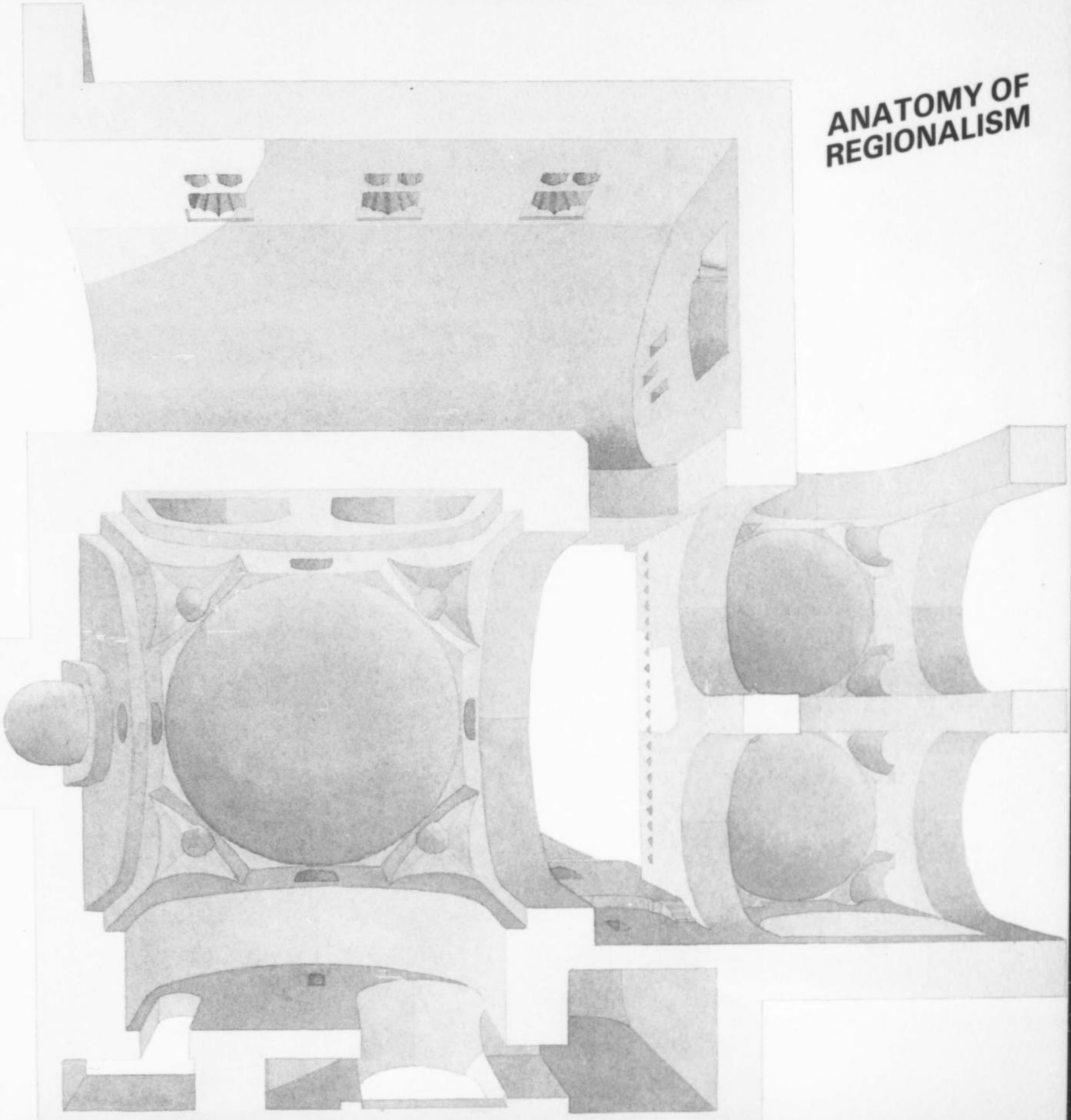
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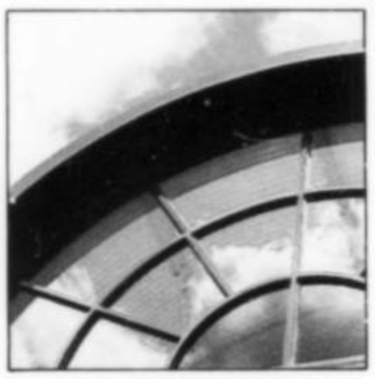
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Cover: Abdelwahed El-Wakil's Corniche Mosque, Jeddah—the conscious development and reinterpretation of Muslim tradition (see p52)



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November 1986
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Theme:
Anatomy of regionalism

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85	**Aga Khan Awards**	*A special supplement examines the third group of Aga Khan Award winners and finds that the scheme is growing into maturity; award winners are: Yaama Mosque, Niger; Dar Lamane housing, Morocco; Renovation of Mostar old town, Yugoslavia; Al Aqsa Mosque, Jerusalem; Social security building, Istanbul; Bhong Mosque, Pakistan. All these are shown, as are five honourable mentions*
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News & reviews

Laid back in Milan

The Milan Furniture Fair, the annual shopwindow for Europe's furniture industry, attracted nearly 2500 exhibitors. In domestic ranges, ideas have been borrowed from the office systems market to give chairs that relax-with-the-body movement; the *chaise longue* is back, not in the Classical lines of yesteryear but in simple modern shapes, so too is the dumb-waiter in slimmed-down form and with a shiny lacquer finish. Moulded plastic, an Italian forte, provides a new generation of stackable conference chairs with greater comfort than hitherto.

The soft look with floppy pillows, crafted usually in leather, is still very much in vogue for settees and armchairs. Italian leather was seen in all manner of casual chairs, suitable variously for living rooms, board rooms, dining areas or patios. Styles suitable for dining or reception feature thin tapering legs smoothly encased in leather, whilst slimmed down seats and backs are covered in the same material. Matteo Grassi have them in singing colours.

There were look-alikes for Frank Lloyd Wright and Charles Rennie Mackintosh classics on many stands, mostly reproductions of the high-backed dining styles, finished in shiny black lacquers. Cassina, who have been licensed to manufacture original FLW designs, produce the real thing and have introduced a collection of seven items, including a barrel-shaped and high-backed chair in wood, as well as metal-framed chairs and tables.

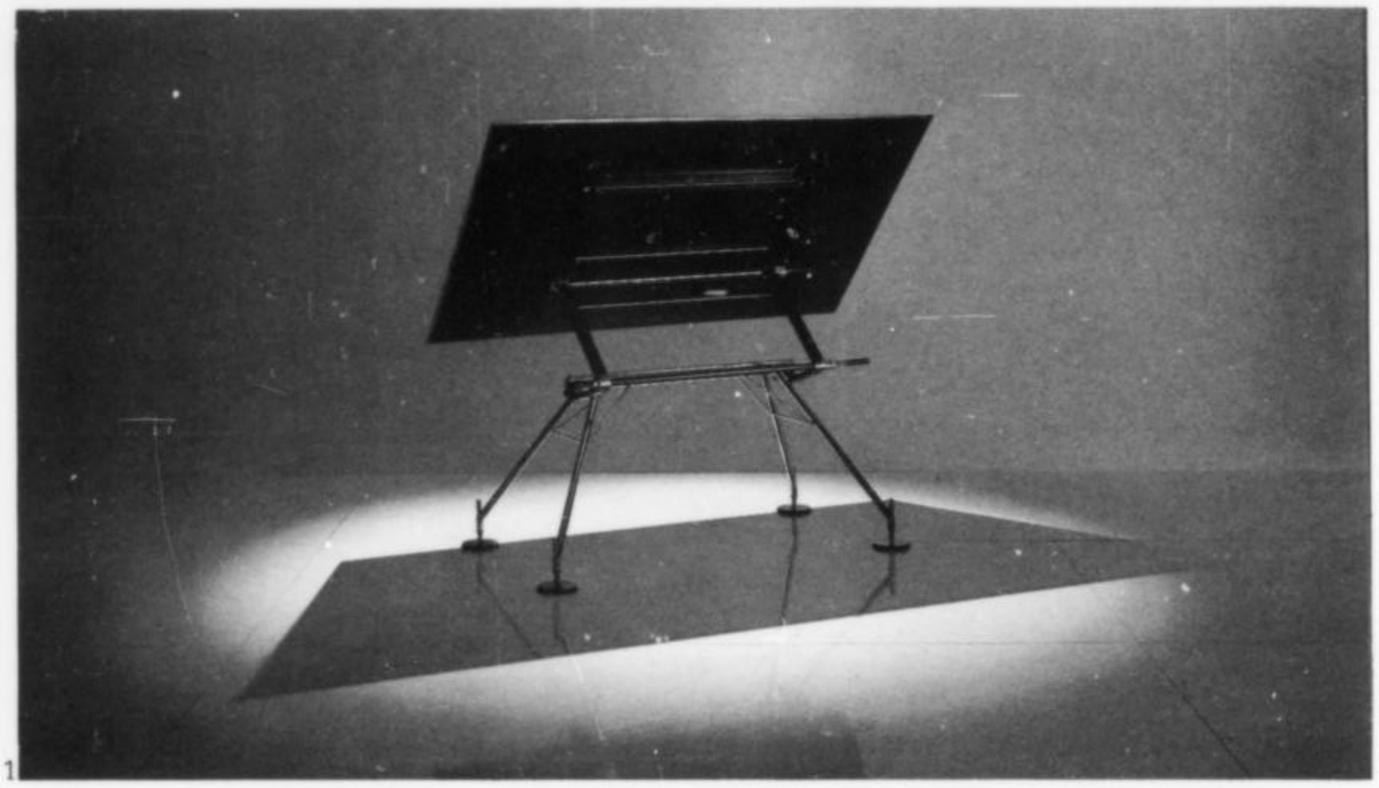
Red and black dominated the Fair but grey is increasingly seen, not only in the leather upholstery of sofas and chairs but also as the finish for sideboards, cabinets and upright chests. Bieffeplast adopt battleship grey for a complete product range with perforated fronts. There are few solid surfaces on the Italian scene: everything has a mesh or pierced finish.

A commendable move towards increasing user satisfaction comes with the news that a group of Italian manufacturers have got together to step up the quality of polyester lacquer finishes and are pledged to apply at least seven separate applications. There will be a label attached to each unit of merchandise so treated publicising the refinement.

Another feature borrowed from the contract market is the convertible table with a fold-away extension piece that can be pulled out at right angles, just like the return of an office desk. There were a lot of new ideas in coffee tables, some of which can be spread out fan fashion from a central pivot, others like Bellato's 'Trittico' with three tops, each independently pivoting so that they can be adjusted to various heights and configurations.

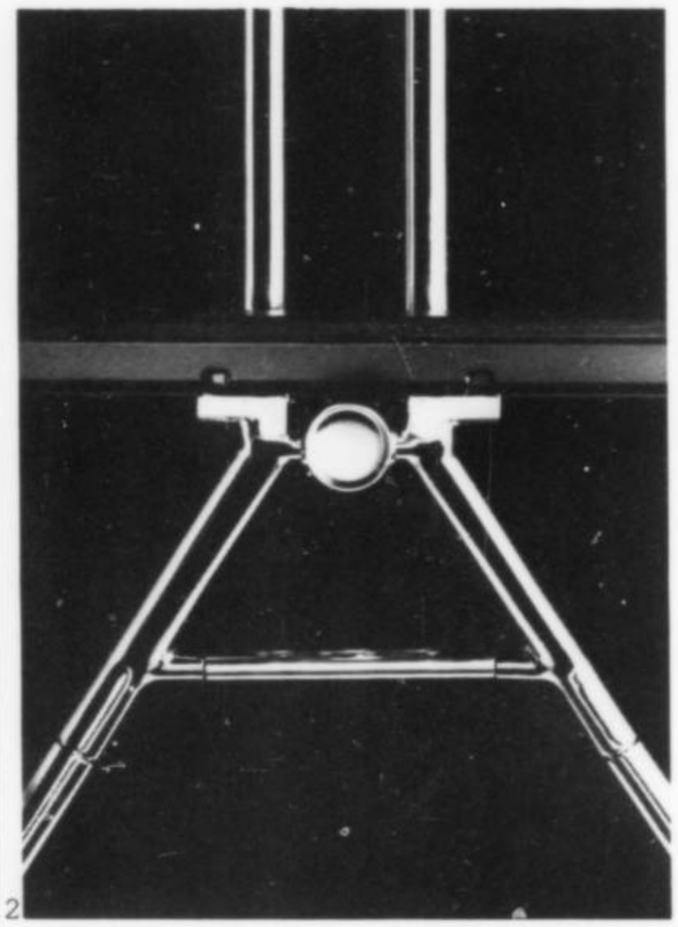
In the past, the Memphis group has given sparkle and excitement to this furnishing event but seems to have been running out of steam, so its decision to invite 12 young architects to contribute a mainstream collection looked as if it would provide a much-needed restorative. In the event, results were disappointing, with too many jokey reworks of ideas presented with more practised hands in the Fair proper. The lighting group was the best of the bunch, with James Evanson's soaring lamp reminiscent of the slim towers on an American skyline. It was comforting to come face to face with the creations of the Memphis Old Guard, notably Nathalie Du Pasquier's exuberantly styled decorative laminate table-tops and Marco Zanini's moulded fibreglass armchair, which are said today to be in wider production.

