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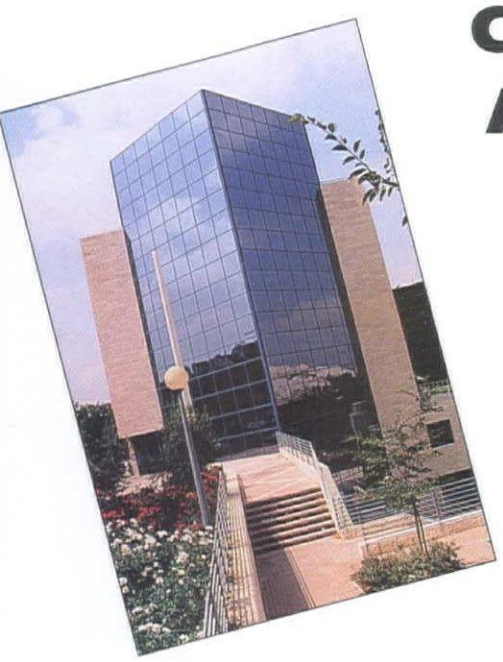
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Above right, the refurbished office facades for KeyMed UK include suspended solar screens which double as maintenance walkways.

Left, new offices for Digital Middle East in Astrawall curtain walling.

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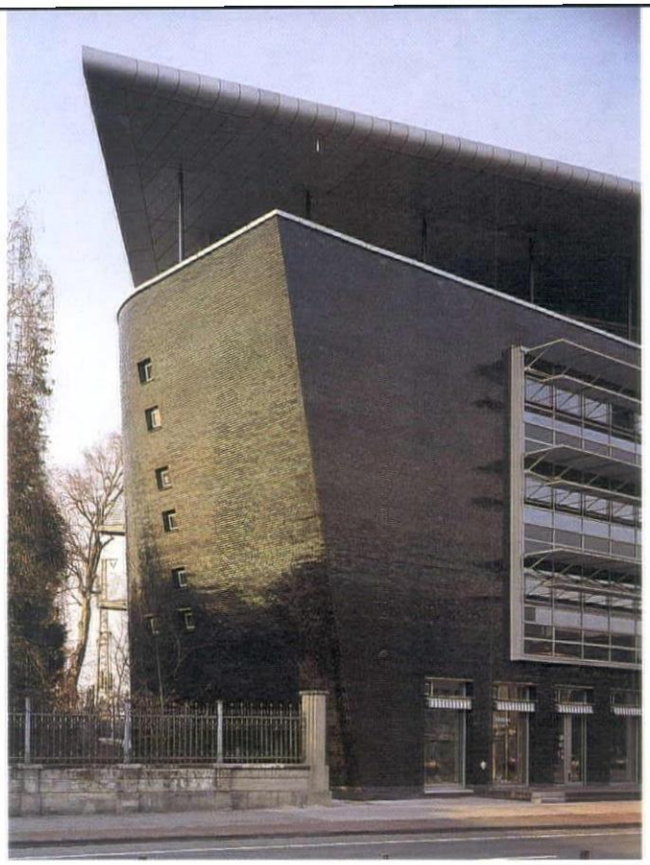
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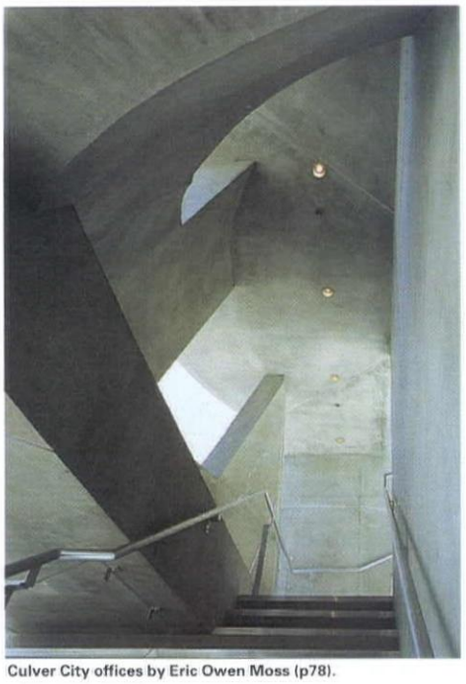
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Local government offices in Münster by Bolles-Wilson (p50).



Culver City offices by Eric Owen Moss (p78).

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Offices, Culver City, Los Angeles by Eric Owen Moss (see p78) — PHOTOGRAPH BY TOM BONNER

WORKING LIFE

Loss of a sense of place in the modern office is one of the results of contemporary management systems and increasingly frenetic flows of capital and information. This issue looks at architectural resistance to the trend: buildings for work that still celebrate human values.

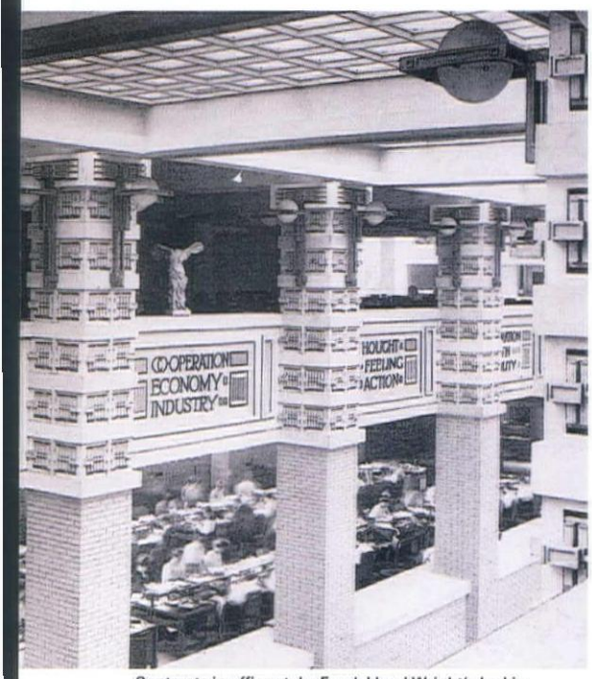
There is an almost uncanny similarity between many contemporary expressions of the world of work and the metaphorical arid plain of much Post-Modern thought where everything has equal value, so there can be no directions or pathways. It is no accident that Deconstructionism emerged in the philosophy schools at the same time as received perceptions of space and time began to be dissolved by the revolutions in communications and capital flow. In many ways, the workplace is the arena of contemporary life in which these developments can be seen most clearly.

At the moment, the most obvious instance of the effects of such forces on environments for working in is the hot-desk office, where no-one (except perhaps the few at the very top of the pyramid) has a regular workplace, but each takes a desk as and when it is needed. In some ways, this can be seen as a welcome release from the highly disciplined offices of the first part of this century, with their ethos and layout derived partly from (in our terms) quite primitive industrial organisations, or from military command structures (a strong pattern in an era when two mass wars were fought within a couple of decades of each other). The hot-desking system allows the organisation to maximise the use of its plant, and it can permit individual workers to work flexibly, using centralised or distant facilities as they need them. Ernst Giselbrecht's media centre at Bregenz, Austria (p73) is a case in point, where the journalists use the most up-to-date portable computers connected to headquarters whenever occasion demands by systems of communication so efficient that they could not be anticipated even a decade ago. In effect, the workplace is where the lap-top is, a mobile world in which differences between the individual's space and time and those of the organisation are blurred in a way new to most office workers: in the open-plan prairie of hot desks, individual behaviour can be scrutinised with even more efficiency than the prisoners who were observed in Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon,[1] and the activities of out-of-office workers can be surveyed electronically with almost equal precision. At the same time, work in general moves and changes from country to country with ever increasing freneticism as capital chases low-cost labour[2] round the globe. This is the placeless world of Post-Modernism.

Manuel Castells calls it 'the space of flows' which, he says, 'is not the Orwellian prophecy of a totalitarian universe controlled by Big Brother on the basis of information technologies. It is a much more subtle, and to some extent potentially more destructive form of social disintegration and reintegration ... social meaning evaporates from places, and therefore from society, and becomes diluted and diffused in the reconstructed logic of a space of flows whose profile, origin and ultimate purpose are unknown'.[3] This analysis is very worrying and can lead to the kind of fashionable nihilism embraced by architects like Koolhaas and Eisenman, which in many ways is no more than a whole-hearted celebration of the new values. Plainly, the espousal of the new system and abandonment of traditional human values and notions of place have brought the *faux avant-garde* much fame and work.

The example is copied by thousands of lesser talents, and now has some of the uncriticised influence among students which PoMo enjoyed 10 or 15 years ago. Such uncritical worship of new technology and organisations resembles that of the interwar Modern Movement. But there is a crucial difference: then, most architects had a burning belief that technology and industry could be harnessed to create a world that would be better for everyone to live in. Now we are frightened of the potential of technology and the mighty market. Together, they are more powerful than any individual or even nation: the harsh choice appears to be between collaboration, or resistance to organisations indifferent to human values which, though (as Castells points out) do not employ murder and torture like those of dictatorships (or at least only in remote countries), are as powerful, and perhaps ultimately more destructive of the spirit of the individual and society.

Yet however powerless architects may feel, however marginalised our traditional concerns with place-making may seem, we are not bound to despair. Castells argues that 'the issue ... becomes how to articulate the meaning of places to this new functional space [of flows]'.[4] He suggests the need



Contrasts in office style: Frank Lloyd Wright's Larkin Building, Buffalo, New York State, 1904-5 ...



... highly disciplined and paternalistic, but at least human, compared to the electronically windswept hot-desk desert (the Hong Kong Stock Exchange), which rejects any semblance of ...

for 'symbolic marking of places', and the cultivation of local societies linked to generate a broad social framework – using the communication systems of the space of flows for human ends. David Harvey, the most comprehensive analyst of the Post-Modern condition, believes that there is hope in the increasing 'recognition that the dimensions of space and time matter, and that there are real geographies of social action, real as well as metaphorical territories and spaces of power'.[5]

Clearly, there is a job for people who make places in such a scenario. But the architect's role is far removed from that of director of the social play to which the profession so arrogantly aspired in the middle of this century – it is more a humble member of the resistance than leader of the revolution. Yet it is nobler than the trade of exterior decorator which the practitioners of PoMo adopted with such avaricious fervour in the '80s.

The buildings shown in this issue illustrate the new role. They are more modest than many shown in previous issues on workplace: none is very big; none proposes a radical re-evaluation of the office and its life, as Niels Torp did with his SAS headquarters in Stockholm (AR March 1989) or Ralph Erskine envisioned when he launched his Ark (AR July 1992).[6] Several, particularly the German ones, are variants on institutional rows of cellular offices along corridors[7] (we must, it seems, deal with either the electronically windswept hot-desk desert, or the labyrinth of Kafka's Castle). But all manipulate these basic types to provide three-dimensional lattices of potential places. And all have special moments which make them memorable: places which celebrate arrival, social eating, meeting, or conversation. They show how human values can be injected into commonplace and sometimes dispiritingly reductive programmes. And, though most are designed for individual clients, they have lessons to offer for even the most mundane speculative projects. P.D.

1 The ideal Utilitarian prison in which the custodian dwelt in a central tower, always and unexpectedly able to observe the activities of the prisoners in a ring of cells round it. I do not mean to imply by this that Giselbrecht's building is like a prison; his system offers many degrees of transparency and opacity in the general office spaces.

2 Low paid, or highly productive, preferably both.

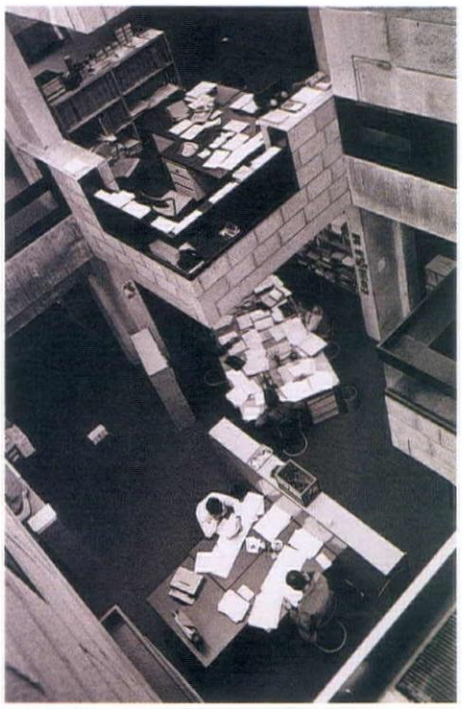
3 Castells, Manuel *The Informational City, Information Technology, Economic Restructuring and the Urban-Regional Process*, Oxford UK and Cambridge USA, 1993, p349.

4 *Ibid*, p350.

5 Harvey, David, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, Blackwell, Oxford UK and Cambridge USA, 1990, p355.

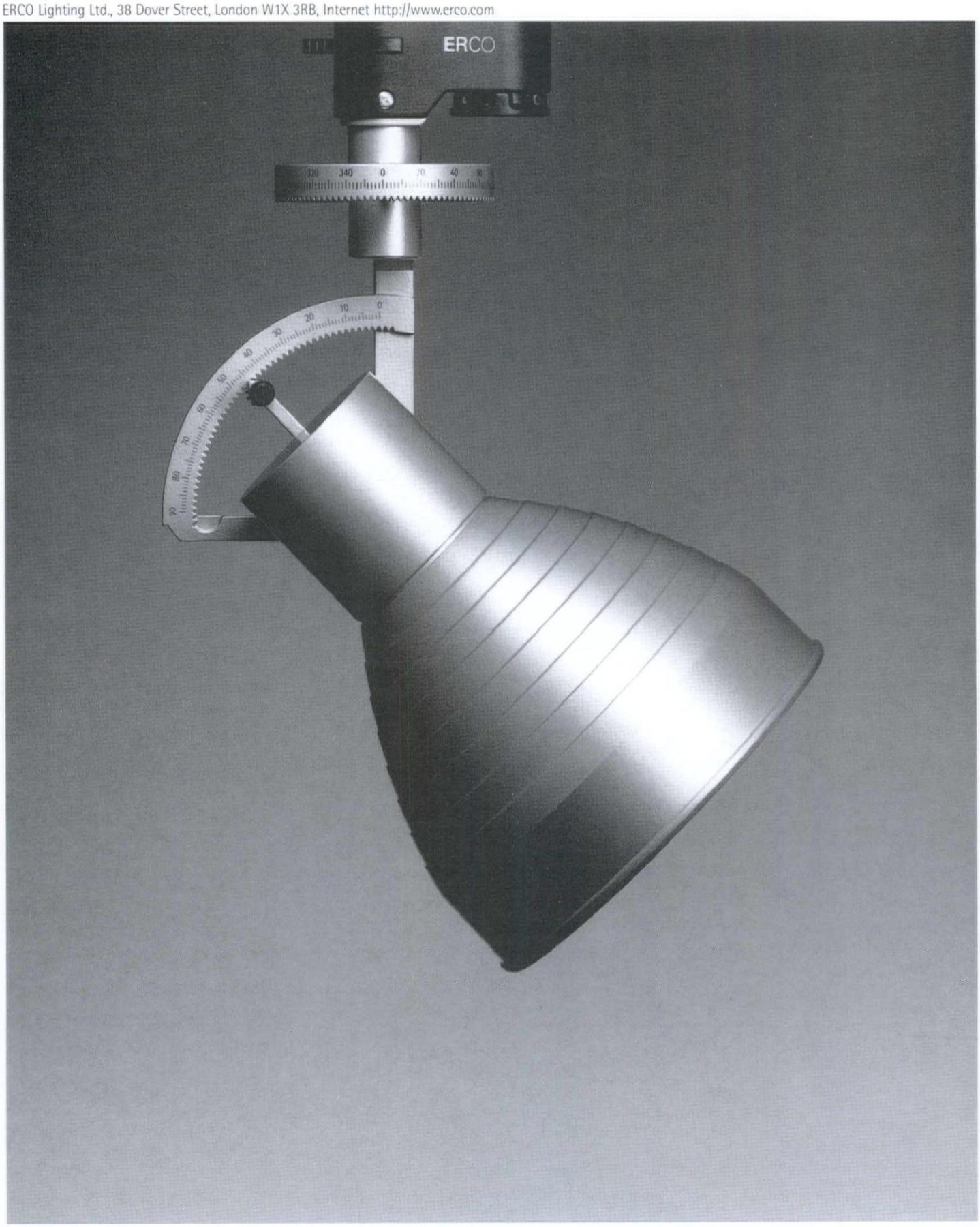
6 This most thoughtful and humane building was built by an extraordinarily idealistic developer in London's Hammersmith as a speculative development. Naturally, in the climate of recession and shortsighted management that prevailed in Britain in the early 1990s, it was not tenanted for a long time. Now, Seagram's have taken the building (see *The Architects' Journal* 31.10.96).

7 Despite (or perhaps because) many of the most humane and influential developments in open planning like Bürolandschaft emerged in Germany, most official organisations (and even NGOs) there build cellular offices (see for instance pp45 and 50).



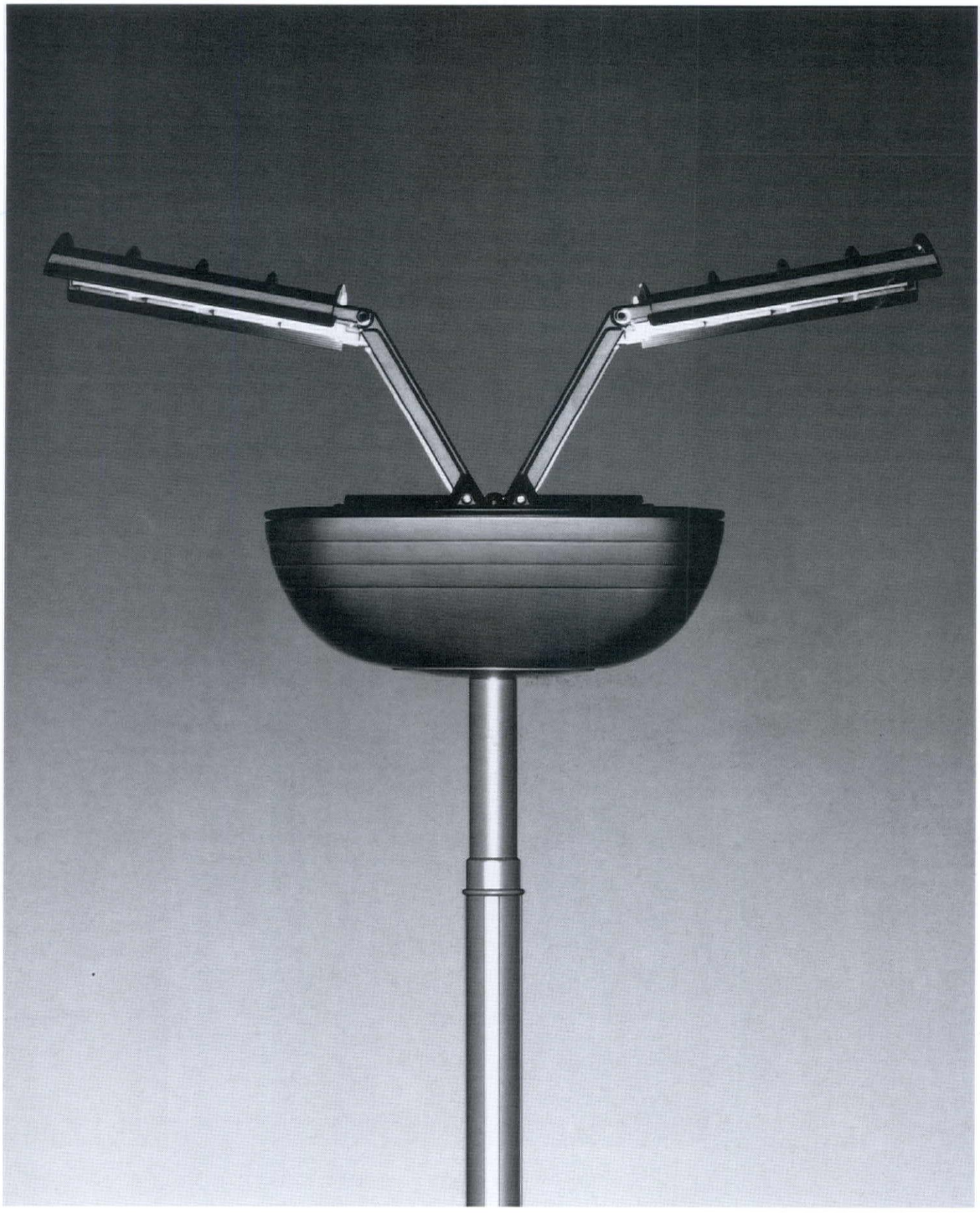
... the individual and social placemaking of Herman Hertzberger's Centraal Beheer in Apeldoorn (1970-2).

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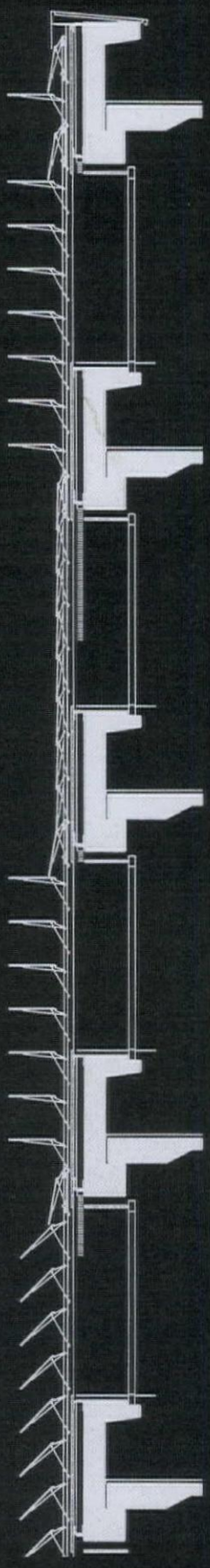
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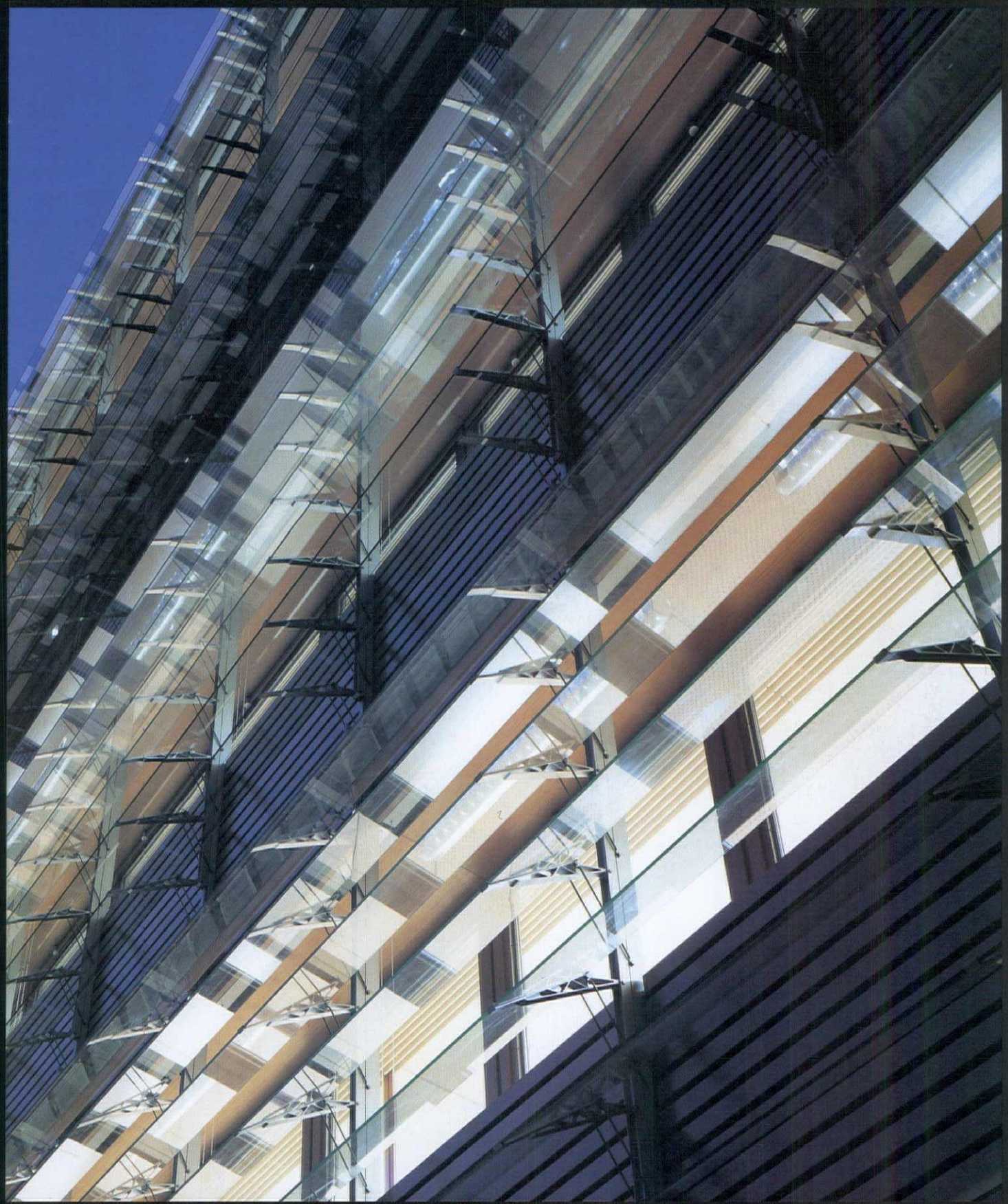
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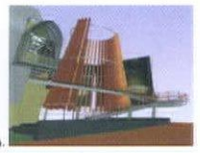
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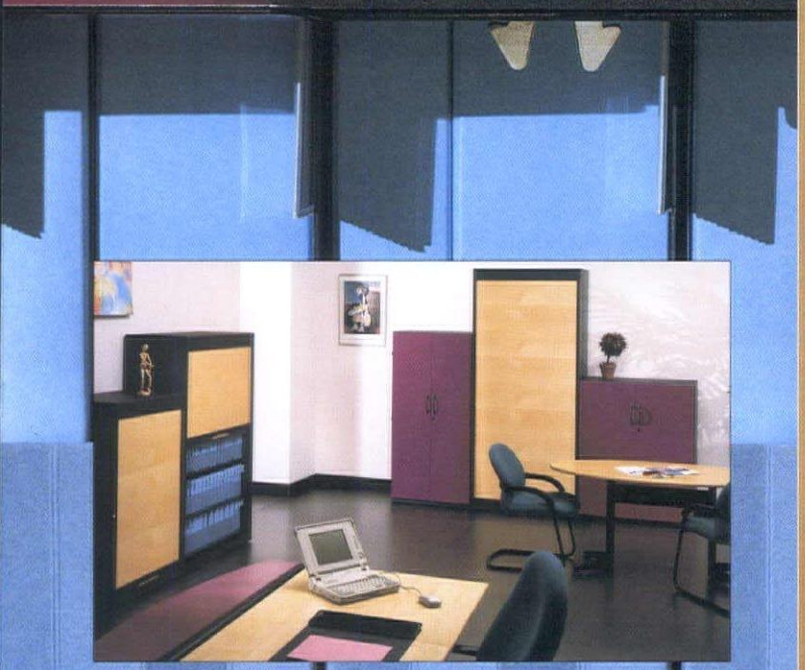
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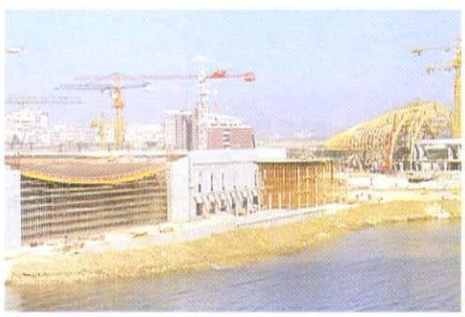
Lisbon Expo 98

The 1998 Lisbon Expo has been far less heralded than for instance Seville's in 1992. Compared to that, it will be a relatively modest affair, without macho contests between national pavilions or huge amounts of hype. Perhaps modesty is wise. Seville's Expo ground is a sorry affair now, with empty pavilions, tatty infrastructure and gap sites; the science park project never took off, and only the regional government of Andalucia occupies the buildings in the way intended.

Lisbon has taken a much more robust attitude: what is built for the Fair must become part of the city. The site is a long strip on the Tagus, or rather what the Portuguese call the Sea of Straw – the lagoon which shelters the city and provided the calm waters from which Vasco da Gama and his followers set sail to explore the globe. The place was occupied by outdated industrial uses, for instance a refinery, the national oil-reserve tank farm and a defunct rubbish disposal works. These could be moved, and a new piece of city brought down to the water. This was an opportunity not to be lost; apart from the mid-eighteenth-century splendour of the Praça do Commercio in the centre of the Marquis de Pombal's reconstruction of the old city after the famous earthquake, Lisbon is almost entirely cut off from the Tagus by nineteenth-century industrial buildings, docks and railways. A new local centre could be created and the river opened up for the enjoyment of all inhabitants.



Entrance to oceanarium by Peter Chermayeff.



Portuguese Pavilion by Alvaro Siza.

Infrastructure associated with the site is much more impressive and permanent than usual for an Expo. A new bridge sweeps 15km over the lagoon to make an additional much needed connection between the top and bottom of the country. The site will have district heating and cooling and a centralised pneumatic waste disposal system. A big new railway station designed by Santiago Calatrava will be a multi-modal transport exchange and the main gateway to the Expo site with connections to the metro, new roads and the airport (3km away). New commercial buildings and housing will be associated with this, and housing is being built on the site itself; initially it will be used by Expo staff, but then offered for rent. A large park will terminate the site to the north.

The biggest building is the 10 000 seat multi-purpose auditorium (every city needs one these days), designed by Regino Cruz and SOM, who have used laminated timber in a not entirely overstretched attempt to evoke the ribs and structure of a caravel – the vessel with which the Portuguese explored the world; externally, its smooth silver skin will make the thing look like a huge marine bug. Next door is the complex that will become the Lisbon Exhibition Centre after the end of the Expo, designed by António Barreiros Ferreira and Alberto França Dória. During the fair, it will house exhibits from participating countries, and there will be another (demountable) structure by Manuel Salgado, Marino Fei and Pierluigi Cerri for the same purpose at the other end of the site. So all national exhibits (except the Portuguese, in a special pavilion by Alvaro Siza) will be in effect interior design displays. The aim of the strategy is to ensure that practicable buildings result after the show (the demountable one will be re-erected in a provincial city) and to avoid ending up with useless tatty pavilions *à la* Seville. But there will be a price to pay, and although sites are being offered free so that exhibitors can concentrate resources on the content of their displays, it will be difficult to prevent the halls seeming like large trade shows.

The theme of the fair is 'The oceans, a heritage for the future', and one of the most striking buildings will be the large 'Oceanarium' by American aquarium architect Peter Chermayeff in which four displays of marine ecologies from different climatic zones surround a huge central



The East Station by Santiago Calatrava.

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Issue six is out, and like its predecessors, has great variety. It includes building and environmental studies, theory, history, documentation of distinguished architects and reviews of books which will have an impact on theory and practice. Nick Baker analyses recent investigations into thermal comfort intended to promote passive cooling and avoid air conditioning. Florian Beigel and Philip Christou describe the strategy of their competition-winning project for regenerating industrial wasteland in east Germany. James Marston Fitch explains the plot of PoMo's emergence from that bastion of Modernism, the New York Museum of Modern Art. Hugo Häring's essay on proportion is translated into English for the first time.

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tank showing life in the great oceans. The peripheral tanks are shaded by partly obscured glass suspended from masts, and the building is set on an island in the dock which forms the centre of the Expo layout.

In contrast to the big safe international names and staid buildings will be lively designs for cafés, bars, street furniture and landscape interventions by less well-known and younger Portuguese architects. By its nature, much of this work has not started yet, but much of the perceived effect of the show, which opens on 22 May next year, will depend on it. PETER DAVEY

Romanian revival

Romania is taking a keen interest in its own past; not the immediate past of course, but the golden years of the '20s and '30s. The modern architecture of that period is alive and well, and the subject of study as well as of a new-found architectural confidence. After five decades of cultural deprivation, the revival of interest in Modernism – in all its guises – is of paramount importance in the recovery of the nation and in its representation in the wider world. There has been a fundamental weakness in our knowledge of the avant-garde in Romania (and indeed in many other parts of Central and Eastern Europe) due to a lack of scholarship, research or even the most obvious kind of publicity. This paucity of information has led to much confusion about what was there, and what is left. Thankfully, from journals and paintings to individual buildings and estates, the artefacts are resurfacing. Romania was certainly not out on a limb. Its involvement with this Modern Movement in the arts was vital, comprehensive and crucial from a cultural point of view. After years in the wilderness Romanian architects, artists and historians are now looking back at this international era. Romanian architecture in the interwar years was dominated by two major influences, both French. The strong links with Paris meant that many architects trained at the Ecole des Beaux Arts and individual Romanian artists played a key role in the development of the modern arts.

A major exhibition *Between Avant-garde and Modernism* held in Bucharest in 1993 and partly sponsored by the Soros Foundation covered all the arts of the period between 1920 and the late 1940s, and included cultural icons and information on the major personalities of the period. It was a revelation and one that focused on Romania's wider European connections.

A major section of the Bucharest exhibition was devoted to Romanian Modernist architecture and it is this section that is now in Western Europe. It was shown at ETH, Zurich and recently at the RIBA and contains some impressive material including original drawings, a number of fine large-scale models and a selection of period photographs, somewhat faded perhaps, but emphasising the strength of the country's Modern examples by Janco, Creanga and the remarkably versatile George Matei Cantacuzino. His splendid Hotel Bellona, a functional object with steamship features and the subject of a vast model in the exhibition, was part of an estate of villas and spa buildings at the Black Sea resort of Efirie. Cantacuzino, a Beaux Arts graduate, advocated the creation of an architecture of compromise, traditional elements combined with a modern architecture, which, he wrote, 'seeks its own laws at the source of the useful, of the constructive and of the social idea. It does not run counter to aspirations of our architecture', he continued, although clearly it was an importation. However, the Modern Movement's early phase had been enriched by the presence of a number of Romanian artists whose impact has been widely acknowledged.

These include the immensely influential sculptor Constantin Brancusi (1876-1957) who left Romania as early as 1904, but whose 30m high gilded 'Endless Column' was set up at Targu Jiu in 1937 and is still here. The original inventor of the Zurich-based Dada Group Tristan Tzara was also Romanian, as was his close collaborator the architect Marcel Janco, who became one of the main exponents of Modernist architecture in Bucharest. Janco, whose work is widely represented in the exhibition, collaborated with his brother Iuliu Ianco to produce a number of 'Cubistic' houses from 1929 onwards. Flat-roofed cubic International Style Modernism soon caught on with the young avant-garde architects, many of whom published their own journals and became involved with artists from many disciplines. The most prolific of these modern architects was undoubtedly Horia Creanga, whose ARO apartment block (1929-31) set the standard for many later apartment buildings by other architects along the main boulevards of Bucharest. Fortunately, many of these blocks remain today and efforts are being made to gradually refurbish them and the other Modern examples throughout the city. But the current mood is not one of conservation, rather of continuity and salvation.

The Romanians have found an important link to their own twentieth-century cultural legacy. They are proud of its depth and bemused at its remains. They now wish to build upon it. This opens up a whole new area of theoretical and practical questions as there is not an identifiable avant-garde anymore. Modernism is clearly not a self-lighting candle snuffed out when the Fascists took control and rekindled when artistic freedom returned. However, it is clearly a key factor in Romania's new cultural mood.

DENNIS SHARP

Romania in the 1930s: Architecture and Modernism at the RIBA Architecture Centre, 66 Portland Place, London until 26 March.

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Prague Castle Competition

Conditions for the Prague Castle Pheasantry Redevelopment Competition will be available from 5 May. The aim of the prestigious two-stage international competition is to find architectural and urban design proposals for this neglected area of one of Europe's finest castle complexes.

The promoter of the competition is the Prague Castle Administration, the non-profit making organisation of the Czech Republic President's office. It is sponsored by The Architectural Review.

Full details of timing, prizes and jury were given in last month's issue of AR (p9). Conditions can be obtained from Jan Zemánek, AYH Homola Projektmanagement s.r.o., námestí Barikád 1134/3, 130 00 Prague 3, Czech Republic. The fee for conditions is 3000CZK (US$110 or equivalent) with 2000CZK (US$75) postage in Europe and (3000CZK overseas).

Vr Une Architecture

Following the success of last year's competition (AR November 1996), The Architectural Review (in conjunction with Graphisoft, Apple Computers, Architectural Record and The American Institute of Architecture Students) is co-sponsoring the annual International Student Competition – *Vr Une Architecture* – for creative architectural interpretation using Computer Aided Design (CAD).

Using computer modelling techniques, the challenge is to interpret works that have never existed physically – or are long missing from the physical landscape – but are nevertheless real in our present day culture. The list of works includes the Bluebeard's Castle, Asgard (from Norse mythology), The House at Pooh Corner, (from *Winnie the Pooh* by A. A. Milne), Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*, The Church of Reason (from *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* by Robert Pirsig) and *The Restaurant at the End of the Universe*, by Douglas Adams.

The competition is open to all university students and recent graduates. Participating students must be enrolled in a school of architecture, landscape architecture, urban planning or an allied discipline. Participants in the recent graduate category must have graduated from a school of architecture within a five year period prior to the opening registration date.

First prize is $2500 cash, a top range Apple Macintosh (plus ArchiCAD software), and a Travelling Fellowship for two. Registration is now open, with final submissions due on 9 June 1997.

For full competition details and entry forms contact: *Vr Une Architecture*, Graphisoft R & D, Kolumbusz-utca 29, H-1145 Budapest, Hungary. Telephone +36-1-467 3000; fax +36-1-467-3099. Or visit the Graphisoft web site at **www.graphisoft.com** to register on-line.

