ISPEC
Uluslararası Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Dergisi
International Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities

Research Article | e-ISSN: 2717-7262 | https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.16932239

The Post-Earthquake Protection Status of Traditional Antakya Mansions in the Redevelopment Process

Aysel Özge KOCABAŞ [*1], Fatma Seda ÇARDAK [2]

[1] Adana Alparslan Türkeş Science and Technology University, Faculty of Architecture and Design, Department of Architecture, Adana
[2] Adana Alparslan Türkeş Science and Technology University, Faculty of Architecture and Design, Department of Architecture, Adana
Corresponding Author Email: 22800901007@ogr.atu.edu.tr

Article Info

Received: 30.07.2025
Accepted: 23.08.2025

Keywords
Mansions,
Accommodation Structure,
New- Function,
Antakya,
Preservation,
Earthquake,

Abstract: Buildings constructed based on experience rather than the intervention of expert architects are referred to as traditional architecture. These buildings, which have lost their function over time, are being restored to society through repurposing. Antakya has a rich traditional architectural heritage due to its continuous settlement since 300 BC and its role as a host to many civilisations. One of the most important elements of this heritage is the Traditional Antakya Mansions. However, these mansions have suffered significant structural damage throughout history due to their location in an earthquake zone. In recent years, efforts have been made to preserve these mansions by repurposing them. This study examines two traditional mansions located in the historic city centre of Antakya district, Hatay province, which were affected by the 2023 Kahramanmaras-centred earthquakes. The history, architectural features, repurposing processes, and post-earthquake damage conditions of the mansions were evaluated. The information obtained has been compiled in the conclusion section. The study discusses the fundamental challenges in preserving traditional residential structures and the factors that threaten their long-term sustainability, particularly in the face of natural disasters such as earthquakes. Additionally, it aims to contribute to the literature on the preservation and sustainability of traditional Antakya mansions.

1. Introduction

Over the centuries, architectural forms have continuously evolved in response to changing functional demands, technological innovations, and aesthetic trends. This dynamic process not only produces new structures but also shapes approaches to preserving existing ones. In a rapidly changing world, the preservation and sustainability of architectural heritage are essential for maintaining cultural and social values. Architectural heritage encompasses structures and ensembles that have endured to the present with their distinctive characteristics, are regarded as the shared heritage of humanity, and must be transmitted to future generations through the adoption of integrated conservation principles (ICOMOS, 2013). Traditional architecture constitutes a significant component of this heritage. It refers to buildings constructed through accumulated experience and local expertise, typically without the involvement of professional architects. These structures—often vernacular dwellings—are built by homeowners or local craftspeople using traditional methods to address specific needs. As such, they reflect the cultural identity, lifestyle, economic practices, and values of the communities in which they are situated. In the case of rural Anatolian architecture, its formation is shaped by a range of

individual, social, cultural, and environmental factors, including climate, topography, lifestyle, family size, socioeconomic structure, individual living density, and notions of self (Muskara, 2017).

According to the Traditional Architectural Heritage Charter adopted by ICOMOS in October 1999, traditional architecture occupies a distinct and valued place in the cultural perception of all societies. It reflects the defining characteristics of a community and responds to the needs of contemporary life. As a product shaped by time and human labour, traditional architecture embodies a collective building tradition rooted in the community. It represents a regional or local identity that is in harmony with the environment, and it demonstrates coherence in style, form, and appearance. It is characterised by adherence to traditional building types, the use of vernacular design and craftsmanship passed down anonymously through generations, the capacity to respond effectively to functional, social, and environmental demands, and the skilled application of traditional construction techniques and artisanal knowledge.

The preservation of traditional architecture and its transmission to future generations can only be achieved through the active engagement of society, continuous maintenance, and sustained use. Neglecting to preserve these harmonious relationships—fundamental to the human experience on Earth—would constitute a failure to honour our shared cultural heritage.

The preservation of traditional structures requires a multidisciplinary approach that respects cultural identity, values, and the broader cultural landscape. Conservation efforts should encompass not only physical elements—such as location, form, materials, and construction systems—but also intangible aspects, including traditions, patterns of use, and community perceptions. Priority must be given to research and documentation, ensuring the permanence of traditional crafts, and allowing only compatible modifications when contemporary use necessitates. Improvements to living standards should maintain the integrity, character, and historical continuity of the structures, while also acknowledging alterations accumulated over time. Raising awareness and conducting educational activities within the local community are essential for the transmission of these heritage values to future generations (ICOMOS, 1999).

Over time, changing lifestyles lead to the loss of original functions in historic buildings. The process of adapting these buildings to serve purposes other than those for which they were initially designed is referred to as re-functionalisation. Many buildings that continue to serve roles such as housing or hospitality today often fail to meet contemporary comfort standards. As they are not updated to align with modern expectations, they become functionally obsolete and fall below acceptable thresholds. Re-purposing is a strategy employed to prevent such buildings from being demolished (Ahunbay, 2011). In essence, it represents the continuation of architectural heritage that is otherwise unused and at risk of destruction. Rehabilitation enables the protection of a building from potential hazards and extends its lifespan by transforming it into a functional and dynamic part of daily life. The new function assigned to the building may be the same as, or different from, its original use. By integrating historical values into contemporary life, the structure is not only rescued from abandonment but also reactivated as a meaningful and usable space once again (Küçükali, 2022). A preserved structure should not merely stand as a static object; rather, it should be revitalised through the assignment of new functions that breathe life into it (Gürlevik, 2022).

When repurposing traditional buildings, a thorough assessment of the site and the structure's historical, functional, and architectural characteristics is essential. This includes researching both existing and proposed uses, developing a detailed program based on identified needs, and compiling documentation such as site plans, current condition reports, and

architectural drawings (Altınoluk, 1996). Interventions must respect the building's original function, structural integrity, decorative elements, and floor plan. Any additions should be compatible with the historic fabric, reversible, and must avoid damage to facades. All modifications require approval from the relevant authorities to ensure the preservation of the building's heritage values (Altınoluk, 1996).

Traditional Antakya Mansions have recently become increasingly popular in the region, attracting significant attention from both owners and investors. It has been observed that many of these residences have been converted into tourism-related facilities through adaptive reuse. In this process, interventions are made to accommodate contemporary comfort standards required by the new functions, including spatial and infrastructural modifications. However, an excessive focus on the requirements of new uses has reportedly led to considerable losses in the original authenticity of these mansions. Adaptive reuse practices that do not adhere to established principles result in the loss of the buildings' original values and a decrease in their structural resilience. Consequently, Traditional Antakya Mansions that were subjected to interventions lacking compliance with conservation and restoration standards suffered severe damage during the earthquake on February 6, 2023.

Therefore, the original spatial and structural characteristics of traditional residences in Antakya have been thoroughly analyzed, and the challenges encountered in adaptive reuse practices have been identified and critically discussed. This study aims to contribute to the transmission of these traditional houses to future generations without compromising their authenticity, while ensuring their socio-cultural permanence and preservation.

2. Material and Methods

2.1. Material

This study focuses on traditional residential buildings located in the Antakya District of Hatay Province and evaluates the role of repurposing in the preservation of traditional architecture. Specifically, it aims to assess the effectiveness of the processes of protection, restoration, and repurposing of Antakya's traditional architectural heritage prior to the earthquake that struck on 6 February 2023, with its epicentre in Kahramanmaraş. Based on the analyses conducted, the study identifies the damage sustained by traditional buildings after the earthquake, along with the underlying causes. Furthermore, it seeks to illuminate the reasons behind the failure to preserve traditional residential structures by examining their post-earthquake conditions, as well as their structural and functional characteristics following repurposing. The objectives of this study can be summarised as follows:

1. Examination of selected traditional dwellings in Antakya.

2. Examination of the process of converting traditional dwellings into accommodation structures through repurposing.

3. Investigation of the post-earthquake protection status and causes of damage to repurposed traditional dwellings.

2.2. Methods

The study was carried out in six stages. The data obtained at each stage were compiled in the sixth section, the results section, and an evaluation of traditional mansions was conducted.

In the first section of this study, the general framework is outlined by presenting the research purpose, its scope, the process of determining the study area, a summary of the literature, and the methods employed. Next, the history of Antakya, its geographical location, and the region's earthquake history are described. The impact of the February 6 earthquake on

the study area is explained through fieldwork and extensive literature review. Based on the data obtained, structures within the study area were selected.

