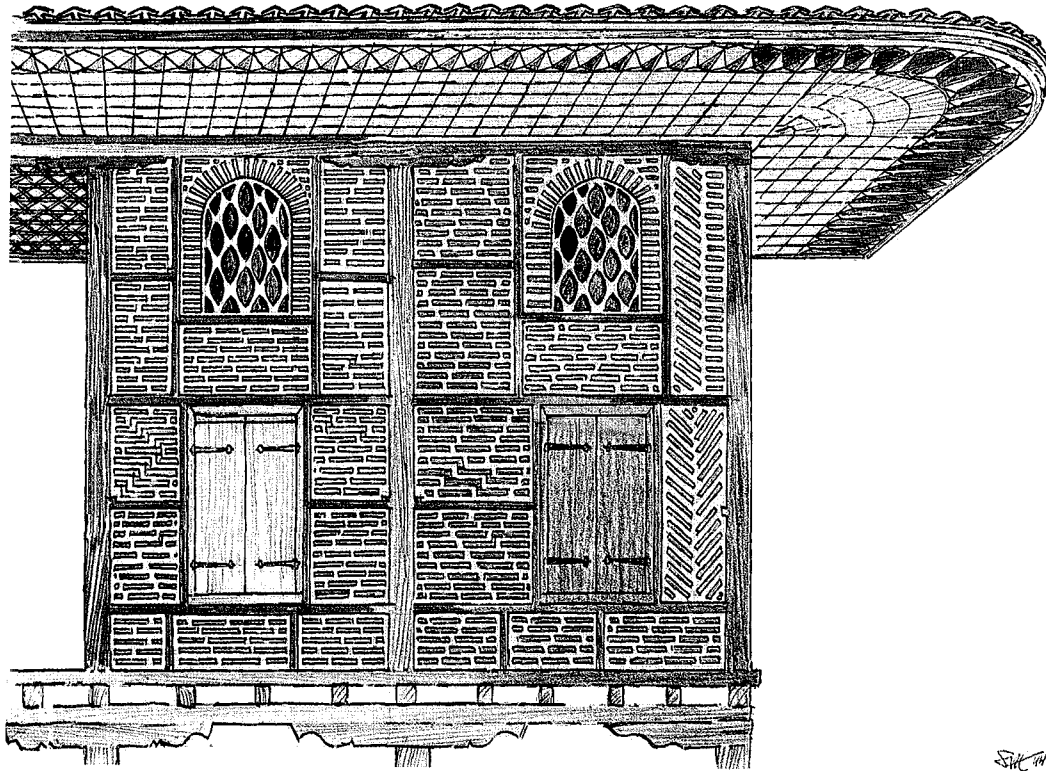


FOREWORD



by Hans Hollein

SHC 79

There are few places in the world where one has as rich an architectural heritage — an heritage which is both an obligation and a burden — as one finds in Istanbul. Istanbul-Constantinople-Byzantium, which covers not only one single period or one civilisation isolated in history, has left its mark to be admired by later generations. There have been superior manifestations in terms of building by successive cultures, each drawing from the previous one, but still creating an identity and character of its own; an architectural identity which not only resulted in regional specifics but in global masterpieces — masterpieces which influenced and steered the course of architecture in the world through centuries.

In the shadow of the Hagia Sophia and the Süleymaniye Camii only an extreme responsibility towards one's own work and towards history can be the basis for continuity into the present and the future: continuity of thought and belief, continuity of the structure and fabric of the built environment, and continuity of excellence in architecture. This continuity forms the basis of today's goals and statements, of an architecture rooted in the local heritage and at the same time encompassing and projecting a global search and development.

An architect who responded to this challenge convincingly is Sedat Hakkı Eldem. A biased architectural history, concentrating on self-determined avenues rather than the search, analysis and report on situations, manifestations and results as they evolve and develop has bypassed the endeavours of Eldem (and others) until recent times.

Only now are we beginning to acknowledge the work of architects whose emphasis is concentrated on historical and spatial contexts, based on an understanding of the materials, techniques and forces which constantly shape an environment of characteristic authenticity and individuality, fitting with the social and cultural situation of a place.

The simplistic polarity between tradition and modernity, between regionalism and internationalism, which separated endeavours in architecture, partly on a qualitative basis — considering the latter good and important and the former second-rate and parochial — excluded important figures, movements and results from the attention and appreciation of serious critique and analytical history. The arrogant emphasis on modernity and internationalism in modern architectural history (as important as those schools of thought are) pigeon-holed figures such as Eldem as peripheral. Only gradually are we recovering from these unjust judgements.

Eldem's position in this respect was particularly problematic. While figures like Hassan Fathy, with their singular obsession, did at a certain moment catch the attention of a new emerging audience eager for their message, heterogenous work like Eldem's was harder to discover and discern. Starting to look at Eldem's work from the viewpoint of the international style (and that's where observation usually started), centring on buildings like the Hilton Hotel in Istanbul, one could easily consider him just an interesting local variation of global currents. Appreciating his enormous involvement in the recording of traditional architecture one could also be tempted to see him mainly as a historian, researcher and scholar.

The key to Eldem's importance and his complex personality and work are however a few buildings which form a synthesis (as Kapfinger has labelled it) of his attitudes and positions which reveal a convincingly authentic approach.

When I first saw — by accident — the Istanbul University Faculty of Sciences and Letters (1942–44), I was immediately taken by its appearance, its subtle and unobtrusive monumentality, its dignity and quietness. It encompassed all what seem to me to be the qualities of historic Ottoman architecture, yet in a contemporary idiom. A self-centred and self-settled tranquility emanates from this building; the cantilevered roof having just the right tension between a sheltering protection and an eloquent communicative gesture. The silhouette and the facade in keeping with its surroundings, make a subtle statement about the importance of its content and function. The structure occupies its site in a dialectic with the topography and the corner situation. It is an oriental building and a western building at the same time.

Another building-complex which exemplifies Eldem's concerns and the creative input of his lifelong occupation with the record of indigenous Turkish architecture is the Social Security Agency Complex in the Zeyrek district of Istanbul (1962–64). Long before “contextualism” became an “issue”, here is a modern building which is in perfect keeping with its environment, both in scale and character. The existing traditional urban fabric is taken up and the size and shape of the new structures correspond with the old. Buildings as responsive as this help to reinforce an existing urban pattern and thus the mood of a neighbourhood.

During this century it is clear that we are confronted with a duality in our life and environment. On the one hand there is something specific to and inseparable from a given cultural and geographic situation (which we could call regionalism), whilst on the other hand there are developments which are global and uniform for all areas and mankind. For example, there are no specific Turkish aeroplanes or airports, TV-sets or light bulbs. There is an overlay of local and global utterances and an architecture of today has to reflect this situation. It is also now impossible not to be influenced by international developments and to base an architecture strictly on a regional tradition. Supra-regional exchange of ideas — and this is aptly demonstrated in the history of Istanbul and Turkey — is not only a phenomenon of this century and to me the efforts of Eldem try to come to terms with this necessity are reflected in his life, in all its ambiguity.

Eldem as a rich cosmopolitan from an old family, educated abroad and versed in many languages (and cultures), part of the ruling elite, reacts against foreign influences (mainly German) be it the “Vienna Cubic” or others. As a consequence of the “Second National Movement” a national architecture is envisioned. Few presentations in written form of his philosophies exist and his main scholarly contribution, the research on the traditional Turkish house, is part of his academic role and he exerts great influence in Istanbul and Turkey in general. Despite sometimes authoritarian leanings and nationalistic priorities, his way and work is also accompanied by foreign influence, be it Frank Lloyd Wright or Lutyens in his early years, or Poelzig and later Bonatz who came to work and live in Turkey. It should be mentioned however, that some of these foreigners (such as Egli, who headed the Istanbul Architecture School in the early 1930s) had a profound interest in the Turkish architectural heritage.

Having understood the Turkish house as *type* — of structural clarity and beauty — a departure point for an architecture of his beliefs and intentions was established. The

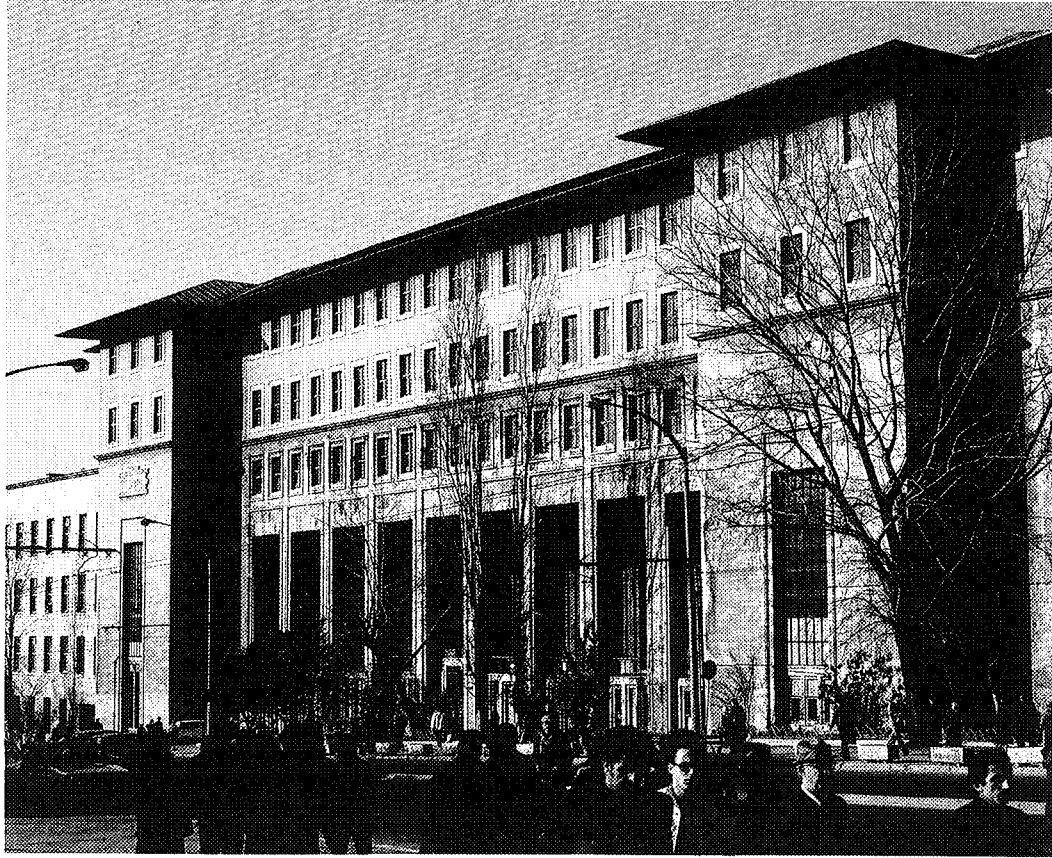
Ayaşlı Yalı (1938) on the Bosphorus is the first mature example, followed by the already mentioned Istanbul University. The Taşlık Coffee House in Istanbul of 1947–48 is an almost literal return to the traditional roots of the *sofa* type house. A further transposition of these principles is the Istanbul Palace of Justice (1948–78), a realised competition project for which Bonatz and Dudok were jurors. A “modern” streak is developing, exemplified most prominently in the Istanbul Hilton Hotel (1952). This building, done in collaboration with Skidmore Owings and Merrill (SOM) must be considered as Eldem’s biggest compromise with his beliefs and a complete departure from his fundamental position. It shows few of the concerns he has demonstrated so persuasively so far.

That “Modernism” could be accommodated under the principles of the regional Turkish house in a convincing way, exemplifies the Şemsettin Sirer House (1967) — a similar task on the Bosphorus as the Ayaşlı Yalı and very much in the spirit of the Social Security Agency Complex.

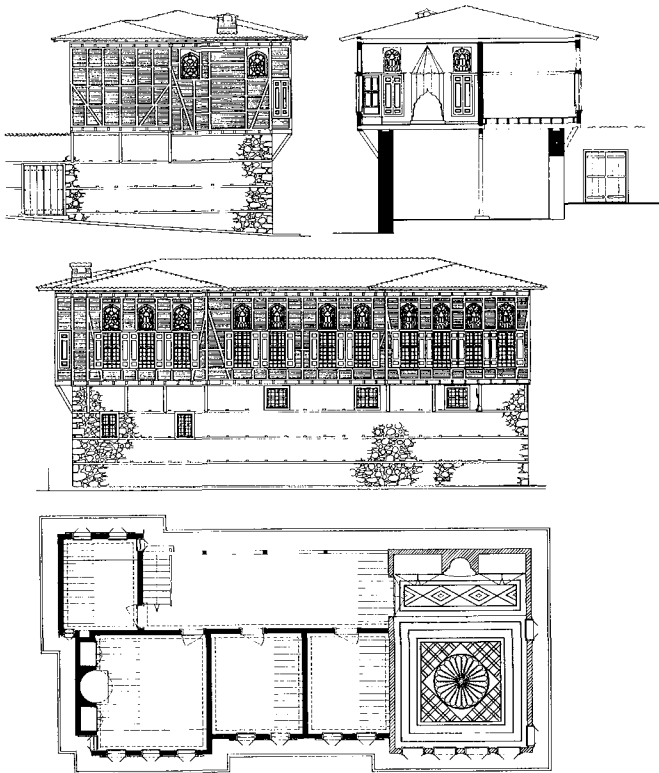
Eldem has executed numerous buildings, some of uneven quality, but in his excellent work he has demonstrated a *path to follow*, and that makes him very important. This path is not just a personal architectural statement, but also an approach which can be adopted by others; a dialectic between the traditional and the contemporary, rooted both in Regionalism and the International movement.

His Social Security Agency Complex has been awarded a 1986 Aga Khan Award for Architecture, and I as a member of the Master Jury, consider his position of great importance to the current architecture debate, not just as an example of good architecture, but of a way of addressing the fundamental issues facing us.

ECHOES OF SEDAD ELDEM



by Suha Özkan



Eldem's measured drawings for a House with an Outer Hall

Sedad Hakkı Eldem's contribution to Turkish architecture shares a fate similar to that of Hassan Fathy of Egypt and Rifat Chadirji of Iraq. His concerns and strife are genuine, but his impact on change in Turkey is small when compared to the major movements in mainstream architecture. Fathy tried to bring back to life the vernacular modes of building by mixing them with one another in terms of "the architect's know-how". He conceived architecture as a whole, with traditional materials and methods of construction, whereas Chadirji has been interested in interpreting traditional forms with old and new materials to be constructed by contemporary means.

When compared to these two eminent architects, Eldem's mission indicates a different line of development. His search is neither a total devotion to the vernacular patterns of building like Fathy, nor is it a search for an appropriate image for civic buildings like Chadirji. Eldem does not see his mission in terms of an absolute continuity but tries to base his architecture on the already existing roots of the traditional patterns which would otherwise be extinct.

Eldem is also a devoted regionalist in search of an architecture which is primarily Turkish, but the references he makes in his design, (to what makes it Turkish), are abstract. He does not use any motif directly by taking it out of its context: instead he has maintained a continuous research in all aspects of architectural heritage and has documented them as his resources. References made to them have always been abstract and interpretative. Even though his research in the form of collective typologies such as the *Turkish House*, and *Turkish Garden* or monographs like *Sadabad*, *Köçeoğlu Yalısı* or *Memories of the Bosphorus* can stand in their own right, he has always confirmed that research aimed at the ultimate objective of forming the basis for his, or others', contemporary architecture, has to be developed. He himself persistently displayed what he meant by generating a modern idiom from this heritage. This, in brief, is not repeating what was valid and built for the past but is a continuous search for abstract intrinsic values to guide new solutions.

In drawing only abstract references from what belongs to the past he uses proportions and structural systems, reinforced by the selection of materials, blended with very limited use of ornamental geometric patterns exclusively in the form of surface treatment and tiling.

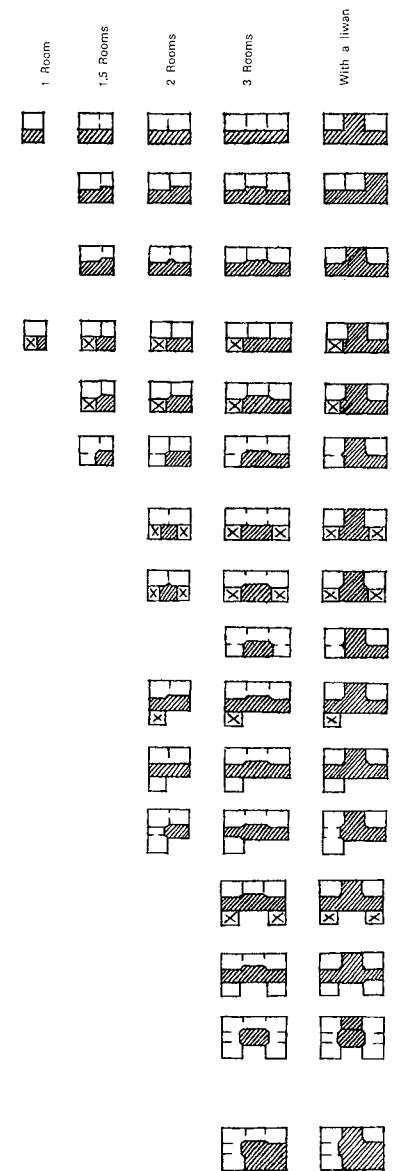
Aspects of Eldem's career were meshed in such a way that, in a discourse on his impact, it is not easy to differentiate his

influence as a researcher from his contribution as an architect or as a teacher. This is mainly due to the fact that, in his long career, all these different functions have been maintained simultaneously. In addition to these three fundamental functions, was his prominent position in the Supreme Council of Monuments from 1941 to his retirement in 1978: a position that reinforced his effectiveness in Turkish society. In reference to the great 16th century architect Sinan's extensive building activity, Eldem said, "Sinan was not only an architect but also a *Vezir* (Minister) in the Governmental hierarchy". This too is partly true for Eldem, especially as he effectively controlled building activity, through the Supreme Council, for more than three decades in the historically most sensitive areas of Istanbul.

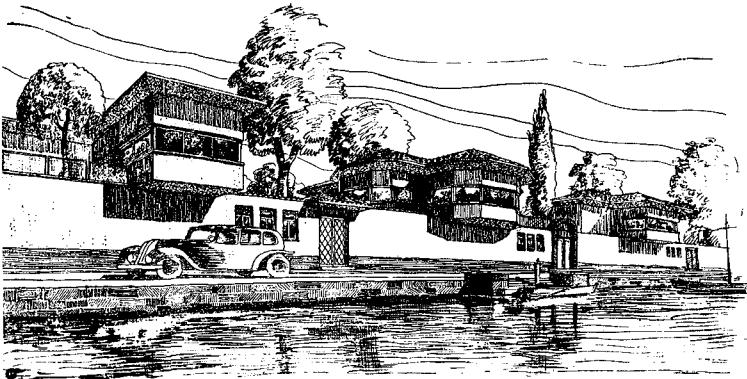
Eldem's influence as a researcher was closely linked with his career as a teacher. He extensively utilised his position in the Academy to generate documents on historical, monumental and, most important of all, civil vernacular architecture, all over Turkey. These documents generated an understanding, awareness, and love for traditional architecture in several generations of the Academy's students. When we link worldwide interest in vernacular modes of building with Bernard Rudofsky's unforgettable exhibition entitled "Architecture without Architects", in 1964, Eldem's contribution to this awareness was thirty years earlier and it was substantiated with genuine research comprised of surveys, measured drawings and historical documents.

Eldem's research over four decades was not regularly presented in the national media. Partly because of his perfectionism, partly because of his insistence on publishing through a national body (i.e. Ministry of Education), but mainly due to the lack of supporting interest in his research, it grew over a long period of time without any dissemination. It is sad to see that his *Plan Types of the Turkish House*, which goes back to the 1930s, could only be published in the early 1950s. This is a remarkably important piece, from the viewpoint of typology, which was recognised as a significant approach to many of the contemporary problems of architecture. Eldem attempted to go back to the origins of typologies in their historical vernacular existence. His magnum opus *Turkish House*, could only recently find a publisher and then only for the first of four volumes. Here his search reminds us of that of J.N.L. Durand in the last century.

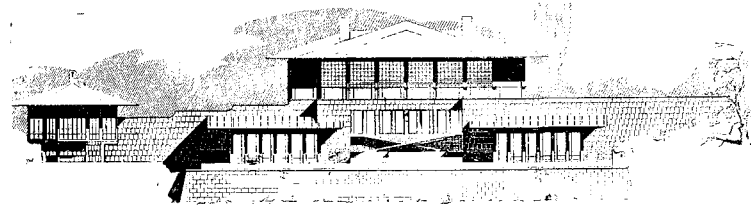
Due to the delay in publishing his research, it is difficult to trace its impact on professionals other than himself. However, students working with him in the Academy were directly



Eldem's typological analysis of the house type; "House with an Outer Hall"



Mahmud Bilen, Student Project, 1939 A residence on the Bosphorus
Source: *Arkitekt*



Demirtaş Kamçıl Recreation centre on the Bosphorus Diploma Project, 1942
Source: *Arkitekt*, 1941–42, pp 196–197



Sedad Eldem, Akbank General Directorate, Fındıklı, Istanbul, 1967–68 and Alarko Office Blocks, Ayazaga, Istanbul, 1976–79 Photographs: Suha Özkan

influenced by the research and survey tasks they undertook at Eldem’s studios, and reflected this in their projects. In the Diploma Projects of the late 1930s and early 1940s, there is an increasing preoccupation with what is “Turkish” as opposed to the widespread internationalism which was the *lingua franca* of architecture at large.

One curious thing about all these graduates is that there is not much of a link with what they did in the school and their professional practice in the years which followed. The uncompromising modernist architecture of Ferzan Baydar, Rahmi Bediz and Demirtaş Kamçıl, from the 1950s onwards, cannot be explained from the point of view of their education, but is more due to the societal dynamics of employing western models and rejecting what was then local, regionalist, or Turkish.

Therefore the students in Eldem’s studio who designed buildings with stone and brick course-work, pitched roofs, long over-hanging eaves, and narrow vertical windows with small glass panes, found themselves in a professional milieu where curtain-walls, glass and aluminium facades, long horizontal windows, and the design of multitudes of indifferent highrise buildings all over the country was prevalent. Whether Turkish society demanded this, or if these groups of architects wanted to manifest themselves as “modernists” to keep up with the times, is something which remains unclear.

In the processes of uncompromising modernity, we also see Eldem himself participating with his SATIE Building (1934), Istanbul Hilton (1952), Akbank Headquarters (1967) and Alarko Towers (1976). We see a consistent stream of involvement in International Modernism as opposed to Eldem’s meticulous regionalism, which he pioneered with very few other architects worldwide. His involvement with modernism “proper”, while designing as a regionalist, must not be interpreted as diversion or compromise. It is more of a manifestation of being capable of designing on a larger scale with determinants and requirements of that scale. This judgement explains his situation vis-à-vis the Hilton and Alarko buildings but does not explain the other two, as he has successfully applied his regional idiom in a similar scale to so many other buildings. This change of attitude should be tolerated in the larger scope of professionalism, where the battle of keeping up with society’s demands remains always to be fought.

Eldem's influence on architectural practice in Turkey is a fairly complex one. But his contribution to nurturing architects at the Academy and following the development of some graduates, especially those who maintained or who tried to maintain Eldem's idiom, is relatively simple. Before going into these, it is useful to dwell upon the trio of Sedad Eldem, Paul Bonatz and Emin Onat — where the most effective attempt at regionalism was led by them in the period named by Turkish architectural historians, as the “Second Nationalist Movement”.

When he came to Turkey with “Der Neue Deutschen Architektur” exhibition (1942), Bonatz's career was on the decline due to political factors. He was the architect of the monumental in stone, with an overwhelming facadism, having designed the main Stuttgart Train Station and many elegant railroad bridges all over Germany. After the exhibition, he remained in Turkey as a professor at the newly opened Technical University of Istanbul. He also became the consultant to the Ministry of Education and designer for two major projects in Ankara, and the spokesman for regionalism in architecture. He not only manifested this in his teaching and consultancy work but also tried to display his understanding in the design of a couple of projects. Looking back to Bonatz's architecture in Germany, where monumentalism was the main ingredient, his later architectural manifestations reveal a rejection or a disbelief in his own past. Turkey's significant architectural heritage must have affected him, and the sudden change of attitude must be at least in part due to his close relationship with Eldem and Onat. As Turkey's most prominent architectural practice, they were then exploring a new idiom in their Ankara and Istanbul University Faculties of Sciences Building (1942–43) where Bonatz happened to be the client's consultant, sympathetic to the cause, and a close friend of both of them sharing the same Germanic background.

Bonatz alone did the conversion of Ankara's Palace of Exhibitions of Şevki Balmumcu into the State Opera House, with a bold expression of constructivist architecture. The remodelling of this “progressive modern” building, with a decor reminiscent of Ottoman and Selçuk motifs, has been referred to as one of the major disgraces of architecture in Turkey. However, soon after this attempt, his governmental housing for civil servants in Ankara (Saraçoğlu Mahallesi) became one of the most outstanding examples of regionalist attitudes. In this project, unlike Eldem's lifelong struggle to refer to all aspects of the traditional house in plan, section and elevation, Bonatz



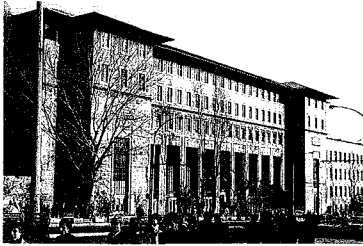
Sedad Eldem (on the far right) with Emin Onat (on the left) and Paul Bonatz (second from the left)



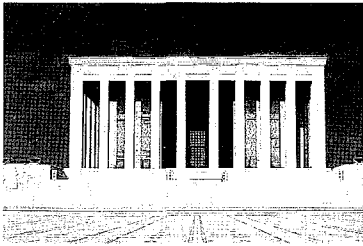
Paul Bonatz, Housing for Government officials (Saraçoğlu Mahallesi) 1944–46
Source: *Arkiitekt*, 1946, p 55



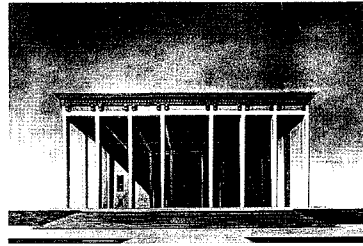
Paul Bonatz, Housing for Government officials (Saraçoğlu Mahallesi) 1944–46 Plan and elevation
Source: *Arkiitekt*, 1946, p 58



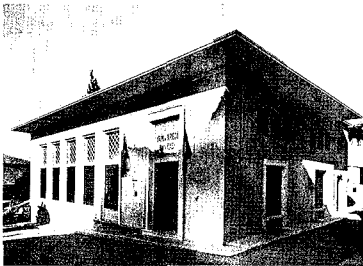
Sedad Eldem and Emin Onat,
Istanbul University, Faculty of
Sciences and Letters, 1942–44
Photograph: Suha Özkan



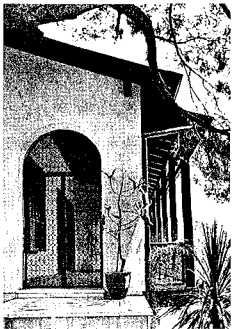
Emin Onat and Orhan Arda,
Atatürk's Mausoleum, Ankara,
1944–53
Photograph: Engin Yenil



Sedad Eldem and Emin Onat,
Proposal for office of the Provost,
Ankara, 1942 (not built)



Emin Onat, Yapı ve Kredi Bankası
(Construction Credit Bank) Bursa
Branch Office, 1948 Source: *Arkitekt*,
1949, p 97



Emin Onat, Architect's
own residence, Istanbul



Emin Onat, Cenap And Residence, early 1940s
Photograph: Engin Yenil

did not pay much attention to the house plans or neighbourhood structure but utilised the regional expression for the elevations. Possibly, what was expected from him by the client was a modern living pattern then referred to as *asri*, i.e. contemporary. Even though this was a good example of regionalism respectful to local values, it was severely criticised by the young architect, Orhan Alsaç, and by the eminent critic and architectural journalist of the time, Zeki Sayar, on the grounds of inappropriateness of the plan type to the Turkish way of life. Nevertheless, Saraçoğlu Mahallesi left an important mark of Eldem's influence on regionalism for the generations to come.

Like the Eldem-Bonatz relationship, in the Eldem-Onat relationship it is also difficult to trace the different roles of the individuals. Accounts by their contemporaries indicate that Eldem was “the designer-architect” of the team and Onat the “spokesman” of the practice. In the competition for the Mausoleum of Kemal Atatürk (1942), even though at that time they had worked together on two major projects, they participated separately. While Eldem went to the origins of Turkish tomb architecture to generate his proposal, Onat's proposal contains distinct analogies to their joint Ankara University Faculty of Sciences and the elaborate Mausoleum of Halicarnasus. However, Onat's individual practice displays a fairly heterogenous picture, where he swings from a whole-hearted devotion to modernist principles to the regionalist tendencies of his joint practice with Eldem. The Yapı ve Kredi Bankası branch office and the residence of the Governor, both in Bursa, manifest traces of the regionalism of Eldem-Onat togetherness. In reality this might also be due to the unavoidable omnipresence of the cultural heritage of this one-time Ottoman capital. However the architecture of his own residence and his milestone Cenap And Residence in Ankara show that he was a genuine regionalist at heart. The Cenap And Residence, conceived and built in the early 1950s, despite its small scale generated a great deal of discussion and influenced the vein of regionalism to come. It has the distinction of becoming a classified protected monument in less than 20 years of existence.

Orhan Şahinler, usually an uncompromising modernist (as illustrated by his Chamber of Commerce Building on the banks of the Golden Horn), took a completely different approach when he was commissioned to design landing facilities for the Bosphorus boats, in the context of Üsküdar Square. The building displays the features and principles of modernity, however, the idiom that Şahinler used to blend this building

into the historical context of the Square, by drawing parallels with the nearby Mihrimah Mosque by Sinan, formed one of the archetypes for contextual building in Istanbul. The large pitched roof with long cantilevered eaves is copper-plated and follows angles similar to that of Mihrimah which provides a monumental backdrop to this humble sensitive building. Şahinler, a long-standing colleague of Eldem, makes his most noteworthy contribution as he follows Eldem's contextualism.

In the 1950s Eldem influenced the Turkish architectural scene with his “ultra modern” Hilton Hotel which, more than any other architectural piece, has influenced recent buildings. He worked as the architect-designer with Gordon Bunschaf of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, where his modernist side became more forceful than his regionalism which was confined to the entrance canopy, ballroom and various decorative elements. This building became a stereotype to be repeated in varying scales all over the country.

During the same period of the Hilton, Eldem's Taşlık Coffee House was imitated in İzmir by the city architect Rıza Aşkan with a fairly sensitive siting and admittedly good planning. Apart from this building, there is not much of Eldem's regionalist approach to be seen in hundreds of new buildings which boomed in Turkey in the 1950s.

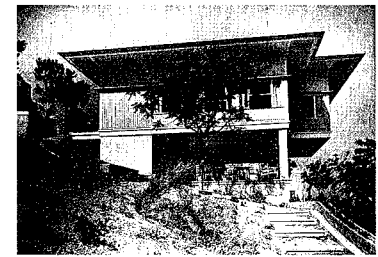
From the mid-1960s onwards, we see a fairly complex series of influences in Turkish architecture which can be attributed to Eldem as precursor. First of all, almost all construction on the banks of the Bosphorus carries good, mediocre or bad examples of his water-front residences. This was partly due to the direct influence of his architecture in this sector, but more to his presence in the Supreme Council of Historic Sites and Monuments — the ultimate body for the approval of all projects, especially granting permission for the demolition of “second class historic buildings” if they were and rebuilt in a similar style. The prerequisite for the rebuilding, was the approval of the Council.

Eldem's influence in mainstream building practice was not widespread, but existed in several serious practices.

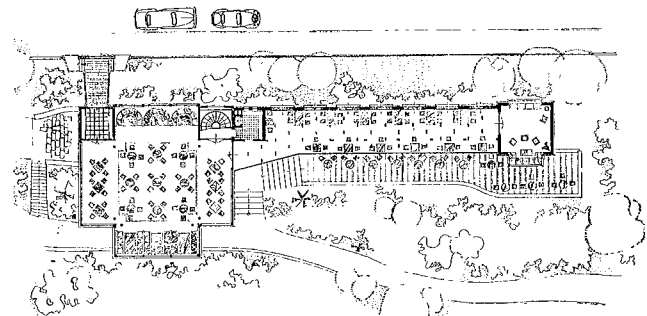
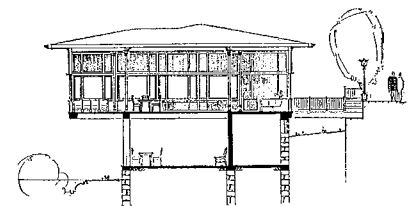
Turgut Cansever, Eldem's student and a former teaching assistant, brought a new level of existence to Eldem's ideas. The Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 1980 permeated Cansever's Turkish Historical Society Building. The abstract analogy to the Central Anatolian concept of protected central space was the main aspect of design distinguishing this building.



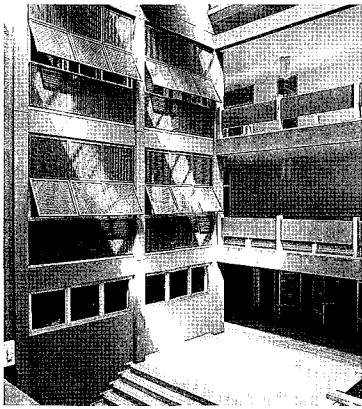
Sedad Eldem with Gordon Bunschaf of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, New York, 1952



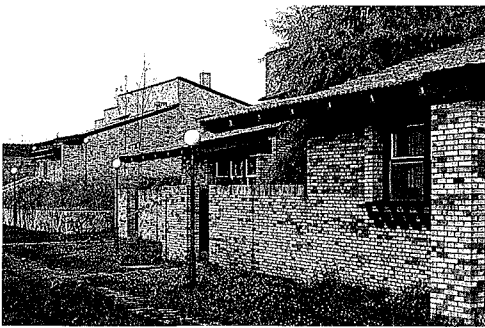
Rıza Aşkan, Oriental Coffee House, İzmir, 1954 Source: *Arkitekt*, 1955, p 8



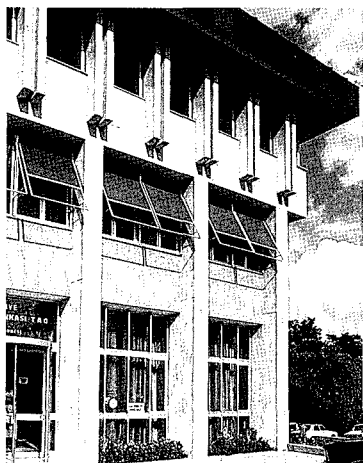
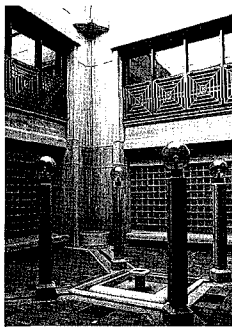
Rıza Aşkan, Oriental Coffee House, İzmir, 1954 Plan and section Source: *Arkitekt*, 1955, p 5-6



Turgut Cansever and Ertur Yener, Turkish Historical Society (Türk Tarih Kurumu), 1966 Interior courtyard
Photograph: C Little/AKAA



Behruz Çinici, Middle East Technical University Staff Housing, Ankara, 1966
Grand National Assembly, Public Relations Building, Ankara, 1978–84
A courtyard



Ertur Yener, Erdoğan Elmas and Zafer Gülçür, Bank of Endowments Headquarters (Vakıflar Bankası), Ankara, 1974 View from the main street

Cansever's concern in this building was as meticulous as Eldem's search for proportions and abstract references to these proportions with contemporary means of construction; nevertheless the quality of space in the main hall owes a lot to Eldem's teachings.

Behruz Çinici, claims Eldem as his advisor for "Güllük Holiday Village", to which project Eldem himself introduced him. However, the project does not realise many of Eldem's ideas. As far as architecture *per se* is concerned, Çinici's reflection of Eldem's idiom occurred in the Middle East Technical University Staff Housing, where he not only utilised traditional load-bearing brick construction, but also referred to the Central Anatolian courtyard type house plan with many details from Turkish house types. Later, in 1978, in his Grand National Assembly Public Relations Building, he remarkably combined precast technology with conventional reinforced concrete building technology; it contained references to a regionalism of Eldem, this time moulded with undertones of the widespread post-modernism of the time.

Ertur Yener, who worked with Turgut Cansever on the Turkish Historical Society Building, has also been involved in the manifestation of regionalism in Turkey. In his Bank of Endowments Headquarters (T. Vakıflar Bankası) he attempted to voice Eldem in a large public building. Despite the fact that the whole of the building does not share the same idiom, the main facade echoes of the language which Eldem endeavoured to develop.

Köksal Anadol was one of Eldem's assistants at the Academy for a length of time. His Military Recreation Centre (Orduevi) on the Bosphorus, and his firm's (Yapı Merkezi) headquarters in Çamlıca, carry out a lot of Eldem's teaching, both from the point of view of plan arrangements, like the central space with galleries and cantilevered offices on the first floor, and the detailing. However, the double columns and beams do not have the structural elegance which Eldem displayed in his large residences, and the detailing is rather crude when compared to Eldem's own work — but the intention and influence are there.

In a similar vein, Neşet and Şaziment Arolat attempted to employ Eldem's regionalistic idiom in their commercial building (1983) near Ulucami in Bursa — another sensitive historical site displaying severe constraints for integration within the context — even though many of the features resemble Yapı Merkezi. The crude finishes and clumsy proportions of this building generate more problems than offer for replicable solutions to building in similar circumstances. These problems

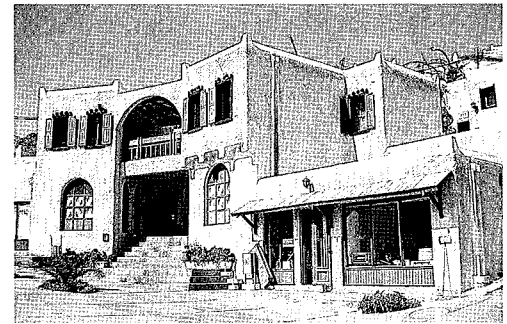
are even magnified if Arolat's project is compared to the "second class historical monument" type of re-building which was realised at the same time on the site adjacent to this building. Unfortunately, the lack of elegance of the former strengthens the position of the latter. Being devoid of design initiative it also becomes anachronistic if anachronism is placed at one end of a scale and modernism at the other. The reconstruction of an existing building, with contemporary materials and technology, paradoxically reinforces this anachronism, which does not do justice to regionalism in this context — where creativity and meticulous design involvement has always been essential.

The late boom in building for tourism brought a new and whole-heartedly justified purposefulness to the regionalism which Eldem has advocated for more than forty years. The new regionalism, mainly attempting a discovery of the Mediterranean as opposed to the Anatolian, found Eldem's teaching and research a ready source to tap and a good many touristic developments have been shaped by it. Architectural quality, which deserves to be attributed to Eldem as the precursor, is not so easy to find in many of these developments. To be fair, it has to be stated that they are less hostile to the natural and architectural environment than what might have happened without Eldem's influence.

Group EPA, mainly composed of graduates from Eldem's studio, in their two holiday villages in Bodrum and Datça, did not go into the hard task of reintegrating and remoulding the local architectural heritage. Instead, they fitted the contemporary touristic functions into a shell which resembles the vernacular. But simply by respecting the vernacular setting and architecture, the resulting environment is far superior to solutions generated with a disregard for these values.

Birleşmiş Mimarlar, headed by Tuncay Çavdar, in a similar context, tries to regenerate vernacularism, but with more design consciousness to a larger regional context of the Mediterranean, but still many of the features refer back to Eldem's architecture and teaching. In saying so, this does not mean that everything done in conformity with the 1970 vernacularist tradition has Eldem's mark on it. Nevertheless, his research, teaching and design devoted to developing the principles of Turkish regionalism, laid foundations which following generations have used.

Unlike his contemporaries, Fathy and Chadirji, Eldem did not present his personal philosophies in written form. In the 1940s he was concerned with the state of architecture in Turkey.



EPA Ersen Gürsel, Mehmet Çubuk and Nihat Güner, Aktur Holiday Villages in Bodrum and Datça, 1969



Birleşmiş Mimarlar (Tuncay Çavdar *et al*) Kemer Holiday Village, 1973, and Çamyuva Silker Holiday Village, 1984 Photographs: Ahmet Özgüner/AKAA

Then he published his vigorous call for governmental intervention to develop an appropriate regionalist architecture under state protection: but he seldom, wrote about his own architecture or design concepts. One cannot imagine him philosophising on his buildings; but lets them speak for themselves. In his publications he discusses other buildings from the past. His vast publishing career forms a background against which many of his buildings fit so well. They also form a background for anyone who is interested in an architecture basing itself on heritage.

Many of his buildings, including the 1986 Aga Khan Award for Architecture-winner, the Social Security Agency Complex in Zeyrek, Istanbul, accommodate themselves into the context that prompts the question: does one really need Leon Krier or Maurice Culot's contextualism to appreciate the presence of these? This will remain a problem question for the coming generations of architects of the Third World to solve: to find a medium for existence for their ideas and buildings conceived in the past.

MODERNITY IN TRADITION



Works of Sedad Hakkı Eldem



by Sibel Bozdoğan

“The work of Eldem as an architect is rich and diversified: from the early thirties to the present, Eldem has been a key figure and realised the most continuous architectural production during this period covering half a century. He experienced different tendencies which can be identified during these five decades: the so-called “Rationalised Architecture” of the thirties, the following “Second National Style” movement, some internationalist designs, and then his more recent realisations always reflecting a certain historic interpretation.”

– Atilla Yücel, *“Contemporary Turkish Architecture: A Thematic Overview Through the Work of Eldem, Cansever and Çiniçi”*, *Mimar: Architecture in Development* 10, 1983, p. 60

“... Most of the middle-aged architects have been indoctrinated against any kind of historicism; an architecture in the spirit of tradition or in a spiritual kinship with Islam, even in harmony with tradition, might trap them into another period of reaction against modern design. The exception is Eldem.”

– Doğan Kuban, *“A Survey of Modern Turkish Architecture”*, in *Architecture in Continuity*, 1985, p. 68

How is it possible to talk or write about a cultural product without gravely schematising, reducing or distorting the complexity of its reality, or conversely, without complicating its actual simplicity? In this case, how is one to deal with the difficulty to characterise and textualise an architect’s life-long production; to subdivide and classify his career into distinct “periods” or “styles”? What confronts the historian/critic is a precarious task indeed: searching for the legitimate middle ground between reading too much or too little into the data.

The difficulty is more pronounced for someone like Sedat Hakkı Eldem whose works are overwhelmingly numerous and diversified. His is a career spanning more than half a century and over one hundred buildings/projects which do not lend themselves to any immediate periodisation or taxonomy. Nevertheless, within this diversity, it is perhaps still legitimate to discern an acknowledged and recognisable “Sedad H. Eldem style” unfolding as certain plan types and elevation patterns deriving from the architect’s fundamental preoccupation with the “Turkish House”.¹ This comprises the underlying thrust of the following exposition of works which is inevitably selective. From the vast *oeuvre complète* of the architect, the works emphasised are intended to illustrate what is fundamental and intrinsic to Eldem’s architecture rather than what is merely circumstantial. In terms of their context and content, these buildings and projects most appropriately represent his characteristic preoccupations and major contributions to contemporary Turkish architecture. Furthermore, they connect him to many of the ongoing debates in architectural culture at large concerning modernism, regionalism, rationalism, historicism, eclecticism, etc. In Eldem we find an architect who has anticipated by decades, the more recent critical bend as far as attitudes towards modernism are concerned. His persistent emphasis on tradition and cultural continuity, while still maintaining a commitment to modernism, attaches to him a renewed significance today and a second reading of his work now becomes urgent if not overdue.

Historical time has two indispensable dimensions: a building/project is both the product of a particular historical/cultural context “horizontally” related to other products and ideas of its time; and it also marks a particular episode in the “vertical” development of the architect’s career. The former is

¹ used as a generic term embracing various types of houses spread over the extensive cultural domain of the Ottoman Empire



a *synchronic* investigation of the context while the latter is a *diachronic* reading of the content of architecture. Notwithstanding the importance of both, the following exposition of Eldem's works is primarily concerned with the latter, since the former may lead to a kind of social/cultural history beyond the scope and intention of this book, and perhaps of the other essays in the book, dealing more specifically with the context and cultural background of Eldem's work. The objective here is to describe the works and to mark what is significant in this descriptive content as far as the ideas and identity of Sedad H. Eldem are concerned.

The material is ordered under *thematical* headings, sometimes corresponding to particular building types, but not reducible to a purely typological classification. Eldem's preoccupations frequently cut across various building types, connecting, for instance, a private villa, a hotel and an embassy building under the same personal "style". At the same time, a rough *chronological* sequence is followed to give a sense of evolution, although the existence of overlappings or discontinuities is recognised.

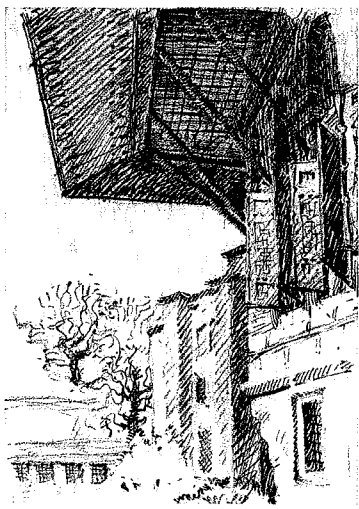
I. Formative Years

Today our nation has many new and hitherto unknown ideals, which before becoming the ideals of the nation, are inevitably the ideals of the pioneers leading the way . . . Since we are in a revolutionary era, we must never forget that buildings have a pedagogical function as well. The individual user, who is to be taken as yardstick and scale, is the ideal person created by the revolution. In the light of this, some of our buildings which are considered to be too modern and too advanced in terms of interior division and standards of comfort, can be better understood.”

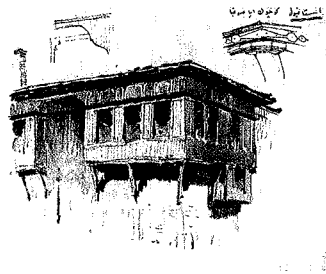
—Sedad Hakki Eldem, “Milli Mimarî Meselesi”, *Arktekt*, 1939, p. 222

“To understand the meaning and the beauty of the materials and to discover a modern character in those old buildings, I was spending all my Sundays and most of the weekdays wandering in the streets of Istanbul . . . I was in love with the beauty I was gradually discovering. It was not the beauty of finished classical compositions, it was rather the overall effect and harmony of certain rhythms and motifs, certain smaller elements.”

—Interview with Sedad Hakki Eldem, 25 February 1986



Detail from Yenîcamî, Istanbul — pencil sketch, 1926



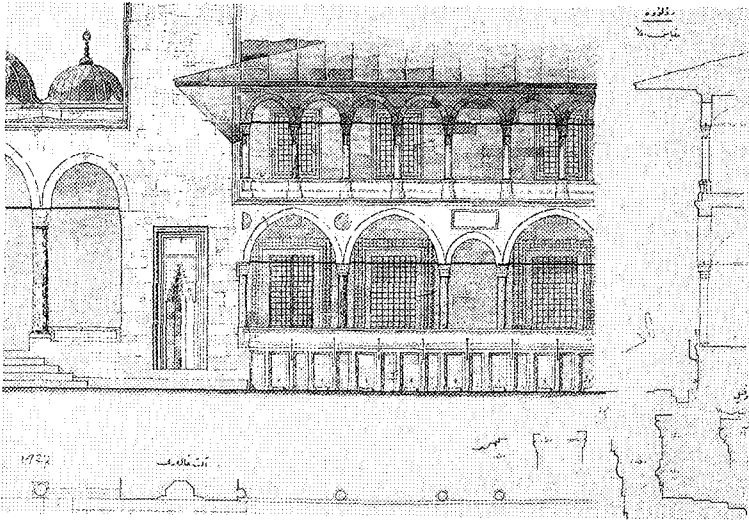
Anonymous house — watercolour sketch, 1926

Sedad Eldem’s school years at the Academy of Fine Arts in Istanbul (1924–1928); his post-graduation training in Paris and Berlin respectively (1929–1930); and his early years back in Turkey before he has actually started to build (1931–1933) constitute a most productive and exploratory prelude to his career. This is a period of hypothetical projects — drawings of remarkable quantity and quality, bearing testimony to the fundamental cultural confrontation underlying his formation as a young architect of European upbringing and taste who is, at the same time, a descendant of Ottoman elite with a passion for traditional Turkish domestic architecture. With the latter as a “deep structure” imprinted in his cultural consciousness, this period marks the architect’s encounter with the epoch-making developments in Europe: with Auguste Perret and Le Corbusier in Paris, with Hans Poelzig in Berlin, with Frank Lloyd Wright through the Wasmuth papers, with the Weissenhof Siedlung and with the ultimate promise of modernism.

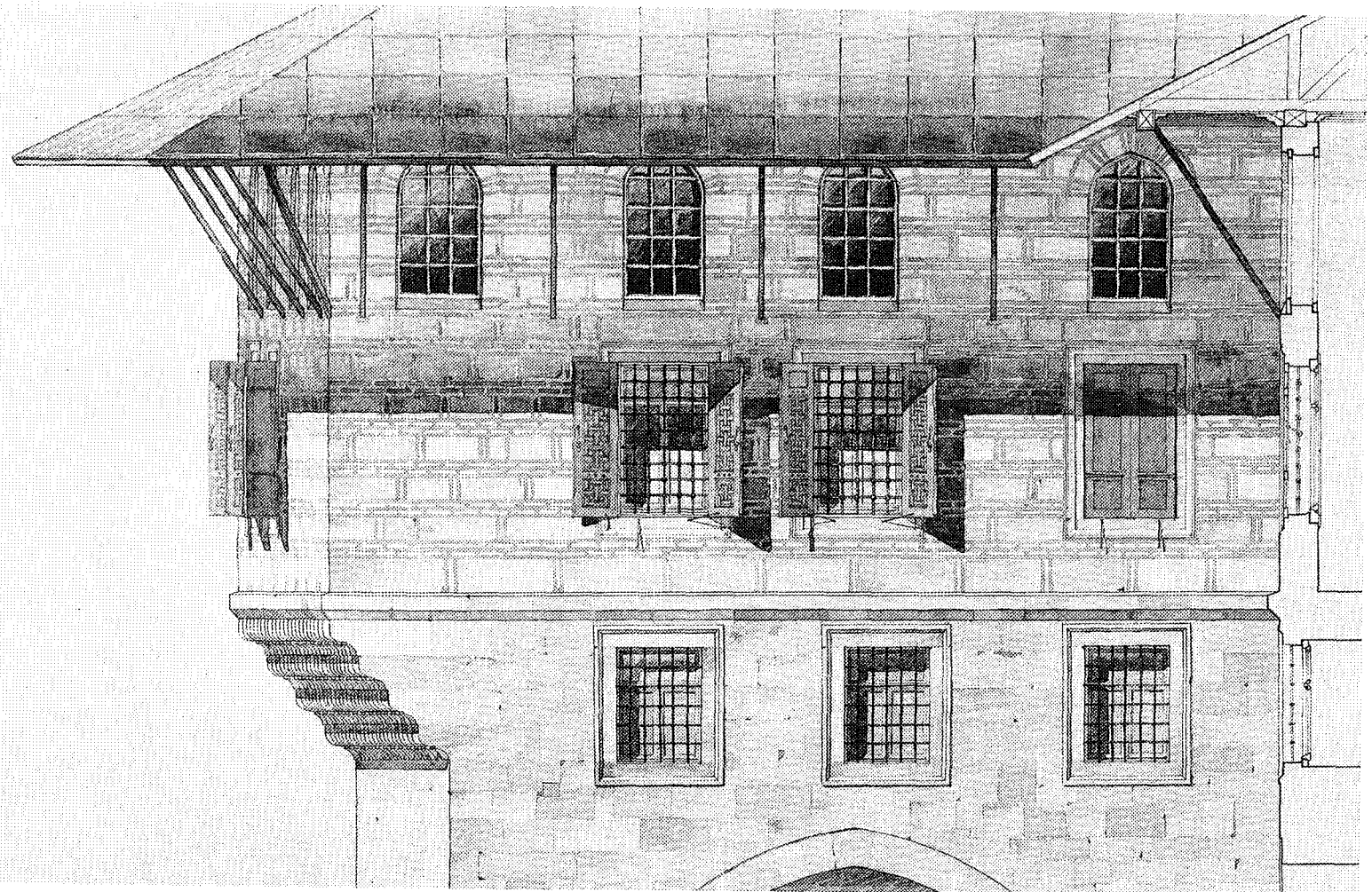
His own culturally “in-between” status has triggered in Eldem, an intense period of cross-cultural exploration aiming at a conceptual reconstruction of the Turkish house using the terms of a modernist discourse. From the deeply engaged position of a young professional and idealist, he has projected his European experience to a visionary future of his own society, producing a series of exquisitely rendered images of what he then conceived to be the houses, the interiors, the railway stations and the urban patterns of an idealised civic life. He thus comfortably bears the vanguard role of the architect and the belief in the committed professional’s instrumentality in leading and transforming social reality — as also expressed in his writings. From the design of a chair or the furnishing of a room, to the layout of a city, he has deemed it all a part of the architect’s greater mission to prescribe lifestyles.

Throughout the 1920s, sketches and surveys have accumulated as a result of a young architectural student’s endless wanderings in the streets of Istanbul, each time taking a different route to walk to the Academy to explore the houses and the lesser buildings of the poorer districts. With a strong sympathy for the gradually disappearing domestic architecture — rather than for the better known and kept institutional buildings of the late Ottoman period — Eldem has engaged in a restless programme to record them, in his memory as well as in his sketch pad. Dating from those years, there are numerous pencil sketches, and also drawings prepared as part of his Academy work, elaborately rendered in water-colour and aquarelle.

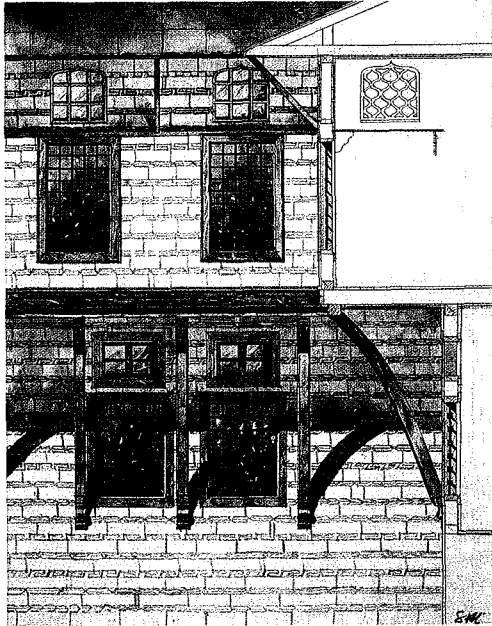
Sketches and Surveys



Yenicami facade, Istanbul — survey drawing, 1927



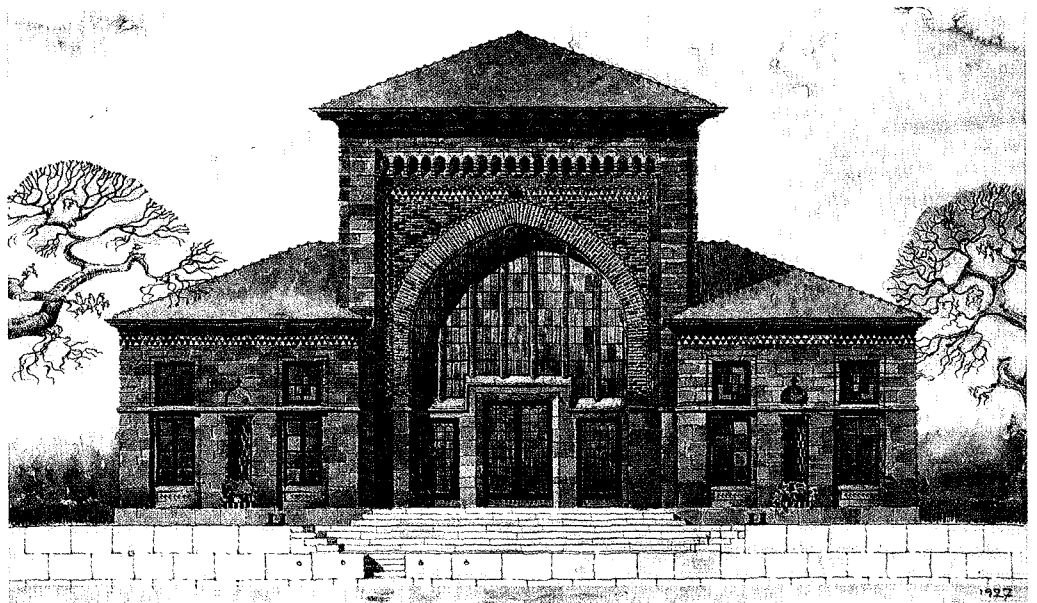
Detail from Hünkâr Kasrı (imperial pavilion), Yenicami, Istanbul — survey drawing, 1927



Detail from Tokapı Palace, Istanbul – survey drawing, 1927.

“In our free time we used to go to the Topkapı Palace. Then, all doors were open to us. I never had the chance again to explore the Palace with the liberty of those days. I was drawing sketches, taking down details. We were nourishing our souls (forgetting lunch time). It was a surprise for Mongeri to find out our extra-curricular studies about Turkish architecture. In our desire to appeal to him, we made with Zeki (Sayar) a large rendering of the side facade of the Yenıcamı. We tried to capture the purplish tone and transparency of the shadows. From that time on Mongeri encouraged me and my work more”

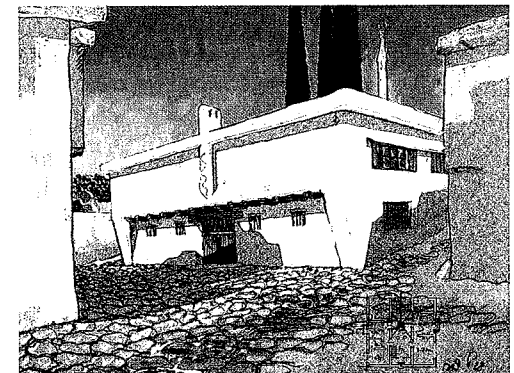
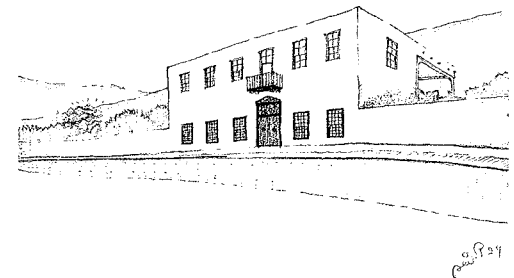
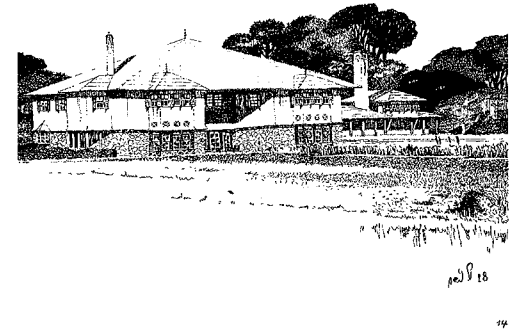
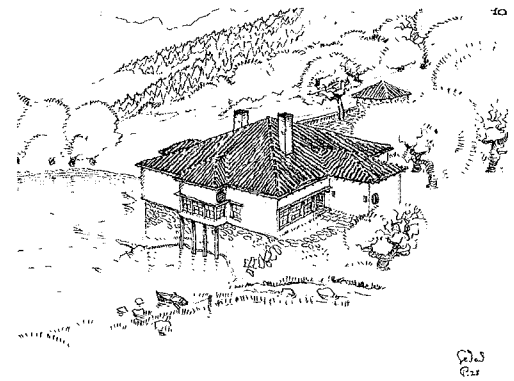
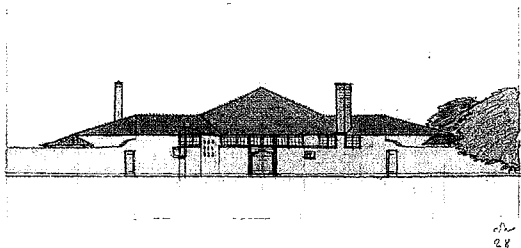
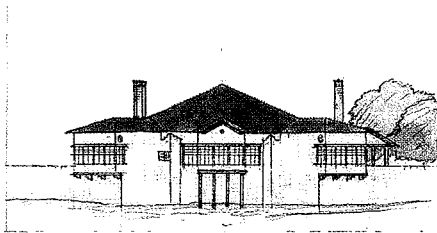
– Sedad Hakkı Eldem, “Sanayi-i Nefise’den Akademi’ye” in Sedad Hakkı Eldem: 50 Yıllık Meslek Jübilesi, 1983, p 7

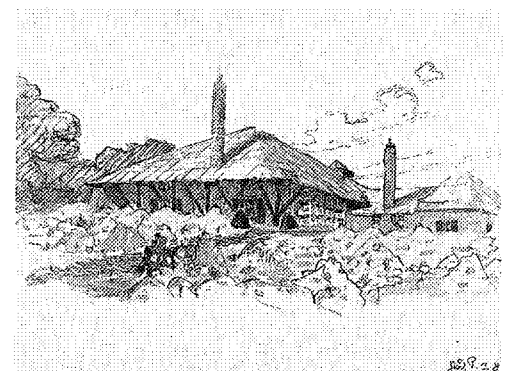
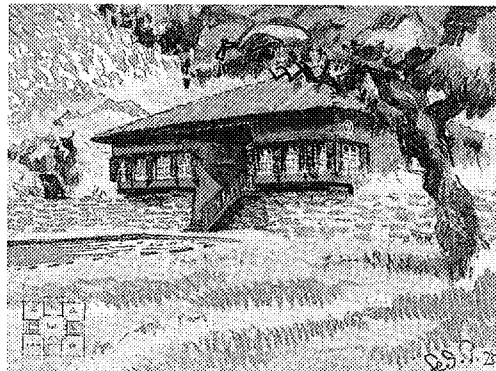
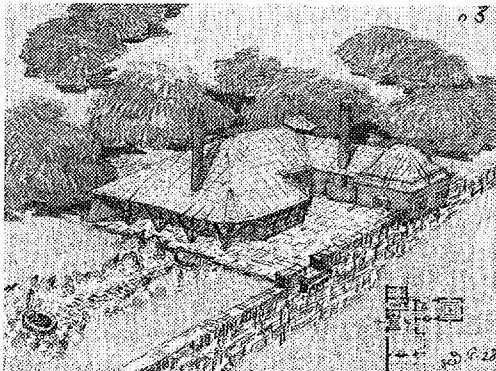
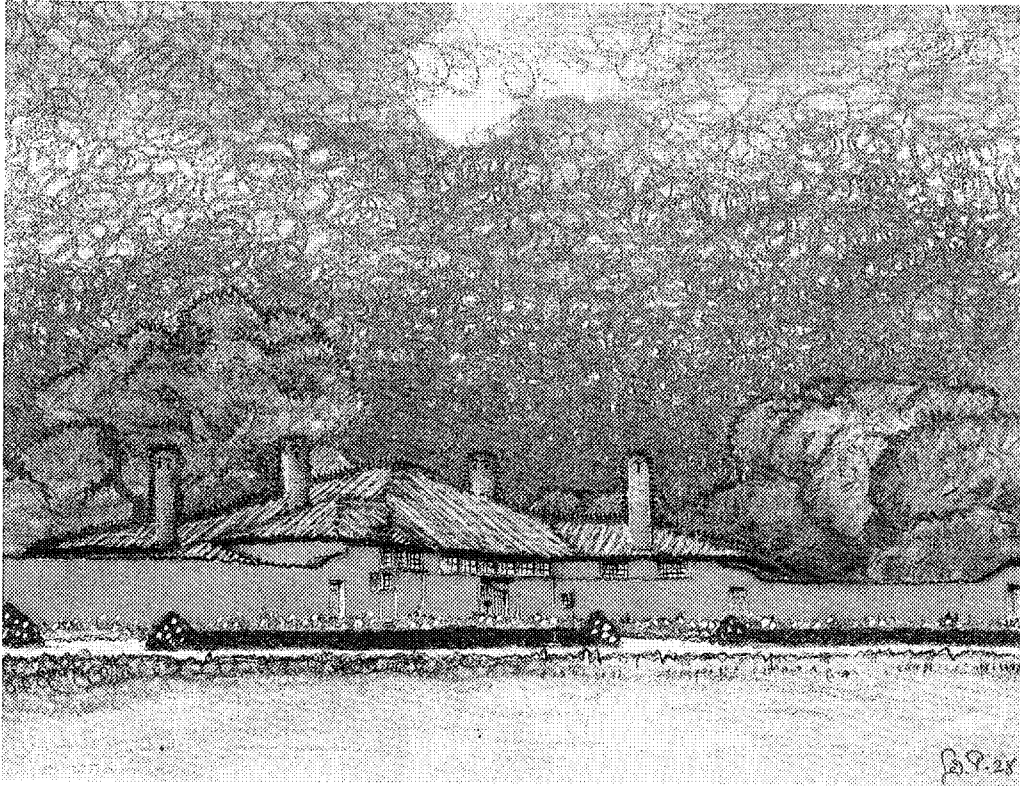


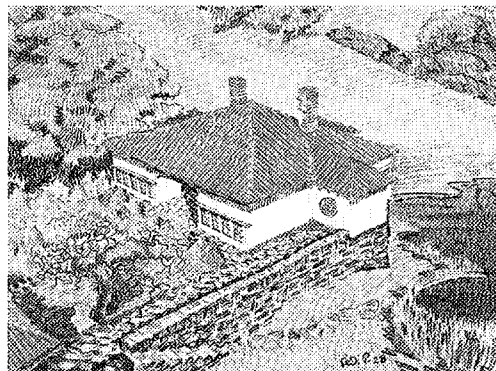
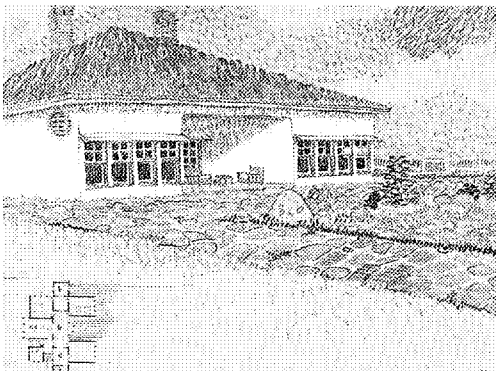
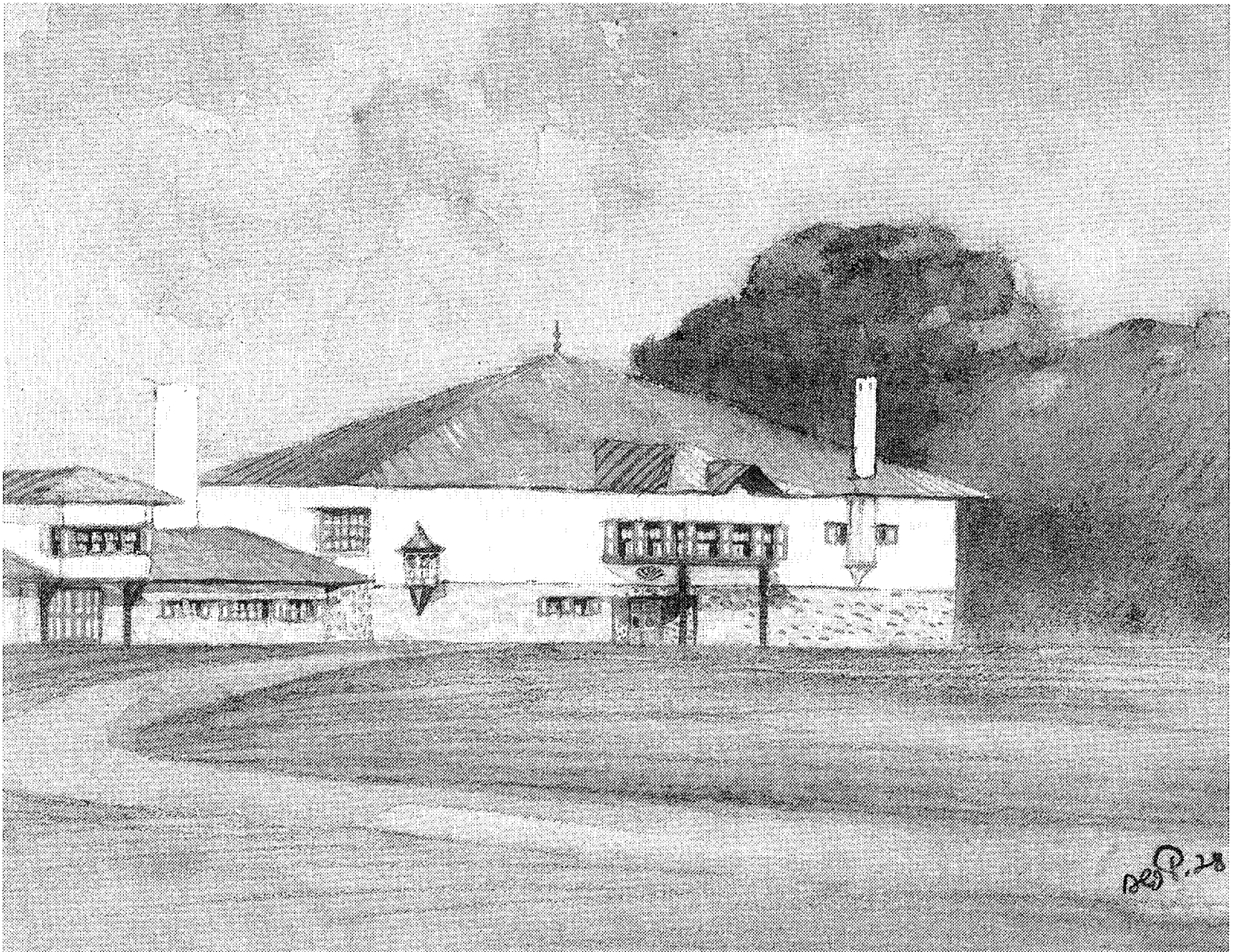
Survey drawing, 1927

Countryside Houses for Anatolia 1928–29

In 1928–29, sent abroad to complete his architectural training, Eldem has undertaken a rigorous programme of research and design producing an impressive number of drawings. In Paris in 1928, he has exhibited a series of colour perspectives, some prepared earlier in Turkey and retouched in Paris, under the title “Countryside Houses for Anatolia”. These beautifully rendered images of individual houses, set in the idyllic landscape of a hypothetical countryside, display a recognisable Turkish flavour with pitched tile roofs, the repetitive window patterns, the house-proper raised above a solid ground floor enclosed within stone walls, and an overall allusion to the Anatolian village. However, they also bear a tint of the Central European vernacular, or sometimes of Dutch Colonial, betraying the cultural duality of the architect’s early years. Furthermore, under the general rubric of “Anatolian House”, a strong sense of regional consciousness is displayed, particularly with two examples diverging slightly from the others: one is a flat-roofed, white-washed house with a West Anatolian or even Mediterranean connotation; the other, a decisively Central Anatolian house exhibiting the language of mud brick or *adobe* as the primary material of the region. It is also possible to find something of the cultural context of early modernism in Europe, from Arts and Crafts to the Vienna Secession, particularly in terms of rendering technique and spirit. Four elevations, rendered in pastel colours and fine lines, recall drawings of Olbrich, Hoffman and Mackintosh.

