

Architecture, in its core, must be sustainable and environmentally friendly

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Can you comment on the role of sustainability and environmental awareness in the architectural design choices that you make?

Sustainability has only been a point of focus in recent years; architecture, in its core, must be sustainable and environmentally friendly. With every project there are certain criteria that we make a priority to fulfil, such as the best usage of our budget, longevity, and, when necessary, to create designs with transformative qualities. Recently, these criteria have started to become more regulated. I believe that good architectural design must always adhere to these criteria.

You are an architect as well as an interior designer. Choosing the right materials to work with is important. Do you select materials yourself or comply with the choices of clients? And what do you pay the most attention to?

Our main work focuses on office fit-out designs and 80% of our projects are architectural. There are certain criteria to follow with architectural work but when designing offices there may be different expectations and demands as firms each have unique characteristics. We prefer to select the materials ourselves but offer the client different choices and at the beginning of the project we set a budget. That budget is very important because the people who will be working in that office have an investment plan

and it's important that they start work at the right time and on budget. Throughout the project, given the nature of the work, certain alterations are made but we try to stay true to the integrity of the work and stand by our choices.

What materials do you prefer to work with?

We don't have strictly set rules but we like natural materials. We don't like fake or faux materials, we prefer to use the real thing. Technology has really advanced in this regard and good technology should be original, shouldn't look like something it's not. Consistency within itself is very important to us, for it to have a voice and tell a story... Compatibility between the building and those that it will house, the employees of a firm or residents, is paramount because we are designing the buildings for them.

The identifying facades of structures are important in terms of metropolitan architecture, texture and sustainability. What criteria should be followed during the design and execution phases in order for the façade to be qualified as sustainable?

Materials used on the façade must be suitable for outdoor conditions, depending on the climate of the location of the structure. For instance, I believe it was in the years 2003 - 2004, when we did a project called Anadir in the easternmost part of Russia. The conditions were very harsh and we made sure that every company we approached for materials for the façade had the materials



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tested to withstand temperatures as low as -60 C. In the end, we brought the flashing in from Finland as it has the same climate as Russia. It's important to design a structure that is suited to the climate of its location; a building in Antalya would be designed differently than a building in Erzurum. So it's more appropriate to discuss what is necessary for the maintenance of the structure in the climate that it must withstand rather than a single set recipe for design.

A well planned and correctly administered façade will age well; like everything else it has a life span and we need to consider how it will age at the very beginning. While working on the Pendorya Shopping Centre we used a precast façade system and worked with a sculptor on the façade. We made our plans taking into consideration how the façade would get sullied over time and how water damage would affect the paint job and age the colour. As a result, the façade is aging slowly and gracefully.



Employee satisfaction was the most talked about issue concerning the work you did for the Sahibinden.com and Yemek Sepeti offices. Was the decision to focus on this made by the employer or was this something you suggested?

In the first few years of the 2000s, we built offices for advertising agencies and one of their priorities was a creative working environment for their staff, and thereby the focus on employee satisfaction began with them. We once did work for an agency in Maslak; at that time, their location was isolated with nothing nearby so we built for them an all-encompassing office with basketball hoops, mezzanines, a spacious cafeteria, etc. and it had made quite a stir back then. We also did work for corporations, and dot-com companies, which embody the principle of keeping their staff happy, and which are the kinds of places that attract the new generation and where young people prefer to work. Due to the popularity of this kind of work and the fickle nature of young people, there is a lot of employee circulation in these kinds of offices. Those newly starting their careers lose interest in their work after a while and start searching for new, more exciting work. Being aware of this, the owners of Sahibinden.com and Yemek Sepeti asked us to design the kind of office that their staff would enjoy working in. With this in mind, we went to work and formulated a plan. We spoke to the employees, got their views, and exchanged ideas.

The concept of liveable cities has been a hot topic lately. Can you comment on this?

In order to establish liveable cities, we must first focus on walkable, easily accessible cities. In addition to the difficulties posed by the hilly topography of Istanbul, we struggle with obtaining even the bare minimums to properly do our job.

I don't like to impose new rules but when developing vertically, life on the horizontal must keep up. In Maslak, for example, one exits a colossal high rise building onto a cramped narrow sidewalk; there is no established public space in front of the structures; buildings are being erected without any consideration given to how it

Pendorya AVM



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will fit in with the cityscape. We need to, therefore, also plan and improve our public areas since cultivating life in these spaces will create liveable cities. Unique and well-built buildings are being erected but the life in their surroundings remains limited. For example Göktürk, they create new and modern residential districts but these are so poorly designed, restaurants, markets, vehicles, etc. so confined to such restricted spaces, that they are all practically on top of one another.



KEREM ERGİNOĞLU



We have been keeping up with local and international architectural projects via the internet. What are the differences between Turkish and foreign investors?

I don't categorize investors as Turkish or foreign; there are investors who simply want solid work, others who will take on any project with the intention of turning it into a success. We choose to work with employers whose aims are compatible with our own, we don't market to a particular type of investor. Generally, investors who have heard of us and our approach contact us and therefore we don't have occasion to separate them by nationality. That being said, the laws and regulations of whichever

country we happen to be working in apply to those involved in the project. In progressive countries, these are well established and organised and there are fewer taboos and fears attached to certain things. Investors from these countries have no issue with bending certain rules once they understand why we are doing things in a particular way. In our country, on the other hand, there are a few taboos; we are told by investors things like the incline here should be like this and this should be done that way, etc... We don't know why but it seems there are unwritten rules that have rendered our people blind. As a result, our greatest frustration in Turkey is that there are too many rules that limit and hinder the architect.

WE NEED TO PLAN AND IMPROVE OUR PUBLIC AREAS SINCE CULTIVATING LIFE IN THESE PLACES WILL CREATE LIVEABLE CITIES. UNIQUE AND WELL-BUILT BUILDINGS ARE BEING ERECTED BUT THE LIFE IN THEIR SURROUNDINGS REMAINS LIMITED.



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