CONSERVATION AND REHABILITATION OF LISTED BUILDINGS IN LIMASSOL, CYPRUS

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ABSTRACT

In the historic centre of Limassol, buildings from different historical periods coexist, presenting a dynamic developing landscape. Almost all of the historic and traditional buildings in the centre of the city have been declared as listed in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Law. The revitalization of a number of listed buildings and their reuse for housing the Technological University of Cyprus is the object of this paper. Complex functional and constructional problems arising from the integration of new uses were successfully solved. The need for the creation of large public halls, the demand for easy access for people with special needs and the embodiment of new electromechanical installations are some of the many problems that were resolved with success. The creation of additional underground spaces and the need for anti-seismic reinforcement, in parallel with the demand for thermal and acoustic insulation requirements led to interesting solutions. The use of materials compatible with the original and the integration of new contemporary light-weight constructions, which were as reversible as possible and consistent with the existing fabric, were some of the principles that were followed in order to resolve the various structural problems. The analysis of the positive and negative effects of implementation of new uses different from the original ones leads to broader discussions on the conversion of historic buildings within the philosophical framework of international principles for rehabilitation. It also raises questions relative to intervention, sustainable development, and reinforcement of existing structures in order to meet contemporary requirements.

INTRODUCTION

Built environment and legislation protection

The revitalization of important historic and traditional listed buildings in the centre of Limassol and their reuse for housing the Technological University of Cyprus is the object of this paper. Complex functional and constructional problems arising from the integration of new uses in existing shells should be solved, as now the buildings are to accommodate public, educational functions. Through the examples analyzed, the current problems facing the historical buildings of the cities of the island and particularly those of the city of Limassol are emphasized. The current trends and approaches in conservation in Cyprus and the way in which these are related and affected by the general philosophical framework and principles applied today, are also presented. This will lead to a global approach to the recent historical development of the planning and management of the architectural heritage of the island. The analysis is comprised of mainly representative examples of recent conservation works in the historic core of the city. For this purpose, fully-completed as well as under construction projects, which have exhibited or are now exhibiting issues of integration, reuse, structural support, scale and texture, are presented.

In the historic centre of Limassol, which is comprised of the neighborhoods of the old city (around the historic castle) there coexist buildings from different historic periods, thus presenting a dynamic developing landscape with multiple readings. Often, in the same area, earlier residential
and commercial uses co-exist with later functions, related mainly to education, leisure, and culture. Most buildings are attached to each other with internal courtyards except for several neoclassical and colonial buildings of public use, which follow the detached building system. The centre of the city includes significant buildings such as churches, mosques, industrial buildings (including wineries) and theaters. In the centre, there are also colonial buildings, which were erected during the British occupation of the island (end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century), which firstly served as government offices. Most of these buildings were until recently in a poor condition as they were not properly conserved and just facilitated the local administration, being used as a post office, courthouse, land registration office etc.

Almost all of the historic and traditional buildings in the centre of Limassol have been declared as listed in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Law and a limited number of historic buildings have been designated by the State as ancient monuments under the Antiquities Law. The whole core of Limassol has been designated in the local plan of the city as an area of special interest. The declaration by the State of all the traditional buildings as listed, often without the consent of the owners, initially led to the protection of the buildings from any future demolition and substantial alteration, as the interventions carried out should follow the generally accepted principles described in the international preservation conventions and charters. Unfortunately, the unwillingness of some owners to maintain these buildings, and their subsequent abandonment, led to their deterioration, and in some cases, to their partial collapse. The discontinuation of the use as well as the under-functioning of others had negative effects on the structures. Wrong and often non-reversible methods of maintenance with the use of inappropriate materials and techniques brought about adverse effects on the historic city centre. Although the city always had rapid development, some of its neighborhoods have presented trends of abandonment and deterioration. Under the above conditions, the decision for embodying the Technological University within the historic centre of the town has been considered as having a positive affect contributing to the revitalization of the centre and its sustainable development.

Dealing with cultural and social revival of architectural heritage through International Charters and Declarations

When conserving a historic or vernacular building some of the questions arising are: How much of the old should be conserved? How far should the renovation either imitate or diverse from the original design? What sort of new technologies and materials are compatible with old structures and finishes? How important is the preservation of the original use? Which uses are desirable for historic buildings? The answers to these questions are not simple and are not always the same. It is obvious that all of the relevant factors have to be investigated in detail before action is implemented.

