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Managing editor

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Assistant editor

ROB GREGORY 020 7728 4587

Art director

CECILIA LINDGREN 020 7728 4580

Chief sub-editor

ISLA MCMILLAN 020 7728 4577

Editorial administrator

CRYSTAL BENNES 020 7728 4574

Editor emeritus

PAUL FINCH

ADVERTISING

International account manager

Edmond Katongole +44 (0)20 7728 4561

UK account manager

Tom Peardon +44 (0)20 7728 4558

Classified executive

Ashley Powell +44 (0)20 7728 4518

Business development manager

James MacLeod +44 (0)20 7728 4584

Italian advertising sales, Milan

Carlo Fiorucci +39 (0)362 23 22 10

Email: carlo@fiorucci-international.com

US advertising sales, New York

Kate Buckley +1 845 266 4980

Email: buckley@moveworld.com

Marketing manager

Steve Budd 020 7728 5043

Marketing executive

Lucy Keenan 020 7728 3974

Group commercial director

Jim Wilkinson +44 (0)20 7728 4452

Advertising manager

Sandra Spencer +44 (0)20 7728 4560

List rental Jonathan Burston, Uni-Marketing

Tel: +44 (0)20 8995 1919

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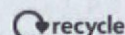
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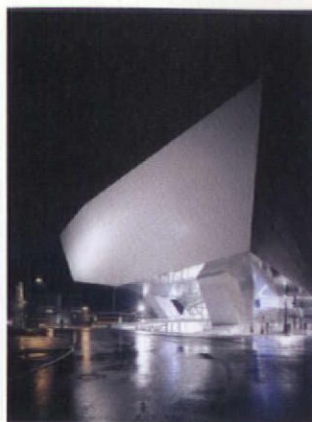


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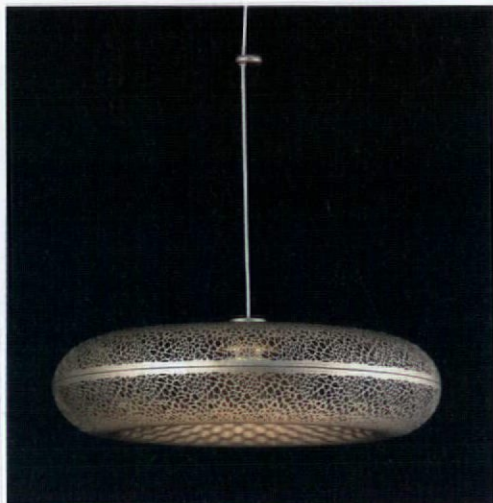
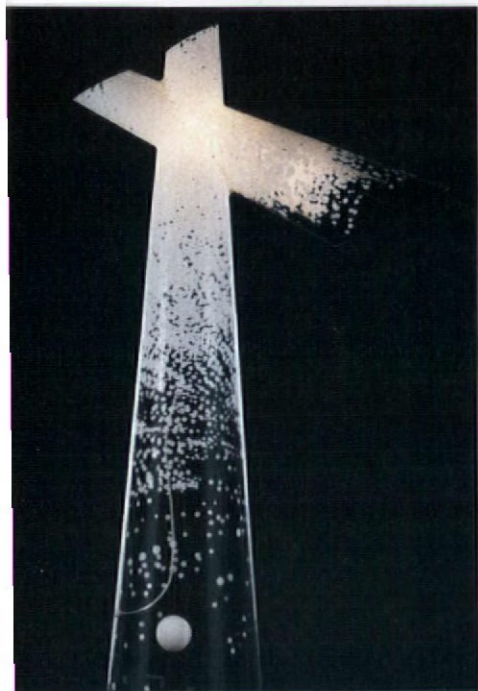
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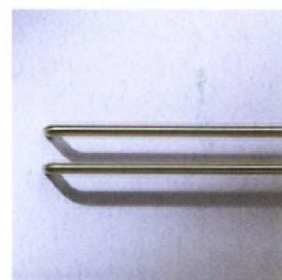
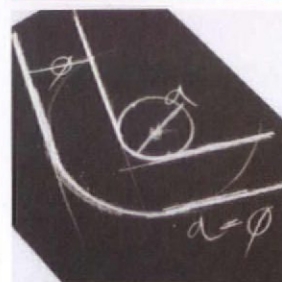
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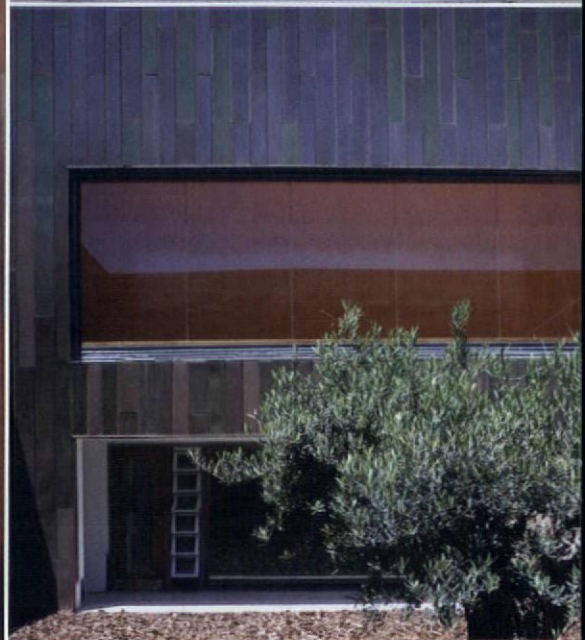
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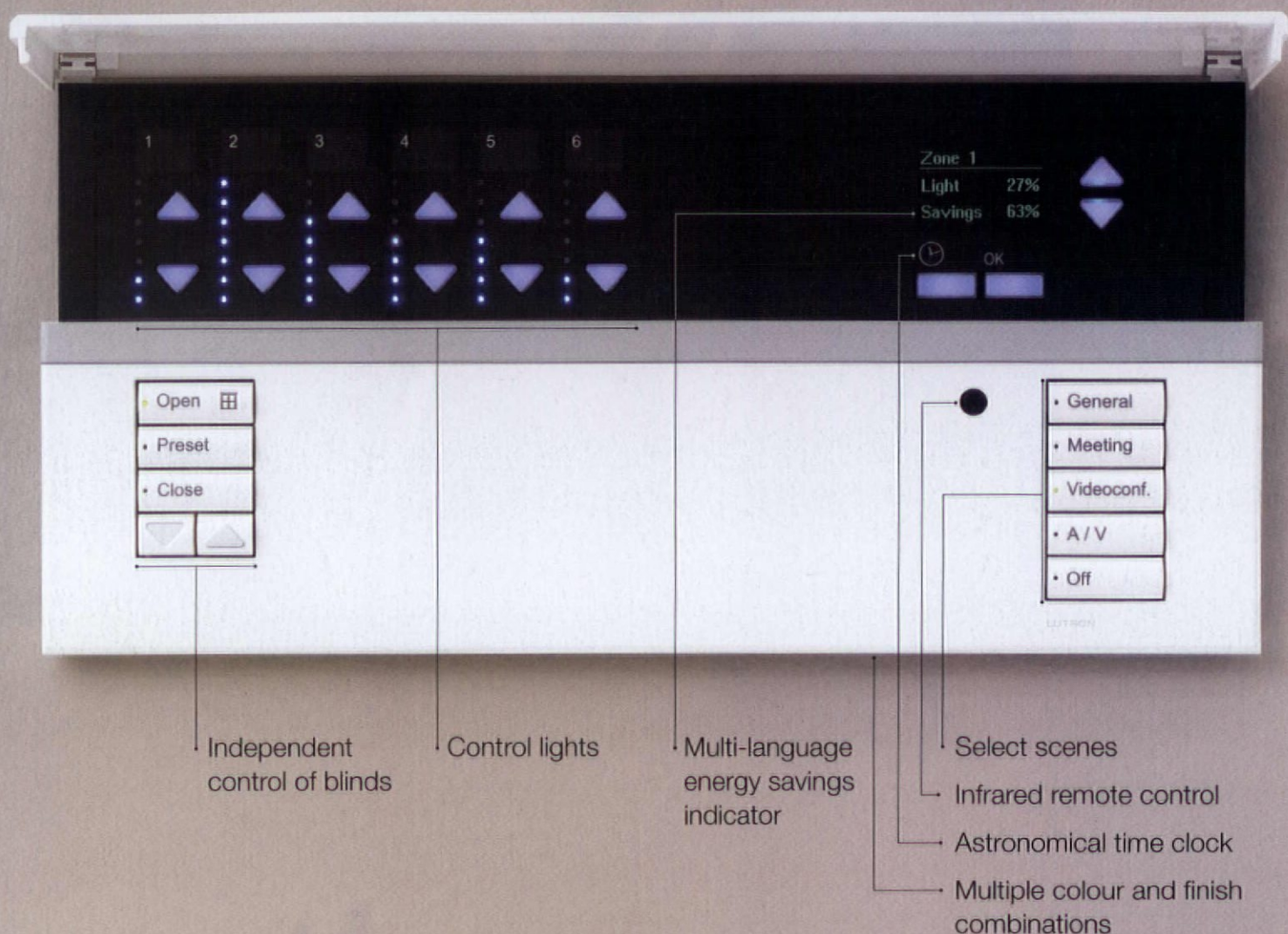
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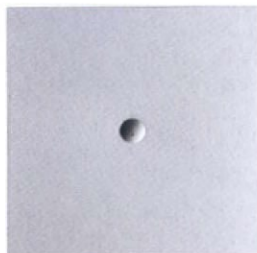
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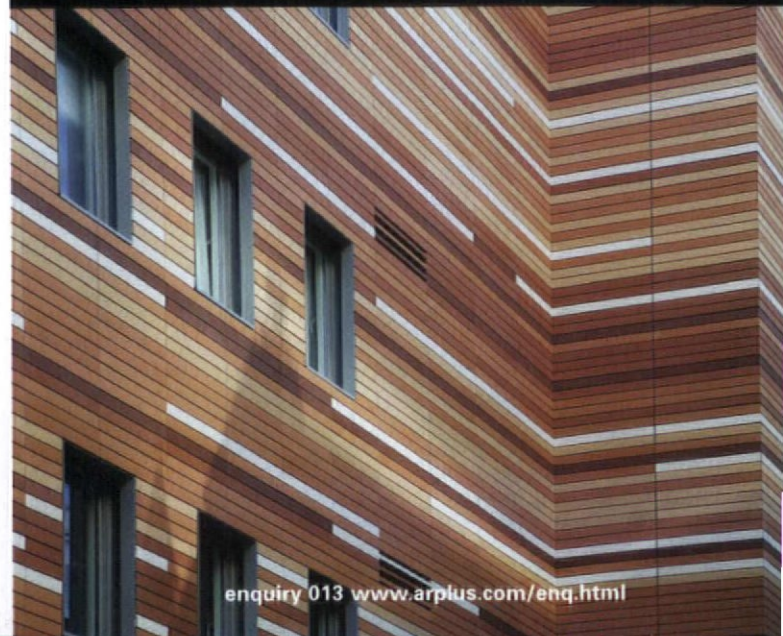
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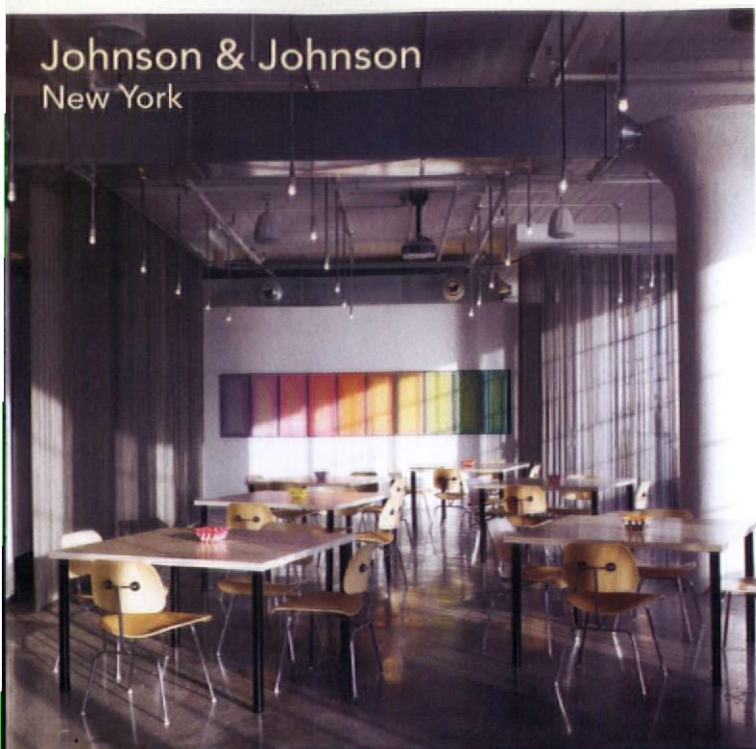
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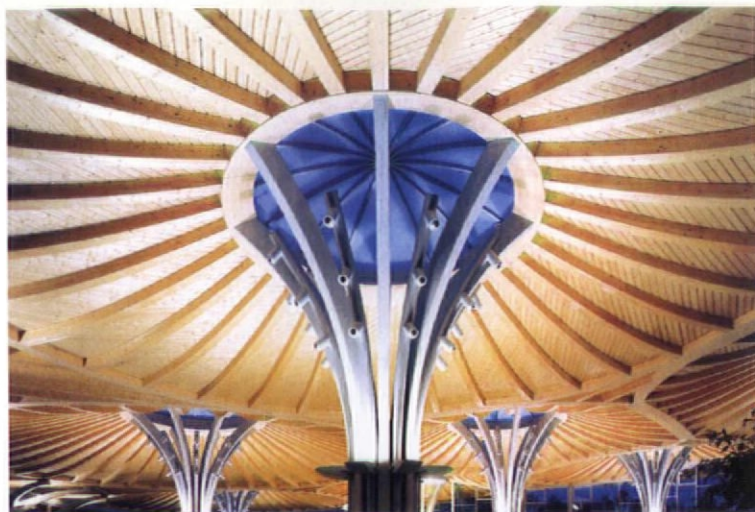
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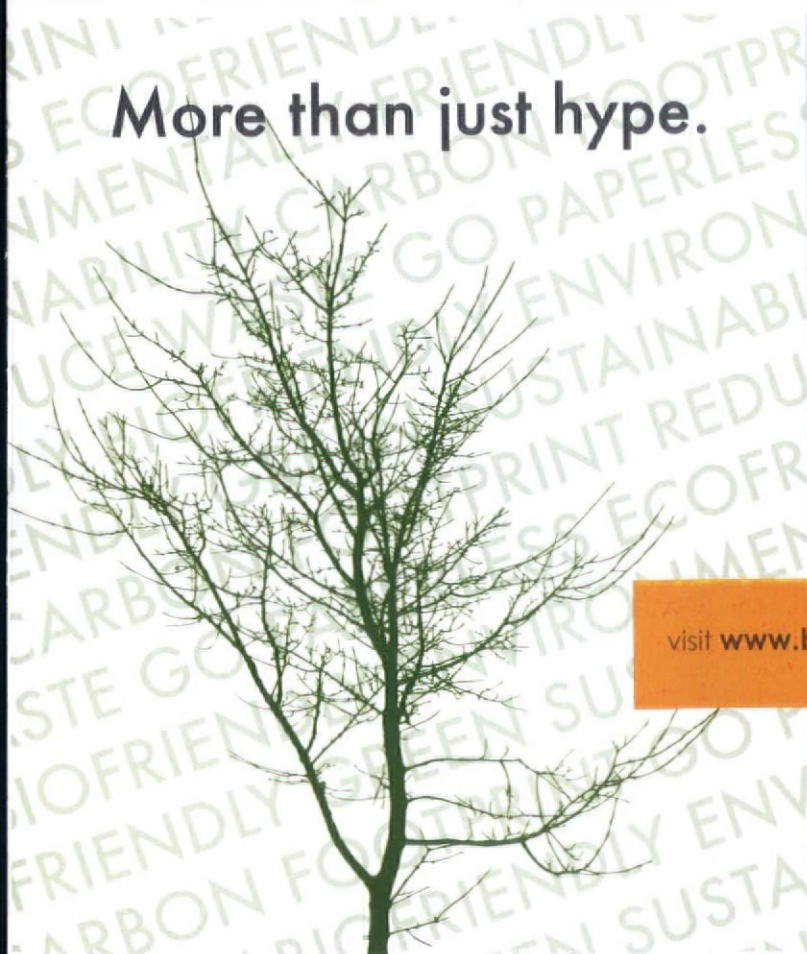
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MIES VAN DER ROHE AWARD – FINALISTS ANNOUNCED; TRIBUTE TO KENNETH BROWNE, THE AR'S FORMER TOWNSCAPE EDITOR; PETER COOK ON WHAT MAKES ARCHITECTURE INTERESTING



FIVE ARE HOPEFUL IN EUROPE

European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture Mies van der Rohe Award 2009: finalists announced.

Last month, the European Commission and the Fundació Mies van der Rohe announced the five finalists of the European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture Mies van der Rohe Award 2009. Funded as part of the EU Culture Programme – which also supports other initiatives such as the European Border Breakers Awards (for music), the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage and the forthcoming European Union Prize for Literature – the Mies van der Rohe prize underlines the role of architecture as a driver for creativity and innovation. It is awarded in recognition of the important contribution of European professionals in the development of new ideas and technologies. Selected from 340 projects

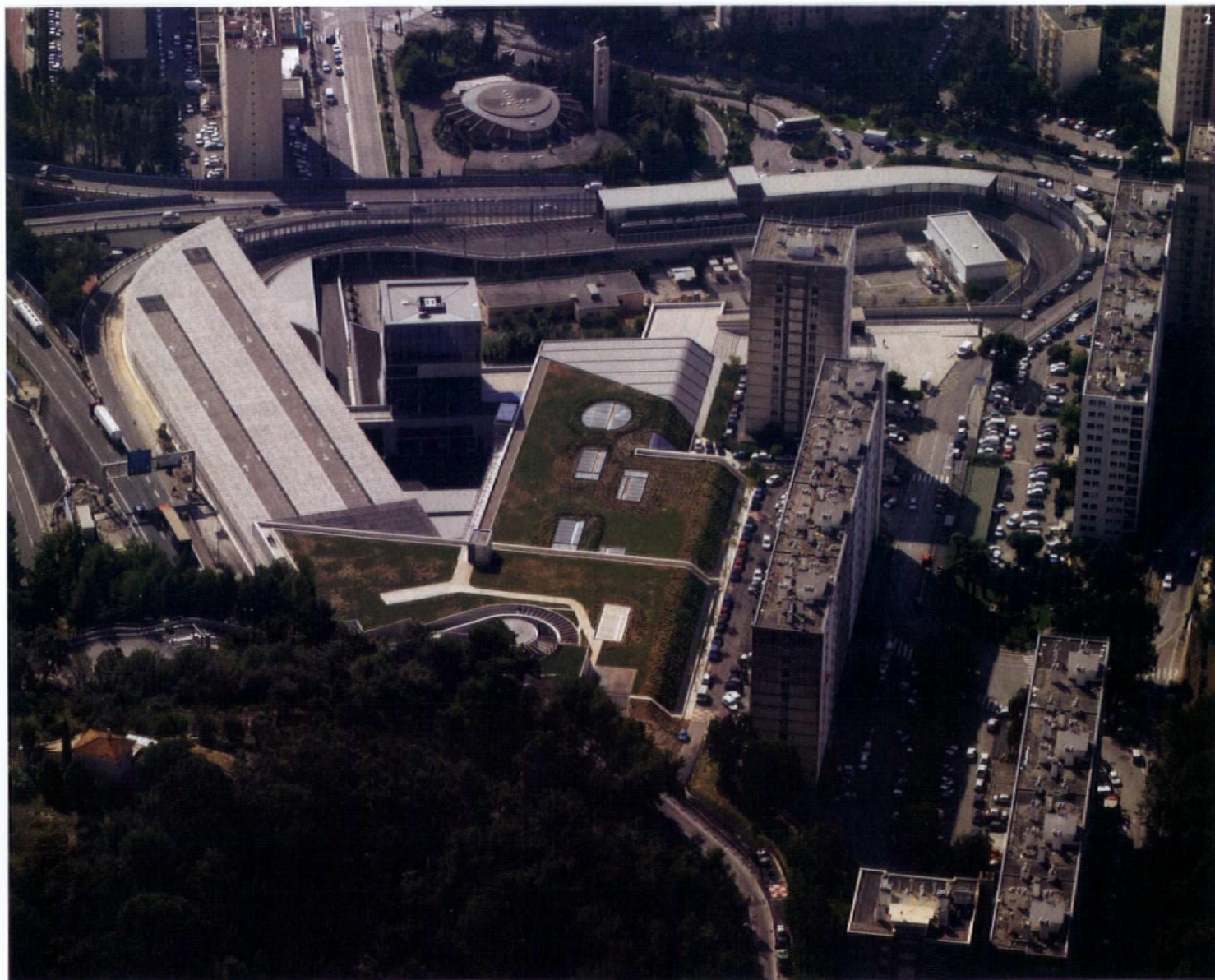
proposed by the Architects' Council of Europe member associations, national architectural associations and the Advisory Committee, the finalists are: Multimodal Centre – Nice Tramway, Nice (France) by Marc Barani/Atelier Marc Barani; Zenith Music Hall, Strasbourg (France) by Massimiliano Fuksas, Doriana Fuksas/Massimiliano Fuksas Architecture; Luigi Bocconi university, Milan (Italy) by Shelley McNamara, Yvonne Farrell/Grafton Architects (p36, winner of the inaugural World Architecture Festival's Building of the Year); The Norwegian Opera & Ballet, Oslo (Norway) by Kjetil Tørdal Thorsen, Tarald Lundevall, Craig Dykers/Snøhetta (AR June 2008); and Library, Senior Citizens' Centre and City Block Core Zone, Sant Antoni's District, Barcelona (Spain) by Rafael Aranda, Carme Pigem, Ramon Vilalta/RCR Aranda Pigem Vilalta Arquitectes.

Mr Ján Figel', European commissioner for education, training, culture and youth, said:

'Each of the projects selected today shows that investing in European architectural talent, in creativity and innovation, pays off. Stimulating new ideas and highlighting entrepreneurial efforts are also a key part of the European Year of Creativity and Innovation (2009).'

The prize jury included Ole Bouman, Irena Fialová, Luis M Mansilla, Carme Pinós, Fulvio Irace and Vasa J Perovic. Chair Francis Rambert said of the panel's finalist nominations: 'We were impressed by the quality of the selected projects, many of which explore important urban issues of infrastructure and regeneration, developing new typologies. Ranging widely in scale, each responds imaginatively to its particular context and brief.'

Each project will be presented in a public lecture series by the architects on Wednesday 22 April in Barcelona. Following this the jury will reconvene before the announcement of the winner in May, where a Special Mention Prize will also be awarded to an emerging



architect. A travelling exhibition on the prizewinner, award finalists and shortlisted works is planned for September this year.

The prestigious Mies van der Rohe Award is held biennially to honour works completed within the previous two years. Established in 1987, past winners include, among others, Banco Borges e Irmão by Álvaro Siza (1988), Stansted Airport terminal by Foster + Partners (1990), Bibliothèque nationale de France by Dominique Perrault (1996), Kunsthau Bregenz art museum by Peter Zumthor (1998), Kursaal Centre by Rafael Moneo (2001), Terminus Hoenheim-Nord by Zaha Hadid (2003), the Netherlands Embassy in Berlin by Office for Metropolitan Architecture (2005) and MUSAC Contemporary Art Museum of Castilla y León by Mansilla+Tuñón (2007). RG

