

Spaces for health: an overview

*From the temple
to the mall concept*

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This short paper discusses, in summary, aspects of planning and designing hospitals through time having in mind the possible analogies between an agora or the bazaar and the hospital (health care facility) and also the parallel route of Hospital & the development of the city through history.

Since the very first, most famous organized health care facilities of the ancient times found in Greece and Middle East are the temple of the God Asclepius (he was a doctor) (see fig02).

Through the 14th and 15th centuries until Renaissance hospitals are influenced by the architecture of the public buildings of the period and the Medieval temple.

During the 19th century, at 1853, the traditional ward “Nightingale” was designed. The facades of most hospitals influenced by it maintaining the neoclassic style (see fig03). In the 20th century, functional parameters such as friendly environment, quality in services supply, quality in architectural design became major in the creation of health care facilities volumes, either as blocks, village type or the type of the mall.

Today basic Design parameters are:

- MORPHOLOGY;
- VISUAL IMPACT;
- EXPANSION & FLEXIBILITY;
- CIRCULATION;
- SIGNS;

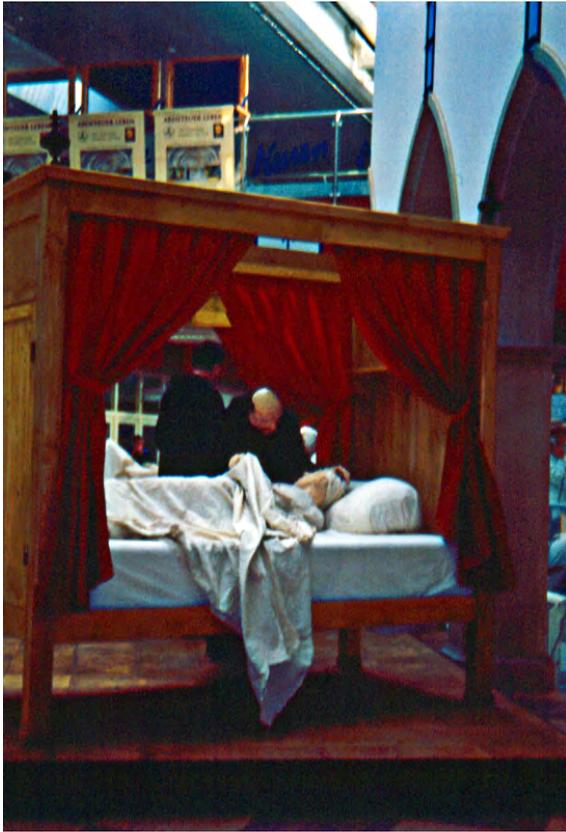


fig01 - Vienna teaching Hospital (personal archive).

- PUBLIC AREAS FOR LEASURE;
- FUNCTIONS;
- MATERIALS;
- CLIMATE / orientation etc.;
- SUPPLIES;
- HYGIENE.

e.g. External traffic network has to be "neat"
 "for patients and visitors to find easily their way to hospital and its departments.

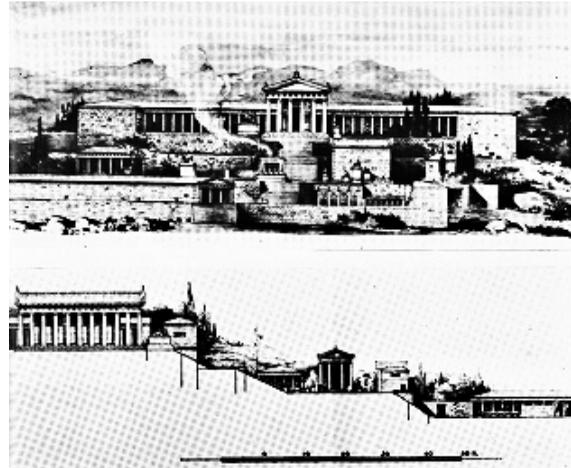


fig02 - Asclepeum, Kos, Greece.

Furthermore:

- Psychology of the user. For example in the model of the "open hospital" there are spaces familiar and of human scale, in contradiction with the high-tech model of today.
 Also the arts and the nature contribute to the use and quality of patient's space.
- Morphology has, also, to take in to consideration:
 - _ Smaller scale of the buildings;
 - _ Natural elements;
 - _ Organized road network in order to remind the familiar pictures from a route in the city.
- Expansion (horizontal or vertical) &
- Flexibility and expansion are extremely important factors and should take place without disturbing:

- _ everyday treatment;
 - _ research and;
 - _ teaching activities and;
 - _ ensure that a certain level of functioning of the hospital complex is maintained;
- Supplies & Disposal: a whole independent system “forms the circulation and nervous systems without which the hospital cannot function”.
 - Hygiene is a crucial factor in healthcare architecture.
 - In non-nosocomial areas the architecture of a contemporary health facility resembles more a well-designed hotel or a public building, rather than a traditional hospital.
- The interplay of carefully selected and processed materials has a direct effect on the morphology of such areas (materials can be used to address specific issues, such as sustainability and specialized facilities' requirements).



fig03 - Nightingale Ward.



fig04 - Krankenhaus, Aachen Weber& brand (personal archive).

Finally, recent trends include, more and more, advanced electro-mechanical, digital and robotic systems. “The case of Rikshospitalet University Hospital in Oslo designed by Svein Bergersen and Arrid Ottar is like a Mediterranean village road, with the hospital complex to be organised along a top lit main hospital road which ends in a set of staircases as it happens in a Mediterranean village where

It is clear that there will be a shift for more and absolute Sustainable health facilities in the future.

Patterns of care are changing. Most of the health care built environment is often so unsuitable for the ordinary people.

The provision of hospitals is highly regulated and the users have specific needs. Today we can rent hospital space for the office like or hotel like parts of the healing process.

But also the neighbourhood is a setting for care.

Since there is no substitute for expertise and experience the aim of workshops are to give a working knowledge of the area of healing environments to students of architecture.

The terms 'healing' & 'therapeutic' are complicated and extremely broad and refer to procedures that support the 'well-being'.

Aspects as "Design got right can transform people's lives," or "Design got wrong can be just a catastrophe" are well accepted today apart from architects but also from politicians and the public.

During the 1950s new ideas were developed to change the face of health care buildings in order to house the new and rapidly changing medical technology but much more focused on the user's needs.

Patient focused design became and still is the basic principle for planning and design health care buildings with an attempt to involve health care personnel in the design of their own hospitals.

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