Office furniture gets a showing every other year in Milan and this being one of the 'in between' years, more than usual interest attached to the preview of



1

1, the 'Nomos' programme of systems furniture, designed by Foster Associates for Tecno, was previewed in Milan. This shows how a table-top is positioned on the chromium-plated tubular frame and with a simple add-on mechanism can be uplifted and locked at any angle.
2, close-up of a table located astride the tubular frame of the 'Nomos' system, with uprights that support cross-members, at arm height, to carry filing racks, trays, etc.
3, barrel-backed chair to an original design by Frank Lloyd Wright, which is part of a seven-strong collection Cassina is producing under licence from the FLW Foundation.
4, typical of the flair with which leather is handled as an upholstery material by Italian craftsmen is this Valet de Coeurs chair with three gently curving leather covered S-shaped units. Matteo Grassi.
5, one of a number of chairs that swivel and incline presented at the Milan furniture market. It has a natural beechwood frame. By Poltronova.



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the new 'Nomos' collection designed by Foster Associates for Tecno, at whose elegant showrooms in the Via Montenapoleone it was presented. 'Nomos' represents a simple, practical approach, where others promote the complicated and over-engineered. It encompasses, at this stage, a series of table-tops supported on chrome-plated metal tubular frames: anything else is a bolted-on add-on. Uprights fit into holes in the tubing to carry cross-members to any desired work surface. With a choice of materials for table tops that spans solid core laminates, glass, stone etc, 'Nomos' is presented as being equally suited to home interiors as the commercial scene.

BERNARD RIDGWAY

'Nomos' will be shown in detail in a future AR.
THE EDITOR

Sainsbury Competition: correction

The north/south dimension on the site plan of the Sainsbury Competition should be 163 m and not as shown on p5 of AR September.

Letters

Bath spirit

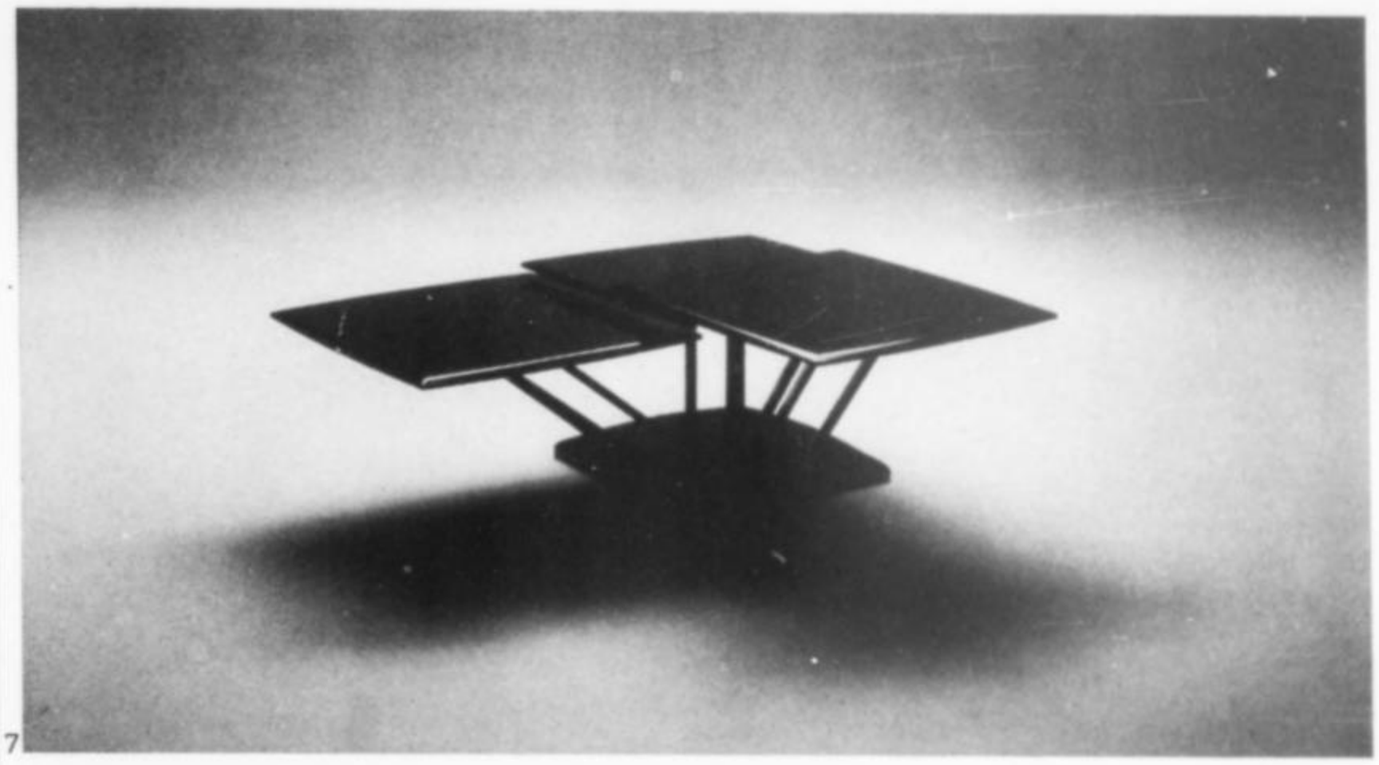
SIR: It seems a pity that so much can be written about architecture and so little of it has any meaning. The latest example which comes to mind is E. M. Farrelly's article in August's AR entitled 'The New Spirit'.

The piece represents the nadir of contemporary architectural thought and criticism. Farrelly has made little or no attempt to be truly analytical and frankly tells us nothing about architecture today in real terms. What we are sold is the latest reactionary nonsense thought up in the bath.

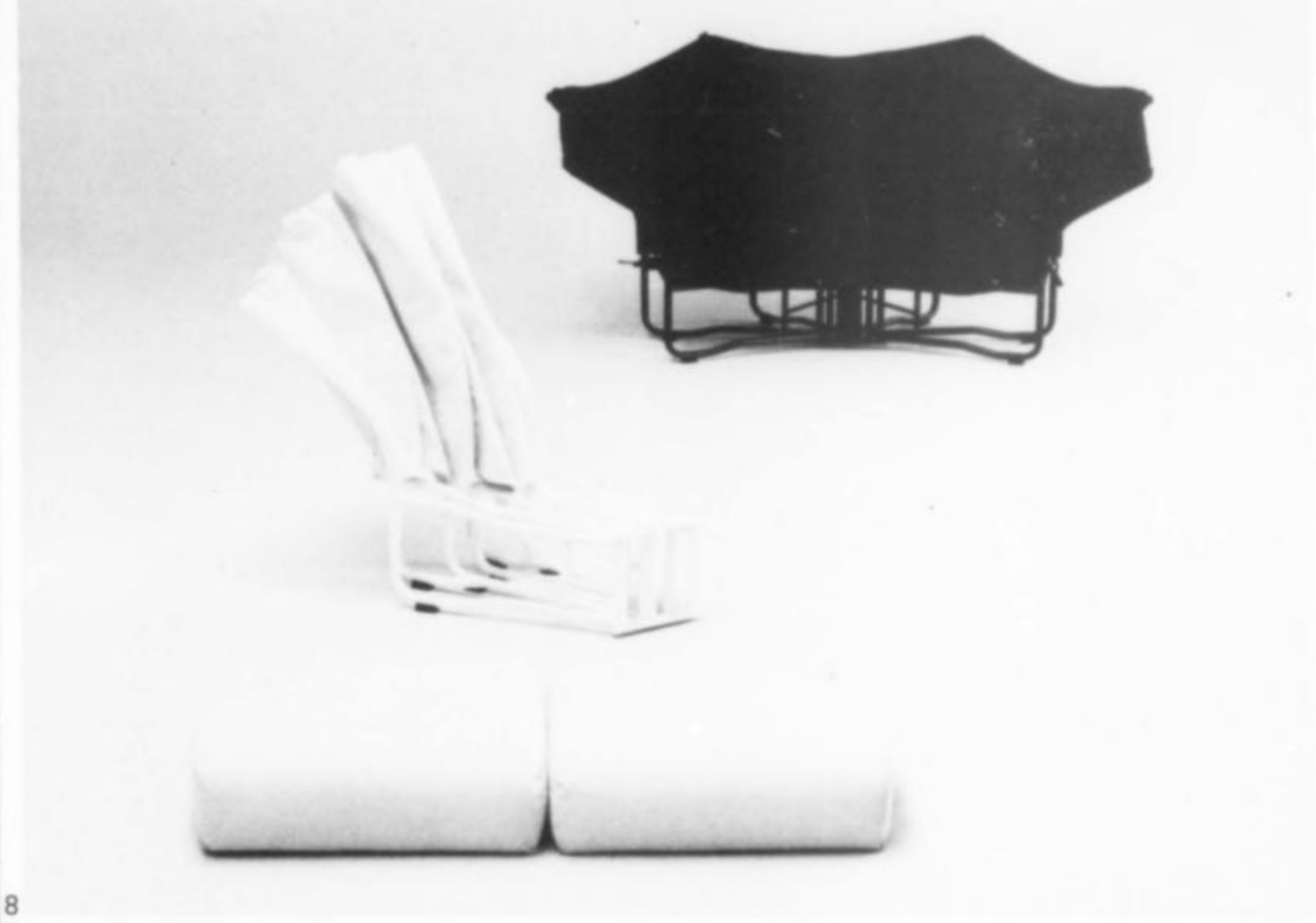
It would surely have been more informative if Farrelly had discussed the current architectural situation in the context of ideological developments and looked at hard material facts—the social, political and economic trends which have affected the profession and the construction industry. Instead her article proceeds on the basis of the idealist notion that the history of architecture is about changing spirits—spirits of the age which are manifest in the buildings of a particular time. Architecture becomes self determining and no worldly things can effect its change. It may be fun and interesting to discuss architecture in terms of a *zeitgeist* but it represents a critical treadwater.

But above all, what was most disturbing about Farrelly's editorial was the political veneer applied to her writing. I say 'veneer' because the politics became a trendy adjunct to what she wrote rather than bearing any relationship to her discussion about architecture. Essentially we were left with a description of buildings in visual terms—form separated from social content. This is surely what we all hope to avoid—a too great a preoccupation with what a building looks like.

Post-Modernism as an 'ism' may certainly have died but as an ideology it lives on and it will live on

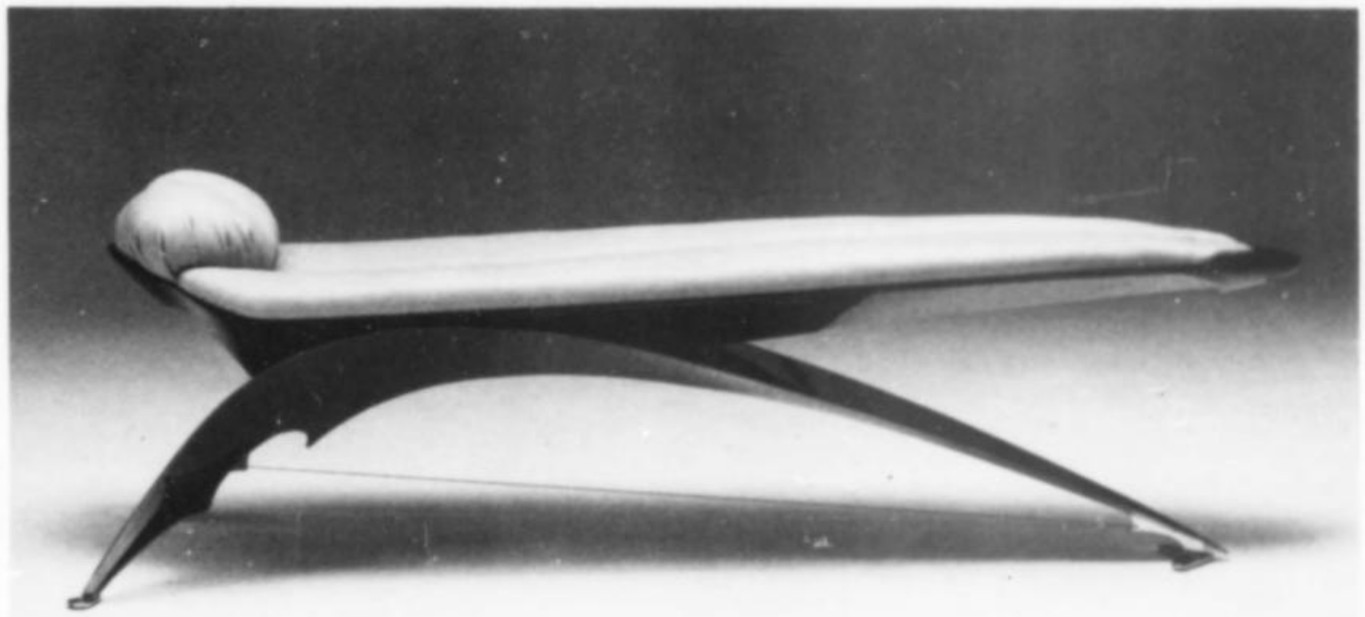


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6, the chaise longue *is making a come-back. Here is one version by Moroso with a seat which simply rests on the nickel-plated steel frame, allowing it to be adjusted to a number of positions.*
7, 'Trittico': three coffee tables that can be angled out from the base into a variety of heights and configurations Bellato.
8, bat-wing shaped sofa with collapsible steel frame folds into a carrying bag. Available in a number of covering materials suitable for both indoor and outdoor use. By Strassle.
9, what happens to the conventional couch when an architect with a reputation for bridge building and more than an interest in sculpture takes on a commission from de Sede to design a recliner in his own terms, is seen in 'Espada', Santiago Calatrava's answer to the challenge. The reclining base rests on a chrome-steel support.