LETTERS

Stonehenge library

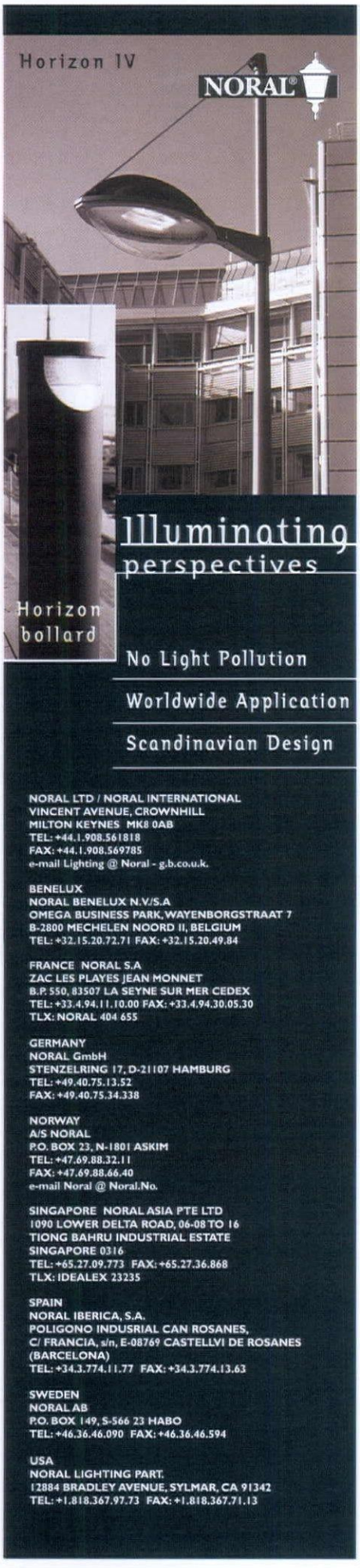
SIR: The failure of Safdie's Vancouver Library (Outrage, January 1997) is not in the overall round colosseum shape, but rather in the specific detail of false post-and-beam, 'advanced Stonehenge style', pasted onto the building's facade, level-by-level, four times upward. This is a vivid example of how architectural details can doom the fate of a building.

Thirty years (!) after Montreal's Habitat, where Safdie stepped forward with the visual expression of industrialised building technology, it is sad to note his recent regression in that same scope.

Yours etc
SIMCHA AFEK-SHPAK
Haifa, Israel



For more details enter 2 on AR enquiry card



For more details enter 24 on AR enquiry card

Drawing conclusions

SIR: We would like to congratulate you on your recent achievement of winning the Editorial Team of the Year Award. It was noted that the judges were impressed by AR's general standard of excellence.

Notwithstanding this, we feel that the quality of the drawings is not commensurate with your acknowledged level of excellence. For instance, many of the drawings in the Theme section of the January 1997 issue have gravely suffered in the process of reproduction for publication. It must not be overlooked that drawing is the fundamental language of the architect. As such, their legibility can never be compromised. Further, their importance as conveyors of information should warrant appropriate attention and not be reduced to obscure marginalia dominated by text and photographs.

Yours etc

ADAM FAWKES

GRANT MACEACHERN

TIMOTHY POTTER

Vancouver, Canada

P.S. As an aside to the attached letter, I must say with respect to the January 'Outrage', I shake my head in bewilderment each time I walk past our new (?) library. GRANT MACEACHERN

The jewel in the crow

SIR: I would like to draw your attention to the fact that Le Corbusier's last design: a jewel of a house on the Zürich lake shore, is suffering from a lack of maintenance, is empty and unheated because of a long running dispute between the two parties responsible for its upkeep: the owner and the City of Zürich.

A word from your magazine, Outrage perhaps, may help them to realise that they have in their charge a monument to one of Europe's most important architects.

Yours etc

BRYN JAMES

Zürich

Middling English

SIR: *Mea culpa*. Martin Schwartz is correct – if somewhat pedantic – in pointing out that *The Architecture of Peter Celsing* (Arkitektur Förlag AB, Stockholm) contains some spelling mistakes and, at times, rather stiff syntax. My review (AR October 1996) dwelt (in the allotted 400 words) on its essence: the presentation through photographs, drawings and factual information of a distinguished architect's work. Wilfried Wang's essay might indeed have been better edited in its English version, but that does not negate its value.

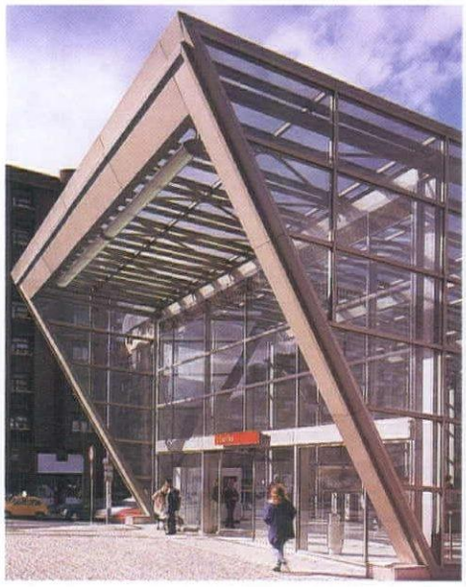
RAYMUND RYAN

Dublin, Ireland

NEXT ISSUE

May's Architectural Review takes transport buildings as its theme. All cities, all communities, no matter how dispersed, need transport interchanges. They incorporate human transactions, movements of people, money and perceptions that require an architectural response. The importance of transport buildings has always been celebrated by grand figures in urban life, from the inns of the Middle Ages to the great railway stations of the nineteenth century and more recently, by a new generation of airports. We consider a wide range of transport buildings that not only epitomise the enduring romance of travel, but also provide smoothly functioning enclosures for a wide range of human experiences.

In Japan, Shin Takamatsu has designed two typically idiosyncratic shipping and ferry terminals, at Mihonoseki and Nagasaki, that greatly enliven the surrounding ports and generate a sense of civic symbolism. In Spain, Foster and Partners have completed an elegant series of underground stations for Bilbao's revitalised metro system. In Austria, Leopold Kaufmann has designed new cableway stations for the town of Montafon, infusing a workaday Alpine building type with presence and style. And in Norway, we consider Niels Torp's latest suburban railway station at Asker, a modest yet invigorating solution that enhances the public realm. Plus the usual inspiring mixture of Interiors, Outrage and Delight. Buy this and 11 other stimulating issues by filling in the enclosed subscription form.



Award for excellence at Spectrum



1



2



3

1
Left-right: jury members, Eva Jiricna, Penny McGuire, Rodney Kinsman.
2
Nick Grimshaw tests an exhibit.
3
AR publisher, Rowan Crowley (centre), presenting the first prize to Bulo's representatives, Bart Busschop (left) and Tony Hendrick (right).

Photographs: Paul Silverberg

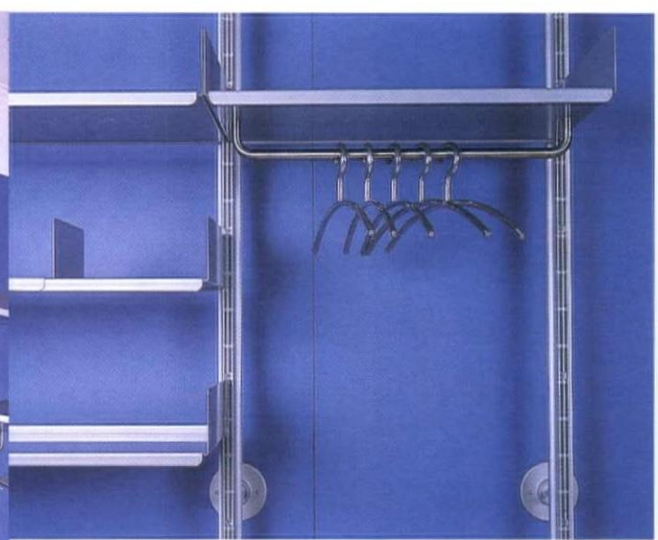
In March, the AR introduced its own Award for Product Excellence at Spectrum, the annual furniture fair held at the Royal College of Art, London. Jury members were Nick Grimshaw, Nicholas Grimshaw & Partners; Eva Jiricna, Eva Jiricna Architects; Rodney Kinsman, OMK; and Penny McGuire, AR assistant editor. The awards (there was an outright winner, and a highly commended) were presented to the products' manufacturers by AR's publisher, Rowan Crowley.

The outright winner was the new M2 office desk system, designed and produced by the Belgian furniture firm, Bulo. The jury unanimously found it 'an outstanding product, very well engineered and cleanly and simply designed: a controlled and stylish system'.

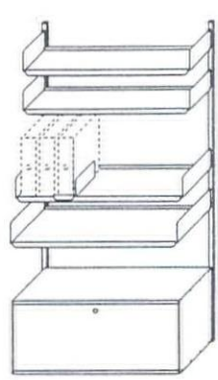
The highly commended prize went to Vitsoe's 606 Universal Shelving System which, designed by Dieter Rams, and first produced in 1960, has been continually refined and developed according to the Vitsoe dictum that 'a classic design must never stand still, but evolve'. The jury commented that it was a pleasure to see evolution that had not 'destroyed the basic excellence of the design.We would far rather see firms refining a good product than chasing innovation for its own sake'.

highly commended





Recent improvements to the 606 Universal Shelving System include shelving and cabinets suitable for the computer age, a new hanging rail and a silver finish. The adoption of new technology and new engineering to form components are necessarily invisible improvements; but the thrust of the work, says the firm, has been to make the system 'perform better and cost less'. Impressively, present prices are what they were eight years ago.



Reader enquiry number 501



For more details enter 8 on AR enquiry card

winner

M2's basic unit is composed of a slender, floating, one metre square table top, supported by a metal frame and cantilevered from a storage unit of solid core laminate. Both the large footrest (in hard rubber, with a flap to hold the foot), and the various storage facilities (including cable management) have been intelligently devised; while the different accessories – a screen, shelf, a horizontal panel that slides things to the back of the desk and out of the way – have been elegantly designed and can be simply attached. Work surface can be laminate or frosted glass and there is an accompanying range of cabinets and alternative work surfaces.

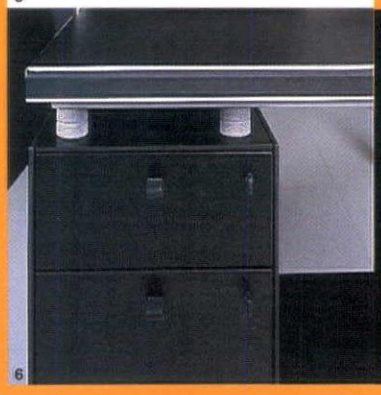
Reader enquiry number 502



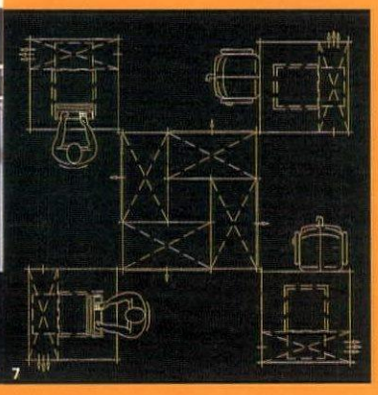


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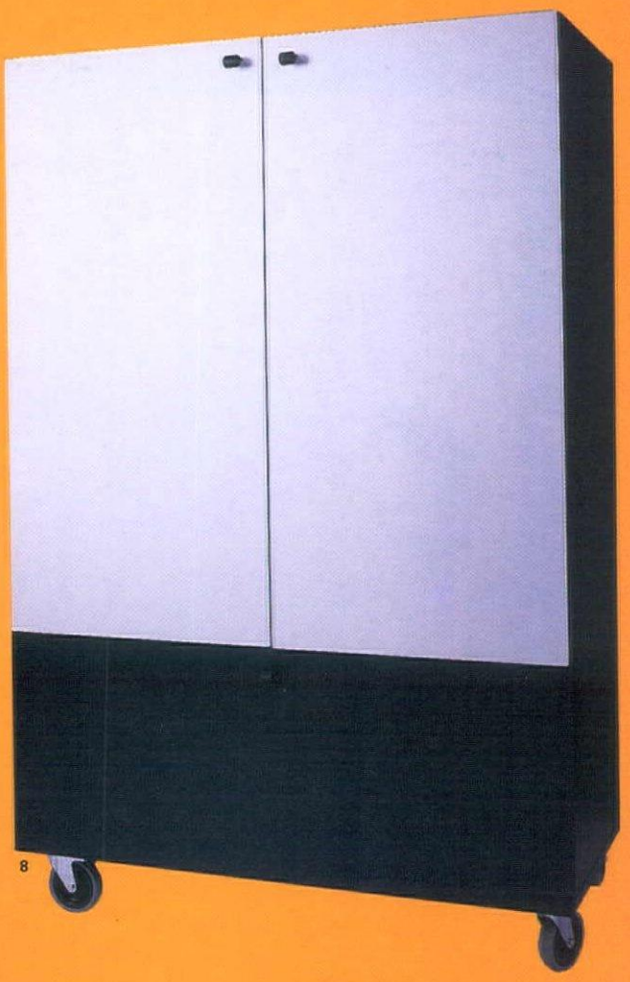
4
M2 desk with horizontal sliding panel and shelf.
5
Connector and height adjustment device with metal rings under the work surface.
6
Desk detail.
7
Possible office layout plan.
8
Glass-fronted cabinet, one of an accompanying range of M3 storage units.



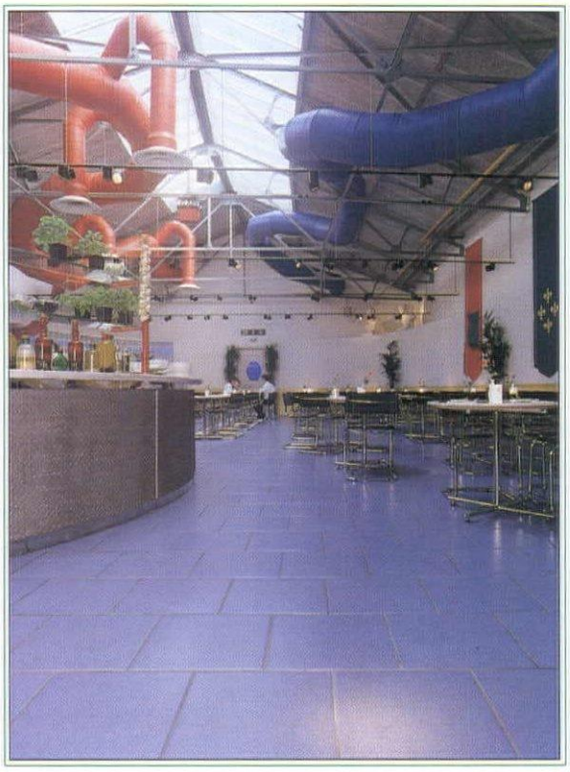
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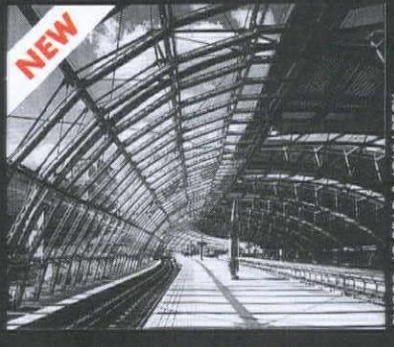
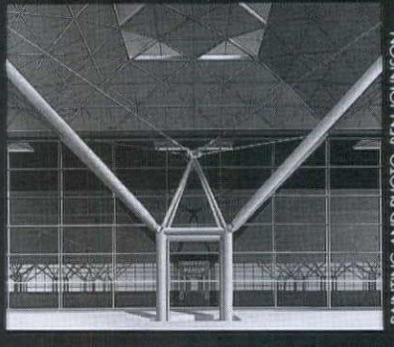


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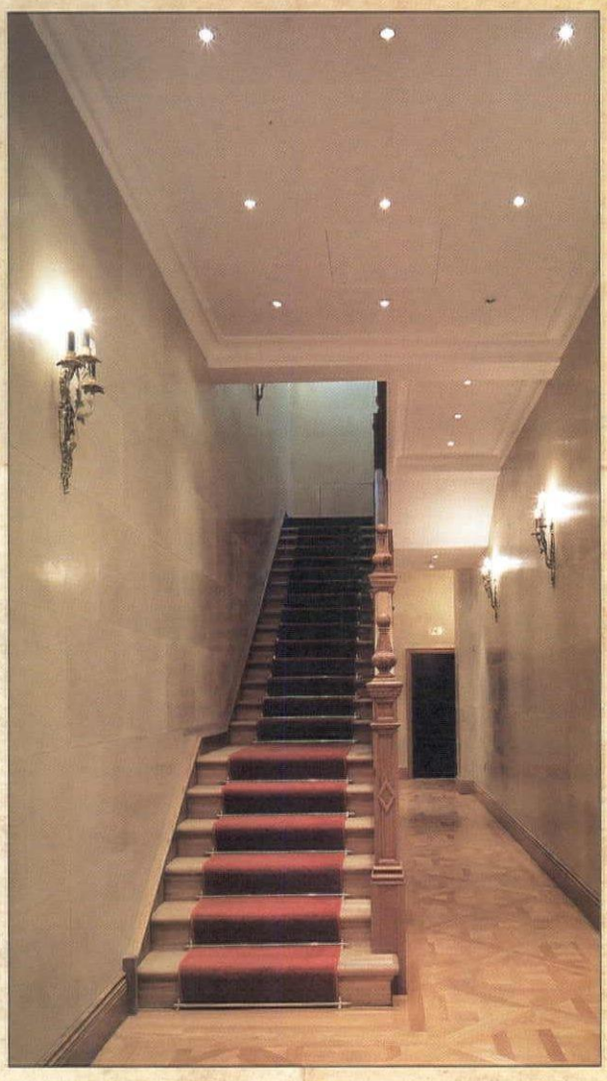
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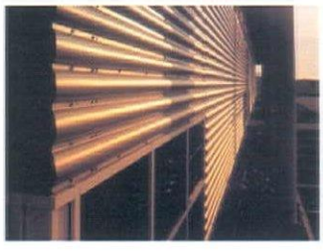
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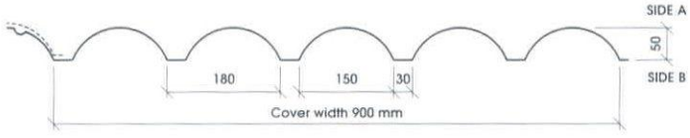
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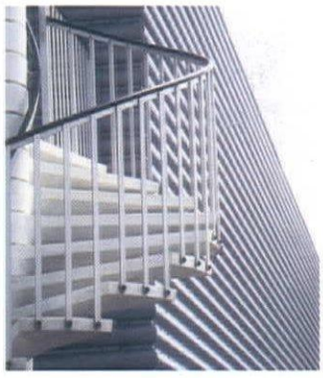
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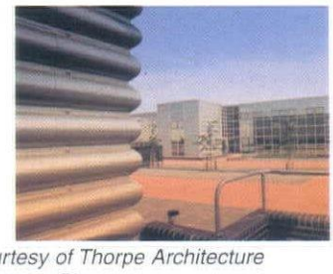
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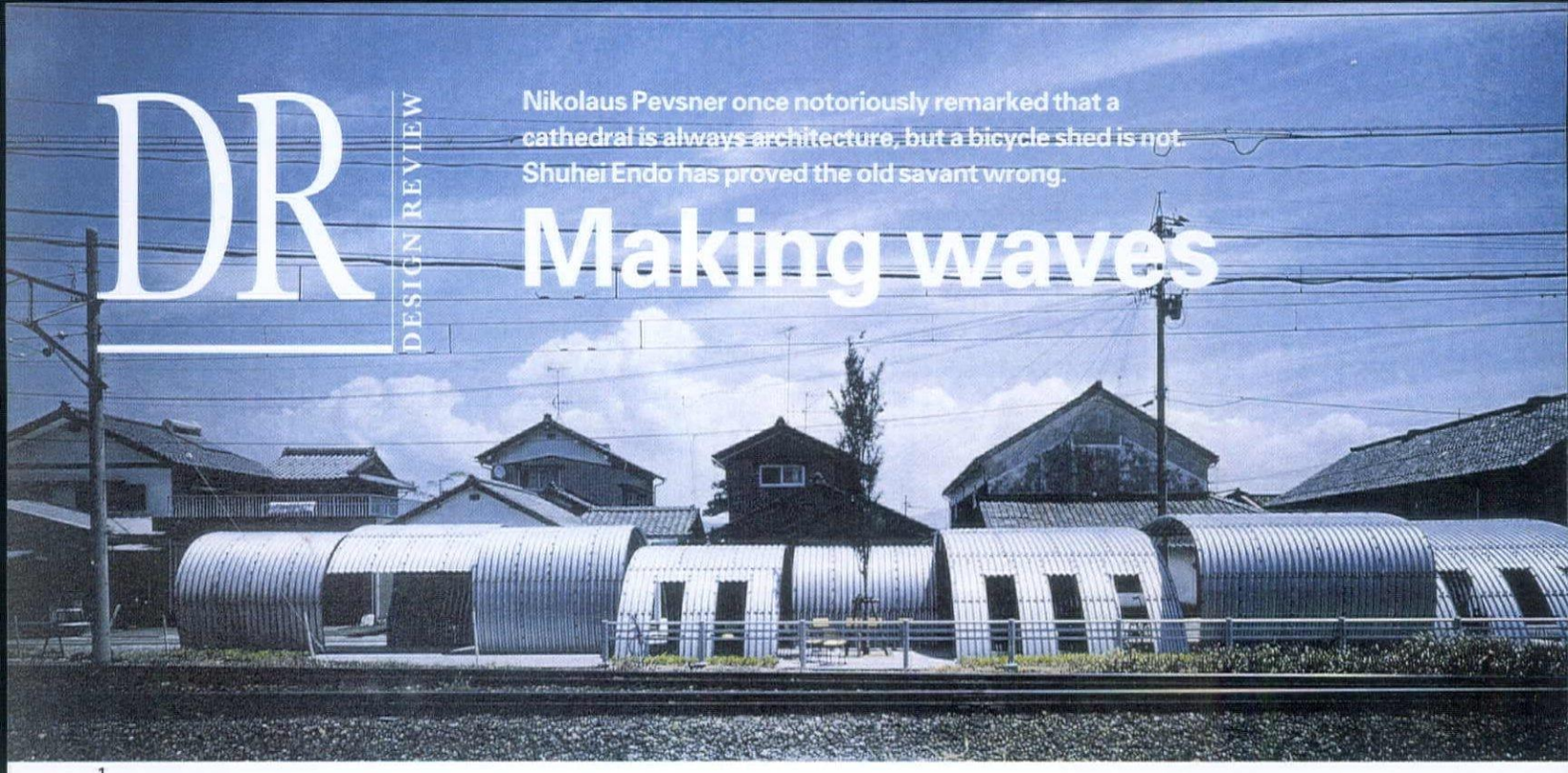
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Nikolaus Pevsner once notoriously remarked that a cathedral is always architecture, but a bicycle shed is not. Shuhei Endo has proved the old savant wrong.

Making waves



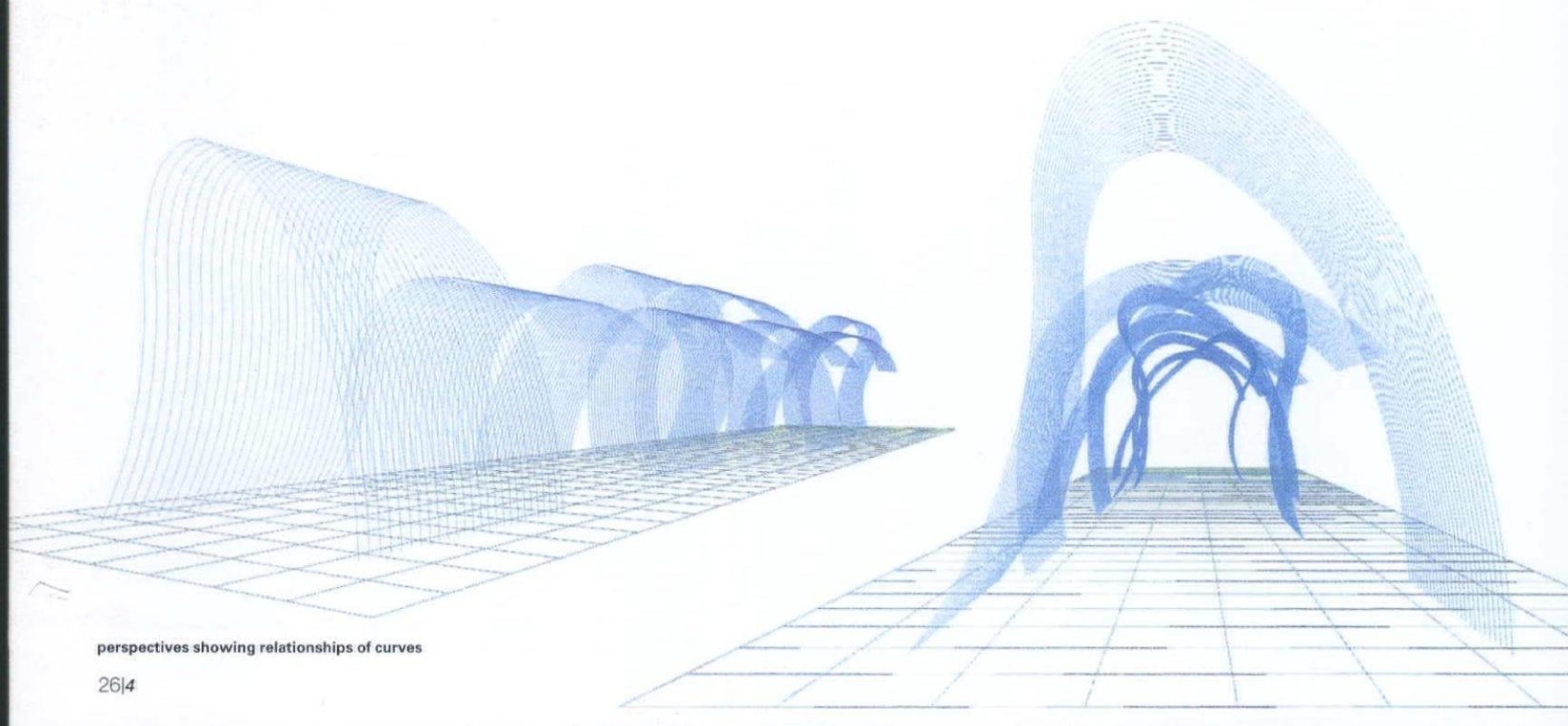
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We have all seen industrial and agricultural buildings that suggest the great potential of shining galvanised corrugated steel formed into curves. And there can be few architects round the world who have not been awed by Glenn Murcutt's work in which the 'corrugated iron' of the Australian farmstead has been transmuted into a noble material.

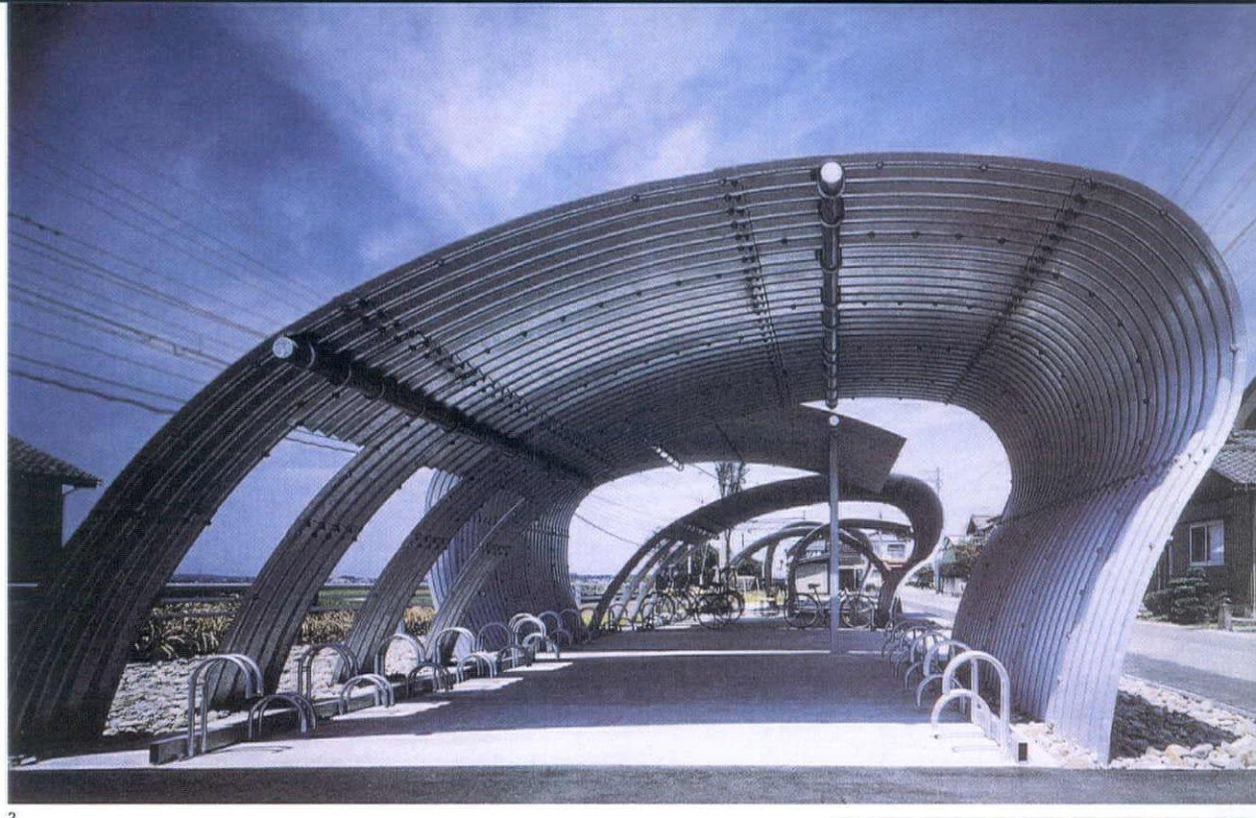
Murcutt's precise and elegant handling of 'tin' stems from a fundamentally Classicising mentality, steeped more perhaps in Mies and Case Study houses than the outback vernacular. Shuhei Endo is equally fascinated by the material but has a quite different mind-set, much more Baroque. He works in Osaka and hence (like Tadao Ando) is not part of the mainstream Tokyo in-group.

Endo first came to international attention when he won the Andrea Palladio prize for young architects in 1993. Since then, he has shown his affection for corrugated metal in several buildings, none more dramatic or original than this chain of shelters at Sakai in the Fukui Prefecture. This is not the sort of place that normally gets into architectural magazines: a shabby old station, raggle-taggle of houses (albeit clean and comfortable), the sky striated with wires and television aerials; there is no Japanese elegance here, but the place is far more typical of this country than most images seen overseas.

Endo has made the town memorable. Seen from the train side, the shelters look like a bank of great silver waves breaking towards the tracks. The vaults dance back and forwards in plan to give a sensation of movement and they are cut with slots to increase the effect and illuminate the interior. You expect them to emit a steely sea-like crashing roar, and indeed in certain weather conditions they do creak



perspectives showing relationships of curves



2

and groan. This is partly because of their amazing shapes, which seem to have been created from conventional conic sections by the wind. But then you realise that this can't possibly be true, for some of the curves meet the ground at one side only. Their unattached edges are weighed into place by galvanised steel tubes strapped onto the corrugated metal. In one such condition, props (which on occasion must become vertical ties) add to stability. But elsewhere steel simply hovers.

Execution throughout is immaculate. All junctions are fixed with standard nuts and bolts. The heavy steel tubes which are used to stabilise the flying edges also weigh down the more conventional two-sided vaults and they are all strapped to the corrugated sheets with thin steel hoops which recall the bamboo straps that hold together the ceilings of traditional Japanese farm buildings. A similar traditional note is struck when the metal sheets enter the earth through water-permeable rectangular pebble-set slots in the slabs.

The result does not strive frenetically against its drab surroundings, as the Tokyo school often does. Endo uses material, technique and structural understanding to make a funny, memorable event of a place with great economy of means and wit.

VERONICA PEASE



3

4



1
The shelters greet people arriving by train like a dance of silver waves.
2
The sections almost seem to have been deformed by the wind, but are calculated to be stable.
3
Joggling the plan and cutting slots in the steel curves ensures that the interiors never become gloomy.
4
Curves supported at one side only seem at first to be impossible.

Architect
Shuhei Endo Architect Institute, Osaka: Shuhei Endo, Aoi Fujioka, Tetuya Fukuda, Wataru Horie, Aya Nakano, Toshinori Nagai, Shinichi Kiyosada
Structural engineer
Shinichi Kiyosada
Photographs
Yoshiharu Matumura



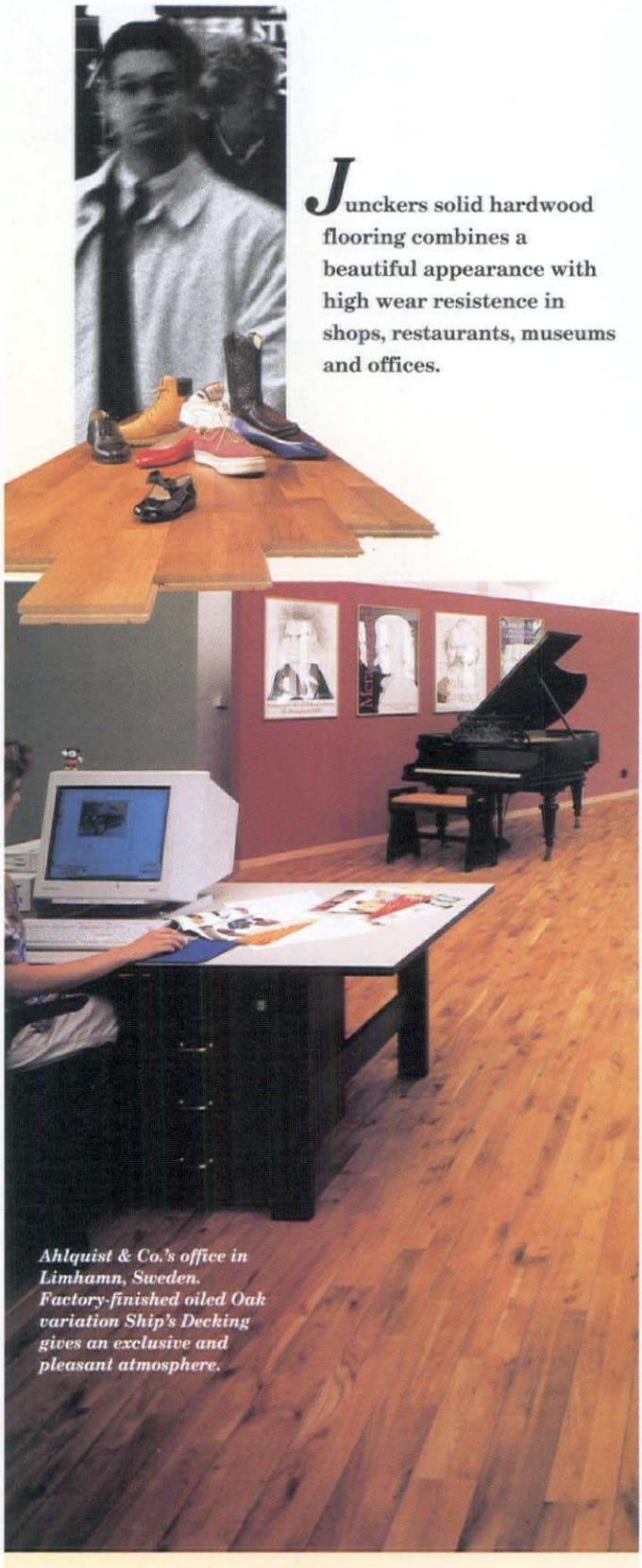
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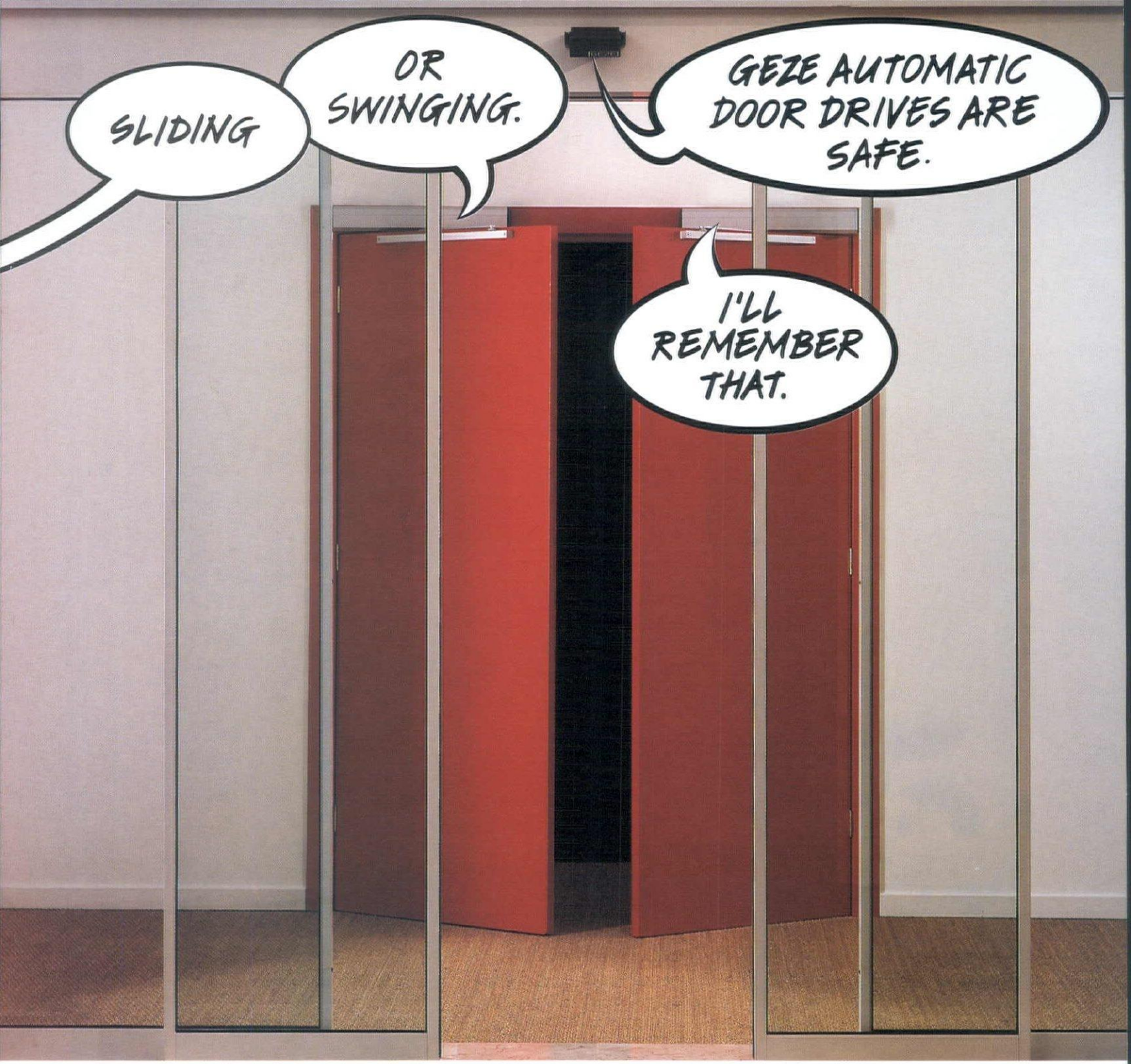
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d line

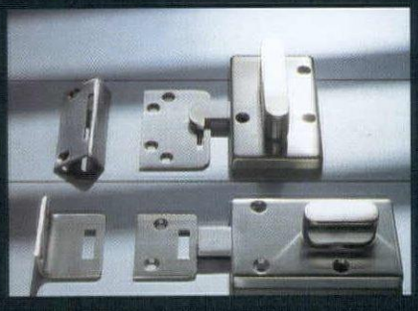
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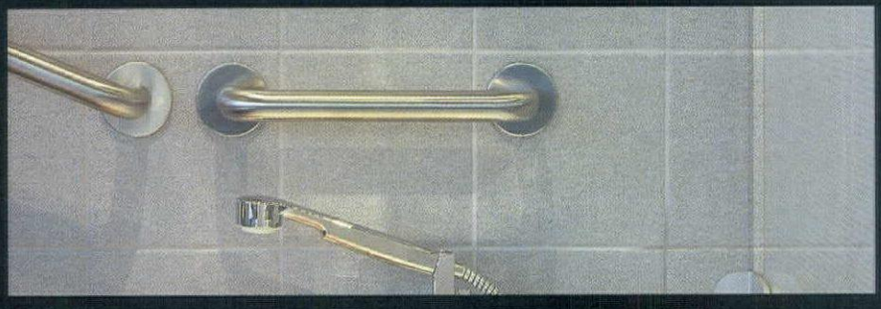


Newly released is the **d line** Bathroom Fittings catalogue, containing complete details of the **d line** bathroom programme and including technical specifications and practical examples with regard to installation.