In the second section, fieldwork and literature review were conducted simultaneously. The location and environmental analyses of the two structures identified in the first section within Historic Antakya were carried out. The construction period, history, original function, and previous uses of the structures were examined.

In the third section, architectural studies on the mansions were conducted. The building authors were contacted, and restoration projects, restoration reports, registration forms, and other written sources related to the buildings were collected. If the restoration project for a building could not be accessed, information about the restoration was sought by examining old photographs and restoration projects. In this section, the architectural features, facade characteristics, floor plan functional analysis, street silhouettes, and construction techniques of the Traditional Mansions were investigated.

In the fourth section, the reuse of traditional residential buildings for accommodation purposes was examined according to the established criteria. To this end, on-site measurements were taken, photographs were captured, and discussions were held with the architects who designed the buildings. Efforts were made to obtain restoration projects for traditional mansions, and relevant documents were acquired from archives.

In the fifth chapter, the damage caused by the earthquake on 6 February 2023 was examined. The cause of the damage was investigated by reviewing damage assessment reports and consulting the architects who designed the buildings.

In the sixth chapter, existing projects and field data for traditional mansions were compiled to create a comprehensive data set, which was then evaluated (Figure 1).

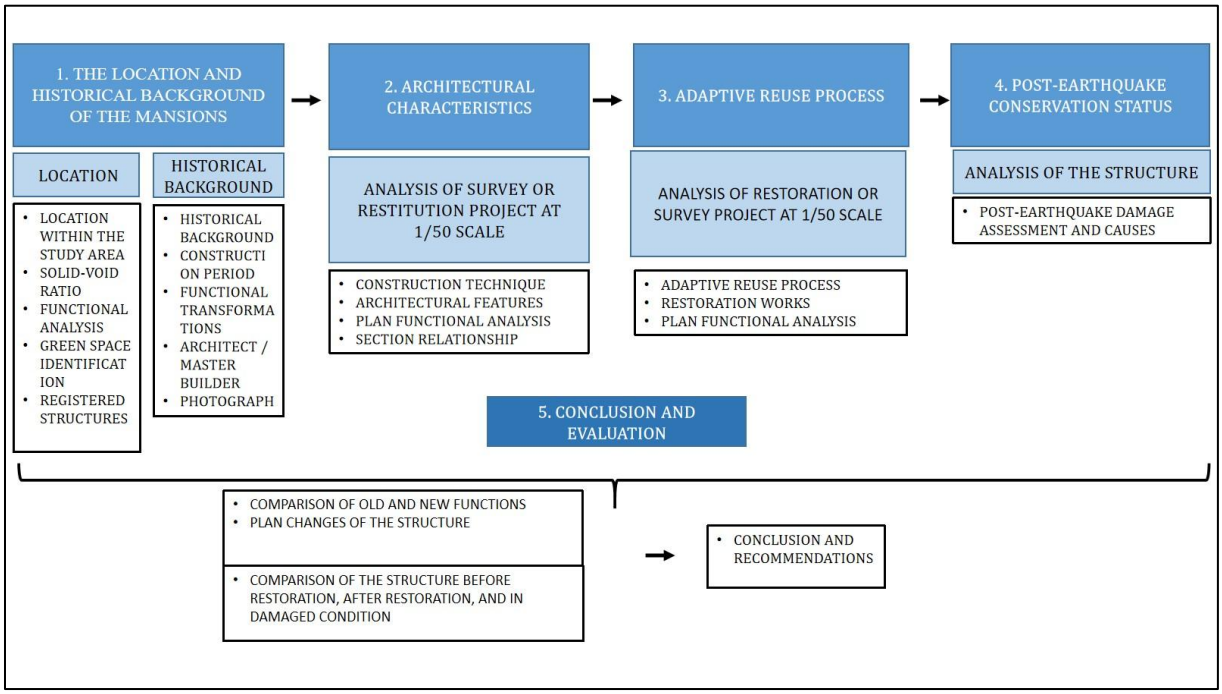


Figure 1. Schematic representation of the investigated structures

2.3. Determination of the study area

The city centre of Antakya consists of 1st- and 3rd-degree urban and archaeological areas. The city centre, which was established between Mountain Habibi Neccar and the Asi River in prehistoric times, began to expand westward towards the Asi River after the French Mandate

period and especially during the Republican period as a result of the increase in Antakya's population and expansion. The Asi River divides the city into old and new Antakya (Figure 2). Both historic Antakya and the newly established Antakya were destroyed in the earthquakes of 6 February 2023. The study area possesses deep historical roots and features traditional residential typologies unique to the region. The earliest examples of these structures are found in settlements dating back to the prehistoric period. Therefore, the area holds a rich cultural memory potential, which justifies its selection as the focus of this study.

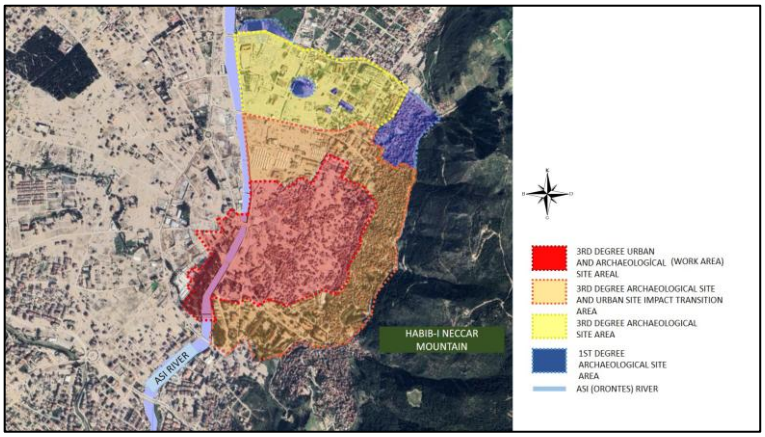


Figure 2. Map showing the study area and site areas (Source: Google Eart, edited by the author 2024)

Our work area is the historic city centre of Antakya, which is defined as a third-degree urban and site area with traditional and registered buildings. The two traditional residences under examination are located in this area (Figure 3).

• Cemile Halefoglu Mansion (5th District, Parcel 1331)

• French Military Mansion (3rd District, Parcel 965)

Figure 3. Location of traditional dwellings within the study area (Source: HMM, edited by the authors, 2024)

Traditional Antakya mansions were selected for this study due to their status as the most significant representatives of the region’s unique architectural heritage. These mansions exhibit

distinctive characteristics typical of Antakya architecture, including specific layouts, cross-sections, façades, and decorative elements. Moreover, the chosen examples demonstrate successful cases of adaptive reuse, highlighting their potential for functional transformation while retaining cultural value. Importantly, many of these mansions suffered severe damage during the February 6, 2023 earthquake, placing them at considerable risk of losing their authenticity. Additionally, their location within a historically significant third-degree urban and archaeological site—an area that was almost entirely devastated by the earthquake—further emphasizes the urgency and importance of their preservation.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Geographical location and climate characteristics of Antakya

Antakya, the central district of Hatay Province in the southernmost part of Anatolia, is located at 36°10' north latitude and 36°06' east longitude (Figure 4) (Demir, 1996).

It was located at the foot of the 440-metre-high Habibi Neccar Mountain, between the Amanos Mountains (Nur Mountains) to the north and Kel Mountain to the south, 22 km away from the Mediterranean coastline (Figure 5). In Antakya, where the Mediterranean climate prevails, temperatures are lower than along the coast. During periods of extreme heat, winds blow at their fastest (Demir, 1996).

Figure 4. Antakya central district and its location in Turkey (Anonim, 2024a).

