

A Caravanserai from 16th century in Sivas “Behram Pasha Han”

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1 ABSTRACT

Behram Pasha Han located in the center of Sivas was constructed as the part of important construction activities carried out within the city in the sixteenth century. Han which is in Ottoman Classical Style has no inscription about first construction.

Behram Pasha Han (*Fig. 1*) is a city inn providing combined use of accommodation for travellers and offices and storage spaces for tradesmen. It is nearly square in plan. It is a two storey building with a spacious courtyard. The courtyard is surrounded by arcades on its three sides at the ground level. There is stable along the northwest side of the ground floor.

According to the late Ottoman inscription over its entrance, it was converted into a military barrack at the end of the 19th century. In the Republican period the building had been used for military purposes until 1976. Since the building is of waqf origin, it was handed over to the General Directorate of Pious Foundations in 1967. After the Ministry of Defense abandoned the building, it was used for different purposes.

Finding appropriate uses for Behram Pasha Han is important for the preservation and sustainability of the monument. The architectural properties of the historic building offer several possibilities for reuse; it can be converted into a social, cultural and touristic center. Its new use can contribute to the improvement of cultural tourism in the city.



Fig. 1: General view of Behram Pasha Han.

2 SIVAS IN 16TH CENTURY

Sivas is located in eastern part of central Anatolia. Its position on the Silk Road made it an important commercial center. In the Middle Ages, trade routes crossing Anatolia from north to south and from east to west directions intersected at Sivas.

In 1175, the city was taken over by the Seljuks. Under Seljuk rule, the city had great political and economical importance. 13th century was the most prosperous period in the history of the city. In the Middle Ages, the city enclosed by walls contained several monumental buildings surrounded by adobe houses. Monuments surviving from that period (Ulu Cami, Gok Madrasa, Buruciye Madrasa, etc.) testify to the importance of the city.

In 1398, Sivas was annexed to the Ottoman Empire. In 1400, the city suffered seriously from Mongolian attacks, as a result of which the city walls and several buildings were damaged. After this invasion, the city

was not able to return back to its good times. Under Ottoman rule, Sivas became the capital of the Province of Rum. This important position was effective in the increase of commercial activities; important projects were carried out within the city. Behram Pasha Han and the other commercial buildings around it mark the new investments to this region during the sixteenth century.

Matrakci Nasuh's miniature showing Sivas in 1536 is the only document that gives information about the outlook of Sivas in the sixteenth century (*Fig. 2*). According to the description of Sivas made by Evliya Celebi in the 17th century, the city was enclosed by walls and it had an inner citadel. He mentions five gates on the walls; Kayseri gate on the west, Palace gate on the south-east, Tokmak gate on the east, Can-cun gate and Sulpur gate located close to each other on the north. According to the plan proposed by A. Gabriel, there was also another gate on the north-west.

Behram Pasha Han, which was a city inn providing accommodation for travelers and offices and storage spaces for tradesmen, was built on the eastern border of the commercial center of Sivas and close to the eastern gates of the old city.



Fig. 2: Miniature of Sivas drawn by Nasuh el Matraki.

3 HISTORY AND REUSE OF BEHRAM PASHA HAN

The han was part of a larger project by Behram Pasha who was appointed the governor of the Province of Rum in 1569. It was founded together with a bath located on the western side of the han. Although there is no inscription about construction of the han, the inscription of the bath mentions Behram Pasha as the founder and gives the construction date as 1576. The architect is not known. The construction date of the han is estimated to be between 1569 and 1576 according to the date of Behram Pasha's appointment as the governor, and the construction date of the bath.

Some documents about the han and the bath indicate that Behram Pasha served as governor in Diyarbakir as well. The Behram Pasha Mosque in Diyarbakir and Gumruk Han in Urfa, also founded by Behram Pasha have architectural details which are similar to the Behram Pasha Han in Sivas. So, it is most probable that the craftsmen who worked for the construction of Behram Pasha's endowments in Diyarbakir and Urfa might have also worked in Sivas as well.

According to the late Ottoman inscription over its entrance, the han was converted into a military barrack in 1316 H (1898-1899) during the reign of Sultan Abdulhamit II (*Fig. 3*) and was used by the Turkish Ministry of Defense until 1976. Since the building is of waqf origin, it was handed over to the General Directorate of Pious Foundations in 1967. After the Ministry of Defense abandoned the building, it was used for several functions like a hostel, storage building, car park, cafeteria and marble workshop.