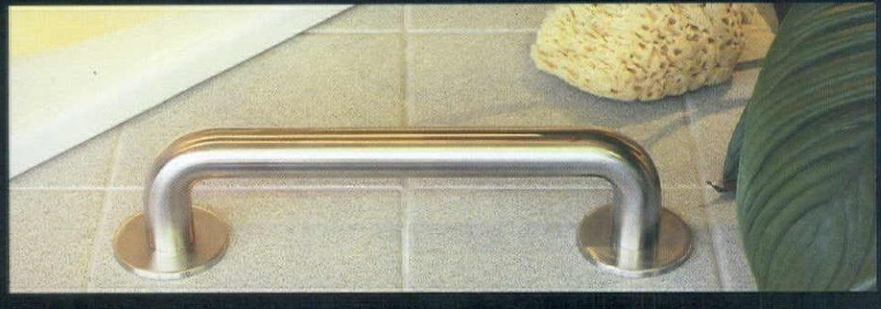
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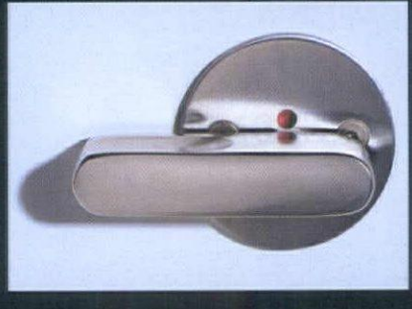
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A small piece of Lisbon (though it could be in almost any European city) shames contemporary architectural practice with its innocent, generous humanity.

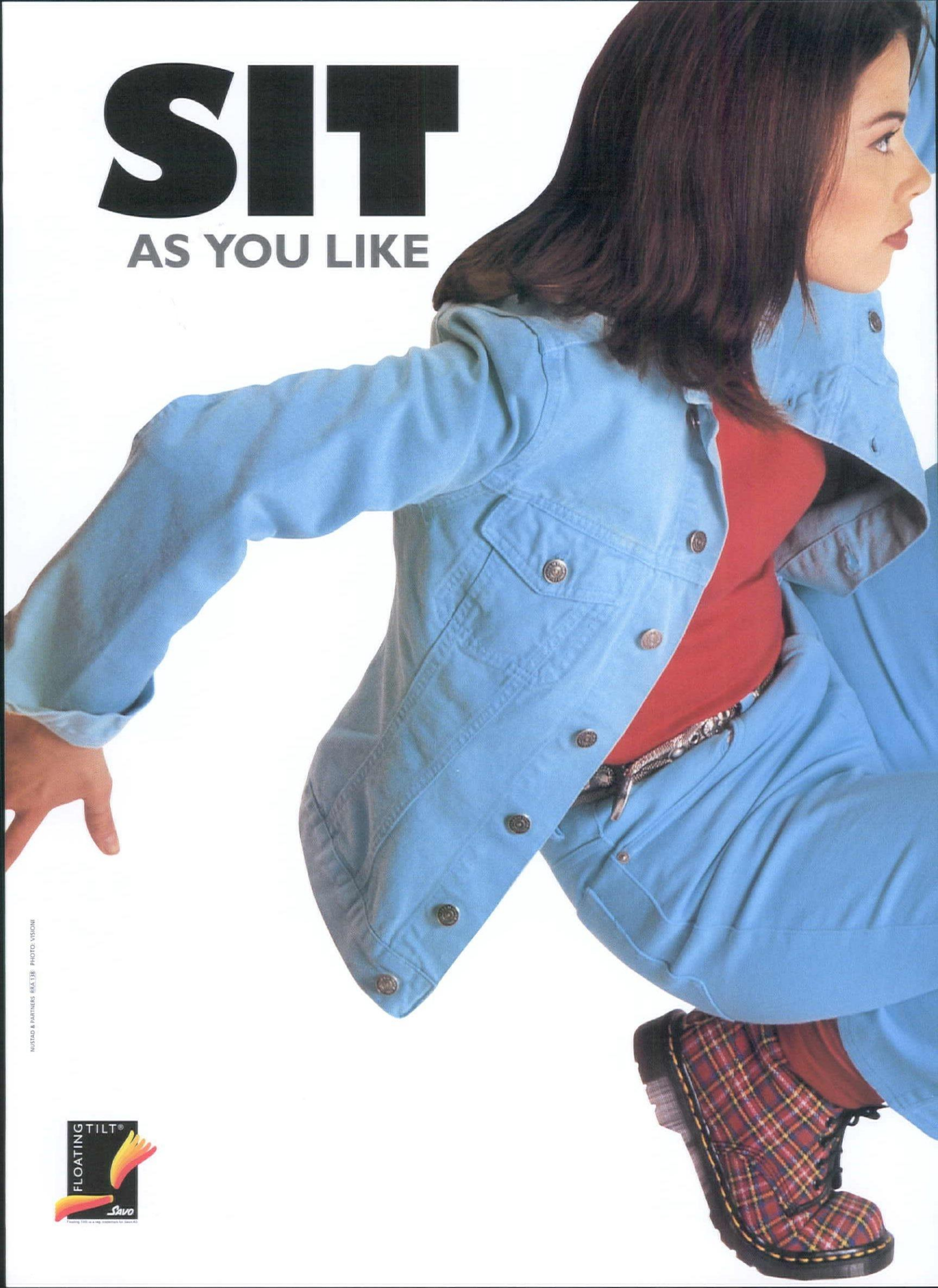
This is a pretty Outrage: about absence, rather than the presence of something dull, crass or vile. Here is a steep little street in Lisbon, coming down into a rather grubby wholesale-commercial square full of vans and lorries, but with a great deal of chatty life with wine and coffee and cigarettes on the pavements outside the corner bars. The buildings themselves seem to have equally lively conversations, ones that engage many generations.

Most of the participants are not obviously much more than 150 years old, but a few still rather shyly show their eighteenth-century (and even earlier) origins. Some have plainly had extensive face-lifts, like the tile-faced one in the foreground. But, unlike their human equivalents, buildings with skin treatment do not always provoke pity or *Schadenfreude*: reconstructed mutton can dress as lamb and often get away with it.

It is an outrage that, in our time, we add so rarely to such urban conversations – and, when we try, we usually do so aggressively or condescendingly. This is no criticism of Lisbon in particular: it is true of almost any city anywhere with more than a century of history. All we seem to have to offer are the cold flaccid sterility of Rationalism, the tarty giggles of Neo-Vernacular or the macho exhibitionism of PoMo. Significantly, the only clearly second-half of the twentieth century element here is the dumb, loutish, slightly threatening and clumsy piece at the top of the street.

In a desperate attempt to escape from the Picturesque, we abandoned Propriety. In the embrace of the Machine, we forgot Modesty (yet look at how those industrial made turn-of-century tiles add to this conversation). In the worship of Big Money and Bureaucracy, we lost the senses of scale and place. In our vanity, we forgot how to be modest, yet that good manners imply more than taciturn reticence.

We have neglected decency, tenderness, conversation, and delight in simple and ordinary things. P. D.



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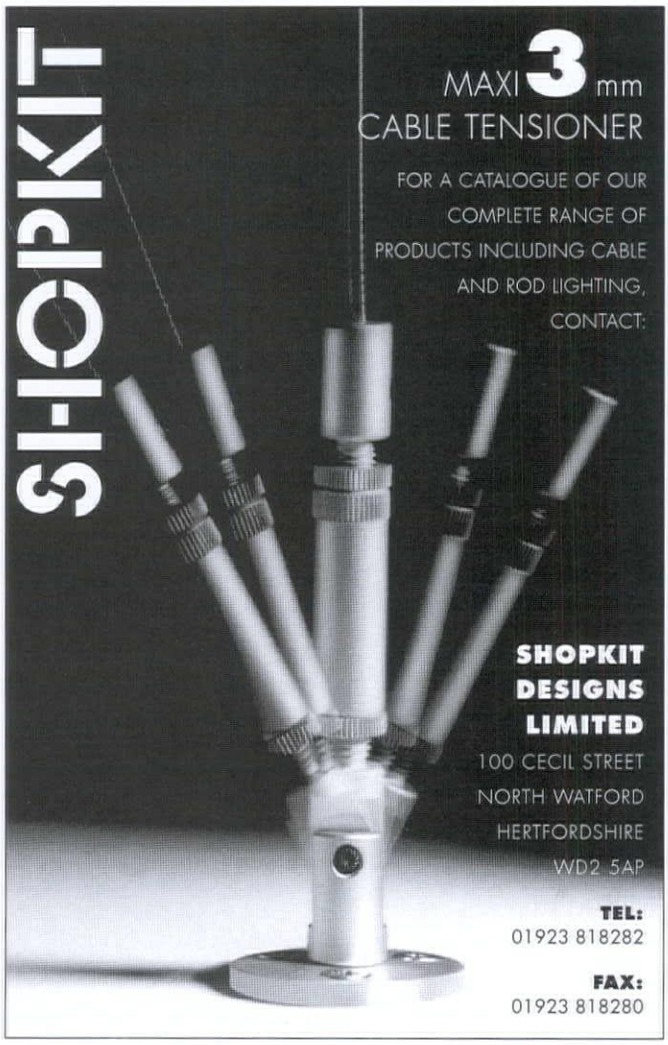
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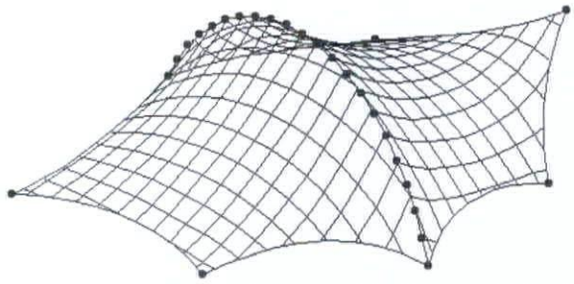
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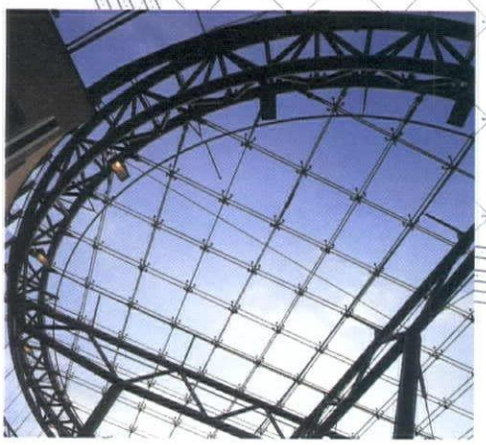
Registration: DM 800 (before May 1st), DM 850 (after)

Information: Prof. Dr. L. Gründig
TUB, Sekr. H20
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Tel.: +49 30 314 23315
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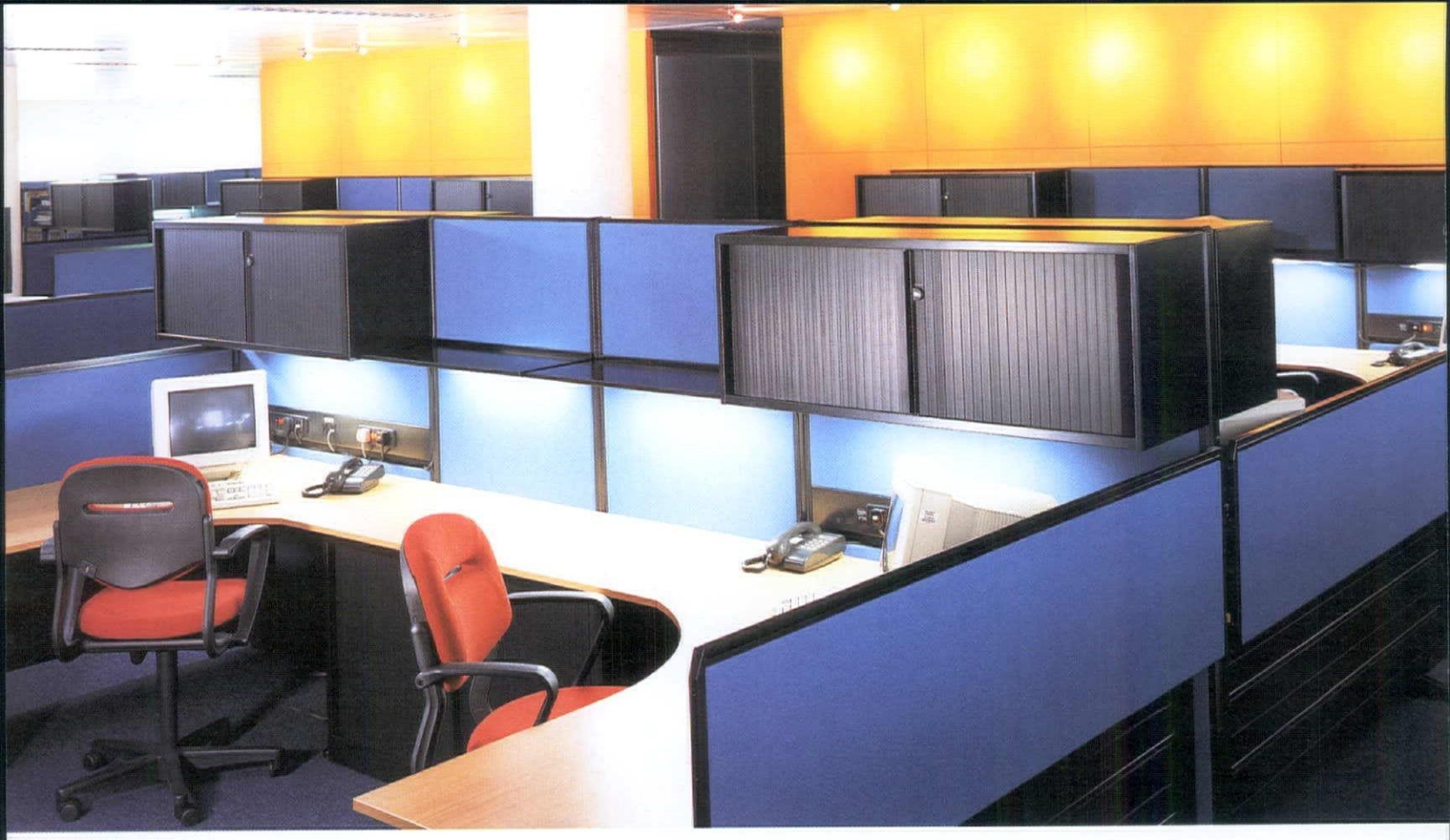
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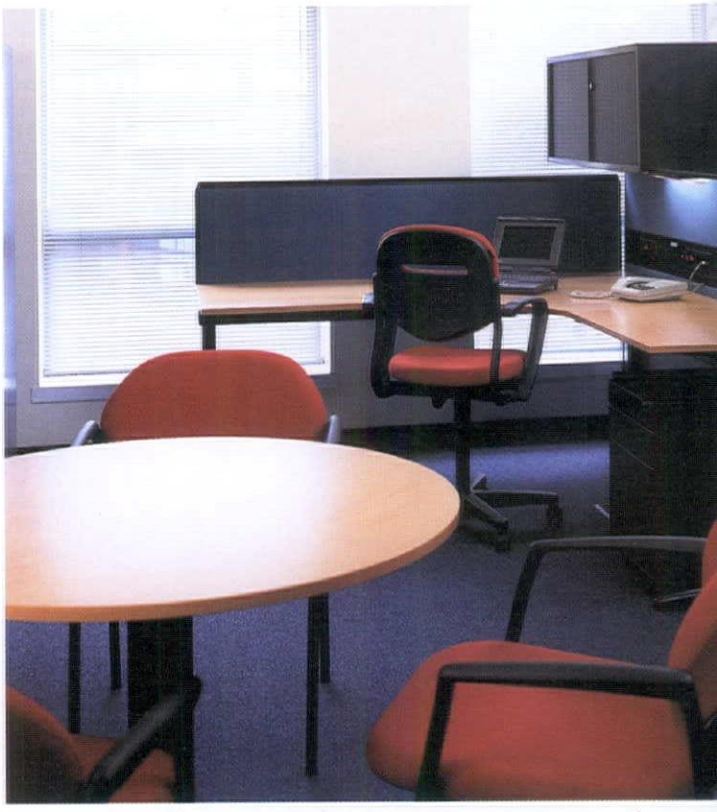
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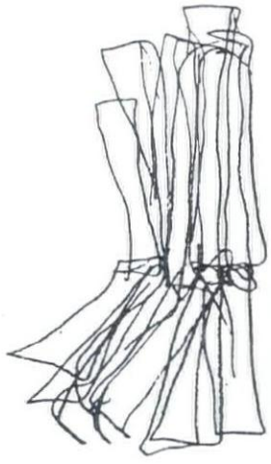




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DANCING HOUSE





1



2

Frank Gehry's exuberantly gestural new office building on the edge of the Vltava river is a bold symbol of Prague's architectural, economic and political renewal.

The history of the site now occupied by Frank Gehry's Nationale-Nederlanden Building on the edge of Prague's Vltava river, is as Byzantine as any plot devised by Kafka. In 1945 an American bomb devastated a handsome Neo-Classical apartment block on the corner of two streets (Jiraskovo namesti and Rasinovo nabrezi) narrowly missing the neighbouring Art Nouveau house of Vaclav Havel, the distinguished writer and future president of the Czech Republic.

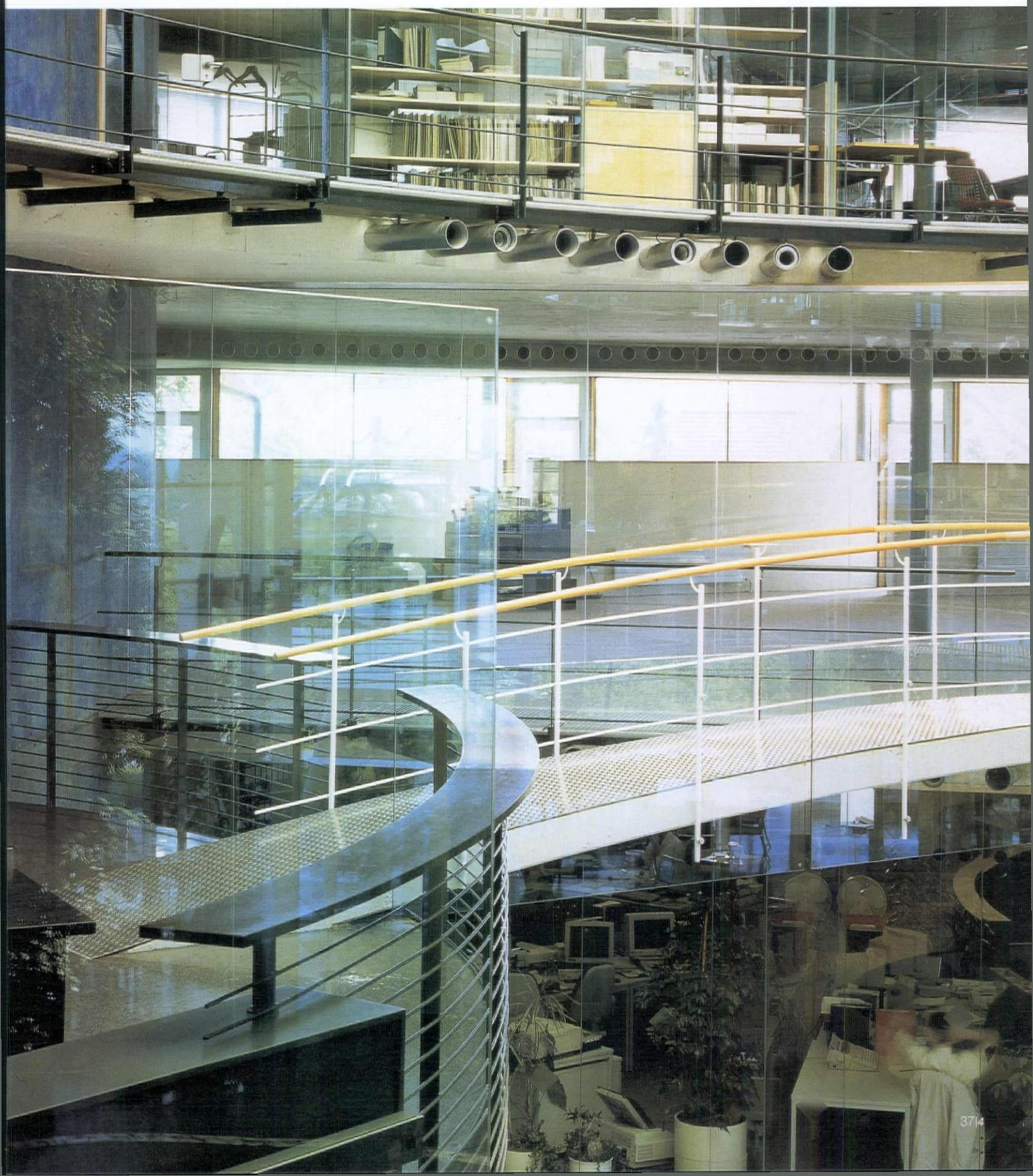
During the post-war Communist era, the site where the bombed apartment block stood remained vacant and attempts to find a use for it only gained ground after Czechoslovakia's Velvet Revolution of 1989. Havel, now president, expressed a wish to redevelop the plot to house an altruistic mixture of cultural and social functions, including a bookshop, gallery, multi-purpose hall and rooftop café. He discussed his ideas with Vlado Milunic, a Croatian architect living in Prague, who along with two other architects (Jan Linek and Vit Maslo) was informally invited to put forward development proposals. Of the three designs, Milunic's witty, symbolist creation perhaps best epitomised the carnival character of the Velvet Revolution. His sketches show an angular building, crowned by a high glass cupola, containing allusions to the Tatlin Tower and the neighbouring Art Nouveau house, built by Havel's grandfather.

Inevitably, perhaps, Havel and Milunic's philanthropic notions were trumped by the power of market forces, when in 1992 the site was acquired by the Dutch insurance company Nationale-Nederlanden, for development as an office block. Yet vestiges of the original concept remained, with the inclusion of shops at ground level, a basement café and a rooftop bar and restaurant. Seeking a suitably high-profile international architect for this important project in the new Eastern Europe, Nationale-Nederlanden eventually alighted on Frank Gehry, but Vlado Milunic was retained in a collaborative capacity, acknowledging both his familiarity with Prague and his initial work on the site. During

1
The new Nationale-Nederlanden building occupies a prominent corner site on the edge of the river Vltava.
2
Two distorted corner towers are lyrically fused in a sculptural embrace.
3
The syncopated facades are an exaggeratedly modern synthesis of Prague's historic precedents.

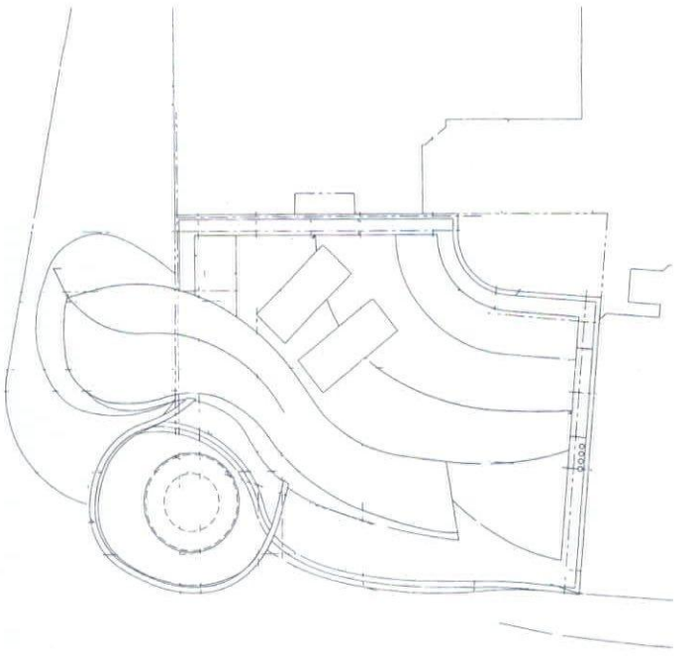
working models

Work from the German-speaking countries takes up a lot of this issue. The headquarters for a software company in Gniebel by Kauffmann Thellig & Partner with varied layouts grouped round a rotunda (here and p65) contrasts with collaged linear partis by Behnisch at Stuttgart (p45) and Giselbrecht in Bregenz, Austria (p73). To the east, Gehry's Fred and Ginger building enlivens a moribund corner of Prague (over), while in Delhi, Raj Rewal creates a tender set of places for that most stodgy institution, the World Bank (p56).

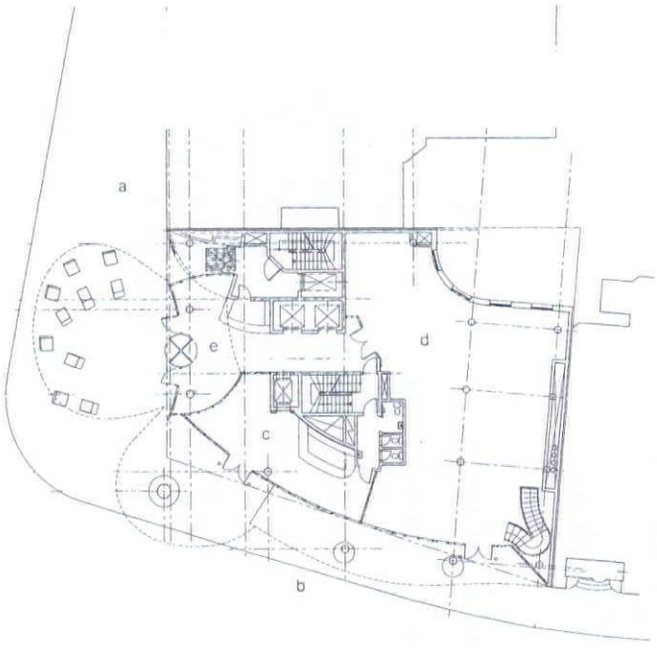




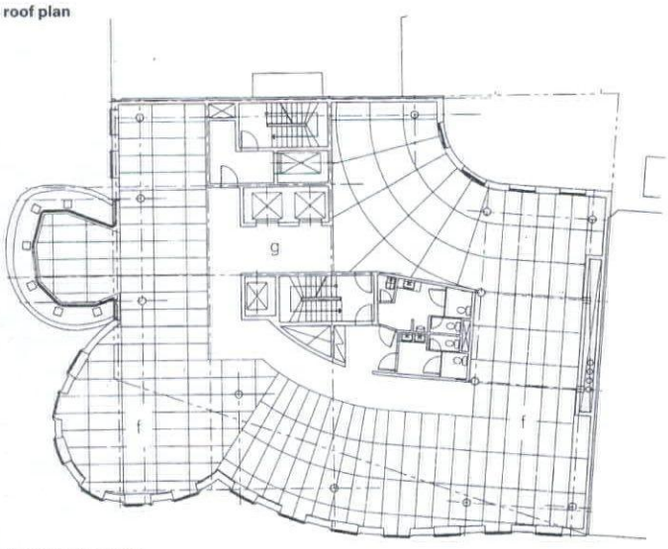
Mixed development, Prague, Czech Republic
Architect
Frank O. Gehry & Associates



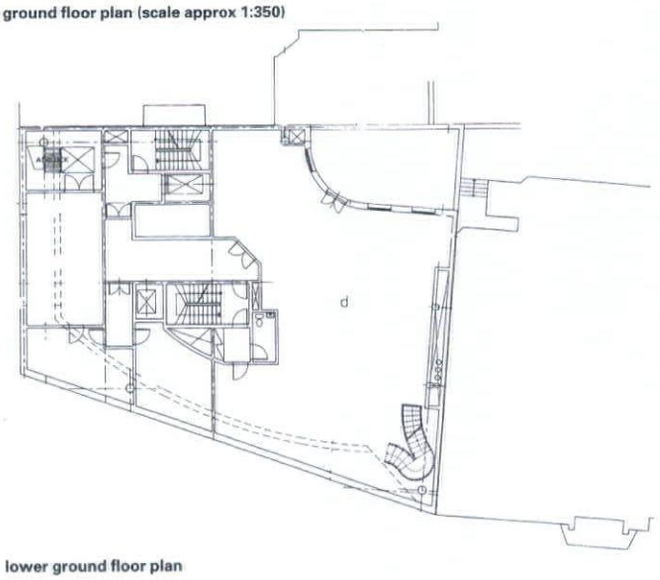
roof plan



ground floor plan (scale approx 1:350)



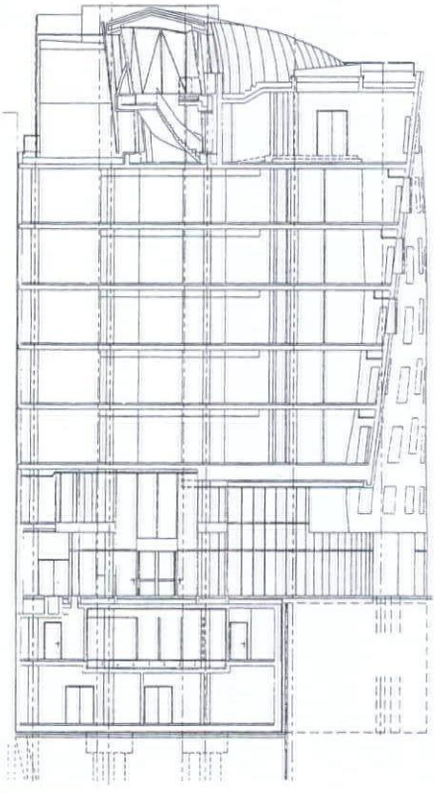
typical office floor



lower ground floor plan

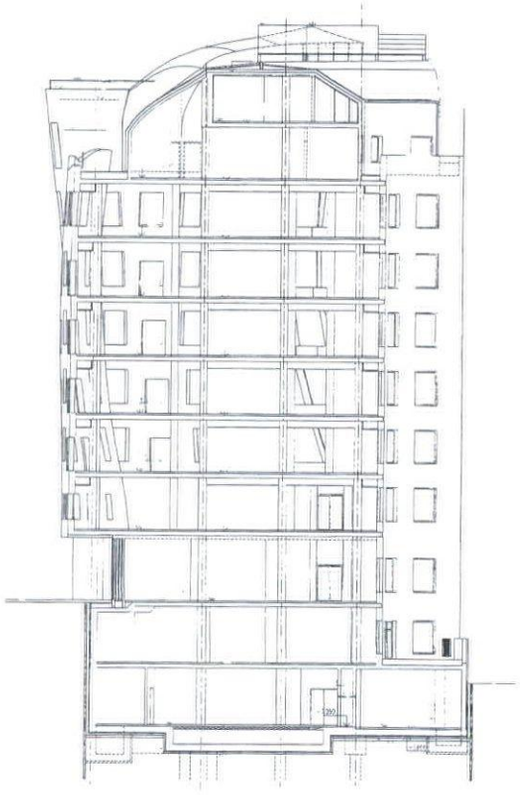


a Jiraskovo namesti
b Rasinovo nabrezi
c café
d shop
e entrance lobby
f office space
g service core



cross section

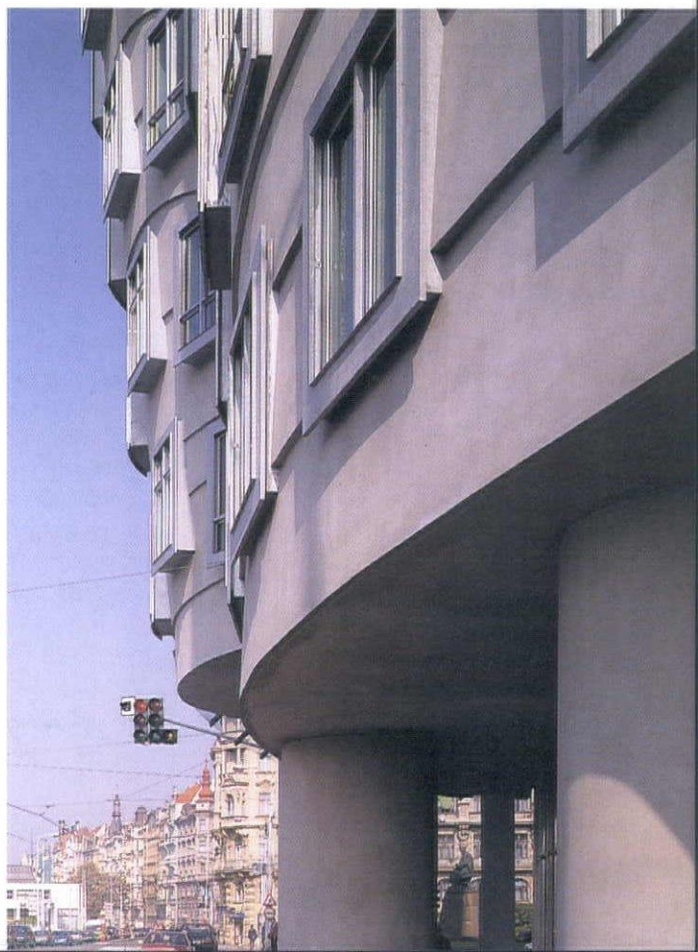
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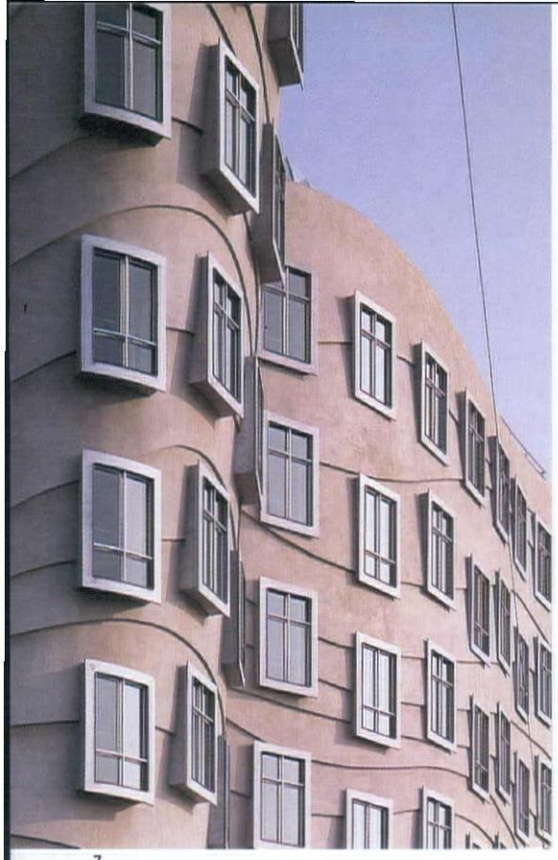
cross section

Mixed development, Prague, Czech Republic
Architect
Frank O. Gehry & Associates

4
The seductive, melted hour-glass tower on the Jiraskovo namesti elevation.
5
The forest of columns under the glass tower creates an enveloping entrance courtyard. The metaphorical 'legs' reinforce the analogy of a dancing couple.
6
The stolid contours of the larger corner tower.



