

SUSTAINING ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITIES IN MIDDLE-UPPER CLASS RESIDENTIAL AREAS: *A Studio Experience on Bagdat Avenue in Istanbul*

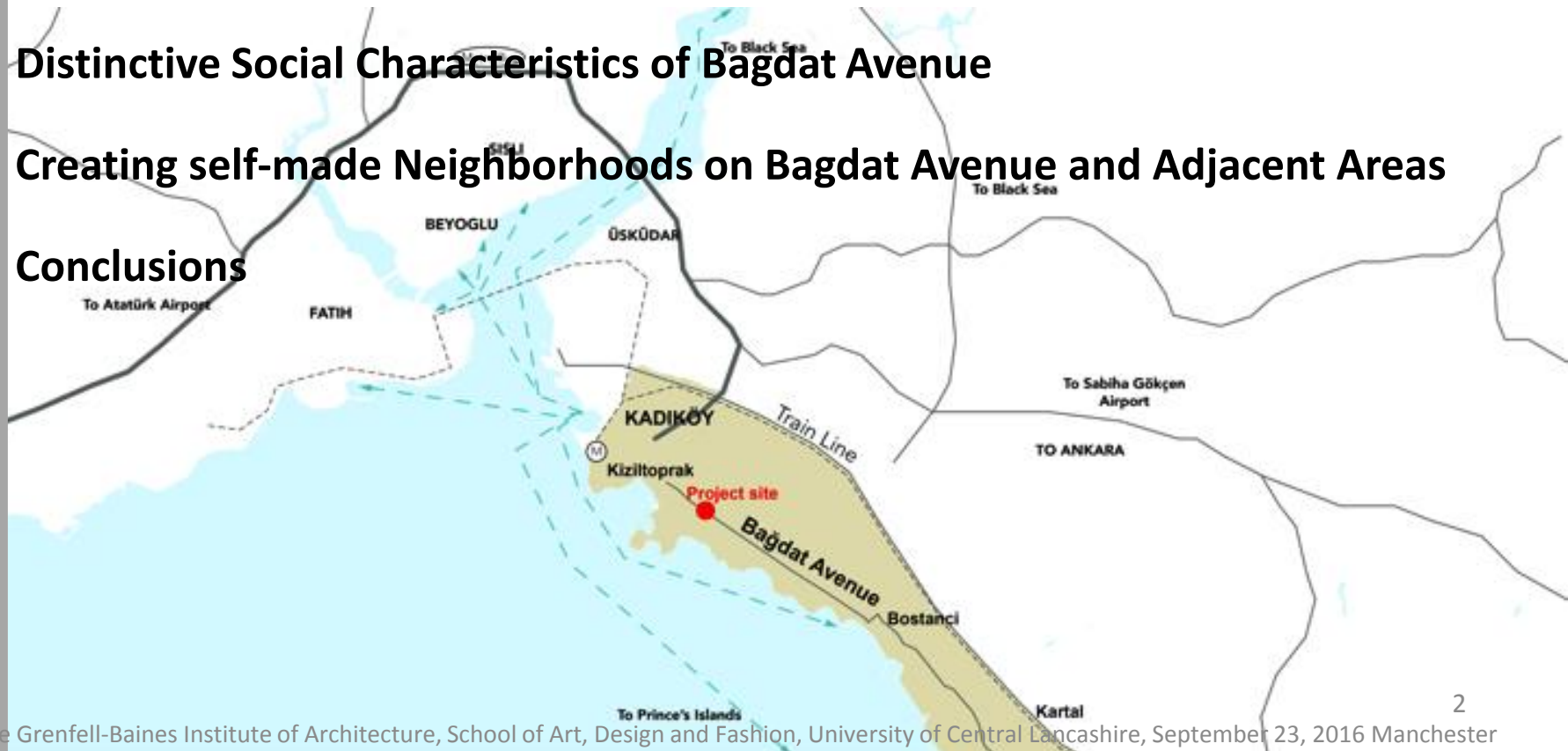
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Outline

- **Bagdat Avenue in History**
- **Distinctive Physical Characteristics of Bagdat Avenue**
- **Distinctive Social Characteristics of Bagdat Avenue**
- **Creating self-made Neighborhoods on Bagdat Avenue and Adjacent Areas**
- **Conclusions**



Aims and Method

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- to discuss sustainability along Bagdat Avenue, a major street on the Asian side of Istanbul and its close neighborhoods in order to preserve the existing physical and social environmental qualities through a self-made approach during the design studio experience.



