The MIT Press

Architecture's outside
Author(s): Juan Navarro Baldeweg
Source: *Assemblage*, No. 34 (Dec., 1997), pp. 30-55
Published by: The MIT Press
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3171252
Accessed: 21/06/2014 06:14

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at
http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp

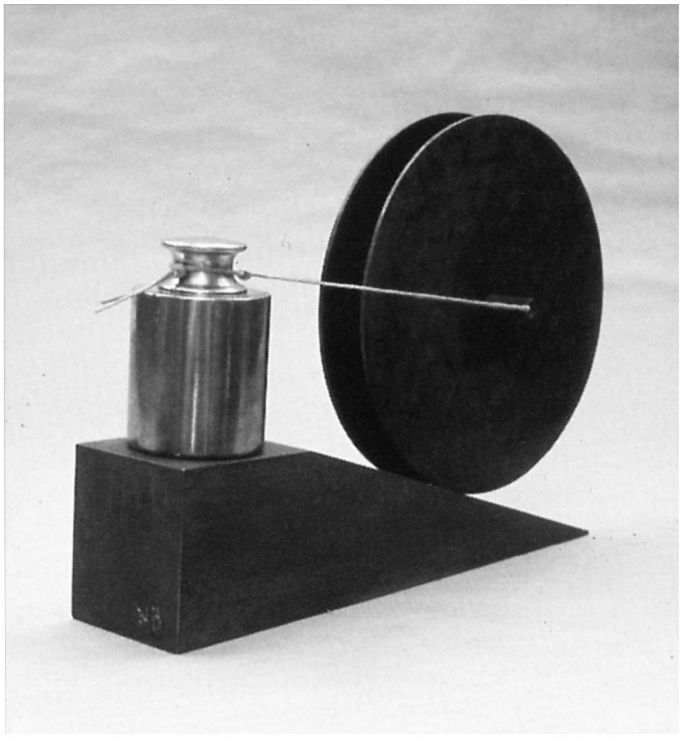
JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

The MIT Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Assemblage*.

http://www.jstor.org

This content downloaded from 188.72.126.162 on Sat, 21 Jun 2014 06:14:07 AM
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

Juan Navarro Baldeweg



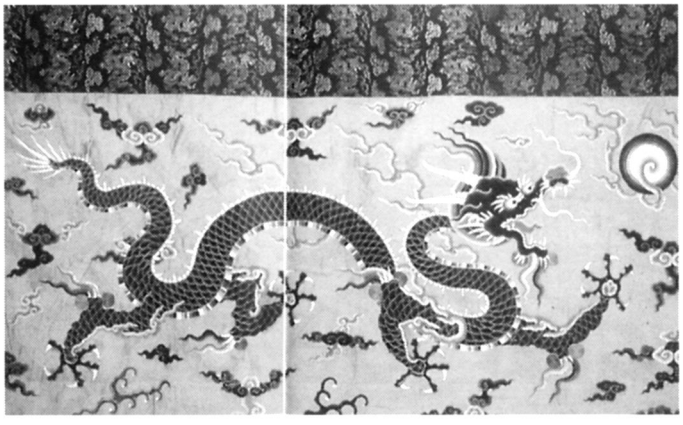
Architecture's Outside

1, 2. Main hall of the Salamanca Conference and Exhibition Center; *Wheel and Weight*, 1993

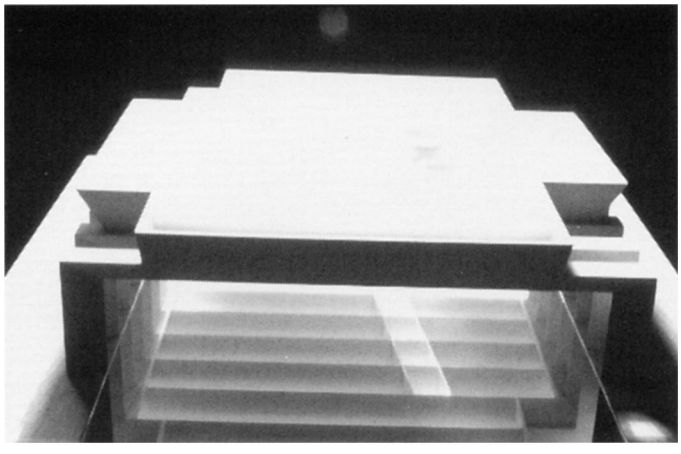
This content downloaded from 188.72.126.162 on Sat, 21 Jun 2014 06:14:07 AM
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions



This content downloaded from 188.72.126.162 on Sat, 21 Jun 2014 06:14:07 AM
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions



3. Brocade tablecloth from the Kangxi period



4. Exhibition hall, 1993

Introduction

Consider this: Don Juan Navarro Baldeweg, an architect who has amassed many awards for his built achievements, whose work is extensively and beautifully published, and whose buildings are best known as poignant presences in the places they are built, chose for a recent exhibition, the 1997 Kenzo Tange Professor Exhibition at Harvard University's Graduate School of Design, not photographs of buildings but rather models, drawings, paintings, and things he refers to simply as "objects." Navarro Baldeweg avoided (I would say emphatically avoided) the photographic reproduction of his built work, as well as the words of explanation that are usually regarded as de rigueur for such occasions.

Is this conspicuous absence a strategy to convey a specific message or sentiment? I think, yes.

We could see in this choice, first, the generosity of the teacher speaking to students through the media they know best — drawings, models, objects — and indeed, these are a passionate affirmation of the love of engagement with a profession, its techniques and tools.

But there is more. Navarro Baldeweg's architecture is the result of a careful, "scientific" distillation of the *concept* of architecture — a projection, a research, which must be understood as a material fact every bit as much as the built artifact itself.

In looking at a different, more recent set of exhibits now presented here in *Assemblage*, I am again reminded of Lévi-Strauss's digression in *La Pensée sauvage*, when, looking at the elaborate lace collar of a woman in a portrait by Clouet, he reflects on the paradoxical efficacy of the work of art when understood as a reduced model of reality — when, in the passage from reality to representation, a thing looses some of its real dimension (size, material, color), but thereby becomes somehow greater, clearer, more specific, and more precise.

With this, and with another alluring choice Navarro Baldeweg makes of a Chinese tablecloth of a dragon as emblematic of his understanding of the creative process in architecture, we get a hint of a possible reading apparatus for his work. These recurring obsessions over things other than the building constitute a constellation of interrelated loci. With a little work, we could perhaps give them names; for like constellations, they acquire complex configurations depending on how we connect them.

And like the dragon in the tablecloth, the building is but the thing that is produced when the complex of forces and vectors traced by the interwoven colored threads find their concept, their name, in a new figure. Like the dragon, the building appears from the execution of specific and exacting

This content downloaded from 188.72.126.162 on Sat, 21 Jun 2014 06:14:07 AM
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

techniques; it is irreducible to anything else, yet its contours are defined by all that is outside it.

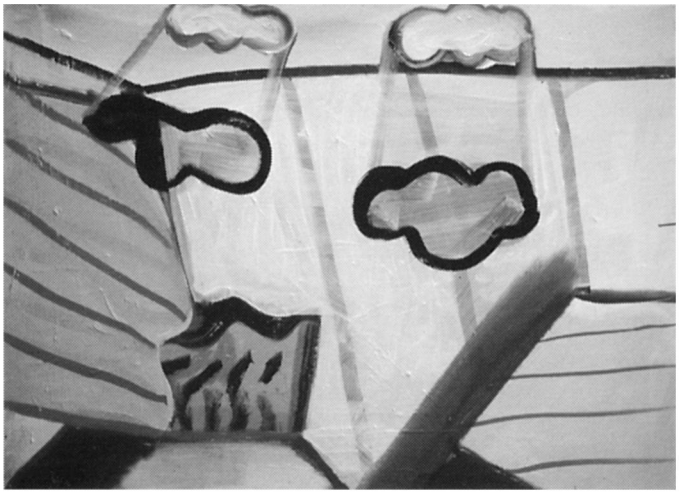
Navarro Baldeweg's discourse returns over and over to interrelated themes that, for him, define the nature of architecture: the tablecloth, the box of light (emanations of forces from the object), the stratifications in an amplified geological map, the section — all these define portions within the open space of physical coordinates to which we can then return, slipping sidewise into the threads of the tablecloth, moving out along the light emanations, burrowing down through the geological strata. These are the worlds of Navarro Baldeweg's architecture.

Luis Rojo has noted: "We will have to acknowledge that one of the traits of Navarro Baldeweg's work is the creation of its own physics, a differentiated working space built using concepts and instruments that identify it. It is a physics in which energies such as light are considered material solids, concrete structures turn into outlined figures that float weightlessly, and the dimensions of certain spaces is outlined by the wall of a shadow. . . . It is a physics constructed by means of stratigraphic, organic, energetic, or pictorial analogies that evoke complexity and the variety of the world we must know."

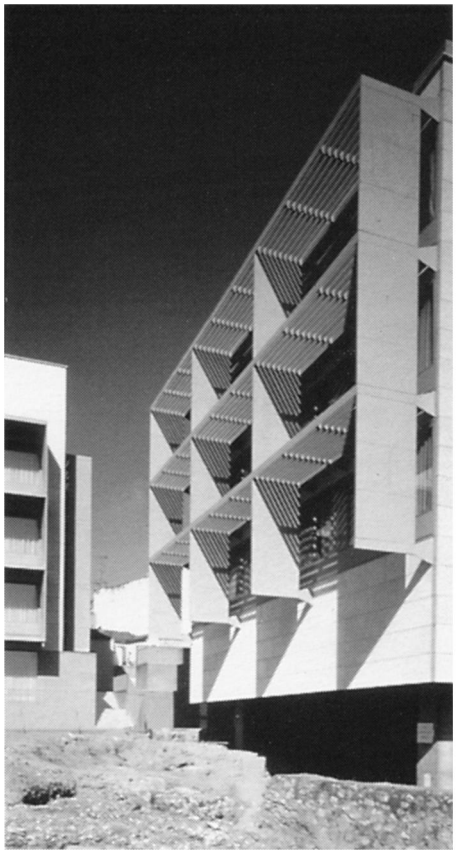
Logically from this physics follows Baldeweg's interest in the complementary — all that is *not* the object, the building — the ground of threads against which the figure of the dragon stands.

And we are forced to sit up and take note, to ponder and sort out the provenances, components, histories, and geologies that shaped its form. And then, only after this work of the intellect and the senses, to recognize the futility of explanation. We shut up and return to the material pleasure of the sheer effort.