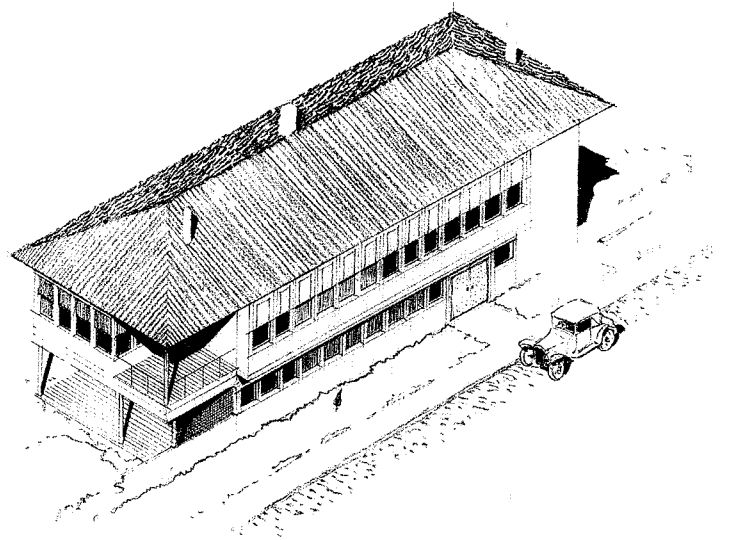
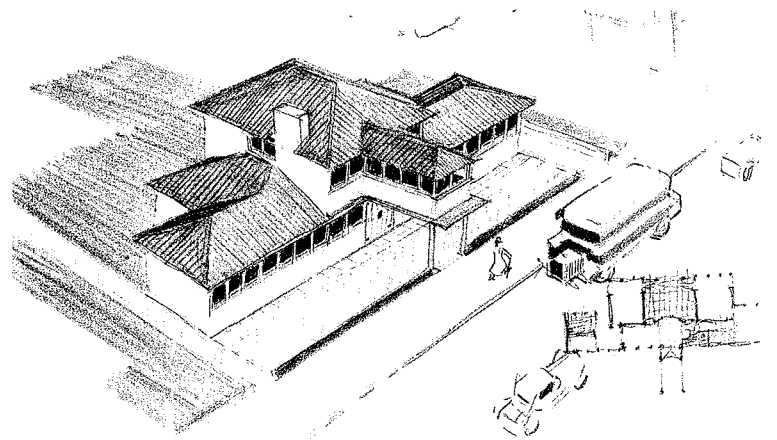
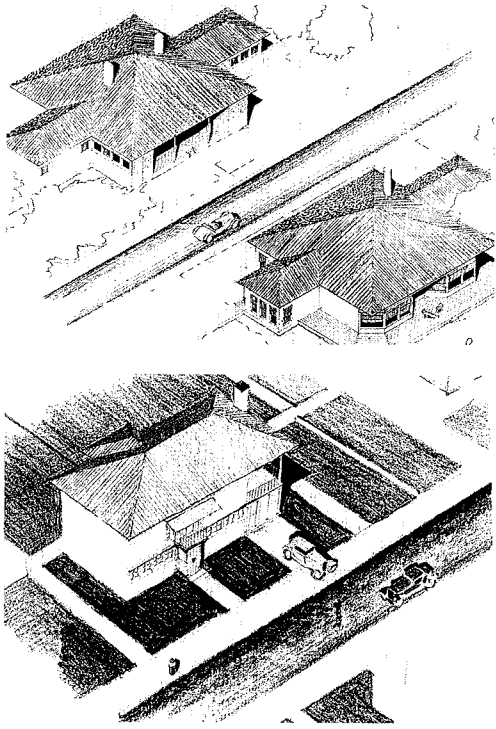


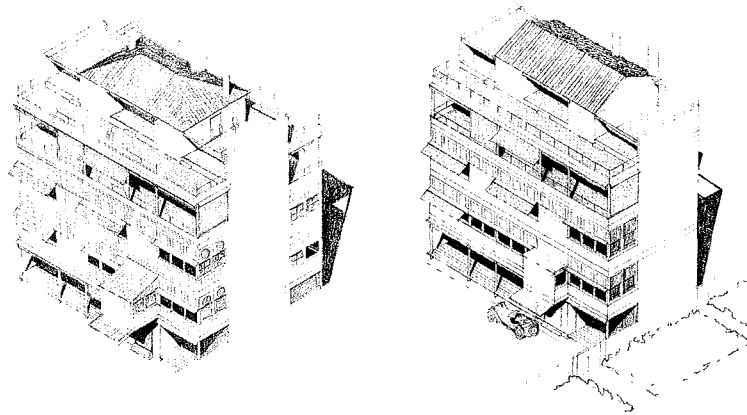




Watercolours of the Countryside Houses for Anatolia, 1928-29

Turkish House Studies Berlin, 1929





Multi-storey house studies, 1929

“The rich collections and libraries I found there, pushed me further into methodical research and into a craze of sketching my ideas. I was dreaming of a kind of Turkish city . . . something between an Anatolian city and an American one. Of course, today I realise the impossibility of anything of this sort.”

— Interview with Sedad Hakkı Eldem, 25 February 1986

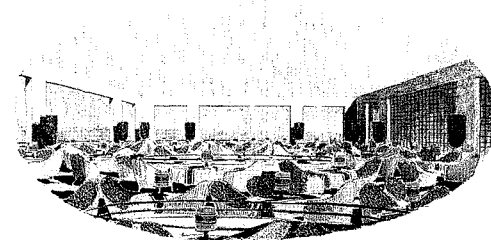
“In Berlin, I first saw the Frank Lloyd Wright album published by Wasmuth, the “prairie houses”, a few of which had already been built, attracted my attention. I believed I had discovered some important elements of the Turkish house of the future in these designs. The long, low lines, the rows of windows, the wide eaves and the shape of the roofs were very much like the Turkish house I had in mind. These romantic, naturalistic houses were far more attractive than the box-like architecture of Le Corbusier. The use of rough-hewn stone and natural wood increased their effectiveness.”

— Sedad Hakkı Eldem, “Toward a Local Idiom: A Summary History of Contemporary Architecture in Turkey”, in *Conservation as Cultural Survival*, 1980, p. 91

In Berlin, Eldem has produced a similar series of drawings in 1929–30, again displaying a culturally hybrid idea: this time “Turkish houses” on a grid-iron subdivision of suburban lots. These perspectives express Eldem’s vision of ideal life in detached houses with their car parks, gardens, entrance porches and an overall flavour of Americana. Given the fact that this is the period of Eldem’s discovery of Frank Lloyd Wright through the Wasmuth papers, it is possible to read into those drawings the inspiration derived from the prairie houses, and perhaps even from the utopic vision of Usonian homes, “. . . warm, open-planned, small houses designed for convenience, economy and comfort”² culminating in the dream of the Broadacre city in 1932. With a similar ideal, the Berlin drawings of Eldem reveal the motivating appeal of family living in houses spread out into nature, yet blessed by the technological comforts of modernity.

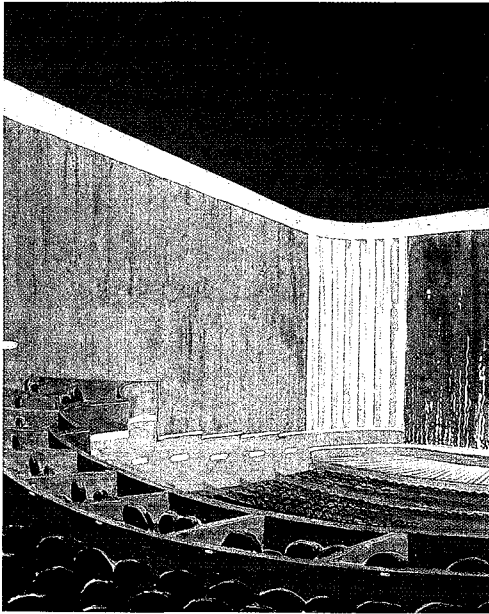
However, Eldem’s vision of a community of single-family detached houses spread across the countryside by no means excludes his interest in multi-storey living. Particularly fascinated by the use of reinforced concrete as the major statement of a modernist discourse, he has produced, both in Paris and in Berlin, axonometrics and perspectives of multi-storey houses displaying their reinforced concrete frames. Yet his attitude towards multi-storey living has also remained ambiguous after his return to Turkey. He has designed and actually built multi-storey apartment buildings — such as the Ceylan Apartment in Istanbul, 1933 — while remaining preoccupied with projects for detached single-family houses.

² K. Frampton, *Modern Architecture: A Critical History*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1980, p. 191



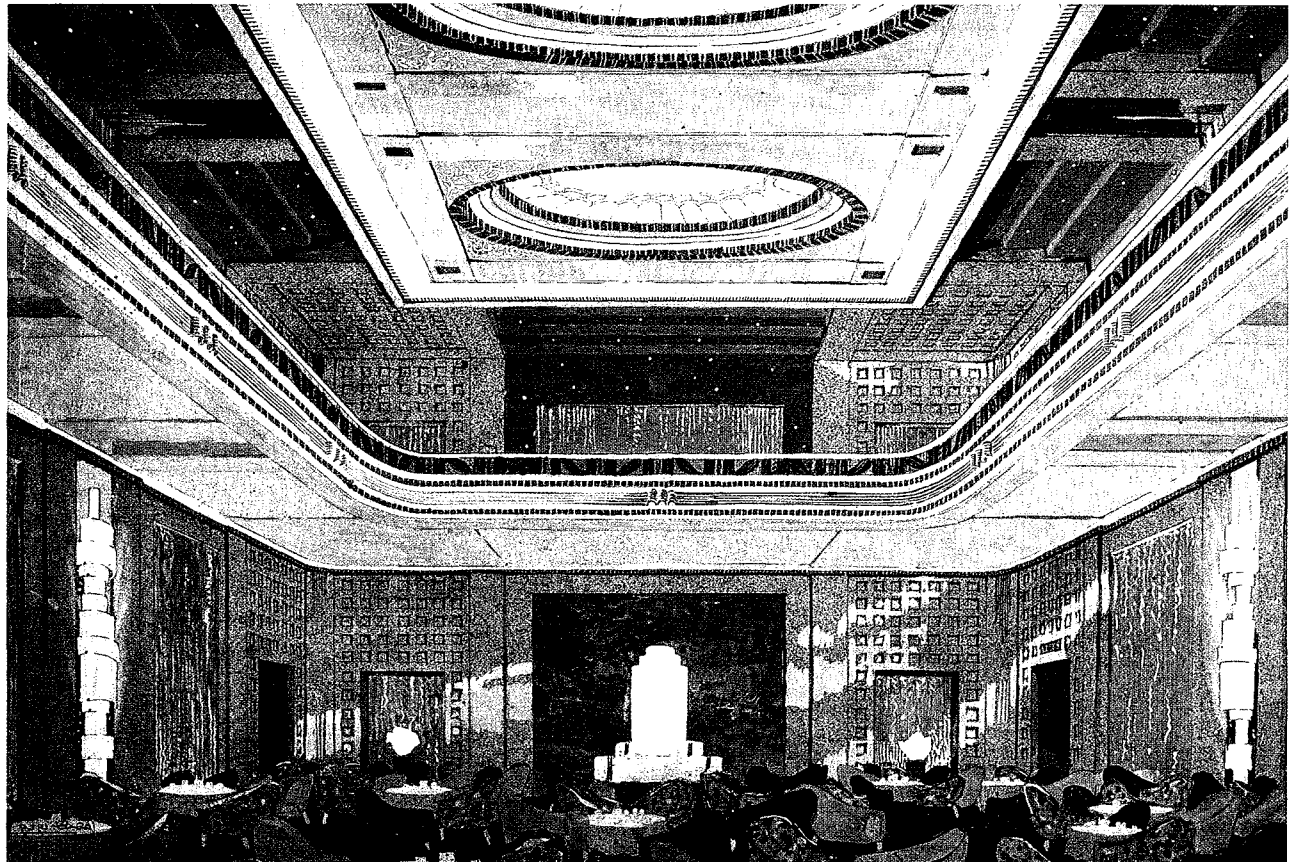
Tea-room, Louvre Store, Paris, 1929
— perspective for a competition project

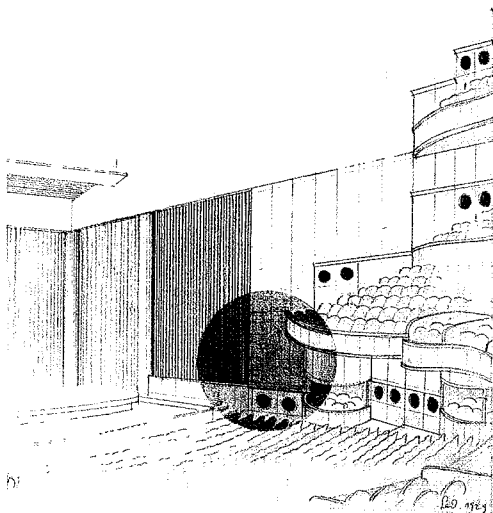
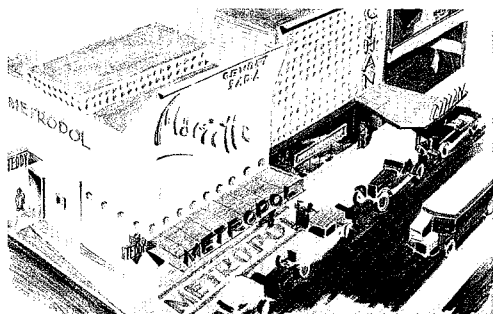
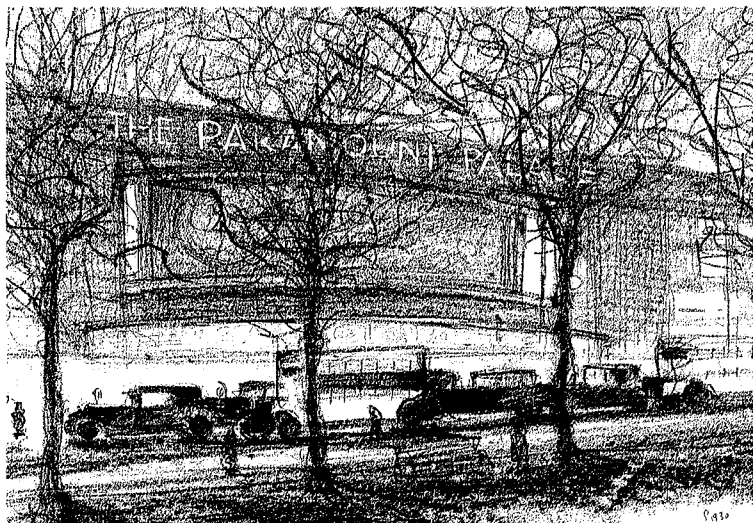
Cinema/Theatre Projects Berlin, 1929–30

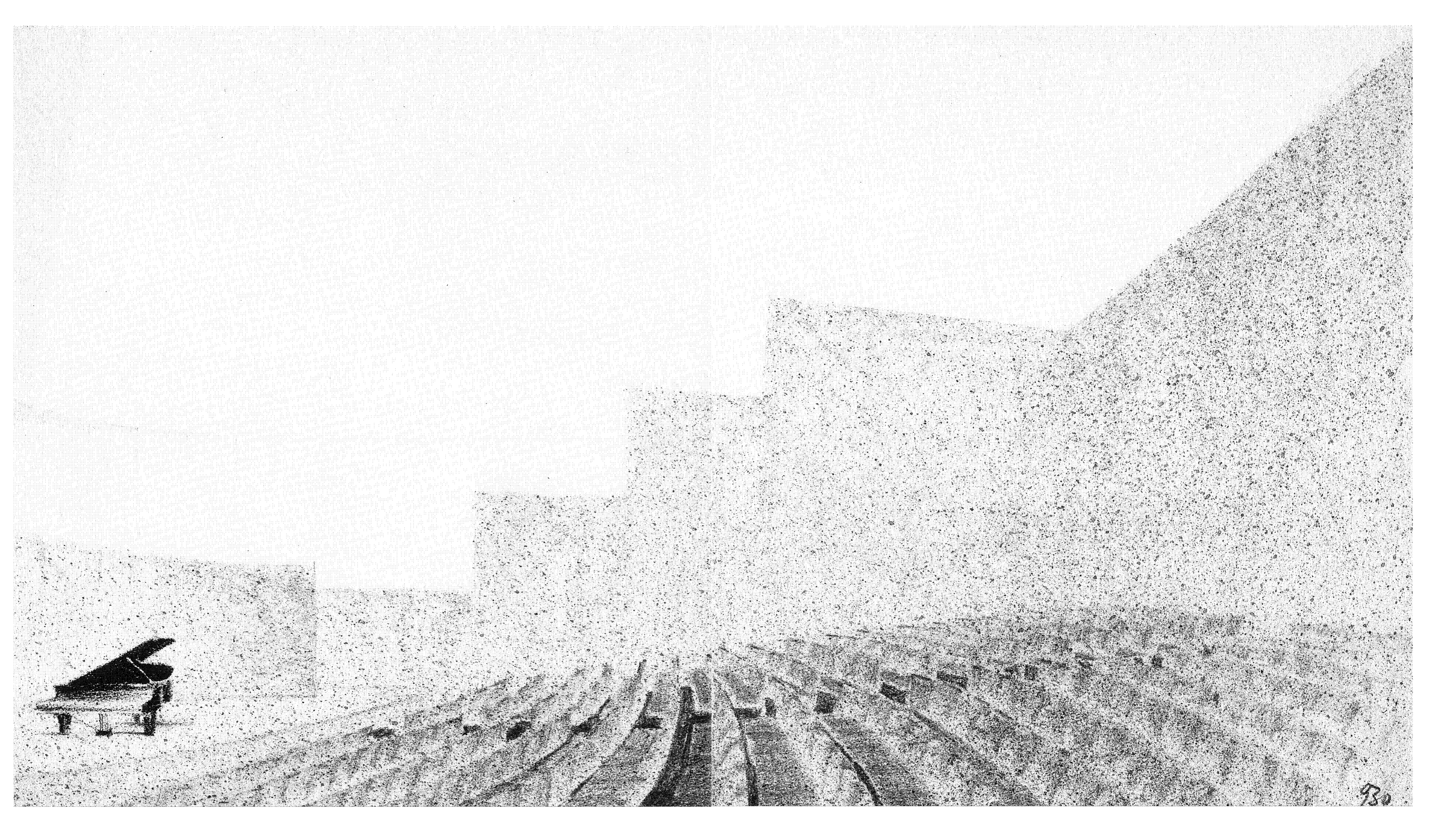


In Paris and Berlin, along with his primary preoccupation with houses, Eldem appears to be absorbed in the life and culture of 1920s Europe: a world of music, cinema, dancing, theatre and civic life. In Paris, while working for the architect A. Thiers, he has prepared a competition project for the extension and refurbishment of the top floor of the Louvre Store. Eldem's large colour perspective, of superb quality, shows the interior of the tea room. In Berlin he has worked on a theatre project for the Friedrichstrasse Triangle, and has also produced numerous studies and perspectives for cinemas and theatres — all of which he evidently views as the expressions of a new and modern life. Upon his return to Turkey, he has published an article on cinemas and theatres³ to inform the profession of these developments abroad, and to exemplify, with his own projects, various technical factors and regulations to be considered in cinema design.

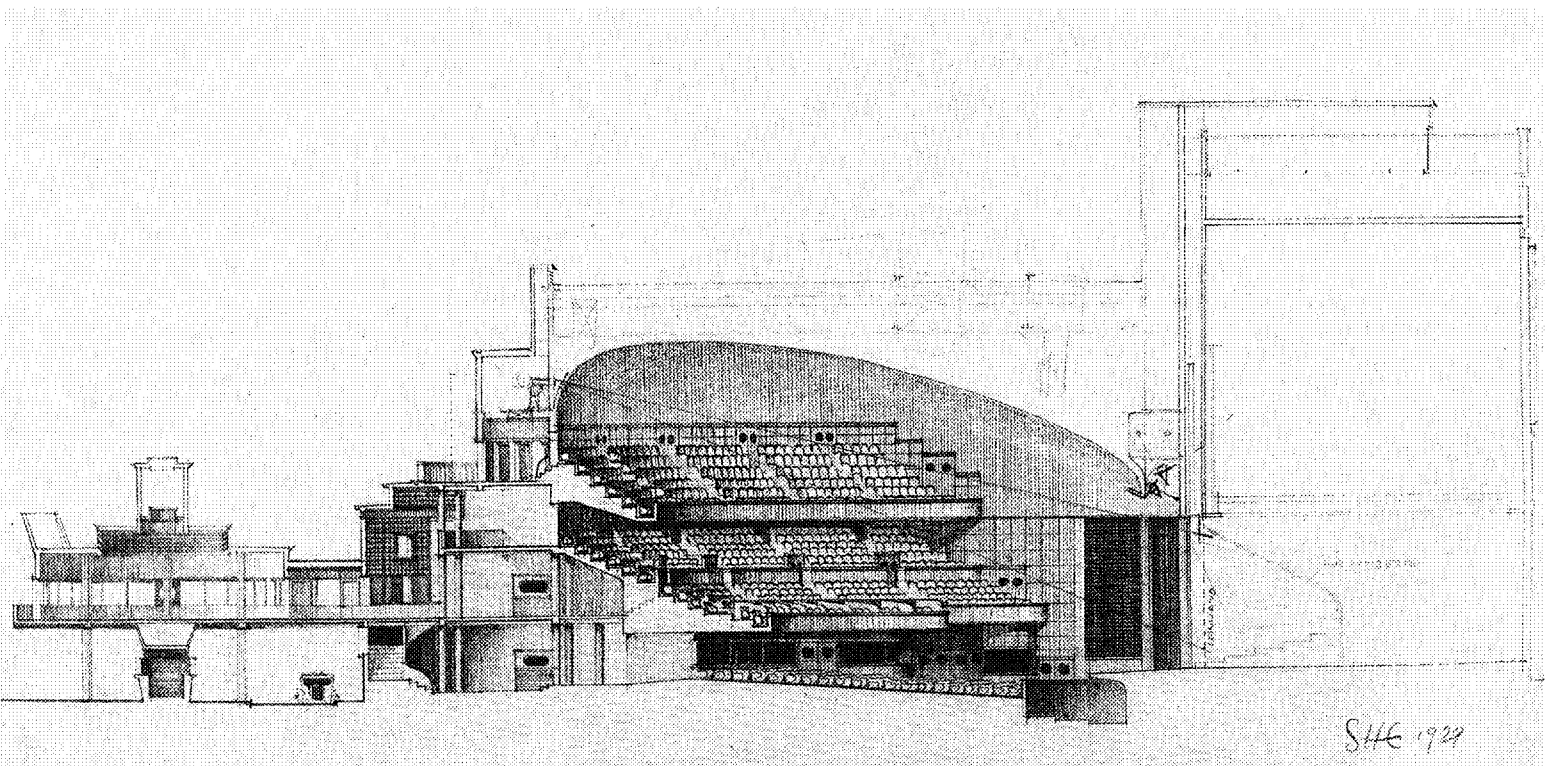
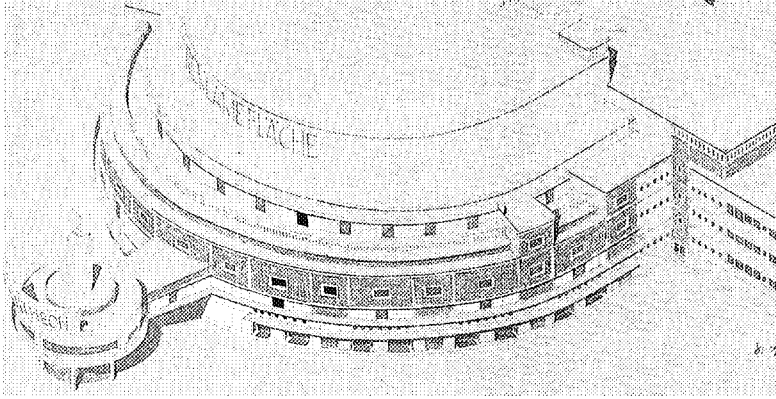
³ S H Eldem, "Sinema Binaları", *Mimar* 1931, n 1, pp 51–59

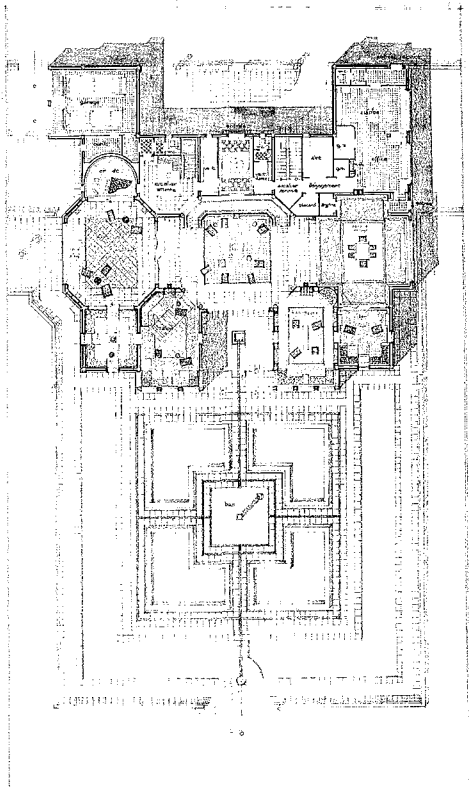






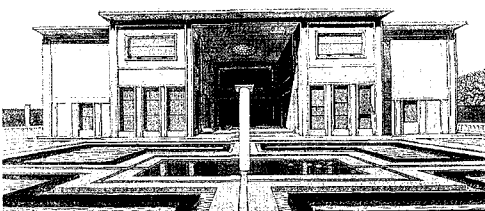
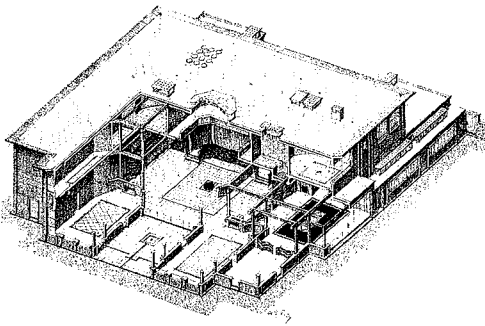
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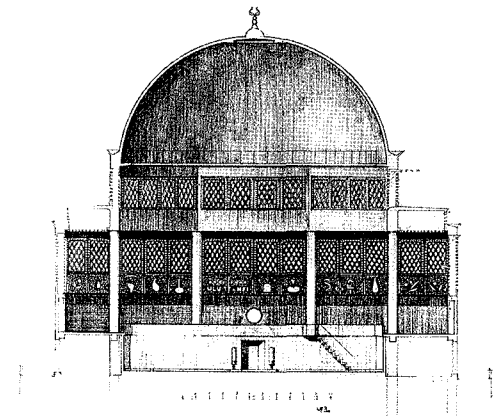


Two other projects are significant among his work in Europe. One is a project for an Embassy Residence, illustrating Eldem's early involvement with the use of reinforced concrete, in this case within the symmetrical and classical spirit of the Beaux Arts. He has rendered the proposal on colour plates and exhibited them in Paris along with his "Anatolian Houses".

The other work, done in Berlin, is a prototype Great Mosque project for a possible location in Anatolia. It is an attempt to translate the central domed mosque type into the modern language of reinforced concrete construction, with insights derived from working with Perret and assimilating his handling of the material. The Mosque project is one example of Eldem's hypothetical proposals for Anatolian towns — his visions worked out for various building types. Earlier in 1927, he had made pencil perspectives of railway stations in Anatolia, into which one can read the impacts of his classical education in the Beaux Arts tradition articulated with elements from Islamic, Seljuk and other historical sources.

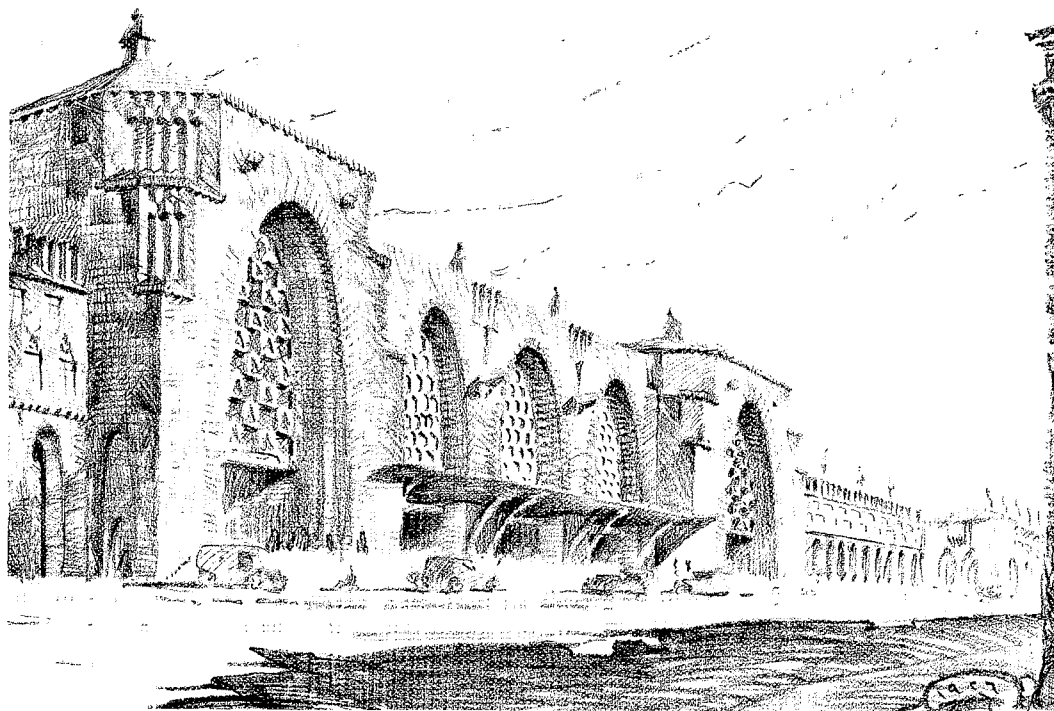


Project for an Embassy Residence, Paris, 1929



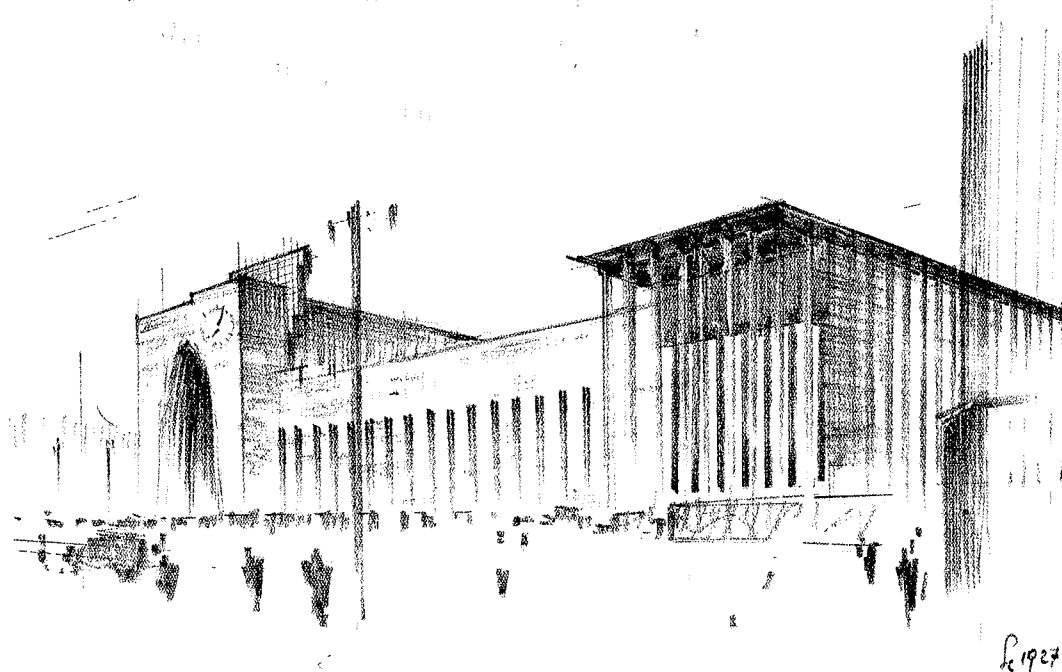
Project for a prototype Great Mosque, Berlin, 1930

Railway Stations Anatolia, 1927



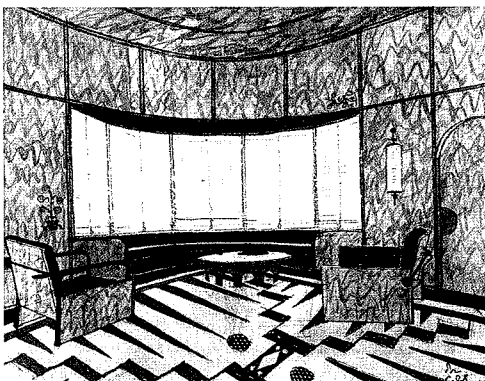
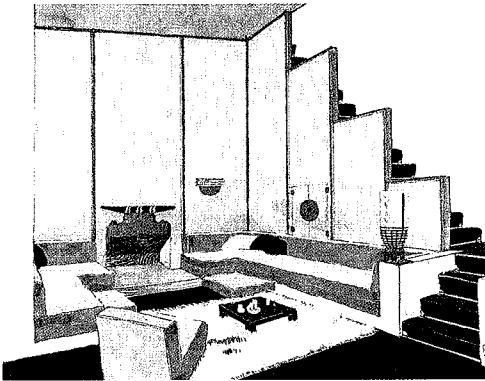
Perspective for a hypothetical railway station in Anatolia, 1927

BAHNHOF „SIVAS“



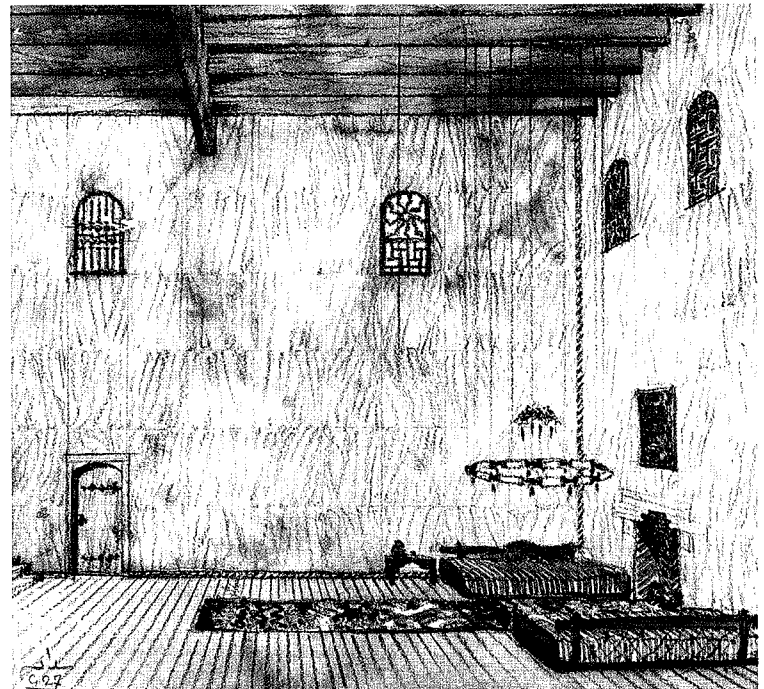
Perspective for a hypothetical railway station in Sivas, 1927

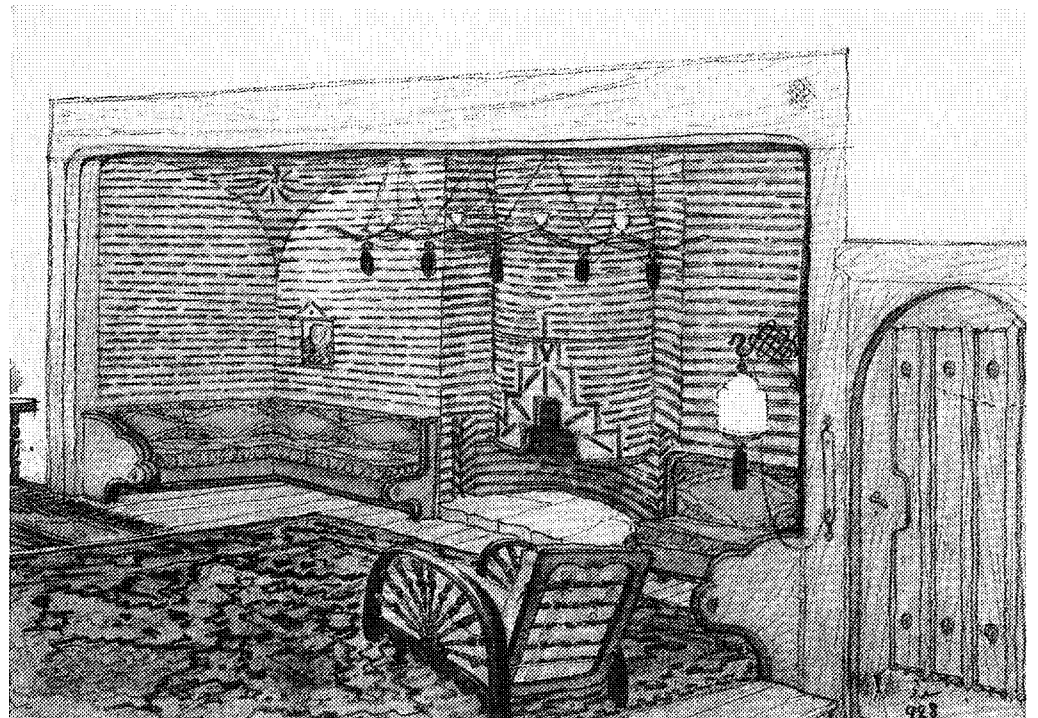
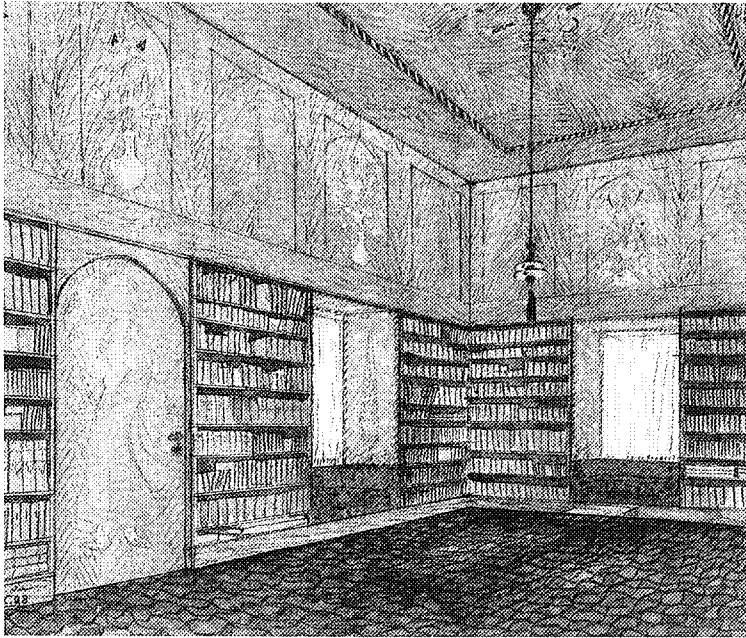
Interiors 1926–30



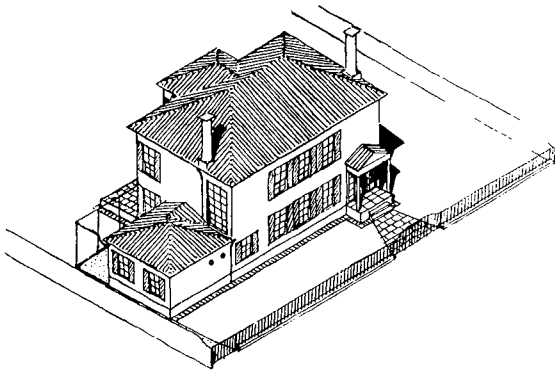
Interior studies

Meanwhile, from his years in the Academy and through his stay in Europe, Eldem has always been preoccupied with the design of interiors and the arrangement of furniture. He has regarded them to be of paramount significance as the manifestations of modern life-styles and aspirations to be communicated to the public at large. These interior perspectives, rendered in colour, depict an essentially European discourse with the movable furniture, the patterns of fabrics and carpets, lighting fixtures and details, etc. all following the prevailing Western fashions of the day. In a few of them, he has captured a more distinct spirit of ‘Turkishness’ with the use of specific details, fireplaces, wood-carved elements, built in seating elements or *sedir* and decorative features — all stylised and reinterpreted along the imperatives of modernity.

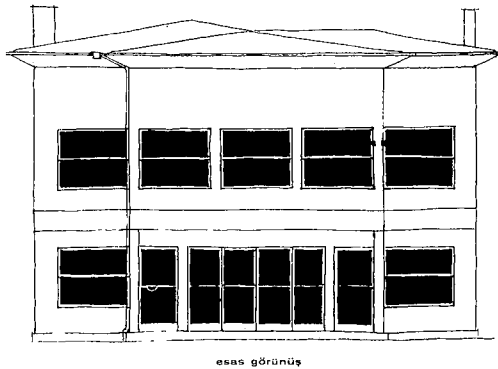




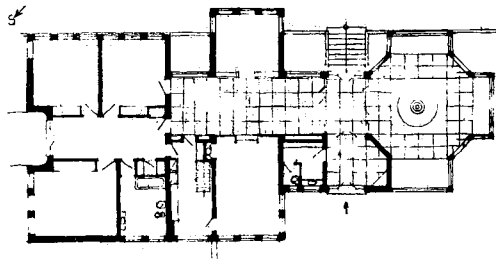
Interior studies



House project, Istanbul, 1932



House project, Istanbul, 1932



Project for İsmail Hakkı Bey House, Heybeliada, Istanbul, 1932

“In Eldem’s architecture, the use of the window is a compromise between Auguste Perret’s vertical order and the horizontal frames of some Le Corbusier buildings. And to achieve this, the architect again refers to the horizontal repetition of vertical frames, according to the vernacular example of the Turkish house.”

– Atilla Yücel, “Contemporary Turkish Architecture: A Thematic Overview Through the Work of Eldem, Cansever and Çinicı”, *Mimar: Architecture in Development* 10, 1983, p 60

After his return to Istanbul, Eldem has published a series of projects (1931–1933) in the Turkish architectural magazine *Mimar* for private, single-family houses, villas or *yalı*’s on the edge of the water. Some are apparently done as mere exercises while others did have real clients. Diverse and sometimes inconsistent references prescribe the design of these houses — ranging from the utopic images of his “Anatolian Houses” exhibited in Paris, to the traditional plan features and horizontal window proportions of the 17th century Amacazade Köprülü Hüseyin Paşa Yalı which is an all-time favourite of Eldem’s. In the project for İsmail Hakkı Bey in Heybeliada (1932) for instance, Eldem has adopted the traditional T-plan for the extension to an existing house. There are also designs with rounded corners, flat roofs and horizontal band windows of early modernism. From this system of mixed references, however, the personal style of Eldem gradually evolves: around, first, a reinterpretation of the plan type of the traditional Turkish house; secondly the lightness and the openness of the Turkish house to be reproduced in reinforced concrete; and thirdly, the articulation of the elevations with the horizontal repetition of vertical windows of 1:2 proportion. The latter is the final resolution of Eldem’s preoccupation with the question: “should the window be standing (Perret) or lying down (Le Corbusier)?”

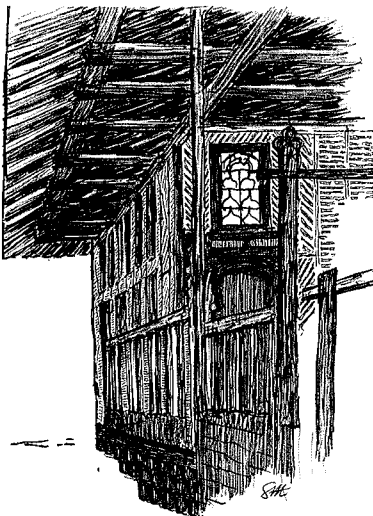
II. The Turkish House Reappraised

“As a student I was doubly rebellious. Firstly, I was violently against the “neo-Turkish” of domes and arches; secondly I was equally against the kübik international style. And at the same time, I was passionately in love with the Turkish house. If thereafter, I have achieved something in my career, I owe this achievement to the persistence of these strong feelings in me.”

— Sedad Hakkı Eldem, “Son 120 Sene İçinde Türk Mimarisinde Millilik ve Rejyonalizm Araştırmaları”, in *Mimaride Türk Milli Üslubu Semineri*, 1984, p. 57

“... in 1932 Sedad Hakkı Eldem started a seminar on the Turkish House at the Academy of Fine Arts. “Turkish House” is a generic term applied to a house type ... based on a wooden framework, with highly standardised plans and architectural elements ... The intention, moreover, was not to imitate but to interpret. Thus the seminar took place, partly in response to nationalistic trends, partly to that deeper urge to create a national architectural style. The impact of the seminar was not immediate, but it served the totalitarian trends of the 1940s, being remembered subsequently as an academic performance. For the man who conceived it, it became the source of a personal style that has lasted to our own day.”

— Doğan Kuban, “A Survey of Modern Turkish Architecture”, in *Architecture in Continuity*, 1985, p. 67



A house in Ankara — sketch, 1927

In the course of the 1930s, and the 1940s, within the political and social context of etatism and nationalism in Turkey, Sedad Eldem has reformulated and publicised his commitment to a “native” style¹ deriving its inspiration from the Turkish House. He has thus articulated his ideal of a “national” architecture, which was to be an explicit critique of the *kübik* style of the official architecture of the young Republic in Ankara, executed under the patrimony of foreign architects from Central Europe and Germany. At the same time, it was to be different also from the so-called “first national architecture movement” of the previous decades, led by architects like Vedat, Kemalettin and Mongeri. Unlike their efforts to retrieve the lost glory of Ottoman architecture through formal elements and decorative features, the ideal of Eldem “... decisively refuses formal imitation. Its indebtedness to tradition and national taste resides in the overall character of the building — the abundance of windows, the plan types, the feeling of lightness, etc.”²

It is important to note that Eldem is not advocating a reclamation of tradition at the expense of modernism; rather he is deeply committed to a reinterpretation of the Turkish House in modern terms, or more precisely, in the language of the epoch-making material: reinforced concrete. The Turkish House embodies for Eldem those modern qualities of lightness, transparency and modular logic which need to be exploited. Like the timber frame/infill wall traditional construction, the reinforced concrete frame lends itself to a skeletal expression corresponding to a modular grid, at the same time allowing an openness and lightness with an abundance of windows.

This ideal prompts Eldem, in this period, to start a National Architecture Seminar at the Academy of Fine Arts which gradually becomes the centre of opposition to the so-called *kübik* style: buildings with flat roof, cubic mass and grey stucco finish. With the students of the seminar, Eldem undertakes an extensive documentation of the surviving examples of traditional houses, in Istanbul as well as in various towns of Anatolia (Bursa in particular). As he frequently states, the two-tiered objective of the seminar was “... to use the students and to make the seminar useful to them.”³

While bringing the themes of tradition and cultural con-

¹ the words “native” (*yerli*) and “national” (*milli*) are used interchangeably by Eldem in those years

² S H Eldem, “Son 120 Sene İçerisinde Türk Mimarisinde Millilik ve Rejyonalizm Araştırmaları”, *Mimaride Türk Milli Üslubu Semineri*, June 1984, p. 58

³ Interview with Sedad H Eldem, 28 March 1986

tinuity onto the agenda, these efforts to document old houses are significant also in terms of the underlying typological consciousness which connects Eldem to current themes in architectural culture, in particular, to the more recent theoretical quest for secure epistemological grounds for architecture perceived as an autonomous discipline.

On one hand, the idealised Turkish House, abstracted from hundreds of individual examples, draws Eldem close to a notion of “type” as the logic of form derived from reason and use — just as it was to the Enlightenment theorist Quatremere de Quincy. At the same time, from these measured drawings of numerous examples, he produces a matrix of all possible plan types — all possible variations of houses classified according to the shape and location of the hall or *sofa*. Here, “type” becomes a compositional device, a methodological and conceptual tool prescribing design — in the sense that another Enlightenment theorist Jean Nicolas Durand had employed it. This is also where the educational function of the National Architecture Seminar resides. Type in the first sense serves as an ideal and becomes the symbol of Eldem’s life-long search; while type in the second sense equips him with an operational a-priori from which design can proceed. His typological matrix of Turkish House plans⁴ constitutes the basic vocabulary of his architectural discourse, lending it authority by precedent. Furthermore, he exhibits the same typological/classificatory consciousness, not only in plan types, but in other elements of architecture like doors, windows, ceilings and details — as illustrated, for instance, in his Bursa sketchbooks of the 1940s. In this way, he has built up the repertoire of his personal style: a rich stock to be reused in his subsequent career.

One of his earliest built works, the Aĝaoĝlu House in Niřantařı, Istanbul (1936, now demolished), is a prominent example illustrating Eldem’s preoccupation with the Turkish House as a source of inspiration; in this case with the particular feature of the traditional *oval sofa*.

It is a two-storey house erected upon the foundation walls of an already existing building. Two adjacent apartments are symmetrically located on the ground floor, with the entrance hall and a circular stairway at the centre. The upper floor contains one large apartment with living quarters and the oval projection in the front, and the bedrooms at the back.

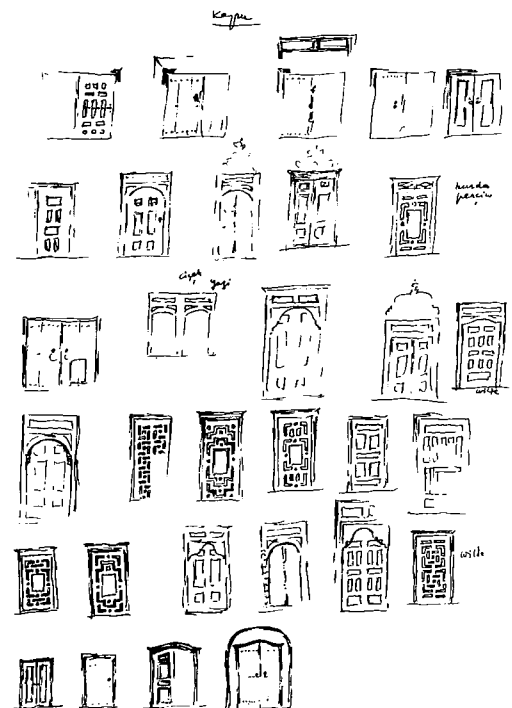
The *oval sofa* is a traditional element, essentially marking the infiltration of Baroque influences into Ottoman architecture

“What then is type? It can most simply be defined as a concept which describes a group of objects characterised by the same formal structure. It is neither a spatial diagram nor the average of a serial list. It is fundamentally based on the possibility of grouping objects by certain inherent structural similarities.”

— Rafael Moneo, “On Typology”, *Oppositions* 13, 1978, p. 23

“What becomes fundamental is the succession of forms in time, their repetition and their variation. It is for instance, the infinite diversity of the models that determines the typology and the irreducible form of the house.”

— Massimo Scolari, quoted in *Rational Architecture*, 1978

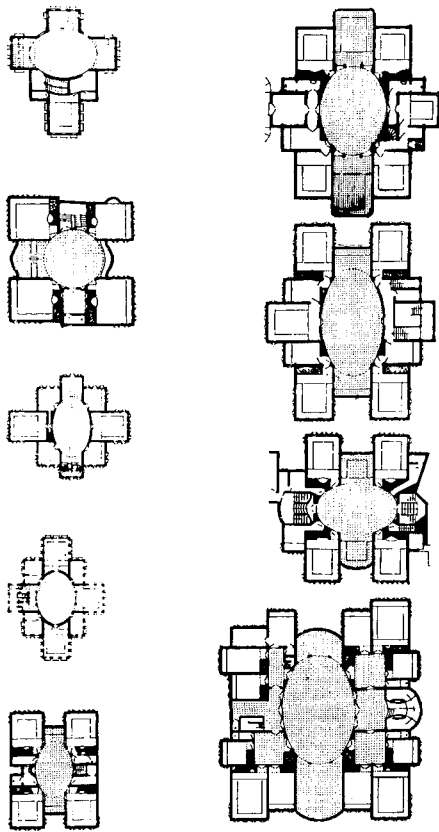


A page from the Bursa sketch book, 1943

⁴ see S H Eldem, *Türk Evleri*, (Turkish Houses: Ottoman Period), Taç Foundation, 1984

from the 18th century onwards. Eldem's use of the *oval sofa* as a formal, typological element, undoubtedly stems from the architect's studies of numerous traditional examples. The way he adopts it in this house, however, diverges from the traditional norm, using it not as an interior central hall giving access to other rooms, but rather as a front-facing living room between the study and the dining room, projecting towards the street in an open fashion. This is a feature prompting some historian/critics to designate the building as a compromise between tradition and modernity, as well as a landmark in contemporary Turkish architecture.

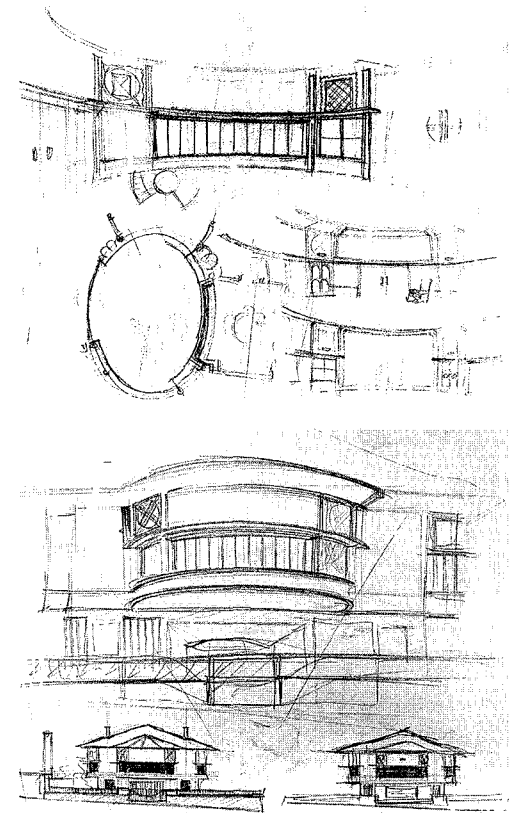
An unbuilt precedent to the Ağaoğlu House, again by Eldem, was published in the *Mimar* magazine in 1932. In this project for a small house in Maçka, the *oval sofa* again dominates the overall design, projecting out on the first floor, this time placed between the dining area and the master bedroom. In plan it is less pronounced since the oval is not complete, and the dining area merges into the oval hall without separating walls



Plan type with an oval central hall or oval *sofa* from *Türk Evi I*, Istanbul, 1984

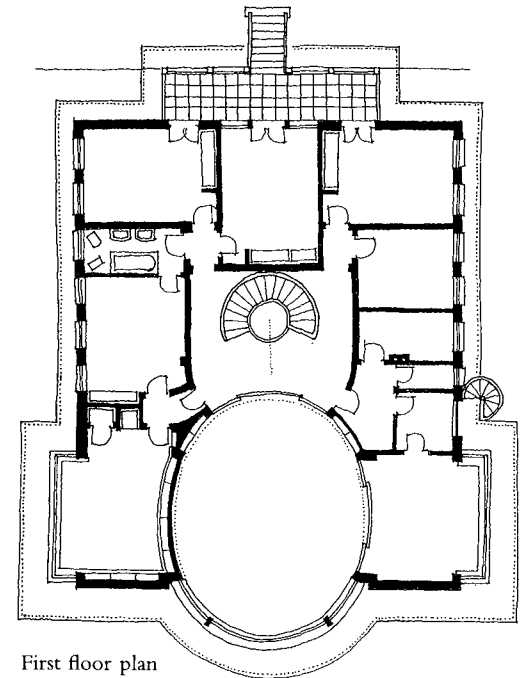
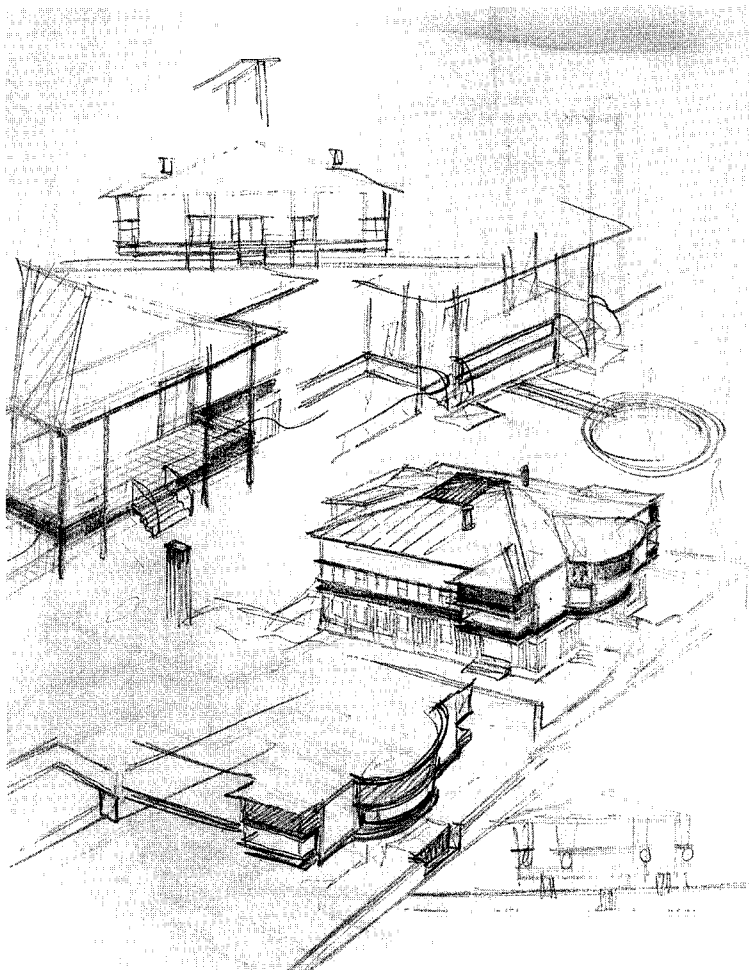
“The large oval hall in the upper floor faces the east and the view. The use of this shape indicates the effect of Baroque at the end of the 19th century when oval rooms are introduced into Ottoman-Turkish house plans. However, in the Turkish plan, the oval hall is a central sofa providing access to other rooms, whereas here, it is an oval living room away from the main circulation, thus remaining a mere formal gesture. Outside, the building again alludes to the traditional Turkish house with wide eaves and bay projections while at the same time, wide glazed surfaces and an overall extroverted expression distances it from the past. In short, it is a combination of the traditional house type with the kübik architecture of the period”

– İnci Aslanoğlu, *Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi Mimarlığı*, 1980, p. 155

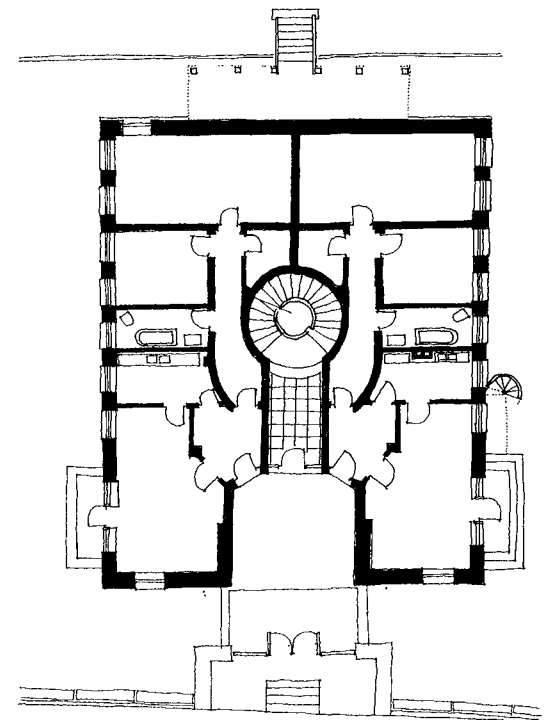


Studies for the oval *sofa* Ağaoğlu House

Ağaoğlu House Nişantaşı, Istanbul, 1936

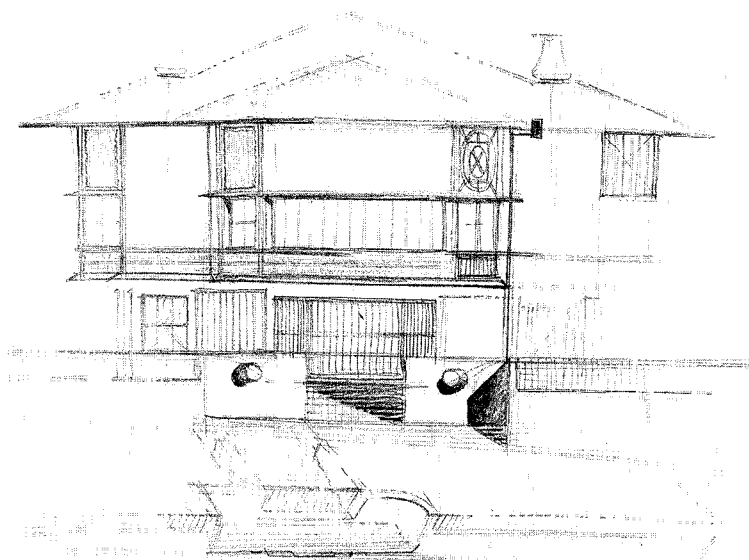


First floor plan

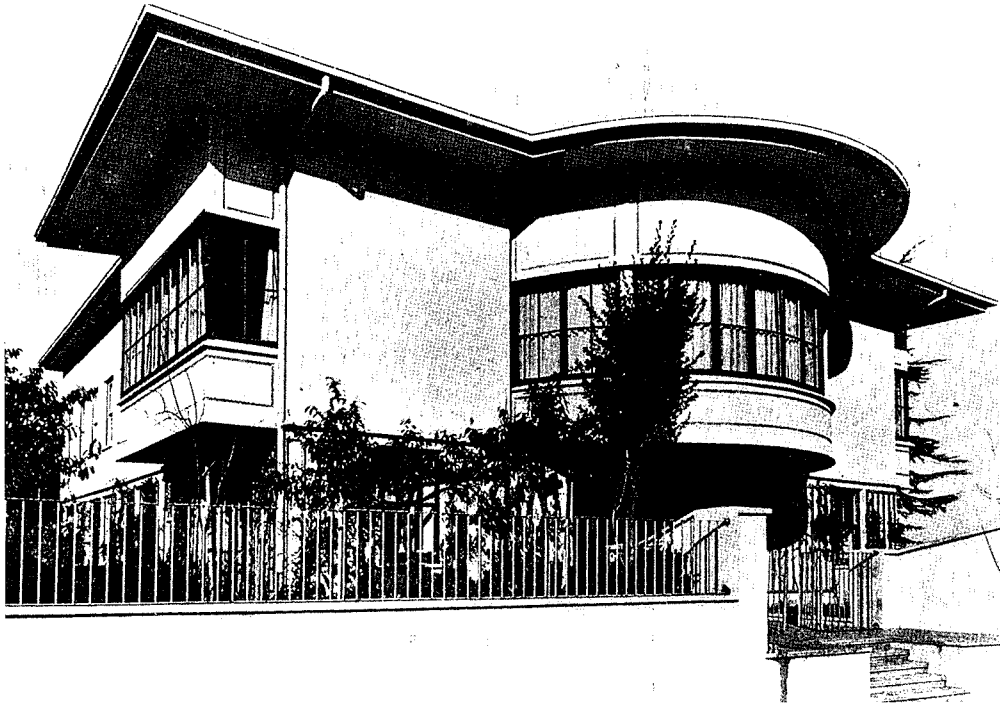


Ground floor plan

0 1 5 m



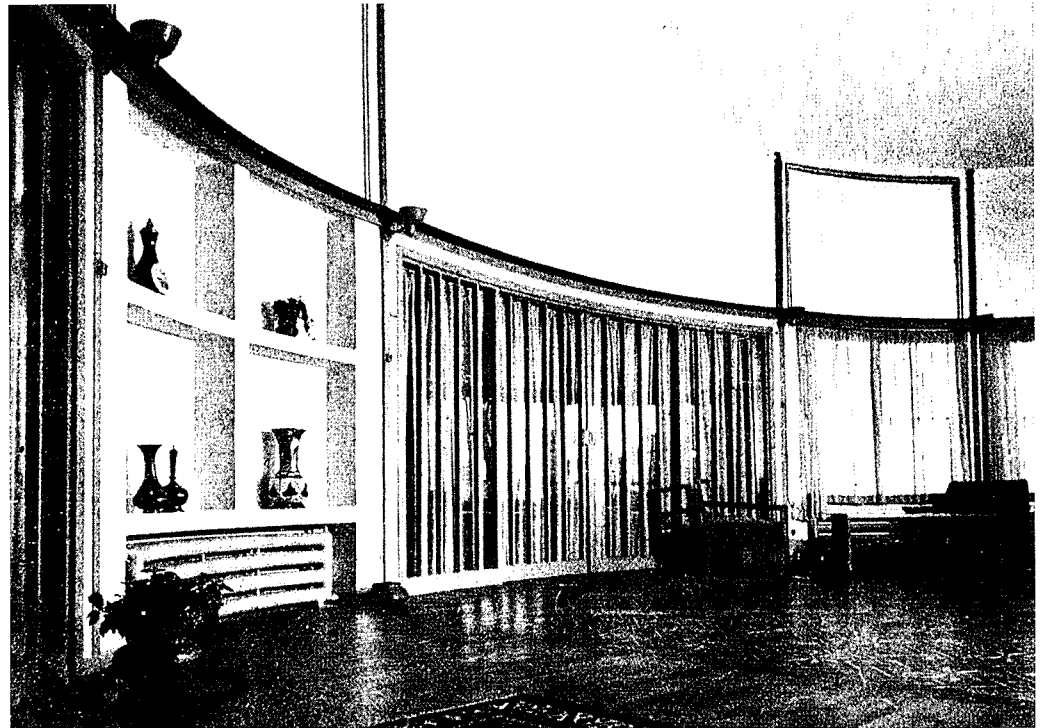
Preliminary studies for the Ağaoğlu House



Front elevation



Lower apartment entrance



Oval hall

Ayaşlı House/Yalı Beylerbeyi, Istanbul, 1938

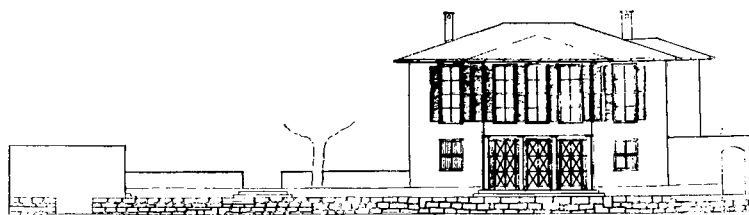
Whereas the Ağaoğlu House conveys an essentially modernist discourse, its *oval sofa* representing the possibility of a tradition-conscious gesture within this discourse, the second built work of the same period, the Ayaşlı House/Yalı in Beylerbeyi (1938) remains more committed to the search for a native style. A two-storey house on the edge of the water, it attempts to reproduce the traditional *yalı* type which is the historical source of the picturesque quality of the Bosphorus. In terms of its plan, it categorically belongs to the type of “inner *sofa* with two facades”⁵ based on the traditional *karniyarık* idea: i.e. a transverse hall or *sofa* cutting through the house and providing access to all other rooms. On the upper floor, the two ends of this hall project outwards in the front and the back. Raised above four slender columns, these *köşk* type projections constitute well-lit bays with modular, vertically proportioned windows. For Eldem it is this feeling of lightness and openness that is typical of the Turkish House. Other features like the wide projecting eaves, the tile roof, the wooden shutters, etc. mark a conscious effort to relate the building to precedents — as highly acclaimed in the *Arkitekt* magazine of the time: “Experiments like this, which, unlike the faceless buildings of recent years, try to capture the architectural character of our old houses, fill us with hope”.⁶

⁵ S H Eldem, *Türk Evi I*, p 35

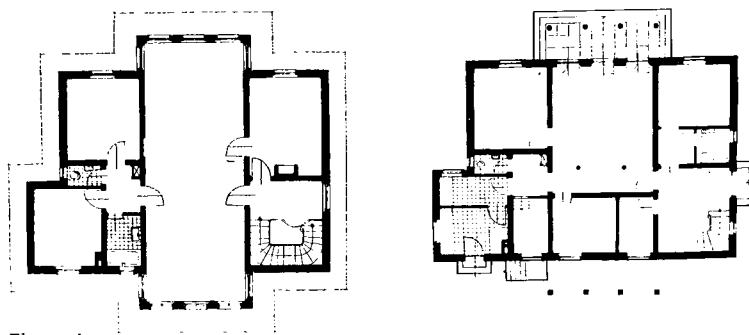
⁶ “Beylerbeyinde Bir Yalı”, *Arkitekt*, n 8, 1938, p 217



Bosphorus view



Front elevation



Floor plans

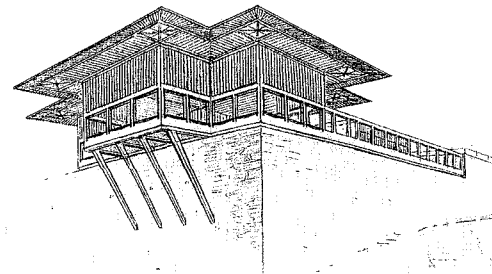


Front projection of the upper hall

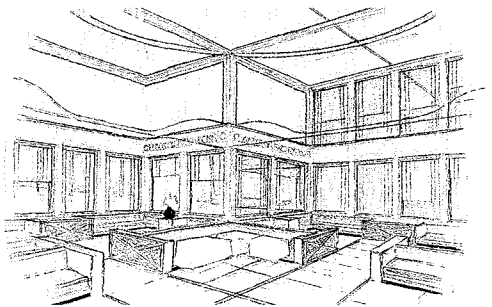
Taşlık Coffee House Istanbul, 1947

“Its plan is almost a replica of the Köprülü Yalı, the only difference being the addition of a fourth arm to the central sofa. That the architect has ended up with this form is, in a way, a sacrifice on his part. Suppressing his own identity, he has tried to display what can be taken as the modern qualities of a traditional example of Turkish domestic architecture, very little known until that time. Such an attitude has later drawn accusations of eclecticism.”

