

Özen EYÜCE, Assoc. Prof. Dr.,

## Konak Square

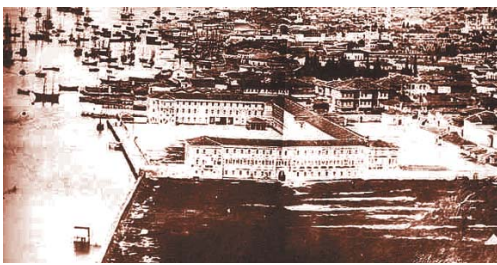
### From Past to Present in Pictures



1



2



3



4

The area known 'Konak Square' today, where the Clock Tower is placed in the center as the symbol of İzmir today, was located outside the boundaries of the settlement that were developed around the inner bay until the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century. The evolution of Konak Square as well as its environs has taken place only after the end of the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As an area gaining importance with the location also of the administrative center parallel to the rise in urban population, growth and widespread development in the course of getting articulated to the changing World conditions of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the square has reached our day through a series of different identities it has undertaken. With the intention rather to enrich the visual memory with relevant pictures, this paper focuses on the changes taking place in Konak square and its environs.

#### Konak Square's Location in City Plan of İzmir during 18<sup>th</sup> Century

The shipyard known to exist in Karataş since 10<sup>th</sup> century, where both the Byzantian and later, Çaka Bey's and Umur Bey's Navy were constructed, have been demolished by the Crusaders in 1344. The area called Kalafthane (between Bahribaba Park and State Theater), which has been named after the shipyard and the neighbouring ship repair places that have been reconstructed following the sovereignty of Timur and kept their function even during 1870s, constitutes the western boundary of city domains until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As for the skirts of Değirmendağı, beyond which traces of any settlement can be seen as the lands were steep with rocky cliffs, the Jewish cemetery stands as the south-western boundary of the city there. (Figure 1)

#### Katipzade Mansion (1804)

The mansion (konak), after which Konak square was named, has been constructed during the reign of vaivode Katipoğlu Hadji Mehmet Agha in 1804. The building was a three-storey timber frame traditional Turkish House with double projections.

Right at rear side of the Mansion takes place the Turkish Cemetery at filled areas of the inner bay, around which Kemeraltı Street was circumscribing the bay prior to the 1800s.

(Cypress trees of the cemetery can be seen in Figure 2)

#### Kışla-yı Hümayün (1827) (Military Barracks)

Within the context of modernization movements commenced in the Ottoman Empire during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the military system also appears to be modernized. Likewise, Kışla-yı Hümayün (Royal Barracks), which was essentially constructed for the new army that were to replace the Janissary corps abolished in 1826, can be depicted as an outcome of the new understanding concerned with re-organisation of the Military System. Named after the colour of stone wielded in its facades, Sarıkışla (standing for Yellow Barracks) was situated at the site filled from sea in front of the street where the National Library takes place today (the mentioned street is known as Sabunhane Street, taking its name from the soap-making establishments located along the coast during 1880s.). In construction of Sarıkışla having started in 1827, cut-stones of marble taken out of the ruins of the amphitheater and stadium of antique city have been used. Sarıkışla, a three-storey building of masonry covering an area that were to shelter 6000 persons, together with Katipzade Mansion, has defined the Hükümet

Square (Governor's Mansion Square) also indicated as Dellal Square in 1854-56 Plan of Storari. (Figure 3)

### Location of Konak Square in City Plan of Luigi Storari (1854)

Initiated with the Ottoman Political Reformation Firman (Imperial Edict) also known as "Gülhane Hatt-ı Hümayunu" since 1839, the efforts to become a contemporary society have entailed implementation of new spatial organizations throughout the cities, firstly, of Istanbul and then of all provinces.

Following his works on sub-division of lands around Edirnekapı at Aksaray, Istanbul, Luigi Storari has visited the city of İzmir and prepared the city's plan in 1854. In the plan, the inner bay area appears to be completely filled and Sarıkışla building extended partly towards the sea, while the coastal line was to start from the line of the barracks and be dragged towards the English Customs building into inner areas.

