THE RESTORATION OF THE KLONARIDIS VILLA

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Abstract

The «Klonaridis Villa» is situated in the district of Patisia in the City of Athens, a quarter once renowned for its rural character. The building was inhabited by the Klonaridis family who settled there in 1902. It is at that time that began the construction of the family Brewery and Ice-Making factory in an adjacent building plot.

The factory, an imposing and modern building in its time, played a leading role in the Athens financial and social life for about a decade [1]. When the company went bankrupt in 1912, the business was bought off by its competitor, the K. Fix company and ended in the hands of the National Bank of Greece in 1982, from which the area of the factory and the villa came in possession of the City of Athens.

It consists in a small two-storied country house, built in the last quarter of the 19th century. The form it has today is the result of continuous additions and extensions. Its interior and exterior was decorated with paintings by noteworthy artists of the time. Because of its important historic and architectural value, the villa has been listed by the Ministry of Culture as a historic landmark building.

Nowadays, the building is not inhabited and it displays a poor state of preservation. Damages have been characterized reversible and are confronted through the elaboration of special restoration studies following the international principles of monument restoration. The cultural use that the building will acquire after the completion of the restoration works is compatible to its nature, while its reuse will make it once more a vibrant part of the city.

Introduction

The Klonaridis villa has been the residence of the homonymous family installed in the villa in 1902, at the same time with the beginning of the construction of the family factory family Brewery and Ice-Making factory, in an adjacent plot. The building’s history was evolving parallel to the history of the factory and is directly connected to the course of its business.

The factory, an important industrial unit of its time, occupied an entire building block and named the area, which was once renowned for its rural character with villas and orchards.(fig.1)

Given that the factory was recently demolished, although it had played an important role in the country’s industrial development, the villa now constitutes an important element which will contribute to the documentation of our industrial and cultural heritage.
Historic elements – use

Klonaridis Factory
The Klonaridis & Co Brewery and Ice-Making factory was founded when Miltiadis Klonaridis, who owned brewery factories in Egypt, was installed in Greece (c.a. 1900) and founded this particular venture with his brother, Errikos. They bought a large plot at Patisia where they constructed an imposing factory whose machinery, mechanics and craftsmen came from Germany [2].

The ice-making factory began functioning on the 1st of March 1903 and the production was constantly rising, so that a few months later, the Klonaridis brothers were offering free ice for the Athens Nursery and Municipal Hospital. They were also supplying the markets of Smyrna with regular loads of ice leaving from the port of Piraeus [3].

On the 26th of December 1903, the inauguration of the brewery was attended by the city authorities, by officials and a large crowd. Apart from the factory, the company owned storehouses in Athens and Piraeus [4], while it also acquired a chain of stores which sold exclusively the Klonaridis beer, which was also delivered to the customers’ homes [5]. As suppliers of the royal court, they enjoyed the regard of the kings and upon a visit at the court in 1904, they were felicitated on their great and national work, while the factory’s garden hosted many receptions to help the work of the Government.

In 1908, the Klonaridis company was involved in a great economic scandal, when it was disclosed that it damaged the Hellenic State, by not defraying the legal duty for the importation of barley [6]. This adventure also marked the beginning of the company’s problems, which resulted in the sealing off of the factory and the arrest of Errikos Klonaridis for various debts in 1911 [7]. The brewery of Karolos Fix was already dominating Athens: Karolos Fix was continuing the family business founded by his father Ioannis Fix at the middle of the 19th century, when the family moved from Germany to Athens, following King Otto. The two businesses were strongly competing on the quality and availability of beer; this competition ended with the final buying off of the company by the K. Fix company. Upon the financial collapse of the K. Fix company in 1982, these assets ended in the hands of the National Bank of Greece [8], which ceded a part of the factory and the villa in 1993 to the Municipality of Athens, in order to cover the area’s needs for communal and utility areas [9].

Klonaridis Villa
A country house already existed in a plot adjacent to the factory and was bought at the same time by the Klonaridis brothers. It was extended and enhanced in order to become the family’s residence. It was built at the last quarter of the 19th century and is a typical example of a suburban mansion of the area [10](fig.2).

Following its buying off by the Klonaridis family, the villa was used to house the family, following the habit that wanted the residence of industrialists to be close to the factory, in order for them to closely supervise the work. Because of the large family, the villa was expanded and acquired
various adjacent buildings. The free space around it was preserved and was gradually transformed from an orchard into an urban garden.

Today, the building is uninhabited. Until the beginning of the 2000’s it was the home of a descendant of the family, within the context of an informal loan that the family enjoyed from K. Fix since the initial selling of the business - this informal loan is mentioned even until the property’s last selling contracts. It was later occupied by the homeless and by marginal elements, who caused great damage to the building through fire and various lootings (Fig.4). Due to its important historic and architectural value, the villa has been listed as a historic monument by the Ministry of Culture (Government Gazette 421/B/6-6-1994).

