



by Dalila ElKerdany

Olbia Social Centre

Antalya, Turkey



Architect

Cengiz Bekta°

Client

Rectorship of Mediterranean University

Design

1998

Completed

1999

Olbia Social Centre

Antalya, Turkey

I. Introduction

The Olbia Social Centre was designed for the Akdeniz University (Mediterranean University) in Antalya, Turkey. The purpose was to provide the campus community with a complex where students could engage in social and cultural activities in an interdisciplinary and intellectual atmosphere that would contribute to their personal development and learning experience. The project comprises an auditorium complex; an amphitheatre; rooms for student societies; a restaurant and various cafés; a book and stationery shop and various other shops; an exhibition area; and a circulation area articulated with public spaces, waterscape elements, plants and sculptures. One of the tasks in designing the Centre was to solve the identity problems of buildings that existed in different styles, and tie together the disparate parts of the university. The complex is designed according to a basic module that gives flexibility in area divisions and functional changes. The spaces of the project, created in an intimate human scale, flow into each other in a perpetual series of perspectives. The area is well used by university students and staff, as well as by members of the community.

II. Contextual Information

a. Historical background

In 1997 the architect Cengiz Bektas was invited to give a presentation and a lecture at the Mediterranean University about the old city of Antalya. The lecture helped raise awareness among the university's rectorship, professors and administrative staff that the campus lacked identity in its buildings and spaces. In addition, it was perceived that in this predominantly modern atmosphere there was a lack of communication between people, and little sense of 'belonging' – either to the campus or to others. The relationship between teachers and students was considered sterile and formal.

The Mediterranean University employs modern teaching methods and also has a completely modern campus in terms of its planning and architectural style. Different schools are scattered around the large plot of land belonging to the university. Wide roads and boulevards connect the different buildings with each other, and connect the campus with the rest of the city. There is an all-pervading sense of newness in this modern campus that lies on the western fringes of the city.

The campus stands in marked contrast to the old city of Antalya. This dates back to the first century BC, when it was founded by Attalus II of Pergamon. The harmonious physical reminders of the various civilizations that took turns in ruling the city bear witness to Turkish culture's ability to absorb and blend the sometimes opposing characteristics of its heritage. Examples of this heritage to be found in the city include the Roman harbour and the double-walled Roman fortress; Hadrian's Gate; Karaali Park; the Roman Temple, which was transformed into the Byzantine Church of the Virgin Mary and then the Seljuk Mosque of Korkut Camii; the Kesik Minare; the Yivli minaret; and the gracious old Hayat Ottoman Turkish houses of Kaleici (Old Antalya) near the Roman fortress.

With a population of one million, Antalya is the chief city on Turkey's central Mediterranean coast. Agriculture, shipping, light industry and tourism have helped the city prosper since the 1960s, and it continues to grow at a fast pace.

b. Local architectural character

In old Antalya the predominant building materials are local stone combined with mud and timber. There are few variations in construction techniques, giving a sense of unity to buildings from various historical periods. The two exceptions are the newer buildings from the modern area, and the poor quality restorations of several of the old Hayat Turkish houses.

Most of the cobblestone streets curve in an organic manner to adapt to the extreme slopes of the city. No formal public spaces exist, except for the beautiful harbour front which provides a very pleasant multi-levelled promenade. The view over the Mediterranean and the mountains to the west, with the walls of the Roman fortress in the foreground, is stunning. The urban fabric is dense, and private spaces in the form of internal gardens are only occasionally revealed through accidentally opened main doors or the very few latticed fences. Roofs project over the streets, giving a wonderful feeling of enclosure and shade. Water channels along some streets, although empty, are an important historical feature since these were part of the old water system used to irrigate private gardens with the northern mountain waters.

