Ahmet Gülgönen

Low-cost Housing, Tourcoing, France

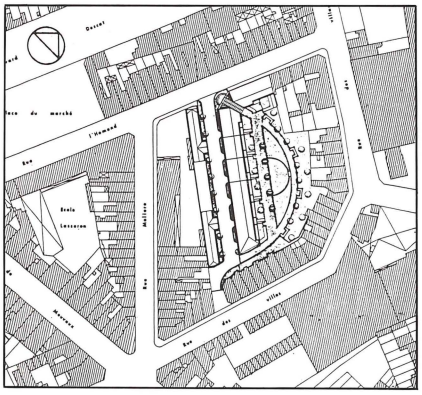
Project Data

Site: Tourcoing, France
Client: Public Housing Office
Architect: Ahmet Gülgönen/APRAH
Consultants: O.T.H.Nord (Engineers)
Contractor: Boschetti – Wilhelem
Number of units: 23

The local public housing authority in this northern French industrial suburb decided on a change of policy to experiment with building smaller groups of apartment units, several dozen in a single complex, instead of several hundred or even a thousand. Gülgönen and his office were commissioned with three such pilot projects in the same region; the one here illustrates their approach, attempting to link new low-rise, low-cost housing to the existing, traditional urban fabric of Tourcoing. As the site was a long-empty plot inside an existing block with houses around the periphery, one major question was "How to conceive inner-city housing acceptable to people when it has to face everyone else's rear facade?" One way was a small park and places to sit, as well as individual private gardens for the new units. This public urban space, tied into the covered passageway between the two new blocks, thus becomes part of an existing network that includes an open market nearby.

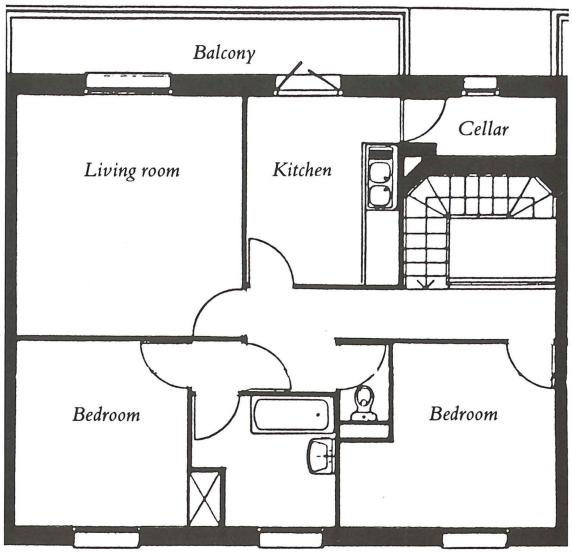
As for the apartments themselves, built of the local brick, they are 3-storey walk-ups with an exterior stairway to the second-floor unit and a private entrance to reach the three-floor unit. Such a solution takes account of the traditional row-housing found in these northern areas. The inclusion of a store room or pantry (*cellier*) off the kitchen, and of ground-level garages (instead of underground) that are typically used as occasional workshops by residents are two more features tthat demonstrate attention the architects paid to local desires and life-styles. The outside stairways also allowed the toilets and bathrooms to receive natural light instead of being tucked away in the centre of the building, as is usually the case.

Working with the future inhabitants already at an early stage of planning for their needs, reveals Gülgönen's belief in architecture (particularly in relation to housing) as entailing a social science component. Then, having determined the programme requirements, the architect tries to fulfill, to serve these needs. Although the requirements may indeed differ from culture to culture, the validity of this nationalist approach remains.

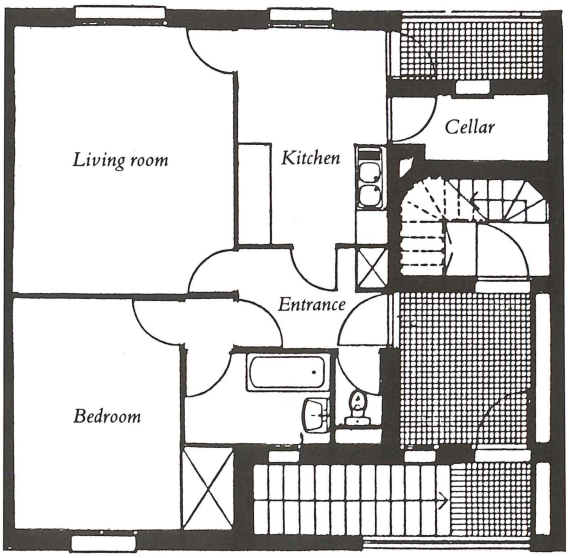


Left: Site plan of the new housing in the old suburbs of industrial Tourcoing.
Below: The rear facade of the flats faces onto a common landscaped area with benches. This new housing complex takes the scale and materials (primarily brick) of traditional housing nearby into account.