**Functional elements**

Today, the building has an almost square ground plan, formed after the extension of an initially parallelogram construction.

**Initial building**
The horizontal design of the initial building followed a strictly symmetric and simple layout, having as its symmetry axis the entrance and the elongated transversal corridor, which divided the building in two (fig.5). The same layout is to be found on the floor, where the balcony of the residence was installed on top of the entrance (fig.6). Auxiliary spaces had been anticipated in the secluded ground floor building to the west of the residence, and they are still standing today. The basement of the initial building had only been anticipated for its North-west part, with access from the interior staircase. The entire building is elevated from the surface formed around it, in order to be protected from humidity, as the area was filled with gardens and running waters. Above the staircase and in order to take advantage of the height of the roof, a small attic had been constructed for the personnel (fig.7).

**First extension**
The building’s first extension must have probably taken place upon the family’s installation, around 1902 (fig.8). It involved the addition of a room on every floor, along with the respective basement at the South-west side of the building and the extension of the corridor. This extension also explains the double thickness of the masonry in that part of the basement, but also the reduction of the thickness of the peripheral masonry. The extension on the south side is also visible on the pictorial rendition separating the building’s volumes through panels (fig.11). The addition was roofed with a soffit, which was probably accessed through a metallic circular staircase, following the habits of the times, from the North-west side of the building, where the second extension was made subsequently. At the same time, a general repair and renovation of the building must have taken place: the initial building and the first extension were bound with iron plates at the height of the building’s base.

The only depiction of the initial state of the villa that we dispose of today is included in a representation of the factory and comes from the Enthymion Athinon (Athens Memoir).1984, Athens (fig.2). It shows a part of the west side of the building roofed with tiles – this part has visibly receded. Given that we have no evidence for this part and supposing that this pictorial representation of the villa is accurate, we have considered that this was an even older extension, which was replaced with the one defined as the first one.

**Second extension**
We are not aware of the time when the second addition took place; it included the North-western area of the building, which, along with the extension of the corridor, is in a slightly angular recess. This area has not been placed at the continuity of the building’s unified base, but at ground level; this height difference enabled the creation of a mezzanine for sanitation areas,
which were absolutely necessary for the building’s use. It is interesting to note the presence of the intermediary door from the corridor towards this area: this door was blocked, probably during the second addition and a new access was opened from the staircase, for reasons that we are unaware of.

On the floor, the respective room which is higher than the rest of the building, might have initially been a porch which was roofed during a third extension of the building; this would explain the reduced thickness of its exterior walls, the angular small pillars, but also the offhandedness which characterizes the solution to access the soffit. It is surmised that the extension must have been concluded until 1912, since after that date the villa along with all the assets of the business were sold, while the informal loan did not allow for important interventions on the building.

**Auxiliary construction**

It consists of a ground floor construction to the west of the villa, which was constructed to include the villa’s auxiliary spaces. It has a double-pitched tiled roof covered by French-type tiles. It originally included a kitchen and sanitation areas and when the business was sold it became the dwelling of the factory’s supervisor.

**Construction data on the villa**

On the building’s main volume, the masonry is made of stonework which is 0,80 m thick at the basement and gradually decreases on the ground floor and the floor. A reduction of the thickness is also observed at the building’s first extension. Brickwork is also to be found on the exterior masonry at the extended part of the floor, aside from its customary use in the relieving arches of the openings, the risers of the windows and the parapets (fig.7).

The roof of the initial building is wooden, double-pitched and covered with Byzantine tiles. The first extension is covered by a passable soffit, while the second one by a four-pitched tiled roof, also covered by Byzantine tiles.

The roofs are formed following the ‘*bagdati*’ system and they bear visible traces of ceiling paintings. The basement of the initial building does not have ceilings and the structure of the floors is visible.

The floors are generally made from wood. An exception is formed by the floors of the soffit of the extensions on the mezzanine and the floor, where girders of a cross section of double T were used, with an intermediate bridging by stone slabs. The floors of the basement had been covered with large stone slabs, while the kitchen and the sanitation areas by 20X20 cm handmade cement plaques. In the soffit, as well as on the balcony, the floor is formed by Malta-type calcareous slabs, whose dimensions are 30X30 cm.

The frames are wooden. The interior doors have been fully preserved and they bear painted panels, while the firm external doors are two-flap, with glass and skylights protected by metal ironwork. The windows are wooden with skylights and with a wooden panel on their exterior side. The shutters are simple and riveted, their inferior part is complete, while in some cases appears the type of the *german* window with opening leaves. Internal shutters have been anticipated for the Southeast part of the floor of the initial building, possibly because of its orientation.

