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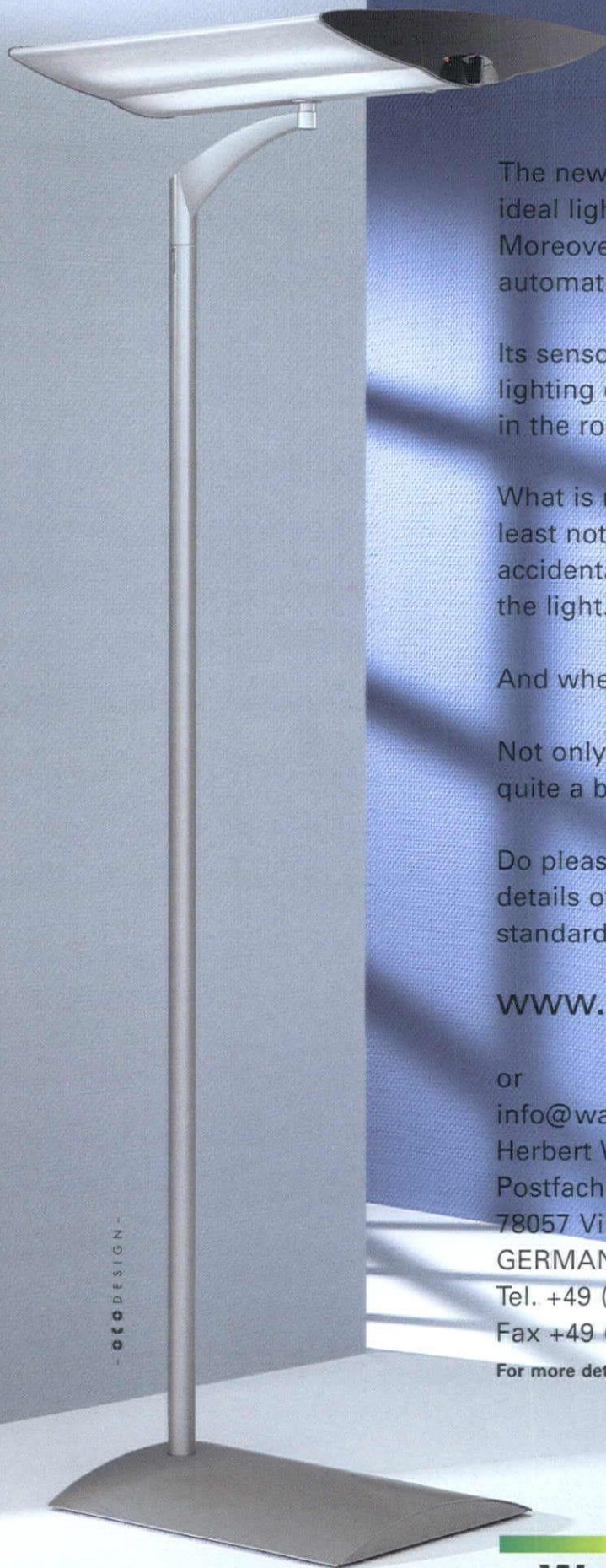
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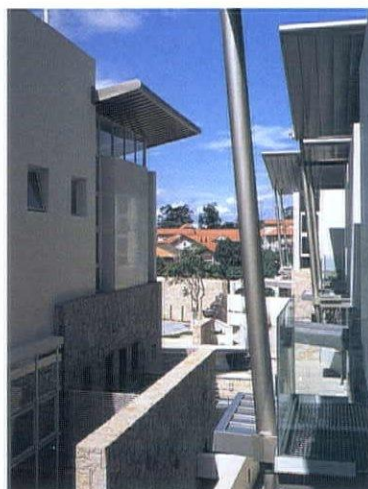
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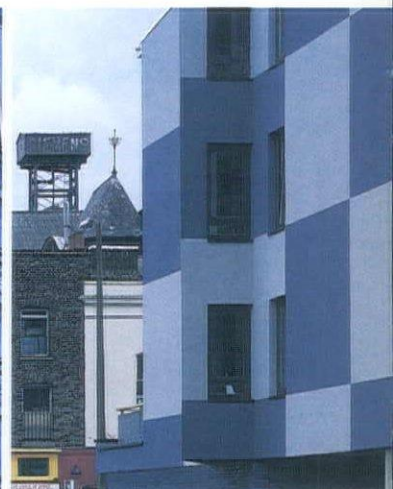
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CONSTRUCT



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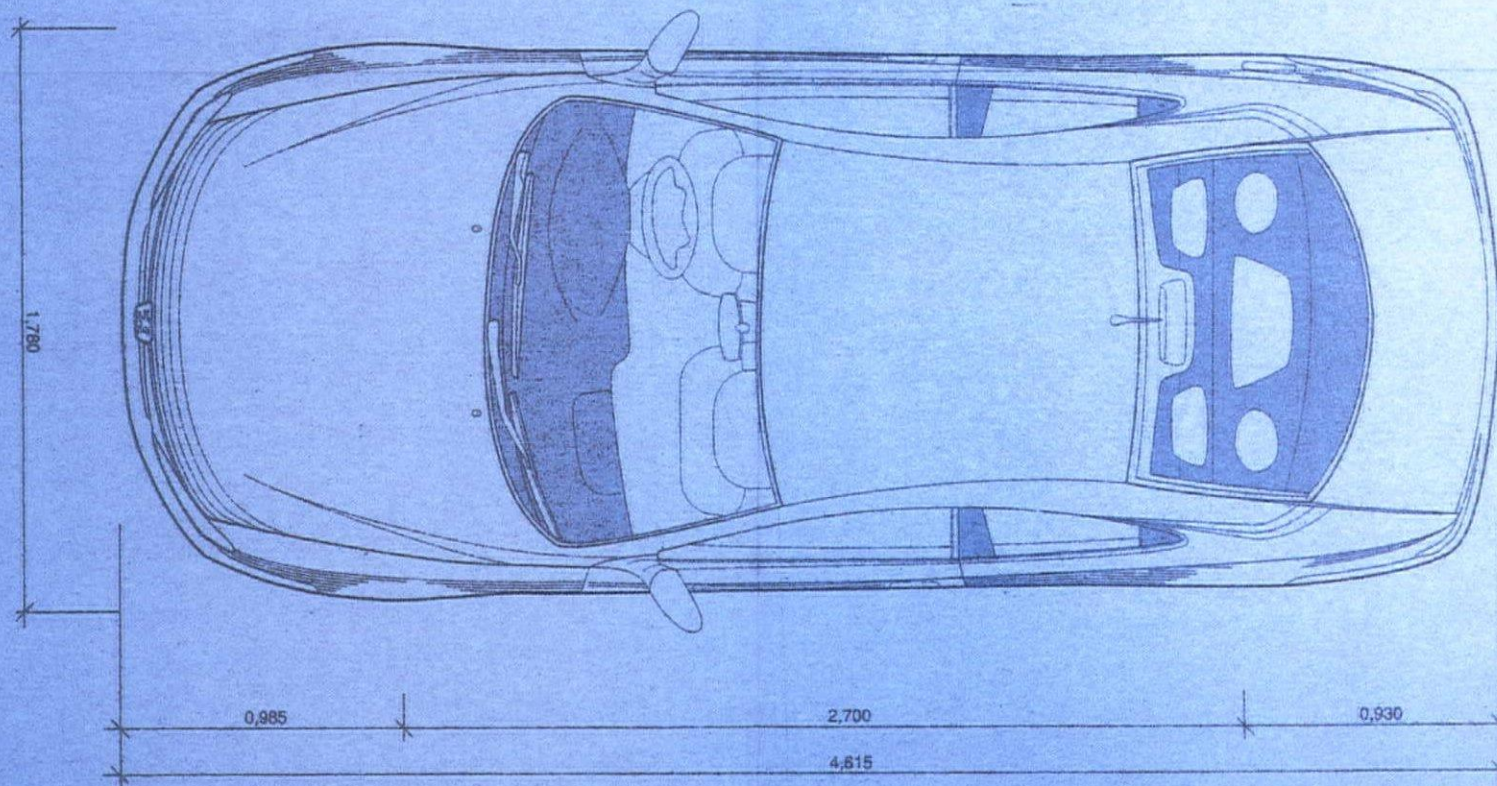
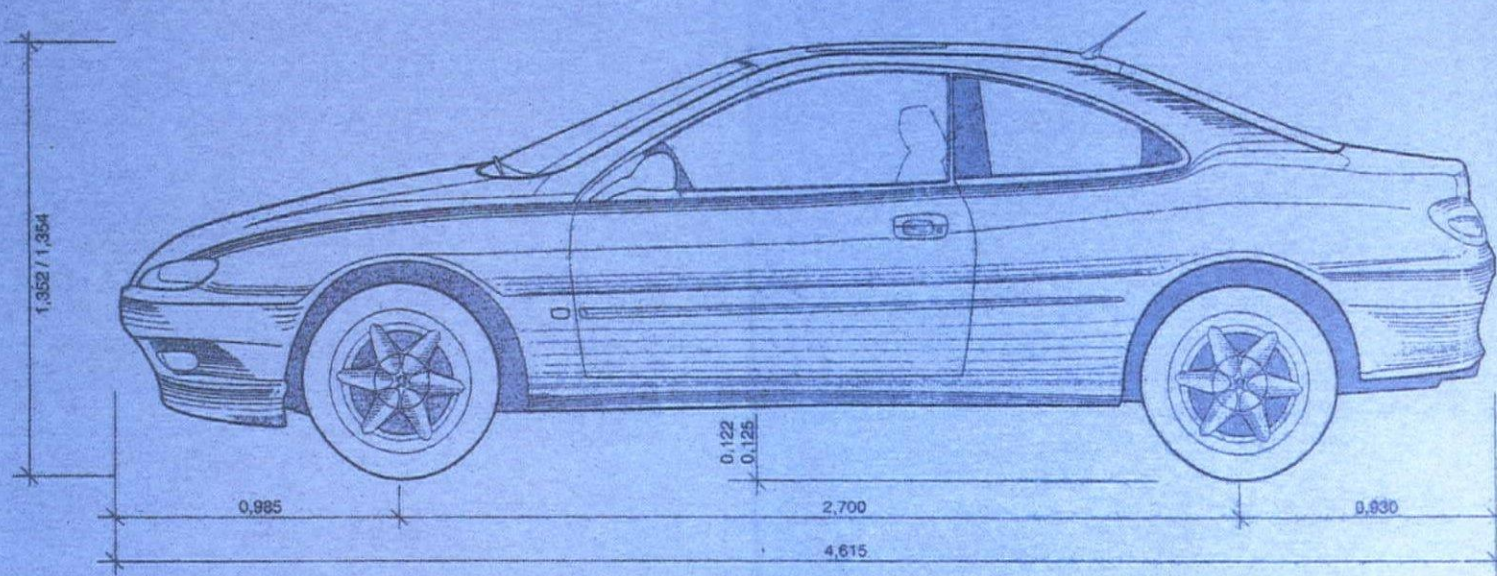
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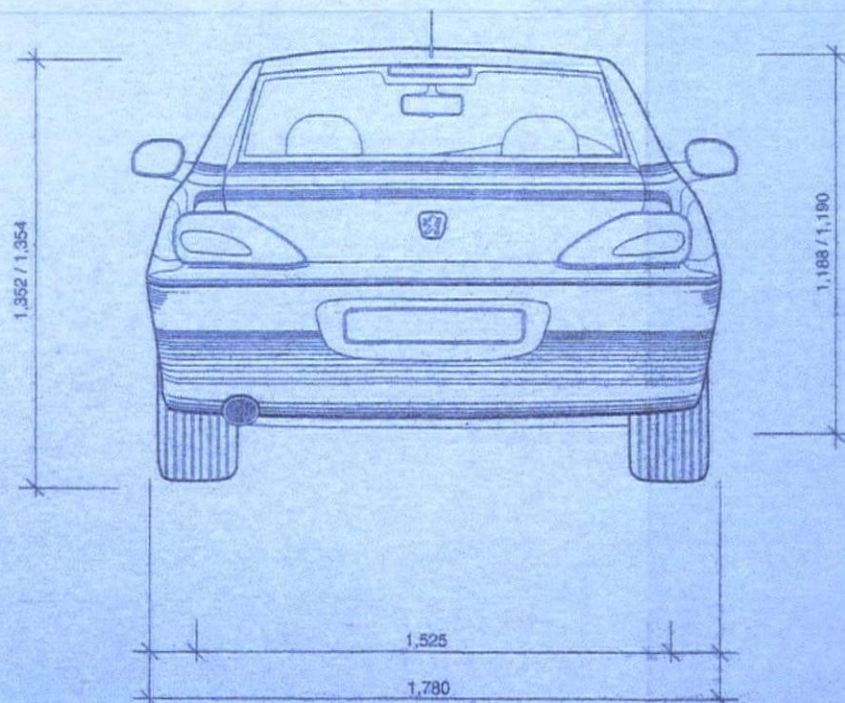
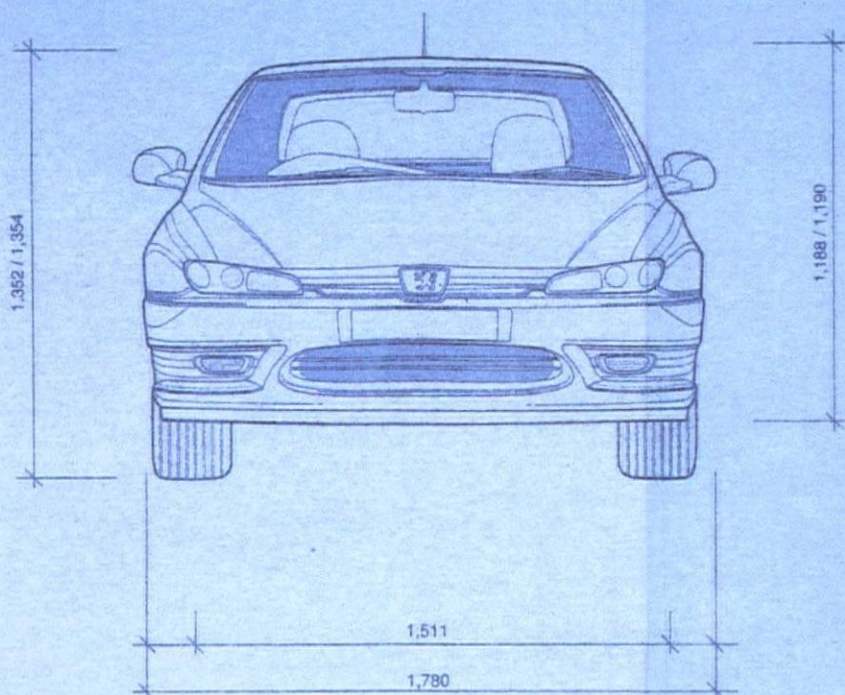
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- 66 KAUFMANN, VAN DER MEER & PARTNER Urban housing, Zurich Photograph by Gaston Wicky



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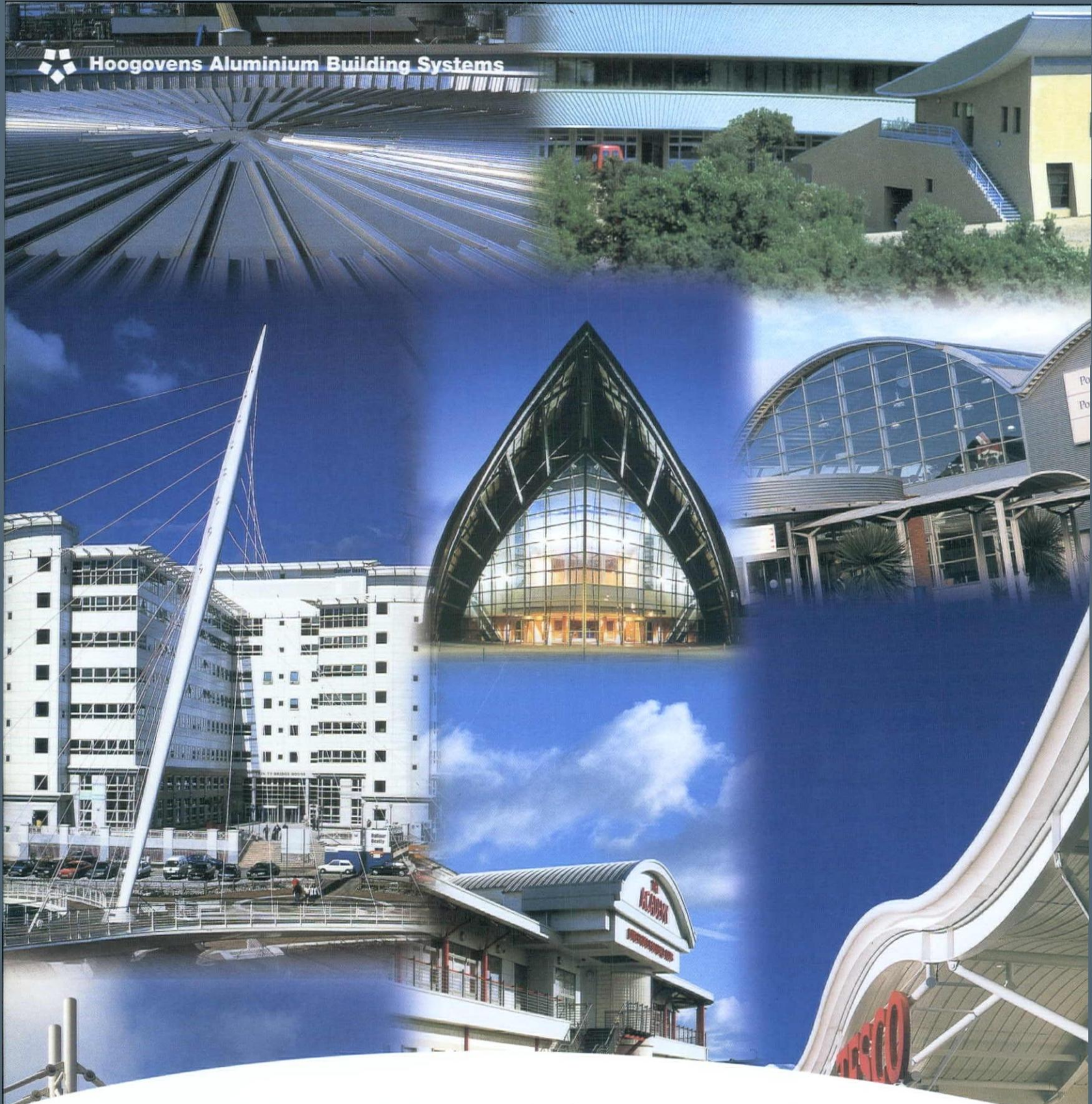
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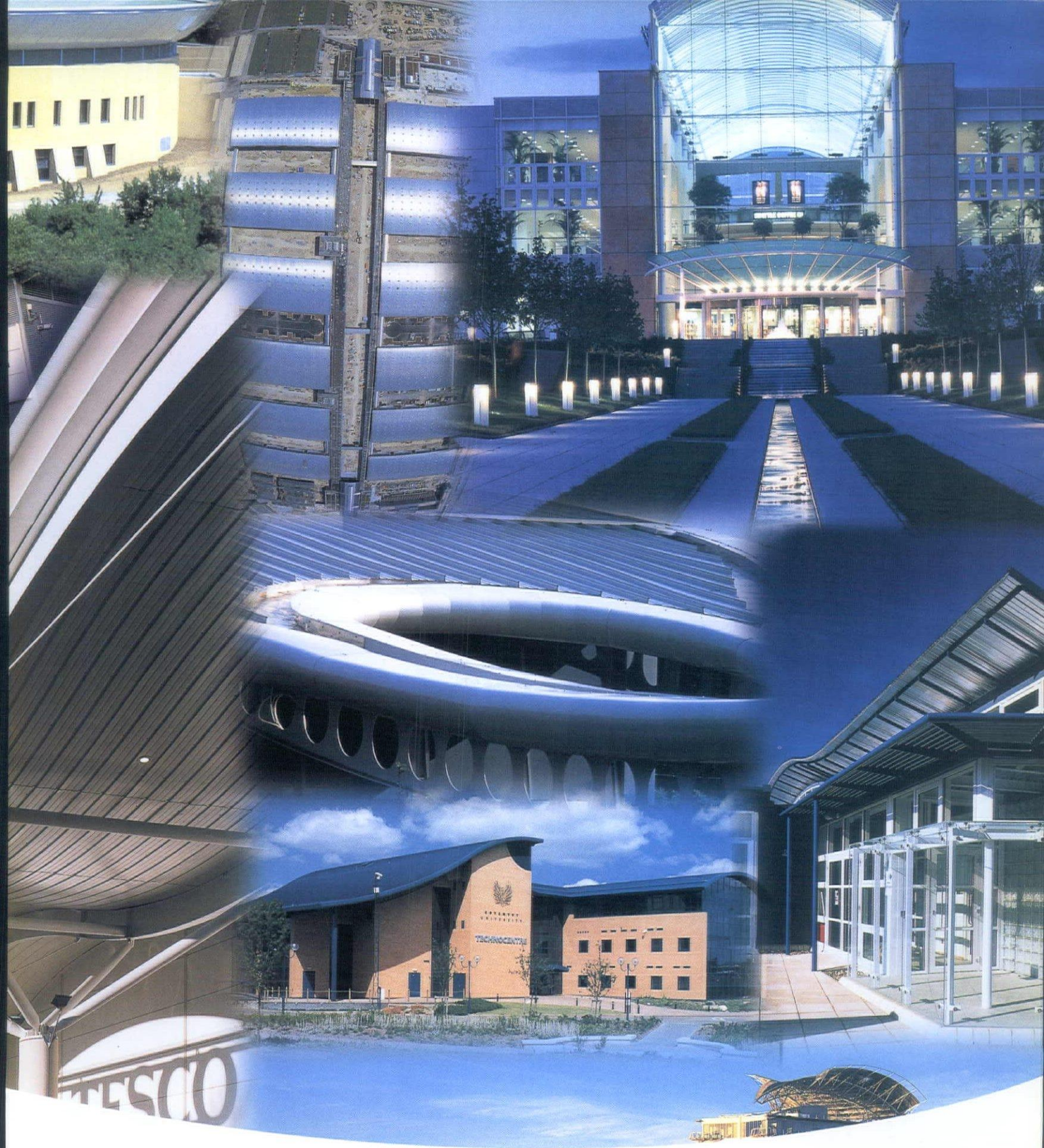
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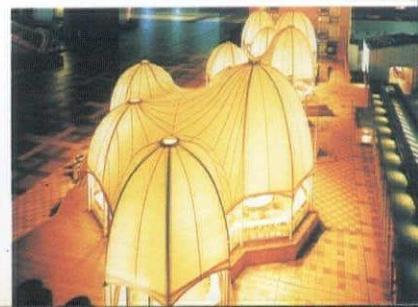
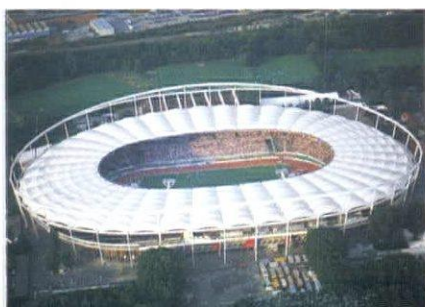
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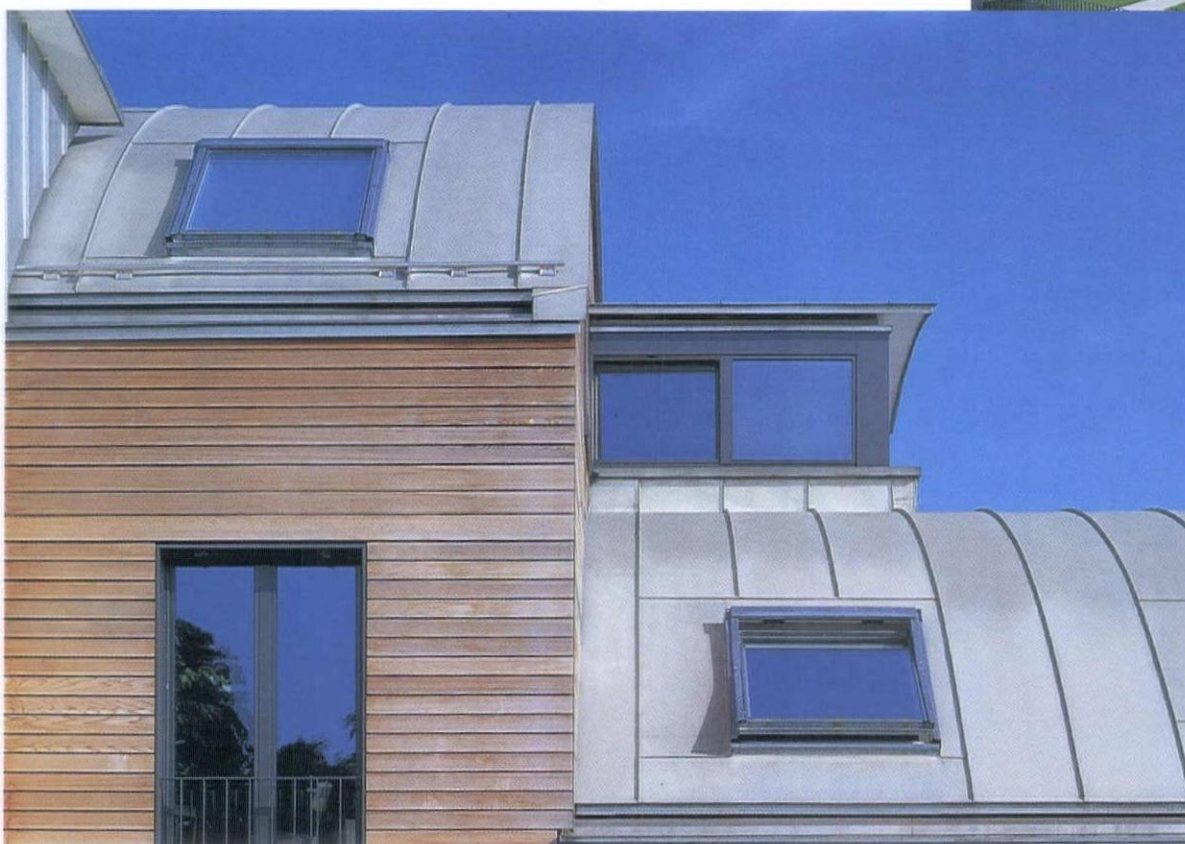
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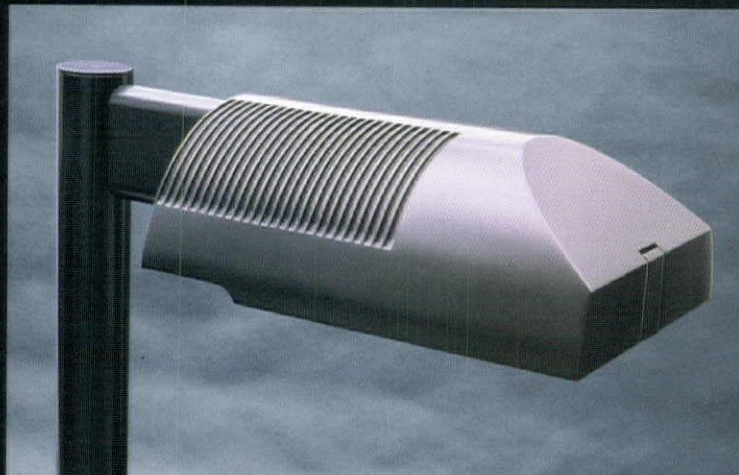
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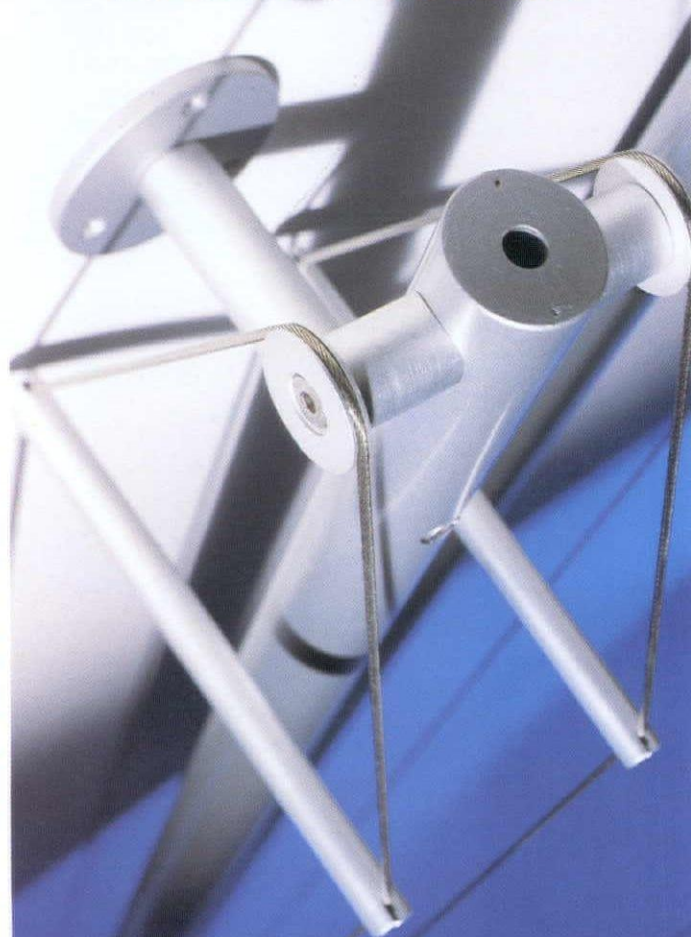
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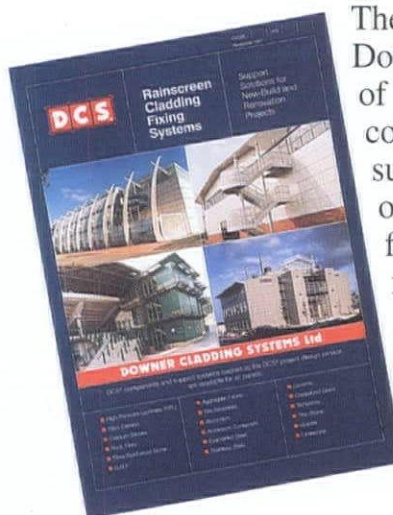
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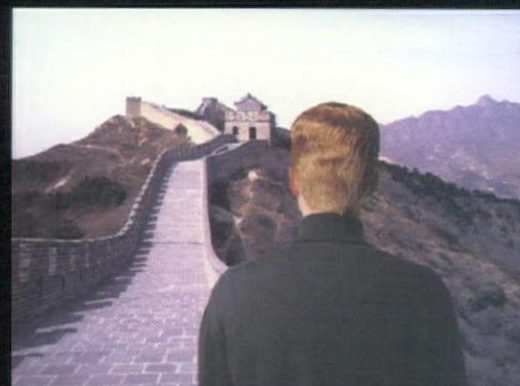
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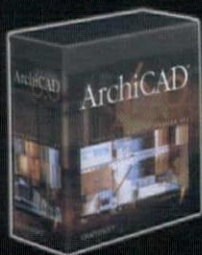
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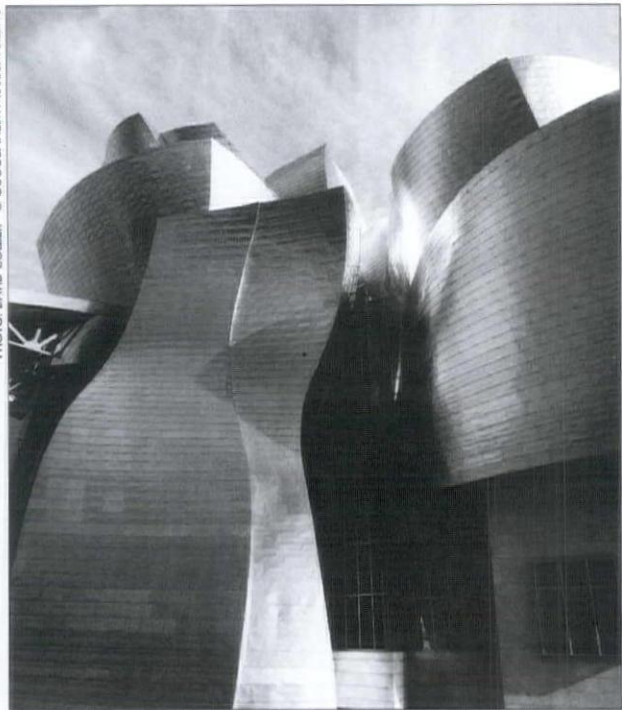
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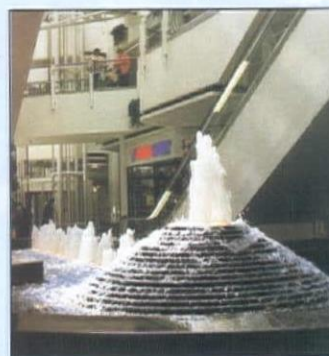
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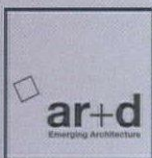
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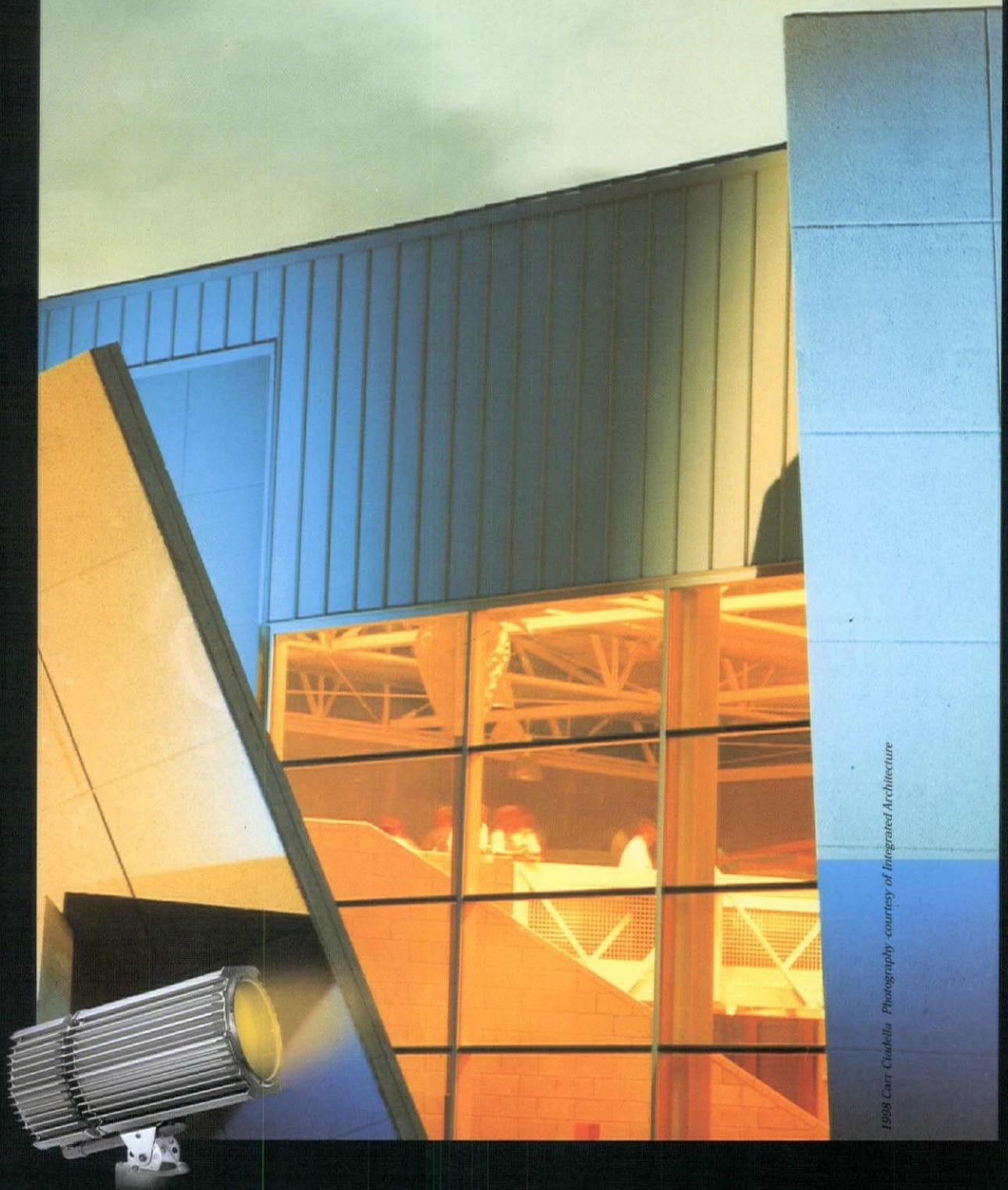
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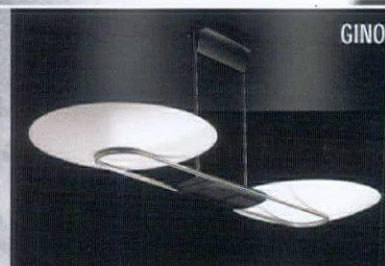


