948 and intended to be used as a tobacco warehouse. In the newspaper report on this subject, it was stated that the building had not been completed since 1910 and that the Italians brought craftsmen and workers from Italy for the construction of the building. In this 1948 report, it was mentioned that the Italian Government acquired an embassy building in Ankara since the capital was Ankara and handed over the unfinished embassy structure in Maçka to the Ministry of Finance. It was

indicated that the building was allocated to the Ministry of National Education to be converted into a conservatory. It was also stated that the structure was used as a tobacco store at that time (Figure 4, "1948 yılında İtalyan sefareti binası tütün deposu olacak!", emlakkulisi).



Figure 4: Newspaper Article, "1948 yılında İtalyan sefareti binası tütün deposu olacak!", emlakkulisi.

Lütfi Kırdar, who served as the Governor and Mayor of İstanbul, started to implement the master plan prepared by Henri Prost between 1936-1937. Within the scope of these studies, the building was given to İstanbul Municipality by the Turkish Grand National Assembly free of charge for the construction of the Municipal Conservatory. After this free purchase, 300 thousand liras, allocated by the municipality from the budget for the purchase, was used to complete the unfinished construction of the structure (Selcuk, Ugur., E. 2009, p.157).

Following the allocation of the building to the İstanbul Municipality, the incomplete construction of the building was completed by the architect Mahmut Bilen in the early 1950s (Can, 1994, p. 301).

Repair was completed in 1958-1959 and Maçka Industrial Vocational High School was moved to this building (file no 41, issue 3463, Letter from the Regional Directorate No. I of the General Directorate of Construction Affairs of the Ministry of Public Works and Settlement, titled as İstanbul Maçka Industrial Vocational High School from the archives of the İstanbul Cultural and Natural Assets Conservation Regional Board No. II of Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Republic of Turkey).

In an article dated 13.01.1981 written by the Department of Laws and Decisions of the Prime Ministry to the National Security Council, the establishment of Industrial Technical Education Institutions that are needed to ensure the social, cultural and economic development of our country and increasing the capacities of those that are active were emphasized. In this context, it was stated that 855 students could not register to Maçka Industrial Vocational High School due to the lack of capacity in the same year. In this context, it was emphasized that additional workshops should be built and the current usage area should be expanded. However, since the ownership of the building belongs to the İstanbul Municipality, it was not possible to do so and the transfer of the structure to the Treasury was requested (The Correspondence of the Department of Laws and Decisions of the Prime Ministry numbered 101-266/08002 from the archives of the İstanbul Cultural and Natural Assets Conservation Regional Board No. II of Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Republic of Turkey). According to the Ministry of Treasury article dated 27.08.1981 following this article, the structure was allocated to the Ministry of National Education in accordance with Article 23 of Law no. 1050 (The Letter of Ministry of Treasury numbered 4/1 Branch Directorate 3100-613-8281 from the archives of the İstanbul Cultural and Natural Assets Conservation Regional Board No. II of Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Republic of Turkey).

5. CONCLUSION

Allocations to the Ministry of National Education are frequently seen in the period starting with the establishment of the Republic in 1923 and until the 1980s. It is seen that the existing building stock had been evaluated in order to fulfill the large buildings needs for meeting functions such as education, museum and health structure.

The building, which was planned as an Italian Embassy, remained unused and empty from the early 1900s to the 1950s except for its use as a tobacco warehouse. The construction of the interiors had not been completed after refunctionalization for educational purposes. As a result of the implementations within the scope of refunctionalization, the interior of the structure, whose facades were conserved, were planned and built according to the educational function.

Plan schemes were designed to create spaces such as classrooms, workshops, and reinforced concrete stairs, floorings and columns that were not found in the original construction technique of the building were constructed. Mezzanines were added within the scope of the new function.

The interior features of the building contain modern approaches of the period while the exterior architecture of the building has 19th century features.

The implementations made within the scope of refunctionalization were not about the conservation of the originality of the structure but about ensuring its use. It is understood that the new cultural and architectural identity attributed to the structure and the stylistic features are important period attachments that must be conserved and have the protection value. For this reason, it is thought that this structure is a cultural asset that must be protected with all its attachments. It is thought that the professional people who converted this structure from the unfinished Embassy to the educational structure approached the building in line with the architectural approaches of the period.

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