

Clermont-Ferrand / 2010

Estaing Teaching Hospital (CHU) in Clermont-Ferrand

Press Release

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In 2004 Groupe-6 won the public commission to build the new Estaing Teaching Hospital in Clermont-Ferrand. Part of the French government's 2007 hospital modernisation plan, the new hospital entered service in 2010. A look back on a standard-setting project combining hospital innovation and urban regeneration.

With a surface area of 70,000 sq m and a capacity of 565 beds, Estaing Hospital is more than just a hospital : it is an urban regeneration project, with a site and structure that represent a real opportunity for Clermont-Ferrand to develop outside its current boundaries.

Replacing the old 18th century hospital in the Clermont-Ferrand city centre, Estaing teaching hospital is located on the site of a former Michelin factory. Neatly integrated into the city at its « limits », in a rapidly changing neighbourhood, the new Estaing teaching hospital is a symbol of urban regeneration. It has become the anchor point for a new city district intended to become a hub for healthcare services.

A hospital to define the urban landscape

A city within the city, and the starting point for a new neighbourhood, Estaing CHU has from the outset had a bold, prestigious identity, that of a hospital that defines its urban landscape : with its monumental entry concourse, the building's main entrance is a landmark in the neighbourhood. On the scale of a work of art, its canopy serves as a beacon and clearly asserts both the hospital's presence in the life of the city and its public, social dimension. A real technical feat, it is made up of five pillars supporting a 1,500 sq m metal « sail ».

The building sits is an extension of this concourse, and is laid out horizontally, in harmony with the existing block structure of the city and, at 15 metres in height, its skyline. In places it also adopts the historic footprint of the town of Montferrand, which adjoins the plot. Highlighting the existing and planned street alignments, it hints at the quality of the future thoroughfares.

The layout and structural balance of the new hospital buildings are therefore very much in keeping with an urban typology and vocabulary. Within Estaing hospital, spaces are referred to as squares, courtyards, streets and alleyways. The hospital is in the city and integrated with it. Its internal street, a 250-metre-long planted avenue dotted with rest and reading areas, is treated as a semi-public, pedestrianised shopping space, like any other city street.

« Horizontal hospital »: a bright, linear layout around a central street

Estaing teaching hospital is formed of a 250-metre-long internal street running off a circular plaza at its south-western corner, surrounded by a 70,000 sq m block with a comb-like layout. A facility of monumental dimensions, it nonetheless manages to create a soothing, calm atmosphere. Its linear design vocabulary and simple, coherent materials, including metal, glass, concrete, coloured resin, and basalt evoking the Auvergne mountains, make it accessible and define the building's identity. The materials, colours and spacious interiors give Estaing CHU a refined feel.

The monumental space is punctuated by a series of breaks which provide breathing spaces and frame the surrounding landscape, while the transparent surfaces magnify the comings and goings and general life of the site.

The ground floor façades, behind which sit the outpatient facilities (consultations and diagnostics), are made of profiled translucent glass panels which alternate with strips of clear glass, bathing the rooms in light and opening up views of the city; the upper floors, which house the accommodation blocks, have a more domestic feel, with private, protected spaces offering a series of framed views of the city.

Inside, the spaces offer calm : a bright, serene and protected atmosphere which prioritises natural light. The reception area benefits from a full-height space which opens out on to the entrance

concourse and is lit by zenithal light; the space guides your gaze to the single-moulded resin reception desk, which rises directly from the floor. The central street, a real nave-like 13-metre-high space, channels light into the centre of the building. The street furniture and landscaping, including ornamental gardens, precious pockets of green space, provide a bright, light environment. Panoramic lifts add an extra breathing space. The corridors of the accommodation blocks are dotted with outlooks over the city, which are like open terraces. Everything is designed to make users comfortable and take the stress out of the hospital experience : the central street, where all the interactions happen, includes the outpatient clinics, shops, cultural activities, a place of worship, and more.