(Figure 4)

With the privileges granted to English and French Corporations between 1856-1863, the Railway Projects have been implemented. Parallel to delivery of these new transportation systems, because of not only the required port, but also of the increasing trade capacity and new regulations for the customs, the city administration has made the decision for construction of a pier on the coast in 1866. The new Pier has then necessitated infilling of the areas from Alsancak to frontal areas of the Barracks. In addition to these spatial alignments, there also have been radical projects realized including the demolition of 'Ok Kale' (Fortress), development of the slaughterhouse and houses around Karataş, the removal of quarantine office elsewhere as well as renewal of the Governor's Mansion and Police Stations<sup>1</sup>.

Influenced by the new system of properties, which, in accordance with the Regulations of Provinces ('Vilayet Nizamnamesi') dated to the 8<sup>th</sup> of October, 1864 was implemented at only some of the provinces until the General Regulations of Provinces ('Vilayet-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi') were put into effect in 1867 to be valid for all provinces,

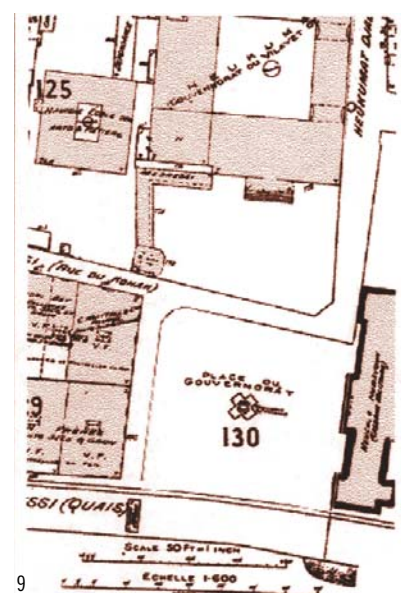
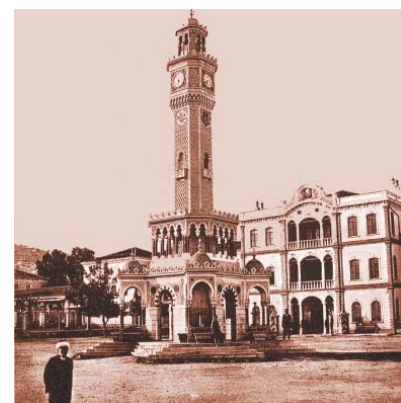
İzmir was no longer a sub-province known as 'Sığla' since the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but the Center of the Province of Aydın. The Administrative center of this new Center city has been selected as Katipzade Mansion at Konak Square.

### New Governor's Mansion (1867)

As it was an old timber-framed building and did not conform to the new building regulations put into effect within context of becoming contemporaneous, Katipzade Mansion has been demolished as ordered by Mehmet Sabri Pasha, the governor of the time. Between 1867-1871, as an Italian engineer under inspection of Salepçi Hadji Ahmet Efendi, Rofo has been assigned to build a new Governor's Mansion in a Neo-classical style. (Figures 5-6)

With the decision to include spaces for a prison and a municipal police office within its construction, the new Governor's Mansion building was estimated to cost about thirty four units, forty nine thousand eight hundred ninety six kuruş, altogether amounting to 10 farms, 2 khans and 1 mill, which were to be sold as properties of treasury within the sub-provinces of İzmir, Saruhan and Aydın<sup>2</sup>.

The rising importance of the coast owing to the construction of the pier at the northern axis of the city and the increase in relations between the railway and pier have rendered development of new plans necessary. In line with this, Midhat Pasha, the Governor of İzmir in 1880, has proposed opening of a new street which were to start from the Kasaba railway station (Basmahane) to end at Royal (Military) Barracks (Kışla-yı Hümayun / Sarı Kışla) going as long as one thousand three hundred fifty meters long and to later be extended toward Göztepe and even Urla<sup>3</sup>. With the impact of rising population on the one hand, and property ownership granted to foreigners as well as the placement of Rumelian immigrants at skirts of Değirmentepe during 1880s, on the other, the city tends to grow towards the West. As a result of such sprawl, Konak or Hükümet Square (Governor's Mansion Square) has gained centrality as a node connecting the northern and western axes of the city.





