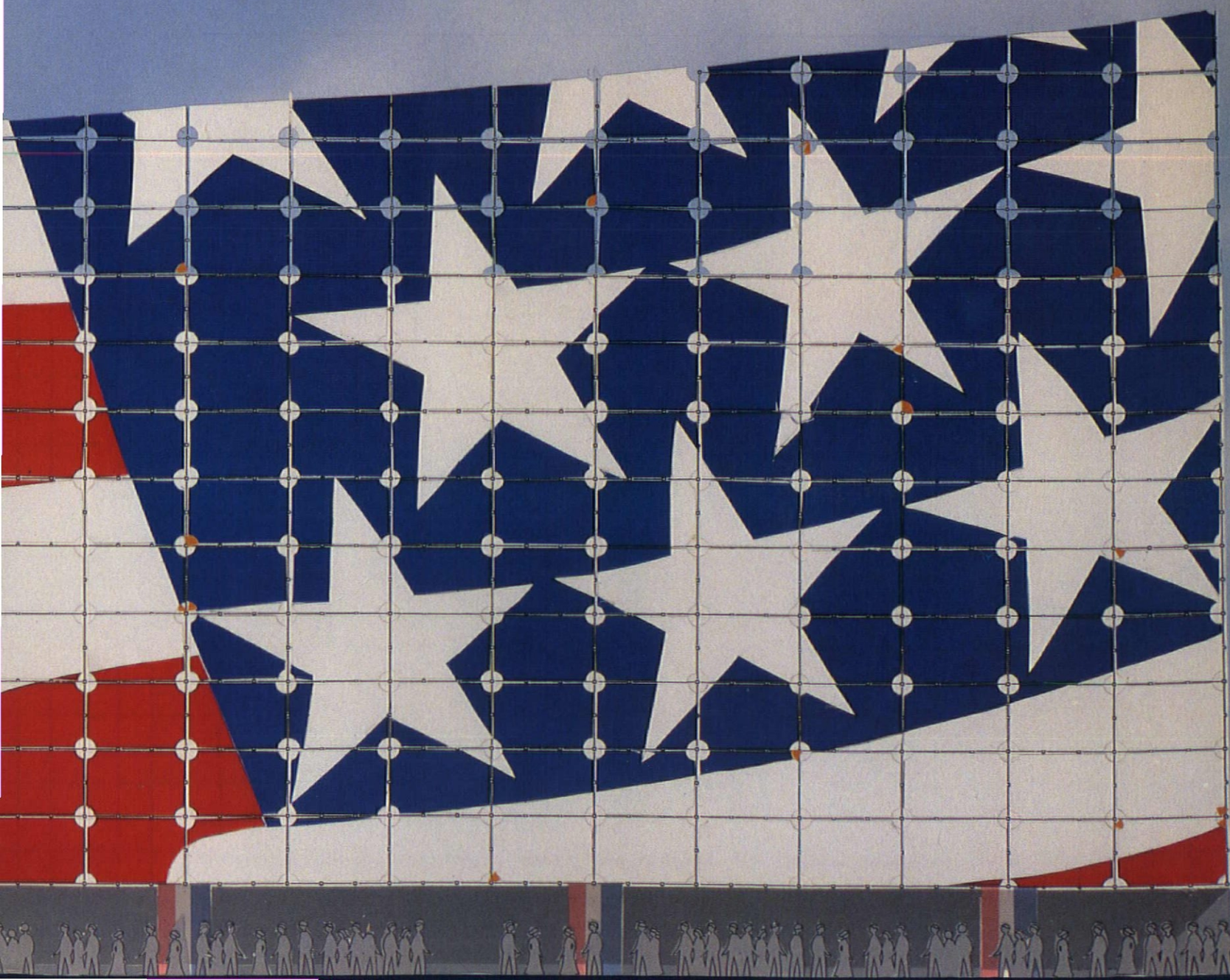
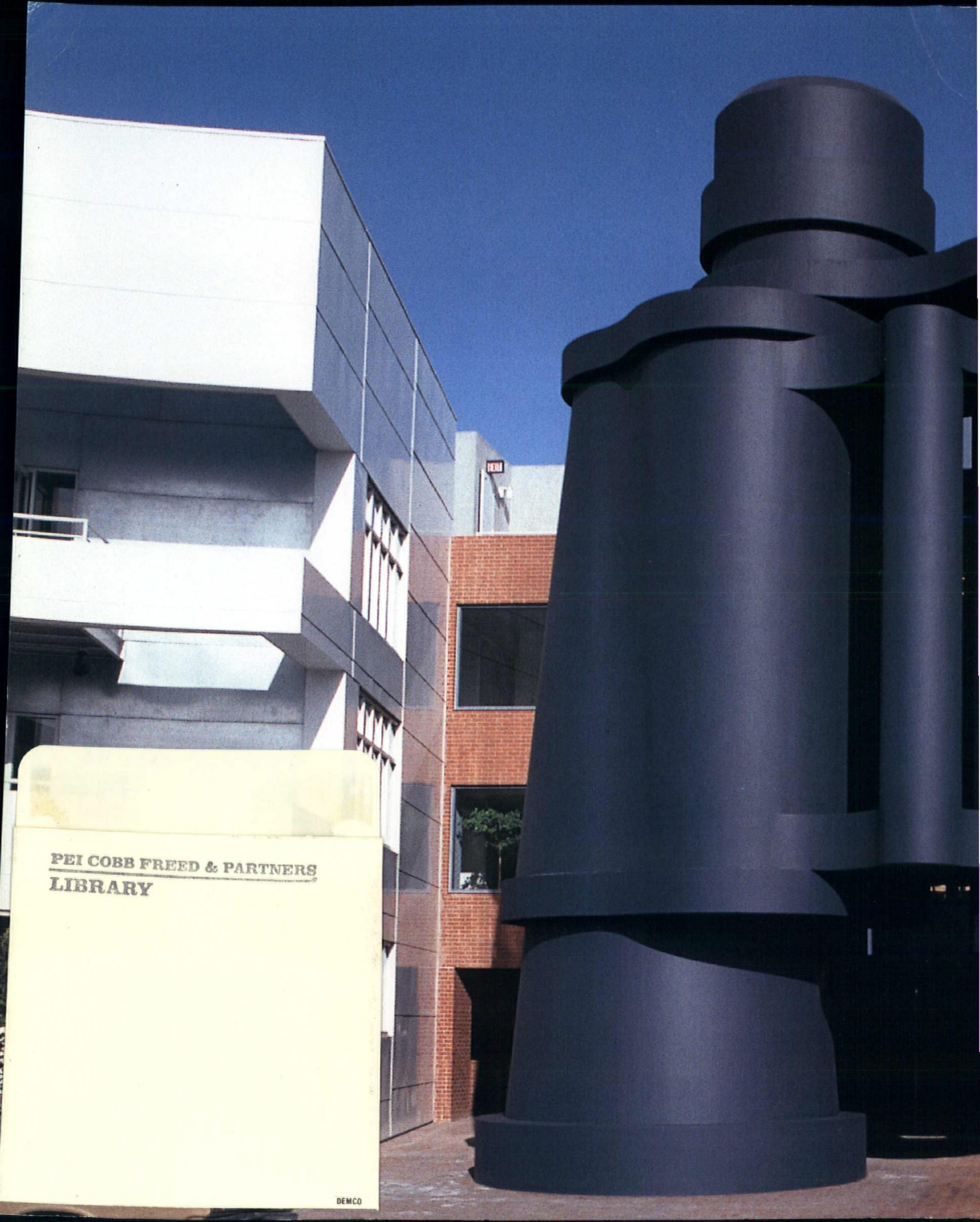
ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN
Vol 62 No 7/8 July-August 1992

POP ARCHITECTURE

A SOPHISTICATED INTERPRETATION OF POPULAR CULTURE?





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ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN
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Annual Rate: UK only £55.00, World DM 178, USA $99.50.
Student rates: UK only £45.00, World DM 144, USA $89.00.
Individual issues: £9.95/DM 32.50/US$19.95 plus £1.50/US$3.00 per issue ordered for p&p. Printed in Singapore.
[ISSN: 0003-8504]

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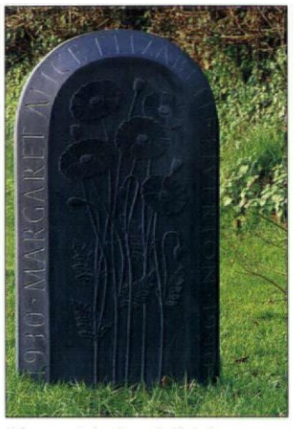

'Memorials by Artists' memorial at Carhampton Churchyard, Dunster, Somerset

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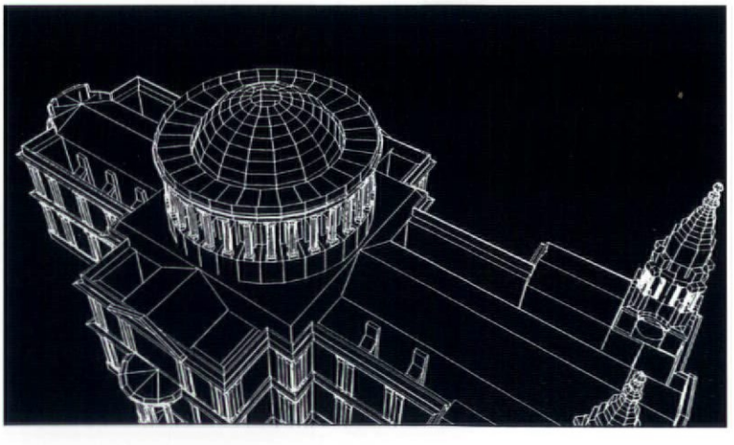
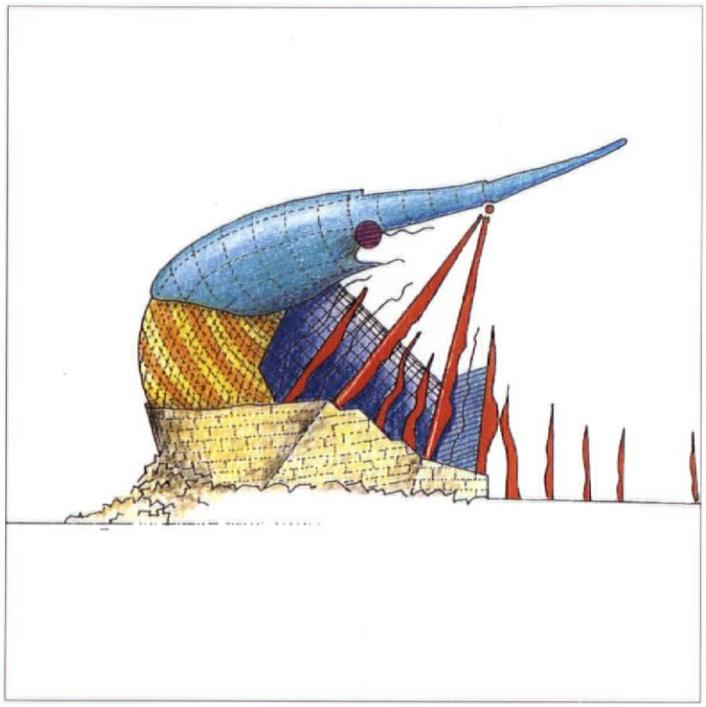
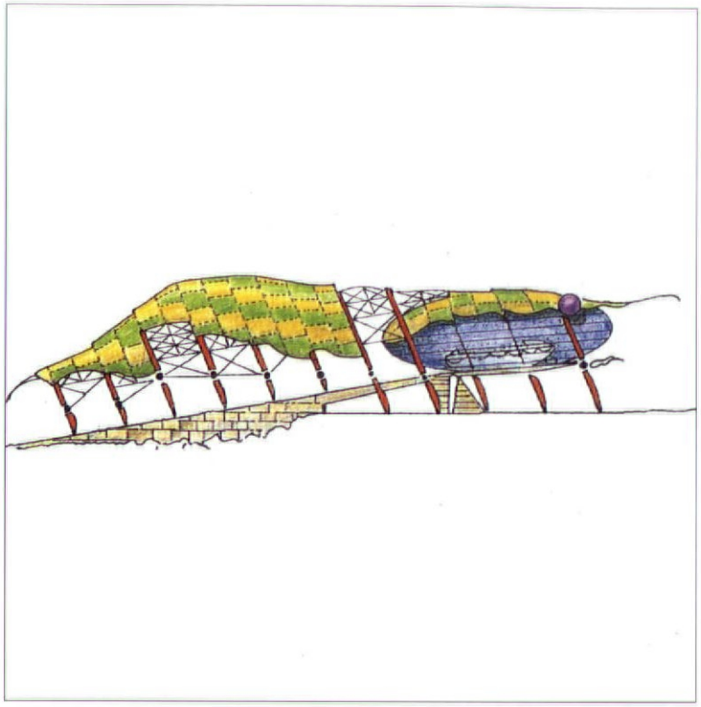
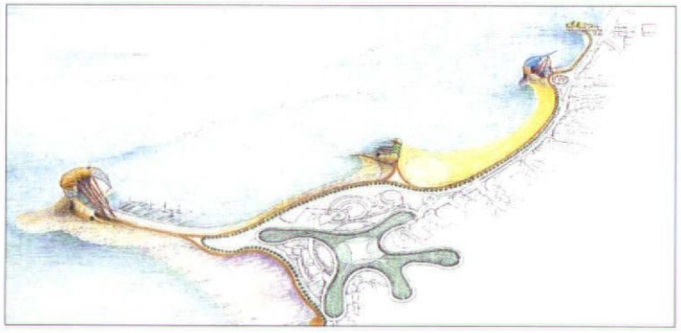
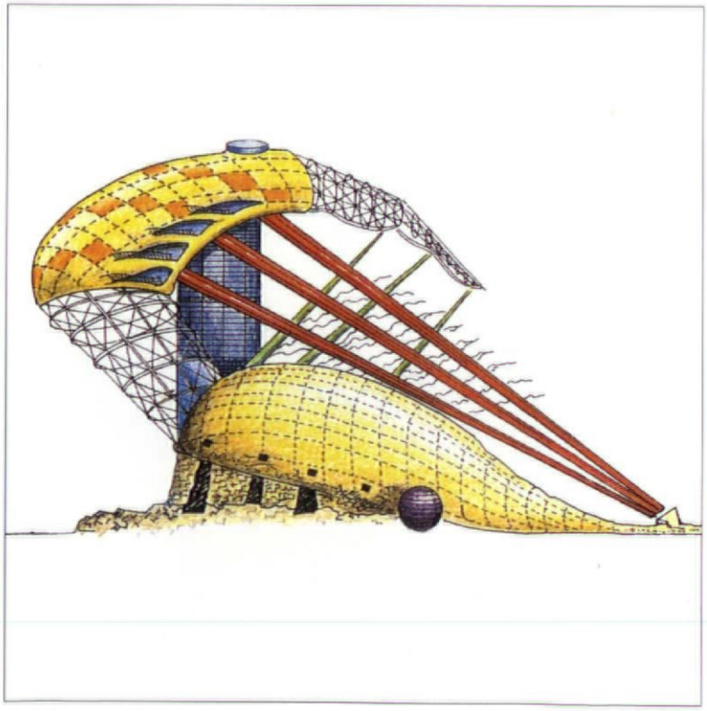


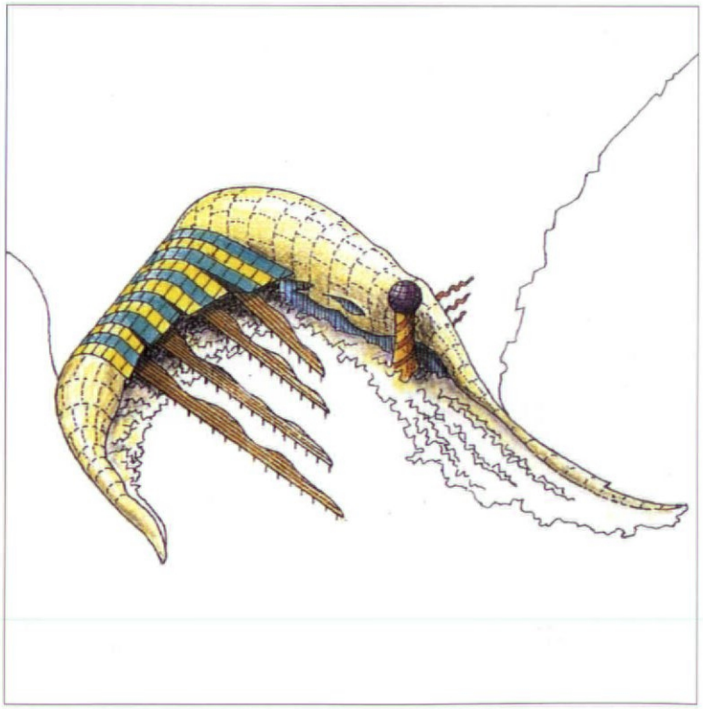
Computer constructed drawing of inner dome of St Paul's Cathedral











ABOVE & BELOW: Birds, Portchmouth and Russum, Theatre, Lifeboat Station, Marina and Amusement Arcade 'Shrimps' designs for Morecambe Bay, with Morecambe Seafront in the centre

THE LUCINDA LAMBTON DIARY

The Shrimps at Morecambe Bay

When a child, I was spun into a fever of excitement every Thursday morning with the arrival of two comics, *Rainbow* and *Playbox*. I can still see them now, two tantalisingly folded and brilliantly coloured broadsheets, lying waiting to be devoured after breakfast. Today I am revved up to that self same excitement every Wednesday morning, this time with the longing to guzzle up Jonathan Glancey's architectural pages in *The Independent*. Never predictable or pretentious and always free of gobbeldy gook, they are unfailingly interesting and enthusiastically eclectic. Jonathan Glancey has just heaped justified praise on three London office developments, small in scale but all of them heading in the important direction of good modest Modernism and away from pastiche 'window dressing' with 'gaily coloured plastic pediments, marble lobbies and the seemingly statutory atrium'. Stripped of all this fancy dress, they sleekly streak in all directions, undoubtedly inspired as Glancey says, 'by the early heroic era of Modernism'. Nevertheless they are very much buildings that could only have bloomed today. With a trick here and a curve there, lessons have been learnt both as to how to lighten the Modernist miseries and to build innovatively once again.

So it is three cheers, hip-hip hurray for fresh, clean and clear lines, providing, that is, that they are first-rate. Whereas the second rate Modernist deals the dankest of deathblows the second-rate Post-Modernist can get away with a multitude of murders. I would rather ten thousand plastic porticos, pillars and podiums than one ill-designed and slime stained concrete slab. How soothed I have just been in Slough by little gables prancing along one office development and by giant porticos soaring out of the stone of another, albeit with the thinnest of cladding; and what a laugh it was to peer through plastic sash windows into a fluorescent lit typing pool the size of an aircraft hanger. There is a bonanza of glitz Classicism in 'lemon' yellow and white to be enjoyed at The Watermere 'All Suite' Hotel, outside Aylesbury, with a parody of every Palladian detail. Better surely to laugh or to leer at such foibles than to be drained of all feeling with the drabness of ill-constructed Modernism. Long may popular Post-Modernism survive, providing a most cheerful backdrop for first-rate Modernist and Post-Modernist buildings alike.

Raising their heads above such mundane musings are the 'Shrimps' of Morecambe Bay; four brilliant crustacean-like buildings that were designed by Birds, Portchmouth and Russum for the RIBA competition to enliven the seafront of this Lancashire town. They did not win and a chance has been missed, not only to transform Morecambe's fortunes

but to transform the ever fading fortunes of seaside life throughout the British Isles. Morecambe owes its existence to the holiday maker; the railway brought them in droves from 1848, and the 'Shrimps' would have brought them back in droves once again today. With buildings of such hair-raising originality, the world and his wife would have flocked to them for a good frolic in the amusement arcade, the Marina and the theatre, marvelling all the while at the fourth building – a life-boat station with sprouting antennae.

Six-storey high slinky 'Shrimps' on the shoreline, weaving away in every contour and curve that both nature and architecture will allow, would surely have cocked a superior snook at leisure developments world-wide. Only Frank Gehry's restaurant in Japan, in the shape of a giant fish, would have been able to claim proud kinship although rearing up into the sky next to a motorway in Tokyo, it would have compared ill with the shrimp-like delights proposed for Morecambe Bay. Between the 'Shrimps' rising out of the breakwater and along some 200 yards of the seafront, Birds Portchmouth and Russum had designed an oak paved promenade. Dotted with festively striped booths and deckchairs and screened from cobbled car parks by weaving walls enclosing luxuriantly planted beds of shrubs and full-grown trees, it would have been like a great necklace linking up the 'Shrimps' as they soared out to sea. They have missed a trick at Morecambe with the poor old shrimps having the direst of deals twice over. Soon after the Lancaster City Council had denounced the 'Shrimps' architecturally, the European Community chose to ban the famous Morecambe Bay potted shrimp gastronomically, on the ground that boiling the delicacy in sea water was insanitary. Poor old Morecambe: the double victim of bureaucratic folly, both at home and abroad.

The Craft of Modern Memorials

300 miles to see a single slate headstone. That was my mission to Minehead, and it was a mission of monumental importance in every sense of the word. Spinning along the Somerset roads in brilliant sunshine, past quantities of distinguished 18th-century village houses and past great church towers soaring into the blue sky I was about to nose out a beautiful modern memorial, an almost unheard of combination that could set a catalystic example all over the land. For the last 50 years great tracts of the British Isles have been prey to what can only be described as a grotesque Modernistic world in miniature, a world that has been creeping and crawling into every church yard, cemetery and crematorium throughout the country. Rules and regulations as to the size, height and material of memorials have resulted in the grimmest uniformity, restraining all but the most determined from producing any works of originality. Democracy has become a dictatorship in death, with every one of us forced to suffer a Ceaucescu-like regimentation of marble and stone blocks marching roughshod over our remains. Even the most architecturally aware

now end their days under a blighting block on the landscape.

The graveyards of the past were intended as morally uplifting oases, reflecting the tastes, the dreams and the ideals of the age. What in heaven's name do today's sterile stumps, relieved only by grisly green marble chippings, reflect of our dreams and ideals today?

In the 19th century you would parade through the great Necropolis' as through the pages of the richest architectural pattern book. Rather than a battle, there is the most festive ball of styles to be found in Kensal Green alone, with double-life-size caryatids, obelisks, gothic pinnacles, Classical canopies, columns and porticos. Some of them are adorned with urns, swords, anchors, helmets or beasts; others have been carved into the shapes of those they commemorate: life-size stone soldiers, women and children. One, a little girl, stands in a 'lace' dress with her boots 'buttoned' to her knees. Most outlandish of all is the Egyptian temple to Andrew Ducrow, who dressed as a Roman statue in an elasticated 'marble' ensemble, riding seven horses at once to entertain Queen Victoria. His hat and gloves, elaborately carved in stone, lie at the entrance to his fantastical Egyptian mausoleum.

The 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th centuries all produced the finest memorials with letters that swirl off into unimaginably beautiful directions. Just as every variety of architecture can be found in the necropolis, so can every intricacy of calligraphy be found in the graveyard. With a heritage like this, how can funerary art have sunk as low as it has, with such dire and devastating consequences. The great improvements that have swept through the architectural world in the last ten years have bypassed this miniature branch of structural design. Visiting most cemeteries and churchyards today is like being in the saddest developments of the 60s, with one hideous difference: that they are still being built, hand over fist, with the same blinkered fervour of the post-war years.

There has always been a thin core of 20th-century craftsmen, producing memorials of the highest quality, with sculptors and letter cutters largely working under the influence of Eric Gill. But they have been few and far between; lone stones swamped by the great seas of banality around them. At long, long last though, the tide seems to be turning and this is due in no small measure to a single figure, Harriet Frazer with 'Memorials by Artists', an organisation that she has set up at Snape in Suffolk. She has gathered together the names of all the craftsmen; the carvers and sculptors, the letter writers, designers and the stonemasons and whatever your request for a memorial, will advise and arrange for it to be made. If your schemes should not be approved of by the local authorities she will apply for the equivalent of planning permission. Her success has been spectacular with, thanks to her, a new and vibrant crop of sculpture and artwork sprouting out of churchyards throughout the land. Suddenly in the midst of modern graveyard misery, you spot her influence. Like St Giles Cripplegate stranded in the concrete wasteland of The Barbican





Development, these memorials appear as masterpieces surrounded by mediocrity, with a brilliant bonus: that they are brand spanking new! As wonderful a discovery is that they stand in happy harmony with their distinguished forbears – the 16th and the 20th century complementing each other and the churchyards around them. I found the perfect example of this, having battled to beat the sun, later in the day at Long Sutton, with the chest tomb to Margaret Louise Bramble inscribed 'Ever Staunch and Generous Minded!'. 'Memorials by Artists' has been responsible for the finest tombs, headstones and memorial plaques, all incised with letters of striking stylishness, as well as sundials, benches and engraved and stained glass. Their contribution however modest in scale, will be monumental in its importance throughout the land. You too can contribute by sending for their elegant booklet, from Snape Priory, Saxmundham, Snape, Suffolk. Telephone: 0728 888934 and by hollering out a hymn of praise to Harriet Frazer.

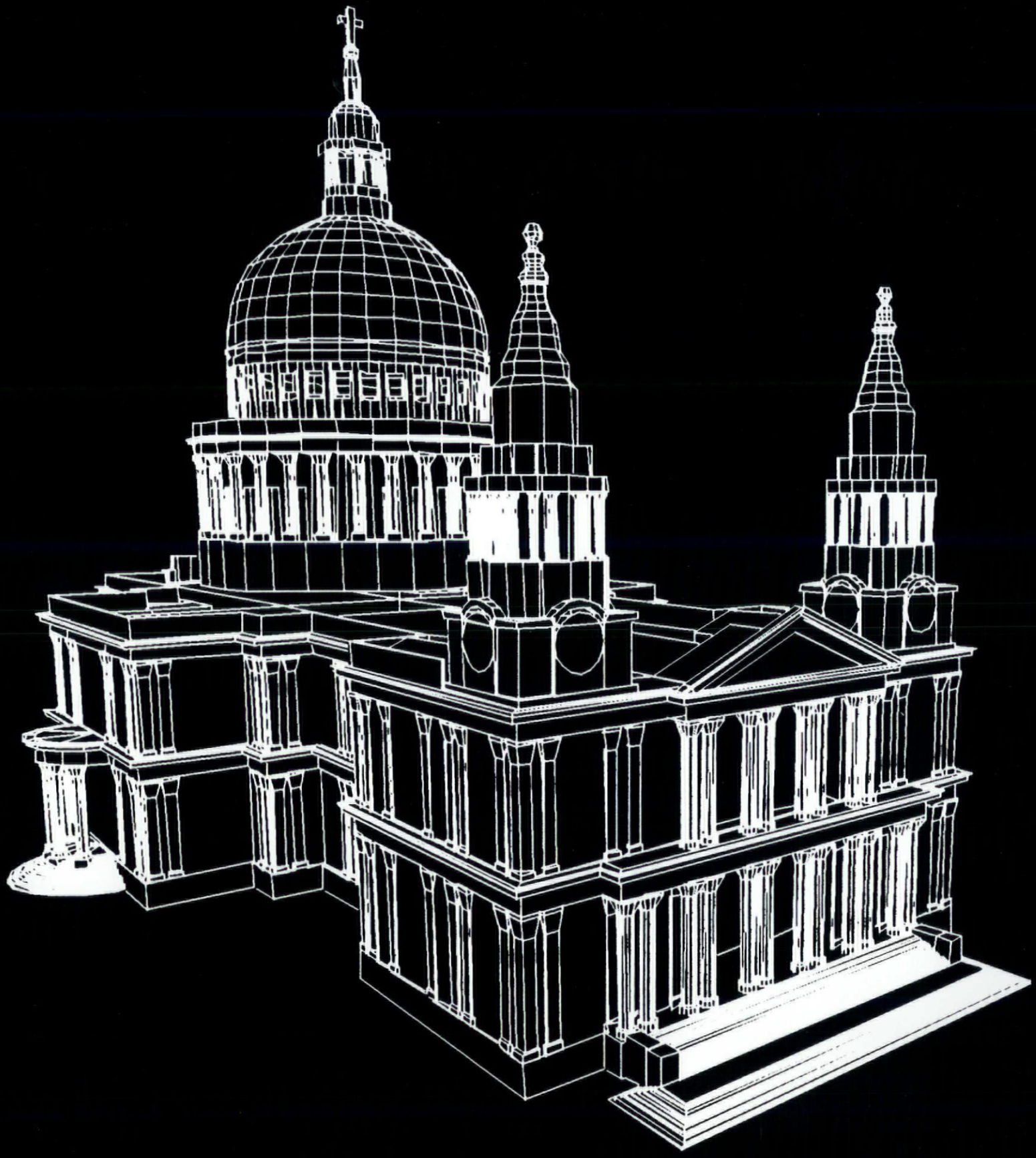
The Oldest Tree House in the World, Pitchford Hall

It is sad news that the vast 16th-century pile of Pitchford Hall in Shropshire is to be sold for the first time in its history. The same family who bought the land in 1473 still own it today. It was here that I learnt that ox blood was the stain used to darken the wood of timber framed buildings, which of course would never have given them their violent 'black and white' appearance that so screeches out of the countryside today.

In the garden at Pitchford stands the oldest tree house in the world, the most curious of 17th-century dwellings which has survived for over 300 years, perching in the branches of the same lime tree. A painting on wood by John Boiven, dated 1714, shows the little house on stilts with the newly planted sapling beneath it. In the 18th century the tree house was classicised with cornerstones and gothicised with a frenziedly festive plaster interior-flying bows tie up the arches on the coved cornice, cluster columns crowd into each corner, ogee arches wave over the windows and doors and a mask surrounded by sun rays beams down from the ceiling. After meticulous work in the 1970s, the little building was restored to its original timber framed exterior, whilst keeping all its interior gothicism, with a grand opening by The Lord Mayor of London in 1980.

In the first half of the century it was to enjoy the startling occupancy of Lady Sibyl Grant who, unable to bear the sound of the river flowing past Pitchford Hall, had left her husband and moved into this branch bound home. Permanently dressed in royal blue and vivid orange to match her orange hair and lipstick, she would practice away at gentle witchcraft, wielding rabbits' feet tied with blue bows. According to James Lees Milne in his diaries she appeared as 'a clairvoyant preserved in ectoplasm', she had chosen the perfect abode. It is said that she and her husband would meet only occasionally, for coffee on the lawn between their two homes.

OPPOSITE: 'Memorials by Artists' memorial at Long Sutton Churchyard, Langport, Somerset, and the tree house, Pitchford Hall



A series of computer constructed drawings showing progressively the outside of St Paul's and various insides of the dome, above and on the following pages. Computer graphics by David McLeod

J'ACCUSE St PAUL'S

BY

MAXWELL HUTCHINSON

In the following article, based on his television presentation on the Channel Four series Without Walls - J'Accuse *by Fulmer TV, Maxwell Hutchinson offers a highly personal view of St Paul's Cathedral. Famous for his controversial views and statements, the ex-president of the RIBA provides a tightly argued critique of this - now - much loved building.*

JR Ewing may control the Dallas of today but he does not own a monopoly on its mythology. As the Ewing clan strut across our TV screens, the majority of those who qualify as viewing statistics miss the all-important Dallas trigger.

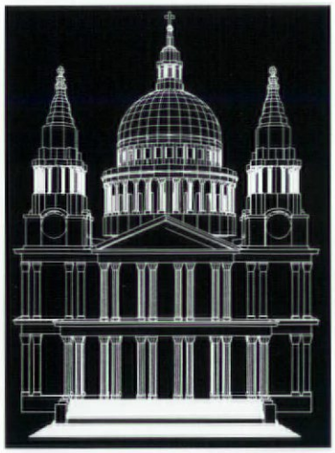
Remember this, the Ewing's massive TV ranch, Southfork, is nothing more than a screen builders' stage set. The backdrop for an endless puerile soap drama is a less than good setting for an under-budget English National Opera blue-jeans Puccini.

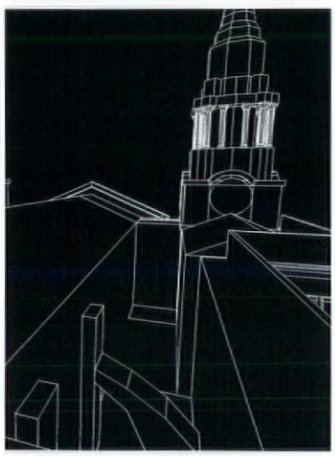
Strange how places' names and buildings, like Dallas, slip into popular mythology without most of us knowing or understanding when or why. Chuck Berry gave us Memphis Tennessee and endless country music crooners hark back to Galveston, Phoenix Arizona and Tulsa - wherever they are. These real places have been turned into colloquial objects of popular mythology.

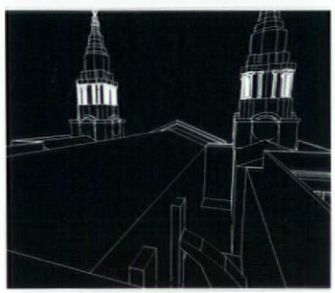
As for Dallas, there is a great deal more to it than Ewing, a pair of cowboy boots and a ten-gallon hat. It won its spurs, as Oliver Stone has recently reminded us through movie force-feeding, on 22nd November 1963.

The grassy knoll beside the expressway to the Dallas Trade Mart was at least real, unlike Ewing's canvas ranch, when the volley of shots rang out from whence and from whom we still do not really know. As if it really matters. The martyrdom remains regardless of method or motive.

But, we all knew where we were, what we had for lunch, what we were wearing on that fateful day when JFK slumped the remainder of his skull into Jackie's arms and the darling of the liberal west - who had stood up to Khrushchev's convoy of missiles to Cuba; resisted the temptation to win martial bouquets in Vietnam; invented the two-button suit and besported the prototype-yuppy wife - having sacrificed exposure, ambition and







The West front and the roof from where 'the game is really given away'

'it is dishonest architecture . . . masquerading as Classicism.'

transparency to whichever gun you believe packed the guilty bullet in Dallas that day. I remember. Anyone over the age of 40 will surely remember. That patch downtown is as potent in today's history as is the window of Inigo Jones' Banqueting House in Whitehall out of which the Cavalier King Charles I walked, at the hands of his civil war Roundhead opponents, to his martyrdom.

Just as Kennedy remains the most potent symbol of the emancipation of the fledgling, promiscuous 60s so Winston Churchill is still (as we see him in the ambiguous and ill-considered statue in Parliament Square) the Godfather of the West's successful struggle against the tidal wave of 20th- century fascism.

The world marks the passage of time with the funerals of the famous (in my lifetime, Khrushchev, Stalin, Churchill, John Lennon and Gandhi come quickly to mind) but the one popular cult figure whose untimely death we can all remember is the gauche, naively pompous Kennedy. However, if the British people are to single out one recent death which transcends mortality then it must surely be the siren suited Churchill. He died at the age of 89, in 1965. His funeral was a massive national pageant.

His vast cadaver lay in state at Westminster Hall for as long as it took for millions of loyal British subjects to file past. The military mounted a 24-hour guard. Geometric guardsmen stood fixed at each corner of the sarcophagus, until it was committed to the ceremonial gun carriage for its long agonising journey from Westminster to the City.

His remains were conveyed in state to St Paul's in the City of London. The ageing lyricism of Father Dimbleby's voice still triggers memories in all but an adolescent mind.

This funeral finally ratified Churchill's role in establishing the Cathedral, not as a work of architecture, but as an icon of British nationalism and independence. It seemed then that he alone had been responsible for the Cathedral's escape from the Blitz, the Nazis and all that threatened the salad days stability of the diminishing British Empire. He, we know, was no lover of architecture. Politicians and military strategists seldom are. At the height of the Blitz, in the incendiary intensity of the Battle of Britain, Churchill's propaganda machine had determined to make St Paul's, probably one of the largest buildings in Blitz-torn London, a symbol of British pride and independence. It took the Nazis' equivalent of the Great Fire to install St Paul's firmly in the attention of the British public. Even I, a post-war ration-book baby, remember the public relation's image of the dome rising mysteriously above the flames and smoke of the Blitz. Hitler's war machine succeeded where St Paul's architect, Sir Christopher Wren, had failed. The flames and smoke of the Blitz transformed an unloved hulk into a potent symbol of nationalism and resistance.

Sir Christopher Wren was a true Restoration Renaissance man. He was born on the 20th October 1632 at East Knoyle in Wiltshire. His father, the Reverend Christopher, was Rector of Knoyle, Fellow of St John's College, Oxford and subsequently Dean of Windsor. Both his father and his uncle were pillars of the conservative High Church bringing up young Christopher in the canon of their faith and churchmanship. After Westminster School, Wren went up to Wadham College, Oxford, as a gentleman commoner.

The Wren family suffered more than their fair share of turmoil and problems during the Civil War. Cromwell and the Roundheads took particular pleasure in the degradation of the Cavalier supporters of King Charles and the destruction of all the Popery of the Catholic wing of the Church of England. Things grew even worse following the martyrdom of King Charles I on the 30th January 1649 and the establishment of Cromwell's Commonwealth.

Meanwhile, at Oxford, Wren developed an early interest in anatomy working closely with Doctor Charles Scarborough, an eminent anatomist and mathematician. The detailed study of the human body was the perfect muse for a fledgling Renaissance man. It taught Wren to work with his hands, his pencil and his eye. Like Leonardo, his studies of skeleton, muscles and the organs taught Wren structure, form, function and even enclosure. The accounts of Wren's career at Oxford mention an early interest in 'dialling' - the design and science of sundials, in the wake of which came astronomy and his designs for complicated apparatus to show the relationship of the sun, the moon and the earth. On the 18th March 1650, at the age of 18, he graduated with a BA. His early scientific achievements were legion: Fellow of

All Souls; Professor of Astronomy at Gresham College, London; Savilian Professor of Astronomy at Oxford and most notably, a founder of the Royal Society.

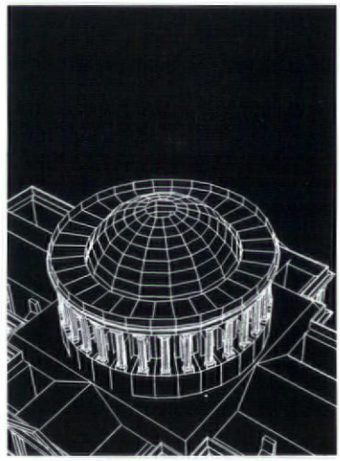
Then came architecture, the missing ingredient in the Renaissance cocktail. It was comparatively simple to apply mathematics and draughtsmanship, through the craft skills of the mason, to the art of architecture. Wren supplied the logic and the learning, the stone masons knew how to put it all together and round it off with all the latest detailing.

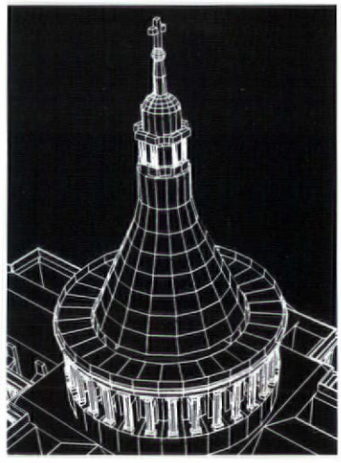
He attracted the very best patrons with the plum commissions - family background and the obvious achievements of his other 'careers' launched one of the most prolific portfolios in all English architecture. Early buildings, including the Sheldonian Theatre at Oxford and the Chapel at Pembroke College, Cambridge, exhibited considerable imagination and consolidated the early English Baroque tradition which found its fulfilment in the naval buildings at Greenwich, the work at Hampton Court and numerous city churches; not to mention St Paul's - the work by which he is most readily associated and most often judged.

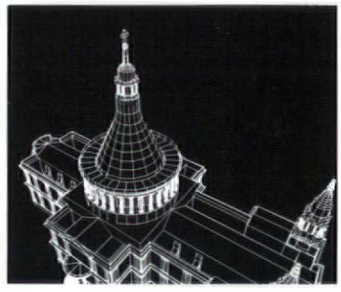
Although he enjoyed an unusually long, prolific and healthy life for the times, was lauded, enjoyed the patronage of the Court and was knighted, he ended his days an outcast of society. In his twilight years the disillusioned Wren would sit unnoticed and unrecognised in the nave of his unfinished cathedral. He had been unceremoniously sacked in 1718 at the age of 86. He died in 1723 and left his memorial inscribed on a circular brass plate on the cathedral floor at the centre of the dome: *Si Monumentum requirs: Circumspice* - 'If a monument is required: Look around'.

What we see today, years later, is not what it seems, not what we think and not what it ought to be. Tuesday 14th January 1992 *J'Accuse:*

> The wedding of the Prince and Princess of Wales was one of the nation's biggest shows this century, of Hollywood proportions with a theatrical setting to match. St Paul's Cathedral, the 'masterpiece' of this country's most famous architect, the natural choice and the predictable setting. But its inflated reputation is seriously damaging this country's architectural health.
>
> It is my belief that St Paul's is no more an architectural wonder of the world than, let us say, Big Ben or the National Gallery. It may be a building of which we have become fond but it is, in truth, second-rate architecture. It simply does not belong in the first rank of British buildings and is not even worth a mention in the world catalogue of great architecture.
>
> It is a sad fact that some of our most influential people sincerely admire St Paul's, now. I am not prepared to dismiss that simply as an eccentricity of taste, like for example admiring the music of John Cage or the novels of Melvyn Bragg. I know that many people of this country revere St Paul's as great architecture, and that really worries me - for architecture speaks more loudly than any other art about the character and self-confidence of a people.
>
> My case against St Paul's is twofold. Firstly it is dishonest architecture and a medieval botch masquerading as genuine Classicism. Great architecture has integrity, and St Paul's has about as much architectural integrity as the castles of Disneyland or a set for Grand Opera. Secondly I am much concerned about the way in which St Paul's has become a rallying point for those who want to hold Britain back in a sterile museum culture.
>
> The present St Paul's rose from the ashes of the Great Fire of 1666 which destroyed much of the medieval city of London. The fire also put paid to the old gothic cathedral of St Paul's which had stood high on Ludgate Hill since 1087. Before the fire, Christopher Wren had produced a bizarre scheme for the refurbishment of the old cathedral. After the fire Charles II invited Wren to design the replacement cathedral, for no apparently good reason other than Royal Prerogative (which we all understand so well today).
>
> The famous Great Model, made of solid English oak, shows what Wren hoped and believed would be his final design for the cathedral. It still includes the original Greek cross plan with the dome sitting over a much more acceptable classical form. But Wren was forced to moderate this design and extend the nave to be much more like a traditional Latin cross plan. The rejection of







The outer dome stripped away revealing the inner dome and the 'medieval spire'

'visual trick-ery-pokery on the inside to fool the eye'



The West front showing the 'two-storey entrance'

'for the first 200 years of its life, this Cathedral was ignored, despised and consistently treated with disrespect.'

the Greek cross and the Great Model designs threw Wren back to the drawing board. His next plan was a most extraordinary design, with a dome and a spire, which attempted to accommodate all the interested parties: the clergy, the King and even Wren himself. An unworkable compromise which unfortunately formed the template for the building as finally completed 35 years later.

Wren was determined that his dome would dominate London's skyline as had the spire of the old Gothic cathedral. It had to be tall enough to be seen from miles around. But a dome of the scale and shape of his design clearly would not carry the weight of the lantern on top, so this plan involved a series of deceptions. On the outside there is the familiar, huge, ballooning dome, covered in lead and apparently supporting the lantern. But beneath the skin things are not what they seem. The lead dome is carried on a false timber structure, rather like a stage set, making the dome pure theatre.

Inside that there is yet another dome which is actually much more like a medieval spire, it is made out of brickwork and stone lashed together with chains, all to carry 700 tons of the lantern above. This second inner dome is not even the one you see down below in the cathedral and the fakery gets worse still.

A spire with a dome on the outside had to be botched on the inside as well. Yet another dome, equally contrived and equally false, to cover up the structural necessity of the medieval masonry spire. What an incredible disappointment. Wren's great dome ended up as a lead-clad timber frame on the outside and visual trickery-pokery on the inside to fool the eye into believing that the inside was the outside, when the outside was not even the real thing and that was not the end to the dilemma of the dome.

Wren had to reconcile the irreconcilable - a dome over a Latin cross. Of course it did not work properly - there should have been eight equal arches around the crossing of the nave, the choir and the north and south transepts. He could not achieve this, so there are fallen arches on diagonally opposite corners which are uncomfortable to look at and create a geometry and a Classical language that is unfamiliar. The loads do not come down in the right places and all in all this crossing is less than it should be.

The West front, the principal public face of the cathedral, is no less disappointing. There should have been a grand Classical portico and a magnificent pediment, more or less like the Great Model design. But what do we get? A two-storey entrance that sadly exemplifies Wren's failure to meet the challenges of thorough Classicism.

The game is really given away up on the roof. The walls down either side of the nave are entirely false. They are there just as a screen, a facade, to hide the real building, which is a medieval building complete with flying buttresses. Of course many great buildings involve visual trickery and optical deception for good architectural purposes. Like, for example Bernini's Colonnaded Grand Piazza in front of St Peter's in Rome. But Wren did not use architectural devices of subtlety and integrity - he merely dressed up his medieval building in 'Classical drag'. At least Wren can be excused for most of the internal decoration, which is a dreadful mish-mash of insincere Victorian-rhinestone Ravenna mosaics.

It is fascinating to see just how St Paul's has become a symbol of resistance to modern architecture - and I would argue, the modern world as a whole. For His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales and his advisers, St Paul's is a Rorke's Drift - a last stand against Modernism. Yet significantly for the first 200 years of its life, this Cathedral church was ignored, despised and consistently treated with disrespect. The Victorians cared so little about the building that they crashed an iron girder bridge across the foot of Ludgate Hill. They thumbed the industrial revolution's nose at the least respected cathedral in the Queen Empress' realm. Symbolically at least, the Blitz changed St Paul's reputation.

Around the time of Churchill's funeral in 1965 the symbolism of St Paul's underwent a subtle

change. The post-war hopes of the new Elizabethans had begun to fade and the war-hero Cathedral had become a pathetic casualty of peace.

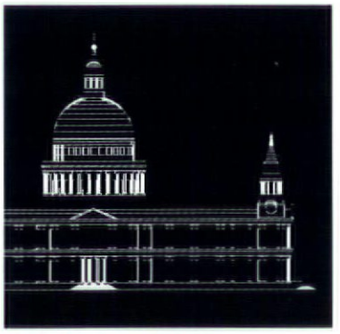
St Paul's may be a building with which we have grown affectionately familiar but that in itself does not make it great architecture. As is so often the case, we British in our architectural naivety confuse sentimental affection with architectural excellence. We can all be justly proud of James Gibbs' enduring monument, the church of St Martin-in-the-Fields on the corner of Trafalgar Square, (built at the same time as St Paul's Cathedral), or for that matter, the confident Classical mannerism of St George's Bloomsbury by Nicholas Hawksmoor, a pupil of Wren.

The world stands in awe of the staggering innovation of the Lloyds building by Richard Rogers, the subtle massing of Denys Lasdun's National Theatre, the delicate grace of the Lords' stands by Michael Hopkins and the ingenuity of the Sainsbury Centre at Norwich by Norman Foster. We fail to appreciate the strength of our native architectural talent. Yet we rally behind the appalling architectural hypocrisy of a 1980's vision of Britain rooted simply and worryingly in our back-to-the-past culture. The school of reactionary 'Little Englandism' has grave implications for our architectural future.

But does all this really matter? Of course it does. A very great deal. Quality architecture of world stature, has become the international coinage of national self-confidence and identity. President Mitterrand and the Mayor of Paris, Jacques Chirac, both reinforced the stature of their capital city but also stands four-square as a symbol of France's commitment to cultural growth and development. As long as we in Britain pin our flags to the West towers of St Paul's we will become the leaders of nothing more than the architectural third world.

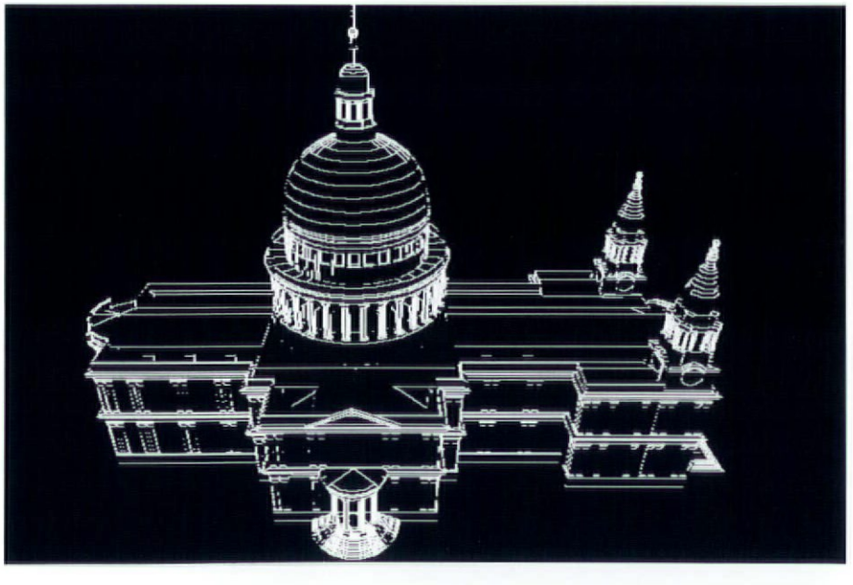
Television is architecture's new debating chamber. Television which goes beyond the agonisingly over-long, self-conscious panning shots of squeaky-clean modern masterpieces (set to the synthesiser doodling of the Jean-Michel Jarre School) or, on the other hand, the kitchen sink gloom and doom of the socio-epic, lambasting all Britain's architects for *all* our post war ills. Row after row of rain-sodden tower blocks, urban flotsam and 80's street urchins set to the slow movement of one of Schînberg's most challenging quartets.

The architectural television of the 90s will enquire within, explain and debate significantly more than just the appearance of our built environment. The ever-developing medium of television looks backwards as well as forwards and prompts our personal recollections of Kennedy, Churchill and the Royal Wedding. The same knowing eye of the camera is a powerful tool at the service of a new era of architectural debate and inquisition. A camera that will go behind the two-dimensional Southfork set, into the credibility gap between Wren's domes and right to the heart of the matter.

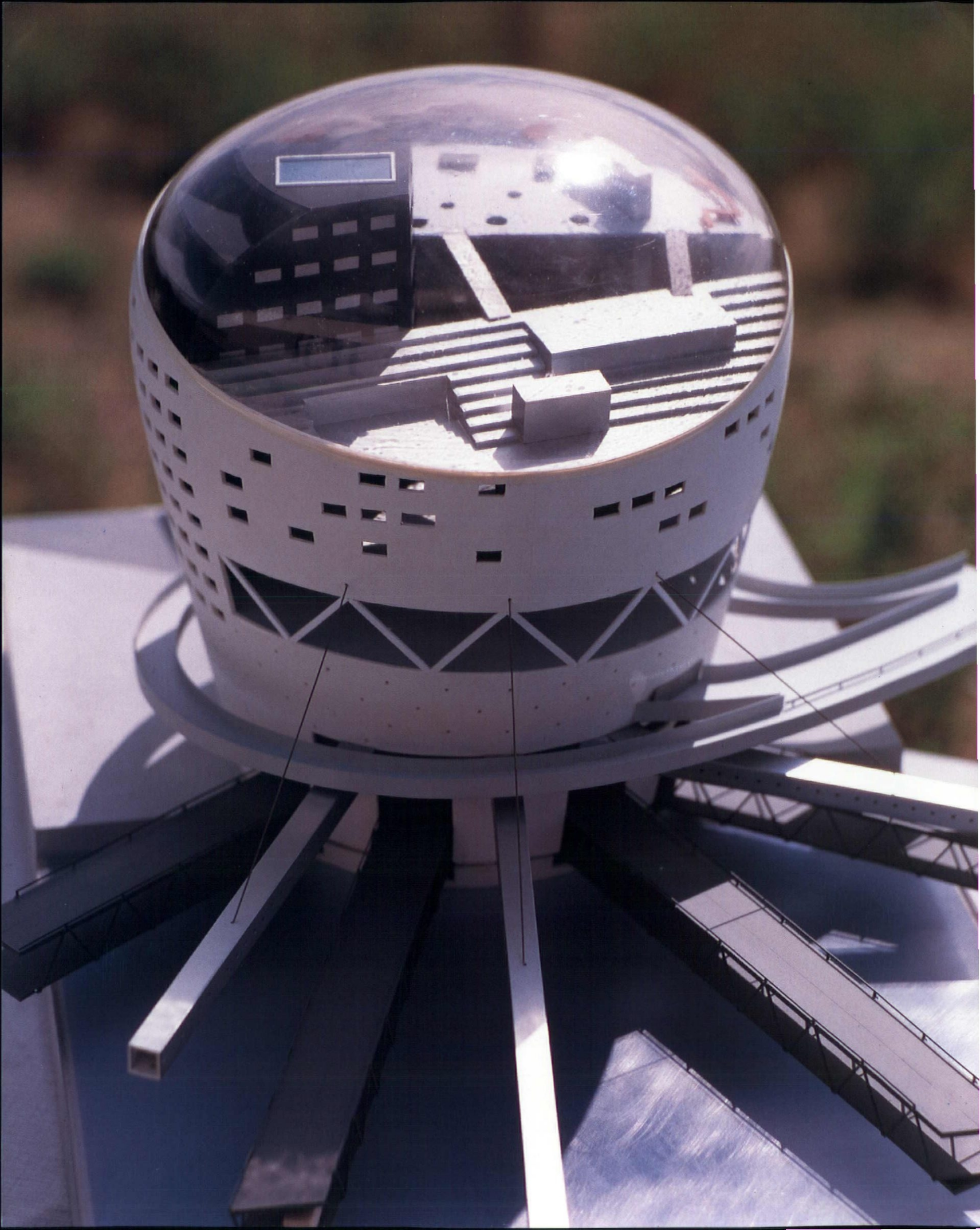


Side view of the Cathedral

'the war-hero Cathedral had become a pathetic casualty of peace.'