« Landmark hospital »: an accessible hospital that is easy to navigate and plays a full part in city life

Mindful of the need to fit in with the urban landscape and the scale of the surrounding built environment, Estaing CHU rose to the challenge of deploying, over three above-ground storeys and in buildings only 15 metres in height, a hub layout with layered facilities:

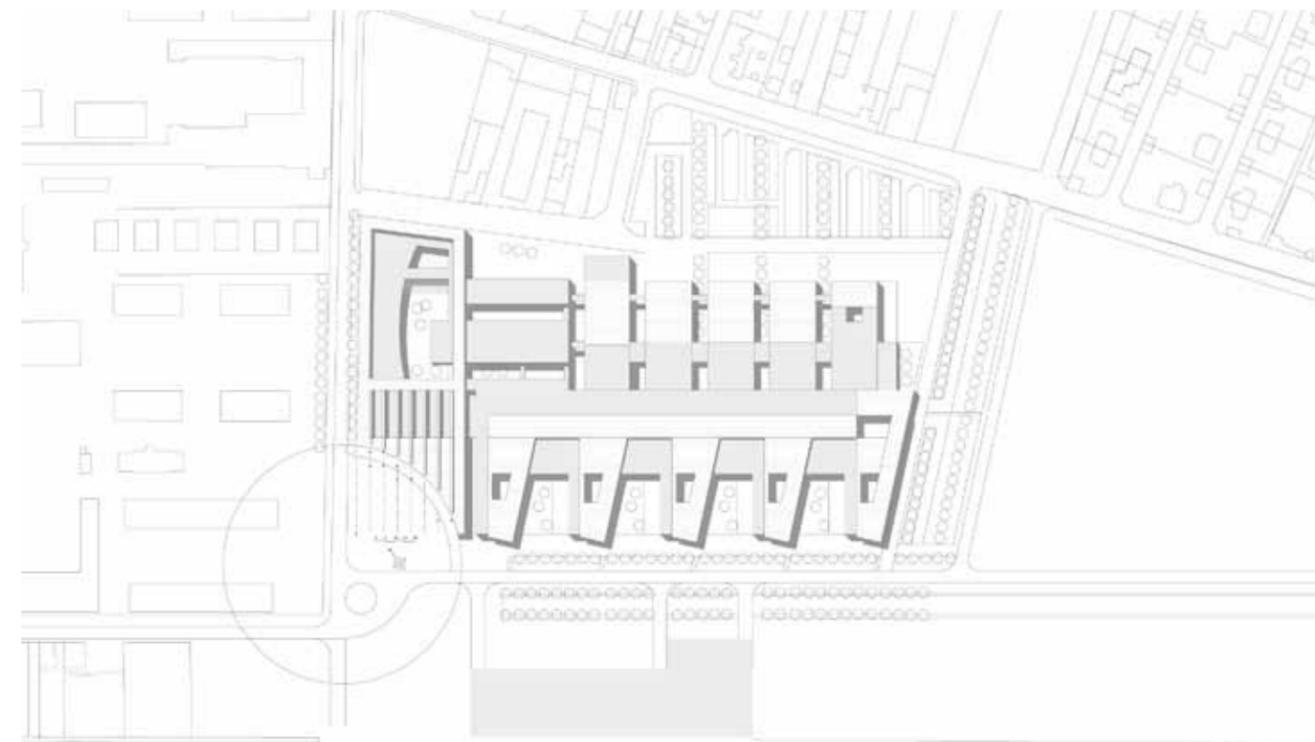
- The whole complex is made up of three sectors : the adult sector to the south of the internal street, with accommodation areas in a comb-like layout; the women and children's sector to the west, laid out around a private patio and a children's garden; and the clinical support block to the north.
- Four levels: the lower ground floor is home to logistics ; reception, public spaces and all functions that regularly engage with city life are located on the ground floor; the two upper floors are home to the clinical support block and accommodation blocks.

The decision to use a horizontal layout increases efficiency and ensures simple, direct links between the different departments: users' routes through the hospital are graduated, easy to understand and clearly signposted. From the lobby, the thoroughfares lead, on one side, to the women and children's block, and on the other to the adult sector around the central street; once on the central street, each department is served by a designated pick-up point. Footbridges over the internal street make it easy to access the accommodation blocks. Medical traffic and the general public are naturally and completely separated : « visitors and consultants » are confined to the ground floor ; « medical staff and trolley-borne patients » use a dedicated thoroughfare running the length of the clinical support block.