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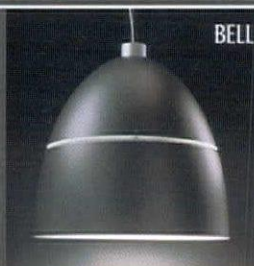
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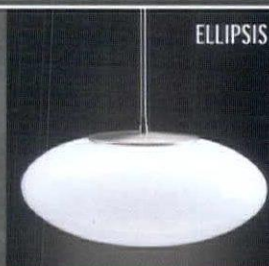
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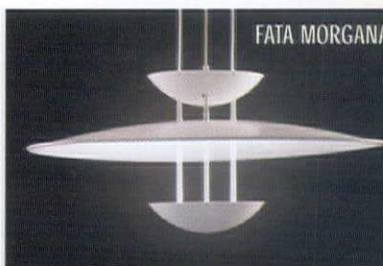
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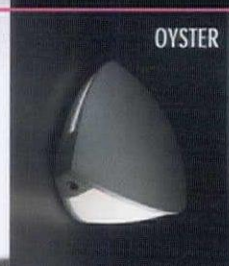
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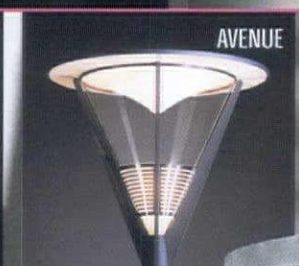
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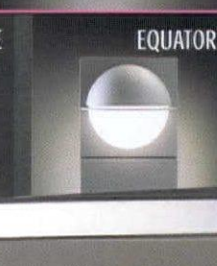
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- 1 Tower block housing being destroyed in Hackney, London in the early '80s. Now to be followed in a neighbouring country by an equally alienating series of new blocks?
- 2 Brick towers, Tilburg, the Netherlands by Jacq. de Brouwer.
- 3 Red metal high-rise (one of three) by Atelier Zeinstra, Almere, the Netherlands.
- 4 Tower, Amsterdam by Neutelings Riedijk.

In the twentieth century, production of large-scale housing has often been disastrous, whether architects have been involved or not. A new sensibility is needed coupled with inventive geometry and new approaches to construction.

PROFESSIONAL HUBRIS?



WHY HAVE TWENTIETH-CENTURY ARCHITECTS BEEN SO consistently nasty to the working class, indeed to anyone less privileged than themselves? Architects searching for ever-more extreme personal expressions of technology and art have had the most disastrous consequences for many poor and disadvantaged people. Throughout the earlier part of the twentieth century, making social housing was one of the key tasks of the profession. In the '20s huge amounts of architectural effort were poured into the notion of *Existenz-minimum*: the creation of a (pseudo) scientifically agreed minimal flat in which decent family life could be conducted with the least expense of money and space, and maximum profit for the contractors and maximum fame for the architects who were trying to manipulate the building process.

After the Second World War, the power of architects over housing provision seemed clear as the world tried to recreate itself from ruins and remorse. Need was enormous and politicians vied with each other to try to generate more and more housing units (as they were called by the bureaucracy) every year. Hundreds of new building systems were invented and tried out on people who had little alternative but to accept their new accommodation.

And, to begin with, all seemed well. The new inhabitants of even the most towering blocks and the grimmest concrete panelled system buildings, were largely happy to be provided with modern kitchens and bathrooms when they first moved in. The problems which afflicted so many of the estates took time to emerge: the constructional defects, the lack of understanding by young architects of lifestyles of less advantaged people (leading to phenomena like endemic condensation), the social ghettoization of many estates with no social or functional mix and precious few facilities. All these were not apparent at first, and during the '60s and '70s, the huge building programmes continued, with the system builders gradually becoming more and more powerful and human considerations being driven out of the equations.

OF COURSE, IT HAD TO STOP, and in the Anglo-Saxon countries at least, reaction was severe. The climate of opinion was reinforced by the disaster of Ronan Point in London in 1968, where a gas main blew up and instituted progressive collapse of the panel-built tower. There was an immediate reaction against tower block housing and system construction in general. At first in the US, such buildings began to be blown up.

The destruction of Pruitt-Igou in St Louis in 1972 was seen as the moment of the death of Modernism by Charles Jencks. It was symbolic of far more than an abandonment of a style or system of building procurement. In many ways the razing of what had turned out to be a disastrous no-go estate marked a turning moment in the Modern project, with its inbuilt commitment to decency and liberation of the poor. The best efforts of state and municipality in conjunction with new industry and technology (always Modernism's great hope) did not seem to work.

In Britain, the state did not give up so quickly. In the '70s low-rise, high-density housing was developed, largely made with rationalized traditional methods of building which, it was hoped, would obviate many of the constructional problems of the previous social housing schemes. Low-rise high-density (which to achieve the densities required on expensive inner-city land, needed architectural intelligence and imagination) virtually disappeared in Britain when Thatcher attempted to make the state wither away, not to be replaced, as Marx hoped, by civilized communities living in harmony together but by the ferocious world of modern multi-national capitalism. As yet, the great international corporations seem to be having little effect on building in general and housing in particular. But the time of their influence will probably come. For instance Ikea, the furniture retailer, is developing programmes for selling prefabricated houses cheaply, and so are several other international con-

cerns. At least with Ikea, there might be some possibility of getting a reasonably decent and carefully designed house, unlike the products of the mass market national housebuilders, who in Britain and the US produce endless appalling copies of Arts and Crafts houses or Georgian villas; in France, Italy and Spain, the model is usually vernacular, and sometimes slightly better for that, because it can at least produce low-rise, high-density joined-up developments. But though they may use slightly less land than endless proliferation of individual houses, they are just as unfunctional and socially segregated as the housing estates of the previous half-century.

WHILE LOW-RISE, HIGH-DENSITY, with private courts and large terraces may be a better way of using the earth's resources and allowing people a sense of identity than the system-built towers and slabs that preceded it, it is clearly far from being a panacea. As I write this in an anonymously designed cheaply-built mid-nineteenth century semi-detached house in north London which, despite much ill-treatment on my part, is managing to stay up and be agreeable after 150 years, there are two standard-setting low-rise, high-density housing developments within a mile or so which were much lauded when they were built a couple of decades ago (including in the pages of this magazine). Now they have become disasters. One¹ is being radically altered, the other² is in desperate need of major surgery. The problems are not perhaps so much to do with the geometries of the schemes,³ but with most ill-advised housing allocation policies, which reinforced the ghetto effects of such large estates on which the incidence of vandalism and serious crime are notorious.

Although social housing in Britain has changed radically,⁴ it still often flourishes abroad in the old sense: in France, Germany, Austria and Scandinavia for instance. And of course in Holland, which is often held up as an example to us all of the benevolent state-funded housing system, largely designed by architects. So why are so many Dutch social housing schemes such obvious and often brutal advertisements of their inhabitants' otherness, and the skill of their architects to make large-scale sculpture? The linked phenomena are certainly not limited to Holland. I return to my initial question. Why are architects often so rotten to the less advantaged? It is completely wrong to use other people's habitations as a form of artistic or technological expression.

Ranging from the eighteenth-century aristocratic Royal Circus in Bath by John Woods to the '20s workers' housing by Bruno Taut in Berlin-Britz, we have numerous examples of quiet decency from the past in which architects allow inhabitants to be individuals and yet have urban figure. Modesty, simplicity, gentleness, not swanky fashionable pattern-making are required. And perhaps we might begin to think of an idea that has shimmered at the back of architectural thinking about housing for over a century: that inhabitants might actually be able to manipulate their own dwellings, like those of us who live in privately owned houses. A few tentative experiments have been seen, but not nearly enough: we need more ingenious geometries, more understanding of the possibilities of technology, and (in most cases) more humility and generosity. PETER DAVEY

1 Marquess Road by Darbourne & Darke (AR September 1974).

2 Maiden Lane by Benson & Forsyth (AR April 1983 and AR November 1988).

3 Though something, because they were conceived in the period when the Corbusian notion of towers and slabs set in parkland had been shown to generate anomie and many other social problems. So, following the teachings of Oscar Newman and Alice Coleman, who preached that each dwelling should have its own 'defensible space', and in fact that all spaces should be 'defensible'. This sometimes has disastrous consequences when criminal presence and acts cannot be detected because of the maze-like geometry.

4 The role of providing social housing in the UK is now largely taken by housing associations (in essence not for profit organizations funded by the state). Many of them object to architects, who are held to have limited control over budgets, and are responsible for past high-rise errors. Courses have been run on how to create housing without the profession, suggesting the use of building economists, civil engineers, and virtually anyone who is not an architect as team leader. Built results have on the whole been uninspiring, mean and grim, modified only by bits of pasted-on decoration.

view

THE AR+D AWARDS. THE NAI CELEBRATES MORPHOSIS. DESPERATE NEED TO CREATIVELY CONSERVE AALTO'S VIIPURI LIBRARY. EISENMAN WINS A COMPETITION FOR A BLEAK TRACT OF LOWER MANHATTAN, AND FROM THE SAME CITY, MICHAEL SORKIN WRITES ON THE DEVELOPMENT SCENE.

AR+D JUDGED

The first ar+d awards have proved to be extraordinarily popular. We had more than 900 entries from over 50 countries worldwide. It became abundantly clear that there is huge interest from all over the planet in an award for architects who are not normally recognized because the contribution of their generation (45 and under) has yet to break into popular consciousness.

Judging so many fine entries was immensely difficult. We realized that we were looking at an enormous fountain of invention. After much debate, the jury decided to adopt Massimiliano Fuksas's proposal that we should have 20 prizes to record and celebrate the great variety of talent shown on the boards.

And, of course, there had to be a first prize winner. So 21 works have been chosen after intense debate.

As editor of *The Architectural Review* and chairman of the jury, I was so overwhelmed and pleased by the response to our award, and the quality of the entries, that it became clear that we must change the whole publishing programme of the magazine. Full results will be published in a special issue devoted to it in December. These pictures show, I hope, some of the intensity (and fun) of the jury's deliberations.

You will have to wait until next month to see what we chose.

PETER DAVEY

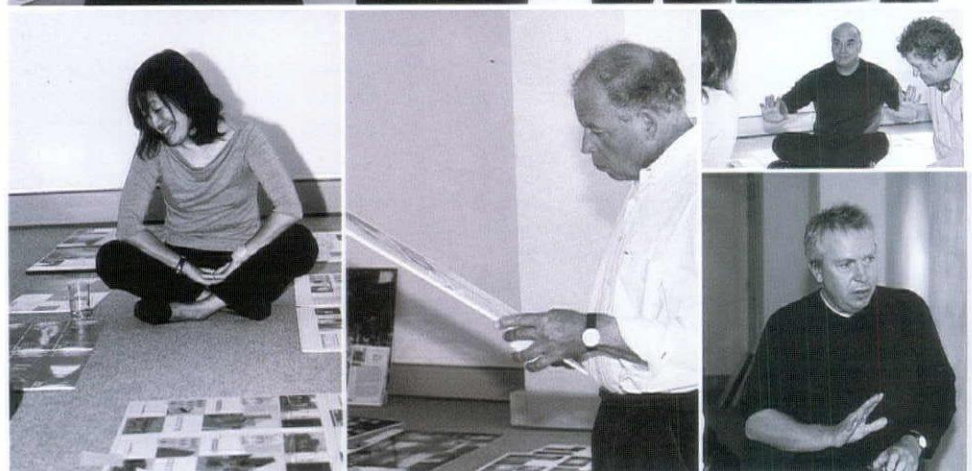
† The jury was Billie Tsien, of Williams & Tsien, New York; David Chipperfield, of David Chipperfield Architects, London; Massimiliano Fuksas, of Massimiliano Fuksas Architetto, Paris, Vienna and Rome; Theo Bjerg, Professor at the Danish Royal Academy; Peter Davey, Editor of the AR.

SILENT COLLISIONS

Morphosis has played a constructive role in LA's idiosyncratic architecture scene for two decades now. After a dip in fortunes in the early 1990s (victim of the Japanese recession) and the departure of Michael Rotondi to found RoTo, Morphosis under Thom Mayne is again to the fore, constructing impressive new projects and the subject of an exhibition at the Netherlands Architecture Institute.

Nothing Morphosis does is especially easy. Having travelled from exhibition last year in Madrid, the drawings and models currently on show in Rotterdam are satellites to a major intervention specifically designed by the firm. This is a vast folded mechanism inhabiting its host – the NAI's Main Hall – as a benign parasite. It moves. Visitors enter onto a bridge leading to a large central platform. Occupied only by an asymmetric chair, this deck is cocooned in splayed white surfaces. Several panels, or wings, rise and fall to a 50-minute time-cycle, slowly changing the nature of the installation from an enclosure to a kind of open viewing instrument. Panels are taut frames of white cloth held by an exposed system of steel cables and motors. When lowered, planes align through low windows to an outdoor fragment sliding into an existing external pool. With nothing but the visitor to inhabit the upper pavilion, Morphosis have celebrated their immediate context with a sample of their own wares.

Beneath this mechanism, down a stately stepped ramp, the firm's drawings and models are displayed in parallel slots of space. The entire undercroft is subdivided by structural partitions set between the hall's deep lateral piers. With projects dating from 1981 to the present, it's quite the *étalage* down there, a compact retrospective. Viewed now, after many years, there's an almost shocking beauty about the earliest artefacts: the block model of Hermosa Beach with its miniature solids and voids, the meticulous elevations of the Lawrence Residence that reveal (again) one building nesting inside another. All embody that quintessential Morphosis conjecture of ground and urban form, of descriptive geometry and appropriated or invented objects.



Jury in action. Clockwise from top: David Chipperfield, Peter Davey, Billie Tsien and Massimiliano Fuksas trying to decide; Fuksas preaching; Chipperfield declaiming; Bjerg brooding; Tsien contemplating.



Morphosis' fusion of topography and cybernetics is currently on at the Netherlands Architecture Institute. Model of headquarters building for SHR Perceptual Management, Phoenix, Arizona, 1997.

Mayne and his colleagues constantly integrate things into richly stratified environments. From the early '90s onwards, they begin to combine walls and roofs into curvaceous envelopes; the Yuzen Car Museum, for instance (AR September 1992), and urban propositions for Paris and Vienna. Then Morphosis embraced the computer and the practice now have the means to envisage new constructs, unimaginable in the days of drawings boards and orthodox model-making. Two recent buildings, the Diamond Ranch High School east of LA and the Hypobank mixed-use development in Klagenfurt, Austria, are fusions between topography and cybernetics, in which it's deliberately unclear where ground ends and building begins.

Projectors within the installation at the NAI are intended to show clips of newly evolving projects. The entire contraption ('1500 metres of aluminium sections, 600 square metres of cotton fabric, 1000 square metres of MDF and more than 10 000 screws and bolts') may itself be anachronistic and indeed was not fully operational during initial days of the exhibition. Delicate and presumably computer-generated, it resembles those fossil-like apparatuses in Mayne's work of a decade or more ago. Yet rather than blurring boundaries between architecture and site, it allows the visitor a look at the NAI Main Hall anew. It's greatly to Morphosis' credit that Jo Coenen's building has never seemed so interesting.

RAYMUND RYAN

Morphosis: Work-in-Progress, Netherlands Architecture Institute (NAI), Rotterdam, 4 September 1999 to 16 January 2000. The exhibition is accompanied by a new monograph on the practice published by Rizzoli.

AALTO IN RUSSIA

The international architectural community has for a long time been worried about the fate of Aalto's Viipuri library.

A recent visit to Vyborg in Russia (Viipuri in Finnish), showed that the famous town library built by Aalto in 1933-35, has been somewhat saved from its dreadful predicament of having been both restored by the Soviets and then neglected as the economy collapsed. Aalto's building is there because, before the Second World War, the city was the second biggest in Finland, and the capital of Kerula, the lost province. Built to demonstrate the importance of the decency and up-to-dateness of Modernity for newly independent Finland, the library was a showpiece of the new civilization.

Now, by and large, it is in a terrible mess, with water and mould staining walls of the reading rooms, the glazing (often cracked) held together with bizarre foaming mastic and everything terribly shabby (like most of the rest of the city). But there are signs of hope. The big glazed wall of the foyer has been restored – or at least made waterproof and neat. One small part of the famous wave-like acoustic ceiling of the auditorium has been remade in pine as a prototype of the whole projected restoration. Good things are going on, but a vast amount more needs to be done.

The library is on UNESCO's list of the 100 most endangered monuments in the world. If you want to help, or to get more information, contact Friends of the Viipuri Library, Alvar Aalto Foundation, Tilimäki 20, 00330 Helsinki, Finland, Fax +358 9 485119. P. D.



Sun Tower in Korea – fractured geometries respond to the chaos of the modern city.



Viipuri library
Top The foyer glass wall, now restored and watertight. Above Kristian Gullichsen, Chairman of the Alvar Aalto Foundation in Leonardo pose outside Aalto's front doors. Black granite surround is erroneous Soviet restoration. Left Restored part of famous auditorium ceiling.

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WEST SIDE STORY

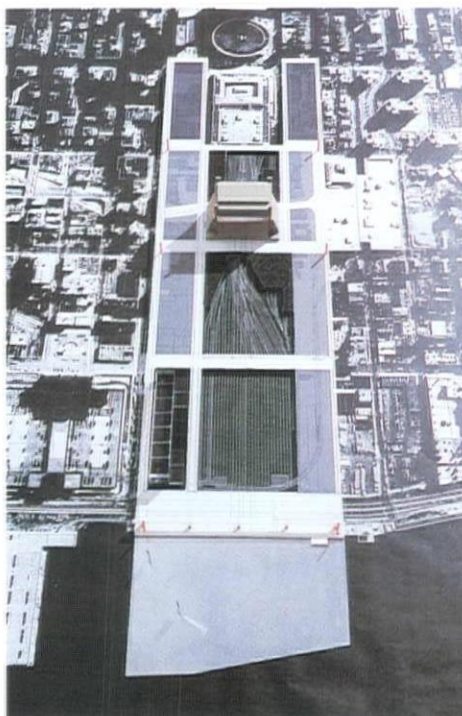
A bleak and neglected tract of Manhattan on New York's Lower West Side was the site for a major new urban design competition, intended to stimulate new ways of thinking about cities and their development.

Held under the auspices of the International Foundation for the Canadian Centre for Architecture (IFCCA), the first Design of Cities competition was won by Peter Eisenman, from an intriguing invited shortlist of Thom Mayne, Van Berkel & Bos, Reiser + Umemoto and Cedric Price, British architecture's iconoclastic elder statesman.

Conceived by Phyllis Lambert, founding director of the Canadian Center for Architecture in Montreal, the West Side project is the first in a series of major triennial urban design competitions aimed at generating provocative, large-scale ideas that are also economically feasible and buildable. Subsequent programmes will address the needs of different cities around the world. In the case of New York, the challenge was to establish architectural and planning benchmarks for an area that, despite its physical dereliction, appears ripe for imminent commercial development.

The vast riverside site is a 12 block corridor, bounded by 34th Street on its northern edge and 30th Street to the south. To the west lies the Hudson River; to the east, bustling Ninth Avenue. The estranged urban landscape of crumbling brownstones, car repair shops, warehouses, and railway yards, is straight from central casting, yet it also represents a frayed remnant of industrial New York that seems all the more precious as memories of Manhattan's working class origins are inexorably erased.

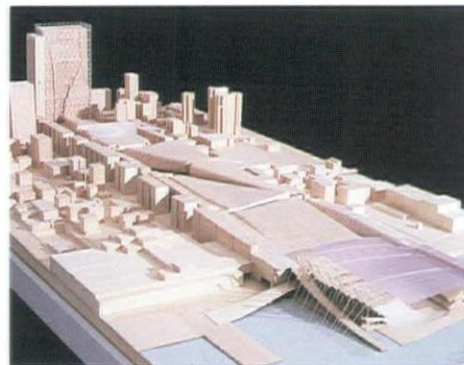
Until recently, developers had shunned the area as commercially unviable, but city planners, including Joseph Rose, Chairman of the City Planning Commission and a member of the IFCCA jury, regard it as a major development corridor. Last January, proposals were adopted to build a new sports stadium in the corridor, along with a relocated Madison Square Garden. The site also encompasses the Manhattan terminal for a new rail link to Kennedy Airport and the imposing Beaux-Arts pile of McKim Mead & White's General Post Office, soon to accommodate a new entrance concourse to Penn Station designed by Skidmore Owings and Merrill (AR September). With such putative developments, together with the strip's proximity to the existing Javits Convention Center (by I. M. Pei), it is hard to imagine a more appropriate urban stage for enacting an enlightened synthesis of architecture, planning and real estate.



Razed grid and 'wind blinkers' by Cedric Price.



Sensuous glass cocoon by Reiser + Umemoto.



Peter Eisenman's winning proposal.



Thom Mayne's dynamic fractured urbanism.

Although the five finalists span three generations, all regard architecture as a medium for exploring wider urban relationships. Eisenman's winning scheme transforms the site into a heroically scaled park running on an east-west axis from the Hudson River to Eighth Avenue. The park creates an undulating public path, described by Eisenman as a fold in the urban fabric. On the west side, this fold creates a pedestrian route from the riverfront into the centre of Midtown. At the east end of the park is a monumental office development at Eighth Avenue (on the current site of Madison Square Garden), and the proposed new Penn Station. Below the park are major new public elements, including a relocated Madison Square Garden, a media centre and an extension to the Javits Convention Center. The park is terminated on the west side by a new sports stadium (initially for staging the 2012 Olympic Games) built into the Hudson River beyond the boundary of the competition site. Where traditional urban schemes might treat the major structures along the site as isolated, object buildings, Eisen-

man's proposal integrates them into a continuous, high-density fabric of public urban and park spaces, in which the ground is fashionably warped to define territories and functions.

Other proposals followed a similar pattern of megastructural intervention, adding hotels and retail space and expanding the convention centre. Reiser + Umemoto designed a huge, glass-enclosed year round public space and entertainment complex; Van Berkel & Bos envisaged a pier on the river and improvements to the Javits Center; and Thom Mayne enclosed an urban park with a dynamically curved and fragmented sequence of buildings. By far the most whimsical submission came from Cedric Price. Claiming that the site was beyond repair by the addition of more buildings, Price proposed a series of 70ft tall 'wind blinkers' resembling windmills to catch breezes off the river and serve as the lungs of Midtown Manhattan. Though the competition was theoretical, city planning officials are holding discussions with the finalists about realizing some of their ideas. CATHERINE SLESSOR

For more details enter 19 on AR enquiry card

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LAMMHULTS

THE BROWSER

Our regular wander round cyberspace looks at sites of general environmental interest, one of the first electronic architectural magazines and a couple of picture libraries.

Architecture Web Resources

<http://library.nevada.edu/arch/rsrcce/websrce/contents.html>
Architecture Web Resources is a guide intended to cover a very wide field from architecture to facility management, construction to energy and the environment. Based at the University of Nevada, it tends to stress North American sites but is not exclusively devoted to the US. Started in 1993, the site is regularly updated and increased in scope. Each site is given a pithy critical description. Definitely worth visiting.

Architronic

www.saed.kent.edu/Architronic/
Architronic is a refereed journal of architecture, intended to disseminate ideas and criticism inexpensively. Intended to appear three times a year, it comes out of Kent State University. Subject range tends to be limited to theory and history, though there are some articles on contemporary practice and current technology. There is a very efficient electronic index. The site gives full details of how to submit articles and how to subscribe to this free publication.

Artsource: Architecture Resources

www.ilpi.com/artsource/architecture.html
Quite a small general site with a few selected references to others, mostly American and academic, but with a few surprises, for instance the RIBA. Artsource is not about architecture only and is more extensive on art and associated sites.

Cities/Buildings Database

www.washington.edu/ark2/
The site is what its title suggests, a picture library. It covers modern and historical buildings in a fairly patchy

way, but you can be lucky, particularly with well-known buildings. The older part of the site encourages searching by country (the geographical spread is wide but most material is US based). The newer part of the site allows searches under many different rubrics, for instance building type, architect, place, photographer and date of photograph. All material is copyright and permission must be sought from photographers for further publication. No drawings.

Quondam - The Collection

www.quondam.com/001/colle.htm

A collection of three dimensional computer models of well-known buildings by selected architects. At the moment only 11 architects are featured, and then only a few projects by each one. The list includes Frank Gehry, Leon Krier, Louis Kahn, Venturi and Rauch and Le Corbusier, and the site organizers claim that the list will be extended shortly. Also included are links to other sites, notably the Schinkel Archive Online. A site to watch if it grows as its organizers suggest.

COMPETITIONS & AWARDS

Latest international competitions for architects and students.

Århus city and harbour

Registration and submission: 20 December 1999
Prizes: First prize of DKK 500,000, with other prizes at jury's discretion
Fee: DKK 200

Open ideas competition exploring the relationship between Danish city of Århus and its harbour, with the aim of evolving a masterplan for future growth and development. Further information and registration:
Bent Kolind, DAL
Strandgade 27A
DK-1401 Copenhagen
Denmark
Tel: +45 32 83 69 00
Fax: +45 32 83 69 01
Email: konkurrencer@dal-aa.dk

Boeing business jet

Registration: 31 August 1999
Submission: 31 March 2000
Prizes: Total prize money of US \$45,000
Fee: None

Jury: includes Francois Burkhardt, Toyo Ito, Jan Kaplicky and Richard Rogers

Open competition for design of the interior of the new Boeing business jet. The plane's very large cabin offers potential for innovative interior design. To encourage new and original ideas, the brief is left open. Entrants can choose their subjects; for instance new cabin layouts, improvement of private space and climate control. Further information and registration:
Domus
via Achille Grandi 5-7
20089 Rozzano
Milan
Italy
Email: domusbbj@bder.org
Website: www.bedr.org/domusbbj/en/

Commonwealth Association of Architects Student Competition:

A Traveller's Hotel
Registration and submission: 17 March 2000
Prizes: first, UK£1200; second, £500; third, £200.
Special 1st or 2nd year prize: £200

Jury: George Henderson (President CAA), Kenneth Yeang (Malaysia), Ian Athfield (New Zealand), Peter Davey (Editor of The Architectural Review).

Eligibility: students studying in all British Commonwealth countries
Ideas competition for eco-friendly hotel catering for budget travellers. Entrants may choose their sites; choice of site, and architectural response to it, will be among criteria for judging the competition. Innovative thought is expected for providing simple, inexpensive accommodation. Climatic factors must be considered, and should influence the nature of indoor sheltered and outdoor spaces and the balance between these. The building should reflect local culture and context and the design should demonstrate clear principles of sustainability through choice of materials, management of energy and waste, climate modification, reusability.

Further details and registration: CAA Secretariat
66 Portland Place
London W1N 4AD
Tel: +44 171 490 3024
Fax +44 171 253 2592
Email:
caa@gharchitects.demon.co.uk

The City:

**Third Millennium,
Biennale de Venezia**
Registration and submission:
31 December 1999

Prizes: three student and
three professional awards

Fee: none

Jury: *François Barré, Peter Cook,
Massimiliano Fuksas, Frédéric
Migayrou, Paul Virilio, James Wines*
The theme of the Architecture
Biennale is 'The City: Less Aes-
thetics, More Ethics' and the
competition is intended to bring
together the most varied kinds of
work by planners and architects
from all over the world. Entrants
will be expected to express visions
of the city: not necessarily as one
particular location, but as sys-
tems of relations and structures
that define contemporary life.
Four digital images of 800 x
600 pixels in 72 dpi and JPG
or GIF format are required;
all techniques and media may
be used.