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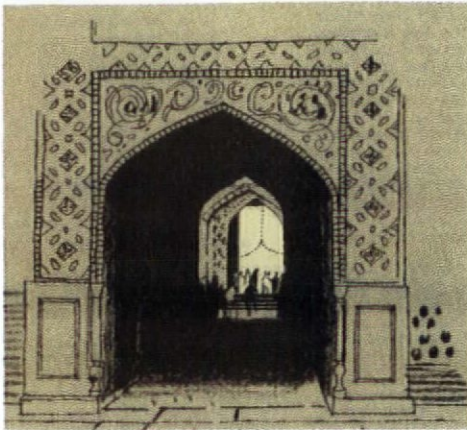
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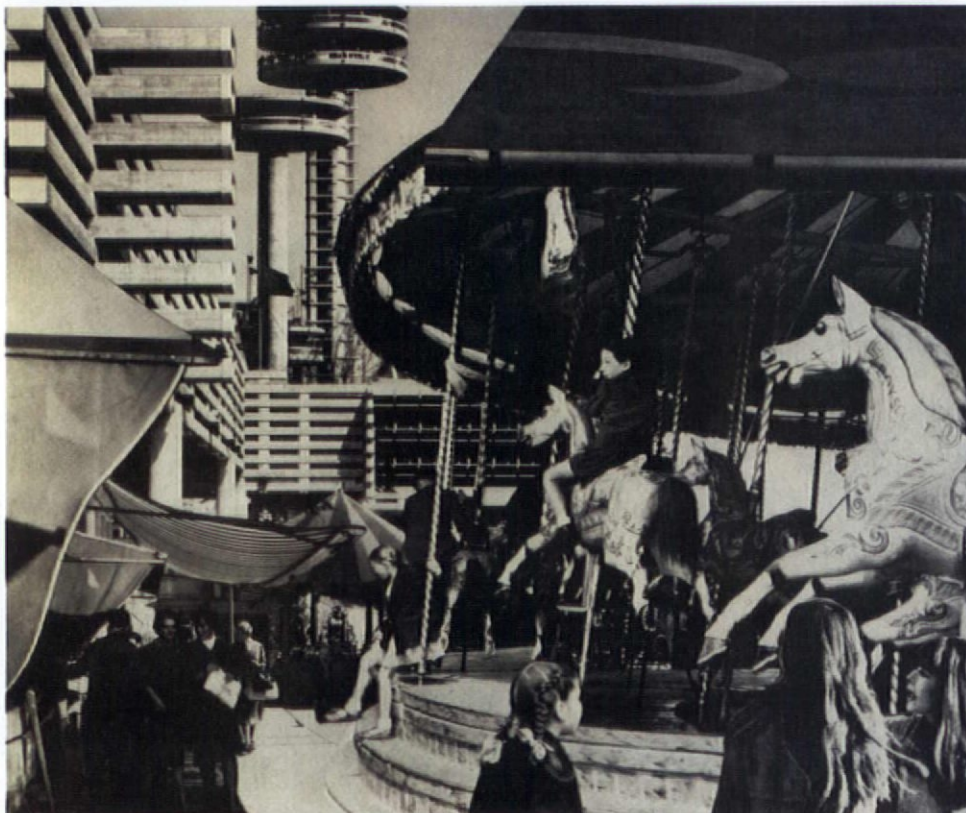
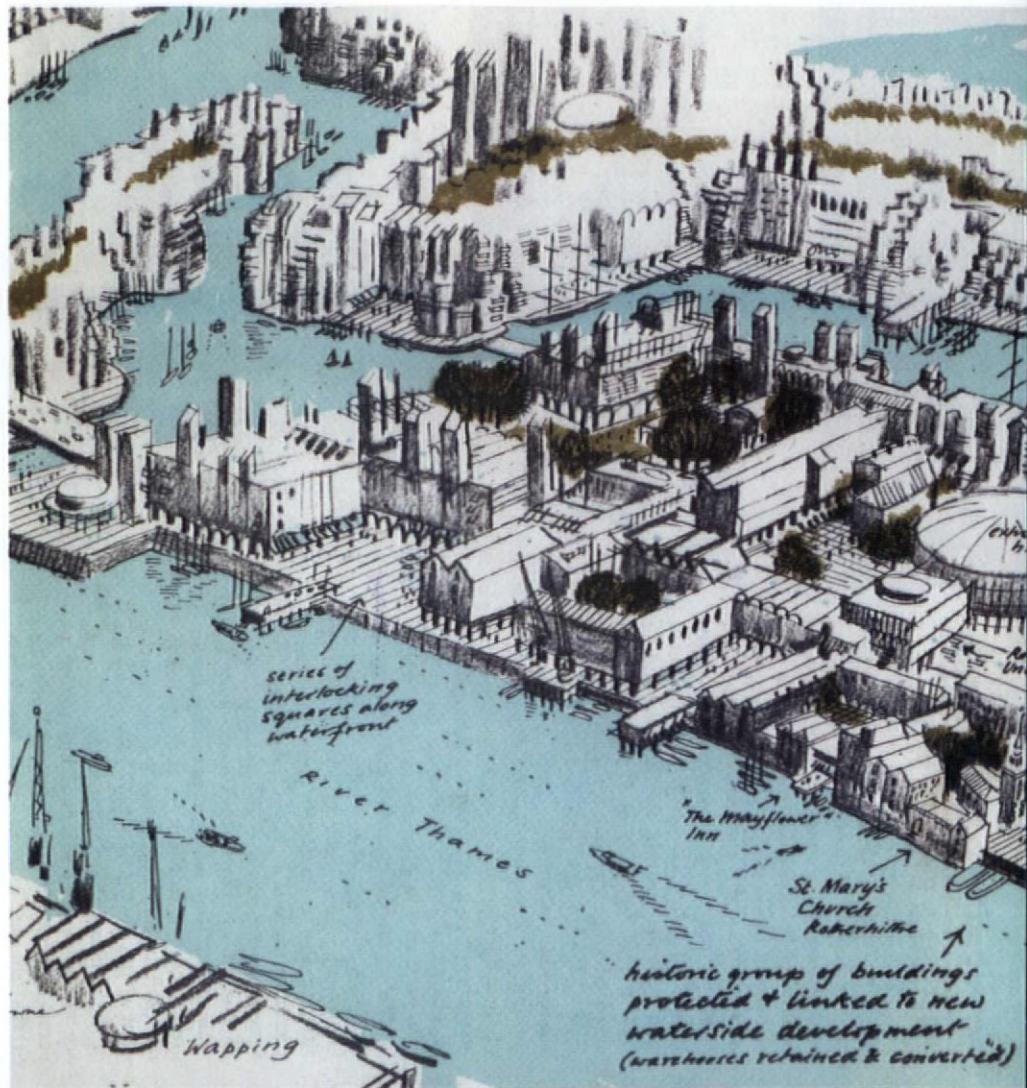
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Library, Senior
Citizens' Centre
and City Block
Core Zone,
Barcelona. (Photo
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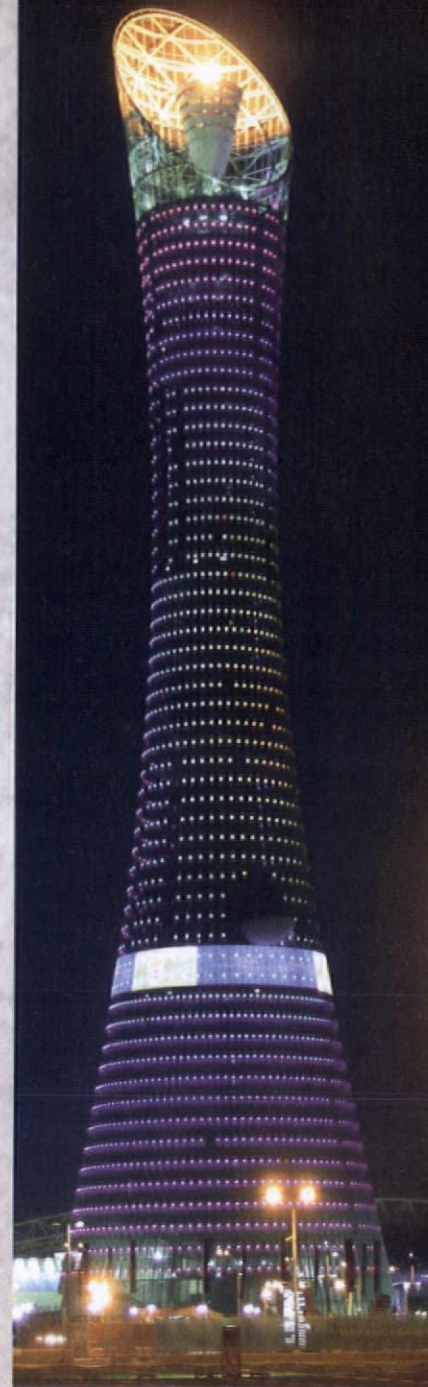
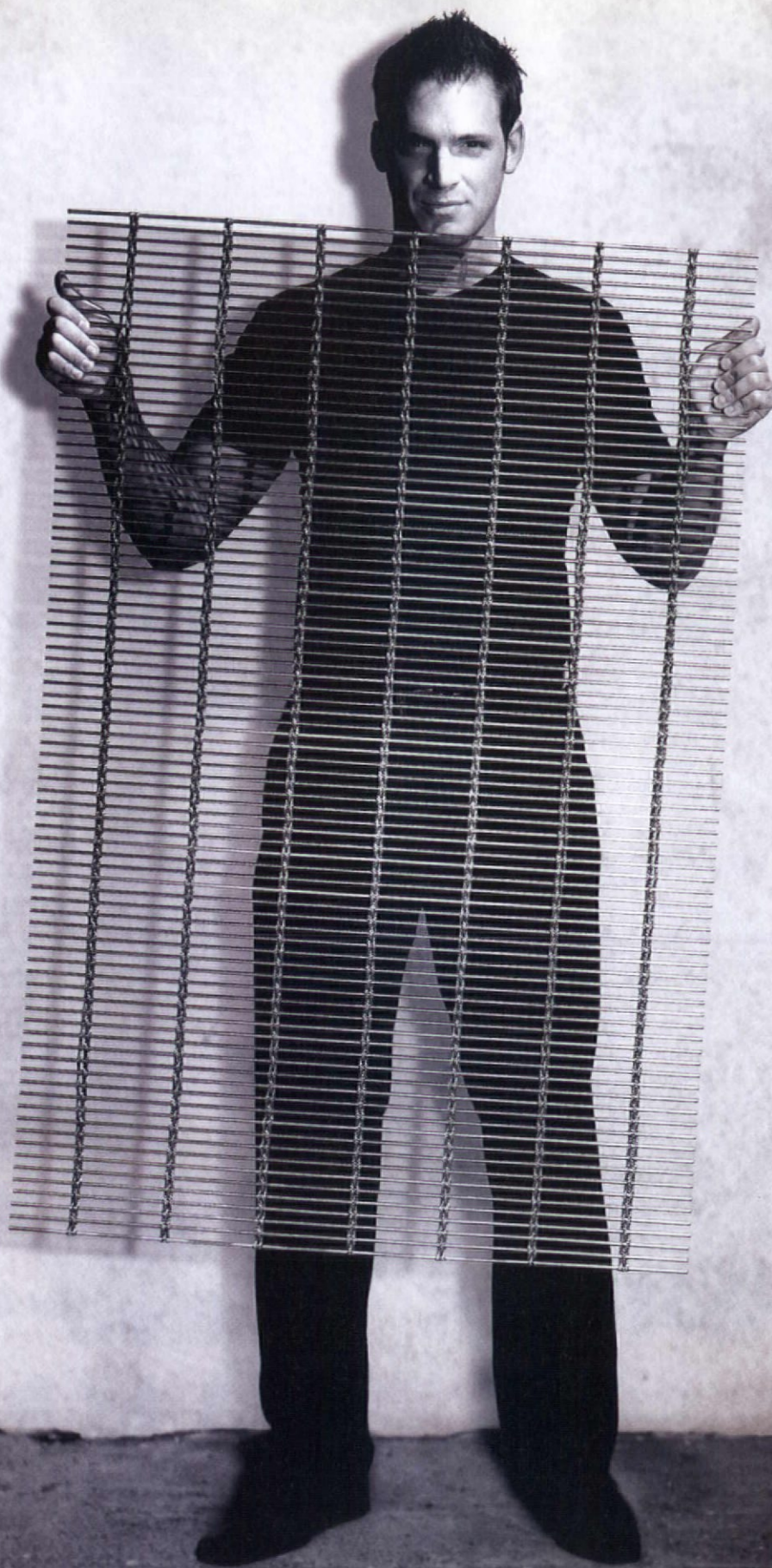


Kenneth Browne, who died in January aged 91, was a long-standing servant of this magazine. He joined the AR in 1953, replacing Gordon Cullen as townscape editor, and was a faithful collaborator of the brilliant proprietor/editor Hubert de Cronin Hastings in his later years. The most conspicuous result of their work together was *Civilia*, eventually published as a book, which combined various social concerns with wild collages of contemporary buildings clustered on a spoil heap in the Midlands as a pattern for high-density living. He later collaborated with de Cronin Hastings' son John, though nothing of substance resulted. However, for more than a decade, Browne's drawing and collage style gave the AR a distinctive flavour.

PETER DAVEY

Top: sketch of the Friday Mosque in Isfahan, from a special issue on the Iranian city, May 1976. Right: *Civilia* in Docklands, April 1972. Below right: sketch of Dublin, from November 1974's 'A Future for Dublin'. Below left: collage from the original issue on *Civilia*, June 1971





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Peter Cook

What makes architecture interesting.

There are two routes into discussing architecture: the first involves the statement of values and the construction of theories (usually linked together). The second involves the dissection of buildings and projects in order to glean the sequences of cause and effect (which may well involve a myriad of values and responses).

The former approach is presumed to be intellectually tougher and is certainly the more preferred and fashionable amongst those who wish to influence our minds. Indeed, it can be pursued by those who are very little interested in buildings per se but who would prefer to erect a structure of polemics than to get inside the architecture. The latter approach (easily dismissed as trainspotting) is difficult for those who did not have an architectural training – who make up an increasingly large portion of the family of critics. For them, the discussion of architecture in relation to politics, gender, art movements,

rhetoric or what makes something iconic is safer territory than getting inside the building or its author.

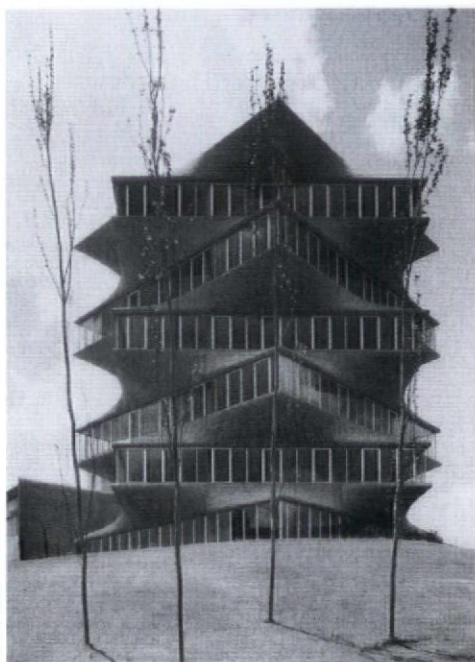
So a third strategy – of sniffing around the circumstances of architecture, the gossip, the gatherings, the manifestations, the events or the oddities of the architects themselves – has been my way of making the entry via the second route (which I value) more palatable.

All this has been at the back of my mind during the three or four years of this column's existence. With its demise (this is the final one), I shall look for other vehicles to continue the discussion of architecture-as-architecture, since I cannot bear to leave the subject. I can't stand to leave even more territory open to the dreaded theorists!

So typically, I am off in an hour to give a lunchtime lecture at the Architectural Association. Having scrutinized the season's list of speakers I am deliberately introducing some other names. Some quaint aspects of their biography, their architectural moves, their assemblages of parts, that would alone intrigue us. I call the lecture 'How to be an Interesting Architect'. Several of them have cropped-up in

this column before, though by no means all. Some are up for redefinition. Terunobu Fujimori is no longer someone I want to meet but someone who I have now visited in the Tokyo equivalent of Barnet, North London, or outer Queens, New York. His own house with the twigs growing out of it is grafted onto a remnant of an earlier, slightly modernist, property in a suburb that until recently contained smallholdings, so my first sight of him was while he was feeding some geese. We talked about Charles Voysey. We took Japanese tea on the floor, but the dining table on legs was clearly visible in the next room. The clue is in the normal, human reality and common sense, rather than the paradoxical. Wit and a very considerable knowledge about the bits and the stuff, re-examined as he travels.

I will talk about Amancio (Pancho) Guedes, who leapt out of a copy of the Architectural Review in the early 1960s with some of the most sculpturally free architecture that I have seen until now. Once I got to know this loveable character and his track record of 400 built buildings out in Africa, I was intrigued by the fact that he often dressed stylishly and urbanely



Miguel Fisac's wonderful 'pagoda'.



Fisac's experiments with 'quilted' concrete.



Terunobu Fujimori and his own house in Tokyo, grafted on to a suburban dwelling.

and could produce very exact work if he wanted. He can weave a tale. He can interweave an anecdote. Little surprise, then, that he was approved of by the far more ascetic Smithsons, since perhaps he followed the ethos of their 'Today we collect ads' a jot more spiritedly than they could. Returning to Portugal and still building a bit. He is regarded as a sage by many who have no idea of those mysterious 400 items.

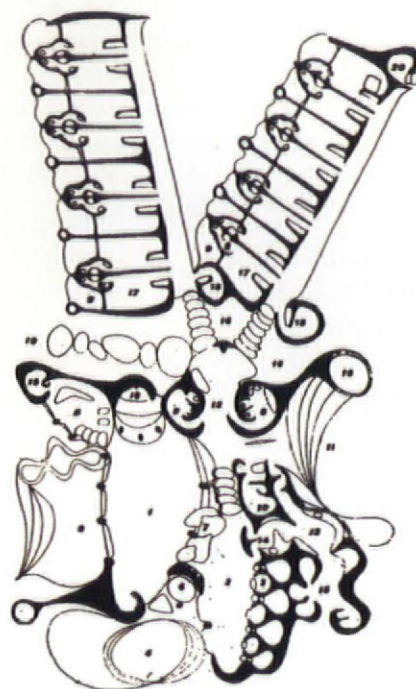
In a way, the easiest task is to dig out some obvious eccentrics from the proscriptive world of modern architecture. What will these kids, brought up on Mies van der Rohe, Le Corbusier and parametric guidelines, do with Morris Lapidus, Carlo Mollino or Herb Greene? Characters who are easily dismissable as 'fruity' – yet not so easily dismissable if you tot up the number of inventions, ideas or devices per m². It's a test of prejudice of mannerism against that of objective learning.

What do they do about Will Alsop, who always seems to be getting into tricky business situations, making him a colourful character? They should forget all this and look at the sheer number of ideas that he has. Or scan the

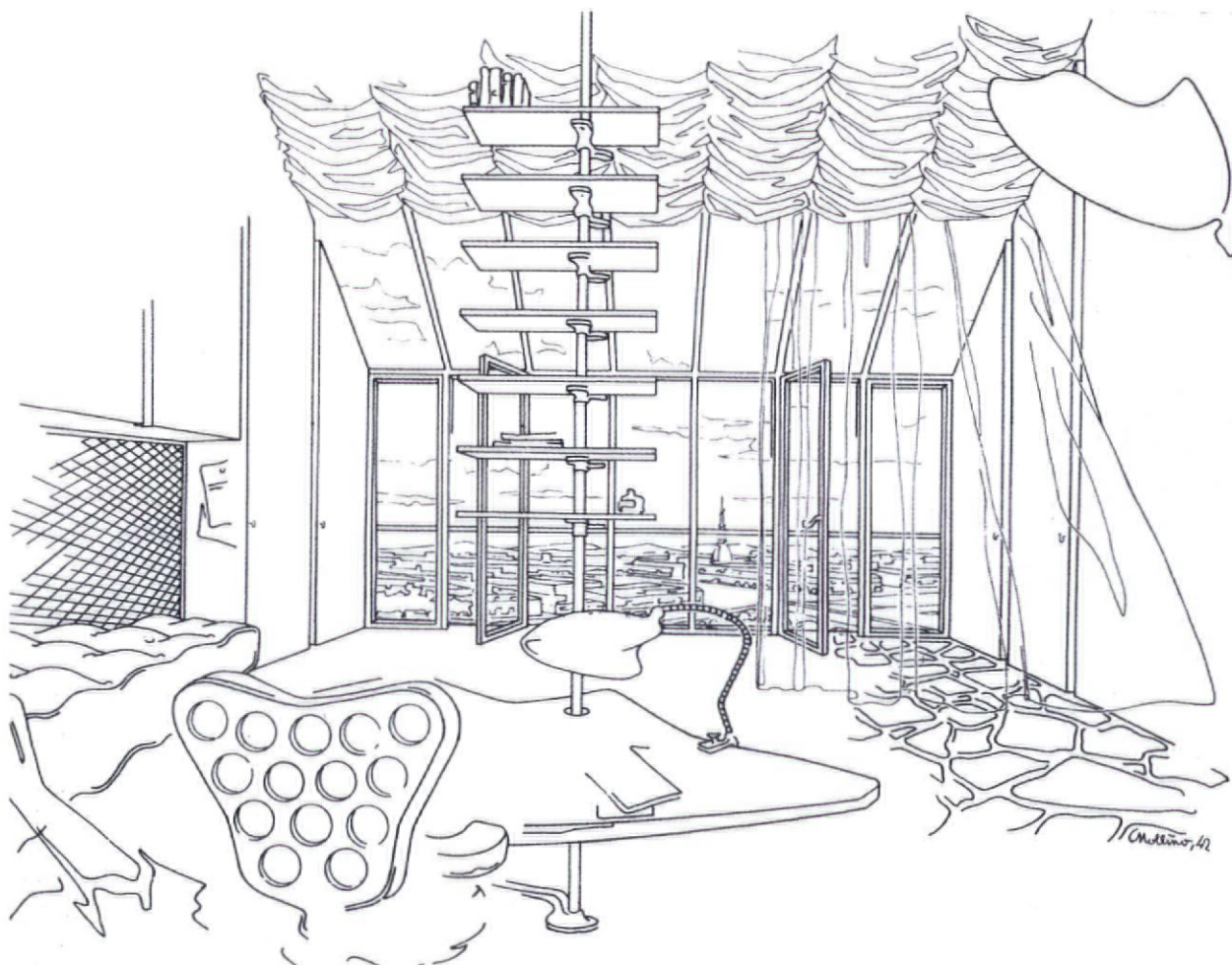
extraordinary range of Miguel Fisac's work, occupying most of his 92 years: from prefabricated housing, to precast concrete systems that led to the least boring compositions: a pagoda, some very theatrical churches or villas with 'quilted' concrete surfaces. A run-in with Catholic organisation Opus Dei silenced him for some years, but then he came back as vigorous as ever. Yet the magazines and picturebooks play cat-and-mouse with such guys, branding them of the wrong generation, of a half-forgotten period in fashion, of a curious mix of mannerisms and thus difficult to categorise by those who don't realise that architecture contains a rich set of layers, requiring the same type of mental pursuit on the part of the observer as a piece of archaeology or the subtle interweaving of the best cooking.

Perhaps the second approach is just too much. A simple piece of rhetoric, the joining of a manneristic gang, the outright dismissal of anything that is uncomfortably piling up a myriad of causes and effects...

This is the easier way. The digestible way.
The boring way.



Floridly organic hotel plan by Pancho Guedes.



Interior of apartment in Turin, by Carlo Mollino.

A NEW LIGHT

The AR is changing. In April's issue we launch a new graphic identity and an evolved editorial approach.

Next month, the *Architectural Review* will change. We have been working on a comprehensive redesign of the magazine for the last three months – the first for over 20 years – and we're excited to announce that it will be unveiled in the April issue.

Anything architecture magazines can do, the AR has done at some point in its 113-year history. So our strategy was to mine that past and find the clues to make a future for the AR. Everything from typefaces to content has been inspired by, or directly stolen from, editions of the past. I've had too many nerdily pleasurable evenings in the AR archive of late, but the result will be a magazine that gets back to the criticality, campaigning and visual flair it is synonymous with.

The structure of the magazine will change. A new opening section will cover global news events and how they are affecting architecture and the city. Some of the world's foremost architectural writers and critics will write on anything from the architectural consequences of the bush fires in Australia, to the aftermath of the fire at Beijing's CCTV complex, the credit crunch, climate change, plus the latest and brightest newsworthy projects will make up the most diverse, insightful and global journalism in any architecture magazine.

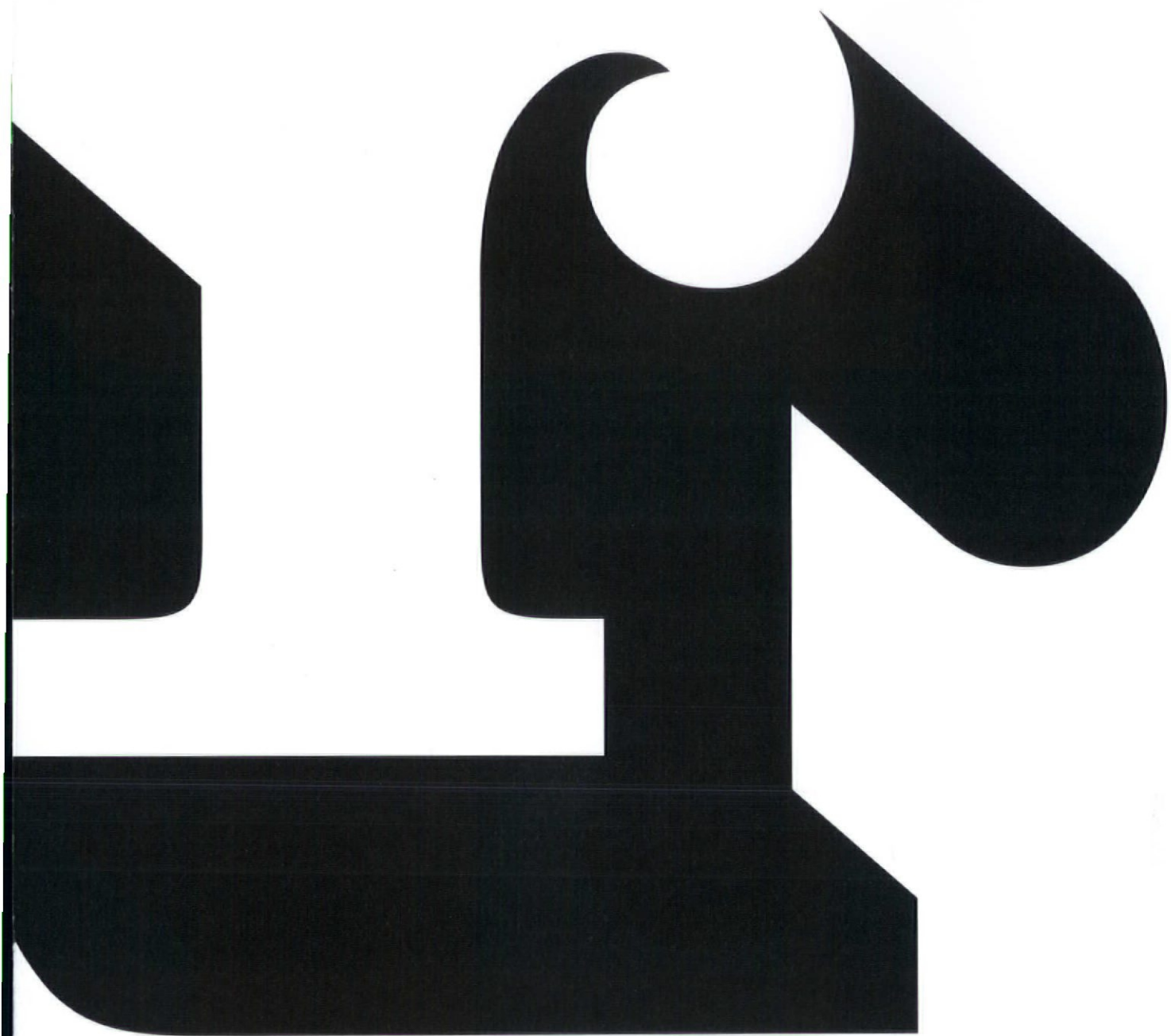
The heart of the magazine will remain the buildings section, chock full of the best projects from around the world, illustrated with glorious photography and comprehensive drawings. We have searched the globe for a new generation of architects to add their work to the AR's mix of buildings coverage. We will publish things in a more timely way, not bound by themes, so you get the best buildings, first.

At the back of the magazine will be the resurrected Marginalia section, a guide to books, exhibitions, products and other things for you to fill your free time with. It will contain the best critical writing on the most important cultural products in architecture today.

There will be many surprises: new sections and features, special issues and more. But we want to bring you the best writing and photography we can find about the best in world architecture. It's that simple.

You can follow the progress of the redesign issue at our new-look website (www.arplus.co.uk), and see more of what's in store in the April issue. Also, we want your feedback and thoughts about the project. This is your magazine, so we expect lots of discussion and debate. We look forward to taking the AR into a new era, while continuing to delight, inform and provoke our readers. KIERAN LONG





UNIVERSITY BUILDING,
MILAN, ITALY
ARCHITECT
GRAFTON ARCHITECTS

GROUND AND SKY

Grafton Architects' building for Milan's Bocconi university synthesises the tough yet sensuous character of the city.

'It's like an oyster,' says Yvonne Farrell, partner in Grafton Architects, describing the new building for the Luigi Bocconi university in Milan. 'A tough grey carapace on the outside, but white, light and delicate on the inside.' As it heaves into view along the Viale Bligny, a nondescript thoroughfare along which antique trams still rattle and hum, you can see what she means. The building's sharply chiselled bulk is clad in thin sheets of ceppo, a hard grey stone more usually employed for apartments, shops and offices. Ultra-fine joints between the 30mm-thick stone sheets give the appearance of a seamless, monolithic structure, clammed shut like a recalcitrant bivalve.

Prising apart the shell reveals a labyrinth of subterranean lecture halls and concourses lined with milky white bianco

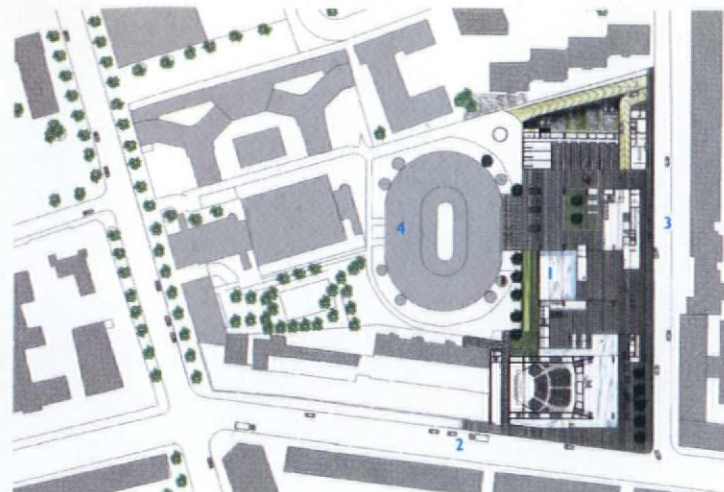
lisa marble that captures and reflects the light, bathing the interior in a delicate, pearly translucence. Above, the 'offices for 1,000 professors' (a programmatic requirement that might have been scripted by Borges or Calvino) are corralled into narrow, cloistered bars and hung from a massive concrete roof structure to free up the ground plane for intensive excavation. Students and teaching staff are now acclimatising to their new home, but the building is also intended to be accessible and legible to the public, connecting with its wider surroundings and creating new pedestrian routes through its city block – so perhaps the oyster analogy is not the whole story.