9

until we have radical social change. Call it the New Spirit but the only 'new' thing about it is the name. The label is as superficial as the architecture and its apologists.
Yours etc
DAVID MAGYAR, NEIL MACOMISH, TIM WRIGHT
London NW6

Order with Spirit

SIR: E. M. Farrelly declares Post-Modernism dead (AR August 1986) and she is right; it was too imitating, too pastiche, although we will miss it a little bit as it aroused our nostalgia for the past.

She introduces the 'New Spirit' as the new baby of architecture. The future looks brilliant, but there are also some doubts.

I will take the work of Vienna's Co-op Himmelblau (Prix & Swiczinsky) as an example, their open house using the New Spirit techniques doesn't give the sense of being in a 'home'. You have devoted a whole issue to this important subject ('House as home' AR February 1986), nor does their grasshopper-like apartment complex give the feeling of 'shelter'.

This kind of architecture looks more temporary than permanent, more sculptural than architectural, more visionary than practical (I hope it will have more of a chance than the 101 Fantasies by Tchernikov), more belonging to the sky than earth, (so as the mythical Antaeus, Son of Goddess Earth, losing his real strength when separated from earth). Too buoyant and floating, than sited, grounded and stable. More like a 'bridge' connecting other points, so 'serving an end rather than being an end itself.' It has no start, no end. (You could add and subtract as you wish from the building and yet remain ignorant of the fact it is a house if you are not told so in advance.) The building is not for the human, but the human is for the building. Architecture and sculpture are united as one; 'The Work of Art' is not separated from the 'Article of Use' as Adolf Loos (1870-1933) dreamed, so there is no difference between the urn and the chamberpot.

In this kind of architecture based on accident, chance, random and designing with closed eyes, I can find no order. Instead there is anarchy, chaos and exaggeration in complexity. (Could life itself have existed without order? Why should architecture do so?)

You are right to link this movement to the punk movement as they are both based on the 'strange', the 'unordinary' and the 'different', *to indicate presence*, see the elevation of Atelier Baumann (p21 AR August 1986); 'strange projections indicating presence behind the Neo-Classical facade'.

If non-order and accident fit sculpture and painting (which are independent & individual arts), that does not mean they automatically fit architecture which is a common art dependent on many *other* factors such as: function, economy, city regulations, owner's desires etc.

The 'New Spirit' could work better with order, and open eyes, rather than accident and closed eyes.
Yours etc
SELIM A. NAZERIAN
Iran

E. M. Farrelly will respond to letters in next month's AR. THE EDITOR

Good for Sales

SIR: I found the August AR on the 'New Spirit' a very good issue and would like to keep it as a reference material. I am a graduate student in art history and found that the discussion of Post-Modern versus 'Post-Modern' was excellent. I hope to subscribe in the very near future when I am able.

Thank you for your continuing commitment to questions of aesthetics and politics. Unlike American architecture magazines, which seem to exist solely to sell plumbing fixtures, the AR has made the link between design and ideology a clear one.
Yours etc
CHRISTOPHER SALES
Northridge, California



Alec Clifton-Taylor, who died last year, was a great enthusiast for regional styles in architecture, believing that all new buildings should be of local materials and should not conflict with their neighbours. As a tribute to him, Denis Moriarty (producer of his tv series 'English Towns') has brought together and edited Clifton-Taylor's notes on his favourite English buildings in 'Alec Clifton-Taylor's Buildings of Delight' (Victor Gollancz, £12·95). Dividing England into six regions, with examples ranging in time from Norman churches at Iffley and Kilpeck to the Palm House at Kew, the West Midlands section includes this superb example of a Herefordshire timber-framed house, 10, 'The Ley' near Weobley.

Big Bang Lloyd's

SIR: Lloyd's is an event (AR October 1986). Hate it—love it—you can't ignore it. It defies architectural criticism. Gerard Hoffnung would have adored it; all those soaring tubes, organ stops and glistening polished surfaces. I can just imagine his drawing with huge black notes leaping joyfully in the sky above. Or at least blowing a giant raspberry to all the pomposity round about.

As with Pompidou, it is the circus come to town, suddenly injecting a sense of life and fun into an over-serious situation—delighting with fantasy, movement and sleight-of-hand.

And suddenly, with 'The Big Bang' in the City, its amazing form exactly expresses the hour. Its neighbours—The Bank, solid and reassuring, the other banks, impersonal 'leave it to us' behind their tinted curtain walls—reflect the past, when things seemed safe. Like it or not—here is the new reality—anything goes. The cut and thrust of modern finance sculpturally expressed in terms of the butcher's shop, chops, entrails and all. The constant state of uncertainty, mirrored by box-like shapes precariously balanced sky-high, the rise and fall of fortunes, by the incessant up and down movement of high-speed wall-climber lifts. Constant change by the blue cranes outlined against the sky, suggesting never-ending building work in progress.

Martin Pawley suggests this should be the model for city building of the future—but what makes Lloyd's such effective cityscape is its contrast with its polite, well-dressed neighbours—seen a bit at a time—hide-and-seek in the tight-packed montage of the City. Then it's marvellous, as Gordon Cullen (AR June 1986) and Patrick Heron point out, but let loose at city scale, it would surely prove a nightmare for it is a monster that cares little for people. Indeed, I suggest that part of the attraction is the sense of danger you feel—that you might at any moment be sucked into one of those giant vacuum cleaner tubes and never seen again. In small doses this kind of suspense is perhaps an essential element of the City—keeps you awake. But luckily here, Leadenhall Market, very caring and human in scale, is ready to hand and you can dive for cover and a reassuring drink.

What makes it so intriguing too is that it is so well done—so cleverly put together—the expertise is fantastic. The magician casts his spell and we are tempted to believe anything—and yet? How much has all this turbulent bodywork to do with what is happening inside—that army of little ant-men in their grey suits and their smooth, silent High-Tech equipment? Or does it matter in a world of illusion? But somehow we feel cheated without the roar, flash and hiss of steam which the image suggests.
Yours etc
KENNETH BROWNE
Sevenoaks, Kent

Basil Spence drawings

SIR: Owners of drawings or sketches by the late Sir Basil Spence are asked to contact Dr L. Campbell, History of Art Dept, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL, in connection with an exhibition planned next year to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the consecration of Coventry Cathedral.
Yours etc
LOUISE CAMPBELL
Coventry