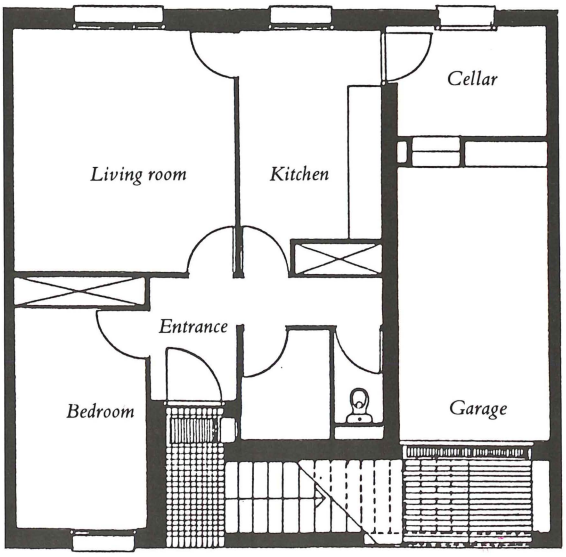
Text by the editors. Photographs and plans courtesy of the architect.



Second floor



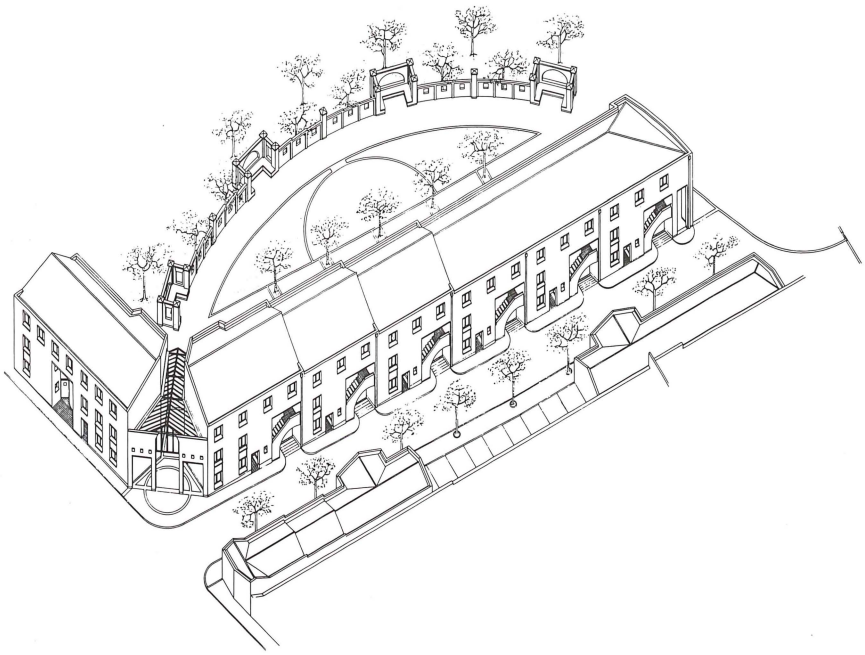
First floor



Ground floor

Top: View of the housing from the street. Each unit contains three flats.
Above: Detail of the covered passageway at the angle between two wings of the housing.
Left: Floor plans of each of the three flats in a unit of row housing. All have one bedroom, a living room and kitchen with pantry, except the topmost flat which has two bedrooms.

Right: View through the rear enclosure of the shared garden spaces, with covered passageway in the distance.
Bottom: Axonometric drawing of the Tourcoing rowhouses from the street side. Note the enclosed command spaces with outdoor seating at the rear.