Introduction

Bagdat Avenue and its surroundings are different from other transformation areas in Istanbul.

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First it is a very **popular location** that attracts many developers to invest.

Secondly, the quality of **housing stock** looks **good** but is **aging**.

And lastly, property ownership there is **totally legal**, unlike other areas in the city.

Because of these positive characteristics, urban transformation is very inviting there.



Bagdat Avenue in History

20th century to the 1950's: Country lifestyle during the summer time was very popular among the super classes.

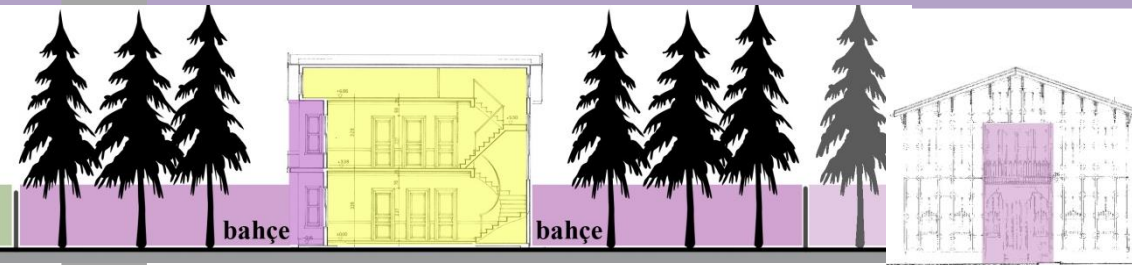
1970's: Country summer resorts were converted **to suburbs** where **middle class** lived permanently. Ownership accelerated construction of apartment houses and increased population **density** along Bagdat Avenue and its nearby surrounding.

1980s: The **Anatolian side** offered a vast amount of **unspoiled land** About 10 percent of the population commutes daily over these bridges.

1990's: Kadikoy including **Bagdat Avenue** was one of these unspoiled areas.

2000's: Bagdat Avenue and its surroundings are included in earthquake risk areas due to its **old settlement**. In addition, this area has high **land values** such that both residents and developers want to make a large amount of money through this urban transformation process.

Bagdat Avenue in History



Wooden Houses 20th century



Single family housing (concrete) 1938-1964



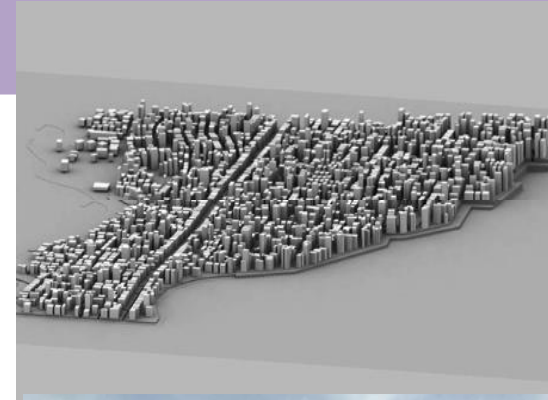
Apartment buildings 1979s

Urban transformation in Istanbul has been viewed in three types as **earthquake-based**, **investment-based** and **historically area-based**, and applied to specific areas.

Four types of transformation areas. The first two areas consist of **squatter settlements** and **social housing**, and the third one is **gated communities**. The fourth, which refers to Bagdat Avenue, are **planned areas** where transformation takes place parcel by parcel.

Distinctive Physical Characteristics of Bagdat Avenue

- **ordered and grid spatial structure** and gradually densified since the beginning of the 20th century.
- Most of the buildings to be rebuilt have relatively **big lots** including **gardens** and **car parking in the back**.
- **5 story high limit** along Bagdat Avenue, surrounding areas has **diversity** in elevation preserving its parcel characteristic with gardens since 1960.
- Currently good **green** and **open space**.
- Characterized by a **mix use** of commercial, residential, and recreational areas,
- Nearby neighborhoods, **typical residential areas** with calm backstreets having small-scale neighborhood businesses.



Distinctive Social Characteristics of Bagdat Avenue

high quality of life (social life).

Heart of retail shopping on the Asian side and its
longest shopping street.

old settlement, 4th and 5th generations of original residents.