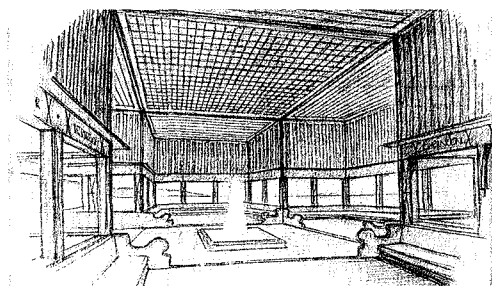
— Sedad Hakkı Eldem: 50 Yıllık Meslek Jübilesi, 1983, p. 82



Perspective study



Interior study



Çamlıca Coffee House, Istanbul, 1941 — interior study

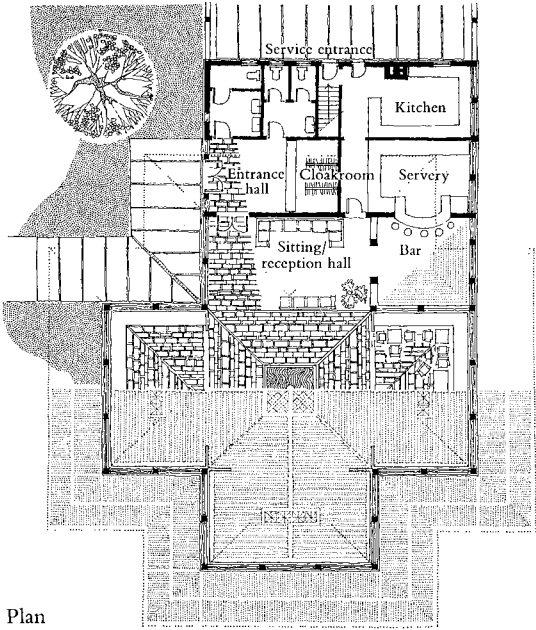
About a decade after these first houses, Eldem has produced the ultimate built manifesto of his quest for a native/national architecture inspired by the Turkish House. Taşlık Coffee House (1947–48), with its wide projecting eaves, T-plan, modular arrangement of windows and an overall predominance of wood, still stands as the architect’s trademark in Turkish architecture. Its explicit reference to Amcazade Köprülü Hüseyin Paşa Yalı from the 17th century — in terms of both plan type and elevation pattern — makes it a seminal, sometimes controversial cultural product with accusations of historicism. But for Eldem, it has a specific and legitimate status as a “showpiece” of all the essentially modern qualities of traditional Turkish House; a demonstration of the contemporary potential of history.

It is a small structure built on the edge of a high retaining wall, as part of a public park with an exquisite view of the Bosphorus. Its plan adopts the central *sofa* type, facing the view with the three projections of the T-plan. The front projection or *köşk* is supported over the retaining wall by wooden brackets; entrance and services are at the back. Built-in wooden furniture is conceived as part of the overall design, and at the centre of the T-plan a pool is located marking the cross-axis, again in the fashion of the wealthier traditional houses and *konaks*. The reinforced concrete structural frame is combined with an extensive use of wood facing on both the interior and the exterior. The floor finish and the pool is of marble.

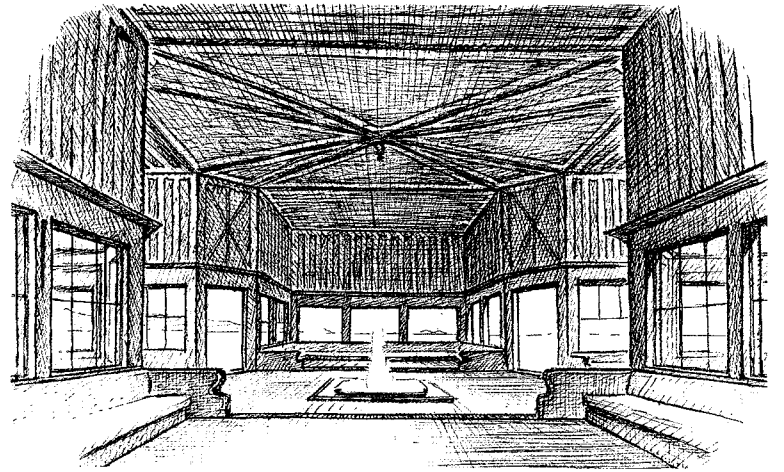
Functionally speaking, a “coffee-house” has come to symbolise Turkish culture for centuries, particularly in the eyes of the Orientalists. In this sense, the building is a statement of how that which is embedded in collective memory and culture, can unfold in a new fashion. Two unbuilt precedents to the Taşlık Coffee House exist in Eldem’s portfolio. The proposal for Beyazıt Coffee House was part of a larger scheme in 1940, in an attempt to reorganise the Beyazıt Square with a series of streets and squares around the old *medrese* and culminating with the coffee house. The same wide projecting eaves and repetitive pattern of windows were adopted. Similarly, the 1941 proposal for the Çamlıca Coffee House, anticipates by a few years, the major features of the Taşlık building — i.e. the T-plan central *sofa* type; reinforced concrete structural frame infilled with polished wood surfaces and the interior, combining the natural colour and texture of wood with white plastered walls.



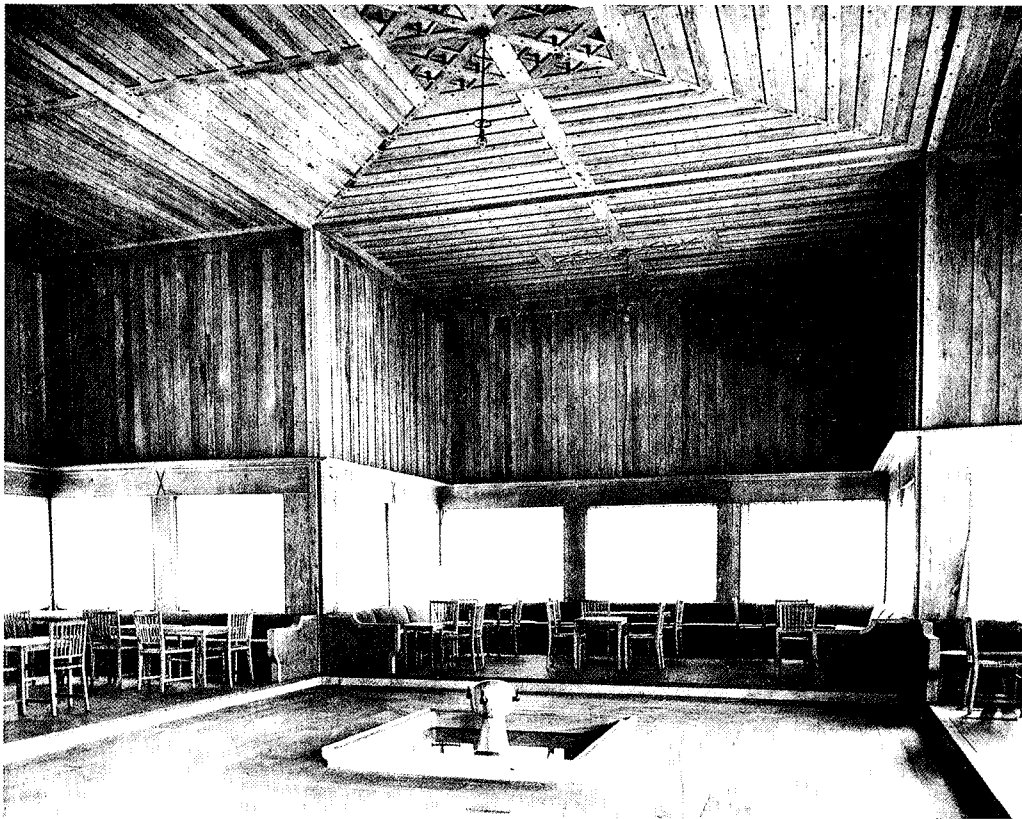
Front view



Plan



Perspective study



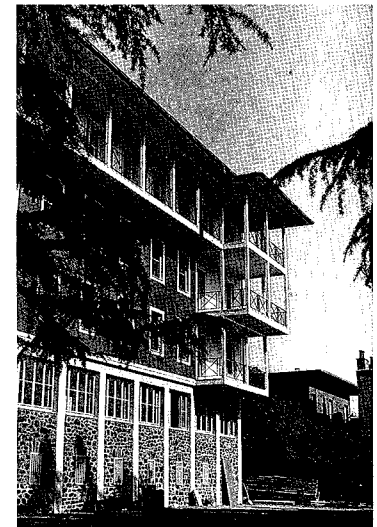
Interior

That the Turkish House embodies the conceptual kernel of a native/national architecture, is an ideal that Eldem has always wished and considered applicable, not only to houses and smaller structures like coffee-houses, but also to larger institutional buildings, to hotels in particular. One constant source of reference and inspiration for Eldem is the 19th century hotel building in Büyükada which is a large timber building with wide overhangs of the roof and staggered double-projections on the facade. Eldem's design for Termal Hotel in Yalova (1934–37), and later his extension to a hospital building in Istanbul (1943) are conceived in the same spirit with double projecting balconies, the repetitive rhythm of the structural frame and the windows, and wide projecting eaves. The Termal Hotel building, now demolished, is designated by Eldem as “... the first product of the National Architecture Movement”⁷ and remains as a recurrent theme as far as hotel buildings are concerned. His more recent Çırağan Palace Tourism Development Project employs the same concepts on a large scale: the building keeps to the cornice line of the Palace, with the same projections, overhangs and window patterns while attempting to maximise the frontage to the view of the Bosphorus.

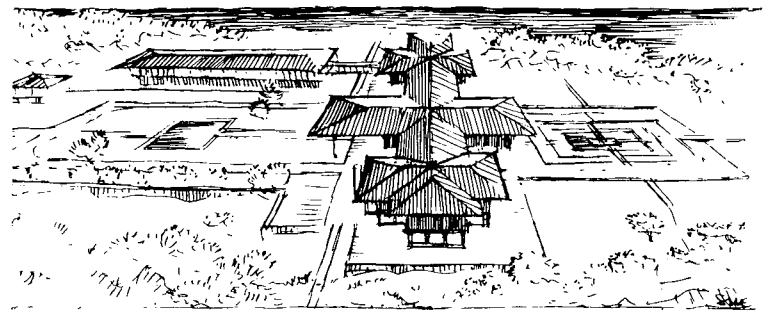
Eldem's quest for structural lightness modelled after the Turkish House also draws him close to the spirit of Japanese architecture, Frank Lloyd Wright being the common thread. Whatever the Japanese House represents for Wright, the Turkish House does for Eldem. This can best be traced in two projects, both in Büyükada, the largest of the Prince Islands. The project for the President's Residence at the tip of a peninsula (1935) consists of cross-axially intersecting wings spreading out into the landscape and an overall horizontal effect reminiscent of Wright's prairie architecture. The allusion to Japanese architecture is more deliberate in the case of the Fethi Okyar House (1936) which Eldem has designed and built for his sister and her husband. Here, he has extended the existing house by adding a large hall rounded at one end and a continuous wide balcony around the house raised on wooden pillars — all in response to the explicit client demand for a “Japanese style”.



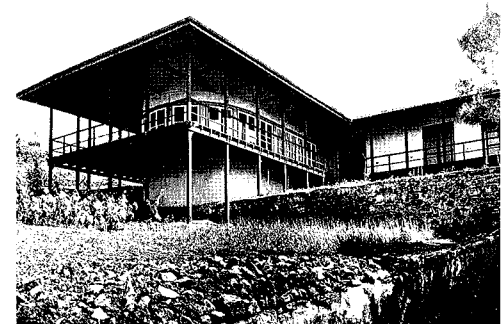
Termal Hotel, Yalova, 1934–37



Admiral Bristol Hospital, Istanbul, 1943



Project for President's Residence, Büyükada, Istanbul, 1935

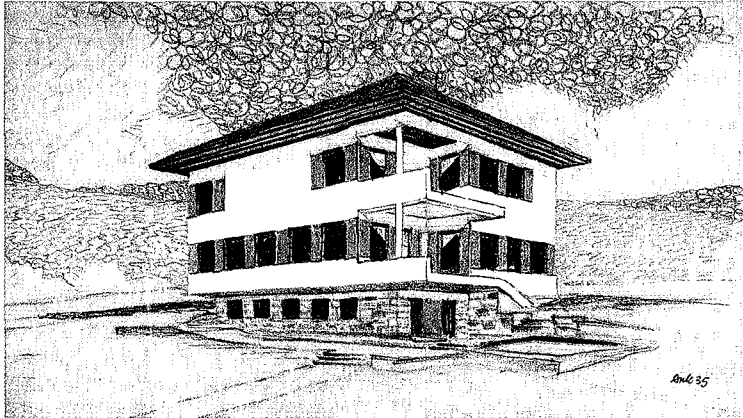


Fethi Okyar House, Büyükada, Istanbul, 1936

⁷ S H Eldem, “Son 120 sene İçerisinde Türk Mimarisinde Millilik ve Rejyonalizm Araştırmaları”, June 1984, p 58

“If national architecture is to be grounded in the past, which of these are you going to take as paradigm? Today there is the fashion of Turkish house, although a largely discursive category. Our model for this is the traditional timber-frame house type. What about the thousand years old tradition of mud-brick houses; of Erzurum houses, Rize houses, Bodrum houses and Uşfa houses? Are these to remain outside what is national?”

– Doğan Kuban, “Çağdas Kültürde Ulusal Üslup Nedir? Ne Değildi?” in *Mimaride Türk Milli Üslubu Semineri*, 1984, p. 8



Naci Paşa House, Ankara, 1932

The frequent use of terms like “native”, “national” and “regional” in reference to Eldem’s architecture, has often caused a certain confusion and controversy. Critics have often pointed out the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of a “national style” in Turkey, given the regional and cultural diversity and complexity. It has often been marked that the timber-frame Turkish House which has inspired Eldem’s native/national architecture, is only one particular house type (with its variations) found over the provinces of the Ottoman Empire. What sometimes eludes these views is that Eldem also displays a powerful regional consciousness for *other* local and rural traditions — in stone, mud-brick, etc. — even if they do not constitute the major thrust of his own work.

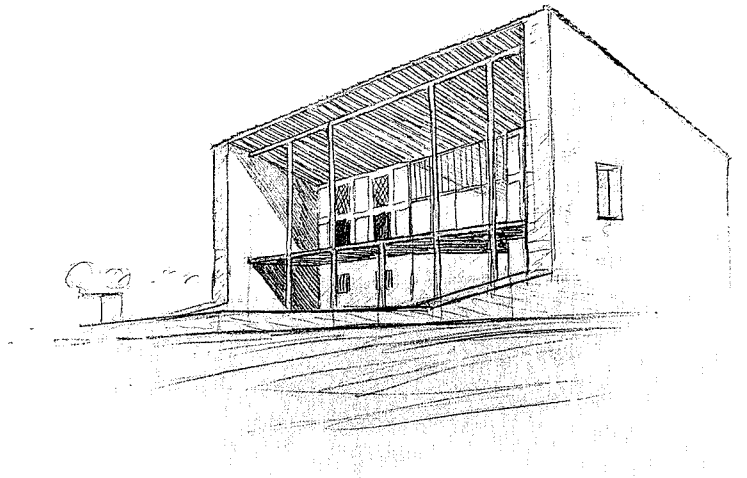
As early as the 1920s, the “Anatolian Houses” exhibited in Paris have included stone and mud-brick examples with rural connotations as already mentioned. Later in his career, although occasional and rather sporadic, other works have demonstrated this consciousness.

The house for Naci Paşa built in Ankara (1932) rises above stone walls and derives inspiration from the vineyard/orchard houses of rural Ankara prior to the expansion of the capital city. The project for Raif Meto House in Adana (1941) is a particularly striking example, as an attempt to translate the Central Anatolian rural vernacular into a modern house with a reinforced concrete front porch of tall slender columns. And more recently, in the unbuilt project for a vacation retreat for the industrialist Rahmi Koç on Tavşan Island, Tuzla, Eldem has deliberately adopted the arches and white-washed walls of a “Mediterranean style” diverging from his own Turkish House *leitmotifs*.

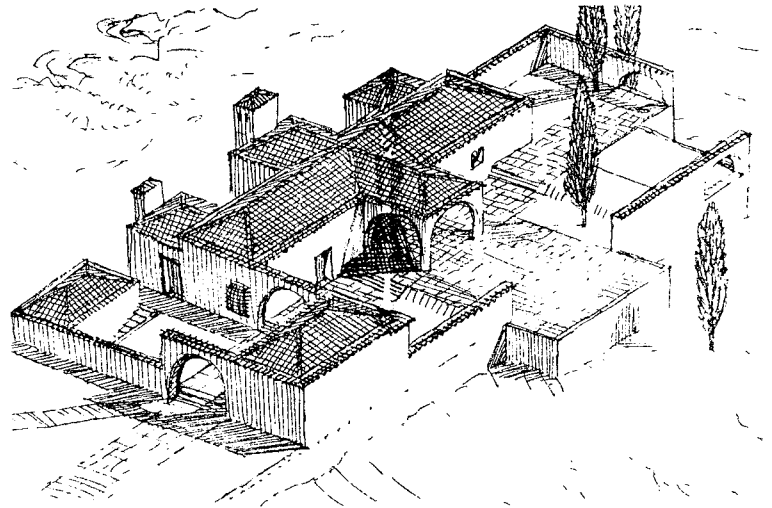
In other words, it is not inherent “national” attributes of any sort that attracts Eldem to the timber-frame traditional houses. It is rather the potential of the latter, to lend themselves to modern interpretations that inform Eldem’s work, which, by no means, rules out the possibility of other traditions and other interpretations.

“Meto House is a variation on the “outer sofa” type Anatolian house: a projection for the hearth or ocak, a seating place or taht inside the eyvan .. All of these have their roots in Anatolia. Therefore my research here is totally different from the symmetrical and slightly monumental type of Amcazade Yali. The issue here is a two thousand years old Anatolian house type reinterpreted for contemporary requirements and with modern materials. It could have been mud-brick or stone. It is not a stylistic search, instead, it is the constructional logic which yields the form.”

— Interview with Sedat Hakkı Eldem, 4 March 1986



Project for Raif Meto House, Adana, 1941



Project for Rahmi Koç Summer House, Tavsan Island, Tuzla

III. Early Dialogue with Modernism



Bayan Firdevs House, Maçka, Istanbul, 1934

Eldem's devoted interest in cultural continuity derived from the Turkish House, and his campaign in the 1930s against the so-called *kubik* style then prevailing in Ankara, should not be mistaken as signs of anti-modernity. On the contrary, it was through an essentially modernist perspective that he has viewed tradition. As already discussed, the Turkish House has been the source of inspiration of his work and ideas precisely because in it he has discovered the potential for modern qualities of lightness, openness and modular logic. Hence, his dialogue with modernism, sometimes even to the extent of approaching the *kubik* style he loathed, needs to be viewed within the context of a wide cultural spectrum between tradition and modernity. The ever-present cultural conflict of modern Turkish architecture — or for that matter of modern Turkey — is beyond the scope of this exposition. It is important to note, however, that Eldem was particularly prone to this tension between tradition and modernity given the cultural duality of his formation.

At the same time, for historiographic purposes, it is important to demystify the myth of unity and consistency in an architect's career, which, for most of the time, responds to diverse and frequently conflicting circumstances. However paradoxical it may seem, this often does more justice to the architect, portraying the complexity of the real picture, rather than oversimplifying it and reducing it to a single theme.

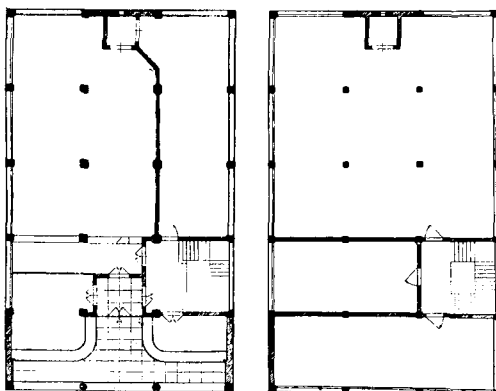
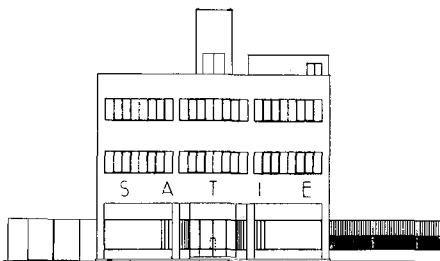
In the 1930s, while primarily preoccupied with the Turkish House and the National Architecture Seminar, Eldem has built two buildings, a house and an office, which remain outside his native/national architecture paradigm, significant in depicting the impact of the prevailing cultural milieu upon its severest critic.

Bayan Firdevs House in Maçka (1934) is a three-storey apartment building, squeezed between two adjoining higher buildings and facing the street with horizontal bands of windows. Its asymmetrically placed entrance is further accentuated by a rounded corner. It is curious to note that, the multiple readings of this building range from a praise of its "... Turkish domestic architecture character" in the 1934 issue of *Arkitekt*, to a more recent designation of it as "... one of the first examples of international style".¹ Since the building displays nothing of the characteristic Eldem *leitmotifs* — i.e. the reference to tradition in terms of plan type and window arrangement, it is not easy to substantiate the former view, except perhaps, by the intention

¹ Aslanoğlu, *Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi Mimarlığı*, 1980, p. 162

“In this typically purist building, one can read Le Corbusier’s principles of modern architecture: i.e. reinforced concrete skeleton and free plan, cubic mass, flat roof, horizontal band windows and the building raised on pilotis. The purist attitude which Le Corbusier has adopted in housing in France between 1925 and 1935 is, in this case, applied to a warehouse, with the characteristic rounded corners of the 1930s at the entrance”

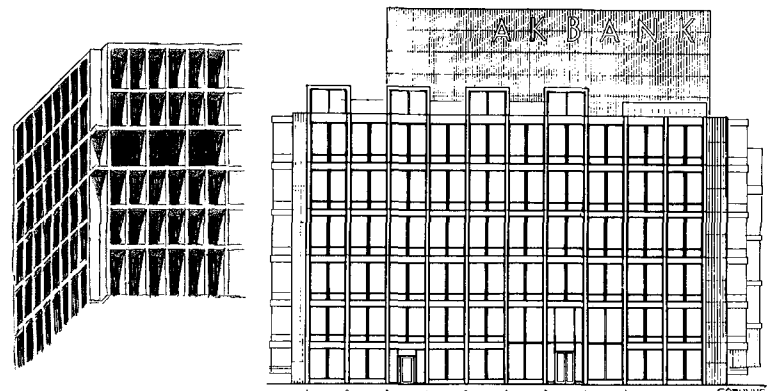
— İnci Aslanoğlu, Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi Mimarlığı, 1980, p 136



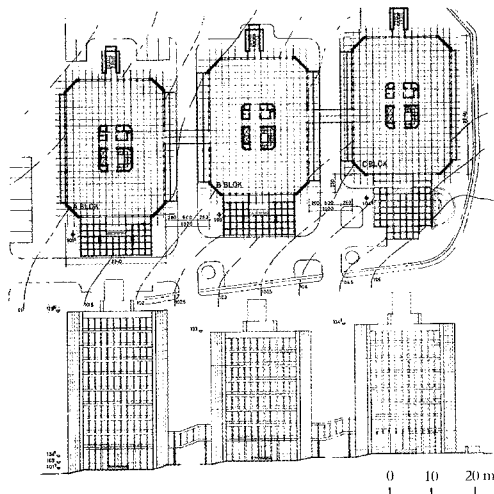
Front elevation and plans, SATIE Building, Fındıklı, Istanbul, 1934

of the magazine to exploit the popular appeal of the attributes like “Turkish” or “native” for a public still largely suspicious of the *kubik* style.

The seminal work of Eldem’s dialogue with modernism is the offices/warehouse of the Electric Company, known as the SATIE Building (1934) demolished in 1960. It was a reinforced concrete frame structure infilled with brick and plastered over. The open plan concept, the cubic overall mass of the building, the flat roof and the horizontal band windows all make reference to early 20th century modernism. For many critics and historians, the SATIE Building is a milestone in Turkish architecture, with its purist principles reminiscent of Le Corbusier. In terms of the major thrust of Eldem’s production, however, it remains isolated. It is perhaps possible to also pose a typological explanation to Eldem’s occasional divergences from his major path. While detached small structures, individual houses, villas or *yalis* lend themselves more easily to an interpretation after the Turkish House, multi-storey apartments, and more specifically, office buildings seem to be “modern types” by definition. It may even be legitimate to assert that the office tower is the expression *par-excellence* of the so-called “international style”. Eldem has also periodically engaged in the question concerning the high-rise office block. Rather than the “glass-skin” idea of the international style, however, his solution has turned out to be the logic of the reinforced concrete skeleton expressed as a uniform grid on the facade. A comparative glance at Eldem’s SATIE building and his later Akbank Headquarters in Fındıklı (1967–68) illustrates, on the Turkish scene, how the avant-garde modernism and purism of early 20th century has evolved into the established neutral grid of the reinforced concrete skeleton.



Facade system studies and front elevation, Akbank Headquarters, Fındıklı, Istanbul, 1967



Alarko Office Blocks, Ayazağa, Istanbul, 1976



State Monopolies General Directorate, Ankara, 1934–37



In the design of Akbank, various studies and wooden models were made experimenting with the facade grid. In the case of the even later Alarko Office Towers (1976–79) the office concept is further rationalised, both in plan and in facade treatment, conforming to the imperatives of corporate image interpreted until very recently, as the antithesis of character and identity.

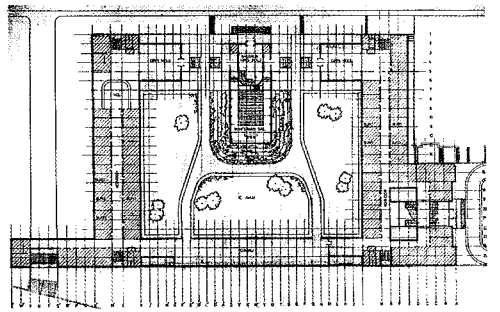
Back to the 1930s, one building stands out as the epitome of Eldem's particular brand of modernism, different from his untypically *kubik* SATIE Building and, more strongly, from the official *kubik* of early Republican architecture in Ankara. The State Monopolies General Directorate in Ankara (1934–37) was Eldem's first major work with the state as his client. Commissioned after winning an international competition, it is designated by Eldem as "... the first modern building in Turkey".²

The project consists of a large quadrangle — a courtyard surrounded on all four sides. Two opposite sides are taken by five-storey office blocks with doubly-loaded corridors. The remaining two sides are closed off by blocks containing larger spaces: entrance hall, auditorium and meeting rooms and garage in the front block, services and cafeteria in the rear one. The play of masses by the composition of different blocks, raising some above the ground on columns and making projections on the upper level, lend the building its particular quality, also subtly alluding to traditional architecture, in this case, reinterpreted for a public building. The repetition of 1:2 vertically proportioned windows further reinforces this allusion. The reinforced concrete structural frame of the building is infilled with brick and stone, and faced on the exterior by 4 centimetres thick artificial stone of a pinkish colour. The original scheme is not completely built; but the existing part effectively serves as the Primeministry today, distinguishable from the other surrounding government buildings of the early Republic, executed in the *kubik* style and plastered in grey.

Finally, the building is significant also as a showpiece of Eldem's interior design work: his fine details and finishes, the design of fixtures, balustrades, fixed furniture, etc. and his choice of materials — mostly wood, marble, artificial stone, leather and glass. Similar interior design features and fine detailing has been applied in his Termal Hotel in Yalova, built during exactly the same years.

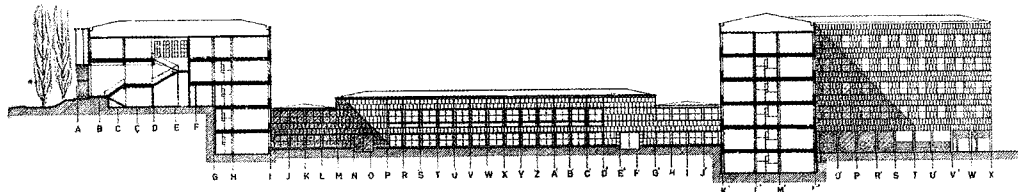
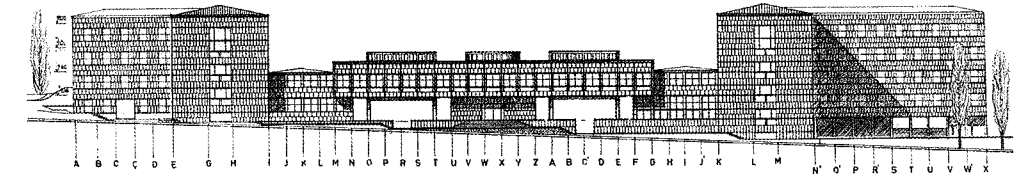
² S H Eldem, "Elli Yıllık Cumhuriyet Mimarlığı", *Akademi Dergisi*, n. 8, July 1974, p. 10

State Monopolies General Directorate Ankara, 1934–37



Ground floor plan

0 10 20m



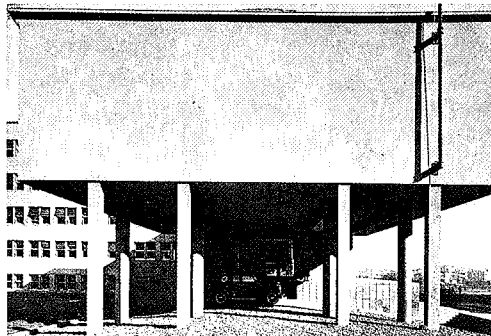
Section and elevation

0 10 20m

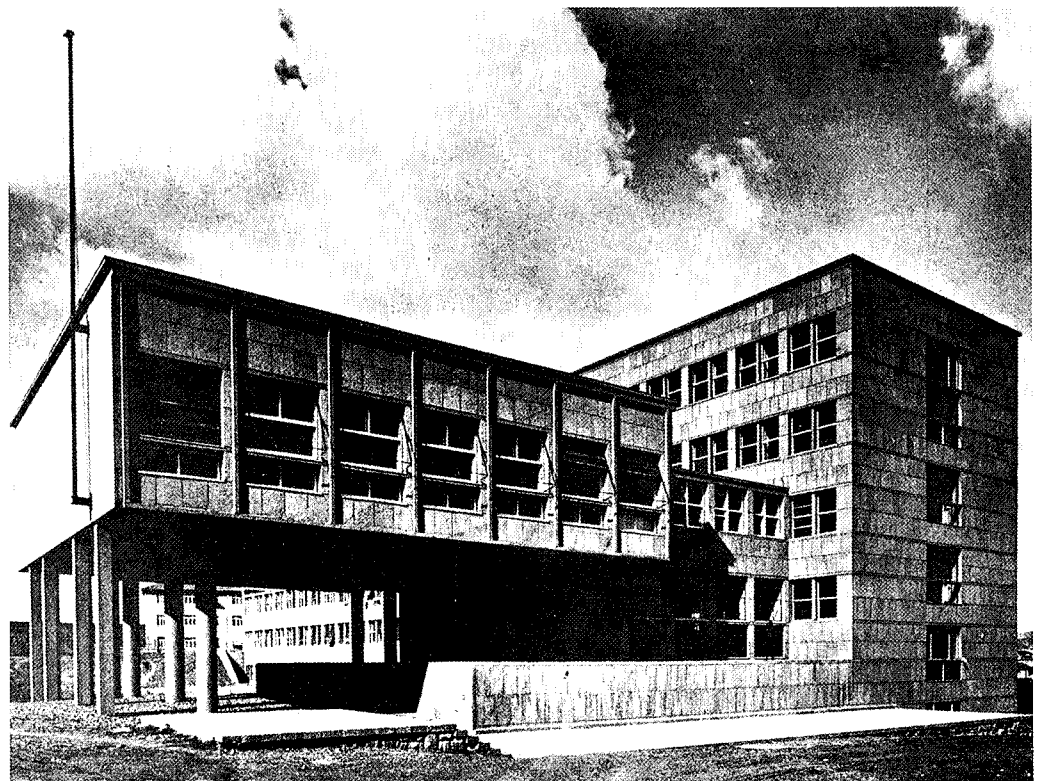
“Although arranged symmetrically, this building does not adopt the neo-classical attitude characteristic of the other public buildings of the period. Different blocks raised above the ground, the projections, and the window sizes yield a mass and elevation effect which escapes the prevailing monotony of the public buildings.

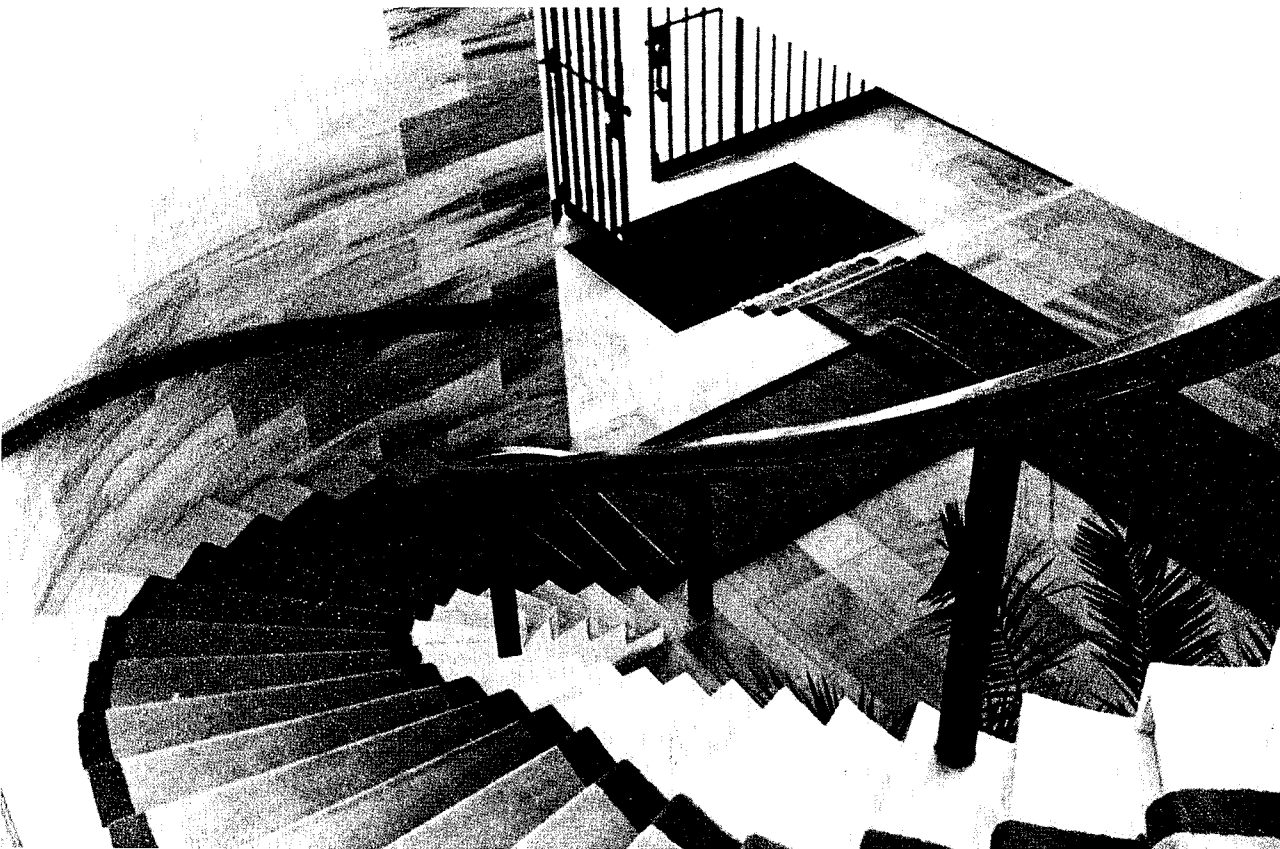
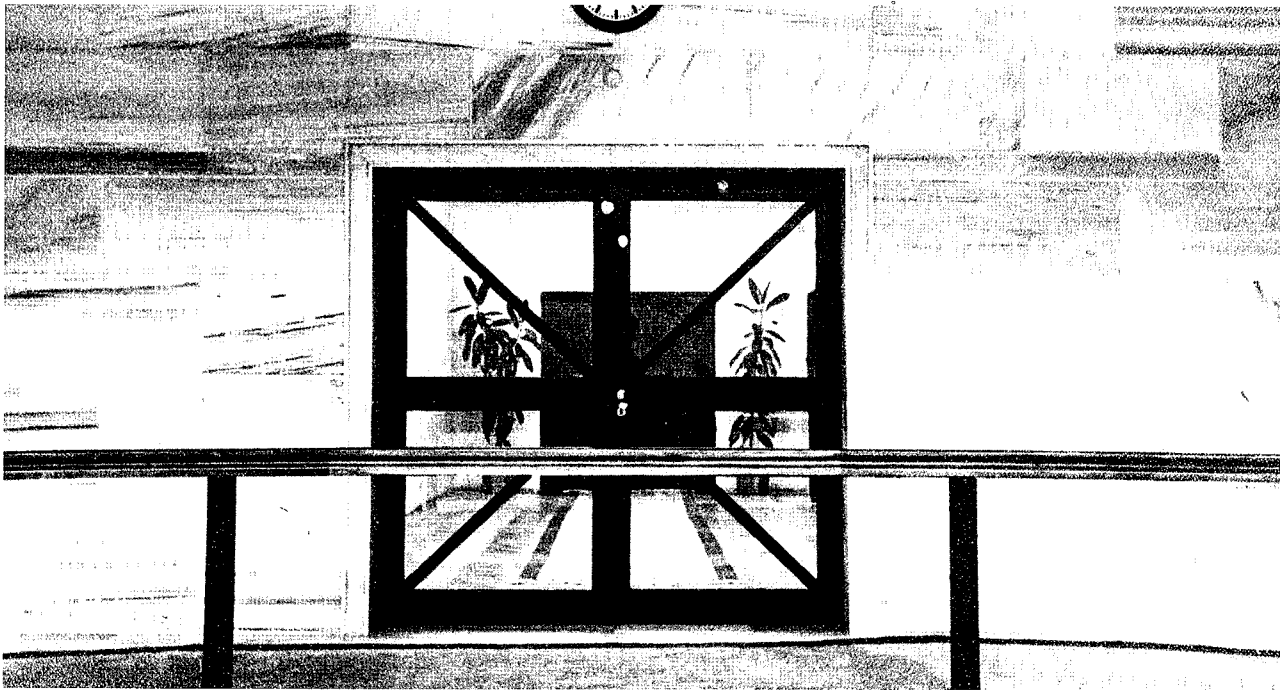
, the facade proportions and the details make it a notable and consistent building”

— İnci Aslanoğlu, *Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi Mimarlığı*, 1980, p. 87



Views of front block





Interiors

IV. In Search of a National Architecture

“Today in architecture, the current is towards nationalism rather than internationalism. Although the same new architectural attitudes and elements are adopted and applied by many different nations, when it comes to ideas and ideals, they all look for ways of maintaining, developing and expressing their own identities. And for this, they look back to tradition, they commit themselves to a new ideal or they try to synthesise the two.”

— Sedad Hakkı Eldem, “Milli Mimari Meselesi”, *Arkitekt* 1939, p. 220

“For an architecture to be national, it has to respond to national requirements and has to depend upon domestic labour force, popular values, national/local materials and land. Among these preconditions, some are material and technical while others are spiritual, the latter being largely a matter of political regime. In other words, strong governments and regimes are more likely to fulfil these conditions, and the role of the State is substantial.”

— Sedad Hakkı Eldem, “Yerli Mimariye Doğru”, *Arkitekt* 1940, p. 69

“Local architecture is not necessarily national architecture. Members of a nation may be living in diverse regions; consequently building different houses. But what lends their common expression is the fact that they are the cultural products of the same nation.”

— Sedad Hakkı Eldem, “Türk Evi”, in Sedad Hakkı Eldem: 50 Yıllık Meslek Jübileleri, 1983, p. 16

Two seminal articles by Eldem, “The Question of National Architecture” and “Towards A Native Architecture” were published in *Arkitekt* in 1939 and 1940 respectively. These articles officially declare his opposition to the work of German and Austrian architects who had built Ankara from scratch in the late 1920s and the 1930s. His national architecture ideal is formulated in these articles in terms of three fundamental points. First, that such a national style can only emerge in response to the native culture of the users; secondly, it can only be realised by a domestic labour force and technicians; and thirdly, it can only arise out of the local context in conformity to land, climate and materials.

Eldem had long subscribed to these points in his reappraisal of the Turkish House, which was, by definition, the product of local know-how, culture, climate and materials. What is new in the 1940s however, is a shift of scale and character, from the house or *yalı* to public edifices and government buildings. This shift of scale is accompanied by a shift from the lightness, openness and transparency of reinforced concrete skeleton structures, to the heavy effect of stone as constructive or finishing material. This is a feature only partly explained by the unavailability of reinforced concrete during the Second World War years. It is rather the inevitability of stone to sustain the desired monumentality and classicism, to be achieved through symmetry, use of giant orders, heavy cornices and the dramatic impacts of light and shade. And it is only through a thorough feeling for the historical context, that this bent in Turkish architecture, as well as in Eldem’s career, can be meaningful. Namely, there is the personality and influence of Paul Bonatz both in practice and in academia; the powerful propaganda of the national architectures of Italy and Germany particularly appealing to a young generation of architects in search of self-confidence; and more specifically, the impact of the 1943 “New German Architecture Exhibition” in Ankara.

Within this historical/cultural context, Eldem’s search for a national architecture has, not surprisingly, acquired a political/ideological overtone. His ongoing campaign to look back to tradition, has now found an ideal to look forward to and the prospects of synthesising the two has mobilised all his energy in those years. Exhilarated by this prospect, he has ascribed a substantial role to the State in the realisation of this ideal by encouraging research, fixing norms, and above all, kindling the national spirit. One ambiguity remains unresolved throughout: the contradictory implications of a regionalist consciousness — of his “third point” — demanding architecture to arise out of

“For there is neither authoritarian nor democratic architecture, no more than there are authoritarian or demokratische wienerschnitzel. It is just as childish to read a particular colour or the immanence of a political system into a row of Doric columns as it is to accept kidney-shaped tables and tensile structures as the authentic expression of a libertarian and democratic regime. On the other hand, there are both good and bad architects as well as human and inhuman means of producing and using them . . . Architecture is not political; it is only an instrument of politics.”

– Leon Krier, *“Forward Comrades We Must Go Back!”*, *Oppositions* 24, 1981, p. 35

“I have always tried to avoid an architecture smelling of historicism. Yet, in the composition of some large buildings, the results have approached what may perhaps be taken as historicism. A young architect, 35 years old in those years, when given a commission for such big compositions, feels like pursuing historicist research. How many architects can afford to miss this opportunity? With those buildings — with the stone facing, tile finishes, etc. — an architecture, hitherto unknown in the monumental buildings of Ankara or Istanbul, was visualised. It is perhaps possible to say that the architect, carried away with the commission, has gone too far in his historicism. What would one do today, if commissioned such a building? I am always intrigued by this question whenever I start my autocritique. I think I would repeat the same horizontal courses of stone and I would employ ceramic tiles or clay motifs in high-relief. I would perhaps make them in a fashion drawing even closer to historicism. And I would do this openly and not discreetly.”

– Interview with Sedat Hakki Eldem, 1 April 1986

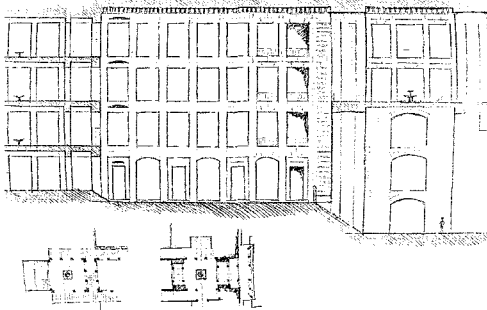
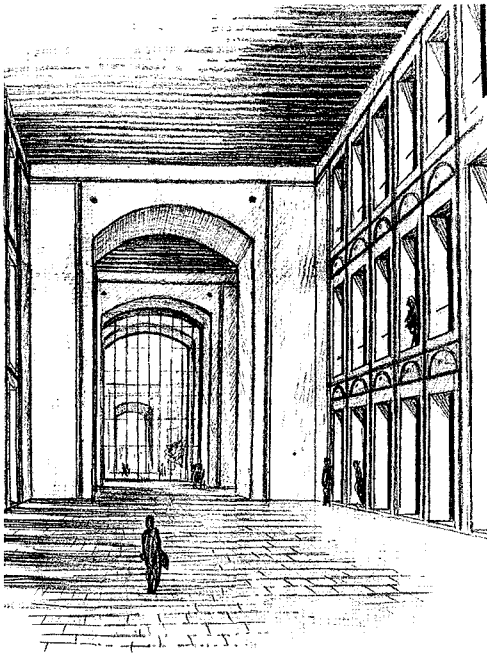
local land, materials and climate, which is diversifying in effect; and that of a nationalist ideal which is unifying in effect.

These debates concerning architecture and ideology cannot ultimately escape being polemical, sometimes with a hasty identification of written discourse with built work. It seems to be less the architecture of Eldem — his monumental stone aesthetics in the 1940s — than his articles that have drawn him into the midst of architecture and ideology debates. In the same way that Eldem considers his National Architecture Seminar of the 1930s “premature” for its time, his work in the 1940s is perhaps also too early anticipating by decades, some of the more recent views regarding architecture as “an autonomous, rational discourse” regardless of the political and ideological system it happens to serve. To put it differently, Eldem’s work in the “stone age” as he calls it, connects forward to current theoretical discourse which lend credibility to such views in a world disillusioned by the international style — the very style that in his time was hailed as the symbol of democracy victorious over totalitarian nationalisms. That accounts for Eldem’s uneasiness between his architectural preferences of the 1940s and their political/ideological implications, consequently prompting him to dismiss the latter as “unrealistic” and “inapplicable”

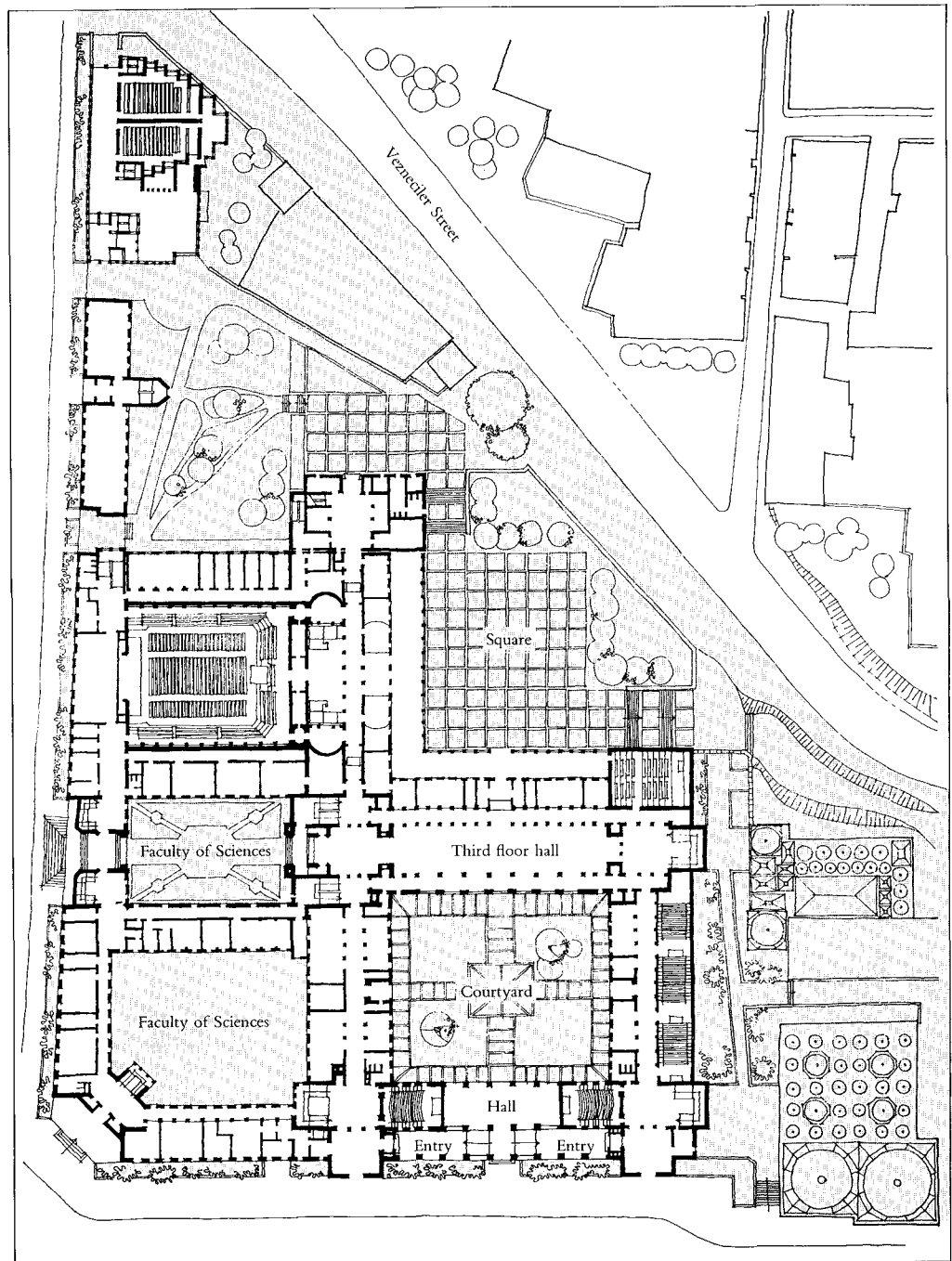
Istanbul University Faculty of Sciences and Letters (1942–43) was designed in collaboration with Emin Onat, the third in the Eldem/Bonatz/Onat trio which has stamped its decisive mark on the Turkish architecture of the 1940s.

The building is conceived as a rational system of “quadrangles” with long buildings around four sides of a courtyard. The intersection of the blocks also constitute the intersection of circulation paths, marking the location of large halls with access to the stairways. The three-storey tall halls, with high stone arches, giant orders and marble floor finish lend the interior an austere monumentality. The stripped effect of alternating layers of dark coloured brick and light coloured stone characterises the building inside out. On the exterior, it is a more explicit statement, in this case, reinterpreting his notion of Turkish House for a large scale building. This traditional flavour is achieved through the effect of wide projections of the roof, the upper part of the building raised above the ground on giant order columns, the stone-faced base and the plastered top separated by a cornice line, and the rhythm of repetitive, vertically proportioned windows bordered in white.

Istanbul University, Faculty of Sciences and Letters Istanbul, 1942



Preliminary studies



Plan.

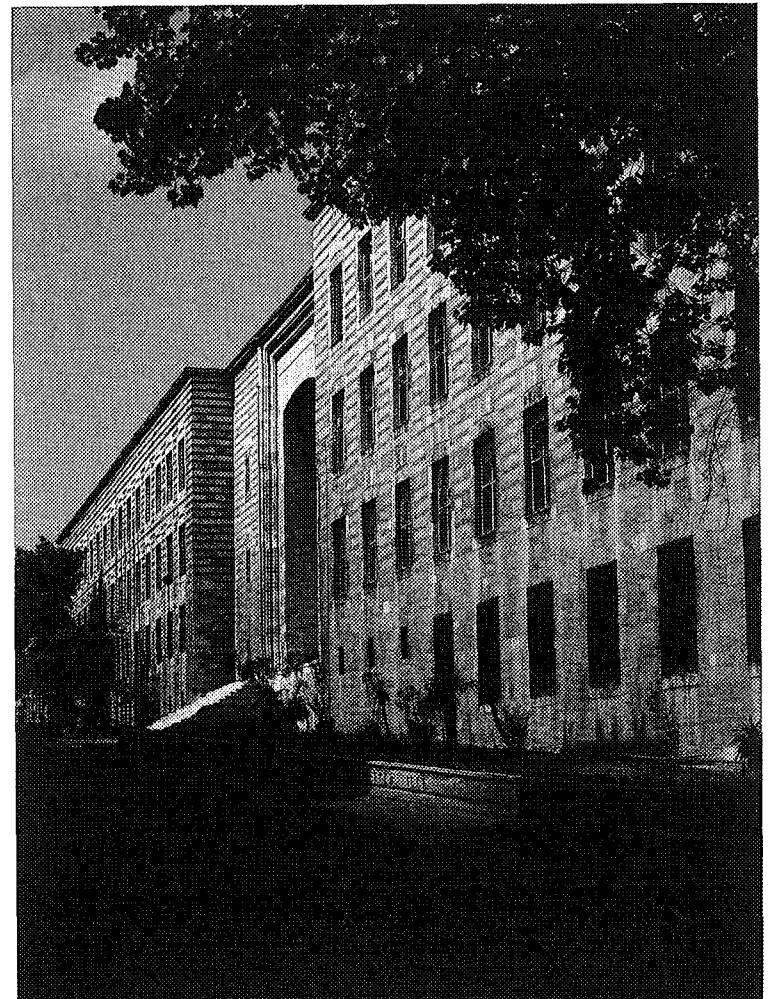
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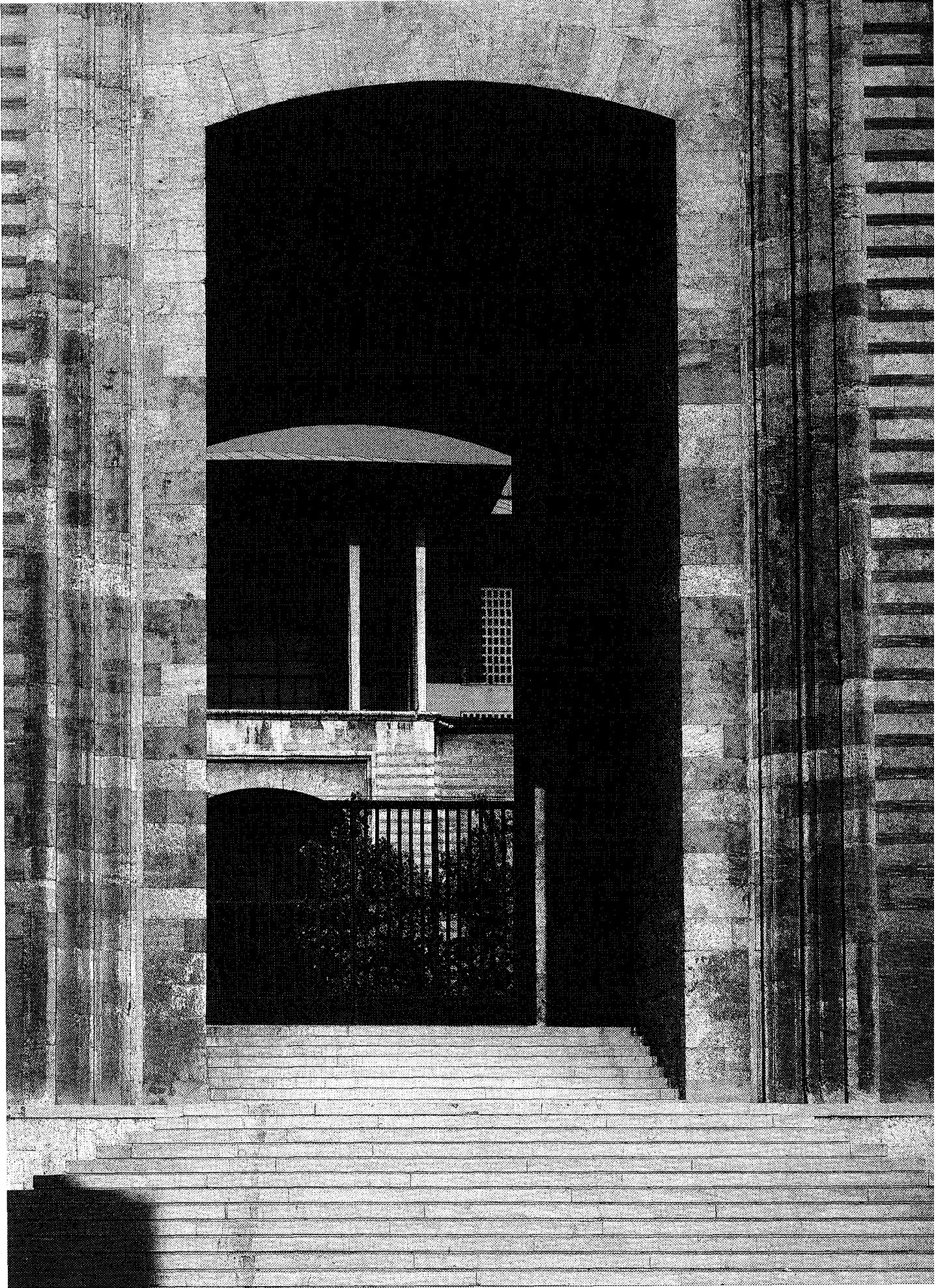
General view



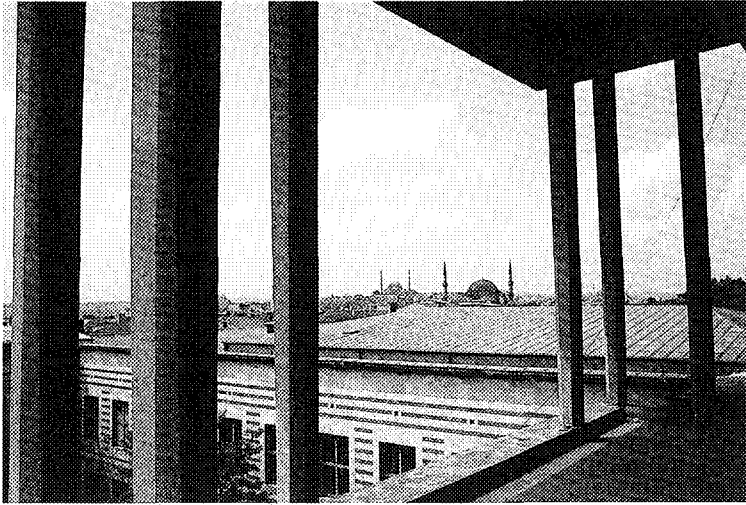
Reşit Paşa Caddesi entrance courtyard



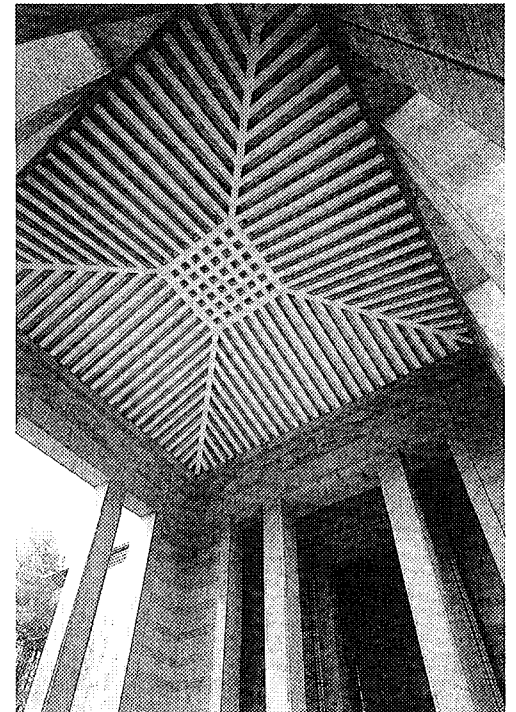
Reşit Paşa Caddesi, elevation



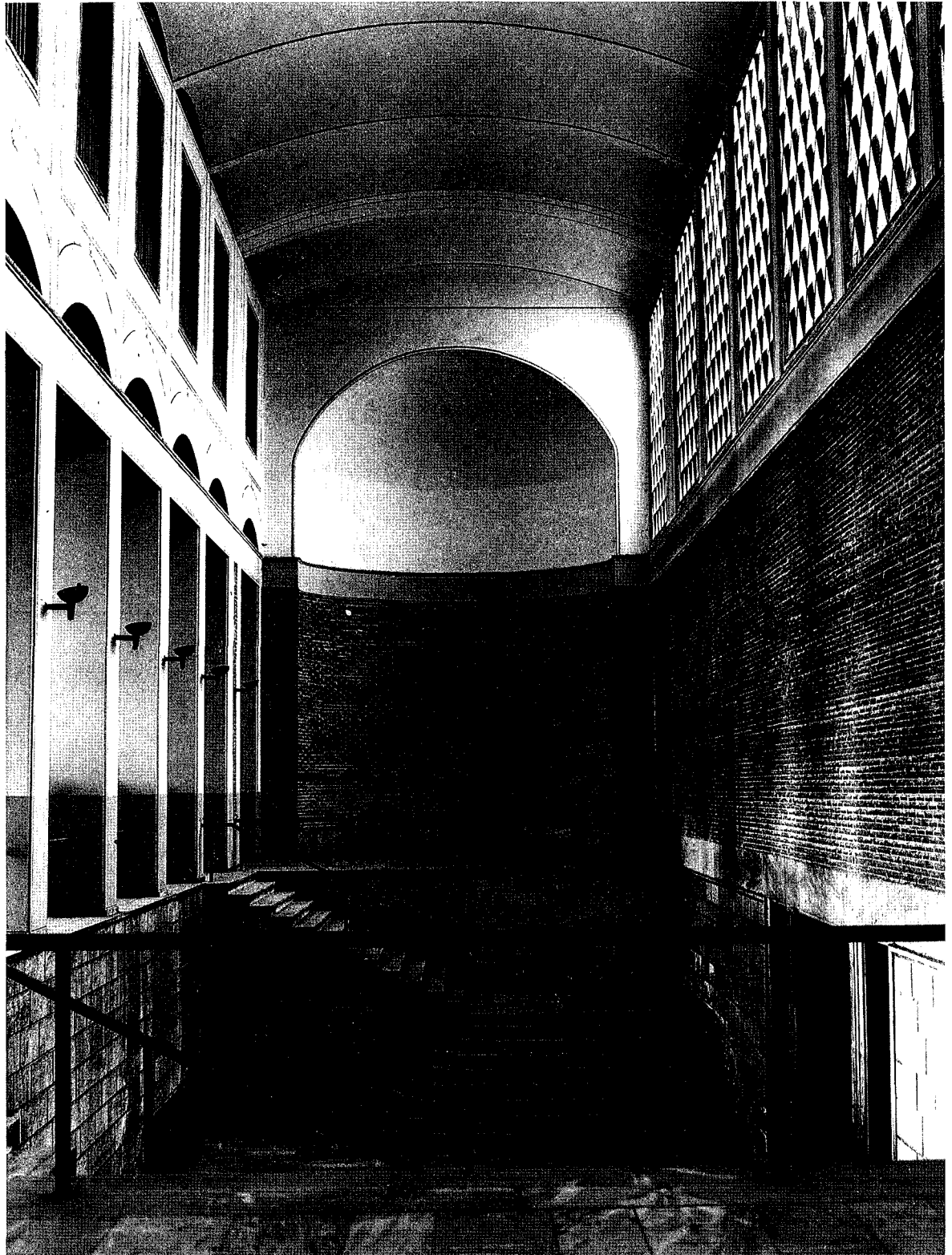
Reşit Paşa Caddesi,
main entrance to
Faculty of Sciences



View from the high balcony above main entrance to Faculty of Sciences

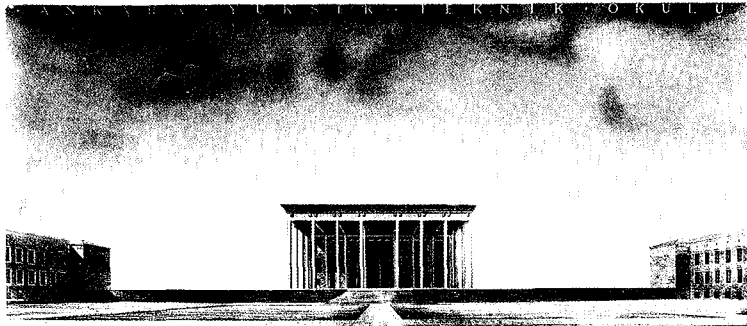


Detail of ceiling

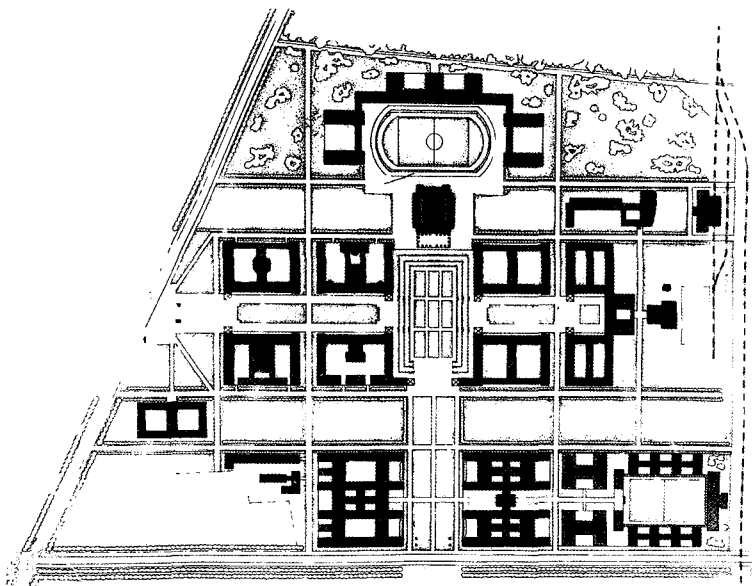


Entrance to "Aula Magna"

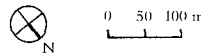
Ankara University, Faculty of Sciences Ankara, 1943



Provost's Offices and main auditorium building



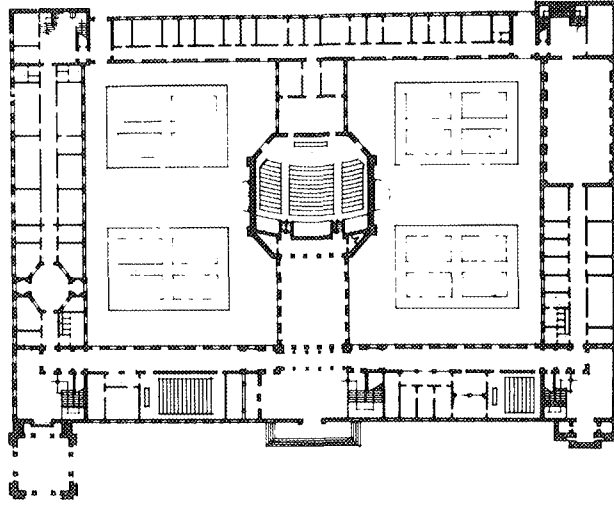
Proposed site plan



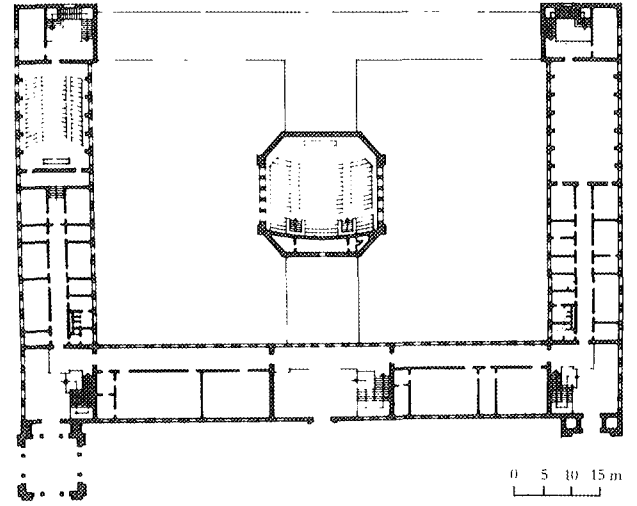
In the same years, Eldem has conceived a site plan for the campus of Ankara Technical University which has remained unrealised. A striking feature is the proposed ceremonial approach to the monumental building containing the offices of the Provost, the library and the main auditorium. Located at the axis of the campus alley, this building is visualised as a temple-like structure. It is raised above a platform, is entered through a monumental collonade of slender columns, and is finished at the top with a heavy entablature resting on brackets. The affinity between this perspective and the winning design of Emin Onat and Orhan Arda for Atatürk's Masoleum/"Anıt Kabir" in Ankara is telling as far as the common cultural climate of the "stone age" is concerned.

