

Mehmet Yelken House

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District of Marmara, Ekinlik Neighborhood	Construction period/date: 19th century
	Current status: Abandoned
GPS: 40°32'50.8"N 27°29'14.5"E	Ownership status: Private ownership
Registration date and number: Not registered	

History

Mehmet Yelken's House is one of the few buildings in Ekinlik with an entirely timber-framed front façade. Although the house does not have an inscription, it can be attributed to the 19th century based on its construction system and its similarities to other buildings in the region from that period (Pl. X.40). According to the interviews with the locals, the building was abandoned in the 1990s.

Architecture

The three-storeyed building adjoins modern houses to the east and west. It has a

timber-and-tile hipped roof that slopes in four directions (Fig. 1).

The south façade features three windows on each floor (Figs. 1-2). The main entrance to the building is on the ground floor with a semi-circular marble step before the doorway. The entire façade is constructed in timber-frame, clad with planks (*yalıbaşkı*), and decorated with wooden pilasters between each opening. The use of these pilasters continues on the western part of the second floor (Fig. 2). At the top edge of the



Fig. 1: General view of the house from the sea



ground floor is a series of timber beams carrying planks, indicating a balcony; the south-western room on the first floor has a doorway opening onto this balcony (Fig. 3). A balcony along the entire façade is a feature rarely attested in traditional Turkish house architecture. The second floor projects out entirely.

On the western façade, the first floor is blind but there was one window each in the kitchen on the ground floor and the northwestern room on the second floor. Both of these were later blocked because of the construction of adjacent modern buildings. The southwestern room on the second floor has a window at the southern end of its western wall, where it projects outward. The western wall seems to have been built with bricks.

The first floor of the street-facing, northern façade has a second entrance via a staircase providing access to the upper floors of the neighbouring western building, which was later extended to this side (Fig. 4). This façade was later renovated and altered to a great extent. There are three windows on the northern façade, two of which were later blocked. The northern façade was built with bricks.



Fig. 2: General view of the southern façade



Fig. 3: Timber projection at the top level of the ground floor on the south façade

On the east façade, there is one window on the ground floor, two on the first floor, and three on the second floor. After the construction of adjacent building, these windows were blocked.

The single-winged, timber door providing access to the ground floor via the southern façade is preceded by a semi-circular marble step. This doorway has a rectangular top window with four partitions illuminating the interior. The entrance opens into a rectangular hall and a long corridor (Fig. 5). To the north of this corridor is the kitchen with a fireplace through the kitchen. By the northern side of the steps to the restroom is a circular lid, which may belong to a cistern. It is possible that the ground floor was used as a shop, considering the spatial organization of this building typology before the population exchange. However, the remains of a staircase by the western wall on the ground floor, the singular entrance to the building, and the fireplace in the kitchen do not support this suggestion. There are two interconnected rooms to the east of the hall. The rectangular room on the south has two rectangular, timber sash windows looking out. The room to the north is reached via this one, and there is a window between them. Based on the information from the locals and the traces observed on the ground floor, the stairs providing access to the upper floor were probably adjacent to the western wall of the entrance hall.

Access to the upper floor is currently provided from the eastern corner of the north façade. Both floors have symmetrical plan organization. The entrance from this façade



Fig. 4: The entrance from the north façade and the brick wall



Fig. 5: The entrance hall on the ground level

reaches the first floor. The *sofa* of the first floor, reached through the rectangular north-eastern room with a chamfered, north-eastern corner, is flanked by two rooms on the south and a kitchen on the north. The *sofa* is arranged as an interior *sofa* considering the original location of the staircase at the western end. The double-winged timber door that opens to the southeastern room is painted green. The timber ceilings of the rooms on this floor have wooden laths, while the floors are covered with timber boards (Fig. 6). The southwestern room has a single doorway with a rectangular top window that opens onto the balcony. The walls of these rooms are painted indigo blue. There is a fireplace in the kitchen. Considering the location of the fireplace's chimney in the room upstairs, this kitchen may have been added later. There is a timber, curving staircase to the west of the *sofa*, leading upstairs.

The *sofa* on the second floor also has a rectangular plan. At the eastern end of the *sofa* is a window, now looking onto the adjacent building, and a sink in the southeastern corner. At the western end of the *sofa*, the curving staircase leads to the roof, but it is thought to have originally led to a third floor (Fig. 7). The timber ceiling of the *sofa* has wood lath ornamentation (*çitakâri*). The two rooms to the south of the *sofa* on this floor project outwards by approximately 60 cm. This projection is carried by timber brackets. The room in the southeast is larger and has a remarkable wood lath decoration in the ceiling (Fig. 8). The circular ceiling rose and the surrounding horizontal laths are vertically articulated, contributing to the elaborateness of the ornamentation. The rooms on this floor are also plastered and painted indigo blue. The roof of the southwestern room has almost completely collapsed, which threatens the flooring due to the increased weight. There are cracks around the window openings. Among the rooms to the north of the *sofa*, the northwestern one is entered through a narrow, double-winged timber door, painted green. This room has a window, which was closed later. The other room is slightly smaller and has a single window that is very close to the neighbouring building. There is a wet space in the southeastern corner of this room that was added later.



Fig. 6: Southeastern room on the first floor



Fig. 7: Second floor sofa and the staircase leading to the roof

The ceiling over the staircase leading to the third floor, which is thought to have existed in the original building but has not survived, has completely collapsed. Apart from the sections of collapsed roof on the second floor, there are losses of infill materials in some of the walls.

Current Condition

The building has been neglected, resulting in the partial collapse of the roof structure and the voids in the walls. The house, which is no longer in use, has undergone various interventions based on the needs of its previous users. The original doors and windows were altered in the rooms on the first and second floors. The northeastern room on the first floor, with the later addition of a second entrance, was divided by partitions that affect the integrity of the space. The originally timber windows were either closed with bricks or replaced with PVC. There are decays on the timber stairs, doors, and windows.

The holes created during the later addition of a door to the first floor and the exterior plaster that has been falling off to reveal the brick infill indicate that the building has been under unfavourable circumstances. The conserved parts of the building are the ceilings of the rooms on the first and second floors and the ceiling of the second-floor *sofa*. Additionally, the decay observed in the stairs may be remedied and the staircase can be consolidated.

Risk Assessment and Recommendations

This unregistered building is threatened by neglect. The house should be registered as soon as possible. Although it has a roof, the building is completely exposed to external weathering conditions due to the collapses in its roof structure. The timber ceilings, flooring, and the windows should be cleaned, repaired, and renewed in accordance with their original design. The timber-frame structure should be consolidated as a whole and renewed where necessary. There are undefined spaces that resulted from alterations of



Fig. 8: Southeastern room with decorative ceiling on the second floor

the plan organization. A restoration project should be drafted to restore the original features of the building. An adequate function will not only increase the island's tourism potential, but also provide income for the building's maintenance and repairs. Similar to other historical houses on Ekinlik, there are no information panels for the house.

The building is of utmost importance for its contributions to the island's landscape and the coastal view. Its original timber façade and authentic architectural features make it noteworthy. The adjacent reinforced concrete structures undoubtedly have negative impacts on the building. It is important to raise awareness among the general public as well as the tenants regarding the values of such historical buildings, which are important resources of architectural history.