Facing Shores of the Golden Horn:
A Spatial Reading of Waterfront Transformation

AR1A066 Delft Lectures on Architectural History and Theory (2025/26)

by

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A comparative study examining the spatial and visual transformation of the Golden Horn waterfront through the facing shorelines of Fener–Balat and Kasımpaşa–Hasköy, from the industrial working period to contemporary redevelopment.

// Abstract

This study examines the spatial and visual transformation of the Golden Horn waterfront in Istanbul through a comparative analysis of two facing shoreline segments (eastern and western shores). The specific areas of focus are Fener–Balat on the eastern shore and Kasımpaşa–Hasköy (including the Camialtı–Taşkızak shipyards) on the western shore. Rather than approaching the Golden Horn as a continuous and homogeneous waterfront, the study reads it through these opposing edges, which face the same body of water but have developed different spatial characteristics over time.

The research focuses on three main periods: the early 20th-century industrial production phase, the post-1980 deindustrialization process, and the contemporary redevelopment period. Across these phases, changes in shoreline morphology, spatial use, accessibility, and visual structure are analyzed comparatively using archival documents, historical maps, aerial photographs, and on-site observations.

The findings show that, despite their shared industrial past, the two shores have developed distinct spatial and visual conditions over time. The eastern shore has evolved into a more continuous, open, and publicly accessible waterfront, while the western shore, in contrast, presents a more fragmented and controlled structure. In this case, access to the waterfront is often limited and organized through specific entry points, creating semi-public or privately regulated spaces that interrupt shoreline continuity.

This comparison suggests that post-industrial waterfront transformation cannot be understood as a uniform or linear process. Instead, even within the same urban context, it can produce different spatial outcomes. In this sense, the study questions the common assumption of “homogeneous redevelopment” in waterfront literature and proposes a more layered reading of urban transformation.

// Thesis Outline

Chapter 1 – Introduction and Research Framework —— 01

This chapter introduces the research topic and positions the Golden Horn within the wider context of post-industrial waterfront transformation. It specifies the research questions, delineates the spatial and temporal boundaries of the study, and describes the methodological framework.

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- The edge between land and water stays relatively open, with multiple small access points

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3.2.2 Western Shore —— 39

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This chapter analyzes recent redevelopment processes and their impact on shoreline configuration, accessibility, and visual structure, highlighting increasing divergence between the two shores.

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4.1.1 Eastern Shore

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4.2 Changing Spatial Use —— 50

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4.2.2 Western Shore —— 51

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This chapter synthesizes the findings from the three historical phases and brings the eastern and western shorelines into direct comparison. By examining morphological change, spatial organization, accessibility, and visual transformation across time, it identifies patterns of continuity, rupture, and increasing divergence between the two sides of the Golden Horn.

The discussion highlights how shared industrial origins did not result in parallel spatial outcomes. Instead, differences in redevelopment strategies, degrees of intervention, and changing public–private dynamics contributed to distinct spatial trajectories. Through this comparative reading, the chapter clarifies the processes that produced uneven transformation within a shared metropolitan and historical framework.

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The final chapter presents a summary of the main findings and revisits the central research questions in the context of the comparative analysis. It demonstrates how the transformation of the Golden Horn exemplifies broader dynamics of post-industrial waterfront change, with particular emphasis on the emergence of spatial divergence along opposing urban edges.

The conclusion further examines the long-term implications of these transformations for urban morphology, accessibility, and visual experience. By situating the Golden Horn case within broader debates on waterfront redevelopment, the chapter highlights how uneven development processes can alter both the physical and perceptual relationships between the city and its waterfront over time.

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Chapter 1

Introduction and Research Framework

1.1 Introduction

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// 1.1 Introduction

Waterfronts have long shaped the spatial and economic structure of cities. For centuries, they functioned as key sites of production, trade, and infrastructure, while also reflecting evolving relationships between port activities and urban life (Hein, 2011). Rather than being shaped by a single process, waterfronts emerge through the interaction of multiple forces, including technological change, economic restructuring, planning decisions, and social dynamics. As Hoyle (2000) suggests, waterfront transformation takes place at the interface between port functions and the broader urban environment, where different actors, institutions, and interests come together, often producing both collaboration and conflict.

In many cities, these industrial functions began to decline in the late twentieth century. As deindustrialization and redevelopment processes unfolded, waterfronts gradually shifted from working landscapes to sites of environmental rehabilitation, public space, and new forms of urban investment. This shift is not only a physical transformation, but also involves changing economic priorities, governance structures, and patterns of urban use (Marshall, 2001; Desfor & Laidley, 2011).

The Golden Horn in Istanbul exemplifies this broader transformation, providing a specific and historically layered case of waterfront change. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it functioned as one of the city's principal industrial waterfronts. Shipyards, dock basins, warehouses, and production facilities defined both shores of the inlet. The water operated as a working surface that connected industrial zones rather than separating them. Yet over time, these shared industrial foundations did not lead to parallel spatial developments. Instead, the two shores gradually followed different trajectories.

This study focuses on two facing shoreline segments along the Golden Horn: Fener–Balat on the eastern shore and Kasımpaşa–Hasköy, including the Camialtı–Taşkızak shipyards, on the western shore. Although both areas developed within the same metropolitan and industrial framework, their spatial transformations have diverged. Today, their shoreline configurations, accessibility patterns, and visual relationships with the water reveal distinct spatial characteristics.

The research therefore asks how and why these differences emerged. It examines how shoreline typologies and edge conditions changed over time, how shifts in accessibility and spatial organization affected the relationship between buildings and water, and how visual and perceptual connections to the waterfront evolved across different historical phases.

Methodologically, the study combines urban historical research with spatial morphological analysis. Archival documents, historical maps, aerial imagery, and on-site observations are used to reconstruct three principal phases of transformation: the industrial working period, the post-1980s transition, and the contemporary redevelopment phase. Through a parallel comparison of the two shorelines, the research traces how similar industrial origins resulted in differentiated spatial outcomes.

This comparative approach suggests that the Golden Horn should not be interpreted as undergoing a uniform or linear transformation. Instead, it reveals a spatial condition shaped by uneven and layered change along opposing shores. Understanding this divergence is significant not only for interpreting the evolution of the Golden Horn itself, but also for reconsidering how waterfront transformation is conceptualized more broadly. The Golden Horn offers a historically stratified example in which industrialization, deindustrialization, and redevelopment can be observed within a single urban inlet. By foregrounding the divergence between facing shores, the study challenges the common assumption in waterfront transformation literature that post-industrial waterfronts tend to evolve as cohesive and unified entities, and instead proposes a more nuanced reading of urban transformation as internally differentiated and morphologically complex (Marshall, 2001; Desfor & Laidley, 2011).

// 1.2 Literature Review

Waterfront areas have historically played an important role in shaping the spatial structure of cities. In particular, the reciprocal relationship between port activities and urban development has been a determining factor in shaping waterfronts both economically and spatially, as well as physically (Hein, 2011; Hoyle, 1989). For a long period of time, these waterfront areas functioned as production-oriented working landscapes in port cities, organized around shipyards, docks, warehouses, and maritime circulation. In this period, the shoreline was not only a physical boundary, but also an active interface that directly took part in the production system.

Towards the end of the twentieth century, with the decline of industrial activities, these areas began to transform. Former industrial waterfronts gradually became spaces open to public use, accommodating cultural functions and evolving into areas of urban development (Marshall, 2001; Desfor & Laidley, 2011). In the literature, this transformation is mostly defined as a shift from production-oriented areas to publicly accessible urban spaces.

A significant part of the existing literature discusses this transformation through examples from North America and Western Europe, often describing the process as a comprehensive and coordinated redevelopment guided by planning strategies. Marshall (2001) approaches waterfront transformation as a transitional process in which cities redefine their relationship with water, while Desfor and Laidley (2011) emphasize that this process is shaped through governance, economic restructuring, and planning frameworks. These approaches, which complement each other, play an active role in defining the future of waterfront cities. However, these studies mainly focus on more coordinated transformations, so they do not fully explain more fragmented or uneven waterfront conditions.

The Golden Horn, as an active industrial waterfront and as a contrasting example, does not fully align with this model. Bezmez (2008) shows that the transformation of the Golden Horn took place not as a single, unified process, but rather through independent and at times disconnected interventions. Instead of producing a single and coherent spatial outcome, this process resulted in waterfront fragments that accumulated over time and differentiated both morphologically and structurally. This suggests that waterfront transformation cannot always be read as a linear and unified process, but may instead produce fragmented, uneven, and at times disconnected spatial conditions.

More recent studies approach waterfront transformation not only through functional change but also through spatial and morphological perspectives. Breś and Krośnicka (2021) examine how waterfront edges become more permeable over time, highlighting issues of continuity, accessibility, and the land–water relationship. Similarly, Krośnicka and Wawrzyńska (2023) demonstrate how infrastructural decisions and environmental factors influence shoreline form and long-term spatial development. These approaches are particularly relevant for this study, as they emphasize the importance of spatial configuration in understanding waterfront transformation.

In the context of Istanbul, existing studies generally focus on specific waterfront segments and on the adaptive reuse of industrial heritage. Özdamar (2022) and Çakmaklı (2025), for example, examine pedestrian experience and transformation processes through selected areas along the Golden Horn. However, these studies tend to focus on individual sites and do not sufficiently address the relationship between opposing shorelines within the same body of water.

Although uneven development is frequently mentioned in waterfront literature, studies that examine how opposing shorelines with similar industrial backgrounds diverge over time remain limited. This creates a gap in understanding how similar initial conditions can lead to different spatial outcomes. In the case of the Golden Horn, the western shoreline, particularly the Camialtı and Taşkızak shipyards and the Kasımpaşa Shipyard, developed as a large-scale, production-oriented industrial landscape.

// 1.2 Literature Review

Waterfront areas have historically played an important role in shaping the spatial structure of cities. In particular, the reciprocal relationship between port activities and urban development has been a key factor in shaping waterfronts both economically and spatially (Hein, 2011; Hoyle, 1989). For a long period, these waterfronts functioned as production-oriented working landscapes in port cities, organized around shipyards, docks, warehouses, and maritime circulation. In this period, the shoreline was not only a physical boundary but an active interface that was directly part of the production system.

Towards the end of the twentieth century, with the decline of industrial activities, these areas began to transform. Former industrial waterfronts gradually opened to public use and turned into spaces that host cultural functions and new forms of urban development (Marshall, 2001; Desfor & Laidley, 2011). In the literature, this transformation is often described as a shift from production-based areas to publicly accessible urban spaces.

A significant part of the existing studies examines this transformation through examples from North America and Western Europe, where the process is generally defined as a coordinated and comprehensive redevelopment guided by planning strategies. Marshall (2001) describes waterfront transformation as a transitional process in which cities redefine their relationship with water, while Desfor and Laidley (2011) emphasize how governance, economic restructuring, and planning frameworks shape this process. Together, these approaches highlight how different aspects of change contribute to the future of waterfront cities. However, they often assume that such transformations take place in a continuous and integrated manner.

The Golden Horn, as an example of an active industrial waterfront that developed differently, does not fully fit into this model. Bezmez (2008) shows that the transformation of the Haliç waterfront occurred not as a single, unified process but through a series of separate and sometimes disconnected interventions. Instead of producing a single and consistent spatial outcome, these interventions accumulated over time and resulted in waterfront segments that differ both in form and structure. This suggests that waterfront transformation cannot always be understood as a linear and unified process, but rather as a fragmented and uneven one.

More recent studies approach waterfront transformation not only in terms of functional change but also through spatial and morphological perspectives. Breś and Krośnicka (2021) examine how waterfront edges become more permeable over time, focusing on continuity, accessibility, and the relationship between land and water. Similarly, Krośnicka and Wawrzyńska (2023) highlight how infrastructural decisions and environmental factors shape shoreline form and long-term spatial development. These approaches are particularly relevant for this study as they emphasize the importance of spatial configuration in understanding waterfront transformation.

In the context of Istanbul, existing studies tend to focus on specific waterfront segments and on the adaptive reuse of industrial heritage. Özdamar (2022) and Çakmaklı (2025), for example, examine pedestrian experience and transformation processes in particular areas along the Golden Horn. However, these studies usually focus on single sites and do not sufficiently address the relationship between opposing shorelines within the same water body.

Although uneven development is frequently mentioned in the literature, there are limited studies that examine how facing shores with similar industrial backgrounds diverge over time. This creates a gap in understanding why similar initial conditions can lead to different spatial outcomes. In the case of the Golden Horn, the western shore developed as a large-scale, production-oriented industrial landscape, particularly around the Camialtı and Taşkızak shipyards and the Kasımpaşa Shipyard. In contrast, the eastern shore, including Fener and Balat, developed within a finer-grained residential fabric.

// 1.3 Case Study Area / Initial Topic

This study examines specific, opposing shoreline segments along the Golden Horn in order to analyze the spatial and visual transformation of the waterfront over time. Rather than approaching the Golden Horn as a continuous and uniform edge, the research focuses on two facing segments whose historical roles within the port-city system developed under different geographical, infrastructural, and economic conditions: Kasımpaşa–Hasköy on the western shore and Fener–Balat on the eastern shore.

On the western shoreline, the analysis centers on the former Haliç Shipyards area (Camialtı–Taşkızak), recently redeveloped as Rixos Tersane Istanbul. Historically, this segment functioned as a concentrated maritime production zone structured around large-scale shipbuilding infrastructure, dock basins, slipways, and naval repair facilities. Its geographical position along deeper waters and its integration into Ottoman and later Republican naval-industrial networks positioned it as a significant economic node within the Golden Horn's working waterfront. The morphology of this shoreline was closely shaped by heavy infrastructural investment, resulting in a territorially defined and predominantly industrial edge condition.

On the eastern shoreline (Fener–Balat), the study investigates a continuous residential waterfront defined by incremental transformations, evolving edge conditions, and changing relationships between buildings, streets, and the water. Although industrial activities were also present along this shore, they operated at a smaller scale and were interwoven with a dense residential and commercial fabric rather than organized as a centralized maritime complex. Workshops, storage buildings, and localized production spaces coexisted with neighborhood-based economies, producing a more porous and gradually formed land–water interface. Its geographical position within an already established urban fabric and its comparatively limited large-scale infrastructural investment contributed to a spatial condition distinct from that of the western shore.

The temporal scope of the study extends from the early twentieth century, when the Golden Horn functioned as an active industrial waterfront, through the period of deindustrialization and environmental remediation following the 1980s, and into the contemporary phase of waterfront redevelopment from the 2000s to the present.

By placing these two opposing segments in dialogue, the study looks at them through the same set of criteria, focusing on shoreline morphology, spatial use and accessibility, and visual relations with the water across different periods. This makes it possible to read the two shores not as separate cases, but as parts of the same system that changed in different ways over time. Even though they respond to similar transformation processes, the outcomes are not the same. In this way, the comparison helps to show how differences in geographical position, infrastructural development, and economic role have influenced their transformation over time.

Rather than reading the Golden Horn as a single and homogeneous waterfront, this approach makes the differences between the two shores more visible and shows how earlier spatial and economic conditions continue to shape the shoreline today. These differences are not only the result of recent interventions, but are also related to how each side developed over time, including their geographical position, infrastructural investment, and role within the port-city system. In this sense, the study suggests that waterfront transformation does not always result in a unified or continuous edge. Instead, even within the same urban context, it can lead to uneven and varied spatial conditions, where different patterns of use, access, and spatial organization exist side by side rather than forming a single coherent system.

Spatial Scope

In order to provide a direct spatial comparison between two opposing water limits, the study looks at facing shoreline segments along the Golden Horn. By focusing on segments that directly confront one another across the same body of water, the research establishes a spatially controlled comparison within a shared metropolitan and environmental context.

In order to analyze how shoreline layout, accessibility, and visual relationships with the water have changed over time, these parts were chosen based on their common industrial background and current geographical divergence. While both shores once participated in the Golden Horn's industrial system, their differing infrastructural configurations and territorial conditions allow for a comparative examination of how similar historical transformations have produced distinct spatial outcomes.

Study Areas

The western side centers on the Camialtı–Taşkızak shipyards area, where large-scale industrial structures, docks, and infrastructural elements have been transformed into a mixed-use waterfront environment. In contrast, the eastern side, represented by the Fener–Balat waterfront, features a finer-grained, predominantly residential fabric shaped by gradual and incremental change. Together, these areas facilitate a comparative analysis of distinct spatial responses to similar historical conditions along the Golden Horn.

Temporal Scope

This study examines the period from the early twentieth century, when the Golden Horn functioned as an active industrial waterfront, through the deindustrialization and environmental improvement efforts after the 1980s, and the subsequent waterfront redevelopment initiatives from the 2000s to the present. Throughout these phases, the research analyzes changes in shoreline typology, spatial configuration, accessibility, and visual connections, documenting how the physical interface between water and the city has evolved over time. This periodization allows the study to trace structural shifts in shoreline morphology and to assess whether transformation occurred as rupture, continuity, or gradual adaptation across the two shores.

// 1.5 Research Question(s)

RQ1 — Morphological Change

How and why have shoreline typologies and edge conditions along the Golden Horn diverged over time, from the early twentieth century to the present, when comparing the facing areas of Fener–Balat and Kasımpaşa–Hasköy?

RQ2 — Spatial Use & Accessibility

How have changes in spatial configuration and accessibility reshaped the relationship between the waterfront and the surrounding urban fabric in Fener–Balat and Kasımpaşa–Hasköy, with a focus on integration, continuity, and everyday use?

RQ3 — Visual & Perceptual Dimension

How have visual and perceptual relationships between the city and the water—such as visibility, enclosure, and framing—changed across different periods, and how do these shifts inform the contemporary spatial character of the Golden Horn waterfront?

Year: 1885



Figure 1. Panoramic view of the Arsenal and the Golden Horn, 1885. Source: SALT Research, Harika-Kemali Söylemezoğlu Archive (Sébah & Joaillier).

Year: 2025



Figure 2. Haliç Shipyard (Golden Horn), contemporary view. Photographer unknown. Source: Turizm Platformu Istanbul, https://turizmplatformu.istanbul/mekan/halic-tersanesi (accessed January 2026).

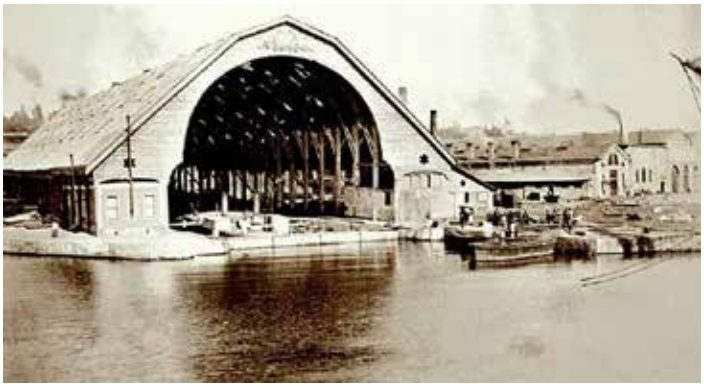


Figure 3. Haliç Shipyard (Golden Horn), late 19th century. Photographer unknown. Source: Eski Istanbul, https://www.eskiistanbul.net/4532/halic-tersanesi (accessed January 2026).



