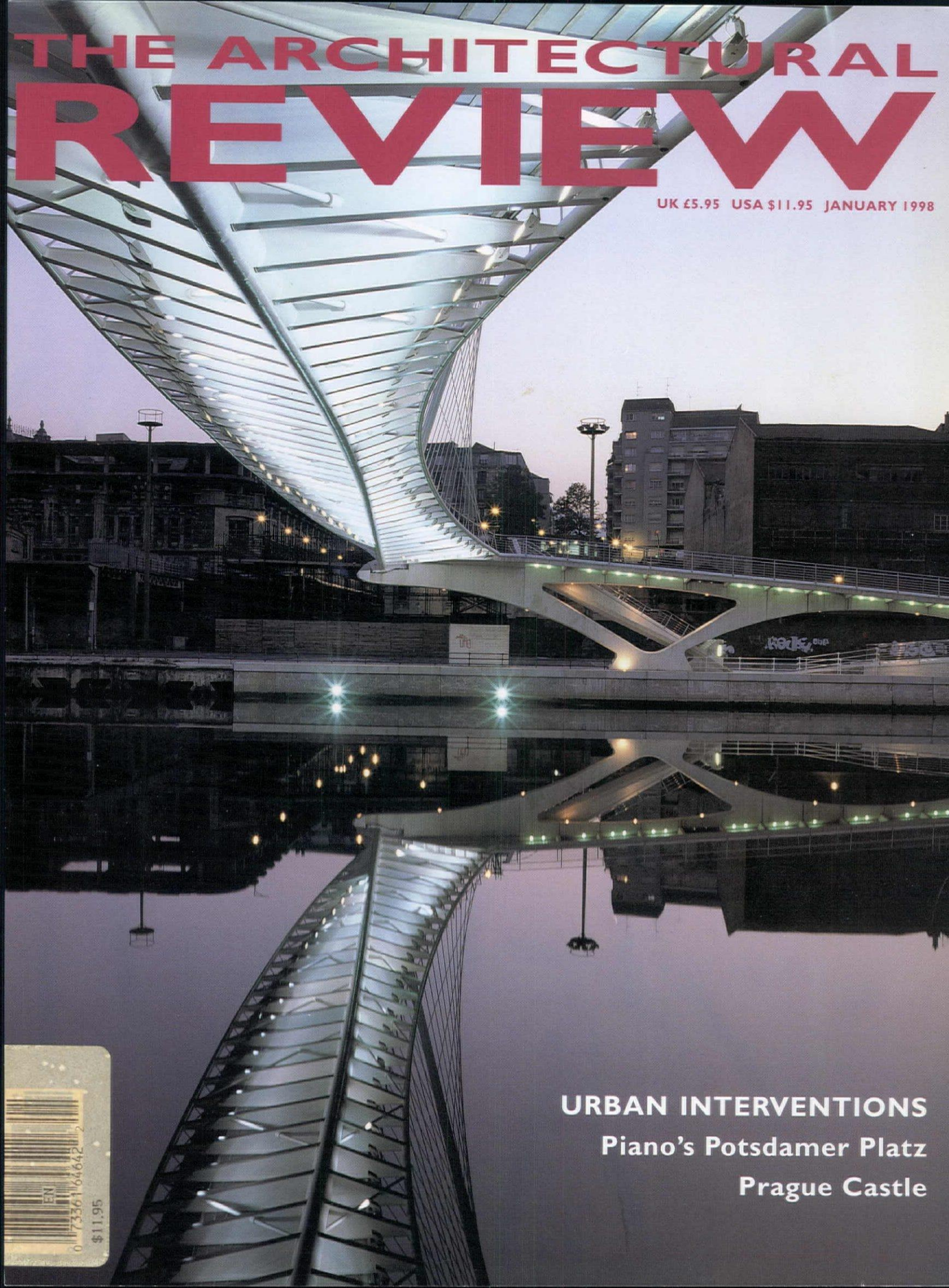




THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

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URBAN INTERVENTIONS
Piano's Potsdamer Platz
Prague Castle



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CONSTRUCT



page 60 Behnisch in Stuttgart



page 66 Varis in Barcelona



page 84 Seth Stein's mini mews

URBAN INTERVENTIONS

COMMENT

- 4 Berlin A challenging model of urbanism for the twenty-first century

SURVEY

- 13 News, exhibitions and letters Desolation in Bosnia; twentieth-century Portuguese architecture

EMERGING ARCHITECTS

- 22 Six architects to watch in 1998

DESIGN REVIEW

- 28 Rus in urbe ATELIER CHRISTO-FOROUX Landscaping, Paris, France

OUTRAGE

- 31 Dog's dinner MARTIN RICHMOND ASSOCIATES Addition to Battersea Dogs' Home, London

THEME

- 34 Potsdamer preview RENZO PIANO BUILDING WORKSHOP Potsdamer Platz, Berlin, Germany
44 Square dance WEST 8 Square, Rotterdam, the Netherlands
46 Public spectacle PERE NICOLAU BOVER Seafront development, Palma, Majorca Spain
49 Prague Castle competition Winning entries for the Pheasantry, Prague Castle, Czech Republic
54 Belém bastion GREGOTTI ASSOCIATI Cultural centre, Belém, Portugal
60 Radical engagement BEHNISCH & PARTNERS State Clearing Bank, Stuttgart, Germany
66 Catalan context VARIS ARQUITECTES Communications faculty, Barcelona, Spain
70 Intra Maurios GEORGES MAURIOS Mixed development, Bercy, Paris, France
74 Singular suspension SANTIAGO CALATRAVA Pedestrian bridge, Bilbao, Spain

INTERIOR DESIGN

- 79 Cogito Erco Sum BOTSCHI VARGAS Showroom and offices, Dover Street, London
84 Rising to the occasion SETH STEIN ARCHITECTS Pied-à-terre, Knightsbridge, London

BOOKS

- 88 Reviews Japan; new office; Danish landscape; Irish architecture; Deane & Woodward; Schlaich

DELIGHT

- 90 Store front THOMAS HEATHERWICK Harvey Nichols' installation, Knightsbridge, London

COVER

- 74 SANTIAGO CALATRAVA in Bilbao, Spain Photograph by PAOLO ROSSELLI

For over 100 years, Berlin has been a melting pot of European urban thinking. Since it became the capital of the German Empire under Kaiser Wilhelm I in 1871 and the explosion of the city started under the impetus of frantic industrialisation, it has always been in one way or another a place in which mighty forces (sometimes tempered by creative imagination) forged new forms of urban life and transformed them into spaces and symbols. In the late nineteenth century, the Miethausen were evolved in Kreuzberg, where Saxon peasants were transformed into industrial proletarians in tiny flats packed round narrow courtyards; a mile or two away were the pompous triumphalist monuments of the new empire and the flashy temples of booming capitalism.

After the First World War, the grinding heaviness of Wilhelmine society and architecture was rejected, and optimistic collaborations between private and public interests created exemplary workers' housing estates like Britz and Siemensstadt. We all know what happened next. In fact, the Nazis did not have enough time to make many built contributions to the city; their legacy was a degree of destruction unprecedented since the Visigoths sacked Rome.

Then came the blockade, which did much to cut the city in half. Both east and west struggled to create decency out of destruction; large new housing estates were developed on the outskirts. The old central areas were largely ignored, but war-time destruction was often compounded by eliminating many relics of a past which so often had unhappy memories. Planning and architecture were not very different in the two halves: the west had the 1957 Interbau, 'the city of tomorrow',¹ a Modernist collection of one-off buildings by well known international architects; in the east, the stolid blocks of Stalinallee 'the first socialist street on German soil',² were equally indifferent to context and history.

In 1961, the Wall slashed across stumbling regeneration. The traditionally prosperous west was cut off from the formal city centre and the eastern working class areas; it was as if an impassable line had been drawn north-south through the Place de la Concorde in Paris, or down Park Lane in London. While paying lip-

service to the ideal of reunion, both sides had to make a sense of urbanity out of what they had got. In the east, the task was bizarre enough, with the great monuments of the old centre hard up against the border, but at least there was free traffic between the city and the rest of the country, and Berlin remained the capital of the Democratic Republic.

Critical reconstruction

The western half of the city was in a much more difficult predicament. It was a quite small island in the middle of a hostile state and had to rely for existence on huge subsidies from the government in Bonn. Yet the place was never as claustrophobic as many who never went there imagined (for instance there was the Grönewald and the big lakes) but it had to be totally self contained physically, so that the Kurfürstendamm, the equivalent of Kensington High Street, became the heart of the city. Here, it was culture that was marginalised, with Scharoun's Philharmonie and Prussian State Library isolated in the east between Wall and Tiergarten.

Partly because of its isolation and need to regenerate the notion of city out of what had on the whole been nineteenth-century inner suburbs³ the western section of the city felt the need to reinvent itself physically. In 1977, Wolf Jobst Siedler and Josef Paul Kleihues launched a campaign to make the demonstration building area intended as successor to Interbau into a much wider exercise which would reinvigorate large parts of the city, principally in areas next to the Wall, still desolate as a result of bombing and post-war planners' dislike of history and their fondness for object buildings. The Internationale Bauausstellung (IBA) was set up and Kleihues was put in charge of the Neubau section which worked largely in the much destroyed late Baroque areas of Southern Tiergarten and Southern Friedrichstadt; Hardt-Walther Hämer led the Altbau department that worked in the slums of Luisenstadt and Kreuzberg, which although more intact than the Baroque parts, were much decayed and suffering from social depravation. Neubau was guided by Kleihues's belief in 'critical reconstruc-

BERLIN

As the first buildings of Berlin's Potsdamer Platz development (p34) emerge out of Europe's largest building site, the city begins to present a challenging model of urbanism for the twenty-first century which has emerged from reinterpretation of the past.

tion', and Altbau by Hämer's slogan 'careful urban renewal'. The aim of both was to build bridges between the past and Modernism (which had been so destructive in the previous three decades).

On the whole, IBA worked very well: indeed, the AR hailed its achievements as heroic.⁴ The city districts in which it worked were to a great degree knitted together, and a model was set for the rest of the world which showed how traditional urban values could be reinterpreted for a modern society without recourse to pastiche (neither PoMo nor Prince of Walesism). But there were difficult problems, because political and economic constraints prevented many uses and building types being included in the programme. As Colin Rowe remarked 'No city can be made of *Sozialwohnungsbauen* [social housing] alone. The great city requires something in excess of that. It requires far more than the measuring mind of twentieth-century government and bureaucracy is willing to contribute'.⁵

When the AR's second special issue on IBA was published in 1987, the prospect of the city being re-united was as distant as ever. So when the Wall came down only a couple of years later, no-one had any ideas for re-uniting the city. With admirable rapidity, plans for infrastructure were generated (initially reconnecting links cut by the Wall but later becoming much more ambitious). But it took a good deal longer to evolve schemes for generating city tissue in the swath of dereliction that accompanied the wall.

Reinterpreting the European ideal

From the first, it was clear that the Potsdamer Platz area was of key importance and, after a number of vicissitudes, an overall master-plan by Hilmer & Sattler was evolved (p36) which followed Klei-hues's principle of critical reconstruction (ie the old plan was broadly followed, and buildings created as blocks defining the street rather than as isolated objects). The plan attracted a good deal of criticism. Rem Koolhaas decried it as 'petty bourgeois and provincial'⁶ and many others attacked what seemed to be its timid obsession with the past. Even more controversial was the method

of development: the two principal sites were sold to big international corporations, Mercedes Benz and Sony, a move which caused a furore both about letting such organisations get so much power over large key chunks of the inner city and letting them have the land for what seemed to be very low prices.⁷

But perhaps there was no real alternative. Public sector development is largely dormant or discredited at the moment, and it may be that the private sector is the only means of finding the capital and management skills to generate such huge developments in a sensible period of time. And perhaps, with its reductive tendencies kept in check by a generously humane plan like Piano's for the Mercedes Benz site (p34), private capital can provide the functional variety and liveliness which, as Rowe pointed out, IBA so conspicuously lacked. But doubts remain. Almost all the big public spaces in the Piano scheme (for instance the atria) are privately owned, and there has been much criticism of privatisation of the public realm. And will there be enough demand to fill all the buildings and provide the proposed rich mix of functions?

Only experience will tell. But few will question the bravery of Piano's plan and his first building on site (and of the venture as a whole). Berlin's history has made it almost the antithesis of the sprawling, centreless Anglo-Saxon model which has been so successful in the New Worlds, and is now so often being imported to Europe. United Berlin may show ways of generating a city with a heart that really works, creating for our time a reinterpretation of the ancient European urban ideal.

P. D.

1 AR April 1987, p23.

2 *Ibid.*, p38.

3 Of course within this matrix there were older parts with civic sense like Charlottenburg, and traditional working class areas like Wedding and Kreuzberg.

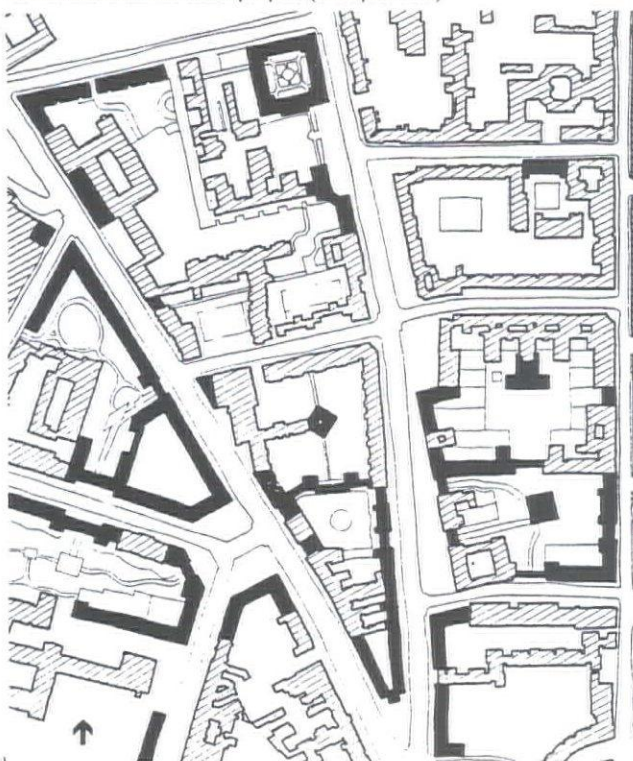
4 AR April 1987, p28.

5 Rowe, Colin 'IBA: Rowe reflects', AR September 1984, p93.

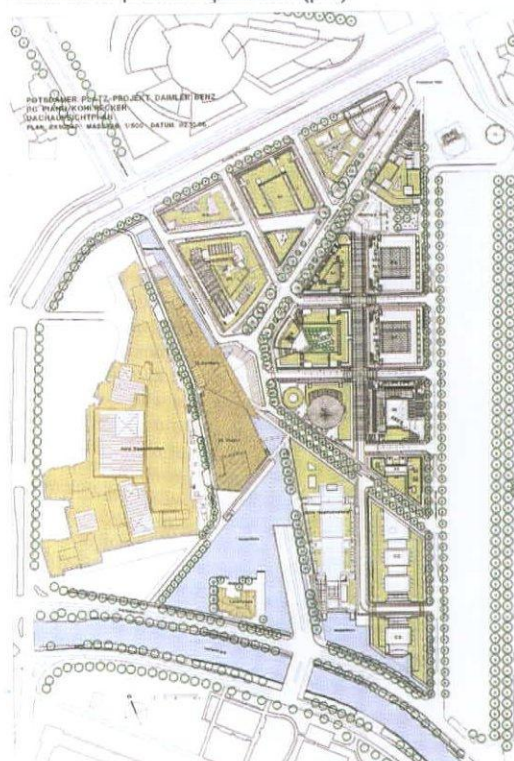
6 Cruickshank, Dan 'Cross Roads Berlin', AR January 1993, p21. It is difficult to see how any plan for the area could have been anything other than bourgeois: the aristocracy no longer exercises power and 'socialist planning' was discredited by Stalinism.

7 In November 1992, the EC ruled that Sony had bought too cheap and should pay more. Cruickshank, *ibid.*

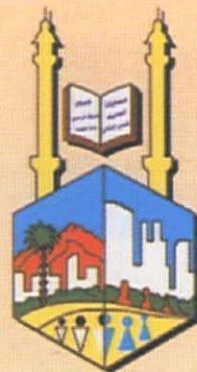
IBA reconstructs the Baroque plan (AR April 1987)



Piano reinterprets European ideal (p34)



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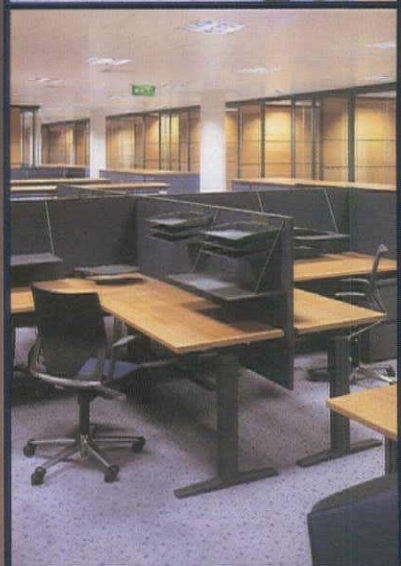
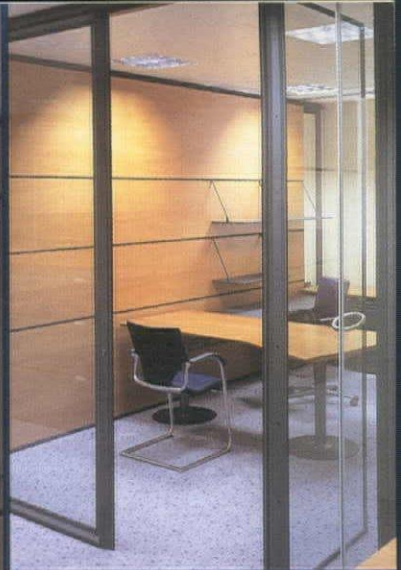
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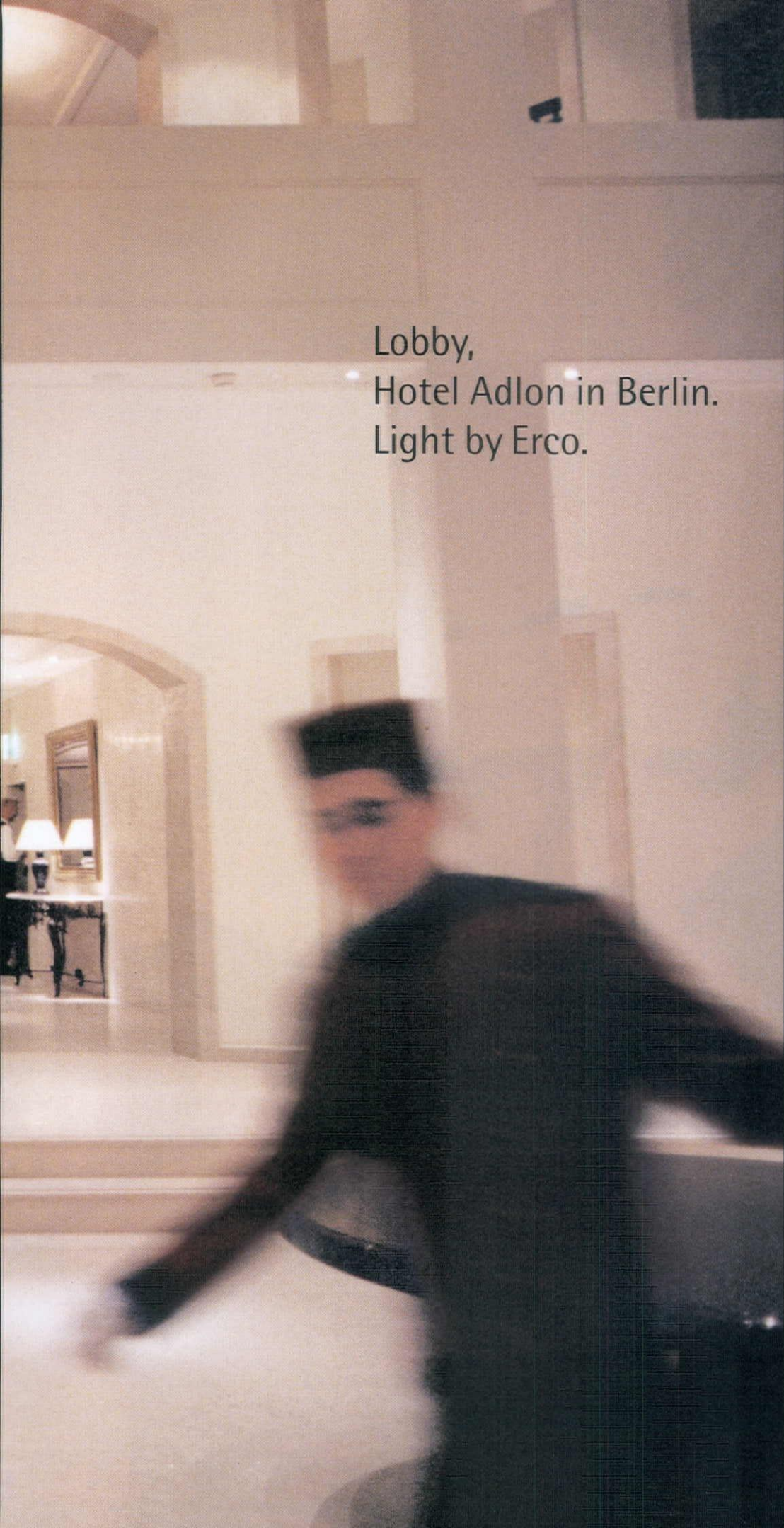
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Walking on the grass



Dobrinja: Serb and Muslim taxi drivers waiting for fares.



Housing, Zmaja od Bosne: collapse in Sniper Alley.



Grbavica: the front line.

We entered Sarajevo from the wrong side – by bus from Belgrade through Pale in Republika Srpska, the Serbian part of Bosnia, and arrived in the Serb neighbourhood of Dobrinja after dark. Taxi drivers had retreated to electrically lit safety some blocks away, and for half an hour we walked along the unlit street which now forms the border between two countries. In the dark, sporadically inhabited housing blocks looked deceptively normal, we could barely make out gaping holes in the walls, total absence of glass in what was left of windows, concrete panels frayed and pock-marked by bullets and shrapnel – the only reminders of war were a handful of anti-vehicle barriers across the road.

We stuck to paved surfaces as we had been advised, and hauled our luggage through the empty neighbourhood until we found a Muslim taxi rank and could pay our way into the city with a few German marks. The next morning we returned. The central reservation was being cleared of land mines by a UN team wearing helmets and body armour. Yellow plastic ribbons labelled 'Mine' had appeared since the night before, cordoning off the lawns beside the road on which we had walked.

In Sarajevo there is little architectural design. Though some big names are being tossed around as potential authors of redevelopment projects, the great mass of reconstruction has few glamorous aspects. It simply means repair. Taking the tram towards the suburb of Ilidza you pass the TV station, the former headquarters of the *Oslobodenje* newspa-

per, industrial areas, public buildings and innumerable Modern social housing blocks: all damaged, some totally destroyed. House after house is empty, damaged beyond repair, or with gardens mined: owners were too scared to stay when the shelling started, they belonged to the wrong ethnic group and had to flee, or they are dead.

Before the war, Sarajevo had approximately 500 000 inhabitants. Now there are 350 000. What is left is an environment stretched beyond breaking point, where nothing makes sense, and yet everything you see is the result of a merciless logic. An artillery shell

hits the side of a house; its impact breaks through a wall or a window, the subsequent explosion blows out the whole side of the house, or takes the roof off, and the damage is the result of a precise equation depending on the trajectory of the shell, the angle of impact, the yield of the explosion, and the physical properties of the construction elements of the house – the brittleness of bricks and mortar, the elasticity of steel or timber or the density of concrete, the only material to provide any degree of protection.

My textbooks of building construction have no chapters on weaponry or ballistics, and say



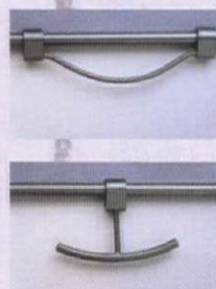
Desolation in Dobrinja: border between the Bosnian Federation and Republika Srpska.

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Fence around barracks, re-arranged by explosions.



Patterns of domesticity and violence.

nothing about the city as a military landscape or how to deal with the damage caused by military tools. I am trained to deal with the slow destruction of rain and neglect, of seeping damp, subsidence and creeping dry rot, which takes decades or centuries to destroy a building. The protection ordinary materials offer becomes an illusion when you are faced with anything more threatening than drops of water. And steel, the red hot shards of a shell, cuts so easily through human flesh once it has entered your house. Contemporary architecture in Sarajevo is not created by letting Norman Foster or Zaha Hadid build along Sniper Alley. The contemporary architecture is there already, with a richness of detail and complexity of structure to rival any Lloyd's Building or Guggenheim Museum: the *Oslobodenje* building with its collapsed floor plates; the broken windows in the Papagajka block, where people collected water in the basement during the siege; the heaps of debris along the front line through Grbavica. These radical changes to the architecture of the city cannot be erased or ignored, they have a meaning to inhabitants and visitors alike and have to be taken into account in any future designs for the city. 'We only want three things,' said one of the professors of the Sarajevo architecture faculty, 'we want respect, we want safety and we want things to be the way they were.' The sentimental longing for the past is as understandable as the demand for safety.

But to give the destroyed city form again, a new building cannot simply copy what was before: it has to give shelter not only from the

weather but from the memory of the terrible energy which shattered the earlier walls. Any city planning project has to consider that many of the inhabitants of Sarajevo are absent but may return.

On the way back we passed through Belgrade again. We left the hotel to look for a restaurant and walked for a while along the main street, brightly lit in the November night. A destroyed building is not a neutral thing. It demands your attention when you first realise that something is wrong, and your imagination then has to reconstruct the wall from the few broken bits of concrete and rusted steel. In places, Sarajevo is so broken that only memories of the inhabitants keep it together. You become so used to interpreting signs of destruction everywhere that when everything is intact it seems as if something is missing. In Belgrade, the evening bustle was peaceful. Cutting through a small park, we suddenly realised we were carefully avoiding stepping on the grass. We looked at each other, laughed, then stamped uneasily. We had lived a fragment of Sarajevo normality, and in only a week, any softness underfoot had become a danger sign.

Even back in the safety of my home in London, the sensation of walking on a lawn kept reminding me of Sarajevo. More than the mine tape or the grenade holes, more than the UN trucks and SFOR soldiers. The simple feeling of walking on grass.

INGERID HELSING ALMAAS

Ingerid Helsing Almaas and Pascal Schöning went to Bosnia with the Architectural Association Diploma Unit 3, 2-9 November 1997

Portuguese punctuation

Portugal's twentieth-century architectural history has been that of Western Europe in a nutshell; influenced by nationalism, the conquering of colonies from Macao to Angola, the grandeur of an empire building Beaux Arts style, alternatively right and left wing politics, monumentalism and social conscience, dictatorship followed by the 'carnation revolution' of 1974. Portugal was the theme of Frankfurt International Book Fair in October and the Deutsches Architekturmuseum, in partnership with the Instituto de Arte Contemporanea and the Centro Cultural de Belém, displayed a century of Portuguese architecture. Over 130 projects, shown in architects' drawings, photographs, models and with original pieces of architect-designed furniture, many by Alvaro Siza.

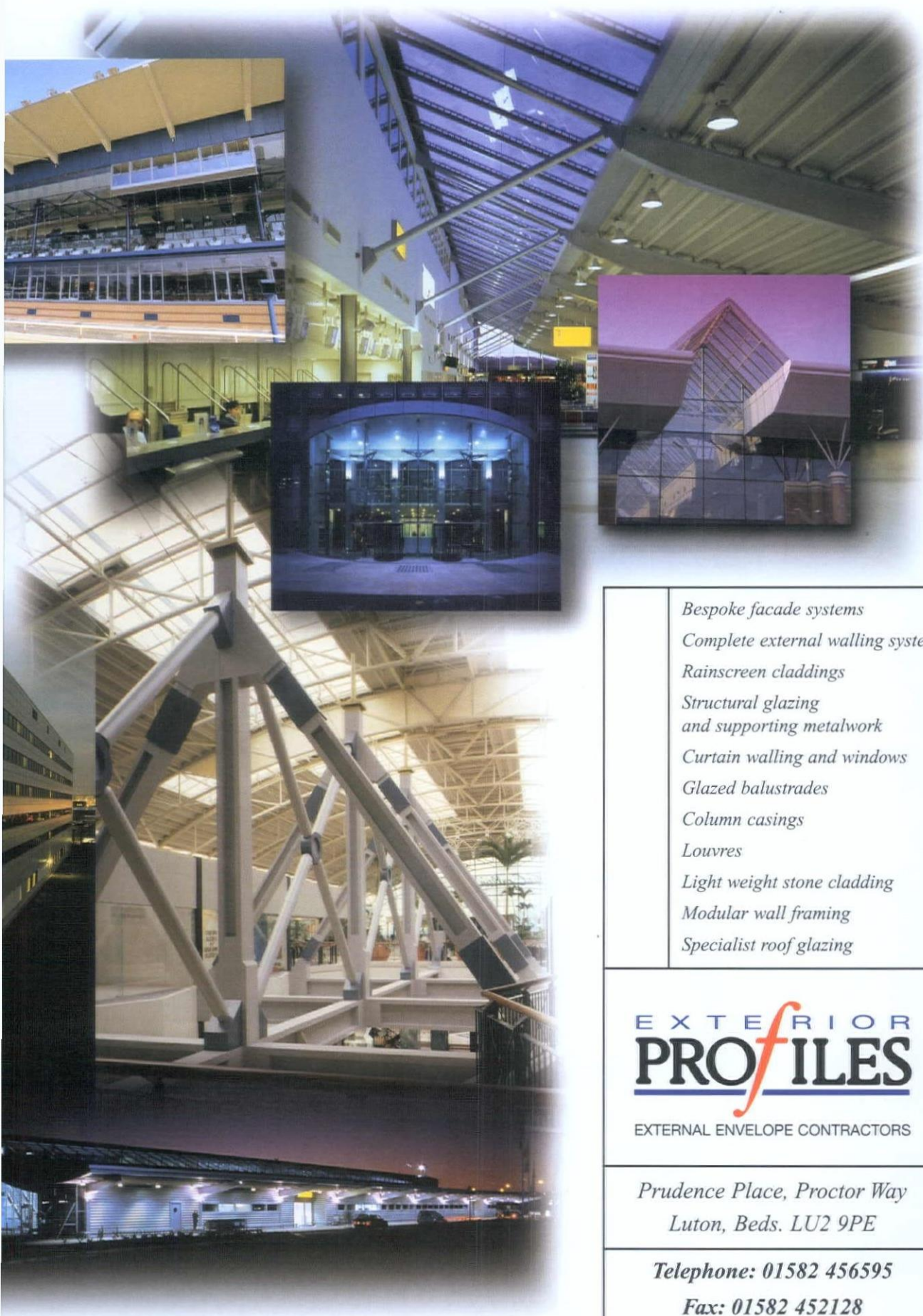
At the opening of the century the pomp and richness of the aristocracy was being miniaturised and translated into apartment houses for the rising middle class at the same time as the crisis in urban worker's accommodation in Lisbon led to the first social housing project at Arco do Cego, 1919-33, designed by Adães Bermudes, Frederico Caetano de Carvalho and Edmundo Tavares. New consumerism and mass entertainment were housed in buildings, like the Nascimento department store in Porto by José Marques da Silva, disguised as urban palaces. A short-lived Modernism between the wars expressed itself in Art Deco cinemas and theatres, functionalist Bauhaus styles, as in the Lisbon Dr Navarrete Paiva Institute, 1931, by Carlos Ramos, or futuristic monuments which began to herald in the fascist period, such as Portugal's pavilion at the 1937 Paris World Fair by Francisco Keil do Amaral. Despite dictator Salazar's friendship with Germany and his own home-grown national socialism, Portugal remained neutral during the Second World War and accommodated an influx of refugees, from artists to businessmen and simple handworkers. Portuguese tolerance at this time, in comparison to other Europeans, can only partly be explained by their world view, developed over centuries as a trading and seafaring nation with a multicultural mix. The same attitude in relation to new ideas in architecture has given this relatively small country, clinging to Iberia's Atlantic coast, examples of every twentieth-century European movement, not slavishly copied but adapted to the local terrain and climate.

In 1947 the first Architecture Congress was held in Portugal and the principles of the Modern Movement were enthusiastically adopted as an answer to social needs and to mark a new beginning. The harsh climate, extreme light contrasts, available craftsmanship and plentiful basic building materials lent themselves to a geo-

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Architecture Faculty Oporto University, by Alvaro Siza.

metrical white architecture of minimal fenestration, plays of light and shadow and the use of screen and gazebo structures to filter and reduce direct sunlight. Housing, school and community building programmes were started. In the colonies expatriate architects, freed from the control of rigorous criticism at home, created some wild eccentricities such as the Maputo residential block in Mozambique, 1954-55, by Pancho Guedes, with free form concrete and coloured mosaic friezes. Overseas territories, like Macao, suffered from export of heavy-handed concrete wedding cake architecture and inappropriate European city planning while back home Alvaro Siza's City district of Quinta da Malagueira was a sensitive construction of a former squatter area using the grid of the old walled city and an aqueduct as a waterway spine.

Today projects seem as diverse as they are plentiful, including restoration of many religious institutions as well as new social and private commissions, individual buildings and planning projects. Portugal's horizontal rock strata and hillside settlements have led to the particular exploitation of internal and external ramps, for example at Oporto University's Architecture Faculty by Alvaro Siza, 1986-94, and the National Veterinary Research Laboratory at Vila do Conde, 1993, by João Alvaro Rocha and José Manuel Gigante. Not only the heat and destructive UV rays but the very function of Oporto's House of Art, 1981-91, gave Eduardo Souto Moura the opportunity to build a virtually windowless structure in which only reflected light enters. Despite the lack of outside views visitors are constantly aware of the site's topography by their progression along ramps. The recent university building programme, booming tourist industry and EU membership which has attracted investment, have all provided work for an increasing number of architects in a country with only 6 per cent unemployment.

For the Lisbon 1998 Expo, Manuel Graça Dias and Egas Jose Vieira have designed Crackling Tower, a landmark structure created around a former oil refinery chimney, with a top of the tower restaurant, spiralling ramp and bridge approach and scenic lift. The project bears comparison with Tatlin's 1927 model for a monument to the III International, combining as it does a relic of labour-intensive heavy industry,

which was once progressive, with futuristic deconstructionist forms developed from the Russian avant garde of the same period, a fitting punctuation mark to a century of European architecture.

LAYLA DAWSON

'Twentieth Century Portuguese Architecture'. Exhibition originally at Deutsches Architekturmuseum, Frankfurt am Main, and next year at Expo '98 in Lisbon, Portugal. Catalogue/book: Portugal, published by Prestel, 352 pages, 560 illustrations, Portuguese and German text, 68 DM.

Addenda

The photograph of the house at Mar Vista, California (AR November 1997, pp11 and 73) was taken by Dominique Vorillon.

Credits for the Marian Shrine (Delight, AR November, p98) should read designed by Susan Jones, with Stephen Lee and Donald Brubeck of The Bumgardner Architects.

letters

Titanic Triumph

SIR: The review of the new Metropolis Science and Technology Centre in Amsterdam (AR December p54) displays an all-too-familiar bias. To provide an appreciative overview of spatial and formal qualities in a new building is fine, but to privilege these above the satisfaction of user and client needs seems to me at best self-indulgent and at worst misleading and insulting.

newMetropolis is founded on an overtly participative educational mission. It is hardly fair, therefore, to offer superficial and derogatory comments on the Centre's exhibition content and its design without at least attempting to outline and understand the range of communication problems it purports to address.