The built part of this scheme, the Ankara University Faculty of Sciences (1943–45) was designed in collaboration with Paul Bonatz who, in 1943, was appointed as the consultant to the Construction Bureau of Technical and Professional Education Council. His commitment to a national idiom for Turkish architecture, particularly evident in his Saraçoğlu Housing in Ankara (1944) where he has adopted the Turkish House *leitmotifs*, accounts for his closeness to and collaboration with Eldem throughout the 1940s.

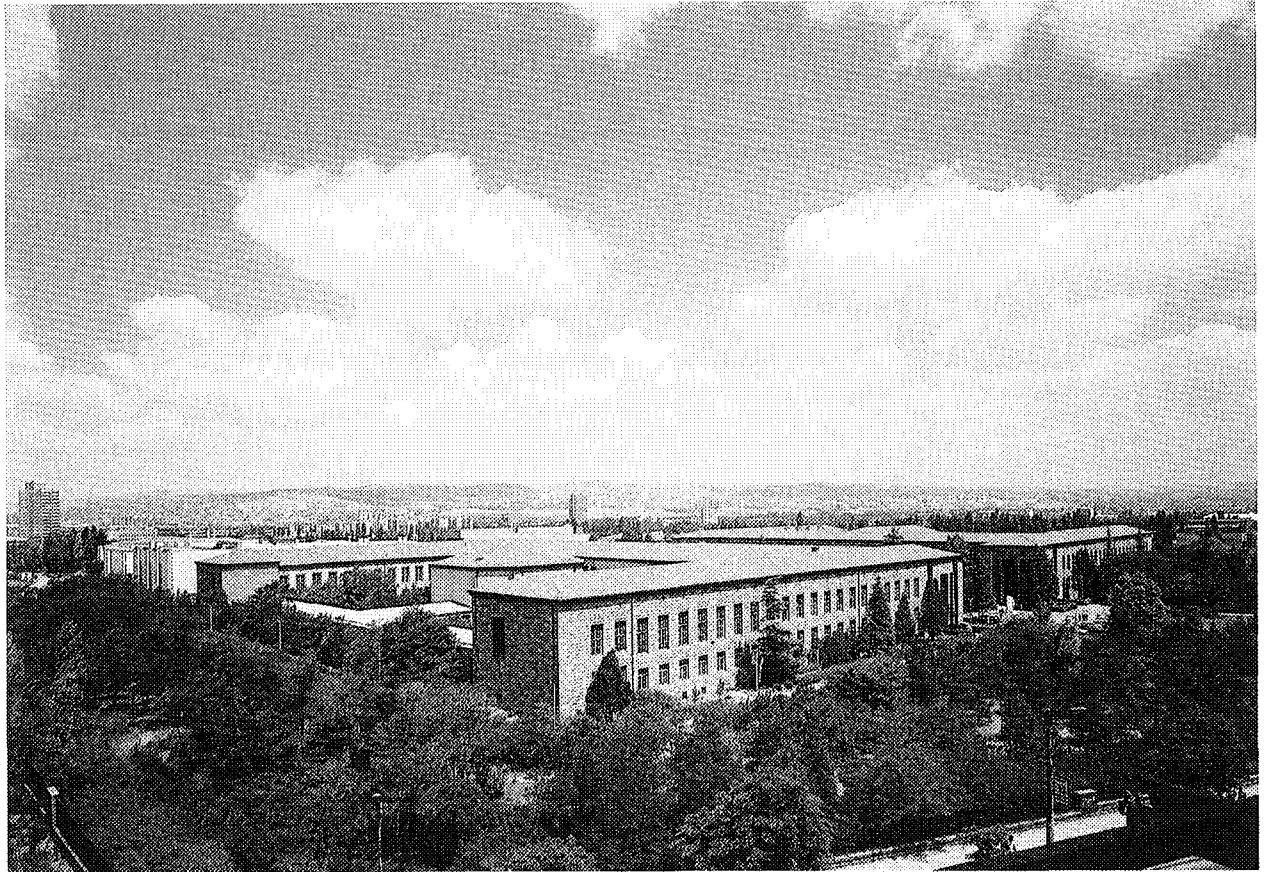
The Faculty of Sciences Buildings strike the beholder with a pair of monumental porticos which act as gateways to the unrealised campus of the original project. They also mark the corners of two quadrangles facing each other across the alley and arranged around their individual courtyards with the main auditoriums at the centre. These porticos most significantly express the nationalism of the "stone age" with their high arches and giant orders, the massive look of the stone walls, and the use of the *muqarnas* motif and the *kirpi saçak* or "porcupine cornice" with allusions to Seljuk and Ottoman sources. Various perspective studies and wooden models were made to test the impact of these elements. The interior is predominated by the same austerity and heaviness, of alternating courses of stone and brick, joining the ceiling with a version of the porcupine cornice.



Ground floor plan



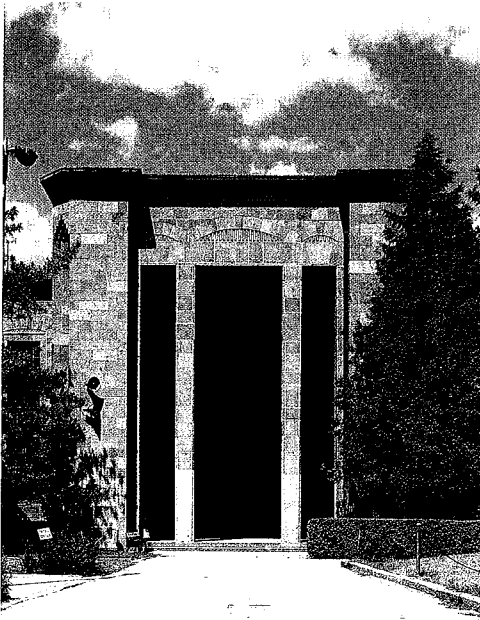
First floor plan



General view

Overleaf: General view
 Photographs: Atelye Mat





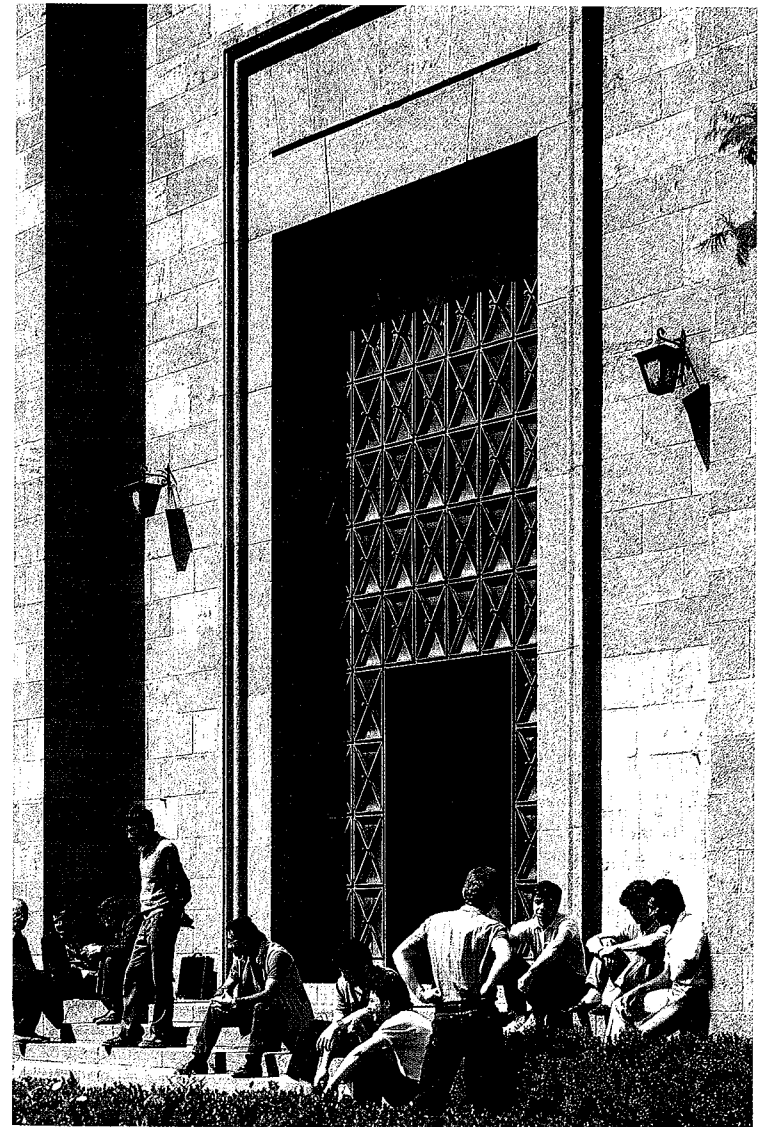
Entrance portico



Corner detail of the entrance portico with the *muqarnas* motif
Photographs: Atelye Mat

“The Stone Age had begun, with both policy and the economy playing their part in this development. Policy demanded that buildings be built of stone, strong and durable unlike the frail Cubist buildings of Ankara. The National Style was therefore, solid and monumental. The presence of Paul Bonatz in Turkey during the period contributed to this outcome as he was a devotee of stone construction”

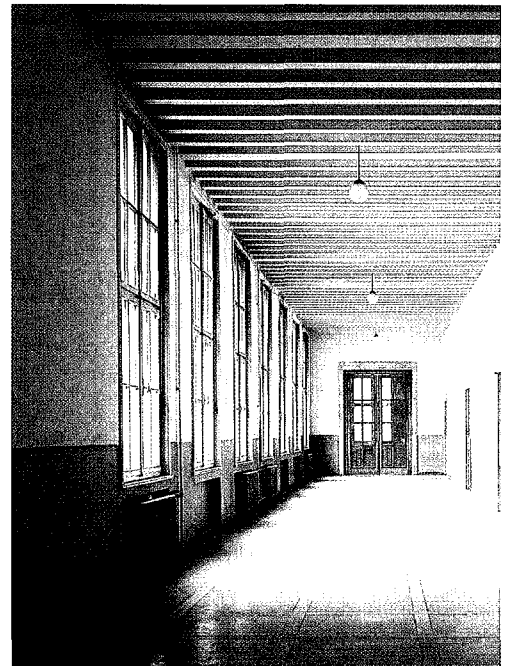
— Sedat Hakki Eldem, *“Toward A Local Idiom: A Summary History of Contemporary Architecture in Turkey”* in *Conservation As Cultural Survival*, 1980, p 92



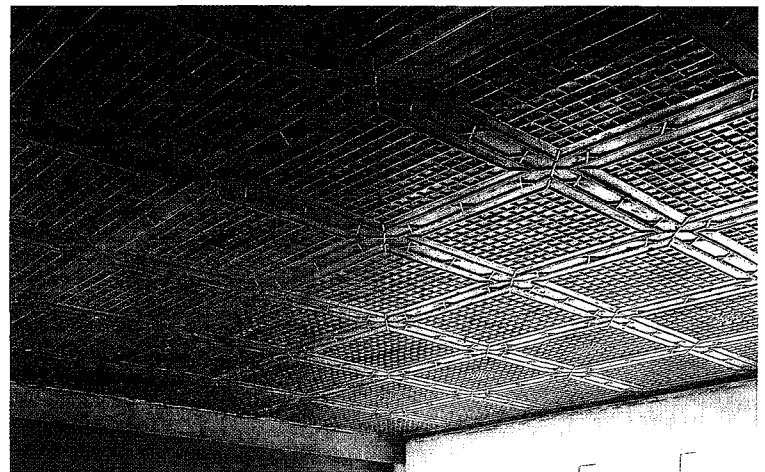
Entrance to courtyard and main auditorium.



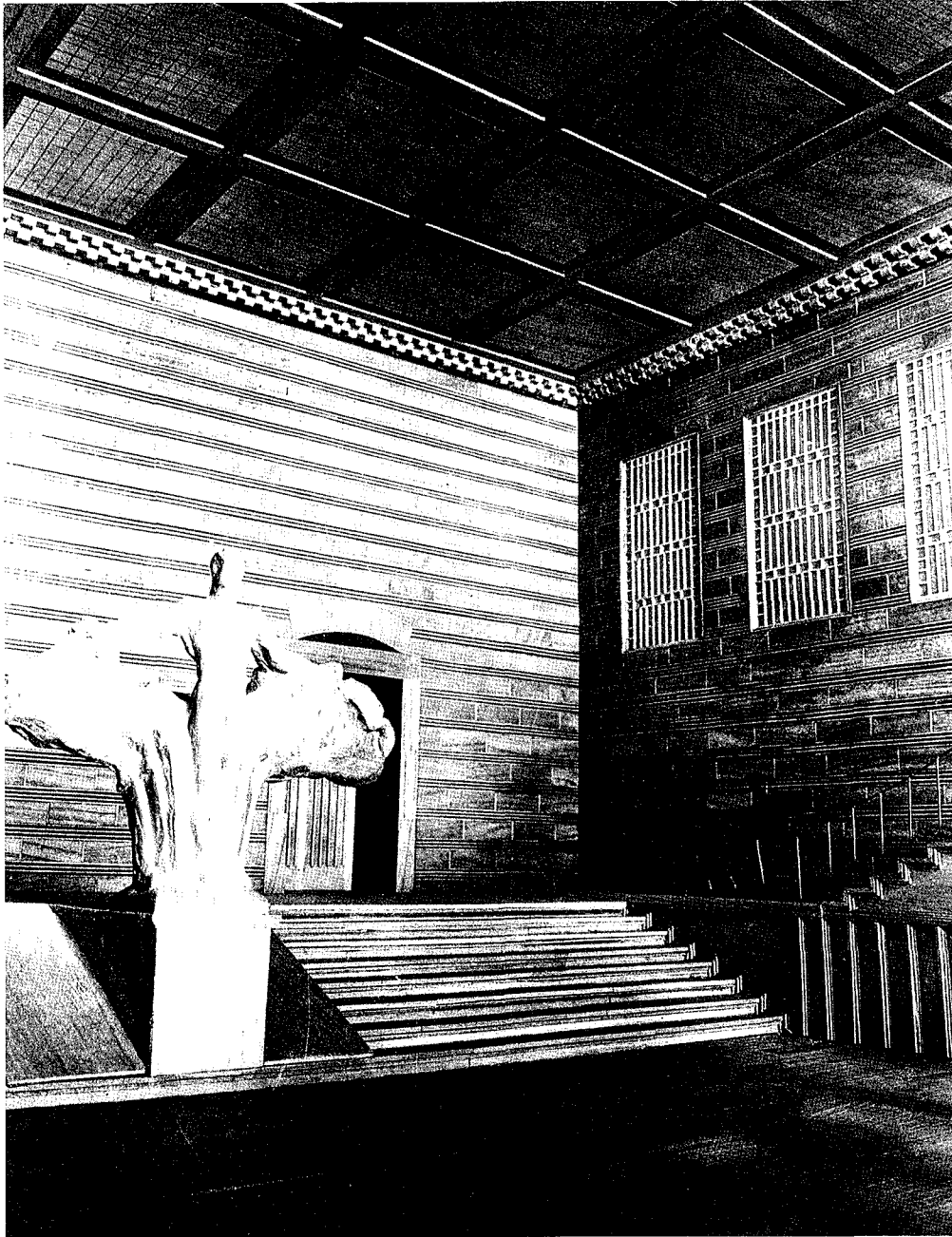
Interior of main auditorium



Corridor facing the courtyard



Detail of ceiling
Photographs: Atelye Mat



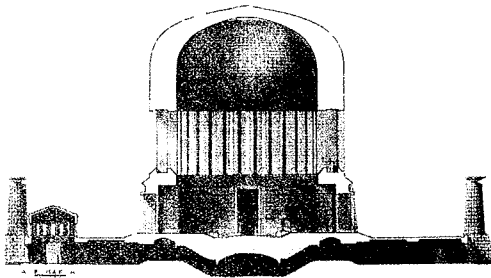
Main auditorium at the centre of the quadrangle

“It is possible to rediscover the Ottoman-Turkish High-style through a different perspective . Here it is not a matter of using or discarding the dome. Rather it has to be understood as a series of architectural codes. solids and voids, the impact of structure and materials, and the consequent beauty . Ottoman-Turkish architecture has an extremely dramatic quality resulting from the contrast of small windows next to large windows, of narrow projections next to wide ones, etc This is a quality that is difficult to find even in Italy, the homeland of classical civic architecture It is perhaps coincidental? But for instance, in the Yeni Cami Hüsnâ Kasrı or the Ekmekçiöğlü Kervansarayı in Edirne, there are certain architectural elements, certain mass effects very modern in essence Their beauty does not rest in domes or ornamental elements here and there . . . Their masses are beautiful . . . Their masses are modern. I wanted to do something similar but I did not have the chance to pursue this course I believe it is worth investigating Someone else should do it. There is too much to be investigated by the new generation A superb architecture can come out of it ”

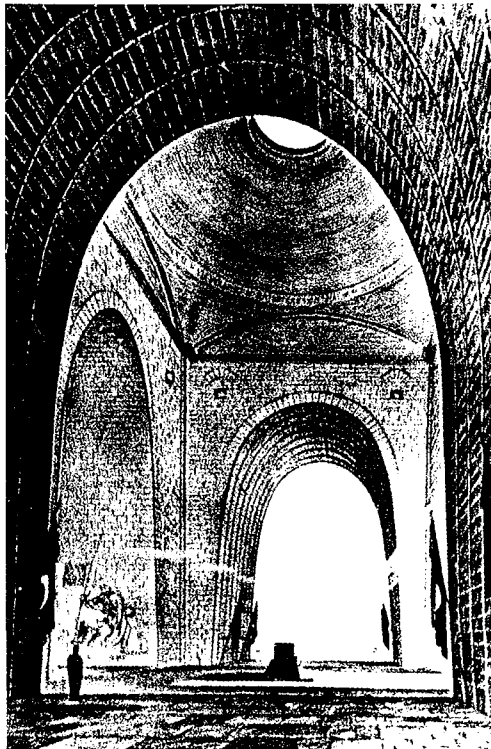
– Interview with Sedat Hakkı Eldem, 28 February 1986

“When I first discovered De Chirico, I realised that it was not architecture but a stage-set. So I experimented with it, maintaining that it was necessary to turn this stage-set into architecture.”

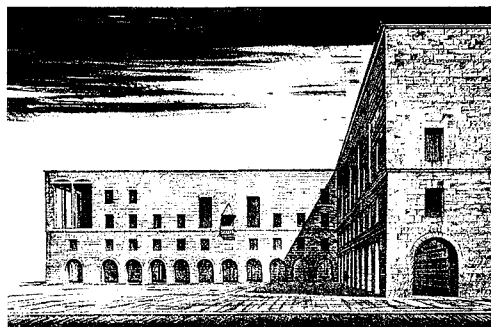
– Interview with Sedat Hakkı Eldem, 28 February 1986



Competition project for Atatürk's Mausoleum/"Anıt Kabir", 1942



Competition project for Çanakkale War Memorial, 1942



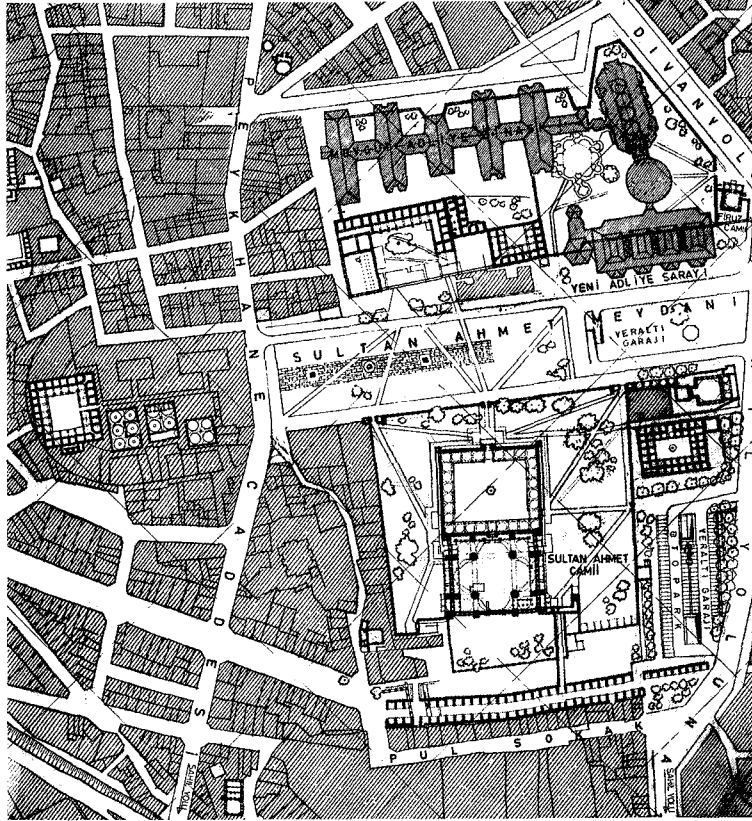
Competition project for the Municipal Palace of Adana, 1944

A number of competition projects from the same period portray Eldem as a visionary architect in the age of ideals. These entry proposals prepared in collaboration with his former students and teaching colleagues, essentially investigate the theme of the monument.

The project for the international competition for Atatürk's Mausoleum/"Anıt Kabir" exploits the dramatic effect of a pure form — a flat dome conceived in stone and at a monumental scale reminiscent of the visionary architecture of Etienne Louis Boulee. The project for Çanakkale War Memorial is another pure and solid object — a massive stone *mastaba* raised on a high platform. The monument stands on four giant "legs" constituting the corners of a square with a central space lit through an *oculus* in the dome. Both projects convey a spiritual concern: a contemplation of the idea of death. Thus preoccupied with the traditional *tirbe* or tomb type, sources of inspiration extend back to the grand traditions of Central Asian and Islamic forms in tomb architecture, in an attempt to retrieve their archaic power.

Finally, the competition project for the Municipal Palace of Adana (1944) displays a strong mass effect in stone. The arrangements of windows and openings on solid surfaces make acknowledged references to the Mehterhane Kasrı/Ibrahim Paşa Sarayı in Istanbul. These premises constitute a different and untrodden ground for Eldem; a different interpretation of Ottoman-Turkish High Style in terms of its masses, its solids and voids rather than stylistic features. Further reinforced by the rendering of shadows, the equestrian statue in the perspective and the overall bizarre effect reminiscent of de Chirico paintings, the project anticipates some of the *leitmotifs* of today's neo-rationalists. The latter's cold classicism of de Chirico "stage sets", their appropriation of history as basic types, forms and constructional a-priories rather than stylistic features, their emphasis on monument and collective memory, and even the inspiration they derive from the Enlightenment all seem to echo the unrealised vision of Eldem in the 1940s even though not expressed in these terms.

V. Rationalist Discourse



Site plan, Istanbul Palace of Justice, 1948

“The beginning of a theory is, I believe, the insistence on certain themes on the part of the architects and artists, in particular, the ability to hit the centre of a theme to follow, to operate a choice inside architecture and to always try to solve that problem. This insistence is also the clearest sign of an evident and valid autobiographical coherence of an artist. As Seneca affirmed, it is the fool that always starts back at the beginning and who refuses to follow, in a continuous fashion, the path of his own experience.”

— Aldo Rossi, “Architecture for Museums” in Aldo Rossi: Selected Writings and Projects, London: AD, 1983, p. 16

A milestone in Eldem’s career is the Istanbul Palace of Justice, the “continuous saga” which has engaged the architect from 1948 well into the late 1970s. It was designed in collaboration with Emin Onat as a competition entry. The jury included Paul Bonatz, an advocate of Turkish national style, and W.M. Dudok known for his modernist predilections.

The Eldem/Onat scheme consists of a long corridor or “interior street”, a backbone along which blocks containing the offices and the courts are “plugged in”. This chain of blocks is situated behind the İbrahim Paşa Sarayı on Sultanahmet Square, and culminates at Divanyolu Boulevard with a larger block for the prosecutors’ offices and the grand court. The latter part was not built however, when construction was interrupted due to archaeological remains excavated on site. Thereafter, Eldem has reconsidered the project many times for extension and modification proposals. The unrealised 1978 proposal incorporates the excavated ruins into the proposal by raising the blocks above them and sheltering the historical rotunda underneath a geodesic dome.

The built portion of the Palace of Justice displays the strong sense of order of blocks repeated along a backbone. The reinforced concrete structural frame is clearly expressed on the elevations, with vertical lines of columns and the horizontal bands of slabs. The infill walls are faced with stone, instead of the ceramic tile facing that Eldem had initially proposed. The logic of a skeleton structure is manifest also in the large glazed areas infilling the frame, and the rectangular box-like character of the buildings. This has prompted some historians/critics to designate the building as “... a rational, functional prism”¹ marking the end of nationalist and revivalist tendencies in Turkish architecture.

Such views proceed from the premise that “functional prisms” or “honest expression of structural skeleton” lend a building its “rationalist” attribute, which, in turn, is a decisive sign of the Modern Movement and an antithesis of historicist, revivalist attitudes. What eludes such an assessment is that rationalism is, before anything else, a philosophical system based on factual truths; on primary postulates that cannot be doubted or denied. It is the Cartesian search for secure epistemological grounds; for mathematical/geometrical certainty independent of circumstance or experience. In architecture, it is a search for formal and structural bases in fact, the truth of which has already

¹ U. Alsaç, “The Second Period of National Architecture” in *Modern Turkish Architecture*, 1984, p. 102

been established. In this sense, it is the philosophical opposite of the Modern Movement's empiricist lesson that problems should be solved as they arise without any formal preconceptions. And it is at this point that Eldem once more approaches the Italian neo-rationalist *tendenza*. His *leitmotifs*, established through repeated use, deny the building any kind of radical break with his ongoing search for national architecture. His three-storey tall colonnades — the giant order of slenderly proportioned columns, the wide projecting eaves of the roof and the overall austere and monumental effect connect back to the aura of the “stone age” — as illustrated for his initial studies and sketches for the competition.

Meanwhile, the designation of the Palace of Justice as “... à forerunner of international style”² as proposed by some critics/historians, turns out to be merely confusing, since international style is essentially associated with the image of a glass skin stretched over a structural frame. Instead Eldem's clearly legible reinforced concrete skeleton draws him once more closer to a version of Italian rationalism epitomised in the 1930s by Giuseppe Terragni, the Casa del Fascio in particular with its skeletal aesthetic. Continuing this trend, the more recent Italian rationalists pursue a discourse in terms which are not too far from Eldem's. An affinity between the sketches of the Palace of Justice and a particular perspective by G. Grassi and his friends for the student dormitories in Chieti, cannot pass unnoticed.

² M Tapan, “International Style: Liberalism in Architecture” in *Modern Turkish Architecture*, 1984, p 109



Interior perspective

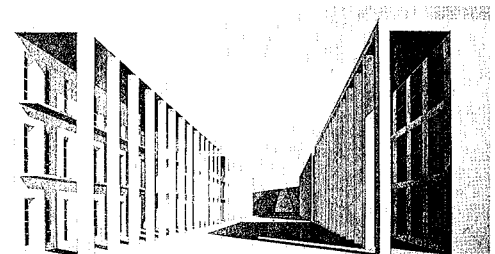
Perspective study of the tall colonnade



Initial studies for the competition Istanbul Palace of Justice, 1948

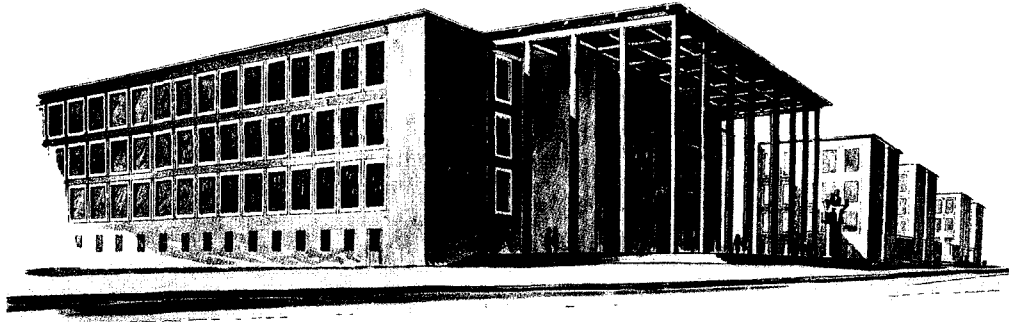
“In practice, the competition for the Istanbul Palace of Justice marked the shift from the Second National Movement to the International Style. A rational approach was the order of the day W M Dudok, a well-known rationalist was on the jury. The competition was won by Sedad Hakkı Eldem and Emin Onat, two educators. A different attitude toward structure was now evident: the reinforced concrete structure was clearly expressed on the facade. However, in the treatment of the roof and the openings the influence of the Second National Movement was still discernable ... Although one cannot say that it did so successfully, the building was nevertheless important as a forerunner of the International Style”

— Mete Tapan, “International Style: Liberalism In Architecture” in *Modern Turkish Architecture*, Philadelphia, 1984, p 109



Student dormitories in Chieti, Italy (G Grassi et al) from *Rational Architecture*, AAM, 1978

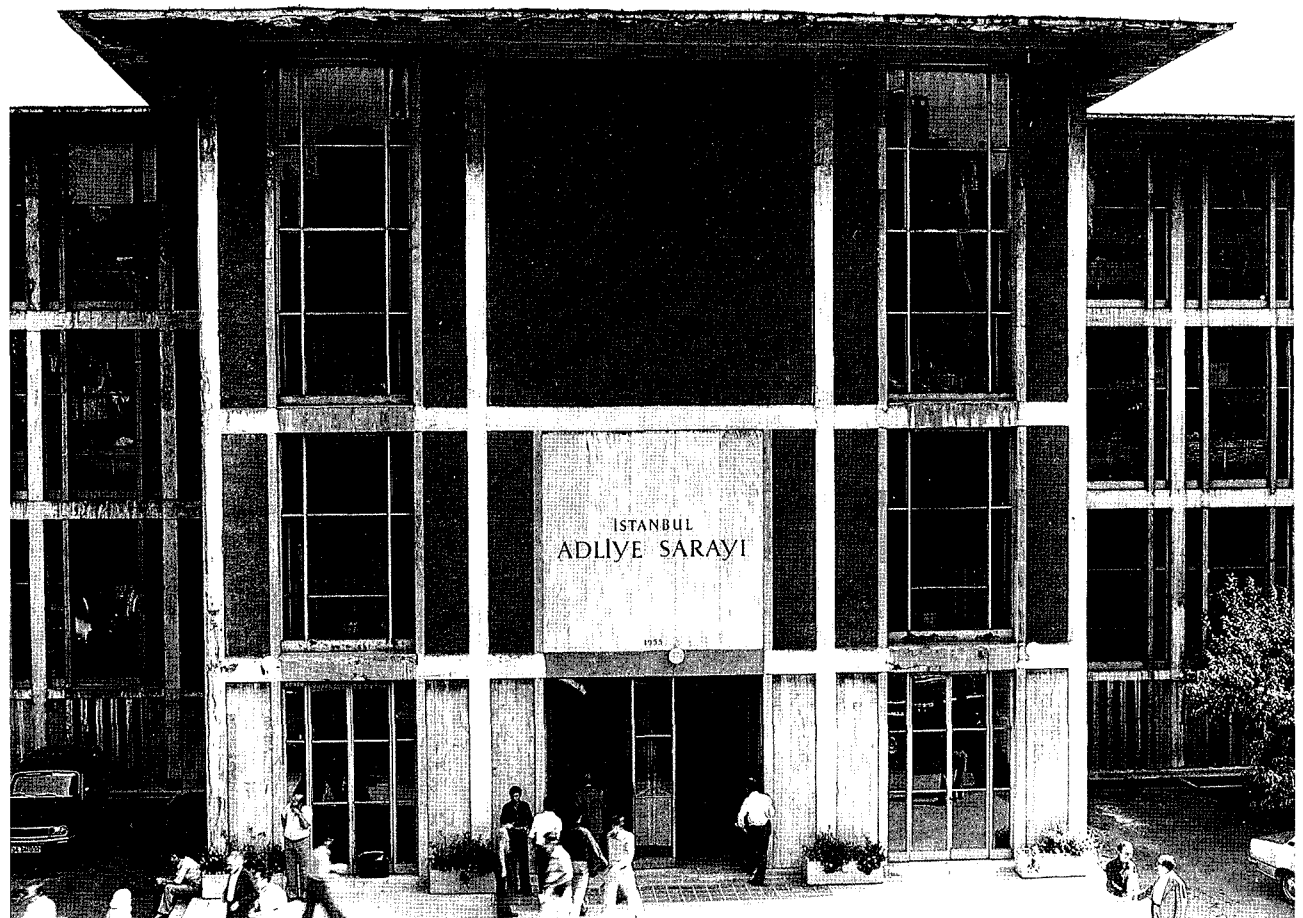
Istanbul Palace of Justice Istanbul, 1948



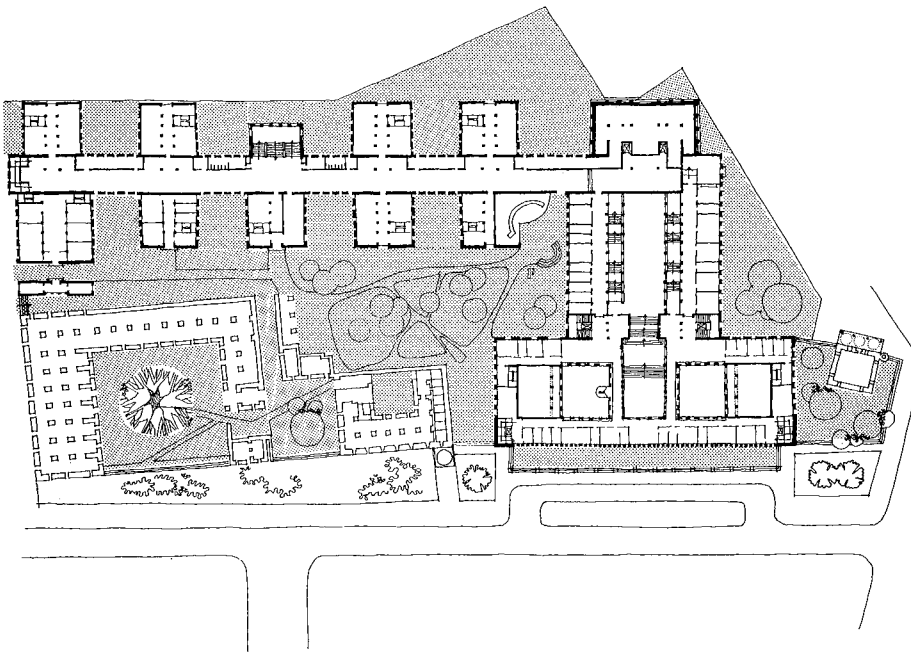
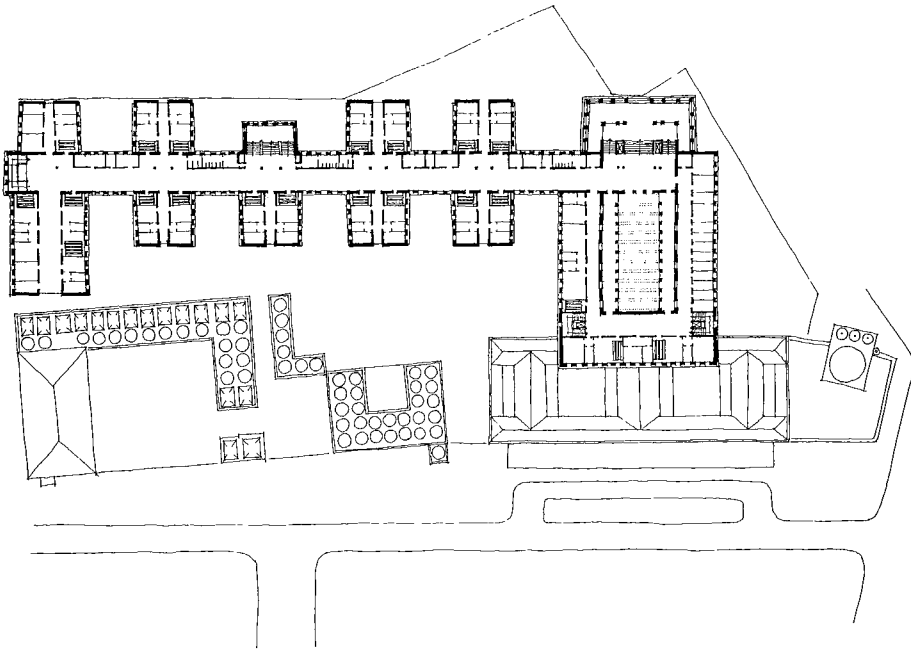
“The three-storey tall portico of the third block in the Palace of Justice ... an element previously used in Istanbul University Faculties of Sciences and Letters, and in the library/auditorium/Provost’s office building of Ankara Technical University Project. It is a middle-eastern motif ... to cast a shade over the building behind and make it look more elegant. This element, coupled with a separation and clear expression of the reinforced concrete skeleton, independent of the arrangement of walls ... I believe that such porticos are extremely appropriate for Turkish architecture How they can be used remains yet to be investigated and deserves attention

— Interview with Sedad Hakkı Eldem, 1 April 1986

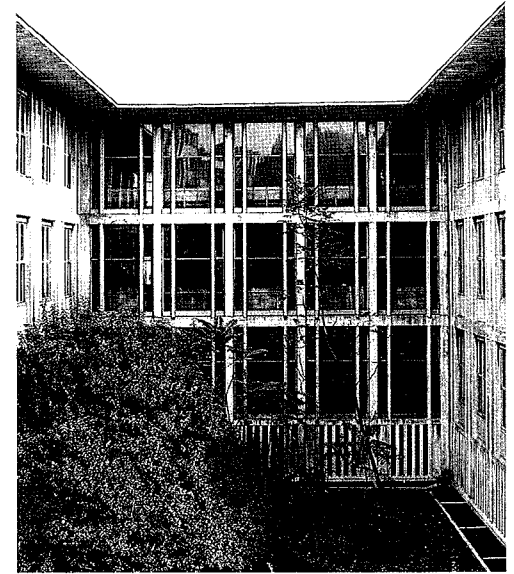
Perspective sketch of the Işık Sokağı elevation



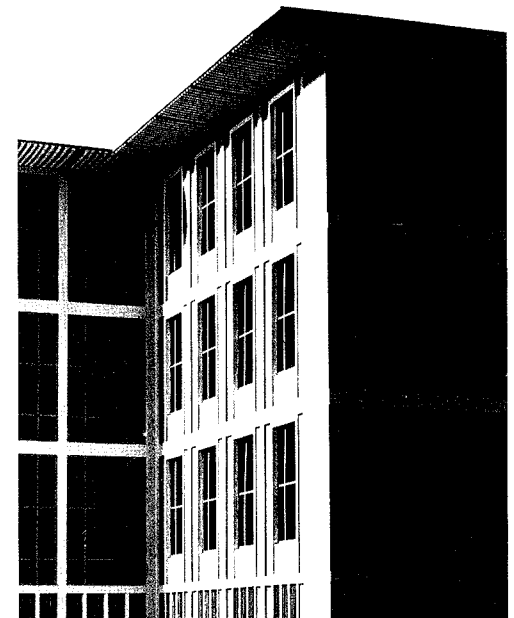
Main entrance



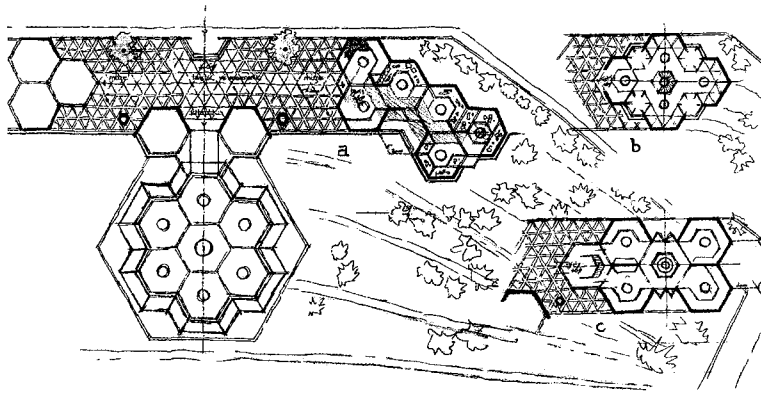
Floor plans



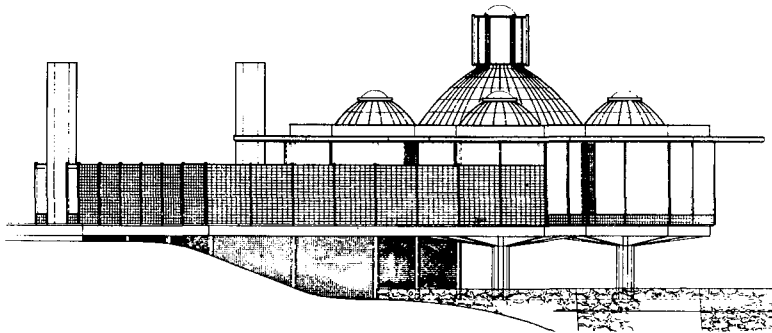
Courtyard between blocks



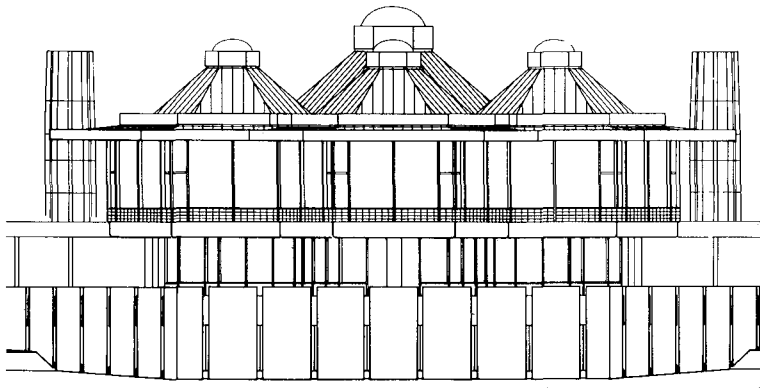
Detail of Işık Sokağı elevation



Site study, Atatürk Library and cultural complex, Istanbul, 1973



Elevation, Turkish Restaurant, Istanbul Hilton Hotel, 1954-62



Elevation, Koç Foundation, Atatürk Library, Istanbul, 1973

As far as this rationalist discourse of Eldem is concerned a different but recurrent theme exists in his work; the hexagon is a formal, typological a-priori to be used and reused, independent of function. It is a geometrical preoccupation independent also of scale — ranging from the hexagonal ceramic tiles of the Istanbul Hilton Hotel to the overall composition of hexagonals in the Atatürk Cultural Centre Project in Istanbul.

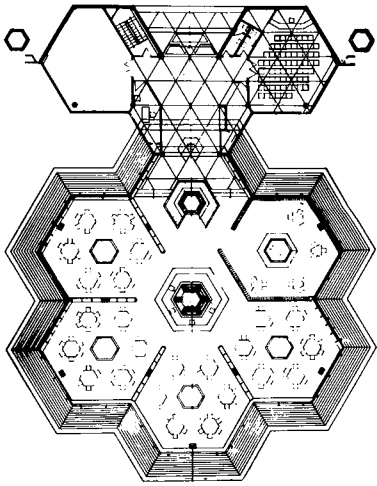
Istanbul Atatürk Cultural Centre was conceived for the Koç Foundation, as a project incorporating library, museum and exhibition halls on the hexagonal grid of the site plan but only the library was built 1973–75. The acknowledged reference for the library is Eldem’s unbuilt project for the Turkish Restaurant of Istanbul Hilton Hotel. Not discarding the idea and continuing to work with it (1954–62), Eldem has adopted the same geometrical order of the plan, modifying the use for the library. In a way, the library is a belated materialisation of the restaurant; the realisation of an unfulfilled but persistent formal concern. In both projects, the hexagonal plan is superimposed on a triangular structural grid, legible in the roof form as hexagonal skylights.

The library functions as a closed system with stacks in the basement; the administration, entrance and offices on the above level accessible from the raised platform; and the main reading rooms and auditoriums on the top floor, skylit through the plexiglass caps of the hexagonal lanterns.

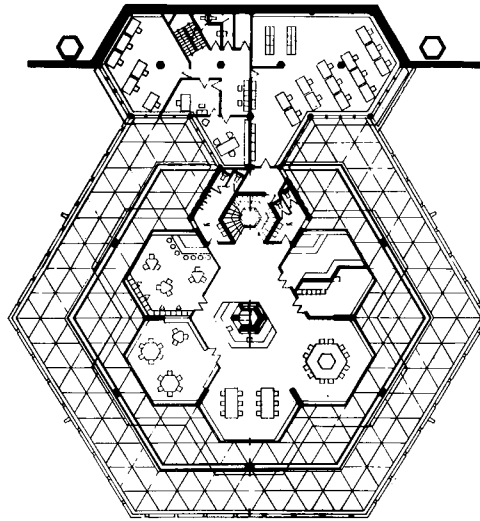
The same hexagonal plan was once again retrieved from the architect’s intellectual stock and reused in a competition entry proposal for the Ankara Atatürk Cultural Centre. In other words, the hexagon is a pure, geometrical “object-type” and the product of a rationalist mind; it is a “deep structure” which appears and reappears in the architect’s career — just as does his repetition of vertical windows. Recurrent themes thus bear testimony to Eldem’s rationalist search for a vocabulary; or to “repetition building up *repertoire*” as he himself prefers to call it.



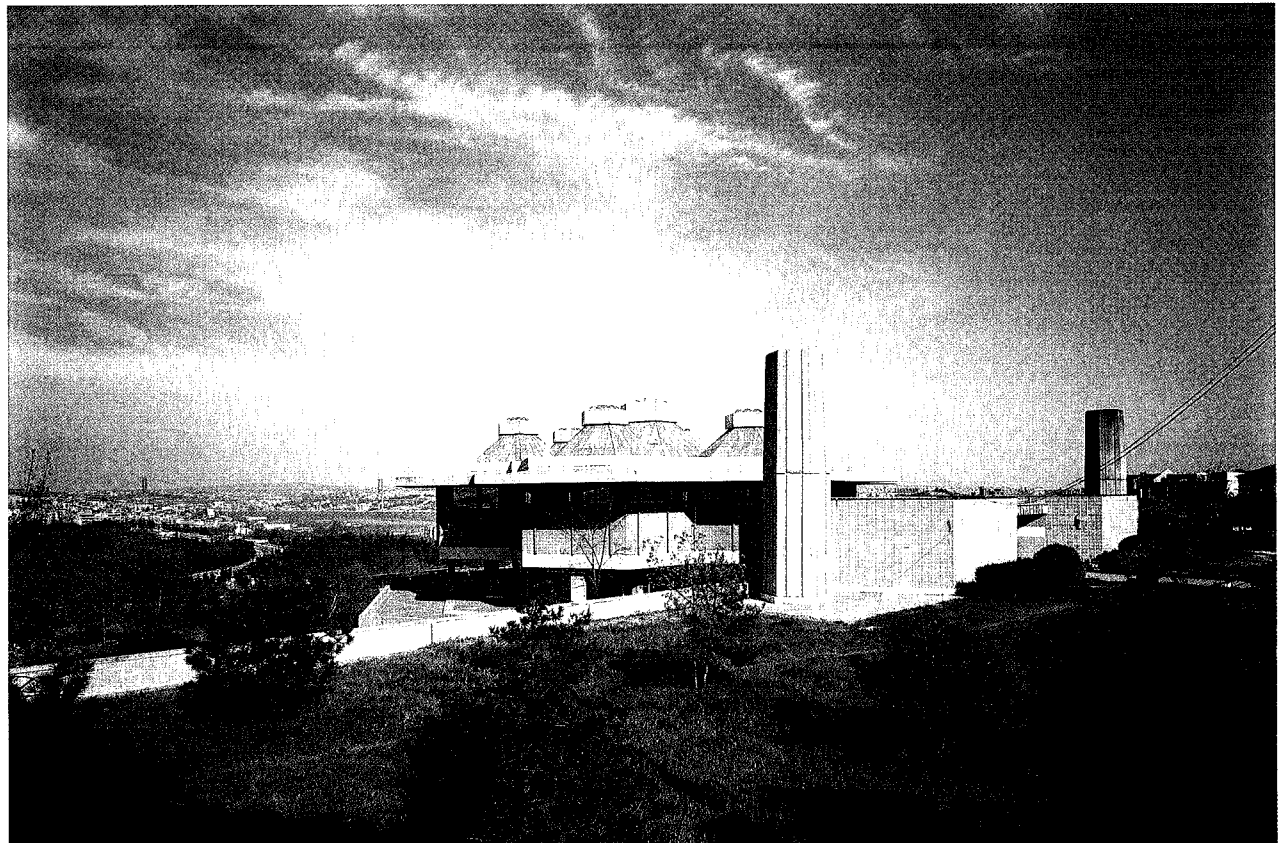
Koç Foundation, Atatürk Library Istanbul, 1973



Entrance level plan



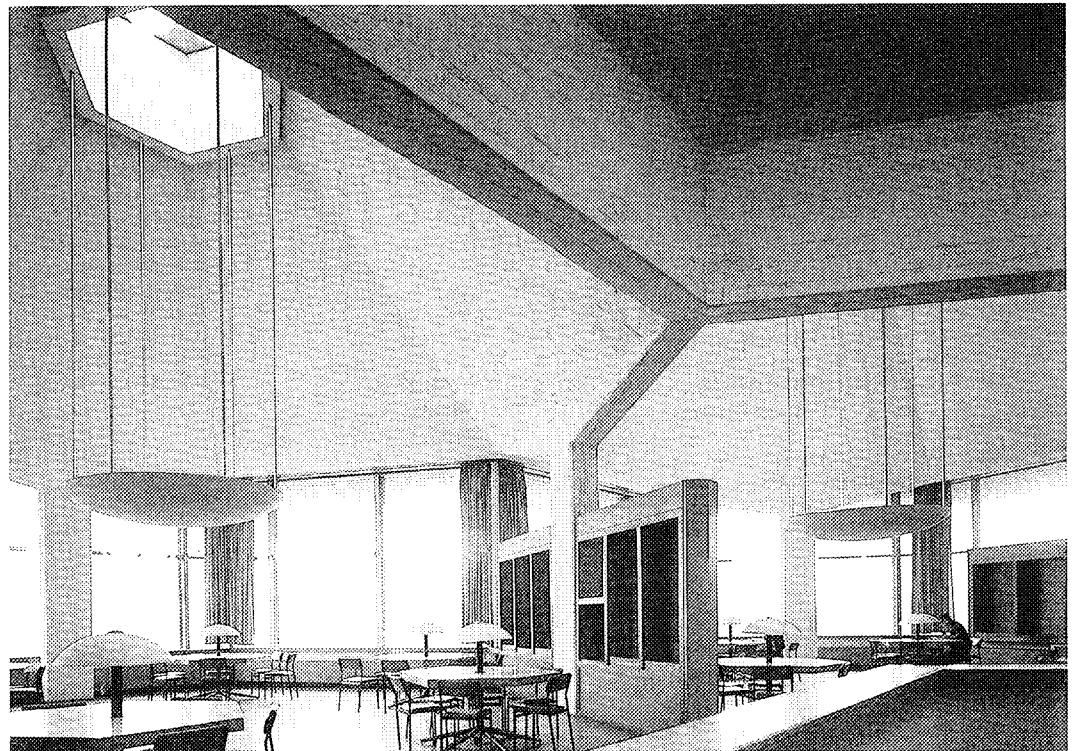
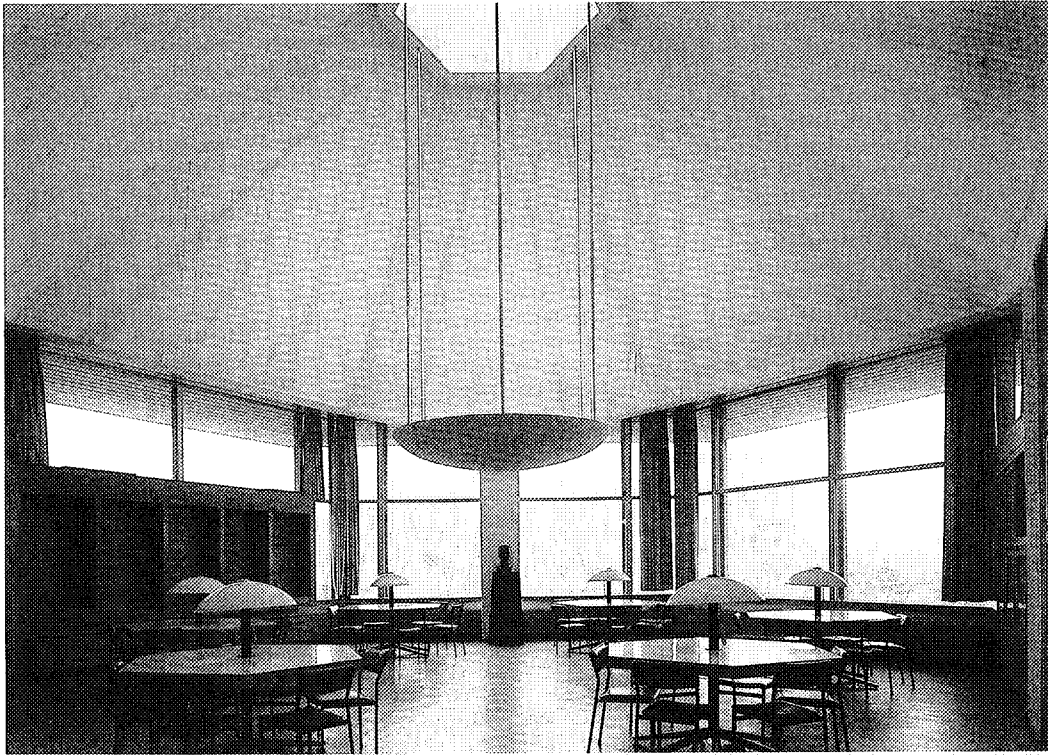
Upper floor plan



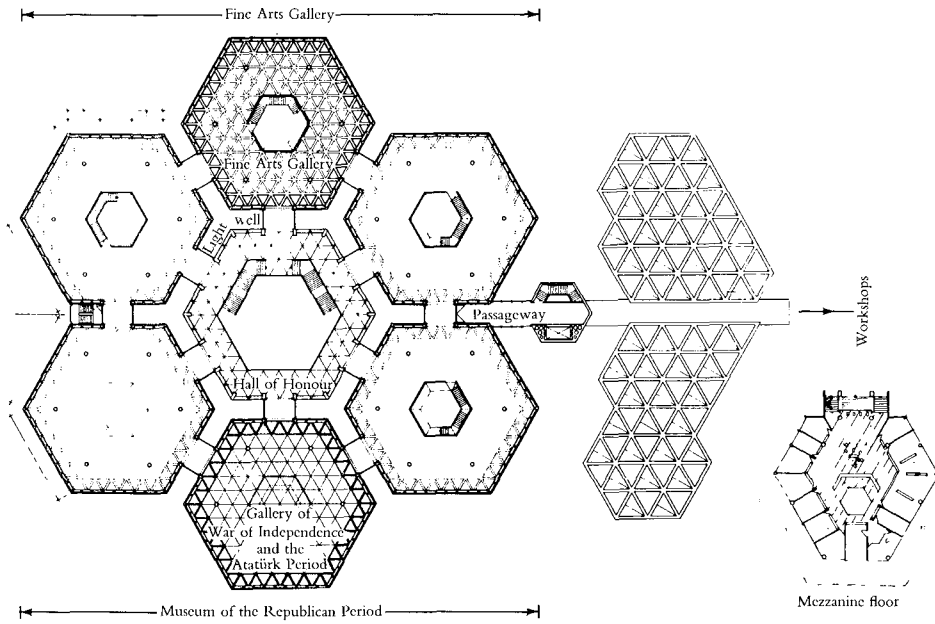
General view



General view

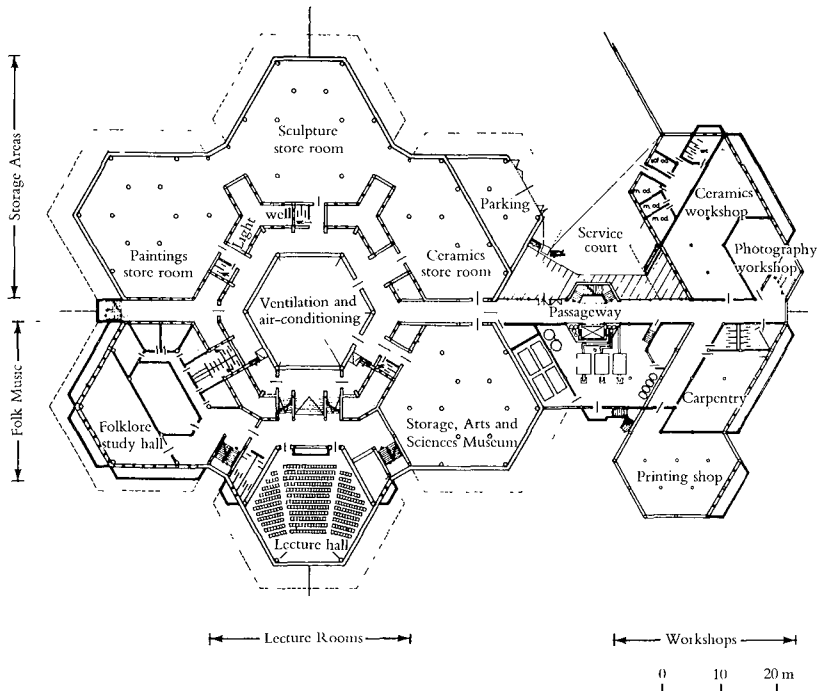


Interiors
Photographs: Atelye Mat



“Repetition also involves repertoire doesn’t it? ... Now, about this Turkish restaurant and the Atatürk Library. It was a matter of obstinacy on my part. Such hexagonal pavilions do exist in our tradition, bearing the names of great artists and architects. It was not embarrassing to make them. In those two buildings there was a similar need for a major motif and I adopted it. I see nothing wrong with it. Nothing wrong with “imitating one’s self”. Otherwise when a project gets built and sealed with the patent of the architect, not to be repeated thereafter, it is doomed to finish . . . to die.”

– Interview with Seda Hakkı Eldem, 28 February 1986



Floor plans Competition project for Ankara Atatürk Cultural Centre, 1983

VI. A Contextualist Experiment

“In the Social Security Complex, located in the historical Zeyrek district of Istanbul, Eldem has proposed an extension of the neighbouring residential quarter. The building complex reproduces the basic pattern of the urban residential aggregate, with small blocks articulated around narrow open spaces: streets, by-passes and squares. The blocks of different levels each repeat common facade elements: rows of vertical windows modulated by small concrete columns, tiny edge profiles, an atomised small-scale impression, accentuated by the use of geometrically ornamented panels on the surfaces. This architecture stands in between the spatial morphology of a spontaneously grown historic Istanbul quarter and the rigid architectonic discipline of an Auguste Perret classicism.”

