

“It’s very important to use sunlight as a tool in architecture”

## SABRİ PAŞAYİĞİT DESIGN OFFICE

WE ARE VERY CAREFUL ABOUT OUR PROJECTS BEING SUSTAINABLE, THEY POWER THEMSELVES, CONTROL THEIR WASTE SYSTEMS AND WE MAKE SURE THEY’RE ENVIRONMENT FRIENDLY. OUR COUNTRY IS DEVELOPING ON THESE MATTERS, GRANTED, WE CAN’T DO IT AS WELL AS EUROPE, PEOPLE ARE MUCH MORE AWARE IN THERE; THEIR CITIES, EVEN THEIR TOWNS, CAN PRODUCE FORTY PERCENT OF THEIR ENERGY ON THEIR OWN, AND THEY MAINTAIN ALL WASTE DISPOSAL SYSTEMS. THESE THINGS DEVELOP PARALLEL WITH CULTURE AND I CAN SAY THAT OUR COUNTRY HAS A LOT OF DEVELOPMENTS...

**You have a sense of design that makes you approach all your project with the same kind of care to both detail and general design. Can you talk about your projects and design criteria?**

Our first starting point was a philosophy that i learned in school. Whenever you start a project you must make sure it’s in human scale, however pretty your design is all your details need to be perfect. My point of view is very clear about this, architecture is a whole thing; your initial design and layout plan need to be perfectly decided. A project in Asia needs to have different characteristics and philosophies than a place you might build in the West. You must never drop a project after making some decisions, because your starting process is twenty percent of the way, only after that the real process begins and you should finish what you start. Because this is our mentality, eighty-five percent of all our projects is completely applicable. We are not an office which makes a lot of concept designs, most of our designs are stuff that actually gets done.

**Are you present in the application as well?**

We are not present during application but our projects are very detailed in how they’re supposed to be applied. We always supervise these things with both investors and site managers, with our projects most building sites don’t have problems during construction. We stick very closely to our design when approaching the end product, we take great care of that. We actually developed a whole other department in our office for that. We have someone who has

20 years of experience with projects and site management supervising that department; someone who has taken problematic projects and someone who did original designs. He controls problems at sites and supervises the design process so that we are much more powerful.

**Terms like green, sustainability, ecology and especially sustainable architecture have become very trendy nowadays. Can you tell us what you think about architecture’s sustainable and ecological sides?**

We are very careful about our projects being sustainable, they power themselves, control their waste systems and we make sure they’re environment friendly. Our country is developing on these matters, granted, we can’t do it as well as Europe, people are much more aware in there; their cities, even their towns, can produce forty percent of their energy on their own, and they maintain all waste disposal systems. These things develop parallel with culture and i can say that our country has a lot of developments but there are also a lot of obstacles in our way. For instance, there are no laws that require us to make sure every project can produce it’s own energy sources. We bring this issue up and we work on fixing it but it always comesback emptyhanded. When i’m working on making a shopping mall i always want to cover the roof with solar panels, save energy on the facades, protect the environment while minimizing the energy expenses and maximize the energy used... Because people don’t know the importance of these issues, it becomes very hard to convince the investors.





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taking these risky structures and redoing them. After these trials the people realized that it couldn't be done by individually doing building renovations and now it's come a long way. I'm sure that architects and sociologists of the time said this as well but nobody listened.

Property problems are very hard to solve, because when you're planning out a large area, the expectations become distorted. As an example; we were doing a really serious, seventy-five thousand metersquare project when we came up with a lot of property problems and we had to slow down. We'll plan out a large city and provide every single recreational facility needed but when you're trying to realise them you get stopped... I don't think urban renewals can be achieved by rebuilding structures and designing projects, but it can be achieved by changing how to do the job.

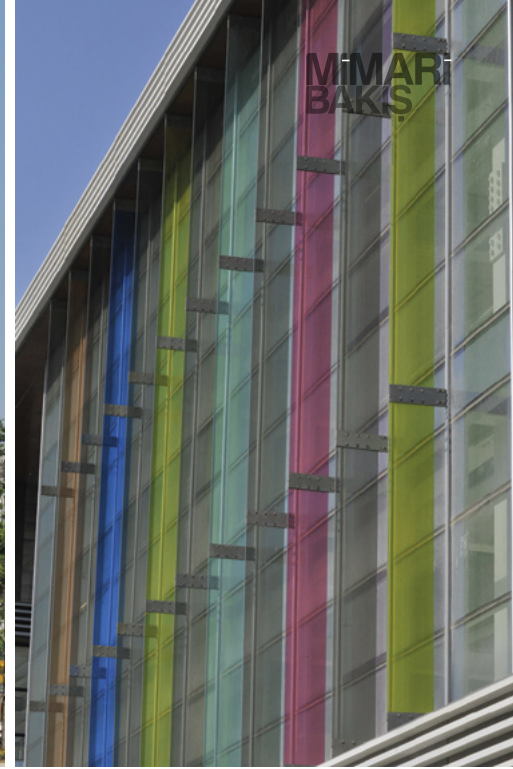
***What ecological steps need to be taken in order to avoid structure related health issues from the start? How should human and environment conscious building systems work?***