The gracious Hayat Turkish houses have an intimate scale that gives a very special feel to the Kaleici neighbourhood. Most of these houses are two storeys high. The ground floors are irregular, being shaped according to the curve of the street, and closed to the outside. The upper floors project over the ground-floor walls and have latticed windows overlooking the street.

c. Climatic conditions

Antalya is the western starting point of a fertile plain that stretches as far as Alanya. This plain lies between a coastal mountain range and the Mediterranean Sea. The temperature in Antalya is generally warm and humid. The maximum temperature is 44.6°C, and the minimum is -4.6°C. Annual precipitation is 777 millimetres and average humidity is 69%.

d. Immediate surroundings of the site

The Mediterranean University campus has all the hallmarks of a new, planned district. It is Western in style with wide streets and boulevards. Buildings are between six and thirteen storeys. The 'international modern'-style buildings have Mediterranean influences such as large balconies and wide openings to the street. In contrast to old Antalya, the scale of the buildings, streets and the open spaces is inappropriate to the context, and there is a sense of being in a 'no man's land'. The district has no sense of individual character.

The efficient road network of Antalya links the site with the city's major attractions such as the beaches to the south, the old city of Kaleici to the south-east and the airport in the far east.

The university campus is currently undergoing landscaping and in a few years will be dominated by greenery.

e. Topography of the project site

The site slopes slightly to the south-west. The water channel that flows along the main axial road follows the natural slope of the site.

III. Programme

a. Conditions of programme formulation

When the rectorship of the Mediterranean University realized that their campus lacked identity, which also reflected in the relationship between teachers and students, it was decided to build a new social centre that might act as a binding element for the disparate elements on campus. Cengiz Bektas – whose recent lecture on old Antalya had demonstrated to the university the potential of traditional architecture – was asked to design the centre.

Because university resources, other than land, were limited, it was decided to finance the project using the now fashionable Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT) method. A firm was chosen to finance the construction; this firm would have the right to run and profit from the project for nine years before transferring it to the university. However, according to the architect it was the university rectorship that had the final word in any construction decisions.

b. Objectives

The general programme objectives can be summarized as follows:

- to create adequate places for the students to interact both with each other and with the faculty, in a comfortable and informal atmosphere;
- to provide sufficient money-making activities to guarantee a reasonable profit for the BOT firm;
- to keep construction costs low so as to benefit both the BOT firm and the campus community, since any rise in construction costs would reflect on the price of services offered in the centre.

c. Functional requirements

In addition to the programmatic objectives of the clients listed above, Cengiz Bektas – as an architect, researcher and poet – developed his own philosophical approach to designing this complex. He asserted that in order for a community to be created and flourish it is imperative that people from different disciplines should meet and exchange knowledge and ideas in a relaxed atmosphere – much in the way that the great civilizations of the world have always used a common space, such as the Greek agora, the Roman forum or the Oriental bazaar. He also stressed the importance of ‘incidental’ and informal learning. From his own experience, he noted that students learn more from each other than from the formal classroom.

Bektas’s approach is a participatory one: he is involved not only in the first phases of decision-making but also throughout the life cycle of the project. The successful interaction of users with the building is a sign for him of having succeeded.

IV. Description

a. Project data

The site area of the Olbia Social Centre is 12,000 square metres. Most of the floor is at ground level and covers an area of about 3,000 square metres; there are also some mezzanine areas in the restaurant and cafés. The clock tower is about 12 metres high. Total covered area is about 3,641 square metres. The complex is composed of detached masses of different lengths, widths and heights,

all of them designed on a basic repetitive module of 3.6 metres in both directions of the plan. This allows for flexibility in the future division of the spaces according to changing needs and functions. Some areas of the complex, however, are permanent and do not allow for much flexibility, namely the open-air amphitheatre, the auditorium complex and the toilets.

The complex as a whole is composed of different functions; these are aligned on one main axis that widens in some parts to form main and subsidiary outdoor locations. The functions are as follows:

- open-air amphitheatre (seating 1,200)
- two auditoriums, of different seating capacities (100–150), that can be also used for film showings
- self-service restaurant
- book and stationery shop
- fauna and flora museum (currently used as an exhibition hall for local handicrafts)
- internet café
- various coffee shops
- meeting rooms for various student societies (concerned with the environment, culture, politics, etc.)
- bank
- travel agent
- bar
- clothing shop
- public toilets
- clock tower

b. Evolution of design concepts

The complex is designed according to the layout of the traditional Oriental bazaar, and links two focal points of the campus in a curved line that forms a short cut between the two points. The mass is fragmented according to the spatial requirements of each function, and in order to humanize the scale. A series of paths connects the main axis with the bus station, the student's hostel, the rector's office and the neighbouring university buildings. This connecting role gives the complex the importance of a hub and makes it the visual focus of the campus complex – in spite of the fact that it is much lower in height than the other university buildings.