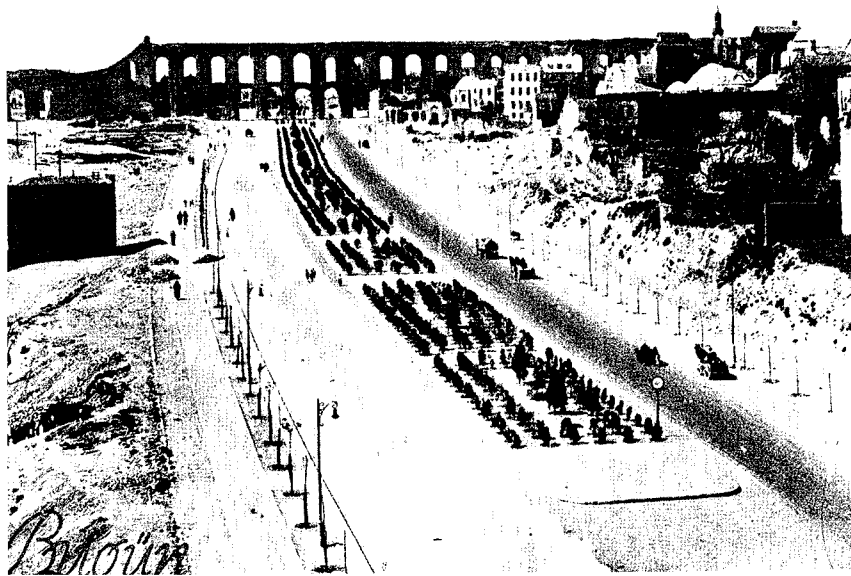
– Atilla Yücel, “Contemporary Turkish Architecture” in *Mimar: Architecture in Development* 10, Oct – Dec 1983, p. 61

Representing a major event in the development of contemporary Turkish architecture is Eldem’s Social Security Agency Complex in Zeyrek (1962–64), winner of a 1986 Aga Khan Award for Architecture. His life-long emphasis on cultural continuity here transcends his preoccupation with building typology and extends into the realm of urban morphology. In the design of the complex, Eldem looks back to the lessons to be derived not only from the traditional houses, but also from the character and scale of the streets and squares containing them. It is the traditional *mahalle* (neighbourhood), as the smaller unit of the urban fabric, that constitutes the starting point of an architecture, recognisably modern yet sensitive to the physical and cultural context in which it is located. The major thrust of the design rests in the intention to fit the complex into its surroundings. This certainly has a lot to do with the prevailing historical/cultural atmosphere in architecture, corresponding to a period when “new regionalism” debates permeated Turkey in the 1960s with a critical reassessment of the international style of the 1950s and as Atilla Yücel puts it “a new re-historicised architecture”.¹

At an urban scale, the Social Security Agency Complex is one episode in the history of the Zeyrek district in Istanbul. This area with its traditional fabric of wooden houses still largely intact and with the Byzantine church of Pantokrator at a dominating high location, was first disrupted when the Atatürk Boulevard was cut through, passing underneath the Roman aquaduct to join Aksaray area to the Unkapanı Bridge on the Golden Horn. The two sides of the boulevard were then filled with concrete blocks, leaving the traditional *mahalles* behind, most in a derelict condition.

The Social Security Agency project was commissioned to Eldem as a rental complex of shops and offices to be situated on a triangular lot where the Zeyrek slope meets the Atatürk Boulevard. A two-level “interior street” running parallel to the boulevard constitutes the spine of the project. Blocks of different sizes and heights are attached to this spine, in conformity to the topography of the site sloping upwards toward the old *mahalles* of Zeyrek. Along the boulevard, the blocks are interrupted by paved courtyards and the long elevation is thus fragmented in mass and scale.

Shops are lined along the interior street running at two-levels. The upper street culminates at the triangular end of the site with a small square giving access to the cafeteria, and incor-



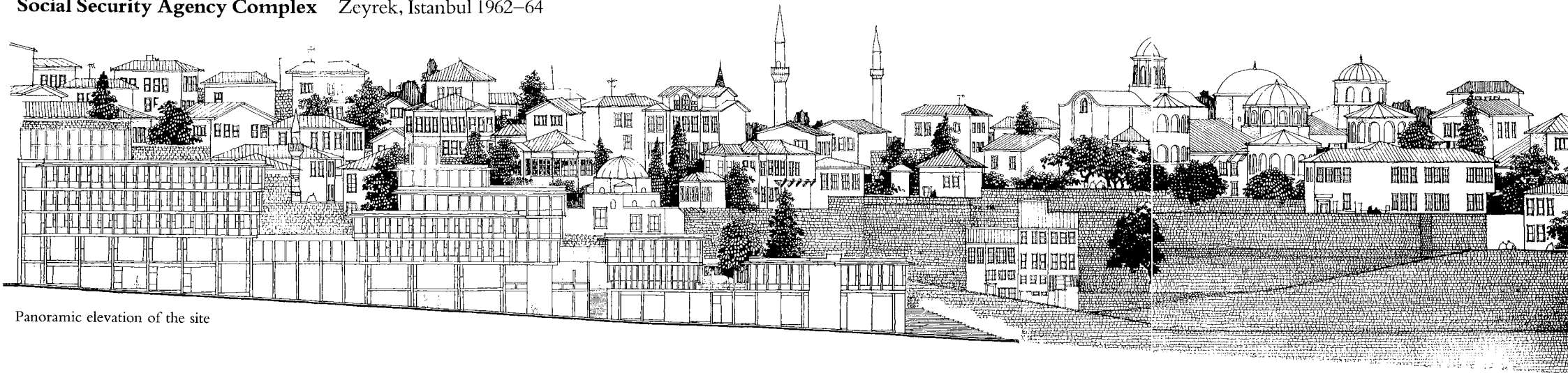
Old photograph of Atatürk Boulevard and Zeyrek district looking towards the Roman aquaduct

Overleaf: Atatürk Boulevard and Zeyrek Social Security Agency Complex looking towards the Roman aquaduct. Photograph: Ercal Aksoy

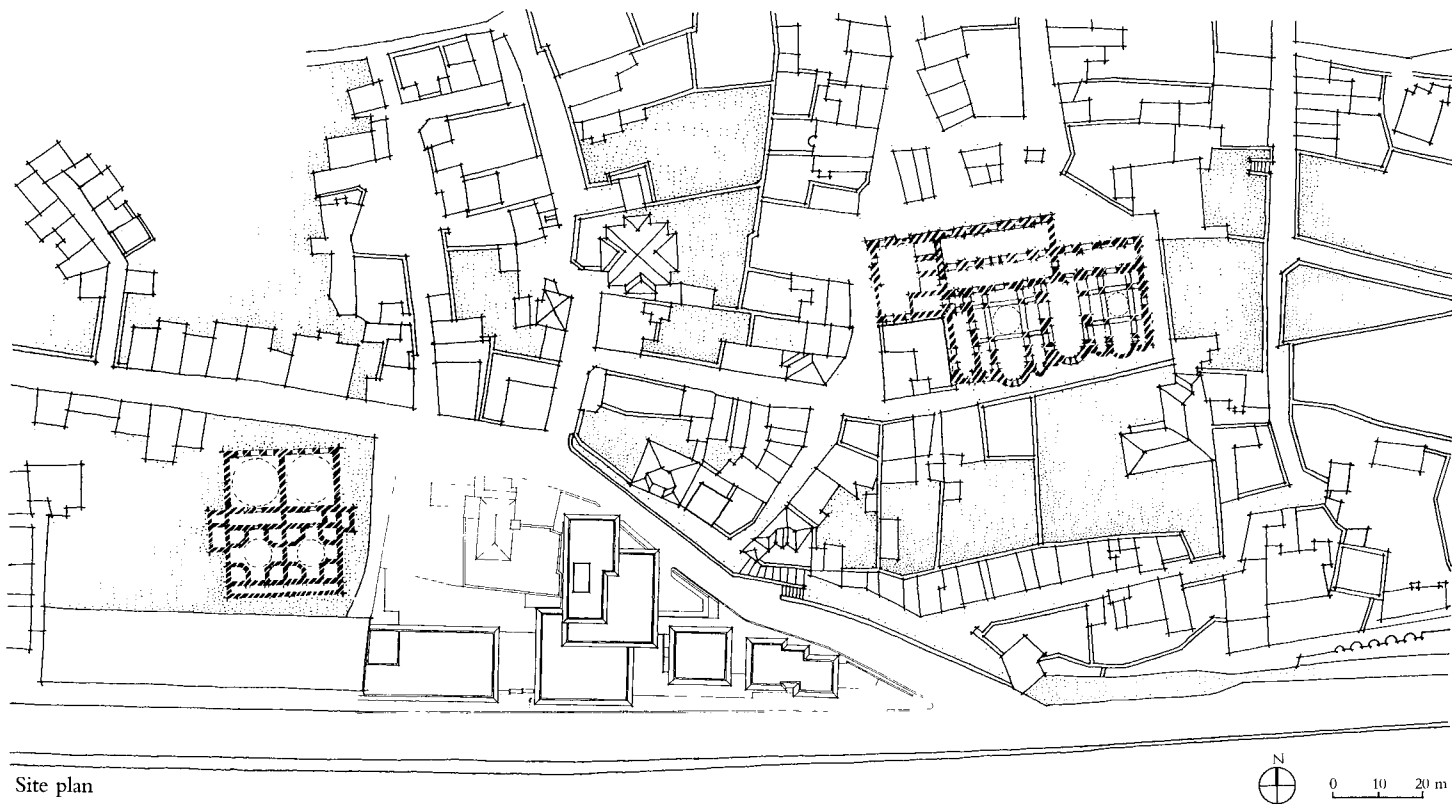
¹ A. Yücel, “Pluralism Takes Command: The Turkish Architectural Scene Today” in *Modern Turkish Architecture*, 1984, p. 141



Social Security Agency Complex Zeyrek, Istanbul 1962–64



Panoramic elevation of the site



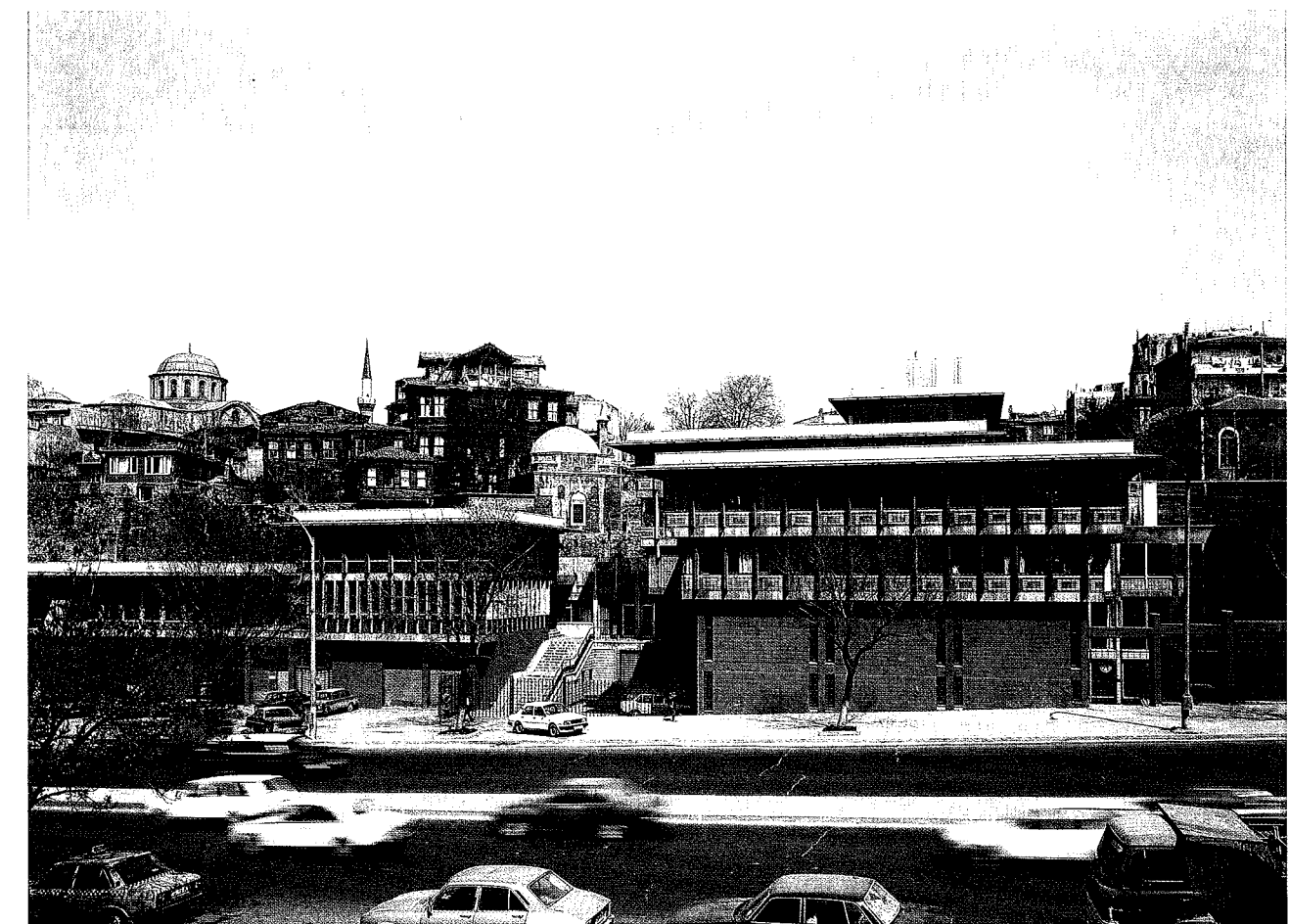
Site plan

“After 1960 the earliest champion of this idea [i.e. spiritual continuity with the past] Sedat Hakki Eldem, followed his earlier experiments with increased sophistication. His Social Insurance Agency Building at Zeyrek, Istanbul, was praised for the sensitive composition of articulated volumes, which harmonises exceedingly well with the traditional background and the complex topography of the site.”

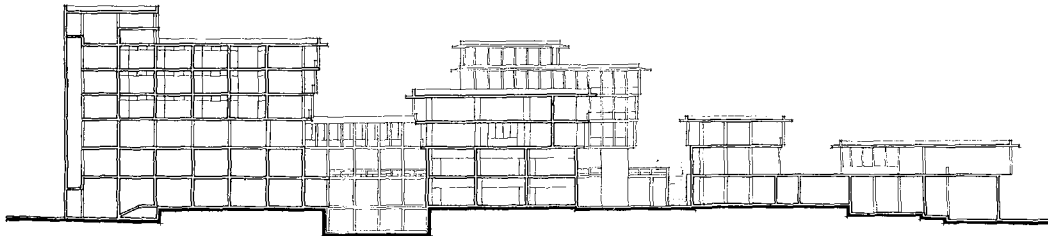
– Doğan Kuban, *“A Survey of Modern Turkish Architecture”* in *Architecture in Continuity*, 1985, p. 69

“The notion that some ideal forms can exist as fragments, ‘collaged’ into an empirical environment, and that other ideal forms can withstand elaborate deformations in the process of being adjusted to a context have largely eluded the modern architect.”

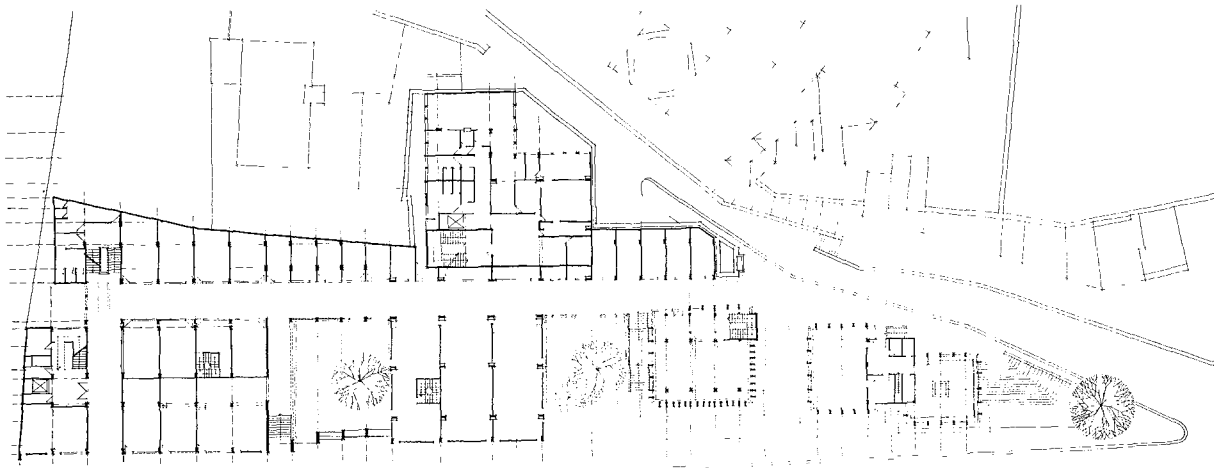
– Tom Schumacher, *“Contextualism: Urban Ideals and Deformations”* in *Casabella* 359/360, 1971, p. 84



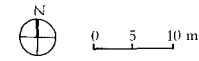
Main facade



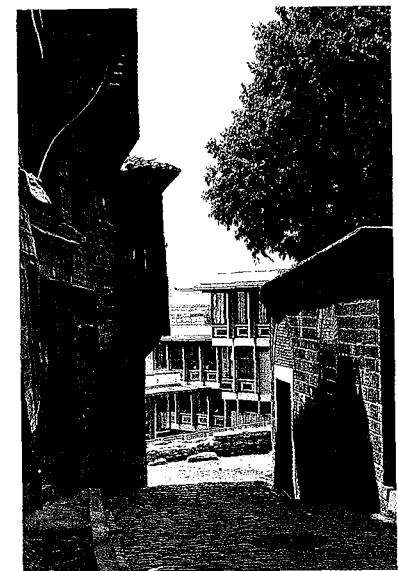
Longitudinal section



First floor plan



Corner of Atatürk Boulevard and Zeyrek slope



View down the Zeyrek slope
Photographs: Etdal Aksoy

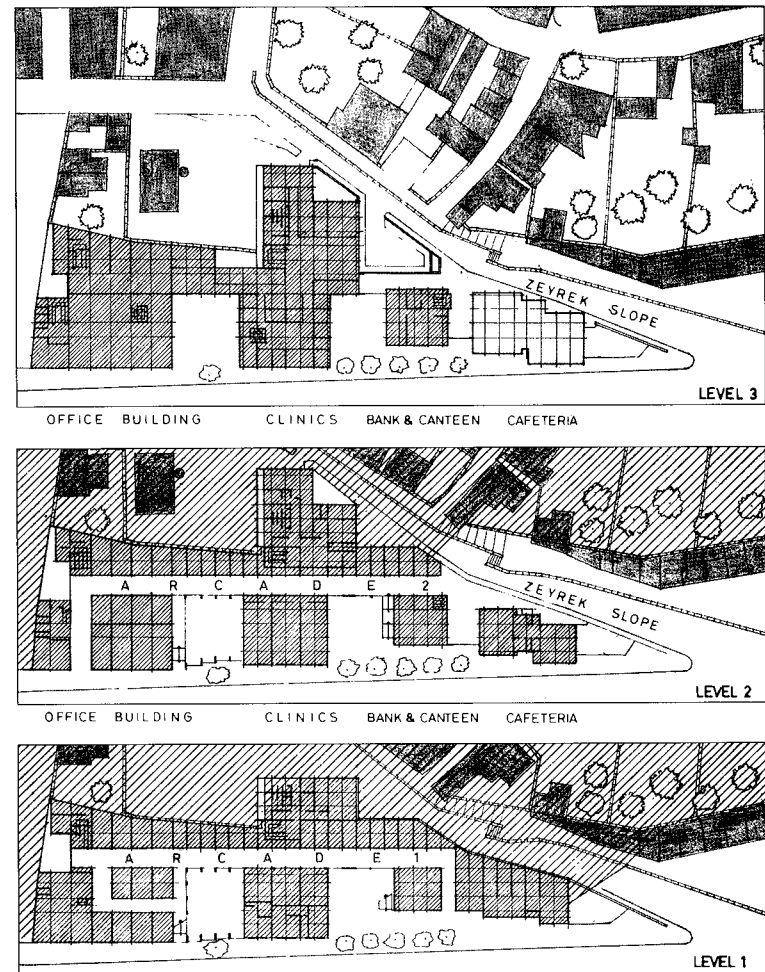
porating, on the sloping side, an old *çeşme* or fountain. The triangular corner of the lot is ingeniously treated with steps connecting the lower level of the boulevard with the upper level of the cobble-stone paved slope. The initial intention to locate a coffee kiosk at this corner was not realised.

Above the level of the spinal “interior streets”, the separate blocks are not connected. The central one contains the health clinic, and the one at the higher end of the site, the offices on three storeys. The current modification of the use of the building, and the conversion of interior streets and shops into offices and archives have substantially impaired the initial concept of the architect.

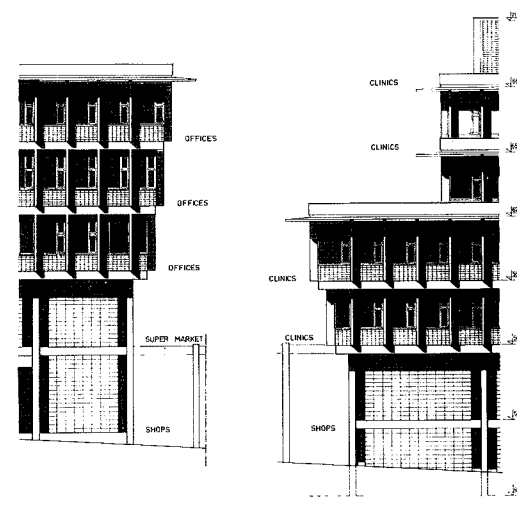
While the complex is sensitive to the scale and topography of the site, the individual blocks clearly exhibit Eldem’s interpretation of the traditional house in modern terms. The upper floors sit on the solid base at ground level, and they gradually project forward in a stepped section culminating at a wide eave which borders the edge of a flat roof. The flat roof was a requirement specified in the brief. The reinforced concrete skeleton of the building is again clearly separated from the infilling walls and windows. The infill parapets under the windows are faced with grey and yellowish cream coloured ceramic tiles. The Eldem *leitmotif* of the repetitive pattern of vertical windows on the upper floors is continued on all sides of the blocks, thus responding not just to the boulevard in the front, but to the whole context surrounding it.

Eldem’s contextual consciousness in Zeyrek unfolds a sensitivity to the physical/topographical context and also to the historical context which is imprinted in memory. Going back to his explorations of Zeyrek area on foot in his student days, he makes a conscious effort in design to recapture his recollections and give them a corporeal form in modern terms. It is ironic that the architect’s deliberate effort to respond to the context has been irreversibly undermined with the rapid disappearance of the very context to which he wanted to respond.

The contextualist concern displayed in the Social Security Agency Complex is widely acknowledged and acclaimed by critics and historians. It still remains, however, to point out the broader significance of the topic within the architectural culture at large. From the late 1960s onwards, it was not only the “facelessness” of the international style that was subjected to severe criticism, but also the “placelessness” resulting from a disregard of context, i.e. of the imperatives of site, topography, climate, culture and tradition. In this critical atmosphere, what appears to have been common to the various “regionalist”,



Diagrammatic plan of three levels



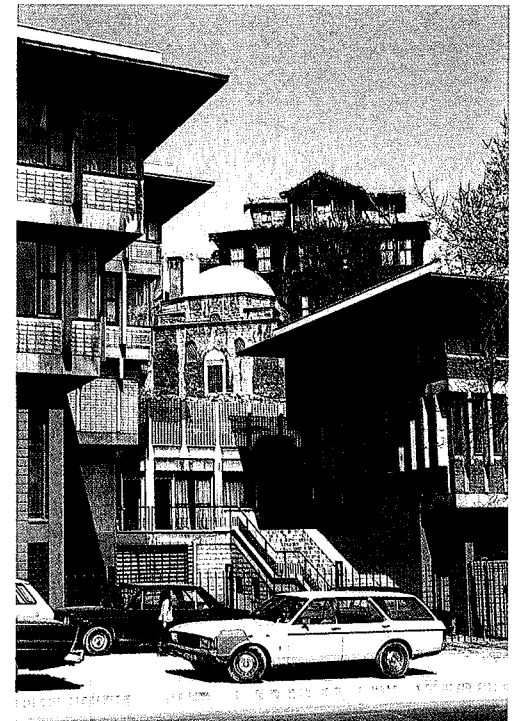
Elevation system

“organic”, “brutalist”, “contextualist”, etc. deviations from the international style is a rejection of the perfect and finished glass-and-concrete-box; a desire to break it down to more context-conscious forms. It is within this cultural framework that Eldem’s Social Security Agency Complex needs to be viewed. Anticipating the brand of contextualism advocated by Colin Rowe, the complex displays how, the ideal-type of a rationalist mind, can empirically bend in conformity to a given context — both physical/topographical and historical/cultural. In this broad theoretical sense, the Social Security Agency Complex is unique in Eldem’s career, exhibiting something different from the usual “context-free syntax”² of many of his works. If Eldem’s individual buildings represent the singular statements of his discourse, the Social Security Agency Complex is, no doubt, a complete essay. The repetition of precast facade elements and vertically proportioned windows with tile-faced parapets bear the exclusive seal of Eldem, while the overall scheme illustrates that he has more to say: that it is the modern architect’s responsibility to engage with questions of scale and character, particularly in the Third World where the socio-economic dynamics gravely threaten the cultural continuity of the urban fabric. The Social Security Agency Complex is a built declaration of Eldem’s practice to not just establish an architectural language, but to implement it at various scales.

² As Atilla Yücel assesses in many of his writings

“ . . . Many years later when I found this commission . . . The task was at a location that had long been of interest to me. I wanted to keep the architectural character . . . of open and covered streets. What I had in mind was the image of old Zeyrek street going up . . . In my opinion for this urbanistic activity not to be artificial, it should not imitate the old but be modern . . . a modern architecture to capture the old image. Particularly in my grouping of the buildings and the scale I adopted . . . I maintained the old character . . . As far as style is concerned, it is what I considered modern at the time . . . But in its scale, its components, particularly in the form and proportion of its windows it makes reference to the traditional . . . ”

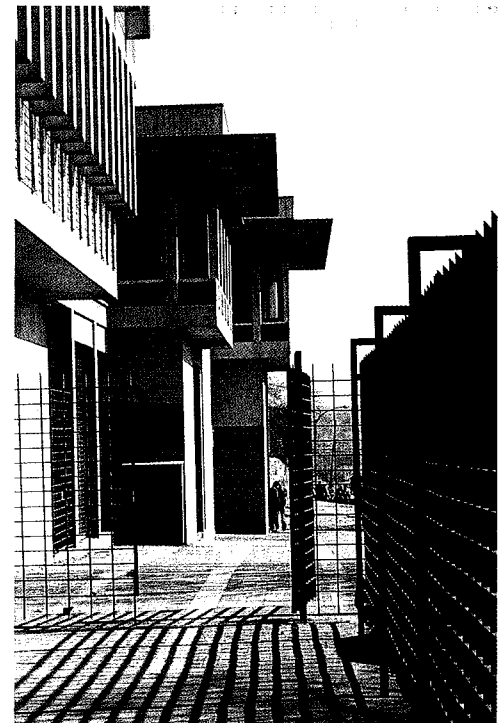
– Interview with Sedat Hakkı Eldem, 25 February 1986



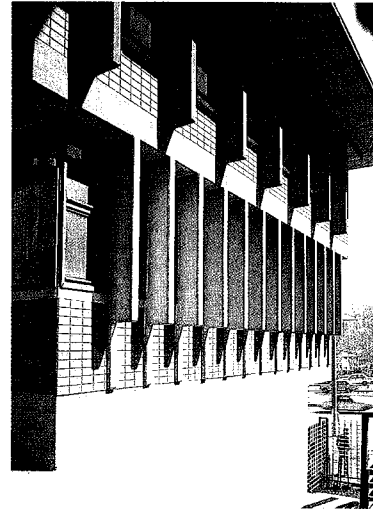
Detail of the main facade Photograph: A Dündar/
AKAA



Detail Photograph: A DüNDAR/AKAA



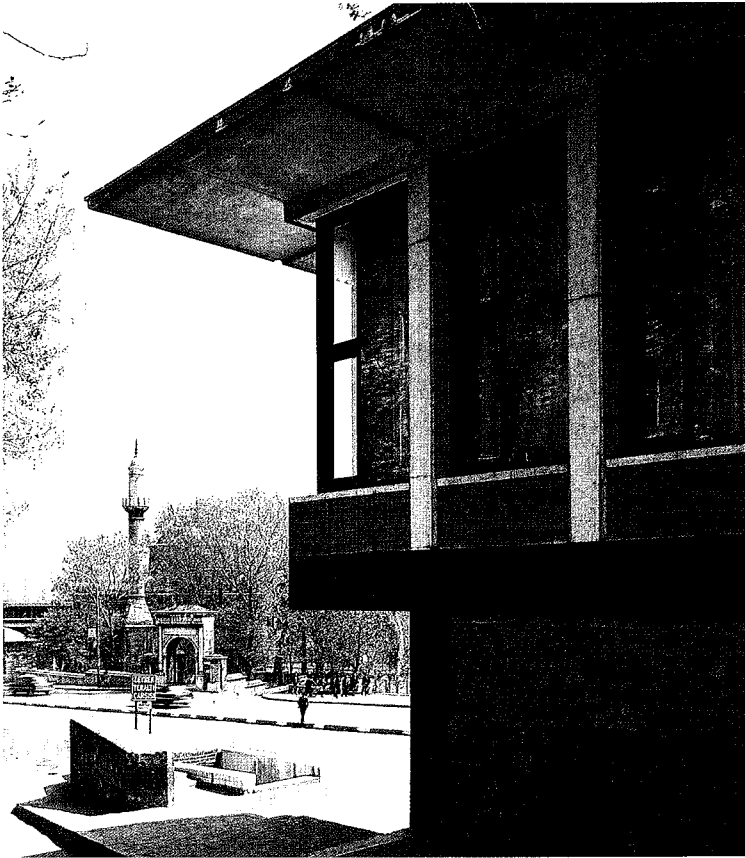
View from sidewalk Photograph: M Pehlivanoglu/
AKAA



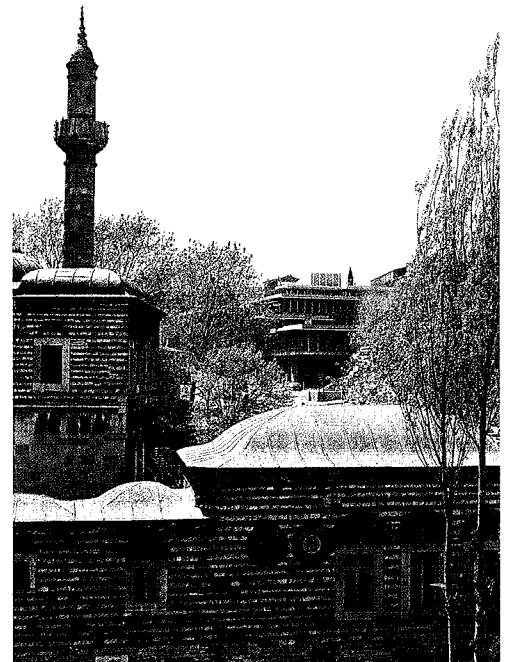
Detail views



Each floor is cantilevered out slightly above the lower floor
Photographs: A Dündar/AKAA



Corner detail



The Complex seen from afar
Photographs: Reha Günay

VII. Voyage Pittoresque Along the Bosphorus



Eldem's colour painting of a Bosphorus *yalı*, 1920s

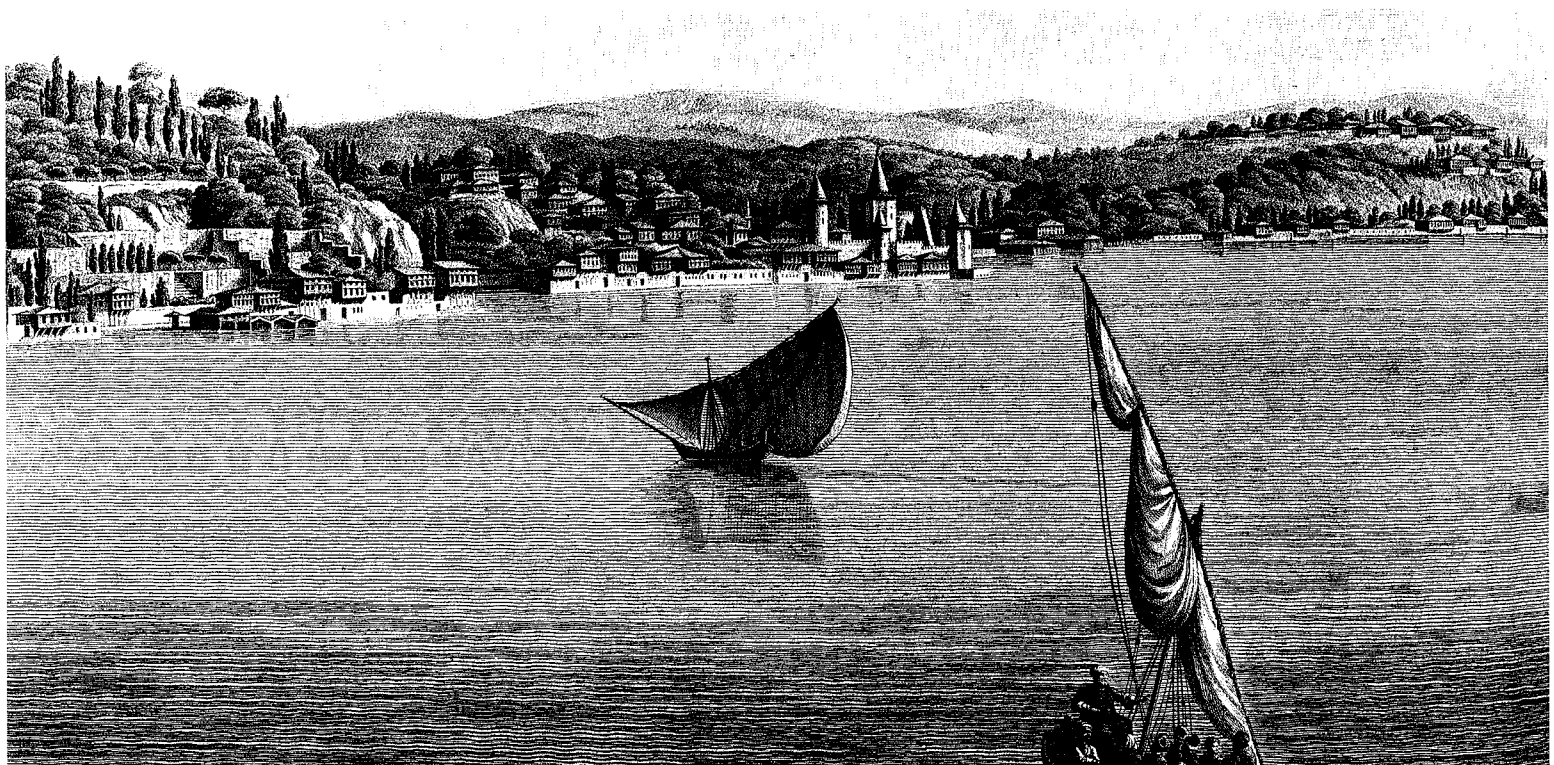
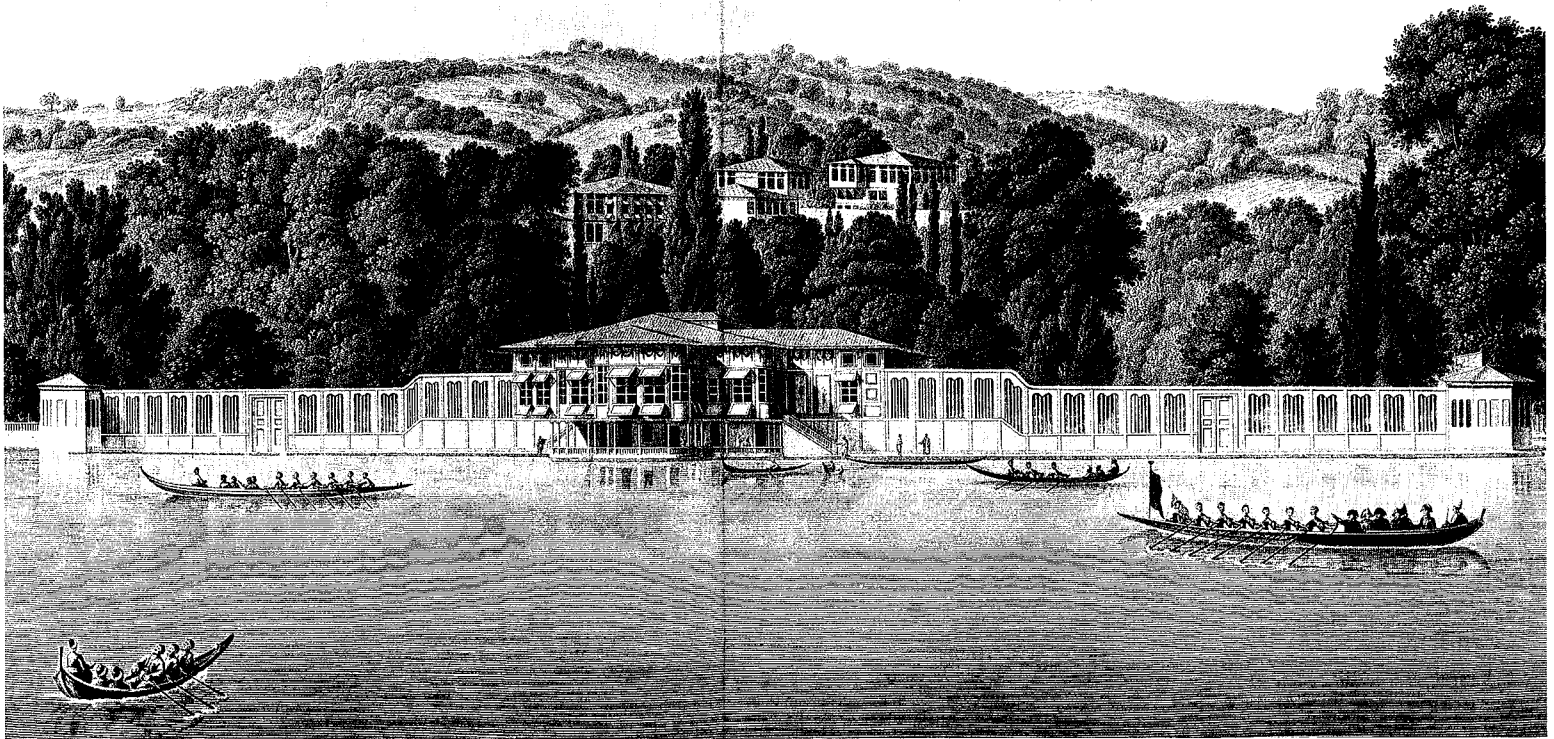
Although the contextualist consciousness displayed in the Zeyrek Social Security Agency Complex remains somewhat unique in Eldem's career, his deep involvement with the Bosphorus, both as a scholar researching its history, and as an architect building extensively along its shores, inevitably brings the question of context once more on to the agenda.

In few other places in the world has the context undergone such drastic transformations in less than a century as the banks of the Bosphorus. Sharing the general enlightened sentiment, Eldem laments the irreversible loss of the picturesque character which has fascinated the beholders for centuries, and has stimulated artists and orientalists to produce numerous etchings and engravings. The latter remain as invaluable documents of a "paradise lost": the enchanting harmony between the clusters of traditional houses and the topography and landscape containing them is now a distant memory surviving only in the engravings of, for instance, Melling's *Voyage Pittoresque de Constantinople et des Rives du Bosphore*, 1819.

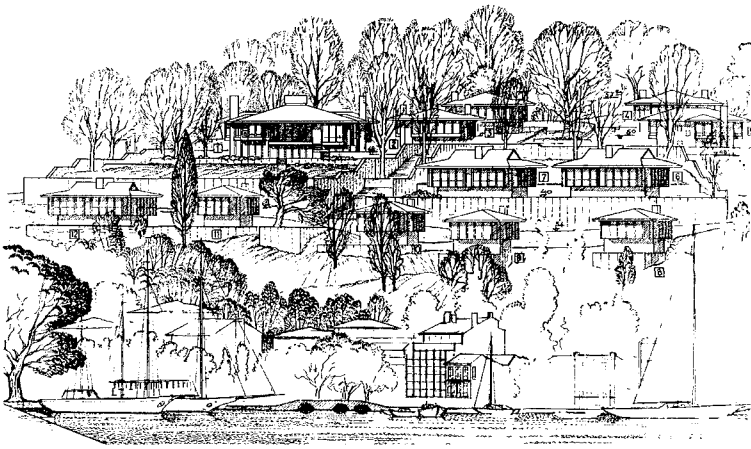
Eldem's devoted involvement with the Bosphorus unfolds at various levels of activity. As scholar and researcher, he has built up one of the richest archives on the history of the Bosphorus. He has published extensively on individual *yalis* including the prominent Köçeoğlu Yalısı in Bebek and the Köprülü Amcazade Hüseyin Paşa Yalısı that has inspired much of his work as a tradition-conscious architect. And his seminal *Reminiscences of the Bosphorus* has appeared in 1979 with numerous drawings and engravings, as well as some original James Robertson photographs from the mid 19th century. It is this passion for the Bosphorus and the nostalgic interest in its history that lend further credibility to Eldem's intervention as a practising architect.

An historically conscious and academically motivated architect, Eldem was periodically trusted with prestigious commissions to renovate or remodel the larger Bosphorus Palaces on the edge of the water — the so-called *feriye sarayları* of the Ottoman elite. Among the most prominent are, his renovation work for the Academy of Fine Arts, in various stages after the catastrophic fire of 1848; his periods of involvement with the Çırağan Palace Tourism Development Project; and more recently, his State Guest House Renovation in Beşiktaş.

It is possible to state that, as far as the Bosphorus is concerned, Eldem's commitment to and knowledge of history weighs considerably heavier than his architect's appetite for novel design. With due respect for what he perceives to be a most powerful stock of precedents — surviving in records and memory if not



From A1 Melling's *Voyage Pittoresque de Constantinople et des Rives du Bosphore*, Paris, 1819

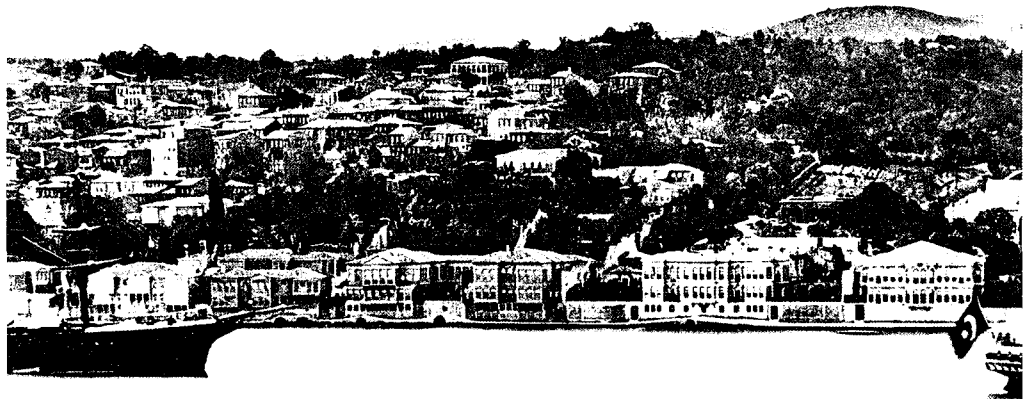


Eldem's sketch for a group of private villas overlooking the Tarabya Bay, Bosphorus

in reality — he puts tradition before creation. A particularly telling case is his project for the Koç Foundation Research and Development Centre in Nakkaştepe (started in 1985). It is an enterprise to reconstruct literally a number of now non-existent *köşks* and *konaks* on the basis of surviving documents, of possible models (in this case the Mecit Efendi Köşkü of late 19th century), and from the architect's own recollections.

However, notwithstanding the significance of his research, renovation or reconstruction work, Eldem's acknowledged trade-mark is the private Bosphorus villa or *yalı* also comprising the bulk of his commissions after the 1960s. It is this building type in which his life-long preoccupations unfold into a recognisable "Eldem style".

Although these commissions have essentially engaged Eldem as individual buildings, each unique in its brief and site, they are too many in number to remain as isolated objects, posing instead the question concerning the broader context: the overall image and skyline of the Bosphorus. Eldem's answer to this question is his commitment to the idea of a unified architectural language based on the syntax of traditional typologies derived from the *yalı*s along the edge of the water, and the *konaks* situated among orchards and pignon trees. Such a concern with overall image is evident in Eldem's study of a series of private villas overlooking the Tarabya Bay. Here the individual villas conform to topography and landscape and the elevation from the sea remains sensitive to the scale and character of the long-lost "reminiscences of the Bosphorus".

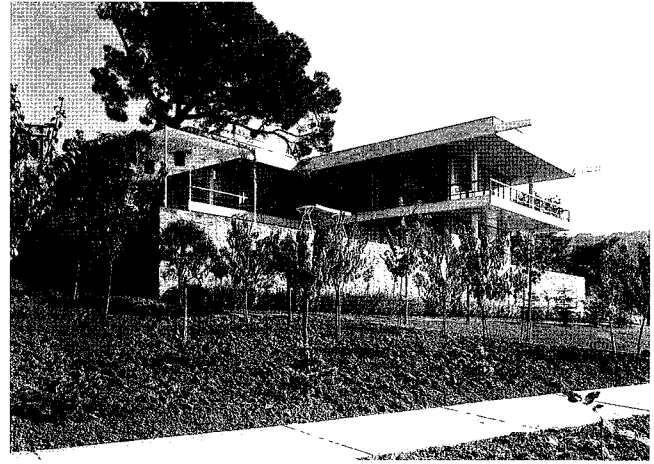


The Bosphorus in late 19th century Photograph: B Kargopoulos

Chronologically speaking, the continuity of Eldem's preoccupation with *leitmotifs* derived from the Turkish House, undergoes a brief period of interruption in the 1950s when he experiments with the prevailing modernist discourse of the post-World War II culture. The Safyurtlu II Villa in Yeniköy (1952) and the Rıza Derviş Villa in Büyükkada (1956–57) are typical products of this period of fascination with flat projecting roofs, large glazed surfaces and cantilevering elements reminiscent of the Frank Lloyd Wright's Falling Water house. Shortly however, this episode gives way to a new programme of private houses on the basis of a rationalised and stylised version of the traditional house. That is the beginning of his period of Bosphorus mansions from the 1960s onwards — a highly acclaimed period in his career.

The role of patronage is of paramount significance in this episode. Built for the wealthy industrialists and businessmen of the country, these villas and *yalis* bear testimony to the indispensability of elite clientele in ensuring quality, maintenance and enlightened collaboration. In this sense, the reference to traditional *konak* and *yali* types of the wealthy Ottoman elite acquires a contemporary relevance. Thus, Eldem's enterprise of "reconstruction" along the Bosphorus is not only architecturally but also socially sustained by precedent.

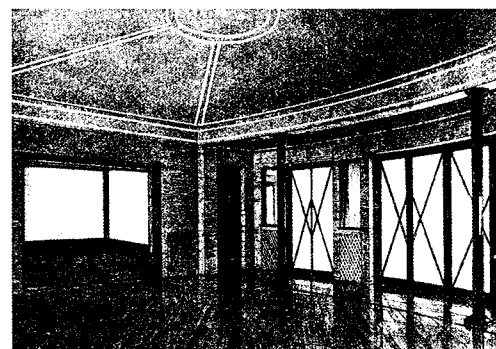
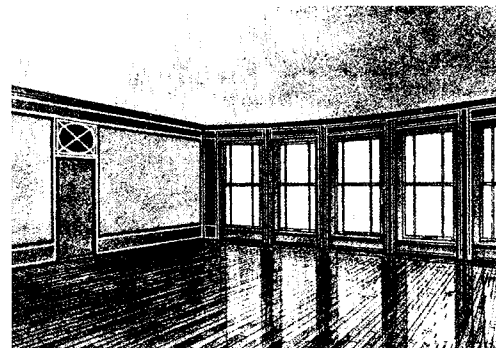
The individual villas and *yalis* are essentially variations on the characteristic Eldem themes — namely, a reference to the traditional plan types of the Turkish House and a recognisable style resulting from the syntax of the reinforced concrete frame, the modular logic of the grid and the repetitive window patterns. These constitute the fundamental stylistic aspect of his architecture, unifying an otherwise wide range of variations in plan type, scale and character. Although each of these houses claim some reference to traditional plan types of the Turkish House, they range from more literal adaptations of tradition to more modern interpretations.



Rıza Derviş Villa, Büyükkada, Istanbul, 1956 Photograph: Erdal Aksoy

Ilicak Yalı Yeniköy, 1978–80

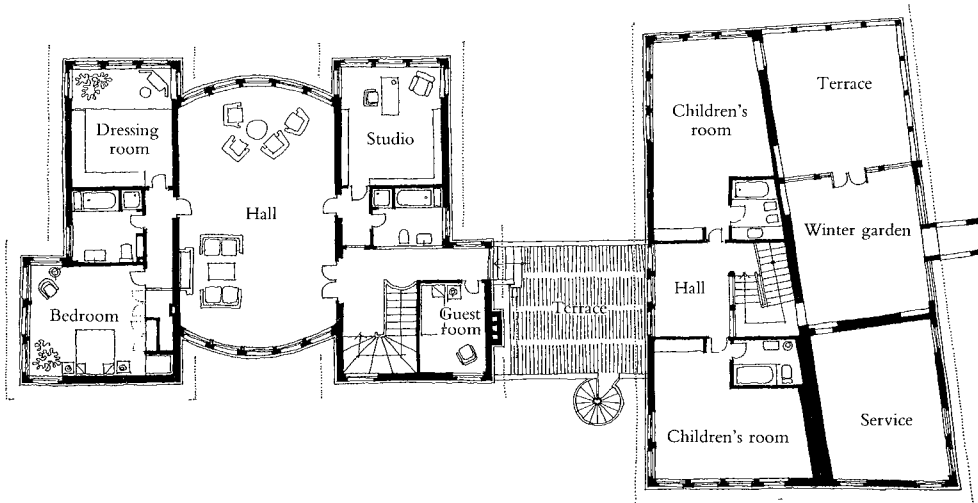
The Ilicak Yalı in Yeniköy (1978–80) remains committed to the traditional flavour of the *kamuyarık* plan type, both in plan and elevations. The building is the remodelled version of the earlier Tahsin Günel Yalı, again by Eldem and dating from 1938. In that same year Eldem had built the Ayaşlı Yalı in Beylerbeyi, on the same plan type (see chapter 2 of this section). The major feature of this plan type, the central *sofa*, transversely cuts through the house. The curved facades at the front and the back are amply glazed for the transparency of the central axis and for the much-desired cross ventilation through the house. Furthermore, it constitutes a powerful axis of symmetry with the *köşk* type projections of the living and dining rooms located on two sides of the central *sofa*. Like the Ayaşlı Yalı of the same generic type, the Ilicak Yalı shows Eldem modestly adopting the authority of precedent. In the interiors as well, his use of wooden built-in closets, cupboards and furniture are inspired by the Turkish House. During remodelling, he has also added a glass passage and a winter garden giving access to the children’s wing, and a separate “tea pavilion” in the garden with allusions ranging from the *kameriyes* of Ottoman gardens to the pavilions of picturesque English gardens.



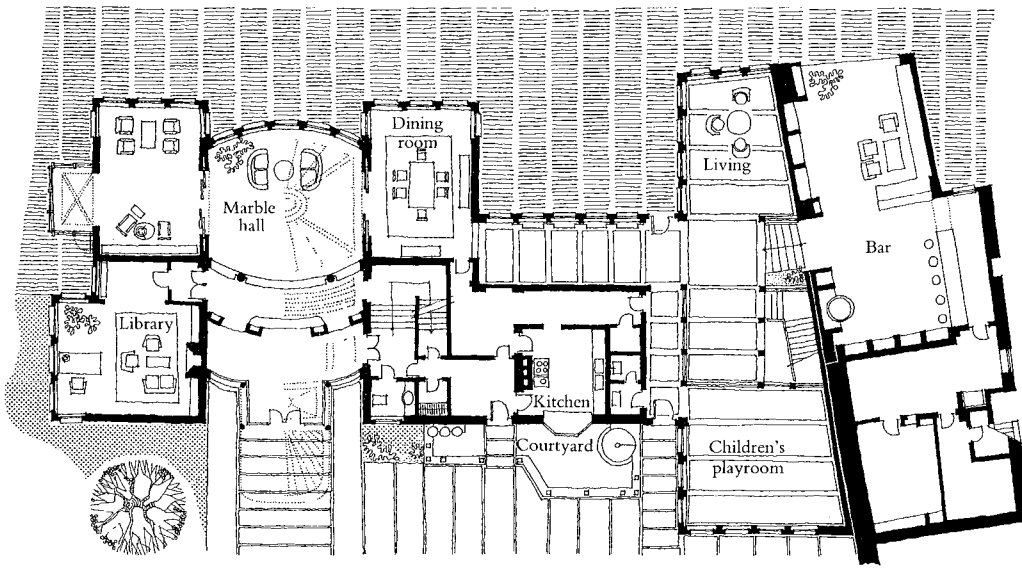
Interiors of Tahsin Günel Yalı, Istanbul, 1938 — remodelled as the current Ilicak Yalı. Source: *Arkitekt*



Bosphorus view, Ilicak Yalı. Photograph: Suha Özkan.



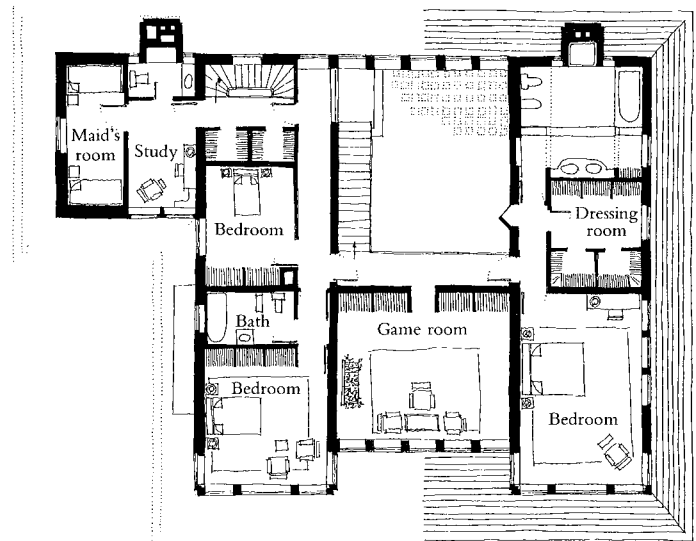
First floor plan



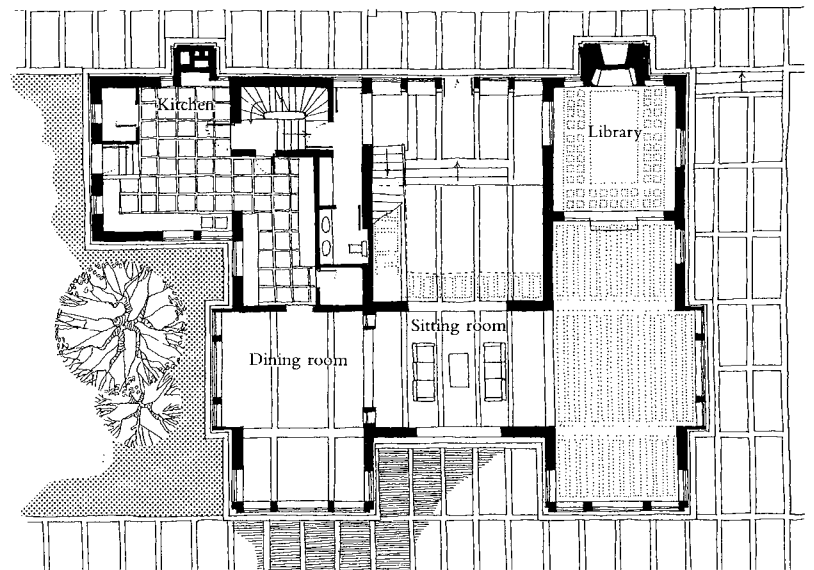
Ground floor plan

Suna Kıraç Yalı Vaniköy, 1965

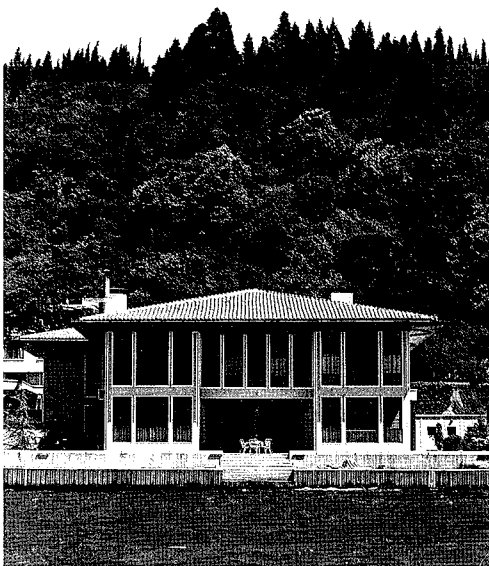
Variations on the same *karniyarik* plan type appear to be the strongest trend in Eldem's Bosphorus mansions — including two prominent houses for the members of the Koç family, leading industrialists in Turkey: the Suna Kıraç Yalı in Vaniköy (1965–66) and the Rahmi Koç Villa in Tarabya (1975–80). The former *yalı* most clearly displays Eldem's rationalism in interpreting tradition. The modular logic of the grid prescribes the plan and the elevations and is extended onto the garden pavement as a chequered pattern of white marble strips infilled with floor tiles. The house is conceived around a split-level central *sofa*, flanked on two sides by the projections of the living and dining rooms on the ground floor and of the bedrooms on the upper floor. The resulting symmetrical sea frontage, and the overall perfection and simplicity of the form exemplifies Eldem's emphasis on precedent-based, rational principles rather than pretentious novelty — particularly as far as the elevation from the sea is concerned. An Eldem *yalı* is, before anything else, a gesture to the Bosphorus. The back of the house has a slightly different elevation, with the projecting chimneys signifying the service side of the building. These chimneys also serve the back patio for barbecues where outdoor life extends to one side; to the swimming pool, the pool pavilion and the winter garden. The overall elevational pattern of vertically proportioned windows with white borders and wooden shutters bear the mark of that "Eldem style" often designated as a version of Perret classicism reinterpreted for the specific case of the Turkish House.



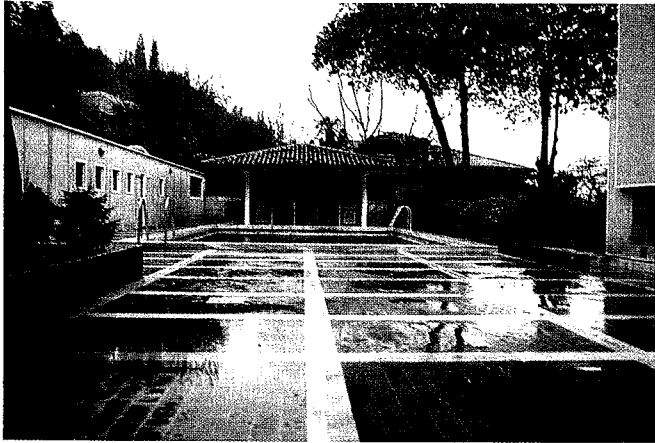
First floor plan



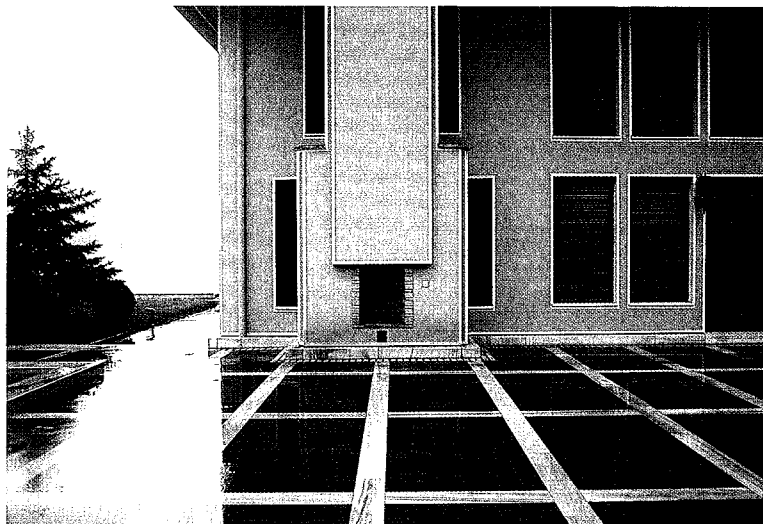
Ground floor plan



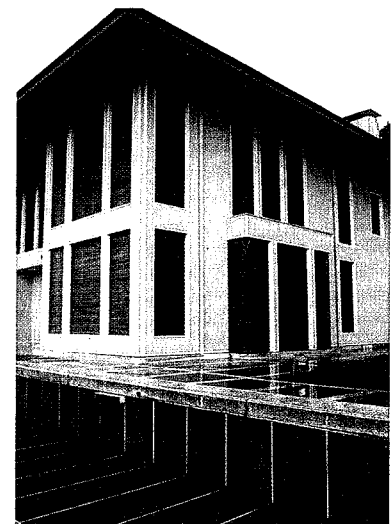
Bosphorus view



Swimming pool and the garden pavilion



Barbecue patio at the back

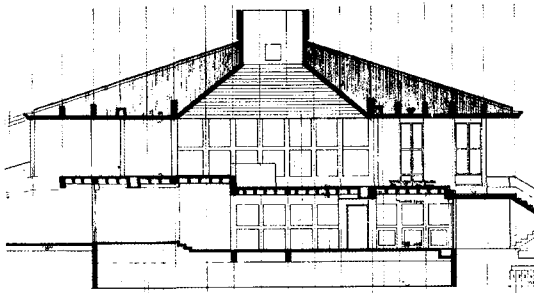
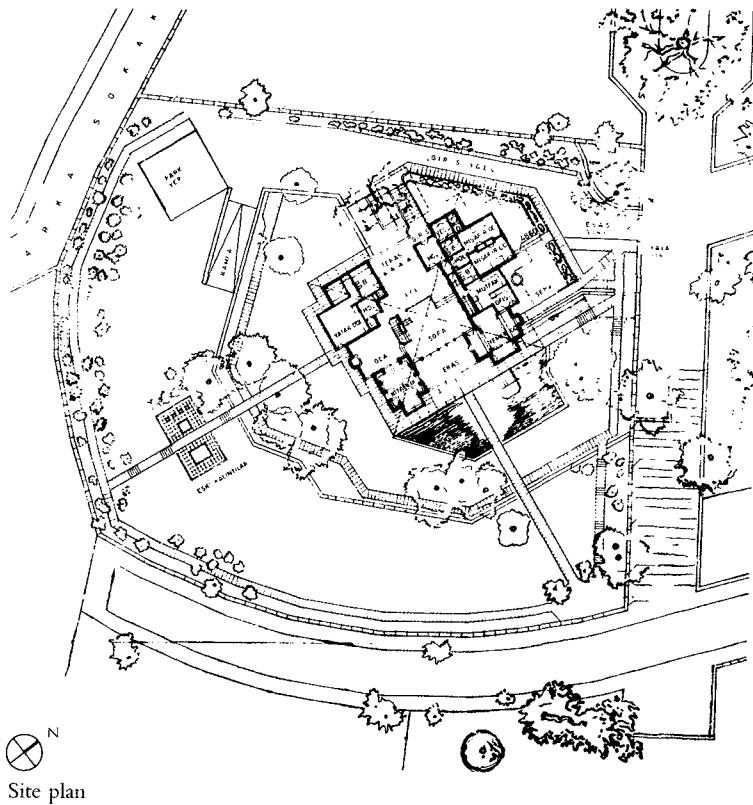


Corner view from the sea



View from the sea
Photographs: Engin Yenil

Rahmi Koç Villa Tarabya, 1975–80



Section

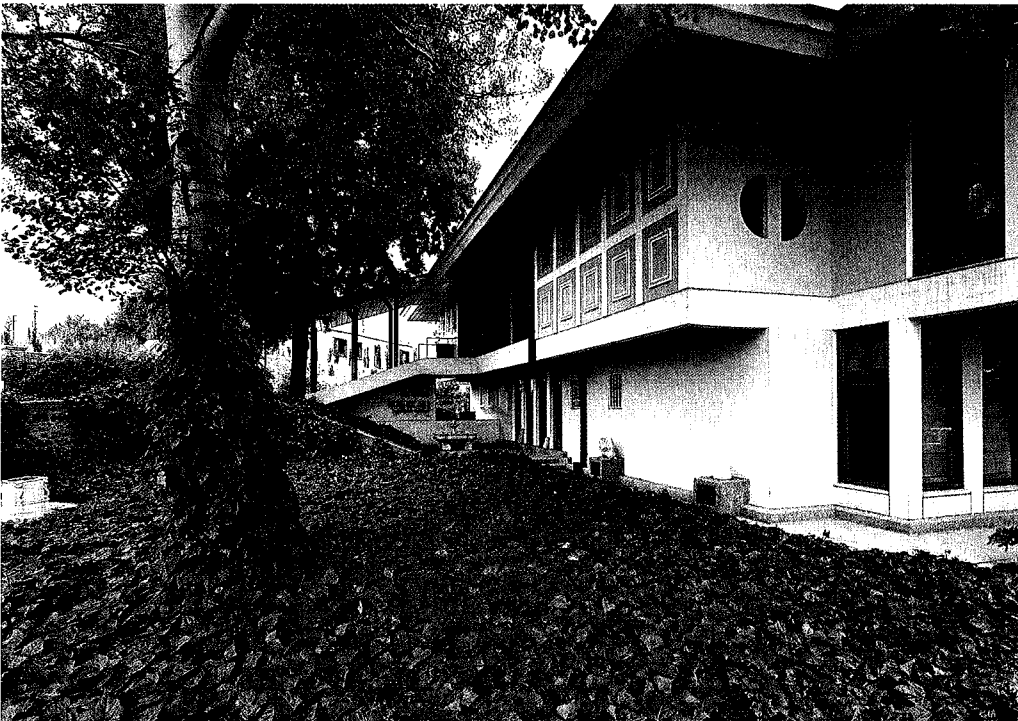
A comparative leap from the Suna Kıraç Yalı to the Rahmi Koç Villa (1975–80) situated on high ground overlooking Tarabya Bay, demonstrates how the same basic plan type is articulated into a different scale and quality of space. The central *sofa* of the *karniyarık* plan is, in this case, a spacious split-level hall dramatically sky-lit by a high lantern punctured pyramidally into the ceiling and finished with polished oak on the interior. This spacious *sofa* constitutes the primary element of the design, and extends into wide balconies in the front and the back with an uninterrupted view across the house. The balcony at the back constitutes the elevated main entrance to the house. The balcony is connected to the garden below, by a free-standing sculptural stair of white painted concrete, cantilevering above the large pool. At the lower level of the garden, the house contains the children's quarters and the services on two sides of a narrower central *sofa* connected to the main hall above by an interior stair.

The Koç Villa is significant as a showpiece of Eldem's understanding of modernity in tradition. The plan type, the window patterns, the wide projecting eaves of the copper clad roof, and the semi-circular/apsidal projections of chimneys and fire-places are explicit quotations from the traditional Turkish House. Yet the highly abstract and stylised overall expression, and the modernist cantilevering stair once more illustrate Eldem's ability to borrow elements from tradition and to modify, transform or even alter their use. His enthusiasm for the essentially modern quality of the Turkish House, i.e. the modular logic of its frame structure, clearly manifests itself in this villa. Vertical precast facade elements and horizontal slabs are painted white, thus visually separated from the infill walls, infilling windows and parapets or the infilling facade panels with their abstract geometrical patterns in low relief. The statement of the elevations is unmistakably clear. that it is not a bearing wall, nor some kind of an outer skin stretched over the structural frame. It is this clarity of expression derived from constructional logic that Eldem pursues in the true modernist spirit.

Meanwhile, the design of the interior and the landscape of the garden are remarkable complementary statements of Eldem's overall discourse. The garden is conceived not just as a composition of pool, flowers and lush green, but also as a setting for the various antique pieces, excavated items, jars and amphoras belonging to the client. The extensive use of polished solid oak, of marble and of brass in the details, further contributes to the richness of expression.