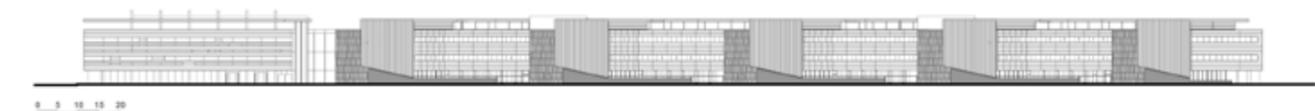
A flexible, modular building constructed in record time

With an average lifespan of around 40 years, healthcare establishments need to be flexible, upgradeable and economically efficient spaces. Estaing teaching hospital boasts key assets that ensure performance and upgradeability :

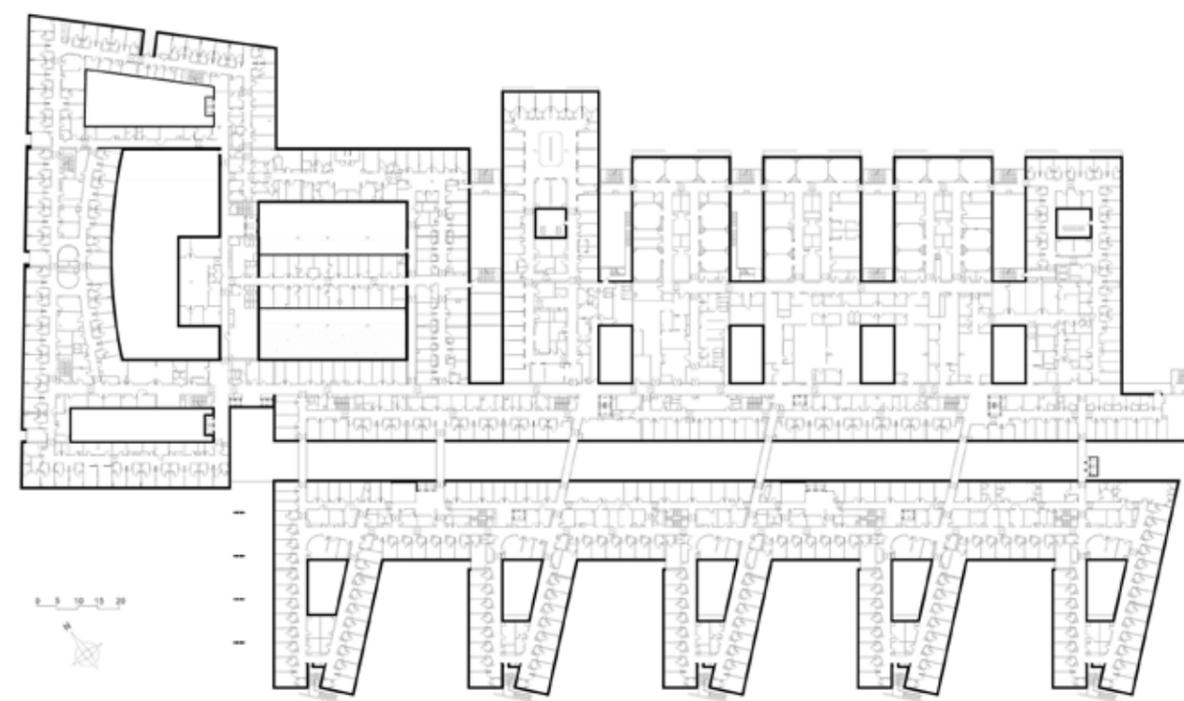
- The central street plays the role of buffer zone and helps to optimise energy efficiency : kept at 16°C in winter, it acts as a heat regulator by increasing the inertia of the building and minimises the effects of outside temperature changes.
- Its supporting structure, the clustering of fixed points (structural columns, lifts and stairwells), the design of the façades, the 4.20 m ceiling heights and the large clinical support blocks mean that the layout of the accommodation facilities is upgradeable in terms of both surface area (potential to add over 20% surface area) and function (rapid extension potential for the theatre and clinical support blocks).
- The building phase was streamlined by rationalising construction elements, limiting complex architectural features and opting for a horizontal layout. It took five and a half years to complete the surveying and construction work, a record for a project of this size.