More **urbanized residents**

Higher **place attachment**

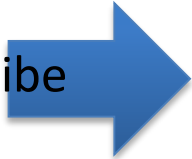
Residential area by **middle and upper classes.**



Creating self-made Neighborhoods on Bagdat Avenue and Adjacent Areas

The urban pattern of the area is **almost full**

ITU architectural students designed conceptual projects to create a **self-made neighborhood** in Bagdat Avenue and its close surroundings.

Self-made is used to describe  **initiators** (catalysts),
players (stakeholders) and
projects (designs and buildings)
that foresee **long term** built interventions.

Self-made **not** the same as **self-help** or **build it yourself**.

Students used **Kristien Ring's ten qualities** of a **selfmade city** to consider in the design process and later.

The goal of a self-made neighborhood is to create a **sustainable social and urban environment** **preserving existing qualities** of the area

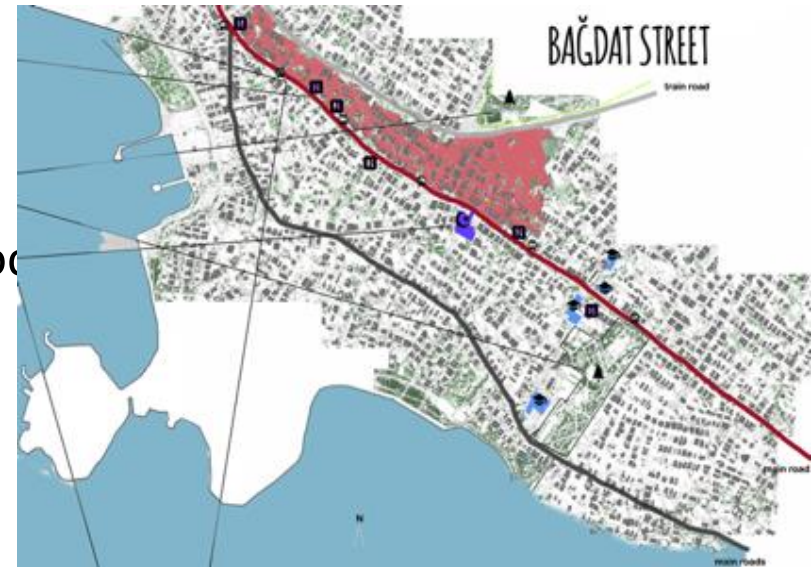
Creating self-made Neighborhoods on Bagdat Avenue and Adjacent Areas

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Ten qualities for the concept of the self-made city are as follows:

neighborhood and urban interaction;
shared space, community and social focus;
long-term affordability;
open and green spaces;
reuse and reactivation;
hybrid concepts;
quality re-densification;
custom-fit solutions for every generation;
investment in ecological building;
future-oriented solutions and experimental

models.

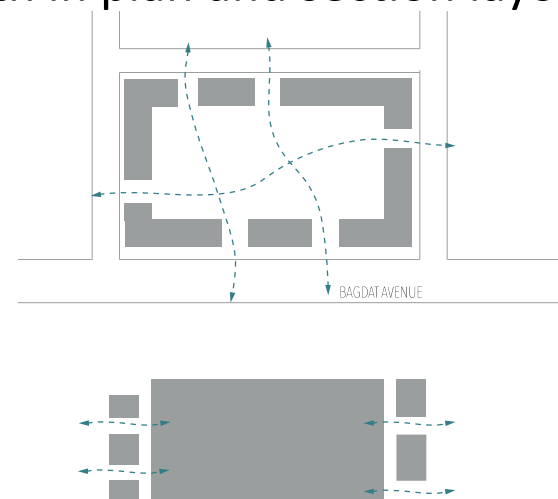


Creating self-made Neighborhoods on Bagdat Avenue and Adjacent Areas

neighborhood and urban interaction

Half of the respondents to our survey have lived in the area **more than 20 years** and are highly attach to their neighborhood because of good **urban interaction**, a **social and safe** environment, and good **transportation**. Residents were satisfied with living in such **a neighborhood** rather than a gated community.