Acknowledgments

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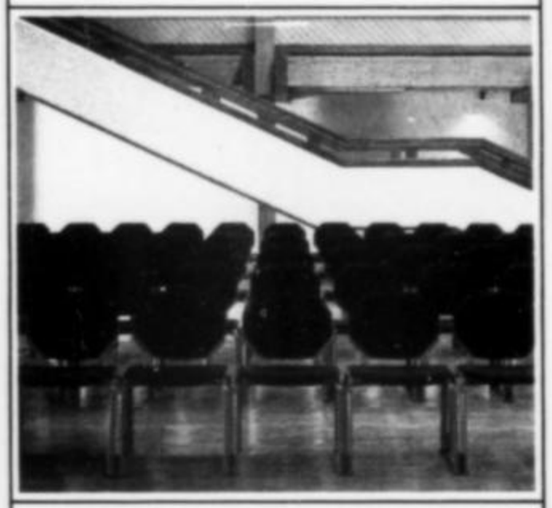
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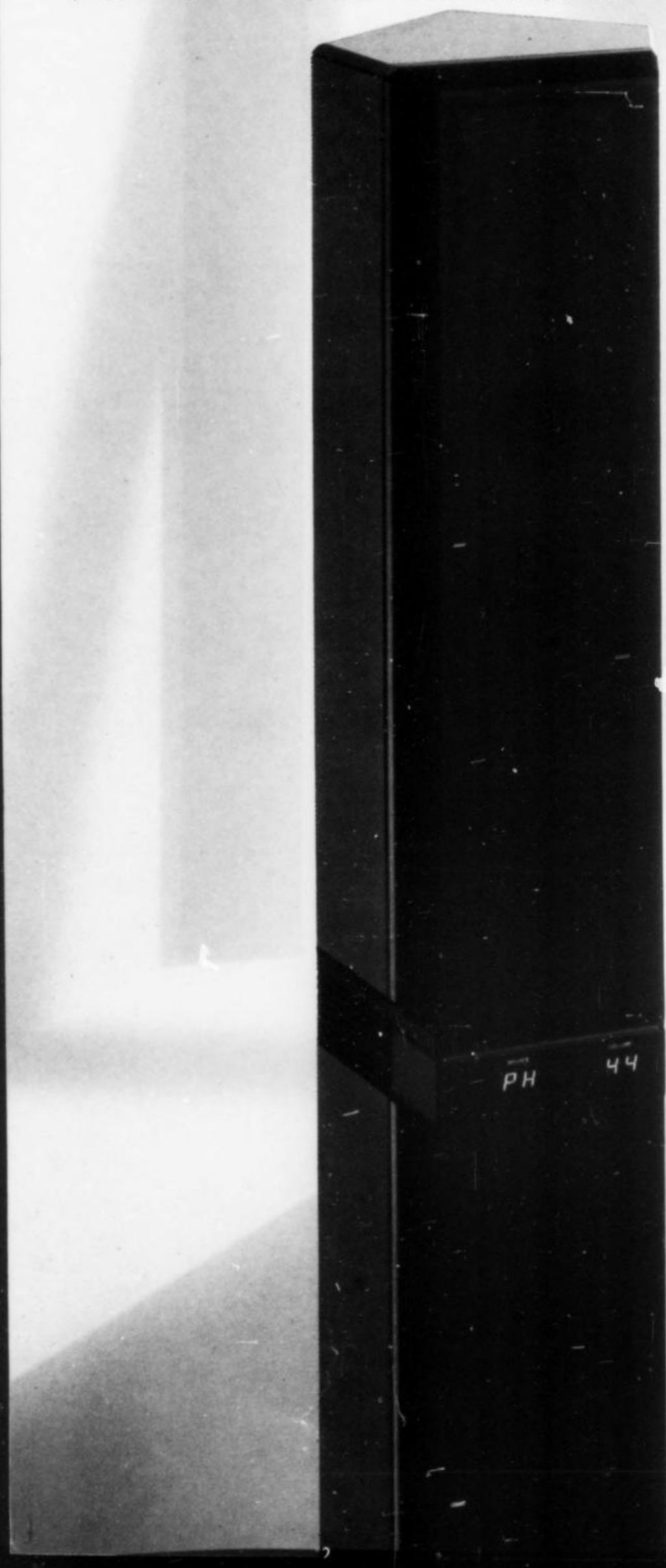
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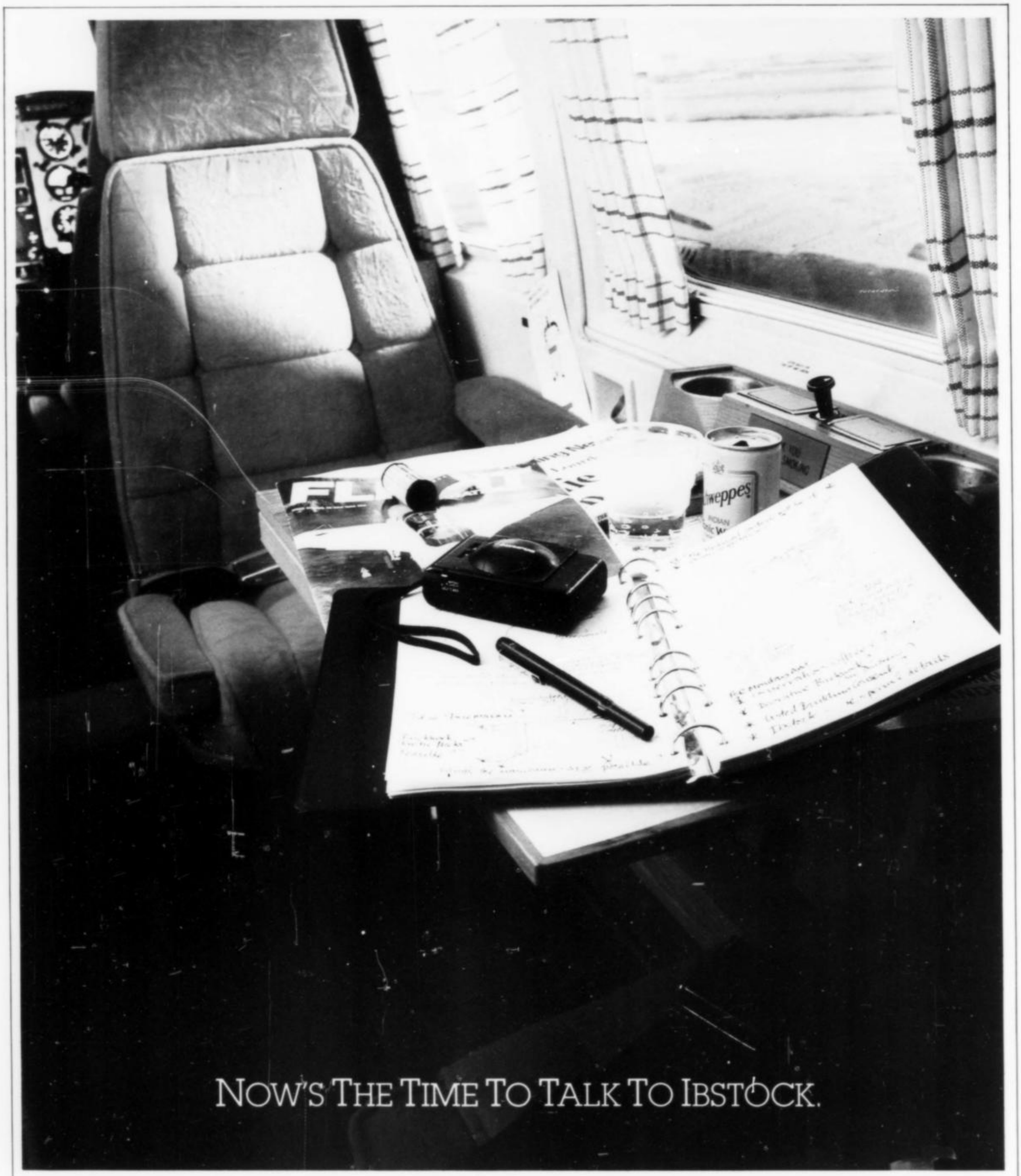
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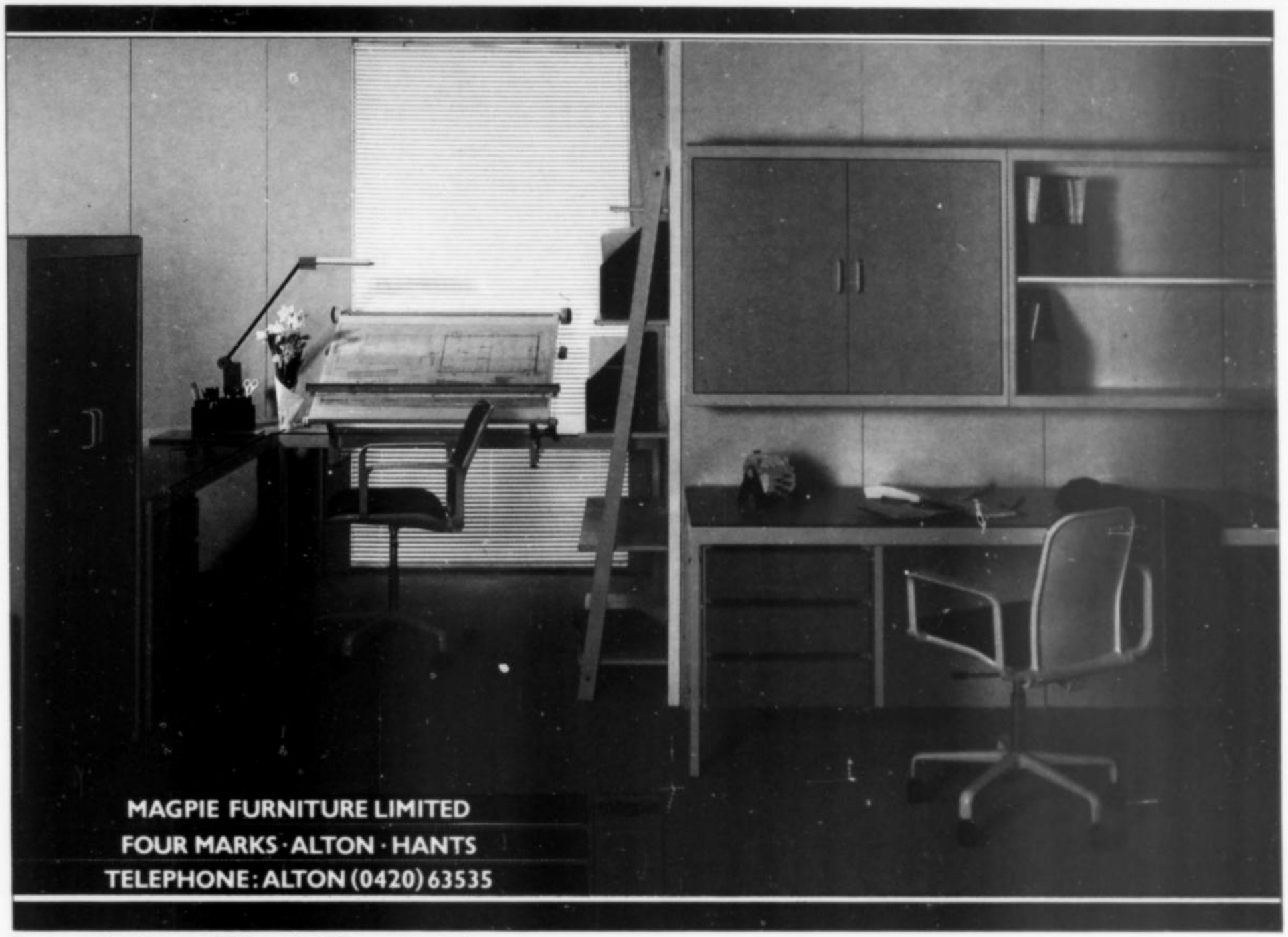


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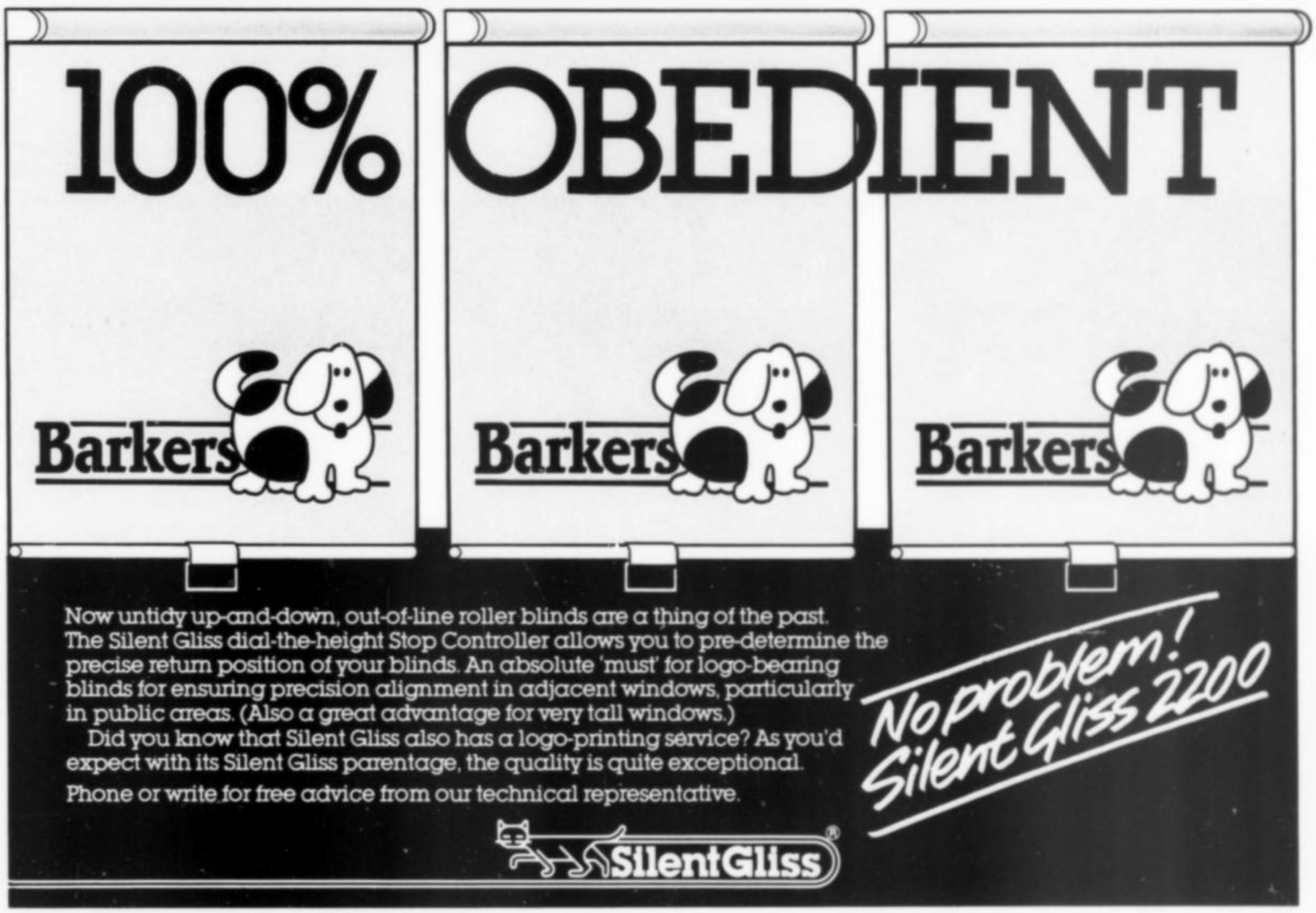
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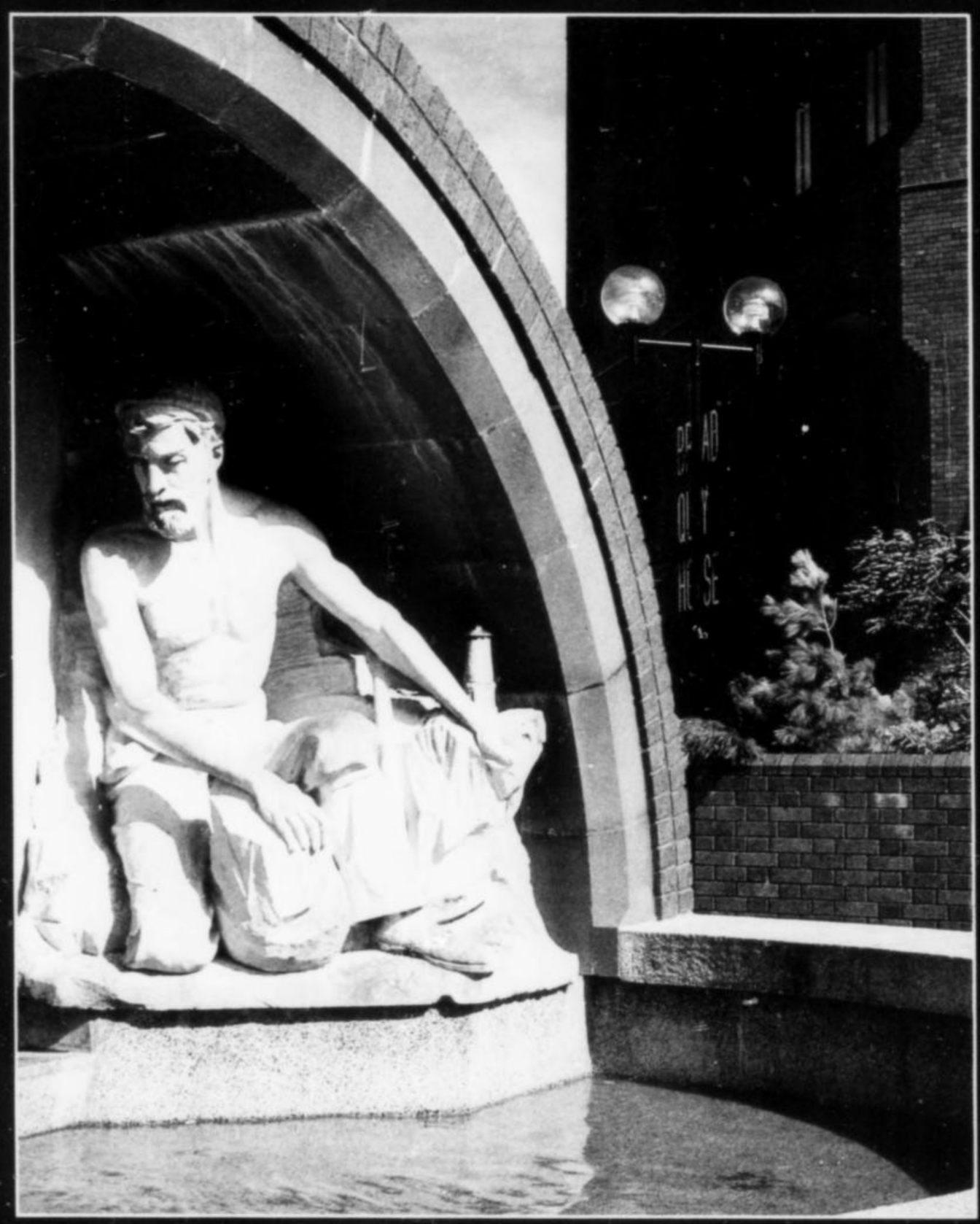