Jorge Silvetti

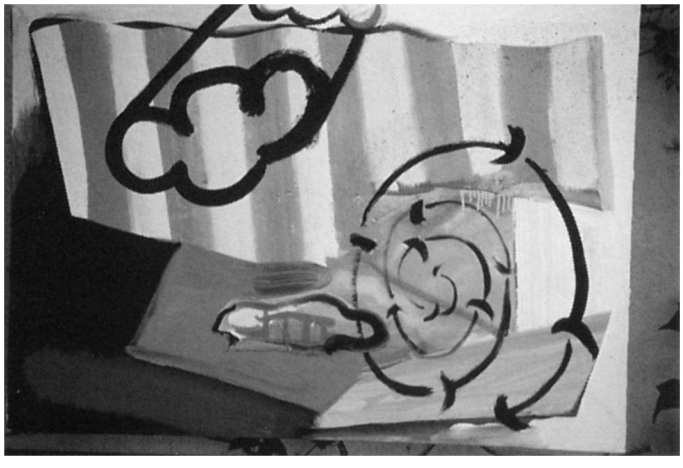


5. *Landscape with Two Clouds*, 1993



6. Regional government offices, Mérida

This content downloaded from 188.72.126.162 on Sat, 21 Jun 2014 06:14:07 AM
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions



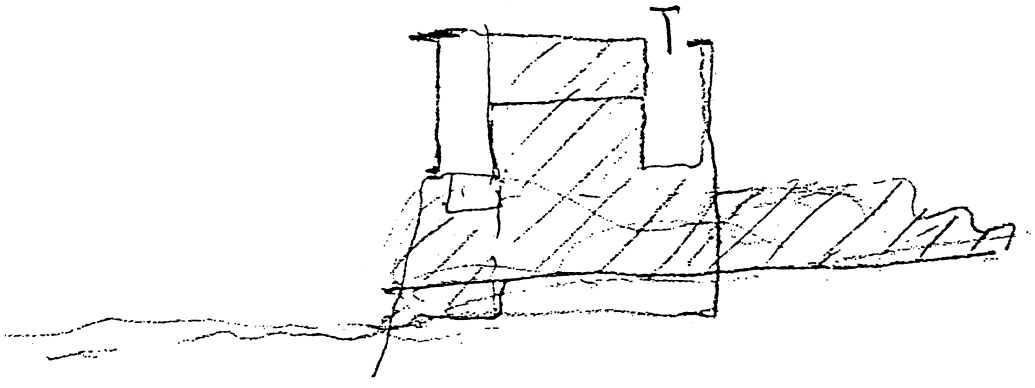
7. *Landscape with Cloud and Flying Bird*, 1993

Courthouse Building, Mahón (Menorca), Spain

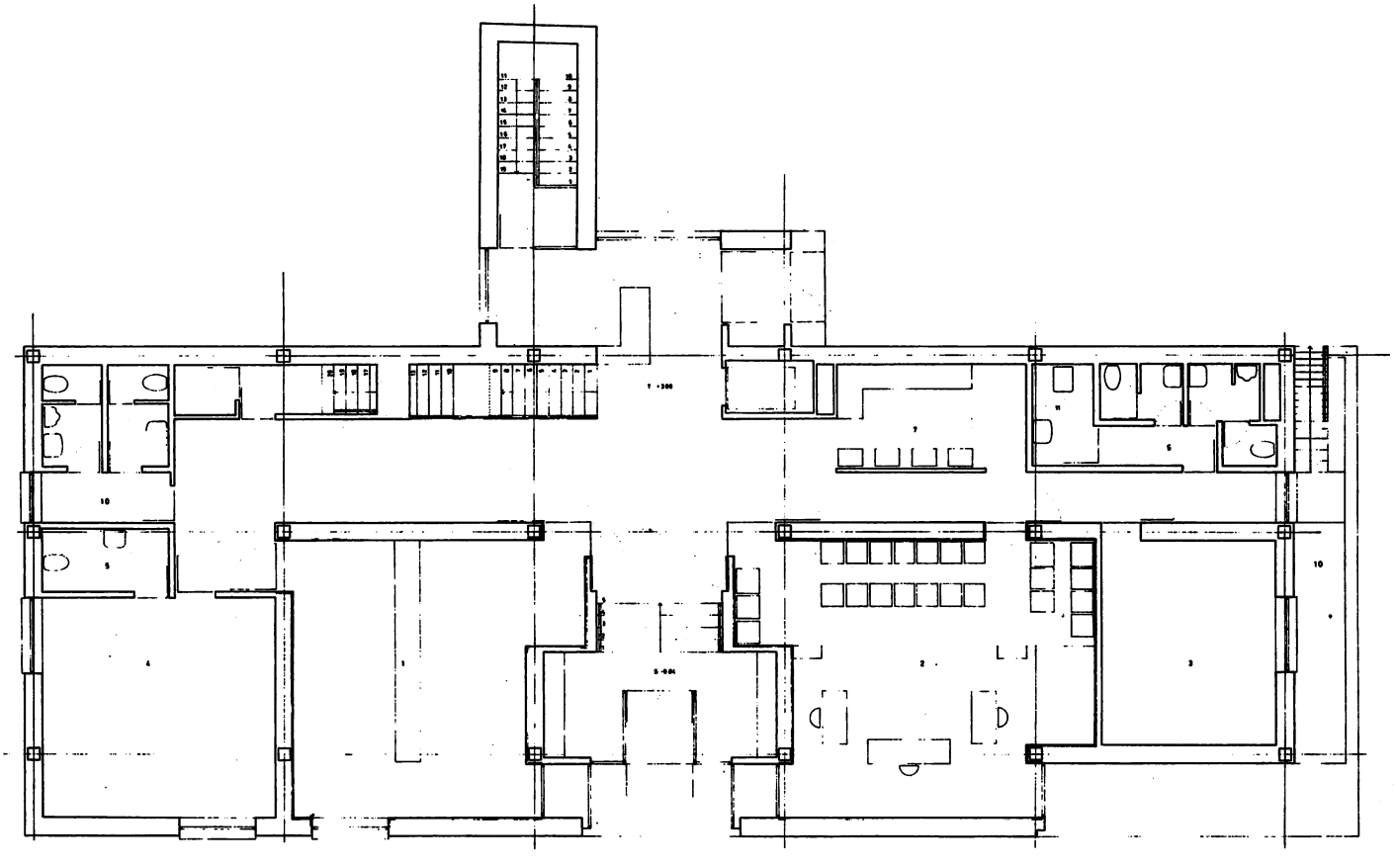
This three-story courthouse building was largely constructed using traditional techniques that associate its image with the urban context. Despite the building's small scale, its public character has been maximized through the articulation of its entrance and the double volume of the upper floors along the new street façade. A set of warm gray aluminum louvers can be traced to the louvers and brises-soleil of the area's residential architecture, but distanced from them in its presence here both in scale and color.

The ground floor includes a civil registry, a courtroom, offices for lawyers and prosecutors, forensic rooms, waiting rooms, and toilets. The second floor houses a second courtroom, an office for a judge, fiscal and penal offices, a secretary's office, and a civil office. The third floor has an office for a judge, a penal and civil office, a secretary's office, and the archives. A basement contains two prison cells, a line-up room, a police room, a civil and legal archive, storage, and a mechanical room. The project takes advantage of the site in its entirety, creating parking and a police car entrance to the rear.

This content downloaded from 188.72.126.162 on Sat, 21 Jun 2014 06:14:07 AM
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

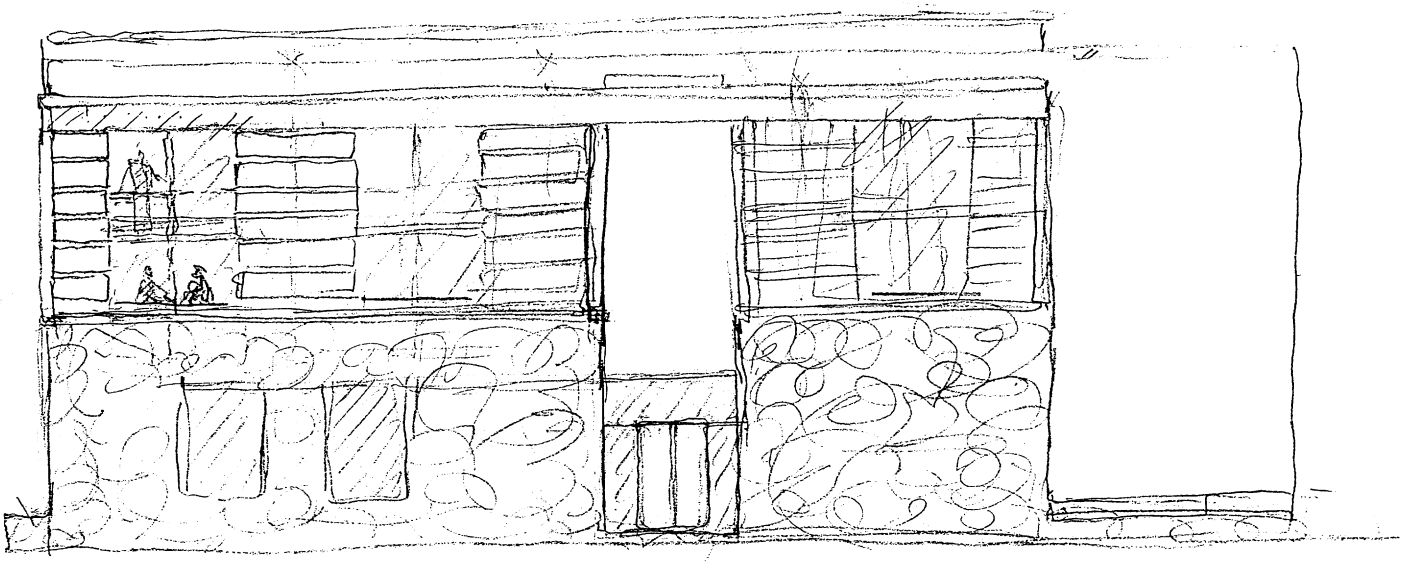


8. Preliminary sectional sketch



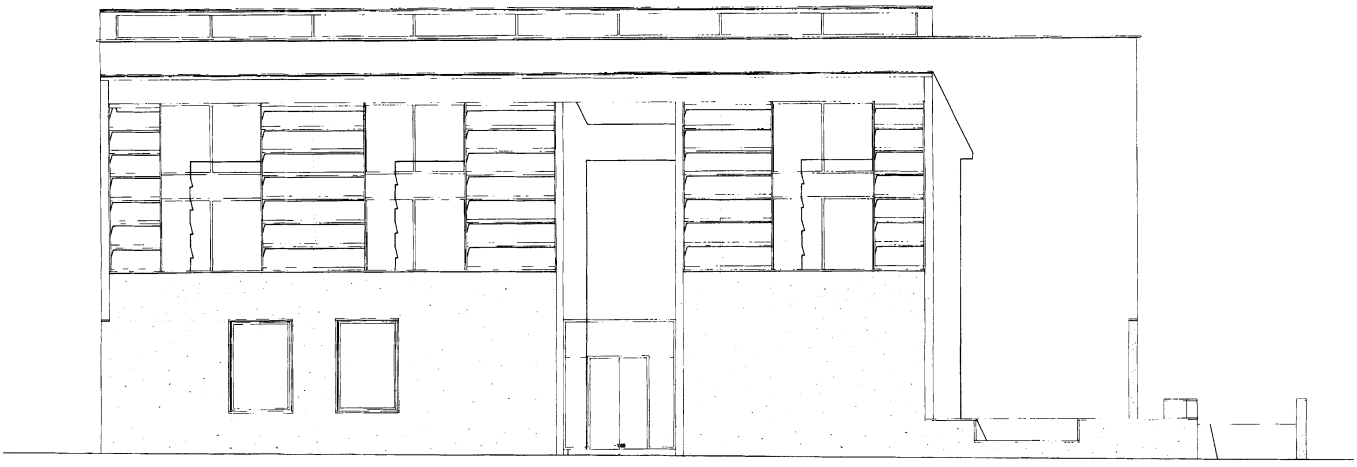
9. Ground-level plan

This content downloaded from 188.72.126.162 on Sat, 21 Jun 2014 06:14:07 AM
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