Ahmet Gülgönen

The Istanbul Cultural Centre

Project Data

Site: Ayasaga Kasri Palace, Istanbul
Client: Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Art
Architect: Ahmet Gülgönen/APRAH, Paris
Consultant: Helmut Müller – BBM Gmbh, Munich
Area: 20,000 square metres
Project: 3,000 seat concert hall
360 seat theatre
400 seat amphitheatre

Although the International Istanbul Festival organised in this city since 1973 has elicited enthusiastic support among the lovers of music, theatre, and dance, this city of 7 million inhabitants at the crossroads of East and West lacks a first-class, modern concert hall.

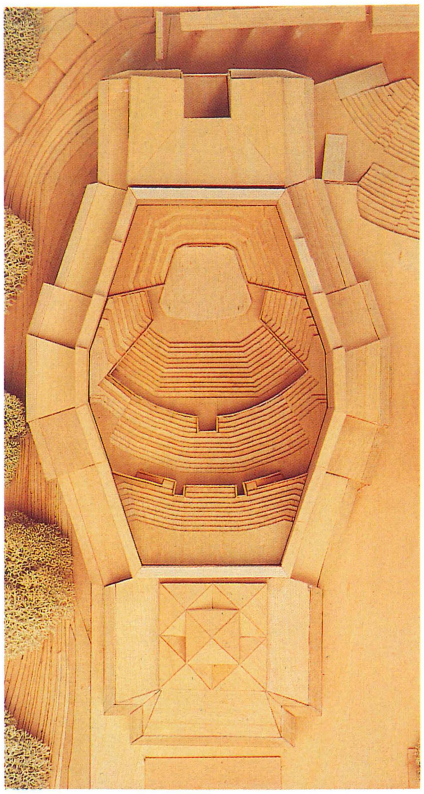
The site for the new complex is an historic one, encompassing the park and buildings of a 19th-century Turkish palace, part of which will be restored to house ancillary functions such as seminar facilities, summer music school, exhibition rooms and tea house – and the garden will be replanted as a public park open all year round.

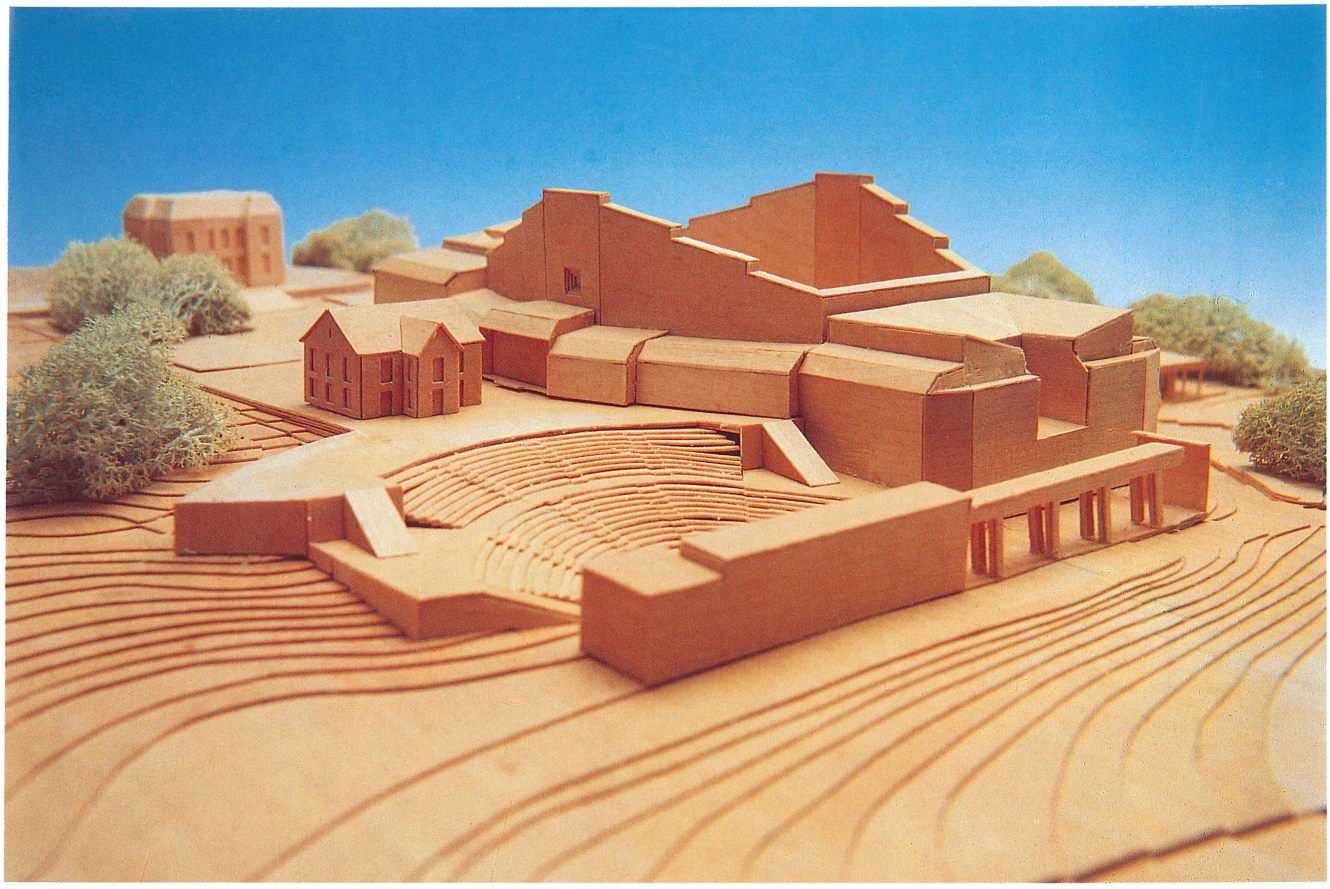
Undoubtedly the most important component of the Centre is the 3,000 seat concert hall, which is designed to project symphonic music without amplification. This is to be accomplished by encircling the orchestra podium with seats to create a unified space. Because the seats flow upward and outward without a break, listeners will be able to experience the atmosphere of the concert on the same plane as the musicians. The interior of the concert hall has been designed so that sound reverberates in just two seconds within an expanse of 30,000 cubic metres. A suspended wooden ceiling, which will have an average height of 18 to 20 metres, is a crucial element in the acoustics of the hall.