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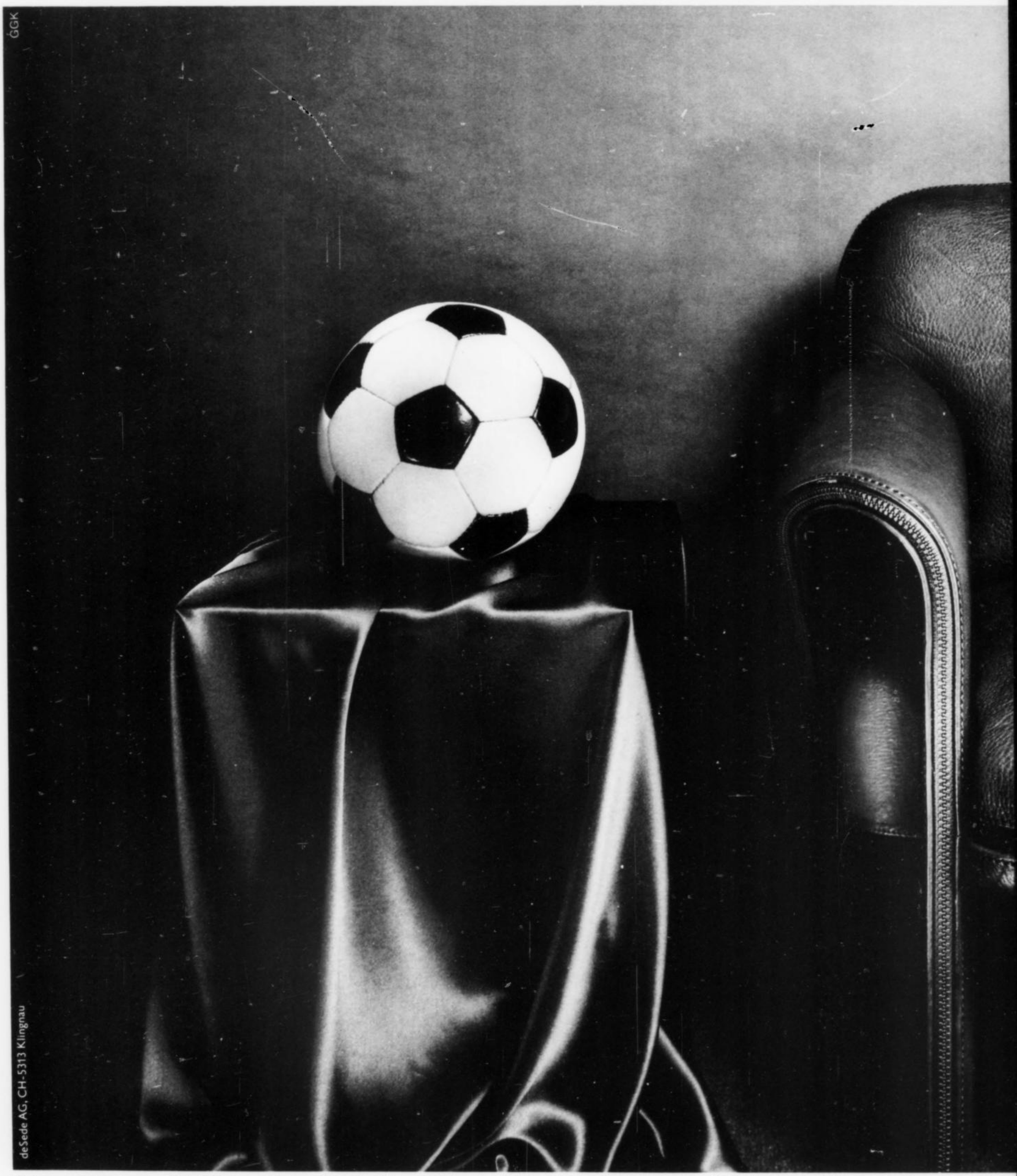
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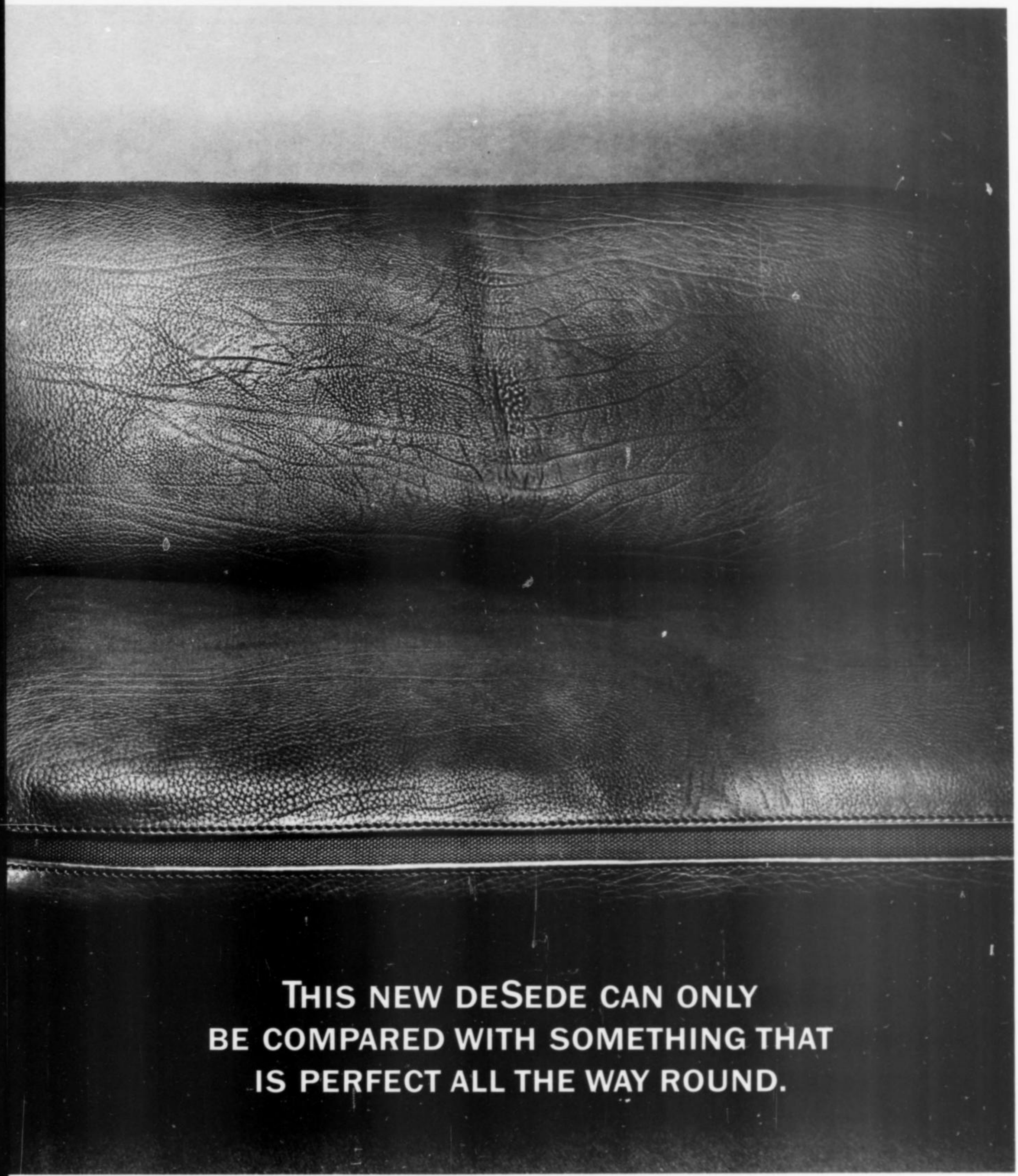
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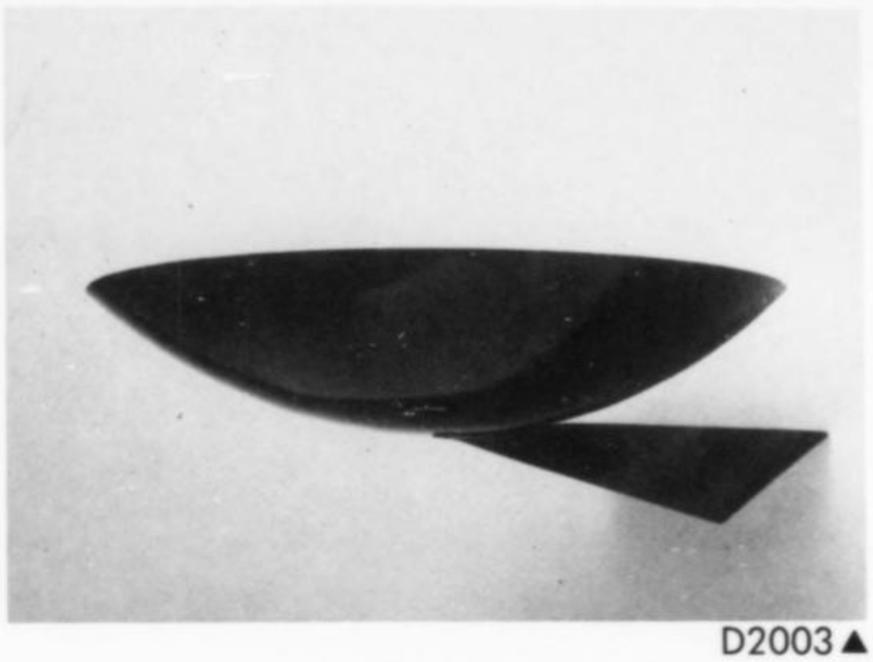
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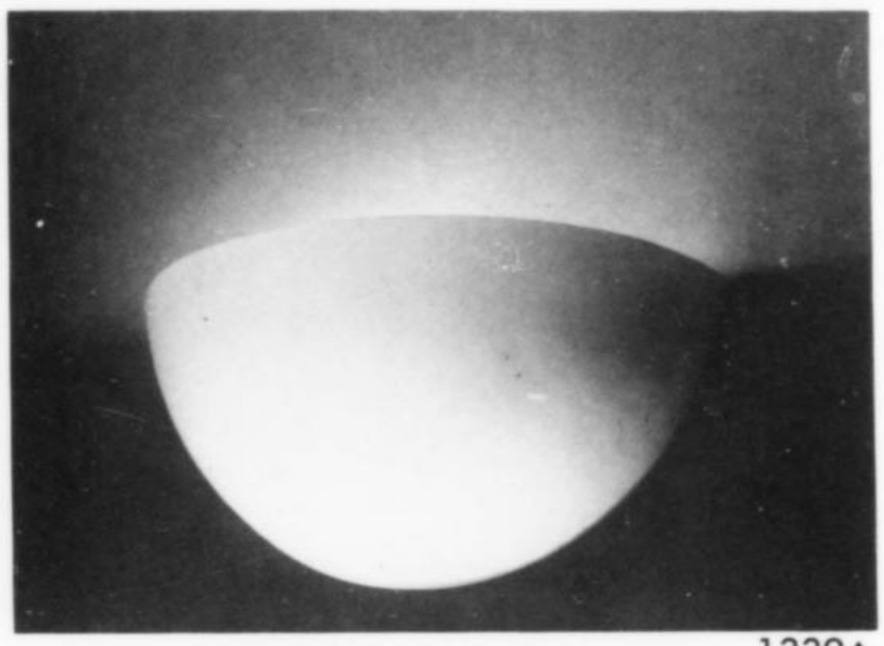
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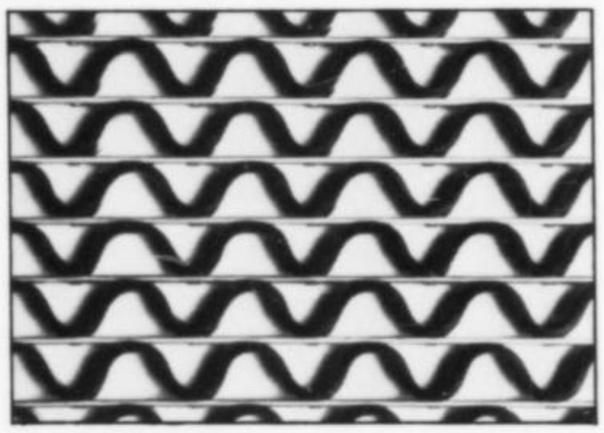
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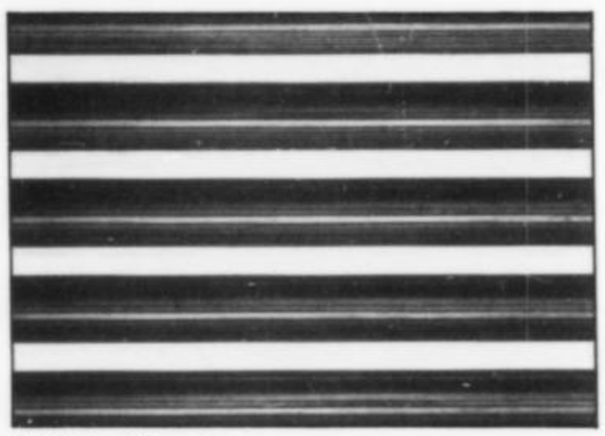