10



11



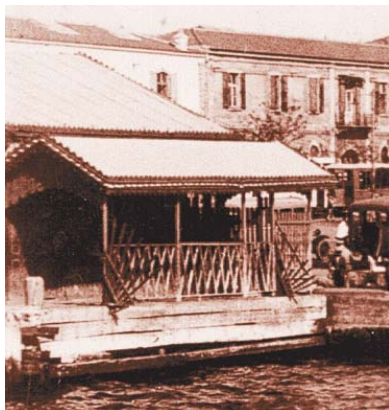
12



13



14



15

Nevertheless, the horsecar (tramway) line, which has been constructed simultaneously with the new pier as extending toward Punta and even Karşıyaka in 1895, and Göztepe tramway line that has been built after the period of Constitutional Monarchy as providing access to Kokaryalı, were to pass along Konak square both.

### **Clock Tower, Hükümet (Governor's Mansion) Square and Sarı Kışla**

For celebrations of the 25<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of Abdülhamit the II<sup>nd</sup> being acceded to throne, the Clock Tower of İzmir has been made constructed in 1901 by the architect who also has designed the German Consulate building. The architect of the tower is known to be S. Reynold. The construction manager of the tower made up of cut-stone has been Navy Officer Said Pasha, the son of Mehmet Kamil Pasha who has been the first grand vizier during the II. Constitutional Monarchy and İzmir's Governor in the same period. With its height of 25 meters, the Tower can be depicted as an example of the Orientalist approach, which covers the intention of the Westerns to create an Islamic style appropriate for us in west-centered design products of the period. During this period, the Clock Tower takes its position as surrounded by the walls of Sarı Kışla. (Figure 7)

### **and the Konak Square**

This square in front of Vilayet (Provincial) Mansion, which has been constructed at where direct view of the sea could be available at the eastern direction of the square (the front / garden of the vilayet), which is surrounded by the exterior garden walls of Royal Barracks (Kışla-yı Hümayun / Sarı Kışla) at the south-western wing, also including Yalı Mosque and the Clock Tower in the center, was the "main" physical space where the Aydın province, together with the the central sub-province was managed in the city of İzmir defined as "the unique astounding city as the outer gate of Anatolia...", "the second most important city of the Ottoman state in terms of trade after Dersaadet (Istanbul)", and "the most crowded city of Asya-yı Osmaniyye (Ottoman domains of Asia) with highest level of trade activities"<sup>4</sup>.

Additional to the Clock Tower in this square, there also take place the Yalı Medresesi that has been made built, just beneath the Yalı Mosque, by Ayşe Hanım, the daughter of Dervish Mehmed Ağazade Mehmet Pasha during the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, and the İzmir İdadisi (Senior High School of İzmir), which has been opened in July, 1886 during the time of Governor Halil Rifat Pasha (a building later functioning as the Courthouse of the city for years). (Figure 8)

### **Konak (Hükümet) Square in 1905 Assurance Plan**

In months following the declaration of Constitutional Monarchy, there have been projects fostered in line with the idea where the pivotal urban element for a prosperous city was accepted to be the "public garden" ('umumi bağçe'), an idea that was on the urban agenda since the time of Governor Eşref Pasha, whose intentions to give the city of İzmir a contemporary look were still to take hold. In context of these "public garden" projects, the Municipality, which was established in 1868, has proposed removal of the Barracks to a more appropriate location in 1909, followed by allocation of the Barracks site to municipal uses. At previous site of the Barracks, there would be a public garden, a club, a theater and a library built. The Municipality were to undertake construction of a police station where two companies of soldiers would be sheltered under sanitary conditions in the very same site as well. ...For all these investments, the required amount of money was assumed to come from the lottery ... There even was a project competition organized<sup>5</sup>. (Figure 9)

In February 1913, it is known that exterior walls of the barracks were demolished to avail for combination of the inner garden with that of the Governor's Mansion and that these have then paved the way for efforts of designing an orderly urban park once again<sup>6</sup>.