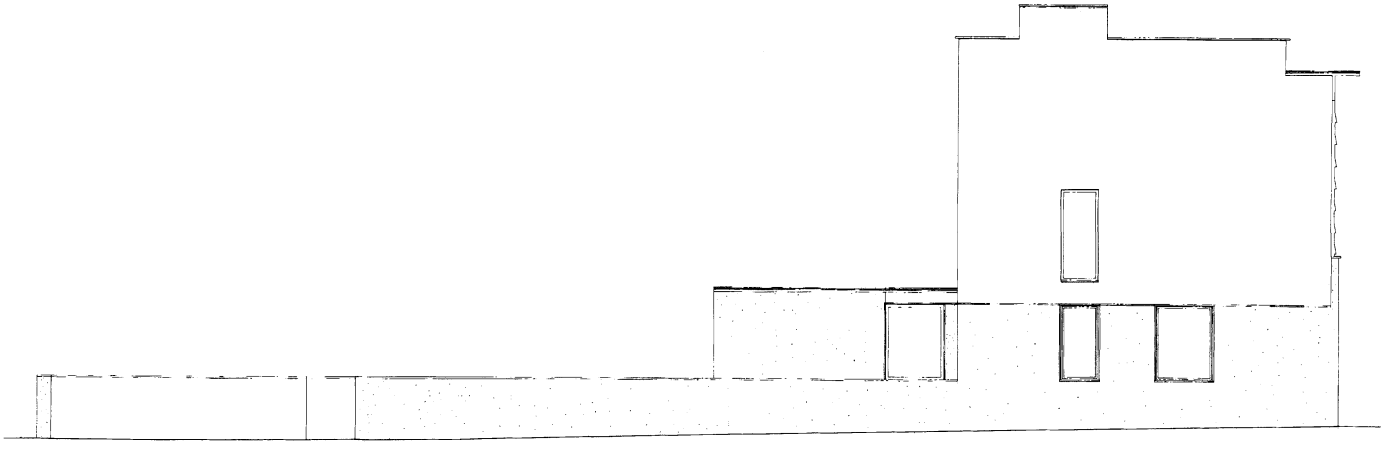


10. Preliminary sketch
of the west elevation

This content downloaded from 188.72.126.162 on Sat, 21 Jun 2014 06:14:07 AM
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions



11. West elevation



12. North elevation

This content downloaded from 188.72.126.162 on Sat, 21 Jun 2014 06:14:07 AM
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions



13. View of the west entrance

This content downloaded from 188.72.126.162 on Sat, 21 Jun 2014 06:14:07 AM
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions



14. View of the east façade



15. Interior view looking
toward the west entrance

This content downloaded from 188.72.126.162 on Sat, 21 Jun 2014 06:14:07 AM
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions



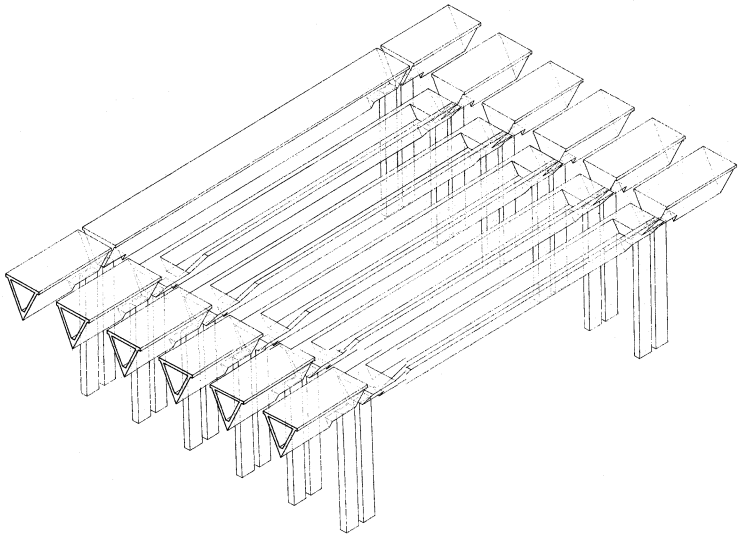
16. *Landscape*, 1992

Cultural Center in Villanueva de la Cañada, Madrid, Spain

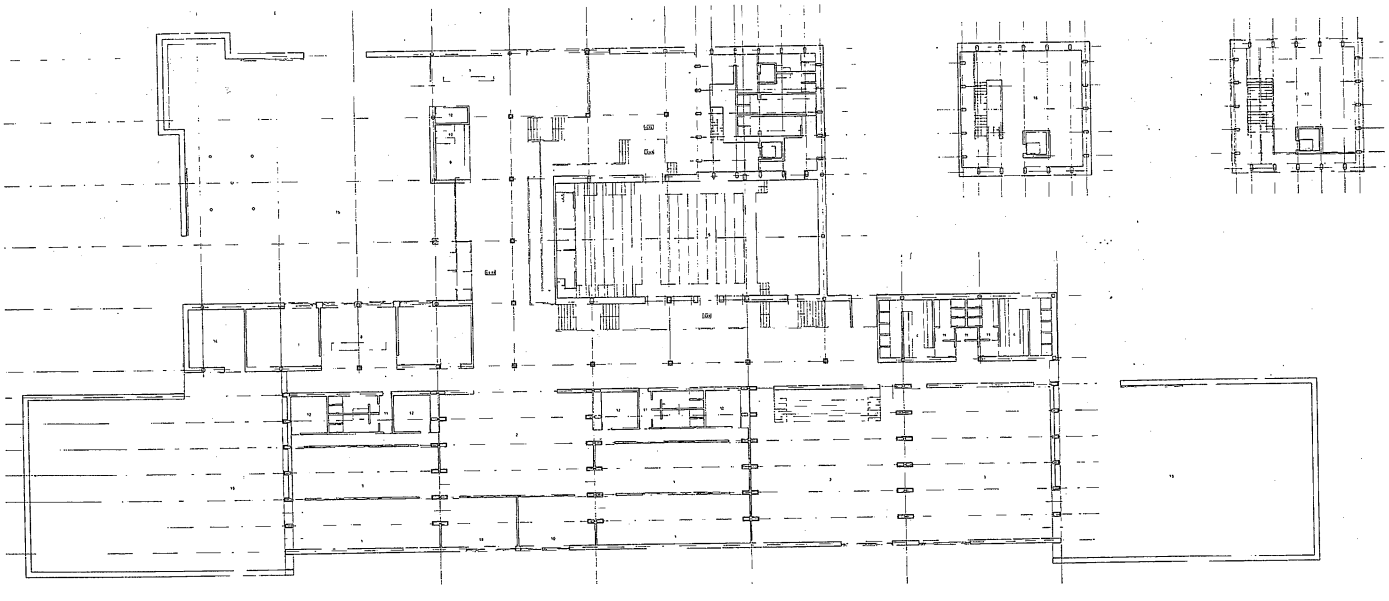
This building was designed to be a focus of public attention, yet flexible enough to house the complex program of a cultural center. The program consists of four studios, two classrooms, two gyms, a three-hundred-seat lecture hall, a library, and a café. These rooms are distributed around a T-shaped building that spreads outward in three patios that serve as meeting places and as outdoor extensions of the studios and gyms. This architecture that inclines toward patios follows the historical pattern of building in Villanueva's center: specifically, the "colonial" architecture around the church and city hall. These outdoor spaces considerably enrich the use of the center as well as advertise the public park to the east.

The studios, the exhibition areas, and the gyms are structured with a concrete module of fifteen meters by two-and-a-half meters. These spaces are naturally lit with skylights, the white V-shape of the roof beams allowing the light to flow better into the various rooms. The rest of the cultural center utilizes a seven-and-a-half-by-six-meter module, except for the lecture hall in which the module is doubled to seven-and-a-half by twelve meters. The center is largely organized on one floor; the library, however, occupies two. A reading room on the upper floor protrudes above the rest of the volume and provides a great view eastward over the park.

This content downloaded from 188.72.126.162 on Sat, 21 Jun 2014 06:14:07 AM
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