The dome on the Latin cross - a reconciliation of 'the irreconcilable'



MARTINE DE MAESENEER AND DIRK VAN DEN BRANDE

REM KOOLHAAS

Sea Trade Centre at Zeebrugge: A Working Babel

Since March this year we have been acquainted with the winning entry in the competition to design a terminal for the port of Zeebrugge in Belgium. From the select group of invited architects – Aldo Rossi, Fumihiko Maki, Rem Koolhaas, Bob Van Reeth and Charles Vandehove – the jury chose Rem Koolhaas as the laureate.

The not inconsiderable size of the project, the near uniqueness in Belgium of a commission obtained from a limited competition, and the high quality of the entries have meant that the competition's progress has been subject to extensive coverage by the (architectural) press. Moreover, the laureate, Koolhaas (with his Office for Metropolitan Architecture or OMA), is tremendously popular in architectural circles in the Low Countries. The Sea Trade Centre at Zeebrugge will be his first built work in Belgium and at the same time the spring-board for a full-scale European offensive. Thus it is natural that the project should be subjected to a more thorough scrutiny.

In the text accompanying Koolhaas' plan one quote stands out in particular, namely that its design shuns the immediately recognisable and consequently elicits a chain reaction of associations. Images such as a boulder washed ashore, a bollard, or a hot-air balloon are responses as much justified as they are spontaneous. These maintain, however, a subjective independence, from the beginning leading a life of their own. Such images like these are often shots that ricochet off the curved surface of the design, without penetrating the deeper stratification of its spherical shape.

Metaphor, for that matter, is often dangerously misleading, as is evident in the image evoked by Aldo Rossi as support for his own entry to the Zeebrugge competition. Rossi loses no time in associating the towers of Flanders with those of Manhattan, as a sign of the rich legacy that Flanders bequeathed to America. Such a statement is proof, however, that Rossi has understood nothing of Koolhaas' now celebrated analysis of the Manhattan skyscrapers, namely that *Delirious New York* (Koolhaas' cult book about the Manhattan skyscrapers, 1978) is the ultimate reaction to the revival predominant since the 70s of historicism in architecture – Rossi's monuments, for instance. A Babylonian confusion of tongues indeed!

The principal issue in this essay concerns basing one's understanding of Koolhaas' design for the Sea Trade Centre on a well defined continuity in his oeuvre. What is at first sight startling, but on closer inspection not so after all, is that the project can be analysed entirely in terms of towers – Manhattan towers.

The Needle-Globe Pendulum Movement

In *Delirious New York* Latting's Observation Tower – part of The Great Exhibition in Briants Park (1853) – is typified as the first skyscraper in the world, if we leave aside the tower of Babel. Koolhaas' argument rests on the following comparison. If Babel is the symbol of chaos, linguistic confusion and ultimate powerlessness, then Latting's Observation Tower – trendsetter for an entire generation of towers conceived solely as a fairground attraction – is the prototype of the illusion of historicism, of the parody on towers marked as monuments or data banks.

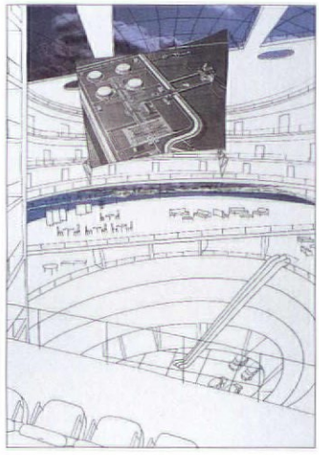
The archetype with which Koolhaas identifies Latting's Observation Tower is the needle. Characterised by the complete inability to house facilities, as a structure occupying the least space, with no interior and with a maximum physical impact, the needle proliferated in the year 1900 in Luna Park (on the legendary Coney Island) into a total spectacle of exuberant shapes: a dream town for the amusement of the proletariat.

But the embryonic Observation Tower of Latting forms only one facet of the bipartite formula introduced at The Great Exhibition in Briants Park. In those days technology was an attraction in itself: a steam-lift which Latting's tower was just able to accommodate (up to a platform with a panoramic view of the then recently colonised New York) was only the beginning of a stream of technological gadgetry, which would all be gathered and subjected to exhaustive experimentation in one colossal cage, a Pandora's box – Crystal Palace.

The expansion of Luna Park with Dreamland brought with it analogous mechanically operated attractions. There were simulated earthquakes and cataclysms, and their heroic suppression. There were gravity-defying attractions, such as the 'barrels of love', in which two drums, one containing women, the other men, and sharing the same axis but rotating in opposite directions, would pair off couples haphazardly: the individual became atomised. These were all attractions engineered to light-heartedly prepare the provincial citizen for a cosmopolitan existence.

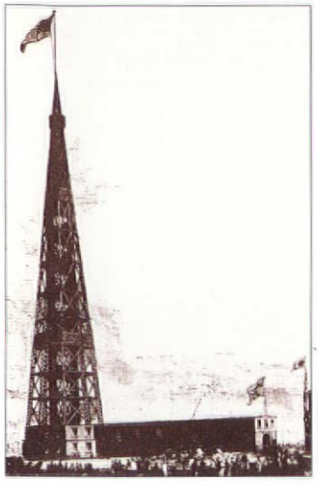
Koolhaas is quick to stress the superlative essence of fairground amusement: the voluntary (weekly) exodus from the half-hearted orthodox urbanisation of New York, to surrender to the superiority of the artificial over the natural, is loaded with a heavy social potential.

Moreover, in the fact that each Dreamland attraction was systematically enclosed, creating the greatest possible compression and maximum contrast, Koolhaas sees confirmation of a social stratification manifest in a second archetype: the globe, which rounds off the foetal stage of the Manhattan doctrine. Typifying the globe is a minimum of exterior with an absolute maximum of interior. According to Samuel Friede, genius and inventor of the



Panoramic projection screen, Sea Trade Centre, Zeebrugge

Model of Sea Trade Centre, Zeebrugge



Latting Observatory, The Great Exhibition, New York, 1853



Samuel Friede, Globe Tower, c1906

'globe tower' (in about 1906), the globe has, through a simple internal layered structure, a seemingly unlimited capacity to absorb and congest objects, people, icons and so forth. The act of simply bringing together things and people is sufficient to allow them, as an innate quality of the globe, to coexist.

Globe and needle, Koolhaas decided, are two complementary values. They form the positive and negative, the beginning and the end of Manhattanism. The consequence is a constant pendulum movement: the needle that endeavours to become a globe, and at times vice versa, and what in a succession of reincarnations has crossed over from The Great Exhibition at Briants Park to the amusement parks of Coney Island and finally, owing to the tremendous population increase, to Manhattan.

As a result, the picture that Koolhaas paints of Manhattan (cf 'The City of the Captive Globe') is that of an all-in spectacle of idealist, highly individualistically inspired delusions of the great (modern) architects who through their extroverted constructions (needles) are in a state of constant rivalry. It is in this connection that Koolhaas also uses the term negative congestion, or congestion of envy.

The breakthrough, however, is that this very ultimate inability to communicate with one another, expressed on the surface by the monotony of the New York street pattern, contains the greatest potential for switching into the summit of the globe (a positive congestion turned inwards). Koolhaas endorses this view: 'By thinking feverishly in terms of towers the globe swells and the internal temperature rises'. Striking in this revelation is the omnipresence of the second law of thermodynamics: when a given system has completely used up the differentiation created by its initial values (in this case based on orthodox imperatives such as hierarchy, composition and harmony) – or if 'in a negative sense' all interactions have been smoothed out to a state of maximum uniformity, or, if preferred, to one of maximum complexity – this then creates in the opposite, positive sense a theoretical framework which holds that the probability of a new type of behaviour arising is at its greatest.

Zeebrugge: a Friedian Globe Tower

With the Zeebrugge design, on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, Koolhaas is now a complete oeuvre away from *Delirious New York*. Since then there have been designs for Dublin, Arnhem, The Hague, Paris, Berlin and elsewhere, during which the needle-globe pendulum movement has been in considerable evidence, at least it would seem so from the pregnant shape of the Zeebrugge terminal (a globe tower – literally a globe above a cone). Koolhaas puts it plainly: the Zeebrugge terminal is a 'working babel'. The image of Latting's observation tower is far behind us, and at once our hopes for a dense social stratification are suitably high.

It is certain that we need not investigate this stratification in a compository or structural sense. The only compository constants we are able to distinguish in the Zeebrugge design are the 'scissors' that never cease to fragment further all substrata (a piece of hotel, a piece of tower block) and the 'curve' which reversely holds together the totality of fragments. Here a statement by Koolhaas brings solace: 'a building constitutes a whole only insofar as all its components are different'. Perpendicular to this Deconstruction formulation stands the near-continuous recycling, reassessment and accumulation of a repertoire of images cutting right across Koolhaas' oeuvre, as diverse as television channels, all linked to the same transmitter: *Delirious New York*.

It is from this continuous pattern of values that we are given insight into the terminal's social stratification.

Panopticism

Panopticism as a concept derives from the prison world. It has become an archetype with which – particularly in a broader social context, from a central position, with only the apparatus of architecture and geometry, and its psychological effect – to exercise control over and enforce discipline in, say, communities of learning or work. In principle panopticon means a circular prison (introduced by Jeremy Bentham in the 18th century) containing cells on different levels, all facing the centre. In this centre is an observation tower, an eye that sees and analyses everything. Essential to the smooth functioning of the prison is that entry to the observation tower is via a system of underground passages, so that access to and presence at the observation tower remain fully screened from the prisoners. Thus it requires only the sporadic and minimal presence there of warders and yet functions optimally. Uncertainty as to whether the post is occupied exerts sufficient psychological pressure in itself to keep the prisoners in a submissive state. Michel Foucault views it thus: 'The prisoner is subjected to a system of control and hierarchy of which he himself is the bearer'.

When Koolhaas was invited in 1979 to sketch out a plan for the renovation of the panopticon at Arnhem the result left little to the imagination. His most decisive architectural step was to eliminate by intersecting the central point, the observation tower, with a grid of streets (in terms of the Manhattan doctrine an empty, anti-hierarchic principle) which in turn had to promote better relations with the outside world, among other things by coupling the grid to public functions such as entertainment, shopping and visitor facilities. On a more subtle level, it transpired that by deconstructing the observation post and inserting the grid Koolhaas had created an architectural vacuum, exactly at the boundary between the inner area (the prisoners in the panopticon) and the outside world (the average citizen). In doing so he had wilfully embroidered on the association with the natal Coney Island (the incubation zone of Manhattan). The Luna Park and Dreamland attractions there were themselves developed on the borderline between two previous functions which divided the island: a Victorian health resort of 19th-century decency on one side, and a refuge for fugitives, criminals and illegal immigrants on the other – an unstable social situation indeed.

In imitation of the Manhattan laboratory the Arnhem prison, too, emerged as a high-pressure area in which the inmates who have become 'voluntary' prisoners of the architecture (as an inherent consequence of the demo-

cratic inversion of the panopticon structure, by eliminating the tower and introducing the grid) can devote themselves to intoxicating games.

In the Zeebrugge terminal the hotel guests are the 'voluntary prisoners' of the architecture. In the curved hotel building we can clearly recognise part of the Arnhem panopticon, though the central observation post of the prison has here made way for a panoramic screen, set up for the projection of, as Koolhaas foresees, architectural images.

The story is thus complete. In Arnhem Koolhaas introduced the grid (eliminating the observation tower), an extract from Manhattanism which through its uniformity of layout, its anti-urbanist, anti-hierarchic and anti-historic structure – in short through its intrinsic emptiness – is, firstly tailor-made for emasculating the panopticon doctrine and, secondly, able to act as a perfect medium for the cultivation of needles. In Zeebrugge Koolhaas introduces as a spin-off his latest needle: the panoramic projection screen which through its minimum of interior and maximum of exterior and physical impact refers in turn to the embryonic Luna Park, to its subversive social impact, where the panoramic view of exuberant towers seemed to have been the superior outlet for inhabitants of the original, hierarchically condensed New York.

'Panorama' is Koolhaas' retort to 'hierarchy'.

Piranesianism

A separate concept attached to the needle-globe pendulum movement is 'circulation'. Here the machine is at the centre, if only because according to the Manhattan doctrine the lift (the steam-engine of Latting's Observation Tower) makes the initial distinction between a state of general linguistic confusion and inability to communicate expressed by an all too envious needle-cultivation on the horizontal plan of the grid, and the towering social interaction emanating from a vertical stratification under one single roof: the globe.

Moreover, and this is important, the machine has already been the pace-maker for the Modern Movement, when the principal issue was to apply the almighty (Newtonian) Laws of Motion (along the basis of attempts to treat integrally the functioning of the machine) to the field of architecture. The promenade theme, dynamic modulations based on the Golden Section and the pinwheel are clear reflections of the tendency towards a 'dynamic' plan. An interesting effect is that every social resonance within (Modern) architecture was preoccupied with the creating of trajectories and relationships: in short with purely spatial interactions (set out in a horizontal plan) in which composition, perspective and hierarchy prevailed as the principal exponents. Surely, the grid constitutes the ultimate deconstruction of this mechanical model.

The image of the machine conjured up by the second law of thermodynamics is essentially different. Whereas the Newtonian way of thinking focused on systems in which transformations of movements were the central issue (eg a windmill), inspiration now came from machines driven by a heat source (eg the steam-lift of Latting's Observation Tower). Such a machine presupposes an awareness of the loss of motion through friction, of the machine's imperfection and eventual cessation of movement, and of the forgetting of initial conditions. Understanding such a machine (above all in an architectural context) can be achieved no longer by calculating relationships and transformations among the elements involved (as applied to the Newtonian machine), but only through parameters such as pressure, temperature and boundary conditions.

Of all machines the steam-lift is probably the perfect prototype of the thermodynamic model. The property of working against gravity – breaking free of the horizontal plan – can immediately be interpreted as a deviation from the Newtonian ideal, as a sign of instability in the 'machine'. Yet this very imperfection opens up a totally new view of the world: that of non-linear systems (for which we may propose as a norm the needle-globe pendulum movement).

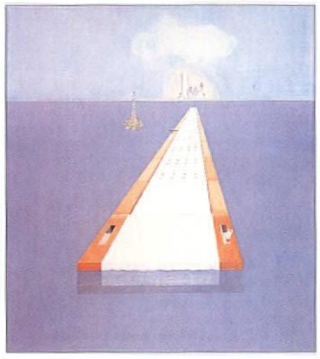
In recognising the imperfection of the machine, life, death and therefore also the concept of duration make their entrance into architecture, while the former Classical to Modern streams relied on a purely spatial continuum only.

Circulation in such pendulum systems – where pressure, temperature and consequently duration play a major part – is expressed in architecture only with difficulty. It is therefore feasible that the lift (in its role of unstable machine) is not truly the *deus ex machina* which with a press of the button activates the social stratification inside the globe, but merely prefaces a more complex structure, this being 'Piranesian space'. Piranesian space is in the first place a mental structure based on the premise that in non-linear systems the problem of circulation has absolutely no need of an explicit solution. Put another way, what is both genial and fatal about pendulum systems is that such formulations of problems can always be solved indirectly: the globe will only begin to expand and the internal pressure and temperature (typically thermodynamic references) to rise when we feverishly think in terms of towers. By way of analogy, it therefore suffices to keep deconstructing traditional circulation into the emptinesss of the grid and the instability of the lift (itself a needle – the globe itself remaining for the time being a metaphysical concept in which communication and circulation stay undefined and the potential of a new society remains safeguarded). It is Piranesian space which accumulates all these so-called non- or post-architectural qualities. By avoiding single-level intersections, hierarchic relationships are further dismantled while the panorama widens, in other words psychological barriers (interfaces) are minimised, and visual contact maximised.

The tangential status which circulation thus achieves – associated as it is with Piranesian space – is that of a catalytic system (in contrast to the control system with which orthodox relational circulation remains linked). In this system, by thermodynamic definition, a catalyst should be understood as a medium: a necessary additional value which takes part in the congestion and which, subject to the parameters of pressure and temperature, activates the needle-globe pendulum movement without



OMA, The City of the Captive Globe, 1972



OMA, Arrival of the Floating Pool in New York, 1977

itself being consumed in the process.

Koolhaas first experimented with Piranesian space in the design for an international business centre at Lille in France (1989), a design directly preceding the Zeebrugge terminal. In Lille Piranesian space is identified with a spiral construction in conjunction with several escalators, which according to Koolhaas must ensure vertical cohesion between all types of traffic present on the site.

This same spiral construction can be found in the Zeebrugge terminal, analogously described as a machine for sorting incoming and outgoing pedestrians, cars and heavy traffic, the major gain being that all movement takes place without the need for intersections.

The Guggenheim Inclination

An improvement on the Lille spiral is the cone shape of its Zeebrugge counterpart. This generates a series of images, in the first place that of an inverted, upturned Tower of Babel (after Brueghel's painting). It is a sign that Piranesian space aspires to the role of a working Babel. On a more suggestive level the conical spiral also reminds us of the Guggenheim Museum in New York. This museum, as it happens, can be found along with Pompeii, the Manhattan Grid, Broadacre City (Frank Lloyd Wright), Central Park and others on Koolhaas' list of 'empty structures'. This 'emptiness' is expressed best if we divide the Guggenheim into horizontal segments. If we look from each segment across the central void to the ramp opposite, we are faced with a fan-shaped panorama that mathematically counterbalances the natural reduction of our visual faculties with distance. The psychological effect arising in such non-perspective circumstances we call 'foreshortening', meaning more or less that visual depth – *in absentia* – leads to spiritual depth. Frank Lloyd Wright introduced this effect to allow each art work to be contemplated as a feature in itself, rather than in 'relation' to other art works as is the case with traditional, rational Renaissance inspired art galleries. In Wright's foreshortening concept we can recognise a clear parallel with Koolhaas' pendulum models. Both are aimed at deconstructing existing hierarchic systems (perspective in the case of Guggenheim) in order to catalyse in the emptiness thus created a heightened psychological or social activity.

Koolhaas' theory of congestion consequently operates at least on a level where needles repeatedly and with increasing frequency attract other needles. Striking in this respect is the inevitability with which 'foreshortening' has found its way into Koolhaas' vocabulary, even though it is an idea introduced in the spiral configuration by Wright. Striking too is the combination of circumstances that preceded this condensation. The Guggenheim is situated in New York, the arena of Koolhaas' *Delirious New York*. The Guggenheim spiral was originally conceived by Wright as a multi-storey car park (for Pittsburgh), while Koolhaas by coincidence adopts the same construction for a car park serving the Zeebrugge terminal.

Such ideas typify the transcendent essence of congestion, namely a lumping together of reactionary images (needles), without concrete relations being forged to this end in the space-time continuum.

Two thermodynamic outlooks suggest themselves. The first is a theoretical model in which the 'great emptiness' is held to be attractor state, in accordance with the idea that each system (left to itself and no matter what its basic premise) will inevitably reach a state of maximum uniformity (also termed maximum complexity or maximum equilibrium), and which creates the theoretical framework for the ever-increasing probability that a new type of behaviour will arise. The condensing of empty structures is quickly grasped in this consensus of attraction. For that matter the probability principle is only feasible within large-scale systems with many participating elements. In reality, however, unlike the theoretical model, the chance that a new architectural language will arise (let alone a new type of behaviour) is extremely specific, and would takes place far removed from a state of maximum uniformity, or maximum emptiness – the latter wherein the prospect of a spontaneously amplifying structure (and the necessary minimum of cohesion this requires) is lost for good.

In reality therefore innovation demands a situation exhibiting both utterly unstable and utterly improbable behaviour (in contrast to the theoretical probability principle), but for this very reason is sensitive in the extreme to the influence of pressure, boundary conditions, catalysts and suchlike.

A situation like this is best comparable in the Manhattan doctrine with the seeming improbability and spontaneity of towers that call forth towers. Separate from the theoretical framework advocated by the Manhattan doctrine and closer to reality, this spontaneous influx – the autocatalysis of (subversive) images in a holistic, visionary atmosphere (holism is a concept which is fully contained by thermodynamic processes found in 'far-from-emptiness-conditions') – forms the true creative impulse; the effectively working Babel, and the summit of Manhattanitis. The story that follows about the floating swimming pool agrees with this hypothesis – the swimming pool also marks the final couplet of our analysis of the Sea Trade Centre.

The Story of the Swimming Pool

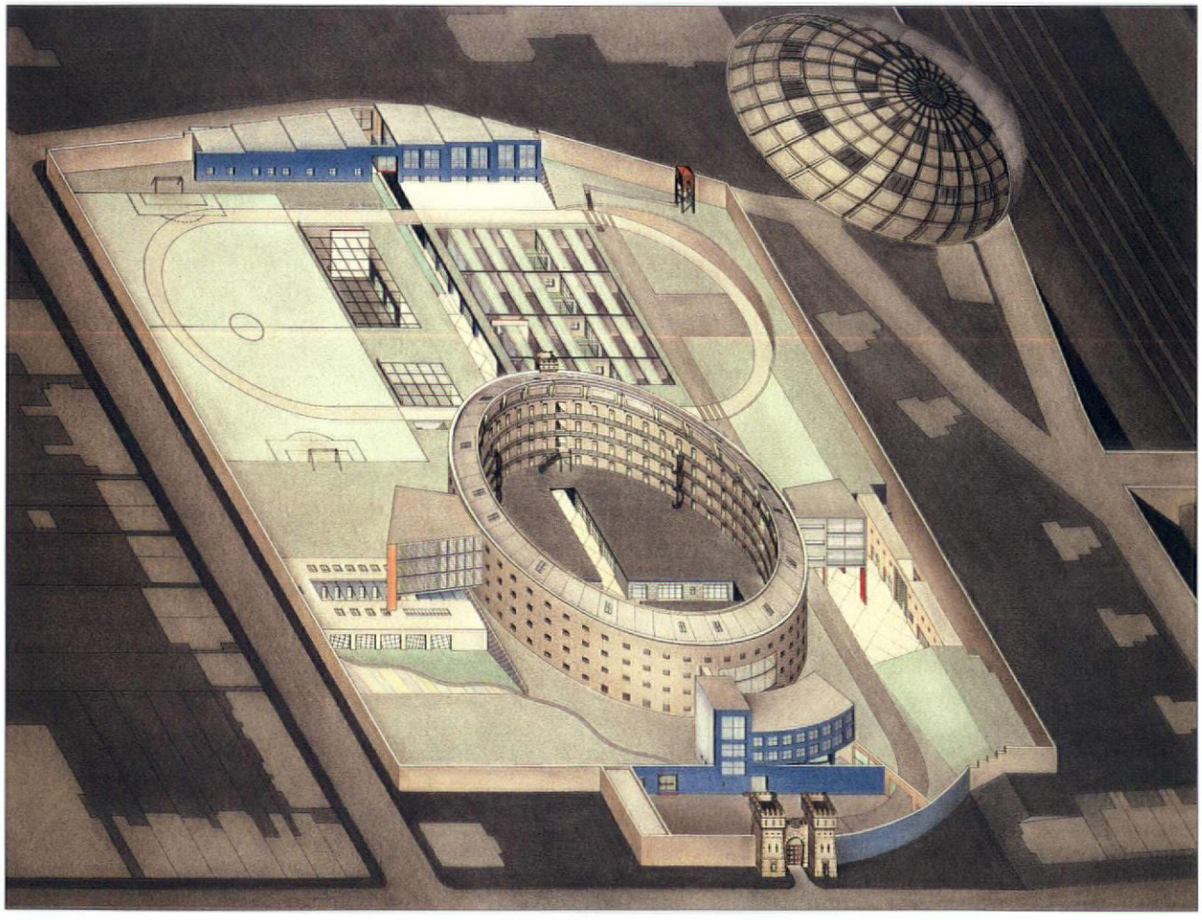
Koolhaas relates:

> The floating swimming pool was designed in the Moscow of the 20s. Which student was responsible is not known, nor does it matter. The idea was just in the air as the climax of a (Constructivist) period in which other students came up with flying cities and artificial planets. The floating swimming pool formed the first modest step in a radical programme that had to make the world a better place. Through its absence of volume and its transparency the floating swimming pool bore every resemblance to the needle: a Manhattan skyscraper designed in Moscow and which would inevitably reach its logical destination, 'New York' – and how! The construction and launching of a prototype immediately brought to light the fact that when the swimmers/architects began swimming in formation, the swimming pool itself began moving slowly but surely in the opposite direction. By

> swimming in the direction of the Stalinist Kremlin, bastion of centralised power, the pool slid furtively in the opposite direction – on towards the freedom of Manhattan.

Again, the story constitutes an allusion to the concept of 'emptiness' (the needle), with a subversive social potential (the globe), and to the totality of ambivalent attractions once united on Coney Island. But above all Koolhaas alludes in this swimming pool saga to a part-critical, part-visionary combination of circumstances. Between the lines the story goes that the arrival of the swimming pool in New York (in the year 1976, at the very moment when Rem Koolhaas himself alighted in that city, and in a sudden influx of hysteria and instability – related to the act of mooring) would inflate anew the Manhattan doctrine: through reincarnation in the book *Delirious New York*.

In Zeebrugge the swimming pool is once more present, as a reinterpretation, however, of the original floating example. We come across it on the roof of the administrative tower (thus the needle has rightfully doubled). He who looks closer will recognise in the interface of the tower with the south-western (landward-facing) outer wall, the blades of a water wheel. In the opposite direction the water wheel is aimed straight at New York. The suggestion is therefore clear that the swimmers/architects (now with Rem Koolhaas at the helm) have by analogy set the wheel in motion, this time by swimming in formation towards New York, by which they, moving in the opposite direction, have once more made the great crossing to reach the Old World on the eve of European unification. With the construction of the Sea Trade Centre at Zeebrugge as the first in a series of great international realisations by OMA (Paris, Frankfurt, etc) the Manhattan doctrine seems to have arrived in the nick of time.



OMA, The Panopticon, Arnhem, 1979-80

QUINLAN TERRY

ARCHITECTURE AND THEOLOGY

My subject is architecture and theology or – if you like – art and faith.

I thought that it would be a simple matter to talk on these subjects. I now see that this not the case. Any fool can talk about architecture or religion; but *this* fool will try to talk about where they touch each other.

I have read the two great authorities on this subject from the last century: Pugin, who designed the Houses of Parliament, and Ruskin, the celebrated artist and writer; both of whom started their lives as devout Christians, and ended their days . . . in a mental asylum. Perhaps this is a warning to tread carefully and not expect too much from art.

It might help if we think of these two subjects: art, music, architecture – all the fine arts on the one hand; and theology and Christian doctrine on the other; as like two great rivers springing from different sources, meandering through similar territory, sometimes flowing along the same course, sometimes flowing in opposite directions, and then running out to different seas. As we travel this course, I hope the subject will become a little clearer.

I have divided the subject into four chronological periods: firstly, we shall look at the relevance of architecture to religion in the Old Testament; secondly, we shall look at the relevance – and the irrelevance – of architecture to religion in New Testament times; thirdly, I will make a potted history of the way these two themes recur from New Testament times to the beginning of this century; finally, I shall attempt to understand the situation today.

Let us start with the Old Testament pattern when the fine arts formed an integral part of worship.

The plan of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness is recorded in great detail in the Book of Exodus. You will remember that when Moses went up Mount Sinai and received the commandments, he also received a specification of the Tabernacle, complete with its dimensions, its division into outer court, the holy place and the holy of holies. He was also given precise information about the furniture, the priesthood and their vestments, even a recipe for the incense to be used in their services; details about sacrifice and a calendar of special days for feasts throughout the year.

If you try to reconstruct this building from the dimensions given, you will be able to draw a similar plan, but you will not be able to reconstruct the appearance accurately.

I like to think that in this Tabernacle were the original and primitive form of the three Classical orders – what we now call Doric, Ionic and Corinthian. It would seem appropriate that a simple Doric order was used for the outer court; the Ionic for the five pillars at the front of the Tabernacle – Ionic with its curved volutes like rams' horns to symbolise sacrifice; and Corinthian for the columns overlaid with gold, which divide the holy place from the holy of holies.

Let us think for a moment on the importance of this small but highly ornate ancient building. It was initiated and commissioned by God. The design and construction were entrusted to Moses; but the art work was carried out by two of the greatest artists the world has ever known, whose names are given as Bezaleel and Aholiab. These two men must have been a sort of Raphael and Michelangelo to the ancient world. And it is significant that the first reference to a man being filled with the Spirit of God, is to these two artists: 'God has filled them with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; to devise curious works, to work in gold and in silver and in brass and in the cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of wood, to make all manner of cunning work.' (Exodus 35/31-33)

This verse is terribly important. It says that artistic ability is a gift of the Holy spirit – *a creative gift given by God the Creator.*

An artist cannot produce beauty apart from nature; he must take his inspiration from the natural world. We can see something of God in his works: the trees, the animals, the sea, the dry land. We acknowledge his majesty, his power, and that he is the supreme architect. Unless we have some degree of humility and reverence for the Creator, we cannot produce creative work which is easy on the human eye. These two artists of the Tabernacle had these gifts in abundance.

At that time this architecture was the visual image of worship. They were inseparable. The two rivulets were running along the same course.

If we move forward 500 years to the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem we see the same plan, but a much larger building in stone. An idealised version taken from Ezekiel's prophecy should give some idea of its scale and design. It was the envy of the ancient world and copied by the surrounding nations. It was destroyed and rebuilt again and again. It was so firmly fixed in the mind of the Jews that the condition of their Temple mirrored the state of the nation, that when the Temple was destroyed, the people felt all hope had gone; and when the Temple was rebuilt the nation was revised. It was inconceivable to them that God could speak to his people outside the framework of this building – this architecture. The rivulets of faith and art were still indissolubly connected, but the river is now wider and deeper.

But before we leave this Old Testament history, we must briefly look at a few islands that began to appear in this wide river. Islands of protest and dissent against the force of the current. Chief among these was King Solomon

himself. Even at the dedication of the Temple, he says: 'But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven and heaven of heaven cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded.' (1 Kings 8/27)

In those early days, even Solomon realised that there was much that was imperfect about the most magnificent building and this must have encouraged him to think that there would be, one day, a clearer and better way.

Another island of protest was the prophets, who spoke up when they saw the moral state of those who were most zealous for this architecturally-orientated worship. For all its art and architecture and music, for all its priesthood and liturgy and sacrifices, these visual aids could not satisfy the conscience or answer the deeper longings of an enlightened soul.

We now come to my second point, New Testament times; where the truths that lay concealed in the Old Testament were revealed in the New, where, it seems, the two rivers divide and run in opposite directions.

It is hard for us, brought up in a Christian culture, nearly 2000 years after the event, to realise the extent of the change; the mental readjustment required by the work and words of this carpenter of Nazareth. The things he said were so completely against the spirit of the times because he took materialism out of temple religion, and replaced it with metaphor. Until he came, the whole concept of worship was neatly confined to particular people. All this he seemed to turn upside down, when he said those memorable words: 'I will destroy this Temple, and build it again in three days'.

Such was the devotion of the priests to the temple, that this statement was quoted at his trial and accepted as sufficient evidence to have him condemned to death. Could we argue, I wonder, that the misguided love of architecture was the justification for the crucifixion? Certainly it shows how close architecture and worship can become and how dangerous it can be.

It was left to the Apostles to reveal the full extent of this destruction and rebuilding; to reform in the mind an image of the temple from worship surrounded by the dead stones of a physical building; to worship in spirit and truth surrounded by the living stones of like-minded people. This metaphor was repeated again and again by the Apostles, and I give but two examples: 'Know ye not that ye are the *Temple of God* and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. If a man defile the *Temple of God*, him shall God destroy; for the *Temple of God* is holy, which *Temple* ye are' (1 Cor 3/16). This word *Temple* repeated no less than four times in this one verse is used each time as metaphor.

The Apostle Peter also has a long section about temple building when he says: 'Ye also as lively stones are built up a *Spiritual House*, a Holy Priesthood, to offer up Spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ' (1 Peter 2/5). Peter is not thinking of rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem made of thousands of dead stones but of re-erecting a temple made of thousands of believers.

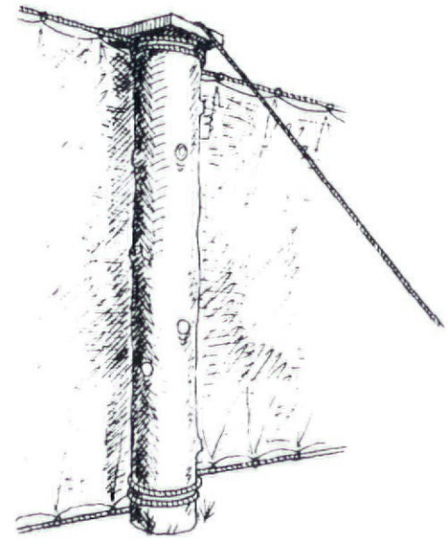
Time would fail us if we were to start on the *Letter to the Hebrews* which explains in unanswerable terms how all the old temple worship was a type of Christ; as the great archetype has come, all the shadows must fade away.

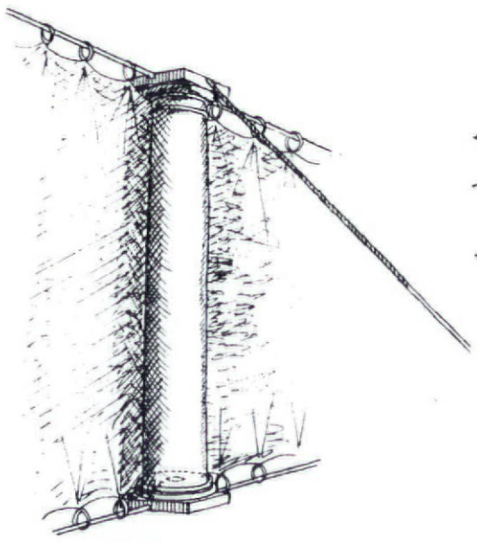
Anyone who seriously and without prejudice studies these apostolic letters, will come to the conclusion that physical buildings played no part in the New Testament Church.

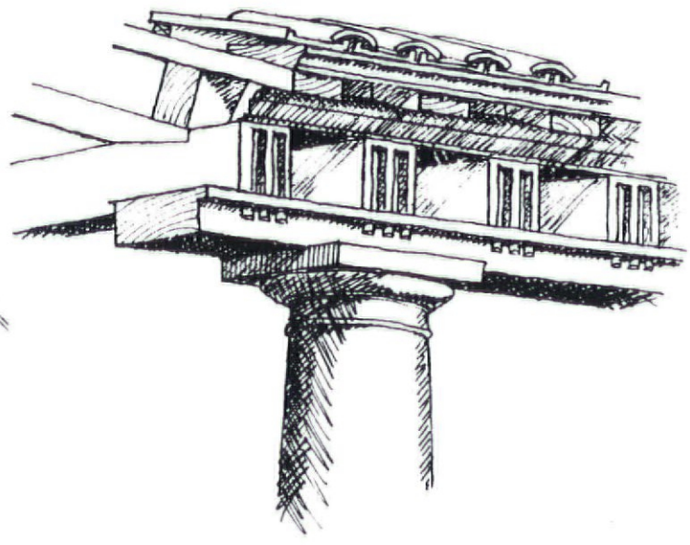
We have further evidence from our knowledge of language. The Greek word used in the New Testament for 'Church' is ἐκκλήσια, from which we have our word 'ecclesiastic'. It comes from two words ἐκ meaning 'out of' and ἐκάλησα meaning 'called'. It therefore describes a gathering of 'called out' people. The word is use 109 times in the New Testament, but never does it refer to a physical building.

Also, the word 'edify' comes from the Latin 'aedificare', meaning 'to build'. It is used 20 times in the New Testament and always means building up in knowledge, not building a structure. Our rivers are now running in opposite directions.

You might well ask at this point, 'Has the art of architecture ceased now it has lost its spiritual meaning?' Not at all! The gospel was now spreading without the shell of architecture; and similarly, temple architecture was spreading to all types of building – markets, sports stadia, government buildings, private houses, without the strait-







A primitive enclosure of canvas stretched on ropes supported between posts driven into the ground and held upright by guy ropes

The enclosure formalised by the inspired artist in the Court of the Tabernacle. The hangings are supported from hooks on rails supported from silver capitals with hooks and fillets on columns of acacia wood set in brass bases

The colonnade around the Temple Court. A stone colonnade supporting cedar wood architrave under the beams bracing principal rafters, plates, common rafters and tilting fillet supporting a tile roof

jacket of religion. To the Christian all secular work is holy; all service to man is service to Christ; and all buildings should honour the Lord.

The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.

We now come to the third section, dealing with the history up to the beginning of this century, in which we see a recurrence of Old and New Testament attitudes: between worship centred on a building, and worship where the building has no significance.

In the age of the Church's greatest growth, up to the time of Constantine, AD330, there were no official church buildings at all. Thereafter, with toleration, buildings were erected called churches, for the preaching of the Word and administration of the Sacraments. Some were little more than sheds to keep out wind and weather; some were converted pagan temples with second-hand columns from other buildings – the Early Christian and Byzantine epoch. But in time this simple worship, requiring a high degree of knowledge and understanding, gave way to more tangible and visible forms, and buildings became gradually more complicated as the gospel became less clear.

By AD1500, all over Christendom there were large and impressive religious buildings erected on the Old Testament pattern that were almost identical in function to the temple. There were the daily sacrifices at the altar; the priesthood in all its hierarchy complete with vestments, incense, choirs, music, art and Holy days. The rivers were running together again. But whereas in Old Testament times this type of worship had divine sanction, now, with the coming of Christ, it had *none*. It was therefore re-creating a temple which Christ had destroyed; reintroducing a priesthood and a sacrifice that Christ had superseded, all as if Christ had not yet come.

This went on until the Reformation when the New Testament was rediscovered. But the architecture was slow to change because it was easy to convert these buildings to a simple service; although later the preaching box plan of the Wren churches evolved a very different type of architecture to the Middle Ages.

But after the Reformation came the Counter Reformation in Europe and in England the 19th-century Oxford Movement pulled architecture back to the Old Testament form.

All this is clearly demonstrated by Dedham Parish Church (the venue for this lecture). Almost certainly there would have been a simple brick or wooden church on this spot before 1492 (Wycliffe and his Lollards were active up and down the country and in East Anglia). But with the power of the medieval church and the riches of the wool merchants it must have been decided to erect this impressive stone building with nave, aisles and chancel; it would have had a rood-screen across the chancel steps to separate the laity from the priests who would be up at the east end near a stone altar. In the roof structure were corbels carved with angels' heads, and you may have noticed, on the large entrance door, the intricately carved panels with saints in niches. The image of God was no longer engraved in the hearts of the faithful meditating upon the Bible, but carved in wood and stone for an easier, less cerebral, but highly visual adoration.

During the Puritan era the stone altar was replaced with a wooden table; the Ten Commandments, Lord's Prayer and Apostles' Creed were clearly painted at the east end. A wooden pulpit was placed in the middle surrounded by box pews. There was clear glass in the windows and any human form which could cause idolatry was removed. Thus the English Parish Church was brought to its familiar 17th-century form.

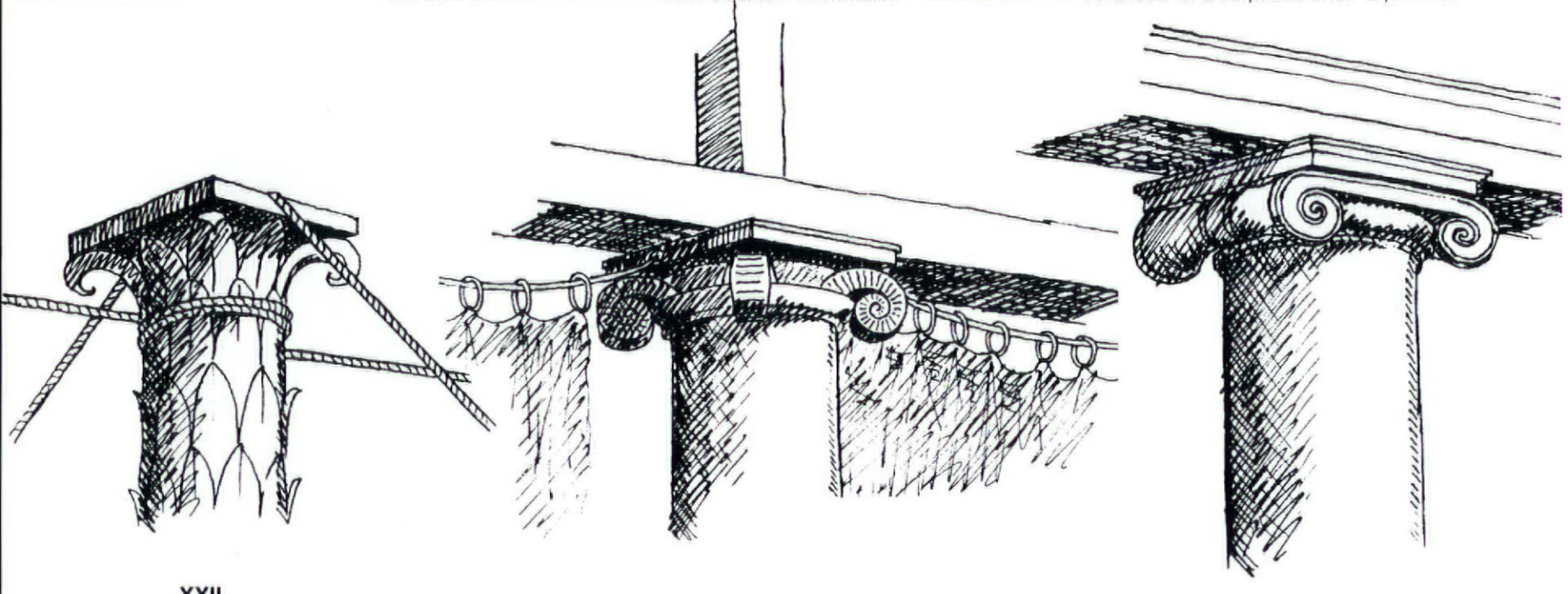
It is important to add that although the Puritans cleared the building of these things, they did not destroy it, or move the congregation to a shed. This building was part of their culture; it reminded them of the divine attributes of order and privilege and raised their spirits as only art can do. So long as the building was not regarded as a means of grace it was harmless to their souls.

But history moved on, and in the last century, 'the saints that went out of the door at the Reformation came in at the windows'. Numerous images in stained glass, the concept of the altar replaced, the Ten Commandments covered by damask curtains and surrounded by a stone reredos with more images of angels, a choir vestry added in high Gothic design. The visual effect of Cranmers' simple Anglican service was cathedralised for a surpliced choir to process

A green branch of a palm tree cut off and driven into the ground to act as a post for a canvas enclosure. It will sprout leaves which press up and curl under the square top forming volutes

The inspired artists formalise the natural shape into rams' horns made in acacia wood overlaid with gold and placed at the door of the Tabernacle. These remind the worshippers of the nature of sacrifice

The same forms adapted with many variations by Solomon at the entrance to the Temple in Jerusalem and constructed in stone



behind a brass cross. No wonder the thinking world is confused by what it sees.

I shall end this talk with some thought on this 20th-century position. It seems that our river is nearing the end of its course and has become a wide delta of confusion.

I believe we are now involved in the final crisis that confronts the world and which is leaving a devastating effect on our minds and hearts.

Throughout the long history we have been surveying, up to 100 years ago, everything carried on more or less as it had since the creation. The horse pulled the cart and ploughed the field; the wind filled the sails of the boats that transported our goods, there was a *modest* use of the earth's resources and all waste was naturally recycled. Whether he liked it or not mankind *had* to live close to his maker.

But now *everything* has changed. We are the victims of a voracious technology, ruthlessly consuming the resources of the earth. As we watch this opening of Pandora's box which no-one can close we begin to see that for all these benefits, these things will bring about huge collective disasters; and as we watch the march of progress we observe the gentler and rarer species of animal and plant crushed to extinction beneath its feet.

But the gentlest and rarest species, it seems to me, are the *creative gift of art* and *the fear of the Creator*, both of which, speaking generally, have disappeared. 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom'; we have lost this fear, and so we have become foolish.

I do not know how to explain this phenomenon, except by relating this *lack of creative gift to the Creator*. We noticed earlier in the building of the Tabernacle that when mankind rejects the belief in the Creator, then this creative ability disappears. I would suggest that never before in the history of the world has man been able to reject God so completely and successfully.

Even the Ancient Roman at his most evil had a fear of God which we have discarded. He realised that his life depended on the one who gives rain and sunshine. If there was famine he prayed to Ceres, the god of Corn; if he was sick he brought libations to Aesculapius, the God of healing; when they were childless they prayed to the God of fertility; and they acknowledged their dependence on the goddess Fortuna for good luck. But the pride of technological man has no limits, and is infinitely greater than his Roman counterpart.

Whereas the heathen feared the Creator and bowed down to wood and stone, modern man fears no god and has no hope beyond technology. Ancient man harnessed nature and expressed this in his art; modern man, finds himself, tragically, opposed to nature and has expressed this defiance in his art, and thus the creative-artistic gift must disappear.

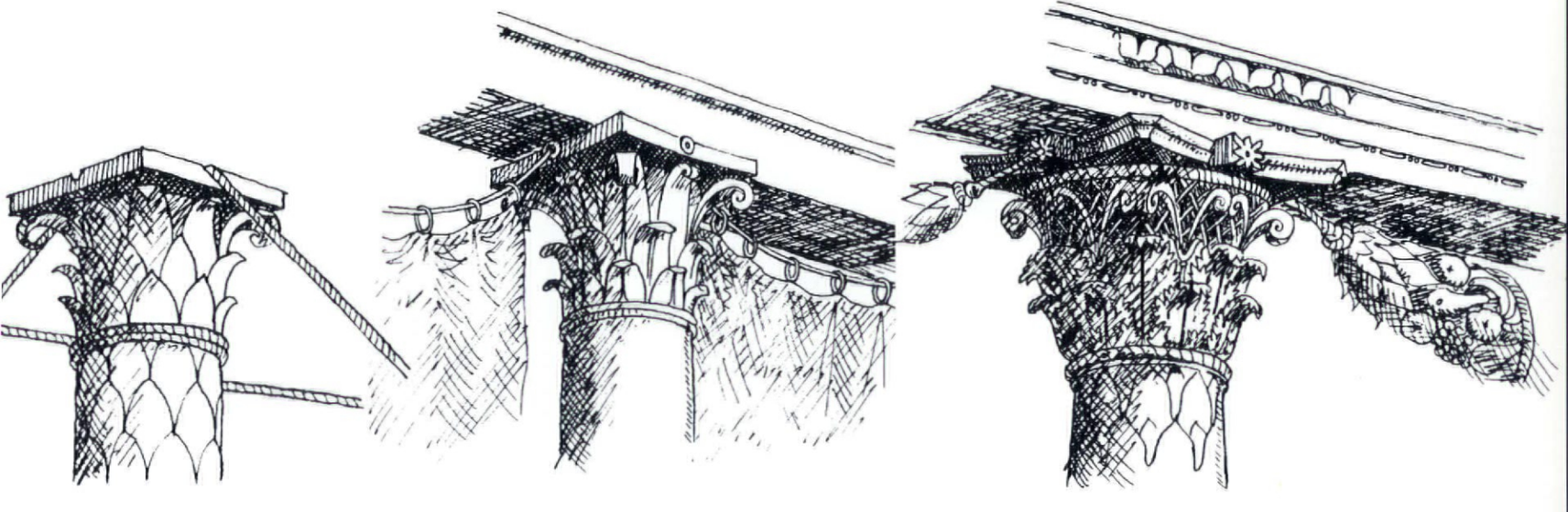
I will show you how this happened in architecture. In the past, we were confined to the disciplines of natural materials – brick, stone, timber, slate and stucco. Dedham, as a village, is a good example of this. The height was controlled by our ability to climb stairs and the depth was controlled by natural light and air. In our cities, the same disciplines applied. But now steel, glass, concrete and plastics, electric lifts, artificial light and air, have given us an unbridled and unlimited freedom which we are able to control. In fact, cheap, temporary construction and maximum profit have become our gods. In the 18th century Canaletto painted a view of the city of London from Somerset House; it *was* a beautiful city with St Paul's dominating the skyline. Today the same view shows St Paul's dwarfed by the new Temples of Mammon: the Banks, who live off usury; and the insurance companies who fix their stakes on our misfortunes. In the old days people's approach to building was like that of the Radcliffe Camera in Oxford; notable for its proportion, its use of the Classical orders, its natural materials, its scale, its harmony, and how it fits in with its surroundings. Today our approach to building is more like that of the buildings around St Paul's. They display no natural materials, no sense of proportion, no harmony or grace. They cannot be compared with the buildings of our forefathers. The ability to design and build beautiful buildings, *generally speaking*, has ceased.

In the old days artists could paint like Andrea Mantegna whose work was notable for its form, anatomy, colour, perspective and composition. Such art lifts the soul and makes us feel good.

A green palm branch with a lower rope that allows another layer of leaves to sprout and curl under the square top

The inspired artists formalise the natural shapes in gold and place them either side of the entrance to the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle where they support the veil

Solomon refines and overrides this capital in The Temple. It has a belly and basketwork as described in I Kings VII 16-20. There are also festoons hanging from the rosettes in the abaci



Today we paint like Sir Francis Bacon with neither beauty, anatomy, perspective nor grace – all is an insult to the human form – or more like Mark Rothko whose pictures are just harsh, brutal and ugly. It is the expression of an age without a soul. It cannot compare with the work of our forefathers. The ability to paint, speaking generally, has ceased. An image of Yves Klein's, perhaps, is the final statement of nihilism, a blue rectangle selling for a vast sum – £57,000. But who is taken in by these emperor's new clothes? Perhaps not insignificant country people, like myself, but go to the big cities, talk to the ones who run the galleries, the institutions, the academies, the schools and the media, and you will discover that this is regarded as great art, and not for what it is: the expression of an age which is morally and spiritually bankrupt – a world that knows not what to do, nor where to turn.

So is our position today without hope? Are we of all men the most miserable? By no means! As in theology, so in architecture, there is always a remnant whose sights are fixed on another world. And as we toil below through this short uncertain earthly life, we can at least attempt to re-create something of his creation. The opportunities are few, but they are at least possible, and here I acknowledge that I owe this good fortune to my clients, whose courage in commissioning and financing these schemes has kept the lamp of traditional architecture flickering. It may be private houses for families of means, who regard their home as the centre of an orderly world. And here again, as in theology, so in architecture, there is nothing new worth having. As Solomon said 'the thing that hath been is that which shall be, and that which is done is that which shall be done and there is no new thing (worth having) under the sun. Is there anything whereof it may be said "See this new?" It hath already been before us in old times' (Ecc 1/9). Another opportunity may only be a new organ case in an old church where the vicar wants the craftsman's art to correspond to music's measure.

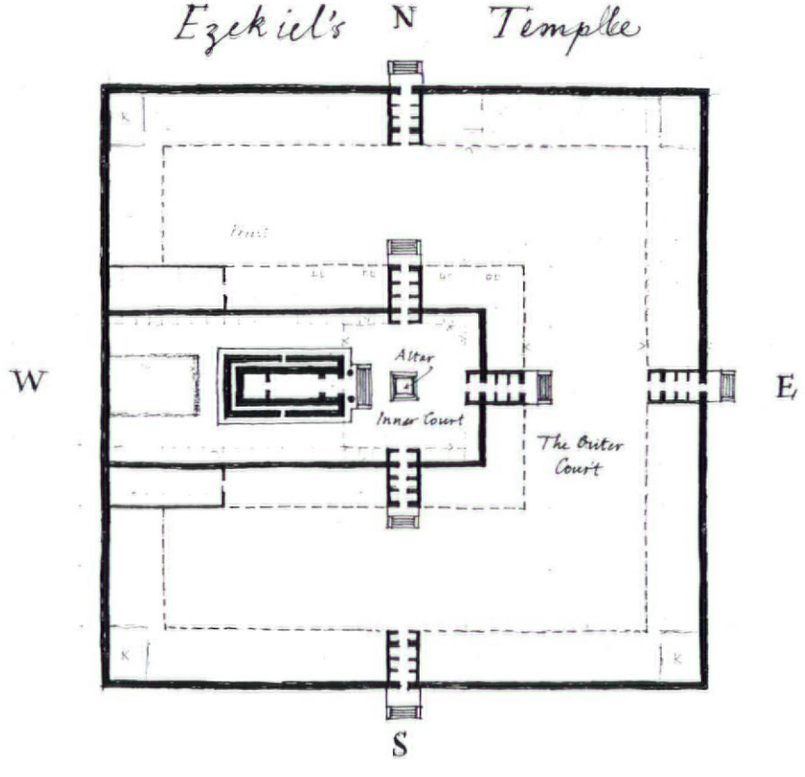
It may be a Cambridge college which is committed to Classicism since its foundation and sees no good reason to change course in spite of all the ridicule it receives from the media. And here again, as in theology so in architecture one has to put up with all the ridicule and scorn that are heaped upon us by the high priests of the establishment. It may be a major project on the banks of the Thames where the developer believes, as in theology, so in architecture, that traditional building is right for yesterday, today and forever. But it may be a tiny commission, just an overmantel to a fireplace, or a garden temple, or a memorial scarcely two feet square.

But each can give an opportunity for the working man to practise the skill he was born to use; to create with his hands the thing that is good whether he works in stone carving the profiles of a cornice, or casting a Doric capital from a mould, or working in iron forming scrolls or twisting a wrought iron bar, or carving in wood the time honoured Corinthian capital, all these raise a man to the exalted level of the creative artist; the craftsman, of whom Kipling wrote:

Who lest all thought of Eden fade
Bring'st Eden to the Craftsmen's brain
Godlike to muse o'er his own trade
And manlike to stand with God again.

This article is based on a lecture given at the Dedham Ecclesiastical Lectureship Trust.

Ezekiel's Temple

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CHRISTOPHER MARTIN
MEDIATED INNOVATIONS

American television is not famous for its coverage of the arts. Nonetheless there is, embedded in the schedules of public service television, more going on than it sometimes gets credit for. There is a not dishonourable tradition of portraits of modern architects – mostly made by New York producer Michael Blackwood – which have painstakingly documented the work of such architects as Frank Gehry, Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, Michael Graves and Robert Stern. These films are sometimes bought for British television and, somewhat grudgingly, shown on one of the arts slots. The lack of enthusiasm with which they are transmitted is because they are thought to be worthy but dull. Blackwood gets the big names but the films plod a bit.