Founded in 1902, the Università Commerciale Luigi Bocconi is one of Italy's leading



1
Clad in sheets
of ceppo, a familiar
local stone, the
new building has
an uncompromising
street presence that
responds to Milan's
tough urban milieu.
2
The subterranean
concourse outside
the 1,000-seat aula
magna lecture hall
becomes an extension
of the public realm.





site plan

- 1 new building
- 2 Viale Bligny
- 3 Via Roentgen
- 4 existing campus building

3 Under construction: upper-floor offices are supported by a suspended structure in order to free up the ground plane.

4 The Milan context and Viale Bligny.

5 The building is penetrated by courtyards that act as routes through the urban block. Ceppo, which resembles a natural terrazzo, covers the ground plane, unifying the external spaces.

6 Bars of offices are wrapped in a shimmering skin of glass shingles.

7 A Piranesian staircase runs parallel to the library and meeting rooms.

colleges of business, economics and law – a kind of Italian LSE or Harvard Business School. It could really only be based in Milan, that curiously dour crucible of enterprise and money making, and Bocconi is deeply meshed in the city's physical and social fabric.

The university was endowed by Fernando Bocconi, a wealthy Milanese shop owner, in memory of his son Luigi who was killed in the Ethiopian colonial wars of the late 1890s. It currently occupies a campus just south of the historic centre, a ten-minute tram ride from the Duomo di Milano, where it relocated in 1940 in order to develop and expand. That move catalysed a flourish of Italian modernism, notably Giuseppe Pagano's headquarters on the Via Sarfatti, a heroic exercise in rationalist rigour that long outlived its idealistic designer, a former editor of architecture magazine *Casabella* and decorated hero of the First World War, who joined the Resistance and died in

Mauthausen concentration camp.

Yet despite a history of championing Italian architects, for its latest phase of expansion the university authorities chose outsiders Dublin-based Grafton Architects, who won a limited international competition in 2001. At 68,000m², it is by far the largest and most demanding project Farrell and her Grafton partner Shelley McNamara have tackled to date, but the challenge has been therapeutic, cultivating a fertile reciprocity between the architects, their clients and the city itself. 'We wanted the building to feel like a piece of Milan, not an import,' says McNamara. 'Small observations led to big moves. We observed the stone floor of the city, the rugged solid geological walls of the city; not pretty, but challenging.' Yet beneath this tough surface, Milan also has a social, sybaritic side. Courtyard gardens, grand piazzas and arcades act as places of exchange, animating city life. The architects cite Il Broletto, a medieval structure near the

Duomo which is used as a civic hall and market, as an example of this urban intercourse, and see their building as endowed with similar potential.

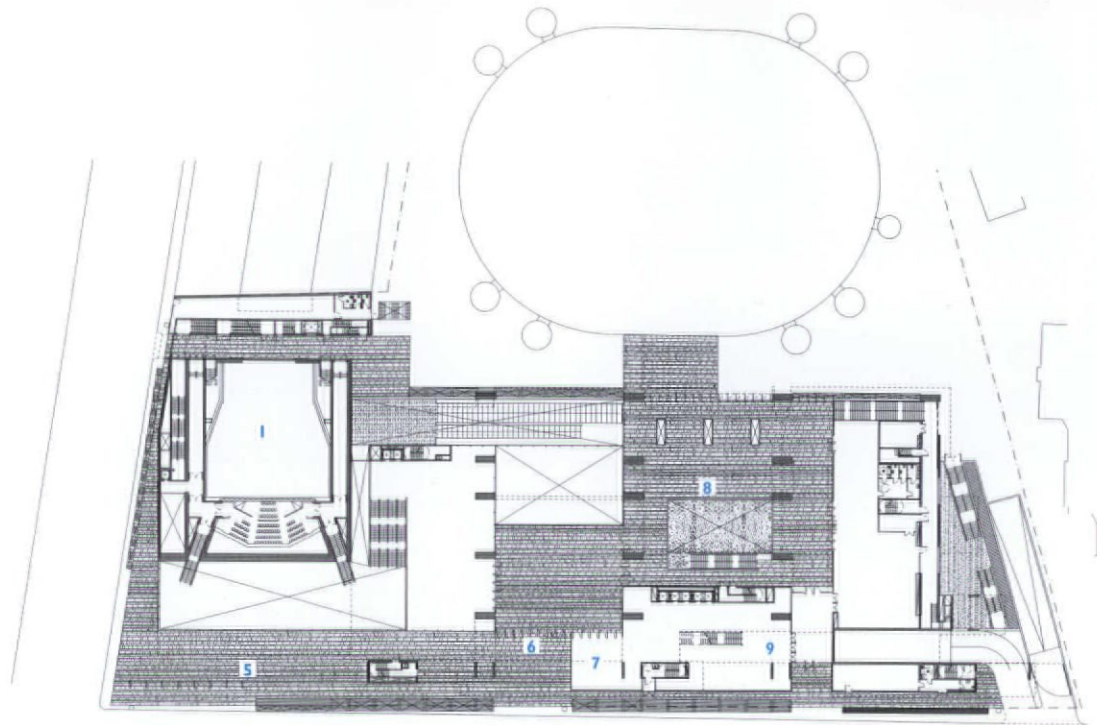
Bounded by Viale Bligny and Via Roentgen, the site lies near Milan's 16th-century boundary, originally marked by walls and gates built under Spanish rule, now demarcated more prosaically by the city's inner ring road. In a predictably exacting programme, the 80 x 160m corner plot somehow had to accommodate a conference hall, five lecture theatres, a library, meeting rooms and offices for the *mille professori*. As the site (a former bus park) is surrounded by mid-rise apartment blocks, planning regulations stipulated that the building could be no higher than 22m above street level. The obvious solution was to inter the lecture halls below ground, but there were concerns that this would simply end up creating a series of dingy oubliettes. Making this underground realm 'pleasurable and habitable' became



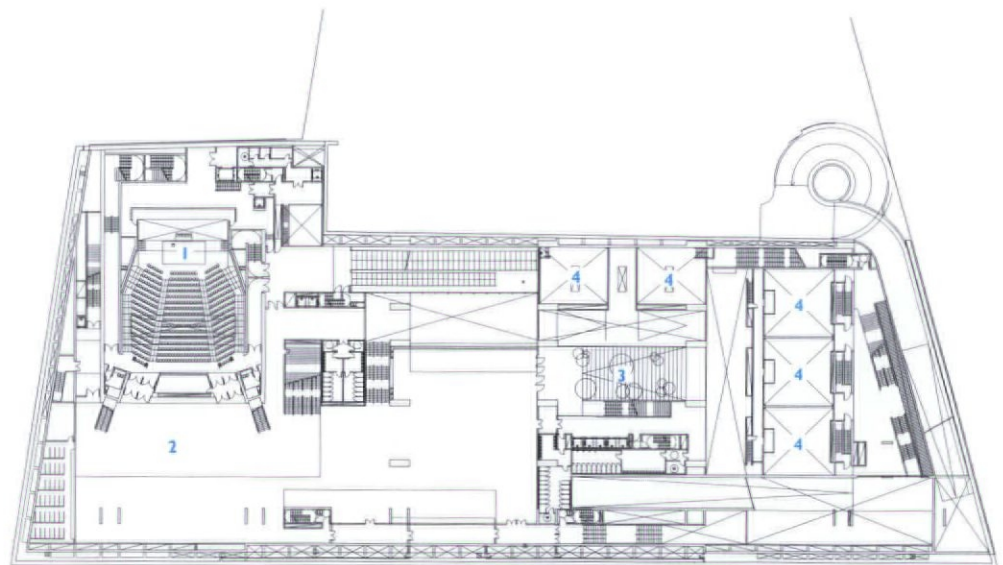
the project's critical impetus.

It took a year to dig and stabilise a crater 22m deep, which now contains the lecture theatres and a subterranean network of courtyards and concourses. The largest lecture hall, the 1,000-seat aula magna, pivotally erupts at the corner in a great gravity-defying wedge that recalls Melnikov's famous Rusakov workers' club in Moscow. Here, as in other places, the ground plane is carved out and pulled away to admit light and views, through fins of clear, curtain wall glazing.

The narrow wing of the library and meeting rooms is placed along Via Roentgen, separated from the offices by a long, top-lit Piranesian stairwell bisected by bridges, landings and breakout spaces. To provide privacy for both scholars and the occupants of surrounding flats, the facade is largely opaque at upper levels. However, slits offering oblique views along, rather than across, the street are chiselled into the carapace of stone. In many ways, the stone defines the building. the architects wanted an ordinary Milanese material that reflected the doughty character of the city, so they chose ceppo, which is quarried in Lombardy (in fact, the university bought a local quarry to ensure adequate supplies). From a distance it registers as a solid grey mass, but when you get closer, you realise that it's more like terrazzo, with a complex, mottled texture. It even appears iridescent, but this geological

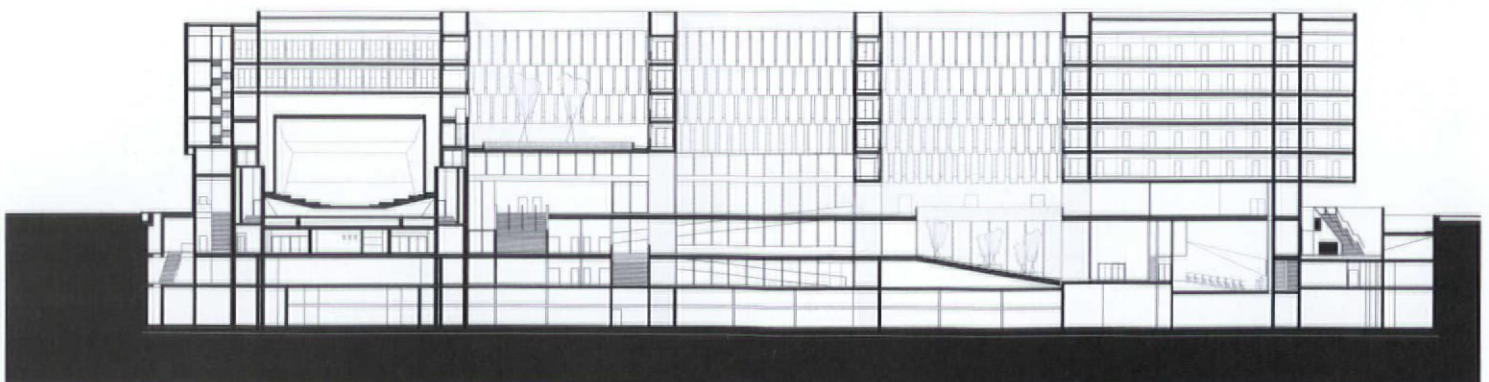


ground-floor plan (scale approx 1:1250)



lower ground-floor plan at 5m below street level

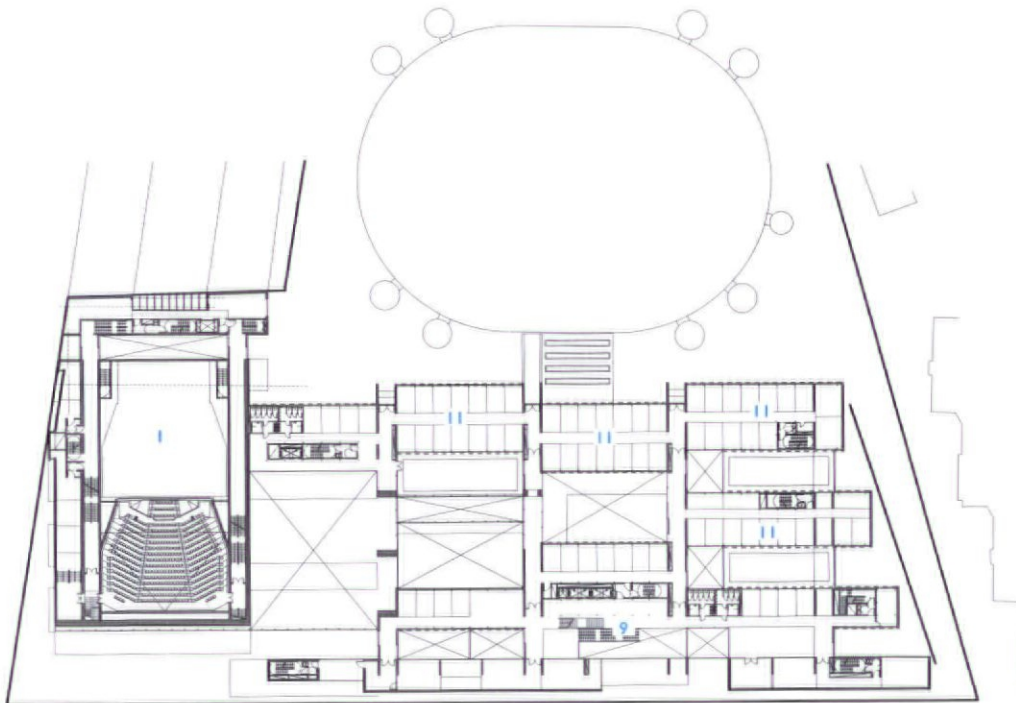
long section



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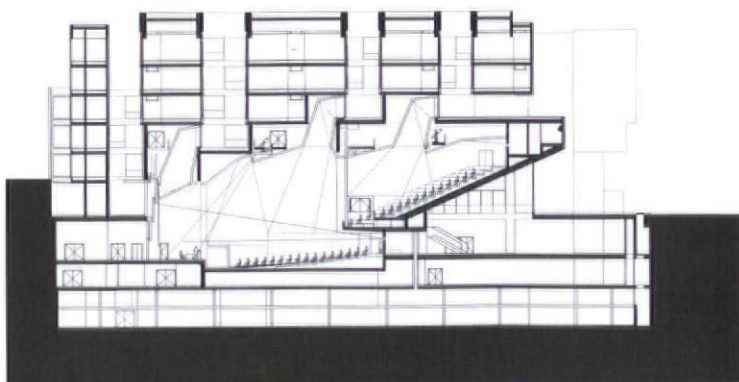
second floor



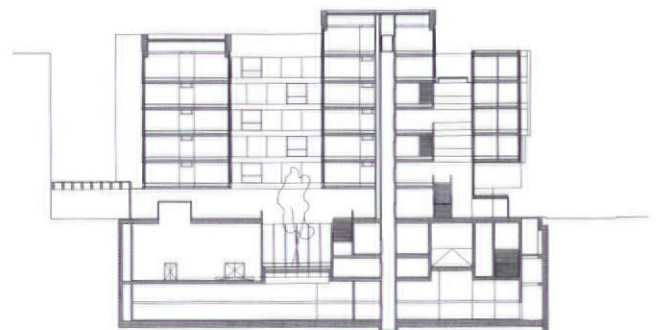
first floor

- 1 aula magna
- 2 concourse/aula magna foyer
- 3 sunken courtyard
- 4 lecture halls
- 5 new piazza
- 6 main entrance
- 7 reception
- 8 courtyard
- 9 staircase
- 10 library/meeting rooms
- 11 professors' offices

cross section through aula magna



cross section through courtyard



nougat is also tough and highly resistant to the effects of pollution. The stone pours off the facade to coat the pavement, internal courtyards and a new piazza created in front of the building, thus unifying public and university space.

McNamara distills the essence of the project into 'an idea about ground and sky'. The ground is carved and cut to admit light, while the sky is conceived as an inhabited roof housing the multitude of professors' offices. Floating high above the excavated ground, suspended blocks of four to five storeys effectively act as huge roof beams. Here too, issues of privacy and light penetration are adeptly addressed, with the blocks clad in a mixture of clear and translucent glass shingles. Though offices are conventionally single- or double-banked off spinal corridors, translucent glass walls transmit a cool radiance through the interior.

Soft yet hard, massive yet light, impermeable yet porous – Bocconi is a deft choreography of formal, material and even constructional contradictions. The outcome is architecture of sobering power, tempered with touches of exquisite subtlety. Milan is an uncompromising milieu, not easily accommodating to outsiders, yet Grafton Architects has managed to absorb, channel and tactfully subvert Milanese reserve with intelligence and sensitivity. Deservedly honoured with the award of World Building of the Year at last year's World Architecture Festival (AR December 2008) and also shortlisted for the Mies van der Rohe Award (p27), perhaps a more telling accolade came when, as McNamara recalls, 'We presented our project and were told: "You are more Milanese than the Milanese themselves." That was a good moment.' CATHERINE SLESSOR

Architect

Grafton Architects, Dublin

Project team

Yvonne Farrell, Shelley McNamara, Gerard Carty, Philippe O'Sullivan, Simona Castelli

Photographs

Nos 1, 4, 7 by Federico Brunetti

All others courtesy of Grafton Architects



8



9

8 The building is a synthesis of stone and glass tempered by light.

9

Creamy marble floors, walls lined with pietra serena stone and gold velvet curtains add honorific touches to the aula magna.

10

Inside the teaching blocks.

11

The subterranean concourses are animated by light from above.

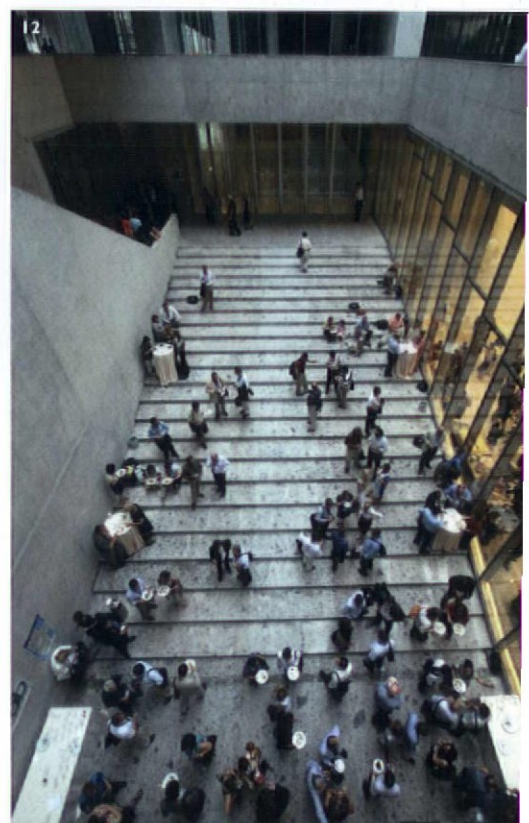
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Internal subterranean courtyards are colonised as social spaces.

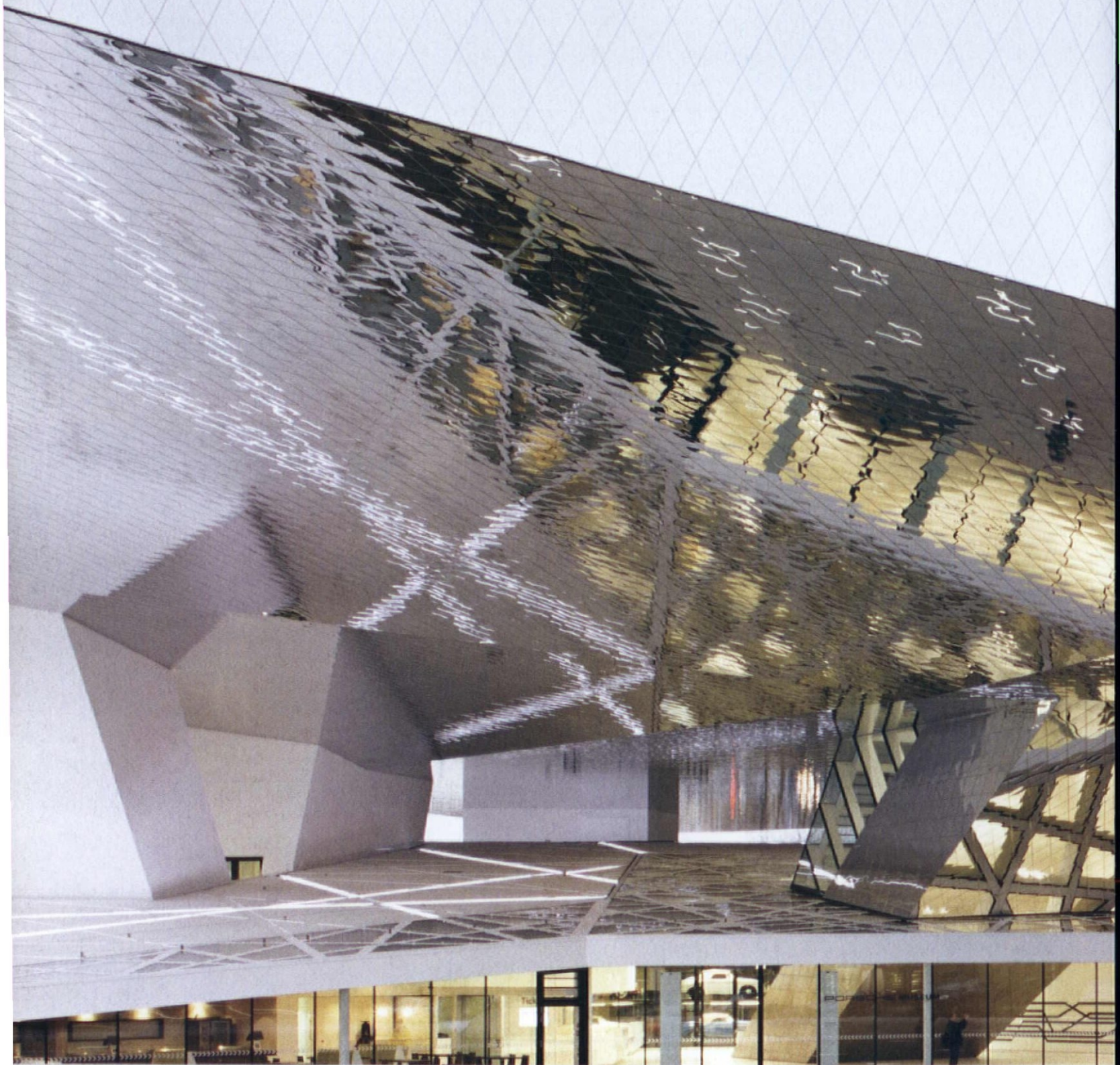
UNIVERSITY BUILDING,
MILAN, ITALY

ARCHITECT

GRAFTON ARCHITECTS



**CAR MUSEUM,
STUTTGART, GERMANY**
ARCHITECT
**DELUGAN MEISSL
ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS**



I
The entrance forecourt slopes down towards the entrance, with the museum's mirrored underside hulking above.

I arrive at the Porsche Museum not in a chauffeured Porsche Cayenne SUV, but in a coach, which pulls up on the tarmac apron that gathers disgorged visitors and funnels them in to the reception. It's a crystal-clear day, and the massive white-clad mass looming above with its mirrored underside is blindingly unreal against the blue sky. Around me are various factory buildings with little sign of activity on the outside. There is no streetlife,

not even a shop, in sight.

The museum, designed by Vienna-based Delugan Meissl Associated Architects, is in Zuffenhausen, Germany, a district half an hour north of Stuttgart city centre and dominated completely by Porsche's main manufacturing facility. For car fans, it's a place synonymous with the design and manufacture of some of the fastest and most beautiful sports cars ever made, first by the firm's progenitor Professor Ferdinand Porsche and later

by his son Ferry. This museum was built to exhibit around 80 cars at a time from Porsche's collection and provide a place to receive pilgrims from across the world. It's a place of communion with the brand's history.

The proposal must have looked spectacular in the competition drawings in late 2004: the faceted mass raised off the ground on three massive, sloping pylons, with a single, rather sinister black glass window looking out across

PORSCHE HOUSE

The Porsche Museum is pure Bond-villain aesthetics: a space-age expanse of white, taking visitors for a spin through the sports car marque's history. But is it too smooth?



Porscheplatz, the interior a seamless, almost clinical environment. It's all realised in a stealth-bomber idiom that blurs the line between computer visualisation and built form – *James Bond* stylist Ken Adam would be proud.

And the built version is certainly spectacular, with the kind of vital statistics that sound great in press releases. 100 million euros spent, 66,000m³ of earth moved, 21,000m³ of concrete and a total of 10,000 tonnes of steel used (this includes the reinforcement in the concrete, plus 6,000 tonnes for the dense structure of the raised part of the building), all for 5,600m² of exhibition space. This is a building from a more innocent time: the pre-credit-crunch flexing of a car manufacturer's pectorals.

The 160m by 70m superstructure is essentially a steel cage suspended on three feet. The complex lattice of steel was designed using parametric software, in collaboration with Stuttgart engineer Leonhardt, Andrä und Partner. The average distance between the cores is 60m, and two of the corners have huge cantilevers.

Unlike other recent undercroft buildings (Forum Barcelona by Herzog & de Meuron or Zaha Hadid's Phäno Science Centre in Wolfsburg, for instance) the mass of the Porsche Museum is raised off the floor for show, rather than for any desire to create routes across the site. The gap between the podium and the monolith above is pure look-no-hands sculpture. The architect described it to me as a way of expressing the separation of the exhibition space (in the raised volume) from the base, which contains the foyer, gift shop, café, a functioning car workshop and office accommodation. It is also presumably the thing that gives this building a 'self-confident attitude' and makes it 'dynamic', according to the press release.

The museum is accessed through automatic glass doors in the hillock of a base structure. The foyer has a roof of triangular panes of glass, through which it

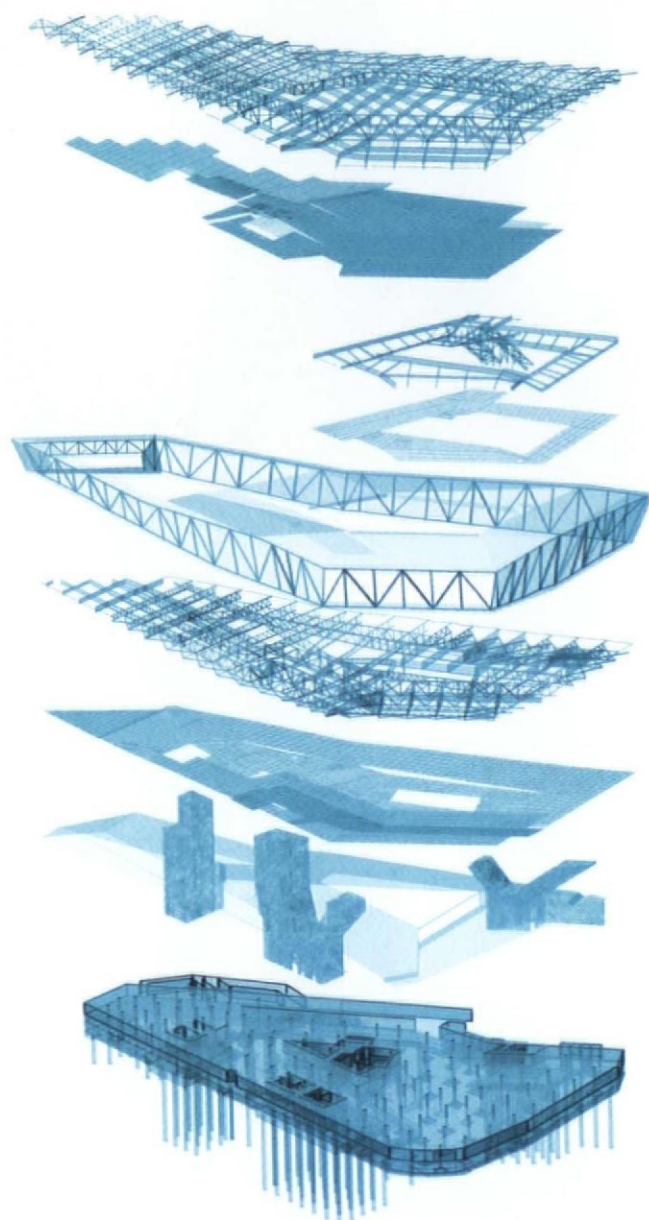
is possible to glimpse the massive mirrored soffit of the exhibition building above. To the left is a café, to the right a gift shop. But this space tapers towards and is focused on the workshop, where mechanics work in more or less plain view (through a glass partition) of the visiting public. This questionable honour for them will be a thrill for petrolhead visitors.