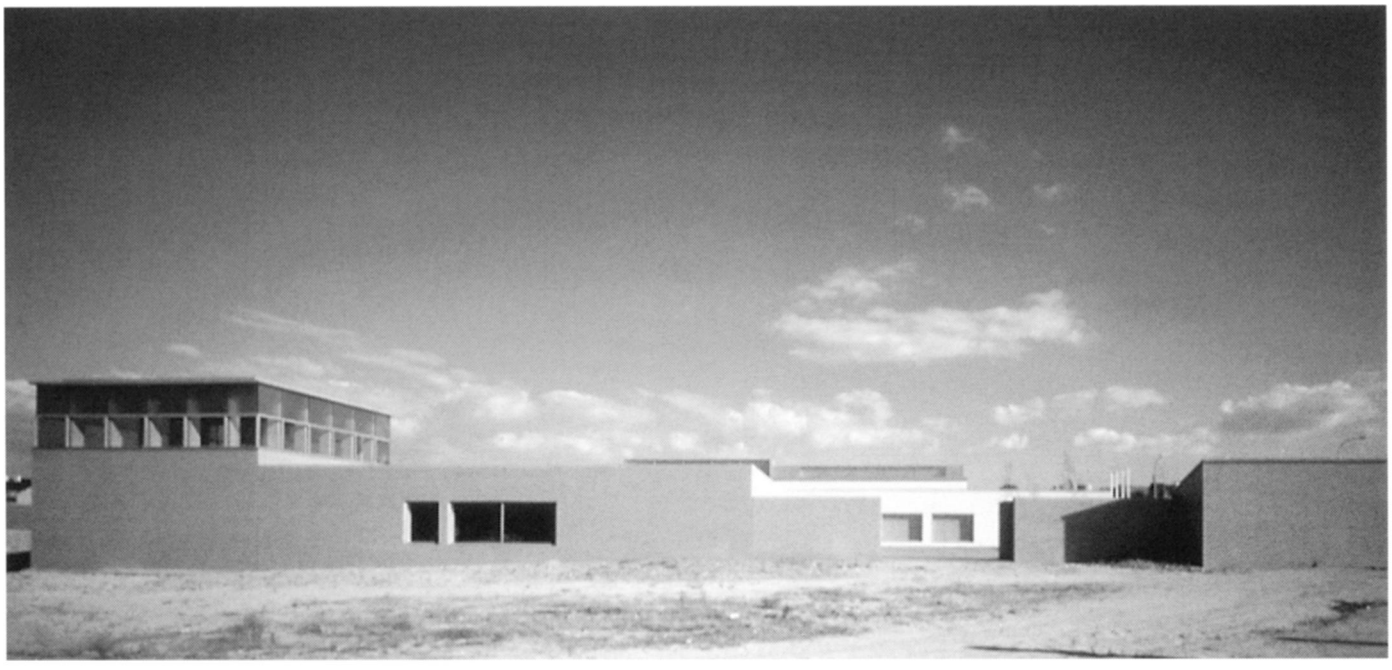


17. Axonometric diagram of the roof structure

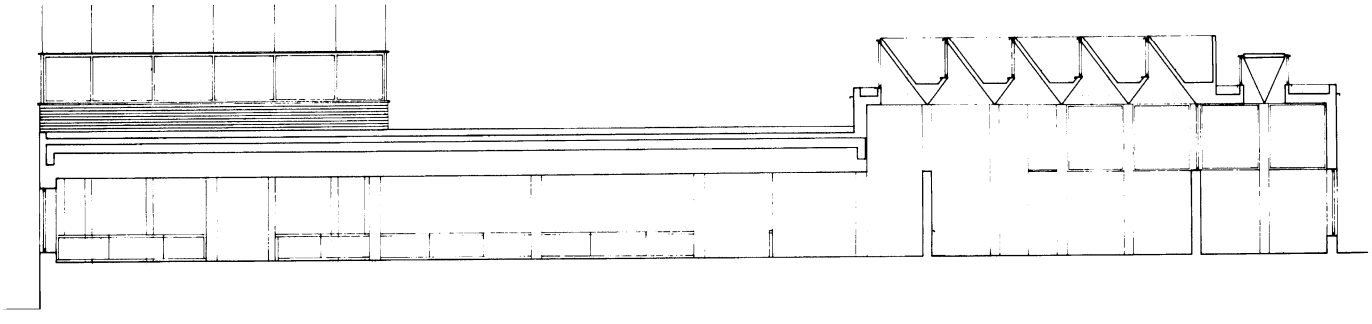


18. Ground-floor and upper-floor plans

This content downloaded from 188.72.126.162 on Sat, 21 Jun 2014 06:14:07 AM
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions



19. View of the north façade

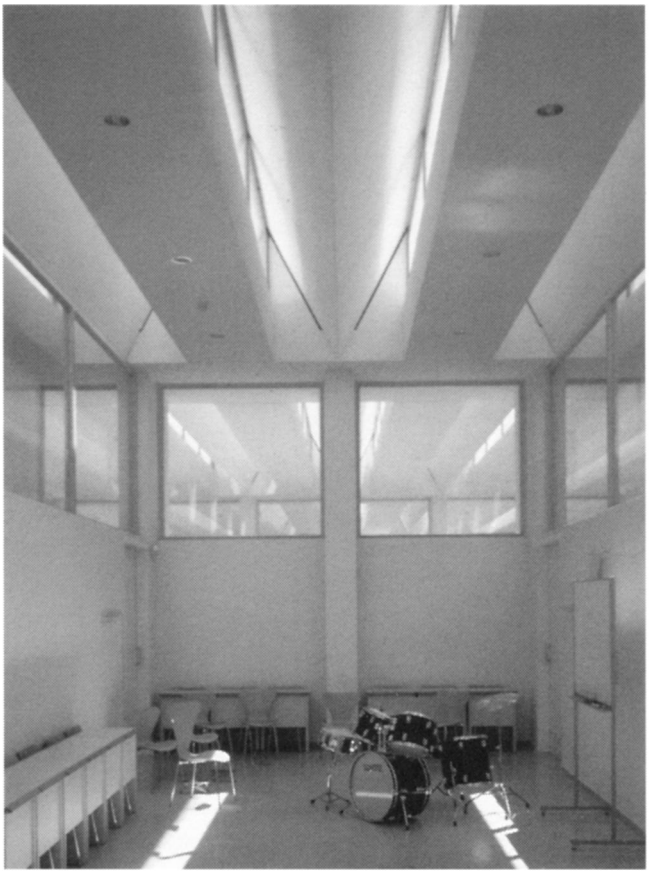


20. North-south section

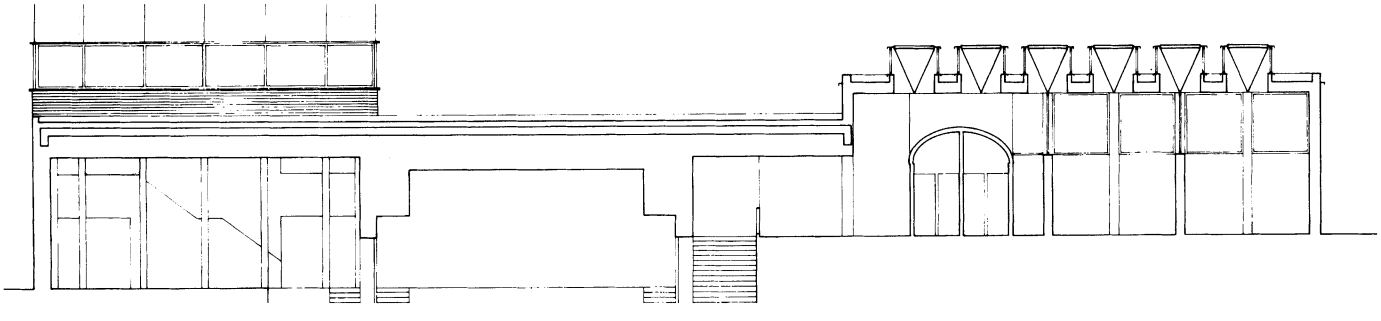
This content downloaded from 188.72.126.162 on Sat, 21 Jun 2014 06:14:07 AM
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions



21. View of the stairs leading to the upper-level reading room



22. View of a workshop space showing the roof structure



23. North-south section

This content downloaded from 188.72.126.162 on Sat, 21 Jun 2014 06:14:07 AM
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions



24. *Landscape*, 1991

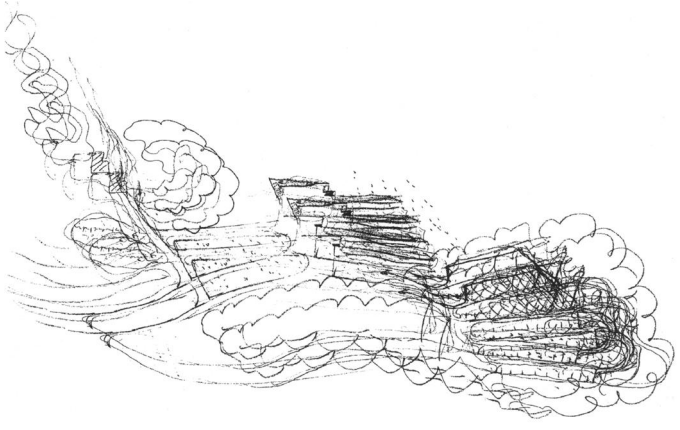
Altamira Museum and Research Center, Santillana del Mar, Cantabria, Spain

An investigation of the deterioration of the Altamira Caves, site of prehistoric paintings, suggested both controlling the number of visitors and establishing a research center. To absorb the large flow of visitors required that a replica cave be built close to the site of the original. Construction is divided into two differentiated areas: the replica location, on the one side, and on the other, the branches that extend from the main entrance and contain the temporary and permanent exhibitions, the administrative offices, research offices, conference room, and cafeteria.

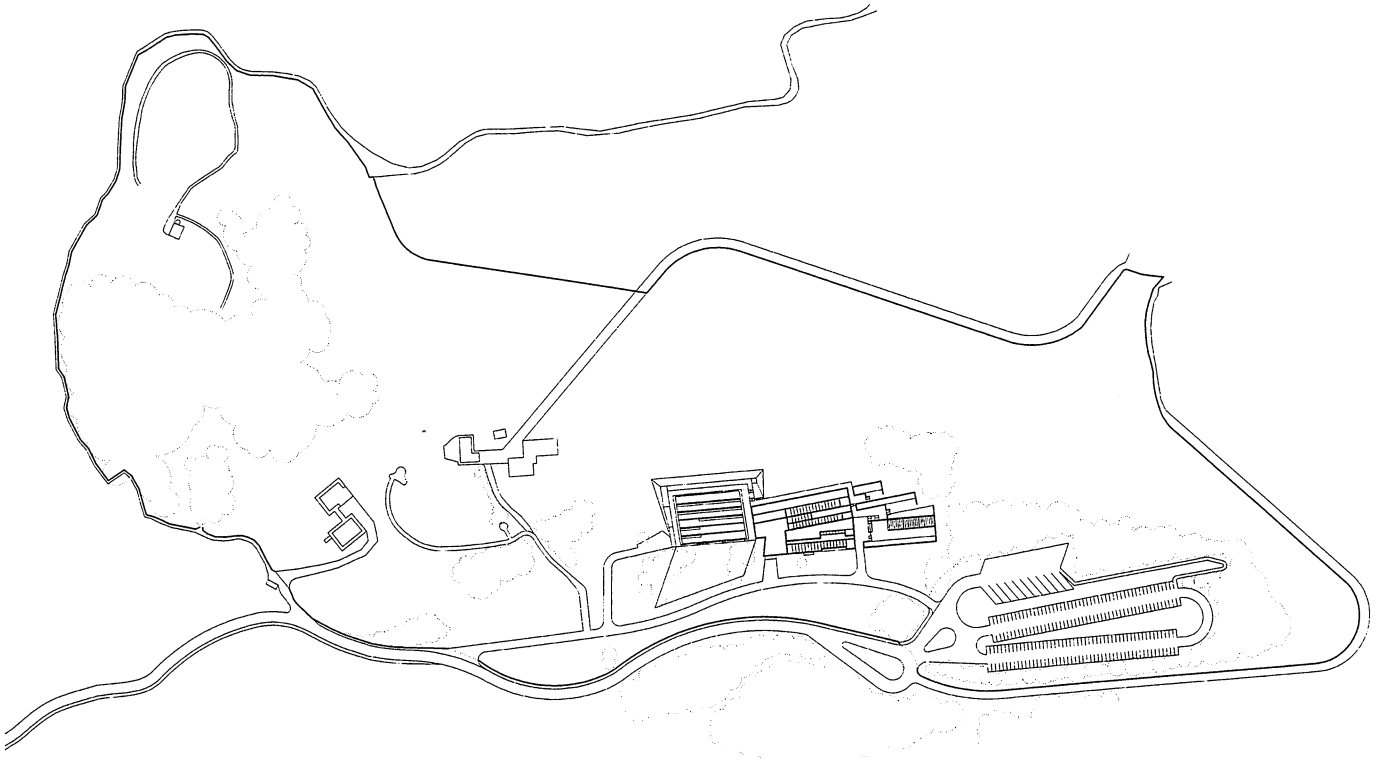
The primary structure consists of large beams to which are attached a secondary structure of sheets that open and rise northward to allow light to enter the exhibition spaces. Over the replica, a slanted roof, partially covered with grass, follows the slope of the land. An aluminum panel structure over stone walls reinforces the idea of building by strata: thick heavy walls emerging from the ground and a light plane floating over them.