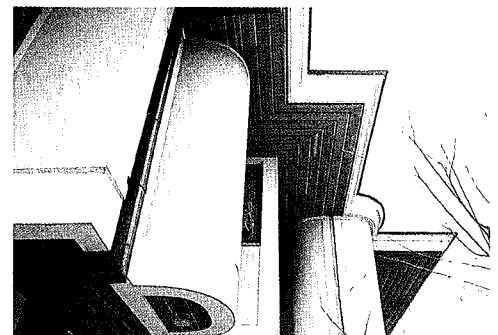


Elevation overlooking the Bosphorus



View of back entrance

Overleaf: Front view overlooking the Bosphorus
Photographs: Ahmet Ertuğ



Exterior expression of the fire-place
Photograph: Engin Yenil

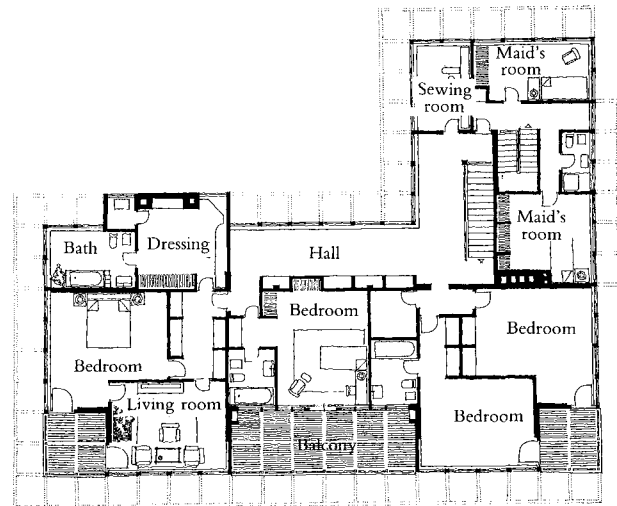




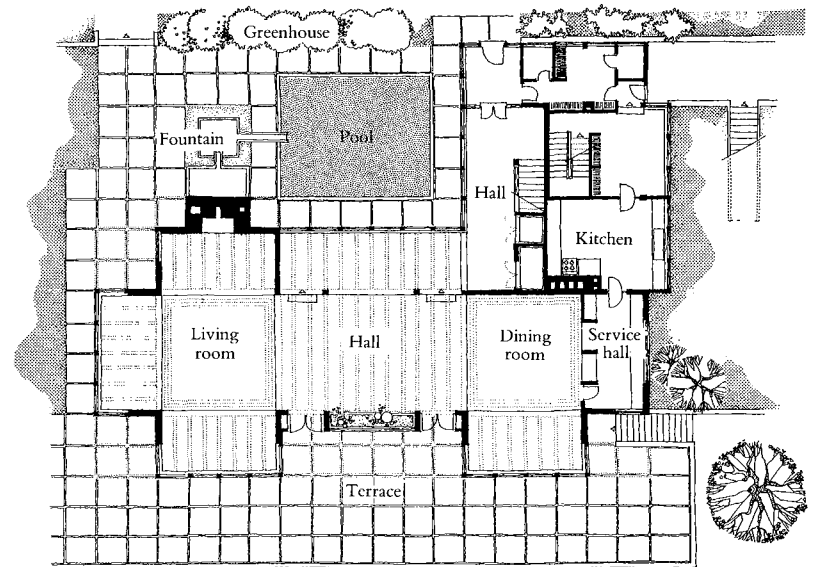
Central hall Photograph: Ahmet Ertuğ

Uşaklıgil House Emirgan, 1956–65

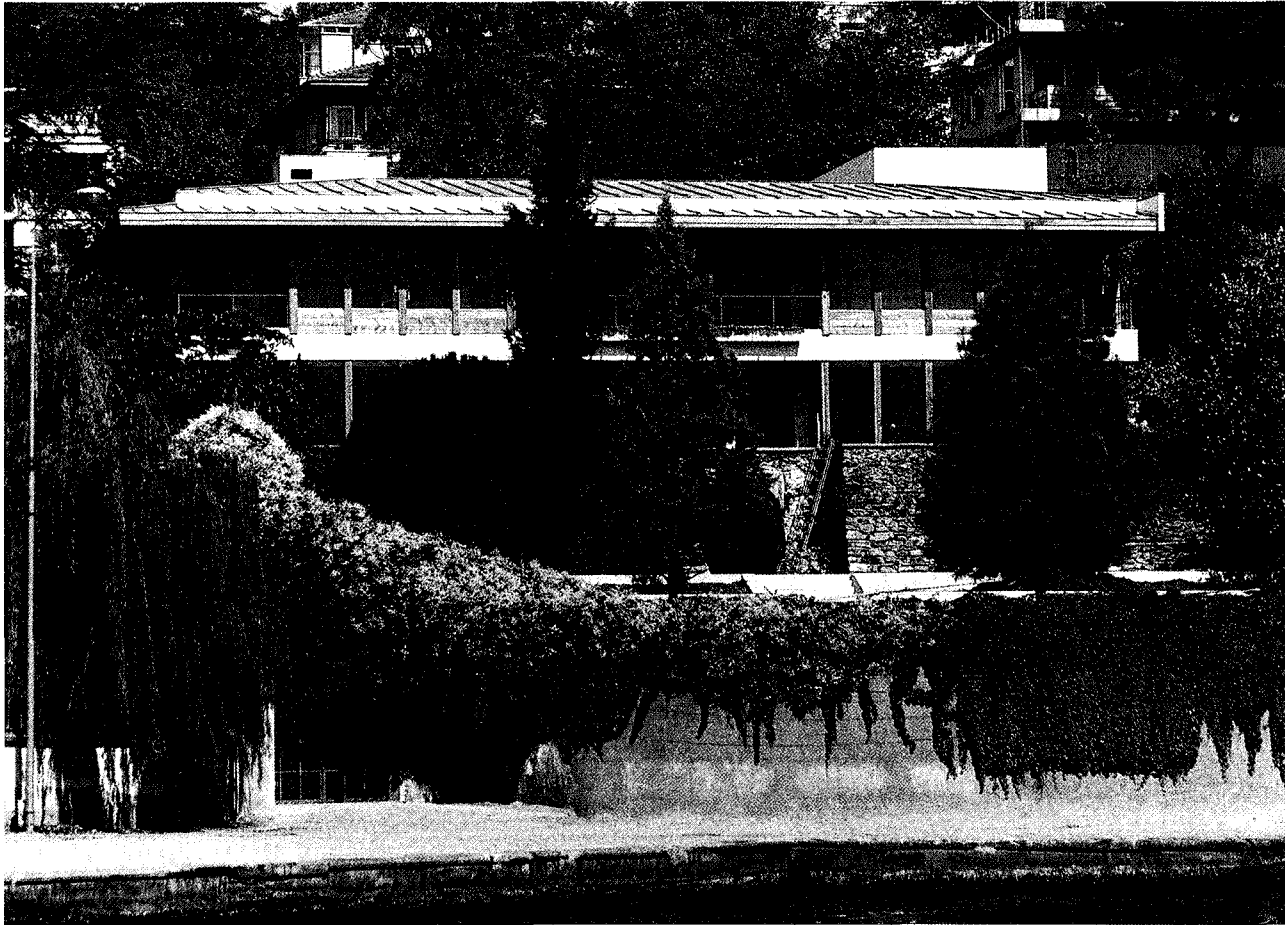
Another category of Eldem mansions on the Bosphorus involves an elongated version of the central *sofa* plan type, to give maximum frontage to the sea view. The Uşaklıgil House in Emirgan (1956–65), is an early example of this category, exhibiting all characteristic Eldem *leitmotifs*. Situated on a high ground held back by a retaining wall, the two-storey house consists of living, dining and services on the ground floor, bedrooms and servants' quarters on the upper floor. The central hall gives access to the dining room on one side, and the characteristic T form of the living room on the other with sitting alcoves in the projecting bays of the T plan. The reinforced concrete structural system consists of L-shaped structural elements also corresponding to the corners of the T plan. An underlying grid of 1.40 x 1.40 metres prescribes the powerful modulation expressed on the elevations, underneath the projecting eaves of the roof, on the interior ceiling finish and even in the garden pavement where textured concrete is used in combination with gravel. The idea of separating the frame from the infill walls and panels again predominates the design: precast facade elements are painted white contrasting with the wood finish of the infill parapet panels. The projecting eaves of the aluminium clad roof, and the overall horizontal accent achieved by the repetition of vertical elements communicate the distinct style of Eldem — the very style that he is to adopt subsequently, in design for embassy buildings.



First floor plan



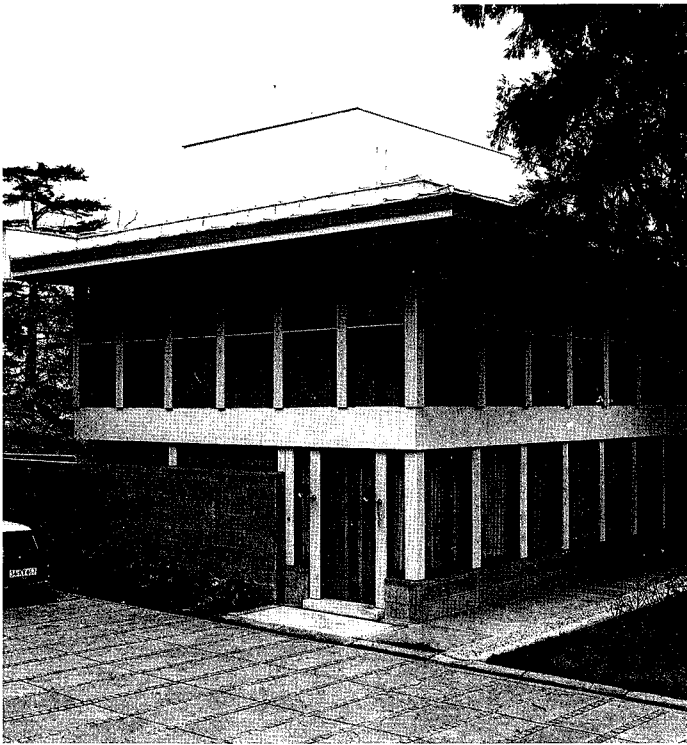
Ground floor plan



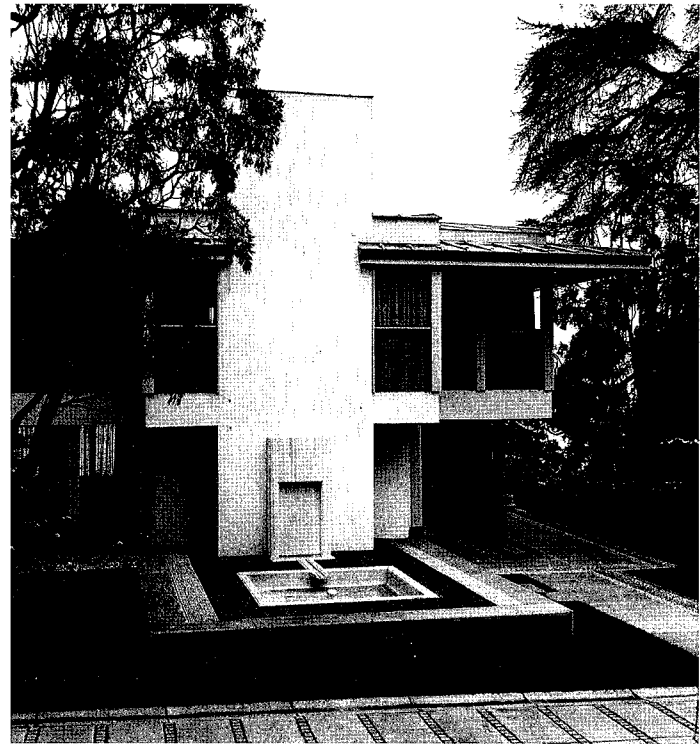
Front/Bosphorus view



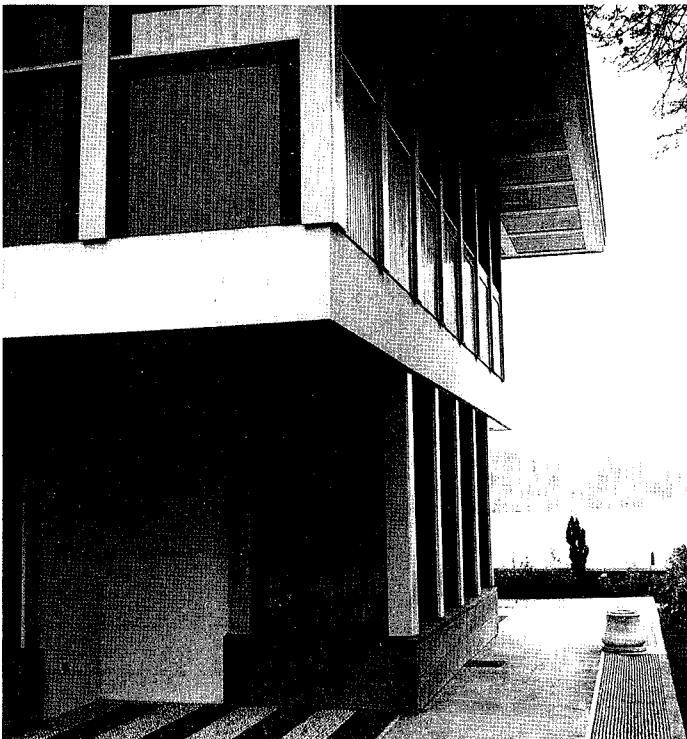
Interior



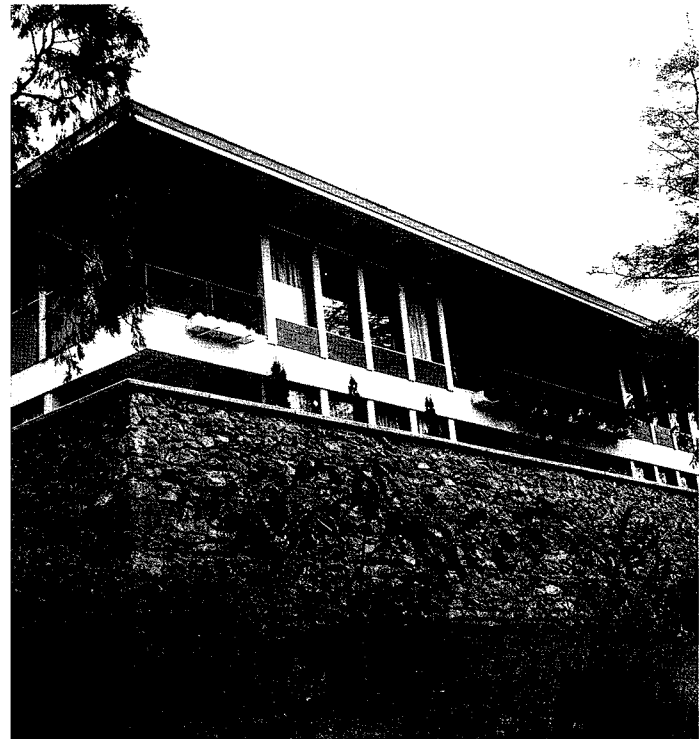
Entrance



Fountain and pool at the back

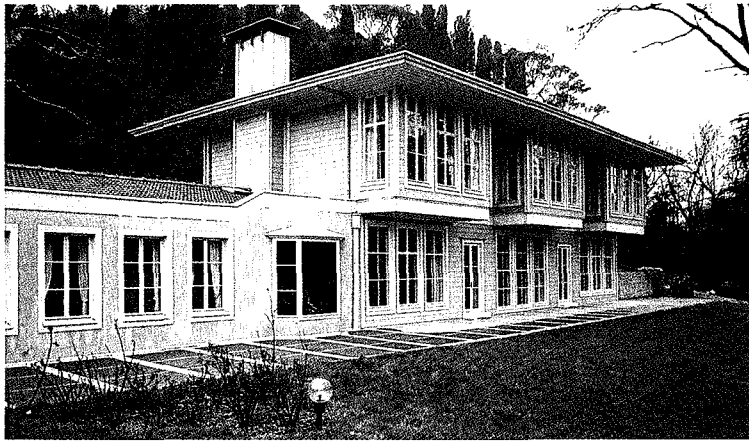


Side view towards the Bosphorus

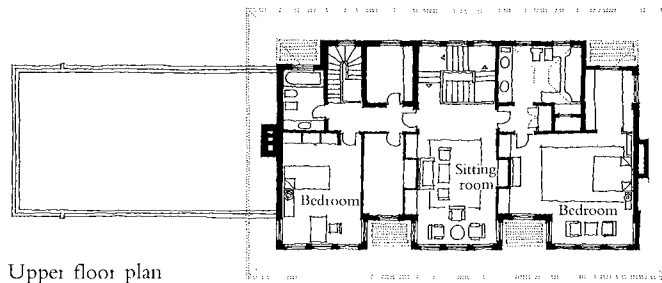


Front/Bosphorus view
Photographs: Erdal Aksoy

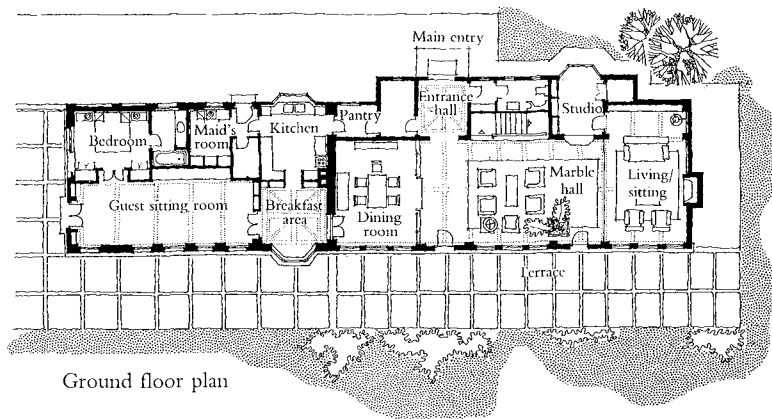
Komili House Kandilli, 1978–80



Garden and Bosphorus view Photograph: Engin Yenil



Upper floor plan



Ground floor plan

The Komili House in Kandilli (1978–80) similarly enjoys a very long facade to the sea viewed through the slender trunks of tall trees. Like in the Usaklıgil House, the elongated plan is a version of the central *sofa* type: a marble paved central hall is situated between the dining and the living sections on the two sides which have polished wood floors stepping up slightly from the hall. In the dining section a wooden ballustrade further accentuates this separation, following the *sekilik* motif of the traditional houses.

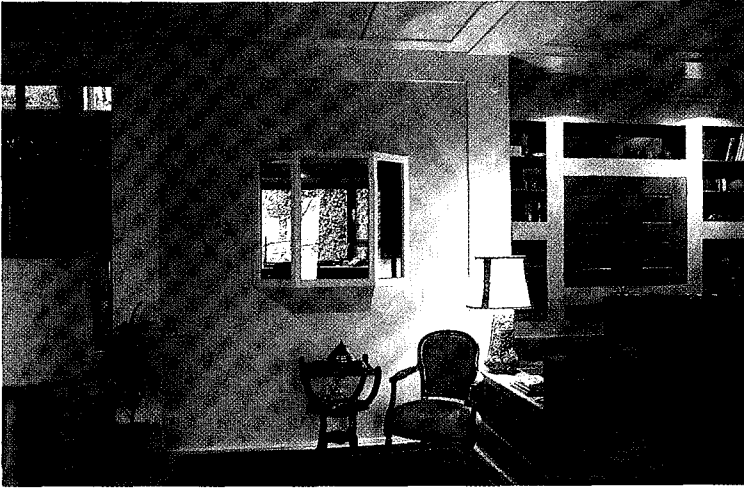
The Komili House is closer to the idea of reconstruction, remaining loyal to the spirit of a previously existing house on the site. For this reason, wood is employed for the exterior finish: horizontal clapboards painted in a greyish colour with windows and doors bordered in white — almost a version of colonial style. As such, the house stands as an ingenious blend of traditional Turkish features with some flavour of American suburban vernacular. The wide projecting roof, the modular pattern of vertical windows and particularly the *köşk* type projections of the bedrooms on the second floor quote extensively from the Turkish House. The bay-window of the breakfast alcove in the guest wing is both an element of vernacular architecture in the Western world, and an interpretation of the Turkish *cumba*. The two-storey house-proper continues into a single-storey guest wing which culminates with the swimming pool and the garden pavilion incorporating a fire-place for barbecues modelled after the traditional *ocak* motif. The exquisite landscaping and garden arrangement also follow the predominant features of the design: the high garden wall employs the same modular and abstract geometry for the flower pot niches; and the same grid extends onto the pavement of the terrace. It is the grid and modulation which embody the rationalist message of Eldem.

Right: Garden view Photograph: Ahmet Ertug





Swimming pool and garden Photograph: Ahmet Ertuğ



Separation between the living room and the study



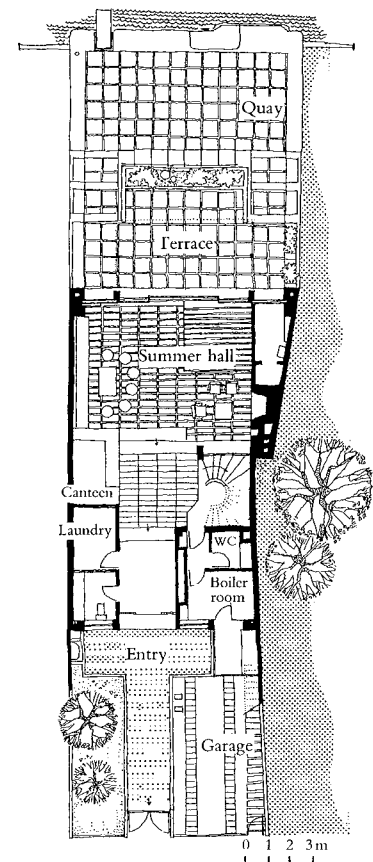
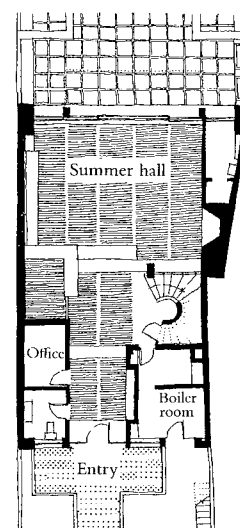
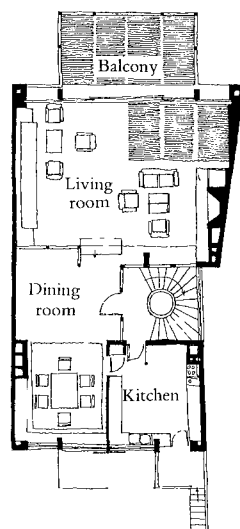
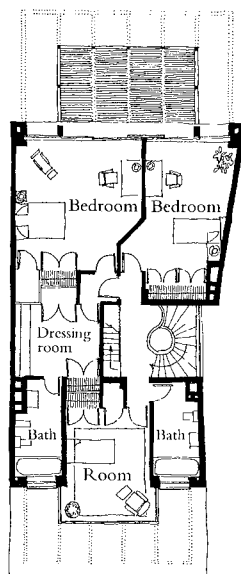
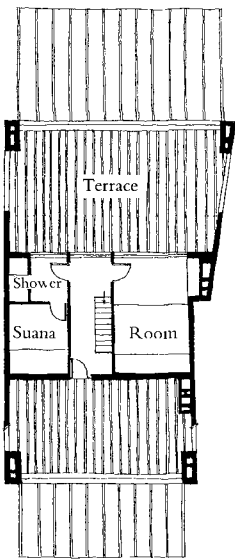
From the central hall looking towards the dining room
Photographs: Engin Yenal

Şemsettin Sırer Yalı Yeniköy, 1966–67

In contrast to the elongated sea-facing facades of these houses, the Şemsettin Sırer Yalı in Yeniköy (1966–67) has a very narrow frontage to the sea. Attached to the adjoining building on one side, this narrowness is compensated by the depth of the building, with the services, bathrooms and utilities lined up against the blind wall attached to the next building.

The entrance level constitutes a throughfare across the house, opening to a marble paved hall, which in turn, opens to the terrace at the edge of the water. The first floor contains the kitchen, living and dining rooms; the second floor, the bedrooms and finally, the attic floor, a sauna and a sun-deck hidden behind the slope of the wide projecting roof.

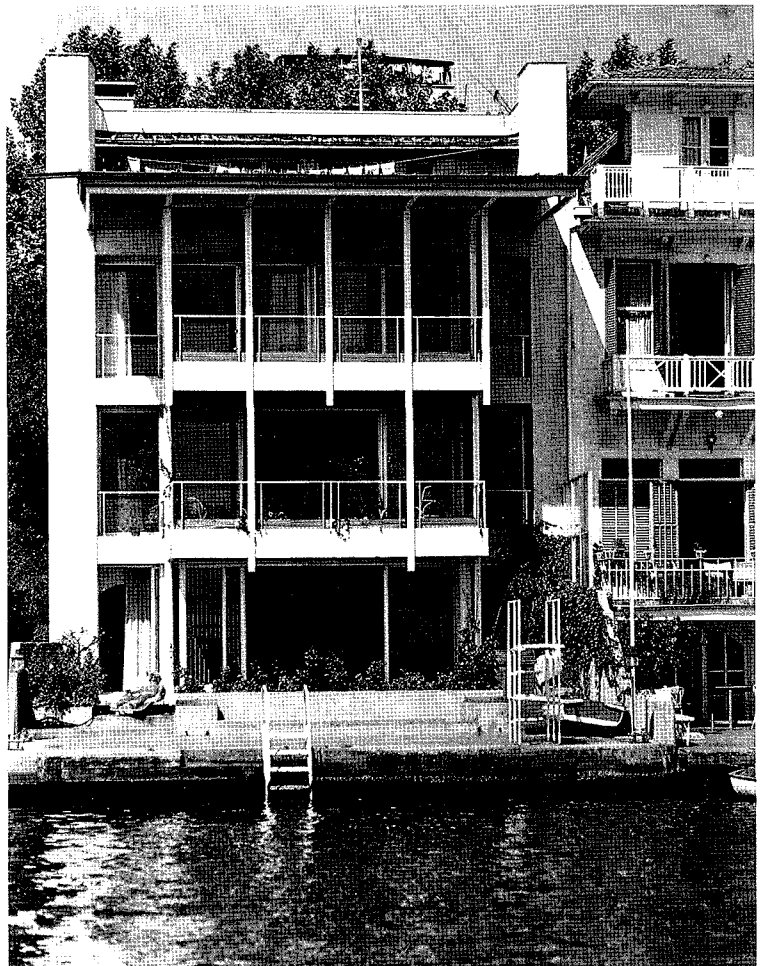
Distributed over four levels on a very narrow lot, the plan of the house does not lend itself to any association with the traditional *yalı* or *konak*. The treatment of the front elevation, however, remains sensitive to the scale and character of the traditional Bosphorus *yalis* also displaying Eldem's characteristic use of the wide projecting roof, double-balcony and modular partitioning of the elevation continuing all the way up underneath the roof. The vertical facade elements are hollow section steel boxes painted white in pronounced contrast to the polished wood finish of the surfaces underneath the balconies and the roof.



Floor plans



Rear facade — view from the street Photograph:
H U Khan



Bosphorus view Photograph: Erdal Aksoy

The Bosphorus *yalis* and villas by Eldem are too numerous for them all to appear here. Each is unique in terms of context and brief: what is still common to them all is his guiding pre-occupation; that is to reconstruct the traditional Turkish House in modern terms, more precisely, in the language of the reinforced concrete frame.

Although the overall image of the Bosphorus and its waning picturesqueness constitute the broader context of Eldem's work, his individual houses are essentially complete in their own statements. As critics generally agree, they are, in the final analysis, idealised "object-types". They result from a rationalist sensibility abstracting certain structural and typological principles from examples of traditional or vernacular houses. It is perhaps possible to claim that an Eldem villa is connected to the vernacular Turkish House, in the same way that a Greek temple is connected to the primitive hut of Laugier. This is where the frequently expressed "classicism" of Eldem resides.

"I was then, and still am, a devotee of the reinforced concrete skeleton. To me, modern architecture must be judged by the beauty of its structure. Turkish proportions and infill walls could fit into such skeletons."

– Sedat Hakkı Eldem, "Toward A Local Idiom: A Summary History of Contemporary Architecture in Turkey", in *Conservation As Cultural Survival*, 1980, p. 90

"In the design of the modern Turkish House or of residential architecture in general, the great traditions of Turkish domestic architecture have become one of the poles of attraction. Sedat Hakkı Eldem who had been the prime instigator of the pre-war seminar on the Turkish House, has been searching all his life for a modern Turkish style based on the analysis of old Turkish domestic architecture. Over the years he has elaborated his style and produced several mansions on the shores of the Bosphorus. . . Eldem's style in its final phase, which may be called structural classicism, is refined in its proportions and its careful handling of details and materials."

– Doğan Kuban, "A Survey of Modern Turkish Architecture" in *Architecture in Continuity*, 1985, p. 72

"Despite all these 'variations on vernacular themes', Eldem cannot be considered as an interpreter of regionalism in architecture. First, because he has almost exclusively built in the old and new capital cities, Istanbul and Ankara. But more particularly, because the Turkish House he refers to is an idealised type of this vernacular tradition: the highest examples of the tradition, generally the rich mansions of the imperial capital or the yalis of Bosphorus. Thus the 'reminiscences of Bosphorus' he documented in his publications are re-created in his buildings. . . . This rational, schematised, classic and somewhat aristocratic architectonic interpretation of vernacular archetypes is the first answer given to the question raised by history in Turkish architecture."

– Atilla Yücel, "Contemporary Turkish Architecture", *Mimar: Architecture in Development* 10, 1983, p. 60–61

VIII. The Embassy Building as a Large House



Pakistan Embassy Residence

“The embassy of Pakistan attempts to apply the architectural principles of Islam to the climatic conditions of Ankara, but it cannot be established that the real inspiration for its reinforced concrete vaulting was any particular design by Le Corbusier ”

– S H Eldem, “Toward A Local Idiom: A Summary History of Contemporary Architecture in Turkey” in *Conservation As Cultural Survival*, 1980, p 90

Although primarily an Istanbul based architect, commissions for three embassy buildings have drawn Eldem to Ankara from the 1960s onwards. Based on the idea of an embassy building as a house on a grander scale, these buildings represent Eldem’s *leitmotifs* pursued to their limits. Furthermore, these buildings have posed the difficult problem of cultural identity when an embassy is seen as the territorial extension of one country/culture within another. It is the question concerning the appropriate expression of an interaction between “guest” and “host” cultures without overemphasising one at the expense of the other.

The Pakistan Embassy (1964–74), located on a sloping corner lot, consists of the Embassy Office Block at the lower tip of the triangular site, and the residence on higher ground with a view of the city. An exposed concrete wall surrounds the garden which terraces downwards from the Residence to the Embassy Offices’ Block.

It is more the Embassy Residence which bears the mark of Eldem’s predilections, particularly with its overall horizontality and the repetitive pattern of modular windows; here implemented on a larger scale and articulated with the untypical feature of concrete barrel vaults forming the projecting eave of the roof. The building can be read as an attempt to capture the middle ground between a house and an institutional building, both in terms of scale and of symbolic content.

The elongated plan of the Residence contains, on the entrance level, the larger rooms for reception and official dining with the related services. The upper floor alludes to the traditional open *sofa* type with an elongated sofa or *hayat* — an element of the Turkish vernacular — which gives access to the rooms of the private residence.

The main features of the design conform to the logic of two superimposed modular systems. The reinforced concrete structural system follows 4.05 metre spans corresponding to the roofing system of shallow barrel vaults cast in concrete. Meanwhile, a sub-system of a 1.35 metre grid, i.e. one third of the above span, prescribes the rhythm of windows and elevation treatment, as well as the outlines of interior design. In addition to the logic of the modular grid, the plan is further rationalised by concentrating all the services, wet zones and storage along a ‘backbone’ running through the house and functionally dividing the house into two: service spaces and service personnel to the south; main residence functions to the north facing the view. As far as the exterior expression of the building is concerned, it again represents Eldem’s preoccupation with separating the frame from the infill. The columns

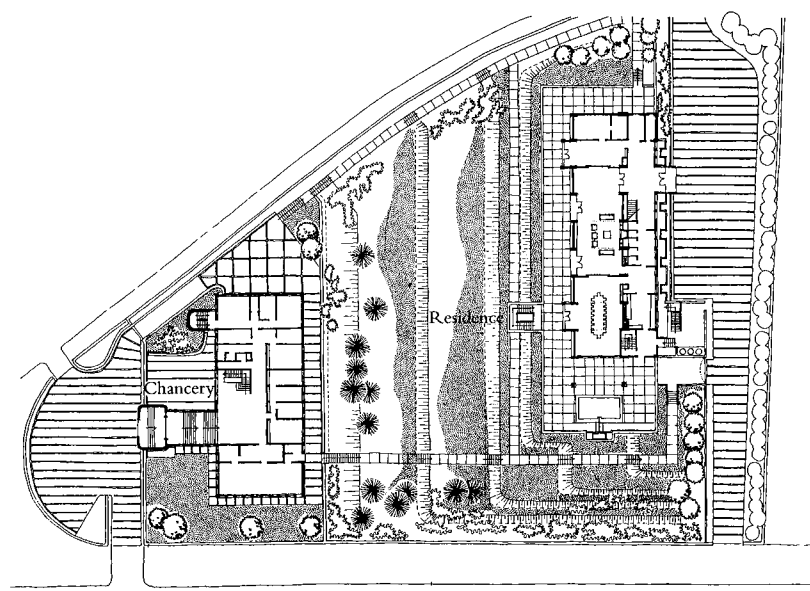
Pakistan Embassy and Residence Ankara, 1964–74

are emphasised and painted white, while brick infill walls and parapets under the windows constitute distinct panels faced with ceramic tile of a yellowish colour.

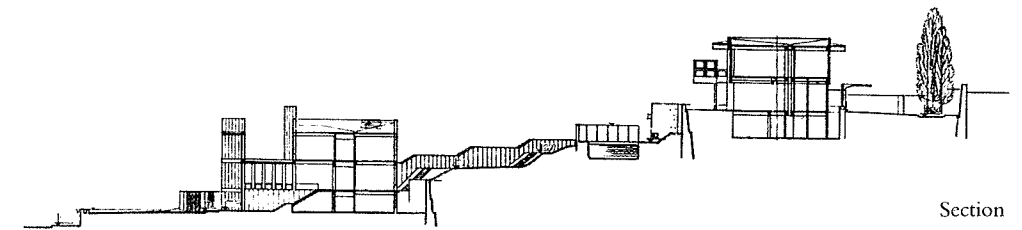
Given its scale and function, the building represents another idealised and stylised object: the reference to a traditional plan type gets blurred in the complexity of the design brief. And the barrel vaults' claim to cultural/historical references is too subtle to be legible.

Meanwhile, in the other building located lower down the site, the Embassy offices are contained within a two-storey rectangular block, entered through a high, monumental portal or *tac kapi* projecting forward and bearing the Pakistani national emblem in high-relief ceramic tilework. In the building, the spans of the reinforced concrete structural system correspond to a double-loaded corridor office pattern. A uniform facade of vertically proportioned windows, runs around all four sides of the building. Columns are alternated by non-structural facade elements of the same width giving a narrower rhythm to the facade. The facade is clad with modular precast concrete panels. The metal roof is hidden behind a parapet. Inside, a suspended ceiling conceals mechanical equipment and lighting fixtures. Pivotal wooden shutters are employed on the standardised windows.

As such, it is the product of a rationalist mind, concerned more with the purity of the statement than with adjustments and demands arising from use.



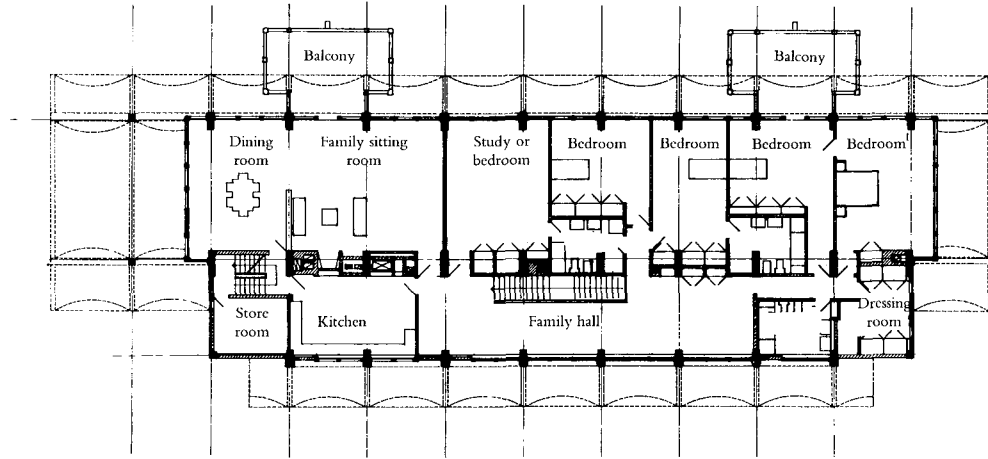
Site plan



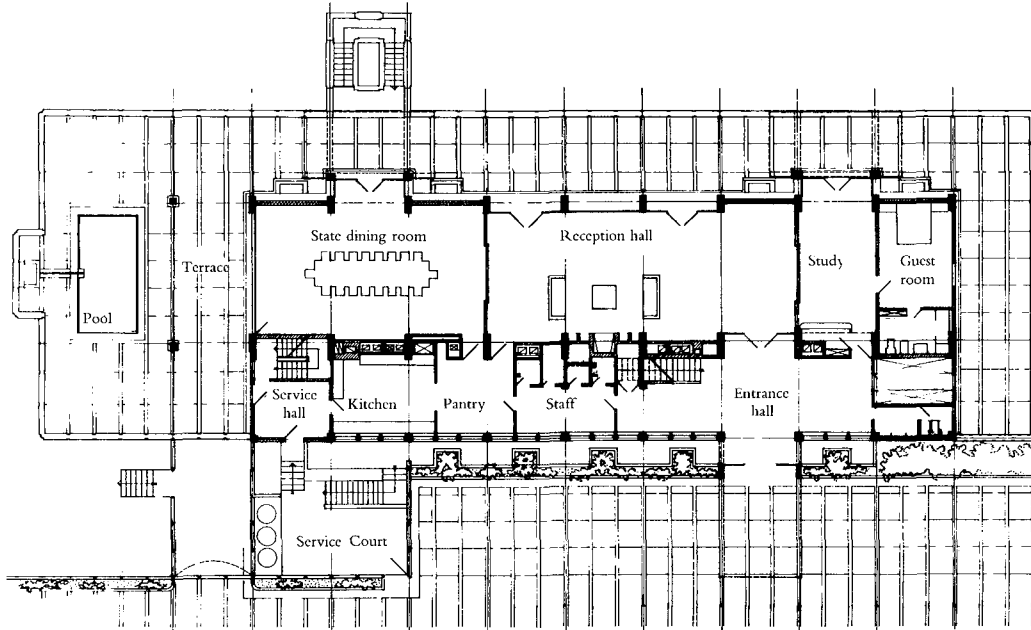
Section



Pakistan Embassy Residence, Ankara 1964–74 Photograph: Atelye Mat

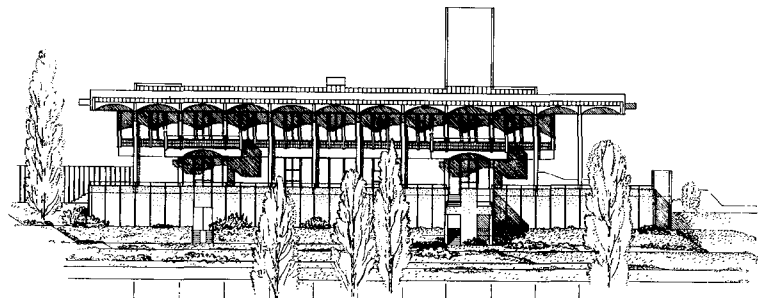


Upper floor plan

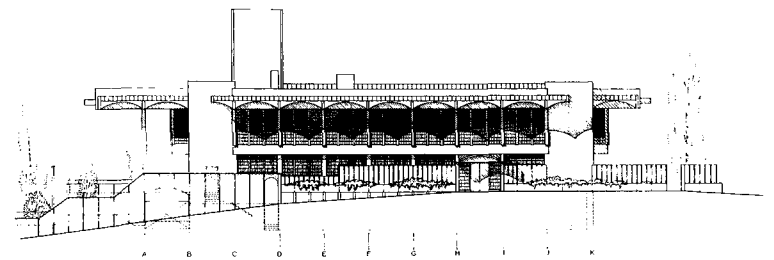


Ground floor plan

0 5 10 m

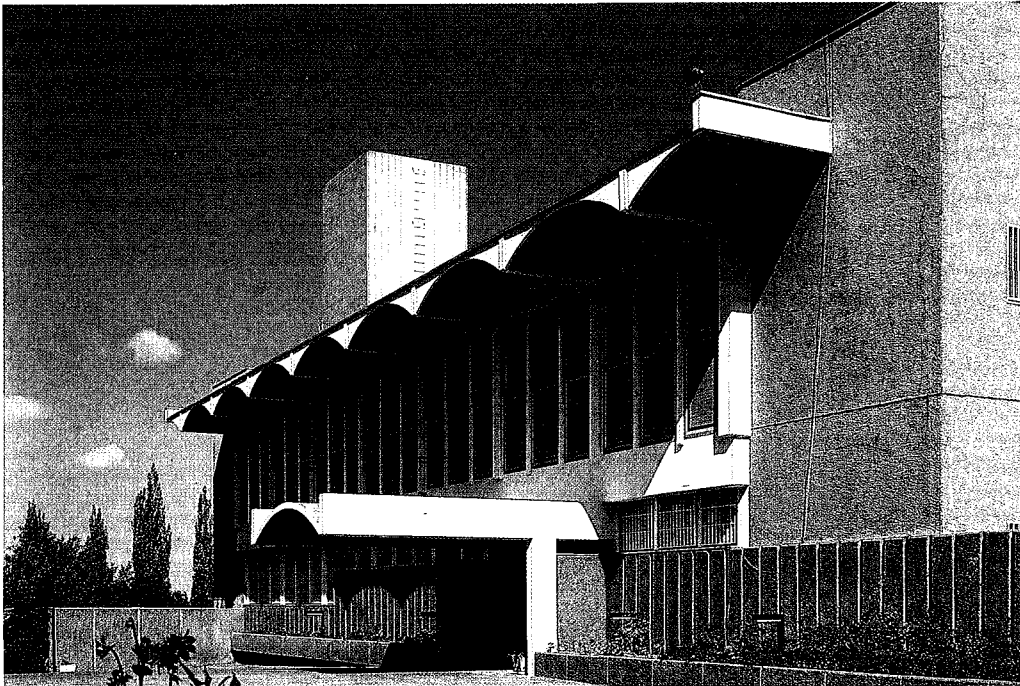


Garden side elevation

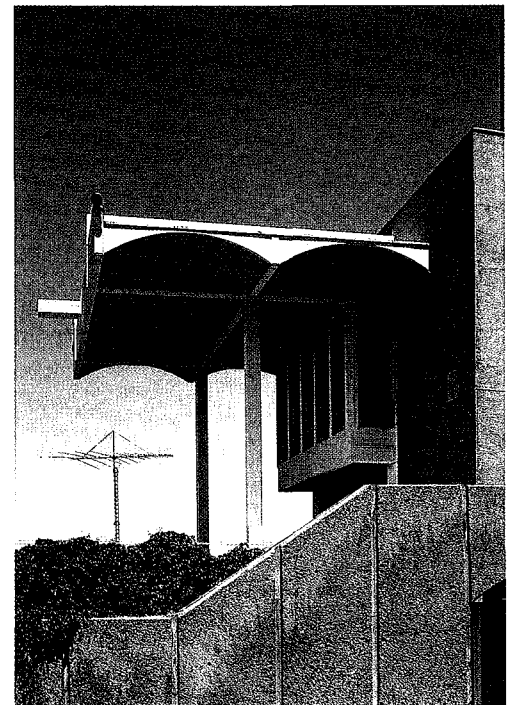


Entrance elevation

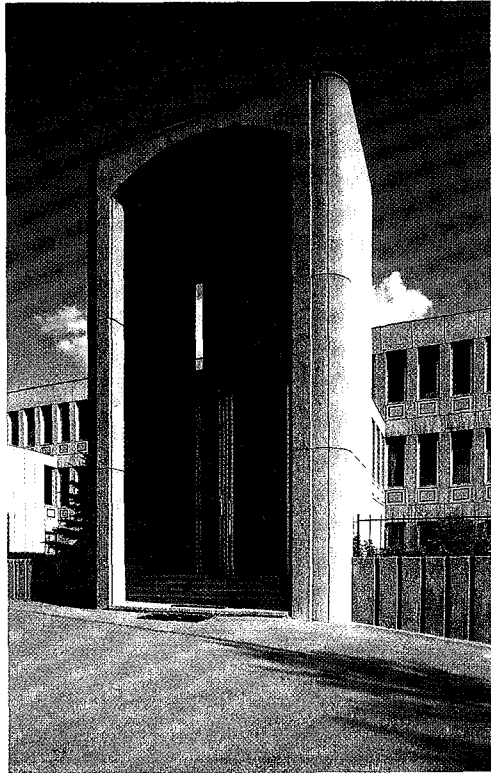
0 5 10 m



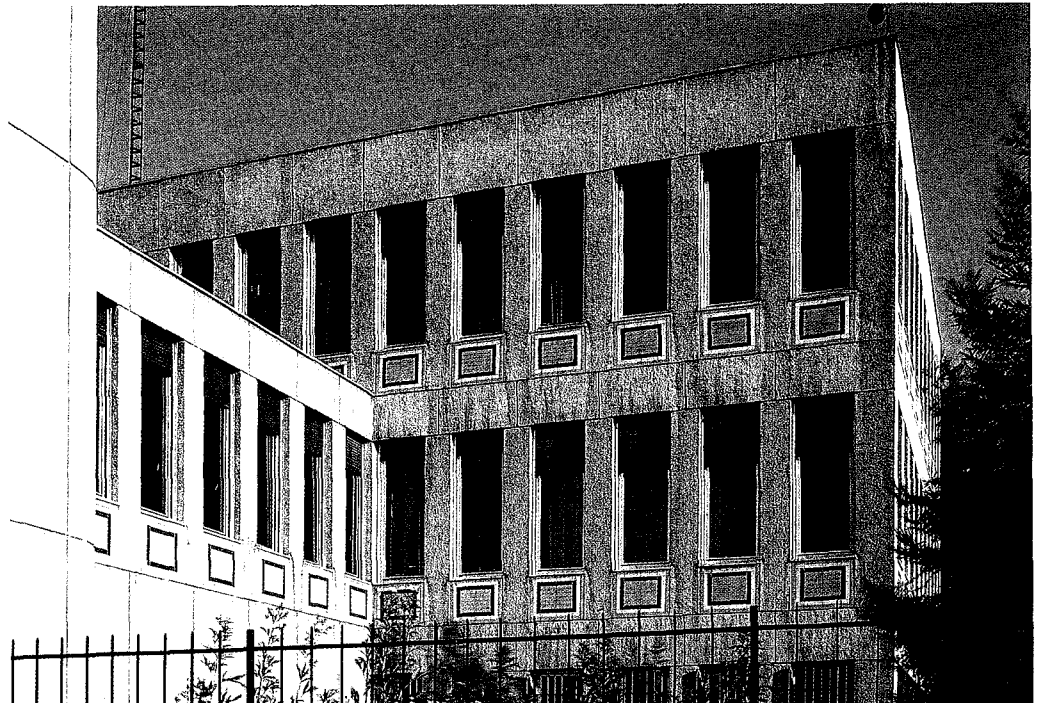
Residence entrance



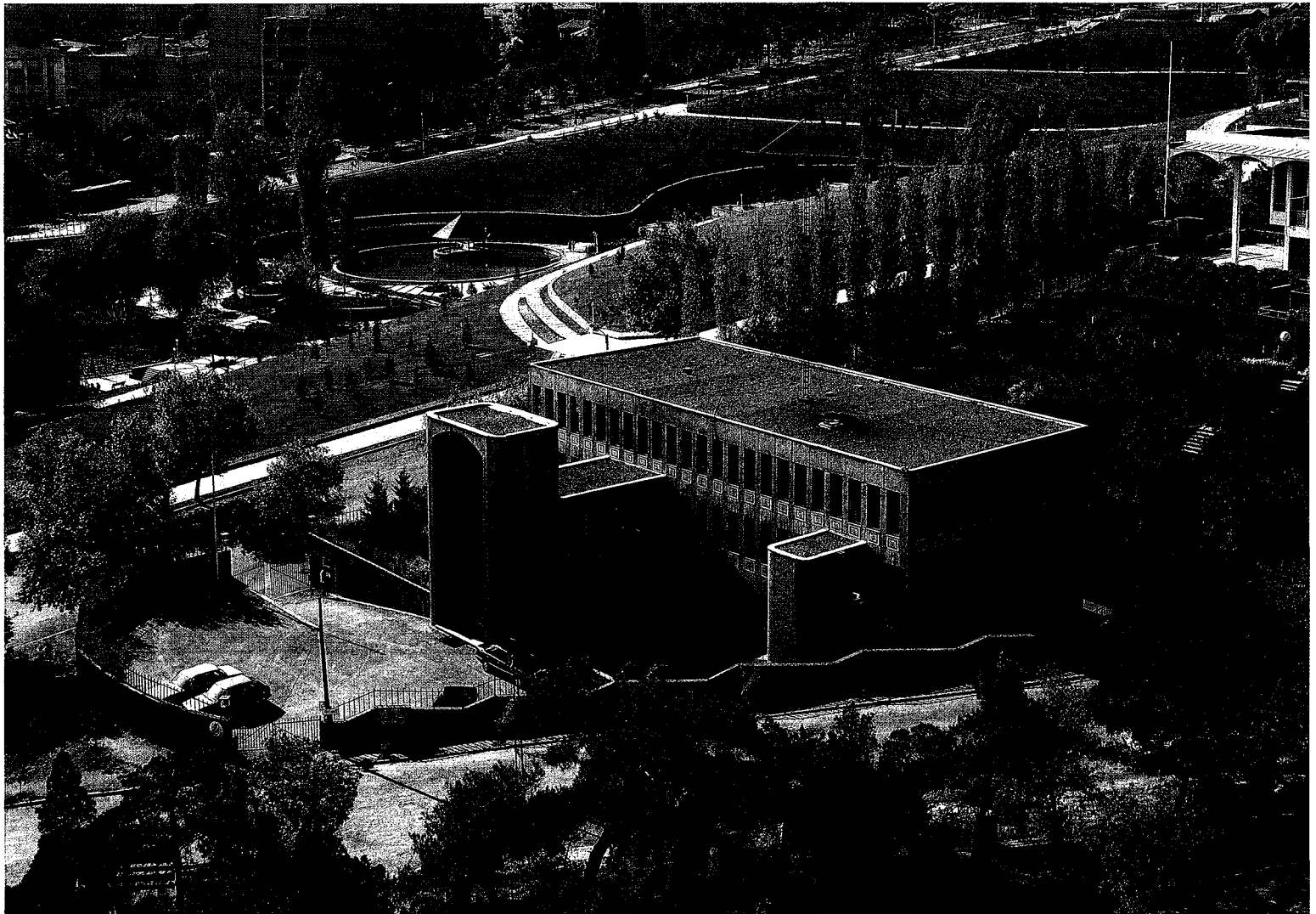
Detail of Residence
Photographs: Atelye Mat



Entrance portal



Embassy Building

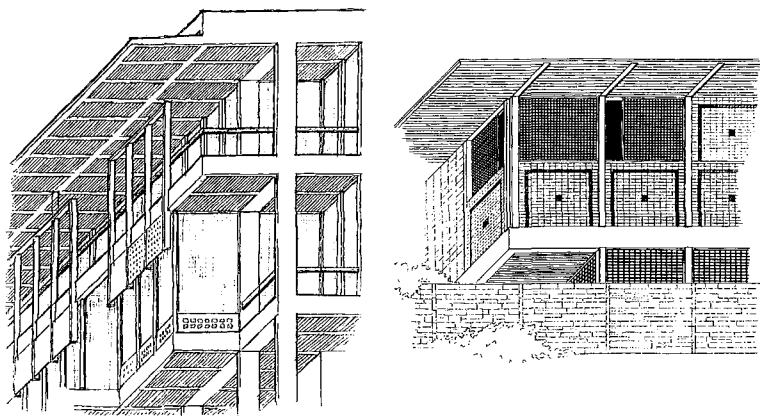


General view of the Embassy Building
Photographs: Atelye Mat

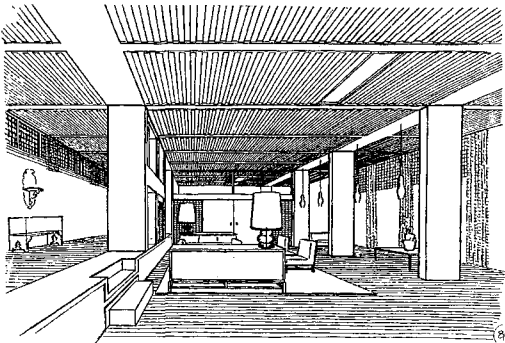
Indian Embassy Residence Ankara, 1965



Residence, view from valley Photograph: Erdal Aksoy



Elevation system studies



Interior perspective

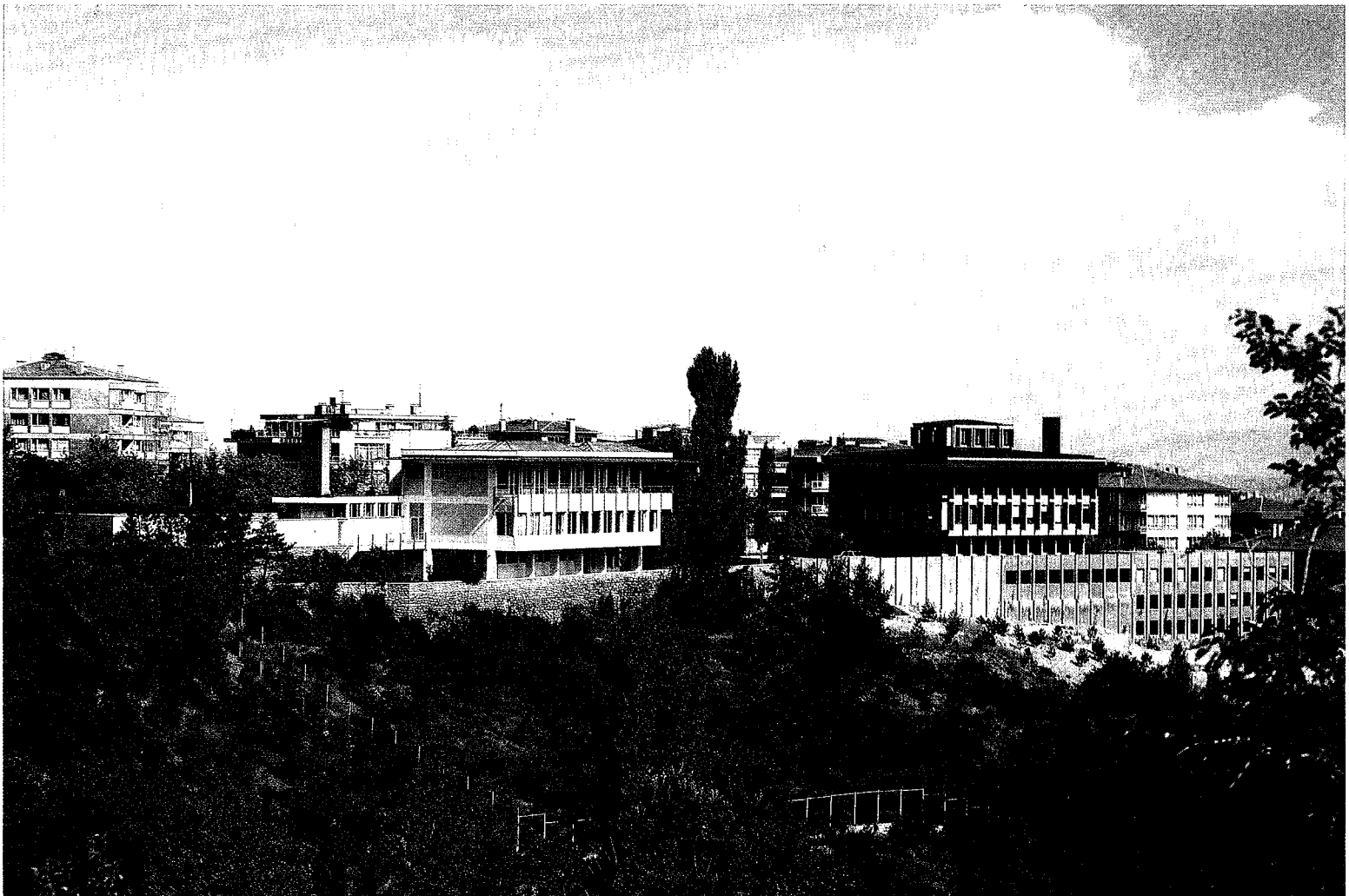
The Indian Embassy Residence (1965), another spectacular work is an elongated building located on the edge of a slope overlooking the valley, above a high retaining wall of rough stone. The plan displays an ingenious separation of the service wing and the main house which interlock at the entrance hall. On this level, the main house contains the large reception and dining halls, while on the upper floor, a corridor gives access to bedrooms which, on the view side, open to a continuous balcony along the whole facade. The basement contains the utilities and the servants' quarters tucked into the slope. The whole plan is conceived on a 2.00 metre module corresponding to the beams of the one-way structural system spanning the shorter side of the rectangular plan. This reinforced concrete structural system is the dominant feature of the overall architectural expression, again painted white in distinct contrast with infilling surfaces. The latter include the windows, white sun-breaking grills, and the infill walls faced with yellow ceramic tile. Numerous studies and sketches of possible facade systems were made, to put side by side, materials of different texture, colour and character within a display of sharp geometrical patterns. In line with a modernist ethic, the building can be seen as a statement of the "honest" expression of different materials. The same ethic underlies the interior design, with a clearly marked contrast between the white strips of painted concrete and the polished wood surfaces of ceiling and floor finish. Closets, shelves, niches and fireplaces fit into this modular subdivision.

The Indian Embassy Residence is particularly significant as an expression of the rational and abstract modernism of Eldem, not only in the modular logic of his elevations, but more significantly in the overall play of masses and surfaces: projections, cantilevers, intersection of vertical and horizontal planes almost in the spirit of De Stijl.

Meanwhile, the more recent Embassy building situated next to the residence, displays a more "brutal" expression leaving the concrete exposed on the vertical facade elements and the horizontal slabs. The infill parapet walls under the windows are faced with a yellowish ceramic tile in an attempt to be in harmony with the older building. The interior is also dominated by the contrasting colour schema of white structural frame versus infill walls and parapets faced with the same yellowish ceramic tile bordered by a course of dark brown tile. The consequent powerful geometrical pattern is continued on the floor finish with a chequered pattern of white and grey marble.



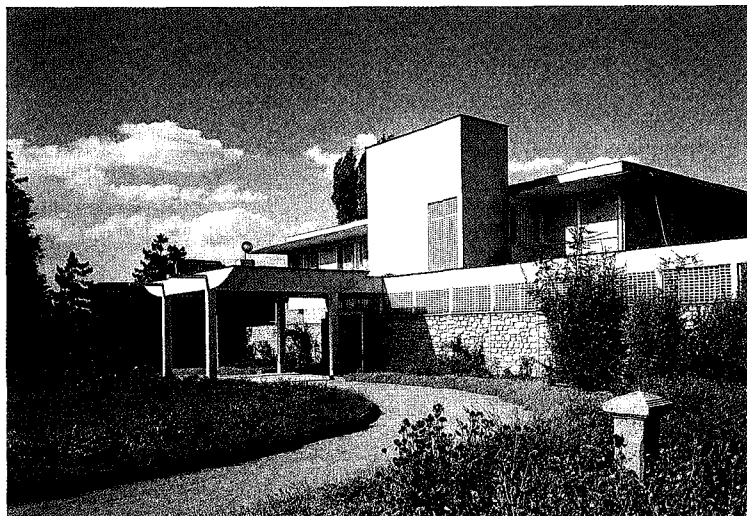
The building is a square block in its overall mass, with a dominant three-storey high interior atrium sky-lit from above. Offices are lined up along galleries overlooking this atrium; and on the outside, they exhibit the characteristic repetition of vertically proportioned windows, projecting outwards above the ground floor in a typical Eldem gesture. The play with proportions, however, lends the building a unique character, with the projecting upper floors and the even wider projection of the roof sitting heavily above a very low entrance floor. That the building stands alone on a wide plaza further accentuates its sculptural, object-like character. The whole site of the Indian Embassy complex is bordered by a high, exposed concrete wall and at the lower corner of the site, a third block is attached to house the embassy employees.