### **Konak Square Designed as an Urban Park (1913)** (Figure 10)

The National Library and Movie Theater, of which the constructions have begun at the time of the Governor Rahmi Bey through

removal of Turkish cemetery that was located along the Street named either Hükümet Street, Resmi Tufan Street or Çobanoğlu Street, i.e, no longer called as Sabunhane Street for Göztepe Tramway Street have taken over this name in 1880s; but these constructions could be completed only after the war. (Figure 11)

While there were quite prominent projects prepared for İzmir during the time of Rahmi Bey as a Governor who has played an influential role under administration of Committee of Union and Progress (İttihat ve Terakki), there also were works held for the design of Konak and its environs, since it was no longer appropriate for the cemetery to be located at the inner city rendering its removal inevitable due to further growth of the city and providing the circumstances for creation of new urban parks and exhibition areas instead. For instance, of such places was the cemetery located at where the current building of National Library takes place today. Likewise, the project for removal of cemeteries from areas extending from the hospital toward Bahribaba and allocation of the vacated lands to an urban park, and the project concerning the design of areas called Kalafat between the coast and the tramway route, can both be mentioned among those projects delivered at Konak and its environs during the period of Governor Rahmi Bey.

Another project realized during the same period of Governor Rahmi Bey has been the opening of a boulevard from Basmahane Station to Hükümet Square as a route being constructed since the time of Midhat Pasha.

In the course of a period starting with the First World War and ending with the War of Independence, Konak Square appears to have been the most important place for the entire city. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of September, 1922, the declaration that the occupancy was over has been made with hoisting the Flag at Governor's Mansion (Hükümet Konağı) and the Military Barracks (Sarıkışla). What remained from the war times was that "There was only a vast hole burnt in the central and peripheral areas of the Old City of İzmir"<sup>7</sup>. However, Konak Square and its environs have luckily been among the least affected parts of the City from such disaster.

### Konak Square of the pre-1930s

As an outcome of the efforts for development of the post-fire İzmir, the Dangér brothers have been asked to draw the 1925 İzmir plan. As a plan particularly having the chance to be implemented for re-construction of the burnt areas of the city, this plan has also proposed for demolition of Sarıkışla at Konak Square. Nevertheless, the efforts of Sarıkışla's removal since the beginning of 1900s would not be realized for long years then ahead. (Figure 12)

### Electric Tramways Began to Operate Along Konak – Güzelyalı Line (18<sup>th</sup> of October, 1929) (Figure 13)

### Mass Transportation and the Timber Ferry Port

Starting with 1884, there used to be Hamidiye Ferries in the Bay carrying passengers from Karşıyaka to Konak. In this picture of Konak dating to 1930s, though barely perceptible, it is still possible to see the timber ferry port. (Figure 14)

### A Detail from the Timber Ferry Port (Figure 15)

### Tramways Replaced by Buses at First Cordon Road since 1937

"As the municipal management of buses throughout the city will be beneficial by all means, ..... in order to purchase the buses via credits on an installment plan .... the Municipal Committee should be given the due rights" 01.04.1936 This statement has been approved in İzmir Municipal Council of the time<sup>8</sup>. (Figure 16)

### Konak Square Has Begun to Function as a Traffic Junction with the Use of New Buses and the Establishment of ESHOT (Buses Administration) (Figure 17)