6



7



8

Mixed development, Prague, Czech Republic
Architect
Frank O. Gehry & Associates

7
Neutral stucco is animated by undulating windows and a wavy bas-relief.
8
Prague from the rooftop of the new building. The upper floor of glazed tower will house a restaurant; on the left is a fractured mesh bauble resembling a traditional onion dome.
9
The top of the glazed tower, boldly addressing the city.

meetings in Switzerland and California, Gehry and Milunic established a close working rapport, and although the main design role fell to Gehry, the evolution of the scheme was informed by Milunic's original proposals.

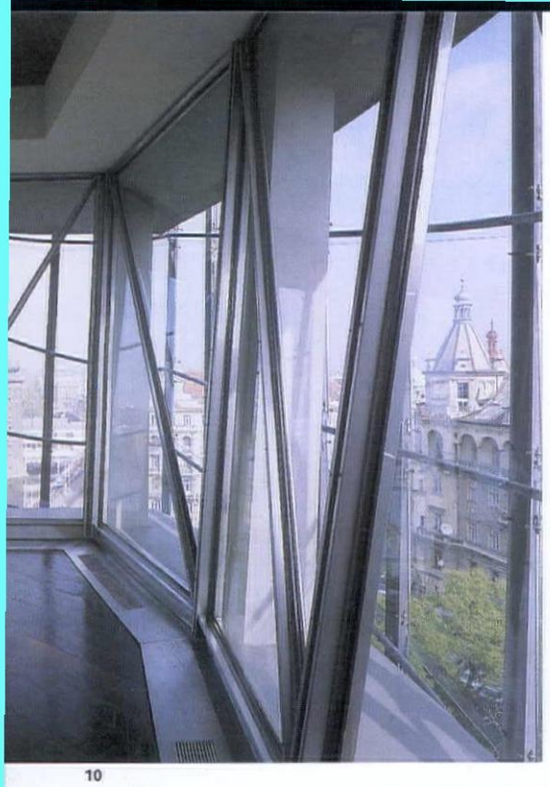
In early sketches, Gehry envisaged the building as a scrummage of boxy and pillow-like forms, to which Milunic added a geyser-shaped tower. The site turns the corner, so a pivotal tower was a logical point of departure; corner towers are also characteristic of Prague's rich urban texture. However, Gehry apparently considered a single tower too overtly masculine, so the idea of a feminine counterpart evolved, a female yin balancing the male yang, giving rise to the analogy of a dancing couple, whimsically described by Gehry as 'Ginger and Fred'. In reality, the analogy has become more abstract (and Gehry has since played down the Hollywood overtones), but the effect of the two towers poised in a fluid embrace is still extraordinarily lyrical, a show-stopping performance in a city full of ancient, sensuous and disturbing architecture.

Each of the two towers is essentially a distorted cylinder; the diameter of the dominant, solid male tower expands as it extends upwards, while its glazed female partner is dramatically cinched at the waist like a melting hour-glass. A small forest of columns peeks out of Ginger's wispy transparent skirts, a fizzy froth of metaphorical legs and petticoats suddenly tumbling on to the street below, marking the entrance to the building on Jiraskovo namesti. Fred's more robust contours are clad in neutral stucco, animated by a wavy bas-relief pattern and undulating lines of windows that extrude slightly from the curving wall planes. A fractured mesh bauble resembling a traditional onion dome crowns the top of the tower. The syncopated external vocabulary of stucco and windows is carried around the corner into the Rasinovo nabrezi elevation overlooking the river; it also buttresses the gap between the ethereal hour-glass tower and Havel's Art Nouveau building on Jiraskovo namesti.

Behind the swirling facade is a relatively simple plan form based on a conventional relationship of lettable space organised around a compact, L-shaped circulation core. The generous protuberances of the towers provide convenient enclaves for meetings or conferences. Six floors of offices are topped by a bar and restaurant with stunning views of Prague. There are shops on the ground and lower ground floors, and a small café at pavement level, set back under the fat circular legs of the larger tower. By providing a degree of animation and public interaction at ground level, the building is much less insular than many traditional office developments, which consciously exclude the public.

Despite its undeniable panache and presence, the overall effect of Gehry's anthropomorphic collage is slightly disorientating. You half expect the two towers to burst out of their exaggeratedly dynamic clinch and go waltzing off down Rasinovo nabrezi. Perhaps it is due to a nagging sense that their activities are confined by the constraints of making a corner building (Fred and Ginger usually had the floor to themselves and Gehry's intensely sculptural buildings are





10



11



12



13

Mixed development, Prague, Czech Republic
Architect
Frank O. Gehry & Associates

10, 11
The towers provide natural enclaves for meeting spaces and conference areas.
12, 13
Typical office work stations and interiors, designed by Eva Jiricna.

typically free-standing). Here, reinstatement of the city grain has clearly come second to the creation of a symbolic new intervention intended to epitomise both architectural and political renewal. Some commentators have compared its effect to Hollein's Haas Haus in Vienna (AR July 1991) which also transplanted an undeniably contemporary building into the ancient heart of an Eastern European city. On the banks of the Vltava, the Nationale-Nederlanden building is within sight of the National Theatre and the Gormenghast silhouette of Prague Castle. Yet in its brazen synthesis of historical precedents – bustling baroque, sinuous Art Nouveau, even suggestions of Czech Cubism – it trips a decidedly light fantastic. HELGA MIKLOSKO

Architect
Frank O. Gehry & Associates
Project team
Frank Gehry, James Glymph, Marc Salette, Edwin Chan, Douglas Giesey, Masis Mcsropian, Eva Sobesky, Thomas Stallman, Lisa Towning, Philip Rowe, Kristen Wochl
Collaborative architect
Vladimir Milunic
Executive architect
Kappa
Engineer
Atipa
General contractors
Les Entreprises, Six Construction
Mechanical and electrical contractor
Croon
Curtain wall contractor
Permasteelisa
Interior design
Eva Jiricna Architects
Photographs
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EVANGELICAL MISSION

Deft architectural moves transform what could have been a dull programme of double-banked cellular offices into a congenial set of places.



1



2

Weckherlin Haus office building for the Diakonisches Werk, Stuttgart, Germany
Architect
Behnisch & Partner
Criticism
Peter Blundell Jones

1
East side, with projecting irregular volume of conference rooms.
2
The site was a previously unconsidered narrow triangle of land between road and railway.

In February 1984 the Herbert Keller Haus, headquarters of the Diakonisches Werk of the Evangelische Landeskirche[1] – a religious charity – was opened on the newly redeveloped Löwenzentrum just north of Stuttgart's main railway station (AR June 1985). Despite being forced into the straitjacket of an unimaginative masterplan which had already imposed a monotonous column grid across the site, and despite being surrounded by soulless and box-like neighbours, the Behnisch office won the design competition with what became a remarkably lively and friendly building. Amid its dull commercial neighbours, the building strikes a resonant note of freedom and individuality.

The Diakonisches Werk grew and needed more office space, more conference rooms and a staff canteen, but there was no easy way of extending the building without filling in the valued communal spaces or blocking views. All immediately adjacent sites were taken, but there was a narrow triangle of land a hundred or so metres to the east caught between road and railway, just outside the zone controlled by the militaristic masterplan. This was taken up for a new sister building to be called Weckherlin Haus after the family who gave the charity its original bequest. It was not intended as a mere extension, but an independent second centre for the charity's activities. The offices had already been organised in two divisions within the original headquarters, so it made good sense simply to move one over. You might have thought that with such a successful first building, the charity's officers would simply have commissioned the same architects, but as often in Germany they opted for another competition, which Behnisch & Partner duly won. Not only was it evident to the jury that the new building would be reassuringly similar to the old in its cheerful, progressive atmosphere: the architects had also exploited the site in a particularly adept way.

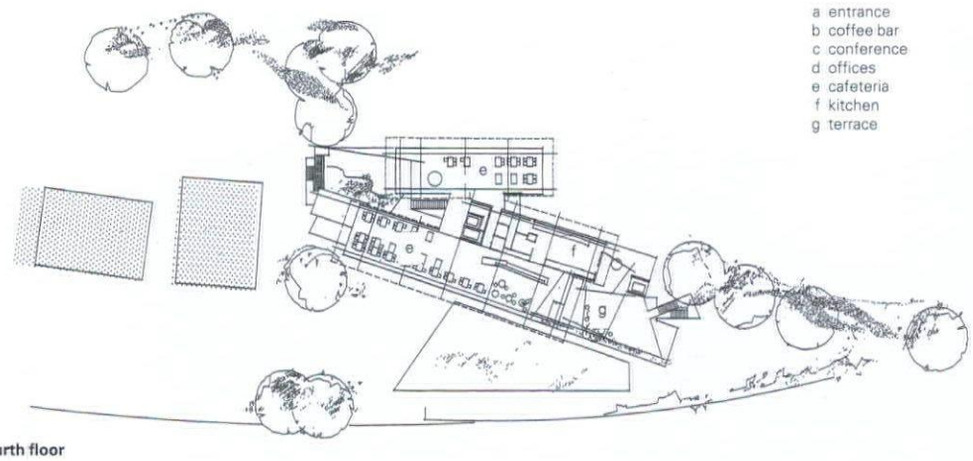
By running the main double-loaded office tract of the new building north-north-east to bisect the triangular site, they gave it a south-eastern orientation and created good entrance conditions on both sides. Its skewed placing was then reconciled with the marching grid of

the Löwenzentrum by the addition of a shorter and single-loaded north-running tract on the west side. The junction between these two bodies produces a wide-angled corner as a natural main entrance with a revolving door in the north end of the short tract, while the closing angle between the two leaves a convenient void as daylit well for the main staircase, allowing some vertical visual continuity even for those using the well-positioned lifts opposite. On the downhill eastern side the closing triangle of land to north is used for a single-storey block of conference rooms – irregular against the regular grid to show they are special, as in the earlier Keller Haus. The south end of this low block produces an entrance sweep for the basement car park, the one-storey drop in section across the site separating vehicle and pedestrian entrances in an effortless way.

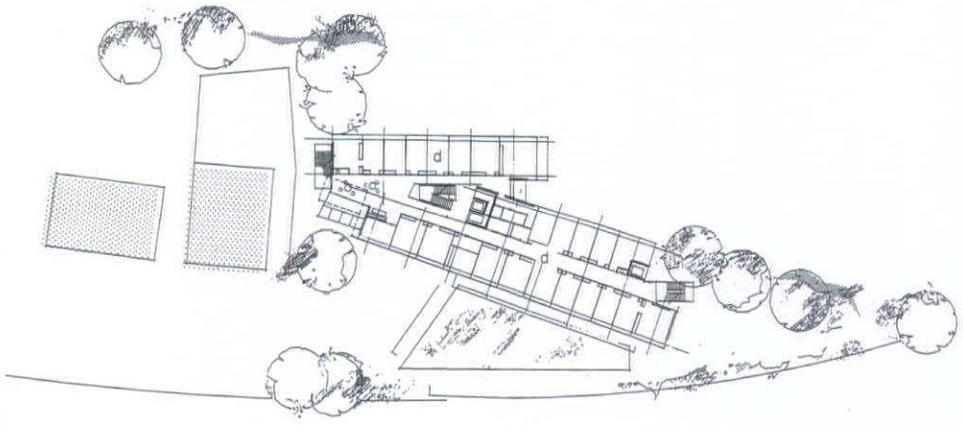
These are the main moves that the designers made, but they are complemented by a series of secondary ones. The space beyond the main stair at entry level is turned into a coffee-bar, for example, a welcoming gesture of immediate hospitality for visitors. This is given a full-height glazed wall to exploit the view and morning sun, and the sloping glazing continues up the outside of the building to articulate a series of open social spaces off the stair-well, which diminish in size from floor to floor. They step both laterally to yield more space to offices, and also inward as less circulation space is needed with diminishing traffic. They create a sense of arrival on each floor and exploit the south-eastward views across the city which get increasingly spectacular as one rises. On the outside the glazing of individual offices remains vertical in contrast with the slope of the shared part and also starts on each floor from waist level, generating strong horizontal banding for contrast.

Over the main entrance, the office tract also steps progressively forward, creating a canopy on columns as a kind of portico. The second and third floor end rooms with north and west views are for conferences, again marking a special place for a communal function. The office floors are otherwise efficient and straightforward, with regular columns between flat slabs and central servicing, but every corridor has a view opened at its end, by displacing or skewing the fire-stairs. The middle floors are also so planned that they can be rented separately to others as the charity's needs expand and contract.

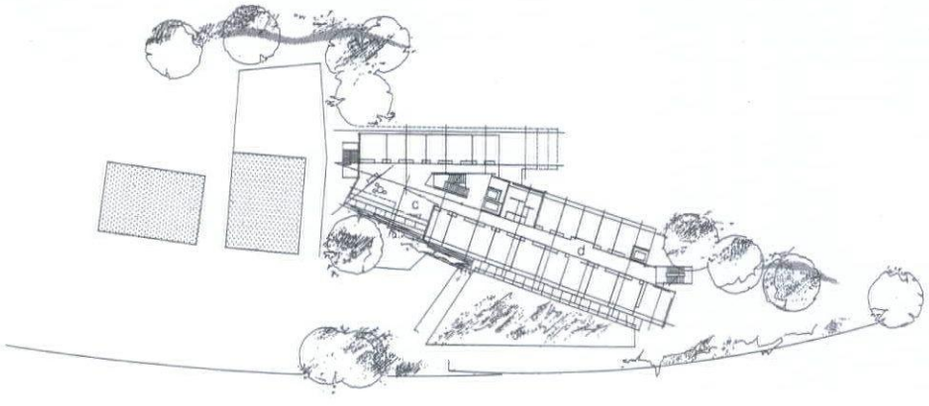
The top floor, taking advantage of distant views, is given over to the canteen for all the charity's workers, including those who walk over from the other building. The service block behind the lift expands to take the whole western side of the main tract as a generous kitchen, serving both the self-service counter of the main canteen and a separately usable waiter-serviced dining room in the short west-facing tract. At the north end is a paved open



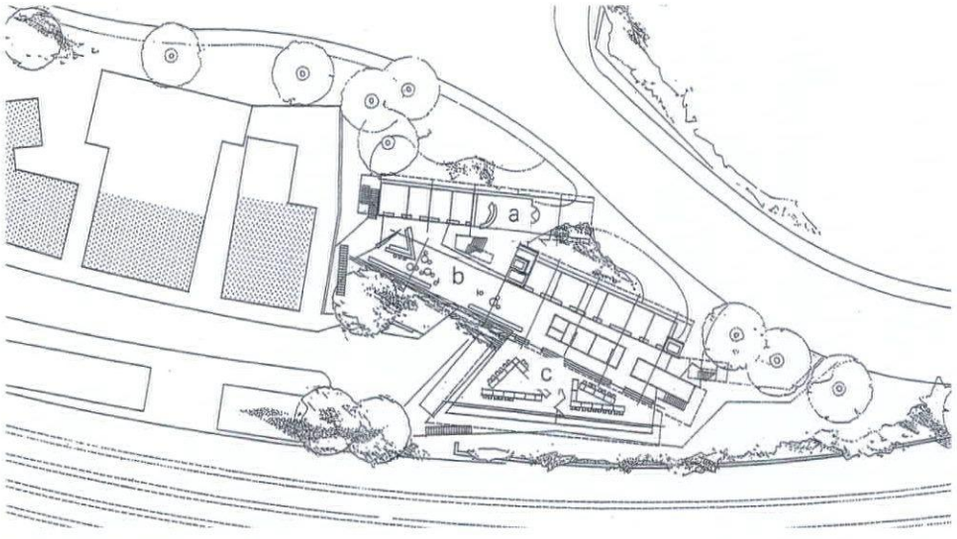
fourth floor



third floor



first floor

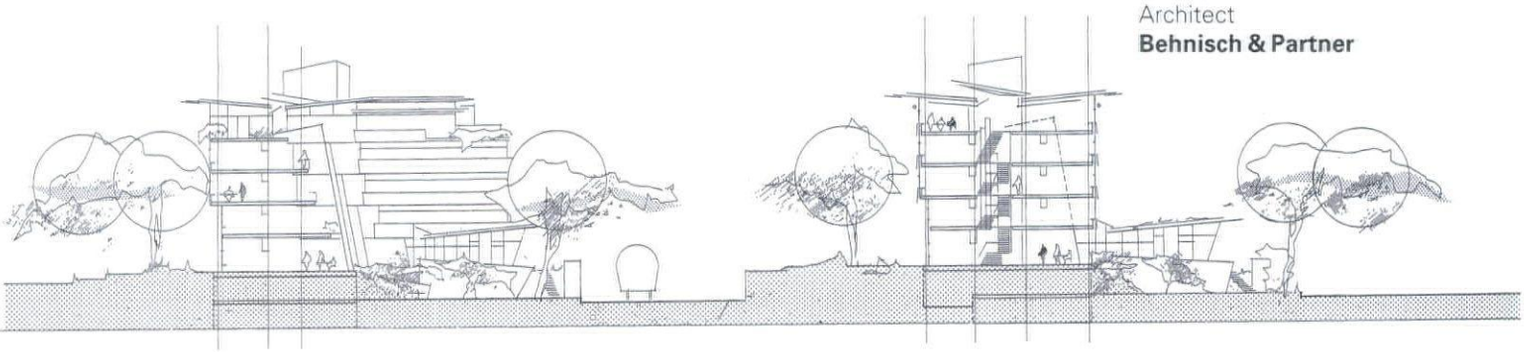


ground floor (scale approx 1:275)

Weckherlin Haus office building for the Diakonisches Werk, Stuttgart, Germany

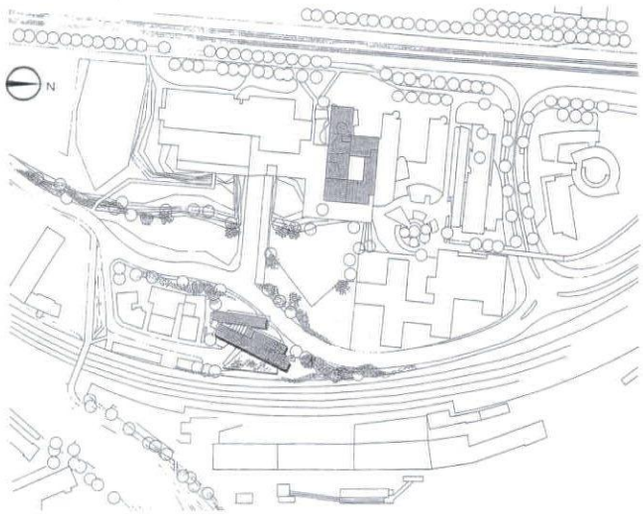
Architect

Behnisch & Partner



cross section through south end

cross section through main stair



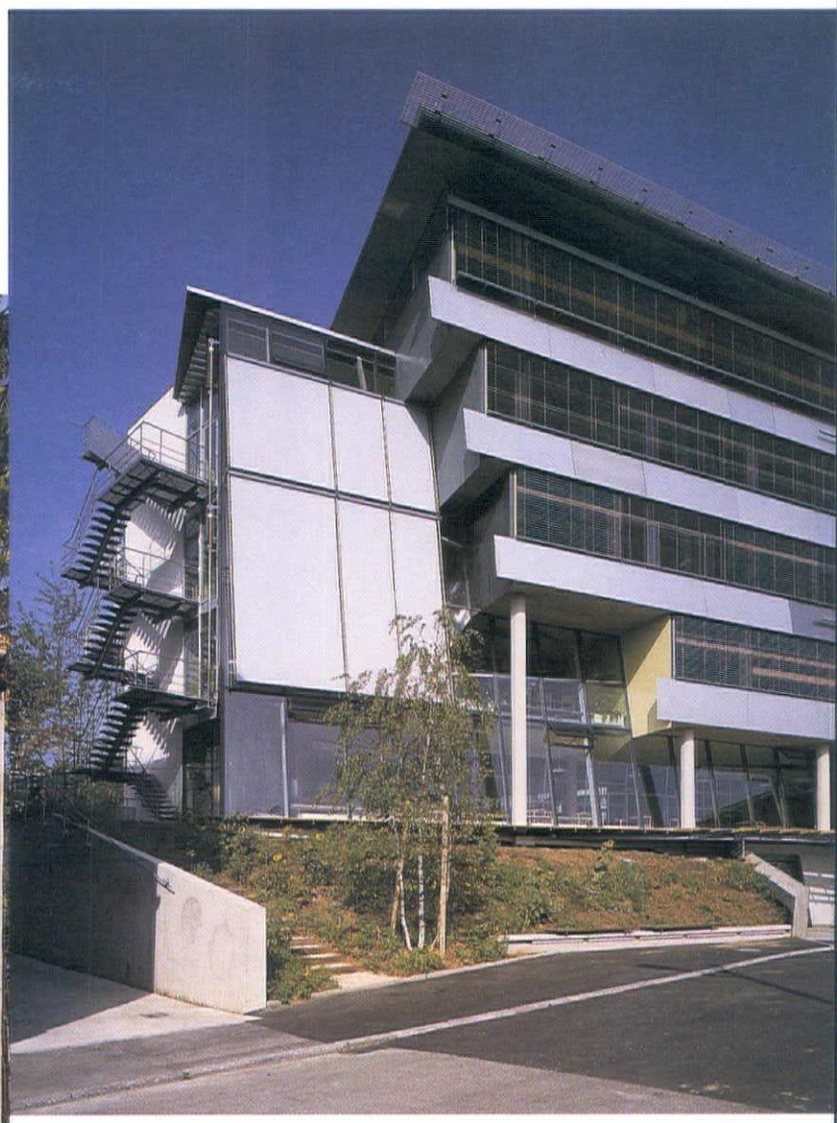
site plan

3
North-east corner of west wing (other wing can be glimpsed beyond) under overhang. Note solar protection devices.
4
South end with sloping glass wall of coffee bar angled to catch morning sun.

3



4



terrace, invitingly placed in full view of those queuing for meals. In this vocabulary flat roofs are floors, replacing ground. Elsewhere, including over the ground level conference rooms, the building is topped by soaring, overhanging low-pitched roofs. This is a quiet reminder that a rhetoric of roof and shelter is available without recourse to the old and now much-abused technologies of slate and tile, and that an expression of roof need not be at all incompatible with the language of modern architecture.

As with earlier Behnisch buildings, the layering of the construction process is revealed, and there is some play of form and colour in the last applied layers, which enhances the light and airy atmosphere. Looked at closely, the detailing has evidently involved much careful development, and the architects recount experiments with large-scale models to determine methods and effects. The result for the inhabitant and visitor is lively though not too obtrusive, and happily identifies the building as deriving from the same stable as the old Keller Haus even though it was completed 10 years later. This was appreciated by the workers, who immediately felt at home.

Weckherlin Haus is nonetheless an exemplary model for office architecture, showing how the benefits of modern techniques of mass-production can be economically combined with an inspiring specificity. As with such earlier buildings as the Post Museum (AR June 1990) and the Bundestag (AR March 1993), the Behnisch office has shown once again how the vices of a difficult site can be turned to virtues. The last word is from the client, Hans Ulrich Schaudt: 'It is amazing how seldom those commissioning new buildings seem to understand how important architecture is for the life and work of those who enter and leave it, how unconcerned they are about their responsibility for a piece of urban environment. Good architecture does not express itself directly in Deutschmarks, but a boss who refuses to spend what is necessary is a bad businessman. Good architecture must also avoid unnecessary extravagance, and we are glad that our new building has been completed on budget.' [2]

1 The social welfare office of the regional church: the name derives from the German word for deacon.
2 President of the building committee, in his speech at the opening printed in the official *Festschrift*: my translation.

Architect
Behnisch & Partners, Stuttgart
Project architects
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Project team
Jochen Schmid, Stefanie Hehl
Landscape
Tränkner & Tiedje
Structural engineers
Schlaich, Bergermann & Partners
Colour consultant
Christian Kandzia
Photographs
Peter Blundell Jones



5

5
Entrance with reception desk and main stair.
6
Coffee bar behind main stair opens to morning sun. (See 4).

6





7



8

Weckherlin Haus office building for the Diakonisches Werk, Stuttgart, Germany
Architect
Behnisch & Partner

7
Circulation areas are deftly enlivened by introduction of pools of daylight.
8
Arrival of main stair at top floor.
9, 10
Cafeteria takes up most of top floor, and enjoys fine views over the city.

9





10



1

NAUGHTY BUT NICE

A standard bureaucratic programme has been transformed by architectural imagination into a creative piece of city and a varied and stimulating series of places.

1
The landmark quality of the building is emphasised by the great aluminium roof and the thin steel stele.
2
The new offices join the busy shopping street context in conversation. Specially made dark green bricks form west end, changing colour with time and seasons.
3
Detail of *brises-soleil* and stele on south (street) side.
4
Entrance for both staff and public is tucked round the back under north-east corner.

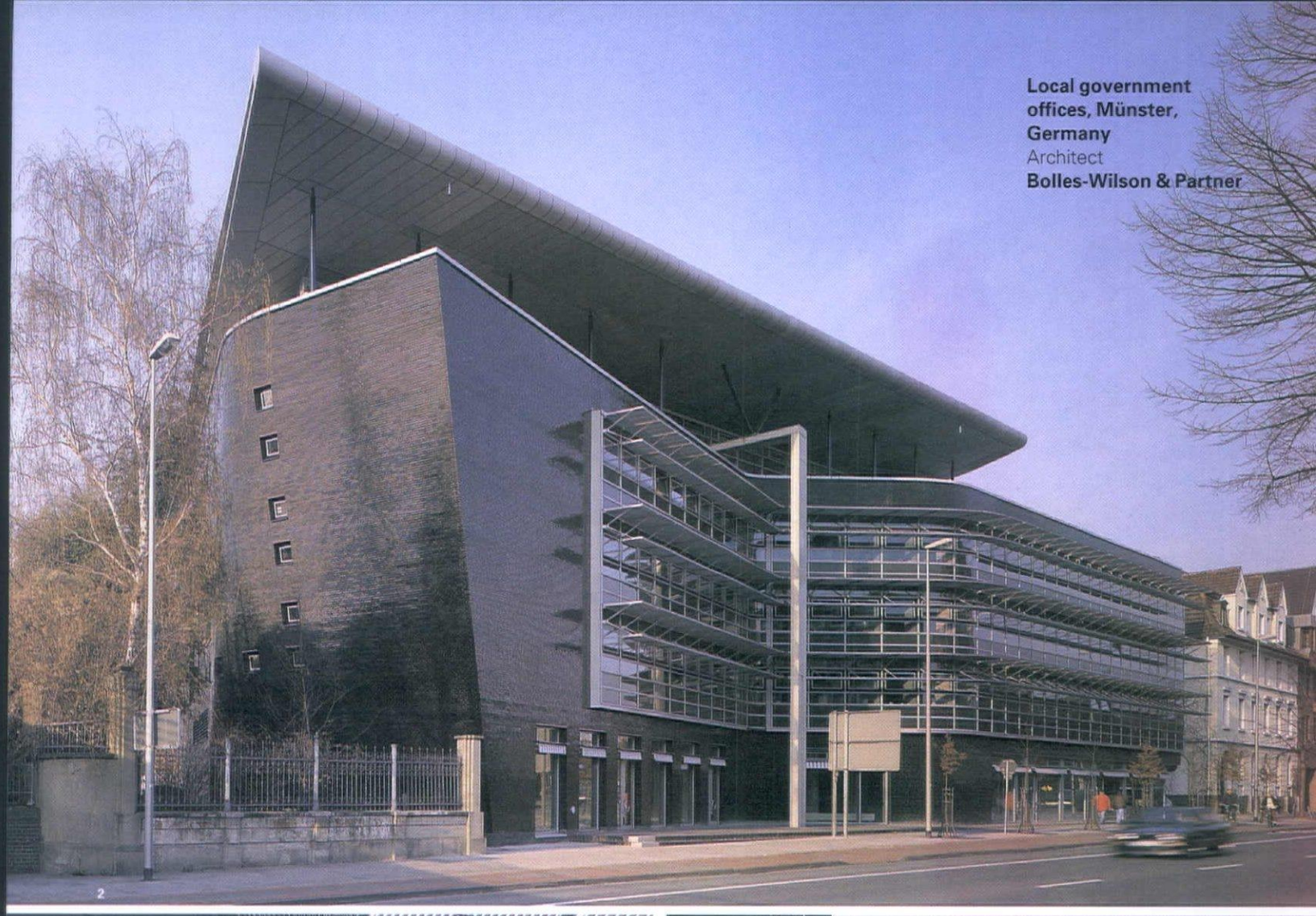
The new local government office block in Münster by Bolles-Wilson & Partner is the result of a 1991 competition and was opened late last year. Like the city's library, completed by the same practice three years ago (AR February 1994), this headquarters for administration of psychiatric services responds to its surroundings with sensitive boldness. But the environs are coarser and simpler than the many-layered tapestry of the inner city in which the earlier building is set.

This one lies on the main east route out of the medieval centre, beyond the green promenade of the old wall ring and the railway (the main European north-south line between Copenhagen and Zurich). Next door, to the east, is a pleasant jumble of nineteenth-century buildings, with offices and apartments over shops; across the street is a large modern version of the same.

The brief called for three floors of cellular offices (the form is mandatory in the German state services), shops on the ground floor, and a cafeteria on the roof which could be used for private functions and jazz concerts – a decent, mixed urban recipe (in how many other countries would you find the bureaucracy anxious to open its office buildings as places of entertainment for the general public in the evenings and at weekends?).

But both site and programme posed problems. The west end is adjacent to the busy railway, with only a few trees in between. And the narrowness of the plot meant that the building had basically to be long and thin, though the architects were determined at all costs to prevent the dead monotony of a bureaucratic slab running parallel to the thoroughfare. By manipulating site geometry, they have evolved a street side with a naughty slippery wriggle which provides the users with variety in an essentially standardised programme, and helps to establish the building as a landmark: a visual fulcrum denoting where the old city's

Local government offices, Münster, Germany
Architect
Bolles-Wilson & Partner



2



3





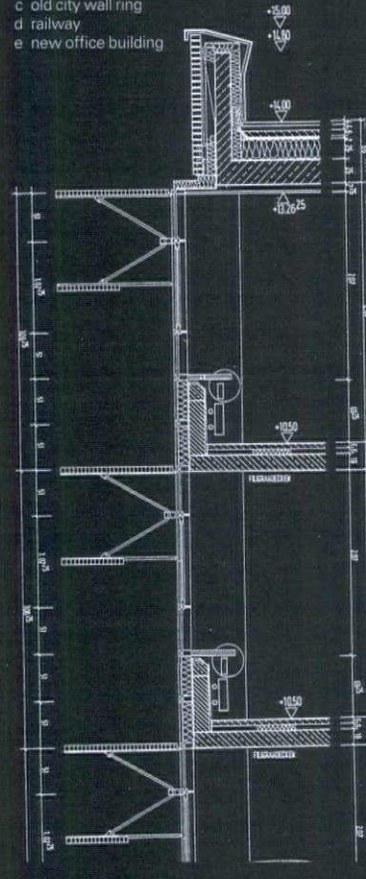
5

5
Slight whiff of Mackintosh in main staircase.



site plan

a Lamberti church
b Alter Steinweg
c old city wall ring
d railway
e new office building



part section of south facade

kernel meets the surrounding shell of inner urban nineteenth-century growth.

The two short end walls, east and west, are smooth and glossy. A special brick with dark green glaze has been made for them; they are only lightly pierced (at least in comparison to the long north and south sides), and seen straight on from the railway side, the west wall in particular has some of the fierce and mysterious glistening countenance of an ancient helm, especially because it is canted outwards towards the top, with the bricks being precisely laid with each course 10mm out from the lower one. This visor protects the building against the noise and pollution of the trains, and, like the more orthodoxly built and slightly more open countenance of the east end, it changes with the seasons and time of day, with hue and chroma continuously shimmering and fluctuating from deep black to almost the azure shine of the sky.

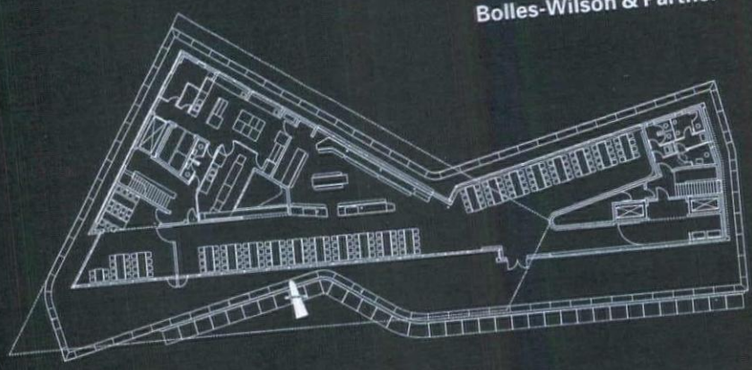
The green brick turns the corners onto the long sides of the building where it becomes a backdrop for the huge panels of glazing that are slightly proud of the glazed surface. I must confess to an instinctive dislike of this way of pushing the glass outwards and setting it in a sort of picture-frame – there are so many pompous and mediocre commercial buildings from the '60s which use the trick that I am prejudiced against it – particularly when it is to be seen raw and unadorned on the north side of this building. However, on the south side, the effect is greatly muted and made almost insignificant by a system of double *brises-soleil* which add a frilly frisson to the sexy wriggle.

Above floats the thin aluminium-shiny aerofoil roof which simultaneously shelters the cafeteria and its terrace, orders the snaky plan geometry below and claims the building as a landmark.

The roof has a separate structure, propped on the concrete one below. In the latter, the main bearing members are 600mm deep precast concrete fins set at 1.625m centres, and concealed behind the brick and glass facades. Within the 600mm zone are the heating and wiring runs behind spandrels in the glass – the device is neat, but it must be difficult to achieve effective sound insulation between offices because of the large holes for services continuity cast into each fin.

The demand for cellular offices has often led to very dreary buildings with rows of cells

Local government offices, Münster, Germany
Architect
Bolles-Wilson & Partner



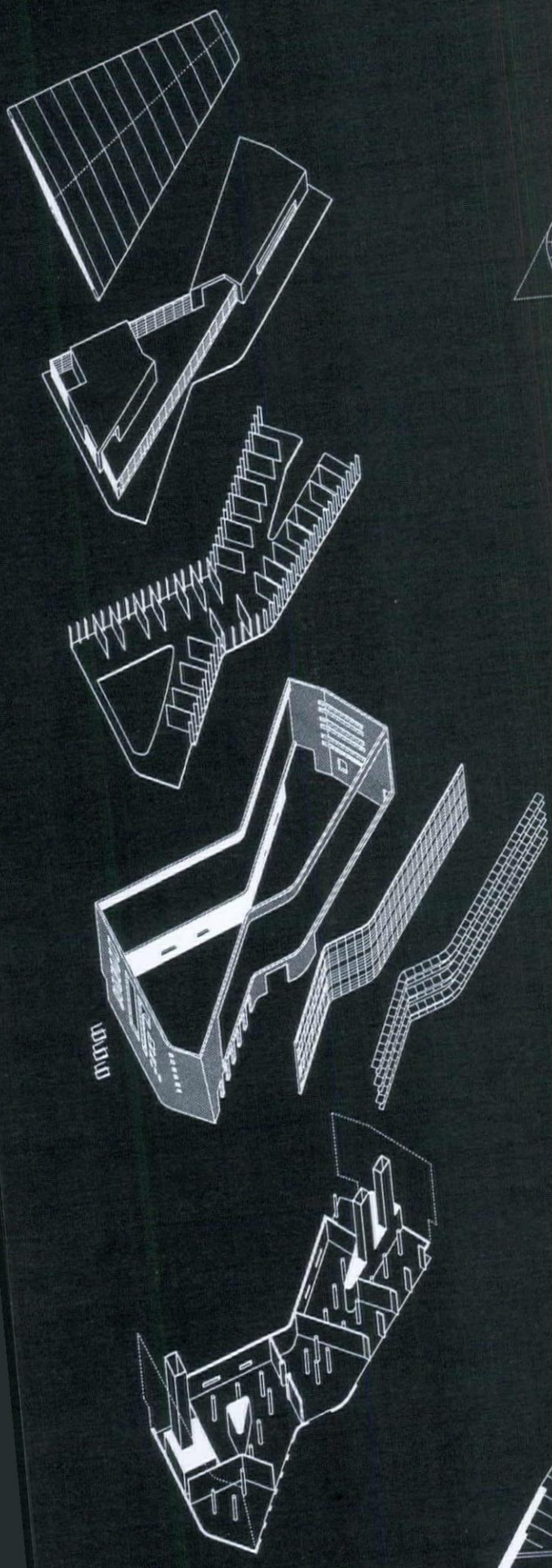
top floor (cafeteria and terrace)



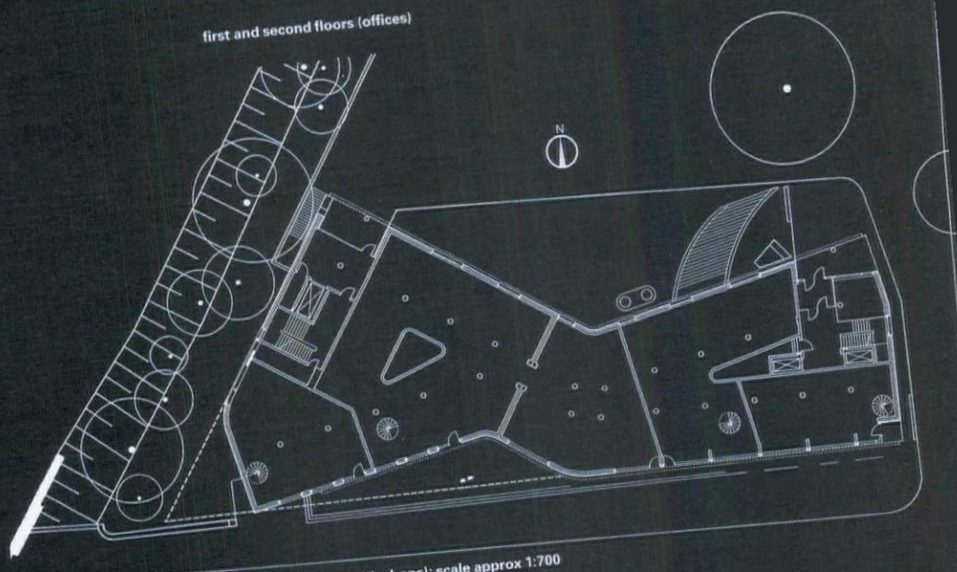
third floor (offices and boardroom)



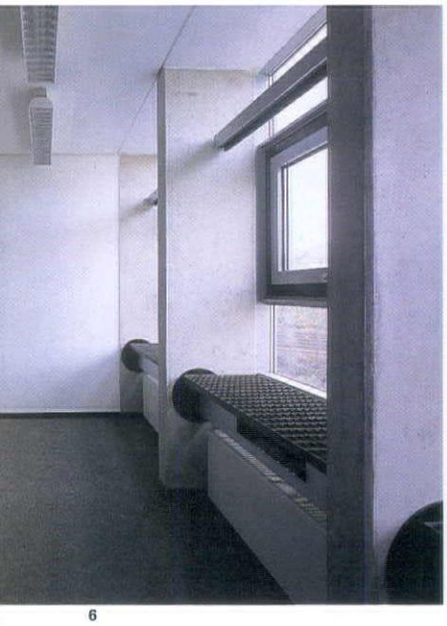
first and second floors (offices)



exploded axonometric showing main elements



ground floor (with shops); scale approx 1:700



6



7

6
Standard office condition with service runs penetrating structural fins.
7
Glimpse up from basement to entrance level.
8
By inserting wedges of vertical circulation and services in plan, corridors are made to branch, breaking away from normal institutional double bank.
9
Cafeteria on top floor.
10
Second floor boardroom with reflective ceiling and absorbent walls.

ranged on both sides of dark internal corridors – unless of course site and budget allow for single-banked galleries. Here there could be no such spatial luxury, but the architects have ingeniously prevented dullness and monotony by inserting a wedge of vertical circulation and services into each end of the plan. This is what produces the external wiggle, and inside, it makes the branching corridors much more cheerful than those of a conventional bureaucratic building. Suddenly, one understands what the slits and slots in the north and south visors are for: they provide strips and spots of daylight which draw you towards the ends of the sinuous passages. Monotony is further combated by using two different kinds of artificial light, each on one side of the corridor only: a small but telling rejection of the 'economic' and conformist central lighting fittings so often found in such places.

