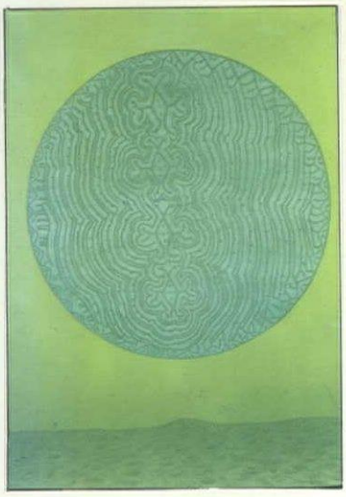
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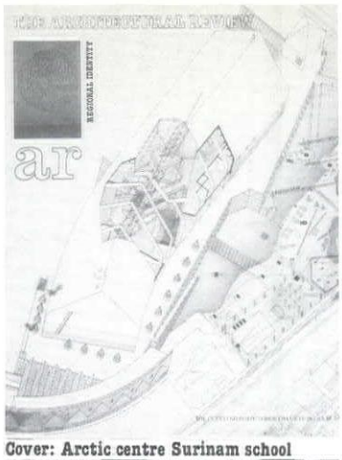
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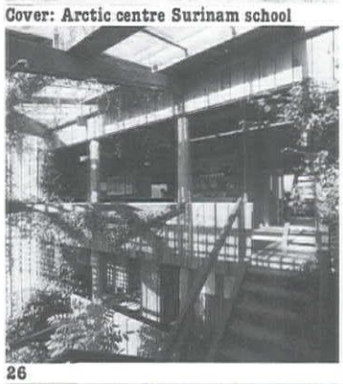
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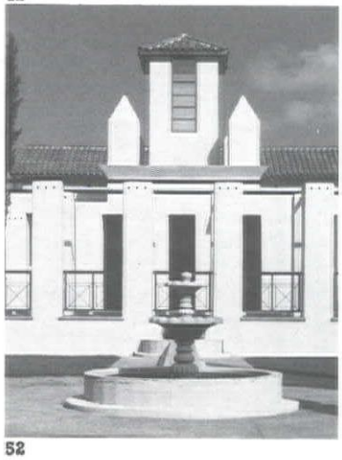
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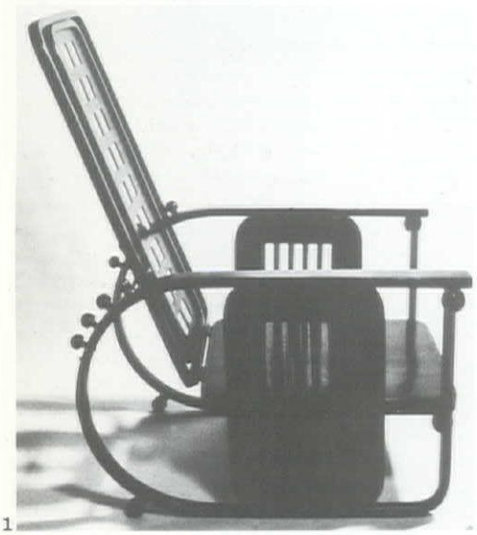
Exhibition

An exquisite Secession from reality

The Venice Biennale devotes its major show this year to 'The Arts in Vienna from the Secession to the Fall of the Hapsburg Empire';* that is to say from the *Sezession* of young artists and craftsmen under Klimt's leadership from academic guilds in 1897 to the shameful and bloody demise of the house of Hapsburg in 1918. The very dates raise a problem; are the organisers justified in putting on the same level a *cultural* event, the creation of a loose organisation of artists, and a major *political* one, the end of bureaucratic system of imperialist domination and national oppression?

At Palazzo Grassi are exhibited some 1200 works: paintings, statues, architectural drawings and models, furniture, wallpaper designs, costumes, jewels, cutlery and the like. To borrow William Morris's distinction, all the 'intellectual' and 'minor' arts are represented, with the notable exceptions of female underwear and weaponry.

The main reason for mounting this mammoth exhibition is ideological. The rehabilitation of the so-called halcyon days of the Hapsburgs, or of the Indian summer of Edwardian kitsch, or of Belle Epoque *pompier* art, corresponds to a general offensive against 'modern' or 'committed' art. Consciously or not, the Secession show aims at upholding an art which is not committed, or rather committed to the preservation of the *status quo*. In Europe today the last decades of imperial Vienna have come to be used as an artistic model by aesthetes and dealers alike, a weapon with which to combat such old concepts of the '60s as 'art for the masses' or 'art to change the world'. A recent special issue of the French magazine *Art Press* is entirely devoted to Viennese art, and with the forthcoming Beaubourg exhibition on the same theme it is to be feared that the production of Secession artists will be further manipulated along nostalgic lines. Nostalgia for an autonomous and highly subjective form of art, nostalgia for luxury handcrafted goods, nostalgia for an era when aristocrats and *rentiers* could turn their lives into works of art, and when the common people knew their place.



1



2

From the 'Secession' exhibition in Venice: 1, chair by Josef Hoffmann, c1905; 2, Alfred Roller Manifesto for the XIV Secession, Vienna, 1902.

Death and eroticism in Vienna

Sezession in Vienna was hardly different from *Stile Liberty* in Italy, *Art Nouveau* in Belgium and in France or *Jugendstijl* in Germany, all derived from the British Arts and Crafts experiments. Seen in the light of this more general quest for a 'styleless style' inherited from the Pre-Raphaelites and mostly based on natural patterns, Secession belongs more to the mainstream of European art than the show cares to admit, and might even be considered as slightly provincial. As to the mindless conformism of most Secession art, suffice it to say that its glitter blinded both producers and consumers to the real situation of the Hapsburg Empire: waltzing on a volcano.

The organisers have chosen to ignore the larger context, a contented bourgeois-aristocratic society enjoying the surplus extorted from Hungarian peasants and Austrian workers, quaffing Tokay wine and stuffing themselves with *Apfelstrudel*. They have concentrated on the more brilliant aspects of the lives of the malcontent happy few, Klimt's patrons or Freud's patients. Hence a fascination with death and sexual transgression, best expressed by the favourite heroines of Secession painters: Judith, Leda, Danea, Salome, Sappho, Melisande and more generally semi-nubile tortured or torturing girls. A diseased and decadent symbolism, illustrated by Kubin or Bonazza, which corresponds perfectly to middle-brow sensibilities of the 1980s. As French designer Louis Feraud was prompt to notice, Secession art is chic and deals with 'sin', but 'clad in gold'.

A special section is devoted to architecture and design. The dominant figure here is, of course, Adolf Loos, although his production is uncritically presented side by side with the most ornamental, *gemütlich* and 'eastern' works of his contemporaries of the Wiener Werkstätte and of his arch-enemy Hoffmann. All the personal hatreds, political crises, social contradictions, have safely been banned from the show, reduced to a digest of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, with nary a word of explanation why such a refined society, the end-product of centuries of *Kultur*, could so suddenly collapse.

Censoring historical events is always dangerous, even in cultural matters; it becomes impossible for visitors to put into perspective the real achievements of Austro-Hungarian art. What is censored from the show is the background of the Secession: the constant struggles, cultural and social, of the various nationalities against the

*'Le Arti a Vienna dalla Secessione alla Caduta dell'Impero Asburgico', Palazzo Grassi, Venice, June to October.

Reconnaissance

Berlin

Internationale Bauausstellung

Martin Gropius Bau, Stresemannstrasse 110
Until 16 December
IBA—Idea, Process, Result
Principles and results so far of the great IBA experiment

Neue Nationalgalerie

Potsdamerstrasse 50
Until 18 November
The Adventure of Ideas
Amazingly ambitious attempt to relate European architecture to the general climate of ideas over the last 200 years

Further details of these and other IBA related exhibitions were given in last month's AR pp117-119

Amerika Haus

Hardenbergstrasse 22-24
2 October-31 October
Architecture in Transition
Seven young architects from America and Europe

Bordeaux

Entrepôt Lainé

3 rue Ferrère
18-20 October
International festival of films on architecture, urbanism and the urban environment

Chicago

Art Institute

Michigan Avenue
Until 28 October
Honour and Intimacy
Architectural Drawings by AIA Gold Medallists 1907-1983

Until 28 October
1984 Chicago Chapter, American Institute of Architects Awards
This year's Chicago winners

Cologne

Messe

25-30 October
Orgatechnik
5th International Office Trade Fair

Frankfurt

Deutsches Architekturmuseum

Schumaneikai 43
Until 10 October
Revision der Moderne
Opening exhibition of the German architecture museum reviews Post-Modernism 1960-80

4 November-January
Caricature in architecture

Glasgow

Art Gallery and Museum

Kelvingrove
Until 7 October
The Glasgow Style 1890-1920
Decorative art of the Mackintosh School

Helsinki

Finlands Arkitekturmuseum

Kaserngatan 24

Saarinen in Finland

Comprehensive survey of the elder Saarinen's Finnish architectural, urban and furniture design

Kortrijk (Belgium)

Exhibition Halls

20-28 October

Interieur 84

Ninth International Biennial Exhibition of Design Creativity

London

Architectural Association

36 Bedford Square

26 September-27 October

Alexander 'Greek' Thomson: Architect 1817-75

Original drawings, photographs and models

3-27 October

Nigel Coates: Arkalbion

Architectural works from 1979 to date including the recent project to open up County Hall

Boilerhouse, Victoria & Albert Museum

Until 25 October

Robots take over the Boilerhouse

Robot and cybernetic show—mainly for children

Central London generally

13 October

Designers' Saturday

15 important design showrooms throw open their doors to everyone interested in interior and product design. Further information from 38 Warren Street, London W1

Royal Institute of British Architects

66 Portland Place

9 November-27 January

The Art of the Architect

150 treasures from the RIBA's drawings collection, fifteenth century to present

RIBA Heinz Gallery

Until 22 October

Edward Cullinan Architects

Survey of work by leading Romantic Pragmatist practice

RIBA lectures

2 October

Denys Lasdun

Architecture: Retention and Renewal

9 October

James Stirling

Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart

16 October

Richard Rogers

Lloyds Headquarters, London

6 November

Charles Correa

RIBA Annual Discourse

Settings Gallery

64 Lambs Conduit Street WC1

Until 31 October

Photographs by Richard Bryant

Mainly as-yet-unpublished photographs of James Stirling's Staatsgalerie

New York

Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53rd Street

Until 27 November

Alvar Aalto: furniture and glass

Architectural League

457 Madison Avenue

11 and 18 October

'The "Natural" City' and 'The City of Experience'

Two lectures by Peter Buchanan, AR deputy editor

Oslo

Norsk Arkitekturmuseum

Josefinesgate 34

4 October-2 November

How Nature Forms

The architecture of Martin Price (p42 of this AR)

Paris

Centre Georges Pompidou

(Closed all day Tuesday; open every weekday 12 noon-10 pm Sats and Suns 10 am-10 pm)

7 November-7 January

Salle du Documentation (lower ground floor)

Six photographes chez le Corbusier

Six photographers at the Villa Savoie: the Villa Savoie in photography and film plus Le Corbusier's original drawings and archive photographs, showing the Villa under construction and on completion

30 October-end December

Vesnine: Russian Constructivism

(staged jointly by the CCI and the IFA at IFA)

Related conferences:

16 November

The contemporary contribution to Russian Constructivism

17 November

Architects and the building industry today in the light of Russian Constructivism

15th-end December

PAN XIII Exhibition

Exhibition of the 1984 winners in the annual competition to find the best young contemporary architects in France

Tokyo

GA Gallery

3-12-14 Sendagaya, Shibuya-ku

Until 14 October

Mario Botta

Toronto

Queen's Quay Terminal

1 November-30 November

Phoenix: an exhibition of new design works

International review of design: furniture, lighting, graphics, products

Venice

Accademia, Fondazione Querni Stampalia

Until 14 October

Carlo Scarpa (reviewed right)

Vienna

Akademie der Bildenen Künste

Schillerplatz 3

9 October-28 November

Otto Wagner 1841-1918

Over 400 original drawings, some newly discovered and never seen before

centralised Hapsburg bureaucracy and the pan-German backlash. Even before the First World War the empire was a satellite of Germany.

It can thus be argued that the Viennese Secession does not represent the end of an epoch, or 'an autumn rhapsody', but the beginning of modern times in *Mittel-Europa*. The organisers have shrunk from including an artist born in Southern Austria in 1889, who moved to the capital in 1905, failed the Beaux-Arts entrance examination twice, and specialised in kitsch postcard reproductions and watercolours: Adolf Hitler. The polite society of Secession was also the breeding ground of Nazi-ism, a fact that organisers and visitors prefer to keep at a safe distance.

Organising a major international show requires great tact and diplomacy; one does not expect from curators lengthy historical and sociological introductions. But the complete exclusion of such data from an exhibition which purports to deal with the arts in Vienna from 1897-1918 is not satisfactory. Far from detracting from the true greatness of Secession artists, some knowledge of their times and struggles would shed light on the intriguing question of Viennese modernity. Loos dreamt of 'introducing occidental culture to Austria'—a design as uncompleted as that of introducing Austrian art to occidental tourists in Venice. JEAN CLAUDE GARCIAS

Scarpa: Local Hero

Carlo Scarpa and his native city of Venice have always entertained ambiguous relationships. For one thing, he was never entirely granted the recognition he craved during his lifetime; and although he worked extensively in the city of the Doges—restoration work in the Piazza San Marco, at Ca Foscari, at the Academy and Correr Museums, besides various luxury shops—like Corb, he was never awarded his architect's diploma, and was often considered to be some freak house designer, the heir to a long middle-European tradition of luxury environments. But on the other hand, one may wonder who stood to gain most from the uneasy relationship: the architect who could pose as the little-known continuer of the Venetian artistic tradition, or the city which can now boast a great contemporary architect, and use his reputation as another tourist attraction?

Six years after his death, Venice is paying homage to his genius by presenting at the Academy Museum—in rooms redecorated by Scarpa himself—some 300 original architectural designs, a dozen models, huge photographs of completed works, glassware, silverware, painting and sculpture.*

The exhibition reveals that the influence of an architect is not to be measured by the sheer amount of his work. Scarpa's *opus* is limited, his major work and his masterpiece being a tomb of moderate size—by Italian standards—for the Brion family and their dependents. It is also regularly shrinking, as the luxury shop owners or museum curators for whom he designed 'in' premises from the '30s to the '70s are unabashedly redoing them in a more modern and, they hope, more profitable idiom.

But Scarpa's influence does not lie in actual buildings. It rests mostly with the 17 000 original designs of his personal archives, with his lasting influence as a teacher in Venice, and with the devotion of a small but growing number of Scarpa groupies. In an era wary of great architectural gestures and terroristic ideological stances, he will be remembered for his humble—yet aristocratic—attention to detail, finish and quality. J.C.G.

*Carlo Scarpa 1906-78, Accademia Venice, 18 June to 14 October.

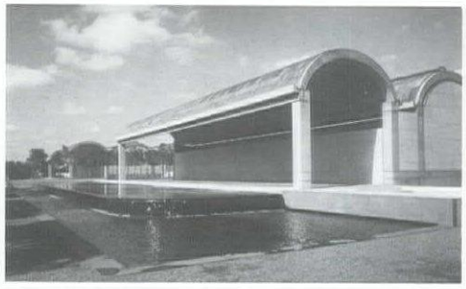
Letters

Bombing Post-Modern Classicism

SIR: If plagiarism is the sincerest form of flattery, then I'm happy to regard William Curtis' occasional paraphrase of my ideas on Post-Modern Classicism (AR August) as a tepid, but welcome, compliment. That he intended it as an insult is of little matter for by rehearsing my arguments yet once again, and in a new key, they take on a credibility which my own dispassionate defense could hardly give them. The totality of his slaughter is impressive, few good architects escape it. His use of the megaton quote is deadly: first Joshua Reynolds, then Valery, Viollet-le-Duc (twice), Jefferson, Geoffrey Scott (twice), Lutyens, F. L. Wright, Le Corbusier (twice), Louis Sullivan (what happened to Vitruvius?). And his list of shallow *pasticheurs* is thorough: Philip Johnson (of course), Michael Graves (ditto), Charles Moore, Hollein, Bofill (inevitably), Isozaki, Stirling (surprising), Quinlan Terry (poor fellow, and he's not even a P-M), Rossi, Ungers—only Mario Botta manages to survive with a condescending 'OK'. The list is almost canonic, a replica of my own, but where are Venturi and Stern, Aida and Watanabe? Did he get bored with the carnage? More to the point, can Post-Modern Classicism really be scuttled without touching Venturi, the architect who, in his Gropius Lecture of 1982, claimed that he is and always has been a Classicist? This is a telling oversight, like missing Normandy on D-Day.

For Curtis is not intent on understanding what is happening today, on explaining the pluralist intentions behind the new architecture, but in suppressing them and regressing to a previous Modernism of 'authenticity'. He avoids discussing Venturi's, Moore's and my own versions of an inclusive architecture and then naturally faults it for using applied imagery and various 'signs'. He fails to mention the way Moore and Graves have both communicated very effectively with the ultimate users of their buildings, and then chastises them for their contextual quotes. He systematically misunderstands the major motive for Post-Modern Classicism—to communicate with a various public, various taste-cultures—and then damns it for being hybrid and heterogenous. Inevitably the realist signs of James Stirling become 'High-Tech costume jewellery, 'showy cosmetics' and nothing more. But this architectural assassination is a little too easy and rather reminiscent of the negative reactions to Modernism in the 1920s—which in spite of their firepower also failed to illuminate their subject. One can, of course, criticise Post-Modern Classicism for some of its short-comings and it is here that Curtis also compliments my strictures by repeating them. But to reject the movement *in toto*, to criticise it for not being as abstract as Modernism, or as well-behaved as canonic Classicism, is to miss the point: it's criticising a cat for being a bad sort of dog. Reactionaries always apply the wrong standards to a movement and then find it wanting.

For more than 30 years critics and historians have been showing the Classical aspects of Le Corbusier, Mies and Kahn, the way they transformed and abstracted parts of this universal language. Ever since Banham and Rowe (not to mention their students) started writing, readers of the AR have been well aware of the fact: now Curtis offers it up in these pages as a surprise. Well the timing's not perfect, and we could actually dish out the same sort of Curtisian treatment towards these very same Modernists. For instance Louis Kahn's Kimball Museum in Texas. It has no relation to its Fort Worth culture (or taste-cultures for that matter), nor to the art displayed inside, nor to its major arrival point by car (the way most Texans approach it). It's a building with too many sub-Roman barrel vaults and no front door; a building in which ornament is reduced to a concrete pour-joint; an inarticulate, heavy, pretentious lump of warehouse vaults—



Kahn's Kimball: too many vaults?

serene in their authentic *gravitas* perhaps—but dumped unceremoniously in a cultural ghetto.

Now this type of Curtis-justice may tell us something negative about the building, and revealing about the critic, but unless it's balanced by an assessment of Kahn's intentions it becomes merely reactionary. The role of the critic is not to dismiss movements wholesale, like a demagogue or John Ruskin, but to balance his own judgements with those of the creators. No doubt a lot of Post-Modern Classicism is shallow, the sign rather than the symbol, as Curtis would have it, of authenticity. But some of it manages to work on both levels, as it must if it really is to engage a varied public. It responds to surface and substance, which is why these architects are committed equally to both. As Oscar Wilde said, to allow myself one megaquote, 'It is only shallow people who do not judge by appearances'.

Yours etc

CHARLES JENCKS

London SW10

Shining example

SIR: Your August issue is a marvellous feast. Its background articles are a decisive, exemplary contribution to the struggle against chaos in present-day architectural thought.

The excellent articles by William Curtis should be translated into French and German and given a wide circulation via the International Committee of Architectural Critics. I hope that architects will finally realise that the time of decadence and self-satisfied games is past—if we want to provide our society with a framework of buildings in harmony with the development of current activities, innovations and changes.

Reyner Banham's article is very well-written and witty as usual, but the defence of Johnson is a lost cause nowadays.

Very sincere and enthusiastic congratulations.

Yours etc

IONEL SCHEIN

Paris

Boggs' redress

SIR: The thrust of my letter to the May AR concerning Richard Guy Wilson's piece in the March issue, 'Recent work by Joe Boggs of Dewberry & Davis', was to see that credit be given, in print, to others, including the writer, who'd also made a significant contribution to those projects cited in the article which were in the office during Mr Boggs' administration as Director of Design, and for which, in that capacity, he naturally had involvement. Indeed, had I known that Mr Boggs was attempting similar redress with his own follow-up letter to the AR (also 'Letters' May), though incomplete, it is likely that I'd not have sent mine. My purpose was not to inflict personal injury on Mr Boggs.

There is also a further point of clarification to be made concerning the circumstance of Mr Boggs' leaving Dewberry & Davis. Although there appeared to be some confusion at the time, the record should be corrected to show that Mr Boggs resigned, voluntarily, to form his own firm.

Yours etc

DAVID ROSENTHAL

Rectortown, Va

Clever Curl

SIR: May I reply to James Stevens Curl's comments about my review of his book? 'Publish and be damned' may be a useful phrase; but Curl is trying to damn me with, as he says, 'unpublished notes'!

First, his quoting of *The Ecclesiologist* is not the same as him giving an opinion on Roberts' Gothic architecture. One is now historical fact, the other modern opinion.

Second, he does *not* quote 'chapter and verse' to state that Roberts' Gothic was awful. His statements are generally of this form—to take a few random examples—'reasonably self-effacing', 'cannot be regarded as distinguished', 'inoffensive', 'handled tactfully', 'well-mannered', 'of little architectural note'. That hardly amounts to a *categorical* statement that his work was *awful*. It is, as I said, grudging. The point though, is that his grudgingness led him into a misjudgement, as I make clear in my review, because he goes on to speculate on the probable success of Roberts' Gothic had he only had more cash to spend. The evidence suggests he'd have made a hash of it.

Third, in my 'unpublished notes' (an AA History Thesis of 1974) I do not 'castigate critics of Roberts' ecclesiastical architecture'; I said somewhere that I felt that *The Ecclesiologist* lacked humour in condemning a particular weather-vane as vulgar; and that I liked the spire of the same church for its Classical feeling. Those are the only signs of approval I make of Roberts' Gothic, while saying that he probably never took a real interest in Gothic architecture, nor in church architecture. But if I didn't make general judgements of his Gothic work, neither did I speculate on what it might have been in happier circumstances; though I dare say it would have been Classical.

I'm sorry to go on at such length, but Curl's letter, clever as its purpose was (he's now had two reviews for the price of one; though they aren't getting any more favourable) could be regarded as rather damaging.

Yours etc

ANTHONY MCINTYRE

London NW3

Acknowledgments

FRONTISPIECE p22: Bruce Iverson and Sáros László. ONLY CONNECT pp23-25: 2, Charlotte Ellis; 3, Nick Wates. THREE AUSTRALIAN HOUSES pp26-33: 4, 9, John Gollinger; 11-13, Michael Keniger/Brit Andresen; 14, 15, Rory Spence. MAKOVECZ EMBRACE pp34-40: Sáros László. HOW NATURE FORMS pp42-45: Model photographs by Craig Kuhner. LIBRARY, SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO pp52-57: 1, 3, 4, Bruce A. Iverson; 2, 5-14, Proto Acme. WITH PEVSNER IN ENGLAND pp58-61: 1, 3, *Country Life;* 2, W. J. Toomey; 4, NBR; 5, A. F. Kersting. INTERIOR DESIGN pp72-78: Richard Bryant.

At last there's a real chance o



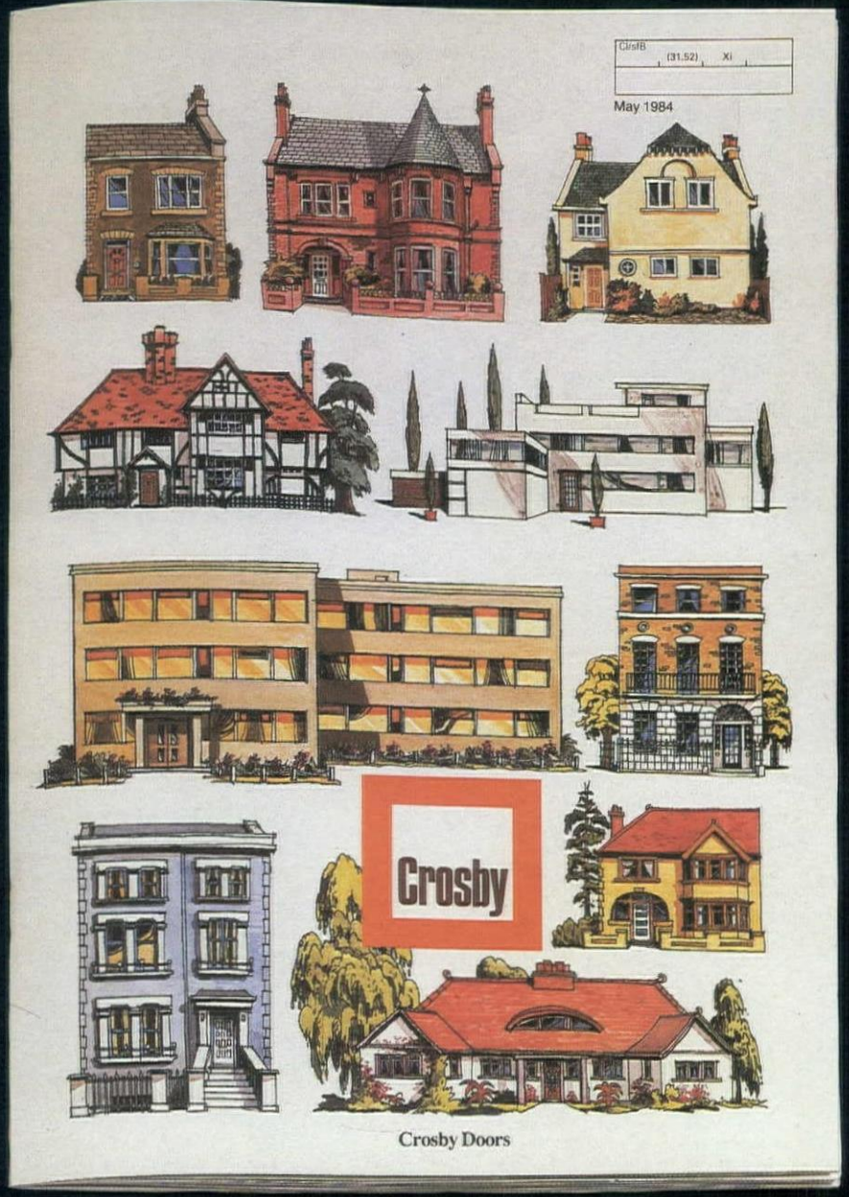
The lack of harmony in British business between the boardroom and the shop floor is well known the world over. But it is not just in terms of human relationships that such discord exists. British commercial institutions are hardly renowned for their stunning interior decor.

The result is that the visual appearance of businesses in this country all too often endorses the poor commercial opinion foreign customers already hold. Our lack of adventure, co-ordination and style appears symptomatic of our attitude towards the commercial world in general.

The problem has been that in the past the decor of a business has been fairly low down on the list of priorities. Since budgets have been restricted, the new installation or refurbishment of major design elements such as carpet, have often had to be achieved in stages, over a period of months or years, rather than as a single co-ordinated statement.

This, combined with the individual tastes and demands of different senior executives, has led in most companies to a hotch potch of differing styles, values and traditions. An unappetising muesli of design.

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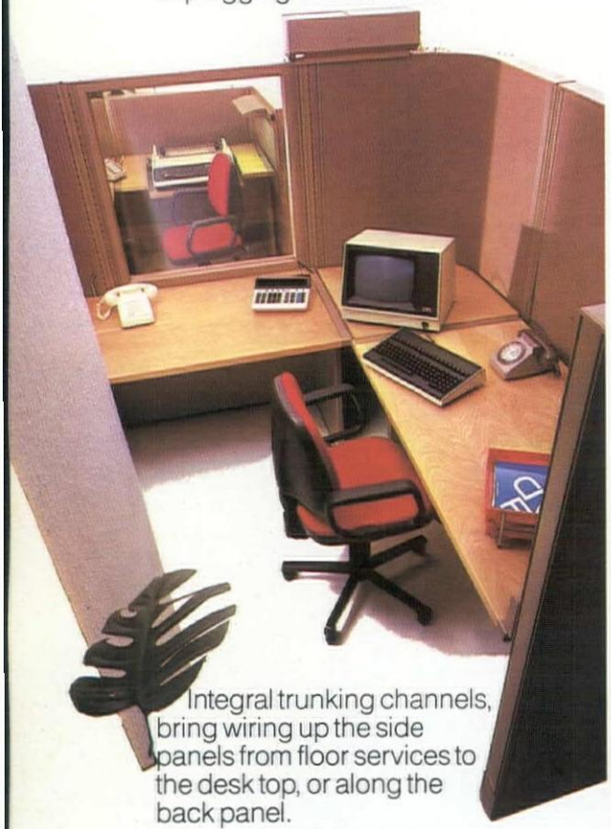
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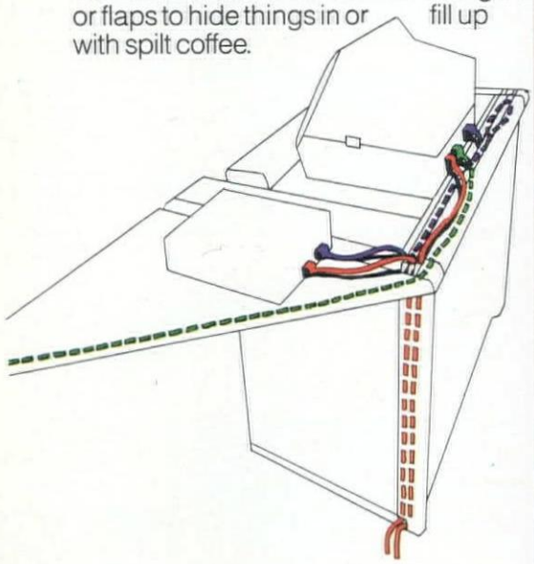


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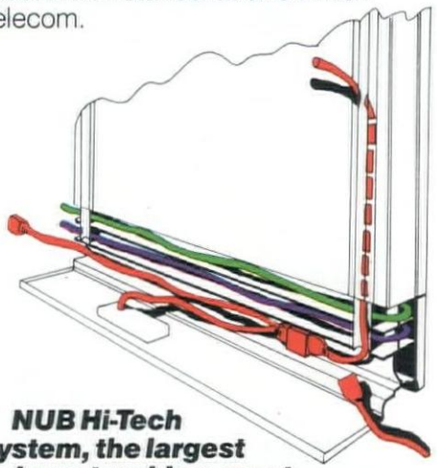
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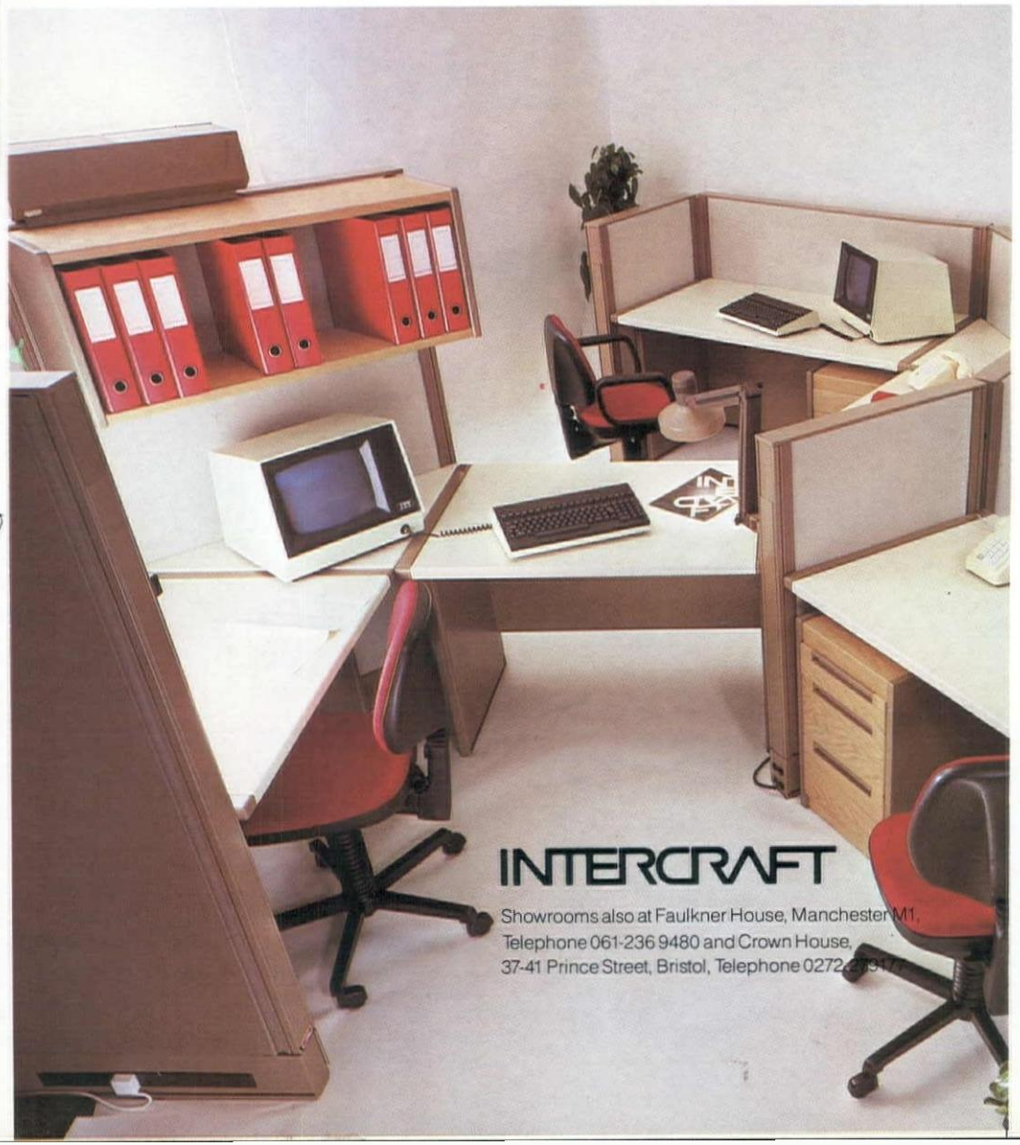
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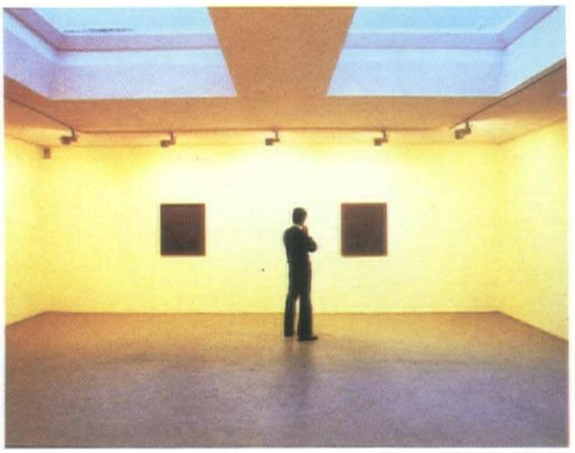
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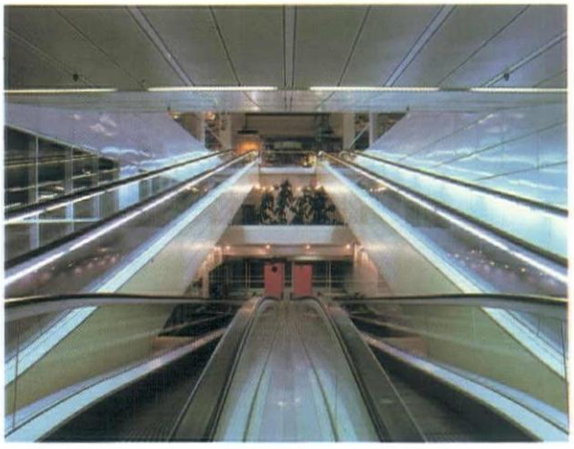
The Sears Building in Chicago, designed by S.O.M., is the highest office building in the world. It is lit with thousands of downlights in darklight technology, with different lamps, according to the particular lighting requirement at that point. Light to see by ... lights to look up to ... all with a specific architectural purpose.



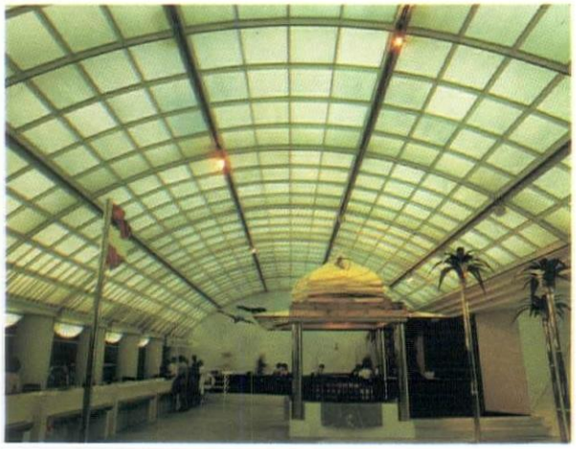
Wallwashing in a gallery of modern art. 150 W halogen lamps in ERCO Tallon luminaire are used to illuminate the most important areas in a gallery. Art must appeal spontaneously to the beholder. Perceiving – the most sophisticated function of the human eye – is the name of the game.



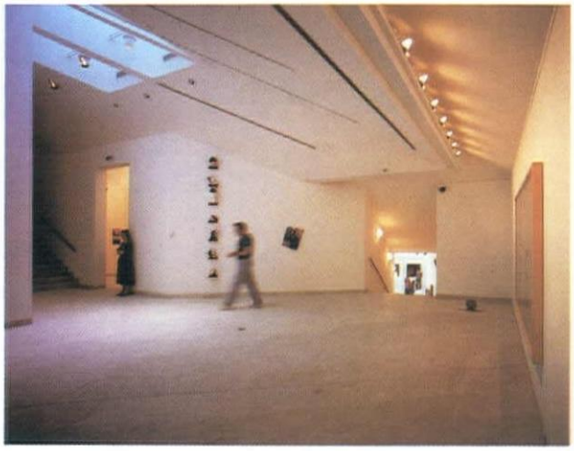
Museums make substantial demands on our ability to perceive. Which is why they also have to make considerable demands on their lighting systems. Uniform illumination of the walls, elimination of reflex light, protection of the paintings from excessive light, visual comfort – these are just a few of the demands museum lighting must satisfy.



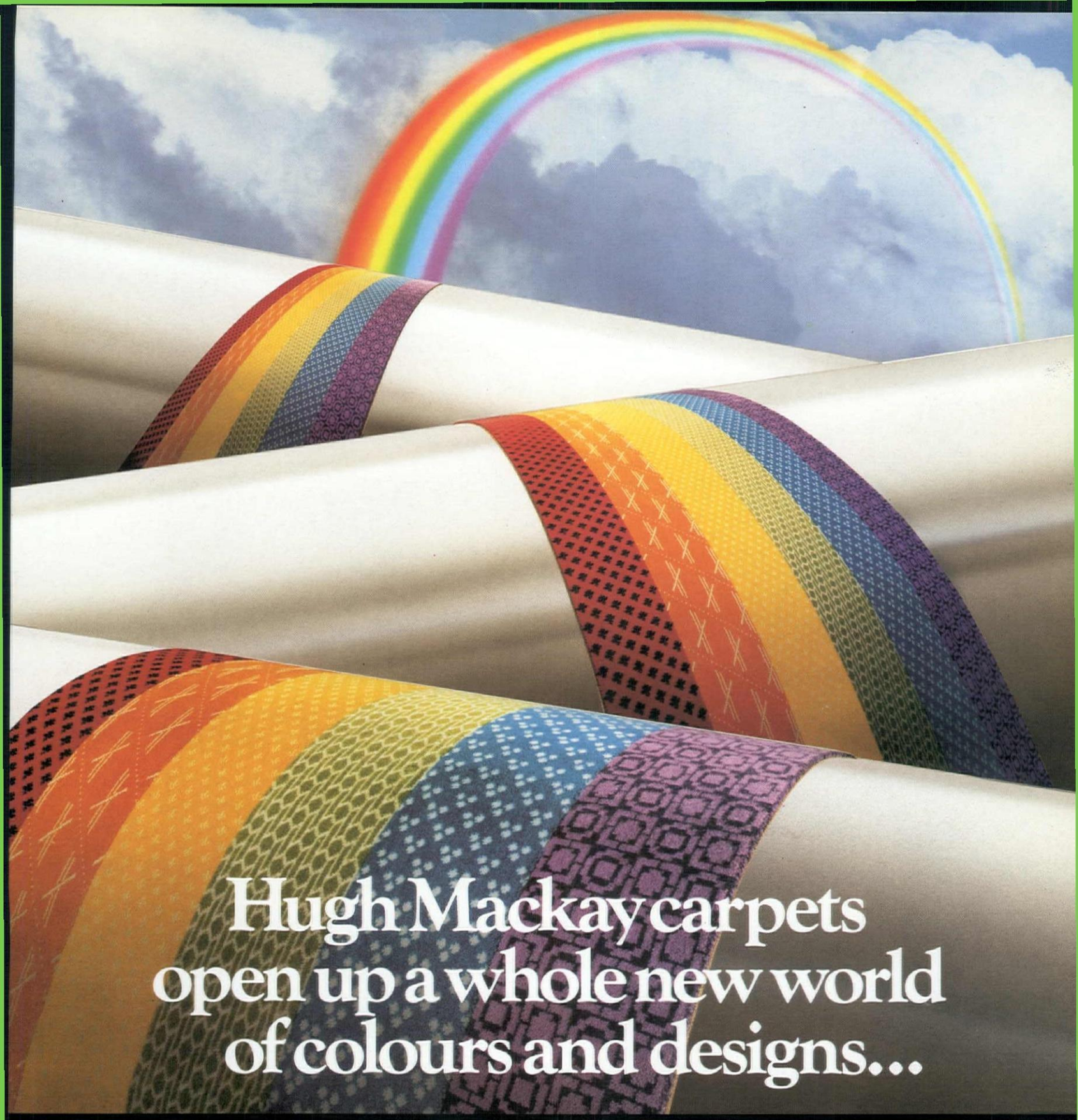
Traffic is not only a problem on the street – it can present problems inside buildings, too. Looking out for signs, trying to find one's way – these are some of the problems the light planner must try to solve. ERCO has the modules to do just that: modules that make seeing believing and blend in with the architecture.



Lighting tracks are recessed into the ceiling in the Austrian Tourist Office in Vienna, designed by Hans Hollein. A mere handful of spotlights provide brilliant accent lighting for the metal flag, the cupola and the metal palm trees – symbols of travel to exotic, faraway places – to combine the fascination for travel with a fascination with light.



Wallwashers integrated into the architecture – that is one of the architectural aims in a museum. The even distribution of light over the surface of a wall, over paintings and other exhibits – that is the aim of the light planner. The Mönchengladbach Museum is an excellent example of how these aims can be achieved.



