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Desert oasis

From its site composition to outdoor courtyards, Iraq's new Shatt Al-Arab Hospital will provide plenty of relief from the desert sun

By Jennifer Kovacs Silvis

Construction of the new Shatt Al-Arab Hospital will bring the first modern hospital to the desert town of Basra, Iraq. Funded by the Republic of Iraq's Ministry of Health as part of a restructuring program, the project broke ground in 2013 and completion is targeted for 2015.

Designed by HAS Architects Ltd. (Istanbul, Turkey) and constructed by Aswar Loubnan (Lebanon), the campus is influenced largely by its site, with factors such as orientation and shape determined by the ability to provide natural light and air movement while preventing heat gain and dust. Patient wings are south-facing, with sun-shading elements used on the patient buildings' and clinics' facades, while the siting of a treatment building on the campus was used to block wind.

Plenty of outdoor courtyards are designed to provide both ventilation and green spaces, with additional recreational areas created at the entrance to the site and terraces dedicated to staff.

Spanning horizontally rather than vertically, the 122-bed hospital, as well as a planned future expansion, includes just three floors.

However, to deter the perception of the building as imposing, a main street was designed between the service and patient areas, creating a double-height corridor off of which gift shops, a cafeteria, and waiting areas are planned.

Responding to the culture of the region, the design provides Western-style patient care but within the context of separate patient wings dedicated to men and women. High security requirements also influenced planning, with the boundary of the campus protected by walls able to withstand 10kg of force in the case of a bombing.

Expansion plans include a new inpatient building and treatment block that can be placed adjacent to those currently under construction. **HCD**

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Do you have a new project on the boards? Email Jennifer Kovacs Silvis at jsilvis@vendomegrp.com for details on how to take part in First Look.



The design for Shatt Al-Arab Hospital includes a campus showcasing plants, flowers, water, and other nature elements to reduce patient anxiety and provide outdoor spaces for visitors and staff, as well.