Figure 4. Haliç in the late Ottoman era. Source: Tersane Istanbul (n.d.).

// 1.6 Methodology

This research is based on a comparative and qualitative analysis of the Golden Horn waterfront, focusing on two opposing shoreline segments: Fener–Balat and Kasımpaşa–Hasköy. Instead of conceptualizing the waterfront as a single continuous entity, the study treats these facing edges as distinct but historically interconnected spatial conditions. This comparative approach enables the examination of changes in shoreline typologies, water–city relationships, and edge conditions over time.

The reconstruction of the waterfront's spatial history utilizes historical maps, aerial photographs, archival images, and planning documents. These sources facilitate tracing the Golden Horn's function as an industrial working waterfront and its gradual transformation through deindustrialization and redevelopment. The analysis emphasizes moments of spatial reconfiguration, shifts in land use, and evolving relationships between built and open spaces on both shores.

The spatial analysis focuses on shoreline edges, water access, waterfront continuity, and the land–water interface. By comparing historical and recent aerial imagery with basic GIS data, the study tracks changes in shoreline configuration, accessibility, and spatial layout across three key periods: the industrial working phase, the post-1980s transition period, and the contemporary redevelopment phase.

Alongside this, the visual analysis considers how the waterfront has been perceived and experienced over time. Photographs, planning visuals, and on-site observations are used to explore changes in visibility, degrees of openness or enclosure, and the spatial framing of the water. Former industrial areas are read not only as physical sites but also as visual and experiential environments that have been reinterpreted within contemporary public space.

Taken together, these comparative spatial and visual analyses demonstrate that similar industrial origins have resulted in markedly different outcomes along the Golden Horn. The study highlights how distinct approaches to shoreline design, accessibility, and open space integration have produced divergent spatial and visual characteristics on the two sides of the inlet.

Chapter 2

The Industrial Working Waterfront (Late 19th – Mid 20th Century)

2.1 Industrial Shoreline Morphology

2.2 Spatial Structure and Use

2.3 Spatial Presence and Visibility

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Golden Horn became one of Istanbul's principal industrial waterfronts. The inlet functioned as a productive maritime corridor, structured by shipyards, dock basins, warehouses, and port infrastructure. Instead of serving as a scenic urban boundary, the waterfront operated as an active zone characterized by continuous vessel movement and cross-shore industrial exchange. The water served as a working surface, facilitating connections between production areas on both shores.

The western shore was defined by the Camialtı and Taşkızak shipyards, which established a large-scale industrial landscape oriented toward maritime production. Dock basins, shipyard platforms, and expansive industrial halls created a dense and articulated interface between land and water. In contrast, the eastern shore's Fener–Balat area developed within a more mixed urban fabric. Although port-related activities and warehouse structures existed, they were generally smaller in scale and integrated into the surrounding residential environment. Structures such as the Cibali Tobacco Factory demonstrate how industrial production was embedded within the neighborhood rather than separated as a distinct infrastructural enclave (Özdamar, 2022).

These differing configurations influenced the morphology, spatial organization, and visual character of each shoreline. The following sections analyze these conditions in detail, with particular attention to shoreline structure, spatial utilization, and the relationship between built form and water during the industrial period.

This period matters because it sets up the initial spatial conditions of the two shores before they start to change. Even though both sides were part of the same industrial system, they were organized in quite different ways. These differences are important, as they help explain why the two shorelines do not follow the same transformation path later on. This chapter therefore works as a reference point for understanding the divergence discussed in the following sections.

2.1 Industrial Shoreline Morphology

2.1.1 Eastern Shore

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the eastern shoreline of the Golden Horn developed as an industrial edge embedded within the existing urban fabric of Fener and Balat. In contrast to the western shore, where large-scale shipyard complexes produced clearly demarcated industrial territories, the eastern shoreline evolved through dispersed production facilities integrated into residential neighborhoods.

As Zeynep Çelik argues in The Remaking of Istanbul, nineteenth-century interventions in the city largely aimed at the regularization and modernization of the urban fabric rather than its complete restructuring (Çelik, 1993). This incremental and partial transformation is crucial for understanding the eastern shoreline. Unlike European capitals where large-scale waterfront redesigns accompanied modernization, Istanbul's transformation remained fragmentary and selective. Consequently, the existing fine-grained parcel structure along the eastern Golden Horn persisted, allowing industrial functions to adapt to pre-existing urban patterns rather than replacing them.

Within this context, tobacco depots and factories emerged as key industrial structures along the waterfront. These facilities were positioned strategically near the shoreline due to their dependence on maritime transportation networks (Özdamar, 2022). However, rather than forming enclosed industrial compounds, they were inserted into the existing parcel system, maintaining alignment with surrounding housing blocks and neighborhood streets. Their placement reinforced the continuity of the built frontage along the shore while enabling direct access to the water for loading and storage activities.

Morphologically, the eastern shoreline retained an irregular and fine-grained parcel configuration characterized by narrow plot rhythms and continuous edge occupation. Instead of large dock basins or monumental infrastructural interventions, the shoreline was shaped through incremental appropriation of the water's edge. Buildings extended toward the shoreline with limited setbacks, and small piers functioned as localized loading interfaces rather than large-scale infrastructural excavations. This produced a dense yet permeable industrial edge in which the land–water boundary operated primarily as a logistical threshold embedded within everyday urban life.

More broadly, industrial waterfronts in this period functioned primarily as spaces of production rather than public urban realms. The shoreline was structured by economic and logistical imperatives, not by recreational or civic considerations. In the case of the eastern Golden Horn, this productive logic shaped the edge as a working interface defined by circulation, storage, and maritime exchange.

The eastern shoreline did not evolve into a fully segregated industrial zone. Rather than displacing the existing urban structure, industrial activities adapted to it and operated within its spatial constraints. The process of modernization unfolded unevenly, which allowed earlier parcel configurations and street alignments to persist. Consequently, production facilities were inserted into the established neighborhood fabric instead of replacing it.

This resulted in a fine-grained and integrated industrial morphology, in clear contrast to the more concentrated and enclave-like formations observed along the western shore.

The historical photographs (Figure 5,6) provide visual evidence of the industrial shoreline morphology along the eastern edge of the Golden Horn. Instead of large-scale industrial compounds, the waterfront was composed of small warehouses and workshop-like production buildings positioned directly along the water's edge. These structures formed a continuous but low-rise built frontage that facilitated loading, storage, and transport activities related to maritime trade.

At the same time, the images reveal the close spatial relationship between the industrial waterfront and the surrounding residential fabric. Behind the waterfront structures, the dense hillside neighborhood of Balat becomes visible, characterized by wooden houses and narrow streets. This layered configuration demonstrates how industrial activities were embedded within the existing urban fabric rather than separated from it.

Morphologically, the shoreline functioned as a working edge defined by small-scale production facilities and localized loading interfaces. The resulting spatial structure reflects a fine-grained industrial landscape where storage, production, and housing coexisted within the same urban system.

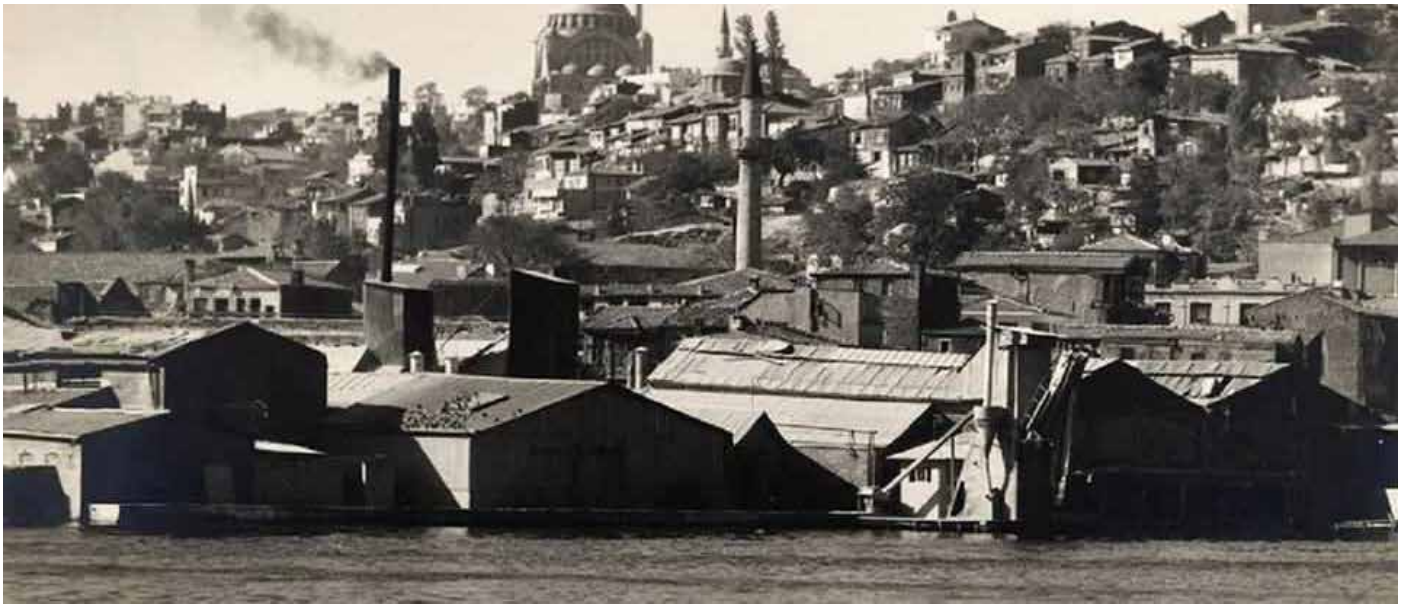


Figure 5. Balat waterfront along the Golden Horn, late 19th century. Photographer unknown. Source: Eski Istanbul, https://www.eskiistanbul.net/65/balat-kiyilari (accessed January 2026).



Figure 6. View of the Fener–Balat waterfront, Golden Horn, late 19th century. Photographer unknown. Source: Seyyahca, https://www.seyyahca.com/fener-ve-balat/ (accessed January 2026).

During the late Ottoman period, the eastern shoreline of the Golden Horn developed through the gradual insertion of small warehouses, storage buildings, and workshop-scale production structures along the waterfront. Rather than forming large industrial complexes, these facilities were embedded within the existing neighborhood fabric of Balat. Production spaces, workers' housing, and residential buildings coexisted within the same urban structure, creating a mixed urban fabric in which living and working environments were closely intertwined.

The historical photographs (Figure 7-10) further reveal the spatial continuity between the industrial shoreline and the surrounding residential fabric of Fener and Balat. Behind the waterfront structures, the dense hillside settlement becomes visible, characterized by closely spaced wooden houses, narrow streets, and irregular parcel configurations shaped by the area's topography. This layered spatial composition demonstrates how industrial and residential environments developed in close proximity rather than through functional segregation. The shoreline thus operated as an extension of the existing urban fabric, where small-scale production facilities, storage structures, and residential buildings formed a continuous and fine-grained morphological system. In this configuration, the land–water interface did not constitute a clearly demarcated industrial zone but functioned as a permeable working edge embedded within the everyday spatial structure of the neighborhood.



Figure 7. A view of the Golden Horn and the Historical Peninsula from Balat, late 19th century. Photographer unknown. Source: SALT Research.



Figure 8. Street view of traditional houses in Fener–Balat, late 19th century. Photographer unknown. Source: Eski Istanbul, https://www.eskiistanbul.net/4353/fener (accessed January 2026).



Figure 9. Funeral ceremony of Patriarch Joachim III in Fener, November 1912. Photographer unknown. Source: Eski Istanbul, https://www.eskiistanbul.net/5230/fener-patrigi-joachim-iiiun-cenaze-merasimi-kasim-1912 (accessed January 2026).



Figure 10. Fener pier (iskele) on the Golden Horn, late 19th century. Photographer unknown. Source: Eski Istanbul, https://www.eskiistanbul.net/870/fener-iskelesi (accessed January 2026).



Figure 11. Map of the Golden Horn and surrounding districts, Istanbul, 1882. Source: Istanbul Urban Database.

As the following historical map (Figure 11,12) demonstrates, industrial and storage facilities were distributed prima
rily along the shoreline, while the surrounding residential blocks maintained their fine-grained parcel structure and narrow street network. The map reveals how production-related buildings occupied the immediate waterfront while the dense hillside fabric of Balat remained largely residential. This spatial arrangement produced a layered urban structure in which maritime trade, storage activities, and everyday neighborhood life operated in close proximity. Similar relationships between small-scale industrial buildings and residential neighborhoods have been documented in studies of the Golden



Figure 12. Map of the Golden Horn and surrounding districts, 1914 (German Blues map). Source: Istanbul Urban Database.

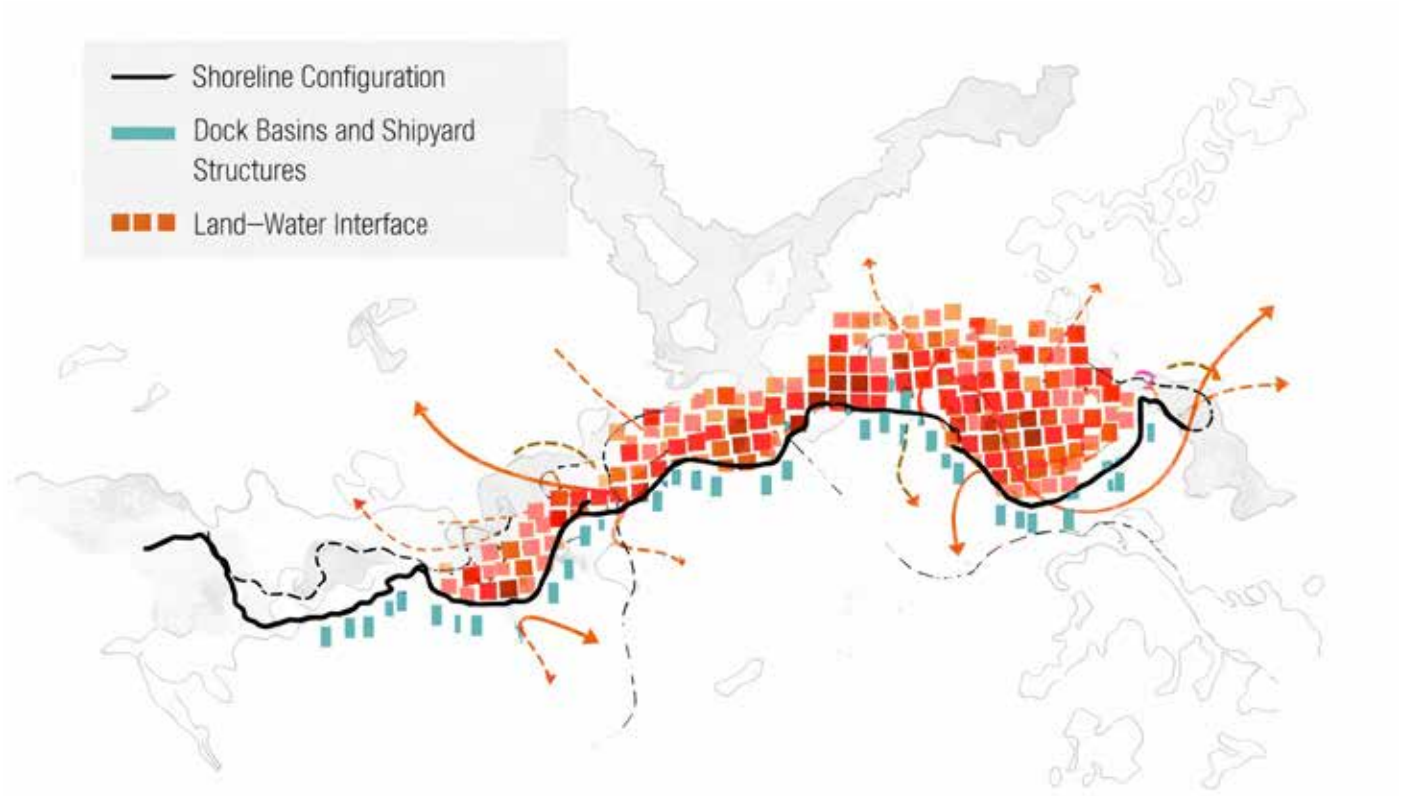


Figure 13. Diagram illustrating the distribution of industrial structures, dock-related elements, and movement patterns along the Golden Horn, late 19th century. Diagram by the author.

This diagram (Figure 13) is based on historical maps and archival sources, which were digitized and analyzed to identify the distribution of industrial structures and their relationship to the shoreline. The mapping focuses on how built form and dock-related elements are positioned along the water, as well as the direction of movement and connections across the inlet. Rather than representing exact measurements, the diagram (Figure 14) highlights spatial patterns and differences between the eastern and western shores, making visible how industrial activities shaped the land–water interface.

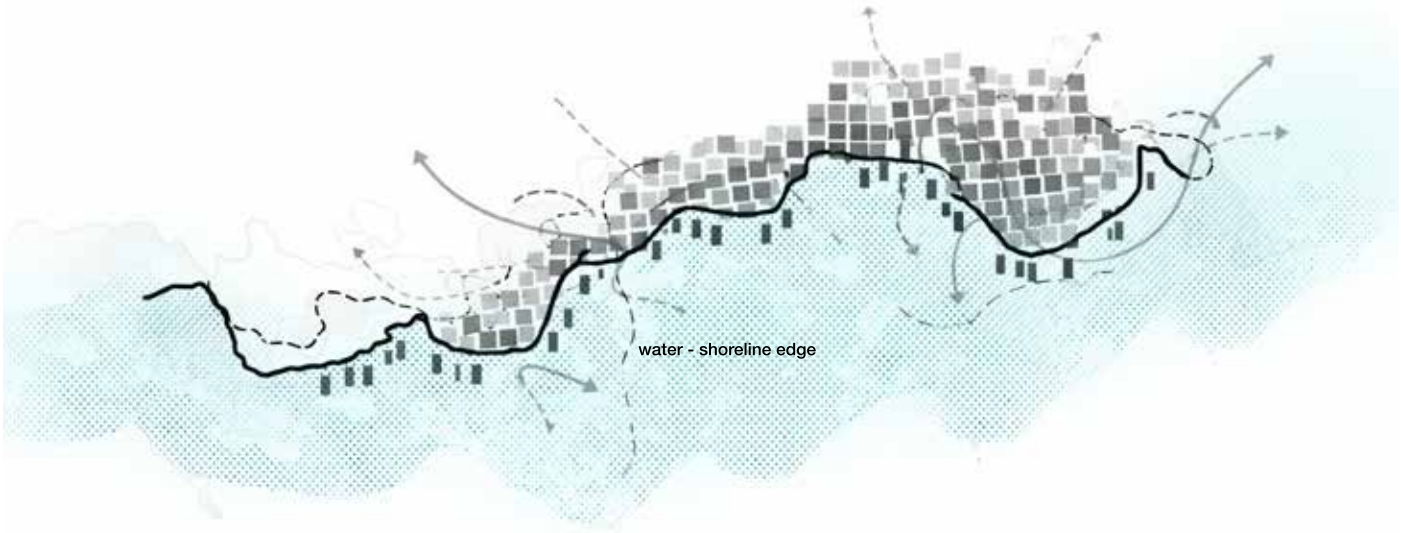


Figure 14. Diagram illustrating the shoreline configuration and the relationship between built form and the water's edge along the Golden Horn, late 19th century. Diagram by the author.