Water was an important factor influencing the project layout. Starting from the highest point of the site, in the north-west, a 10-centimetre-deep water channel, with very gentle waterfalls, flows along the main axis, separating it into two walkways. Small slabs of reinforced concrete, with holes underneath so as not to block the water flow, periodically connect the two sides of the axis. The project's basic structural module is revealed through the perforated pergolas that cover both sides of the pathway, which also serve to provide a balance between outdoors and indoors. The pathway widens slightly at some parts, creating 'bulbs' which allow indoor functions to extend to the outdoors. This is especially pleasant for coffee shops, which follow the Oriental tradition of allowing people to sit outside amidst the traffic.

The water channel and its twin walkways connect the two major spaces of the centre. The northern space overlooks the auditorium complex and the main restaurant. A fairly large pool of quiet water 'centres' the space and connects to the main water channel. Meanwhile, the clock tower, which chimes on each hour, is placed to the south near the pathway. On the side, a small pit of stepped seats can be used for individual reflection or for interaction within small groups.

The southern space has a spiral water fountain in the middle. Its shape resembles the Bronze Age, Hittite symbol of 'floating time, or time is floating'. The sound of water is very pleasant and relaxing. The fountain and the clock tower together represent contradictory yet complementary concepts.

The amphitheatre turns its back on the complex in order to facilitate entrance from the rear. In addition to performances it is used for a wide range of social and cultural activities, not just by the students but also by the community at large.

The flow of spaces and masses, with the water elements as a regulating concept, appears natural and spontaneous; the overall effect is very pleasant. The gently curving pathway, with water in the middle and perforated pergolas next to the heavy stone buildings on both sides, gives an ever-changing perspective from both inside and outside the complex. This rich visual experience recalls classical Turkish music with its repeated rhythms, sensitive melodic variations and anticipated climax. The informal, relaxed human-scale sense of the complex allows students to feel comfortable during this critical period of their emotional and psychological growth. The different functions complement each other, and the building's modular concept allows for flexibility in change and growth.

The centre does not only reinforce communication between people in informal public places; it also serves to connect the scattered buildings of the university campus within a cohesive whole. The architect would like to expand the concept of this relatively simple 'connecting structure' still further, making it more complex and allowing it to connect with the neighbouring communities through spatial elements such as pedestrian bridges, hanging spaces, tunnels and so on. He would like his architecture to grow and to allow for additions and interventions.

With its highly individual form, materials, construction techniques and symbolism, the project acts as a unifying, harmonious element for the different urban traditions that have passed through Turkey throughout history.

The design solutions for the different buildings have evidently stemmed from their functions, and from the adoption of an inside–outside approach. The repetitive structural module acts as an organizational element for the various architectural masses. Unity in building materials, construction techniques and details helps to give harmony through the variety of volumes and functions. Façades are not designed as such, and do not form an important element in the project aesthetics. Instead, what counts, as in traditional arrangements, is the wholeness, the collectivity of the experience, the movement within spaces, and perceptions from different angles.

The roofs on either sides of the pathway are designed so that they slope towards the water channel at the centre. Although this is successful in formal terms, it might contradict with optimizing the inside climate since most prevailing winds come from the north.

The project possesses honesty in its expression of techniques and materials; there are no fake decorative elements. The beauty and ornamentation come from spontaneous design decisions: the concave timbers in the ceiling, with shapes and details that resemble those of old ships; the texture of the exposed rough stones of the walls, which contrasts with the two horizontal rows of reinforced-concrete beams embedded on sensitive levels; the latticed pergolas, with their timber beams moving in curves above the pathways while giving different perspectives and different shadow patterns throughout the day; and the intricate, prefabricated concrete pergola columns themselves. These columns, aligned at forty-five degrees along the outer edge of the pathway, are divided with sensitive proportions into three parts, and serve a number of purposes simultaneously. Not only do they act as construction elements for carrying the pergola timber roof, but they also carry light and sound fixtures,

in the top part, and bear educational copper plaques that give information about important cultural Turkish figures.