The development of exhibits in a hands-on science centre is a process that demands a carefully managed rolling programme of prototyping, testing, production, maintenance, evaluation and renewal/replacement. Such a programme is driven by an educational rationale and direct feedback from the visiting public. This generates an exhibition which continuously evolves as weaker and worn-out exhibits are gradually replaced with new ones, often of radically different design and communicative intent.

The 'noble factory' therefore is a perfect metaphor upon which to conceive the building that will house a production facility which organises scientific and technological information into a form which visitors can process and experience. I suggest that, from the client and visitor points of view, the success of the building is best judged on how well it protects and sus-

tains these purposive activities. The reason why no daylight is admitted into the exhibit areas is because it would compromise their flexibility and purpose. This is far more important than whether or not the 'splendid spatial sequence' is revealed by architectural means. I agree, the present lighting scheme is fragmenting, but the services of a good theatrical lighting designer could soon put that right.

Whether or not the building works as an architectural exhibit is of interest to architects. But, are not architects committed to the wider public interest and therefore entitled to a broader-based appreciation of wonderful buildings like Piano's Titanic?

Yours etc

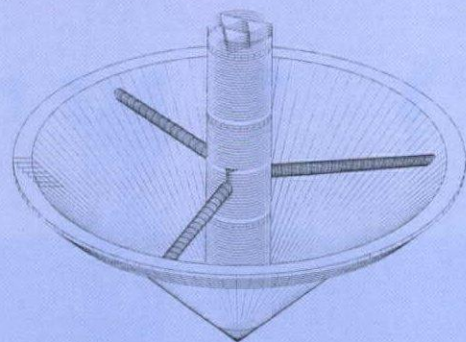
GEOFFREY MATTHEWS
Hull, England

Emap snap

SIR: Your September issue featured an item on the winning entry for the Emap competition for a millennium tower. Much to our surprise this tower bore a remarkable resemblance to a tower we designed back in 1995.

We wanted to inform you of the existence of Altior, our entry for the International Student Contest on High-Rise Building. We designed the tower as students within the scope of the scientific research on structural efficiency led by Patrick Lints at the St Lucas Institute of Architecture in Ghent.

Regulations asked for a 400-metre building, to be situated in the polders in the Netherlands. As the polders' subsoil is swampy and has low bearing power, we came up with the principle of an inversed cone, driven into the ground down to its rim, as bearing surface. The cone was to be filled with water, as any excavation in a swampy soil would naturally be. We thus designed a tower stretching 200m both above and under ground level. Three stabiliser beams are in fact access tubes connecting the circular parking levels in the cone (broader edge) to the centre of the tower.



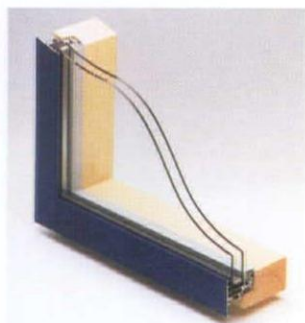
Unbuilt competition design for a Dutch high-rise.



Client: University of Cambridge

Architect: RH Partnership

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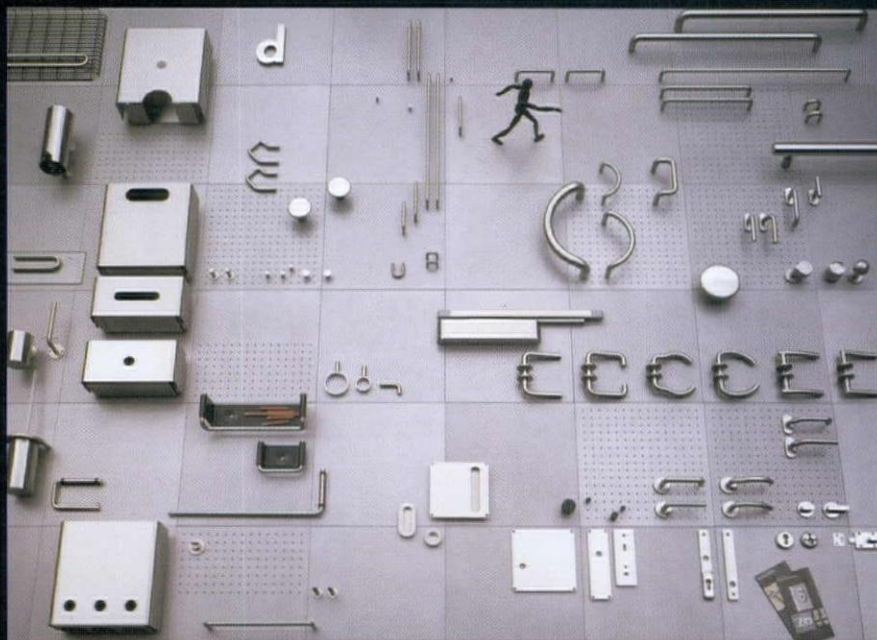
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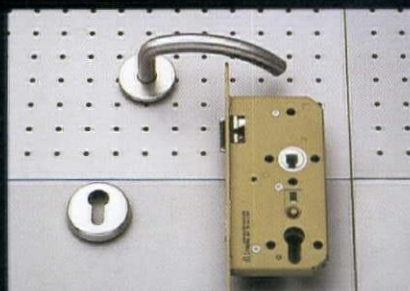
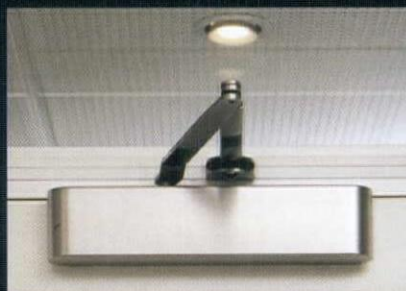
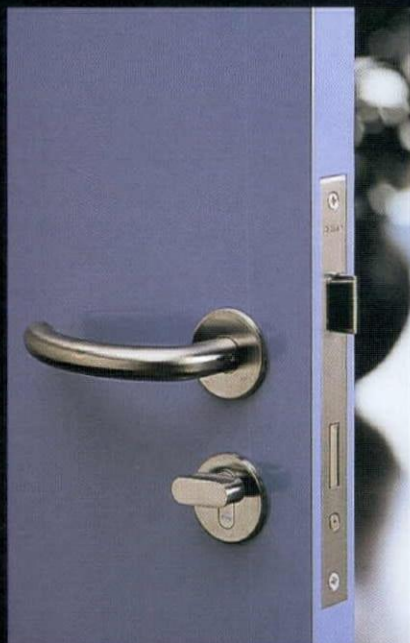
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We made a model of the project using single-CD discs (the old small format appeared perfectly scaled) for floors. With well-positioned lighting, the tower glowed as if it were glass.

A self-indulgent thirst for acknowledgement inevitably leads us to wonder whether the winning project was inspired by our work. A model of our tower was indeed submitted to an exhibition in The Netherlands ... but then again, the odds are that no-one ever noticed Altior. Assuming that all scientific research in related fields tends to come to similar conclusions within a limited period, let's say it's a nice example of how the same structural concept can emerge in different environments.

Yours etc

FILIP COPPENS, SIGFRID GIES, JOS TANGHE,
BENOIT VAN SANDE
Ghent, Belgium

Prince Charming?

SIR: The article on Poundbury by John Walker (AR July) may have some truth in it, but is it necessary for it to be phrased in such offensive and negative language? Even the editorial postscript can't resist a final jibe after damming the scheme with faint praise. At least it was the means of the Review publishing one of the finest photographs of the year on p68. There must be some good there somewhere.

Yours etc

DON DONNITHORNE
Christchurch, New Zealand

People's front

SIR: On the subject of people in architectural photography, the Voelckers (AR November 1997 p18) should take heart and continue with their subscription! The front cover of AR July 1997 (photographed by Ian Lambot) shows people and buildings in happy harmony in downtown Frankfurt, and is in my view a model of what good architectural photography can do.

Yours etc

A. E. P. ZALESKI

London SW19

Scottish geography

SIR: The two unavoidable things on Earth where there is civilisation are Music & Architecture, and generally they both are, or have been, indigenous to their particular location.

In this shrinking world these distinctions are becoming blurred, witness the global appeal of many pop groups and the work of renowned architects designing buildings all over the world. Local character is being eroded as a result. With many new office buildings there is

little to link them with their location. Many look as though they have landed from a stage set, each trying to go one better than their neighbour. They could easily be in Berlin, London, Dallas, Edinburgh or Paris.

The new Scottish Parliament Building will probably be the most important public building to be built in Scotland, well into the next century. We must not squander the opportunity to make it unique, a landmark building recognisable the world over as the Scottish Parliament Building.

Value for money is most important, and rightly so, but on what basis? Short or long term? In political terms 'value for money' might only suggest one political term. In historical terms it might suggest 200 years. It may be expedient to go the developer route but what guarantee do we have that the building will have the longevity befitting its purpose. What might lie beneath the quality of the veneer or glitzy facade. It must have an intrinsic quality, for without it, to be part of Scottish history, it cannot be value for money.

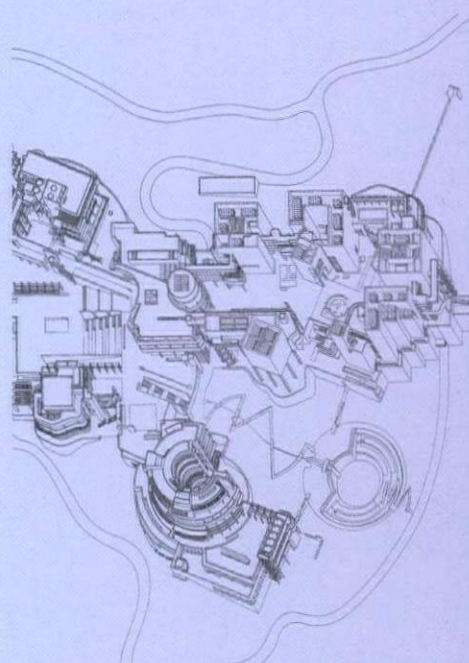
There is much discussion about the location of the building. With the preferred location being the capital, Edinburgh, with sites suggested at Leith, Haymarket and Calton Hill. Why? Many cities are now having to look hard at traffic pricing to ease congestion and pollution, keeping traffic out of the city and suggestions are being made to site the parliament building in the very heart of it all. With Information Technology and efficient air travel at our disposal there is no reason for the Scottish Parliament not to be elsewhere in Scotland.

Reports in the Press and on Radio Scotland suggest support for a new town or city in north-west Sutherland, near the north-west corner of the Scottish mainland. Land costs are cheap, the air is clean and transport links would improve dramatically should such a proposal go ahead. The Highlands were one of the first areas to benefit from a substantial investment in Information Technology infrastructure, allowing easy communication links to the rest of the world. With all this technology on hand there is no reason why the Scottish Parliament should not be in the Highlands. Political correctness dictates otherwise.

Our practice is near John O'Groats, seven hours by train from Edinburgh, about as remote from Edinburgh as Scotland is from Westminster. It is of little consequence to most people outside the central belt where the parliament is, as long as the building is well designed, of a high quality and is well constructed. It must be Architecture ... but more central locations such as Stirling or Bannockburn might be suitable.

Yours etc

SHANE RODGERS
Caithness, Scotland



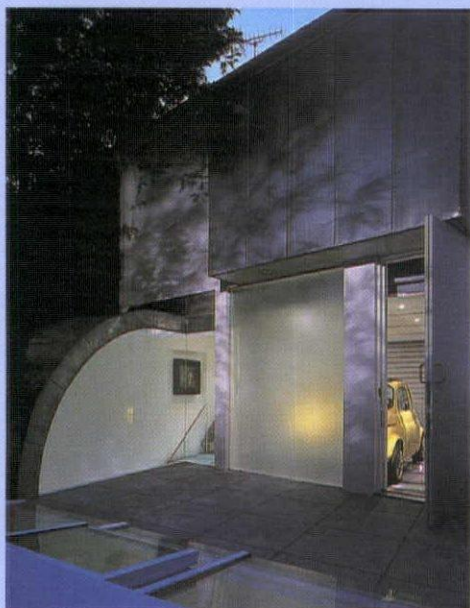
Making places for culture is the theme of next month's issue, underpinned by extensive coverage of the new Getty Center in Los Angeles. On a stunning hilltop site, Richard Meier's extraordinary building brings together the disparate parts of the Getty institution in a single complex dedicated to the display, viewing, conservation and study of art. Over a decade in the making, the Getty Center is an epic creation of almost biblical dimensions. It also raises fascinating questions about how culture is disseminated in modern society and architecture's changing role in that process.

We also examine other types of cultural buildings, more modest in size, but which too provide possible paradigms for the future. These include Foster and Partners' American Air Museum at Duxford, a striking, modern reinterpretation of the aircraft hangar; Massimiliano Fuksas' dramatic arts centre in Bordeaux and I. M. Pei's Miho Museum near Kyoto.

Plus the usual invigorating mixture of interior design, delight and outrage. Start the new year with a resolution never to miss a copy of the world's most stimulating architectural magazine by filling in the enclosed subscription form.

Six To Watch in '98

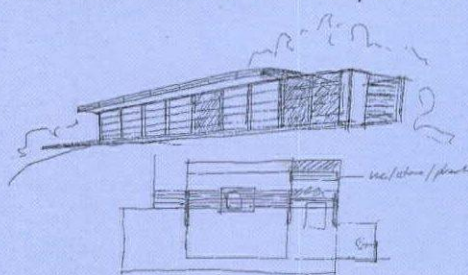
As in all creative professions, new talent is the lifeblood of architecture. Yet it is often hard for young practices to develop and sustain a credible body of work. Here, we survey the careers and future prospects of six emerging architects from around the world, whose work holds great promise for the coming year and beyond.



Mews house, London, by Seth Stein.

Seth Stein

Trained at the Architectural Association, Seth Stein has worked for both Richard Rogers and Norman Foster, setting up his own practice in London in 1989. As a graduate from the Foster/Rogers proving ground, his work has a material refinement and expresses a Modernist pleasure in the manipulation of space and light. The courtyard house he designed for himself and his family in Kensington (AR October 1996) makes ingenious use of a Victorian stableyard; similarly the little mews house in this issue is both jewel-like and inventive. Like many young practices, he has built up a reputation with a series of small but beautifully executed



Stein's sketch for a Finnish house.

domestic and commercial projects. Current work includes private houses in Toronto and on Osterskoven Island, Finland; the latter based on the dimensional module of a standard photovoltaic panel which will supply power to the house for eight months of the year. In London, Stein has also just completed the Interim Art Gallery for Maureen Paley, who represents recent Turner Prize winner Gillian Wearing.



Hølmekbakk's elemental workshop.

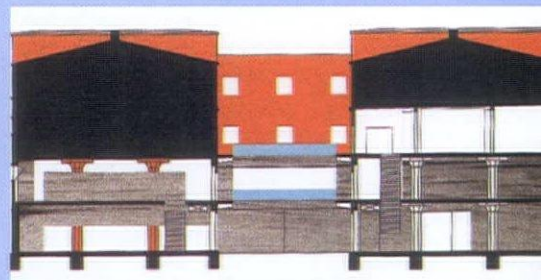
Carl-Viggo Hølmekbakk

Carl-Viggo Hølmekbakk is one of a younger generation of Norwegian architects continuing that country's scrupulous, clear-sighted approach to design. Hølmekbakk trained at the Oslo School of Architecture and at the Cooper Union in New York before returning to work in private practice in Oslo. He set up his own practice in 1986. Projects such as a garden workshop (AR October 1997), private library, various small houses and prototypes for bus shelters, epitomise the functional traditions of the workshop and a Scandinavian regard for material honesty.

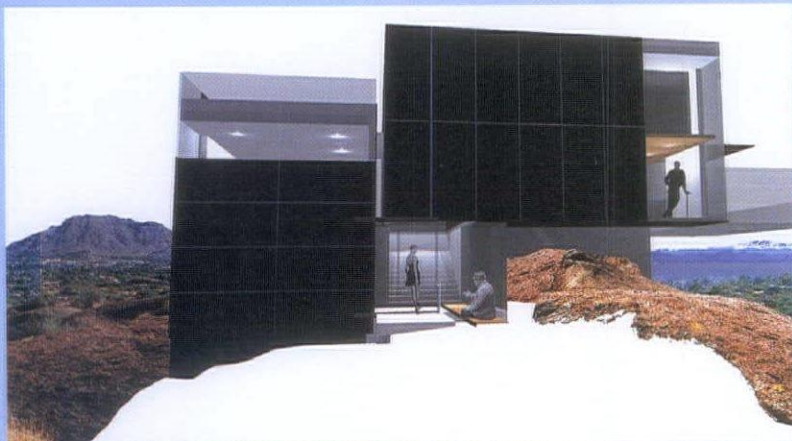
Each is the product of sophisticated tectonic intuition, coupled with a forensic attention to detail. Hølmekbakk's modest workload includes a new summerhouse at Risør and various projects and prototypes for the Norwegian State road service, building on his earlier experience of working for Norwegian State Railways.

Studio Granda

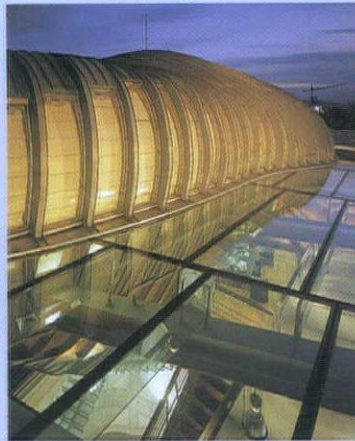
Based in Reykjavík since the late 1980s, Studio Granda was founded by Margrét Hardardóttir and Steve Christer, who met while studying at the Architectural Association. Their radical, competition-winning scheme for Reykjavík City Hall (AR October 1992) attracted much attention, yet displayed a maturity and sophistication in the elegant way in which it responded to Iceland's distinctive topography and climate. Christer and Hardardóttir balance architecture and design, cosmopolitan and local associations with an assured handling of space, light and materials. Their Supreme Court of Iceland (to be featured later this year) extends their repertoire of major public buildings, as does their competition-winning proposal for the Reykjavík Art Museum, but they have also concentrated their attention on modest private houses, interiors and even product design. They formed the Icelandic component in the impressive 'New Generation of the North' exhibition organised by the Finnish Museum of Architecture at the 1996 Venice Biennale.



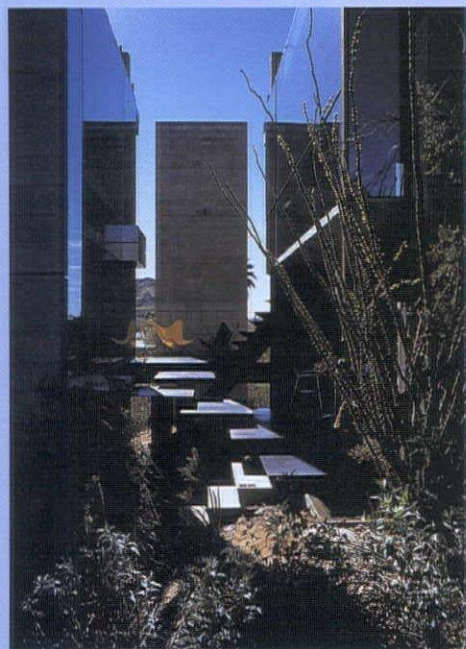
Studio Granda's Reykjavík Art Museum.



Proposal for the Nichols Residence, by Wendell Burnette.



Egeraat's ING Bank.



Burnette's own house and studio.

Wendell Burnette

Wendell Burnette's slightly unconventional route through architectural training involved a combination of travelling, study, observation, apprenticeship and a three year period at Taliesin West. He worked in William Bruder's office for 11 years, and was job architect on the New Phoenix Central Library (AR March 1996). In 1996 he set up his own practice in Phoenix, and as for many newly independent architects, his first project was his own house and studio (AR November 1997). Like his mentor Will Bruder, Burnette's architecture is grounded in an understanding of place; particularly the desert climate and landscape of the America's south-western states. Burnette is also resourceful in making buildings on limited budgets that are both functional and poetic; his own house is a testbed for formal and material experimentation that convincingly reinterprets Modernist tenets of transparency, structural expression and spatial interpenetration. Construction is just about to start on the Nichols Residence in Paradise

Valley Arizona, a new dwelling for private clients who wanted their house to be like a piece of modern sculpture.

Erick van Egeraat

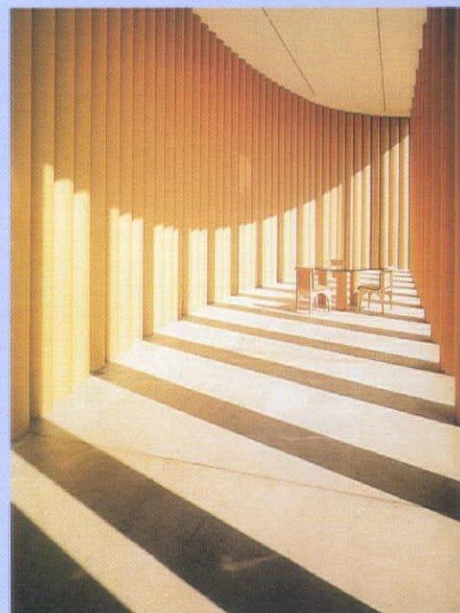
Having studied at Delft University, Erick van Egeraat founded Mecanoo Architects in Rotterdam in 1983. His work with the partnership had a sense of youthful self-confidence and a sense of lightness that has evolved into a more complex sensibility. In 1995 he left Mecanoo to set up his own practice and has since completed a range of projects, including a Laboratory for Physics and Astronomy in Leiden, an extension to the Museum of Natural History in Rotterdam and proposals for new housing in Bijlmermeer outside Amsterdam. One of Egeraat's earliest solo ventures was an extension to the ING Bank in Budapest (AR July 1995) where he placed a sinuously pulsating organic conference room within a historic Neo-Classical building to achieve what might be described as 'modern Baroque'. Current work includes Ichthus College in Rotterdam, which draws on the industrial character of the port architecture, and an extension to the eighteenth-century Crawford Art Gallery in Cork, consisting of undulating brickwork planes. Egeraat has an acute feeling for the spatial and textural richness of architecture and his work consistently surprises and delights.



Ichthus College, by Egeraat.

Shigeru Ban

Shigeru Ban studied architecture at the Southern California Institute of Architecture and the Cooper Union in New York. After a short spell working for Arata Isozaki, he established his own practice in Tokyo in 1985. Ban's work encompasses a range of housing, cultural and educational buildings, but he is perhaps best known for developing a technology of low cost 'paper' architecture, made from cardboard tubes. His experiments with paper architecture conducted over the last 10 years or so have encompassed exhibition stands, a house for himself and a gallery of exquisite simplicity in Tokyo (AR August 1995). Most recently he has made his paper architecture serve the needs of refugees and victims of disasters, providing housing and a church for the victims of the 1995 Kobe earthquake (AR September 1996). Ban has also worked with the architecture school at the University of Nairobi in Kenya, on the development of semi-permanent housing for Sudanese refugees combining paper tube construction with traditional mud walls.



Shigeru Ban's Tokyo gallery.

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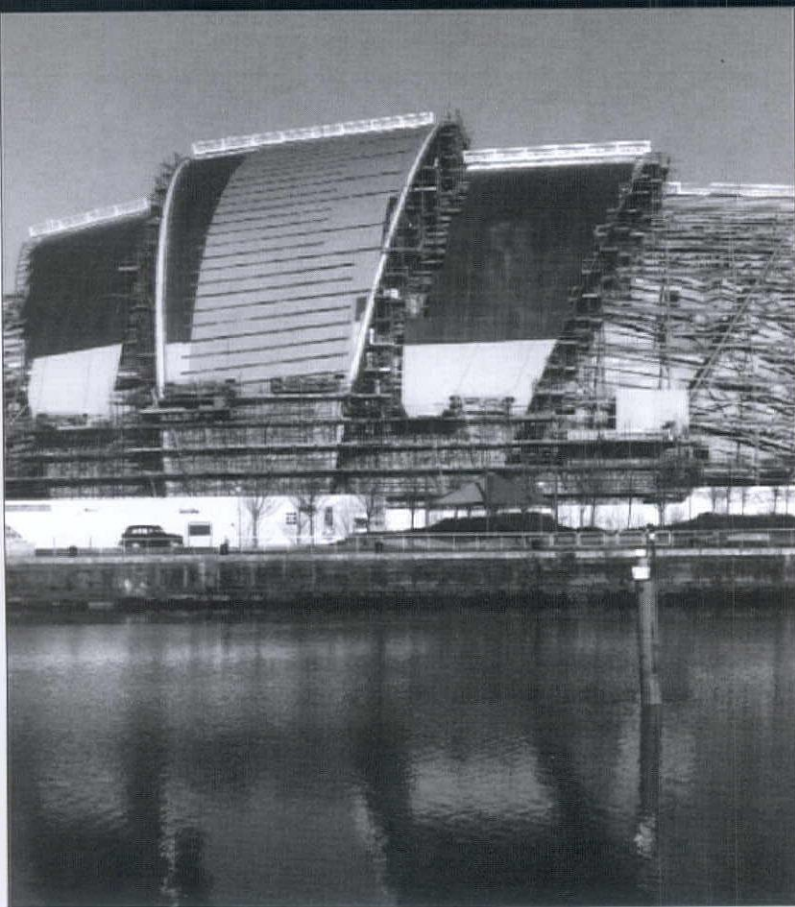
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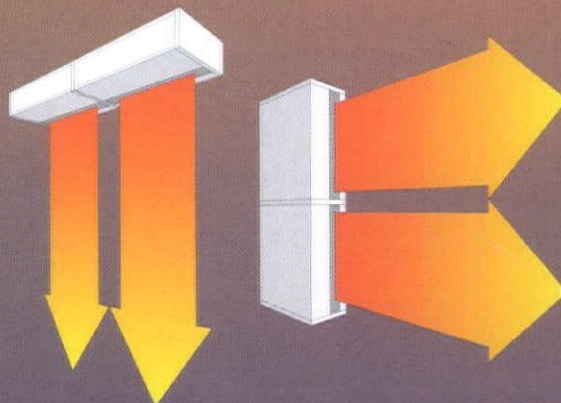


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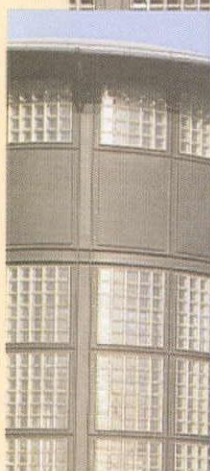
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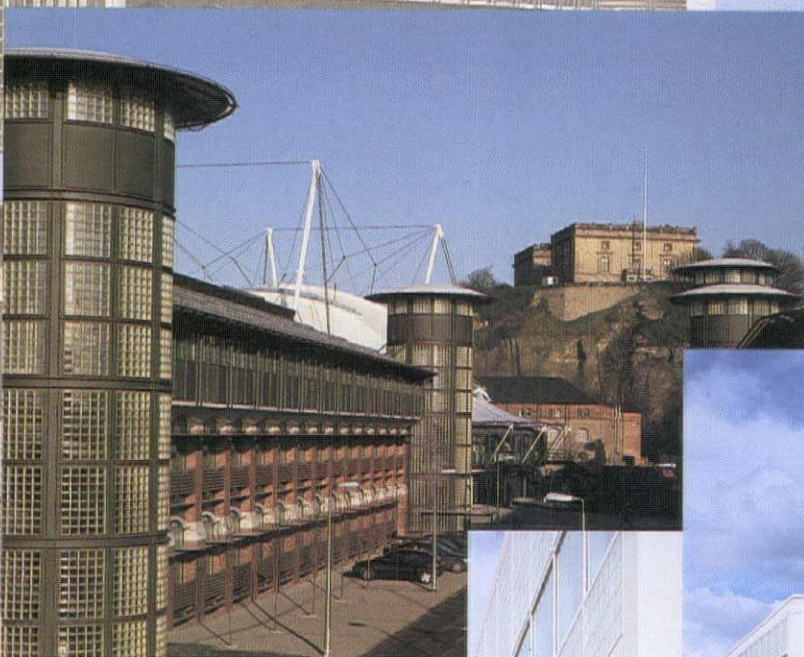


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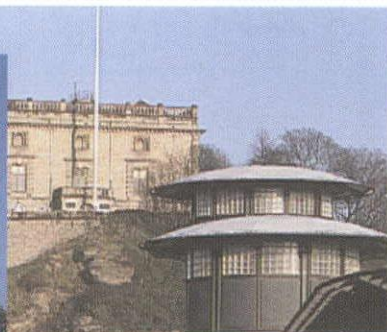
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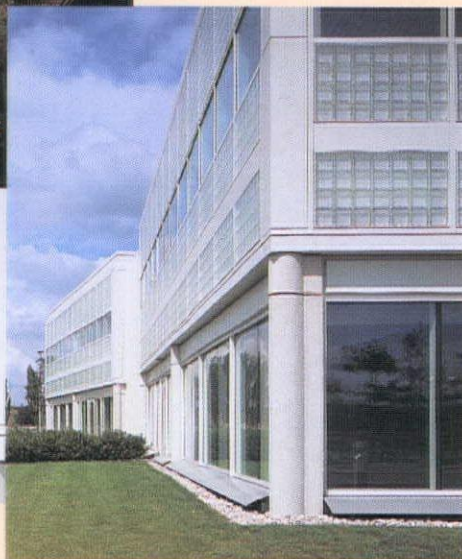
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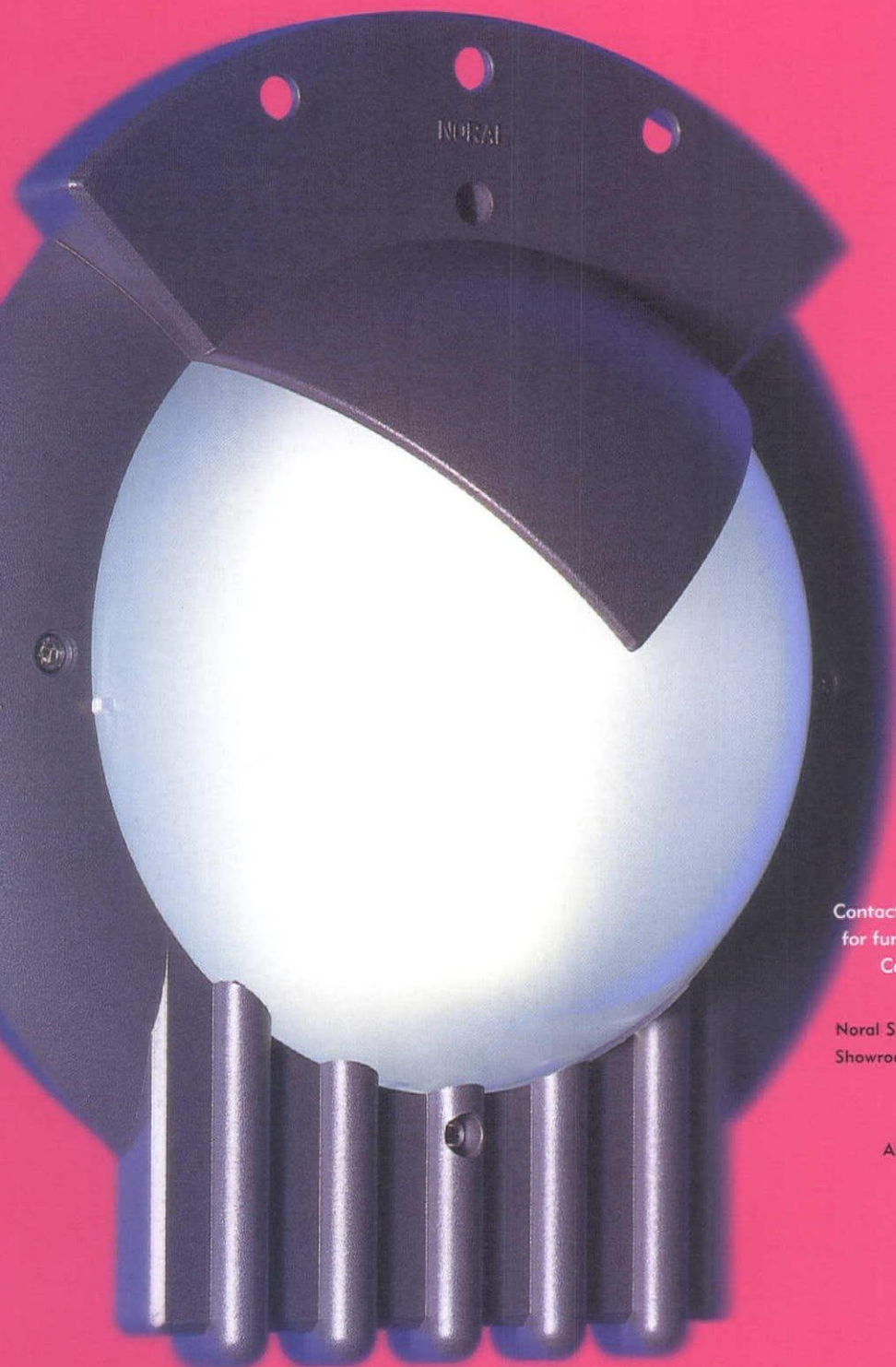
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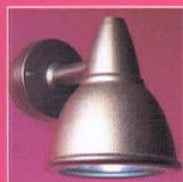
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Main picture shows
Caesar.
Designed by Hamilton & Hempel



Othello

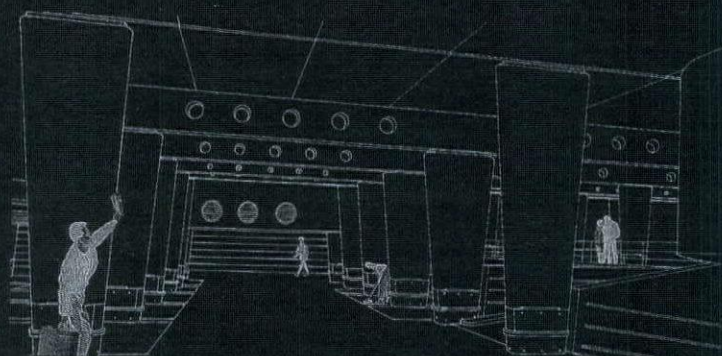
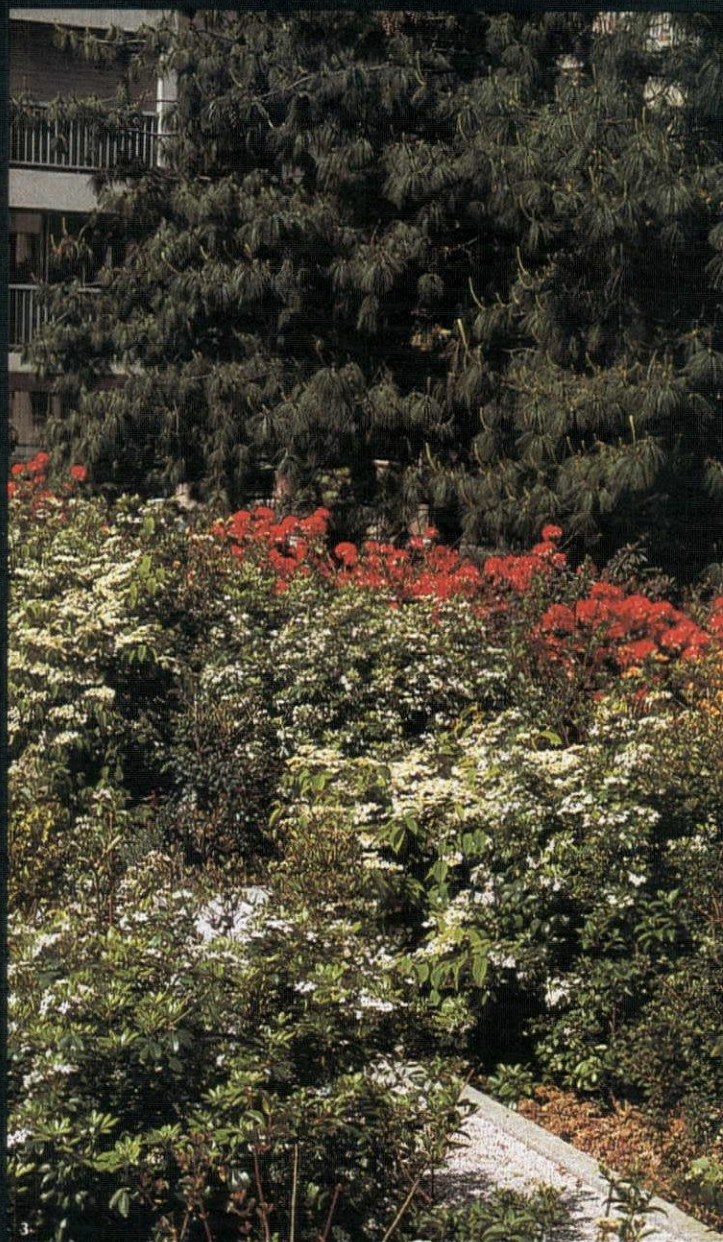


Atrium III



Golf

For more details enter 18 on AR enquiry card



perspective of car park

Built on top of a seven-storey car park and combining formalism with intimacy, these landscaped terraces constitute a green lung in central Paris.