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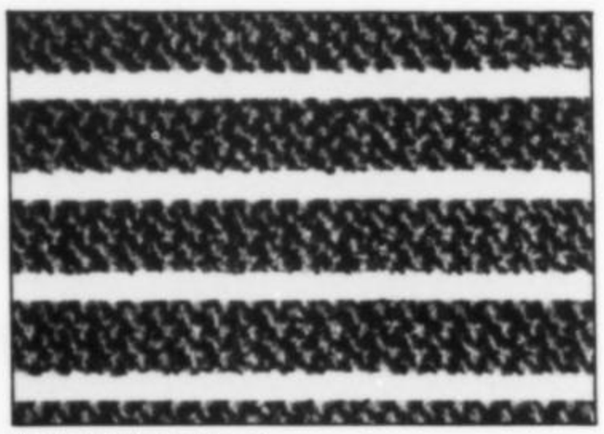
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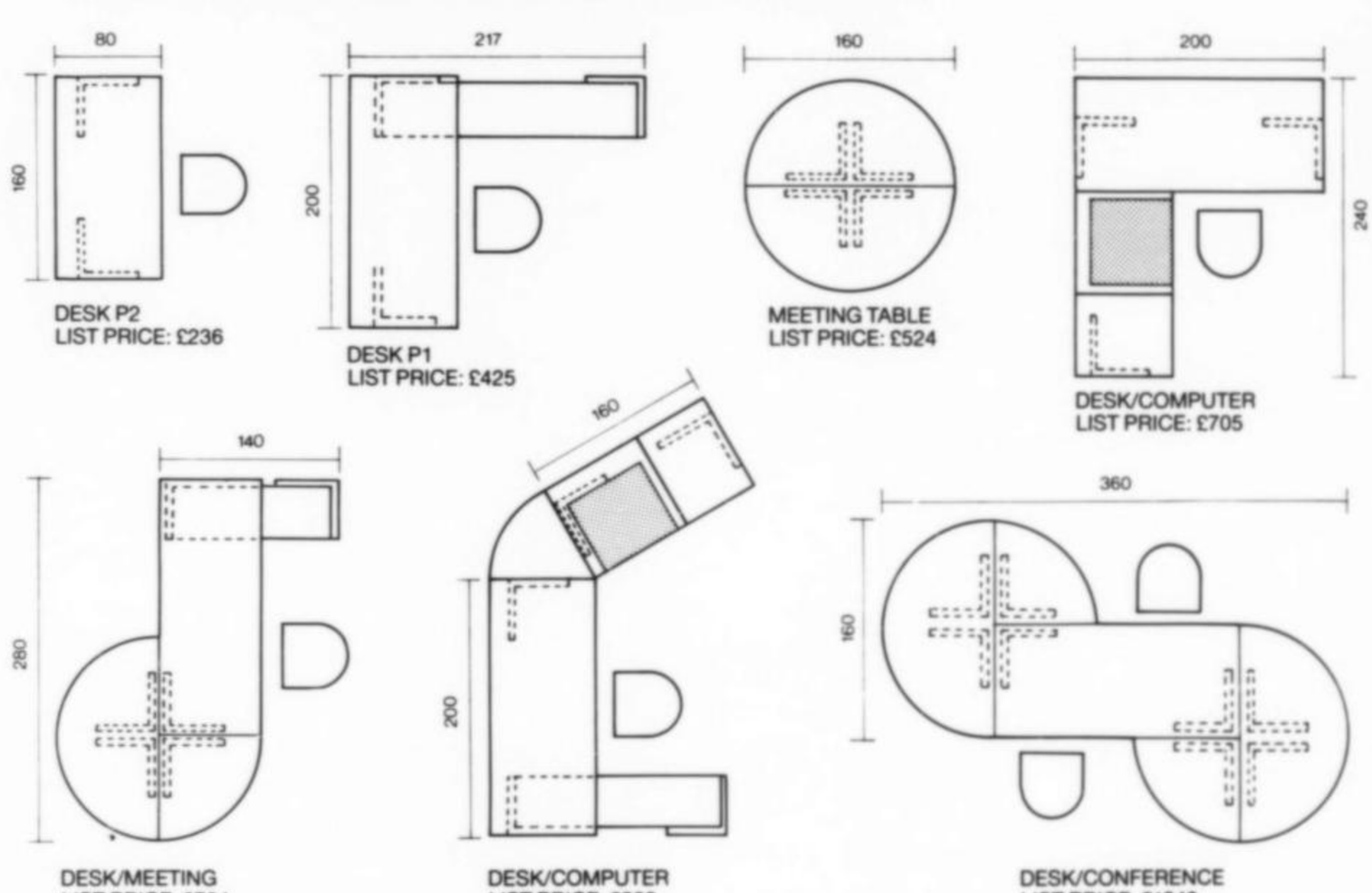
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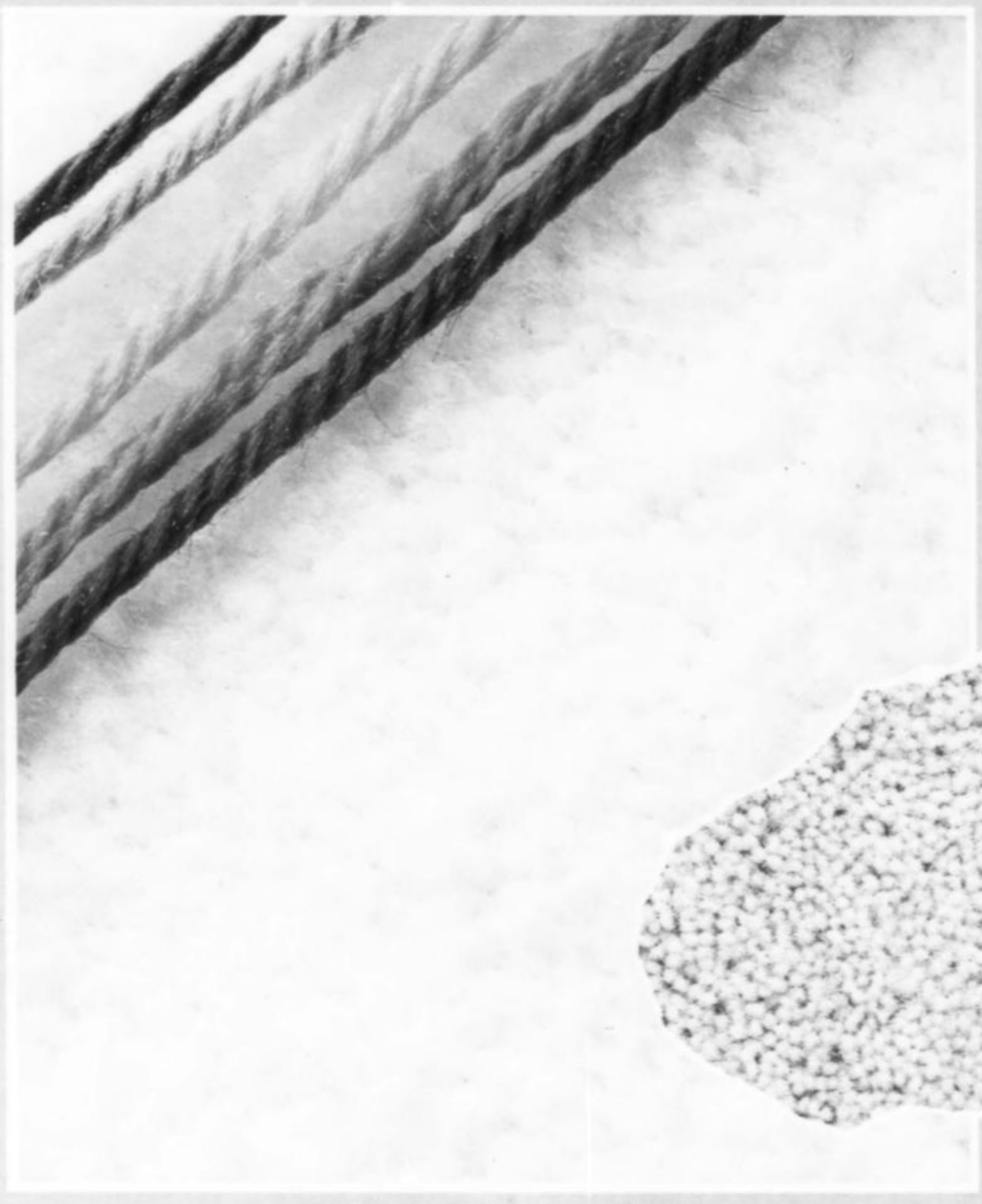
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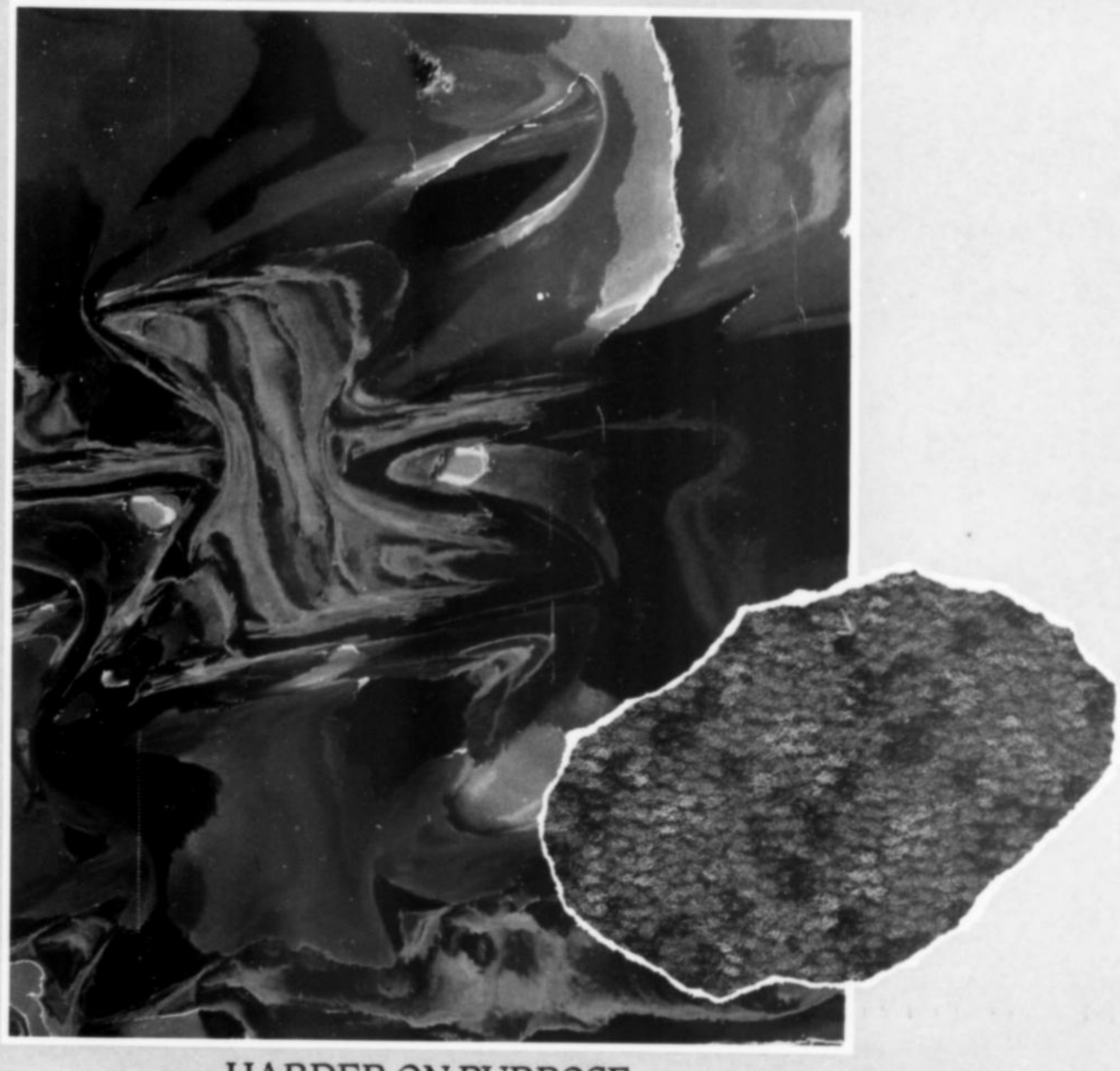
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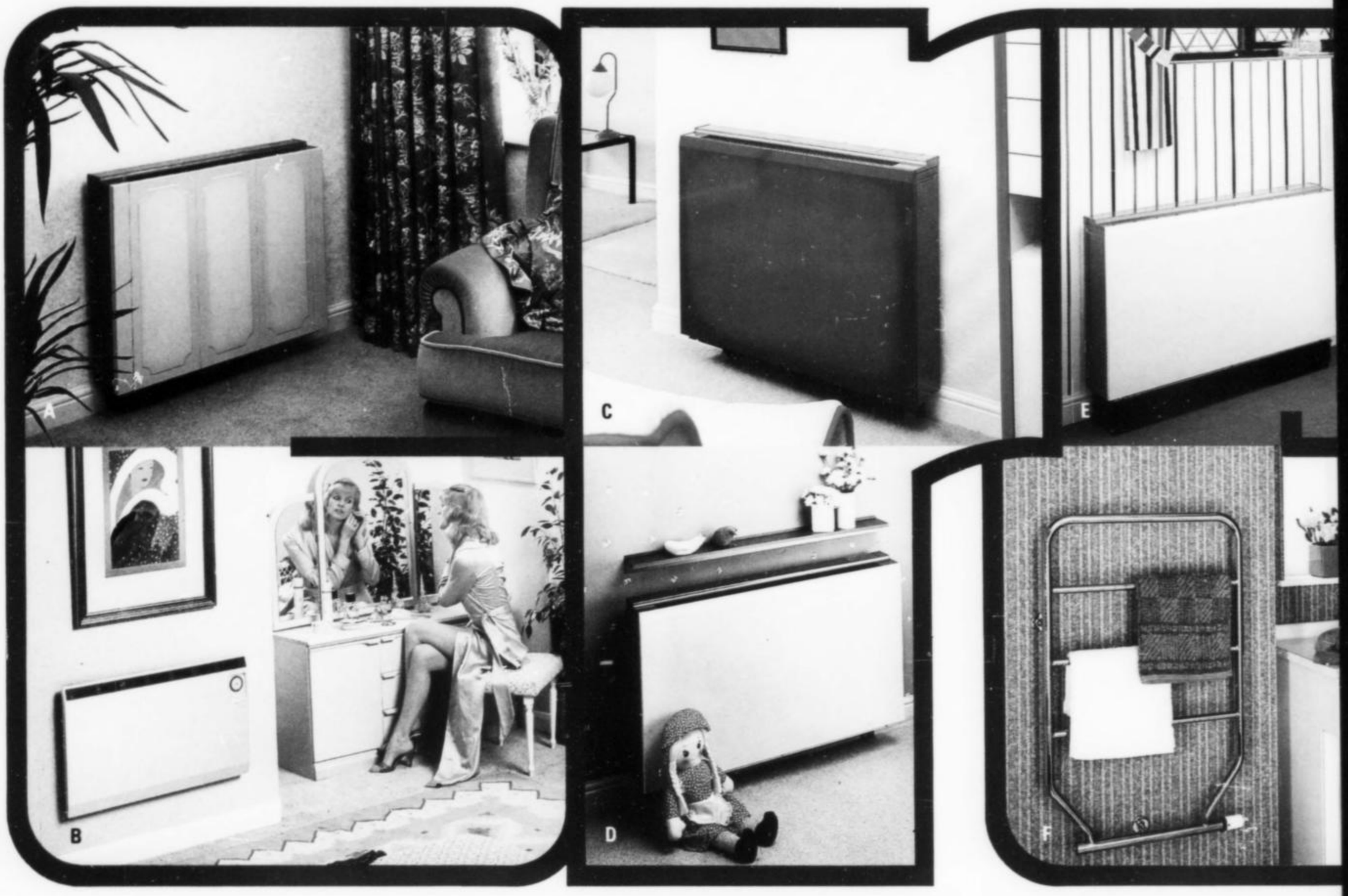
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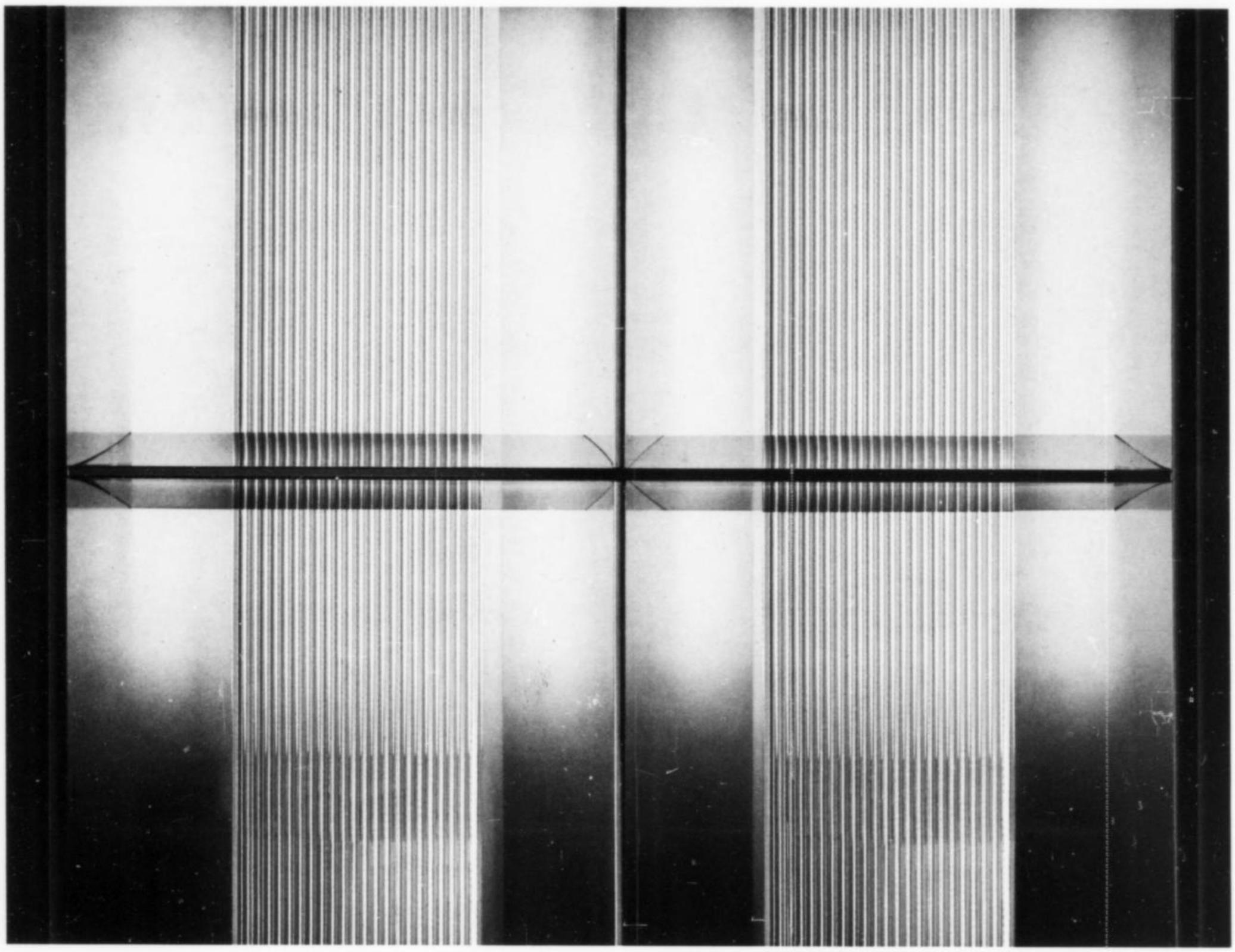