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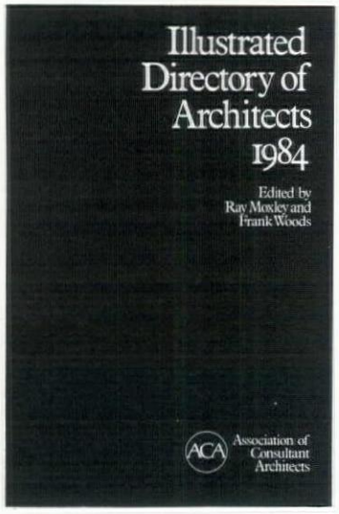
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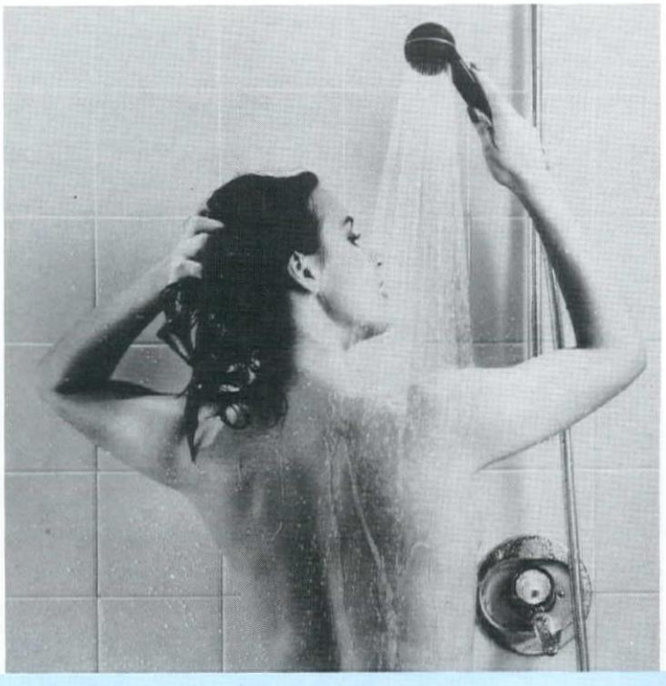
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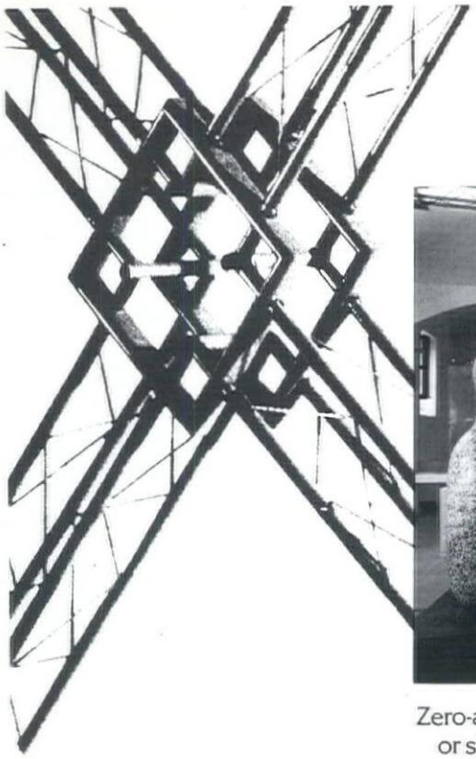
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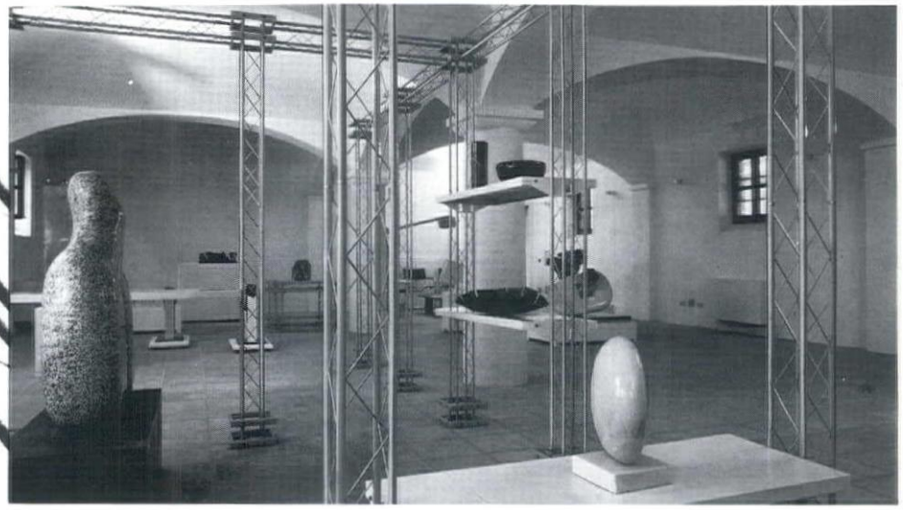




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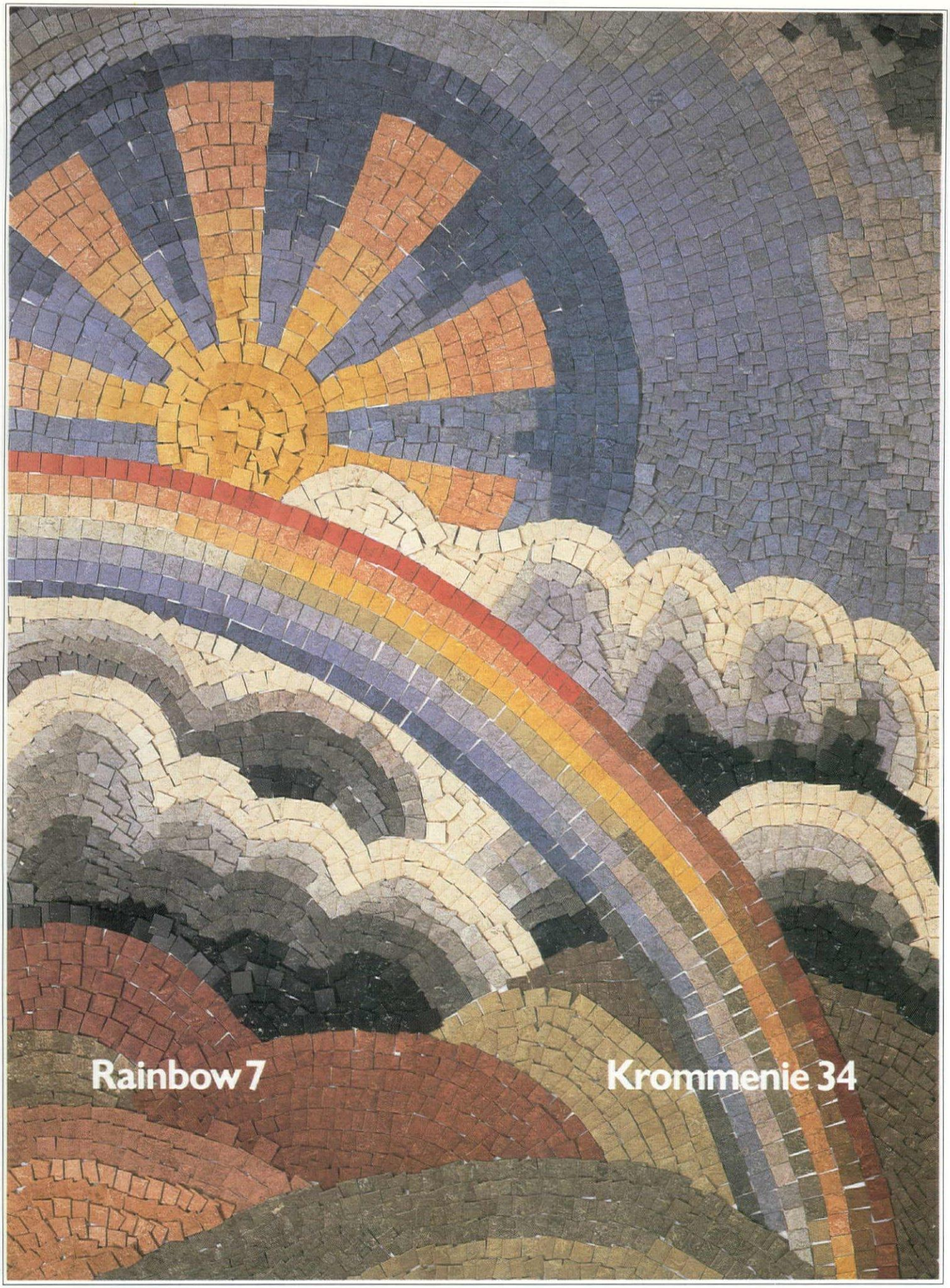
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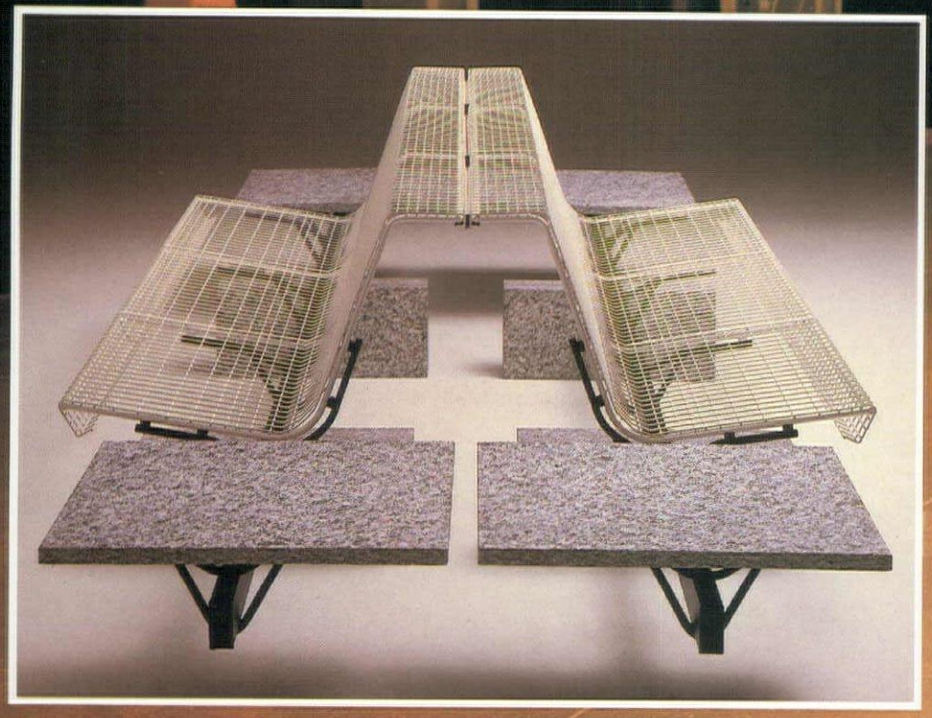
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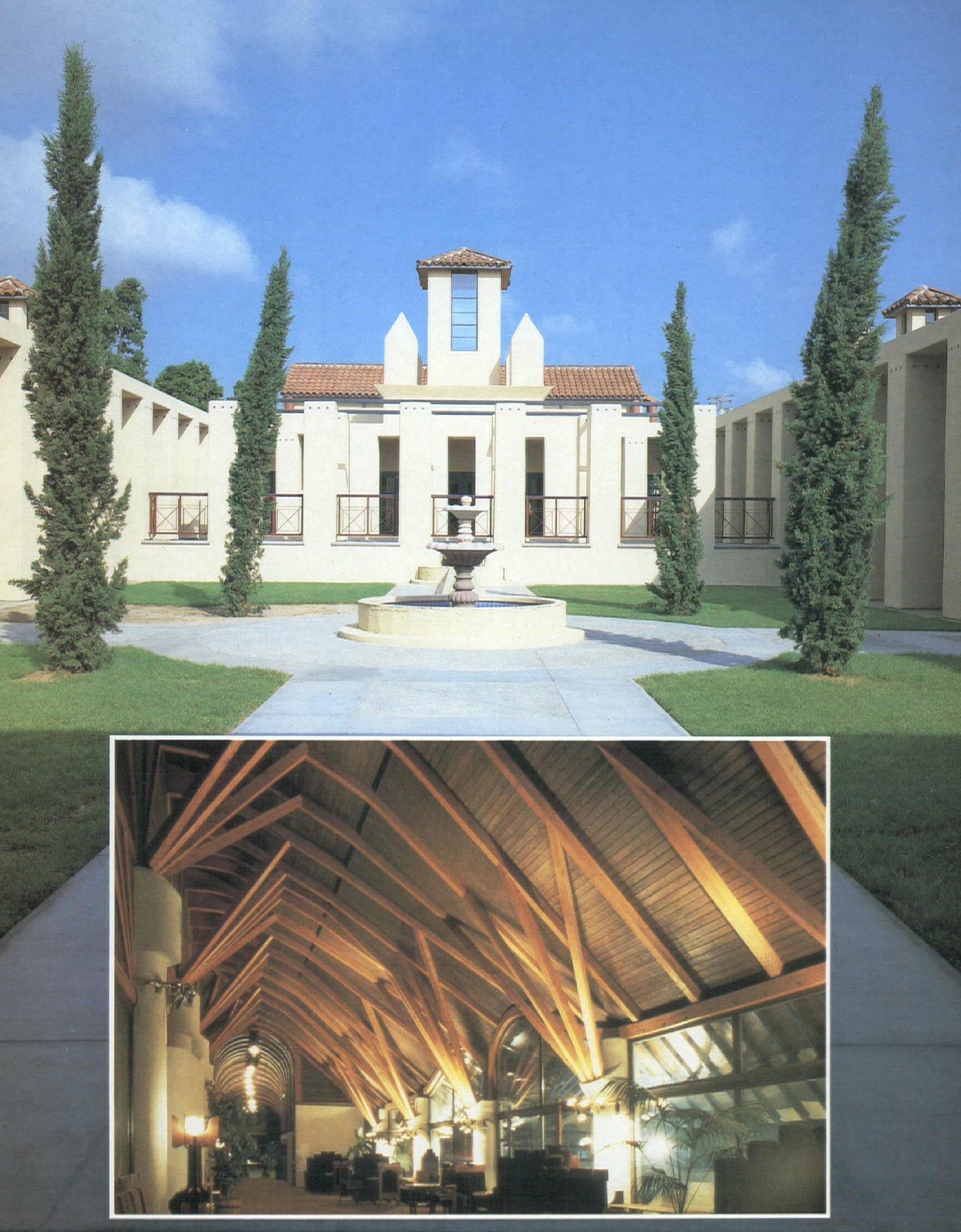
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The AR's second theme issue in May 1983 was devoted to Regionalism—the attempt to retain local flavour, and express local identity and aspirations in architecture. Because it was so well received, because so many architects see Regionalism as the salvation of modern architecture—tempering its destructive universalising tendencies, and because so many new buildings around the world demonstrate different possible approaches, this issue revisits Regionalism as a theme. In introducing last May's issue, Peter Buchanan argued that any convincing Regionalism could not just ape the past but must look forward too—and be a hybrid, fusing the best of local tradition with the best of an emerging global civilisation. Here he argues further for the need for Regionalist architecture and discusses some interim strategies for maintaining regional flavour.

ONLY CONNECT

Peter Buchanan

Much of the Earth's surface has been shaped by human hand. Yet everywhere the results are different. Exploiting local resources, responding to local climate, vegetation and topography, and guided by local cultural traditions these interventions, though all by the same biological species, tended not to uniformity but highlighted local flavour by exaggerating differences and particularities.

The building materials and craft techniques available in any area were, until recently, limited. This, and cultural norms, set strict limits to built form and detail. Though improvements were gradually introduced, there was neither desire nor need to be innovatory or original. People wanted 'proper' buildings, shaped and built like those of their fathers and fit not just for themselves but for their children and their children's children. A certain uniformity and so harmony between buildings was inevitable. But the harmony went deeper than just between buildings—it was also present between building and setting.

Each building was placed with an intimate knowledge of the site, knowing which part is cool in summer but sheltered in winter, which view is best all year round and how the building should be oriented and shaped to exclude wind and catch the sun and, perhaps most important, to 'feel right' in its setting.

How different things are now. In many parts of the world the choice of materials and techniques is huge and local materials and crafts either no longer exist or are too expensive for common use. With the resulting riot of form and finish there can be little harmony—or sense of belonging to place or region. Now many people do not want to build as their fathers did, but as they do on tv or in the magazines. Worse, they are probably not building for themselves, and almost certainly not for their children. Most new buildings are speculative enterprises for profit or state facilities for anonymous citizens. Even if purpose-built for family or business, a building is probably short-term accommodation until the client outgrows it or moves on. Buildings have been reduced to real estate and their real purpose to being figures on a ledger—perhaps of a multi-national corporation or big bureaucracy which will never see the building, nor care to. Compounding this demeaning process of reduction is the further abstraction of being designed by distant architects. Buildings are positioned not on site but on paper and constructed in lettable standard units from standardised components. So they not only do not quite fit into their surroundings, they do not even quite fit into their sites, leaving useless residual areas.

A precious harmony built up over ages between buildings, and buildings and setting, is now rapidly being destroyed and replaced by a chaotic and dislocated sameness; and a squalid but prevalent interpretation of Modern architecture is the villain. Though tragically ruinous in impact, there is a crushing logic to such architecture. Seemingly efficient and economic, it reflects the expressed values of our society and seems so inevitable that objectors often feel impotent and nostalgic Luddites. Yet the flocking of tourists to unspoiled towns and regions, and the vehemence of conservation groups, shows how deeply unsatisfying are the instrumental values that underly our society and its architecture.

Our emerging global civilisation is destroying ecologies that took millions of years of evolution, as well as richly ordered human habitats that took thousands of years of sensitive accretion. In destroying these complexly ordered webs of interdependencies and rich harmonies we are clearly generating massive entropy. Yet evolution is neg-entropic, constantly creating higher levels of order, and so too would be any viable human culture. From an evolutionary perspective our present destructive civilisation is unsustainable. Of course the continuing destruction of complexity—a basic dimension of order—is to some degree offset by the order-making connections being established around the world by the near instantaneous flow of information through new communication networks. And according to physicists and biologists studying the behaviour of 'dissipative structures', open-systems such as eco-systems and human cultures generate large amounts of entropy just prior to establishing a higher level of synthetic order. Perhaps (and hopefully) what we are witnessing is the traumatic period prior to the birth of a viable global civilisation in which networks of communication and trade will no longer just be homogenising and destructive agents but will have such abundant capacity as to allow regional particularities to survive and be savoured. A truly universal civilisation will not only envelop the world and give its citizens the breadth of experience so offered. It will also encourage that *depth* of experience that comes from being rooted in, and caring for, local issues and which is another dimension to the idea of being universal.

What can, and should, architects do today? Should they persist with giving society the architecture it deserves, arguing, quite legitimately, that a more varied and harmonious architecture will only be possible in a less exploitive civilisation? Or should, and

Facing page: two aspects of Regionalism. Michael Graves responding to the synthetic Spanishness of Southern California and (inset) Imre Makovecz's search for a Hungarian architectural identity.

can, architects take a more critical stance, either resisting the more destructive aspects of modern civilisation, or trying to be the harbinger of a more sustaining and sustainable civilisation? Of course the two strategies of conservationist resistance and catalytic anticipatory design need not be exclusive. Indeed they will be complementary if architects recognise that the true role of design extends beyond problem-solving and utilitarian concerns, and beyond superficial simplification to be the creation of order —a role endorsed by the evolutionary perspective.

To accuse the modern architect of not being a creator of order, and of having ignored the insights of science may seem harsh, but is nevertheless profoundly true. Because the creation of a higher level of order (both traditionally and as now defined by biologist or systems-analyst) involves not only forging patterns of coherence but also articulating differences and so increasing variety and complexity. The simplistic and reductionist order of most modern architecture (as seen to an extreme in the work of Mies van der Rohe and his followers) and the forsaking of regional variety for the universals of the International Style, is mere orderliness. Eliminating variety and complexity for a universal space and structure minimises relationships with the world around and is not just impoverishing, but diminishes real coherence, is destructive of order, and is therefore entropic. And the energy needlessly consumed and dissipated in artificially lit and air-conditioned buildings only adds further to the entropy. Hence a fascination with, and liberal use of, technology often indicates no sympathy for the insights of science.

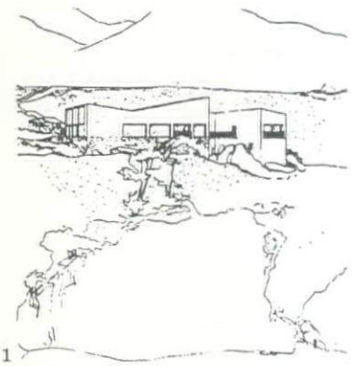
Obviously Regionalism is more than fashion or nostalgia. From the perspective outlined above it could be argued that it is essential, not just to our enjoyment and spiritual satisfaction, but to our very survival. The problem is how to be convincingly Regionalist in the face of a global civilisation which has had irrevocable—and largely beneficial— impact on the local life-styles architecture both shelters and expresses. There are no simple, and certainly no universal, answers. It seems the retention and regeneration of regional identity may best be achieved by a combination of strategies.

Conceptually the simplest of these strategies is conservation—the avoidance of unnecessary and destructive change. Old buildings (which from their skilled hand-crafted construction have a complexity in richness of form and detail that we cannot match today) can usually, with minimal refurbishment, accommodate contemporary lifestyles (as every architect in Britain knows, judging from where they choose to live and work). The supposed obsolescence of old buildings usually reflects extortion and avarice on the part of landlord and speculator, (and the architects' opportunism) more than it reflects the quality and usefulness of the building.

GROW FROM THE PAST

Nevertheless change, and the need for new buildings, are inevitable and should be welcomed—but with more thoughtful discrimination than now. And while it is feasible to preserve and adapt buildings from the past to serve for the present, to build today exactly as in the past would be unconvincing. The buildings of the past crystallised a moment in time in terms of taste and technique, lifestyle and world view. To build in an identical manner would be to pretend these persisted and would be to freeze a corpse rather than to crystallise a new order, and contribute to a vital culture. After all, the regional flavour and identity we now treasure was usually intensified, if not almost completely created, by deliberate man-made change. Our guide in new building should not be to avoid change but to continue to elaborate and intensify local flavour. To do this we do not pastiche the past but grow from it and, as I argued in AR May 1983, create a Regionalism that is a genuine hybrid, fusing what is still vital in local tradition with the best of what global civilisation has to offer.

One form this hybridisation may take is by combining the benefits and appropriateness to modern life of modern architecture's functional planning and efficient appliances with the assurances and appropriateness to region of tried and tested local techniques. Where local materials are available, and local crafts persist and are still sufficiently productive and economic, architects should continue to use them. Right through the modern period—and endorsed by no less a master than Le Corbusier in such projects as the Errazuris house and house at Le Mathes—architects have combined modern planning with local crafts and materials to create particularly satisfying buildings. The most laudable aspect of modern architecture is its concern with programme and the quality of life; technology that is not subservient to those ends, but is fashionable show—or even domineering show-off as in High-Tech—is a pathetic travesty of the original ideals. The marriage of modern plan and programmatic concern with disciplined but appropriate technique, and local and/or traditional materials can be seen in the British movement that Peter Davey calls Romantic Pragmatism (AR September 1983)—really a peculiarly British, mid-Atlantic version of Organic architecture, combining as it does aspects of the European Organic of Aalto and Scharoun with the American Organic of Wright.



1, Le Corbusier's Errazuris house project for Chile (1930), though modern in its forms, was to be a sophisticated hybrid built in local materials

PITFALLS OF KITSCH

The danger of using local crafts and material is that if they are merely applied rather than intrinsic to construction and form, then the results can be kitsch. The pitfalls of kitsch become even more difficult to avoid if it is not genuine materials and techniques that are used, but faked up semi-replicas of traditional elements used as signs that are somehow supposed to invest a rootedness into locale or history. For this reason neither Neo-Vernacular nor Post-Modern make convincing Regionalism; they smack of a cynical exploitiveness rather than a real concern with local culture. Both undoubtedly are consumerist strategies playing to the market: both justify this as populism.

If Post-Modernism is an American approach to Regionalism, and Neo-Vernacular the horrid fake Regionalism pervading Britain, then a prevalent European approach, and barely more convincing, is that of Neo-Rationalism. Sophisticated Continentals, scared of the pitfalls of kitsch, attempt to preserve historic and regional links, not by preserving technique and details but, stripping away any obvious signs of tradition, by abstracting the plan form and massing of traditional buildings and cities. With this typological approach they believe the buildings and cities retain some archetypal essence of the past—and perhaps, even without use of explicit signs, some symbolic potency. What is taken from modern architecture is not its planning but its pared detail. By doing this the Neo-Rats hope to achieve buildings that are timeless yet modern, and to preserve or reinstate the rituals of traditional life that are encoded in the

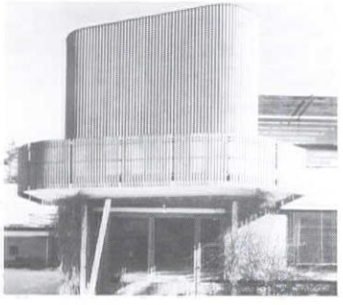


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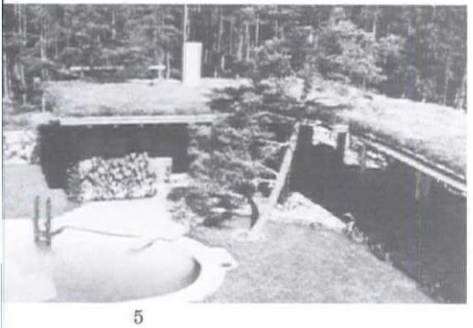


3

Two buildings in Amsterdam—are both truly Regionalist?
2, Michel de Klerk's Ronnersplein housing is unmistakeably 'Amsterdam School' and hence Regionalist, yet in no way imitates traditional Amsterdam buildings.
3, Aldo van Eyck and Theo Bosch in their recent attempts at Regionalist architecture, though, still feel compelled to reflect the gabled and vertical forms of traditional Amsterdam as here in the Nieuwmarket district.



4



5

Modernism and tradition may be fused in many ways. Particularly daring and sophisticated, though, is Alvar Aalto's Villa Mairea (1938) where the front, 4, is an exercise in the International Style while the sauna at the rear, 5, is an essay in rural Karelian primitivism. Throughout the interior these two themes are played against each other.

traditional plans of homes and cities. It is here that the supposed deep psychic response with the past is to be made after the trivialisation (not, they think, liberation) of daily life rendered by the functional free plan. So the nostalgia is not just for built forms, but also for social rituals of the past. If the strategy outlined earlier wraps modern life in regional materials, then Neo-Rationalism hopes to retain traditional life in a superficially modernised setting. But a convincing Regionalism would choose carefully from the possibilities of Modernism and tradition and create hybrid forms for both lifestyle and setting—and would also not duck the issues of symbolism and narrative. Most Neo-Rationalism shares similar faults to the Late-Modern Structural Rationalism of Mies and his followers. Both are too far abstracted and their closed mute forms fail to communicate or engage with setting or user; in failing to 'connect' and to elaborate both create disorder not order.

Of course, the theory is like that of Modernism, that the buildings will provide a reticent but generous framework for later elaboration, both in patterns of use, and in elements applied by the user. In this particularisation, incident, identity and local flavour would be added. So the silent Neo-Rat monument would be elaborated by later additions (just as the simple block of a Piedmontese farmhouse becomes bedded into later accretions to merge into a complex of almost organic unity) much as the spare frame of Modernism would acquire awnings, signage and vegetation to clothe its starkness and help blend it with its surroundings.

It is not only Neo-Rats who exploit type: the best modern architects sometimes did too, but as well as abstracting they would distort the type to fit specifics of programme and topography. Such a strategy arguably achieves connections with history and an accommodation both to modern lifestyle and the specifics of location; and in the *oeuvre* of Aalto, Kahn and Le Corbusier are magnificent examples of this strategy (see William Curtis' articles AR August). A version (perhaps inversion) of the same strategy is to use as the basic type the abstract frame of Modernism, and within its 'cage' have permanent as well as more temporary, elements that are more explicitly local. However this use of type and distortion is achieved the results could be richer, and both more ambiguous and more ordered than anything achieved by a pure Neo-Rationalism (or Functionalism for that matter).

A SHARPER FLAVOUR

A Regionalist architecture will not only be a hybrid, selecting from the past while shaping the future. As well as perhaps acknowledging traditional forms, crafts and symbolism, it should exploit and enhance local topography and climate, just as traditional construction did, and with a similar sharpening of regional flavour. Modern architecture is frequently particularly bad at this; pilotis deny land form and its mirror-glass and air-conditioning annihilate any experience of local climate.

Strategies to enhance a sense of place by highlighting the topography and local vegetation could range from exploiting the total contrast that geometrically pure and abstract forms (whether building or terracing) can provide, to mimicking and creating visual puns with common natural features, to melting into the landscape with sympathetic forms and materials—or any combination of these. If the traditional buildings tend to one of these strategies, they may best be enhanced by using another.

To exploit and enjoy climate, traditional buildings are usually the best guide: whether turning low windowless walls to face cold winds and/or opening to winter sun and summer breezes large windows protected by huge overhanging eaves; or raising towers to catch the wind and enclosing courts in which at all times of the year can be found a patch that is cool or warm enough; or any other of the myriad ways traditional architecture exploits local conditions. Using such devices would create buildings that have not only formal similarities and echoes with those of tradition, but also the spiritual and sensual satisfactions of living gracefully with nature.

A Regionalist architecture, though, is not to be found in an accommodation (even one similar to that of tradition) to physical setting and climate alone. It must also have a cultural dimension reflecting local lifestyles, history and aspirations. Nevertheless, all the various strategies outlined above, if used individually or in concert, should go some way to creating a Regionalist architecture. By making connections to traditional setting they help create, or at least maintain, variety and coherence, and therefore both complexity and order. All these strategies were understood and used at one time or another by the few best of Modern architects, but unfortunately not by the great majority.

IMAGINATION V ECONOMICS

Scared of exercising their imaginations (often trained not to), embarrassed lest their designs be dismissed as parochial or arbitrary, too many architects—instead of attempting some synthesis between tradition and contemporary potential, and between the man-made and its natural setting—continue to design buildings shaped solely by economics, regulations, catalogue components and construction. And they seek both justification and a sense of authenticity for their squalid and spiritless design in how directly it accommodates and expresses such limited concerns (and limiting constraints). But buildings or cities made like this lack order. Traditional buildings and cities were shaped by human imagination to be inventive and wilful (no matter how sensitive)—and so ultimately arbitrary—elaborations of local possibilities. Now architects play down the role of the imagination and their role as artists. They opt out to let buildings and cities be created by the seemingly 'natural' and inevitable processes of economics, access, technology and so on; and so they lose control. Buildings and cities become like cancers. Instead of shaping, elaborating, particularising incident and event into a larger physical and social order—they are haphazard in composition, low in content and meaning and, like a cancer, gobble up order—including regional variation.

It is urgent that we try to control the destructive aspects of our rampant civilisation. This will ultimately necessitate considerable cultural transformation. In the meantime, and helping this cultural transformation, architects should again try to create real order—that is, variety, complexity, continuity and coherence—in our environment. This can only be done by making connections with and enhancing the specifics of culture and location in sensitive, disciplined yet wilful acts of the imagination. Then once again good architecture will be Regionalist architecture and combine the instrumental values of our civilisation with the human concerns of culture—local culture.

THREE AUSTRALIAN HOUSES

CRITICISM BY RORY SPENCE

Despite a flirtation with Brutalist aesthetics, partly provoked by a spell in Paul Rudolph's office in the early '60s, Daryl Jackson has become known for an underplayed, generally anti-monumental architecture of an informal, additive character, suggestive of the Australian outback tradition of casual improvisation. He aims for a 'lack of pretension' and likes to break down and fragment the forms of his buildings to achieve an 'easy familiarity'.

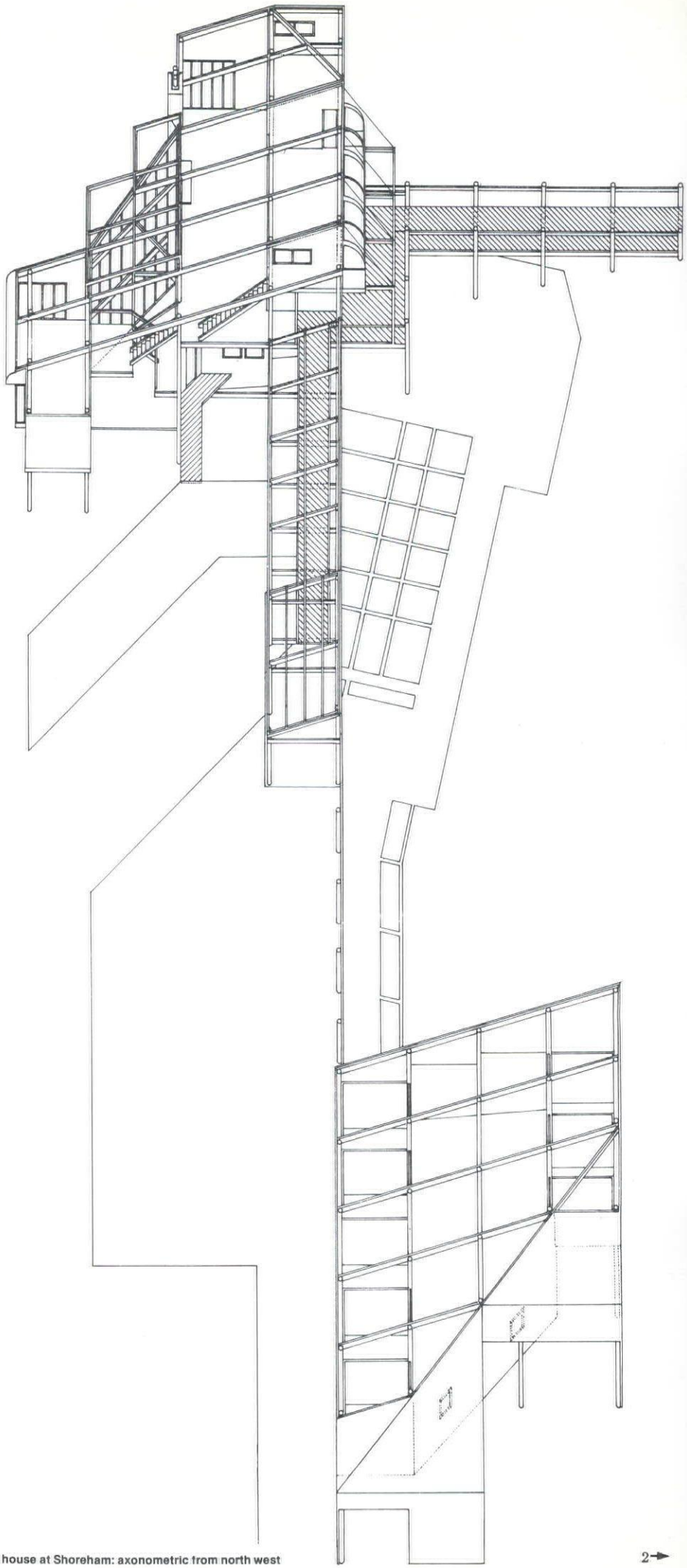
Jackson considers architecture to be above all a social art. He likes to organise buildings into a sequential hierarchy of spaces, ranging from the public social areas down to the more private areas for the individual with circulation emphasised as a system. Extensive use is made of the 45-degree splay in the plans of otherwise orthogonal buildings (borrowed from Louis Kahn) which aids their rambling informality.

Until recently, his work has been mainly residential and educational, but the current economic climate has encouraged greater diversification and he now runs one of the largest and busiest practices in the country. In some recent city projects, however, the relaxed and unpretentious quality of earlier work is in danger of being lost. A fashionable stylism influenced by European and American Post-Modernism is emerging which has less contact with the regional context.

HOUSE, SHOREHAM, VICTORIA ARCHITECT: DARYL JACKSON

Daryl Jackson's country farm on the Mornington Peninsula, south of Melbourne, is one of the most convincingly Regionalist of recent Australian buildings. Unlike Glenn Murcutt's country buildings (AR June 1982), which relate to the landscape in a more abstract, almost Neo-Rationalist manner, dealing with poetic essences, Jackson's house evokes more specific historical images of the Australian rural tradition.

Facing page: 1, from the north, with the main house on the left.
2, the two-and-a-half storey atrium between the living areas and bedrooms.



house at Shoreham: axonometric from north west

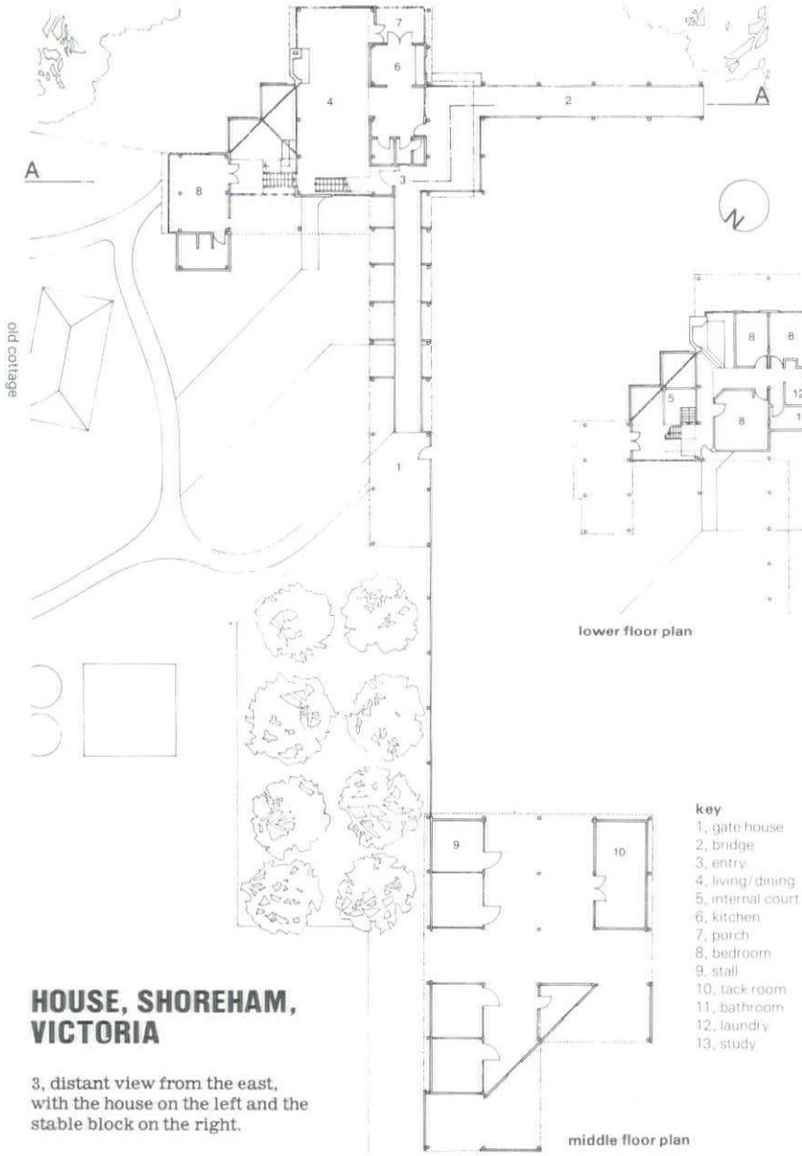


3

4







lower floor plan

middle floor plan

upper floor plan

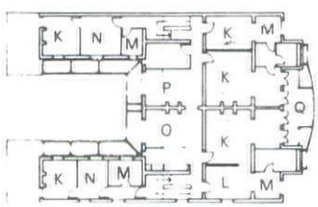
HOUSE, SHOREHAM, VICTORIA

3, distant view from the east, with the house on the left and the stable block on the right.

Set in a rolling pastoral landscape, this loose grouping of buildings recalls from some angles the archetypal Australian farmstead, with the disparate collection of ad hoc structures in timber and corrugated iron. Closer inspection, however, reveals that the buildings are carefully related to one another to create two informal, but coherent precincts as settings for the principal existing features of the site—a huge gum tree which Jackson likes to characterise as 'pre-Captain Cook', and a pioneer cottage of timber slab construction, lined with wattle and daub—two of the earliest colonial building techniques. Jackson refers to these two partially-enclosed areas—the entry court and the garden—as 'outer' and 'inner' realms. They seem to celebrate, on the one hand, the ancient Australian landscape, symbolised by the mighty gum and, on the other, the history of Australia's colonial settlement, symbolised by the cottage. At a more explicit level, they represent the open, pastoral context and the intimate, secure world of the family home. The contrast between the two precincts is heightened by the abrupt horizontal line of the entrance pergola and fence, which faces one on arrival, defying the contours of the site and establishing a kind of visual reference datum for the rolling landscape. This fence line links the house, at one end, with the stable block, at the other, like a →

HOUSE, EAST MELBOURNE ARCHITECT: DARYL JACKSON

Daryl Jackson's Melbourne house contrasts strongly with his country retreat at Shoreham. The facade has been consciously designed as a piece of city architecture, fitting into a context of formal inner suburban villas and relating to the Classical colonial past. 'The central idea', Jackson says, was 'to authenticate the principles which underpin Classicism without replicating their formal properties.'

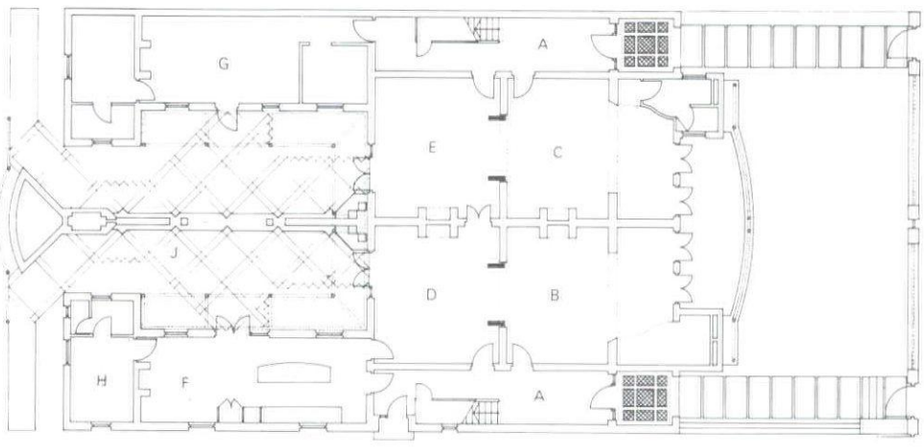


first floor plan (to half scale)

4, the street front at night.

The house is a renovation of an existing building, constructed as a pair of semi-detached terrace houses in the 1870s-1880s, but drastically altered around the 1950s with the removal of the original verandahs. Jackson has retained the overall form of the 1950s front, but has modified it in detail and rendered the walls, evoking early nineteenth-century Classicism. A clearly contemporary, steel verandah structure, with punched decoration and a theatrical mock pediment behind, has also been added, recalling the Victorian origins of the building itself.

It is an interesting exercise in contextual renewal, but the result is disturbing. The attempt to introduce greater unity by the addition of the pediment motif is contradicted by the even bay division between the towers, and the central paired columns of the verandah, creating a very uneasy relationship. The paired columns are intended as a reference to the party wall which once divided the building into two. The theme is continued in the paired pillars of the front fence and in the layout of the courtyard. In his concern to relate to more formal, urban themes, Jackson seems to have also lost sight of some basic human considerations—even in his own house. The whole front and the entrances in particular, are bland and unwelcoming. The verandah, unlike its nineteenth- →



ground floor plan (the plan retains the possibility of future re-conversion into two houses)



5

HOUSE, SHOREHAM, VICTORIA

5, the pioneer cottage with the new house beyond.
6, from the access road to the south.
7, looking down on the living room.

balanced pair of scales. Appropriately, the stable is above the fence line, enclosing the pastoral entry court, while the house is below the fence line, enclosing the domestic garden, so that the two are in counterpoint.

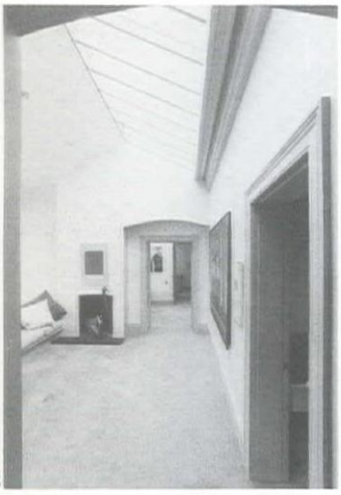
The incorporation of the humble pioneer cottage together with its immediate surroundings is a touching example of preservation and enhancement of an historical milieu rather than just an isolated building. The original English-style cottage garden, from which a few flowers survive, was reinforced by new planting and the existing orchards retained. Even the old boundary fence was left intact and the upper floors of the new house allowed to straddle it, invading the adjacent field. The house itself diminishes in scale as it steps down the hill to meet the old cottage, creating a sympathetic relationship between the two. Both the house and the stable block have monopitch or 'skillion' roofs, which are a symbol of the celebrated outback tradition of the ad hoc lean-to, and reflect the slope of the land. The corrugated iron cladding of the stable block is cut away in steps to reveal the internal, timber enclosures, in a manner recalling Aalto's Maison Carré. This is echoed by the lattice screens on the house, which are similarly cut away to reveal the full-height patent glazing behind.



6

The entrance pergola becomes a bridge as the ground falls away towards the house, bringing one into the building at the middle level containing the main communal areas—the living/dining room, kitchen and a little fly-screened breakfast porch—with spectacular views along and across the valley. A partially-enclosed gallery accomodates a bedroom and study, while the remaining bedrooms are located on lower levels, together with a delightful sunken fireplace nook—a characteristic Jackson feature. The lower levels are united with the main body of the house by a two-and-a-half storey glazed atrium, which provides a transitional zone between the private bedroom areas and the communal living spaces, and between the parents' and childrens' bedrooms. This inside/outside space is shaded by creeper-covered latticework screens, and canvas roof blinds which give protection in summer but can be removed in winter to allow penetration of winter sun. The house is designed to be ventilated by natural convection, a simple but effective traditional technique much under used in Australia. The air enters through the double doors to the garden at the lower end of the building and escapes through opening windows and a spinning industrial roof cowl at the upper end. There are also large timber flaps at the apex of the glazed atrium roof, which can simply be propped open with poles supported on the edge of the balustrade. Spatial excitement is achieved by the simplest of means. The series of open floors, stepping down the hillside, provide views through the house from top to bottom, and down into the valley below, through the generous glazing; but each area retains its own spatial identity, contained by the solid balustrades, posts and upper walls, so that every view is framed.

The interior has the warm, but sturdy and workmanlike appearance of a farmhouse, despite

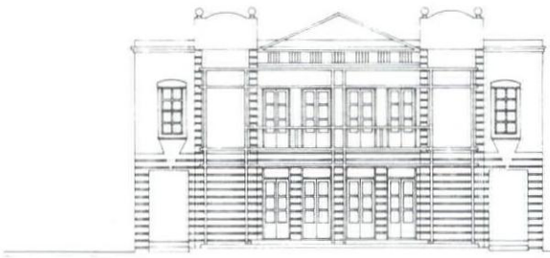


8

HOUSE, EAST MELBOURNE

8, first floor studio with sewing room beyond.
9, the street front works better when seen close up in perspective.
10, the formal rear courtyard with its somewhat Moorish ornamental pools, inspired by a visit to the Alhambra. The north-facing rooflight and double-storey windows allow winter sun into the courtyard, and by reflection back into the house.

century counterparts, fails to break down the scale and austerity of the building. The steelwork lacks the refinement and delicacy of Victorian examples and its detailing seems out of key with the remainder of the design. Furthermore, the north-facing front garden, which receives the most sun and best relates to the main living areas, has been stripped of the hedge and trees that provided summer shade and privacy, so that it is virtually unusable at present as an outdoor living space. The courtyard at the back of the house has been seen as the private outdoor living area. Northern sun can penetrate into this courtyard, even in winter—via a substantial rooflight and tall windows ingeniously incorporated into the rear part of the main block, but it is a hard and formal space, suitable only for a limited range of activities. There is an additional garden to the south of the courtyard, but it has no direct relationship to the internal living areas, and is overlooked by the neighbouring flats.



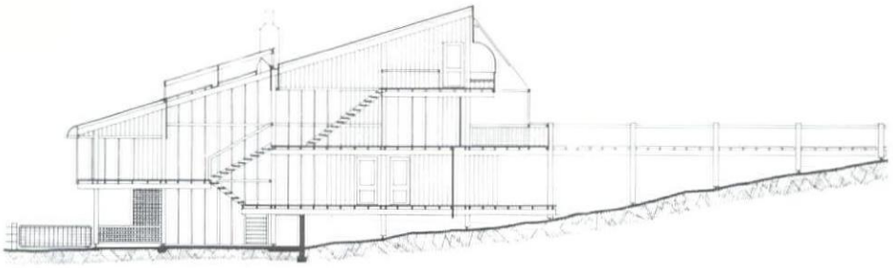
front elevation



cross section through courtyard



courtyard elevation and long section through house



section A-A

the non-traditional forms and spaces. 'Australia is a friendly, raw country,' Jackson comments, 'and we wanted this house to reflect that personality'. The construction is in the tradition of Australian rude timber buildings and bush carpentry. Indeed, Jackson, who worked as a labourer on site and carried out some of the timberwork in the stables, regards himself as something of a bush carpenter. The timber posts, walls, beams and purlins are all of Yellow Stringybark (*Eucalyptus Muellerana*), once common locally. Like many Australian hardwoods, it has to be worked green, as it becomes impossibly hard when dried, so that extremely high shrinkage had to be allowed for. The internal and external walls, lavishly constructed of 75 mm thick planks, deliberately recall pioneer 'slab' construction, where timber planks were set directly into the ground, vertically, or dropped into grooves between posts as in the existing cottage on the site. The red brick chimney stack set in an external wall is another reference to early farmsteads, the chimneys of which are often the only elements to survive, as melancholy reminders of past struggles.

The whole complex sits beautifully on the hillside. The entry pergola and 'backdoor' bridge reach into the landscape, anchoring the building to the hillside. The mellow grey of the weathered hardwood and the dull sheen of the galvanised iron echo the greyish bark and subtle grey-green leaves of the surrounding gum trees. On the interior, however, and around protected areas such as the recessed entry proches, the timber retains its warm, yellowish-brown hue, welcoming the visitor.

At Shoreham, Jackson deliberately set out to produce a country building, in marked contrast to his Melbourne house. He describes it as the kind of house that can take piecemeal additions, in the Australian outback tradition. The building manages to reflect the rough craftsmanship of the bush and the simple monumentality of the big-boned Australian shearing sheds; its layout responds sensitively to the existing features of the site, showing unusual respect for the hard-won achievements of the early settlers; but the building eschews a glib use of literal historical forms, thus avoiding superficiality and nostalgia. It is a warm and friendly, but also a vital and stimulating transformation of the traditional Australian farmhouse.



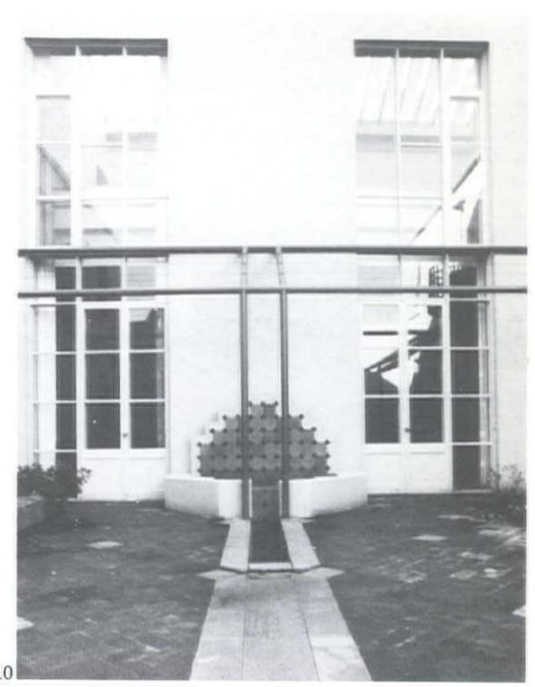
7



elevation evolution



9



10

This Melbourne house suggests that Jackson, along with many other architects in Australia and elsewhere, finds it very much more difficult to relate satisfactorily to an urban context than to a rural setting. The problem seems to be, firstly, to find an urban vocabulary that is adequately rich in human detail and yet has contemporary relevance, and secondly, to develop the skills—which were second nature to Victorian architects—to manipulate such a vocabulary with conviction.

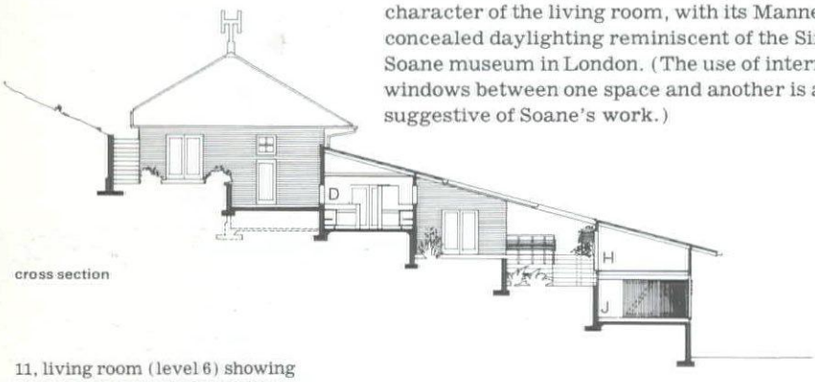
HOUSE, CHAPEL HILL, BRISBANE
ARCHITECTS: BRIT ANDRESEN AND MICHAEL KENIGER

This suburban house is a good illustration of how expatriate architects can relate to the regional characteristics of an area by responding to its climate, lifestyle and traditions, while retaining elements from their own background. Brit Andresen and Michael Keniger taught at the AA and Cambridge in the early 1970s and have recently been teaching at the University of Queensland in Brisbane. Andresen also worked on the Burrell Collection Competition with Barry Gasson and John Meunier.

