



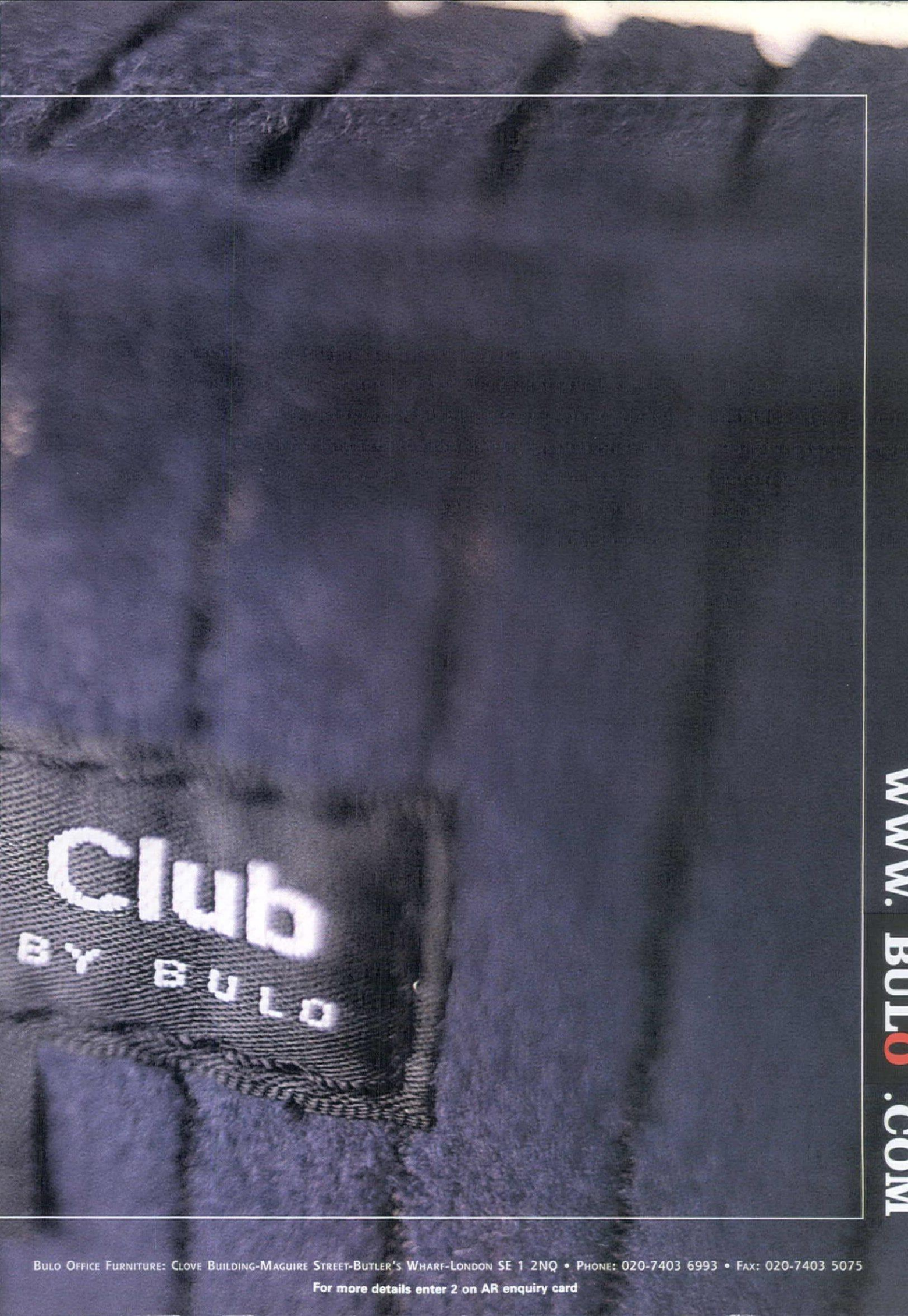
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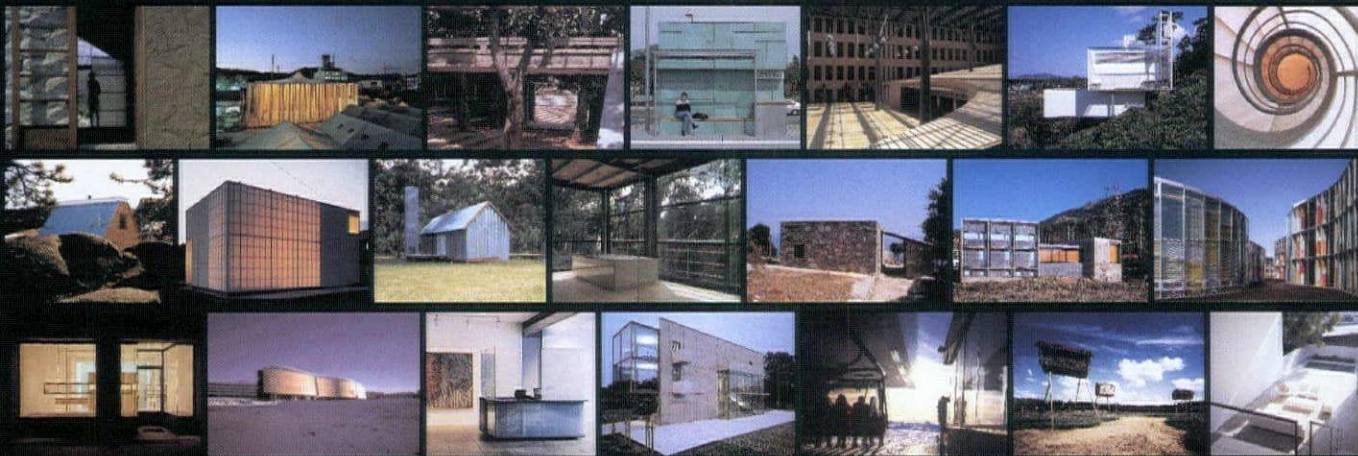


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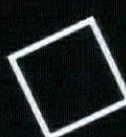


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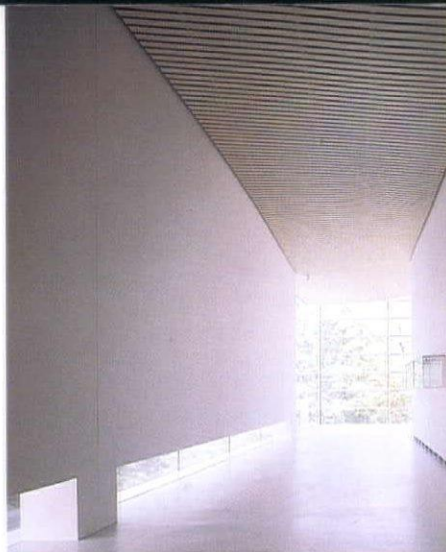
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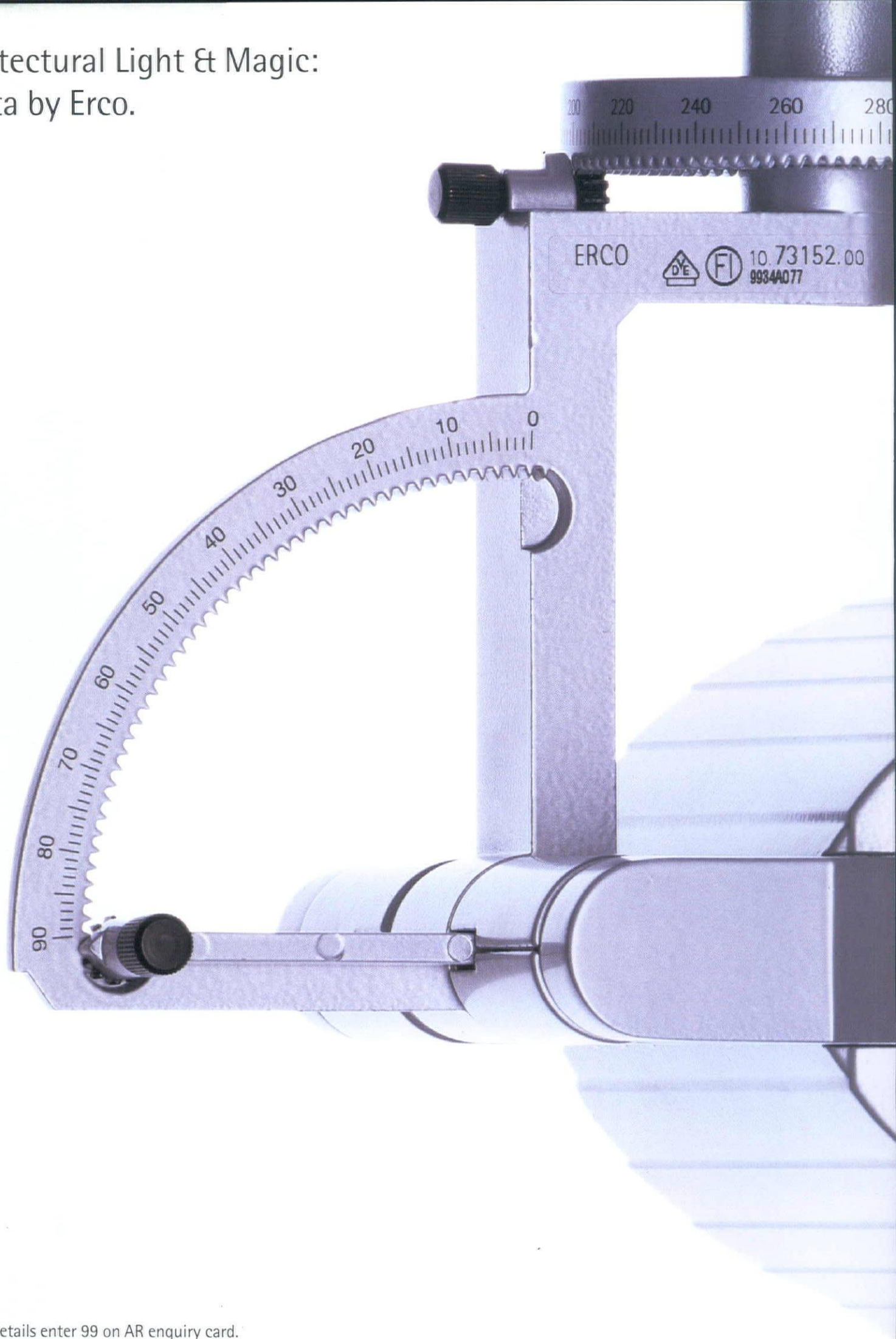
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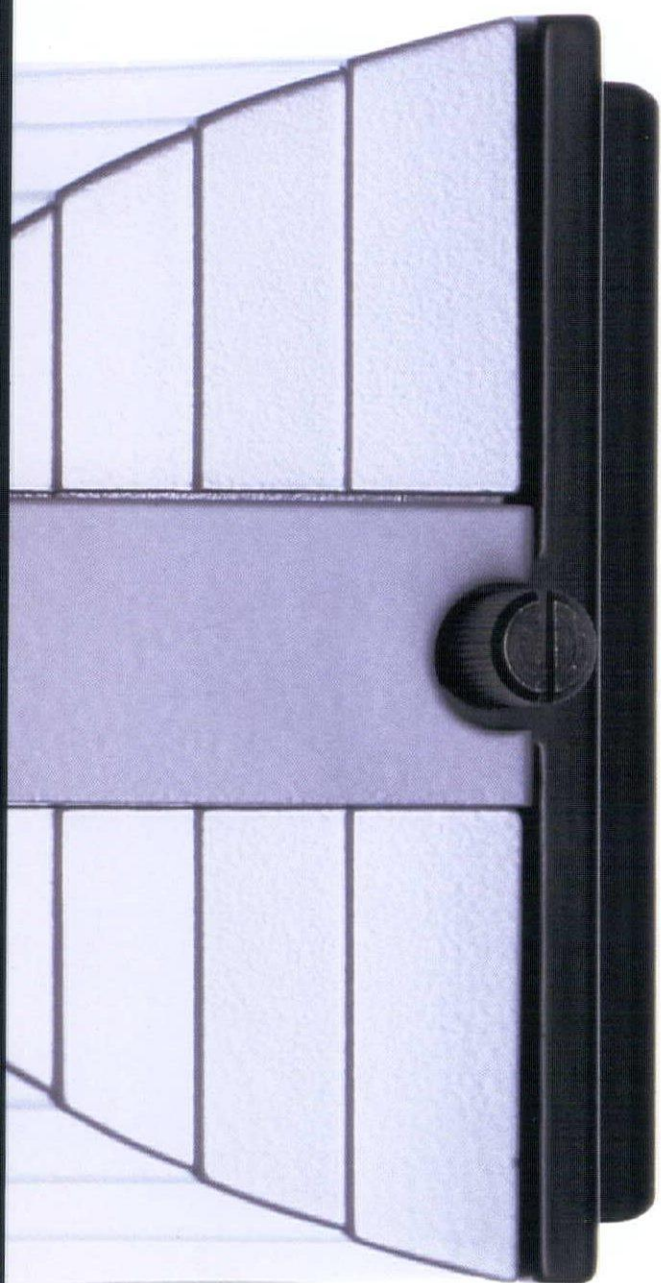
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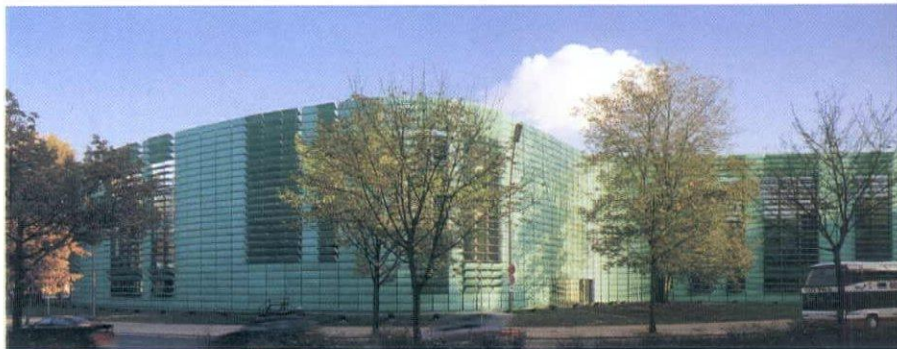


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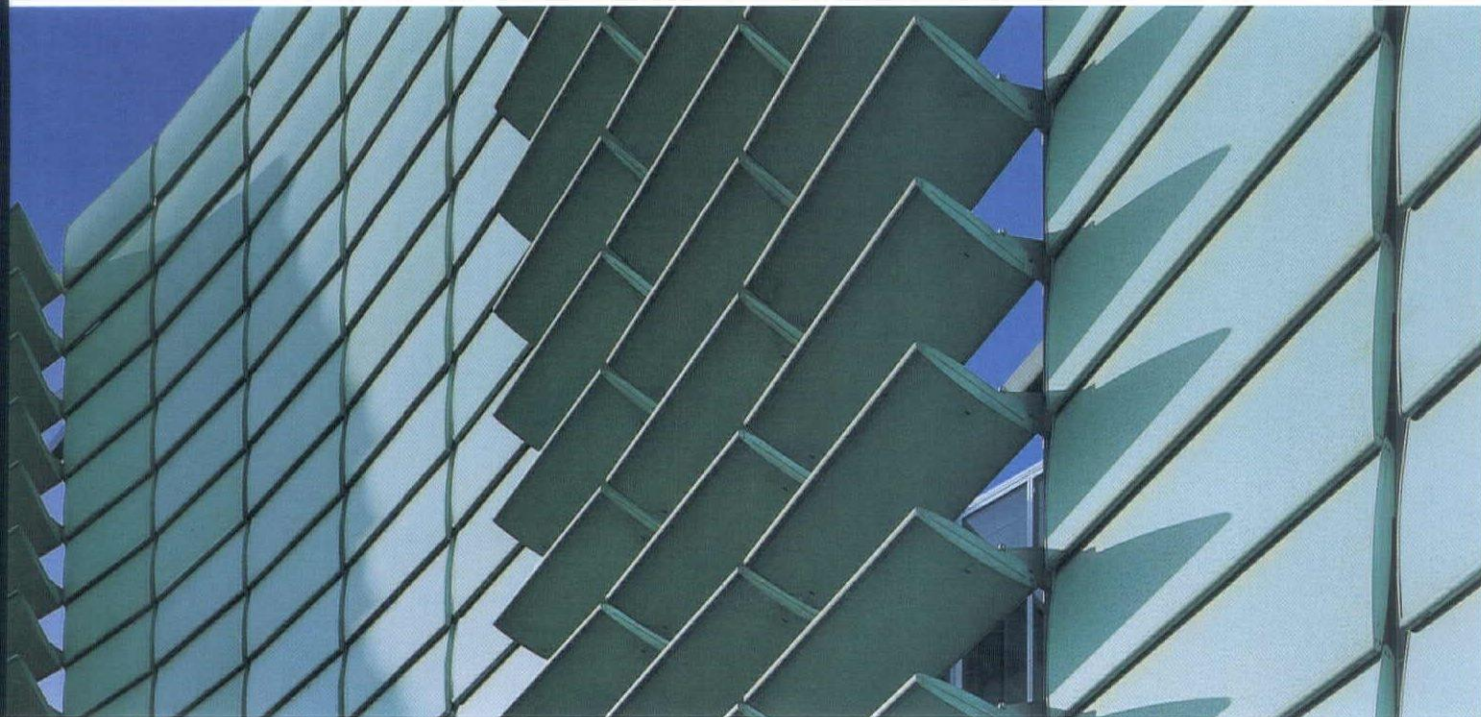


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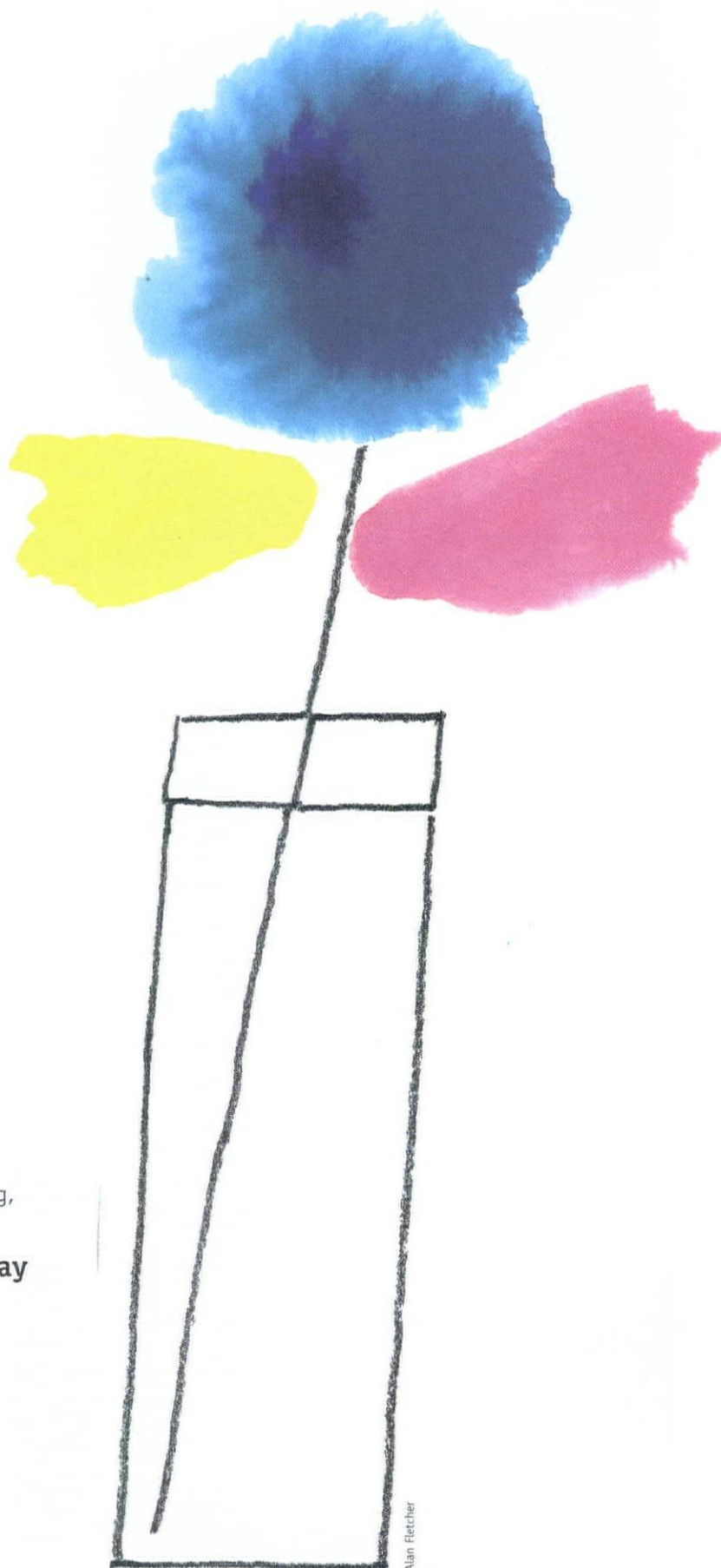
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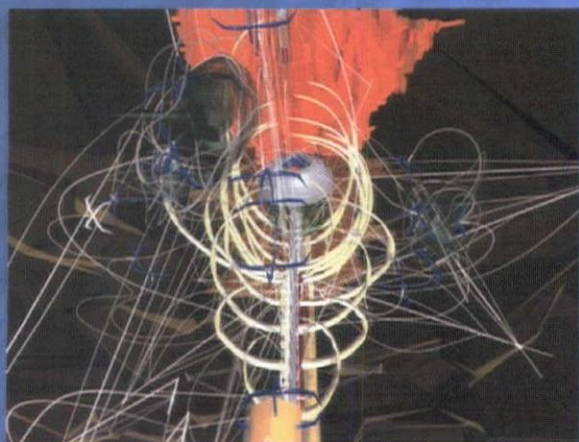
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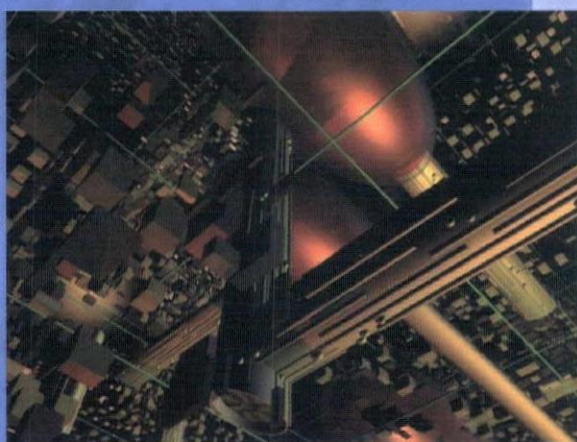
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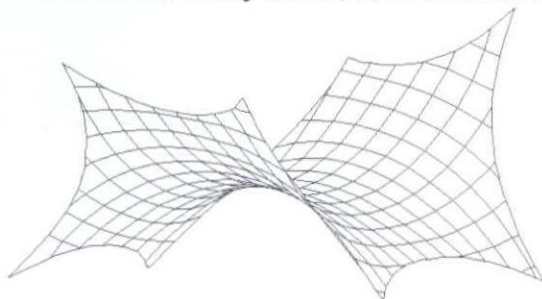
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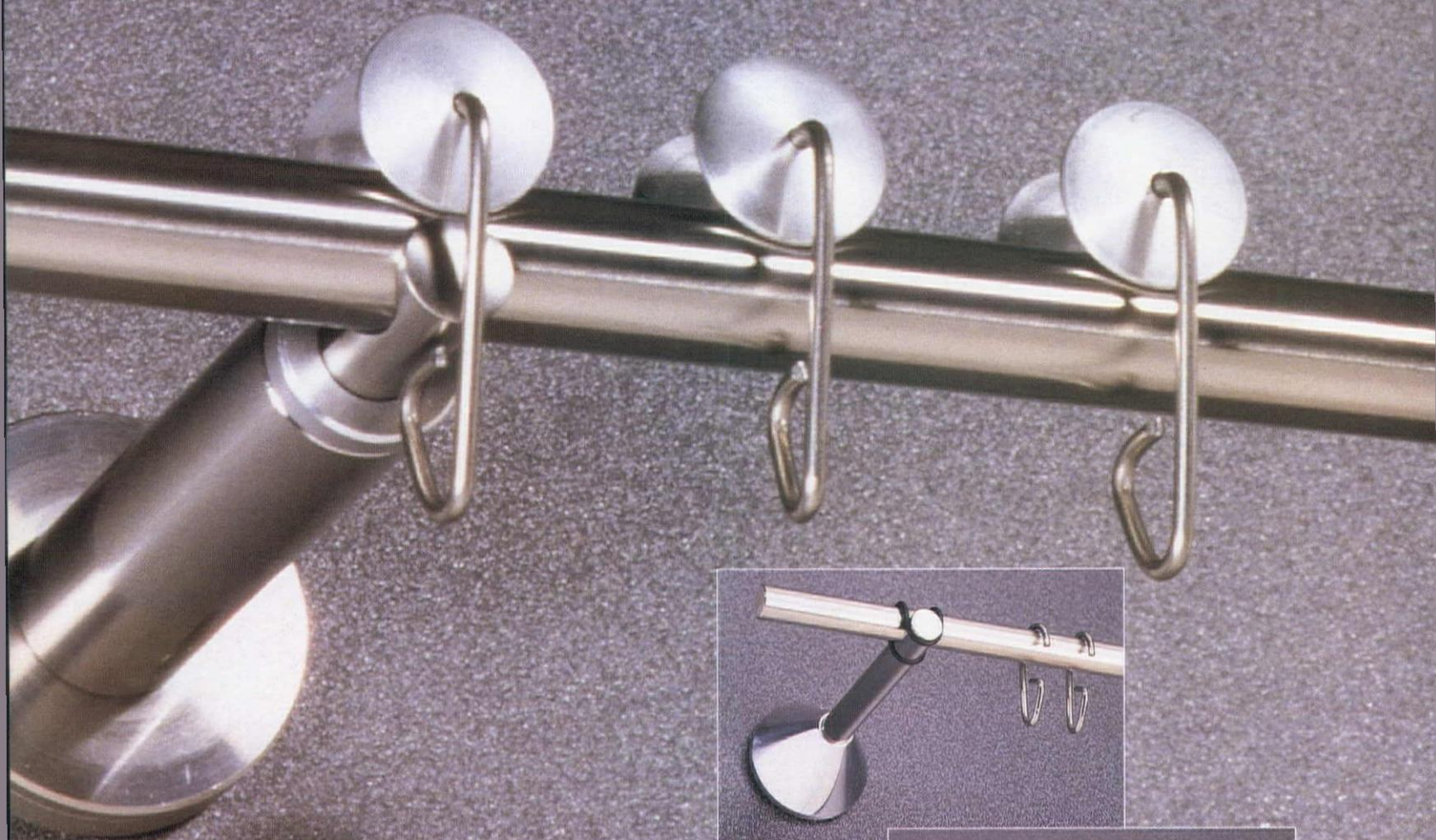


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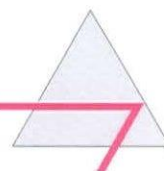
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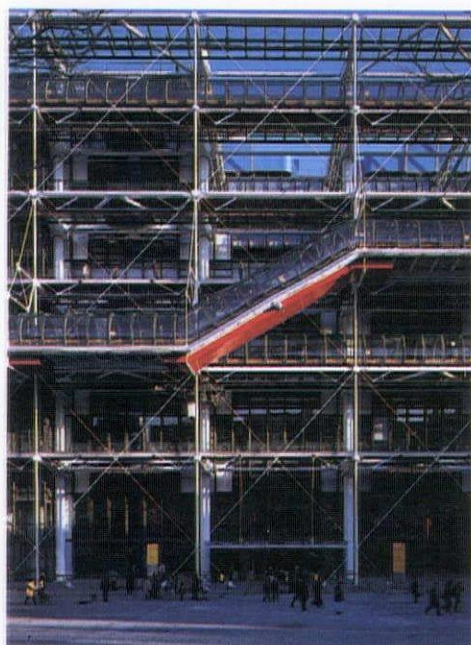
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view

THE NEWLY REFURBISHED POMPIDOU CENTRE IN PARIS IS INUAGURATED BY AN EXHIBITION DEDICATED TO RENZO PIANO, ONE OF ITS ORIGINAL ARCHITECTS. MARGARETE SCHÜTTE-LIHOTZKY, RADICAL GERMAN DESIGNER, HAS DIED AGED 102; AND TIMOTHY BRITTAIN-CATLIN PRESENTS A VIEW FROM TEL AVIV ON NEW BUILDINGS IN THE CITY.



The sparkling and newly renovated Pompidou Centre.

PIANO SYMPHONY

The Pompidou Centre in Paris has emerged from its 28 month makeover looking remarkably sleek. Stripped of all steel sleeving, the external structure is gleaming white; colour-coding has been refreshed and much of the elevational glazing has been replaced. In keeping with current practice in France, all public access is channelled through a battery of security controls at the main entrance, so when busy, multiple admission queues stretch right across the Place Georges-Pompidou. Opening hours are longer and tariffs cheaper than before and free admission still applies to the public information library (BPI) and on one Sunday a month. A similar policy is being tried out at the National Museum of Modern Art.

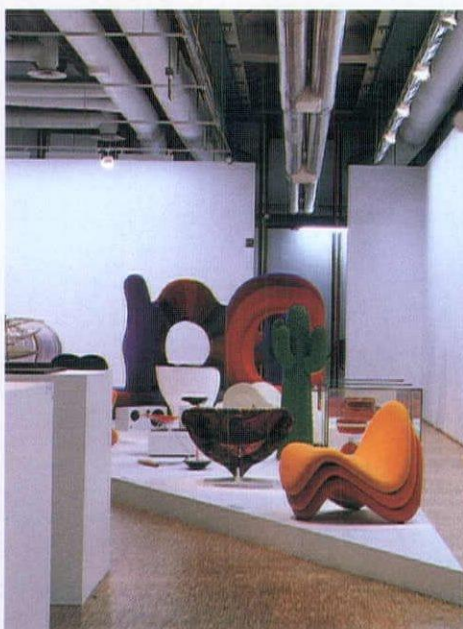
The complete internal reorganization was conducted by three practices. Jean François Bodin was commissioned for the public information library, the National Museum of Modern Art and the main top-floor exhibition space. Jakob & MacFarlane won the competition for the new top-floor restaurant and Renzo Piano retained responsibility for roof terraces and remodelling the Forum and related spaces at lower levels, where his exhibition, *Renzo Piano – un regard construit*, is on show in the Galerie Sud.



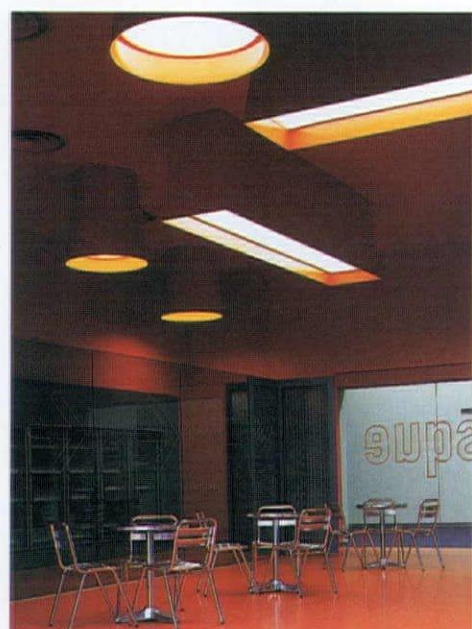
Piano's exhibition occupies the Galerie Sud.

The exhibition has been in preparation under Piano's direction since 1997 (not without friction, some of it shown on video). As with his previous exhibitions (at the IBA in 1989 for instance, or the Beyeler Foundation Basel in 1997), Piano wanted to create an atmosphere akin to his own office, by presenting a selection

of buildings and projects on 6m x 2m work tables with chairs to sit on while visitors study them. In response to the size and technical capabilities of the Galerie Sud, a more abstract approach was developed, based on the idea of hanging most of the exhibition from a forest of cables. Arranged in rows, 22 work tables are



Renovated gallery spaces.



Bold colours and new signage invigorate the interior.

suspended from the ceiling and anchored to the floor. Vertically hung spot-lit colour photographs signal the displays at each table.

Seen from outside, it presents the inviting spectacle of a huge space alive with sculpture-mobiles (structures seemingly plucked from D'Arcy Thompson's *On Growth and Form*), full-size mock-ups of construction details, models of buildings at different scales, large spot-lit colour photographs, people moving among the exhibits or pouring over horizontal displays, others sitting at tables consulting reference material or watching videos.

Eighteen built projects have been selected to illustrate major turning points in Piano's work, amplified by some prehistory (1965-1973). These are simply presented as one per work table (two in the case of Potsdamer Platz). In theory, at least, they are grouped as three families – 'invention', 'urbanité' and 'sensibilité' – identified only in the catalogue, which evidently went to press before the exhibition layout was finalized. Piano is naturally anxious to stress these categories are not mutually exclusive, but simply a means to show aspects of his buildings which exemplify new departures in his work. What's more, unexpected cross currents emerge from these non-chronological groups. For instance, until seeing the Bari football stadium, Kansai airport and the Foggia pilgrimage church lined up (as examples of invention), it had not occurred to me that all three have crowd management in common as well as innovatory structures.

Vertical panels at the perimeter offer glimpses of work in progress (seven current projects, four of them in Europe, two in the US and one in Tokyo), and two work tables serve as a sort of office library, where books and other publications, videos and computer data on Piano's work and career may be consulted.

The Centre Georges Pompidou is included among buildings selected to illustrate 'urbanité', from the Piano + Rogers competition project to completion in 1977, and subsequent extension by Piano. Reinforcing the evolution in his work since 1977, the exhibition is seen against the backdrop of the immediate neighbourhood – Piano's Ircam tower (1990) is in view and his Atelier Brancusi (AR September 1997) is only a short walk away, via the Forum just remodelled to his designs.