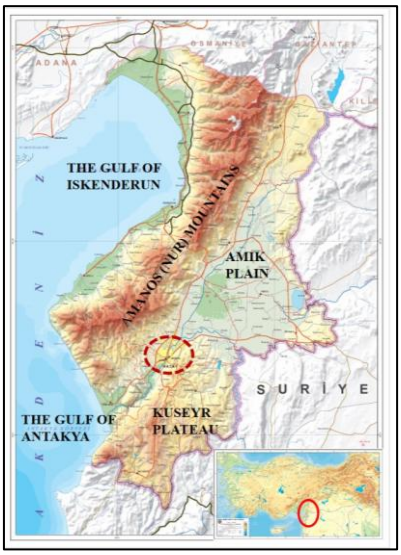


Figure 5. Hatay's location in Turkey and the physical map of Hatay. (Anonim, 2024b)

3.2. Historical and architectural development of Antakya

Antakya has historically served as a centre for numerous civilizations and, due to its strategic location, has long been regarded as a highly valued settlement. Its historical legacy, natural environment, multicultural fabric, and architectural character have profoundly shaped its development (Yüzer, 2021). In the Prehistoric period (17th–12th centuries B.C.), courtyard houses and temples were uncovered in the Amik Plain, particularly at Tel-Açana (Alalah), laying the foundation for the city's traditional courtyard house typology (Demir, 1996).

The city's architectural identity evolved in parallel with its economic and cultural diversity. Antakya's urban fabric bears the imprint of successive civilizations—from the Hellenistic and Roman periods to the Beyliks, Ottoman, French Mandate, and Republican eras—where secular structures and monuments of monotheistic faiths together form a multilayered urban landscape (Sökmen-Kök and Uşma, 2022).

Founded in 300 B.C. by Seleucus I Nicator, one of Alexander the Great's commanders, Antioch became a major political and cultural centre of the Hellenistic East (Kayış, 2023). Like other Greek cities of the time, it was organised according to a grid plan and situated between Mount Silpius (Habib-i Neccar) and the Orontes (Asi) River. Supported by channels, arches, and dams, the river supplied the city with water; however, none of the structures from this period have survived (Figure 6).

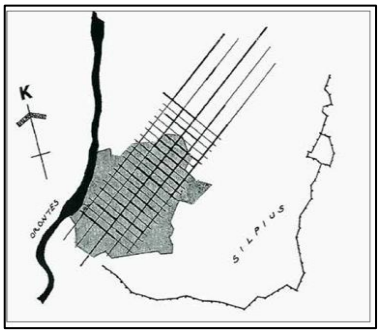


Figure 6. Antakya Seleucid Period initial city plan (Ovalı, 2017)

In 64 B.C., Antioch came under Roman rule and entered a golden age in architecture and urban planning. Recognized as one of the empire's four major cities, it earned the title "Queen of the East" (Ovalı, 2017). The island formed by the Orontes River's bifurcation became a central hub of urban development (Kayış, 2023) (Figure 6).

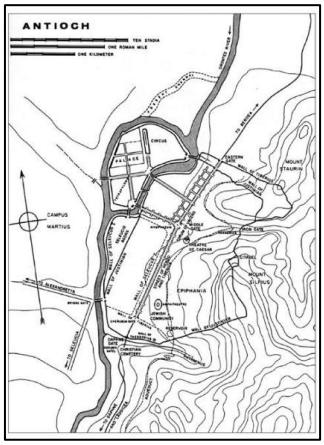


Figure 7. Antioch in the Roman Period (Giorgie and Eger, 2021)

Following the Roman period, Antioch came under Byzantine rule, becoming a key Eastern city. Justinianus reconstructed the city as a military and religious centre, building

churches and fortifications, which were later damaged by the earthquakes of 526 and 528 and Persian invasions (Demir, 1996). In 638, the city fell to Arab rule, initiating the transformation of the urban fabric under Islamic influence, evident in structures such as the Habib-i Neccar Mosque and Cündi Hamam, some of which likely date to the Mamluk period (Demir, 1996). Ottoman rule began in 1516 under Sultan Selim I, lasting four centuries, during which the city's urban layout largely persisted (Figure 8) (Demir, 1996).

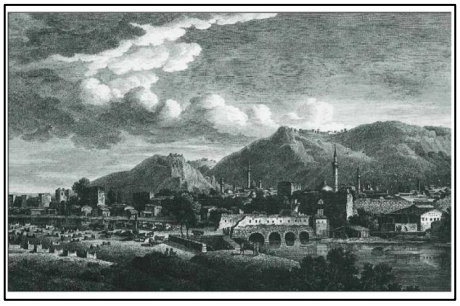


Figure 8. View of Antioch from the road to Alexandretta according to Cassas, 1748 (Ovalı, 2017).

In 1918, British forces briefly occupied the Sanjak of Alexandretta before withdrawing, after which French troops assumed control of Antakya on 7 December 1918. The French administration dissolved the local Arab government, influencing the city's urban and administrative structures. Hatay remained briefly independent before its integration into Turkey under the 23 June 1939 Ankara Agreement (Figure 9) (Demir, 1996).

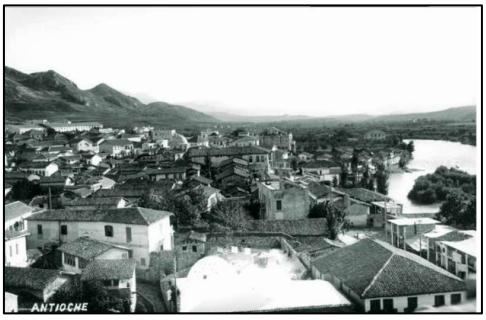


Figure 9. View from Samandağ and Defne in the 1920s. The Asi River is on the right, and the white dome of the Cindi Hamam is in the foreground. Stone streets are visible (Ovalı, 2017).

Hatay joined Turkey in 1939, after which three urban plans were implemented in 1948, 1957, and 1978. The 1957 plan proposed urban expansion across the Asi River and towards Reyhanlı (northeast) and Harbiye (southwest). In 1987, a conservation-oriented urban plan was prepared. By 1985, Decision No. 1558 annexed 25 mosques, 6 prayer rooms, 3 inns, 4 bathhouses, 7 tombs, 23 fountains, 1 covered market, 4 soap factories, 1 church, 1 synagogue, and 24 other structures as monumental works, while 190 houses were registered as examples of civil architecture, with four surveyed in detail. The annex also delineated first- and third-degree archaeological sites on 1/1000 and 1/5000 maps and specified applications within protected areas. Subsequent amendments were made in 1990 (Demir, 1996).

3.3. Antakya eurtquake zone

The Hatay Region, forming the study area, is located at the convergence of the African, Eurasian, and Arabian tectonic plates, between the northern East Anatolian Fault Zone (EAFZ) and the southern Dead Sea Fault Zone (DSFZ), classifying it as a first-degree earthquake hazard zone. Historically, Antakya has experienced repeated severe earthquakes. A major Roman-period earthquake (130–148 BC) destroyed the city (Üsküplü, 2012). During the Byzantine period, earthquakes between 526–528 caused widespread destruction, including the city walls

(Tekin, 2002; Üsküplü, 2012). Under Arab rule, the 713 IX-magnitude earthquake extensively damaged Antioch and Aleppo (Üsküplü, 2012). Seljuk-period earthquakes in 1072 and twenty years later destroyed churches and collapsed seventy towers of the city walls (Üsküplü, 2012). Ottoman-era earthquakes, including the 1872 event, destroyed 1,960 of 3,003 houses and damaged 894 others (Üsküplü, 2012). Recurrent seismic activity hindered Antakya's development, reducing it from a major Roman city to a town under Ottoman rule. French traveler Vital Cuinet noted that earthquakes "were so violent that they changed the riverbed and the topography of the city" (Rifaioğlu, 2012) (Table 1).

Table 1. Summary table of earthquakes (Usküplü, 2012; Tekin, 2002; Kayış, 2023; Anonim, 2025d edited by the authors).