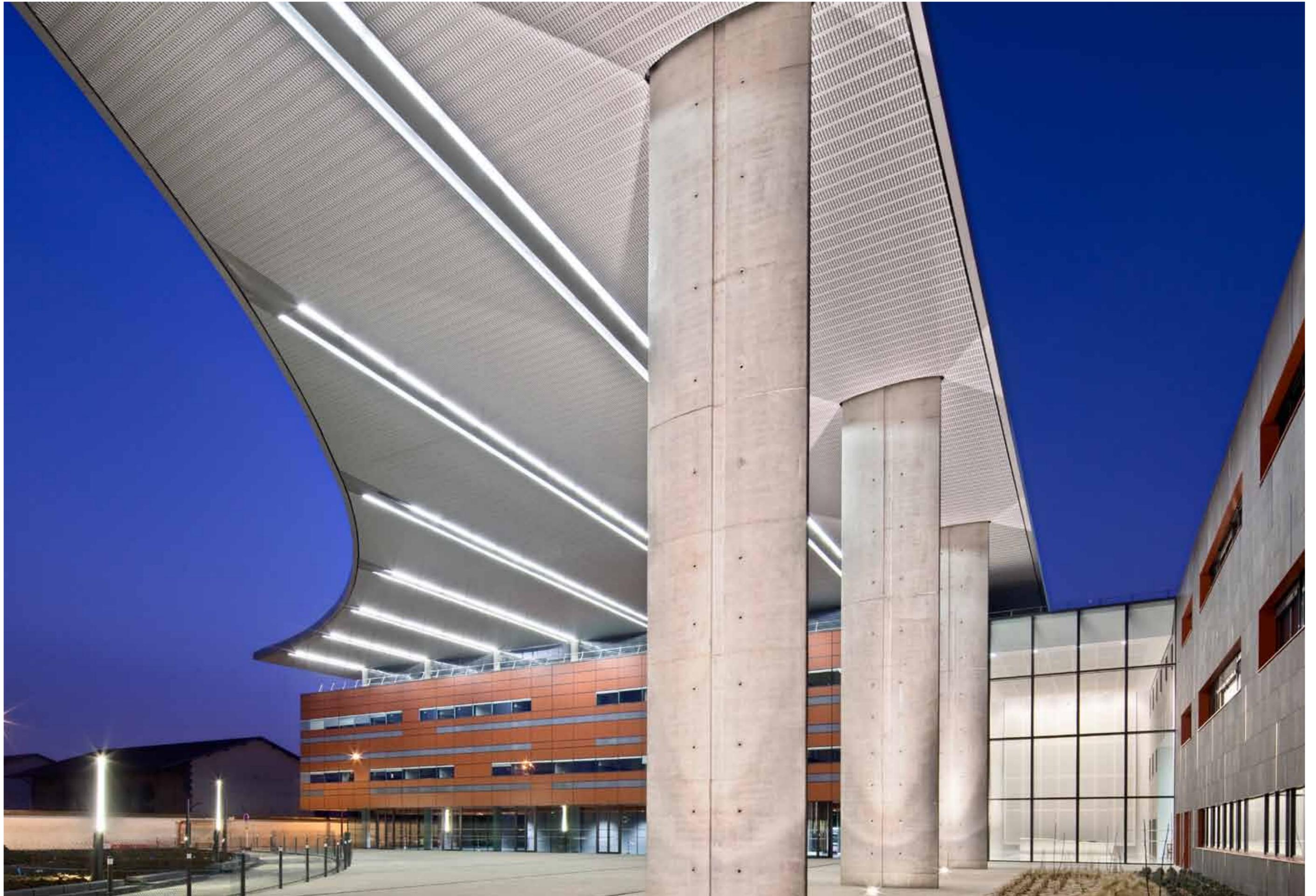
Site plan