The most important thing is direction when it comes to health issues, direction is very overlooked in a lot of projects. I especially think that residence projects shouldn't be facing North. Direction determines at what angle the light comes in the building, and i think it's a very important factor so we take

it really seriously. But because the projects all around have a lot to think about they tend to overlook that, they make some improvements with isolation but when it comes to the sun, you cant change much. We can't fight nature, so we must be at peace with it. Like i said, the most important thing is direction, livingrooms must face east and bedrooms southeast, if they facing west, we shoud angle it in a way to try and fix it. The materials are also very important; even though plastic based, unbreatheable, synthetic products are getting pulled out of the market, they're still being used, we are also very careful about that. These are the kind of materials that you don't worry about right now, but you can never know what kind of health issues they might bring up, or fire safety issues. These are the kind of savings we do in design. We work with fire safety advisors when making hotels and other such structures, it's very important to use fire resistant materials because those tend to be environment friendly.

I think construction systems have become very humane in our country, i don't think there're as many problems as people advertise; but it's important to become more conscious... There's an evergrowing collaboration with machinery in our country, contractors are very fast at production, of course there're issues but generally speaking, i don't think we're in a horrible state. The law is also very clear on environment focused construction, after some problematic events they took some precautions, which is bad but i think right now we're in a good place.

Is it enough to get one of the available certificates to prove a building is environment and health friendly? What can be done to avoid the certificate being the goal? A certificate gives you a to do list, a plan to follow; but a certificate shouldn't be your main goal, it should give a quality to the structure while positively affecting your finances. The advantages of certificates are an incentive to the investors, i think it should be made obligatory. For instance, the energy ID shows how much energy the building uses, but they don't just not give you the certificate because you use too much energy, because there's no energy storing system in here, and then you have to stop the system.



WHEN THE NEW LAW CAME 7-8 YEARS AGO,  
URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS BECAME  
FASTLY POPULAR IN TURKEY BUT ALL OF IT WAS  
BUILDING RENEWALS...

About materials, we are already very conscious but the investors look at the price and they don't want it to be too much, this shouldn't happen, any polluting materials shouldn't even be produced. The people should get conscious while the governments take these matters more seriously, there should be rules, that's how you can get to a good point. That's why i think that getting a certificate should be mandatory.

***Water has become more valuable in the last thirty years and people are foreseeing a crysis. Can you talk about what you're doing for water efficiency?***

The project in Adana, is planned to produce energy from the underground water sources, it's very important to us. I believe that saving water is very important but i think we aren't doing anything to be efficient, i think this is because there's plenty of water in our country. Our underground water sources are enough for a hundred years, i think that's why people are less attentive.

Managers, employers and all of us, we don't really look out for water efficiency, but at least there shouldn't be any faucets that don't have photocells in public restrooms. Our biggest problem is that we are letting the rainwater go to the sewers, but rainwater is a perfectly safe water source once it's been filtered. We want to collect rainwater in our project; but because of people's mentality, we are faced with loads of problems. Both

employers and the people are really carefree on this very important matter, but as architects we are careful, investors spend money both while wasting and using water, and they want to do what's best to make most profit. On the other hand the photocell faucets are much more expensive than the normal ones, i think the government should make regulations about that as well.

As a country that doesn't collect rainwater, and loosing out water from dams "turning the tap off while shaving" is not going to save us. This should be a matter of politics, cities should be reinforced in a way that collects rainwater and that should be a mandatory part of urban renewals. Collecting water from the asphalt for the sidewalk shrubbery is a simple engineering job, but we can't even do that.

***How are health and environment friendly materials being accepted by the users and where do they stand in Turkey? What's your favorite natural material to use?***

People don't usually care what materials are being used but it's very important to know that. If something is environment friendly it's also human friendly.

We like to use wood; it's hard to use, it works a lot of the time and it's alive. You can't expect it to be perfect when you mount it somewhere because it bends, because it's alive, natural, breathing. Imitations, overlays and wood patterned plastics, we never use those. If you want a building to use natural materials, it need to be one with nature, you can't use all natural products on a skyscraper. We chose cork-like materials for isolation. It's natural but it's also not being produced a lot in our country, so it's very expensive. We used it in a blood center project, with really good designs; we mixed it with different materials and used it for walls and floors, you can make a lot of good designs come true with it. It's used in a composite form and it's very thin, you can find a lot of it used in a lot of countries all over the world, but not so much in here.