YEAR	INTENSITY/ MAGNITUDE (Mw)	DAMAGE TO BUILDINGS AND THE CITY
ROMAN PERIOD		
130-148 B.C.	IX-XI	The city was razed to the ground.
BYZANTINE	PERIOD	
526	-	All structures, except for those located in mountainous areas, were destroyed.
528	IX	Nearly all structures in the city were destroyed once again. The city walls suffered extensive destruction, leaving the city defenseless. Several churches were razed. Buildings constructed after the 526 earthquake were again demolished. Samandag sustained severe damage.
ARAB PERIOD		
28 February 713	IX	Nearly the entire city was destroyed. Antakya and Aleppo suffered extensive damage (Usküplü, 2012).
SELJUK PERIOD		
17-26 September 1091	X-XI	Seventy towers of the Antakya city walls collapsed. Churches in the city were destroyed.
CRUSADER	PERIOD	
29 June1170	IX- X	Along with the city walls, the Church of St. Peter, the Great Greek Church, and the Rusyana Church in Antakya were completely destroyed.
MAMLUK	PERIOD	
1303	-	The cıty suffered extensive damage.
OTTOMAN	PERIOD	
3 April 1872	-	Of the 3,003 houses in Antakya, 1,960 were completely destroyed, 894 were damaged, and only 149 remained intact.
REPUBLIC	OF TURKEY	PERIOD
6 February 2023	MW 7,8 XI	Of the 587 registered cultural assets, 186 were destroyed, 175 were heavily damaged, 84 were moderately damaged, 67 were slightly damaged, and 72 remained undamaged.
20 February 2023	MW 6,4	Some buildings that had survived the 6 February earthquake or had sustained heavy damage collapsed.

3.4. Historıc Antakya city centre after the earthquake on 6 February 2023

As a result of the earthquakes measuring 7.7 and 7.6 in magnitude, centred in Kahramanmaras on 6 February 2023, and the 6.4 magnitude earthquake centred in Hatay (Samandag) on 20 February 2023, widespread destruction occurred across 11 provinces (Kahramanmaras, Gaziantep, Osmaniye, Adana, Adıyaman, Malatya, Sanlıurfa, Elazıg, Diyarbakır, Kilis, Hatay). The devastation, concentrated particularly in Hatay, caused extensive damage to the city centre of Antakya and created long-term challenges. In Antakya, approximately 85% of the building stock was either destroyed or subsequently demolished due to severe structural damage (UCTEA, 2023). Immediately after the earthquake, reconstruction efforts commenced. However, beyond the physical rebuilding of the city, multiple domains require comprehensive solutions, including the economy, social structure, collective

psychology, ecology, demography, education, agriculture, labour force, migration, the presence of migrants poised to replace the city's original inhabitants, the designation of rubble disposal areas, the operation of debris-sorting centres, issues of urban traffic and transportation, as well as the environmental impacts associated with temporary housing and the subsequent construction of permanent dwellings.

According to damage assessments conducted by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the historic city centre of Antakya—the primary area of study—of the 587 registered cultural assets, including foundation properties, 186 were destroyed, 175 were severely damaged, 84 were moderately damaged, 67 were slightly damaged, and 72 remained intact. Although the restoration and reconstruction of public buildings and foundation properties undertaken by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism have been pursued with sincere intent, the restoration of the remaining registered cultural assets poses significant challenges due to the high financial costs borne by the public (Anonim, 2025d).

The February 6 earthquakes inflicted not only profound social, cultural, and economic disruption in Antakya but also widespread damage to its cultural heritage assets. In the "Old Antakya" district, located on the eastern bank of the Asi River, the Habib-i Neccar Mosque, Ulu Mosque, Protestant and Orthodox Churches, the Governor's Office building, registered structures along Kurtulus Street, as well as mosques, baths, inns, bazaars, and traditional unregistered Antakya houses suffered severe damage or total destruction. Likewise, historic public buildings situated on the western bank of the Asi River were also heavily affected (Doğruel, 2024).

Data from the Turkish Statistical Institute (TSI, 2024) indicate that Hatay experienced the highest migration rate among the earthquake-affected provinces. Following the disaster, a considerable portion of the population was compelled to leave their homes due to harsh living conditions. Statistics from the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (DEMA, 2023) show that approximately 560,000 individuals migrated from Hatay to other cities. Moreover, among the 11 provinces that experienced population decline after the earthquake, the number of individuals who transferred their population registration from Hatay to other provinces reached 141,000 (TSI, 2024).

Destroyed or heavily damaged buildings were demolished using excavators and transported by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism to the Cultural Debris Sorting and Separation Area (Figure 10a–10b). At the sorting centre, the debris was systematically separated and stored according to parcel number (Figure 10c).

Figure 10. a. Excavation of registered historical structures using shovels (Author's Archive, 2024). **b.** Ministry of Culture and Tourism Cultural Inventory Sorting and Separation Centre (Author's Archive, 2024). **c.** Separated stones in Plot 371, District 4 (Author's Archive, 2024).

Property owners were not informed during the removal of rubble. According to the Amsterdam Declaration (1975), local authorities are obliged, as part of their duty to ensure

public awareness, to communicate their decisions in clear and comprehensible language. This includes the organization of public meetings, exhibitions, and referendums, all of which must be carried out with the support and participation of the community. The failure to notify property owners thus constitutes a clear violation of this principle.

The use of heavy machinery on the remains of historic structures has resulted in severe damage to the stone masonry. The Conservation-Oriented Development Plan explicitly stipulates that "heavy machinery shall not be employed on historical structures; demolition and excavation works must be carried out using hand tools and in a controlled manner." Accordingly, the interventions implemented directly contravene this plan. Similarly, the application of asphalt within historic zones is inconsistent with existing legislation and regulations. The Conservation-Oriented Urban Planning Regulations strictly prohibit the use of permanent surface coverings such as asphalt, as these can negatively impact the natural and historical fabric of the site. Despite this, asphalt roads have been constructed in the city centre of Antakya without the consent or prior knowledge of property owners (Figure 11). In cases where the reopening of streets is deemed necessary, such works must be undertaken in a manner that respects the original urban fabric and ensures the protection of surviving historical remains.

Figure 11. Asphalt work carried out on Antakya's historic sites after the earthquake (Author's Archive, 2025).

It is understood that the extraordinary measures taken in response to the earthquake were not intentional but necessitated by the magnitude of the disaster. Although the Ministry of Culture and Tourism provides project and implementation grants for registered buildings, these supports do not compensate for the significant material losses incurred by property owners (Varnacı Uzun and Somuncu, 2023). The Amsterdam Declaration (ICOMOS, 1975) recommends that property owners allocate a balanced budget for maintenance and repair. The lack of formal notification and approval processes has negatively affected the morale of property owners, and the removal of debris using heavy machinery violates regulations; stones should be carefully removed by hand and stored appropriately. Erroneous interventions must be avoided, and the historic city center of Antakya should be restored using a holistic approach rather than at the level of individual buildings. The February 6 earthquake caused severe loss of life and property and significantly damaged the city's multicultural and tangible cultural heritage. Many heritage structures, including traditional Antakya houses, were either completely destroyed or heavily damaged, and the unusability of administrative and commercial buildings disrupted daily life in the city center (Varnacı Uzun and Somuncu, 2023). Traditional buildings, as fundamental elements of cultural heritage, are at risk due to unplanned urbanization, inadequate conservation practices, functional usage, environmental effects, water and moisture damage, ground-related issues, and user-induced impacts (Dönmez and Uşma, 2023). The traditional architecture of Antakya, already exposed to these risks prior to the earthquake, suffered severe damage as a result of the event. These factors have contributed to

the deterioration of vernacular architecture over time, placing it in danger of eventual disappearance.

3.5. Cemile halefoğlu mansion (5th district, parcel 1331)

3.5.1. Surroundings and history of the mansion

The building known as the Helefoglu mansion is located in the centre of historic Antakya, within a third-degree urban and archaeological site. It is located on Kurtulus Street, which has been used as a settlement since ancient times (Figure 12).

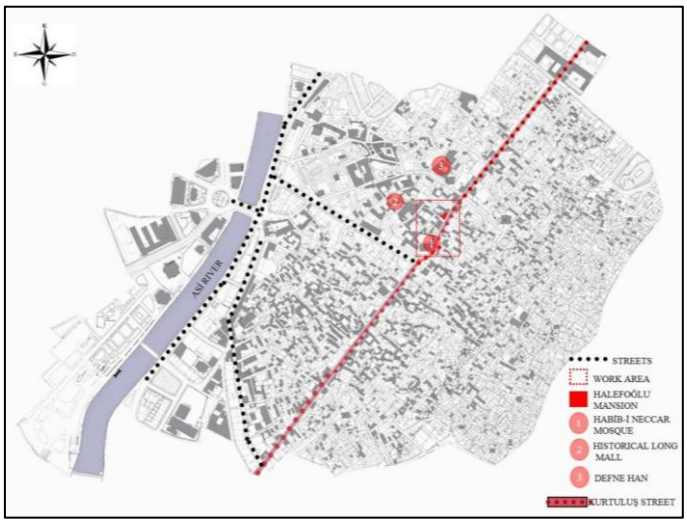


Figure 12. Location of Cemile Halefoglu Mansion in the urban site area (Source: HBB, edited by the authors, 2024)

The historic mansion is located in Hatay Province, Antakya District, Habib-i Neccar Neighbourhood, at the intersection of Kurtulus Street and Ornek Street, in the 5th District, Parcel 1331. Most of the buildings on Kurtulus Street are used for commercial purposes. The houses are 1-3 storeys high (Figure 13).