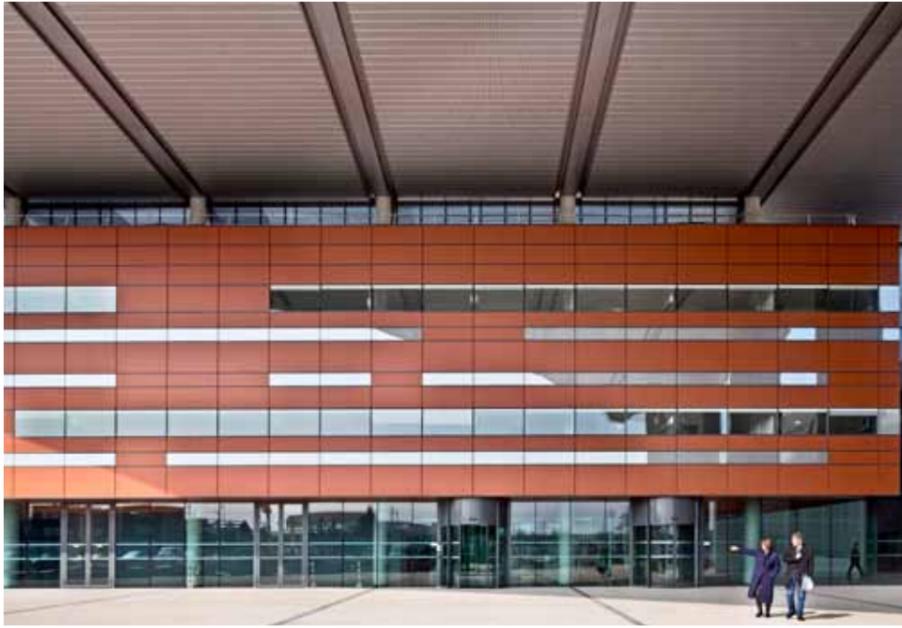


South elevation

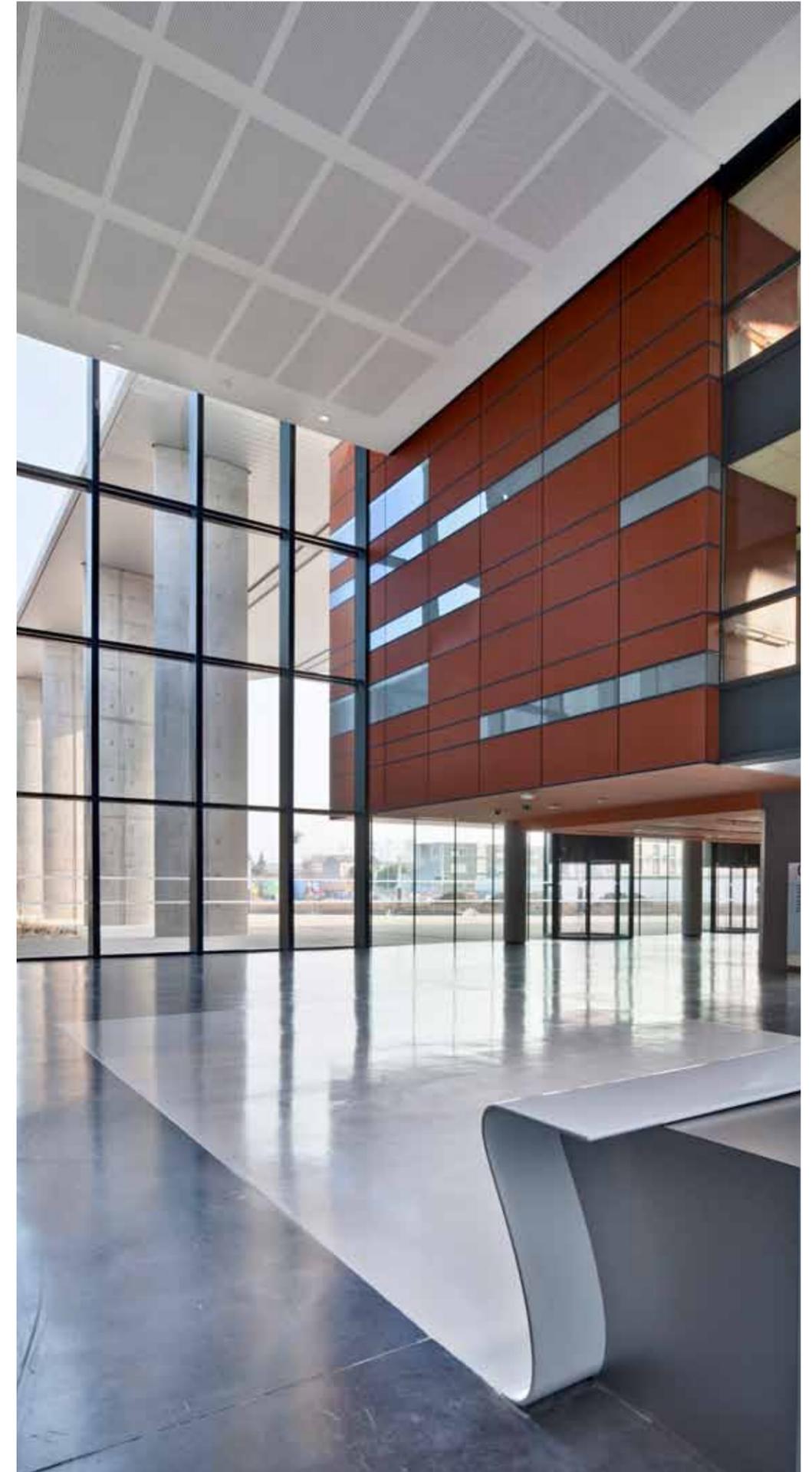