British television has anyway rather gone off the profile. Artists who have kept themselves to themselves over the years and have thus acquired rarity value may be honoured by an invitation to the full treatment but both Channel 4 and the BBC look for what they regard as more exciting formats.

Channel 4 in particular has been so anxious to break the bonds of expectancy that its arts programming swirls in and out of recognisability as being concerned with the arts at all. The price of failure in this respect is marginalisation – programmes being seen as of interest or no concern to anyone least of all that constituency which like art and likes to see programmes about it. The rewards for those responsible for planning and scheduling a programme like the one that featured an 'obituary' of Spike Milligan are a certain amount of morbid press attention and the satisfaction of having cocked a snook at bourgeois expectations of what programmes about the arts should be like.

In fact the whole idea of a shockable, middle-brow audience out there is almost poignantly out of date nowadays. Such members of the British public as remain who feel offended or disturbed by horrid sights, four letter words or vulgar presentation are – unless they have enlisted in the army of Mary Whitehouse – unlikely to be watching the programme anyway or will be sufficiently wise about the ways of the media, to know their letters of anguish and protest are exactly what the programme makers most hope for. The cries of indignation are proof of the producer's vitality, the letters to the press (and these are what the producer and director are really praying for) are evidence of the programme being 'controversial', 'news worthy', an 'event', not just a boring show setting out to be entertaining or interesting or generally informative. 'Interesting' is one of the great put down words in television. If the purpose of art is to shock, destabilise, and – in a favourite word at the moment – 'subvert', so too must be television programmes about it.

For some years there have been very few programmes on any channel which have dealt with what might be called the 'traditional' arts and none about the crafts. The crafts have become ensnared in their image of thatched-cottagey folk art, an element in the dreadfully – to the media – unfashionable world of 'heritage' and conservation. To say that these subjects are unfashionable is to underestimate the deep disdain in which they are held by most television professionals. Art, and architecture so they believe, should be 'progressive'. In television, if nowhere else, the idea of an 'avant-garde' out there in front, challenging, changing things, 'subverting', still holds firm.

True, there has been some recognition in recent months that whole areas of the arts – those areas indeed which most people like best and instinctively believe to be important – have been actively banished from the schedules for about eight years. But if TV condescends to make a film about, say, Mantegna now it is unlikely that Mantegna will emerge from the experience unscathed. The item will be shot in a mannered and self-regarding way. Emphasis will be laid on 'style' – and will mobilise such a multiplicity of views and opinions about the artist that the viewer is unlikely to

be able to remember a single point made by the frenzied legion of experts whose 30 second *aperçus* constituted whatever argument or narrative the film may have had. Similarly a recent film about London enlisted on oddly assorted *équipe* of commentators and pundits rather than follow an argument or give time for a single point of view to develop. Single points of view are, one must assume, deeply unfashionable too because few of them now are allowed on television. The reason for this is that they are thought to be authoritarian and undemocratic. Besides, the film-maker can have much more fun playing various points of view off against each other rather than collaborating with – and being thus obliged to bend his film-making talents to – another, possibly weightier author than himself. No director can read without pain the words 'X's film about Y' when he or she knows very well that it was *his* or *her* film and that X, the front man, was bone idle and didn't even write his own commentary. Modest anonymity is no way to acquiring the reputation of being the Ken Russell of the 90s and – more pressing – contracts may not be renewed for those whose lustre is seen to be shining only fitfully.

Television has never been a place for strong, silent men.

For television, contemporary art is 'modern' art – art smiled upon by the Arts Council, endorsed by the Tate Gallery, traded in by West End dealers, and written about by the critics. It is within the area defined by what is in fact quite a small area of taste that such 'discourse' as there is about art in this country is conducted. Any other kind of art, however popular, is treated as if it simply didn't exist. It is very rarely actually attacked because its very presence is unacknowledged. To acknowledge it would be to confer on it a faint echo, but an echo nonetheless, of Russia in the 30s when disagreeable elements in the culture were mentally eradicated from the picture so that the final victory of what was officially approved could be guaranteed.

The sterility and impenetrability of so much approved, modern art has presented something of a problem to the media. If 'acceptable' art is so unyielding and unpromising it is scarcely surprising that art has become less and less a subject in itself and more and more regarded as a kind of metaphor for something else – something to be used – something of social, political and psychological significance if not much else. And from art as a branch of social studies it is but a short step for subjects which had hitherto been seen as the footnotes to art being promoted above art because they provide the means with which to delve even more clearly and entertainingly into the national psychology.

Producer Nicholas Barker scored a hit a year or so ago with his series 'Washes Whiter', a history of television advertising. The films were not interested at all in the products – whether they were any good or whether indeed the campaigns, so nostalgically disinterred, succeeded. What the commercials showed was what in the 50s and 60s, we had thought about women, men, homes, mothers, etc . . . 'Signs of the Times', Nicholas Barker's latest series, scrutinised with a mordant eye the anguish and the conflicts engendered within the home by such things as the choice of chairs or of sitting-room curtains. It was horribly entertaining. But it arrived on the screen after a belated – but by no means unimportant – debate broke out about how such programmes were taking the place of *proper* 'arts' programmes in the schedules.

It was easier, it was pointed out by Patrick Wright in *The Guardian*, to find a programme about Coke bottles or training shoes on television than one about, say, Keats. Certainly Keats was thought to have been eclipsed in television's pantheon by the likes of Bob Dylan. So much so that the new Head of Music and Arts at the BBC, Michael Jackson – at first sight an unlikely wearer of the mantle of Matthew Arnold – felt moved to pronounce fearlessly that Keats *was* more important than Dylan. This unexpected 'fiat' for Keats ran like wildfire through the world of television arts programme makers. What did it mean? It was examined like a Papal Bull not only for what it said but what, between the lines, it may have meant.

Was the BBC's Arts Department embarking on the greatest U-turn since John Berger's 'Ways of Seeing' followed Lord Clarke's 'Civilisation'?

Patrick Wright's original *Guardian* article provoked letters and follow-up articles which indicated that there were a number of viewers who had watched with irritation at what they saw as the standard late evening talk and

condescending manner of 'The Late Show'. The programme, much praised within the corporation, had, it seemed, been almost more than some *Guardian* readers could bear. Not least it was too metropolitan – if it wasn't about London it was about New York and it certainly never took an away-day ticket to cover what was going on in Manchester or Sheffield. It is true that striving to make what used to be called 'broadly-based' programmes having roots in general, public affection has not, for a long time, been a top priority of arts producers. The traditional constituency for such programmes has been ignored or insulted by the tone of voice adopted by producers anxious lest any 'bourgeoisie' out there derive any scrap of comfort, solace, reassurance from anything on the show.

This puts them in good odour with the energetic coterie of writers who patrol the media – many of whom seem to have derived their philosophy of life from *Time Out* when students in the 70s and base their moral vision from a knowing, world-weary nihilism.

For them, arts programmes are a kind of moral and political battleground and for them, Channel 4 isn't winning. BBC2 is. *It* is 'innovative', a word much favoured by the coterie. According to media mythology, 'innovation' was one of the principle elements in Channel 4's heroic birth and early life. Now, despite the frenzied attempts of Commissioning Editor of the Arts to be so, he is thought to have failed in the fight to be innovative.

The minorities for whom all the alternative, 'innovative' programming are designed, are not of course those minorities who are interested in the crafts, 'heritage', conservation, etc. The minorities have come to be the practitioners rather than the audience. There is an anxious multitude of independent producers anxious to get their stuff on the air and who vie with each other in political correctness and right-on artistic and cultural values which make them indistinguishable from each other – (insofar as they appear to stand for anything).

It is originality of technique, boldness with the TV language, an often reckless enthusiasm for new technologies, a paranoid distrust of the ordinary and the day to day which usually manifests itself by an obsession with 'style' for its own sake at the expense of subjects that are seen as being the main justification for the minority channels. Not the satisfaction of viewers' tastes and expectations.

It is not likely that Keats will feature generously in this year's programming but, as though to silence criticism, the BBC put on a whole range of programmes about an archetypal old master – Rembrandt. There is even talk of the return of major TV series with authoritative front persons giving their personal and weighty views.

The BBC is thus trying to recapture lost high ground. Is its heart in the assault? Or is it an attempt to annexe an area of art before the opposition wakes up to the fact that what is at stake is far more important than curtains, training shoes and Spike Milligan. When charters are renewed and licenses allocated Rembrandt reassures that hearts are in the right place and will weigh in the balance impressively.

Channel 4, on the other hand, was left looking cheap with its *J'accuse* programme about St Paul's Cathedral. In it the past President of the RIBA said what a rotten building it was and how pernicious its current influence. *Country Life* discovered a publication of only a year before which Max Hutchinson had said what a masterpiece St Paul's was.

The media's obsession with 'innovation' put it at something of a disadvantage when it came to reacting to The Prince of Wales' Institute for Architecture. The Prince's ambitions to start a new school whose purpose is no less than to change the whole culture of building, not only in Britain but beyond, could hardly be called unambitious. It might even be called 'innovative'. There was not much for the tender-skinned to take offence at in the Prince's inaugural speech at St James' Palace with which he launched the enterprise. It was hard to object to his call for a return to an 'architecture of the heart and the spirit' even though some commentators were uneasy about the methods by which this goal was to be achieved. Some confessed themselves baffled by how such high moral sentiments, as well as an enthusiasm for 'traditional wisdoms', were to be integrated into the computer aided, and technologically obsessed world of modern architecture.

Some looked wistfully towards the RIBA hoping for some squashing fatwah or at least a disapproving word or two. But the RIBA seems happy enough to welcome the Institute and sufficient staff-work had been carried out by the Institute's Director Brian Hanson for the established schools of architecture and design not to feel put out or

threatened by an organisation which Prince and Director were at pains to say was a compliment, not a rival, to what was already available. In fact so virtuous did the project seem that it was difficult for some papers to get a 'story' out of it at all. The best some could manage was to write about Keith Critchlow's expertise in sacred geometry as if it was some kind of weird obsession with the occult. Dr Critchlow is a key figure in the new Institute and is Head of Visual and Traditional Islamic Art at the Royal College of Art (which probably sounds odd enough for some of the press to have a snigger). This, one suspects, puts him rather outside the mainstream of Royal College thinking. But used as he is to incomprehension and criticism he was shocked by the ignorance and the venom of the press as they tried to discredit the Institute through trying to discredit him.

A moment to relish at the morning press conference at which the Institute was launched was Christopher Alexander's reply to a reporter who suggested that behind all the diplomatic language the Institute was in fact to be a centre for the great anti-Modernist crusade. What, he asked hopefully, didn't they like about Modern architecture? Which architects was it which, in particular, they didn't like? Alexander referred him to Descartes. Most of what was wrong with our age, let alone our architecture had its roots in the 17th century. Modern architects were the victims of an ancient malaise – a vain belief in 'progress' which stemmed from the Enlightenment rather than bold perpetrators of a new offence.

Another obvious PR move had been to invite the supposedly hostile members of the architectural press to the Palace to hear the Prince for themselves. They may not have fully accepted the spiritual message but the sincerity and commitment of the messenger could not be denied. What some had billed as another round in the battle between Modernists and traditionalists, between the corrosive polarities of current architectural opinion, turned out to be something much more muted, much more subtle and much more important and, indeed, truly innovative.

LEFT TO RIGHT: Leon Krier, Alan Baxter, Demetri Porphyrios, George Smith and Brian Hanson of The Prince of Wales' Institute of Architecture



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YOUR HEALTH AND THE INTERIOR ENVIRONMENT A Complete Guide to Better Health Through Control of the Atmosphere ***by Randall Earl Dunford with Kevin G May, NuDawn Publications, Dallas, 1991, 772pp, b/w ills, PB $19.95***

DESIGN JURIES ON TRIAL The Renaissance of the Design Studio ***by Kathryn H Anthony, Chapman and Hall, London, 1991, 257pp, b/w ills, PB, price N/A***

BUILDING FOR INDUSTRY ***by Kurt Ackermann, Watermark, Surrey, 1991, 264pp, b/w ills, PB £15.00***

CAMBRIDGESHIRE LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES A Manual for Management and Change in the Rural Landscape ***Cambridgeshire County Council, Granta, Cambridge, 1991, 86pp, ills, PB £9.95***

CONTEMPORARY MASTERWORKS ***edited by Colin Naylor, St James' Press, London, 1992, 933pp, b/w ills, HB £90.00***

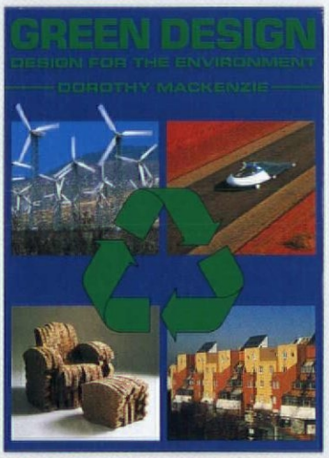
CONSTRUCTION INTO DESIGN The Influence of New Methods of Construction on Architectural Design, 1690-1990 ***by James Strike, 227pp, b/w ills, PB £19.95***

RON ARAD Restless Furniture ***by Deyan Sudjic, A Blueprint Monograph, Fourth Estate, London, 1989, 111pp, ills, PB, price N/A***

THE PROCESS OF LANDSCAPE DESIGN ***by Seamus W Filor, Batsford, London, 1991, 160pp, b/w ills, HB £30.00***

THE ARTLESS WORD Mies van der Rohe on the Building Art ***by Fritz Neumeyer, MIT Press, London, 1991, 386pp, b/w ills, HB £44.95***

GREEN DESIGN Design for the Environment by Dorothy Mackenzie, Laurence King, London, 1991, 176pp, ills, HB £16.95
Environmental issues are no longer the speciality of scientific experts, they are now at the forefront in a great many design considerations. This new level of awareness has caught many designers by surprise and up until now very little guidance has been given. This volume defines the issues clearly and addresses the problems many designers may encounter in all areas of design. With a wealth of illustrations and case studies, Mackenzie explains how enormous improvements can be made in the use of materials without in any way sacrificing good aesthetics or excellent functioning.

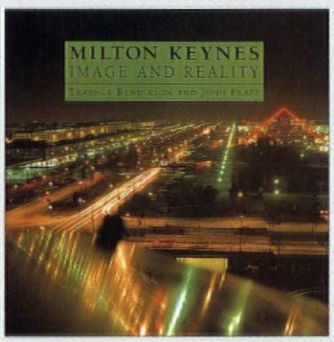


ALDO ROSSI The Complete Buildings and Projects 1981-1991 edited by Morris Adjmi, Thames and Hudson, London 1992, 300pp, ills, PB £29.95
Aldo Rossi has achieved recognition not only as a practising architect but also as an artist and author of architectural and urban design theories. Over the last ten years there has been a progressive increase in the number of projects he has completed each year and the spread of his work from Italy to other parts of Europe, Asia and America.

Most of his projects completed in the last ten years are collected in this monograph. Among the 61 works presented are the Hotel Il Palazzo in Fukuoka, Japan; the Venice Biennale Entry Portal and Palazzo del Cinema, 1991; Lighthouse Theatre, Toronto, Canada, 1987 and Disney Office Complex, Orlando, Florida, 1991, each with a descriptive project text. These are accompanied by essays by Karen Stein, Diane Ghirardo and Aldo Rossi.

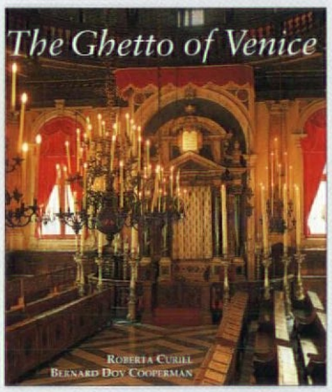
The final section of the book includes a project chronology from Rossi's thesis design to the current Art Academy in the Bronx, New York. This is followed by a chronology of his furniture and product design, a biography and list of his exhibitions.

MILTON KEYNES Image and Reality by Terence Bendixson and John Platt, Granta, Cambridge, 1992, 301pp, ills, HB £14.95
Any document about Milton Keynes is bound to cause controversy. As Britain's largest new town it has aroused the fiercest passions. It is argued that none can deny its financial success as it has attracted over 100,000 people to this area of North Buckinghamshire. The main sources to this book include the still confidential minutes of the board of Milton Keynes Development Corporation and taped interviews with prime movers in the building of the city. The result is a volume which will be of technical use to professionals involved in planning and development on a grand scale.



BUYING A HOME by John Smythe, SHAC Publications, London, 1991, 116pp, PB £4.95
A comprehensive guide to what is for most people the largest single purchase of their lives. It is good to know that this essential reference point is available for anyone wanting to assess for themselves the merits of all the various forms of purchase and finance in an easily accessible form cutting out the half-understood and often meaningless jargon. A vital addition to the helpful and illuminating SHAC library.

THE GHETTO OF VENICE by Roberta Curiel and Bernard Dov Cooperman, Tauris Parke, London 1990, 176pp, ills, HB £29.95
With sumptuously evocative imagery and informative descriptions the Ghetto in Venice is explained and illustrated. Its cultural heritage and origins are depicted with material available for the first time from the Museum of Jewish Art in Venice which reflects not only the diversity of the groups and traditions from which the Ghetto was formed, but also how it became an integral part of the life of the Venetian Republic, bequeathing a wealth of art and artefacts.



SOLAR ARCHITECTURE IN EUROPE Design, Performance and Evaluation edited by Theo C Steemers, a Commission of the European Communities volume, Prism Press, Dorset, 1991, 260pp, colour ills, PB £14.95
Solar Architecture in Europe is a result of a project within the EEC's research and development programme to study houses, schools, factories and offices with features using passive solar energy.

The purpose behind this project was political and economic. A reduction of Europe's dependence on imported oil would also bring down costs in the face of rising oil prices. It was perhaps most obviously environmental as there was the hope of reducing pollution.

30 schemes are fully explained and evaluated. Full details are provided about the aims of the schemes, the design features, their performance and cost effectiveness.

A recent study of the potential of passive solar energy as a fuel reveals that it is being underused. This book should be seen as a positive contribution to its widening application.

ARCHITECTURAL INTERIOR SYSTEMS Lighting, Acoustics, Air Conditioning ***edited by Flynn, Kremers, Segil and Steffy, Chapman and Hall, London, 1991, 338pp, b/w ills, HB £32.50***

OWNING YOUR OWN FLAT A Practical Guide to Problems with Your Lease and Landlord ***by Jankowski and Perri 6, SHAC Publications, London, 1990, 72pp, PB £3.95***

FROM DRAWING BOARD TO BUILDING SITE Working Conditions, Quality, Economic Performance, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, ***HMSO, London, 1992, 64pp, b/w ills, PB £8.95***

MORE THAN HOUSING Lifeboats for Women and Children ***by Joan Forrester Sprague, Butterworth Architecture, Oxford, 1991, 235pp, b/w ills, PB £22.50***

LOW-E GLAZING DESIGN GUIDE ***by Timothy E Johnson, Butterworth Architecture, Oxford 1991, 200pp, b/w ills, HB £27.50***

GUIDE TO RECORDING HISTORIC BUILDINGS ***Icomos (International Council on Monuments and Sites), Oxford, 1991, 80pp, b/w illus, PB £17.95***

PRACTICE MANAGEMENT FOR DESIGN PROFESSIONALS A Practical Guide to Avoiding Liability and Enhancing Profitability ***by John Philip Bachner, Wiley, Chichester, 1991, 371pp, b/w ills, HB £47.50***

REPAIR AND REFURBISHMENT OF MODERN BUILDIINGS ***by Ian Chandler, Batsford, London, 1992, 176pp, b/w ills, HB £30.00***

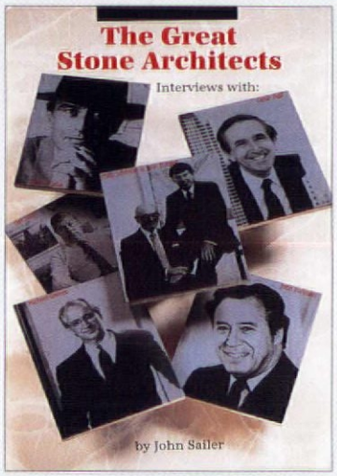
THE GUIDE TO THE ARCHITECTURE OF PARIS ***by Norval White, Charles Scribners, New York, 1992, 448pp, b/w ills, PB $24.95***

WOOD FRAME HOUSE CONSTRUCTION ***edited by Gerald E Sherwood and Robert C Stroh, Delmar, Albany, New York, 1991, 306pp, b/w ills, PB £12.95***

JAVIER MARISCAL Designing the New Spain by Emma Dent Coad, A Blueprint Monograph, Fourth Estate, London, 1991, 112pp, colour ills, PB £16.95

Javier Mariscal has come to be associated with the face of the new Spain. His mascot 'Cobi-man' for the Barcelona Olympics has caught the mood of a rapidly changing society and he has become an international figure.

This book documents Mariscal's prolific output including the strip cartoons he started drawing at art school, furniture designed for the Memphis group, and restaurant and bar designs in both Japan and Spain including Mariscal's latest collaboration with the architect Arribas, the nightclub Las Torres de Ávila.



THE GREAT STONE ARCHITECTS by John Sailer, Tradelink, New Jersey, 1991, 107pp, colour ills, HB $29.95

A series of interviews with great American architects such as Philip Johnson, Michael Graves, Cesar Pelli and Helmut Jahn extol the virtues and review the problems of working with stone. The discussion of their use of many combinations of stone, from marble and slate through granite to sandstone and limestone is a vehicle for expounding the philosophies of this group of prestigious and accomplished architects (all of whom are well known for their work with this 'traditional' material). The buildings are presented alongside the commentary, by way of a small and perhaps inadequate selection of images, in what proves to be an original evaluation of the architects and their buildings.

THE ROYAL TROPICAL INSTITUTE An Amsterdam Landmark by J Woudsma, KIT Press, Amsterdam, 1992, 48pp, ills, PB £4.00

The Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) in Amsterdam with its museum, library, marble hall and meeting rooms, is an historically interesting building. The architecture, use of materials, sculpture and symbolism reflect the progressive thinking of Dutch government officals and the colonial elite in trade, industry and science. This booklet reveals the history of the KIT building, its sculpture and symbolism, which was designed by Van Nieukerken in 1926.

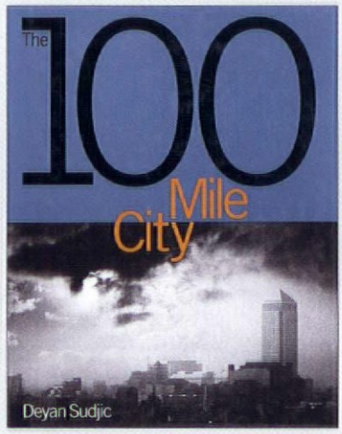
LIVERPOOL STREET STATION A Station for the Twenty-first Century by Nick Derbyshire, Introduction by Colin Amery, Granta, Cambridge, 1991, 127pp, colour ills, HB £25

The intriguing story of the development of a mainline station is cleverly unfolded in this beautifully illustrated book which chronicles the past, present and looks towards the future for this transport terminal. Following an introduction by Colin Amery, Derbyshire, director of Architecture and Design Group at Britsh Rail, who has been intimately involved in the station's design, narrates the story of a progression in design from 1894 into the 21st century.



PALACE ON THE RIVER Terry Farrell's Design for the Redevelopment of Charing Cross by Marcus Binney, Wordsearch Publishing, London, 1991, 96pp, ills, PB £15.00

Published to celebrate the completion of a new major landmark in London, *Palace on the River* presents Terry Farrell's design for the redevelopment of Charing Cross. Binney's text studies the history of the site, the thinking behind the development and the air rights concept, as well as the complex engineering and construction, the design in detail and the broader planning objectives.



THE 100 MILE CITY by Deyan Sudjic, Andre Deutsch, London, 1992, 313pp, b/w ills, HB £20.00

There is a War of the Worlds feel about this volume which chronicles with excitement and tension the life and death struggle for supremacy between cities, paramount in most Western economies. In a style which breathes life Sudjic discusses overall architecture, the physical qualities of cities; how they grow and change through their buildings and how people live and work in them. This analysis is not a dissection of facades and floor plans, but an assessment of forces shaping lives using London, Paris, New York, Tokyo and Los Angeles as its examples. The fate of these cities is critical as their size, power and history set them apart from their competitors.

GESTALTETE LÄDEN 2 Shop Design by Ingrid Wenz-Gahler, Verlagsanstalt Alexander Koch, 1992, English/German text, 216pp, ills, HB, price N/A





ARCHITECTURAL MONOGRAPHS

Architectural Monographs focus on individuals of international stature, who have been influential in education and in practice, and often represent the first publication of a particular architect or firm. Including both built and unbuilt projects, and writings by the architects, the Monograph becomes an invaluable record of the architect presented, and an important source book for further study.

Daniel Libeskind

Daniel Libeskind is one of the most innovative architects working today. The projects featured in this Monograph, together with texts by the architect, range from Micromegas and Chamber Works to the Three Lessons in Architecture, the Berlin 'City Edge' competition, and the Jewish Museum in Berlin.

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Robert AM Stern

Robert Stern's work as an architect is indivisible from his abiding concern with history and historical style, and he is widely acknowledged as one of the originators and key theorists of Post-Modernism. The thirty-three projects featured here reveal the range of influences which have informed Stern's buildings.

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Frank Lloyd Wright

In a major new contribution on the work of this iconoclastic and flamboyant architect, Thomas A Heinz presents aspects of Wright buildings that have previously gone unnoticed. Construction techniques are examined through photographs, all showing Wright's pragmatic approach to detailing.

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Venturi Scott Brown & Associates

In this complete record of houses and housing projects, Venturi Scott Brown and Associates' versatility is revealed. This Monograph is a rigorous, thorough investigation into this established firm's pioneering ideologies over the past thirty years.

ISBN 1 85490 098 6

BOOKS

BOOKS RECEIVED:

RIGHTS GUIDE FOR HOME OWNERS (Eighth Edition) ***by Jan Luba and Derek McConnell, SHAC Publications, London, 1990, 147pp, PB £5.50***

A WOMAN'S PLACE Relationship Breakdown and Your Rights, A Guide For Married Women ***by Julie Bull, Sue Spaull, Lorraine Thompson, SHAC Publications, London, 1991, 82pp, PB £3.95***

GOING IT ALONE Relationship Breakdown and Your Rights, A Guide for Unmarried Women ***by Julie Bull, Sue Spaull, Lorraine Thompson, SHAC Publications, London, 1989, 74pp, PB £3.95***

VERONA ***by Sheila Hale, with photographs by Mark Smith, Tauris Parke, London, 1991, 128pp, colour ills, HB £14.95***

ITALIAN LIVING DESIGN Three Decades of Interiors ***by Guiseppe Raimondi, with photographs by Carla De Bebedetti, Tauris Parke, London, 1991, 288pp, colour ills, HB £24.95***

NORMAN FOSTER SKETCHES ***edited by Werner Blaser, Birkhäuser, Basel, 1992, 240pp, ills, HB 218SFR***

INFLUENCES Voices of Creative Dissent ***by Colin Ward, Greenbooks, Bideford, 1991, 147pp, b/w ills, PB £7.95***

SIMPLIFIED SITE ENGINEERING (Second Edition) ***by Harry Parker, John W Macguire, James Ambrose, Wiley, Chichester, 1991, 178pp, b/w ills, HB £36.95***

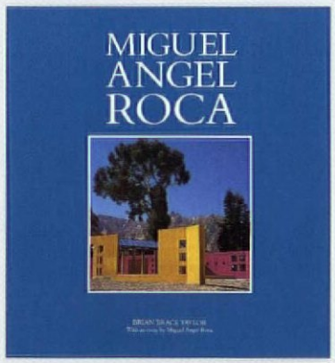
SANTIAGO CALATRAVA Engineering Architecture (Second, revised and extended edition) ***edited by Werner Blaser with contributions by Kenneth Frampton and Pierluigi Nicolin, Birkhäuser, Basel, 1990, 208pp, b/w ills, HB 82SFR***

MIGUEL ANGEL ROCA by Brian Brace Taylor, Mimar Publications, Concept Media Ltd, London, 1992, 180pp, ills, HB £36.95

Miguel Angel Roca has emerged as an important and innovative figure in contemporary architecture. Roca's projects in his native country of Argentina recall its history in unexpected ways and despite political instability and soaring inflation he has produced strong but sensitive architectural statements. His intervention as municipal architect, in conserving and rehabilitating old buildings and creating new urban areas, parks and institutions, had a lasting effect on the policies and appearance of Córdoba, Roca's native town.

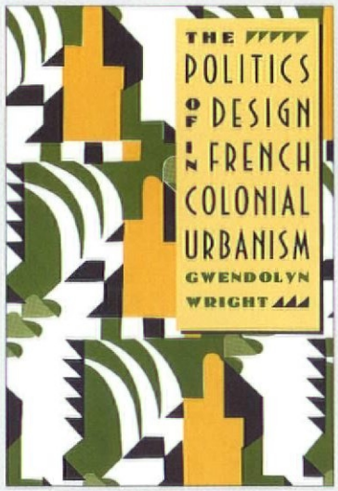
His most recent work is in La Paz, Bolivia where Roca was involved in designing district centres, urban parks, a new city hall and the restoration of the historic urban core.

This book examines and illustrates the work of Roca in Argentina, Bolivia, Singapore, Hong Kong and Africa, accompanied by an essay by Roca in which he explains the thoughts which have developed through his design and theoretical work. The book culminates with a retrospective of his early work in urban design, a comprehensive chronology of his works, a biography and a bibliography.



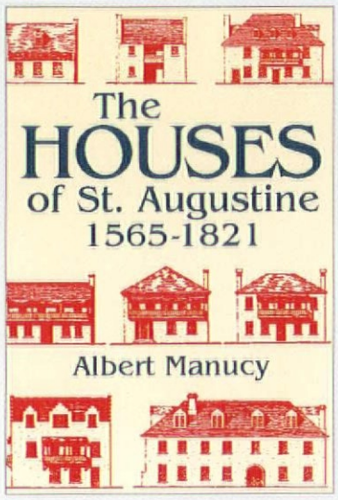
THE POLITICS OF DESIGN IN FRENCH COLONIAL URBANISM by Gwendolyn Wright, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1991, 389pp, b/w ills, PB £19.95

Focusing on the colonies of Morocco, Indochina and Madagascar, the author explores how urban policy and design fit into a new imperialistic policy called 'association' – a strategy that accepted, even encouraged, cultural differences while it promoted modern urban improvements that would foster economic development for Western investors. The issues she confronts – the potent implications of political power, cultural continuity, modernisation, and radical urban experiments – still challenge us today.

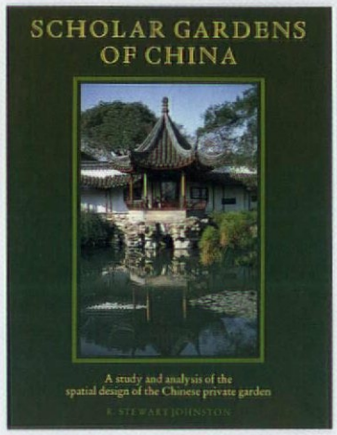


THE HOUSES OF ST AUGUSTINE 1565-1821 by Albert Manucy, University Press of Florida, 1992, 180pp, b/w ills, PB £8.43

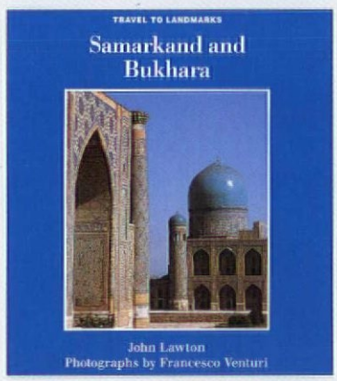
The charming two-storey balcony house so distinctive to St Augustine offers tangible evidence of Spanish settlement in the New World. Albert Manucy discusses this and a host of other features in this basic reference tool for period colonial restoration, based on a careful study of existing buildings, archaeological findings, and Spanish archival documents. As architecture documents history, this book records architecture, preserving and interpreting the history of housing in the oldest city in the continental United States.



SCHOLAR GARDENS OF CHINA A Study and Analysis of the Spatial Design of the Chinese Private Garden by R Stewart Johnston, Cambridge University Press, 1991, 331pp, b/w ills, HB £85.00



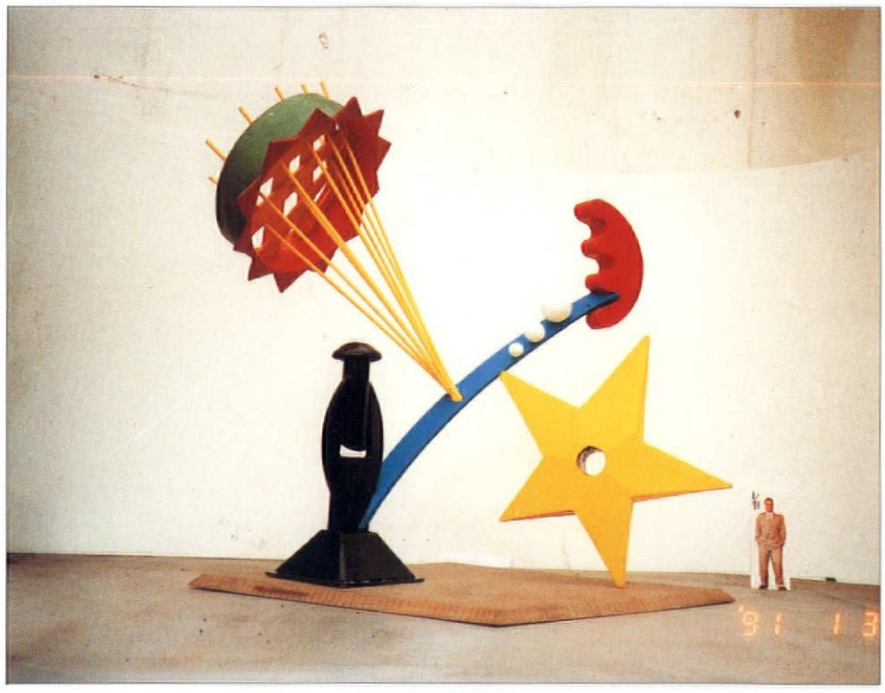
SAMARKAND AND BUKHARA by John Lawton, with photographs by Francesco Venturi, Tauris Parke, London, 1991, 128pp, colour ills, HB £14.95



Ever since the 15th century, the opulence and beauty of Samarkand and Bukhara have fired the imagination of poets and travellers. Originally caravan cities on the Golden Road trade route, they developed into thriving centres of commerce and culture, despite being intermittently razed by invading armies. But under Timur-the-lame they attained inimitable power and splendour. Samarkand was chosen as the capital of Timur's great empire, and he turned it into the most beautiful city in Central Asia.

The author explores not only the monumental buildings with their domes and towers but also the markets, alleys and local haunts. Through these imaginative descriptions the medieval cities are brought to life.

POP ARCHITECTURE



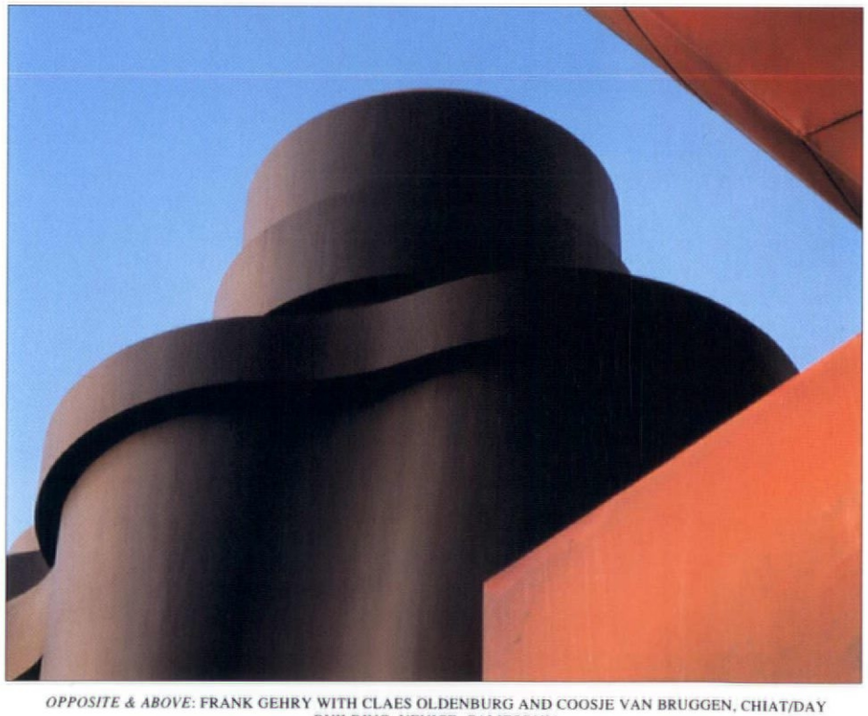
PHILLIP KING, *SCULPTURE*



Architectural Design

Edited by Andreas C Papadakis

POP ARCHITECTURE



OPPOSITE & ABOVE: FRANK GEHRY WITH CLAES OLDENBURG AND COOSJE VAN BRUGGEN, CHIAT/DAY BUILDING, VENICE, CALIFORNIA

ACADEMY EDITIONS • LONDON

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to Sir Roger de Grey, President of the Royal Academy of Arts, for his encouragement and support; to MaryAnne Stevens, joint organiser of the Academy Forum on ***Pop**ular Architecture*; to the many participants of the Forum and Symposium for responding with enthusiasm and at such short notice and for allowing us to reproduce their contributions in this issue.

Photographic Credits
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Front and back cover: Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates, US Pavilion, Expo 92, Seville
Inside front and back cover: Frank Gehry in collaboration with Claes Oldenburg and Coosje Van Bruggen, Chiat/Day Building, Venice, California

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First published in Great Britain in 1992 by *Architectural Design* an imprint of the
ACADEMY GROUP LTD, 42 LEINSTER GARDENS, LONDON W2 3AN

ISBN: 1-85490-133-8 (UK)

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Architectural Design Profile 98 is published as part of *Architectural Design* Vol 62 7-8 /1992
Architectural Design Magazine is published six times a year and is available by subscription

Published in the United States of America by
ST MARTIN'S PRESS, 175 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, NY 10010
ISBN: 0-312-08108-1 (USA)

Printed and bound in Singapore

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POP, POPULAR AND POPULIST

Pop architecture never existed – at least in the sense that Classical architecture, Modern movement architecture or even Post-Modern architecture existed. There is no Pop style, no Pop philosophy of design, no conscious movement. Yet the Pop spirit – which swept through the world of painting in the late 50s – was a critical element in the development of some of the most distinguished architectural careers of the late 20th century. It continues an elusive – sometimes irritating, sometimes enlightening – strain in the architecture of the 1990s, questioning certainties, breaking down dogmas, but above all underlining the essentially artistic nature of the practice of architecture.

Robert Venturi's out-of-context Ionic column, glimpsed obliquely through a sawn-off corner of one of the galleries at the Oberlin College art museum (a work of the mid-70s) epitomises that spirit. The building is new, most of its contents very old and put there (it is assumed) to be reverenced. The architect questions that assumption in a gesture which can be interpreted, variously, as a banal wisecrack or a profound comment on the overbearing weight of history.

It is all too easy to see Pop as a constituent part of the Post-Modernist mix. Populism was certainly part of the Post Modern brew and architects like Michael Graves and Terry Farrell have passionately argued the case for buildings with popular appeal. Yet the architecture of Venturi is frequently as opaque to the untutored eye as the painting of Robert Rauschenberg or Jasper Johns and far less instant in its appeal than that of, say Richard Rogers. Post-Modernism promised more than it delivered.

Frank Gehry has moved the dialogue between architecture and the Pop spirit several leagues further on. His Chiat/Day building is nothing less than a piece of Pop sculpture, made inhabitable and raised on a huge scale. Some years ago, Gehry shocked his neighbours in Santa Monica by transforming a typical suburban house into a statement about architectural appropriateness. The chain-link fencing he tacked across the front looked out of place – but this was the point. Gehry was playing the Pop game – put something ordinary and familiar into an unfamiliar context and wait for the shock effect. Pop artists had been doing as much with mundane and everyday objects and images for years – in the safety of the art gallery. Now Pop hit the street. Gehry's perverse logic slips through the net of conventional criticism. Asked why he designed a building in the shape of a fish, he responds; 'why not? Isn't a fish as beautiful as a Classical column?' 'In its place', the critic responds. End of discussion – placing something out of context throws the conventional mind into confusion.

Pop isn't concerned with being correct or even 'good' – that defiant mood is as evident in the domestic designs of Robert Stern (themselves a continuing commentary on American patronage) as in the internal architecture of Philippe Starck. The inherent seriousness of early Pop – manifest, for example, in the work of the Archigram group in Britain (a major inspiration to Richard Rogers) – seems to have become discredited. But there is something basically unstable and slightly dubious about a serious joke. Architects in the 1960s had to be serious: architecture remained a crusade.

The Post-Modern revolution changed all that: its most lasting and beneficial effect? Architecture has shaken off the bonds of social engineering (though not social responsibility) and the impediments of quasi-religious campaigning, and regained a vision of its proper identity as an art. In this light, Pop appears not as a passing fad or a perversity but as a pointer forwards from contemporary Pluralism to a new expressive architecture of experiment.

If Pop transforms the traditional – as Tomas Taveira argues – it equally sweeps away accepted ideas of tradition and received definitions of 'architect' and 'architecture'. Early expressions of the Pop spirit now seem a little naive in their reckless assumption that the popular and the commercial could be quickly and beneficially assimilated into the arts. Their stance was essentially ad hoc, theory-free. Whatever the long-term significance of the Deconstructionist episode, it at least represented a restatement of the value of theory.

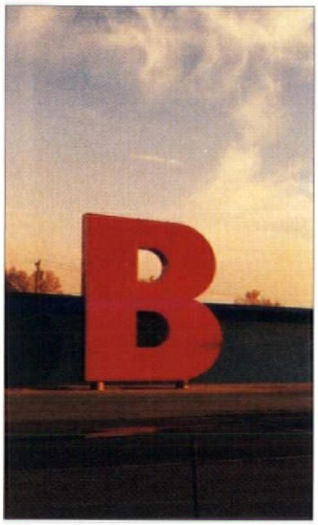
The new spirit in architecture represented by the recent work of Bernard Tschumi, Peter Eisenman, Zaha Hadid, Daniel Libeskind and by a score or more of Japanese practitioners combines a concern for coherent theory with a new freedom and urge to experiment, to turn the streets of the cities into galleries. Far from being a brief aberration, Pop, it seems, is sought, above all, to communicate, to defy the artistic elitism which scorned the popular. Architects in the late 20th century must be communicators, populists and, above all, conscious artists. *ACP/KP*

Robert Venturi, Allen Memorial Art Museum, Addition and Renovation, Oberlin College, Ohio

ROBERT VENTURI AND DENISE SCOTT BROWN

INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT MAXWELL

The following interview with **Robert Venturi** and **Denise Scott Brown**, was commissioned by *AD*, and was conducted to coincide with the Academy Forum discussion on Pop Architecture which took place at the Royal Academy, chaired by **Robert Maxwell**. In the event, neither Venturi nor Scott Brown were able to attend; however, their ideas and work were much discussed. The interview takes place at Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates' Philadelphia office.



Basco Showroom, NE Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

DSB: I hope Bob will agree with this. Bob and I, a few years ago, discussing Pop art in relation to architecture, found we were in disagreement. I said, when I first saw Pop art, I felt at last, the artists are catching up with the architects; and he said, 'That's ridiculous, the architects followed the artists'. It took me some years to understand why both of us were so sure of the opposite assumption; it was because I had been in England in the 1950s and had been allied with a group there, we were kind of in parallel with the Brutalists.

RM: *The Independent Group as such?*

DSB: Not exactly. I was part of a student group at the AA who were thinking about architecture in the same way as Peter and Alison Smithson, but did not feel they were influenced by them, rather that they were all working at the same time on similar ideas. Although I had not heard of The Independent Group, as such, obviously it influenced me. If you look at our diagrams for our *Learning From Levittown* studio of 1970, or our exhibition Signs of Life, Symbols in the City,[1] of 1976, you will find that they look very much like the early proto-Pop art work of The Independent Group, done in the 40s. Recently people have asked me to recount the story of studying and working in England then coming here, because at last someone caught on that I may be one of the links between the two movements. I wrote an article called 'Learning From Brutalism' which records that experience. This is why I felt that the architects, ie the Brutalists, had been ahead of the American Pop artists.

RM: *I can understand that there was a whole group which were in a sense, swept along with Smithson, the 'inventor' of Brutalism.*

DSB: These students would have resented being described as 'swept along' with the Smithsons. They felt they had generated the same thought in parallel. It was the time of *Look Back in Anger* and the whole ethos was similar in many respects to what was coming out of the Brutalists. The writing of John Osbourne, author of *Look Back in Anger* was as much related to what we were doing as the Smithsons were. Another very interesting set of connections, I only realised later, was with English sociologists. Judith Henderson, a sociologist and wife of Nigel Henderson, taught Young and Wilmott who did the study of the East End of London. Out of that group came some of the Smithsons' ideas about urbanism. When I studied urban sociology at Penn, Herbert Gans, our instructor, was writing *The Urban Villagers* at the time, about the West End of Boston, one of the required readings in his course was Young and Wilmott's study. So, at the same time as there was an artistic strain in what we were doing, there were parallels in social areas, and these are in our work too, albeit unnoticed by most architects. Our view of popular culture derived from social concern and sociological study as well as from Le Corbusier's 'eyes that will not see'. Corbu talked about industrial architecture, we talked about commercial architecture in the same vein. But, like him we looked at Pop culture to freshen our eyes, to establish a new aesthetic. Yet the reasons were partly social. I have a thesis that aesthetic sensibility is likely to change in the wake of social change.

RM: *Was there a sense that if you looked down, out of the high art level, to the common people you would sense the currents in society better?*

DSB: The hierarchical way that you posed your question was something we had to work against. The terminology we use is a given terminology, we've inherited it. I hate to say 'high art' and 'low art' and would rather say art ABCD, or XYZ, to get away from hierarchy. I think the notion that different strands, different 'taste cultures', can influence each other was more what we had in mind. Then from a social concern point of view, the critique made by people like Gans and Davidoff, before Jane Jacobs made it held that architects were part of the problem because architectural programmes lead to the wholesale removal of the poor. Urban renewal became urban removal of the poor into ever denser slums. Also the public stayed away from Modernist public spaces, prompting social critics like Gans to suggest that architects should see where people actually go, where people vote with their feet, so to speak, and analyse those places. There's nothing wrong with middle-class values, he would say, but they're not the only values, and being aware of other people's values and being honest in your mediation between values is important in your work as an expert, a professional and a people server. So he looked at Levittown, but not with eyes, with social insight. We looked at Levittown and we looked at Las Vegas for the same reasons, as Gans did, as well as for aesthetic reasons.

RM: *Smithson's theory of the city was much more of a clean sweep thing, his winning competition entry for Golden Lane would have recreated the street in 'clean' conditions – up in the air, on the street deck. The whole premise of that was that these blocks would proliferate across the city and wipe out the old streets and leave a green park. Now, I've never been able to quite understand myself how Peter reconciled these two views; the existing streets which he honours through Nigel Henderson's work and which he dishonours through proposing to remove them. How do you feel about that?*

DSB: Peter Smithson describes having 'caught a whiff of the powder' of the earlier architectural revolution of the 1920s and 30s. That revolution was present among all of us at the time. We were a small in-group with our own feelings and our own rhetoric

but the rhetoric was linked to the excitement of the industrial imperative, as it was seen by the architectural revolutionaries of the 1920s and 30s. These ideas were present in parallel with Nigel Henderson. I think that the cities' streets in the air were a profound miscalculation of the meaning of Henderson's work, but a very understandable one for architects, who were not socially adept and lacked the help of sociologists. Early on the Smithsons wrote about 'active socio-plastics'. They were thrilled about that notion and it's a pretty nice one, but within a few years they pulled back and Peter wrote that the sociologists were going to have to develop their field and expand it before he, the architect, could work with them. I think I know what happened: sociologists are the most verbal of people and the most uptight about things out of their control – emotional, artistic, graphic and manual – you can imagine the whole lot of them drawing with a pencil as if it were a nail. So there is the verbal mind-set of sociologists. Many architects, on the other hand, can't speak unless they draw and are verbally halt and much more eloquent with their hands. These are two very separate cultures.

RM: *I remember when I first came to Princeton in '66, Bob Gutman was the tame sociologist and whenever on the jury there would be an impasse about what do people really like they'd all swing around to him and ask 'Well, what do people want?' And of course, he couldn't answer questions as simple as that.*

DSB: That's right, a sociologist really can't. Gans gave an example of what sociologists can and can't tell you. He said a sociologist, by research, can tell that when a family runs out of money, the mother will cut down on her own diet to feed the children. But the sociologist can't recommend policy out of that finding, others must recommend and yet others make policy based on what the sociologist has established. If sociologists can't recommend even that sort of policy, what can they tell you about rooms and spaces? My feeling is that we architects at least have to pass muster in a verbal world, just normally in order to survive. We do more writing and reading in high school than sociologists do drawing so that if anyone's going to build the bridges it's going to be the architects. The architects will have to find ways to get what they need from sociologists, not the other way around. Peter Smithson wasn't able to do that. He didn't have the liberal arts education he needed to do that, coming from the English educational system, where you start specialising in high school.

RM: *The English, they still have the five-year professional undergraduate, course.*

RV: One thing we've learned from the British architectural press is how uneducated they are, but that's another story.

RM: *I agree about that, but I also think that you're right about the mind-set in which architecture was somehow given the responsibility of changing society. When I was doing my planning year at Liverpool, in 1949, under Gordon Stevenson, we had to study the cotton town of Ormskirk. My solution was a single tower block in the cleared middle, sitting apart. He argued with me very gently and it was years before I realised he could have been right.*

DSB: But you know, I'm thinking of that professor arguing with you gently, how right he was. You know why? Because that enthusiasm that you had, you needed to take you over the next ten years. And if he had dashed that and had not put anything in its place, where would you have been? As a teacher, I would be very careful with students' ideals, even if I felt they were misplaced at the time. But just let me tell you one other thing, I came to Penn basically because Peter Smithson suggested it. They had met Lou Kahn – and that's another interesting set of combinations: at that time Kahn was influenced by Duiker's open-air school in Amsterdam, you can see it in the Richard's medical building.

RM: *The repetition of units.*

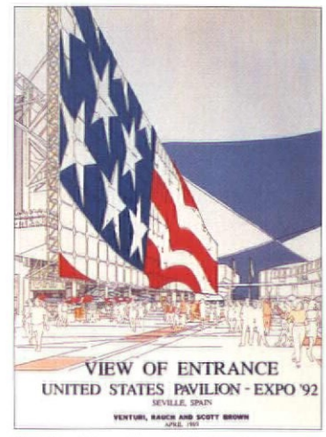
DSB: Not only; look at the detailing. Some of these cross-continental relationships have not been spotted either in England or America... But we should go back to Pop art and popular culture. You can see that we were very much immersed in trying to understand popular culture, not just popular art and Pop art, and that the tie-in between the two has been intriguing for us. With our understanding of urban social life and social categories, we've never claimed not to be elitists. That would be naive. But we've tried hard to be self-aware about our values and to understand our role in the adjudication of multiple values in urbanism.

RM: *Can I ask Robert something at this point? How would you feel about this idea of popular culture being something that tells you where we're at, as well as something that tells you about the tasks that face us and what architects should do in society? Do you agree that the architect has to understand popular culture?*

RV: There is a lot of wisdom in that idea and I think any artist who does not need it does so at his or her own peril. And there certainly is a long and rich tradition we all must acknowledge connecting high art with low art as in Beethoven's adaptation of rollicking peasant tunes in third movements. There is also the ascendance of genre subject matter in realist and impressionist painting in the 19th century, of the everyday over the heroic – no longer that of noble portraiture of heroic gods in Arcadia, but of a middle-class family at a picnic or bohemians in a café.

One thing we should do is compare popular art with Pop art. I think you can say that the former is art that generally attracts a big audience while Pop art of the mid-century represents a particular elitist movement involving sophisticated connections between perception and meaning via scale, symbol and context. It is based on the idea that change in context and scale usually causes change in meaning and it specifically employs ordinary and familiar commercial images that are usually enlarged and projected in an extraordinary context – matted and framed on the wall of a gallery or living room – that become thereby at once extraordinary and unfamiliar. The Campbell soup can as a symbol of the ordinary, if not the banal, looks weirdly impressive; new meanings are applied to old to make for extraordinary tension – all this based on the Gestalt theory involving meaning deriving from context, and not much different in its artistic effect from that of Beethoven's rondos and Renoir's picnics.

The question of Pop art is very relevant now. I think the most heroic and wonderful thing that we did in our architecture, in the 60s, was to design an unheroic architecture. When you look at Louis Kahn now, as you can in the current exhibition of his work, one thing that makes him old-fashioned is his heroic and original stance – his heroic form and planning; granted the planning is not so idealistic and persuasive in its effect as that of Le Corbusier in his Ville Radieuse which ignored the existing fabric and precluded any vestiges of it, but Kahn's intrusions into the existing, ordinary and popular fabric were drastic and heroic. This is when I said Main Street is almost all right and we learned from the Las Vegas strip. And it's when we designed little houses that looked like houses, that promoted elemental reference, or fire stations that looked like fire stations and not heroic and original, if not monumental gestures. We were employing the ordinary and adapting it in an extraordinary way.



US Pavilion, Expo 92, Seville



Seattle Art Museum, Washington

We suffered of course by upholding this position in that heroic era – heroes are more likeable than anti-heroes. Gordon Bunshaft as a member of the Washington Fine Arts Commission condemned our design for Transportation Square in that period and convinced that commission to reject it – he called it 'ugly and ordinary'. We considered the source and interpreted that designation as complimentary and made it complementary to 'heroic and original'. And when you review the late heroic gestures in late Modernist architecture promoting big scale and minimalist forms within their urban plans with only little bits of structural symbolism to ornament them, when you review them from the perspective of now you realise, as an American at least, how prescient we were – as good artists who are of their time and ahead of their time and whose vision was broad. We were on the right track in the 60s and 70s as we veered left from the road articulating heroic global dominance via military – industrial complexity and opportunistic capitalism, toward another road acknowledging modest but vital reality – social, economic and political – a reality, alas, at this moment in our national evolution, more sordid than modest.