When the exhibition opened in January, Piano was asked by the press for his comments on the changes made to the Pompidou Centre, notably those resulting from revisions to the programme originally announced in 1994 (AR May 1994). Reminding his interlocutors that the building had been designed to accommo-

date continual change, he asserted that nothing had been done in the present refit that could not be changed in future, adding that the whole building should be given a radical overhaul every half century or so. When asked whether he would design the same project if starting from scratch now, he put it like this: 'Of course not. Time has moved on'. CHARLOTTE ELLIS

Details of current Pompidou Centre exhibitions, events, opening times and entrance charges are available at www.centrepompidou.fr. A catalogue Renzo Piano, un regard construit is published by Editions du Centre Pompidou FF199 and a 52 minute film directed by Marc Petitjean Renzo Piano, Architecte au long cours is also available on video. The exhibition will transfer to the Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin from 1 June. Readers can also consult an archive of AR articles on Piano's work over the last three years on the AR website at www.arplus.com

obituary

MARGARETE SCHÜTTE-LIHOTZKY 1897-2000

'I don't want to be labelled as an architect of kitchen only.' Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky, who died in Vienna shortly before her 103rd birthday is best known for her 'Frankfurt Kitchen', the prototype of today's fitted kitchens: 10 000 versions were installed in the Frankfurt Social Housing which she designed under Ernst May from 1926-30. She never wrote about her career, but instead Schütte-Lihotzky left us with an account of her resistance work during the Second World War.

In the Vienna of her childhood there was hunger, homelessness and tuberculosis. At the Vienna School for Applied Arts she studied architecture, against her family's wishes, under Josef Hoffman and Heinrich Tessenow, who opened her eyes to the practical help architecture could offer in improving people's lives.

In 1917 she won a housing competition, after visiting the suburbs where up to nine people lived in one room. Schütte-Lihotzky joined Adolf Loos in designing affordable housing for the Settlement Movement (Siedlungsbewegung). They fought for sites, materials and finance. Impressed by Schütte-Lihotzky's work, Ernst May invited her to Germany when he was appointed Frankfurt's building director.

Only design ingenuity – prefabrication, tailored plans, reinforced concrete and simple details – made social housing at all possible. She was disappointed in Frankfurt colleagues who considered politics beneath them. 'I am convinced that this attitude very much helped the Nazis come to power.'

In 1927 she married the architect Walter

AR + D @ RIBA

Following the great success of the ar + d Award for Emerging Architecture, an exhibition has opened at the RIBA.

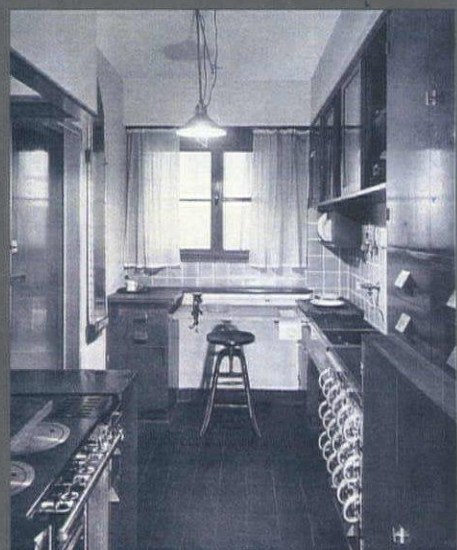
The exhibition runs until the end of March. It features the 21 winning submissions together with a selection of unpremiated projects. The enormous diversity of schemes testifies to the richness of architectural imagination around the world. Apply to the Royal Institute of British Architects, 66 Portland Place, London W1. For further details tel: +44-171-580-5533, or visit the website: www.arplustd.com

Schütte. They lived in one room with a Frankfurt kitchen. 'No children and a small flat, those are very favourable conditions, and also a man who agrees to share the work ...' Later Schütte-Lihotzky was in the team Ernst May took to Moscow to build new industrial cities in the Soviet's first five year plan.

After Hitler came to power, the Schütte-Lihotzky and her husband supported the Austrian resistance, while simultaneously building French children's clinics and Turkish village schools. In 1939 she joined the illegal Austrian Communist Party. During a clandestine visit to Vienna in 1941 she was arrested by the Gestapo.

Following the war she was much in demand outside Austria for her expertise in buildings for children. She didn't avoid controversy. In 1988, Schütte-Lihotzky refused to accept Vienna's Award of Honour for Science and Art from the hands of President Kurt Waldheim, a former Waffen SS officer.

LAYLA DAWSON



Prototypical 'Frankfurt Kitchen', designed in 1926.

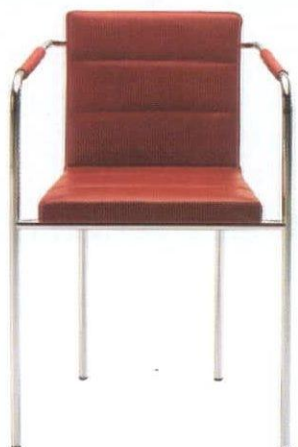
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view

the browser

An excellent portal to world architectural sites is based in Dublin; a quick guide to the architecture of Asia.

Archiseek: Architecture Directory

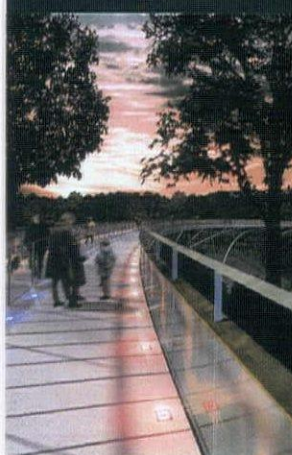
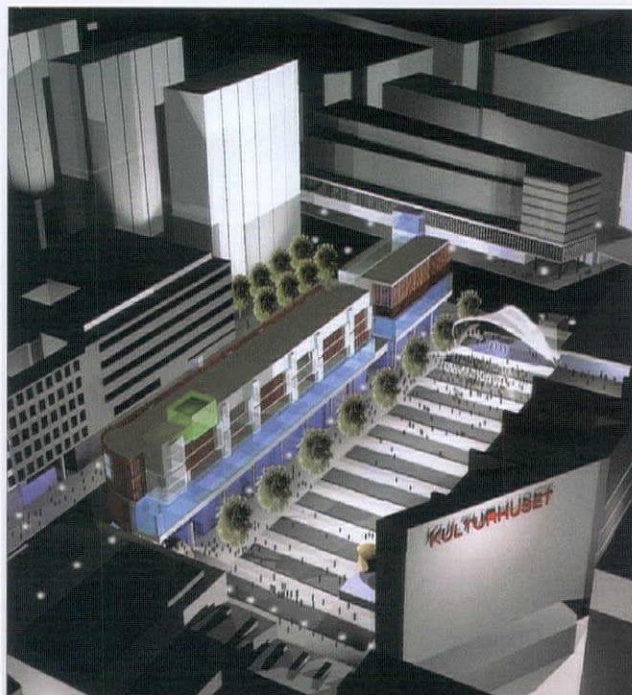
<http://www.archiseek.com>

Archiseek is an excellent website: up-to-date, regularly maintained and more comprehensive in its links than any other architectural portal we have investigated so far. Based in Dublin, and with an understandable slight Irish bias, the site is mainly a directory to others in the English speaking world. But it also has some primary information (for instance it covers current international competitions, which are very well described).

Among other headings are, of course, architects and practices: a wide-ranging directory of sites, mostly in the northern hemisphere, with all the usual suspects and more. The 'past masters' section includes, confusingly, Norman Foster and Sverre Fehn as well as Wright and Lissitzky, but the living 'past masters' are featured as Pritzker prize-winners and Foster at least crops up in several other places.

The 'history' section is amazingly eclectic and numerous, with entries as disparate as Gehry's Bilbao Guggenheim, Castles of Wales, and the Islamic Architecture of Isphahan. A related section is a directory to electronic town and city guides: nothing like it is to be found elsewhere, with addresses of sites as different as those of Burnham's Chicago plan and Portmeirion by Clough Williams Ellis.

Archiseek's architectural associations and organizations list is certainly worth consulting, as is its guide to publications, both electronic



Pawson Williams have won a competition to design a major new building in Stockholm city centre, above. The 130m block redefines the northern edge of Sergels Tor, the most important public square in the city and site of Celsing's iconic Kulturhuset. The new block combines housing with civic and cultural functions. In Glasgow, John McAslan has won a competition for a pedestrian bridge across the river Kelvin, left. Linking the University of Glasgow and the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, the elegant, sinuous structure threads its way through the river valley at high level.

and on paper. There are useful sections on photography (photographers, libraries, agencies), computers (people who can help architects get on to the web and so on).

The 'education' department is a bizarre mix of directions to educational buildings (not only those for architecture, but any other subject as well), and links to architectural school sites. Notice boards and other inter-user areas clearly work, but could be imaginatively expanded.

Clearly, the site is refreshed thoughtfully and regularly. Of course, it is quirky and neither totally objective nor comprehensive. So is any publication, electronic or conventional. Go to the site, encourage its organizers, and ask for more.

Architecture Asia

www.architectureasia.com

Architecture Asia is an ambitious attempt to provide an electronic overview (in English) of architects, landscape architects, schools, products, builders, books and magazines for the whole of 'Asia', ranging from Australia and Bangladesh to Tibet and Vietnam. Central Asia is not covered.

Sites can be looked up by country or by name. As yet there are no architects', builders' or product entries from for instance Tibet and Bangladesh, but as you would expect, the lists for Japan, Singapore, New Zealand and Korea are long and (in the case of products) detailed and thorough. Educational

enquiries tend to direct the browser to particular national sites, from which (usually) individual university and foundation sites can be referenced.

Architecture Asia carries continent-wide coverage of news items on buildings, contracts and opportunities. An intriguing area is 'miscellaneous' which gives access to sites like 'Chinese Astrology and Feng Shui' and 'Mirrors, the Aspirin of Feng Shui'.

The site is clearly refreshed regularly, and it is worth a visit for all Asian questions, but as usual with such a portal, the information you get out is only as good as what a very diverse scatter of sources chooses to put in.

competitions & awards

Latest international competitions for architects and students.

Marijin Dvor District, Sarajevo

Registration: March 30 2000

Submission: August 15 2000

Entry fee: DM 100

Total prizes: DM 150,000

Eligibility: All registered professionals

Jury: *Renzo Piano, Ferdinand Stracke, Ivan Straus, Nedžad Kurto, Ahmed Kapidžić, Joseph Liop Torne and Jade Tabet*

Marijin Dvor occupies a strategic position between the old city and new districts of Sarajevo. It includes the former Marshal Tito barracks which posed a major obstacle to the urban continuity of the city. As this area is extremely important for the future development of Sarajevo, the authorities have decided to consider the urban development of this zone as a priority and invite proposals. The brief includes housing, commercial, tourist and office facilities, an educational and cultural complex, as well as green space.

Further information and registration:

Sarajevo Canton Planning Institute

26 Branilaca Saraveja Street
71000 Sarajevo

Bosnia Herzegovina

Tel: +387 71 20 95 40

Fax: +387 71 20 95 43

Email: cp11sa@utic.net.ba

www.zavodzpr-sa.ba

Grande Bibliothèque du Québec

Registration: March 24 2000

Awards: Design commission

Eligibility: Architects or teams associated with a registered Quebec architect

Jury: *Phyllis Lambert, Georges Adamczyk, Lise Bissonnette, Ruth Cawker, Yvon-André Lacroix, Hélène Laperrrière, Mary Jane Long, Bernard Tschumi and Irene F. Whitlome*

The competition for a new Quebec regional library will be conducted in two stages over a six month period. For the first stage, architects will be asked to submit a portfolio of their previous work, a summary of qualifications and a conceptual response to the project. The panel will then review the proposals and select five candidates for the second stage. For this, the five finalists will be asked to develop their schemes further. Each of the five will receive \$60 000 CAN and the panel's final decision will be announced in July 2000.

Further information and registration:

Louise Amiot

Conseillère professionnelle

Concours International

d'Architecture La Grande

Bibliothèque du Québec

2e étage

385 rue Sherbrooke Est

Montréal

H2X 1E3

Québec

Canada

Fax: +1 514 873 2717

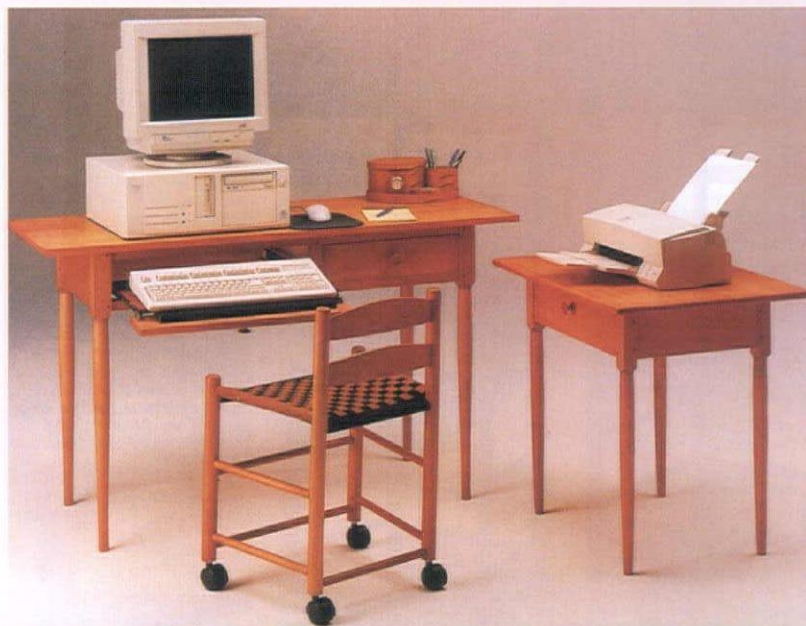
Email:

concours@grandebibliotheque.qc.ca

www.grandebibliotheque.qc.ca

SPECTRUM 2000, the annual furniture fair, will be taking place 17-20 May in the Commonwealth Institute on Kensington High Street. As in previous years, the AR will be giving an Award for Excellence to the product new to the UK and judged the most worthy by an eminent panel of judges. The deadline for submissions is Tuesday 21 March.

With the release of the whole top level of the Commonwealth Galleries, the event will be the largest yet, with 20 new companies and a total of 130 exhibitors. The exhibition will run Wednesday to Friday 10am-9pm, and Saturday 10am-6pm when there will be a children's club for visiting families. Pre-registration at tel: 0870 7511479. Information about hotel and travel discounts, tel: 0207 372 2001. Spectrum website: www.spectrumexhibition.co.uk



outrage

THE DIGNITY AND HONEST FUNCTIONALISM OF SHAKER PHILOSOPHY IS TRADUCED IN THIS CRUDE COMMERCIAL ATTEMPT TO MARRY MODERN NEEDS WITH 'TRADITION'.

The current trend for 'brand stretching' reaches its unnatural conclusion with the 'Shaker Workshops® Home Office'. The concept of applying a well-known marque to a completely different product line has been round for some time, and even architects are not immune: Foster's benign bus stop for J. C. Decaux being just a stone's throw from the Foster uPVC self-assembly conservatory.

But just what is it that makes today's Shaker home office suite so indifferent, so unappealing? This cannot be explained away in a haze of post-modern double coding. On one level, a coherent nineteenth-century Shaker aesthetic for the connoisseur; on a baser level concessions to current functional needs. This is, in fact, a case of total destruction of design and mutilation of morality. The crudely castorized chair is amputated of proportion. The horizontally deformed drawer destroys the symmetry of composition, while creating ergonomics for the touch typing orang-utan. Ingenuity hides the keyboard, but not the workstation; dishonesty of expression being only half-heartedly adopted. This is certainly enough to have the order's founder, Sister Anne, not merely shaking, but spinning in her grave from righteous outrage.

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letters

OUTRAGE OUTRAGE

SIR: I regularly read your publication and find it to be, for the most part, intelligent balanced and thought provoking. However, your so-called 'outrage' column is not. In fact it is the exact opposite - naive, one sided, and facile. Still, nothing is perfect, so I have continued to enjoy the AR while regarding 'outrage' with slightly amused irritation.

However, the attack on Aldo Rossi in the January edition goes beyond the usual smug bigotry and enters the realm of the absurd.

Rossi was among the greatest architectural thinkers of the twentieth century - few scholars would disagree with that. By so casually and superficially dismissing one of his last major designs, you actually damage your own intellectual credibility.

If you want to take the position that this is a 'bad' scheme, that would be fine if you could sustain an argument to that effect in a balanced article taking the scheme in the context of Rossi's (often subtle) ideas, and in the spirit of the age in which it was designed.

It is just too easy to make these cowardly 'hit and run' attacks on architecture you don't like - a cheap alternative to proper debate.

Yours etc

JONATHAN R. J. BURGESS

Lewes, East Sussex, England

ECO CONFUSION

SIR: Am I the only one to be irritated by patently aesthetic design decisions being dressed up with bogus ecological and technical claims. I refer to your review of the school at Maeder in Austria by Baumschlager & Eberle (AR January 2000).

The building belongs to the current tendency emanating from Holland and Austria which uses glass as a veil over a facade of multiple layers. The effects are often stunning and this is indeed a very good looking building. However, with phrases like 'climate modifying skin' and 'ecological responsiveness' your review would have us believe that this is a design driven by green concerns. Close examination reveals this interpretation as misleading. For example one might expect that a glazed cavity like this would be used for passive solar heating or ventilation. No such use is apparent. Indeed the fact that the glass skin is applied on all four sides belies a preoccupation with geometrical purity rather than with solar

aspect. Furthermore the large gaps between the glass panes would obviate any contribution to the thermal performance of the facade. It is obvious from the photographs that the inner layer is a complete facade with only the walnut panels in need of some extra protection. To describe the glass skin as a rainscreen displays the technical ignorance of the writer. This would seem to leave the accommodation of the external roller blinds as the only technical pay off for this expensive overcoat of glass. That would be fine until you realize that unprotected external solar blinds have been a standard building component on the Continent for decades.

This is not meant as a criticism of the building which I find very interesting. It is the architectural critique that is at fault. It would seem that to discuss the building in terms of geometry, purity and diaphanous visual effects is not enough and that, much like the glass skin itself, a layer of specious techno-babble is required to make the building something that it is not. This sort of sloppy writing deserves no place in a magazine like AR.

Yours etc

JOHN MORAN

johnmoran@callnet0800.com

Despite its appearance, the school is not simply informed by aesthetic decisions as Mr Moran asserts. The cubic form offers the greatest volume with the least surface area and full-height windows act as passive solar collectors. It is claimed that optimized insulation, combined with a single-pane glass curtain wall and heat exchange system, contrive to reduce energy consumption by half compared with a conventional building. THE EDITORS

MODERNIST CHAMPION

SIR: We were overjoyed with Timothy Brittain-Catlin's comment that our book, *The New Modernist in World Architecture*, '... would be a fun and healthy book for a beginner' since we wrote and dedicated it to 'young potential designers' (AR January 2000). We hope the book will guide them away from narrow Post-Modernism, especially because we took such care to explain modern design as taught by the Bauhaus. We hope the beginner will follow this design ethic and learn that Po-Mo is, to quote Philip Johnson, 'a joke'!

We regret the errors in the text but we were not given the opportunity, as promised in our contract with McGraw-Hill, to correct printers' proofs. We did want it to be perfect, of course. We are especially proud that yours was such a perceptive review. We are promised perfection in re-runs.

The Review is, we feel, most respected for its brilliant criticisms and it is a delight to see

such beautiful architecture each month worldwide. Many of us here are very embarrassed by being drowned in Po-Mo.

Thanks for the label as 'naive if they think that they can counter the great pretentious racket generated around Post-Modernism', but it is a start. No one here, except my friend James Marston Fitch, has dared to write an anti-Po-Mo book, with the Chapter, 'Murder At The Modern' exposing the start of the Po-Mo movement here. Also my friend, John Johansen said, 'Well Richard, you and Pat did it!'

Yours etc

PAT AND DICK SNIBBE

New York, USA

WEB OFFSET

SIR: The article published in the August issue of *The Architectural Review* (p15) concerning the UIA website has come to our attention and a number of inaccuracies in the information thus communicated to your readers call for a reaction on our part.

While it is quite true that information on the organization of the XX UIA Congress in Beijing remained on the UIA site in August 1999, the dates of this event were clearly indicated and a visitor to the site could not have mistaken it for a coming event. A clear hypertext link to the Congress server in Beijing permitted instant access to information on the events that had taken place there.

With regard to international competitions, contrary to the information given, the list of current competitions systematically indicates the deadline for registration and highlights it with a flickering underline, thus leaving no place for misunderstanding. Furthermore as soon as the results of a competition are published, the competition exits from 'Current competitions' and is transferred to 'Results' where it introduces the list of winners and the projects selected by the jury. It is therefore impossible, contrary to what you publish, to access the 'results' of a 'current competition'.

I should also like to point out that the competitions announced on our site are competitions launched with the approval of the UIA, that is to say, according to the ethics and regulations drawn up jointly between UNESCO and representatives of the UIA member Sections. Consequently, it cannot be an exhaustive list of international competitions worldwide, but only a list of competitions for which the UIA is in a position to guarantee the viability, as is indeed shown by the considerable space given to this subject on our site and which your article has

view

chosen to disregard. Finally, concerning the calendar of events, the information published on-line depends on details being received in good time, which is unfortunately rare.

Your article makes no reference whatsoever to the services offered by our site, such as the list of associations of architects in over 90 countries (UIA member Sections), with hypertext links to those (34 professional organizations) which are on the INTERNET network, or indeed the museums and architectural magazines offering the same electronic access (systematically and regularly tested) from the UIA site towards professional activities and architects throughout the world.

The partisan spirit of the article published by *The Architectural Review* causes prejudice to the International Union of Architects, and I feel sure you will understand our indignation that a well-known professional magazine should indulge in discrediting the UIA.

Yours etc

JEAN-CLAUDE RIGUET

UIA Secretary General, Paris, France

WHO GOT IT FROM WHOM?

SIR: In 'Letter from Berlin' (AR February, p30) we are informed that Daniel Libeskind wrote to the German Parliament to protest about Eisenman's plagiarism of his design of 'Memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe', i.e. Eisenman's 2700 close set concrete columns as compared to Libeskind's 49 (which, by the way, lean a bit and have trees on top).

This is not a case to be taken lightly. Although it is inevitable that the vast majority of architectural design is derivative, a modern memorial, however, a work of symbolic value, is expected to be a personal creation, to be unique. Especially where the subject matter is charged with historical and humanitarian significance, plagiarism would be cheating and would diminish its value. It would be an insult not only to its original author, but also to the memory it is supposed to serve.

Where does all this leave Libeskind? The Jewish Museum in Berlin seems to be a truly expressive and powerful building. However, in all the references I came across in the architectural press about its memorial garden, (and, as I recall, in his book about the project), there was no tribute to Louis Kahn as the original designer of the 'Memorial to the Six Million Jewish Martyrs'. The first of Kahn's designs (1966) was a group of nine pylons on a pedestal in a pure geometric arrangement. Your readers may be interested to read about his profound feelings about this project, and his choice of clear glass as the material for the pylons, the light and movement in this medium expressing

'the spiritual quality inherent in a structure'. This proved to be 'too abstract' and he had to produce revised versions, and it was never built. As the model photograph from this source shows, the similarity of Libeskind's garden to Kahn's original design is considerably 'more than merely coincidental'!

Is Libeskind tarred with the same brush as he is using on Eisenman? Is he commemorating the Jewish victims of the Holocaust at the expense of a deceased Jewish master architect? Unless, of course, he has openly paid a respectful tribute to Louis Kahn for this memorial and I missed it. Since he could not have copied Kahn's design if Kahn were alive, one should assume that he has. (If that is the case, I would welcome any references and offer my apologies.) Nevertheless, architectural critics should not exclude this point from their commentaries so that their readers or audience are better informed, and professionalism in architecture is upheld.

In any case, Libeskind's memorial is a copy and Eisenman's looks like a graveyard. Kahn's original design had the purity of feeling and design and is the one that should have been built.

Yours etc

BERNA BASATEMUR

London

postscript

INTERBUILD GROWS INTERNATIONALLY

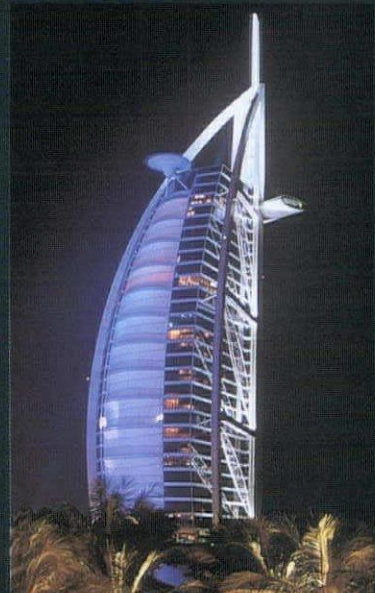
The international strength of Interbuild, the British building exhibition, grows apace. Relaunched to rival its great Continental contemporaries like *Bâtiment* in Paris and *Bau* in Munich, Interbuild is run as a joint venture between the AR's owners, Emap Business Communications, and the Montgomery Group, the founders of the century-old show.

The exhibition will be held in Birmingham's National Exhibition Centre 21-25 May. Among many new features will be the IT for Construction show, which will feature a very wide range of latest hardware and software products and services including CAD, web working, two- and three-dimensional modelling, cost and facilities management programmes. Further information from www.interbuild.com.

ERRATUM

In AR February 2000 p97, we mistakenly translated a word 'anexact' by Greg Lynn, referred to in Raymond Ryan's review of Lynn's book *Animate Form*, as 'an exact'. We should have translated it as 'inexact'. Apologies to Ryan but not necessarily to Lynn.

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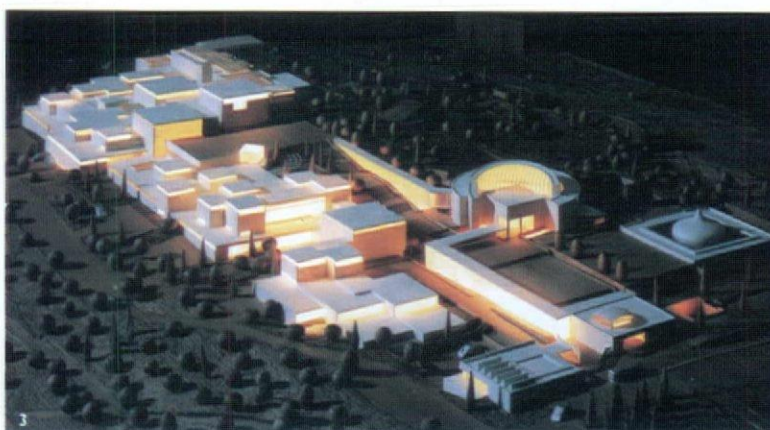
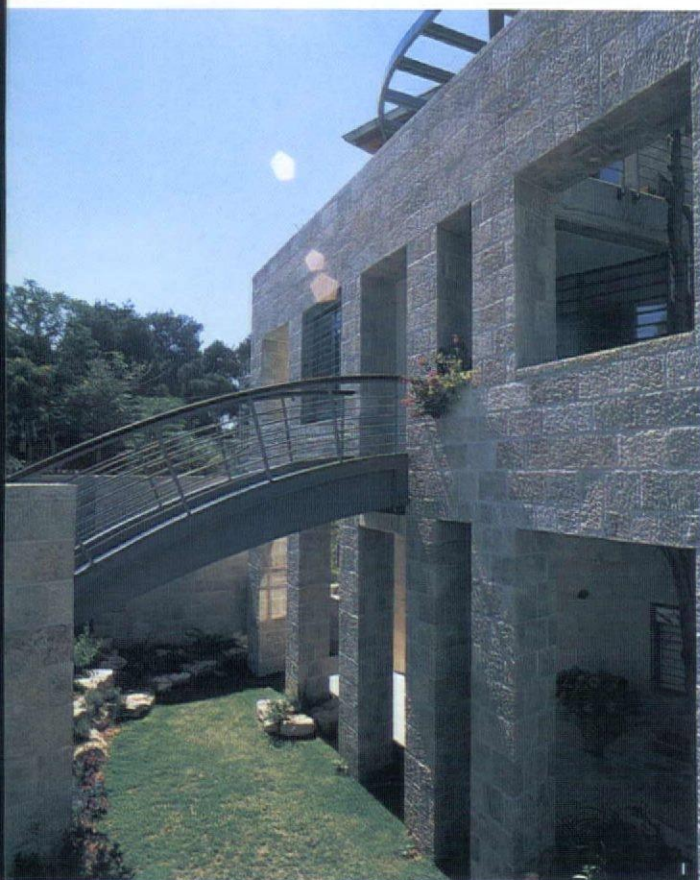


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letter from... TEL AVIV

Israel's architecture is intensely heated in the pressurized crucible of a small society 'perpetually on the verge of hysteria'. Timothy Brittain-Catlin contrasts Israel's heroic period with the less clear cut and perhaps more petty-minded professional atmosphere today. Yet the country sometimes produces memorable architecture and buildings which distil the noblest aspects of the nation's culture.

Most characteristics of Israeli culture are derived from the fact that the country is so small that everyone can feel part of the national daily adventures. One occurrence last summer will serve to illustrate something of what that entails. During an all-night session of the Israeli parliament, a caller identifying himself as a hospital doctor notified the speaker of the Israeli parliament that a prominent member, currently hospitalized for a minor matter, had suddenly died. Eulogies and prayers were immediately instigated on a grand scale, and only later it emerged that the call was a hoax. Breathless television and radio updates the following days described how the police leapt on a convivial old couple who had, to their misfor-

tune, put through a call to the parliament earlier that fateful night; it was only after their thorough humiliation in the press that the culprit was revealed as a famous transvestite and campaigner for prostitutes' rights, who explained that lack of public attention to himself was causing him personal distress. Suddenly, everyone seemed to be an acquaintance of the distinguished parliamentarian, the humiliated grandparents, or of the famous transvestite.

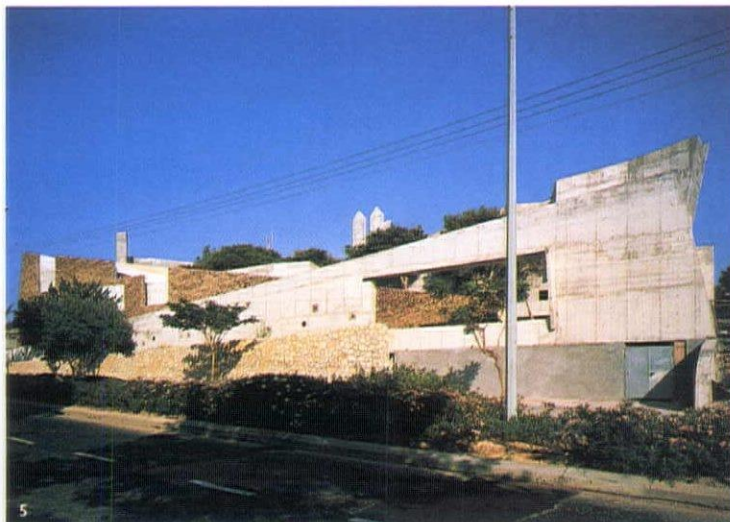
This bizarre little story illustrates so well what a well-known columnist here calls 'the public psychodrama' of a nation 'perpetually on the verge of hysteria', a country which had recently won both prizes of international camp: Eurovision and Miss World. It's therefore appropriate that the nature of public space should be a popular theme for architectural debate. The Israeli street is a chaotic place, and the architectural profession has added its own hazards: sprawling building sites, and crooked and vulgar finishes. Worst of all, a regulation requires developers wanting to maximize building rights to build balconies at two floor intervals only, or in zigzags across the facade: the result can only be described as revolting.

And yet Israel in fact has at certain periods built some very fine public structures; with no old palaces or cathedrals, its museums and law courts must play the part of the major civic monument, and consequently some fairly

recent architecture already assumes the role of national heritage. A current debate concerns the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. The building was designed in 1959 by Alfred Mansfeld with the interior designer Dora Gad, and developed over the next 20 years or so in accordance with the architect's original principles: white stone pavilions of various sizes grouped over the brow of a hill in the centre of the city, supposedly in the manner of an Arab village (one of which was largely demolished to build the government centre nearby). Thanks to a foreign donor, James Freed was recently commissioned to design a new entrance pavilion.

Freed's original design looked like some kind of biblical shrine, with a pair of wings poised over a huge cube: since it added merely an entrance pavilion and shop, it appeared out of scale. His revised proposal is lower and broader, but will still dominate the overall composition. Mansfeld claims that the museum management is treating him with contempt; he has many on his side, including the only architectural critic writing regularly in a national daily newspaper.

It looks, from an outside perspective, like a nostalgia argument; the austerity of Mansfeld's design is a metaphor for the vanished high-mindedness of public life here. That's an unrealistically rosy picture of the past. Mansfeld's partner, Gad, was one of a group of designers, some of them with friends in high places, who



1 Hillel Schocken, two-family house in Jerusalem: Schocken has designed some of the more sophisticated stone-clad buildings in the city. (Photograph courtesy of *Architecture of Israel Quarterly*.)

2 Botta's Zymbalista Synagogue, Tel Aviv University: attacked as 'red elephant' by local architect. With Zucker Shiran Architects.

3 Israel Museum, Jerusalem by Alfred Mansfeld and Dora Gad with proposed new entrance by Pei Cobb Freed in foreground. Will the entrance dominate the delicate scale of the original?

4 Educational centre, Yad VaShem Holocaust Memorial site, Jerusalem by Guggenheim Bloch: a 'rare romantic sense of location which echoes the heroic vision' of the country's founders.

5 Palmach House, Tel Aviv by Zvi Hecker: rising crescents of stone and concrete evoke the limestone ridge that runs down the Israeli coast. 'It's a monument rather than a building: something that belongs utterly here.' (Photograph: Yael Pincus.)

supplanted the vastly more talented Yosef Klarwein in the design of the parliament building, following a competition which Klarwein had won: behaviour that in retrospect looks scarcely ethical. Some distinguished architects publicly support Freed. The most prominent of these is David Reznik, who, not long after arriving in the country in the 1950s designed, with his mentor Heinz Rau, the only synagogue of any architectural distinction in the whole country, and possibly the only building here that could be described as magical. Reznik sees Freed as a first class architect by international standards who should be given the chance to design in Jerusalem; in any case, he adds, the current building functions badly for the visiting public, who are greeted by a perfunctory entranceway surrounded by a large car park. A younger architect, Hillel Schocken, the designer of some sophisticated stone-clad buildings in Jerusalem, echoes Reznik's support for Freed, but is sceptical that the new scheme will succeed in rooting the museum to its floating, non-urban location.

Another well-known foreign architect to have found himself under attack here is Mario Botta (with Israeli associates Zucker Shiran) who recently completed here the Zymbalista Synagogue on the campus of Tel Aviv University. Stone clad in an environment of concrete, the building takes the form of two large cylinders set together, like two chimneys or the two

Tablets of the Law. The profession locally seems to have reacted with indifference or hostility to a work of the highest constructional standards. The former university architect declared that the new building was a 'red elephant': perhaps it showed up the locals' inability to deal with atrocious workmanship, or to detail something properly.

And yet there are some magnificent exceptions. David Guggenheim, Jerusalem born and Israeli trained, has, with Daniel Mintz, recently completed the International School for Holocaust Studies in Jerusalem, displaying a fine grasp of stone detailing and a rare romantic sense of location which echoes the heroic vision of the country's founding generation without being anachronistic. A talented younger generation and a clientele which have travelled abroad and have seen and require higher standards will, in time, start to create a real architectural culture for this rollercoaster nation, this dizzying and frantic society. Look at Hecker's 'Palmach House' in Tel Aviv: its rising crests of stone and concrete seem to invoke the limestone ridge, characteristic of the Israeli coast, wrenched angrily out of the ground. It's a monument rather than a building, architecture as art, in Loosian terms; it is superb, and it is something that belongs utterly here.

TIMOTHY BRITAIN-CATLIN

Timothy Britain-Catlin is a British-Israeli architect who works and teaches in Israel, and is a frequent correspondent to The Architectural Review.

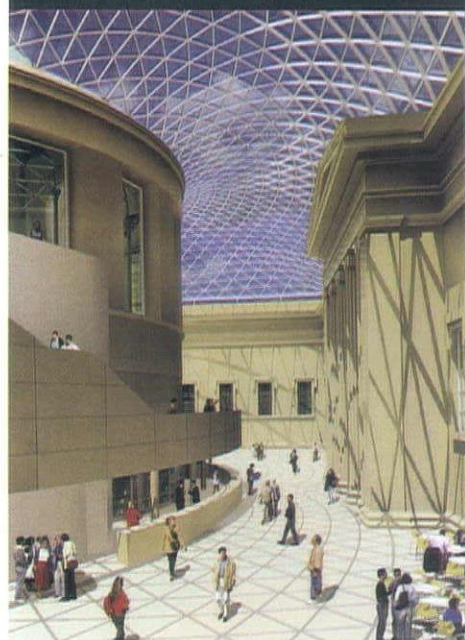
april

The April Architectural Review is a special issue on Britain's Millennium architecture. The Dome and its troubled history are known round the world, but though the awesome space has been the most discussed of the Millennium projects, 24 other major buildings are in the process of completion (and these themselves are but the most obvious aspect of a huge investment in smaller projects, ranging from community centres and village greens to the rehabilitation of small towns and transformation of run-down urban areas; more information from www.millennium.gov.uk). All projects were supported by the Millennium Commission with money derived from National Lottery profits: an unprecedented investment in the fabric, culture and society of Britain, made the more impressive because social and environmental issues had been consciously neglected by previous governments.

Included in April will be the Dome of course, but it will feature projects such as the Hopkins' Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh, Michael Wilford's Lowry Centre in Salford, Terry Farrell's maritime centre in Hull, the Bristol science centre by Wilkinson Eyre, Nicholas Grimshaw's Space Science Centre and the Tate Gallery of Modern Art by Herzog & de Meuron. The issue will be a portrait of some of the best architecture in Britain and the climate in which it is practised at the turn of the Millennium.

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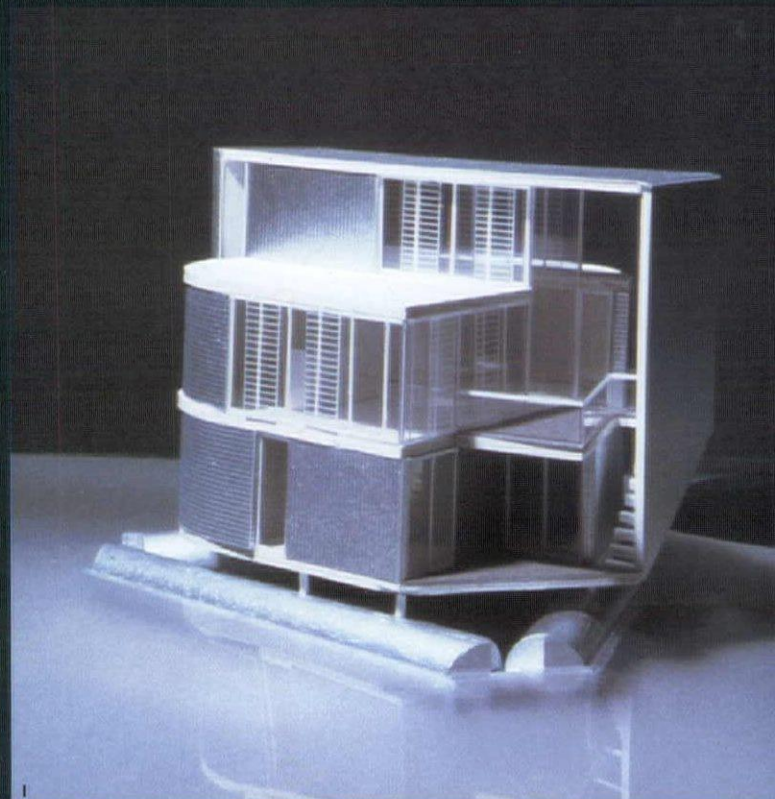
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design review

Herman Hertzberger's prototype for a floating house exploits the watery landscape of The Netherlands, but also has a wider relevance.

Water world



site plan of De Veersche Port

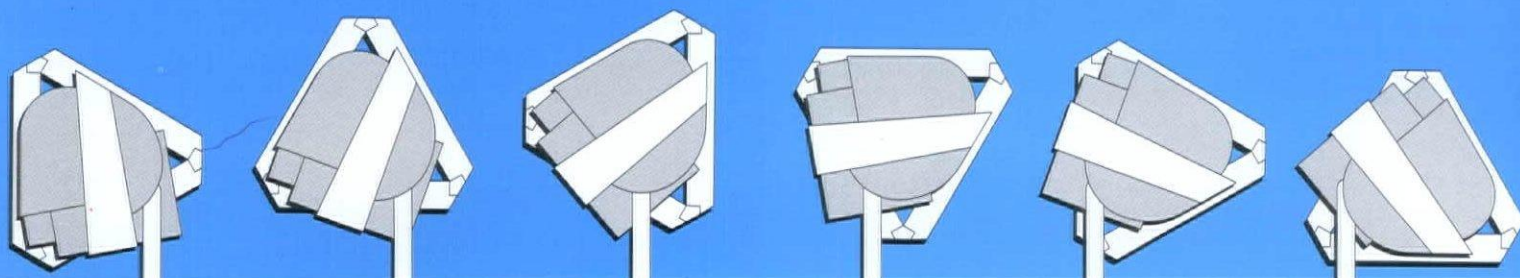
Throughout history, the idea of living on water has exuded a strong romantic and pragmatic appeal. The waterlogged topography of the Netherlands has given rise to a great tradition of idiosyncratic houseboats, yet such structures are inevitably constrained by scale and function, rarely rising to more than a single-storey structure attached to a floating barge.

Since the mid '80s, Herman Hertzberger's studio has been experimenting with the concept of a large scale floating villa that could be mass produced to create waterborne suburbs. A floating house has the principal advantage of mobility, enabling it to exploit views, privacy and more particularly sunlight, with consequent energy consumption advantages. Recently the town of Middelburg commissioned

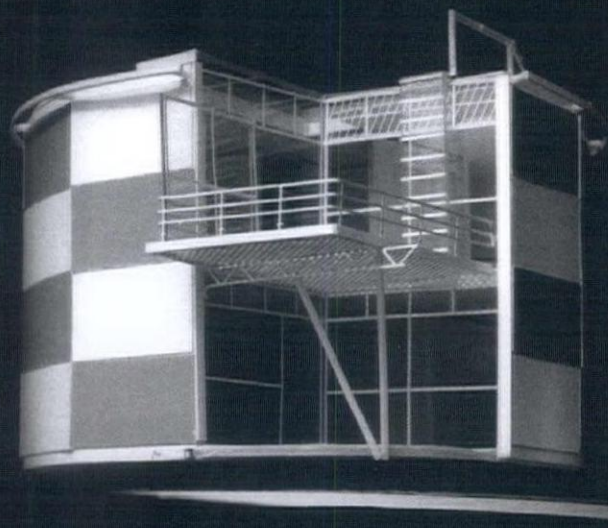
Hertzberger to consolidate his proposals for a prototypical water house that will initially serve as an information centre for a new district, De Veersche Port. This will consist of 10 floating villas moored in a lake set in parkland and could act as a model for future similar developments.

The house is based on a floatation system supporting various living spaces arranged around a central void. Living rooms and kitchen are located on the first floor, with bedrooms and entrance hall just above water level. The roof can also serve as a planted garden. However, plans can be adapted to suit individual preferences.

Structure is a steel skeleton, with concrete floors. The external skin is made up of insulated box-like steel



diagrams showing house rotation



2

compartments clad in lightweight metal panels which can be prefabricated off-site. Photovoltaic panels can also be incorporated as required. The floatation system comprises three interconnected steel pipes, 2m in diameter arranged in a triangle. The buoyancy of the pipes is such that if one leaks or fails, the house can still be supported on the two remaining floatation components. The 18mm thick steel pipes have a highly durable protective finish rendering them virtually maintenance free. Construction is expected to take only around four months, because of the high level of prefabrication.

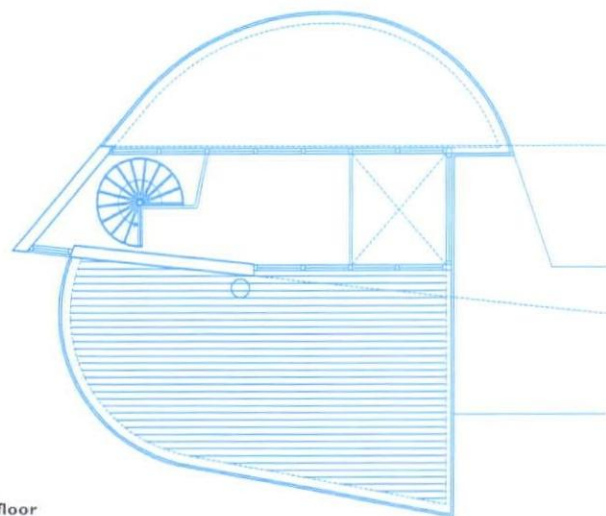
By revolving to a maximum of 90 degrees, the house can track the path of the sun. This is achieved initially by means of a

manual winch, but eventually through a computer-controlled automatic mechanism. Winch cables also help to moor the structure in position and resist strong cross winds. A concrete pier and 8m long gangway connects the house with dry land and anchors the floating structure in position. (By being permanently attached to the shore, the house can also be considered an immovable property for the purposes of obtaining a mortgage.) Using industrial and maritime technologies in the best Modernist tradition, Hertzberger has devised an inventive and environmentally responsive solution to the challenge of mass housing. C. S.

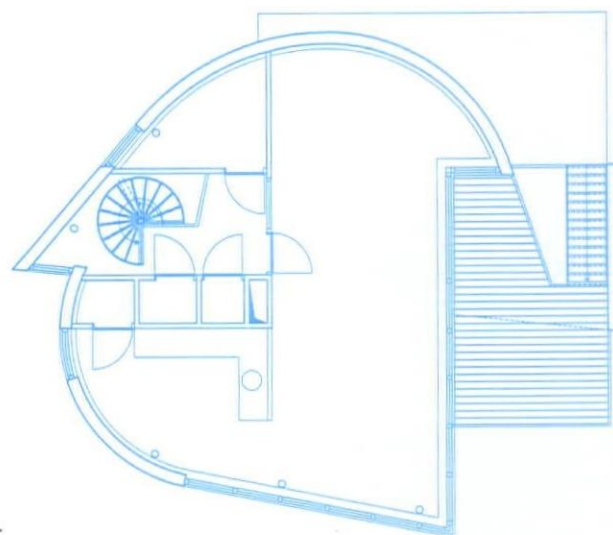
Architect
Herman Hertzberger

1
Model of the prototype floating house. Buoyancy is provided by a triangular arrangement of steel pipes.

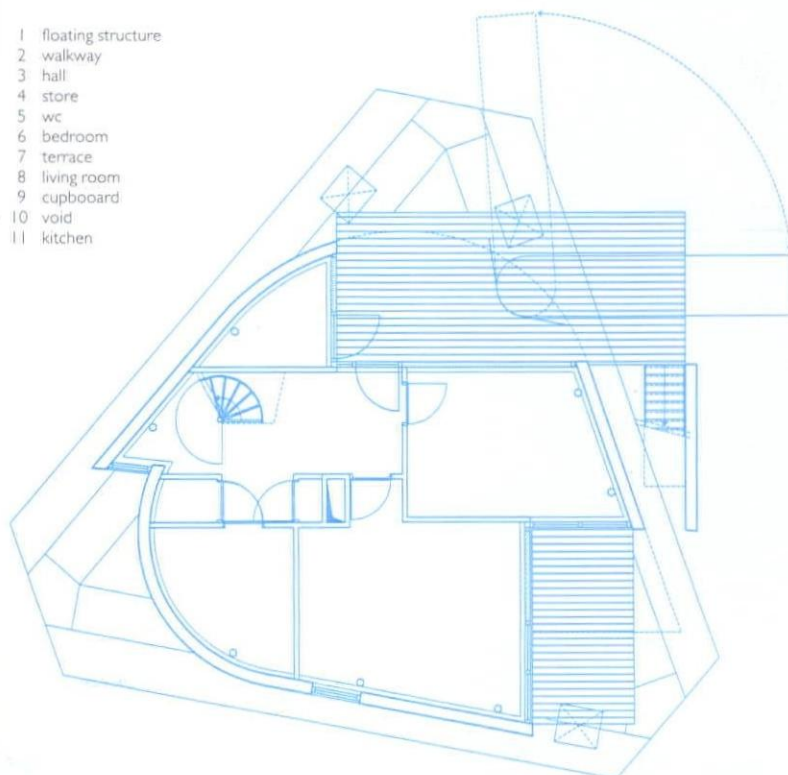
2
The house can rotate to a maximum angle of 90 degrees, to exploit views, privacy and light.



second floor



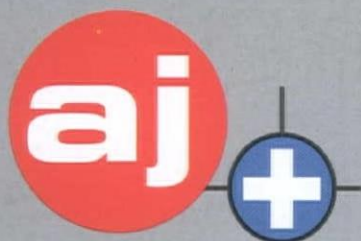
first floor



- 1 floating structure
- 2 walkway
- 3 hall
- 4 store
- 5 wc
- 6 bedroom
- 7 terrace
- 8 living room
- 9 cupboard
- 10 void
- 11 kitchen

ground floor plan (scale approx 1:200)

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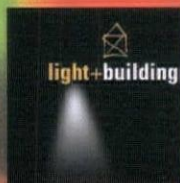
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REVEALED IN LIGHT

Shaped by latitude, culture and place, the capacity of light to make manifest built form and move the human spirit has been a richly poetic element of architecture since the earliest times. Contemporary fascination with achieving both material and spatial ephemerality continues and extends this immemorial relationship with light.

Architecture depends on light. As light reveals the forms of architecture and the places made by it, it simultaneously manifests the meaning and intentions inherent in the processes of conception and building. Such meanings are both particular and universal. Architects and artists have long been aware of the potential of light to move the human spirit. From earliest times, light has been consciously sought out for its expressive and numinous power. Sunlight described sculptural reliefs on temple walls, filtered through colonnades, illuminated the interiors of basilica halls and sparkled off mosaics. Light radiated through the gorgeous stained glass of medieval cathedrals and glimmered in arcaded loggias. It diffused softly through Japanese *shoji* screens and was veiled by intricately carved *mashrabiyyas*, casting arabesque shadows on walls and floors.

Humans are phototropically inclined, so illuminated places set in darkness exert a powerful attraction. The upward pull of a starry cupola or the mesmerizing allure of a sun-drenched atrium are some obvious examples. In the Baroque period, painters such as Caravaggio and Rembrandt explored the tenebrous effects of shadow and light to dramatize the essence of human struggle and sanctity. In Nordic stave churches, the mystery of the forest was fixed and explained as 'dark light'. Whether in painting, sculpture or architecture, light links the visual environment with human perceptions and sensitivities.

Light that is visible to the human eye occupies an extremely small part of the electromagnetic spectrum. This confluence of the visible spectrum, the structure of the human eye and entire perceptual system is in itself a miraculous synthesis. Within average sensitivity ranges to light and colour, each of us sees in a unique way and our cumulative experience of light in space is richly complex. Before the advent of electricity and its capacity to deliver 'delayed light', we were probably much more aware of our place in the universe. Starlight and moonlight defined the night, and through these natural phenomena, the remote and mysterious universe was a source of awe, fear and wonderment.

Through the modulating matrix of architecture, ethereal light can be transmuted into a tangible element of buildings, a space filling and defining presence. Among the most enduring ways of handling light, the oldest and most basic involves a fusion with matter. Trapping and reflecting light in mass impregnates forms with a radiant, vital energy. Tadao Ando's stark concrete walls, for instance, assume the remarkable potency of mass transformed by nature when animated by changing light. Methods of sensitizing solid material to light have been painstakingly cultivated and passed down through generations of builders and craftsmen. Opaque materials such as polished wood, ceramic tiles, silken plaster and the glass-sandwiched leaf of gold mosaic were transformed into glowing, lustrous lattices, catching and mirroring light. For baser materials, hewn and chiselled textures invested mass with a flickering play of light and shade. In this way, even the most drab substances could be induced to undulate and pulsate with life.

The nature of luminance varies enormously with latitude and landscape, generating a perpetually changing diorama. In equatorial regions, the intensity of light is so strong and shadows so short, that objects appear to vibrate and dissolve. In northern forests, light is filtered through clouds and foliage forming picturesque patterns of shadows, giving rise to romantic musings and dreams. As Henry Plummer observes in his lyrical essay on Nordic light (p70), place and culture determine our relationship with light, which is evocatively crystallized through architecture.

Christian Norberg-Schulz singles out the window as especially important in defining the spirit of place, 'It does not only express the structure of the building, but also how it is related to light'. The windows of the Netherlands, for instance, are as distinctive as Japanese *shoji*. The *shoji* cannot be comprehended as a single element that controls the quality of light, but form part of the pattern and rituals of traditional Japanese dwellings. Historically, Dutch windows are unusually large, to minimize the load of houses on waterlogged land. But in the Dutch climate with its colossal, cloud-filled skies, light is prized and windows tend to claim as much of the walls as possible. For Flemish artists such as de Hooch and Vermeer, this light was a profound source of inspiration. Vermeer's remarkable paintings, made in his studio facing the market square in Delft, capture a gentle luminance diffused through windows, shutters, curtains and draperies. Stealing quietly across rooms, the delicate light reinforces the gentleness and dignity of domestic life.

Contemporary use of translucent or semi-transparent glazing materials (such as frosted glass, translucent plastic sheeting, double layers of glass and perforated screens) expresses the current fascination for an architecture of material and spatial lightness. This continues the Modernist quest for talismanic transparency, but unlike the simple pristine clarity of a Miesian glass box, contemporary notions of transparency are more subtle and diffuse, as evinced by UN Studio's new art museum in Nijmegen (p54). Suspended within multiple layers of the building structure, the effect of this gauzy translucence is to elevate space into an experience of lightness and weightlessness. Such ephemeral architecture reflects the increasing sophistication of building technologies, but also manifests a persistent theme in the evolution of architecture.

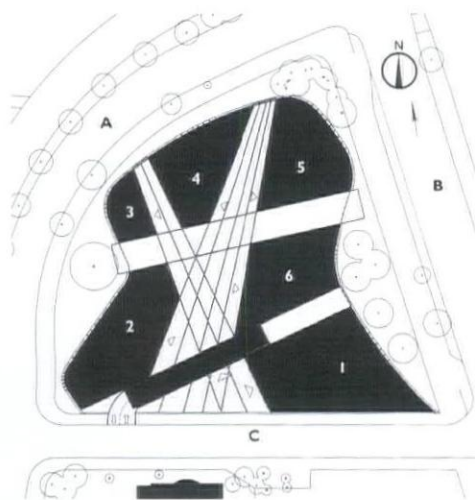
Light acquires meaning in architecture as part of a sequence of luminous relationships. Light reveals the building, its intentions, its form, space and meaning, modulated by the consequences of place. As Christian Norberg-Schulz contends 'The study of light is something more than a mere investigation of illumination. Light and things belong together and every place has its light. The sky is the origin of light and the earth its manifestation. Always the same and always different, light reveals what is.'* CATHERINE SLESSOR

* *The Poetics of Light*, A+U, December 1987 supplement, p7.

Right, Vermeer's *Girl Reading a Letter at an Open Window*, 1657, a gentle, luminous portrait of domestic intimacy.



**NORDIC DIPLOMATIC COMPOUND,
BERLIN, GERMANY**
ARCHITECT
BERGER + PARKKINEN ARCHITEKTEN



site plan

A Stülerstraße	2 Denmark
B Klingelhöferstraße	3 Iceland
C Rauchstraße	4 Norway
I common building (Felleshus)	5 Sweden
	6 Finland

- 1** From west, the sleeping green armadillo quietly respires through its scales.
2 Corner of Rauchstraße and Klingelhöferstraße from east, showing how perimeter becomes permeable on Rauchstraße. Felleshus on corner.
3 Both day and night, the compound has strong presence from the urban freeways.

When Berlin became the capital of re-united Germany, much of its centre was soon covered with a spindly forest of construction cranes (AR January 1999). Until recently, one of these hovered over a big site in the southern Tiergarten, the hunting park of the Prussian kings just west of the old city centre (the Mitte). In 1937, the area was declared to be a new diplomatic quarter¹ and some of the villas of the rich were converted to embassies. Afterwards, when Berlin was cut in half, the place became meaningless and partly deserted. Now, its diplomatic functions are restored, and the first major new contribution has been completed.

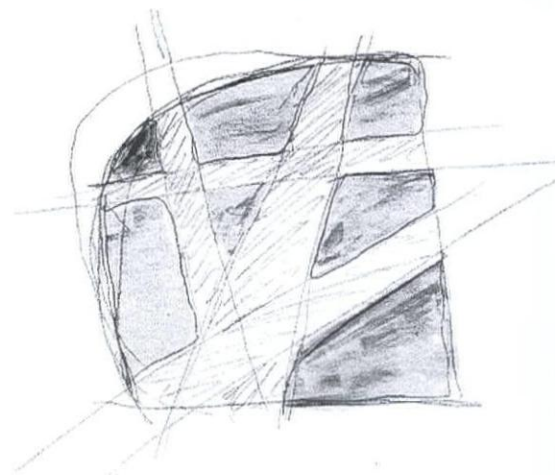
The new Nordic embassy enclave is an odd creation in many ways. You see it first as you drive down Stülerstraße, the urban highway which defines the southern rim of the park. A flowing wall of patinated copper lamellae presents an impassive front to the road and park. The scale of the place is quite different from its surroundings, and though the plates are sometimes raised to allow suggestions of what might be happening inside, they are largely smooth and flat, rather like the armour of an emerald armadillo. The complex is largely inscrutable, inward turned, offhand to its surroundings. For architects, the scale and form (if not the material) inevitably recall Aalto's curved perimeters, themselves a soft echo of the gently flowing contours of the lakes of the glacially smoothed Finnish landscape.

Inside this mysterious barrier is an unusual organism. For years, the governments of the Nordic countries have toyed with making embassies in common.² Berlin offered the chance to try the idea out for the first time. The wandering Aaltoesque wall is the perimeter of the new compound. It contains the five separate embassy buildings, and a



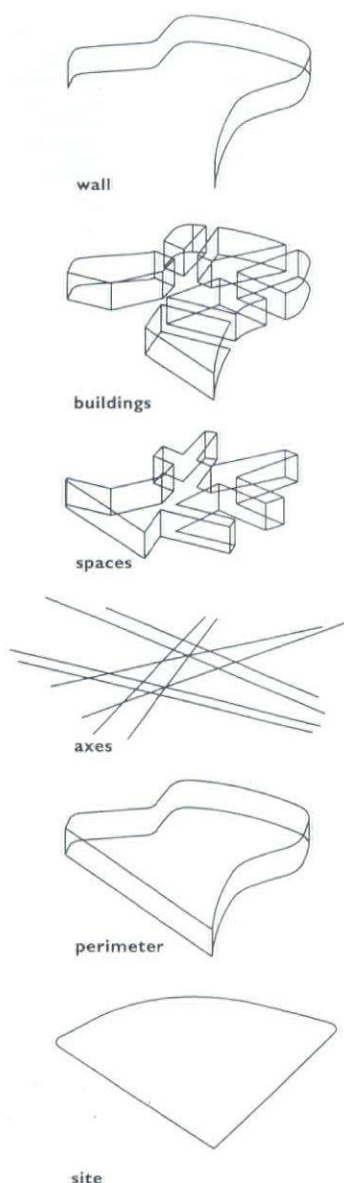
DISSECTING THE DIPLOMATIC

In an innovatory approach to the relationships of diplomacy and the city, the Scandinavian countries describe their ethos in space and light.



site sketch





sixth one, the Fellehsus (common building).

The strategy needed a carefully thought out approach. Two competitions were held. The first, for the masterplan, had 222 entries from all over Europe.³ It was won by the Austrian-Finnish firm Berger + Parkkinen with a scheme very similar to what has been built. Their arbitrary green copper perimeter, which only in certain places reflects the road pattern of the block,⁴ contains an amoebic area which has been equally arbitrarily carved by a smash of open axes. These define the building blocks of the individual embassies, but they do more than that. Tapering from wide and generous semi-public space at their southern ends on Rauchstraße to quite thin terminations up against the inside of the copper wall on the northern perimeter, these internal streets have a sixteenth-century proto-Baroque understanding of the apparent nature of space, for their plan shapes exaggerate the perspective effect, making them seem longer than they really are, the individual buildings bigger, and, curiously, people at the other end of the vistas, taller. Comparisons with Palladio's Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza, that wonderful set for the parade of Humanist drama, are almost inevitable – and not entirely inappropriate.

After the overall design had been determined by Berger + Parkkinen, individual national design competitions were held for each country's own embassy. These had to fit the strange shapes generated by the overall plan – plots which were both spiky and curved. It is a mark of the ingenuity of the different architects (who were selected in a second round of national competitions), that their buildings have a degree of comradely congruity, yet express something of the countries they represent.

As designers of the general plan, Berger + Parkkinen were also responsible for the Fellehsus. It contains most of the public functions of the embassies, leaving the individual national buildings as not much more than decent little office blocks. In the Fellehsus are the functions and events, the cocktail parties, lectures, receptions, meetings, exhibitions and visa issuing which most of us associate with an embassy.

A tented canopy forms a ceremonial portico to the whole compound, offering views of the internal streets; under it is a toughened glass fence which separates the general public from the little city within the copper wall. (A separate entrance at the corner of Klingelhöferstraße and Rauchstraße serves the consular section.) To

make the complex more easy to understand, this and the other buildings in the place are described separately on the following pages.

Does the compound work as a whole? It is efficient and must be relatively economical, for the pooling of consular and formal spaces is clearly a money-saving move. Internal and external spaces are elegant, have appropriate drama and a degree of gentleness appropriate for social democracies. But there remains a question about the edge. That green-scale skin is scarcely a welcoming device, and even though it is replaced on the entrance side in Rauchstraße by more friendly, urban and permeable elevations, the place is rather hermetic and even slightly sinister. The effect is increased by the amorphous plan and, inside, it is added to by rather blank and inexpressive individual buildings which sometimes cause the inner urban theatre with its exaggerated perspectives to have unsettling overtones of de Chirico. No-one doubts that embassies have to be protected, and that security is one of the key determinants in their design, but do they have to be quite so stern and impervious? The compound may have scale suitable to the urban freeway (indeed it makes a pleasurable moment on an otherwise rather dull drive), yet the nobility of Nordic social democracy has not been properly celebrated. Perhaps the place should be thought of as a good first effort: maybe next time the countries will be able to express some of the generosity of their cultural ethos more directly. P.D.

1 The traditional one was in the Unter den Linden and Pöhlser Platz. Here new French, American and British embassies, among others, are being built on their original sites.

2 Though they are very different topographically, they share long-standing historical links, a sort of common culture, and to some extent, language. All are social democracies; all have a high official regard for architecture as the built expression of a decent state. Though Icelandic is an archaic form of western Scandinavian, and Finnish is completely different from any other European language, Swedish is that country's second language as Danish is of Iceland.

3 It would have been illegal under European law to have restricted entries for such a large project to Scandinavia. And architects from Iceland and Norway (not EC members) had to be allowed to enter too.

4 The site was originally rectilinear until Stülerstraße was made into an urban freeway, drastically curving its north-west boundary.

Architect

Berger + Parkkinen Architekten, Vienna

Design team

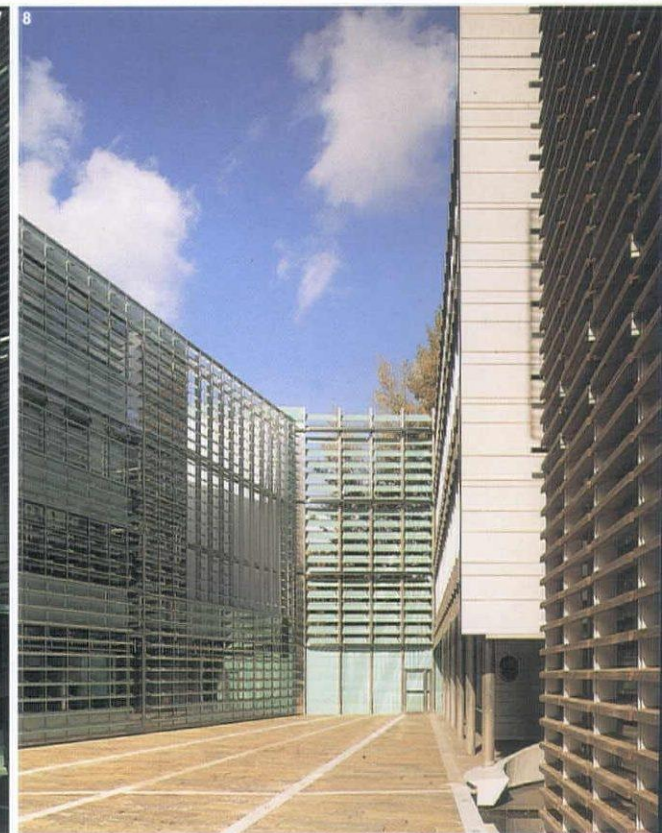
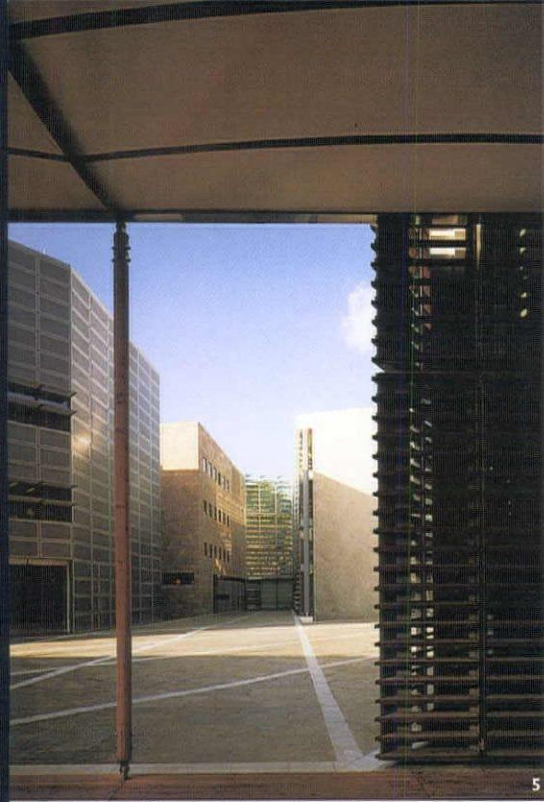
Alfred Berger, Tiina Parkkinen, Margarete Dietrich, Antti Laiho, Ines Njic, Kurt Sattler, Peter Thalbauer, Ivan Zdenkovic

Associate architect

Pysall + Ruge Architects, Berlin

Photographs

Christian Richters



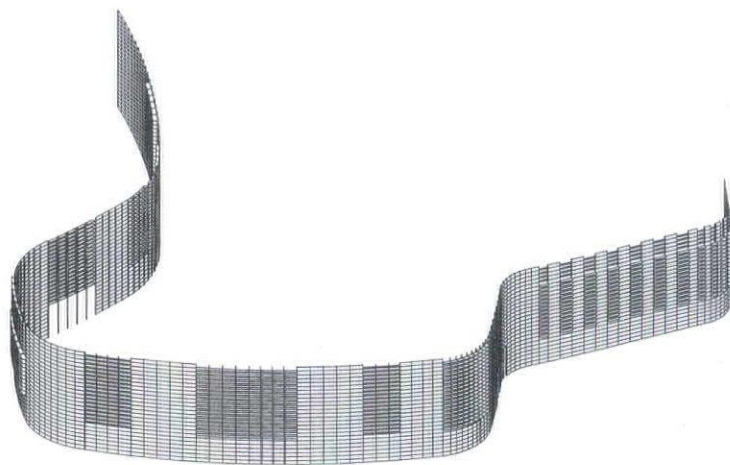
4
Patinated copper scales are movable, but most are kept either open or shut.