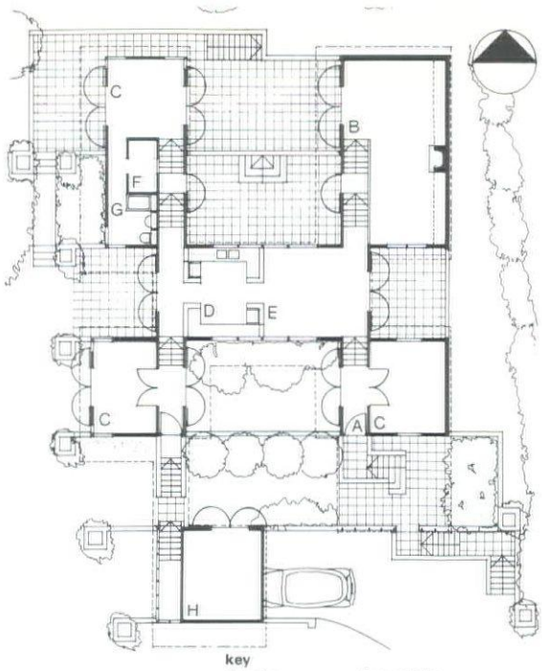
The site presented a series of problems: it is on a steep slope with an unfavourable south aspect, is entered from the bottom and has a motley collection of new houses as neighbours, with little existing planting to provide privacy. The single client also required guest accomodation to be virtually self-contained, with possibilities for future letting.

These constraints have led to an inward-looking house on six levels, composed of semi-independant pavilions arranged around four courtyards with varying degrees of enclosure, so that every room relates visually to at least two different external spaces. Such a solution would be impractical in Northern Europe, due to heating costs, but here it works well with the climate, creating opportunities for extensive cross-ventilation and a wide variety of outdoor rooms, giving occupants a choice of shade, partial shade or full sun at any time of day.

This apparently rambling house has in fact a highly controlled H-shaped plan, with two spinal corridors running from front to back, giving the building great formal clarity. In the four arms are the three bedrooms and the withdrawn, formal living room. In the heart of the house, linking the two corridors, is the informal kitchen/dining area, which opens on to the east and west courtyards and looks into the north and south courtyards providing a kind of communal meeting and orienting space for the occupants. The ordered nature of the plan and the use of corridors seem to reflect the more ordered, European conventions of privacy implicit both in the brief and background of the architects. The European connection is reinforced by the character of the living room, with its Mannerist, concealed daylighting reminiscent of the Sir John Soane museum in London. (The use of internal windows between one space and another is also suggestive of Soane's work.)



cross section



plan

key
A, entry
B, living room
C, bedroom
D, kitchen
E, dining area
F, wardrobe
G, bathroom (bath under)
H, store
J, car park

In contrast to the refined, slightly European feeling of the interior, the exterior of the house displays a suitably regional combination of weatherboarded timber frame with corrugated-iron roof and use is made of timber lattice, a traditional Queensland feature. The lattice, however, is not primarily used for sun shading, although it does provide a beautiful dappled light in two of the courtyards, but rather as a unifying device in the Post-Modern idiom, to link the garage to the house, and as a trellis for climbing plants, which have yet to appear. The house is not yet truly complete, as it was designed to be enveloped in the lush growth characteristic of the older inner suburbs of Brisbane, with the Wrightian planter boxes as colourful boundary markers and each courtyard planted to create a different character.

The group of buildings sits well on the hill, the only jarring element being the sliced-off roof of the higher living room, which is of a different slope to the others.

The house is particularly notable for its balance of formality and informality, privacy and openness, allowing great flexibility of use, while remaining unobtrusive in its mediocre suburban context.

11, living room (level 6) showing Soane-like concealed roof light, artificially lit at night.
12, lattice screen and side entrance (level 2).
13, from access road to south-west.
14, courtyard on level 5.
15, main entrance (level 2) with south courtyard beyond, which will be planted with palms.

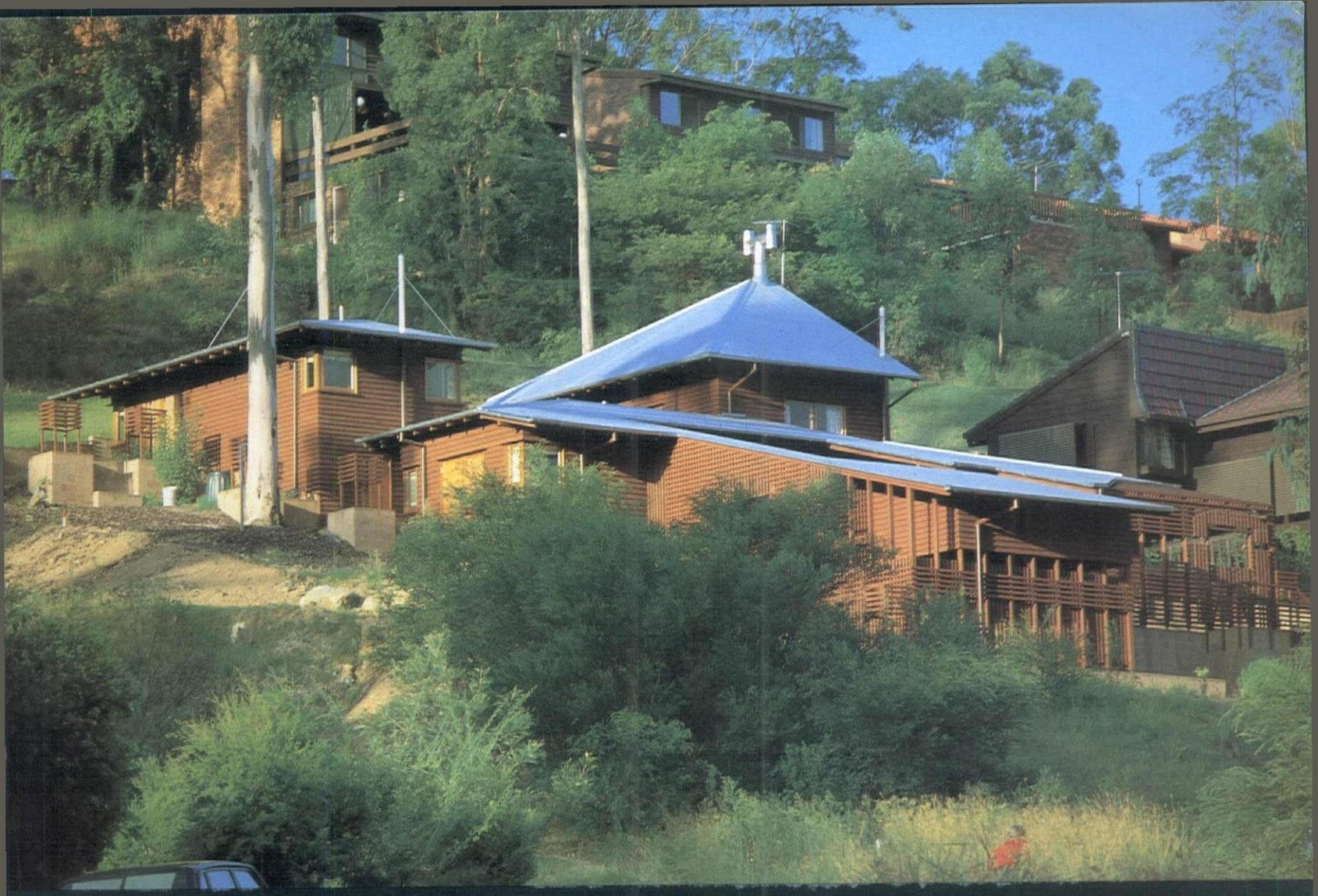
Two subsidiary axes have been created across the house, with sets of double barn doors, which open up the building to the outside and provide cross breezes (however, they do not continue through the east wall, where there is a privacy problem—screened ventilators could have been incorporated here to complete the through draught).


11

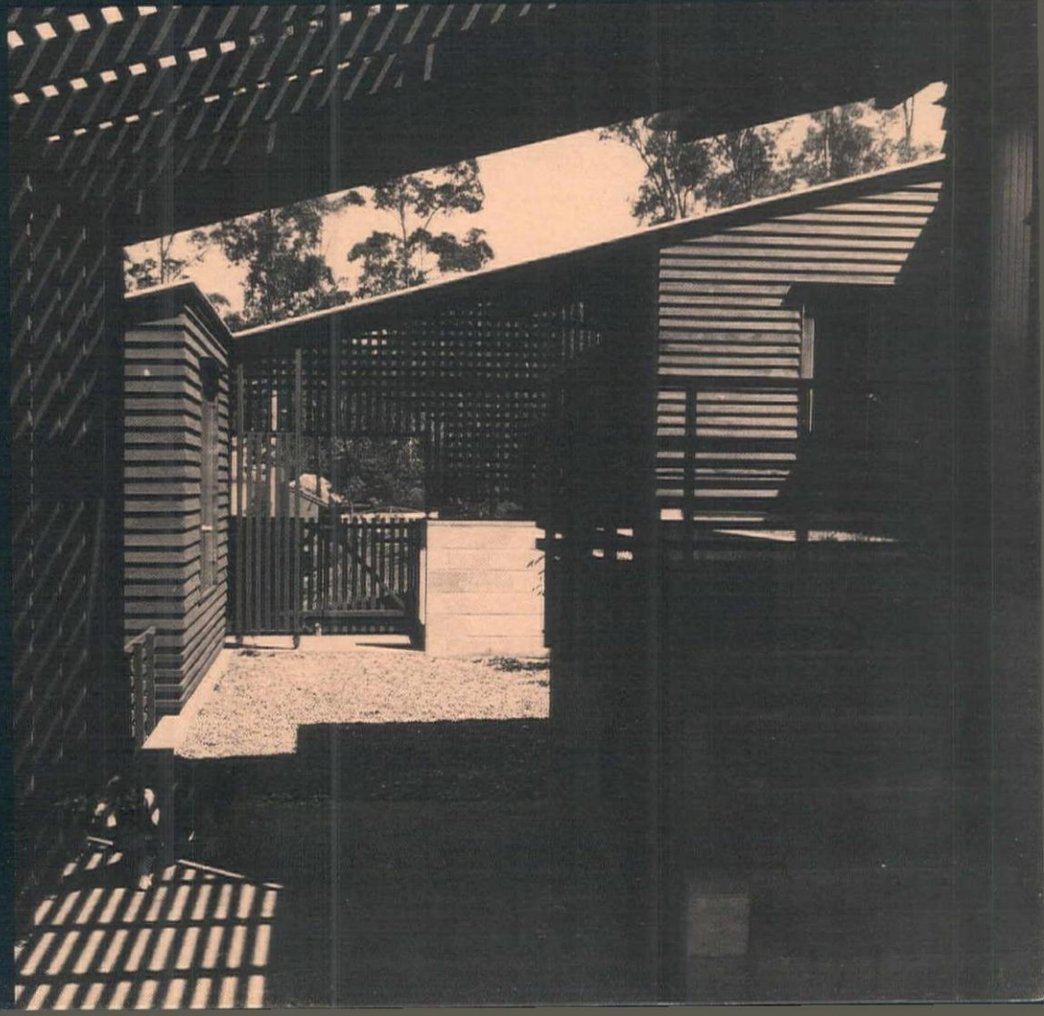

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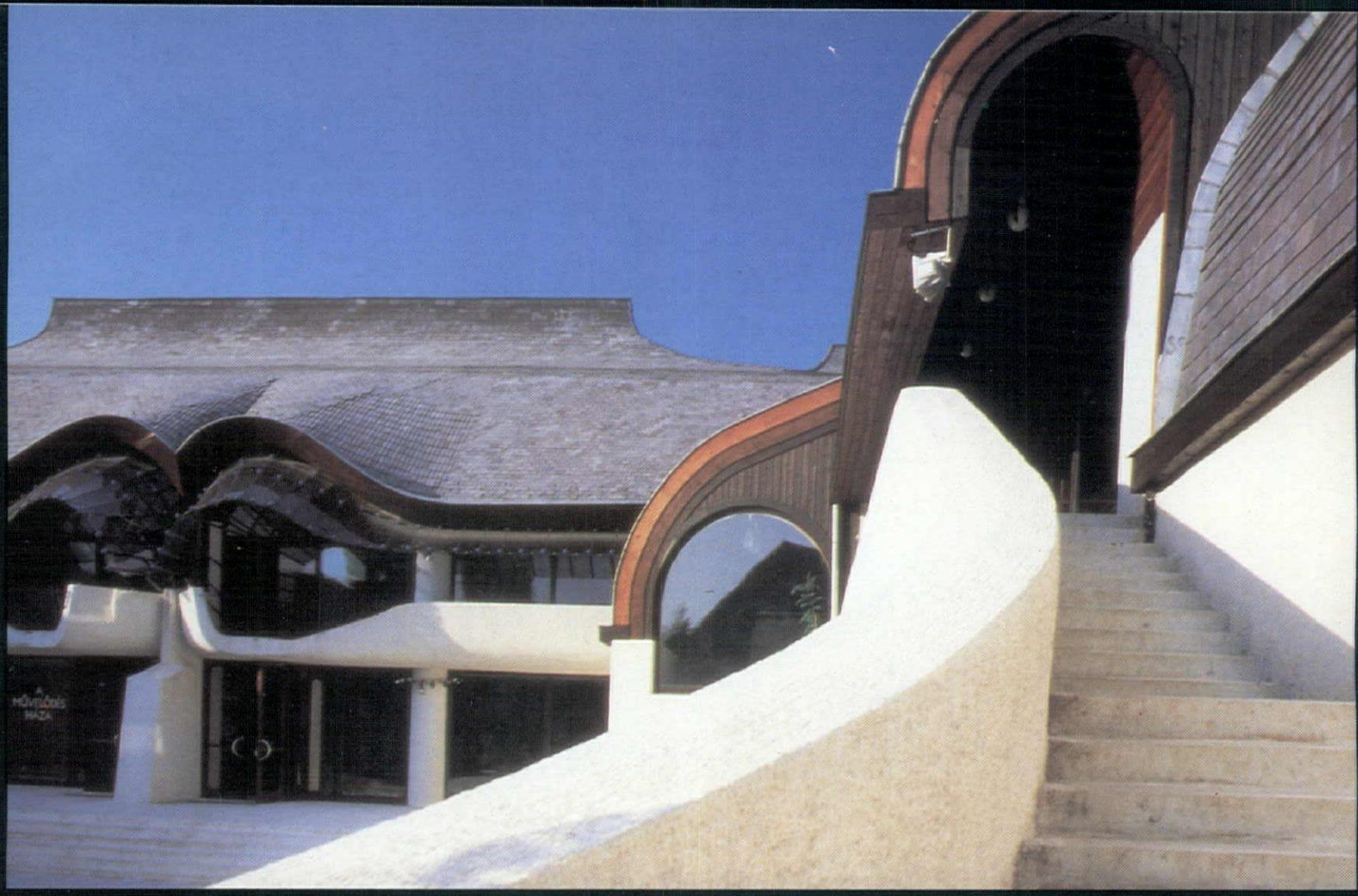
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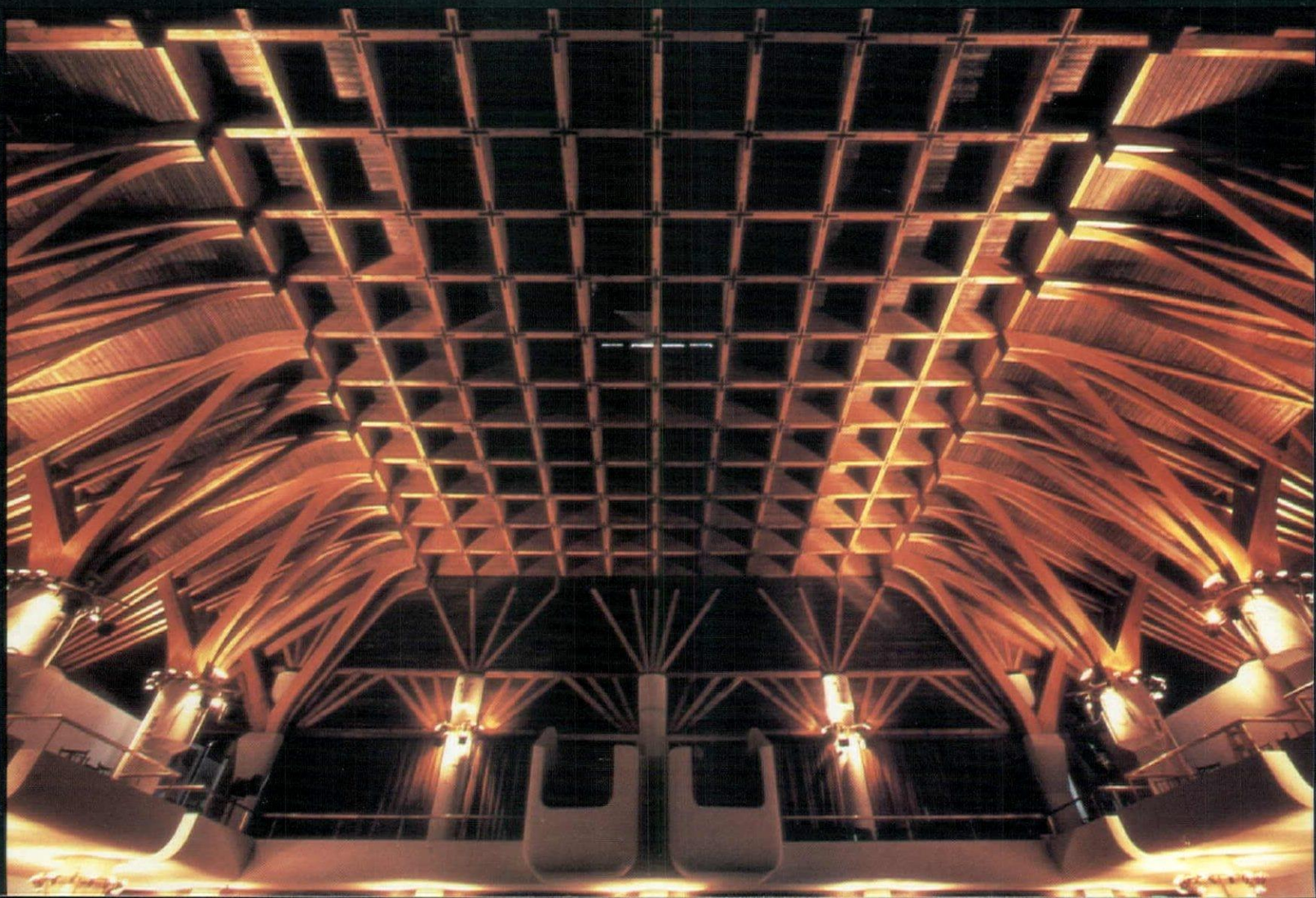








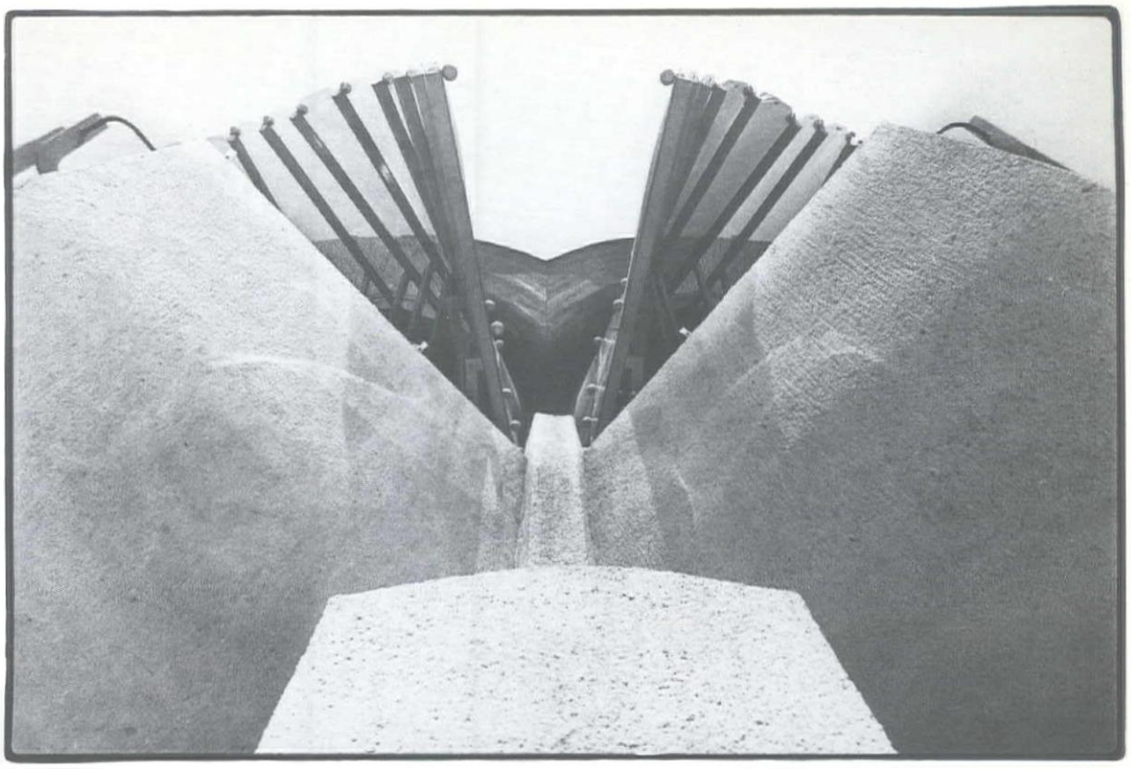
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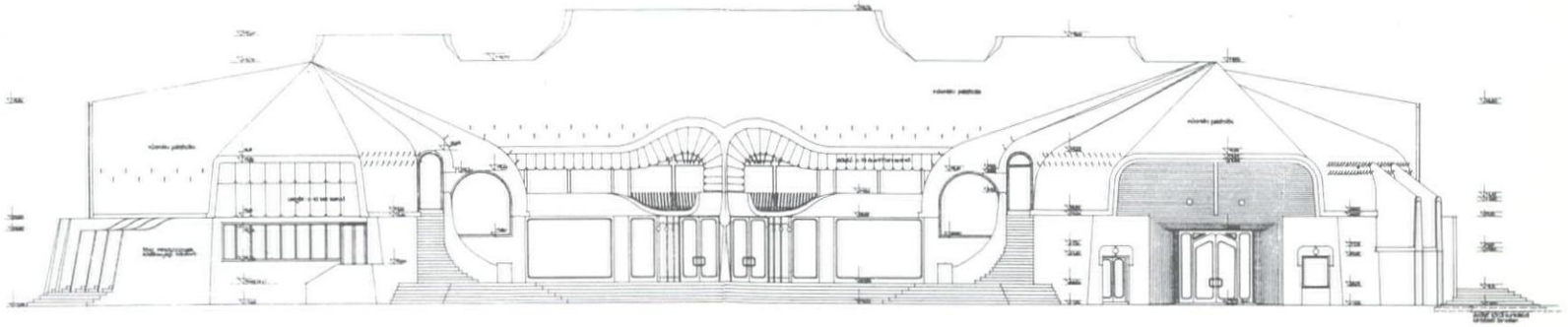
Jonathan Glancey

Jugendstijl, Bauhaus, Social Realism, Soviet-build . . . Hungary has been invaded by successive waves of international architecture. As an antidote Imre Makovecz's folkloric and nationalist buildings are gaining ground. How appropriate are they? Jonathan Glancey looks at Makovecz's latest and biggest commission, the controversial cultural centre at Sárospatak.



3

MAKOVECZ EMBRACE



principal courtyard elevation of cultural centre: as in all Makovecz's buildings—on plan, in elevation—there is an asymmetry designed to reflect the subtle irregularities of human features

Imre Makovecz's anthropomorphic buildings continue to take root slowly in the Hungarian countryside. Best described in zoomorphic terms—dragon, lizard, frog, bird—and with their plans like bodies or their constituent organs—these unusual structures are beginning to attract international attention.

The cemetery building at Fakarest (AR March 1981) demonstrated the Magyar architect's extraordinary ability to fuse architectural form with symbolic content in a language uniquely his own. This intense, symbolically charged building represents rural or folkish values, including fine timber craftsmanship.

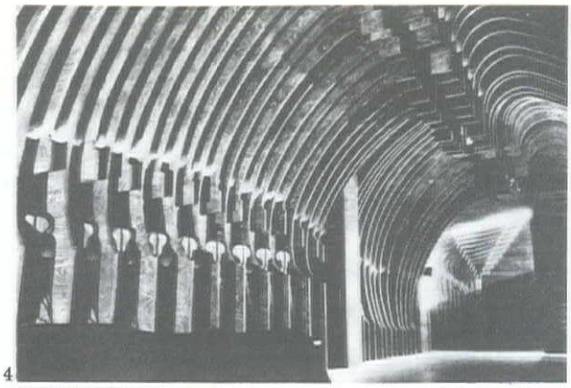
Makovecz, however, claims that he wants to reconcile urban and rural values. Yet, apart from a small shopping scheme in Szentende (1974) he has not until recently had a chance to prove his case. Much of his work during the past decade has been in out-of-the-way rural places for the Hungarian forestry department—hostels, camping sites, restaurants and so on. But at Sárospatak Makovecz has finally been able to put theory into practice and to produce an urban building type—in this case a cultural centre—in the weave of a historic town.

Many architects both inside and outside Hungary will find Makovecz's taste for the organic unpalatable. A cultural centre that resembles a friendly dragon with its drooping eyes and long sensual lashes, its scaly arms outstretched around a courtyard embracing visitors, will undoubtedly be considered highly wilful and idiosyncratic. Indeed the impression is of a creature that has slunk out of some fairytale Transylvanian forest and made its way to slumber in a provincial town square. And certainly in terms of construction with its rough scraped cement-rendered walls and billowing tent-like slate roofs it seems a stranger in the town.

In Makovecz's original design the building was to have grown out of massed banks of earth, but this idea of a building burrowing its way out of the ground apparently held little appeal for the local planning authority. This aspect of the design was turned down leaving the building as it stands fully exposed. Originally only the U-shaped courtyard was to have been on full view, the building revealing itself only as visitors made their progress through its interior spaces. Inside, too, Makovecz has had to make

Facing page: 1. Makovecz's cultural centre at Sárospatak viewed from steps leading up to one of the asymmetrical wings embracing the courtyard. The flat roof of the main auditorium rises above the beetling brows of the lobby windows. 2. the architect as shipwright—the stunning, if compromised, timber ceiling of the auditorium. 3 (above), looking up from the entrance steps between the 'eyes' of the building.

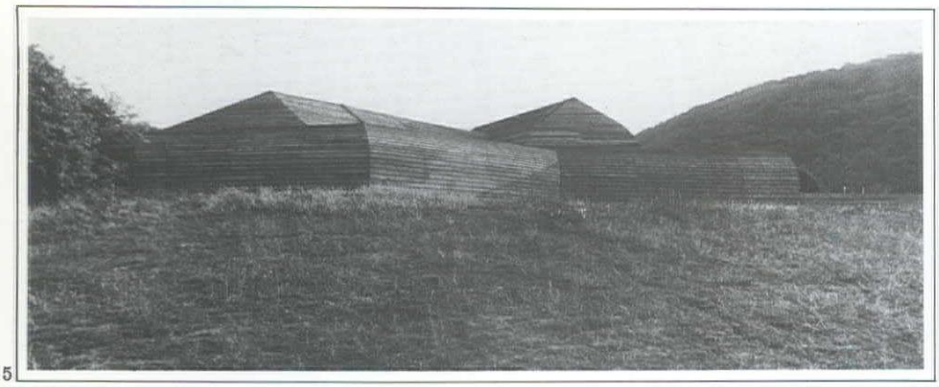
4, profoundly moving rib-cage interior of Makovecz's mortuary chapel at Fakarest. In his original design for Sárospatak, Makovecz wanted to develop this theme for the auditorium (see section on p40).
5, 6, the mainstream of Makovecz's work has been in rural areas. This new restaurant and refuge high above the Danube at Visegrad is part of a continuing development of crafted rural shelters.
7, interior reveals a bravura display of the carpenter's skill.



4

compromises to satisfy the authorities.

The building was commissioned in 1974 and completed last year. It stands in a square, rather than growing out of it as planned, facing across to a courtyard building by the Jugendstijl architect Odin Lechner. The plan comprises 'head', 'shoulders' and 'arms'. As in all Makovecz's buildings, the plan is slightly asymmetrical. Makovecz rejects pure symmetry as not being found in nature. His buildings are designed to create an empathetic response in the user like that evoked by the asymmetrical human face and body, and so have more in common with the structure of the human body than with Bauhaus



5



6

8-10, a second new hostel in Visegrad shows a new and curiously referential phase in Makovecz's work; the asymmetrical wings are arranged around a courtyard. A traditional farmhouse and barn have seemingly been spliced together. There is a hint of reconciliation between the architectural forms of rural field and village street.



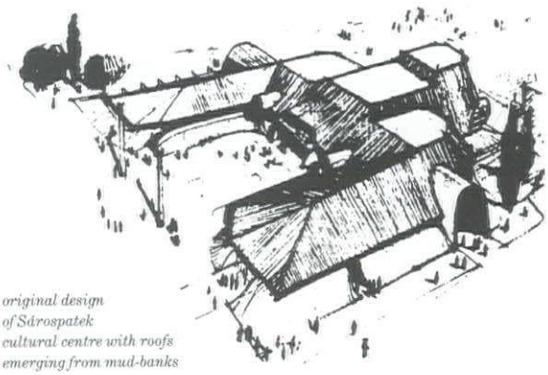
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abstractions. He aims to create what he calls 'building beings' (epulet-levy).

Here the 'head' of the plan is a large auditorium, the 'shoulders' lobbies and access gangways, while the 'arms' comprise stair towers, library, restaurant, meeting and service areas. But though the sequence of spaces through the building is hierarchical, these spaces are fluidly interwoven and open to each other. So progress through the building is both organic and yet ordered to combine a hierarchical differentiation of space with democratic accessibility of all parts one to the other. The experience of the building is, however, even richer than the plan suggests, for both the skin



8

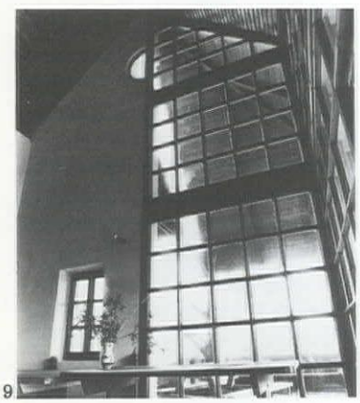


original design of Sárospatek cultural centre with roofs emerging from mud-banks

and structure are quite out of the ordinary.

Under its great beetling brows the hooded eyes of the building watch visitors as they make their way into the embrace of the courtyard. Attention at this point is focused on both the unfamiliarity of Makovecz's architectural vocabulary as well as on the sheer quality of its slightly rough-hewn workmanship. The cement render in several graded coats is laboriously hand finished, the massive curving timbers seemingly the work of a shipwright (and their shape, like inverted hulls, is a Makovecz trademark), whilst the delicate plexiglass glazing is beautifully held in place on slim steel sections by plexiglass spheres.

The 'head' and 'shoulders' of the building comprise



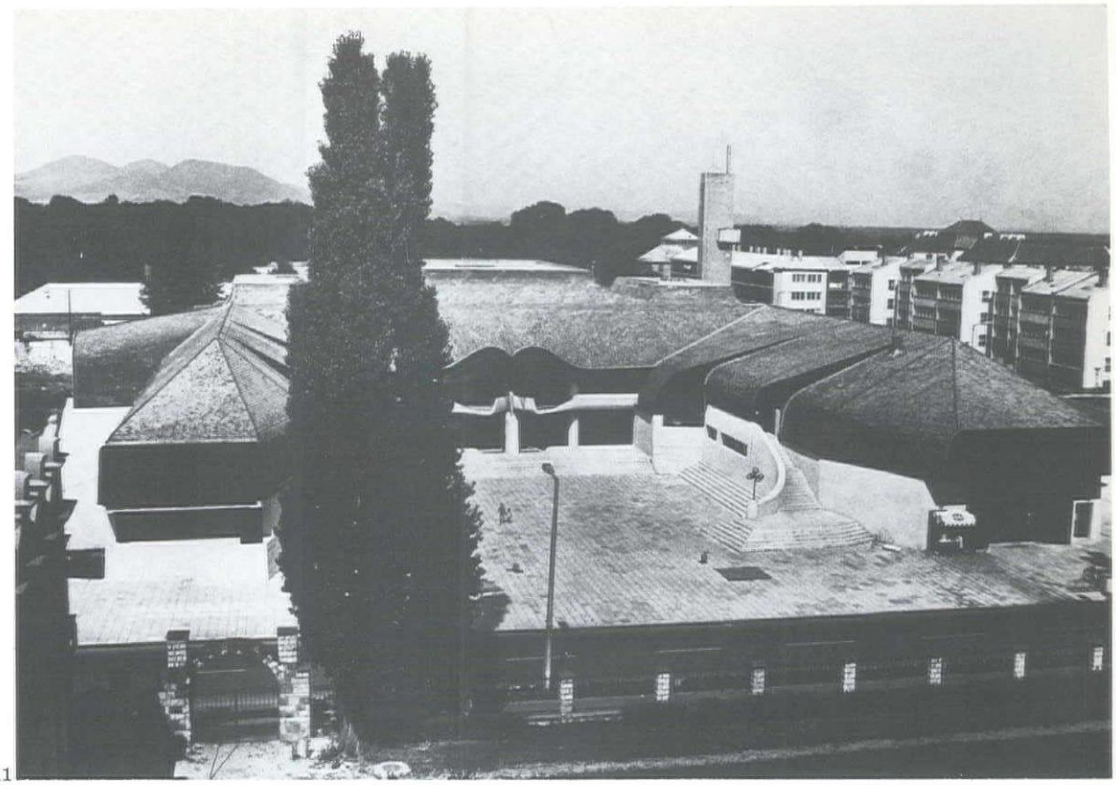
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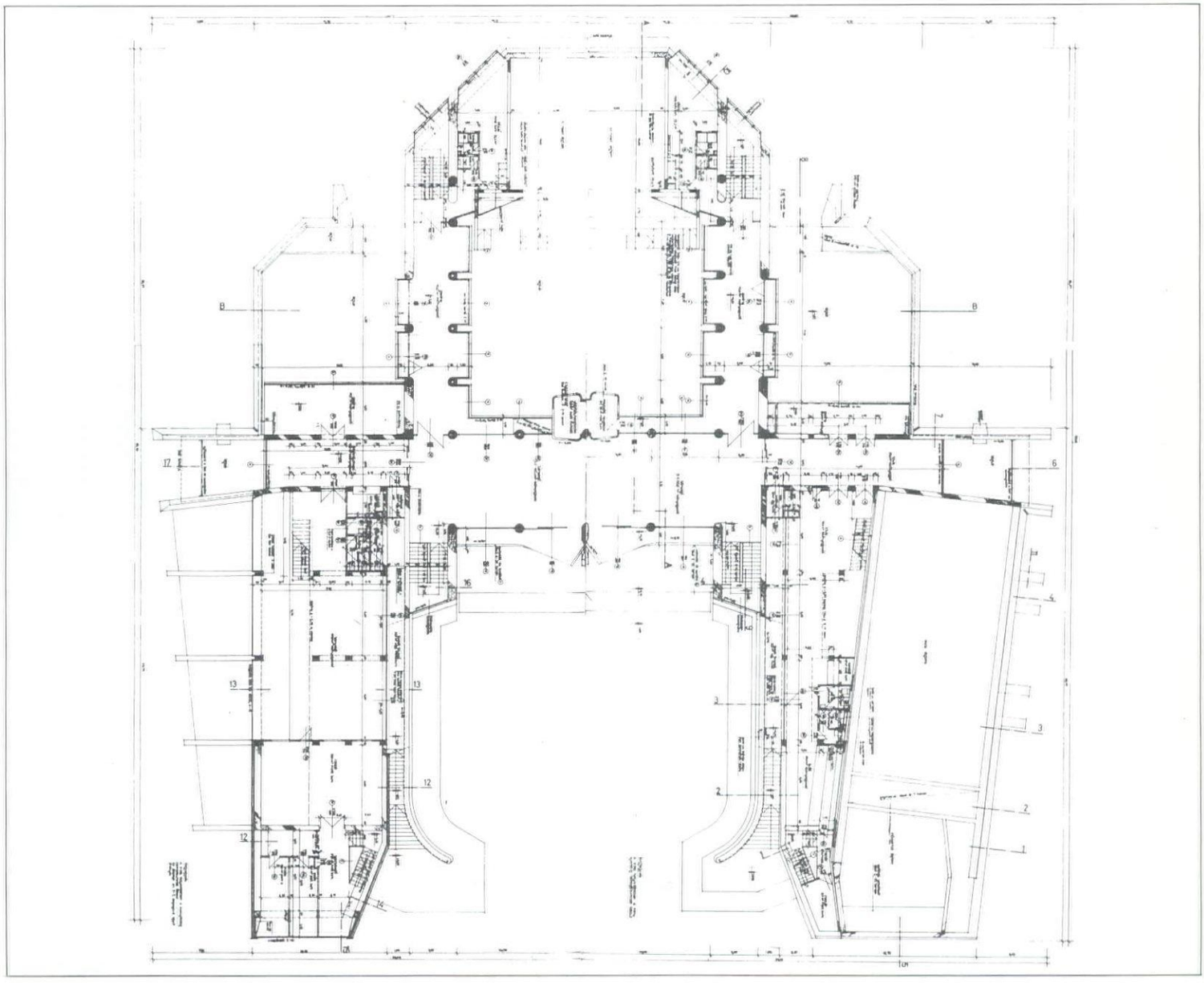
MAKOVECZ EMBRACE

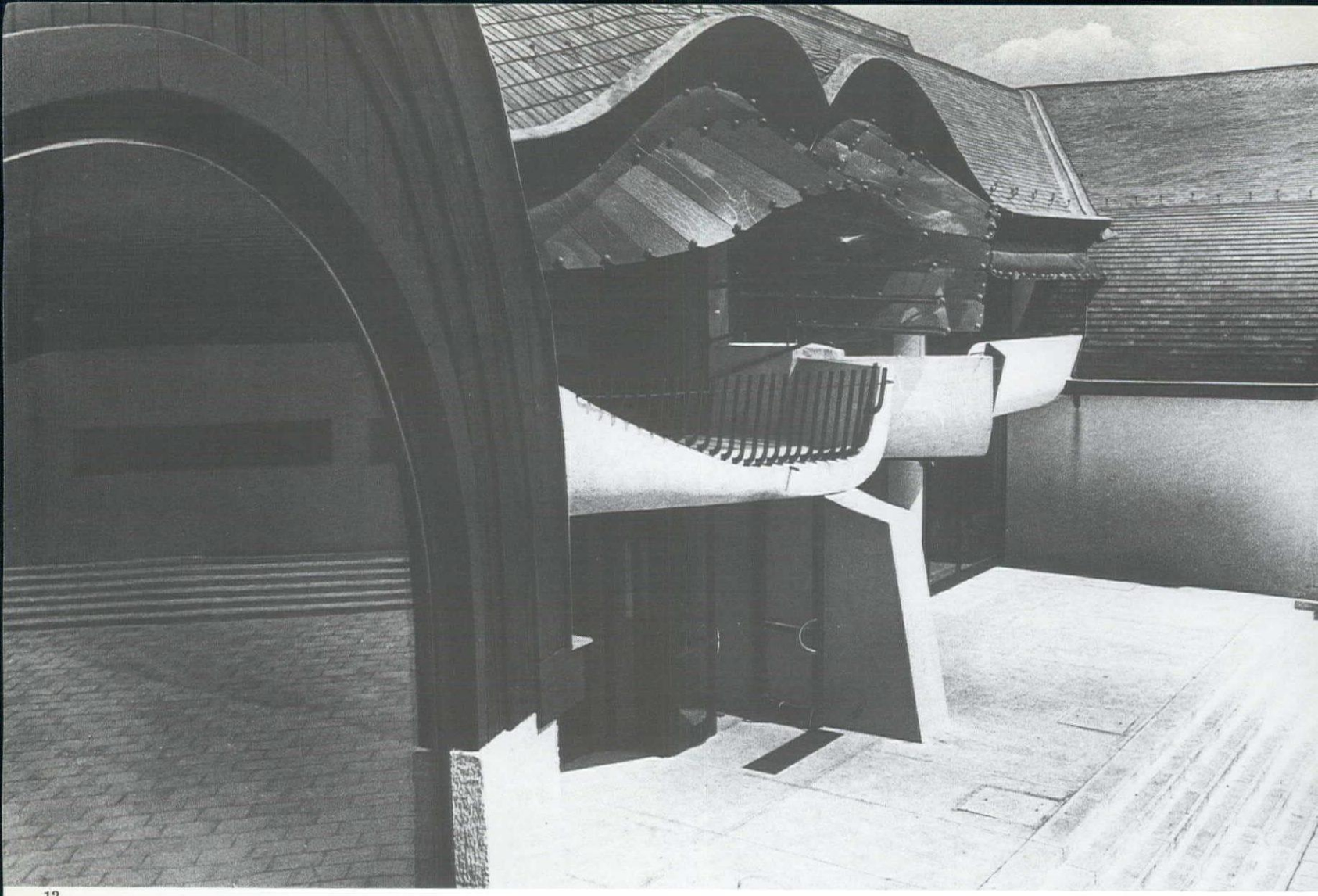
11, view of cultural centre, Sárospatak, from the roof of facing courtyard building. Note the outlines of hills, wood and Makovecz's roofscape.



11

first floor plan of cultural centre: library (left), lobby and auditorium (centre), restaurant (right)

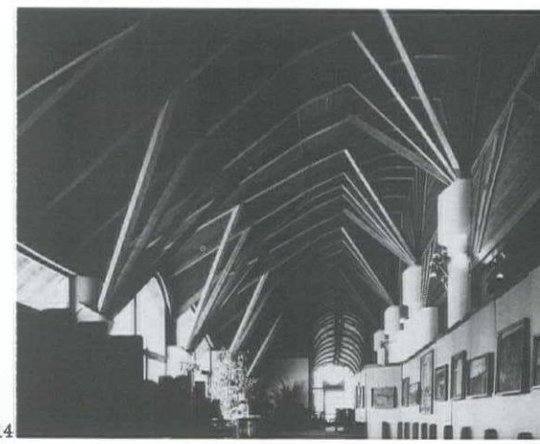




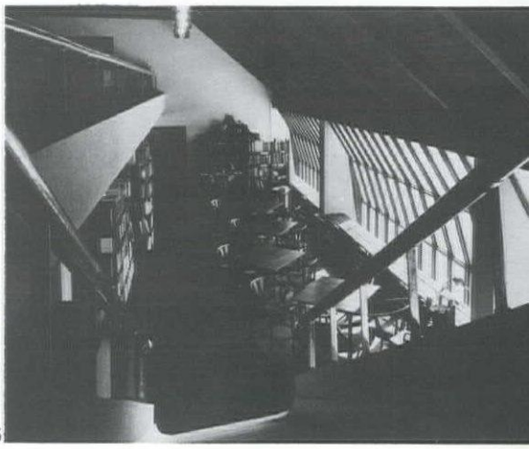
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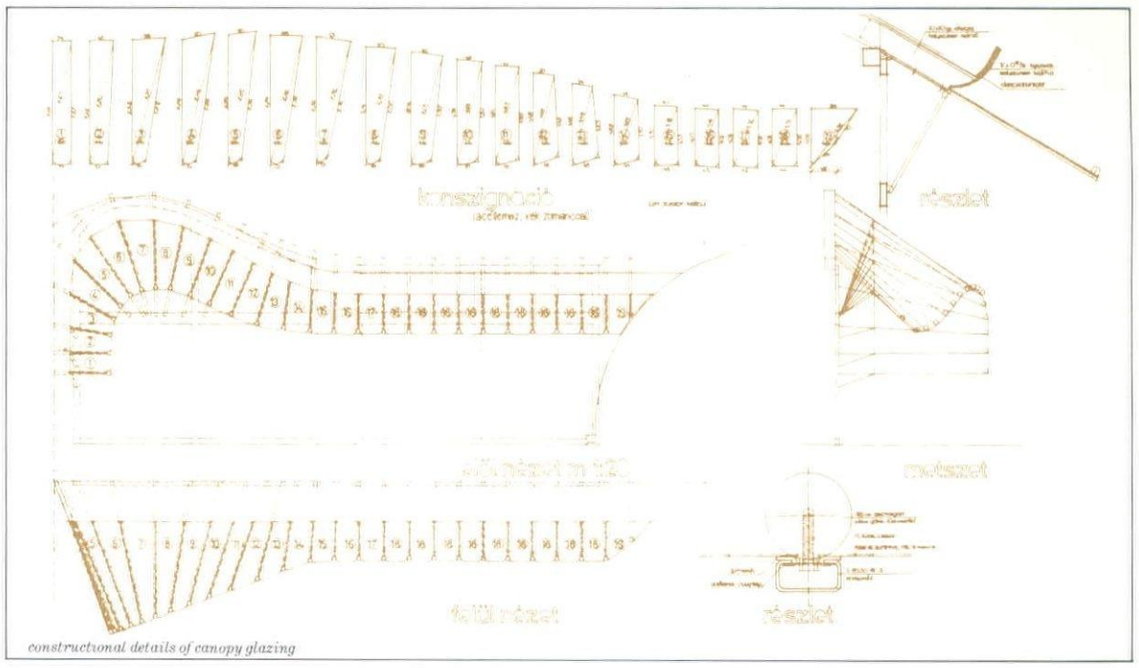
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MAKOVECZ EMBRACE

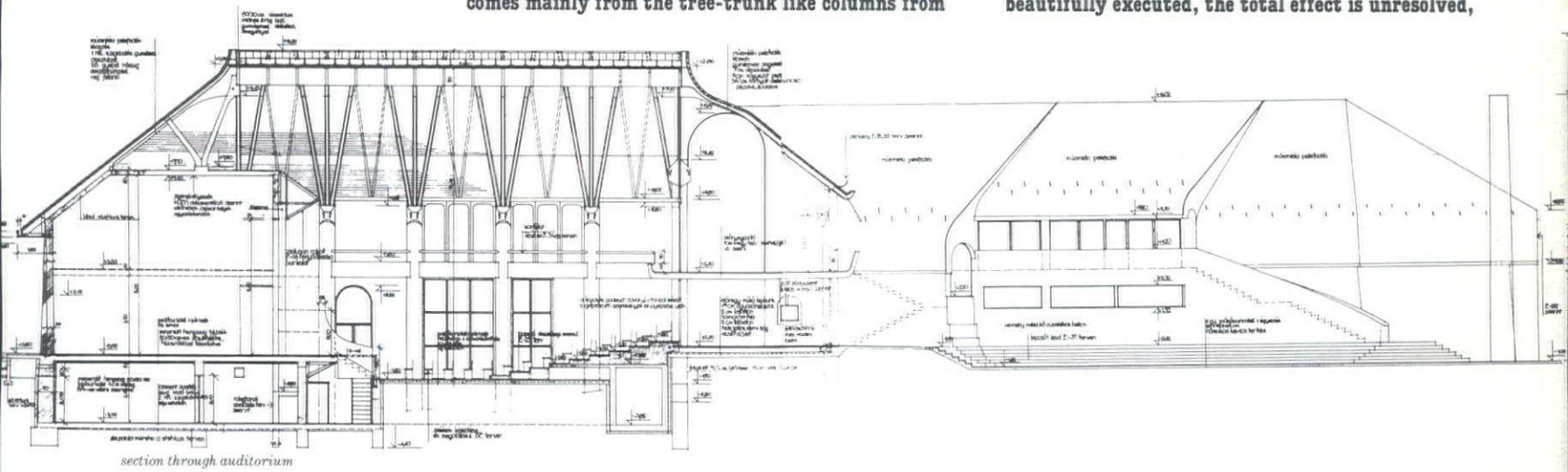
12, close-up of entrance of the cultural centre—eyes and mouth of a dragon.
13, the courtyard from the canopied balconies; details such as the handrails and canopy glazing demonstrate beautifully how craftsmen and architect can work together without the work of the former seeming like some token gesture.
14, main cross axis through building. A forest glade meeting place—balconies are to the left; to the right behind the columns and exhibition wall is the auditorium.
15, library.
16, side entrances into building.