The architect suggested the plaques as a way of enabling students to learn about different aspects of contemporary Turkish culture in an informal manner, and encouraging them to search independently for more information. They also serve to foster pride in the country and its culture, while creating an example for young Turkish people to follow. The plaques were designed and made by a renowned Istanbul sculptor.

A number of trees existed on the site prior to building, and the design for the most part has worked around and preserved them. When construction commenced the architect added more indigenous trees, shrubs and flowers, in addition to grass which grows all over the land and in between the small granite blocks that pave the pathways and spaces. The plants, however, do not appear to be growing sufficiently – especially the climbing ones for the pergolas – bearing in mind that they were planted three years before the review visit took place. When fully grown they will give sufficient shading for the hot summer months, while also satisfying the architect's vision of an ever-changing environment due to the plants' growth cycle and the different seasons. The new trees were planted so as to indicate the age of the buildings over time.

Again, water has been an important element in the project's landscaping. Although not sufficiently full when the review visit took place in late April, the sound of waterfalls was pleasant and relaxing. The juxtaposition of the rough stones of the buildings and pavements with the smoothness of the water created a pleasant and thoughtful contrast.

c. *Structure, Materials, Technology*

The structural system for the predominantly one-storey buildings is very simple, comprising load-bearing walls of stone, and reinforced-concrete beams at two different levels (1.25 metres and 2.5 metres). Imbedded iron bars tie the beams as an earthquake precaution. The granite stones come from the site itself and were quarried when digging the foundations; they were then cut to smaller sizes and rough-cut on site. Cement was used as a cohesive material in preference to mud, which is the traditional technique, and concrete beams were used instead of the timber beams employed in the past. Some spaces have a mezzanine floor constructed with timber beams and columns, and partially supported on the rear load-bearing wall.

The timber ceiling structure rests on the load-bearing walls and borrows its material and technique from Antalya's ancient shipbuilding industry. As the city is known historically to have been the site of innovations in shipbuilding, this represents another gesture towards fostering pride in the region's history and achievements. The red ceramic tiles that cover the sloping roofs give added insulation.

While the main buildings are made with heavy materials and using traditional techniques, the pergolas are constructed from relatively light materials, employing modern methods. The wooden beams that act as a 'ceiling' over the pathway are supported on one side by a row of prefabricated concrete columns, and on the other by the load-bearing walls of the buildings. A continuous 'pillow' wooden beam ties the overhead beams to the columns and also transfers the load.

Materials for the structural members are mostly local and traditional – stone, timber, concrete beams and iron. The exceptions are the prefabricated concrete columns of the pergola, and the partition

walls, which are generally made from dry wall and sometimes brick. All construction elements have been left without finishes, while wood has been given a final transparent protective coating. Indoor floors are of semi-polished random-cut diagonal travertine slabs. Outdoor paving is made from small granite blocks (approximately 10 by 10 centimetres); these have been laid naturally, without cement, leaving spaces between them where grass is allowed to grow.

In contrast to the rough and natural texture of structural elements, partitions have been given attractive polished colours, especially in the lavatories. Doors and windows are simply detailed from wooden sections and glass.

The water is contained by concrete basins that have been finished in places with 2-centimetre-thick travertine slabs. The basins are isolated in order to prevent the water from leaking.

Construction technology is generally traditional, with the exception of the prefabricated pergola columns, which were done on site following a specially designed format.

Because the site lies inside the university campus, the main services and utilities were already installed. The installation of electromechanical elements within the various new buildings was carried out in line with the same concept that lies behind the architecture, namely that of honesty and exposure. This facilitates maintenance and any future alterations to the project due to changing function. In the absence of a unifying concept for the existing spaces, however, each of these had its own ways of treating the service elements. The unprofessional intervention of users here was inevitable.

Although it gets hot in summer, which lasts from May to September, adequate mechanical ventilation and air-conditioning was not included in the architect's initial study. Informal additions had to be made by the users at later stages, thus lowering the aesthetic quality of the rear elevations – which unfortunately constitute the main pedestrian approaches from the different points of the university campus.

Public toilets are in a central location and connect to the southern main space. Their design is interesting, especially the octagonal marble complex for sinks, which resembles the central part of a traditional Turkish bath. The small openings for ventilation are efficient. However, poor detailing and manufacturing spoil the elegant atmosphere that was expected from the design.