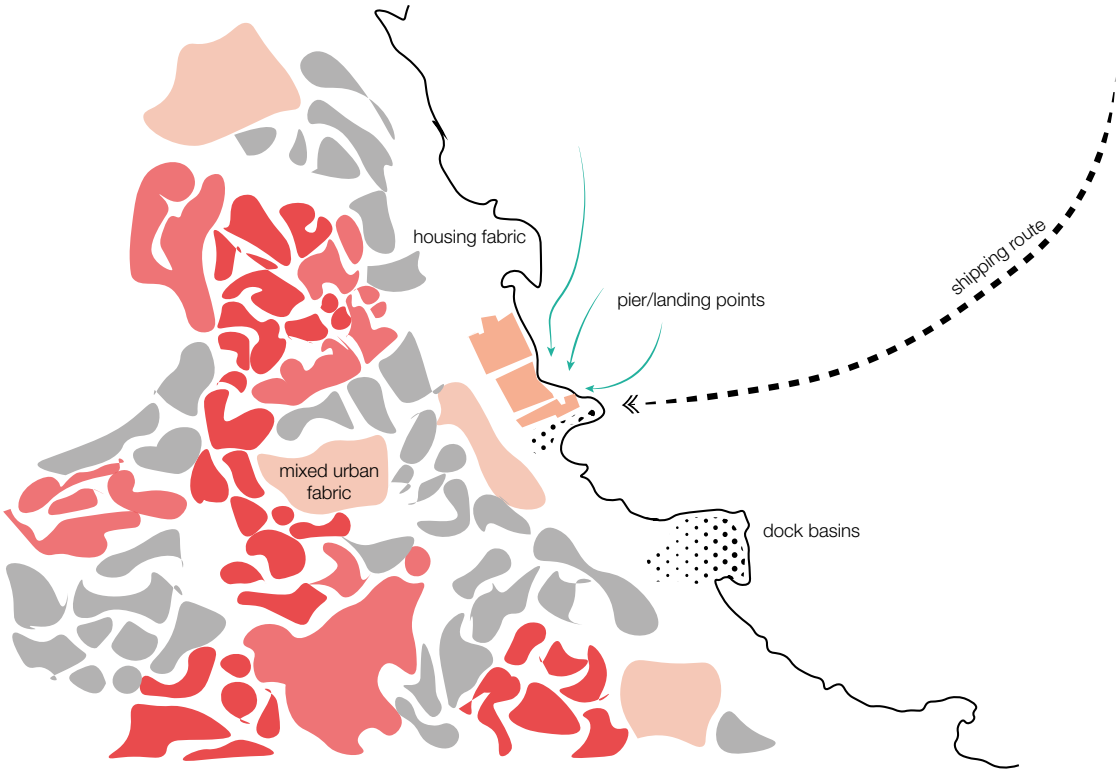


Figure 15. Diagram illustrating the integration of residential fabric, small-scale production, and maritime transport along the eastern shore of the Golden Horn. Diagram by the author.

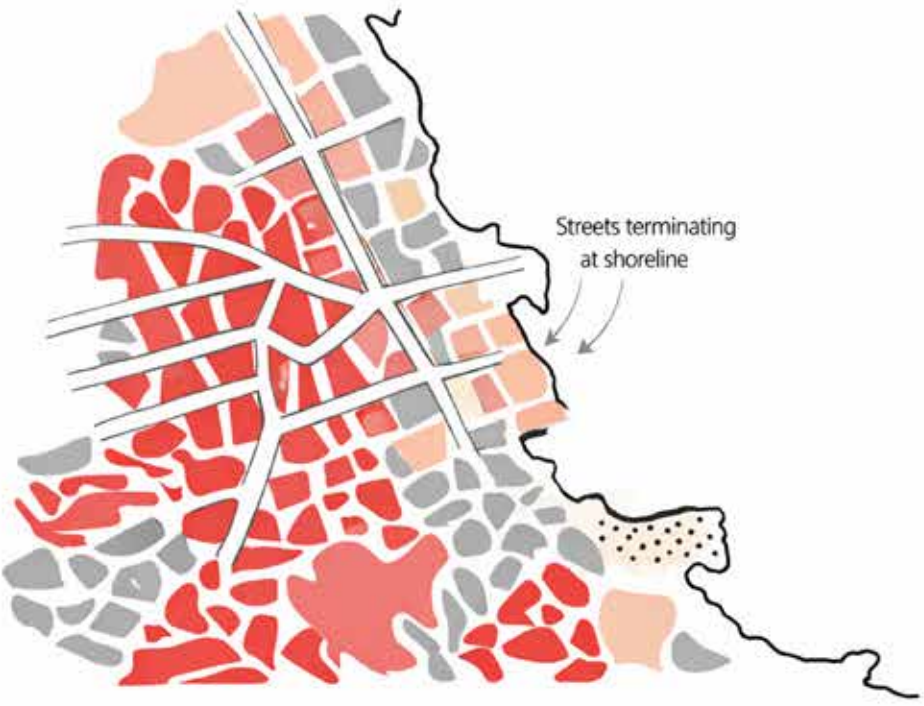


Figure 16. Diagram illustrating street alignments extending toward the waterfront and terminating at small piers and landing points along the eastern shore of the Golden Horn. Diagram by the author.

The diagrams (Figure 15,16) further illustrate how this porous shoreline condition operates at the neighborhood scale. Street alignments extend directly toward the water, terminating at small piers and landing points without a clearly defined boundary between the urban fabric and the shoreline. Small dock basins and localized industrial structures occupy limited segments of the waterfront, while residential buildings appear immediately behind them. This configuration reveals a compact spatial structure in which circulation routes, production spaces, and housing remain closely interwoven.

2.1.2 Western Shore

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the western shoreline of the Golden Horn developed as a dense industrial waterfront shaped primarily by shipbuilding activities. The coastal edge of Kasımpaşa–Hasköy became one of the main shipbuilding areas of the city, where large naval and industrial infrastructures were established directly along the water. These facilities required continuous access to the Golden Horn, which led to the construction of dock basins, repair docks, slipways, and production yards that gradually reshaped the natural shoreline. Through these interventions, the coastal edge evolved into an active working landscape in which the water functioned as an essential part of the production environment, also influencing how the waterfront was spatially organized and how it related to the surrounding urban fabric (Hein, 2016) .

Among the most significant facilities shaping this industrial shoreline were the Camialtı and Taşkızak shipyards, which operated as major centers for ship construction and repair along the Golden Horn. Their spatial requirements introduced large-scale maritime infrastructures along the waterfront and reinforced the industrial character of the area. Dock basins, repair docks, and shipbuilding platforms extended directly to the water, creating a shoreline that was closely tied to maritime production processes. Industrial structures formed a dense production edge along the waterfront, where production halls, storage spaces, repair yards, workshops, and technical facilities occupied most of the coastal strip, producing a compact industrial landscape.

Behind this industrial edge, workers' housing and small residential clusters developed in order to accommodate the labor force associated with shipyard activities. Historical evidence suggests that these residential areas were located in close proximity to the production zones, creating a spatial condition in which living and working environments were closely connected (Ceyhan, 2011).

The surrounding street network connected residential areas to the shipyards along the waterfront, allowing a direct link between living and production spaces. In this way, the industrial areas remained part of the urban fabric of Kasımpaşa and Hasköy instead of becoming fully separated from the city. At the same time, the shoreline was not only shaped by natural coastal conditions but also changed through industrial infrastructures. Dock basins, slipways, and repair areas extended into the water and cut into the land, creating a more fragmented but still functional edge.

The concentration of shipyard infrastructures, production spaces, and supporting facilities resulted in a highly dense industrial landscape along the waterfront. Industrial buildings, workshops, storage areas, and technical structures occupied most of the coastal strip, leaving limited open space between them. As a result, the shoreline functioned primarily as a working waterfront organized around shipbuilding activities, forming part of a broader port–city relationship shaped by both industrial activity and urban development (Hoyle, 2000) .

Overall, the western shoreline of the Golden Horn developed as a highly specialized industrial landscape shaped by shipbuilding activities and related infrastructures. The layout of dock basins, production areas, and supporting facilities follows the needs of shipyard operations and their direct connection to the water. Industrial structures defined the immediate waterfront, while workers' housing and the street network developed just behind this edge, forming a supporting layer connected to the production areas. Through this configuration, the coastal edge functioned as a dense working environment where maritime production, infrastructure, and everyday urban life operated in close spatial proximity.

The historical photographs provide visual evidence of the industrial shoreline morphology along the eastern edge of the Golden Horn. Instead of large-scale industrial compounds, the waterfront was composed of small warehouses and workshop-like production buildings positioned directly along the water's edge. These structures formed a continuous but low-rise built frontage that facilitated loading, storage, and transport activities related to maritime trade.

At the same time, the images (Figure 17) reveal the close spatial relationship between the industrial waterfront and the surrounding residential fabric. Behind the waterfront structures, the dense hillside neighborhood of Balat becomes visible, characterized by wooden houses and narrow streets. This layered configuration demonstrates how industrial activities were embedded within the existing urban fabric rather than separated from it.

Morphologically, the shoreline functioned as a working edge defined by small-scale production facilities and localized loading interfaces. The resulting spatial structure reflects a fine-grained industrial landscape where storage, production, and housing coexisted within the same urban system.



Figure 17. The Golden Horn, Constantinople, late 19th century. Photographer unknown. Source: Naval History and Heritage Command.

The historical photographs (Figure 18,19) provide visual evidence of the industrial shoreline morphology along the eastern edge of the Golden Horn. Instead of large-scale industrial compounds, the waterfront was composed of small warehouses and workshop-like production buildings positioned directly along the water's edge. These structures formed a continuous but low-rise built frontage that facilitated loading, storage, and transport activities related to maritime trade. At the same time, the images reveal the close spatial relationship between the industrial waterfront and the surrounding residential fabric. Behind the waterfront structures, the dense hillside neighborhood of Balat becomes visible, characterized by wooden houses and narrow streets. This layered configuration demonstrates how industrial activities were embedded within the existing urban fabric rather than separated from it. Morphologically, the shoreline functioned as a working edge defined by small-scale production facilities and localized loading interfaces. The resulting spatial structure reflects a fine-grained industrial landscape where storage, production, and housing coexisted within the same urban system.



Figure 18. Haliç Shipyard (Golden Horn), 1916, showing industrial production and dock structures along the waterfront. Photographer unknown. Source: Eski Istanbul, https://www.eskiistanbul.net/291/halic-tersanesi-1916 (accessed January 2026).



Figure 19. Boats and harbor activity along the Golden Horn, late 19th century. Credit: GRI Digital Collections, Pierre de Gigord Collection of Photographs of the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey.

Historical photographs of the Haliç Shipyard show that the shoreline was used intensively for shipbuilding, repair, and related activities. A large number of boats, ships, docks, and workshops were located directly along the water, and vessels could be built, repaired, and loaded at the shoreline without any clear spatial separation from the water. This direct physical relationship between production areas and the shoreline shows that maritime activities were closely tied to the coastal edge. The density of vessels and industrial structures also suggests that the shoreline functioned as an active working environment organized around shipyard activities.



Figure 20. Map of the Golden Horn and surrounding districts, Istanbul, 1882. Source: Istanbul Urban Database.

Historical maps (Figure 20,21) of the area show that the shoreline was largely shaped by shipyard infrastructures and related working areas. Around the shipyard facilities, large open spaces and green areas can be observed, which likely functioned as operational yards for shipbuilding activities, material storage, and repair processes. Industrial buildings appear to form a linear strip directly along the waterfront, indicating that production spaces were organized in close relation to the water. Residential areas begin to appear further inland, particularly towards Kasımpaşa, suggesting a spatial structure in which shipyard infrastructures occupied the immediate shoreline while housing developed behind the industrial zone. The surrounding street network connects these residential areas to the waterfront, allowing direct movement between housing and shipyard facilities.

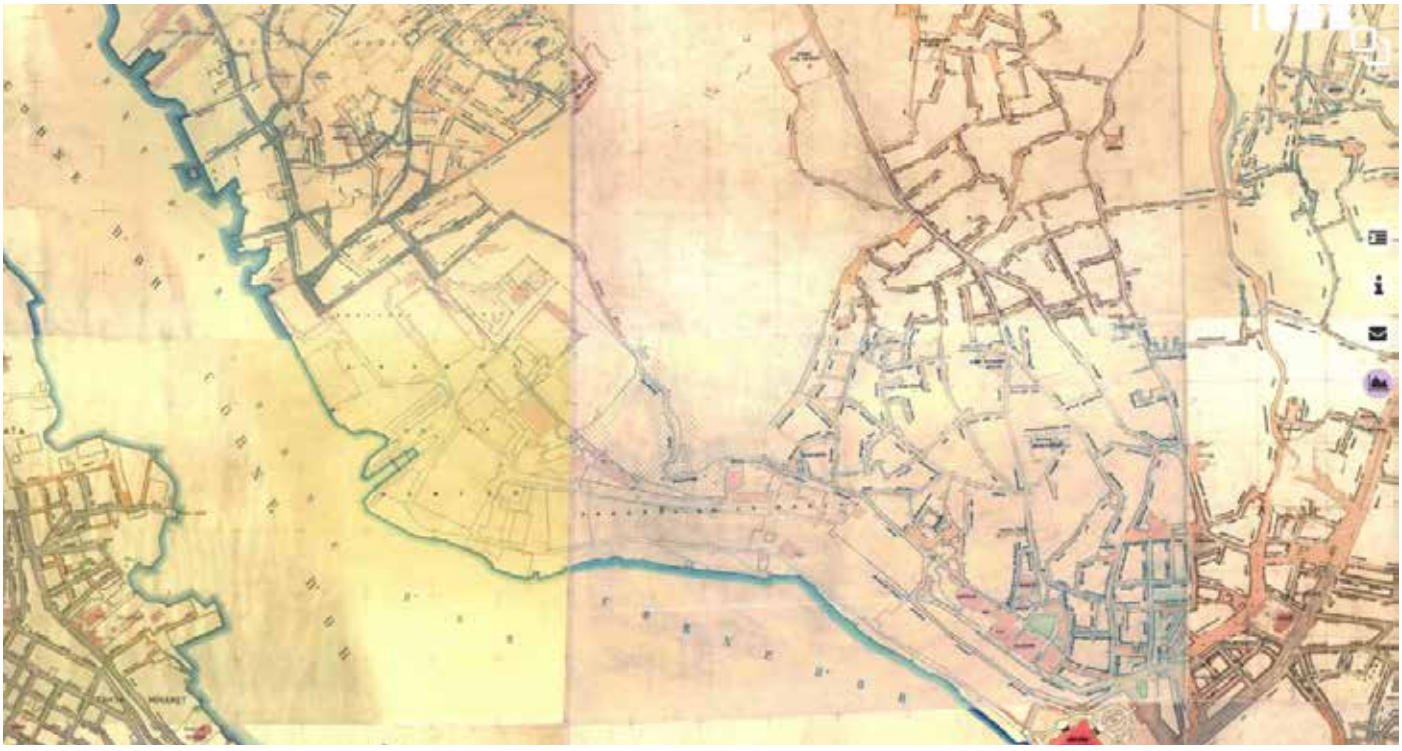


Figure 21. Map of the Golden Horn and surrounding districts, 1914 (German Blues map). Source: Istanbul Urban Database.

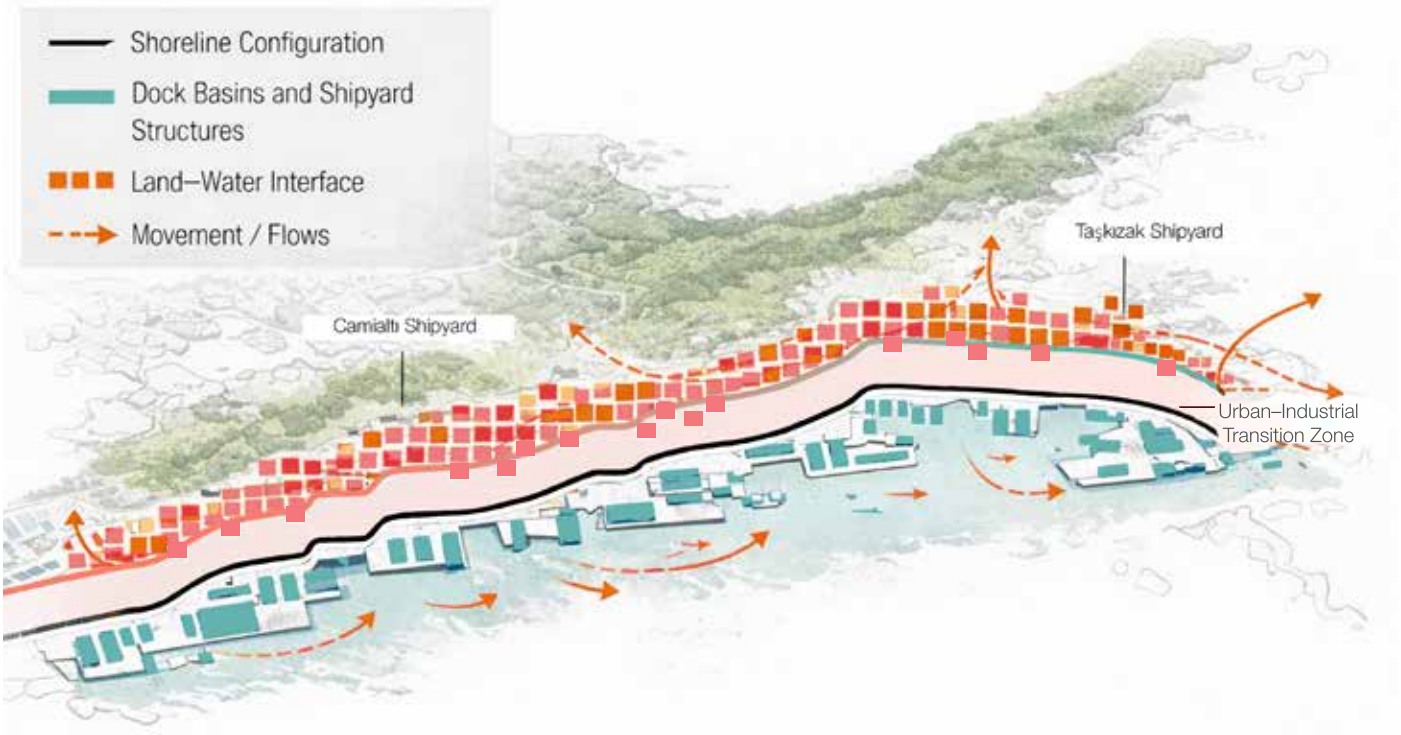


Figure 22. Diagram illustrating the western shoreline configuration of the Golden Horn, showing the spatial relationship between shipyard structures, production areas, and the adjacent urban fabric, late 19th century. Diagram by the author.