The proposal called for a program of considerable size and yet a building that respected the fragile landscape. The project attempts, at all costs, to reduce any negative impact to the site. The architecture, at the same time, creates its own value, evident in the geometries that emerge from the natural slopes and create an artificial landscape of minimalist character.

This content downloaded from 188.72.126.162 on Sat, 21 Jun 2014 06:14:07 AM
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

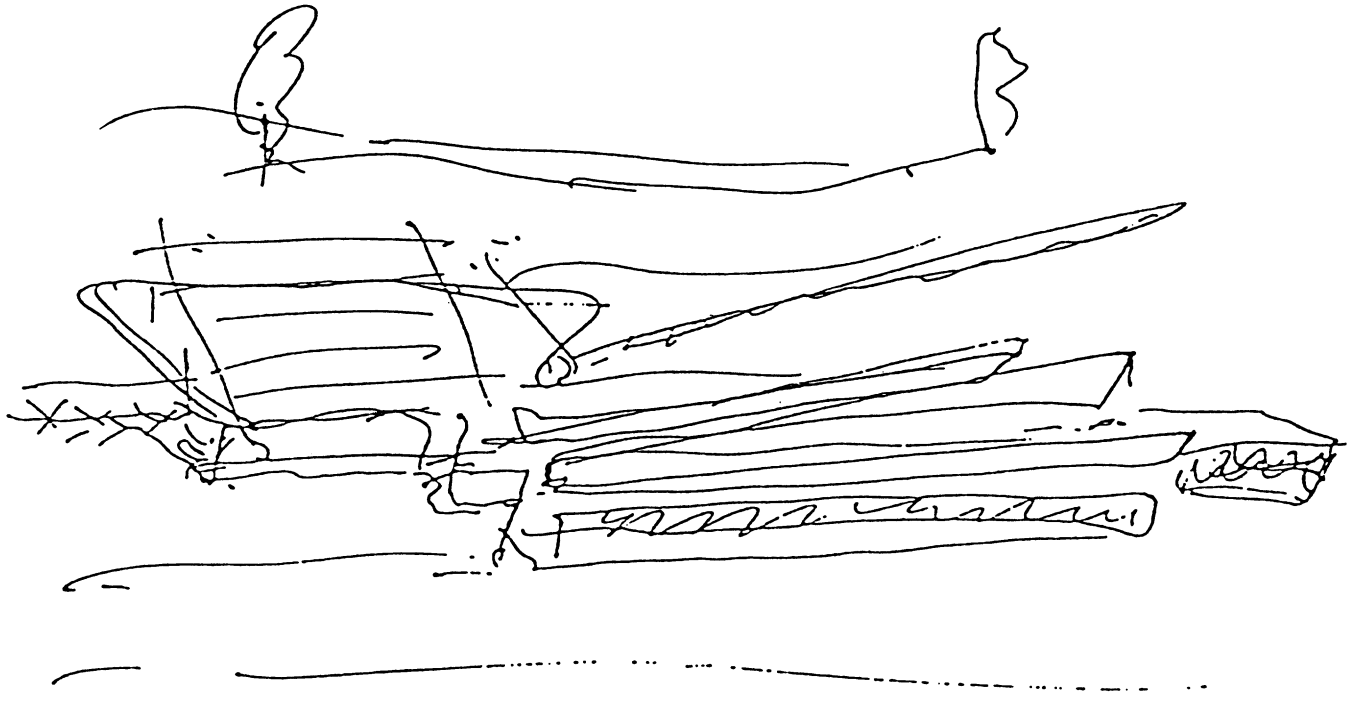


25. Preliminary sketch of the site plan showing the original and replica caves



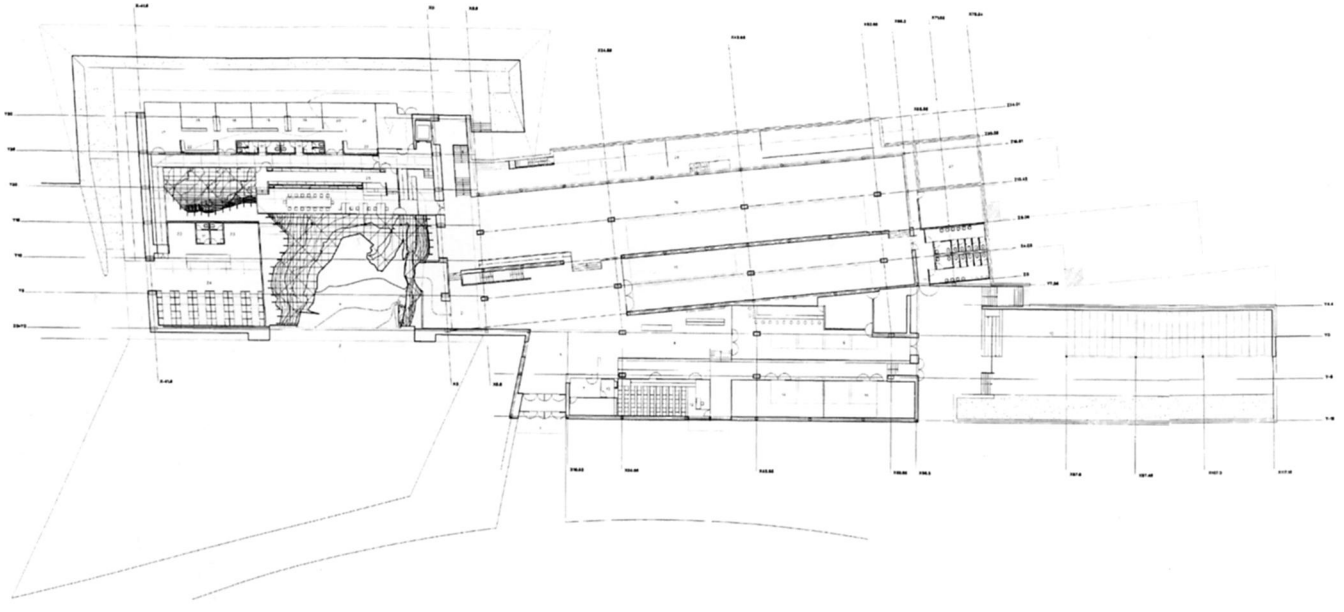
26. Site plan

This content downloaded from 188.72.126.162 on Sat, 21 Jun 2014 06:14:07 AM
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

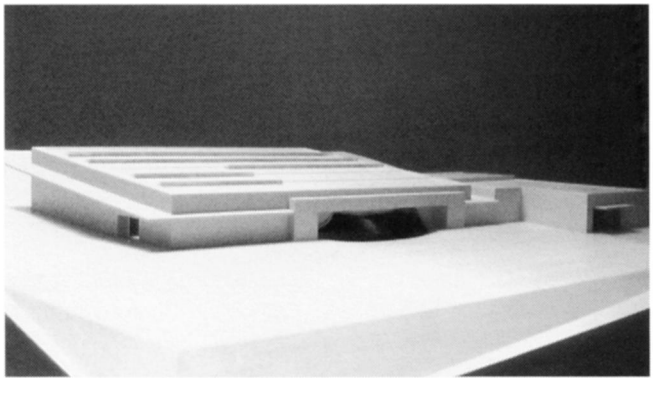


27. Preliminary sketch of the building plan

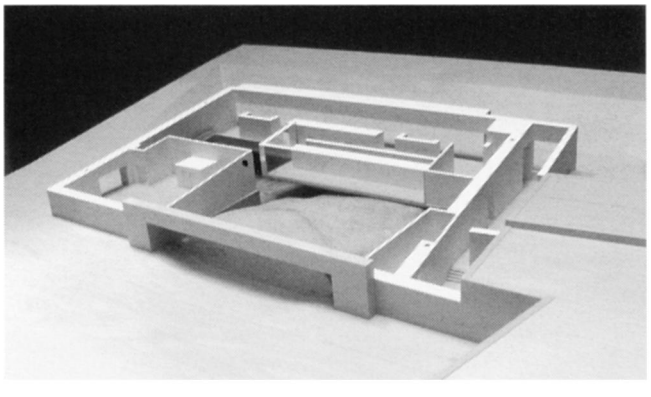
This content downloaded from 188.72.126.162 on Sat, 21 Jun 2014 06:14:07 AM
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions



28. Ground-level plan

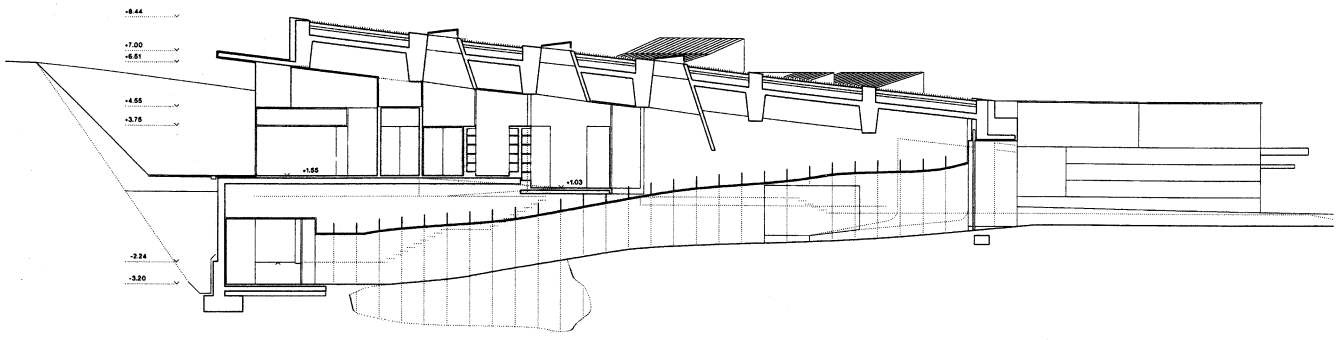


29. View of the model showing the entrance to the replica cave

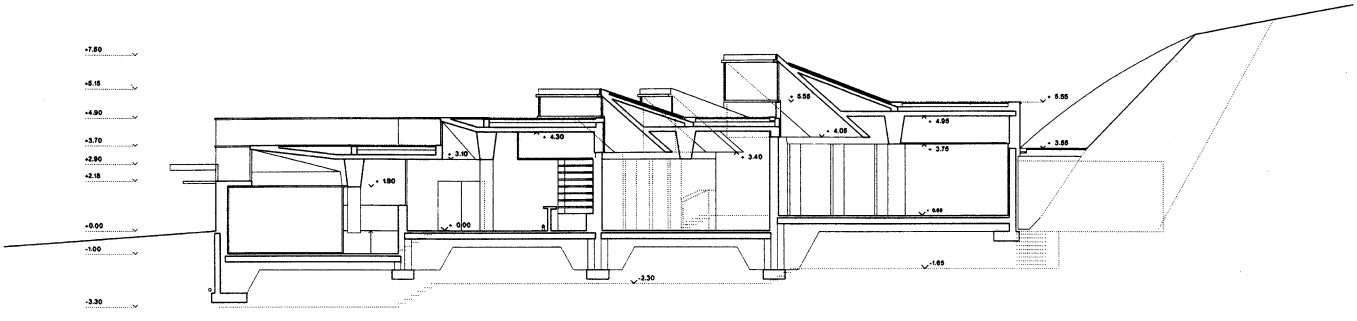


30. View of the cutaway model showing the replica cave

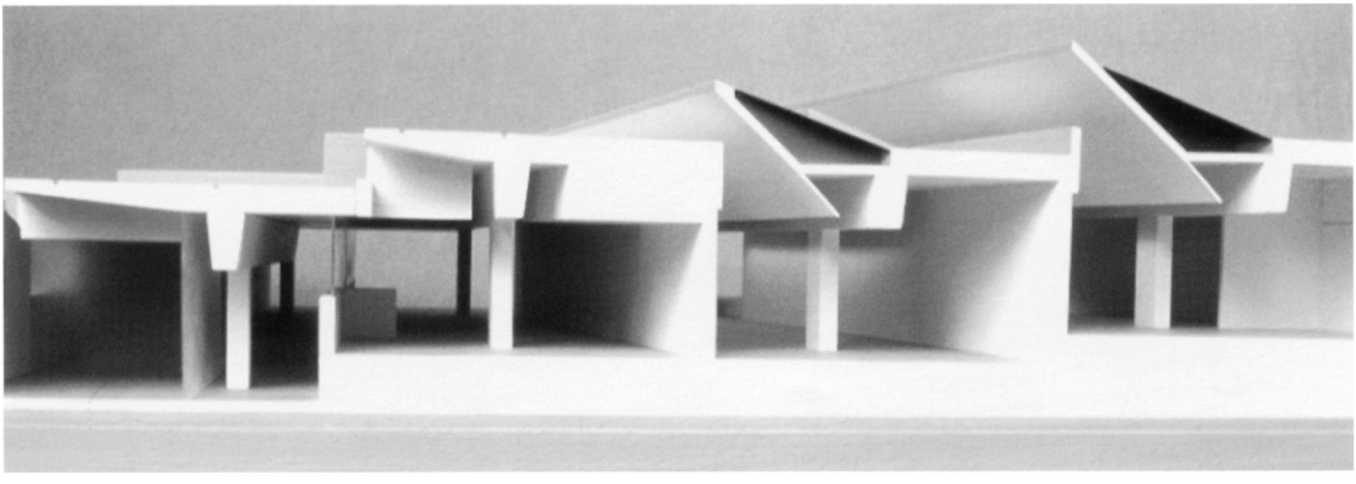
This content downloaded from 188.72.126.162 on Sat, 21 Jun 2014 06:14:07 AM
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions



31. North-south section
through the replica cave

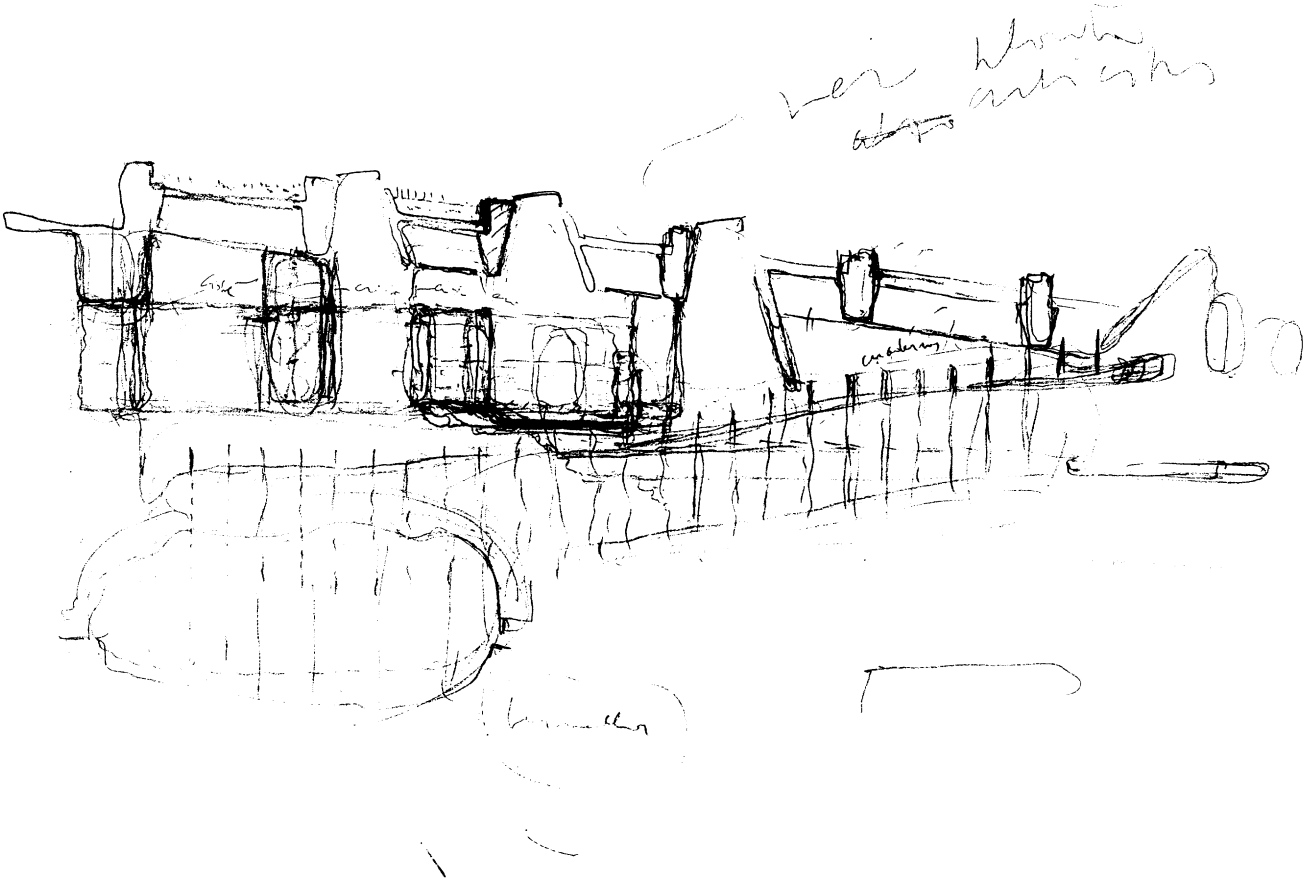


32. North-south section



33. Sectional model

This content downloaded from 188.72.126.162 on Sat, 21 Jun 2014 06:14:07 AM
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions



34. Preliminary sketch of the north-south section through the replica cave

This content downloaded from 188.72.126.162 on Sat, 21 Jun 2014 06:14:07 AM
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions



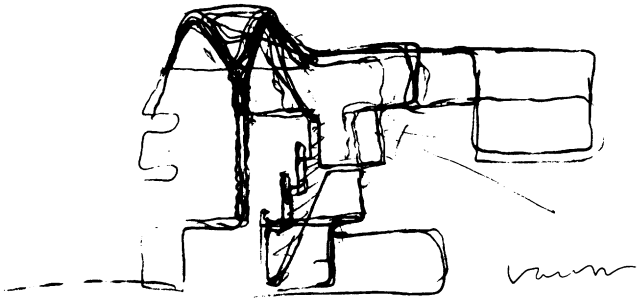
35. *Landscape*, 1991

Addition to the Woolworth Center of Music, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey

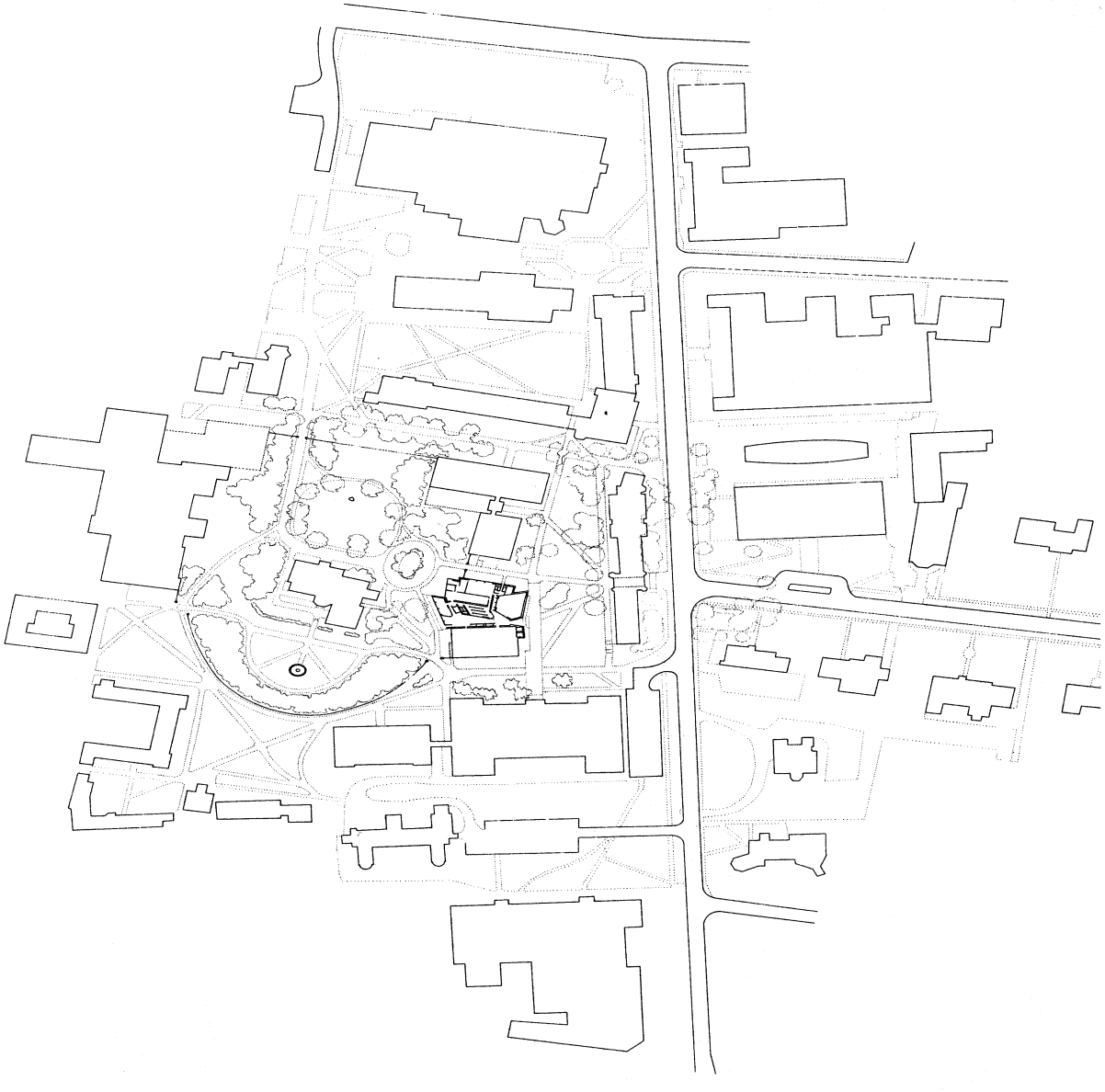
Within the formal structure of Princeton, it is possible to distinguish a superposition of patterns on the campus: the buildings, the streets and sidewalks, and the pedestrian walkways. The 1879 Green can be considered as a "plaza" "activated" by students traveling to and from classes. The gardens around Prospect House have a more tranquil character. The exterior of the new music building reflects the characteristics of street, covered walkway, route, and "plaza" that connect the green and gardens, being formalized at the perimeter as a fanlike shape. Both the original Woolworth Center and the School of Architecture building compositionally reveal their structural framework. They reinforce their syntax by distinguishing their parts as bones and skin, or structure and covering. Thus special importance is granted to the abstract composition and the differentiation of the architectural elements of the Woolworth addition. The inflection in the wall and the footprint of the floor plan clearly indicate the strategy of extending outward to reach the pedestrian on the green and to carefully connect the Woolworth Center with the neighboring architecture school.