Further information and
registration:
Email: concorso@labiennale.org
Website: www.labiennale.org

Frate Sole Award

Submission: 31 May 2000

Submissions are invited for the
second Frate Sole Award for
Sacred Architecture. This is
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siastical buildings completed
within the last 10 years. The
Frate Sole Foundation was
established to celebrate the
architectural and spiritual qual-
ities of new church buildings.
The first recipient of the award
was Tadao Ando. A prize of 300
million lire will be presented on
4 October 2000, the Feast of St
Francis of Assisi, in Pavia.
Further information and
registration:
Fondazione Frate Sole
Via Ada Negri 2
27100 Pavia
Italy
Fax: +39 82 301413

Sustainable architecture

Registration: 30 September
1999

Submission: 30 March 2000

Prizes: Total prize money of

24 000 euros

Fee: None

Eligibility: Open to
architecture students in the
following countries – Austria,
Belgium, Denmark, Germany,
Finland, France, Greece, Great
Britain, Ireland, Italy,
Luxembourg, the Netherlands,
Portugal, Spain and Sweden

An effective way of expanding
knowledge on sustainable archi-
tecture is to make it part of the
core curriculum in architecture
schools. This competition
among schools in the European
Union seems an apt way to
encourage these institutions to
be more active in this important
field. The aim of the competi-
tion is design either a refurbish-
ment of an office block or a new
commercial complex. In the
process, students will address the
issues of what form energy-effi-
cient buildings might take in the
future.

Further information and

registration:

Vivien Walker

Conference Co-ordinator

School of Architecture

Oxford Brookes University

Gipsy Lane

Headington

Oxford OX3 0BP

UK

Tel: +44 1865 483200

Fax: +44 1865 483298

Email: tia@brookes.ac.uk

Website:

<http://www.brookes.ac.uk-schools-arch-TIAconf.htm>

Central California History Museum

Registration and submission:

24 January 2000

Prizes: negotiations for
commission

Fee: US \$100

Jury: Not yet announced

Eligibility: Californian
architects or others associated
with a registered Californian
architect.

Sponsored by Fresno Historical
Society, the competition is for a
45 000 sq ft museum to display
relationships of the land of cen-
tral California and mankind
from aboriginal times to pre-
sent. Two stage competition,
with five finalists chosen to
work up proposals; they will
receive honoraria of \$7500.

Further information:

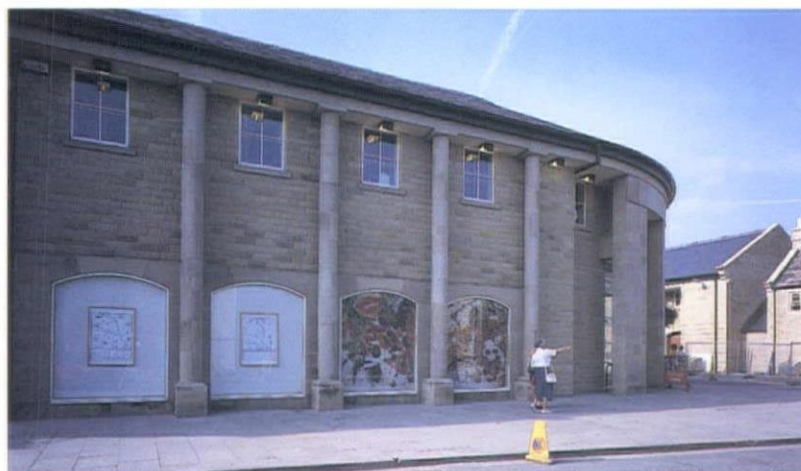
Bill Liskamm, Competition

Adviser.

Email: fresnomuse@aol.com

Fax: +1 559 441 1372

Website: www.valleyhistory.org



outrage

Sleepy Bakewell in the English Peak Park lives from tourism and tries to
take care of its image, but a new supermarket was needed. Such buildings
are not easy: inside they need a deep plan, artificial lighting and ventilation,
and a single entrance from the world, no longer living quarters over, nor
even shop windows to show the wares.

So what do you do with the blind facades? Expensively carved stone and
slate, a fake upper storey, a responsibly 'civic' clock tower, and Classical
colonnades in the newly invented 'Bakewell order'. You want a portico on
the corner? Just bend it round! Unhindered by Classical precedent, the
architects evidently chose proportions to reflect the disharmony of the
modern world. PETER BLUNDELL JONES

COMPETITION RESULT FOR LIBRARY, SEINÄJOKI, FINLAND



Seinäjoki library elaborations.

The international student
competition for a library adjacent
to the Alvar Aalto Civic Centre in
Seinäjoki, Finland, has been
judged. The jury (including Juhani
Pallasmaa and Daniel Libeskind)
decided that the 331 entrants did
not display enough appreciation of
local context or culture. So nine
were asked to develop schemes.
No first prize has been given, but
the second went to British based
team: Marcelo Espinosa, Pablo
Lazo, Marila Perez-Pantin with
Susanna Gonzalez and Francisco
van Kesteren. The jury called for
further development of the project.

LETTERS

BLINDING NECESSITY

SIR: A whole volume of modern houses (AR September 1999) and hardly a curtain or blind in sight! Floor to ceiling walls of glass are tremendously seductive in the daytime, as we see in your photos. But at night, we are apparently to believe that rich patrons are happy on the one hand to be looked at by outside 'peepers' (less likely of course if their house is in its own field), and on the other hand to look on to a wall of blackness (see the Shuttleworth house on p74).

By drawing curtains or blinds at night, most people seem to be answering a basic need for privacy, and for lightening the dark tone of glazing to match the walls more closely.

What is the explanation for the AR houses?

Yours etc

PAUL DIMARCO

Bristol, England

RIGHT TO A FAIR TRIAL

SIR: I could not believe the 'Outrage' article in last month's AR (September 1999). I cannot say if it smacks more of Salon des Refusés or of the delicate sensitivities of our Prince of Wales.

You urge us to join with you in pouring scorn upon Marco Dezzi Bardeschi's 'Art Deco for Less'. Indeed, how ghastly! What a 'kitsch cocktail' of such 'pure undiluted vulgarity'!

Perhaps this cowardly stab at a building, which you seem only to have driven past on your way to reviewing some far worthier creation, was intended to disprove allegations of unfair bias? I do not defend the building, but its right to a fair trial. Where are the decent photographs? The plans and sections? The rational, rather than kneejerk stylistic objections?

Surely a magazine of such high quality and skill as yourselves need not resort to such cheap token gestures?

Yours etc

SIMON MURRAY

Cambridge, England

PS Loved the 'jazz barracks'!

OUT OF SITE

SIR: I much appreciate the very generous review of my website, Architekt Links, in the September edition of AR, p30. It is especially gratifying as I am not an architect – although I am married to one – and I created the site entirely as a hobby, hoping that it might prove useful to other people with an interest in architecture.

There is one comment in the review which I found rather puzzling – the comment concern-



Legorreta in Japan, in the dark and without people.

ing my 'Masters' section, that '... you can call up information about many of the most distinguished architects of this century (with the interesting addition of Pugin)'.

In fact, my 'Masters' section is not limited to architects of the twentieth century – other examples from previous centuries include Wren and Palladio, as well as the Australians Francis Greenway and J. J. Clark. The fact that there are not more entries concerning pre-1900 architects only reflects the dearth of information about such architects available on the Internet.

Despite this minor quibble, I am truly honoured by the review, and I hope that this publicity will enable my website to be of assistance to increased numbers of 'surfers' looking for sites of architectural interest on the Internet.

Yours etc

ANTHONY MORRIS

Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

morrisqc@thehub.com.au

www.thehub.com.au/~morrisqc/architekt/

THE IRISH QUESTION

SIR: I have subscribed to The Architectural Review for over two years and, during that time, have found it to be an excellent source of information.

What has begun to greatly disturb me, however, is the complete absence of articles (however small!) on Irish architecture. I am hard-pressed to think of any other European country that hasn't had some project published! I would be most surprised (and horrified) if absolutely no Irish contemporary schemes were worthy of even the odd article in your 'View' section.

Some of the 'big names' to have recently designed projects here (simply taking Dublin into account) include:

Ian Ritchie – has designed a Millennium Monument for O'Connell Street (the main

street of Dublin). It is a 120m tall metallic spire/spike (with a mere diameter of 6m at the base) tapering to a 20m length of optical glass, which would be lit at night, etc. That height would allow it to be seen from much of Dublin and would return O'Connell Street to its former glory, as the main focus of the city.

Santiago Calatrava – has designed two bridges to cross the Liffey (the river around which Dublin developed), due to begin construction between 2000 and 2001. One will swing around (the span of the river at that point is approximately 120m) to allow ships to pass.

Kevin Roche (who is actually Irish – though has built practically nothing in Ireland) – has designed a huge development (the largest in the history of the state) for the Docklands of Dublin. This is currently undergoing planning permission procedures – amid much debate and controversy due to the building heights and lack of compliance with the (recently produced and excellently thought-out) Docklands masterplan.

So more Irish architecture in The Architectural Review please!

Yours etc

SHANE WARING

Dublin, Ireland

POSTSCRIPT

INTERNATIONAL INTERBUILD

Interbuild, the British building exhibition, has been relaunched as an international forum of construction services and products intended to rival Batimat in Paris and Bau in Munich. Interbuild is now run by a joint venture between EMAP Business Communications, the AR's owners, and the Montgomery group, the founders of the century-old show.

To be held in Britain's National Exhibition Centre near Birmingham 21–25 May next year, Interbuild will for the first time have a major proportion of Continental exhibitors as well as British ones. News of latest exhibitors can be found on www.interbuild.com/

Each month, the AR will publish an Interbuild update.

ADDENDA

The credits for Legorreta's Japanese house (AR September 1999, p69) should have read as follows: design architect, Legorreta Arquitectos: Ricardo Legorreta, Victor Legorreta, Noe Castro (design team Miguel Almaraz, Jorge Corvarrubias). Project architect, Kajima Design: Yukishige Miyamae, Atsu Wada

Richard Davies took pictures 1 & 2 of Comme des Garçons, New York (AR October, p73).



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LETTER FROM NEW YORK

As the great economic boom in the United States continues to roar on, American cities, particularly New York, are being transformed, and not usually for the better. What had been one of the few American cities with a delicate downtown is being radically altered in scale, mix and quality of detailing. Michael Sorkin explains how one of the most desirable parts of Manhattan is being transmogrified and degraded before his eyes.

Today is the first day of autumn and the city is lovely, the air crisp and clear and the pace everywhere quickening – our best season. As I write this I'm sitting in my studio in groovy Tribeca, rapidly becoming the city's most covetable neighbourhood. My building – a sturdy, 30s vintage, high-rise loft has, until recently, been home to a wide and delightful variety of art and industrial uses (printing has a long history on lower Hudson Street) but is now largely vacant, we remaining tenants living on borrowed time. Not that no one wants the space but the go-go regime on Wall Street is spreading new money around like manure on downtown's fertile soil and the 'demand' is for residences. My landlord, sniffing this inevitable, has decided to cash out and convert the building into deluxe multi-million dollar condos (a million bucks no longer even gets you a conversation with a broker these days). As a result of this enormous bubble, a lovely, very

mixed, neighbourhood is undergoing the throes of homogenization, rapidly becoming just another yuppie paradise.

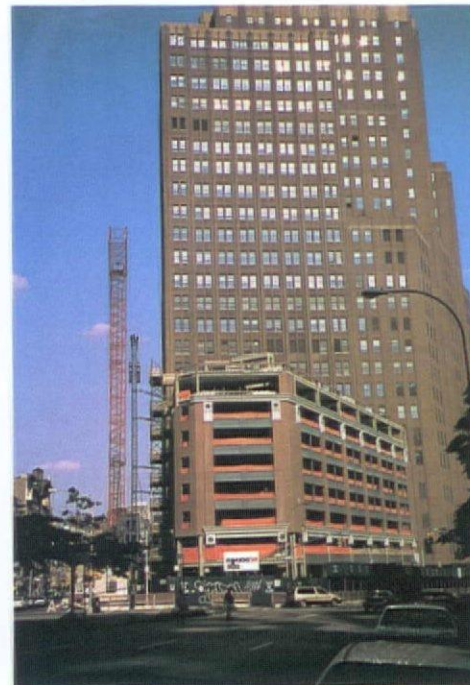
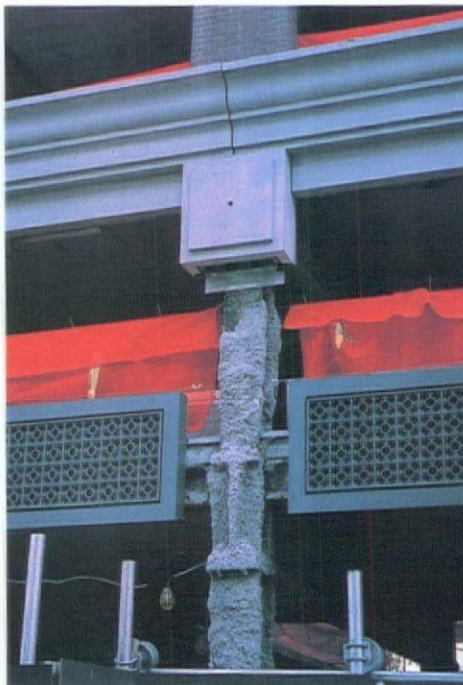
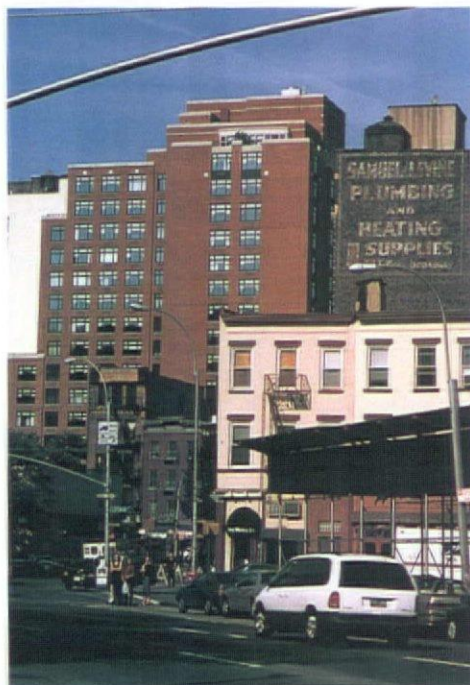
Among the distinguished avatars of this transformation (over on North Moore Street – the hottest block in the city) – were JFK Jr and Caroline Bessette. I saw them occasionally (and even writing this, I know I join the ranks of the 'saw them occasionally' crowd and wannabes – every merchant in the neighbourhood having been quoted in the media about Kennedy buying a cup of take-out coffee, being a regular guy and a good tipper, several boasting black-framed photos of the deceased behind their cash registers) and am still halted in the street by tourists looking ('John John Junior, please?') for their doorway. This was not difficult to find in the weeks immediately after the crash as their entire block was cordoned off by police barricades and composted shoulder deep with flowers, messages, and other tributes of celebrity grief, our own mini-bit of Di madness.

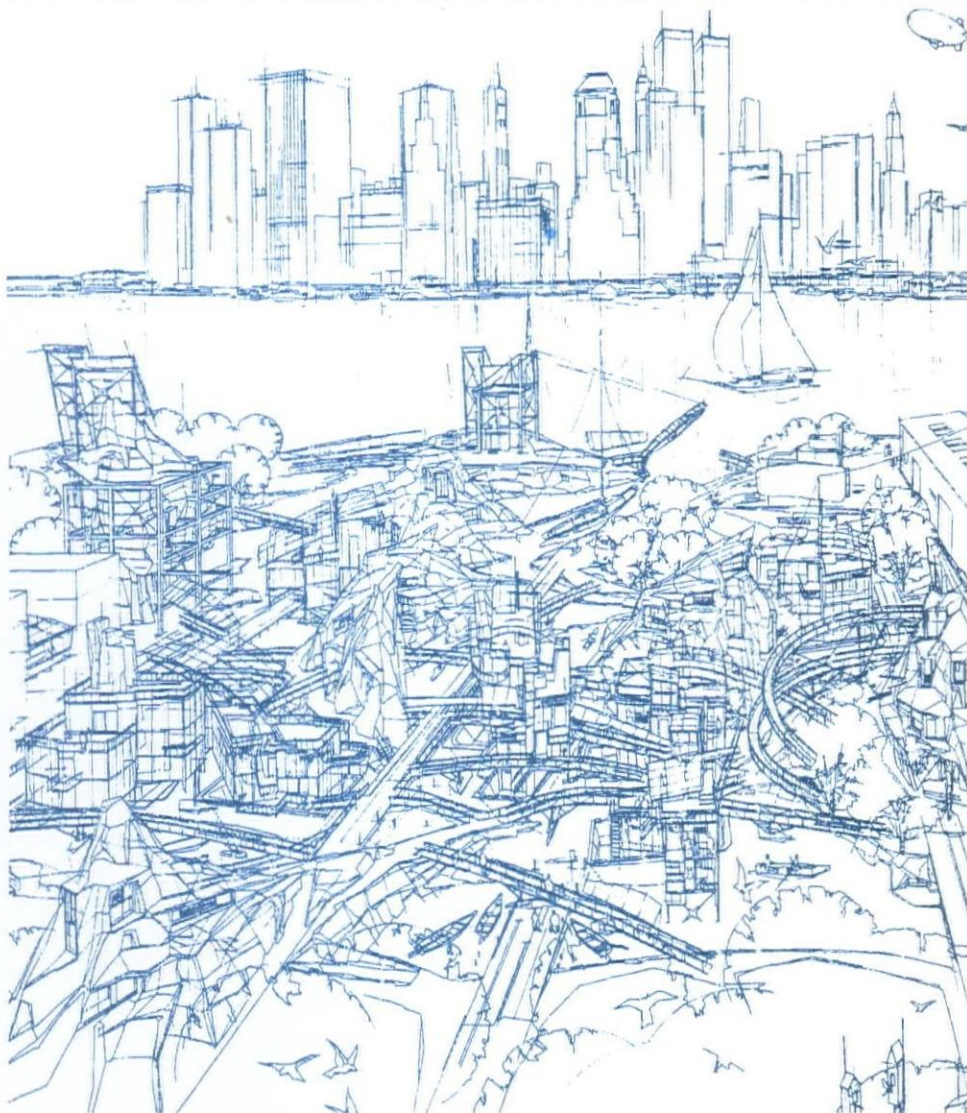
More recently, there's been a proposal to rename a tiny neighbourhood park in Kennedy's honour. Although I like the idea of naming local civic spaces for local heroes, I do wonder what's being commemorated in this case. To be sure, JFK Jr was incredibly good-looking, a nice neighbour, and the author of that iconic salute at his father's funeral. Professionally, he was an indifferent lawyer and the progenitor of a not particularly interesting magazine. He was, it appears, a poor aviator. He was, however, enormously famous. Naming the park after him would certainly affirm the celebrity vibe that pervades the local sense of value. This, after all, is a neighbourhood in which Robert De Niro is a leading restaurateur

and Harvey Keitel can be spotted buying a quart of milk.

The park that is candidate for renaming sits catty-corned from another prime neighbourhood site, a triangle of land that for years housed a garden shop and nursery. That plot was wonderful in its potential, its apex pointing south and its short side facing a fabulous inhabited mesa built for the phone company by Voorhees, Gmelin, and Walker, the greatest, most geological, of New York's Deco-era architects. To the east of this inhabited mesa lies a row of small nineteenth-century commercial buildings and to the west – along the hypotenuse – is a funky range of very low structures of somewhat more recent vintage running down a slight grade. It was a singular space, an important moment of relief in the density, and a viewing armature across which these wonderful buildings could be seen from far away in rare perspective.

Unfortunately, the rising real estate tide is swamping all sites and a hotel is under construction on the triangle. Recently topped out and now nearly skinned, it's a dreadful piece of work, ersatz as all get out, swaddled in phoney-baloney allusions to nearby cast-iron construction. The hotel's being erected by a developer who, several years ago, built a much larger version a couple of blocks to the north in Soho that has proven highly successful commercially but which – enormously overscaled – is a continuing affront to the fine-grained neighbourhood fabric. Like the earlier flop-house, the new one can be expected to generate the queue of idling, air-fouling, limousines that are the emblems of success in the current cultural regime.





Sorkin's 1994 vision of the lower end of Manhattan from his reworked Brooklyn waterfront.

Although there were citizen efforts to stop both of these structures, they were to no avail as both buildings fell within the letter of the zoning laws which take no position on the value of such serendipitous open-spaces.

Given the leading role of celebrity and entertainment in the new urbanism of downtown, there's nothing that meaningfully could have been counterposed to the hotel to attract real support on the part of the civic weal. Except perhaps a higher version of celebrity. One project that could surely have stopped the hotel in its tracks would have been a proposal to make the site into a park in honour of JFK Jr. The iconic oomph and reach of dead Kennedys is irresistibly sacred to us Americans and even the aggressive commercialism of the new hotel would surely have been humbled by the necessity of this national project of commemoration and fraudulent grief. Kennedy, however, simply perished too late.

Open space is at a premium downtown and we are rapidly losing all those accidental sites of uneven development – our stock of vacant lots – that have, until now, been uneconomic to build on. Nervously, I await the consumption of an impeccably scaled, might-be piazza that currently serves as a parking lot behind my

building which the landlord hopes to turn into yet another mindless condo tower. The mindset behind such serendipitous space-amenity is threatened not simply by this gap-filling surge but by the opposition of the merchant class to civic improvements, even in legitimately public spaces. There has, for example, been a years-long to-do about the so-called 'Greening of Greenwich', a plan to convert a lane of an unusually wide stretch of Greenwich Avenue into a linear park-space. This marginal reduction in the territory of the car is perceived as threatening to the idling limousine constituency – our hoteliers and restaurateurs, who, fearing the loss of their double-parking privileges have opposed the project tooth and nail.

Much as I love the signs of construction and physical improvement that currently abound in the city, there are certainly days when I think that the most useful contribution to the quality of life here would be a, shall we say, 5000 point drop in the Dow. That should get me a decent extension on my lease and keep a few of our wonderful accidental plazas around for a while.

MICHAEL SORKIN

Michael Sorkin is an architect, critic, teacher and writer who lives in New York.

December

The ar+d awards (The Architectural Review and d line international) are to be the theme of the December AR, making it into a special issue on this new and thought-provoking contribution to international architectural culture. The jury (p28) selected one prize winner and commended 20 others from a field of over 900 (some of which are shown below). As might be expected, the majority of entries from architects under 45 were of relatively small schemes, and among the selected works there was a good proportion of houses from South Africa to the USA, Greece to Australia.

But there was also a great range of other types: transport buildings for instance in Germany and Austria, a cultural centre for the Arctic, a church in Japan, a library in India, a town hall in Spain and much else. There were rather more inventive new offices than we expected. Perhaps surprisingly, relatively few interiors and conversions made it to the last round of judging, but the premiated ones, in Budapest and Munich, show a high standard of ingenuity and sensitivity to context.

As well as the ar+d awards, we shall of course be publishing our regular features, new and old: Interior Design (including Eduardo Souto de Moura's strange auditorium in the middle of a car park ramp); Place (our visit to a previously undiscovered potent spot); reviews of current competitions, books and architectural websites; our new monthly house study; View From (a critic writes); Design Review (our study of a particularly outstanding piece of design, ranging from knives and forks to motorway bridges). And of course, Outrage and Delight

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design review



Established in 1921, Mabeg, the German engineering and hardware firm, is chiefly known for the manufacture of signs and public transport structures. Recently its activities have taken a new turn. Impressed by the detailing at London's Waterloo International Terminal, the firm asked Nicholas Grimshaw & Partners to develop a universal system for all kinds of internal and external signs.

Grimshaw's answer was the elegant and immensely adaptable Profile One system. The basis of it is an extruded anodized aluminium track supplied in lengths cut to order, it can be fixed to walls, incorporated in partitions, made part of a desk or transformed into a free-standing mast. Each element is a finely detailed piece of design and engineering. The track is secured

by a fixed or adjustable foot, made of cast aluminium with a ball blasted finish. Cast stainless-steel arms provide a means of fixing display units, large signs and information systems.

Design of standard components is equally thoughtful. Signs in glass or aluminium are robust and outside ones will stand up to weather and vandals. Curving shelves, shaped around a central mast come in various sizes and materials, from glass to granite or wood. A stainless-steel footrest, similarly curved, has a ball blasted finish. The assemblies of these things, with their expressive junctions and high grade materials, bear the unmistakable imprint of the Grimshaw practice. The information mast is a particularly elegant piece of street furniture. The extrusion contains the

conduits for power and information cabling for flat screen monitors, LCDs, double-sided monitors, animated graphics, three-dimensional directions and interrogative facilities are all possibilities.

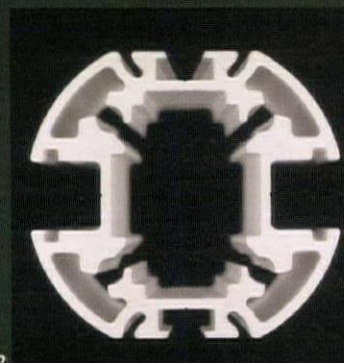
Internally, the system has generated a handsome reception desk by the simple expedient of linking two masts with a length of wood, glass, or granite and connecting it at both ends to a standard shelf of the same material. In theory, the desk is capable of infinite extension. An upper shelf can be added and the desk screened by panels.

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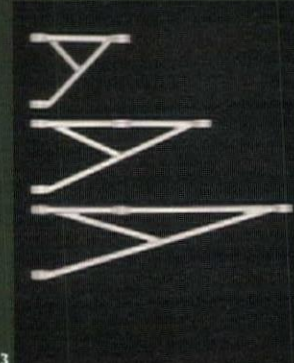
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Signs of the times

A system of components, designed by architects for an eminent German signage manufacturer, provides an elegant flexible system for street and office furniture.



2



3

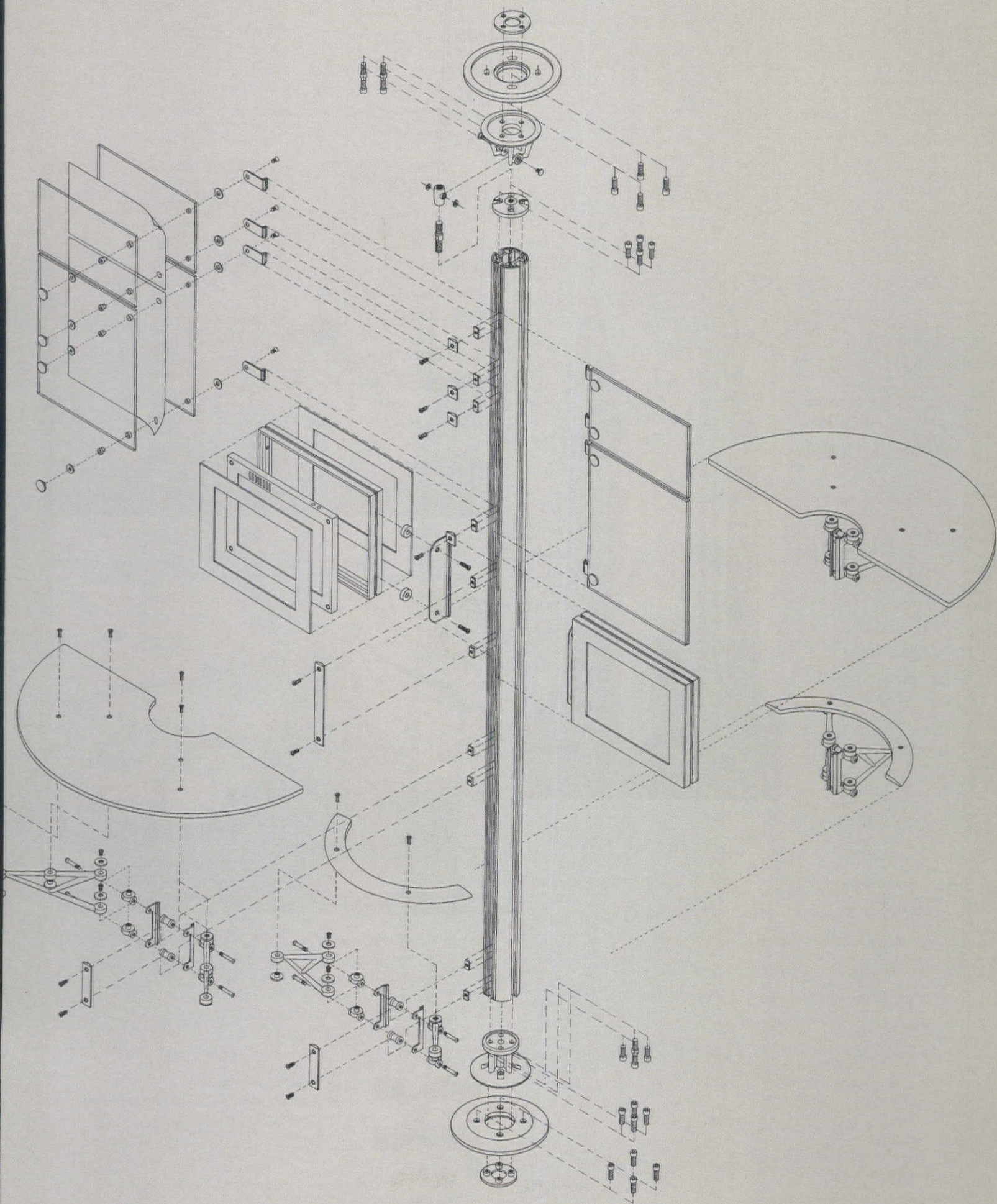


4



5

- 1 Information mast.
- 2 Mast: cross section.
- 3 Cast stainless-steel arms.
- 4 Mast with ball blasted stainless-steel footrest.
- 5 Reception desk with blue glass panels.



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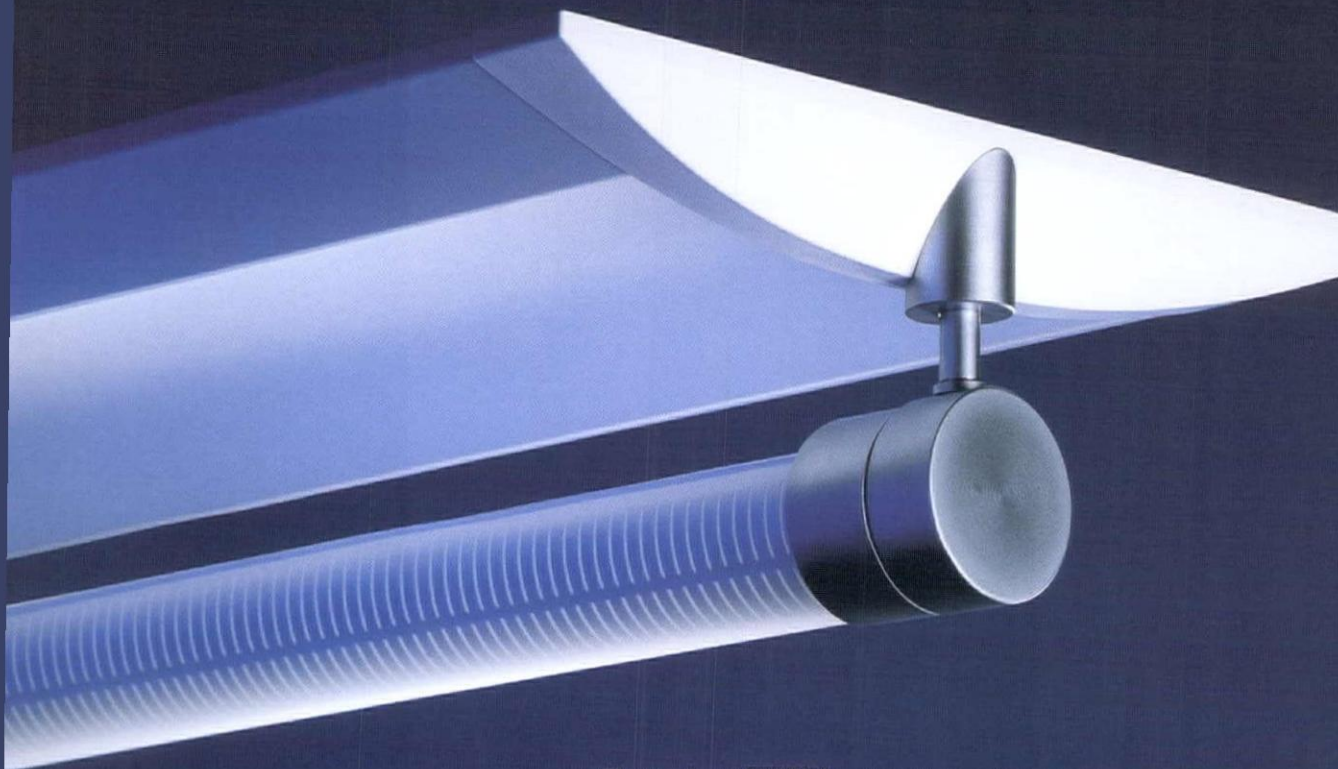
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Curved balconies facing parks
flats on lower
floors above.
places of latter

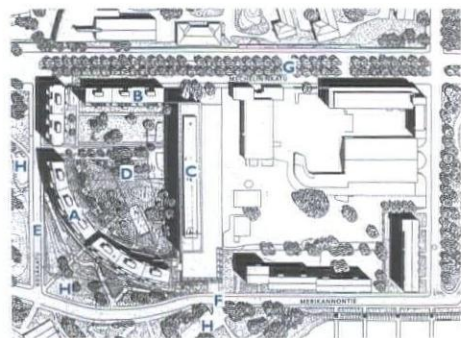




HOUSING, HELSINKI, FINLAND

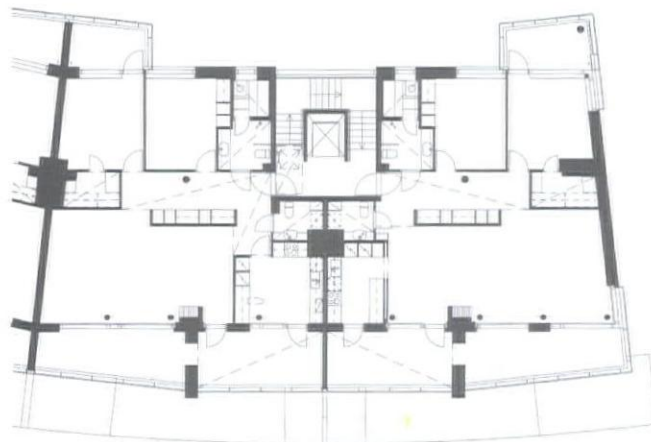
ARCHITECT

GULLICHSEN VORMALA ARCHITECTS



site plan

- A main curved block
- B unfinished block
- C existing office
- D green court
- E Kesäkatu
- F Menikannontie
- G Mechelininkatu
- H park

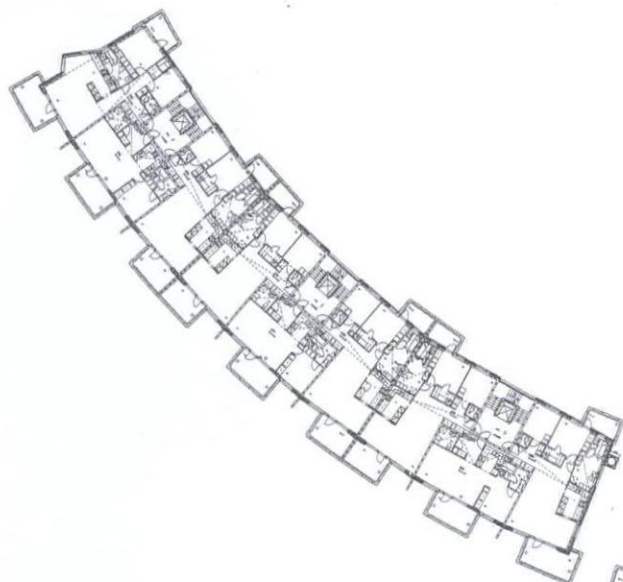
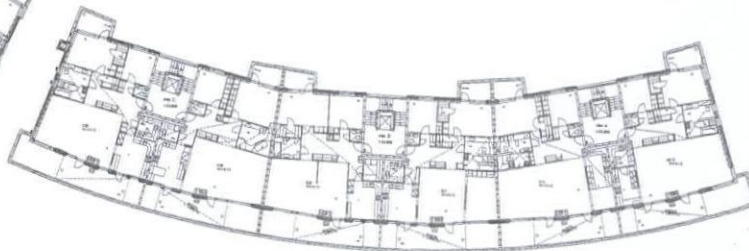
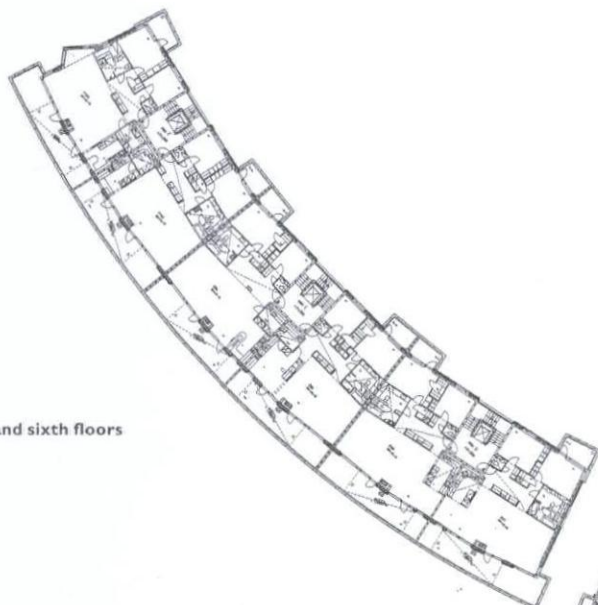


seventh floor flats



first to fourth floor flats (scale approx 1:250)

fifth and sixth floors



2
Garden court side. All except smallest flats
have balconies on this side to catch morning
sun, as well as winter-garden balcony and
sometimes terrace on the other.
3
Southern end of curve.



Helsinki is on a peninsula, pointing southwards to the Gulf of Finland with bays on each side protected from the open sea by chains of islands. A liberal sprinkling of parks relieves the density of the promontory (largely ordered into six- or seven-storey streets in the German fashion), and greenness is nowhere more pronounced than on the west side of the city. It was here that the national broadcasting company had its headquarters, on a big site between Mechelininkatu and Merikannontie streets overlooking the Taivallahti bay and out towards the green islands in the bay.

When the '60s complex became too constricted for the broadcasting people, they decided to move to a decayed industrial

area in the middle of the north of the peninsula. So a large site was released in one of the most desirable parts of town, just south of the Sibelius Park, and with a smaller green space between it and the sea over Merikannontie. Both new owner and city planners decided that the site should contain housing and offices like most of the rest of the area, and Timo Vormala of Gullichsen Vormala Architects made preliminary designs which were gradually refined to make an arc sweeping from west to north with a detached block in the main street, Mechelininkatu. (This was originally intended to be offices, but demand for flats was so high the developer decided to make housing, and the block will be completed soon.)



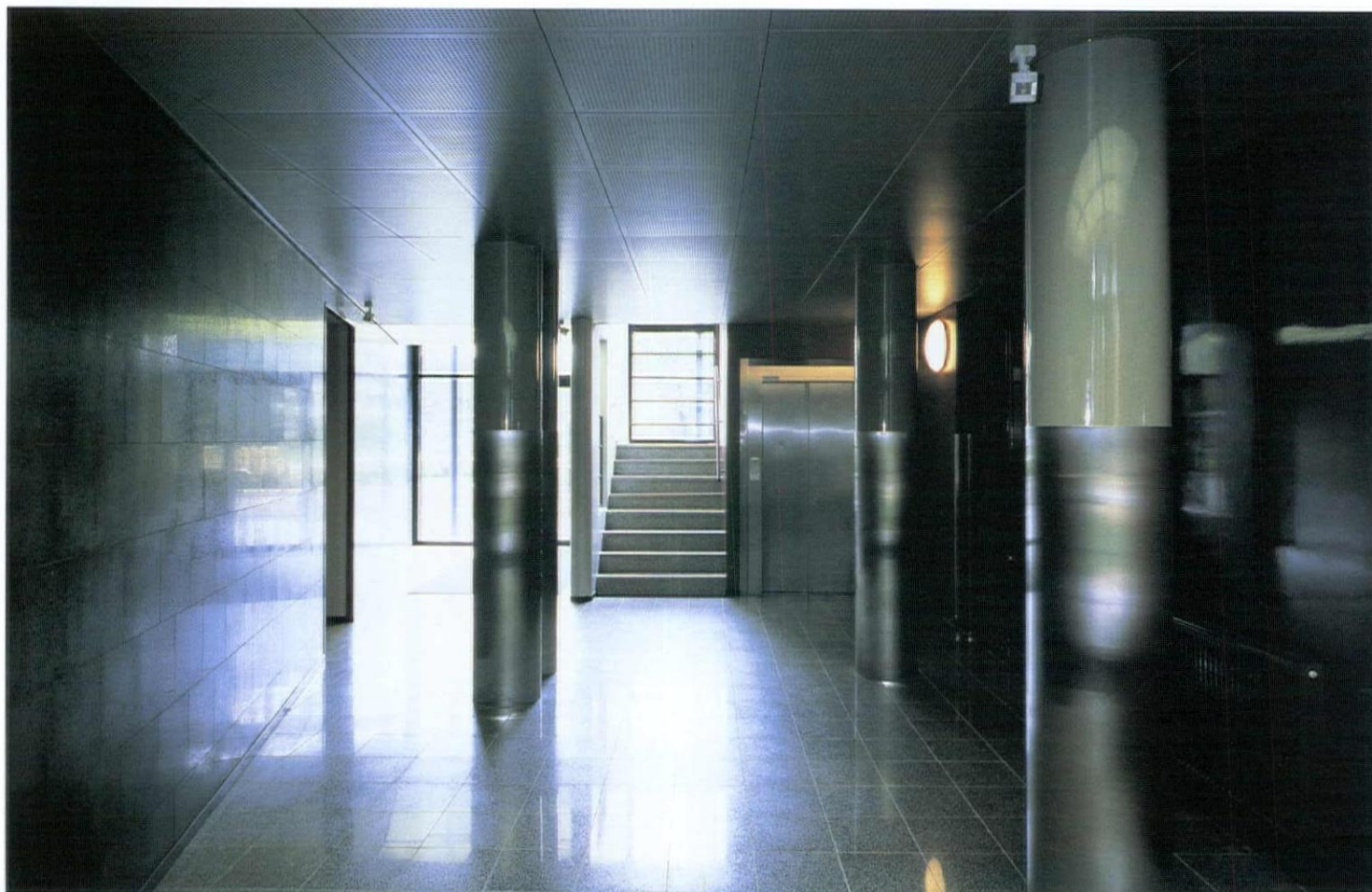
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HOUSING, HELSINKI, FINLAND

ARCHITECT

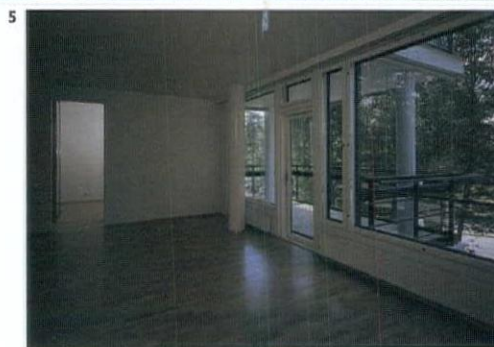
GULLICHSEN VORMALA ARCHITECTS



4 One of the entrance halls: tough but elegant materials for the public areas.

5 Living room in one of smallest flats: winter gardens have views of parks and sea.

6 Living room in one of largest (top floor) flats which has both terrace and winter garden overlooking sea.



The main curved piece is eight storeys high. It defines a big landscaped green which is enclosed to the south by a long rectangular office building from the original '60s development. Flats are mixed in size, and to some extent in layout. In the lower floors are the smaller units: three to a landing. The three upper floors have two flats a landing, and these with generous living rooms and staggering views over the bay are the stars of the show; they even have fireplaces (unusual in modern apartment blocks in Europe). All flats penetrate through the building, with balconies on the inside overlooking the inner semi-public court and catching the morning sun. Balconies and terraces on the convex side, which overlooks the parks and sea, may

be smaller on lower floors, but at least each flat has one, enclosable by glass as a winter garden to catch the fleeting sun in darker months. Because of the great popularity of the scheme, future residents were known early in the project, and flats were modified to suit owners; some were even connected for large families. Floors are in-situ concrete slabs with service voids so that services can easily be changed (wet ones particularly). All parking is underground, with little provision for casual vehicles to stop at ground level round the buildings (though there is provision for fire engines and maintenance trucks).

A terrace surrounds the completed block, with a natural random rubble wall defining the immediate purlieu. Above this, and the

greenery of the parks, floats the big long building detailed in white render, black metal, wood balustrades, glass block and glass with the crisp precision we have come to expect from Finland. The whole effect, in scale and careful elegance, is reminiscent of the huge city-block sized Baltic ferries still made and repaired a mile or so further south down towards the end of the peninsula. For all its classiness, the scheme has lessons for much less expensive forms of housing. H. M.

Architects

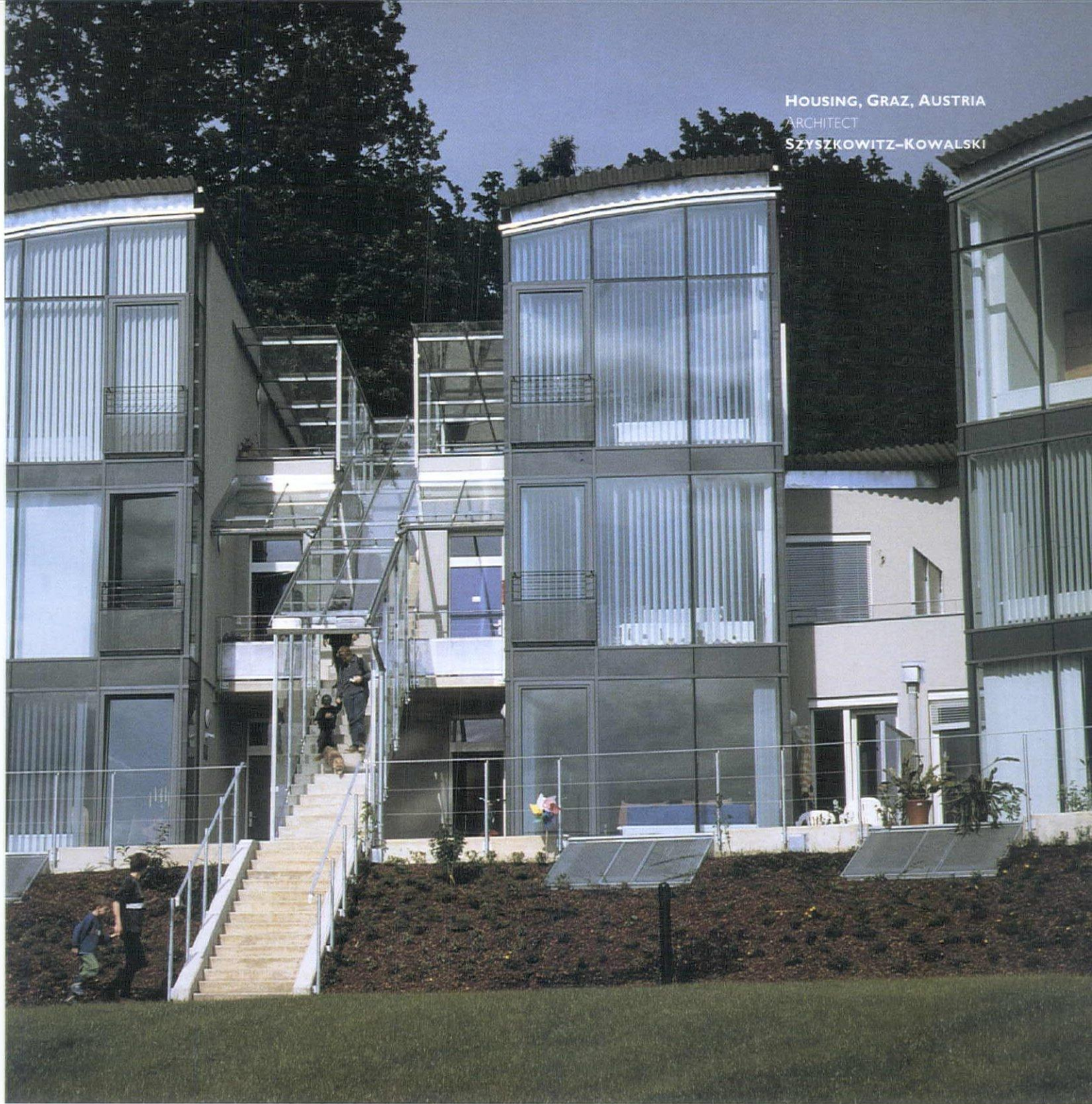
Gullichsen Vormala Architects

Project team

Timo Vormala, Susanna Raitanen, Jukka Linko

Photographs

Rauno Träskelin



ORGANIC CHEMISTRY

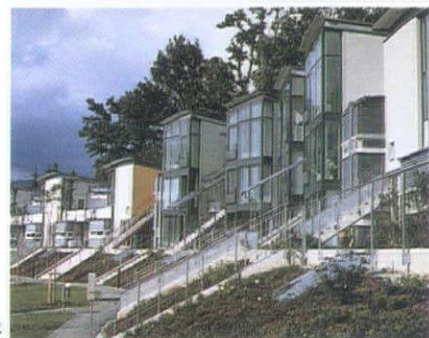
A lively and thoughtful housing scheme in Graz, southern Austria, responds with sensitivity to human need and nature of site.

Karla Kowalski and Michael Szyszkowitz are some of the most vigorous and inventive architects in that forcing house of organic architectural talent, the southern Austrian city of Graz (see for instance AR June 1995). Their work is organic in the best sense: highly honed to human use and need; the

resulting internal spaces are carefully articulated on the outside. Graz has had a distinguished record in housing design in the last two decades but changes in the provincial government of Styria have meant that architects get far fewer commissions because the ruling coalition believes that

social housing is best provided by package dealers, hence much of the latest work is drear and pinchbeck.

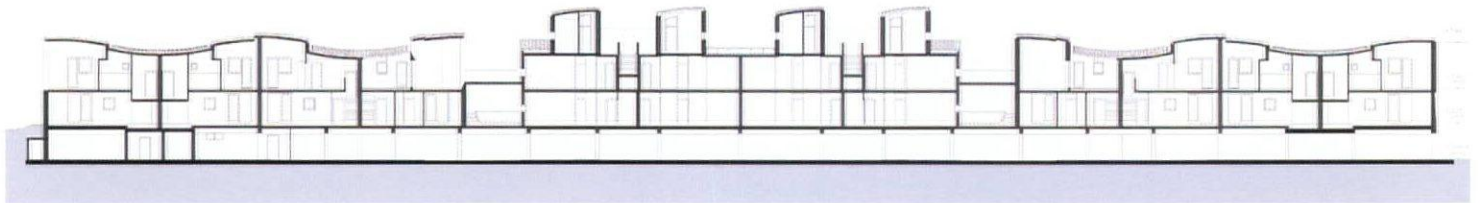
But not all. Szyszkowitz-Kowalski's latest scheme in the new housing suburb of Schießstätte is a case in point. Financed slightly differently from ordinary social housing (as



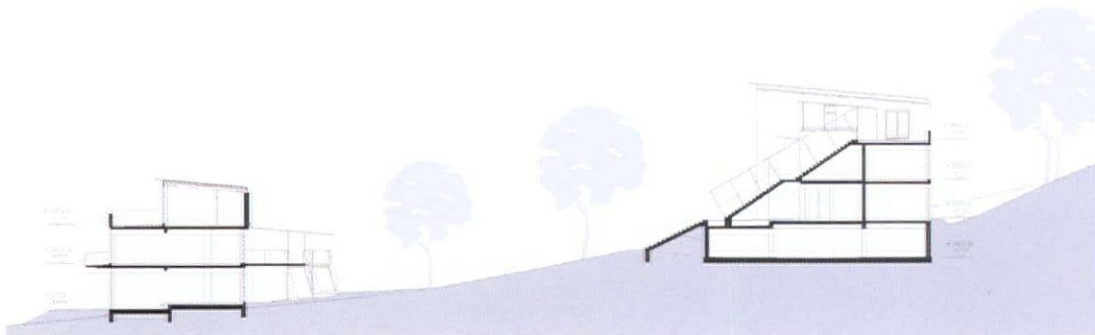
2
The inhabited wall against the hill encloses a green that is the spatial centre of the whole development.



site plan: Szyszkowitz-Kowalski scheme shown dark



long section



cross section



3
A spring found on the site animates the green, and its rill flows along the main axis of the development.

a sort of association, in which occupants buy flats on the hire-purchase principle), their 35 unit Schießstätte project has the complexity of their earlier work (AR October 1995), in which each dwelling is given a sense of place and outdoor territory by careful manipulation of plan and section, while interiors, though partly standardized, vary according to family size, orientation and prospect. Schießstätte's basic plan was created by Heiner Hierzegger, who with what Szyszkowitz-Kowalski call 'great fairness', invited Austrian and foreign architects to design different parts of the scheme which, overall, contains 250 housing units. Szyszkowitz-Kowalski were offered the key site, the eastern one which terminates the pedestrian spine of the development with a slightly curved wall of building that defines a leafy green, intended to serve as public space for all of Schießstätte. A spring was found during the works, and its chattering water is led through a series of ornamental troughs at the point where the pedestrian route bifurcates to send two arms towards the curved wall, conducting Schießstätte's inhabitants through the block towards the wooded hill behind. Spring water flows out from the scheme in the other direction, in a rivulet which follows the pedestrian route curve through the whole development.

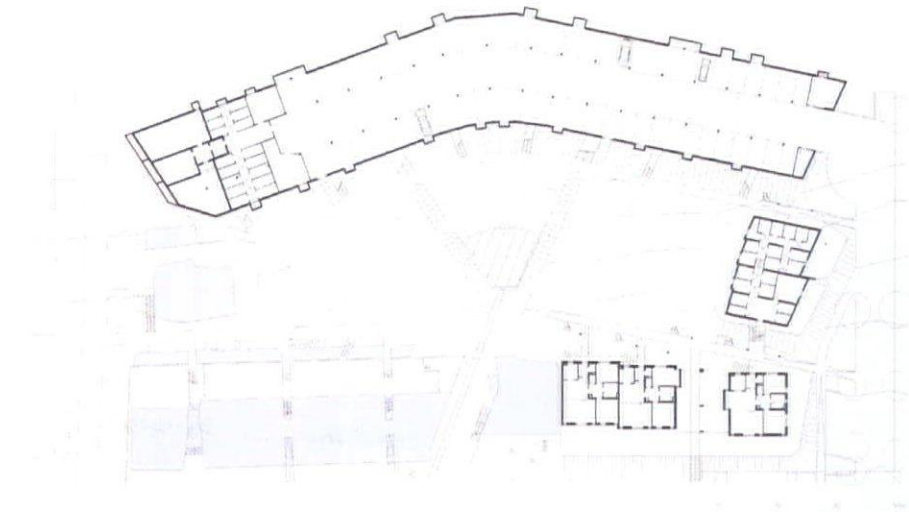
In the long main block are maisonettes which vary in size from 50m² to 90m². These are reached directly up glazed open stairs from the public pathway. Car parking, served by a distributor road that runs along the whole of the south side of the development, is built into the hill under the dwellings so that the front, west-facing gardens of the maisonettes are half a storey above the public green.



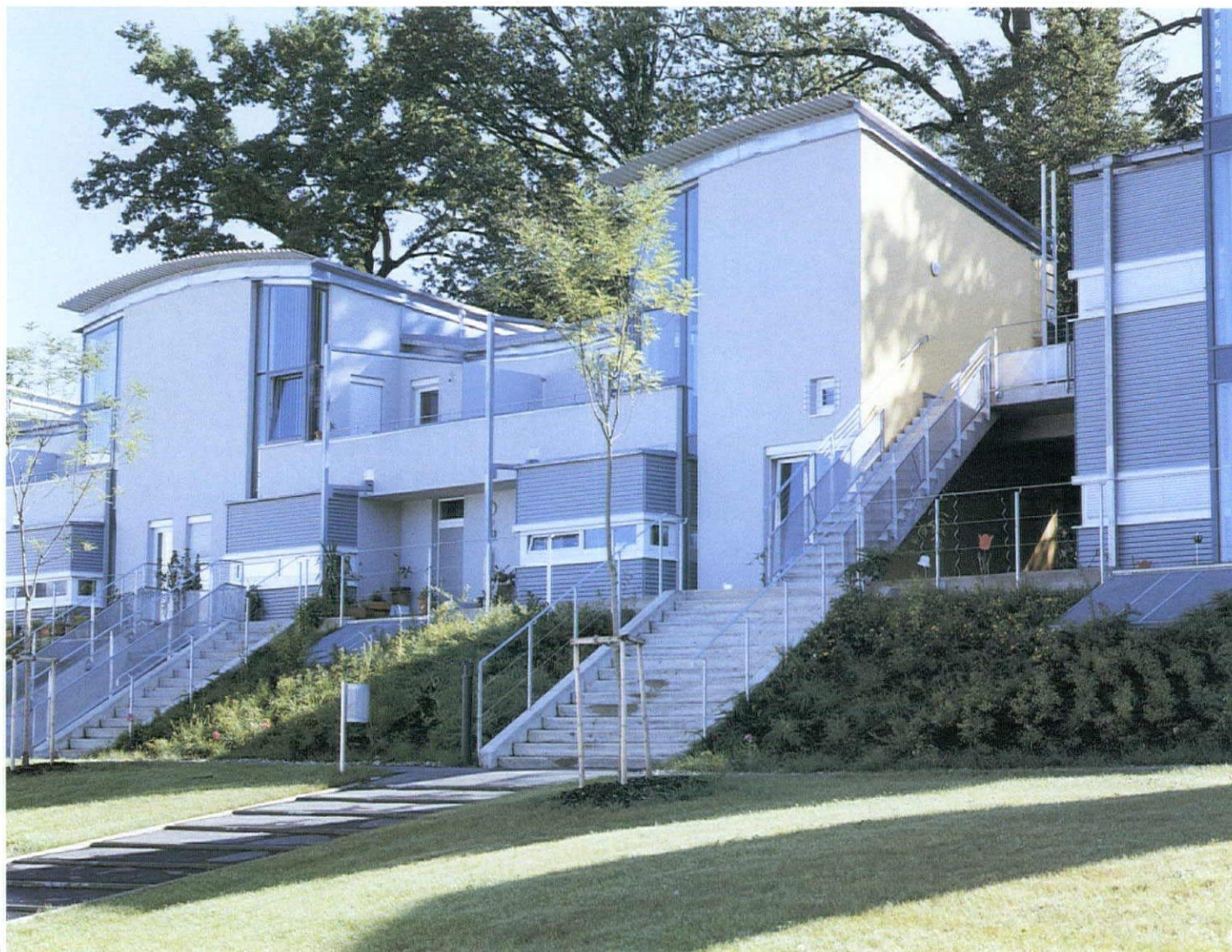
upper level



entrance level



basement



4

The central part of the long block contains flats, while the wings of the composition are maisonettes, in effect terrace houses, a form unusual in Austria. All units have large private balconies or roof-top

terraces; the latter articulate the profile of Szyszkowitz-Kowalski's wall against the canopies of the old native oaks of the communal green and wild hillside. The analogy of shelter and enclosure is an apt

one for the whole scheme, which attempts to give both individuals and households a sense of personal place and territory, poised between community and nature.

ELIZABETH MILES

Architect

Szyszkowitz-Kowalski, Graz

Project team

Karla Kowalski, Michael Szyszkowitz, Rolf Seifert

Structural engineer

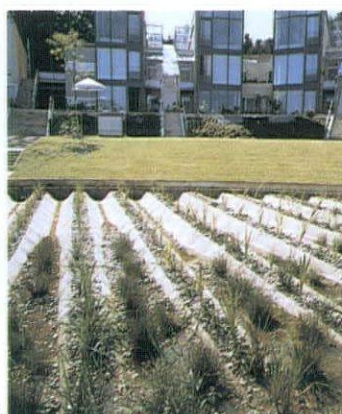
D. I. Wendl

Photographs

Karla Kowalski



5



6

4 West-facing front gardens overlook green.

5 Downhill side.

6 Water sculpture fed by spring animates green.

7 Articulation of private and public territory.





SOCIAL SERVICE

This housing in Santa Monica is an enlightened addition to the public realm.

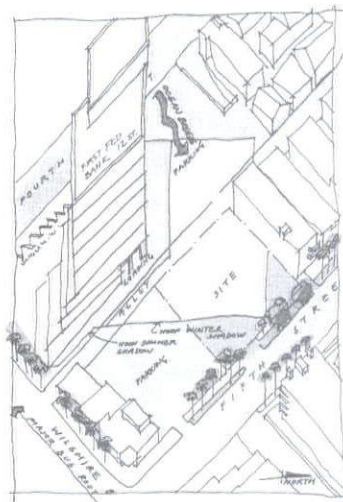
Beyond the insular Californian scenography of villa and pool, there remains an urgent and pressing need for affordable housing in Los Angeles. Bound up with wider political and social issues, the provision of decent, dignified housing for poor and marginalized groups is a subject that attracts scant attention from the city's glossy coterie of superstar architects. Koning Eizenberg are a rare exception. Based in Santa Monica, Hank Koning and Julie Eizenberg have established a reputation for making socially responsive architecture that also has great formal and tectonic presence. The Simone Hotel (AR

June 1993), for instance, is a humane and inventive approach to the maligned typology of the short stay hostel, providing accommodation for people who would otherwise be living rough on the streets.

For this more recent project, Koning Eizenberg were asked to design a block of affordable family housing on a tight site in downtown Santa Monica. The roughly square site is bounded by a featureless assortment of parking lots, offices and residential buildings. To the south-west, a 12-storey bank lowers over the cityscape. The programme specified a mixture of two, three

and four bedroom house types, including some with disabled access.

Koning Eizenberg's strategy divides the accommodation into four terrace-like components, arranged around a south-west facing courtyard. This takes advantage of the sun and sea breezes (the site is only four blocks away from the Pacific Ocean). The three-storey terraces sit on top of a subterranean parking level, so freeing up the entire site for housing. Organized around a front-to-back plan, with living and kitchen spaces at ground floor and three bedrooms above, Koning Eizenberg's basic template is a

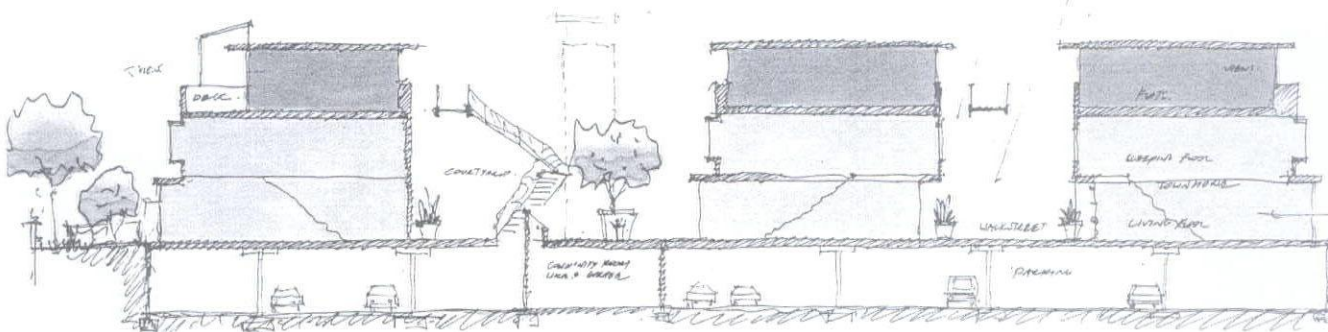


axonometric of site context



**FAMILY HOUSING,
SANTA MONICA, USA**
ARCHITECT
KONING EIZENBERG

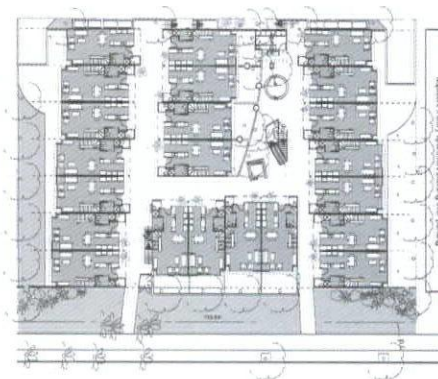
- 1 Low-rise blocks arranged around a courtyard recall traditional Mediterranean patios. Bold colours enliven the humanly scaled spaces.
- 2 Apartments with terraces sit on top of two-storey town houses.
- 3 Typical street elevation.



sketch: cross section through site



4
A narrow semi-private street leads to the central courtyard. Although public and private realms are separated by a gate, the scheme is not obsessively hermetic in its relationship with the wider world.
5
Kitchens overlook the courtyard, fostering a sense of informal communal supervision.



second floor plan - apartments



first floor plan - upper floor of town houses



ground floor plan - lower floor of town houses
(scale approx 1:1000)

modern version of the familiar town house. The second floor is given over to 10 single-storey apartments, varying in size from two to four bedrooms. External walls are kinked, skewed and pulled back from the line of the houses below, to create terraces for the apartments. An elevated walkway links the blocks at this upper level and connects with a free-standing stair and lift for disabled access.