Fig. 3: Entrance of Behram Pasha Han (Photograph archive of Sultan Abdulhamid II).

4 ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES OF BEHRAM PASHA HAN

Behram Pasha Han is in Ottoman Classical Style. The building is nearly square (49,5 × 49,5 m) in plan (Fig. 4). It is a two storey building with a spacious courtyard. The courtyard is nearly 27,20 × 25,70 m in plan. The entrance is situated within an iwan on the southeast façade. Behind the entrance gate, there is a passage leading to the courtyard. The courtyard is surrounded by arcades on three sides. At the northwest part of the ground floor, there is a stable measuring 46,50 × 8,80 m in plan. Nine piers lying in the southwest to northeast direction support the vaults covering this space. Several rooms of the ground floor and all of the rooms of the first floor have at least one window on the exterior wall. At the first floor, arcades surround the courtyard on four sides. There is a passage on the north corner. It is estimated that this passage lead to the toilets that were located on the north-eastern side of the building.

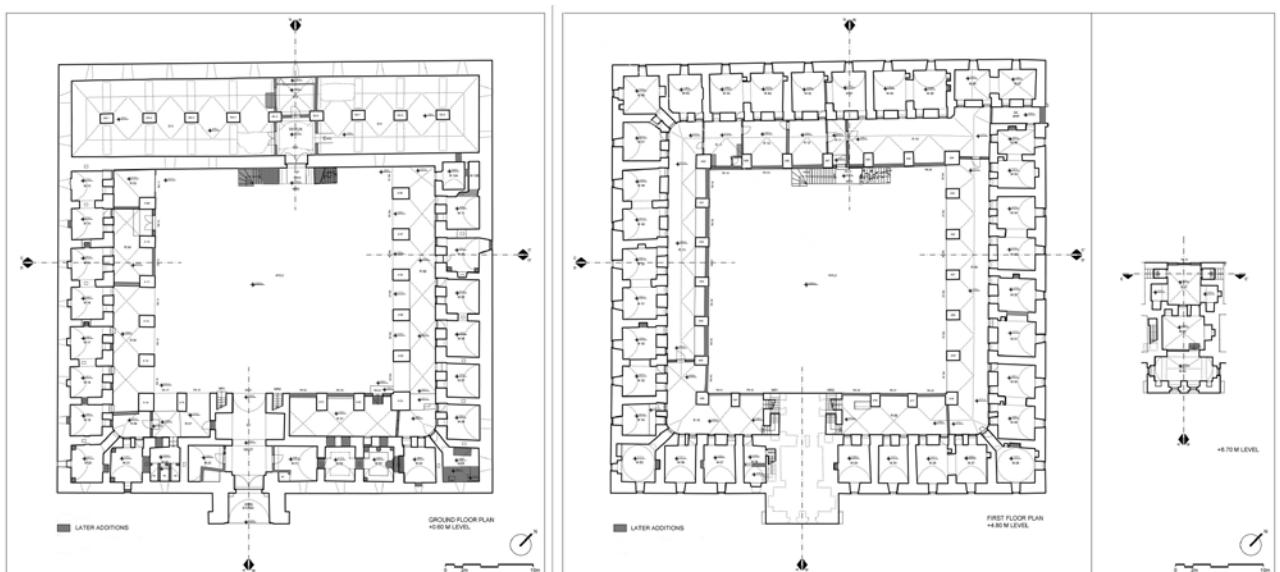


Fig. 4: Ground floor and first floor plans of the han.

The stairs leading to the first floor are on the southeast arcade and on the northwest side of the courtyard. Another stair located in a room on the southeast side of the han leads to the roof. The building has a flat roof covered with terrazzo as a later intervention. Two domes lie at the south and east corner of the roof.



Fig. 5: Section A-A'.

The arcades have pointed arches supported by square piers (*Fig. 5*). Some of the openings are closed. The central part of the entrance façade of the Han is accentuated by a jetty which is higher than the other rooms. Seljuk style ornaments and carvings on this façade are special (*Fig. 6*). At the level of the ground floor on all of the façades, there are irregular openings that are in different dimensions and forms (*Fig. 7*). The windows located at the level of the first floor are rectangular. On the northwest façade there is a pointed arched opening that was probably leading to the toilets.



Fig. 6: The entrance of the han.