Inside, the building is divided into two halves. On the south side is the current teaching wing that houses the classrooms, many of the offices, and the practice rooms. On the north side is the entrance to the new rehearsal hall and the library, which is also visible from the lobby through a glass wall that reveals the terraced stacks. The light entering from the skylights also follows this concept of two halves. The warm southern light illuminates the large vertical lobby space. The northern light flows indirectly toward the terracing floors of the library.

This content downloaded from 188.72.126.162 on Sat, 21 Jun 2014 06:14:07 AM
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

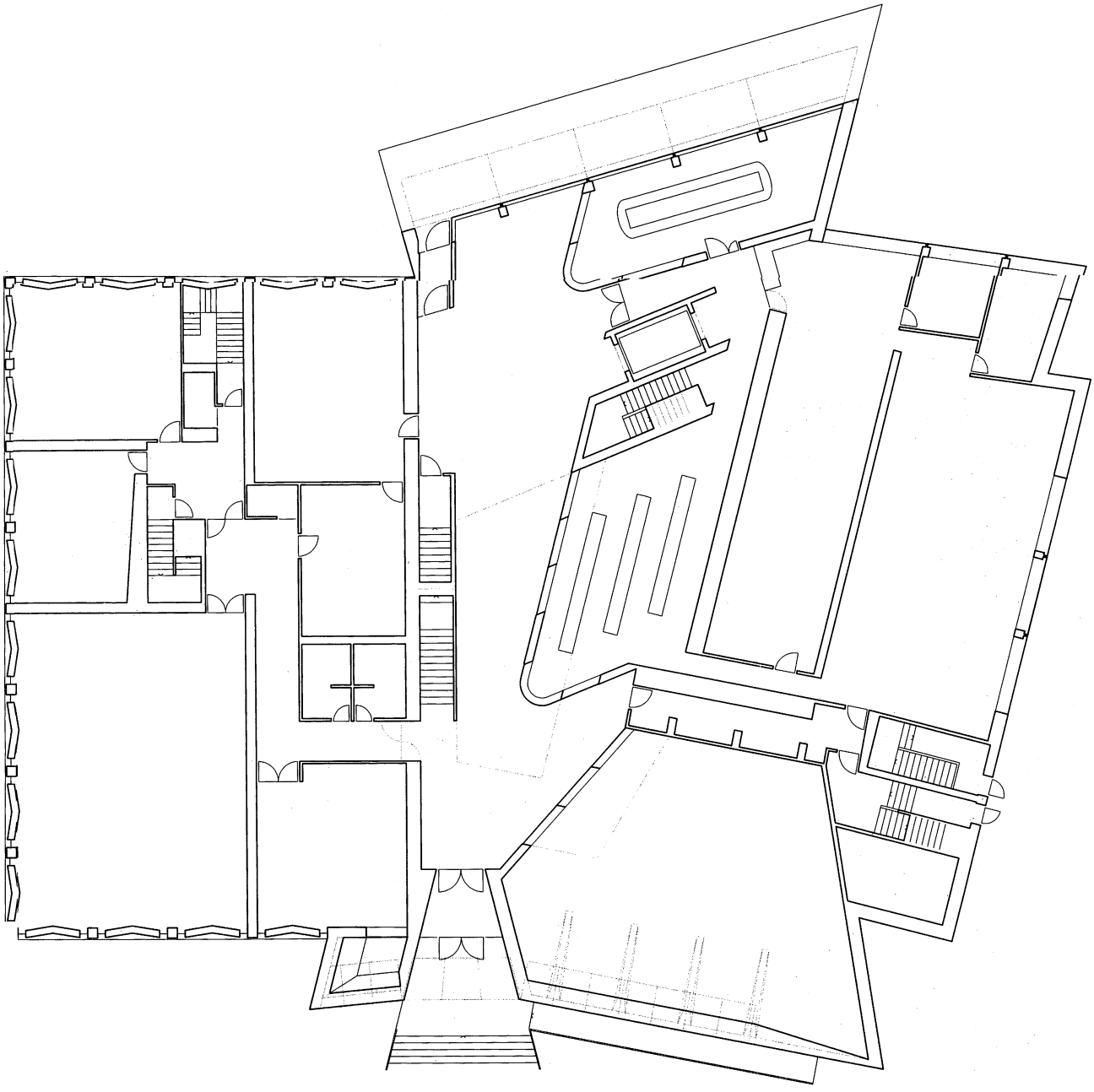


36. Preliminary sketch of the section through the lobby and atrium



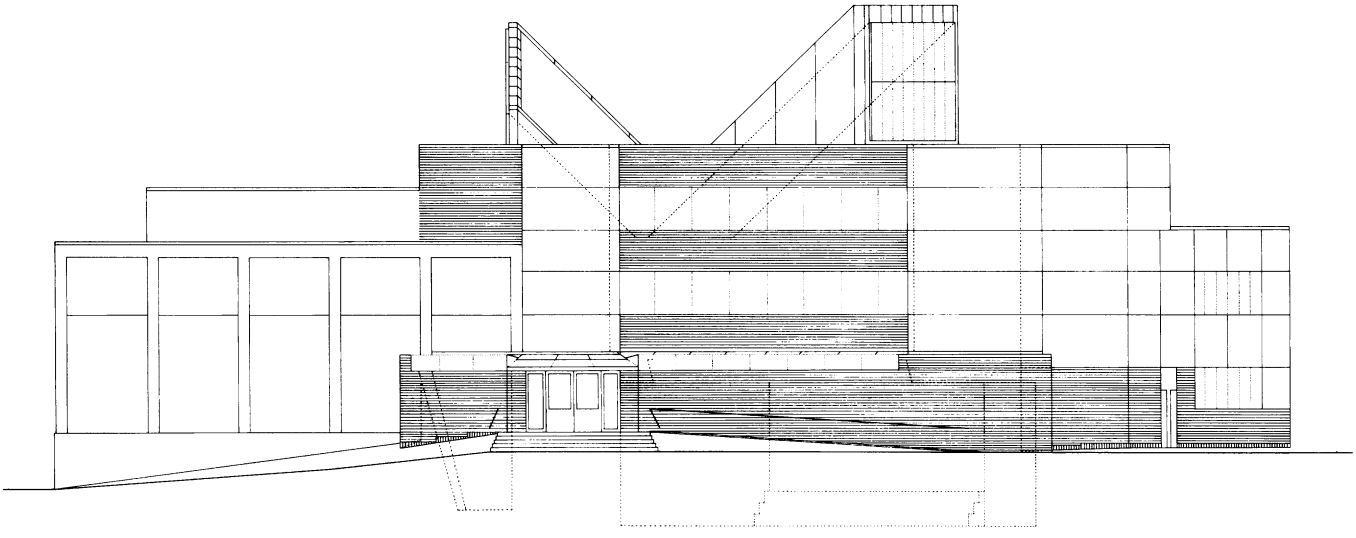
37. Site plan

This content downloaded from 188.72.126.162 on Sat, 21 Jun 2014 06:14:07 AM
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

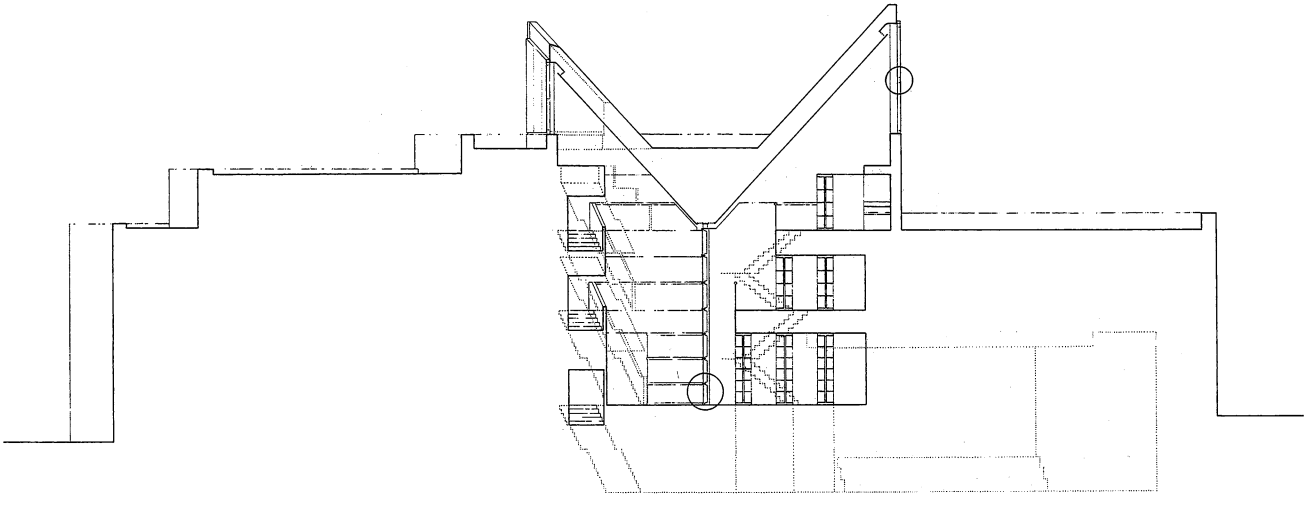


38. Ground-floor plan

This content downloaded from 188.72.126.162 on Sat, 21 Jun 2014 06:14:07 AM
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