### 1951 İzmir City Plan of Kemal Ahmet Aru, Gündüz Özdeş and Emin Canpolat, the Central District

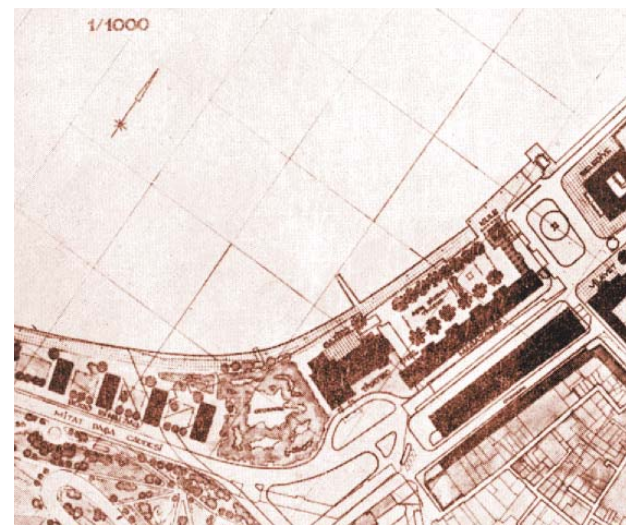
Toward the end of 1930s, though it has been effectively delivered during the first years of Republic and have aided in reconst-



16



17



18



19

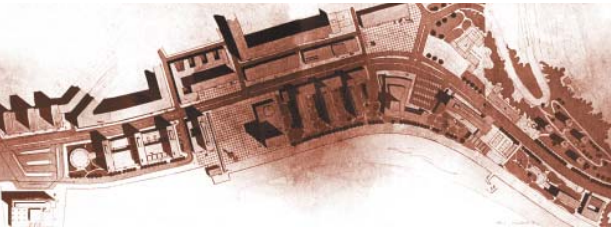


20



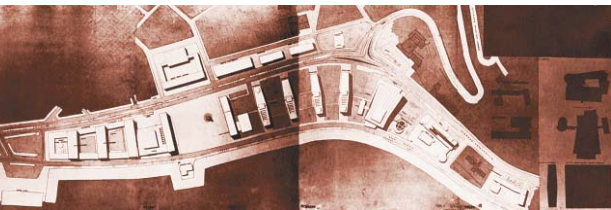
21

ruction of the burnt areas in the city, the Dangér Plan was claimed to fail in encountering the current requirements of İzmir. In the following course, Le Corbusier has been asked to prepare a new plan for İzmir. While plan proposals of Le Corbusier have not found any chance to be implemented in the city after the intervening Second World War, their impact were to become manifest upon projects for Konak area to be designed in much later periods of time. (Figure 18)



22

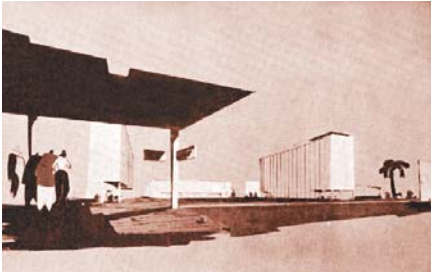
Nevertheless, owing to social developments of 1950s that render a new plan necessary for the city of İzmir, the first prize winners of the international competition held in 1951, namely Kemal Ahmet Aru, Gündüz Özdeş and Emin Canpolat, have prepared a new urban plan, where, in parallel to Le Corbusier's approach, the central areas have been allocated to multi-storied building blocks with gardens. In this center, there also exists a culture center.



23

### Perspective from the Central District of the First Prize-Winning Project for the City Plan of İzmir, 1951

(Figure 19)



24

### The Central District of Konak with Sarıkışla and the Prison in Plan of 1913

Among the programme of the project demanded from the competitors for the 1951 plan take place the following issues:

Removal of the Military Barracks and the Prohibited District Headquarters ("Müstahkem Mevki Komutanlığı") as well as the Officer's Club ("Orduevi") and its Outbuilding all taking place at Konak District has become essential for the area with the decision where this district will be allocated to public uses and entertainment places aiming at revitalization of the Konak Square. The relations between the square and its environs will be reckoned with.

By virtue of its unsuitable location, the old prison will be required to move to its newly-proposed place. <sup>9</sup>

The route under construction as providing connection from İnönü Street and Eşrefpaşa Street with several curves downwards the Değirmendağı direction will have to be taken into consideration (Variant) (Figure 20)



25



26

### The Pattern Subject to Change with the 1951 Plan

One of the crucial changes at Konak area of the 1950s has been brought with demolition of the old ferry port to be replaced by the newly-built one. Another change pertains to opening of the street proposed at the time of Governor Midhat Pasha to start from Basmahane, be connected to the Hükümet Square and then extend towards Göztepe. As with the building lot emerged between the Göztepe Street and the street opened parallel to Sarıkışla, the site neighbouring the Military Café ("Askeri Kırathane") has been given for construction of Ankara Palace Hotel, one of the architectural assets of the early modernist period.

(Figure 21)

### 1956 Competition (Figures 22–23–24)

Whereas the winner project of the 1951 Competition has provided all the circumstances for its city-wide implementation until the 1960s, it has remained inexpedient for the central areas implying the necessity to attach more weight there with organization of a new competition. In this new project, the following issues have been demanded for the design of an area of 60.000 m<sup>2</sup>:

- Balanced distribution of areas allocated to uses included in the programme (municipality, opera house, hotel, workplaces etc.),
- Ensuring that the distribution of functions comply with the silhouette of the city as perceived from the sea,
- Balanced distribution of areas for roads, squares and urban parks,
- Achieving well-planned traffic circulation through transportation axes including clear distinction between vehicular traffic and traffic-calmed areas.

There have been 14 participant projects in the competition. However, even though the jury has made the statement "In result of the assessments made, ...no project could have been seen possibly implementable by virtue of lacking future expression of any final spatial configuration of such a valuable site", the project of Doğan Tekeli, Tekin Aydın and Sami Sisa has been chosen as the first, and of the team of Güngör Kaftancı and Cihat Fındıkoğlu, as the second prize winners for proposing proper locations for

the opera house and the building of Turkish Center (Türk Ocağı) as well as achieving similar solutions for office blocks to be situated perpendicularly to the sea.<sup>10</sup>

In their layout of building blocks located perpendicular to the sea in a way as to create no interrupting effect between the city and the sea, while the projects were to remind of Le Corbusier's "buildings within parks" system on the one hand, they were to resemble the settlement patterns of block designs as widely implemented in Europe of the post-war period, on the other. Nevertheless, the settlement layout previously prepared for this area by Professor W. M. Dudok at the instance of the Municipality of İzmir appears to be no different from the competition projects. (cited from an interview with G. Kaftancı). The proposal of Prof. Dudok. (Figure 25)

Whereas no projects could have been delivered, the state of Konak is maintained until the 1960s, during which considerable amount of demolitions have taken place.

The magazines and newspapers of the 1960s point to the programmed demolitions as the "renewals for İzmir of the future". (Figure 26)

Sarıkişla has been demolished. Next were the others: the prison on the one hand, the Warehouses and the Old French Customs building on the other...

The Eastern face of Konak or Hükümet Square is destroyed in parallel to the Governor's Mansion ("Hükümet Konağı") being burnt. (Figures 27 – 28)

### **..and finally Konak, from Gümrük to Bahribaba, is spotlessly clean everywhere.**

It is no longer the Hükümet Square, which was previously defined by the clock tower in the middle and buildings on the surrounding, the square has lost its architectural boundaries. (Figure 29)

### **Konak during the Early 1980s**

Konak has been subject to new building activities held in 1970s. While the areas between Gümrük – Konak were used by bank centers and the Municipality, the burnt Governor's Mansion has become the subject of another competition, which was won by

the Arolats, the project of whom has been constructed.

Another important development of the 1970s pertains to construction of Sosyal Sigortalar Çarşısı (Commercial Buildings of the Social Insurances Organization) designed by Orhan Dinç as a competition project as embodying a new spatial understanding where the ongoing habits of shopping in Kemeraltı were to be altered at a site referred to as the so-called maneuver areas of Sarıkişla having emerged with amendments of the plans of 1951 and the latter years.

Meanwhile however, the Senior High School of İzmir ("İzmir İdadisi"), which has later functioned as the Courthouse of İzmir for long years have also been demolished.