Rus in urbe

The perennial problem of assuaging the need for urban green space and car parking is ingeniously solved in this scheme by Andréas Christo-Foroux for a site in Paris. The project forms part of a larger revitalisation of a historic railway viaduct (AR September 1996) as a *promenade plantée* running from the rear of the Bastille Opera to the Bois de Vincennes to the east. As the viaduct runs along the avenue Daumesnil, incident is provided along the route by a lushly landscaped garden (the Parc

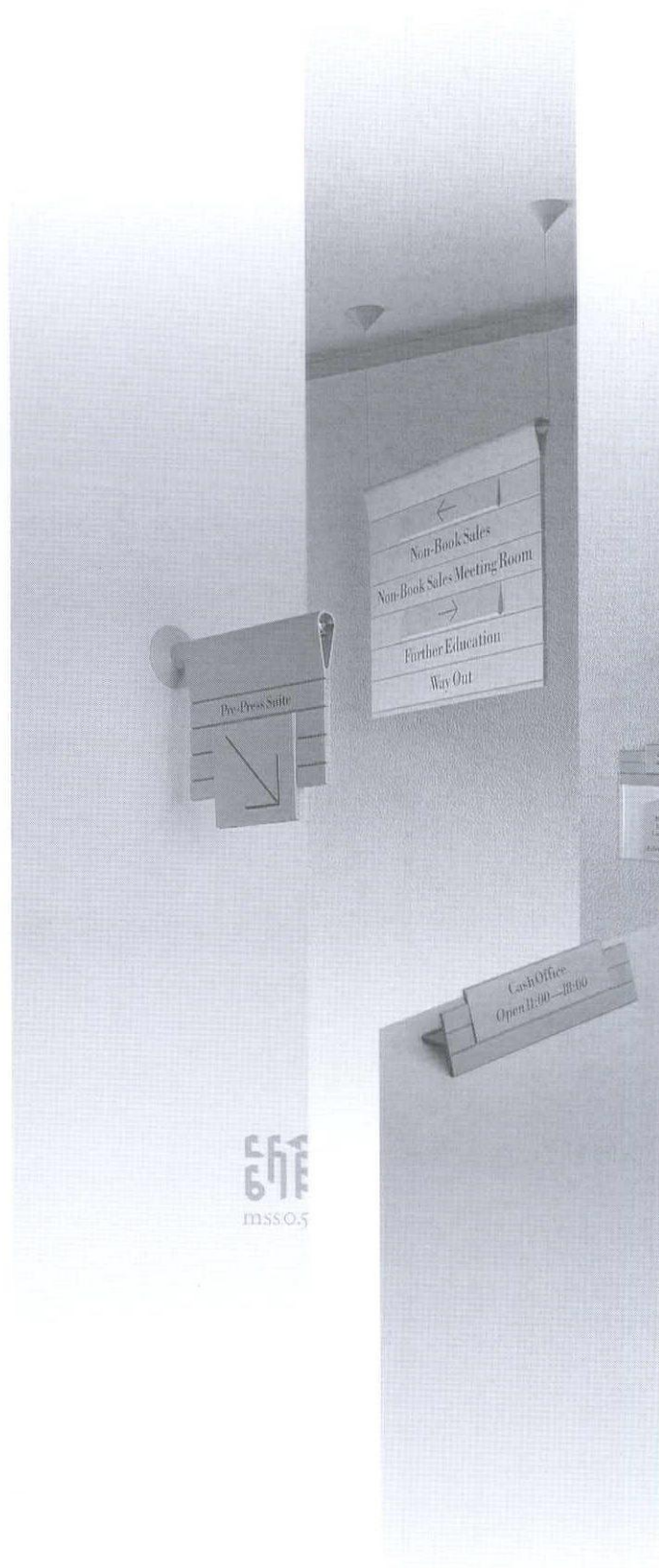
Hector Malot) that sits on top of a new car park.

The car park holds 450 cars over seven levels and is accessed through one of the viaduct vaults on the avenue Daumesnil. As an antidote to the municipal dinginess and claustrophobia of inner-city car parks, detailing and construction (a white concrete structure and bold tiling inspired by the Paris Métro) combine to create a series of surprisingly airy, luminous volumes. The roof of the car park is colonised as a

modern hanging garden, with planted terraces corresponding to the half-levels of the car park below. The scheme required astute engineering, with 2m depth of soil imported to provide bedding for 30 trees.

The gardens are conceived as a sequence of contrasting spaces, using planting, texture and colour to create both intimate enclaves and more formal set pieces. The focus of the gardens is a square paved with rubiginous bricks and planted with a regular grid of

maple trees. The spacing of the trees corresponds to the structure of the viaduct's brick vaults. Small circular fountains linked by a capillary network of water conduits animate the square, in the Moorish fashion. Simple stone benches are randomly placed between the trees. The square is linked to a lower terrace by an enclosure of bamboo shoots that form a luxuriant, protective rampart. The lower terrace is designed as a scent garden, with a profusion of Mexican orange trees,



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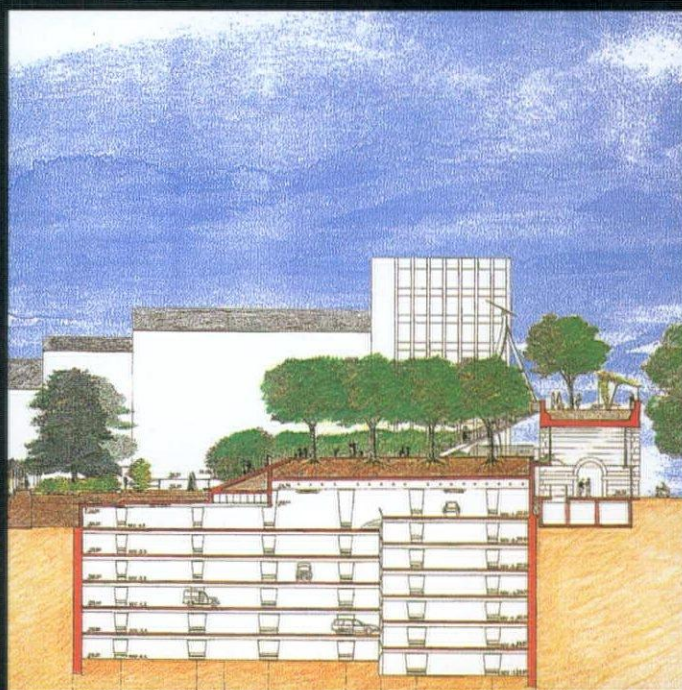
wistaria, azaleas and hydrangeas arranged in broad strips. Interstitial paths are paved with cobbles arranged in a traditional fantail pattern.

The Parc Hector Malot is an inventive synthesis of many disciplines – engineering, architecture, landscape design and urbanism. More importantly, it provides an inspiring modern paradigm of how the often conflicting needs of city dwellers and car drivers can be skilfully and beneficially reconciled.

CATHERINE SLESSOR

- 1 A grid of maple trees interspersed with elegant stone benches and small fountains make up the formal square.
- 2 Detail of hard landscaping.
- 3 The lush profusion of the scent garden on the lower terrace.
- 4 The series of terraces corresponds to the levels of the car park below, creating a green lung for the city.
- 5 Tall bamboo plants form a luxuriant rampart between the two levels.

Architect and landscape architect
Atelier Christo-Foroux, Paris
Project team
Andréas Christo-Foroux, G. J. de Jong



cross section

OUTRAGE



A new addition to the much loved Dogs' Home in Battersea, London might provide greatly improved facilities for its canine and feline inhabitants, but sadly does little to improve the public realm.

The dogs may be materially very well off in the Battersea Dogs' Home, but it is the humans who are to be pitied as they drive down Nine Elms Lane in south-west London. It is possible for the driver to avert the eyes from two '80s riverside flat developments on the way, but for hundreds of yards there is no option but to look straight ahead down the road at the new addition to the Dogs' Home, by Martin Richmond Associates. The road takes a turn just as it passes, and it is then that you see the buildings fracturing rather strangely.

The neighbourhood is inspiring – the power station, railway bridges, gas holders, expanses of industrial landscape. Across the road there are several good buildings; a substantial Edwardian school, and a large Catholic church complex of stepped gables, now being sold off as lofts. The Dogs' Home is in three parts: the '60s horizontal

slab (now lacking the familiar endearing tiled mural), a tidy modern addition further away from the road, and now this. The bulk of the two new houses is emphasised by the apparently honest show of loadbearing construction and the heavy eaves.

The approach has the two green-roofed blocks completing the view, each pitched roof apparently capped by a raised section. But the caps do not quite fit, and it is soon revealed that they are the tops of two towers – behind the two main buildings – which have crudely truncated roofs with plant ducting poking up behind the well-loved name. As you pass, the rooftops glide sideways in an absurd duet. It is almost too well arranged to have been an accident: whatever the architect intended, he had no regard for the commuter, confronted daily by this queasily awkward film strip.

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Corporation in Al Khobar, Saudi Arabia.
- Dr Kenneth Yeang, T. R. Hamzah & Yeang, Malaysia. Dr Yeang is world
respected both as an architect and a theoretician in the use of ambient
energy.
- Ali Shuaibi, Beeha Group Consultants, Riyadh. An Aga Khan Award
winner who has built a major contribution to Riyadh.
- Rasem Badran, Amman, Jordan. Another award-winning architect who
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THE ARCHITECTURAL
REVIEW

GÖTZ -
More than just a facade



C1-Building, Daimler-Benz Potsdam Square Project
Architect: Planning team Renzo Piano Building Workshop, Paris
Dipl.-Ing. Christoph Kohlbecker, Freier Architekt BDA, Gaggenau

Photo: M. Barthelme, GÖTZ GmbH



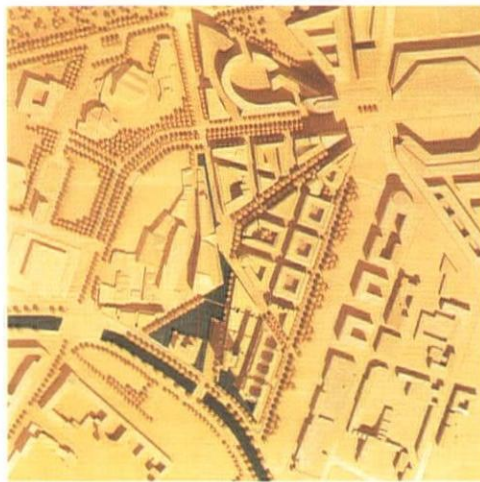
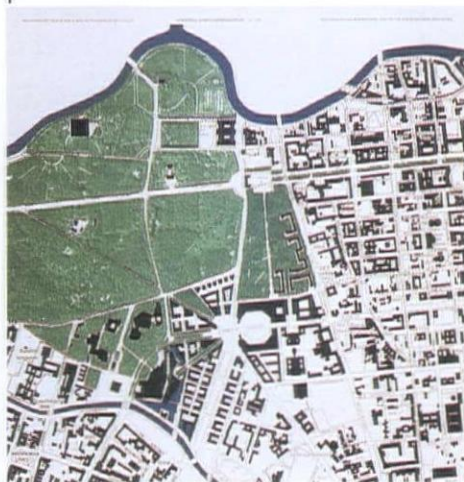
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The first building in the initial stage of the huge Potsdamer Platz development which is intended to give Berlin a new heart.

POTSDAMER PREVIEW



POTSDAMER PLATZ, BERLIN, GERMANY ARCHITECT RENZO PIANO BUILDING WORKSHOP

- 1 Potsdamer Platz after the First World War.
- 2 Hilmer & Sattler masterplan (centre below) with Tiergarten to north.
- 3 Piano plan with curves of the Jahn triangle to north and Tiergarten beyond that. Leipziger Platz is octagon to north-east and Scharoun's library is west of site. Landwehrkanal to south of site.
- 4 Model of Piano-planned Daimler Benz area. His completed tower is to right near Landwehrkanal. Two towers top left against Potsdamer Platz are (left) by Kolhoff and (right) by Piano.

History

Potsdamer Platz was one of Berlin's most important squares before the War: not very beautiful, either in urban form or architecture, but full of life, trams and traffic, always changing – a German equivalent of Piccadilly Circus or Times Square with sometimes a decent building like Schinkel's gatehouses and Mendelsohn's Columbus Haus. Bombs and shells put an end to most of the buildings. Then came the Wall, and almost everything that was left was razed to allow the guards a clear field of fire over the desolate minefields.

When Germany was reunited over a quarter of a century later, it was clear from the start that a lively new Potsdamer Platz would have to be created as a symbol of the rebirth of the city and nation. With the Wall removed, the site could once more relate to its neighbours, the Landwehr Kanal to the south, with the Tiergarten park and the Reichstag a short distance to the north. Scharoun's great buildings, the Philharmonie and the Preussischer Staatsbibliothek could be brought into urban conversation, whereas

they had previously been forlornly isolated up against the Wall.

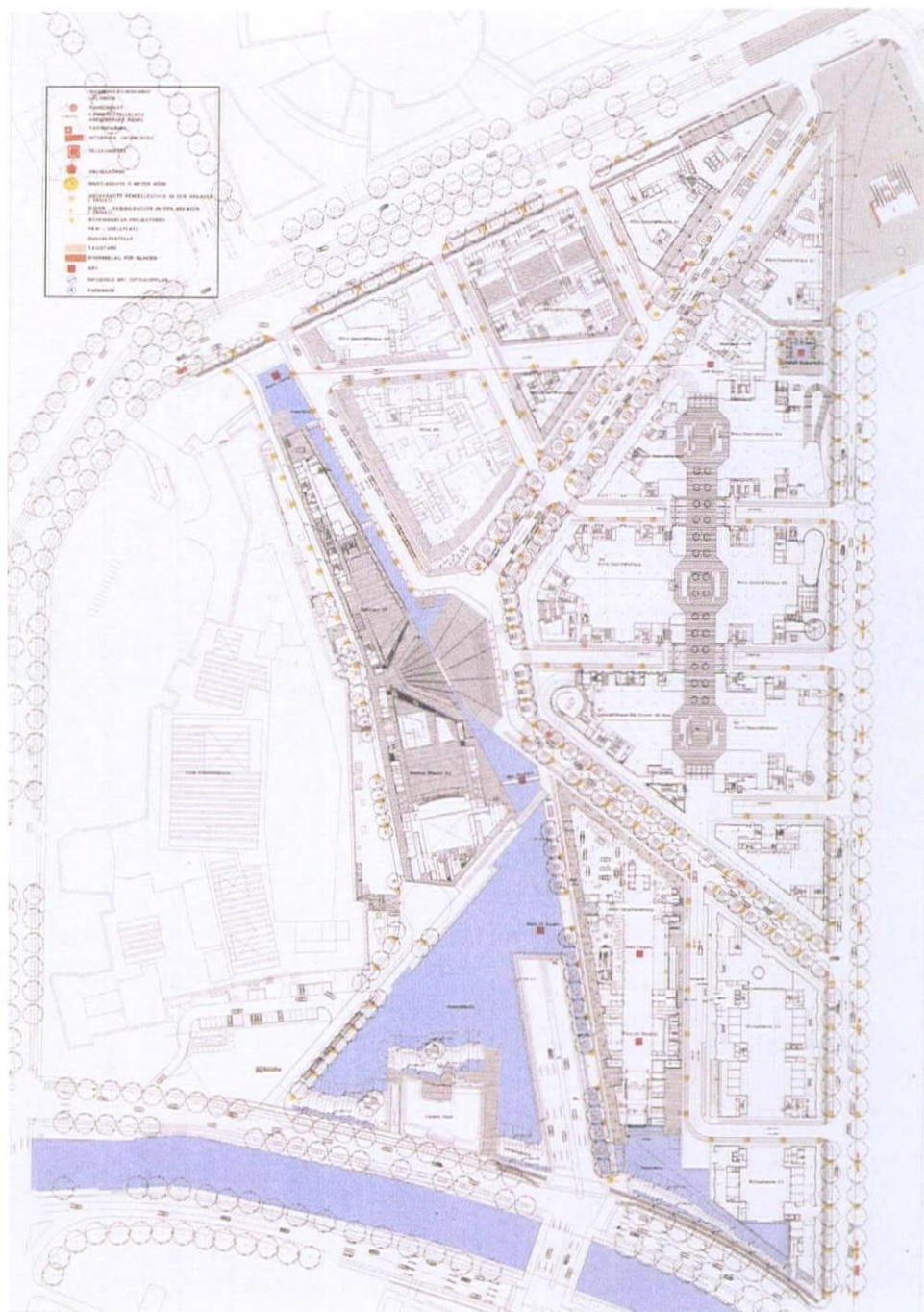
A working group was set up by the Senate of Berlin in 1990 and a competition held for the whole site south of the Tiergarten, east of the library and west of Leipziger Platz. Entries and results (announced in 1991) were controversial, with Hilmer & Sattler producing a rather timid first prize scheme (which fulfilled the intentions of City Architect Hans Stimmann and Wolfgang Nägel, Berlin senator in charge of building to create a 'critical reconstruction' of the pre-1940 plan by retaining most of the old street pattern). O. M. Ungers collected second prize for a rationalist cluster of towers intended to mark the place on the map of Berlin (and Europe), but this was seen as too arrogant a gesture by the jury.

In 1991, the owners of the sites within the redevelopment area (huge companies: Daimler Benz, Sony and others) commissioned Richard Rogers to make a counter masterplan. In 1991, he produced a very formal ahistorical scheme radiating from a glazed circus which locked into the

5
Ground plan of Daimler Benz area showing principal public and semi-public spaces. Landwehrkanal is south of complex. Blue triangle, and other blue areas are lake to take site run off. Lake (higher than canal) accommodates entrance to Tiergarten road tunnel.

6
Huge Daimler Benz site with dome of big screen 3-D theatre under construction.

7
Dome with moon projected on it.



5

octagon of Leipziger Platz; the proposal successfully linked all the major elements in and around the site in a genial urban scale (AR January 1993, p21). The Senate turned the proposal down, but asked Hilmer & Sattler to incorporate some of Rogers' ideas, particularly natural ventilation and lighting of the buildings, into the masterplan.

The plan

The landowners were required to develop within the Hilmer & Sattler masterplan and each held further competitions. First prize in the Daimler Benz one went to Renzo Piano with Christoph Kohlbecker (AR November 1992, p4). The winner of the Sony competition was Helmut Jahn. The Daimler-Benz site is the most southerly one. To the north, before you get to the park is the Sony triangle where Jahn is building offices (including the firm's European headquarters), housing and shopping spaces round a giant ovoid urban entertainment centre which will contain the Filmhaus and Deutsche Mediathek, as well as an IMAX and numerous cinemas. To the east of the Piano site, is

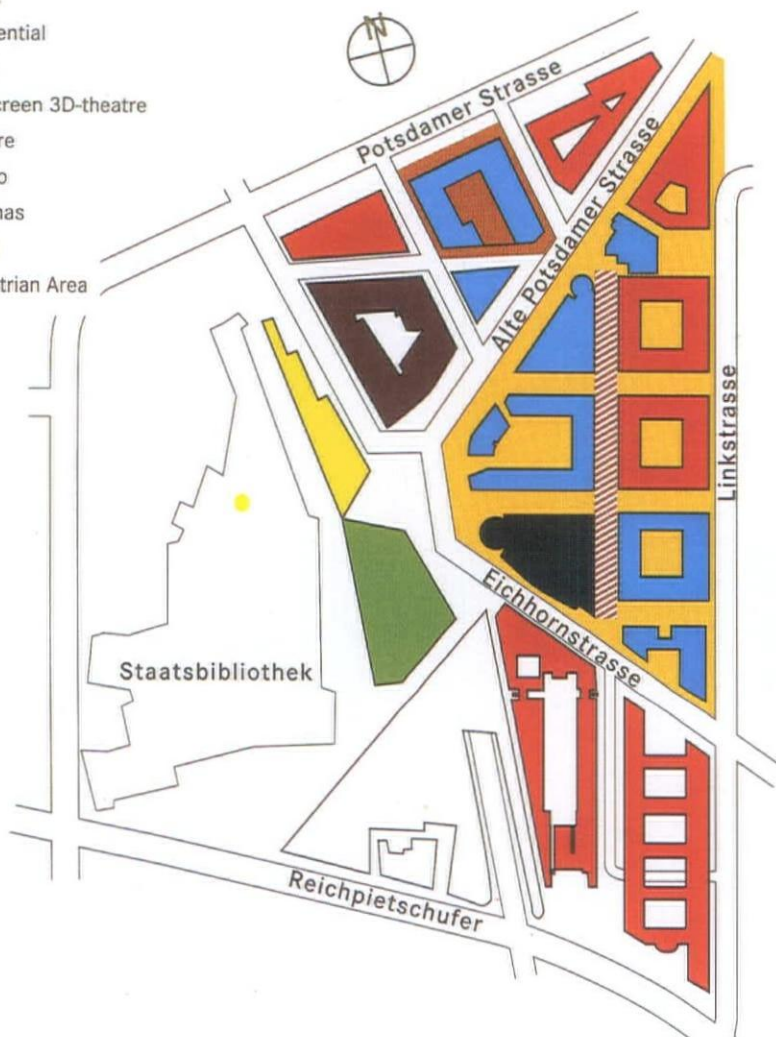


6



7

- Office
- Residential
- Hotel
- Big Screen 3D-theatre
- Theatre
- Casino
- Cinemas
- Retail
- Pedestrian Area



Land uses in Piano's Daimler Benz site

Linkstraße, which will have a green linear park in its centre (is this a wise move?) and, on the other side, is to be a series of courtyard blocks on the A+T site designed within Giorgio Grassi's overall plan by different architects including Roger Diener and Jürgen Sawade. All these sites meet at the Potsdamer Platz itself: an irregular public space, not unlike the old one. It adjoins Leipziger Platz, which is to be recreated on its old octagonal plan (the hamfistedness of its first new building sadly promises some sort of scaleless neo-PoMo extravaganza here).

Piano's parti for the Mercedes Benz site is not very complicated to understand in principle. (Though it is difficult to comprehend at the moment in the midst of the vast turmoil on the largest building site in Europe, all of which is amazingly intended to be completed at the end of this year.) From Potsdamer Platz, an avenue, Alte Potsdamer Straße, lined with mature trees (which astonishingly survived all the destruction) runs south-west to the opposite side of the

development area. Here, Marlene Dietrich Platz, a new pedestrian square is to be created, appropriately cradled in the arms of a new casino and a music hall. These back onto the great blank gold east wall of the Staatsbibliothek, into which it is hoped at some time to make a new entrance from Marlene Dietrich (though the library authorities are at the moment opposed to the move because of disruption caused by the colossal works to their east). The other major geometrical moves in the urban plan are retention of the traditional lines of north-south Linkstraße and the boomerang of strangely named Eichhornstrasse (Acorn Street). From this simple matrix, the other thoroughfares of the complex take their pattern, much as would the minor streets of a nineteenth-century city after its main lines had been laid out.

Architects and planners were determined from the first to make sure that the new city centre should have a real urban mix of uses: as well as offices, there will be housing, shops and restaurants, a hotel, a cinema, big screen

POTSDAMER PLATZ, BERLIN, GERMANY

ARCHITECT

RENZO PIANO BUILDING WORKSHOP

8
Piano's corner block which will contain the big screen 3-D theatre.

9
The apex against Potsdamer Platz itself (foreground). Right-hand tower is by Kollhoff, left one by Piano uses same cladding details as completed building.

10
Part of Marlene Dietrich Platz with Piano's music hall behind.

11
One of Rogers' eroded cubes of office, retail and housing accommodation on Linkstraße.

12
Piano's completed (Daimler Benz) building from north as it will look when siteworks and lake are finished.



8

3-D theatre, the casino and music hall. As in the A+T development across Linkstraße, the Piano site has been divided among several architects, for masterplanner and client decided that the area and its 17 blocks were too big to be created by one firm (all participants won prizes in the Daimler Benz competition). Apart from organising heights, street pattern and distribution of functions, Piano and Kohlbecker suggested that cladding should be in glass (of course), and terracotta with details and precise colours chosen by individual architects. On the whole, the suggestion has been followed, with only Rafael Moneo deciding to use different material, sandstone (though the stone's colour is within the terracotta range of the spectrum).

Moneo is building the hotel and the housing block on the north side of the site. Rogers is doing three eroded cubes of offices, retailing and flats which face east across Linkstraße. To the south of these is Isozaki's contribution, a rectangular commercial block with parallel slabs along a



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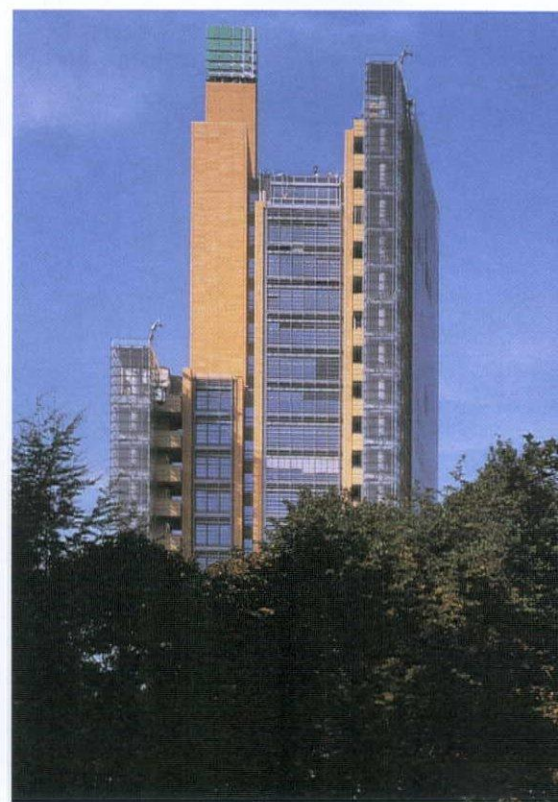
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POTSDAMER PLATZ, BERLIN, GERMANY

ARCHITECT

RENZO PIANO BUILDING WORKSHOP

13

The first buildings to be completed: Isozaki's egregious office block in foreground of Piano's Daimler Benz tower.

14, 15

Piano's Daimler Benz tower along the Landwehrkanal.

16, 17

From across the Landwehrkanal.

18

The delicately detailed Piano tower, with Isozaki to right (east).

long atrium. This was the first building to be completed, and promises to be the least impressive, with flush facades of two-tone terracotta arranged in meaningless trapezoids topped and underskirted by frilly undulating glass walls. A 23-storey high office tower by Hans Kollhoff will bring the complex to conclusion against Potsdamer Platz in the north-east. Over Alte Potsdamer Straße, Piano is making a slightly shorter tower, so that the pair of tall buildings will make a gateway from square to street.

Piano's office is making a swing of buildings down Alte Potsdamer Straße down to the Landwehrkanal at the southern end of the site. To the west, the curve defines the edge of the Marlene Dietrich Platz, looking over toward the music hall and casino (also by Piano). To the east, the Piano work is to be linked to Rogers' three cubes by a glazed shopping arcade. Some notion of what the area will be like in a year's time can be gained from the Piano's first building to be completed: the Mercedes Benz Haus at the southern tip of the complex.

The building

As you drive east along the Landwehrkanal, there is a procession of monuments on the north bank: first Stirling and Wilford's now rather faded pink and blue striped post-modern Wissenschaftszentrum, frivolous in comparison to the gravitas of Mies's dark square steel and glass Nationalgalerie; then the Staatsbibliothek, the alternative strain of Modernism flexing and twisting in concrete and gold aluminium, then a Wilhelmine Baroque villa, the only reminder in this part of the bank of what the canal must have looked like in the nineteenth century. Then the climax: Piano's 21-storey Mercedes Benz tower, resplendent in eco-tech layered cladding of glass and biscuit coloured terracotta.

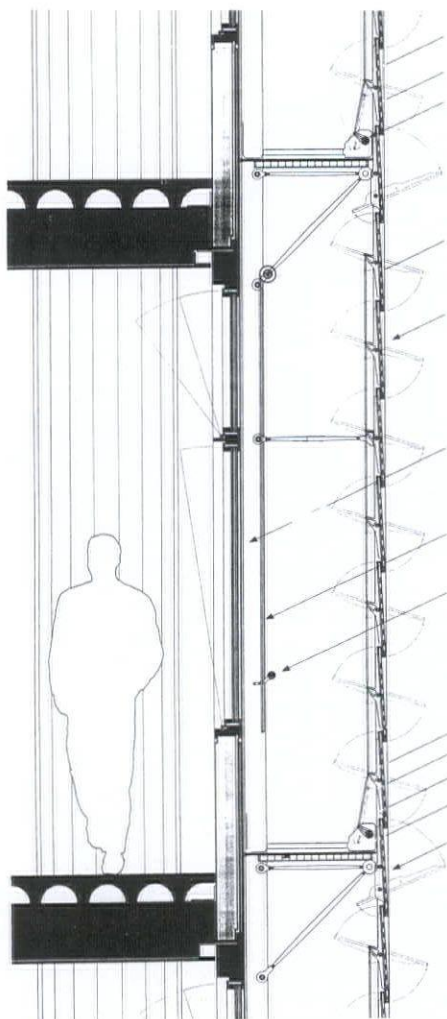
Though this is quite the biggest building in all the procession (at least in height), it does not show off. It has distinguished and elegant modesty, appropriate for what is mainly a large office block. After all, all the other creatures in the zoo along the canal are in one way or another monuments to culture built with public money, so it is appropriate



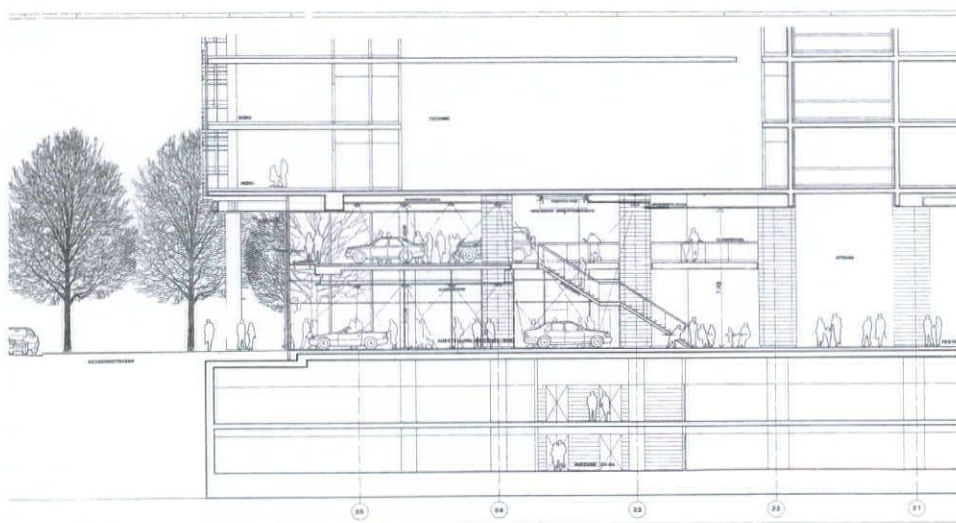
17



18



glazed tower wall with movable louvers on breathing wall



detailed section of entrance

POTSDAMER PLATZ, BERLIN, GERMANY
 ARCHITECT
RENZO PIANO BUILDING WORKSHOP

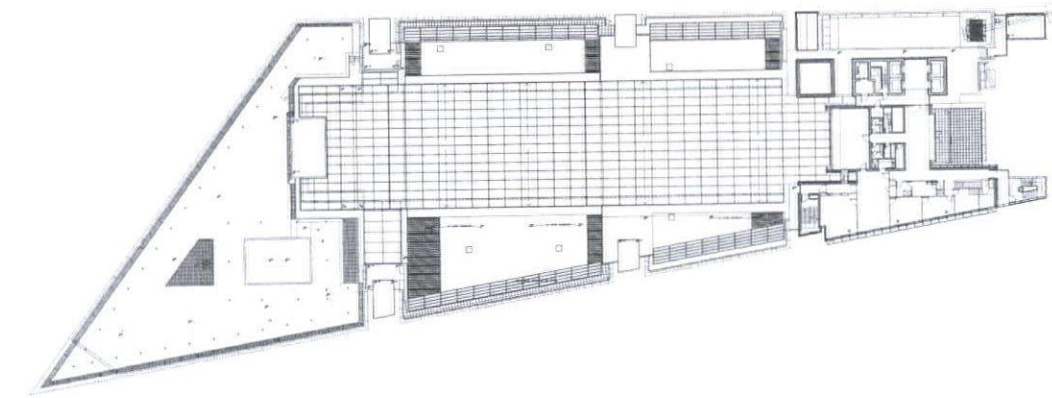
that the first commercial building in the sequence should act as dignified backdrop. But it succeeds in avoiding both the pin-striped effect of so many curtain wall buildings and the aggressive dullness of Isozaki next door.

South and west sides of the tower have a glass breathing wall with a louvred outer skin which is opened and shut automatically and an inner layer of tilt and swivel windows which ensure that individual inhabitants of offices can adjust their own internal climates by taking tempered air from the 700mm wide cavity. This would appear to be a much cheaper way of making a breathing wall than the elaborate special sections used by Foster and Ingenhoven in their office towers in Frankfurt and Essen (AR July 1997). And visually, it is more delicate and subtle, with the outer glass skin often fluttering and changing, and the two glazed layers with their interstitial space clearly articulated against each other.