This diagram (Figure 22,23) shows the relationship between the shipyard areas and the surrounding urban fabric. Production areas are located directly along the shoreline, while the urban fabric develops just behind these structures. This pattern emerged as the shipyards gradually expanded along the coast over time. For shipbuilding and repair, dry docks, slipways, and different working areas were added along the shoreline, and the coastal edge slowly changed as a result. This process was largely shaped by the structures that managed shipyard activities during the Ottoman period. For this reason, the shoreline was used as a production area while still maintaining its connection to the city; this also points to the ongoing relationship between production and the urban fabric in port cities (Hein, 2016).

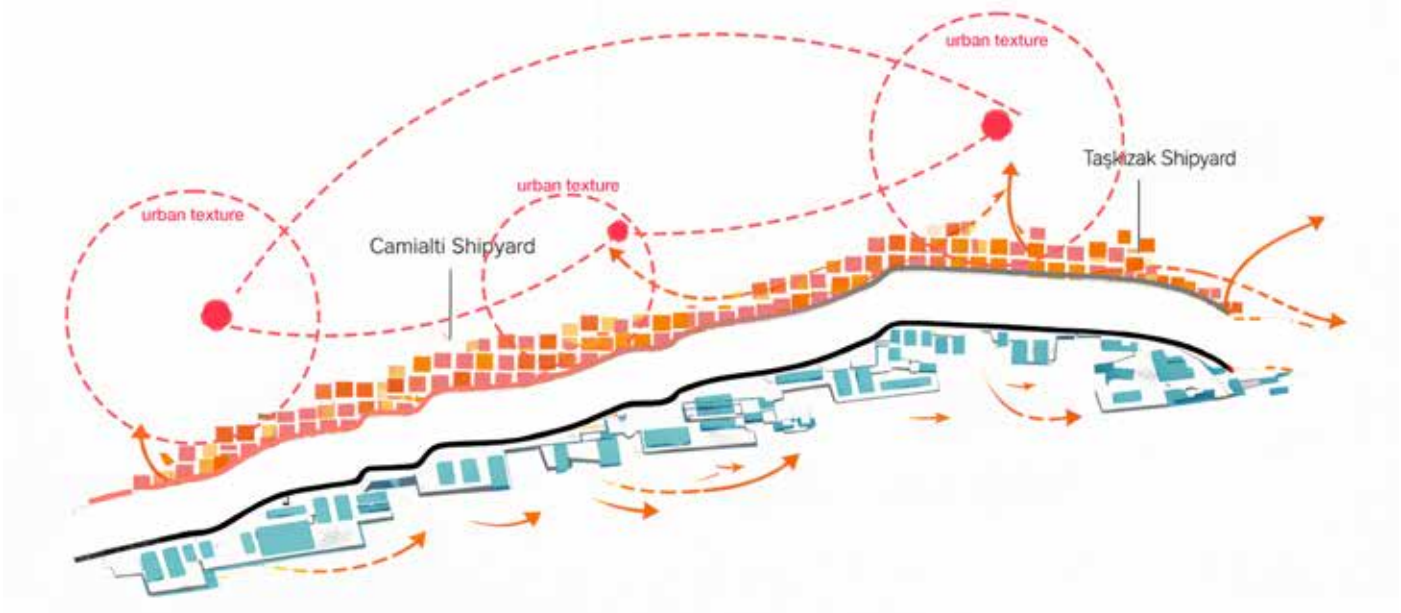


Figure 23. Diagram illustrating localized urban nodes and connections along the western shoreline of the Golden Horn, highlighting the interaction between shipyard areas and surrounding urban fabric, late 19th century. Diagram by the author.

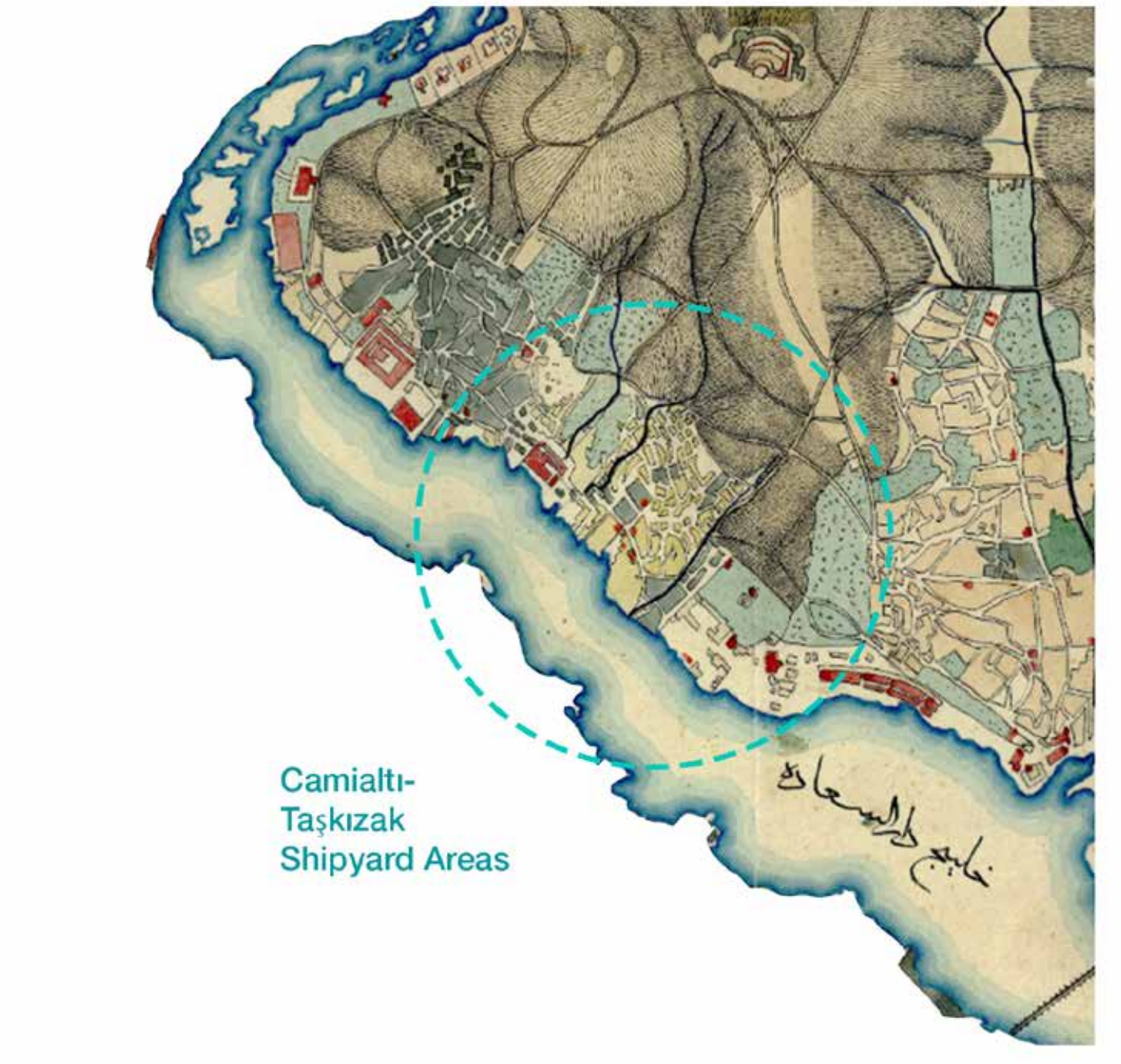


Figure 24. Diagram of the Golden Horn shoreline based on the Map of the Golden Horn and its surroundings, late nineteenth century. Credit: Diagram by the author based on SALT Research, Mustafa Vasfi Paşa Collection.

The map shows (Figure 24) the Camialtı and Taşkızak shipyard areas along the Golden Horn. Most of the buildings sit directly at the water, so the shoreline is not separate from the production areas. Instead, it is used as part of them. Repair areas, docks, and working yards extend towards the water, and in some cases the coast is cut or extended to make space for these uses.

There are also large buildings and open yards behind the edge. These open spaces were likely used for storage, assembly, or maintenance. Because most of the shoreline and the spaces behind it are directly organized around shipbuilding and repair, the area works as a highly specialized industrial landscape.

Camialtı- Taşkızak Shipyards

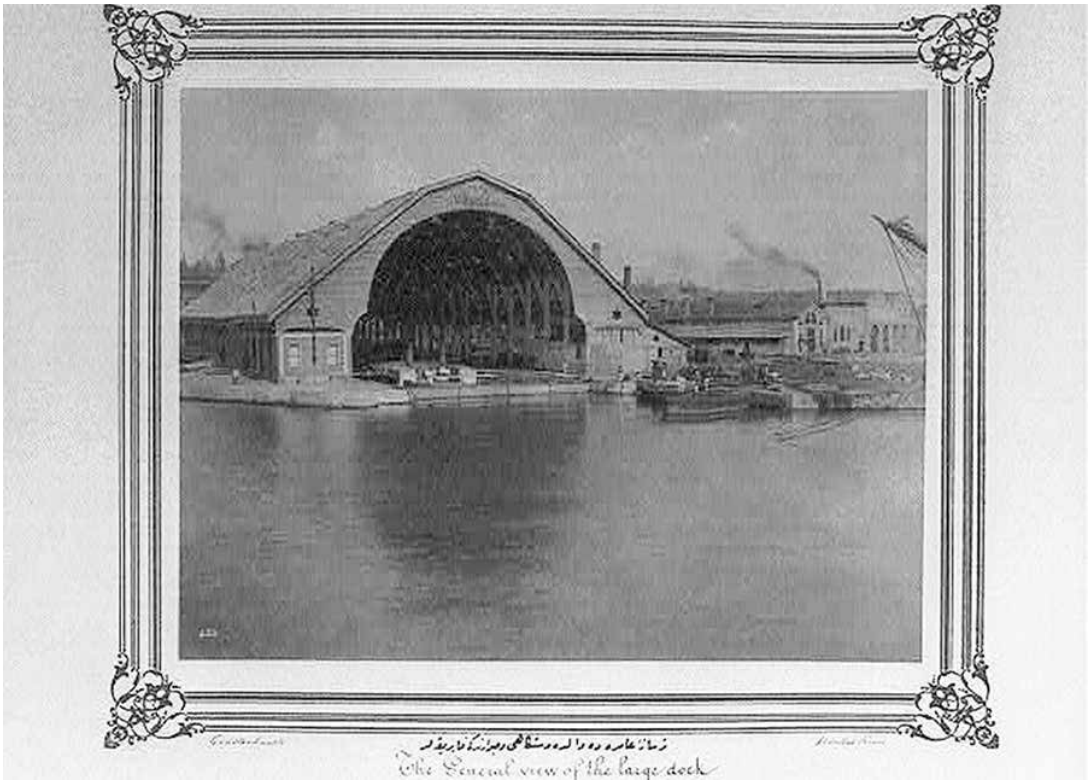


Figure 25. The Valide Shipyard and surrounding factories at the Imperial Naval Arsenal, Constantinople, late 19th century. Photograph by Abdullah Frères. Source: Library of Congress.

The large wooden structure visible in the photograph (Figure 25) functioned as a repair hangar where ships could be brought in for maintenance, construction, and repair activities. Such structures provided sheltered environments for shipbuilding operations and formed an important component of the shipyard infrastructure along the Golden Horn. The presence of these large-scale repair spaces reflects the intensive maritime production activities that characterized the Haliç Shipyard, particularly within the Camialtı and Taşkızak shipyard areas.

The historical importance of this shoreline, however, extends much further back in time. The shores of the Golden Horn had already been used as an important naval and shipbuilding zone during the Byzantine period, when shipyards and maritime infrastructures were established along the inlet and played a key role in the naval organization of Constantinople. This long history of maritime activity contributed to the formation of a shoreline morphology closely tied to shipbuilding and naval production (Ceyhan, 2011).

The continuity of shipyard infrastructures along this edge demonstrates how the Golden Horn historically functioned as a working waterfront shaped by ship construction, repair activities, and maritime trade. A similar structural typology can still be observed today within the Tersane İstanbul complex, where elements of the historical shipyard infrastructure have been preserved. This continuity highlights the long-term relationship between the shoreline and shipbuilding activities, reflecting how maritime production has historically structured both the physical edge of the coast and the spatial organization of the surrounding industrial landscape.

2.2 Spatial Structure and Use

2.2.1 Eastern Shore

Historical maps of the eastern shoreline reveal a spatial structure shaped by a dispersed distribution of small industrial and commercial facilities along the waterfront. Rather than forming large industrial complexes, production-related structures appear as relatively small buildings integrated within the existing neighborhood fabric. Warehouses, depots, and small processing facilities were positioned directly along the coastal edge, allowing easy access to maritime transportation and facilitating the movement of goods between the shoreline and the inland neighborhoods. Studies on industrial activities along the Golden Horn emphasize that tobacco warehouses and similar storage facilities were often located close to the waterfront in order to benefit from water-based transport networks and the logistical advantages provided by the shoreline (Çakmaklı, 2025; Bezmez, 2008).

Within this spatial structure, a clear relationship emerges between production, storage, and circulation. Production spaces and small workshops were frequently located near storage facilities positioned along the waterfront, creating a localized logistical system in which goods could move efficiently between different stages of production and distribution. Raw materials arriving by boat could be transferred to nearby workshops or storage buildings, while finished products could easily be transported back to the water or distributed through the surrounding street network. This arrangement produced a spatial organization in which economic activities were embedded within the urban fabric rather than concentrated in large industrial complexes.

Maritime traffic played an important role in structuring the everyday use of the shoreline. The presence of landing points such as Fener İskelesi and Balat İskelesi indicates active nodes of water-based mobility along the Golden Horn. Unlike the large shipyard infrastructures observed on the western shore, these piers appear to have functioned at a smaller scale and were closely connected to the daily circulation patterns of the surrounding neighborhoods. Boats arriving at these landing points transported passengers, goods, and materials, linking the district to other parts of the Golden Horn and supporting local economic activities.

The spatial organization of the waterfront also suggests a more active and permeable shoreline environment in which maritime activities were closely integrated with everyday urban life. Streets descending from the hillside connect directly to the waterfront, allowing residents, merchants, and workers to move easily between the inland neighborhoods and the shoreline. As a result, the waterfront did not function as a restricted industrial edge but rather as a publicly accessible interface used for transportation, small-scale trade, and daily economic exchanges.

Together, these elements indicate that the eastern shoreline operated through a distributed waterfront system composed of small landing points, storage facilities, workshops, and residential areas closely interconnected within the same spatial structure. This configuration supported a continuous flow of maritime traffic and daily circulation, producing a waterfront environment that was both economically active and socially integrated within the surrounding neighborhoods (Bezmez, 2008; Çelik,1993).

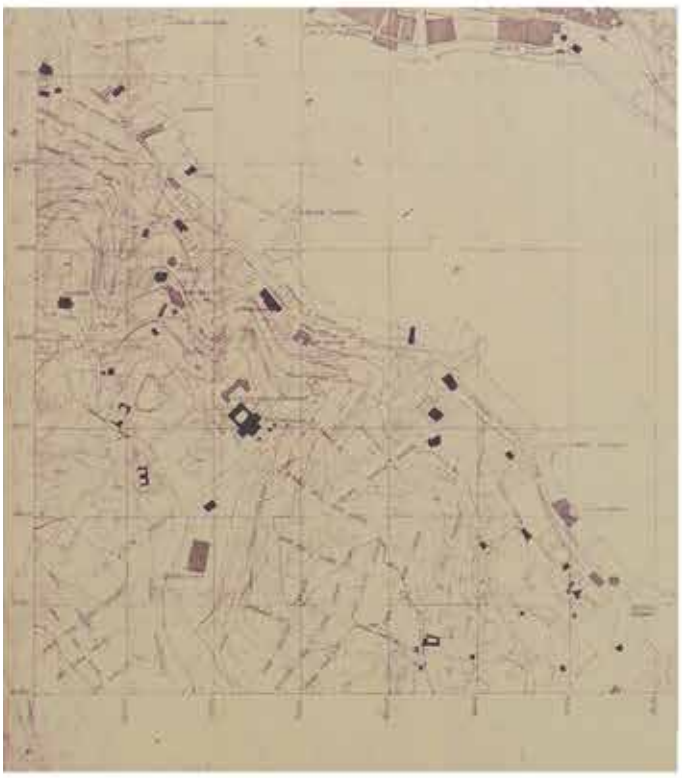




Figure 26, 27. Tobacco production at the Cibali Tobacco Factory, late nineteenth century. Credit: Photograph by Guillaume Berggren, SALT Research Archive.

The Cibali Tobacco Factory (Figure 26,27) represents one of the most prominent industrial facilities located along the eastern shoreline of the Golden Horn during this period. Established in 1884 and positioned directly on the waterfront, the factory benefited from access to maritime transportation networks that facilitated the movement of raw tobacco and finished products (Özdamar, 2022). Rather than forming an isolated industrial enclave, the factory operated within the surrounding urban fabric in close proximity to residential areas, religious institutions, schools, warehouses, and local landing points.

The map and the diagram (Figure 28,29) derived from it illustrate this mixed spatial structure along the eastern shoreline, where educational institutions, religious buildings, warehouses, tobacco depots, piers, and residential areas coexist within the same urban fabric. Rather than forming clearly separated zones, these functions appear closely interwoven, reflecting a spatial organization in which everyday urban life, small-scale production, and maritime activities were integrated within the same shoreline environment.



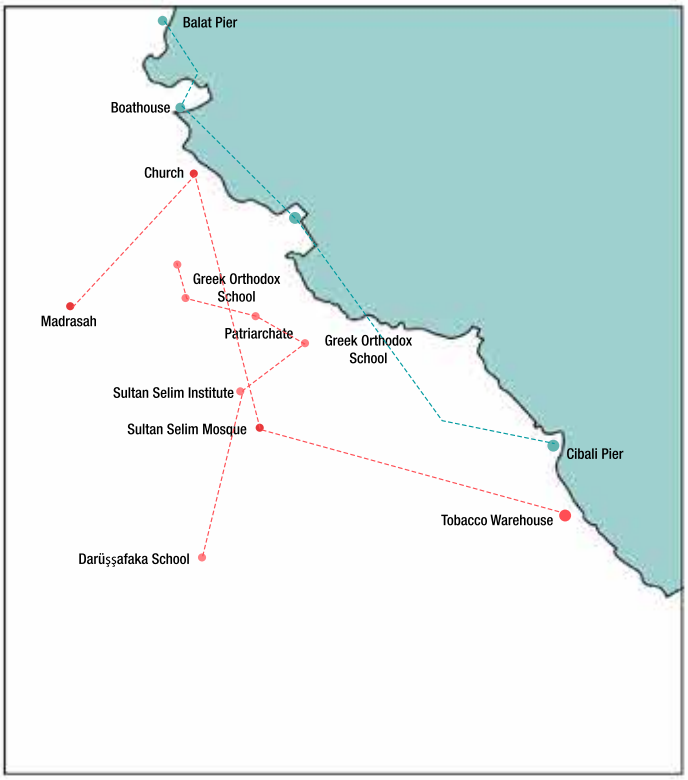
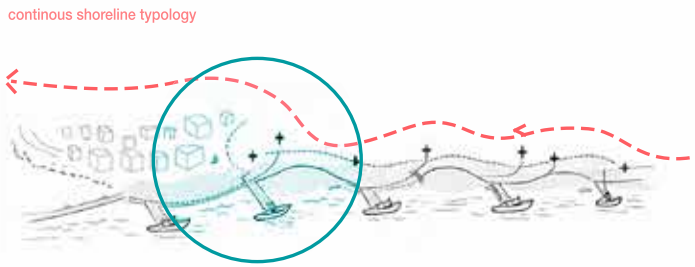


Figure 28. Partial Istanbul maps showing the Golden Horn and surrounding areas. Source: SALT Research Archive, Kemali Söylemezoğlu Documents Collection.