5
Looking down axis from entrance: Denmark left with Iceland behind; massive stone front of Norway right.

6
Entrance canopy over glass security fence: Denmark left, Felleshus right.

7
Norway's mighty stone front left; Finland's timber skin right with Sweden behind.

8
Internal axes simply terminate at inside of copper perimeter. A ceremonial tree might have given more point to vista, and softened the de Chirico-like effect.



FELLESBUS, BERLIN, GERMANY
ARCHITECT
BERGER + PARKKINEN ARCHITEKTEN

MUCH IN COMMON

The Fellesbus is the social focus of the compound, with facilities for both public and staff.

Berger + Parkkinen's Fellesbus is the public front of the compound. Like the other parts of the complex, it has a rather inscrutable presence, being clad mostly in strips of timber and glass which reveal little of the interior. But the west elevation which greets you and overlooks the entrance to the whole site has a big transparent panel let symmetrically into the horizontally striped walls.

You get into the building through the big glass panel. (The internal entrance from the compound is rather curiously in the corner of the building, separated from the public by the toughened glass fence.) From the approach, you can glimpse a formal stair, rather like the ones of London's clubs but made of glass rather than stone. Light fills the big entrance hall, coming from both the big end window and the glass and steel roof. It is a decent and generous space.

Behind the stair at ground floor level is the auditorium, and on top of this there is a terrace at first floor level which is confined against the city by the curving copper screen, in which the louvres are left open. Galleries flank the terrace, and on festal days in summer the whole can be thrown open for large receptions. On the second floor is the staff canteen which serves all the embassies, and formal meeting and dining rooms for different sized groups.

On the whole, the building works well and simply. And it has a degree of dignity and welcome appropriate to its functions. But there could be a problem with the galleries: when I was there just before the Fellesbus opened, the exterior with its alternating bands of transparency and opacity looked as if it was likely to cause glare in the exhibition spaces. Doubtless, this can be modified in various ways, but it seems a pity that the problem is designed into the building from the start.

Architect

Berger + Parkkinen Architekten, Vienna

Design team

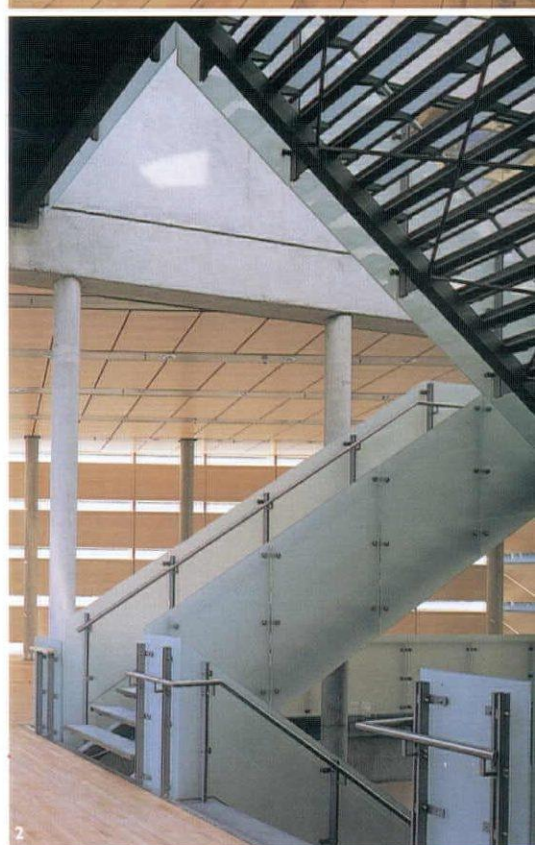
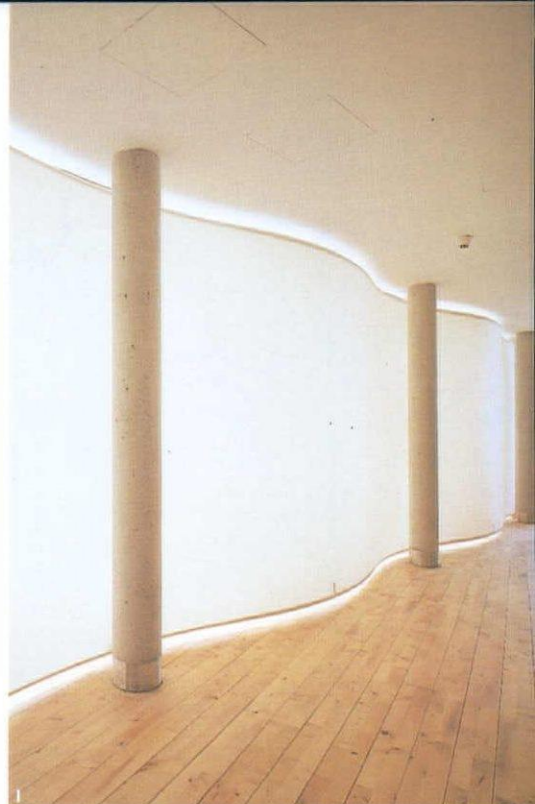
Alfred Berger, Tiina Parkkinen, Margarete Dietrich, Antti Laiho, Ines Nicic, Kurt Sattler, Peter Thalbauer, Ivan Zdenkovic

Associate architect

Pysall - Ruge Architects, Berlin

Photographs

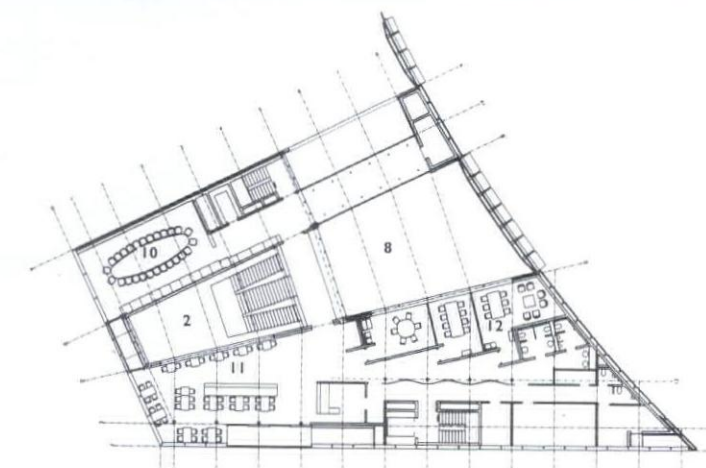
Christian Richters



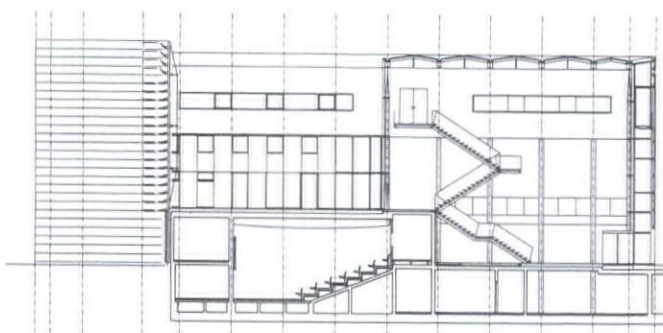
1
Translucent undulating wall counteracts glare on top floor.

2,3
Formal, honorific glass stair is major public route up through building. This is first (exhibition) floor level.

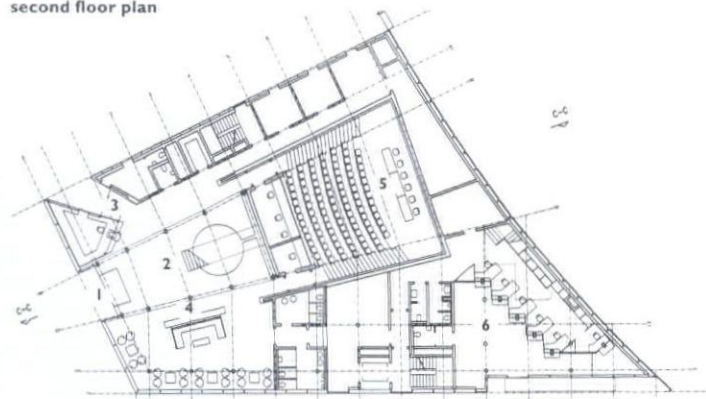
4
Looking along Rauchstraße to west-facing public entrance. Left is canopy which marks entrance to compound with toughened glass security fence under.



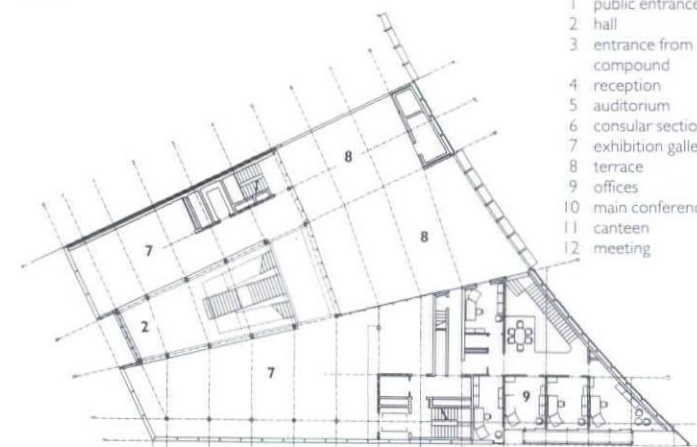
second floor plan



section



ground floor plan (scale approx 1:600)



first floor plan

- 1 public entrance
- 2 hall
- 3 entrance from compound
- 4 reception
- 5 auditorium
- 6 consular section
- 7 exhibition gallery
- 8 terrace
- 9 offices
- 10 main conference
- 11 canteen
- 12 meeting

SWEDISH EMBASSY, BERLIN, GERMANY

ARCHITECT

WINGÅRDH ARKITEKTKONTOR

In the north-east corner of the compound is the Swedish Embassy on a triangular site which overlooks the Norwegians to the west and the Finns to the south over Berger + Parkkinen's formal pool. The third side of the triangle is formed by the curving copper perimeter of the compound, but here, unlike the Danes for instance, Gert Wingårdh has created a flat glass wall within the curve and arranged for the copper scales to be left open, so you can glimpse the warm Swedish interior from the traffic in Stülerstraße.

From the interior of the compound, the building seems to have two personae. To the south is a white plane of Gotland limestone behind storey-height windows protected by horizontal planes of translucent glass which are intended to act as anti-dazzle screens. The west side has rather more conventional treatment, with strips of windows over black stone spandrels, though the latter are rather odd. Made of Brännhult diorite, their outer faces are polished, but they are suspended overlapping from right to left like big slates, and the exposed edges are hand trimmed, giving a roughness which is intended to emphasize the nature of the very hard and dense stone. The change in material and treatment is rather curious, for both facades front similar kinds of offices, and of course

both are subject to the sun as it travels round the south-west arc of the heavens. It is difficult to see the justification for the change, apart from a wish to demonstrate the possibilities of Swedish materials. And to give the building more figure and presence: for the best of democratic reasons, these are remarkably lacking in much contemporary Swedish architecture, and perhaps there is an element of over-compensation in Berlin.

The slightly strident exterior is offset by a splendidly tranquil interior. You are led in by a curving, slightly battered white limestone wall which draws you through a glass screen to the building's main space, a full-height foyer that looks out over the Tiergarten through the louvres of the outer copper wall. The space is lined with warmly finished birch veneer, and seems almost like the inside of a very fine musical instrument, beautifully crafted like the interior of Gothenburg's '20s concert hall by Nils Einar Eriksson (Wingårdh is a Gothenburg architect).

A solid-seeming spiral stair corkscrews from basement pool to top floor, and the space is overlooked by upper floor meeting rooms and the staff canteen, which slots into the building at second floor level. It is difficult to overemphasize the calm of this gentle, welcoming and beautifully built space.

To the south, the curved white wall which greeted you at the entrance rises to enclose a big meeting room which overlooks the metaphorical Gulf of Bothnia between Sweden and Finland. The space between ceiling and the wall is filled with glass to provide acoustic privacy; a huge piece of curved stone is pivoted to act as entrance door. Visual privacy is provided by a magical curtain of woven copper threads which can be drawn round the conference table.

Of all the buildings in the compound, the Swedish one has a dignity usually associated with the embassy type, but it is a democratic dignity, not in the least tainted with the pomposity and bureaucracy which so often permeates such buildings.

Architect

Wingårdh Arkitektkontor, Gothenburg

Design team

Gert Wingårdh, Per Glembrandt, Ulrika Bergström, Vanja Knoke, Thomas Ocklund, Jerry Kopare, Pål Eriksson, Fredrik Gullberg, Anneli Carlsson, Torbjörn Edgren, Gunilla Murnieks, Dan Danielsson, Björn Dufva, Johan Casselbrant, Smajo Stender, Anna Evaldsson, Jonny Dernbrant, Erik Williamsson

Associate architect

Pysall + Ruge Architects, Berlin

Office interiors

White arkitekter: Elisabeth Rosenlund

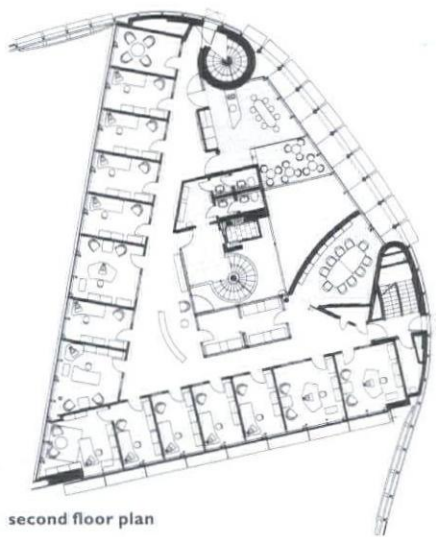
Photographs

By Åke Eson Lindman except no 1 by Christian Richters

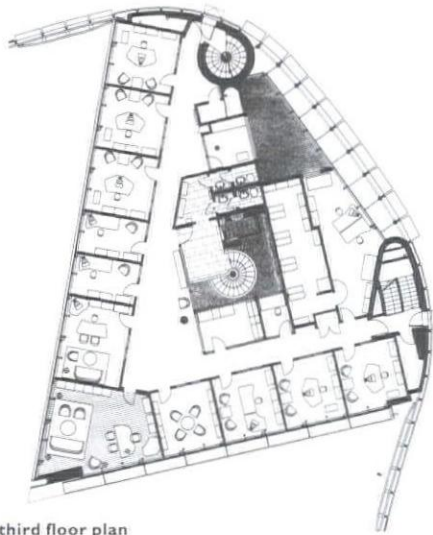
SWEDISH GRACE

Sweden's embassy is intended to display symbolically the country's natural materials and to provide a dignified but gentle workplace.

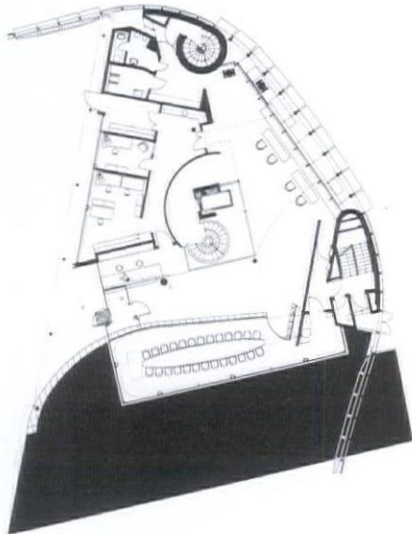




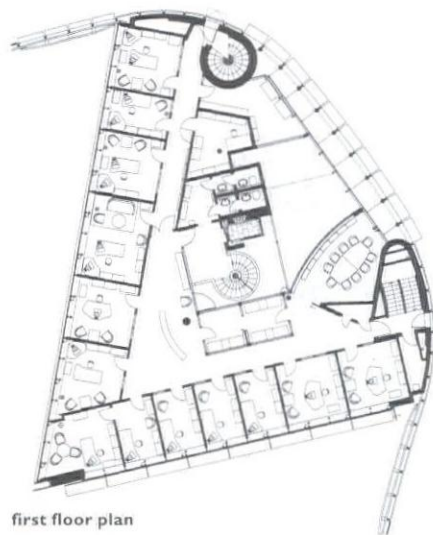
second floor plan



third floor plan



ground floor plan (scale approx 1:340)



first floor plan

1 Sweden's curious split personality, with white Gotland limestone south face looking over pool to Finland and Brännhult diorite spandrels on west, looking towards Norway.

2 Entrance, gentle curve of limestone wall greets you and rises to become ...

3 ... perimeter of conference room, which can be made private with copper thread curtain.

4 Marvellous veneered spiral stair corkscrews through atrium.

5 Full-height foyer overlooks park through open blades in perimeter wall. Staff rest area is balcony on second floor.

6 Craftsmanship and material handling is of highest order, with copper seams between veneered ply sheets.

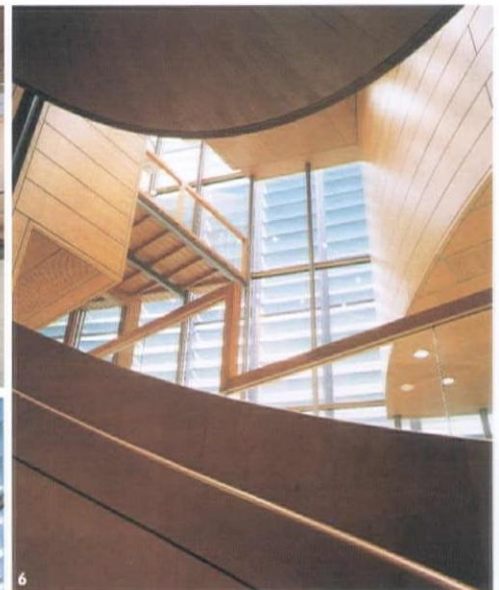
7 Foyer where spiral winds down to pool in basement.



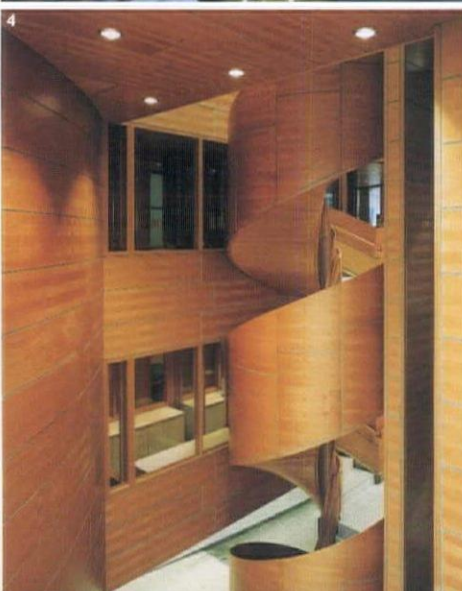
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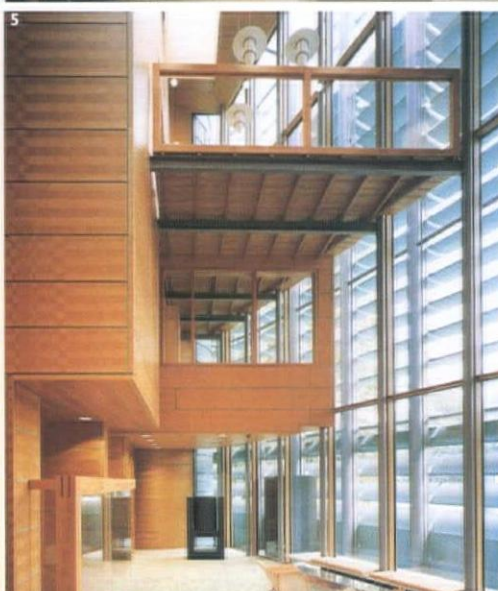
3



6



4



5



7

FINNISH EMBASSY, BERLIN, GERMANY
ARCHITECT
VIIVA ARKKITEHTUURI OY

FINNISH COOL

Designed by a very young team, the Finnish embassy has minimalist clarity, set off by formal and luminous events.



Finland's Embassy is in the middle of the east side of the compound, between the Felleshus to the south and Sweden over the pool to the north. It is a box within a box, the inner one transparent and the outer formed of the curved copper wall and, on the three interior faces, horizontal strips of aspen closely arranged like the slats of Venetian blinds. The triple-glazed glass walls are supported on metal mullions, which also carry the timber slats. In the cavity between the glass and slats are hydraulic devices which can be activated from the inside to manoeuvre sections of the blinds, so that the essentially inscrutable embassy subtly changes as the sun moves round and the inhabitants alter the external skins. (The wooden panels can be opened manually from the outside so the glass can be cleaned and maintained.)

Like the Felleshus next door, the building is dominated by a central honorific processional axis, which leads you from the entrance to a tall hall, beyond which is a first floor terrace that looks out over the park through the copper scales. But there are significant differences between the two partis. Whereas the atrium of the Felleshus is full height throughout, you go into the Finnish building through a one-storey entrance sequence and you are drawn forward into the tall hall by the vivid brightness of Silja Rantanen's mural. The place is full of light from the big window which looks onto the court. Floating at the top of the space is the curved form of the main conference room which has been formed monocoque out of blond Finnish plywood – a truly secret volume visually and structurally almost

independent of the rest of the building.

Minimalism enhanced by intense focusing moments is the discipline that has formed the building. It is designed by VIIVA, a young practice two of whose three principals are students; they won the national competition against 91 other entries. Internally, the in-situ concrete walls, beautifully cast against smooth moulds, are allowed to retain their own colour, protected only by a transparent matt coat to prevent them becoming dirty. A silver stair with crisp aluminium balustrades, stairs and soffits shimmers in the grey concrete hall and its first flight terminates at a landing overlooking the terrace which is dominated by a single sorbus (rowan), the old magic tree of the north. It is a powerful luminous sequence.

Left of the entrance is the sauna suite (without which no official Finnish building seems able to function). On upper floors, offices are divided by lightweight birch-faced partitions (the birch in this building is much paler than that of the Swedish Embassy). Perforated steel ceiling panels continue the minimalist atmosphere and their restraint is echoed in polished concrete or pale timber floors. The whole is visually cool, a calm dignified place and an appropriate representation of its country's culture.

Architect

VIIVA arkkitehtuuri Oy, Helsinki

Design team

Rauno Lahtinen, Pekka Mäki, Toni Peltola

Associate architect

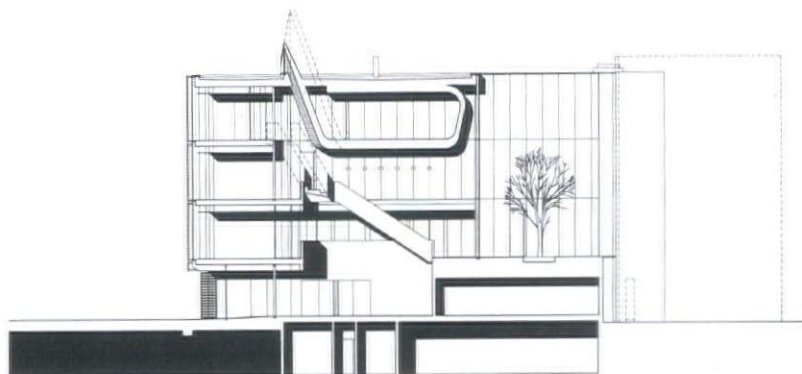
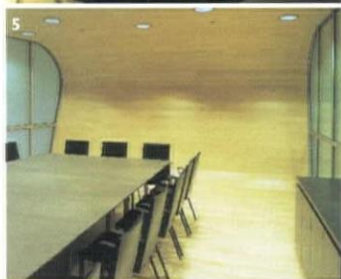
Pysall - Ruge Architects, Berlin: Justus Pysall, Peter Ruge

Photographs

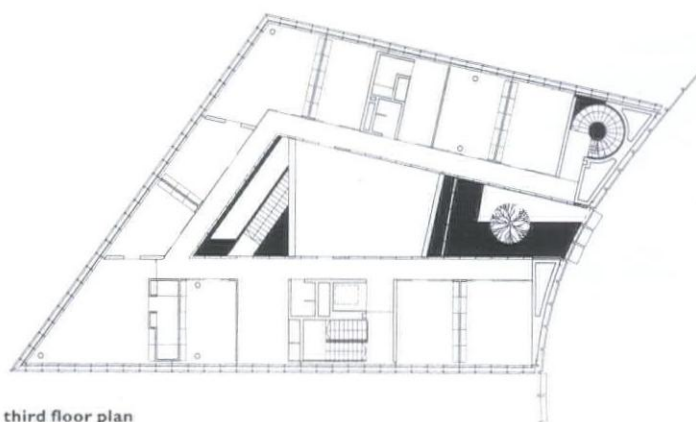
Christian Richters 1, 2; others by Jussi Tiainen and the architects



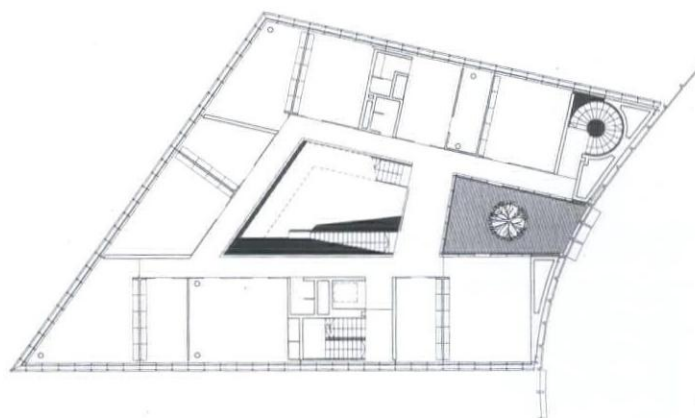
- 1 West front of Finnish Embassy: more impressive than most.
- 2 Facing Sweden to the north: occupants change slatted Finnish exterior with sun, season and time of day.
- 3 Foyer is enlivened by Silja Rantanen's mural. Very crisp aluminium stair gives worries about wear.
- 4 First floor court with magic tree.
- 5 Conference room of connected ply skins floats over atrium, and ...
- 6 ... also acts as side of light-chute, drawing luminance into interior.



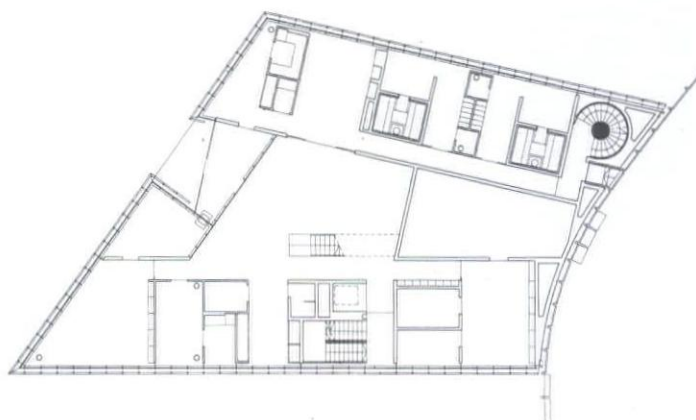
west-east section



third floor plan



first floor plan



ground floor plan (scale approx 1:450)



ICELANDIC EMBASSY, BERLIN, GERMANY

ARCHITECT

PK HÖNNUN

Aptly, in view of the size of its population, Iceland has the smallest of the embassies, which is rather tucked away in the north-west corner of the site opposite the Norwegians and behind the Danes. It is clad in a strange Icelandic stone, liparit, a material so rare that it is protected, and only parts of cliffs which had fallen off could be used, to be worked in a way never done before to produce a smooth rosy east wall penetrated by a Rationalist grid of square windows, set off by a row of slots which illuminate the ambassador.

Entrance is signalled by a change of material, where the whole of the lower storey seems to shift to the right as if following some sort of geological heave. The new material is ribbed concrete chosen, the architect Palmar Kristmundsson says, because it echoes the corrugated metal of much of the traditional vernacular building of his country.

The honorific smooth face looking east at the Norwegians is balanced to the west by a thin service tower which is also enclosed in glass and corrugated concrete. In the space between the tower, perimeter curve and office slab is a courtyard, not unlike the Norwegian one, but in this case it is purely decorative, being paved with irregular slabs of black Icelandic lava which can be lit from below by lamps that try to evoke volcanic fires – a Disneyesque touch which rather lets down an otherwise gentle and thoughtful building.

Architect

PK Hönnun, Reykjavik

Design team

Palmar Kristmundsson, Gunnar B. Stefánsson, Birgir Teitsson, Haraldur Ingvarsson, Sindri Gunnarsson

Associate architect

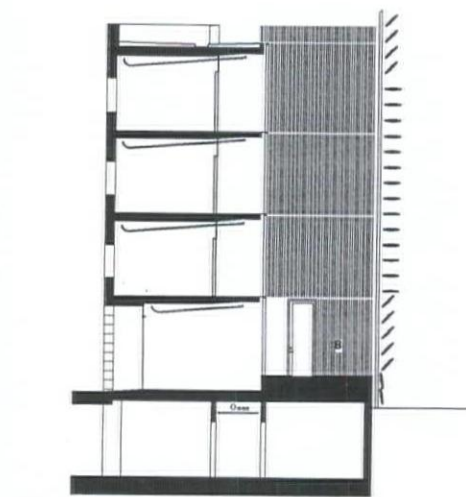
Pysall + Ruge Architects, Berlin

Photograph

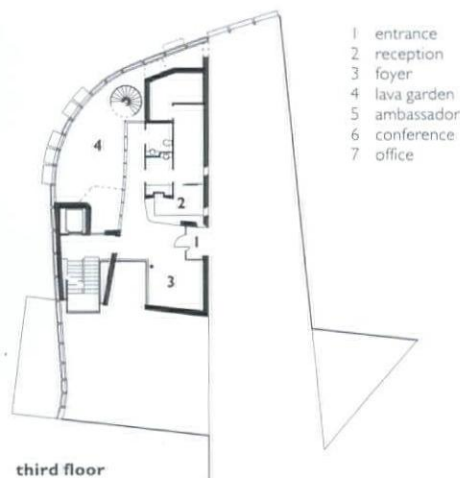
Christian Richters

ICELANDIC ANALOGUE

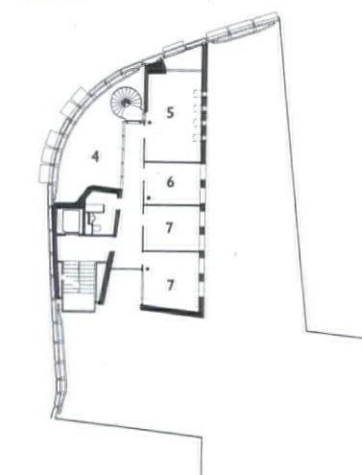
The austere, grand landscape of Iceland is evoked in a little building which veers from abstraction to perhaps excessive realism.



east-west section



third floor



ground floor (scale approx 1:650)

1 From south: main block is clad in liparit, a stone so rare that it cannot be quarried. Introduction of corrugated concrete by entrance is metaphor for geological shift.

2 Foyer with lava garden beyond.

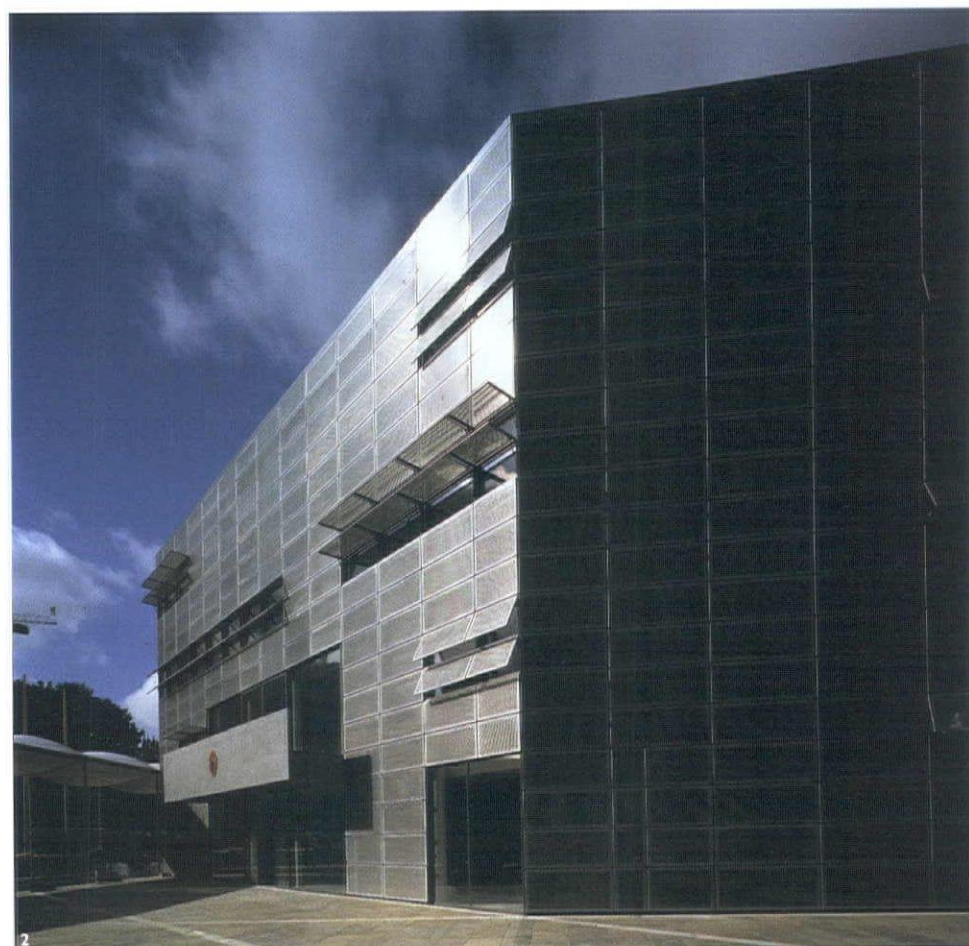
3 Lava garden - Disneyesque touch?

DANISH EMBASSY, BERLIN, GERMANY
ARCHITECT
NIELSEN, NIELSEN & NIELSEN



DANISH DRAMA

The Danish embassy, behind an external veil, is divided into two linked halves by a dramatic luminous gulch which is also the main social space.



1
From south, showing transition from Danish
stainless steel to copper perimeter.

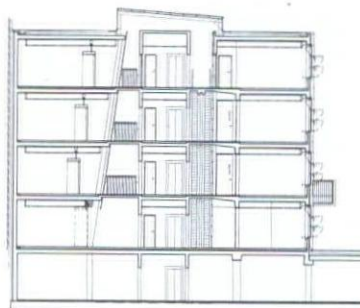
2
Canopy portico to compound left flanked by
Danish entrance front.

DANISH EMBASSY, BERLIN, GERMANY

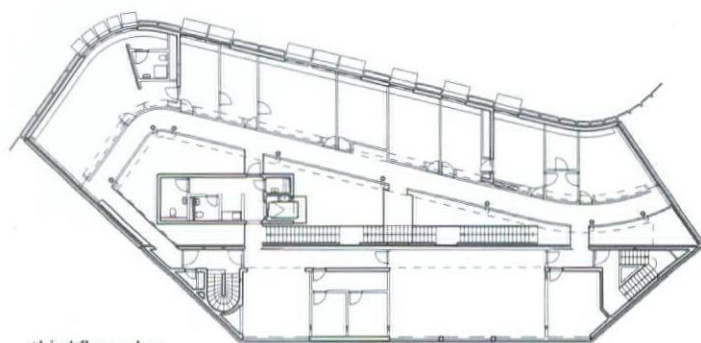
ARCHITECT

NIELSEN, NIELSEN & NIELSEN

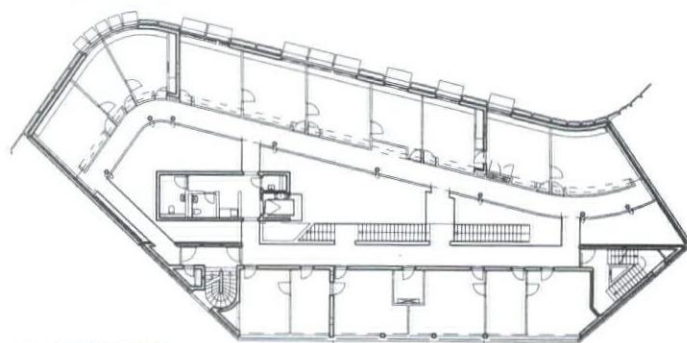
- 3 Pale ash slats screen galleries of soft and curving half.
- 4 Central luminous chasm separates two halves, with stairs climbing up hard side.
- 5 Lift and services tower terminates chasm at south end. Two sides are linked by bridges.
- 6 Ground floor, where common facilities like library have easy relationship to semi-public space.



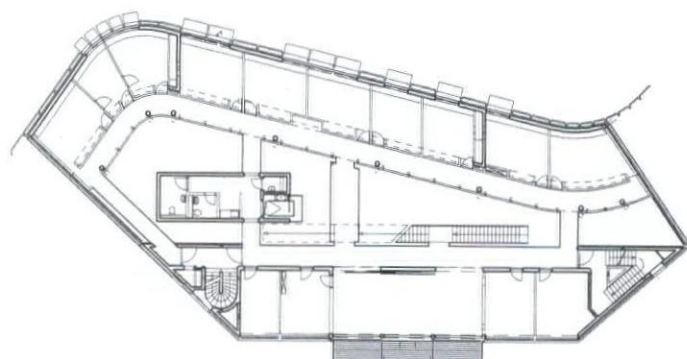
west-east section



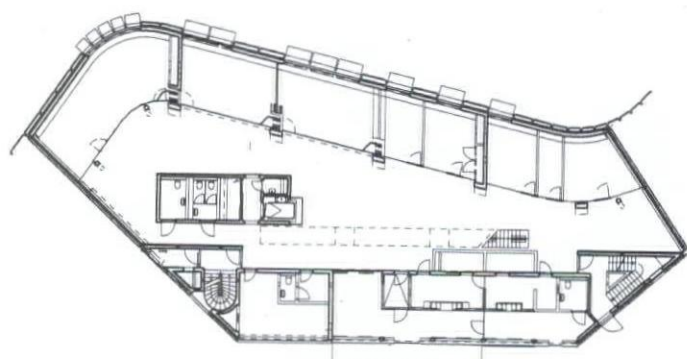
third floor plan



second floor plan



first floor plan



ground floor plan (scale approx 1:520)

The Danish Embassy has the south-west corner of the compound facing the Fellesthus across the tent-portico. Its stainless-steel panels perforated by a grid of numerous small holes are either shinily opaque or surprisingly transparent, depending on your angle of view. This rain-screen cladding seems to be becoming a Danish fashion, and is similar to the panels used by Henning Larsen in his little offices for Berlingske Tidene newspaper (AR June 1995). Simultaneously, it gives privacy for the users of the building and it hints at inner life to onlookers. It has an affinity with the elegant, puzzling green copper wall that surrounds the whole place.

Sympathy continues inside. The Danish building is the only one which reflects internally Berger + Parkkinen's undulating perimeter. Designed by 3 x Nielsen, the parti is a development of the firm's Architects' House in Copenhagen (AR December 1996), which is formed round a central top-lit cleft between a hard building finished in render and a soft one largely clad in wood products.

In Berlin, the soft building behind its elegant pale ash slats follows the curve of the copper wall and provides a necklace of office cells which look over park and surrounding city. Opposite, the hard building, rectilinear and clad in the same stainless-steel panels as the exterior, has a similar arrangement of individual offices which overlook the internal streets of the compound, the Fellesthus and the Finnish Embassy.

The central gulch tapers upwards in section to its glass roof which splashes abundant light down to the dark stone floor four storeys below. Along the hard side, exposed stairs with ash treads, risers and handrails climb to galleries which are connected to similar ones behind the timber screen on the soft side. Bridges link the two halves of the building and give a notion of the theatre of office life as diplomats run, stroll, shuffle, mutter and dream across the space.

The building is steeped in Danishness: while the robust Norwegians decided to invest all the free space left between the demands of the programme and the constrictions of the perimeter in a big terrace so that the employees can enjoy Berlin's sun and the dubious pleasures of the air of Stülerstraße, the Danes chose to make a blond arcade furnished with triumphs of national design like Jacobsen chairs and Kjørholm tables, lamps from Artemide and bookcases designed by 3x Nielsen themselves.

Architect

Nielsen, Nielsen & Nielsen, Århus

Design team

Lars Frank Nielsen, Kim Herforth Nielsen, Gerti Axelsen, Lars Kjemtrup, Lars Due Jensen, Helge Skovsted, Jette Schwarz, Lars Povlsen, Mads Posch, Malene E. Knudsen

Photographs

All photographs from 3xNielsen



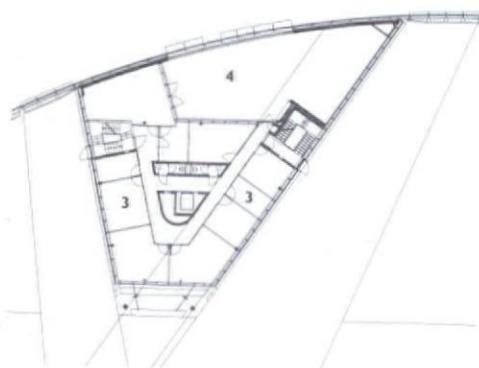
NORWEGIAN EMBASSY, BERLIN,
GERMANY
ARCHITECT
SNØHETTA

Norway's embassy is an analogue
of spectacular mountainous
landscape, and it incorporates a
massive chunk of the real thing.

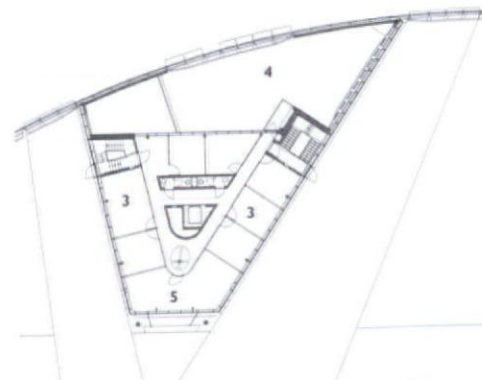
ELEMENTAL NORWEGIAN



ground floor

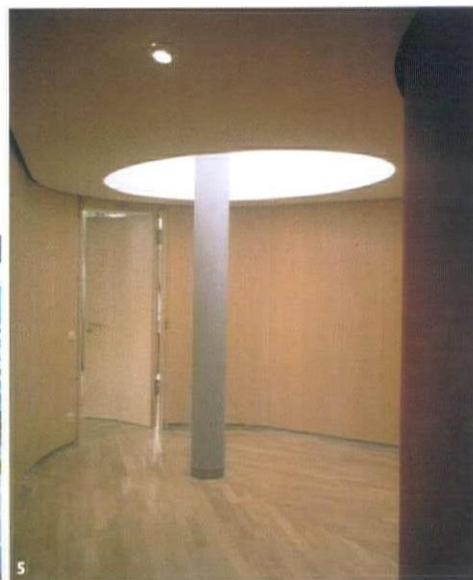


first floor



third floor

- 1 lobby
- 2 reception
- 3 offices
- 4 terrace
- 5 ambassador



The Norwegian Embassy is the building that faces you directly as you approach the complex from Rauchstraße, and it is the only one which overtly tries to capture some of the spirit of the landscapes of its country. Perhaps this could be expected of Snøhetta, the team which called down the presence of the rising sun to form the Great Library of Alexandria which is slowly approaching completion on the south Mediterranean coast (AR June 1990).

In Berlin, the practice chose to emphasize the rocky verticality of their country: the only one in Scandinavia to have significant mountains – awesome places of the north in which vast cliffs of igneous and metamorphic rock crash down into the prodigiously deep, icy green waters of the fjords. In the building, a huge slab of grey Norwegian granite faces the public and overlooks a little triangular pool which emerges from the conjunction of Berger + Parkkinen's axes and their long rectangular pool that runs across the site, and even emerges on each side beyond the curving copper wall.

To try to evoke the mountains of the north in a slab of stone and a little pond could have been terribly twee. It is not: the grey monolith weighs about 120 tonnes, is over 14m tall, 5m wide and about 700mm thick. It is huge enough to have real presence, and its power is enhanced by leaving the exterior just as it came from the mountain, scratched diagonally by the immemorial grind of the glacier which shaped it. On the inside, is a smooth face, slightly convex due to the creep of the

diamond cutting band, and the whole mass tapers slightly as it rises. Cutting the thing out, getting it there and putting it up was a major feat of organization.

The monolith faces south, and to east and west are louvered green-frosted glass screens which the architects hope will act as memories of the glaciers and as a filter between Berger + Parkkinen's streets and the interior.

Of the latter, there is not much to say. Both programme and site determine that it must be a small and simple office block, with cellular offices of different kinds looking outwards. They are arranged round an internal corridor wrapped round the central services core. Details and materials are carefully honed. There are two moments when the little building becomes more than decently utilitarian: the entrance, a welcoming glass box behind the monolith, and the terrace which at first floor level looks out over the big road through raised louvres in the copper skin towards the trees, grass and pastoral perspectives of the Tiergarten.

Architect
Snøhetta, Oslo
Design team
Craig Dykers, Christoph Kapeller, Kjetil Thorsen, Ole Gustavsen, Jostein Bjørndal, Ibrahim El-Hayawan, K. Tronstad, F. Kristiansen
Landscape architects
Ragnhild Momrak, Rainer Stange
Furniture
Ole Gustavsen, Linda Evensen
Photographs
Jiri Havran, Snøhetta

- 1 The huge glaciated monolith cut from the mountainside boldly dominates the vista from the entrance to the site in Rauchstraße.
- 2 Stone and ice. Latter in frosted glass metaphor modifies sunlight to offices on east and west faces.
- 3 Terrace overlooks Tiergarten through copper scales of perimeter wall, and looks down on public space within compound through embassy's own glass louvres.
- 4 Lobby: a welcoming glass box behind the monolith.
- 5 Lobby outside ambassador's office on third floor.



south-north section



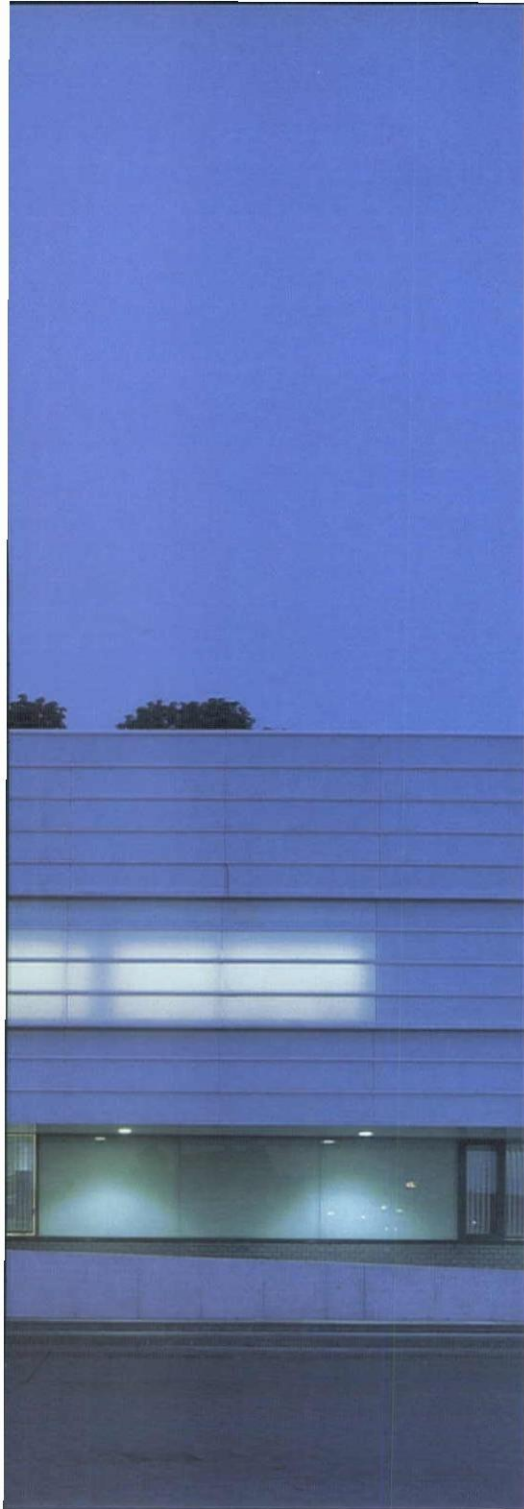
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2



54 | 3



3



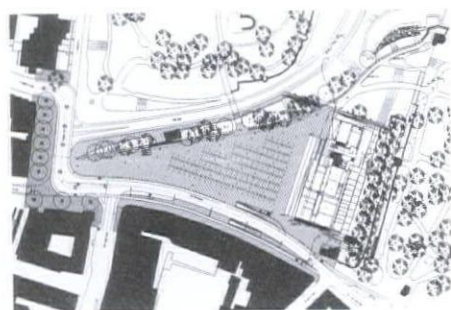
Supermarket, temple and social meeting place; programmatically, the contemporary museum is an ever evolving hybrid space. Both technically and structurally, museum buildings are no less heterogeneous, made up of a mosaic of routes, changing installations, blank walls, and variable lighting conditions. UN Studio's new provincial museum in Nijmegen explores how these demands can be integrated into a composite, homogeneous form, capable of absorbing and responding to changing conditions.

The brief brought together the town's two existing and very diverse collections of archaeological artefacts and modern art. Each was unsatisfactorily housed in a separate building and required space for expansion, so a competition was held for a single new museum. This was won in 1995 by van Berkel & Bos, now practising as UN Studio. Municipal

pride in the project is reflected in the allocation of a prominent historic site, close to the medieval city wall and the town's oldest park.

The new building butts up along the edge of a triangular piazza, confronting the town on one side and Kelfenbos park on the other, with views of Roman ruins and the river Waal. Consisting of a rectangular box mounted on a black stone plinth, the museum is a long, low and somewhat hermetic structure. The box part is clad in sleek, horizontal panels of greenish-blue translucent glass, with occasional pockets of transparency. At night, light palpates gently through the delicate glass skin, so dematerializing the building mass.

The museum's elemental simplicity belies a surprising diversity of internal spaces. Public, administrative and storage functions are



site plan

- 1 Light radiated through a delicately translucent glass skin to dematerialize the mass of the museum.
- 2 Low horizontal volume overhangs to shelter entry.
- 3 A 15m wide stair cuts through the building, leading from the entrance to the lower ground floor ...
- 4 ... and up to the gallery level on the first floor. The stair forms a key element of the interior.

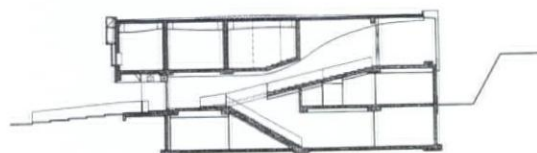
LIGHT WAVES

Nijmegen's bold new museum is a light-filled repository for art.

MUSEUM, NIJMEGEN,
THE NETHERLANDS
ARCHITECT
UN STUDIO

**MUSEUM, NIJMEGEN,
THE NETHERLANDS**

ARCHITECT
UN STUDIO

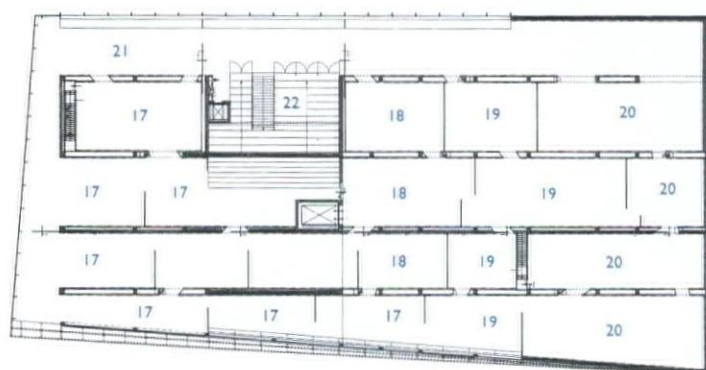


cross section

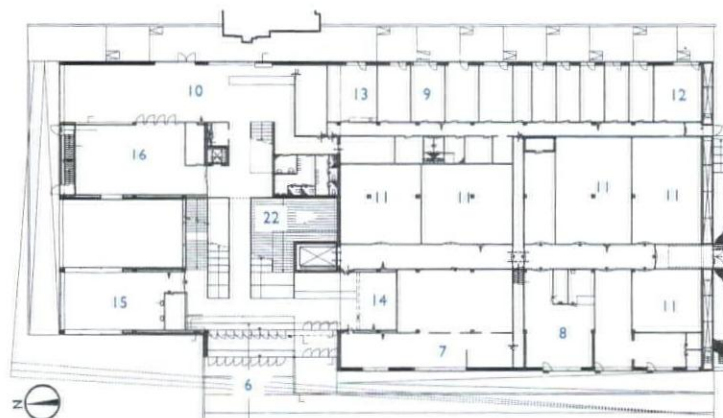
- 5 Promenade at first floor level marks the beginning of the gallery circuit and offers views out over the park.
6 An undulating slatted ceiling conceals services and diffuses light into the gallery spaces.
7, 8 The museum combines a collection of archaeological artefacts and paintings in cellular galleries arranged in long streets. Natural light combines with daylight in the neutral interiors.



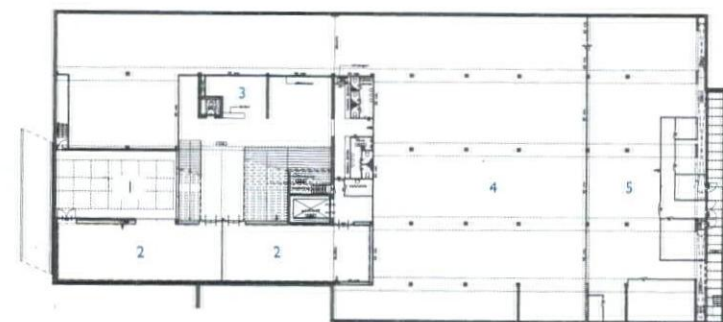
5
6



first floor plan



ground floor plan (scale approx 1:200)



ground floor plan (scale approx 1:200)

- 1 patio
- 2 gallery space
- 3 cloakroom
- 4 future expansion
- 5 plant
- 6 entrance
- 7 library/archive
- 8 staff restaurant
- 9 offices
- 10 café
- 11 storage
- 12 meeting room
- 13 staff room
- 14 shop
- 15 education room
- 16 auditorium
- 17 archaeology
- 18 painting
- 19 modern painting
- 20 temporary display
- 21 promenade
- 22 staircase





8

housed in the ground and basement, while museum and exhibition spaces occupy the first floor. The three floors are connected by a 15m wide staircase, which cuts a ceremonial swathe through the museum and extends outside to unite building with town. From the piazza, the stair runs into the museum, on a slightly off-centre axis, past the café, foyer, museum shop and library, and up to a promenade area at first floor offering an elevated vantage point over the park. This marks the start of the museum circuit, but the route is not prescribed: instead, visitors can determine their own itinerary through a series of cellular galleries with multiple lateral openings arranged in parallel streets. Attracted by light, cross views or exhibits, visitors can weave through the galleries at will. In this way, the conventional static floor

plan is challenged and deformed by the fluid patterns of movement (although curators trying to construct coherent displays or publish a definitive exhibition guide might beg to differ). Yet for a modest municipal museum with a disparate collection, the flexibility seems to work and extends UN Studio's preoccupation with circulation as a form generator, most radically explored in the practice's recent Moebius House (AR September 1999).

Above the labyrinthine galleries, internal coherence is provided by the sensuously undulating ceiling, which follows the route of the stair. Where visitors congregate, the undulations are fullest, but in gallery spaces they are shallower and less frequent. The ceiling is a lightweight slatted structure, with the mechanics of lighting and services set

above it, partially visible through the slats. Light filters through the diaphanous structure, supplementing cool north light for those exhibits that can be exposed to daylight. Eggshell blue floors soften the clinical white walls and ceiling and form a neutral backdrop for the great variety of artefacts.

Distinguished by subtlety and invention, Nijmegen exploits materials and light to create a luminous repository for art.

CONNIE VAN CLEEF

Architect

UN Studio, Rotterdam
www.unstudio.com

Project team

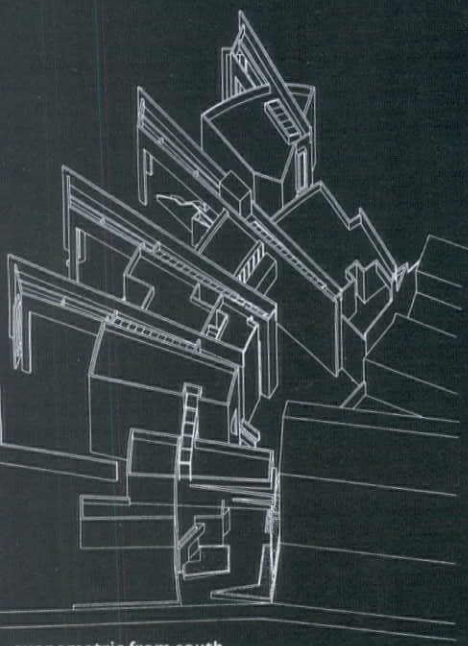
Ben van Berkel, Caroline Bos, Rob Hootsmans, Henri Snel, Remco Bruggink, Hugo Beschoor Plug, Walther Kloet, Marc Dijkman, Jacco van Wengarden, Luc Veeger, Florian Fischer, Carsten Kiselowsky

Photographs

Christian Richters

JEWISH CULTURAL CENTRE, DUISBURG,
GERMANY
ARCHITECT
ZVI HECKER ARCHITEKT



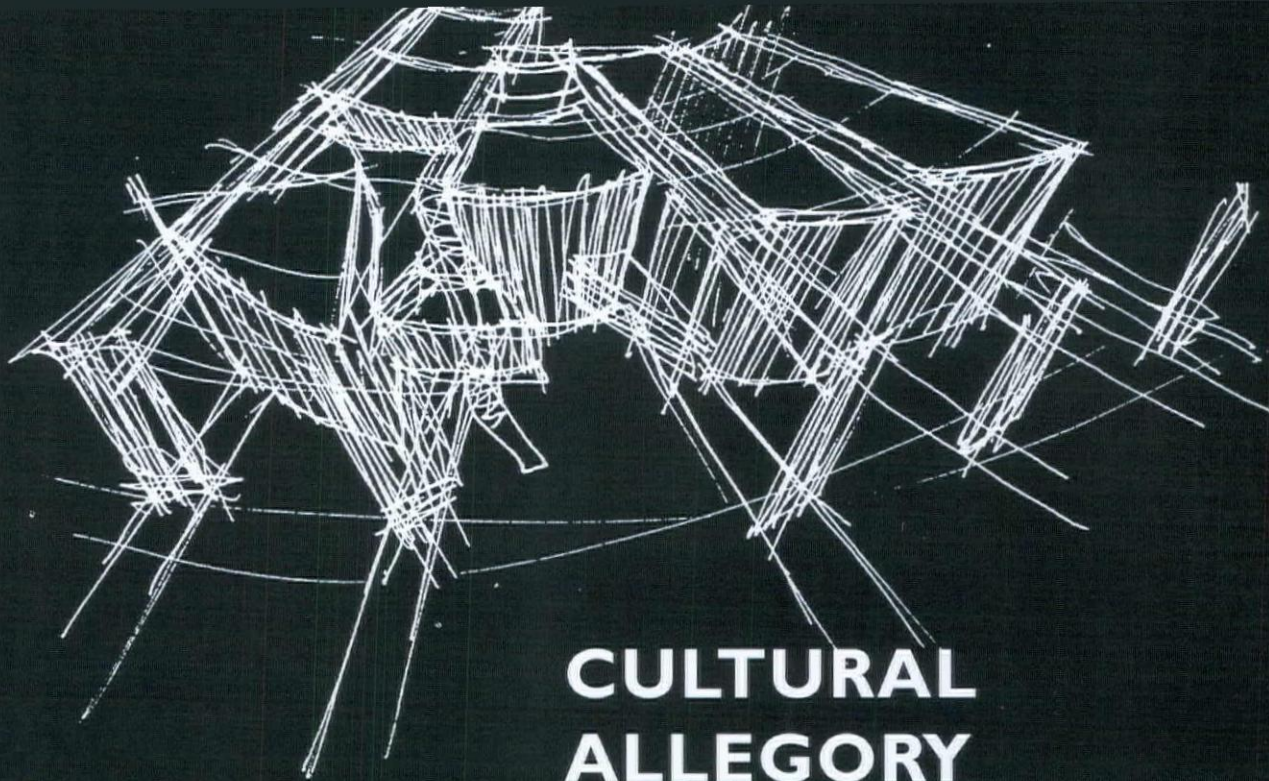


axonometric from south



5
Entrance court has almost domestic
scale. Actual entrance ...
6
... is round corner, into ...
7
... the glazed lobby.





CULTURAL ALLEGORY

Allegorical manipulation of space, light and figure give appropriate presence to a Jewish centre in the Ruhr.

On Kristallnacht in 1938, the synagogue of Duisburg was destroyed by the Nazis. Since then, the city and its Ruhr conurbation neighbours, Mülheim and Oberhausen, have had no focus for Jewish life, until Dani Hecker's new building was completed. It is in a riverside park by Dani Karavan which replaces a redundant warehouse area, curiously not far from the site of the original synagogue. Hecker has always had

sensitivity for figure, last displayed movingly in his Jewish school in Berlin where the plan is based on the life-celebrating form of the sunflower, which becomes an intricate curving lattice of children-scaled spaces. At Duisburg, the figure is bolder, and the scale bigger. Five pairs of double beams radiate from the southern (upper) edge of the park in a way variously compared by Hecker to the fingers of a hand or the leaves of

an open book. The hand is the characteristic organ of our species, and its imprint can be found in the caves in which we began habitation. The book is of course the foundation of Jewish culture, as Hecker says 'In Jewish history text replaced territory, the Book a kingdom'.

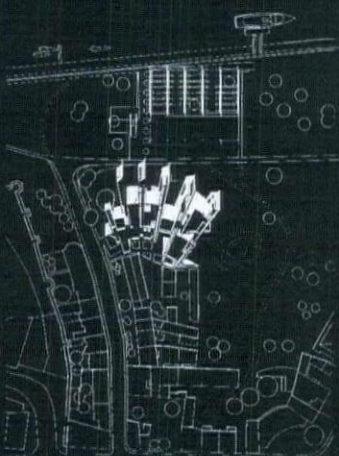
The paired concrete beams order the complex which is formed by and around them. At their northern (park) ends, they are propped on big and complex

fingers or the leaves of a book spread out into landscape, symbolically representing history of Jewish community in Duisburg.

paired beams terminate in elaborate columns, creating ...

portals of almost archaic presence when seen from east.

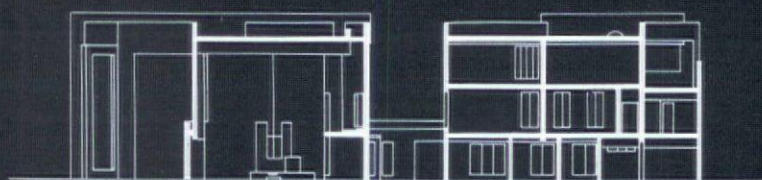
entrance to Centre is down a cobbled path which goes under cantilevered caretaker's flat.



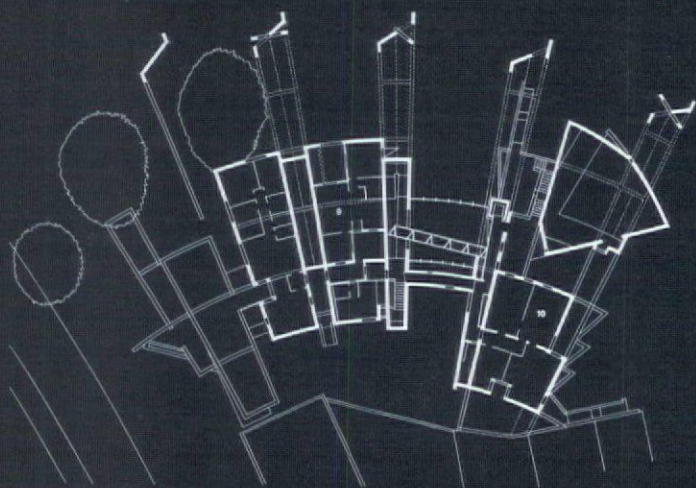
site plan



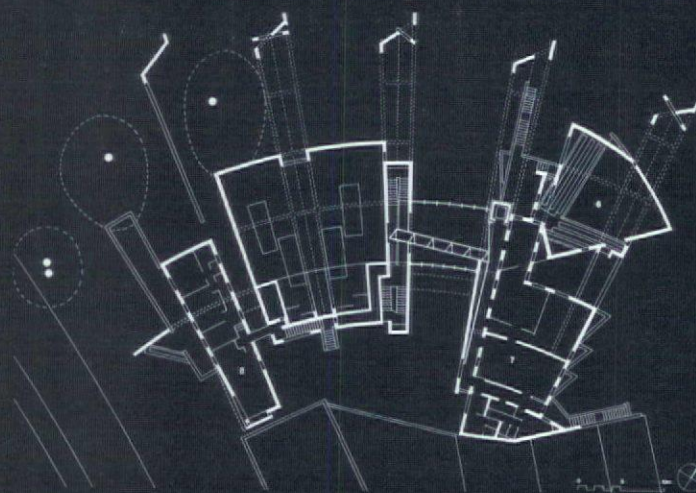
- | | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| 1 lobby | 6 women's gallery |
| 2 hall | 7 hobbies |
| 3 synagogue | 8 caretaker's flat |
| 4 administration | 9 rabbi |
| 5 kosher kitchen | 10 class |



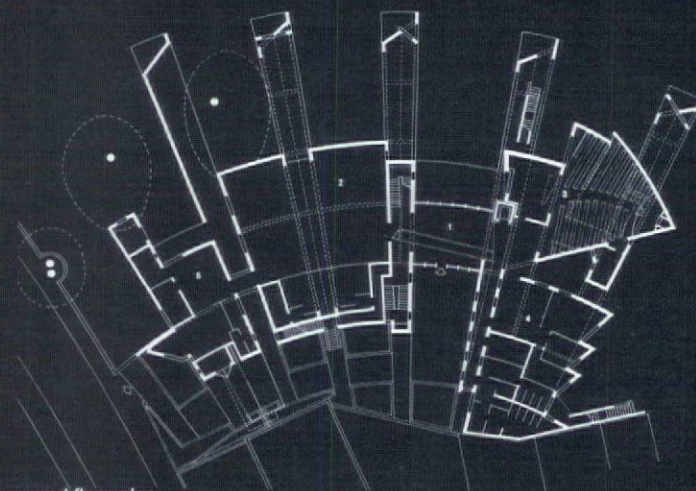
section through synagogue and administration



second floor plan



first floor plan



ground floor plan

JEWISH CULTURAL CENTRE, DUISBURG, GERMANY

ARCHITECT

ZVI HECKER ARCHITEKT

columns from which they taper back into the irregular masses of the building proper. So they form a kind of abstracted curving arcade which articulates the building and looks down over the grassy park slope towards the river, grandly commanding the view back up from the bank with its almost archaic monumental arches against the sky.

The complex is reached from the west down a cobbled path from the street. An inner court is revealed under a strange portico formed by projecting the caretaker's flat over the entrance route in a hair-raising cantilever which stops just short of the neighbouring building. It is, as Layla Dawson has remarked (AR September 1996), like part of a realized Proun project by El Lissitzky. The device serves two functions. It allows the caretaker to oversee the entrance from his long canted bay window (the building is under constant surveillance from here and elsewhere to ward against neo-Nazis). And the portico marks the symbolic moment of entering the Jewish Cultural Centre.

The court is a quiet and gentle urban place set between the entrance (south) side of the Centre and dull existing buildings. At first, its scale seems domestic and even confusing, for the only apparent entrance is a short flight of external stairs which turns out to be the entrance to the caretaker's flat. The public entrance to the place is round the corner to the left, where the glazed walls of a triple-height lobby unite the two main parts of the building, and offer a view of park and river between two of the organizing fingers of the plan.