The specific individual value of each building and its tangible architectural components as well as the urban tissue of its location should be considered and assessed thoroughly before attempting any intervention. The investigation of the values of the architectural heritage before any intervention is underlined by the Burra Charter. Each construction should be recognized as an integral part of the cultural and built environment. The architectural value, which is expressed by the typology (floor plan, arrangement of spaces), morphology (features) and structural system as well as applied finishes may be individually or collectively important in defining the character of each building. The purpose for which each building was constructed as well as its historic (sense of time and place) and archaeological value play an important role in the decision-making. According to Article 9 of the Venice Charter the aim of conservation is to preserve and reveal the aesthetic and historic value of the building and should be respectful of the original material. Investigation
regarding the reasons and the time in which the building achieved its importance and the way this value contributed to the significance of the district is also essential. Thus, in every conservation project primary consideration should be given to the identification, retention and protection of all of these elements. Caution should be exercised in developing plans that would radically change the character or alter other values of each building. According to the Burra Charter identification of the parts of the building that are significant and those that may not be of great importance is often required. This information will form the basis for decisions about its management.

All of the interventions should be faced in a multidisciplinary way and be preceded by a full analysis of the form and structure. The new elements added should respect the authentic values and the fabric of the original buildings, with the use of suitable compatible materials. According to the Burra Charter, significant fabric should be preserved, as its unnecessary removal breaks the tangible links with the past. Reversible interventions and new structures that are distinguished from the original fabric but respect the authentic elements should be preferred (Burra Charter, Venice Charter).

It is important to bear in mind that even if the exterior of a building is very often its most prominent visible aspect - as it constitutes its “public face” sometimes its interior is equally important in conveying the building’s history and development over time. Rehabilitation has to respect all of the exterior and interior constituent parts and features of the building that are significant to its historic, architectural and cultural values. These values are closely associated with the introduction of new uses and thus care should be taken during this process.

The total reconstruction of the interior of a building and the preservation of only the external shell and facets, although being a practice followed in some cases, is considered as an extreme solution, as in this case there is no relation between the facets and the internal layout (form, typology). Thus, the architectural character of the building disappears behind the facets [1]. On the contrary, the conservation of the interior to a greater or lesser degree according to the architectural value of the building and the functional prerequisites increases the difficulty in design, but at the same time may lead to excellent results with the maintenance of the building’s identity. Thus, the embodiment of new structures and forms in existing shells is a challenge which at the same time offers a great margin for architectural creation.

It is obvious that the revival and reuse of historic and traditional buildings or groups of buildings is always recommended, provided however, that these functions do not impair either the interior or exterior of the structures as well as their nature as integral entities. The answer to the question whether the building will be adapted to the new use or the use adapted to the building determines the attitude towards the decision procedure [2, 3]. If the ultimate aim is the protection of the architectural heritage, the second case will lead to successful results from the conservation point of view. Thus, the investigation of the proper uses that can be incorporated into a historic building is a prerequisite.

It is not a coincidence that almost all conventions and international charters concerning the architectural heritage give special consideration and emphasis on the new uses which should be compatible with the cultural significance of the buildings and involve minimal alteration to their fabric (Venice Charter, Burra Charters). Alterations for the adaptation of new uses can be accepted if they have minimum impact on the cultural value and need minor changes to their structure and form without change in the layout of the building. It is only within certain limits that modifications demanded by a change of function should be envisioned and permitted. There is always a preference for the preservation of the original use, but if this is not possible, a new use compatible
with the original one can be adopted in order to restore the function of the buildings. In his book “Theory of Conservation”, Brandi refers to the importance of the restoration of the function of the historic buildings, whereas the Venice Charter claims that conservation is always facilitated by making use of the buildings for some socially useful purpose.

EXPERIMENTAL

Matters of intervention and integration. The city of Limassol

The integration of the newly established Technological University of Cyprus in the historic centre of Limassol is unique for the island, and has enhanced the revitalization of the historic city centre with the functional integration of existing historic buildings in the life of the town. According to the Unesco Convention of 1972 (concerning the protection of the world cultural heritage), the cultural heritage should acquire a function in the life of the community. This function will integrate the protection of the heritage into comprehensive planning programs. The Amsterdam Declaration also underlines the consideration of social factors during conservation inferring that a policy of conservation means the integration of the architectural heritage into social life. This integration is expected to lead to alterations of the urban and architectural character of the old city and affect the local society. It will result in a rapid growth of earlier run-down neighborhoods, with significantly positive consequences, attracting different social groups - including students - and bringing new life into the centre of Limassol.