The entrance to the offices is very understated, round the back in the north-east corner. It is easy to understand why German official buildings do not want to draw pompous attention to themselves, but this one seems to be going a bit too far the other way, verging on the secretive – not surely a desirable trait in a building in which major decisions about people's minds are taken. Tucked under the main mass of offices, the entrance leads to a small hall, made more interesting by the void that shows the presence of a lower floor (it contains seminar rooms) and by the Mackintoshian treatment of the stair balustrades.

The public has to use this almost secret entrance when the top floor is devoted to private functions and so on. Up there, the great aluminium wing hovers over the cafeteria and much of its terrace, reflecting light down into the space and framing the view of the city to the south. All is transparent and open, in contrast to the sealed privacy of the offices below. It could be a pleasant place for a jazz concert, though the furnishing with rigorous rows of six person tables is not perhaps conducive to a festal atmosphere. Perhaps experience and use will modify arrangements.

There are certainly problems with the building, but they are far from serious. What matters is that architectural imagination has transformed a dull, prosaic programme into a noteworthy piece of city which contains a three-dimensional web of places in which users and (it is to be hoped) the public may find pleasure. FRITZ FREI

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Architekturbüro Bolles-Wilson & Partner
Project assistant
Martin Schlüter
Engineer
Ing.-Büro Gantert
Technical consultant
Ing.-Büro Werning + Schmickler
Facades
Ing.-Büro Wiethoff
Photographs
Christian Richters



8



9



10

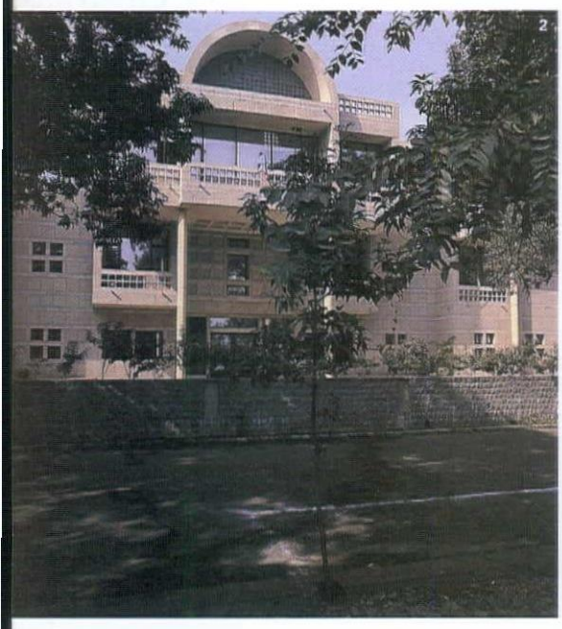
World Bank Regional Mission, New Delhi, India
Architect
Raj Rewal

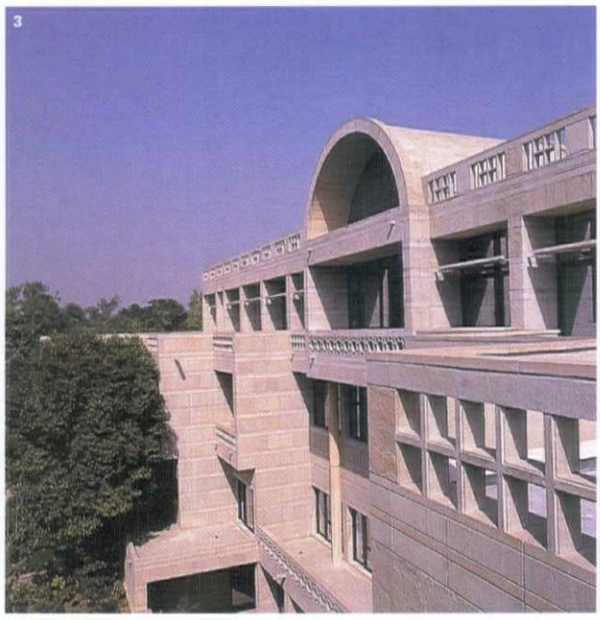
BANK STATEMENT

Raj Rewal's regional mission for the World Bank in New Delhi is a thoughtful synthesis of institutional presence and humane placemaking, that draws on the precedents of Western modernism and traditional Indian architecture.



1
The detailing of the elevations abstracts traditional Indian devices, such as projecting balconies and intricate screens.
2
The building in its leafy setting.
3
The great tectonic presence of the Bank's red and beige sandstone elevations is a metaphor for its institutional stability ...
4
... yet monumentality is tempered by the human dimension. A sunken courtyard to the rear of the building suggests many possible uses – meetings, performances, or simply having lunch.





India, despite its numerous attractions to outsiders, does not appear an easy or comfortable place in which to work. Bureaucratic practices abound, accusations of corruption are common, and inefficiency – generally the result of far too many people chasing scarce capital and employment opportunities – is endemic. The World Bank, as a post-colonial, international institution fostering economic development, seeks to be one of the forces which are rapidly transforming the subcontinent's business culture – and its New Delhi headquarters, recently completed in a leafy district of institutional buildings to the south of the city centre, serves as a model for the vast country's new workspaces.

As with all of Raj Rewal's projects, the World Bank Regional Mission combines formality and informality, symmetry and asymmetry, traditional Indian themes with those of international modernism – all with a measure of theatricality and spatial dynamism. Rewal's architecture reflects his roots, as an Indian-born, British-trained designer, explicitly influenced by Le Corbusier and Louis Kahn, equally aware of his Mogul inheritance, but, above all, distilling what is essential to good buildings, and rejecting all contemporary fads or fashions, whether Indian or Western.

The building's typology is straightforward, distributing its accommodation around a central courtyard, with a clear progression along an axis from the major entrance, facing a future public piazza, through to private landscaped grounds, backing onto the celebrated Lodhi Gardens next door. Rewal cites the nearby Lodhi monuments as precedents for his formal,



4

World Bank Regional Mission, New Delhi, India
Architect
Raj Rewal

essentially symmetrical composition; but whereas the symmetries of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century structures are unrelieved, Rewal's design introduces a variety of incidents. The symmetry of the major entrance foyer is immediately challenged by the circulation. Turning left, visitors and staff pass the principal reception desk, which controls access to a lift, leading to offices on all upper levels. The opposite end of the foyer leads to a stairway, descending directly to the Bank's most public areas, including the restaurant, main conference room and terraced gardens. This stairway is overlooked by open plan office areas, giving visitors a sense of the life of the building as they pass, without compromising either security or clarity of circulation. The foyer and stairs wrap around the courtyard – as do the offices above, giving all users a constant point of orientation. Almost all office areas, indeed, enjoy daylight and external views.

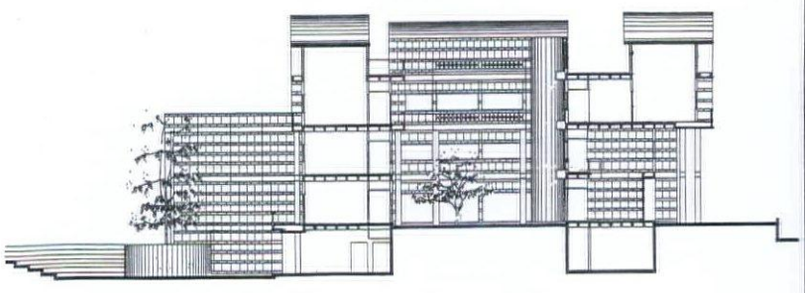
Raj Rewal's design is explicitly hierarchical, following the typological conventions shared by Indian and European classical traditions. A clear series of thresholds mediates between public and private spaces; with more important spaces, such as the top level meeting rooms, placed on axes, and articulated with minimally detailed, but classically inspired, barrel vaults. In its detailing too, the building incrementally breaks down the monumental scale of its total mass, to human proportions, particularly those elements near at hand. Shifts in axes and unexpected asymmetries are seen by Rewal as necessary humanising gestures.

The building's great tectonic presence – the sheer mass of its red and beige sandstone facades – emphasises the stability of the institution, as well as serving to maintain the thermal stability of the building fabric, minimising the need for air conditioning, and giving users the option of natural ventilation. In its colours, textures and hierarchical disposition of openings, from large windows and doorways to the intricate screenwork of balconies and partitions, Rewal's detailing abstracts traditional Indian – and more broadly classical – devices and motifs. Deep openings and glass blockwork both help to diffuse sunlight throughout the interiors. The only overtly figurative elements are the World Bank globe logos, carved repetitively in sandstone balustrades; while the wall-climber lift could be taken for a (perhaps ironic) reference to the corporate world of international investment banking.

The sunken courtyard, entered from the basement restaurant, is the building's most explicitly theatrical space, yet appears uncontrived and inviting to casual habitation. Well shaded by the 16m high trees in the Lodhi Gardens, the grass terraces of this external auditorium provide an ideal spot for a light meal break or informal meeting with colleagues. It is equally easy to imagine the space being used for a formal address by the Bank's management, or even an amateur dramatic performance staged by the staff. The unprescriptive potential of the sunken courtyard epitomises the theatricality of Raj Rewal's architecture, which always celebrates the possibilities of seeing and being seen, without compromising the design's fundamental practicality in serving its corporate clients.

PETER WISLOCKI

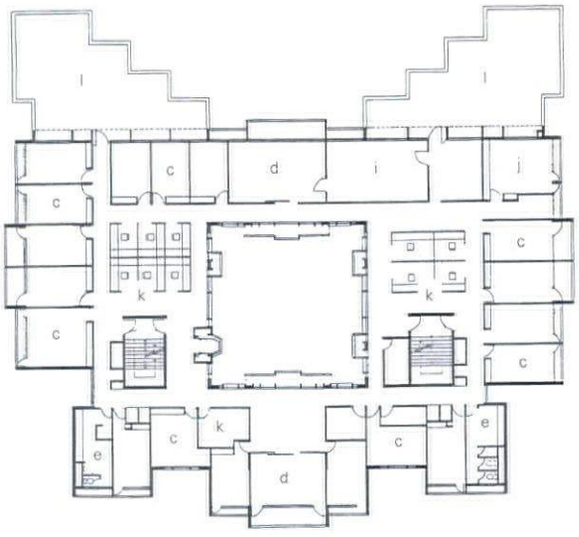
Architect
Raj Rewal, New Delhi



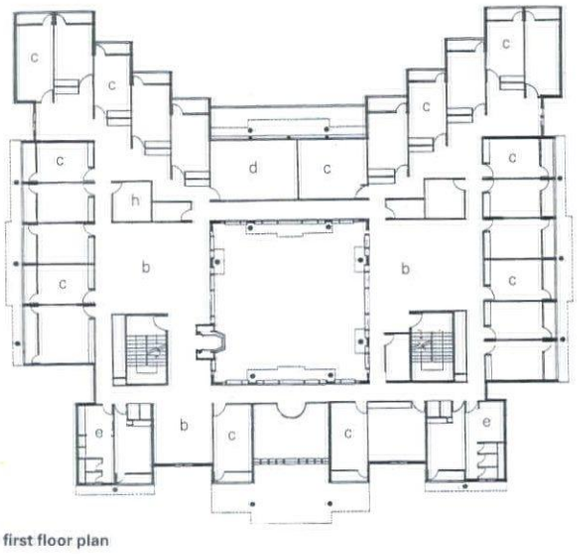
cross section through sunken courtyard



sequence of axonometrics

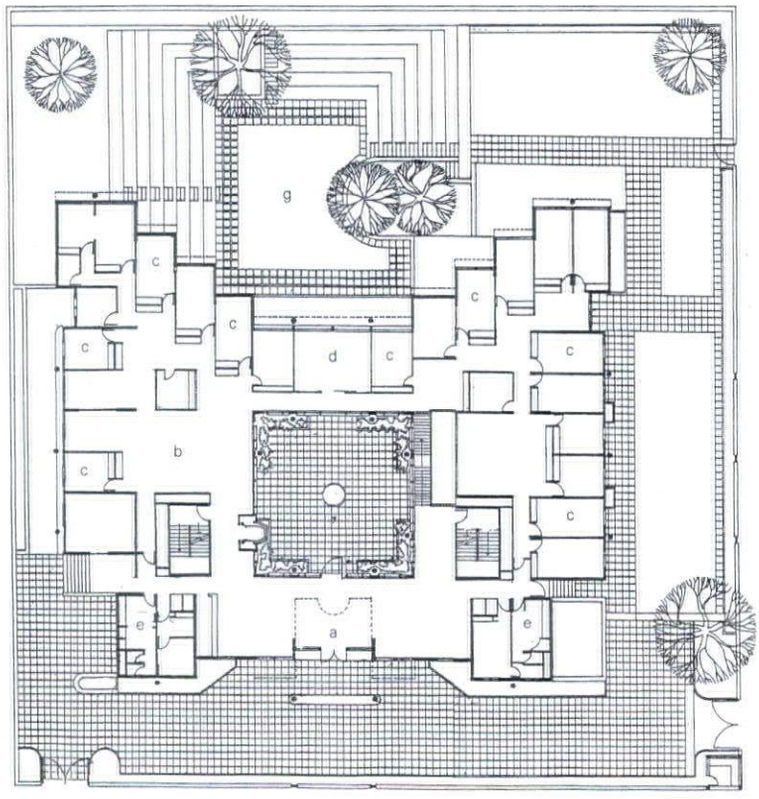


second floor plan



first floor plan

a entrance lobby
b secretarial staff
c offices
d conference rooms
e wcs
f courtyard
g sunken garden
h file storage
i chief of mission
j deputy chief
k computers
l terrace



ground floor plan (scale approx 1: 500)

5
The cool, luminous entrance space.
6
The interior is animated and defined by screens.





Dutch embassy,
Paramaribo, Suriname
Architect
L. Lafour & R. Wijk
Criticism
Julyan Wickham

1
Detail of the curving, layered walls.
2
The shading helps to mitigate the effects of the tropical climate.
3
The building has a modest yet dignified presence within the Paramaribo street scene.
4
The new embassy in its context.

1



2







4



COLONIAL OUTPOST

The new Dutch embassy in Paramaribo embodies a modern tropical architecture that responds to context and climate, yet has an appropriately dignified civic presence.

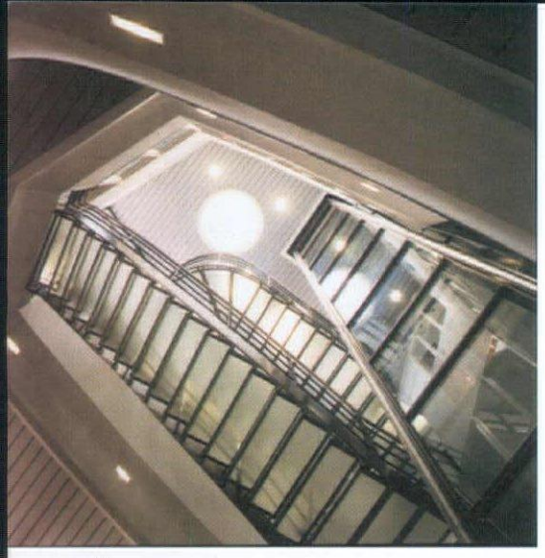
Suriname is the new name for what was originally called Dutch Guiana, geographically sandwiched between the old British and French Guianas on the north-east coast of South America. It was the first foothold on this continent for all three countries and was where they started building their empires in the New World. The Dutch first took over this land in the seventeenth century, exploiting its resources (including gold, rice, bauxite, hardwood, tropical fruit and fishing) for over 300 years until they finally left in 1975, when it became an independent nation, with a population of 450 000.

An amazing culture emerged, combining and mixing many races including fragments of the old South American population, African Negroes, Indians, people from the East Indies brought by the Dutch, the Chinese (the great quiet colonials) and not least Europeans, not only from Holland, but also from Spain, Portugal and England. Together these people formed a country that has a particular and strong identity. This region is now brilliantly poised to form a bridge between North America via the Caribbean and South America.

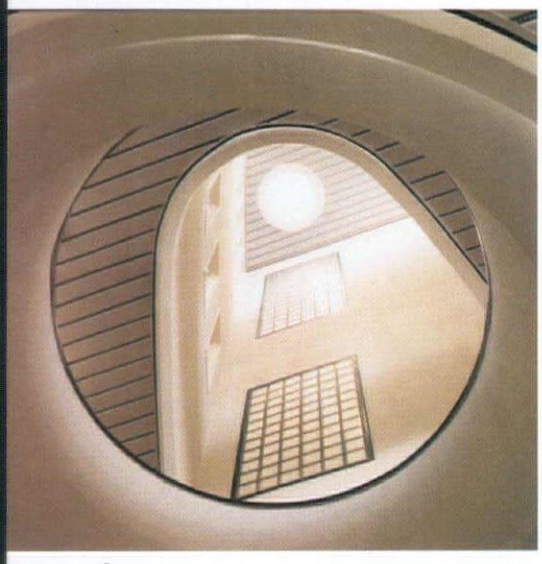
Before going to Suriname, I was given the impression that there was very little to see. In fact, Paramaribo is a thriving and important city, containing a quarter of a million people. It is an established seat of Government, as well as a trading base, with markets, educational facilities and cultural activities, laid out in a series of overlapping grids. Lying just 6 degrees north of the equator, it is hot and humid nearly all year round. Located on Suriname's broad sea coast, at the mouth of the great Suriname River, Paramaribo is surrounded by tropical rain forest. The river, which threads its way north through this hot wet jungle from the Brazilian border in the south, is historically the only major trade route to and from the interior and still plays an important part in the life of the country today.

It was in this context that Lucien Lafour and Rickert Wijk started their practice together. Both trained in Holland, and each worked there separately for several years before going to Suriname in 1976, where they met for the first time. Their collaboration over the next 21 years produced some memorable buildings. In Suriname they have built schools, housing, workplaces, private houses and hospitals (the hospital at Marienburg being the most celebrated to date, AR October 1984). Over the past 15 years they have been based in Holland, engaging in a range of projects along with the design and supervision of urban plans for several Dutch cities.

The high standard of their work, coupled with a long association and commitment to Suriname, made Lafour and Wijk the natural choice of the Dutch Government for their new embassy in Paramaribo. This building is the first of its kind by the practice, and although it is a comparatively large building for Paramaribo, it works well in the neighbourhood, which consists predominantly of two- and three-storey buildings with a few of four storeys scattered within it. The site is fronted by a small canal, so the building is approached across a

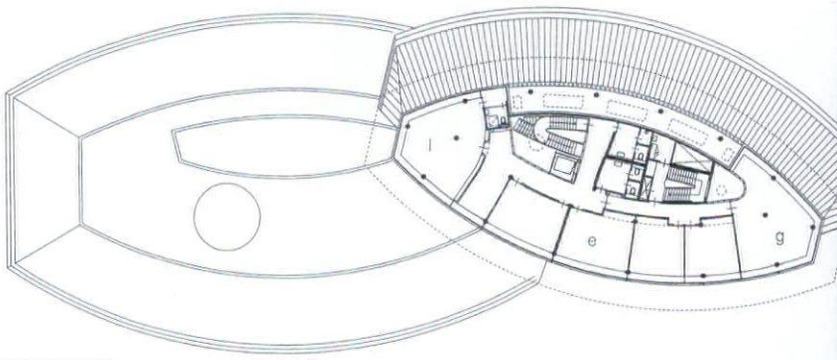


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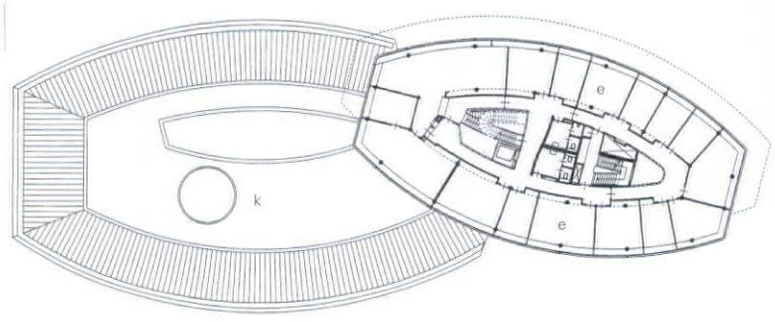


6

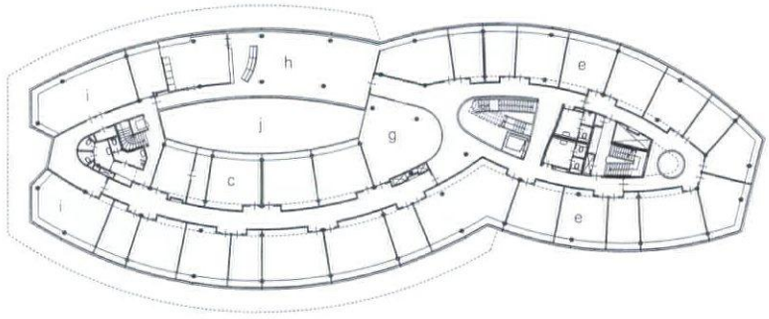
a public entrance to consulate
b consulate reception
c consulate offices
d entrance to embassy
e embassy offices
f water garden
g meeting room
h canteen
i cultural centre
j void
k roof of consulate
l ambassador's chamber



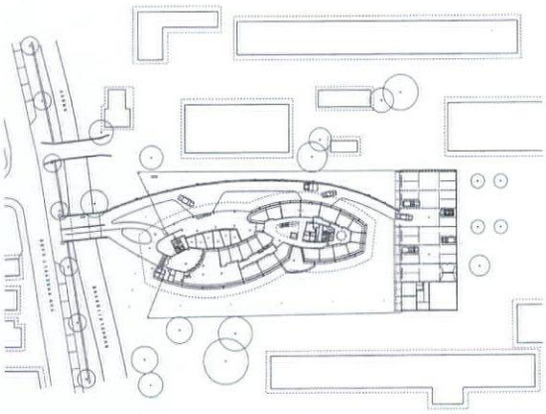
third floor plan



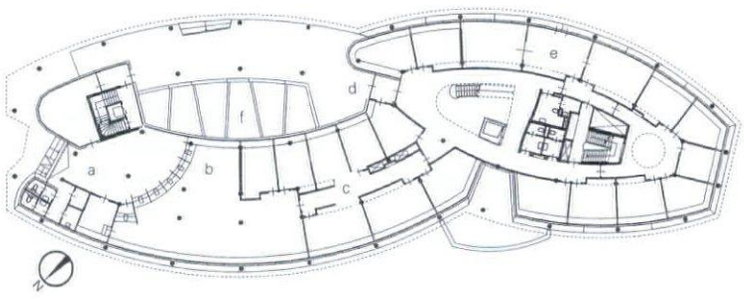
second floor plan



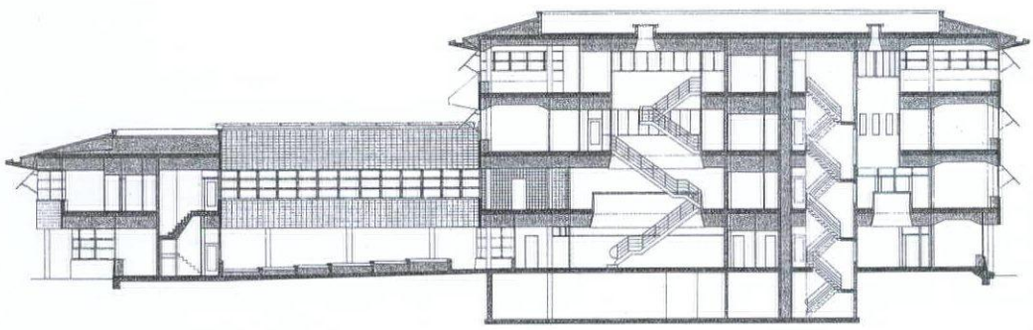
first floor plan



site plan



ground floor plan (scale approx 1:500)



longitudinal section



cross section



7



8

Dutch embassy, Paramaribo, Suriname
Architect
L. Lafour & R. Wijk

5
The main internal atrium with translucent glass staircases.
6
Internal spaces have a sculptural elegance.
7
The atrium creates a communal focus to the building.
8
The external atrium, animated by the play of water.

new and shaded bridge serving both pedestrian and vehicular access to the grounds of the embassy. Mass, form and a compact morphology are the driving forces behind the concept. These considerations allow the building to sit comfortably within its site, establishing generous and platonic spaces on either side, in relation to the surrounding buildings.

The compactness of the main building is essential here, as an even mildly fragmented proposal would have diffused the old urban context which clearly needed some strengthening in recent times. Needless to say, compact buildings are more efficient and conserve energy while at the same time affording good internal communication between the various functions housed.

The gentle presence of the building within the street scene, a mute requirement for a building of this kind, is achieved by a composition of two interlocked oval plan forms creating informal geometries both inside and outside. The cascading curved roofs and sun screens form the predominant elements of the facades, covering the whole building and providing the embassy with a distinct identity.

At the front of the site the building is organised on three floors housing the immigration and cultural departments. Nestled into these three floors is an open court shaded at roof level. Around the court are a series of rooms overlooking a terrace at ground floor level. This terrace acts as a threshold and forms the route into the main body of the embassy in the four-storey rear part of the building. On the terrace is a great cascading waterfall with fountains to cool those entering the heart of the building. At this point is a great four-storey hall surrounded by access balconies on each level which are connected vertically by a big stair and lift.

Planning the building around these two multi-storey spaces (one inside and the other on the outside) provides important contact between levels. This brings occupants back to the centre of their working world whenever they need to communicate either with others in the building or with the city outside. The circulation spaces are articulated to provide degrees of privacy and variation in scale. The ambassador is located in a suite of rooms at the hinge point where the two parts of the building mass engage one another. He is thus placed at the top of the taller part of the building overlooking the lower oval and the street beyond.

Lafour & Wijk's experience of Suriname's tropical context is clearly evident by the use of the overhanging sun-shading elements lining the elevations



9



10



11



12

Dutch embassy, Paramaribo, Suriname
Architect
L. Lafour & R. Wijk

9
Offices are humanely scaled, with abundant natural light.
10
Typical meeting room.
11
Part of the consulate reception and visa section.
12
The ovoid form generates curving corridors. Slatted panels at the top of the internal partitions allow air and light to circulate through the building.

throughout, a device which sets the whole aesthetic simply and with great strength. This preoccupation with integrated climate controlling elements can be seen in the design of the Marienburg hospital and other earlier Lafour and Wijk Surinamese projects, all of which develop the requirements for sun shading and water shedding as major architectural elements.

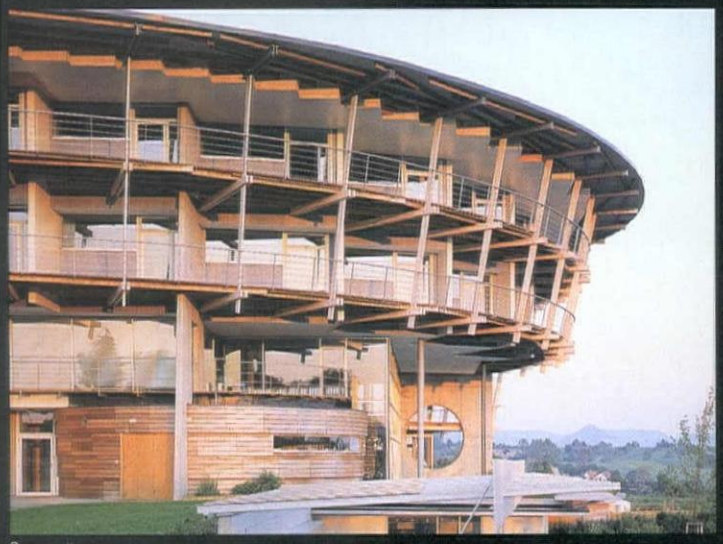
The new building exemplifies a tropical architecture that clearly responds to its context. I enjoyed it for the careful planning of its individual parts within an overall form. Moreover, given the tight discipline of the programme and the compact massing of the building form, Lafour & Wijk have succeeded in creating a great variety of room shapes and sizes. The layering of spaces and circulation through the section is arranged well, allowing good cross lighting and ventilation when needed. And the use of materials and colour are restrained to the exact point where they simply support the aesthetic without overstating any individual part of the composition.

The design succeeds on two important counts; it deals with its urban context most satisfactorily and has synthesised the requirements of brief and climate, without over asserting its function or relationship with other buildings in the neighbourhood. It is a success, I am sure, and is popular with all those who know and use it.

Architect
L. Lafour & R. Wijk, Amsterdam
Client
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Netherlands, Property Abroad Department
Structural engineer
Heijckmann bouwadviesburo
Mechanical and electrical consultants
Huygen Elwako, Raadgevende Ingenieurs
Photographs
Peter de Ruig



1



2

Offices, Gniebel, Germany
Architect
Kauffmann Theilig & Partner



3

RING CYCLE

This headquarters for a software company surprisingly combines humane scale and organisation with energy consciousness in a boldly articulated, sculptural form.

This unorthodox-looking office building on the outskirts of Gniebel houses a software company consisting of 250 employees. The greenfield site is typically placeless yet well connected, on the edge of the motorway linking Stuttgart with Tübingen. Kauffmann Theilig & Partner are acquiring a reputation for innovative office design, based on an ability to combine bold form with energy-conscious environmental control strategies (for example their proposal for Glasbau Seele's headquarters, AR May 1995). Here the aim was to create a building that would nurture creative collaboration between employees as well as incorporate a degree of energy and ecological consciousness.

The five-storey building is organised around a doughnut-shaped plan. The squat yet sculptural circular form makes a strong impression in the landscape, reinforced by the raw materiality of the concrete structure and its timber cladding. This gives the building an engagingly robust, ark-like quality, far removed from the slick blandness more typically associated with corporate headquarters. Wide balconies project from the upper two floors and the entire ensemble is capped by an oversailing roof. The circular plan is intended to break down traditional management hierarchies and encourage a sense of workplace communality.

Rings of offices, some cellular, some open plan, enclose a generous, cylindrical atrium which forms the building's spatial and social focus. Each cluster of desks or cellular offices also has direct access to the balconies that run around the building, so that workers can enjoy a change

1
Unlike the slick blandness of most corporate headquarters, this new office for a software company has a robust, ark-like quality.
2
Detail of the wide balconies that run around the upper two floors.
3
The generous balconies act as extensions of the offices.

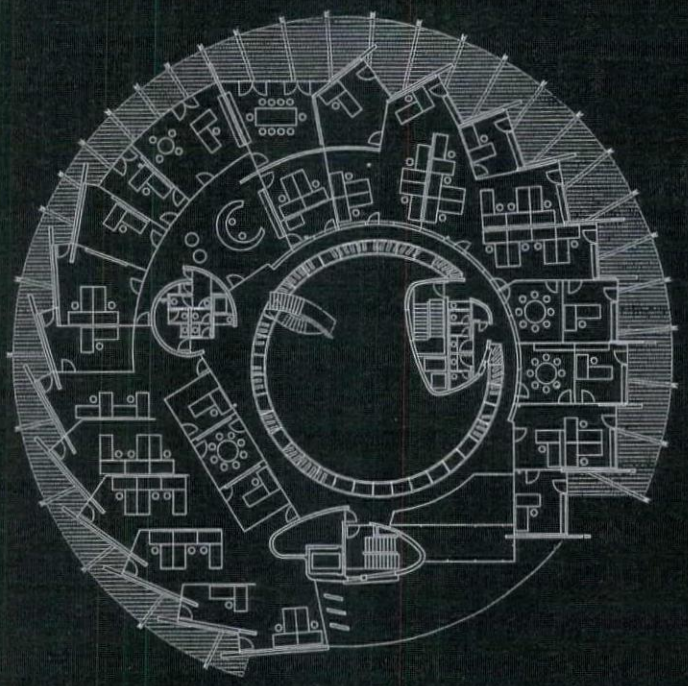
of scene. As well as providing informal social spaces, the balconies and overhanging roof also help to diffuse distracting glare on computer screens.

The building's entrance is indicated by a glazed wall (a surprisingly delicate insertion in the building's curved timber and concrete hull) that gives enticing glimpses into the atrium beyond. The four-storey atrium drops down one floor, below the level of the entrance, and is bisected by a system of bridges and stairs linked to galleries running round its edge. The dividing walls between the offices and the atrium are glazed, primarily so that daylight can be brought into the offices, but also to generate a sense of animation and openness. The only enclosed elements are the modular pods housing the lavatories and fire escape stairs.

The environmental control strategy relies on natural ventilation, thermal mass and exploiting the considerable waste heat from computers and telecommunications equipment. The offices are mechanically ventilated using fresh air which is ducted into the atrium and through into the adjoining office spaces. More remote offices are serviced through a pipe system and floor vents. A ring-shaped duct running along the external facade collects the return air. During summer, fresh air is collected and cooled in an underground duct, to around 7 degrees Celsius, and return air is exhausted over the roof. In winter, the return air is collected and helps to pre-warm the air supply; this process is also supplemented by heating units. Exposed areas of concrete act as thermal mass.

During the design phase, the building's annual energy requirements were predicted by computer modelling at around 25 kW/ sq m, roughly one quarter of the consumption of a conventional building. Obviously this may be subject to variation once the building is properly monitored and in use, but it also offers encouraging evidence that the modern workplaces can be energy efficient as well as humanely scaled and organised.

