



GÜREL SUMMER RESIDENCE

ÇANAKKALE, TURKEY

Client: Guzin Gürel, Istanbul. Architect: Sedat Gürel.

Completed: July 1971

The summer residence of the Gürel family was built by the late Sedat Gürel for the enjoyment of his family and friends. The family normally resides in Istanbul but decided in 1968 that they would like a summer place in the Çanakkale region. They had spent many enjoyable holidays in that region and wanted a house of their own. The climate and setting suited them, and the wealth of historic and archaeological sites in the region was an added incentive for the family. Since friends and relatives frequently came to stay, the summer house had to accommodate numerous families and yet be able to provide privacy and solitude for individuals. Sedat Gürel acquainted himself with the ecology, climate and construction techniques of the local area, and conceived an architectural design consisting of several independent units.

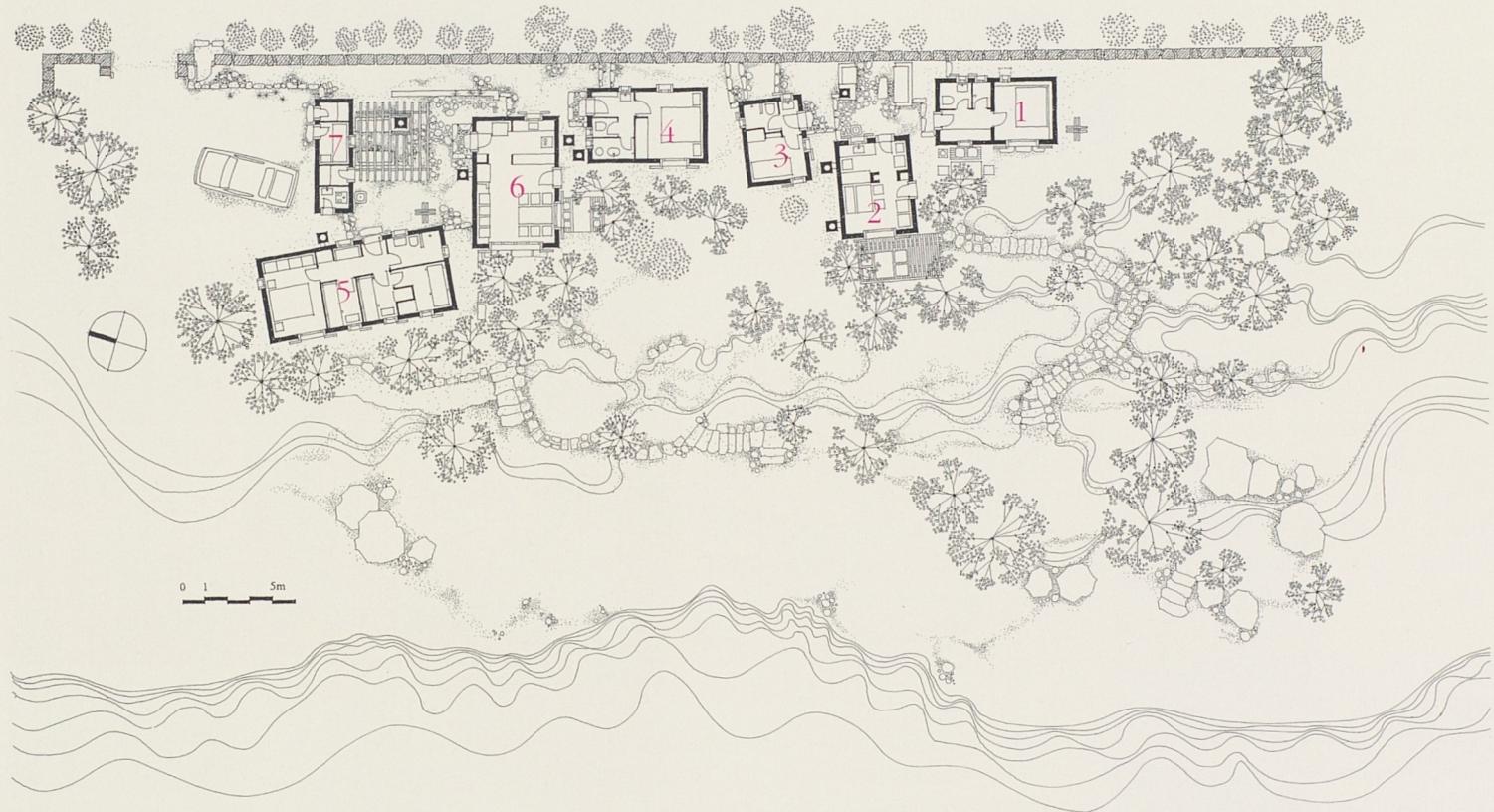
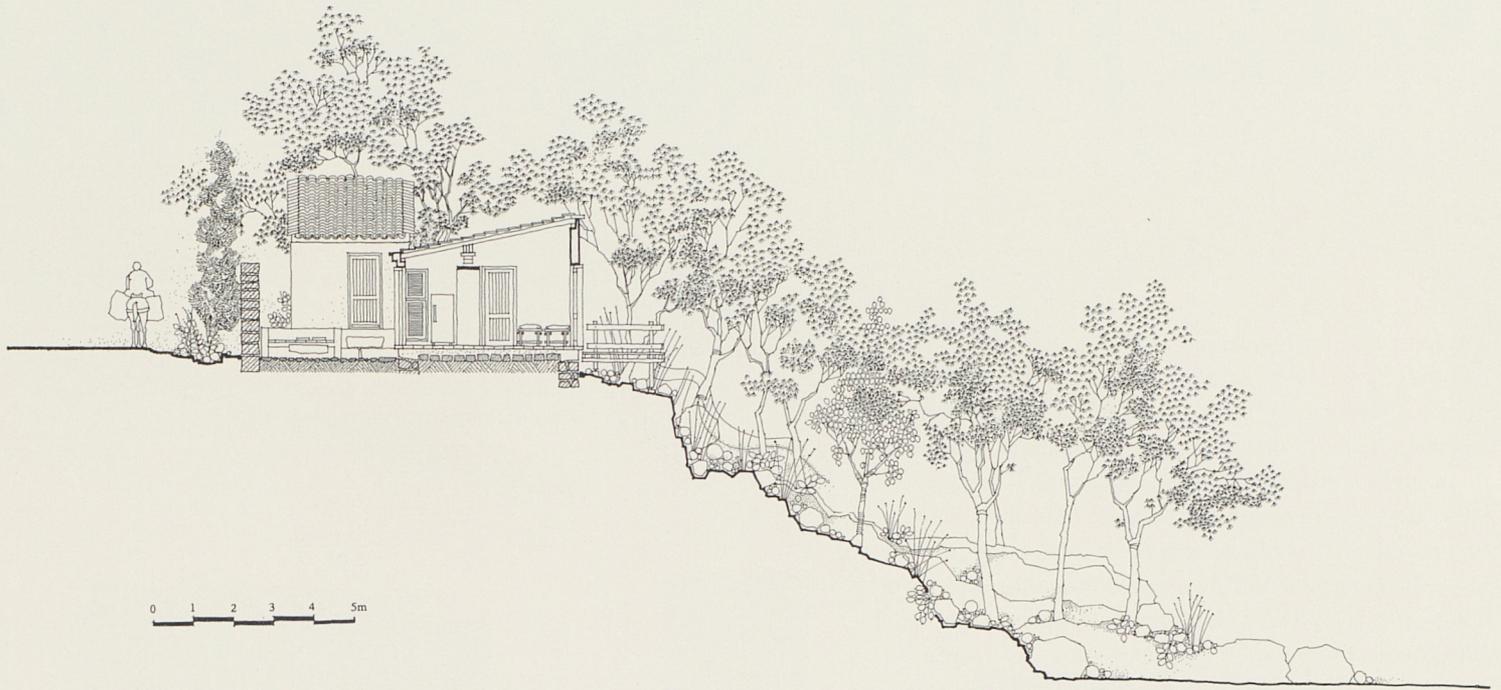
The vernacular architecture of the Aegean and southwestern coast of Turkey is conceptually Mediterranean. Whitewashed stone houses, cube-shaped, most often with a flat rather than a sloped roof, are the norm. Today most houses are constructed of brick, and have a wooden roof structure covered with tiles.

Turkish houses have a great deal of inbuilt elements in them. Rooms are provided with alcoves, cupboards, shelves, niches, latticed windows and sofas, all of which are built into the structure. The incorporation of these everyday utilities and objects into the vernacular architecture is a direct reflection of the aesthetic and functional convenience that is associated with Middle Eastern houses.