Parking and loading zones are nicely fragmented behind the different buildings, and connect well with the various approaches.

d. Origins of technology, materials, labour force, professionals

Set in the midst of a predominantly new district of Antalya, where modern Western construction techniques and materials are widely used, the project adapts the traditional techniques and materials of the old city. (The only exceptions are the prefabricated pergola columns and theatre seats.) To do this the architect needed to teach some of the old techniques to the craftsmen working on the project. For example, they did not know how to lay the tiles on the round shapes of the roofs, and so the architect needed to do some of this himself in order to give them a practical example of the technique. In this context, it is fair to conclude that the architect may well have managed to revive old building techniques in this area of Antalya.

Most of the building and finishing materials are local, in particular the stone, granite, travertine and timber. Cement, glass and iron are also locally manufactured: the Antalya region is fast becoming one of Turkey's major industrial centres.

The labour force was drawn locally, either from Antalya itself or from the nearby small towns and villages. Antalya is an important urban centre; moreover, no special skills were required to execute such a simply designed and detailed project.

The architect, his supporting team and the civil engineer come from Kuzguncuk, Istanbul. However, in a clear sign of devotion the architect rented a house and lived as one of the community for long periods during construction. This helped him better to understand the needs of the university community, which no doubt contributed greatly to their eventual satisfaction with the social centre. It is worth noting that Cengiz Bektas is an important architect and urban researcher in Turkey. He has written, with the assistance of his students, an important reference book about the culture of building, the architecture and urban traditions in Antalya, as well as other parts of Anatolia. He is acknowledged as the first author of an architecture book in the Turkish language; he has also written widely in the fields of poetry and culture. He pens a daily column and has participated in many radio talks and interviews. He can certainly be regarded as a public figure and a 'master' for many practising architects in the country.

The contracting firm comes from Ankara, and has experience in restoration. In fact, the construction site manager is currently involved in restoring one of the old Antalya Hayat Ottoman houses.

V. Construction Schedule and Costs

a. History of project

The public lecture and presentation that Bektas gave in 1997 about the old city of Antalya prompted strong feelings about the need for such a project. A year later the university commissioned the architect to design a new social centre. Construction work started the same year and took only five months. Full occupancy took place at the start of the 1999 school year.

The poor quality of some of the details might be due to the relatively short construction period. It is likely that the BOT firm had the construction time squeezed in order to start commercial operation of the project. The reason behind the generally poor building quality was not clear at the time of the review visit. However, everyone we met, namely the architect, the BOT operator and the construction engineer, took pride in the fast construction phase as well as the low cost.

b. Total costs and main sources of financing

The university owns the land. The total cost of construction was USD 728,242. This was fully paid by the BOT firm. In return the firm has the right to operate the project for nine years, after which the whole property will be transferred to the Mediterranean University.

c. Comparative costs

The architect and client are take pride in the low cost of the project compared to other modern constructions in the area.

d. *Qualitative analysis of costs*

Actual cost per square meter is about USD 208.

e. *Maintenance costs*

The project does not use sophisticated systems requiring high maintenance costs, except for the air-conditioning units which were added later and which will certainly entail greater energy expense. The delayed growth of the plants suggests that they are not watered enough. The water channels and fountains are not adequately filled, either, which leads us to conclude that the consumption of water is high.

f. *Ongoing costs and 'life performance' of building*

Life performance for the building superstructure is expected to be of normal quality, due to the simple and basic method of construction. The clock tower, however, while constructed with the same load-bearing wall system found in the other buildings, might meet with difficulties because of its great height.

It is expected that most of the fittings, such as doors, windows, sanitary appliances, partitions and furniture, will need different degrees of repair and/or replacement at some point. It is unfortunate to note that the elegant octagonal sink complex of the public men's washroom collapsed during the time of the review visit.

'Hardscape' elements such as the water channel need repair, since water had started leaking in some parts.

VI. Technical Assessment

a. *Functional assessment*

The flexibility in design afforded by the structural and architectural module has allowed for a variety of different usages for similar spaces. This will also enable ease of change of use in the future. This applies to the functions that do not need strict requirements, such as shops, clubs, offices and the exhibition space, and to a lesser degree to coffee shops and food outlets, since the latter need service areas.