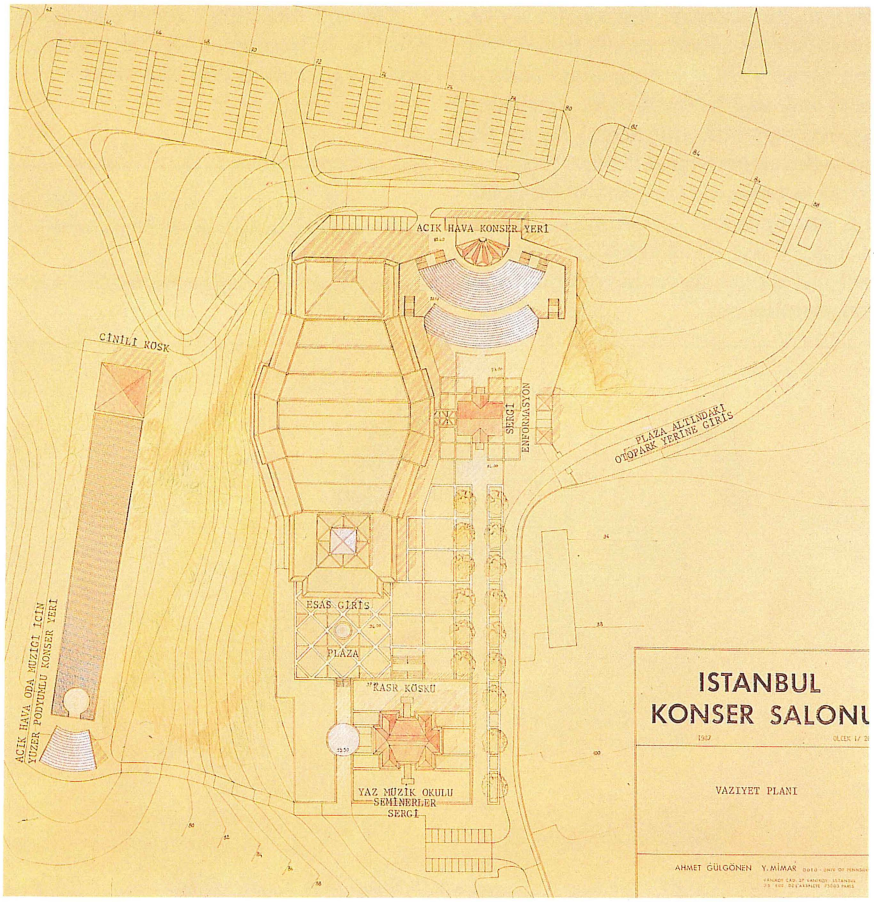
The twenty-metre-wide and ten-metre-deep orchestra podium can be split into modules according to the requirements of the orchestra. An air-circulation system has been specially designed to work silently, with clean air coming from below the seats, which is then collected at the ceiling and discharged.