Many existing contemporary buildings as well as listed historic or traditional examples were selected to be converted into university buildings. In this paper, the most important listed buildings that were chosen for this purpose are presented (fig.1). Four of them are public buildings and until recently were under-functioning as government offices. The conservation works of three of these buildings have already been completed. Another interesting example is the municipal library that is now being converted into an electronic university library. Some other private listed buildings were acquired or rented by the State to host university facilities.

Figure 1. Integration of university uses (red spots) in the urban core

The plans and proposals for the conservation of the above-mentioned listed buildings were prepared by teams of private architects and engineers selected by the owner. These proposals were submitted together with the “Application for Consent by the Minister of the Interior” to the municipality of Limassol, where they were examined by an aesthetic advisory committee. The proposals were then transmitted to the Conservation Section of the Town Planning and Housing Department for permission. The Conservation Section is the government section in charge of the architectural heritage of Cyprus and incorporates all the internationally-accepted principles and charters for the conservation. Actually, this Section controls the works of preservation of all listed
buildings in Cyprus and plays a very important role in the protection and enhancement of all physical and built manifestations of the heritage of the island, as it applies the Town and Country Planning Law which refers to the conservation of listed traditional buildings. Before the beginning of any conservation work the so called “Ministerial Consent” and all the subsequent licences (Town Planning Permit and Building Permit) from the relevant authorities were acquired. The Conservation Section in collaboration with the private architects and the owner supervised the works carried out, so as to ensure that the internationally-accepted principles and licensed plans were followed.

The interventions that were designed for both the exterior and interior of each individual listed building were based on the value of the typological and morphological elements and features [4]. The buildings’ plans (sequence of spaces, circulation and patterns), the individual architectural features and various finishes and materials (walls, floors, ceilings) were in each case evaluated before the decision-making. Thus, in the municipal library where there were a lot of unique and special morphological elements (staircases, plaster cornice ceilings) on the exterior as well as in the interior of the building, there was an effort to preserve all these elements. On the other hand, in the case of the courthouse and the girls’ school where no such important morphological features exist, the interventions and new structures were more freely arranged. In these cases, extensive alterations were perfectly acceptable and in some rooms a total reconfiguration was implemented.

**Decision making according to the new university uses to be introduced in each building**

The selection of the university use to be introduced into each individual building was based on the architectural and typological elements of each structure. According to the Burra Charter, where the existing use is of cultural significance, every effort should be made to retain that use; if this is not possible then the place should have a compatible use. Therefore, for the rector’s council offices, the 19th century two storey post office was selected, which is an impressive building rather older than the rest with a previous use of public significance (fig.2-3). The existence of arches, decorative niches, magnificent staircases and large halls create an excellent aesthetic environment suitable for hosting these offices, which require large unified spaces. This is in accordance with Article 5 of the Venice Charter stating that the new use of a building must not change its layout or decoration. It was decided that the building of the land registration office and the old girls’ school host university laboratories as in this case, the required alterations would be rather limited. The old courthouse with the single magnificent central space was chosen to host the university library. This central hall was ideal for hosting new lofts which created extra space for bookshelves.

**Figures 2-3.** Exterior and interior view of the two storey post office
The old municipal library, one of the most impressive buildings in the town and probably a unique structure on the island (fig.4-5), will be used as an electronic library, thus preserving its existing use and following the principles of the Venice and the Burra Charter. Its conversion into an electronic library did not demand any additional loads on its already problematic structure. The construction of the first floor slab is comprised of a combination of steel beams and small bricks, and thus was considered unsuitable for greater loads despite the reinforcement implemented. It is for the above reasons that the placement of a library of the traditional type on this floor was avoided.

![Figures 4-5. The old municipal library of Limassol](image)

**Identifying the typological elements. Matters of integration**

The primary and often more public spaces of the buildings (foyers, corridors, stair-halls) were preserved in their original arrangement as these constitute the most important typological elements of the buildings. The sequence and flow of these spaces contribute to the buildings’ character. Secondary spaces, generally more utilitarian in appearance and size than primary ones (service rooms) were considered of lesser importance and accepted greater change without compromising the buildings’ historic character. Therefore, interventions to the primary rooms (foyers) were avoided and all the facilities and secondary services were housed in the secondary rooms. The sequence of spaces was always respected as this defines and expresses the buildings’ historic function and unique character. Thus, the most important sequences of spaces were identified and retained in the conservation work. In any case, the interior did not lose the physical vestiges of its past as well as its historic function. The sense of time and place associated with both the building and the district in which it was situated was also preserved. The need for the creation of large public halls, mainly to be used as comprehensive spaces for various events as well as for teaching, led either to the erection of new structures in the open space of the plots or to the demolition of some less important interior partition walls for the unification of existing smaller spaces.

