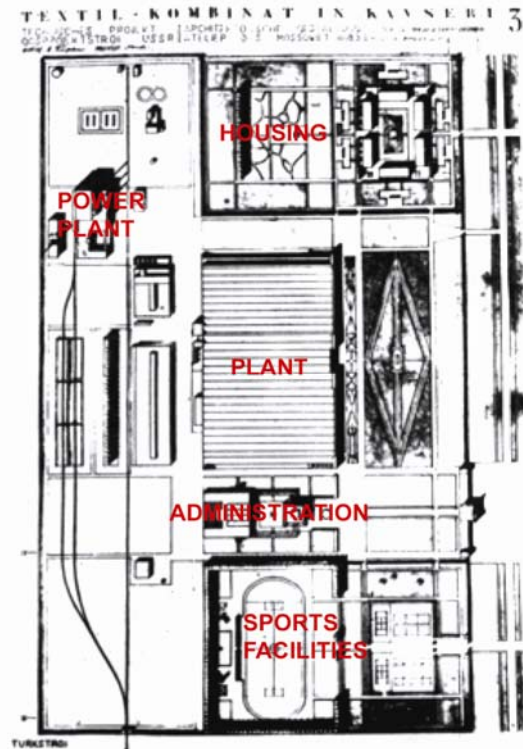
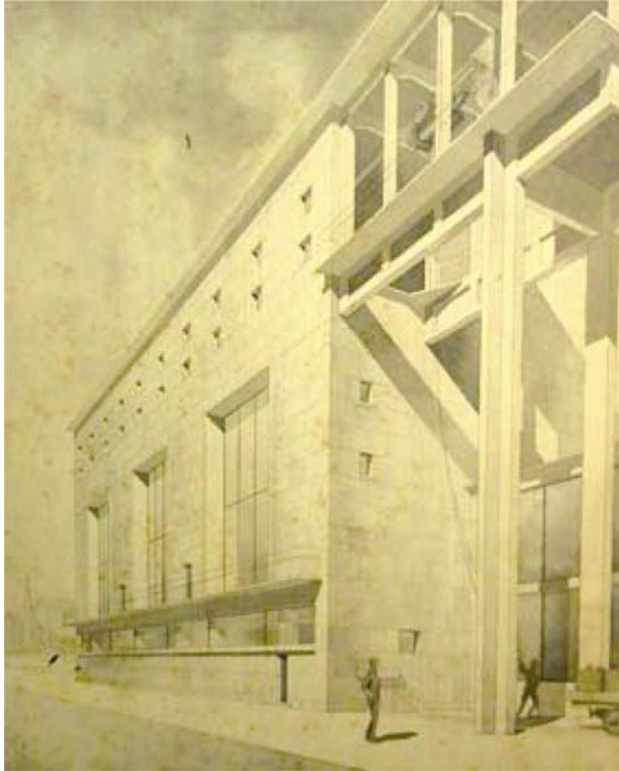


SAVE THE KAYSERİ SÜMERBANK TEXTILE FACTORY COMPLEX!

DOCOMOMO Turkey National Working Party has learned with great concern that Kayseri Metropolitan Municipality and Erciyes University plan to demolish some of existing parts of the Sümerbank Textile Factory Complex in Kayseri (Turkstoј, 1935) for a landscaping and land-development project, the details of which are yet unknown.

The Sümerbank Complex was one of the earliest industrial production plants of the young Turkish Republic. It was not only intended for the development of the local and national economy but also as a part of the socio-political revolution aimed at nation-building and modernization. The complex was designed in Moscow and constructed with a loan from the USSR in 1934-1935. The architectural style is undoubtedly Modern. The architects (including I. Nikolaev) were Russian and the constructor was a Turkish Firm (Abdurrahman Naci Bey).



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The plant produced cotton textiles and employed 2100 workers and 155 clerks. In addition to the administration, production and energy facilities the complex included housing for the clerks and foremen, an infirmary, a day-care center for the children, social facilities for the workers and the clerks, a market and a bakery as well as a movie-theatre, a soccer-field with a capacity for 1000 spectators, tennis-courts, a semi-olympic pool and an open air casino organized around it. The architectural design is simple and functional and follows modernist ideology.