But the way of the ugly and ordinary in architecture can lead effectively to that of pretty and ordinary where principles of Pop Art combine with and invigorate those of popular art, where the aesthetic in the art of architecture is read at many levels, by children and the learned, and where architecture as an everyday background for living in communities can be appreciated by many kinds of people at once: elitist architecture in this context is an oxymoron.

You can achieve this kind of popular art-architecture ironically more easily through an architecture of complexity and contradiction than through one characterised as minimalist: to appeal to the simple, the art can't be simple. A sensual or lyrical element, referred to above as pretty, is helpful as one of the multi-dimensions of this kind of architecture that has direct appeal to the senses as well as the mind: what I'm leading up to is you probably gotta have decoration. I'm sorry, but it's true – decoration as abstract pattern involving expression and/or as referential sign involving meaning. In the Seattle Art Museum the lyrical quality of its exterior surface ornament derives from polychromatic patterns configured by varied terracotta and masonry units which also work to compose rhythm and variety of scale on the facade.

This issue of popular architecture relying on old traditions involving ornament and symbol and recent ideas concerning the familiar is interesting and relevant for us as we complete two museums – on Trafalgar Square in London and within the downtown grid of Seattle – and have two others in design. Within the programme of the Seattle museum as we interpreted it lay an explicit requirement that the building be popular as one of the factors working toward attracting lots of visitors to its collections. Moving downtown in the thick of things from its suburban location in a park meant in itself this institution wanted to reach out into a diverse community, increase its market, diminish its elitist image. There is precedent in the United States for this locating of a museum within the grid of the city and not in an extraordinary location – as not in a park or the end of a boulevard but in an ordinary location like that of a commercial building downtown – as in the location of the Museum of Modern Art on 53rd Street in New York many decades ago. In terms of our location in downtown Seattle we are no different from the go-go girl place across the street. On Trafalgar Square the facade had to acknowledge its old and recent kinds of heritage via its adaptation of the delicate, kind of patrician vocabulary of the original National Gallery facade and via the intrusion of the big entrance holes through whose size and scale a kind of contemporary museum populism is acknowledged.

RM: *That's why you put the entire circulation inside alongside the sidewalk.*

RV: Yes, by making a major part of the circulation inside next to and parallel with the outside we identified the inside as like the outside, if not part of it; by this means we also brought outside civic scale inside our building to enhance its civic quality.

To make museums work as populist places American museums have long been adapting their programmes in a way that modifies the ratio between exhibition space and support space – the latter including educational, administrative, commercial, social, storage, maintenance, conservation and especially the dominant educational facilities that accommodate museum programmes reaching out to the larger community as a heterogeneous mix. This ratio is now as much as one-third exhibition space to two-thirds support space.

Now in designing the popular museum in terms of its aesthetic lyrical-ornamental dimension as well as its downtown location and its didactic and communal programme, we are working within an established tradition. By sensuous I have meant appealing directly to the senses via colour and rhythm to make this architecture immediately attractive to the ordinary person. But it must be attractive not only to the naive or to children, but also to the sophisticate for whom this is to be a kind of cultural temple containing significant icons. And perhaps you find an approach here that parallels one characteristic of Baroque architecture. A Baroque church is generally immediately appealing to a naive person by means of its dramatic manipulation of light inside, its curvaceous forms and dramatic spaces combined with rich combinations of materials and colour at least inside – this for the sake, it can be argued, of maintaining, if not increasing, devotion to the Roman Catholic church during the counter-reformation. At the same time these churches tend to impress us sophisticates by means of involving complex geometric and spatial relationships. We like Bernini – as does the ordinary person.

But perhaps Modernism was populist if you go back to the social housing in Germany in the 20s.

DSB: Conceptually, it was.

RV: Yes, that is, not by means of sensuous or lyrical quality but through its industrial and socialist symbolism. And these European populist forms and symbols when promoted in America several decades later under Public Housing programmes didn't work – weren't popular – weren't populist. There was little of a Socialist proletarian tradition among lower-income Americans. What an irony that this originally socialist-industrial symbolically-based architecture of the masses was ultimately taken up in the US by capitalist America for their corporate headquarters made agreeable by Mies van der Rohe and Barcelona chairs: the ordinary became the extraordinary with a new twist. And then it was easy to go from there to the late-modern heroic brutalism of Corb and Kahn!

RM: *Can I go back on one thing that interests me? I think one of the reasons why the English have been so resistant recently to your architecture is the sense that it is conceived with an audience in mind. In England there's a peculiar prejudice about this; you're supposed to be following some kind of track where what happens is determined by rational, or systematic order. To actually think that you're looking towards an audience that could be sympathetic to your work and seeking them out: that makes many people deeply uneasy. They want it to be a system where you do the right thing and you don't worry how it comes out.*

DSB: Ironically, our re-thinking of that part of the Modernist philosophy was influenced by two English writers: Alan Colquhoun, who argued convincingly against the exclusively rationalist approach to Modern architecture and Colin Rowe, who discussed vocabularies of form. And the point we've emphasised from a reading of their work is that it is almost impossible to put together forms without a pre-conceived geometry for doing so, without a vocabulary, as in language, where you need not only grammar and syntax but, also, phonemes and morphemes. What do you call them, the bits of language that are recognisably English and not Spanish and that you put words together to? Lacking those humans may not have the mental capacity for making language or form, and architects, who believe they go straight from form to function, trick themselves and, in fact, use unconscious formalisms, not necessarily suited to their projects.

RM: *I think that's right and I remember those discussions in the early 60s when for instance a small group with Colquhoun and Sandy Wilson and Peter Carter, tried to bring into the LCC a regular housing policy based on Corbusier's Unité which was greatly resisted.*

Nevertheless, there's still something I need to get from Robert on this. If you have an audience in mind, I would say that one of the things that you are setting out to do is to persuade. *Now, in analysis of language, it's agreed that the art of persuasion is rhetoric. And this is another matter of unease at the present time. Does that mean that everything is slippery? Does that mean that motivations are always complex and so on? Isn't there anything that's straight? That's very much the English scene. How do you feel about being accused of trying to persuade some people?*

RV: Well of course you must never forget that the primary purpose of architecture as shelter and background – and much of its aesthetic – must derive from these elements. But then much of aesthetics is a matter of persuasion. One's approach, however, should not involve appealing to a box office via sensationalism which much hype-architecture does today in its trendy evolutions. Perhaps the word appeal works better than persuade – appeal appropriately to a wide range of taste cultures today.

RM: *Right. Well, that's all very clear.*

DSB: Although we talk a great deal about meaning, in the end a work of art has layers of meaning and ambiguity and I'm very aware of the possibility that I, in writing about our work, could be reductionist and define too clearly the meanings. I much admire the American writer, Jerry Mangione. Although sometimes thought of as a sociologist, ethnic writer and historian, he is in fact a great writer of English prose. Someone said of him that, as an artist, he has ardently sought the truth and, as a true artist, he has made sure he has never found it. That's what I mean by layers; or again, we're interested in works of art that appeal at many levels. Take the TV show *All in the Family*; it's not a great work of art but social analysts may look at it as a sign of the times, and if you push them they might, in a hang-dog way, admit to liking it. It has characters that appeal to a wide range of ages, social groups and ethnic groups. The whole thing hangs together and, at its prime, much of America might have watched it on one night; which doesn't mean that it's greater art than something that would appeal to only intellectuals or only motor mechanics or only Italians, or whatever. But this view of art certainly applies to civic art. And, although we've talked about getting away from the heroic, there is still the need for civic monumentality, which we ought to be able to deal with in a way that is non-heroic, if you like, or semi-heroic or even anti-heroic. You look for a combination of monumentality and humanity and you sometimes get it by setting up an order and then breaking it in the interests of some other order or disorder.

RV: That's right. Heroic rhetoric cannot be overdone and has to fit inside an everyday ethos. All heroic is not heroic just as all dissonance is not dissonance.

RM: *There's a point I'd like to illustrate there, maybe a historical point, but it refers to Louis Kahn and the situation in England in the late 50s and early 60s. When Lou did the plan for Philadelphia, he had this metaphor about the water coming in and breaking down into smaller canals and finally into quays, and so on. Along with that was a kind of theory of traffic movement and all those arrows and big parking structures – structures that were leaning about like something out of Russian Constructivism. I myself have always thought that had a great influence on Smithson when he said that it's the engineering parts of the city that will give the orientation, that will give the fix, and that the city will fit in around those.*

DSB: He did claim that.

RM: *Did he get that from Kahn would you say?*

DSB: I think so, I think he was influenced by Lou at that time, but very shortly after, people in England began to claim that Lou was getting too heroic, that his Beaux-Arts education was catching up with him and pushing him in the wrong. . . .

RM: *Yes, Bryn Mawr, the three squares appearing diagonally. That upset a lot of people.*

DSB: I learned something fascinating from the architectural historian Peter Reed. I'd surmised that those drawings by Lou, the fantastic imagery of the arrows and the poetry of the containers, depicted in fact was the thought of people like Robert B Mitchell, here in Philadelphia. He, Lou and others met in the later 40s, in citizen action committees that went along with reform government in Philadelphia – the same government that supported the changes in the School of Architecture at Penn that caused us all to go there. Well, I pushed Bob Mitchell on that but never could quite get an answer, but Peter Reed went through the minutes of the meetings and he came across suggestions to Lou from the others there, 'You draw this thing to show what we mean'. I was amazed to learn that just two days ago. In other words, you're the one who can show this in a way that...

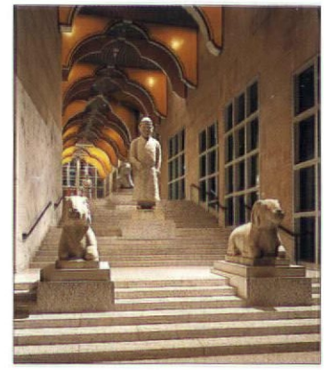
RM: *That gives us some idea that the architect has a kind of usefulness in society, he can draw the things . . .*

DSB: But also it shows Lou tied into society in ways that are not easy to perceive, unless you go to the minutes of the meetings.

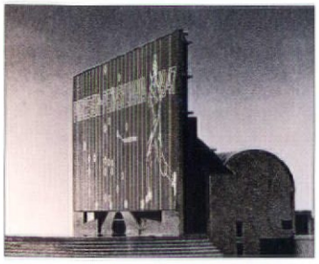
RM: *The other thing I wanted to pick up is that when you talk about an architecture that would appeal at different levels – a simple level maybe acquiring something more sensuous and decorative, and a more intellectual level that would stand up against the critics – I understand that and Baroque churches are I think a perfect example of that. The great thing here would be that the two aspects can co-exist without hurting each other, right?*

DSB: Absolutely. There's room for everyone's meanings.

RM: *For instance when we come to Aalto, he never had any hesitation in putting in curvilinear door handles, shaped wood,*



Staircase, Seattle Art Museum, Washington



National College Football Hall of Fame, competition

decorative light fittings . . .

RV: Pretty light fixtures.

RM: *Pretty light fixtures. And generally he used wood in a decorative way, even if it wasn't apparently necessary. So that could be a model for you. Was it a conscious model or was it just a sort of reinforcement that 'a good guy' could do that?*

RV: When I was young I didn't like Aalto much. He seemed ordinary. When I grew up, I began to love Aalto: he seemed ordinary – with a twist – or perhaps ordinary as adapted, in his adaptations of the conventional Modernist vocabulary as it had evolved, and he did not try to heroicise it or make it 'original'. Of course it became original because he used it in slightly incorrect ways and the architecture achieved its enormous vitality through its resultant tension. I think of Aalto as mannerist, and there's a profound quietness about his work at the same time that's better than heroism.

RM: *I'm particularly fond of that office building on the port, I can never think of the name of it.*

RV: When I saw it in photographs I thought it was banal.

RM: *Yes, so under-played. But then it...*

RV: The day I *saw* it in reality was one of the great days of my life.

DSB: In its context, it's amazing.

RM: *What I always like about that building is that it is so understated, so conciliatory. Ever since Duchamp or the first acts of Dadaism, there's been a feeling that to be really radical you have to do something that breaks utterly with precedents; that to be interested in carrying some folks along with you is just to show that you're faint-hearted or stupid or something. But, with architects, one didn't think of it as art or protest. One thought of it as social meaning coming through. The analysis was so strong that it justified you doing something that ordinary people might at first find a bit austere. So how do you feel about the avant-garde aspect: do you feel you're a leader and that you can be a leader while at the same time keeping the audience in mind?*

RV: From the beginning, we haven't ever thought in terms of 'We're going to be leaders, we're going to be great, we're going to be original'. As an architect you are a craftsman and you just try to do your best everyday and if it turns out you become a leader, if you become original and revolutionary or whatever, its incidental. I love Duchamp who was revolutionary; but there are moments for revolution and moments for evolution and the time of the early Modern movement was an exciting time and validly revolutionary. But by definition a revolution can't last 50 years or it becomes an oxymoron in the way a consistent avant-garde is: people who call themselves avant-garde I suspect; trying to be avant-garde is tricky. I don't know what's going to happen tomorrow or next year, but in the last few decades evolution has been the revolution. I think its sad to witness the kind of academic avant-garde today; I remember one architect leaning over a panel discussion and saying 'oh, c'mon Bob, when you wrote *Complexity and Contradiction* don't tell me you weren't trying to shock.' My answer had to be 'Peter, I was only trying to make sense'.

DSB: Also, we were in the somewhat ironic situation of leading a revolution in favour of non-revolution, a revolution for the ordinary. This was because the revolutionary had become the norm but we were accused by Martin Pawley of being 'The avant-garde leading from the rear'.

RM: *He used that expression?*

DSB: Yes.

RM: *He's a smart guy.*

DSB: Yes, he's smart. On the other hand we've also found that our propounding popular symbols doesn't necessarily go down well with the people who evolved them.

When we were working on our *City Edge* study, we produced billboards to line portions of the expressway from the airport to Philadelphia. They were called 'cultural billboards' and some had paintings from the art museum; but the ones that used Philadelphian symbols like the hoagy, the pretzel; symbols that come from lower-middle-class South Philadelphia, were the ones that our mayor, who represents that constituency, did not approve of. That's sad. There's the sense that 'maybe in using our symbols you're laughing at us' and obviously we aren't, but we're aware of the fact that you can't make caricatures of people's symbols, and sometimes it's hard to treat them straight on; if they're not your own symbols, you don't know how not to caricature them.

RM: *That would have to apply to the case of the gold Television aerial on Guild Hall – wouldn't it? – which was not accepted too easily.*

RV: I think it worried elite critics – some of them thought it was condescending and all that, but I don't think people worried about it. It didn't stay up because we had to use a real television antenna which by nature is not permanent. We could not get Lipold to make a bronze one, so its life ended after about five years.

RM: *So, this is a question of the critics criticising what they see as an act of condescension, which is simply from your side, perhaps, the attempt to find what will be the medium of communication, what will go and what will be understood.*

RV: There was no condescension in it. There was joy in it, there was wit in it, and there was a beautiful ambiguity. It was a little like a Lipold abstract sculpture but the symbolic reference, granted an ordinary kind of reference, was there too. And it employed ordinary in an unordinary way and so it was Pop; I think it was formalistically nice and appropriate as a . . . what's the word I want.

DSB: *Jeu d'esprit.*

RM: *An emblem.*

RV: It was like a tassel except that it's going the opposite direction. So I think on all those levels, it sort of balanced out nicely.

DSB: This is an example of what I was saying earlier: he gives an explanation, you do, I do. (I didn't, but I could do the same). All of us are being reductionist, because the artist does something that feels right, and it has all these layers of meaning, and 50 years from now people will see another meaning in it. 50 years from now it may be lost and one hundred years from now it may be found again.

RM: *I agree with that very much. But let me just come on to think about another emblem that rose over the building: the big stiff flag above the Thousand Oaks Centre. Would you relate that in any way to the Jasper Johns use of the American flag?*

RV: Very much so. I'm sure I was influenced by that.

RM: *Here's a commonplace symbol. Every day you see the flag, but by making it stiff it makes it 'second glance'.*

RV: We weren't sure whether it would be stiff, because actually it would be an extremely heavy and resistant to wind.

DSB: It's just big.

RM: *It was just drawn as big.*

RV: We did two drawings, on one drawing it was shown as stiff, on the other it was limp, but since it was a competition we didn't have to worry too much about that.

DSB: What we did do is make it very very big, to fit its urban sprawl context.

RM: *Sure, and that way it works for the whole width of the facade and not just a little accent.*

DSB: Not only that but for the whole site and the whole region, as it was the capital.

RV: The building itself was not heroic. It was refined-ordinary. But the symbol was ordinary *and* extraordinary

RM: *I would say it was almost Palladian, it was making the most of the offices and then having the big thing in the middle. But the other point that I wanted to touch on here is that when you describe an architecture with levels, which can be received by different groups in the audience, isn't there still a sense that if you are to avoid condescension, if you are to avoid a certain self-consciousness, everything you do, at whatever level, has to be enjoyable in itself. You do it ultimately for your own enjoyment. That's where it's synthesised.*

RV: That's what makes us different from the cynical composer of a cheesy musical comedy, if I may say. You must love what you do yourself and respect it; in a way you're the person who has to be made happiest – thereby you're the artist.

DSB: When working in Las Vegas we went out of our way to meet Morris Lapidus because of the work he had done in Miami Beach. We had long talks together. We liked him very much and he liked us, but at one point he said, 'You are different from me', then paused and tried to define what he meant and he said 'You're not panderers'. It stayed with me a long long time and it's sad because it meant that he didn't respect what he did.

RM: *He thought that this was required in order to achieve success.*

DSB: Yet when he took us through the Fountainbleu you could see how proud he was of it. It's interesting that Alan Lapidus, Morris' son, who is also an architect does work in the mainstream, recognisable and accepted architecture. When he did research on his father's buildings, that was also completely within the mainstream and accepted, although the father's doing the buildings was not accepted.

RM: *Well there is a certain element of scandal about anything that's new, isn't there? If you don't have that, maybe you haven't got the edge on it. There has to be some nervous reaction that shies off it I would say. I would like to ask you in that connection about ordinariness and strangeness. In the work of the Russian Formalists between the wars when they were trying to go back and understand what makes the simplest form of narrative work, as with children's stories and so on, they came up with this idea that what the artist had to do was to* make strange *– to take the everyday and then show its opacity to the light or show something unexpected about it.*

DSB: For children, in particular, Maurice Sendak does that. Children live in a world of magical thinking and as they grow older, if they're lucky, they will develop their imagination so that world never quite leaves them, and that's maybe what happens to artists. You grow out of magical thinking and artists maybe need something more beyond it, but presumably artists and story-tellers are communicating with this aspect of childhood.

RV: I often refer to what I liked as a child. The configuration of the back door of the house I grew up in, you will find in the front door of my mother's house and now that door is all over the world. And it's in the entrance of the Sainsbury Wing of the National Gallery. The vivid multi-coloured terracotta on the exterior of the Philadelphia Museum of Modern Art which I loved as a child has influenced our museum in Seattle. And so I find I have respected my early intuitions – acknowledged what I liked, and I think artists might go wrong when they fail to monitor their intuitive likes and dislikes and when they think in terms of what they should like or they adapt an ideology they think they should adapt.

RM: *That would be to allow to develop within you a kind of natural appetite for certain forms. All forms are available but they're not all equally apparent to us. I think it's inevitable that the artist selects those things that excite his imagination and lead him on. Some of those will come out of idealistic childhood memories.*

DSB: If you're lucky enough to stay in touch with your childhood as a source.

RM: *I was asking about any other high art, Pop artists, other than Jasper Johns or Peter Blake, that you particularly enjoyed or were sympathetic towards.*

RV: I might mention I learned a lot from Peter Blake's scorn of the Long Island Duck illustrated in his book *God's own Junkyard*. You often learn what you love from observing what other people hate – in this case vulgar-vital representational commercial roadside architecture: I loved it as a child would. You learn from your intellectual and artistic enemies. You understand your own position as you disagree with others.

RM: *Lichtenstein's my own favourite. Did you ever come across the American Kitaj who went to work in England most of his life?*

RV: I don't know him. I'm not aware of knowing him or his work.

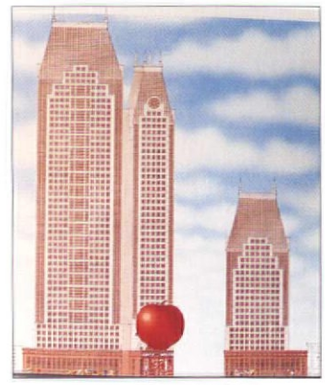
RM: *He's one of the first people in a way, to be figurative long before figuration came back. He, to me, is an amazing person.*

RV:. . . Tom Wesselmann also. This usual, established group I learned very much from.

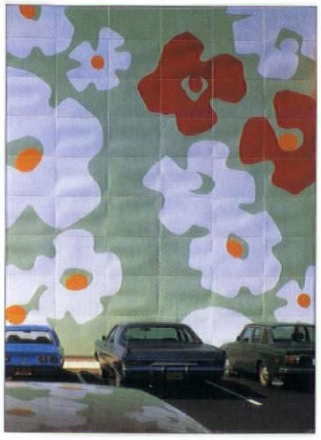
RM: *When you do chairs like these Robert, would they not be in a certain sense in that genre?*

RV: Yes.

RM: *The decorated chair?*



Times Square Plaza, project



Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin, Ohio

RV: Yes, the generic chair – in a series of 'ordinary' styles that are represented, not reproduced; they are ordinary in quotation marks and with a twist. They are in some ways silhouettes of chairs.

RM: *But also thinking about Aalto.*

RV: Yes, very much that too. We are using in a way an old-fashioned familiar Modern technical method, that of bent plywood, applied to furniture forms that derive from a very different kind of construction.

RM: *When I last talked with you Robert, I asked you about the out-sized Ionic column at Oberlin, and whether it was intended as a joke and you said vehemently 'No, no, we never joke, we don't put jokes in our architecture'. Would you like to enlarge on that? If you're trying to communicate, isn't the joke or the caricature one of the standard ways that emotion can be passed?*

RV: I think the word joke implies a misunderstanding of what we're doing which is serious but witty. These gestures involve also a mannerist combination of several meanings at once – a kind of ambiguity understood in literary criticism, not in architecture. And that certainly was the first time a Classical column, albeit a witty one, was used since Modernism had begun. It was, of course, a very abstracted, stylised version of a Classical element. People don't get it that the evolution of Classical architecture teems with distortion that later becomes orthodox; Classicism's value derives from the strength of its vocabulary as it allows you, dares you, to break the rules – but not arbitrarily. That column has to look good through a window from inside.

RM: *How did you feel about Charles Moore's use of the orders in his Piazza d'Italia?*

RV: I think there's always a danger when you're not being serious of being serious, and I think they verge on becoming too serious, too literal, but that's a difficult thing to judge because I have not seen that project. Our pilasters (there are no columns) in the Sainsbury Wing facade are literal replications but their spacing and resultant rhythm is dissonant and 'modern'. They are both-and.

RM: *So what people might refer to as jokes (and the English critics have rather tended to see jokes everywhere), you would describe more as witticism. It would come back, I think (I don't know if you agree with this) to the idea of mannerist poetry. I once used the term 'conceit', and you obviously didn't like that, because currently it has a different meaning from the original one. But it's a sort of witticism, a sort of deliberate witticism which everybody knows is far-fetched but it's enough to link together two things that are very widely separated in ordinary life.*

RV: I think you have to be very careful where you employ wit in architecture – perhaps more so than in poetry which you can read and then turn the page. Architecture is always there as a background and background cannot be too strident or too explicit in its aesthetic; in this context wit can also become boring. That is a problem concerning the architecture today which is recognised as shelter background for the activities of living. You are not composing a coloratura aria for an occasional performance in an opera house or a *tour de force* of sculpture that you see in a garden sometimes. Architects are designing things that are around for one hundred years that you shouldn't get tired of or distracted by everyday.

RM: *One of the things that struck me about your Sainsbury Wing design is that you have a very direct link to the main gallery, that is to say, if you follow the axis from the main gallery then you're penetrating into the rooms of your gallery at a slight angle and a lot of people have mistaken this as being a Classical connection. They assume that you are a Classical architect because you decorate with columns. But I would characterise the Sainsbury Wing plan as essentially a Modernist plan, organised from within. It exploits that change of angle, but every thing else seems to follow a functional balance. And for instance, people have objected to the change of direction between the going in and the going up in the staircase. Would you like to comment on that?*

RV: Well, there are plenty of buildings where the stair is not on axis with the entrance – as a generic Italian palazzo. As you enter this inevitably complex lobby you are drawn to the stair by its presence – by its grand size and its location toward the natural light. And the great stair creates hierarchy amongst all the complex spaces and necessary functions in the lobby – shop, information counter, cloak areas, lifts, circulation to basement, special exhibition galleries, auditorium – and it identifies the important if very remote part of the building which must be up those stairs. Of course the route to the stair and up it to the galleries is not direct, but it's clear. How stupido can you get.

RM: *Right, for coming in that way you had to do all these acts first. But it also seems to me that it serves another thing: Because it's on the side, next to the way through from Trafalgar Square to Leicester Square, (which is very much the idea I think that you're following in Seattle, of making a link between the internal circulation and the external), and because it comes down towards Trafalgar Square, it does seem to me to perform a function in relation to the sense of Trafalgar Square. And the whole building then is inflected against this staircase, against this glass wall, towards the old building and towards the Square. That seems to me to go along with the kind of common sense that, in Bedford Square and other three-bay houses, led them to put the front door not in the middle bay but at one side, so that you didn't spoil the ground-floor room. The staircase being placed there, you've got a good chunk of space for the auditorium, all the other things. So it's functional.*

RV: A wonderful analogy! I love the analogy of houses on Bedford Square.

RM: *In Amsterdam the burghers' houses always enter in the middle, in England they always enter in the side bay.*

RV: That again is English involving pragmatism and perhaps mannerism.

RM: *Pragmatist, I think in any case.*

RV: This kind of balance between order and pragmatism is beautiful and tense. The Italians do such things well too. We also bring the outdoor scale of the city outside in via the boldness of the stairs; we are a relatively small building but we are important and we lead up to important things.

RM: *I know that the curator was delighted with the gallery layout and the whole effect. Have you had any indication so far that the general public are appreciating the use of the building and that it's going to be a popular success?*

RV: I judge that ordinary people and connoisseurs generally like it: quasi-connoisseurs in between don't. The attendance by the public has been very high.

RM: *I think it has a lot going for it. Not only your design, but as you say, the new market. We seem to be in an era where great masses of people are prepared to give time to pick up on culture, and even pay for it. Although the National Gallery has the bonus of having free access. So it's hard to see that it won't be visited by an increasing number of the public, and in fact will achieve a popular success, and that would be what you'd hoped for, wouldn't it?*

RV: Very much so. One of the sad things is we weren't permitted to put the amount of colour into the design of the lobby we originally intended; there was to be colour in the furniture, the ceiling coffers, the bold graphics, and in the soffit of the porch outside. Colour was *not* to march up the stairs as your eye then would be prejudiced, so to speak, as you entered the galleries and perceived the paintings. A kind of sensuous and lyrical dimension in the lobby was not permitted.

RM: *Let me ask you about one thing. There's one feature of the design that I don't myself much like and that's those arches that go above the staircase. There have been some comments on those. I don't actually myself immediately recognise what they refer to. It might be industrial Coalbrookdale-type arches or something from later in the 19th century. Would you care to say what they meant to you?*

RV: I like their reference to early industrial architecture and engineering that originated in Britain, but their main job is to make a formal and spatial connection between two very different walls on each side of the stair gallery and to articulate this space as positive, *not* residual.

RM: *Without that one might see it as an interdependency between two different things.*

RV: Yes – but I also love Brunel.

RM: *Which also comes up in the ceramic columns in a way . . .*

RV: Yes, it does.

RM: *. . . So it's thematic in a sense. One of the things that I like very much about the Sainsbury Wing is the plunging staircase that goes on down with big bands of mouldings that then completely stop at the landing. That makes me almost feel like I'm falling. It's vertiginous.*

RV: I'll have to figure out a justification for that gesture.

RM: *It makes the downward staircase dramatic and interesting.*

RV: We like its being the equivalent to the stair above in plan but, of course, less important within the hierarchies of its functions. One of the reasons for the big down-reaching mouldings is to diminish the amount of expensive masonry on the walls.

RM: *I had another thing I wanted to ask you. It's what you said, or maybe Denise said, earlier about meaning being more important than expression. I've thought a bit about meaning, Colquhoun also has. In a way meaning is simply something being linked to something else. When I go around London in my car, every time I pass a corner or place where I had an auto accident, I remember it. Through geographical touch, the connection is made by metonymy, touching the same spot. But on the other hand, meaning does seem to be very individual to every person and it seems to me that there's a problem then, that for some private meanings to become public meanings, there has to be some foothold, some structure, that will make the transition. What do you think about Colquhoun's concept of the* type *as a way of expanding that idea? He wrote a famous essay on the typologies in architecture which argued that with the* type, *although it recurs in different situations, the conditions are always generalised so that you recognise it. It occurs over and over again in many different particular presentations but because it has a type function it's recognisable. It links between the evanescent meaning and the conceptual word that people share.*

RV: I can't respond directly because I have not read that essay although earlier essays of Colquhoun were very influential on me. I do think there must be a play among kinds of symbols and references – more or less generally recognised, esoteric or popular, and always involving some ambiguity that makes for tension and quality. The ornament over the door in Wu Hall is perhaps too ambiguous – but that is compensated for in its formal-abstract effectiveness.

RM: *I'm slated to give a lunch-time talk in Wu Hall because I'm a faculty fellow of Butler College.*

RV: We're fellows, too.

RM: *I said I'll talk about the architecture of Wu Hall and I'll talk about the fact that it depends on the arbitrary. And what I mean by that is: I don't think you even get an artistic expression when what you're doing is determined by some system. It only gets to be expression if the thing is free for the architect or the artist to make his own choice. How do you respond to that one? Obviously, it's not arbitrary in some sense. It follows a scheme, an artistic whole. But there's another sense* not *meekly determined by climate, dimensions, the things that people sometimes think – on the analogy of engineering.*

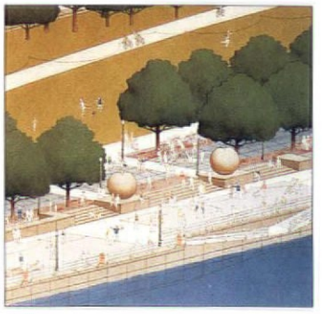
RV: I understand that; when you've been focusing on an element of design for a long time sometimes your hand draws something you didn't particularly direct it to and that is in a way arbitrary but also intuitively sharp.

RM: *This would be to do with the fact that the architect, as artist, has a certain repertoire of forms and processes which maybe are only partly visible to himself. He does a lot of it by instinct, some of it comes into his consciousness, some just as a preference, yes?*

RV: I think, if you're a good artist you acknowledge your predilections and preferences – but discriminately and in an appropriate way. I think appropriateness is a wonderful simple noun pertaining to architectural design. So I think you can use the arbitrary in a particular appropriate way.

RM: *But the appropriate doesn't impose the same strait-jacket on things as does the determinate. For instance, which is like climatic control, the body's only comfortable between a certain range that's determined by science. The range is determined but the choice is free.*

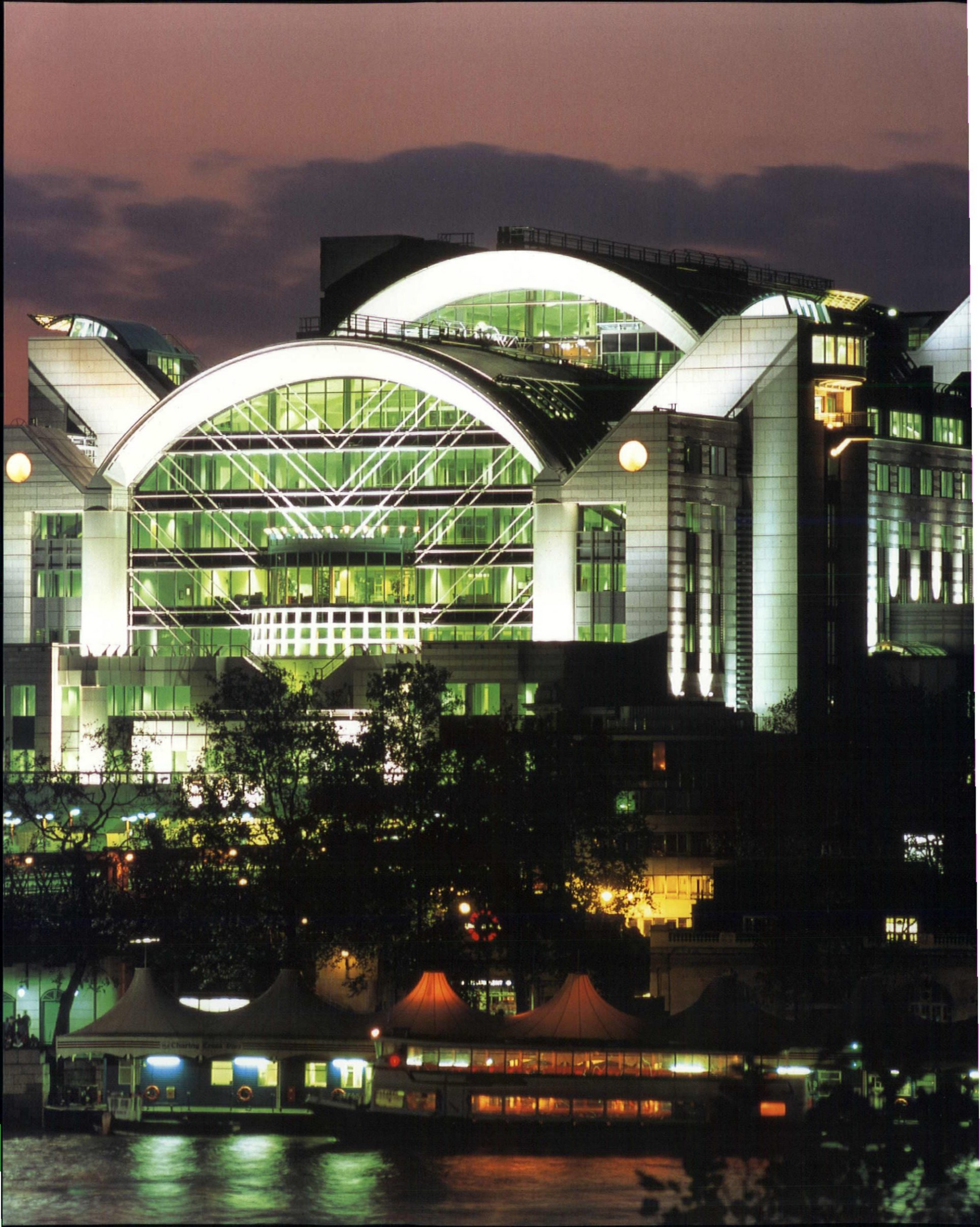
RV: Ironically, arbitrary can be good in this way, but ideology is always bad in art.



Westway, urban design project

Note

1 *On Houses and Housing*, Academy Editions, London, 1992, p58.



KENNETH POWELL
ON TERRY FARRELL

'Popular taste', says Terry Farrell, 'is as important an issue in the late 20th century as nature was for the Romantic era'. At the end of a decade which has seen his practice grow rapidly and his buildings change the face of London, Farrell expresses contempt for 'elitist' and prescriptive views of architecture and offers instead a vision of a populist architecture of free choice which responds to ordinary people's needs and aspirations.

In 1980 Terry Farrell's ten-year partnership with Nicholas Grimshaw was dissolved and the two men went their own, very different, ways. Grimshaw pursued the high-tech vocabulary already evident in earlier buildings by the partnership – like the Park Road flats in St John's Wood, London (1970) and the Herman Miller factory, Bath (1977). Grimshaw's recent works include the Channel Tunnel rail terminal at London Waterloo and several commissions in Europe, including the British pavilion at this year's Seville Expo and a proposed new stock exchange in Berlin.

Farrell, in contrast, has forsworn the high-tech in favour of a more broadly-based architecture which, style apart, takes its cue from his feelings for places and for history. His first solo projects showed a willingness to challenge Modernist planning orthodoxies which marked him out as an architectural radical. Farrell might well have continued along this course, building on a modest scale and concentrating on refurbishments rather than new buildings. But during the 1980s Britain was experiencing a remarkable building boom, centred on London, and Farrell boldly seized the opportunities it provided. Early housing and urban infill projects demonstrated his feeling for London spaces. TV-AM took the language of American Post-Modernism and applied it to a mean street in Camden Town with spectacular results. Buildings in Queen Street and Aldgate proved his ability to contribute to the varied commercial townscape of the City of London. Embankment Place, Charing Cross, is as prominent a London landmark as Rogers' Lloyds and has had a generally positive critical reception. Two more recent projects, however, Albangate on London Wall in the City and Vauxhall Cross, on the south bank of the Thames, lack its persuasive self-confidence and balance of swagger and sensitivity. The element of offices and retailing in Farrell's plans to recast the culture complex around the Hayward Gallery and Queen Elizabeth Hall, a mile or two east along the river, worries some – who fear that the public character of the site will be compromised. Farrell, however, defends the proposals as 'an attempt to urbanise through design'.

That adjective – 'commercial' – elicits a response from Farrell. 'Commercial means being in touch with what people want – nothing to do with being cheap and nasty', he says. 'People vote with their cheque books and go out and get what they want.' In a society which is increasingly better educated – more people go to the theatre than ever in history – this does not imply mediocrity. Pop artists elevated and interpreted popular taste: why should the architect not do likewise? 'Popular' should not mean bad.

In Britain, the rise of Post-Modernism in architecture coincided with the 80's boom and the reign of Margaret Thatcher. Socially-minded critics have suggested that there is a direct connection – the thinly-applied Post-Modernist facade is a symbol of the unstable foundations of the Thatcherite economy and the transparency of conservative 'morality'. Farrell insists that it was just a coincidence. Aren't Lloyds, the Hongkong Bank, and Willis Faber Dumas unashamedly capitalist companies, he says? Yet all commissioned buildings from high-tech stars, and Rogers, Foster and Grimshaw all strive for effects in their buildings which are far removed from classic Modernist purity. 'We're all Post-Modernists now', insists Farrell.

Farrell denies that he ever totally embraced American Post-Modern Classicism – though several of his buildings suggest a definite flirtation with the manner, and with the work of Graves in particular. He does not see Post-Modernism as simply a matter of style – it is more to do, he says, with approaches to planning the city. He now finds Robert Stern's work vulgar and brackets that of Michael Graves as 'sophisticated vulgarity'. If there is a populist element in his work, he would see it less in surface decoration than in response to context. Urbanism, he says, is a popular art – 'it's about understanding what people want'. It is now the Modernists (Farrell argues) who are contemptuous of urban values – and of popular taste. Norman Foster's art, for example, is abstract, often only distantly related to sites. But Foster is a member of an elite – 'it's out of control – an establishment'. Because of the deplorable lack of a visual culture in Britain, an organised group has been able to dominate the scene. It is anti-pluralist and exclusive, yet undermined by its lack of a popular base. 'These people actually believe they are part of a crusade – they're convinced they're right. But their architecture, like abstract art, is only understood by a few. Perhaps that makes it more attractive for sôme of them . . .'

This 'club', says Farrell, includes older Modernists like Sir Denys Lasdun and Colin St John Wilson as well as Rogers, Foster, Grimshaw and Arts Council Chairman Lord Palumbo (whom Farrell crossed with an alternative, conservationist scheme for the 'No 1 Poultry' site). Just as it backs gallery art which ordinary people find worthless, the Arts Council, Farrell believes, supports architecture

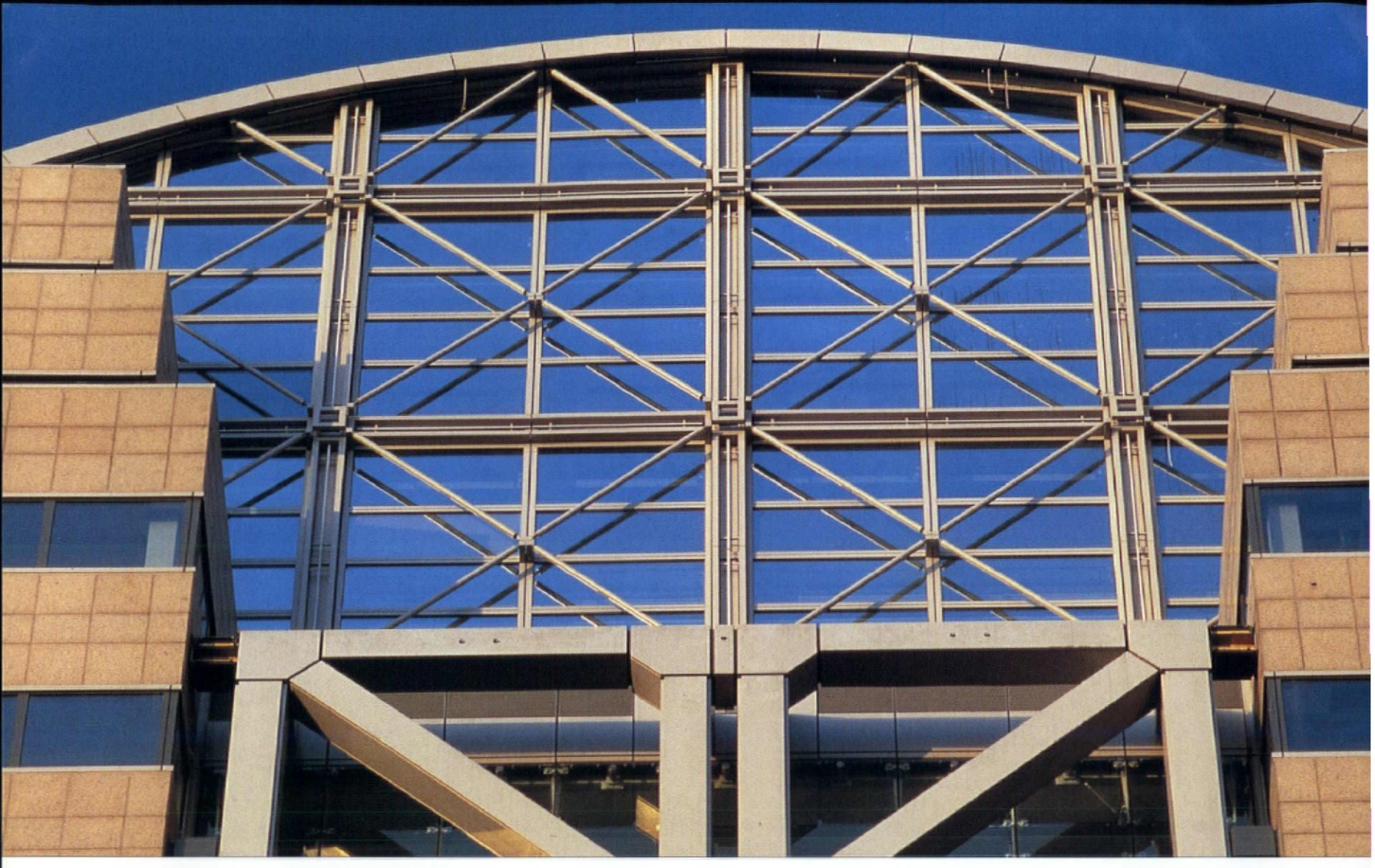


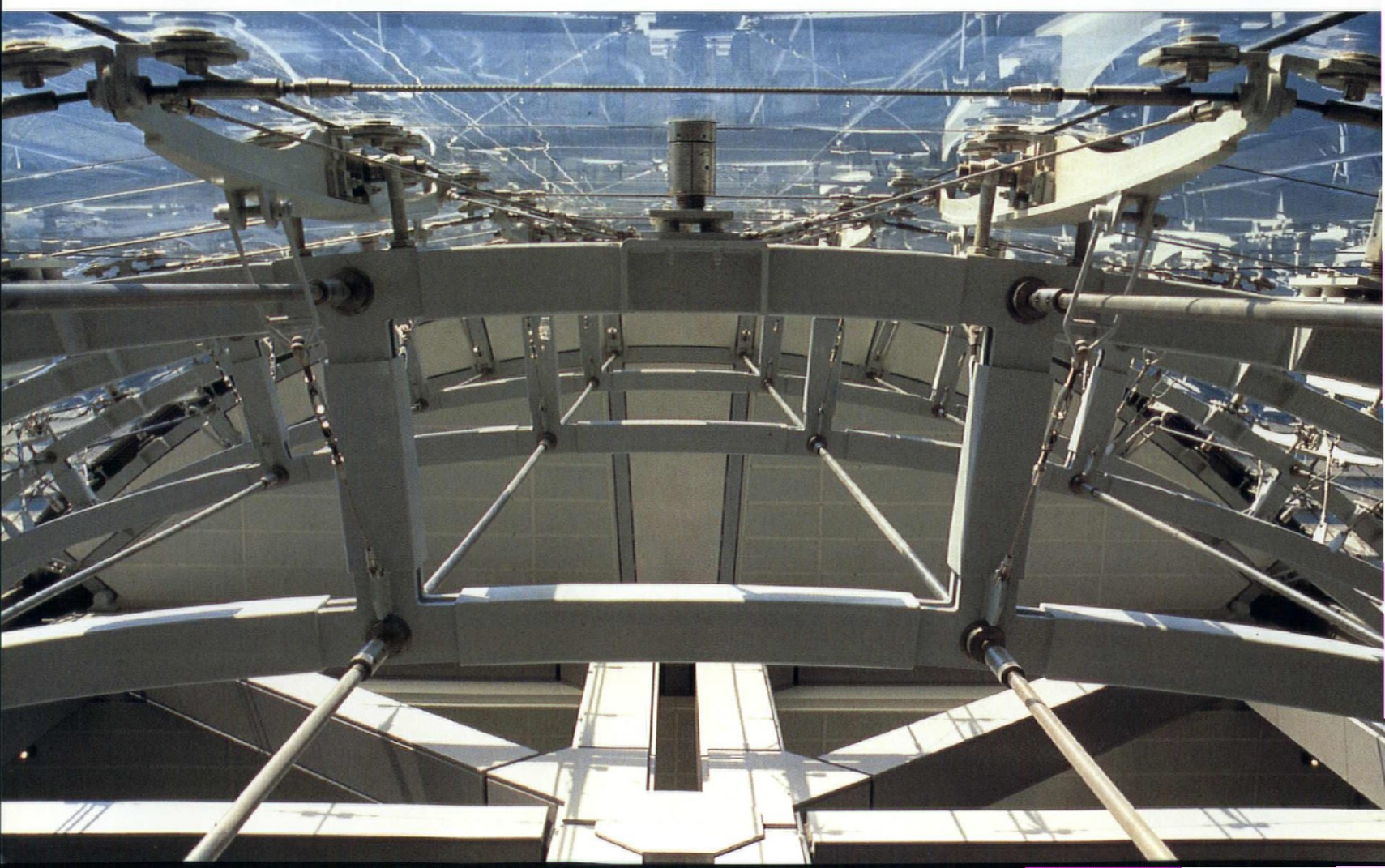
Interior of Moscow underground



Model of TV-AM Building, London

Embankment Place, London





which it thinks is good for people rather than genuinely popular. Yet the architecture of Rogers – one of the inner elite – can be 'vulgar . . . obvious . . . bombastic', while Nicholas Grimshaw's architecture is as 'commercial' as Farrell's own. So why single it out for praise?

Farrell is an avowed pluralist and pragmatist. If there is one adjective he *would* like used of his work it is 'optimistic'. Farrell's own success has undoubtedly helped to improve the standard of commercial architecture in Britain: he is a force for good. Yet his recent involvement in the 'Classical' scheme for Paternoster Square – an adaptation of the unashamedly purist masterplan by John Simpson – angered some traditionalists. Farrell finds the exponents of the Classical Revival 'in some ways more difficult than the Modernists'. He is vexed by their intransigence and extremism.

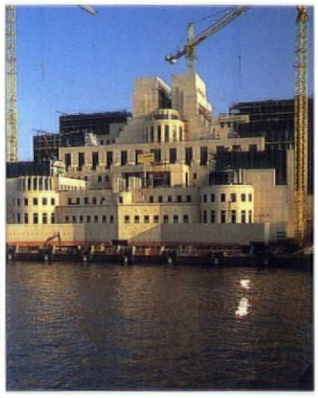
But Classicists, like Modernists, are dedicated to an ideal, social as much as aesthetic. Leon Krier's 'fanaticism', like that of Le Corbusier or Pugin, cannot accommodate the world as it is. 'I actually think the world's a good place – I don't really want to change it' says Farrell. 'The world has improved greatly in my lifetime'. It is popular taste and the views of the common man, operating through the democratic system in the West, which has been triumphant. Architecture is, if anything, a preserve of reactionary views, where public taste is despised.

Terry Farrell compares the flat roof as a symbol of oppression to the hammer and sickle of Communism. 'I question the integrity of all those who built the high-rise housing estates of the 60s and 70s, he says. The rejection of Modernist orthodoxies in the realm of housing was a breakthrough. The revived pitched roof was a symbol of sanity and simple realism.

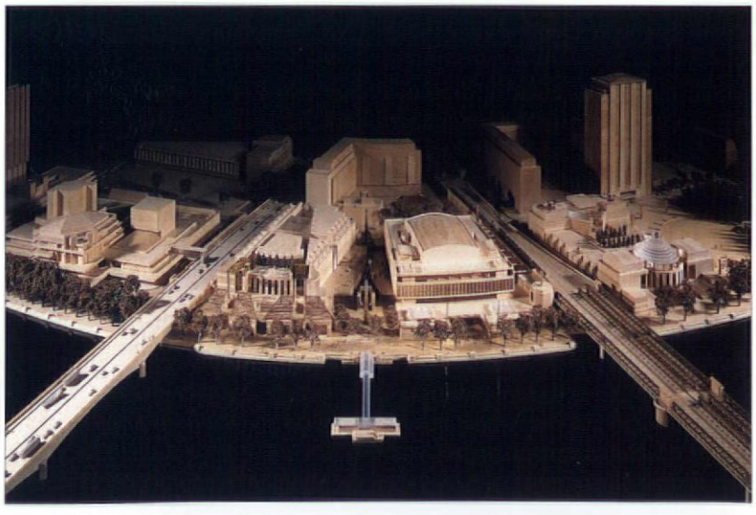
In Britain, however, the establishment still fights a dogged rearguard action. So Robert Venturi is bracketed as a thinker rather than a doer – Farrell applauds the Sainsbury Wing as 'a triumph'. It displeases the extremists on both sides – all credit to its architects, says Farrell. In the 1930s, 'Modernistic' buildings like the Hoover Factory were dismissed as a shallow compromise – now they are treasured. (Farrell, one suspects, could have been a very good designer of cinemas . . .)

Terry Farrell sincerely sees himself as a lonely defender of popular values in architecture and planning – of buildings and places that work well and are pleasant to use. Genuine 'functionalism' of this sort, he suggests, is more important than artistic innovation. So Farrell was persuaded, despite his admiration for James Stirling's work, to oppose the latter's first City of London project and has sided more than once with amenity and environmental groups against his fellow architects because he believed that what already existed should be retained. He respects Norman Foster's work, yet is glad that Foster's BBC scheme foundered and that the Victorian Langham Hotel on Portland Place survived and was restored.

Farrell might well complain that he has been cold-shouldered by the architectural establishment – no knighthood or Royal Gold Medal for him as yet. His position is a lonely one and he has, on occasions, disappointed his sincerest admirers. Embankment Place – recently given an RIBA National Award – is an impressive performance. Other recent major buildings have been disappointing. Farrell's involvement in the Paternoster Square scheme seemed to be at odds with many of his previous pronouncements and campaigns. Even leaving aside the arguments – apparently embraced by City planners – that the plans represent an overdevelopment of the site, there is something incongruous about Terry Farrrell being involved in the politics of mere style. The spirit of his work is at odds with the nature of this project. At the time of writing his office (like virtually every other in Britain) is shrinking. Farrell can see the possibility of its shrinking to the size it was ten years ago – a couple of dozen people. Yet perhaps this is the way forward for him, the way in which he will return to the pioneering urbanistic interventions which established his reputation. Farrell's enemies – and he has a few – would like to write him off, but they would be foolish to do so. He deserves respect as a sincere and intelligent populist in a profession which thrives on illusions and dislikes those who shatter them. By breaking rank on too many issues – conservation, style, 'commercialism' and history – Farrell has put himself outside the inner circle of British architecture. It is the disjunction between the radicalism of his thought and the nature and scale of this practice which makes him an uncomfortable and, to some, disturbing figure.



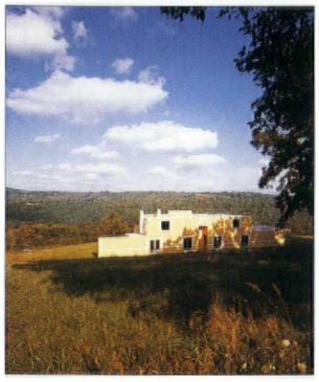
Vauxhall Cross, London



OPPOSITE: Albangate, London
LEFT: Model of the redevelopment of the South Bank Centre, London

ROBERT AM STERN

THE POP AND THE POPULAR AT DISNEY



Lang Residence, Washington, Connecticut

This talk has a curious history. It was prepared in response to a request of my publisher and master, Andreas Papadakis, who called me and said, 'We're talking about Pop, please do something. Goodbye.' Now Pop has been very far from the front of my mind for quite some time – or so I thought. But when I began to think about my assignment, I realised that a great deal of what I've done and a great deal of what I've learned, especially from my early mentor, Bob Venturi, comes out of the Pop sensibility. So what I will try to do today is to illustrate the effect of Pop on a few early projects of mine and on some of the recent things I've done for Disney, which run in that vein.