Although the scale of the blocks is far from oppressive, Koning Eizenberg contrive to humanize and animate the terraces through various formal devices. Individual blocks are stepped and staggered to break up their mass and chunky bay windows articulate wall planes. White stucco predominates, giving the complex a buoyant Mediterranean air, further enlivened by the use of vivid applied colour. Taxi-cab yellow and terracotta red recall Barragán's use of pigment to articulate and define space.

External areas between the blocks are enclosed and landscaped to create semi-private gardens for the town houses, and there is also a large communal courtyard with a children's play space. Front doors and kitchens overlook the courtyard, fostering a sense of intimacy and informal neighbourhood supervision. By sensitive manipulation of forms, materials, scale and light, Koning Eizenberg make the simple and familiar seem quietly extraordinary. Their 5th Street housing is a testament to the transforming social and civic potential of architecture. C. S.

Architect
Koning Eizenberg, Santa Monica, USA
www.kearch.com
Photographs
1, 2, Grant Mudford
3, 4, 5, Benny Chan



HOUSING, SINGAPORE
ARCHITECT
BEDMAR & SHI

TROPICAL INTENSITY

A combination of two fundamental types, the Chinese shophouse and the British semi-detached dwelling allow very high densities in Singapore.

Singapore is one of the most densely populated places in the world, all very well ordered, cheerful, prosperous and remarkably clean, but its population per square hectare must be similar to that of some of the worst slums in Asia. In the euphoria of prosperous independence, the old terraced Chinese shophouses which traditionally gave Singapore such very high densities were largely demolished in the '70s and '80s to be replaced by high-rises. Some are now being restored and preserved as town houses for wealthy people (see for instance AR June 1999), but the basic problems of their long thin plans remain: it is difficult to get light and air into the middle. Radical surgery is the only answer, with courts or light wells chopped into the middle of the plan. This is one of the reasons why converted shophouses are so expensive,

another is of course that there are very few left.

It was understandable that when Bedmar & Shi were asked to develop a tight suburban site for housing, they chose the basic long thin shophouse plan as model. Eight houses were packed onto the site as four groups of two. Three pairs run south-east to north-west, and the remaining couple are set at right angles to them. Main entrance to the site is in the southern corner, where there is a U-shaped ramp leading down to the car parking underneath, the pedestrian access gate and a narrow communal swimming pool. The pedestrian route curves round a circular well which ventilates and brings light down to the basement, and contains a stair connecting the two levels.

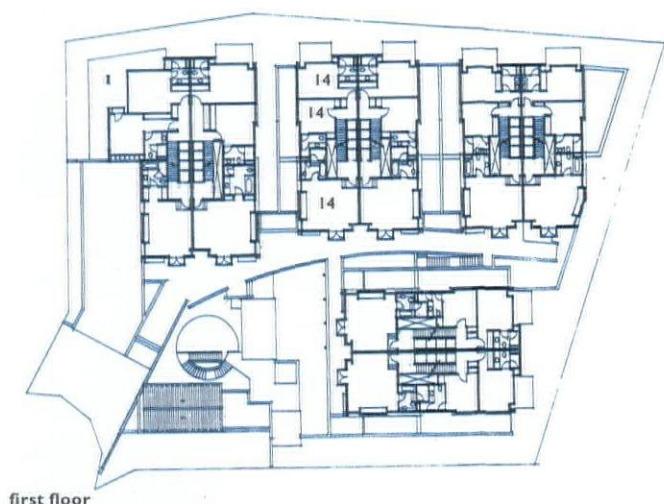
At entrance level, house plans are basically similar. You enter under a canopy that stretches

1 From north, with main row of six semi-detached houses to right.

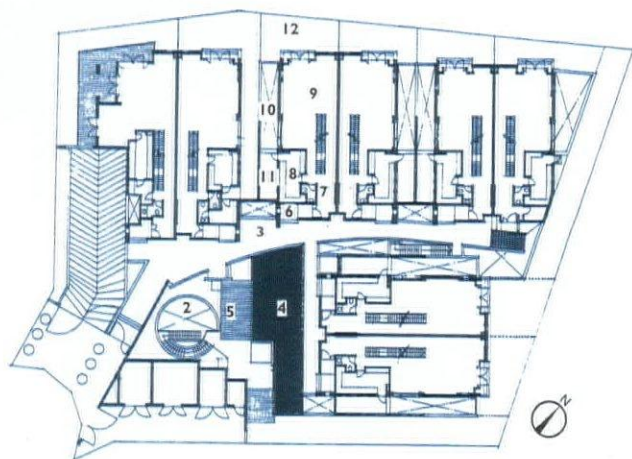
2 Entrance front of main row.

3 Garden fronts look onto tiny private plots, and are in entirely different idiom from entrance.

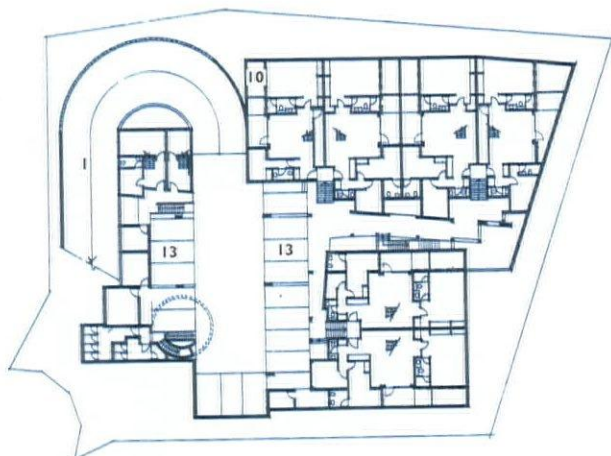




first floor



entrance level



basement (scale approx 1:750)

out over the pedestrian path. Inflected sideways from this open porch, you enter the house proper and find a quite restricted hall (the kitchen accounts for the narrowing of the plan). Ahead is a stair which rises straight up to the first floor in a shaft of light from a long lantern on the roof. This is the device which brings luminance to the middle of the plan, and its effect is carefully enhanced by the glass bridge joining the two halves of the first floor (which contains three bedrooms, each with its own bathroom). From this level a further flight of riserless stairs ascends into the lantern which opens out onto a large roof terrace.

If instead of going upstairs from the ground floor, you go straight ahead, past the stairs, you come to the narrow living and dining room which opens onto the tiny back garden. At basement level, plans are not always similar, partly because one pair of houses sits on top of the car ramp. But in most cases, the stairs terminate in a garden room which looks out through a glass wall onto a thin sliver of planted open space that has been excavated down to basement level. In the normal condition, a stout wall separates the thin courts of adjacent pairs, making these low-level gardens the most private open spaces in the densely packed site. Such tiny scraps of ground open to the sky would be horrid for most of the year except in the tropics.

The complicated and intricate geometry of the plans is echoed

on the exteriors, sometimes giving a fidgety appearance. Entrance elevations are of white render relieved by random rubble, which forms a notional plinth. Aluminium butterfly roofs flutter over each house, and are emphasized by inclined down pipes which take tropical rain from internal roof gutters. At the other end of the houses, materials have changed to brick and white steel: planes of red brick are articulated by steel brise-soleil and balustrades: the butterflies have completely disappeared, to be replaced by the flat roof terraces. Along the sides, the different materials appear as panels restlessly joggling each other as materials change from one end to the other. Perhaps this does not matter very much, for it is unusual to look down the side elevations except very obliquely (the photographs exaggerate the effect). A more serious criticism might be that the bedroom windows of adjacent houses sometimes look point-blank into each other over the garden trenches.

Such criticisms are trivial compared to the achievement of attaining such high density of houses in such an appropriate way for site and climate. Of course, the development is for rich people, but it could have lessons for much more modest developments. WINNIE YU

Architect
Bedmar & Shi/B&S&T Architects, Singapore
Project team
Ernesto Bedmar, Vincent Lim, Kevin Tan
Photographs
Xiao Photo Workshop



- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 1 ramp | 8 kitchen |
| 2 open stair | 9 dining/living |
| 3 entrance way | 10 sunk court |
| 4 pool | 11 terrace |
| 5 deck | 12 garden |
| 6 porch | 13 parking |
| 7 hall | 14 bed |

4
Sectional model showing ...

5
... principles of introduction of light into centre of plan.

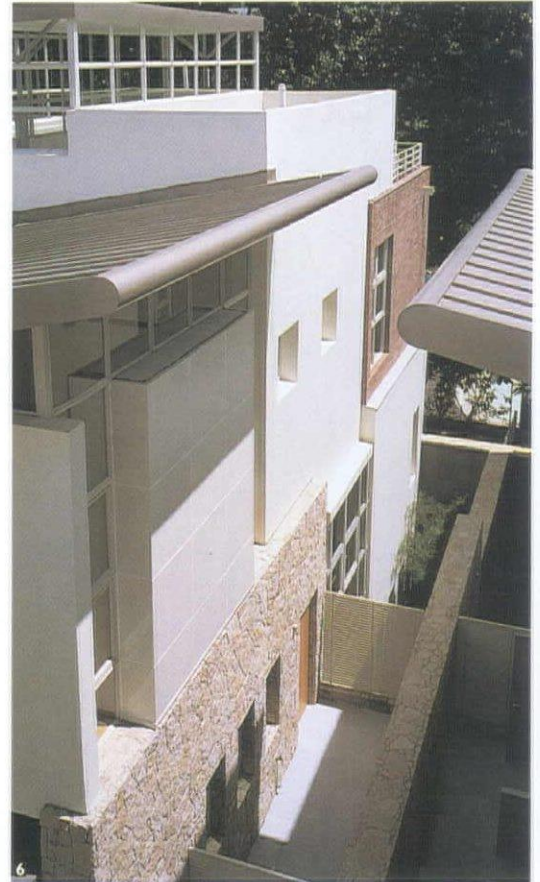
6
Side elevations show variety of internal spaces. Small sunken gardens are most private open spaces on site.

7, 8
Butterfly aluminium roofs with galvanized down-pipes signal presence of each house.

HOUSING, SINGAPORE

ARCHITECT

BEDMAR & SHI





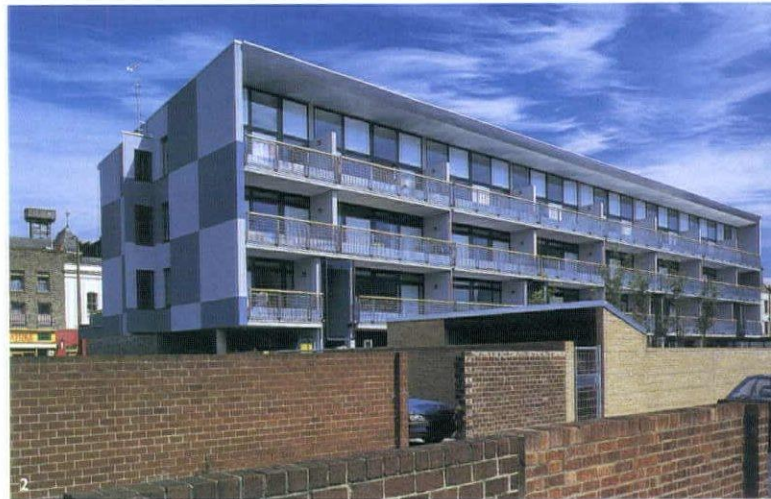
URBAN GEOMETRY

Through formal and material inventiveness, this new social housing block brings a sense of optimism to an inner London neighbourhood.

Encompassing sedate Victorian terraces and bleak postwar estates, Dalston, in north-east London, has a typical inner urban panorama of housing. Dalston Lane is a mongrel assortment of decaying factories awaiting gentrification and straggling parades of shops with flats above. Yet despite its evident physical decline, the area retains a gritty, engaging character.

The newest addition to Dalston Lane is a block of flats designed by young London-based practice Allford Hall Monaghan

Morris. With projects such as Walsall bus station and an elegantly understated health club at Euston (AR August 1998), AHMM are getting a reputation for distinctive architecture that has its formal and ideological roots in British Modernism. This commission came from the Peabody Trust which, along with many other independent housing associations, has assumed the role of social housing provision in Britain since the state's retreat from such responsibilities during the Thatcher era.



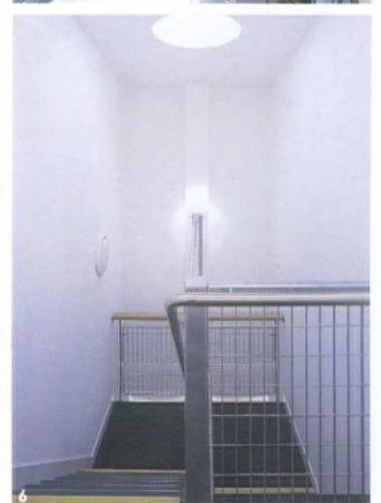
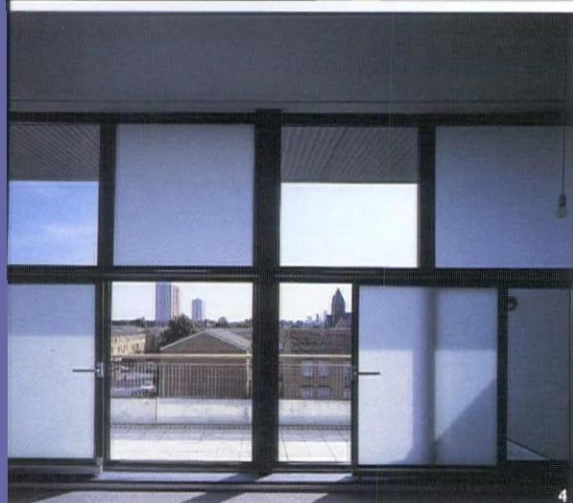
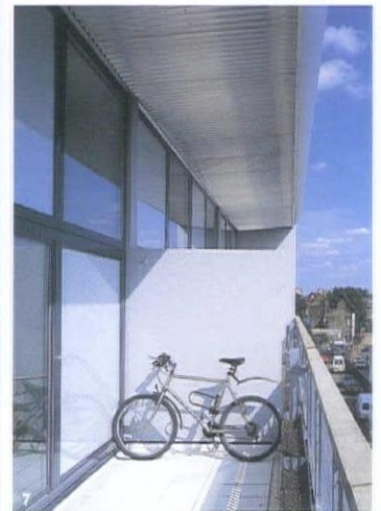
HOUSING, DALSTON, LONDON

ARCHITECT

ALLFORD HALL MONAGHAN

MORRIS ARCHITECTS

- 1 Main street elevation to Dalston Lane is animated by a bold chequerboard pattern in blue and grey render.
- 2 With long balconies and a softer geometric grid of translucent and clear glass, the south elevation opens up to the city.
- 3 Flank walls of surprisingly sumptuous ultramarine brick fold back to form entrances to the block.
- 4 Double-height living space on the topmost floor. Flats are let at affordable rents through the Peabody Trust. Established during the nineteenth century by George Peabody, an American financier and philanthropist, the eponymous trust is a non profit-making body originally charged with building decent housing for working men in inner London.
- 5 Typical living and kitchen space.
- 6 Communal stairwell; flats are arranged in pairs off four staircases.
- 7 South-facing balcony, protected by the gently oversailing roof.

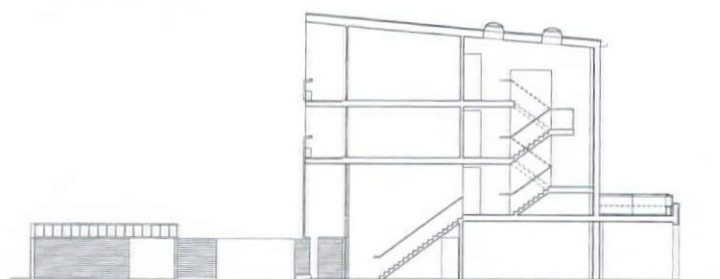


HOUSING, DALSTON, LONDON

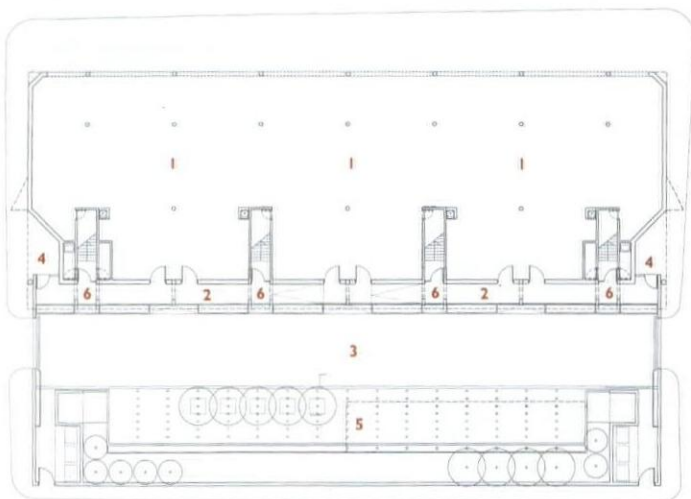
ARCHITECT

ALLFORD HALL MONAGHAN

MORRIS ARCHITECTS



cross section



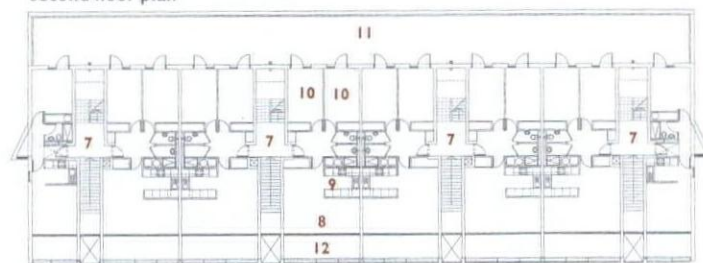
ground floor plan (scale approx 1:700)



- 1 shop units
- 2 colonnade
- 3 landscaped courtyard
- 4 entrance to courtyard
- 5 residents' parking
- 6 entrance to flats
- 7 communal staircases
- 8 living room
- 9 kitchen
- 10 bedroom
- 11 terrace above shops
- 12 balcony



second floor plan



first floor plan

The Dalston Lane block provides 18 two-bedroom flats and six one-bedroom flats for rent at affordable levels. Set back above a plinth of shops, the four-storey block follows the dominant form of the neighbouring buildings. Yet while the scale conforms to the existing context, the elevational treatment is more exuberantly unorthodox. The main street frontage and short side elevations are embellished with a chequerboard pattern of blue and light grey render. The effect is undeniably striking; seen from a distance, the block is transformed and made abstract, its architecture camouflaged by the powerful effect of the blue and grey squares. Alluding to Lutyens's surprisingly modern work at Page Street in Pimlico (1930), the strong, simple geometry breaks down the building mass and picks up the scale of the adjacent Victorian terraces and 1960s library. The chequerboard rhythm extends

to the south elevation, where alternating panes of clear and translucent glass soften the overpowering effect of a fully glazed wall.

The shops form a continuous row along Dalston Lane, so entrances to the flats are placed on the non-street south side. The strip of shop fronts is bookended by visually sumptuous flank walls of glazed ultramarine brick, that fold inwards to mark the demarcation between public street realm and the flats. Gates at each end of the block lead to a narrow colonnade that runs the length of the building. A semi-private courtyard provides service access for the shops and some car parking for residents.

Where the street elevation is abstract and hermetic, the south face opens up, with long balconies and glazed walls. Flats are arranged in pairs off four generous communal staircases. Bedrooms are placed on the

north side, with living and dining spaces overlooking the south courtyard and the towers of the City on the distant horizon. Flats on the first floor have street facing terraces above the shops, while those on the top floor take advantage of the gently oversailing roof, with dramatic double-height living rooms.

Despite being realized under a Design and Build contract (the most Gradgrinding form of building procurement in the UK; AHM's design succeeded an original proposal for a *faux* Victorian mansion block), the quality of detailing and materials has a robust, inventive elegance, reflecting the good relationship established between architect and contractor. Moreover, despite its standard, no-frills budget and unpromising location, the scheme has a heroic optimism that invigorates the public realm and celebrates the provision of dignified urban housing. CATHERINE SLESSOR

Architect

Allford Hall Monaghan Morris Architects, London

Project team

Simon Allford, David Archer, Jonathan Hall, Victor Kite, Jenny Lovell, Paul Monaghan, Peter Morris, Demetra Ryder Runton

Structural engineer

Campbell Reith Hill

Cost consultant

MDA

Landscape architect

Jonathan Watkins

Contractor

Rooff

Photographs

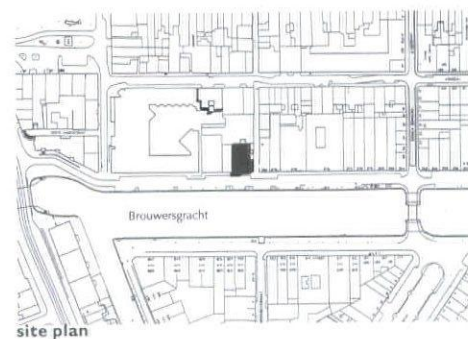
Timothy Soar

TWO HOUSING SCHEMES, AMSTERDAM,
THE NETHERLANDS
ARCHITECT
MECANOO

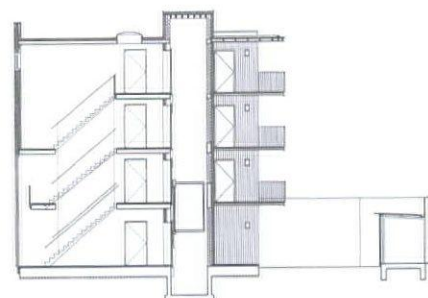
DUTCH DUET

Two housing schemes in Amsterdam's historical centre relate to traditional forms and, through material treatment of their exteriors, to each other.

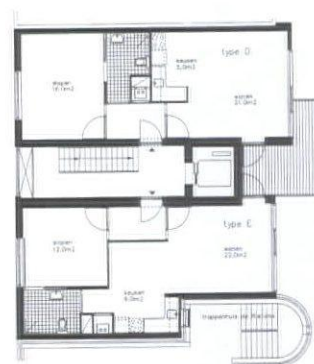




site plan



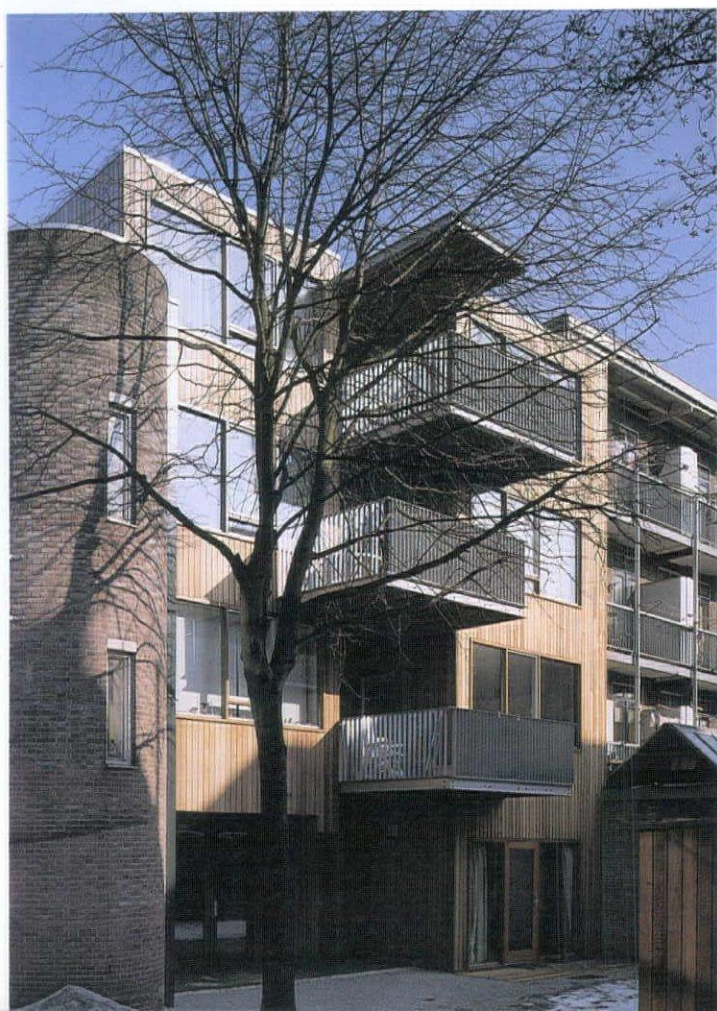
north-south section



L.A. Rieshuis typical floor (scale approx 1:400)

2

3



4



The housing scheme, by Mecanoo, consists of two apartment buildings in Amsterdam. One is on the Brouwersgracht, which flows into the Singelgracht to the north of the city; the other, the L.A. Rieshuis, is on nearby Vinkenstraat, just behind and to the south. The challenge was how to fit the buildings into the historical urban fabric. Both have seven flats, with the addition on the Brouwersgracht of a ground floor studio, and in the L.A. Rieshuis of a communal room.

The small infill site on the Brouwersgracht is on the corner with a narrow alley, the Baanbrugsteeg, and is flanked by the fine seventeenth- and eighteenth-century brick town houses which line this old canal. The building has a broad bay facing the canal; and a narrow bay stepped back with elevations onto the canal and the Baanbrugsteeg.

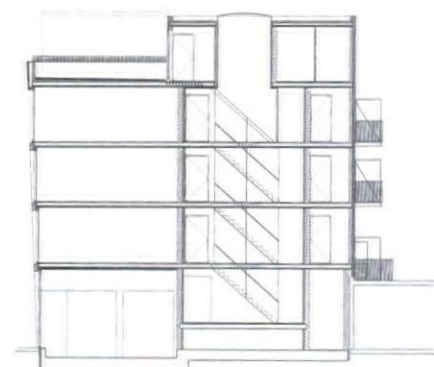
Accommodation is spun round a central service core, a toplit staircase in the broad bay. As well as the double-height studio on the ground floor, with its own entrance off the canalside street, there is a penthouse with a broad terrace on the fourth floor. In between, the size of the one-person flats is determined by the width of the bay, with compactly designed kitchens and bathrooms arranged to leave as much open space as possible and rooms with views front and back.

Exterior treatment makes canalside distinct from alley, public from private, and one bay from another. Echoing historical example, the wide bay's main face is a thin brick frame round large windows. To the right, the tall slender face of the narrow bay is composed of brick on edge round the openings. Secondary elevations along the alley and the backs of the bays are clad in cedar boarding above a masonry plinth. Away from the canal, windows are smaller and more discreet, and have balconies at the back.

Each scheme is an individual response to site, context and programme, but the same external aesthetic links the two. Brick on edge and a staggered pattern of windows articulate the main face of the L.A. Rieshuis. Wood, glass and the same fragile steel balconies give the back a more informal character. The building houses elderly homosexuals, some in need of care, and shares a garden with the adjoining nursing home. Most inhabitants lead independent lives in one-bedroom flats clearly and compactly designed. There are two to a floor, sharing balconies directed to sun and garden, and reached by lift or by a central top-lit staircase. On the ground floor the communal room was designed by the artist Macel Kronenburg. Sculptural in form, it gives onto the pretty garden. P. M.

Architect
Mecanoo
Photographs
Christian Richters

- 2 Main face of the L.A. Rieshuis on Vinkenstraat.
- 3 Back of the L.A. Rieshuis and garden shared with adjoining nursing home.
- 4 Central top-lit staircase of the L.A. Rieshuis.
- 5 Brouwersgracht housing seen across the canal.
- 6 Back and alleyway faces of the Brouwersgracht scheme clad with cedar boards.
- 7 Attic flat in the Brouwersgracht scheme.



south-north section



fourth floor



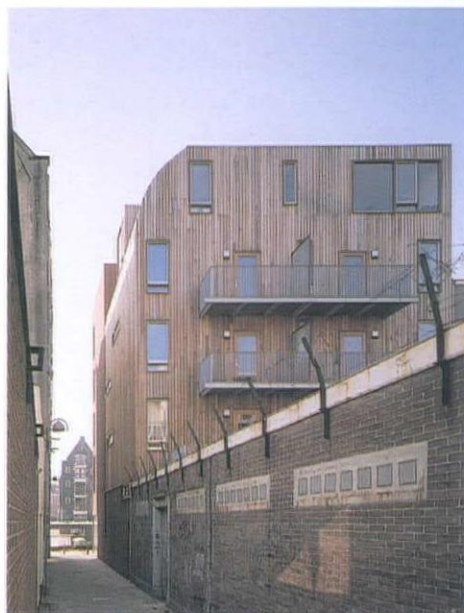
Brouwersgracht first to fourth floor
(scale approx 1:400)

TWO HOUSING SCHEMES, AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS

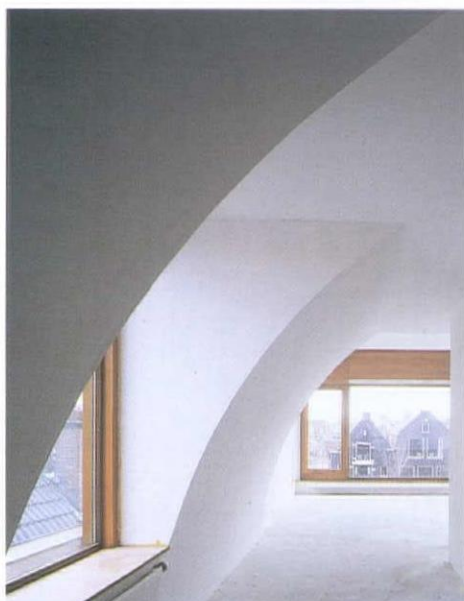
ARCHITECT
MECANOO



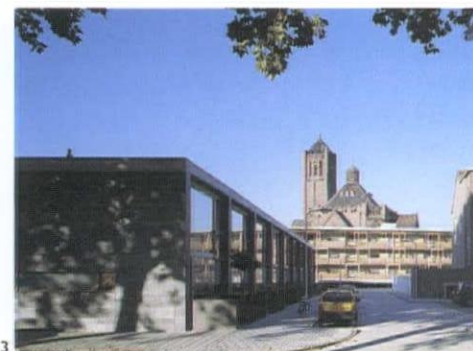
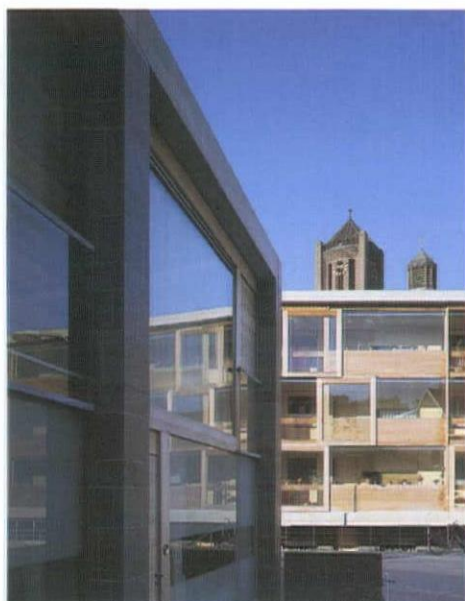
5



6



7



FITTING IN TILBURG

Erick van Egeraat's housing in Tilburg mixes public and private provision in two elegantly austere blocks that have a welcome formal modesty.

Best known for idiosyncratically cannibalized office buildings (ARs July 1995 and June 1999), Erick van Egeraat has also realized a number of housing schemes. While inevitably less formally expressive, such projects test the relationship between programme and architecture in important ways.

Van Egeraat's most recent housing scheme is in Tilburg, near the Netherlands' southern border with Belgium. Set in a quiet urban backwater, near a school and an imposing nineteenth-century church, the programme specified nine houses for the owner-occupier market and 26 one-bedroom rental flats. Houses and flats are divided into two separate long rectangular blocks at right angles to each other facing over the school playground.

The terrace of houses is based around a two-storey town house model, with small private gardens to front and back. On a 5.1m wide plot, living and dining spaces are organized round a central imperforate hub of circulation and storage, with three bedrooms above. An austere palette of materials is used

to create the tautly elegant geometries of the long elevations. Lower floors are fully glazed, but opaque sections preserve privacy, so transparency is confined to a narrow horizontal strip. Above, clear glass is partnered with vertical panels of Western red cedar, which will age gracefully to a weathered silver. Slate-clad pilasters mark the boundaries between each house and gardens are divided by low concrete walls.