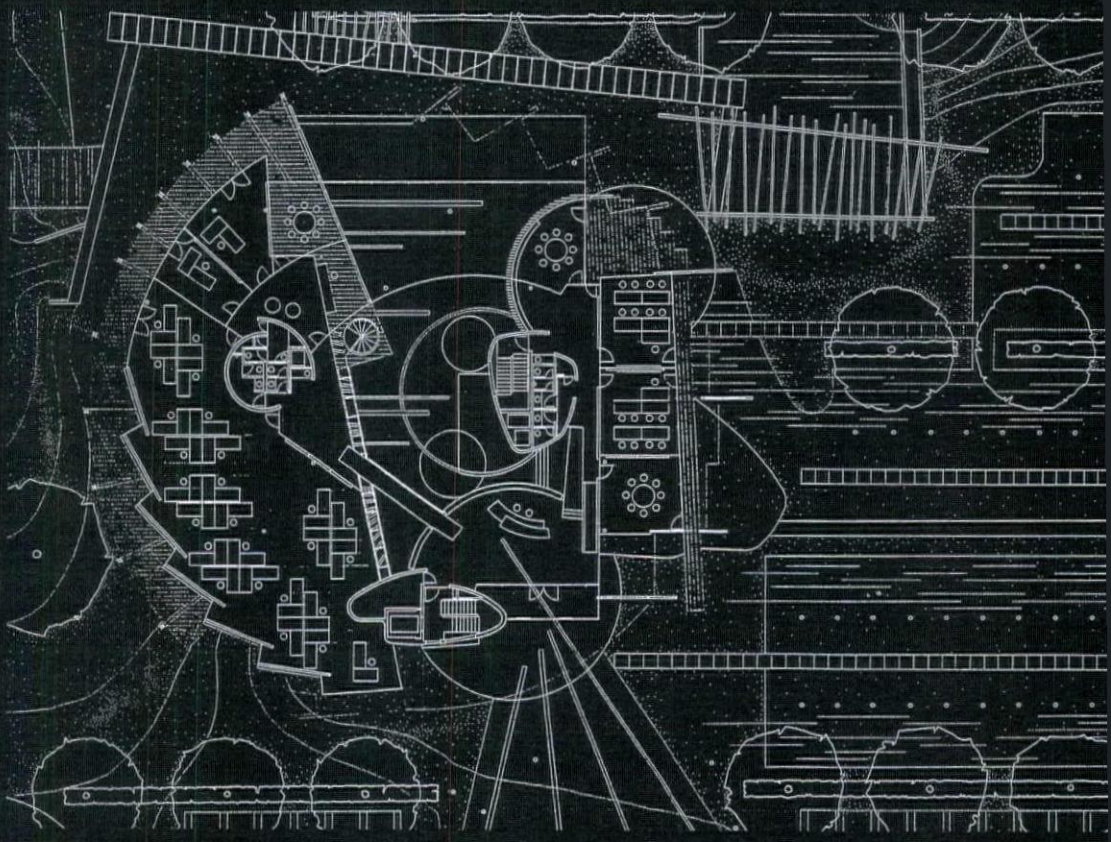
CLAUDIA KUGEL



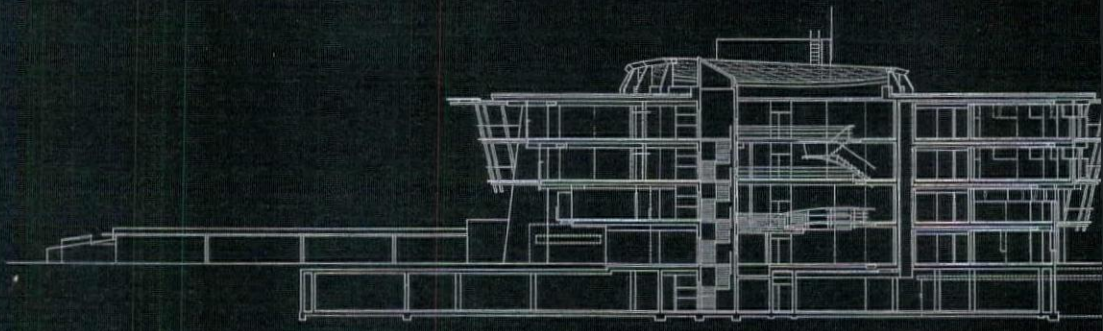
typical office floor plan

Offices, Gniebel, Germ
Architect
Kauffmann Theilig & Partner

4
Entrance foyer, with the atrium b
5
The four-storey atrium forms the
and social hub of the building.
6
The staff café, overlooking the atr
7
Typical meeting room.



entrance level plan (scale approx 1:1000)



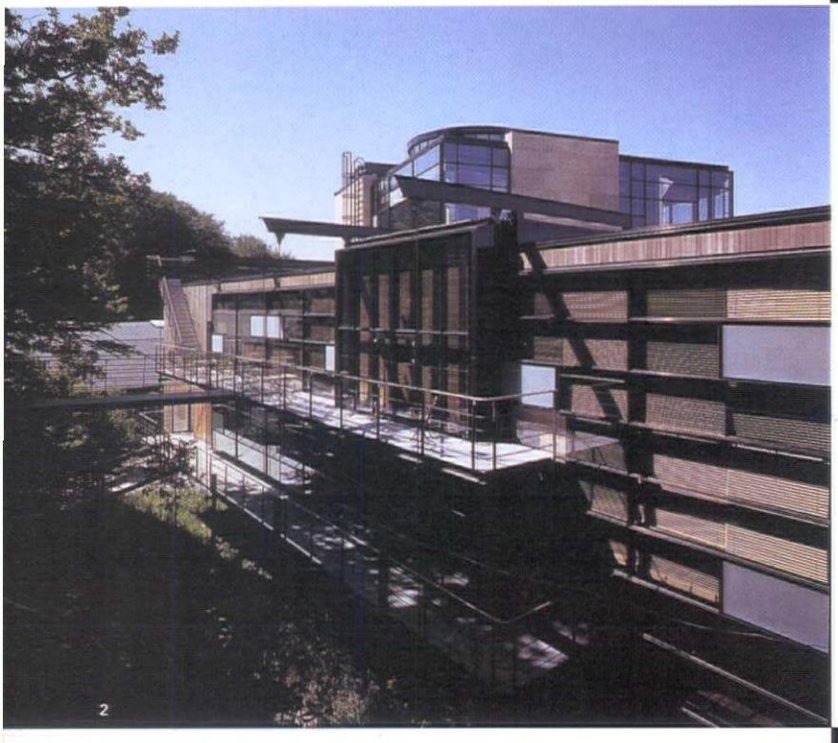
cross section

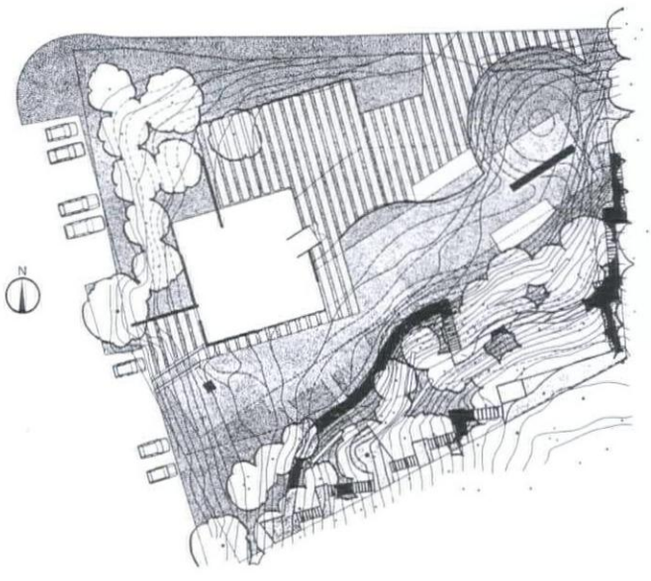
A SPORTING LIFE

This office building relates sensitively to its beautiful site, and in so doing, provides an interlocking lattice of places with which individual workers can identify.

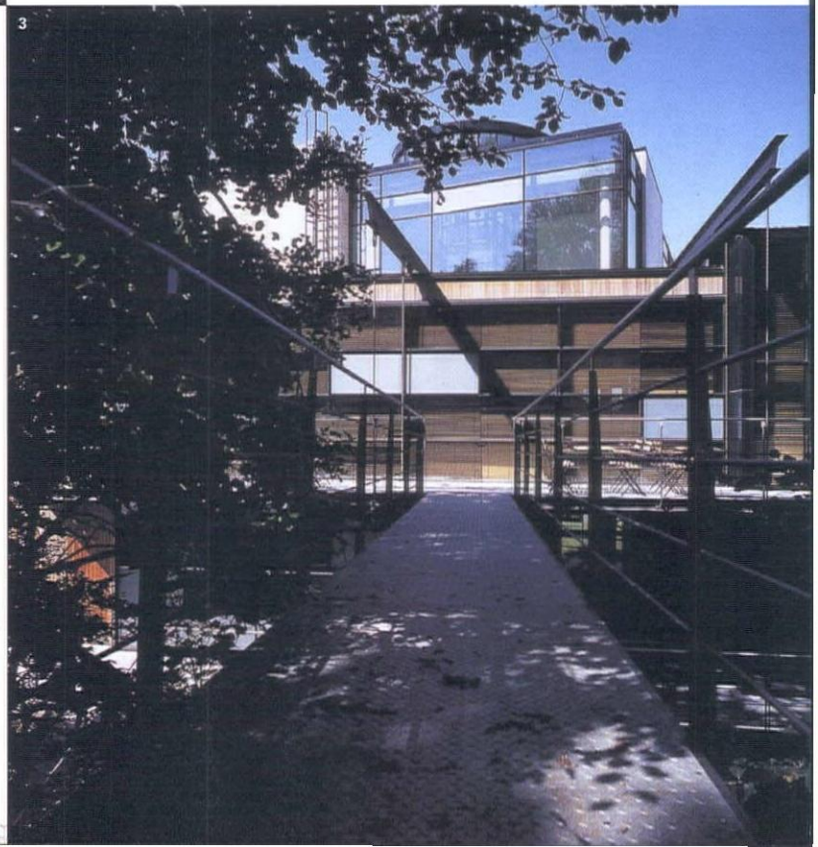


1


2



site plan


3

Office headquarters, Vingsted, south Jutland, Denmark
Architect
Nielsen, Nielsen & Nielsen

1
From north with 'cigar-box wood' wing flanking entrance at base of tower.
2
The south elevation looks point-blank into a wooded hillside.
3
One of two bridges to the woods from the wing.
4
One of the first large buildings by a relatively young practice: both form and materials are frenetic and exhausting.



4



5

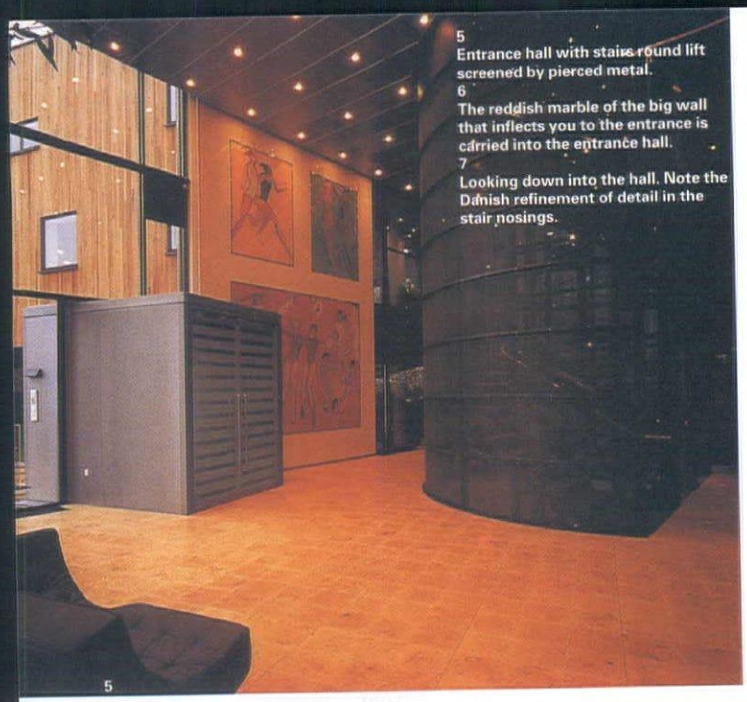


6



7

Architect
Kauffmann Theilig & Partner, Stuttgart
Project team
Wolfgang Kergassner, Ulof Rückert, Tobias Wallisser
Structural engineer
Pfefferkorn & Partner
Services engineer
Transsolar
Photographs
Roland Halbe/CONTUR



5
Entrance hall with stairs round lift screened by pierced metal.
6
The reddish marble of the big wall that inflects you to the entrance is carried into the entrance hall.
7
Looking down into the hall. Note the Danish refinement of detail in the stair nosings.



5

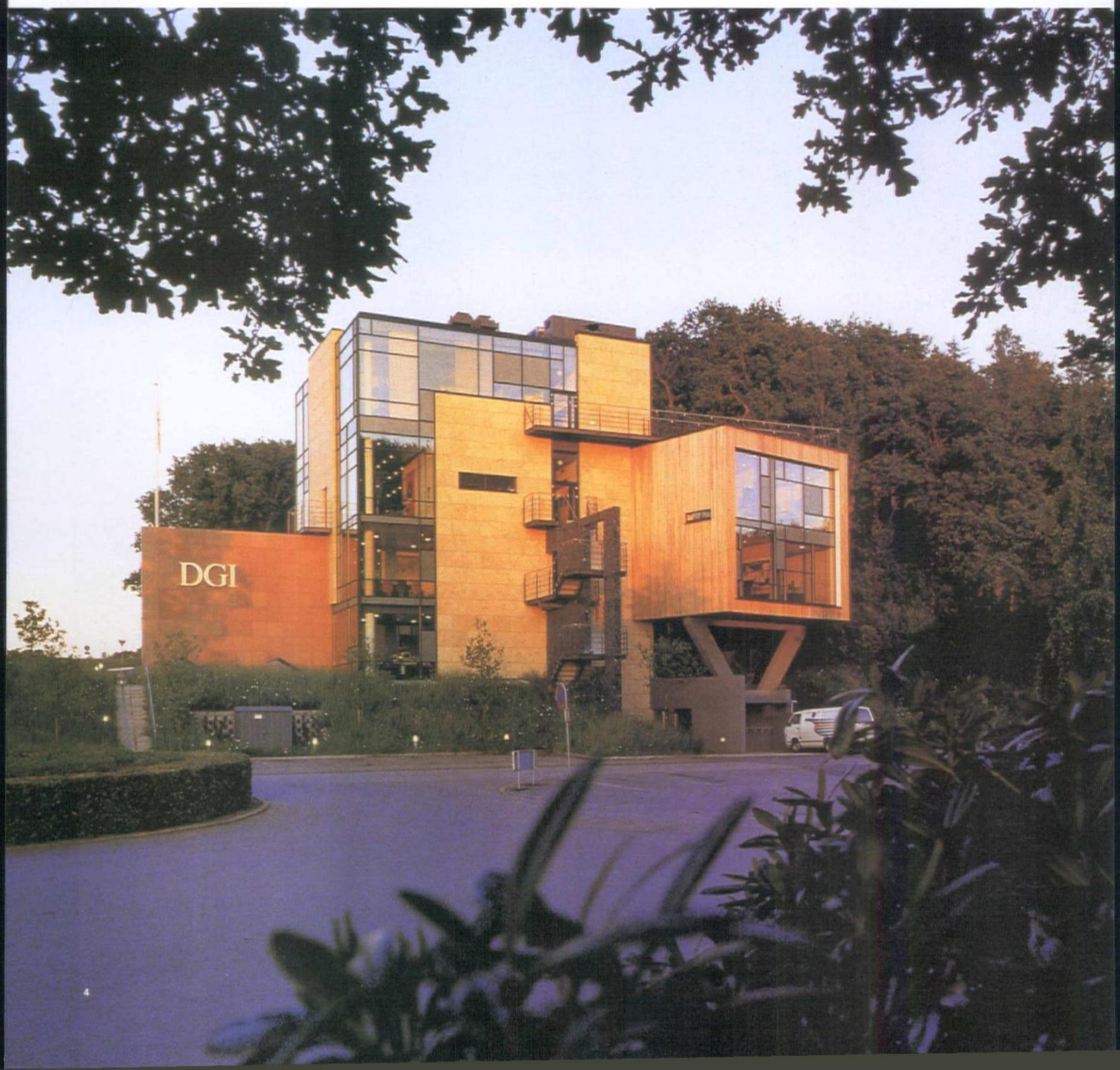
6

Office headquarters,
Vingsted, south Jutland,
Denmark
Architect
Nielsen, Nielsen & Nielsen

The Danish practice, Nielsen, Nielsen & Nielsen has already been seen in these pages as author of the landmark Architects' House in Copenhagen (AR December 1996), a most sophisticated contribution to the cityscape of the capital and an extraordinary brave and imaginative investment in its future by the Danish architectural profession. The headquarters of the Danish Gymnastic and Athletic Associations (DGI)[1] is a slightly earlier work which shares with its successor the aim of creating a largish office building that is simultaneously an efficient and flexible instrument with which the organisation can pursue its aims while providing a lattice of places where individual workers and groups can find identity.

The building is at Vingsted, near Vejle in south Jutland, hard by the sophisticated and extensive local sports grounds. The site is in the beautiful wooded valley of a little burn, an area too steep and delicate for athletics. This strategic locational decision means that the long south elevation looks point-blank at a steep north-facing slope. Not perhaps the most promising of relationships, but one which the architects have exploited with sensitivity, for the natural vegetation of the valley has been very carefully preserved. The shape of the section between the natural slope and the extensively glazed south facade means that low winter sun is largely occluded, while high summer sunshine is intended to be shaded by trees.[2] The relationship between the offices that so closely overlook this lovely slope and the hillside is made more intimate by balconies which at the upper level are connected to the wild reservation by bridges.

This description seems to have run away with itself a bit in concentrating on the ways in which the architects have dealt with the site. The building itself is in two parts: what the architects call the 'wing' and the 'tower'. The long two-storey wing is the element that faces the slope and is roughly parallel to it. The four-storey tower is aligned with the west side of the site, so it impinges on the wing at an angle. At its lowest level, the tower is the entrance hall, and is a floor below the lowest one of the wing. The wing is a bridge cantilevered at both ends, and



wild plants of the slope are supposed[3] to sweep under it to greet you at the entrance.

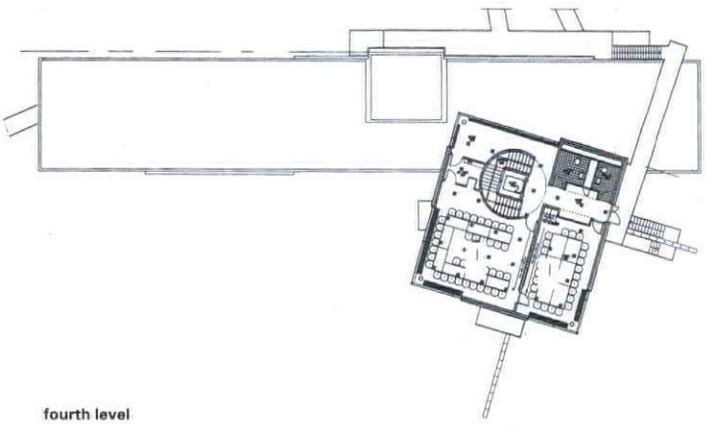
Broadly, there is functional differentiation between the parts: the wing is the office area in which the gymnastic and athletic associations have been brought together in (initially) a rather shot-gun marriage; the tower is more devoted to visitors, with the double-height entrance hall topped by the cafeteria and, above that on the top floor, large formal boardrooms which look out over both the valley and the sporting grounds below.

As soon as you get near, you can see that this is no low budget building – perhaps to its cost. Panels of sawn stone and elaborate glazing mark the entrance to the tower, while the the wing is clad in what a Danish critic has charmingly (and accurately in the circumstances) called cigar-box wood[4] – Canadian cedar. What with the wood, no less than three types ofstone[5] and a Mondrianesque glazing pattern, the outside is rather exhausting, almost as if the building is trying to perform too many gymnastic feats simultaneously (but in a very controlled Danish fashion, with the skin drawn pretty taut over gawky flesh).

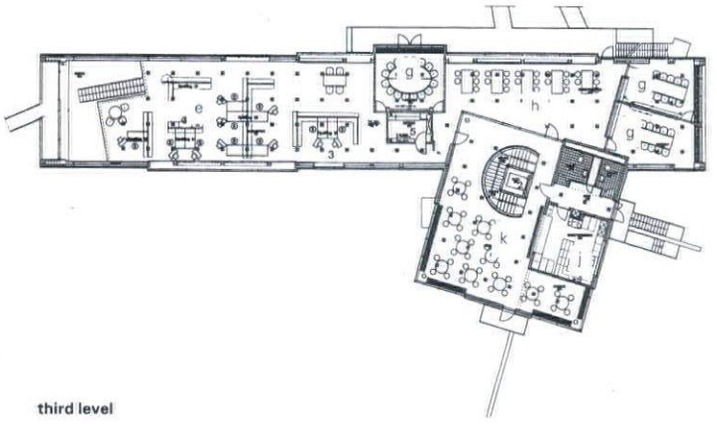
Inside, the wilful lavishness of the exterior is distilled into delicate refinement. The plane of the external flange of ruddy Italian marble squares is continued into the entrance hall, a high and dignified glazed space dominated by the cylinder of filigree pierced grey steel that contains the stair, itself surrounding the glass walls of the lift shaft. The expense, quality and propriety of the building are brought home as you cross the floor of rosy limestone to meet stairs in dark hardwood with fine little brass strips set in at the nosings: this is modern Danish building craft at its very best, recalling in a contemporary building the decency with which office workers have traditionally been treated in Denmark in buildings like Nyrop's Copenhagen Town Hall, and Jacobsen's post-war set-pieces.

The office areas in the wing have very dark hardwood floors (wenge) discreetly patterned with silvery-yellow ash covers of the

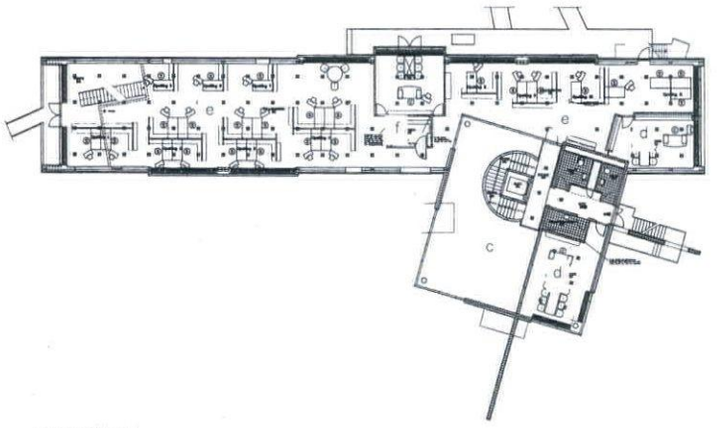
a entrance
b reception
c void
d chief
e office
f photocopy
g meeting
h dining and meeting
j kitchen
k canteen
l board



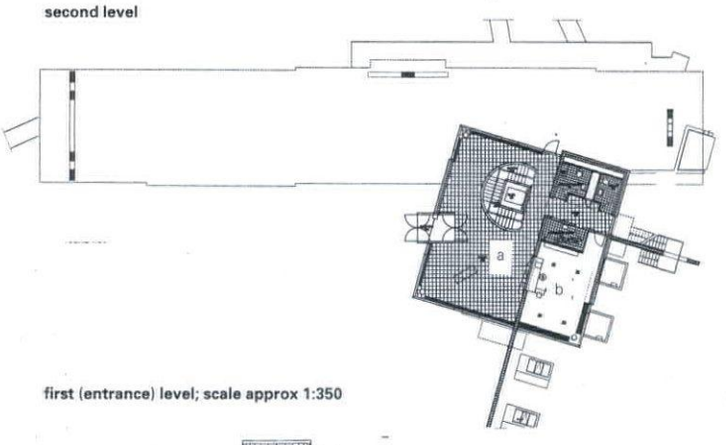
fourth level



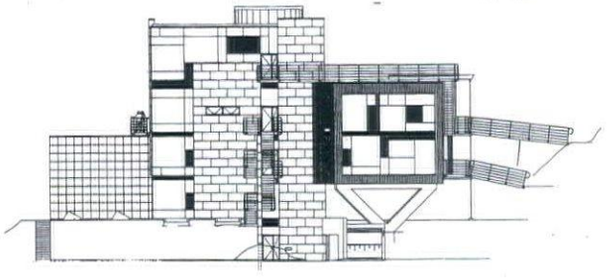
third level



second level



first (entrance) level; scale approx 1:350



west elevation

Office headquarters, Vingsted, south Jutland, Denmark
Architect
Nielsen, Nielsen & Nielsen

telecommunications access points. Ceilings shimmer with very well-made perforated metal tiles. Walls are white plaster. There is a degree of dignity and generosity about the bare shells of the offices. It is complemented by the specially designed office furniture that gives each work-place a measure of privacy according to the taste of individual users. (The system was developed and perhaps refined in the Architects' House.)

The careful organisation of glazing which alternates views to the forest bank and the sports fields, glimpses and panoramas, ensures that there will be a variety of interchange between interior and outside, no matter how workplaces are reconfigured. The initially apparently arbitrary relationship between the tower and the wing is resolved internally with much finesse. The angle of the collision undoubtedly reduces any tendency of the wing to become a boring office slab: it offers dramatic views down into the tall entrance hall from the first office floor, and a companionable relationship between the two kinds of eating rooms on the second.

This is undoubtedly a very special office building with a largish budget, honed carefully to the needs of its owner(s) and the site. And it is (at least externally) rather overcooked. But it has many lessons to offer about the need for quality and variety in all workplaces. HENRY MILES

1 *Danske Gymnastik- og Idrætsforeigninger.*
2 That the strategy does not work perfectly is shown by the extensive use of the beautiful internal limewood blinds in summer (de Waal, Allan, 'Arkitektonisk Akrobatik', *Arkitektur DK*, 5, 1995, p255).
3 Only time will tell if the Corbusian notion of the natural landscape flowing under an elevated slab will work on this occasion. It doesn't usually.
4 *Ibid.*
5 Jura Gelb limestone in the vertical panels, Italian Rosso Asiago on the plane that defines the front door, and green Turkish marble on the spine of the fire escape.





8
Open-plan offices: furniture was specially made for building. It allows partial screening of each work-station.
9
Chief's office.
10
Meeting and dining room overlooking the forest bank.



Architects
Nielsen, Nielsen & Nielsen, Århus
Associates
Carsten Olsen, Asbjørn Gregersen, Helge Skovsted
Engineer
KPC Byg
Landscape architect
Jeppe Aagaard Andersen
Photographs
Poul Ib Henriksen

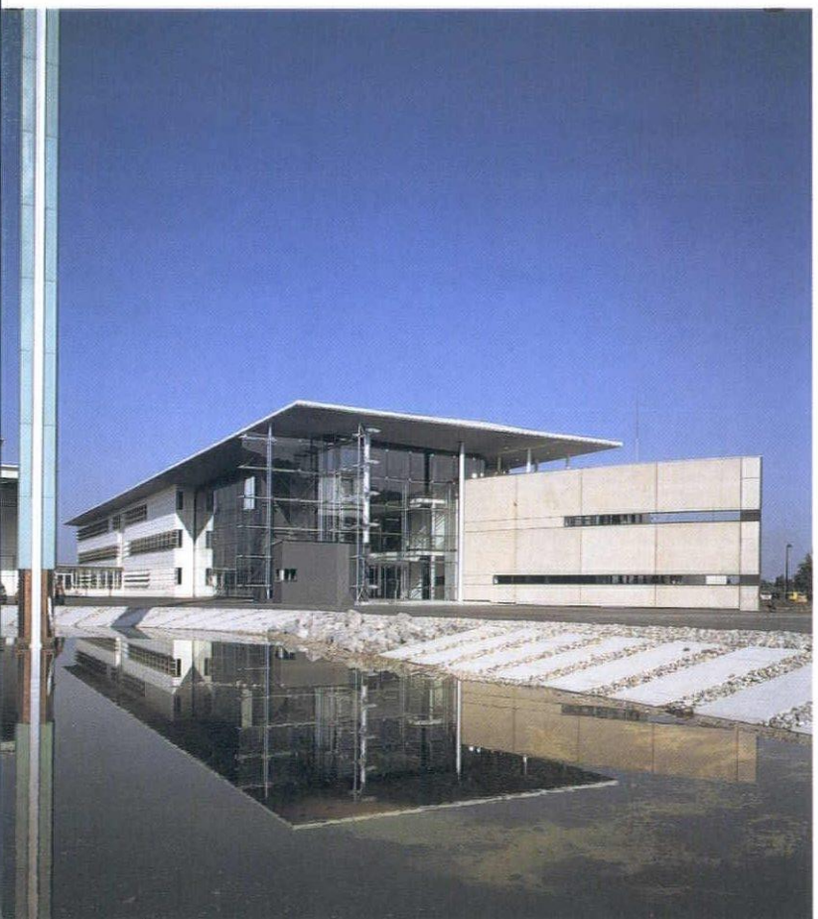
Vorarlberger Medienhaus (media centre), Bregenz, Austria
Architect
Ernst Giselbrecht
Criticism
Peter Blundell Jones



1

MEDIA ATTENTION

In a largely standardised office building for the latest communications technology, design effort has been focused on creating public spaces that encourage social interaction.



2

1
North elevation of new block: high degree of standardisation was needed to achieve fast building time.
2
East (entrance) end with, left, Bechtold's amazing *Lichtsäule* which changes colour according to the state of the news.

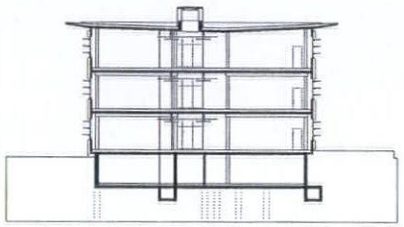
Vorarlberg is the Westernmost province of Austria, bordering Switzerland and Germany at the corner of Lake Constance. The publisher of the newspaper *Vorarlberger Nachrichten*, a long established family business, had expanded to employ over 400 people and outgrew its old premises at the centre of Bregenz. The first major investment was a new automated setting and printing plant. Large, with noisy machines running night and day and constant lorry access, it could scarcely be placed in the heart of the city.

A suitable site was found on the edge of Schwarzach, a village to the south-west with bus and rail connections. The desire to concentrate the whole operation on a single site with plenty of room and good communications soon prompted the firm to move its offices there as well. The stated reason was increased efficiency of operation, but the firm clearly relished the opportunity to display its progressive ethos, both to its own employees and to the wider world, while its new buildings also inevitably reflect its growing economic power. The owner/proprietor, Eugen Russ, is fully aware of the emblematic power of architecture, and also commissioned a new house from Ernst Giselbrecht a year or so earlier. Client and architect have known each other from childhood, for Giselbrecht was born and brought up in Vorarlberg before he went to study in Graz, where he made his reputation and now runs his office.

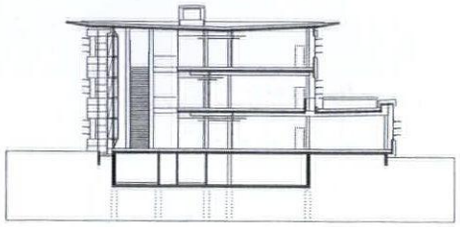
The site lies in a valley running almost north-south, between a railway to the west and road to the east. The printing works, already at an advanced stage when the office was commissioned, had been placed east-west across the site.[1] Giselbrecht set the office block parallel to it, creating two court-like spaces between the buildings by linking them centrally with a single-storey glazed passage. He left the land to the north free for expansion, and if a further block is built, the current open car parking will be shifted to its basement.

The office had to be built extremely quickly – it was only 15 months on site – and flexibility of use was a high priority. Strict dimensional co-ordination was essential if components made simultaneously but separately would fit together, and relatively long production runs were required to make components economical. These pressures led to a typically repetitive linear building with a regular bay rhythm and standard details. It has three identical storeys of offices looking north and south divided by a central circulation spine. A couple of service cores with linking stairwells subdivide the long body into three zones, lifts being provided in the middle and at the front end. The concrete column and slab structure rests on piles and the envelope is a sophisticated aluminium and glass cladding system. As in earlier Giselbrecht buildings, such as the HTBLA technical college near Graz (AR November 1995), this includes semi-automatic motorised elements for solar protection.

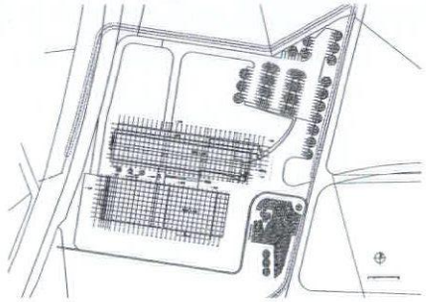
Internal environmental control in the new



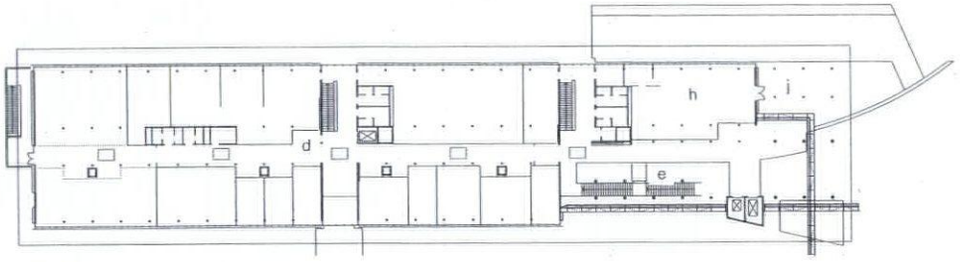
cross section through offices



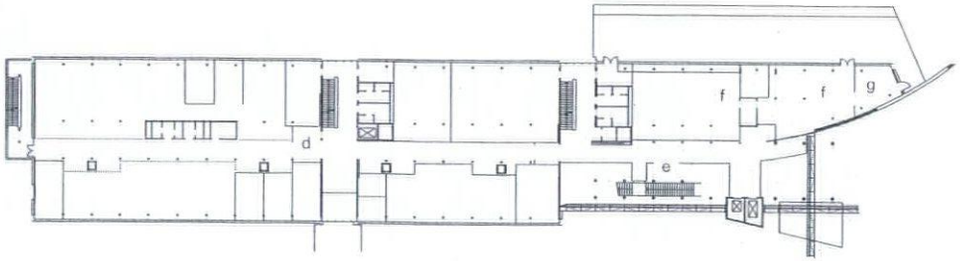
cross section through entrance hall



site plan

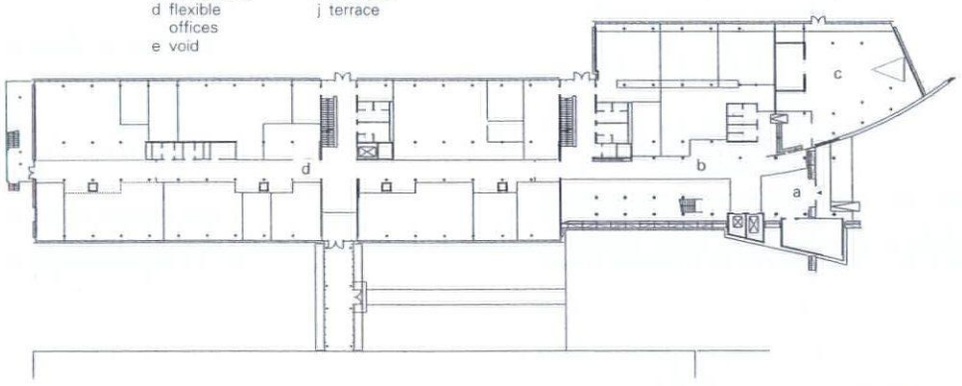


second floor



first floor

a entrance
b hall
c conference
d flexible offices
e void
f general office
g proprietor
h cafeteria
j terrace



ground floor

Vorarlberger Medienhaus (media centre), Bregenz, Austria
Architect
Ernst Giselbrecht

building is also technically advanced. Floor slabs and deep foundation piles were cast with regular runs of plastic piping, snaking to and fro for plenty of contact and without embedded joints.[2] Water pumped through the floor pipes can heat or cool the structure of the building, whose considerable thermal mass keeps the temperature very stable at around 22 degrees Celsius. The pipes in the piles can allow heat loss to underground water for cooling in summer, or heat gain through heat pumps in winter. A significant proportion of winter heat is also extracted from the hot machines in the printing factory, reducing the load on the boiler, the heat source of last resort.

The elements so far described outline a building system that could be endlessly repeated and imposed more or less anywhere, potentially soulless and placeless. What saves Giselbrecht's building from this fate and relates it back directly to the site is the special area of the building where irregular and one-off things are allowed to happen – the entrance and entrance hall. This has received a disproportionate amount of architectural effort, for it is also the focus of community life. Such a building placed on a greenfield site needs to make its presence felt at a distance and at a glance, for people are either arriving by car needing to know where to go or flashing past at 50mph, hence the great scale.

The overhanging plate of roof comes through unbroken, supported by a giant order of columns to make a three-storey portico. To the right side a low projection adds necessary accommodation and softens the linearity. More crucially a huge curved wall that bounds it where it projects – the only curve in the complex – sweeps in, guiding visitors around from the car park and creating enclosure in the otherwise open site. This is counterpointed on the left by a pond, out of which grows a special vertical element twice the height of the building, the *Lichtsäule* (light-column) by artist Gottfried Bechtold.

Physically, this is an element ranking somewhere between flagpole and tower, but the message it carries is more subtle. Light emitting elements running from top to bottom, and bright enough to be seen by day, allow an instant colour display from any part of the spectrum. This is controlled by a computer program linked to the incoming newsline. It depends on indices and keywords to which it will react, but the program is designed to learn, as the computer counts the number of times certain words are used, and so on. Sometimes the changes of light and colour are fast, sometimes slow. When there is some major tragedy, it apparently goes a deep purple. The pattern is not specifically legible, but it is not random either, worked out with no understanding but with flawless and unfathomable logic by the machine: very post-modern. On the top of the column is a strobe-light, wired by radio-link to the frequency of the artist's heart. This is the 'subjective' element as opposed to the 'objective' message of the colours.

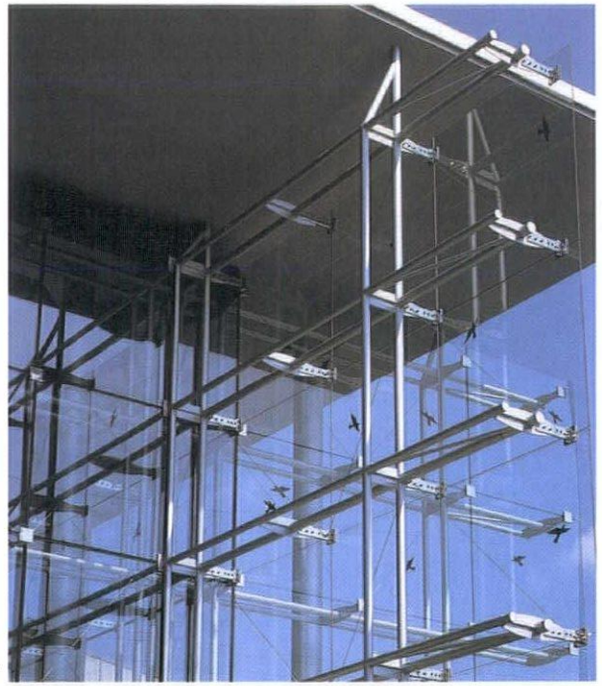
The great portico is screened from the weather by two glass screen walls carried by their own steel structure. They intersect, and their ends project out of the building a couple of metres beyond the roofline to show their independence. Breaking through these glass walls almost like free pavilions gathered beneath the sheltering roof are the low porter's lodge and the tower of the lift-shaft. Entry is via automatic glass doors in the end glass wall, leading to a hall with galleries and a running stair leading right to the top. Everything is laid out for the visitor to see: to right of the entrance, conveniently close, is the conference room. The middle level front contains the main office, nerve centre of the whole, with the proprietor's personal office at the end, separated by a glass wall that can be changed from clear to milky at the touch of a button. On the top floor the same area of the building is a restaurant with a partly covered roof-terrace. The effect of all this is to make the 'prow' the heart and community centre, to generate an immediate sense of place.