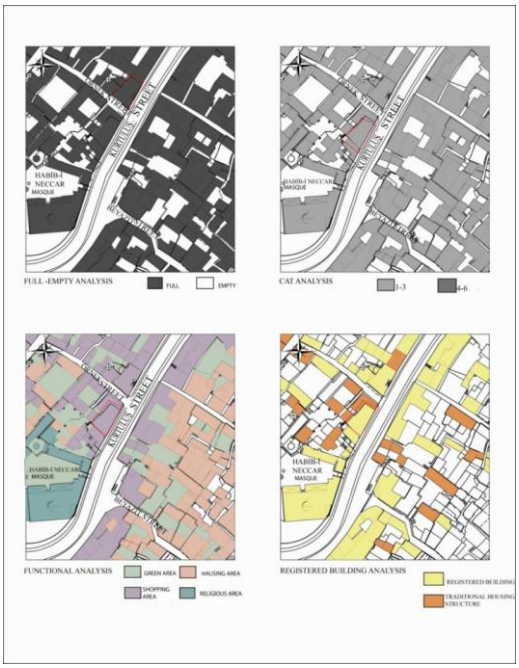


Figure 13. Halefoglu Mansion Environmental Analysis Sheet (Source: HMM and MCT data, prepared by the authors, 2024).

The building, constructed by the Halefoglu family, is also known as the Cemile Halefoglu Mansion (Figure 14). It was designed in 1925 by the Aleppo architect Abdüllatif (Gecen-Eren-Camlı, 2019) and completed in 1927. The materials used in the construction of the building and the construction workers were specially brought from Aleppo (Nakip 2012).

Figure 14. Halefoglu Mansion 2009 Photo taken from Kurtulus Street (MCT, 2009).

Cemile Hanım began living on the upper floor, while the lower floor was rented out as a residence. Later, both floors began to be used as a home. In 1963, the family moved out of the mansion and rented it out. The upper floor was used as a residence, while the lower floor was used as a dental clinic.

3.5.2. Architectural characteristics

The mansion has two floors and is built of cut stone. The façade facing Kurtulus Street has eight wooden shuttered windows. There is a three-arched door. Above the door is a balcony with a decorative stone railing. The balcony is accessed through a three-arched door (Figure 15). The façade facing Ornek Street has the same features (MCT, 1985).

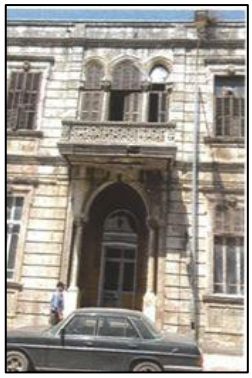


Figure 15. Exterior view and view of Kurtulus Street in 2009 (MCT, 2009).

The roof is a hidden pitched roof. The interior and façade are simple and elegant (MCT, 1985). It has a central hall layout (Figure 16). It bears the architectural features of the French Mandate period.

Figure 16. Photo of the upper floor sofa in the Cemile Halefoglu Mansion (MCT, 2009).

3.5.3. Re-functionalisation process

The building was re-functionalised as the Liwan Delux Hotel in 2009 with a survey, restitution and restoration project (Table 2).

Table 2. Information about the Cemile Halefoglu Mansion

Building Information	
Name Of Building	Cemile Halefoglu Mansion
Address Of Building	Hatay Province, Antakya District, Habib-i Neccar Neighbourhood, corner of Kurtuluş Street and Ornek Street
Building Plot and Parcel Number	5th district, parcel 1331
Date of Construction	1927
Architect of the Building	Aleppo architect Abdüllatif
Architectural Style	French mandate period eclectic architecture
Original Function of the Building	Residential
Functions Used Outside of Original Function	Dental Clinic Hotel
Current Function of the Building	Hotel
Damage Status after the 2023 Earthquake	Heavy damage

It was used as a 6-room hotel until the earthquakes of 6 February (Photo 9).

Figure 17. View of the mansion from Kurtulus Street (MCT, 2020).

There are two entrances on the ground floor. The entrance from Ornek Street is used for the service area, while the three-arched entrance on Kurtulus Street is the main entrance used by customers (Figure 17). The sofa serves as a reception area. The ground floor has a kitchen, service area, lift, administrative office and a room (Figure 18-19).

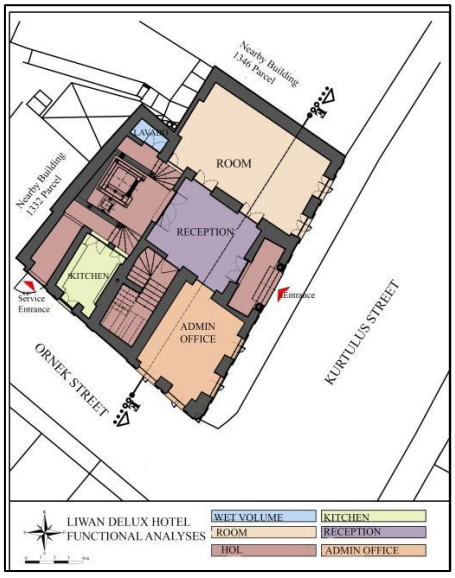


Figure 18. Restoration project ground floor functional analysis table (Source: Atolye-De, prepared by the authors, 2009).

Figure 19. Halefoglu Mansion, now functioning as a hotel, with its arched entrance gate and reception area, 2022 (Anonim, 2025b,c).

There are three guest rooms and a toilet on the first floor. The staircase, lift and rooms open onto the hall (Figure 21). Each room has glass partitions that can be removed for the toilet and bathroom (Figure 20).

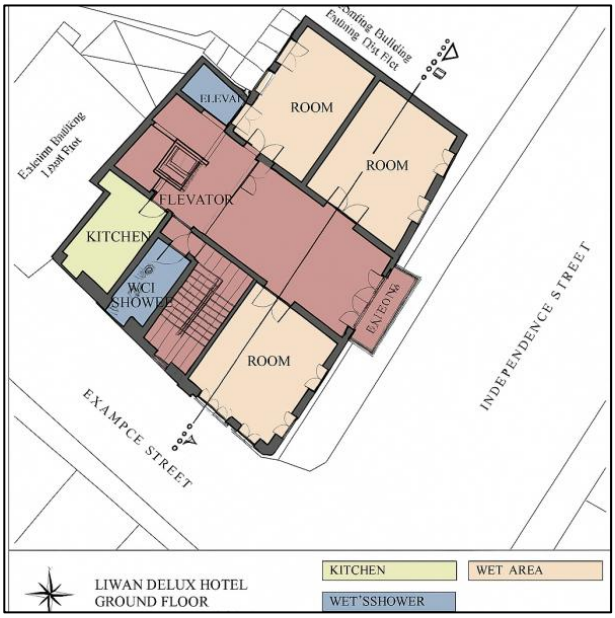


Figure 20. Functional analysis sheet for the restoration project (Source: Atolye-De, prepared by the authors, 2009).

Figure 21. First floor sofa 2022 (Anonim, 2025b).

The second floor is a terrace floor. There is one room on this floor. The roof terrace is used as a restaurant (Figures 22-23).

(Kocabaş and Çardak, 2025)

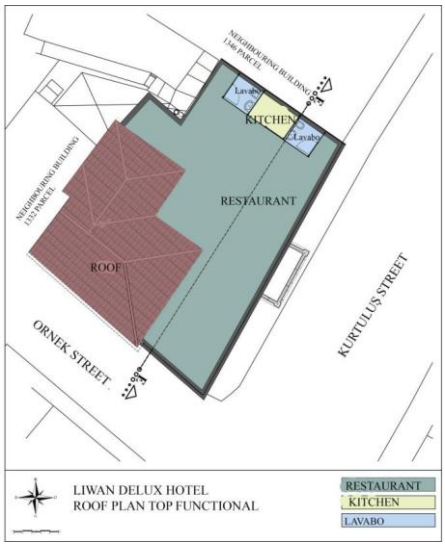


Figure 22. Restoration project attic function analysis (Source: Atolye-De, prepared by the authors, 2009).