It's 25 years since I began to practise independently as an architect. My first house, the Wiseman House in Montauk, New York (1966-67), was an attempt not only to kick the teeth out of the dull conformism of late Modernism and to reflect on what I had learned from Bob Venturi but also, and I believe naturally enough for a beginning architect, to cut a little swath of my own. Venturi's house for his mother set the agenda for me and probably quite a few other architects who wanted to change things as they were. But though in many ways it can be seen as a refection of Pop, it was not that aspect which interested me. I was impressed with the Vanna Venturi house because it used history.

On reflection, Pop seems to have meant a great deal more to me than I thought it did at the time. At the very least it was important as an energy jolt; on a more profound level, because it looked at things as they are in the world and took pleasure in them, it helped me find my way around the Modernism I had come to regard as overburdened by empty rhetoric. Modernism saw the world in ideal terms; Pop-ists saw it as very real. Modernist buildings were designed not for the world as it was, but for the world as Modernist architects wanted it to become. Take the Modernist argument about technology, for example, or should I say, applied engineering, which was what it really was about. Given that Modernism was so obsessed with technology, it's amazing how little real understanding of actual construction its proponents exhibited. The major figures of the inter-war and postwar era had ideas about the way architecture should be built, but from the American perspective these ideas, like their ideas about function, had precious little to do with how buildings were actually built or how things really worked.

So Venturi's house for his mother, like the Wiseman house for my college roommate and his beginning family, tried to answer Modernism's windy calls for a brave new world with an architecture completely ordinary in construction, and familiar in form, if not typical in the way the form was manipulated. So it was that the conscious play with imagery – the use of historical forms in bold, iconographic and/or iconological ways, as well as the parodying of history, were Pop's particular influence on my first work.

The parodied Brillo box seen in Warhol's then and still famous show at the Stable Gallery set the agenda for the nascent Post-Modernism of the 1960s. But with the passage of time, the interest in the world-as-it-is has evolved from the shock value of the banal container into a more scholarly exploration of the architecture of tradition and of traditional architecture, which are not necessarily the same. In architecture, an example of this maturing approach is the idea that the gable roof is at once a paradigm of domesticity and an iconographic representation of the sacred mountain. I think such double readings certainly intrigued Palladio – for example when he put the Nymphaeum behind the Villa Barbaro. As a student of Vincent Scully's, I was early on introduced to this way of thinking and seeing. His existential approach to Greek architecture stressed the relationship of form to site in ways no other commentator had yet done. In a little temporary golf club in the middle of the Rocky mountains, nothing more than two trailers pulled up where somebody said 'Can you make something of it?', I thought of Palladio's Nymphaeum and its split gable and of the Greekness of the gable that evokes the mountain landscapes behind it.

The Lang House in 1974 was built at the point in time when Modernism was really on the run. The idea was to take a very ordinary building and with it to comment on the great works of the past, using hyper-bold colour and exaggerated detail, deliberately revealed as added-on rather than integral to the construction process.

Pop was a liberator, making it possible for me to look at things as they are and to see what might be made of them without worrying about what we were told in school, or better still, not worrying about what other architects would say, which was that the past was dead and therefore of no real interest to the creative process, and that to be new one had to be abstract and discontinuous. When the Best Products Company, seeking an alternative to the surrealism of their SITE-designed catalogue showrooms, turned to the Museum of Modern Art for advice, six architects were commissioned to prepare new prototypes. These architects were Allan Greenberg and Michael Graves at the beginning of their Classical phases, Charles Moore, Stanley Tigerman, Robert Venturi, and myself. My proposal for Best Products was a temple of consumerism. Best's buildings typically were built on flat sites on commercial strips facing major highways. I chose to

develop an iconography to describe the kinds of goods that were sold inside, describing a life cycle of consumerism, each stage represented by a familiar item, such as an engagement ring or a camera. Our Best building was imagined for a site on the strip. It was a box with signs on it – reflecting Venturi's Las Vegas-inspired typology. It used bold colours. It made a cartoon of Classicism. For these reasons it was Pop.

Our proposal for the second Chicago Tribune competition was a column, the same form that Adolf Loos used in the 1921 competition. Pop enabled me to see Loos' 1921 design for the Chicago Tribune Competition for itself, made it possible for me to take it as a serious joke. Our Classical column was sheathed in glass, so as to demonstrate that traditional firmness of shape could be sustained even in an age of thin-skinned buildings. From the technological point of view, our column was comparable to the one that Mies projected in 1919, but his had no rhetoric outside that which proclaimed itself. In Mies' case, the design was the thing itself, but in ours, the rhetoric was added on as a commentary on Chicago, on the client, on the very nature of newspapers.

I think we're fated to see Disney over and over again today, because the work commissioned by that company since the mid-1980s puts a new spin on the discussion of the relationship between Pop and popular and populist. My first introduction to Disney came not through a visit to one of the theme parks but through an experience of my architectural education. When I edited *Perspecta* as a student at Yale, Charles Moore proposed, and we published, an article about Disneyland in California, 'You Have To Pay for the Public Life', in which he made the fundamental observation that people go, and pay for the experience to go, to Disneyland in Anaheim, California (as they now also go to Walt Disney World in Florida, to Tokyo Disneyland, and as they will soon go via TGV or RER to Euro Disney outside Paris) because it satisfies a need unfulfilled in their everyday lives, one which seems increasingly unavailable to them in the places they live and work in. That need is to be safe and secure yet amongst strangers in a public place, to have a sense of a town or a city, to have choice and variety in hyperabundance in the environment around them. Disney's appeal is rooted in Walt Disney's sure sense of what binds people together in an atomised world. Disney is very complex, far more so than many give it credit for being. It is about place and symbol; but what of values? For Bob Venturi it is a secular religion of the 20th century, nobody knows what Mickey Mouse means but everybody knows he's some sort of important, almost godlike figure.

Our projects for Disney fall into two categories. Our hotels – the Yacht and Beach Clubs at Walt Disney World and the Newport Bay Club and Cheyenne Hotels at Euro Disney – are 'themed'. They represent an effort to be popular but not Pop. In designing the hotels, architectural traditions deemed dead by the Modernists but very much alive to the public are evoked. These hotels take a Disney programme which specifies not quantity and cost but also character and tries to recapture the past in the present. Our hotels are not reproductions. They are inventions. The Beach Club invents a resort of the 1870s on the New Jersey shore. The Yacht Club invents one that could have been built anywhere along the Atlantic coast from Maine to Rhode Island between the 1880s and the early 1900s. The plans of the two hotels are identical. They share kitchens and other 'back-of-the-house' services but they *look* different. The plan is not the generator of form – at least not in these cases (and indeed most hotels are planned pretty much the same way everywhere, are they not?) So you have the 1870s 'stick style' as Vincent Scully labelled it, in the Beach Club, and what he named the 'shingle style' in the Yacht Club. Neither is used in a jokey or ironic or Pop way at all. Neither has much to do with Pop except for one significant thing: Pop made it possible for me to see these past styles for what they are – not dead curiosities but living actualities. Pop made it possible to accept them as on-going and valid rather than to see them as only sentimental manifestations of a faulty vision unable to come to terms with the 'constituent facts' of that damnable eternal present that Gideon, in particular, loved so much.

Each of our 'themed' hotels is a whole world within the cluster of worlds that Disney creates as environmental entertainment. Disney's worlds are live-in movies, and visitors are able to roam from one scene to another just as they are able to flip the channels on their television sets. But each world is coherent, inhabitable and real on its own terms. It's dead-pan and straightforward and in that sense it is very much like Warhol's vision of Pop.

Disney is about the movies and Pop, which, with its serial imagery, is also closely connected to the movies. The connection to movies is particularly clear in the work of Warhol. But there is also a connection in the work of Rosenquist and other Pop artists to the movies. In Disney, while they were willing to set up an environment in a very coherent and convincing way, at the same time they never let the visitor forget that there are many different worlds. Disney's theme parks and resorts offer a wonderful juxtaposition of worlds. Earlier this afternoon Charles Jencks noted that Michael Graves' dolphins can be seen 'sitting' on the roof of my Yacht Club Hotel. In the movies, these crazy juxtapositions are often cultivated to great effect – think of fast cutting. Nowhere is that more clear than in the heart of the so-called Magic Kingdom where a mere craning of the neck will shift one's gaze from Cinderella's castle to Disney's now charmingly frozen 1950's view of the future.

In designing the Casting Building for Disney, which represents the second direction of our approach, and the one we also pursued in Espace Euro Disney, we confronted the issue of Pop more directly in our effort to transform an ordinary office building into an expression of the Disney enterprise as a whole. Facing the interstate highway, but on land belonging to Disney at the edge of the private realm of Disney World itself, the Casting Building is the only facility that bears Disney's identity in the public realm. If you haven't been to Florida, I should point out that Disney owns some 26,000 acres of land which it administers as a kind of independent fiefdom under a quirk of Florida law. An enterprise district, Walt Disney World has its own government governed by a handful of employee-residents who, out of what might best be called enlightened self-interest, tend to see things the



Rear view of villa in New Jersey



Residence, Hewlett Harbour, New York



Entrance rotunda, Disney Casting Center, Florida

Disney way.

In that district, the Casting Building is the one building facing on the public realm that is identifiably Disney's. The Casting Building was built for the single purpose of attracting people to work for the Disney Company – not to work as presidents of major divisions, but to work in the 'cast' of the theme park. Disney calls people who work for them the 'cast', the paying guests are alternately the 'audience' or the 'guests'. The Casting Building was to be an ambassador of good will for Disney as an employer. It was to express Disney's vision; to make people smile and to encourage some among them to consider working for Disney. On a real movie lot, casting is definitely a 'backlot' activity, but at Orlando, the Casting Building, though budgeted as a backlot facility, was put on-stage in a front and centre position.

Every move in the Casting Building was thought through in functional and representational terms. The spirit of Pop was never far from my mind as the design unfolded. Yet, the Casting Building is a conventional office building as well, containing all the clerks and executives who take care of the welfare of the approximately 20,000 people who work for Disney in Florida. The Casting Building is a conventional office building with a twist. Instead of the typical situation of offices wrapping a solid core filled with toilets, elevators and fire stairs, the Casting Building has been pulled apart, leaving a void through the centre into which a ramp is threaded connecting the ground floor entry at one end with the main reception room a floor above at the other. The ramp simulates the experience that everyone has when they visit Disney, or any theme park, that of waiting in line on ramps leading to an attraction. Though most of the building houses office space devoted to routine activities, its heart is a singular sequence of space designed to effortlessly lead the arriving would-be employee to his objective, a job interview.

Employees enter the building through an inconspicuous door located near their section of the parking lot. But job-seekers enter under a 'futuristic', 'airfoil' canopy, then pass through an oval rotunda, before they make one left turn and head up the ramp. At the top, a person sits whose sole job is to ask the job-seekers to perform the supreme rite of initiation – which is to write his or her name down on an application card. Let me emphasise one thing: by and large, the people seeking employment are not carrying briefcases; they are not dressed for success in smartly tailored business attire; they are kids, some of whom are not even old enough to drive themselves to the interview; they are unwed mothers or fathers, but it's the unwed mothers that seem more the tragedy; and they are also old people who are returning to the job market because they've either bored themselves to death in retirement or can't make ends meet. It's an extraordinary cross section of post-industrial society, American style.

Venice is the point of departure for the building's exterior, it can be seen in a stucco box overlayed by a diaper pattern of muted cream and golden brown squares. Forming a bridge between unemployment and employment, the Casting Building was to have 'spanned' a lagoon. But the water feature was 'value engineered' out of the project. Venice, also evoked in the glass campanile, is not a chance reference: a reproduction of the campanile at San Marco is one of the major attractions of Walt Disney World's Epcot Center; and the light and abundance of water in Central Florida also makes a Venetian point as well as the juxtaposition of cultures in a previously bland place, Orlando (which has become a focus for migration into the United States, as well as a major destination for vacationers from Europe and South America). The company's traditional iconography is not ignored. Mickey Mouse's profile forms the scuppers needed to carry the rain from the building during the downpours that so frequently and forcefully flood central Florida. Cinderella's castle plays a role in our design as well; a kind of unattainable goal, it sits above the 'airfoil' entrance and is reprised as a false balcony outside the second floor waiting room.

Because executives want corner windows, we created the Gothic framed enclosures that trap, Rapunzel-like, the most powerful bureaucrats in their towers of power. The executives occupying the corners get the best views from their windows – of the parking lots and roadways which necessarily surround our building.

Back to the arriving job seekers: they enter the building through imposing bronze doors, pulling on doorknobs which represent characters from Alice's Wonderland, rubbing them so often for good luck that they have to be replaced periodically. Inside, the rotunda is surrounded by the Disney Pantheon, dedicated to important characters represented by gilded statues carried aloft on columns and bathed in light coming down from a dome of heaven underneath the glass campanile. There is but one way to turn. There is no need for signs because you are now part of a ritual of movement familiar to you because it is so similar to the movement pattern of the park attractions themselves, which most job-seekers know from their visits to the park. You move up a ramp towards your destination, to the right you look out through *trompe l'oeil* windows to freeway scenes where, instead of tourists from Iowa and Ohio, you see the great Disney characters having a lot of fun in crazy cars. Now you, the anxious job-seeker, are elevated to the same position as the high executive looking through those Gothic-style windows – but yours are views of ideal versions of Disney World while they have to settle for the realities of roadside living. Isn't it wonderful what you can do with paint? Looking through the *trompe l'oeil* windows on your left, you look into the park itself – that is into evocative vignettes of some of its key environmental scenes, places where you will be performing on stage should you get a job.

You continue under a bridge of sighs above which a dome offers a childlike view of heaven with Peter Pan and Wendy flying above. Your journey concludes at the top where a fresh-faced, perfectly scrubbed and groomed person says, 'May I help you?' and asks you to fill out an application form. Some 50 percent of the people melt down at this moment and have to leave because they cannot provide the information required. The rest are asked to sit down and wait . . . and wait. You are then interviewed in confession-like booths, where you are asked to give away such intimate facts as how fast you can type and what your previous jobs have been. Some of you are then asked to stay longer. If you are lucky enough to

get a 'call-back', as the movie business calls it, you are asked to come back the next day for further interviews – and get a second glimpse of our building. For those of you who are the lucky ones, as you wait, the bright light dims from the sky to be replaced by the dramatic spotlighting of the theatre world illuminating Disney's representation of hope, Cinderella's castle.

Were it not for Pop, the building would not have been possible. The corporate iconography has been hyped up, mixed up, scrambled up, but in a way that can be easily understood by the people who actually use the building. True, on some levels it is an intellectual's version of Disney. Maybe it is elitist as some suggested this afternoon. But it is also very popular – it's easily understood; and it is fun.

Now, Disney is coming to France. The project is not only challenging because of its size but also because of issues of cultural exchange and meaning. I am the architect for two hotel projects at Euro Disney, the Newport Bay Club, which shares many ideas with our Yacht Club in Orlando, and the Hotel Cheyenne, which I will discuss with you today because it is somewhat different. The Hotel Cheyenne is a two-star hotel with 1,000 rooms. Some 4,000 people will occupy 14 two-storey buildings, arranged along a street, that will also contain some other buildings to provide the guests with food, entertainment, and other services. The hotel is based on the idea of an American Western town: not the Western town in its reality, but in its hyper-reality, the Western town as seen through the movies, the Western town as built on studio backlots. As in the movie backlots, our main street bends to contain the view. You can't really have the open vista of the real Western town on a backlot.

The buildings that line our Main Street are essentially identical, two floors of guest rooms lining double-loaded corridors. But each building is treated as a different design problem, so that the total effect is that of a town. Not a real town, but an environmental prop, a set dressed for a movie, one in which the overnight guest is the star.

Lastly, we were asked to do the building which has turned out to be the first building representing Disney in Europe. It is a little information centre called Espace Euro Disney and it is perhaps the most 'Pop' of our buildings to date. For this temporary building, hardly more than a facade in front of some trailers, I had the opportunity to play a Pop game in a way that could bring together my interests in iconography and contextual reference. The building sits in open fields, easily viewed from the A-4 superhighway that leads past it. It's a billboard. While the building's conelike roof undoubtedly represents the hat Mickey wears in The Sorcerer's Apprentice, it is also the typical tower of the kind of farmhouse groups one finds in northern France, some of which can be found very near the Euro Disney site.

Pop has become a 'constituent fact' of the late 20th century way of seeing. Not *the* fact, but a fact. In my work, there is much that is Pop but I know that there is more. Pop is, but it is not all.



Two Venture Plaza, Irvine, California



Pool House, Llewelyn Park, New Jersey

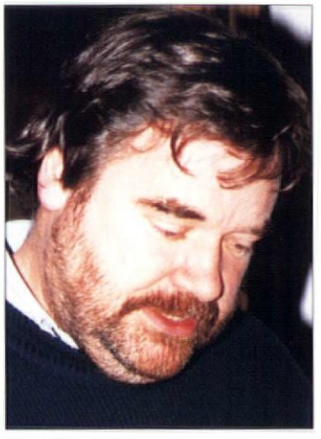


ACADEMY FORUM
POP*ULAR ARCHITECTURE*

Academy International Forum

The Royal Academy of Arts, Large South Room, London. Saturday 16th November.

The International Forum on **Pop***ular* Architecture.



Paul Finch

Forum Discussion

Chairman, **Paul Finch**, Editor of *Building Design*: I'm delighted to welcome a number of students to this occasion which has made the audience not only on average about 20 years younger, but considerably more colourful. I would like to express a particular welcome to Robert Stern who is here with us this afternoon. The subject of this afternoon's discussion and seminar is Pop and/or popular architecture. I don't propose to engage in any lengthy discussion now about the differences between Pop and popular or indeed populist. Instead, I'm going to hand over to Geoffrey Broadbent to discuss some of the issues arising out of the 'Pop Art Show' and its relationship or relevance to contemporary architecture.

Geoffrey Broadbent: Insofar as I was an artist at all in the 1960s, I was an Op artist. On the whole my heart was in that kind of movement rather than Pop and I commend the idea to the Royal Academy of a future exhibition on this kind of thing. However, I noticed that other people were doing different kinds of art and I thought, well, there is Jasper Johns' painting the American flag, big deal. And I realised of course, as everyone else did, that the whole point of Pop was an attack on abstraction of every kind, especially Abstract Expressionism. There'd been art for many years with no recognisable subject matter and the Pop artists were saying to themselves, it's time we got back to some kind of figuration, and also made it identifiable – so I came to the conclusion that Pop was really an exploration of how to bring meaning back into painting. Some of them found it difficult to get away from Abstract Expressionism. Rauschenberg for instance still had an Abstract Expressionist nose for his goat. In the catalogue for the 'This Is Tomorrow' exhibition of 1956 the spirit of Pop is summed up; on one side 'we hate all these tasteful things,' like Mozart, taste, dove-grey, the church etc, and on the other side the things we love are a little bit more rugged, such as forty-inch busts and disregard for scientific smells.

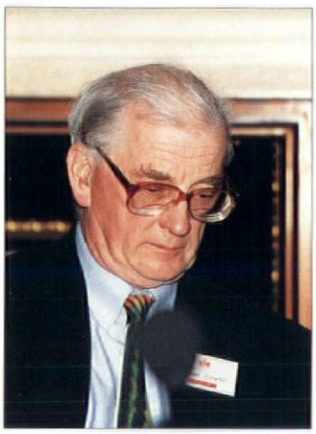
But the two things that really impressed me were done by Richard Hamilton's group. First of all they'd taken the spread of electromagnetic radiation and shown how we perceive the world around us. They had taken the human senses too: the nose smells, the eyes see, and feed information into the brain, which addresses this data. You then put forth the signal which is decoded by the receiver. I realised that what followed was the analysis of the world around us and information theory. There are many ways in which the ideas from the 'This Is Tomorrow' show emerged in architecture. Not long after the exhibition John Portman started designing hotels like The Hyatt in San Francisco, where he made a specific attempt to delight the human senses by a series of devices such as colour, form, running water, nature in the form of trees, movement certainly, the elevators on the front of the lift shaft, the escalators too – 'And especially,' he said, 'people watching people, that's one of life's great pleasures'. Which is difficult in the centre of an American city on the whole, so you create a nature where it can be achieved.

I've looked at the most popular buildings in the world. Disney World is fairly well up, it's got 12.5 million visitors a year,

Zoe Zenghelis, Egg of Columbus, detail



Geoffrey Broadbent



Michael Compton

so has Disneyland. What's extraordinary is that the most visited buildings of all turn out to be shopping malls, including, curiously enough, two in the north of England, one near Sheffield and one near Newcastle, that attract 25 million people each in the course of a year. But the thing about buildings designed to be popular is that they do, in the way I've been describing, satisfy the human senses. Disney World you go to for the rides, the pavilions and the water experiences. In the case of the *Centre Pompidou* (one of the most popular individual buildings in the world, with about 9.5 million visitors a year) if you watch them, of the 30,000 people a day who go in, virtually everyone takes the escalators to the roof, experiences a sense of movement, gazes over the rooftops of Paris, and having had a free ride then goes down and out again. Only about 3,000 penetrate to see the art. The other place people go for the view is the Eiffel Tower of course, but you have to pay for that.

I began to think that Hamilton was the most serious British Pop artist because of his taking the idea of the human senses, how we're stimulated by the media, by advertising and so on; much of what he was doing in the 50s and 60s was the analysis of the advertising package. This gave an insight into what was behind it, and the appeal which attracted us and made us buy things on impulse. Then Lichtenstein, with his analysis of the comic strip, is thinking about each line, each wisp of hair and even each word in the caption too, trying to make the message as efficient as possible in terms of communication. The minimum effort for the maximum communication.

Well, who translated all this into architecture? There were a number of people working in the 'This Is Tomorrow' show, and of those only James Stirling, from Stuttgart onwards, has been making anything like 'popular' architecture. The person who made the translation is Robert Venturi with *Complexity and Contradiction*, which really is a manifesto for architecture based on Pop Art thinking, even though he didn't show many connections. He takes the clashing scales of Jasper Johns' *Flags* and compares them with the University of Virginia, the way the large columns and the small columns fit together, and applies that device in the National Gallery Extension. But of all the sentences in *Complexity and Contradiction*, the one that most appeals to me is the memorable phrase, 'Our buildings must survive the cigarette machine'. This seems to me the heart of the application of Pop to architecture. It was in Las Vegas, one of the most visited cities in the world, that the Venturis picked out their amazing comparison of a building designed for efficiency with a front stuck onto it – a decorated shed – and a Maurer's Duck on Long Island in New York, making their distinctions between the 'Duck' and the 'decorated shed'. Of course, that shocked my generation, but it is an age-old principle, I could trace it back to the Egyptians and the Greeks but Alberti practised it with a finished palazzo on which architecture was carved. The Modern Movement did it too. Mies van der Rohe's I sections in the Seagram Building were literally stuck onto the facade as architectural decoration.

So taking Venturi's phrase, that our buildings must survive the cigarette machine, I find that I can apply that to the buildings I know and love and the ones I don't too. Probably one of the most spectacular examples recently is Stansted Airport, where the design is based on an immensely elegant structure, a wonderful thing to look at, but once you start adding human life to it, like the screens that protect the check-in desks, the departure lounge and so on, then you begin to destroy the purity. The thing is so discreet that you can hardly see the signs, they're terribly small, too elegant to serve their purpose. The British Airports Authority have to put in further signs to tell you exactly where to go. These concessions should be at the level of Las Vegas razzmatazz, and they are if you go to Gatwick North Terminal – it's an amazing place to go around; there's all the movement, the light, the excitement that is Pop. For me Stansted is totally non-Pop architecture and I happen to like Pop.

Paul Finch: I would like to bring in Robert Maxwell at this point to say something about the way that Robert Venturi sees the effect of his books and his work in the period since he first visited Las Vegas.

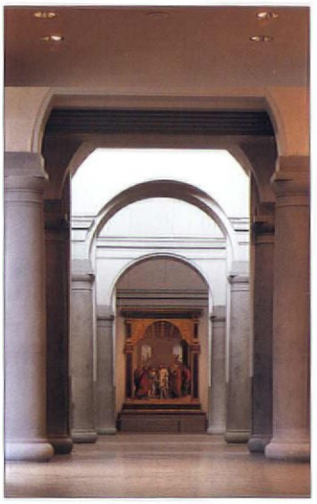
Robert Maxwell: I specifically put some questions to Venturi about his view on architecture, and I think I would sum

up his attitude as follows. First of all he says: 'We never make jokes'. I had asked him whether the last column on the National Gallery scheme was a joke, possibly referring to the Nelson's column in the middle. 'That is simply the end, the coda of the tune we're playing in Corinthian columns form. We never make jokes', he said.

I'm beginning with that because, in this country, it seems that Robert Venturi is seen as a joker even more than Peter Eisenman, which is amazing. I just wanted to put over what he said, 'We never make jokes'. I asked him, 'What is it about architecture that would distinguish Pop art from popular architecture, do you want your architecture to be popular?' He said, 'Of course, the important concept here is meaning'. Meaning is evanescent, we know that meanings don't last, we know that everybody makes up their own meaning and that you can't pin meaning down so that it's always the same. In his opinion meaning is important because it is a form of communication and they do want their buildings to communicate. He understands architecture to be a multi-level thing where the same building could be enjoyed at one level by the architectural critics, such as Maxwell or Colquhoun or Jencks, and at the same time could be understood and enjoyed by the common woman in the street. The concept is very clear but it means that his architecture is bound to be tricky, because if you're putting in something for everybody, then you are thinking of the response at the moment you are doing it, you're not aiming at responding to nature. Anything that goes with the laws, the natural laws, the laws of science, is not yet mediated by culture. It has to be mediated by culture in order to become part of culture, in order to become properly arbitrary and therefore to carry a message, to be human.

I should also say that he never denies it when I accuse him of liking Alvar Aalto, on the contrary he admits to being a fan. What he liked about Aalto's buildings is the fact that, as Robert understood them, they were already demonstrating this principle of mixed, multi-mixed, mixed level, multi-level buildings. They appealed to the architect, the theorist, the client who was looking for functional efficiency. If you look at an Aalto building, the door handles are always sympathetic to the touch, light fittings are usually pretty and there's decoration around in quantity including maybe a marble facing only around the entrance side and not around the back. So in that sense there was a model amongst the giants of the Modern Movement whose name is still honoured even in England. Aalto was taken as a model for Venturi and allowed him to theorise a multi-level building, a building where there's a meaning deliberately arranged for those who can pick it out.

I imagine the National Gallery will turn out to be popular here. It may be that that's not so much a quality of the architecture as the fact that it is a museum. Museums are rapidly becoming the expression of culture of our age, because a trip to a museum can combine all the benefits of going to church with all the benefits of going to an opera: being seen in your new clothes, with all the benefits of keeping out of the weather. There's a lot of money in art but then there was a lot of money in religion. Art is becoming the religion of our time and in that sense it's not just a question of enjoyment, although that is one aspect of it, it's a question of feeling right with the world. In that sense we have to take very carefully what I'm next going to reveal to you that Robert Venturi said about his work, which is to say 'We know that we are elitist'. So that would bring up the interesting point which is to do with not being able to comfortably separate Pop Art from popular art. Of course they are different – if you go to see the most popular paintings, they're nearly all of things to do with ships at sea, walking through the woods, nature's cathedral, etc. All these paintings deal with creating a horizon, making a distance work, and then ending up with an incredibly smooth image which is better than a photograph because it's such beautifully smoothed art, the clouds are always rubbed to make them ineffable, and there's a kind of religious aura about them. So my theory is yes, Pop Art is popular, because it communicates to people. What it communicates is not only sensuous values, but a deep sense of where you are, what's important, how you're connected to things, and that for me would be ultimately a religious experience. I think I'd better stop at this point because once I get onto religion, being a Presbyterian from Northern Ireland and brought up on the Old Testament but hating it, really opens up a can of worms for me.

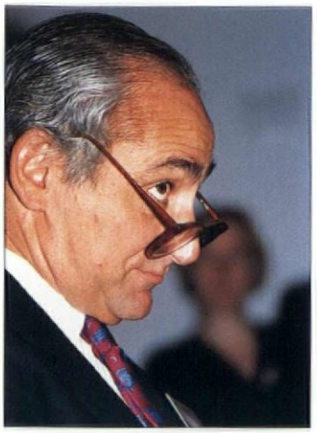


Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, The National Gallery Extension, London

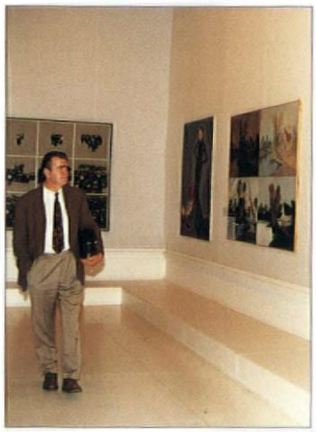


Robert Maxwell

Robert Stern: A great deal of what I've done and a great deal of what I've learned from Bob Venturi, to begin with,



Robert Stern



Terry Farrell at the Pop Art Show

comes out of the Pop sensibility. My first house was of course an attempt through the Pop sensibility not only to kick the teeth of the late Modernists' rather dull architecture, of my then youth, but also to try to both learn from Bob Venturi and somehow cut a little swath behind him. His own house for his mother was about five years old when my Weissman house was built. The Vanna Venturi House set the agenda for me and for probably quite a few architects who did not regard Pop then, and maybe have not since, as really anything more than an energy jolt – but it's a great deal more. It looks at things as they are in the world and tries to make architecture connect with things as they are, rather than as the Modernists wanted them to be, or sociologically. Remember, also, the Modernists of the inter-war period and the immediate post-war period who wanted architecture to be built as they wanted it. They had ideas about the way architecture should be built that had nothing to do, at least in the American perspective, with how buildings really were built. So Venturi's building, like the Weissman house which followed it, was a completely ordinary construction . The imagery – the use of history in a bold iconographic or iconological way, with its parodying of history, which was yet history, just as the parodying of the Brillo box is reverent to the Brillo box, as in a Warhol museum show at the Stable Gallery, or in any of the images we'll see in the Royal Academy 'Pop Art Show', from the American side at least – set the agenda for me.

Charles Jencks: My view is that 'popular' has to be reconsidered in the light of what advanced techniques of market research have shown since 1974, that is the computerised studying of what used to be called, even under the Venturian, Gansian analysis, 'taste cultures'. Herbert Gans, if people don't know, was one of the great sociologists on all sorts of levels, and has been since the 50s. He had an enormous impact in the fields of sociology, and economics, and architecture through the writings of Venturi and Scott Brown. He formulated this relationship between high culture and the popular which I think is underneath the whole argument. Basically this is the central question which asked itself in 1952, 1953, 1954. You can't quite talk about a popular culture as if it were a homogeneous mass, that's thinking in terms of mass culture and then you get into dichotomies. It is the culture of maybe two or three per cent of the profession, or the population which is set by the cutting edge and which is responsive to it. As The Independent Group said, 'We operate in the gap between life and art, and culture is a continuum'; culture is a continuum and there's no better or worse, it's just varied. We can't speak about 'popular' in quite the way I think Robert was speaking, as if it were one thing that's unchanging, and if we get into this computerised cluster analysis, you find that there are something like 40 different taste cultures, not the seven of Herbert Gans. The largest one, interestingly enough, is what's called blue-chip, blue-collar and that's the upper working class. That in America is only six per cent of the population, in Britain it's about the same and it's fascinating that these are the people who voted for Thatcher and for Reagan and on whom they targeted their message. It's the only group to show a wide change in its voting patterns. It suggests to us that we have to take a different tack, that if America is divided into 40 taste cultures we can't talk about 'popular' as if it's one thing out there that we could take a poll on. If we're always out of step with the other 94 per cent of the population then it seems we have a moral responsibility to try to make bridges to other taste cultures. I think Robert Maxwell has gone right to the heart of the matter and we ought to have something that's closer to a moral and religious discussion.

Paul Finch: Robert Stern, when you're designing buildings are you responding to a certain taste culture, or do you think you're creating a taste culture, or shaping it, or are you just making buildings to a client's commission?

Robert Stern: Well, I don't think it's the latter. I think the whole point of Pop in relationship to architecture and in the change in architecture since Venturi, is that architects don't make culture. They are at best interpreters and they are the end-product of a phenomenon, not like the Modernists whom Charles Jencks alluded to who felt that they could reformulate culture and then disseminate it. I'd like to think that in my own work – and I think it's true of many many architects today, even for those such as Sir Norman Foster or Richard Rogers – I am working very self-consciously in an

established point of view. It is the big shift in architecture which continues to unite people since the Venturis.

That was a very interesting discussion of the Venturis and the shift into the religious thing. I feel obliged to point out that the most sinful advocate of that in the Charles Jencksian sense would be Philip Johnson, who long ago said that the museum was the 20th-century church; and I think that, at least in terms of the American architectural perception of the role of the museum as a problem for architects and as a cultural phenomenon, Johnson was very early in articulating that point of view. I think that it is correct and the reason why we are fascinated by museums.



Robert Stern, Llewelyn Park, New Jersey

Robert Maxwell: I'd like to comment on one thing that Charles Jencks said which has to do with the mall idea, about being apparently engaged in consumption but not actually buying very much. The other phenomenon that strikes me as amazing in America is the outlet house called IKEA, which is somewhat similar to what we used to have when he was still running it, Conran's Habitat, which is very much downwind of the Bauhaus and their effort to mould taste because it is definitely stuff that's modified by all that development. On the whole it's good simplified design, it's cheap, but quite well-made and it's clean. I remember that when I was young, starting up on furnishing my house, I found Habitat extremely useful. As a matter of fact I still find Habitat extremely useful and I went to IKEA the other weekend and bought a thing for my computer to go into and it's very happy there. It seems to me there is a sense in that what happened in the Bauhaus in the 20s was a reformulation of taste which has now gone down in the popular taste to a point where it's been picked up. It would be wrong to look at an IKEA and find nothing but Modern, Abstractist-type things. You will also find craft stuff there, baskets made in Czechoslovakia and China. You will find decorative stuff there, tablecloths and bathroom things printed with flowers – so it's far from being the purist taste, and that's the point I wanted to make; that if you're looking to see where the common movement is today, it has to be a mixture of good design and responsive things, things that respond and look human. And that very often comes down to having some pattern on them, being in some sense decorative or having the mark of having been lovingly made. So it would be wrong to see this prevalence of good design in the Habitat/IKEA sense as being the beginning of a new, modern age, mass-abstract culture. And I think that that would bring us to another question on figuration – of course for me, it is always tied up with religion because you look in the sky to see God and what you do is you see somebody, but it's not God. Any cloudscape, if you look at it closely, it turns out it's got a figure in it, usually of a bearded man, and I take this to be God. But then there is the problem that if you look around to see good and evil, they don't have any figuration, they're abstract concepts. What I'd like to talk about in that relationship, in its religious, in its ultimate intent is figuration; what do you expect to get back when you look at nature, what do you expect to see reflected in nature of the human condition? What is it with abstraction and why do, and this is the controversial question, why do British architects maintain that any appearance of figuration is decadent?

Robert Stern: Pop was not only a reaction against abstraction, which is a troublesome word, because abstraction implies that you're working from something to something else. Non-objective art, to use the term which was popular in the US, at least at the Guggenheim in the 40s and 50s, is what it was a reaction against. It was also a reaction against personalisation, extreme personalisation in the arts in general – where Jackson Pollock's paintings for example were a record of his own processes and not any more, he never presented them as any more than things by Pollock. But the other side of this personalisation was of course the tendency in late Modernism at the time to move away from Mies, although strangely enough he was not criticised, even by Venturi, despite the 'less is more' thing. But for Corbusier and in some ways Aalto – Aalto was totally impossible to rationalise or explain, you've done as good a job as anybody has ever done – it's just a personal approach to form, and there was very much a reaction against that. The one alternative was of course the objectivity of Mies and that clearly was lacking in figuration and clearly lacking in meaning, it got awfully repetitious. The other side was just to look around at all this stuff that was out there. I don't know how we got to IKEA which by the way is a Scandinavian company, and has nothing much to do with anything except that it's cheap.



John Melvin



Dennis Crompton

Robert Maxwell: And popular.

Robert Stern: And popular, yes. And different from Habitat I suppose, but I didn't know we were at a merchandisers' convention here, or a shopping centre convention. The other thing is the change in Venturi's argument, although he would not necessarily say so, from the first book to the second book, from *Complexity in Contradiction* to *Learning From Las Vegas*: of course that reflects the inclusion of Steven Izenour and Denise Scott Brown into the formulation of ideas, but also of course reflects a dramatic change in American and world culture.

Charles Jencks: I think figuration is important because it is the way in which architecture is most accessible to people who don't understand its more fast-changing codes. One of the things which is so clear about roadside Pop and popular architecture (what we understand as Pop architecture) is its figuration in a pluralist society which lacks clear legitimacy for a representation of certain figures: ie, what do we decorate, what do we ornament, what do we explode as a Pop image or an accessible image?

Theo Crosby: The reality is that everybody needs figuration, as part of how you explain what the building is. It's impossible to explain a building without a language, without a set of elements at play, and if you're only playing structure, that is an amazing limitation on its eloquence. I've always thought that you could do it with art, you could look to your contemporaries and find an art that could be used in building, and we've even managed to find a kind of financing mechanism for at least some of it, which is now operative. But the problem is that the art has gone away from building, students are now taught about how to design works of art, but they don't have the rationale for it and I think that has to be taught again, that is the task of the next 20 years, because if you can't bring everybody into the environment then you've made a terrible civil failure. The early Modern Movement was about all the arts, it was about poetry and music and philosophy and the crafts and the best example there is the Art Deco period, where everybody was involved and a completely new style was evolved. It was all thrown away by architects desperate to make what you might call cheap-as-possible housing estates after the war. The artist were shuffled off to the universities where they swam around in ever-decreasing circles. Now, it is time to change that. Certainly we have to have a popular architecture, what's the point of any kind of architecture unless it's popular?

Paul Finch: Could you make the distinction between Pop architecture and popular architecture?

Theo Crosby: No, not really. Pop art was really, from what I remember of it, an attempt to use available materials, to use what was there. The whole of my generation was always trying to make something out of what was there. Balustrades out of bed springs, your clothing out of army surplus, that was our whole mode – there wasn't any money. Something like 'This Is Tomorrow' was made out of £30 per group, and everybody scrounged to do it – feasible method, still a perfectly feasible method.

Paul Finch: The question of picking up things from one area and using them in another actually guarantees that whatever else it might be, Pop Art could never be popular in the sense that the pictures of Tahitian ladies could be popular. Isn't that the problem, that a Pop architecture probably wouldn't be popular at all? And that's why Post-Modernism is not Pop architecture, it's something quite different, because it has borrowed from its own history, it hasn't borrowed from the histories of other things in other areas.

Kevin Rowbotham: Pop architecture is high culture; you're not talking about popular architecture at all, we've not

even started to. No, this is just the same old bloody high-cultural discussion we always have. What we might begin to ask is some questions about what actually are the kinds of cultural values that are excluded by the operation of architecture.

Robert Maxwell: So, what are they?

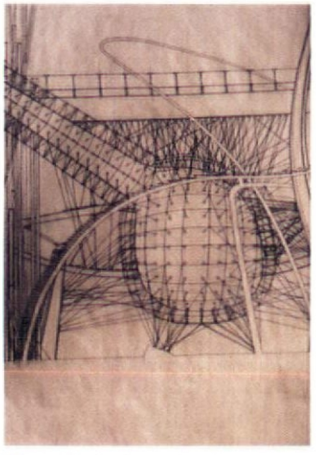
Kevin Rowbotham: Well, you're the expert.

Robert Maxwell: No, come on, you brought it up so come out with it. What does normal high-culture architecture like Stansted or whatever, what does that exclude?

Kevin Rowbotham: Let me put it like this: what seems to happen is that architecture creates for itself a site onto which certain kinds of interpretations can be projected, in this case the work of Robert Venturi, which is not popular at all, which doesn't seat itself on a kind of popular understanding that might be interested in things like *Neighbours* and other kinds of popular consumable forms of culture, but on a reassessment of the historical development of architecture in its own terms. Now, that is not popular from my point of view at all, neither is it critical.



Kevin Rowbotham



Kevin Rowbotham, drawing

Richard Reid: Isn't one of the problems that we assumed presumably that any of the more popular dialectical forms are communicable and that clearly is a nonsense. Geoffrey Broadbent made that point. There are many other ways to communicate, we don't merely have to use popular things, it just happens to be the easy way to do it; that presumably is why the street, the main street, uses that more than anything else, but it is definitely not the only way to do it.

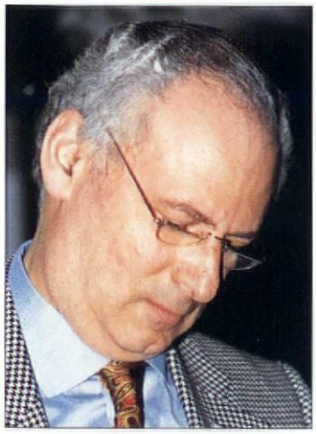
Charles Jencks: Can I just interject the statement, 'What is popular?', and come back to these taste cultures – the show here, is that popular, the 'Pop Art Show' with 3,000 visitors a day, 1,000 school children, I think these are more or less the figures; is that popular? Well, it isn't popular enough if you expected 4,000, but it's more popular than if you expected 2,200. What I think we have to think about seriously is what this word 'popular' means. The market researchers are way ahead of us on this and they'll show you that if no style gets more than 20 per cent of the popularity sweepstakes when you do sophisticated studies, and most of them are around the 10 to 12 per cent, then what does 'popular' mean?

Kevin Rowbotham: Well, I think in these terms, this counting of heads, this way of assessing the popular is just a way of concealing the issue. What I want to know is how architects approach the values that are excluded by architecture. Architecture wants to take its own value-view of the world and it does, it refines its own view. Why doesn't it then admit that it's not popular at all, but exclusive, and we can be happy with that? So what you mean by a popular architecture, is obviously ironic.

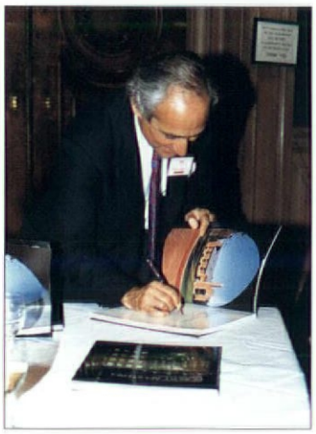
Robert Stern: I never use the term, but there is Pop as a sensibility which is what I think is the really important issue. But what is interesting about it is that in general it looked to rather ordinary and day-to-day things, that had been overlooked by other artists or architects.

Kevin Rowbotham: But don't you think it was a predictable inversion and a predictable mechanism, which the avant-garde had used for a considerable number of years? It simply inverted an identifiable position of high art. It wasn't anything cultural at all.

Robert Stern: No, there I think it wasn't predictable, that's always so easy to say in retrospect; in reality I don't think it



Geoffrey Wilson



Robert Stern

was predictable. I think it was rather amazing on the New York scene. The impact of the 'World of Tomorrow', the show which I've been hearing about for 30 years, is unrecorded in New York, for better or for worse. If we knew about it at all, we did so through British publications. The other thing is that I don't think it was intended to have an avant-gardist impulse really, in the classic 20th-century way of the avant-garde, which is sort of to screw everybody and start a new way. Andy Warhol was not really an avant-gardist by nature, and early manifestations of Oldenburg and so forth really weren't quite, they were in a way basically enthusiasts.

Warhol was a very shrewd manipulator of the scene, he was never very shy about it. But he wasn't actually out to do everybody, at which the avant-garde always has to be way ahead of everybody. He was just simply trying to find his own little niche. It's a very different impulse.

Michael Compton: I think it has been demonstrated, for example, that Andy wanted to sell certain kinds of pictures to Leo Castelli. Then he found that Lichtenstein had occupied this territory so he decided to produce another kind of picture and that was a hit. It was baked beans instead of comic magazines, I forget which. That to me is not very interesting really, the extent to which Andy was determined to defeat everybody else and be finally defined as the leader of the new art. But I would like to go back a bit to The Independent Group, and say that, as I remember it, it wasn't just that there would be more items in the stacks, more and more types of culture, and they would be considered of equal value from the point of view of their practitioners. The picture that was represented of culture was one of a multitude of overlapping subcultures, a picture informed in particular by the mathematics of topology, brought in to explain the phenomenon. Each of those subcultures required a sort of expertise, whether it was fancying pigeons, or fancying pansies, or motorbikes or whatever – all of the people would define themselves not only in relation to the gross subcultures of society, like trade unions, but also in terms of whatever it was that interested them, whether they were products of heavy industry or natural products. They would speak to each other using a fairly sophisticated language which was related to the iconographic studies of Panofsky and Wittkower, and the Pop Art that was envisaged was to be an art that tried to make use of this multitude of overlapping languages, each of them corresponding to a subculture which would be in itself evanescent, constantly evolving. The question is then, can architecture play that game? It was a question of importing notions from anthropology for example, the study of the behaviour of people considered as subcultures. Of labelling the architecture with added-on elements, as well as in its basic design, to correspond to that kind of thing.

I suppose though that is a part of architecture all the time. It has to be to the extent that architects consider at all the public use of their buildings, it must be.

Paul Finch: As you walk around London do you see any buildings which strike a chord in relation to the Pop art exhibition?

Michael Compton: No, not really. Reyner Banham, for example, was very interested in Las Vegas because of the decorated shed. There was an architecture, it was similar to the saloons in the Wild West movies where the pack camera would turn around and you would see that there was a box which was a saloon, and the facade would have almost nothing to do with the structure, and so these were interesting because although all architecture has its symbolism, in this kind of architecture the language, the linguistic element is very obviously detached or it's not part of the same structure. I'm getting into trouble here, I can't easily make a point . . .

Paul Finch: Can I rescue you by asking Mark Fisher if he sees architecture that he recognises as Pop architecture (in a funny sort of coincidence) at pop concerts? Do the sort of stage sets that are provided correspond in any way to what

one might think was a pop architecture?

Mark Fisher: I have great difficulty in following this conversation because it seems to be a long way away from what one might expect the subject to be if one accepts that our invasion of Pop has anything to do with the populace. The conversation is extraordinarily high-brow, perhaps one might've heard Medieval physicians discussing anatomy this way, if one had been around in Medieval times, because it's almost a conversation borne of the ignorance of the subject. This was well exemplified by dismissing the products of surveys of numbers of people attending as some sort of statistical trivia. I think the most important thing that's been said with regard to how you would define 'popular' in respect of the built environment is the comment that the people who go to Disneyland pay, people who go to shopping malls don't pay. And when people go into their back pocket in our society, they are voting in the only way that has any true meaning. When they vote for politicians it's exactly the same process. I think that is the ultimate test of whether architecture is popular or not. Our society is largely about an interest for what is contained and thus architects are enchantingly marginalised and the public get on with going to the shopping malls and doing their shopping. That's really the issue, they go to the art galleries for whatever symbolic or religious purposes are met within art galleries, they very rarely go to see the architecture. They go to pop concerts that I design in order to see the pop stars, they don't go to see our stage sets. But they do go and pay to see the pop stars, they'll go and pay to see Madonna. They'll pay to go to Disney World and I think that's the criteria, that is the issue as much as there is one in this conversation.



Fisher Park, 'Angie', Rolling Stones Tour



Fisher Park, 'The Wall', Roger Waters, Berlin

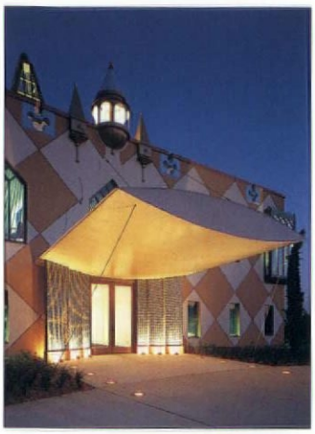
Charles Jencks: As an architect insofar as you're designing for her or for that show, what obligation do you have? That's really the key. Although one admits that maybe the form is less popular than the content.

Mark Fisher: The key issue to understand in the job that I do is that I'm irrelevant and I share that with most architects – it's just that I probably have a better understanding of it.

Robert Stern: I don't think that's true in the case of Disney. You could probably have the Madonna concert without the set and it would probably still come off fairly well. But in Disney I don't think people actually go for what's inside the buildings half as much as for the facades and the environment, it's like a walk-in movie, they go for the architecture in essence, for the scenography. The scenography is the thing and that, at least in terms of this historical discussion of Pop, was made as a point by Charles Moore; at the same time Venturi was making the points we referred to earlier, he said that Disneyland in California was a place people would pay to go to have a kind of 'urban experience' because there was nowhere else you could have such an experience in all of Southern California. I wouldn't sell architecture totally short. I also think architects make a spectacular museum environment, I don't know anybody who's gone to the Guggenheim Museum to see those paintings, I mean they're horrible paintings, they have terrible shows but everybody loves the building. Of course there is a *cognoscenti* who go for the shows but the basic mob scene of a Saturday at the Guggenheim is because it's a place to meet people and it's a great environment. I actually think that that will be the case of Venturi's building for the National Gallery,, the big stair and the restaurant properly placed and so forth.

Charles Jencks: The paintings are good, Bob.

Robert Stern: The paintings are excellent and they're shown with a sensitivity that is amazing by the architect, who really understands and appreciates them, and who also knows about how to handle natural light in this climate. I think we are scenographers, as Nash understood 200 to 300 years ago, and as other architects have understood all through the history of architecture – usually the ones whom we still pay attention to, because they make a great fabulous theatre which you can walk into.



Robert Stern, Disney Casting Center, Florida



Theo Crosby

One thing about the Pop sensibility is that in the few encounters I have personally had with Andy Warhol he had very interesting architectural ideas. Once, Philip Johnson was struggling with a visual problem in his ill-fated complex of buildings for NYU in Washington Square, New York, where there is an axis of a street and there was no termination. So Johnson asked Warhol while I was present, 'Well, Andy what shall we do?' and he said 'Well, why don't you make a stop sign there?' Philip Johnson replied, 'No, no, no'. Warhol insisted 'No, no, make a stop sign. Just make a giant stop sign'. He really understood and had a take on that. That's what I think Pop was really about; raising the level of the obvious to an incredible power through art, but not an art that has to evaluate anything else. In fact, just an art that said, here it is, but I'll make it gigantic and you'll see it as you've never seen it before. I think that's the part about Pop that makes Pop architecture interesting as well. Popular architecture is a different concept, because that gets us into the late 60s where you have people taking street corner surveys and finding out what kind of building do you want, and then it leads you to disastrous conclusions like the biker wall which is maybe the most organised version of popular architecture of that period. We could talk about that, but I would much rather talk about Pop, not popular.

Paul Finch: Theo Crosby, why don't you describe some of the themes of The Independent Group when they were addressing these matters?

Theo Crosby: Well I mean, most of them were very simple Brutalists – almost everybody was a Brutalist in the sort of Smithson or early sense and they carried on building the kinds of buildings which they had started doing in the 50s, like Roehampton and so on. You see, those were the Brutalist buildings. I don't think they were able to transfer their interest in advertising and so on directly into building for many, many years. In fact, architecture always lagged behind art, for a fair period. In fact the first building proposed using a great deal of popular imagery was of course the Pompidou Centre, which was a long, long time after and comes out of three generations of teaching from the Smithsons and Peter Cook and then on to Rogers, so it's a slow process in architecture, and the whole business of making a popular architecture is quite another matter from using that. Popular architecture comes out of a rejection of the provision of the old Modern movement and that comes from Jane Jacobs and from the business of having to read them and what it is their view provided.

Michael Compton: In those days people who were recruited into the profession were I think recruited because they were the sort of people who wanted to change the world. There were the heroes ahead of them who they felt had managed to change a little bit of the world, they were a mess of young people who wanted control. They were interested in popular architecture in the sense that there would be a matrix of buildings which would be constantly done over by Boots or WH Smith or whoever occupied it, so that the bit of the building which faced you on the street would be continually changed. The problem with Pop architecture is that the architect on the whole continues to want to have control over the building, so that the external decoration, even if it appears to be loosely attached to the building, is a kind of mask or game under the surface which is still going to be under the control of the architect; and that is a straightforward contradiction.

Paul Finch: I would like to bring Cedric Price in at this point to provide the link between The Independent Group and the subsequent Pompidou Centre, and perhaps to say something about his ideas which emerged both at the Fun Palace and also Interaction. Did you see yourself as part of that Independent Group tradition?

Cedric Price: I worked on 'This Is Tomorrow'. I don't see the link between the Smithsons, Archigram and Pompidou, I would have thought it's more Richard Hamilton, Archigram and Pompidou. I think there's something taken out of this

discussion and it's a point which was made earlier on, I think that to talk about Pop is different from 'popular'. There isn't much fun in this discussion. We are constantly saying in the office that serious fun is not funky, you can hear that echoing round our office all the time. What makes it very sad for me, I'm not sorry about these architects who design buildings in Orlando for Disney Headquarters or whatever it is, but what is sad is that I'm sorry for the clients. I'm sorry for the people who think they need architects. The ghost thing has reversed, the fact that Campbell's, cornflakes, Monroe and Mao ghosted for a couple of pretty good Pop architects, that's fine. But when in fact Disney and his successors ask architects to come in and Arata tries to be witty but with terribly good taste and does the gateway, the Mickey Mouse ears for the headquarters in Orlando, it's tragic, it's sort of designer Pop, it's like adverts for Silk Cut cigarettes, the fun's gone. I remember once at the AA, Piers Gough came in and brought a great model; it had little plastic trees and it was all in colour, it was his scheme. Everyone else was still using balsa wood and a little bit of grey spray. The jurists all said it was fun, but we'll take it seriously, this is marvellous. But when he put in the little electric train which ran around, that was too much. They wrote it off, it wasn't serious enough. There is something in timing, there is something in immediacy, it's not just in expendability, it's not just in scrap, there's something in a sort of timing that people associate with. For example the sign which said Mr Big Boy or something like that, a billion and one hamburgers have been sold – you assumed that everywhere in the United States these signs were going up and they recorded that you'd just eaten that hamburger, wherever you were, Tampa or somewhere, and another number spun around. That had a lot of design attached to it and a lot of what Mark Fisher puts into some of those Pop things. So that element, that is fun, it's not people being conned, because they can draw out, but it does require a very clever sort of design and an acceptance of chain, scrap, and even an acceptance of the poor joke which you will then rap out again. I think that answers the question.