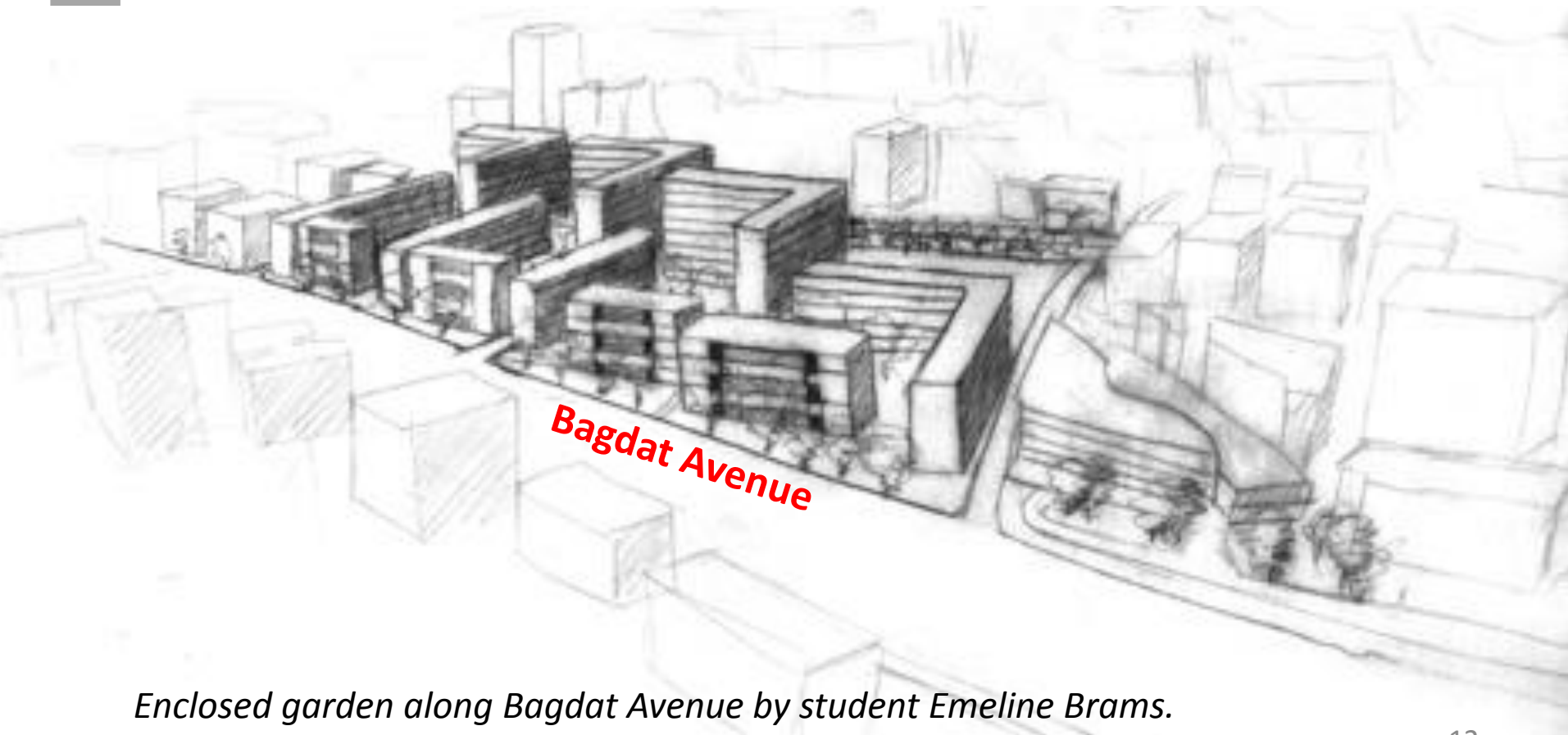
Students propose a way to meet local resident expectations to keep the **interaction** between their neighborhood and city **porous** both in plan and section layout.



Neighbourhood feature by student Handenur Yuksel (left), and porosity in neighbourhood by student Gabrielle Wouters (right).

Creating self-made Neighborhoods on Bagdat Avenue and Adjacent Areas *shared space, community and social focus*

Creating “shared space, community and social focus” would lead to a better **social awareness** and **interaction** in the neighborhood.