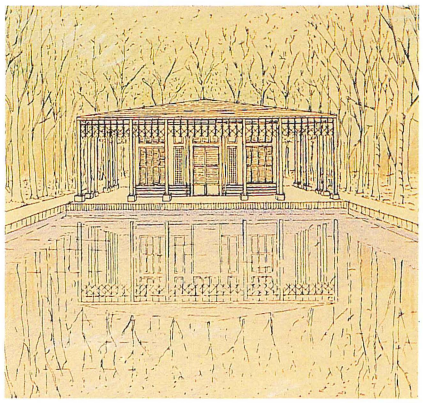
In addition to the concert hall and rehearsal rooms of the complex, the Palace's restored reflecting pool will have a floating podium and be combined with a 400-seat amphitheatre to create an outdoor environment of enchanting charm and beauty for musical recitals.

Below: Model of the 3,000-seat Concert Hall with the roof removed.
Bottom: A model showing the site and buildings. (The roof has been left off the Concert Hall).

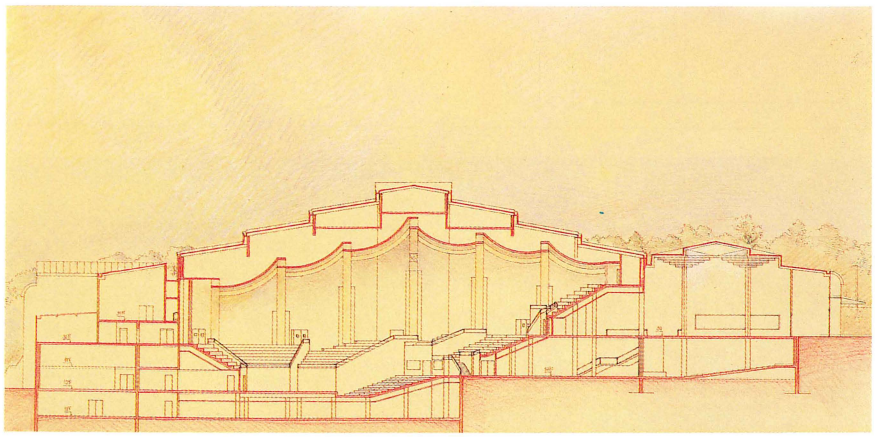


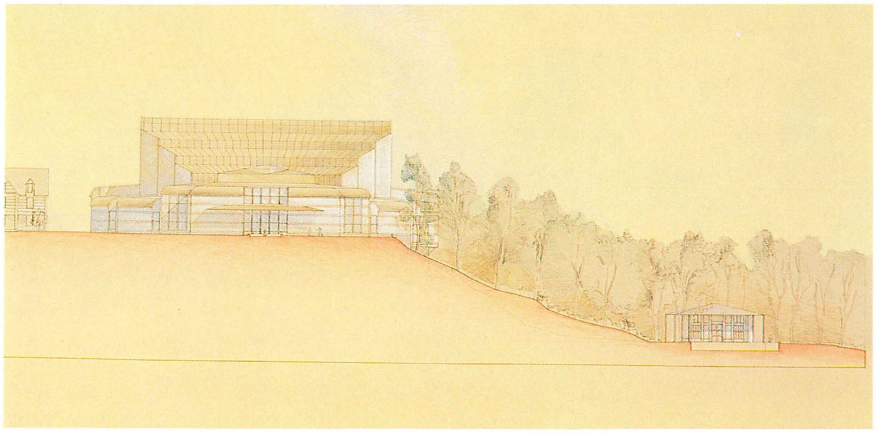






Above: Perspective of the garden pavilion.
Left: Site plan sketch of the entire complex, with 400-seat amphitheatre, reflecting pool and restored pavilion, Concert Hall and 360-seat theatre.
Left, below: Sectional drawing of the Concert Hall showing the suspended ceiling.
Left, bottom: South elevation of the Concert Hall.