First floor : Accommodation

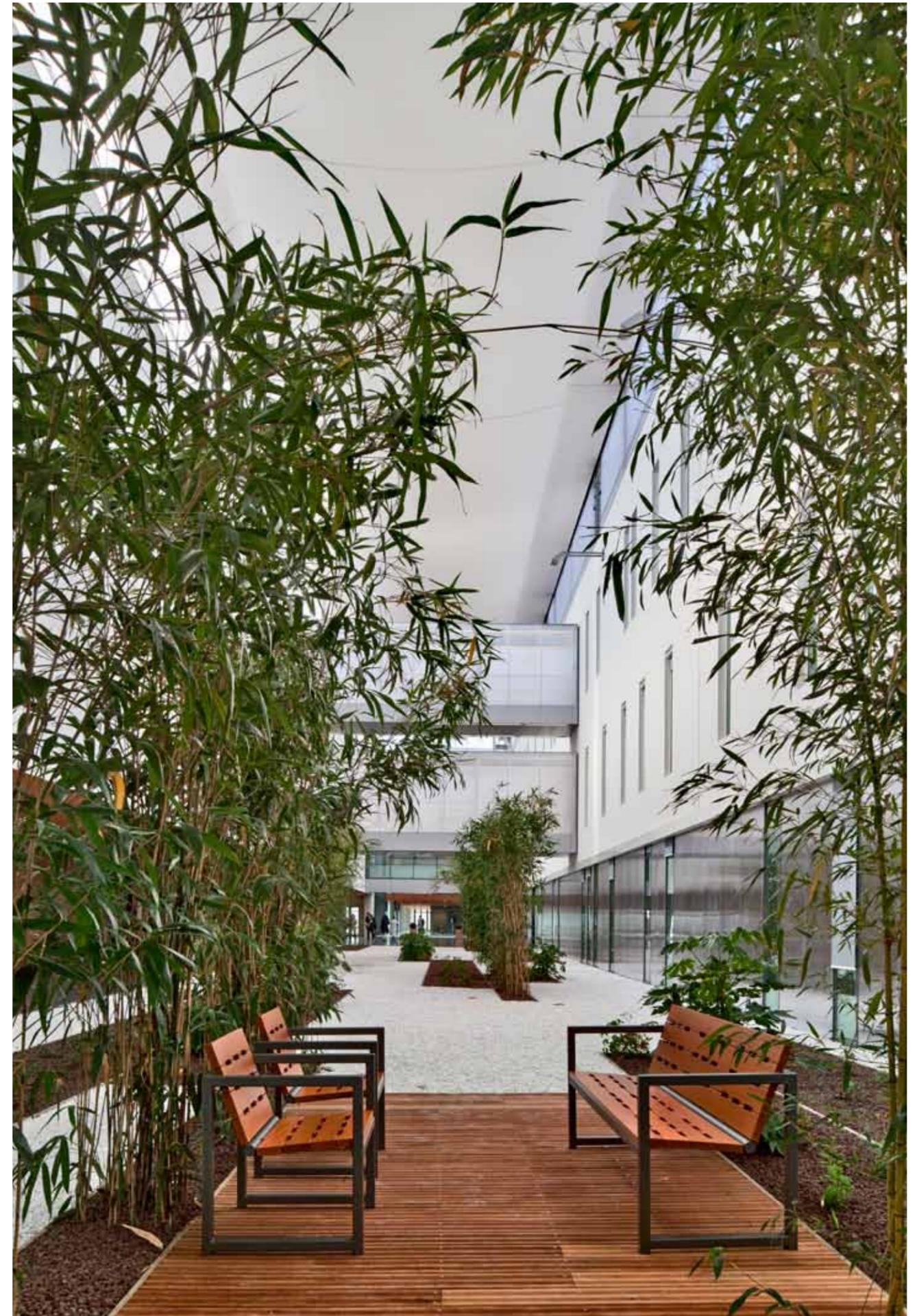
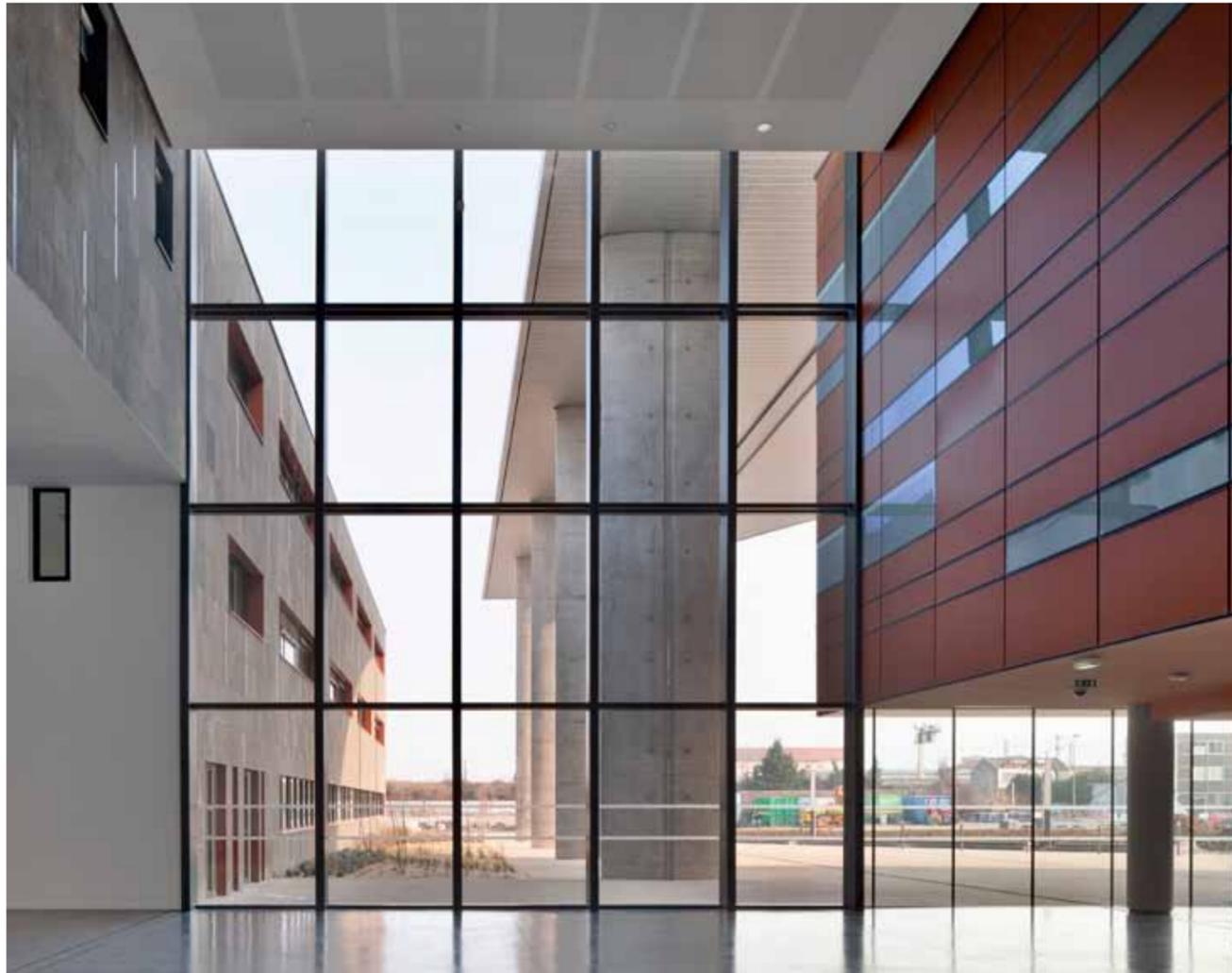