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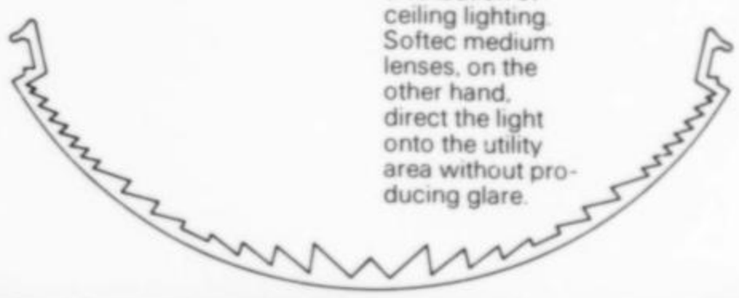
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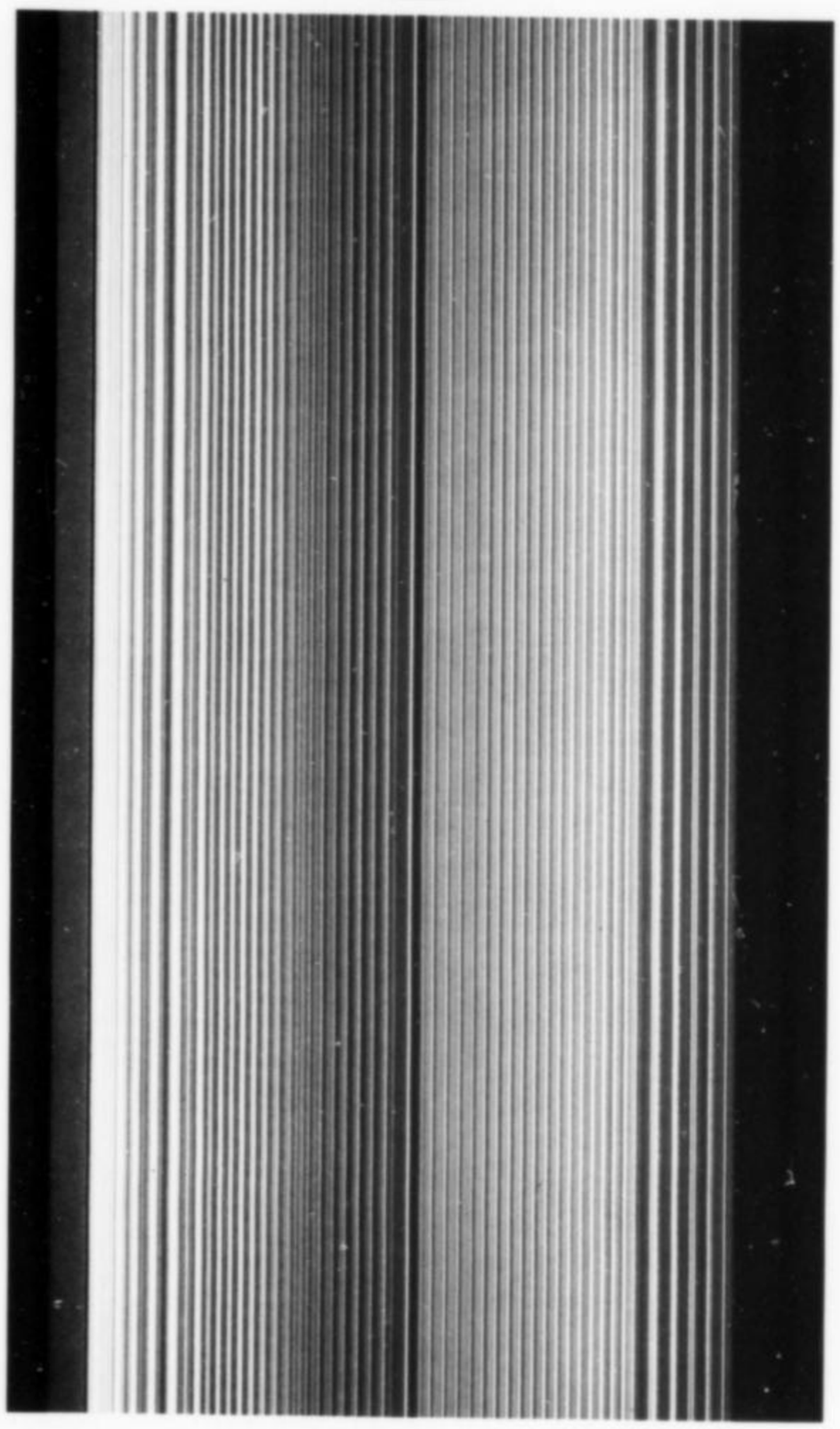
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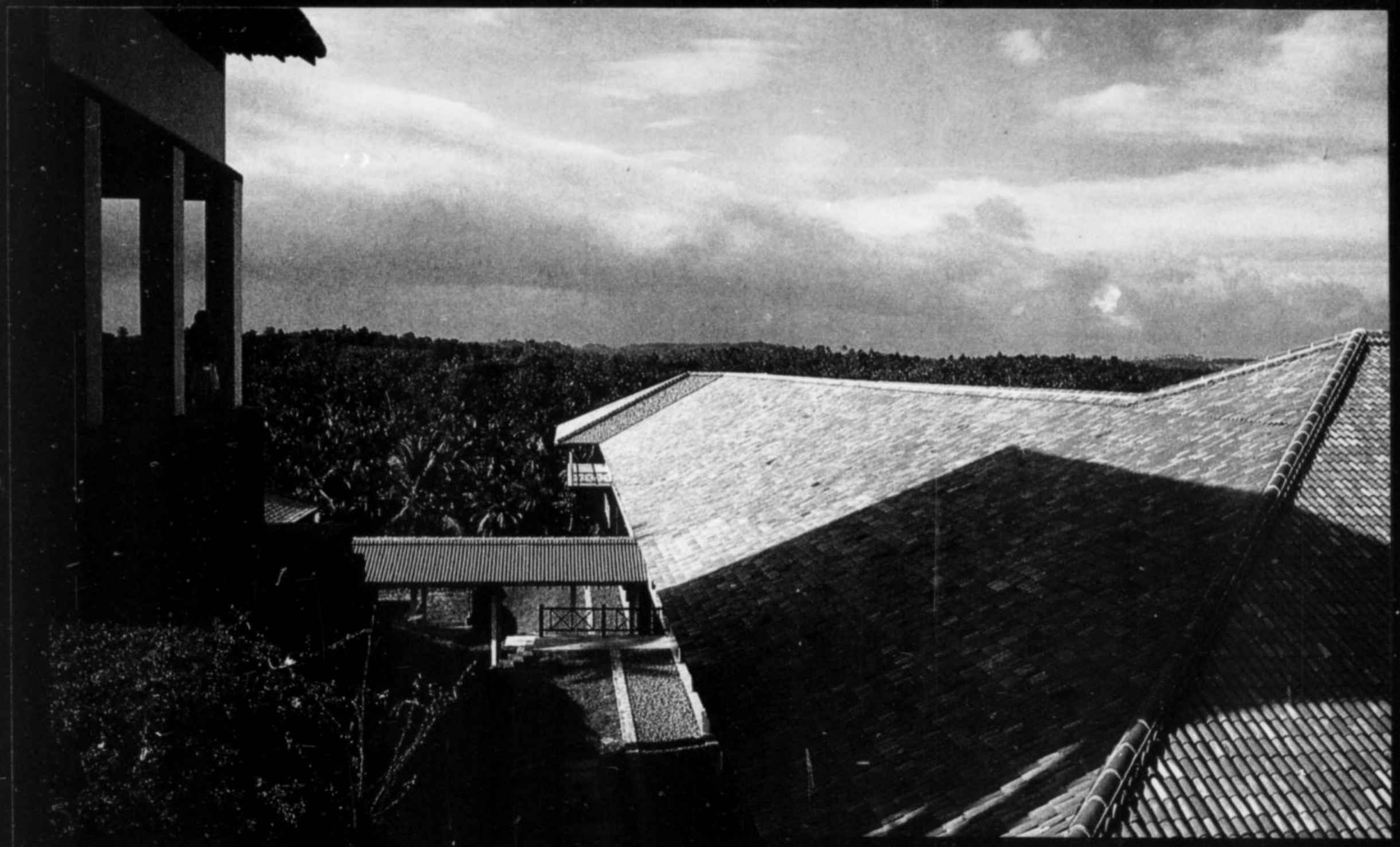
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Chris Abel