Ahmet Gülgönen

Microsurgery Hospital, Istanbul

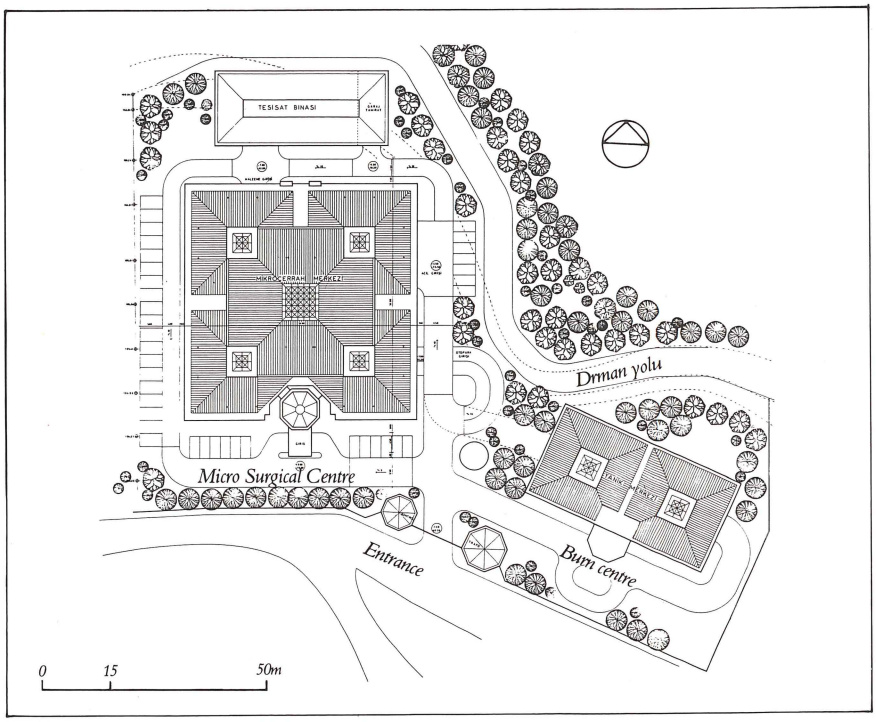
This hospital has been designed for an internationally renowned group of micro-surgeons in Turkey. The uniqueness of the brief given to the architect involved the very special, technical needs of this kind of medical activity, such as restoring severed limbs, and at the same time dealing with the social traditions and climate of this country. Each aspect was dealt with in a rational, yet sensitive manner.

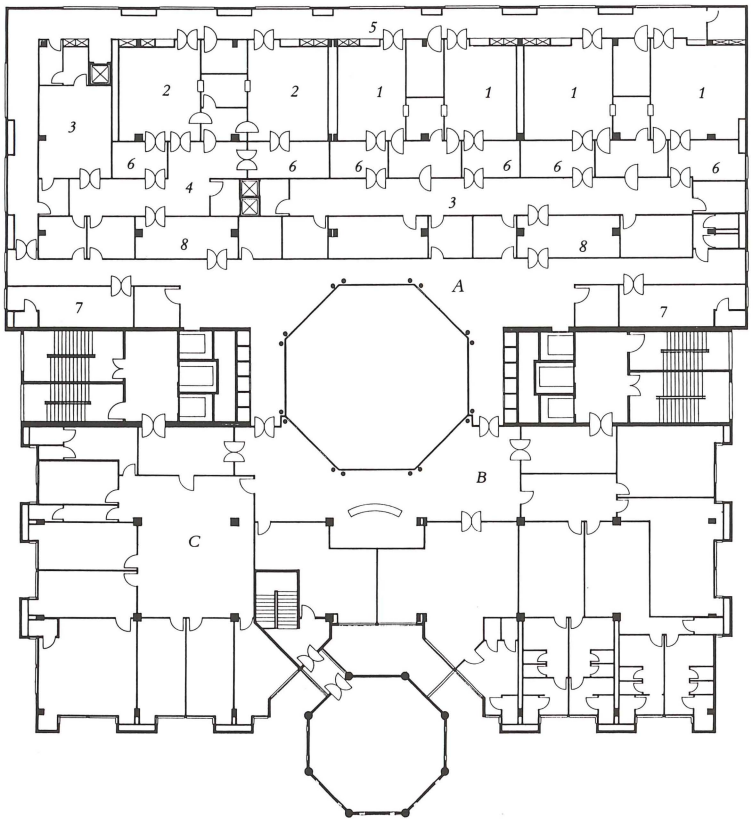
Located on a newly-developed site in a forested area of Istanbul's outskirts, the hospital plan utilises advantages of the slope to provide different entrances to the building. Conceived as a vertical arrangement of spaces internally, there were a number of problems of vertical circulation to be resolved; however, the hexagonal central courtyard offers a source of natural lighting to the core of the building as well as a space for public use. This hexagonal space is echoed on the front entrance facade of the hospital where there is an hexagonal meeting room located above the main entry.