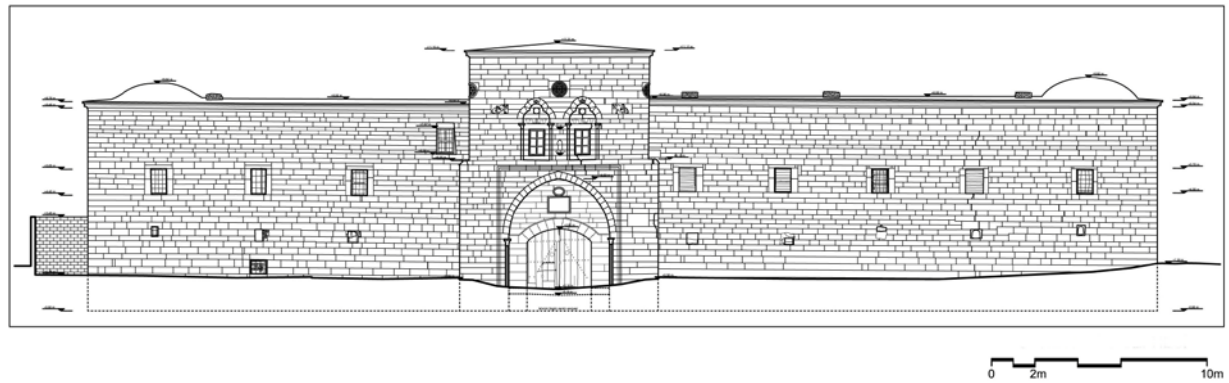


Fig. 7: Southeast façade.

The structural system of the han consists of masonry walls, piers and vaults. Four types of vaulting were used in the building: pointed barrel vault, cross vault, semi dome and dome. The original construction materials were limestone and brick.

5 RECONSTITUTION PROJECT

Caravanserais are buildings which provide accommodation to people, tradesmen, pilgrims who travelled with their animals and goods. City inns were located in cities. Ottoman inns consisted of a courtyard surrounded by arcades. They were usually two storey buildings with rooms, storage places and a stable. The spaces which the passengers and their animals stayed were separated. (Fig. 8)

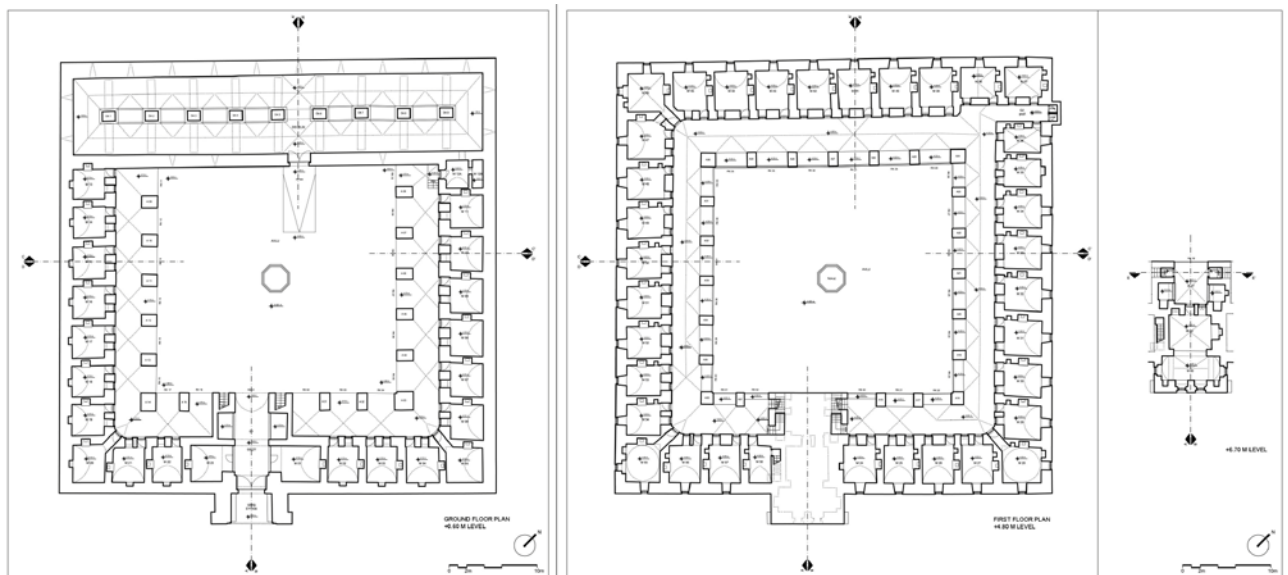


Fig. 8: Reconstitution of the ground floor and first floor plans of the han.