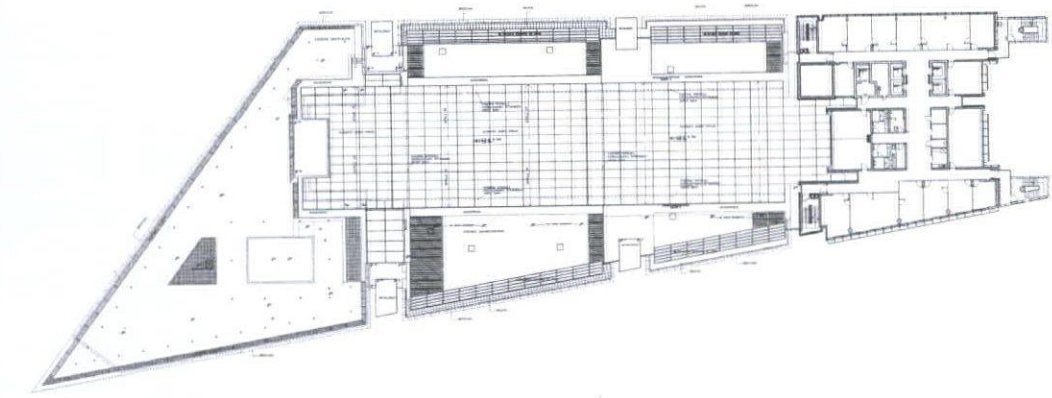
The east side of the tower is quite different. Here the terracotta cladding (a few elements of which you can glimpse in the

cavities of the breathing walls) dominates the whole facade as a skeletal exo-skin. Vertical and, predominantly, horizontal terracotta elements are combined to create a delicately proportioned pattern which articulates each floor and bay within an overall texture. In a sense, this is a huge modern ceramic *mashrabiyya*, which modifies the impact of the elements and provides a protective framework for the louvred blinds that can be lowered in the external cavity between ceramic and glass skins. The terracotta pieces themselves are of course specially made (by NBK): the horizontal ones are hollow extrusions which Piano calls 'baguettes'; the vertical pieces are more like beads which are fixed back to the metal subframe of the tilt and swivel office windows and the automatically operated ventilation lights above them. Baguettes lock into appropriate beads and the whole assembly – windows, spandrel and terracotta elements – is delivered to the site as a storey-height prefabricated unit.

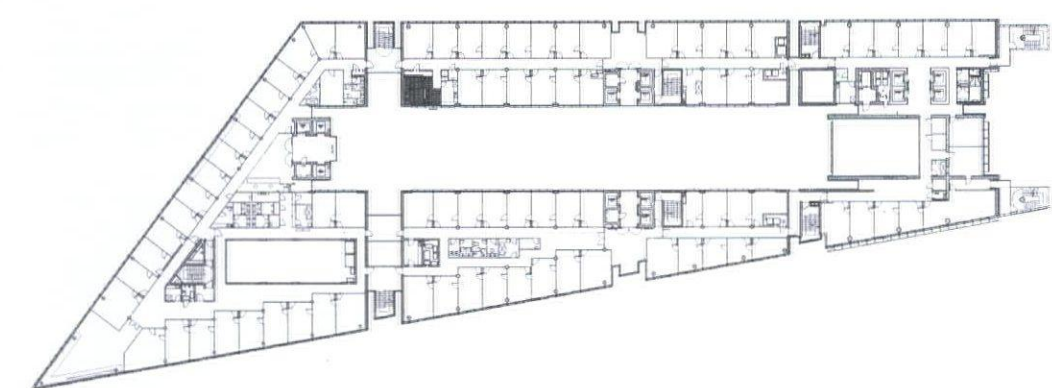
To the north are three lower, longer building pieces between seven and nine



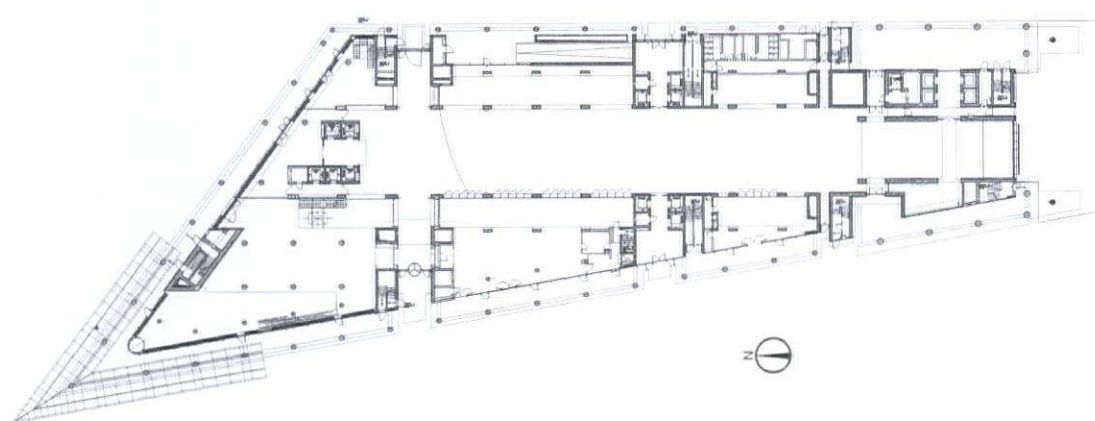
top floor



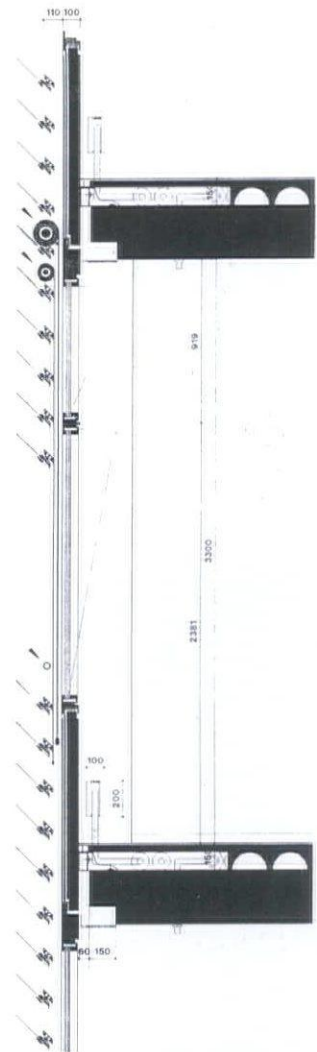
13th floor



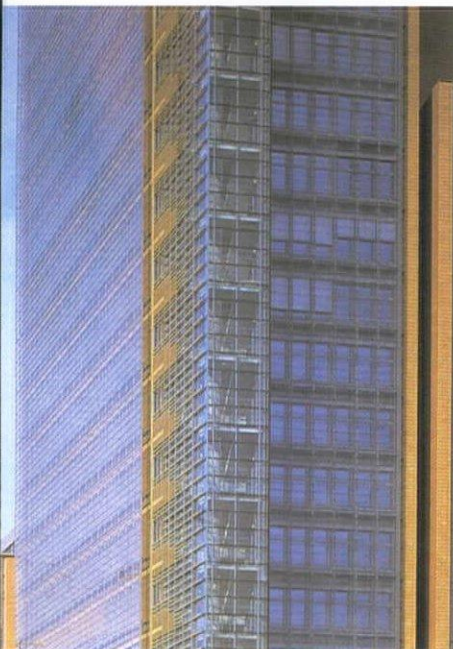
third floor



ground floor (scale approx 1:160)



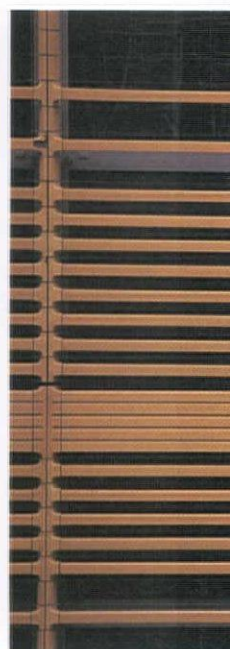
atrium wall has fixed fritted glass shades



19



20



21

POTSDAMER PLATZ, BERLIN, GERMANY

ARCHITECT

RENZO PIANO BUILDING WORKSHOP

Renzo Piano Building Workshop/C. Kohlbecker Design team

B. Plattner (*associate in charge*), R. Baumgarten, A. Chaaya, P. Charles, G. Ducci, M. Kramer, N. Mecattaf, J. Moolhuijzen, J. B. Mothes, M. B. Petersen, J. Ruoff, M. van der Staay, E. Volz
With E. Audoye, G. Borden, C. Brammen, D. Drouin, B. Eistert, M. Hartmann, O. Hempel, M. Howard, W. Matthews, G. M. Maurizio, D. Miccolis, M. Pimmel, S. Stacher, M. Veltcheva

Kohlbecker team: J. Barnbrook, H. Falk, A. Hoher, R. Jatzke, M. Kohlbecker, M. Lindner, N. Nocke, A. Schmid, W. Spreng

Engineers

Ingenieurgesellschaft IGH/Ove Arup & Partners, Schmid Reuter Partner; Ingenieurgesellschaft Boll & Partners GmbH, Stuttgart, Ove Arup & Partners, Ingenieurgesellschaft IBF

Landscape

Möhrle und Krüger, Stuttgart, Berlin

Facade construction

Götz

Terracotta panels

NBK Keramik

Photographs

Berengo Gardin, Vincent Mosch, Michel Denancé, Andreas Muhs

floors high. These have the same biscuit-coloured cladding as the east front of the tower and all round them is a double-height external arcade which allows glass walls to offer local street level activities (though when I visited the building last month, virtually the only signs of this were a café and a showroom for Mercedes Benz vehicles).

The north entrance at the tip of the lower part leads directly to an atrium which runs through virtually the whole length of the lower parts of the complex. This nave-like volume is toplit from a glass roof and the double-height arcades are expressed on the interior down the two long sides. Here the café, car showroom and a travel agency open into the big space (and will presumably be joined by other such uses as the area gets going and attracts more people than those who work for the Daimler Benz development and management company which occupies this first finished building).

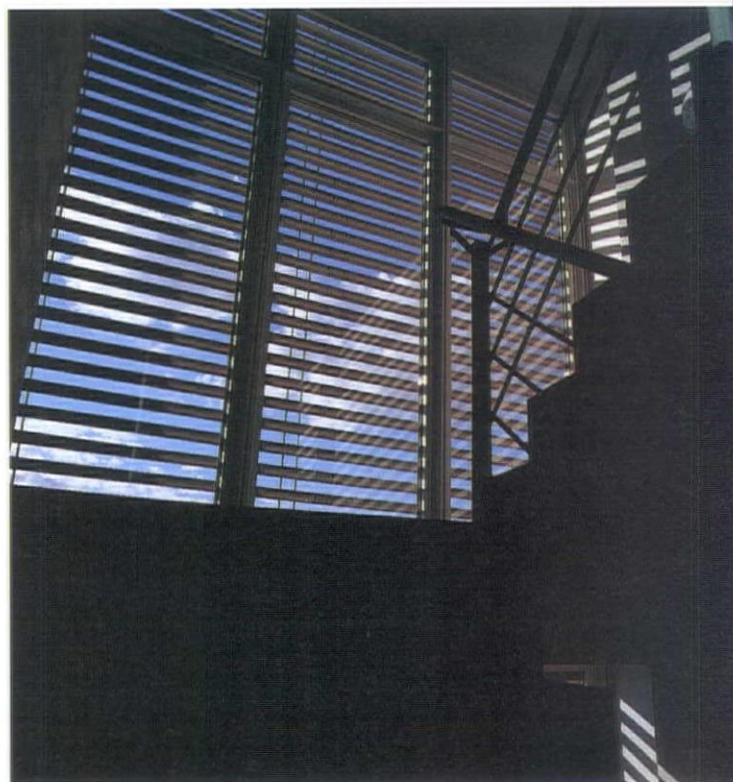
In the atrium, the main vertical structural elements are emphasised by being clad in flat terracotta bats, rather like the ones Piano used on his housing in Paris, but similar in colour to the baguettes, which themselves re-appear in various ways covering service ducts and the narrow ends of the big space. Between the rectangular terracotta covered

columns are regular strips of aluminium tilt and swivel windows, which like those on the external walls can be manipulated by inhabitants of individual offices. Strips of windows between biscuit-coloured columns do not sound like a very promising recipe for making a fine space, but their potentially drear effect is ameliorated by a simple device: layers of glass slats fritted in white with a delicate pattern are above and below the window strips. Set sloping upwards at 45 degrees, their laciness softens the space visually – and acoustically for they act as sound diffusers and act with the absorption behind pierced aluminium spandrels. Their laciness is echoed in the slats held at 42 degrees under the roof to modify direct sun.

The atrium is the first of what promises to be a sequence of many major public and semi-public spaces which will be created in the Potsdamer Platz complex, and while there may be arguments about the nature of ownership and control (p5), the propriety and elegance of the new space and the building that houses it cannot be questioned. Astonishingly, the rest of the vast site is to be completed within a year. The start is what a schoolmaster's report would call 'very promising indeed, but a long way to go'. P.D.

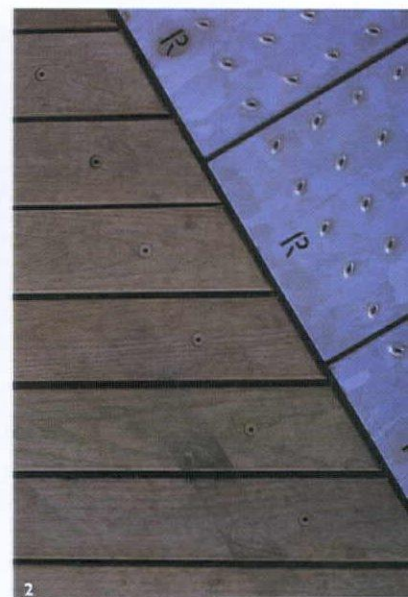


- 19 Glass breathing wall on tower.
- 20 Terracotta baguettes give scale and layering to main external walls.
- 21, 22 Details of terracotta baguettes and beads.
- 23 Detail of atrium wall fenestration with fritted glass louvers.
- 24 The nave-like semi-public space of the atrium is intended for exhibitions and events.
- 25 Light filtered by baguettes in staircase of tower.



SQUARE DANCE

A dead square in the centre of Rotterdam has been reinvigorated through a series of bold interventions.



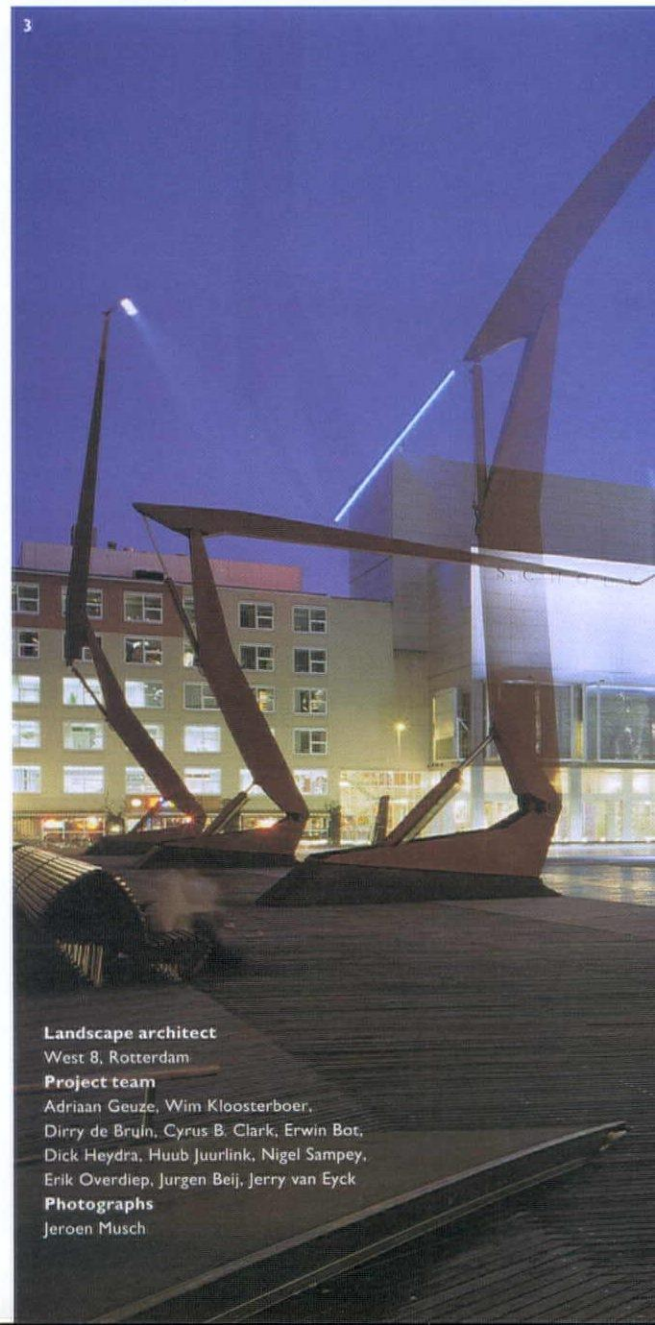
Flanked by the municipal theatre, concert hall and central station, Schouwburgplein occupies a prominent site in the post-war centre of Rotterdam. Yet despite its location, it had become a dilapidated, cheerless place; a typically featureless by-product of commercial development. Through a series of innovative tactics proposed by the young Dutch landscape practice West 8, this inanimate space has been brought back into use as a lively urban square.

West 8 reinterprets the Schouwburgplein as a city stage, raised slightly above street level. The planning of the square reflects the changing path of the sun and different patterns of use. On the east side, where the sunlight is most abundant, is a long row of languidly elegant slatted benches in Robinia wood. Hard landscaping in linear bands of wood, perforated steel panels and epoxy resin coated concrete, reflects traditional Dutch field patterns. The largest surface of steel panels is inset with a herringbone pattern of narrow timber decking, which assumes a curiously three-dimensional quality when viewed from a distance. Circular grilles conceal spray mist fountains which operate in warm weather. A broad strip of dark green

granite, sandblasted with a fragment of local geography (a map of the River Maas and Europoort) runs across the square from east to west. Ventilation towers to the underground car park below are clad with a lightweight gauze, becoming armatures for displays of municipal information and advertising. On the west side is the sensuous translucent flank of a new cinema designed by Koen van Velsen.

At night, fluorescent tubes set below the perforated steel panels transform the Schouwburgplein into a gently glowing sea of light. Most spectacular of all are a quartet of 35m tall hydraulic lighting masts, lined up along the east side of the square. Inspired by the cranes in Rotterdam's huge docks, these red oxide structures are fitted with spotlights at the tips of delicately tapering cantilevered arms. The position of the lights was originally controlled by inserting a coin; now they contort at random, like inquisitive robots. Informed by civic symbolism, material tactility and a strong sense of drama, West 8's proposals for Schouwburgplein show how an ailing public space can be ingeniously rehabilitated.

CONNIE VAN CLEEF



Landscape architect

West 8, Rotterdam

Project team

Adriaan Geuze, Wim Kloosterboer, Dirry de Bruijn, Cyrus B. Clark, Erwin Bot, Dick Heydra, Huub Juurlink, Nigel Sampey, Erik Overdiep, Jurgen Beij, Jerry van Eyck

Photographs

Jeroen Musch

1 The eastern edge of the Schouwburgplein is lined with elegant slatted benches.

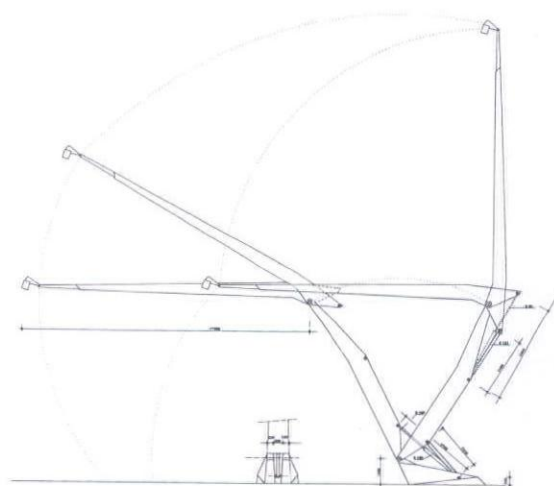
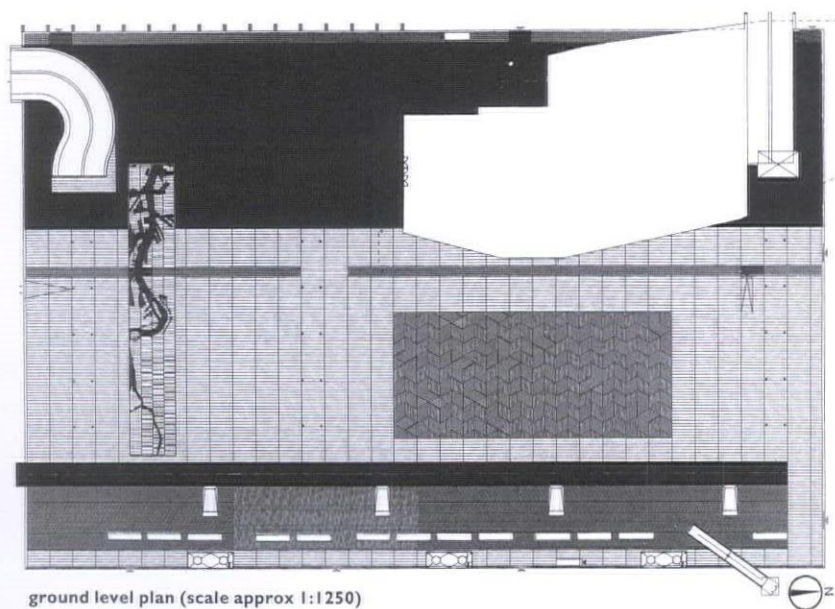
2 Detail of junction between timber decking and perforated steel panels.

3 At night, the square is a gently glowing sea of light, animated by the robotic movements of the hydraulic lighting masts.

SQUARE, ROTTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

WEST 8





The seafront of Palma is dominated by the twin Gothic masterpieces of the Almudaina Palace and the fourteenth-century cathedral. Set on lofty Renaissance walls, the cathedral contains the largest nave in Catalan Gothic architecture. Strollers along the edge of the harbour below can marvel at the sight of the cathedral walls with their daring structural system of internal and flying buttresses. During the 1970s, however, a motorway was built on the seafront, effectively cutting off views of the cathedral for those on foot.

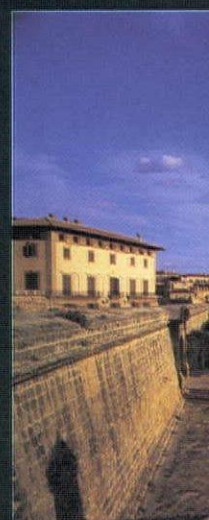
Some years later, a competition was held to find a more appropriate reconciliation of the needs of modern transport and ancient history. This was won by a team headed by local architect Pere Nicolau Bover, with a proposal that both restores the spectacle of the cathedral and creates a series of new public parks and promenades.

The motorway, which scythes past the cathedral in a gentle curve, is treated as a kind of elevated harbour wall, forming the last barrier against the sea. On each side of the motorway are linked sequences of sunken terraces and gardens. These vary from traditional promenades, gridded with palm trees and benches, to more informal landscaped spaces. Lush Mediterranean planting screens the motorway from the pedestrian zones. Directly below the cathedral ramparts, an area has been re-excavated to create a small lake, with water sculptures and fountains. Now

PUBLIC SPECTACLE

The seafront around Palma's historic Gothic cathedral has been sensitively restored to create a series of landscaped promenades.

- 1 Grove of gridded palm trees, with Palma cathedral in the distance.
- 2 The Gothic splendour of the fourteenth-century cathedral and Almudaina, framed by a new lake.
- 3 Terraces and promenades slope down from the motorway, far left.



2

3



4

- 4 The lake is animated by water sculptures and fountains.
- 5 Seen from the cathedral ramparts, the motorway acts as an enclosing barrier against the sea.
- 6 Part of the formal promenade around the cathedral.
- 7 The sculpture garden.

SEAFRONT DEVELOPMENT, PALMA, MAJORCA, SPAIN
 ARCHITECT
PERE NICOLAU BOYER

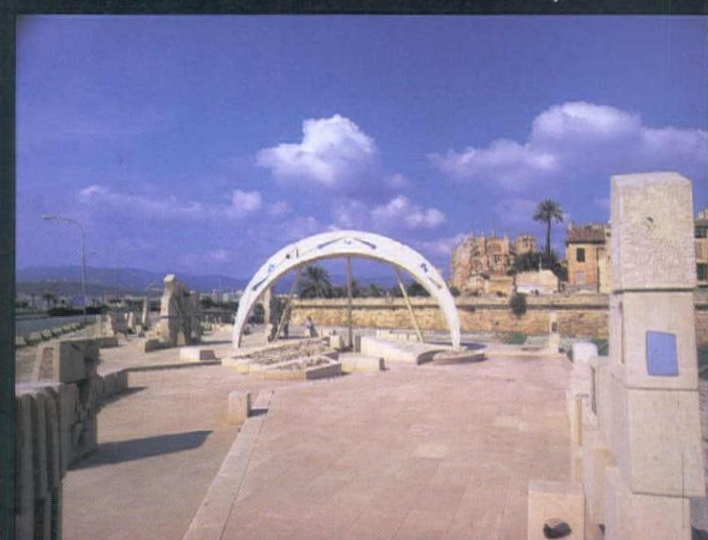
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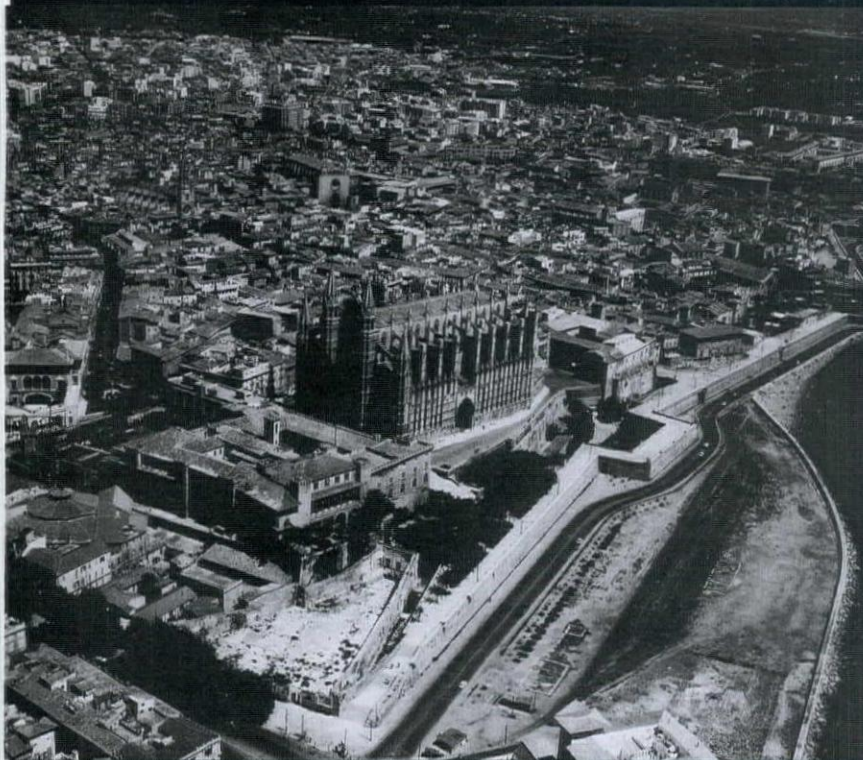


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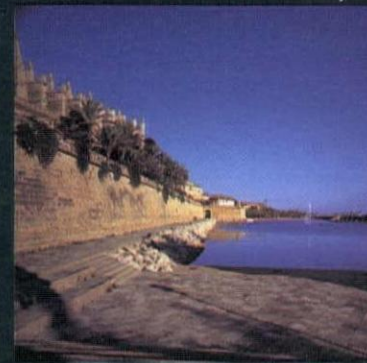
8

the cathedral and its reflection in the water can once more be seen from a distance, as originally intended.

The Parc de la Mar scheme inventively combines hard landscaping with planting, changes of level and visual incident, such as the intriguing sculpture garden (with pieces by the Spanish sculptor Josep Guinovart) on the edge of the motorway which acts as a symbolic gateway to the new development. Terraces and gardens are modern interpretations of traditional Spanish squares and promenades, characterised by a relaxed Mediterranean delight in the public realm. Yet the material and formal qualities are also underpinned by the sense that a significant piece of the city has finally been returned to its citizens. CARLA BERTOLUCCI



9



10

SEAFRONT DEVELOPMENT, PALMA, MAJORCA, SPAIN

ARCHITECT

PERE NICOLAU BOVER

Architect and landscape architect

Pere Nicolau Bover, Palma

Project team

Pere Nicolau Bover, S. Bo, E. Nadal,
A. Morado, E. Gené

Engineers

M. Castelló, I. Cisneros

8

The original site configuration, prior to the building of the motorway. The area in front of the cathedral has since been excavated to create a small lake.

9

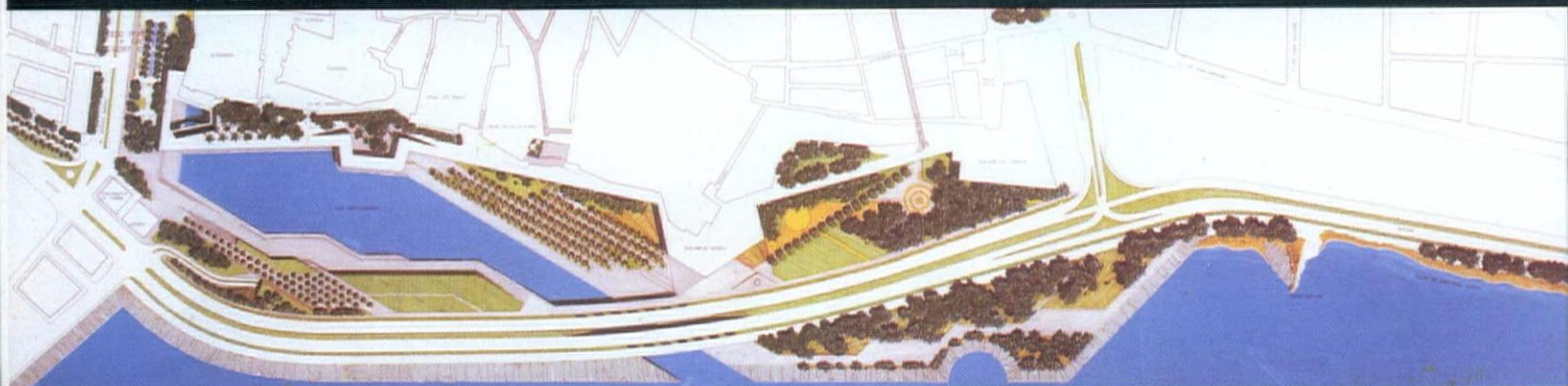
Ramparts, lake and sea.

10

The road around the base of the cathedral is now a leisurely pedestrian promenade, dotted with sculptures.



aerial perspective



competition PRAGUE

Prague Castle is one of the most amazing monuments in the world. Its environs lock into the city and (since the collapse of Communism) are part of the public realm. But the old Pheasantry, the kitchen garden, was a forgotten part of the castle grounds. The AR sponsored a competition held by the Prague Castle Administration to re-awaken a sleeping beauty as a new form of urban park.

The great picturesque mass of Hradčany Castle hovers over the Czech capital, crowning the skyline with overlaid memories of the Church, the ancient Bohemian monarchy, the stupendous emperor Rudolph II, the grinding rule of the later Habsburgs and the birth of the Republic under President Masaryk. This image of the city is unforgettable – much less well known is what happens to the north where the castle nudges towards the remains of the city's Renaissance fortifications.

First, there is a huge chasm, the landscaped moat, on the precipitous landscaped sides of which deer were cultivated for the castle kitchens. A plateau follows, roughly at the same height as the upper courtyards of the castle. The only connection between the two

levels of high ground is the Powder Bridge. To its east, the plateau has long been a pleasure ground, the Royal Garden, where the changing tastes of the castle's rulers imposed a succession of versions of Elysium, ending with a delightful late nineteenth-century gardenesque park which is now open to the public during the warm and hot parts of the year.

To the west of the Powder Bridge on the plateau, there is a fine Baroque riding school (now a gallery). And west of that, a rather dilapidated series of horticultural endeavours. This is the old Pheasantry of the castle, which in the twentieth century became a kitchen and cut-flower garden, then gradually withered under the Communists into messy semi-rural slovenliness.



Site is over moat to north-west of castle (foreground).

The competition

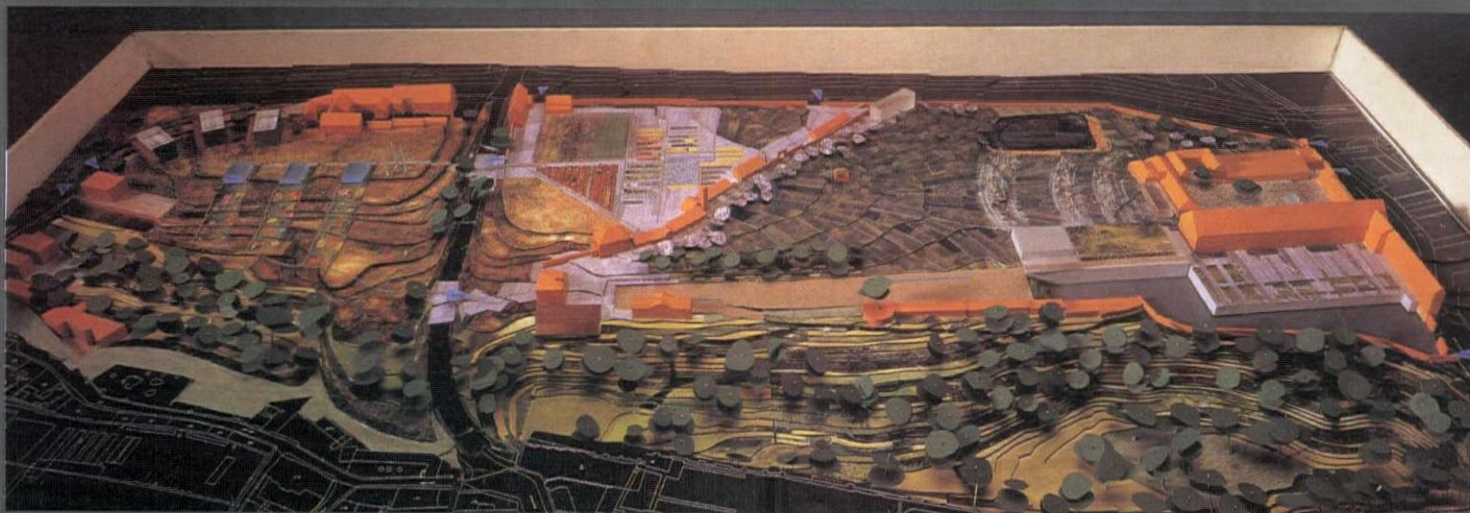
The Pheasantry is integral to the castle complex, and potentially a most important part of the inner city. The Prague Castle Administration decided to hold an international competition for making the Pheasantry part of the public pleasure gardens on the plateau and relating it visually and functionally to the castle. Some elements of the site and its structure seemed to be essential, for instance the Imperial (carp) Pond in the north-east corner, the diagonal wall across the site built in Rudolph II's time, and Masaryk's lookout built by Plečnik so that the first president could dream overlooking the deer moat, the castle and the spires of St Vitus's cathedral within it; a very large new greenhouse for rearing castle flowers had to be incorporated in the design.