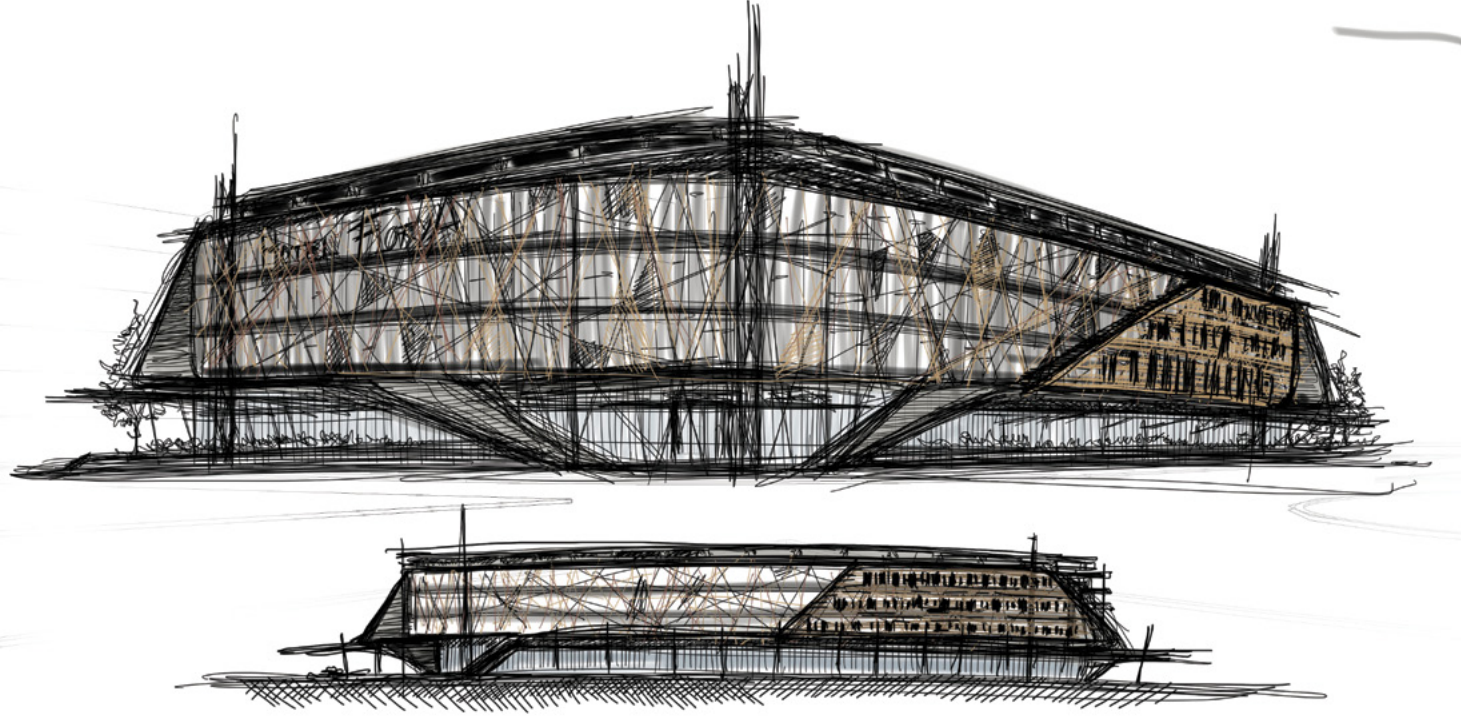
***Can you talk a little about your latest projects?***

Most of our projects are hotels and we make sure they're all sustainable. Usually big hotel brands care about greywater usage, reserved water usage and energy so they align with us.

We're building a four story, 220 room city



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hotel in Florya; it has an atrium that takes all of the sunlight inside, we couldn't find anything else like it Istanbul. We're working very hard on sustainability on this project; we're taking the sunlight from the center so we use less energy on mutual grounds, we also have serious projects with our reserves and our engineers take great care of our heating and cooling systems. We've also started seeing people for a LEED certificate; we really want this hotel to be sustainable and we took great steps in that direction during the design process.

We started on a project in Adana and when we dug up the site we found a large body of water after 8 meters, we requested information and analysis of the land and the water and decided to change our cooling system to a water based cooling system using the water underground. We're going to use the low temperature of the water on our devices and then we are going to send the untouched water back into the ground. But when we're working on residence projects, we need the investor to tell us to do that. They should know that if a project is sustainable it would be better for everyone, where the government stands about this is very important.



# FİROBETON İLE DOĞUŞTAN RENKLİ CEPHELER



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