The main event, however, is still to come. Access to the exhibition space is up a long escalator, which ascends through a tube to the almost windowless exhibition hall. On dismounting the escalator, you're faced with a steel recreation of Ferdinand Porsche's first car body design, and the beginning of the Porsche chronology.

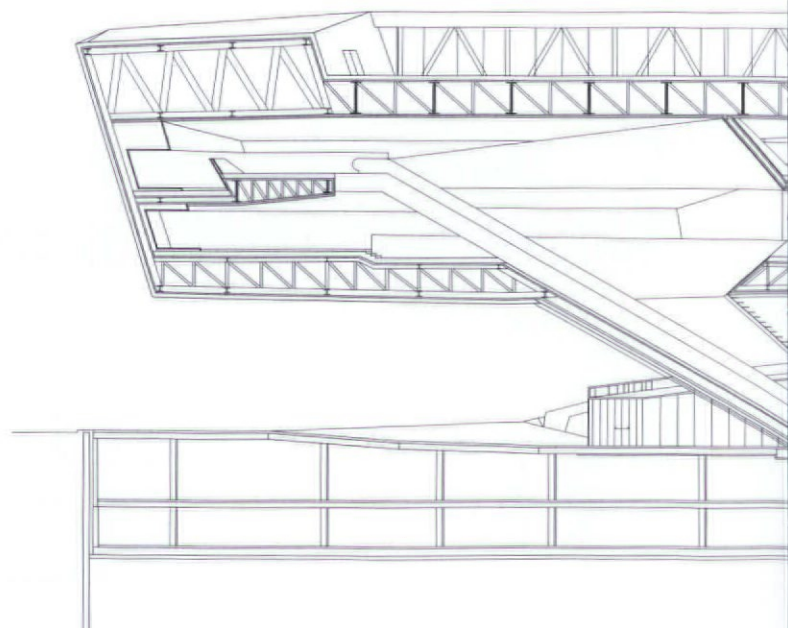
The main idea for the exhibition space was to have an ascending spiral of galleries, with an almost imperceptible climb (a 3 per cent gradient) taking you past the cars. This allows there to be a single, comprehensive route with shortcuts allowing the errant visitor freedom to roam. There is one chronological display: a series of cars in a black-lined niche, which winds its way around the perimeter of the exhibition hall.

The space itself is odd in that despite its size, it doesn't easily offer spectacular views. The top of the escalator, for instance, affords no moment of revelation. You must turn 180° to see the extent of the space and even then, there's no particular visual focus. This is architecture about continuous movement, rather than episodes or moments of revelation.

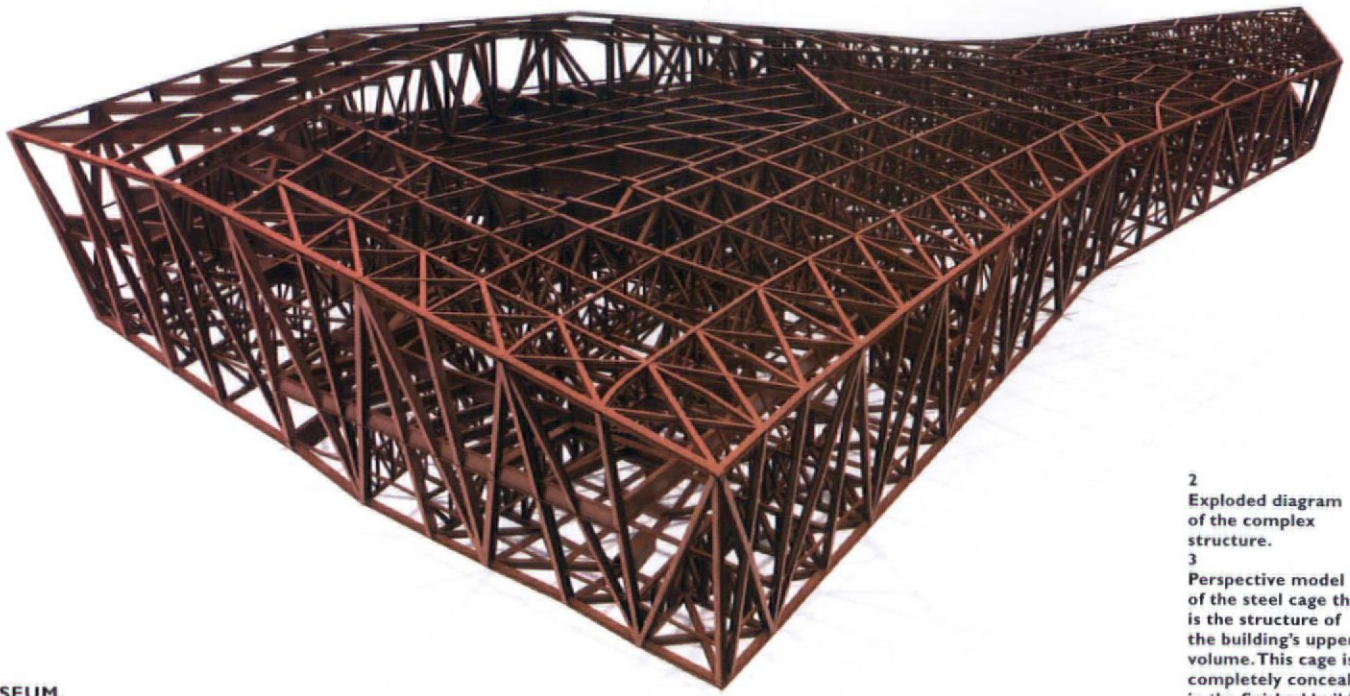
Delugan Meissl's approach is to suppress junctions between components or materials, focusing on a way of building that is seamless, or at least without detail. Inside the Porsche Museum, when two materials meet, one simply stops and the next begins. There's no attempt or desire to mediate or articulate that junction. This explains their enthusiasm for a material like LG Hi-Macs (out of which is cast the coffee bar in the foyer), with which they also originally hoped to coat the



2

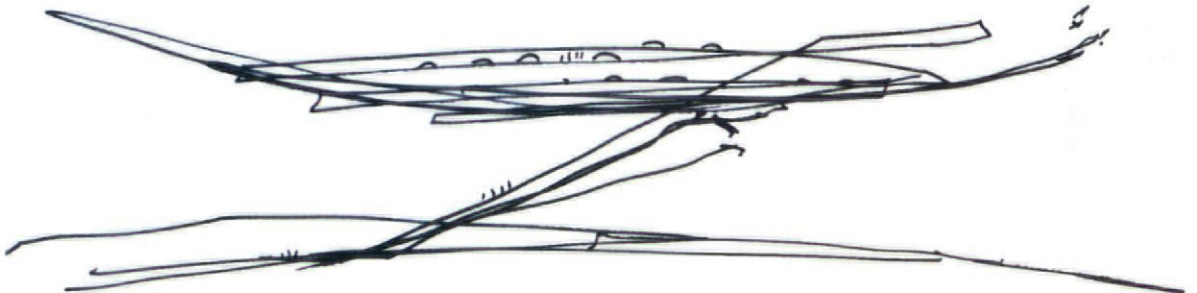


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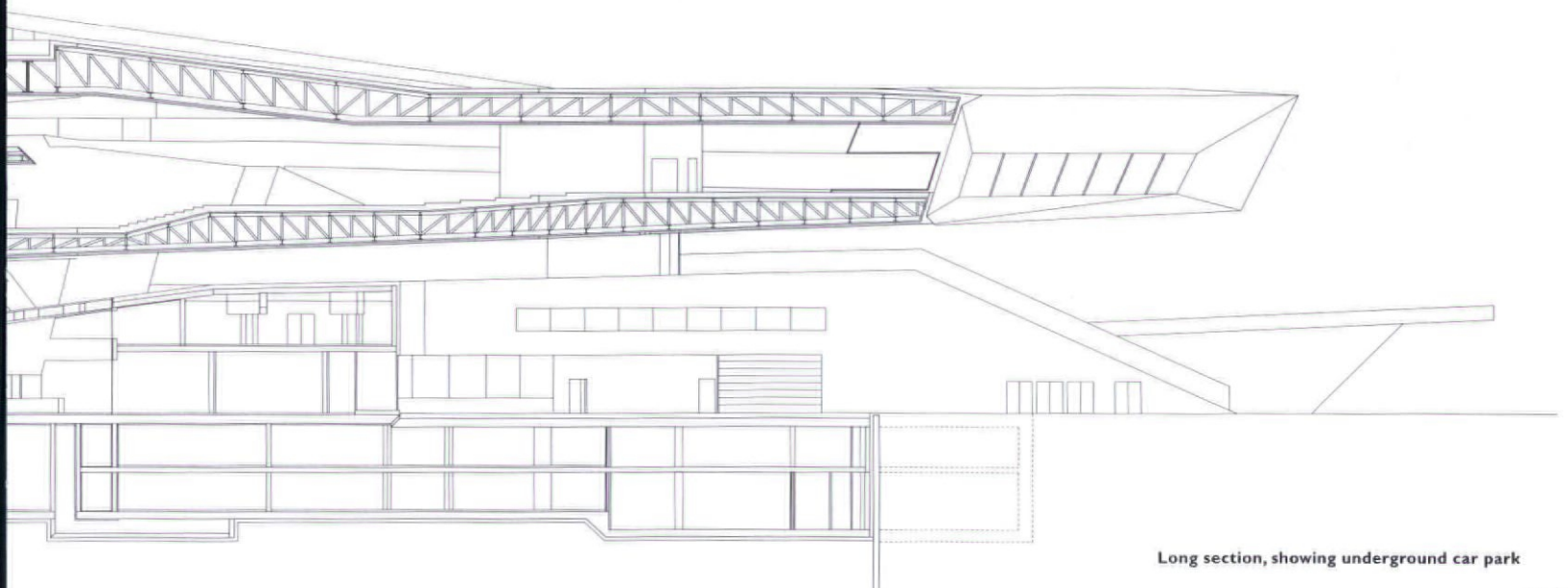


**CAR MUSEUM,
STUTTGART, GERMANY**
ARCHITECT
DELUGAN MEISSL
ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS

- 2
Exploded diagram
of the complex
structure.
- 3
Perspective model
of the steel cage that
is the structure of
the building's upper
volume. This cage is
completely concealed
in the finished building.
- 4
Concept sketch
showing the elevated
museum volume
connected to the
ground by an elevator.



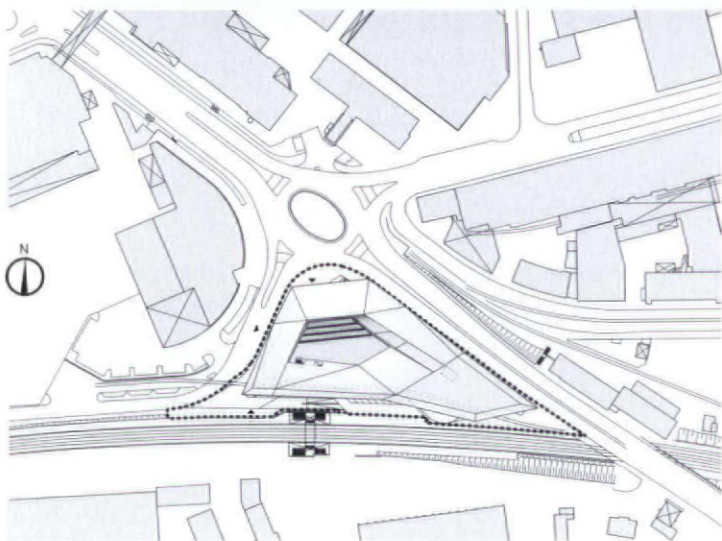
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Long section, showing underground car park



5



Site plan, with Porscheplatz to the north and the train station to the south



6



5
Looking at the
museum across
Porscheplatz. Behind
the dark window are
conference facilities.

6
View from the south.
The local train station
defines the southern
site boundary.

7
From the south-west.

8
The view from the
road into Stuttgart.



**CAR MUSEUM,
STUTTGART, GERMANY**
ARCHITECT
**DELUGAN MEISL
ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS**

9

At night, the mirrored soffit and glowing lower storey transform the building.

10

Natural light reaches the exhibition space through this relatively small slot at the south-east corner.

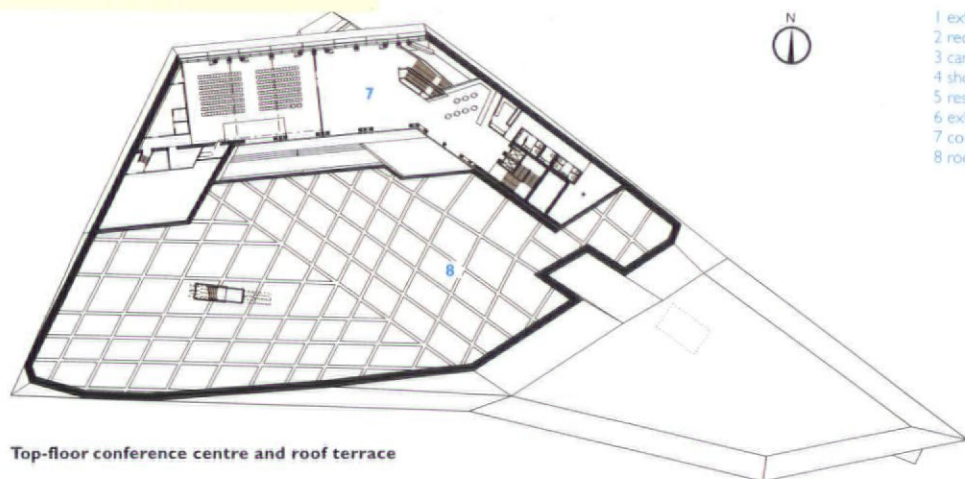
**CAR MUSEUM,
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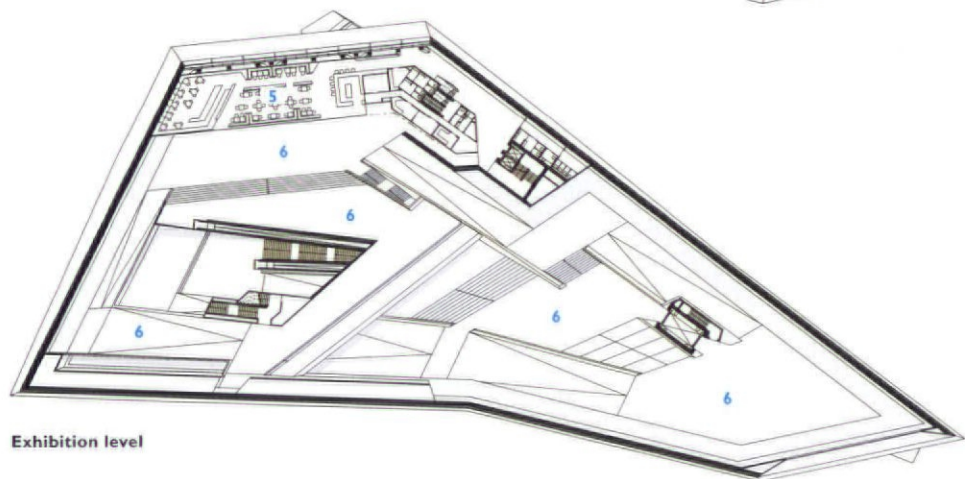
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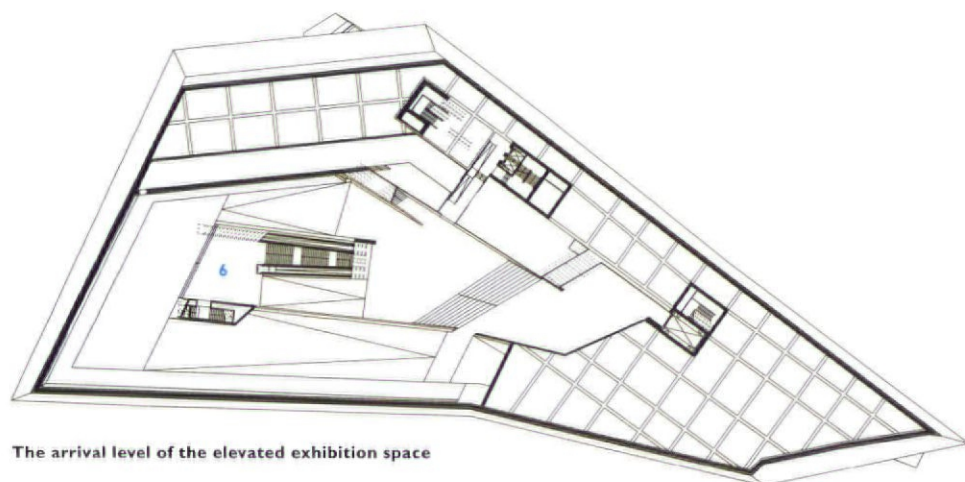




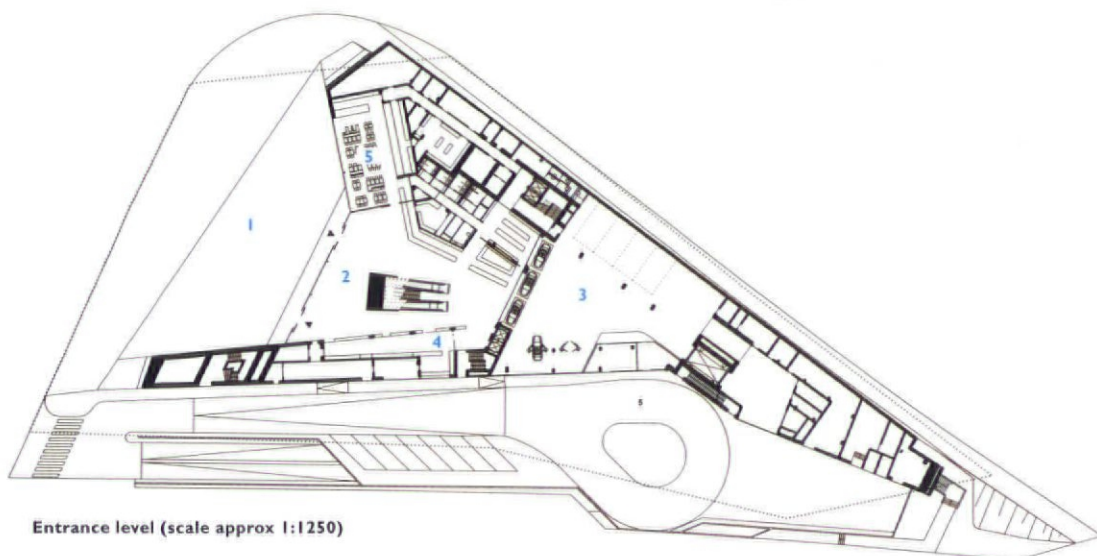
Top-floor conference centre and roof terrace



Exhibition level



The arrival level of the elevated exhibition space



Entrance level (scale approx 1:1250)

- 1 external entrance court
- 2 reception
- 3 car workshop
- 4 shop
- 5 restaurant
- 6 exhibition space
- 7 conference facility
- 8 roof terrace

exhibition hall interior. Cost demanded that this be changed to a more conventional mineral coating, and it is now a series of planes of white, subtly faceted like the exterior. The floor is a high-resistance sandwich panel made of a white reconstituted stone, designed to resist leaks from cars, since most of the cars sit directly on the floor, rather than on podiums.

This desire to create architecture of a single, inviolable surface is almost contrary when you consider the extreme complexity of the structure. The dense cage of steel that forms the main volume will never be seen again, hidden by huge covering surfaces, both inside and out. I know we've gone past functionalism by now, but it still seems a shame.

The exhibition design is by HG Merz and is beautifully realised. It is less hyperactive than its exhibition in UNStudio's Mercedes-Benz Museum across town, and all the better for it, with less text to read and slick interactive digital screens. Particularly popular with my motoring journalist colleagues were three sound umbrellas projecting the engine noise of various historical Porsche cars. The exhibition space is more or less free of natural light, except for one relatively small window facing the road on the south of the site. There are some spectacular moments inside – the view back across the space from the southernmost limit, for instance, with one transverse beam of white holding cars high in the air. Also, the journey down the escalator is really something. But the faceted white interior is a little flat, owing to the extremely consistent lighting. The architect justifies this monochrome scheme on the basis that the cars are the stars. But the lack of any contrast makes the use of white slightly strange – because of the lighting, the facets and surfaces are barely perceptible, despite the undeniable effort that went into detailing them.

There's no doubt that, with Europe in the throes of an economic crisis, the Porsche

Museum is a strange building to be writing about and, without wanting to sound overly moral, a strangely gratuitous one. Porsche shared the same motivation as the other German brands that have done the same thing recently – the Mercedes-Benz Museum (AR October 2006), BMW Welt by Coop Himmelb(l)au (AR June 2005) and the somewhat less architecturally active Volkswagen Autostadt and Audi Forum Ingolstadt, both by Henn Architekten – which was to give a physical base to a brand that

distinguishes itself in the competitive global car market by its history and tradition. By building a museum in the heart of its traditional home of manufacturing, Porsche hopes that the heritage of the marque will cohere and become transmissible. But when considering the acres of facade demanded by the design and the profligate structure, we wonder what message the auto industry is communicating beyond its brand values.

It is ludicrous to call this a

museum, of course. Telling highly selective histories of motorised transport in a way that glorifies one brand above another is hardly academic history. But to the legions of fans in car clubs across the world, Porsche has created its Mecca. Real enthusiasts will relish the spectacle of the building and most of all, the cars. The rest of us, as we contemplate a new era of austerity, may look back and see this landmark as an exemplar of a tendency that is on its last legs. KIERAN LONG

11
Entrance foyer, with reception on the left and the car workshop through the glass partition at the back.

12
The exhibition design was by HG Merz. The cars sit directly on a tough sandwich-panel floor.

13
The escalator ascending from the arrival level to the elevated exhibition hall.

Photographs
Brigida González



**CAR MUSEUM,
STUTTGART, GERMANY**
ARCHITECT
DELUGAN MEISSL
ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS





1
The redeveloped
Ruthin Craft Centre
presents a more
unified architectural
expression than
its predecessor.

2
Viewed from across
the roundabout on
approach to the town,
the centre's easterly
elevation is glimpsed
through the trees.

3
In celebration of
its reopening, the
courtyard once again
served as the craft
centre's social heart.

**APPLIED ARTS CENTRE,
RUTHIN, NORTH WALES**
ARCHITECT
SERGISON BATES



HOBBY CRAFT DELUXE

London-based Sergison Bates' first major public building gives form to many untested architectural preoccupations.

When Ruthin Craft Centre reopened in July last year, it was a big event in the North Wales market town. Closed for over two years, the centre's courtyard resumed service as the social focus for both local and craft communities, as hundreds gathered to see just how well the new 1,500m² building would occupy the footprint of the original. Opinion about its merits was divided, confirming architect Stephen Bates' experience that people 'either love or hate our work,' adding, 'which is probably the way we prefer it.' 'I'm glad you're open again,' said an elderly lady to one of the centre's directors, Philip Hughes, 'but I don't like this modern building.'

Sergison Bates describes Ruthin as its most 'formally

extravagant' completed building, and there is a sense of reservation in the firm's (unnecessary) justification for this (moderate) excess. Bates describes the roof's peaks, resonant of the distant Clwydian Hills, as 'a clumsy version of the picturesque'. With similar caution, in-situ tilt-up concrete walls, finely raked to produce a corduroy-like surface for 'an appropriate ornamental character', are referred to as 'cast-stone', elevating the building from arts barn to civic cultural destination and mimicking Ruthin's grand sandstone buildings in what Bates uneasily describes as a 'pinkish' hue.

Initially, the architect considered ways to adapt the original precinct – an odd collection of conjoined units

resembling a domestic institution, a result of the pessimistic stipulation that its 1980s design should be capable of conversion into sheltered housing. Despite the building's failings and apparent doubts that a centre in this place would succeed, the organisation thrived, with touring exhibitions and publications promoting its work around Europe and America. In the local region, however, it had little presence. In response, the directors secured funding to find a building that would reflect the craft centre's broader reputation.

Trapped within their municipal expression, the asbestos-ridden, uninsulated existing buildings were soon declared obsolete, and so this redevelopment came to mean much more than mere

adaptation. By 2005 Sergison Bates had secured the contract for its most significant public building yet, finally bringing to life its preoccupation with form and material – themes previously limited to design competitions. Now complete, the £4.4 million (£2,809 per m²) centre is a victory for architect and client, who both speak of the success of their relationship, owing in part to a shared passion for craft and production.

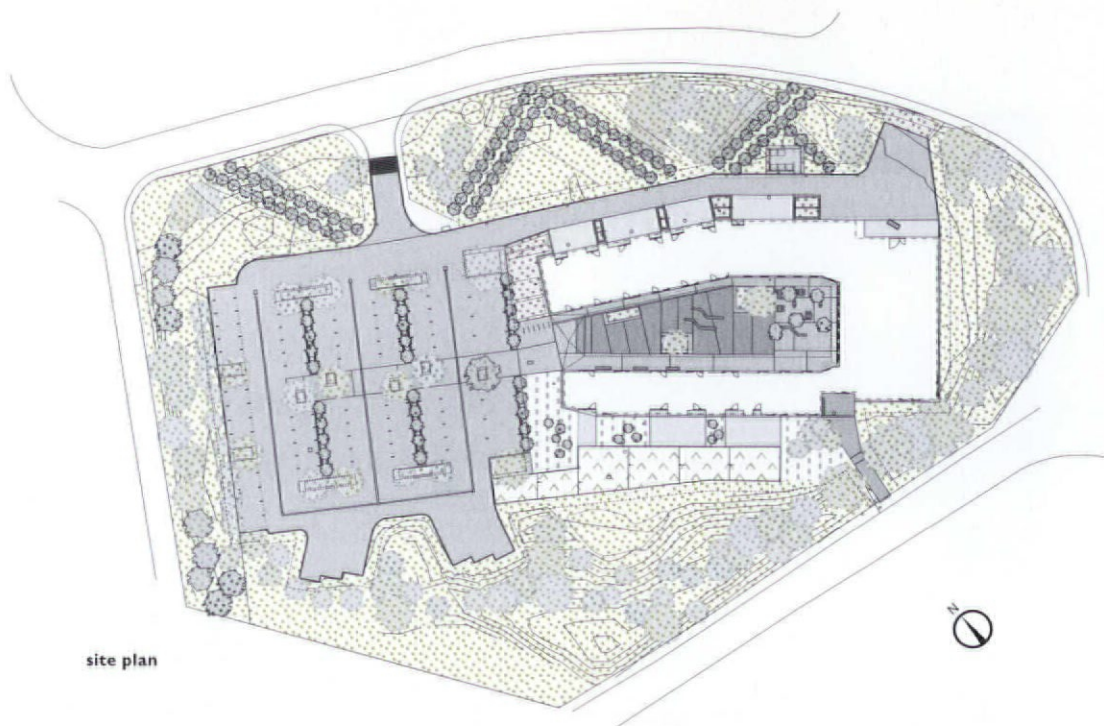
The new centre is housed in a space that includes six workshops, two artist-in-residence studios, an education suite, café, tourist information centre and 300m² of exhibition space. This time however, where a messy ensemble of pitched roofs once existed, the new building stands

beneath a single low-lying roof, maintaining the sort of domestic scale appropriate to the art on display, without losing sense of the building's public status.

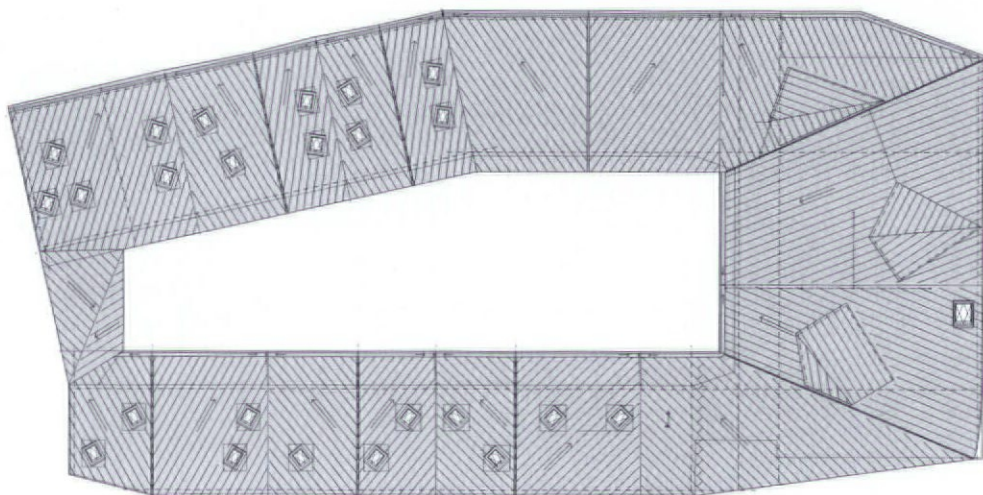
Set out marginally beyond the footprint of the original, hemmed in by a sewer and an underground river, the singularity of the form encapsulates the architects' reading of the setting. Situated next to a roundabout on the edge of town, on a main truck road dominated by a number of large industrial sheds, their response was to avoid replicating a normal shed. Instead, consistent with their interest in giving greater significance to conventional building types, they set about producing a civic building that would 'remove a shed-like building from a shed-like experience'. They achieved this with an appropriate level of flair – through formal distortion in plan and section, and through their trademark attention to the tectonics of lining and cladding – exhibiting similar sensitivities to the work of the firm's Swiss friends Gigon/Guyer, whose fine-art store in Wichtrach showed how a basic agricultural form could assume the elevated status of the organisation it served (AR June 2004).

In Ruthin, even before they considered the building's distinctive palette of materials, the architects focused on resolving its form by establishing a degree of deformation. They wanted to express each individual part within a design that would bring presence to this gateway site on the approach to town. The result responds to both landscape and townscape conditions, with a zinc roof that casts a strong line against the sky, reminiscent of the horizon, and a distortion in plan that brings something of the complexity and eccentricity of a historic town square to an otherwise featureless, level site.

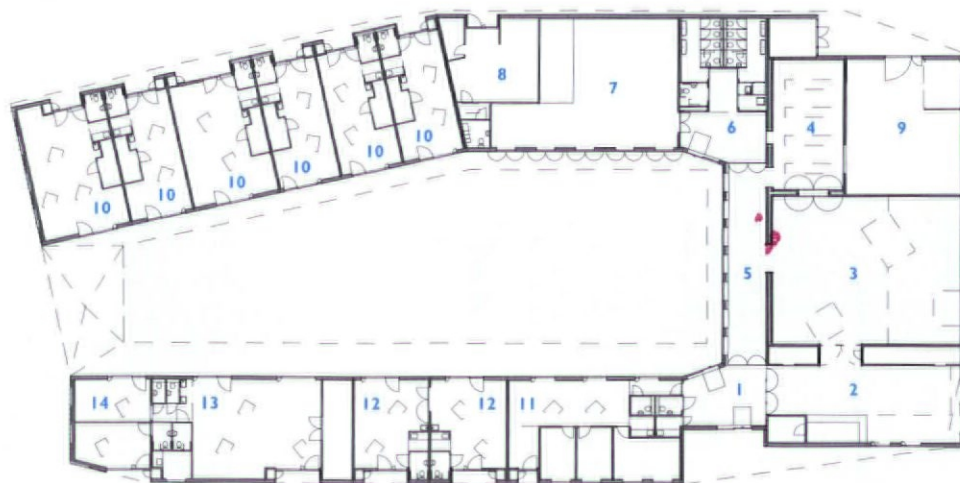
Arranged around three sides of an elongated courtyard, the northern range cranks like a lobster claw to pinch the gated westerly entrance. This tapering geometry shortens the viewer's perspective, bringing forward



site plan



roof plan



ground-floor plan (scale approx 1:625)

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 entrance lobby | 8 kitchen |
| 2 retail gallery | 9 loading bay |
| 3 Gallery One | 10 makers' studios |
| 4 Gallery Two | 11 directors' offices |
| 5 Collections Gallery | 12 artist-in-residence studios |
| 6 café lobby | 13 education suite |
| 7 café | 14 tourist information centre |

**APPLIED ARTS CENTRE,
RUTHIN, NORTH WALES**
ARCHITECT
SERGISON BATES



4
Elevating the status
of humble materials:
zinc and concrete,
aka photographic
plate and cast stone.

5
A secondary entrance
on the south-east
corner welcomes the
occasional pedestrian
from the town.

6
The principal entrance
to the west features
a bi-folding stainless
steel gate by Brian
Podschie. The
south-range roof
includes generous
overhanging eaves.

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RUTHIN, NORTH WALES**
ARCHITECT
SERGISON BATES



7
The courtyard with fewer visitors shows off landscape works by Pat Brown's Landscape Interface Studio, and charred and waxed oak benches by artists Jim Partridge and Liz Walmsley.

8
Makers' studios are dual aspect with shopfronts to the courtyard...

9
...and service entrances around the perimeter.

10
The cloister-like collections gallery is visible from the courtyard...

11
...and from within, art is viewed with the courtyard as backdrop.

the contents of seven display windows as visitors approach under the shelter of the south-range roof. It also brings greater enclosure to the courtyard, which takes on the character of a stable yard, with a repetitive but shifting array of Welsh oak doors, windows and hatches that connect it with each interior.

Approaching from the car park, visitors first pass through artist Brian Podschies' bi-folding gate – a complex stainless steel weave – before passing the tourist information centre and artist-in-residence studios on the right. Sheltered beneath generous eaves, the uninitiated visitor is led directly to the main entrance, situated on one of two chamfered corners, which leads them into a lobby that also welcomes the occasional pedestrian visitor from the south, who may have wandered down from the town. Once inside, the full effect of Sergison Bates' formal treatment is revealed in a variety of delightfully scaled interiors, each retaining its own relationship

with the courtyard through stable-yard-like apertures that exhibit the architects' preference for generous, squat proportions.

In section, only a loose relationship exists between roof and ceiling profiles, providing opportunity to further tune the proportion of each space and integrate necessary ventilation and service runs. This subtle sense of dislocation between inside and out is amplified by a further eccentricity: the shift in plan between largely orthogonal rooms and rooflights that rotate to take on the orientation of the roof panels and valley gutters. This highly bespoke form of natural lighting exploits the belief among curators that craft objects are best displayed in a more figurative, less formal manner to fine art and also alludes to the architects' ceaseless admiration for Jim Ede's former Cambridge house turned gallery, Kettle's Yard (AR May 2005).

With such a variety of spaces, curators and visitors have a range of scenarios in which to

interact with the objects. Each of the three principle exhibition spaces takes on contrasting characters, from the conventional dead-end orthogonal Gallery Two, through the eccentric and lofty Gallery One, to the cloister-like Collections Gallery, which stitches all public spaces together and provides (when necessary) a direct internal link between entrance, café and exhibition spaces. The courtyard serves as the principal means of circulation, with the remaining rooms being more autonomous, taking advantage of direct access from the exterior and of the building's dual aspect. The makers' studios, for example, incorporate a back door to the perimeter car park for day-to-day servicing, as well as having a more prominent shopfront in the courtyard.

With over 59,000 visitors in the first five months, Ruthin Craft Centre has far exceeded expectations and as such, residency in this building has clear advantages for artists. Situated within easy reach of Chester, Liverpool and



10



11

Manchester, it has an identity that should attract people from an even wider catchment area. And for the architectural tourist, there are many delights to make a visit essential – from the vibrancy and efficiency of the plan, where the relationship between internal and external space is constantly changing, to the simply detailed roof, which provides an ideal surface, like a matt photographic plate, on to which the sun projects its kinetic shadow-dance through the trees.

When asked what he thought the building meant to the people of Ruthin, Bates' partner Jonathan Sergison concluded: 'Perhaps they see it as a really good place to eat, and park'. Let's hope he is underestimating their appreciation of this finely crafted building. For whatever reason people choose to visit, its multi-functional nature and handmade qualities set it well apart from the neighbouring monocultural sheds. Sergison was right, however, as some people overlook the cultural status of the centre, focusing instead on its equally important social role. As she left on that busy opening day, Hughes was keen to ask the anonymous elderly lady if she had enjoyed her visit. 'Oh, it's lovely', she said, to Hughes' relief. 'The café's wonderful. I enjoyed the bun. The toilets! Oh, the toilets are wonderful. The exhibitions spaces are lovely, so light. There's lots of places to sit. The courtyard – I sat there for 20 minutes.' 'And the building?' Hughes enquired, hopefully. 'Oh no', she said. 'I still don't like the building.' ROB GREGORY

Architect

Sergison Bates, London

Project architect

Mark Tuff

Project team

Stephen Bates, Kaj Blattner, Kyle Buchanan, Thomas Klement, Emiel Koole, Jonathan Sergison, Susan Vericat, Lukas Wolfensberger

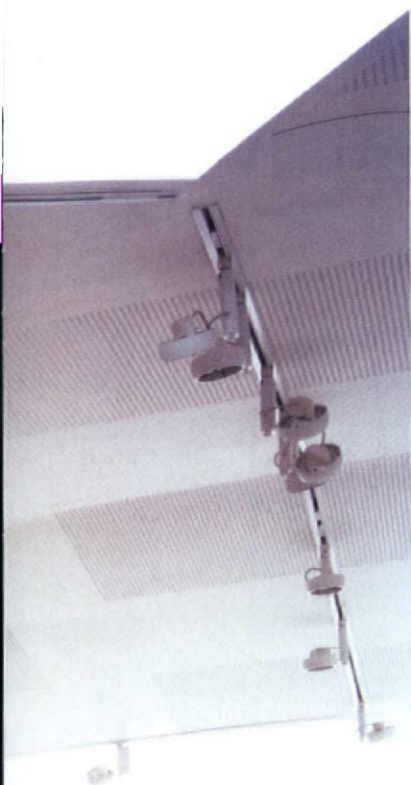
Photographs

No 1 by Dewi Lloyd

Nos 2-4 by Sergison Bates Architects

Nos 5-14 by Ioana Marinescu





**APPLIED ARTS CENTRE,
RUTHIN, NORTH WALES**
ARCHITECT
SERGISON BATES

12
The largest exhibition space, Gallery One has three rotated rooflights, giving the space a unique and mutable daylight scene.

13
Gallery Two links to the Collections Gallery via the open doorway (right), and also to Gallery One through the closed double doors (ahead).

14
The Centre's café has direct access to the courtyard and serves excellent food – including buns.



BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION,
COLOMBO, SRI LANKA
ARCHITECT
RICHARD MURPHY
ARCHITECTS





TROPICAL AMBASSADOR

Richard Murphy's new British High Commission in Colombo subtly communes with its locale.

1
The perimeter wall is breached to permit a view into the compound. In this respect the new High Commission is unique, as its fortified neighbours prefer to keep the public out.

2
The visa and consular entrance on Baudhaloka Mawatha.

Shortly after Sri Lanka's independence in 1948, the last British governor handed over the keys for his official residence in Colombo Fort to Sri Lanka's governor general. The new order required new diplomatic links to be forged: a British High Commission was established on the sea side of Galle Road, 2km south of Fort, while a High Commissioner's residence, christened Westminster House, was built on tree-lined McCarthy Road in the eastern suburb of Cinnamon Gardens.

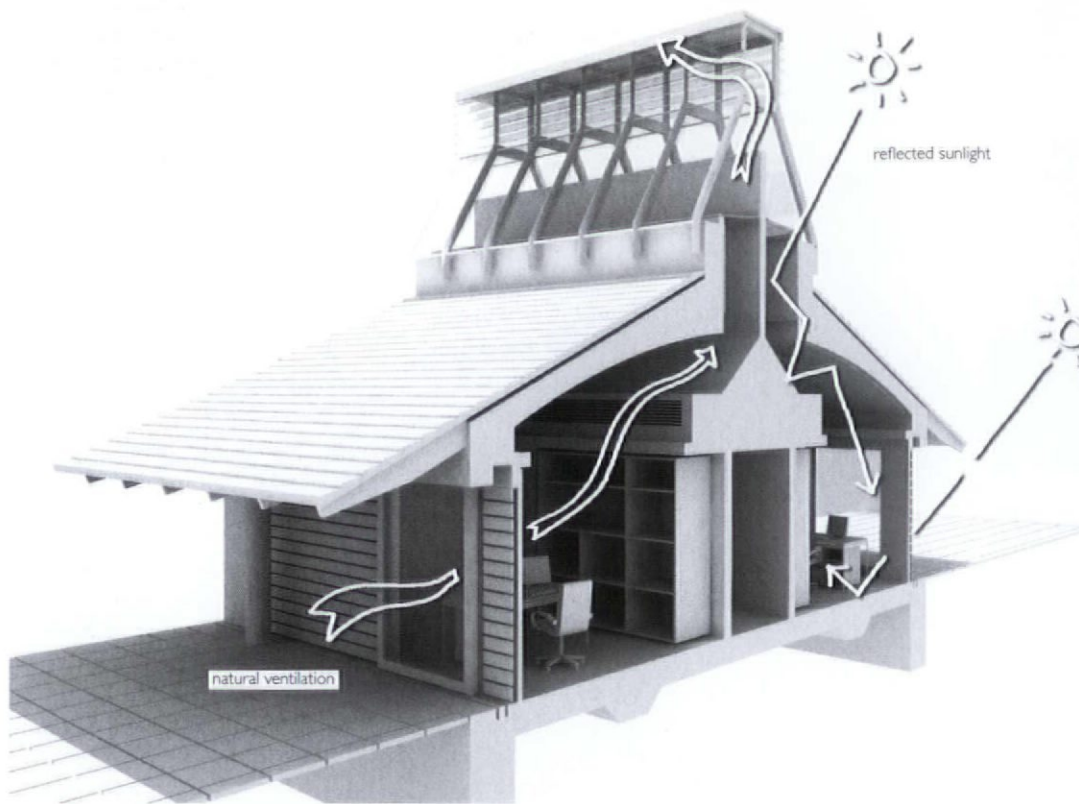
The High Commission building was a utilitarian four-storey slab block, set well back from the

road, behind a high wall. Aloof and stiff-lipped, its glazed facades were stubbornly oriented to take the blast of the morning and afternoon sun and the full force of both monsoons. The building was much loved by its occupants, however, who appreciated its generous gardens, its proximity to the well-used Colombo Swimming Club and the views it afforded out across the Indian Ocean towards their distant homeland. But it was much reviled by Sri Lankans who, when they wanted a visa, were obliged to queue for hours on the pavement in the sizzling sun.

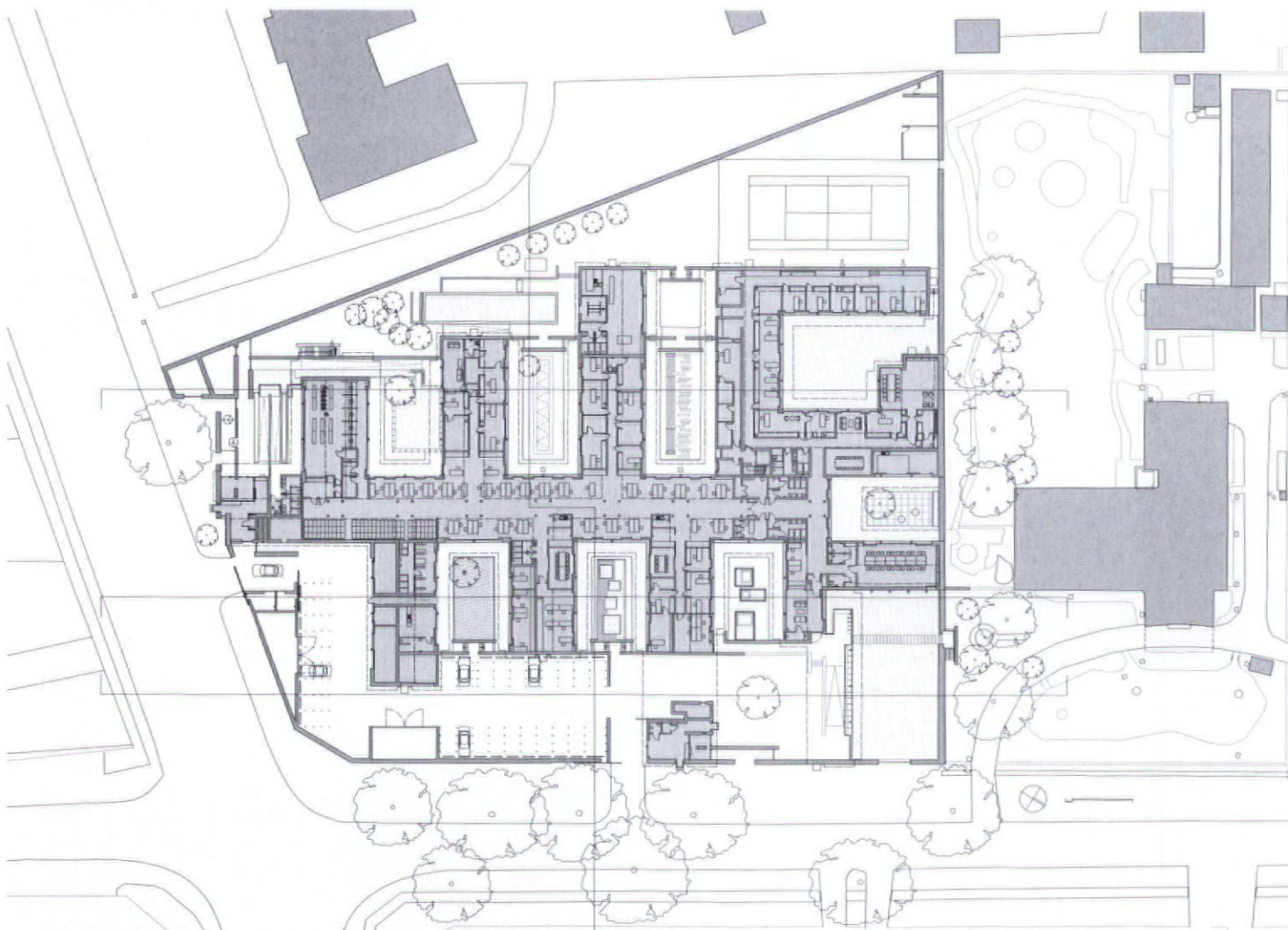
Sri Lanka's governor general

was eventually replaced by an executive president who, in 1979, proposed to move the Sri Lanka parliament from its home on the edge of Fort to Kotte, 4km beyond the eastern limits of the city. The new complex was designed by Sri Lanka's master architect Geoffrey Bawa, and the president decreed that the civil service and the diplomatic corps should move to it without delay.

Subsequent presidents, however, refused to leave Fort to join them and government was split: the parliament and the civil service moved to Kotte while the presidential secretariat and foreign ministry stayed put.



environmental control strategy



**BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION,
COLOMBO, SRI LANKA**

ARCHITECT

**RICHARD MURPHY
ARCHITECTS**

3
Entrance pool with
stepping stones to
Westminster House.

4
The utilitarian block
of the old High
Commission.

5
The compound
wall on Wijerama
Mawatha. The street
is lined with huge
para mara trees.

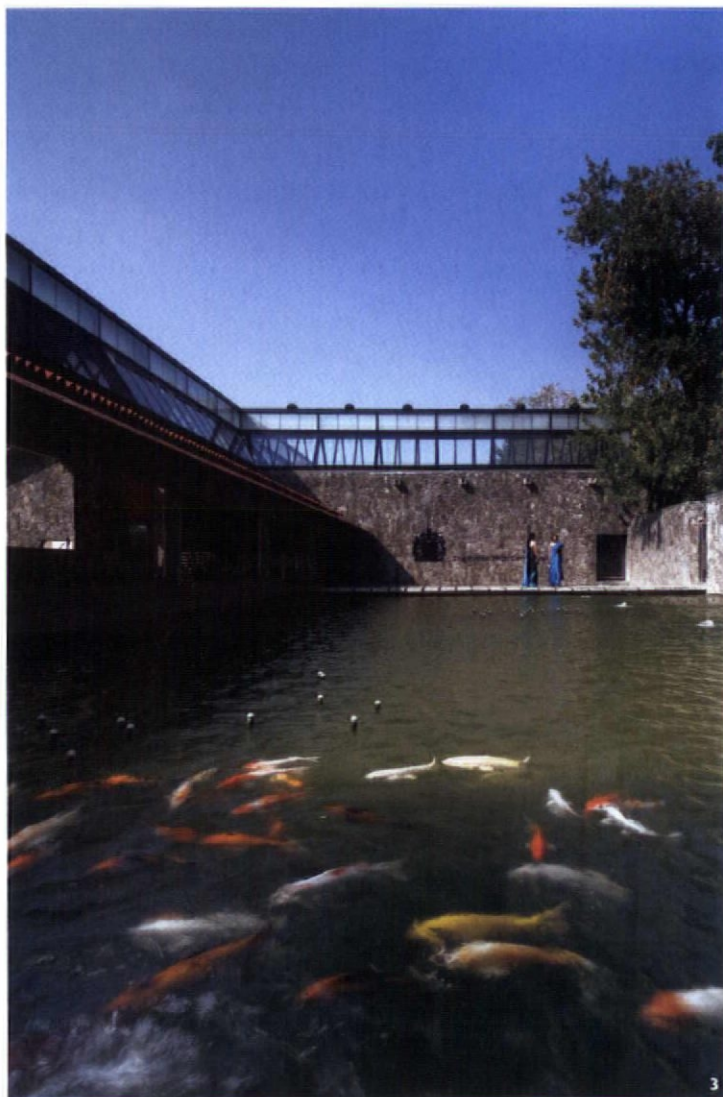
Most of the diplomatic missions remained halfway between the two in Cinnamon Gardens.

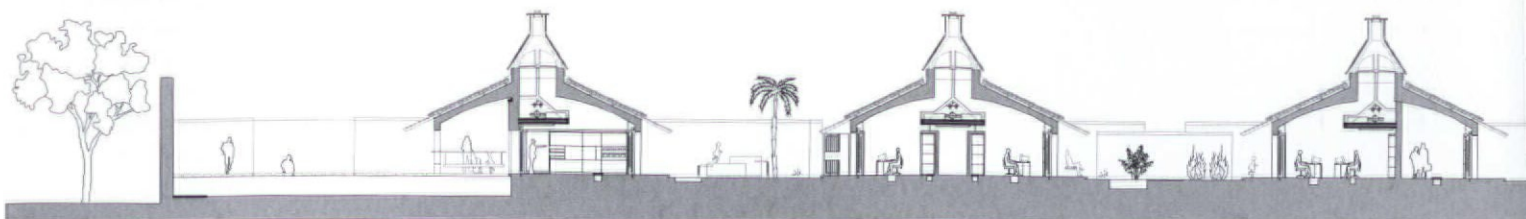
At the end of the millennium, the British Foreign Office took stock of its now outdated and dilapidated High Commission and decided to replace it with a new building on a 0.8ha plot of land next door to Westminster House, at the corner of McCarthy Road (now renamed Wijerama Mawatha) and Bauddhaloka Mawatha. The new site lay at the edge of Cinnamon Gardens, directly opposite Colombo's vast Anglican cathedral.

In 2001 the British Foreign Office announced plans for proposed new missions in Morocco, Uganda and Sri Lanka. Edinburgh-based architect Richard Murphy registered an interest and was selected to take part in a limited competition, with five other practices, to design the Sri Lanka High Commission. Participants were

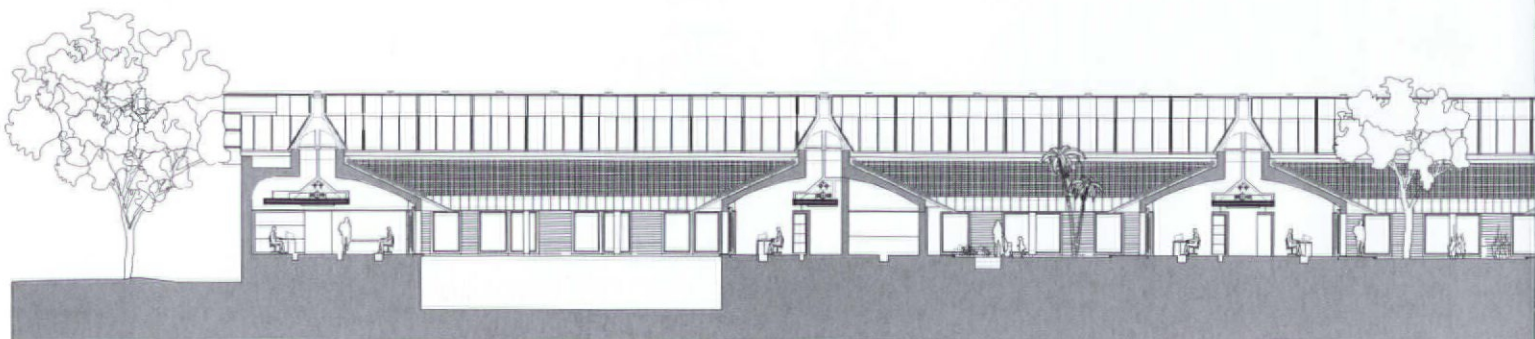
advised to team up with a local executive architect, and Murphy invited Milroy Perera and his son Arosha, both former Bawa employees, to join him. At the end of 2001 he flew out to Sri Lanka – the only competitor to do so – and met the Pereras, who took him on a tour of Bawa's surviving buildings.

Inspired by his visit, Murphy developed a design that echoed Bawa's architecture and incorporated a range of local materials. But it was also rooted in the experience of his own practice and his preoccupation with courtyards, the sensitive interconnection of inside and outside space, the creation of naturally tempered environments and the articulation of richly coloured and textured surfaces on a framework of simplified modernist forms. His design was developed from a trio of basic premises: that the building should be built on a single level, that it should be disposed





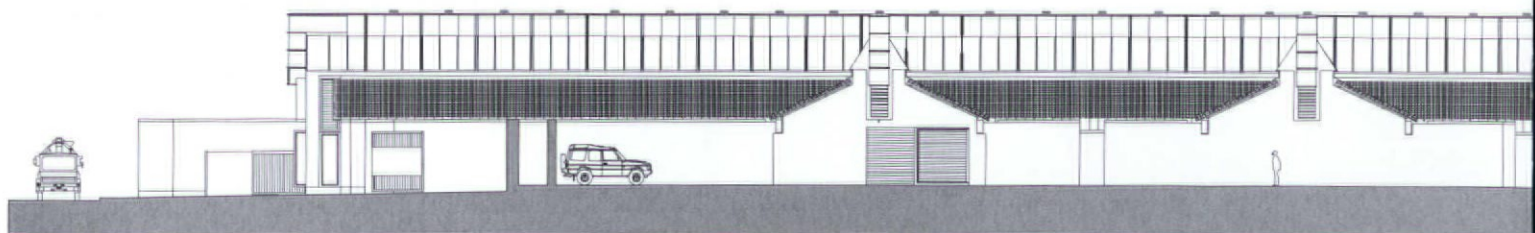
section through entrance lake



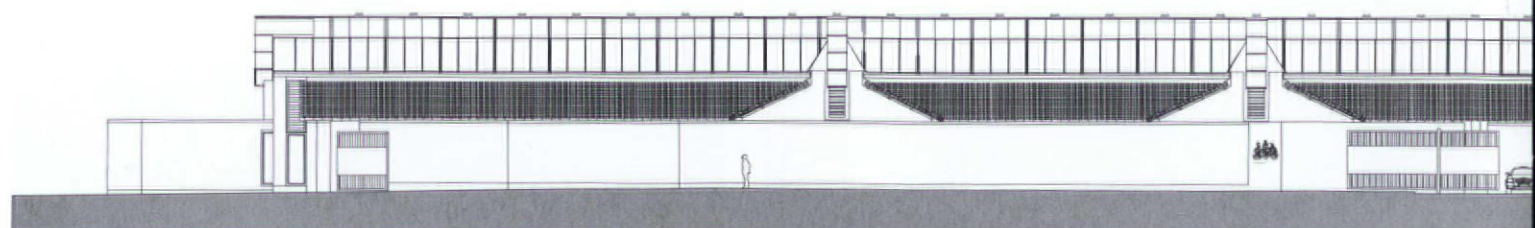
typical section



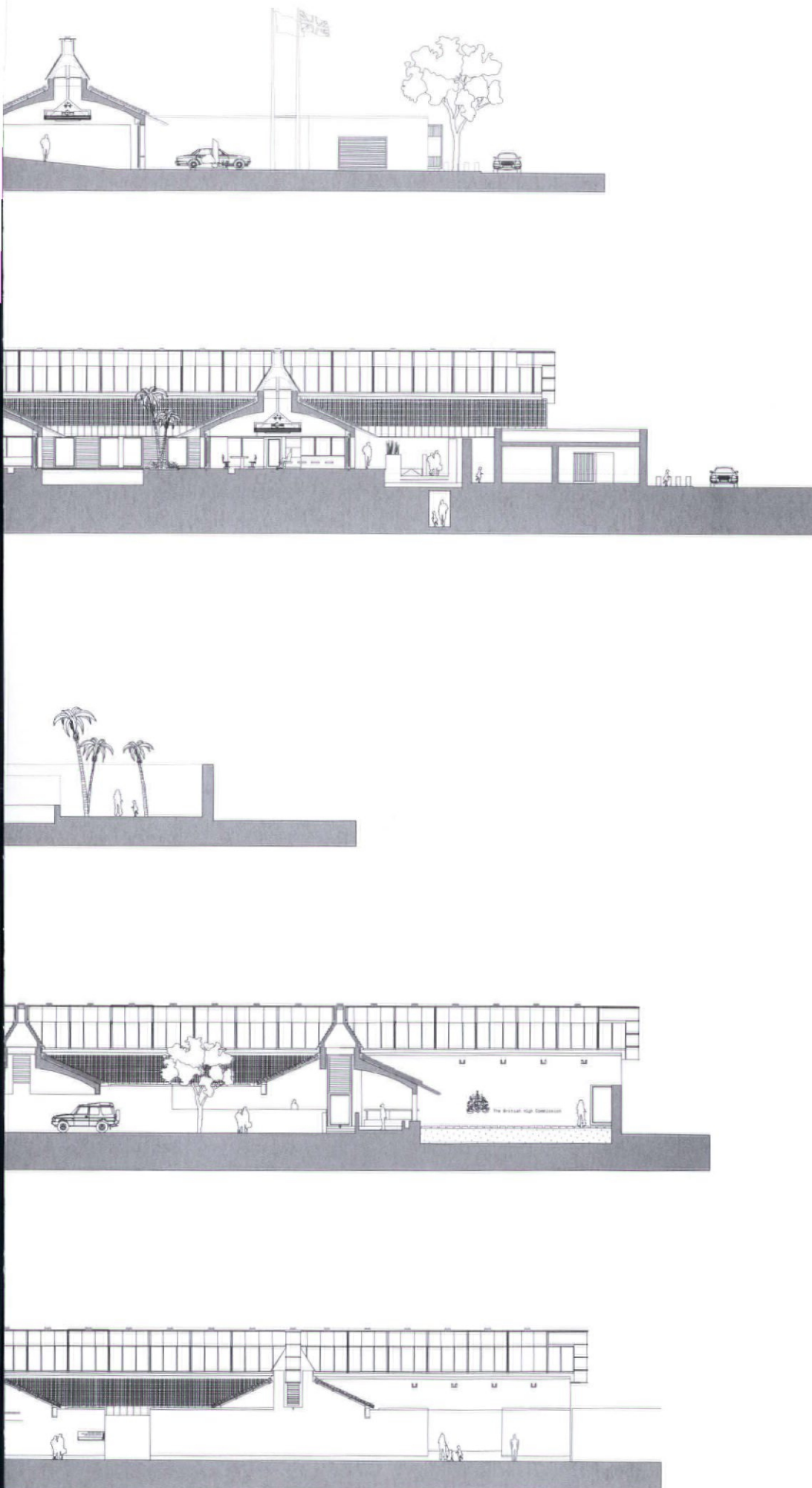
section through main spine



sectional elevation through entrance lake



elevation to Wijerama Mawatha



around a series of courtyards and that it should incorporate a section which encouraged natural stack ventilation and introduced controlled amounts of natural top-lighting.

In the event, Murphy was declared the winner and embarked on a year of detailed design development, during which he had to fend off criticism from security experts who were worried about his single-storey approach. Opinion remains divided, however, and some argue that upper floors of tall buildings such as the old High Commission offer easy targets to snipers. In response to these concerns, Murphy's design was surrounded by a carapace of solid stone walls, within which the various layers of building protect the interiors.

After a year of intensive work, the project was shelved due to lack of Foreign Office resources and the drawings consigned to the bottom drawer – but four years later, work started again in earnest. The project was let as a design-and-build package to the firm of Gibs Ltd, which ran it as a series of sub-contracts. The total building cost for a plate of approximately 3,400m² came in at £7.5 million – equivalent to £2,200 per m² – an expensive amount in Sri Lankan terms, but something of a bargain when compared to other British embassy buildings. Milroy Perera acted as the local site architect, while project architect Matt Bremner made monthly visits to Colombo. The building was completed in early 2008.

The design might be thought of as a fish lying within a box: the backbone serves as a central office mall which connects the head (the public entrance and reception areas) with the tail (the consular section) while the lateral bones contain various

**BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION,
COLOMBO, SRI LANKA**
ARCHITECT
**RICHARD MURPHY
ARCHITECTS**

6

Entrance courtyard looking towards the gatehouse. The colourful flamboyant tree will eventually grow to cover the courtyard and its blossom will match the red wall.

7

Public routes wind through the sequence of low-rise courtyards.

8

Main entrance and port cochère.

9

Entrance courtyard.

specialised departments.

A staff garden with pool and tennis courts fills the peripheral space along the western boundary, while the main pedestrian and vehicle entrances pierce the east wall.

Courtyards dominate the design. There are nine partially enclosed courtyards adjacent to the spine and a further seven around the periphery. Many precedents for this can be found in Sri Lanka: the fifth-century rock citadel at Sigiriya, medieval Sinhalese manor houses, Dutch buildings such as the old hospital in Colombo Fort (now a police station) and many of Bawa's designs. But Murphy had already experimented with courtyards in Edinburgh New Town and is currently working on courtyard designs for Jesus College, Cambridge.

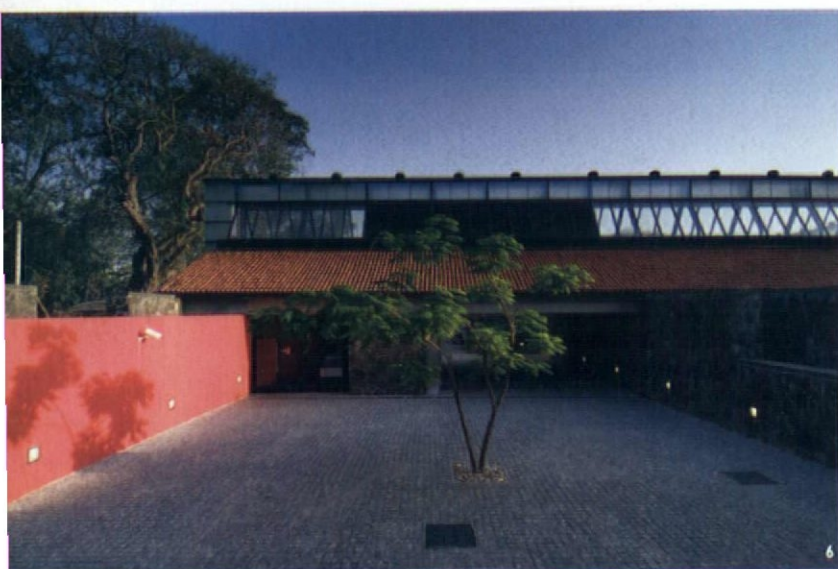
Visitors enter the complex


past a bright red blast-wall set back within the high black perimeter, proceeding through security into a large hard-paved entrance court. One of the lateral wings projects to the perimeter to create an open-side porte cochère, under which a ramp leads up beside a large carp pond to the main entrance and reception space. This connects to a small conference room and entertainment court as well as to the main north-south mall, which serves both as an open office and as a main thoroughfare. The side wings, containing specialist departments, alternate down the mall with a series of open courtyards.

A typical section comprises a central corridor under a raised clerestory with cellular offices to either side. Each office opens through a fully glazed sliding

door across a covered verandah to an open courtyard, but is also lit indirectly, via a curving concrete half-vault, from the clerestory. The clerestory also acts as a solar chimney: if the outer door is open, the air-conditioning cuts out and a damper opens in the base of the clerestory to allow stack ventilation; if it is closed, the air-conditioning restarts automatically. The roof is clad with a double layer of half-round clay tiles which terminate in projecting eaves clad in copper and lined with coconut wood. The consular and visa sections are at the south end. Featuring their own separate entrance from Baudhaloka Mawatha, Murphy's intention – to design a welcome and user-friendly visa section – has been a success.

The various courtyards were





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ARCHITECT
RICHARD MURPHY
ARCHITECTS

laid out by landscape designer Gross.Max. All of the central courts incorporate a water feature of one sort or another and an attempt has been made to give each court its own character. The results are disappointing. It may be that the designers have tried too hard to ring the changes with a contrived variety of hard landscape, failing to realise the potential of Sri Lanka's fantastic flora. Perhaps the architects and designers should have relied more on local knowledge.

In the final analysis, however, it has to be said that Murphy has pulled off a diplomatic coup. The building is modest in scale and fits well into its surroundings, though its towering clerestories offer a reminder that this is a workplace and not a suburban villa. The heavy granite walls offer a suitable sense of gravitas, while the occasional flash of colour adds an accent of playfulness. 'It's also the only embassy in Sri Lanka where you can see in from the street,' says Murphy, referring to a highly reinforced window set in the perimeter wall to encourage views in, unlike its ultra-fortified neighbours. The building takes its inspiration from Sri Lanka, but it also carries echoes of Murphy's earlier works, such as the Stoneman houses in Ireland, and references Murphy heroes such as Carlo Scarpa, Louis Kahn and Glen Murcutt. Most importantly, it serves as an ambassador for contemporary British architecture, or at least the branch of it that Murphy inhabits, along with Edward Cullinan, Richard MacCormac, Michael Hopkins et al.

DAVID ROBSON

Architect

Richard Murphy Architects

Project team

Richard Murphy, Matt Bremner, Tim Bayman

Associate architect

Milroy Perera Associates

Structural engineer

SKM Anthony Hunts

Landscape

Gross.Max

Project management

Edmond Shipway and Partners

Photographer

David Morris



**BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION,
COLOMBO, SRI LANKA**
ARCHITECT
**RICHARD MURPHY
ARCHITECTS**



10
Visitors' waiting
area overlooking the
flooded courtyard.

11
Offices and
meeting spaces.


12
Main central office
space. Light is
funnelled from
light 'chimneys'
and reflected on to
the concrete vaults.

13
Sliding doors connect
inside with outside,
allowing High
Commission staff
to work on the edge
of a courtyard garden.

**WINERY, PEÑAFIEL,
CASTILLA Y LEÓN, SPAIN**
ARCHITECT
**ROGERS STIRK HARBOUR
+ PARTNERS**

I Arriving on the raised podium at Protos winery, visitors enter the building under the shelter of the largest of five parabolic roof shells. The rampart wall contains services from the underground production and storage space.





As one of the first completed buildings by the restructured Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners (RSH+P), formerly Richard Rogers Partnership, it is reassuring, but not surprising, to discover the practice has not taken rebranding too far. When discussing the new Protos winery in the Castilla y León region of north Spain, Graham Stirk is keen to underline the practice's core concerns in each architectural response: city and context, public domain, legibility, flexibility, energy and teamwork.

Stirk, one of five RSH+P senior directors, delves into the archive to place the origins of this project in the Reliance Controls electronics factory: the seminal Team 4-designed industrial shed, co-authored by practice founder

and chairman Richard Rogers in partnership with Norman Foster and their respective wives, Su and Wendy, in 1962. Situated on the outskirts of Swindon in the west of England, the building unified the traditionally separate blue- and white-collar working structure, not only anticipating many of the current practice's concerns, but also the social significance of team dynamics and operational efficiency. Since then, RSH+P has produced only six industrial buildings, the most recent being Inmos Microprocessor Factory in Newport, South Wales, completed in 1987. As such, Protos takes the practice into new territory, not only requiring a vast production facility capable of processing one million kilograms of grapes

per year, but more importantly, in consideration of context and public domain, a building that forms a physical and emblematic focus for Bodegas Protos, a cooperative of over 240 winegrowers, established in 1927 in the Ribera del Duero region.

Situated on the edge of Peñafiel, in the shadow of its picturesque castle (now home of the Museo Provincial del Vino), Protos is unlike other celebrated winery premises in the region, such as the hotel at Marqués de Riscal by Canadian-born Frank Gehry and the Ysios winery at Álava by Spaniard Santiago Calatrava, both within easy reach. While these are set in expansive vineyard landscapes, Protos is in a more gritty setting, the periphery of a historic townscape.

ROLL OUT THE BARREL

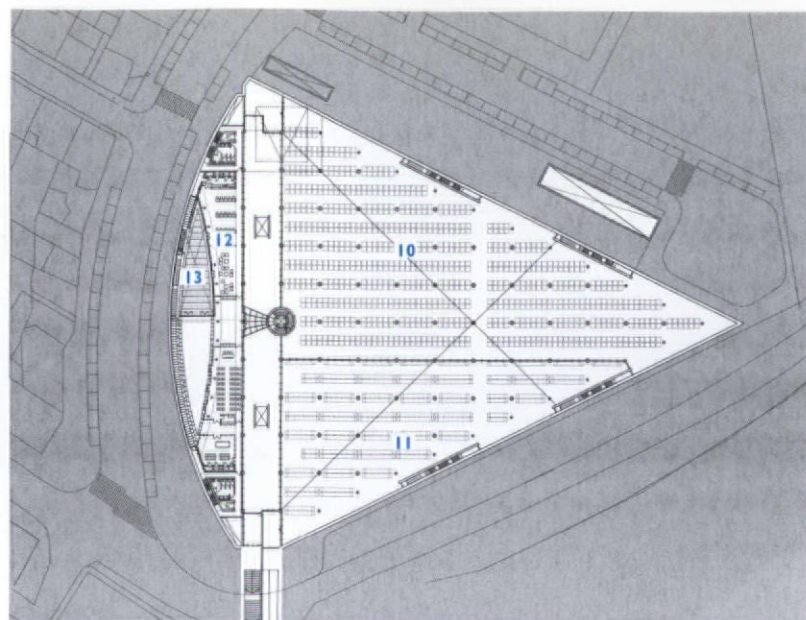
RSH+P balances conflicting demands of production and cultural tourism at Protos winery.

As Stirk remarks with measured criticism, 'a shed with a hairdo' would not have been appropriate here. Neither would the other prevalent option of tourist-attraction-cum-production-facility: the sham hacienda in which themed front-of-house dress conceals low-quality production spaces in lightweight tin sheds – 'environmental disasters' in Stirk's words.

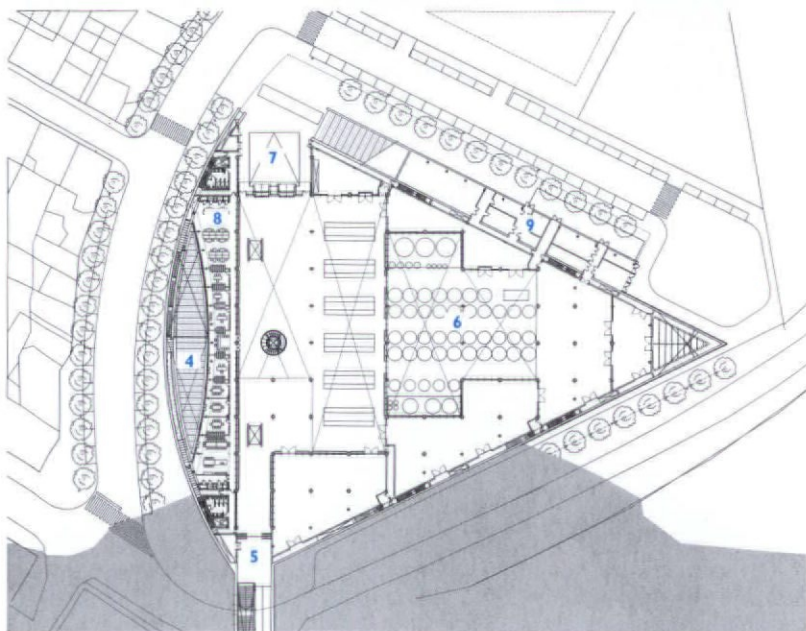
RSH+P avoided both pitfalls, characteristically starting its design process from first principles, considering the winery as a distinct form of building type. The result is by no means neutral or mechanical and, through careful consideration of programme and physical context, the building gains its own identity. Taking clues from, but not competing with, the castle, it sits within its own rampart walls (made from limestone quarried in Campaspero, a village 15km south-east of Peñafiel) which neatly conceal ventilation and servicing requirements. These walls bind the boundary into a symmetrical segmental plan, tapering in elevation as they rise out of the sloping terrain to create a strong horizontal datum. This then cuts across the building's section, dividing structural and organisational systems, as five elegant timber paraboloids hop, skip and jump over a thermally stable, buried concrete box.

The wine-making process can be divided into three stages; accordingly this building is also divisible by three in both section and plan. In section, ageing, fermentation and processing are stacked. In plan, each of the three points of the triangle forms a key entrance. Public and service access is at either end of the wall along the thick end of the wedge, which contains offices, tasting suites and a teardrop-shaped sunken garden, and a generous barn-like canopy at the apex, where grapes are delivered by queues of tractors during harvest.

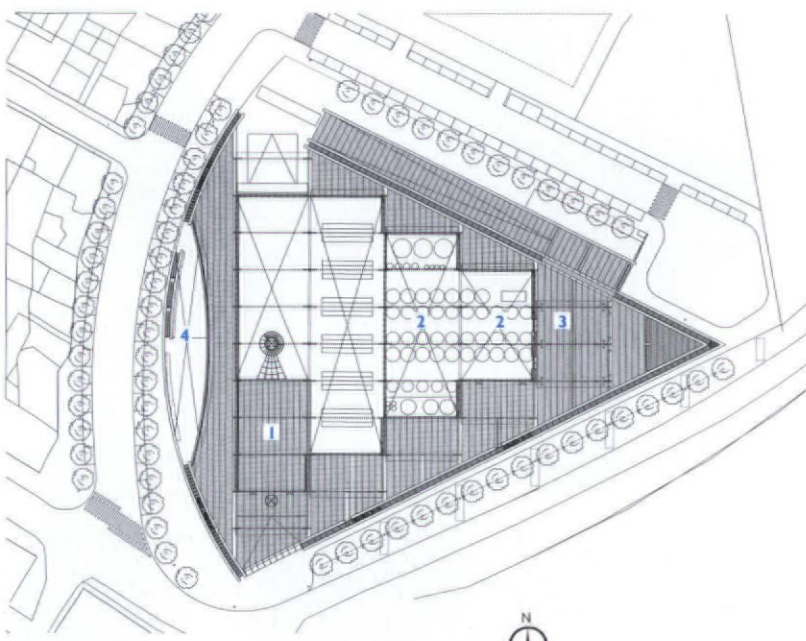
The distinctive profile of the roof, which articulates the separate layers of structure and skin, is reminiscent of Renzo Piano's fine Padre Pio Pilgrimage



cellar/mezzanine level plan



production level plan



entry/grape-delivery level plan (scale approx 1:2000)

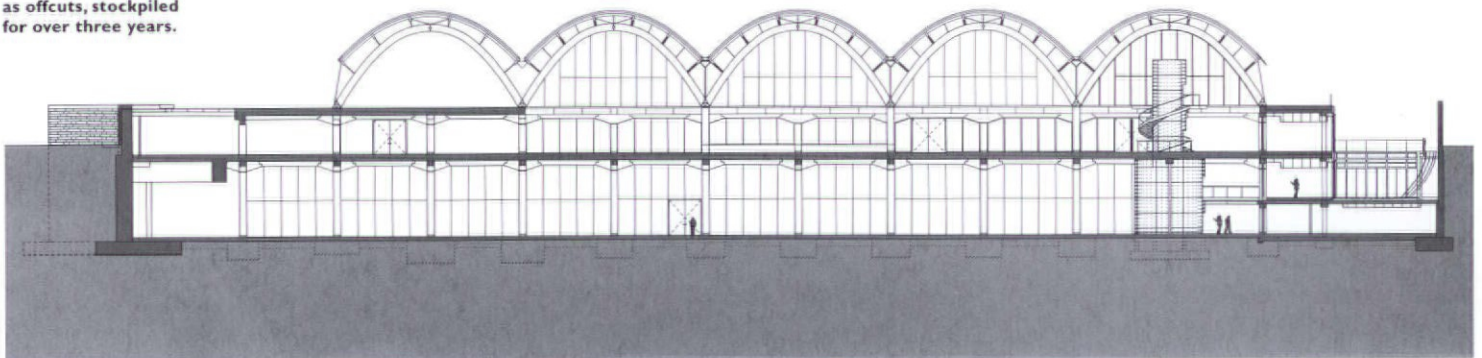
- 1 public entrance
- 2 accessible deck over fermentation tanks
- 3 covered bay – grapes in
- 4 void over sunken garden
- 5 tunnel link to existing winery
- 6 production/fermentation tanks
- 7 loading bay – wine out
- 8 offices
- 9 plant
- 10 bottle room
- 11 barrel room
- 12 tasting suite
- 13 sunken garden



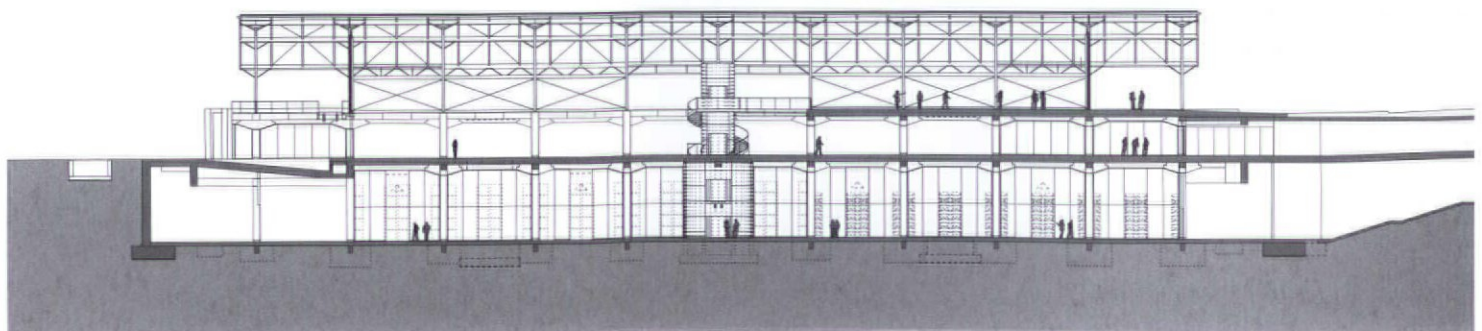
2
Situated at the foot
of Peñafiel castle's
rocky outcrop, the
winery's low-lying
terracotta roof is
almost invisible.

3
The curved rear wall
contains many of the
winery's public rooms.
Stone was sourced
as offcuts, stockpiled
for over three years.

**WINERY, PEÑAFIEL,
CASTILLA Y LEÓN, SPAIN**
ARCHITECT
**ROGERS STIRK HARBOUR
+ PARTNERS**



east-west section, looking south



north-south section, looking east





4
Grapes are loaded directly from tractors into vats (seen here through the doorway), which are then wheeled into place above fermentation tanks below.

5
At the apex of the winery, grapes are unloaded in the open air. The easternmost vault has the quality of an open-ended agricultural barn.

6
All fermentation tanks are accessible via a deck and rail system.

7
On the northern elevation, glazing is brought forward in relation to structural bay.

**WINERY, PEÑAFIEL,
CASTILLA Y LEÓN, SPAIN**
ARCHITECT
**ROGERS STIRK HARBOUR
+ PARTNERS**

Church in southern Italy (AR September 2004), on which Stirk worked while taking a sabbatical from the Rogers office in 1994. At that time, Rogers' designs were almost exclusively in steel and glass, and so working with Piano enabled Stirk to experience a richer palette of materials as well as forms. Since his return, alongside a fresh generation of architects, the practice has completed a new breed of buildings, with projects like Madrid Barajas International Airport (AR July 2006) and the Welsh Assembly (AR February 2006) adding timber and stone to its palette. Use of these materials has defrosted the practice's cool machine aesthetic. As the first of RSH+P's industrial designs to extensively feature natural materials, Protos takes on something of the status of the practice's other civic and cultural buildings.

Despite associations with Padre Pio, Stirk attributes development of the structure to Arup, the engineer that helped to achieve this most efficient and graceful result. From less expressive trabeated steel structures, through barrel vault options, to the final parabolic arch, the engineers were able to halve the structural depth from 1,200mm to 600mm. This yielded significant material and cost savings, producing what is essentially an array of conjoined lightweight barns. An agricultural building for an agricultural community – what could possibly be more fitting? Echoing the continuity of its own office rebranding, in which the vintage of Richard Rogers successfully blended into an all-new RSH+P, the architect has created one of the world's most compelling new wineries, in one of the most beautiful settings. Very much the best of a good crop – and the wine's not bad, either.

ROB GREGORY

Architect

Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners, London

Structural engineer

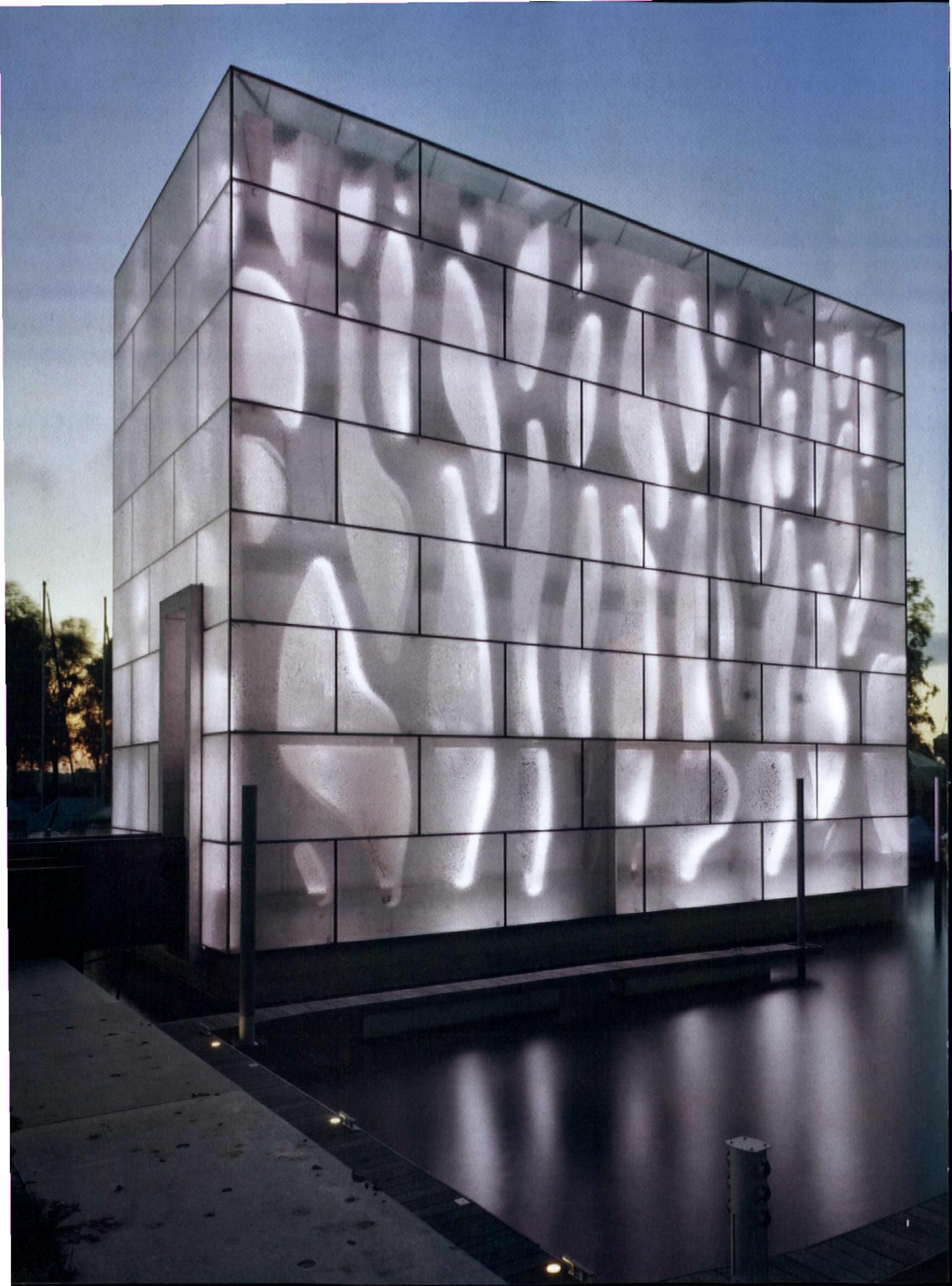
Arup, Boma, Agroindus

Services engineer

BDSF, Grupo JG, Agroindus

Photographs

Paul Raftery, VIEW



**BOATHOUSE, FÜBACH,
AUSTRIA**
ARCHITECT
BAUMSCHLAGER EBERLE



PROJECTION BOX

Baumschlager Eberle's new clubhouse creates a waterside kaleidoscope.

1 Occupying the space of a single mooring, Nordwesthaus rises 12m out of the water. Giving the illusion of a built-on barge, the structure in fact bears firmly on concrete piles and does not rise and fall with the seasonal tides.

2 In 2000, the architect completed the port office building. This is the view from that building, looking towards the new multipurpose hall and boathouse.

Having previewed this project in the January 2007 edition of the *Architectural Review*, the opportunity to revisit Baumschlager Eberle's Nordwesthaus, a boathouse in west Austria, allows us to consider how well the focus of the original architectural vision has been sustained. This is the third phase of a project that started a decade ago, and as such, maintaining vision is essential if the finished building is to amount to more than the sum of its parts. Phase one of the waterside development, completed in 2000, comprised construction of an ambitious and precarious cantilevered concrete extrusion containing port offices. Under the watchful gaze of this brooding mass, phase two, completed in

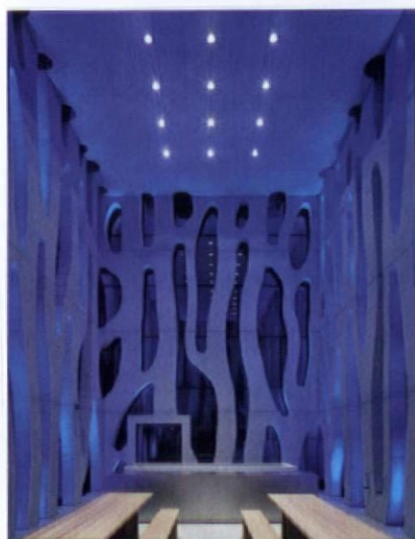
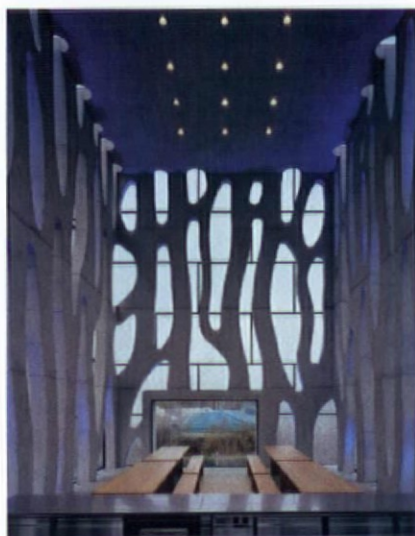
2004, included the harbour wall itself, constructed in local stone to create a man-made sustainable habitat for wildlife and plants.

As with phase one, this part of the project adds a freestanding floating element to the waterside ensemble. This time, however, the boxy form really does appear to float, rising directly out of the water. Described by the architect as a 'boat-box', the pavilion provides space for boat storage and maintenance at water level, and a multipurpose hall above serving as a meeting point for the sailing community. The 14m-high structure occupies the space of a single mooring, adding to the analogy of building as boat.

The original design statement described the building's misty skin as a glaze which, along with

an alluring physical model, conjured images at the time of a translucent coating that would encapsulate the fluidity of the structure's concrete profile. In reality, skin became cladding and as such, the built outcome is far more prosaic and slightly disappointing: glazed in the more traditional sense of the word, with a separate skin held off the surface by bracing props. However, putting the original image out of our minds, the end result is extremely well executed, the architect having exploited the articulation of each layer of construction to maximum effect.

With standard panels of glass, suspended and lightly held away from the concrete in a more conventional manner, the thickness of the composite wall



3 Rising up one level from the entrance, the curvaceous concrete frame sits within the building's glazed skin.

4 The hall is 8m high, giving the tree-like forms plenty of space to stretch their limbs. A solitary aperture provides a single vantage point.

5 Lighting plays an essential part in the sceneography.

6 Looking towards the landward elevation.

creates additional depth. This adds to the range of optical effects produced during the day and night, as modified glass filters and reflects the perpetually shifting scenes of artificial and natural light. ICE-H, the new product by Austrian glass manufacturer Glas Marte, produces translucency without having to use colours or add layers of external materials. Effectively chipping away at the surface, varying degrees of opaque, transparent and translucent patches – created by the manufacturing process upon imperfections in the glass

– transform the surface into a natural filter. The architect specified this material to 'avoid too sharp a contrast between the core and the envelope', adding that the purpose of these overlays is to allow light and shade to move around the inside.

Used in this application, the 8.8m-tall interior is transformed into a kaleidoscope, exploiting the changing play of light and shade between the layers. The interiors seem to make light almost physically tangible, adding to a strong sense of enclosure. Views out are very deliberately limited to two apertures of clear

glass set into deep concrete frames. At night, internal lighting in the ceiling, augmented by feature lighting on the structure itself, creates X-ray projections of the internal organisation, visible across the water.

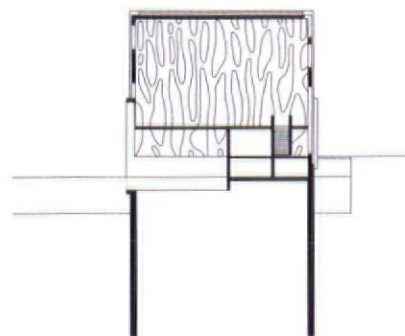
Throughout the project's development, the architect has exploited the tension that exists between nature and the man-made; a relationship that is constantly amplified, not only in how the geometrically strong built forms sit in contrast with their immediate landscape, but more conspicuously through the use of the abstracted tree-like

silhouette. While this motif traced by the concrete frame is not in itself new (Japanese architect Toyo Ito did something similar for Tod's flagship store in the dense urban context of Tokyo's exclusive Omotesando avenue), in this setting, the tree-like forms are less angular, alluding more specifically in this maritime context to the image of trees reflected in water. R.G.

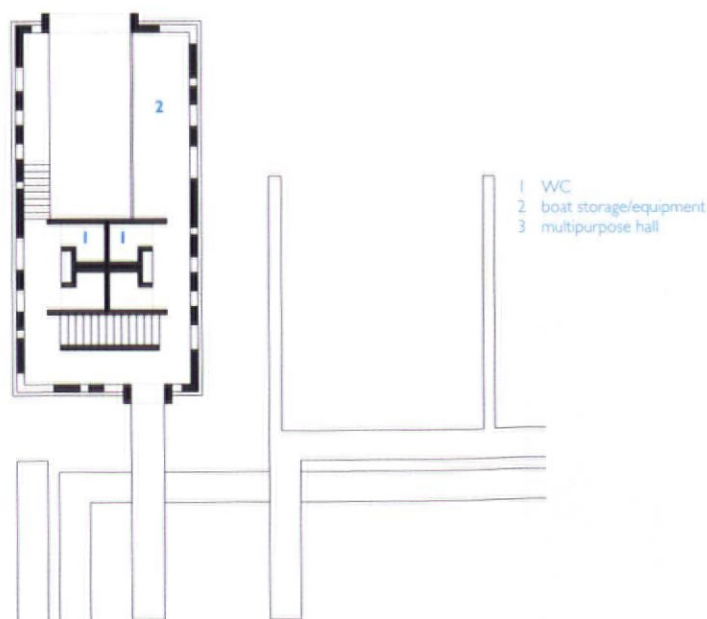
Architect
Baumschlager Eberle
Project architect
Christoph von Oefele
Photographs
Eduard Hueber, Ines Leong



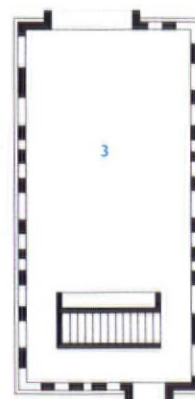
location plan



cross section



boat room plan (scale approx 1:650)



function room level plan

**BOATHOUSE, FUßACH,
AUSTRIA**
ARCHITECT
BAUMSCHLAGER EBERLE

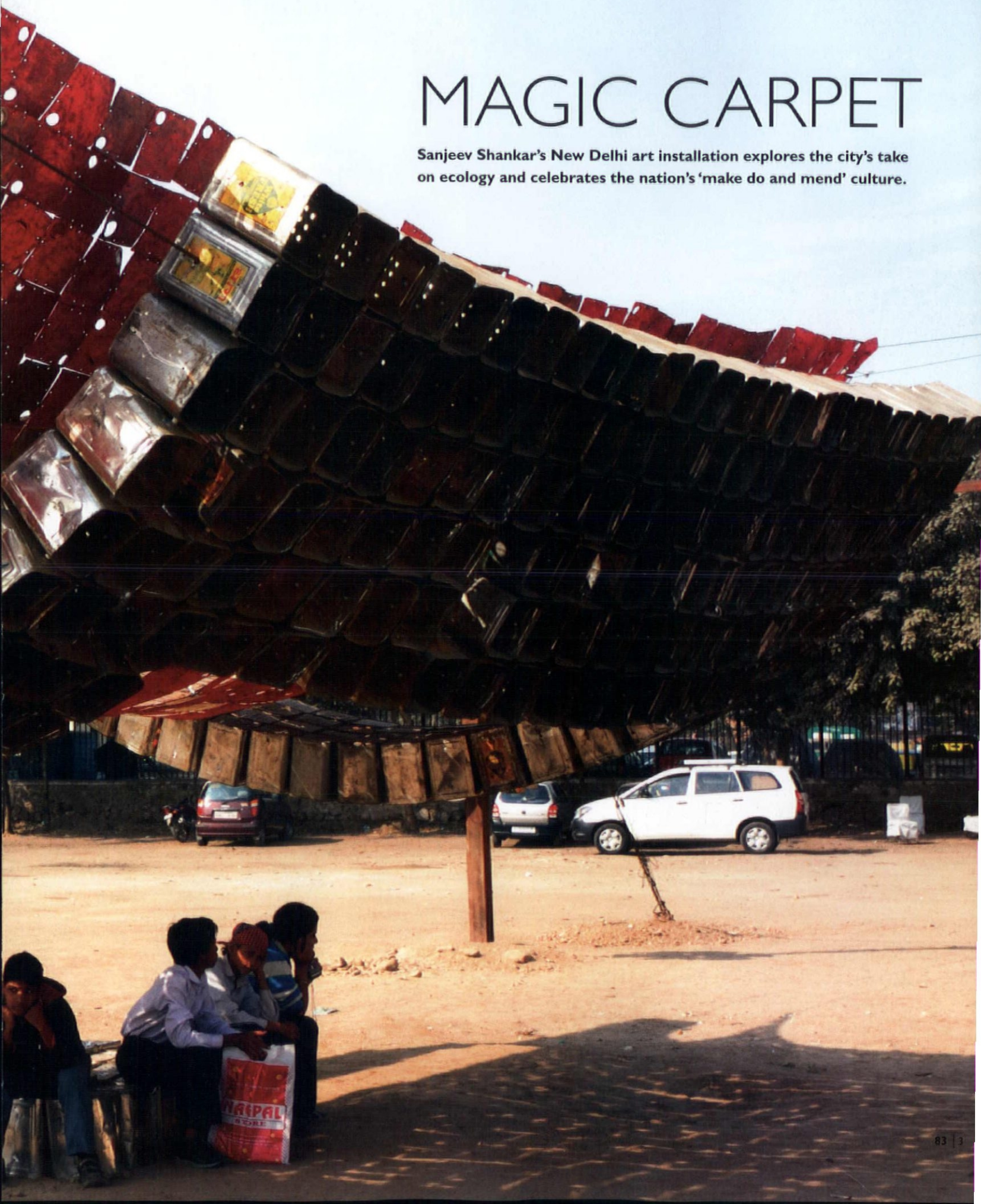
1
Made from hundreds
of discarded cans of
cooking oil, the
finished installation
is a cross between
a giant patchwork
blanket and a
honeycomb. It was
fabricated by locals
from a village on the
edge of New Delhi.



process

MAGIC CARPET

Sanjeev Shankar's New Delhi art installation explores the city's take on ecology and celebrates the nation's 'make do and mend' culture.



2



3



6



7



8

2 Discarded cans are collected.

3 Cans being cleaned in big communal vats.

4 Local metalworkers were employed to cut, perforate and assemble the cans.

5 The sharp edges of the can lids are bent inwards to create a metal tile.

6 A can lid is cut off.

7 Lids are strung together with rope and their undersides dyed with *gula*, a bright pink pigment.

8 Assembling the honeycomb of can bodies.

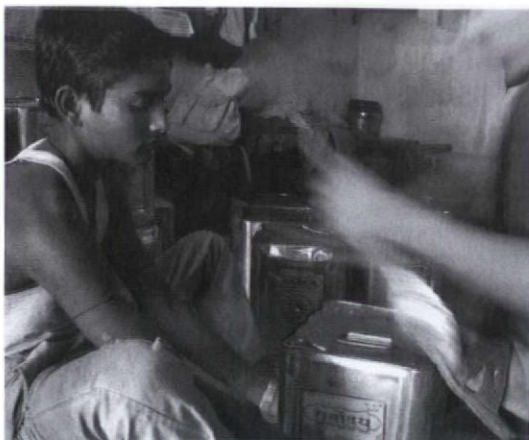
9 Light dapples through perforations in the metal canopy. The heavy can bodies are linked together with bolts, which act as shear connectors.

What happens when a thousand oil cans decide to fly? Artist Sanjeev Shankar, an alumnus of Mumbai's Indian Institute of Technology, decided to find out for himself when he created *Jugaad*, a public art initiative that transmutes discarded objects into a striking new composite structure. The project involved collecting, cleaning, cutting, perforating and stringing together hundreds of discarded oil cans to create a freestanding canopy supported by a system of pulleys and cables. Gently bowed like a giant hammock, the installation covers 70m², its myriad shimmering scales resembling a piece of oriental armour. Big square tins of cooking oil are a ubiquitous feature of Indian life and this initiative explores notions of sustainability, recycling and general material inventiveness. It also shows the potential for transforming mundane domestic objects into a thing of grungy, rough-edged beauty.

Jugaad was first shown at 48°C Public.Art.Ecology, a three-week public art festival held in New Delhi at the end of last year. 'The aim,'



4



5



9

says Shankar, (who also describes himself as a 'traveller, provocateur and creator') 'was to interrogate the teetering ecology of the city through the prism of contemporary art.' In this case, a notable feature was the involvement of the local community. The inhabitants of Rajokri, an urban village on the edge of New Delhi, were charged with gathering empty, unwanted cans and fabricating the canopy. The unorthodox use of scavenged materials tested the skills and the imagination of local metalworkers and fabricators.

The canopy consists of two parts. The flat upper layer is made from 945 can covers, stitched together with rope fastenings like a patchwork blanket. Lids were cut out of the cans and painted with *gula*, a shocking pink pigment, to create a vibrant, pixelated effect. The lower layer is more sculptural, like a honeycomb, and consists of 692 can bodies joined together with bolts which act as shear connectors (each can is quite heavy, weighing up to 700g). The bottoms of the cans are perforated to admit light, which also filters through the

proprietary circular openings on the can lids. After dark, artificial illumination is provided in the form of 20-volt halogen fittings set in the can covers. The two layers are suspended by pulleys using 12mm and 6mm diameter steel cables, fastened to a pair of supports anchored into the ground. During the day, light dapples through the canopy, providing shade in the baking Delhi sun, and at night the illuminated fittings sparkle against the metal skin.

Jugaad is a Hindi term that describes the practice of achieving an improvised quick-fix solution using only the resources to hand. The project celebrates the act of *jugaad* and the *jugaadis*, who use constraints of resources or time as a launch point for (often surprising) innovation. Motivated by an inventiveness that underscores a culture of scarcity and survival, it suggests alternatives, substitutes, improvisations and make-dos. 'It gives new life to objects discarded as valueless. It reminds us that the familiar is not necessarily known,' says Shankar. CATHERINE SLESSOR

- 1
The house lies next
to a flood-prone river.
- 2
Concrete piers lift
the building off the
ground, protecting
it from flooding.
- 3
A smaller, secondary
structure braces
and supports the
main volume.





ar house

HOUSE, SANJHIH, TAIWAN
ARCHITECT
C-LABORATORY

Rural retreat

A robust response to a challenging environment.

Finnish architect Marco Casagrande first came to the AR's attention when his remarkable 'walking' barn houses, designed in partnership with fellow Finn Sami Rintala, were honoured in the inaugural AR Awards for Emerging Architecture (AR December 1999). Conceived as a meditation on the decline of Finnish rural life, the project – punningly entitled Land(e)scape – involved hoisting a trio of redundant timber barns on to spindly stilts to make them look as though they were walking out of the countryside and migrating to the city. In a final nihilistic flourish, the structures were set on fire and transformed into blazing memorials to the loss of a pastoral idyll.

Casagrande is now in partnership with Taiwanese architect Frank Chen, and together they recently completed a house in the north of Taiwan, near the Datun Mountains. Set on farmland next to a river and surrounded by tree-covered hills, the remote, rural site has echoes of the walking barns project. Yet for all its bucolic charm, the environment can be harsh, with intense heat in summer and frequent typhoon winds, compounded by periodic flooding from the river and seismic activity.

The commission came from a retired couple who wanted to leave the city and embrace a simpler, rural lifestyle, farming cherry trees and bamboo. When

approached to design the house, Casagrande was living in an abandoned tea factory in the area and had become familiar with the locale. Though climate and site conditions are challenging, he regards his design as an adaptable, responsive entity, capable of riding them out 'like a boat'. To protect against flooding, the house is raised above the ground on a platform, which also acts as a terrace, extending the living area. The main volume, which contains living and sleeping quarters, is a narrow, single-storey wedge, buttressed along its long, east side by a smaller structure housing a bathroom, kitchen and sauna. This arrangement neatly demarcates served and servant spaces, but equally importantly it also enhances structural stability in the event of an earthquake, the smaller body acting to brace and support the larger one. The roof and walls of the main volume project out at the wider north end to form a sheltered enclave for al fresco dining. The roof is also brought into play as a sun deck, accessed by an external flight of stairs.

Perhaps because Casagrande helped to build the house himself, construction and materials have a rough-edged simplicity and honesty of expression. Nothing is fudged or covered up; you take it as you find it. The timber frame is clad in horizontal timber planks, giving the house a barn-like appearance that chimes instinctively with the rural setting. In some parts of



HOUSE, SANJHIH, TAIWAN

ARCHITECT

C-LABORATORY



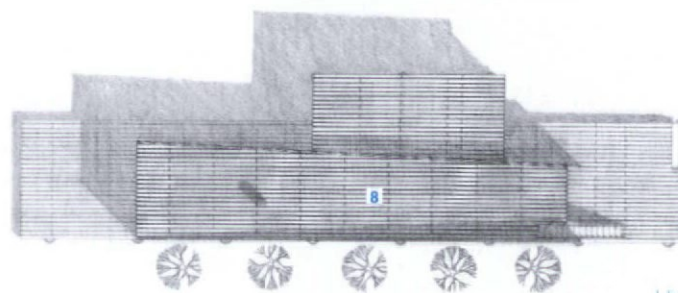
site plan

- 4, 6 Low windows offer outside views only when occupants are seated on the floor.
- 5 Natural ventilation cools the interior in the hot summer.
- 7 A brick hearth anchors the living space but the main material is melanti, a robust timber usually used in formwork.
- 8 Dining area.

- 1 house
- 2 Datun river
- 3 pond
- 4 existing farm building

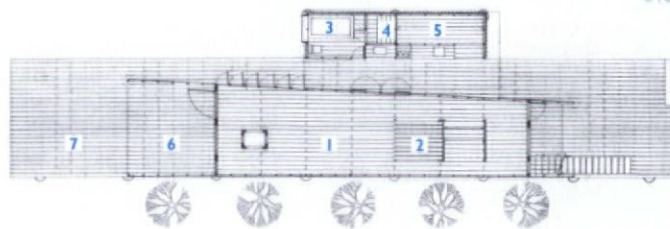
the wall, gaps are deliberately left between the planks to aid natural ventilation and help deflect strong winds. A freestanding brick hearth anchors the living area, and strategically placed glazing frames and defines vistas out to the landscape. A strip of windows at floor level, for instance, is designed to offer views only when occupants are seated on traditional floor cushions.

For the cladding, Casagrande chose meranti, a tropical hardwood with a reddish hue resembling Canadian pine. Though strong and economical, with good moisture and insect resistance, it tends to be more commonly used in Taiwan for formwork because of its rustic appearance. 'When Taiwan was under Japanese rule, there was a vigorous culture of building with timber,' says Casagrande, 'but now brick imported from China's Fujian province has become the norm. In this project I wanted to reconnect with an older building tradition and make use of so-called disregarded materials.' The timber also underscores Casagrande's notion of the house as a lightweight vessel, capable of weathering difficult conditions with ease and elegance. CATHERINE SLESSOR

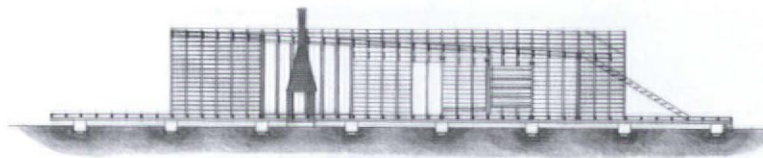


roof plan

- 1 living area
- 2 sleeping area
- 3 bathroom
- 4 sauna
- 5 kitchen
- 6 dining area
- 7 deck
- 8 roof terrace



ground-floor plan (scale approx 1:500)



long section



cross section

Architect

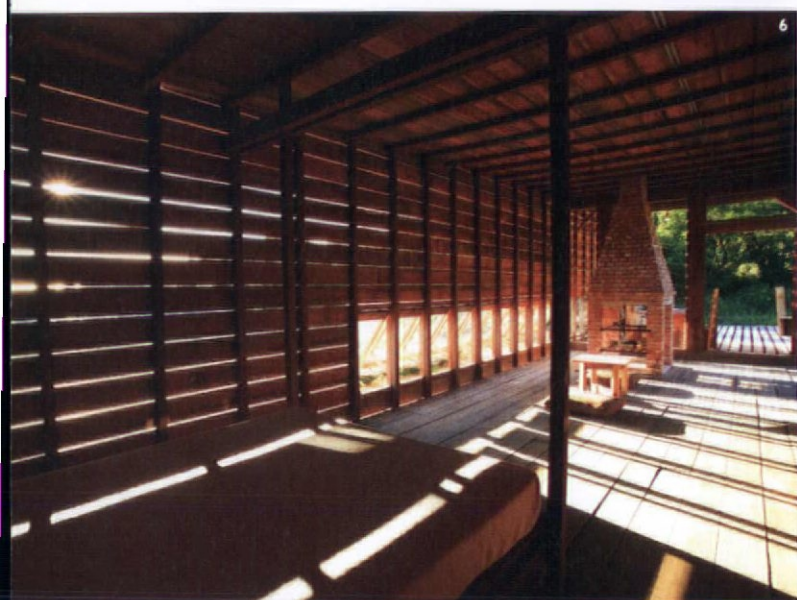
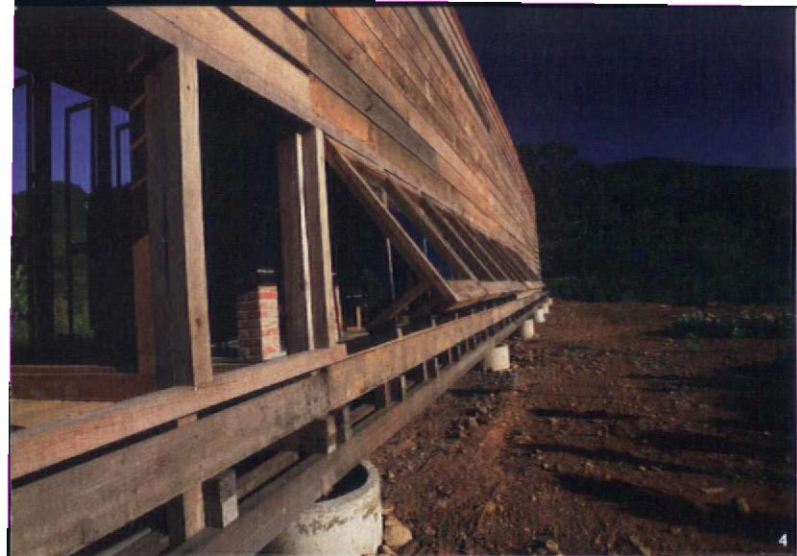
C-Laboratory, Turku, Finland

Project team

Marco Casagrande, Frank Chen, Nikita Wu, Shi-Ding Chen, Shu-Gi Bai

Photographs

AaDa



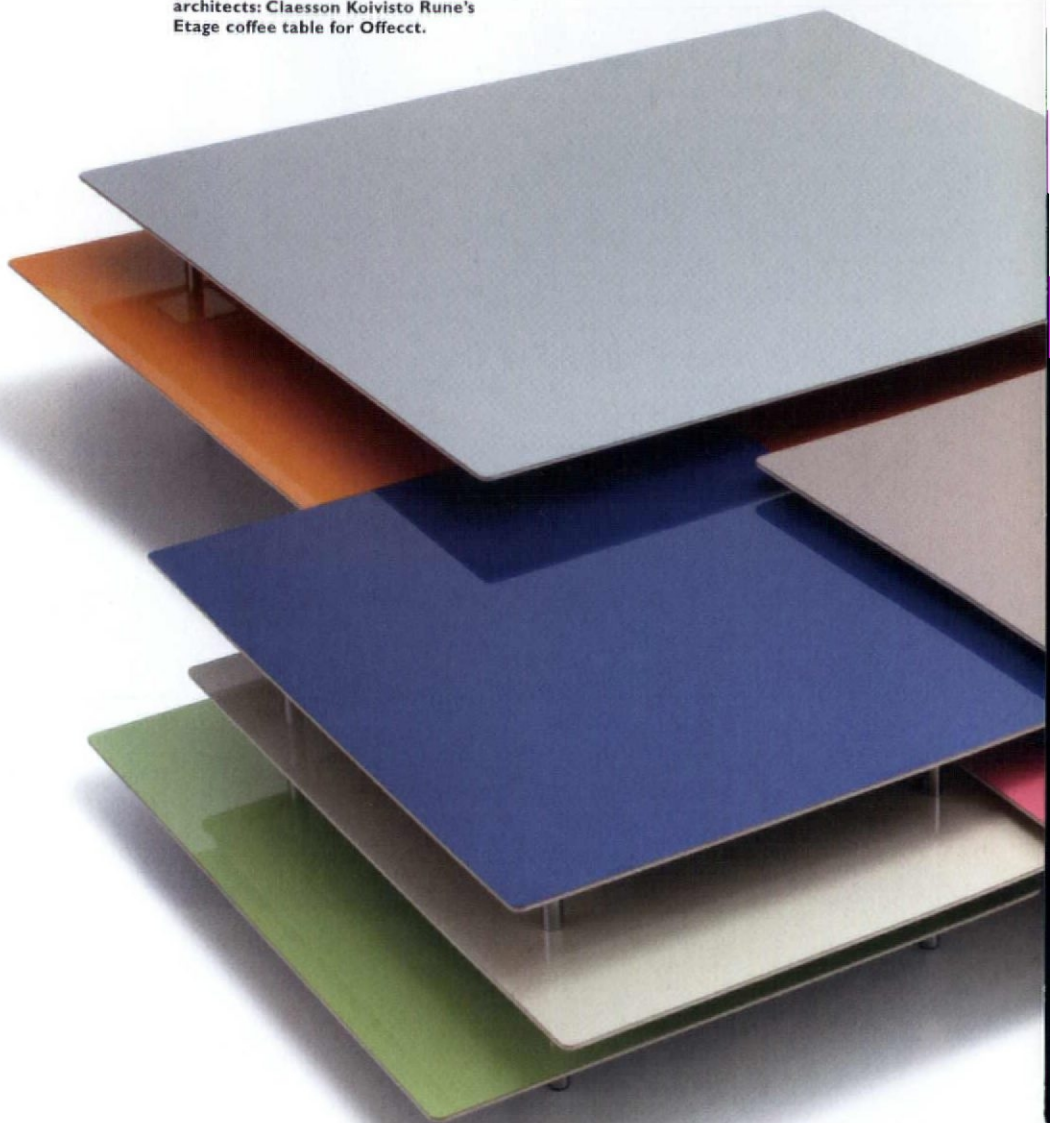
product review



Hotel chair by Oslo-based design company Norway Says for LK Hjellev.