To the right of the entrance is the synagogue and its anti-rooms, with a tapering corridor to the south that gives access to the offices. The synagogue is an irregular, broadly triangular

space, but carefully modified to allow light to penetrate from the west, behind the congregation. A triple-height space, the synagogue has a gallery for orthodox proceedings where women have to be upstairs. Their level is reached either by lift from the lobby or up an outside stair from the park. Both men and women face the luminous corner from which the Ark containing the Scrolls dominates the space.

If you turn left in the lobby instead of right you enter the community hall which, like the synagogue is a triple-height space, this time set firmly between three of the massive radiating double portals. The central one spans the whole space and provides a light chute which by its taper directs attention to the stage at the south end.

Beyond the hall, a glass passage connects to the kosher (double) community kitchen which is needed for communal celebrations: bar-mitzvahs and so on. The kitchen is tucked under the caretaker's flat and there are two rabbinical flats on the third floor. Other uses: classrooms, a hobby room and all the usual apparatus needed in a public building, are ingeniously tucked over or beside the main functions and linked by an amazingly picturesque network of internal and (sometimes external) circulation routes. Not as convenient or obvious as they perhaps could be, they provide memorable series of events: unexpected views, sudden splashes of light, alternating containment and exposure (for instance the bridge which flies across the glazed lobby at first floor level).

Materials of the bridge, as everywhere else, are simple and rather austere. In-situ concrete is exposed where possible, in the portals for instance; there is steel in the bridge and its first floor connections. There are

**JEWISH CULTURAL CENTRE, DUISBURG,
GERMANY**

ARCHITECT

ZVI HECKER ARCHITEKT

plaster and render over infill brick, wood-framed windows and external zinc over elements like the lift tower. Only in the lobby and synagogue is an honorific material used: warm Jerusalem limestone on the floor of the entrance lobby and on the Ark of the synagogue.

The simple palette is intended to allow the forms and spaces to speak for themselves. Each volume is different, and each is clearly expressed on the outside. Here the Organic meets Constructivism, and other things meet too: Ancient and Modern,

building and Book.

Hecker suggests that the five great portals overlooking the park are abstract representations of a chapter in the history of Jewish life in Duisburg: the arrival in the twelfth century, the first Minyan in 1793, the first permanent one room prayer location, the first synagogue in 1875 (and points to the original site), and the new beginning symbolized by the portal which crosses the new synagogue. Will the text be readable? Not immediately, but it will surely be absorbed over

time, for the Centre has the intimacy of an old family house, or a small quarter of a complex town. It will be learned physically and mentally over the generations by the community, and become part of it.

DIETER DAUNE

Architect

Zvi Hecker Architekt, Berlin

Design team

Zvi Hecker, Petra Korff, Laurence Nash

Associate architect

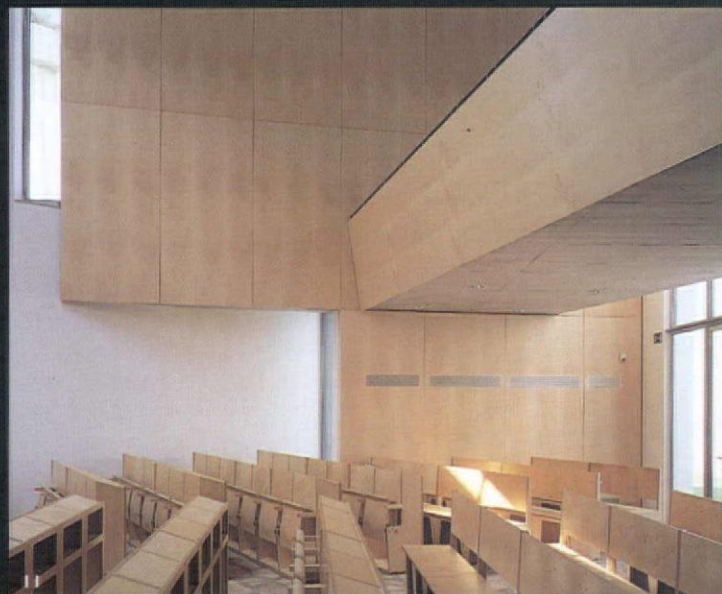
Inken Baller, Architektin, Berlin

Structural engineer

Gerhard Pichler

Photographs

Michael Krüger



8 Internal circulation is enlivened by spatial incident and splashes of light.

9 Community (multi-purpose) hall.

10 Synagogue focuses on Ark, with daylighting ...

11 ... coming largely from behind congregation.



On falling ground, at the edge of the forest, the Misteli day care centre for little children overlooks the outer Helsinki suburb from which their mothers go daily to work. It contrasts with the red bricks and white timber trim of the bungalows further down the slope in its patent solidity, natural wood and the finesse of

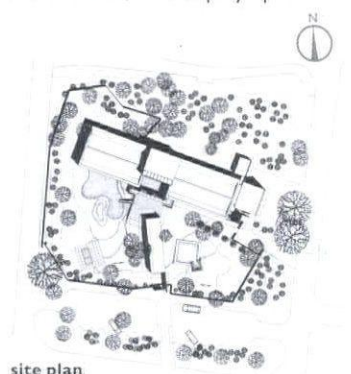
its detailing, which can be sensed from a good way off.

A long, low solid building runs roughly from west to east on the site, with a storage wing slightly inflected from a right angle to meet it on a deck which forms a platform that runs clear through the main slab. Here is the forum of the little complex: the entrance, outdoor play space

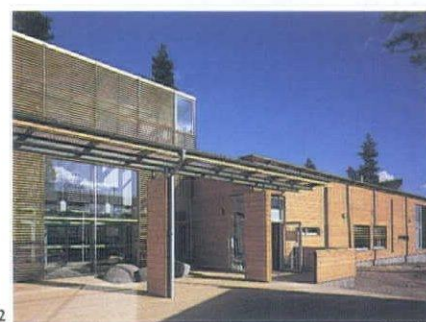
and meeting area. Here, the two blocks provide shelter and emphasis on arrival in much the same way (on another scale) that the seemingly arbitrary arrangement of elements gave a powerful protected entrance sequence to the folk art centre at Kaustinen in Ostrobothnia (by Kaira-Lahdelma-Mahlamäki, AR July 1998, p50).

PLAY HOUSE

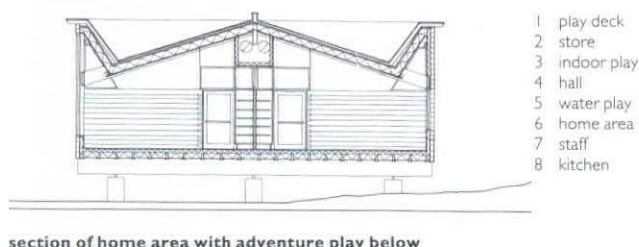
A thoughtfully crafted building on the forest edge introduces children to the wonders of light.



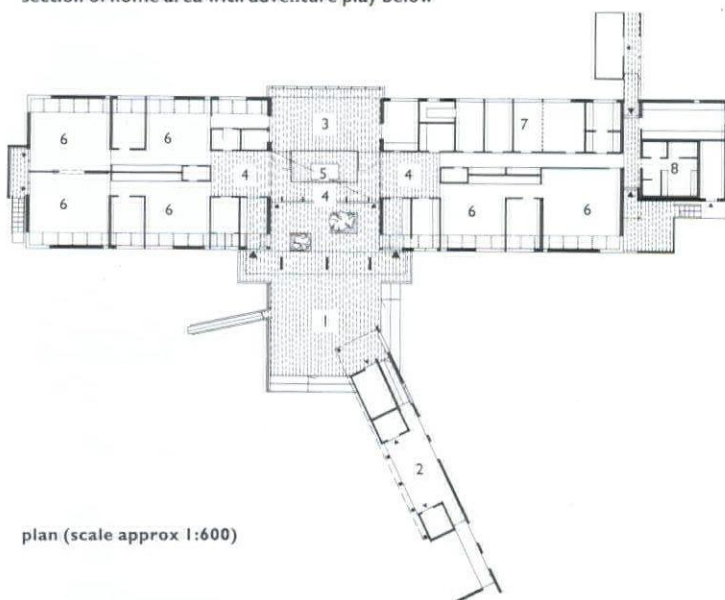
1
Play deck is sheltered by canopy and store wing (right).
2
Windows in log walls of home-area blocks are positioned in height to cater for both children and adults.



**DAY CARE CENTRE, HELSINKI,
FINLAND**
ARCHITECT
ARKKITEHTITOIMISTO KAIRA



section of home area with adventure play below



plan (scale approx 1:600)

In the day care centre, both section and materials of the main block change at the entrance. Individual home areas are contained in a heavy, solid, comforting structure formed of squared solid logs. This gives way to a high glassy box through which the floor plane of the entrance platform passes to unite the two sides of the building in a common play area.

To prevent this central space from overheating, the glass is protected by an external grillage of fixed wooden louvres which are cut back in places to give what must for small children be wondrous views of the sky. Immediately facing the external deck is a louvreless section of wall where light is modulated by raisable venetian blinds to provide visual continuity between external

and internal play areas. (It seems a bit odd that there is no direct physical connection between the two places – the entrance doors are on each side of the deck.)

The central volume is a splendid space, full of light from the glass walls. In the middle is a small glass aedicule containing the pool for water-play. The whole of this central area is filled with light: the grey light of the Finnish winter brought into the middle of the building, or summer sunshine casting striated shadows onto the little children as they play, and giving them a subliminal notion of time and season. H. M.

Architect

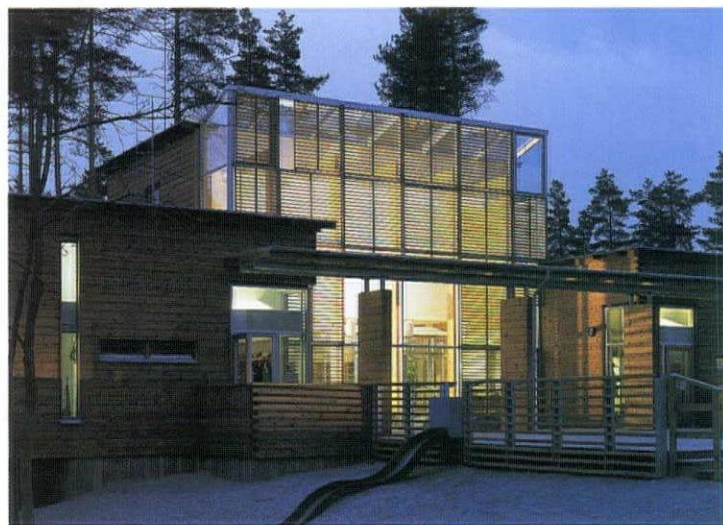
Arkkitehtitoimisto Kaira

Design team

Mikko Kaira, Virve Kaartoluoma

Photographs

Matti Karjanoja



3



4

- 3 At night (which can fall very early in the winter), the entrance becomes a beacon of welcome.
- 4 Looking out to play deck through little glass house for water play with lid of tank raised.
- 5 Original site boulders incorporated into deck.
- 6 Sunlight striated and slowly moving turns entrance playroom into giant internal sundial.

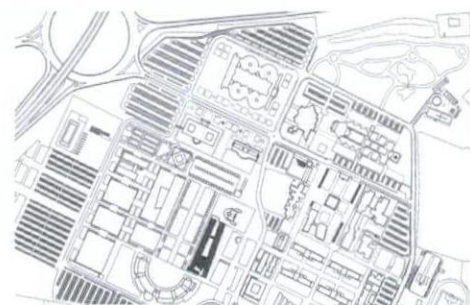


COLLEGE COURTS

Reinterpreting the traditional Hispanic patio form, these offices for a college rector in Alicante are a hermetic presence in the landscape with a softly luminous interior.

The University of Alicante at San Vincente del Raspaig occupies the grounds of the military aerodrome of Rabasa. Alvaro Siza was asked to design an office and administration building for the college rector on a site adjacent to an abandoned air control tower on the edge of the campus. The taut, Rationalist orthogonality of the existing structures informs Siza's characteristically austere response to the programme, but he is also concerned with mitigating the harsh Mediterranean light of southern Spain. In the traditional Hispano-Arabic manner, the building is conceived as a closed, imperforate fortress against the rigours of climate.

Organized around a basic H-shaped plan, the rectorate is an emphatically horizontal volume enclosed by low, white stucco walls with plinths of honey-coloured stone. From the street the building appears austere and opaque, an institutional monument defined by its white, inscrutable mass. Deferring to the control tower close to its south end, the building diminishes in height from two to one storeys along its length, creating terraces shaded by crisp overhangs that articulate the impervious volumes. A handful of openings are deeply recessed into the white flanks of the walls. The scale is almost domestic, save for an oversized cuboid loggia that projects out dramatically over the north-east corner



location plan

RECTORATE, ALICANTE UNIVERSITY,
SPAIN

ARCHITECT

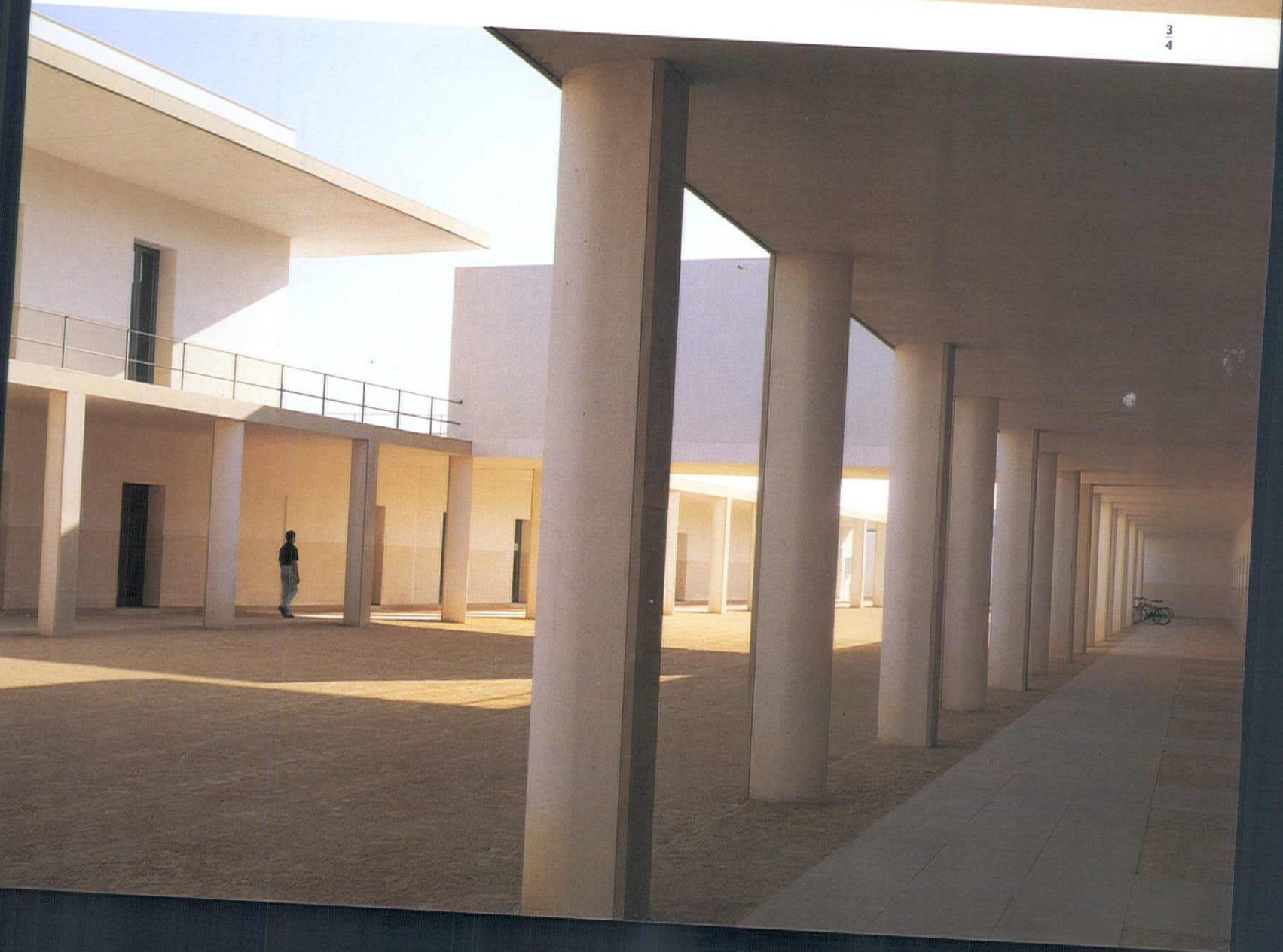
ALVARO SIZA

1, 2 Enclosed by low, impermeable walls, the rectorate is a hermetic volume that reinterprets the traditional Mediterranean patio typology.

3, 4 At the heart of the building is a long, tapering courtyard enclosed by a colonnade for shade.



3
4



RECTORATE, ALICANTE UNIVERSITY,
SPAIN
ARCHITECT
ALVARO SIZA



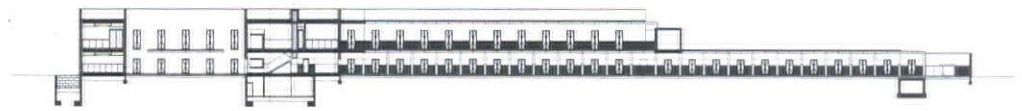


6
7



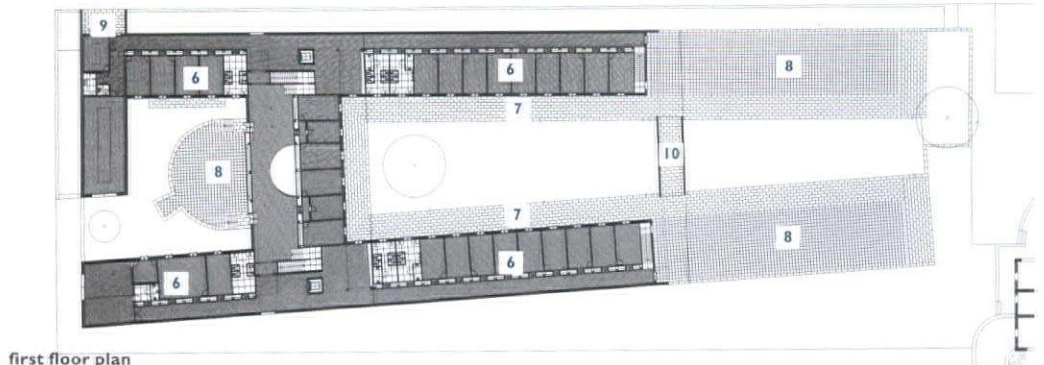
5, 7
Light softly washes through the internal spaces,
reflecting off cream tiles, white walls and polished
timber floors.
6
Semi-circular void brings light deep into the building.

**RECTORATE, ALICANTE UNIVERSITY,
SPAIN**
ARCHITECT
ALVARO SIZA

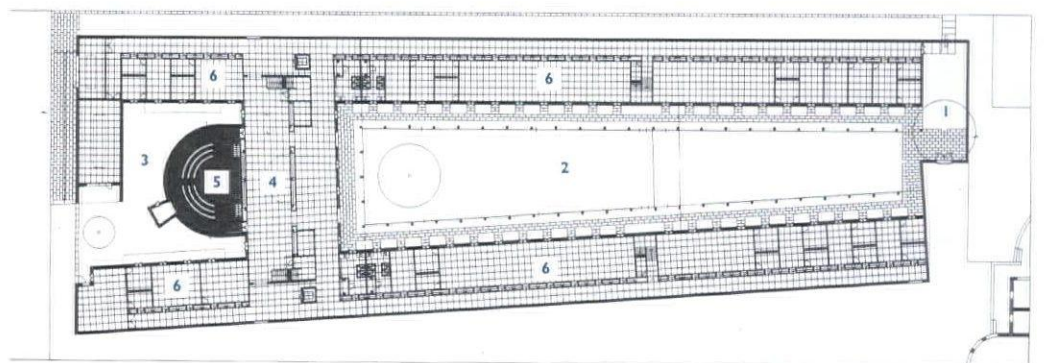


longitudinal section

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 entrance | 6 offices and meeting rooms |
| 2 main courtyard | 7 open gallery |
| 3 secondary courtyard | 8 terrace |
| 4 entrance hall | 9 loggia |
| 5 auditorium | 10 footbridge |



first floor plan



ground floor plan (scale approx 1:1000)

anchoring the overall composition.

The slightly tapering legs of the H house cellular offices and meeting rooms, linked by a transverse block containing a foyer space, with the rector's office above. Within the foyer, a double-height, semi-circular void disperses soft light into the depths of the building. Light is reflected off predominantly hard or lustrous surfaces, giving the interior a cool luminosity. Materials are chosen for simplicity and climatic comfort: heat-reflecting white walls, stone, polished timber and cream ceramic tiles. The foyer also functions as a breakout space for a semi-circular auditorium which resembles an ancient Greek theatre, attached to the north side of the transverse block.

The long thin office wings enclose two hermetic internal courtyards or patios. Hung off long spinal perimeter corridors, rooms

are oriented to the courtyard, so the building effectively turns in on itself, away from the glare and heat of the exterior. A single-storey colonnade marches rhythmically around the perimeter of the larger south courtyard, creating a broad, interstitial zone of shade. The main entrance to the building is on the south-east corner, and is a simple portal framed in the perimeter wall. From here, you stroll through the colonnade to the foyer, or can cut directly into the offices, as each room opens on to the courtyard. Its bald expanse colonized by a single stubby tree, the narrow courtyard has the bleak and slightly disturbing aura of a de Chirico painting. The regular geometry of the colonnade breaks up the low volumes and casts changing patterns of striated shadows over the walls. Towards the north end, the building rises to two

storeys, and the roof of the colonnade forms an external gallery for spaces at this level. The smaller secondary courtyard on the north side of the transverse bar is dominated by the curved flank of the auditorium.

With its vocabulary of restrained neutrality and subtle reinvention of the traditional patio form, Siza gives the nondescript campus a quiet focus that responds poetically and pragmatically to the Andalusian light and climate. C. S.

Architect
Alvaro Siza, Porto
Project team
Elisário Miranda, Luiz Martinez-Planellas, Avelino Silva, Carlos Seoane, Cristina Ferreira, Hana Kassem, Luiz Diaz-Mauriño, Antonio Morata Ortiz
Structural engineer
José Luis Pérez Molina
Photographs
Duccio Malagamba

Lighting up the North

The distinct and highly poetic qualities of light in the far Northern latitudes have inspired generations of Nordic artists and architects to create works that reflect the beauty of the dream-inducing atmosphere and landscape.

THE IMPORTANCE OF NATURAL LIGHT TO THE ART OF building in Finland, and to some extent all Scandinavia, is precisely because of its scarcity for half the year. But it results as well from a desire to be close to the haunting beauty of light and colour which define the Nordic world, and infuse the landscape with mood.

Northern light derives from a blend of atmospheric conditions and low sun. At very high latitudes, rays of light are pale and weak, arriving at angles that are often horizontal and may even come from below the horizon. Seasons bring an astonishing contrast between summer, when there is sunshine even at midnight, and winter with its perpetual darkness and gloom. During long midsummer evenings, the sun dissolves in a blue haze which fills the sky like gentle mist. And at winter dusk, sky and snow are bathed in delicate colours which linger for hours.

While Scandinavian countries have different terrain and climate, they all share a bewitching light. Even more than the landscape, it is this dream-inducing atmosphere which conveys where you are – at the outermost edge of the world. Left behind is the sharp and brilliant light of the South, which makes perception more clear and constant.

The mystical Northern sky was absorbed into saga and myth, and deeply coloured all the arts.¹ Most renowned are *plein air* paintings from the turn of the century, whose artists were drawn to the eerie glow which gives the region its brooding mystery, and source of geographic identity. One immediately sees this spell in a series of exhibitions from the 1980s and '90s on Scandinavian painting, whose titles alone are revealing – *Northern Light*, *Dreams of a Summer Night*, *The Mystic North*, *The Light of the North*.² Central to the Nordic 'mood painting' is an attempt to bring viewers into startling contact with evocative aspects of light, which suffuse the picture surface and are often its

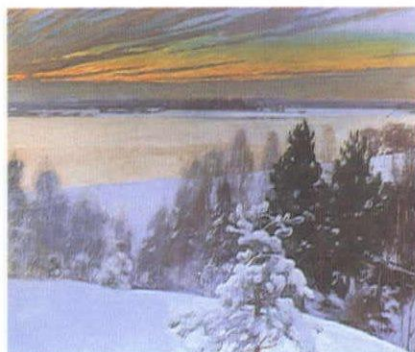
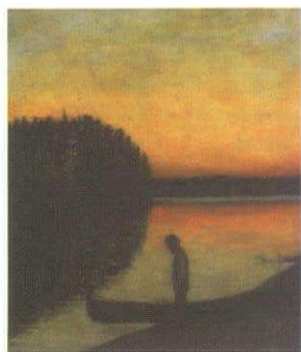
very subject. A frail luminosity was constructed on canvas with penetrating accuracy, producing a hypnotic mixture of realism and magic. Apart from the unreal haze of summer evening, whose colour is neither of night nor day, there was a fascination with the starry winter night, translucent mist of the forest, glistening ice and snow, and throbbing violets of winter dusk. In architectural scenes, these subtle tones bathe over volumes to bring every surface under their spell, imbuing rooms with an air of solitude, touched with spirituality.

BY THE 1920s and '30s, architects were learning to handle the soft dilute light of the North with equal poetic force. But they faced a problem unique to their medium – how to illuminate interiors and provide contact with nature in a climate where daylight was scarce, and a limited resource. While winter darkness and precious light are concerns throughout Scandinavia, they have been a central preoccupation of twentieth-century Finland, and define its building culture.

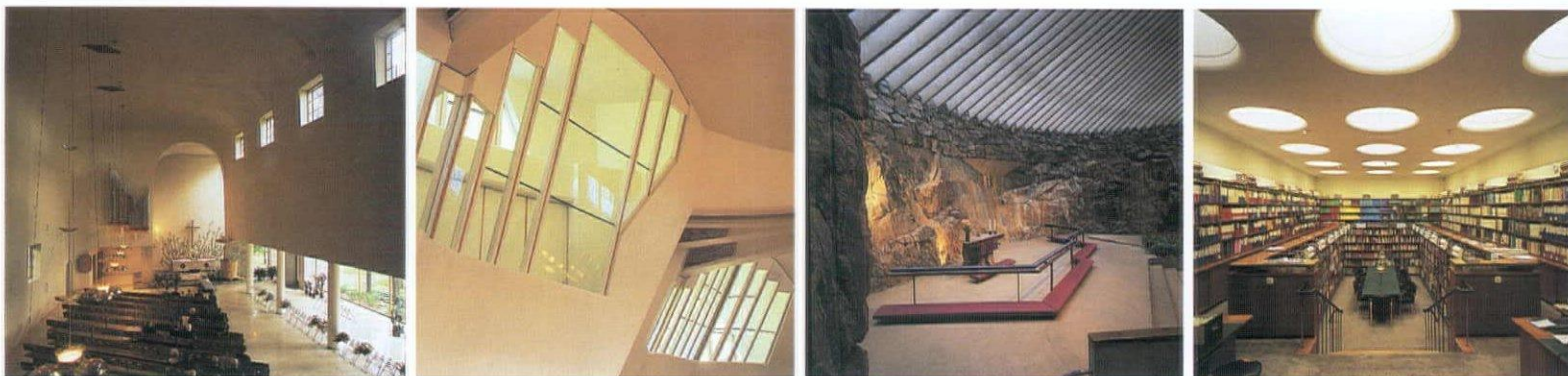
Drawing on centuries of peasant woodcraft, and the white tones of *l'esprit nouveau*, modern Finnish architects pioneered a new kind of space in harmony with the low sun and dim dusk. Methods of lighting developed that were ample, yet deliberately soft-focused, gently nuanced, and painterly in manner, throwing emphasis onto tonal relations rather than contour. Stretching back to figures like Alvar Aalto and Erik Bryggman is an art of creating mood, not with harsh light but exceptionally weak illumination, whose rarity brings to each room a reticent beauty.

Finnish techniques for managing light begin with carving and folding the building shell to form channels and scoops, acting as funnels. These profiles increase the capture of light, while drawing it from specific parts of the sky. Baffles and blades, troughs and cells guide

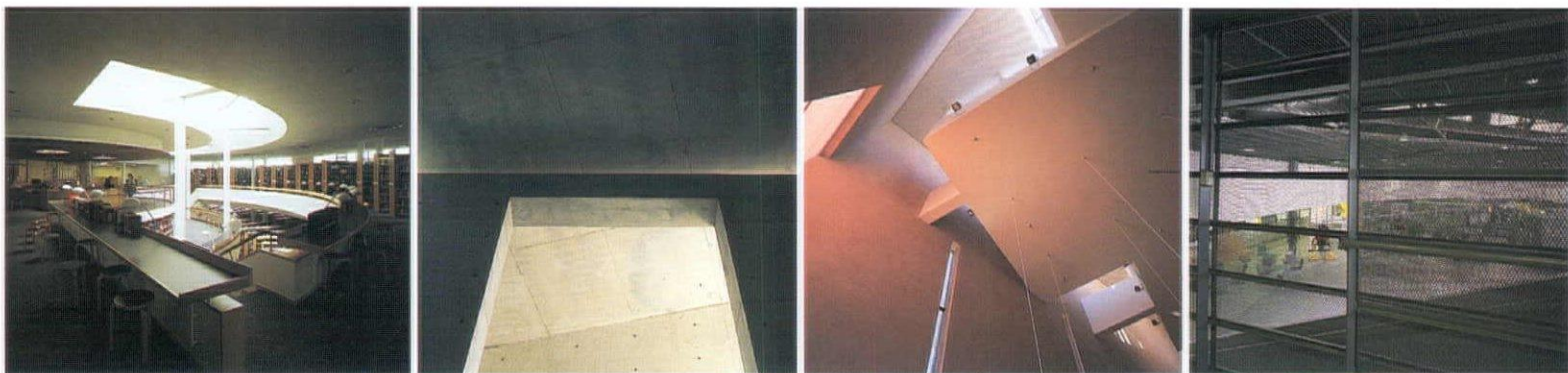
Turn of the century Scandinavian painting poetically evoked the moods of light and landscape. *Finnish Elegy* (right), by Hugo Simberg (1895); *Sunset in Winter* (middle), by Pekka Halonen, and Akseli Gallen Kallala's *Imatra in Winter* (1893), (far right). Opposite: forest landscape and Aalto's Church at Imatra (1958).







Northern architects, especially in Finland, have sought to evolve an architecture of spaces in harmony with low sun and dim dusk. Left to right: Erik Bryggman's Resurrection Chapel, Turku (1940); Aalto's Imatra Church; Tempeliaukio Church, Helsinki, by Timo and Tuomo Suomalainen (1969); Library in the National Pensions Institute by Aalto, Helsinki (1957).



Left to right: Aalto's Mount Angel Abbey Library, Oregon (1970); Tadao Ando's exquisite Church of Light at Ibaraki (1989) shares qualities of transcendence with Nordic architecture; Kontula Church, by Kärpy and Simo Paavilainen (1988); Heikkinen & Komonen's Emergency Services College, Kuopio (1992). Opposite: Imatra Church and limpid light at Lake Päijänne.

the light as a flowing liquid, diffusing rays by a series of reflections, and shedding them where needed free of glare. By employing such optical instruments not only along outer walls, but midpoints in the roof, an entire building can be exposed to natural light, and stay in touch with shifting seasons and passing weather.

The most exquisite touch is the delicate surface prepared for faint, frail light to play. Wall and ceiling are tactile yet pale in colour, to reflect and register subtle illumination. Blond and unfinished woods, grainy coatings of white plaster, monochrome expanses of brick, and at one time granite, provide neutral yet responsive grounds for magnifying feeble light, bringing out imperceptible tones and angles.

RECURRENT ALSO IN Finnish daylighting is a fusion of rational illumination and poetic evocation. A generous amount of light is provided to see by, and combat the long winter night, while this same light is treated to create mood, and conjure up an atmosphere distinct to the North. Thus Aalto's interiors may be well-lit, but also resonate with nature – materializing the forest in baffled screens, the snowy winter and summer night in white cavities, a misty veil of sky in rooflights, and a shimmering lake in ribbed ceramic tile. Heightened abstractions by later generations, such as the dark containers and steel meshes of Heikkinen & Komonen, are no less tied to the Nordic climate and sky, as was the architecture of the past, notably the peasant log hut and white-painted church. Whether conscious or not, these buildings are inscribed with impressions of native light, maintaining contact with reality.

A resonance of building and sky calls attention to the most elusive aspect of spirit of place. Our sense of being somewhere distinct in

the world is never due merely to physical forms, but arises as well from metaphysical phenomena, and the intangible spell they weave. The softness or harshness of things which results from ambient illumination, and its spectral composition, affect human perception and thereby a sense of reality, shaping the temperament of a people and their landscape, and general ethos of a culture.

A built evocation of Northern light does more than reproduce nature or delight the senses. It helps the Finn better understand his place and himself, conjuring up an image of what he feels inside and believes to be true. And by doing so, it helps him be fully human – restoring the spiritual dimension of life, and allowing him to inhabit the environment emotionally as well as physically.