The offices have the latest computer equipment, with sophisticated servers in the basement, and editors and reporters can have laptops radio-linked to the main system, thus usable anywhere in the building. With mobile phones also on an internal system, they are not tied to particular desks, so can work in any office, in the restaurant or even outside within the range of the radio link. This system allows great flexibility, so that for example a new team can quickly be assembled for a particular task and assigned a space. Architecturally, it means that the office floors must be open to changing configurations of use, including changing partitioning if necessary.

A growth area for the firm is the Internet, which it sees as the natural successor to print journalism. Although it earns the bulk of its income at the moment from newspapers, it is investing heavily in electronic communication and has a substantial team building web pages and offering net connections, hoping to become the regional distributor over a wide region, embracing Germany to the north, Switzerland to the west and Austria to the east. People will in due course pay to subscribe by card. Editors will produce their electronic newspaper or magazine and distribute it instantly as they wish. This is the future: it is only a matter of time, they think. It may mean a cultural change as major as the switch from the monastery scriptorium initiated by Gutenberg.

The irony for the media centre is that it grew here rather than elsewhere for the sake of print, and but for print it could be back in the centre of the city or anywhere else, perhaps even without provoking its worker-inhabitants to commute – the main reason for making a building that is all entrance. It has often been pointed out that electronic media would make it possible for everyone to work at home communicating by line or through the ether. But the telephone and fax, which have been with us for some time, have been very selectively used: we still insist on doing so many things face to face. And for many people, work is still a social experience whose whole existence depends on the rules and rituals of the workplace, and on the working persona assumed with the suit. For bosses of course, the temporal rhythms of the workplace are the main means of policing the workforce. I have long suspected that the backward- as well as forward-looking Lloyds building was more about the preservation of corporate identity than the move to new technology, and that this was the main reason not to disperse across London relying on electronic links. It is perhaps the same with Giselbrecht's Media Centre: a social network needs a place to have relationships however virtual an electronic one may be.

1 Giselbrecht was able to make superficial changes for the visual consistency of the complex, but the main decisions had already been taken before he was commissioned.
2 Minimum cover of 50mm was specified. The separate circuits are so numerous that the occasional damaged pipe can simply be abandoned without significantly affecting the overall performance.



7



8

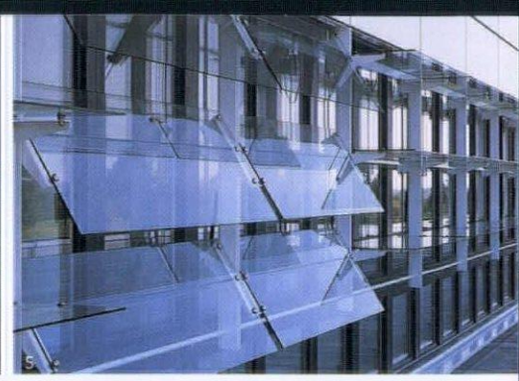
Vorarlberger Medienhaus (media centre), Bregenz, Austria
Architect
Ernst Giselbrecht

7
The glass planes of the entrance hall have own steel structure.
8
Glass planes intersect at south-east corner.

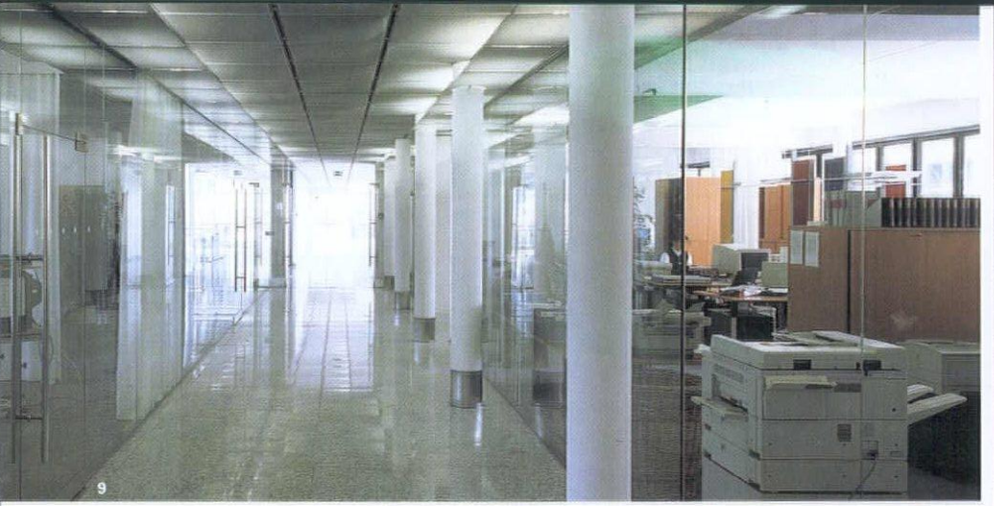
Architect
Ernst Giselbrecht, Graz
Project leaders
Peter Müller, Gunther Koppelhuber,
Project team
Zsolt Gunther, Wolfgang Pichler, Gernot Bittlingmaier, Johannes Eisenberger, Andreas Moser
Structural engineer
Martin Moosbrugger
Heating and ventilation
GMI, Gasser & Messner
Electrical engineer
Kurt Gmeiner
Landscape
Mario Broggi
Photographs
All photographs by Paul Ott except 10 and 11 which are by Thomas Filler







3
South elevation with louvred sun protection.
4
South side with link to existing printworks (right).
5
Semi-automatic louvres with solar control glass.
6
The great curved wall inflects visitors to the triple-height portico that houses the entrance.



9

9
Typical office condition, all is flexible, and full of light through glass partitions.
10,11
The galleried hall in which the main elements of the organisation are displayed for all to see.

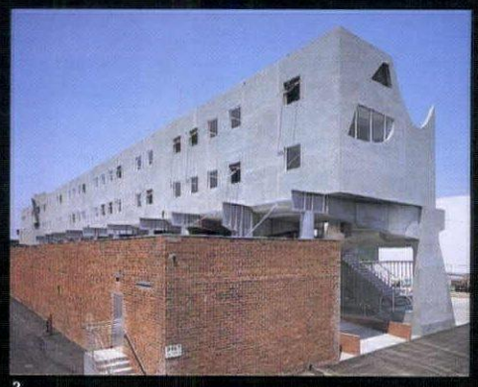
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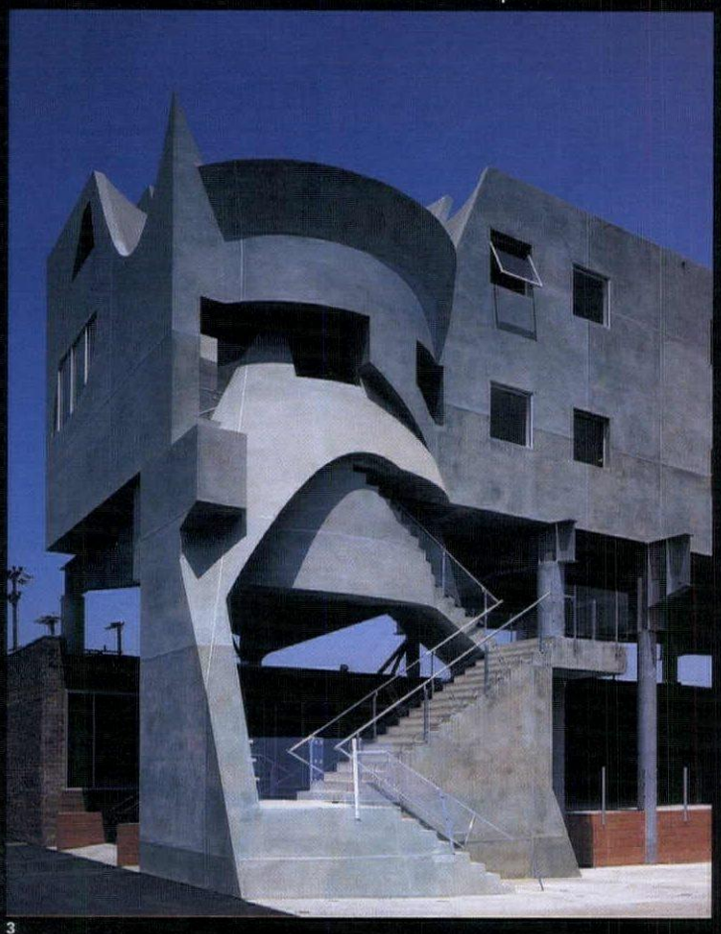
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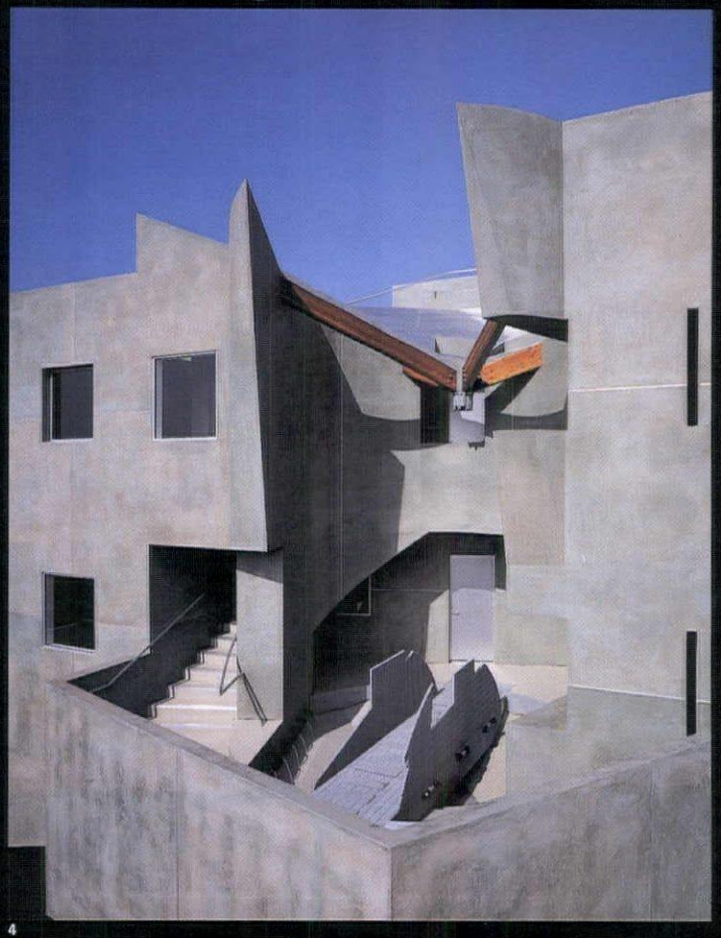
Offices, Culver City, Los Angeles, USA
Architect
Eric Owen Moss

1
The new building is spectacularly elevated on *pilotis* above the original warehouse complex.
2
The elongated two-storey volume is clad entirely in sensuous green stucco.
3
The fractured hour-glass form of the main entrance stair.
4
The baroque, panoramic terrace.


1


2


3


4

EDGE-CITY SPECTACLE

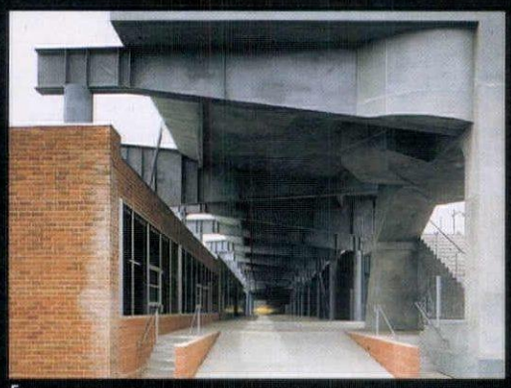
Eric Owen Moss' latest addition to the fragmented urban landscape of Culver City in Los Angeles is a boldly gestural speculative office development intended to symbolise the area's civic renewal.

Over the last 10 years, Eric Owen Moss has been engaged in a series of interventions in Culver City, an amorphous and decaying light industrial zone in central Los Angeles (AR September 1992). Noted for their startling iconoclastic quality, Moss's gestural schemes fracture and distort the shells of existing warehouses, transforming tracts of moribund space into animated, signature buildings, fit for corporate recolonisation by the industries that are LA's creative and economic lifeblood – advertising, film, graphics, television and so on. Apart from Moss's evolving preoccupation with a sculptural materiality that hovers at the more humane end of Deconstruction, his buildings also embody a larger civic mandate, suggesting visionary alternative strategies for urban redevelopment.

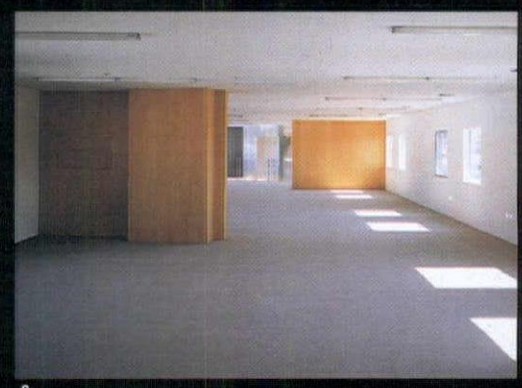
In this tentative reclamation of Culver City's peripheral badlands, Moss has established a crucially symbiotic relationship with his developer patrons, Fred and Laurie Samitaur Smith. This most recent project, the Samitaur Building, dates back to 1989 when the Smiths asked Moss to develop a proposal for renovating a dilapidated industrial building with a traditional sawtooth roof into speculative offices. The site was caught up in the Los Angeles riots of 1992, which had the effect of temporarily putting the project on hold (and potentially jeopardising it altogether); only now is it complete.

Taking the configuration and functions of the existing warehouse complex as its starting point, the Samitaur Building is hoisted into the air, above the exigencies of turning circles and fire regulations. Spectacularly elevated on a series of *pilotis*, the narrow, two-storey volume is a startling presence in the nebulous, edge-city landscape. The columns are positioned in relation to openings and vehicle access points at ground level, generating an

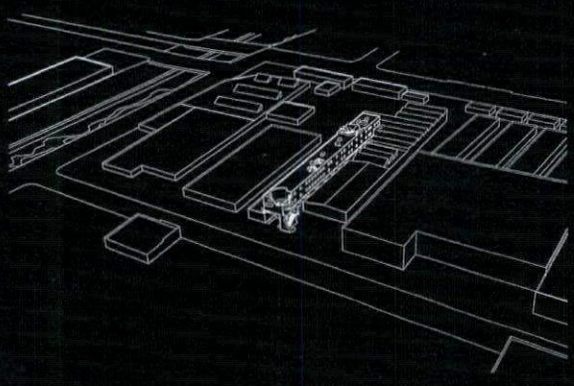
5
The public space underneath the building; part arcade, part loading bay.
6
The unremarkable tracts of lettable space, awaiting colonisation.
7
The double-height circulation core.



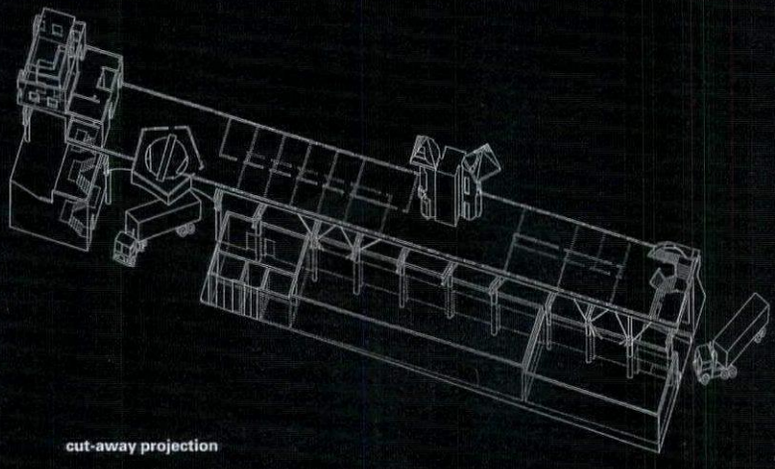
5



6



aerial perspective of site



cut-away projection



7

irregular structural rhythm. The muscular beams that support the building are set at variable angles between the columns; Moss has described the resulting skewed, bridge-like structure as a 'freeway designed by a drunk ... who sees the world precisely but differently'. The open space underneath is part public arcade, part loading bay.

The building is coated in an amorphous, greenish-hued stucco, giving it a curiously organic quality, emphasised by a series of contorted geometrical incidents that subvert the orthogonal regularity of the building. At the west end is an entrance stair housed in an expressively fractured volume that resembles a mutated hour-glass – except as Moss notes, 'people instead of sand, filter up and down'. Halfway along the elongated north elevation is a pentagonal double-height courtyard, suspended above the ground, a modern baroque balcony, providing surprising panoramas over the raw, industrial surroundings. Finally, at the east end of the building, where a set of lifts links the new and existing structures, a double-height boardroom projects over the shark's fin gables of the original warehouse. Set against the challenging pyrotechnics of the exterior, the interior is a simple, flexible volume of lettable space, capable of subdivision as required. Clearly this project is about symbolising civic renewal through the creation of a boldly idiosyncratic external form, rather than innovative internal planning. Those companies spirited enough to relocate to this part of town will presumably make their own arrangements. PHOEBE CHOW

Architect
Eric Owen Moss, Los Angeles
Structural engineer
Kurily Szymanski Tchirkow
Mechanical engineer
I & N Consulting Engineers
Lighting consultant
Saul Goldin & Associates
Photography
Tom Bonner

The M-collection



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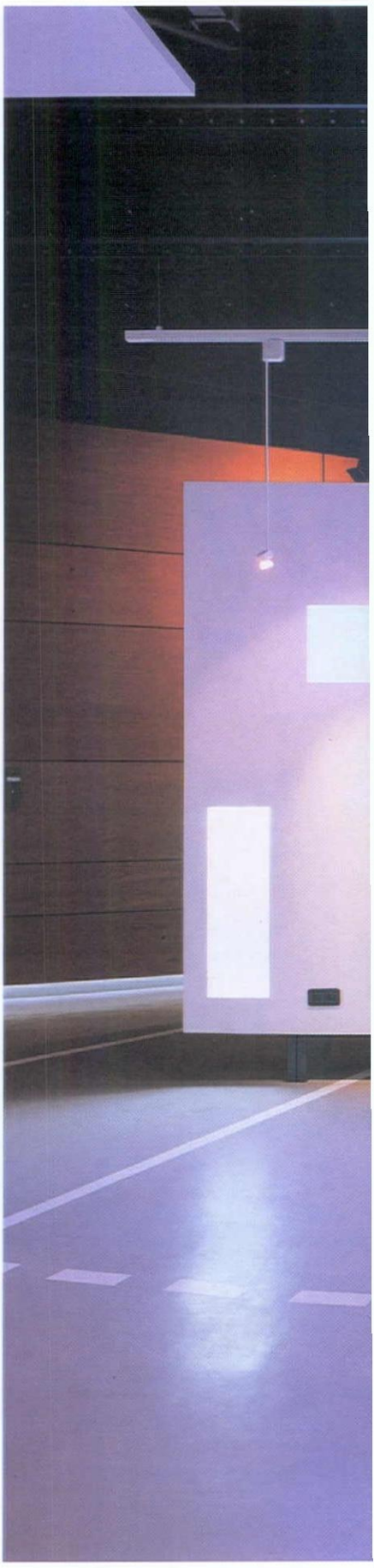
interiors quarterly

Two of the work places shown here focus on objects for sale. Bolles-Wilson's showroom and offices for a lighting firm lyrically display the powers of its products and create an inspiring work environment (p82). Noble Associates (p87) have conjured an airy work space out of an oppressive structure. Meanwhile, with the cheapest materials, Margaret Helfand creates islands of individuality in a New York loft; and in south London, Studio Downie has turned a town hall in a depressed community into a civilised social assistance centre.





1



2

Lighting showroom and offices, Lemgo, Germany
Architect
Bolles-Wilson & Partner

A scheme for a lighting showroom and offices on an unremarkable site in provincial Germany extemporises on the theme of light and transforms a blank box into a lyrical and functional work space.

Light spirits

Generally speaking, lighting design in Germany is dominated by high-tech sophistication, found at its most elevated in the products of Erco Lighting. As part of an attempt to establish a separate, distinctive image for itself in the market, Zumtobel-Staff commissioned Bolles-Wilson & Partner to design new offices in Lemgo, south-west of Hanover.

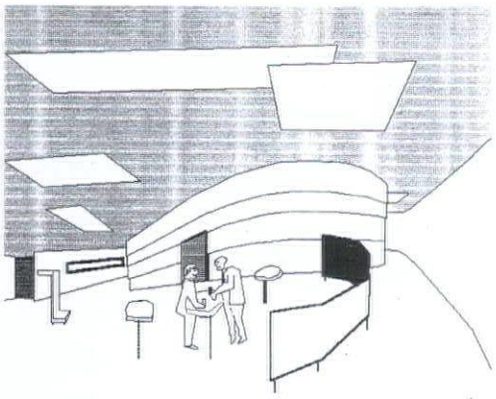
Zumtobel is an Austrian firm with refined, somewhat offbeat architectural sensibilities, evinced in the past by its commissioning Hans Hollein to design a showroom in Vienna, and Ettore Sottsass to design lights. Zumtobel's acquisition of Staff, which is a German firm, has breathed new life into the latter. Staff was famous in the '50s for the futuristic exuberance of its lighting designs, and blown up images from '50s catalogues have been used by the architects to decorate the walls of the new offices.

Bolles-Wilson's skill at drawing a narrative out of unpromising material – expressed abstractly and with architectural rigour, but recognisably narrative – was remarkable in its ingenious design of the Suzuki House fitted onto a tiny site in Tokyo (AR December 1995). The practice seems to revel in coping with awkward sites. In Lemgo, the problem was not so much awkwardness as blank anonymity. For the site was an amorphous black box, an industrial shed in undistinguished surroundings. It stirred, said Peter Wilson, a digitalised imagination in which islands of exoticism rise out of a bland computerised landscape.

Necessarily self-contained and divorced from a context of any significance, except the one of purpose, such essays can be distillations of an architectural approach; just as the design of an essential piece of furniture, a chair, a table, often is. This is so here. As in past schemes, like the Church House in Münster (AR October 1993) and again the Suzuki House, the practice has used boxes-within-boxes to establish islands of privacy and generate strange left-over bits of space. Such volumetric eccentricities have their own appeal, which the orthogonal cell

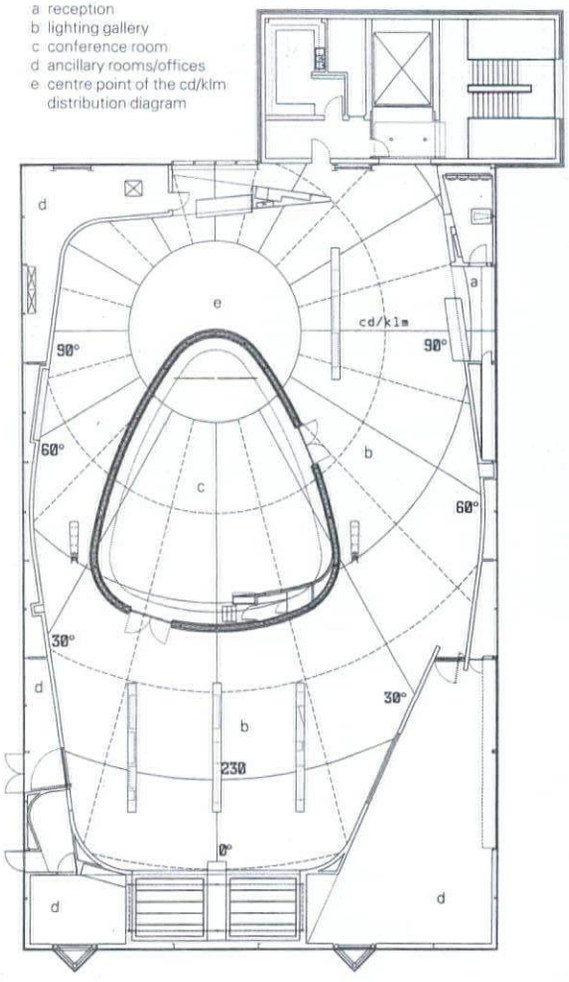


1
Entrance and reception desk.
2
Space in the lighting gallery is defined by free-standing walls and floating planes of light overhead.



perspective

a reception
b lighting gallery
c conference room
d ancillary rooms/offices
e centre point of the cd/klm distribution diagram



floor plan (scale approx 1:380)

Lighting showroom and offices, Lemgo, Germany
Architect
Bolles-Wilson & Partner

– often the blight of conventional Modernist interiors – cannot.

Within its anonymous container, the scheme provides a large lighting gallery, conference room, offices and meeting rooms. The main space is the gallery marked out by free-standing walls for displaying lighting and enclosed by a white wall. This is an inner skin set away from the walls of the building to create the series of odd-shaped spaces used for the offices and meeting rooms.

With characteristic abstraction, Bolles-Wilson has extemporised on the theme of light, so that it is the lyricism of light rather than the technical performance of the objects that produced it that seduces you first. This is surely the right approach.

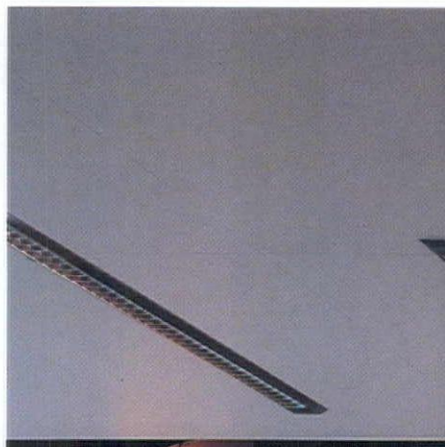
Metaphorical allusions are easily inferred in these circumstances. Overhead for instance, a constellation of geometric planes of light, called Technical Clouds by the architects, float underneath existing ceiling trusses, blacked out to simulate a dark void. As the name suggests, these planes are display panels for the firm's lighting, as are the free-standing walls. One wall cut by geometric pools of light stands opposite the reception desk and is an appropriately luminous introduction to the place.

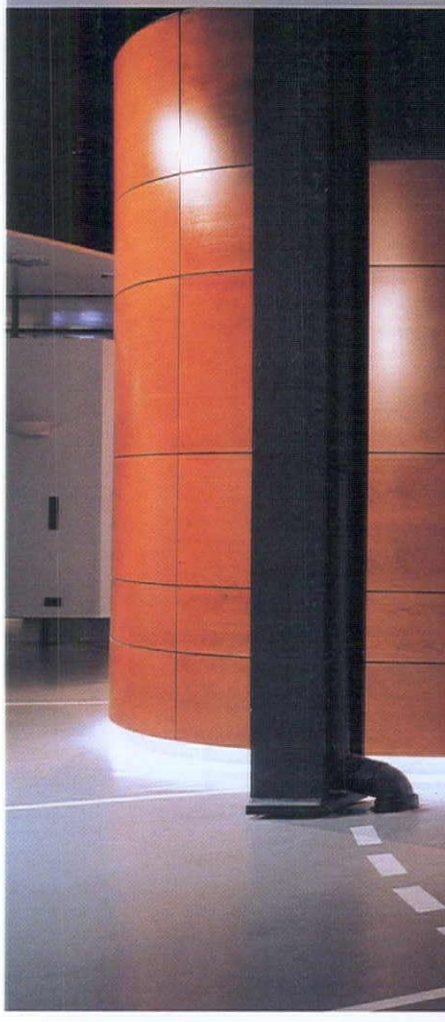
A pattern of light curves, known to lighting engineers as the cd/klm distribution diagram, is traced out over the floor of the gallery. One curve projected vertically delineated the form of the substantial core of the scheme, the conference hall for 80 people at the centre of the diffuse light-filled space. The shell is clad inside and out with sheets of burnished cherrywood, the material and colour seeming all the more rich and sumptuous in the immaterial circumstances. Once inside the hall, you see these solid walls are floating, separated visually from floor and ceiling by continuous ribbons of light. Light installations, including eight computer-controlled light settings, are accommodated by recessed ceiling coffers.

The architects' pleasure in counterpoising materials, which they do most delicately, and in manipulating light, is encapsulated particularly well in this small scheme; and their habit of detailing inexpensive materials carefully is constantly pleasing.

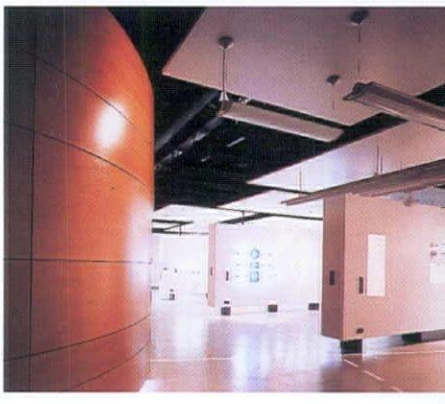
PENNY MCGUIRE

Architect
Bolles-Wilson & Partner
Project architects
Julia Bolles-Wilson, Peter L. Wilson, Jim Yohe
Lighting concept
Licht Köln
Photographs
Christian Richters





3

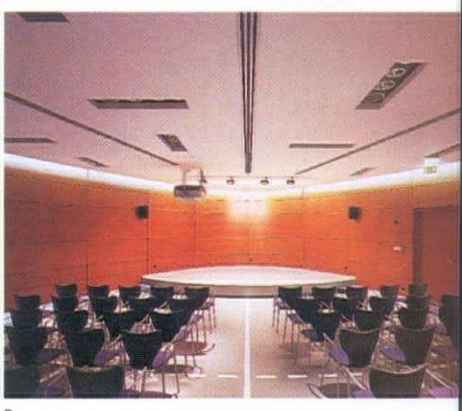


4





5



6

3
Conference room forming scheme's kernel is clad inside and out with cherrywood panels.
4
Free-standing walls display lighting.
5
Steps to projection equipment inside conference room.
6
Conference room, seating up to 80 people, has walls rimmed in light.



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Sitting rooms

A showroom and offices for a Dutch furniture firm has transformed spec-built warehouse space on a busy main road into a civilised workspace.

The remodelling by Noble Associates of a showroom and offices, for the Dutch furniture firm, Ahrend, has created a civilised airy interior in which staff can work in comfort, and where the furniture is lit and displayed like objects in an art gallery. This is an approach which has long been practised in the motor industry, and has been made familiar over the years by exhibitors at the Milan Furniture Fair. At the Vitra Museum in Germany chairs are displayed, like treasures, on plinths and on the wall; here too the plan is eventually to mount an exhibition of Ahrend's chairs on the wall opposite the entrance. This should work well; the spare sculptural Modernism that characterises Ahrend's design makes its products suitable cases for such treatment.

The building, which is basically a late '70s spec-built warehouse with offices built into it, straddles the junction of two main roads leading west out of London. Though plainly of the period, it is structurally of better quality than most. But because the two levels of offices were built into the warehouse section, the heights of the floors were compressed and proportions uncomfortable.

As well as showroom and offices, the client asked for a



1
Entrance and stairs to upper balustraded galleries.

meeting room and café. Faced with two horizontal wafers of space one on top of the other, Noble Associates cut through the upper floor plate, removed existing partitions and inserted others to create interlocking spaces while a strong vertical dimension was introduced to relieve the horizontal oppression.

The double-height atrium over the entrance has been made the central focus of the scheme. Paved with polished composite tiles speckled with colour, it gives onto the L-shaped showroom and glass screened computer room on the ground floor; and flows into the open balustraded galleries at the upper level which is reached by means of an existing metal staircase. Overhead, perspex rooflights, stained yellow by time and casting a pleasing gold light over the interior, have been screened by perforated metal pans; and an undulating suspended ceiling panel links the higher volume of the atrium with that of the showroom.

On the ground floor, the long axis of the showroom terminates in a newly created void rising two storeys. A green panel suspended within its height and back-lit forms the frame for Ahrend's A220 chair.

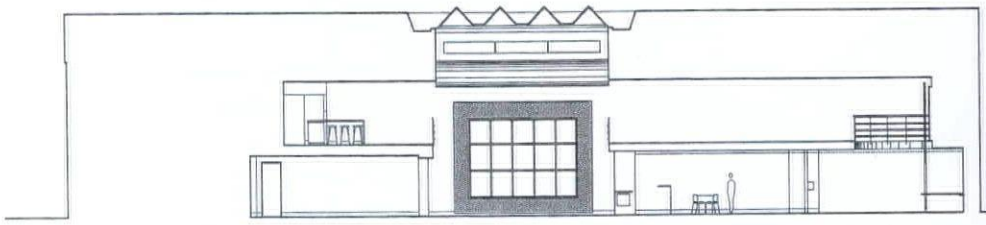
The shorter arm of the showroom embraces a conference room enclosed by a curved wall clad with oak staves and window slots. Set at the level of a seated person, they ensure privacy for those inside. At either end, two large panels can be pivoted shut to enclose the space fully, or opened out to make it part of the showroom.

In this mainly black and white interior where the lighting has been competently and sensitively designed, Ahrend's sculptural furniture often brilliantly coloured takes on a jewel-like quality. This is particularly so in the small espresso bar, where black granite and stainless steel set off the firm's café chairs in pale spring-like colours. P.M.

Architect
Noble Associates
Project architects
Graeme Noble, Mark Simpson, Colin Birkhead, Rupert Everett
Quantity surveyor
Keogh Edwards Partnership
Structural engineer
Price and Myers
Photographs
Peter Cook



2



long section



cross section



3



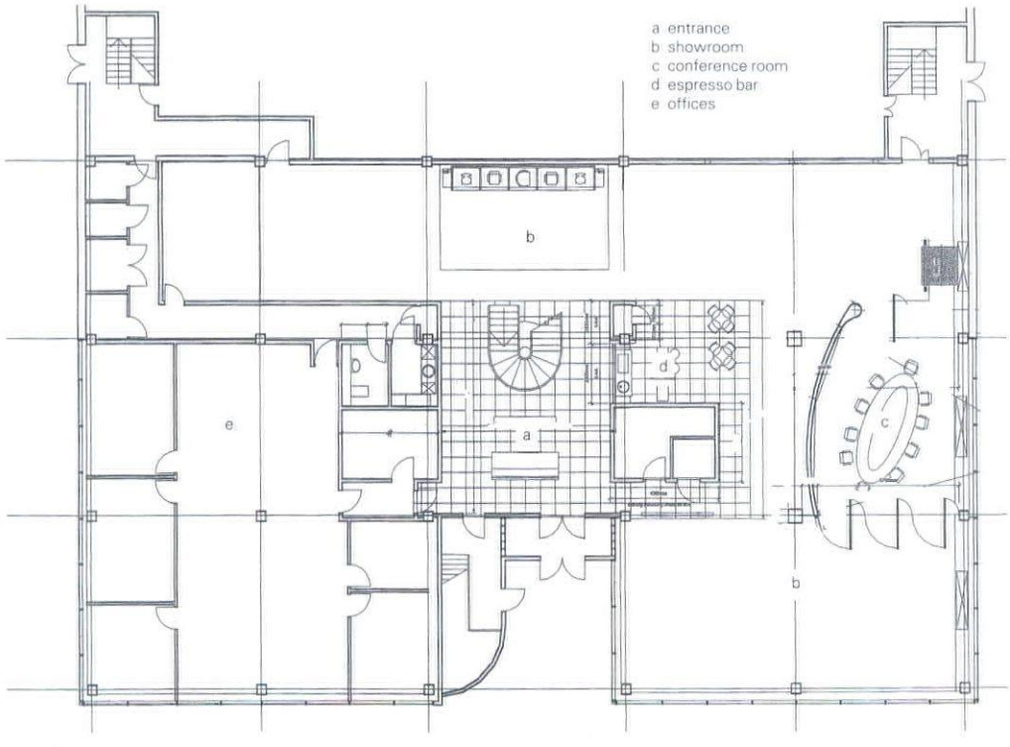
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5



6



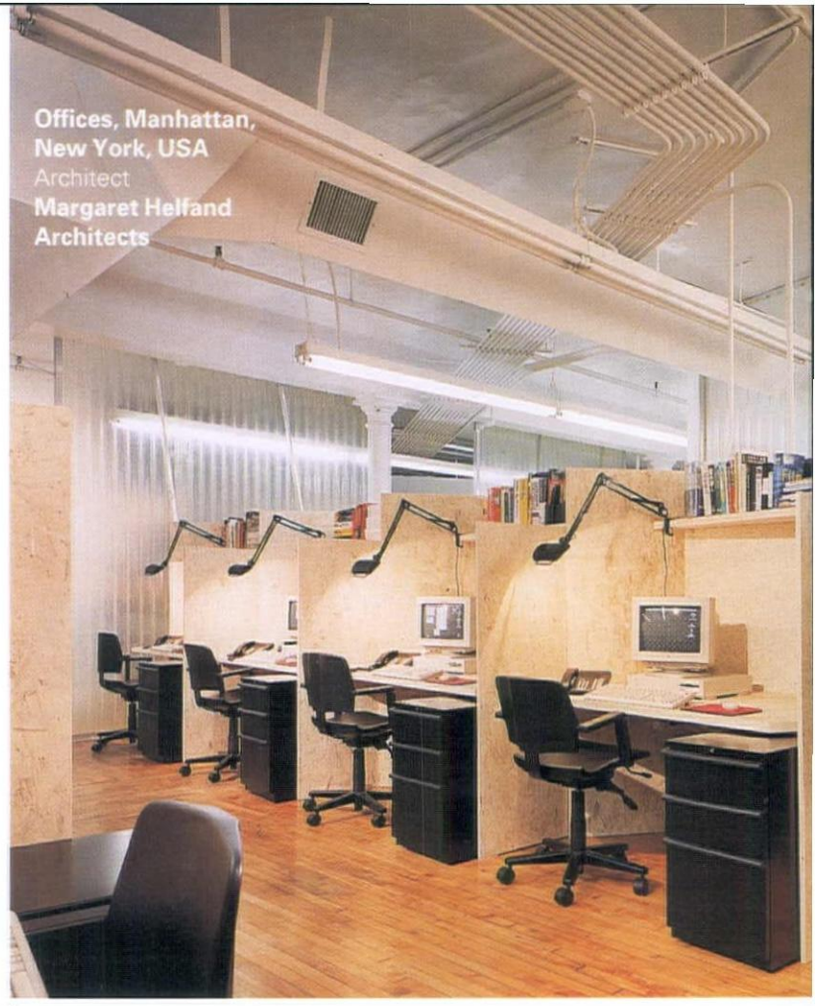
ground floor plan (scale approx 1:300)

Ahrend showroom and offices, Chiswick, west London

Architect

Noble Associates

2
New void and Ahrend's A220 office chair displayed at end of a long axis.
3
Looking down the long axis under open galleries.
4
Espresso bar with Ahrend's café chairs.
5
Conference room with curved oak stave wall and pivoting panel.
6
Bridge and open galleries at upper level.