The larger three-storey apartment block continues the theme of formal and material reticence. Flats are reached from wide gallery spaces running along the main north-east elevation. Decks are enclosed by glass and cedar panels, which can slide back during summer to admit sun and air. Benches are placed in the deck spaces to encourage communal interaction.

Each apartment is based on a 7.2m wide module, with a south-west facing balcony to the rear. An L-shaped living room, bedroom and kitchen space wraps around a core of bathroom, storage and entrance hall. The

long living room is terminated by a kitchen that projects out slightly on to the access galleries. Deck-facing elevations of pale ash are incised with visor-like windows.

Flats are arranged in rows of seven over three storeys, with five on a lower ground level. Recessed under the projecting gallery decks above, the latter might seem slightly oppressive, but are afforded the compensation of small rear gardens. Clad in bands of slate, end elevations form visually solid bulwarks to the long glass and timber facades.

Despite its enviable proliferation, new Dutch housing often oscillates between Calvinist grimness and kooky theatricality. In its attention to social and spatial interaction, allied to thoughtful use of materials, van Egeraat's Tilburg scheme is distinguished by a pleasing, entirely appropriate modesty.

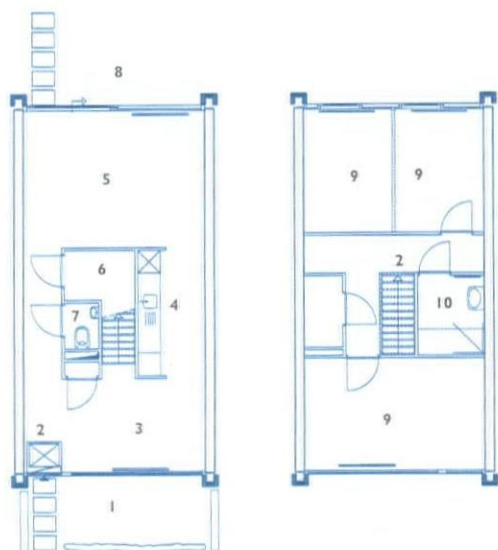
CONNIE VAN CLEEF

Architect

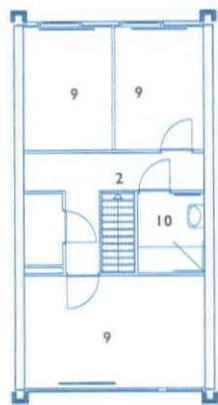
Erick van Egeraat Architects, Rotterdam

Photographs

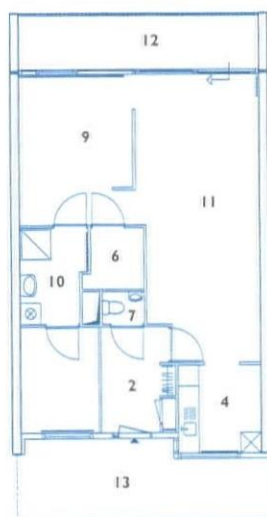
Christian Richters



town house – ground floor
(scale approx 1:250)

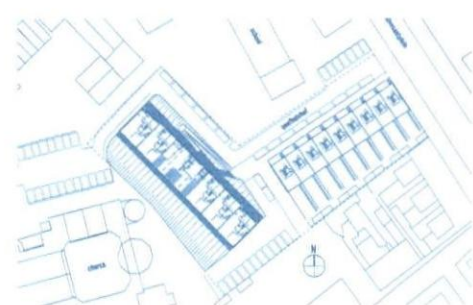


town house – first floor



typical apartment plan

- 1 front garden
- 2 hall
- 3 dining room
- 4 kitchen
- 5 living room
- 6 storage
- 7 wc
- 8 back garden
- 9 bedroom
- 10 bathroom
- 11 living/dining
- 12 balcony
- 13 access deck



site plan

1 Town houses, with the apartment block beyond.

2 In the apartment block, access decks are enclosed by sliding cedar and glass panels.

3 Both blocks display a formal and material reticence, yet enhance their low key urban context.

4 Detail of one of the access stairs in apartment block.

HOUSING, TILBURG,
THE NETHERLANDS
ARCHITECT
ERICK VAN EGERAAT



URBAN HOUSING, ZURICH,
SWITZERLAND
ARCHITECT
KAUFMANN, VAN DER MEER
& PARTNER



- 1 The former soap and detergent factory has been imaginatively recolonized to house a variety of commercial and residential uses, bringing life back into the city centre.
- 2 Stepped building volumes create terraces for flats at upper levels.
- 3 The new parts display an industrially-inspired language of light steel frames infilled by glass and metal panels.
- 4 The former soap tower has been converted into loft-like apartments.

SOAP OPERA

This conversion of a former detergent factory in the centre of Zurich brings life back to the city.



Ever since decaying garment warehouses were colonized by artists in New York during the '50s and '60s, the concept of reclaiming large industrial structures has become a familiar pattern in cities with redundant docks or industrial quarters. By bringing people back into urban centres and helping to reinvigorate neighbourhoods, the re-use of old buildings has tangible economic, social and environmental benefits.

In the heart of Zurich, a former soap and detergent factory has been imaginatively converted to house a mixture of residential and commercial uses. Ten years ago, the factory was closed and production moved to the outskirts of the city. At the same time, a planning zoning law was introduced allowing construction of housing and offices in former industrial areas and the adaptation of existing structures to serve new functions.

Local architects Kaufmann, van der Meer & Partner were asked to make a proposal for refurbishing the factory. The programme combined 50 flats of varying sizes with some

6000 sq m of commercial space. The original factory complex had evolved over time according to the needs of industry and Kaufmann, van der Meer's scheme shares this accretional quality, gradually evolving over six years. Further additions are planned, so the refurbished complex retains a strong sense of organic growth.

The original four-storey brick warehouse forms an armature for a range of new uses. Lower levels are given over to various creative and commercial functions, including a small dance school, television studios and office spaces. Two new storeys of flats have been added on top of the warehouse, stepping back to form small terraces. An external walkway connects the flats with the rest of the building. At the west end of the complex, the former soap tower has been converted into single-storey loft spaces, with sheer glass walls offering uninterrupted city views.

A new block runs along the south-east edge of the site, containing flats organized around two basic plan forms.



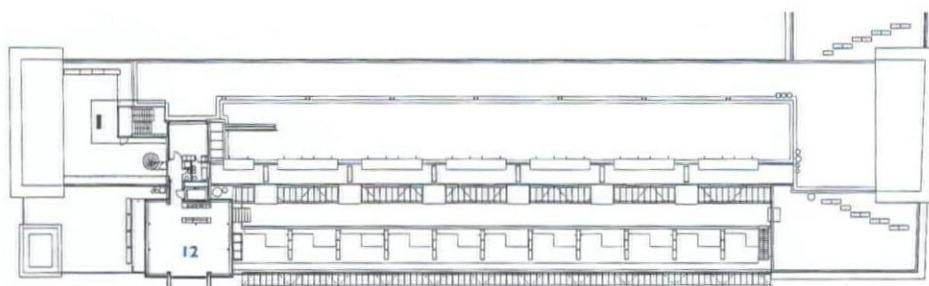


**URBAN HOUSING, ZURICH,
SWITZERLAND**

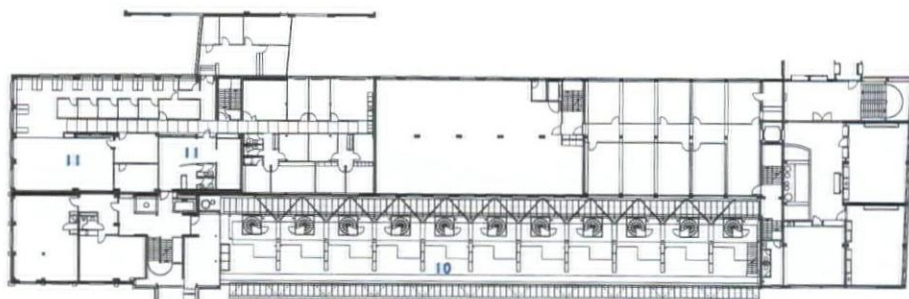
ARCHITECT

**KAUFMANN, VAN DER MEER
& PARTNER**

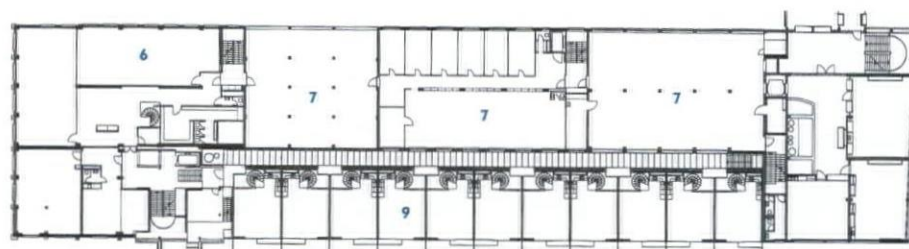
- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 restaurant | 7 offices |
| 2 brewery | 8 commercial space |
| 3 lower level studio flats | 9 intermediate level apartments |
| 4 lower level apartments | 10 upper level terraces |
| 5 internal street | 11 tv studio |
| 6 dance school | 12 loft apartments |



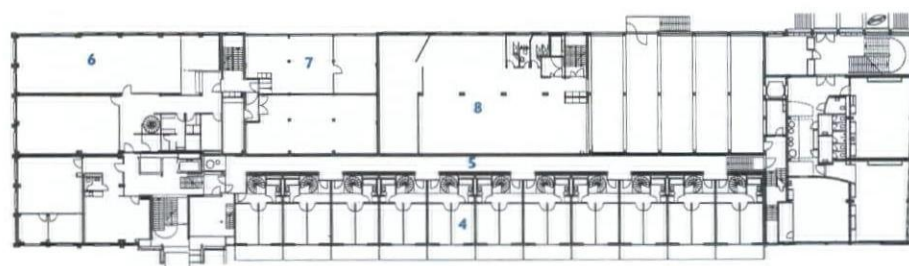
sixth floor: typical upper level plan



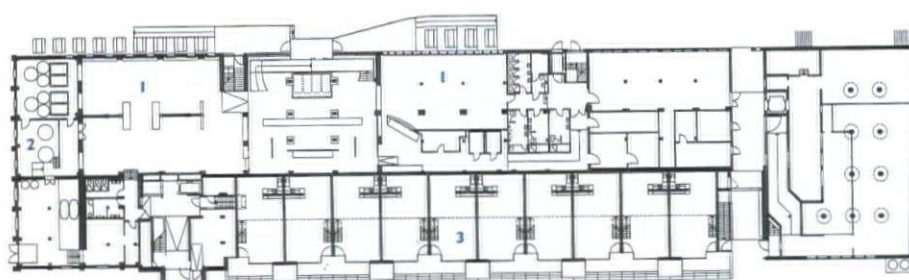
third floor plan



second floor plan



first floor plan



ground floor plan (scale approx 1:1000)

Duplex studio flats on ground and first floor have direct street entrances and compact, mezzanine sleeping galleries overlooking living spaces. Those on the upper floors are reached by an internal glazed street formed in the chasm between old and new blocks. Connected by a spiral staircase, each three-storey flat has two bedrooms at entrance level and a large intermediate living and kitchen space. The topmost level leads to a generous terrace, created by stepping back the building volume. Low planters separate the terraces, which have been enthusiastically colonized by residents to create small green oases in the sky. These are also overlooked by new flats on top of the existing warehouse block.

The structure of the new elements had to be very light, so that existing footings could sustain additional weight. This has generated a quasi industrial language of thin steel frames crisply infilled with metal, glass and gypsum panels. Detailing and materials have a spare, minimal elegance. Registering as identifiable additions that clearly express the building's revitalized function, the new parts sit lightly and easily on the old block.

Through careful planning, the architects have created a great and impressive variety of housing types, from loft spaces, to multi-storey flats with gardens and terraces. Such formal diversity will hopefully encourage social diversity, so that the building has a sense of community, as opposed to being a socio-economic ghetto. By suggesting how redundant industrial buildings can successfully be brought back into use and contribute to city life, the project has valuable lessons for the future. **CLAUDIA KUGEL**

Architect

Kaufmann, van der Meer & Partner, Zurich

Project team

Chuker Azalez, Hansjörg Betschart, Jan Bollag, Bernhard Friedl, Käthi Gering, Hubert Gessler, Matti Hefti, Peter Kaufmann, Susanne Kaufmann, Beat Küttel, Ernst Müller, Rolf Nimmrichter, Eliane Platzer, Stefan Schaad, Georg Strassburg, Pieter van der Meer

Structural engineer

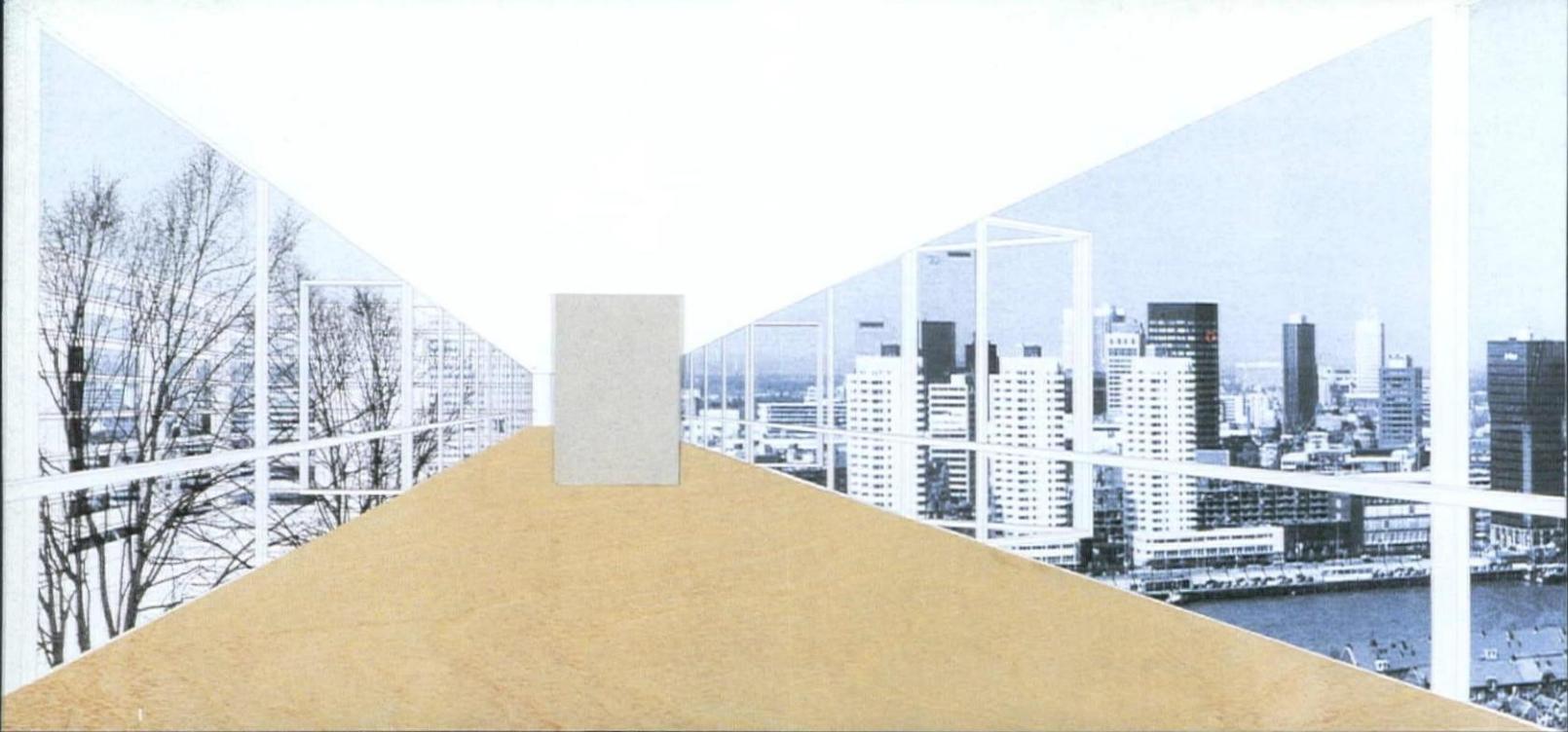
H. R. Schalcher

Photographs

Gaston Wicky

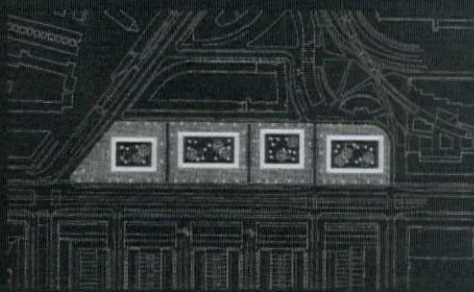
- 5
Elevated walkway and bridges lead to flats on top of existing warehouse block. The chasm between the old and new parts forms a top glazed internal street at lower level.
- 6
Circulation spaces retain a robust, factory-like quality.
- 7
New elements sit lightly on top of the existing brick warehouse.
- 8
Typical loft apartment in the tower.



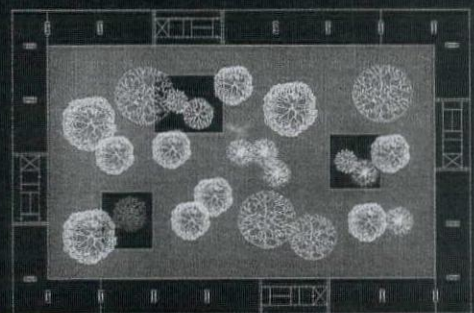


ROTTERDAM PROTOTYPE

Team Haut's winning proposal for the recent European 5 competition is an inventive and ecologically aware reinvestigation of the courtyard block.



site plan



typical floor plan (scale approx 1:1250)

1 Interior of typical flat, with views out over both the city and the green internal courtyard. The long thin plan can be subdivided or left as a single volume.

2, 4 Models showing the four blocks in their urban context.

3 Collage of glass elevations, animated and enriched by layers of colour and texture provided by occupants.

One of the perceived traditional disadvantages of urban housing is lack of contact with nature. Yet low-density suburban sprawl wastefully consumes large tracts of land, encouraging social dislocation, boredom and a dependency on the car. Exploring the relationship between urban housing and nature, Team Haut's competition proposal suggests a new prototype; an 'activated suburbia' that combines urban typologies and the advantages of city life with communal green spaces.

The site chosen for the competition is in the Kop van Zuid district, south of the city centre. Taking a conventional courtyard block as its model, Team Haut's variation envisages a narrow 5m wide dwelling zone wrapped around a landscaped garden. Housing about 80 apartments, each block is seven to nine storeys high. Subtle variations in scale and proportions create an elegant rhythm on the busy main street of Laan van Overmaas. Each block is sheathed in a clear glass skin which can be simply slid back, transforming apartments into spacious, airy terraces with views over the city boulevard and green courtyard heart. During winter, the courtyard can be enclosed by a clear polycarbonate roof, so that it becomes a winter garden. The concertina form of the roof is designed to reflect and transmit sunlight. Ventilators fitted just under the roof circulate

heated air and recycled heat from the apartments around the winter garden.

Like stacked Farnsworth Houses, the transparency of the blocks softens their mass. Internally, the long thin plans can be subdivided, or left as a single volume of floating space. Once occupied, the demands of privacy and general inhabitation will add further layers of colour and texture to the ethereal elevations, enriching the blocks' abstract formal qualities and expressing the inhabitants' characteristics.

Historically, the notion of a large, almost industrial housing block with generous communal spaces constitutes an important aspect of Rotterdam's urban development. Team Haut's inventive reinterpretation builds on this tradition, suggesting a flexible modern prototype that encourages high density living informed by ecology and a sense of civitas. **CONNIE VAN CLEEF**

Architect

Team Haut, Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Project team

André Kempe, Oliver Thill

Services engineer

Battle McCarthy

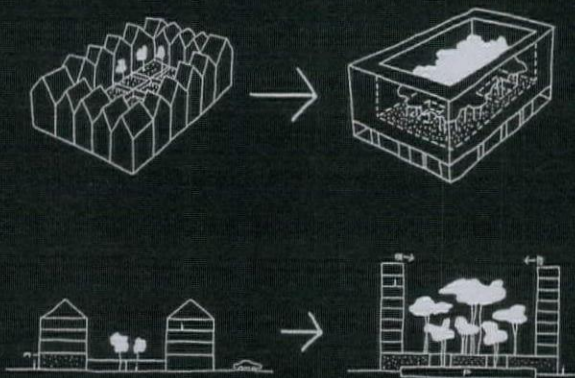
Landscape architect

Luke Engleback

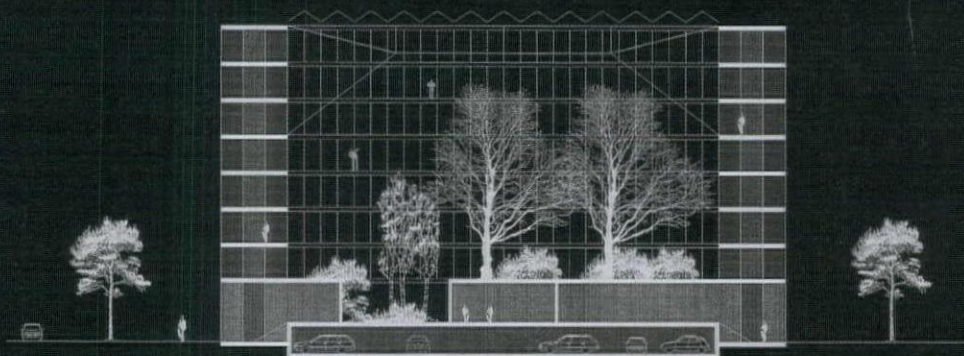
Model photographs

Bastiaan Ingenhouz

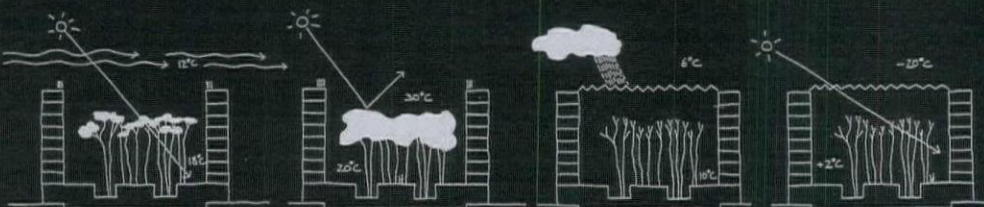
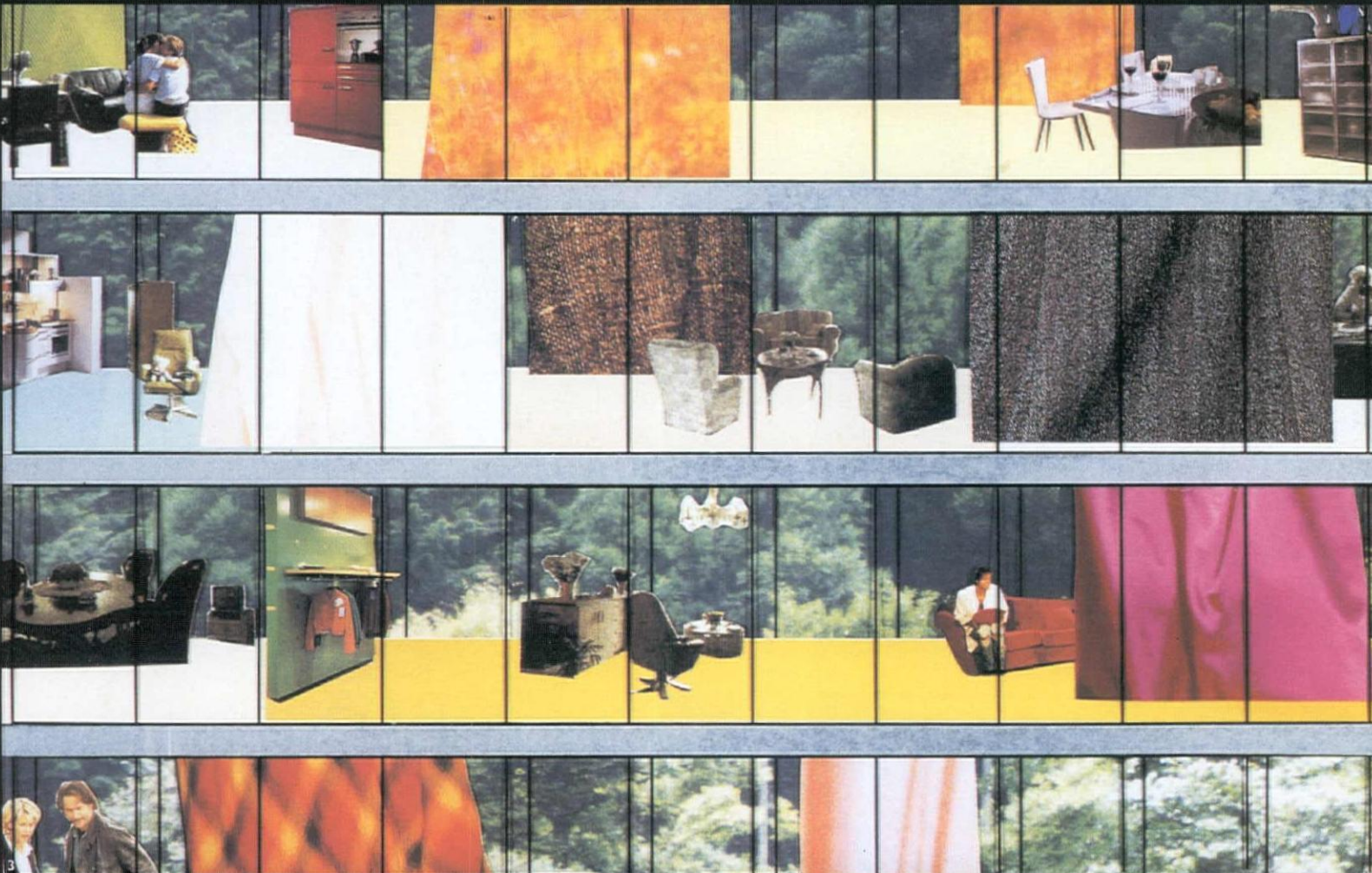
COURTYARD HOUSING,
ROTTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS
ARCHITECT
TEAM HAUT



prototype block compared with traditional courtyard form



cross section



sketch cross sections showing the role of the green courtyard in seasonal environmental control





Light cone

An extension of a tile coating headquarters in northern Portugal is a landmark on a busy main road and evocation of one of the country's oldest industries.

- 1 South-east corner of the building from the motorway.
- 2 Entrance under cover on south-east.
- 3 Stairs from entrance lobby up to showroom.
- 4 Showroom and sample racks.

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1 entrance lobby | 8 office |
| 2 archive library | 9 meeting room |
| 3 dining room | 10 hall |
| 4 service entrance | 11 elevated gallery |
| 5 showroom | link to ... |
| 6 lavatories | 12 existing building |
| 7 study | |

Revigrés, the headquarters of the Industria de Revestimiento de Gres (clay tile coating) is at Agueda, a town north of Coimbra in northern Portugal. Alvaro Siza's extension to the existing administrative building provides a showroom, library and archive room, and big staff dining room.

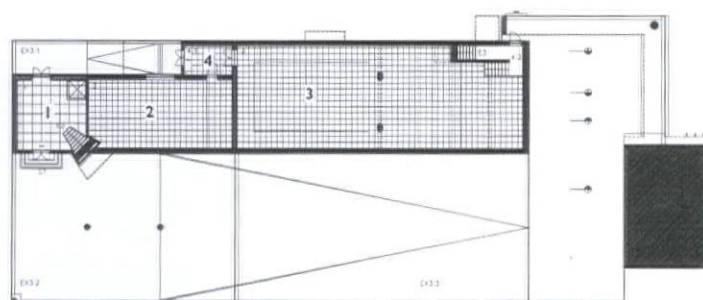
The building has been designed as a landmark, lying, as does the existing administrative building, along and west of the main north-south national highway. Linked to the existing building by an elevated gallery, the extension has a main axis running parallel to the motorway. From the road, as

you flash by in a car, the building registers an intriguing – even exotic – presence above a long horizontal green bank. Set on a granite plinth and surmounted by a gleaming white, truncated cone, it appears to be a complex composition of white volumes stepped up towards the south-east corner and back from the road. If the stacking and layering of simple imperforate forms recall the traditional architecture of more southerly latitudes, the conical chimney is reminiscent of the tapering flues of pottery furnaces.¹ Here the cone has been transformed into a lightwell illuminating the exhibition hall, which is the heart

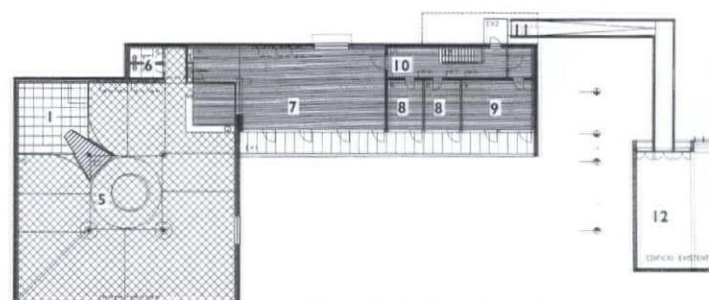
of the scheme.

In other ways the building is not as it seems from a glance in passing. Rather than a complex composition of many parts, a closer inspection reveals it consists simply of two interlocking bodies which together describe a kind of L around an open forecourt.

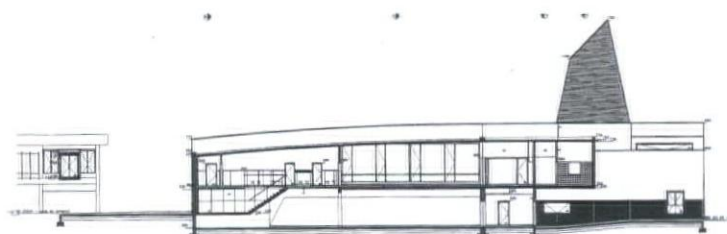
The main one, containing the exhibition hall, forms a square block to the south, and, built upon a sloping site, it is partly raised on columns to provide a covered entrance under which visitors arrive on the south-east. Running along the west side of the site is the secondary long arm of the L, its curving roof



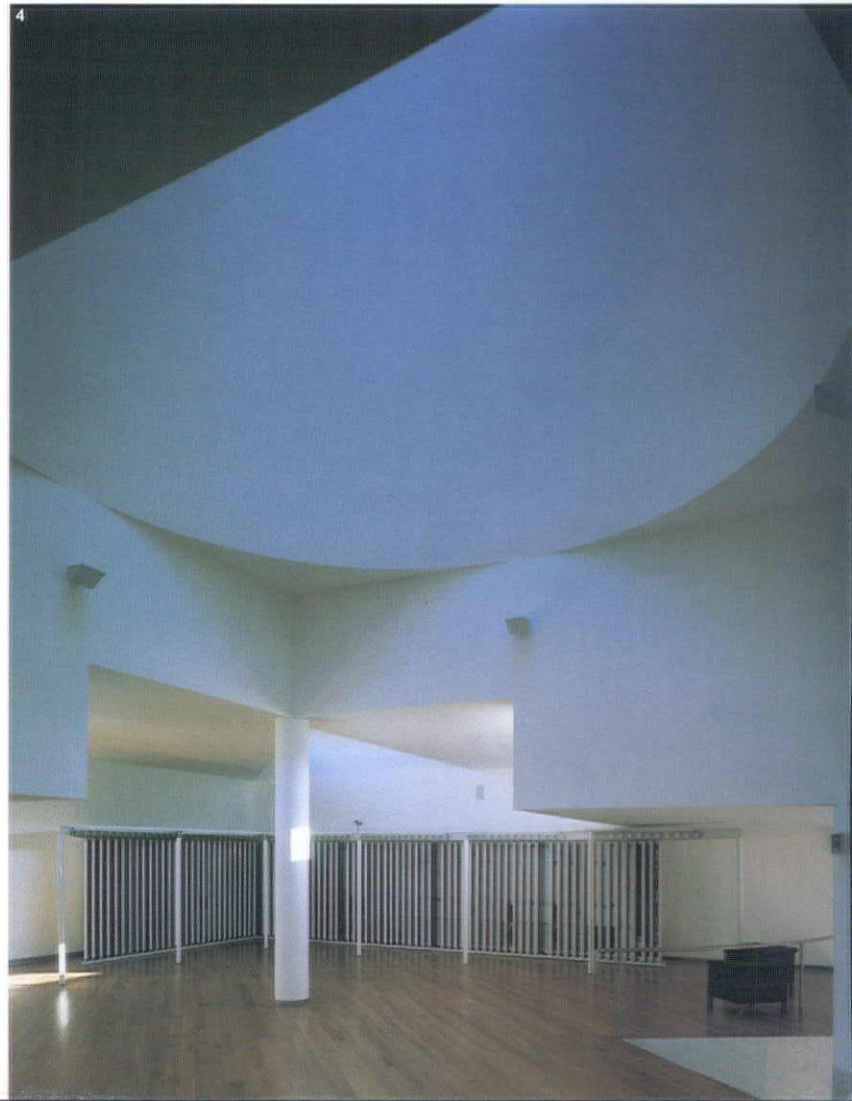
ground floor plan (scale approx 1:960)



first floor plan

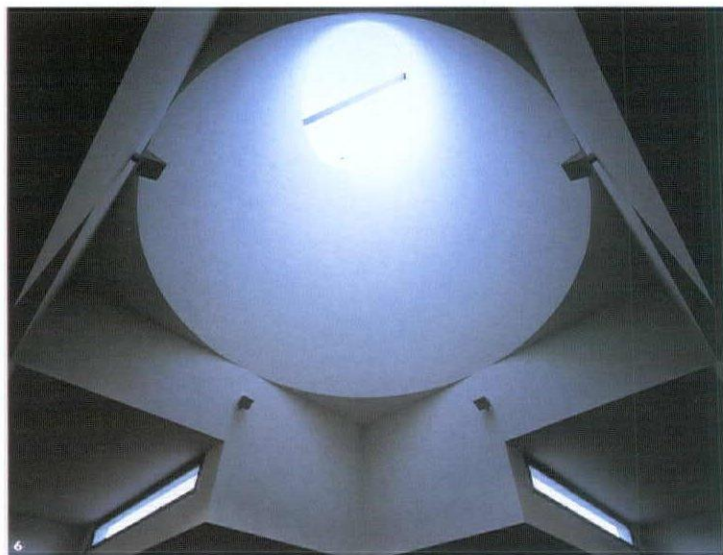


HEADQUARTERS EXTENSION,
AGUEDA, PORTUGAL
ARCHITECT
ALVARO SIZA





5



6

5
South-west corner of showroom with
reception.

6
Interior of cone.

softening linearity. On the ground floor is the large dining room and kitchen. An archive room is the interlock between the two bodies. Above, on the first floor, there are offices and meeting rooms giving onto a long terrace, and passage to the gallery link with the main building.