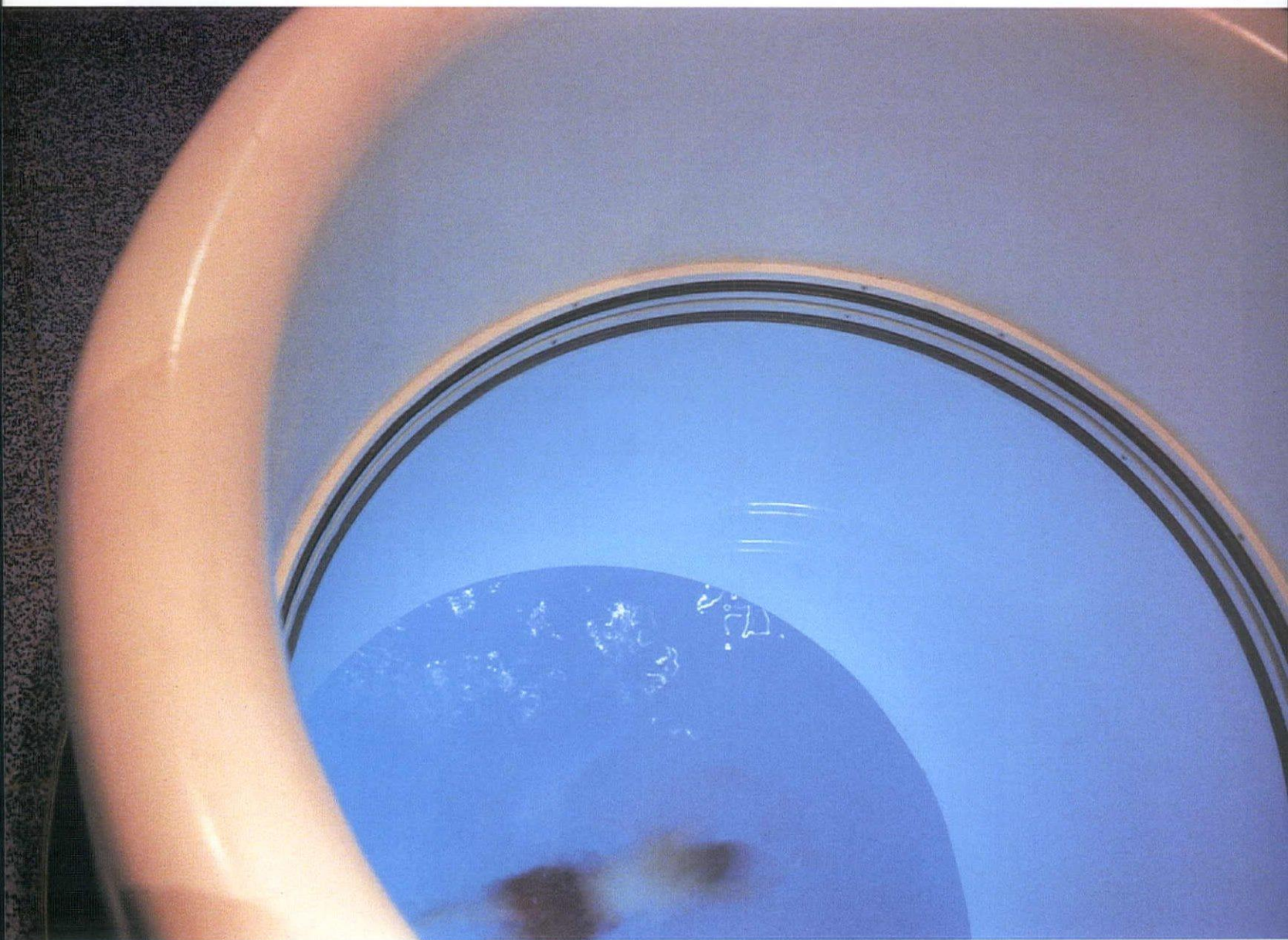
The Finnish stress upon light and atmosphere also suggests an affinity to our time. Its transcendental urge is echoed in other cultures, and profoundly modern in its ties to non-objective art and phenomenal experience. As with enchanted buildings by Louis Kahn and Tadao Ando, or installations by James Turrell and Robert Irwin, a level is touched that transcends material, reducing the physical to an elemental state that is almost nothing, and giving access to a kind of magic that is real. HENRY PLUMMER

This essay forms part of a longer treatise 'Building with Northern Light' first published by *ARK* (the Finnish Architectural Review) in April, May and June 1999.

1 The mystic quality of Nordic light, and its influence on painting in both northern Europe and North America between the 1890s and mid-twentieth century, was the subject of a 1984 exhibition *The Mystic North*, held at the Art Gallery of Ontario and Cincinnati Art Museum. See Roald Nasgaard, *The Mystic North* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984).

2 The exhibition *Northern Light* was organized by the Brooklyn Museum in New York, where it was shown from November 1982 to January 1983. *Dreams of a Summer Night* was held at the Hayward Gallery in London from July to October 1986. *The Light of the North* was organized by and held at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid, from March to May 1995.





Submarine dream

Design of the interior of a new hotel on a remote island in the North Sea draws on the floating drifting forms of marine flora and fauna.

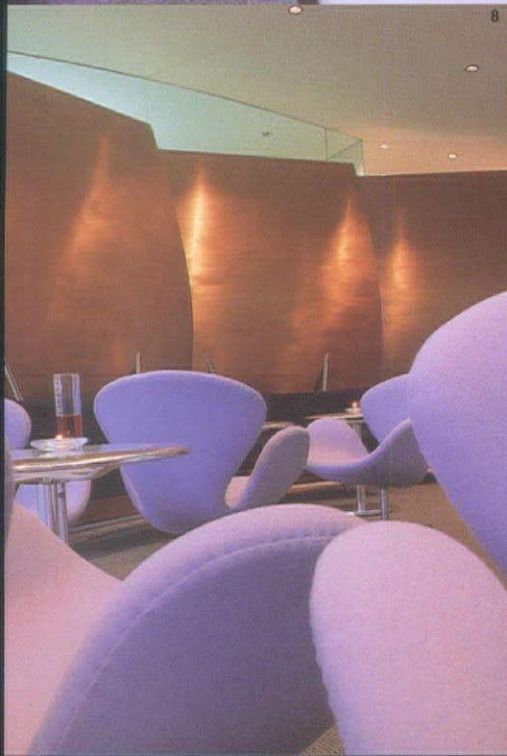
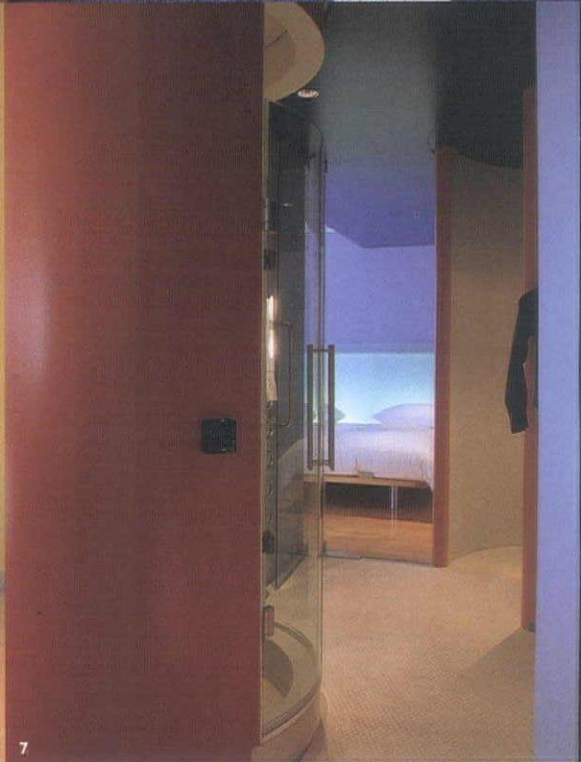
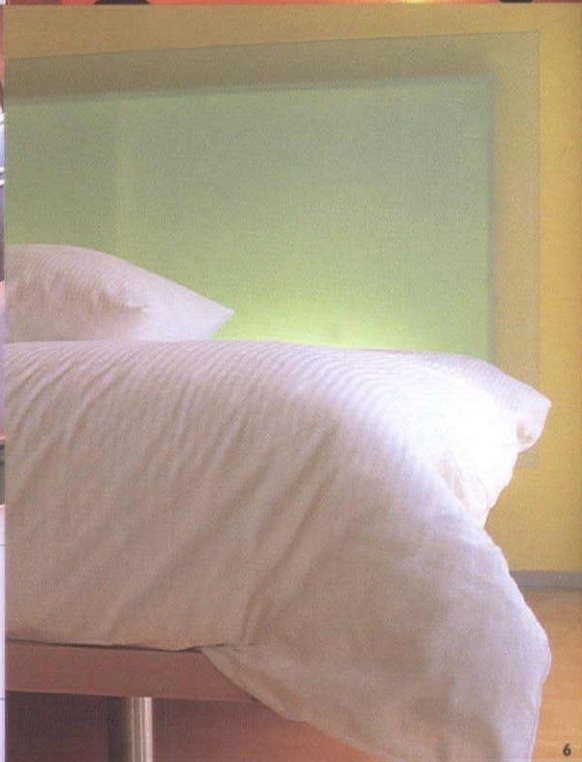
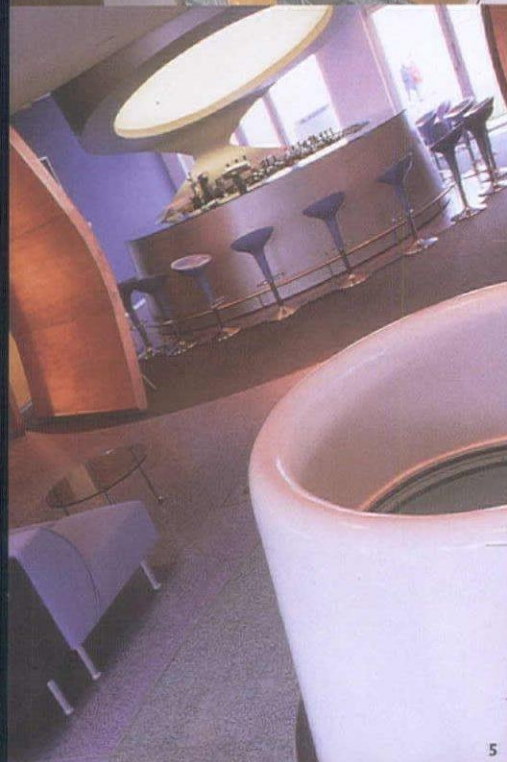
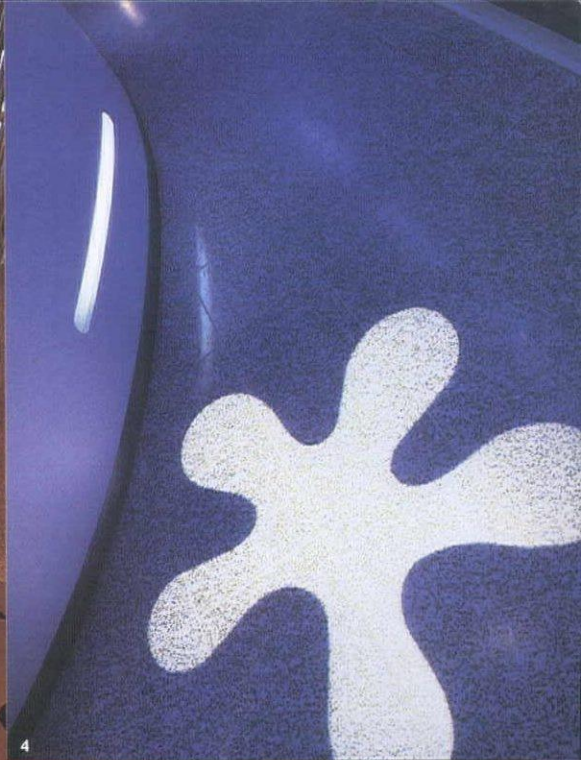
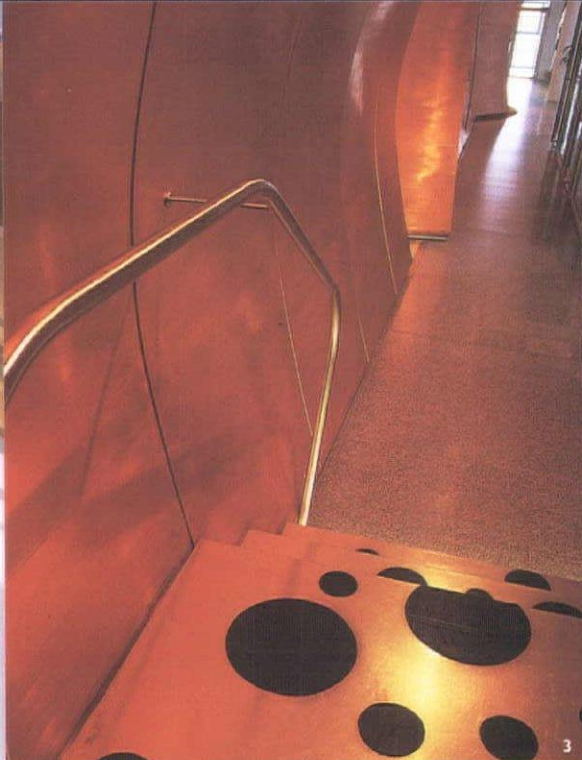
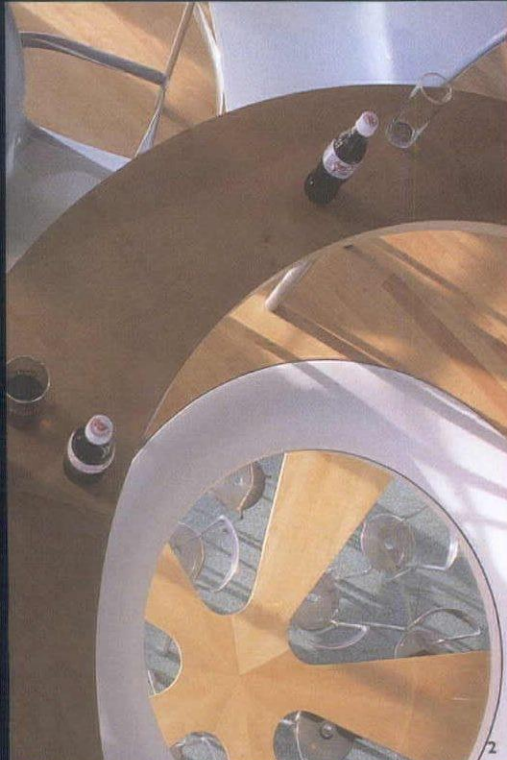
**HOTEL, HELIGOLAND,
GERMANY**
ARCHITECT
ALISON BROOKS ARCHITECTS

The two islands of Heligoland, lying 70km from the mouth of the Elbe, are a three hour hydroplane ride from Hamburg. For such minute, isolated specks of flat red rock (the main one is one mile long, at most one-third of a mile wide) they have had an extremely interesting history.

Supporting a spa and a fishing community, Heligoland was passed during the nineteenth century from Denmark to Britain which gave it to Germany (in exchange for Zanzibar). As a German possession during both world wars, it was an important naval base and munitions dump. In 1947, the British succeeded in obliterating fortifications,

munitions and town, and used the island for bombing practice until 1952, when it was handed back to the Germans.

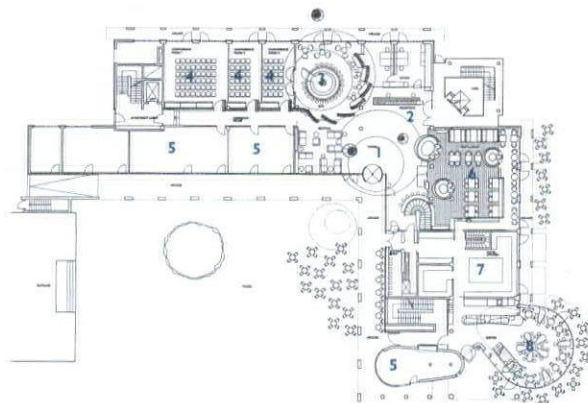
As a result of a competition held in the 1950s, a new utopian town, faceless and utilitarian, was built to replace the one destroyed. It is now designated a national monument. A new arrival, the Atoll hotel is externally an undistinguished building cranked round two sides of the main square in front of the Rathaus. On the other side, the two faces pinned at the angle by a glass tower, look south and east over the sea. Designed by NPS Architekten Hamburg and put up by Arne Weber, a Hamburg



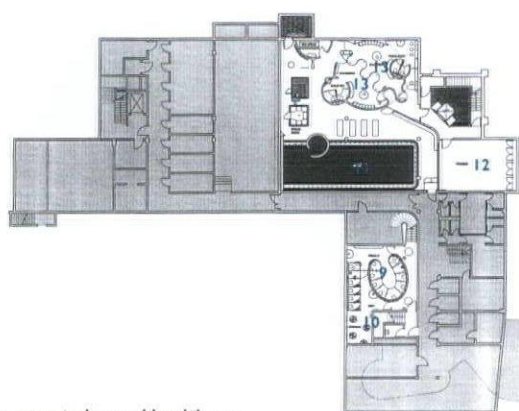
- 1 In the foyer, stainless-steel cones erupt through blue black terrazzo to give views of swimmers in the pool below.
- 2 Looking down from upper timber deck of bistro to starfish/flower café table.
- 3 Concave copper-lined wall of ground floor corridor.
- 4 Atoll motif imprinted onto sea blue terrazzo.
- 5 From foyer to circular bar within pivoting concave copper doors. Bar counter made from aluminium cylinder sliced diagonally to create halo of light.
- 6 Bed with illuminated headboard, replacing bedside lamps.
- 7 Bedroom with cylindrical shower on left and illuminated bed.
- 8 Bar with Arne Jacobsen's biomorphic Swan chairs.
- 9 Aluminium bottle wall lining stairs to lavatories accommodates bottles in restaurant on ground floor.



first floor plan



ground floor plan (scale approx 1:700)



basement plan and health spa

- 1 foyer
- 2 reception
- 3 bar
- 4 conference room
- 5 shop
- 6 restaurant
- 7 kitchen
- 8 bistro
- 9 lavatories female
- 10 lavatories male
- 11 pool
- 12 gym
- 13 changing room
- 14 bedroom
- 15 apartment



industrialist, its architecture is due to the strictures imposed by the islands' planning authority.

There is little about the circumstances – the sea-girt remoteness, the strange little town fixed in a time warp, the undistinguished exterior of the Atoll – that prepares you for the hotel's extraordinary and dream-like interior, designed by Alison Brooks Architects. The only intimations are the two-storey glass teardrop, which projects from the south-west corner of the building and contains a bistro, and the curving metal clad exterior of the Atoll shop to the west of it.

Alison Brooks was once a

partner of Ron Arad's, working with him, among other things, on the design of subterranean restaurant Belgo (AR July 1995) and the Tel Aviv opera house foyer (AR December 1993). Like Arad, she is an inventive designer working at the edges of surreality. Her interiors are inhabited, animated rather than furnished, by organic forms like characters suggesting growth and movement; disliking the orthogonal, she dissolves boundaries so that walls and ceilings bulge and distort, are pierced or sprout bizarre protuberances. Like Arad, she is apt to hijack familiar materials into unfamiliar places.

Design (and her invention of the name) of the Atoll interior was inspired by Weber's North Sea relic of a man-made atoll, a floating ring structure once inhabited by deep sea divers and used as a base. (Presently being restored, he plans to convert it into a floating bar moored off Heligoland.) Brooks' imagination, charged with images of submarine depths, flora and fauna, has been translated into circular geometries, undulating forms, liquid spaces, strange materials and shimmering colours.

Restructuring of the building was required to obtain flowing space, but within the L-shaped plan, arrangement of the facilities

is straightforward. The restaurant, offices, conference rooms and shops are on either side of the foyer, at the junction of the L. Above this are 32 hotel rooms on two floors, and below, a sybaritic health centre reflecting Weber's desire to restore Heligoland's status as a spa.

As in Belgo, details are so richly invented, so intriguing, that it takes time to absorb them. Moving from the foyer, where you look down stainless-steel cones to the swimmers in the pool below, to the shimmering copper-enclosed bar, to the bistro, furnished with undulating tables and a ship's ladder and flooded with soft northern light,



you are continually distracted. Surfaces ebb and swell. Lavatories are a particular delight: men's have stainless-steel urinal trees rising out of illuminated glass puddles, women's are enclosed by a horseshoe jellyfish pierced by glowing slots.

The revolution in hotel design began with Ian Schrager and Philippe Starck, and later, Jean Nouvel (ARs August 1990, July 1993). Brooks takes it a step further. Her design of Atoll bedrooms avoids the domestic mockery of conventional hotel furniture. Instead, all room functions are concentrated in Shelf Life, a 7m long cantilevered wall unit. Of carbon fibre and built

by a company specializing in composite structures for offshore oil rigs, the undulating black plane meanders down the wall, providing a hanging rail, luggage rack, desk, chaise longue and tv stand. There are no furniture legs or cables. The claustrophobic bathroom cell has been replaced by an enclosure of translucent glass with cylindrical shower; and the usual grim bedside lamps by a glowing plane of light at the head of the bed. PENNY MCGUIRE

Architect

Alison Brooks Architects, London

Project architects

Alison Brooks, Antonia Infanger, Sara Yabsley, Thorsten Overberg, Wolfgang Frese

Photographs

Christoph Kicherer

10

Restaurant on raised timber deck floating on light and allowing diners to look at the sea. Glass cylinders enclose diners; shiny banquette seats evoke cruise liners.

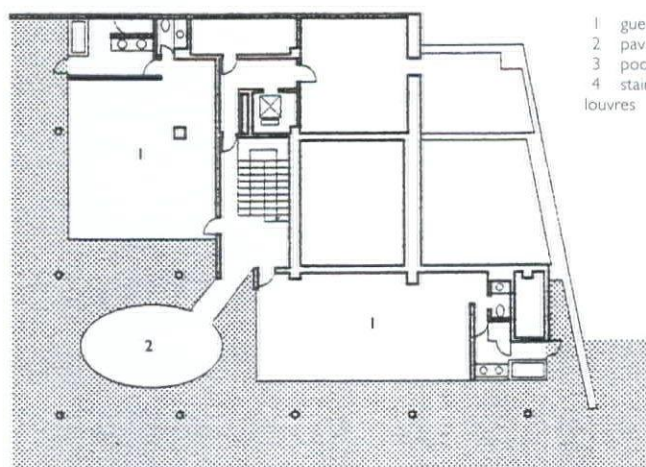
11

Reception desk: horizontal aluminium beam balanced on glowing glass fin. Behind, a box of wood and translucent glass studded with blue glass bottle ends.

12

Bedroom with multi-functional Shelf Life. Available from Alison Brooks Architects.

interior design



third floor plan (scale approx 1:4000)

- 1 guest room
- 2 pavilion
- 3 pool
- 4 stainless-steel louvres

- 1 Glass pavilion from guest room, surrounded by sheet of water.
- 2 Pavilion under louvred glass canopy, detached from main body of house and linked by glass walkway.

Design of this villa by Kengo Kuma & Associates was influenced by the writings of Bruno Taut extolling the virtues of simplicity and harmony between nature and artefact. The architect, who contributed significantly to the development of Japanese Modernism, settled in Japan 1933-37.

In his book, *Houses and People of Japan* (1938), he drew attention to buildings that to him were masterpieces of 'inner modernity', in particular the seventeenth-century Katsura Detached Palace. Its architect, Kabori Enshu, had devised a staggered plan which encompassed an informal arrangement of tea ceremony houses. Projecting eaves and

bamboo verandahs shaped views of gardens with ponds, streams and artificial hills. Taut was ravished by the architectural simplicity and coherence of the building, which both framed and was framed by nature, and which inspired design of his only Japanese essay, the Hyuga Villa.

Kuma's three-storey villa has been built into a hill and looks south-east over the bay of Atami, south of Tokyo. Perched on the hillside, the villa seems suspended between sea and sky and Kuma seizes on the ambiguity, manipulating glass, water and light. His abstract architecture, which depends on the changing qualities of light and reflection, is a response to the atmospheric abstraction which

surrounds it. At times, the separation of material and insubstantial seems to dissolve.

On the two lower levels, the main elements of the house – bedrooms, living room, kitchen and *tatami* rooms – are spun round a central core. Depending on the privacy required, east and south rooms are enclosed by glass walls that frame and admit the views, with private quarters like bathrooms screened off. In traditional manner, the *tatami* mat is the unit of measurement.

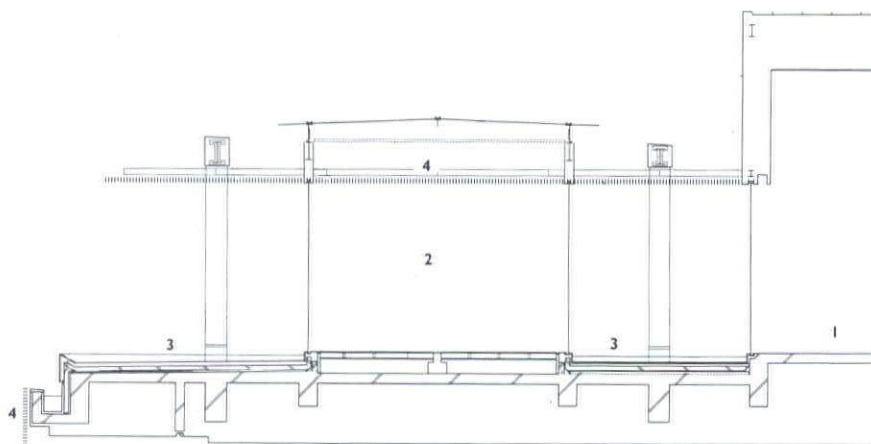
The climax of the composition is at third floor level where, in an echo of Katsura's staggered plan, the building is surmounted by a glass pavilion. Detached from the main body by a glass walkway, it floats on a sheet of water under

a glass canopy screened by silver louvres. For Kuma, the watery sheet which laps the edges of the building replaces Katsura's bamboo verandahs; similarly, the sheltering canopy, also measuring the building's extent and supported on columns, is an abstract echo of the palace eaves. From the transparent pavilion, the views are framed by beam and columns, mediated by faint reflections and seams of the glass enclosure, and by striations of light falling through louvres onto water that merges with sea. P. M.

Architect
Kengo Kuma & Associates
Project architects
Kengo Kuma, Kenichi Hosomura,
Takaaki Ando
Photographs
Mitsumasa Fujitsuka

Bay watch

Design of a glass pavilion floating on a sheet of water high above the sea reflects the ambiguity of a blurred horizon.



pavilion section

VILLA, ATAMI, NR TOKYO, JAPAN

ARCHITECT

KENGO KUMA & ASSOCIATES



1
2



interior design



FLAT, EAST LONDON

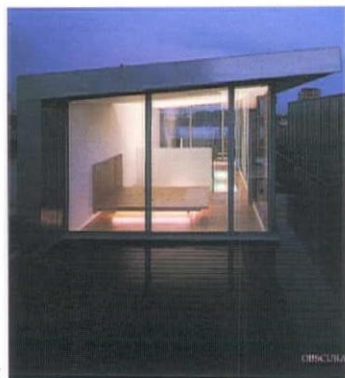
ARCHITECT

SIMON CONDER ASSOCIATES

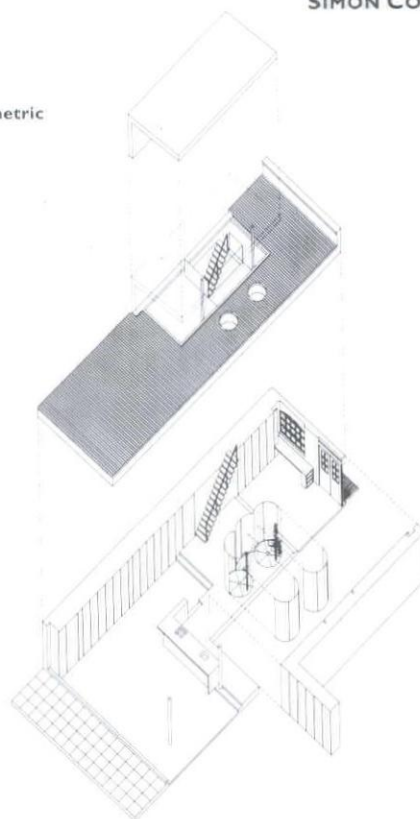
1 Cantilevered stairs lead to glass bridge and sleeping gallery with access to roof terrace. Below, dining area opposite kitchen.

2 From surrounding roof terrace to sleeping gallery.

3 Translucent glass drums for shower and lavatory. Beyond, kitchen, dining and living areas. Floors of American white oak.



axonometric



The flat, designed by Simon Conder Associates, has been created out of a shell on the top floor of a nineteenth-century building. Lying just west of Shoreditch in east London, the immediate area is still pioneer territory but the building has been converted with some refinement, and the flat has views south and west over the City and towards the West End.

The empty space, measuring 1250 sq ft and running east-west, was L-shaped, with a double-height central section and the potential for a large roof terrace. Since it was to be a *pied à terre*, the clients thought it more important to enhance the sense of space and light, rather than

provide separate bedrooms and bathrooms.

Simon Conder's austere sensibilities, his pleasure in clear unobstructed space and a few carefully chosen materials, have been demonstrated before (ARs October 1997, June 1993). Here, he has retained the shell as a single volume for living, cooking and dining, and opened it up on the west with sliding glass doors onto a terrace. Where the shell was double height, he built a sleeping gallery at the upper level which gives onto a second larger terrace on the roof.

Part of the delight of the place consists in Conder's use of glass. A bathroom has been replaced by a pair of translucent glass

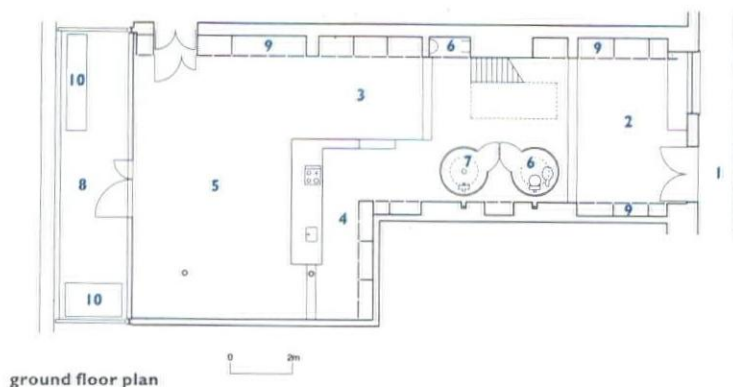
Urbane eyrie

Design of a *pied à terre*, inserted into a bare shell in a nineteenth-century industrial building, exploits copious light and creates opulent austerity.

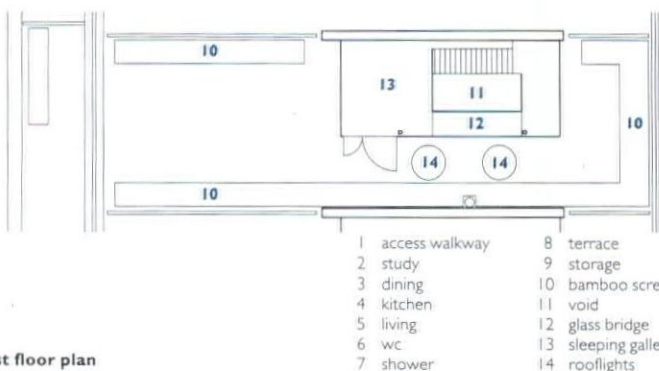
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3



FLAT, EAST LONDON
 ARCHITECT
SIMON CONDER ASSOCIATES



ground floor plan



first floor plan

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| 1 access walkway | 8 terrace |
| 2 study | 9 storage |
| 3 dining | 10 bamboo screen |
| 4 kitchen | 11 void |
| 5 living | 12 glass bridge |
| 6 wc | 13 sleeping gallery |
| 7 shower | 14 rooflights |



4 Entrance with study to left. Stair treads cantilevered from storage wall.
 5 Living area with furniture by practice, illuminated from beneath.

drums (something of a Conder signature) on the ground floor; one contains a shower, the other a basin and lavatory. Capped by a translucent skylight set into the wooden floor of the terrace above, they are naturally lit during the day and a source of luminance at night, downstairs and on the terrace. A sandblasted glass and acrylic bridge leads from the top of a simple flight of oak stairs to the sleeping gallery. At night, this too can be illuminated.

On the ground floor, the two party walls are lined by storage –

for kitchen, bathroom, clothes, books and CDs. Cupboards also accommodate services, a second, more private lavatory and a fold-down double bed for visitors.

With all these things contained at the peripheries, the main space is left clear and defined by free-standing elements. They are the sleek stainless steel kitchen turning the inside corner of the L and serving the dining area on one side and living on the other, and the glass drums which with the staircase opposite indicate

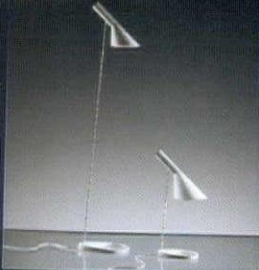
passage between entrance and living area.

With the exception of Hans Wegner's Wishbone chairs, all the severe, elegant, pieces of furniture – sofas, dining table and bed – were designed by the practice. Illuminated from beneath, each piece looks as if it is floating on light and is itself a source of luminance in this eminently habitable flat. P. M.