The competition asked for suggestions of all kinds for using the site as a new urban

park, but its essential elements were to be preserved, and its marvellous position celebrated. Entries from all over the world were received in the first stage of the competition. This was judged in September, and eight projects were chosen by the jury² for development into second stage entries. The jury met again in November, and four projects were chosen as prizewinners. We show them here. The promoter (the Prague Castle Administration) intends to build the first-prize winning scheme.

¹ Though under the Communists, it was the President's private garden, and the public was very sternly kept out.

² Eva Jířitná, Giancarlo De Carlo (second stage only), Zdeněk Novák, Zdeněk Lukeš, Jifi Kotalík, Ivo Koukol (Prague Castle Administration), Peter Davey (Chairman of the jury). Non-voting members of the jury were Martin Rajniš and Bohuslav Blálek. Photographer Pavel Techa.



From south (castle) side; riding school to right. Rudolph II's diagonal wall separates public meadow (reinforced by curves of cobbles) from castle cut-flower garden. The sunken road, U Brusnice divided the site towards the west. The whole progression from east to west is from public to private realms, though whole site is open to everyone.

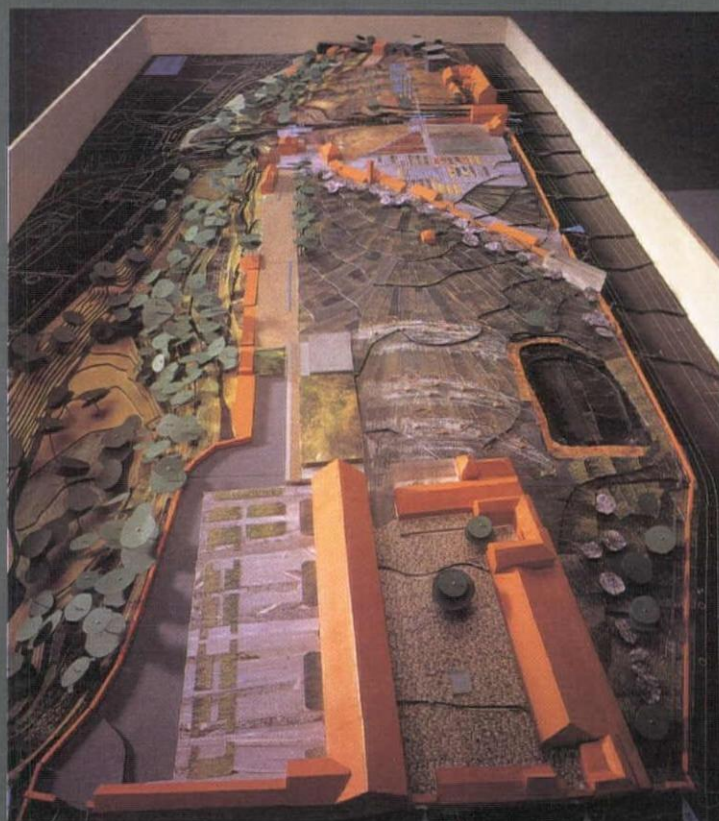
First

P.-A. BOHNET, S. RAY, D. STILES, B. BOURGEOIS,
D. MEIER, H. KIKUCHI – SWITZERLAND

The most ecologically conscious of the final eight entries, the scheme offers much human potential.



From north-east, with Imperial Pond in foreground just beyond riding school. New glass winter garden is projected at junction of Rudolph II's wall and the perimeter. It will house tender plants in cold months; in summer, they will be wheeled out in tubs.



From east, with riding school and its formal court in foreground. Masaryk's outlook incorporated in formal terrace overlooking deer moat (left, middle ground).

Jury report: 'The reading of the area has been made with intelligence and imagination. The approach offers a multiplicity of ideas and uses, both collective and individual. It proposes the implementation of ecological principles in planting and executions. And it offers opportunities for public participation in the running of the park. Qualities we particularly admire about this project include the way in which it offers freedom of movement and use. It has a plurality of destinations and functions, some declared, some implicit and others to be invented by the users. Its numerous entrances welcome visitors from all over the city. Its functions overlap creatively and generate new textures and surfaces which are achieved with a rich choice of materials and plants appropriately used. The scheme can easily be implemented in phases if the promoter decides to do so.'

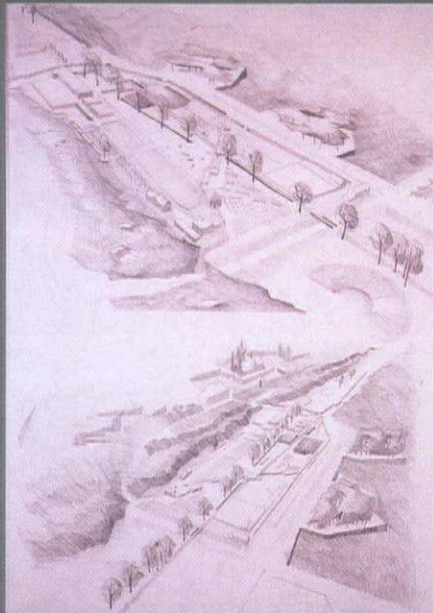
'While this scheme is the winning one, we must point out that it is still unclear in certain details. While we admire the handling of the landscape the proposed new buildings are not nearly as convincing. We are critical of the insertion of housing blocks in the north-west corner of the site. The reconstruction and re-use of the Riding Hall and its courtyard are unclear. So are those of the group of buildings at the south-west end of Rudolph II's wall. But we hope that these problems can be overcome, for this scheme, more than all the others chosen as finalists, showed remarkable improvement between the first and second stages of the competition and we believe that such progress will continue as the project is carried into practice. However, the concept presented is clearly the first stage of a process of realisation and it needs much more development.'

Second

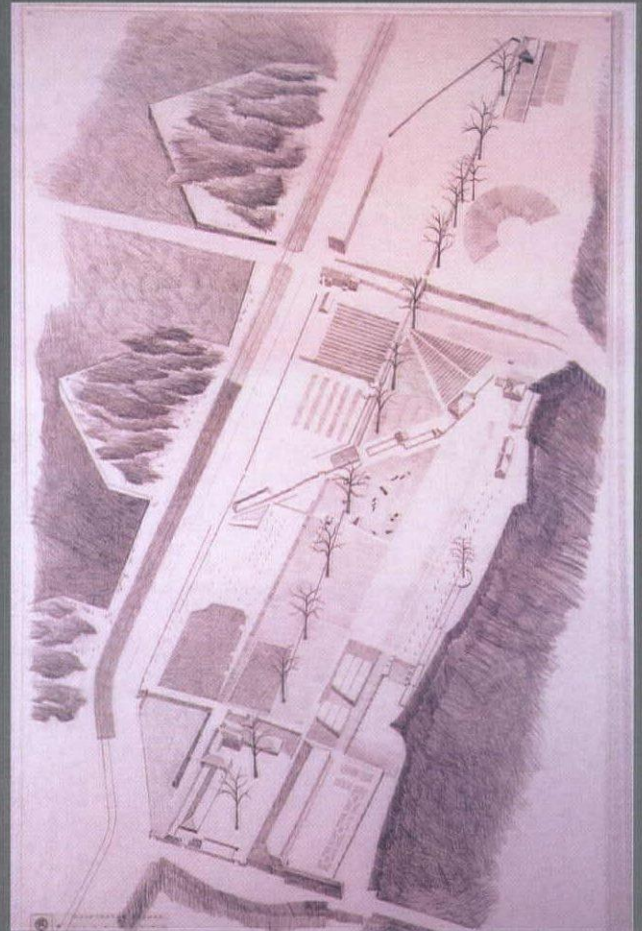
J. PLESKOT, M. VAVRIN, R. LAMPA, J. SVOBODOVA, K. STROBL,
P. RYDLO, F. TITTELBACH, P. LACKO – CZECH REPUBLIC

A very direct and simple solution, which took existing elements and imaginatively extrapolated from them.

Jury report: 'A professionally handled design showing deep knowledge of the area. The main theme is respect to the character of the site defined by the authors as a "production garden". Attention is also paid to the broader area, especially the bastions and the visual dominants of Hradcany [the castle area], as convincingly documented in a series of axonometric views and site plans. The interventions into the existing structure of the area are very careful and fully respect its existing character. The line of trees, some existing, others to be supplemented, and the path spanning the Pheasantry area and continuing across a bridge above the U Brusnice Street into the Cernin Field are selected as the main east-west axis. The authors show respect to the area also by counting on gradual construction of the concept in a long-term framework. However, several members of the jury find the proposal too cautious, and lacking invention. The entry was presented at a professional level.'



From north-west (top), and west (above).



From north-east: tree-line orders and relates all elements.



North-west corner of site (north to right). End of Rudolph II's wall (right foreground) becomes small square within park.

Joint third

A. OLIVER SUINAGA, A. MONROY NORIEGA – MEXICO

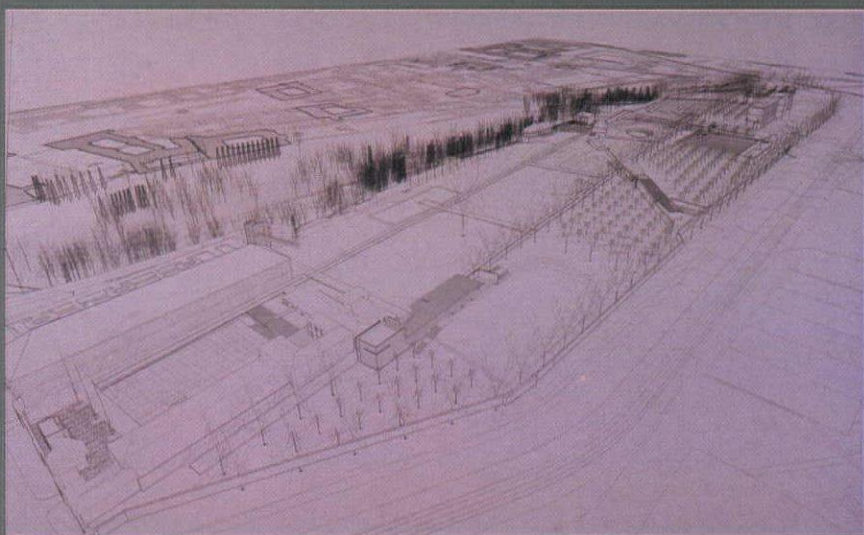
Taking its scale from the footprint of the riding school, the scheme made a series of platforms overlooking the valley and Hradcany's silhouette.

Jury report: 'We were impressed by the effort and knowledge displayed in this scheme and its presentation. It takes a logical approach to linking the main existing elements of the site in a plan which offers much spatial and functional variety. We welcome the attempt to develop the European formal garden tradition in our times, and the way in which the proposal is given scale by taking the footprint of the Riding Hall and its courtyard as the basic module. The platforms offer magnificent views of the castle and cathedral.'

'But we were worried that the repetition of the module might be mechanical, and in the end, meaningless. The northern axis terminates unhappily at both ends, particularly in the west. Building a new block of flats overlooking the Cernin Field is most undesirable.'



First version of plan.



From north-east: tea-house is set against Imperial Pond in foreground.

05 SITE PLAN / BROADER AREA DEVELOPMENT 1:1'000





Suinaga and Noriega: from south-east, with plan of castle first court in foreground.

Joint third

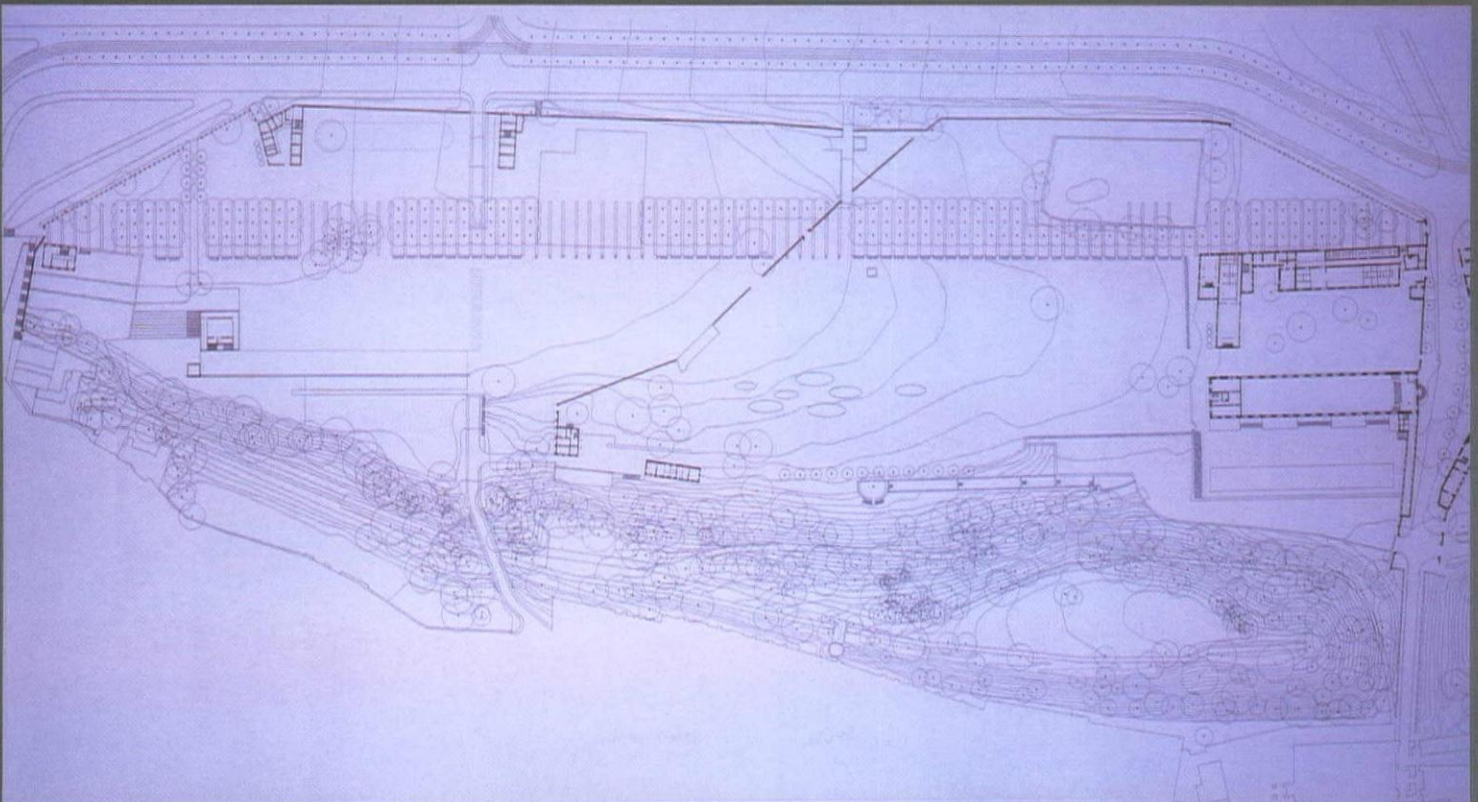
M. MASAK, M. RUDLIS, V. RUDIS, D. TYRDIKOVA, Z. VYDROVA –
CZECH REPUBLIC

One simple, bold move, the creation of a tree-shaded activity strip which runs right across the site serves to relate all the different elements of topography and programme, leaving most of the rest as a natural meadow overlooking the castle.

Jury report: 'In accordance with its first stage evaluation the Jury appreciates the simple and legible concept which in principle has not changed. The Jury highly values the naturally felt auditorium between the Riding Hall courtyard and Rudolph's wall.'

'The concentration of the active zone into a long rhythmical bosket, the idea of the physical connection of the western and eastern parts and numerous proposed demolitions received criticism. The strong and courageous design introduces a new axis, perhaps too accented by its scale and function.'

'The Jury appreciated the professional presentation but lacked more convincing development of some of the first stage ideas.'



Masak et al: meadow has oval pools to reflect skyline of Hradčany. North-east and north-west corners of site are visually opened to road through fence.

CULTURAL CENTRE, BELEM, PORTUGAL

ARCHITECT

GREGOTTI ASSOCIATI

1 From the river side, the building rises over its almost imperforate plinth as a series of levels of raised ground which now have more vegetation than shown in these pictures.

2 Tooled panels of warm limestone almost completely cover the exterior (texture seems to reduce incidence of vandalism and graffiti). Top of major masses is defined by white painted steel cornice or clerestories (see below).

3 Fly-tower (35m high) of theatre/opera house dominates north elevation. Main entrance is in centre of east elevation, facing the Praça do Imperio, which Gregotti describes as a 'very ugly square'.



Belém is the little town on the north bank of the Tagus from which Prince Henry the Navigator's unbelievably brave sailors set out in tiny ships to discover what was in the world outside Europe. The early sixteenth-century Manueline architecture of the Jerónimos monastery was one of the results of the wealth they brought back from the Indies: an amazing, wildly optimistic cocktail of very late Gothic, proto-Renaissance and Oriental themes without parallel in the world then or since.

The monastery remains the centre of the town, which is now set in the amorphous matrix of the western suburbs of Lisbon. But its exuberant (much restored) main facade still looks over to the mighty river across a formal planted square, the Praça do Imperio. Today, the west side of this public space is defined by a building which is almost the total opposite of the Manueline one: Modern and secular, it is virtually undecorated; it stands on a storey-high, scarcely pierced plinth; its blank walls tell no stories, unlike those of the monastery, where the life of Christ and that of the burgeoning empire are intertwined; yet while the ecclesiastical building is self-contained and a glorious end in itself, the new complex is penetrable in many ways and is intended to be a small permeable chunk of city, with cross and through routes like the little streets of all southern European towns.

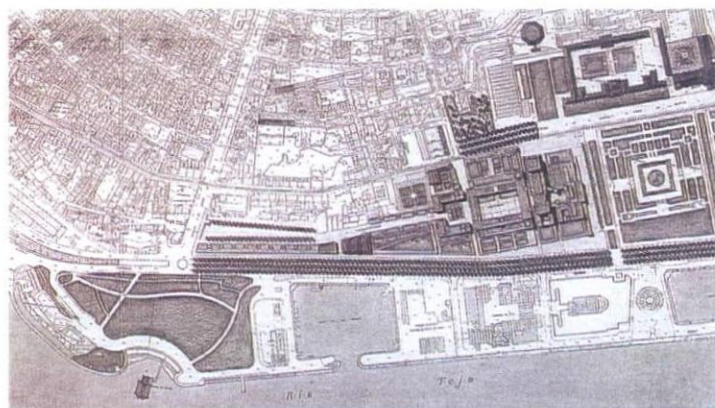
The Belém cultural centre by Vittorio Gregotti consists of three main elements, reading from west to east: a museum and library; a theatre complex; and a conference centre (intended to be largely used for cultural affairs – but as usual with such places, not always so). A further stage has been planned to the west with a square dominated by a hotel and shopping leading to a new street of shops, housing and miscellaneous functions.

What we have now is a big cultural plant, made originally for the 1992 rituals of the European Community, when Portugal was in the chair. Today, the building remains as a much used and cheerful part of what could clearly be a new lively and integrated part of the town, but partly because the final phase of the complex has not been built (city and national funds have been diverted to the 1998 Expo site up the river east of the city), the cultural centre is rather isolated.

Yet when we visited it in the twilight of a warm evening, the internal open spaces were full of families taking their *passaggiata*, interwoven with children amiably swanning about on skateboards; the cafés were cheerful; the bookshop was crowded; the museum well

BELEM BASTION

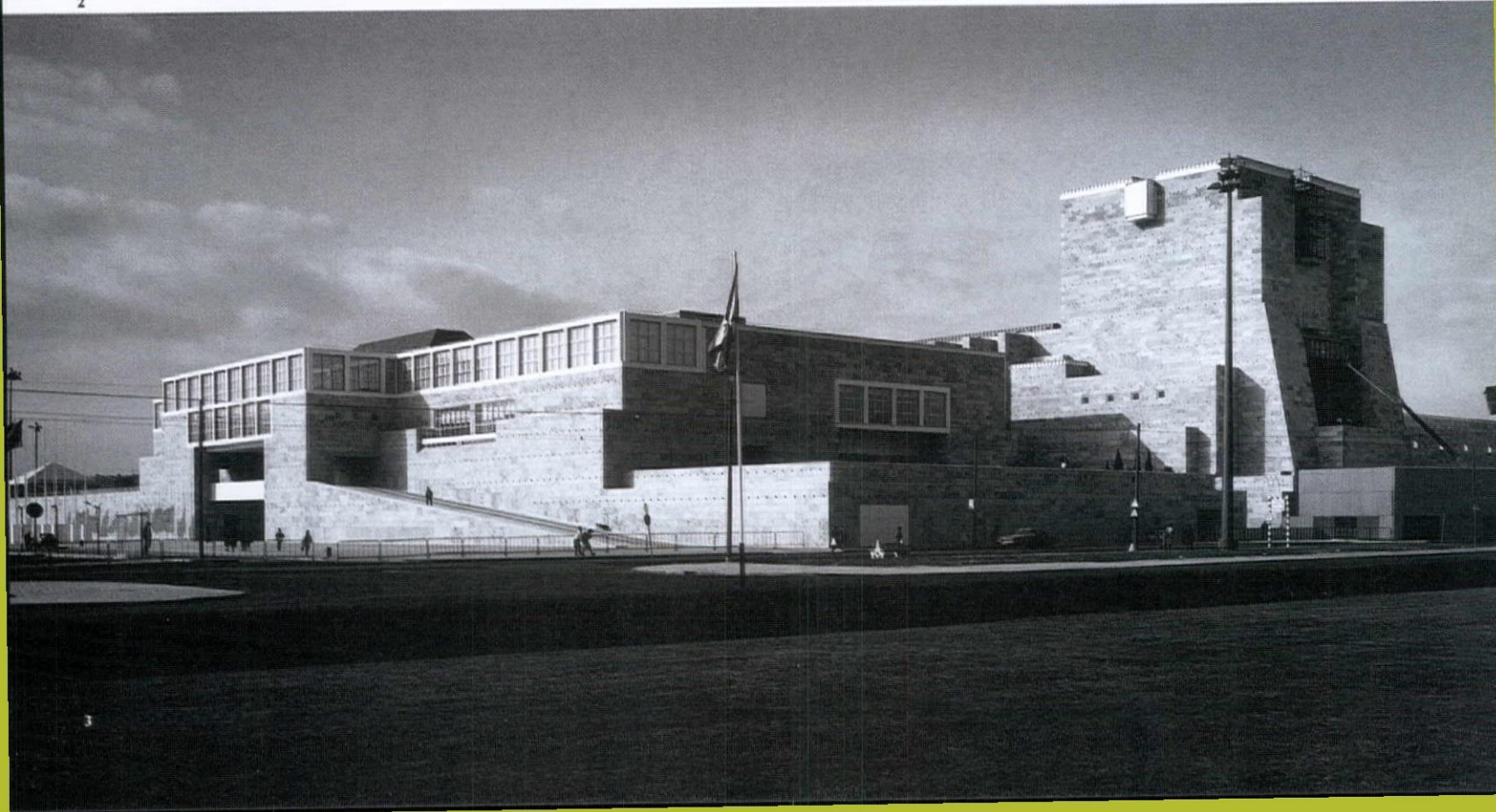
Can a town be re-animated by a cultural centre? We went to see how Vittorio Gregotti's contribution to Belém near Lisbon is faring.



site plan (north to top) shows projected west court which is intended to contain hotel and shopping. Monastery is north of Praça do Imperio to east of cultural centre



2



1

CULTURAL CENTRE, BELEM, PORTUGAL

ARCHITECT

GREGOTTI ASSOCIATI

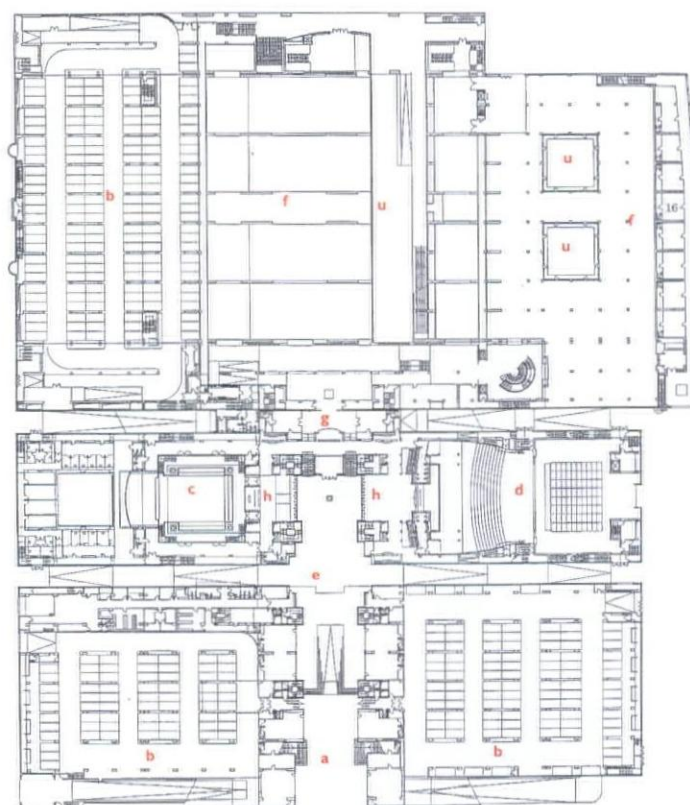
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The museum square on top of the podium is paved in traditional two coloured *calçada* setts which are used on almost all Lisbon's pavements. Trench on left (north) lights the temporary exhibition spaces below.

5

One of the ramped alleys which link the museum square to ground level. Glass box brings light down to the foyer of the museum.

- a ground level entrance
- b parking
- c conference auditorium
- d main auditorium
- e conference court
- f temporary exhibitions
- g museum entrance foyer
- h theatre entrance
- j museum court
- k terrace
- l museum
- m foyer
- n experimental theatre
- o conference centre entrance
- p conference
- q meeting
- r plant
- s conference auditorium
- t museum bar
- u sunk court



ground level



4



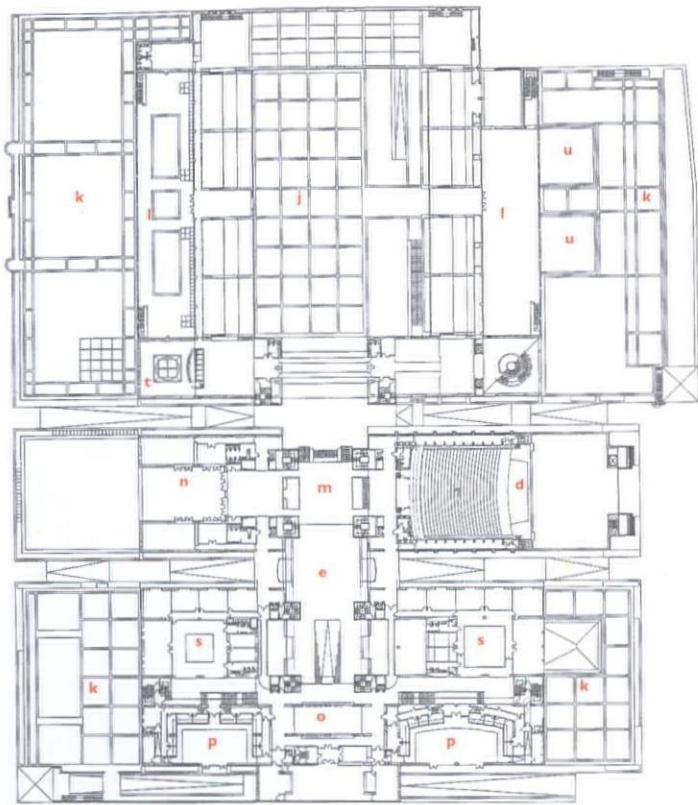
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attended. The rough hand-tooled limestone panel walls were admirably free of graffiti; the public spaces remarkably clean and neat. Clearly, the complex works at quite a lot of levels.

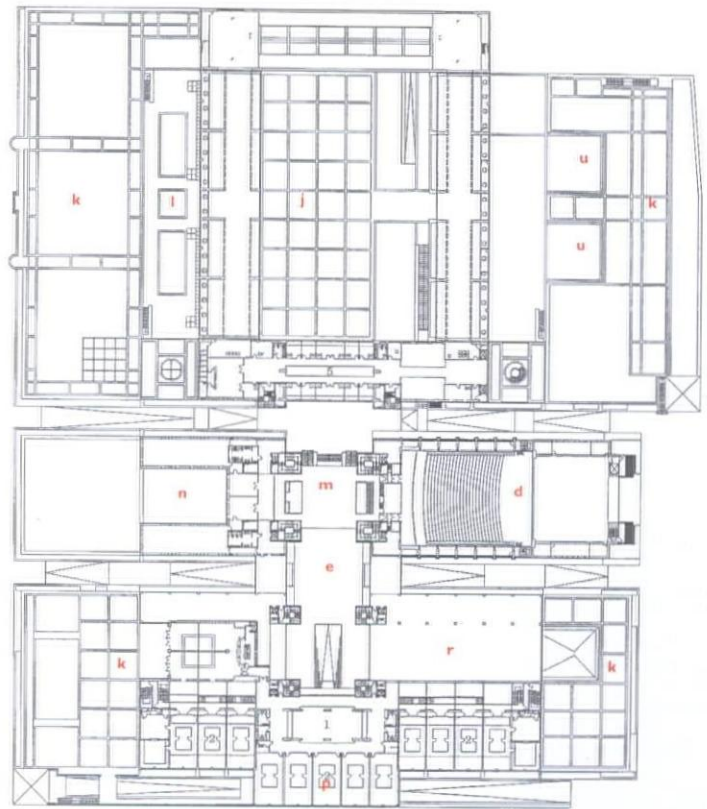
The urbanity is perhaps partly due to the politeness and polity of the Portuguese, who to the more individualistic Protestants of the north seem paragons of propriety. But surely it is also a reflection of the *parti*. A main east-west axis unites and relates the different functional zones of the scheme at first floor level over the plinth which is much occupied by car parking. The axis is approached from the square in front of the monastery through a central opening on the ground floor in the middle of the east elevation of the new building. From here by dexterous juggling of levels, you can walk up to the eastern court of the axis, a quite narrow public open space which is intended to be surrounded by shops. Ascent to the court is under the main foyer of the congress centre which is normally approached up ramps on each side of the central entrance.

This east court is connected to the west (museum) one by the glazed foyer of the two theatre spaces: a 1500 seat auditorium to the north which is capable of mounting opera, and a smaller, flexible experimental theatre on the south. The museum court which follows is a good deal wider and is a much more cheerfully generous social space. On its north side is a wide trench, almost like the trace of a forgotten moat in a medieval castle; it brings light down to the extensive temporary exhibition spaces within the plinth. A bridge crosses the moat to ceremonially deliver you to the museum, in which white galleries play on three levels.

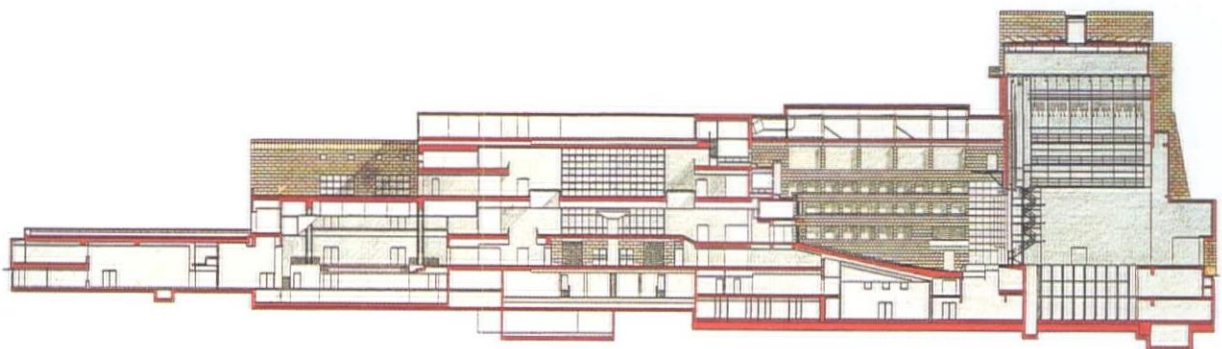
The main axis is crossed by two smaller open routes – alleys which run up north-south ramps on each side of the theatre complex to meet the main public promenade on top of the podium. These moves, like all the others in the complex, are intended to evoke the nature of southern European urbanity. Up to a point, it all works. The little north-south alleys in particular draw you in and up to the public open spaces. It is a great pity that the shops and little uses that Gregotti wanted to create at that level have not been realised.



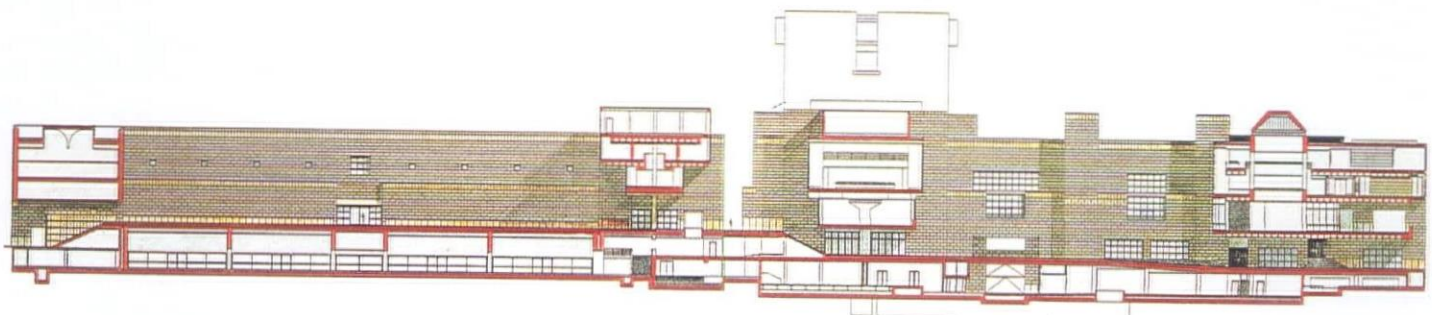
podium level



upper level



south-north section through terraces, experimental theatre, opera auditorium and fly-tower



west-east section through museum square, theatre foyers, conference square and main eastern entrance

CULTURAL CENTRE, BELEM, PORTUGAL

ARCHITECT

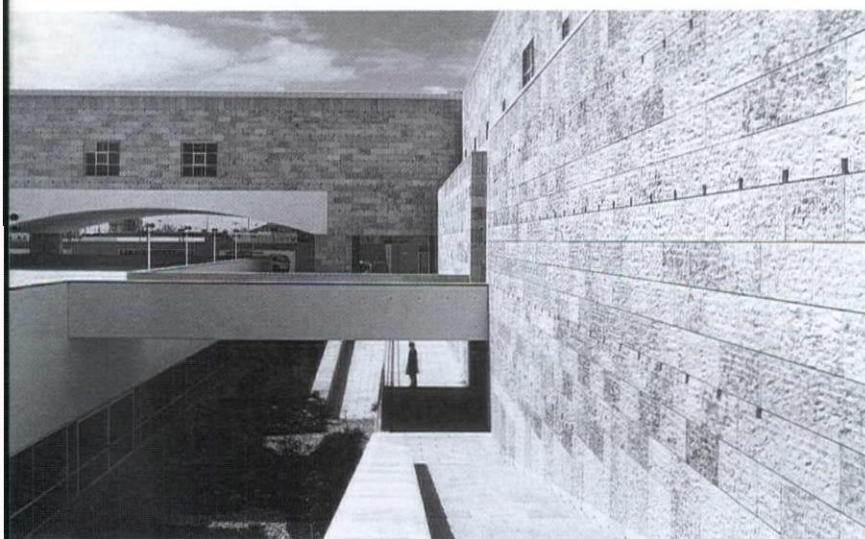
GREGOTTI ASSOCIATI

6
The dry moat which divides the museum from its courtyard.

7
The long thin galleries of the museum.

8
The main auditorium lined with granite and velvet is a conscious return to the tradition of theatre as a listening device.