(Figure 30)

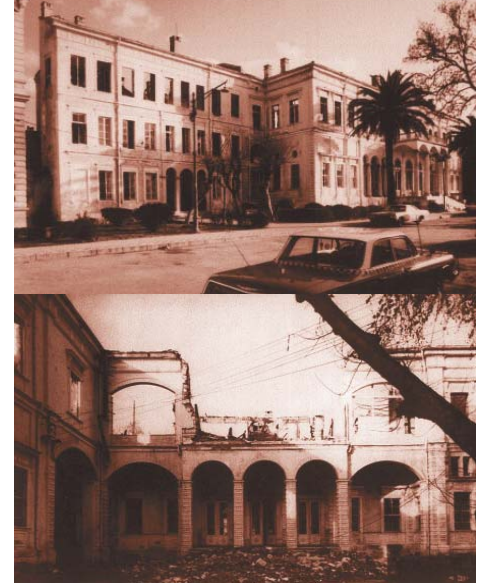
### **Pedestrian – Vehicular Traffic**

The only axis connecting the southern and northern parts of the city developed in a linear form due to the geographical characteristics of İzmir Bay, carries such intense levels of traffic parallel to densification of central activities that pedestrian access cannot be maintained. Kemeraltı appears to have lost its connections with the sea for some time. In a way, this amounts to a break in relations between Karşıyaka and the city center as well. Then, Konak finally meets its first pedestrian bridge with the intention to provide access despite the through traffic. (Figures 31-32)

The continuously interrupted system of inner city transportation necessitates wide areas for vehicle accumulation at the center, causing those areas gained by filling of the sea to be used as parking lots. (Figure 33)

### **From 1986 Design Competition for Konak Area**

The 1980s witness competitions organized for new alignments of the Konak area. While the main artery previously passing through the front side of the Governor's Mansion has been pedestrianized, the matter as to how the spacious areas gained from removal of the central bus stops out from Konak as required by continuity in mass transportation, has become the focus of new projects as well as of the ongoing debates of our time. (Figure 34-35)



27



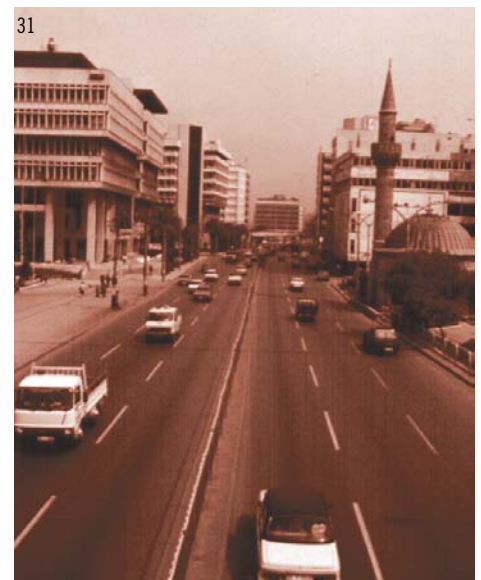
28



29



30



31



32

Parallel to the filling of the coast, as if a destiny of İzmir, the areas gained from the sea in fact increase the distance between the sea and the city center. The coast is now so far away. The area left in between are far from being a square, but merely a lost space.



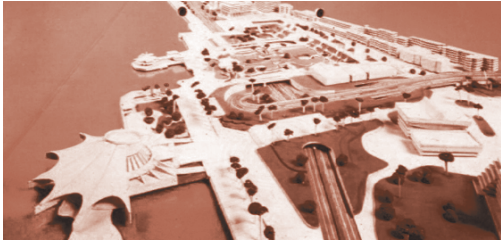
33

### Galleria Project (Figure 36)

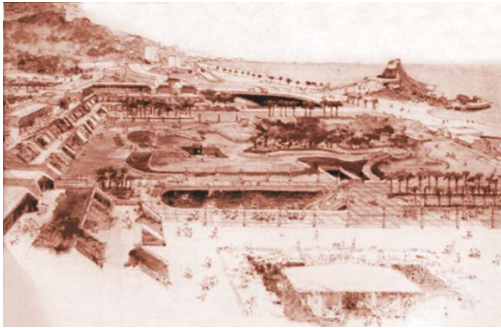
### Konak by Late 1980s (Figure 37)