Cedric Price



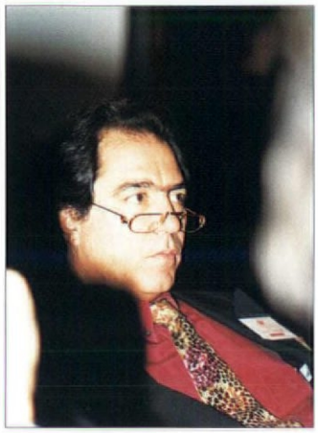
Disney street scene

Nick Clear: One thing I'd like to comment on about this discussion is how terrified most architects are with such things that are genuinely popular, because of course I operate within a realm of cultural relativism. Having been the high priest of cultural relativism for now almost 12 years, Charles Jencks realises that cultural relativism doesn't need any high priests and now we can retreat into an ethical position, which then tries to retrench itself as a new form of science. It's not that there is a series of pluralist codes where anything goes, but it's actually now, 'Well, that's OK, but we'll go on to something else, we'll try and discover real values, real ways of working'.

Charles Jencks: What I was trying to do is get back to what I think is part of the argument of The Independent Group and taking seriously a continuum of tastes, then taking a pluralism seriously, and then market researchers who try to target this with their computers. I think it is a moral question, if you're designing for other people, using their money, and you want to get into some kind of relationship to them, if you don't accept the Corbusier thing of from the top down, then you don't accept that your taste happens to correspond to their taste, and then you have some obligation to try to figure out what their tastes are – if you don't assume it is homogeneous culture, if you assume there is Pluralism and conflict and difference, and in fact that the definition of a market is the difference that makes the difference. People try to dominate it, like Prince Charles and Sir Richard Rogers, both have claimed legitimacy. Why? Because the Pompidou Centre is popular among 75 per cent of the public that comes to Paris, and because Prince Charles says, 'I get 86 to 92 per cent of the people who watch television on my side'. They are using these statistics to browbeat people and to legitimise a kind of taste. They really do, that's the politics, so accepting that allows Prince Charles and Sir Richard to set two dominant taste cultures, neither of which is very dominant (we know from the Mori investigators that none of them go above 18 to 20 per cent); and most people, even most people in this room probably, like me, often prefer people's taste which isn't their own. They like to be slightly jolted out of their own taste, so we're probably over-sophisticated anyway. In any case, if we're designing for the public realm and it's a mixed public or even an ethnic public, we want to know what their view of the good life is, that seems to me a minimal morality for an architect.



Kenneth Powell



Tomas Taveira

Nick Clear: You say architects design for the public domain, but they most patently do not. They design for themselves, they design for the critical community which is the architectural establishment, they don't design for people at large.

Charles Jencks: The Independent Group was towards the popular and populist and Pop, all three, they were trying to break out of the ghetto. You're repeating Mr Wolf's attack on Venturi, you say he just dances on the ghetto walls, right?

Nick Clear: They both dance from the ghetto through the gallery, and that's not really getting anywhere, is it?

Charles Jencks: Out of the ghetto.

Cedric Price: When I asked Herbert Gans to the AA, he wasn't a precursor of Jane Jacobs, who was designer Pop, like Silk Cut adverts, quite a different thing, not Pop really. Now if you're saying that because of the cluster theory of advertising we are now going to put our finger on the pulse of popular taste and then respond, that finger will be put in a very rude place. It's about happiness, fun, choice and delight, manifesting very often in finite objects, but not always.

Robert Maxwell: Come on, you can't define architecture, which we're all trying to keep in the public realm, God knows.

Cedric Price: I'm not defining.

Robert Maxwell: Well, you're not trying to but then I understand that you have a different view by your saying that it is what is fun. What is fun for you is not fun for me. What is fun for any one person is that person's choice of what is fun. Now you're claiming to know what is fun for the people and I would think that that is way off, that's bloody fascist.

Cedric Price: I wasn't defining architecture, I was defining what was the subject of this afternoon's talk, 'popular'.

Charles Jencks: Your Interaction Centre, is that a lot of fun Cedric? Have you done polls there?

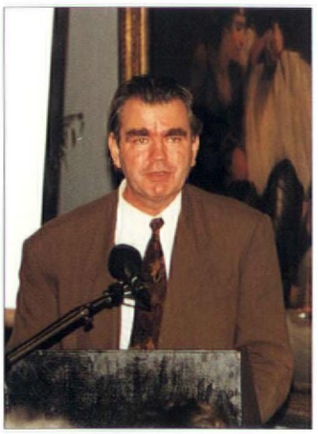
Cedric Price: Desperate! It's not fun at all. Anything that's operated by a charitable trust is scarcely anything. It's a rusty centre for do-goodery.

Paul Finch: I recall talking about the nature of popularity surrounding the death of (I think) Sam Goldwyn; there was a most enormous crowd turned out for his funeral. And since he was known as a tyrant, as one of the tzars of Hollywood, there was some mystery as to why this monster attracted such a huge and apparently sympathetic crowd, lining the route of the funeral cortege. The film writer Joe Mankovitz was asked for an explanation of this crowd and he said, 'You give the people what they want'. We might return to this question of how you measure popularity later, I for one would be very interested to know whether surveys are carried out as to, out of all those people who visit the Pompidou Centre, not only how many there are, but how many of them like what they experience. We now move to Tomas Taveira who is going to give a brief presentation.

Tomas Taveira: What is Pop art? What is Pop architecture? What is Pop Design? What are their limits, the materials

which they use and the ways they are articulated, either psychological or artistic, and what are their temporal limits?

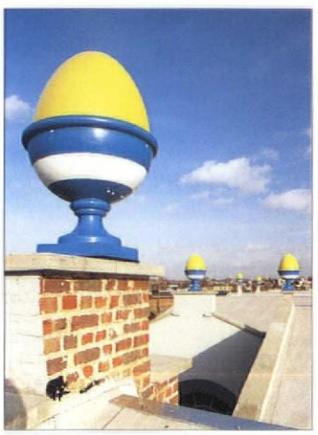
These are the most common questions or issues that since the beginning all artists, architects and critics have dealt with. [The full presentation given by Tomas Taveira is made separately in this issue]



Terry Farrell

Terry Farrell: I think for me the most interesting thing to pick up as a theme is, where do the British interpretations of all this lie? One of the most interesting aspects of the art exhibition is the interrelationship between the British artists and the American artists, 20 or 30 years ago. Having followed a group of Americans on the platform here, I think it turns my mind around to several issues that are very much alive today about the nature of British architecture and the place that Post-Modernism and popular architecture plays in that.

In the TV-AM building I was fascinated by the extent to which the egg in the egg-cup became an icon for the building when it was picked up by the press. I collected various cartoons over the years, and in them the newspapers always illustrated the plight and the successes of the building by using the egg-cup. To what extent does the literal interpretation of the kind of images that the painter very strongly picks up have to be used in a building to make it legible and usable by the general public? Does the milk crate have to be literally a milk crate, or to what extent does architecture begin to transform popular imagery away from the medium that the artist is able to work within?

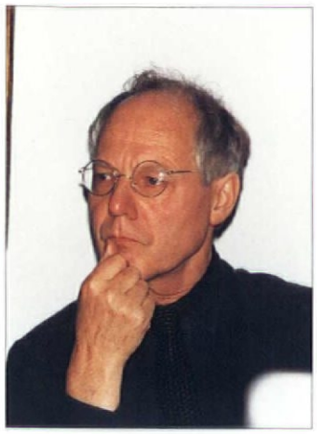


Terry Farrell, TV-AM Building, London

The TV-AM egg-cups were very much an afterthought for us. I was very keen on the building being designed as a non-screen building. I was fascinated by how much architecture lent to the media of TV a sense of identity, in different programmes, such as the *News at Ten*, where Big Ben appears, or in *Dallas*, where it's a ranch. All the time a building helps to create culture, a sense of place and a sense of identity. And so I very deliberately and consciously designed through the building all the kind of themes of breakfast and dawn. When the building was finished the egg-cups were placed on the back of the building, on the canal side. Many people think these egg-cups, when they know it as 'Egg-cup House', must be in a very prominent position. They're not, they're around the back. Nevertheless, the world picked up on the egg-cups. Is it because it's a very obvious egg-cup, like a Woolworths' egg-cup? To what extent does the architect contribute to this? It is purely a selection process. It wasn't a Philippe Starck or a designer egg-cup, it was just a very obvious egg-cup. In just the same way that the acorn or the pineapple works as a motif, as an idea when transformed in Stirling gateways, the egg-cup in this instance had to be absolutely literal in order for it to work.

The interior and also the front facade of the TV-AM Building, for me, were an exercise in something much more complex. In my view, Post-Modernism is only part of the answer to architecture today. I am very interested in technology, in the television studio as a working thing, and in the expression of that technology within the building. I'm also very interested in buildings as a resource, the extent to which one can transform buildings that exist today, and how much that work with existing buildings is an inspiration and a source material for the architect. Internally what one sees, when one takes a garage and makes it into a television studio, is the whole drama of interiors. I designed the interior as a progression around the world. It was basically a news programme and we went right from the Japanese through to the desert, from east to west.

Our scheme at Vauxhall Cross, opposite the Tate, was described in the press. I was not here, I only picked up some of the press clippings today when I returned. One critic described it as an American-style Post-Modern building, more fitting to the CIA than to MI6. The article was not about architecture at all, which is actually more fascinating than architectural criticism. It was an article about the fact that for the first time the British are coming out of the closet and saying where the secret service buildings are. They later picked up on the fact that this building was being designed. Our client is the PSA and the press has picked up on the fact that it is believed to be for MI6. But in that article, in that non-architectural article, about the issue of whether we should know where our secret service buildings are, this was called an American Post-Modernist building. It was therefore concluded that it was probably more fitting for the CIA. I don't see that there isn't that close a link between the interpretations of Post-Modernism, like those which Piers Gough and myself



Alan Colquhoun

and John Outram and others do in this country, and what the Americans do. Bob Venturi and Denise Scott Brown were very important influences for all of us.

This building actually has an English precursor to it, just a few yards down the river, Gilbert Scott's Battersea Power Station. In its use of a traditional material, brickwork, in a completely new 20th-century way, it is to me a more interesting precedent for this architecture than what the Americans are doing.

Our plan is being built as a result of a whole series of continuous changes of ideas of what should be done on this site that we've gone through since 1981. We are still playing with the model of the finished building. What is fascinating about popular tastes in architecture is that there is great interest in solidity and heaviness in buildings. To try and interpret in a modern building how one creates that monumentality or strength through materials like concrete or stone is one of the fascinating design areas to work in. I'm working in it at the moment.

Paul Finch: I wonder if I might ask Robert Stern to say something about the idea of Pop, whether in art or in architecture, as a sort of cultural shock tactic and the extent to which you might use it as that.

Robert Stern: Pop is, was, and I suppose continues for artists and certainly for architects to be a kind of shock tactic. For some architects, perhaps growing out of a side of Venturi's observations and work, that has been married to the rediscovery of traditional architectural form. The Classical language of architecture, or vernaculars here and there, had been used to amuse people through architecture. That's not so bad to do, and also to back them into a rediscovery of the broader traditions of architecture. That's where Pop was used as a kind of intellectual prod, if you will, a lesson because I think that (the other word that no one has dared speak), Post-Modern (everybody's feeling so much better now that it's come out), the notion of Post-Modernism, that Modernism had come to a complete dead end, that there was no discourse between those buildings and a wide range of sensibilities that many people did and do have about the past – was challenged through a kind of Pop version of traditional architecture. I think it's certainly true for many architects who came into their own or who began to practise in the late 1960s, and we as a group – younger ones like myself, older ones like Venturi – did observe, very closely, what the lessons were of Warhol. Warhol in particular I think, more than Lichtenstein and others, although I think that Lichtenstein for example did so-called Modern pictures. When he did the



The Art Bookshop at the Royal College of Art as it was when designed by James Gowan, owned by the Academy Group

Parthenon, if you remember the painting of the Parthenon, it just shows it done in the Benday dots and so forth.

Certainly we have used architecture, Venturi started it, with the exploded mouldings that are divorced from the building, with the kind of shapes that were childlike and iconic in the extreme, then with Venturi showing us photos of his mother's house with the gigantic sunflower which seemed to be in the midst of bourgeois respectable Pennsylvania. I can assure you that was preposterous in the extreme, that picture with his mother sitting like something out of Whistler's painting in front. So it was the sensibility of the Pop through art, the sensibility of going to tradition and flailing, not so much the public (the public loves traditional architecture, I think we could say that) but trying to get the goat of the prevailing taste-makers in architecture, both the critical establishment and the architects who were in control of the profession at that time.



James Gowan

James Gowan: I'd like just to introduce a pragmatic note rather than a theoretical one. I'm reading the biography of Oscar Wilde and it's a sobering book to read. It is to do with culture and an artist trying to establish the boundaries for his work and running into some very desperate difficulties very quickly. When one reads even an establishment book, like Sir Kenneth Clarke's first autobiography, right in the middle of the book you get slammed by a remark which says that the British society is philistine. It's an astonishing remark to read in a book written by a man whom you have assumed has been part and parcel of the British art establishment. He said he couldn't achieve anything in England without subterfuge, we're a philistine society as far as art is concerned.

I introduce this because I found in the conversation a certain complacency about the subject, it seemed to be implied that if we could just agree something this afternoon, we'd put it into effect on Monday. I think if you're young you can imagine that, but only just. When, if I just kept to the Wilde, not the David the Oscar Wilde, when he nervously arranged an interview with Walt Whitman, he had difficulty in getting Whitman to join in the conversation, he was very guarded and said very little indeed; so Wilde asked him how he went about writing. Whitman told him he had been trained as a compositor and that when he wrote, he tried to get the words neatly on the page, he said he'd been struggling with this all his life. They seemed to have a cheerful conversation but it appeared to be rather one-sided. Reading Richard Ellman's tome on Wilde, a sad book about the phenomenon of Wilde's life, one or two aphorisms still come singing through the page – the remark that 'life imitates art' is rather the inverse of the conversation which is taking place today.



The Art Bookshop at the Royal College of Art today, with colours 'blotted out'



Ian Pollard



Edwina Sassoon

There's this presumption that one is going to construct life out of art by some mechanical arrangements or vice versa, that it's under our control. Wilde appeared to hang onto the notion of the significance of art and the consequences he appeared to dangerously discard. I imagine that's a tremendous warning to artists nowadays. On the issue of culture and society, there's this rather famous one which I just bumped into last night, this axiom, this epigrammatic quip: he said that 'to disagree with three-fourths of the British public on all points is one of the first elements of sanity'. It's pretty good isn't it? It gives you hope as an artist that you can be on your own really and not be a failure, that you don't have to stand outside your building counting the number of people who go in. You don't have to ask an accountant if it has been profitable and then as a result of that, realise that your work has been a success. You don't attempt to do it that way, you look at it from your own satisfaction, you derive what pleasure you can from it and you hope for the best.

I would think really what's missing from our conversation today about architecture and success is that a number of commercial architects are clearly an enormous success. They've rebuilt the City of London, they've rebuilt the Thames, they've destroyed the wonderful Thames scene we were presented with, it was all done rather quietly. I imagine it can be termed a financial success, apart from the ending. But these things are disasters, they are cultural disasters. Whether the man on the street is happy with the city or Docklands is nothing to do with the conversation, I personally could not care less. I've never been to Docklands. I've read, I've seen photographs of it, and they have upset me so much that I don't go there. I hate it without seeing it, I am a bigot.

The last point is pragmatic and it is that Andreas Papadakis reminded me that I designed his artshop at the Royal College of Art. You've probably heard of that, its reputation has been severely damaged by a man called Joshua Stevens but I imagine that you realise that it does still exist. The shop was kind of jokey, a sort of fairground Classical architecture, and I decorated it from a book I had on ornament. I used the Owen Jones book because I don't know anything about art and I don't know anything about painting – I used it as a reference book. I designed the ornamentation for the book shop and the painters looked at it and said they couldn't do it. I couldn't believe it, it was quite simple ornamentation, but they said they couldn't do it. Could I give them a pattern or something? So I went back to the office and I made a pattern and they asked me if I'd put it up. So then on the top of their undercoating, I drew in the pattern most carefully and they painted it, they did a lovely job of the painting, it looked fine. They were happy craftsman. I went there recently to find that all the colours had been blotted out, the whole thing. The other night I was at a 'do' and the Rector came up to me and said, 'Forgive and forget, bygones be bygones'. He said, 'We've still got your bookshop over there'. I said 'What! You've blotted out all the colours!' He said 'Bygones be bygones, let's be friends'. The point here, I think there is a point, I can't quite put my finger on it, but I think it probably is that you would think what I had done was harmless, you would think that about painting a little colour on a tiny bookshop in the principal college of art in this country. You would think I would be free to do that and it would be a harmless thing to do. Someone has blitzed it out and no one has taken responsibility for it, it has caused offence. Joanna Brompton, who was Head of Fashion while it was going on, after the painting had been finished she looked into one of these soirées that had been arranged for wealthy ladies. All the tables were there, they were vulgar wrought-iron work, the tablecloths were hideous, the crockery was unspeakable and you can imagine the guests. She was walking down the stairs and she said 'James', and she pointed and said 'isn't it horrible?' And I said 'Yes, it's dreadful'. She was talking about the bookshop at the end. I just introduce this note that the element of art isn't easily assimilated by the English, even less by the Scots really. You would rather hope they might like Shaker architecture, but you do feel that they've never heard of it. I hope I haven't been too discouraging.

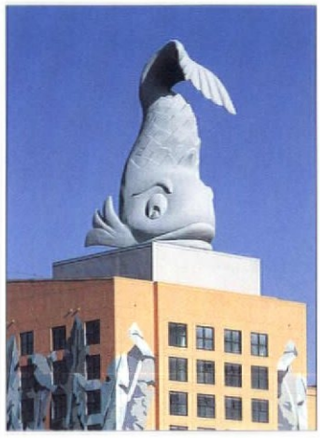
Charles Jencks: We would never have a symposium on Pop urbanism because Pop urbanism has never been created at a mass scale unless by Disney. Because by definition, if we just take the strong iconic image, the amplified Pop image which we all understand as a key aspect of Pop, then one of its problem is that it, like the bookshop, shouts out for attention against a background. So anything it shouts out against has to be painted back into the background unless

it has a public function that has legitimacy and it is recognised that that is where we should focus on something. I think that is one of the things about going to Disneyland and seeing Bob Stern's building next to Michael Graves', and then both next to thousand other fantasies by many different kinds of architects. Some are straight revival, some are Pop, some are popular, some are populist, they are all the colours. The most fascinating thing at Disney is between the buildings. If you look at the holes between the buildings, they're all surreal, it is the definition of Surrealist beauty; the fortuitous encounter of a dolphin 30-feet high on Bob Stern's building is extremely beautiful. But the dolphin on Michael's building is rather boring. So, the point is an obvious one and that is that part of the discourse of the Pop is to turn things into one-liners, and then if they don't have public legitimacy they become horrific and then, what does a kind of Urbanism do, what does it produce between them?



Charles Jencks

Now following from this logic, when Venturi was designing for Washington DC, he was asked to design a public building and in fact it was a bureaucracy. So he did the double-think thing of designing a bureaucracy that had a sign on it that said, 'This is a bureaucracy'. And he designed it in the bureaucratic style and it was just slightly more bureaucratic than all the other bureaucracies, it was amplified bureaucracy with a bigger door and some funny little things around the windows. So if you looked hard and he justified it, it's a Warhol: so what Bob was saying, that they were learning from Warhol, is absolutely true. Now, at that moment the judge, who was a Modernist named Bunshaft, said, 'This cannot get the commission, it's an ugly and ordinary building'. Immediately Bob got so angry, this was his work being painted out, he said 'Yes, that's just what we're trying to be, ugly and ordinary. Now I shall put forward an ugly and ordinary architecture. A kind of extreme realism'. Then he got this incredible commission from Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi government. He went to do popular housing and mixed housing in part of the city, in I guess, Baghdad. If you want to follow some of the ramifications of this, there's a very interesting book written by an Iraqi who is I suppose someone in hiding, about the implications of popular architecture, Pop architecture, Venturi and Saddam Hussein. It is a problem, that when you use signs, super-signs, and icons from another culture, and you amplify them and you send them back with the irony, ie a bureaucracy to the Washingtonians or a popular Islamic architecture back to the Islams, they either may consume it without the irony – they don't see that it comes in an art gallery, they don't see all the quotes around it, for them it's just a pastiche of their traditional culture in which case it is vile, a vulgarisation – or else it is an intimidation of them. In other words it has the problem of all one-liners. So it strikes me, although, if we just look at this aspect of Pop, the popular image is incredibly liberating, especially if it's fun, like the *Fun Palace* was meant to be. But what is it like on an urban level, when other people are forced to consume it?



Michael Graves' Dolphin Hotel

An authentic Pop architecture must place itself more critically in the paradox between transience and permanence, between commerce and the public realm, high art and low. It must make an art of contradictions – in effect it must give equal weight to the popular language of Pop and to a deeper language of symbolic architecture. Symbolic building is distinct from Venturi's decorated sheds, structures with signs and emblems attached, as much as it differs from Disney's architecture and its one-liners. No one will ever confuse the worth of Mackintosh's Glasgow School of Art with Graves' Swan Hotel. Symbolic architecture is distinguished by its depth, the precise cause of its symbolism which entails a resonance of relationships, the way all parts of a building task interrelate – this is quite impossible when signs are collaged, or superimposed. A multivalent, symbolic architecture must be clearly contrasted with a univalent, 'signolic' architecture – the architecture of signs – on which it may nevertheless be based.

Pop architecture, when it has existed, has brought back the urban vernacular as a necessary concern, but the point is to use it in the service of something much greater than its origins and intentions – a meaningful, heteroglot high art that strides across the many subcultures that will continue to proliferate.

Paul Finch: I wonder if Michael Gold would like to say something about using popular cultural icons in architecture?

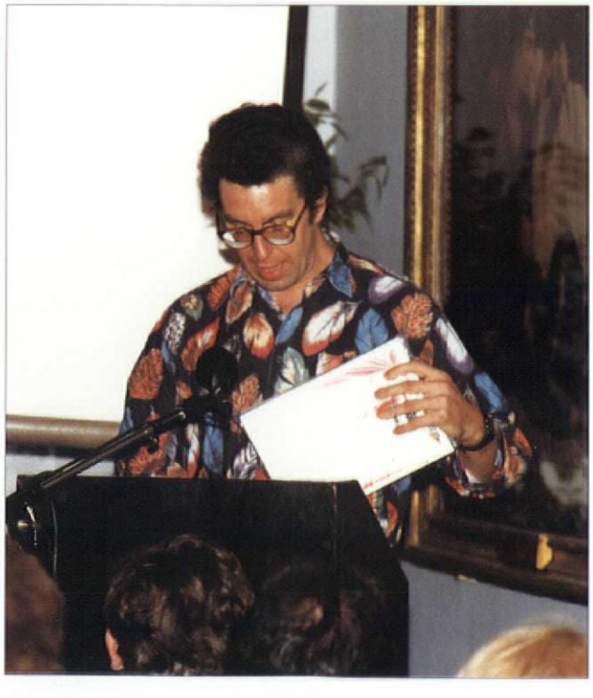


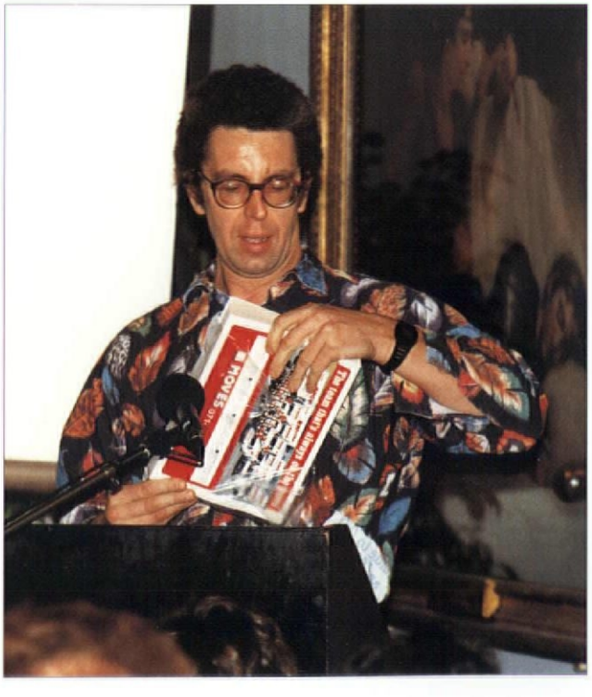
Michael Gold

Michael Gold: I could say something about two or three buildings I know of in popular culture. Charles just spoke about Saddam Hussein and this wasn't what I was meaning to talk about, but I designed a building called the Crossed Swords for Mecca. This was done for the mayor and the city of Mecca. It didn't get built for one reason or another, we found ourselves dabbling in a foreign popular icon and got our feet muddy – it didn't work. The reasons it didn't work out I won't go into, except I'm Jewish. Last year it appeared in Saddam Hussein's capital city in a kind of ghastly barbarised form. I regret that whole thing as a mistaken essay in popular iconography. One is a bit of a child at this – as soon as you pick on any kind of popular or well-understood iconography, architects flounder. We flounder enough anyway and to take on this kind of symbolism flounders us even more.

But that isn't what I wanted to mention. We were altering a pavilion in Bayswater Road, a building by Alison and Peter Smithson which was commissioned in 1958, while the Smithsons participated in 'This Is Tomorrow'. The perplexity is that this is a highly evocative, poetic building which on the other hand corresponds to a movement that was extremely unpopular, Brutalism. And yet this particular building carries the kind of poetry of a popular subject matter that I think we really should be meaning about Pop. It deals with and exudes a love of the things that Bob Maxwell mentioned unwittingly as popular – he didn't mention them unwittingly, he never mentions anything unwittingly – but mentioned in passing, the people who have the picture on their wall of the countryside or the ship he mentioned, two wonderful things. If you could only do a ship in the forest, as a building, it would be popular. He mentioned these things, about nature and so forth, half-developing the theme I felt, about nature. This building carries that sort of wide-ranging, common theme, the feeling of a people for the nature that is around it, the nature into which it contrasts. It's a very fine building. When we worked on it, part of the job consisted of an English Heritage representative coming along to have a look at it, to see if our alterations would be fitting, preserving and looking after our heritage. The chap who appeared looked at the pavilion and said, first of all, he couldn't see where it was, he thought we were in a side extension built in rough-cast block-work. He thought this was a side extension ruining the original 18th-century house. I don't think he really quite knew where he was, but as he looked past the block-work and the exposed pipes and the drains and so forth all showing, he looked into the garden and said, 'In an ideal world, this building wouldn't exist'.

Now 15 or 20 years ago, that building was visited by many people in its way; it should have corresponded and should still correspond to a moment in 20th-century British architecture, as the Graham Greene house in Pasadena





corresponds for Americans to a moment, a high moment in American architecture. This building should have been like that. The English Heritage representative thought yes, 20 years ago many people did visit this building, there were a stream of people constantly appearing, visiting that building, popularity comes and goes. Anyhow, I think that building is Pop architecture. It's called the Whaling Down pavilion, the one with a tree built in a corridor that goes through the roof, you'll remember that. With the corridor the natural garden wall, the stone paving internally, the bath elevated to a high status; not very well known now.



Richard Reid

Cedric Price: It's quite memorable because they've made slashes and cuts into the tree. It's a most unusual thing to do. The Green people haven't quite caught up with that one yet, or Stirling's tree job at the Biennale. Poor old trees.

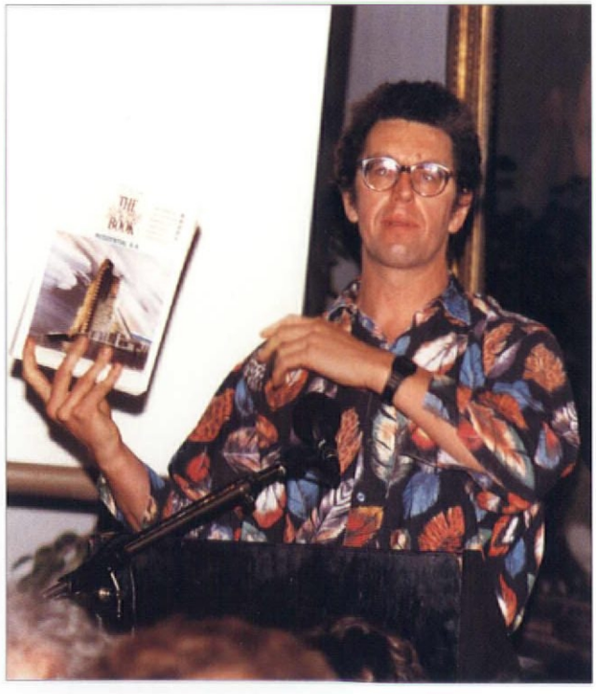
Paul Finch: I wonder if Piers Gough might like to say something about the use of irony in architecture, and whether what you do in your work is intended as a shock to the system as well as a delight to its users.

Piers Gough: I avoided a question this afternoon by saying that the point of being a Pop artist is not having to talk. It's great the way Pop artists would have interviews with learned writers who gave them pages of erudite questions just to get at the end the answer 'Yes'. People would talk to Jasper Johns at great length about his work and he would say 'Well I did it because I liked it that way' and this is the kind of answer which I've always wanted to give, but never do. That's why I'm not a Pop architect, because I love to talk, that's what undid me. The wanting to talk, to explain, to lecture . . .

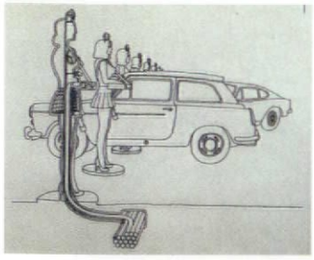
At the AA in '65 it was all Brutalism and rough-shuttered concrete building. Rule one of Pop is that you should never pay any attention to other buildings. That's a killer. That's not Pop it's Po-Mo. The whole thing about Pop is it took the iconography from another scene and it made it into art. If you want to do Pop architecture for Christ's sake don't look at other buildings – it will be your undoing. So this first year photographer's studio got illustrated as if it were Hockney. Then when it came to doing a model, it was imitating the back of a Kellogg's cornflakes packet because the Pop way is 'You too can make a model'.

In the second year, we designed a station where you walked through the word 'trains'. The third year went hippy with a psychedelic restaurant, but it also had the solution to a really difficult problem which is car parking. I solved it with a

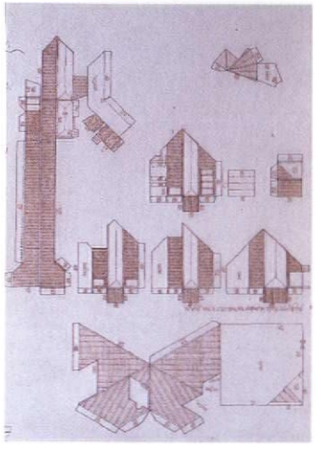




'It's a tradition in speaking, at any institution, that you give a book of your work to the institution in question for their library. So perhaps I'll just skip my talk and hand over the books – the London telephone directories. A to K has Cascades, one of our most popularist buildings on it, and L to Z has China Wharf, another popularist building.'



Piers Gough, line drawing for a drive-in motorolarama



Piers Gough, cut-out model

Ferris Wheel. Then there were inflatables. Yeah well, inflatables were always very po-faced, remember how they used to be? So it seemed important to point out that inflatables didn't have to be architecture.

Then in the year out we did a boutique (Mary Farrin), that was Wilkinson Calvert and Gough as we were called in 1968. A boutique was intrinsically Pop. It got into an Italian magazine. We were never gonna look back. The work would pour in. Somebody very nicely described this one (*knitwit sic*) as a walk-in Hockney. It made our day because English Pop is rather different from American Pop. It is slightly more, well not subtle, but let's say not necessarily about just reproducing iconographic images. Then we went on to do other shops which didn't get built and buildings that aren't really about other buildings, they were about curtains or fashion or, anyway, perforated metal fashion.

Back at the AA, the fourth year tried to knuckle down and do a series of buildings for ICI for testing polystyrene. But even trying to do Vanbrugh it kinda popped. ICI at the time had the symbol with a wave beneath it which was very convenient for the organisation of the building. The AA made you very rigorous and reasonable, you had to be able to argue your point. So the Modernist tutors would sit around and no one talked about elevations as image – Christ no! I would say: well, the expression of the ground floor is different because it's a workshop and the three upper floors are laboratories and so on; it's a magnificent play of light and shade etc. Actually the whole building was to be polystyrene so people could carve their names like on real castles but much more quickly and easily.

In Peter Cook's fifth year we did a drive-in motorolarama. There is another important strand of Pop art which is to be despicable – the idea that you should not even bother to get out of your car, to enjoy yourself – great. Didn't have a car myself of course – total fiction.

Then there was a pure Pop building called the Pilotis Building with interesting retractable pilotis. Here Pop is taking wittily the elements of everyday life and reinterpreting them as architecture or vice versa, I suppose.

On another part of Wormwood Scrubs I designed a building as a pair of hoardings which are in fact a pair of semi-detached mansion flats which go under a railway embankment. My first housing scheme at the end of the fifth year. One of the owners is a ten-pin bowling alley freak, the other, who knows? Anyway both hoardings reappear on the other side masquerading as allotments with greenhouses.

After college, there were many failed projects. One was a studio for Allen Jones, the Pop painter, his paintings next door [in the Royal Academy Pop Art Show] are some of the best and strongest with their fabulous colours. His studio window refers more to the technique of painting than it does to architecture, although it does refer directly to the big studio windows of buildings around. There were caryatids which were the right way in or the wrong way out. That was typical of our life, summed up by this sort of commission, hope, and then ending up doing an internal warehouse conversion with a whiplash staircase. The last vestige of Jonesiana here is that staircase.

The real finish for Pop pretensions was when we came up against old buildings – bloody things! In the 70s all we could get was conversions. We did an old warehouse off Queensway, in Bayswater. Once we found out what a brick lintel was it really messed us up very badly indeed and we've never really come out from that – knowing how buildings are put together normally and cheaply. We've got ourselves fucked by lintels and lots of wood and lead and all that crap, and we liked it of course.

Before Nigel Coates was born we did a nice design in the Kings Road called Champagne Alley (after Sam Champagne the developer). It had a cake shop at the front with a Paternoster system of bun display that went right up the middle of the building and was fed all the time. You just picked off the cream cakes from the passing trays.

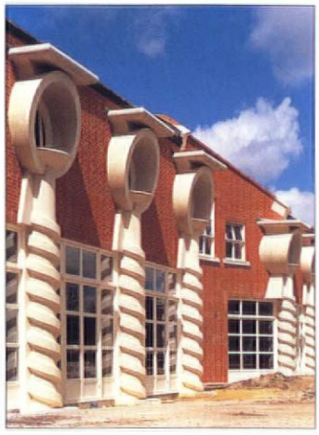
At first when we got to do new buildings they were populist rather than Pop. When we discovered that one off the peg column would do two houses it made us very popular with the developers anyway.

There is also a bravado about Pop which means exploiting its shock value. So we have done a Quinlan-Anne-type house. Fine, you want me to be ironic about this! I refuse. If a guy wants a nice red building he can have a nice red building. Meanwhile at Bryanston School we did some big screws – a very complicated piece. 'What comes in packets

of six and costs £40.000?' is the pupils' way of putting it. Answer: A big screw. The contextual angle was slightly undone when the same screws are used turned up on our own office facade in London (although there they are painted gold). What does that say about the original screw? I don't know.

Then there are the serious buildings. Cascades is anti-Pop, or is it? What, after all, could be more despicable than high-rise living – architects would hate it, the public would hate it. We just had to do it. Then it sold brilliantly. I go to architecture lectures and say that China Wharf comes from Adolf Loos' chemical factory in Luban but I only discovered that a lot later. Its cookie-cutter architecture but with a flange so that you think it's a ship. Well, if you're *Crée*, a French magazine, you think its an *édifice métallique* when of course its made of concrete. There are in fact three different facades. Some unkind people say it's because it was our first new building and we didn't know what to do. Be polite – be shocking and be nice to the neighbours all at once. Which brings us to The Circle in Queen Elizabeth Street which is quite a huge building supporting the idea of the narrow street. It is about bricks and how thick they can be and balconies held up by great chunks of wood until it gets to the middle which is The Circle. It is like an idea by Lutyens where he papered a study in silver paper and when asked why said, 'I always wondered what it would be like to be a tea leaf'. The question here is, what would it be like to be a gas molecule in a gas holder? (You could never live to tell the tale). Or a blob of blue in a vat of paint? But – and here it is the danger of iconography – the idea was that it was going to be a *vessel*. It is a very grown-up concept, not to mess around with common (Pop) symbols, so now we work with archetypal elements such as 'The Vessel'. The Circle is a glazed vessel, it got cut down by four storeys at planning so the stem disappeared but it was still supposed to look like a vase shape with an elongated top edge to reinforce the silhouette. But the minute it went up the guys on site dubbed it 'The Owl'. I meant to talk about Disney. I would rather have done Mickey Mouse's ears. I got my ears but they are pointy.

Finally, Janet Street-Porter's house, well enough said. She is Pop. It is Pop. If you copy a Joe Tilson onto the floor that must be Pop, more than Pop . . .



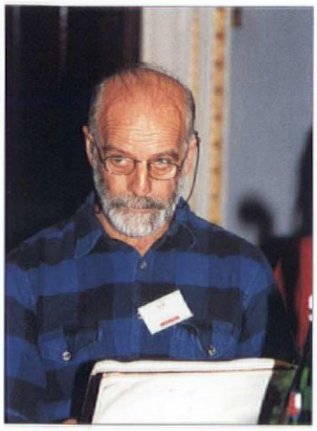
Piers Gough, CDT Building, Bryanston School



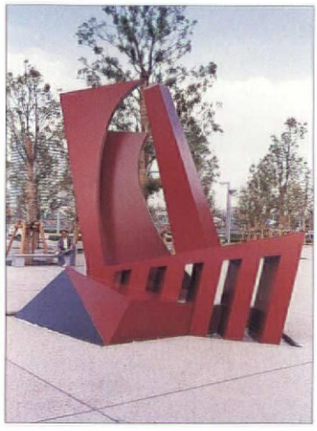
Piers Gough, The Circle, London

Robert Maxwell: As I'm representing the Venturi camp here, let me say that Denise Scott Brown went back to one of the first projects they did, I forget the name but that freeway project where they were going to erect signs along route 95. Some of those signs represented the culture of Philadelphia in terms of the Pop sign; Benjamin Franklin, ringing the bell. Others were hyped-up or exaggerated or ironic exaggerations of ordinary Pop culture. What scandalised her was that the mayor rejected all of those as in bad taste, thereby in a sense putting a meat axe through their right to speak for the disenfranchised mob. It's also true, I think, that the case where the designer is designing down and trying to produce a popular sign is probably the most difficult of all, whether it's *Crossroads* or whatever, because there is an element of knowingness in the design and this means that you approach the kitsch. Now that's another word that's forbidden nowadays, but kitsch, who decides what is kitsch? It's never the people who have the flying ducks in their living room who decide, it's the critic who decides what's kitsch.

Charles Jencks: I would like to go back to the ordinary and ugly, and one has to remember that of course the Smithsons used the word 'ordinariness' as one of their key words. Denise Scott Brown considers herself a spokeswoman for the underprivileged – the blacks and all these subcultures – and what Herbert Gans says, and I think he is the justification for this, is that if you look at the seven (or 40) taste cultures, the ones that are never really catered for, except on a very low level, are the lower; the blue-chip, blue-collar class is the one that Margaret Thatcher and Reagan aim their things at. So Gans is saying that everything from there on down (except at the bottom, where there's a kind of inversion, which is hippy culture), anything in the middle or below is always considered kitsch, camp, and untouchable. So you can understand Scott Brown's logic and I think Venturi's logic, because it comes from Gans, who is saying that the people who never ever make it are always called the philistines. They have no spokespeople except for Reagan and Thatcher,



Phillip King



Phillip King, Chiba City, Japan

and we hate them. Basically, that's what she's saying, and 'I'm going to defend them and produce ugly and ordinary things for them'. Of course the mayor of Philadelphia was outraged and Bob just said, 'and it was bad taste, wasn't it?' Well, that's what I think we have to question, the minute you use the word 'bad taste' you classify yourself.

Paul Finch: I'm going to ask the sculptor Phillip King to say something about how he sees the quest for accessibility of art and sculpture in relation to this discussion.

Phillip King: Before deciding to contribute to this debate, I asked myself why I should talk about Pop sculpture, when I hardly know whether it exists at all. One of the reasons that made me decide to do it was that I was briefly and erroneously thought to be a Pop sculptor. I grew up as an artist in the 60s and painting, not sculpture, was the big thing. We young sculptors talked more about painting than sculpture. Painting had been Abstract Expressionism in the 50s and had then become Pop Art. However sculpture, both here and in the States, seemed to sidestep Pop and move straight into Minimalism. People talk about popular sculpture but to me, when I first heard the word 'Pop', I always thought it was to do with a drink and I always assumed that until quite a bit later, but maybe that's the right image, something fizzy, blowing up. Well, 'The Pop Art Show' now on has only two major sculptors in it – Oldenburg and Paolozzi – and probably only Oldenburg fits comfortably in these parameters. Is there then such a thing as Pop sculpture? It seems that now is the time when a lot of sculpture looks more Pop than it did in the 60s. Koons, amongst others, could fit nicely in this show. Koons was a stockbroker. Many of the Pop painters were commercial artists working in advertising. Could there be a link there? Possible, but rather tenuous I think.

Does the wheel of history turn so inexorably that we have to go through this rigmarole of revivals every 30 years or so under the market pressure of the time? I haven't come here to discuss art history nor art fashion and I don't expect anyone else is here for that either. If history is going to have any meaning for me at all, it is to make some sense of what I love, or more likely, hate, what I despise in art. One of my hate fantasies is to shoot Duchamp historically dead. Like the proverbial pack of cards, a whole lot of art which I really dislike would come tumbling down, Koons and a lot of Pop art included. However, I don't want to see Oldenburg or Paolozzi shot down as well. So before shooting Duchamp I thought I would look into a few things I liked, especially sculpture that had a link with architecture.

I looked at the photographs of Brancusi's endless column in Romania. It showed the column rising from a village scene of wooden traditional houses with a typical Romanian church and a spire. A village rooted in the earth and steeped in tradition. The column seems totally alien, frightening really in its unnerving simplicity and repetition, in its colossal scale and its defiance of gravity – and yet it fits within its environment somehow. Why? Surely it must be something more than a superficial look of Brancusi's work, resembling the peasant carvings found in the homes and the utensils of his native country. For a sculptor as rooted to the earth as Brancusi was, it seemed strange that he allowed himself to be so carried away as to make an undifferentiated and undefined object, a mystical link between earth and sky – echoes of a sublime in Abstract Expressionism, E Barnett Neuman comes to mind. I had a conversation in the 60s with the sculptor Carl André. He seemed to have both Brancusi and Duchamp in his gallery of heroes. Could Brancusi remotely be Pop after all? It is possible to read Brancusi's column as a vast enlargement of a detail from a peasant chair with one third of it rooted in the ground. Can this be compared to a Pop artist's enlargement of a brushmark to the size of a billboard?

No artist is ever totally free from all the other art of his time. Duchamp, the dandy whose wit and sarcasm undermined the foundation of visual art, produced work curiously trapped in an aesthetic time capsule of the 20s and 30s. His art reeks of that time. Looking at a fashion plate of the 20s, could not one of these models be Duchamp's model descending that staircase? Dressed or undressed, she's nevertheless a flapper. I would like to shoot Duchamp because he was a painter who opened sculpture's Pandora's Box. The result is that in much sculpture today, context has taken over from content. Values have been turned upside-down, the alien thing is turned into an icon. Perhaps we could talk about

alienism later on, I think it's an important thing. Bad taste is thought to be the only true guide to pushing the new. I have nothing against bad taste, but some people just go by bad taste in order to look at any art. I've heard a dealer say, the only way to pick up a new artist is see if he's got bad taste. If I did shoot Duchamp, I would be shooting one of my sculptural fathers. Without Duchamp, would I feel as comfortable with change, and the speed of change in our time? Would I now be taking art too seriously at the expense of life? The war-cry of the Pop artist was, 'merge life into art'. I think it was Rauschenberg who said that, they may well be right. Brancusi of course I will not shoot. His works have roots and I need to find my own. Pop sculpture to me is a small chapter in sculpture's history. Interesting in that it hardly exists at all, so when I throw out the bath water, I find the baby is alive and well.



Odile Decq

Paul Finch: I'll ask Odile Decq from France to perhaps say something related to that and perhaps make some observations on that most massive of public sculptures, the Pompidou Centre.

Odile Decq: Yes, I can because I think the most important question today is the exact meaning of 'popular'. Because I'm not sure that Pop architecture or Pop art means popular exactly. When you say the *Centre Pompidou* is a most popular building because 60 per cent of tourists visit it, I think of the fact that 60 per cent of French people *don't* like the *Centre Pompidou*. In that sense, it is less popular.

A problem for me is that I definitely think it's not possible to have Pop architecture in France, like in England or America. When Jean Nouvel tried to design a factory for cars which was like a car, it was forbidden. Another problem I think is that when we were discussing Pop architecture or popular architecture, I had the impression that we were discussing only the wrapping, the outside of the building. And for me, architecture is more than the outside, more than wrapping. If, in popular architecture or Pop architecture, the meaning of the architecture is only the problem of the wrapping, we can film that, advertising films can design architecture. They can design architecture like they can design packaging for a bottle of perfume or anything else. I'm finding this discussion a bit of a problem.



Odile Decq, Banque Populaire de L'Ouest, Rennes

Paul Finch: Geoffrey Broadbent, do you want to pick up on any of these things in relation to your opening remarks?

Geoffrey Broadbent: There's been talk in different directions about opinion polls and the idea you could measure the popularity of a building by the people who go there. Charles Moore has a test: how many postcards do they sell, or in the case of Michael Graves or maybe Robert Stern these days, how many cookie containers do they sell? But that's a very different thing from designing by opinion poll which Charles was hinting at earlier. I don't think that's ever worked, for any field at all. It's been tried with cars for instance, the Escort was a failure and the recent Calibre, an artists-designed car, was a great success. We can draw parallels from that to architecture, certainly where the artist has done something interesting, and most particularly to Pop music which is really the model for all of this. Now what happens in the Pop industry is that every week something like 50 singles are released, and of those one might catch on and become top of the pops and last for years possibly. The fact is that there's immense creativity going on and then somebody captures the spirit of that week or that year or whatever – and it's that kind of thing we're looking for. There was one interesting case, a pupil of Richard Hamilton's, Bryan Ferry, who having learned to be a Pop artist at Newcastle actually designed a career in Pop music and formed Roxy Music and was very successful; so there's a very direct link in that case.

It also happens in architecture. The form-givers give forms and if you look at the housing market these days, most developers in order to sell at all are building sub-Jeremy Dixon. Jeremy tapped a market which proved to be popular.

The final point I'd like to make is, going back to Kevin Rowbotham, who got very angry about all of this, that if you look at the shanty towns, what's intriguing is that people first of all build their minimum house, just put up four posts and put a roof on and put some cardboard boxes around or whatever, but when they can they harden up the house with concrete



MaryAnne Stevens

blocks and a corrugated asbestos roof. They then begin to declare themselves a style – and literally what they do is go to the other side of the city to see what the architects have been doing and then bring back those images. So there could be shanty housing with Le Corbusier designs painted on. There are certainly Post-Modern shanties these days. In fact, in some cities, Caracas for instance and certainly cities in Indonesia, you can buy Classical columns to make your shanty Classical. We have nothing to be ashamed of. We're artists in the way that car designers are, or painters, music makers, all the rest of them. Let's go and be bloody good artists.

Paul Finch: And on that controversial notion of shanty towns as being popular, I'm going to draw the proceedings to a close. May I, first of all, thank the Royal Academy for having us here, and in particular MaryAnne Stevens for all her help in organising this event, and of course Andreas Papadakis as ever. I think there's plenty we haven't discussed this afternoon, for example some of the people who might be doing what one could consider Pop architecture these days, the people who do buildings that are in the shape of other things – I'm thinking for instance of Nick Grimshaw, who's managed to produce a building which looks exactly like an ocean-going sea-liner because it's down in Plymouth (in fact it's for the local newspaper, and that's sort of fun) and in Berlin he's producing something which looks like, the structure at least, one of the more obscure exhibits from the Natural History museum.

I think we never really addressed this problem of the distinction between 'popular' and 'Pop'. To me the thing about Pop is quite right, the point about fizz – that's why it's slang for champagne, because Pop was about fizz, vibrancy, shock, Cedric's delight and fun – and the good thing about it is, that you can undertake and find all those things outside the walls of the Academy. Thank you very much.



Robert Stern and Andreas Papadakis

ROBERT AM STERN

ESPACE EURO DISNEY, VILLIERS-SUR-MARNE

The firm's responsibility on this project was to create a site plan and a facade for a Disney-designed building consisting primarily of a small retail outlet, a food concession, a lobby with a model of the future Euro Disneyland, and a theatre where the resort will be previewed.

The building has been located on the site so that the primary facade is rotated slightly towards the direction of most of the guest traffic. The parking is kept to the side while an entry court is created in front of the building, allowing everyone to approach the building from the same direction – whether they are driving in or walking to the building from the parking lot.

As the French public's first exposure to a Disney building in the Paris area, this temporary structure needed first and foremost to capture the Disney spirit in the same way that a nation's pavilion at a World's Fair strives to capture the essence of the country it represents. Here, bright colours, lively shapes and patterns, and Disney iconography all serve to create an assemblage with the kind of festive, youthful atmosphere that is synonymous with Disney.

Mickey Mouse's Sorcerer's Apprentice hat becomes the tower marking the entrance to the building's primary function – the preview theatre. The sorcerer's hat alludes to the 'Disney Magic' while it also prefigures the night-time atmosphere of the theatre. The theatre walls and ceilings will be painted in a night-time theme reminiscent of many classic movie houses of the 1920s and 30s. A balcony above the front door will contain a Disney character welcoming guests to the centre. The entrance to the Disney retail outlet is masked by a small purple facade with a Mickey cut-out, while a large yellow wall behind unifies the two entry elements. The yellow wall features chase lights on wavy blue lines and separate randomly lighted lights on red dots, which together give the effect of confetti.

The food concession to the left of the main building mass is fronted by a billboard-like red wall with silhouettes of iconic Disney Characters as they seem to walk from the parking lot to the building entrance. The figure/field colours are reversed as the characters continue to march across the front of the arcade in a manner reminiscent of a series of film stills.







NEWPORT BAY CLUB HOTEL, MARNE-LA-VALLEE

The Hotel Newport, designed in the tradition of grand old-time American resort hotels, in particular that of Shingle Style seaside hotels along the north-east coast, is the first hotel to be seen by guests arriving at Euro Disneyland. Glimpsed across a lawn from the *rond point*, its 68 metre long porch is the symbolic gateway to the Lake America Resort. The shingled walls, decorative wood details, awnings, dormer windows, and towers all give the hotel a comfortable, relaxed feeling.

Upon arriving, guests walk from the *porte-cochère* into a painted wood-panelled double height lobby and lounge, both providing direct views to Lake America, which during the summer will be dotted with small paddle and sail boats. From the lobby and lounge, a staircase leads to the two restaurants below, each offering expansive views out over the gardens to the lake. In warm weather, the restaurants will expand out onto the garden terrace.

Even more informal than the front, the sprawling lakeside elevations of the hotel are punctuated by a profusion of figural elements that help break down the scale: towers, pergolas, dormers. To centre the composition, a giant gambrel pediment culminates the axis of the lake.

Two smaller buildings, marking the end of Bailey's Beach cove, create a middle ground for the crescent shaped plan: the lighthouse rests on the tip of a peninsula, surrounded by radiating docks where small paddle boats and sail boats will be moored; the pool pavilion, a festive, glassy, tent-like structure, is virtually free-standing to allow for maximum sun exposure.