The objective of the Gürel residence was to accommodate the family and friends on a single site, on an area of about a thousand square metres, most of which slopes down to the beach. Seven sleeping and living units were designed, grouped around different courtyards, and resembling a small village. The first two units were for the immediate family of the architect; after his death they were occupied by his wife. Unit 1 consists of a sleeping area with its private bathroom and outdoor seating area, while unit 2 comprises the indoor sitting and dining rooms, kitchen, balcony and open courtyard. Unit 3 is equipped to house two guests, and has an attached bathroom. Unit 4 is much like the above, and was intended for the use of Sedat Gürel's parents. Since their death it has been used for guests. Units 5 and 6 were designed for Guzin Gürel's sister and family, and are similar to 1 and 2 except that they can sleep four people. The living unit (6) consists of

While unmistakably contemporary, the forms of the house echo those of local vernacular architecture; OPPOSITE: Built in benches, around a fireplace, contribute to the impression that the central court of the Gürel House is an outdoor room; OVERLEAF: Section; floor plan; a simple open trellis over one part of the court changes the character of this part of a relatively small space









a sitting and dining room plus kitchen, balcony and terrace making it a totally independent residence. Unit 7 houses the common services, garages and maintenance areas. Altogether, the total floor area of construction occupies 125.5 square metres.

Each of the units was designed and envisaged to be self-sufficient, and to be used independently. Privacy was ensured, but enough communal areas were incorporated into the overall plan so that it was still possible for the family to meet and gather together whenever they wanted to. Guests can feel free to come and go as they will, and to gather with their hosts in the many courtyards, or on the beach.

The open and rocky terrain around the units was left in its natural state. Dotted the landscape are numerous pine, olive and oak trees. Nature has been incorporated into the design process. The sea and sky, and the rocky landscape are integrated into the architectural format of the residence. There are numerous natural seating areas among the trees and rocks, and vistas of the sea and nature abound throughout the site. Nothing is intrusive. The individual balconies and courtyards offer the more controlled outdoors, but they too have been designed for a purpose, to funnel the sea breezes into the units. Footpaths and courtyards are paved with stones picked from the beach. Stone stairways, built into the rocks, lead from the units down to the beaches. A high wall, and a line of specially planted trees, help to insulate the residence from the traffic noises of the road situated along one side.

A simple traditional construction system using brick as the building material was utilised for the residence. Except for the woodwork, all major building parts were fabricated on the site. The technology was all local. Foundations were made of local stone, and the infill brick walls were constructed the local way. The roof was built on a wooden structure, and covered with terracotta tiles. Roughly applied whitewash was used to coat the exterior facades, and all the floors were tiled. Ceilings were made of timber, and wooden shutters were installed to protect the wooden windows.

The materials used in this house were of the simplest and cheapest variety, and available locally. The wooden furniture, doors, windows and shutters were made by a competent local carpenter, and display the simplest designs. Until 1971 there was no electricity in the residence. Lighting was provided by candles and kerosene lamps, water is from a well and there is no telephone. The Gürel family prefers and enjoys this natural life, and is not at all disturbed by the lack of modern facilities.

The architectural plan was completed in 1969, and construction began in September of that year. It was completed in July 1971, and the family moved in straight away.

The total cost of the residence came to TL 100,000, or US \$700, the cost per square metre being TL 816, or US \$57 (1971). All funds came from the Gürel family. The costs appear to have been below average for traditional contemporary constructions.

Maintenance costs are very low. The residence is only used during the summer; therefore, there are no heating costs. Fireplaces provide heat when and if it is necessary. There is no cooling system, the wind from the sea being the most effective coolant. The units need to be whitewashed every two years, at a cost of some TL 100,000, or US \$45 (1989), and the woodwork has to be painted and varnished every seven years. During the winter months the units are closed up but they can be opened, cleaned and ready for use in just a few hours.

All the members of the family and the guests who use the residence seem to be very satisfied with its performance. It provides them with a pleasant holiday setting which contrasts with their normally urban and busy life in the city. For a few weeks or months every year they are allowed the luxury of enjoying a beautiful haven in nature.

The Gürel summer complex, with its modest aspect, functions well. The height and size of the individual units, and their calculated and designed dispersal through the site, help to integrate them into the surrounding countryside. The separate units are insulated from each other, the wind blowing from the sea masking all other noises. The irregular disposition of the units offers a diversity of scenic views from many vantage points. The spatial unity of the whole complex is designed so that it seems to be in perfect harmony with nature around it.

OPPOSITE: In a grove of trees on the bluff above the Aegean, the various parts of the house give it a village-like aspect