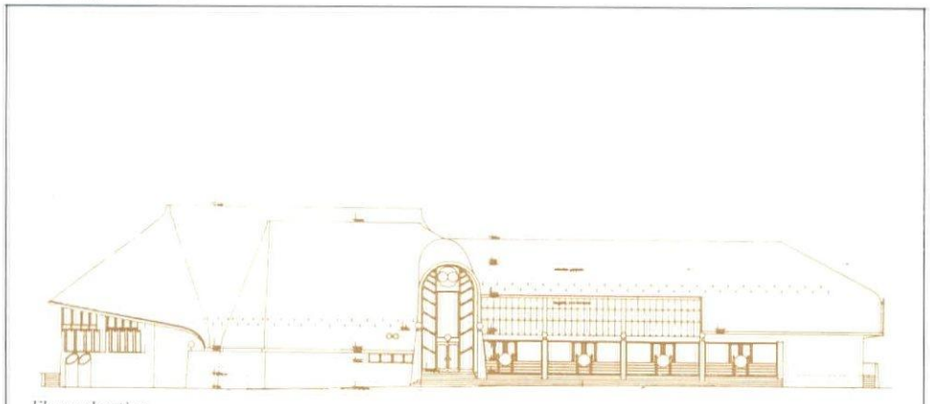
constructional details of canopy glazing

two complementary and structurally linked spaces—auditorium and cross-axial lobby, of which the lobby is the more dramatic, being more powerfully and more perfectly realised than the compromised auditorium. The lobby is made up of three parts—the pitched roof core joined to and flanked by two barrel-vaulted wings. The three elements form a single axis across the building, dividing the auditorium from the library and restaurant. It is from inside this lobby that one gazes across the courtyard to the Lechner building beyond through Makovecz's eyes. The lobby is provided with seats, tables and booths and low walls for hanging temporary exhibitions. But the character of the space comes mainly from the tree-trunk like columns from which branches of timber struts fan out and upwards to support the sloping timber roof, conjuring up the image of a meeting place in a forest glade.

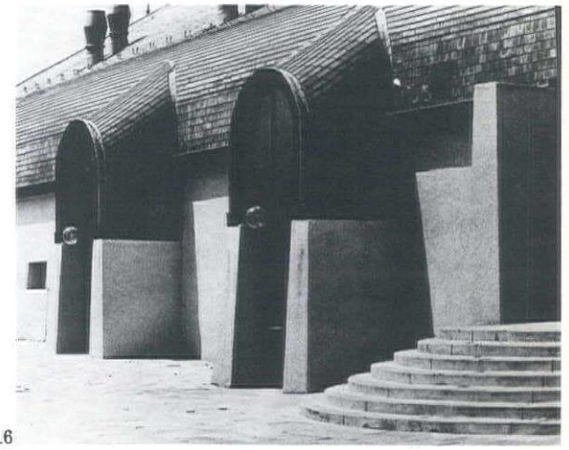
This organic theme was meant to have been more fully expressed inside the auditorium, but planning constraints prevented Makovecz from constructing the ceiling he wanted. He wanted to have branch-struts rising to support the roof and then curving in towards the centre of the space to connect with a giant beam running the length of the room—thus creating a rib cage of wood to frame the human activities below. Instead of this the organic branches rise up to meet a rather mechanical flat gridded ceiling. Although beautifully executed, the total effect is unresolved,



section through auditorium



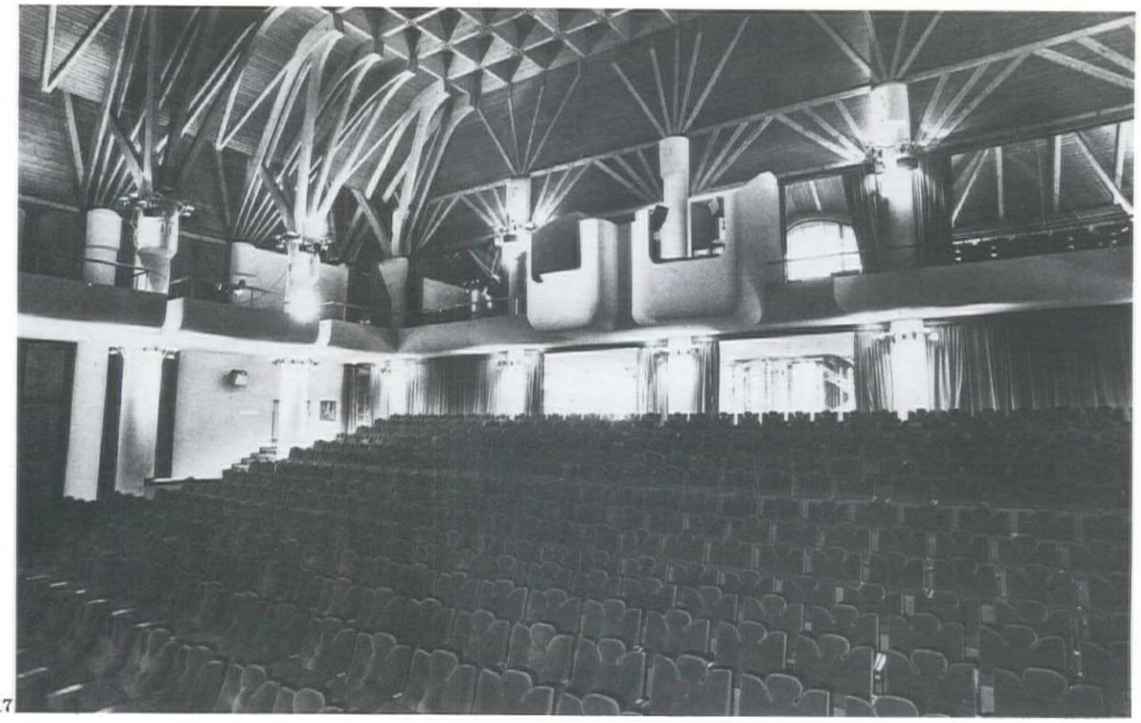
library elevation



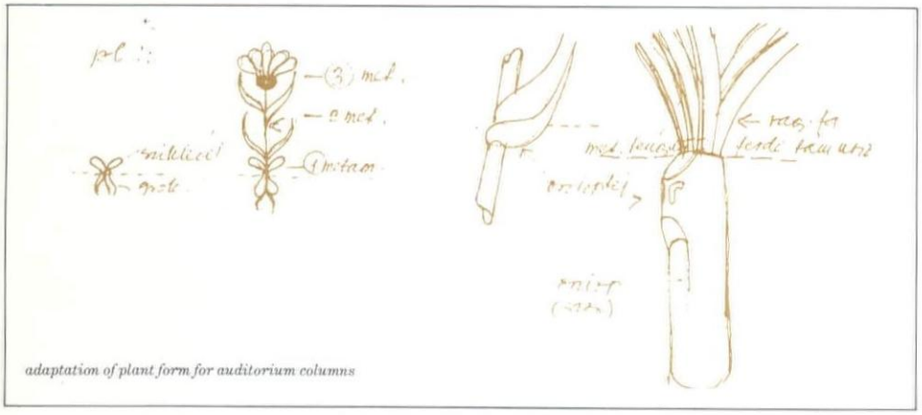
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MAKOVECZ EMBRACE

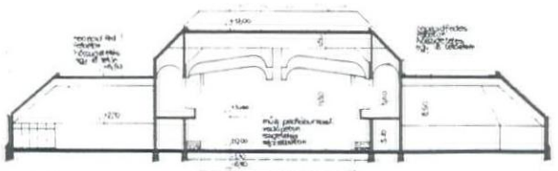
17, auditorium of the cultural centre. Even when empty Gabor Mezei's anthropomorphic seats give a sense of human presence.
18, library mezzanine and roof.
19, Mezei's lobby furniture.



17



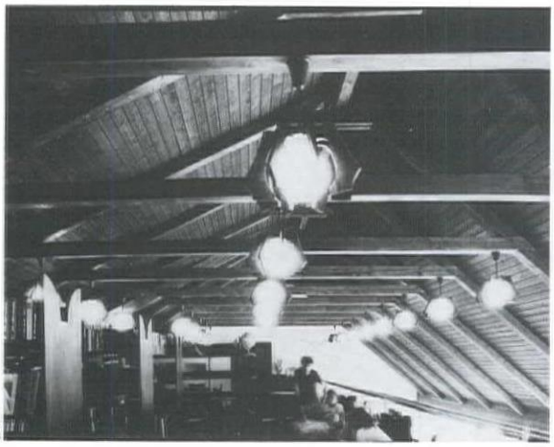
adaptation of plant form for auditorium columns



section through auditorium showing rib-cage roof Makovecz originally intended

while his earlier design would have echoed the interior of Fakarest. If it might have been a little overpowering, it would, in purely architectural terms, have been immensely more satisfying and complete.

So Makovecz's building is both a compromise and a synthesis between urban and rural values, in terms of both local politics and architecture. It is also a collusion of technologies—concrete and wood. These compromises and syntheses must ultimately be a good thing if Makovecz's architecture and that of his emerging 'school' are really to connect up with the mainstream demands of Hungarian architecture. There is after all a world of difference between building hostels and restaurants in virgin forest clearings and designing buildings which must reconcile themselves both to the fabric and weave of those towns and the views of citizens and civic advisers. Organic architecture does not have to be solely rural in its values, but can be an agent in the coming together of town and country. One of Makovecz's great tasks is to reconcile his sometimes idiosyncratic values with those of the Hungarian mainstream, so as to better influence his country's profession. Makovecz at one end of the Hungarian spectrum and Soviet-style prefabrication mass housing, without the guiding hand of an architect, at the other might then begin to settle their enormous differences. Hungary needs the talents of architects to build more humanely for its people. The great dragon that Makovitz has disturbed from rural slumber and which has clawed its way to rest in Sárospatak where the curious townfolk gather in the folds of its cossetting arms is a creature stepping in from the right direction. But possibly it combines too folkloric an identity with, perhaps, too literal an organic vitality to influence a country with modern urban aspirations as well as a nationalistic sense of identity.



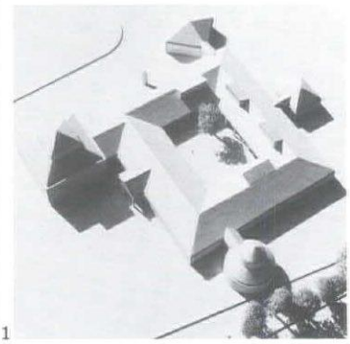
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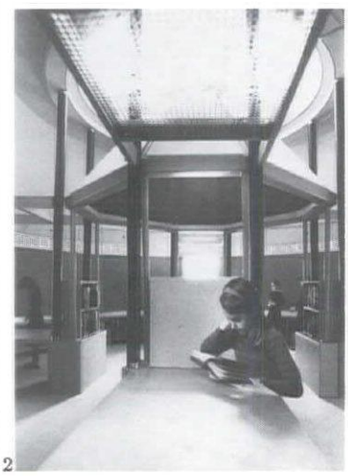
WILSON'S DRUM

The latest design by Colin St John Wilson, who expounds his, and T. S. Eliot's, understanding of tradition on p68, is a library for the proposed girls' primary school at North Springfield, Chelmsford, 1.* It will be a memorial to Bishop Wilson, the architect's father.



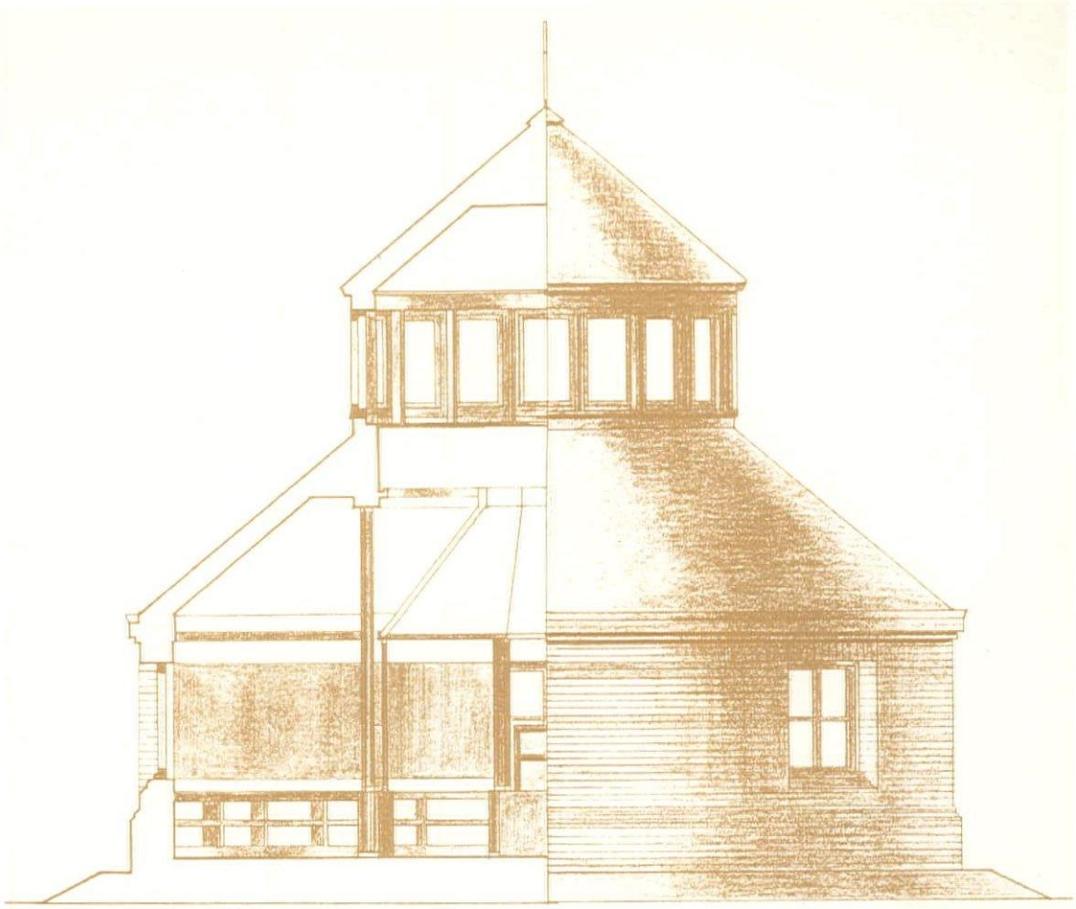
1

Wilson describes his work: 'The library is circular in form, 3·9 m radius. Four reading tables are disposed radially from a central space which rises to a clerestory drum. The reading places which have a window-view outwards are screened on the inside both by the columns supporting the roof and clerestory and also by the display bookcases of the central space, 2. The central space has an aedicular canopy with an oculus: this has the double effect of bringing the dimensions of the centre down to children's scale and also setting up a play between the centre and the reading tables outside. The notion of light falling outside the aedicule is borrowed from Soane's house. The circular form plays on the twin themes of the circular library (from the Radcliffe Camera to Asplund's Stockholm Library) and the mausoleum form (insofar as the building is also the memorial to a man).'

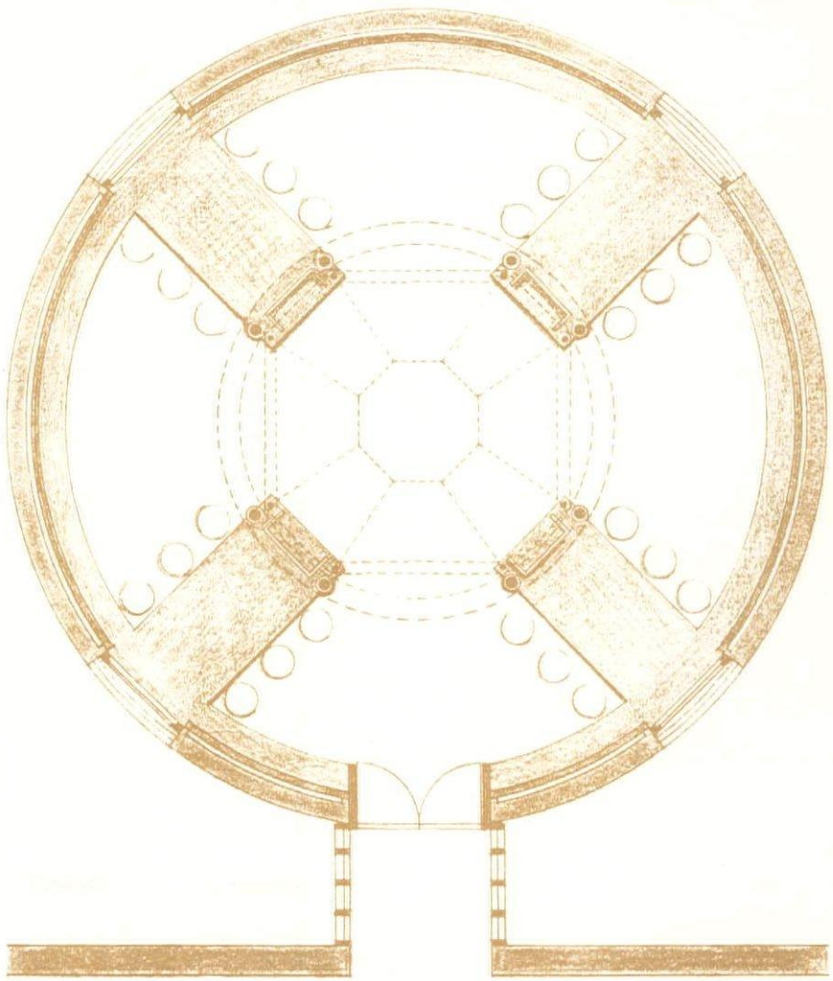


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*Thomas Mowle & Chisnall designed the rest of the school.

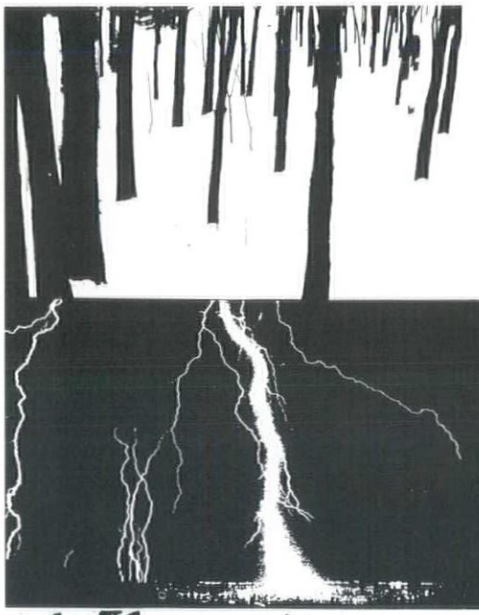


sectional elevation: the outer wall is loadbearing (brickwork of two tones in bands), steel columns support the central drum; the building has slate roofs and stained timber windows; below, plan



HOW NATURE FORMS

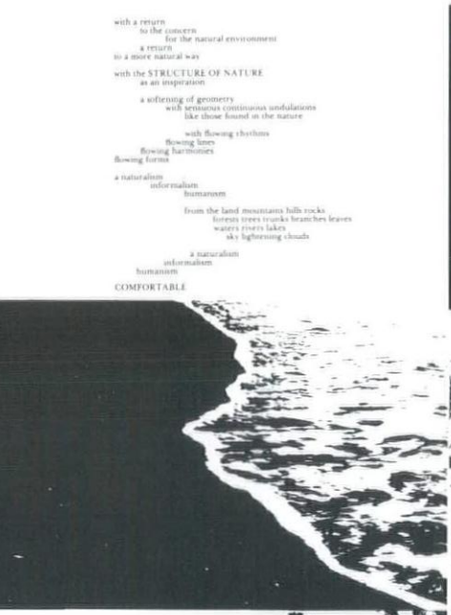
One of the sources of regional architecture must be ecology and the landscape. Texan architect Martin Price's designs poetically resonate with the natural world to an unusually rich degree. Here **Bodil Kjaer** describes Price's approach, based on an exhibition of his work organised by the Finnish Architecture Museum now on show in Oslo (see p5) and which will visit the Architectural Association, London, next year.



popular trees in snow at house site in Indiana

lighting over Tucson, Arizona

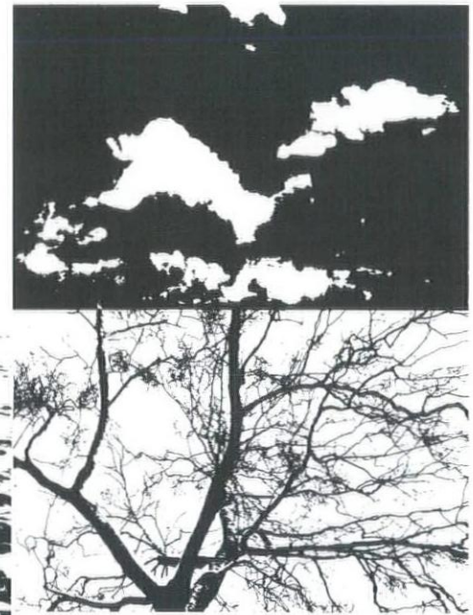
cattle moving along a Texas trail



flowing statement

tide line at Texas coast

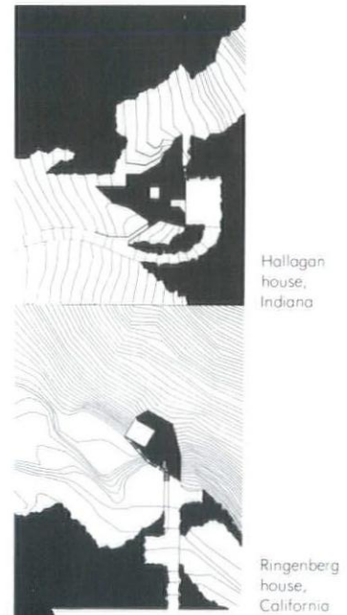
mountain in Orgon Cascades



clouds over Fort Worth, Texas

tree branches

aerial view of house site on inland waterway in Beaufort, North Carolina



Hallagan house, Indiana

Ringenberg house, California

Waltz house, North Carolina

site plans

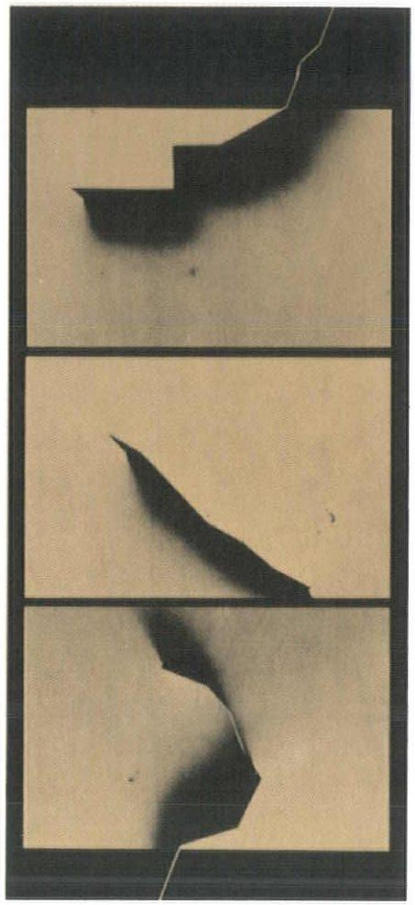


site models (in Finnish birch)

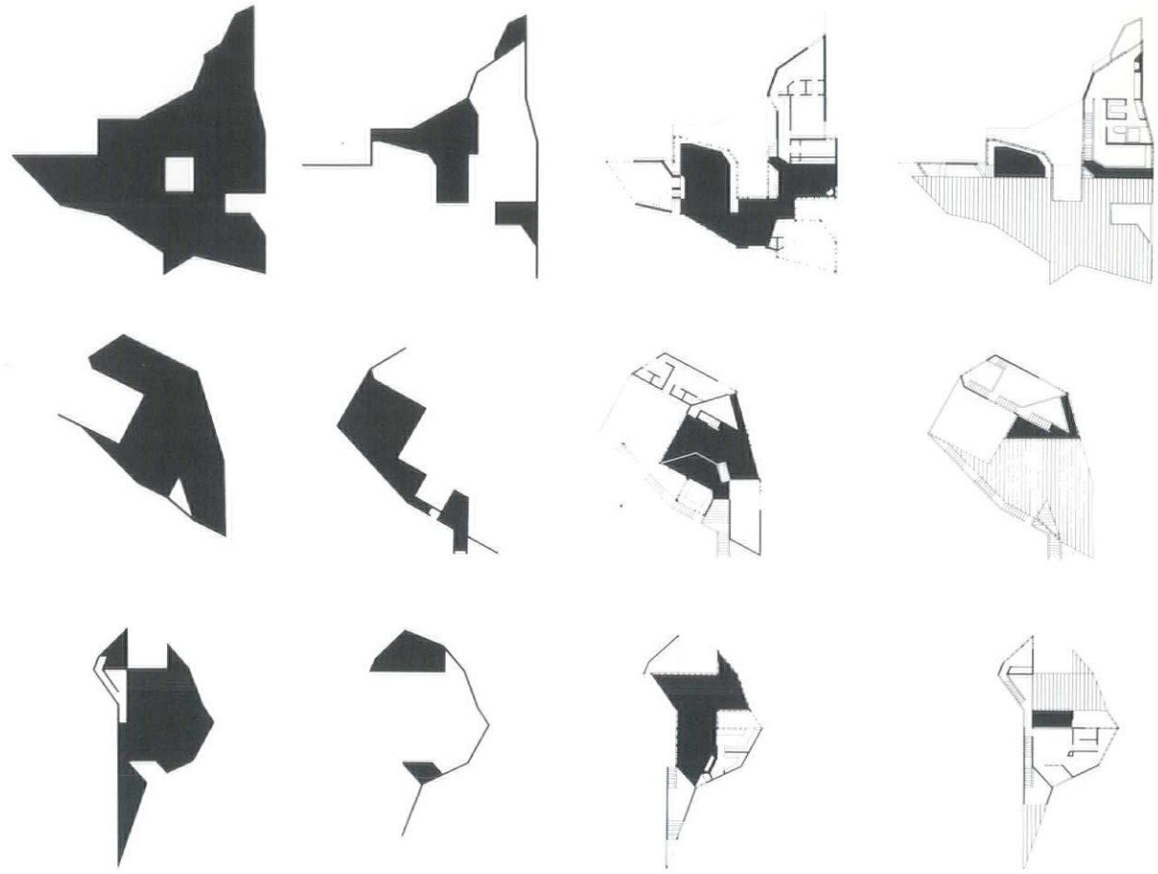
Hallagan house, Indiana

Ringenberg house, California

Waltz house, North Carolina



flowing edge models (in Finnish birch)



roof plans | porch and deck plans | lower floor plans | upper floor plans

Images of Architecture, drawings that trigger yet other images in the mind, that inspire fresh feelings and thoughts about our need for enclosure, spaces, places—these are first impressions of the exhibition of three projects for three houses by Martin Price.

Though Price has joined the exhibition-and-lecture circuit of the architectural image makers, he speaks with a different voice. His forms derive from nature, his projects aim at total integration with landscape and culture, and his great concern is with the well-being of people, spiritually and otherwise. Spirit, maybe more than anything else, is his concern.

His exhibition, 'How Nature Forms', expresses a belief in the necessity of living in harmony with nature, of accepting the rules of the natural environment, of learning from it rather than fighting it.

His openness and sensitivity to natural phenomena and natural forms have provided him with a fund of sources to design from. They are by now so firmly impressed in his mind and spirit that they are almost reflex tools for his work.

Talking about the three houses in the exhibition, Price says that what he is trying to demonstrate is how he lets nature inspire his forms. He shows how he looks at and lets edges and surfaces of the land below and the sky above inspire a more natural architectural response. He tries to create a lyrical harmony between landscape and house—looking at how the edges of forest profiles, tree branches, lightning bolts, water, clouds, and mountains form a flowing rhythm of line has led him to explore flowing building edges and profiles, space that flows both horizontally and vertically, and movement that flows through these spaces. By looking at the whole as a sum of its parts he has studied use of materials until they came to express what he wants: lowering of high forms towards the ground, meeting lower forms rising to the sky.

The three dramatic landscapes in which the three houses are to be sited have inspired him greatly.

The Hallagan house moves with the sloping land and reaches up to the tall poplar woods. The Ringenberg house climbs the rolling hills and reaches for a view to Mount Diablo. The Waltz house echoes the rising and falling of the profile of the pine forest along the inland waterway.

Price is a poet of Architecture. Like a poet he feeds on whatever and whomever he chooses from his surroundings. So the future users of his architecture are usually also heavily involved in the design process. He turns dreams into visions of attainable delight.







Hallagan house, Indiana



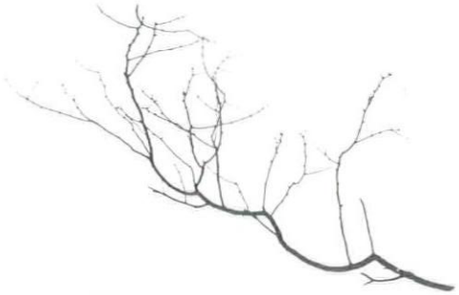






Ringenberg house, California





American eagle

hops from Mt Angel, Oregon

Mesquite tree branch from Dallas, Texas

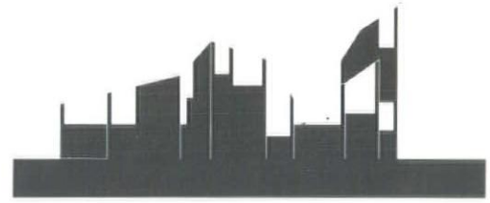


roof elevation forms



Waltz house, North Carolina

upper elevation forms



lower elevation forms

Hallagan house

In the Hallagan house, the spatial and functional fulcrum is the kitchen. The living areas rise from this point with the slope of the land, and flow toward a media centre; other spaces rise from the dining area and flow toward the master sleeping area, with additional bedrooms below.

A stainless-steel standing seam roof continues as a fascia, meeting the Indiana limestone rising out of the ground. The stone is indigenous to the region, the quarry being only 10 miles away. Stone above the glass has been avoided by bringing the metal down above the glazing. A 'planned random' spacing of mullions (1, 1:2, 1:2:3) creates a rhythm that echoes the random spacing of the poplar trees.

Ringenberg house

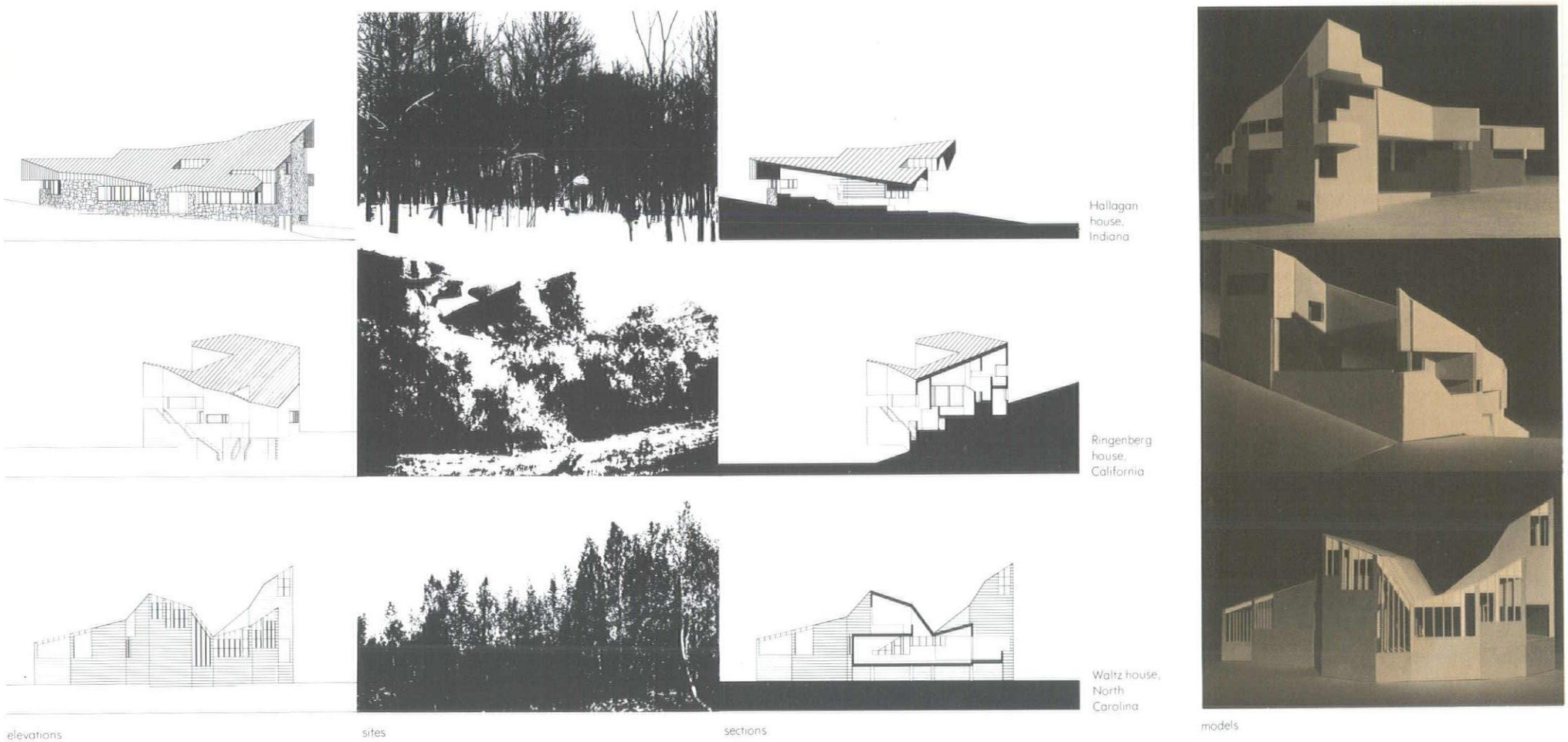
Half levels rise together with continuous flowing interior and exterior stairs. As the house climbs, it opens to the largest space, an outdoor deck which flows out from the living area and gestures towards and looks at the mountain. It continues up the hill with a master sleeping area and ends at the top with a space for the owner's treasured loom.

A metal standing seam roof which is to be painted blue meets white stuccoed walls, and the stucco lowers to meet green-tiled concrete. Blue roof echoes Californian blue sky; green tiles are a remembrance, in dry yellow summer, of the lushness of Californian spring.

Waltz house

A continuously flowing stair rises above the ground to the main living level that contains a greenhouse, outdoor deck and covered porch and continues up to the sleeping level with its shower overlooking the greenhouse below. It proceeds to an upper study in the tower that overlooks the pine forest and waterway.

The undulating roof is galvanised steel with standing seams, which is traditional to North Carolina's metal-roofed tobacco barns. The metal roof continues as a fascia, is joined to a rhythm of wood mullions, and meets a rhythm of horizontally spaced plywood boards that rises out of the ground. Due to the proximity of the inland waterway which can flood above its banks, the house is perched 6ft above ground on wood piles. Horizontally spaced plywood continues over these pilings as a skirt, with spaces between the plywood to permit the rising water to enter and exit, and to make easy replacement of the boards if necessary.



HOW NATURE FORMS

Peter Davey

ARCTIC RESPONSE

In February this year, AR editor Peter Davey was asked by Marja-Riitta Norri, the editor of the Finnish magazine, *Arkkitehti*, to visit Rovaniemi, capital of the Finnish Arctic, to see the entries for the competition for an Arctic Centre which would celebrate the Arctic cultures. Open to all nations with territories in the Arctic, the competition generated proposals which covered the whole gamut of contemporary style. In this essay, extracted from *Arkkitehti* 2/3, 1984, Davey speculates on the nature of an Arctic architecture and the role of the museum as a regional cultural resource.

Judging by the posters to be seen in every shop window and hotel foyer in town, Rovaniemi's big cultural event this February (when the Arctic Centre competition was assessed) was the Arctic Circle Samba Carnival. Under this title (in English) was displayed a frisky, scantily-clad Latin lady frolicking below a crown liberally bestrewn with grapes, oranges, even a small pineapple. All over Lapland teams of samba enthusiasts were apparently frantically preparing for the contest.

To the visitor, the Arctic Circle samba is both extremely funny and deeply disturbing. In an age of easy communications, it is natural that all peoples import chunks of each other, but to take and celebrate such a large, undigested lump of a totally different culture shows either that the consuming society is extremely unsure of its cultural roots and is incapable of resisting even the most elementary blandishments of consumerism (the Carnival was organised by the biggest hotel in Rovaniemi which hoped to make a tidy sum from the proceedings). Or the bizarre concatenation shows that Lapland really has an extremely strong culture which can simply shrug its shoulders and decide to dance the sub-zero arctic night away in the most amusing fashion it can find.

I doubt the latter proposition. No small town of 30 000 inhabitants can remain unaffected by the influx of half a million tourists a year. The culture and ecology that attracts the tourists is progressively destroyed by their very arrival. They come in search of authenticity to contrast with their synthetic lives but their consumerism is almost irresistible. Small and fragile cultures become another item for consumption: they are sanitised, deconstructed and packaged into neatly gobble-able morsels. Yet the human race needs to preserve the integrity of these cultures because they are like rare plants which, as biologists have taught, we need to keep because their genes may someday, quite unpredictably, become important in enriching the gene pool of the rest of plant life. Consumerism cannot last for ever in an age of rapidly depleting resources and one day, probably quite soon, we shall need the example (though not the specific practices) of local individualistic cultures to show us how we might come to terms with smaller social groupings which, while exploiting the benefits of modern communications and technology, are more closely integrated with ecology and reality.

By suggesting that we should try to conserve the particular and the local, I am not advocating that the richer, cosmopolitan portion of society should corral the poorer ethnocentric elements into reservations into which tourists are allowed on sufferance while the natives are perforce held in perpetual underdevelopment. That is totally barbaric. There must be some other choice for a small, delicate culture which is not offered by the two most powerful patterns evolved by the twentieth century: total consumerist corruption of the structure (as in Hawaii) or systematic oppression for picturesque effect (as in South Africa's Bantustans or the Pueblo Indian reservations of the USA).

Of course, Lapland tends towards the seemingly more civilised Hawaiian alternative rather than the oppressive one. But I would guess (perhaps impertinently) that in a generation, unless the present trend of cultural erosion can be stemmed, the peoples of the Arctic will be as disoriented, and alienated as are the Polynesians of Hawaii today. The creation of an Arctic Centre could be an important step in the creation of a dam against the erosive current—in two ways. First, it could help heighten local people's consciousness of their uniqueness and the depth of their culture and its relationship to the ecology. Second, it could help the tourist get a glimpse of the reality he has come to seek and encourage him to understand and respect the Arctic culture.

Of course, a brilliant museum director could build up such a programme in any old hut. But the building he works in and with must inevitably have a considerable effect on the message he tries to put across—the more so because Rovaniemi is a dump in architectural and townscape terms. Totally destroyed by the Germans in the Second World War, it has been rebuilt piecemeal in boring, unplanned three- and four-storey walk-up blocks.

The site is not an easy one. A blunt L-shape with the foot severed from the leg by a road, the plot nestles in the angle formed by the edge of the town and the main road into Rovaniemi from the north. The best thing about the site is the bank of the Ounasjoki which defines its north-eastern border. Across the river, which forms a sort of delta just before its confluence with the Kemijoki, are beautiful views of the untouched arctic landscape with drifts of trees striating rolling country which rises to low hills on the horizon.

The programme for the Arctic Centre demanded accommodation for two distinct but symbiotic institutions: an Arctic museum and a Lapland provincial museum. The Arctic museum is intended 'to partly illustrate local culture patterns by means of cultural-historical methods . . . and to partly develop new ways of defining and realising environmental models as demanded by local conditions and taking into account today's needs and the needs of the future'. Included in the museum should be a 'Polarium' which could show

the Arctic's diurnal variations as well as displays on nature, natural resources and culture. These are thought of as educative displays rather than real objects. The Lapland museum is a more conventional affair, displaying local artefacts and natural phenomena. As an extension of the Arctic museum, an outdoor exhibition area was required 'permitting the lifesize reproduction of modes of habitation and construction, means of livelihood and methods of transport'.

The presence of these structures surrounding the centre disqualified a whole group of entries: those that took a primitive archetypal arctic building type and blew it up in volume to accommodate the whole programme. While obviously of the Arctic, such buildings would be given the lie by the patently greater reality of the neighbouring authentic (or mocked-up) tents, huts and igloos. The approach is kitsch—allowing the forms of an authentic indigenous culture to be packaged, consumed and internationalised. And it is exactly what Rovaniemi doesn't need. The Arctic doesn't need Venturian ducks to call attention to its singularity.

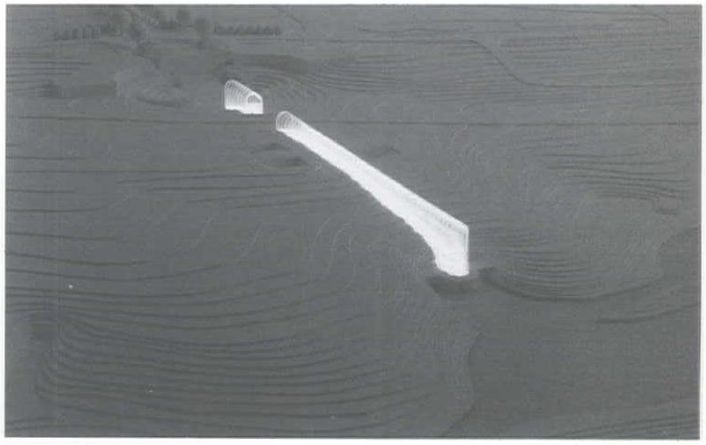
But, deprived of any obvious leads from native building, what were the competitors to do? How were they to make the Arctic Centre respond to the Arctic? How could they make a solution to what the jury elegantly perceived to be the problem of 'the ambiguity of both the site and the programme, of being a mediator between landscape and town, craft and industrial, rural and urban?'

The most convincing answers took the nature of Arctic building rather than its forms and translated some of the basic ploys of native construction into contemporary terms: delving into the earth for protection from the cold; covering space with thin, easily obtainable skins.

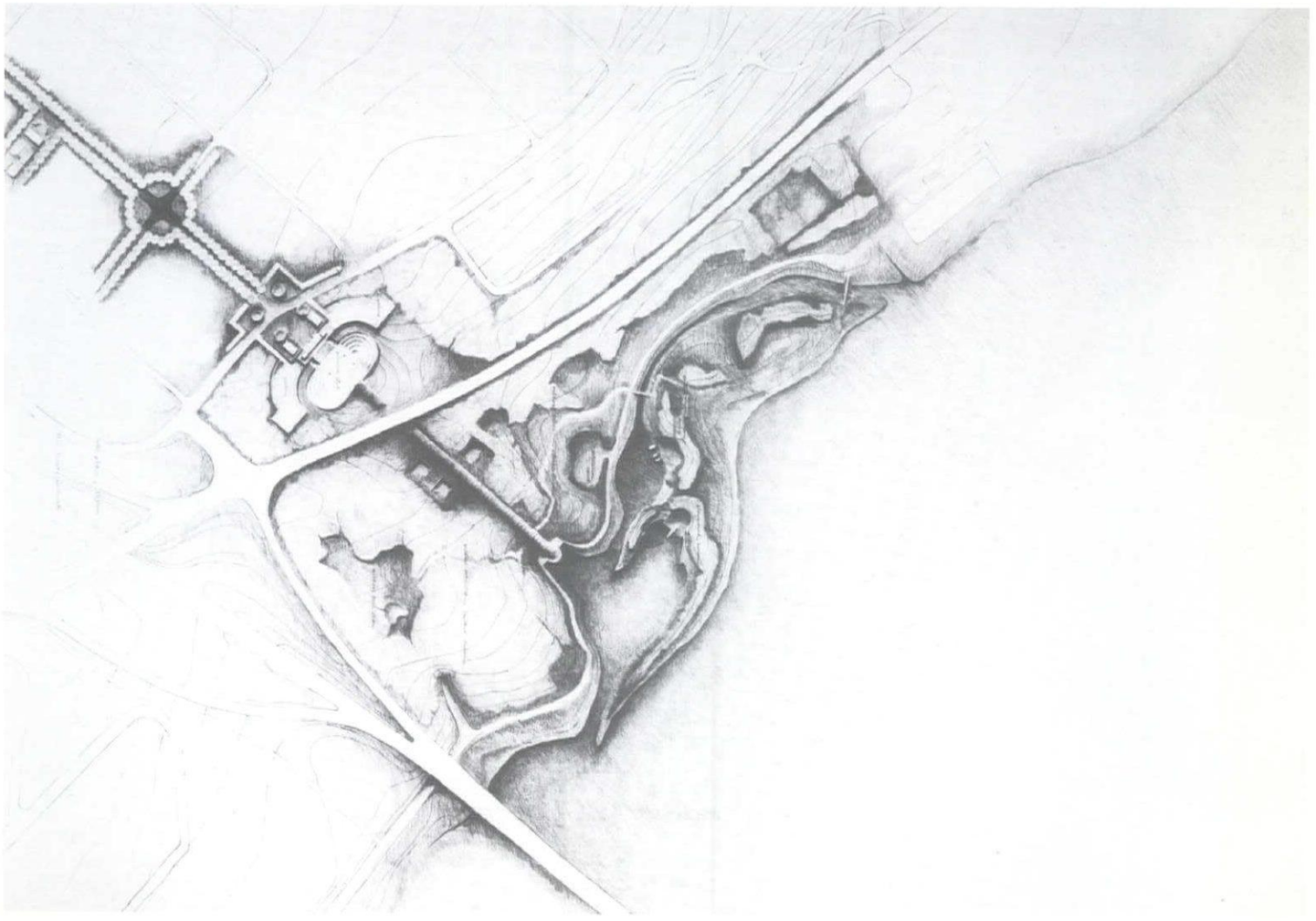
ARCTIC CENTRE COMPETITION

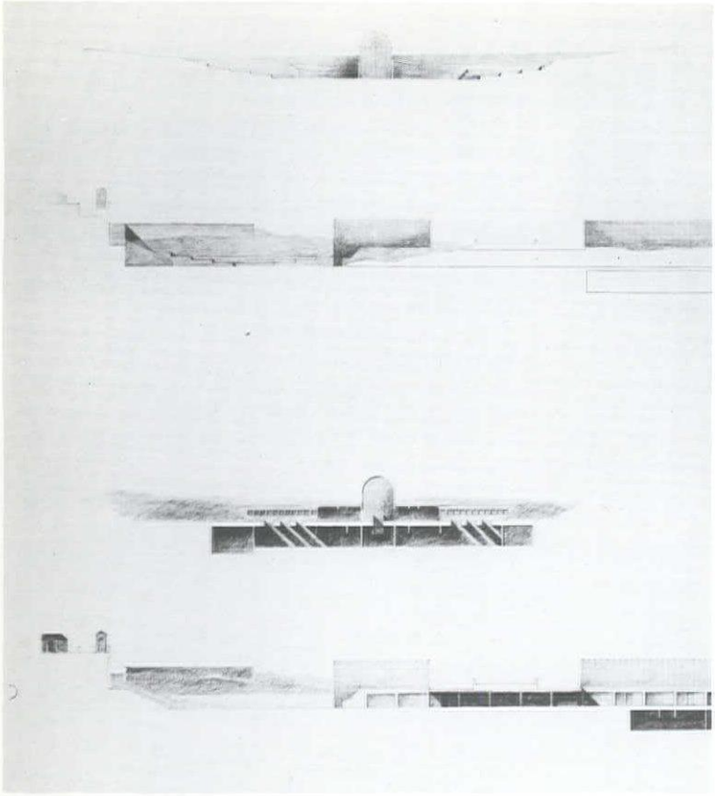
Design by Claus Bonderup, Søren Birch and Ellen Waade

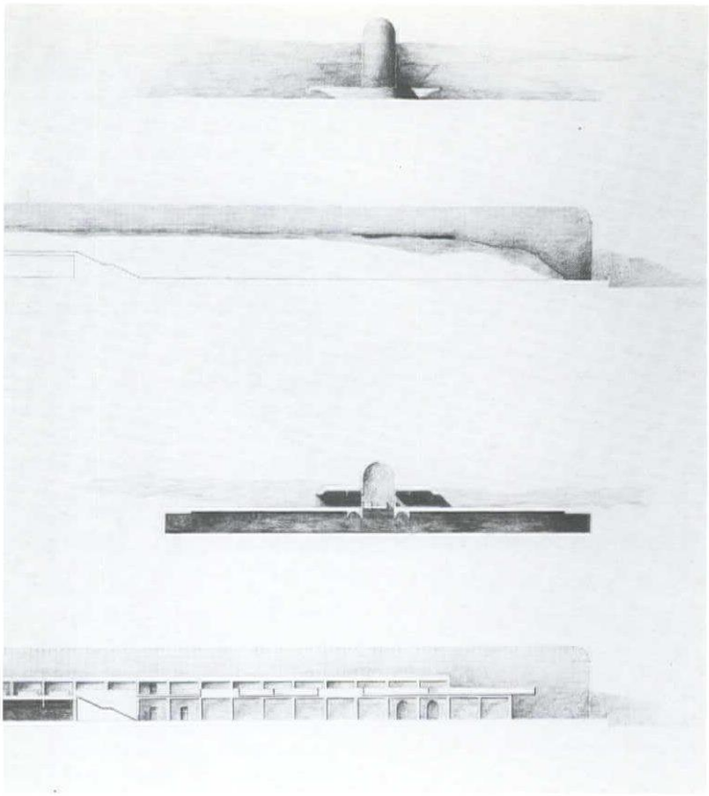
This was the approach of the first prize-winner, by the Danish/ Norwegian group Claus Bonderup, Søren Birch and Ellen Waade. A long and elegant glass arcade (the thin skin), an imperative finger of light pointing towards the north, will be all the visitor first perceives as he crosses the bridge over the Ounasjoki. The arcade is simply a top hamper of circulation above the museum spaces which are to be burrowed into delicately moulded slopes of earth that come up and gently caress the flanks of the finger. Delicacy is one of the chief characteristics of this scheme—the slim glass tube tremulously touches the edge of the water. The beautiful



right: first prize—a finger of light pointing towards the Arctic
below: the sensual site plan







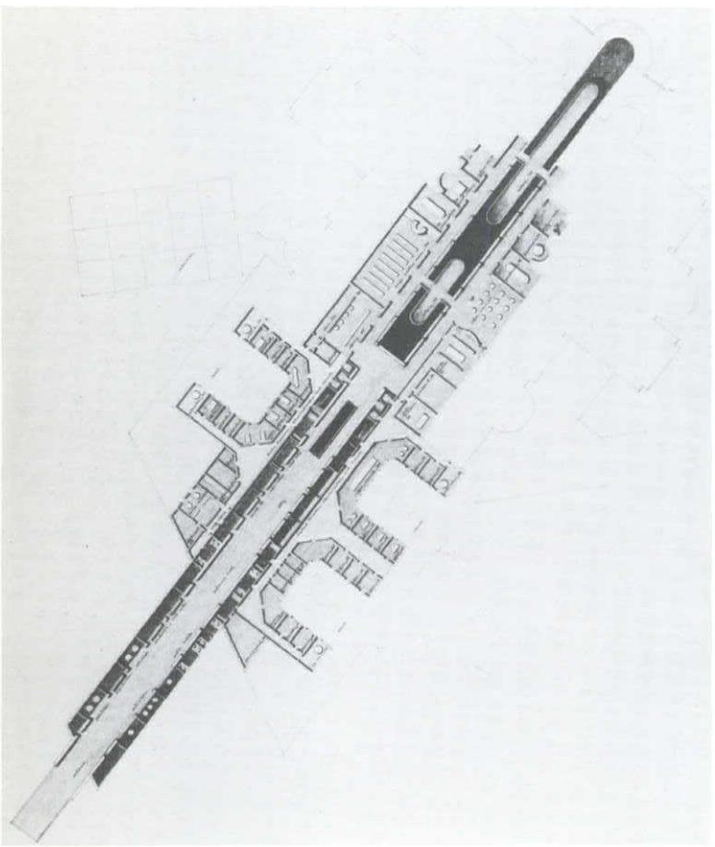
first prize: sections and elevations

ARCTIC CENTRE COMPETITION
Design by Claus Bonderup, Søren Birch and Ellen Waade

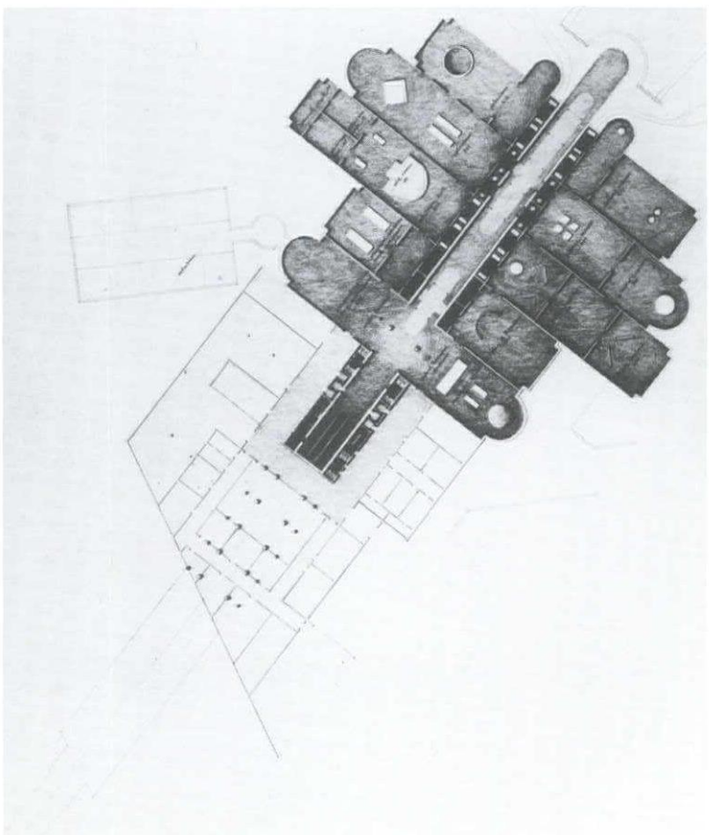
artificial island, on which the architects suggest that many of the outdoor ethnic demonstrations will be accommodated, echoes this sensibility. The island takes its generic form from the shapes of the Ounasjoki delta: they are strange, curved, tapered, sometimes anthropomorphic. In plan, how beautifully the left-handed shape of the artificial island almost—but not quite—caresses the artificially created breast-like bank of the river. No wonder that jury member Juhani Pallasmaa says that this scheme is 'the most sensual'.