Figure 29. Diagram illustrating key urban and social nodes along the Fener–Balat waterfront, showing connections between religious, educational, and commercial structures and their relationship to the shoreline. Diagram by the author, based on SALT Research Archive.

01 DISTRIBUTED WATERFRONT INFRASTRUCTURE



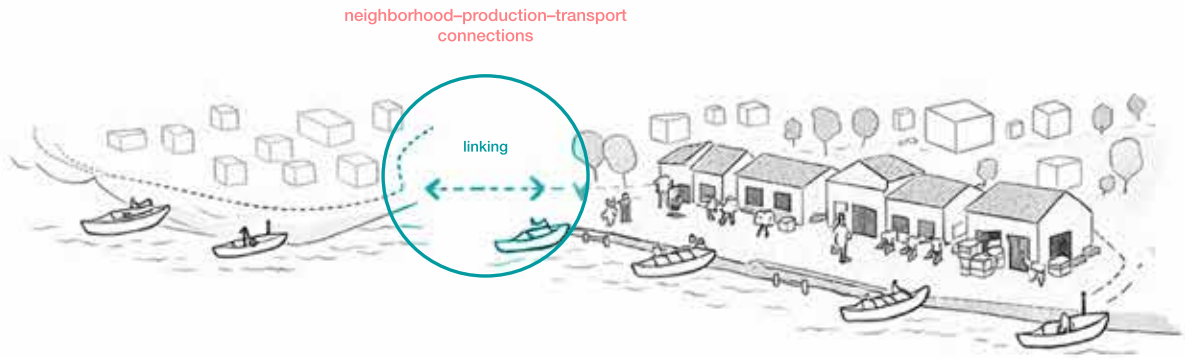
Small landing points distrubted along the shoreline supporting localized maritime activites.

02 PRODUCTION - STORAGE - CIRCULATION NETWORK



Integrated production and storage within the neighborhood fabric.

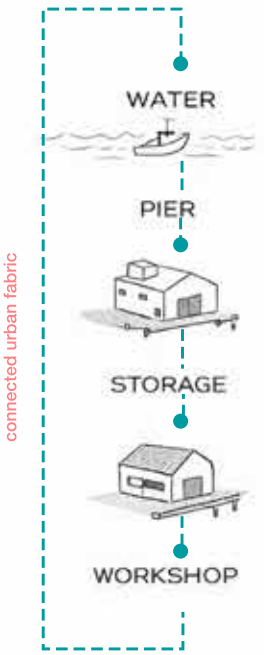
03 EVERYDAY WATERFRONT USE



Daily circulation and local trade integrated with neighborhood life - daily life.

These diagram (Figure 30) is based on a reading of the eastern shoreline developed through historical maps, archival photographs, and recurring spatial patterns along the Golden Horn. Rather than showing exact physical conditions, they reorganize the shoreline into three main components: distributed infrastructure, production–storage–circulation networks, and everyday waterfront use. These categories come from repeated spatial relationships observed across different sources, especially the connection between small-scale maritime structures, neighborhood-based production, and daily movement along the water.

Looking at it this way, the diagrams help to make these relationships more visible. Instead of separating industrial and everyday uses, they show how production, circulation, and daily life were part of the same spatial system. Similar patterns can also be seen in studies on waterfront transformation, where industrial edges become more open and connected to everyday urban life (Breś & Krośnicka, 2021; Özdamar, 2022). In this sense, the eastern shoreline can be read as a layered and integrated environment shaped by these overlapping activities.



A small-scale waterfront structure composed of spatially connected and mutually integrated elements.

Figure 30. Diagram set illustrating the spatial organization of the eastern Golden Horn waterfront, structured through distributed infrastructure, production–storage–circulation networks, and everyday waterfront use. Diagram by the author.

2.2.2 Western Shore

Historical maps of the period indicate that the spatial settlements along the western shoreline differed from those on the eastern shore both in scale and in urban texture. The Camialtı and Taşkızak shipyards occupied a large area along the waterfront and were characterized by large-scale structures, shipyard buildings, and associated production facilities. Behind the shipyard zone, warehouses and additional production spaces belonging to the shipyard were located.

Further inland, residential areas and smaller-scale production and living units were positioned, indicating the continuity of the urban fabric. These areas functioned as an intermediate zone between the shipyard and the inland urban structure.

Within the shipyard itself, ship repair, production, and transportation activities were taking place during this period. This situation indicates that materials, products, or components entering the shipyard remained within this area throughout different stages of the production process, and that logistical circulation largely occurred within the boundaries of the shipyard.

This spatial structure suggests that production activities along the western shore were organized within a more concentrated and centralized industrial system. The shipyard functioned not only as a site for ship construction and repair but also as an integrated working environment where production, storage, and logistical processes were closely interconnected. Shipbuilding and maintenance activities took place in large production buildings and dock areas located along the waterfront. Warehouses, workshops, and auxiliary production spaces supporting these activities were positioned in the rear parts of the shipyard zone.

This organization created a spatial arrangement in which different stages of the production process could take place within the boundaries of the shipyard. Raw materials and necessary supplies arrived via maritime transportation, shipbuilding and repair processes progressed within the same area, and circulation related to production was largely structured through the logistical network operating inside the facility. As a result, the western shoreline was shaped primarily by large-scale industrial and production activities rather than everyday urban use. Similar spatial conditions can be observed in many industrial waterfronts, where port and shipyard infrastructures tend to produce more enclosed and controlled waterfront edges with limited public accessibility (Breś & Krośnicka, 2021).

During the late nineteenth century, many people working in the shipyard resided in neighborhoods close to the shipyard area, as observed in many other port cities. Many of the surrounding buildings of the period housed shipyard workers who lived there either alone or with their families. Worker residential areas were located slightly inland, behind the shipyard waterfront zone. Although these residential areas were positioned further inland and somewhat separated from the shipyard, they were not entirely disconnected from it. Behind the shipyard and within the residential neighborhoods, small workshops and supporting production activities such as carpentry, metalwork, and ship component manufacturing were present. These formed a network of small-scale industries that supported the shipyard economy.

This spatial condition can be read as a working waterfront where shipyard production and worker residential areas were closely connected. It did not come from a single reason. On the one hand, shipyard activities required certain spaces, which shaped how the shoreline was used and organized. On the other hand, the existing urban fabric and nearby residential areas also influenced how production and daily life took place. So this relationship developed through a mutual interaction rather than a one-way process. Similar situations can be seen in other port cities, where maritime industries and residential areas remain closely linked (Krośnicka & Wawrzyńska, 2023; Hein, 2016).



Figure 31. Partial Istanbul maps showing the Golden Horn and surrounding areas. Source: SALT Research Archive, Kemali Söylemezoğlu Documents Collection.

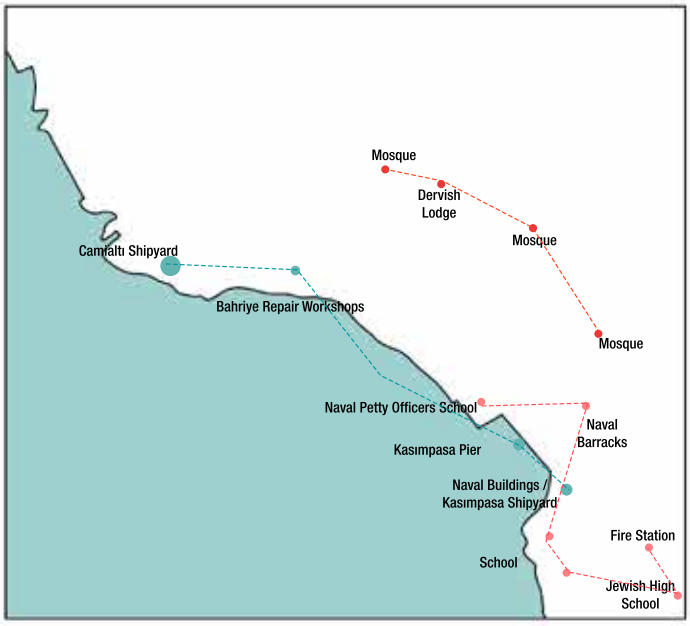


Figure 32. Diagram illustrating key institutional and urban nodes along the western shoreline of the Golden Horn, showing connections between religious, educational, and industrial structures and their relationship to the waterfront. Diagram by the author, based on SALT Research Archive.

The historical map and the derived diagram (Figure 31,32) indicate a clear concentration of naval and shipyard-related structures along the western shoreline of the Golden Horn. Facilities such as the Camialtı Shipyard, Bahriye repair workshops, naval buildings, and military barracks formed a large industrial and naval zone directly connected to the waterfront. Unlike the eastern shoreline, where different urban functions were integrated within the neighborhood fabric, this area developed as a more specialized production landscape focused on shipbuilding, repair, and maritime infrastructure.



Figure 33. Historical view of the Imperial Naval Arsenal (Haliç Shipyards) along the Golden Horn, 19th century. Source: Tersane Istanbul, https://www.tersaneistanbul.com.tr/tr/tersane-hakkinda (accessed January 2026).



Figure 34. Panoramic view of the Imperial Naval Arsenal (Haliç Shipyards) along the Golden Horn, illustrating shipbuilding activity and waterfront infrastructure, 19th century. Source: Tersane Istanbul, https://www.tersaneistanbul.com.tr/tr/tersane-hakkinda

2.3 Spatial Presence and Visibility

2.3.1 Eastern Shore

Industrial areas and operating facilities along the eastern shore are smaller in scale and lower in height compared to those on the western shore. In contrast to the shipyard complexes, they present a more fragmented and small-scale character. Workshops, warehouses, production spaces, and the Fener–Balat piers located along the waterfront are blended with the surrounding urban fabric and therefore do not become dominant elements within the urban skyline.

This porous and fragmented spatial arrangement also creates a similar visual permeability. These building masses do not interrupt the visual perception of the shoreline. The coast continues to be distinguished by its green boundary, and a visual continuity remains present. The topography of the area also plays an important role in shaping this visual condition. The dense residential fabric rising along the hillside behind the waterfront remains one of the most visible layers of the eastern shore. Within this hillside landscape, prominent structures such as the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate and the Fener Greek High School emerge as recognizable landmarks that contribute to the visual identity of the eastern shoreline.

Consequently, when viewed from the eastern shore, the shipyard structures and large-scale industrial infrastructures along the Kasımpaşa–Hasköy line on the opposite side can be clearly perceived within the urban landscape. This condition enables not only a physical but also a visual relationship between the two shores of the Golden Horn. The smaller and more fragmented urban structure of the eastern shore also contributes to the more dominant appearance of the large shipyard complexes on the opposite side within the overall silhouette.

In this context, the water surface of the Golden Horn functions not only as a natural boundary separating the two shores but also as an active working surface connecting them. Through small boats, piers, and water-based mobility, the movement of materials, goods, and people between the two sides becomes possible. The small piers and landing points located along the eastern shore operate together with the neighborhood street network, integrating the waterfront into everyday life and local economic activities. Through this circulation and movement, the eastern shore becomes spatially perceived as part of the broader working landscape of the Golden Horn and the western industrial waterfront.

Overall, the industrial presence along the eastern shore emerges not through large enclosed production complexes but through smaller structures embedded within the residential fabric. This spatial configuration allows the shoreline to maintain a more open and permeable character both visually and functionally, while also enabling a continuous visual and economic interaction between the two shores of the Golden Horn.

2.3.2 Western Shore

The Camialtı and Taşkızak shipyards constitute the most significant area in terms of spatial presence and visibility along the western shore. The active use of the shipyards during this period and the coverage of these areas with large shipyard cranes, ships, and production workshop spaces caused the western shoreline to be perceived as a large production coast when viewed from the eastern shore.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when industrial production reached its peak, the intense traffic and activities within the shipyard continuously altered the urban silhouette. The movement of arriving and departing ships, small boats, and the circulation within the harbor created a strong visual intensity along the waterfront. This visual intensity was also shaped by the green areas located on the upper parts of the shipyard, which have been preserved until today. Together with these green areas, the visual density along the shoreline continued while the spatial texture gradually changed.

The scale of the structures within the shipyard was significantly larger and their heights were greater compared to those on the eastern shore. This created a clearer, sharper, and more visible industrial edge along the waterfront. The visual dominance of this industrial landscape also produced a contrast with the surrounding residential units, which remained smaller in scale. This contrast continued through the presence of smaller repair workshops and residential buildings where shipyard workers and soldiers lived, forming a layered spatial relationship between the massive shipyard structures and the smaller supporting buildings around them.

Within this spatial configuration, the water surface of the Golden Horn functioned as an essential component of the shipbuilding environment. Ships entering and leaving the docks, repair activities, and the circulation of boats structured the waterfront as an active maritime production landscape. Rather than acting as a boundary, the water operated as a working surface that supported shipbuilding processes and connected different parts of the shipyard infrastructure.

Chapter 3

Deindustrialization and Transition (1980s–2000s)

3.1 Morphological Change

3.2 Changing Spatial Use

3.3 Visual Transformation

The Golden Horn functioned for a long time as an active industrial waterfront shaped by shipyard activities and production. From the second half of the twentieth century, and more clearly after the 1980s, this condition began to shift. Industrial areas that were once concentrated along the shoreline were gradually moved outside the city, and many of these functions disappeared from the Golden Horn. This change did not happen suddenly but over time, and it can also be seen in many other waterfront cities where former industrial areas lost their role and started to open up for different uses.

As these areas lost their function, large vacant and underused spaces began to appear along the shoreline. These spaces did not remain empty for long, but became part of new redevelopment processes shaped by changing economic conditions and urban priorities. At the same time, the environmental condition of the water became a major concern, making the Golden Horn an area that required intervention. Because of this, the waterfront was no longer understood only as a production space, but started to be seen differently within the city. The edge, which had once been clearly defined by shipbuilding and industrial structures, slowly began to open up to other forms of use.

Under these conditions, the shores of the Golden Horn—especially the facing areas of Kasımpaşa–Hasköy and Fener–Balat—began to be approached as areas with potential for change rather than as active production zones. Different interventions and waterfront projects introduced new spatial arrangements that gradually reshaped the relationship between the city and the water. At the same time, this process did not develop in a uniform way. It moved through different decisions, actors, and moments, which led to uneven spatial outcomes. Because of this, even though the two shores share a similar industrial past, they have followed different spatial trajectories over time.

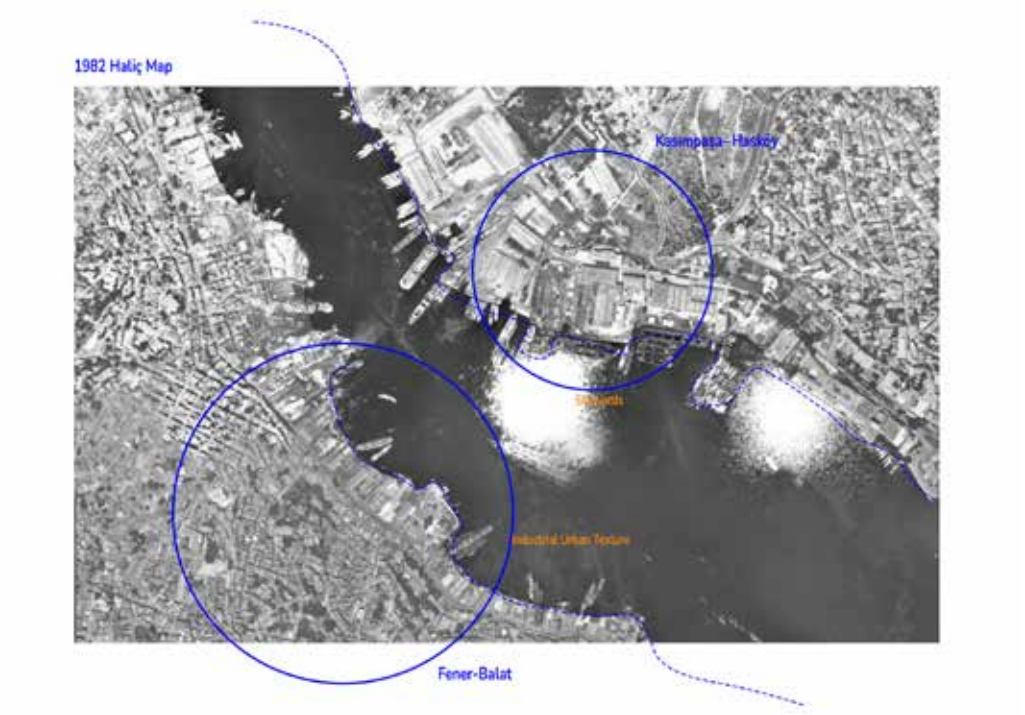


Figure 35. Golden Horn orthophoto, 1982, showing the distribution of shipyard-related structures and production areas along the waterfront. Source: Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IBB), edited by the author.

When the 1982 and 2020 maps (Figure 35,36) are compared, the change along the Golden Horn waterfront can be directly observed. In the 1982 map, the presence of shipyard-related structures, the density of ships, and the concentration of production areas are visible, whereas in the 2020 map the shoreline appears to be largely cleared. This density along the facing shores gradually decreases, and the Golden Horn, once an active passage, becomes significantly emptied over time.

Especially on the western shore, the decrease in the number of ships in the areas where shipyards were located and the weakening of spatial traces related to production clearly show that the shoreline has lost its former function. In contrast, more continuous open spaces and green bands become more visible on the eastern shore. This comparison makes it possible to read, through maps, how the shoreline moves away from a production-oriented structure and becomes open to different spatial uses.



Figure 36. Golden Horn satellite imagery, 2020, showing the transformation of the waterfront and the emergence of open and post-industrial spaces. Source: Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IBB), edited by the author.

3.1 Morphological Change

3.1.1 Eastern Shore

When the Fener–Balat shoreline is examined morphologically across different periods, a small-scale urban fabric that is intertwined with residential structures and reflects a mixed neighborhood–production–waterfront structure can be observed. Even during the periods when it was actively used for industrial production, this shoreline shows a similar urban character. During the deindustrialization period, compared to the western shore, it includes smaller-scale production areas and instead of forming a large-scale and closed system like the western side, it develops as a more integrated and permeable structure within the neighborhood fabric.

This process starts with the gradual relocation of production activities away from the waterfront and leads to a spatial reconfiguration along the shoreline. After the 1980s, with the decrease of production activities, the structures along the waterfront lose their functions and more open spaces start to appear along the shoreline. This situation is related to the deindustrialization process, where waterfront areas become emptied and open to new uses (Bezmez, 2008). During this period, different waterfront projects are proposed for the area and with these interventions the shoreline becomes a more continuous linear open space, forming a transition zone between the residential areas and the water.