The design of the housing units, on the other hand, cannot be classified as “social”: The first group constructed in 1935 included apartment buildings comprising of five-room duplex flats and three-room flats for the head clerks and two-room flats for the foremen. A separate hostel for the workmen was constructed in 1937. The design of the houses is functional; the structures are reinforced concrete but the façade claddings are of local stone. A total of six different types have been produced between 1935 and 1950. The complex itself generated the development of the areas immediately surrounding it in due time. In the 1950s land was allotted for the construction of housing for retired employees, and similar housing projects around the complex continued until the 1970s, producing at least four neighborhoods around.

In terms of local and national economic development, the complex provided in service training for its employees, who in their turn established new production facilities of their own in Kayseri and elsewhere. The commercial and social growth initiated led to the development of the city while the architectural characteristics of the complex directed the urban development of Kayseri, the modernist principles becoming one of the major considerations in new development.



However the plant lost its function in 1998. Its ownership was transferred to Erciyes University in 1999 but has so far remained in disuse. Meanwhile it has been the subject of various architectural research projects and papers as well as a number of graduate theses and PhD dissertations.

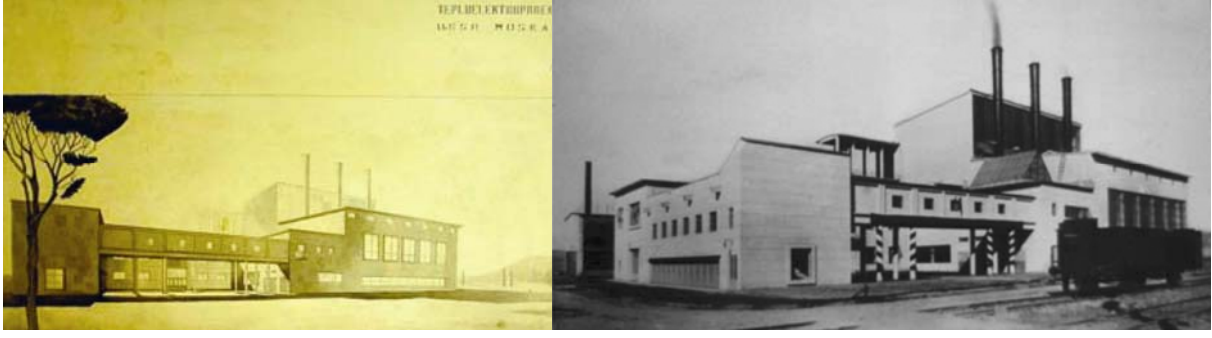
DOCOMOMO_Turkey has concentrated its efforts for the preservation of the complex since 2003 when the main plant and four types of in service housing were registered in the national inventory and a conservation area was designated around the remaining parts of the complex. However disuse and neglect has resulted in rapid deterioration of the existing buildings and the removal of some of the separately unregistered parts has come into question. As a result, DOCOMOMO_Turkey has applied to the concerned Kayseri Regional Commission on the Conservation of Cultural and Natural Property last month for the registration of the remaining parts separately on the national inventory in order to prevent their demolition and ensure their preservation as inherent parts of this modern complex.

DOCOMOMO_TURKEY National Working Party

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We would like to ask the support of all the national working parties within DOCOMOMO International for the preservation of the Kayseri Sümerbank Textile Factory Complex, which has become a symbol of Kayseri as well as a national symbol of Turkish modernization. Your support letters will be included in the dossier presented to the Conservation Commission concerned and will hopefully help its members to understand the heritage value and unique qualities of this complex. Please also forward this letter to all your national institutions in the field of architecture and ask them to support us by sending letters.

You may post or fax hardcopies of your support letter to the address and/or number below or send them in pdf format to our official e-mail address: docomomo_turkey@yahoo.com.

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DOCOMOMO_Turkey has also opened a virtual petition to signatures at the following address. Please ask your members and colleagues to support us by signing this petition as well. A list of the names will also be included in the same dossier that will be presented.

<http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/Kayseri-Sumerbank/>

We sincerely hope that you will find the time to support our cause in saving the Kayseri Sümerbank Textile Factory Complex and send our thanks in advance.

On behalf of the DOCOMOMO_Turkey National Working Party,

Yıldız SALMAN, co-chair
Ebru OMA Y POLAT, co-chair
Nilüfer BATURAYOĞLU YÖNEY, secretary

D O C O M O M O _ T Ü R K E Y N a t i o n a l W o r k i n g P a r t y

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