

Heritage Alert: Ataköy Housing Estate (Phases I-II)

Press Release

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The International Council on Monuments and Sites ([ICOMOS](#)), through its International Scientific Committee on 20th Century Heritage ([ISC20C](#)), is issuing a Heritage Alert in response to the ongoing threats to the Ataköy Housing Estate (Phases I-II) in Istanbul, Türkiye. This significant 20th-century heritage site is at serious risk of irreversible loss, as evidenced by the recent demolition of one of its housing blocks (F Block).

Heritage Significance

The Ataköy Housing Estate is a prominent and early example of an integrated green satellite city, adapted to the rapidly growing modern Turkish metropolis and society. As a significant post-war manifestation of the CIAM (Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne) debate on habitat, which redefined housing and urbanism through a more human-centered approach to architecture and city planning, it represents important global ideas of modernity in Türkiye and the region.

The development exemplifies a holistic approach to urban planning, integrating social, cultural, educational, and commercial spaces at the neighbourhood level. Within the housing units, exceptional architectural quality was achieved through meticulous attention to climatic, lighting, and functional standards.

The estate's 90 high-rise residential blocks embody the architectural trends of the 1950s, featuring cubist façades, *pilotis*, flat roofs, and carefully oriented designs that enhance natural ventilation and light. The efforts of the prominent Turkish architects, engineers, and planners involved reflect an innovative approach to mid-20th-century design, marked by structures set in thoughtfully planned landscapes and robust infrastructure, which remain noteworthy in an international context.



Ataköy Housing Estate (Phase I-II) (Yöneş, 2006)
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Ataköy Housing Estate (Phase II), general view with the primary school (Giray, 1967)
Source: Muhteşem Giray, "Ataköy İkinci Mahalle İlkokulu", *Arkitekt* 1967-2/326: 58-61. Licence: [open source](#). Courtesy of the Chamber of Architects of Turkey.



Ataköy Housing Estate (Phase II), touristic facilities and residences built following the demolition of the original Ataköy touristic facilities in 2009 (Aşık, 2022). Photo courtesy of M. Aygün Aşık. Licence: [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)



Ataköy Housing Estate (Phase I), F Block, demolished in 2024. (Breitling, 2006) Photo courtesy of docomomo_tr. Licence: [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)

ICOMOS expresses its deep concern over the prolonged neglect and ongoing alterations to the complex, particularly the gradual replacement of individual structures with high-rise developments, which significantly disrupts the relationship between its constitutive elements, the urban landscape and the broader context. The cumulative effect of these partial losses and incompatible additions poses a serious threat to the significance and relevance of the Ataköy Housing Estate as cultural heritage. This is evidenced again by the recent demolition of F Block, which represented the sole housing typology of that kind.

ICOMOS recommendations

Twentieth Century heritage remains underappreciated, often neglected and too often demolished through lack of recognition, protection and conservation. ICOMOS is aware that Ataköy Housing Estate still preserves its integrity despite the recent demolitions and urges its retention and adaptation, in line with current efforts for sustainable development.

It is important to emphasise that the recognition and designation of a building or a site as cultural heritage, does not preclude the necessity for modifications to ensure their long-term viability. In contrast, conservation actions facilitate the continued functionality of a building, ensuring it meets the demands of contemporary life.

ICOMOS is issuing this Heritage Alert for the **Ataköy Housing Estate (Phases I-II)** to raise awareness about its national and international significance and to highlight the importance of its safeguarding and conservation.

ICOMOS through this Heritage Alert recommends the:

1. **Listing of Ataköy Housing Estate (Phases I-II)** as an urban site in the Turkish national inventory, to ensure that its future development is well managed.
2. **Development of appropriate conservation and future adaptation guidance**, based on the international guidelines established in documents dealing with the conservation of cultural heritage in general - [The Venice Charter](#) - and modern heritage specifically - [Approaches to the Conservation of Twentieth Century Cultural Heritage \(the Madrid-New Delhi Document\)](#).
3. **Formal recognition of the Ataköy Housing Estate (Phases I-II) as an integral part of the urban landscape** in urban legislation, master plans, and urban strategies.

ICOMOS' International Scientific Committee on 20th Century Heritage stands ready to assist the authorities of Türkiye and İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality in developing a sustainable preservation strategy for the complex, in partnership with the ICOMOS Türkiye National Committee and all the relevant decision-making bodies.

For more information, [read the full letter sent by ICOMOS to the Turkish authorities](#)

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The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) is a non-governmental, not for profit international organisation, committed to furthering the conservation, protection, use and enhancement of the world's cultural heritage. www.icomos.org The ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Twentieth Century Heritage (ISC20C) focuses on promoting the conservation of twentieth-century places and advocating for sites that are at risk due to neglect, disfiguration and/or development pressure. <https://isc20c.icomos.org/>