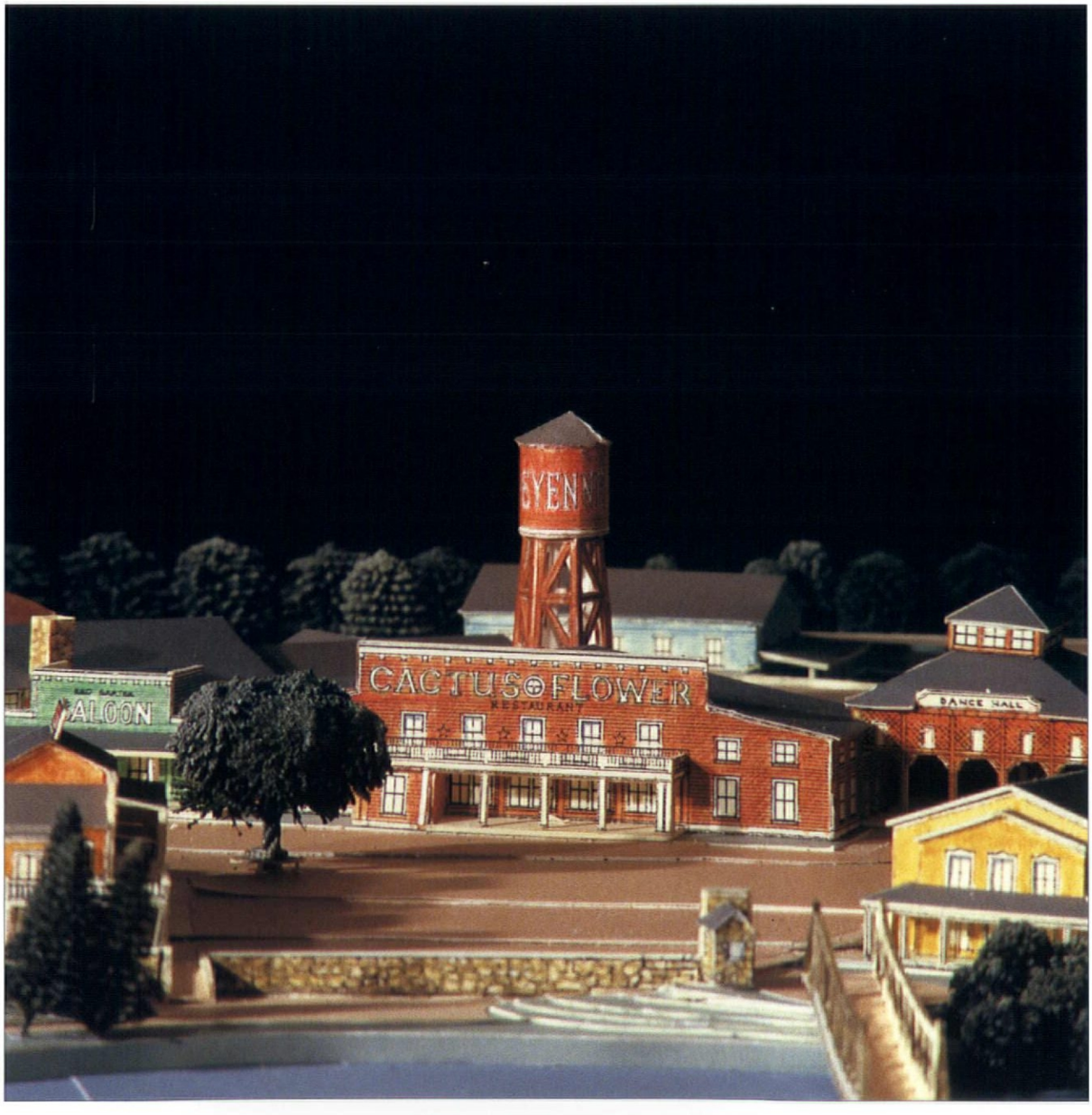

GUEST HOUSE

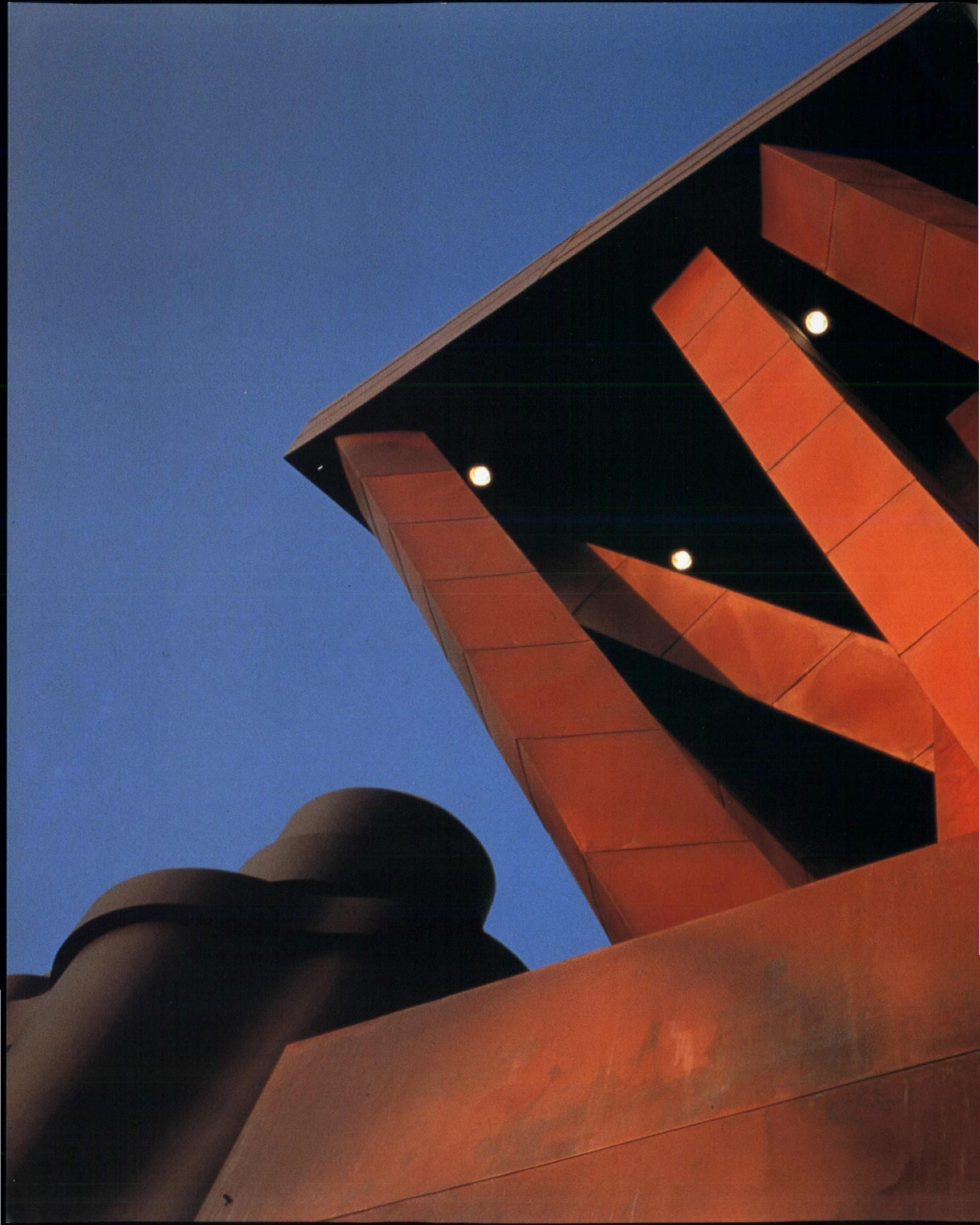

WYATT EARP
GENERAL STORE

HOTEL CHEYENNE, MARNE-LA-VALLEE

This Euro Disneyland hotel is organised as a complex of buildings conceived in the image of a 19th-century American western town, but a western town filtered through the lens of Hollywood. Unlike its prototype which simply has a hotel as one of the buildings along Main Street, the Hotel Cheyenne is the town itself, with a Main Street lined with individual buildings to form traditional city blocks. At the principal crossroads, where a street leads to the Hotel Santa Fe across the creek, there is a restaurant and check-in building. Covered walkways are provided on the north side of Main Street to protect guests in rainy weather and to provide shade on hot summer days.

While the streets of typical western towns ran in a straight line to endless vistas of prairie and mountains, the streets of Hotel Cheyenne, like those of the western towns that were built by Hollywood studios, have vistas angled to screen out 'backlot', 'backstage' areas from the actors who are, in this case, the hotel guests.

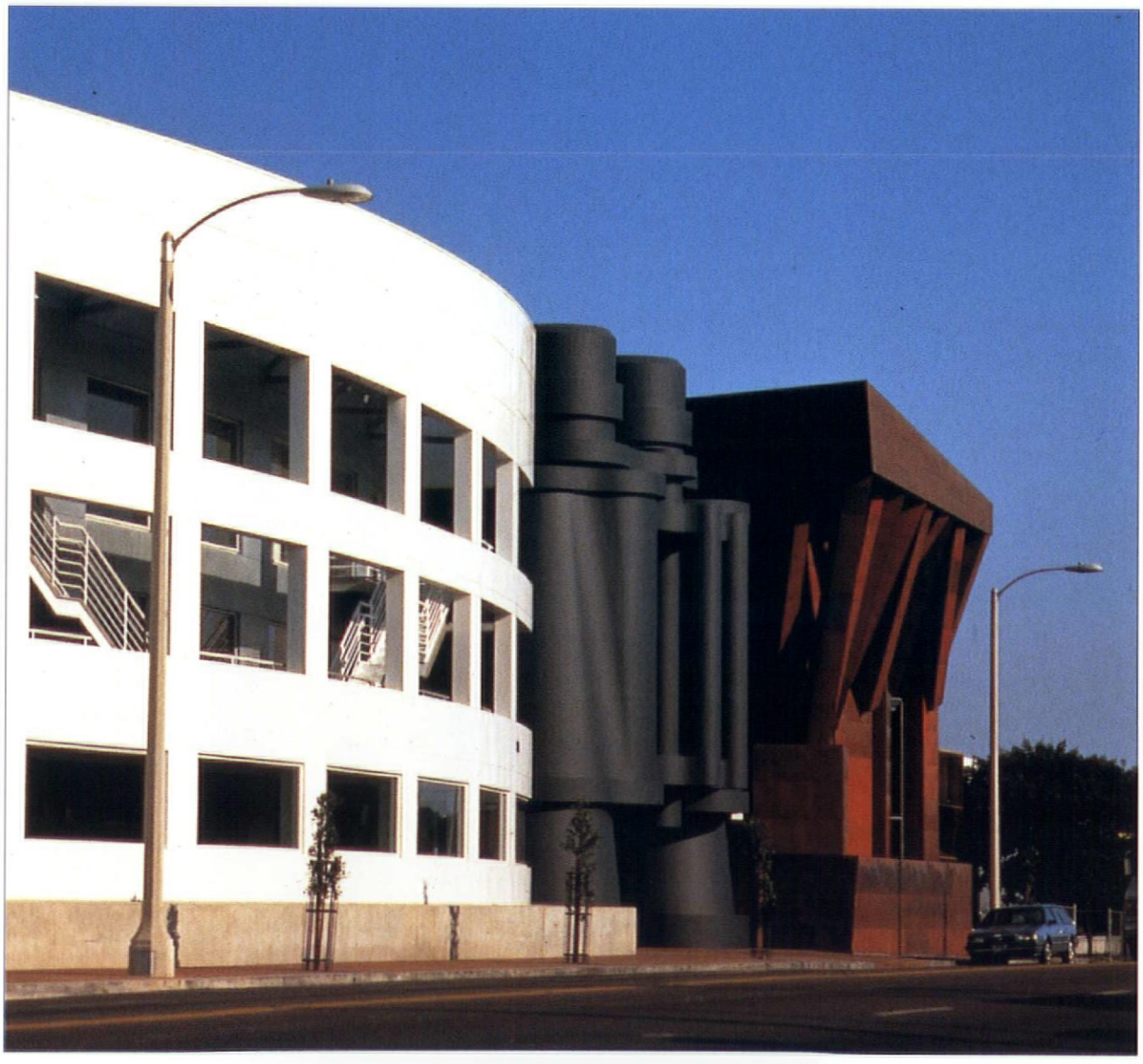


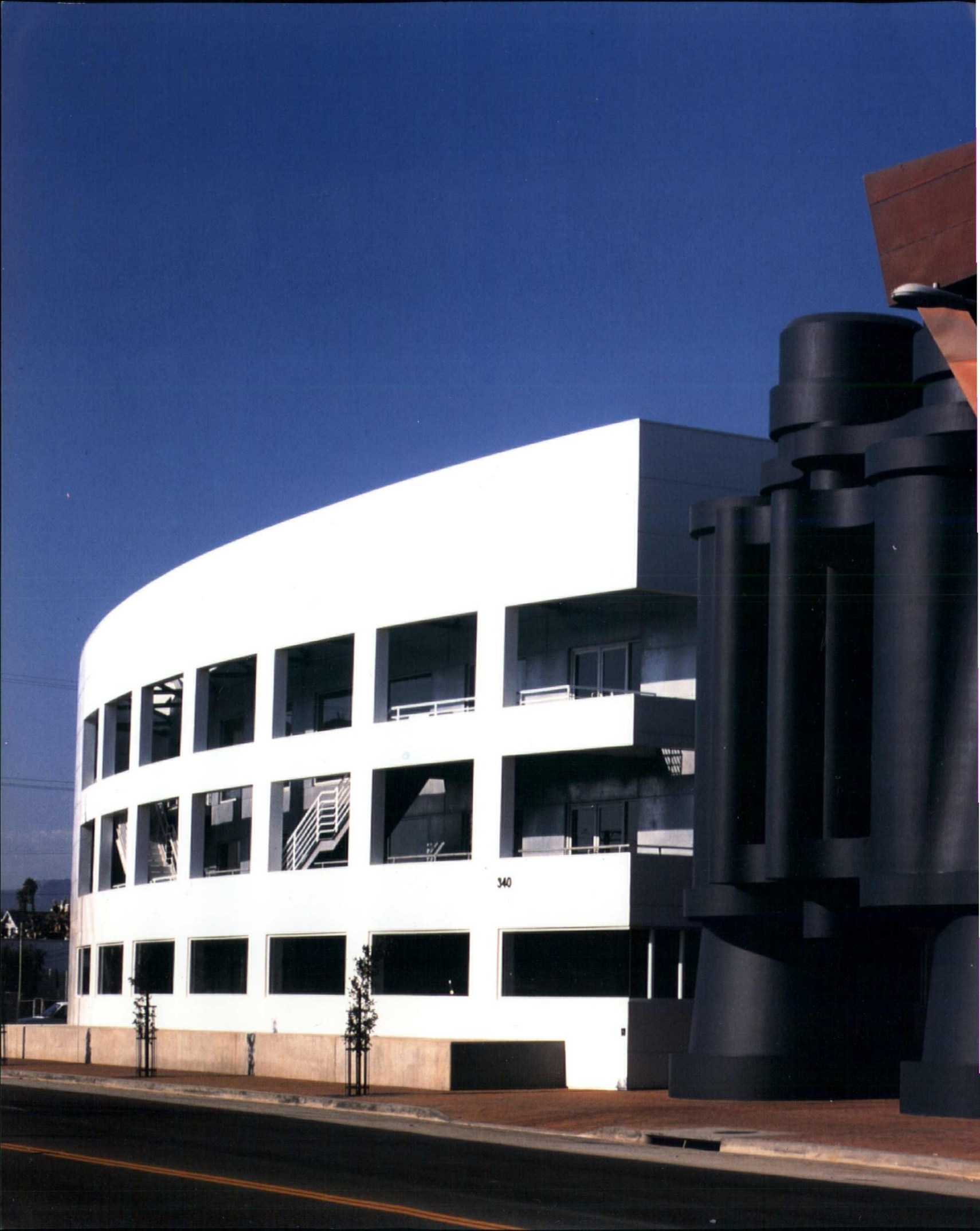


FRANK GEHRY
IN COLLABORATION WITH CLAES OLDENBURG & COOSJE VAN BRUGGEN
CHIAT/DAY BUILDING, VENICE, CALIFORNIA

In Frank Gehry's own words, the new Chiat/Day/Mojo offices are 'designed to work urbanistically in a community that is practically formless. I wanted the building to have differentiation on the street line to break down the scale of the long frontage, and to punctuate the entrance with something special.' The building's special focus is a three-storey high pair of upright binoculars that are both functional and visually appealing. The eye pieces serve as skylights illuminating the interior of the binoculars, which open up into a large conference room. And, as if to inspire bright ideas in the room, huge lightbulb sculptures, designed by artists Oldenburg and Van Bruggen, hang from the ceiling. Oldenburg, who also collaborated on the binocular design with Van Bruggen and Gehry stated that the project was 'a departure from the usual antagonism between architect and artist. The beauty of it is that the sculpture is of equal weight with the other parts, acting as a pivot around which they revolve.'

The interior office design of this advertising company eliminates the usual hierarchies, with all offices and furnishings essentially the same. 'My hope in the interiors was to make the place comfortable' states Gehry, 'where people can feel relaxed while doing their work, and to create a place with a sense of humour.'

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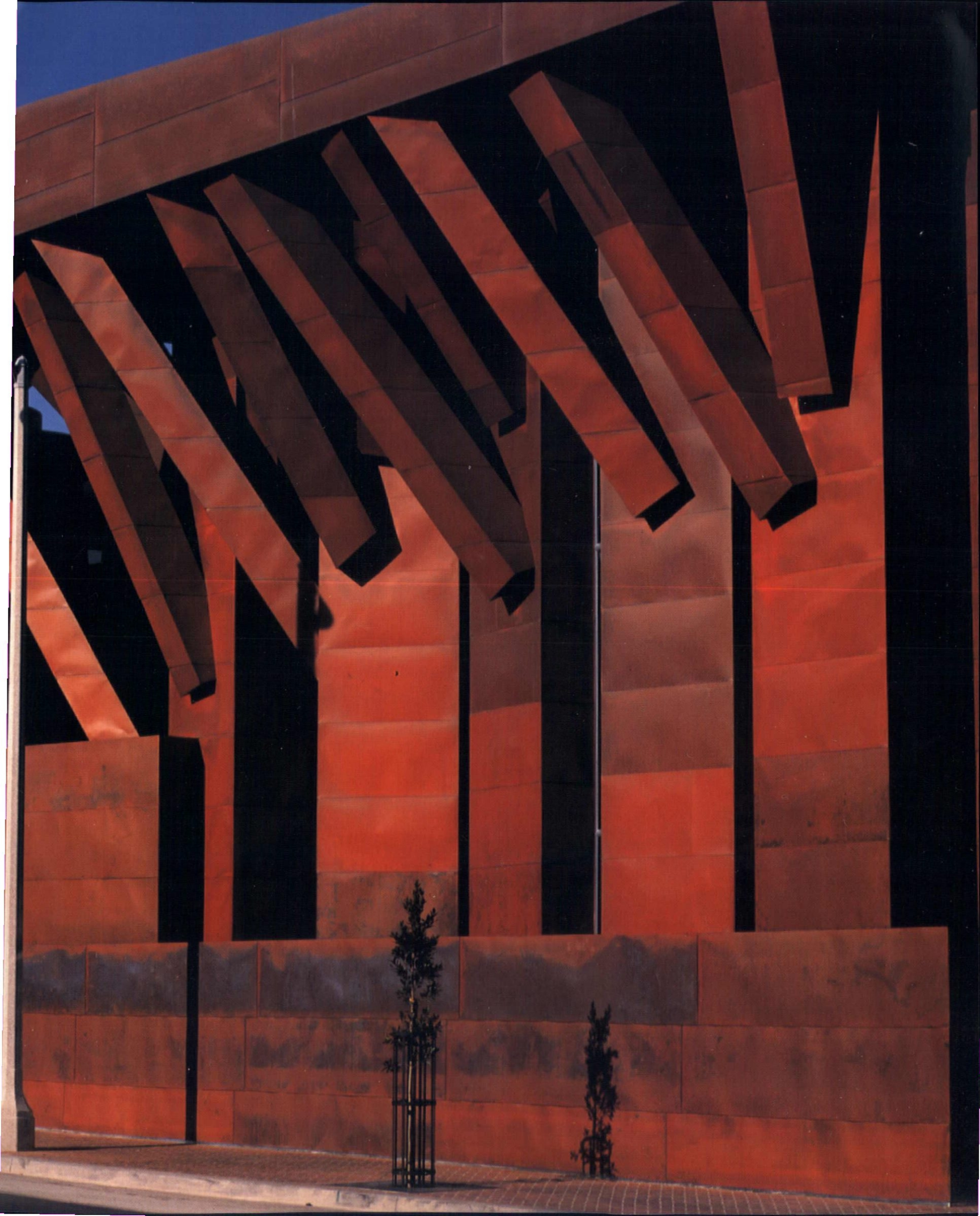
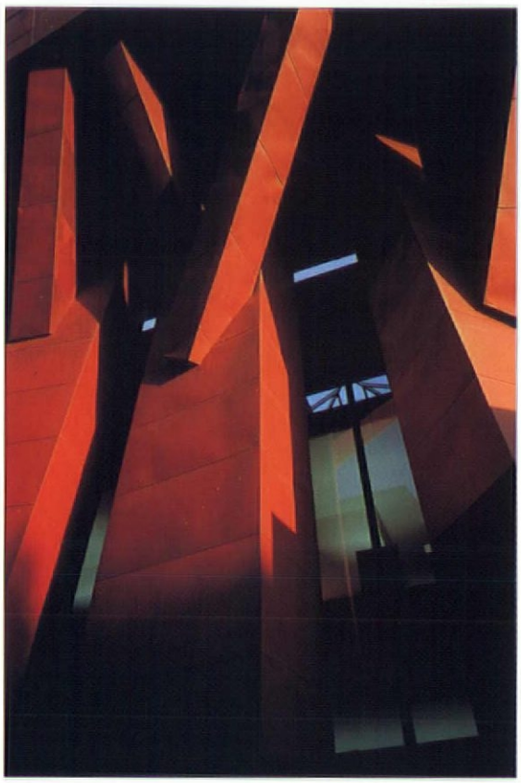
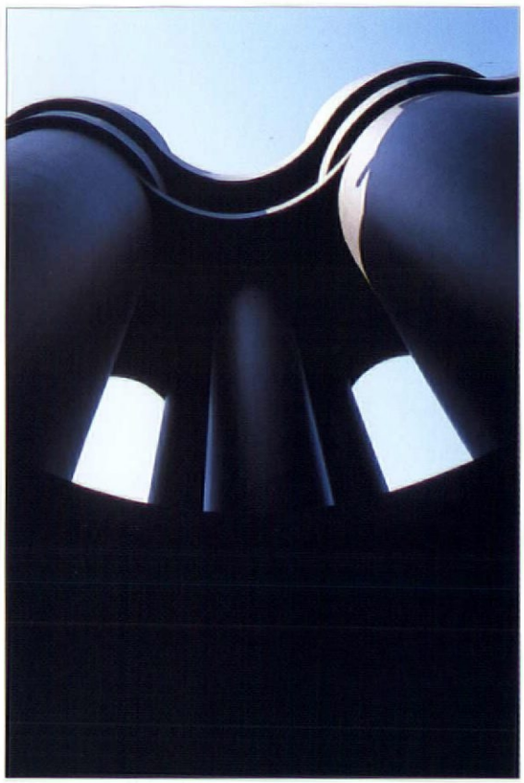
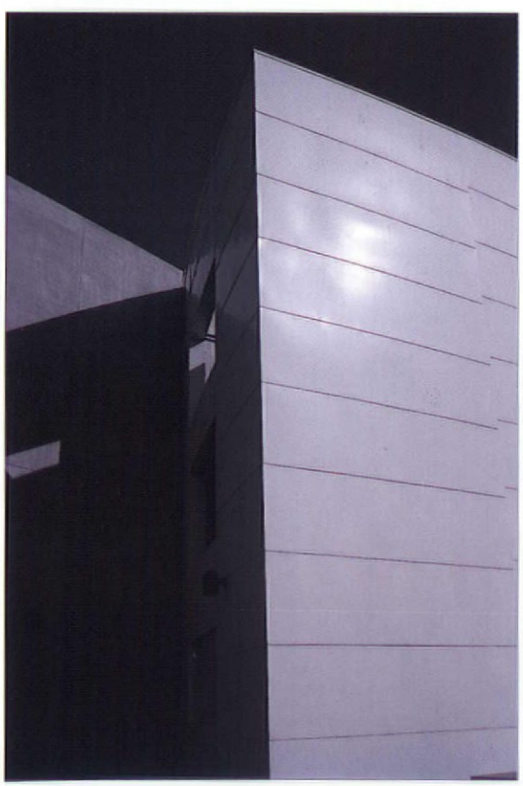














CHARLES JENCKS
Towards the Perfected Office

Main Street in Venice, California, is a mixture of Main Street USA, office park and seedy downtown trying to survive the recession. Right across from the binoculars of Frank Gehry's new offices for the advertising firm Chiat/Day/Mojo is a dosser's pad, a black mattress and garbage-pile set in the bushes as if beach bums had suddenly taken up industrial espionage. At the next road junction up the street is Jonathan Borofsky's *Hermaphroditic Clown*, its unofficial title, a running man-woman with ballerina-legs and moustache. Now Gehry's collage completes the scene – boat, binoculars, forest – a summary of the funky beach vernacular on a higher level.

Gehry will not like the compliment, but this is his most accomplished post-modern building to date. Small block planning at the right scale, a mixture of appropriate languages for an ad-agency in the commercial strip, explicit simile and implicit metaphor, high/low taste, symbolic collage and, on the interior, rich warm ironies. It's all here, almost the canonic PM formula conceived in the mid-1980s just as he was damning post-modernism and saying his 'fish' were meant as a response to and critique of the movement. As often happens in history, rejection of an approach becomes the sign of covert appropriation.

The contrasting images of the Main Street facades are superb even if at first, they seem a bit obvious. Second glance uncovers the relevant and multidimensional references: the 'white boat' is also a 'pointed fish' and in its metallic sleekness a comment on the boatyards and Pacific ocean nearby; the 'binoculars', designed by Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen, while more representational, serve as a triumphal arch for automobile parking and the enclosure of the main conference room. This doubly-functioning object with its 'snake light' clearly advertises the purpose of this agency located in 'Venice'. The copper tree trunks lean towards the feminine binoculars like Duchamp's 'men' in *The Large Glass*, a clutch of wavering branches that also cut down the fierce Californian sunlight. These enigmatic shapes show the typical Gehry aesthetic that has evolved after ten years of skewing industrial and natural forms.

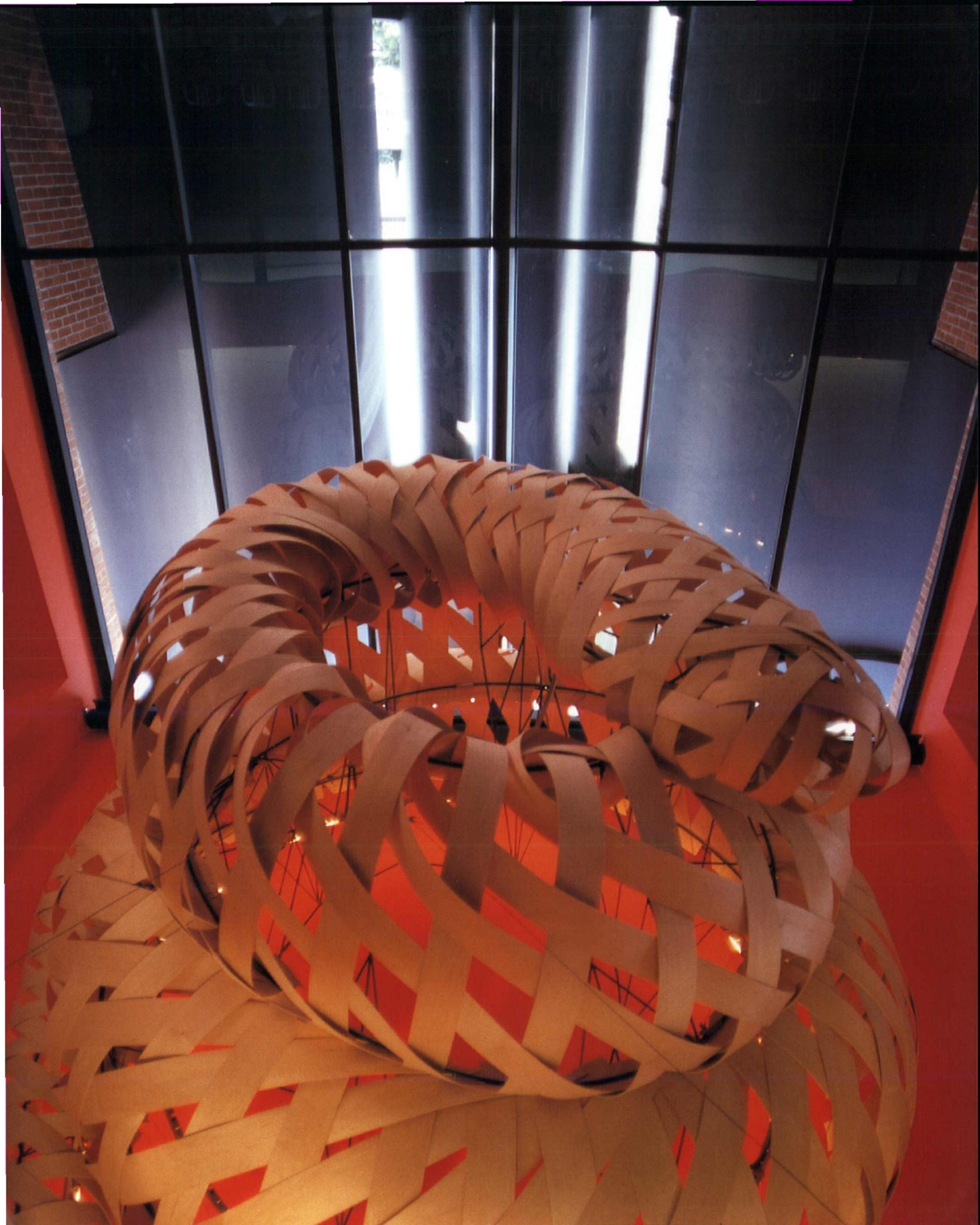
It's a chunky abstract representation positioned carefully between the requirements of architecture and communication. The chunkiness comes from the necessities of enclosing space with economy and using the geometric solids that architecture must employ, a direct result of articulating familiar shapes with flat metal panels – the fish, tree or boat. Mondrian, whose paintings of trees from 1911-16 became successively more general, would find these angular struts midway in his series. This halfway position is the strength, not weakness, of Gehry's abstract representation and, of course, a key method of post-modernists (an issue of *Architectural Design* was devoted to the subject in 1983).

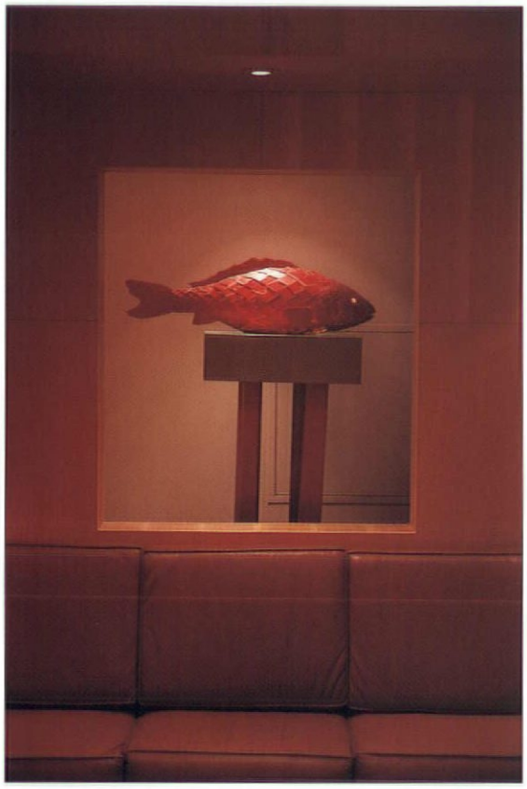
Even more convincing are the interiors – both the old refurbished warehouse on the back street and the new buildings on Main Street. Here a relaxed urbanity prevails, a grid of 'streets', major 'avenues' and 'monuments' set into the fabric. This transformation of the office into an interior city block – an idea that it has been around since Herman Hertzberger's work in the late 60s – finally takes the sting out of open planning. The open, flowing office-landscape no longer has to look like a military camp, or an assembly-line manned by well-paid zombies. The functional workstation is packaged repetitively here, as any office, but finally with intimacy, informality and surprise – precisely the qualities needed in our white-collar factories.

In the old warehouse a village landscape is structured around a Main Avenue organised north-south, and plugged into this grid are several enigmatic incidents – again abstract representations of fish and other objects that have acquired various affectionate euphemisms. Some are media rooms where complete silence and acoustical control are required. A set of three rammed together in a typical Gehry collage is constructed of contrasting materials: galvanised sheet metal versus corrugated cardboard versus dark-red-Finn-Ply.

The interior of the cardboard room is surfaced in corrugated blocks creating an acoustically zero-rated womb: you can hear your heart beat, naturally faster and faster. With its interior oculus allowing a shaft of Californian light to move around the conical dome this space – and I will stand by the comparison – is the equivalent of the Pantheon's. Magical, nicely perplexing in its mixing of wall, furniture and ceiling, it brings a space of contemplation and rest to the most pragmatic and restless of city functions.

If most of those in the First World are destined to spend 60 per cent of their waking hours toiling in factory-offices, then it is buildings like these that are going to make the experience equal to the full urban life of the cosmopolitan city. Along with the NMB Bank in Amsterdam, the Landeszentralbank in Frankfurt and recent work by Hiroshi Hara and Michael Hopkins, Gehry's buildings define the office paradigm of the 90s.











JAMES STEELE
The Myth of LA and the Reinvention of the City

As Los Angeles, which is the parent city without a centre, increasingly yearns for an urban core that is synonymous with its new status as 'the capital of the West Coast', opinions are becoming more sharply divided over the part that architecture should play in its transformation. Joel Garrean, whose *Edge City* has been helpful in defining the urban type predicated by LA, has identified a key ingredient in this change, for as he says: 'Within the Sixty-Mile Circle one can find a stunning diversity of environments – ocean surf, rolling hills, canyons, mountains, lakes, deserts, and some of the most productive farmland on earth . . . The Edge Cities of the Los Angeles Basin contain a vibrant ethnic mix. America is going through the greatest wave of immigration since the turn of the century. It is absorbing more legal immigrants than the rest of the world combined. Los Angeles is its premier entrepot.'[1]

In the debate precipitated by this evolution, those who treat structures as a defensive weapon in an alien urban landscape are in strong contention with both the contextualists and the proponents of the single building as expressive sculpture, with each faction convinced it has the answer. Frank Gehry, who is recognised as an unparalleled medium to the subconscious of this city has now begun to display a decided social consciousness of his own, having recognised both the potential and danger of this diversity and the civil experiment it has engendered. His Disney Concert Hall, now under construction, is a dramatic example of the heightened status of his city and the marked change in his own stylistic direction that has resulted from his perception of that shift. Having begun in the same way as his houses, as a series of isolated pavilions that depended on the expressive individuality of each part to bring the whole composition together, the Concert Hall has since coalesced into a unified whole. While this change has admittedly been partially caused by an acoustician brought in at the client's request, it also reflects Gehry's recent move towards monumentality, as also seen in the American Centre in Paris and the Vitra Museum. As a sign of his awareness of the need for a more substantial symbol of the growing cultural base in LA, as well as his own artistic coming of age, the Disney Concert Hall marks a watershed in his career, and a *tour de force* in the joining of expression and function. Located on Bunker Hill, which is a prominent downtown site at the intersection of First Street and Grand Avenue adjacent to the existing Music Center of Los Angeles, the Concert Hall includes many innovative ideas, in respect to the legend it is dedicated to, the social agenda the architect has set for it, and his empathy with the artistic needs of the musicians who will play there. These include a fully accessible 'front door', joined to an entry plaza at the prime corner of First and Grand, and a secondary entry plaza at Second and Grand leading into the gardens that will surround the Hall, which are visualised as an oasis of palm trees around the billowing curves of the exterior screen walls. Both entries reflect the sympathetic and inclusive sense that Gehry wants to convey, and his determination to avoid any hint that this is a bastion of the culturally elite. This accounts for the contrastingly human scale of the free-form arcade along Grand Avenue, and the fact that unlike most concert halls, the lobby here has purposefully been designed to relate to the street, and is intended to remain open all day, not just during performances. Large, operable glass panels will assist in this accessibility; a restaurant, the Museum of the Philharmonic, Disney memorabilia and a pre-concert amphitheatre will insure activity in the lobby. The amphitheatre will be used for lectures related to each performance, as well as educational programmes and impromptu events that will be scheduled throughout each day. With these egalitarian aims in mind, the 2,400 seat Concert Hall, has been designed to be visually and acoustically intimate, despite its necessarily large scale. The sail-like forms on the ceiling and the swooping curves of the side walls continue the image of closeness, and convey the feeling that the audience are all passengers on a ship heading into uncharted waters, bound for discoveries yet to be revealed.

Gehry's recently opened Chiat/Day/Mojo Office, which is the second of his larger projects in the Los Angeles area, offers another take on what he considers to be the proper architectural response to a dispersed urban field. Located in Venice, California, the offices occupy an L-shaped site, and have been designed in collaboration with the artist Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen to be seen almost entirely as a facade best appreciated when seen through a windscreen on the way down Main Street. Reading from left to right, the principal elevation is divided into three different parts which have been named by Gehry's office, and subsequently referred to by company employees, as 'Boat', 'Binoculars' and 'Trees' with each part having a totally different character. While the notorious Binoculars, which in true LA fashion are intended as a gateway for cars rather than people, initially seem to be the centrepiece of this tripartite composition, the interaction between each part is a bit more subtle. When seen from the prime direction of travel along Main Street, from Los Angeles and Santa Monica towards Venice and the Pacific, the graceful curve of the 'Boat' first leads the eye towards Oldenburg's ocular gate, and then on to Gehry's 'Trees' which are its equal in scale and artistic impact. This pairing reinforces Gehry's self-image as artist-architect, which began with his own chain-link and raw plywood

house-collage in 1978 and has continued on through early residential projects for many LA artists. As well as his recent Fish restaurant in Kobe, Japan, which is his most literal piece of architectural art prior to Main Street. In his Pritzker Prize acceptance speech Gehry openly referred to this identification when he said: 'My artist friends, people like Jasper Johns, Bob Rauschenberg, Ed Kienholz, Claes Oldenburg, were working with very inexpensive materials . . . broken wood and paper, and they were making beauty, these were not superficial details, they were direct, it raised the question of what was beautiful. I chose to use the craft available, and to work with the craftsmen and make a virtue out of their limitations. Painting had an immediacy which I craved for architecture. I explored the processes of raw construction materials to try giving feeling and spirit to form. In trying to find the essence of my own expression, I fantasised the artist standing before the white canvas deciding what was the first move. I called it the moment of truth. Architecture must solve complex problems . . . But then what? The moment of truth, the composition of elements, the selection of forms, scale, materials, colour, finally, all the same issues facing the painter and sculptor. Architecture is surely an art, and those who practise the art of architecture are surely architects.'2

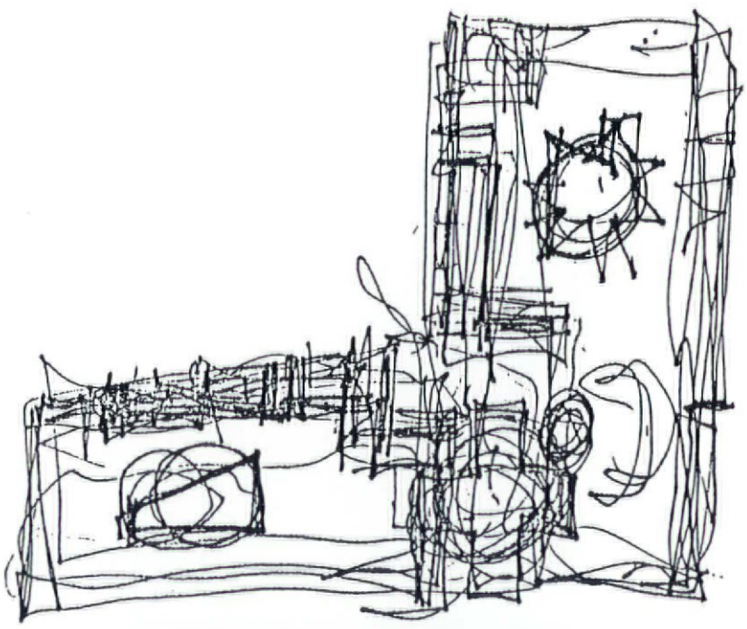
Binoculars apart, Chiat/Day/Mojo is an intriguing addition to Gehry's oeuvre in another sense, in that it is intended to be more lyrically metaphorical than the tissue thin French limestone wrapper around the Disney Concert Hall. It evokes images of the glamour days of Hollywood and the Pacific, in the 'Boat' and the dendritic carpet that once covered the California coastline in the 'Trees'. The stylised trunks, branches and canopy of this copper-clad part of the building, which houses chief executive officers in democratically apportioned, open-landscaped style, is also an intentionally graphic reminder that the natural beauty being replaced by asphalt all over Los Angeles is impossible to replace. As Joyce Kilmer said, 'Only God can make a tree'.

If the Disney Concert Hall is the unified monumental gesture that is meant to signify the arrival of LA as the premier commercial and cultural centre on the West Coast, Chiat/Day/Mojo perpetuates the attention getting, scenographic approach that Gehry still senses to be a valid representation of the fragmented urban landscape surrounding the downtown area. Each is an equally germane prototype of a different aspect of the city's character, fit to serve as a guide while LA reinvents itself. The fact that each model also functions well is further proof that this particular architect resists categorisation. At the same ceremony in which he described architecture as an art, jury member Ada Louise Huxtable said that 'he has reconciled art and utility in a handsome, workable and intensely personal synthesis of form and function [that] is his singular achievement . . . Gehry's work goes to the heart of the art of our time, carrying the conceptual and technological achievements of Modernism (as real and instructive as its much better-publicised failures) to the spectacularly enriched vision that characterises the 1990s.'3

These latest additions to those explorations in pure form and sculpture continue to delight offering the promise of an almost inexhaustible imagination that is sure to survive future changes in architectural fashion.

Notes

1 Joel Garreaux, *Edge City*, Doubleday, New York, 1991, p 283. 2 & 3 *The Pritzer Architecture Prize Presentation Book*, 1989.





TOMAS TAVEIRA

THE TRADITIONAL TRANSFIGURED AS POP

What is Pop art? What is Pop architecture? What is Pop Design? What are their limits? What are the materials they use and the ways they are articulated, either psychological or artistic, and what are their temporal boundaries? These are the most common questions or issues that artists and critics have dealt with from the beginning.

Both Claes Oldenburg and Andy Warhol, as well as Hamilton and the Smithsons, among others, considered that mass production should respond to mass communication, according information and creativity.

Richard Hamilton says in his *Collected Works* (London, 1982, p28):

> Pop art is: Popular (designed for a mass audience), Transient (short-term solution), Expendable (easily forgotten), Low cost, Mass produced, Young (aimed at youth), Witty, Sexy, Gimmicky, Glamorous, Big business. Will it be only that? Or any artist can add a bit more?

Pop art is not a joke or a bunch of jokes, neither can its humour be black or critical; Pop art has its own signification, at least at the level of understanding and artistic communication. Pop art sharply states the problem of understanding, the problem of 'street' or normal people understanding, or simply culture lovers understanding; Pop art shows more than any other type of art the contradiction of 'intellectuals', due to the fact that it shows the dichotomy between superior culture and normal or anthropological culture is artificial.

This aesthetic stream will never be out of the cultural artistic debate, nor out of the debate on imagination precisely because Pop art is the unique 'art fashion', that states that there is no difference between cultures.

Culture is homogeneous, there is only one, it merely has different aspects and means of self-expression.

It was this expression of art that for the first time included the notion of glamour, humour, pluralism and the legitimation of self-expression and self-choice; and considered itself as fundamental for the artists themselves as well as for the community.

It is clear that my art, my way of doing architecture and design is affiliated with Pop art, not directly linked but affiliated. I have suffered a great influence from Pop art, from the 'road' and the 'beatnik' aesthetic, and from anthropological culture, old and new.

Looking at my objects one should say that they are definitely related to this type of art, and that it is clearly visible, but at the same time it is necessary to show their roots and laws of generation and thinking. Most of them can be considered as pure transfigurations, like some of Warhol's works, because he and I share a starting point, that of 'existing objects', existing formal themes, which have or had vitality, a life of their own, and the capacity to inform psychologically and emotionally. Both are autonomous forms – objects which after having suffered cultural action assume a different cultural status.

Some of the objects which constitute my starting point are old – 11th century or earlier. They are so old that they can be considered anthropological: historic objects that penetrated so deeply into society it was as if they belonged within society's own body. The type of artistic work I have developed in the last few years consists in a creative and intentional dialogue between the 'object starting point' with its one cultural mark, and a new additional culture which stems from reasoning and knowledge, which stems in turn from a cosmic information structure, which I have named 'Cosmopolitan Culture'.

All the 'original' objects are popular and come from several cultural ages, both of Portuguese and Mediterranean origin. Some of them are Greek and Roman designs (Portugal was colonised by the Romans) and their origins are lost in the dust of time; some others are of Medieval origin; others belong to the pre-industrial age (19th century), while others are entirely contemporary.

The cultural attitude and my cultural intervention are basically the same: the action is to give respectability to the popular folk object, thus giving it the status of fine art. In doing so some objects lose their function, while others are able to maintain it.

I should add that all the original objects can be found in popular folk markets, actual countryside markets – and hence they belong to the collective Portuguese memory.

All the artistic work is done in such a way that it leaves intact the original shape and its basic capacity to communicate; in certain cases the original shape becomes more real and visible after the transfiguration.

Fine arts depend on the traditional and the popular. The fine arts exist in confrontation with the folk world – the other face of culture. The fine arts depend on folk culture for vitality and in a certain way the folk world attains its respectability from superior culture. An arch becomes 'useful' and 'artistic' after the artist has used it. Folk and popular art become something complex when the fine artist touches them and transforms them in some way.

The transformation from everyday object, form, colour or light to a fine art manifestation or understanding happens in many ways, depending on the artist and their poetics.

An *objet trouvé* or *l'art brut* is an object which appears or that is discovered; the object remains absolutely the same and its 'artistic light' is something which exists through words, explanations or a particular use; on the other hand the *objet trouvé* is just a starting point or one from which to jump to a different object, and in this case the folk, or



The Barcelos Cock



The Barcelos Cock transfigured

Fountain in the main square of the Amoreiras Complex shopping mall, Lisbon











OPPOSITE: Detail of façade, Don Carlos I Building, Lisbon
FROM ABOVE: 'Sandeman', 'Marcelos II', 'Forum' and 'Sylvia' Chairs



popular initial ideal, becomes a totally different object. This type of work can be named 'transfigurative', and this approach is characteristic of our design work.

What can we say about this attitude, what is the best way to understand my architecture and design?

In all our objects, both in the realm of architecture and art, there are some poetic constrictions which can co-exist, in some cases better than in others. This is an attempt to explain the fact that in all our designs there are two types of aesthetic positions. On the one hand there is an attempt to restore anthropological objects, the form of some of which were defined in the fifth century BC, and which, because they have always been part of the life of the poor, have never achieved the status of art. On the other hand there are objects which have always had more or less folk functions, as in the case of money-boxes or the Barcelos Cock. Another interest of ours is related to the creation of objects which have lost their original function by taking on a new aesthetic order, following a less functional and more artistic way of thinking. This is true for example in the case of the transfiguration of the commonplace into objects of value such as everyday chairs 'found' in impoverished areas.

Post-Modernism is therefore, and above all, a reaction against schematism; against mass production; against written and bureaucratic functionality; a reaction against the machine, the God of modern life. It is a very serious attitude that revitalises or recovers the last 80 years, with reference to: the spirit of the place, based on the prime of its cultural anthropology (Lisbon is Medieval); a new relationship with history, both of today and of antiquity (New Classicism or Free-Style Classicism); a return to the idea of colour and ornament, like a return to the soul; and the reintroduction of the ideas of regionalism, symbol, spectacle, glamour, fascination, monument, metaphor, humour, transfiguration and rethinking.

The idea of Post-Modernism is new food for the spirit, it is the return to imagination. The Post-Modern is more effective in the representation of the spiritual and metaphysical reality of present man. Of Structuralism and Deconstruction, one can say that the idea of Post-Modernism or the end of Modernism encompasses them as well as many other different strands in architecture. Post-Modernity definitely exists and we architects and designers must accept the plurality of points of view – the plurality of tastes and communities.



OPPOSITE: Ideas for the rebuilding of Chiado; LEFT: BNU Building, Lisbon



PHILIPPE STARCK

RECENT DESIGNS

Salon Coppola, Milan

Perhaps I had better tell you about the general spirit behind this project, as it is always more a question of spirit than anything else behind my built work.

The history behind it goes something like this: three years ago L'Oréal asked me to design a collection of furniture for their hair salons with a view to distributing the work, for L'Oréal, Maletti in Italy and Takara Belmont in Japan, which together form the largest and best salons in the world. They would group together to manufacture and distribute my furniture: The Starck Collection.

They also decided to set up a salon in every city in the world in order to show an example of the use of furniture and an example of styling. L'Oréal wanted me to make types of decoration – murals and things which I knew wouldn't work, as I thought it would be far better to show a few examples which people might then apply to their own interior decoration taking an element from here, and another from there, gradually building up something themselves. It therefore became an exercise in re-evaluating hair salons.

The way in which I entered the project was, as always, from a critical point of view. I studied hair salons a little and their furnishing, and noticed that they were deteriorating, in the sense that a hair salon is a place where people go to become more beautiful, to blossom out, and you find yourself in a harsh, constraining contraption. It is supposed to be a place of pleasure, of flourishing, but instead it is somewhere where women feel panicky about what is going to happen to them.

At the beginning of the project I thought that the title was significant – notice that the title is hair Salon and not hair Factory. So from this came the idea of redesigning all the furniture as that which could exist in a salon, or living-room as opposed to the average room of hair-washing sinks aligned as if they were in a factory. The object was a collection which would abandon the machine; rather, it would veer towards the human, making it a place where people go to make themselves look and feel beautiful; I don't believe you can do this if you're feeling scared.

So the principal idea was one of pleasure, the idea of the *salon*, the idea of making yourself beautiful. However, when you talk about this and about the world of hairdressing the whole idea seems affected and ridiculous. The hairdressing world is one of caricatured femininity as is everything that is created for a particular group of people but seen from the outside by others – it is never the women who go to hairdressing salons themselves who design them. There does exist what is known as a feminine style – pink and affected – but this hardly corresponds to the truth of what a woman is today. I don't believe in this and therefore tried to look at the design from another angle, trying to give it a slightly harder side, more structured, a little more architectural. Coppola is exactly that; it expresses the idea of feminine beautification with dignity, without any affectation; it is dignified femininity.

Glacier Bottle

I work above all for personal affairs as I don't care too much about the product, and society a little less; what I love above everything are the people with whom I work. I don't work for people I don't like. I have *lovers*; I don't do projects: I have sexual relationships. One day, a young man called me from New York and said: 'I need you. I'm 27 years old and have just set up a mineral water company.' He arrives the next morning, opens up a large book of photos of Alaska, shows me a huge glacier and says: 'It's mine. I've just bought it.' And the other day, I was on my bike, I was thirsty, I wanted my bottle of water. Where on earth was it? Oh, yeah, in the sink – they're the bottles you have to wash, and what's more, the water stinks inside. I want to drink the best and purest water in the world, everywhere I go. And this guy, a 27 year-old sort of early 20th-century pioneer, is a modern adventurer that doesn't exist anymore. He finds a glacier, buys it, then buys an old boat, and gets tanks and enormous funnels made. He takes his boat, goes under the iceberg where there are torrents of prehistoric water – the purest water in the world, 300 times purer than Evian water. Then he gets back to the bank, fills these bottles and the guy's going to be Monsieur Perrier or Evian in a couple of years' time. And what's more, he does this for the whales. He's a bit like everyone at the moment, into protecting the environment. He's employed a full-time adviser who knows all about the accounts of the various whalers, about their financial situations, who's in debt etc . . . and as the glacier produces water, he picks the one in most difficulty, buys it and sinks it. Darius Bikoff's theory is to say that in ten years' time all these industries will have died but it'll be too late in ten years' time – there won't be any whales left. So he makes money, buys the boat and sinks it. Very stylish.

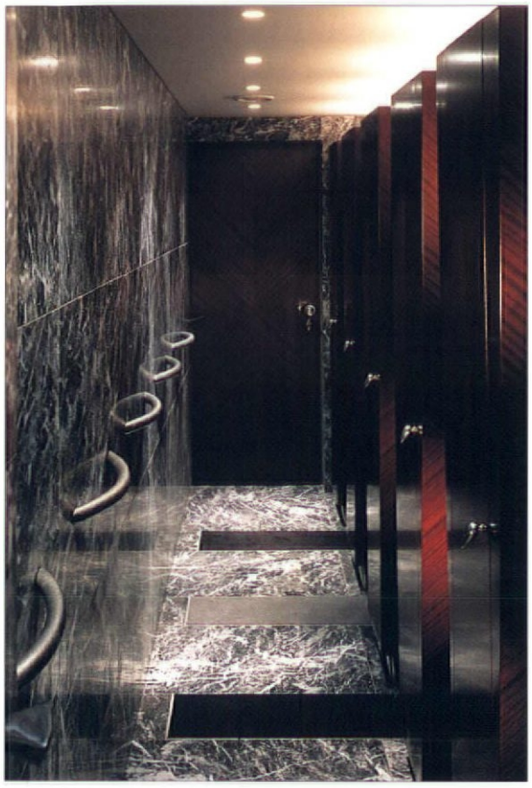
The Olympic Games Torch

What particularly interested me about this project was the fact that I was able to discuss something I knew nothing about. As you can probably guess I know nothing about sport; well, this is what I would call the ingenuous effect, in that if you don't know anything about something you have to imagine it, and arrive at its essence. You have to get rid of all the anecdotal elements surrounding it, to clean it up and eventually come to the important part of the thing. And this is where it began to interest me: I'm not concerned with













PREVIOUS PAGE, OPPOSITE & RIGHT: Salon Coppola, Milan



great demonstrations, organisations or by sport as it is portrayed on television. But there is something in sport that I find beautiful: the energy, the eagerness, the enthusiasm. It was at that moment I realised that it was pointless designing a torch, an object; I would design a flame instead. The problem is really one of a flame in that it's about expressing yourself from within and making it extend from your arm, so that the flame is held in a symbolic and beautiful way. That's what is important in the human being: energy.

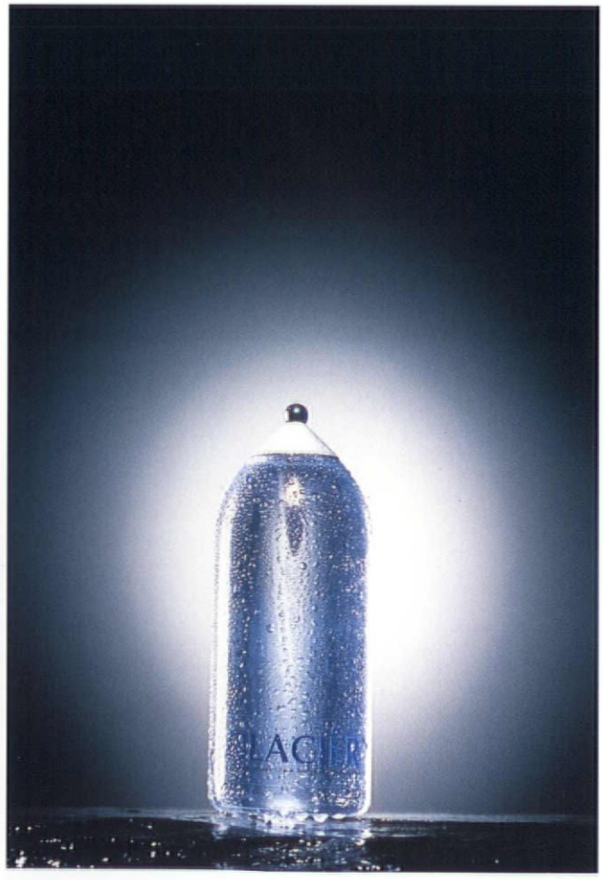
The project is also somewhat based on the idea of reduction. Here, I simply wanted to give an idea of a continuation of energy, in that rather than talking about a torch we are talking about energy from a human being. Someone is running and, from the end of his arm comes a flame; and it merges with the arm. There is no longer anything: no decoration; just the flame which is emanating. What I would have also liked to do was to have the flame coming from the fist itself – as Hardy used to do by flicking his thumb against his finger when Laurel asked for a light. However, for security reasons I didn't.