The staircase leading to the floor is wooden and straight, with an intermediate landing and a wooden railing with straight poles. The same form is shared by the staircases leading towards the attic and the basement, which were however much steeper and less wide.
The balcony is based on pillars of square cross section, with perimetric beams which are straight at the face and slightly curved at the sides. The parapet is composed of a series of clay decorative balusters among massive angular parts of masonry. The parapet of the soffit was formed by a built parapet and an intermediate baluster, different than those of the entrance which were older.

**Morphological elements of the façades**

The plastic decoration of the façades is concise and limited to the cornices, the parapet with baluster and to the painted exterior decoration which has formed the panels of the façades, of windows and the surface of façades as brickwork masonry. The panels of the façades traced in the initial building and in its first extension accentuate the form of the volumes, while the cornices have been formed by bricks in a denticular placement and have been constructed under the roof and between the floors. It is characteristic to note that the cornices do not include the building’s last extension.

Today, the building is generally painted in a dark red color with white panels, while the parapets and the entrance are painted at an ochre hue, just as the more recent coatings which appear at various places.

**Restoration of the building**

*Principles-methodology*

The restoration proposal aims at promoting the building’s architectural physiognomy, while enhancing its function. It included work for the building’s reinforcement and fixing, the replacement of all installations and the restoration not only of its initial form, but also of the extensions deemed noteworthy. The restoration was elaborated following the international principles and declarations, aiming at the preservation of the monument’s authenticity, at safeguarding the building’s long lifetime, while at the same time it opted for these interventions to be as reversible as possible, and was based on detailed research, on the current situation’s static and architectural documentation.

*Restoration proposal*

Within the context of functional interventions, it is proposed to construct two external staircases, which have been destroyed and which are in morphological harmony to the initial planning. On the mezzanine, the auxiliary sanitation area is divided in more sections so as to service more people. A small food elevator is placed at the opening of the ground floor between the corridor and the kitchen which had been blocked later on, in order to service the proposed dining room. An interior wooden staircase is placed on the floor, in order to access the soffit.

At the building’s exterior, the proposed interventions aim at restoring the initial form of the façades, with morphological elements rendering to the building an aesthetics in concordance to the spirit of its creators (fig.9). Within this context, the window of the basement at the principal façade and the window at the part of the second addition, at the north side of the building, which is estimated to have been modified later, return to their initial form (fig.10).

It is suggested to replace the roofs exactly like the original ones. An exception is made for the small-scale modification at the roof of the second extension, which is formed in such a manner so as to enable access to the soffit (fig.11).

All initial frames and morphological elements of the building are preserved, while for the removed elements for which we dispose no information, suggestions are made in perspective to the rest of the elements of the building or of other buildings of the same period and style. Security ironworks are placed at the frames of the basement, in the style of the existing gate (fig.12).
The organization of colorations proposed was in the spirit of the initial creators and the spirit of the time that the building represents. Accordingly, the dark red hue is maintained in the general colouring and all the painted decorative elements are white, such as the frames of façades and of windows, as well as the imitation of the brickwork. We have proposed to paint the shutters dark green and the railings at a carbon hue.

**Restoration – formation of the courtyard**

It was proposed to recreate the urban garden of 1902, by modifying the garden of the old country house. The proposal includes clearly dissociating the garden from the rest of the green common space which had been created after the demolition of the old factory, as well as the return of the initial iron enclosure, part of which is still standing.

**THE PAINTED DECORATION**

The «Klonaridis Villa» has defied time and has maintained the remarkable color and painted decoration in its interior as well as on its exterior.

The building’s façade is dominated by the Pompeian red, with a painted imitation of brickwork masonry. The building’s angles as well the perimeter of windows are rendered in painting, imitating a tile construction, with an isodomic design at a whitish coloration (Fig. 13).

**Ground floor**

The painted decoration begins at the propylon of the entrance. Beneath the plastered decoration added at a later date, a decorative frieze runs through the part of the wall underneath the balcony (Fig. 14).

Upon entering the ground floor, a long corridor divides the house symmetrically in two parts and leads to the back west exit. The walls of the corridor are painted from the floor to the ceiling in an amazing composition, imitating a marble revetment and testifying to the family’s economic prosperity, given that the decorating artist who was called to work on the villa was a fine master. (Fig. 15) At the inferior zone, the *passamento* was colored at sienna and rosso antico hues, imitating a marble revetment within rectangular panels. At the finishing of this zone runs an imitation of a marble crossbeam, painted at ochre hues. The superior part is structured within rectangular panels and is also rendered through the imitation of marble revetment, contained in a whitish marble frame, thus delimitating space. The panel’s interior imitates a painting and shows a rather mannered imitation of marble revetment at an ochre hue, while the waters of the marble are greatly schematized. This decoration runs also along the wooden staircase leading to the floor and also continues to the corridor of the floor.