9
Auditorium in conference centre: wood is oak.



6

Architect

Gregotti Associati International, Milan

Associate architect

Risco, Manuel Salgado

Project team

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Paulo Albuquerque, Vitor Alves,

Rita Amado, José Araujo, Lourdes Bispo,

Judice da Costa, Carlos Cruz,

Diogo Veiga da Cunha, Cristovao Macara,

José Carlos Monteiro, Lino Ramos,

Rui Ruivo

Structural engineer

Segadaes Tavares

Services engineers

Ansaldo, Joule, Grade Ribeiro,

Amman Progetti

Theatrical plant

Heinz Oechslin

Acoustics

Pedro Martins da Silva

Lighting

Piero Castiglioni

Interiors

Daciano Costa

Photographs

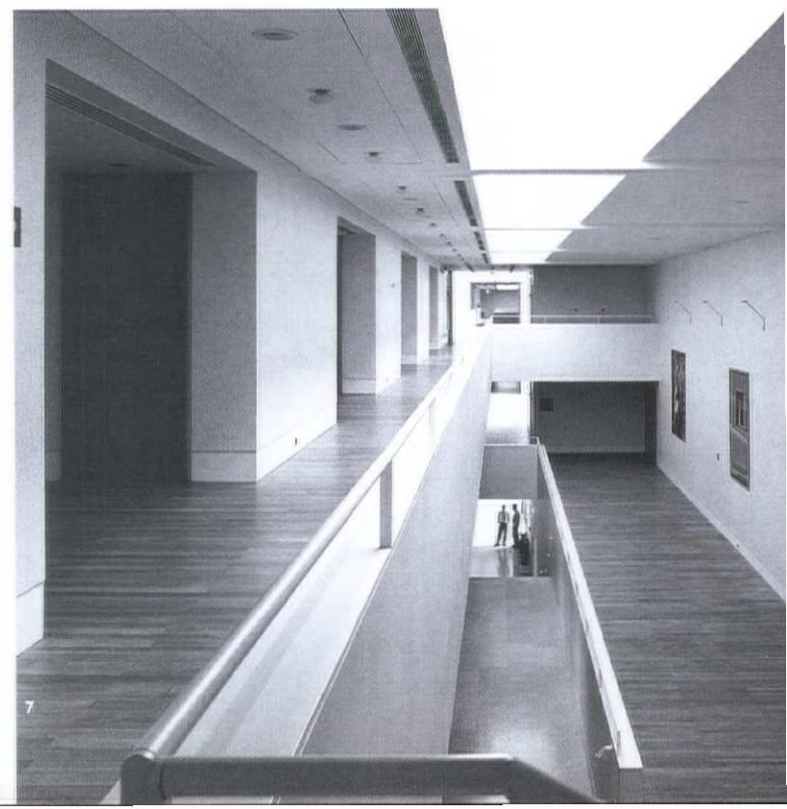
Mimmo Jodice

The building breaks down towards the south in a series of planted terraces which evoke the delicious semi-tropical formality of traditional Portuguese gardens and offer wonderful views over the Tagus; northern green terraces look to the monastery and the little houses of Belém. What Lasdun has called 'levels of raised ground' have been created, both as landscape and parts of city.

Despite this, the complex provokes many questions. It sits mute and inarticulate against the wild exuberance of the Manueline monastery. Is a democratic monument bound to be so austere and uncommunicative? Why is it so detached from the texture of the town? Did the organisation have to be quite so diagrammatic? Why put the main new public open spaces a level above the square, and not dig the contents of the plinth below ground level, allowing much easier access and integration with the urban fabric? Where it makes gestures, the building is often ungainly: think for instance of the clump fly-tower of the main theatre, the really dull glass curtain walls, and the squashed ceremonial arched links between parts of the main axis.

Yet it suggests a notion of urbanity, and (so far) has worked well. The attempt is brave, and a part of the immensely difficult effort to find for our times a series of places as generous and humanly rewarding as those of the Jerónimos monastery. Their beauty was made out of a lost common spirituality – and of the violence and rapine of the Portuguese empire. Gregotti has tried to show how decency and figure might be attained in a generous democratic society.

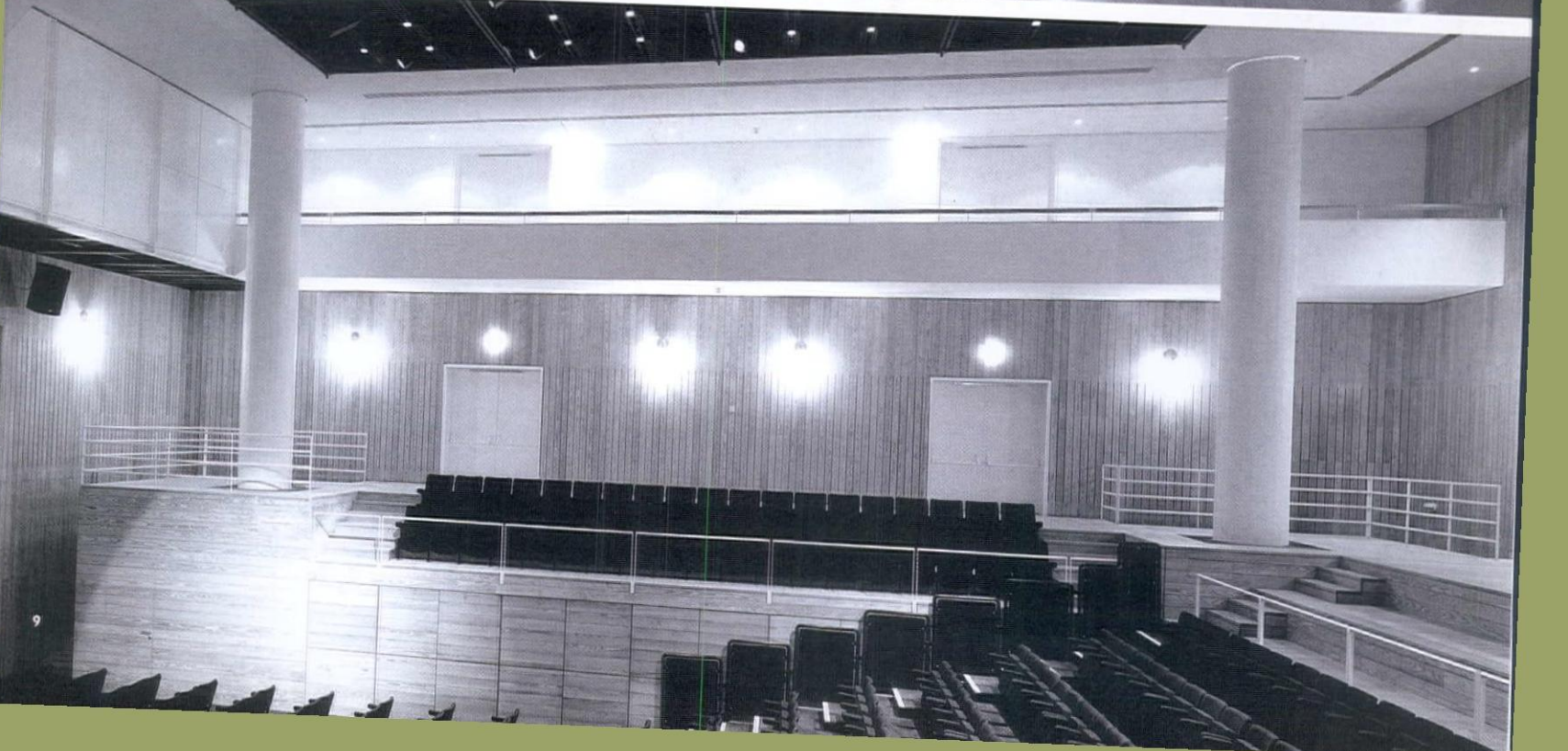
PETER DAVEY



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LANDESGIROKASSE ADMINISTRATION
BUILDING, STUTTGART, GERMANY
ARCHITECT
BEHNISCH & PARTNERS

RADICAL ENGAGEMENT



1

Through a rich engagement with urban life, this German bank headquarters confounds conventional notions of office buildings as defensive monoliths.

The Landesgirokasse (State Clearing Bank) is the main savings bank in Stuttgart with hundreds of branches. As it grew, its various operations spread into many buildings, and in 1988 a competition¹ was held for a general headquarters on a site near the Liederhalle. Behnisch & Partners won with a radical proposal for a complex 100 metre tower, but this proved too controversial for the city authorities and was dropped.

A second competition held in 1991 for the current site was again won by the Behnisch office. A tower was clearly out of the question, but the new site was also more intensely urban, calling for a more engaged building. The place is called Bollwerk (bulwark), recalling the fact that it was part

of Stuttgart's later fortifications of 1567, lying then just within the city's north-west corner. Although this is the highest piece of ground in the central area, it has become caught between the old centre and the later west-end, left as a transitional zone lacking in energy. Following war-time damage, the use of the hilltop site as a car park further destroyed the urban continuity, and it was a duty of the new bank building to stitch the area together again, both by making a memorable place at the top of the rise and by adding new attractions for the public.

Seven hundred people work at the bank's new building. Given the relatively generous size of site and the planners' wish that adjacent eaves lines be respected, it made

2





3

sense to build the perimeter of the block up to heights of five to eight storeys, leaving the centre open. A double-loaded corridor with rooms looking inward and outward was the obvious arrangement, with vertical circulation stacks near the corners. A column and slab structure allows the greatest flexibility, and suggests the adoption of a lightweight semi-transparent facade. All this is pretty standard, but almost immediately variations due to the particular situation start to arise (a Behnisch keyword is *Situationsarchitektur*). In following the street pattern, the plan figure becomes trapezoidal. The office tracts to north and west remain symmetrical and parallel sided, but those to south and east taper, responding to the site shape and allowing the creation of wider communal spaces along the spine. In the upper plans, the widening corridor of the south wing leads to a staff coffee bar with a sudden southward view. In the east wing, the greater width due to squaring off the enclosed court allows the offices to be treated as two buildings linked by vertical service cores. Between these is a broad communal space with floor voids of varying shape, and extra staircases making

direct links between adjacent floors. Such variations in circulation spaces give specific character to the wings and departments, acting as landmarks. Regular views of the outside world through glazed areas at each lift station provide further visual orientation.

In the offices, every effort was made to avoid uniformity. Departments are treated differently: the dealing room for foreign exchange is a big open office space on the lowest three levels of the south wing, for example. It shows itself on the court facade with continuous glazing. Walking through the building, the visitor encounters many different types of office, including those for one or two persons, group offices for four to seven people, and larger combined areas. There are variable partitioning possibilities, but on the whole the bank's policy is to create personal workplaces. Behnisch considers this important for a humane working environment, and he is sceptical of the new fashion for nomads with laptops.² The policy for electrical servicing is the standard 150mm floor void.

Office plans in the upper part of the building are largely repeated from floor to floor. But the top level which makes the

1
A cantilevered sky-box containing the entertainment suite thrusts out over Fritz-Elsas-Strasse.

2
Office blocks are elevated on columns to create a colonnade, leading to the central courtyard beyond.

3
The courtyard is dominated by a large, reflecting pool, penetrated by the sloping glass enclosure of the foyer.

**LANDESGIROKASSE ADMINISTRATION
BUILDING, STUTTGART, GERMANY**
ARCHITECT
BEHNISCH & PARTNERS

building's skyline is quite different. Because of the elevated site, views across the city to the surrounding hills are exceptional, and are exploited with generous windows and terraces. The most dramatic gesture is the cantilevered sky-box projecting over the front facade (an entertainment suite for visitors).

Most invention is lavished on the building parts which hit the ground. This is partly a question of entrance, but most essentially a matter of how the bank engages with the public realm. Its own programme did not offer enough public face to animate all three street-fronts that it owns: the bank itself meets the public realm only at its main entrance, the service entrance at the southern corner, and the self-service cash facility at the northern corner. Unlike most banks, it does not then spend the rest of its frontage being monumental, dead and defensive. Instead, the public face is given to other public functions. There is a stylish Italian restaurant on the corner, a three-auditorium cinema on Hohestrasse to the east; and a lamp shop on Leuschnerstrasse.

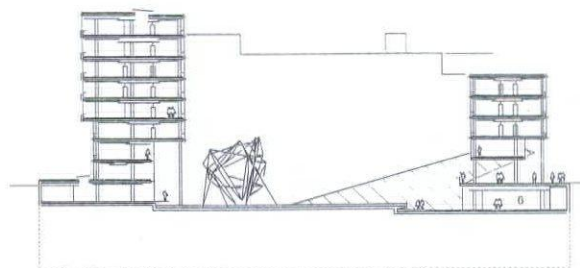
Doubtless chosen to enhance the bank's intended fashionable and progressive image, these tenants are nonetheless independent. They enliven the area, making the bank's territory more public and more penetrable. With its corner position, pavement tables, and canted two-storey glazing, the

restaurant has the hottest site of all.

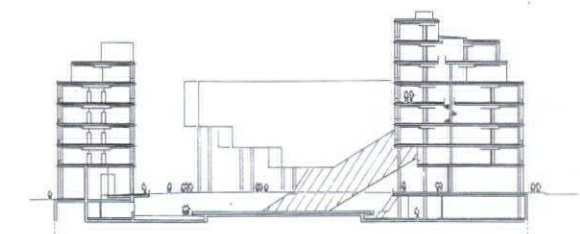
The central court of the building also has a public role, at least visually. This large void was needed by the offices as a light-well and carries on down to basement level, admitting luminance right around the inner perimeter. The ground-space around its northern edge, which gets the best south light, is the outdoor sitting area for the bank's basement cafeteria. The rest of the space is given to a reflective pool which is to be enlivened with a large Frank Stella sculpture. Continuity with street level is assured by the great glazed void on the east side, and by inviting flights of stairs. Seminar rooms at basement level on the north side have to be artificially lit, but because they open into the big foyer space they do not seem cut off from the outside world.

By breaking the front block and leaving the upper floors projecting over as a portico, symbolic entry is invited. The public can walk across to the railings on to the court, where they can enjoy the spectacle of the pond and peer down at staff in the outdoor cafeteria area. They can feel part of the space without entering it, which would pose security problems. Looking to the left, they see the sloping glass plane of the foyer area which links the basement to the ground floor. This dramatic invention is similar in concept to the glass roof at the Ohringen school (AR April 1995), but is here used to much greater

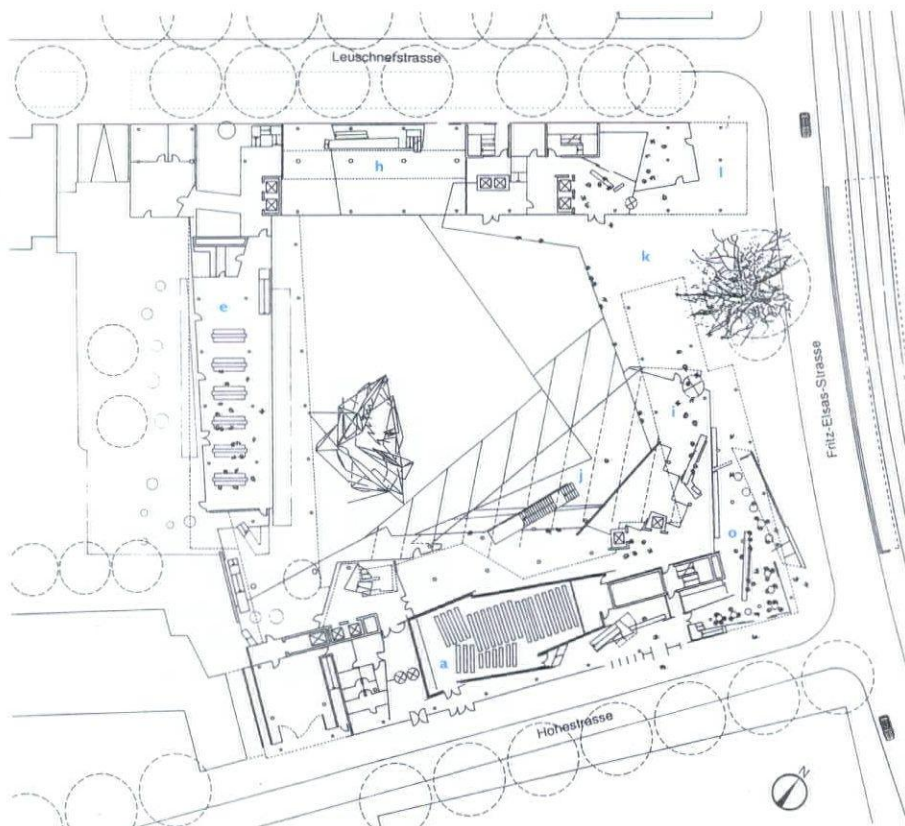
- a cinema
- b training
- c foyer
- d seminar rooms
- e trade centre
- f proposed sculpture
- g cafeteria
- h shops
- i entrance
- j exhibition space
- k entrance forecourt
- l automated banking
- m pool
- n offices
- o restaurant



east-west cross section



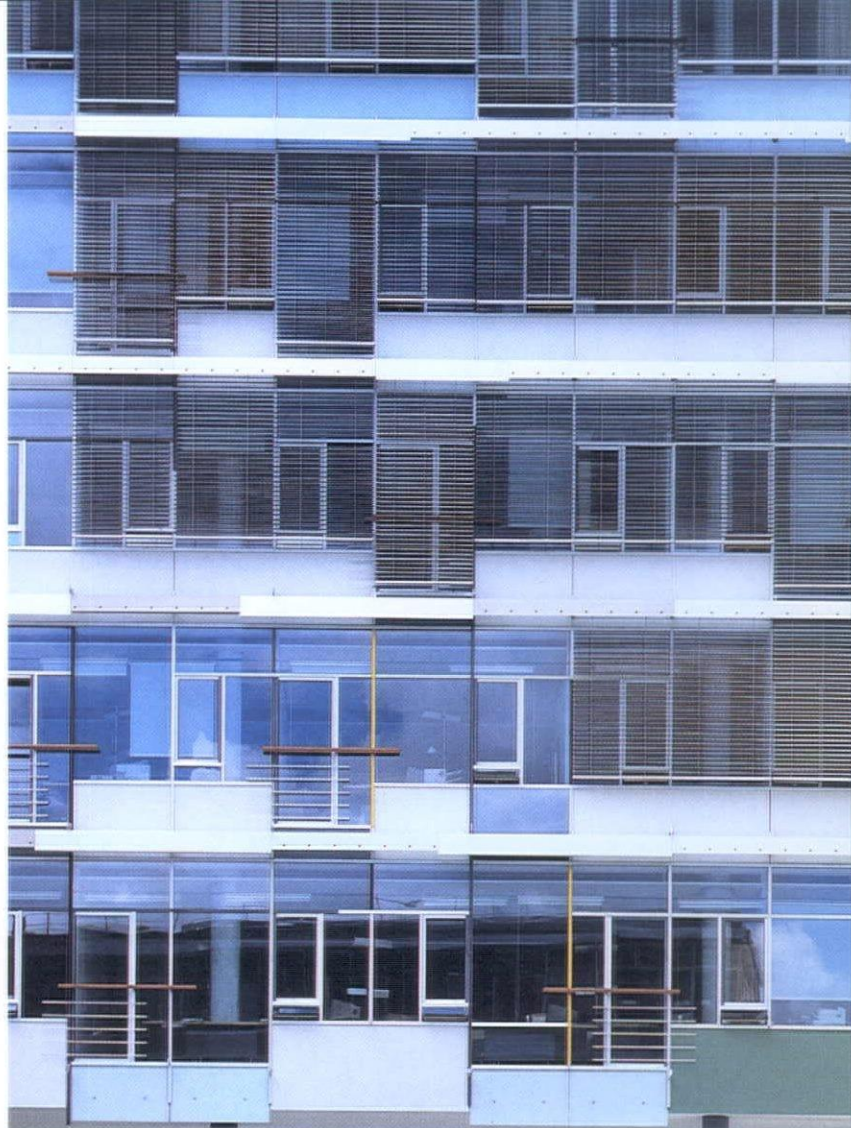
north-south cross section



ground floor plan (scale approx 1:1500)



4

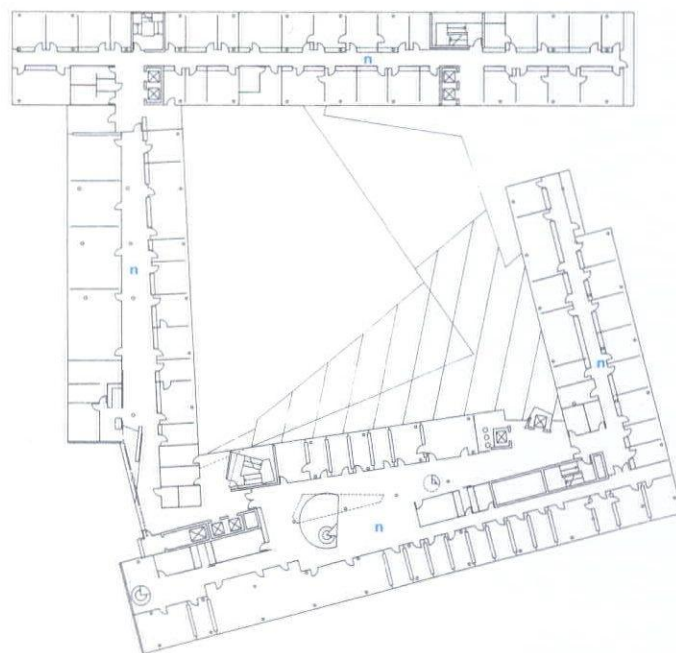


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4
Part of the poolside walk.
5
Detail of typical office elevation.



lower ground floor plan



typical upper floor plan

**LANDESGIROKASSE ADMINISTRATION
BUILDING, STUTTGART, GERMANY**
ARCHITECT
BEHNISCH & PARTNERS

- 6, 7
Translucent planes of water and glass
collide in the courtyard.
8
The glazed foyer encloses generous,
luminous spaces.
9
Detail of roof landscaping.
10
Materials, light and spatial
interpenetrability combine to lift the
senses.
11
Part of the foyer.
12, 13
Even the interiors strive to be
uninstitutional.

effect. It is as if ground and first floor circulation galleries have been left open to participate in the court, then weatherproofed at the last minute. The glass plane even plunges into the pool, dividing the main external water sheet from another inside.

Just as the public look into the court, so internal visitors can look into the continuation of the space from a balcony rail just inside the entrance. As they progress further into the building they cross a glass floor lit from below, again an intriguing invention, but also a happy accident. The concrete structure had been made to earlier plans following the main lines of the two blocks when the architects saw that the busy corner would be too congested, so they filled it in almost on the same angle as the great glass plane. A lighter technology was needed at this stage, but the glass floor also enhances the sense of transparency and continuity between ground floor and basement.

As Behnisch notes: 'The huge facades were a problem for us. The demands and apparent perfection of the facade are disrupted, for we dissolved the network of constructive parts by means of colour and material. Thus the line of a column, for example, can be

taken into graphic play, or a sheet of water can become a mirror, and this makes things free to work beyond their earthly weight and necessity. Things begin to dance – in the end the dancing is more important than the things themselves.'³

Think of the building without the colour, or the play of reflection and transparency: these effects are essential. The colour scheme fits so well that it is hard to imagine the building without it. Colour choices for most Behnisch buildings are made by Christian Kandzia, the long serving member of the office who also takes the official photographs and organises publications. When he first joined the office, he was a project architect initiating designs, but he gradually found that his gift as an architect lies less at the conceptual end than in the final stages, making adjustments to the finishes and adding colours. It is typical of Behnisch's imaginative way of managing his staff that he has allowed this untypical role to develop. Behnisch and Kandzia have no general colour theory, indeed Behnisch has admitted that 'in our attempts to establish a consistent approach to colour, success has eluded us'.⁴ But they do try to avoid colours

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11

associated with corporate identity and with political parties, and Kandzia is careful how they are mixed. He considers working on site with the newly completed building essential, and he experiments. In some parts of the bank, he says, certain walls are not yet quite right and will be repainted. The Landesgirokasse is the largest building by Behnisch in his home city. In atmosphere and general intention it is not unlike the Herbert Keller House of 15 years ago, the office building for a religious charity in which Behnisch pioneered a new kind of place-making approach to office design (AR June 1985). But unlike the Keller House, which was part of a large typically modern redevelopment with too much landscaped interval space, the new bank has a real old-fashioned urban site. It makes a block and contributes to surrounding streets, besides providing a new landmark at a crucial point in the urban fabric and in the city skyline. It completely vindicates the architects against the oft repeated charge from their ideological opponents that they cannot do urban buildings. The Landesgirokasse is a fully engaged urban building making a new interpretation of the idea of court, and playing new variations on the theme of visual

penetrability. In its responsiveness to specific local incident it stands in a noble urban tradition going back to the contextualism of Theodor Fischer and the Stadtlandschaft ideal of Hans Scharoun. PETER BLUNDELL JONES

- 1 The limited competition was held in July 1991, the ground broken in April 1993, the foundation stone laid in August 1994, the topping out in March 1995, and completion January 1997.
- 2 Günter Behnisch in an interview with Amber Sayah in *Stuttgarter Zeitung* no 142, 24 June 1997.
- 3 Introduction to the booklet *On Colour* produced by the Behnisch office and published by Gerd Hatje, Stuttgart 1993 (bilingual English/German text).
- 4 Behnisch in the same interview, my translation.

Architect

Behnisch, Sabatke, Behnisch, Stuttgart

Project architects

Günther Schaller (project leader), Andrea Crumbach, Martin Schodder, Wolfgang Sterr, Thomas Strittmatter

Project team

Volker Biermann, Michael Blank, Julianna Fecskes, Stefanie Flaubert, Ulrich Hanselmann, Rochus Hinkel, Hans-Peter Höhn, Tom Hurt, Peter Koller, Ingrid Marx, Christoph Mayr, Christoph Mischke, Claudia Möller, Laura Rovelli, Birgit Sauerhammer, Bettina Stark, Roland Stölzle, Peter Voelki, Edelgard Wilburger, Christian Kandzia

Structural engineer

Leonhardt, André + Partner

Landscape

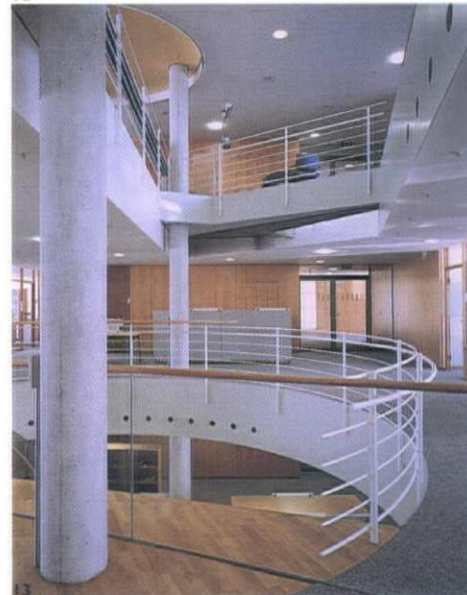
Luz + Partner

Photographs

Roland Halbe/CONTUR



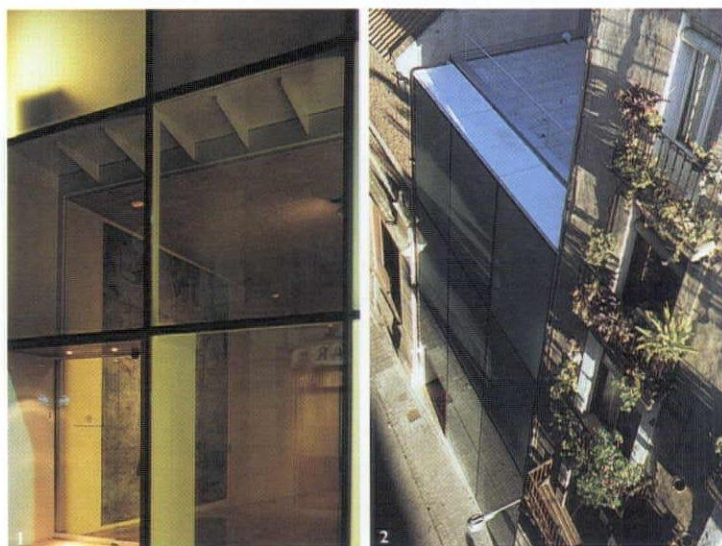
12



13

This sleek new faculty building in Barcelona is an imaginative response to an awkward site in the city's labyrinthine medieval core.

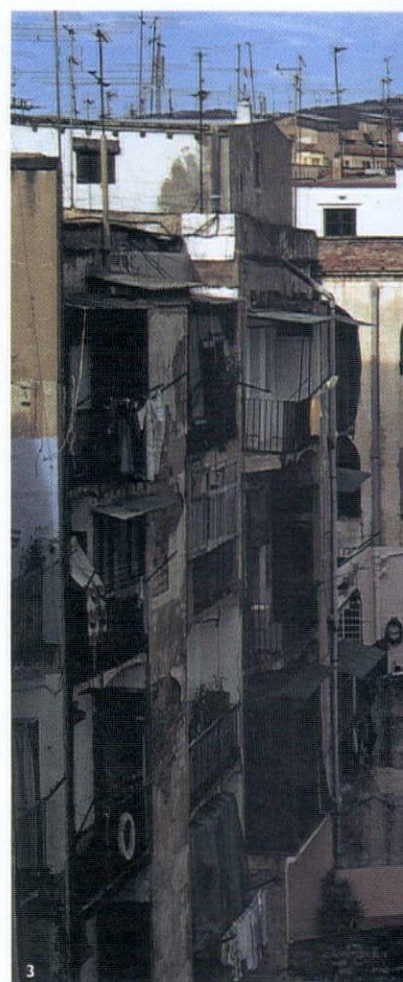
CATALAN CONTEXT



Since the 1970s, the labyrinthine *paseos* and buildings of Barcelona's dense Barri Gòtic have been progressively rehabilitated through a series of modest urban design initiatives. Co-ordinated by Oriol Bohigas, the strategy has concentrated on renewing the decaying city fabric by establishing small-scale piazzas, and restoring significant buildings, such as churches and convents. The strategy has also given rise to the much larger intervention of Richard Meier's Museum of Contemporary Art (AR March 1997), which forms the north edge of the rather bleak new Plaça dels Angels. Meier's formidable building is an assured and heroic piece of architecture, but its unremitting bulk tends to eclipse its surroundings. To the north of the MCA, is the fourteenth-century convent of the Casa de la Caritat, now converted into a Centre for Modern Art by Albert Viaplana and Helio Piñón. This overlooks a smaller square to the west, which originally formed part of the convent's lands, its south side partly defined by the pristine flanks of Meier's massive museum.

The eastern edge of this smaller square has been recently colonised by a new building housing the Communications Sciences Faculty of Barcelona University. Designed by the local practice of Varis Arquitectes, the new insertion responds to its exacting context with subtlety and invention, mediating between the historic convent and the imposingly contemporary MCA.

The five-storey block is set against the blank party wall of an adjoining apartment building. Most of the faculty accommodation – essentially seminar and lecture rooms of varying sizes – is contained in a rectangular slab running parallel to the square. This crisply articulated volume is wrapped in sleek aluminium cladding panels, intermittently perforated by horizontal slashes of glazing. Elongated windows are protected from the sun's glare by mechanical shutters, angled like heavy eyelids. The faculty's double-height cafeteria occupies



1 North elevation to the calle Valldonzella.

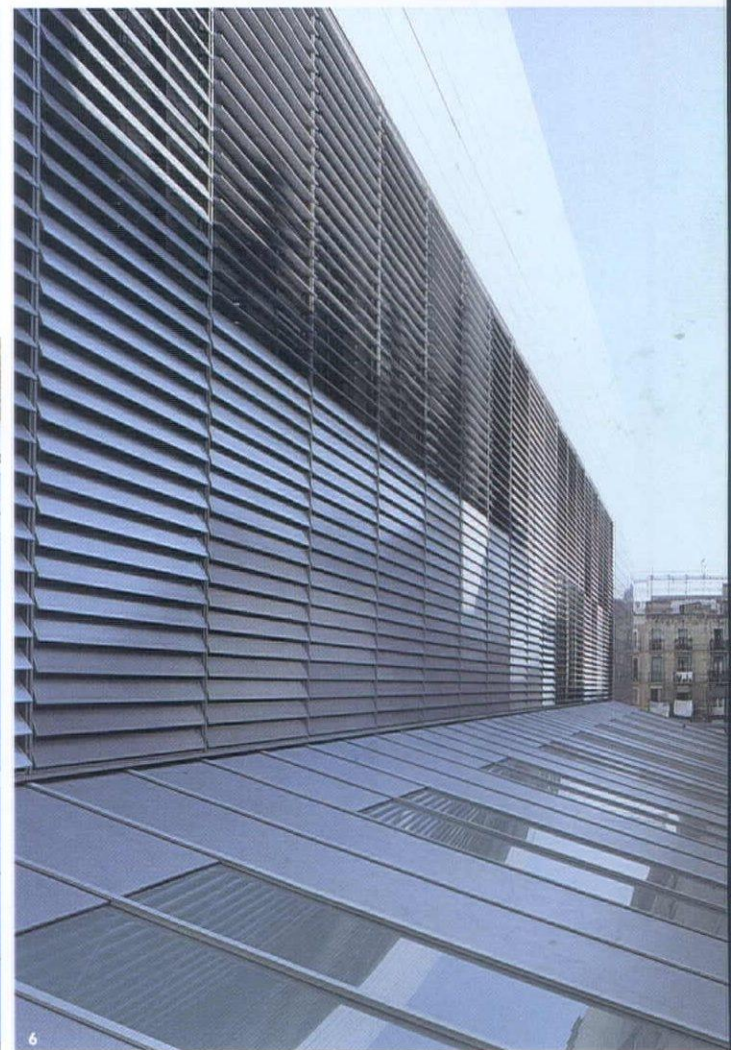
2 The building extrudes into the *calle* to register as a sheer, inscrutably translucent plane.

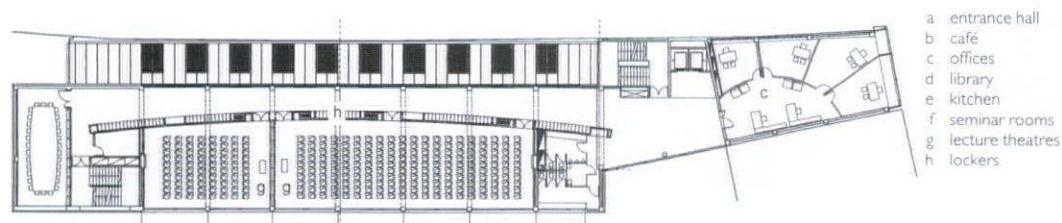
3 The abstract south elevation, with the great white flank of Meier's Museum of Contemporary Art, right.

4 The rectangular block is wrapped in sleek aluminium panels, punctuated by horizontal slashes of glazing.

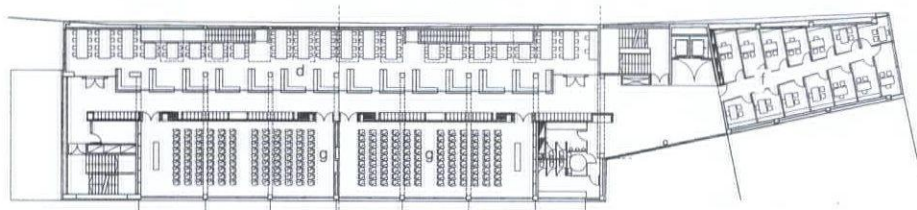
5 Main east elevation overlooks an intimate square, which was originally part of the fourteenth-century convent of the Casa de la Caritat.