Offices, Manhattan, New York, USA
Architect
Margaret Helfand Architects

1

Time in

The weekly arts and entertainment guide, *Time Out*, began in London in 1969 and until this year New York had no equivalent. Greenwich Village has the famous *Village Voice*, and there are other local publications, but no listings magazine covering the whole city.

New York now has its own *Time Out*, installed in offices designed by Margaret Helfand Architects in downtown Manhattan. This New York practice has been responsible for a number of diverse schemes, mostly small, ranging from a factory in the Catskill Mountains (AR January 1994) to a clothes shop in Santa Monica, California (AR June 1993) but a common approach binds their diversity.

Helfand's approach to the business of carving out space seems at times closer to that of a sculptor than an architect (AR June 1993). This is because her responses to the site and brief and her expression of material and mass seem wholly individual. Her use of materials is in the tradition of Modern sculpture, for she plays about with the aesthetic of the scrapyard as the 60s' artists did, folding and crumpling odd-shaped sheets of whatever seems to hand – metal, plastic, counterpoising richly finished wood against unfinished concrete or using familiar materials in unfamiliar ways. The geometries generated seem eccentric, but underpinning them are the proper architectural concerns with function and with controlling volume and scale.

Time Out's offices have been inserted into a Manhattan loft, measuring 10 000 square feet. Here too, the magazine is weekly and published electronically. The brief asked for informal, flexible, groups of work stations, and smaller private working and meeting areas. The budget was tight and the scheme had to be completed in 12 weeks. The cheapest materials have been used with great imagination; and computer work stations for 70 people have been disposed so that the various sections of the magazine can work together comfortably within the lofty white space. The main impression is youthful, and of light and space.

The space is a long narrow rectangle running east-west more or less open to natural light on all sides. The main expanse of windows is at either end and there is a sprinkling of windows down the north side and a glazed bay let into the centre of the south wall. On plan, a corridor of clear space runs down the long central axis connecting private meeting rooms at each end. On the north side are the groups of work stations, set at oblique angles to maintain privacy and informality. On the south side of the corridor are services and more enclosed areas.

Materials and finishes have been used with great ingenuity and imagination. Space is divided by translucent light-diffusing screens of corrugated fibreglass. They enclose the private rooms at the perimeter and, set at eccentric intervals down the length of the corridor, they shield the work stations without blocking off light – and make pleasurable fun out of what would in most offices be a regimented route between desks. Solid partitions and incidental pieces, like the triangular corner desks and trapezoidal tables, are of composite board stained with bronze and/or aluminium dust, and doors of birch veneer have also been given a decorative powdering of bronze dust. Work stations are built of composite board stained white, and acoustic panels.

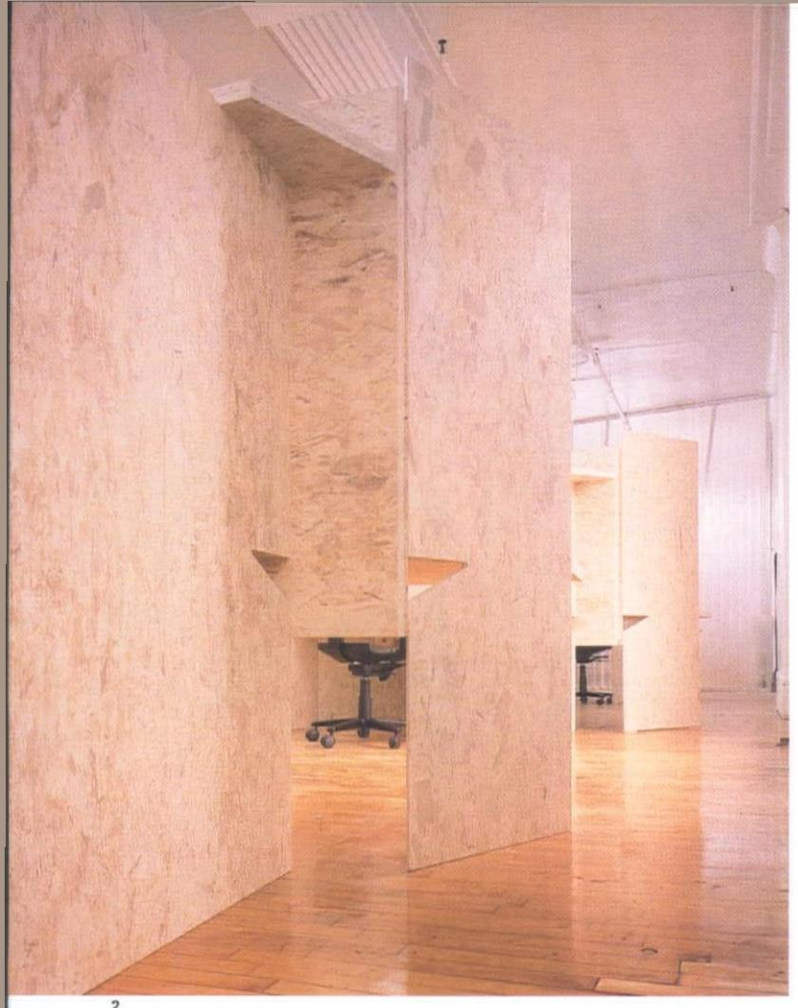
Overhead, the informal geometry of the plan is echoed in the criss-crossing layout of fluorescent lights, ductwork and raceways of voice-data conduits.

The offices are immensely popular with the staff, several of whom have given the pleasure of working here as a reason for resisting the blandishments of other organisations eager to tempt them away. P. M.

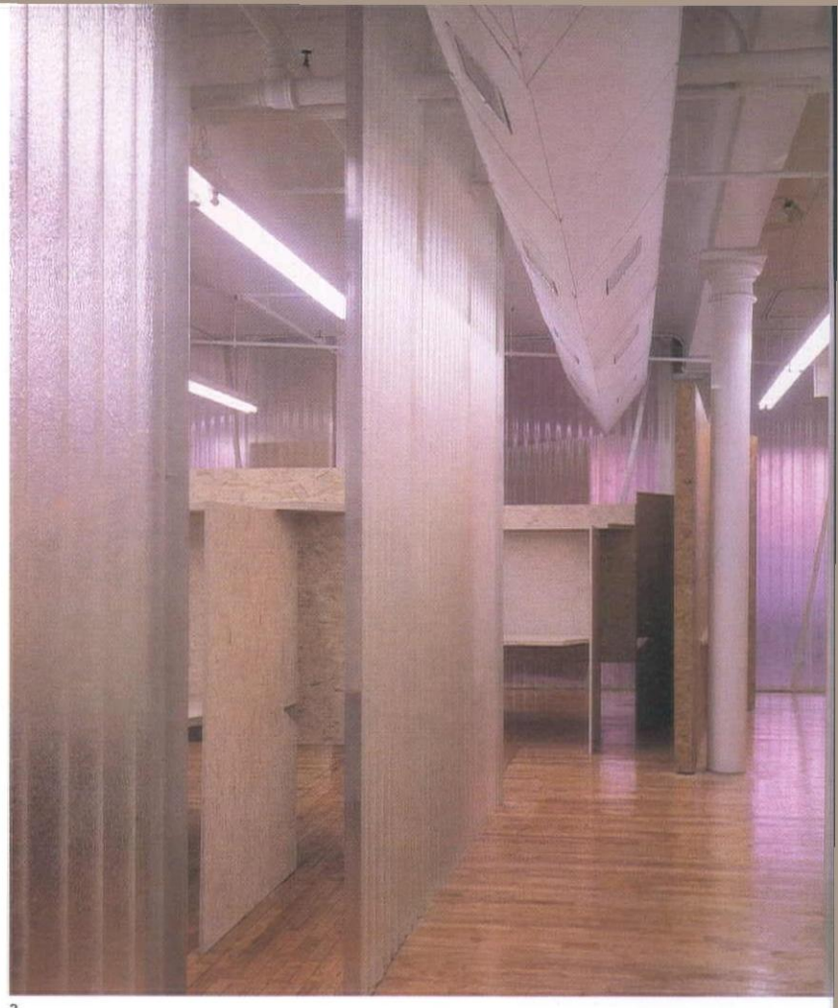
4



1
Groups of work stations allow different sections of the magazine to work closely together.
2
Solid partitions are of composite board sprinkled with metallic dust.
3
Translucent screens of corrugated fibreglass filter light into the interior.
4
Wooden floor and furniture composed of composite board.
5
Fibreglass screens give corridor a magical quality.

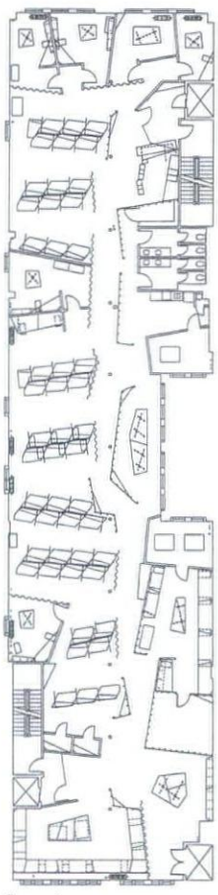


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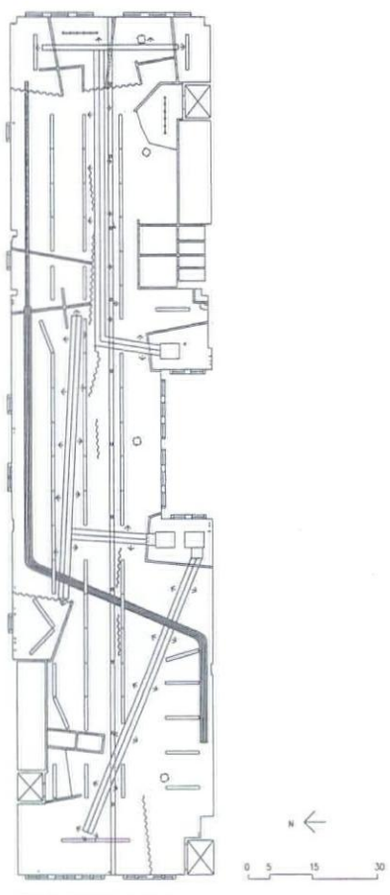


3

Using inexpensive materials and a great deal of imagination and skill, a New York practice has installed a British weekly magazine in a downtown Manhattan loft, in a work space that is youthful, light and airy.



floor plan



reflected ceiling plan

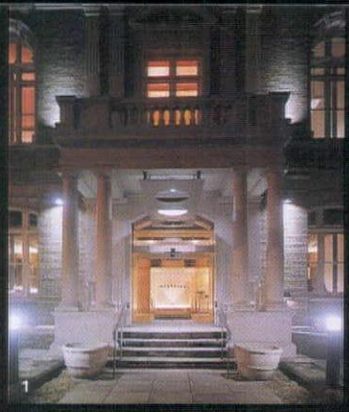
5



Architects
Margaret Helfand Architects
Photographs
Paul Warchol

Social service

Despite a tight budget, Studio Downie's new social assistance centre is both imaginative and humane.



Social assistance centre, Southall, west London
Architect
Studio Downie

1
The brightly lit new canopy.
2
The interactive wall separating public and private domains.
3, 4
Detailing is crisply refined.
5
Use of colour adds cheer.

Southall in west London contains a lively Hindu community served by temples and shops selling Asian textiles and other produce. The West London Training and Enterprise Council was set up to provide legal and housing advice, and advice about training and job opportunities, business support and immigration problems. Its offices, which were once scattered about the locality, have now been brought under one roof.

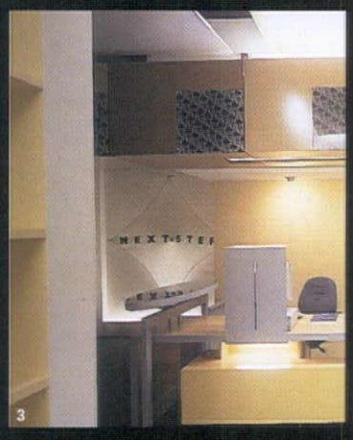
Studio Downie's design makes use of an empty late nineteenth-century town hall and fire station, which had long been empty and neglected. Inside was a warren of dark corridors and uninviting rooms. Juggling with a limited budget, Studio Downie has had to exercise imagination. The buildings' exteriors were cleaned up and renovated, and the public entrance emphasised by a suspended aluminium canopy. New lighting illuminates the centre at night and a new glass door admits light into the old fire station which has been turned into an airy meeting room.

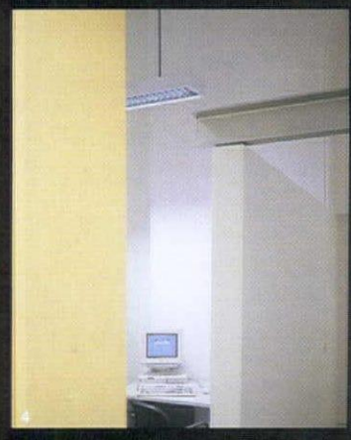
On the ground floor, internal walls were removed to create one large open and welcoming space. Running lengthways down the centre is a new 'interactive' wall which divides the public area from small private interview rooms at the rear. The wall stores the centre's information, accommodating a library and computer stations. Rooms upstairs, used for conferences, offices and meetings have been simply refurbished.

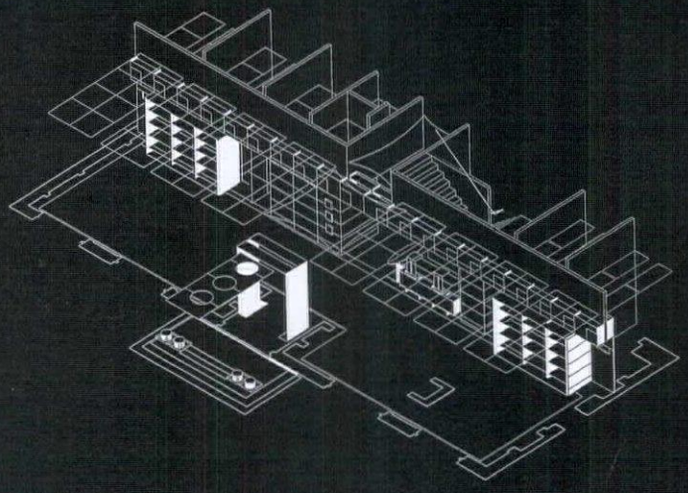
Materials and finishes are generally inexpensive. The information wall is made of painted plasterboard partitions with acoustic quilt, while light American oak veneered panels have been used to line the ceiling. Throughout the interior, various shades of yellow strike a sunny optimistic note. P. M.



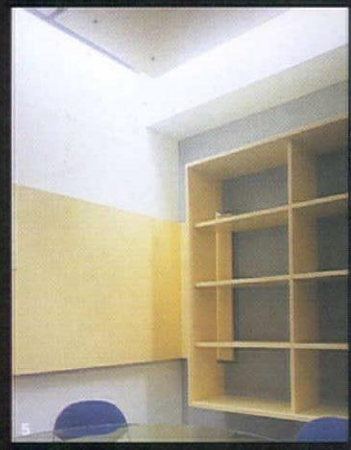
Architect
Studio Downie
Project architects
Craig Downie, Andrew Jackson, Arita Patel, Chris Harrison, Laura Downie
Photographs
Peter Cook





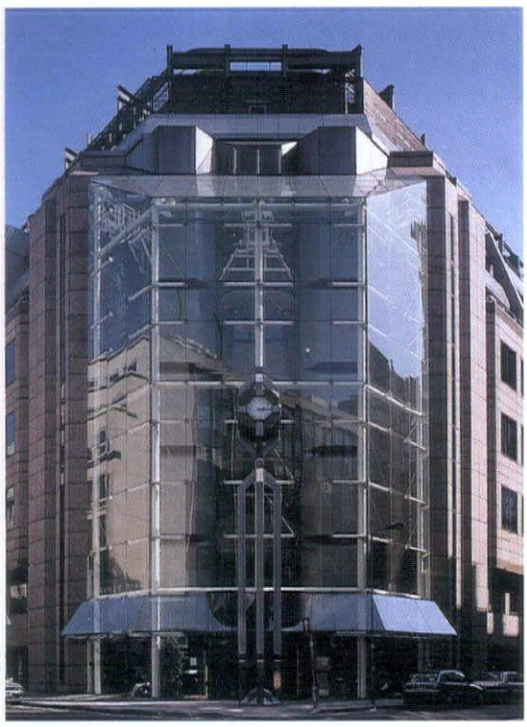


isometric projection

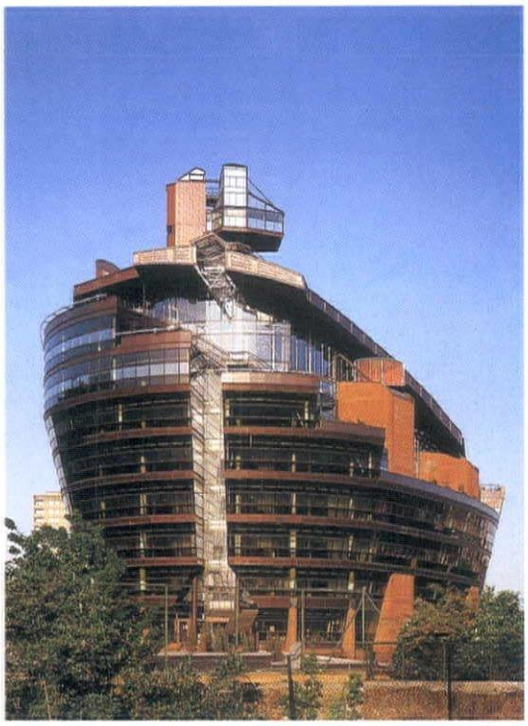


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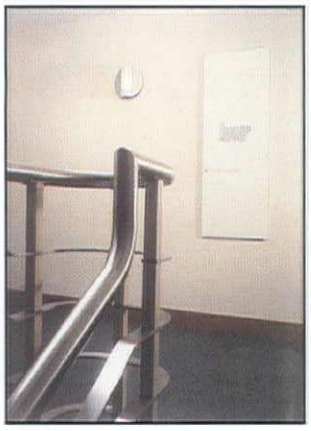
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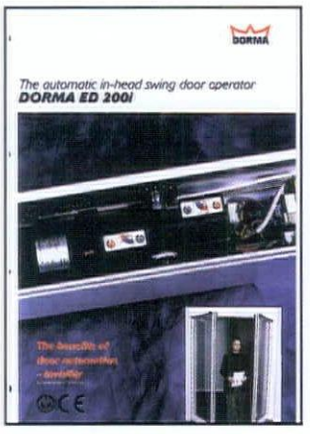
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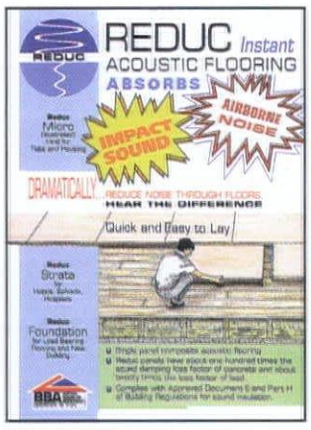
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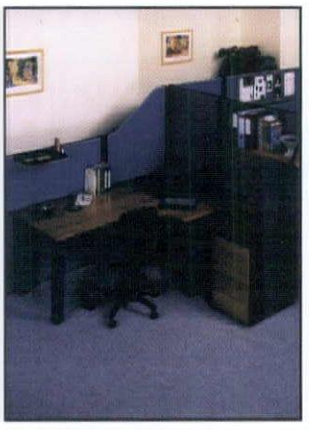
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Tel: (+44) 01264 332166



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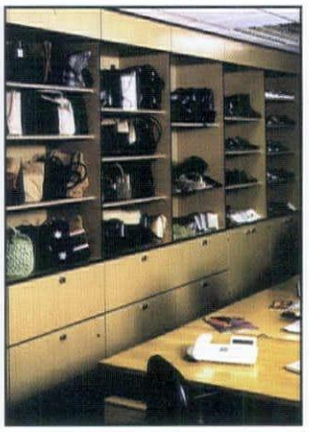
Laura Ashley

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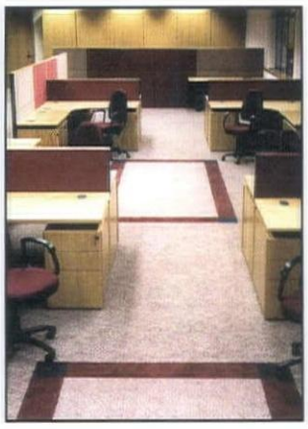
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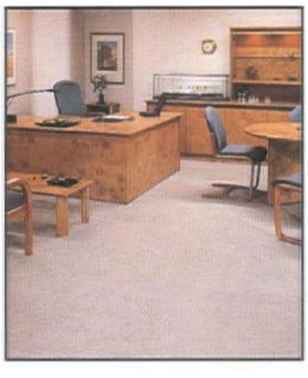
Stoneware Tiles

Reed Harris, specialist suppliers of Architectural Ceramic tiles have introduced 3 new ranges of fully vitrified Porcelain tiles from Niro which vary in texture and shade to replicate natural stone, marble and terracotta.

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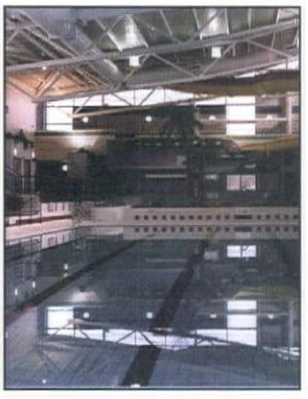


Testing Time for Durafire doors

Durafire doors have been specified for the Loss Prevention Council's UK test centre, including a large format 3 metre by 3 metre Durafire sliding door, which will be subjected a regular onslaught from fire fighting equipment. Durafire doors are suited to heavy wear and tear situations and can be made to virtually any specification for practically any size or unusually shaped aperture.

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After a design competition, South Shropshire District Council chose architects Graham: Lambert: Robinson to design a new swimming complex for Ludlow. Lignacite's Apollo white and blue shotblasted facing masonry was selected by the architect to create a striking interior in the pool hall.

Internally the blue shotblasted APM is used imaginatively to form a dramatic banding effect and the colour theme continues externally where blue fascias and grey composite cladding is fixed to a steel frame. The Apollo range of architectural facing masonry is available in 38 varieties and virtually any special shade can be formulated to meet a customer's specification.

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Design no object

NEW THINKING IN DESIGN
By C. Thomas Mitchell. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold. 1996. $59.95, £45.

This is a book about the way that design these days has less to do with beautiful objects than with abstractions: perceptions, processes, scenarios and strategies. Computer software is the most obvious example. The Macintosh operating system is undeniably a design, a product, a tool, something that is bought and sold; it has a look and feel, even an aesthetic, but it isn't an object. It is an interface, a representation of electronic processes in human terms. A number of well known designers, including architects like Frank Duffy and Lucien Kroll, industrial designers like Michael McCoy and Daniel Weill, and theorists like Donald Norman and John Thakara, are called upon to testify on behalf of this new design paradigm.

This is an important topic, but hard to define precisely. Several of the designers featured in the book have attempted to sum it up in a single phrase – 'interpretive design', 'the choreography of change', 'humanware design', 'cognitive engineering' and even 'cultural engineering' – but none has yet gained universal currency. Bringing them all together in a single book ought to have been a useful exercise. The problem, ironically, is with the book's design – its conceptual design – not its design as an object, though this has its shortcomings (why, when the whole point is the diminished importance of the object, put a picture of a silly PoMo vase by Daniel Weill on the front cover?). The 'author' has merely assembled a set of transcribed and edited interviews. This is a lazy method and the result is a thin, tedious text that does no justice to the ideas. It would have been far better to have constructed a proper argument, using the various designers as examples, or even simply to have let them write, rather than speak their contributions.

COLIN DAVIES

Taschen's textbooks

TASCHEN'S WORLD ARCHITECTURE
Cologne: Benedikt Taschen. 1996-7. Volumes at £16.99 each.

The first efforts of a truly remarkable publishing event in architecture are out. Taschen proposes to do nothing less than cover the whole of architecture from its origins in the Far East, Egypt and the Pre-Colombian Americas to today's puzzling scene in 40 volumes, all well illustrated, decently bound and incredibly cheap.

The one I have been looking at in detail (Islam Volume 1, by Henri Stierlin) looks at Muslim architecture from its origins in Byzantine and (to some extent) Jewish roots to its magnificent flowerings in Mesopotamia, Egypt, North Africa and Spain. The book ends with the fall of the Abbasid dynasty in 1258. Presumably the second Islamic volume will cover the splendours of Granada, Central Asia and Istanbul; supplementary volumes are promised on Persia, Asia Minor and the Mogul realm.

The format is popular: big glossy pages, text broken up by headlines, lots of coloured pictures, no footnotes. The text is plainly processed by a graduate of the *Readers' Digest* school of journalism. But the books survey the main facts (the Islamic volume describes the rise of the religion and its buildings in a very clear and direct way). And, unusually in popular format, there are measured drawings of key buildings, even if they are presented in rather flashy graphic style. In each volume, there are chronological tables, (short) bibliographies, and glossaries (which in Islam I covers religious as well as architectural terms).

Scholars and aesthetes will doubtless object to the populism. The prose will make many queasy. But there can be none who can say that their knowledge encompasses all that the series proposes to offer. P. D.

Tomorrow's garden

PARADISE TRANSFORMED: THE PRIVATE GARDEN FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY
By Guy Cooper and Gordon Taylor. New York: The Monacelli Press. 1996. £35.

A recognisable new landscape design genre has emerged in the last few decades. *Paradise Transformed* illustrates this trend, showing striking recent private gardens by innovative landscape architects/designers such as George Hargreaves, Shodo Suzaki and Kathryn Gustafson.

Cooper and Taylor, ranging from Japan, the Americas and Europe to Australia, have put together a visually exciting and simply written collection, in a format similar to books like Sutherland Lyall's *Designing the New Landscape*. A brief history of design development through this century introduces the context. The main content consists of photographs and texts describing individual gardens, organised into the categories of Exploration, Innovation, Tradition (which offers least) and Abstraction. These overlapping subdivisions add nothing to our understanding of the different concepts and solutions shown.

Some projects are mouthwateringly exciting, such as the Dumfriesshire garden by Maggie Keswick and Charles Jencks, illustrated with stunning photographs. Frustratingly titillating glimpses of this and other gardens make you want to see or know much more. The text gives helpful background, but tends to be over descriptive. Cooper and Taylor often facilely ascribe design influences without theoretical discussion and analysis which the gardens merit; an index would be useful.

Paradise Transformed, clearly a plantsman's book, is an easily accessible introduction to new concepts of garden design. Will we now see many more private gardens, large and small, exploring new concepts, forms and materials? ELSA LEVISEUR

Personal office

THE ARCHITECT'S OFFICE
By Anatxu Zabalbeascoa. Barcelona: Gustavo Gili. 1996. 6900 ptas.

We have had books on architects' houses, now we have one on architects' offices. This book, of Spanish origin, is beautifully illustrated with the offices of 38 of the world's most famous architects.

The author's taste is catholic and she writes with equal enthusiasm on Bofill or Foster, Graves or Hadid. Perhaps the choice of cover photo is a give-away of her real preference – we have a grand and totally symmetrical space, with Mario Botta on axis under the great concrete vault.

It is interesting to see how much we give ourselves away in our workplaces – blot out the text and one would have little trouble guessing the architects from the pictures of their offices – the trademarks are all there, the ionic columns in Robert Stern's office, the immaculate whiteness of Richard Meier, the generous space of Harry Seidler, the cheerfulness of Richard Rogers, the Patera shed and stretched fabric of Hopkins.

If you work in a typical tatty architect's office, show this book to your boss and shame him into action. JOHN WINTER

Austrian innovations

INNOVATIVE AUSTRIAN ARCHITECTURE
Edited by Ramesh Kumar Biswas. Vienna & New York: Springer Verlag. 1996. ATS485.
ACHTUNG ARCHITEKTUR! IMAGE AND PHANTASM IN CONTEMPORARY AUSTRIAN ARCHITECTURE
By Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen. London: MIT Press. 1996. £33.95.

These two books attempt to document and explain the lively development of Austrian architecture over the last 15 years. It may be significant that both were put together by outsiders: Biswas is an Indian architect who has practised in Vienna since 1991, Pelkonen a Finn who worked for Volker Giencke in Graz for four years before moving on to teach at Yale. Outsiders are supposed to be able to take a more independent view, but their presence is also a reminder that however much the commissioning of architecture may depend on local conditions, the architectural debate is increasingly and inevitably international. The two books are very different in character: Biswas's was

born as the catalogue for an exhibition which he curated in Vienna, while Pelkonen takes the work of Giencke in Graz as the basis for a deep theoretical discussion about where architecture is going.

Biswas's catalogue alternates surveys of projects according to various headings – 'interventions', 'cultural buildings', 'residential buildings', 'ecological buildings' etc – with a series of essays by himself and various others, again many of them outsiders. The buildings and projects shown will excite many readers, and if the idea was to impress the rest of the world that the current Austrian scene is worth studying, it will succeed. But there is in most cases simply not enough information. Often it is impossible to envisage the context, and hard to imagine how the buildings are inhabited or built. Intentional or not, such limited coverage encourages a view in terms of form or style. In the age of the sound-bite and the fashion spread this tendency is only too easily indulged.

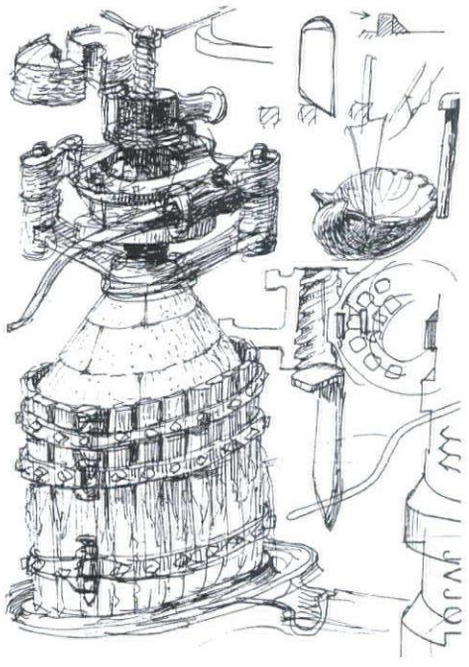
There is value in the essays, but they seem to have been produced independently and do not read as a coherent whole. The editor's contributions are not the strongest, for he writes generally, making references and connections you might expect without producing a clear or memorable picture: perhaps it is still too early. What a pity that he did not adopt the critical apparatus suggested in Bruno Zevi's short contribution and then left high and dry. The most memorable piece for me, perhaps because it tussles with some larger ideas, was Michael Sorkin's in the Urban Design section. He touches on Vienna's psychoanalytical heritage, discusses the work of the unmentionable (why?) Hundertwasser, and suggests a promising historical dialectic stemming from the opposition between Sitte's ideal of the grown town and Wagner's classical geometry. I suspect the book worked better as a catalogue.

The fact that none of Volker Giencke's work is included in Biswas's catalogue, though MIT Press have seen fit to publish a book devoted largely to it, indicates the myopic rivalry between Vienna and Graz. The internationally known Szyszkowitz/Kowalski are also missing.

Eeva Pelkonen's *Achtung Architektur!* is not a standard monograph however: it attempts more ambitiously to erect a general theory about the current state of architecture. It is not exclusively about Giencke, for she also touches on the work of Klaus Kada, Helmut Richter, Coop Himmelblau, Haus Rucker Co and various other artists.

Pelkonen develops her theory around an early work: the temporary Red Stage used for the cultural event Styrian Autumn in 1984. Set in a square backing onto the steep cliff of the Schlossberg, it framed performances with a stepped platform and a huge backdrop of red fabric on high-jump poles. This three-storey red flag could stand upright or be tensioned to curve forward, becoming at once shelter and acoustic reflector, acting also as a kinetic sculpture. Pelkonen dubs it a revolutionary work because it nods at function yet is largely sign, depends utterly on the context yet contrasts with it, and also focuses the ritual without monumentalising it. Being a temporary work it intensifies the notion of architecture as event. She claims that it 'manipulates perception' in a way that makes the 'rediscovery or reinvention of architecture possible'. There are some acute observations here, but perhaps too much is hung on one small peg, for Pelkonen constructs an enormous intellectual edifice with reference to a familiar list of current cultural heroes: Artaud, Breton, Heidegger, Bachelard, Merleau-Ponty, Deleuze, Godard, Cacciari, Bloch, Benjamin, Agamben, just to mention the supporting cast of this one chapter. Giedion and Frampton are also invoked so that their distance from the new interpretation can be defined.

In subsequent chapters Giencke's main works are tied to the developing theme, which embraces great twentieth-century topics such as the myth of glass, the myth of the machine, organicism, aperspectivity and more. Pelkonen is most authoritative when close to the work, and the work is certainly worth the effort. It is a pity that the articulate Giencke is not more often quoted in person, and that coverage of his working methods, which Pelkonen is uniquely qualified to describe, is not fuller. My main reservation, though, is the earnestness with which the grand theory is set out, as if to take or leave. You can be sympathetic without feeling able to swallow the whole. I also found it hard to dispel the impression that it was less historical analysis than alibi making, intellectual justification by connection to the right heroes. If the work is good enough, it hardly needs such legitimation, while if the ideas are good enough their pedigree need only be quietly footnoted. Pelkonen has not achieved a new historical paradigm, but her book is a must for those wanting to know more about the contemporary Austrian scene. PETER BLUNDELL JONES



Sketch of wine press for Casa Andreu, by Josep Jujol from Josep M. Jujol *by Vincent Ligtelijn and Rein Saariste, Rotterdam, 010 Publishers, 1996, £18.50 (paperback). This little guide to Jujol's complete work shows that, as Aldo van Eyck says in the preface, Jujol was no mere collaborator or follower of the great Catalan genius, but 'a small giant next to a large one'. Distillation into small vessel of a much bigger (as yet unpublished) book which quite clearly needs a publisher – perhaps a bigger firm should go in with 010.*

Public Chambers

SIR WILLIAM CHAMBERS: ARCHITECT TO GEORGE III

Edited by John Harris and Michael Snodin. London: Yale University Press in association with the Courtauld Institute of Art. 1996. £40.

This book was published to accompany the anniversary exhibition on Chambers held in the Courtauld's galleries in Somerset House and the 16 contributors deal in their individual chapters with various aspects of Chambers' life and his work as an architect and as a designer. Their essays greatly expand our knowledge of Chambers, which previously depended on John Harris's monograph, now 25 years old.

Although Robert Adam was the better self-publicist and is still the best-known Georgian architect, William Chambers was more truly at the centre of Georgian architecture in Britain and was acknowledged to be so by many contemporaries. He tutored the architectural taste of George III, enjoyed a consistently successful architectural practice with both private and public clients, and was a crucial figure in the founding of the Royal Academy, of which he was appointed first Treasurer by the King. Academies are very French institutions. Chambers had spent time in Blondel's Ecole des Arts in Paris and maintained contacts with his French friends; in his four years in Rome he tried to achieve the same results as the French graduates of Academie Royale d'Architecture.

On his return to England in 1755 Chambers quickly absorbed the current neo-Palladianism but it formed only part of a truly international outlook. Indeed, Chambers was one of the few European architects with first-hand knowledge of China and its buildings, though he only occasionally allowed himself the indulgence of chinoiserie. For the most part his buildings are restrained in appearance – Palladian Classicism with a dash of French Neo-Classicism – though with handsome internal decoration and occasional flashes of drama like the Navy Office staircase in Somerset House. NEIL BURTON







These works by artist Terry Howe explore the sculptural potential of quotidian, man-made objects, magically transformed by light, nature and applied texture.

This surreally choreographed assembly of objects arrayed on an isolated beach is the work of artist Terry Howe. Originally trained as a graphic designer, Howe uses photography to record sculptural activity, in the tradition of Richard Long and Andy Goldsworthy. Yet while Long and Goldsworthy have a strong affinity with nature in their use of materials and selection of sites, Howe is more gently subversive, exploring the sculptural potential of often mundane, man-made objects. Pedal bins, lamp stands, oil cans, beach flotsam, even a row of humble freezer bags billowing like windsocks on slender sticks assume a strange, magical quality when animated by the changing light.

Howe's work is concerned with the power of transformation and his quotidian objects are often disguised by rich, raw pigment, or more usually, by a coating of tea. The ubiquitous English restorative is used as a dry patina, cloaking familiar forms of discarded domestic detritus. The process is painstaking, often involving several coats of tea. Long leaf Darjeeling creates the most satisfying texture, apparently, although ground tea is also used. The mysterious, tea-clad objects are marshalled into groups and photographed, either in the landscape or, more typically, in a studio. The outcome is a series of curiously potent still-life images, memorably evoking texture and form.

To date, Howe's most ambitious transformation was an entire room in his terraced house, as part of the annual Brighton Arts Festival. Once the furniture was removed and the window boarded up, the walls, ceilings and skirtings were covered in tea leaves. As visitors moved around the installation, they stirred up the haunting, delicious aroma of Darjeeling. C S

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