The amphitheatre is successfully used not only for students' performances and activities but also by the wider community for social and cultural functions. Spectators enjoy good vision both of the stage and of each other. The theatre helps to connect the university campus with the surrounding community, and at the same time provides a forum for students' self-expression and recreation. The prefabricated concrete theatre chairs are comfortable and nicely detailed.

The auditorium complex is widely used for the university's formal ceremonies. It can also be converted into a cinema. Air-conditioning was added subsequent to completion of the project and the windows were blocked. These last alterations, although necessary, were done without consulting the architect and have an unprofessional quality.

All other functions, such as coffee shops, internet café, restaurant and outdoor spaces are heavily used mainly by the university students. The place is fairly busy almost all of the time, day and night.

b. Climatic performance

The thick stone load-bearing walls should provide efficient heat insulation. Formal roof insulation is provided in addition to the tiles, which no doubt contribute to the bettering of the interior environment.

Cross-ventilation has been taken into consideration by ensuring that there are openings on both sides of nearly all the buildings apart from the auditoriums. Since the wind direction changes between day and night, the climate on one of the two sides of the complex will usually be better than that of the other. The roofs slope in opposite directions on the two sides of the complex, which ignores the predominant northerly direction of the wind. Since it can get hot and humid during summer, passive temperature treatment is not sufficient. Many informal interventions by the users are therefore taking place, especially for areas that accommodate large numbers of people such as the auditorium, coffee shops and internet café. Water channels and fountains, however, help in humidifying and cooling the outdoor spaces.

Vegetation is meant to contribute to cooling the environment, and the pergolas and trees are intended to provide shade. However, the growth is not yet enough to act efficiently in this regard. Large, informal advertising umbrellas have been provided by shop owners in order to encourage the use and enjoyment of outdoor spaces in sunny spots.

c. Response to treatment of water and rainfall

Although a system of discharging rainwater is implemented, the reviewer heard stories of water overflow during the most recent rainy season. This happened not only in the project site but also in other parts of the campus. No traces of damage could be found as a result of this incident. If rainwater is that abundant during certain seasons, one wonders why no system exists to utilize it for at least watering the gardens.

d. Environmental response

From its first planning phases, the project preserved the existing trees in the site. It also utilized the cultivation of indigenous local trees, shrubs and flowers. The project respected the natural topography of the site and took advantage of it in the pathways and the simple waterfalls. It also made use of the stones available on site for building the walls. Indeed, the project seems more responsive and adapted to the surrounding natural environment than most of the other buildings in the area.

e. Choice of materials, level of technology

It is to the credit of the project that it used very simple local materials and technology. This has made it more in harmony with the local environment and natural scenery than the modern and sophisticated neighbouring buildings. In fact these buildings look odd in contrast to the project. The primitive quality of the materials and technology no doubt contributed to the low construction cost.

f. Response to and planning for emergency situations

The climatic and geographic conditions of Antalya are of a very mild, Mediterranean nature. The project is only one storey high in most parts, which minimizes risk in emergency situations. However, earthquake hazards have naturally been taken into consideration in the structural design of the buildings. Nevertheless, the design of the clock tower does raise a degree of doubt with regard to earthquake resistance.

As a precaution for fire emergencies, in the auditorium complex it would have been preferable to have had emergency exits from the back wall to the open air rather than just two entrances on different levels located on the same side of the room.

g. Ageing and maintenance problems

The basic and strong nature of the materials and technology used in this project makes them likely to resist the ageing process. However, the finishing details for window frames, interior partitions, public toilets and landscape water elements are likely to need different degrees of intervention, from regular maintenance to complete replacement.

h. Design features

The massing, volume and articulation of space are the strongest points in the design of the Olbia Social Centre. The curving of the main pathway and fragmentation of the mass humanizes the scale and gives ever-changing perspectives, shade and shadow during the different times of the day. The balance between outdoor and indoor places is perfect and well thought out.

The project's formal quality is enhanced by the slope of the roofs from both sides of the pathway towards the water channel at the centre.

The sensitive textural variations of the different building materials serve to enhance the scale and the aesthetic qualities of the project. In addition to the visual dimensions of the complex, the chiming clock and the running water add a sensual sound quality.