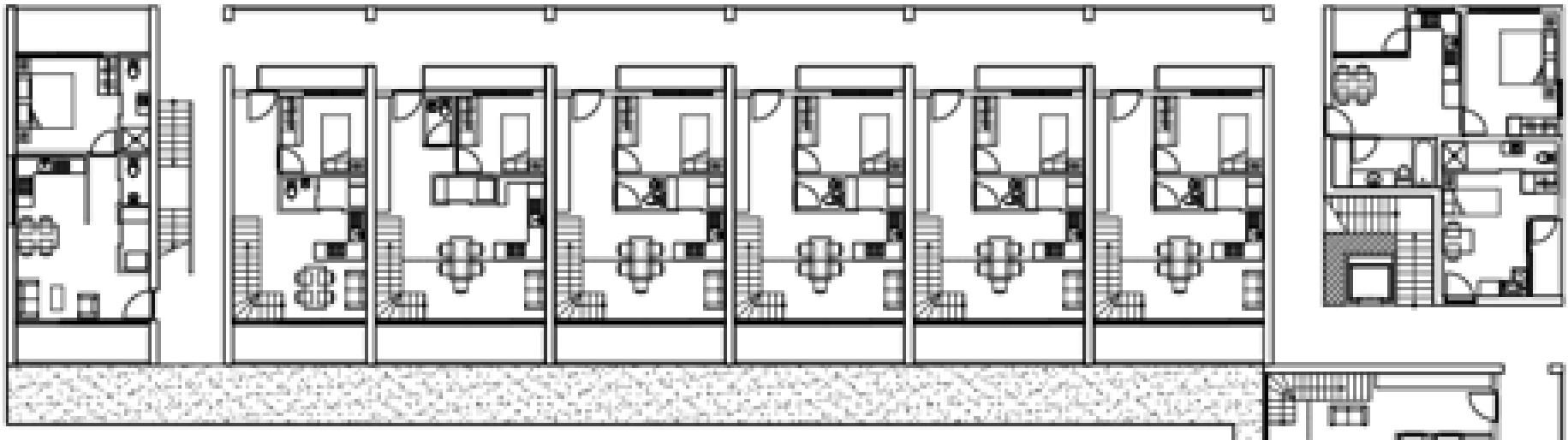
Enclosed garden along Bagdat Avenue by student Emeline Brams.

Creating self-made Neighborhoods on Bagdat Avenue and Adjacent Areas

Long-term affordability

“Long-term affordability” can assure secure **affordable living and working** spaces in the **long term**. In this neighborhood **homeownership** is a determinant characteristic, however **affordable rental** is also a necessity.

Proposes Housing in different types and sizes to retain different income people in the area.



Different type and size of housing by student Emeline Brams.

Creating self-made Neighborhoods on Bagdat Avenue and Adjacent Areas *open and green spaces*

Creating satisfaction with abundant “open and green spaces” is crucial for a neighborhood although developers tend to seek maximum space efficiency from their investment land.

shows proposals aimed to increase or develop green space in the neighborhood.