The initial impression of complexity derives from the stacked roof of the exhibition hall, the tiers ascending and descending and, inset with clerestory windows, spun around the big cone.

Given the traffic blown circumstances, Siza has elaborated the vertical and created an extraordinary interior space. His spatial sequences, the suggestion of volumes hollowed out of the solid and manipulations of light and shadow often suggest the influence of Islamic architecture. And nowhere more so than here.

As usual in Siza's buildings you have the sense of moving through layers, through spaces

that vary in size and intensity so that you continually experience differences in scale and light. From the entrance, you pass into a double-height lobby, floored and panelled in pale marble. From this enclosed space you have a glimpse of the sculpturally expressive heights of the hall above. To the right a flight of marble steps expands in width from bottom to top and delivers underneath the edge of the cone. Above and around you, space is modelled by the underside of the receding roof and cone; and by luminance from the skylight and clerestoreys. Tempted to look into the cone's core, you experience the limitless void of an Anish Kapoor sculpture. P. M.

1 Among the most potent examples are those added to the monastery of La Cartuja, Seville, when it was converted into a pottery during the late nineteenth century (AR June 1992, pp55 and 58).

Architect
Alvaro Siza
Photographs
Duccio Malagamba

**HEADQUARTERS EXTENSION,
AGUEDA, PORTUGAL**

ARCHITECT
ALVARO SIZA

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SEVEN POINTS FOR THE MILLENNIUM

an untimely manifesto

Kenneth Frampton gave the keynote address at the 1999 UIA conference in Beijing (AR August, p15) in which he set out an agenda for the architecture and planning of the next century. This is a slightly edited version of his speech.

WE ARE COMING TO THE CLOSE OF A CENTURY IN WHICH contemporary architecture has often been inseparable from the writing of manifestos, so I thought that one might indulge, on the occasion of the 20th UIA Congress, in an untimely manifesto, treating seven themes; first, environmental education, as this concerns the profession and in relation to the way this affects society as a whole; second, the question of the relative autonomy of architecture as this has had and continues to have an impact on both the profession and the society. The third point attempts to treat the socio-ecological implications of current patterns of land settlement. The fourth point turns to the need for architects to maintain their leadership role in the building team, retaining as much as possible their mastery over the craft of building in the widest sense. The fifth point tries to argue that the design of landscape is of greater critical consequence than architecture on its own, thereby suggesting that we give as much priority to the greening of the world as to building with bricks and mortar. Point six highlights the need for an incremental urban strategy. Point seven deals with the inevitable conflict between power and reason as the ultimate dialectic in the field of environmental design.

architecture and society: environmental education and the future of the profession

WITH THE DEMISE of the socialist project with which modern architecture was once so intimately involved, the profession has the challenge of trying to determine the scope of its role in the next century. This cannot be coherently addressed without involving the relationship of architecture to society as a whole. It is well known that the intentions of the client are absolutely seminal to the successful outcome of any architectural endeavor and that without a sensitive, intelligent and responsible client, the aspirational range of a project becomes limited. Good clients do not necessarily guarantee architecture of quality, as the architect may not be of comparable caliber, but there is little doubt that the reductive client, born of bureaucratic rigidity or speculative ruthlessness assures a mediocre result well before pencil is set to paper. To cultivate an adequate client base, the education of society in environmental design matters should be given the highest priority, beginning at high school level, as many have advocated over the past 20 years.

Unfortunately, we have yet to see a society willing to educate its children with regard to environmental *ends* as well as to the apparent benefit of ever-expanding economic *means*. The profession also has to restructure its own pedagogical goals, particularly maintaining a balance between professional training and the responsibility of

giving aspirants a sufficiently broad education. It is essential to admit that the practice of architecture is still ultimately a craft, however much its processes may be qualified by techno-scientific methods and applications. This should help us to understand why architecture as a discipline has always been situated uncomfortably within the confines of the university. As Portuguese architect Alvaro Siza put it:

'We developed the idea that the architect is a specialist in non-specialization. Building involves so many elements, so many techniques, and such different kinds of problems, that it is impossible to command all the requisite knowledge. What is required is an ability to interrelate diverse elements and disciplines. Because architects have a broad overview and are not constrained by concrete knowledge, they are able to connect various factors and maintain the synthesizing capacity of non-specialization. In this sense the architect is ignorant, but he is able to work with many people and coordinate the integration of a vast number of particulars. These are skills one can acquire only through experience. With them, we are able to face the new situations that accompany each project.'

As to the appropriate education for this synthesizing, the most one can do is to suggest a number of areas that still seem to be essential to the formation of the architect. Among them one may emphasize the following:

■ **HISTORY.** Ideally architectural history should be taught as cultural history which is a challenge since architects and architectural historians are not generally trained to approach the topic in this way. It is important that curricula be developed to include three important subsets; the history of landscape, technology and industrial design. It is certain that different subsets will have to be emphasized in different cultural situations depending on the part of the world in which the architect is being trained.

■ **DESIGN.** Training in building design as a tripartite procedure involving three different media at the same time; (i) hand drafting of initial concepts before passing to other modes of representation, (ii) continual building of models at all scales to assess the concepts under consideration and (iii) computer-aided design to be used for drafting and modeling in relation to the two other modes.



Gregotti: architectural practice requires the presence of societal need (Belém cultural centre, Portugal – AR January 1998).

Obviously one needs to oscillate constantly between all three modes in the generation of a design.

■ **TECHNIQUE.** At the end of the century, it seems that the teaching of technology may be best approached through two strategies; (i) the teaching of current technique through analytical case-studies of contemporary building culture and (ii) the teaching of technology through simplified comprehensive design projects in order to expose the student to the task of synthesizing different techniques.

The crisis of the architectural academy is at least in some measure a reflection of the crisis facing the profession: the more the practice of architecture becomes removed from the needs of society as a whole, the more it tends to become an overly aestheticized discourse that addresses itself exclusively to the spectacular preoccupations of an arriviste class. Inside architectural schools, this discourse is often served by a mystifying theoretical status, drawn largely from other disciplines, and removed from basic conditions and needs of environmental design. As Vittorio Gregotti pointed out some time ago, architectural practice requires the presence of societal need and sociological debate and constraint in order to exist at all, even if the rules for the development of the discipline at an intrinsic level can only be found within architecture itself.

the relative autonomy of architecture and its socio-cultural role

IF WE ASK OURSELVES what belongs to the building art as opposed to other socio-cultural discourses, we may surely identify architecture as the constructed enclosure of volumes for human occupation and use, even if under exceptional circumstances, the fabric does not serve simply as a shelter or the function remains symbolic. A number of corollaries follow from this:

(i) Architecture as opposed to any other art form is irremediably mixed up with the life-world. In this respect it is as much a context for culture and life as it is a cultural expression in and of itself and hence it cannot be convincingly rendered as fine or figurative art writ large. When architecture is reduced to large sculpture it is not only formalistically reductive but also an acritical mode of expression that may pass muster as art but is hardly architecture.

(ii) Architecture has a quintessentially *tectonic* character whereby part of its intrinsic expressivity is inseparable from the precise manner of its construction.

(iii) Needless to say this dimension does not preclude the equally essential embodiment of architecture as a spatial assembly: the by now obvious point of the nineteenth-century German theorist August Schmarzow that architecture is the 'creatress of space'.

(iv) These two dimensions, the *tectonic* and the *spatial*, are complementary and equally pertinent to the inflected articulation of *macro* and *micro* space on which the socio-cultural potential of architecture so evidently depends. Hence the limitations of the *minimalist* sculptural approach in late modern architecture, which tends to inhibit in different ways the articulation of micro-space.

(v) All of the above do not preclude the representational aspect of architectonic form or its capacity to refer to cultural values lying beyond the parameters of immediate context, so that in *tectonic* and *spatial* terms, built form may be as *representational* in its implications as it is *ontological*.

(vi) Unlike music, painting, sculpture, literature, or even photography and film, architecture cannot convincingly attain or aspire to the critical autonomy of modern art. In its opening towards the life-world it is indissolubly linked to the progressive ethos of the Enlightenment, to that which Marshall Berman identified as the *pastoral*, positive, caring mode as opposed to the *counterpastoral* of the

negative avant-garde. Liberative architectural form is invariably critical when it is set against the chaotic, exploitative, alienating environment of everyday life. As Alvaro Siza put it in 1979: 'Most of my works were never fulfilled, some of [the] things I did were only carried out in part, others were deeply changed or destroyed. But something remains. Pieces are kept here and there, inside ourselves gathered by someone leaving marks on space and people, melting in a process of total transformation.'

the crisis of land settlement in the age of the megalopolis

HALF A CENTURY ago, the dialectical interplay between civilization and culture still afforded the possibility of maintaining some control over the shape and significance of the urban fabric. The past 30 years have radically transformed the metropolitan centers of the developed world. What were still essentially nineteenth-century cities in the early 1960s (e.g. Glasgow, Sydney, San Francisco and Shanghai) have become overlaid by the matrices of megalopolitan development, the free-standing high-rise and the serpentine freeway. The former has come into its own as the instrument for capitalizing on increased land values brought into being by the latter. The typical downtown which, up to 30 years ago, still presented a mixture of residential stock with secondary industry has now become little more than a Motopian landscape dominated by tertiary industry.

By similar token, the unremitting suburbanization of North America and the simultaneous dissolution of the nineteenth-century provincial city structured about the railroad has been brought about by the deliberate maximization of private transport, sponsored by oil and automobile lobbies and by the corresponding contrived decline of public transport. While these symbiotic consumerist processes are at their most extreme in the US, it is clear that this tendency is to be found throughout the developed world, so much so that one is tempted to assert that if there is a single apocalyptic invention in the twentieth century it is the automobile rather than the atomic bomb.

Meanwhile, by a reciprocal and similar process, there is a corresponding implosion of urban populations in the vast hinterland surrounding capital cities, particularly in the Third World where such growth has been exponential. The population of Bombay virtually doubled between 1900 and 1950 when it was 2 million. In the next half century it increased almost eightfold to over 15 million. As in Latin America where the phenomenon was first fully acknowledged, most of this expansion occurs in the form of so-called spontaneous housing; *bariadas*, *fevillas*, where land is appropriated en masse and shacks come into being overnight without the infrastructures essential to health: water, sewage disposal, power and public transport. If the projections of a decade and a half are correct by the year 2000, as Charles Correa remarks in his prophetic book *The New Urban Landscape*, there will be 50 cities in the world with populations of 15 million or more. This spontaneous global urbanization produces



Collective, ecological patterns of land settlement. Siedlung Halen, Bern by Atelier 5 sets standards rarely reached since.

IF THERE IS A SINGLE APOCALYPTIC INVENTION IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, IT IS THE AUTOMOBILE RATHER THAN THE ATOMIC BOMB

ONLY ONE POSSIBLE STRATEGY SEEMS TO BE AVAILABLE: BLANKET APPLICATION OF LANDSCAPE ... IMPROVING ENVIRONMENTAL HARSHNESS

urbanized regions comparable to the megalopoli of the developed world, given this name by French geographer Jean Gottman in 1961. I have in mind such well known conglomerations as the Boston-Washington corridor, the so-called Randstad in north-western Europe, the Hokkaido to Osaka megalopolis in Japan that is now fed by the bullet train for the entire length of the island system. With the singular exception of these megalopoli that are relatively well served by public transport, explosions in the US tend socially and economically towards the condition of Third Worlds trapped within so-called First Worlds.

It is demagogic to complain that we lack appropriate strategies to deal with such apocalyptic developments. One way to treat such implosions was posited by Charles Correa, Pravina Mehta and Shirish Patel in their 1964 plan for New Bombay, through which at least 2 million of Bombay's burgeoning population would have been decanted eastward to the other side of the bay. The hard fact is of course that investment in public transport has not been made and that today, after nearly 40 years, this plan has yet to be fulfilled.

Without lamenting the loss of the traditional city, we may nonetheless claim two factors that must be seriously addressed if we are to come to terms in a socio-ecological sense with the current rate of urbanization. These are (i) the provision of adequate public transport systems of varying interlocking speeds, from high velocity inter-city trains to local light-rail, tram and bus systems and (ii) the general establishment of more collective, ecological patterns of land-settlement.

I am referring to the concept of low-rise, high-density housing which has been available as a general strategy for residential land settlement ever since the mid-60s, particularly in the so-called developed world, following the realization of Siedlung Halen outside Bern in 1960 and Serge Chermayeff and Christopher Alexander's seminal low-rise, high-density study *Community and Privacy* (1963).

We are familiar with the paradigms that could be applied to the general dilemma that we confront at the scale of the urbanized region. What we lack is the political and ideological will to bring these models into being. Successful demonstrations of low-rise, high-density housing have been made over the past 30 years, but for such land-settlement patterns to become normative we would have to introduce draconian legislation severely restricting not only high-rise development but almost all forms of low-density suburbs. Speculative suburban subdivision would have to be outlawed and the consumerist illusion attending our exaggerated individuality would have to be relinquished.

landscape form as a redemptive strategy

SINCE MEGALOPOLITAN development now takes place at a global scale, few options are available that are capable of significantly improving the socio-cultural and ecological character of the average urbanized region. Other than insertion of new systems of public transport, only one possible strategy seems to be universally available: blanket application of landscape interventions, in one form or another, as a way of improving the environmental harshness of large tracts of our urbanized regions. The ubiquitous black-top parking lots of North America are a case in point, for clearly all such lots could be transformed into shaded parking areas through subsidized application of tree planting as a coordinated public program. Given the present escalation of global warming, the ecological low-term benefit accruing from such a provision would be considerable. The related enclosure of such spaces by planted berms would lead to further cultural benefits, together with the enactment of legislation pro-

hibiting the use of asphalt for the surfacing of parking areas, to reduce the destructive distribution of water run-off produced by the automotive system. It is easy to construct parking bays out of perforated, prefabricated concrete paving elements filled with grass, so that the entire parking network throughout a megalopolis could be transformed into a landscape. The ecological and cultural benefits are self-evident.

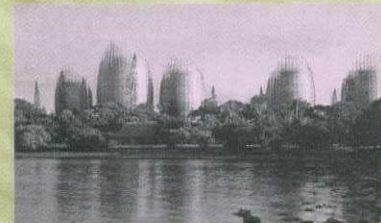
This general greening strategy possesses other pastoral benefits: *first* the current tendency to reduce the built environment to an endless proliferation of free-standing objects would be overcome by landscape which would integrate everything into the surface of the ground – and *second*, landscape would have the advantage of being more culturally accessible to the man in the street, than the contemporary built environment with all the seemingly unavoidable harshness of its instrumentality. This may also explain why landscape architects may be more readily allowed to treat the reorganization of large tracts of land where planners and urban designers run into different forms of obstruction and resistance.

It is for these reasons among others that I am convinced that architectural and planning schools throughout the world should give much greater emphasis to the cultivation of landscape as an overarching system rather than concentrating exclusively, as they have tended to do up to now, on the design of buildings as aesthetic objects.

product-form versus place-form

THE TERMS *product-form* and *place-form* are, I believe, my own coinage and as such they need to be defined. I have in fact borrowed the term *product-form* from Max Bill. He meant it to mean the way in which industrial design items are invariably determined as much through constraints imposed by modes of production as by ergonomic function. It is fairly obvious that so-called high-tech architects who have reinterpreted the craft of building in terms of modern productive methods have in effect been engaged in creating buildings which are largely determined by production methods. It is clear that this deployment of sophisticated technology constitutes a fundamental challenge to traditional building methods where these are either too expensive or for other reasons unattainable today.

Against this, we may set the *place-form*, or the foundational, topographic element that in one way or another is cast into the ground as a heavyweight site component that offers a form of quite literal resistance to the lightweight, productional superstructure poised on top of it. This is exactly the point that Renzo Piano made, when in his contribution to the Jerusalem Seminar in Architecture of 1996, he insisted that: 'the primary structure itself constitutes the place; it is sculpted in position, as it were, like a bas relief. This part is normally massive, opaque and heavy. Then you craft a light, transparent, and even temporary piece of architecture, which is poised on top of it. In such a combination, the heavy is permanent and the light is temporary.'



Piano: New Caledonia – symbolic abstraction of tradition, using new materials in fashion sympathetic to local culture, so generating an icon of the emerging nation.

'I believe that it is possible to create a tension between these two aspects, the place and the building, or rather the place and the crafted fabric. They are of two different worlds, but they may certainly coexist.'

Whether the superstructure need be light or tempo-



Kenneth Yeang: Singapore tower (AR February 1999) operating climatically and regionally in hybrid fashion.

rary may be debated but clearly this perception of the dialogical relationship between the earthwork and the roofwork is a productive way of regarding the interaction between the wet *landscaped place-form* and the dry, *rationally assembled product-form*.

The capacity of the *place-form* to resist the homogenizing tendency of universal technology may not be exclusively restricted to the earthwork, particularly if we turn attention to the roof and the membrane, both of which are potentially susceptible to the specific location of the work. In this respect, the case can be made that both cladding and fenestration are directly expressive of implicit and explicit values as these may be incorporated into a work of architecture in a given location at a specific moment in time.

Some obvious examples may be cited which illustrate the way such values are expressed. For instance under the current building legislation in the Netherlands, it is normally not possible to construct office buildings without openable windows, whereas, in the US, it has long been standard practice to fully air-condition office structures and hermetically seal fenestration throughout the building. This last has two maximizing results, first it becomes impossible to ventilate the building naturally in temperate seasons, and second, there is a corresponding maximization of the amount of energy consumed by the building. As many experts have argued in the past, technological maximization invariably entails negative side effects in whatever field it occurs, whether this be the maximized use of antibiotics in the field of allopathic medicine or the over-dependence on nitrates and insecticides in modern agricultural practice. One may also cite innumerable examples of similar negative consequences in building, for instance bulldozing an undulating site flat to achieve optimum economy, or designing museums in which no natural light is admitted: maximizing the conservation of art objects as opposed to enhancing the sensuous pleasure of perception.

Against such practices we may set recent efforts of certain high-tech architects, such as Kenneth Yeang from Malaysia and Thomas Herzog from Germany, who have attempted to design buildings which are ecologically responsive and which are conceived of as operating climatically in a hybrid fashion: they are designed as louvered, sun-screened and filtered structures that are partly air-conditioned and partly ventilated by natural means. It ought to be self-evident from any examination of traditional building culture that such structures possess the potential of giving specific expression to the cultural and physical values of their regions and that these climatically responsive features may appear as a *répétition différente* of local cultural mores.

A rather unusual example of such an instance is Renzo Piano's cultural centre for the Kanak people in Noumea, New Caledonia with its so-called timber 'cases' (AR December 1998). Aside from the multiple means provided for ventilating such structures, we enter into the symbolic significance of the materials used and the way in which these can give an idea of the place in an overt way. In this instance, the basket-like timber structures allude rather

directly to the traditional dwellings of the Kanak people without literally mimicking them. We will find a parallel cultural reference, but to an entirely different culture, in the dense urban housing that the Renzo Piano Building Workshop realized in the Rue de Meaux, Paris in 1992 (AR March 1992). Here what we might call a high-tech/low-tech finish (terracotta tiles) is clearly intended to invoke the atmosphere and pattern of traditional building form. Terracotta is commonly read as a traditional low-tech material, so it also opens the door to a reciprocity between the place-form and the product-form that need not necessarily concentrate solely on the use of lightweight systems, moving towards a high-tech expression that is as much heavyweight as it is light and dematerialized.

megaform as urban acupuncture

THE CONTEMPORARY environment is now so conditioned by maximized technology that the possibility of creating significant urban form has become extremely limited. Restrictions imposed by the dominance of automotive distribution and the volatile play of land speculation limit the scope of urban design to such a degree that any intervention tends to be reduced either to the manipulation of elements predetermined by the imperatives of production, or to a kind of superficial masking to which modern development seems to gravitate in order to facilitate marketing while maintaining a prerequisite level of social control. It is this that makes any kind of masterplanning other than public transportation largely academic. And the same may also be said of large-scale urban design. Since this is an equally harsh reality in both the developed and developing parts of the world, urban designers, architects and planners have tried to evolve alternative piecemeal strategies for development and/or modification of urban form. Among these are such figures as Henri Ciriani and Fumihiko Maki; Ciriani for his concept of a catalytic form urban intervention to which he gave the name *la pièce urbaine* and Maki not only for his concept form first developed with Ohtaka, but also for the way in which he has been able, in his recent practice, to use large roofs as a device for creating identifiable urban place-forms within the unending chaos of the megalopolis.



Piano: Rue de Meaux housing, Paris: evoking traditional form with new material uses (AR March 1992).

To this I would like to add the notion of urban acupuncture as developed by my colleague, the distinguished Barcelona urbanist Manuel de Sola Morales. By this term he intends a similar strategy of making catalytic, small-scale interventions, with the condition that they should be realizable within a relatively short period of time, and capable of achieving a maximum impact with regard to the immediate surroundings. I would like to argue that all three propositions converge about the concept of the urban *megaform* involving the creation of a largely horizontal fabric capable of effecting a local transformation in the megalopolitan landscape. While this may seem to be synonymous with the term megastructure, first coined in the 1960s, the two are different in respect of the relative continuity of their form. While a

TECHNOLOGICAL MAXIMIZATION INVARIABLY ENTAILS NEGATIVE SIDE EFFECTS IN WHATEVER FIELD IT OCCURS FROM MEDICINE TO AGRICULTURE

POWER UNDER A DEMOCRACY ... COMES INTO BEING AS THE MANDATE OF THE ELECTORATE BUT ... ACTS AGAINST THE ELECTORATE'S SELF INTEREST

megaform may incorporate a megastructure, a megastructure does not necessarily yield a megaform. A megaform may be defined as being: (i) a large form extending horizontally rather than vertically, (ii) a complex form which does not necessarily express its structural and mechanical elements, and (iii) as a device that is capable of inflecting the existing urban context because of its strong topographical character. Beyond the historical core, a megaform may thus be recognized as an urban difference within the open-ended repetition of the megalopolis – as in say Henri Ciriani's Barre à Marne in Marne la Vallée (1980) or in Rafael Moneo and Manuel de Sola Morales' L'illa Block completed in Barcelona in 1997. The latter suggests that the horizontality of the megaform should be capable, by virtue of its program, of serving as a civic microcosm. Hence one may suggest types that may have potential for engendering such forms: shopping malls, air terminals, transport interchanges, hospitals, hotels, sports facilities and universities; types in fact that have great applicability within the contemporary megalopolis.

rationality and power

WHEN WE ADDRESS ourselves at the end of the century to the entire predicament of the environment and the state of the profession, we would do well to bear in mind the unavoidable interplay between reason and power in almost every design and policy decision both large and small. As the Danish planner Bent Flyvbjerg puts it in his book *Rationality and Power: Democracy and Practice* of 1998, 'Power concerns itself with defining reality rather than discovering what reality really is'. Elsewhere, he says: 'In the *longue durée*, we see that in practice democratic progress is chiefly achieved not by constitutional and institutional reform alone, but by facing the mechanisms of power and the practices of class and privilege more directly, often head-on: if you want to participate in politics but find the possibilities for doing so constricting, then you team up with like-minded people and you fight for what you want, utilizing the means that work in your context to undermine those who try to limit participation.'

'If you want to know what is going on in politics but find little transparency, you do the same. If you want more civic reciprocity in political affairs, you work for civic virtues becoming worthy of praise and others becoming undesirable. At times direct power struggle over specific issues works best; on other occasions changing the ground-rules for such struggle is necessary, which is where constitutional and institutional reform come in ... The focus of modernity and modern democracy has always been on "what should be done", on normative rationality. What I suggest is a reorientation toward the first half of Machiavelli's dictum, "what is actually done", toward *verita effettuale*.

'We need to rethink and recast the projects of modernity and democracy, and of modern politics, administration, and planning, in terms of not only rationality but of rationality and power, *Realrationalität*. Instead of thinking of modernity and democracy as rational means for dissolving power, we need to see them as practical attempts at regulating power and domination. When we do this we obtain a better grasp of what modernity and democracy are in practice and what it takes to change them for the better ...'

I have opted for the theme of rationality and power as my last point for much the same reason that I chose to end my book *Studies in Tectonic Culture* (1995) with a quote from Guy Debord's *Commentary on the Society of Spectacle* of 1988, particularly for his contention that the spectacle (the media) has allowed power to assume that it no

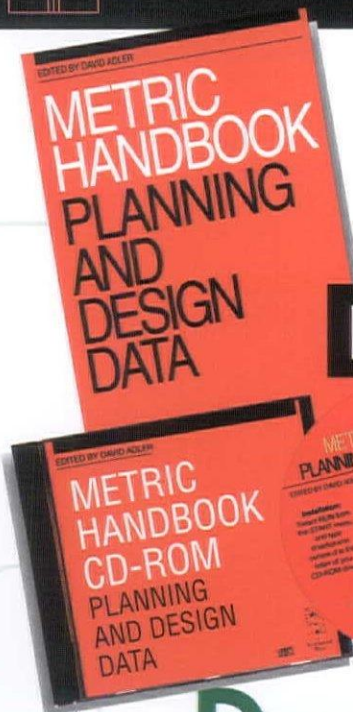
longer has to take responsibility for its decisions, just as it encouraged science to enter into the service of spectacular domination.

Whether this indictment is justifiable or not, there is surely no doubt as to the perennial play of power and reason in the application of technology. The irony is that while power under democracy ostensibly comes into being as the mandate of the electorate, we also know that it often acts against the electorate's self-interest, due, among other factors, to the influence of the media, the rise of global marketing and the corresponding decline of the nation-state. As a result of this the natural and the human environment becomes ever more degraded, from the phenomena of global warming to oceanic pollution, from wholesale deforestation to the destruction of the landscape through tourism.

Accompanying the misinformation of the media, there is also mediatic information of a more positive kind, with the paradoxical result that while the environment as a whole becomes increasingly barbaric, an incidental architecture of richness and subtlety now may be found all over the world. And while there is also a great deal of inauthentic, acritical and insensitive building, there are also many works of exceptional stature. Thanks to the universal distribution of information, these may just as easily be found in the so-called provinces as they are still occasionally to be found in the so-called centers of civilization.

At the same time once one turns attention not to the one-off incidental quality work but rather to the design of the environment at a somewhat larger scale, then the aporia of the spectacular returns with a vengeance, as Flyvbjerg demonstrates in his documentation of the Aalborg project. Basically the struggle rose out of the decision on the part of the mayor and his cohorts, both within and without the council, to locate a new bus terminal adjacent to the ancient castle within the historical center of this provincial Danish town. Notable in this conflict was the fact that the city architect opposed this location from the outset on cultural and environmental grounds, while the city engineer, unquestionably the more powerful of the two, endorsed the council's decision. Flyvbjerg is able to show with painstaking perspicacity and courage how the various vested interests lined up in this controversy, with the local newspaper following the Chamber of Commerce in backing the location of the terminal since it would increase the land value of their centrally located premises. Flyvbjerg records an 18-year long struggle to get a comprehensive urban renewal plan for the city approved, with little to show in the long run save for the fact that the city was awarded the 1995 EC Planning Prize for having gone through the process. Flyvbjerg's conclusion is that while power sets out the ground rules for reason, it deliberately blurs the lines between rationality and rationalization, so that power and rationality are essentially opposed.

Flyvbjerg argues that power always prevails in any showdown between power and reason and that the greater the power the less it is accessible to reason. Contemporary planning is as much marked by pre-modern tribal power relations as it is by rationality and democracy. Thus the ideals of a liberative democracy cannot be realized for once and all, and in fact have never been achieved in this sense. As he puts it, to register a government as democratic is always in some sense a piece of propaganda. Finally Flyvbjerg concludes, after Michel Foucault, that in undermining tradition and religion, modernity and democracy condemn the species being to the unending arduous task of producing itself. Architecture, it should by now be clear, is in some specific sense inseparable from this relentless procedure.



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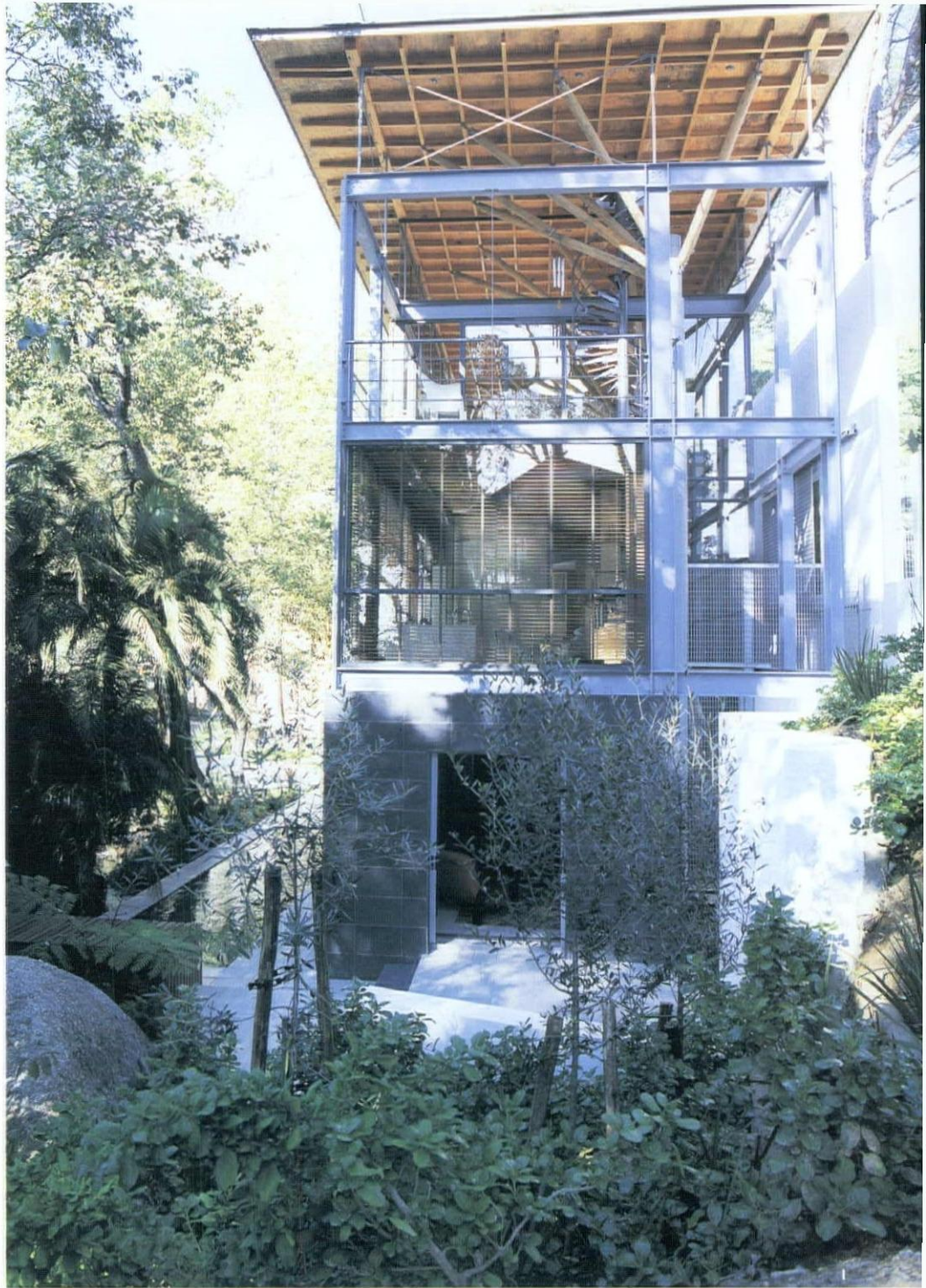


ar house

Cape Town's stage set topography forms a huge and dramatic amphitheatre. Residential districts clamber up the edges of the city bowl, grouped around the central business gridiron. Diverse communities, from the ill-fated District 6 to the Malay quarter known as Bo-Kaap (above Cape), historically occupied these sites cheek-by-jowl with upmarket neighbourhoods. Higgovale falls into the latter category. Half hidden in its steep and leafy woods is the Tree House, the newest and most ambitious project to date by South African duo Anya Van der Merwe and Macio Miszewski.