Although Behram Pasha Han has been changed in the course of time, its main characteristics are preserved. The first important intervention to the building was its conversion into a military barrack. During its use as a military barrack, the arcades were transformed into closed spaces and some of the walls between the rooms were removed or doors were inserted in them. Most of the original architectural elements; fireplaces, niches and chimneys were changed and damaged. Another important intervention was the restoration work carried out by Directorate of Pious Foundations between 1978 and 1984. During this intervention, modern materials such as bricks made of concrete and cement mortar were used.

At part of the research carried out on the site, the changes and damages to the fabric were observed and investigated. The written and graphic documents about the han were searched and compiled. The evolution of Turkish caravanserais was studied; similar city inns were investigated to find evidence about the missing architectural elements of the han.

The rooms flanking the entrance were probably the rooms for the guards. Although a caravanserai building of the era in such style is expected to have either a pool or a masjid in the courtyard, it was not possible to

find any trace of these elements. It can be assumed that a room inside the han was used as a masjid like in the Gumruk Han in Urfa. The original masjid located on the entrance of Gumruk Han in Urfa constructed by Behram Pasha in 1563 has striking similarities with the part over the entrance of the Behram Pasha Han in terms of plan properties and some details. So the possibility of using the room over the entrance of the han as a masjid is quite high. According to the results of our research, we think that the ground level of the courtyard has been raised by 85 cm in time.

Arcades are the spaces for circulation, providing light and access to the rooms. The floors of the arcades were paved with stone according to the evidence found on the site. The rooms behind the arcades were reserved to the accommodation of the travelers. In its original form, rooms were separated from each other by walls. In each room, there was a fireplace and at least one niche. The floors of the rooms were covered with hexagonal bricks. It is estimated that the small units on the north corner of the ground floor were used as toilets. The toilets of the first floor could be next to the northeast corner.

The plan of the stable has not changed in time. There were stone stalls between the pillars. It is thought that the stair located on the entrance of the stable is a later addition. This type of stairs was used at the military barracks in the 19th century. Other stairs are original. There is no evidence of the original form and finish of the roof. According to the explanation in Arabic letters on an old photograph of the han, the roof was most probably covered with lead sheets and there were chimneys on the roof.

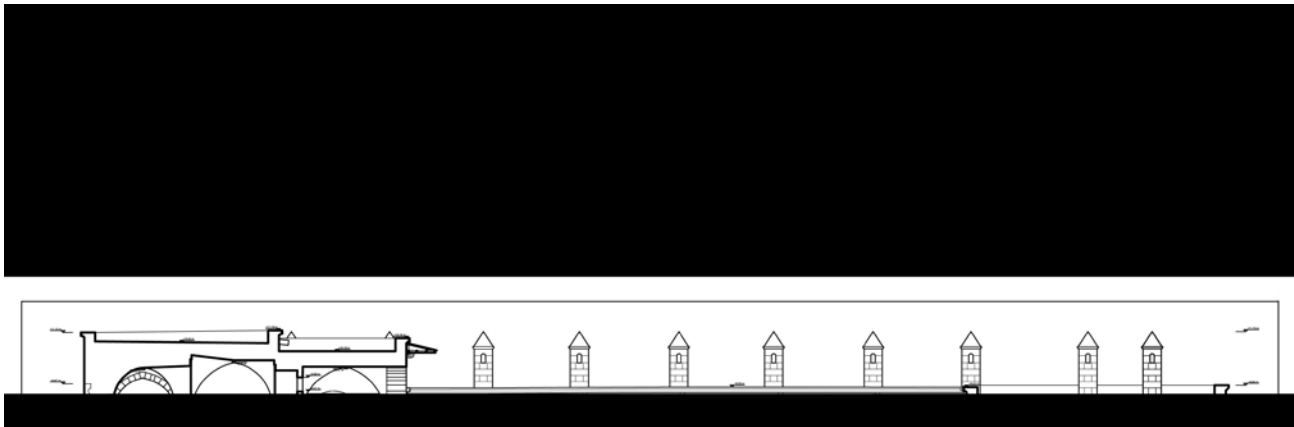


Fig. 9: Reconstitution of the section A-A'.

At the construction date, the courtyard was surrounded with pointed arched arcade on three sides (Fig. 9). The northwest façade is different because of the stable. There were timber tie-rods at the springing level of the pointed arches. It is thought that there were parapets between the piers of the first floor. The doors and window shutters of the rooms behind the arcades were probably made of timber in the 16th century. There were also iron window bars at the windows. The openings of the rooms that are open to the passage at the entrance were probably closed with timber partition walls and the doors of these rooms were located on these partitions. According to the measurements, it is estimated that the roof is sloped towards to the courtyard. This enabled the water spouts to be placed on the façades of the courtyard. It is thought that a timber eave was located on the stone corbels on the southeast façade of the courtyard.