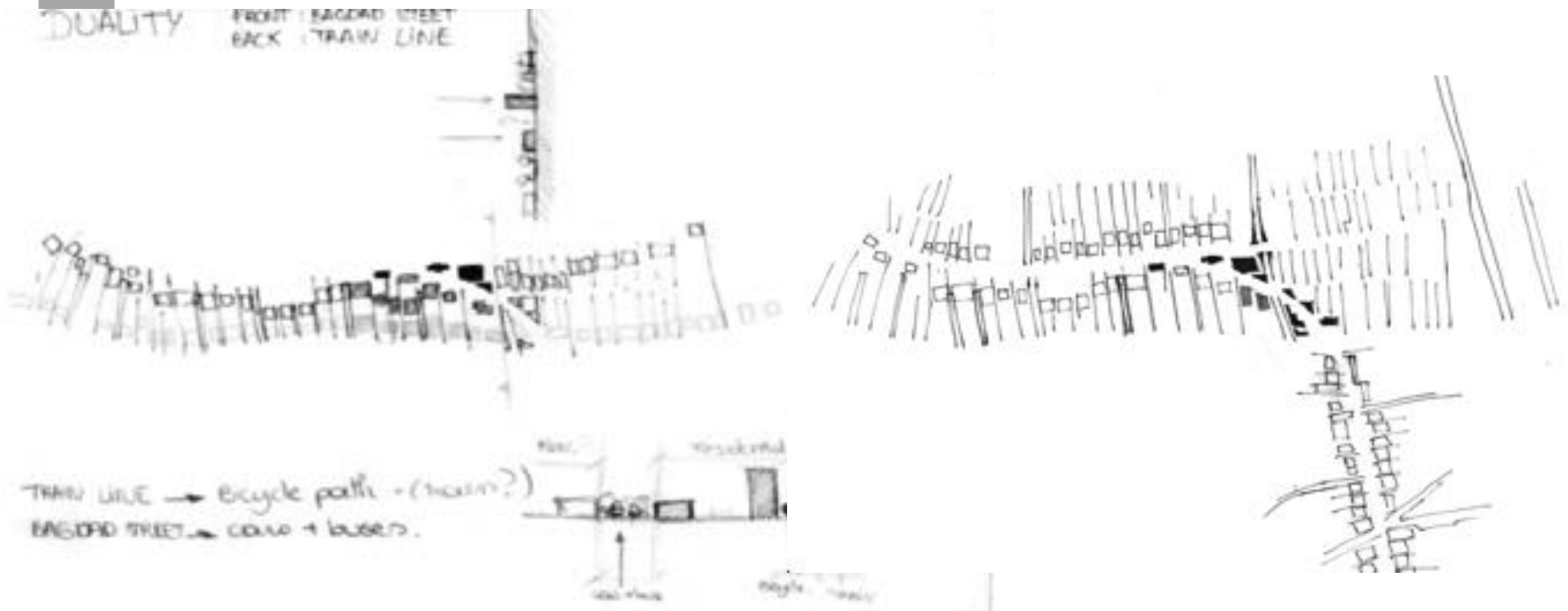


Exterior circulation up above garden by student Gabrielle Wouters.

Creating self-made Neighborhoods on Bagdat Avenue and Adjacent Areas *reuse and reactivation*

Concerning “reuse and reactivation” approach culturally, architecturally, naturally or historically **valuable** but **unused** or **old** buildings are aimed for reuse and reactivation.

In the area the old unused **tramline** is proposed as the extension of a **new bicycle route**.



Reactivation of tramline as bicycle route by student Emeline Brams

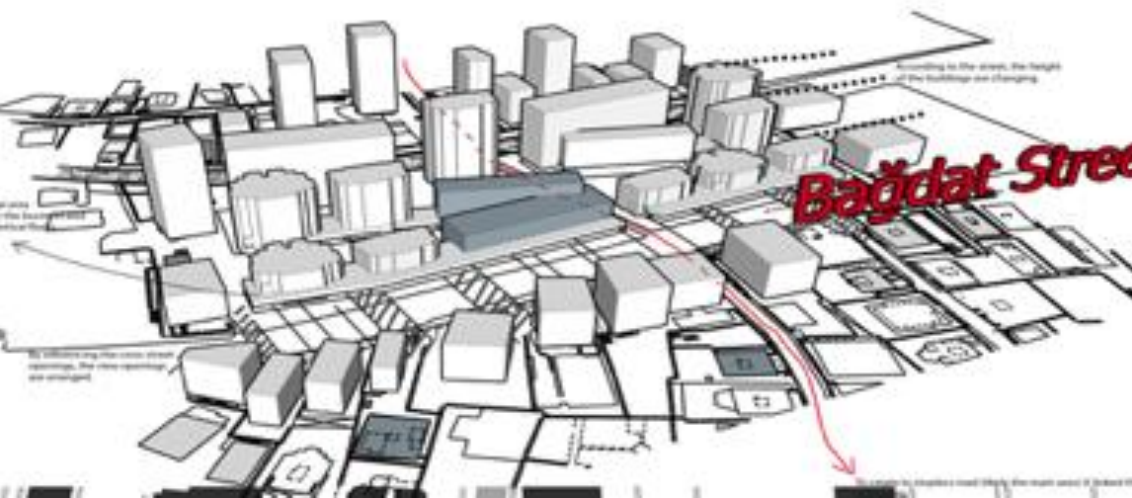
Creating self-made Neighborhoods on Bagdat Avenue and Adjacent Areas

hybrid concepts

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Using “hybrid concepts” in the buildings including housing and other supportive functions would help to create **sustainable urbanity**.

hybrid concepts in the projects are based on and developed out of existing needs. Mixed-use spaces such as **home-offices** or **workshops, shops, libraries**, or collective **green** areas, etc. **nearby residential areas** play a significant role to make self-made developments and increase the social level of people.



Mix-use buildings by students Irem Tikiz.