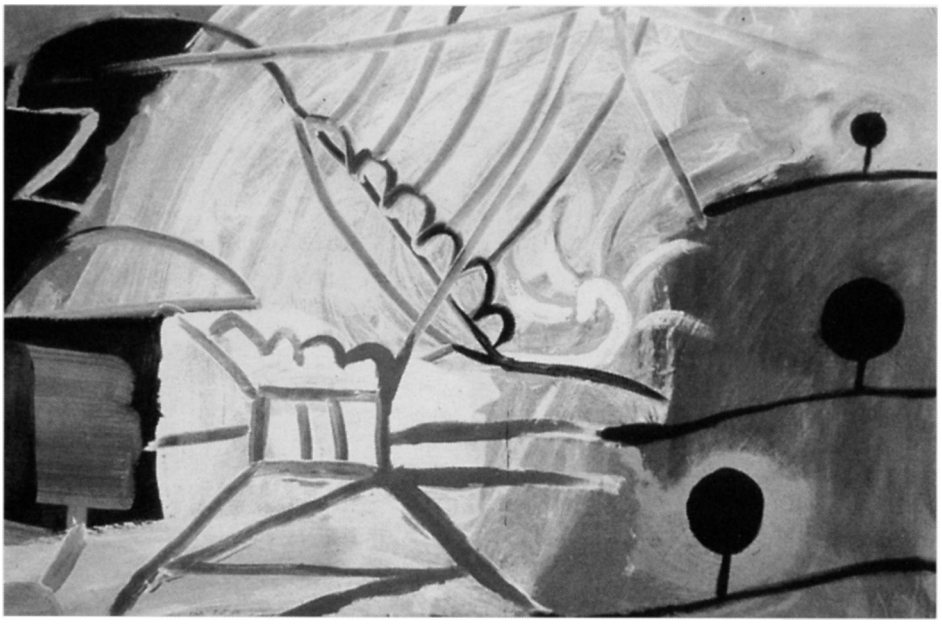


39. East elevation

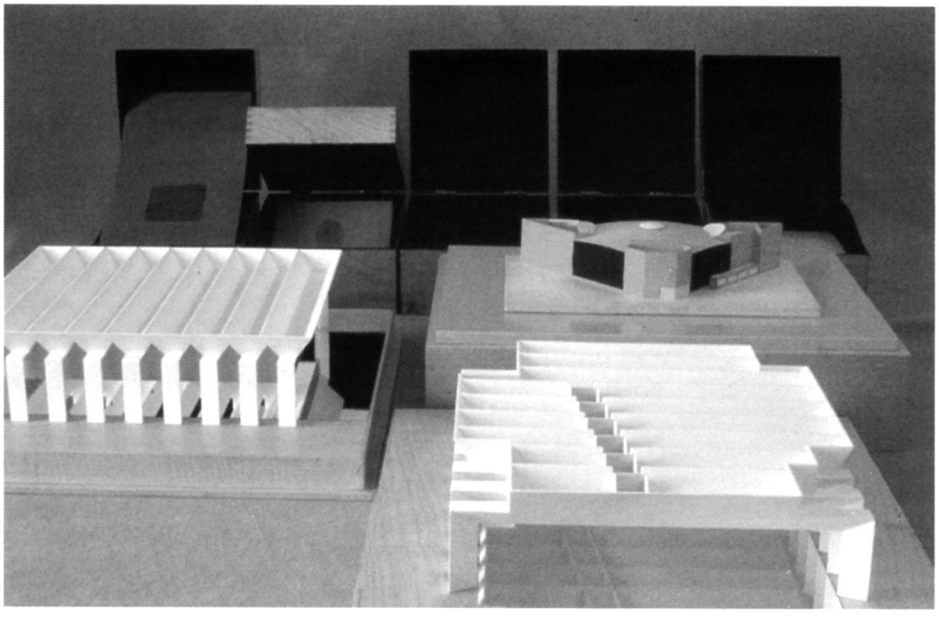


40. North-south section
through the lobby and atrium

This content downloaded from 188.72.126.162 on Sat, 21 Jun 2014 06:14:07 AM
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

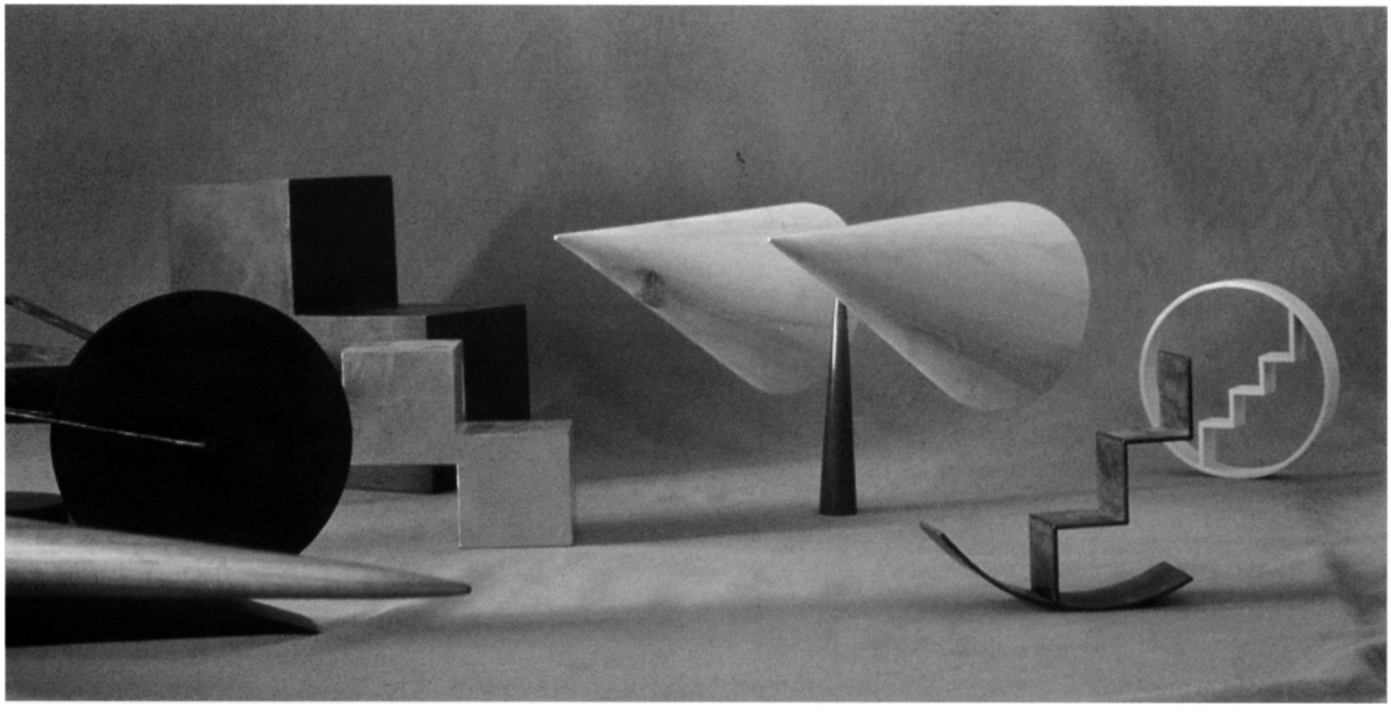


41. *Landscape*



42. Skylight models

This content downloaded from 188.72.126.162 on Sat, 21 Jun 2014 06:14:07 AM
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions



43. *Pieces in Gravity*, 1996–97

Project Credits

Courthouse Building in Mahón, 1996

Architect-in-charge: Juan Navarro Baldeweg

Design team: Verónica Scortecci, Pau Soler Serratosa, Andrea Lupberger, and Eduardo González Velayos

Project supervision: Juan Navarro Baldeweg with Verónica Scortecci

Structure: Juan de la Torre

Model: Juan de Dios Hernández and Jesús Rey

Construction: Cubiertas and MZOV

Cultural Center in Villanueva de la Cañada, 1997

Architect-in-charge: Juan Navarro Baldeweg

Design team: Andrea Lupberger and J. Joaquín Lizasoain Urcola

Project supervision: Juan Navarro Baldeweg with J. Joaquín Lizasoain Urcola and J. María Churtichaga

Construction drawings: J. María Churtichaga, J. Joaquín Lizasoain Urcola, Joaquín Riveiro, and Alejandro Climent

Models: Juan de Dios Hernández and Jesús Rey

Construction: Estructuras Mixtas y Edificiaciones, S.A.

Altamira Museum and Research Center, 1995

Architect-in-charge: Juan Navarro Baldeweg

Design team: Andrea Lupberger, Alvaro Galmés Cerezo, Jaime Bretón Lesmes, Daniel Delbrück, Andrea Kaiser, Andrés Jaque Ovejero, Miguel Bernardini Asenjo, and Eduardo González Velayos

Project supervision: Juan Navarro Baldeweg with Jaime Bretón Lesmes

Structure: Julio Martínez Calzón

Construction: NECSO

Model: Juan de Dios Hernández and Jesús Rey

Addition to the Woolworth Center of Music, 1997

Architect-in-charge: Juan Navarro Baldeweg

Collaborating architect: WASA Architects & Engineers

Design team: Enrique Pujana Bambó and Leslie Dowling

Project supervision: WASA, Juan Navarro Baldeweg, and Enrique Pujana Bambó

Structural engineers: Severud Associates, New York; Juan de la Torre, Madrid

Acoustical consultants: Achentech, Cambridge, Massachusetts

Library consultant: Michael Keller

General contractor: Barr & Barr, New York

Model: Juan de Dios Hernández and Jesús Rey

Descriptive texts by the office of Juan Navarro Baldeweg.

Figure Credits

1, 6, 13–15, 19, 21, 22. Photographs by Duccio Malagamba.

29, 30, 33, 42, 43. Photographs by Andrés Jaque Ovejero.

All other images courtesy of the architect.

Juan Navarro Baldeweg was born in Santander, Spain, in 1939. He has taught at various universities in Europe and the United States and has won numerous awards for his art and architecture.

Assemblage 34: 30–55 © 1998 by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

This content downloaded from 188.72.126.162 on Sat, 21 Jun 2014 06:14:07 AM
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions