

GOVERNOR GENERAL'S MEDAL WINNER

## DELEGATION OF THE ISMAILI IMAMAT



**PROJECT** THE DELEGATION OF THE ISMAILI IMAMAT, OTTAWA, ONTARIO  
**ARCHITECTS** MAKI AND ASSOCIATES I MORIYAMA & TESHIMA ARCHITECTS  
**PHOTOS** TOM ARBAN

The Delegation of the Ismaili Imamat in Ottawa (Delegation Building) is a formal and symbolic representational building for the Ismaili Imamat in Canada and for the non-denominational, philanthropic and development agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network. An open and secular facility, the Delegation Building is a sanctuary for peaceful quiet diplomacy, informed by a commitment to global pluralism and to the development of civil societies. The building powerfully symbolizes this important mission through its architectural "bridging of dichotomies" such as modernity + tradition, light + dark, indoor + outdoor, west + east.

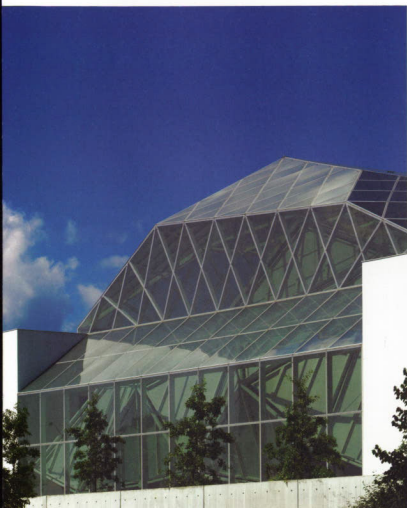
Contained within a simple rectilinear footprint (43.5 metres wide, 87 metres long, resting on a podium of black granite), the building plan is configured as a "ring" of program enclosing two central symbolic spaces—a crystal-inspired domed atrium and an open-air interior courtyard. The atrium is located to the west and is accessible from the ceremonial entrance on Sussex Drive, while the modern four-season courtyard—adapted from the traditional *Chahar Bagh*, a Persian-Islamic walled garden—is located to the east.

The atrium is inspired by natural stone crystals, traditional dome construction and Islamic geometries, and creates a highly distinctive and visible landmark. The unique geometry of the atrium animates the interior

central hall and gathering space with an enchanting interplay of light and shadow. The quality of light within the hall is enhanced by virtue of a stunning *jali* screen composed of 180 custom-cast aluminum panels. The panel pattern—a double layer of repeating hexagons—evokes the screens of carved marble and wood that filter light and views in traditional Islamic architecture. Floating between the glass dome structure and the *jali* screen is a shading layer composed of triangular frames covered with woven glass-fibre meshing that gently transforms the quality of light filtering through. An intricately patterned floor of Canadian maple (49 geometric squares in reference to the 49th Imam) lends additional warmth and a domestic note of welcome.

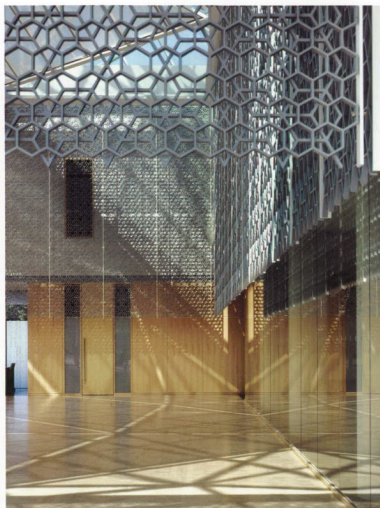
Symbolically, crystals represent spiritual peace and healing. The powerful yet modest design of the atrium and its delicate patterns of light and shadow evoke in visitors a profound sense of spiritual peace and optimism. The primacy of light and the interplay of contrasting opacity and translucency is a strong theme of this work. Clad primarily in glass with varying degrees of transparency, translucency and opacity, the building achieves a dynamic visual effect. Crystallized glass panels (*Neopariés*)—a unique building material that gives the glass a soft opaque colour and a smooth marble-like finish almost porcelain in its quality and beauty—comprise the primary façades.

Like the natural beauty of a rock crystal that is a wonder to behold, it is hoped that the Delegation Building will be a source of optimism, fascination and enlightenment for all.



**Jury:** This is a significant addition to Ottawa's repertoire of diplomatic buildings and puts Canadian architecture firmly on the world stage. Impressively monumental in scale, the project combines a powerful civic presence with a remarkable level of sophistication. Its integration of traditional Islamic motifs such as specially crafted screens and a lush courtyard garden is choreographed with assurance and sensitivity, bringing the building wonderfully to life as a delicate and sensual piece of architecture, while the quality of materials and detailing is outstanding. **CA**

**CLIENT** HWAA (SUSSEX DRIVE) LIMITED  
**ARCHITECT TEAM** HWAA AND ASSOCIATES, RUMKHO MAJI, GARY KAWENOTO, KOTA KAWASAKI, TATSUYO WAKABAYASHI, SAO KODA, KAMOTO CHAI, MORIYAMA & TESHIMA ARCHITECTS, TED TESHIMA, DAMALD NASH, NORMAN JENNINGS, PO MA, LOUIS JORIE, EMMANUELE VAN RUTTEN, AMANDA GIBERT, RONEN BAUER, JOHN BAILEY, SHAWN DESBRES, ROY GILL, JOHN INOUE, AJON MORIYAMA, FARHAD RAHBARI, HANY RIDWALA, SUGANA SAID, DIAS SAOUD, CHRIS YEH  
**PLANNING TEAM** MORIYAMA & TESHIMA PLANNERS (DREW WENSELEY, TARA MCCARTHY, ERIC KLAVER)  
**STRUCTURAL** MICHOVI YOKES  
**MECHANICAL** THE MITCHELL PARTNERSHIP  
**ELECTRICAL** VALVEY & BANANI  
**LANDSCAPE** MORIYAMA & TESHIMA PLANNERS  
**INTERIORS** HWAA AND ASSOCIATES IN COLLABORATION WITH MORIYAMA & TESHIMA ARCHITECTS  
**CONTRACTOR** PCL CONSTRUCTORS CANADA INC.  
**LIGHTING** LUNARINE POWASLUK DESIGN INC.  
**ACOUSTICAL** AERACOUSTICS ENGINEERING LTD.  
**FOOD SERVICE DESIGN** NET  
**CODE** IBCB KUBES  
**COSTING** CURRAN WOODCOCK BENDERMAN ROSS INC.  
**ARCHITECTURAL SPECIFICATIONS** DOL CONSULTING SERVICES  
**PLANNING** LLOYD PHILIP & ASSOCIATES LTD.  
**TRAFFIC AND CIVIL** ZUCAN CORPORATION  
**MICROCLIMATE, WIND AND SNOW** ROWAN WILLIAMS DAVIS AND IRWIN INC. (RWID)  
**ENVIRONMENTAL AND GEOTECHNICAL** GOLDER ASSOCIATES LTD.  
**AUDIO/VISUAL ENGINEERING** HARMONICS  
**AREA** 171,641 M<sup>2</sup>  
**BUDGET** \$54 M  
**COMPLETION** NOVEMBER 2008



**OPPOSITE TOP** THE ELEGANT FORMAL ENTRY TO THE BUILDING, VIEWED FROM SUSSEX DRIVE. **TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT** THE ICONIC CRYSTAL-LIKE GLASS ROOF OVER THE CENTRAL ATRIUM; THE CUSTOM-DESIGNED AND FABRICATED ALUMINUM LATTICEWORK OF THE JAU SCREEN. **ABOVE** THE INTERIOR COURTYARD GARDEN BECKONS DESPITE ITS FORMALITY.