The other end of the project is a different matter. A great tree-lined urban axis is projected into the town from an oval amphitheatre. Extending and echoing the line of the luminous finger is an avenue which, apparently, totally contradicts the jury's intention to reject 'models from the south where it is mild and warm'. It is difficult to imagine the boulevardiers of Rovaniemi wandering arm-in-arm in temperatures well below zero among the stunted Arctic trees.

But I suppose that when (if?—much money has still to be raised) the museum is built, the axis and its southern, almost colonialist gestures will be the last, most rethought, parts of the programme.



entrance level plan



basement level plan

ARCTIC CENTRE COMPETITION

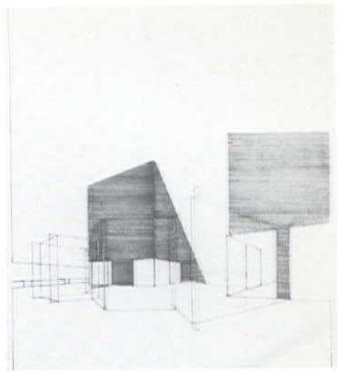
Design by Kai Wartiainen

While the first prize-winner is perhaps the most sensual entry, the third prize must be the most sensuous. Those walls of tarred timber blocks, the mounded earth, the simple red ochre fenestration in white walls seem of the essence of the Arctic. The architect, Kai Wartiainen, talks of the winter snow adhering to the great timber-faced south facade: 'it melts partly . . . revealing the dark wood and making icicles . . . (releasing) the smell of sun heated tar and melting snow'—sensuous indeed. The turf covered roofs, he says, 'live their lives in the rhythm of nature, green in the summer and snow-covered in the winter'.

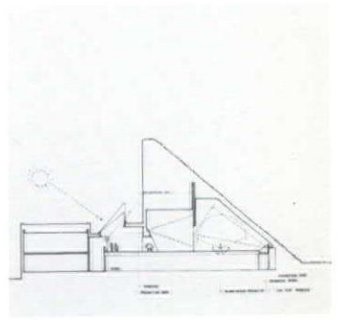
His intention was to make a structure which is 'a building to the town and an artificial mountain from the river'—an effect that is perhaps rather overdone. A vast amount of earth is heaped up to obtain the mountain and the wooden cliff. There is altogether too much poché in the section of the project to be remotely economic. But this problem could be remedied easily without destroying the essential qualities of the scheme—the more so because the plan is so elegant and sensitively organised. The building effectively turns its back on the rubbishy views of the bridge and the fringe of the town; like a hand it cups views from the entrance hall over the tranquillity of the river and the Arctic forests beyond. Very sensibly, the architect has concentrated the whole action on the riverside site, leaving the smaller site across the road for housing to make an effective visual edge to the town.



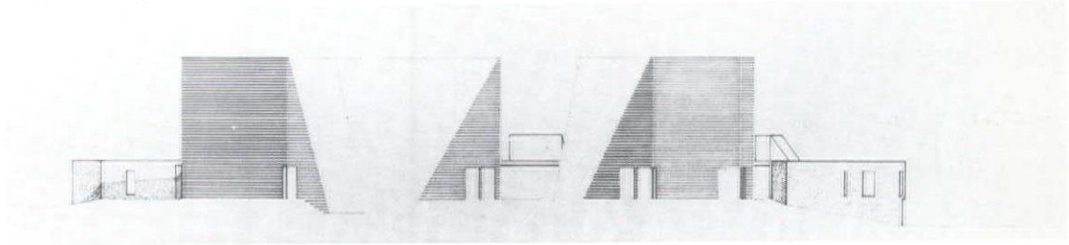
third prize: location plan



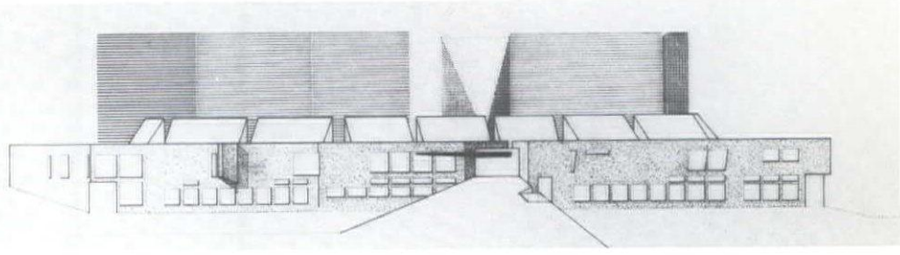
interior perspective

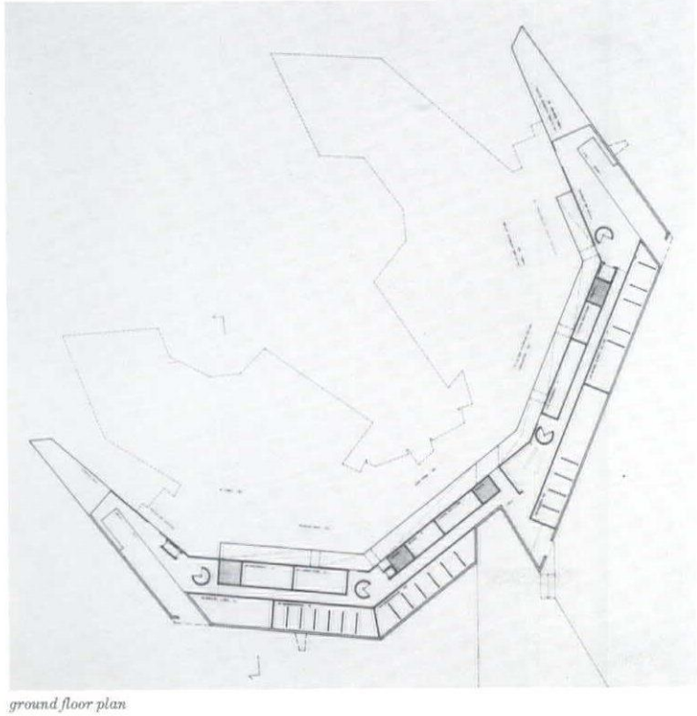


section

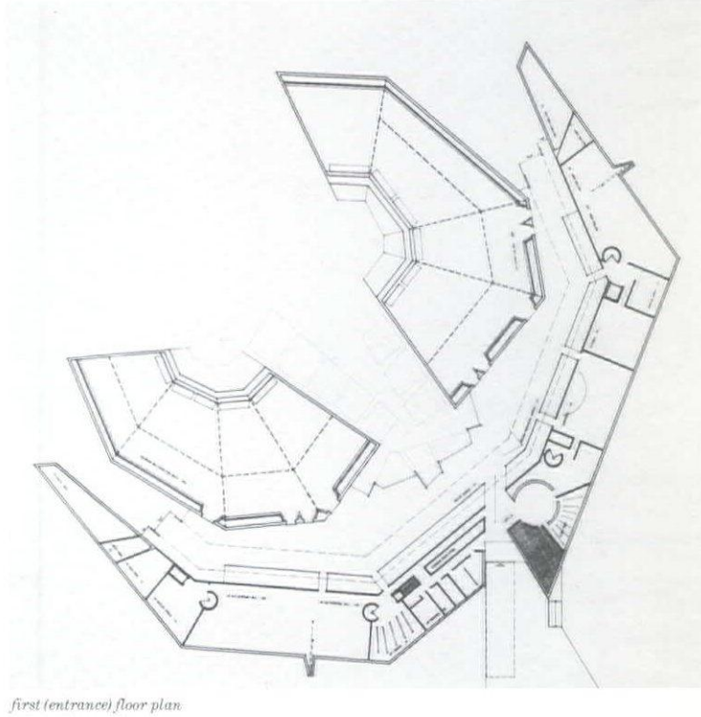


above: north elevation; below: south elevation (vertical elevation is of tar-covered timber)

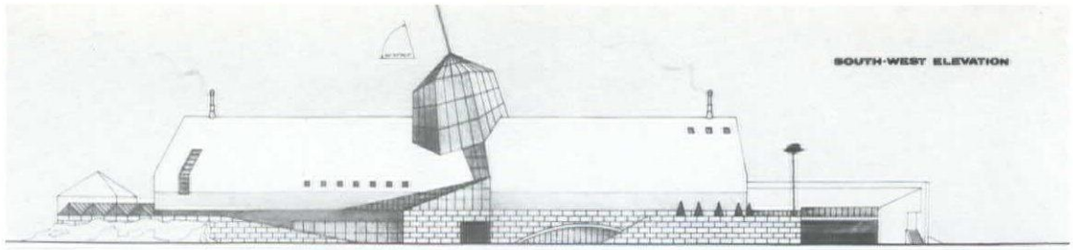


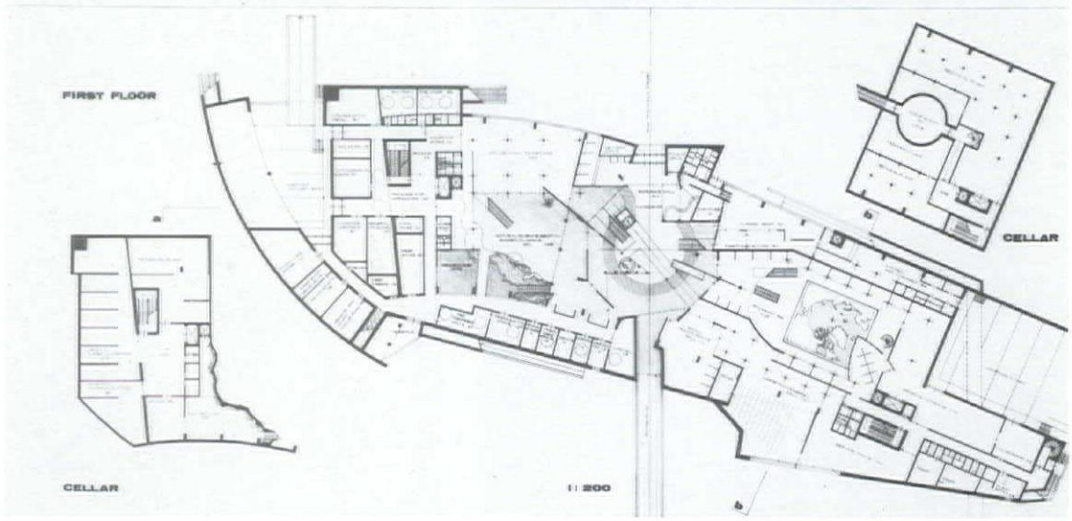


ground floor plan



first (entrance) floor plan



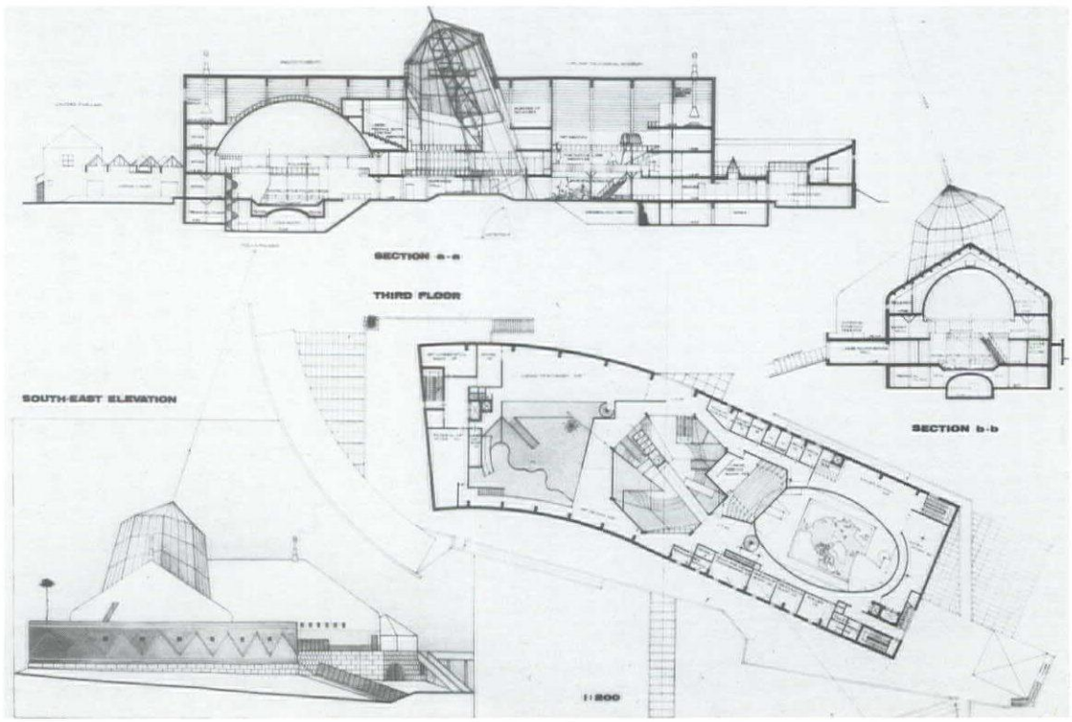


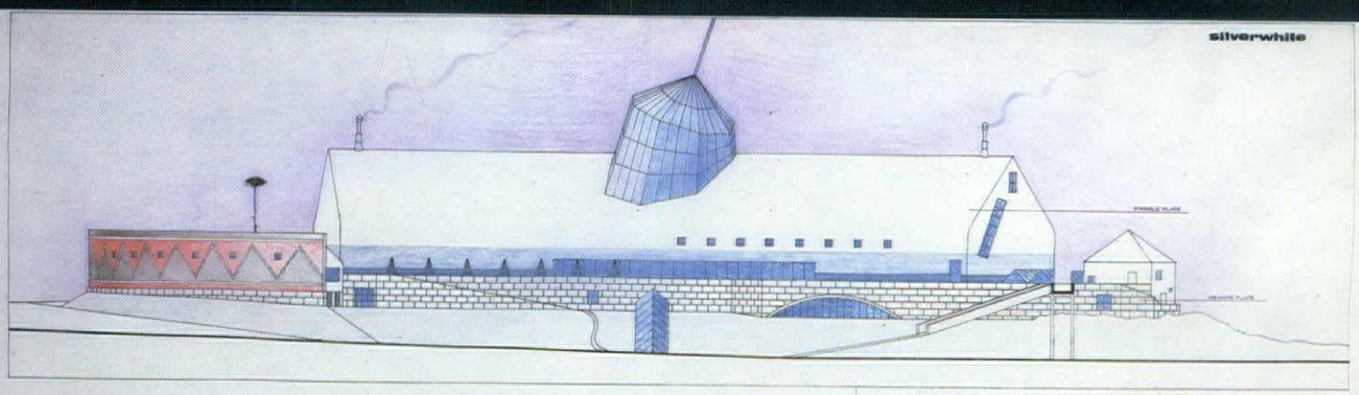
ARCTIC CENTRE COMPETITION

Design by Ain Padrick, Vilen Künnapu and Lennart Meri

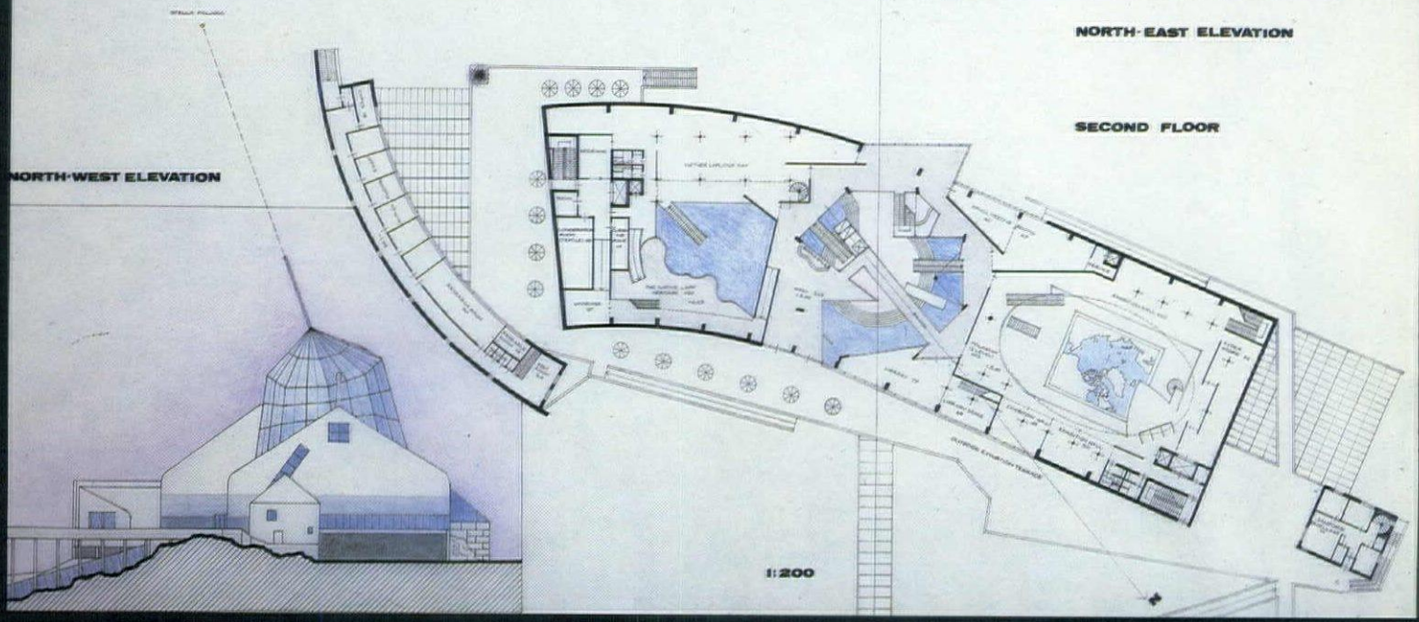
Of all the entries, 'Silverwhite' by Estonians Ain Padrick, Vilen Künnapu and Lennart Meri is the most ambitious attempt to make a building for the Arctic which can resonate with the tales of the northern peoples. Terminating the street from the station is a tapered glazed structure which points to the North Star, an evocation of the myth—to quote the designers—of the 'sacred world pillar which touches the sky at stella polaris' and supports the heavens. . . . Up this pillar, the shaman climbs to communicate with the spirits and it 'links space as well as time, connects the present with the past and hopes for the future.'

Any programme of this kind runs the severe risk of descending into trivial parody, yet the project triumphantly avoids the banal. A great white whale of a building clad in gleaming marble flexes round the smaller part of the site nearer the city. The ribs of the whale are of giant, commonplace (but economic) pointed concrete portals which allow five levels of museum activity to be freely and excitingly disposed within. As it writhes, the whale is savagely punctured by the glass harpoon of the heaven pillar, hurled from the essence of the north itself. The form of the glazed spear is taken from the cone-shaped koda, the oldest dwelling in the tundra. But it, and the body it transfixes, have been abstracted, and given so many complicated layers of different meaning that the design rises above any simplistic analysis. The jury said that the disposal of the functions 'into five floors . . . is undesirable and the 'symbolic character of the building is quite strong but somewhat alien in the context and scale of Rovaniemi'. Well, yes, but how much more romantic Rovaniemi would have been made, more the source of the mysteriousness of the Arctic, if this scheme were to have been built. If the first prize-winning project is the most sensual and sophisticated entry, and the third the most sensuously and quietly Finnish, 'Silverwhite' is the most mysterious, the most thought-provoking.





NORTH-EAST ELEVATION

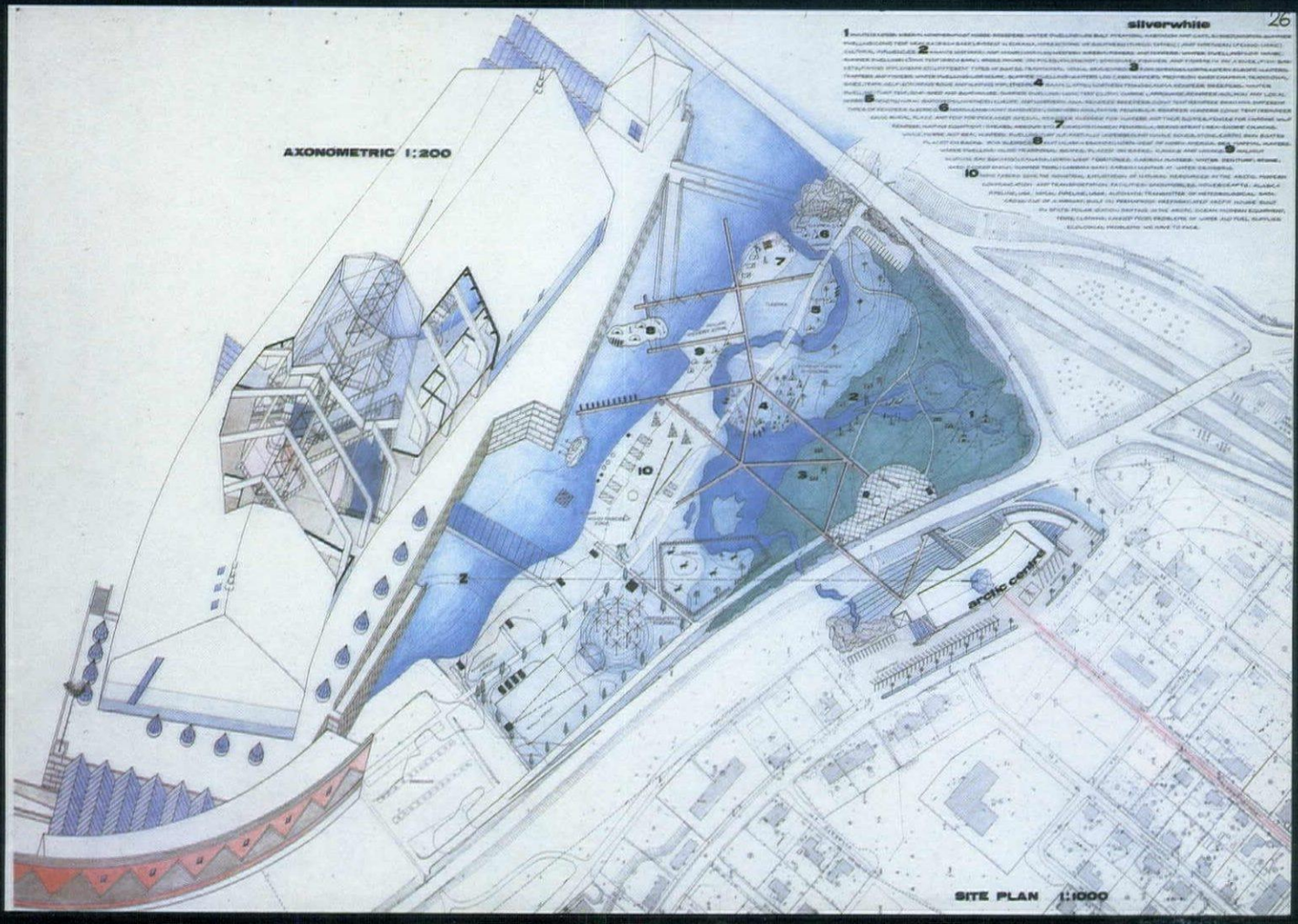


SECOND FLOOR

NORTH-WEST ELEVATION

1:200

AXONOMETRIC 1:200



SITE PLAN 1:1000

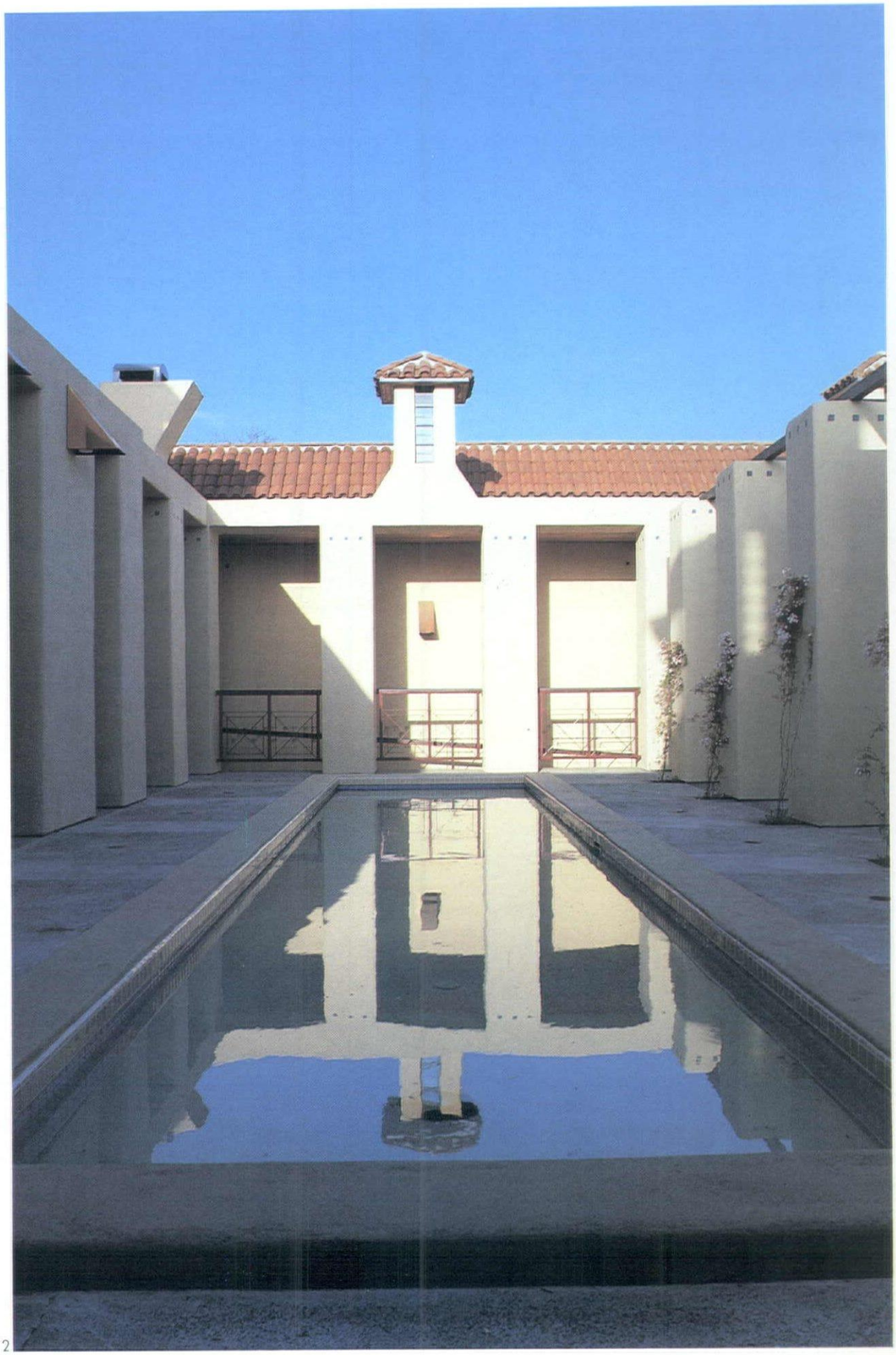
MISSIONARY GRAVES

Library, San Juan Capistrano, California
Architect
Michael Graves



1

Regionalism, as John Pastier explains on p55, is not one of Michael Graves' obvious preoccupations. But here, in the small library at San Juan Capistrano, Southern California, Graves consciously assimilates and abstracts the local architectural tradition—which itself is not all that it seems to be.

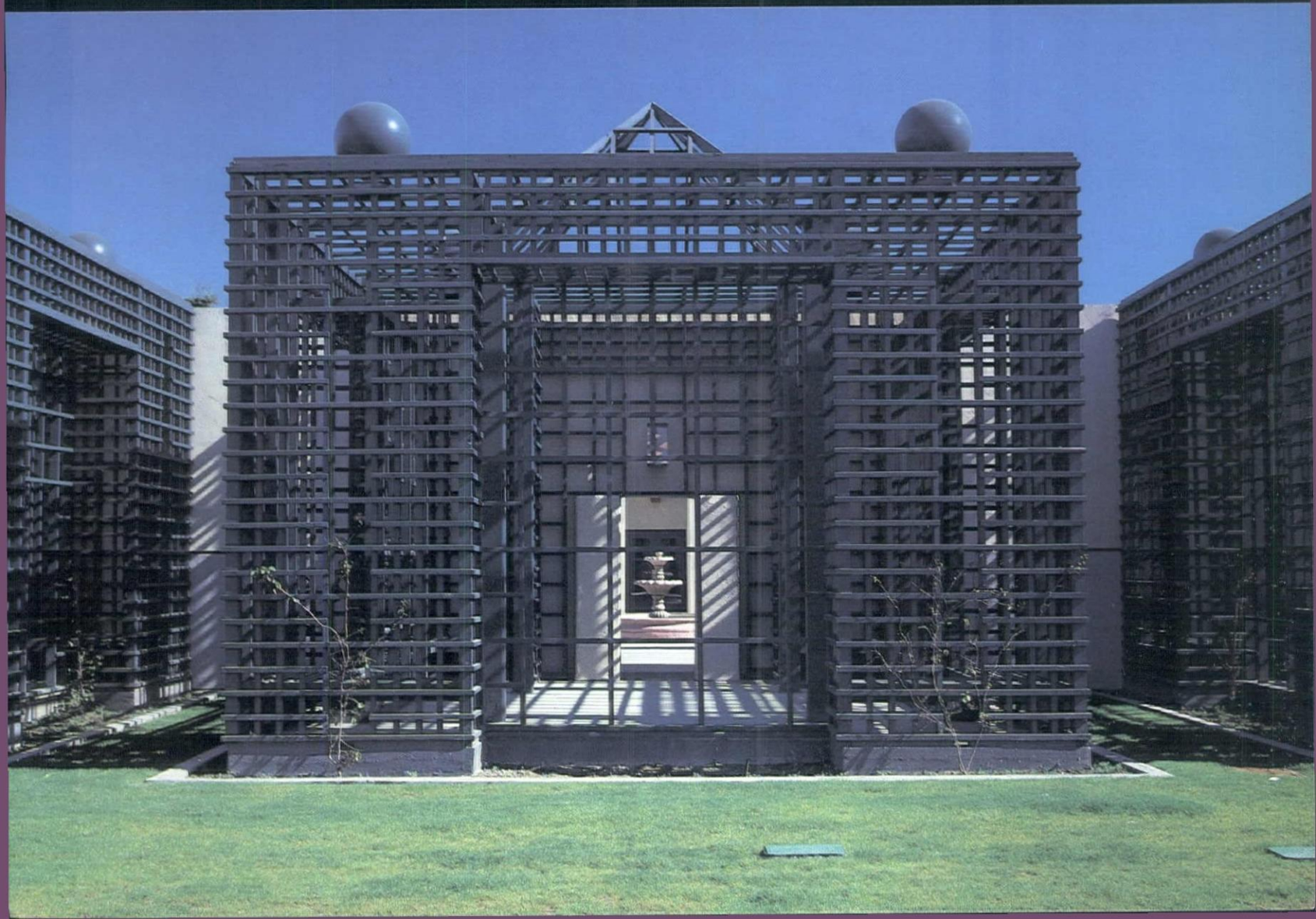


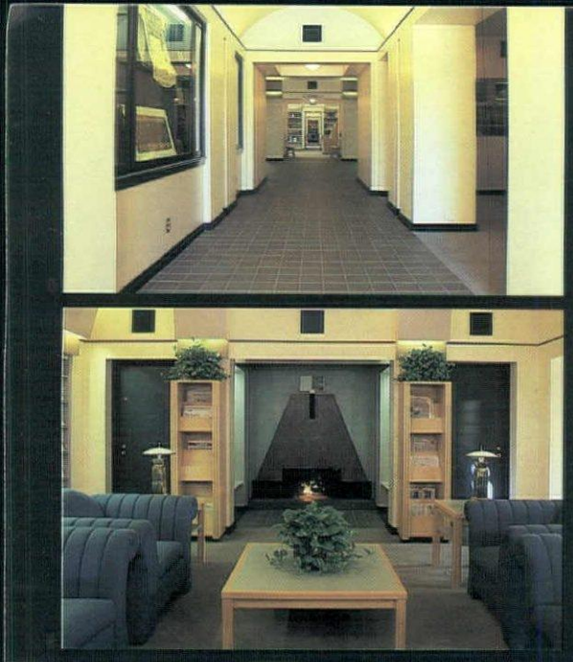
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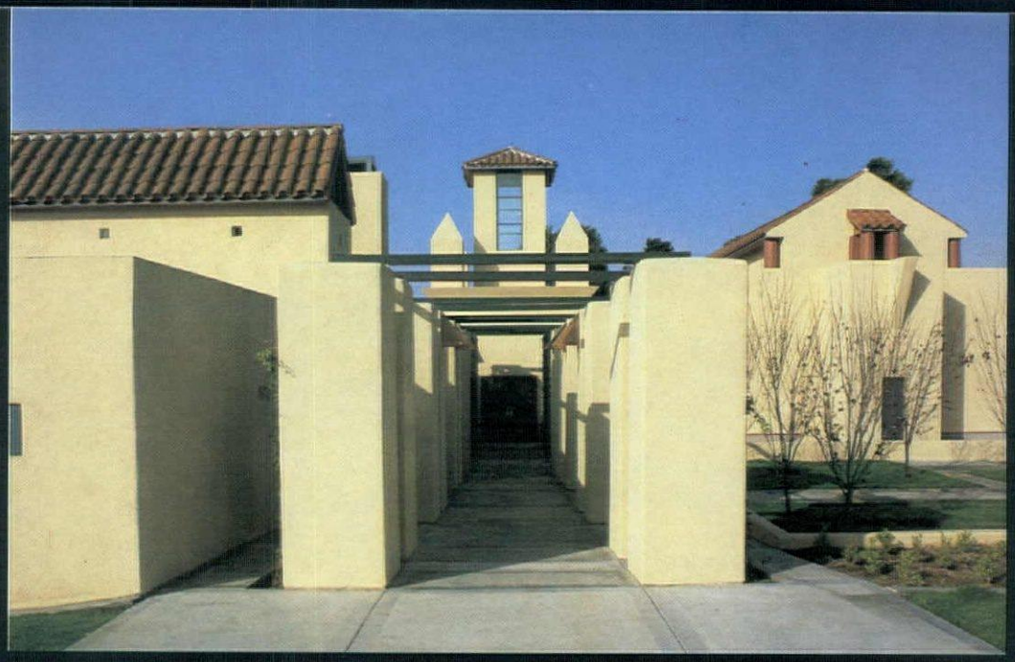
4

1, main entrance on south side is signposted by baldachino.
2, the calm Classical centre—the reflective pool which separates the main court from the auditorium complex.
3, from south-east, building is a collage of more-or-less abstracted Mission forms.
4, one of the reading gazebos—the response to 'a benign climate and an equally benign administrative policy'. 2



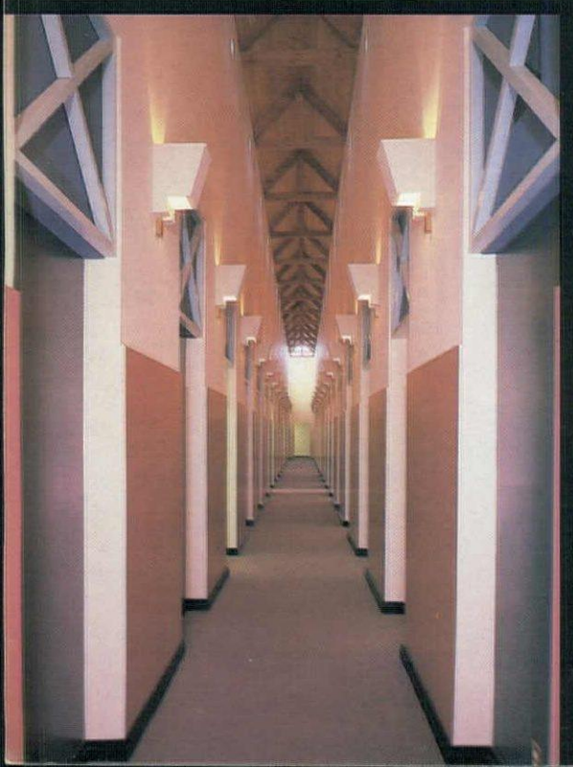












Library, San Juan Capistrano, California

Criticism

John Pastier

5 | 9
6
7 | 10
8



11

5, library entrance foyer with opening to charge desk right.
6, club-like reading room.
7, children's reading room: shades of the school house?
8, gallery which links the main elements of the plan.
9, Spanish overtones in pergola leading from east to auditorium foyer.
10, library court from central outdoor reading gazebo.
11, Graves' sketch of church door in Guatemala.
12, library in neo-Spanish context—'an entire civilisation in miniature'.

Regionalism is not the attribute that immediately springs to mind when one thinks of the buildings of Michael Graves. Nor is it a quality likely to be found in a southern California dormitory community, especially one that has grown fivefold over the last decade. Yet Graves' public library for the city of San Juan Capistrano, while unmistakably characteristic of his recent work and strongly similar to his Environmental Education Center in New Jersey, is about as clear a case of contemporary Regionalist design as can be found in greater Los Angeles.

This claim assumes a definition of Regionalism embracing the contradictions and fantasies that lie at the root of Californian consciousness. Capistrano itself is a paradoxical place, for although an instant suburb, it also contains a two-century-old partly ruined mission that is widely regarded as California's finest. The presence of this romantic monument has led the town to see itself symbolically in terms of its single, small pedestrian-scaled historic oasis rather than in terms of the automobile-dependent new development that constitutes nearly all of its physical fabric.

Appropriately, the San Juan Capistrano Library combines the stucco-on-lath pragmatism of southern California with the revivalist yearning for history that was strong in its fledgling towns at the turn of the century, and which has now returned like the mission's legendary swallows to the architectural profession itself. It addresses California's tradition of informality and outdoor living within a rigorously organised, visually solid building. It provides the town with a civic landmark that is at once an extension of its consciously manufactured indigenous style, and an up-to-date exercise in Graves' personal version of an internationally evolving Post-Modernism.

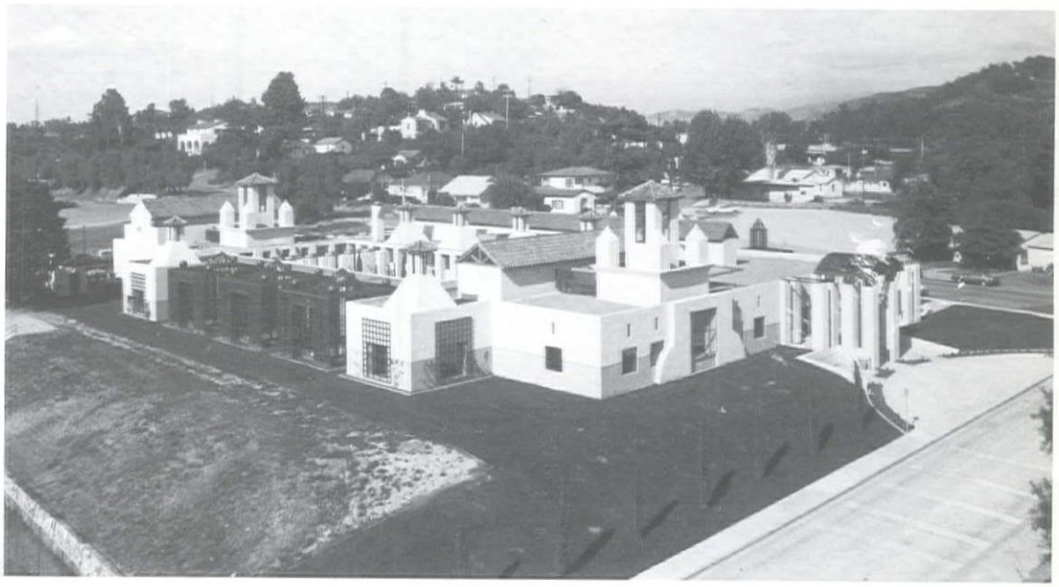
The civic process that led to its creation was an unusual blend of small town pride in the mission and its symbolism on one hand, and a more cosmopolitan ambition in seeking a designer of national stature on the other. Capistrano's is a Regionalism mandated by law as well as local sentiment; in 1980, shortly before Graves was awarded the commission, the city had drawn up design controls that made a loose version of the Mission and California Coastal styles a legal requirement for major buildings. The design guidelines' technical substance was largely the work of Charles Moore's Los Angeles office, Moore Ruble Yudell.

Moore would have been a more obvious choice for the library commission than Graves, since he was proximately based (at least to the extent that this definitive peripatetic could be said to be located in any single place), as well as a prime shaper for the city's newly minted official style. His own affection for the various Mediterranean revival styles of the region is legendary and longstanding, dating back to family vacation trips taken a half-century ago, and confirmed in 'The City Observed: Los Angeles', his just-published guidebook to southern Californian architecture.

But the library's architect was not selected according to location or attitude toward local stylistic traditions. Instead there was a national design competition in which the Princeton-based Graves, Moore, and Robert A. M. Stern of New York were designated as finalists late in 1980. Graves' submission was the least overtly Mission Revivalist of the three, but it was also the most closely related to the mission in its planning, and was the most elaborated and aesthetically resolved of the entries. Stylistic Regionalism was a central competition issue that proved to be a stumbling block for Stern, who confronted it too literally, and for Moore, who approached it a bit too playfully. By abstracting it and working with its spirit rather than its letter, Graves was able to turn a New World Spanish idiom into a reasonable and serious basis for his design.

Rather than adopting the style of the missions, he adopted their organising principles: his library is not just a building, but resembles, like California's Franciscan outposts, an entire civilisation in microcosm. Accordingly, it is an exercise in multiple axes and complex symmetries, in correspondences of volumes achieved both through replication and through interchange of solid and permeable forms, in processional space, and, most of all, in determined articulation. There is an underlying Spanish Colonial inspiration for the library, although not a Californian one: prior to its design, Graves had become intrigued with the early churches of Guatemala.