In the Fener–Balat shoreline, where streets connect directly to the waterfront, the retreat of built structures allows open spaces to become more continuous. As the shoreline opens up, the boundary becomes less clearly defined. With this change, access becomes easier and the relationship between the water and the city becomes more direct. This shift can also be understood as part of a broader change in how waterfronts work. As production activities decline, the edge is no longer shaped only by industrial use but begins to take on different roles. Instead of functioning as a fixed boundary, it starts to operate in a more flexible way, where different uses overlap and interact. In this sense, the shoreline becomes a more layered condition, shaped both by existing structures and by everyday movements and activities (Desfor & Laidley, 2011).

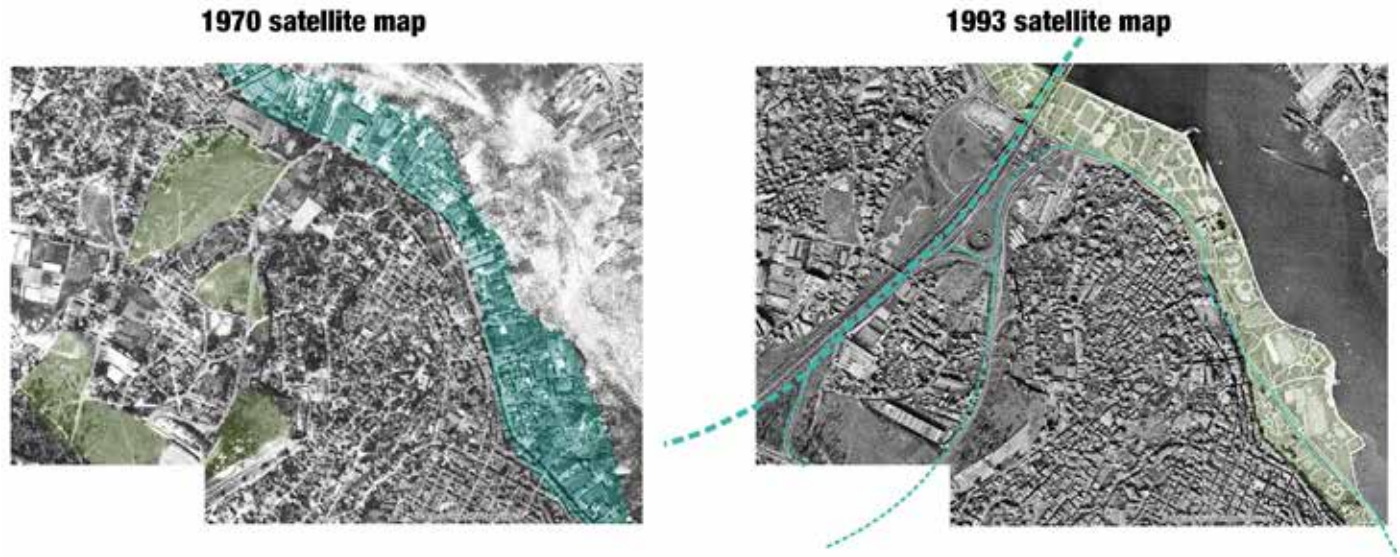


Figure 37. Golden Horn satellite imagery, 1970 and 1993, showing the transition from a dense built shoreline to a more open and continuous edge. Source: Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IBB), edited by the author.

- **From dense built edge to open and continuous shoreline**
- **Loss of industrial footprint and spatial intensity**
- **Expansion of open spaces along the waterfront**
- **Emergence of a linear and continuous edge condition**
- **Increased permeability between urban fabric and water**
- **Strengthening of street–water connections**

When the transformation observed along the Fener–Balat shoreline is examined, it is not only limited to the increase of physical voids caused by the decrease of production activities, but also leads to a morphological redefinition of the waterfront edge. In the previous period, the shoreline followed a more fragmented pattern that was interrupted by production activities in certain parts, while over time it becomes more continuous, open, and can be defined as a single line. This condition is related to the retreat of built masses, allowing voids to become more visible and more readable as they connect with each other. After the 1990s, this shoreline becomes more clearly observable as a greener, open line where the void is designed and gains continuity. In this process, the shoreline moves away from being a sharp edge that creates a strict boundary and becomes a more permeable and gradual transition space. The condition where streets connect to the waterfront, which existed before, is preserved, but these connections are strengthened by establishing a more direct relationship with open and green spaces. This situation strengthens the relationship between the waterfront and the neighborhood fabric. In this way, the shoreline starts to function not only as a boundary line but as a transition zone where different spatial layers come together. This layered structure can be read through streets, open spaces, and green bands, and makes the relationship between the city and the water more flexible and accessible.

In this period, the Golden Horn Bridge establishes a direct connection between the two shores at an upper level, and its extension passing through the Fener–Balat shoreline can be read as an important intervention that redefines the relationship between infrastructure and the waterfront. Especially at the point where the bridge intersects with the shoreline, the reorganization of existing open and green spaces contributes to this area becoming a more defined and continuous open space. This situation allows the shoreline to be understood not only as a horizontal edge, but also as a multi-layered structure that is related to transportation and open space systems at different scales.

In this context, the Fener–Balat shoreline today presents a more open, continuous, and permeable waterfront morphology. The redefinition of the waterfront edge in this way allows a more direct relationship between the water and the city, while also making the waterfront part of everyday use. This transformation can be related to the evolution of the waterfront edge into a more permeable, layered, and accessible structure over time (Breś & Krośnicka, 2021).



Figure 38. Aerial view of the Golden Horn and Haliç Bridge, showing the redeveloped eastern shoreline. Photograph by M. Erem Çakıroğlu. Source: SALT Research.

3.1.2 Western Shore

During the deindustrialization process, a clear morphological change starts to become visible along the western shore of the Golden Horn. The shoreline, which was previously shaped by production activities, intense ship traffic, and a continuous linear structure, begins to lose this continuity over time. With the closure of shipyards and the gradual weakening and eventual ending of their activities, the production band along the coast slowly dissolves. Instead of a continuous working waterfront, the area turns into a more fragmented and interrupted spatial condition, where large voids and undefined spaces start to appear.

In this process, large-scale industrial structures belonging to the Camialtı and Taşkızak shipyards still remain physically in place. However, as they lose their functions, these structures stop working as active production sites and begin to act more like idle spatial masses. This creates a kind of intermediate situation where the form is still there but the function is no longer present. Over time, the previously dense and compact production fabric becomes looser and more fragmented, mainly defined by emerging voids.

At the same time, changes in continuity also affect access along the shoreline. Before, the edge was continuous, controlled, and clearly defined due to its industrial use. After deindustrialization, these boundaries mostly remain, but they no longer serve a clear function and instead create a more disconnected and inactive edge condition. Because of this, the shoreline becomes both physically and spatially detached from the city, with limited accessibility and a more fragmented structure. The boundary between the water and the city, which already existed before, becomes even sharper and starts to appear more as a spatial void.

As a result, the shoreline, which once formed a clear industrial boundary along the western shore, becomes more ambiguous and fragmented, turning into a less defined threshold. This transformation shows that the shoreline is no longer a production-based interface, but rather a transitional and unresolved spatial condition that remains open to further redefinition.



Figure 39. Golden Horn satellite imagery, 1987 and 2000, showing the transformation of the western shoreline from a dense industrial edge to a more open and continuous condition. Source: Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IBB), edited by the author.

- **From continuous production shoreline to fragmented and discontinuous edge condition**
- **Persistence of industrial structures despite loss of function**
- **Emergence of large spatial voids within the former production fabric**

The change along the western shore does not appear as a sudden transformation, but rather as a gradual loss of its production logic over time. As shipyard activities start to weaken from the 1980s and eventually come to an end in 2000, the shoreline begins to shift away from its role as an active working waterfront. Instead of a clearly defined and continuously operating edge, the area starts to break down into disconnected parts. Former production areas lose their function step by step, and this process makes the emerging voids more visible both on land and along the water (Şen & Sarıca, 2024). What used to operate as a continuous system slowly turns into a fragmented spatial condition.v

In this process, large-scale industrial structures belonging to the Camialtı and Taşkızak shipyards physically remain in place; however, due to the loss of their functions, these structures cease to operate as active production sites and turn into idle spatial elements. Despite the disappearance of production activities, the persistence of spatial traces creates a condition where, as can also be read from maps, the form remains while the function disappears. At the same time, ship traffic significantly decreases, and the shoreline starts to appear as if it is closed off to ships, creating a sense of emptiness also on the water. This condition leads the previously dense and compact production fabric to gradually loosen and transform into a spatial organization defined by voids (Bilgiç, 2020). These voids are also reflected on the water surface.

As production activities come to an end, the spatial organization of the shoreline also starts to change. What was once a linear and continuous system shaped by production gradually loses its internal connections. Instead of working as a single continuous structure, the shoreline begins to break into more disconnected parts. This shift creates a more heterogeneous condition, where different densities and voids appear next to each other rather than forming a uniform structure (Çakmaklı, 2025).

Seen from this perspective, the change along the western shore is not only about physical fragmentation. It also reflects how a production-based spatial system slowly dissolves and turns into something less defined and more open to change. The shoreline shifts from a linear and continuous production line into a fragmented structure defined by voids, with weakened spatial relationships.

3.2 Changing Spatial Use

3.2.1 Eastern Shore

As industrial activity starts to decrease, the waterfront does not stay unused. Instead, these areas slowly begin to take on new roles. Over time, the edge of the water turns into a more continuous open space where people start to walk, sit, and spend time. The shoreline becomes something that is used in everyday life rather than just something to look at (Breś & Krośnicka, 2021).

Even with these changes, the connection to the water is not completely lost. It continues through specific points. The ferry piers in Fener and Balat remain active, and they keep this link alive. Around these points, movement and activity become more visible, so the shoreline starts to feel more used and occupied instead of empty.

At the same time, a road running parallel to the shoreline adds another layer to how this edge works. It carries both cars and pedestrians, and creates a line between the waterfront and the urban fabric. But instead of separating them, it works more like a transition zone, where different types of movement overlap and interact.

This change is also supported by rehabilitation projects in the Fener–Balat area, especially from the late 1990s onwards. Buildings are repaired, public spaces are reorganized, and the connection between the neighbourhood and the waterfront becomes stronger. As a result, the shoreline starts to be used more in everyday life .

In this process, the existing residential fabric also plays an important role. The Balat houses are mostly not replaced, but repaired and used again. Because of this, daily life in the area does not disappear, but continues in a slightly different way over time. Living spaces and the shoreline stay close to each other, and this makes the water part of everyday routines.

At the same time, the area slowly begins to attract new users. This does not happen suddenly, but over time. Different people start to use the area in different ways, and new activities appear. These do not replace what already exists, but rather exist together with it, creating a more layered and evolving use of space.

The reuse of industrial buildings also plays a role in this shift. For example, the Cibali Tobacco Factory is no longer used for production, but functions as an educational building, bringing new users into the area and adding different types of activity (Yağmur, 2024).

In later periods, the tram line along the shoreline further increases accessibility. Even though this comes later, it supports the existing uses by connecting the waterfront to a larger part of the city.

Overall, the eastern shoreline moves away from production-based use and becomes more open, accessible, and layered. Water transport, road movement, and rail systems all exist together, creating a condition that can be read as a “multi-layered mobility edge.” The shoreline is no longer just a boundary, but an active part of everyday urban life (Bezmez, 2008).



Figure 40. Contemporary satellite image of the eastern shoreline of the Golden Horn, showing the transformation of the waterfront into a more open and continuous green edge. Source: Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IBB), edited by the author.

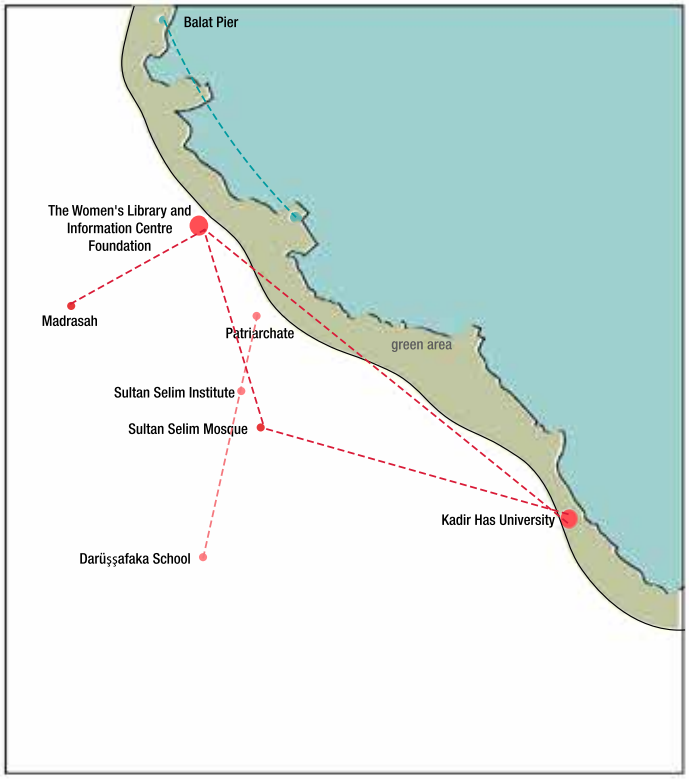


Figure 41. Diagram illustrating key urban and social nodes along the contemporary eastern shoreline of the Golden Horn, showing their connections to newly formed green areas and the waterfront. Diagram by the author, based on IBB imagery.

The diagram shows how the previously integrated waterfront system begins to break apart during deindustrialization. Connections weaken and become discontinuous, while functions appear more as isolated points than as part of a unified system. The introduction of green areas along the shoreline also increases the separation between the city and the water, resulting in a more dispersed and less connected spatial condition.

3.2.2 Western Shore

The spatial use along the western shore during this period is shaped less by the emergence of new functions and more by the closure and loss of existing ones. As production activities in the Camialtı and Taşkızak shipyards gradually declined and eventually came to an end around 2000, these areas lost their active role. However, instead of being reprogrammed, they remained closed and largely inaccessible for a long period (Çakmaklı, 2025).

This condition becomes clearer when compared to the previous period, when the shoreline was actively used in relation to shipyard production. The production buildings, workshops, and storage spaces still physically remain, but they no longer function as part of an active system. Areas that once supported production, repair, and logistics have gradually emptied out, remaining as inactive and closed spaces without taking on new uses. At the same time, smaller production and support structures that extended into the surrounding urban fabric have also lost their role and slowly disappeared.

During this period, no new forms of use clearly emerged along the shoreline. Instead, access and movement became more limited. Although the fragmented shoreline still defines a boundary with the city, the edge remains controlled and discontinuous due to the presence of former shipyard areas. Small public parks appear in some northern parts, creating limited points of contact with the water, but these remain isolated and do not form a continuous system. As a result, the waterfront does not function as an actively used public space, but remains largely detached from everyday urban life. The residential fabric along the western shore also follows a different trajectory compared to the eastern side. Housing areas that were previously connected to shipyard workers lose their direct relationship with the waterfront, and everyday life becomes increasingly disconnected from the shore. Unlike in the Fener–Balat area, a continuous residential structure integrated with the waterfront does not develop here. This also points to the absence of a mixed-use condition during the deindustrialization period.

The introduction of new user groups remains limited. Although industrial use disappears, the lack of reprogramming leaves the shoreline empty and undefined for a long time. In this sense, the area can be understood as remaining in a transitional condition, where change is present but incomplete (Bezmez, 2008).

Overall, the spatial use along the western shore shifts from an intensive production-based system to a condition where new uses have not yet emerged, access is limited, and the relationship with everyday urban life remains weak. This situation reflects a phase in which the waterfront has lost its original function but has not yet been fully reconnected to the city. Similar in-between conditions are often discussed in studies on waterfront transformation, where change tends to happen gradually rather than all at once (Desfor & Laidley, 2011)



Figure 42. Contemporary satellite image of the western shoreline of the Golden Horn, showing the current spatial configuration of the waterfront and its relationship to the surrounding urban fabric. Source: Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IBB), edited by the author.

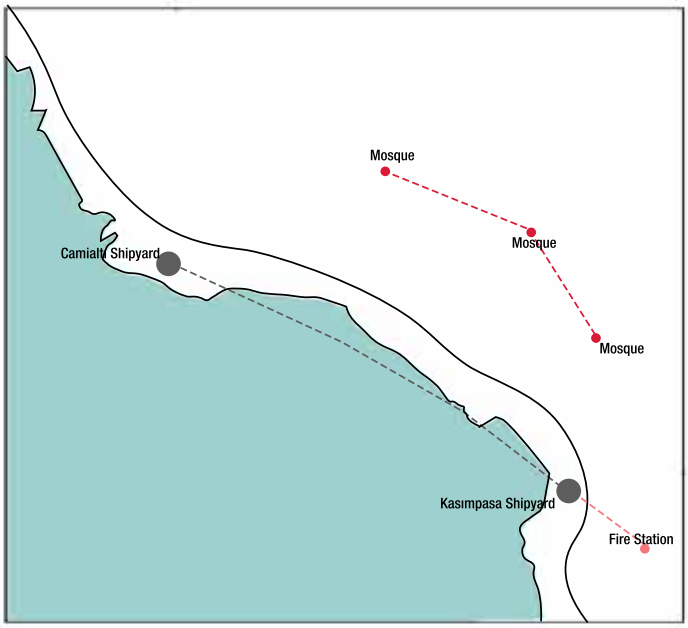


Figure 43. Diagram illustrating selected institutional and urban nodes along the western shoreline of the Golden Horn, highlighting their spatial connections to the waterfront. Diagram by the author, based on IBB imagery.

This diagram builds on the previously described condition of the western shoreline and shows how its spatial structure becomes increasingly defined by inactivity during the deindustrialization period. In the earlier period, the shoreline was shaped by an active production system. In this diagram, this system starts to break down as shipbuilding activities in the Camialtı and Taşkızak shipyards gradually decline and stop. Even though these large industrial structures are still there, they no longer function and continue to occupy large areas without being actively used.

As highlighted in historical studies, the shipyards and their surrounding areas were not immediately transformed after their closure, but instead remained closed and largely inaccessible for long periods (Alarslan Uludaş, 2022). This creates a spatial condition where the waterfront is still shaped by existing industrial elements such as dock basins and storage areas, but these no longer operate as part of an active system. Instead of production, these spaces remain mostly empty or unused. The shoreline, which was previously organized through continuous production and movement, is now defined by closed and controlled areas. As a result, both access to the water and everyday interaction with it become more limited.

This is shown in the diagram by fewer connections and no continuous network. Rather than operating as an integrated system, the shoreline appears as a series of fragmented and isolated elements. At the same time, the historical continuity of industrial use remains visible in the physical layout, reinforcing a strong but inactive edge condition. As a result, the western shoreline enters a prolonged transitional phase, where the industrial past continues to shape the spatial organization, while a new urban function has not yet clearly emerged.

3.3 Visual Transformation

3.3.1 Eastern Shore

The visual perception of the shoreline changes noticeably as production activities come to an end. The industrial character that was previously read through small-scale production buildings, workshops, and storage areas gradually fades as these structures lose their function, and the visible traces of production along the waterfront start to recede. The Fener–Balat pier, which still remains today, can be seen as one of the few elements left from this once active and built-up waterfront. As a result, the shoreline begins to be perceived less as a space of production and more as an open and simplified visual field.