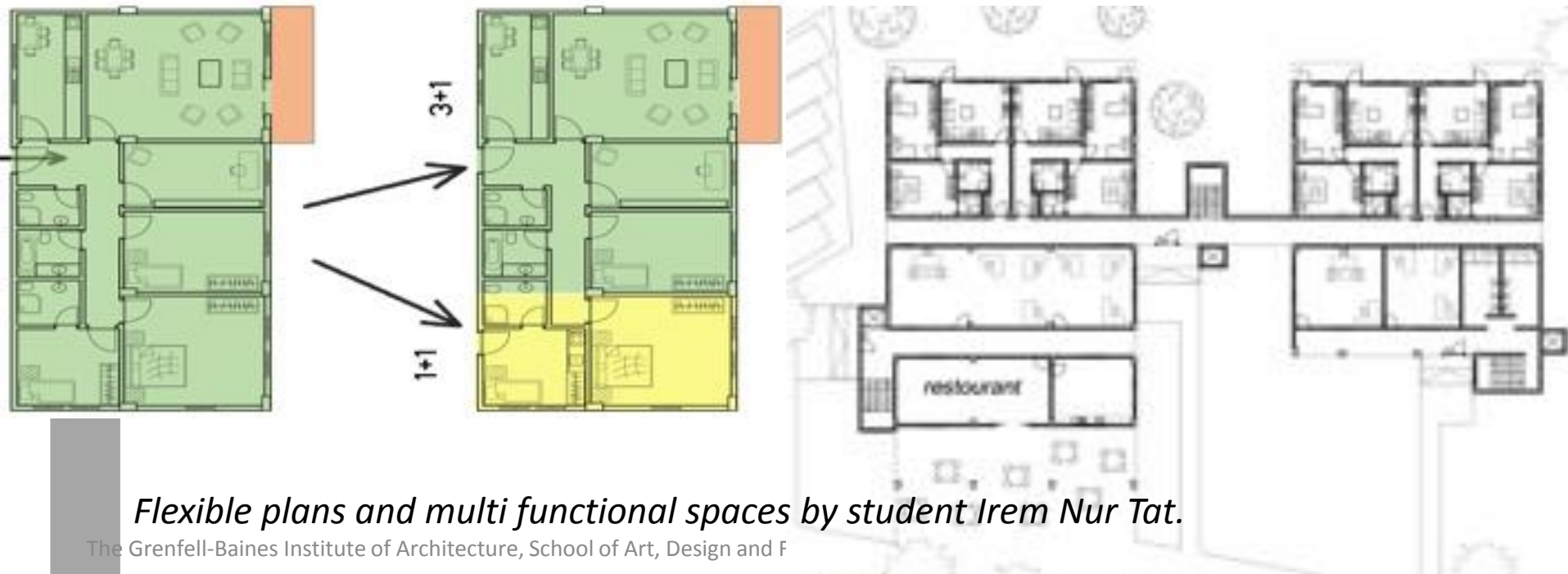
Creating self-made Neighborhoods on Bagdat Avenue and Adjacent Areas *custom-fit solutions for every generation*

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Self-made projects aim to meet existing residents’ **requirements changing in time** through the quality of “custom-fit solutions **for every generation**”.

Flexibility and **openness** would allow buildings to be **sustainable for current and next generations** while adapting new lifestyles.

Four bedroom apartments that can **convert to** one and two bedrooms and **multi-functional** spaces are proposed in order to adapt to current conditions in the future.



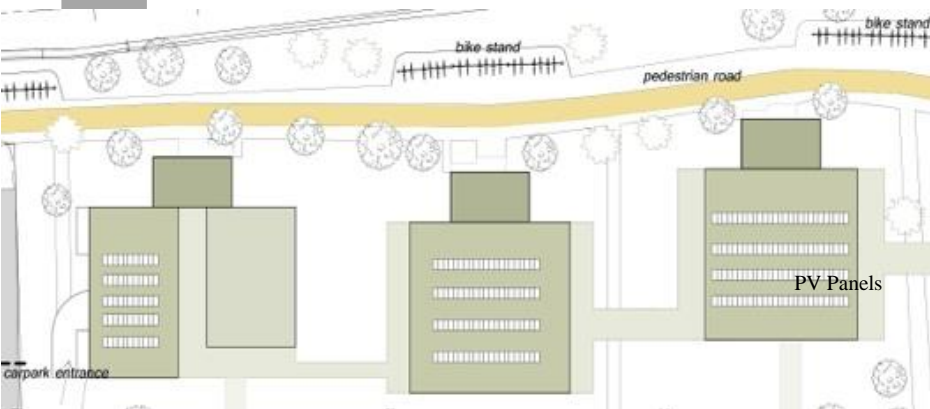
Flexible plans and multi functional spaces by student Irem Nur Tat.