One of the star pieces of the fair by one of Sweden's new star architects: Claesson Koivisto Rune's Etage coffee table for Offecct.



Thomas Bernstrand is one of the most influential designers in Sweden today, and designed the Subway magazine rack for Materia.

Stockholm Furniture Fair 2009

Stockholm Furniture Fair is by far the most important event in Scandinavia for design and interiors. A truly Nordic event, the new products released there tend to come from an increasingly impressive array of Swedish, Norwegian and Danish brands, using a mix of local and international designers. This year, the standout pieces were all produced by Scandinavian manufacturers and largely designed by Scandinavians, too.

Lighting manufacturer Wästberg, launched last year by the youthful Magnus Wästberg, has grown a collection of freestanding lamps displaying a postmodern, almost toy-like

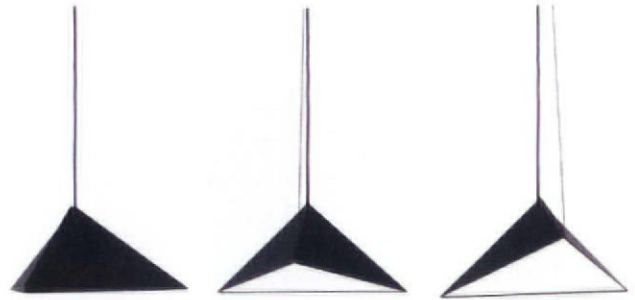
desire to make modern lighting with character. Seeing new brands appear, such as Stockholm-based Massproductions, was also heartening. Brands like LK Hjellev, Materia, Blå Station and Offecct have been around for longer, but are upping their game in response.

Scandinavian manufacturers have moved on from the modernist heritage we traditionally associate them with, but the fair displayed a characteristic interest in function and comfort that has always distinguished them from the Italian furniture producers.

For details of exhibitors at the fair, visit www.stockholmfurniturefair.com



Blå Station has added to its quirky collection with the Pebble armchair and ottoman by Osko+Deichmann.



Known for its collaborations with outstanding new Swedish designers, lighting company Zero unveiled these Top lights by young Stockholm architect Tham & Videgård Hansson.



Materia, a brand owned by Swedish giant Kinnarps, showcased the Coat chair, designed by Fredrik Färg.



Norway Says created the Duo sofa for Norwegian manufacturer LK Hjelle. The impressive collection also included pieces by French designer Inga Sempé.



New lighting brand Wästberg unveiled a range of task and point lighting, including this wall-mounted lamp by Ilse Crawford's Studioliise.



New Anglo-Swedish manufacturer Massproductions unveiled this steel chair at the fair, entitled Tio.



reviews

LIFE AFTER DEATH

HOUSES OF LIFE: JEWISH CEMETERIES OF EUROPE

By Joachim Jacobs. London: Frances Lincoln. 2008. £35

Jewish cemeteries are called (in addition to various other mystical names) 'houses of life' in Hebrew, in part because of a theological uncertainty about the existence of an afterlife but also because bodies seem to be waiting there until the day when they rise up again. In recent Eastern European history, these places (traditionally devoid of any ornament and with their graves lined up in rigid rows, men separated from women) have, ironically, sometimes become the only surviving witness to the Jewish life of a place, the consequence of a village being cleared and its inhabitants murdered. A small number of the more cosmopolitan cemeteries, such as that in Prague, crop up in travel guides or architectural summaries because of their picturesque abandon or perhaps just because the Hebrew inscriptions make them exotic to Europe. But there's been very little up to now that suggests a richer story to a wider audience.

Jacobs' book, which is illustrated by evocative photographs by Hans Dietrich Beyer as well as by many historical maps, views and vignettes of Jewish life, thus provides a welcome introduction to a broad overview of the subject. In addition to studies of the major German sites, the author includes here Sephardic cemeteries from Portugal to Istanbul; others range from York to East Prussia, where Erich Mendelsohn completed an astonishingly powerful complex in 1929 that, unsurprisingly, has been destroyed. The cemeteries are presented chronologically, concluding with the recent garden of remembrance by Jaap Walvisch at Amstelveen, near Amsterdam. The unfolding story is one of increasing Europeanisation of Jewish traditions, particularly in the 19th century, when merchant families started to ignore conventions and began to build pompous mausoleums such as one seen at Père-Lachaise Cemetery, or the surviving Schönhauser Allee site in Berlin. There is much of interest here. BOAZ BEN MANASSEH

THE SILENT PARTNER

MODERNITY AND REINVENTION: THE ARCHITECTURE OF JAMES GOWAN

By Ellis Woodman. London: Black Dog Publishing. 2008. £29.95

Of British buildings built around 1960, Leicester University's Department of Engineering is

perhaps the most original and at the time, was the most surprising. When most British architects were adding footnotes to the work of Mies and Le Corbusier, the building drew on new sources, crucially the industrial vernacular as celebrated by the functional tradition, highlighted by the AR in 1957, and the little-known work of Konstantin Melnikov. Bold and original in its rhetorical functionalism, it capitalised on a tower for hydraulic experiments, cantilevering its lecture theatres, and famously allowed its diagonally placed northlight roof to cascade out of the end elevations. Nikolaus Pevsner hated it, blind to its functional credentials and castigating it in terms of his old enemy, expressionism. But his complaints only helped push Gowan and his partner James Stirling towards international stardom, the engineering building marking the peak but also the end of their shared practice.

Stirling took to stardom like a duck to water and seduced the world with his great formal invention and a graphic fluency, not seen in British architecture since Lutyens. Gowan, always the more reticent partner, went on to produce a series of puzzling and eclectic works that failed to hit the headlines. Architectural journalism's reductive obsession with single heroes soon settled on Stirling as the 'real' talent, sidelining Gowan, an interpretation reinforced by Stirling's inappropriate repetition of Leicester's architectural vocabulary in his Oxford and Cambridge buildings. But now, for historians trying to come to grips with the period, Gowan's contribution is rising out of the depths.

Gowan was the more intellectual and articulate partner, less visual and intuitive and more reflective, and always concerned with 'the style for the job', showing a sense of propriety that the bombastic Stirling lacked. When you look at the drawings for the Isle of Wight house of 1957, which is largely his, there is also a fastidious precision about the underlying geometry and the way the parts come together which one does not find in the impatient Stirling. This new book draws together Gowan's many works so one can contemplate the whole, from the great but perverse Schreiber house in London to the Italian hospitals of the last decade on which he served as a kind of aesthetic consultant. Tony Fretton's introduction remembers his legendary role as teacher, besides reminding us that reticence, if unfashionable, is by no means done with. Ellis Woodman's well-researched text provides a fresh and reasoned perspective, but best of all is the series of interviews conducted with Gowan, who discusses his period and contemporaries with a twinkle in his eye and a naughty iconoclastic wit.

PETER BLUNDELL JONES

COLLECT THE SET

ARTS & ARCHITECTURE 1945-1954: THE COMPLETE REPRINT

Ten volumes, with an introduction by David Travers. Cologne: Taschen. 2008. £400

This mammoth facsimile edition of *Arts & Architecture* magazine is the latest great stroke of absurdist publishing from Taschen, leaders in the field, whose heavyweight tomes continue to cripple coffee table across the globe. It slipstreams a similar venture with *Domus* magazine, the idea being to reprint and repackage leading design and architecture publications verbatim, complete with adverts, to celebrate the questing spirit of a particular age.

John Entenza's *Arts & Architecture* spanned a critical time in recent American history, from the end of the Second World War to the summer of love, in which mid-century modernism, now the predictable toast of style magazines everywhere, got going with a vengeance in a ferment of experimentation, enquiry and élan. This wallet-busting enterprise covers the period from 1945 to 1954, and a second volume (charting the changing waters from 1955 to 1967) is promised next year.

Some quick statistics: 10 years, 10 slipcases, 118 issues and more than 6,000 pages. It's a Brobdingnagian visual and textual banquet, staffed by an illustrious cast of architects, artists, writers and graphic designers, all refreshingly cocked and ready to seize the possibilities of post-war social and cultural renewal. Entenza's particular fixation, to find a way of making decent, low-cost homes on small plots, spawned the famous Case Study House Program, which unfolds here tantalisingly in real time through reports of the latest commissions and critiques of the finished products. Though much of the work and its proponents are now hugely familiar (the Eames, Ellwood, Soriano, Koenig, et al), seeing it in its original published context gives a sense of the radical energy that infused those heady times. Nothing like it had ever been done before, in terms of either architecture or magazine publishing, and though avant garde is an overused soubriquet, here it rang true. Entenza's rhetoric and ideas were brought to life by graphic pioneers such as Alvin Lustig and Herb Matter, whose abstract, economical layouts helped to forge a new visual language. Yet for all its flair and ground breaking, *Arts & Architecture* was a surprisingly minority interest publication. Its circulation never topped 10,000 – a figure that would have today's publishing directors snorting into their spreadsheets. But like all good magazines, it saw its chance and took it. The rest is history. CATHERINE SLESSOR

**MARCEL MEILI, MARKUS PETER
ARCHITECTS: BUILDINGS AND
PROJECTS 1985-2008**

With essays by Jürg Conzett, Hermann Czech,
Josep Lluís Mateo, Heinrich Helfenstein. Zurich:
Schiedegger & Speiss. 2009. £68.50

Marcel Meili and Markus Peter's Zurich-based practice is a household name in Switzerland, but until now their architecture has been less accessible to a global audience. Two factors lie behind this relative anonymity: firstly, the refusal to subscribe to an identifiable, signature approach and secondly, the slightly random nature of previous publications on their oeuvre, which usually address one building at a time.

Meili Peter's recent monograph, covering two decades of work, is set to remedy the latter concern and brings the partnership the international exposure it has long deserved. At the same time, it effectively deals with the former

issue: it reveals an underlying common attitude beneath the indefinable, heterogeneous production. The relationships between projects emerge in the light of a palpable intellectual density, representing a highly curious and restless creative intelligence.

The book's structure allows a rounded account of the practice's several levels of activity. The introductory pieces, a conversation between Meili, Peter and Austrian architect Adolf Krischanitz and an overview of Meili's early work up to 1987, help establish the intellectual armature on which the designs have been developed. The 26 selected projects are then treated factually and chronologically, their argument conducted in terms of architectural decisions rather than discursive, overly theoretical descriptions. Finally, four essays from external contributors – architects Hermann Czech and Josep Lluís Mateo, engineer Jürg Conzett and photographer Heinrich Helfenstein – add up to a clear image of Meili Peter's collaborative approach to various disciplines.

Slightly younger than Jacques Herzog, Pierre de Meuron and Roger Diener, Meili belongs to an architectural generation educated at ETH Zürich in the 1970s – an institution which, in Switzerland, has acquired almost mythical status. At the time the school, in thrall of Aldo Rossi's notion of architectural autonomy, experimented first with typology then increasingly with the poetic potential of images lifted up, as fragments, from the urban fabric of marginal environments: interstitial infrastructure, industrial estates, working-class neighbourhoods. Meili contributed to this discourse not only in early speculative projects but also critical writings, revealing a lucid understanding of contemporary Swiss architecture's inspiration.

Conversely, Peter was trained a few years later through the alternative route open to Swiss architects – an apprenticeship followed by technical college – which imparted a more practical understanding of construction-related issues. Thus, one's technological expertise and the other's academic theoretical perspective combine in an architecture characterised equally by conceptual coherence and constructional experimentation.

One of the practice's better-known projects, the timber engineering school in Bienne (1990-1999), clearly illustrates this general strategy. The building grapples with the requirements of its programme on several levels. As a high-rise, large-span timber structure, with only the circulation cores cast in concrete, over several years of research it explored the limits of timber construction and fire protection treatments (anecdotally, sections of the building exist as burnt ruins). The tectonic expression of its facade, with a repetitive timber frame module, mimics the image of wooden stacks characterising the site yet retains an ambition towards overall definition, a barely perceptible tension defining a whole out of these parts.

These and other projects reveal a consistent approach, rooted both in a profound familiarity with the rational (Swiss) city and knowledge of Western architectural history. This is grounded in typological research but developed in the direction of a more literary, poetic appraisal of the contradictions and differences of urban environments. This excellent monograph makes visible the range of possibilities of practice when committed to a consistent conceptual and constructional strategy. Which makes this a necessary book, re-iterating a precious belief in substantial, intelligent architecture.

IRINA DAVIDOVICI



Study for a housing block on Berlin's Verbindungskanal, 1976, by Aldo Rossi, from a new book on his drawing work edited by Germano Celant and published by Skira. It covers the period from 1965 up to Rossi's death in a car crash in 1997. Typically executed in an exuberant flurry of ink and colour, most of the drawings are previously unpublished and document Rossi's quickfire exploration of ideas, which can then be compared with the finished projects. Rossi's style spawned many imitators, so it's a pleasure to revisit the original.

These and other AR book reviews can be viewed at www.arplus.com and the books can be ordered online, many at a special discount.

reviews

PALLADIAN REVIVAL

Five centuries on from his birth, the genius of Andrea Palladio still enthalls.

Architecture exhibitions at London's Royal Academy of Arts are rare events: paintings and sculptures more readily draw sponsorship, publicity and blockbuster crowds. While infrequent, they have succeeded in engaging the attention of a diverse exhibition-going public and raising the profile and status of architecture as an art. These memorably include the 1986 exhibition *New Architecture: Foster, Rogers, Stirling*, which previewed the work of three already internationally renowned and either current or soon-to-be elected architect Academicians. The 1995 exhibition, *The*

Palladian Revival: Lord Burlington, His Villa and Garden at Chiswick, paid homage to the architect earl whose extended townhouse the RA now occupies on Piccadilly; and in its 2000 exhibition an early RA Professor of Architecture was celebrated in *John Soane, Architect: Master of Space and Light*. They are underscored by *Andrea Palladio: His Life and Legacy*, both architecturally and as an exhibition experience.

While Foster and Rogers enjoy global fame now, the reputation of Andrea Palladio (1508-1580) has survived, even grown, across the 500 years since his birth. Countless classically inspired houses, churches and public buildings owe their existence and continuing popularity to him. He provided the spiritual and practical touchstone to Inigo Jones's classical revival in Britain 100 years after his birth and,

through Jones's example, inspired the Georgian creation of regular squares and linear, elegantly geometric palazzo-style terraces in London, Edinburgh and Bath, which remain at the core of their urban magnificence. Palladianism spread north to Britain, east to Russia, and west to America, promoted by Palladio's *The Four Books on Architecture*, which provided Thomas Jefferson, third president of the United States, with his architectural bible. This exceptional life and legacy is made wonderfully vivid at the RA exhibition.

Its distant forerunner, the 1975 South Bank exhibition on Palladio, subtitled *The Portico and the Farmyard*, displayed more wooden models than are on show here, but the RA exhibition is better balanced visually. Arranged principally across three large galleries, it establishes his



Portrait of Andrea Palladio by El Greco, c. 1575



Cover of Palladio's *The Four Books on Architecture*, 1570



Above: Palladio's project for an alternative entrance to the Rialto Bridge, c. 1570. Although his design for the Venice bridge was not chosen, Palladio built extensively in the city, including the church of San Giorgio Maggiore. Right: Model of the Church of the Redentore, 1772. The original Palladio building is in Venice. (Photo: Alberto Carollo)



reviews



Paolo Veronese's *Susanna and the Elders*, c. 1588, features a Palladian backdrop.



View of Pavlosk, c. 1786, by Giacomo Quarenghi. Palladio's influence is clearly visible in this palace by Charles Cameron.

beginnings in Padua and Vicenza, fame and fortune in Venice, and later years in Venice and Vicenza. A fourth, smaller gallery focuses on 'The Architect's Mind' – Palladio's having been well honed by patrons whose combined intellects aided his mastery of classical architecture, and with whom he collaborated effectively, with art, to produce the symmetrical, elegantly columned frontages, topped by triangular pediments, with which his architecture is synonymous. Superb models of his more influential buildings punctuate the larger galleries. On the surrounding walls, his drawings – sketches, measured drawings and published woodcuts – sit comfortably alongside paintings by Renaissance artist Veronese and Venetian landscape painter Canaletto.

This very successful display of drawing, painting, models and architecture is skilfully presented by architect Academician Eric Parry. His backdrop depictions of the ruins of ancient Rome in the first gallery rise dream-like beyond the perimeter screens, and capture the power and wonder that clearly impressed the young Andrea. The exhibition exits through his theatrically-painted interpretation of Palladio's Accademia Olimpica scene front, articulated by statues of Vicenza's own academicians, which fittingly – in the original – includes Palladio amongst them. Here, his successful pursuit of a timeless architecture can be experienced as an all-embracing art. **ROBERT TAVERNOR**

Andrea Palladio: His Life and Legacy runs until 13 April at the Royal Academy of Arts, London. www.royalacademy.org.uk

Robert Tavernor is Professor of Architecture and Urban Design at LSE, author of *Palladio and Palladianism* (Thames & Hudson, 1991), and co-translator (with Richard Schofield) of *Andrea Palladio: The Four Books on Architecture* (MIT Press, 1997).



Model of the Villa Capra, also known as the Villa Rotonda, 1970. The actual building, located outside Vicenza, was completed after Palladio's death in 1580. (Photo: Alberto Carollo)

browser

In elegiac mode, Sutherland Lyall presents his coin to the ferryman of the CyberStyx.

Content is king in the Land of FAT

FAT (Fashion Architecture Taste) has taken on the mantle of CZWG Architects (www.czwg.com) as maverick-in-chief to the UK architectural establishment. The practice has a website at <http://fashionarchitecturetaste.com> – a model of how to be beguiling, talented and lucidly unpretentious. This is a serious contender for the *Don't Make Me Think* (www.sensible.com) site prize. Equally intriguing are the partners' personal blogs. Charles Holland has *Fantastic Journal* at <http://fantasticjournal.blogspot.com>, and Sam Jacob has *Strange Harvest* at www.strangeharvest.com, whose subtitle is 'On Architecture, Design, Art, Culture, Beauty, Truth, Paranoia, Fear & Love'. (You don't often hear love mentioned in our fraternity. More's the pity.) So many architects equate obscure language with depth and seriousness. These two, like their FAT partner Sean Griffiths, write with perceptiveness and clarity – which is why they often appear in our sister publication, *The Architects' Journal*. Being blogs, these sites are based on standard templates, which means the design issue has been resolved and their proprietors can concentrate on what is important: content.

Building the definitive database

This looks a bit like a house ad, but take a look at the World Buildings Directory online database at www.worldbuildingsdirectory.com. It's the preliminary spin-off from last year's World Architecture Festival, containing the 700-plus entries for that apparently wildly successful event in Barcelona. It ticks all the usability boxes partly because it boasts an easy-to-follow category breakdown. It starts off as a two-column, blog-like layout with the title and category options on the left. When you make a successful search, you get a selection of thumbnails down the right. Click on one of them and up comes a bigger image with five alternatives as thumbnails below, together with the texts submitted by the architects. So you only get the architect's version, but hey – it's still the beginning of a massive contemporary world archive.

Can't live by graphics alone

I can't tell if architectural group AH Asociados did any testing of its site, www.ahasociados.com. Maybe not, because image download times are dire. You begin with a page of very elegant white text on black, with a vertical orange line dividing the language options (Spanish and English). When you click either, a new, black screen pops up (oddly, leaving the home screen behind) and

along slides an orange line, which thickens to acquire that weasel word: loading. Eventually, you get a strip of black and white thumbnails, a simple navigation box on the top left of the page and the big image of the day, which is highlighted by being in colour in the thumbnail strip. I searched, but could find no details of the buildings apart from the credits. But since they are quite elegant, as is the site in its design, maybe that's all that's needed. This is also one of those sites that removes your browser toolbars and doesn't have a back button. A real web designer said to me when I asked about doing Norman McLaren-style introductory animated graphics: 'Sure I can do it. But why? It will just be in the way of people getting at the information.'

Nuts

A colleague directed me to architect Gábor Bachman's insane site at www.bachman.hu (the .hu means he is Hungarian). I say insane because, superimposed across a monochrome background incorporating the wild-eyed features of, presumably, Gábor himself (plus a big, suggestive nut on the left), is a gyrating mass of coloured balls which, from time to time, acquire temporary labels. I won't go on, but let me urge you to take an amused look at what I now think is an attempt to suggest that a mass of ideas is jostling around in old Gábor's brain. And damnit, isn't that exactly what architects' brains are supposed to be like?

Envoi

This is the last Browser column in the AR. My warm thanks to everybody over the last few years who has written in... some crossly, of course. I have to pay special tributes to Kansas architect and the architectural blogosphere's living treasure, Eric Morehouse, at www.eyecandy-webcandy.blogspot.com And to Steve Parnell, now running *The Sesquipedalist* at www.sesquipedalist.com. Also to Adrian James at www.adrianjames.com for that wonderful first blog message: 'We love doing architecture.' Oh, and the anonymous Alice the Architect at <http://alicethearchitect.blogspot.com> who stopped communicating when I suggested that, for all I knew, she might actually be a six-footer with a beard and bad habits. Her blog is still great. The bible, according to my pro web designer friends (and me) is still Steve Krug's *Don't Make Me Think: A Common-Sense Approach to Web Usability* (New Riders, 2005). If you would like to keep browsing browser items, tune in to www.browsertwo.co.uk whence you can hook up to a free weekly feed. Hooked up or not, it's been really nice writing for you.

Adieu.

Sutherland Lyall is at sutherland.lyall@btinternet.com

diary

AR'S CHOICE OF INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS FROM WWW.ARPLUS.COM

CANADA

WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH THE CITY
Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal
Until 19 April

An exploration of how everyday human actions can animate and influence the perception and experience of contemporary cities. Seemingly common activities such as gardening, recycling, playing and walking are pushed beyond their usual definition by the international architects, artists, and collectives. Their experimental interactions with the urban environment show the potential of a new level of participation by city residents. www.cca.qc.ca

FRANCE

ALEXANDER CALDER: THE PARISIAN YEARS, 1926 – 1933

Centre Pompidou, Paris

18 March – 20 July

This show is devoted to the famous American kinetic sculptor, focusing on the period when he lived and worked in Paris. As well as presenting outstanding pieces, the exhibition also offers an opportunity to witness the original state of works conceived in terms of motion and equilibrium but now condemned to immobility by the exactions of time or by the death of their creator and animator. Films by Jean Painlevé and photographs by Brassai reveal Calder operating and engaging with his creations. www.centrepompidou.fr

UNITED KINGDOM

LE CORBUSIER'S CABANON

RIBA, London

5 March – 28 April

Continuing London's Corb season, the RIBA Trust presents a 1:1 reconstruction of the interior of Le Corbusier's Cabanon, the compact holiday house he built for himself and his wife on the Cote d'Azur. This is the first time it has ever been reconstructed and offers revealing insights into the mind of the maestro. www.architecture.com

UNITED STATES

DREAMLAND: ARCHITECTURAL EXPERIMENTS SINCE THE 1970s

The Museum of Modern Art, New York
Until 16 March

Last chance to catch this show from the museum's Architecture and Design collection. Rem Koolhaas's watercolour *Plan of Dreamland* (1977), a recent acquisition, forms the exhibition's point of departure before dipping into the explosion of architectural thought and experimentation that characterised the 1970s. During that time, the city (and New York in particular) became a screen for the projection of architectural fantasies and utopias. Works by Raimund Abraham, Peter Eisenman, Steven Holl and Hans Hollein give a retro flavour. www.moma.org

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delight

When, at the start of February, London ground to a halt in the heaviest snowfalls for 18 years, it brought home to the populace how unprepared they were for the white stuff and its consequences. Yet what passes for a blizzard in London would be shrugged off in the Alaskan city of Anchorage as a mere dusting. Here, snow lies feet thick and winter daytime temperatures oscillate between -15°C and -1°C . But Alaskans are resilient souls and recently celebrated their sub-arctic climate through Freeze, a month-long programme of conferences, performances and exhibitions exploring aspects of a hyperborean (extremely northerly) existence. People have lived in the Arctic regions since the last ice age (around 20,000 years ago) but polar regions are now coming under new pressures through the effects of climate change.

The most photogenic aspect of the programme was a series of installations erected along Anchorage's Delaney Park Strip involving teams of designers, artists and architects from Alaska and around

the world. Shown here is *Ice Fracture*, by Canadian architect Kobayashi + Zedda, working with Polish-born artist Ana Rewakowicz. 'The piece transforms the winter phenomenon of shifting ice into an urban experience that explores the physical relationship between movement, light and landscape,' they explain. Humble traffic cones are used as casts for spiky ice sculptures and lights embedded in the frozen ground are triggered by motion sensors, so visitors walking round the site create their own light patterns.

Hosted by the Alaska Design Forum in association with the International Gallery of Contemporary Art and the Anchorage Museum (now being extended by David Chipperfield Architects), the diversity of work and the public response to it echoes the hardy conviviality of Anchorage's winter carnivals, which date back to 1918. The spirit of the north lives on. CATHERINE SLESSOR
www.freezeproject.org/alaska



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