As industrial activities disappear, empty areas and open spaces along the shoreline become more visible. Spaces that were once dense and active begin to clear out, allowing the waterfront to be perceived as more open and continuous. In this sense, the shoreline starts to read as a more uninterrupted edge (Bezmez, 2007).

At the same time, large-scale interventions play an important role in shaping this visual change. Some structures are removed, while others are left empty. Within the scope of the Golden Horn Coastal Arrangement Project, many buildings along the waterfront are demolished, and the shoreline is transformed into a wide green band. Through this intervention, an area that was once defined by dense and fragmented structures becomes a broad, open, and visually continuous surface (Dinler & Şahin Güçhan, 2016).

However, the formation of this open space does not only increase visual continuity, but also changes how the shoreline relates to the city. The road along the shoreline draws a clear boundary between the green strip and the urban fabric. Although the waterfront is open and can be reached, it does not fully connect with everyday urban life. Because of this, the shoreline is not used as an active public space, but is mostly experienced visually (Dinler & Şahin Güçhan, 2016). The wide and flat green area in between reads as an open but empty zone, sitting between the neighbourhood and the water.

The removal of large-scale structures that once interrupted the waterfront also opens up wider perspectives and makes the opposite shore more visible. The water surface of the Golden Horn is therefore not only a boundary between two sides, but also a shared visual field. When viewed from the western side, the eastern shoreline appears more open within the overall urban silhouette. In this way, visual continuity is strengthened not only along the shoreline, but also across the water.

This condition is not unique to the Golden Horn. In many cases, waterfront areas that lose their industrial function become emptied and are later redefined in different ways (Marshall, 2001). On the eastern shore, this change is not only physical, but also related to how the shoreline is perceived. At the same time, the residential fabric rising along the hillside behind the waterfront continues to define the main visual character of the area. Landmarks such as the Fener Greek High School, the Patriarchate, and the Fener–Balat pier remain visible and continue to shape the identity of the shoreline, even after the decline of industrial activity. This shows that the transformation of the eastern shore is not a sudden break, but a gradual shift where existing visual layers are rebalanced over time.

3.3.2 Western Shore

The visual transformation of the western shoreline is not defined through openness and continuity, as in the eastern part, but rather through the continued presence of industrial structures. Large-scale buildings belonging to the Camialtı and Taşkızak shipyards remain physically in place even after production has stopped. Because of this, their visual impact along the waterfront is still clearly visible. The shoreline therefore continues to carry the image of a former production landscape.

With deindustrialization, some open areas and gaps have appeared on the western shore, similar to the eastern side. However, these spaces are not continuous or linear. Instead, they appear fragmented and difficult to define. Rather than forming a wide and continuous public edge, these areas are perceived as leftover spaces between both large and small industrial masses. In this sense, they do not create a feeling of openness, but instead make the existing sense of enclosure more noticeable.

These fragmented spaces break movement and make the shoreline hard to read as one whole. The eastern side feels continuous, while the western edge appears broken, with gaps and different building scales creating a fragmented image. As a result, the shoreline is not read as one unified surface, but as separate pieces placed next to each other. Large shipyard buildings, warehouses, and production-related structures play a strong role in shaping this condition. They interrupt views and limit the direct visual connection with the water. At the same time, they reduce the sense of openness by narrowing perspectives and blocking longer views. Because of this, the shoreline is perceived less as an open interface with the water, and more as a boundary where what lies behind remains partially hidden.

Deindustrialization has also affected the movement on the water. In earlier periods, the Golden Horn was defined by intense ship traffic and production-related activity. Today, this movement has largely disappeared. Without ships and industrial activity, the water becomes calmer and more still. This changes how it is seen. While the shoreline remains enclosed, the water feels open but inactive. Unlike the eastern shore, this openness does not support use and reads more like an empty surface. The silhouette of the shoreline is also shaped by these conditions.Large industrial structures still dominate the waterfront and shape how the edge is seen. From across the Golden Horn, the shipyard buildings remain clearly visible and stand out in the skyline. This creates a strong contrast with the more open eastern shore.

In this context, the visual transformation of the western shoreline is not defined by the disappearance of industrial traces, but rather by their continued presence without active use. Large areas remain physically in place after production ends, yet they are not immediately re-used. Instead, they appear as fragmented and undefined spaces that stay inactive for long periods. This kind of condition can be related to broader transformations in urban waterfronts, where former industrial areas lose their function but do not quickly take on new roles, remaining in an unresolved state within the city (Desfor & Laidley, 2011; Harvey, 1996).

Overall, the western shoreline does not transform into an open and public edge, but instead continues to be shaped by existing industrial structures and large vacant areas. Even though it is no longer an active production site, it still carries a strong industrial character. This condition continues to limit its visual relationship with both the city and the water.

Chapter 4

Contemporary Redevelopment (2000s–Present)

4.1 Reconfigured Shoreline Morphology

4.2 Changing Spatial Use

4.3 Visual Transformation

With the decline of industrial production at the end of the twentieth century, the Golden Horn waterfront has gradually shifted from a production-oriented area into a restructured urban space shaped by culture and consumption. As also discussed in the literature on post-industrial cities, in areas undergoing such transformations, new spaces emerge where urban identity is redefined and new economic and cultural activities become concentrated (Marshall, 2001).

Since the 2000s, through urban improvement projects, the adaptive reuse of industrial buildings, the creation of new public spaces, and the densification and multiplication of these public areas, the relationship between the city and the water has started to be redefined. However, this transformation has not produced a continuous, uninterrupted, and homogeneous shoreline. On the contrary, it has resulted in a fragmented and layered structure where redesigned public spaces, preserved industrial traces, infrastructural boundaries, and public, semi-public, and controlled areas coexist.

In the case of the Golden Horn, this process is shaped not only by global waterfront transformation trends but also by local decisions, different actors, and the way projects are carried out over time. Instead of a clear and continuous transformation, what emerges is a more uneven and mixed shoreline, where different interventions—often developed separately—come together but do not fully integrate with each other (Bezmez, 2008).

These transformation processes are shaped by different actors, including municipal authorities, private developers, and project-based initiatives that have been introduced over time. As a result, the eastern and western shores have developed different spatial and visual outcomes. Although both sides have undergone redevelopment, they differ in terms of continuity, accessibility, and the ways industrial traces are preserved or removed. These differences reflect how decisions are made through multiple actors and processes rather than through a single, unified strategy (Healey, 1997).

In this chapter, these contemporary conditions are examined through morphology, spatial organization, and visual structure, focusing on how redevelopment processes have produced different shoreline characters on the eastern and western sides of the Golden Horn.

4.1 Reconfigured Shoreline Morphology

4.1.1 Eastern Shore

The contemporary morphological transformation of the eastern shore can be understood not as a complete disappearance of its relationship with the existing urban fabric, but rather as a process in which this relationship has been reorganized and restructured. During the industrial period, the shoreline functioned as a direct extension of the neighborhood, shaped by small-scale production and repair structures, warehouses, and piers. After deindustrialization, this urban structure lost its function, but its traces have largely remained both spatially and culturally.

Since the 2000s, waterfront redevelopment and improvement projects, focusing on the production and enhancement of public space, have reshaped the physical configuration of the shoreline. On the Fener–Balat side, these interventions have aimed to fully open the waterfront to public use, increase pedestrian accessibility, and introduce recreational areas supported by new infrastructures such as tram lines. However, rather than producing a single, continuous, and fully integrated shoreline, these interventions appear as fragmented arrangements implemented in different periods and through different approaches (Dinler & Şahin Güçhan, 2016).

Within this process, the earlier relationship between buildings, streets, and the water has been partially reorganized into a more linear and continuous shoreline condition.The pedestrian paths and green areas along the waterfront make it easier to reach the water and move along the shore. Because of this, the shoreline is no longer only a physical edge, but becomes part of everyday use and daily movement. Similar changes can also be seen in post-industrial waterfronts, where former industrial edges gradually turn into more open and publicly accessible spaces (Breś & Krośnicka, 2021).

At the same time, this new morphological condition does not produce a fully continuous or homogeneous shoreline. The existing urban fabric of Fener and Balat—its narrow streets, characteristic housing, sloped topography, and building patterns—continues to define the shoreline in certain areas. The close positioning of buildings to the water and the way streets extend toward the shoreline have not completely disappeared; instead, they have been reorganized through new public arrangements and connected to the newly introduced green edge.

Also,several urban regeneration proposals have been developed for the Fener–Balat area over time, suggesting different approaches to transformation, often focusing on conservation, rehabilitation, or renewal. However, many of these proposals were either only partially implemented or remained limited in scope. Because of this, the transformation of the shoreline does not follow a single, continuous strategy, but rather reflects a series of separate interventions that do not fully connect with each other. As discussed in previous studies, the redevelopment process in Fener and Balat has been shaped by multiple projects with different priorities, often lacking long-term continuity and integration (Dinler & Şahin Güçhan, 2016).

As a result, the eastern shoreline today is shaped by a layered morphological structure in which continuous public open spaces coexist with traces of the existing urban fabric. The shoreline no longer operates as a purely functional edge defined by production, but as a reconfigured interface that combines accessibility, circulation, and public use.

In this sense, the eastern shore has transformed from a waterfront defined by production and logistical relationships into one shaped by public use, movement, and accessibility. However, this transformation has not occurred through the complete erasure of the existing urban fabric, but through a condition in which past and present spatial structures coexist and partially overlap.

Continuous Access and Everyday Life

When looked at from a closer scale, the eastern shore presents a less defined landscape that continues as part of everyday urban life. As seen in the images (Figure 44-48), the relationship with the waterfront is not organized through designed or controlled entry and exit points, and remains fully public. People reach the shore by passing through the neighborhood, following informal routes shaped by the existing topography and street network.

This creates a different type of spatial experience compared to the western shoreline. Instead of moving through controlled and defined sequences, the transition to the waterfront happens gradually and often unintentionally. The shoreline is encountered as part of daily routines rather than as a destination, and its use is shaped by small-scale activities, local movement, and immediate proximity.

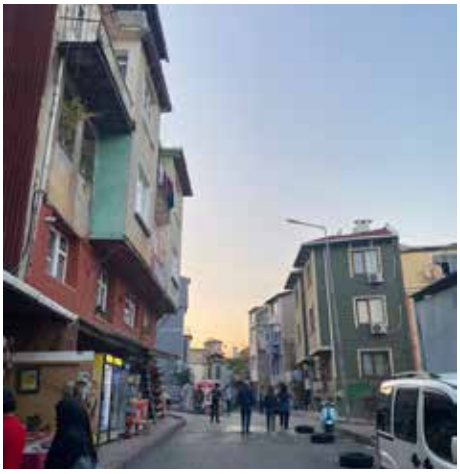


Figure 44. Street view in Fener–Balat, illustrating the continuity of the residential fabric and its integration with everyday urban life. Photograph by the author (2024).



Figure 45. Intersection connecting neighborhood streets to the waterfront, showing the accessibility of the eastern shoreline. Photograph by the author (2024).



Figure 46. Historical building along the eastern shoreline, reflecting the layered urban fabric and architectural continuity of the area. Photograph by the author (2024).



Figure 47. Waterfront open space along the eastern shore, illustrating the emergence of continuous green areas and public accessibility. Photograph by the author (2024).



Figure 48. Narrow street descending toward the Golden Horn, showing direct visual and physical connections between the urban fabric and the water. Photograph by the author (2024).

4.1.2 Western Shore

The morphological transformation of the western shore after the 2000s, unlike the eastern shore, has not developed into an open and continuous public waterfront through the removal of industrial traces. Instead, it has been shaped through large-scale and controlled interventions. In particular, the transformation of the Haliç Shipyards area has not led to a fully open public shoreline, but rather to a condition where the waterfront is redefined, limited, and reorganized through newly introduced structures.

Within the scope of the Tersane Istanbul project, this former industrial production area has been refunctionalized and given a new identity. However, this transformation has not produced a shoreline that is freely and continuously accessible. The entrances to the waterfront and the shipyard area, as well as the circulation and patterns of use, are defined by clear boundaries and security controls. As a result, even though the shoreline may appear physically accessible, it operates as a controlled and selective space. Although waterfront redevelopment often emphasizes the importance of public access, in practice such projects tend to produce controlled and semi-public environments (Özyörük, 2021).

Instead of completely removing the industrial structures, the transformation follows a more selective approach. Some buildings are kept and reused, while others are removed and rebuilt in a similar form. Because of this, the area still carries references to its industrial past, but in a different way. The former production structures are no longer active, and what remains works more as a representation of that past rather than a continuation of it.

At the same time, the new spatial organization along the waterfront is shaped less by open public access and more by controlled and semi-public use. Newly built piers, waterfront structures, hotels, and commercial spaces do not create a fully public circulation system, but rather serve specific user groups and more limited uses. In addition to these programs, residential units have also been introduced further back from the shoreline. These housing areas are separated from the public spaces by additional boundaries. Access becomes more controlled, and the link between the city and the water gets weaker. The shoreline is no longer directly connected to the urban fabric and starts to function as a more exclusive space.

Such transformations align with studies that discuss how the shift of the Haliç shipyards from production to culture, tourism, and service-oriented uses also brings processes of limited gentrification and spatial separation (Şen & Sarıca, 2024). The shoreline is changing not only in its physical form, but also in how it is used and accessed. Different groups have different levels of access, which shapes how the space is experienced.

As a result, the morphological condition of the western shore is not one that produces continuity, accessibility, and permeability, but rather one that is more bounded, controlled, and fragmented, while still carrying traces of its industrial past. Compared to the eastern shore, which presents a more open, accessible, and layered condition, the western shore remains more closed and controlled in its overall morphological character.

Tersane İstanbul Project

The Tersane Istanbul project is one of the clearest examples of the transformation and change taking place in the area. Located within the Camialtı and Taşkızak shipyard site, the project reuses some of the existing industrial structures and assigns new programs to them, creating a cultural and commercial waterfront facility.

As can also be seen in the images (Figure 49-51), this transformation does not aim to create a fully open and continuously flowing public waterfront. Instead, it creates a more defined spatial experience through different entrances and controlled pathways. This spatial experience is also shaped by clear boundaries that separate different areas. Within these separated zones, there are restaurants, hotels, shopping areas, cafés, and outdoor seating areas, forming a mix of semi-public and private spaces. This shows that this separation exists not only across the site but also within the Tersane Istanbul project itself, through different user groups and different spatial experiences.

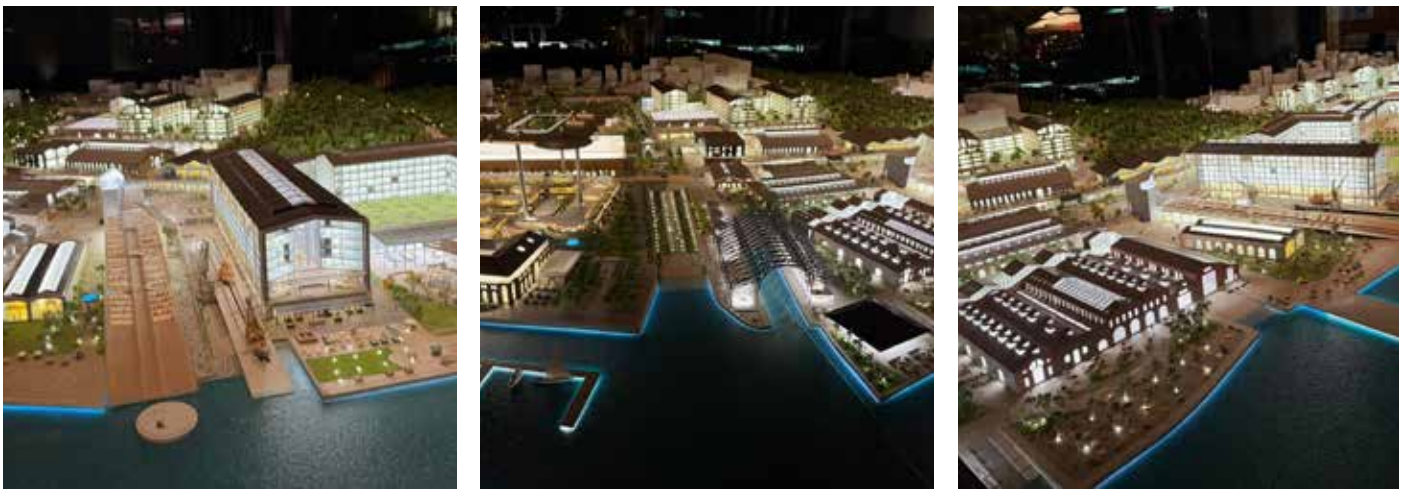


Figure 49. Physical model of the Tersane Istanbul project, illustrating the adaptive reuse of former shipyard structures and the organization of cultural, commercial, and waterfront spaces within a controlled and semi-public environment. Photograph by the author (2025).



Figure 50. Waterfront edge of the Tersane Istanbul development, showing semi-public access controlled through security and defined entry points, with retail areas located on the upper level. Photograph by the author (2026).



Figure 51. Interior view of the Tersane Istanbul complex, showing a controlled commercial environment organized as a shopping mall within the former industrial structures. Photograph by the author (2026).

Ongoing Construction and Persistent Boundaries

Even though the Tersane Istanbul project has been completed and opened for access, the transformation in the area is not fully finished and is still ongoing. As can be seen in the images (Figure 52,53), some parts of the site are still under construction, and the areas leading down towards the shoreline are also still being built. For this reason, it cannot yet be fully considered as a public space.

Due to its scale and location, this construction area directly limits and blocks access from the existing residential fabric to the waterfront. The area is still defined by strong boundaries. Fences, level changes, and controlled entrances separate the project from its surroundings. Instead of connecting with the city, it remains a more closed and controlled zone.



Figure 52. Ongoing construction within the Tersane Istanbul site, showing the incomplete transformation of the waterfront. Photograph by the author (2026).



Figure 53. Edge condition between the Tersane Istanbul site and the Kasımpaşa residential fabric, showing fenced boundaries and restricted access. Photograph by the author (2026).

Hasköy- North side of the Tersane İstanbul



Figure 54. Public open space along the Hasköy waterfront. Photograph by the author (2024).



Figure 55. Green waterfront area in Hasköy, showing accessible open space along the shoreline. Photograph by the author (2024).



Figure 56. Buildings along the Hasköy waterfront, reflecting the local urban fabric adjacent to the shoreline. Photograph by the author (2024).

4.2 Changing Spatial Use

4.2.1 Eastern Shore

Industrial activity starts to decrease, but the waterfront does not become an empty or unused area. These spaces begin to change over time with new uses and different ways of organization. The shoreline turns into a more continuous open space where people walk, sit, and spend time. Because of this, the waterfront is no longer only something to look at, but becomes part of everyday life (Breś & Krośnicka, 2021).

The connection with the water does not completely disappear. It continues through specific points. It continues through specific points. The ferry piers in Fener and Balat remain active and help maintain this connection. Activity around the piers makes some parts of the shoreline more lively. These areas are used more, while others remain less active. The shoreline works through these points instead of forming a single continuous space. Even though this connection is sometimes interrupted, it is never completely lost. For example, one of the piers in Balat was damaged by a fire in the 2000s and became unusable for a period of time, but it was later repaired and brought back into use. This shows that the relationship between the neighbourhood and the water is not broken, but only temporarily interrupted and then re-established.