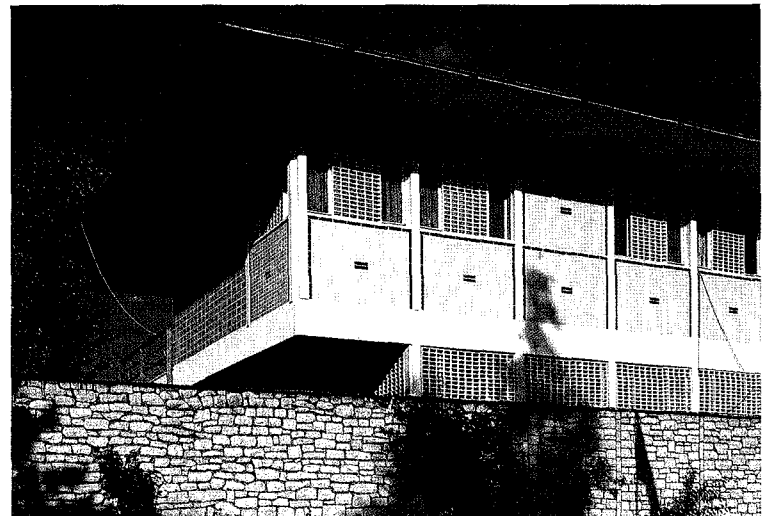
Indian Embassy Complex, Ankara, 1965 Photograph: Atelye Mat



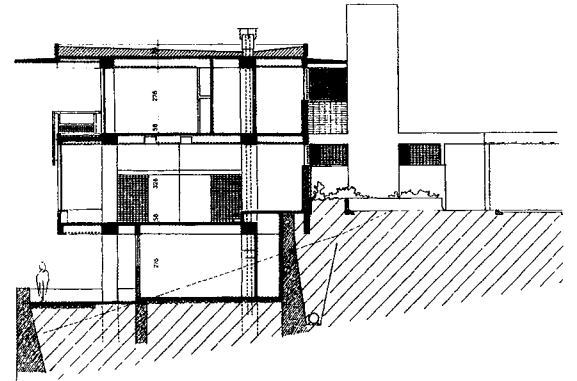
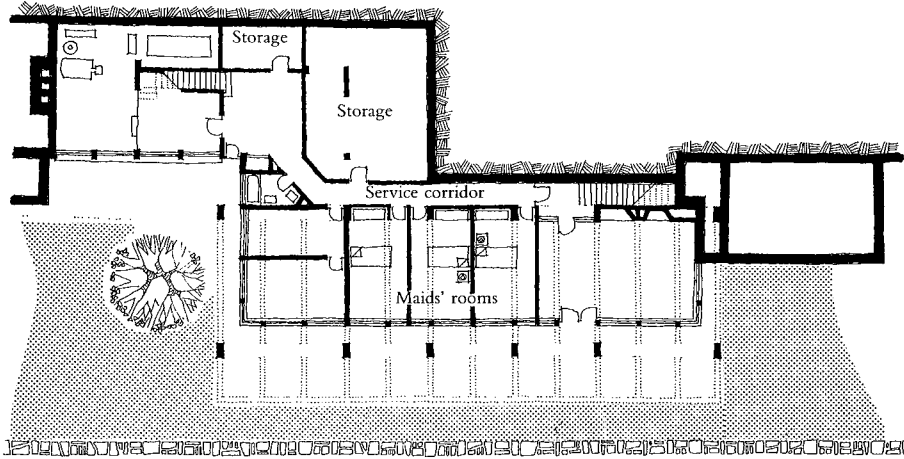
Residence, street view



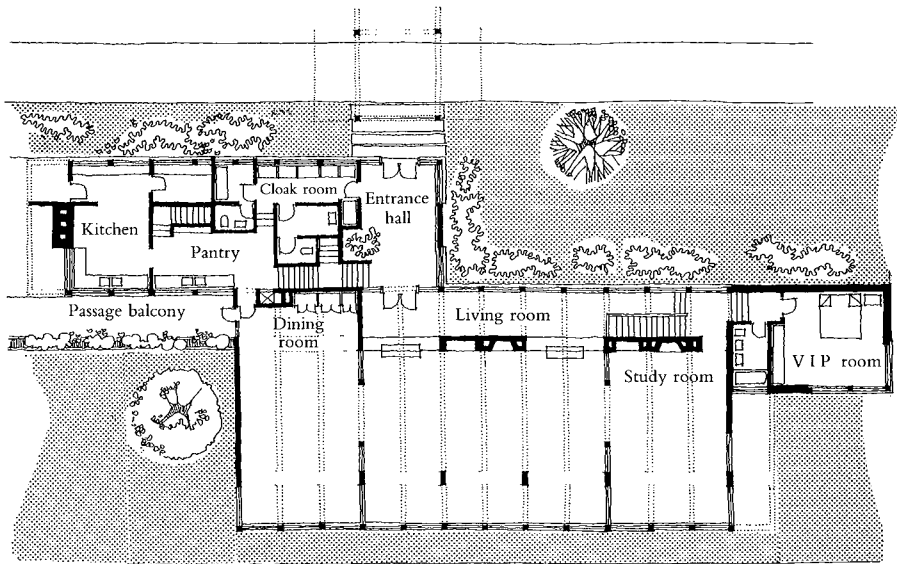
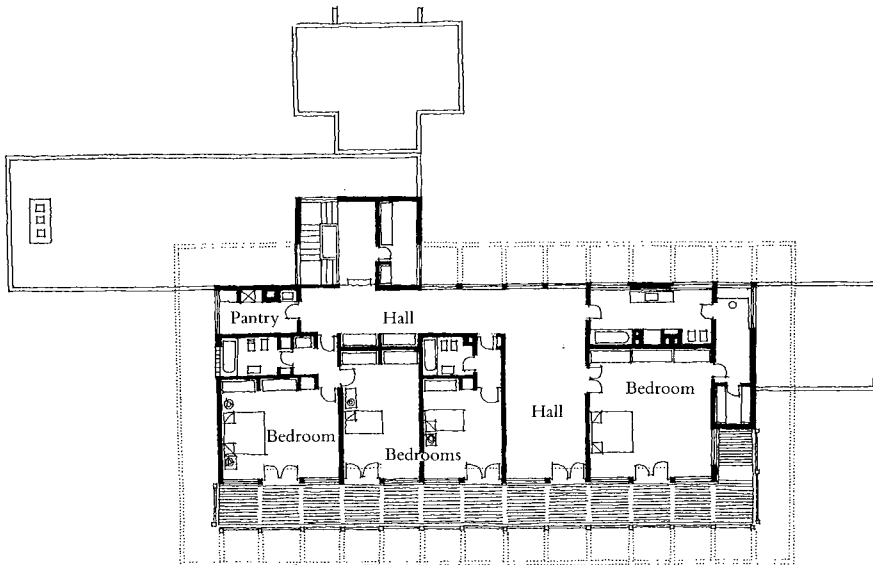
Residence entrance



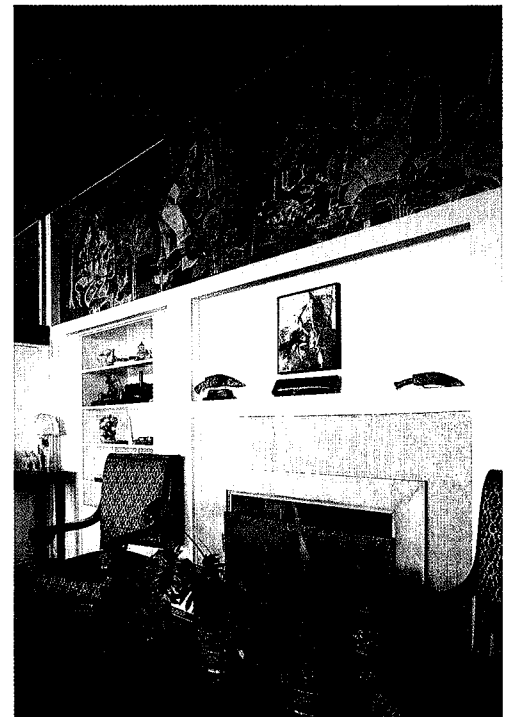
Residence, view from valley
Photographs: Atelyc Mat



Residence, section



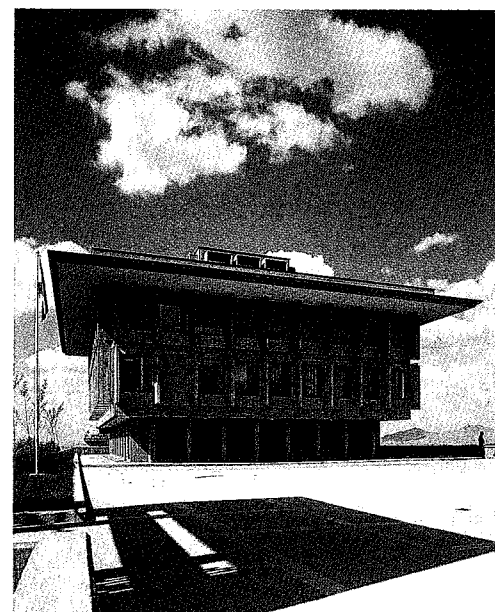
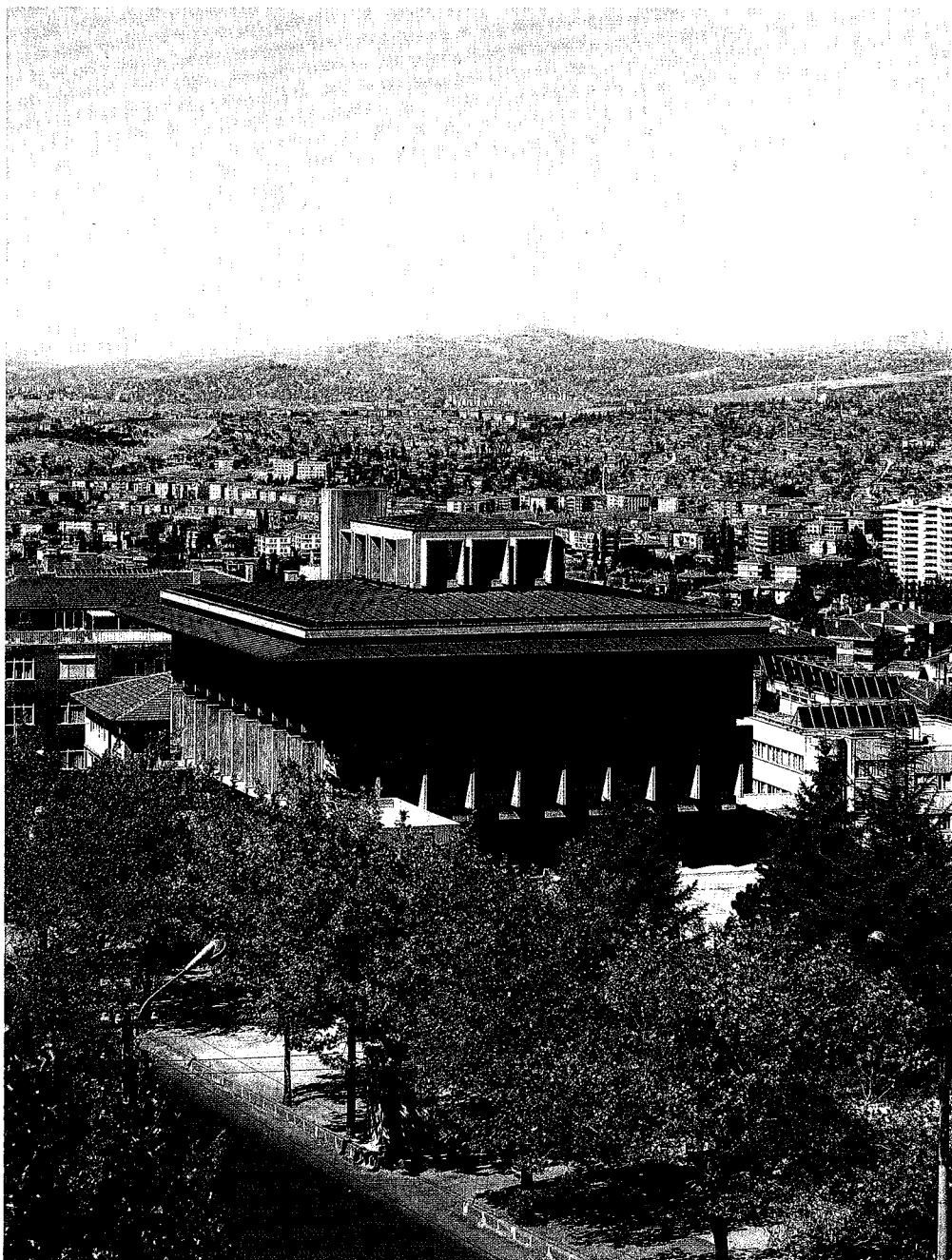
Residence, plans



Residence interiors

Overleaf: Residence, main reception hall
Photographs: Atelye Mat





Embassy Building, general views

Right: Embassy Building, corner detail
Photographs: Atelye Mat





Embassy Building, atrium

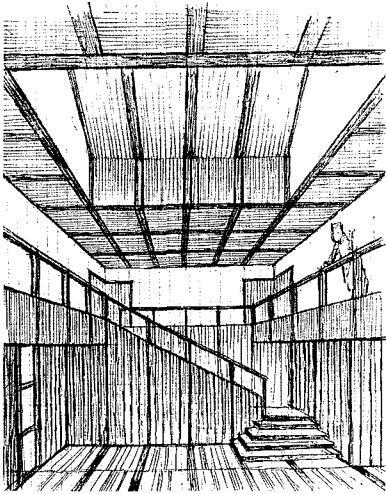


Embassy Building, entrance hall

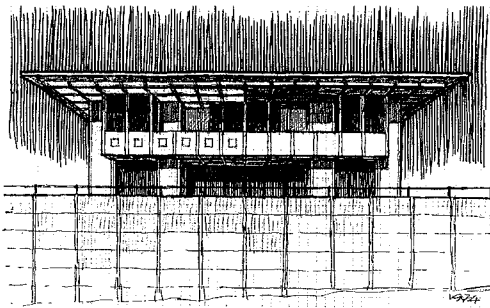


Embassy Building, atrium
Photographs: Atelye Mat

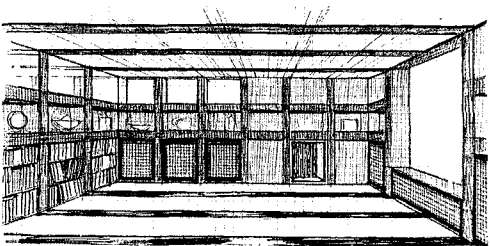
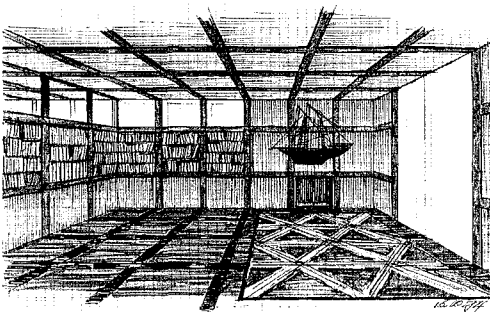
Dutch Embassy Residence Ankara, 1973–77



Central Hall study



Perspective, 1974



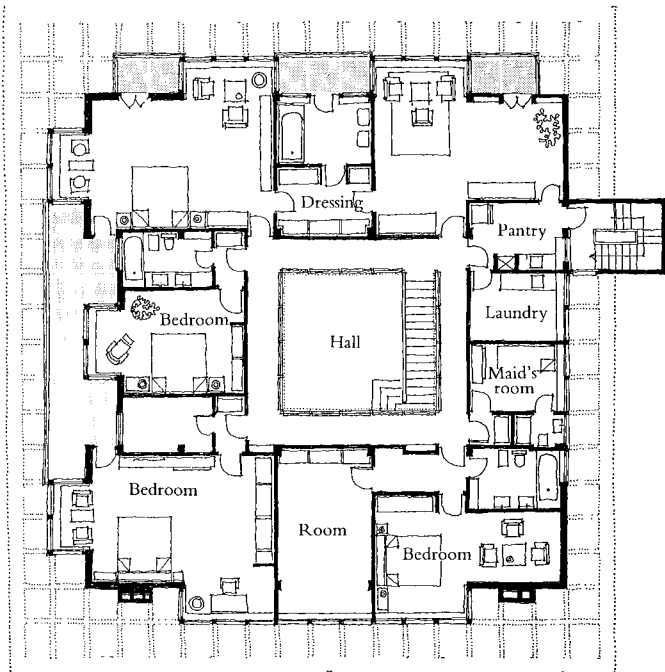
Interior studies

The Dutch Embassy Residence (1973–77) is a relatively smaller building, closer in spirit to Eldem's concerns with the traditional house. The two-storey building is almost a perfect square, adopting the central *sofa* plan type over a grid of 1.20×1.30 metres. The upper floors characteristically project outwards and are finished at the top with wide overhanging eaves of the roof. On the entrance level, the central *sofa* is open to the front, with the projecting bays of the study and the reception hall on both sides of it. At the centre of the building, the hall is a two-storey high space sky-lit from above. On the second floor the bedrooms are located around a gallery overlooking this central space. Numerous studies were conducted by the architect for the interior design of this hall and the presence of the modular grid was overemphasised by material and colour contrasts. The square pattern of the floor finish, with alternating bands of white and black marble, restates the significance of the grid on this focal point of the plan. The elevations are characterised by the repetition of vertical elements yielding an overall horizontal effect. The parapet walls under the windows were conceived to be faced with ceramic tiles, but are left as exposed concrete surfaces.

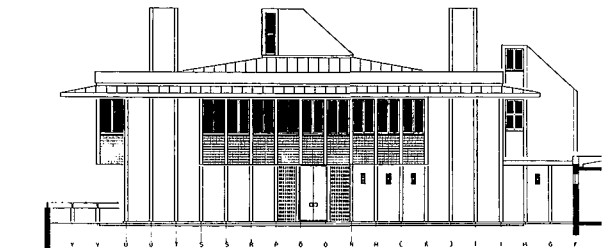
The predominance of the grid is deliberately exaggerated in a perspective rendering by Eldem for the initial 1974 design which bears testimony to his uncompromising rationalist predilections in his search for a modular system of plan and elevation. His interior perspective sketches also display his obsession with the grid as the skeletal mesh into which wall, floor and ceiling finishes, built-in shelves and closets, fire places and empty niches all neatly fit. The whole design is, ultimately, an exercise in order and geometry as a means to abstract elements from tradition and use them in a modern and different fashion.



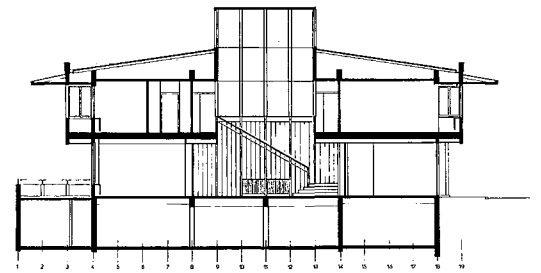
Street view Photograph: Erdal Aksoy



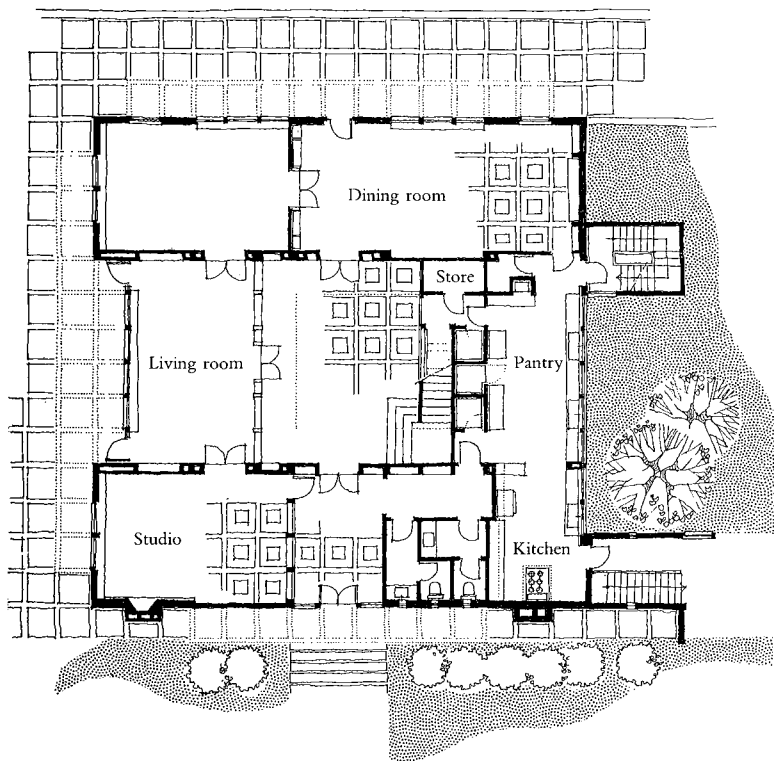
First floor plan



Entrance elevation



Section



Ground floor plan





View from entrance plaza



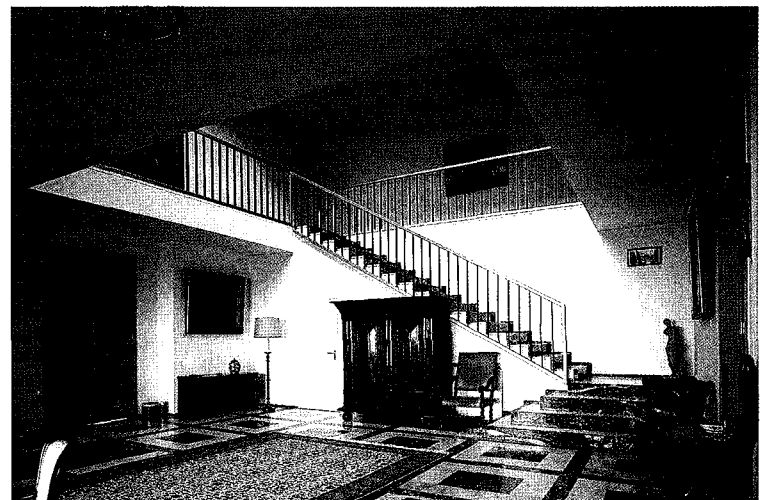
Detail of entrance elevation

Right: Garden/street view
Photographs: Atelye Mat





Central sofa



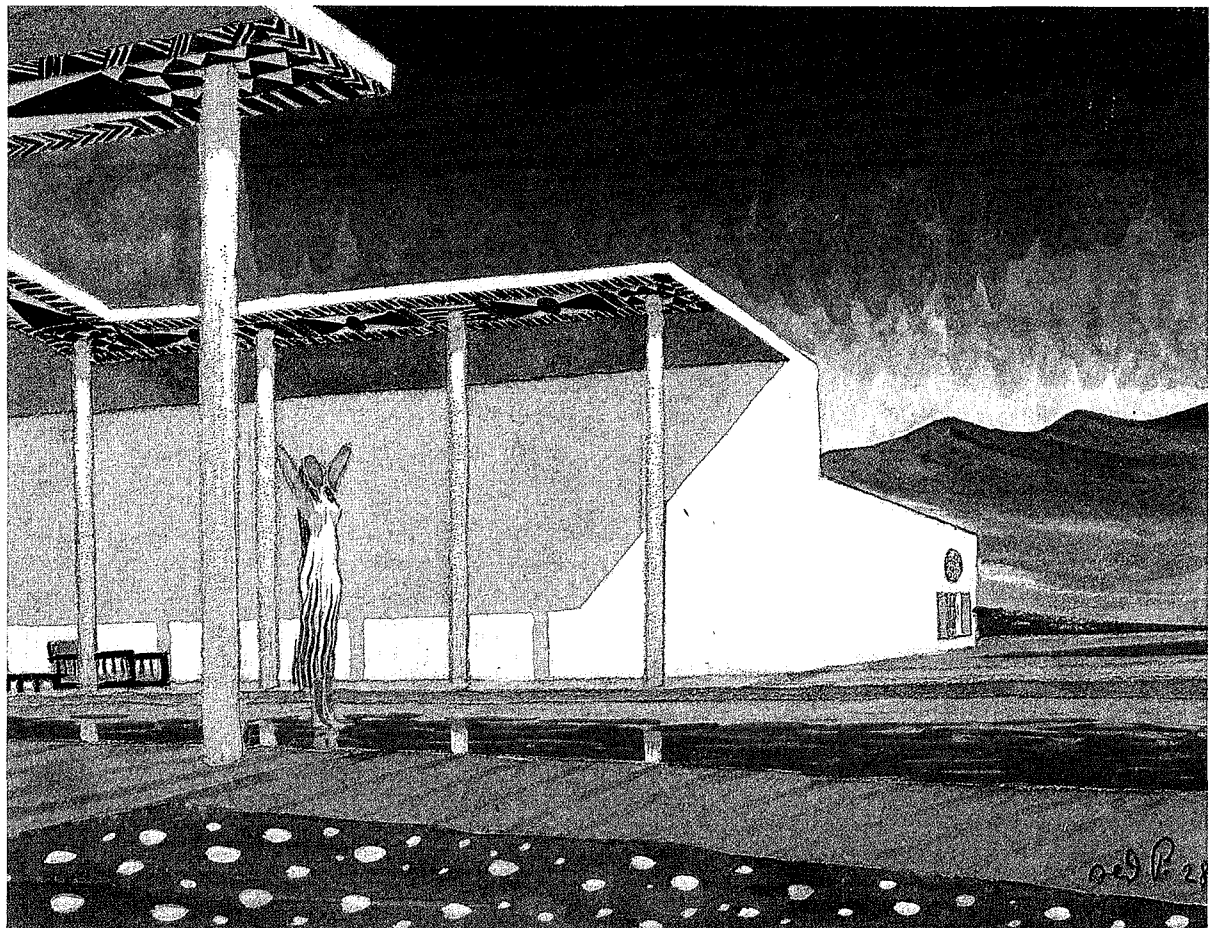
Central sofa
Photographs: Atelye Mat

“One might ask why it is necessary to look into the past. Why can we not simply look forward? The answer is that Islam’s only way into the future is through the past. The greatest achievements of Islam are those of the past, since then we have merely been marking time. It is a regrettable fact that we must first journey into our past and seek our inspiration there. Only then we can venture forward onto new ground. Our first requirement is a solid foundation.”

– Sedad Hakkı Eldem, “Toward A Local Idiom: A Summary History of Contemporary Architecture in Turkey” in *Conservation As Cultural Survival*, 1980, p. 93

Finally, Eldem’s discourse in the form of buildings, drawings and texts, once more illustrate that labels need to be handled with care. All the adjectives used in reference to his work — terms like “nationalist”, “regionalist”, “historicist”, “eclectic”, etc. — ultimately explain less about his architecture than about the historical/cultural context in which such discursive categories are produced and reproduced; are loaded or emptied of values. Also that, in the last instance, the architect himself is embedded in the same context within which his architecture is to gain or lose credibility. Therefore Eldem’s quest for “nationalism” in the 1940s, and for “regionalism” in the 1970s do not correspond to grave differences in the underlying vision. It is only the terms of the discourse which change in the course of time. But it is essentially the constants which raise an architect to prominence.

The constant in Eldem’s career is the rationalist/idealist sensi-



Eldem’s sketch for the spirit, house and nature

bility that has guided him throughout. He is, in general, not interested in producing unique and highly personal artworks which, by definition, are the products of creative genius and are therefore not repeatable if not totally unintelligible in their reception. On the contrary, his enterprise is the construction of an architectural discourse: one that is recognisable, repeatable and communicable. It is a search for Cartesian certainty in a world where pluralism has gone astray; a desire to derive authority from precedent and, at the same time, to convey authority to the future. And it is in this sense that the work of Eldem is ultimately “*classic*” — in the true etymological meaning of the term as “authoritative works for study”, or the “best possible” abstracted from the real world of artefacts and experience. Rather than being empirically embedded in context and circumstance, his buildings essentially stand out as “ideal object-types” rationally conceived in order to be transmitted in time. It is a deliberate choice to “construct” rather than to “create” It is, before anything else, the *language* that he is trying to build up. Poetry can then follow. .

A concluding remark is often redundant when the objective has been to expose rather than to explain. In this sense, the works of Eldem speak for themselves and what can at best be resumed from such an exposition of works is the diversity and richness of his production; his insatiable appetite for building. This is the pragmatic face of the architect-in-practice.

Yet it is his idealist face — his inexhaustible search and re-search for a modern reappraisal of tradition — that gives him his distinguished place in Turkish architecture. His greatest achievement and contribution reside, certainly in his persistent emphasis on tradition and cultural continuity, but more significantly, in his equally persistent emphasis on reinterpretation rather than repetition. His particular brand of appropriating tradition, not as imagery and ornament, but as a set of fundamental formal and structural principles, i.e. the “use” and not the “abuse” of history, can be better appreciated in today’s cultural context when the polemic between the “post-modernists” and the “neo-rationalists” is about to exhaust itself. Eldem can best be identified as a critical modernist for whom the past is paradoxically the only path to the future, and the future the only measure to understand the past.

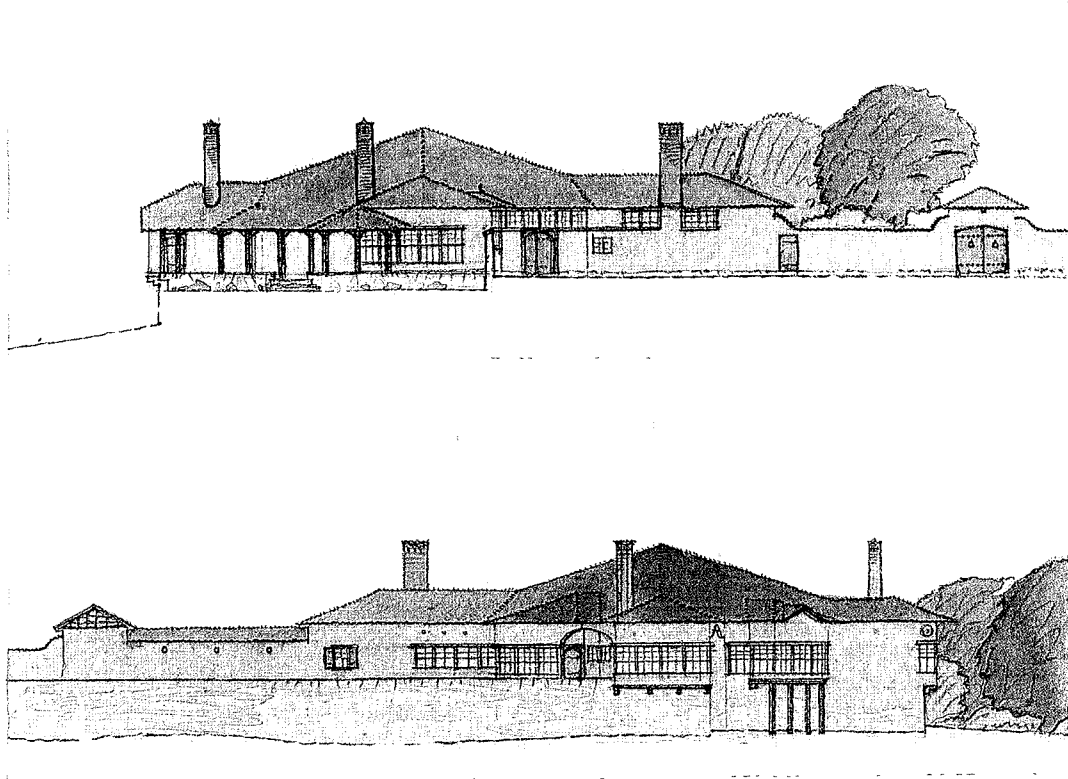
“That which is classic invokes the idea of ancient and exemplary and suggests ‘authority and distinction’, it is a model of what is excellent or of the first rank. More importantly, it implies its own timelessness, the idea that it is first rank at any time ”

– Peter Eisenman, “The End of the Classical”, *Perspecta 21*, p. 155

“But a more important feature is the consideration of the building as a static object, exactly as in the case of compact grand-scale buildings. And these realisations — houses, yalis, embassies — are classic, not only because of their forms or symmetry, but merely because they are, independently of their real size, monumental and atemporal ”

– Atilla Yücel, “Pluralism Takes Command: The Turkish Architectural Scene Today” in *Modern Turkish Architecture*, 1984, p. 147

CHRONOLOGY OF WORKS 1931–1986



by Sibel Bozdoğan

Notes:

Buildings are dated at the time of design. A second date denotes the date of the building completion.

Asterisked (*) projects are covered in this monograph.

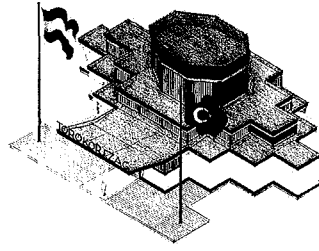
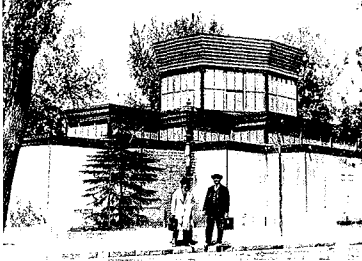
Bibliographical references to each building follow each entry.

Turkish Pavilion — Budapest International Exposition

Budapest, 1931

Temporary structure built on a 2.00 × 3.00 metre grid with timber posts and lightweight infill panels. Central hall, a slightly elongated octagon in plan, is a high space dominating the building.

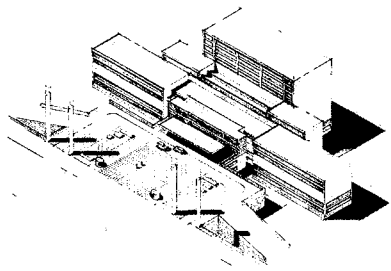
Published in: "Peşte Sergisinde Türk Pavyonu", *Mimar*, 1931, pp 187–192



Project for "Sergi Evi"/Exhibition Building Ankara, 1931

Entry proposal for an international competition organised by the National Economy and Savings Society

Published in: "Sergi Binası Müsabakası", *Mimar*, 1933, pp 141–144



House Projects Istanbul, 1931–1933

Series of designs published in the architectural magazine *Mimar*, the professional journal of the young architects of the Republic. These projects for small houses, villas or *yalı* types, most of them along the Bosphorus, are conceived within a wide range of allusions from traditional houses (plan types, window proportions and arrangement, wide eaves, etc.) to an aesthetic of modernism (rounded corners, band or slit windows, etc.).

Published in:

"Küçük Ev Projeleri", *Mimar*, 1931, pp 156–159

"Ev Projesi", *Mimar*, 1931, pp 264–267

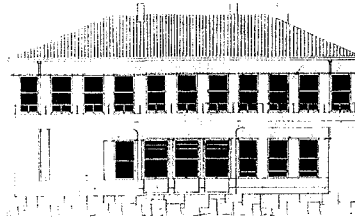
"Villa Projeleri", *Mimar*, 1931, pp 301–305

"Bir Ev Projesi", *Mimar*, 1932, pp 141–143

"Bir Sayfiye Evi Projesi", *Mimar*, 1932, pp 248–250

"Bir Villa Projesi", *Mimar*, 1933, pp 50–52

"Bronz Sokağı Köşesinde Ev Projesi", *Mimar*, 1933, pp 206–207



İclal Sadi House/Köşkü Istanbul, 1932

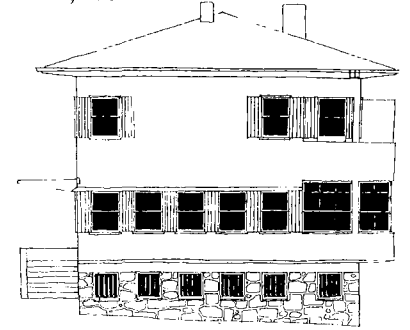
Demolished in the 1950s

Published in: "İ Hanım Evi", *Mimar*, 1932, pp 168–170

Naci (Eldeniz) Paşa House Ankara, 1932

Demolished in the 1950s

Published in: "Naci Paşa Villası, Ankara", *Mimar*, 1932, pp 101–107



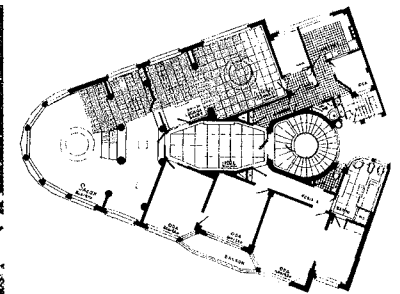
Tevfik Azmi Yalı İstinye, Istanbul, 1933

Remodelled in 1985 by Sedad H. Eldem as a new *yalı* for Mehmet Hattat

Ceylan Apartment Building Taksim, Istanbul, 1933

Built on a triangular corner lot pointing towards a view to the park. Consists of a basement, a ground floor with shops, six upper floors each designed as one large apartment and a penthouse flat at the top. The structural system is a reinforced concrete frame. Walls are plastered; columns, floors and stairs are finished with marble.

Published in: "Ceylan Apartmanı, Taksim", *Mimar*, 1933, pp 331–346



House Projects Istanbul, 1931–1933

Series of designs published in the architectural magazine *Mimar*, the professional journal of the young architects of the Republic. These projects for small houses, villas or *yalı* types, most of them along the Bosphorus, are conceived within a wide range of allusions from traditional houses (plan types, window proportions and arrangement, wide eaves, etc.) to an aesthetic of modernism (rounded corners, band or slit windows, etc.).

Published in:

"Küçük Ev Projeleri", *Mimar*, 1931, pp 156–159

"Ev Projesi", *Mimar*, 1931, pp 264–267

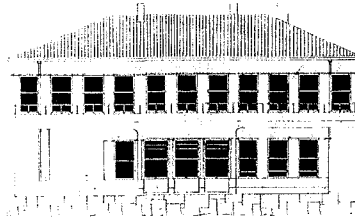
"Villa Projeleri", *Mimar*, 1931, pp 301–305

"Bir Ev Projesi", *Mimar*, 1932, pp 141–143

"Bir Sayfiye Evi Projesi", *Mimar*, 1932, pp 248–250

"Bir Villa Projesi", *Mimar*, 1933, pp 50–52

"Bronz Sokağı Köşesinde Ev Projesi", *Mimar*, 1933, pp 206–207



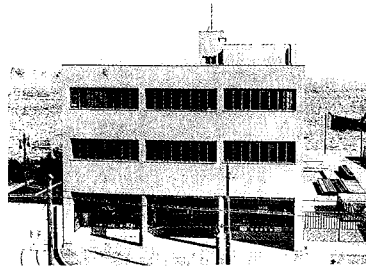
Bayan Firdevs House Maçka, Istanbul, 1934

A three-storey apartment building squeezed between two higher buildings adjoining on each side. Entrance is asymmetrically placed to one side of the ground floor, further accentuated by a rounded corner. Living and dining areas face the front of the building; bedrooms are placed at the back and services are in between facing a light-well.

Published in: "Bayan Firdevs Evi, Maçka", *Mimar*, 1934, pp 331–334

Electric Company Building/SATIE Fındıklı, İstanbul, 1934*

Demolished in 1958 Initially built as offices and warehouse of Societè Anonyme Turque d'Installation Electrique Reinforced concrete frame structure is infilled with brick and finished on the outside with plaster The cubic mass, flat roof and band windows make reference to early 20th century modernism

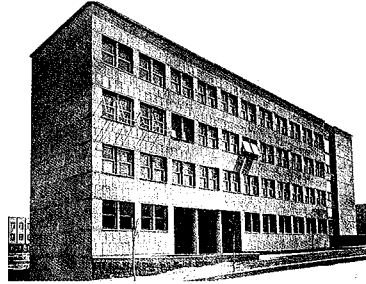


Published in: "Elektrik Şirketi Deposu (SATIE), Fındıklı", *Mimar*, 1934, pp 159-162

State Monopolies General Directorate Ankara, 1934-1937*

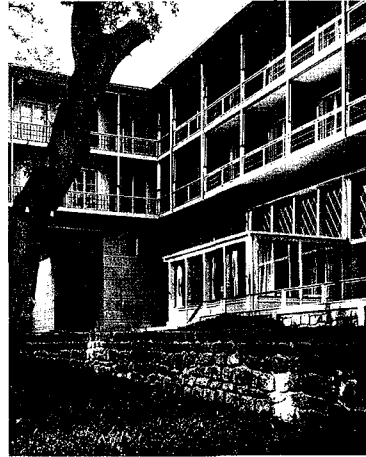
Winning project in an international competition in 1934. Partly built in 1937, as a modified and incomplete version of the original design Today used as the Primeministry Building

Published in: "Gümrükler ve İnhisarlar Vekaleti Binası Proje Müsabakası", *Mimar*, 1934, pp 195-199
"İnhisarlar Umum Müdürlük Binası", *Arkitekt*, 1937, pp 315-324



Termal Hotel Yalova, 1934-1937

Project taken up in 1934 upon the initiative of the first president Kemal Atatürk who demanded the intervention of S H Eldem in the ongoing design and construction of the hotel Projecting eaves and balconies, horizontal rows of vertically proportioned windows make references to traditional domestic architecture Work was completed in 1937 including the architect-designed interiors, furniture, fittings and fabrics Demolished in 1983

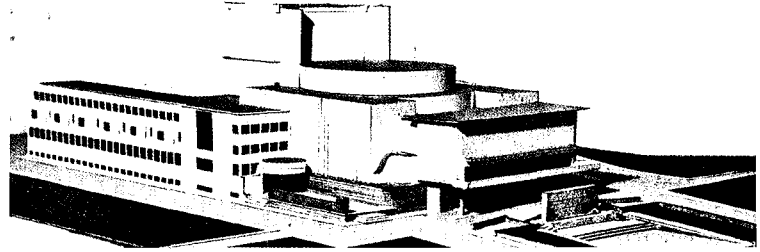


Published in: "Yalova'da Bir Otel Müsabakası", *Mimar*, 1934, pp 159-162
"Yalova Termal Otel", *Arkitekt*, 1938, pp 67-81
"Termal Hotel In Yalova", *Moderne Bauformen*, v 9, Sept 1939, pp 466-472

Project for Conservatory and Theatre Şehzadebaşı, İstanbul, 1935

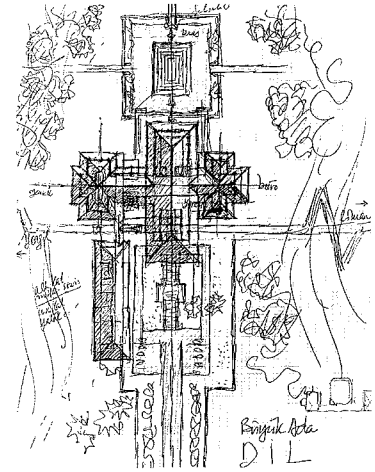
Entry proposal for the international competition won by Hans Poelzig with whom Eldem had worked as a young assistant in Berlin earlier in his career

Published in: "İstanbul Tiyatro ve Konservatuvarı Uluslararası Proje Müsabakası", *Arkitekt*, 1935, pp 19-21



Project for the President's Residence Büyükdada, İstanbul, 1935

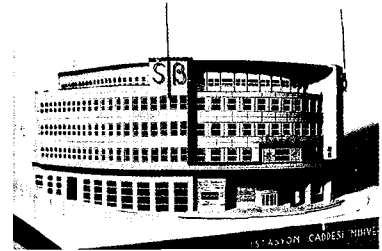
Unrealised project for President Atatürk's residence and guest house, located on the tip of a peninsula of the largest of the Princes Islands Cross-axially planned with an extending wing for the guests, and an overall horizontality reminiscent of Frank Lloyd Wright's prairie architecture to which Eldem acknowledges his indebtedness



Project for Sümerbank Ankara, 1935

Entry proposal for the international competition

Published in: "Sümerbank Proje Müsabakası, Ankara", *Arkitekt*, 1935, pp 73-80

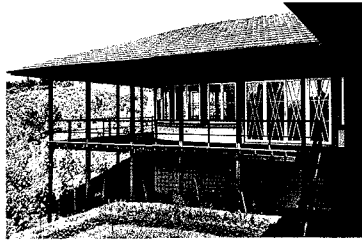


Project for the Third Army Headquarters Erzurum, 1936

Unbuilt proposal for clusters of row houses Various different house typologies are studied

Fethi Okyar House Büyükdada, Istanbul, 1936–1937

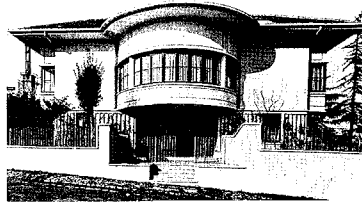
Extension to an existing house with the addition of a large hall rounded on one end, and a wide terrace/balcony supported on timber posts and surrounding the whole house. Located on a high ground on the largest of the Princes Islands. S.H. Eldem acted as architect and contractor, at the same time responding to the client aspirations for a “Japanese style”



Published in: “Büyükdada Bir Villa”, *Arkitekt*, 1938, pp 67–81

Ahmet Ağaoğlu House Nişantaşı, Istanbul, 1936–1937*

Demolished. Was initially built above the foundation walls of an existing building. Two identical apartments are located on the ground floor, and a larger one on the upper floor. The protruding oval hall of the upper floor apartment is the most significant feature of the house.



Published in: “Maçka’da Prof. A. Ağaoğlu Evi”, *Arkitekt*, 1938, pp 277–282

Music Conservatory Extension Ankara, 1938

Eight rehearsal rooms are arranged within an octagonal plan. Built as an extending wing of the main building by Ernst Egli dating from 1927.

Published in: “Müzik Öğretmen Okulu İlavesi”, *Arkitekt*, 1938, pp 10–13

Tahsin Günel Yalı Yeniköy, Istanbul, 1938

Remodelled in 1978–1980 by Sedat H. Eldem as the new İlicak Yalı. The building adopts the traditional *kamuyarik* plan type which basically displays a more or less symmetrical arrangement on the two sides of a central hall/*sofa* transversely cutting through the house. In this case the hall culminates with curved facades on both ends, amply glazed to visually connect the garden at the back with the sea in the front.



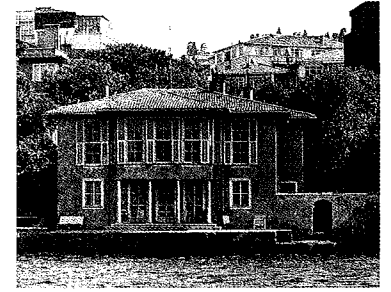
Published in: “Boğaziçi’nde Bir Yalı”, *Arkitekt*, 1944, pp 147–153

Süleymaniye Area Redevelopment Study Istanbul, 1938

Urban studies for the Municipality of Istanbul

Ayaşlı Yalı Beylerbeyi, Istanbul, 1938

Two-storey house on the Bosphorus capturing, in terms of its plan type, the spirit of the traditional Turkish House. On the ground floor, the central hall/*sofa* opens to a terrace overlooking the sea, while on the upper floor, it cuts across the house making *köşk* type projections at the back and the front.



Published in: “Beylerbeyi’nde Bir Yalı”, *Arkitekt*, 1938, pp 213–217

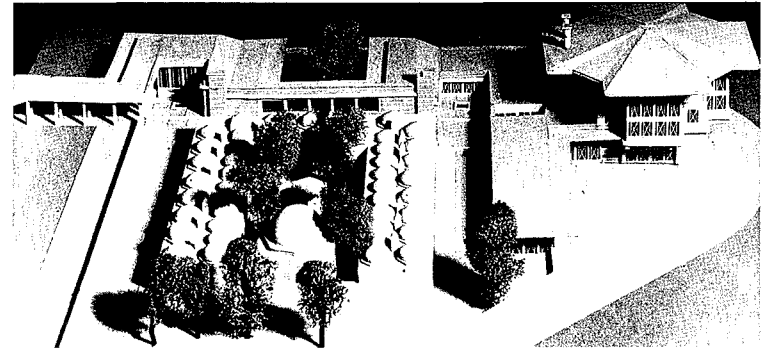
Eminönü Area Redevelopment Study Istanbul, 1938

Studies for the Municipality of Istanbul to reorganise the square with an accompanying proposal for new offices and shops.

Beyazıt Square Redevelopment Study Istanbul, 1939–1940

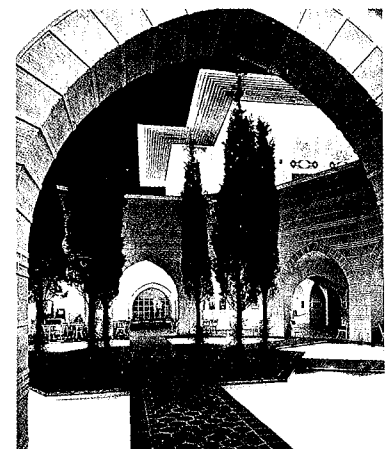
Unrealised proposal for the rehabilitation of the square. The scale of the old *medrese* is captured by the proposed streets and squares surrounding it and culminating with a coffee house/restaurant based on the “Turkish House” type.

Published in: “İki Türk Kahvesi Projesi: Beyazıt ve Camlıca”, *Arkitekt*, 1941, pp 8–11



Turkish Pavilion — New York International Exposition
New York, 1939

Temporary structure consisting of two wings — “Sümerbank” and “İnhisarlar”/State Monopolies — arranged around a circular sunken plaza, with a Turkish coffee house/restaurant on the upper level. The structure was intended to be light, using timber and steel frame with gypsum-board panels. The initial design was drastically altered and was built with decorative additions.

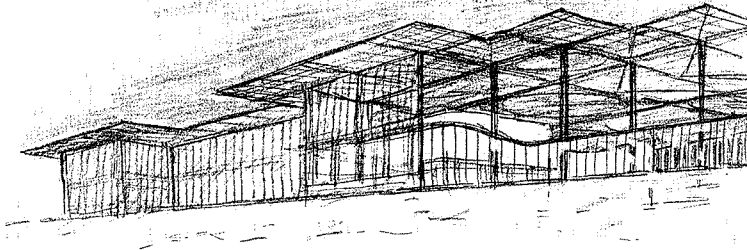


Published in: “New York Sergisi Türk Pavyonu Projesi”, *Arkitekt*, 1939, pp 153–156
“Architectures Classique et Moderne de la Turquie”, *L’Illustration*, n 5023, 1939

Project for Çamlıca Coffee House Çamlıca, İstanbul, 1941

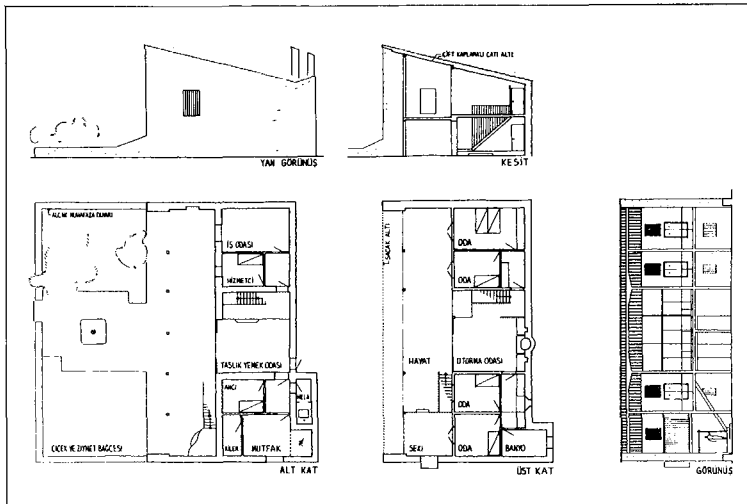
Designed on a square-modular grid with cross-axially arranged interior spaces. A reinforced concrete frame structure was proposed with infill panels finished in timber. Interior design and furnishing was an integral part of the project, combining the natural colour and texture of wood with walls plastered in white.

Published in: "İki Türk Kahvesi Projesi: Beyazıt ve Çamlıca", *Arkitekt*, 1941, pp 8–11



Raif Meto House Adana, 1941

Not built as designed. Was conceived as a small house, central Anatolian in spirit, combining load-bearing walls with a reinforced concrete frame on the front facade, and a timber roof structure clad in tiles.



Istanbul University — Faculties of Sciences and Letters

Istanbul, 1942–1944*

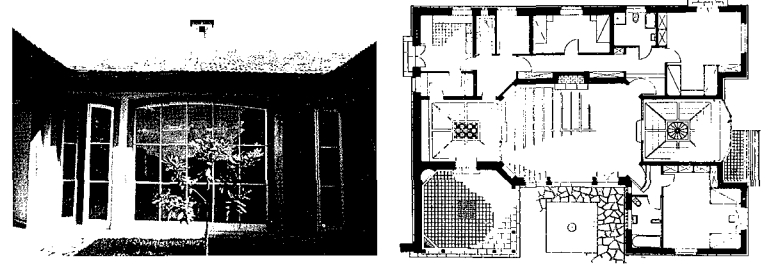
Designed and built in collaboration with Emin Onat from 1942 to 1944. Conceived with the initial idea of quadrangles, square courtyards surrounded by buildings, adopting the prevailing trend of monumentality, use of giant orders and stone facing.



Safyurtlu House I Yeniköy, İstanbul, 1942

Built on a terraced ground held with high retaining walls and the remains of an old viaduct. Single-storey building based on the Turkish House type with a central hall/sofa and two *eyvans*, one serving as the dining room and the other as the study. Solid oak is extensively used for pillars, wooden arches, window, door frames and sashes.

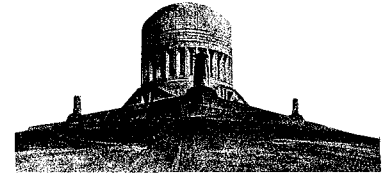
Published in: "Boğaziçinde Bir Villa", *Arkitekt*, 1946, pp 99–103
"Safyurtlu Evi", *Eser*, 1947, pp 4–12



Project for Atatürk's Mausoleum/Anıt Kabir Ankara, 1942

Competition entry in collaboration with Mehmet Ali Handan and Feridun Akozan, Eldem's teaching colleagues in the Academy of Fine Arts.

Published in: "Anıt Kabir Yarışma Projesi", *Arkitekt*, 1943, pp 59–60



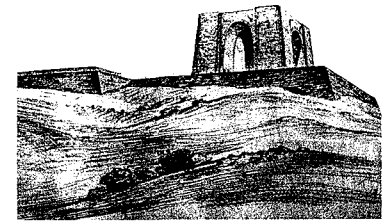
Project for the Ankara Technical University Ankara, 1942–1944

Site plan proposal with quadrangles on both sides of a wide ceremonial alley, culminating at the monumental office of the Provost.

Project for the Çanakkale War Memorial Çanakkale, 1943

Competition entry in collaboration with Rahmi Ediz, Samim Oktay and Demirtaş Kamçıl, Eldem's former student and then assistants at the Academy of Fine Arts.

Published in: "Çanakkale Zafer ve Meçhul Asker Anıtı Müsabakası", *Arkitekt*, 1944, pp 57–58

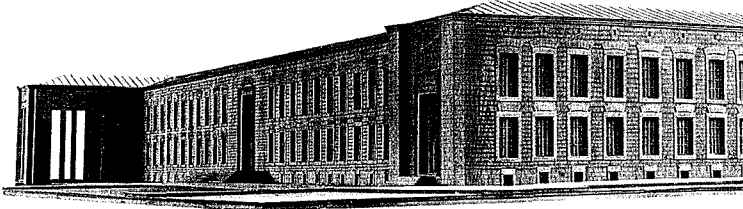


Proposal for Çırağan Palace Hotel/Casino İstanbul, 1943

Proposal prepared in collaboration with Paul Bonatz. Conceived on the palace grounds, as a hotel/casino for high level bureaucrats of the government. One episode in the architect's various phases of involvement with this historical building on the Bosphorus, dating from the 19th century; however, in ruins since the fire in 1914. Earlier in 1936, 1:50 measured drawings of the Palace were prepared by a team which included Eldem.

Ankara University — Faculty of Sciences Ankara, 1943–1945*

Designed in collaboration with Paul Bonatz, within the cultural milieu of the “National Architecture Movement” of the 1940s The built portion is only one part of the initial campus project for Ankara Technical University



Admiral Bristol Hospital — Nurses' Building Istanbul, 1943

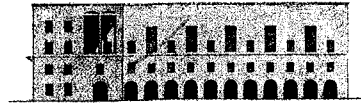
Built as an extension to the existing hospital building Use of balconies, stepped double projections and wide overhanging eaves give a certain lightness to the building which consists of a basement and four floors

Published in: “Admiral Bristol Hastanesi Pavyonu” *Arkitekt*, 1952, pp 51–55



Project for Adana City Hall Adana, 1944

Competition entry in collaboration with Samin Oktay and Demirtaş Kamçıl, Eldem's former students and teaching assistants at the Academy of Fine Arts

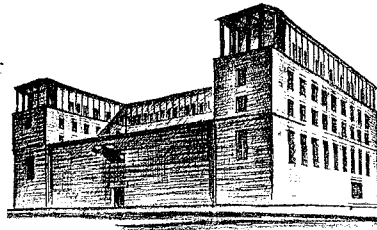


Published in: “Adana Belediye Sarayı Proje Müsabakası”, *Arkitekt*, 1944, pp 253–254

Project for Istanbul Radio Broadcasting Headquarters Istanbul, 1945

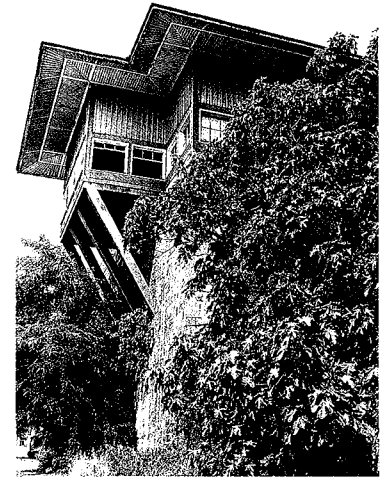
Competition entry in collaboration with Ahsen Yapanar and Asım Mutlu, Eldem's teaching colleagues at the Academy of Fine Arts

Published in: “Istanbul Radyo Evi Proje Müsabakası”, *Arkitekt*, 1945, pp 208



Taşlık Coffee House Istanbul, 1947–1948*

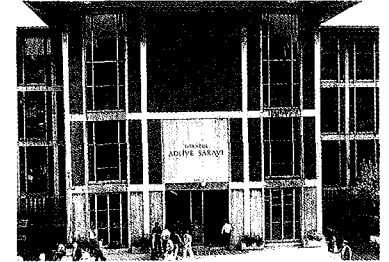
Built on the edge of the high retaining wall of the “Taşlık” promenade with an exquisite view of the Bosphorus A small structure designed as part of a public park scheme Its plan adopts the “Turkish House” type with a central hall/sofa making an acknowledged reference to the 17th century example of Amcazade Köprülü Huseyin Paşa Yalı The reinforced concrete structural frame is combined by an extensive use of wood finishing on both the exterior and the interior



Published in: “Taşlık Kahvesi”, *Arkitekt*, 1950, pp 207–210

Istanbul Palace of Justice Sultanahmet, Istanbul, 1948–1978*

Prepared in collaboration with Emin Onat as a competition project Only partially built in various stages from 1948 to 1971 During one stage of construction, excavations on site have revealed Byzantine remains, necessitating subsequent revisions of the initial project, also to incorporate extensions for new blocks and new floors The unrealised new version of 1978 proposes a new block raised above the ruins, and shelters the remains of the historical rotunda under a geodesic dome



Published in: “Istanbul Adalet Binası Proje Müsabakası”, *Arkitekt*, 1949, pp 179–182

Academy of Fine Arts Renovations and Additions Fındıklı, Istanbul, 1950–1983

In 1926, the Academy of Fine Arts was moved to its current building on the edge of the Bosphorus, which had been built in the late 19th century as a twin palace for Cemile and Zekiye Sultans After the catastrophic fire of 1948, Eldem undertook, with Mehmet Ali Handan, the renovation of the first palace which was completed in 1954 Between 1970 and 1976, he made further additions to the building including the main auditorium and carried out the renovation of the second palace, connecting the two buildings with the library addition The central administration building, also designed by Eldem, is scheduled for completion in 1987

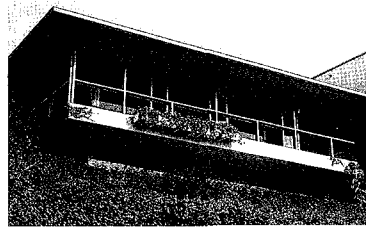
Published in: “Devlet Güzel Sanatlar Akademisi”, *Arkitekt*, 1954, pp 5–17

Apartment Building Taksim, Istanbul, 1950

Higher floor of shops on the street level facing the busy traffic of Cumhuriyet Caddesi Six upper floors with two apartments on each, the top floor housing the current residence and office of the architect

Safyurtlu House II Yeniköy, Istanbul, 1952

Built on a higher terrace above the earlier Safyurtlu House I (1942). Entrance level is reserved for the kitchen, services and the main living area opening to a paved outdoor platform The upper floor is raised on reinforced concrete *pilotis* and contains the bedrooms surrounded by a wide balcony with a commanding view of the Bosphorus Painted and polished wood finishing, partitions and wall panels are extensively used.



Istanbul Hilton Hotel Istanbul, 1952–1984

A Skidmore, Owings and Merrill design with Sedad H Eldem as the local consultant and collaborator The main entrance porch is an exclusive Eldem contribution: a stylised version of the “flying carpet” image with Orientalist connotations. The main hotel block is a major episode in Turkish architecture as the seminal example of the “International Style” in Turkey Eldem’s involvement with the Hilton has continued in various stages afterwards There is an unrealised project for additional rooms in 1965, and another site plan proposal in 1975 incorporating a parking garage, shops and in an even later proposal, an office block In 1984, the casino/“şadırvan” was built and construction has started on additional rooms and an auditorium annex

Published in:

“Turistik Otel Hilton”, *Arkitekt*, 1952, pp 56–63

“Istanbul Hilton”, *Architectural Record*, 1953, n 194, pp 103–115

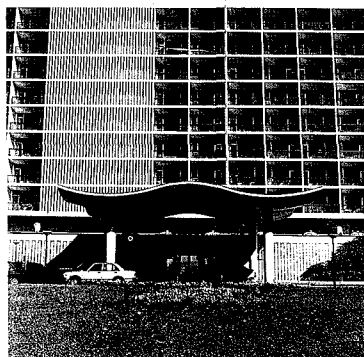
“Istanbul Hilton”, *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui*, Sep 1955, pp 64–65

“Hotel in Istanbul”, *Architectural Review*, Nov 1955, pp 240–246

“Hilton’s Newest Hotel”, *Architectural Forum*, Dec 1955, pp 120–127

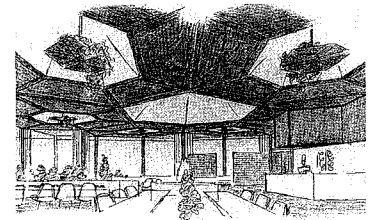
“Hilton Hotel, Istanbul”, *Baumeister*, Aug 1956, pp 535–551

“Hilton Hotel Istanbul”, *Bauen + Wohnen*, Apr 1958, pp 118–119

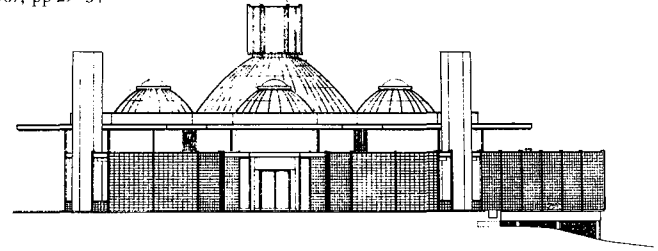


Turkish Restaurant — Istanbul Hilton Hotel Istanbul, 1954–1962

Designed in various phases from 1954 onwards and partly built in 1956 until construction was interrupted and the design altered A rigorous study of hexagonal geometry reflected not only in plan and the corresponding caps of the lanterns on the roof, but also on the patterns of tile designed for interiors



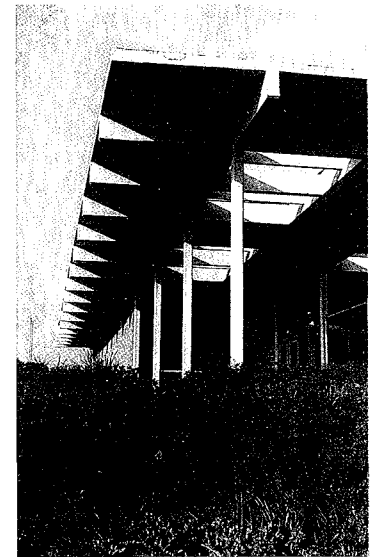
Published in: “Türk Lokantası”, *Akademi*, n 6, Mar 1967, pp 29–34



Florya Master Plan — Hotel, Beach and Camping Facilities Istanbul, 1955–1959

Designed in collaboration with Orhan Çakmakçioğlu and partially built from 1955 to 1959. Motel and beach facilities are based on a modular grid, with reinforced concrete beams and columns framing the wooden sun breakers, lattice panels and tile finished walls.

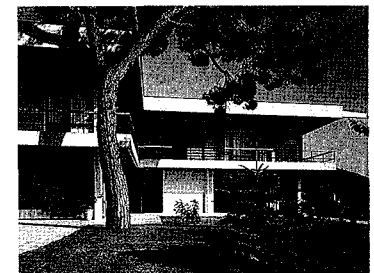
Published in: “Florya ve Kilyos Tesisleri”, *Arkitekt*, 1961, pp 105–113



Rıza Derviş House Büyükkada, Istanbul, 1956–1957

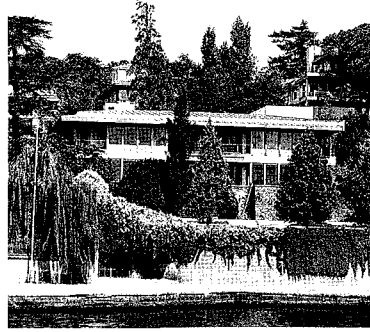
A two-storey “modern” house by Eldem, with reinforced concrete structure, flat roof, wide projections, large glazed areas and an L-shaped plan with the shorter arm of the L cantilevering towards the sea

Published in: “Büyükkada’da Villa”, *Mimari ve Sanat*, 6, 1962, pp 224–227
“Büyükkada’da Bir Köşk”, *Akademi*, n 6, Mar 1967, pp 24–28



Uşaklıgil House Emirgan, Istanbul, 1956–1965*

One of the prominent Eldem houses along the Bosphorus, with the predominance of the modular grid expressed in plan, elevations and pavement patterns. The ground floor contains the living and the dining wings connected by a marble-paved central hall/*sofa* all facing the view. The upper floor is given to bedrooms and servants' quarters.



Published in: "Uşaklıgil Köşkü, Emirgan", *Arkitekt*, 1971, pp 109–111

Kilyos Grand Hotel Kilyos, 1958

Designed in collaboration with Orhan Çakmakçioğlu. Only partially built.

Published in: "Florya ve Kilyos Tesisleri", *Arkitekt*, 1961, pp 105–113

Salıpazarı Warehouses and Offices Istanbul, 1958–1960

First studies made as early as 1930, and taken up again in 1958 as part of the larger Tophane Area Redevelopment scheme. The buildings are designed and built for the Turkish Maritime Bank, in collaboration with Campax Construction Company.

Naciye Sultan Green — Settlement Project Ortaköy, Istanbul, 1960–1976

Site plan studies and various types of housing proposals periodically engaging the architect from 1960 to 1976.

Social Security Agency Complex Zeyrek, Istanbul, 1962–1964*

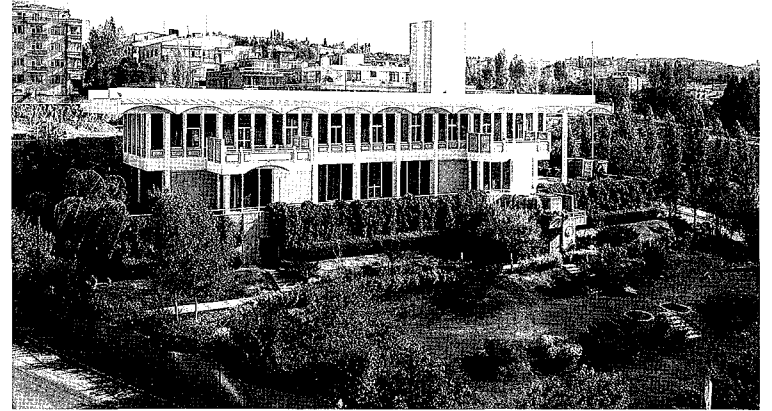
Built between 1962 and 1964 as a rental complex of shops, offices and clinic for the Social Security Agency. Subsequent change of use has turned the building exclusively into offices and archives substantially impairing the original idea. Contextually significant as an attempt to fit the scale and character of the surrounding traditional urban fabric of the Zeyrek district. A winning project in the 1986 Aga Khan Award for Architecture.

Published in: "Sosyal Sigortalar Kurumu Tesisleri, Zeyrek", *Arkitekt*, 1971, pp 105–108



Pakistan Embassy and Residence Ankara, 1964–1974*

Built from 1964 to 1974, as two separate buildings: one for the embassy offices and the other for the embassy residence, situated on a sloping corner lot. The site is terraced to locate the residence on higher ground and to prevent the embassy office building from blocking its view.



Suna Kiraç Yalı Vaniköy, Istanbul, 1965–1966*

Built on the edge of the Bosphorus above the foundations of an existing building. Another interpretation of the traditional Turkish House with central hall/*sofa* flanked on two sides by the projections of the living and dining areas.

Indian Embassy Residence Ankara, 1965–1968*

Built on a sloping ground at a high location of the city with a view towards the valley. Long thin rectangular plan with maximum frontage to the view. Wide eaves, terraces and cantilevering projections accentuate the horizontality of expression. The modular grid, corresponding to the reinforced concrete frame, is expressed on the treatment of the elevations, as well as in the design of interior finishes and built-in furniture.

Published in: "Hindistan Sefareti, Ankara", *Arkitekt*, 1965, pp 53–58
"Ankara'da Hindistan Sefarethanesi", *Mimarlık*, 1965, n 1, p 15
"Hindistan Sefareti", *Akademi*, n 6, Mar 1967, pp 12–18



Project for the Turkish Embassy New Delhi, 1966

Competition project adopting a modular grid corresponding to the reinforced concrete frame, and to the sun-breaking structures raised above the building like umbrellas

Şemsettin Sırer Yalı Yeniköy, Istanbul, 1966–1967*

Situated on the edge of the Bosphorus, attached to the adjoining building on one side. The very narrow frontage to the sea is compensated by the depth of the building, as well as the height allowing a three-storey arrangement with wide terraces overlooking the sea on each floor.

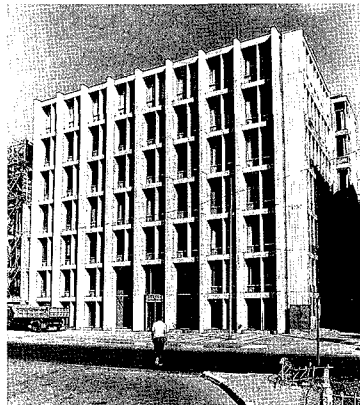
Published in: "Sırer Yalısı, Yeniköy", *Arkiitekt*, 1971, pp 115–117
"Yeniköy'de Sırer Yalısı", *Aminat*, 7, 1981, pp 4–9



Akbank General Directorate Fındıklı, Istanbul, 1967–1968

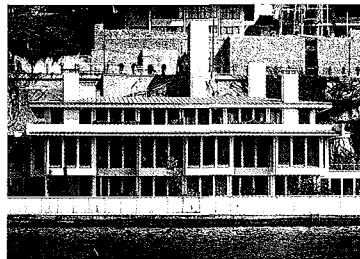
Six-storey rectangular office block built in 1967–68, with a uniform expression of the reinforced concrete grid on the front facade

Published in: "Akbank Genel Müdürlük Binası Fındıklı", *Arkiitekt*, 1971, pp 112–114



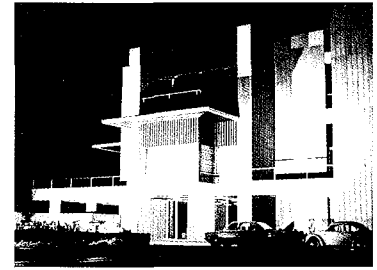
Fuat Bayramoğlu Apartments Kandilli, Istanbul, 1969–1974

Built on the edge of the Bosphorus with a long frontage to the sea. A high retaining wall borders the building at the back. Entrance is from the higher street level 14 metres above sea level. One apartment is located on the ground floor, and two adjoining duplex apartments on the upper floors. The modular grid of the plan is expressed on the elevations and the pavement patterns, while the horizontal effect is accentuated by the slabs, terraces, balconies and wide eaves.



Turkish Embassy Beirut, 1971–1972

Designed in collaboration with Hamdi Sensoy and Sungu Sadik. Built on a square lot. The embassy offices and the residence/reception block are placed on diagonal corners while the other corners are given to a garden and a parking lot/entrance plaza respectively. The larger residential block is an interpretation of the traditional central hall/sofa plan type with reception halls, formal dining and other larger spaces on the ground and first floors, and the private residence on the upper floor.



İkbal Moneim Sultan Yalı Kandilli, Istanbul, 1971–1972

A single-storey house built on the edge of the Bosphorus under the shade of an old pignon tree. The traditional central hall/sofa plan type is adopted, the central living area flanked on two sides by the projections of the master bedroom and the dining room with a view to the garden and the sea.



Dutch Embassy Residence Ankara, 1973–1977*

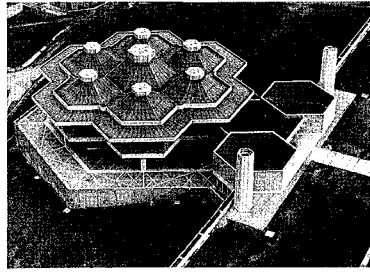
The initial proposal was prepared between 1973 and 1975 with all working drawings and details but the construction was postponed. The design adopts the traditional central hall/sofa plan type and expresses the underlying modular grid on the elevations with prefabricated artificial stone cladding elements. The building was finally constructed through 1975–77, as a modified and slightly simplified version of the original design, retaining the initial character of the elevations. Today the building houses the residential/reception functions of the Dutch Embassy.