The lobby of Estaing CHU offers expansive views of the entrance concourse. A resin layer rises from the floor to the reception desk, as if inviting visitors.



The wide, bright internal street has an urban feel: planted waiting areas with street furniture provide generous breathing spaces. Highlighting the great height of the « nave », along its length it is interspersed with walkways that identify the different departments..







Informations

Project : Clermont-Ferrand Teaching Hospital (CHUE)

Site : Clermont-Ferrand

Client : CHU Clermont-Ferrand

Project manager : AsCoRéal, Limonest

Team : Groupe-6 architectes, lead consultant (Michel Rafin, Yves Pervier, Antoine Buisseret)

Engineering : Jacobs France

Quantity surveyor : Groupe-6

Competition : 2004 (winner)

Delivery : October 2009, public opening March 2010

Net surface area : 70,000 m²

Number of beds : 565

Cost : € 138.5 M (November 2007 value)

Photos : © architecture groupe-6 Luc Boegly

Groupe-6, a team of architects covering a range of disciplines

France's 3rd leading architectural agency, with some 180 employees from 15 different nationalities, Groupe-6 is a multi-disciplinary structure made up of architects, urban planners, interior designers, landscape designers and economists.

For 30 years now, Groupe-6 has been designing complex, large-scale projects that fall in line with their flawless aesthetic approach and optimal functionality, keeping within the budget and deadlines given.

Groupe-6 is a flexible, multi-disciplinary architectural agency, which can adapt to the wide range of requests it receives from its clients and contractors. It has expertise in sectors of activity ranging from business-related urban planning, hospital design, new technologies, research and education, sport and leisure, culture, and finally, urban planning.

In the interests of its client and the end project, Groupe-6 ensures it works with the world's best specialists and opens its teams up to expertise from outside the agency, in the areas of engineering, landscaping, stage design, lighting, acoustics, and more. The agency's teams are run by experienced project leaders able to tackle complex and demanding programs.

Groupe-6 is committed to designing projects that respond to the issues of sustainable development and eco-responsibility. The agency pays particular attention to the quality and sustainability of its architecture and, with respect to its constructions, takes a preventive approach to the ecological and energy-related issues.

For over 10 years, Groupe-6 has been working overseas, accompanying its clients in their real estates ventures and exporting its savoir-faire. Already involved in projects in Europe, the Ukraine, the Middle-East and the Magreb, Groupe-6 competes in the most dynamic geographical areas.

Certified ISO 9001 in 2009, Groupe-6 aims for excellence in what it does, focusing in particular on four key values :

- Consider its clients as real partners, offering permanent, trusting and constructive dialogue about their projects. Respect, attentiveness and dedication are all highly valued by the agency.
- Invest in bold projects that push the agency to be creative, thorough and practical. Groupe-6 values its clients projects, giving them a privileged place among its concerns.
- Ensure a collective mode of operating, striking the right balance between innovation, consultation, methodology, and decision-making priorities.
- Provide clients with architectural solutions that offer the best compromise between functional requirements, flexibility and sustainability: essential conditions for the quality and durability of its projects.

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