6 Upper floors are pulled away from the adjoining party wall, creating a glazed slot which brings light into the library below.

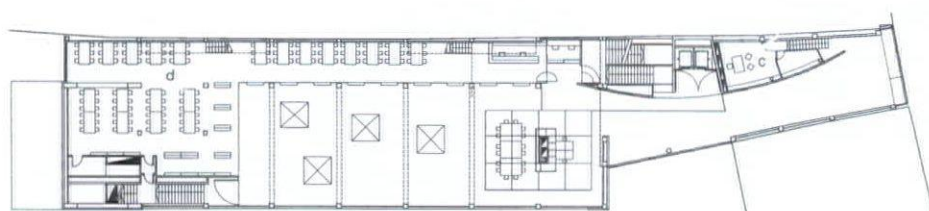




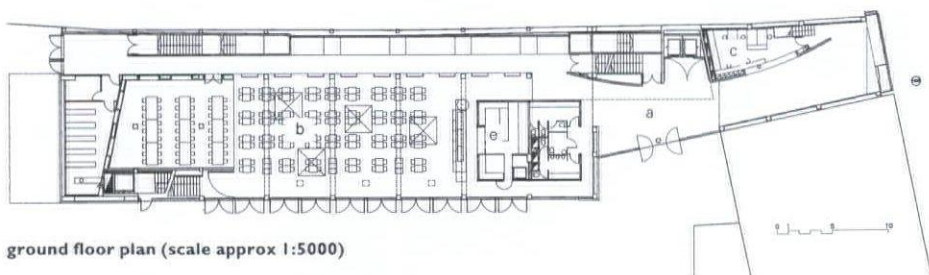
third floor plan



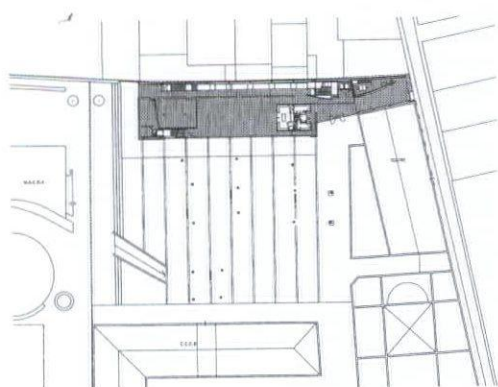
second floor plan



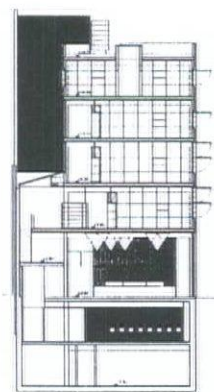
first floor plan



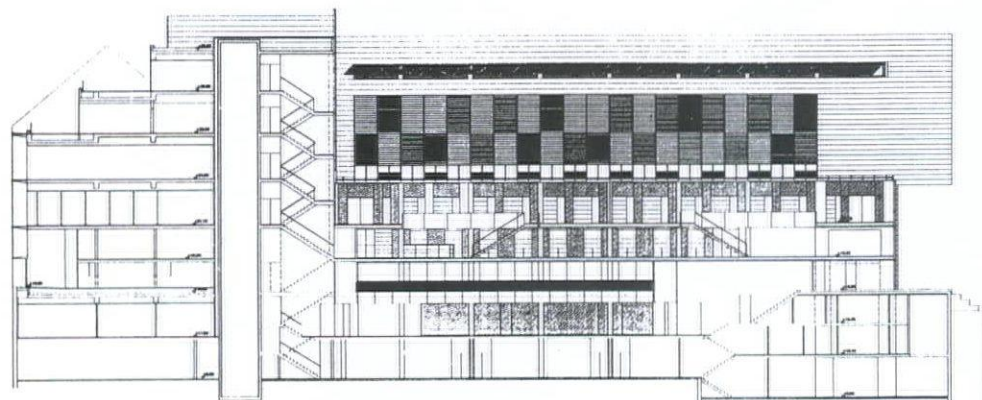
ground floor plan (scale approx 1:5000)



site plan



cross section



longitudinal section

- a entrance hall
- b café
- c offices
- d library
- e kitchen
- f seminar rooms
- g lecture theatres
- h lockers

the ground floor; here the walls are fully glazed, so that students can spill out into the square on warm days, adding animation and life to the urban scene.

On the shorter south elevation, the upper three floors are cantilevered out, sculpturally terminating the block. The projecting end is randomly studded with tiny square openings, like a computer punch card. The upper three floors are also pulled clear of the party wall on the east side, forming an interstitial slot. This is glazed over, bringing light into the generous double-height volume of the library which wraps around the café. The upper floors house cellular lecture and seminar rooms, enclosed by a gently curving wall containing banks of individual lockers.

To the north, the rectangular block tapers to a wedge between existing buildings, finally extruding out on to the narrow calle Valldonzella as a sheer, translucent plane. The glacial skin forms a starkly contemporary foil to the eroded stone and ornate mouldings of the Barri Gotic. This compressed portion of the faculty contains administrative offices and the deanery, separated from teaching spaces by the main entrance hall and a glazed node of circulation.

Although modest in scale and execution, the building responds to its context with an austere formalism that resists the blandishments of historical pastiche. Instead, through sensitive placemaking and a refined material presence it makes a contribution both to Barcelona's incremental architectural evolution and the wider social life of the city. C. S.

Architect

Varis Arquitectes, Barcelona

Project team

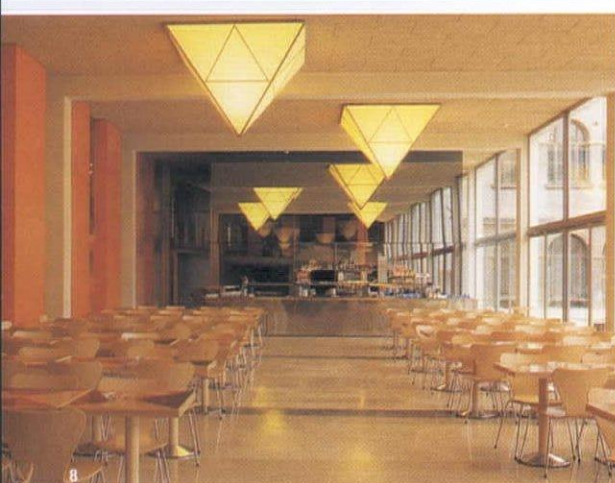
Dani Freixes, Vicente Miranda, Vicenç Bou, Eulàlia González, Ricard Pie, Anton Alsina, Artur Arias

Structural engineer

Robert Brufau

Photographs

Mihail Moldoveanu

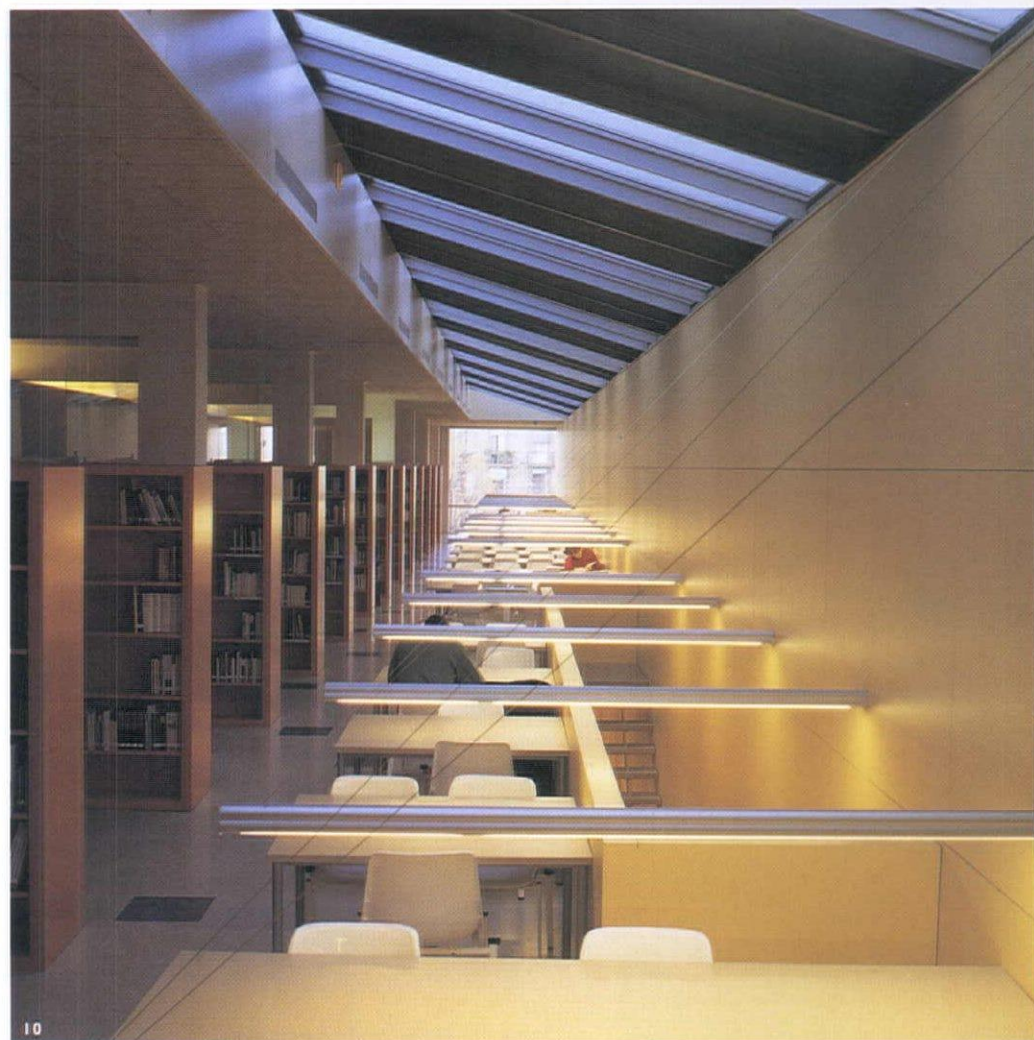


7
At ground level, the faculty café can spill out into the public realm.

8
Café interior. The luminous, double-height volume is the faculty's social focus.

9
Entrance hall, with café beyond.

10
The faculty library, illuminated by the glazed interstitial slot. The lower level of the library wraps around the café.



INTRA MAURIOS

Parisian Zones d'Aménagement Concerté are models of how to create urbane cityscapes today which relate to tradition and fully use modern technology.

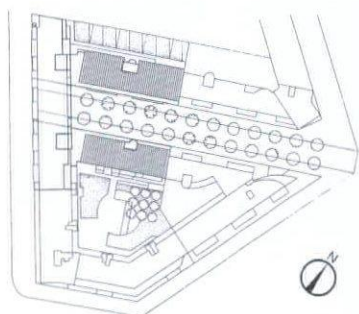
The Zone d'Aménagement Concerté (ZAC) at Bercy where the old Paris wine warehouses used to be on the banks of the Seine is an inspiring model of what planning can do to tame the mighty destructive forces of the market and Modernism, which together and separately, have done so much to destroy traditional European cities. The developments along rue de Pommard, where Jean-Pierre Buffi and others created a sequence of small courts and little streets leading down to the new urban park along the river, are some of the most sophisticated pieces of European urban housing built in the last decade (AR June 1995): they self-consciously draw on the traditions of Paris, while using up-to-date constructional

techniques, and the spatial and formal potential these offer.

Now, the other side of the rue de Bercy (the spine of the whole development) is being rebuilt and one of the first results is the corner of the block where rue Corbineau joins Bercy. As usual in a ZAC, several architects have been asked to work together to ensure that there is a degree of variety within the strong overall plan – a tradition that goes back to Haussmann and perhaps earlier. Francis Nordemann and Georges Maurios worked out an overall scheme in which the heights of their contributions are related and the street front seems of a piece. It was important to present a united and strong statement on this site for it is surrounded by powerful neighbours. Across the road is

the Bercy Palais Omnisport (the one which looks like a truncated green pyramid, with grass sides set at improbable angles); just a little further down the Seine is Chemetov & Huidobro's frightening Ministry of Finance, which bridges over the road and sticks out into the water (AR August 1989); and over the river are the mighty towers of the Très Grande Bibliothèque (AR July 1995).

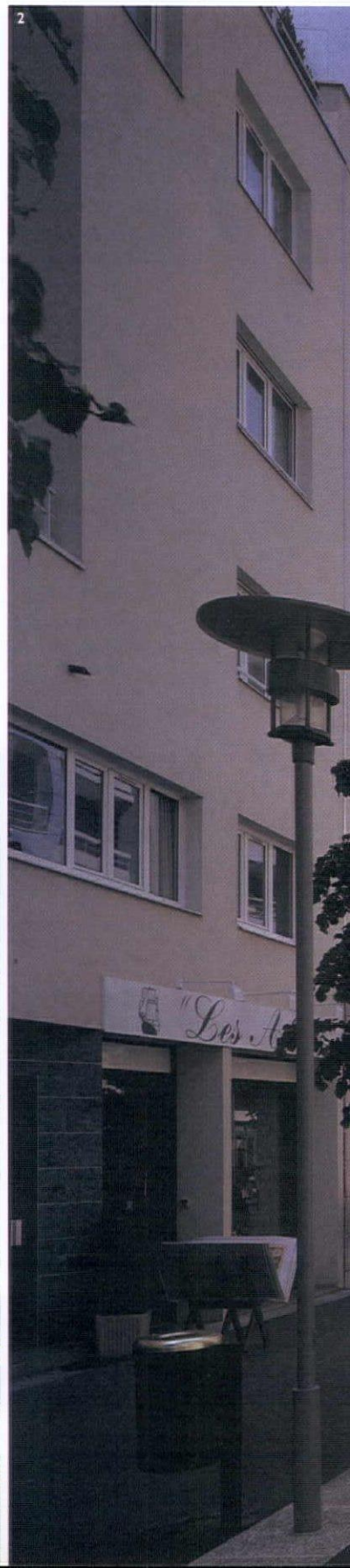
Nordemann and Maurios and their colleagues are in a sense required to provide an urban backdrop to all these detached object-monuments. They are helped in the task by the new height limits in the area, which allow them to go up nine storeys high (as opposed to the old six floor walk-up tenements which are virtually standard



site plan

1 The propylaeum which signals entry to the new pedestrian street that crosses the block.

2 Pedestrian street reduced in scale and lined with trees also has local uses at ground level. Beyond propylaeum can be seen the improbable sloping lawns of the Bercy Palais Omnisport.



MIXED DEVELOPMENT, BERCY, PARIS, FRANCE
ARCHITECTS:
GEORGES MAURIOS AND FRANCIS NORDEMANN



MIXED DEVELOPMENT, BERCY, PARIS, FRANCE

ARCHITECTS

GEORGES MAURIOS AND FRANCIS NORDEMANN

Architect

Georges Maurios Architecte (assistant Luc Houel)

Francis Nordemann Architecte

Photographs

All photographs by Olivier Wogenscky apart from 3 which is by Stéphane Couturier/Archipress



3 Nordemann's corner; is part of main strategy of scheme but goes slightly wonky.

4 Maurios's contribution (with propylaeum in middle) links Nordemann with recent development on left.

5 The new buildings incorporate more shops and restaurants at ground floor than did the first housing in the ZAC. Upper floors are dark and recessed to retain traditional Parisian cornice line.

6 Inside one of the new courts created behind pedestrian street.

throughout traditional Paris). This has allowed them to create a predominantly horizontal slab with its lines emphasised by the generous balconies of each flat. Both schemes have recessed and darkened upper floors so that the traditional cornice line of the area is retained (though because modern floor heights are lower than those of the nineteenth century, today's architects can cram in seven storeys where there were only six before).

Nordemann on the corner site has responded a bit wildly, with slightly wonky dark stone faced balconies at the angle itself. Maurios has adopted a more sober approach and has the more interesting site. His chunk of facade on rue de Bercy is pierced by a pedestrian way

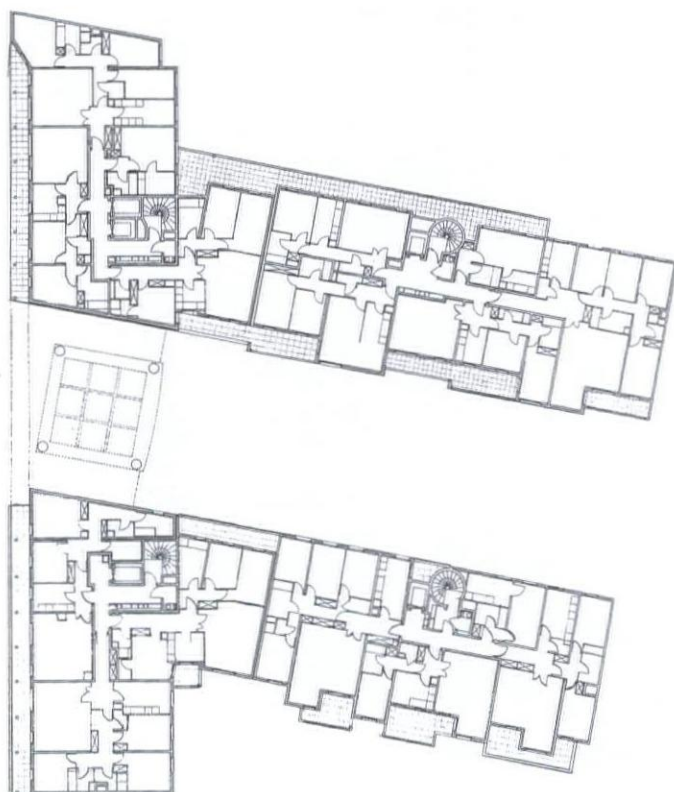
running through the block almost at right angles to the big street. He has made a celebratory propylaeum which marks the entrance of the small tree-lined route and cut block heights to six stories, so that the thoroughfare is not too dark. As in the rue de Bercy facade, the treatment is predominantly horizontal, but here again, each flat is identifiable within the overall order, so a sub-theme of towers of individual dwellings is set in counterpoint to the strong lines of the balconies.

The problem with the first stage of the Bercy ZAC was that, excellent though both the urban form and the individual flats may have been, the traditional European tenement model (which has been the pattern of dense

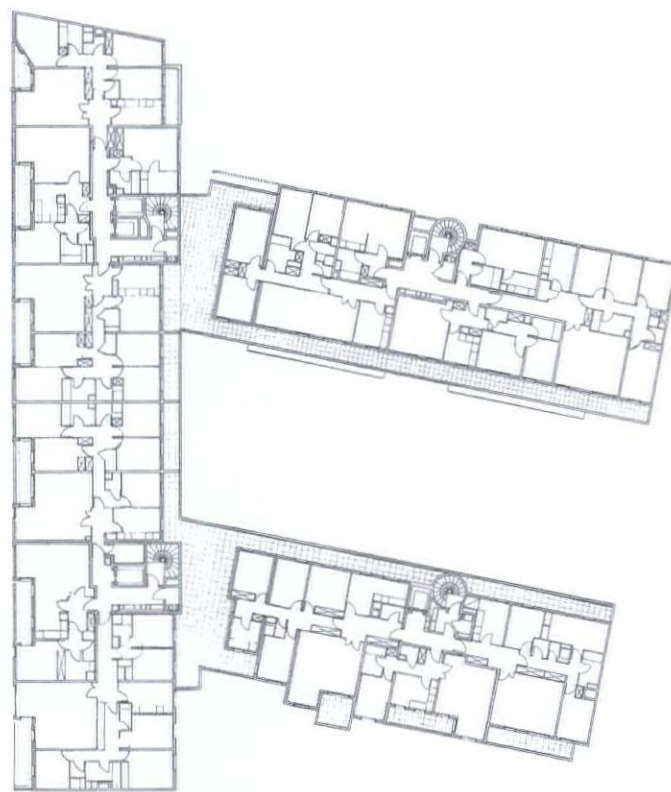
cities since the Roman Empire) was largely abandoned: there were few local uses (restaurants, bars and shops) in the ground floors of the housing blocks. As Nordemann and Maurios's work shows, this has been corrected to the east of rue de Bercy. There is a bistro and a huge sandwich bar on the main street; behind in the pedestrian part, there are a couple of little cafés: more may come.

This is not grand or gestural architecture, but it has a good deal to teach about modesty (not a quality for which French architects are usually renowned), respect for tradition and urban life. Paris could do with more such schemes in which humanity and decency are celebrated, rather than flashy figure.

TOM OLD



Maurios: first floor level (scale approx 1:1000)

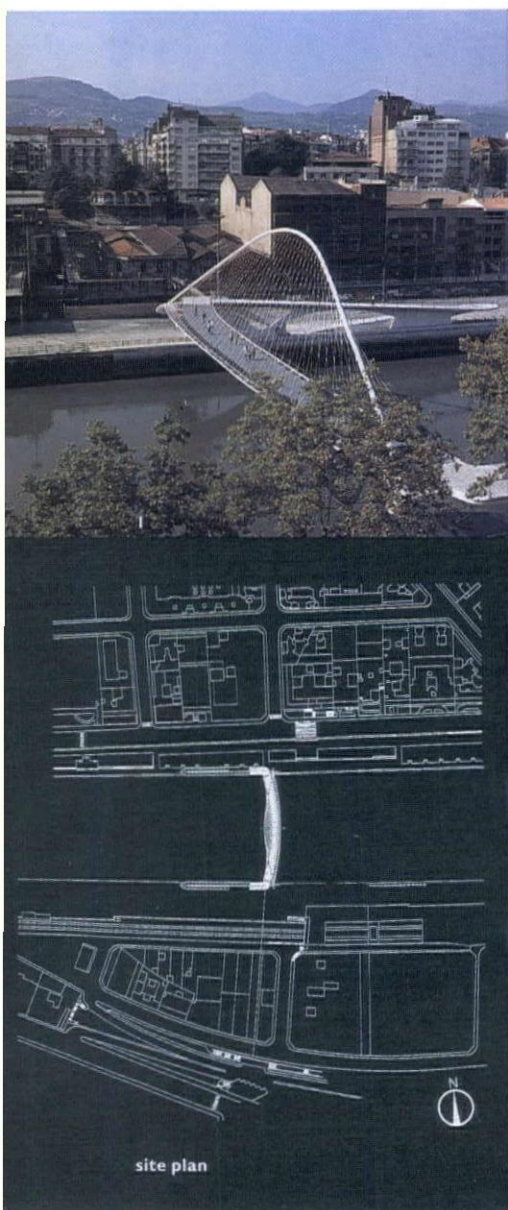


upper floor



SINGULAR SUSPENSION

Gracefully spanning Bilbao's River Nervión, this pedestrian bridge by Santiago Calatrava explores the expressive civic potential of urban infrastructure.



Designed by Santiago Calatrava, this new pedestrian bridge in Bilbao forms part of an enterprising plan to reinvigorate the Basque city through a series of urban design initiatives and bold individual *proyectos*. Described in detail in last month's AR, the proposals include infrastructural improvements and finding new uses for the derelict swathes of land left by defunct maritime industries along the banks of the River Nervión. Calatrava's spectacular arched span lies just upstream from the new

Guggenheim Museum and links the disused Uribitarte warehouse complex with the Campo de Volantín, a sweeping riverside promenade on the opposite north bank. As well as providing a new crossing and meeting point, the bridge is part of a larger scheme to redevelop the Uribitarte warehouses into offices and flats.

Historically, Bilbao's topography and engineering capabilities have contrived to produce some curious structural experiments, such as the nineteenth-century Puente de

Vizcaya (designed by a disciple of Eiffel), in which vehicles and people are ferried on a moving platform slung from a set of cables; and the Ascensor de Begoña, a free-standing lift tower designed to carry people up from the old medieval core to the hills above. With its dramatic curving profile effortlessly traversing the Nervión, Calatrava's contemporary addition extends this lineage of industrial ingenuity.

The elegantly minimal composition is based on the two opposing curves of the bridge

PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE, BILBAO, SPAIN

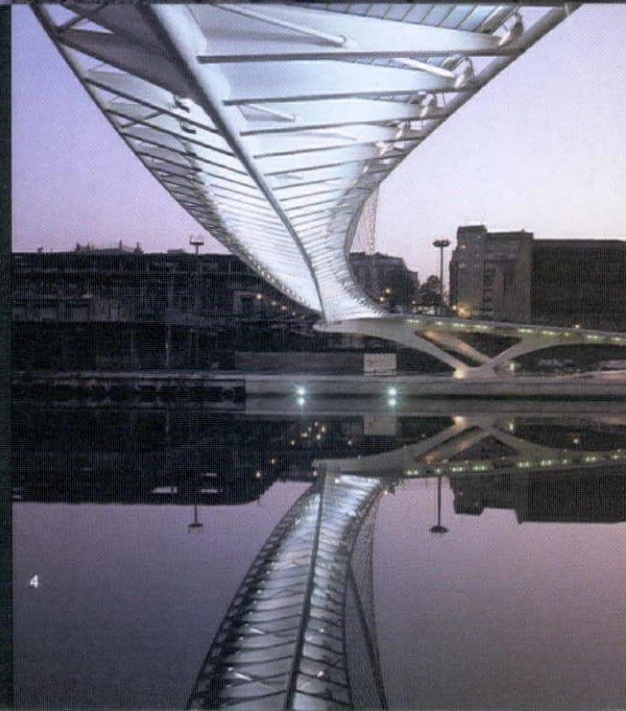
ARCHITECT

SANTIAGO CALATRAVA



3

- 1 The sweeping profile of the new bridge symbolises Bilbao's renewal.
- 2 An elegant cat's cradle of tensile cables supports the bridge deck.
- 3 At night, the illuminated structure casts spectacular reflections on the river surface.
- 4 Detail of the translucent glass bridge deck and the curved steel 'backbone' of the deck structure.



4

PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE, BILBAO, SPAIN

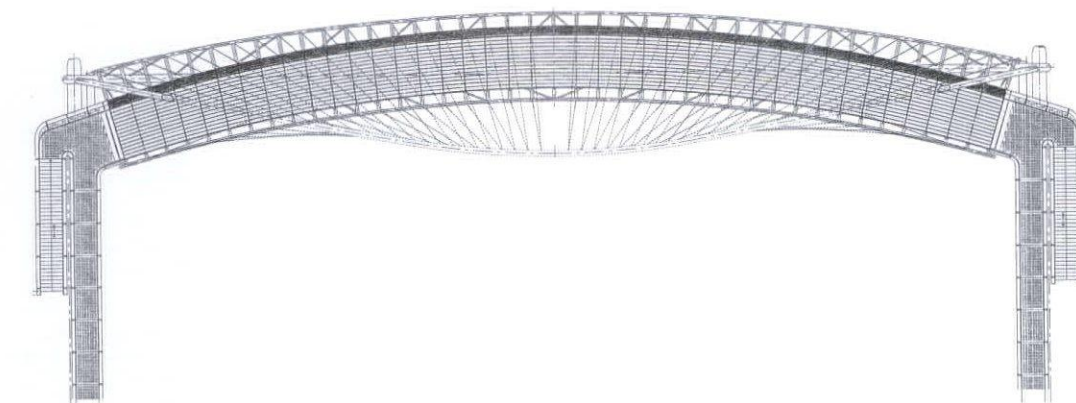
ARCHITECT

SANTIAGO CALATRAVA

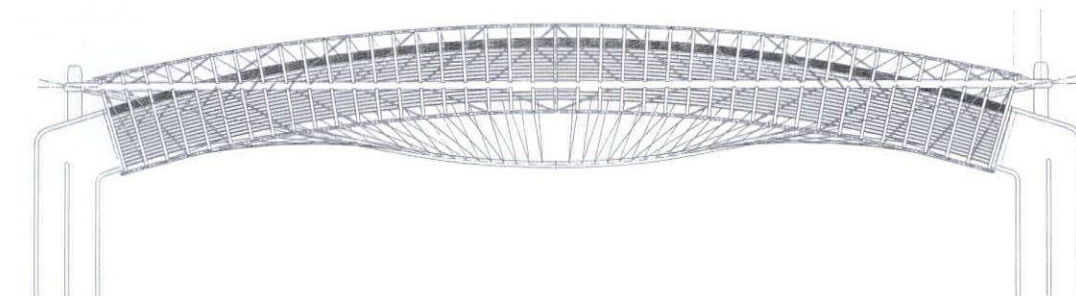
south elevation



west elevation



plan of bridge deck



plan of deck and arch

deck and its supporting arch. Pitched downstream at an angle of 80 degrees, the 14.6m high steel arch appears on the point of leaning too far, like a frozen pendulum unable to return to its natural point of equilibrium. Strung from the arch, a delicate filigree of cables supports the 71m long span of the bridge deck. Accentuating the ephemeral quality of the structure, the deck is made from panels of translucent glass, supported by narrow stainless steel ribs, like the spiny

backbone of a fish. Lateral support is provided by a pair of sinuously sculptural precast concrete platforms moored to each bank.

For Calatrava, bridges are not merely utilitarian objects in the landscape, they also have a civic and social dimension. With the recent Trinity Bridge in Salford for example (AR March 1996), two distinct areas of the city were joined together, bridging the physical and social divide between the local populace. Here, the new bridge represents the renewal of a

city. At night, its symbolic purpose is emphasised when both the gleaming white structure and the translucent deck of the bridge are illuminated, reflecting a dramatic play of light on to the river surface. By treating his bridge commissions as public places, civic icons and opportunities for structural invention, Calatrava challenges the tenets of contemporary bridge design and encourages a re-examination of the visual and social potential of urban infrastructure.

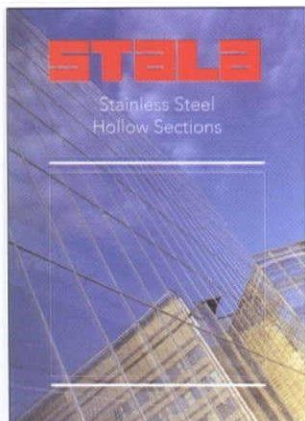
CATHERINE SLESSOR



5 Sleekly aerodynamic precast concrete platforms (containing ramps and stairs) provide lateral support.

Architect and engineer
Santiago Calatrava
Photographs
Paolo Rosselli

Specifier's information



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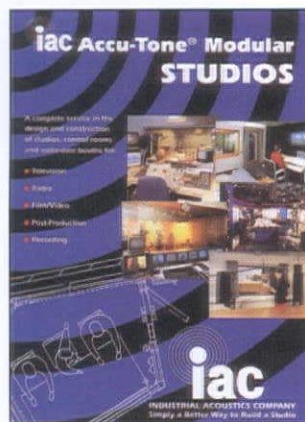


Lignacite strikes again

Bolton Wanderers Football Club has a new 25,000-seater stadium with a 100m x 70m pitch, all part of a £150 million sports and leisure complex. Birse Construction won the £25m design and build contract and The Lobb Partnership designed the elliptical shape, five-level stadium. Other facilities within the complex include banqueting, conference resources and an exhibition hall. Polished Architectural Facing Masonry from the Apollo range by Lignacite is used on all the external walls. Shades chosen from the Apollo palette are Snowstorm Amazon and Silver Grey Inca.

For further information tel: 01842 810678 or fax: 01842 814602.

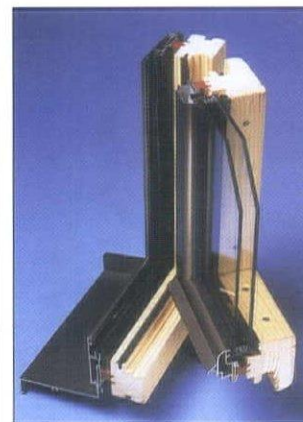
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IAC's guide to modular studios

Industrial Acoustics Company (IAC), has produced a new brochure explaining the use of modular acoustic components to build TV, radio, post-production and recording studios, control rooms and voice-over booths. The brochure includes colour photographs of over 20 projects the company has completed for companies such as Channel 4 and BskyB using a range of construction components that can be assembled simply and quickly to create complete structures of known acoustic performance. For further information, or a copy of the new guide contact Annette Fairlie on 10962 873000 or fax 01962 873111.

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Metal UK

Metal UK Ltd are referring to their Aluminium/Timber window range under the less confusing title of "metalwood" windows, so as not to cause specification confusion with other composite types. Additionally Metal UK can now offer metalwood designed windows from two European manufacturers, both offering different styles and benefits. Metal UK's windows come in a wide range of formats including open out casement, curtain wall design and glazed apex roof capability.

For further information telephone Metal UK on +44 (0) 181 868 5883.

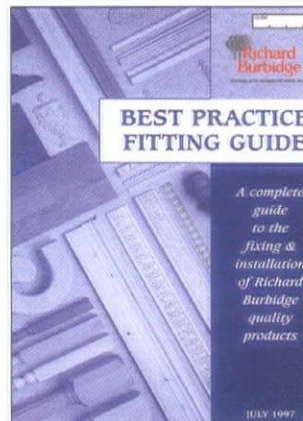
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Laura Ashley

Fresh colours and differing textures play a leading role in the Laura Ashley 1998 Home Furnishing Collection. *Seaside Living* offers the simplicity of cool blues and clean whites, combining casual denim, chambray and white checks. *City Living* brings tranquillity to the hustle and bustle of urban life with soft, almost translucent colours, tailored herringbone weaves, gingham and delicate florals. The *Garden Living* design story introduces fresh prints and delicate burn-out fabrics. Telephone 0800 262 600 for more information.

904 on AR enquiry card



Best Practice Fitting Guide

Richard Burbidge has published a 36 page 'Best Practice Fitting Guide', which gives comprehensive details of how to fix and install the company's range of timber home improvement products. For use both by professional contractors and householders alike, the publication aims to give hints and tips to enable jobs to be completed to a high standard. The publication covers all of the company's product ranges, including stair balustrading, mouldings, shelving and flooring. For each range, clear line drawings depict each stage of installation, and care has been taken to pitch the accompanying text at a level that is not overly technical. For further information, or a copy of the guide tel: 01691 655131.

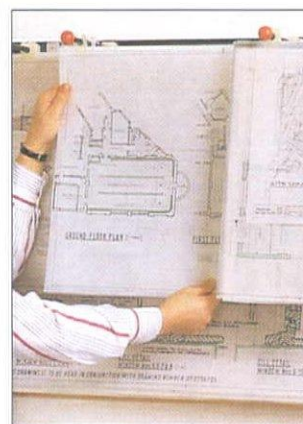
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Glutz

This security package from Glutz would deter the most determined criminals. It includes a 3-point mortice locking device suitable for new or existing doors and all parts have passed the severe Swiss Testing Institute Standards gaining a 1,500 kg impact rating. The Glutz security set features lockcase to suit most internationally manufactured cylinder profiles; a stainless steel security plate, concealed bolt fixing and anti-drill protection; top and bottom bolts manufactured from hardened steel and hinge side protection to prevent the successful attack of this usually weak point. For further information contact John Planck Ltd, tel: 0171 608 0074.

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SHOWROOM AND OFFICES,
DOVER STREET, LONDON

ARCHITECT
BOTSCHI VARGAS

! Showroom: Nomos table by Norman Foster; Verner Panton's classic moulded chairs. Beyond glazed boardroom is Panton's polychromatic backdrop.

Cogito Erco Sum

Dramatic remodelling of a famous lighting company's premises shows the firm's philosophy and the sophistication of its systems.