Specifically, in the case of the girls’ school, which had an original plan in the shape of a Greek Π (with rooms arranged around a central yard) an elliptical contemporary structure with a slightly vaulted roof was erected in the open space (fig.6-7). This structure replaced an existing later addition integrated in this area which was considered of no architectural interest and value. This addition did not respect the authentic fabric and layout of the original building. The removal of this new addition of little interest brought to light the original layout of the building, contributing to the enhancement of its original authentic value. This is in accordance with Article 11 of the Venice Charter. On the other hand, the new structure with its simple and contemporary design, erected at a small distance from the authentic shell of the old building was perfectly incorporated.
into the open space. The connection between the old and the new structure was achieved via glass corridors (fig.8-10). In this way, the distinction between the old and the new was clear and successful as the new additions were clearly contemporary for their time (Burra Charter).

**Figures 6-7.** The incorporation of the elliptical hall in the open space of the girls’ school

**Figures 8-10.** The glass corridors, which connect new additions with the old building

The primary spaces like stair-halls (characteristic of the building type) were not subdivided. In other cases (old post office), some interior partition walls without any special architectural features were partly demolished in order to increase the unified interior space and create a hall for the rector’s council. In these cases, parts of the demolished walls, especially the connections between two perpendicular walls and their upper parts were preserved for structural and aesthetic reasons. All the new interior openings had their lintels constructed of contemporary materials and this led to an obvious distinction between the new and the old openings (Burra Charter).

In some cases the large spaces were subdivided either vertically through the insertion of new partitions or horizontally through the insertion of mezzanines. The need for small auxiliary rooms in the interior of larger spaces was met with the use of light partition walls. These remained at a lower level than the original spaces. In other cases, glass panels were placed in their upper part. In this way, these new partitions were distinguished from the original fabric.

On the other hand, the demand for a large number of small student studios in existing private historic buildings led to fragmentation proposals of authentic old mansions because of the many partitions required. In this way, the original typology of these buildings was altered. These proposals need further consideration so as not to endanger the architectural value and the layout of the buildings (Article 5 of the Venice Charter).

The creation of new staircases and lofts in the interior for acquiring additional space, led to interesting results as these were constructed of new contemporary and light materials (Burra
Charter, Venice Charter). These structures were incorporated into the interior of large spaces but can be distinguished from the old fabric. In one case, the required size of the new staircase for safety or functional reasons led to its imposition over the traditional structure (fig.11-13). When a second access was required, new staircases in secondary spaces were constructed.

Figures 11-13. The incorporation of a new staircase and a loft in the interior of the university library

The need for closing original arches both in the exterior (courthouse), and in a couple of cases in the interior of the buildings (post office) led to the investigation of simple contemporary solutions with the use of frameless transparent glass. In this way the original typology and morphology of the structures was maintained and the new intervention can be distinguished from the authentic structure, which followed the principles of the Venice and the Burra Charter.

The need for structural reinforcement

All the original authentic building materials (mainly stone) that were in good condition were preserved. The buildings were mainly conserved using traditional materials and techniques similar to the original ones, following the principles of the ICOMOS Charter on the Built Vernacular Heritage (1999), which underline the importance of the continuity of traditional building systems and craft skill associated with vernacular architecture. The later additions and interventions using new materials (especially reinforced concrete) that were not compatible with the original fabric of the buildings were carefully removed (Article 11 of the Venice Charter). Thus, all the concrete beams and columns were demolished with great care in order to avoid any possible damage to the authentic structure and materials.

The need for anti-seismic reinforcement in order to meet the new needs and regulations led in many cases to the investigation of simple solutions that were reversible and compatible with the authentic structures. This is in accordance with the Burra Charter principles stating that alterations to significant fabric should be reversible (i.e. temporary and removable). According to the Burra Charter, change that harms cultural significance and for which there is no current alternative should be reversible and be reversed when circumstances permit. Therefore, simple steel members (tension wires) visible in the interior and sometimes in the exterior of the buildings (courthouse) were incorporated (fig.14-15). These elements have minimal dimensions so that they do not disturb the continuity and the form of the authentic structure and are easily reversible. In some instances (post office), the main structural timber beams bridging the span of very large spaces were replaced by steel elements for structural reasons. This approach is in accordance with Article 10 of the Venice Charter stating that when traditional techniques prove inadequate, the consolidation of a building can be achieved by the use of any modern technique, the efficiency of
which has been shown by scientific data and proved by experience. The other timber elements were preserved or replaced by new members identical with the original ones.