Upon entering the long room to the south (6.90 X 4.55 m.) we could be finding ourselves inside the dining room, because of the extensive decoration of the ceiling and the size of the hall. The ceiling painting is well preserved and consists of a large band running around the ceiling and including panels, inside which alternate floral patterns. The interior parallelogram which is formed contains small lozenges breaking the monotony of the plain, by forming at its corners a swastika, while at the middle they are decorated in the shape of a cross by floral repetitive patters. A floral decoration is symmetrically developed in the middle of the composition, inside a large rhomboidal form. All these elements have earth tones and hues of brown. The walls are coated in a uniform brown color which covers a painted decoration underneath – this decoration appears schematically at various points! (Fig. 16)

Even the interior paneled doors are painted. In the other areas of the ground floor, the walls have been coated with color at a later date, while the ceilings are covered by a plaster decoration added later on. But the wear from time has revealed the painted coating underneath.
The riser (pasamento) of the main corridor continues in the staircase and is drawn at the same height. It runs through the entire length of the staircase, until the entrance of the corridor to the floor (Fig. 17).

**Floor**
The rhythmology of the floor follows the same structure as that of the ground floor. The corridor is the same oblong space as the one on the ground floor. The inferior zone (pasamento) is preserved in its original form, but the walls’ superior zone is color coated, and the ceiling is decorated by a plaster decoration (Fig. 18). A scaling of the color which was added later on has revealed an older painted layer. The walls of all the rooms on the floor have been coated at a later date. Here as well, the scaling of the more recent coating and the fissures that have strained the building have revealed the presence of painted decoration. (Fig.19,20)

In conclusion, we could say that the Klonaridis Villa manifested overall a rich painted decoration, executed by noteworthy artists of the time, which is mainly indicated by the excellent rendition of the ground floor’s corridor. This corridor must become the object of systematic and detailed research, in order to allow for the documentation of its true image.

**Technology of the creation of the ceiling paintings**
1. Support
The ceiling paintings are supported by wood beams which are fayed into the wall’s masonry and are covered by wood slats (bagdati) and plaster.

2. Underlay
The ceiling paintings’ underlay is plaster 2-2.5 cm thick, which has been placed in successive layers: the first contains gross grain, whose connective material is lime and inactive material on the bagdati; the subsequent layers are more fine grained. The granulometry (sieved sand) of the lime and the inactive material that they include reduces as we move towards the final surface which received the pigments.

3. Painting surface
In order to create the painting surfaces, pigments have been used in the form of powder, bound together with linseed oil. This is the al secco painting technique, meaning painting on dry plaster.

**State of preservation of mural & ceiling paintings**
The mural and ceiling paintings are in a poor state of preservation. The largest part of the mural paintings is covered by later color coatings.

The main cause for the damage incurred to the ceiling paintings is the poor state of preservation of the roof. At the floor, the rain water has caused the loss of the underlay and of part of the painted surface for the ceiling paintings. Part of the painted decoration has been chromatically altered, while at many points the underlay has been detached from its support.

Moreover, the underlay of the mural and ceiling paintings has undergone serious fissures, due to the mechanic stress that the building has suffered from earthquakes and from its inappropriate use.

Summarily, the state of preservation of the mural and ceiling paintings is the following:
• Fissures running through the surface of the underlay.
• The underlay has been detached from its support medium.
• Posterior interventions have been made on the color restoration.
• Damage caused by posterior electrical installation.
• Scalings on the painted surface.
• The painted surface is covered by scratches and superficial dirt.
• A posterior plaster decoration covers the ceiling paintings.
Conservation and restoration proposals
On the basis of the proposals for the restoration and promotion of the building’s architectural physiognomy, the proposals for the conservation and restoration of the damage caused on the mural and ceiling paintings are the following:

- Cleaning – revelation of the painted decoration.
- Removal of the plaster decoration on the ceiling paintings.
- Fixing the painting layer.
- Fixing – underpinning of the ceiling paintings’ sub-layer.
- Removal of electrical installations.
- Removal of added paintings.
- Completion of losses and fissures.
- Retouche of the painted surface.

Proposals for the restoration of the exterior painting
It is proposed to clean and reveal - remove the posterior coatings and to highlight the isodomic design as well as the colors preserved on the frieze.
Following the restoration works on the building’s façades, we propose the color restoration of the frieze as well as the restoration of the isodomic design on the entire surface of the floor.

CONCLUSIONS
The building is in a bad state of preservation. The damage observed because of the ageing of materials, the long-time inadequate conservation but also the earthquake stresses, is considered to be reversible and will be encountered through the elaboration of a special restoration static and exterior-interior painting study. The cultural use which will be given to the building following the restoration works is compatible to its nature, it does not force large-scale modifications and additions. Through its reuse, the building will become once more an active element of the city.

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