**SHOWROOM AND OFFICES,
DOVER STREET, LONDON**
ARCHITECT
BOTSCHI VARGAS



- 2 Victorian shopfront, now restored, and Warhol's Goethes framing showroom.
- 3 Entrance with green glass bridge and gallery with thin balustrading.
- 4 Glass and steel reception desk by Pierre Botschi.
- 5 Restored showroom fitted with Erco's lighting systems.
- 6 Staff café in the basement with terracotta polished plaster walls and terrace with Panton's Form and Colour sculpture.



In his transformation of Erco's showroom and offices at 38 Dover Street, Pierre Botschi has exercised a painter's awareness of distance and perspective. Standing on the luminous green glass bridge that spans the double-height void at the entrance, your eye is drawn through the showroom, past the milky glass walls of offices beyond, to Verner Panton's dazzling polychromatic image in the far distance. Looking in the opposite direction, from the rear with the translucent glass corridor in the foreground, you see through the delicate tracery of the Victorian shop front to the animation of the street.

Botschi's commission arose out of his earlier scheme to convert a warehouse into headquarters for this British arm of Erco Leuchten, the German parent company. Because of planning difficulties the scheme was never realised but was admired by Kristian Hertzum, his design conscious client. Having decided to reorganise the Dover Street premises, Hertzum asked Botschi to draw up a new scheme. The two did work closely together, and not surprisingly, given the client's provenance (and the fact that he

spent his formative years working in Louis Poulsen's office), a Danish presence is detectable in fittings, furniture – and most notably colour.

The existing showroom behind the old shopfront always seemed glamorous. Handsomely proportioned with decorative plasterwork, it showed off high technology lighting designed by famous architects and had Andy Warhol's screenprints of Goethe on the walls. (Goethe's dying words are popularly believed to be: 'More light!'.) But it was surrounded by a warren of offices, and basement offices with little natural light were dispiriting. On plan, both levels formed a long thinnish slot stretching back from the street to a narrow courtyard at the rear, overlooked by an undistinguished jumble of neighbouring buildings. The main sources of daylight on the ground floor were the shopfront and gloomy rear terrace.

Botschi's scheme involved a judicious mixture of restoration and wholesale clearance. The fine nineteenth-century facade was stripped of unsightly '60s additions and the character of the original retained. The showroom was simply



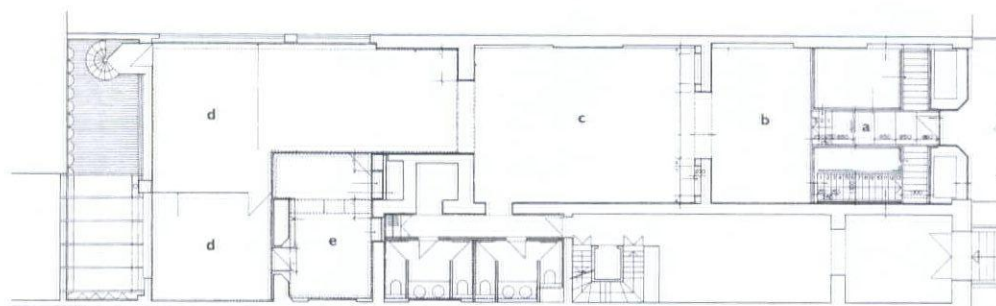
SHOWROOM AND OFFICES, DOVER STREET, LONDON

ARCHITECT

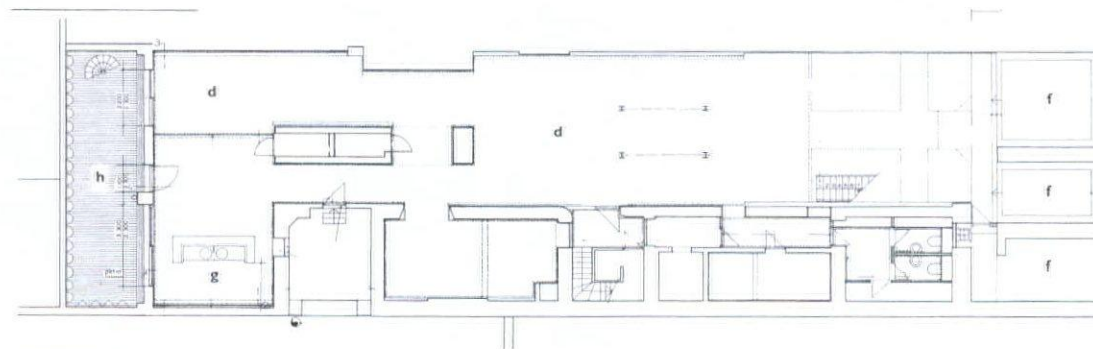
BOTSCHI VARGAS

- 7
The terrace experience and spiral metal stair to ground floor.
8
Basement meeting rooms created out of old brick vaults discovered under the pavement during construction.
9
By creating a double-height void, Botschi has connected the two levels and opened up the basement to daylight.

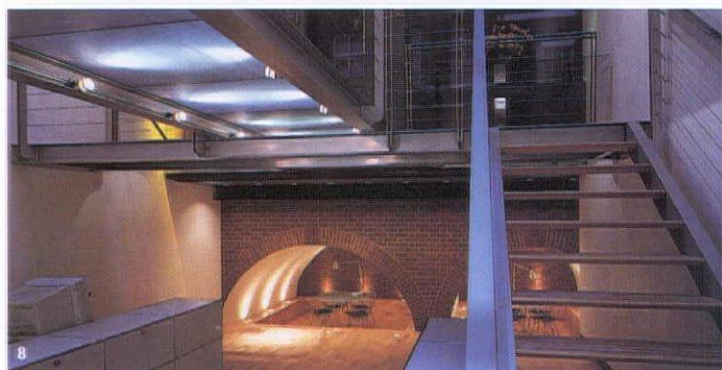
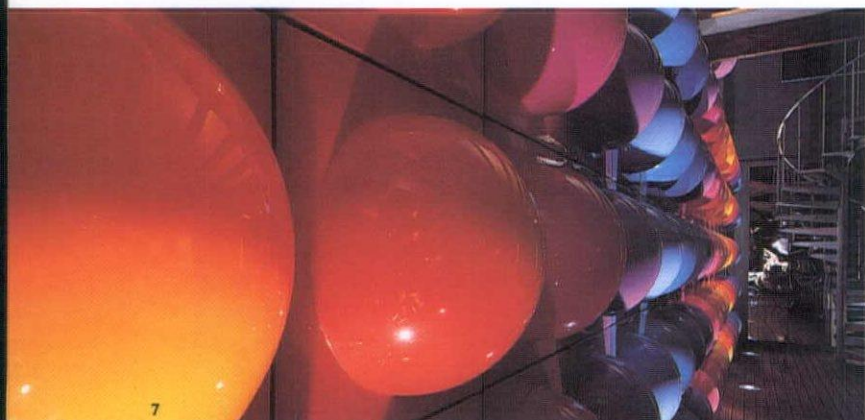
- a glass bridge
b reception
c showroom
d office
e boardroom
f meeting room
g café
h terrace



ground floor plan (scale approx 1:250)



basement plan



Architect
Botschi Vargas (now Pringle Brandon Botschi); project architect Pierre Botschi

Photographs
Richard Glover

Lighting
Erco Lighting

Polished plaster walls
Armourcoat

Suspended ceiling
Luxalon: Hunter Douglas

Glazing
Solaglas

Ironmongery
D-line by Knud Holscher: Allgoods

Reception desk
Salsa by Pierre Botschi; RAM Engineering
Office furniture
USM Haller by Fritz Haller
Tables
Nomos by Norman Foster; Tecno; Café Lux by Piet Hein; Fritz Hansen/Dovetail; Eames marble table: 20th Century Design; Area (table and bench) by Antonio Citterio: Vitra
Chairs
Eames Aluminium Group and Pantoni by Verner Pantoni; Vitra; Bertoni: Knoll; Ant by Arne Jacobsen; Fritz Hansen/Dovetail Model 900 trolley and Model 60 stools by Alvar Aalto: Aram Designs.

retouched and painted. More a gallery than a showroom, the space has been frequently used as a gallery for exhibitions of art and architecture and will be so used in the future.

Wherever possible, the interior was cleared of obstructions. Separation of the two levels was always a problem and Botschi has cleverly unified them physically and visually. The new double-height void, its walls finished in pearly polished plaster, absorbs and illuminates the basement. Physically the levels are linked by a flight of finely detailed stairs, their treads of wooden decking and thin balustrading having faintly nautical associations. The stairs lead to offices and meeting rooms created out of old brick vaults, discovered by chance under the pavement during construction. A pale beech floor laid throughout further unifies the different spaces; as does glazing of rear walls at both levels and their external connection by a metal staircase rising from the terrace.

Botschi's lyrical use of glass has transformed the ground floor. The illuminated steel-framed, glass paved bridge over the void makes entry an event; sandblasted glass walls around a

normally prosaic boardroom at the rear turn it into a luminous box; the same translucent glass lit from behind conceals a party wall of ugly industrial glazing and screens the managing director's office.

After this luminous oasis the full-scale exposure to riotous colour hits you between the eyes. Erco has always tended towards the monochromatic, so that any colour is a departure (and here one must suspect a Danish influence). As if to emphasise its essentially subterranean nature, Botschi has used his favourite strong blue on some walls, and the elegant little café giving onto the terrace has glowing walls of terracotta red.

But it is Verner Pantoni, Danish architect, designer and experimental colourist, who burns the retina. Stepping onto the terrace you experience the full effect of his extraordinary coloured vision, an enormous bosomy sculpture called Form and Colour that billows over the enclosing wall. Above it is a rainbow-coloured wheel – the spectral image visible from the street.

PENNY MCGUIRE

I Goethe's final words: 'Macht doch den zweiten Fensterladen auch auf, damit mehr Licht Hereinkomme': 'Open the second shutter, so that more light can come in'.



Seth Stein's courtyard house for himself and his family in Kensington (AR October 1996) has been followed by another skilful exercise in urban evolution – the intricate design of a mews house in Knightsbridge.

But if the former spread itself expansively over the site of a Victorian stableyard, the latter has been extracted from the smallest conceivable footprint of land – an empty parallelogram, 6m wide and 8m deep, at the end of a mews. Even the prospect was cramped, for the site faced new bank offices of hard red brick across a tiny cobbled alley, and its back was pushed hard up

against a rear garden wall, in the shadow of trees and a tall terrace of houses.

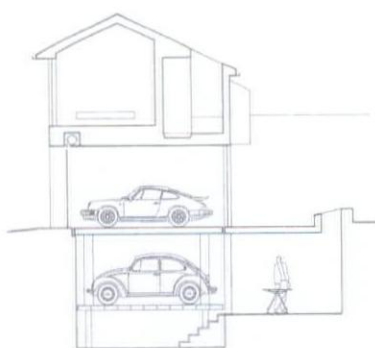
Difficulties of building anything more complicated than a garage on the site were compounded by the brief. The client, who collects old cars, wanted a *pied-à-terre* for himself and his wife and room for storing two cars when they were away.

In response, the architect's ingenuity has been remarkable. The supple architectural intelligence underlying design of this tiny house gradually reveals itself as you pass from its discreet presence on the street into its industrially wrought

light-filled interior.

Restricted by the height of the mews' roofline, the site was excavated, providing another storey and a half under the building and further skylit space at the rear under a small paved courtyard. Not to waste an inch of valuable space – and this is the great surprise – they have called on the vocabulary of car repair. Behind the rolling shutter onto the street there is a two-storey pit which like those found in car mechanics' workshops is filled with a hydraulic lift with two car decks. But this contrivance has an upper car deck floored with green limestone, the lower one

- 1 Street facade echoes those of its neighbours.
- 2 Lift being raised to provide basement living room.
- 3 Living room under a translucent ceiling, and dining room beyond.
- 4 Entrance hall with translucent floor and courtyard beyond. Folding screen can be pulled across to conceal car and lift.
- 5 Dining room and elegant kitchen slotted under glass stairs.



cross-section with lift lowered

PIED-À-TERRE, KNIGHTSBRIDGE, LONDON

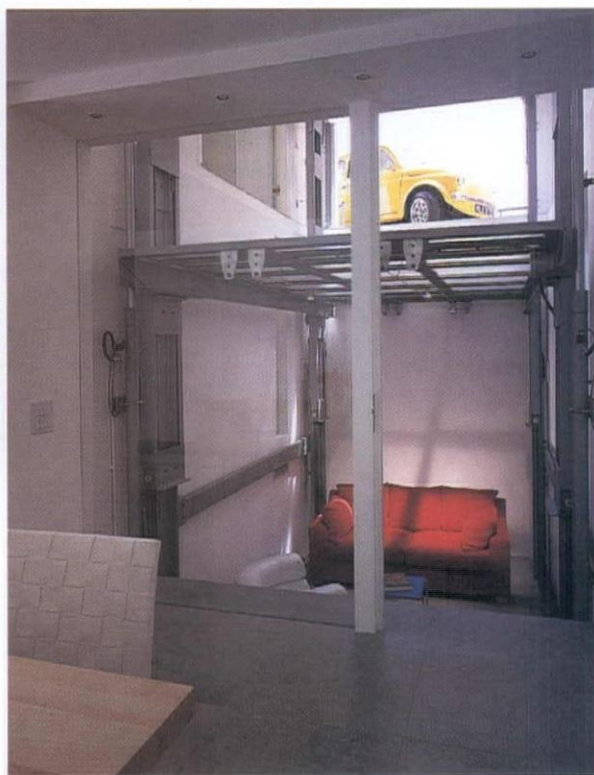
ARCHITECT
SETH STEIN ARCHITECTS

In one of the wealthiest and most congested parts of central London, a tiny mews house expands and contracts with elegant ingenuity.

Rising to the occasion



1



2



3

with translucent perspex panels each 30mm thick and calculated to take a two ton weight and point loading without shattering.

When empty of cars and raised, the lift provides a ground floor room with a translucent floor next to the entrance hall, and a basement living room with a translucent ceiling; when lowered, the upper room is floored in limestone and the lower one is translucent underfoot. The two decks are open on all sides, simply slotting into the building envelope at each level.

In cross-section you can see how the interior has been



**PIED-À-TERRE,
KNIGHTSBRIDGE, LONDON**
ARCHITECT
SETH STEIN ARCHITECTS

- 6 Zinc-clad/glazed rear of house and paved courtyard, screened by bamboo with skylight inset over basement.
7 Stainless-steel kitchen with panel of hall floor overhead. Limestone floor.
8 Landing and bedroom with wooden floor and storage plinth.

organised into levels stepped discreetly up and down to accommodate something above or beneath. The bottom of the pit is four steps below the adjacent dining room and kitchen so that when fully down, the lift does not disturb the furniture; at the top of the building, the roller shutter mechanism slots in beneath the bedroom floor, set above the level of the stone floor of an elegantly detailed skylit bathroom. The bed itself rests on a storage plinth, of the same warm wood as the floor.

Interpenetration of the various spaces and levels, as well as the diffusion of light through

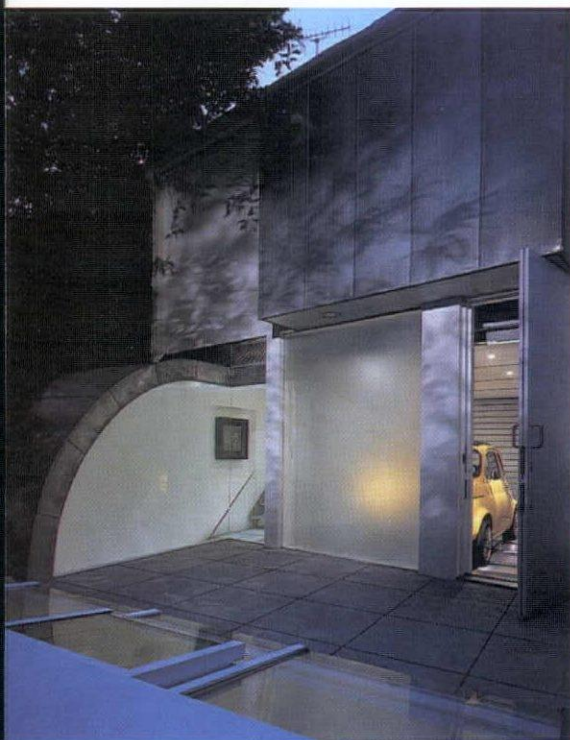
translucent floors and walls, creates an illusion of greater space. The principal continuous conduit of light through the building is the transparent flight of stairs, with glass treads and balustrading, that rises 12m from basement to first floor landing where a square window high in the facade gives views of the sky.

In pushing the spatial envelope to extremes, the architect may not have created the most restful of houses – the machinery and spatially movable feasts are entertaining but somewhat disconcerting. But this is an elegant austere finished *pied-à-terre*, miraculously open to light and greenery in

congested central London; and you can only marvel at the amount of care and thought implicit in every detail of the design. The clients seem to relish living cheek by jowl with their cars – one after all is an original Fiat Cinquecento.

PENNY MCGUIRE

Architect
Seth Stein Architects: Seth Stein, David Russell
Steel fabricator
G. T. Coulson
Glasswork
Nero Glass
Teak floor
Victorian Woodworks
Photographs
Richard Bryant/Arcaid



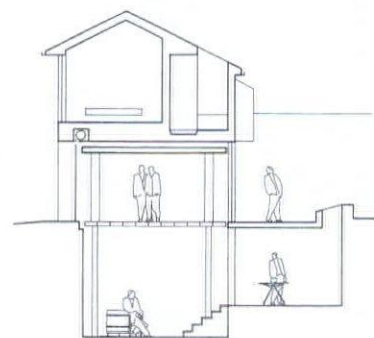
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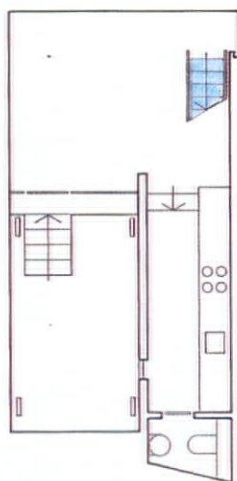
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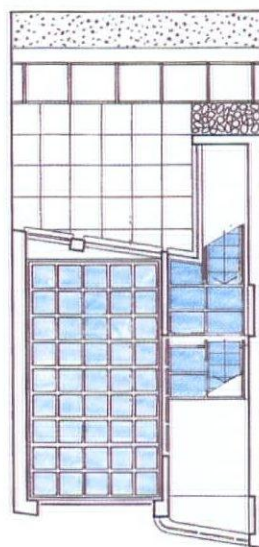
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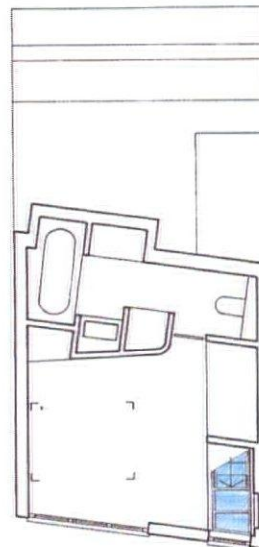
cross-section with lift raised



basement plan



ground floor plan (scale approx 1:200)



first floor plan

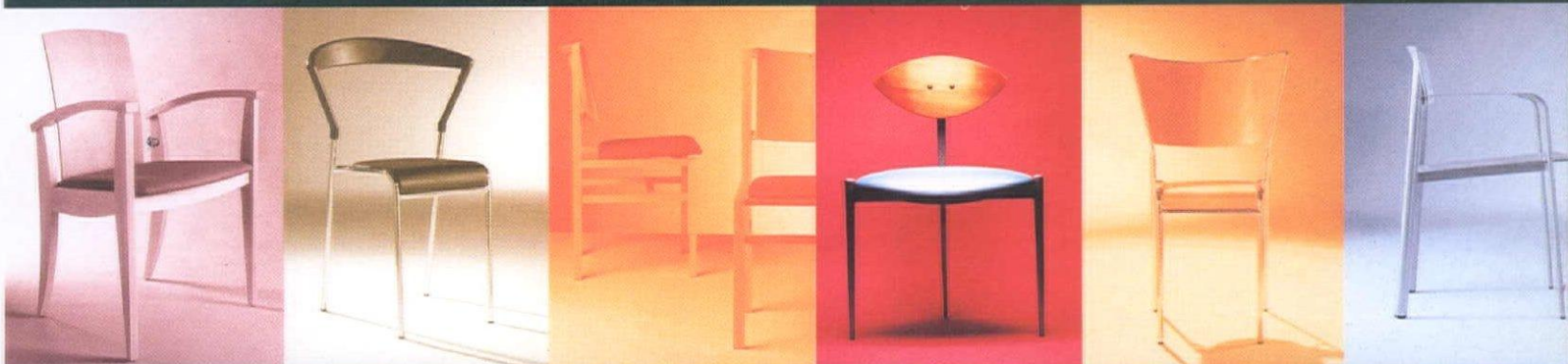
ALLERUIR



tubby

designed by J. Mark Gabbertas

'Tubby' is a refreshing, contemporary alternative to traditional tub chair designs. The shape is simple, strong, and elegant, gently sloping back, and with a subtle taper to the legs. The veneered backrest can be stained, coloured or just clear lacquered. The upholstery lining the backrest, and the seat which has a deep waterfall front, offer a generous sit and a high level of comfort. This is a luxurious chair equally adept in corporate or leisure use, available with complimentary tables.



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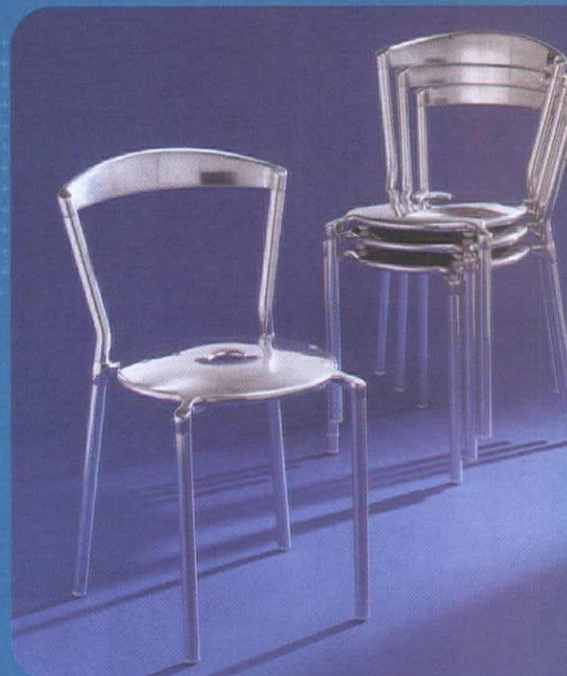
pharaoh

meeshak

DESIGNED BY AMOS MARCHANT AND
LYNDON ANDERSON OF BLUE

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Japanese tectonics

**JAPANESE BUILDING PRACTICE:
FROM ANCIENT TIMES TO THE
MEIJI PERIOD**

By Kenneth Frampton, Kunio Kudo and Keith Vincent. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold. 1997. £24.99

As the first general survey of its kind to appear in English, this chronological study of the methods and organisation of Japanese building construction up to the beginning of the modern period is extremely welcome.

Kenneth Frampton's finely-tuned critical skills in the field of building technology have here been woven together with a mass of invaluable contextual material from his co-author Kunio Kudo to provide a comprehensive but highly readable account of the hitherto fragmented story of Japanese builders. Beginning at the very beginning with early Shinto sacred woven constructions and *Jamon* pit dwellings, the essays lead us through the wonderfully productive medieval period, when the Japanese master carpenter was at his zenith, through the decline in skills which came with the deliberate dismantling of the traditional apprentice and job patronage systems after the Meiji Restoration of 1868, up to the impact of Western architectural training and the establishment of the Big Five Japanese construction giants at the end of last century.

This survey brings together, as far as I am aware for the first time in English, a host of previous research on various specialised areas of Japanese construction by both Japanese and Western authors. As a result it is an excellent first resource for anyone wishing to know exactly how the much-admired forms of traditional Japanese buildings were actually realised, and why. To this end, the extensive bibliography and endnotes are extremely helpful, although the lack of an index to the text itself is puzzling.

As with all surveys, the discussions of specific topics can at times seem too brief or too detailed depending on your particular interests, but on the whole the authors have combined their skills to provide a reliable but succinct source of reference of value to both the specialist and general reader alike.

KEVIN NUTE

Look back or feedforward**THE NEW OFFICE**

By Francis Duffy. London: Conran Octopus. 1997. £50

The New Office is a sumptuous book. Images of all the most respected, attractive, or innovative offices worldwide are in full colour on

every page, some in wonderful juxtaposition – such as the interior of Frank Gehry's office for Chiat/Day in California alongside a painting of a coffee house in Vienna by Ferdinand West.

The first section neatly lassoes all the various drivers of workplace change into a clear bundle. The pleasures of Johnson Wax and Centraal Beheer lead into innovative work methods, and their interaction with design.

Each of the 20 case studies which follow are categorised as hive, cell, den or club. But does this simple classification work? As one office user said, 'We decided that in a club there is not enough interdependence of responsibility, so we now call ourselves a "family"'. The final section shows how to evaluate the business usefulness of accommodation, but for whom is the book? Much is written from the architectural standpoint, about architects' response to client vision. Some useful figures are given, aims are explained, and inhabitant reactions recounted, but there is little solid fact about results.

Another problem is that in a way this is two books. The text has that discerning historical sweep and shrewd holistic analysis which we have come to expect from Frank Duffy, but it has little connection with the picture book. Despite stressing the importance of architectural image, Duffy has not shown us how to make that vital link.

What promised to be the office lover's book of office fails – perhaps through good manners. To properly extrapolate the future, real feedback is needed; the honest admission of things going right and wrong. So without 'feedforward' (a word found in the book) there can be no answer to the endless question of 'Where is office design going?' except 'Horses for courses' or 'Suck it and see'.

SANTA RAYMOND and ROGER CUNLIFFE

Landscape portrait**GUIDE TO DANISH LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTURE**

By Annemarie Lund. Copenhagen: Arkitektens Forlag. 1997. 248DKr

The time span encompassed by this guide book is testimony to its comprehensiveness. It is thoroughly researched, and extensively illustrated with photographs, plans and sketches, historical and recent. Covering nearly 200 projects in detail, a further 300 other gardens and grounds are listed. I cannot speak for its ease of use without road-testing it, but it is certainly enticing enough to make one want to take the next ferry over to Denmark and explore and experience the wealth of gardens it presents.

Too big to tuck into a pocket, the guide is nonetheless a pleasure to handle and is beauti-

fully designed. It includes a separate map of Denmark and Copenhagen for numbered reference to the locations, so as to be able to plan a visiting itinerary with spatial rationality.

The text is organised by time periods, with the main focus on works this century. It is prefaced with a description of the history and development of the Danish landscape. Within each time period typological categories describe gardens and landscapes of all sizes, scales and functions. Each garden shown is described by date, designer, design history, changes, intent, and physical aspects – a useful and mammoth work of research and compilation.

Lund makes available a knowledgeable and loving presentation of the landscapes and gardens of her country, their unique design quality and variety relatively unknown in the UK. The line of evolution from the historical to contemporary rural and urban design is skilfully drawn and includes recent examples of landscape art. While producing a guide book, Lund has also written a valuable landscape reference book.

ELSA LEVISEUR

Oxford movement**THE ARCHITECTURE OF DEANE
AND WOODWARD**

By Frederick O'Dwyer. Cork: Cork University Press. 1997. £60

Deane and Woodward are mainly remembered for two influential mid-nineteenth century buildings – Trinity College Museum, Dublin, completed in 1857 and the University Museum in Oxford, which although never completely finished, was publicly inaugurated in June 1860.

This well researched and absorbing study running to over 600 pages charts the development of what was really always a family firm from its provincial beginnings in Cork in the 1830s and '40s with Thomas Deane (1792-1871) until its demise under his descendants around the First World War. What lifted the practice above the ordinary was the part played by Benjamin Woodward (1816-1861) who became a partner around 1851 until his premature death from tuberculosis at the age of 45. He was a designer in a different league.

Although some of the ground in this book has already been covered in Eve Blau's *Ruskinian Gothic – the Architecture of Deane and Woodward 1845-61*, which was published in 1982, O'Dwyer in drawing on new correspondence and other material offers a number of fresh insights, particularly into the role of John Ruskin, both as critic and as a direct influence on site, the O'Shea family of stone carvers and the Pre-Raphaelites.

The design and construction of the University Museum in particular, seems to bring into focus

a number of key mid-nineteenth century issues both at a national and a local level. The unfolding story has been skilfully pieced together drawing largely on the wealth of remaining manuscript sources, principally in the Minutes of the Delegates Meetings (essentially client meeting minutes), from 1853 onwards.

For the contemporary reader the sense of *plus ça change* is unavoidable – the vagaries of the competition system, the lobbying behind the scenes, the critical intervention by a national figure, technical disasters, shortage of money – the list is endless. It proves again, in case we had forgotten, that to build anything of real merit requires a particular sort of tenacity which Woodward clearly possessed.

The strength of this book is in the writing. The illustrations, many of which are published for the first time, are mostly quite small and although in some cases of great historical interest, they are all black and white so the assessment of the large architectural impact of the work cannot be fully appreciated here and for this one is forced to go elsewhere, either to Trevor Garnham's *Oxford Museum* in the Phaidon 'Architecture in Detail' series, or best of all the buildings themselves.

BIRKIN HAWARD

Hibernian development

20TH CENTURY ARCHITECTURE IN IRELAND

Edited by Annette Becker, John Olley and Wilfried Wang. Munich: Prestel. 1997. £39.95

20th Century Architecture in Ireland is a thorough catalogue for the summer exhibition of the same name at the D. A. M. in Frankfurt (and more recently, in an abridged form, at the RIBA). This is, apparently, the first-ever compendium of twentieth-century work in both the Republic and Northern Ireland. It plots various architectural manifestations from a surprisingly weak Arts and Crafts Movement (Lambay Island, by Lutyens, being a splendid anomaly) through the elegant Miesianisms of Scott Tallon Walker in the 1960s to the so-called Figurative designers of today. An important theme of this trajectory – at least for the South – is the loosening of Anglocentrism via a general fixation on the United States to an appeal for place-making situated within a consciously European context.

The catalogue – with, unfortunately, several factual and graphic errors – divides into an initial family of essays, chronological and thematic surveys which address many historical and social issues, and a subsequent presentation of 57 selected schemes from Henman & Cooper's Royal Victoria Hospital in Belfast (1900-03) to O'Donnell and Tuomey's Black-



Between 1830 and 1842, the Society for Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, that short-lived, energetic and enlightened organisation which published assiduously in London, printed maps of almost all the major cities of the Europeanised world from Philadelphia to Calcutta. They capture the moment just before medieval defensive walls came down on the Continent, providing a snapshot of urban life just before the Industrial Revolution burst out of Britain and railways transformed cities for ever. An *Atlas of Rare City Maps* (Princeton Architectural Press, 1997, £42) beautifully reproduces 40 of them, mostly at nearly full size. An introduction by Melville C. Branch sets the maps, and their cartographic and engraving techniques into context. This is a detail of the Copenhagen plate (much reduced).

wood Golf Club nearby in County Down (1992-94). Some essays appear superfluous; an interesting topic concerns the Free State's self-expression between the Wars (inevitably, most projects reviewed are in the Republic). If architectural focus in the 1980s was on the city and urban form, there is now perhaps a new concern for rural planning and an appreciation for landscape.

Missing is an analysis of the financial and psychological impact of EU membership and some sense of management of today's 'Celtic Tiger' economy: twin successes on which the shapely, colourful and literate work of recent years is dependent and of which it must to some degree be representative. RAYMUND RYAN

Internal affairs

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF INTERIOR DESIGN

Ed Joanna Banham. London and Chicago. Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1997, two vols, £175

The Encyclopedia of Interior Design is an awesome attempt to cover the whole field of interiors (except ecclesiastical ones) throughout the world from Ancient times to today. It is hard to think of a major omission in a list of names that includes Aalto, Raphael, Burges and Jiricna and from a catalogue of subjects ranging from billiard rooms to wicker furniture, Japan to the Mudéjar Style.

Each entry is followed by a useful (and remarkably up-to-date) list of books and articles for further reading, and the articles on individuals all have a little biography, and a

short catalogue of principal works. As is inevitable in a work as big as this with so many authors, entries vary in depth and acuity (for instance Clare Brisby blithely remarks of the Byzantines that they lacked 'respect for architectonic principles' – scarcely a remark to make of the civilisation that produced the Hagia Sophia). But the authors who do not have to cover a thousand years in a couple of pages, particularly those who deal with individual designers, are concisely and judiciously inclusive and informative. Well illustrated in black and white throughout, and with a good index, the *Encyclopedia* will swiftly become the kind of book which we cannot imagine ourselves without. PETER DAVEY

Structural inspiration

THE ART OF STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING: THE WORK OF JÖRG SCHLAICH AND HIS TEAM

By Alan Holgate. Stuttgart: Edition Axel Menges. 1997. DM158. £62

The author of this inspiring book spent a long time with Jörg Schlaich and his partners and has produced a fascinating detailed survey of the work of one of Europe's great engineers.

Before setting up his partnership Schlaich worked for Leonhardt and Andra, another famous German firm of consultants. While there he was in charge of the cable net structures for the Munich Olympic Games. I went to see the main stadium under construction and was stunned by the scale of the whole concept and the structural details of masts, castings and cable clamps.

The work of the practice is adventurous and innovative and they use advanced technology, not as an end in itself but to produce engineering solutions of real elegance and beauty. Schlaich says that he considers structural engineering to be an art while being dominated by the laws of nature and by economic and practical realities. Structures should be 'uncamouflaged'. This philosophy stems from his interest in the Deutscher Werkbund and the fact that he was first trained as joiner (cf Konrad Wachsmann) and then studied architecture at the same time as engineering. He also feels strongly that structures are influenced by the personality of the engineer.

I have not been so excited by any book on the art and technique of structural engineering for a long time and it is an inspiration to my team and me for the future of adventurous and innovative ideas. An inspiring book for engineers, architects and anyone interested in design of the environment and, as a bonus, the photographs and illustrations are superb and very detailed. ANTHONY HUNT

DELIGHT



Part sculpture, part window dressing, this eye-catching temporary installation in a London department store celebrates the tectonic and sensuous potential of modest materials.

Harvey Nichols department store in the fashionable Knightsbridge district of London has a growing reputation for progressive, modern design. From elegant packaging to lively interiors (such as Julian Wickham's inventive remodelling of the fifth floor food hall and restaurant, AR July 1993), Harvey Nichols has shaken off the traditional conservative image of English department stores. The shop is also renowned for the wit and ingenuity of its window displays, which regularly enliven the busy surroundings.

Here, however, conventional window dressing has evolved into a curious and arresting hybrid of sculpture and architecture. Designed by sculptor Thomas Heatherwick to draw attention to Harvey Nichols' participation in recent London Fashion Week, the extraordinary installation rises up through the proscenium arch of the shop

windows and writhes its way along the main frontage in an overwhelming mass of curiously angular, ersatz Cubist tentacles.

The traffic-stopping confection looks like some kind of invasive mutant growth or alien colonisation. In reality, it is a meticulously crafted and jointed plywood structure, suspended from the brick facade by a network of steel cables. Heatherwick, who trained at the Royal College of Art, clearly relishes the tactile and sculptural potential of materials, especially timber.

Previous equally eye-catching installations include a slatted gazebo, made from thin strips of birch plywood, which was positioned outside the Royal College. Judging from the Harvey Nichols tentacles (now dismantled) he also relishes the chance to indulge in playful urban surrealism. CATHERINE SLESSOR