Architect
 Simon Conder Associates, London
Structural engineer
 Dewhurst Macfarlane
Photographs
 Chris Gascoigne/View



AJ Table & floor



AJ Wall



AJ Royal



Light in Detail

AJ family

Design: Arne Jacobsen



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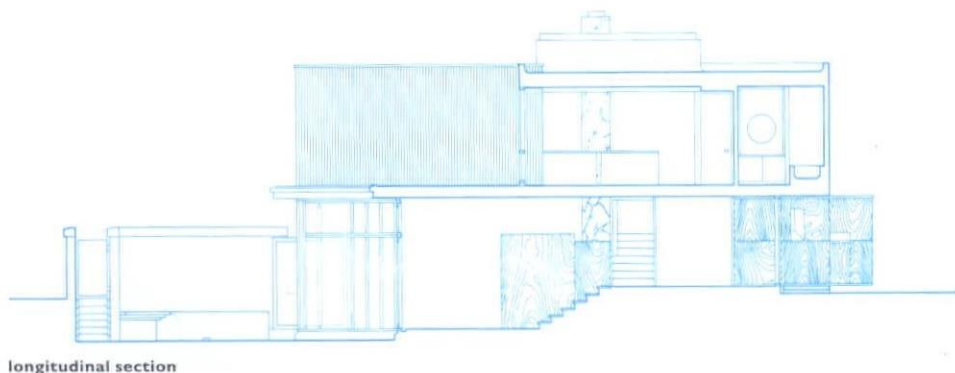
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ar house

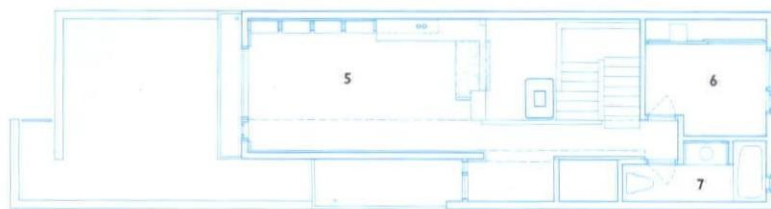


COTTAGE LOFT

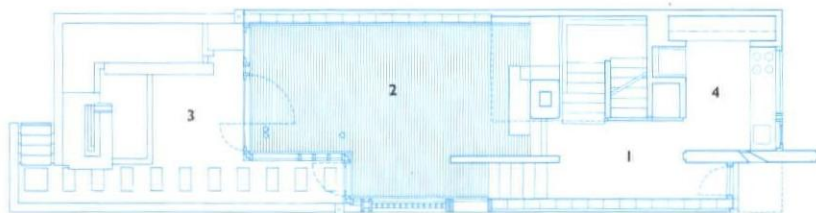
In the heart of Toronto, this compact house combines living and work spaces in an elegantly economical form.



longitudinal section



first floor plan



ground floor plan (scale approx 1:200)



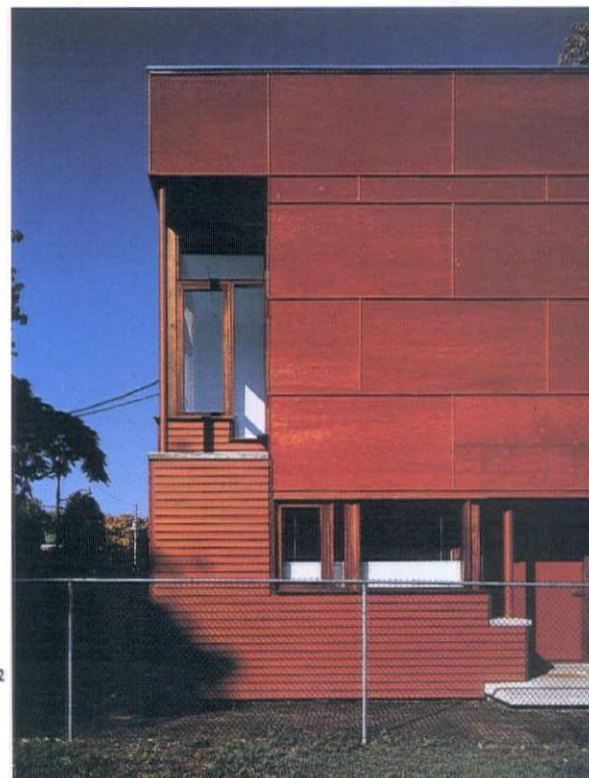
site plan

- 1 entrance
- 2 living/dining room
- 3 garden court
- 4 kitchen
- 5 study
- 6 bedroom
- 7 bathroom

1 Nestling into an urban plot, the two-storey house alludes to both industrial and domestic types.
2 The taut timber skin reflects the contrasting character of the internal spaces. At lower level, softwood boarding forms a rainscreen around the living areas; above, panels of Douglas fir plywood enclose the work spaces.

The Hill House is located in the heart of Toronto – a city that confounds the specialized landscapes typical of so many North American cities. Its busy streets are lined by new and old buildings which mix housing and shops with small scale industry and offices and are linked by parks and public transport. Emphatically different from Atlanta, Denver or Detroit, it is no surprise that this is the adopted city of Jane Jacobs.

This new house, built on a slither of vacant land on a former service lane with houses along one side and garages and workshops on the other, is a place to both live and work. It is planned for a researcher and an archivist – a client of modest means – who asked that the architects create an airy light-filled space for work, with warm intimate rooms for day to day living. As Toronto's city





3
The tall luminous volume of the *piano nobile* work space. Floor to ceiling bookshelves emphasize the loftiness of the upper levels.

4
Dining area on the ground floor. On this level, space is compact, cellular and cottage-like.



HOUSE, TORONTO, CANADA
ARCHITECT

86 | 3 SHIM SUTCLIFFE ARCHITECTS

planners have sought alternative urban models, so the architects of this house looked across the landscape of the city for inspiration. As a result, the design is rooted in two quite different yet familiar building types – the cottage and the loft. On the ground floor are living and dining spaces, planned alongside an open kitchen, bedroom and bathroom, with a library, office and second bathroom occupying a tall, airy space upstairs.

Designed as a free-standing two-storey block aligned with its neighbours along the street, the house was sited with a nominal setback to the north to provide a generous south-facing entrance garden. Planned as a simple box, it is clad with a taut skin of wood. This skin has been detailed to underline the contrasting character of the spaces within. At the lower level, facing the street, narrow horizontal softwood boarding provides a delicate rainscreen which returns to define the main entrance on the south. This gives way to larger panels of Douglas fir plywood cladding above. While windows at the ground floor recall the small openings of the cottage, the more generous openings and cladding above suggest the workaday loft.

In details of cladding and fenestration, the house also acknowledges the significance of the street as a major focus; a move which enables it to take its place alongside its neighbours without slavishly mocking their gabled forms. Yet at the same time, by referencing both the domestic and the industrial, it also notes surrounding buildings in this particular neighbourhood.

Internally, the more compact cellular cottage-like rooms on the ground floor have a 2.25m ceiling height, and are simply detailed and finished using a strong polychrome colour palette. The upper floor, by contrast, is a 3.6m high space painted white and flooded with light from both large windows on the street and generous rooflights above. Floor to ceiling bookshelves and storage cabinets, specially designed to house the client's collections, line the library and stair, emphasizing lofty spaces within this tiny jewel-like dwelling.

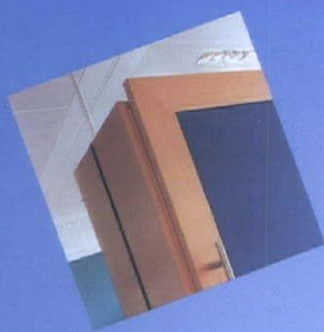
The figural qualities and distinct frontality of the Hill House acknowledge its place on this inhabited city street, while its considered modesty matches the everyday with a particular domesticity that reflects the life of its urbane owner. BRIAN CARTER

Architect
Shim Sutcliffe Architects, Toronto
Photographs
Michael Awad 1, 2, 4
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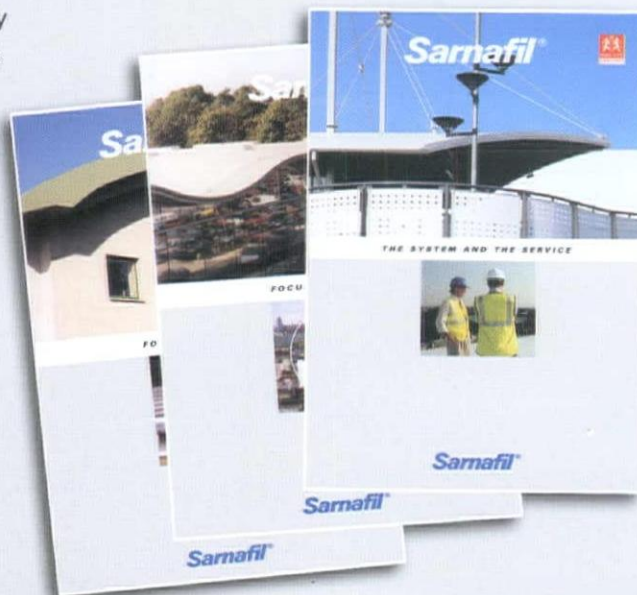
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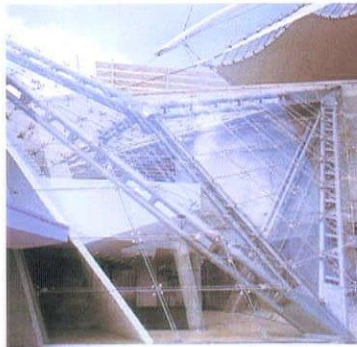
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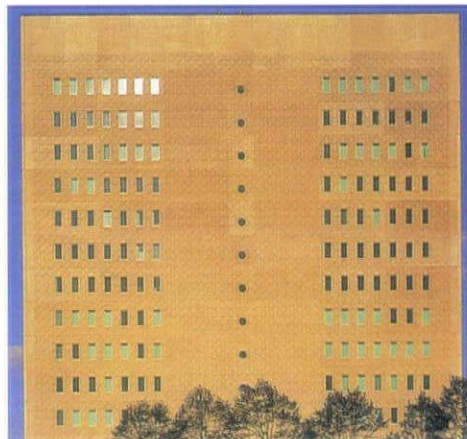
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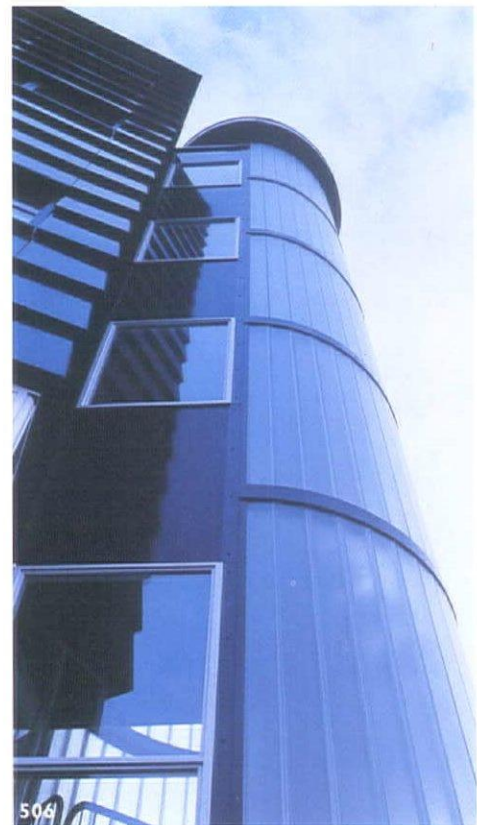
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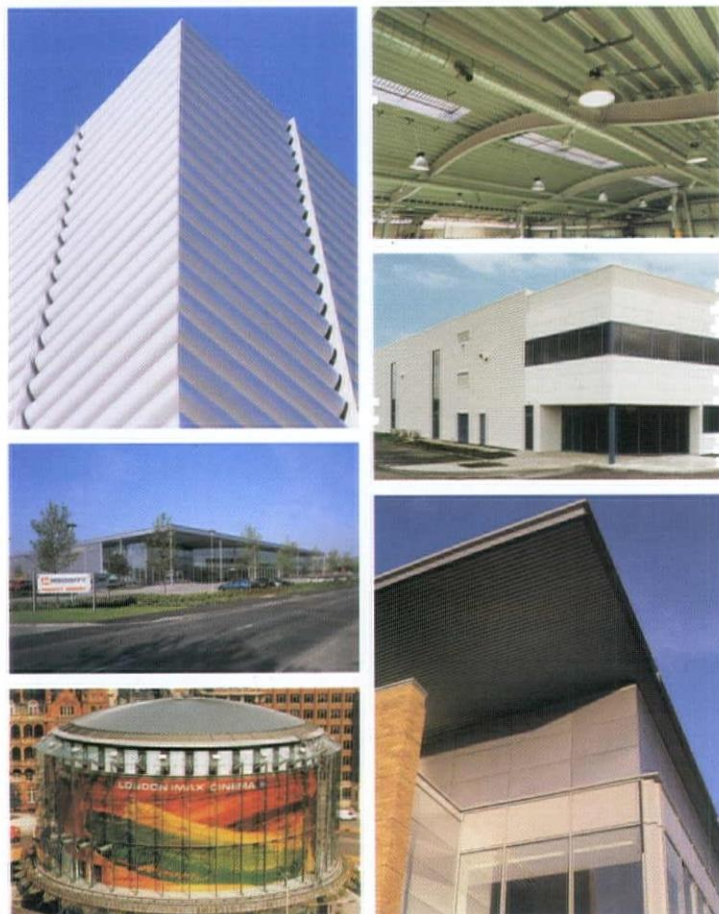


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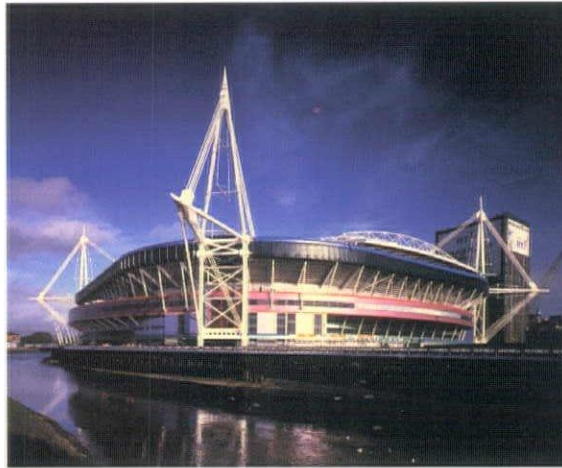
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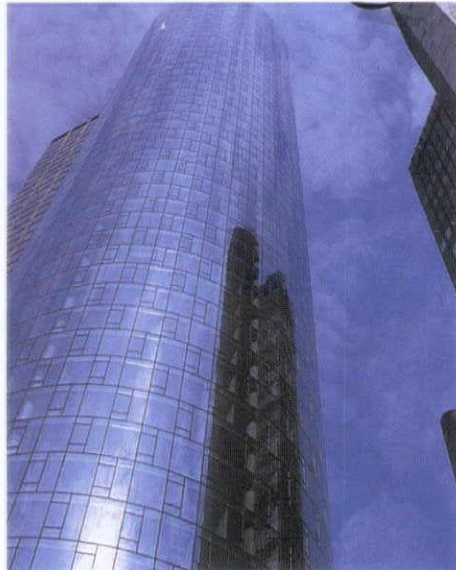
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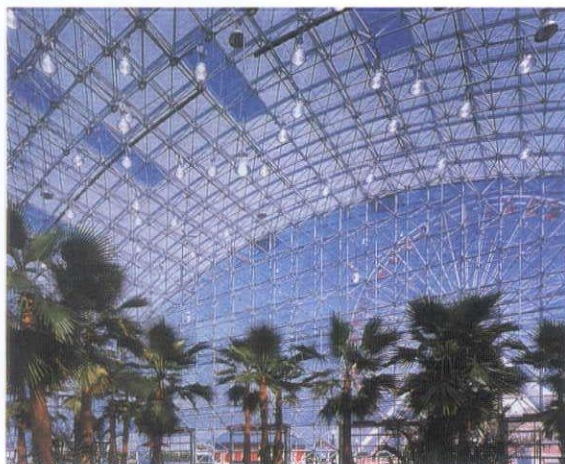
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512



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Curved and tempered, clear float glass for the external skin of Main Tower, Frankfurt, designed by Schweger & Partners.
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Fax: +39 0429 899294

511 REYNAERS ALUMINIUM

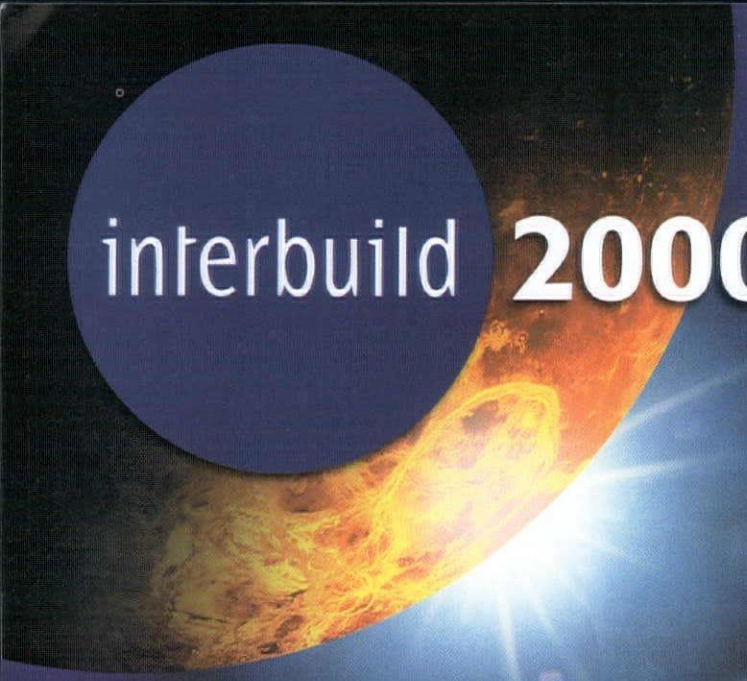
Cintro: aluminium system for fabrication of rooflights and covered walkways, at the Espace Social Pierre Mendès-France, by Michelle Colotte, Rambervilliers.
Tel: +44 121 421 1999
Fax: +44 121 421 9797

512 SUNGLASS

Curved and flat tempered laminated glass for the roof of the Lawn building by Nicolas Grimshaw and Partners, Paddington Station, London.
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Fax: +39 0499050964

513 VIRACON

Solarscreen VH Series: laminated architectural glass with pigmented interlayers, high performance coatings and silkscreened patterns at Navy Pier Crystal Gardens, Chicago, Illinois by VOA & BTA.
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Opaline

Translucent Opalescent Glass Blocks

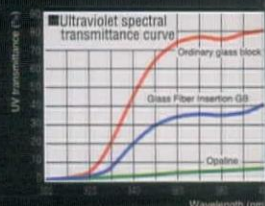
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Internet <http://www.mesh.ne.jp/neg-ken/> E-mail kenzai_otsu@muji.biglobe.ne.jp

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20123 Milano, Italy
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An illustrated catalogue of various Opaline applications is available at no charge.



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514

514 INTERPANE

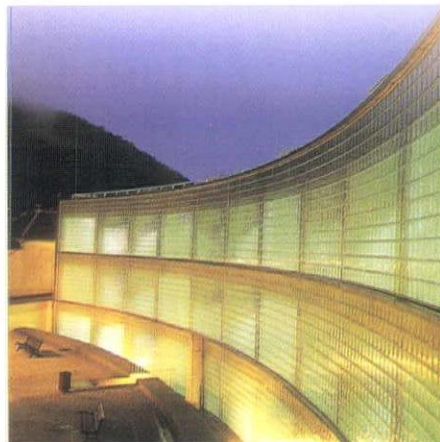
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515

516 PILKINGTON ARCHITECTURAL

Planar: structural glazing system at the entrance to the Royal Bank of Scotland's headquarters in Edinburgh, designed by Michael Laird Partnership.

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521 TECHNAL EXPORT

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Fax: +33 561 312 600

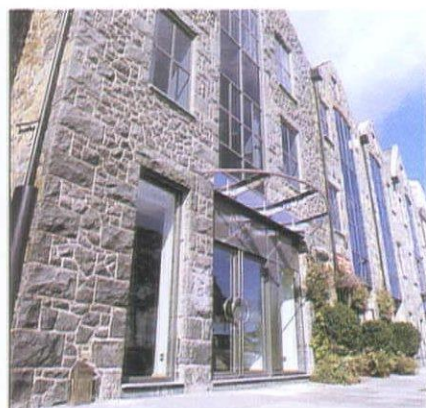
522 VELUX

Rooflight screened by rolling shutter.

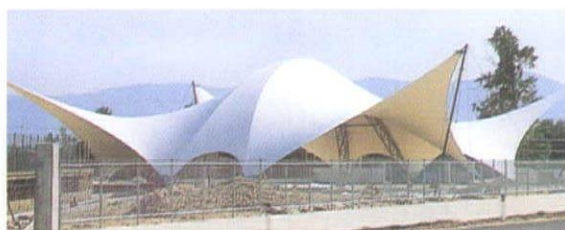
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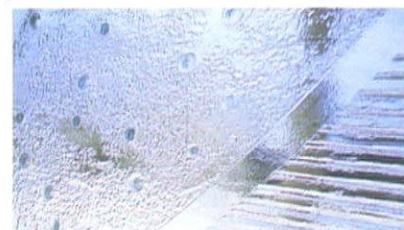
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CHANGING AS NEVER BEFORE

CREATING THE PRODUCTIVE WORKPLACE

Edited by Derek Clements-Croome. London: E & FN Spon. 2000. £29.95

This essay collection appears at a time when the relationship between physical working environment and productivity is attracting much interest, especially in offices where most of the workforce is employed. The resolution of the debate could have huge economic consequences. To show conclusively that certain environmental features, such as higher – or lower – light levels could generate faster key strokes, fewer errors, happier staff would give design professionals a higher status in the world of work.

A more complete account of this fascinating, rapidly changing field is hard to imagine. Many disciplines are represented, from medicine, through social sciences, to design in its various manifestations. Quality varies, not surprisingly in a collection of over 20 papers drawn from so many quarters, both geographical and disciplinary. The best, for instance Leaman and Bordass's, Wyon's, and Kroner's papers are well structured, thoroughly referenced and highly quantitative. One or two tend to the aspirational and the woolly: Feng Shui and lay lines are not far away. A familiar methodological ghost flickers between the lines of many of the contributions: the Hawthorne studies, carried out in the US over 70 years ago, when the bottom fell out of deterministic environmental psychology because, in studies carefully conducted on the factory floor, the full complexity of the relationship between the physical and the social became apparent.

None the less, the tone is upbeat. These researchers know that they are on to something. Their investigations are generally more sophisticated because they are willing to accept that complexity as a condition of the conduct of their research. They know that they must take into account changing social conditions, and above all, the growing power of people at work to control their own environmental destiny. The methodological issues these papers raise are fascinating. Environmental research in the working environment is inherently interdisciplinary and systemic, i.e. it must take into account the interrelationship between the design of information technology, the design of the appropriate social organization and the design of the physical environment. Such research must take into account the micro – and perhaps also the macro – politics of the workplace. It must admit users, and their history and opinions, into the conduct of the research. This kind of research has to be open-ended, to take into account time, change and

economics. No business, no building can be static for long. What is curious to me is that, given such complexity, standards of proof are sometimes demanded of the researchers working in this field, standards that would be more appropriate to natural science conducted in the laboratory than to the messy complexity of working life.

The office is changing as never before. Conventions about use of time and space inherited from mill and factory are being challenged. The relation between people and their working environment, given ubiquitous information technology, is now fluid. Perhaps it is as well that Clements-Croome's compilation doesn't try to give architects all the answers about how to design more productive workplaces. If it did, such answers would be certain to be wrong. Which doesn't mean that architects can afford to divorce themselves from the conduct of systematic and imaginative enquiry into this fascinating area of design.

FRANCIS DUFFY

PARANOID GENIUS

JOHN SOANE: an accidental romantic

By Gillian Darley. London: Yale University Press. 1999. £25

Soane seems to have overtaken Hawksmoor as the modern architect's favourite dead architect. Both were interesting, unusual men; both produced buildings of often startling and perverse originality, but while Hawksmoor revelled in the sheer mass of Portland stone,

perhaps Soane's games with floating domes and thin wall planes have more relevance to a modern practitioner. An exhibition on Soane's influence on twentieth-century architecture is on at John Soane's Museum and this new biography by Gillian Darley was hurried out to coincide with the exhibition on the master held at the Royal Academy at the end of last year.

Soane's long career coincided with the Industrial Revolution, the long wars against the French and, above all, the Romantic movement. With his interest in *lumière mystérieuse* and in creating emotional effects through the 'poetry of architecture', with his conviction of his own genius and his determination to pursue a highly individual style that offended conventional rules of proportion and architectural grammar, as well as his dislike of conventional Christianity and his obsession with Death, he might well seem the ultimate Romantic Architect. He can certainly seem so when his buildings are depicted by his assistant and collaborator, J. M. Gandy, greatest of architect-painters. But the role of Architect as Hero sits uneasily on Soane. His rise to professional success from humble origins by dint of hard work was certainly heroic, but there is little admirable or noble about much of his life.

John Soane was quarrelsome, paranoid, unbalanced and litigious, constantly falling out with old and loyal friends and entirely lacking in self-knowledge and a sense of humour. Satire and criticism of his buildings in the press – however gentle – would have him flying to the libel lawyers (how different from our knighted architects today) and he waged venomous vendettas against his disappointing sons and even against their children. One of several unpleasant stories uncovered by Darley is that, suspecting sexual irregularity, the aged architect instructed a young assistant to shadow his hopeless grandson. No visitor to Soane's house museum in Lincoln's Inn Fields could suppose that its creator was in any way normal – or uninteresting. He was, in fact, a control freak, keeping every drawing and document and leaving his house and collection to the nation as his memorial by Act of Parliament and in so doing attempting to manipulate his place in history from the grave. Fortunately, after a century and a half, he has failed.

Gillian Darley has written the first proper biography of this extraordinary character and has explored material outside Lincoln's Inn Fields. The result is a most illuminating and riveting portrait both of Soane – a man 'frequently beyond self-control' – and of his changing and complicated times. The revealing sub-title of this magnificently illustrated book is 'the accidental romantic', for Darley shows how 'the man, as angry as Benjamin Robert Haydon, as visionary as William Blake



Yona Friedman has long been court jester of Modern architecture, light-hearted, but with a serious point (or rather points, for his output has been very varied). This is a suggestion for alternatives to the tower form in Yona Friedman: *Structures Serving the Unpredictable*, Nai Publishers, Rotterdam, 1999, 65 Guilders.

or J. M. W. Turner, as expressive as William Hazlitt, remains unimpeachably a mid-Georgian in his attitudes, his references and his Pittite view of the world'.

As an architect, he was the supreme, responsible professional. No, Soane was not quite the stuff of which Romantic Heroes were made; the real hero(ine) in this biography is Eliza Soane: she had a lot to put up with, not least living in that tantalizing domestic memorial in Lincoln's Inn Fields.

GAVIN STAMP

SEEN IN PROPORTION

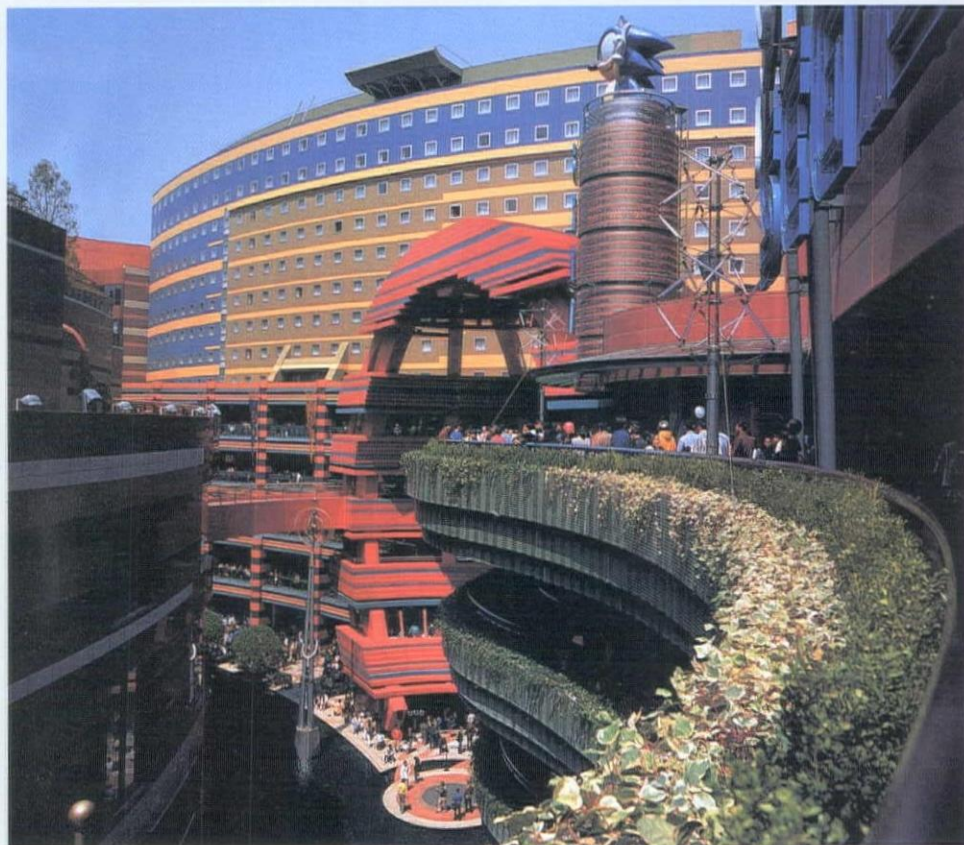
PROPORTION: science, philosophy, architecture

By Richard Padovan. London: E & FN Spon. 1999. £24.99

E & FN Spon is a technical and scientific publishing house, and it is remarkable that they are behind a book which attempts to deal with some of the big questions of architectural philosophy, as expressed through the relationships between proportional systems and the architect's view of creation. Furthermore, Padovan starts with the admission that he is writing a polemic rather than a handbook, and his own prejudices permeate the book: in particular, his promotion of the late Dutch monk-architect Hans van der Laan, and his dismissal as simplistic of the theories of Wittkower and others.

There is here a highly concise guide to thinking about the meaning of proportional systems from Plato to modern times, illustrated all along by step-by-step mathematical examples and analyses which should not be beyond the grasp of the average architect reader. Padovan uses Worringer's dichotomy between 'empathy and abstraction' as his principle tool, and distinguishes between the philosophical assumptions of the architect when starting to design, and the geometrical analyses performed by later generations on elevations and plans which, as he so rightly says, can prove anything. He quotes James Pennethorne, writing in the 1840s, proposing that architectural creation may once have led the way for mathematical theory, perhaps by generations. Padovan adds that 'much modern architecture ... reflects a naive desire to keep up to date with (or, by moving very fast, to remain only a few decades behind) the latest discoveries in physics and mathematics'. Unfortunately he does not mention in this context Erich Mendelsohn, whose work seems to be running alongside Einstein's thought rather competently, as Kathleen James' recent monograph describes so well.

Padovan has been a student of Le Corbusier's Modulor for nearly 50 years; his view of this sometimes rather camp drama is a wry



Jon Jerde's architecture is not to everyone's taste, but it is undeniably lively and popular. His output is prodigious – his exuberant buildings seem to be emerging in every continent. He believes that 'the last vestiges of community are a parade, a football game and a shopping center', and has made a speciality of the latter. This mixed entertainment and retail complex is Canal City Hakata, Japan and is to be found in the lavishly illustrated *You Are Here: The Jerde Partnership International*, edited by Frances Anderton, Phaidon, London, 1999, £45/\$75.

one, and he contrasts it with van der Laan's 'plastic number', which is more to do with relative rather than absolute proportions. One can certainly find holes in this book, but Padovan has much to offer all architects, not only in respect of what they design but also of how they see the world as a whole. And that is quite an achievement. TIMOTHY BRITAIN-CATLIN

GREEN PLANNING

BUILDING THE 21ST CENTURY HOME: the sustainable urban neighbourhood

By David Rudlin and Nicholas Falk (URBED, The Urban & Economic Development Group). Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann. 1999. £19.99

The argument of this book is that the sustainable urban neighbourhood is our new millennium's answer to the nineteenth-century terrace street and the twentieth-century semi-D suburb. Such neighbourhoods enjoy a central location within existing cities, with life throbbing in their dense exciting vandal-free streets. Work mixes with habitat; pedestrians and cyclists predominate over cars; the bus service is good; there's the odd corner shop like in

the old days. The buildings form proper streets, well proportioned and handsome, sometimes with trees down them. And inside the blocks so formed, wholesome organic vegetables grow, rainwater is collected for re-use, solar panels bask in the sun and children play happily. It sounds pretty good – and it's sustainable: socially, economically and environmentally.

There is a growing abundance of books about environmental/ecological sustainability. This is one such, and it draws on the authors' experience at URBED and the model project carried out in the Hulme area of Manchester. Many of the ideas are not new, as the authors readily acknowledge – Jane Jacobs was talking about social and economic sustainability some 40 years ago, though with different words. If her message has still not hit home, any new attempt is to be welcomed. But I have two regrets about this book. It touches too much on the issues Jacobs dealt with, and not enough on the environmental/energy problems she didn't. And I miss her energetic prose.

ADAM VOELCKER

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delight



Photograph: Mihail Moldoveanu

THE EVOLUTION OF THE EUROPEAN SPA DURING THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY GAVE RISE TO ARCHITECTURE BASED ON A RICH AND DELIGHTFUL PANOPLY OF BATH HOUSES, CASINOS, PROMENADES, PARKS AND GRAND HOTELS.

From ancient times, the rites and rituals associated with bathing have assumed a special place in human culture and consciousness. In all religions, water purifies the soul and visits to medicinal springs are historically linked to a stated or implicit belief in regeneration. Bathing in thermal waters released from the bowels of the earth serves to renew a profound relationship with the primitive and the numinous. The practice of immersion also corresponds to the pursuit of physical well-being.

The map of Europe is dotted with a constellation of spa towns. The origins of modern spa culture can be traced to the eighteenth century, with the appearance of new towns whose purpose was to exploit thermal baths and entertain an emerging, well-heeled clientele. In an age of growing industrialization, spa towns became refuges where people could cultivate a privileged relationship with nature. Focused around the therapeutic, primordial waters was a complex network of social rituals enacted on the stages of grand hotels, bath houses, parks, promenades and casinos. As well as embodying novelty and

enchantment, the architecture of the spa reflected these intimately connected functions. Over the last few years, Mihail Moldoveanu, a Romanian architectural photographer and writer based in Paris, has been documenting European spa architecture and culture. The fruits of his labours have been recently published. Moldoveanu's highly atmospheric pictures of the towns, buildings and paraphernalia of spa culture are accompanied by scholarly essays. Shown above is the Széchenyi spa in Budapest built in 1913, with open air pools added in 1927. Lovingly recording places as far apart as Scarborough in the north of England to Kalithea in southern Greece, Moldoveanu's pilgrimage is not only geographical, but chronological. From the origins of Classical civilization at Thermopylae, to Peter Zumthor's exquisite contemporary thermal baths at Vals (AR August 1997), it spans centuries of architecture that unite humankind and the elements in the immemorial rituals of purification and pleasure. C. S.