

Press release

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Construction begins on state-of-the-heart hospital in Cairo

Construction on the Magdi Yacoub Global Heart Centre Cairo has begun. It is the newest outpost of the Aswan Heart Centre founded by renowned Egyptian surgeon Sir Magdi Yacoub and provides free state-of-the-art treatment for the people of Egypt and beyond, in particular those in sub-Saharan Africa. The design of the 300-bed hospital responds to the needs of patients, their families and the staff that care for them, and is set within a lush, verdant landscape and a calming lake that seeks to optimise the overall patient experience and decrease recovery times.

Norman Foster, Founder and Executive Chairman, Foster + Partners said, "New Aswan Heart Centre offers state-of-the-art, free-of-charge medical services to the Egyptian people, particularly the underprivileged. Lush and verdant, this oasis of paths and parks promotes wellbeing. With its passive design strategy, it is an exemplar of sustainability, responding to the needs of patients and to its locale. We are delighted to be working with Sir Magdi Yacoub and his foundation for such a noble cause."

Sir Magdi Yacoub commented: "Cardiovascular disease is currently the most important cause of disability and death with 80 per cent of the burden affecting low- and middle-income countries. This demands urgent action with emphasis on quality and excellence at every level. The new Global Heart Centre at the foot of the Pyramids designed by Lord Foster and Foster + Partners exemplifies the ultimate facilities capable of achieving the

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objectives of the Magdi Yacoub Foundation, in terms of care, training and Research, at the highest level, directed at people , who need it the most. We are all proud to be part of this important and meaningful partnership.”

With striking views of the Pyramids of Giza, the site for the new hospital borders the prestigious Zewail City of Science and Technology, forming part of an integrated health and medical research zone. The main access to the site is from the south through a pedestrian plaza with an intimate shaded route that leads to a welcoming canopy that marks the entrance. The ground floor comprises comprehensive diagnosis and treatment facilities, including an accident and emergency department, a large outpatient clinic and rehabilitative departments. Several courtyards bring natural light into the deep plan building, while also aiding orientation. Supporting the innovations of the centre, the surgical department and intensive care units are co-located. This minimises the distance between ‘bed and bench’, maximising collaboration between researchers and caregivers working to deliver advanced, innovative care.

On the first floor, each of the eight intensive care units is designed to optimise recovery, with privacy and natural daylight. Each patient room on this level is oriented so that patients benefit from landscaped views and the newly formed lake on the northern edge. The state-of-the-art prefabricated operating theatres bring the best available care, with carefully planned flows to ensure high clinical safety standards. The hospital also features support spaces for families to stay while the patients recuperate as well as classrooms and other educational spaces for medical students to engage within an active learning environment. The design uses soft and warm colours throughout the interior, influenced by the psychology of colours and the Egyptian history.

A green terrace on the second floor – inspired by the local traditions of being outdoors

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during the cooler parts of the day – provides a vital break-out space for the staff and visitors. The open terrace is interspersed with complementary built spaces containing a large staff canteen, children’s nursery and other collaborative meeting spaces for staff to share ideas. A series of single and shared patient rooms on the upper floors – each with expansive views of the surrounding lake and landscape – are sheltered by sculptural shell-like roof structures.

Throughout there is a focus on natural light, greenery and views out, creating an environment that supports wellbeing. Rich, native flora has been introduced to the site, creating a ring of green interwoven with pedestrian paths and quiet contemplative spaces.

Nigel Dancey, Head of Studio, Foster + Partners, said: “This is a special project that focusses on giving the best care to the patients and offering them the best natural setting to recover in. It brings together the latest research on biophilia and the positive impact of nature in clinical settings with our pioneering work on collaborative working environments that allow healthcare professionals to give the best care.”