**Figures 14-15.** Steel members (tension wires) visible in the interior and the exterior of the buildings

The suggestion by one of the private teams that was responsible for the conservation and reuse of the Limassol Municipal Library as an electronic university library to implement an innovative solution of seismic isolation (lead rubber or friction pendulum) was considered and discussed in detail. This solution offered some definite advantages over more traditional methods [5]. According to the proposal, its proper use would significantly reduce the seismically-induced deformations and forces of the superstructure and would greatly reduce forces at the foundation. The main result of this reduction in forces and deformations is the minimizing of the requirements for strengthening the superstructure and foundation so that the architectural and historic features of the structure are preserved. The team also believed that it would be unlikely that the increase of the shear strength through injections or similar methods, without reducing the forces and deformations of an isolation system, would be sufficient to provide the necessary capacity for the expected seismic demand without a significant impact on the architectural features of the building. Eventually, this suggestion was not accepted by the owner and the relevant Government Departments because of the high cost compared to the traditional methods of conservation, and also because of the risk concerning the method of jacking up the structure and inserting the isolators under the whole building due to the inexperience of the contractors (Article 10 of the Venice Charter).

The increase of the permitted loads in a historic building due to new use often leads to solutions requiring the reinforcement of its load bearing system. Such an increase in load may have adverse consequences in the structure and form of the building and may make the intervention undesirable. Therefore, a careful study and consideration of all possible effects should precede any intervention. It is important that the original form of construction of the building is preserved and every addition or reinforcement is oriented towards the maintenance of its authenticity. Thus, any reinforcement should not change the role of the separate elements of the original traditional structure for historic, archaeological, and constructional reasons. The partial alteration of the bearing element may lead to detrimental solutions especially when the new elements do not cooperate harmoniously with the existing ones because of their different qualities and behaviour under the various stresses. In such cases the intervention may have detrimental effects instead of having favourable results especially in cases of significant stresses – earthquakes etc.

*Evaluation of authentic morphological elements and introduction of new contemporary structures*

All the morphological elements of the buildings were respected and preserved. Special care was given to the conservation of all ashlar stone elements of the buildings – openings, corners, edges, roof details and mouldings. The importance of conserving and maintaining all decorations, which
form an integral part of a historic building, is underlined by Article 8 of the Venice Charter. The additions that were considered essential for better functioning of the buildings were designed with great caution. The ultimate aim was to introduce new elements that have a contemporary form and structure, are reversible, and at the same time respect the existing morphology without imposing on the old fabric. This principle is also underlined in the Burra Charter stating that any change should not falsify the evidence of the history of the building (e.g. work should not nostalgically create a false impression of age or style). In addition, the old and new work should be easily distinguishable. Therefore, iron frame structures with glass were chosen for the erection of a small entrance room in the old land registration building. Using transparent glass the whole façade remains visible behind this addition. This new structure with its lightness and simplicity contrasts with the original dense stone structure and is in harmony with the old fabric (fig.16). The same principles were followed for many other corridors between parts of the buildings that were not previously interconnected.

![Figure 16. Erection of a small entrance using iron frame structures with glass](image)

In the case of the proposed addition to the plot of the municipal library, a different approach was adapted. This impressive building was always visible from all sides, which were all richly ornamented. The addition had to be introduced to the plot in such a way as not to alter this visual presentation. Therefore, it was decided that the addition be placed at a lower level (underground). In this way, the authentic relation between the building and its surrounding environment will be preserved. This is in accordance with the principles expressed in Article 13 of the Venice Charter, as this addition did not detract from the interesting parts of the building, its traditional setting, the balance of its composition and its relation with its surroundings. Such solutions were followed in other cases in Cyprus and also internationally with successful results. For securing satisfactory lighting in the proposed underground addition, which is to be used as a reading room, a glass roof will be constructed in the middle of the space. In this way, a supply of adequate lighting will be achieved. The upper part of this structure, slightly elevated above the ground level, will be formed as an amphitheatrical outdoor space, being a part of the wider space design. For securing internal communication between the addition and the existing structure, a glass lift will be placed at the back of the building with a perimetral light staircase. This addition, which will constitute the only visible point of intervention, will be successfully incorporated in the whole structure in a contradictory way and will come in a dialogue with the existing shell.