The Capistrano mission, just a block away from the library site, was not used as a specific model. The mission's main architectural component, its stone church, is in ruins due to an unmistakable regional influence: it was toppled soon after its completion in an 1812 earthquake. Across the street from the library is a just completed 'replica' of this church that contains little stone and is larger than the original, framed in steel, and not on the original site. This attitude toward history, also embodied a few freeway exits away at Disneyland, is unfortunately a common one in this land of instant gratification. Under the circumstances,



12

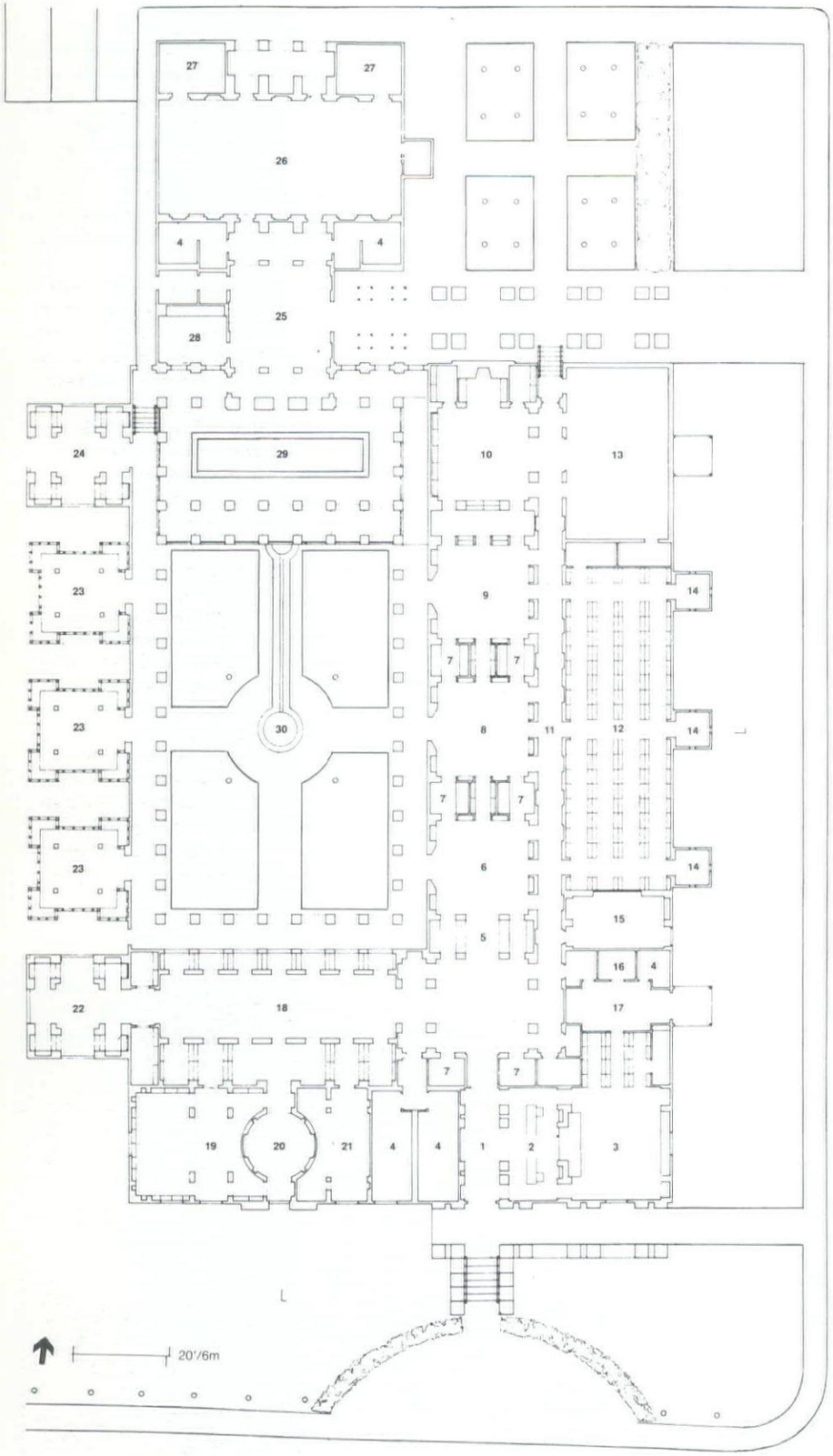


cross section

key

1. foyer
2. charge desk
3. work room
4. lavatory
5. information
6. reference
7. study carrel
8. young adults
9. Spanish collection
10. adults' lounge
11. gallery
12. stacks
13. garden
14. reading room
15. librarian
16. kitchenette
17. staff lounge
18. children's room
19. primary room
20. storytelling
21. conference
22. children's fiction
23. outdoor reading
24. Friends of the Library room
25. auditorium foyer
26. auditorium
27. storage
28. kitchenette
29. reflecting pool
30. fountain

plan



Graves' less than literal approach was the most astute course to follow.

Regardless of the architect's liberties and personal inventions, to a non-professional eye the building must doubtless appear well within the Capistrano idiom. And even to an architectural initiate, it demonstrates an appropriately Mediterranean spirit even if it is not a literal Mission Revival design. Its organisation around a central colonnaded atrium goes back to Roman, if not Mycenaean times, and its use of small windows in large expanses of masonry walls is a traditional thermal technique in societies having warm, sunny climates. Its pyramidal light monitors recall vernacular forms of southern Europe and northern Africa, while the towers over the children's wing and the auditorium lobby could easily be taken for Italian belfries. Gently irregular stucco work painted in soft colours, pergolas, a central garden with cypresses and a fountain, and red clay tile roofs further reinforce the somewhat rustic Mediterranean imagery.

Inside, the building's initial casualness gives way to a more overt design discipline. Here, the elaborate grids of Graves' plan are manifest in the form of long axes, layered spaces and screened vistas, and strictly arranged ranks of columns, lighting sconces, and door openings. Indoor and outdoor reading rooms align in stately and unflagging processions. Many of these devices were originally tried and refined by Graves in his famous Sunar showroom interiors (AR March 1983). The scale of the library's space is remarkably intimate, curiously less so in the children's wing than in the adults' section, but the feeling of geometric order is nevertheless paramount.

The library's various rooms are deftly linked, either visually or physically, to external spaces such as the courtyard, a smaller walled garden, and several lath gazebos. A benign climate and an equally benign administrative policy encourage reading in all these unconventional locations. Even the acts of entrance and departure occur through mediating devices such as the roofed colonnade around the courtyard, the lath-canopied one at the main entry, or the open one at the auditorium wing. But despite all this conscientious architectural integration, there is still a pronounced difference between the character of the exterior and interior.

Outside, the Capistrano library has its occasionally awkward passages (most obviously an overscaled window and frame to the left of its entrance), yet it is nevertheless a relaxed and undemanding artefact. Inside, it is remarkably worked out, perhaps to a fault. In a mere 14 000 sq ft, Graves has provided sufficient architectural incident to suffice for a building 10 or 20 times the size. There are frequent changes of scale and ceiling height; dozens of corridors and passages, many running parallel to one another just a few feet apart; more than a hundred doors

13, from north-east composition breaks to frame replica Capistrano mission church.
14, exit from auditorium has—confusingly—mini baldachino.



13



long section

and portals; multiple methods of bringing natural light inside; an intricate subdivision of rooms, and a complex colour scheme of the sort that has made Graves both famous and widely copied. All this elaboration is for the most part brilliant, but it can also prove a bit overwhelming in the long run. The rooms are intimate and furnished for comfort, but the architect's omnipresent virtuosity tends to compete with those reposeful qualities.

To some degree, the differences between Capistrano's facades and its innards grow out of materials and construction methods. The external surfaces are of stucco and meant to look massive and hand worked like traditional provincial masonry construction. They fulfil this intent, largely because there was concordance between aesthetic aim and construction technique. Inside, the surfaces are for the most part painted gypsum board, smooth, precise, and sharp-edged: a manufactured material well suited to modern architecture but not so readily responsive to Graves' humanistic intentions.

But despite these problems, the library succeeds on the whole. It manages to create dualities and resolve them successfully. It is novel yet also familiar, humanly scaled yet also substantial, respectful to the local aesthetic yet also very much the foreground building it was meant to be. Even its overstatements serve as an expressive purpose, and to the architecturally starved suburbanites of Orange County, Graves' bravura Regionalist essay must surely be one of the seven wonders of their recently created world.

Built for a reasonable $1·6 million (about $115 per sq ft), the San Juan Capistrano library is a casebook demonstration of the uses of space, scale, light, colour and processional circulation devices in a public building. Just as significantly, it combines those elements in a way that impresses itself strongly and positively upon its users. Attracted by its architecture, many librarians throughout the county system have applied for transfers to this somewhat remote branch. New borrowers' cards are being issued at the rate of a thousand per month, a remarkable record for a town of about 20 000 population.

It may seem surprising that this east coast transplant could thrive so vigorously on Pacific shores, but transplantation, after all, is one of the hardiest forms of Regionalism. Confirmation of this claim may be found as close as a block from Michael Graves' library, for California's missions demonstrated the principle most convincingly two hundred years ago.



14

Robert Harbison

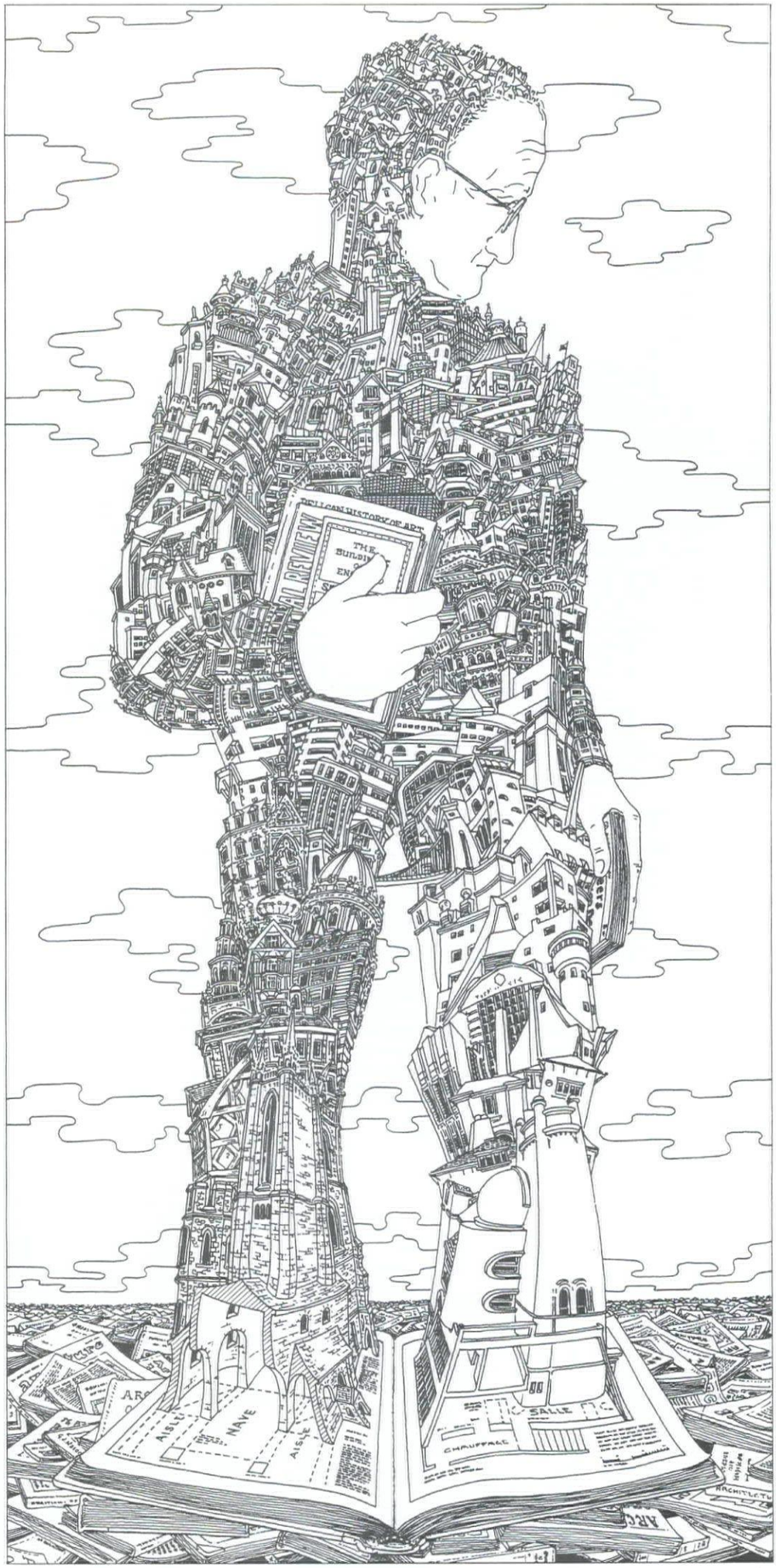
With Pevsner in England

Nobody did as much as Nikolaus Pevsner to document and further appreciation of the qualities —including Englishness—of the vast wealth and variety of English architecture. Now his greatest achievement, and self-built monument—'The Buildings of England', is being slowly updated. Robert Harbison (author of 'Eccentric Spaces' and 'Deliberate Regression') pays tribute and comments on the revisions.

In 1947 in a borrowed car running on rationed petrol Nikolaus Pevsner began a series of Easter and summer tours of the buildings of England which were to last 25 years, include 30 000 visits and result in 46 volumes (20 000 pages of text, several thousand of them by other authors). The size of the undertaking was correctly foreseen from the start: he thought it would consume 25 years and run to 50 volumes. He knew instinctively what others would have needed time to find out, that groundwork for a whole county should be thoroughly done before travel began, and that each day's visits must be written up immediately, before they got obliterated by the following day's.

Perhaps at first it is disappointing to learn that the secret of the series is an unvarying methodicalness. Yet the method exists to serve an un-humble and outrageous purpose: that one man should see and describe it all. For unlike other exhaustive works of this kind, Pevsner's guides are not anonymous, but near-miraculous marriages of thoroughness and individuality. This paradox sets them apart—their maker is both scientist and aesthete, collector and discriminator, and they are broad and deep.

However much one realises that the books had their antecedents and that their author saw his task matter of factly, they are objects of mysterious birth and he remains legendary,



GERALD NASON

Pevsner's appreciation for even the most bizarre, small-scale and out of the way items has brought to general attention such curiosities as:
1, Kedderminster screen in Langley Marish church, Bucks.
2, Up Marden church, Sussex.
3, room by Sir John Soane at Marden Hill, Herts.
4, cast-iron bench on Victoria Embankment, London.
5, west porch of Sunningwell church, Berks.

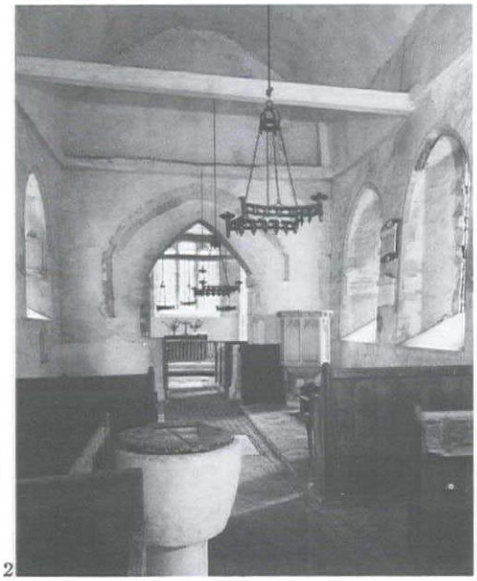
because one feels, as one does with Ruskin and with no common guidebook writer, the author's presence in the places he has been. So one is led to speculate about how the journeys were broken and what the weather was like. And one is not surprised to learn that these were tours which went on whatever the weather, because one county must be covered in each college vacation. Bridget Cherry remembers Pevsner musing on the way to Peterborough in snow that his Birkbeck students would see now that this study wasn't all comfort and ease.

One must be thankful that it was only at the end of his life he asked very insistently why he had driven himself so hard, and glad also that he


1

wasn't liable to doubt that any sizeable number would want to know all he was gathering. How can one tell if the right audience exists even now, because sales figures and thefts from libraries may mean other things than full appreciation? The series exists because he powerfully wanted it to, and others ought to, and would (he hoped) come to.

It isn't the work of someone racked by doubts or even second thoughts. When he says at the end of the farewell foreword in the last volume[1], that the first editions are only trial balloons, and the second editions (now in the care of Bridget Cherry and Elizabeth Williamson) are what really matters, he is teasing in a way his old readers recognise, but much in earnest. By most standards they are sound and permanent works; in his more distant perspective they are perfectible and in need of improvement. His faith that he can leave this to others seems more justifiable in the year after his death than it has ever seemed before—for Bridget Cherry's *London 2: South* and Elizabeth Williamson's *County Durham*, out last year, are the most thoughtful tributes to his

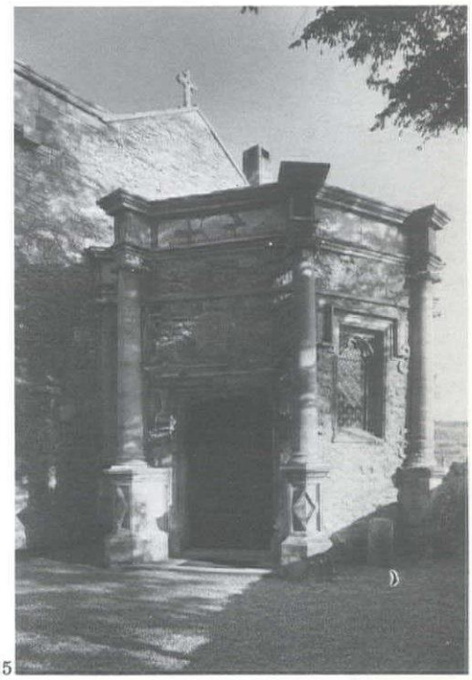

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3


4

guidance and to the soundness of the foundation he laid.

It sounds odd to accuse someone who projected so grandly of practicality, but a key feature of his plan, as he saw it, was that it was compassable in a single lifetime. When he predicted that at the present rate the wonderfully full volumes of the Royal Commission for Historical Monuments[2] would take 200 years to complete their coverage of England, he knew it was an unrealistic projection, for any purpose continued that long would drastically have changed, not to speak of alteration in the objects of its attention, or in the world to which it published its results. Pevsner is distinguished by having maintained a place


5

somewhere between eternity and ordinary human haste, a compromise which allowed him to finish the whole Herculean structure, even if at times in skeletal form which requires later fleshing out.

One's estimate of *The Buildings of England* (or the buildings of England) is partly dependent on what one is comparing them with. For both the books and the structures Pevsner knows the Continental prototypes or analogues. Initially it makes his conception (not its carrying-out) seem less miraculous to remind readers of Georg Dehio's *Handbucher der deutschen Kunstdenkmäler*, which covered Germany in five volumes published in 1905-12.

Opening the first edition of Dehio any user of Pevsner will experience twinges of recognition: the simple two-page map in front peppered with names of towns, villages and houses, but no other features (rivers and roads omitted), a gazetteer which plunges immediately into details of orientation and construction and uses so much shorthand for recurring parts and styles it sometimes reads like telegraphese, a striking

With Pevsner in England

Pevsner also sought out, appreciated and drew attention to such extraordinary and difficult-to-classify architects of recent history as E. S. Prior, who built the Home Place in Holt, Norfolk, 6, between 1903-5.

absence of building or town plans and a consequent reliance on the word.

If Dehio is the inspirer of Pevsner's brevity (not so marked in any of his collaborators, who lack his long experience of zipping through Dehio *on the spot* looking for details he may have missed), from the beginning he allows himself more room, so he needn't *assault* the reader with information, and preserves many signs of a personal response.

The series undergoes a metamorphosis to be sure; volumes get longer and descriptions fuller, a creeping advance without sharp demarcation which occurs in the late '50s and early '60s, partly spurred by new sources of information, but also signalling a mellower, more comfortable inhabiting of the whole idea. This process can be charted, yet already in the first volumes one finds the conviction that art is an individual communication made to individuals, to remove the traces of which (as Dehio does in the interest of efficiency) is a kind of betrayal[3].

Reprints of Dehio remain unillustrated to this day; it is an austere tool. Though the German series has undergone amplification roughly similar to what we see in later editions of *The Buildings of England*, it remains focused on important buildings, the real monuments of art, not bizarre tidbits or enjoyable minor things. To understand Pevsner's modification of the German model it is helpful to know the Royal Commission volumes which include pictures of seventeenth-century grafitti, old locks, cropmarks, estate maps, and details of wood and brickwork. In one of the four volumes for Northamptonshire covering archaeological sites alone, a dismantled tramway at Blisworth used for four years (1801-5) to carry diverted canal traffic while a tunnel was built is carefully mapped and described. In fairly vacant parishes of West Cambridgeshire one can just about keep pace with the accumulation of detail (while losing patience with an unvarying order for describing churches: chancel, nave, north then south aisles, tower, roof, fittings, remembering Pevsner's way of seizing first the oldest or most remarkable feature) but the volume for the city of Oxford induces feelings of defeat. To open this without panic one would need a definite goal beforehand: a single college, or a single feature: fireplaces.

For those who have ever felt swamped by Pevsner or suspected he is making an inventory disguised as a guide this is a useful experience. RCHM tomes are not much help for planning journeys, unless one wants to confine oneself to non-defensive medieval houses in Glamorgan; to deserted villages, erased fishponds and rabbit warrens in Northamptonshire; or to the city of York. Besides which one needs a large desk to accommodate them, such as one finds in no cars and few hotel rooms.

Not that the idea of a guidebook is as easy to plot the edges of as one might think. Perhaps one shouldn't even leave aside abuses of the word where 'guide to . . .' means a fairly detailed book on a subject, with plentiful pictures and no claim to definitiveness. 'Things you must know, arranged so that it is easy to look them up, with multiple means of approach to the same entry.'

Cookbooks may be read without reference to a particular meal and dictionaries even though one is not at a loss for words, but these are dilettante or philosophical uses of devices meant as tools. Likewise guidebooks and journeys—one reads more in earnest when about to set off in a particular direction, or maybe you only need to feel that the hypothetical trip would be an easy one to take. This stage of journeys, at home beforehand with maps and guidebooks, can be omitted, which reduces the scale of travel by disregarding the nearly identical or vastly dissimilar rivals by which any journey undertaken for pleasure is surrounded.

Though 'guidebooks' to bird and flower species always include rudimentary maps, they are really taxonomies not guides, which identify without being able to locate their objects. If one's maps are good enough, most buildings can be more or less infallibly located (though in an amusing foreword to the first volume of *The Buildings of Ireland*, Alistair Rowan suggests that names and distances are less constant there, and a traveller's existence therefore less certain) but even the best directions will not undo a demolition or soften an uncooperative vicar.

Pevsner became impatient with all the silly things 'guidebooks' to English counties were full of, unreliable anecdotes of local characters, as if the author's goal were to haunt churchyards and houses with as many ghosts as he could collect. So Pevsner sometimes reminds us that he includes only things which can be seen, which means archaeological sites that don't show above ground will be omitted, as will buildings which have disappeared or were never built. Sometimes he says he must leave a non-survivor out even as he tells you what it is. However downright one decides to be, one can't ignore how things might once have been in explaining how they got to be the way they are, and he often conjures up the Saxon church which preceded the one now occupying the space, not because it makes the present clearer, but in simple love of what is lost.

There is another boundary mostly enforced but selectively relaxed to let through interesting intruders, the line between architecture and other sorts of construction, mainly vernacular and industrial building. It was part of his original rigour that picturesque or sentimental interest was to give way to aesthetic, and every object to be judged on palpable not associational merit, but, as in all histories, earlier remains had, because of their rarity, an easier time. For Pevsner, as not perhaps for all students of architecture, anything medieval has automatic claim to notice even if he feels (as he does with many castles and town walls) it makes no aesthetic effect at all.

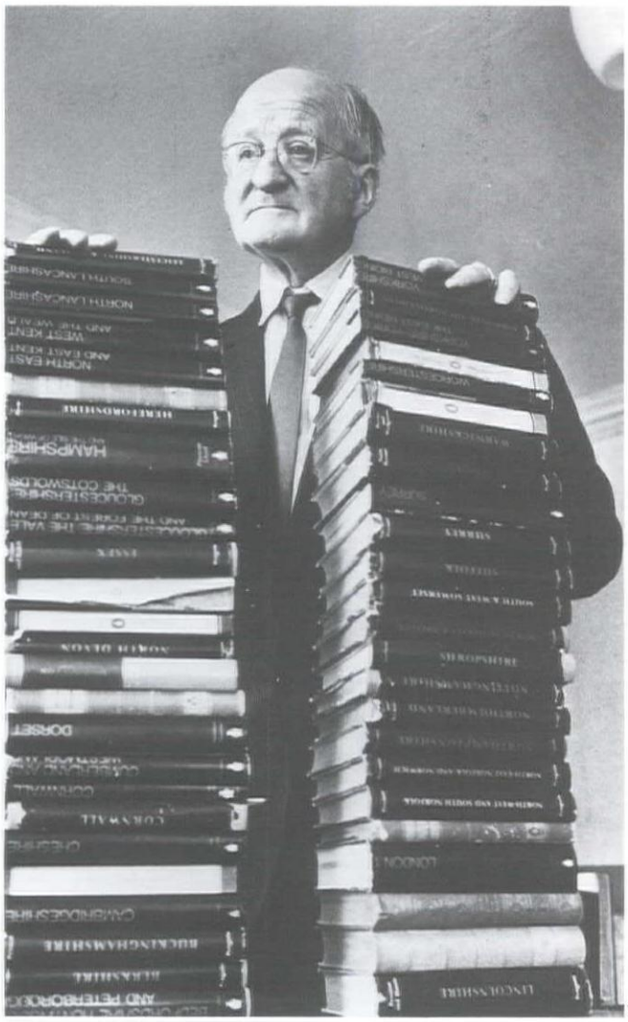
He might have been mildly unhappy to see vernacular and industrial buildings now making quiet inroads (most noticeably in *London 2: South*, but previously in *Lothian* ['Buildings of Scotland']. Although he didn't have much time for them[4] he could have blamed himself in part for alerting people to the presence and interest of these types. As happened with the noisiest Victorian architecture, Pevsner's omnivorousness made forays into the untried tastes which were later to constitute the entire diet of specialists who went on to upbraid him for lukewarm commitment to their *idées fixes*.

If pumping stations, warehouses, mills, and barns are extra-architectural, as one must admit they substantially are, they loom large and impress themselves on the traveller, who feels



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7. Nikolaus Pevsner with his most towering achievement, the many volumes of 'The Buildings of England'.



7

more at home in a landscape whose extractive industries or characteristic working and sleeping spaces he begins to understand. As they are sometimes more like facts of nature than more artful structures, they form part of the permanent setting in which everything else takes place. And it is finally impossible to keep one's aesthetic emotions for those objects which have conscious designs on them. Pevsner always felt the attachment of buildings to landscape, without presuming to indulge in diversionary raptures about the natural world. It seems a legitimate extension of the series' scope to take more notice of these sturdy artefacts, located somewhere between the pretensions of art and the constancies of nature.

The series will go on widening its users' approach to the physical world, in ways true to the spirit if not always the letter of its founder. The new *London* volume has begun to make me look differently at Board schools, Edwardian Baroque, and older housing estates. Of course there will be those who prefer to re-view the best buildings instead of chasing the fool's fire of completeness. Pevsner visited a new nineteenth-century church each time he went to Paris; Ruskin returned to buildings he had already tested. *The Buildings of England* can accommodate both: fierce selectivity which seeks only the sparsest sprinkling of highlights, and the passion for obscure crannies, or for finding all that survives in some tiny chosen plot.

Only grudgingly does one accept that Pevsner ever overlooks anything, so it comes as a shock to hear that interiors are often undescribed not because unworthy, but because he slipped past the gate to scan front and back, peer in at the stairs, and leave before being noticed. Nor does one seriously try to pick out those churches seen at the end of the day when a mental glaze has set in. Pevsner's work begins to have the air of the superhuman, itself a monument which awakes a toppling urge in others (hence David Watkin's *Morality and Architecture*).

Critics now point out that Pevsner was a child of his time, prevented by his allegiance to the International Style from full appreciation of its competitors, a truth he was preternaturally cognizant of himself and transcended by self-questioning. Thus, for example, his essentially unsympathetic depictions of Lutyens sometimes probe the buildings more perceptively, less trivially, than the advocates can.

Many will occasionally feel, as Pevsner himself did, that his long devotion to the counties was an insane and limiting commitment, preventing him from many other things (and making his last book *Building Types* discontinuous like a gazetteer). As a feeling about *The Buildings of England* this is only surfeit brought on by the user's overindulgence. The series is an inexhaustible mine which will last a lifetime, continually inviting one into further corners, multiplying and complicating one's idea of what England is.

Notes

1 *Staffordshire*, 1974, p18.

2 British Library houses these conveniently on open shelves.

3 A spritely wit plays around many of Pevsner's sentences. One sample from *North-West and South Norfolk* (1962):
SHADWELL PARK
¼ m S of Brettenham
The house was originally built *c*1720 by John Buxton, an amateur, who also built Bixley Hall. The park with a lake of 16 acres was made by his son. His grandson in 1789 employed *Soane* to make alterations. There were more alterations or even a rebuilding by *Blore* about 1835-40. However, thanks to the thoroughness of Sir Robert Jacob Buxton and his architect *S. S. Teulon* nothing remains of all this, except perhaps the fireplace in the drawing room. Teulon's work, which was carried out in 1857-60, is prodigious. No effort was spared to combine heavyweight Gothic structure with the most intricately carved detail. Symmetry was taboo throughout. The centre of the entrance(E) side *eg* has a tall tower with an oriel on figure corbels and a round stair turret starting only half way up, again on a figure corbel. . . .

4 According to one of his co-workers vernacular and industrial interested him mainly as sources for certain nineteenth- and twentieth-century practitioners (respectively) of architecture proper. His other blind spot (this colleague thinks) was English Palladianism, which left him colder than he usually said.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to Dieter Pevsner and Bridget Cherry for telling me about the progress of the series. I have also benefited from Mrs Cherry's pamphlet prepared for the Penguin Collectors Society: *The Buildings of England: A Short History and Bibliography* (available from Penguin at £2·25). The *Times* obituary of 19 August 1983 gives an informed and sympathetic account of Pevsner's life and work.

Aldo van Eyck

TROPICAL LAFOUR

In the latter part of his stay in Surinam, Lucien Lafour—whose work is introduced here by Aldo van Eyck—worked in partnership with Rikkert Wijk, a partnership that continues in Amsterdam today. The buildings shown here are a product of that partnership. To fully appreciate them a feel for the local climate is necessary, as described on p65.

Some 10 years ago, when Lucien Lafour left the Netherlands to live in Surinam (and perhaps to build something there), I made up my mind that as soon as there was something in being I would write about it. There were several reasons for this decision.

I already knew intimately the particular tropical country that Lucien Lafour had decided to go to. Like Lucien, I had grown up there from a distance; my mother and her family were from Surinam and some of them still live there; and my grandfather knew more, I think, than anyone else about it. Moreover, the real nature of architecture—here and elsewhere (ie the subject in its broadest sense)—is what interests me. And Lucien Lafour, too—a friend and colleague for at least 20 years. The reader will by now have realised that my decision to write something involved no risk. I knew that if he ever did succeed in building there, the results would be more or less as they are, and those are truly not trifling.

Anyone familiar with the problems of building in places where things are different from here will certainly be more surprised than others that there it really has proved possible to put up buildings that work, *that function well and that also* belong *there. That the achievement of something so obvious as a good building (for that's what it comes down to, after all) should occasion surprise says quite a lot about the present state of this discipline. And surprise is not just because here are some good buildings made for people who live in completely different circumstances, but because who else is there still genuinely engaged in the making of buildings which, for* whoever *and* wherever, *work well in being functional and belonging. That's what counts and is timeless, after all.*

There, where circumstances are quite different, people still tend to repeat or follow what is standard here (and not really usable here either) with even more disastrous results. As to what must inevitably follow, when the present trend towards the (empty) autonomous gesture, which refuses to take account of such things as place and function, spreads to the whole of 'the rest' of the world, I would rather not imagine. Because there, far less even than here, one cannot allow oneself the luxury of mischievous nonsense.

Publishing these buildings gives an opportunity to reflect on this for a moment, to give it proper consideration and to adopt a standpoint. To show how completely of their time—'modern'—buildings can look when they are made in a way that responds well to specific circumstances, and assimilates them both spatially and in construction. It would equally well have been that the specific conditions were, say, very changeable temperatures, cold and constant wind, instead of consistently high temperatures and humidity, tropical rain and little wind. These buildings in Surinam should actually be seen just as good professional products.

Lucien Lafour, who was born and grew up in Holland and acquired his professional training there, has just completely realised his ideas about space, light, material, dimension, function, etc—ie about architecture—in Surinam. Now that he is back in Holland, his strongly developed openness to 'specific' circumstances (and where do these not exist?) will undoubtedly ensure that what acquired characteristic form in Surinam will also do so here. The form will be different here, but the process of arriving at it is no different from there—indeed, is precisely the same.

As far as I know, Lucien Lafour is the first to have shown how it really is possible to build well in Surinam: he has given an impulse that can be carried further: test empirically, observe, improve—do! again and again, until it becomes possible to say, 'Look, that's how we do it here—how we function well in what we build'.

I cannot actually think of any more telling examples (from that overlarge 'third' of the world, at least) of new buildings which can be said without exaggeration to be right—right for the place where they stand. Here in the West too, where everything is so different, such buildings are so scarce that quantitively speaking hardly anyone benefits from them. We would in any case do well to regard what Lucien Lafour has built in Surinam as a confirmation and continuation of the fundamental values that Functionalism originally advocated.

There is a lot that could be said about the buildings themselves, but I shall just make one or two comments here. The clinic is characterised, it seems to me, by the way it receives people all round at the sides as generously as it catches the rain all round from above, for the 'gutters' here are at the same time roofs, actually of the concrete verandahs below. These support the wooden canopies, which work like enormous lungs. A real boon, that great shady world underneath, where there is always a bit of a breeze. It could be said that there is a good understanding here between the building and specific local circumstances, wind, rain and heat. And in this connection, look how sunlight and shadow, light and dark, inside and outside, open and closed, appear to full advantage both in gradation and contrast—everything diversified, adjustable. Without expensive mechanical aids, a good climate is achieved by means of the building itself.

In the tropics an awful lot of people often wait long and patiently every day for something that sometimes isn't there at all—in dust and appalling heat. People in Marienburg who go to Lucien's clinic ill, weary and apprehensive will be made to feel a bit better by the way the building receives them and lets them stay. If this isn't a good and beautiful building, I don't know one. I even regard it as an archetype for the tropics. What that might mean can well be imagined, for the tropics are as big as the needs that exist there.

In conclusion, just a word about that school beside the water. It clearly shows what beauty can be created with very modest means . . . and also what can still be achieved, when through respect, understanding, affection, patience and skill *an old Indian woman of over 80 was prepared—dared—to proceed to transfer the circular designs she normally did in dark pigment on her tribe's dance drums directly and faultlessly into the wet mortar, vertically, on enormously enlarged circular surfaces (which probably appeared 'big' to her in relation to the limited reach of her arm).*

I think that both the building and its decoration have to do with shaping culture—but then that is axiomatic.

TRANSLATED BY PATRICIA WARDLE

Facing page: school at Galibi.
1, aerial view shows school beside waters of Marowyne estuary.
2, festival drums with typical decorations.
3, patterns being incised in wet plaster by old woman.
4, close-up elevation of the classroom with finished circular panel between windows and timber louvres.



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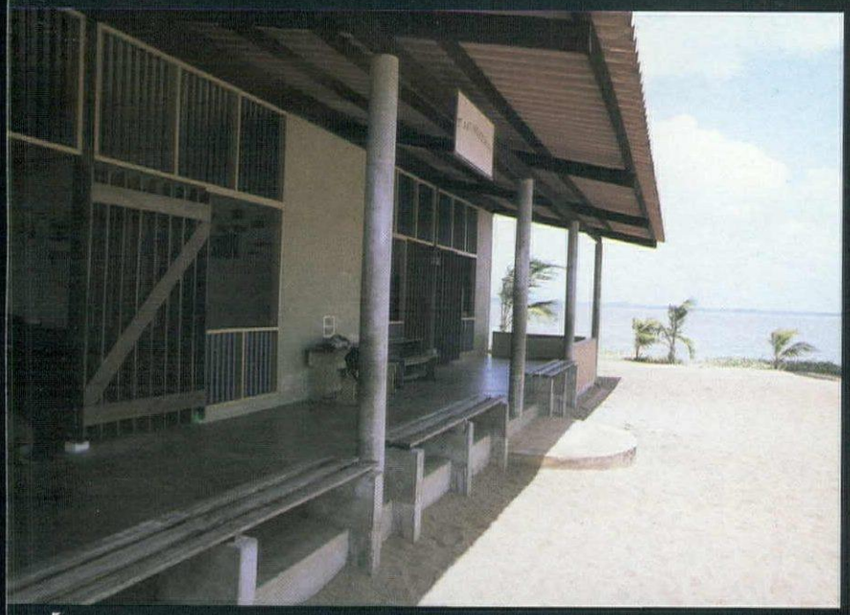


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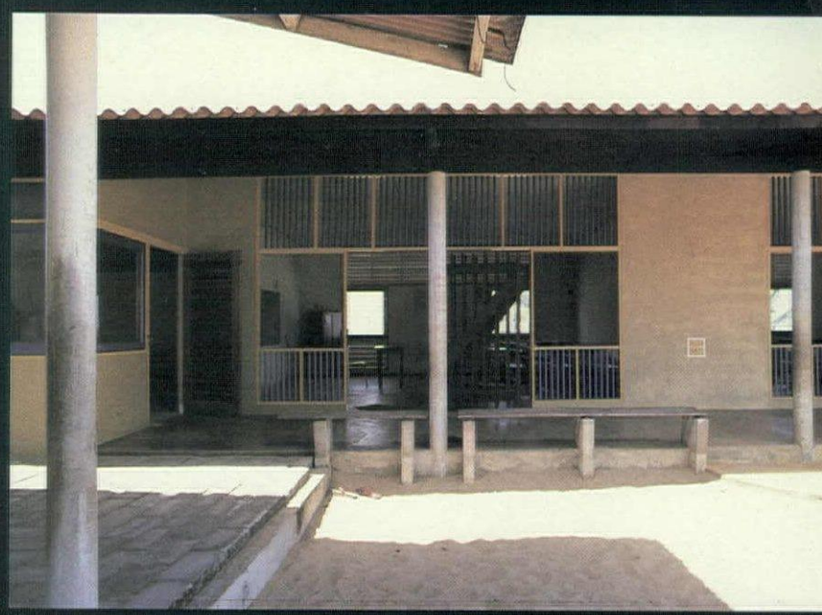


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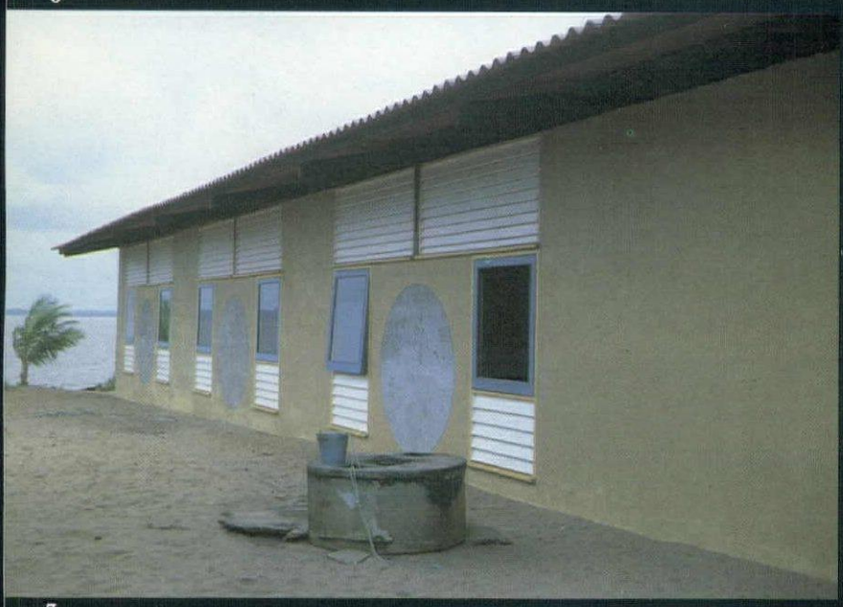
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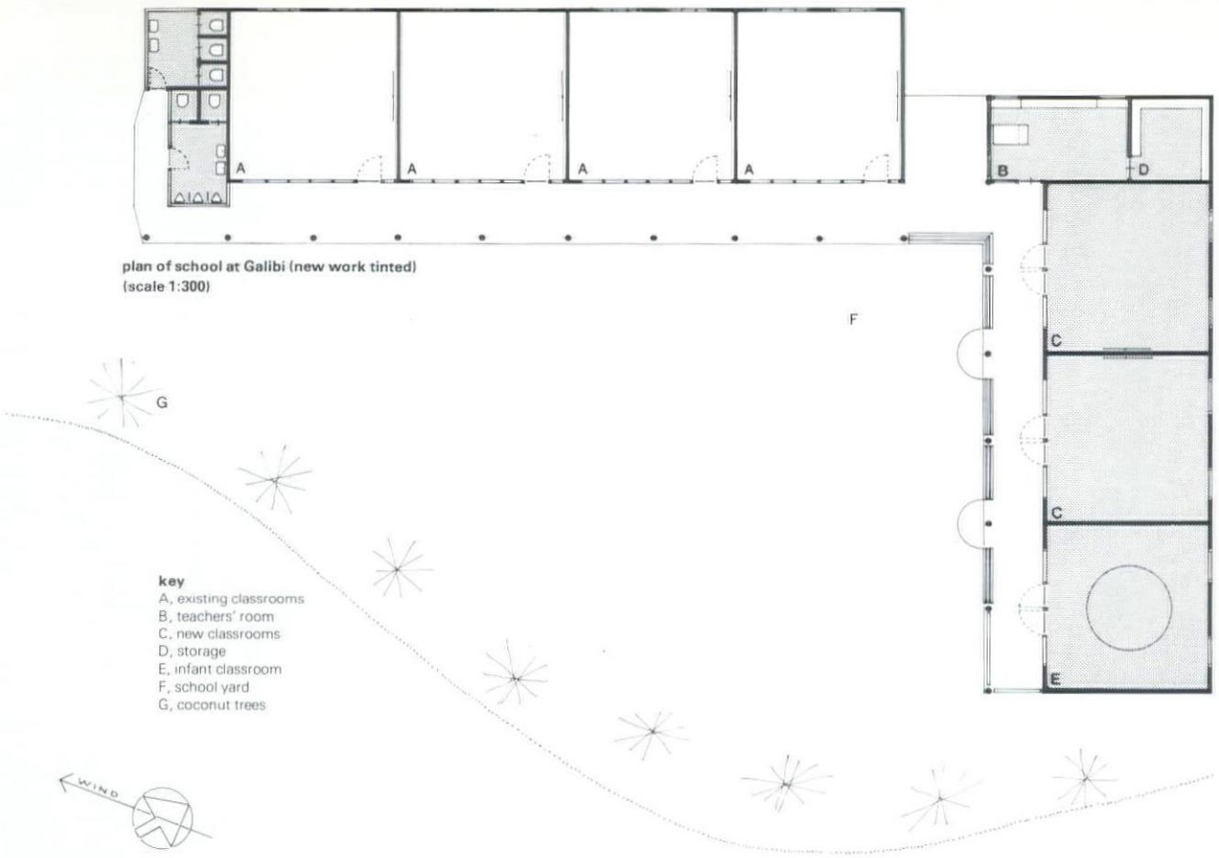
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9





plan of school at Galibi (new work tinted)
(scale 1:300)

key
A, existing classrooms
B, teachers' room
C, new classrooms
D, storage
E, infant classroom
F, school yard
G, coconut trees

THE CLIMATE

Surinam, on the north coast of South America, has a typical tropical climate of hot sun, high and fairly constant temperatures, and high rainfall and humidity. Average temperature is 27 degrees C (maximum midday temperature 31 degrees C, minimum night-time temperature 23 degrees C), average unobstructed sunshine 58 per cent, rainfall 2000 mm, relative humidity 80-95 per cent and prevailing wind a gentle north-easterly. Rain comes in short, heavy showers clearing quickly to sunshine again.

If a building in this climate is to be air-conditioned, then it must be highly insulated and airtight. But if, as in these buildings, such expensive and energy-guzzling devices cannot be afforded, then the climate must be exploited to achieve comfortable internal conditions. With the high temperature and high humidity, constant air movement—what in Europe would be an insufferable draught—is what is needed. Buildings and rooms are deployed to invite in the wind, with walls and roofs shaped and perforated to encourage the wind to flow through and ventilate them. Spaces need to be shaded from the direct sun by overhanging roofs, as do any components such as brick walls that have sufficiently high thermal mass to absorb and later radiate heat. East and west elevations in particular need protection from rising and setting sun. Timber has both a low thermal capacity and high insulation value, and so, if well treated, is a good material for the tropics.

SCHOOL EXTENSION, GALIBI, SURINAM

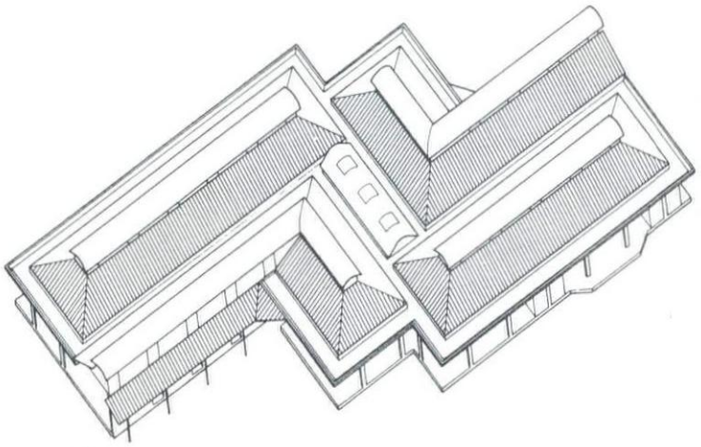
5, new classrooms open off a shady verandah. As befits programme and budget the building is simple and direct, yet welcoming and generous.
6, new wing viewed from old.
7, circular panels in context on rear wall of classrooms.
8, interior of classroom looking onto verandah.

Galibi sits on the estuary of the Marowyne river which forms the boundary between Surinam and French Guyana. The brief was to extend a school on the water's edge by building three more classrooms, a teachers' room and wcs.

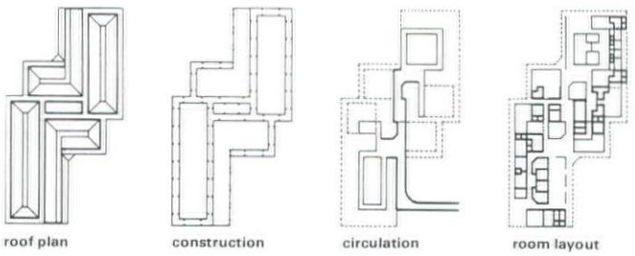
The new classrooms form a wing at right angles to the old thus enclosing a playground against the river. Where sheltered by the corridor/verandah the classrooms are quite open to breeze and light, while on the less protected side glass windows and wooden louvres protect against the rain. On this latter side large circular panels are decorated with patterns that were incised in the wet plaster by an old woman who used similar motifs to decorate the drums used in local festivals. On the verandah decorated rectangular tiles provide patches of ornament on wall and floor.

HEALTH CENTRE, MARIENBURG, SURINAM

9, general view of Marienburg health centre from east. Projecting wing capped by tall bank of louvres contains wards with terraces shaded by lower awnings.



axonometric



roof plan | construction | circulation | room layout

Marienburg lies across the Commewyne river from Paramaribo, the capital of Surinam, and the health centre is in a new development area outside the town. The centre is a clinic providing health care for the district and reducing pressure for bed space in the Paramaribo hospitals. It is well equipped and as well as consulting and observation rooms it has facilities for: childbirth; pre- and post-natal care; ear, nose and throat; dental care and hygiene, and casualty departments, laboratories and a pharmacy.

The plan is organised into three major elements of polyclinic, workspaces and wards. The polyclinic is freely open to the public while the wards are not, so the workspaces which serve both are placed between them as a link and filter. Administration, pharmacy and library are adjacent to the polyclinic; kitchen, laundry, change and staffrooms beside the wards; and delivery and sterilisation rooms in the middle.