Figure 23. E-E Section (Source: Atolye-De, prepared by the authors, 2009).

3.5.4. Post-earthquake protection status

The building and Kurtulus Street, where it is located, have suffered severe damage. Many buildings in the surrounding area collapsed or were severely damaged during the earthquake. Concrete walls were added to the structure for reinforcement purposes. These did not move with the masonry walls during the earthquake and caused the structure to sustain severe damage (Table 3).

Table 3. Damage analysis table for the Cemile Halefoglu mansion.

Damage Analysis Table	
Name of the Building	Cemile Halefoglu Mansion
Nature and Protection Status of the Structure	Registered cultural property
Original Function	Residential building
Number of Floors	2 floors
Basement Floor	None
Damage Level Based on Observations in the Structure	Severe damage
Secondary Hazards Causing Damage after the Earthquake	Looting
Structural System and Materials of the Structure	Stone wall + reinforced concrete wall + wooden roof
Observations Related to the Cause of Damage	Concrete wall
Emergency Response after the Earthquake	--

(Kocabaş and Çardak, 2025)

3.6. 3. district 965 parcel (french military mansion)

3.6.1. Surroundings and history of the mansion

The building known as the French Military Headquarters is located in the centre of historic Antakya, within a third-degree urban and archaeological site. It is located on Kurtulus Street, which has been used as a settlement since ancient times (Figure 24).

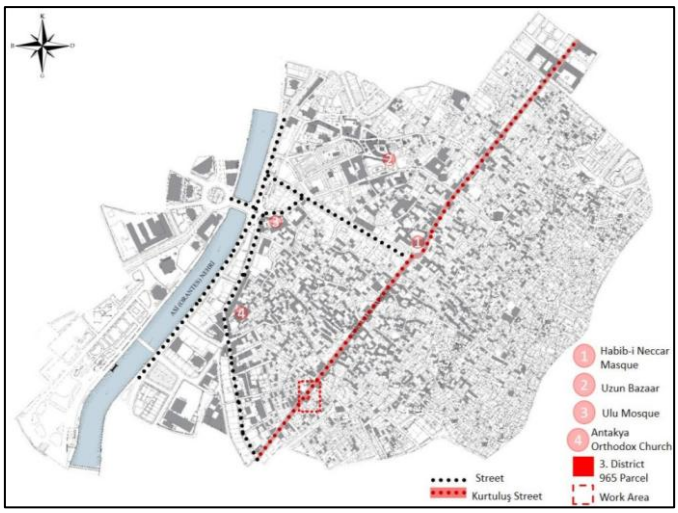


Figure 24. Location of the Halefoglu Mansion in historic Antakya at a scale of 1:1000 (Source: HMM, prepared by the authors, 2024).

The historic mansion is situated at District 3, Parcel 965, Kurtulus Street, Fevzi Cakmak Neighbourhood, within the Antakya district of Hatay province. The Fevzi Cakmak Neighbourhood, which functions both as a market and a residential area, is characterised by the presence of traditional Antakya houses. The courtyard house typology typical of Antakya is observable in the vicinity of the mansion. Along the main street, the majority of houses are currently used for commercial purposes, while the residential buildings range from one to four storeys in height (Figure 25).

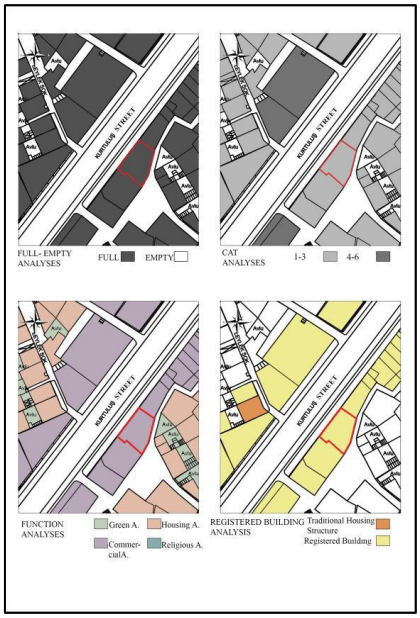


Figure 25. Military Barracks Environmental Analysis Map (Source: HMM and MCT data, prepared by the authors, 2024).

The historic mansion was originally constructed as a residence for French soldiers during the French Mandate period. No documentation has been found concerning the architect or the builders of the structure. In subsequent years, the façade facing Kurtulus Street was adapted for commercial purposes, with the ground floor functioning as a shop (Figure 26). The first floor was converted into a warehouse, while the second floor retained its residential function.

Figure 26. View of Kurtulus Street before restoration in 2014 (MCT, 2014).

3.6.2. Architectural characteristics

It has architectural features from the French mandate period. Unlike other houses in Antakya, there is no courtyard in the mansion. The mansion has two floors. The walls of the ground floor are made of stone. It has pointed arches. The arched upper part of the ground floor was later closed off to create a mezzanine floor. The upper floor is made of wood and its fade is plastered (Figure 27). There are exits from the upper floor to Kurtulus Street and the back alley (Figure 28) (MCT, 2014).

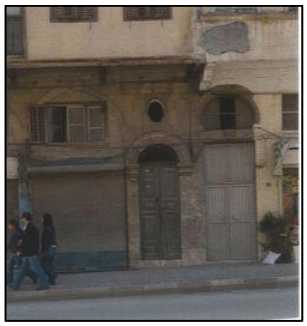


Figure 27. Northeast and northwest facades (KTB, 2014).

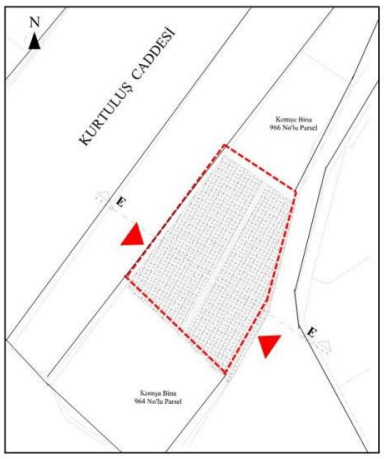


Figure 28. Site plan (Atolye-De, 2014).

On the ground floor, three shops open onto Kurtulus Street (Figure 29). From this level, a doorway and staircase provide access to a separate entrance leading to the upper floor. An additional entrance is located on the northeast side, opening onto a dead-end street; this serves

as an independent access point to the residence, distinct from the commercial units. Within this section, there are two rooms, a toilet, and a staircase that connects to the mezzanine (first floor).

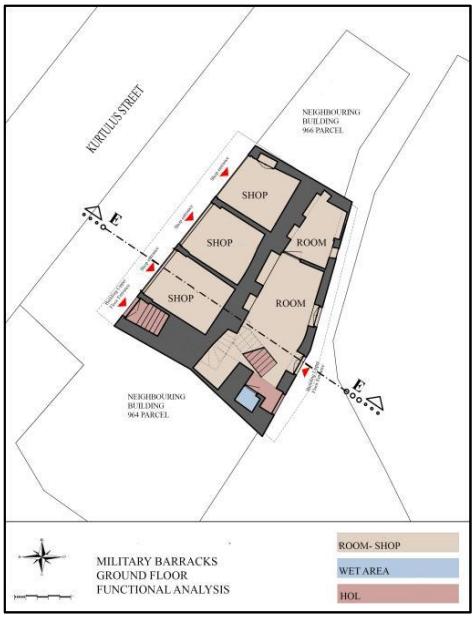


Figure 29. Restoration project French Military Barracks first floor functional analysis (Source: Atolye-De, prepared by the authors, 2009).

There are two rooms on the loft floor. The second floor has a living room layout. There are four rooms, one toilet and a kitchen with a stove. This floor protrudes towards two sides. There are wooden storage cupboards (Figure 30).