The house represents a committed architect client relationship established over several years. Newcomers to the city, the clients were responsive to Van der Merwe Miszewski's strategy. Their design dramatizes the views, and literally heightens the sense of being 'in nature', while also affording a panorama of the city. Teetering on a precipitous slope, it is a delightful contrivance, matching structural playfulness with a studied approach to the ordering of thresholds and elevations.

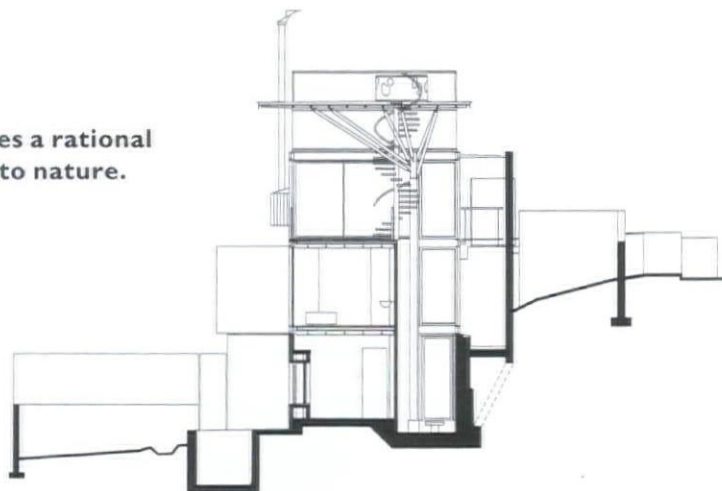
Rising from a winding road teeming with building activity, the disengaged street facade cheekily masks the body of the house, rather like a slightly too small towel at the beach. Addressing the street at mock urban scale, a monolithic wall restates the language of the town house, establishing scale, privacy and security. And almost at once it violates all three. Scale is distorted in two grandiose openings, one to mark entry and the second to offer a glimpse into the private realm beyond. Privacy is manipulated both in the openings and in the tantalizing views of the tree columns above. Security is pitted against enclosure; the wall is just the first in a series of



URBAN GAZEBO

Poised among the trees, this house in Cape Town combines a rational spatial and material sensitivity with a romantic approach to nature.

- 1 Part garden gazebo, part Modernist machine, the house is a surprising presence among lush landscape.
- 2 Like a tree-house, the living room heightens the sensation of being at one with nature.
- 3 The glass and steel upper floors emerge from a robust masonry base.
- 4 Arboreal roof structure mimics and abstracts nature.



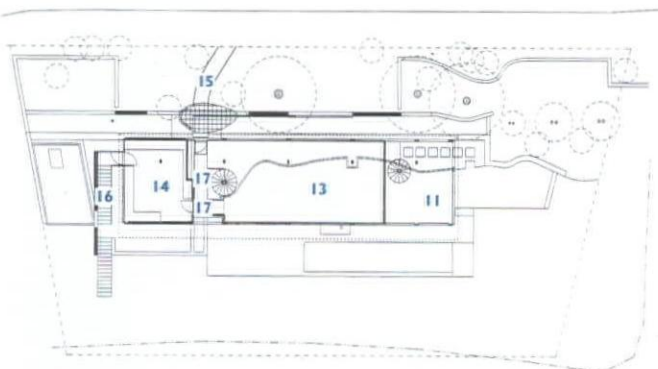
cross section

HOUSE, CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA
ARCHITECT
VAN DER MERWE MISZEWSKI

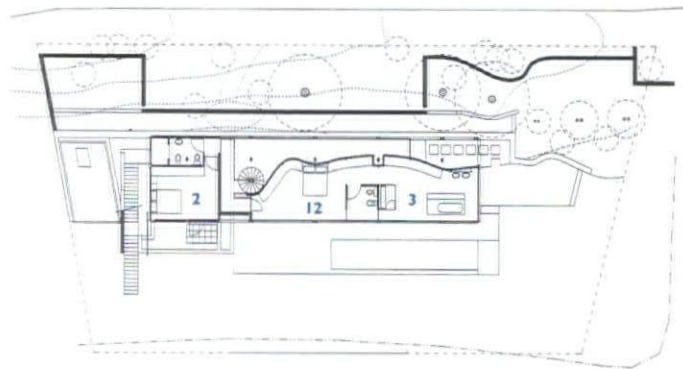


2





second floor (entrance level) plan



first floor plan

vertical layers, which on closer inspection, form the house's principal ordering device.

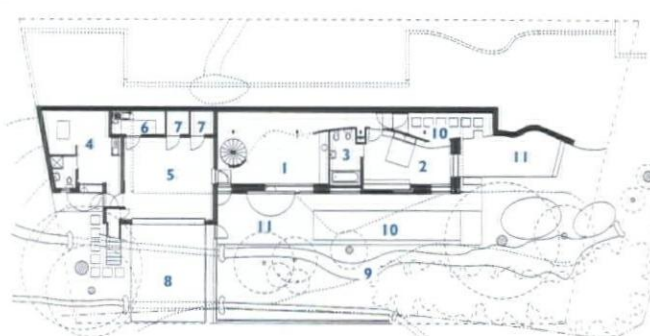
The house envelope is rectangular in plan. A three-storey void drops behind the glass layer of the street elevation all the way from the entry level living area to the study, and guest room two floors below. The living area inhabits the garden facade and overlooks the void towards the street, separated from it by a curvilinear maple ply screen. The tree columns rise against this screen, spreading their asymmetrical branches to carry the composite box-crate roof-terrace structure above, a plane oversailing the body of the house with uninterrupted views of the city bowl and bay.

The design mimics the paradoxically exposed but enclosed childhood experience of a tree-house. The interior is reinterpreted as a landscape, an artificial garden in which the living room is perched between the fabricated structural trees inside and the real pines all around. It reflects the designers' fascination with layers and the idea of a building's hidden heart, in which the *promenade architecturale* is a game of discovery, the home unpeeled like an onion.

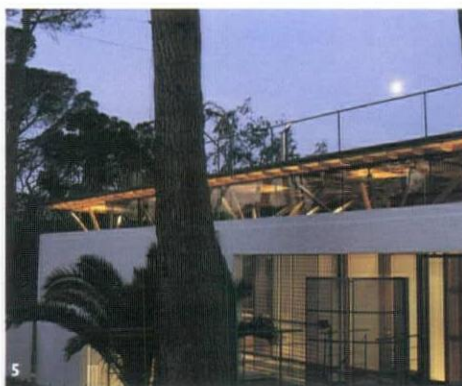
Anya and Macio, the wife and husband partnership at the core of Van der Merwe Miszewski trace the roots of their Tree House to a concern with environmental design and the particulars of a place. The design draws out the spirit of the site in a way that brings the house into dialogue with nature. Oscillating between Modernist machine and garden gazebo, the building's nimble poise is at the heart of its charm.

MATTHEW BARAC

- 1 study
- 2 bedroom
- 3 bathroom
- 4 guest flat
- 5 garage
- 6 laundry
- 7 store
- 8 driveway
- 9 stream
- 10 pool
- 11 terrace
- 12 master bedroom
- 13 living room
- 14 kitchen
- 15 entrance bridge
- 16 service stair
- 17 access bridges



ground floor plan (scale approx 1:800)



5 From the street, a monolithic wall restates the language of the town house, yet it is also punctured to reveal tantalizing glimpses of the interior realm.

6 Enclosed in a cylinder of perforated steel mesh, a spiral staircase snakes through the house, vertically linking the three levels.

7 Bathroom with master bedroom beyond on the first floor. Materials and detailing display a crisp, functional elegance.

Architect
Van der Merwe Miszewski, Cape Town
Photographs
Steven Inggs

Opaline

Translucent Opalescent Glass Blocks

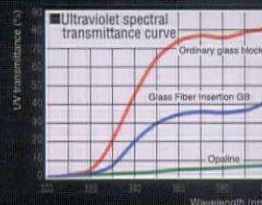
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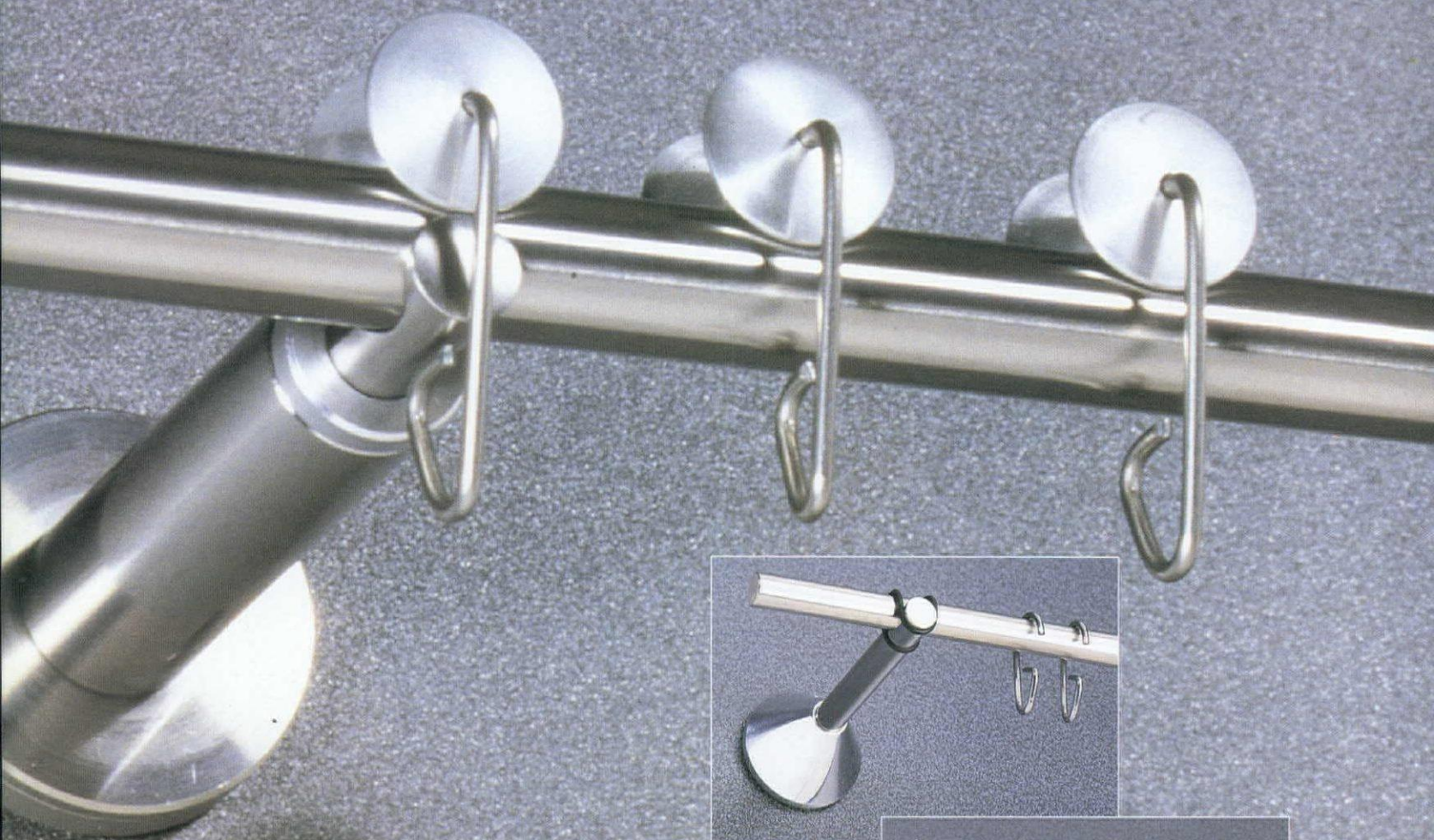
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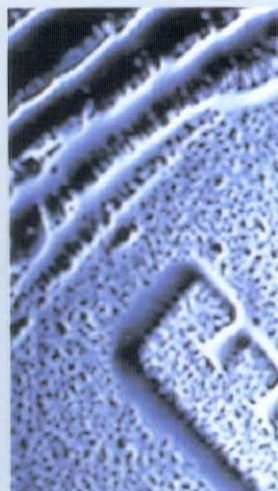


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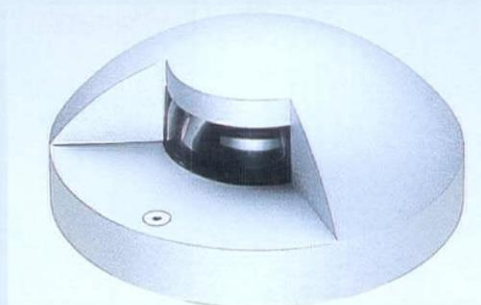
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Mixing innovation and elegance, this year's 100% Design held at Earl's Court in London builds on the success of previous shows. Here we look at some of the best products for contemporary interiors.



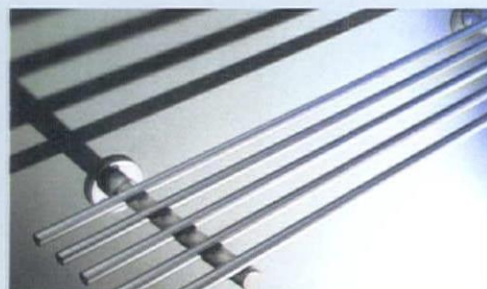
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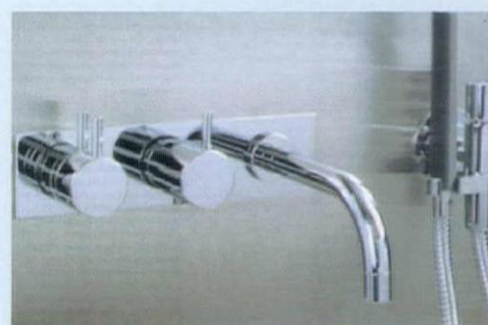
506 HERMAN MILLER
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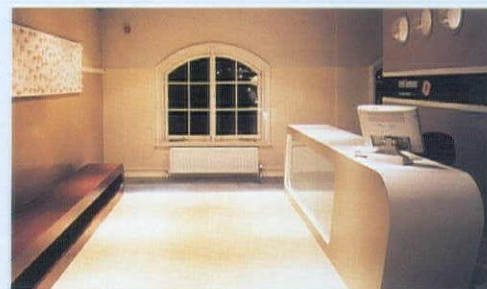


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520 HT (UK)

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521 HUNTER DOUGLAS

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522 LEIGH'S PAINTS

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523 SUNFOLD SYSTEMS

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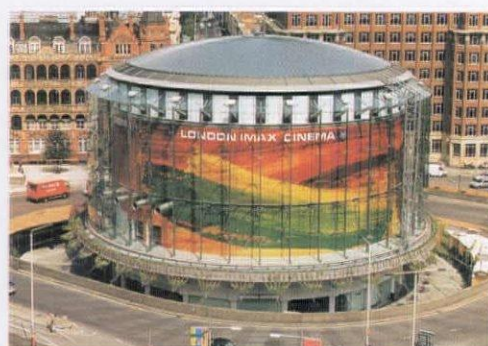
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526 ALUMASC

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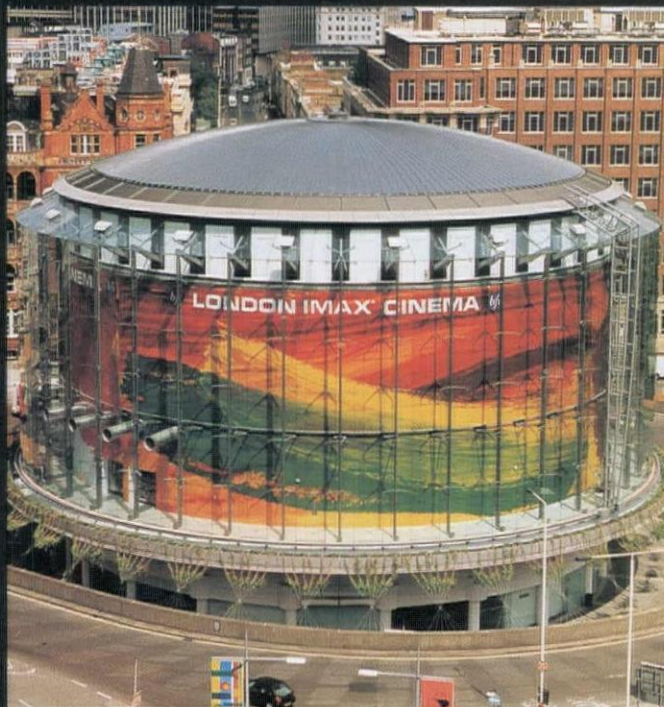
527 SEELE

Seele were responsible for structural glazing and internal glass smoke screens at this new shopping mall at Cribbs Causeway in Bristol.

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Imax Cinema - London
Architect: Avery Associates



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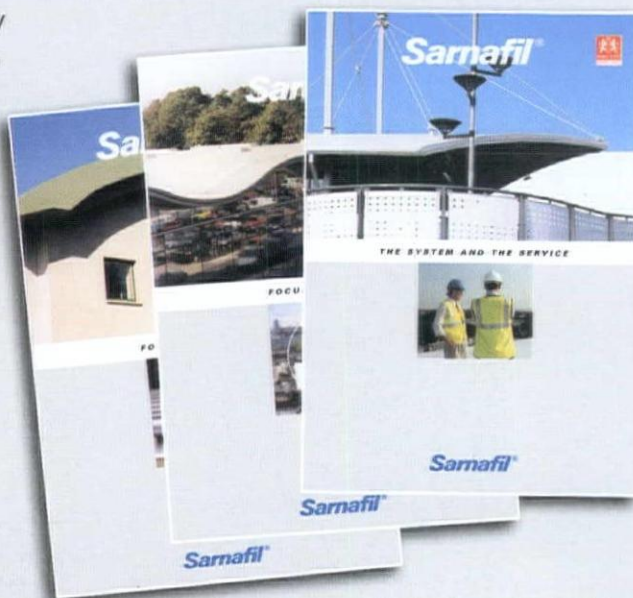
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SUSTAINING OUTLOOK?

DESIGNS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES

By Richard Hill. London: Yale University Press. 1999. £19.95

Towards the end of this book it becomes clear that it is not merely a thoughtful ramble on the subject of form and content but a critique of the 'sustaining outlook' of modernist architecture – a phrase which is supposed to describe the architect's attempts at unifying his personal beliefs and expression with his work, and which seems to carry with it some degree of elegantly veiled sarcasm. Hill is one of those people who sees modernism as being a development of the picturesque movement of the early nineteenth century, and as such is some kind of bastard son of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts when going through one of its romantic phases. His investigations into ways of seeing, 'expressiveness' and 'usefulness' in architecture owe (and are here credited) much to Wollheim, Collingwood and Scruton, and as is often the case with people who take this line of attack, none other than Kant is ever lurking in the background, scratching away at thoughts that seem unhelpful in the light of the nineteenth century.

I find it hard to accept that architectural aesthetics or ethics can ever be evaluated without any reference to the political or social factors that generated and promoted visual forms in public places and influenced the perception of them. But if you like Geoffrey Scott you will enjoy this. Hill is at his best when describing ways of seeing – seeing as power, 'seeing-on', 'seeing-in'. He writes in an informal style and allows himself here and there a strange remark which seems totally unjustifiable – that 'a building cannot perform the function of "educating"', for example. A wearing and unrewarding read. TIMOTHY BRITAIN-CATLIN

TANIGUCHI FIRST

THE ARCHITECTURE OF YOSHIO TANIGUCHI

By Y. Taniguchi. New York: Harry N. Abrams. 1999. £79.95

Some years ago on a trip to Japan I sat in a three hour traffic jam with Yoshio Taniguchi on our way to the Tokyo Aquarium, a multi-billion yen project then under construction. On arrival at the vast building site, the foreman handed Taniguchi a dozen or so tiny transparent sachets – each containing a cementous powder in a different shade of grey.

I observed as the contents of each sachet was carefully examined, first in bright light, then in shade, then sprinkled onto the tiled floor. I

remained mystified by this ritual, until Taniguchi explained that he was selecting 'the correct shade of grey' for the grout. This small event epitomizes Taniguchi's uncompromising and relentless attention to detail.

Taniguchi is one of the few architectural giants practising today for whom design is far more than the pouring out of an elusive 'talent' but a discipline. A discipline that demands honing of the senses and training of the eye – where Corbusier 'learned to see' and continually sharpened his senses through his paintings and sculptures, Taniguchi practises the art of calligraphy, repeating a particular stroke on reams of scrap newspaper perhaps hundreds of times.

As in calligraphy, where the space created by the stroke assumes a higher significance than the stroke itself, Taniguchi's architectural spaces assume a power far beyond the form of the walls and columns that contain it.

As you turn the pages of this sumptuous book you learn to appreciate that basic universal principles like generosity of spirit, humanity, proportions and composition drive his work and invariably give rise to outstanding buildings. In the past 35 years Taniguchi has avoided transient style but practised architecture as a discipline based on underlining principles.

Taniguchi continued his father's inspired tradition to work with his great mentor and friend the sculptor Isamu Noguchi. Their collaboration at the Ken Domon Museum of Photography, richly illustrated in the book with 16 superb colour pages, resulted in an architectural masterpiece hardly known to anyone outside Japan.

Up till now Taniguchi has resisted publication of his work, perhaps because the power of his exquisitely executed details and the serenity of his spaces can easily be lost on the printed

page and can only truly be felt on a journey through his supremely crafted buildings.

Nonetheless this resplendent coffee table book with its staggering 440 crisp and luscious photographs must be the next best thing to a trip to Japan. This long overdue title will inspire many architects outside Japan and allow them to discover the work of one of the world's few great architectural heavyweights.

GABRIELE BRAMANTE

ROMANIA RISING

ROMANIAN MODERNISM: the Architecture of Bucharest, 1920-1940

By Luminita Machedon and Ernie Scoffham. London: MIT Press. 1999. £29.95

This book came out of an exhibition of the Romanian avant-garde in literature and the arts held in Bucharest in 1993, the architecture section of which proved to be something of a revelation to Western observers and subsequently travelled to London and Zurich. The result is a valuable addition to the scholarship of the Modern Movement and a superbly produced book with many of the original drawings and period illustrations published for the first time.

Having provided the historical and physical contexts, the authors devote separate chapters to the pioneers Marcel Janco and Horia Creanga, before discussing the various building types. They also discuss the Bucharest Master Plan of 1934-35 which they regard as 'unique in its rapid incorporation and transformation of the ideas of the Charter of Athens into a practical working tool'.

I have contributed a foreword on my father,

Ken Domon Museum of Photography by Yoshio Taniguchi and Isamu Noguchi. See Gabriele Bramante's review



G. M. Cantacuzino, who as a practising architect was by no means a wholehearted modernist but who became, as the authors acknowledge, the foremost architectural theorist for the avant garde.

It was Creanga who said 'our modern architecture springs from the general needs of the time and not from the pleasure of imitation'; and a topic that appears frequently in Janco's writings is the social role of modern architecture as an expression of democracy. But whereas the architects of the Modern Movement in Romania, as in Western Europe, embraced the idea of progress, of an architecture directed primarily at satisfying human needs, they also saw in the Modern Movement a continuity with the past in the simple lines and masses of both Byzantine and popular architecture. This was the reason why Romania's Modern Movement, unlike England's, was entirely home-grown. Romania today is again striving to take her place among the European democracies and this book is a distinct contribution towards this goal.

SHERBAN CANTACUZINO

LANDSCAPE PROCESSES

THE LANDSCAPE APPROACH

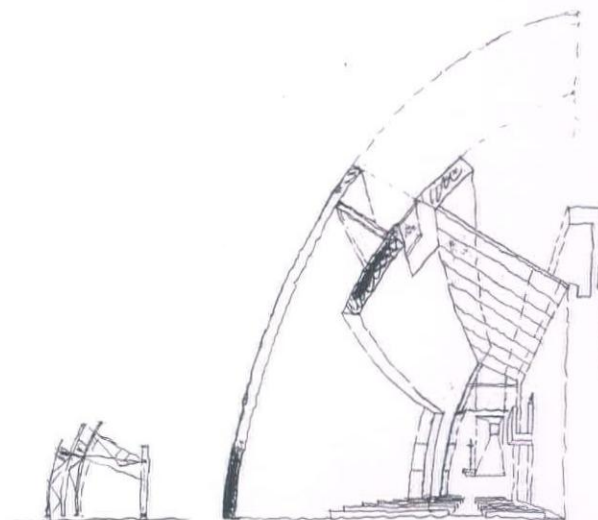
By Bernard Lassus. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 1999. \$39.95 (£30)

An artist, academic and philosopher, leading French landscape architect Bernard Lassus is relatively unknown in the UK. He brings unusual transformative philosophies to landscape architecture which are drawn from the kinetic artist's long term theoretical and practical investigations. The landscape designs of American artists such as Robert Irwin and James Turrell arise out of similar conceptual explorations.

In this delightfully illustrated, thought-provoking work, Lassus, and sometimes colleague Stephen Bann, describe the experimental progression and its realization in three sections: early concepts and explorations; landscape theory drawn from the above; and descriptions of the studies and projects.

Lassus' landscape projects are process driven. He creates a dichotomy of cultural/natural elements layered in the past, the present and the future forming 'narrative landscapes'. These contain elements of transformation, transposition and sensory connections resulting from sometimes surrealist substitutions stimulating new perceptual expectations. Research projects such as the 'Garden Game' encourage public interventions and feed into projects, questioning the relationship of elements and providing new metaphors. While some landscape projects resulting from the experiments are splendid, others do not translate into readable landscapes.

Church of the Year 2000, Rome
by Richard Meier. Section,
showing lighting principles, of the
new church in a rather isolated
and impoverished suburb. From
Richard Meier, Architect, volume
III by Joseph Rykwert and
Kenneth Frampton, Rizzoli
International, New York, 1999,
£35 paperback. The latest
addition to the *oeuvre complète*, it
covers Barcelona Museum of
Contemporary Art, the Getty
Center, the Weishaupt Forum
and much else.



Ultimately, this difficult but ground-breaking text merits much more discussion than is possible in a brief review. For those interested in new theories of landscape design, *The Landscape Approach* is a must to glean the philosophies, the new perceptual approaches and paradigms which characterize end of twentieth-century landscape architecture.

ELSA LEVISEUR

SCOTTISH URBAN CONDITIONS

CLONE CITY: Crisis and Renewal in Contemporary Scottish Architecture

By Miles Glendinning and David Page. Edinburgh: Polygon. 1999. £11.99

Clone City is an unusual publication – a contemporary critique of the Scottish urban condition. Intended as a polemical treatise, it takes Patrick Geddes' idea for 'Clydeforth' – a linear city from the east to the west coast founded on the Glasgow and Edinburgh conurbations – as its central proposition for resolving the fragmentation and debasement of the Scottish urban environment which the authors perceive as having been caused by market-led globalization.

The book is timed to respond to the emergence of a Scottish parliament, seeking from it a reinvigoration of the planning process as a means of realizing its ambitions. Many of these are of a scale and determinism at odds with the putative new form of democracy, and so fail to deal convincingly with the central issues of identity raised by the book. As in so many areas of Scottish life, aspirations seem to founder in unnecessary prefatory compromise, mitigating against the achievement of real quality in the nation's architecture. A paradoxical mix of propositions, *Clone City* is nevertheless sufficiently bullish in its analysis to set the scene for a more sophisticated debate than has previously existed in Scotland on its built environment. The proposed new architecture policy can only aid this.

PETER WILSON

SOCIAL STANDING

FRAMING PLACES: MEDIATING POWER IN BUILT FORM

By Kim Dovey. London: Routledge 1999. £17.99

The first of a new series examining buildings as social objects rather than works of art or technology, this book examines the seats of power. The author begins his exploration with the hope in the activity of design, 'a greater transparency of the practices of power can lead to more imaginative, liberating and empowering placemaking practices.' To this end he examines power relationship as exhibited by the plan form of various building types, beginning with the simple autocracy of Versailles.

He shifts to the Reichstag, built in 1894 and funded from French war reparations, and to Hitler's commissioning of Albert Speer to design and build a vast new Chancellery. There follows an account of the Forbidden City in Beijing and the impact of the student protest of May 1989 in the Tiananmen Square that Mao had commissioned in 1949, modelled in part on Moscow's Red Square.

From absolutism he moves to the evolution of the parliaments at Westminster and Canberra, and then to other global types displaying different forms of power: skyscrapers, shopping malls and gated private estates. A sardonic wit creeps into Kim Dovey's narrative. Having revealed that British parliamentary democracy was born in the tiered choir stalls lining the opposite sides of a chapel, he concludes that the modern House of Commons and its offspring in Canberra are still designed as stalls for choir boys. And he asks, 'Why do mature people seem to undergo 30 years of regression when they walk into the House?'

COLIN WARD

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delight

THIS REMARKABLE COMPOSITE SUPERSCULPTURE CELEBRATES THE TACTILE AND VISUAL PROPERTIES OF OVER 200 DIFFERENT SORTS OF MATERIALS, FROM LACE TO SLATE.

To celebrate the completion of a series of art installations at London's Science Museum, sculptor Thomas Heatherwick was asked to create an object that incorporated the world's largest collection of materials. The result is an intriguing, tactile structure made up of 213 different materials, from Astroturf to Segovia lace. Heatherwick specializes in organically-inspired, large scale works; his *Autumn Intrusion*, for instance, festooned Harvey Nichols department store with a scrum of writhing, plywood tentacles (AR January 1998).

The enormous *Materials House* is intended to stimulate curiosity about the nature of organic and manmade substances. Each component material is described in a series of swatches which form a fascinating adjacent display. Donated by various manufacturers and suppliers, the range of stuff is truly mind-boggling. It encompasses various kinds of metals – steel, anodized aluminium, even a very thin layer of silver; timbers – including exotic woods, plywood and flake board; slate, Chinese quartz tiles, fake fur, polycarbonate, felt, coir, rubber, leather, recycled PVC wellingtons and even postage stamps. Sadly, Heatherwick's plans to incorporate a layer of hardened camel dung were unrealized.

Cutting paths and profiles were determined using computer programs. Individual layers were shaped using various cutting techniques, from lasers and water to hand trimming, and then fixed in place with hundreds of screws, bolts and litres of contact adhesive. The sculpture took three years to complete. Combining senuousness with a trainspotter's obsessive attention to detail, Heatherwick's voluptuous curves and kaleidoscopic colours are feast for the eye, hand and imagination. C. S.



Photographs: Steve Speller