Polyclinic and wards are loosely arranged as pavilions under a huge oversailing roof which, reflecting



10



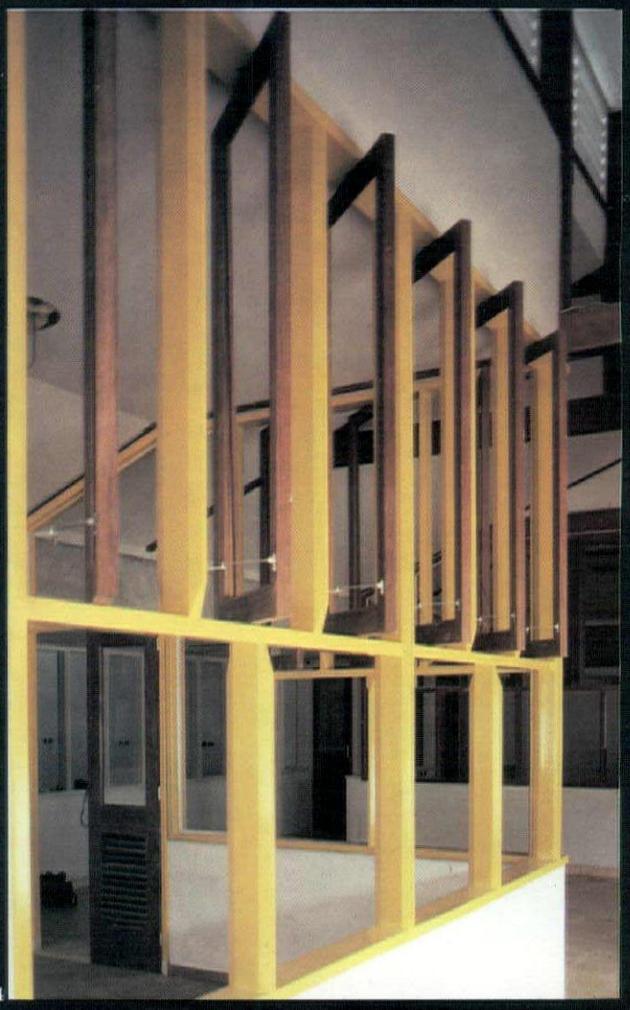
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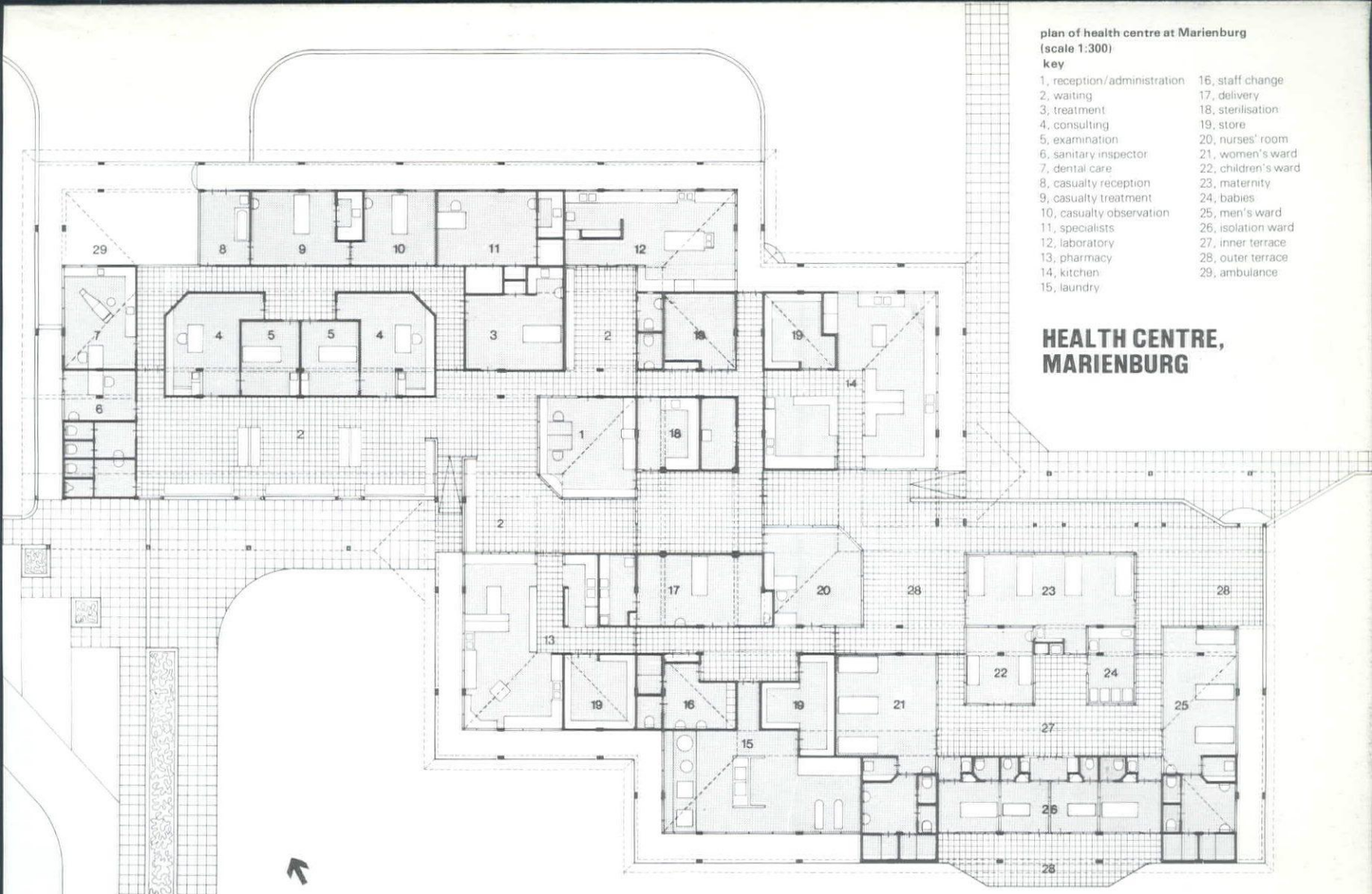
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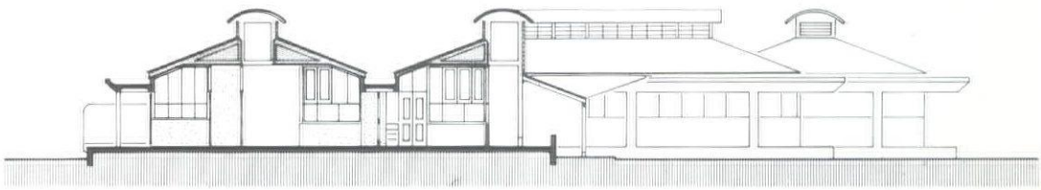
plan of health centre at Marienburg (scale 1:300)

key

1, reception/administration
2, waiting
3, treatment
4, consulting
5, examination
6, sanitary inspector
7, dental care
8, casualty reception
9, casualty treatment
10, casualty observation
11, specialists
12, laboratory
13, pharmacy
14, kitchen
15, laundry
16, staff change
17, delivery
18, sterilisation
19, store
20, nurses' room
21, women's ward
22, children's ward
23, maternity
24, babies
25, men's ward
26, isolation ward
27, inner terrace
28, outer terrace
29, ambulance

HEALTH CENTRE, MARIENBURG



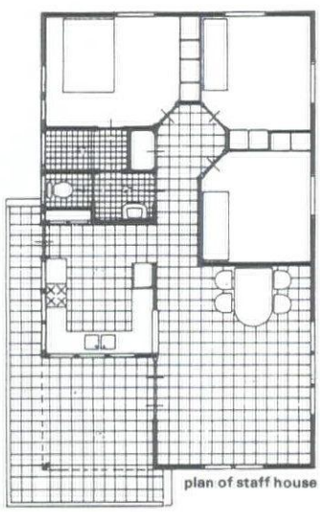


cross section

10, partial view from north with laboratory in right foreground and kitchen in centre. Wide concrete gutters on concrete columns support the various roofs.
11, outer terrace roofed with half truss spanning between concrete gutter on right and timber posts on left from which project the lower awning.
12, waiting room with similar roof to 11, with bank of ventilating louvres.
13, corridor alongside maternity on left leading towards inner terrace.
14, detail of glazing to maternity ward.
15, the two staff houses.

the plan organisation, is composed of several independent roofs and awnings. Concrete columns support concrete gutters which serve as beams between which span the roof trusses. Over the waiting areas, though half trusses span to timber posts from which rafters extend awnings to protect waiting areas and terraces and so welcome visitors by sheltering even those who have not yet entered. The roofs are well insulated and the ridges capped with ventilating monitors with double banks of louvres. Ceilings of public areas slope up to the ventilators, while smaller rooms have flat ceilings between the tie beams of the trusses. The underside of the concrete gutter provides a service duct and a few specialist areas such as those used to store sensitive equipment have independent air-conditioning units.

In the grounds are two small staff houses, set at right angles to each other, and a mortuary.



plan of staff house



15

Colin St John Wilson

The Historical Sense

T. S. Eliot's concept of tradition, and its relevance to architecture

The August AR was devoted to debating the uses and abuses of history. Here, Colin St John Wilson, Professor of Architecture at Cambridge University, enters that debate in a way that adds perception to the theme of this issue—Regionalism.

Eliot's theory of the relationship between tradition and novelty is exceptional for its power and originality. It grew from a remarkable interaction between critical intelligence and poetic vision. In fact Eliot's final triumph lay precisely in the uncovering of a structure of relationships between the old and the new, the temporal and the timeless, innovation and quotation; each had its place in a precise order of a kind that no other artist in our time has achieved. And that order hinges upon a paradoxical interpretation of tradition as the springboard for innovation.

The first statement of this theory appeared in the celebrated essay of 1919 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', and I take the liberty of transposing the familiar passages in it into terms of architecture[1] rather than poetry as follows:

'Tradition . . . cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour. It involves in the first place, the historical sense, which . . . involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; [and] compels an [architect] to work not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the [architecture] of Europe from [Ictinus] and within it the whole of the [architecture] of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as the temporal and of the temporal together, is what makes an [architect] traditional. And it is at the same time what makes an [architect] most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his own contemporaneity.

'No [architect], no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone . . . you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead. I mean this as a principle of aesthetic, not merely historical, criticism. The necessity that he shall conform, that he shall cohere, is not one-sided; what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it. The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the whole existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new. Whoever has approved this idea of order . . . will not find it preposterous that the past is altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past. And the [architect] who is aware of this will be aware of great difficulties and responsibilities.' In a two-way process Eliot, changed by Dante, has in his own work changed Dante for us. This depth of reference and interchange operates in a number of benign ways. Memory (in Greek mythology the Mother of the Arts) becomes the key and it carries with it an incomparable depth in terms of allusion or direct quotation.

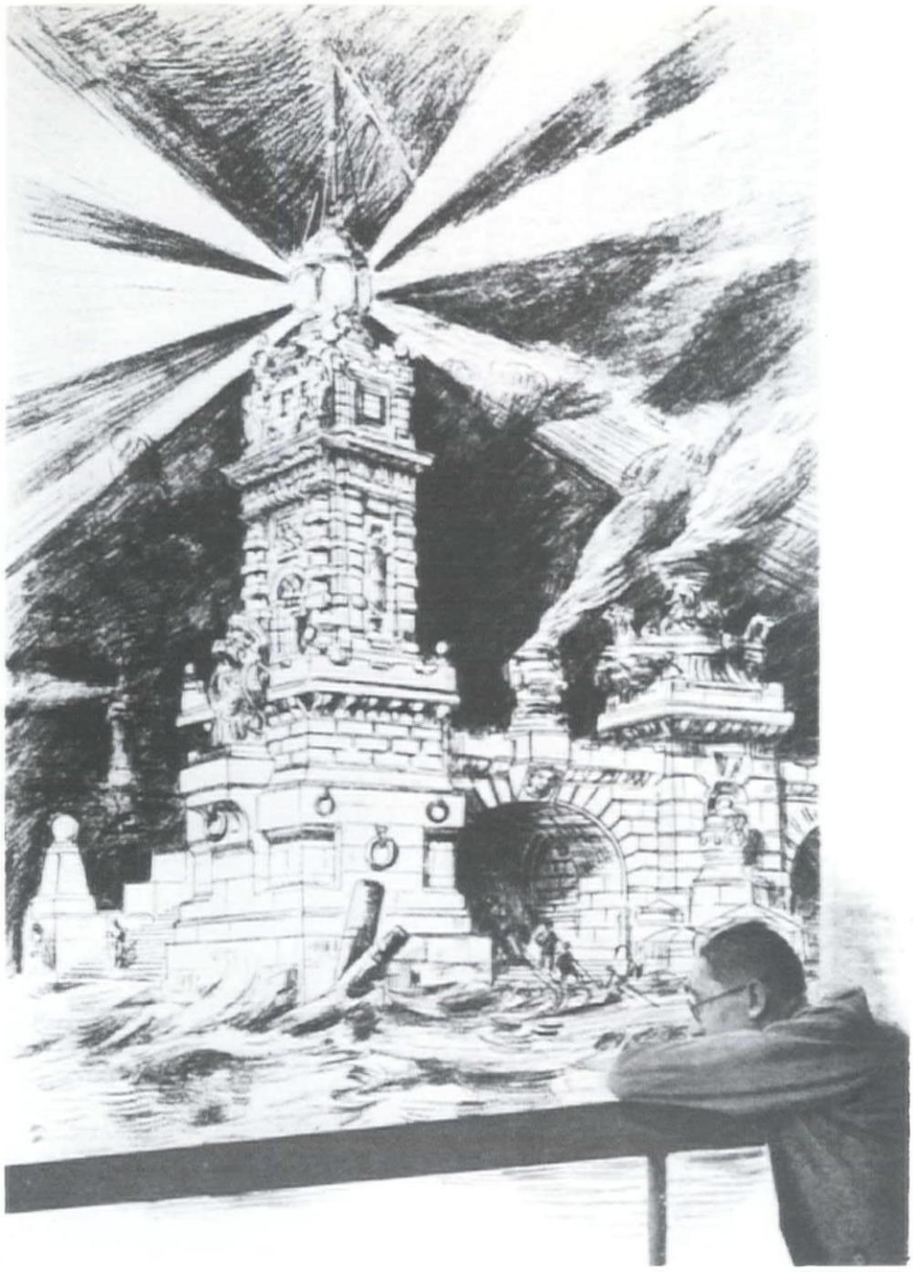
The power of condensation it gives to communication can be most clearly demonstrated by an analogy in literature. Virgil, in writing the greatest Roman epic, plants his hero, Aeneas, in the midst of the greatest Greek epic, Homer's Iliad: and 1300 years later Dante picks Virgil as his guide in the Divine Comedy (during which they meet both Ulysses and Aeneas). So that it only requires James Joyce 600 years later to entitle his novel *Ulysses* for a vast apparatus of allusion and analogy to come into play and to be available to anyone informed of Classical Christian culture.

By contrast we may take the following statement by Walter Gropius: 'Modern Architecture is not built from some branch of an old tree but is a new plant growing directly from roots'. In the light of this assertion it is not surprising to learn that there was no teaching of history at the Bauhaus. And out of such an attitude the notion was fostered that a brave new world could be built only by breaking free from custom and association: that the Past was the enemy of the Future. This is a clear case of what Eliot (in a later essay entitled 'What is a Classic?') referred to as 'a provincialism, not of space, but of time: one for which history is merely the chronicle of human devices which have served their turn and been scrapped, one for which the world is the property solely of the living, a property in which the dead hold no shares'.

The first thing to be said about the juxtaposition of these two viewpoints is that we are not confronted by a simple conflict between the futurist and the conservationist. Both Gropius and Eliot were equally resolved to discover 'the really new'. Furthermore both started from the same point—a moment of deep critical unrest at the beginning of this century. In architecture a typical reaction to the self-indulgence of Art Nouveau was Karl Scheffler's flat statement: 'We have had enough of "originality"; what we need is the self-evident'. Shortly after that Eliot wrote of the need for verse 'to recover the accents of direct speech' in a context vitiated by 'the pathology of rhetoric' and that the best way to go about it would be to concentrate attention upon 'commonplace objects'.

In fact what we are confronted with is something much more complicated—a deep division within modernism itself. In the field of architecture that division came into focus at the attempt to establish a new orthodoxy by the founding members of CIAM at La Sarraz in 1928. The assertion of new norms, the establishment of a common language was all the cry. Impatient of contradiction the new orthodoxy was proclaimed.[2] But how can orthodoxy exist without reference to precedents, to a body of doctrine that is to be reinterpreted and developed?

That is the rub: and it now seems clear to us that this rejection of historical continuity (something that could have been easily embraced within the vision of their elders such as Loos, Perret, Wright, Berlage and Mackintosh) was bound to make the new law seem alien. At the very least it amounted to throwing away not only a wealth of allusion but also a whole



1

1, Le Corbusier has difficulty in deciphering the signals from a 'traditional' lighthouse. (From 'Croisade ou Le Crepuscule de Academies', 1933.)

groundwork of the familiar upon which alone confidence in the new can be constructed. At the Bauhaus itself Paul Klee lamented 'The people are not with us'.

But before we condemn the founders of CIAM too readily we should try to understand that they were guided not only by their sense of the urgency of the new issues that had to be confronted and for which there was no precedent—'*Les problemes du grand nombre*' (mechanised transport, mass production, population explosion): they were stupefied at the ludicrous abuse of image and precedent that was flaunted by their elders, 1. Architects like Sir Gilbert Scott had brought the Battle of the Styles to such a level of cynical manipulation that the battlefield was strewn with broken images.[3] And as to the written justification of such manipulation you merely have to read the sort of inflated platitudes written by a typical protagonist such as John Belcher (in his *Essentials of Architecture*) to know what Eliot himself meant by the Hollow Men ('Shape without form . . . paralysed force . . . this broken jaw of our lost kingdoms'). In fact it would be fair to say that those who claimed above all to be the inheritors of Tradition did more than anyone else to devalue the only terms under which it could be sustained: they had made it onto a language that could only tell a lie.

Furthermore there were those who, shortly after, were prepared to use history and associations for more sinister reasons under the banner of the 'Recall to Order'. This was (and still is) the euphemism under which the so-called 'right thinking' intellectuals provided the soft talk for fascism. Eliot, who had come near enough to Charles Maurras to scent the danger, had himself pointed out that to carry into practice his interpretation of the working of tradition would lead to 'great difficulties and responsibilities'. For certain appeals to memory will all too readily conjure up images of malign power. 'In the back of every Dictator there is a bloody Doric Column' (Herbert Read). It is an uncomfortable fact that the forms of Neo-Classicism only too readily embodied the mythology not only of Nazism,[4] but also of Communism ('The People too have a right to Columns' said Stalin). And Giuseppe Pagano, editor of *Casabella* summed up the danger when he wrote of Mussolini's Third Rome that it was 'the exaltation of a lie perpetrated out of a love for tradition . . .'.

We need then to establish criteria by which that insight can be pursued; by what means we can judge the value of any appeal to the authority of the past, and also by what means we can reveal the intentions that underlie it. Such an appeal takes the form of an allusion or quotation in which a new form is associated with an existing precedent for any one of a number of reasons. The analogy may be formal, technical or semantic; rewarding, trivial or false; and the intention behind it may be in good or bad faith. It can be simply analysed as a relationship between two terms; and the originality and power of Eliot's formulation is to suggest that it is a *two-way relationship*, that the precedent is changed by the new term as much as the new is informed by analogy with the old. Thus when Alberti transposes the Roman triumphal arch onto the facade of the Christian Church at St Andrea in Mantua the analogy is very rich. It brings together the New Learning, Christian theology and the Roman celebration of victory at the same time that it announces a rediscovery and reassessment of the Classical language of architecture. Both of the terms are changed by the relationship and gain in their range of significance.

The use by Aalto in the Villa Mairea of regional Karelian forms on the back of the building (the 'primitive' sauna) and on the front the very sophisticated commentary on Purist themes together with their progressive overlapping and fusion throughout the house is another case in which both new and old terms are transformed and gain by the encounter.

On the other hand, when Mussolini set out to celebrate victory (the bombing of defenceless Abyssinian villages) by building the Third Rome, we are only too aware that the relationship is one-way —an attempt to appropriate to the new the aura and authority of the old by an act of symbolic inflation, 2.

2, a Mussolini poster makes claims for the timelessness of Romanita. Pagano called it 'the exaltation of a lie perpetrated out of a love for tradition'.
3, 'Giovanni Muzio in dialogue with Vitruvius', from the painting by L. Filocamo. In the background are various projects by Muzio.



2

The original source of reference gains nothing by the analogy—is in fact diminished by any degree to which the claim of association could be made to stick. This is almost a definition of kitsch.

In fact the Fascist experience is prefigured by historical claims of a more complex nature which are open to analysis in the same way. For in the work of Muzio and the early Terragni the claim to recall the ancient spirit of 'Romanita' carries some conviction, 3: akin to the metaphysical forms of de Chirico a haunting juxtaposition is set up between the solemnity of Roman forms and the stripped geometry of Loos. It constituted a Surrealist gloss upon late Rome and in this way the exchange between new and old is not merely one-way however equivocal it may seem to be.


3

Where the analogy is more directly to building language, the relationship of new to old is very vulnerable to pastiche since development in technology will probably have undermined any direct grounds for quotation. For instance Kahn in Dacca has invented a new form of masonry construction laced with rc tie beams and this new form stirs memories of Roman monuments in a way that is sufficiently sympathetic for us to feel that the Romans themselves might have welcomed it. By contrast Michael Graves uses the keystone motif in the form of curtain-walling for his Portland building. Such use can only be understood as an ironic gesture: for here the language of building construction is more travestied than transformed. And here the relationship of the new to the old comes close to a further definition of kitsch (by Demetri Porphyrios) as 'the evocation *in toto* of a style simply by means of one of its attributes used out of context'. One is reminded of Eliot's description of Romanticism as 'a short cut to the strangeness without the reality'. In these terms all forms of revivalism are open to challenge whether Victorian, Edwardian or Post-Modern. Certainly kitsch can never, in Eliot's terms, enlarge upon the meaning of the exemplar to which it alludes for the new relationship proposed is itself a perversion not an extension of the original.

It is of course dangerous to transpose a thesis formed in the study of literature to the context of architecture. On the other hand in so far as the use and abuse of history takes the form of allusion or quotation the essential relationships of novelty to tradition invoked by Eliot can be seen to obtain. What you do about that fact will be very different in each discipline. What of the old is to be referred to and what to be rejected: what of the new has substance and will prove irreversible—all such questions relate to an interpretation of what is the 'ideal order' within any one discipline and not in another. But even what Eliot finally came to see about his own art of verse is not without relevance to the future of architecture.

'What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from. And every phrase
And sentence that is right (where every word is at home
Taking its place to support the others,
The word neither diffident nor ostentatious,
An easy commerce of the old and the new,
The common word exact without vulgarity,
The formal word precise but not pedantic,
The complete consort dancing together)
Every phrase and every sentence is an end and a beginning . . . '[5]

Footnotes

1 I have put the transposed words into brackets.

2 And resisted. Hugo Häring denounced the formulations that were put forward and which shortly became the established doctrine of CIAM. He was one of a number of architects (among whom Frank Lloyd Wright, Aalto and Asplund were pre-eminent) whose work constitutes a sort of running resistance to CIAM 'Orthodoxy': but that is too large an extension of the present argument to be explored here. Cf my 'Alvar Aalto and the State of Modernism' in *International Architect*, Vol 1, No 2, 1979.

3 The case of Foreign Office design changing from 'French Gothic' to 'Byzantine Renaissance' (!) to 'the ordinary Italian' is consummate farce.

4 See my article 'Speer and the Fear of Freedom', AR June 1983.

5 'Little Gidding' from *Four Quartets* by T. S. Eliot. Faber & Faber, 1944.



Interior design

Video post-production facility, Camden Town, London

Architects: Powell-Tuck, Connors, Orefelt & d'Avoine

Video production companies are street-wise urchins growing rapidly on the fringes of the media and business worlds. They have been booming for some years now in old warehouses, offices and studios situated in those inner city areas only recently come back to life. The video industry has yet to achieve the furiously inflated and egocentric position of the advertising world but it is undoubtedly on its way.

In terms of premises the video business at a very basic level requires highly serviced and well organised technical suites for editing and transferring film to videotape. But there are two reasons why such studios should be more than clinical film-processing laboratories. On the one hand the staff, who can work up to 24 hours at a stretch on a rushed production, need to be comfortable; on the other clients from different areas of the arts, advertising, media and business both want to and need to be present whilst editing is in progress—it would be bad publicity to invite clients wanting glamorous videos into cable-strewn factories. So as well as being highly functional, the video company with an eye to success needs to present an attractive face to its public.

This is certainly true of Research Recording Ltd's new studios in Camden Town. Powell-Tuck, Connors, Orefelt & d'Avoine have designed a stage set of an interior that shrouds a highly complex and highly-serviced video facility. Situated right across the street from Terry Farrell's TVam Studios (AR June 1983), Research Recordings is an intelligent and appropriate part of the new media vernacular. The entrance lobby could be a still from an advertising or pop video. This is appropriate design, nicely executed and highly workable. The premises are housed in what was a singularly banal piece of concrete framed spec trash dating from the early '60s. Research Recordings were keen to move here from seedy Maida Vale because of TVam and Camden Town's reputation as catalyst of the new independent media. There was also room for expansion to the rear of the building as well as generous off-road parking.

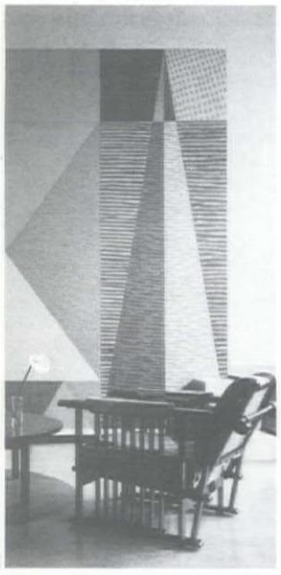
The architects decided early on to design an interior that 'complemented the sophisticated technology but didn't seek to emulate it on an architectural level'. They also designed with constant change in mind—businesses in this medium can grow or develop very rapidly—and so new walls, floors, ceilings and services were conceived of as movable or removable elements. In both a structural and graphic sense this is a stage set interior, even more so when one considers that all furniture and equipment in the technical areas has been housed in free-standing sets.

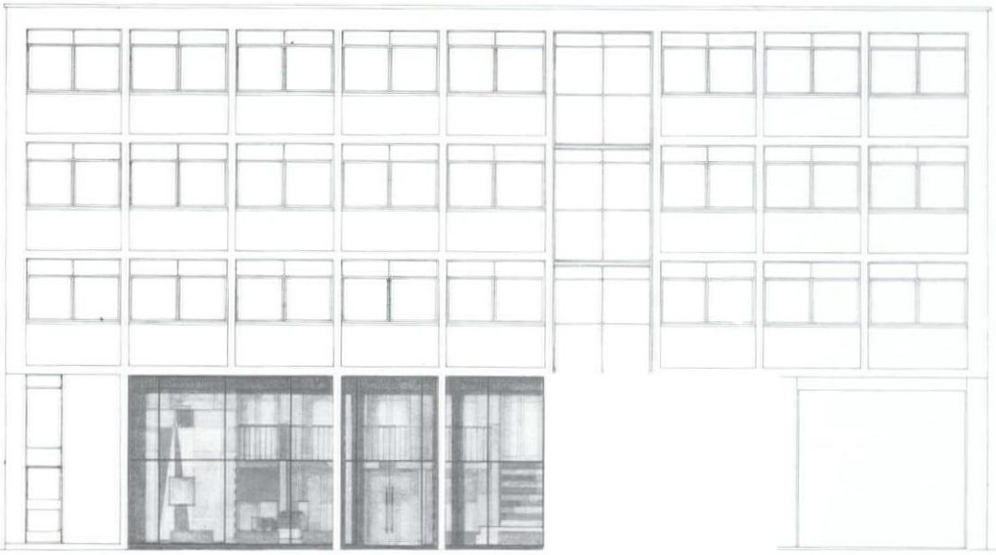
The entrance lobby in its distinctive striped and geometrically abstracted blue and grey garb is pure theatre—Whitehall Farcical, almost, with that staircase to the right, balcony running across the back of the stage and numerous doors for characters to pop in and out of at unexpected moments. Visitors at the centre of all this to-ing and fro-ing wait seated in Powell-Tuck's Hoffmann-like armchairs set on a decorated lino floor. Facing them on the ground floor is a row of double doors leading into the conference room and marketing office. The central entrance up above them going off the balcony belongs to RR's managing director who can watch his bustling and rapidly growing empire even while deskbound. To the left and right of the mezzanine behind the wings or screens painted by Sally Greaves-Lord are office areas for accounts and computer staff.

The lift up to the first floor takes clients and staff into a very different world: Act Two—a twilight zone where eyes are meant to adjust to the relative darkness of the editing suites compared with the bright lobby spaces below.

The client reception room is an extraordinary space—a darkened, film-set living room. Plush armchairs are set enigmatically around a small table with Classical legs, the whole group settled by a mocked-up black lacquered fireplace backed by a heavily draped curtain. The walls and carpet are various shades of grey. An axis runs through this room leading to a lobby at either end around which are grouped the editing suites. Here client, editor and machinery work in close relationship. The suites are treated individually but have common elements—lowered ceilings containing lighting hovering over the desks and screens, framed and curtained backgrounds to the screens which provide a restful and soft background against the glare and harshness of the electronic technology. Each suite houses an ante-chamber, where those not directly concerned with the minutiae of the editing process can sit watch and comment. Each suite is finished in warm colours, along the lines of the living room, creating 'a user-friendly atmosphere'.

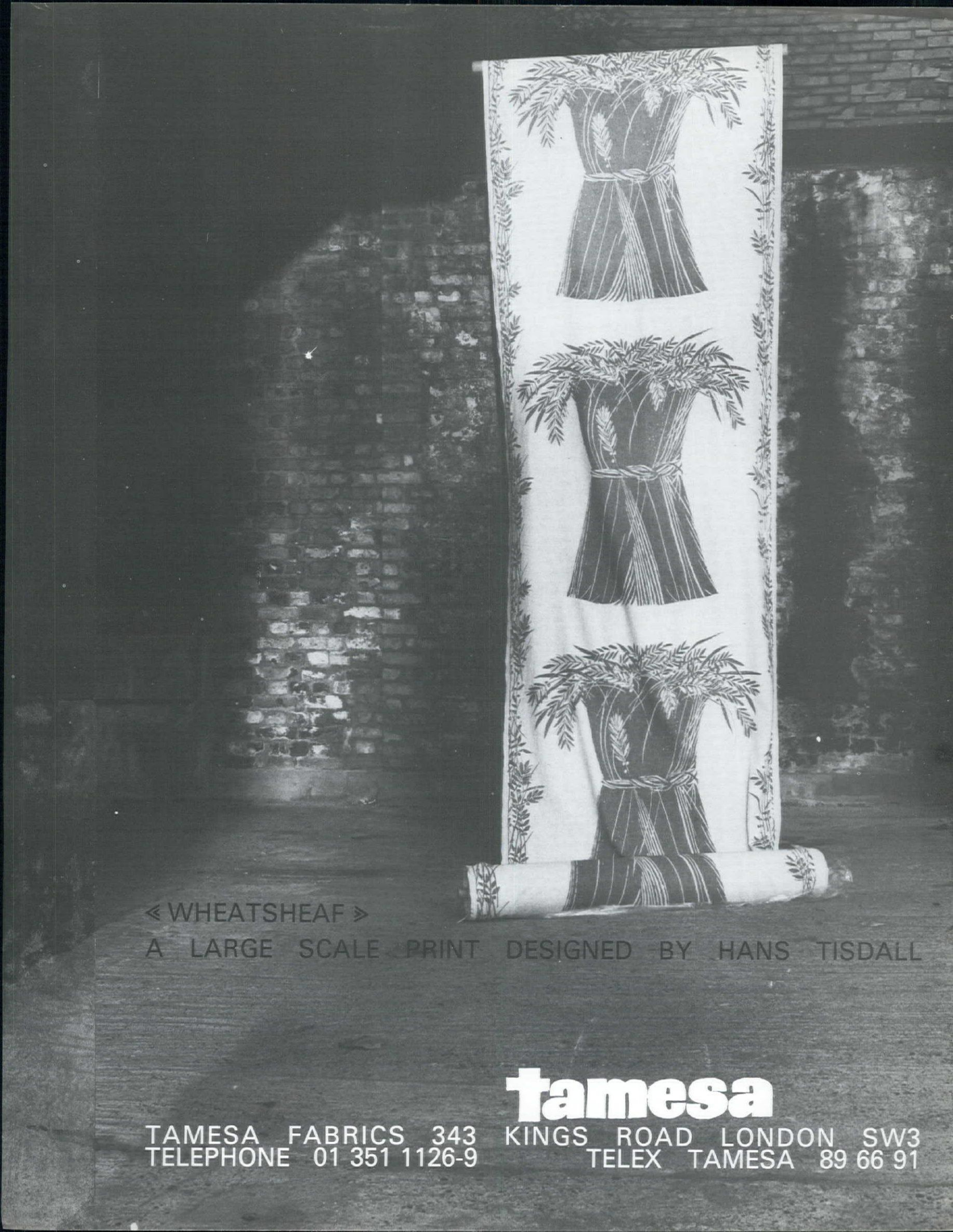
The second floor is more factory-like and accommodates the 'central apparatus' room where inevitably the machinery dominates. Attempts have been made in some recording studios, notably in Milan, to decorate the machines themselves, to give them a more relaxed and friendly aura. A suspended ceiling houses full air-conditioning—the atmosphere here must be





elevation to street

1, powerful graphics—by Sally Greaves-Lord—and unusual furniture such as Powell-Tuck's Hoffmann-like chairs are distinguishing marks of this theatrical interior.
2, the full theatrical effect seen in the double-height reception lobby—linoleum floors, carpeted stairs, painted walls. Lighting throughout the scheme is remarkably restrained.
3, views like this through the lobby are reminiscent of stills from avant-garde videos.


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2



3

Video post-production facility, Camden Town, London
Photographs by Richard Bryant
4, first-floor client reception room: false fireplace, dim lights and plush soft-finishes.
5, graphic detail of reception lobby.
6, the neatly detailed but purely functional second-floor 'central apparatus room': the colour scheme and lighting though has been carried on from the public spaces downstairs.
7, glimpse inside one of the richly textured editing suites.



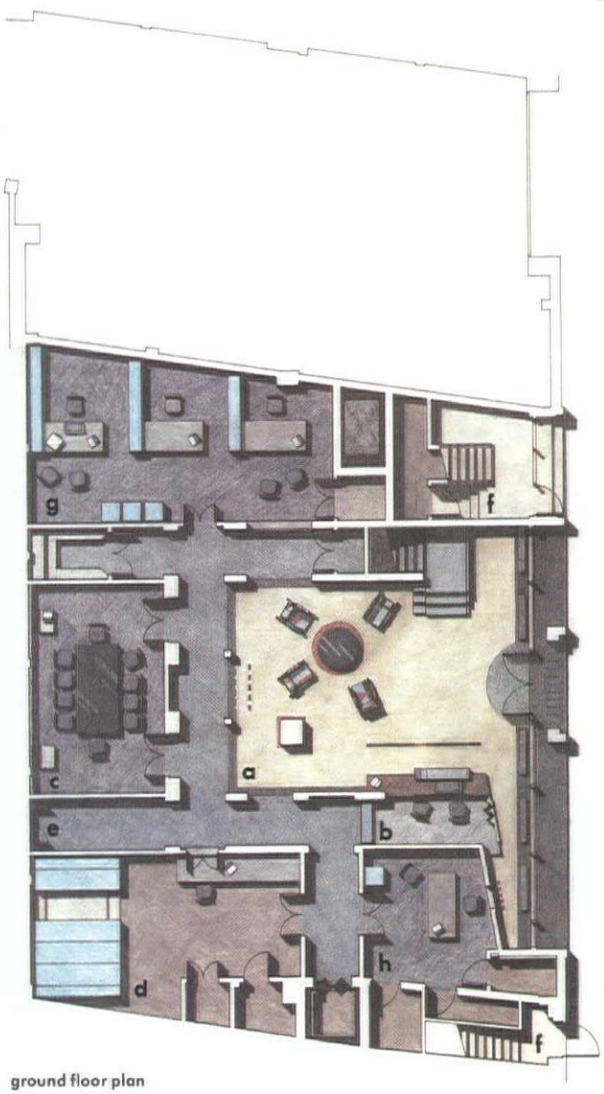
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cool and dust free. But the colour scheme is again consistent with the more public areas of the building and given limitations on cost is well thought out. Carpeted floors and lino-topped desks help soften what are rather stark working conditions.

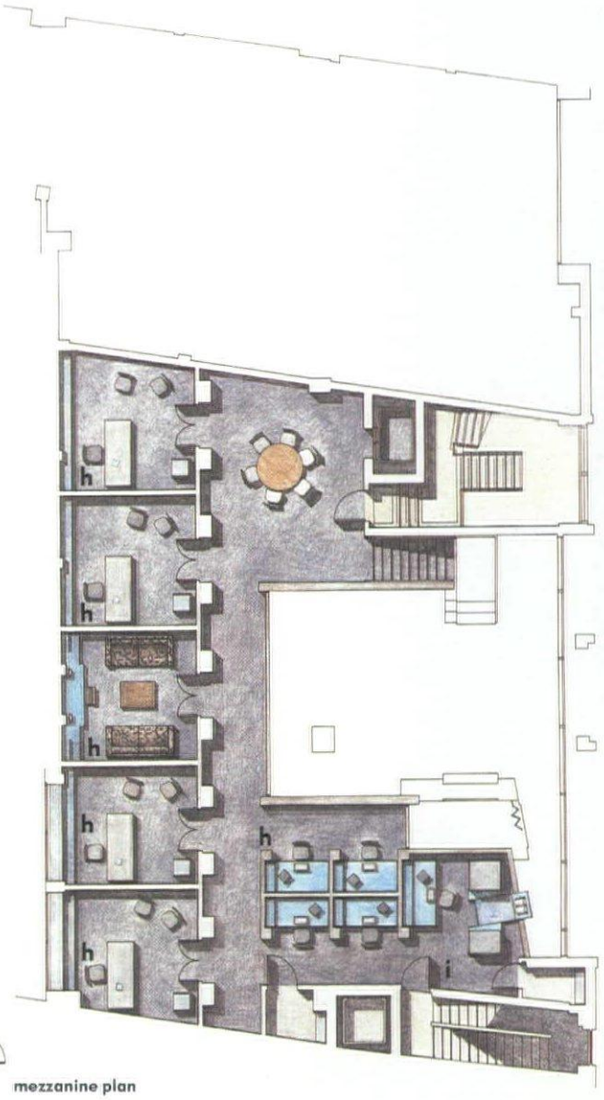
Technology is rampant in the final room of this tour; this is the equipment bay where 20 'equipment racks' switch the video equipment in the editing suites through to the machines in the 'central apparatus' room. The demountable floor opens to reveal a snakepit of cables-arteries of the whole recording process.

From abstract stage set to all-too-real hard technology—the transition from one to another in this interior is gradual; the aim has been to soften the domineering electronic gagetry and to make it more approachable. Research Recordings are certainly moving fast, trading on talent and architect-given image, and by the time this article appears they will be needing a larger stage to play on.

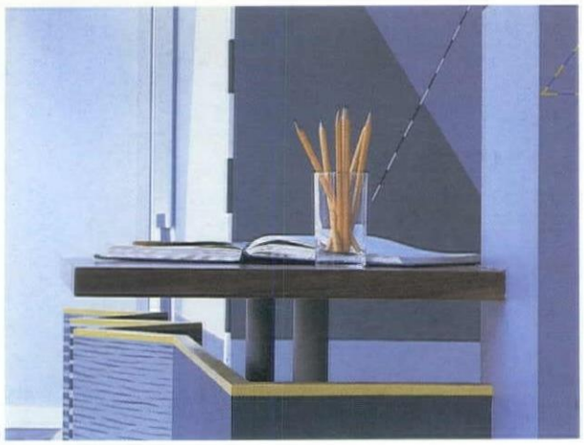
Jonathan Glancey



ground floor plan



mezzanine plan



5



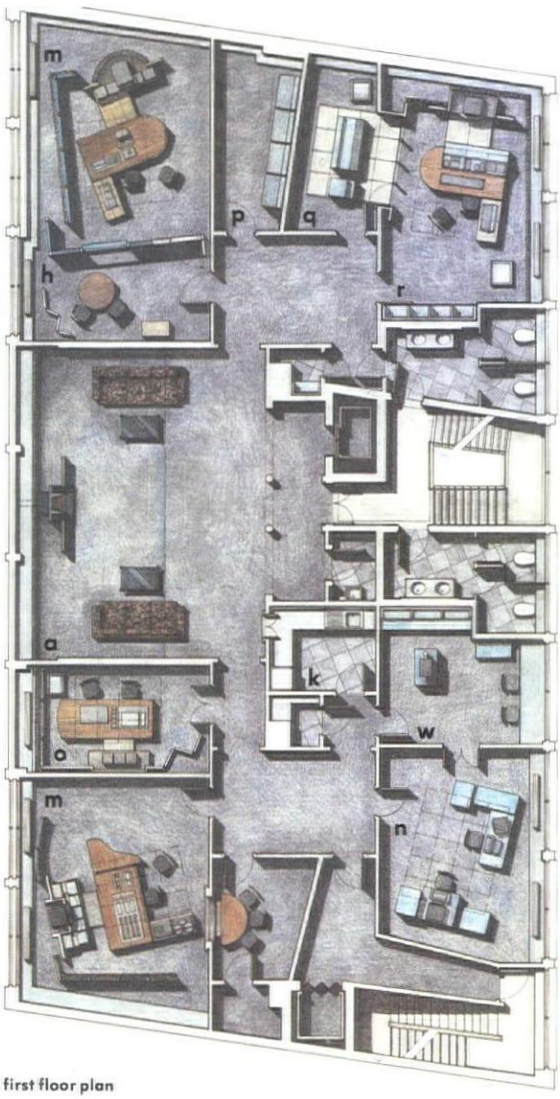
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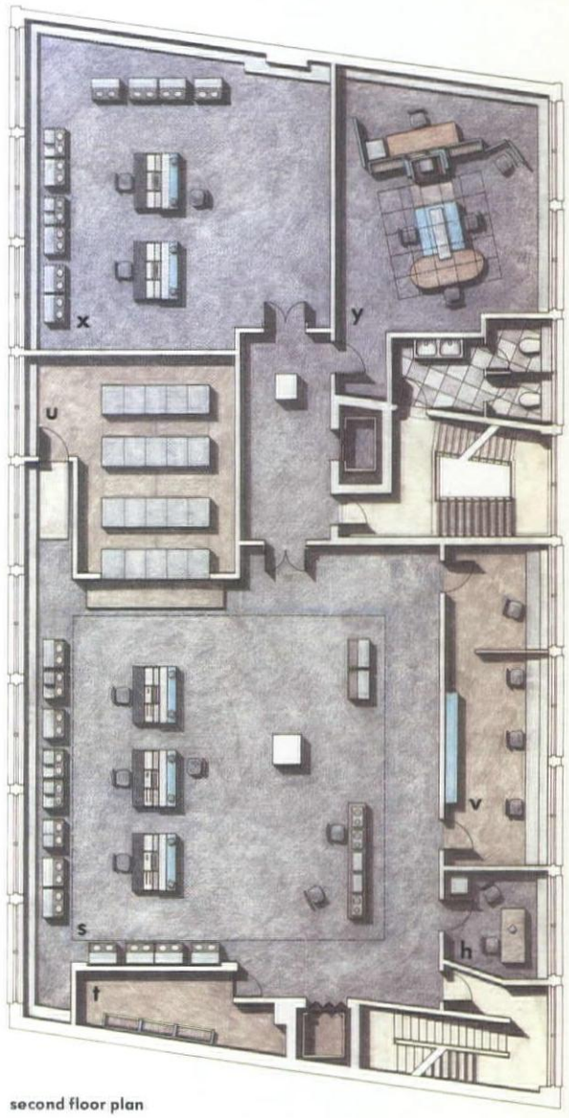
7

key

a, reception
b, receptionist
c, conference
d, type library and dispatch room
e, proposed access to rear depot
f, fire escape
g, marketing office
h, office
i, computer bay
k, kitchen
m, editing
n, computer graphics
o, offline editing
p, film preparation
q, equipment room
r, telecine
s, central apparatus room
t, tape store
u, equipment bay
v, maintenance room
w, white room
x, apparatus expansion
y, schedules



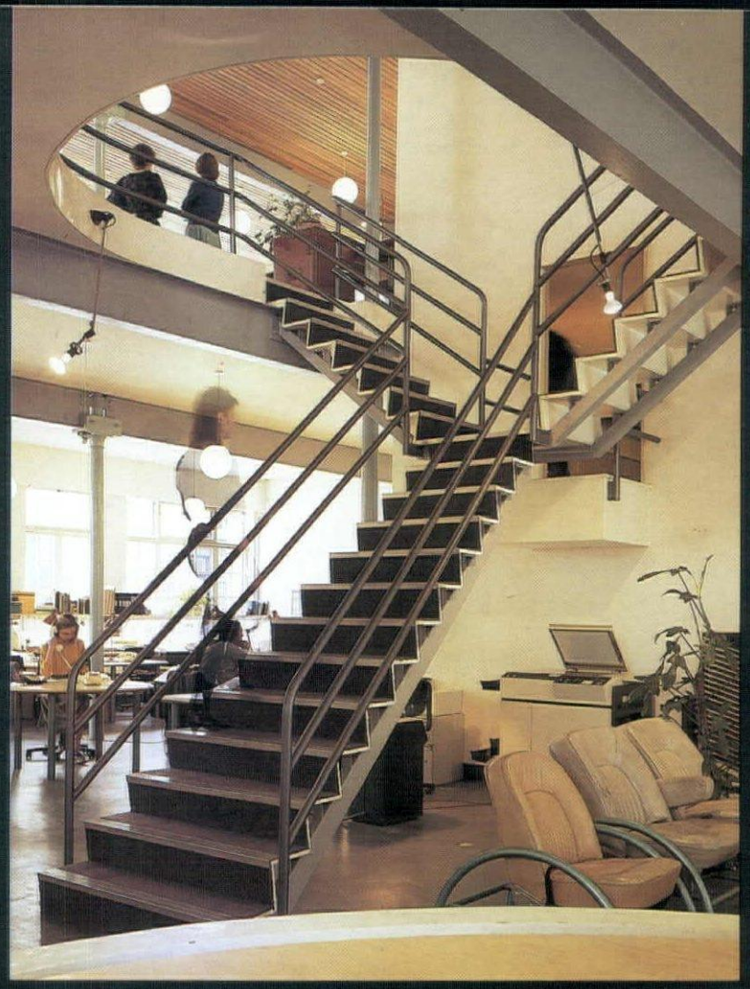
first floor plan



second floor plan

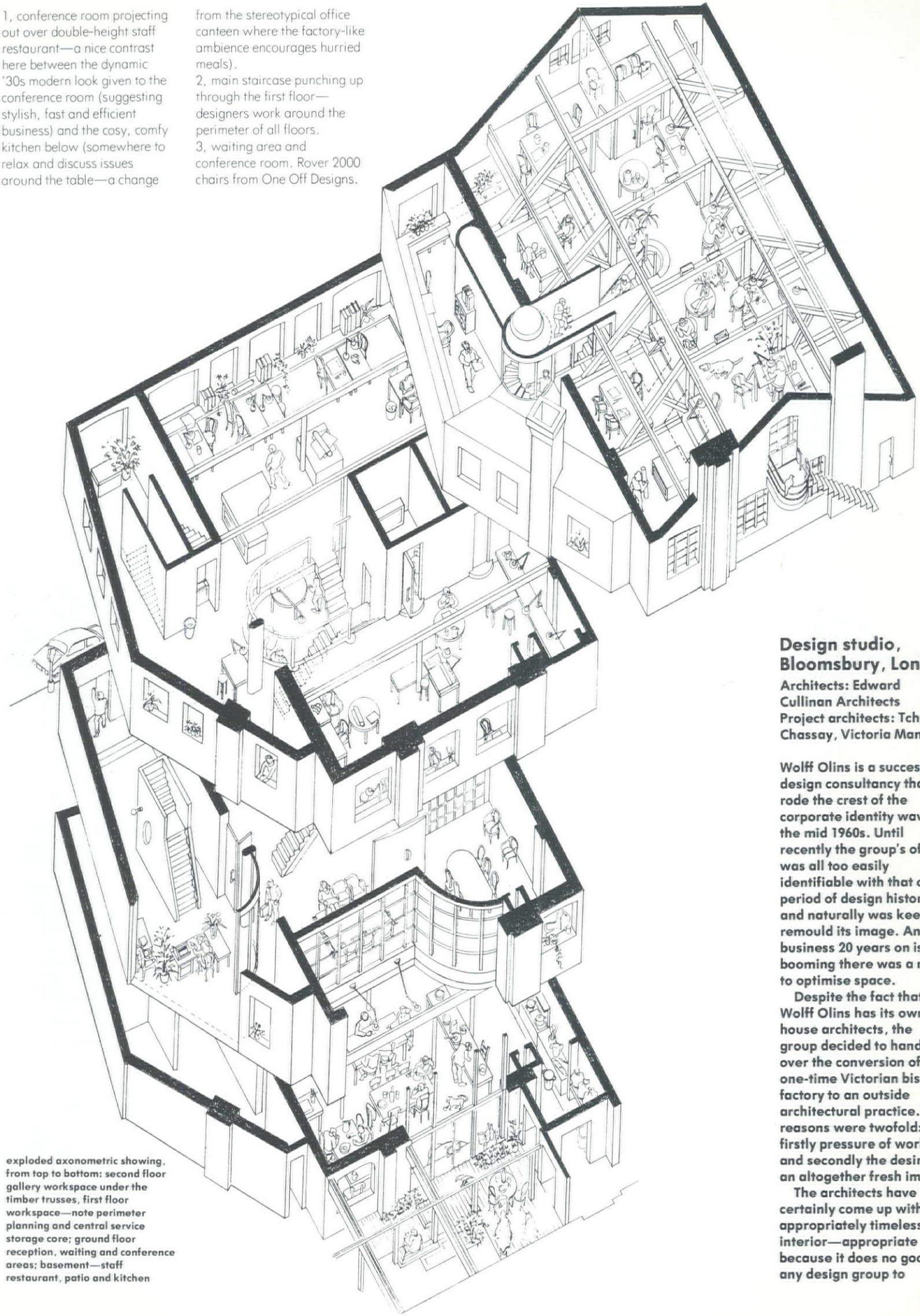
Design team: Pierre d'Avoine, Richard David, Julian Powell-Tuck, Jonathan Stickland
Special paintings and fabrics: Sally Greaves-Lord, Timney Fowler and David Champion







←1,2 1, conference room projecting out over double-height staff restaurant—a nice contrast here between the dynamic '30s modern look given to the conference room (suggesting stylish, fast and efficient business) and the cosy, comfy kitchen below (somewhere to relax and discuss issues around the table—a change from the stereotypical office canteen where the factory-like ambience encourages hurried meals).
2, main staircase punching up through the first floor—designers work around the perimeter of all floors.
3, waiting area and conference room. Rover 2000 chairs from One Off Designs.



exploded axonometric showing, from top to bottom: second floor gallery workspace under the timber trusses, first floor workspace—note perimeter planning and central service storage core; ground floor reception, waiting and conference areas; basement—staff restaurant, patio and kitchen

←3

Design studio, Bloomsbury, London

Architects: Edward Cullinan Architects
Project architects: Tchaik Chassay, Victoria Manser

Wolff Olins is a successful design consultancy that rode the crest of the corporate identity wave in the mid 1960s. Until recently the group's office was all too easily identifiable with that one period of design history and naturally was keen to remould its image. And as business 20 years on is still booming there was a need to optimise space.