The six levels of services include the following distribution of functions: parking, emergency room, X-ray, and other technical services on the lower two levels; main entry, administration and physiotherapy clinics on the third floor; six operating rooms on the fourth; sixty beds in private and semi-private rooms on the fifth; and the cafeteria, kitchen, library on the sixth floor. These benefit from excellent views of the surrounding countryside, and also have excellent ventilation (especially for the kitchens). All of the ducts throughout the different levels have been placed on the periphery of the building for optimum flexibility in the interiors. As a result all toilets, for example, and wet service spaces have natural light and ventilation.

Ground breaking ceremonies took place in November 1988 and construction is expected to take two years.

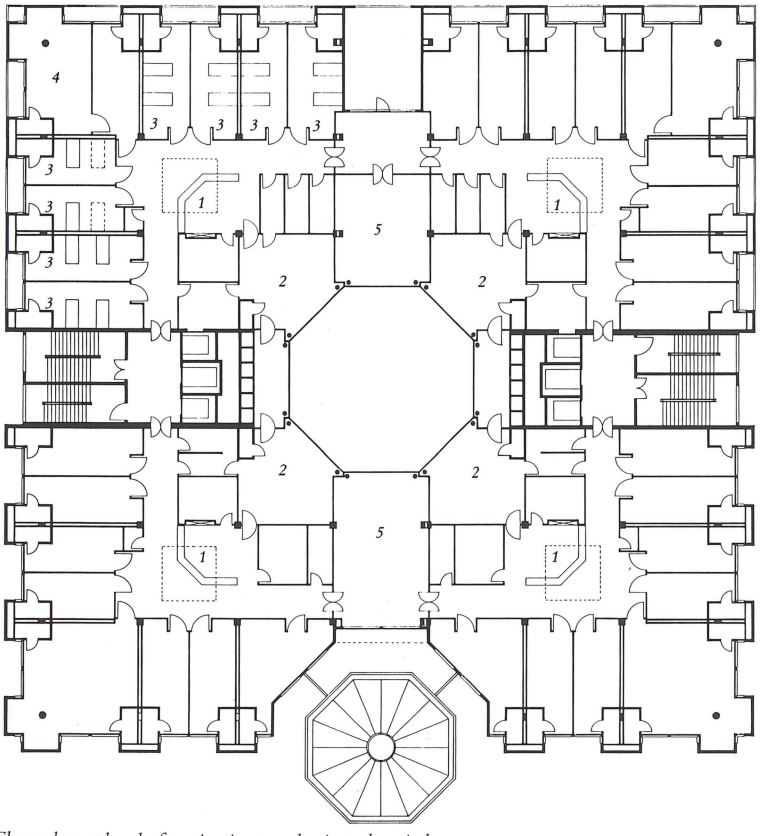
Below: Site plan of the complex, showing the Micro-Surgery Centre, with the Burn Centre in a separate building.
Bottom: Model of the Micro-Surgery Centre seen from the front.





Floor plan at the level of the surgical suites.

A. Surgical Suite
1. Sterilised surgical rooms
2. Clean surgical rooms
3. Sterilised corridor
4. Clean corridor
5. Dirty corridor
6. Anesthesia
7. Recovery room
8. Changing room
B. Surgeons and nurses changing rooms
C. Surgeons' offices



Floor plan at level of semi-private and private hospital rooms.

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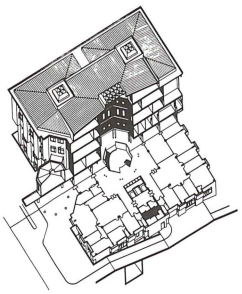
1. Nurses' station
2. Service facilities – preparation rooms
3. Patients' rooms
4. V.I.P. rooms
5. T.V. rooms



Axonometric drawing of the hospital. Note the covered interior courtyard in the centre of the building.