A road runs along the shoreline and shapes how this edge works. It is used by both cars and pedestrians. Instead of clearly separating the waterfront from the neighbourhood, it works as a space in between where different movements overlap. The shoreline is not only an edge next to the water. It becomes a place where different flows come together.

In the Fener–Balat area, changes in use are also connected to rehabilitation projects, especially since the 1990s. Buildings are repaired and reused, and public spaces are reorganized. These changes make the connection between the neighbourhood and the waterfront stronger. The shoreline becomes more present in everyday life. Since these interventions focus on improving the existing fabric rather than replacing it, the relationship between the neighbourhood and the waterfront continues over time. The existing housing fabric also plays an important role in this process. Many Balat houses have been preserved and reused, allowing daily life in the area to continue. This keeps the close relationship between housing and the waterfront, and maintains the everyday connection with the water. However, this condition is not consistent across the whole area. Unlike places such as Kuzguncuk, where restoration is more continuous and active, in Balat this process is more uneven. Especially when moving further into the neighbourhood, many houses can be seen as empty or left unused.

Over time, different user groups have also started to use the area. This change does not happen suddenly, but gradually and in layers. New users and activities appear, but existing uses do not disappear. Instead, they continue together. Closer to the shoreline, many Balat houses are used for tourism, while still being part of everyday neighbourhood life. The ground floors of these houses often include cafés, restaurants, and small shops, which mix daily life with tourism. This creates a layered use of space that becomes more visible toward the waterfront. The reuse of industrial buildings is also part of this transformation. For example, the former Cibali Tobacco Factory is no longer used for production, but has been converted into Kadir Has University, bringing new users and activities into the area (Yağmur, 2024).

In later periods, the tram line added along the shoreline has further increased accessibility. It connects the waterfront to other parts of the city and supports existing uses. As a result, the shoreline becomes a more active part of the city and Fener–Balat turns into an important stop within urban movement.

Overall, the eastern shoreline has shifted from a production-based system to a more open, accessible, and layered use. Water transport, road movement, and rail systems all exist together, creating a dense and multi-layered condition. Because of this, the shoreline is no longer just a boundary, but can be understood as an active urban edge where different flows meet and everyday life takes place (Bezmez, 2008).

4.2.2 Western Shore

The current spatial use of the western shore, unlike the previous period when the area was inactive and functioned only as a closed shipyard, has been reprogrammed and reorganized. However, this new use does not produce an open and continuous public structure. Instead, the new uses are controlled, limited, and developed for specific user groups. This shows that after the production period, the shoreline has not fully transformed into a public space, but has instead taken shape through a selective new use condition.

With the transformation projects carried out in the Haliç shipyard area, spaces that remained inactive for a long time have been given new uses and roles, and have been transformed and rebuilt. Within the scope of the Tersane Istanbul project, functions such as the Rixos Tersane hotel, restaurants, commercial areas, a shopping mall, shops, and residential units have been introduced. Although these new functions reactivate the area, they do not create a continuous and fully accessible public waterfront. Even though waterfront transformation after deindustrialization often aims for this, the western shore remains in a semi-public and private condition. Access to the waterfront and the shipyard area is provided through defined entry points and security controls, and this interrupts the continuity of spatial use.

The housing areas are placed at the back of the site (Figure 59), closer to the existing neighbourhood. They are separated from the waterfront by the shopping mall. These areas are surrounded by boundaries and security, and work as more inward-focused spaces. This prevents a direct relationship between the new housing and the existing neighbourhood fabric and reinforces the fragmented condition of spatial use. These boundaries, created for security purposes, form two different zones: luxury housing within the project and the existing neighbourhood housing. While these secured housing areas have a stronger relationship with the waterfront, their connection to the urban fabric behind remains weak, causing the use to be oriented inward and limited within the shipyard complex.

The new uses along the shoreline also follow a similar controlled and selective pattern. The newly added pier structures (Figure 57) are not designed for public use, but rather for private boats and yachts. The wooden structures that were previously used for shipbuilding and repair have been removed and reinterpreted with steel systems in the same form (Figure 58). This shows that the spatial use has changed, but has not become public. Restaurants and commercial units have been placed within these structures, which slightly increase the use of the waterfront, but still remain limited to certain user groups.

Along the shoreline leading to the Rixos Tersane hotel, a green strip similar to the eastern shore can be observed. This strip creates a transition zone between land and water and supports pedestrian movement. It partially opens the waterfront to public use. However, this public use remains limited within the overall controlled structure of the project and does not produce a continuous public experience along the entire shoreline. Movement is limited up to certain points, especially toward the hotel area (Figure 60).

In this context, although the new functions on the western shore reactivate the area, they do not produce a continuous and everyday use as seen on the eastern shore. Instead, functions such as hotels, restaurants, commercial areas, and housing are placed within defined boundaries, resulting in a fragmented and controlled use. Use is stronger in some areas and more limited in others.



Figure 57. Waterfront pier within the Tersane Istanbul development, showing restricted access and private use along the shoreline. Photograph by the author (2026).



Figure 58. Restored steel structure within the former shipyard, reflecting the adaptive reuse of industrial elements. Photograph by the author (2026).



Figure 59. Edge condition between new Tersane Istanbul housing and the existing residential fabric, highlighting spatial separation and defined boundaries. Photograph by the author (2026).



Figure 60. Public space within the Tersane Istanbul development, showing commercial and hotel functions organized around controlled and curated environments. Photograph by the author (2026).

The eastern shore is more open, accessible, and part of everyday life, while the western shore works differently. Use is more controlled and depends on who is able to access the space. Even though both shores have gone through similar transformation processes, they do not operate in the same way, and they produce different outcomes in terms of spatial use, accessibility, and the relationship between the city and the water.

In addition, instead of directly preserving former industrial structures, new buildings have been constructed that repeat or reinterpret the spatial logic of the earlier fabric. In many cases, this appears through steel structures and large spans that recall shipbuilding environments, but are now used differently (Figure 61-63). The past is not kept as it was, but reworked through new forms that still carry traces of the dockyard condition along the shoreline. This can also be understood in relation to the broader transformation of former industrial areas in central urban locations, where production sites gradually lose their original function and are later reconsidered through new uses and redevelopment processes (Özen, 2014).

As a result, the western shore does not become a fully open and continuous public waterfront. Instead, it develops through a more controlled and selective form of reuse, where access remains limited and the relationship between the shoreline and the city stays partial rather than continuous.



Figure 61. Exterior view of the restored steel structure, reflecting the reuse of former shipyard elements within the redevelopment. Photograph by the author (2026).



Figure 62. Interior view of the steel structure looking toward Kasımpaşa, showing the transformation of industrial space into a controlled and accessible environment. Photograph by the author (2026).



Figure 63. Preserved shipyard cranes within the site, maintaining traces of the industrial past. Photograph by the author (2026).



Figure 64. Residential buildings within the Tersane Istanbul development, showing new housing introduced within the former industrial site. Photograph by the author (2026).



Figure 65. Former shipyard crane retained as a sculptural element, representing the reinterpretation of industrial heritage. Photograph by the author (2026).

4.3 Visual Transformation

4.3.1 Eastern Shore

In the current period, the visual character of the eastern shore has become more open and simplified with the withdrawal and removal of industrial production traces and the reorganization of the shoreline. In earlier periods, small-scale production buildings, storage areas, and fragmented industrial elements along the waterfront created a dense visual condition. Today, as most of these elements have been removed, the shoreline has become more readable, opened up through a green strip, and more continuous (Figure 66).

The green strip and open spaces along the shoreline make the boundary between land and water less sharp and more continuous. The shoreline looks wider and more open. What was once fragmented now appears more linear and continuous (Dinler & Şahin Güçhan, 2016).

The open areas also change how the shoreline is seen. Views become wider and longer, and the water is more visible. Because the Golden Horn is relatively narrow, the opposite shore stays in view. The water works as a shared visual field between the two sides (Krośnicka & Wawrzyńska, 2023). This openness is not fully continuous. The road that runs along the shoreline, together with the green strip, creates a sense of continuity, but also keeps a certain distance between the waterfront and the urban fabric. This shows that although the shoreline appears open and accessible, it does not fully merge with the city. The existing urban fabric continues to play an important role in this visual transformation. The residential fabric in Fener and Balat, together with the topography, forms the background of the shoreline and supports visual continuity. In addition, structures such as the Fener Greek High School and the Balat houses remain visible from the waterfront and continue to act as strong visual references that define the identity of the area.

Overall, the visual transformation of the eastern shore can be read as a shift from a dense and fragmented industrial condition to a more open and continuous shoreline. This change is shaped by a series of planning and design interventions that removed smaller industrial structures and reorganized the edge as a linear green strip. Similar processes have been discussed in studies on the Fener–Balat area, where urban design and renewal projects have played a key role in redefining the spatial character of the shoreline (Derman, 2010).

The introduction of open spaces and landscape elements has made the shoreline more readable, while also changing how it is experienced visually. At the same time, this openness is not only the result of removal, but of specific interventions that redefined the waterfront as a more public-facing edge. The green strip and the coastal road together create a continuous visual line, while still maintaining a certain distance between the water and the surrounding urban fabric.



Figure 66. View of the Fener–Balat eastern shoreline silhouette from Tersane Istanbul. Photograph by the author (2026).

4.3.2 Western Shore

In the current period, the visual transformation of the western shore is not defined through openness and continuity as in the eastern shore. Instead, it can be understood through the coexistence of structures from different periods and the reconstruction of the shoreline with a different interpretation. Large-scale shipyard structures from the industrial period, including shipbuilding areas, storage spaces, and production zones, have mostly not been physically preserved. However, the areas they occupied, their scale, and their spatial organization have been reinterpreted and reproduced through new structures. In this way, the visual density along the shoreline has been maintained.

In addition, instead of directly preserving these structures, new buildings have been constructed that repeat or reinterpret the spatial logic of the former industrial fabric. In many cases, this comes through steel structures and large spans that recall earlier shipbuilding environments, but are now used differently. The past is not kept as it was. It is reworked through new forms that still carry traces of the dockyard condition along the shoreline. This situation is also related to the gradual decline and eventual closure of the Haliç shipyards towards the end of the twentieth century (Şen & Sarıca, 2024).

New buildings, including hotels, commercial areas, and housing, are placed between these industrial elements. Different scales and architectural styles appear together. Within this visual composition, some cranes from the shipyard period are kept and displayed as sculptural elements, and spaces are organized around them. This creates a heterogeneous condition. Unlike the eastern shore, this does not result in a continuous visual surface. Structures from different periods and functions stand next to each other. The image feels layered and fragmented. When viewed from the eastern side toward the western shore, this layered condition becomes more visible through the contrast between the newly developed shipyard complex and the existing residential areas and other buildings located outside its boundaries. This fragmented condition makes it difficult to read the shoreline as a single surface. The combination of structures at different scales produces a heterogeneous silhouette. While large-scale industrial references remain visually dominant, the newly added contemporary buildings do not fully integrate with them. Instead, the contrast between old and new becomes more visible.

As can be seen in the image (Figure 67), the coexistence of structures from different periods along the shoreline is clearly readable. The shoreline does not appear as one continuous surface. Industrial references, reconstructed structures, and new buildings are clearly separated. Because of this, the shoreline is perceived not as a unified surface but as a layered and fragmented condition.



Figure 67. View of the Tersane Istanbul development on the western shore from Fener–Balat (eastern shore), showing its silhouette. Photograph by the author (2026).

Studies on industrial transformations also describe similar situations, where old and new structures exist together without fully connecting (Marshall, 2001). On the western shore, industrial traces are still visible. They continue to exist alongside new interventions.

Overall, the visual structure of the western shore does not present an open and continuous shoreline. The shoreline does not feel unified. Different structures from different times and scales stand next to each other. The eastern shore is more open and continuous. The western shore is more enclosed and fragmented.



Figure 68. View of the western shoreline, showing the fragmented relationship between Tersane Istanbul and the surrounding urban fabric. Photograph by the author (2026).



Figure 69. Edge condition within the Tersane Istanbul site, showing the separation between the Rixos hotel area and adjacent semi-public commercial spaces. Photograph by the author (2026).



Figure 70. Open public space within the Tersane Istanbul development, organized around retail and commercial functions. Photograph by the author (2026).



Figure 71. Semi-public café spaces within the Tersane Istanbul complex, illustrating controlled and curated everyday use. Photograph by the author (2026).

Chapter 5

Comperative Discussion

Chapter 5 Comperative Discussion

This chapter brings together the findings from the three historical periods and examines the eastern and western shores of the Golden Horn in a comparative way. As observed throughout the study, the shoreline cannot be understood as a single and homogeneous structure. Instead, it can be read as a system that changes over time, where traces from different periods are sometimes preserved, sometimes disappear, and sometimes are reinterpreted. When morphological change, spatial use and accessibility, and visual transformation are considered together, it becomes clear that a growing divergence between the two shores appears over time.

Although both shores share a similar industrial past, this common starting point does not produce similar or parallel spatial outcomes over time. During the industrial period, the Golden Horn functioned as an active surface of use, with intense ship presence, movement, and water-based activity, forming a connected system between the two shores. After deindustrialization, this unified condition disappears, and the shores begin to transform in different ways. This shows that the transformation of the waterfront is not only a functional change, but also a process that differs in terms of spatial organization, user profiles, access conditions, and visual relationships (Marshall, 2001; Breś & Krośnicka, 2021).

From a morphological perspective, the eastern shore develops through a process that works together with the existing urban fabric and produces continuity. The large-scale preservation of the residential fabric and the addition of new interventions onto this structure allow the shoreline to gradually become more open and continuous. This process does not rely on complete reconstruction, but rather on the reorganization of existing spatial relationships. In contrast, the transformation of the western shore takes place mainly through large-scale interventions and project-based approaches. Instead of directly preserving industrial structures, their scale, position, and spatial traces are reinterpreted. However, this approach does not produce a continuous shoreline as in the eastern side, but instead results in a more fragmented and controlled morphological structure. This comparison shows that shoreline morphology on each side is shaped through different transformation strategies and interventions.

When spatial use and accessibility are considered, the eastern shore shows a shift from a production-based system, where production and neighborhood life were closely connected, toward a more open and public use integrated into everyday life. This shift is shaped by planning and design interventions that removed many of the smaller industrial structures and reorganized the shoreline as a publicly accessible edge, particularly in response to changing urban priorities after deindustrialization. As a result, the shoreline becomes a space related to walking, meeting, and daily practices, while its relationship with the surrounding neighborhood is largely maintained. With the contribution of tourism, the variety of uses increases, and the area develops a stronger mixed-use character. This creates a layered spatial structure where different uses exist together. On the western shore, although new functions are introduced, these uses are more controlled and limited both physically and spatially. These limitations are organized within defined complexes. Access to the waterfront is provided through specific entry and exit points, which interrupts the continuity of public use. This shows that the relationship between the city and the waterfront is constructed differently on each shore in terms of access and use.

A similar divergence can also be observed in visual transformation. On the eastern shore, many industrial structures are removed. This leaves more open space along the waterfront. These spaces are used as green areas and as a transition between the city and the water. Because of this, the shoreline looks more open, more readable, and more continuous. The green band also helps to make the boundary between land and water clearer.

On the western shore, visual transformation does not develop through openness and continuity, but through the coexistence and reinterpretation of structures from different periods and contrasting architectural languages. Industrial traces do not completely disappear but remain together with new structures.

As a result, a layered and fragmented visual condition emerges. This difference shows that the way the shoreline is visually perceived, and how the relationship between the city and water is formed, changes on each side.

When these three dimensions are considered together, it is not possible to describe the Golden Horn as a unified and homogeneous waterfront. Instead, the two shores, although located within the same historical context, develop differently due to different intervention approaches, scales of transformation, and user groups shaped by these processes. The Golden Horn shows that post-industrial waterfronts do not always produce a uniform public space. Instead, even within the same city, different spatial and visual characters can emerge.

As a result, the Golden Horn should not be read as a single shoreline, but as a multi-layered system formed by different thresholds, layers, and characters. Within this system, the eastern and western shores are related, but they produce two distinct shoreline conditions shaped by different transformation processes. This divergence reveals how the research questions of the study lead to different outcomes in spatial, functional, and visual terms.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Chapter 6 Conclusion

This study examines the eastern and western shores of the Golden Horn through a comparative approach and shows that post-industrial waterfronts do not always follow a unified and homogeneous redevelopment process, even though they are often planned and expected to do so.

The findings show that two shorelines facing the same water body, and still visually and physically connected, can develop clearly different spatial characters over time, even if they share a similar industrial past. This suggests that waterfront transformation cannot be explained only by the addition of new functions after deindustrialization. Instead, it is shaped by multiple factors such as intervention strategies, property structures, access conditions, and design approaches working together.

In this sense, the Golden Horn should not be read as a single shoreline, but as two opposing urban interfaces that change in different ways over time. During the industrial period, water functioned as a shared surface of production and movement that connected both sides. Today, it no longer produces the same level of connection. Instead, it creates a more fragmented condition with different levels of access, openness, and use. Even though the water remains a shared physical surface, the spatial experience is no longer equal on both sides.

One of the main outcomes of this study is that waterfront transformation is not only about physical change or reuse, but also about redefining the relationship between the city and the water. On the eastern shore, this relationship becomes more open, continuous, and integrated into everyday life. On the western shore, it becomes more controlled, selective, and limited. This difference shows that the two shores are not only spatially different, but also differ in how they are experienced and used socially.

This also raises questions about the common idea of the “public waterfront” in the literature. Post-industrial waterfront transformations are often linked to the creation of accessible public spaces. However, this study shows that even within the same city, and under similar conditions, different parts of the shoreline can produce different levels of publicness. For this reason, waterfront transformation should not be understood as a linear and uniform process, but as a set of multiple processes developing in different directions at the same time (Desfor & Laidley, 2011).

In conclusion, the Golden Horn should be understood as a layered urban system shaped by both continuities and breaks. Although the eastern and western shores developed within the same historical framework, they produce two distinct shoreline conditions shaped by different intervention approaches and use patterns. This divergence shows that the relationship between the city and the water is not fixed or singular, but is continuously redefined through changing spatial and social conditions.

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Archival and Supporting Sources

- *SALT Research Archive – industrial documentation related to the Golden Horn*
- *Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Atatürk Library Digital Archive – historical maps and photographs*
- *Turkish State Archives – institutional and historical records*
- *Shipyard Archives (Camialtı, Taşkızak) – plans and archival photographs*
- *Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Urban Planning Directorate – Beyoğlu Photo Archive https://sehirplanlama.ibb.istanbul/beyoglu-arsivi-fotograflar/*
- *Eski Istanbul Photo Archive https://www.eskiistanbul.net/*
- *Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality City Maps Portal https://sehirharitasi.ibb.gov.tr*
- *Google Earth Pro – historical satellite imagery*
- *Copernicus Urban Atlas – land-use and spatial datasets*
- *OpenStreetMap – base mapping and spatial reference data*
- *Author's photographs – on-site documentation of the Fener–Balat and Kasımpaşa–Hasköy waterfronts (2024–2026)*

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by

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