### Konak by Early 2000s

It still is indefinite concerning what will happen to the area. Another aspect of the debate pertains to announcement of Konak as a Conservation Site. The "Public Garden" design solution dating to early 1900s appears to be sustained even after 100 years, but this time, as vacant areas that do not belong to the public at all.



34



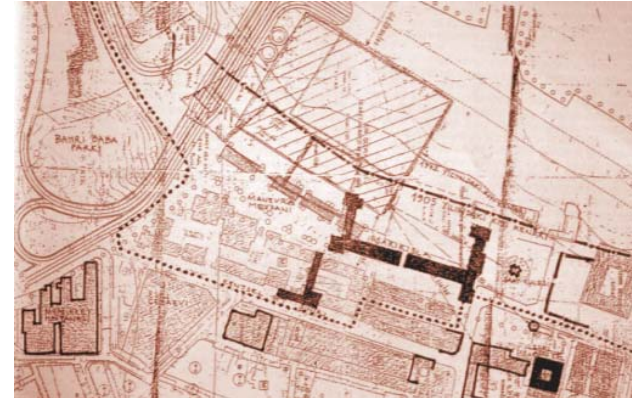
35



36



37



39

### ...and Konak from Past to Present

(Figure 39)



38

### Footnotes:

1. Serçe, Erkan, "Tanzimattan Cumhuriyet'e İzmir'de Belediye", DEÜ Yayınları, İzmir 1998, p.53
2. Berber, Engin, "Yeni Onbinlerin Gölgesinde Bir Sancak: İzmir 1977", p.9
3. Serçe, Erkan, "Tanzimattan Cumhuriyet'e İzmir'de Belediye", DEÜ Yayınları, İzmir 1998, p.65
4. Berber, Engin, "Yeni Onbinlerin Gölgesinde Bir Sancak: İzmir 1977", p.9
5. Serçe, Erkan, "Tanzimattan Cumhuriyet'e İzmir'de Belediye", DEÜ Yayınları, İzmir 1998, p.142
6. Berber, Engin, "Yeni Onbinlerin Gölgesinde Bir Sancak: İzmir 1977", p.9
7. Serçe, Erkan, "Tanzimattan Cumhuriyet'e İzmir'de Belediye", DEÜ Yayınları, İzmir 1998, p.173
8. a.g.e., p.186
9. Arkitekt 1951
10. Arkitekt 1956

### References:

1. Atay, Çınar, "Tarih İçinde İzmir", 1978
2. Canpolat, Emin, "İzmir- Kuruluşundan Bugüne Kadar", 1954.
3. Beyru Rauf, "18. ve 19. Yüzyıllarda İzmir", İzmir, 1973.
4. Tanyeli Ugur, "Çağdaş İzmir'in Mimarlık Serüveni", Üç İzmir, YKY, İstanbul, 1992.

### Photo Credits:

- 1 Emin Canpolat Archive • 2,3 Üç İzmir • 4 Emin Canpolat Archive • 5,6,7,8 Eyüce Archive • 9 Çınar Atay -Tarih İçinde İzmir  
 10, 11,12, 13,14, 15, 16 Eyüce Archive • 17 Cengiz Onaran Archive • 18, 19 Arkitekt Magazine1951 • 20 Çınar Atay - Tarih İçinde İzmir  
 21 Cengiz Onaran Archive • 22, 23, 24, 25 Güngör Kaftancı Archive • 26, 27 Eyüce Archive • 28 Güngör Kaftancı Archive  
 29, 30 Cengiz Onaran Archive • 31 Eyüce Archive • 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39 İzmir Branch of Chamber of Architects, Türkiye Archive  
 38 İzmir Institute of Technology Archive