Creating self-made Neighborhoods on Bagdat Avenue and Adjacent Areas

Investment in ecological building

“Investment in ecological building” is essential for self-made neighborhoods considering environmental sustainability.

Proposals for **agricultural lands**, **photovoltaic panels** and limited **parking garage** area only under the buildings in order to keep the **natural soil** to provide environmental **sustainability**.



Photovoltaic panels for energy efficiency, by student Irem N. Tat (left) and agricultural lands along railway by student Ugur Kocak (right).

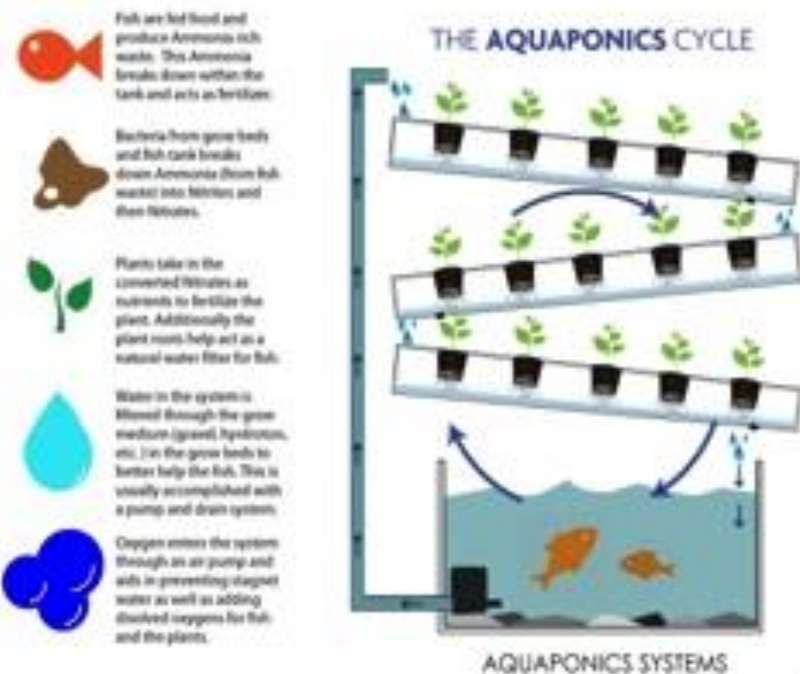
Creating self-made Neighborhoods on Bagdat Avenue and Adjacent Areas

Future-oriented solutions and experimental models

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“Future-oriented solutions and experimental models” are required to be realized by **innovative** moves.

Proposals for experimental approaches such as permaculture and aquaponic systems allow people to stay in touch **with nature**.



Permaculture and aquaponic systems by student Aylin Ozcan.

Creating self-made Neighborhoods

creation of congested quality densification.

1923-2005: Increased subdivided city blocks and parcels

2000s: Density without control.

How can we create quality lives in cities?

What are local residents' expectations from urban housing?

How can we meet the housing need of tomorrow?

How can we avoid being crammed a fair amount in cities?

How do we deal with the scarcity of space?



Conclusions

Bagdat Avenue and its close surroundings can easily **answer critical questions** related to **self-made neighborhoods and sustainability**.

The **mixed-use** of Bagdat Avenue and its close surroundings’ residential character, with a **detached pattern** and **gardens**, should be preserved to guard its **safety, usability, and love of life**.

All these steps create **quality lives**.

The **socialization** effect with functional connectivity, commuting and transferring capacity of Bagdat Avenue as well as its social structure of middle-upper class and retired residents that created a **collective memory** which meet residents’ expectations of urban housing should be sustained.

The close residential area characterized by **local neighborhoods** should be preserved.

Conclusions

Additionally, providing residential opportunities for **younger adults** would be valuable for the long-term health and vitality and meet the housing **needs of tomorrow**.

To **avoid overcrowding**, existing **green** and open spaces should be kept and increased. Existing parks need better tending and preservation for the environmental sustainability of the area.

While keeping the limit of **five story** structures along Bagdat Avenue's 3rd dimension, its close surroundings should continue to allow more diversity of elevation with perhaps a **15 story** limit, accessible **scale** of city blocks and detached housing with **gardens** in the **layout** second dimension to deal with the scarcity of space.

Thank you...

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