Toothbrush

This is the product I am proudest of. For the past ten years I've been telling people I want to make popular products in bulk, which are worth only a couple of pounds, which are honest, do their job well and have a little bit of poetry about them. Occasionally I made a poetic object, or a popular object, but I had never made anything that had all of the above. L'Oréal and Fluorocaril gave me the opportunity to make an object which costs 28 Francs – the average price of a toothbrush – and which is the best toothbrush, which functions the best and which solves the problem of matching the toothbrush with the rest of the bathroom. The reaction to this toothbrush was significant. Firstly, Fluorocaril took the great risk of asking the most senior dentists what they thought of it; and their answers were very interesting. They said that technically it was the best; it had the slimmest head; the best stem, softness of bristles, etc, etc. However, that was not what interested us – there are already plenty of excellent toothbrushes around. Rather, what we found interesting was not that people are brushing their teeth any *better*; it was the fact that people brush their teeth *at all*. Half the French do not brush their teeth. So, by making a desirable object you then create new toothbrushers. *That's* what interests them; the result being that normally four to six toothbrushes are sold in a chemists per day, while we sell 60. This proves that if you make an honest, accessible, innovative, intelligent product, people actually respond. Manufacturers should understand rather than scorn their customers. Today the public is more intelligent than manufacturers; and when one or two are as clever as their public the result is a true success. Initially it was to be sold only in France, but now it's available in Japan and the US – a real French success. It's on the way to becoming a world-wide toothbrush.

OPPOSITE: Salon Coppola, Milan; BELOW: Toothbrushes and Glacier Bottle









MARK FISHER

SOME THOUGHTS ON POP AND PERMANENT ARCHITECTURE

As a high-brow pursuit, Pop architecture has a problem. Popular culture is ephemeral, but most architecture is designed to be permanent. The high-brow dredging of popular culture to make Pop Art is OK for paintings. They can be hidden when they go out of fashion, and then rehung from time to time as historical curiosities. For architecture the only escape from old fashion is demolition. Long-life buildings are anathema to Pop architecture.

In the late 50s Reyner Banham contradicted Sir Hugh Casson's fallacious argument that Pop Art presaged Pop architecture. Banham demonstrated that Pop architecture had existed before Pop Art. He proposed Albert Kahn's Ford Pavilion at the New York World's Fair of 1939 as the first example of Pop architecture because it was an advertisement, the precursor of all 'exclamatory hamburger bars and other roadside retail outlets'.[1] An essential feature of popular culture was the disposability of everything including its aesthetic qualities. He quotes Leslie Fiedler: '. . . the articles of popular culture are made, not to be treasured, but to be thrown away'.[2] Leaving aside his academic preference for crediting an architect with the invention of the genre, his thesis was that once architecture embraces commerce, it becomes Pop, subject to 'the same set of Madison Avenue rules' as popular culture – including, by implication, being thrown away .

He also noted that 'the collage-effect of violent juxtaposition of advertising matter with older art forms . . . was being widely discussed in architectural circles around the time of the Festival of Britain'. In a manner which today seems rather precious, this mixing of graphics and form can be seen in the temporary buildings of the Festival itself, which were far more exuberant than the permanent architecture of the period. The certainty of demolition must have been a liberation for the architects involved.

Many of the early examples of what Banham called Pop architecture borrowed their forms from the Modern Movement. Stanley Meston, the architect of the original Golden Arches for McDonalds, introduced the parabolic arches to give the building a 'futuristic' look in 1953. He wasn't bothered that the arches had no structural function. Richard McDonald,one of the franchise's brothers, said later that 'it was fortunate the arches were not structural, since if a vehicle had run into one of them, it might have done serious damage to the building![3] The life expectancy of Pop architecture has always been short. Commercial buildings like hotels and exhibition pavilions, or the interiors of shops and clubs, are really advertisements, built to last as long as the products they contain will sell. Harrison and Fouilhoux's Trylon and Perisphere, the centrepieces of the 1939-40 World's Fair, were copied in a whole range of consumer goods which today command good prices in antique shops. But the buildings themselves barely made it to the end of the fair. As *The New York Times* put it: 'If the builders of the Trylon were counting on a single season Fair, it might be argued that they timed themselves with one hundred percent precision.'[4]

The survival test for things in popular culture is whether or not people will buy them. In the purest form, these things are unnecessary, like fashion or entertainment. New styles are constantly invented to exploit the natural habit of consumers to become bored. Even when things are not improved by technical development, they are restyled to excite jaded palates. Permanent architecture cannot survive in this commercial environment; it's too durable.

One of the most transient forms of Pop architecture can be found in the world of popular music. The stage sets for outdoor rock concerts are conversion kits which change the use of space on an architectural scale. With equal ease they turn sports facilities and wastelands into transitory theatres for popular entertainment. They are large and expensive, incorporating technical equipment, decoration and weather protection, in structures which it can take more than 20 trucks to transport from show to show. For the bands which perform on them they are distress purchases, brought about by the lack of facilities at the venues where they play, and the competitive need to add value to the tickets they sell. Greed and ambition drive bands to sell as many tickets as possible. These vices are endorsed by the huge public demand for tickets to the most successful shows; the Rolling Stones sold 6 million $35.00 tickets to their concerts during 1989-90. Left to themselves, the bands would present the cheapest shows they could get away with in the largest venues they could sell out. The fact that they present extravagant spectacles instead, is a response to public demand.

The economic pressure on stage set design means that the materials and technology employed are just sufficient for the job. The sets are ephemeral; they have no use after the final concert. This is why, underneath the decorated surface, they are built from commonplace sub-structures of scaffolding and timber, assembled by hand from rented components. They are an entirely commercial architecture, sustained by voluntary public subscription and discarded as soon as they have passed their sell-by date.

Notes

1 Reyner Banham, 'Towards a Pop Architecture', in *Design by Choice*, Academy, 1981.

2 Reyner Banham, 'Throw-Away Aesthetic', in *Design by Choice*, Academy, 1981.

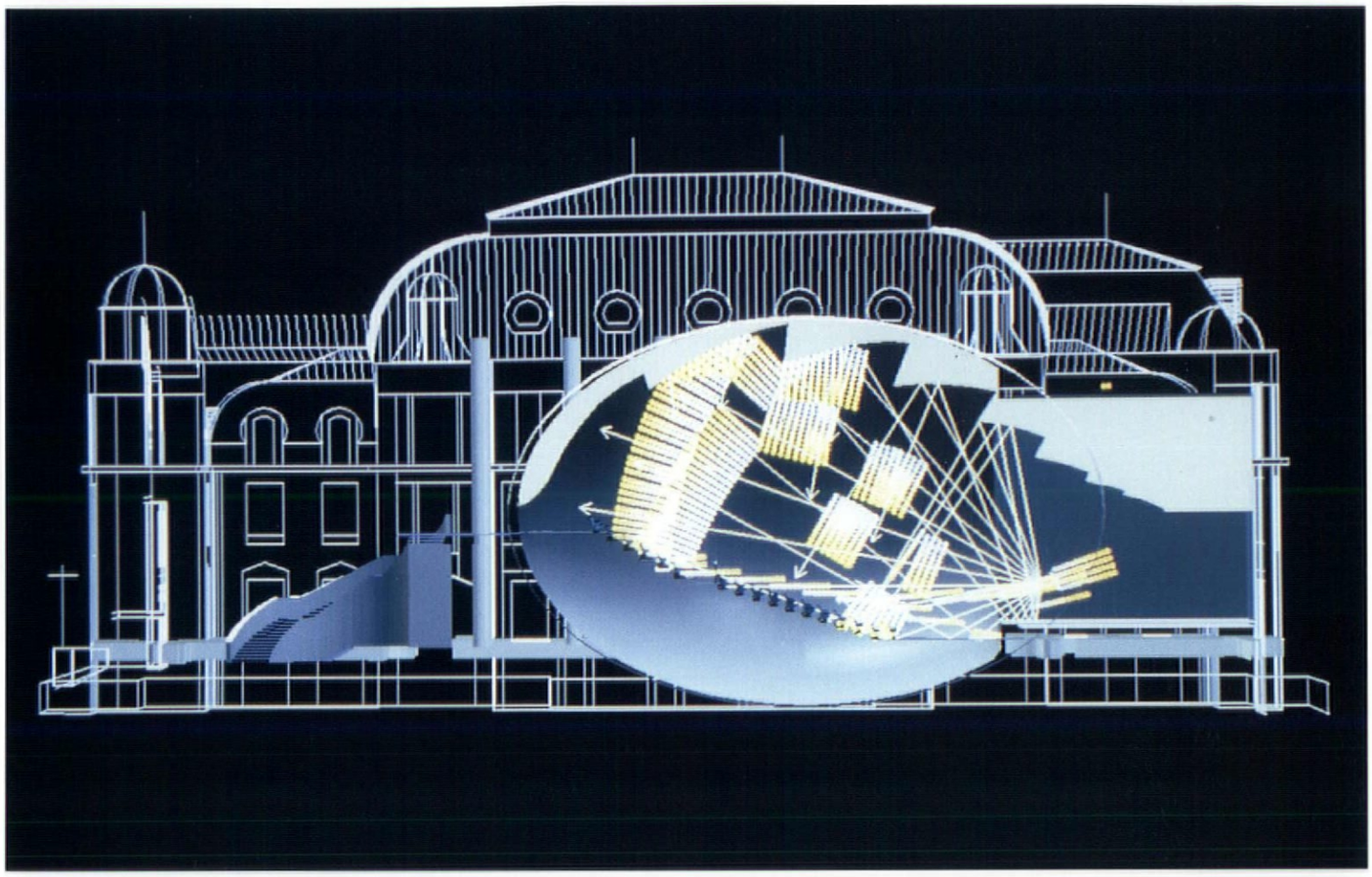
3 Philip Langdon, 'Burgers! Shakes!', *Atlantic Monthly*, 1985.

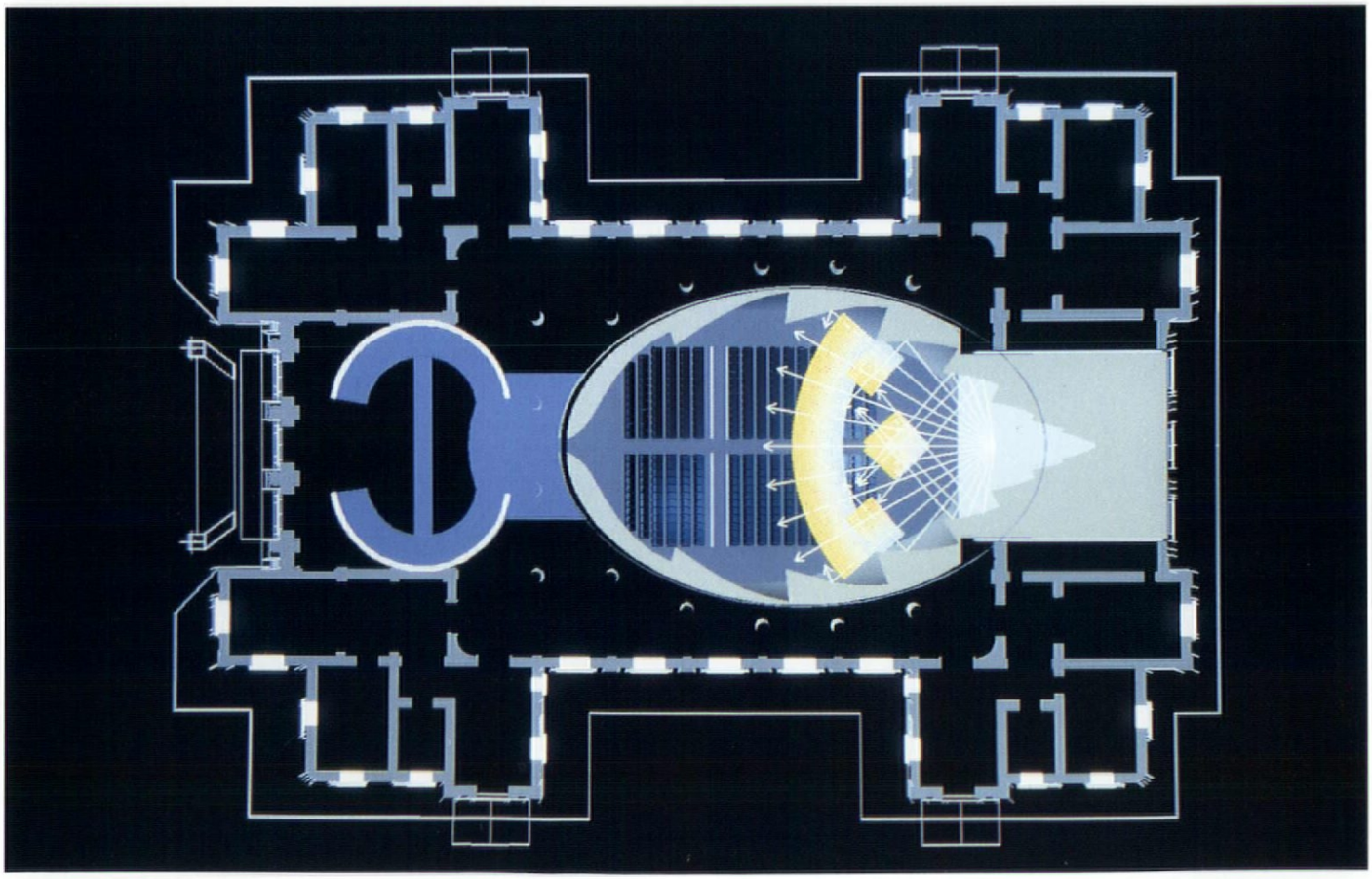
4 Quoted in Cohen, *Trylon and Perisphere*, Abrams, 1989.





PREVIOUS PAGE: Rolling Stones, 'Steel Wheels' US Tour; OPPOSITE & ABOVE: Roger Waters, 'The Wall', Berlin



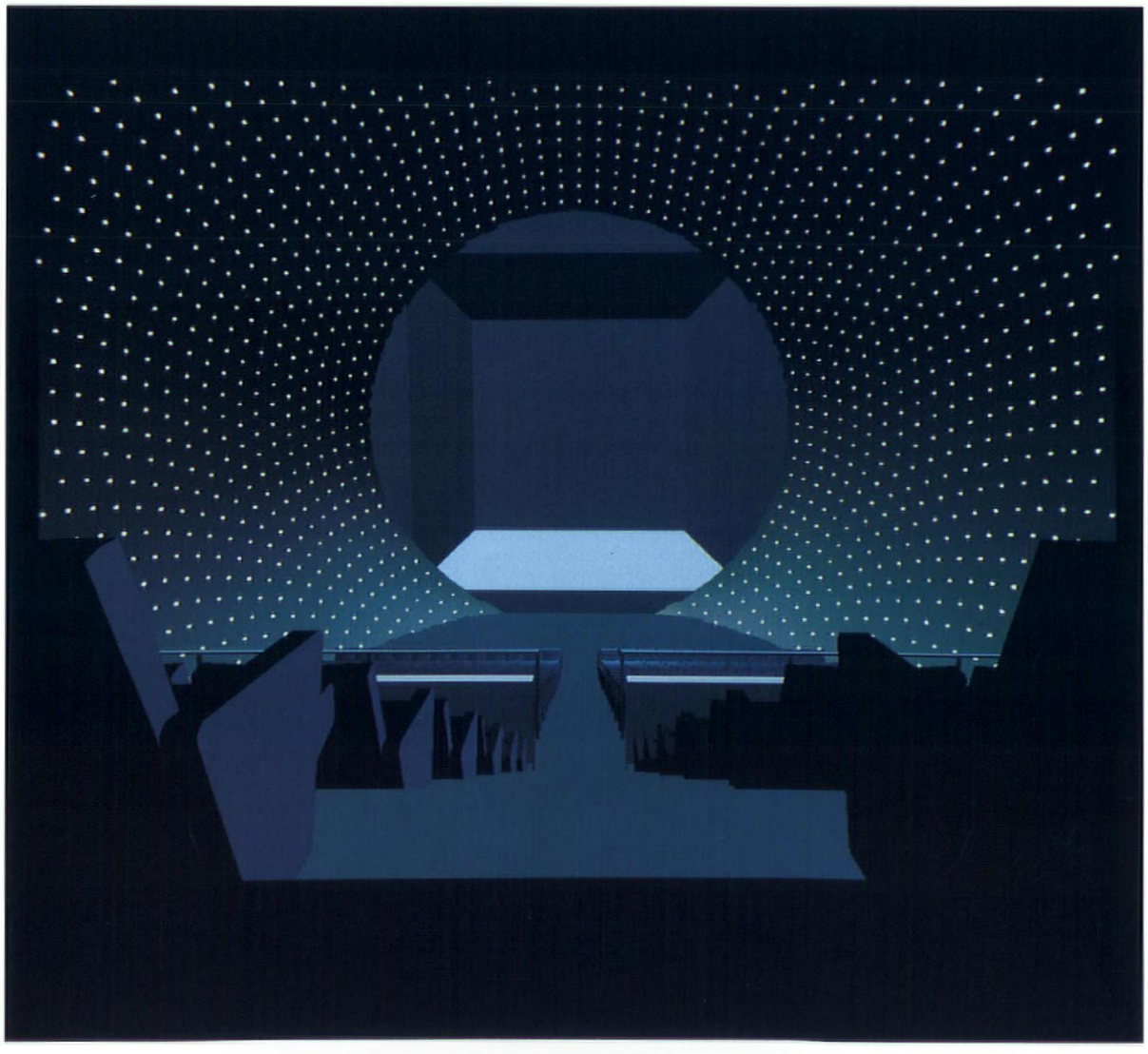


TADAO ANDO

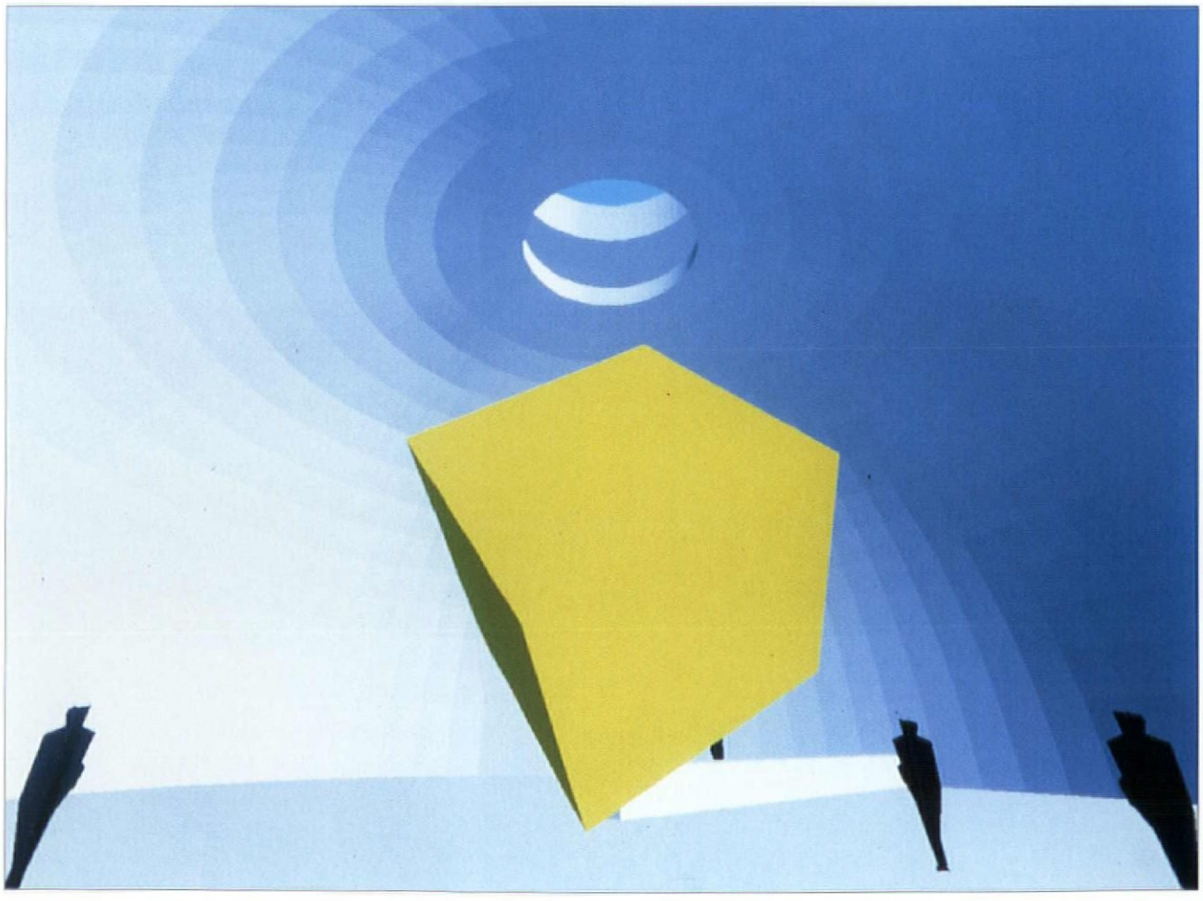
NAKANOSHIMA PROJECT II (SPACE STRATA)

The Nakanoshima Project offers a structural concept of an urban park aiming at the 21st century. In structuring the project, I tried to embody various values which the site in Nakanoshima has accumulated by presenting them in contrast and building them in multi-layers.

The site is a small delta extending from the east to the west, of 150-metres width and 920-metres length, which crosses Midosuji Boulevard, an economic axis of the city. This green sand-bar is situated between the Dojima River and the Tosabori River where such historical buildings as the Central Public Hall, the Prefectural Library, and the Bank of Japan Branch Office stand. The location of the project was taken into particular consideration. The plan was made on three main axes of succession: contrasting history, empathy with nature, and the multi-layered structure of the site. We proposed to build respective areas in multi-layers and to utilise the site in a three-dimensional manner. The whole project is divided into an aqua plaza, a green plaza, and an underground plaza. The site is utilised to the fullest extent by burying facilities such as an art gallery and a concert hall; above ground, there is a green plaza and a restaurant on the water. The multi-layered areas can be used for various cultural activities and events, which continue in lamination.







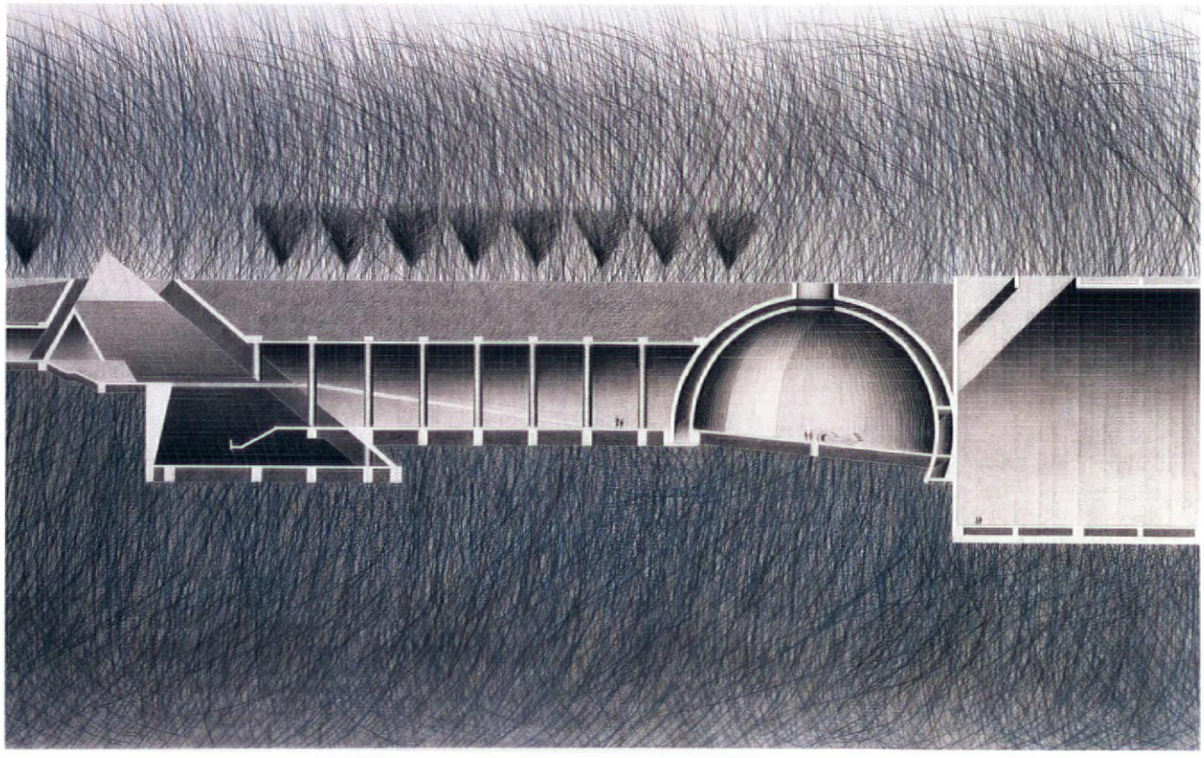
NAKANOSHIMA PROJECT II (URBAN EGG)

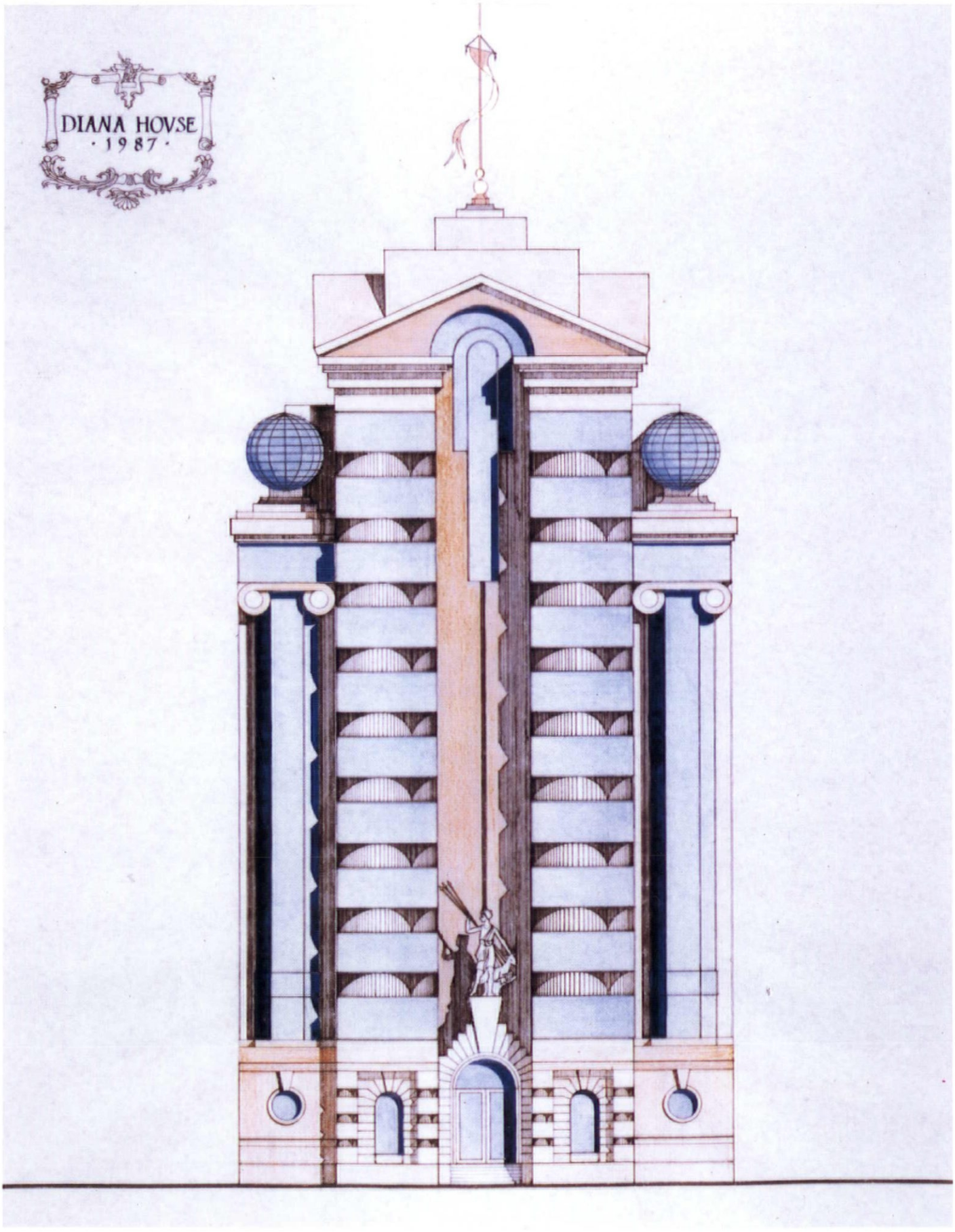
A city is not built merely on functionalist and economic logic, it is an integration of various values built on a historical legacy. It is a place where architectures built in different ages present their charms, by contrasting and opposing each other or by discovering a harmony. To create a building in a historical context is to dig out what is buried in a long past, to make it recognisable and to thereby attempt both assimilation and dissimulation.

The Central Public Hall in Nakanoshima, comprising of a basement and three storeys above ground, was completed in 1918. The main hall that sat 1,500 people was built as a well extending through two of these storeys. Our proposal is to place within the hall an urban egg with a long diameter of 32 metres and one of 21 metres. The newly conceived hall is small with only 400 seats, the surrounding space that remains is to be revitalised as a gallery.

This is a trial to exchange phenomena beyond the limits of time and to structure two spaces of the present and the past in a multi-layer. An ellipse has two focuses and its form suggests movements. Both circle and sphere give an impression of self-conclusiveness and of being settled in an eternal phase. An ellipse, on the other hand, suggests a forward movement towards the future while swaying between the two poles of past and present. I wanted to build a space in such a direction.

Two independent spaces (the existing Public Hall and the Urban Egg) are dissimulated from each other for stimulation. In the stream of time flowing from the past to the present, the succession and contrast of historicism should be presented.




DIANA HOVSE
·1987·

BASIL AL-BAYATI
FUNCTION AND FANTASY

I believe there is a hidden meaning in all forms of life and natural elements: each entity has an outer as well as an inner meaning. In order to understand my design it is important to perceive the outer and inner reality from which physical form has its origin in the mechanism of the *wasitah*. The initial concept of Al-Batin is characterised by different patterns in differing combinations which create an environment in which events occur according to set rules. This approach is found in all my work, especially in the Al-Nakhlah Tower where the tree form was adopted in the substructure of the wasitah. In Jama's Al-Kitab the Five Pillars of Islam established the basic geometrical form of the wasitah. A different approach was adopted in the Island House where the first pattern consisted of four equal spaces punctuated by projections and recesses.

I totally oppose architecture which is ordinary and unoriginal. My buildings have two purposes: they have to be functional but also enjoyable in appearance. My work is often referred to as expensive and luxurious: I think this is misconstrued. The unit/module design allows for repetition and, therefore, economical methods of construction.

An architect colleague once told me I should be handcuffed when designing as he considers I conceive architectural fantasies. I think this is a misjudgement as I possess the ability to fuse function and fantasy, to mould an object physically and psychologically. I consider myself firstly and foremostly a builder and as such am familiar with the basis of structural pattern.

Lisson Grove Development, London

The Lisson Grove site lies between Nightingale Hospital and Manor House. The architectural expression of these two buildings, as most of the street frontage, is eclectic with some architectural merit. Architectural elements are assembled into subjective composition, creating a variety of materials and designs. Georgian detailing predominates, particularly in the details of windows and doorways. It is with respect to the above that the design approach has been kept consistent with the established street architecture. The street frontage emerges from the ground as two rusticated columns supporting spherical features. The whole composition emerges from a rusticated base, through which main access to the building is provided.

The entrance perforates the building via a reception area into an inner courtyard which is closed off by a terrace of houses. The configuration of the building at the rear has been largely dictated by stringent lighting criteria and covenants. However a coherent design has been achieved. The building is clad in reconstructed stone and roofed with lead sheeting.

In the design the central element is a stone classical pediment capping two vertical banded towers of glass and stone. The glass, square in plan, is supported on semicircular plinths which are cantilevered from the main structure. The detailing in this glass box is simplified and minimised to give a pure uncomplicated form.

Adjoining and symmetrical towers of glass complement each other and are the central element, capped with a traditional lead mansard. These glass towers and the central banded towers are supported on a classically detailed stone plinth, incorporating the main entrance. The plinth, one-and-a-half storeys high with four columns supporting the projecting bays and stonework, has emphasised rustication to give visual strength, and emphasise its function as a base to the building. The structure is a reinforced concrete frame and floor slabs, with semicircular cantilevers of the floor slab at the projecting bays.

Fish Canning Factory, Yemen

The building site is Yemen, remote from any established urban development or settlement. The building itself is eclectic and expresses the product processed and its natural habitat; this being the fish and sea.

The undulating elevation, with two stylised carp emphasising the entrance, conveys movement and drama, unfolding in an unimpeded and gently undulated landscape.

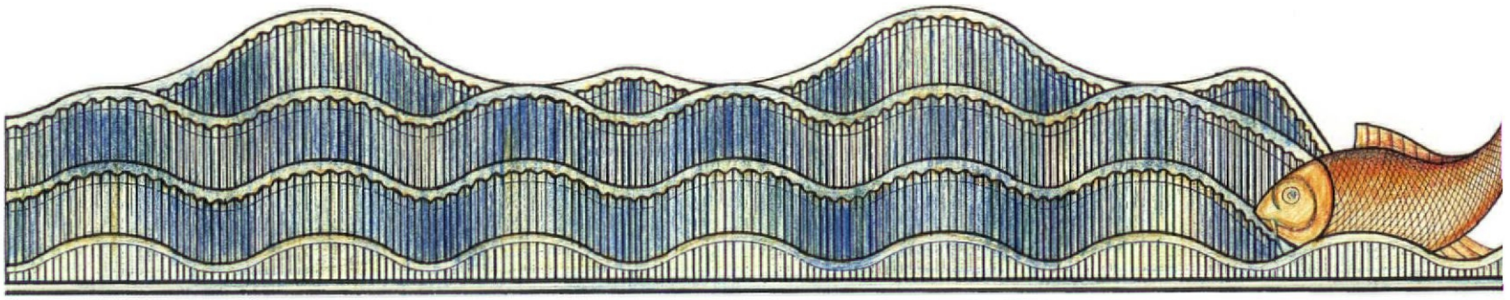
Boadicea House, London

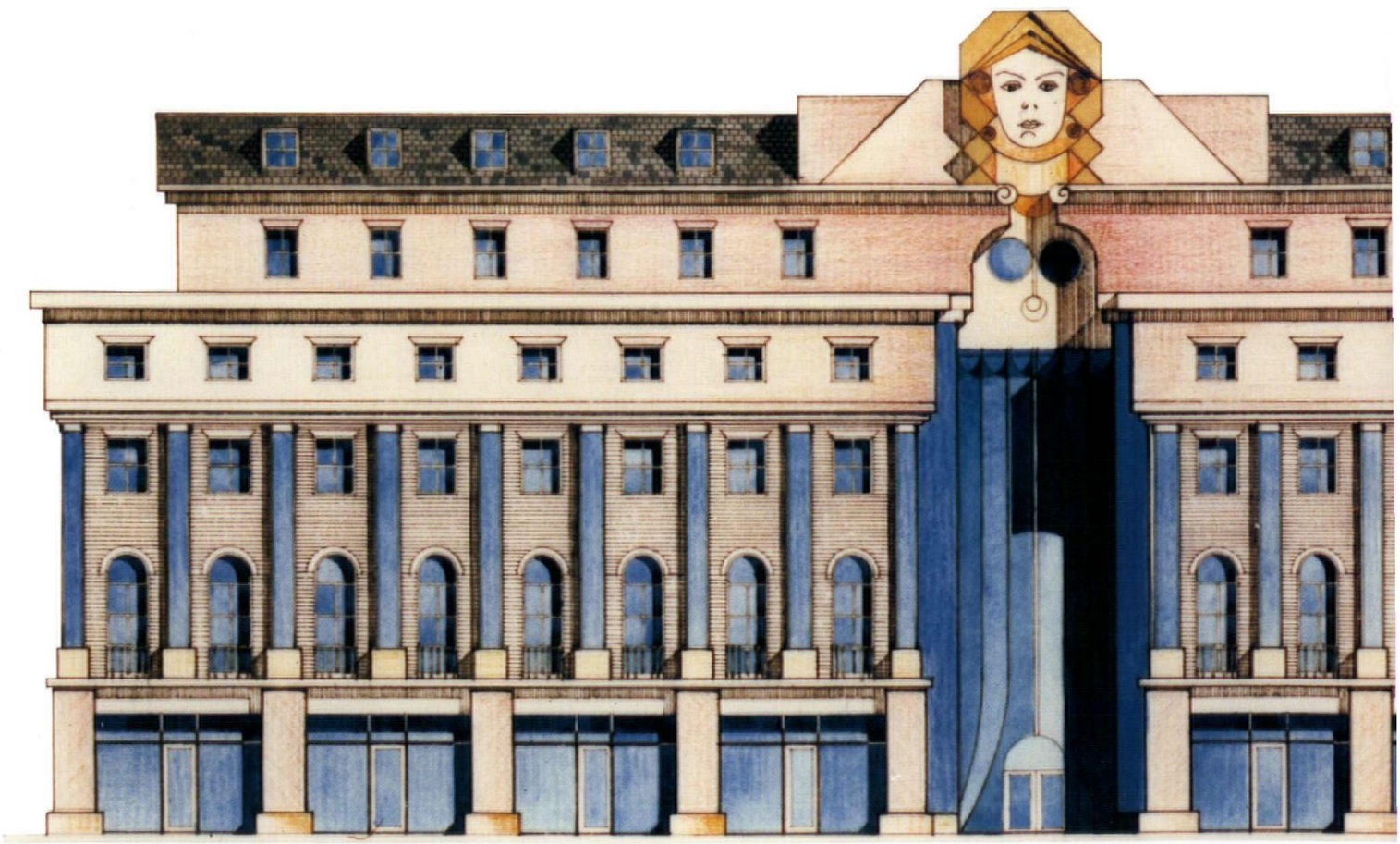
The site for this project lies in Hammersmith, West London. Its architectural idiom is eclectic, giving predominance to Georgian detailing, particularly in the design of windows and definition of floors.

The design principle of solid and void denotes an element of mannerism which almost defies conventional grammars.

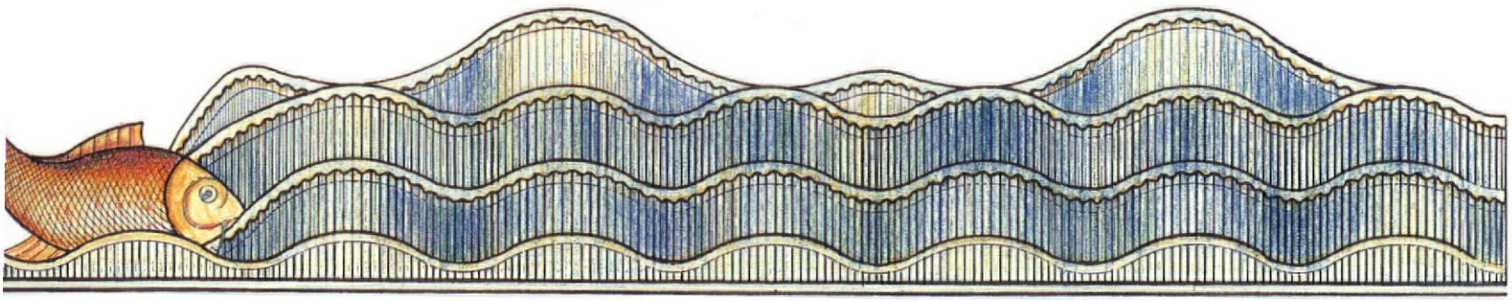
The central entrance is the focal point of the symmetrical elevation; this emerges as a stylised human figure inspired by the legendary Boadicea.

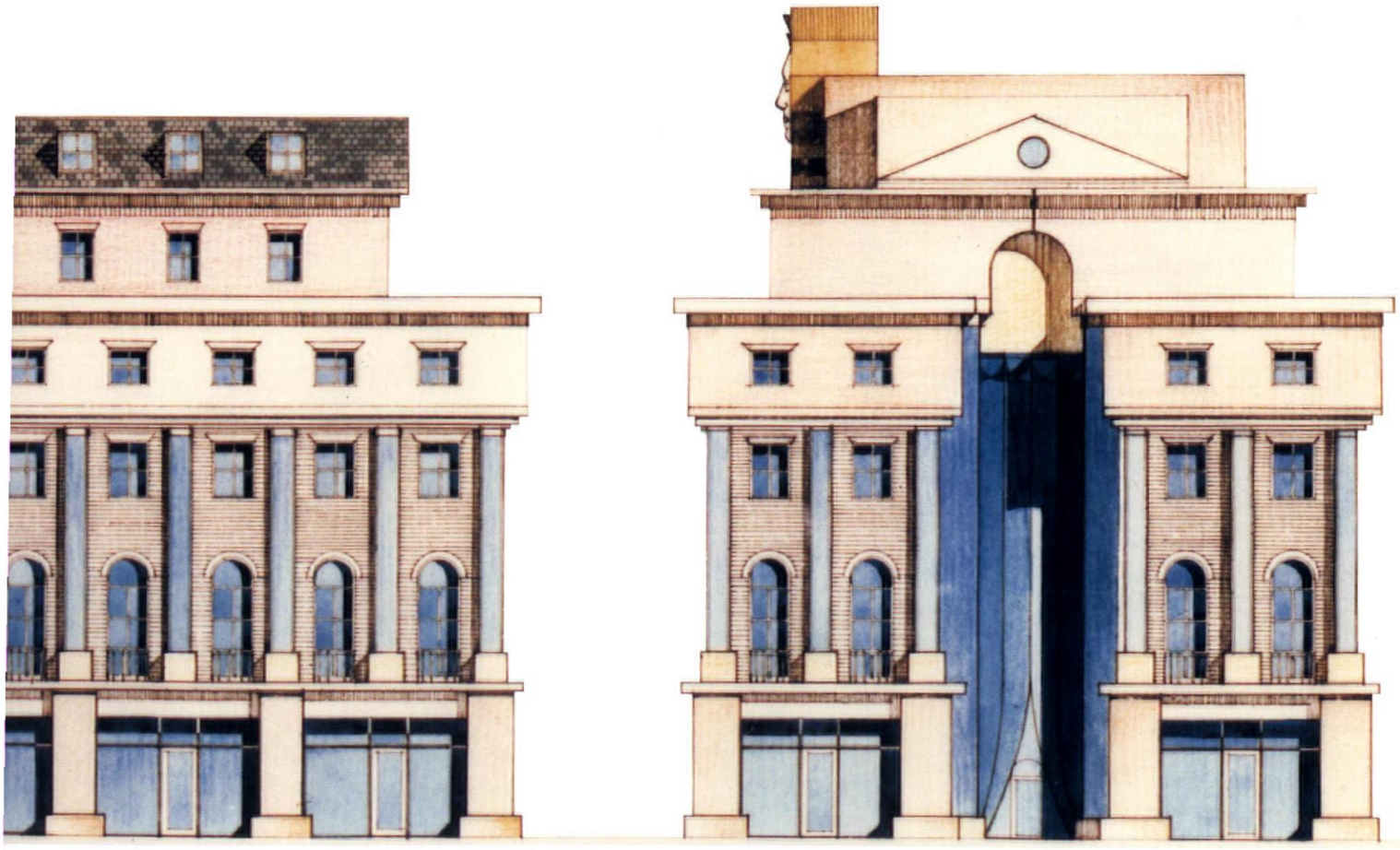
Diana House, Lisson Grove Development, London





ABOVE: Fish Canning Factory, Ye





OW: Boadicea House, London


PLAZA LAS FUENTES
DOUBLETREE HOTEL

CHARLES MOORE

PLACE, PLACELESSNESS AND THE RES PUBLICA

Text by James Steele

With the exception of Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, few architects have come to personify the demystification of their profession as much as Charles Moore, albeit in a slightly different way. Appearing at the same time as the first reviews of *Complexity and Contradiction* in *Perspecta* 9/10, 1965, Moore's article 'You Have To Pay For The Public Life' has not been equally eulogised, but has proved to be just as perceptive concerning the dangers of Modernist reductivism and the irrepressible character of popular taste. Rather than using the encyclopedic methodology employed by Venturi, whose universal references incrementally establish an ironclad case for complexity, Moore characteristically relies on regional examples from his more localised experience in California, from the Santa Barbara Court House to Disneyland, to make his point that the 'civilising' of the public realm cannot come about without individual sacrifice, and that the nature of that realm has now been irrevocably changed. Since its appearance two years after that prophetic preview, *Complexity and Contradiction* has been widely regarded as having singlehandedly brought about contemporary pluralism and yet, the specific kind of cultural rootlessness identified by Moore, as well as his concern about the vacuum created by increasingly important institutions has proven to be equally prescient. His observations of Los Angeles were most perceptive, as he then said 'the most evident thing about Los Angeles, especially . . . is that in the terms of any of the traditions we have inherited, hardly anybody gives anything to the public realm. Instead, it is not at all clear what the public realm consists of, or even, for the time being, who needs it. What is clear is that civic amenities of the sort architects think of as monumental, which were highly regarded earlier in the century, are of much less concern today'.[1] He goes on to ascribe this lack of commitment to growth, and continues by saying that: 'As its population grows phenomenally, the people who comprise it, rich and poor, come from all sorts of places and owe no allegiance to any establishment of the sort that exercises at least some control of money and taste in areas less burgeoning'.[2]

City officials, planners, developers and other architects, have found all of this to be increasingly true today. In his most recent design for Pershing Square, in the middle of Los Angeles, for example, Ricardo Legoretta has been concentrating entirely on the problem of isolated ethnic enclaves within the city, and the possibility of bringing them together with one expansive welcoming gesture. In searching for the means to do so, however, he freely acknowledges the difficulties that prevent social spontaneity today, as well as Charles Moores' role in helping him come to terms with them in the design.[3] This fragmentation is more exposed in Southern Californian cities because this was where the promise of a better life was virtually guaranteed to come true, and obviously hasn't, which is particularly haunting now that urban sprawl has virtually destroyed most of the natural beauty that has drawn people to it in the first place. Moores' 'keenness to re-create places', follows on from his awareness that popular disillusion has now turned to aggression, and that there is a paradox between what he feels to be a basic human need for public space in a region where interaction at an urban scale is becoming increasingly improbable. International fame and success in recent competitions have allowed him, through his Santa Monica firm Moore, Ruble, Yuddell, to expand his search to Europe and the Far East, and to continue to work through this dilemma in even larger and more diverse commissions. His later projects in California, however, continue to constitute the most germane commentary on the fate of 'the public life', since this is where the debate first started for him.

Of all the satellite cities now surrounding downtown LA, Pasadena has managed to retain the image of Eden longer than most, even though the crystal clear air which once made this a popular resort destination on the coast has not been immune to the pervasive smog now afflicting the rest of the region. Because of its high elevation, however, after wind and rain have cleansed it, it is easy to imagine what attracted people here and how paradisiacal the entire area used to be. Plaza las Fuentes, which is a mixed use development planned on six acres of Pasadena's historic district, is one of the largest projects that MRY have realised in America to date, and because of its scale and location, it is a prime example of the concerns that have occupied this office most. As structured by MacQuire Thomas, who has proven to be Los Angeles' equivalent of Gerald Hines, Plaza las Fuentes combines hotel and conference facilities with office and commercial space, all wrapped around the gardens and fountains which it is named after. By seeing the project as not just another opportunity for profit but a gift to the city, Moore has used it to reinforce the image of the City Hall nearby as a civic landmark and focus of urban identity, by implementing an angled configuration that fulfils the spirit of the original master plan of Pasadena. Using the edge of a building that exists next to the church as a guide, Moore has displaced the office portion of the complex, as well as the hotel right against the longest edge of the property, creating an impressively vertical urban massing along Los Robles Avenue, with an arcade used as an introduction along this entire 'front door'. Passages that cut into this line at strategic places encourage people, on one end, and cars, on the other, to enter into a central planted *paseo* that is the


DOUBLETREE HOTEL

conceptual heart of the scheme. The pedestrian gateway terminates in a grand plaza that acts as the hub of the central promenade and allows it to do a right-angled turn towards City Hall; and, at its opposite ends, the paseo terminates in a tall hotel tower, prosaically becoming 'Peacock Alley' as it is extended into an indoor lobby. Along the paseo, arched arcades, reminiscent of other prototypes such as Wright's Morris Store in San Francisco, as well as deeply inset openings, stucco walls and tiled roofs all reinforce the historical images that city officials as well as the developer and the architects, want to perpetuate. Such attention to detail extends down to a notable series of screen walls that separate the paseo from the church, which are clad in deco tiles once common in Pasadena, and reproduced by a small factory that was reactivated just for this installation. As in all developments, in a relative sense, financial considerations have also predominated here, and did not allow such details to be fully executed in spite of the good intentions, and revival of an important local craft, that were involved. Above considerations of profit and loss, Plaza las Fuentes represents Moore's most ambitious attempt since Piazza d'Italia to create a popular communal gathering place and is significant in the repetition of ingredients that he feels necessary to do so. Unlike his other stylised village streets and squares such as those in New Orleans, or the Kresge College Campus, however, the Paseo has remained sparsely populated, resisting the spontaneous crowds envisioned for it and the life that it would possibly generate in another culture or locale. Aside from scattered groups of executives looking for a short cut from city hall, or hotel guests seeking respite from Peacock Alley, all of the high skill and cultural research lavished on the Paseo have not made it the new civic core of Pasadena. The failure of the space to connect with people may have much to do with the fact that it is not enclosed and air-conditioned, it requires the physical effort of walking, and doesn't provide the relief of being able to buy something every 20 feet, bolstering the argument of Dean Richard Weinstein of the Architectural School of UCLA in Los Angeles, that entirely new typologies, related to shopping malls, must evolve, to generate such activity in the future.

Moore, Ruble and Yudell has had more success with churches in this regard, since it is a building type that is more susceptible to innovation within carefully proscribed liturgical guidelines, and already involves a pre-existing community which the architecture can augment. In his design for St Matthews in Pacific Palisades, Moore was the only architect of all those interviewed to actually welcome a requirement by the selection committee that all members of the congregation be involved in the design phase. Using techniques that he has perfected in other communities, Moore held a series of 'open workshops', which have resulted in an internalised sanctuary that is innovative and yet recognisably traditional, with spatial arrangements that have been enhanced, rather than compromised by consultation with the congregation. The Nativity Catholic Church in Rancho Sante Fe, north of La Jolla, is a similar example resulting from the wish of the Diocese of San Diego to establish a parish sanctuary that will become the centre of a Christian community in much the same way that missions have been in California in the past. In a more attenuated and literal way than at St Matthew's, this church is also part of a walled compound, and set back from the street, but is here approached by an axial lane that leads through a group of trees to a cloister and espedana, punctuated by a bell tower. The church, parish hall rectory, chapels and columbarium, in the Spanish-Mexican tradition, are layered to establish a series of gardens, in a sequence of open and covered spaces that end at the place of worship. The interior of the church is recognisably divided into narthex, nave and choir with its altar and has an equally incremental approach to space, which purposefully blurs conscious identification with conventional ecclesiastical formulae and makes points of departure clear. The emphasis on the re-establishment of a religious community is most evident in the location of the Commons which, in its prominent position on the opposite side of the narthex, becomes the secular complement of the large sacred space, and is presented as such to those entering the main courtyard outside.

While diminutive in comparison to Plaza las Fuentes, the Boxenbalm Arts Education Center in Santa Monica brings the issue of the appropriate character of public space in the city today one notch closer into focus because it is in an industrial neighbourhood next to a major freeway, and serves a quasi-institutional function as an integral part of the Crossroads School. After deciding on the possibility of the conversion of a simple rectangular concrete warehouse that was already included in a row of former commercial structures assimilated by the School, MRY have used the familiar device of an interior street with arcades to tie the Center to the rest of the campus and to continue pedestrian movement through it to 21st Street on its opposite side. In the process the dance, music and art studios, on the ground floor, as well as a gallery on the second level of the building that is made accessible by a monumental staircase, are opened to view displaying a sequence of performances to those moving through this space, or from a variety of vantage points.

Ironically, Weinsteins vision of a new typology is now being implemented by MRY in Europe, rather than America, where Moore's models of plazas, interior streets and arcades originated. Their recent success in the Peek and Cloppenburg competition in Berlin will combine the cultural uses with a grand mercantile hall, with vertical movement up from street level linking the two.

PREVIOUS PAGE & OPPOSITE: Plaza las Fuentes, Pasadena, California

Notes

1 Charles Moore, 'You Have To Pay For The Public Life', *Perspecta* 9/10, New Haven, Connecticut, 1965, p 58.

2 *Ibid*, p 85.

3 Personal interview, Los Angeles, December 10, 1991.

ACCENT ON ARCHITECTURE

Accent on Architecture, sponsored by The American Institute of Architects and The American Architectural Foundation, is an annual celebration of design excellence – an expression of the commitment of the architectural profession to expand public dialogue about critical issues affecting the various environments of the United States. Through public lectures, publications, exhibitions, design workshops, and other events, Accent on Architecture seeks to broaden public understanding of architecture's role in American life.

Here we present the work of the 1991 Gold Medallist, Charles Moore.

Charles Moore, Wonderwall, 1984 Louisiana World Exhibition, New Orleans, drawing and detail