The new light contemporary shelters erected in the open space of some of the plots had a simple contemporary form, being constructed of timber and steal elements. These new structures were implanted very successfully in the surrounding environment and created semi-open spaces, which were very useful for the students in a Mediterranean climate. Harmonizing new structures with the local existing cultural heritage is one of the factors that are considered to be of utmost importance. The creation of ramps for people with special needs also leads to interesting solutions.
Thus the additions and alterations needed for permitting public access to the buildings respected their authentic elements and any structural development considered necessary for this purpose did not adversely affect their architectural and historical character (Article 12 - Granada Convention), having simple contemporary form and minimal dimensions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The change in function of existing buildings is a practice that has been observed over time on a large scale. Some of the above-mentioned buildings have been adapted to different uses throughout their previous history. For example, the municipal library was a mansion of the Pilavakis family. Later on, it was deserted. Many thoughts for a new use as a Casino or Gallery were investigated. Eventually, the building was acquired by the municipality of Limassol. A part of it was converted into a municipal library and the other part remained empty. The two colonial buildings (court house and land registration office), previously mentioned had also undergone changes of use. In these cases, their functions remained either institutional or public and they were never converted into private houses. They were products of a whole socio-economic system and they have been conserved as such [6]. Therefore, the public character of these colonial buildings is now being preserved. This is in accordance with the principles of the ICOMOS Charter on the Built Vernacular Heritage (1999) stating that the vernacular traditional buildings embrace not only the physical form, fabric, and spaces, but also the ways in which they were used and understood and the traditions and the intangible association, which were attached to them.

The need for the creation of large public halls as well as small spaces and additional underground rooms led to interesting solutions. The insertion of lofts in the interior and the installation of shelters in the courtyards had successful results. The need for anti-seismic reinforcement, as well as thermal and acoustic insulation of the structures are some of the many problems that were resolved with success. In addition, the need for recreation places for students in the old city brought about the reuse of a great number of workshops and shops as well as small industrial buildings. The use of materials compatible with the original ones and the integration of new contemporary lightweight reinforcements, which were as reversible as possible and consistent with the existing traditional buildings constituted some of the principles that were followed in order to resolve the various structural problems. A key point of the interventions was the unity of materials and colours. The use of materials that perpetuate the texture and character of the traditional materials was preferable without precluding the use of contemporary ones, if these new materials were governed by synergy and structural consistency (fig.17-19). The use and application of these new materials and structures such as steel reinforcing elements within the interior and mostly on the exterior of the buildings was discreet.
**Figures 17-19.** The use of new contemporary materials and structures in the new university library

The preservation of the existing space relationships, the dialogue between the new and old, the preservation of the unity of the urban tissue and the vision of local architecture as a single object of study constituted a few parameters that determined the basic mechanisms of action. In order to achieve a successful synthetic effect, a thorough knowledge of traditional fabric and a fully integrated architectural approach was essential, since the whole effort aimed at successfully integrating new contemporary uses, structures, and additions in such a way as to not disrupt the balance of the whole. Simultaneously, the simplicity and purity of the shapes and forms, the direct relationship between form and function and the human scale are some of the architectural and anthropometric parameters that were taken into account during the enhancement and revitalization of traditional shells.

**CONCLUSIONS**

The analysis of the positive and negative effects of implementation of new uses different from the original ones in the historical listed buildings in Limassol leads to broader discussions on the conversion of existing buildings within the philosophical framework of international principles for rehabilitation. It also raises questions relative to intervention and reinforcement of existing structures in order to meet contemporary requirements.

The answer to the question as to whether a new use can be embodied in an old existing fabric is not easy. To arrive at a decision it is essential to consider initially with care the positive and negative consequences. It is important to reuse and revive an existing building but this has to be done with respect to its architectural, aesthetic and historical value. If a use brings about many alterations and changes to its typology and structural integrity it should be avoided. The building should be functional, but the new use has to be embodied in harmony with the existing fabric.

Virtually all the rehabilitation projects involve a degree of alteration and change in the life of the buildings, which may range from conservative preservation to total reconfiguration [4]. Most of the buildings are characterized by variations, continuations and discontinuations in their life – additions, changes in use and functions. Despite these changes, their symbolic entity is very often preserved. Even the incorporation, after conservation of a new use identical to the previous one constitutes an alteration. Nevertheless, the rehabilitation of existing buildings and their integration to the life of a city, with all the positive social consequences, is almost always desirable and helps towards the sustainable development of the architectural heritage.

**REFERENCES**