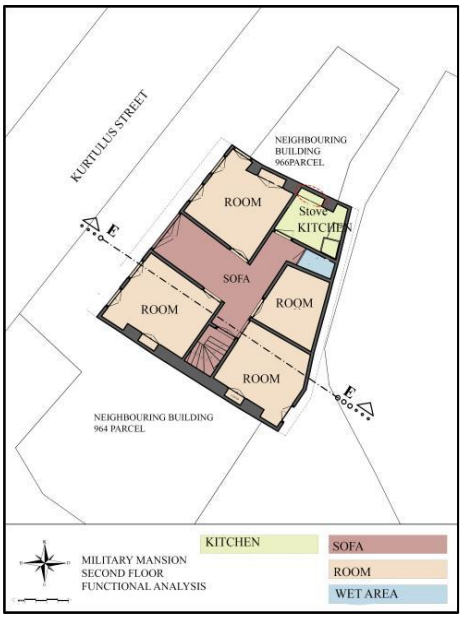


Figure 30. Restoration project French Military Barracks second floor functional analysis (Source: Atolye-De, prepared by the authors, 2009).

The floor heights of the shops are 2.75 cm. The floor height of the second floor is 3.70 cm. The mezzanine floor is 2.00 cm (Figure 31).

(Kocabaş and Çardak, 2025)

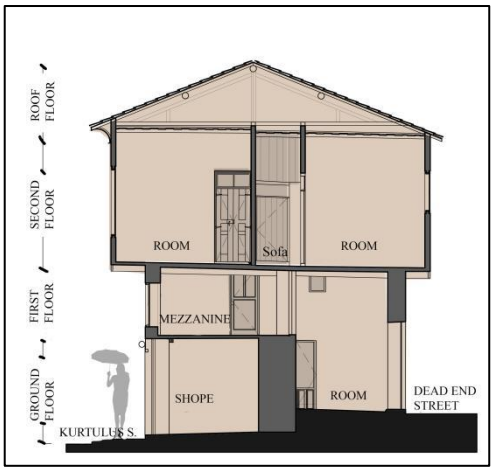


Figure 31. Section E-E of parcel 965 in district 4 (Source: Atolye-De, created by the authors, 2009).

3.6.3. Re-functionalisation process

The mansion, documented through architectural drawings in 2014, was restored in 2015 and subsequently re-functionalised as the Luwi Boutique Hotel-Café (Table 4). The establishment contains a total of three guest rooms.

Table 4. Military residence detail.

Building Information	
Name Of Building	French military residence
Address Of Building	Antakya District, Hatay Province, Fevzi Paşa Neighbourhood, Kurtulus Street,
Building Plot and Parcel Number	3rd District, Parcel 965
Date of Construction	20 th century
Architect of the Building	-
Architectural Style	Traditional residential building from the French Mandate period
Original Function of the Building	Residential building
Functions Used Outside of Original Function	Residential building
Current Function of the Building	Boutique hotel
Damage Status after the 2023 Earthquake	French military residence

The ground floor is used as a reception area, service area and café. The café section is generally used as a restaurant and breakfast room (Figure 32-33).

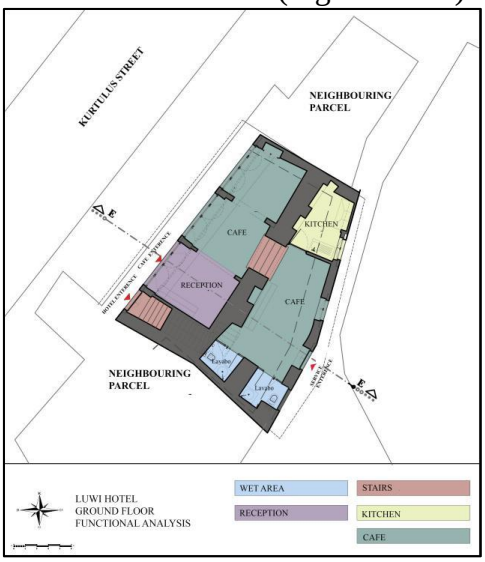


Figure 32. Functional analysis of the ground floor without restoration project (Source: Atolye-De, prepared by the authors, 2009).

(Kocabaş and Çardak, 2025)

Figure 33. Luwi Hotel ground floor reception and café (Anonim, 2025a).

The mezzanine floor has been used as a storage area. The first floor is where the hotel rooms are located, with three guest rooms and wet rooms (Figure 34-35).

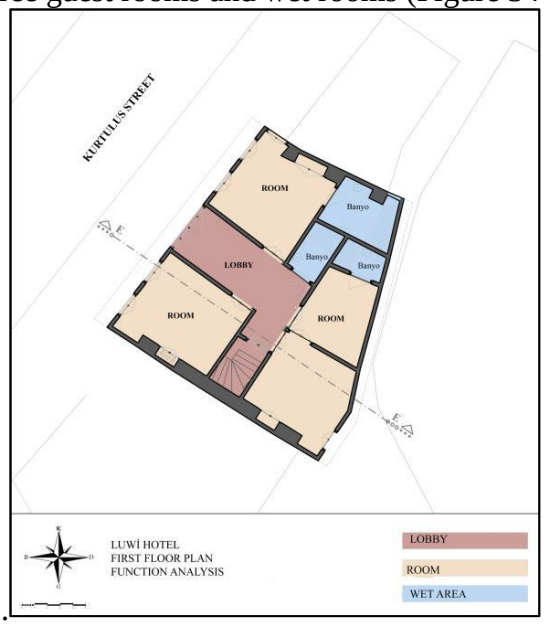


Figure 34. Functional analysis of the first floor without restoration project (Source: Atolye-De, prepared by the authors, 2009).

Figure 35. Example of a first-floor hotel room (Anonim, 2025a).

3.6.4. Post-earthquake protection status

The historic mansion sustained severe damage as a result of the destruction of adjacent buildings during the 2023 earthquakes centred in Kahramanmaras and, subsequently, in Hatay (Table 5). The structure is currently supported by temporary steel I-beams as a protective measure until restoration can be undertaken (Figure 36).

Figure 36. Facades after the earthquake (Author's Archive, 2025).

Table 5. Damage analysis table for the Military Barracks.

Damage Analysis Table	
Name of the Building	Registered cultural property
Nature and Protection Status of the Structure	Residential + shop
Original Function	2 floors
Number of Floors	None
Basement Floor	Undamaged
Damage Level Based on Observations in the Structure	-
Secondary Hazards Causing Damage after the Earthquake	Stone wall + timber-framed + wooden roof
Structural System and Materials of the Structure	Adjacent buildings demolished towards the mansion.
Observations Related to the Cause of Damage	Suspended with steel I-profiles.
Emergency Response after the Earthquake	Registered Cultural Property

4. Conclusions

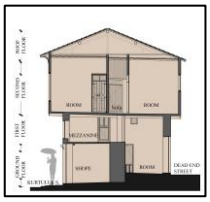
The study titled “The Post-Earthquake Protection Status of Traditional Antakya Mansions in the Re-Functioning Process” demonstrates that re-functioning constitutes an effective and sustainable form of intervention for heritage protection. It represents a sensitive conservation approach that requires careful consideration in all its dimensions. Ensuring compatibility and respect for the historical structure is of paramount importance, and any contemporary function assigned must remain consistent with the building’s architectural and cultural character. Among the principal threats facing traditional houses are natural disasters. The earthquakes measuring 7.7 and 7.6 in magnitude, centred in Kahramanmaras on 6 February 2023, caused extensive destruction across eleven provinces, with Antakya experiencing the most severe damage. The city’s traditional housing stock and street fabric were largely destroyed. Within the scope of this study, two historically registered traditional residential structures that had been re-purposed as hotels prior to the earthquake were examined.

The first case concerns the historic mansion known as the Cemile Halefoglu Mansion, located in District 5, Parcel 1331. Reflecting the residential architecture of the French Mandate period, the building has been registered as a cultural asset by the Cultural Heritage Preservation Board. Originally designed and long used as a residence, the mansion’s ground floor later functioned as a dental clinic, while the upper floor continued to serve as the residence of Cemile Halefoglu. Following the family’s relocation to the newly developed city centre, the building was abandoned. After the loss of its original function, restoration projects were prepared in 2009, and the mansion was subsequently re-functionalised as the Liwan Deluxe Boutique Hotel (Table 5). Although the principles of ICOMOS were adhered to during the re-functioning process, the mansion suffered severe damage during the 6 February 2023 earthquake, primarily due to inappropriate reinforced concrete additions. The structure was later dismantled with the contribution of the property owner under a grant programme for earthquake-affected cultural assets administered by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. A reconstruction project was subsequently prepared, and rebuilding work commenced.