Published in: "Ankara'da Bir Elçilik Evi", *Arkiitekt*, 1979, pp 4–6



Koç Foundation, Atatürk Library Istanbul, 1973–1975*

Designed as a cultural complex of library, museum and exhibition halls. Only the library was built through 1973–75. Hexagonal geometry is adopted for the plan superimposed on a triangular structural grid. It is a closed system with stacks in the basement, the administration, offices and entrance above it, and the main reading rooms and auditorium on the top floor skylit through hexagonal lanterns with plexiglass caps.



Published in: "Atatürk Kütüphanesi", *Arhitekt*, 1979, pp 43–46
"Atatürk Kütüphanesi, İstanbul", *Çevre*, 1, Jan–Feb 1979, pp 27–30

Ministry of Foreign Affairs — Annex to the Auditoriums' Building Ankara, 1974–1976

Additional rooms built behind the main auditoriums' block dating back to 1938.

Project for the Libyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs Tripoli, 1974

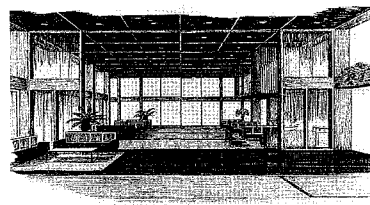
Designed in collaboration with Nihat Hasekioglu and Ahmed Bahaeddin. The main building is proposed to rest under the shade of reinforced concrete 'umbrellas' simulating date trees — an idea similar to the one adopted in the competition project for the Turkish Embassy in New Delhi in 1966.

Çırağan Palace Tourism Development Project Istanbul, 1975–current

The architect's second significant phase of involvement with this historical Palace on the Bosphorus currently standing in ruins. The project involves the renovation of the Palace, and the proposal for a new hotel parallel to it slightly set back and elongated with maximum frontage to the sea. In 1984, the project was commissioned to Sanbar Ltd., an England based construction firm to which Eldem acts as the local architectural design consultant in collaboration with Ahmet Ertuğ.

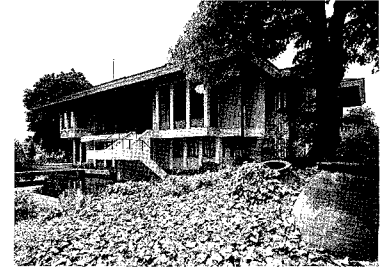
Project for Presidential Palace of Reception and Ceremony Ankara, 1975–1976

Project for a limited competition. Awarded the second prize.



Rahmi Koç House Tarabya, Istanbul, 1975–1980

A significant private villa within the overall scheme of about sixteen houses scattered on the hill overlooking the Tarabya Bay. Built from 1975 to 1980 for the prominent industrialist of Turkey, Rahmi Koç, a consistent client of Eldem's. With allusions to traditional plan types, the central hall stands out as the dominant element of the overall design, further emphasised by a skylight through a high lantern.

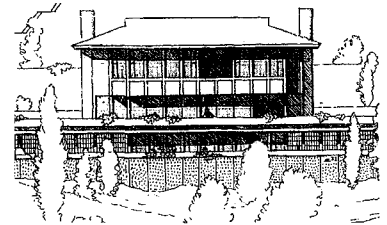


Kamuran Sertel House Yeniköy, Istanbul, 1975–1980

Built on a wide, paved terrace extending to the garden and the pool. Two-storey building adopting the central hall/sofa plan type and the 140 centimetres modular grid expressed in the treatment of elevations as rows of modular windows.

Üstay and Duruman Houses Tarabya, Istanbul, 1975–1987

Two adjacent houses, as part of an overall scheme of about sixteen private houses on a hill overlooking the Tarabya bay.

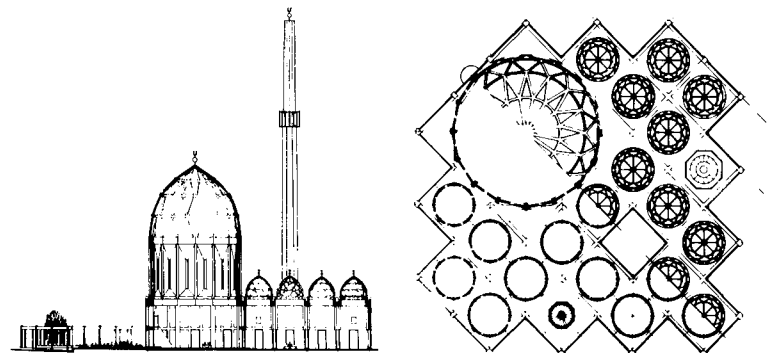


Project for the Benghazi Mosque Benghazi, 1976

Prepared in collaboration with Nihat Hasekioglu and Ahmed Bahaeddin. A design investigating the possibilities of a plan consisting of two squares intersecting at 45 degrees and yielding a polyhedron form.

Project for Canzur Settlement, (Cultural Centre and Mosque) Tripoli, 1976

Prepared in collaboration with Nihat Hasekioglu and Ahmed Bahaeddin. Eldem has experimented with the geometries of polyhedra producing a series of studies of the mosque: the dome, the minaret, the elevations and system details.



Rahmi Koç Summer House on Tavşan Island Tuzla, Istanbul, 1976–1977

A small vacation house in “Mediterranean style” with arches, courtyards and white-washed walls Not built

Yıldız Housing Complex Yıldız, Istanbul, 1976–1978

Built from 1976 to 1978 on a sloping site rising about 20 metres from one end to the other. The scheme consists of a large apartment building on the front, and six villas to the back, sitting on different levels in pairs with a terraced pedestrian path in between. Characteristic Eldem features are wide projecting caves and the modular treatment of the elevations expressing the regulating grid



Alarko Office Blocks Ayazağa, Istanbul, 1976–1979

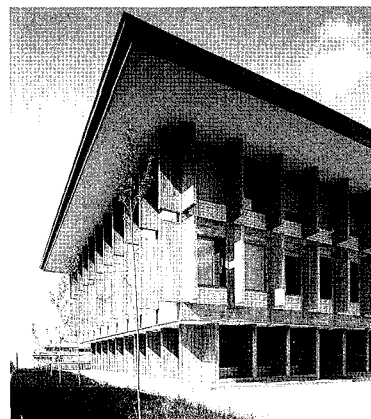
Three office towers connected at the first floor level, with heights of ten, eight and eight storeys respectively. Vertical shafts comprise the core of each floor while elevations display an undifferentiated, uniform office grid



Published in: “Ayazağa İşhanı Kompleksi”, *Arkitekt*, 1980, pp 88–89

Indian Embassy Ankara, 1976–1980*

Designed and built from 1976 to 1980, next to the Embassy Residence built in 1965. The idea of a regulating modular grid is adopted, corresponding to the reinforced concrete structural frame and to the arrangement of windows on the elevations. Concrete is largely left exposed, also on the high wall bordering the site



Published in: “Ankara Hindistan Büyükelçiliği”, *Mimar*, 7, 1981, pp 56–67

Project for Şahenk House Emirgan, Istanbul, 1977

Project conceived for the new owners of the Uşaklıgil House, 1956 on the same grounds in proximity to the existing house

Project for Çarmıklı House Tarabya, Istanbul, 1977

Unbuilt design for a private villa, within the overall scheme of sixteen houses overlooking the Tarabya Bay on the Bosphorus

Çolakoğlu House Kandilli, Istanbul, 1977–1980

Built with the characteristic Eldem feature of modular grid prescribing the reinforced concrete structural frame and the repetitive arrangement of windows

Bilimer Apartments Yeniköy, Istanbul, 1978–1981

Three-storey arrangement consisting of six apartments, two on each floor. Projecting bays of the living areas, the underlying modular grid and the wide eaves of the roof are characteristic allusions to tradition

Komili Yalı Kandilli, Istanbul, 1978–1980

Built in the garden of an existing *yalı* set back from the sea, viewed through the high and slender trunks of the trees. Modelled after the traditional plan type of the existing building, as a two-storey arrangement with projecting bays on the upper floor and wood finishing on the exterior



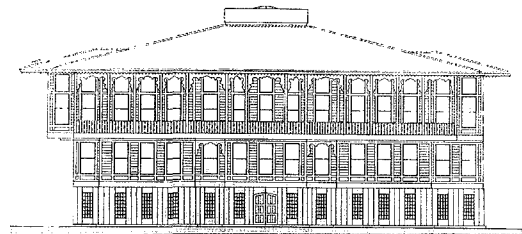
Elongated for maximum frontage to the sea, the building terminates at one end with a swimming pool and an open pavilion for barbecues

Fuat Süren Apartment Building Istanbul, 1978–1980



Koç Holding Education, Research and Development Centre Nakkaştepe, Istanbul, 1978–1987

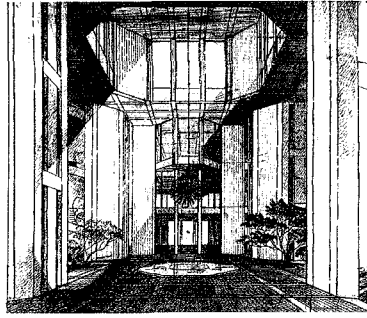
A set of now non-existent buildings to be reconstructed on the basis of old records and photographs



Şark Insurance Company Headquarters

Bağlarbaşı, Istanbul, 1979

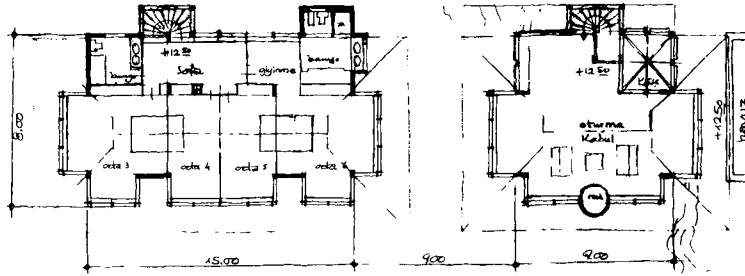
Three-storey building on a square plan with a central, interior courtyard. The facade is articulated with stepped projections of the modular window bays.



Eymen Topbaş House

Vaniköy, Istanbul, 1980

Designed on a steep sloping site, with a long frontage to the view articulated by the projecting bays of the upper floor.



Pendik Atatürk Cultural Centre

Pendik, Istanbul, 1981

Initial proposal was not built and the commission was changed to the restoration of an existing building.

Project for Atatürk Cultural Centre

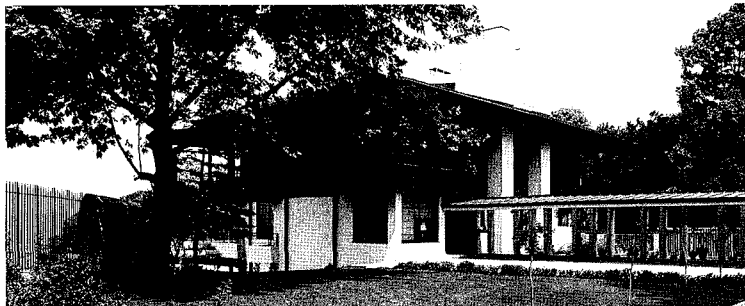
Ankara, 1981

Competition entry in collaboration with Muhteşem Giray, Affan Kırımlı and Orhan Çakmakçıoğlu. The scheme adopts the hexagonal forms and triangular structural grid reminiscent of Istanbul Atatürk Library Building (1973).

Published in: "Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yarışma Projesi", *Mimar*, 3, 1981, pp 16-21

Hilmi Sönmez House

Tarabya, Istanbul, 1981-1984



Sadi Aral Yalı Renovation

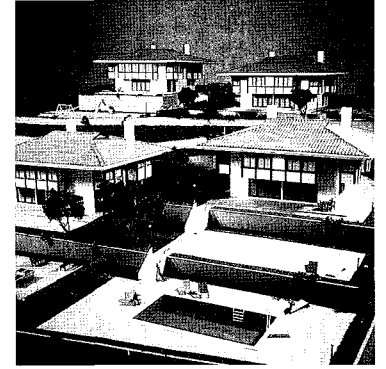
Vaniköy, Istanbul, 1983

Extension and renovation of an earlier building, largely destroyed by a fire.

Project for Topser Settlement

Büyükdere, Istanbul, 1984

Unbuilt project including housing, mosque, swimming pool and social facilities.



Project for Alkent "Garden City"

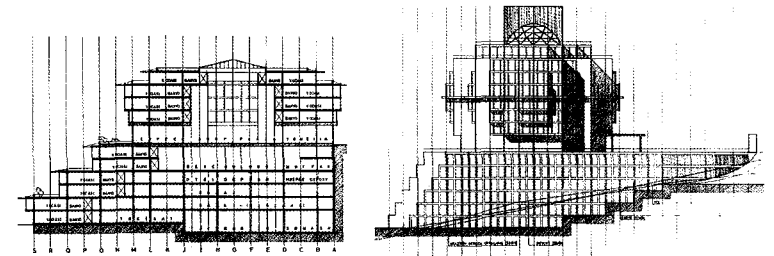
Etiler, Istanbul, 1984

Eldem as consultant. Project for Attaş/Alarko Company, consisting of various types of housing, as well as club, hotel, swimming pool and social facilities.

Tourism Development Projects

Istanbul, 1985

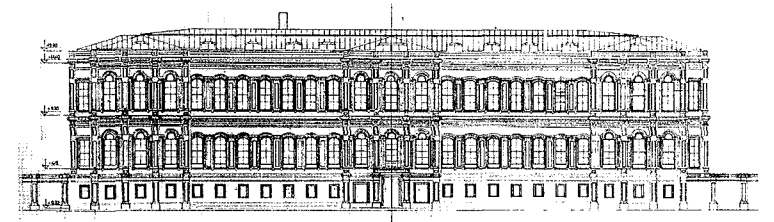
Series of yet unbuilt proposals, in collaboration with Ahmet Ertuğ as the architectural design consultant, for internationally financed luxury hotels. These projects include Istanbul Plaza Hotel, Taşlık Hotel, Tasim Hotel and the Sarayburnu Tourism Development Project involving the reconstruction of the coastal buildings of the Topkapı Palace.



Project for State Guest House

Beşiktaş, Istanbul, 1985

Renovation of an existing palace on the edge of the Bosphorus.



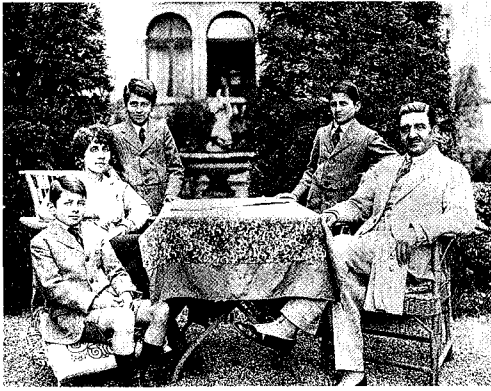
PROFILE OF THE MAN



including a biography and bibliography



by Engin Yenal



Omer Sedad (third from left) with parents, brothers, Munich, 1916



Omer Sedad, Munich, 1916

Eldem (born Ömer Sedad Hakkı Alişanzade in 1908) is a genuine Eastern intellectual who has rediscovered the East, either while in the West or during his own or his country's Westernisation process.

Transformation of the Ottoman (a traditional, Imperial-feudal) Society started as early as the 18th century. Distinct patterns of transformation differed from other traditional — historical societies of Islam; especially so called patrimonial and tribal federations. The cultural shock caused by the ever increasing impact of the West was first felt at the centre — the *foci* and *loci* of the various great traditions. The chaos resulting from this confrontation has not yet led to a synthesis in the terms of an explicit-adoptive culture.

In 1985, in Turkey (a country of 55 million) there were about 16,000 graduate architects, an impressive figure for a developing country. But this is also misleading. With the most optimistic estimations there are perhaps three hundred or so “creative” architects and only a handful “star performers” who might produce “excellence” in architecture.

Within this framework, in the history of the Republican era of Turkish architecture, Eldem emerges as the most prominent figure with his *bona fide* architecture and with his quest to re-awakening a cognitive processed consciousness, to rediscover the intrinsic values of his own cultural heritage. But how has Eldem assumed his pivotal role in contemporary Turkish architecture?

Roots

Both of Eldem's families represent the 19th century Ottoman Social System's upper strata. His mother's grandfather was Sakızlı Edhem Paşa (1817–1893) a French educated engineer. As a politician turned bureaucrat he occupied ministerial posts and briefly served as the “Grand Vizier”. He was also one of the first Ottoman intellectuals striving for the international recognition of Ottoman art and architecture¹. One of his sons, Osman Hamdi Bey (1842–1910) a lawyer/artist, was the founder-director of both the Imperial Museum of Antiquities (1881) and the School of Fine Arts (1882). Paşa's third son Edhem Galip Bey, a bureaucrat and numismatist, was Eldem's grandfather.

¹ Edhem Pacha, *l'Architecture Ottomane*, (ouvrage autoisic par l'ade Imperial et publiee sous le patronage de son excellence Edhem Pacha, Ministre des Travaux Publics, President de la Commission Imperiale Ottomane pour l'Exposition Universelle de 1873 a Vienne) Constantinople 1873

His father's family Alişanzade was equally old. His grandfathers served in the Ottoman bureaucracy and military and were also hereditary "Sheikhs" (masters) of a Sufi order's Istanbul branch.

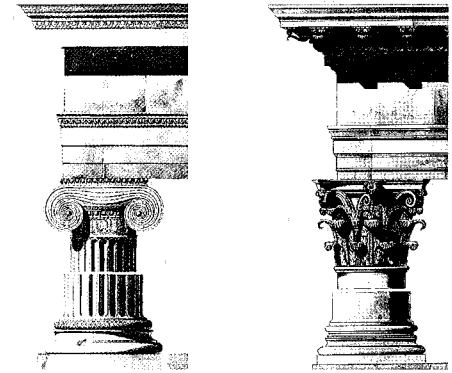
Eldem's father, Alişanzade İsmail Hakkı Bey, a literary admirer, an amateur musician, painter and architect was a diplomat by profession. He represented his country in Nice, Geneva, Zurich and Munich, where young Ömer Sedad spent his boyhood and early years of his youth. Due to years spent and the primary-secondary education completed abroad he is fluent in both French and German.

Early in life, when he was only fourteen years old, his intellectual interest focused on architecture, leading to a decision, eventually, to become an architect. After accumulating some architectural knowledge via books and magazines, he started to look at buildings, visit construction sites, admire the last members of German guilds of master builders, stone cutters and carpenters of *fachwerk* tradition. His favourite German architects of those years were Friedrich Schinkel, Max and Bruno Taut, Bruno Paul and Adelbert Niemeyer.

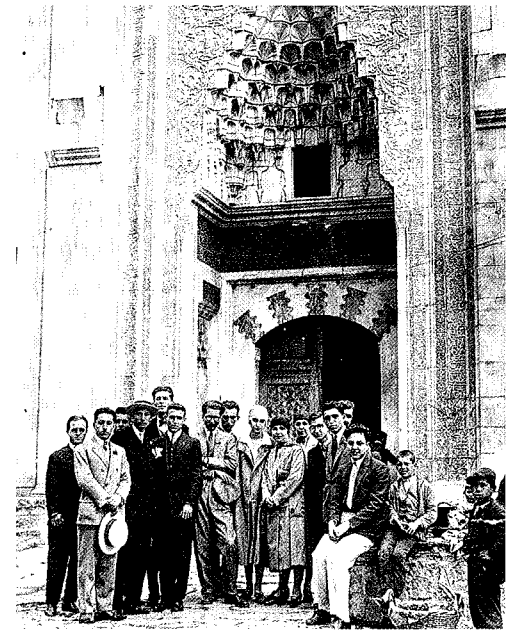
Alişanzade Sedad Hakkı returned to Turkey in 1924 — one year after the proclamation of Republic — to enrol in the Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi (Academy of Fine Arts) Department of Architecture. Studying architecture in those years was not very popular: only 145 architects graduated from the Academy between 1883 and 1924.

The curriculum of the Academy was based on the French Ecole des Beaux Arts. Students began by learning Classical Orders (including Byzantine and Ottoman) and gradually went on to composing larger buildings whose elements were usually derived from studies of antique and contemporary exemplars. Students were also encouraged to "get out and sketch". Walking in the historical precincts of Istanbul to discover the beauty of old urban wooden houses (then still intact) provided young Alişanzade a culturally refreshing and everlasting experience.

His *patron* (master) in the atelier was Giulio Mongeri an Italian architect/educator, designer of some major buildings in Istanbul and Ankara. In his Istanbul period he exhibited a hybrid style: a mixture of Neo-Renaissance, Byzantine and Ottoman styles, as evidenced in his private residence. In 1926, Mongeri joined ongoing building activities in the Nation's new Capital; Ankara, designing two prestigious banks and a public building. His student Sedad Eldem assisted him there during his summer vacations.



Stylistic exercises, approved by Mongeri, 1926



Academy students in Bursa (Eldem, centre), 1927



Alişanzade Sedad Hakkı (first left) in the Mongeri Atelier, 1928



Detail, the Mongeri residence Photograph: Engin Yenil



The Mongeri residence, Şişli, Istanbul, 1916 Drawing courtesy of Prof Dr Metin Sözen



Vedad Bey's private residence, Nişantaşı, Istanbul, 1916 Source: Suha Özkan

In his Ankara period Mongeri's architecture was in keeping with the "First National Style"; reintroducing Ottoman architectural elements and excessive facadism — eventually leading to a peculiar monumentalism.

The other atelier in the Academy was Vedad (Tek) Bey's (1873–1943) who happened to be the first formally trained contemporary Turkish architect, studying painting and engineering prior to his Ecole Nationale des Beaux Arts education — all in Paris. Vedad Bey, as Imperial Chief architect in the 1910s, built impressive monumental buildings in Istanbul, in accordance with the Ideology of the First National Movement, formally encouraged by the Second Ottoman Constitutional Period's leading party; Ittihad ve Terakki (Union and Progress). Even in small buildings — like his private residence in Istanbul — he exhibited his revivalist Neo-Ottoman style. (It is interesting to note that the design vocabulary of both these architects somehow displays striking similarities to the "Neo-Arabic/ Islamic" style then practiced in Egypt.)

Their student Sedad Hakkı, even then disillusioned with his masters' philosophies, started to look for different sources of inspiration. His favourite architect in those years was Alexandre Vallaury, the first chief instructor at the Academy (1883–1908). Although Vallaury's major buildings reflect his own interpretation of pseudo-Islamic Oriental eclecticism, his latter work with apparent refinement echoes a mature understanding of Ottoman residential architecture.

In 1928 Alişanzade Sedad Hakkı graduated from the Academy with an Honours degree qualifying him for a further three years *ikmal-i tahsil* (post-graduate) study in Europe. In Europe, in *die Wanderjahre* his actions seem to have been guided by an inner drive towards his ideal of excellence in architecture.

In Paris, under the tutelage of Auguste Perret and guidance of Le Corbusier, whom he intermittently visited, he eagerly tried to develop his skills. "The Villa Savoie had not yet been built and Stein's house had only recently been finished . . . I was fascinated by the Domino project. I was unhappy with only two aspects of Le Corbusier's work: he did not pay enough attention to the reinforced concrete framework and his roofs leaked. I was then, and still am, a devotee of the reinforced concrete skeleton. I moved from the Rue de Sevres to the Rue Franklin and Perret was pleased that I had done so. I wished to learn how to leave reinforced concrete exposed: that for me was essential: the beautiful concrete framework had to be visible without any concealment. I have dreamed the infill walls

coloured as they were in Ankara, Kastamonu and Amasya.”²

In Berlin, his tutor was Hans Poelzig a prominent practitioner and a significant educator at the Charlottenburg Technische Hochschule. Poelzig’s style in the late 1920s following his expressionist years was straightforward.

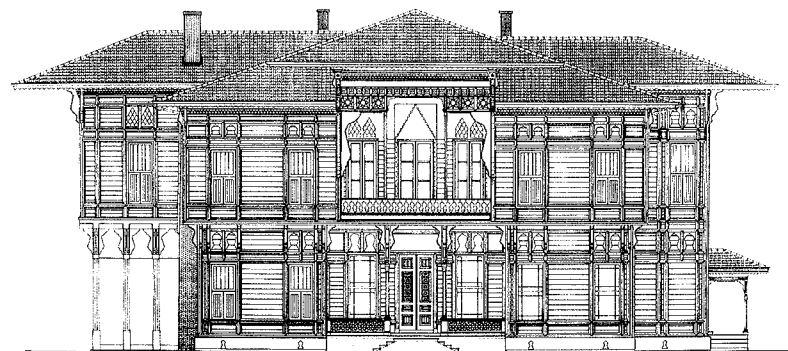
A lot was happening in Germany in those years: the Bauhaus was about to move to Berlin, Mies van der Rohe just built the German pavilion at the Barcelona International Exhibition, and the Weissenhof Estate at Stuttgart almost finished. The Taut brothers and the planners Martin Maehler and Fritz Schumacher were amongst the most influential figures of the era.

Eldem’s intellectual drive often took him to the Staatlichen Voelkerskunde Museum (State Ethnological Museum) where he greatly admired The Turfan Expedition-exhibition³ led by Albert von Le Coq, then director of the Museum. Central Asia, the ancestral homeland of the Turks, helped the young Alişanzade to discover, though intuitively, the deterministic patterns of the cultural continuity via exhibited artefacts.

In Berlin he first saw the Frank Lloyd Wright album *The Prairie Houses* published by Wasmuth. “A few which had already been built attracted my attention. I believe I had discovered some important elements of the Turkish House of the future in these designs. The long low lines, the rows of windows, the wide eaves and the shape of the roofs were very much like the Turkish House in my mind. These romantic naturalistic houses were far more attractive than the box-like architecture of Le Corbusier. I was not then able to detect qualitative and intellectual differences between these two styles. But how had Wright arrived at these forms? All these questions forced me to spend my spare time at the Voelkerskunde Museum: Wright’s sources were not in America but in Asia and “prairie” was merely a metaphor for his horizontal linearity.”⁴

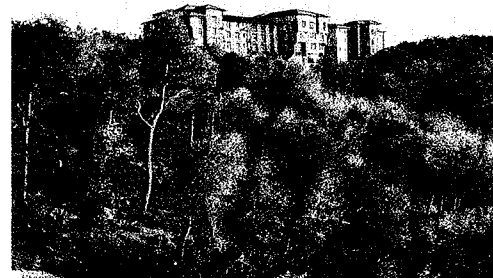
During the study tours he made to England, Lutyens’ architecture — especially his ongoing work in India — provided him an opportunity to re-assess his judgement on the First National Architecture Movement.

In 1928 Eldem returned to Turkey to teach and practice.



The Crown Prince Abdülmecid Efendi’s residence, Bağlarbaşı, Istanbul Architect: Alexandre Vallauray (ca 1889) Drawing courtesy of Dr Sinan Genim, architect

برك اوردو كورنيان
Iles des Princes-Prinkipo L'orphelinat



The orphanage (originally hotel), Princes Islands, Istanbul Architect: Alexandre Vallauray (ca 1890s) Source: Engin Yenal

² Eldem, in “Development of Regionalist Tendencies” paper presented at The Aga Khan Award for Architecture Seminar *Conservation as Cultural Survival* held in Istanbul, Turkey, Sep 26–28, 1978

³ Le Coq, Albert von, *Chotscho, Königlich Preussische Turfan Expedition*, Berlin, 1904–14

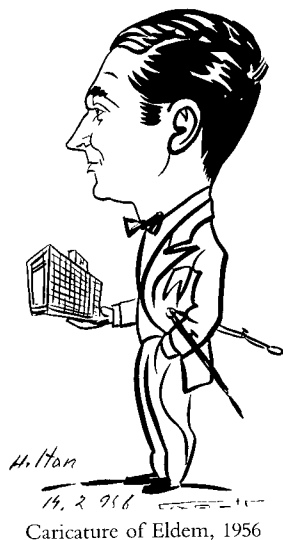
⁴ Ibid, Eldem, 1978



Eldem with Indian President Zakhir Hussein, Istanbul, 1967



With colleagues in the Design Bureau for major projects of the Ministry of National Education (Eldem centre third, Onat fourth), Istanbul, 1944



Caricature of Eldem, 1956

Professional

Eldem's professional career might serve as a model to analyse the behavioral constraints of the client relationship patterns of most of the idealist-elitist architects in the Third World.

As a neophyte with his traditional elitist background he first designed for family members and friends. Due to his rapid socialisation he consequently designed for the ruling elite. As a mature professional he secured direct commissions from the State and finally he designed for the power elite who wanted to display their cultural sophistication via architecture.

Throughout architectural history, the traditional alliance with the elite has been guaranteed to secure good commissions. Expert patronage especially in developing countries is still very important, though harder and harder to find.

In a transitional society the heterogenous bourgeois stratas regard architecture only as "rational and functional". Turkish Society has been, and still is, a transitional society with a number of overlapping subcultures — each striving to find its own expression through the projects its powerful and wealthy members build. The end-product of this process is often mundane. Priorities usually do not include aesthetic or socio-cultural considerations as to provoke quality in architecture or even "appropriate" architecture.

In this chaotic environment Eldem's uncompromising drive in search of excellence became the most important determinant of his architecture. But in client relationships he does not consider himself either a socio-cultural reconstructionist or a professional imperialist. In his professional career — with a strong belief and respect in "collective creativity" — he sometimes collaborated with a number of his former students and teaching assistants, mainly in competitions. He joined forces with a fellow architect/educator Emin Onat, often consulting another prominent architect/educator, Paul Bonatz. He also partnered the corporate design giant Skidmore, Owings and Merrill without compromising his own creativity.

Besides his talent in architecture, his professional activities are multidisciplinary including Urban Design and Urban Renewal, remodelling and refunctioning historical buildings, Interior Design and Industrial Design. It would not be incorrect to call Eldem one of the last European style *generalists* as opposed to the contemporary wide range of specialists.

In Urban Design/Urban Renewal proposals he prepared for the historical precincts of Istanbul (Beyazid in 1938, Tophane in 1958 and Sultanahmet in 1978) his nostalgic vision of the

lost forever characteristic Ottoman City with its historical buildings and low-rise structures almost invisible in greenery is remarkably evident. In his Zeyrek project (1962) Eldem finally succeeds in recreating at least physically, the spirit of *Mahalle*, the Ottoman City's micro-spatial unit, through his superb design.

In restoration projects his inclination has always been towards rather unconventional dynamic remodelling, to successfully and realistically secure the refunctioning, to fully answer current user needs.

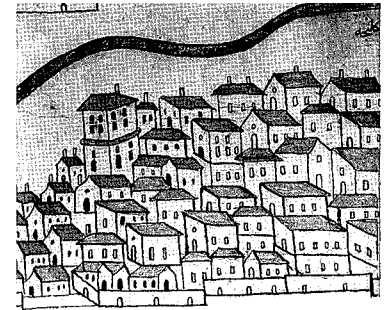
His passionate interest on *Raumkunst* (Spatial art) Interior Design stems from his formative years. In two of his earlier projects, won through competitions — General Directorate of State Monopolies, in Ankara (1934) and Termal Hotel, in Yalova (1934) — his Interior Design work stretches from the pattern of fabrics and carpets to wall panels to the furniture. Due to the Government's self reliance policy, all hardware of the windows and doors, lighting fixtures were designed by Eldem and all manufactured in Turkey. Such an integrated design approach, treating Interior Design as an inseparable part of architecture and architecture part of Urban Design, is probably due to his brief encounter with the Bauhaus philosophy.

Another Eldem trademark, visible on all of his buildings, is the sophisticated but simple detailing and finishing accompanying the clear structural logic. His thorough knowledge of building materials and their appropriate usage, *de facto* qualitative limitations of the builders and some contractors, are again, co-determinants of his realistic way of constructing in a developing country.

Educator

Eldem's capacity as an educator is not confined to teaching architecture only, but also being able to motivate his colleagues and to re-shape public opinion through his editorials, articles and books.

In 1930, when Eldem had started his academic career, the reforms initiated by Swiss architect/educator Ernst Egli aiming to teach Modern architecture in a contemporary manner, departing from the Beaux Arts tradition, were already underway. Architectural studies though were still unpopular: during the Egli years (1930–36) only 42 students graduated and the total number of architects practising in Turkey (then a country of 15 million) were about two hundred.



An Istanbul *Mahalle* in the 17th century
Detail from Köprülü Water supply
map/plan, 1672



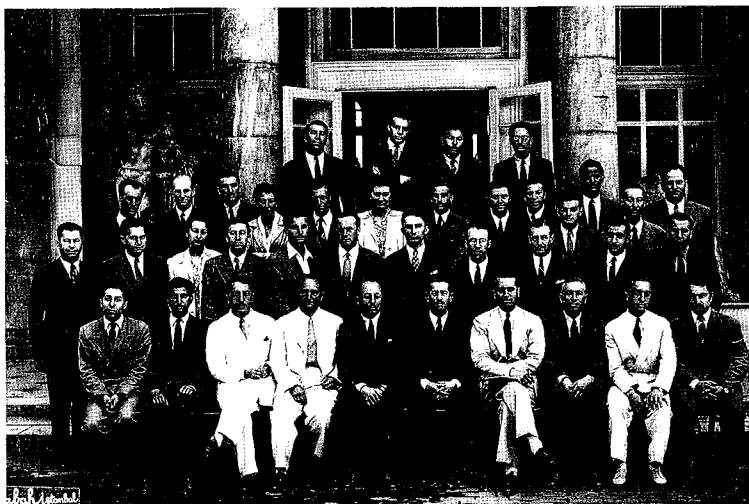
An Istanbul *Mahalle*, 1853
Source: Engin Yenal

“Deprived of the appropriate instructions, foreign experts have often followed their own intentions which fall short of responding to the national character. As a result, our country has turned out to be a ground for their experiments, and they have not given us a hand to create a native style. Instead, foreign influences have confused our native taste and thus prolonged the evolution of a national style.”

— Sedad Hakkı Eldem, “Yerli Mimariye Doğru” *Towards a National Architecture*, *Arkitekt*, No. 3–4, 1940, Istanbul, p. 69–74

“As in most areas in our country, in the construction field too, the need for foreign experts will continue to be felt. In my view, assistance from foreigners should be asked in these fields.
a. wherever qualified personnel cannot be found;
b. in training and education
Apart from these, there is no need to consult foreign experts.”

— Sedad Hakkı Eldem, “Yerli Mimariye Doğru” *Towards a National Architecture*, *Arkitekt*, No. 3–4, 1940, Istanbul, p. 69–74



The Class of '45, members of the Faculty, Academy of Fine Arts (Eldem front row, fourth from the right), Istanbul, 1945

Acknowledging the status quo, his editorial published in the first issue of the Turkish journal *Mimar* in 1931 can be considered a manifesto; demanding societal professional recognition for his fellow architects. His ideology to professionalise, not only in a business or ethical sense, but through the establishment of higher artistic standards, is still valid.

With the impact of the Depression in the 1930s Turkey entered an era of New Nationalism. State Ideology focused on the nationalism, populism, etatism and accordingly protectionism highly influenced the intelligentsia and inevitably the architectural community.

In the second manifesto, published in 1940, Eldem, besides being explicit on his design philosophy, in an authoritarian manner advocated a policy of self-reliance in defence of professionalism — an ideology rediscovered and adopted by most of the developing countries in as late as the 1980s.

Prior to the establishment of the National Architecture Seminar at the Academy in 1934, he initiated publications introducing the last exemplars of the Turkish Civil Architecture to evoke intellectual reactions.

The Seminar itself was a pioneering attempt marking the beginning of a new era — both for Turkish and Third World architectural education. The central concern of the Seminar extended far beyond its assumed function: the consistent search for an alternative to the Westernised aesthetic of the contemporary architecture, to recreate a new design vocabulary supported by research within the restructured academic framework and profession.

In current debates on architectural education in the Islamic World some of the questions being repeatedly asked: How can we find “a distinctive architectural expression of contemporary Muslim culture that has integrity and force?” How can we create “a design theory which is specific and local in order to be germane to the generation of architectural form that is regionally appropriate?” Are there artistic constraints intrinsic to architecture apart from the constraints of culture? What, therefore, should be general and what should be particular or local about architectural education for Muslims?⁵ The Seminar, more than fifty years ago, was established with an avowed aim to answer these and similar questions. Retrospective experiments may and should provide invaluable models to today’s educational planners.

⁵ Porter, William L. “Architecture Education in the Islamic World” Introductory paper presented at The Aga Khan Award for Architecture Seminar *Architecture Education in the Islamic World* held in Granada, Spain Apr 21–25, 1986

Besides his leading role in the Seminar, between 1930–78 Eldem taught architectural design studios and theoretical courses on construction techniques, measured survey and restoration. His impact on students largely stemmed from his personal vigour and self-confidence as a successful practitioner and his behaviour as a *bon vivant* and a *kavalier der alte garde* more than his skill as a teacher. As an educator he always encouraged his students to seek a cognitive path, not to imitate, but to aspire to equally high standards of their own similar to his.

Eldem's most important scholarly contribution has been to publish the outcome of his research on the Turkish House. Despite the destruction of the Seminar's archives by fire in 1948, he was able to publish his macro-explanatory book, organised on the basis of typologies, in 1952.

The first volume of his ultimate monumental study, *Turkish House — Ottoman Period* is in print since 1984. When complete (three volumes, approximately 1500 pages) it will probably be the most comprehensive survey of the Civil Architecture in a Third World country ever prepared by a Muslim scholar.

The Turkish House is often considered a temporal shelter. His interest to study more permanent edifices of high style: the Imperial palaces, Royal pavilions and the Bosphorus *Yalı* produced several invaluable books: *Köşler ve Kasırlar* (1968–73), *Köçeoğlu Yalısı* (1977), *Sad'abad* (1977) and *Topkapı Sarayı* (1984). A two volume nostalgic photographic survey of the 19th century Istanbul and Bosphorus (Istanbul Anıları and Boğaziçi Anıları, 1978) besides contributing to urban history carried along a concealed provocative message to all: the urgent need of using the cultural heritage in urban scale.

Source

Eldem's main source of inspiration for design has always been the Turkish House. But in the 1940s his philosophy shifted to a newer and much wider field of design exploration: to rediscover, retrieve and revive some traditional codes in a contextual manner.

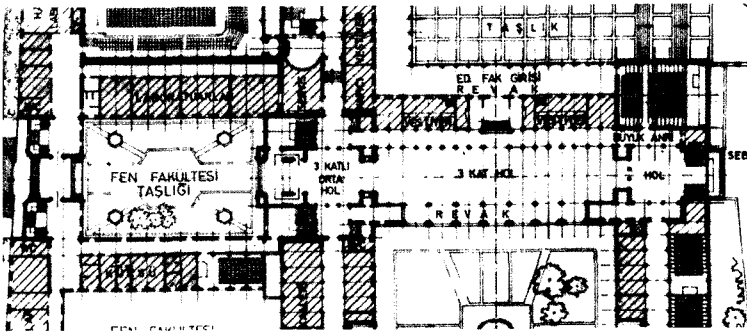
His historical vision, clearly stemming from an uncompromising belief in *Zeitgeist* ideology, focused on the continuous/uninterrupted, evolutionary flow of architectural culture. His innovative search for a fundamental order with possible semantic values surviving subsequent transformations, had provided the organising force of his work. The linear historical development of a design philosophy remained unnoticed and ignored by the vast majority of the Third World's westernised

“Before attempting to look to the future, and in order to protect ourselves from the influence of alien cultures, we must concern ourselves with our own architectural heritage, reap its fruits and take strength and inspiration from it. Any other approach would be unproductive and would necessarily be swallowed up in the flood of world architecture. We must first gain an understanding of our own individuality, become familiar with the values of our own culture and architecture and learn to love them and be proud of them. Only after structuring the new foundations with the help of knowledge and sensitivity can we design our own new style.”

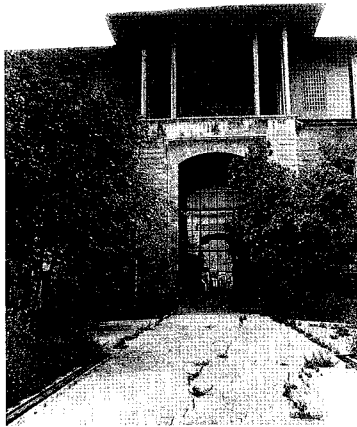
– Sedat Hakkı Eldem, quoted from “Development of Regionalist Tendencies”, his paper presented at The Aga Khan Award for Architecture Seminar held in Istanbul, Turkey, Sep 26–28, 1978

“One might ask why it is necessary to look into the past. Why can we not simply look forward? The answer is that Islam's only way into the future is through the past. The greatest achievements of Islam are those of the past, since we have merely been marking time. It is a regrettable fact that we must first journey into our past and seek our inspiration there. Only then we can venture onto new ground. Our first requirement is a solid foundation.”

– Sedat Hakkı Eldem, quoted from “Development of Regionalist Tendencies”, his paper presented at The Aga Khan Award for Architecture Seminar held in Istanbul, Turkey, Sep 26–28, 1978



Faculty of Sciences and Letters, Istanbul University, 1942 Partial ground floor plan showing the sequence of spaces



The courtyard, main entrance to the Faculty of Sciences and Letters
Photograph: Engin Yenal



The Central Hall, Faculty of Sciences and Letters. Photograph: Erdal Aksoy



House, Kozan, Turkey
Source: *Arkiitekt*

architects who were, and still are, after the dubious pursuit of modernism or post-modernism in order to be part of the global trend. Eldem's approach was then, and still is, a revolutionary notion.

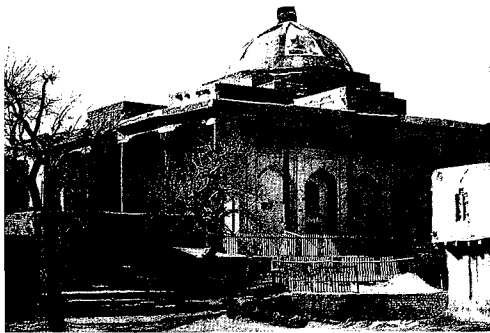
Qualities extracted from the traditional prototype could be assigned to newer functions to recreate a dignified, authentic architectural vocabulary. A formal expression of history could also combine the emotional and the rational, the traditional and the modern, as a commentary on context, rather than as mere reflection.

The major themes and virtues of the tradition: overall spatial harmony, a proportional system, strong modulation and aesthetics were all manifested in one of his major buildings namely the Istanbul University's Faculty of Sciences and Letters (1944–48) designed in association with Emin Onat.

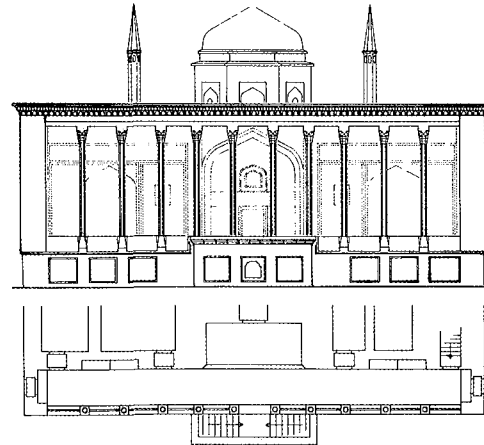
An ingenious fusion of sequential spaces: a courtyard (named *Taşlık* to recall the traditional residential courtyard) and series of three-storey high inner central spaces flanked with *revaks* and the representational use of certain traditional elements (a monumental gateway incorporated into traditionally striped walls, another doorway to a pavilion overlooking the courtyard) are some of the major themes of this remarkable building. The coherence achieved here, in the 1940s, with perfection, nuance, ordinance and refinement, exhibits a different kind of understanding from Fundamentalist Neo-classicism or Critical Regionalism and even Historical Contextualism.

One of the morphic, formative elements employed is a peri-style portico or the pavilion placed on top of the courtyard gateway, whose origin and historical development was persistently studied by Eldem since his early student years. Probably stemming from the primitive wooden hut with slender, long columns called *çardak* (trellis) in rural Anatolia, it shows a remarkable uninterrupted evolutionary trend both in Space and Time. Eldem had traced its earliest known use in von Le Coq's Central Asian shelters, then with greater refinement to Iran (where it is called *talar*), and then to Anatolia and finally, in Istanbul. It was either used as an independent, free-standing pavilion or incorporated into much larger buildings.

This element was used as a house (in Bukhara and Kozan, Turkey), a mosque (in Bukhara, Samarkhand and Soma, Turkey), a gate-pavilion or summer pavilions (in Isfahan), various Royal kiosks and halls (in Edirne and Istanbul), popular coffee-house kiosks (in Istanbul), and again as a Royal kiosk (in Istanbul).



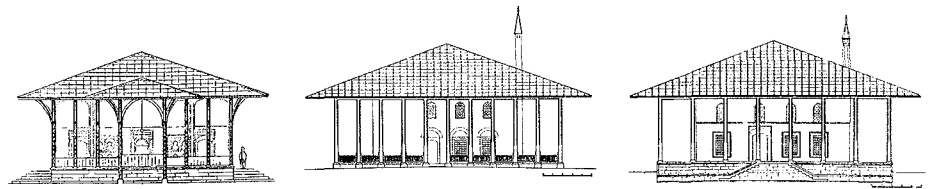
The Hoca Zain ad-din Mosque, Bukhara, 16th century



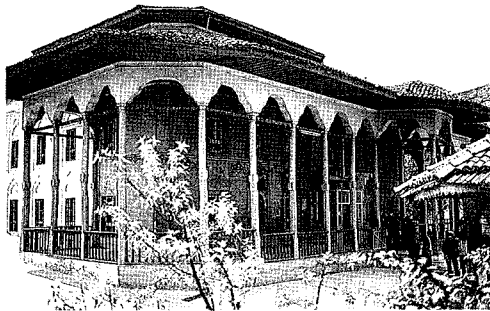
The Çinili Köşk (tiled kiosk) Topkapı Palace, Istanbul, 1473



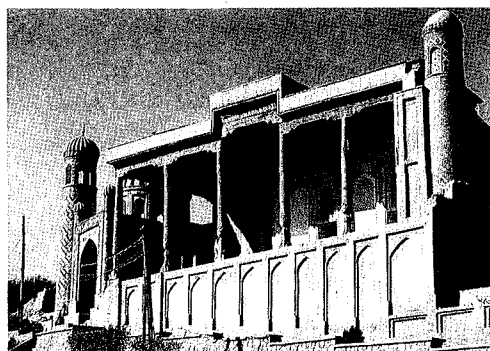
Ali Qapu, Isfahan, 1597–1668



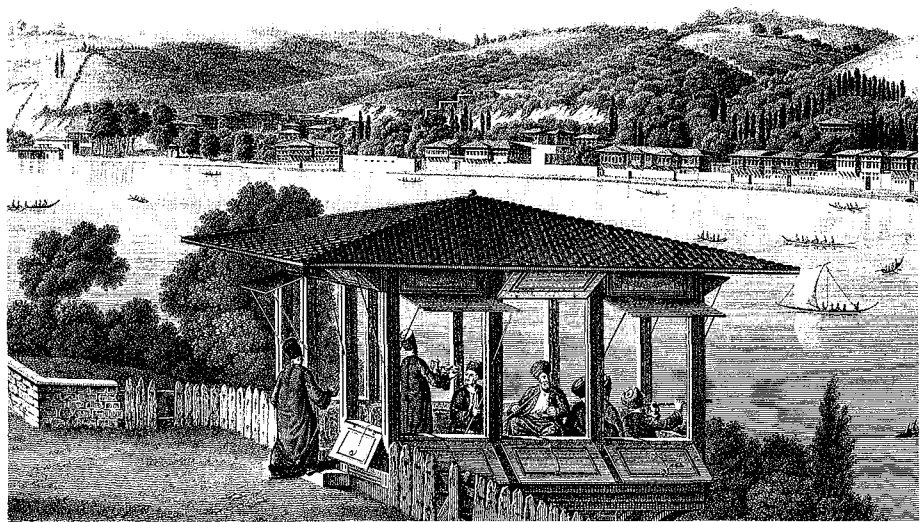
Left to right: The Fener Kiosk, Fenerbahçe, Istanbul, 16th century; Hall of the Divan, Edirne Palace, 15th century; Hall of the Divan, Topkapı Palace, 15th century



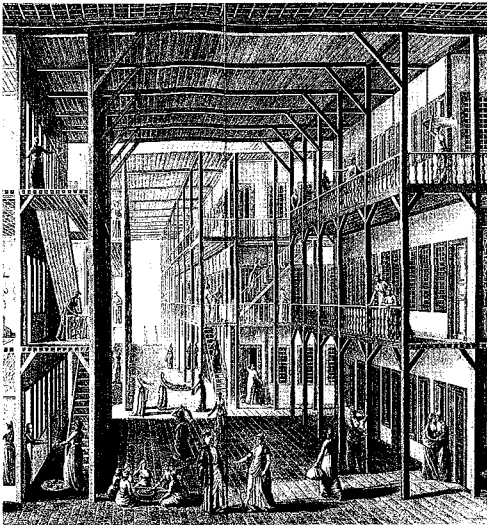
Hızır Bey Mosque, Soma, Turkey, 19th century
Source: Engin Yenil



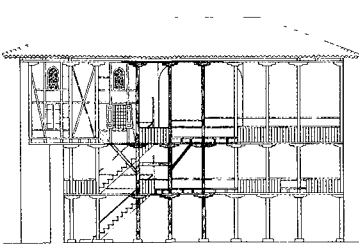
Hazret Chir Mosque, Samarkand, 1915



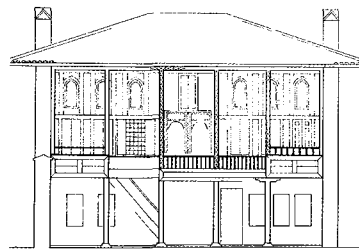
The Coffee House, kiosk, Bosphorus, Istanbul, 17th century Engraving by Antoine I Melling, 1819



The Dormitories of Harem Odalisques, Harem Section, the Topkapı Palace, 16th century
Engraving by Antoine I Melling, 1819



Bursa, the Muradiye House, 17th century



Manisa, the Aye Kadın House, 17th century

To recreate articulate inner spaces which are introverted, aesthetically Eastern and monumentally regional, in the same project, Eldem once again used the traditional methodology. The traditional architectural codes, when translated into contemporary vocabulary, could also re-emerge as a synthesis through sublimation.

Two and three storey high inner central spaces of some residential units of the Topkapı Palace were used as spatial models.

The traditional, spatial formative principle, applied in the palatial scale, is actually a modified version of the vernacular tradition. The structural principle applied in both the Bursa and Manisa houses, to create the connective space of *Sofa*, reappears in the Topkapı Palace in Istanbul to recreate the inner central space flanked with multi-level galleries.

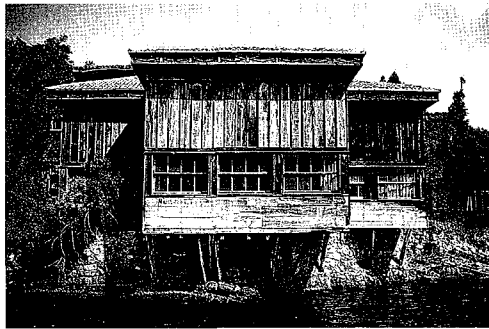
The deterministic/technological pattern exhibited in all these prototypes actually proves Eldem's hypothesis: that traditional buildings are both complex and simple summaries of a single, coherent architectural culture. Since the structural perfectionism is already achieved the vernacular designers/folk builders are free to focus their individualistic talents to create spatial variations in different kinds of buildings

Eldem's understanding of Contextualism — a revolutionary notion in the 1940s — prophesying the basic substance of the current methodology of architectural anthropology, should be considered as another pioneering attempt anticipating the Historicism rhetoric aroused in the 1970s and 1980s.

In Eldem's research of the Turkish House, the Amcazade Hüseyin Paşa Yalı in particular had always occupied a prominent place. The *Yalı* was initially perceived by Eldem as a unique, singular source to re-generate design principles encoded in the tradition. Its "Central *Sofa* type" T-plan; once a stereotype for most of the large residences and royal pavilions, has been deliberately used by Eldem as a model, either as an exact replica, or sometimes as the elementary spatial unit, within the plan compositions of his contemporary *Yalı*s.

Eldem's prime source of inspiration: the Turkish House, in general, is a cross-cultural by-product bearing both Anatolian and pre-Anatolian traits.

What are the characteristics of the Anatolian indigenous tradition? What are the deterministic factors setting up its internal spatial organisation? What are the micro-climatic and socio-cultural co-determinants? How does building technology and materials, accentuated by craftsmanship social traits and economic factors, define the regional variations? Where has the *foci* and *loci* of the "Great Tradition" evolved?



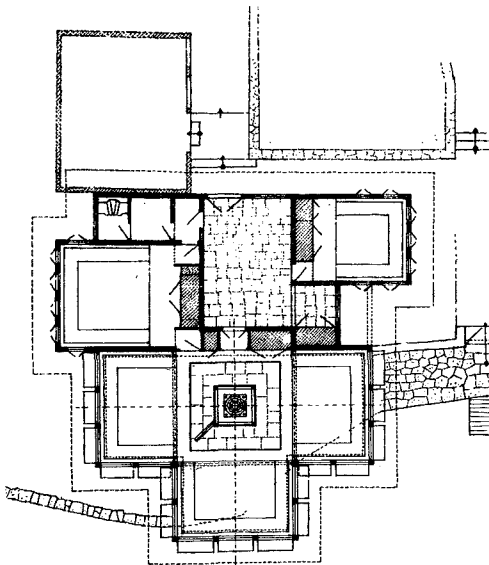
Yali, Bosphorus Photograph: Engin Yenil

“Although the main structural elements in the Turkish House are vertical, the lateral arrangement of the windows produces a horizontal effect consonant with Le Corbusier’s statement on their relationship with nature. Visually, nature has been brought into the dwellings and a horizontal plane formed. Vertical structural elements are preserved in this panorama, achieving a rhythmic movement. As a system of structure, the Turkish House presents a tradition for contemporary architecture.”

– Sedad Hakkı Eldem, “A comparative spatial analysis of traditional Turkish and Japanese dwellings” in *Process*, no 27, 1981, Tokyo, p 50



Safranbolu House



The Amcazade Hüseyin Paşa Yali, Bosphorus, Istanbul, 1699

“Typical modular features of the Turkish House have the capacity to be regenerated in contemporary design principles. The use of the 1:2 proportion in window designs and the use of alcove projections and eaves could modify a lot of the present design procedure occurring in historical environments. There is a need to modify present urban planning trends and to encourage the revival of an architecture with Turkish characteristics through a modification in the building construction codes.”

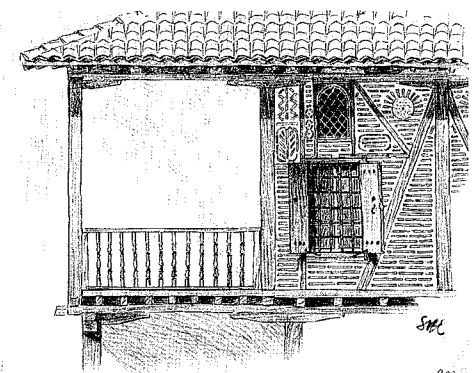
– Sedad Hakkı Eldem, “A comparative spatial analysis of traditional Turkish and Japanese dwellings” in *Process*, no 27, 1981, Tokyo, p 50



The Hezarens Konak, Amasya during the restoration, 1980

The structural formation of the Turkish House follows the plan of sash-windows. The windows have a vertical proportion of 1:2 and are basic elements of residential architecture. The axial measurement of the windows ranged from 120 to 150 centimetres. In this system the windows are separated from the structural elements and aligned in a row.

Photographs: Engin Yenil



Bursa, the Bitli House, late 17th century

“In big cities the 19th century residential architecture has been closely attached to almost dogmatic principle of the repetitive rhythm of vertical windows of 1.2 proportion. Architectural compositions started from this unit and practised by the so called Kalfa (master builders) who controlled almost all building activities. Their viewpoints and understanding had had to confine within a relatively narrow framework with limited capacity. By departing from all kinds of egocentric claims an architecture without identity or in other words an “anonymous” architecture has evolved. It consequently has safeguarded the profession and art of architecture from all kinds of dubious pursuits and eccentric attempts.”

– Sedat Hakki Eldem, “Elli Yıllık Cumhuriyet Mimarlığı” in *Akademi Dergisi*, No 8, July 1974, Istanbul, p 10



Kahraman Maras, South-eastern Turkey

Eldem’s meticulous study tries to answer such questions in an abstract manner. He sees the methodology of vernacular design as a tool to the understanding of the spatial formative principles starting with the “unchanging” to accommodate “change”.

To some of its critics vernacular architecture appears to be monotonously homogeneous, undistinctively identical and repetitively unified. Why then should contemporary architects and students alike re-study the vernacular; to quote from it; to revive it; or to re-affirm? What can we possibly learn from the vernacular and how? Is vernacular architecture really a narrow field for design exploration or is it a multi-dimensional source for the architectural culture? How can we extract a design vocabulary by re-analysing the abstracted ideas encoded in tradition? How can we align vernacular design methods with contemporary ones?

To re-generate design concepts by disassembling existing forms and re-composing new ones out of the abstracted ideas has ever been the design methodology of the traditional vernacular designer/folk builder.

The folk designer/builder or handyman, *Bricoleur* (to use C. Levi Strauss’ terminology) produces infinite variety while operating within an extremely limited field of pre-constrained concepts, derived only from the existing buildings, reflecting the local building tradition⁶.

⁶ Levi-Strauss, Claude *The Savage Mind* University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1966, pp 16–19



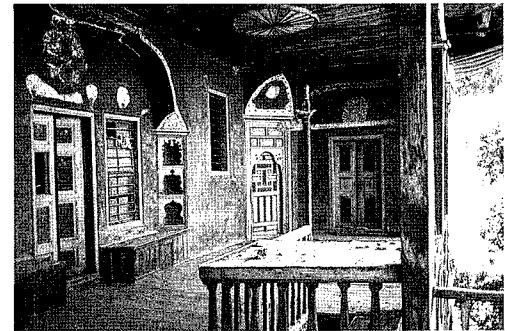
Safianbolu House, North-west Turkey



A non-historicist approach in establishing a new design vocabulary therefore may start by re-ordering the hierarchy of ideas (schemata) contained within the known grammar of tradition. In other words, contemporary architects may also operate within the finite world of ideas, signs, codes of the vernacular culture, and its epistemological structure geared to the replication and preservation of the tradition. The new design vocabulary could be characterised by both primary (traditional = dependent = unchanging) and secondary (contemporary = independent = changing) design components.

Eldem's methodical survey of the Turkish House, is actually a summarised macro-explanatory version of the "generative process", extracting an abstract conceptual framework by re-analysing the existing composition within the reverse architectural design methodology. However, this neither is explicitly formulated in his books nor exhibited in his buildings to reveal a clear unambiguous message.

It seems that Eldem, the profound educator, prefers that the idealistic architects of the younger generations should not imitate his work but should use their intellectual and creative forces to re-assess and learn from it.



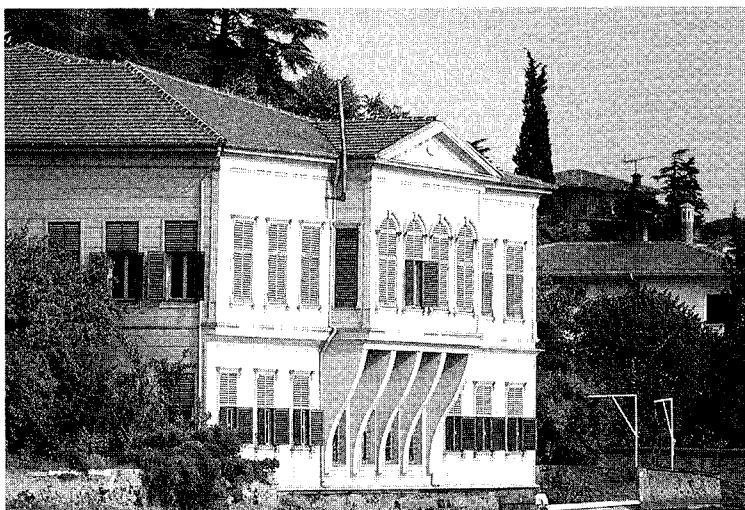
Soma, Aegean region



Yenisehir, Bursa

"The chief aim of my fifty years of professional life has been to create a regional architectural style. I have approached the problem from various angles, not all of which have been appropriate or successful. With time I have become even more convinced that internationalism in architecture is not a productive choice. World architecture is in a state of crisis. The various "isms" such as functionalism and internationalism, are no longer valid. We now face a new "ism": regionalism.

– Sedat Hakkı Eldem, "Toward a Local Idiom: A Summary History of Contemporary Architecture in Turkey" in *Conservation as Cultural Survival*, 1980, p. 96



House on the Bosphorus, Istanbul
Photographs: Engin Yenel

Biography



1926



1938

18 August 1908

Born, Ömer Sedad, in Istanbul, Turkey

Mother: Azize Galip Edhem Hanimefendi

Father: Alişanzade Ismail Hakkı Beyefendi

1914–1924

Primary and Secondary Schools

Ecole Cuchet, Geneva, Switzerland

Altes Real Gymnasium, Munich, Germany

1924–1928

Architectural Education

Sanayi-i- Nefise Mektebi, (Academy of Fine Arts), Istanbul, Turkey

1928–1930

Die Wanderjahre

Study tours in Europe, Paris, Berlin and England

1930

Member of the Faculty, Department of Architecture, Academy of Fine Arts, Istanbul

1931

Exhibition of his European work, Istanbul, Ankara

Sets up his private practice in Istanbul

His first building abroad: The Turkish pavilion, International Exhibition Budapest, Hungary

1932

His first building in Turkey: General Naci Eldeniz Villa in Ankara

1934

Commencement of the National Architecture Seminar, Academy of Fine Arts, Istanbul.

First prize in the International Design competition for the General Directorate of State Monopolies, Ankara

Adopts the family name, Eldem.

1941

Marries Fahire

1941–1946

Department Head, Department of Architecture, Academy of Fine Arts, Istanbul

1944

Head, the Design Bureau for major projects of the Ministry of National Education, Istanbul

1945–1952

Partnership with Emin Onat, for the design and execution of some major projects in Istanbul and Ankara

1945

The Academy fire, destruction of the archives of the National Architecture Seminar

1952

His first book published *Türk Evi Plan Tipleri* (Typology of the Turkish House)

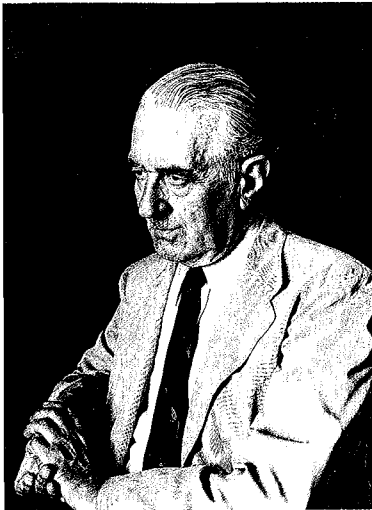
1978

Retires from the Academy
Continues in private practice

Awards



1952



1978

1929

Bronze Medal — “Exhibition Les Artistes d’aujourd’hui”, Paris, France

1952

Recipient of an American Institute of Architects Regional Design Award.

1979

Honorary Degree Doctor of Philosophy, Academy of Fine Arts, Istanbul.

1983

Recipient of the Sedat Simavi Award for his achievements in Architecture.

Assumes the “State’s Artist” title bestowed by the Ministry of Culture, Ankara, Turkey.

1986

Recipient of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture for the Social Security Agency Complex in Istanbul

Affiliations

1932

Member, Güzel San’atlar Birliği (Union of Fine Arts), Istanbul

1934–1954

Member, Türk Yüksek Mimarlar Birliği (the Turkish Architects’ Union), Istanbul

1931–1941

Member/chairman, Asar-ı Atika Encümeni (Central Committee of Antiquities), Istanbul.

1941–1945

Member, Eski Eserleri Koruma Encümeni (Central Committee for the Protection of Cultural Properties), Istanbul

1946

Honorary Fellow R I B A. (Royal Institute of British Architects) London, U K

1954

Member, T.M.M.O.B (Turkish Chamber of Engineers and Architects), Istanbul

1962–1978

Member, Gayrimenkul Eski Eserler ve Anıtlar Yüksek Kurulu (Council of the Monuments and Sites), Istanbul

1978–

Member, Türkiye Anıt ve Çevre Değerlerini Koruma Vakfı (Turkish Foundation for the Environmental and Historical Protection), Istanbul

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(with F Akozan and K Anadol) *Rölöve 1* (İstanbul Boğaziçi köyleri yerleşmesi, resmi ve kültürel taş binalar, İstanbul ve Anadolu evleri, çeşmeler ve selsebiller), İstanbul. D G S A Yayını, 1968
- Köşkler ve Kasırlar I* (A Survey of Turkish Kiosks and Pavilions), İstanbul: D.G S A yayını, 1969.
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Glossary

arasta covered market

avlu: courtyard

cumba: a window projecting out from the surface of the wall containing it; a bay-window

çardak: pergola or trellis

çeşme a tap for drinking water, often elaborate with basin

eyvan: a vaulted or domed recess open on one side

feriye sarayı: a palace built for or by the members of the Ottoman royal family, the notables of the state or other Ottoman dignitaries

hayat a balcony-like place containing all the household activities of the traditional Turkish house; located on the ground floor or the upper floor, open to the courtyard but covered above

kameriye: pergola or trellis in the garden covered with ivy, climbing roses or other flowers.

karniyank a major plan type of traditional Turkish domestic architecture, with a central hall or *sofa* transversely cutting across the house and giving access to rooms on both sides, as well as allowing for cross-ventilation

kirpi saçak: the so-called “porcupine cornice” of Seljuk, Byzantine and Ottoman architecture: diagonally placed bricks making a band of saw-tooth projections along the cornice

konak: a large mansion divided into *harem* for family and *selamlık* for the male guests

köşk (kiosk): pavilion built separately or as extension of a larger palace for short term stays, receptions or hunting parties, also the name given to projecting bays or alcoves on the upper floors of traditional houses

kübik: the term designating the official style of the architecture of the Early Republic in Ankara, mostly by foreign architects; buildings with cubic or rectangular masses, flat roofs, sometimes rounded corners, and a greyish stucco exterior finish.

mahalle: smallest unit of traditional urban fabric consisting of an agglomeration of houses and the social, commercial, religious buildings serving them; a *quartier*

mescit: small chapel or prayer hall without a minber for the Friday prayer

mukarnas: stalactite vaulting; angular or spherical squinches arranged in steadily diminishing horizontal registers and used to effect the transition from the angular base of a building to the circle of the dome, as a filling for the canopy over the entrance to a building and, in a non-structural context, as a cornice or as a decorative relief to the bareness of a facade.

ocak: tall hood-shaped chimney breast

ıevak: a domed or vaulted colonnade enclosing a courtyard

sedir: wooden seating surfaces along a wall or inside an alcove

sekilik: a slightly raised platform, usually wooden, constructed on the main floor

sofa a hall constituting the focal point of the traditional Turkish house and giving access to other, more private rooms. Various plan types of Turkish domestic architecture are characterized by the shape and location of the sofa

şadırvan: the ablution fountain in a mosque courtyard

taç kapı monumental portal

türbe: mausoleum or tomb in Ottoman architecture deriving from the Seljuk *kümbets*

yalı mansion on the shores of the Bosphorus at the edge of the water

yüklük: built-in wooden closets and cupboards in traditional Turkish houses, often for storing mattresses, bed-spreads and linen