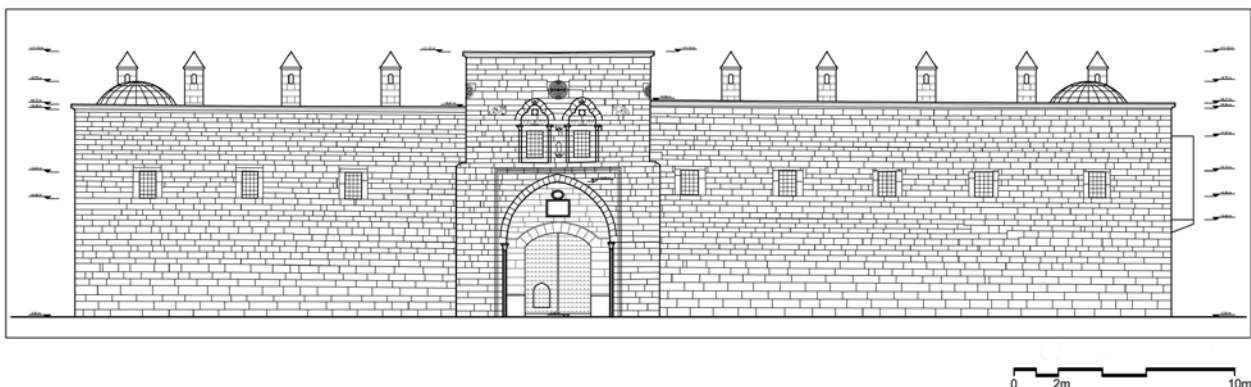


Fig. 10: Reconstitution of the southeast elevation.

The exterior walls had loopholes at the level of the ground floor and rectangular windows at the level of the first floor (*Fig. 10*). It is thought that there were iron window bars and double winged timber shutters at the windows. The destroyed toilets adjoining the northeast façade were probably supported by stone conbels.

6 RESTORATION PROPOSALS

Finding appropriate uses for Behram Pasha Han is important for its preservation and sustainability. There are several possibilities for its reuse; it can be converted into a social, cultural and touristic center. Its new use can contribute to the improvement of cultural tourism in the city.

To improve the landscaping around the han, it is necessary to lower the ground to its earlier level around the han and the bath. Within the context of the restoration project, the interventions for the conservation of the building were grouped under the headings of maintenance, cleaning, consolidation, reintegration, reconstruction and rehabilitation using modern additions. We find it necessary to remove the traces of bad interventions on the structure caused by the restoration between 1978 and 1984. It is proposed to remove also the inappropriate additions and fillings from the military and the later usages. After checking the structural stability of the han, the necessary interventions can be performed very carefully. The consolidation of the materials is also important. Some demolished parts of walls and vaults need to be reintegrated. The floor covering of the arcades and the rooms, the missing doors and window shutters, and demolished loopholes should be reconstructed using traditional materials. The northeast arcades that were reconstructed using bricks made of concrete and cement mortar during the restoration between 1978 and 1984 harmonize with historic fabric. So it is proposed to remove the modern additions and reconstruct this part as soon as adequate financial funds are provided. Some stairs, ramps at the outside and a drainage system are required as contemporary additions for the rehabilitation of the han. Sivas is affected by cold weather in the most part of the year. So closing the pointed arched openings of the arcades on the first floor, by using single glass sheets supported by timber frames is proposed. Electrical, lighting, heating and air conditioning systems should be designed without damaging the historic and aesthetic features of the han. All of the contemporary equipments and details must in harmony with the original materials.

7 CONCLUSION

Conservation of a redundant historic building becomes possible with its reuse according to the social and cultural needs of the people living around it. Rehabilitation contributes to the survival of the monument. Behram Pasha Han dating the second half of the 16th century should be conserved as a city inn from that period. It is necessary to remove the wrong interventions made in the past. It is proposed to give new life to the building without overloading, damaging its general character. During making a decision about a new function for the han, primary importance has been given to social and cultural requirements of Sivas; social benefits provided by the revitalization of an important monument and its contributions to the cultural tourism of the city. We hope that the conversion of the han into a social and cultural center will contribute to the dynamism of the cultural life of the city.

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