(Kocabaş and Çardak, 2025)

The second case involves the historic mansion located in District 3, Parcel 395, commonly referred to as the French Military Mansion. Exhibiting the architectural characteristics of the French Mandate period, the building has been designated as a registered cultural asset by the Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums. The mansion originally served as a residence for French soldiers and was used for this purpose for many years. After the departure of the French military, the building remained abandoned for an extended period, until it was purchased and repurposed with the ground floor converted into a shop and the upper floor retained as residential space. This configuration remained in place for many years. In 2015, following a change of ownership, the mansion underwent restoration and was re-functionalised as the Luwi Boutique Hotel (Table 5). Renovated in accordance with ICOMOS's principles of adaptive reuse, the building nevertheless sustained severe damage as a result of the collapse of adjacent structures during the 6 February 2023 earthquakes. At present, the mansion awaits restoration and is expected to reopen once its structural stability has been fully reinforced.

Table 5. Functional changes and conservation status of the traditional residences examined.

5the District	1331	Parcel	(Cemile	Halefoglu	Mansion)
	Situation Plan	Ground Floor Plan	First Floor Plan	Photo	Vİew - Section
Restitution Project	-	-	-		-
Restoration Project					
3the District	395	Parcel	(French	Military	Mansion)
	Situation Plan	Ground Floor Plan	FİrstFloor Plan	Photo	Vİew - SectİOn
Restitution Project					
Restoration Project	-				-

Both structures exemplify the characteristic features of residential architecture from the French Mandate period and have been officially registered by the Conservation Council for Cultural Properties. Initially constructed for residential use, they were subsequently adapted to tourism-oriented functions as boutique hotels. Although the adaptive reuse processes were largely carried out in line with ICOMOS principles, certain inappropriate interventions—such as the incorporation of incompatible reinforced concrete elements into the Cemile Halefolu Mansion—compromised both the architectural integrity and the structural stability of the building. Both mansions sustained severe damage during the earthquakes of 6 February 2023; while the Cemile Halefoglu Mansion has since entered a reconstruction phase, the French Military Mansion remains in need of structural reinforcement and restoration.

For historic buildings from the French Mandate period, seismic retrofitting interventions must be prioritised, with particular emphasis on the preservation of original architectural features and material authenticity. Restoration and adaptive reuse projects should avoid inappropriate practices—such as reinforced concrete additions—that risk undermining the heritage value of these structures. All conservation measures must be implemented in accordance with approved conservation plans, ICOMOS principles, and traditional craftsmanship techniques. Tourism-oriented adaptations should be designed to safeguard the original spatial configuration and material character of the buildings. In addition, sustainable use strategies should be developed to mitigate the risks of long-term abandonment, supported by regular maintenance and repair programmes to ensure the long-term preservation of the historical fabric.

Acknowledgement

This study was produced from the ‘Master's Thesis’ titled ‘Evaluation of the Post-Earthquake Protection Status of Traditional Antakya Houses Repurposed as Accommodation Structures with Examples’ belonging to the first author at the Institute of, Adana Alparslan Türkes Science and Technology University.

References

Ahunbay, Z., 2011. Conservation and Restoration of Historic Environment (5th ed.). YEM Publications, No: 28, Istanbul.

Altınoluk, Ü., 1998. Reuse of Buildings (1st ed.). YEM Publications, No: 10, Istanbul.

Anonim, 2024a. Wikipedia. (https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/T%C3%BCrkiye), (Accessed 05.08.2024).

Anonim, 2024b. (https://www.harita.gov.tr/urun/hatay-fiziki-il-haritasi/398), (Accessed 13.09.2024).

Anonim, 2025a. (Retrieved from https://www.luwihotel.com/galeri.html), (Accessed 21.05.2025).

Anonim, 2025b. (Retrieved from https://liwan-deluxe-hotel-hatay.bookeder.com/), (Accessed 20.02.2025).

Anonim, 2025c. (https://tr.hotels.com/ho1211368992/the-liwan-deluxe-hotel-boutique-class-antakya-turkiye/?pwaThumbnailDialog=thumbnail-gallery&pwaDialogNested=media-gallery), (Accessed 15.03.2025).

Anonim, 2025d. (https://www.mimarist.org/antakya-tarihi-kent-merkezi-tarihimizi-kulturumuz-kentimizi-ozgun-durumuyla-korumak-zorundayiz/), (Accessed 15.05.2025).

Atolye-De, 2025. Atolye-De Architecture, Author Architect Deniz Emir Archive.

De Giorgi, A., Eger, A., 2021. Cities of the Ancient World: Antiochs (2nd ed.). Routledge Publications, No: 78, New York.

Dema, 2023. Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD). February 6, 2023 Pazarcık-Elbistan Kahramanmaraş (Mw: 7.7 – Mw: 7.6) Earthquakes Report.

Demir, A., 1996. Antakya Through the Ages (9th ed.). Akbank Culture and Arts Publications, No: 12, Istanbul.

Doğruel, H., 2024. The ımpact of earthquakes on the settlement history of the city of Antakya: the cases of the 1872 amik and 2023 Kahramanmaraş earthquakes. Master Thesis, Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, Graduate School of Science, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Istanbul.

Dönmez, S., Uşma, G., 2023. A comparative structural system analysis in the context of physical environmental control: The case of traditional Antakya houses. *Journal of Architectural Sciences and Applications*, 8(Special Issue): 525–546.

GDM, 2024. General Directorate of Mapping Archive.

Gürlevik, M.M., 2022. Adaptive reuse as a tool for the conservation of cultural assets: The case of Erzurum şeyhler madrasa. Master Thesis, Atatürk University, Departmen of Architecture and Design, Erzurum.

HMM, 2024. Hatay Metropolitan Municipality Archive, Hatay.

ICOMOS, 1999. Traditional Architectural Heritage Regulation, Mexico.

ICOMOS, 2013. Declaration on the Protection of Architectural Heritage in Turkey. Istanbul.

Kayış, T., 2023. The memory of multi-layered cities: the case of Antakya. Master Thesis, Eskişehir Osmangazi University, Departmen of Architecture and Design, Eskişehir.

Küçükali, T.T., 2022. The enhancement of castle ruins with contemporary additions as adaptive reuse ınterventions. Master Thesis, Yaşar University, Departmen of Architecture and Design, İzmir.

MCT, 2024. Ministry of Culture and Tourism Archive, Hatay.

Muşkara, Ü., 2017. Conservation of traditional residential architecture on a rural scale: Authenticity. Selçuk University, *Journal of the Faculty of Literature*, 9(37): 437–448.

Ovalı, E., 2017. The Crown of the Queen of the East: Antakya Bridge (1st ed.). Hatay Metropolitan Municipality Culture Publications, No: 7, Antakya.

Rifaioğlu, M.N., 2012. An ınquiry into the definition of property rights in urban conservation: Antakya (Antioch) from 1929 title deeds and cadastral plans, Doctoral Dissertation, Middle East Technical University, Departmen of Architecture and Design, Ankara.

Sibel, Ü., 2012. Preparation of earthquake scenarios for Hatay province and ıts surroundings within gıs and comparison of these scenarios with historical earthquakes. Master Thesis, Istanbul Technical University, Eurasia Institute of Earth Sciences, Istanbul.

Sökmen-Kök, D., Uşma, G., 2022. Reuse and the alienation of local identity and architecture from authenticity: The case of Antakya zenginler district. *Journal of Turkish Studies,* 17(3): 627–647.

Tekin, M., 2000. History of Hatay (1st ed.). Atatürk Cultural Center Publications, No: 10, Ankara.

Tekin, M., 2002. Earthquake and historical earthquakes of Antakya. *In VI Hatay and Culture Symposium* 4(28): 1–24).

Varnacı Uzun, F., Somuncu, M., 2023. Evaluation of the Antakya urban cultural heritage after the earthquakes. *Journal of Environmental Sciences*, 10(1): 9–23.

Yüzer, M.E., 2021. A study on urban texture and architectural characteristics, Master Thesis, Yıldız Technical University, Antakya.