Despite the fact that Wolff Olins has its own in-house architects, the group decided to hand over the conversion of this one-time Victorian biscuit factory to an outside architectural practice. The reasons were twofold: firstly pressure of work and secondly the desire for an altogether fresh image.

The architects have certainly come up with an appropriately timeless interior—appropriate because it does no good to any design group to

Design studio
Bloomsbury, London
Photographs by Richard Bryant
4, looking through from the conference room into waiting and reception areas.

lumber itself with an easily dateable image. One might find shades of High-Tech or Bauhaus or Ethnic thinking here, even markedly '60s motifs (such as the Rover 2000 car seats from One Off Designs), but the overriding impression is one of label-free, clean cut design. This interior is remarkably unstuffy and much care has gone into ensuring that workspaces are well washed with daylight. But the most important requirement of the brief was to bring staff close together whilst working on several different floors. This was accomplished by cutting out a significant section of the ceiling separating ground and first floor, by enclosing the busy conference rooms in custom made glazed partitions and by creating a conservatory-like restaurant which staff can look down or through into from different parts of the building.

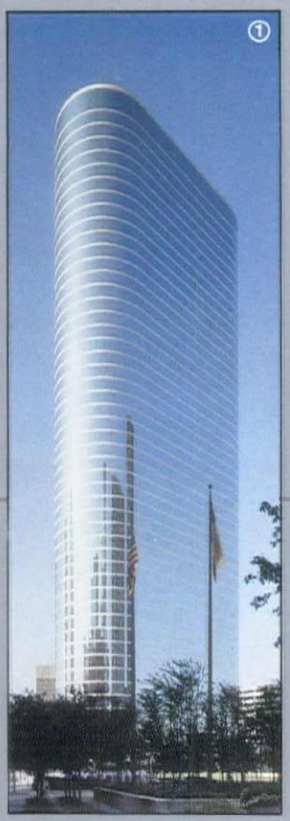
The plan has an easy-going fluidity which gently holds together the various parts of the building and the staff who use it. This relaxed atmosphere is obviously heightened by the choice of furniture and fittings, many of which are custom made (to the designs of Edward Cullinan Architects and Wolff Olins).

Working space is uncluttered, contributing to this easy-going atmosphere; this has been achieved through perimeter planning whereby tables, desks and drawing boards are located around a continuous fully serviced worktop running round the walls of the first and second floors. Central services such as photocopiers, printing and dark room facilities, stationery and so on are all housed in a three tier drum pushing up through the middle of the building.

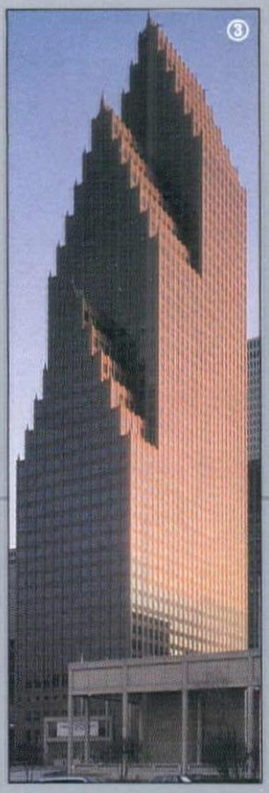
Moving quickly through the building, the basement houses the comfortable wine-bar like staff restaurant overlooked by the bowed and glazed conference rooms on the first floor and looking out to the rear of the building through double-height glazing. The ground floor comprises the cool white reception area from which lead off conference rooms and work areas. A slim steel stair leads up right and left to further design studios as well as giving access to the central service core. The floor above, under the rafters, is a gallery with a main open workspace and two small offices. Throughout these spaces lighting is largely natural, supplemented by pendant and angled lamps where necessary, and altogether there is a complete absence of cliched office tat. In some ways Wolff Olins are happy prisoners of their past. In Margaret Thatcher's revolutionary but mean-minded Britain, it's nice to visit a liberal-minded office that still has a generosity of spirit, and welcomes the kind of encounter and social interaction that, seemingly so important 20 years ago, is already in danger of being forgotten. Spec offices can never achieve this kind of social ease and efficient use of workspace, but London, like so many other cities, continues to watch this uncertain struggle between the rise of spec trash and the intelligent re-use of old buildings. JG

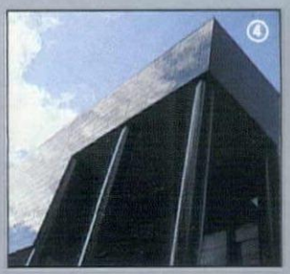


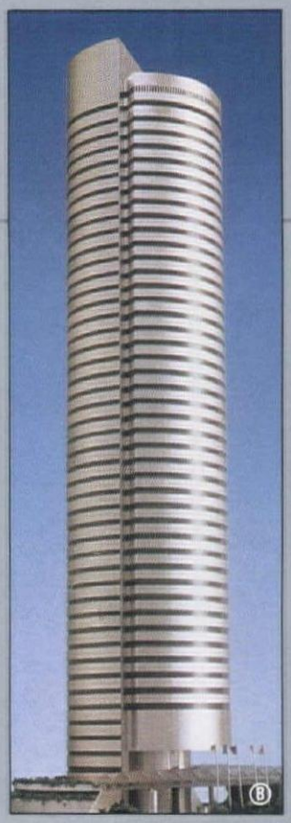
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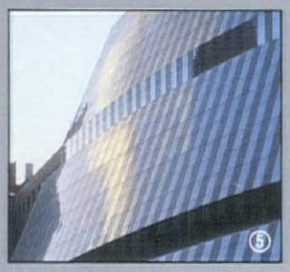




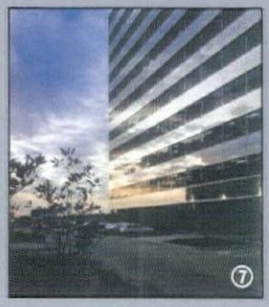












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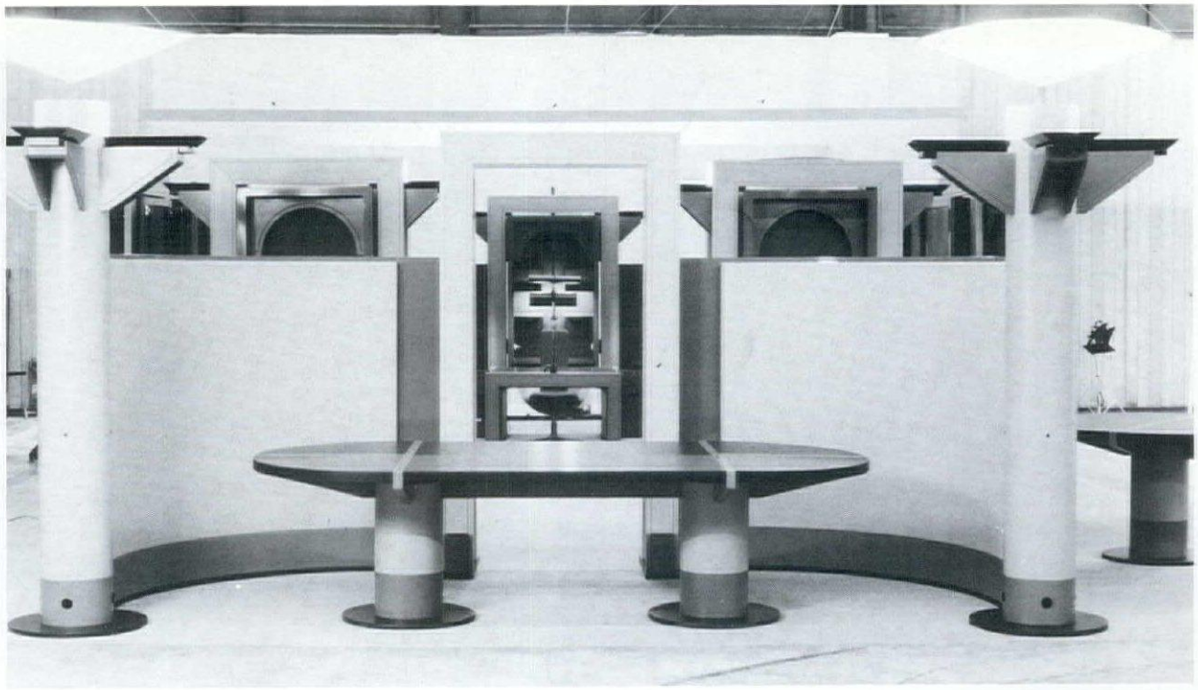
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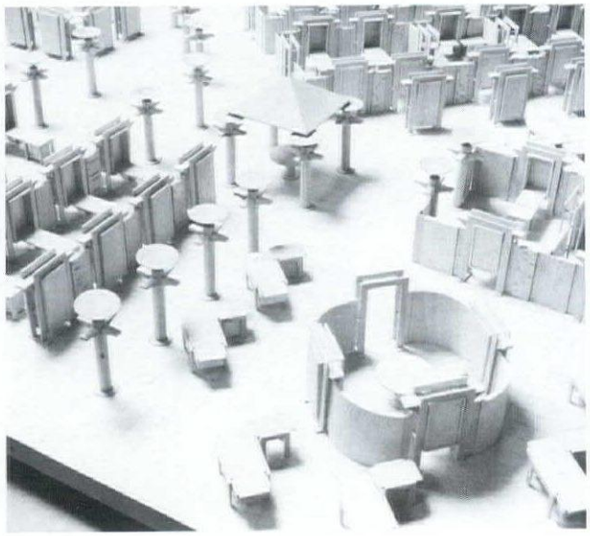
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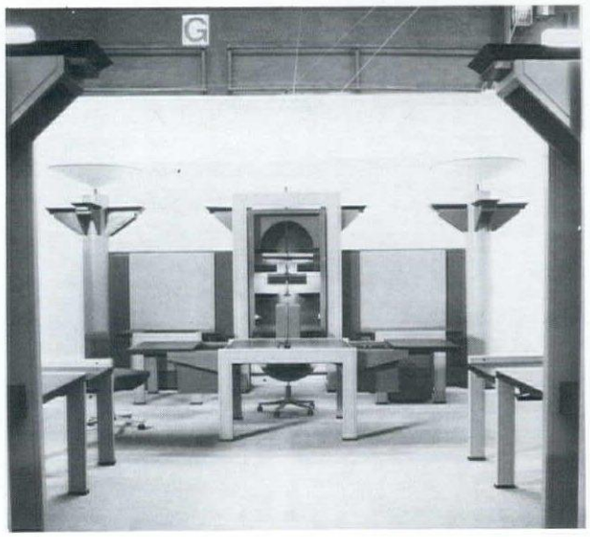
Design review

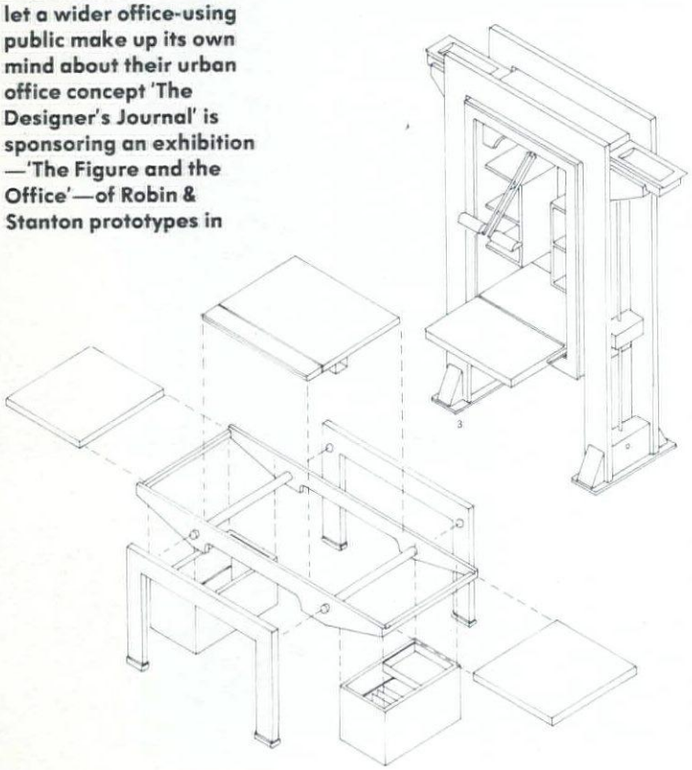
Alan Stanton and Wendy Robin were awarded third prize in the French Government's monumental office furniture competition, the results of which were announced in February AR. Aside from the fascination of a British entry doing so well in a French competition, Robin & Stanton's entry was also one of the most intriguing. Based on town planning rather than office landscape principles this Post-Modern-flirting-with-High-Tech system builds up inside the open plan office into Grand Classical townscapes. To redeem this potentially overwhelming seriousness of intent Robin & Stanton have chosen bright colours for the furniture—reds, blues and greens. The furniture is currently being manufactured by the French firm Parisot who confidently expect orders from national ministry buildings.

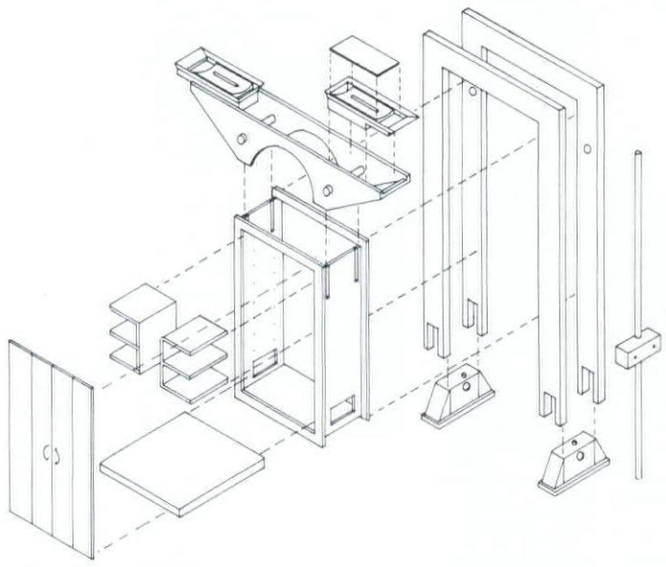
To celebrate Robin & Stanton's achievement and let a wider office-using public make up its own mind about their urban office concept 'The Designer's Journal' is sponsoring an exhibition —'The Figure and the Office'—of Robin & Stanton prototypes in Room 58 of the Victoria & Albert Museum from 5 September until 14 October. Also on display in this mocked-up office of the future is the first micro-computer—ACT 'Apricot' —to be acquired by the V&A, proof that the principles Henry Cole's museum was set up on are still going strong.











K+N International Ltd are a new company marketing the high-quality products of their German parent König & Neurath. Besides selling systems office furniture, K+N are well set up to analyse user requirements, offer a complete planning service, will install their products and guarantee a Teutonically-efficient after sales service. Top of the K+N line is the new 'King Alpha' office furniture system designed by Hartmut H. Esslinger.

Compared with the symbolic monumentalism or High-Tech efficiency of the designs seen in the recent French office furniture competition, the 'King Alpha' system is a practically considered, highly usable, ergonomic







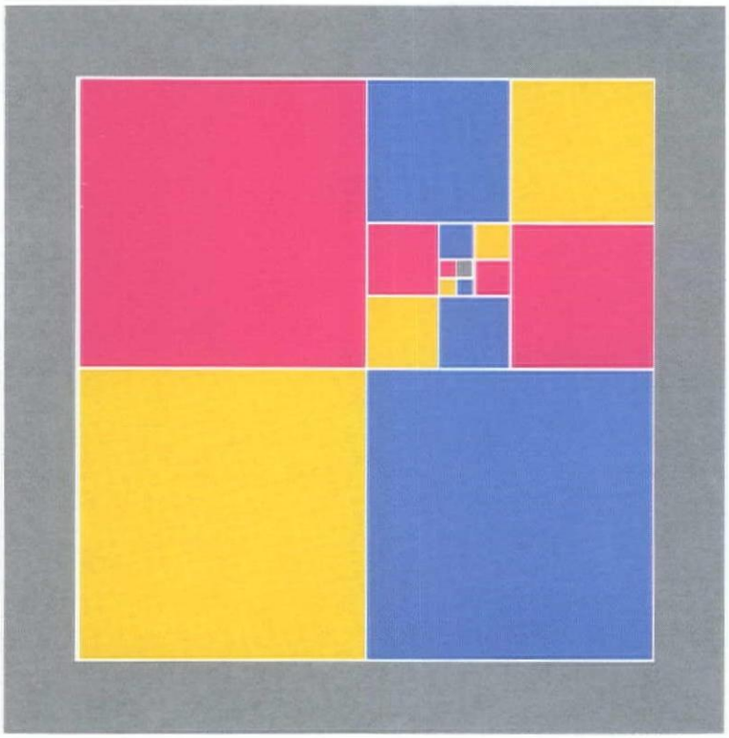
and well-built. But although reticent, its design is sophisticated. K+N believe that the ergonomics of the desk should be as highly considered as those of the chair, which has received considerable attention over the past decade or so. In the 'King Alpha' system the desk is adjustable (by a simple clutch mechanism housed in the distinctive bellows—the visual buffer zone between desk top and legs) and can be set to a range of angles to best help users in the different tasks they perform.

The basis of the system is a structural element linking legs to desk top and concealing cable channels, electric sockets and further sockets into which a wide range of complementary accessories integral with the system can be plugged—these include task lamp, telephone arm, vdu platform, document holder, filing tray—all of which swivel.

Drawers and filing cabinets on castors can be rolled underneath the desks or stand alongside them—filing cabinets have opening tops so that drawers can be reached without stooping. The desks—available in widths of 800, 1200 and 1600 mm link together in a variety of formations. Screens and cabinets of matching height are available as well as a conference desk which, based on the same structural elements, features the cable channel. A reception desk completes the range. The system is finished in a welcome and unobtrusive grey. 'Executive' work surfaces finished in matt-oak veneer or light-grey stain are also available. Further information from:
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'Designers' Saturday', London's day-long carnival of modern furniture, fabrics and lighting is held this year on 13 October. Taxis will race architects and designers between the 15 showrooms taking part. The two newcomers are London Lighting, the stylish Fulham Road showroom, and Dux Interiors, importers of contemporary Swedish furniture. The full list of companies taking part is: Aram Designs (many design classics including Eileen Gray and Le Corbusier); Domus (comprehensive and fine range of Italian tiles); Dux (luxury Swedish furniture); Erco Lighting (some of the best lighting available—enormous range including designs by Emilio Ambasz); Ergonom (lightweight German office furniture); Herman Miller (the legacy of George Nelson, Charles Eames. . .); Hille international (English office furniture, including the much-favoured Supporto chair); House of Sweden (Swedish classics and surprising circular workstation); Interspace (Italian furniture in magnificent setting); Liberty & Co (fabrics, lights, furniture—bright new English designers); London Lighting (enormous collection of high quality lighting—most of the best available); Marcatré (exemplar of Italian elegance); Oscar Woollens (Walter Collins' personal choice—from Scarpa and Magistretti to young English bloods); Scott Howard (Danish refinement; hot on graphics; own design magazine).

DESIGNERS' SATURDAY · 13 OCTOBER 1984



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Books

House style

THE MODERN HOUSE. *By David Mackay. Barcelona: Gustavo Gill.*

This book illustrates some 30 houses from a dozen countries. They are a lively lot arranged willy-nilly. The title suggests some common ground but the reader will have to sort this out for himself. The American block is the most easily identifiable, and the most dominant; Meier, Graves, Eisenmann *et al.* Curiously, although Venturi was never part of this group, the names have become interchangeable and the old divisions forgotten. Stern slips into a vacant slot and Venturi assumes pride of place with his calculated, relaxed, dexterity. So there is Five. The snag about this simplified classification is that the reader thinks he has seen it all before and the author too, on this occasion, for he sharpens his pen.

Italian style can be spotted at 20 paces; an affection for medieval prototypes, simplified form, neat geometry on the one hand and a good deal of concrete and over-articulation on the other, being two principal lines of enquiry. As the Swiss are also well disposed towards unadorned concrete and are just a little more precise it is not at all easy to distinguish these territories.

Energy and dedication are not enough. Japan struggles into the mainstream laboriously, swapping early Corbusier, Chareaux models and a remorseless extent of concrete for the refinements of the past. Why this should be so I do not know. At a recent RCA talk Frampton, an enthusiast of these tendencies, said that their traditional craftsmanship had out-priced itself but economics do not seem to be an evident constraint. It looks more like taste; certainly preferment. Hirishi Hara's Nagano clap-boarded house and Venturi's at Karonah have a lot in common and it's not all good.

Aldo van Eyck makes his own way in the world, thoughtfully. The gimcrack houses of Argentina and Chile are a pleasure; Solsona's tin shed a delight after the excesses of high style. Johnson completes his country estate, as it were, in a gentlemanly fashion with a tiny monastic studio. Bofill makes a ceremonial monument out of domesticity.

The notion of what makes a good house seems to be a matter of private concern and a reaction to the variability of events. The group of dwellings at Helsinki by Penttila, Saarela and Lind are arranged in a locked compound. It's an old idea, the fortified manor house, but it is still quite menacing. Britain is, in part, represented by Colquhoun & Miller's Pillwood house which has strong formal links with the Long Island Everyman-dwelling that Kocher and Frey built in 1934. In a sense it is the only project in this publication that holds its ground as far as the Modern Movement is concerned but it could be argued that the studio, and its models, simply offer another sort of sanctuary. JAMES GOWAN

Glass gazetteer

NINETEENTH-CENTURY NORFOLK STAINED GLASS. *By Birkin Haward. Norwich: Geo Books and Centre of East Anglian Studies. 1984. £35.*

Although, as Birkin Haward points out in his preface, a national survey of nineteenth-century stained glass seems at present impractical, this monumental survey of windows of the period in Norfolk is an invaluable contribution to the study of post-medieval stained glass throughout Britain. It consists of a comprehensive church-by-church gazetteer of all nineteenth century (and later) windows in the county's 722 churches, an account of the development of the stained-glass revival from the early 1800s to the turn of the century—with a study of the architectural context of some of the finest schemes of glazing—and an important section on the hitherto unresearched glass painters working in Norfolk during the period.

Since well over three-quarters of the county's nineteenth-century windows were made by artists and firms based in London or in a few major provincial cities, and since in this respect Norfolk's heritage of windows is typical of most other English counties, this detailed and well-illustrated survey is of considerable significance for any future nation-wide documentation of stained glass. Ninety-five excellent monochrome plates and over 400 colour transparencies on microfiche, cross-referenced with the gazetteer, provide a record of the development of such well-known firms as Hardman's, Clayton & Bell, Heaton Butler & Bayne and Powell's, and of designers working either in collaboration with firms, as in the case of Pugin, R. T. Bayne, Holiday and Albert Moore, or independently in the Arts and Crafts tradition of Christopher Whall and his followers. The illustrations of windows by the early nineteenth-century Norfolk glass painters such as S. C. Yarington and the Grants of Costessey show the progress of the stained-glass revival in a provincial context before the full 'archaeological' impact of Puginism in the 1850s. Though some examples appear crude in design and execution, the best productions of this Norfolk school rival the output of contemporary London studios.

In its attractive and thorough presentation of a prodigious quantity of detailed information this book provides a model for future studies of nineteenth-century stained glass—both author and publishers are to be congratulated.

PETER CORMACK

Books received

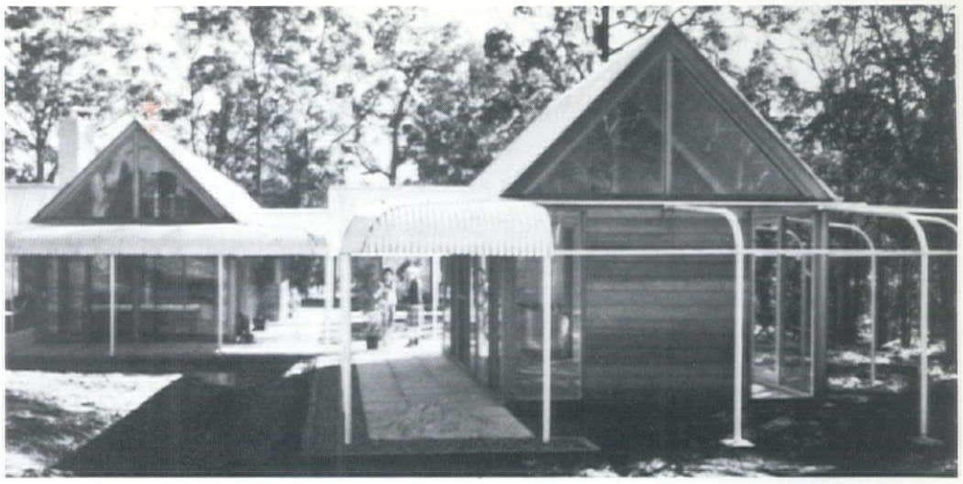
SWEETNESS AND LIGHT: THE QUEEN ANNE MOVEMENT 1860-1900. *By Mark Girouard. New Haven and London: Yale University Press. Paperback. £9·95.*

MODERN STAINED GLASS IN BRITISH CHURCHES. *By Mark Angus. Oxford: A. R. Mowbray. £18·50 (hardback), £12·50 (paperback).*

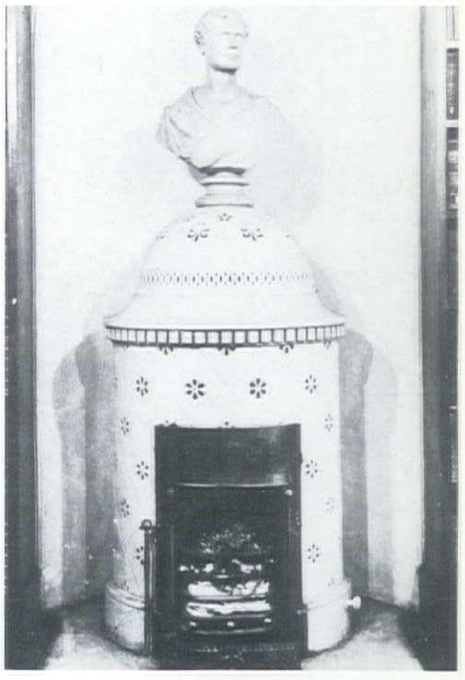
IL LUOGO TEATRALE NELLA TRATTATISTICA ITALIANA DELL '800. *By Elena Tamburini. Rome: Bulzoni Editore. Lire 12 000.*

THE BUSH CAPITAL. *By Roger Pegrum. Sydney: Hale & Iremonger. A$24·95.*

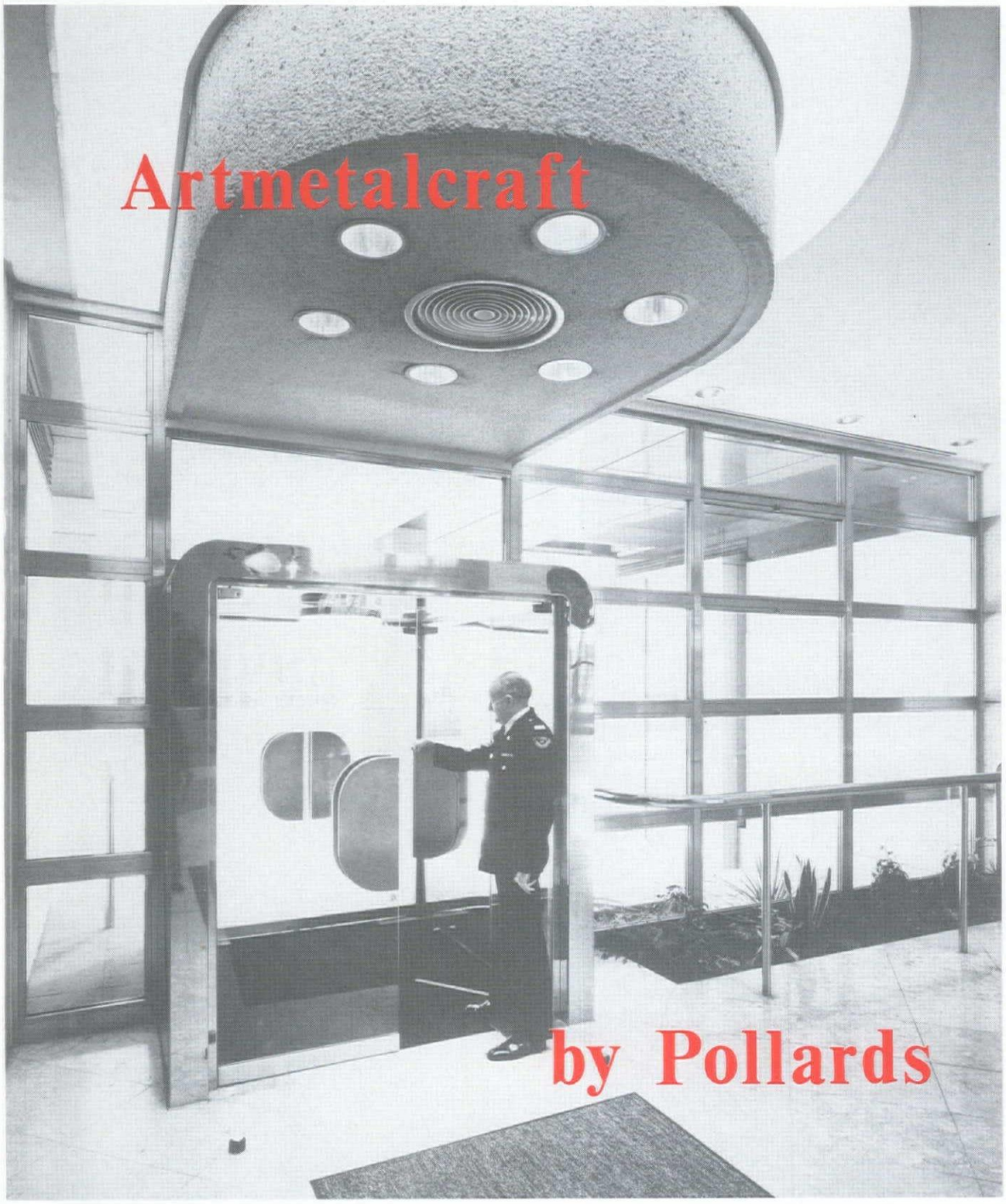
LA CITTA' DI ANFIONE E LA CITTA' DI PROMETEO: IDEA E POETICHE DELLA CITTA. *By Rosaro Assunto. Milan: Editoriale Jaca. Lire 22 000.*



The Hambrett house in Dural, New South Wales, by Philip Cox, is featured in a monograph of the architect which is the first in a series on contemporary Australian architects published by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects. The house is yet another fine example, alongside those of Glen Murcutt and John Andrews (AR June 1982) and Daryl Jackson (p26) which exploits corrugated iron in a search for a convincing Regionalist architecture for the outback. Cox is no newcomer to Regionalism. Over the years he has researched the Australian vernacular and published books on it, restored historic buildings and been part of (at least until the early '70s) the Regionalist 'Sydney School'. The present monograph shows well the full range of his architecture, but unfortunately without sufficient detail to allow real study of each building. Nevertheless it is well presented, well written and includes a particularly fine essay by Roger Pegrum.



Nicholas Hills' 'The English Fireplace' (Quiller Press, £9·95) not only surveys fireplace fashion over the centuries but also goes into the more profound subjects of fuel production and pollution. Above, an early example of a space heater—a stove surmounted by a bust of Faraday, originally in the Royal Institution, London. It is thought to be by the American-born Count Rumford, who settled in London and introduced many improvements in coal combustion and smoke emission and who founded the Royal Institution in 1799.



Framed screen and tunnel entrance in stainless steel with double entry doors. Office Block, Goodmans Yard/Portsoken St, London EC1.

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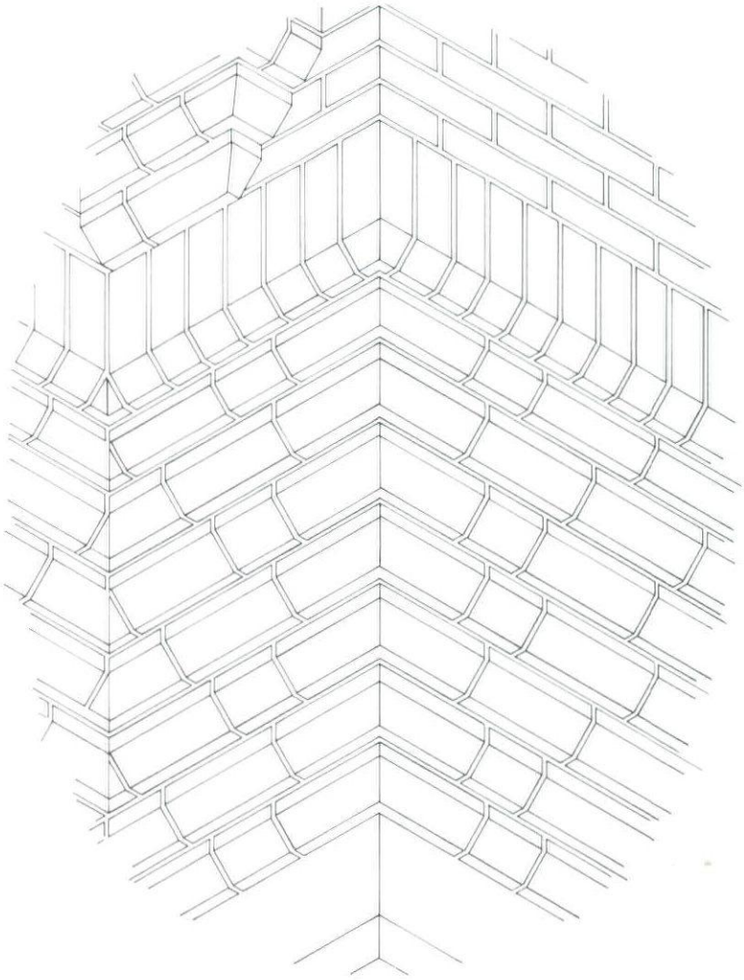
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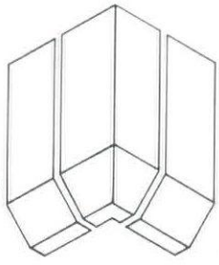
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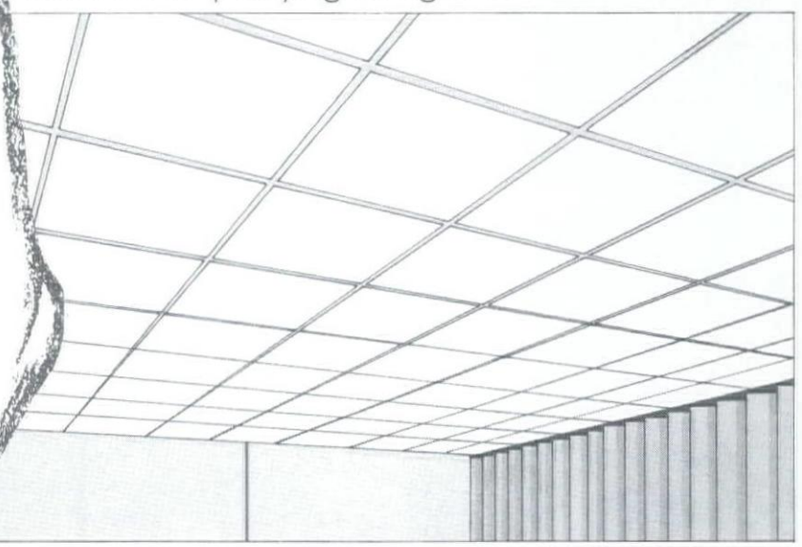
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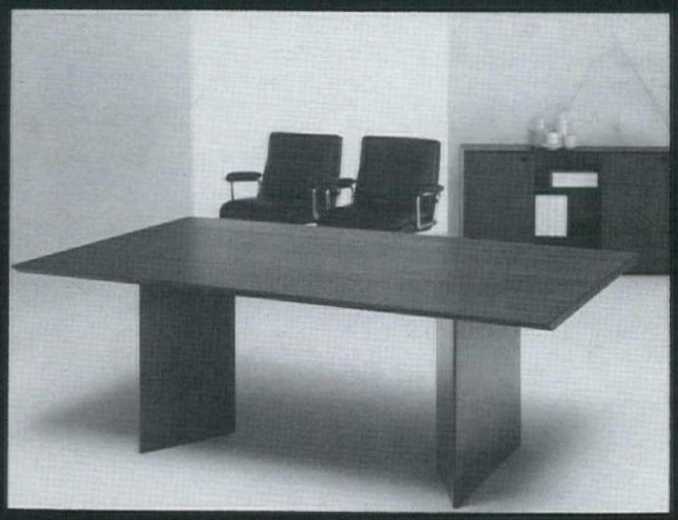
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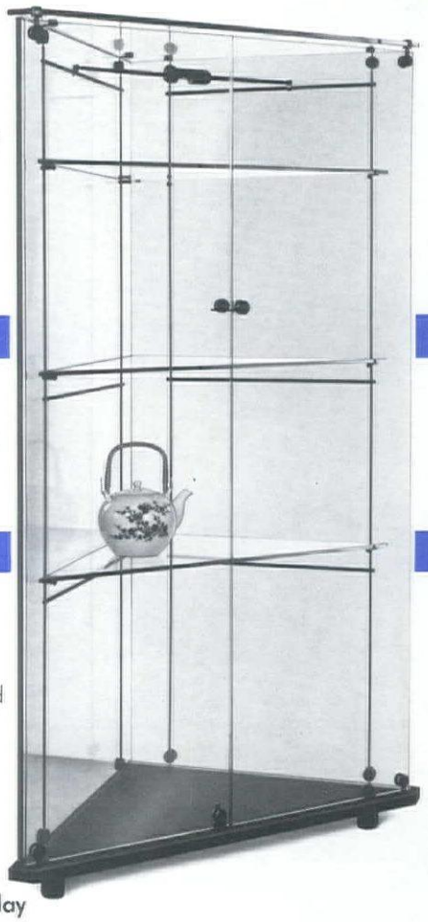
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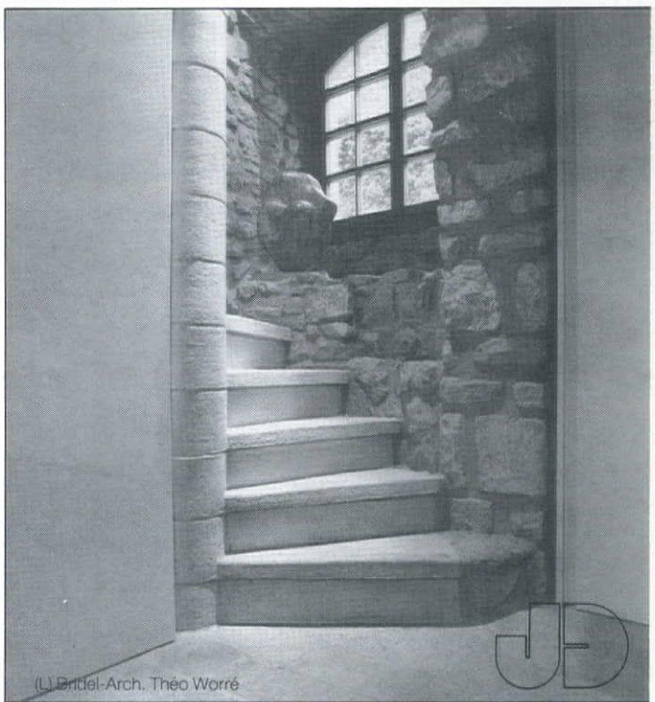
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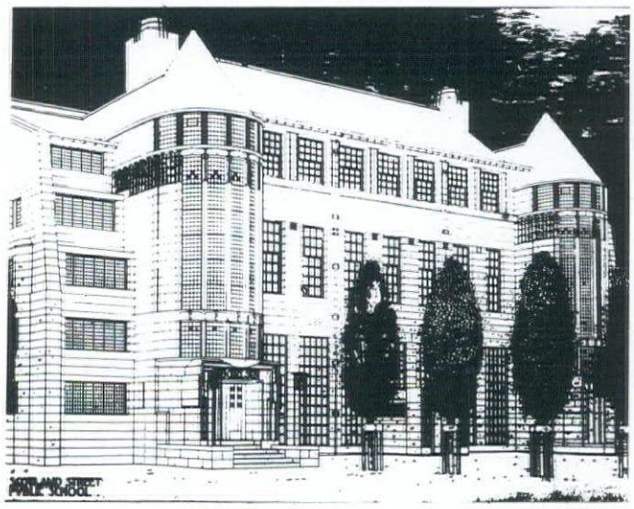
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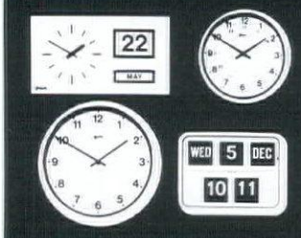
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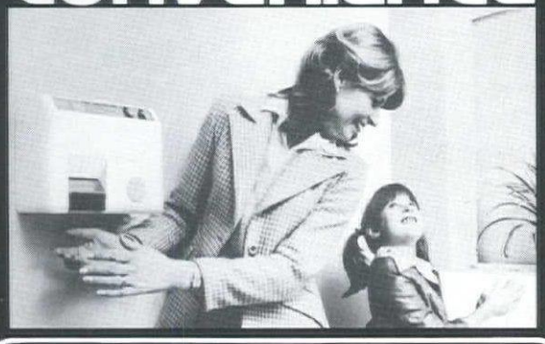
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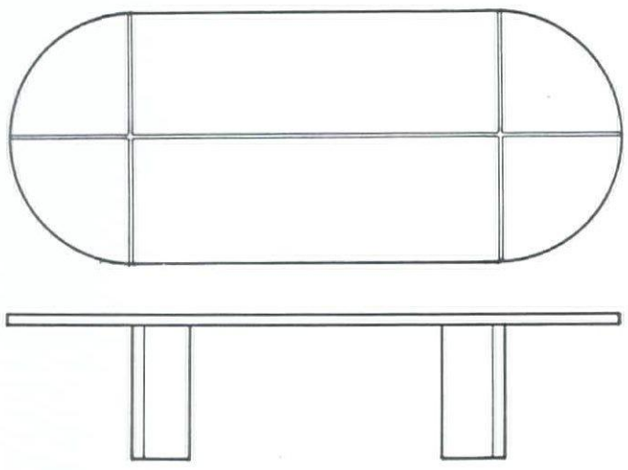
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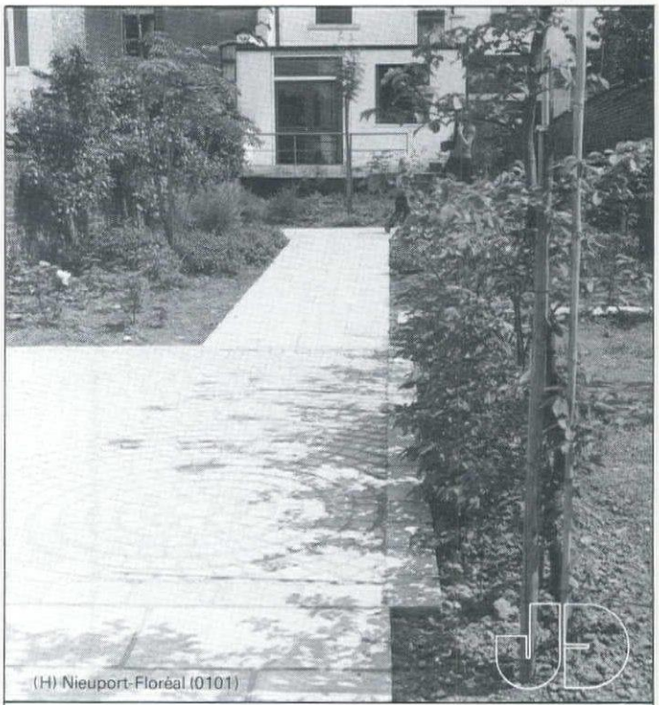
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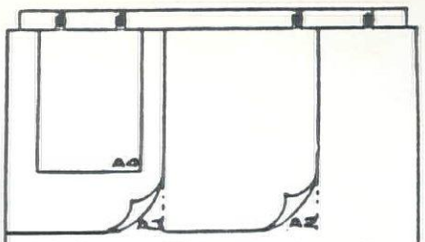
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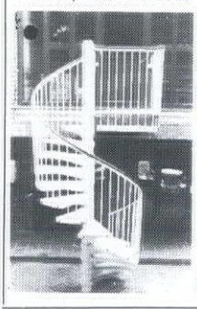
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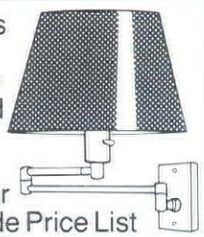
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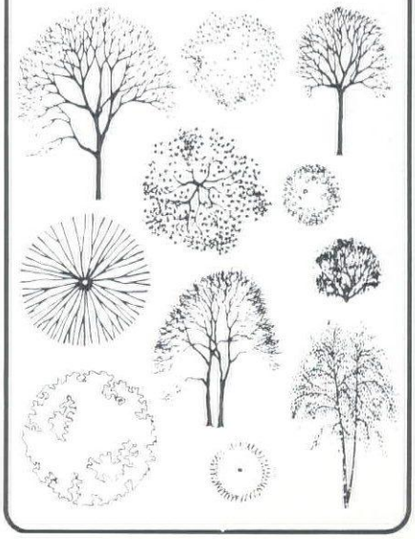
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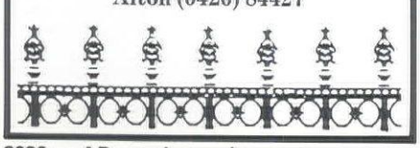


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