The project has enhanced the functional and experiential qualities of pedestrian circulation in the campus, and it succeeds in binding together the once scattered buildings of the university campus. In so doing it has become the campus's functional and visual hub.

The design idea was based on the flexibility of dividing and adapting most of the spaces according to a repetitive module. This idea allows for ease in changing the functions according to emerging needs. Given the site availability, the expandable system allows for possible growth to the north-west and the south-east if the need arises.

Simplicity was a feature that was consciously planned by the architect, so as to allow the positive interaction by and participation of users through the different stages of the project. This quality is set to ensure long-term viability.

The wooden furniture originally proposed by the architect was basic, elegant, traditional and fairly inexpensive. It was familiar since it is used in most local coffee shops of the area. The different earthy, sensitive colours of the chairs added an interesting additional quality.

In spite of its low prices, however, it is not widely used. Instead, plastic or bulky wooden furniture has been employed. From the owners' and shopkeepers' point of view this furniture is definitely easier to maintain, especially during the rainy season. In spite of the apparent beauty of the local furniture, the way it was made for this project was not sufficiently durable.

VII. Users

a. Description of those who use or benefit from the project

The project is designed for and used mainly by college students, who come from different income levels and socio-cultural profiles. It is also used by university teachers and a certain number of community members and school pupils.

b. Response to project by clients, users, community, etc.

The project was published in the *Architectural Year Book 1: Architecture in Turkey 2000*. Rectors of some other universities who have happened to visit the Olbia Social Centre have showed their admiration by declaring that they are thinking of planning similar projects on their campuses.

The place is almost constantly full of students from the campus and, to a lesser extent, teachers. An unmistakable feeling of enjoyment and relaxation is apparent in every visitor.

It is worth noting, in this respect, that the name Olbia, which is an old word for city, was chosen via a public vote. An inevitable assumption is that because of its very architecture, the project reminded people of old cities. In spite of the apparent freshness of the design, it has authentic features that had not been in use for a long time. The general public could identify themselves with the project's resemblance to old Antalya.

In my view the young people appear to be take the place for granted since they have never experienced anything else. The teaching staff, however, greatly appreciate the space for the intimate quality it gives, which allows them to have informal and relaxed relationships with their students. They feel that this has made a positive contribution to the learning environment. Teaching staff and administration alike are proud to have this complex, which is unique among Turkish universities.

VIII. Persons involved

a. Project personnel and their roles

Cengiz Bektas, the architect, has had the most significant influence on the philosophical basis of the project and its different aspects. The personality of the project is inseparable from the personality of the architect and his philosophy of life.

Bektas has had a long career in the realm of architectural education, philosophy, theory, experimentation and research. His earlier works demonstrate participatory approaches of different kinds and to different degrees, but in this project he added something new. He conceived his architecture in such a way that it would naturally grow with the people through time. First he allowed workers and craftsmen to put their own knowledge and methods to use during construction. He did not demolish or

redo any part, saying that in this way the architecture would become lovelier. This also allowed for a more continuous tradition of interaction between the people and the spaces during the project's life cycle. For Bektas, architecture is a tool and a method for life, not a goal in itself.

The client and owner is the rectorship of Mediterranean University. Out of its belief in, and trust for, the architect, it gave him full freedom during the design and construction phases.

CENKA Ltd is the company in charge of operating the complex. It paid the construction cost according to a BOT agreement with the university rectorship. Three years of successful operation have now passed from the nine years allotted to the company. Kemal Karaoglan is the director of the Olbia Social Centre, on behalf of CENKA company.

Atilla Turkoglu was the construction site engineer of the contracting company, Baki Yapi Malzemeleri Insaat Sanayi ve Ticaret Ltd Sti. When he knew that the Olbia project was designed and going to be supervised by Bektas, he sought to work on it in order to come in direct contact with the architect. He had learned about him from his writings, radio broadcasts and local architecture publications. Turkoglu described his experience with Bektas as having taught him not only about architecture but about life as well.

Plaques for important Turkish cultural figures were designed and made by Bihret Mavitan. They add a beautiful quality to the project in addition to their informal educational content.

Delila ElKerdany
May 2001