This is the third AR devoted to Regionalism (previous theme issues were in May 1983 and October 1984). It ranges in scope from Abdelwahed El-Wakil's respectful reinterpretation of Islamic tradition (p52) to Rex Addison's very relaxed evocation of Brisbane living (p66). Here, Chris Abel adds depth to the discussion by suggesting that regional architecture has almost always accepted imported models and that it is in the transformation of model and type that the specific nature of regionalism can be discovered.

REGIONAL TRANSFORMATIONS

Regionalism attempts to put back into architecture what Modernism conspicuously took out, namely, continuity in a given place between past and present forms of building. As a movement, its gathering appeal is as strong in the West as it is in the rest of the world, to which Modernism was exported. But it is in the countries of the Third World, where the effects of Modernism's break with the past have been compounded by a drastically speeded-up rate of development, that regionalism has a special meaning. For the inhabitants of these countries, the business of deciding what does or does not belong in their region, acquires political and emotional dimensions that smack of a basic struggle for cultural survival, frequently couched in the plaintive terms of a 'search for identity'.

Yet the requirements of a viable architectural continuity are anything but clear-cut. Even the most favoured architectural images of local culture are suspect. These are the non-monumental forms usually lumped together as the product of 'non-architects', or 'unselfconscious' developmental processes. They are selected in the belief that such architecture alone represents the ideal, seamless harmony between built form, culture, place and climate, that was lost to Modernism, and must be regained.[1] However, sufficient anomalies abound to confuse this romantic picture, and to discredit any simplistic notions of a 'folk' architecture uncontaminated by extraneous influences.

The Regionalist approach is now seen to be one of the few potential ways of making architecture with a human face. It permits architects to relate to the past in a deeper and more authentic way than Post-Modern Classicism can ever attempt. It allows Modernism to be built on humanely by injecting a sense of place and continuity without throwing away the spatial and industrial advantages that Modernism offered. Opposite are (above) Geoffrey Bawa's Ruhunu University (see also p44), which reinterprets Sri Lankan models with picturesque sensibility, and (below) Rex Addison's house at Moreton Bay, Queensland (see p66), which reflects on traditional Australian patterns of country living.

CROSS-CULTURAL EFFECTS

Contrary to the images, such architecture is not always local in its origins and may derive, wholly or in part, from other sources. Where truly indigenous examples are found, as in the mud brick architecture of the central Nejd area of the Arabian Peninsula, they are the outcome of relatively isolated situations. Commonly, as in the dwellings on either coast of the same peninsula, contact with other cultures, whether by trade, conquest, or pilgrimage, has left an indelible mark. For example, the 'hanging' balconies, or *rowshans,* that embellish the dwellings of Jeddah and other cities of the Hijaz, are exclusive to that area only in detail, and were introduced by the Ottoman Turks. As well as being found in Istanbul, similar building elements turn up in cities across the Mediterranean region, including Cairo, Tunis, and Valletta, on the island of Malta.

The typical house-on-stilts of Malaysia provides another instance of 'indigenous' architecture that has actually travelled from somewhere else. More accurately described as a family of related dwelling types, the form originates in various islands of the Malay Archipelago, now Indonesia, and the major types found in Malacca, Perak, and the east coast states of Malaysia, each reflect something of the respective cultural groups which came to settle in different parts of the mainland. To these basic types were then added other features, also sometimes imported. The distinctive tiled stairways of the Malacca houses, for example, derive from the architecture of Chinese immigrants who also settled in the Malacca Straits.[2]

Even more perplexing are the anomalies to be found between culture and built form, such as occur where major forms of religion have been imported from other regions, and adopted by the local population as their own. The peoples of South-east Asia, who embraced first Hinduism, then Islam, resolved the different building requirements of the two religions by largely ignoring those differences. By the time the Islamic religion was introduced by traders into the Malay Archipelago in the fifteenth century, the defining attributes of the mosque had already been established for several hundred years. But the building type that was actually adopted for the purpose, first in the islands, then in the Malay Peninsula, already existed in the region. It is traced to both a quasi-religious component of the well-to-do Javanese house, and more importantly, to the typical Hindu-Javanese temple structure, also familiar in Bali, and has its antecedents in even earlier animistic beliefs and practices. A characteristic of the form is its centripetal plan and *meru* roof type, a pyramidal form of several layers supported by four central pillars, all features expressive of Hindu-Javanese cosmology. By adapting Islamic practices to a local building type, rather than importing more orthodox but 'alien' building forms, potential conflicts between new and old ways of life were reduced, but with the odd and probably unanticipated result that any interpretation still yields ambiguous results.[3]

The aims and methods of regionalists are further complicated if it is acknowledged that even the most powerful forms of monumental architecture may be adapted to different conditions of place and culture. In the West, the extreme example is the Pantheon in Rome, with its countless progeny and their regional variations.[4] Roman precedents are also traced in Islamic architecture. Since the Islamic Empire covered much the same ground as the earlier Roman Empire, the builders of Islam in these areas assimilated many of the forms and techniques of antiquity. Consequently, the typical hypostyle mosque, especially as demonstrated in the Great Mosque at Damascus (AD 706-714), owes much to Roman building types, notably the basilica-forum complex, as well as to the Prophet's own courtyard house, which was the original source of inspiration. Though the model never took hold in South-east Asia, later variants throughout the remaining Islamic World show further evidence of the simultaneous expression of both local and imported influences.[5]

1, indigenous mud built houses in Nejd region, central Arabian Peninsula—product of an isolated culture.
2-5, 'hanging' balconies in Jeddah (2), Istanbul (3), Cairo c1860 (4), and Valletta, Malta (5): local variations on widespread form.



1

For both monumental and non-monumental architecture generally, the crucial measure of historical import is not the individual work taken separately, but the whole linked series of precedents and later variants with all their transformations over time, each of which in turn becomes an actual or potential model which can beget still more transformations. Replications of the model provide those essential elements of continuity through change by which cultures measure their lineage. Transformations of building form are the imprint made on these enduring models by the more particular circumstances of place, programme and history, as interpreted by the builders of the day.[8]



2



3



4



5

RELATIONS OF ANALOGY, NOT IDENTITY

The problem in trying to deal with such anomalies is that the social psychology commonly used to describe cultural 'identities' is often mixed with logical concepts that are unsuited to the purpose of understanding the ambivalent nature of the continuities involved. Any logical question of identity demands an unequivocal answer. Either one thing is identical to another in some respects, at the same point in time or at any other point, or it is not. Used in the context of defining continuities of human behaviour, the requirement for logical symmetry presents questions that are impossible to answer, even for continuities of individual behaviour,[6] let alone culture-forms. Things become more realistic, and manageable, if it is allowed that the sought-for continuities are not the all-or-nothing relations of identity, but more tolerant connections of some sort between different forms or states of existence, most usefully described in the terms of relations of analogy.[7]

Looked at in this way, how the archetypal mosque and the Malay house originate in diverse precedents and come to function in their own respective roles as models of architectural form is more relevant to understanding the nature of architectural continuities than any romantic ideal of 'pure' culture.

The attempted distinction between 'selfconscious' and 'unselfconscious' architecture is another red herring that obscures the ubiquitous role of precedent and tradition in all forms of architecture. As Modernists demonstrated with their own preferred models, even the most highly educated architect is reliant upon tacit knowledge transferred by precedent, as much as any explicit rule or principle. On the other hand, it is not only inaccurate, but patronising, to characterise traditional architecture as the result of wholly unselfconscious processes of cognition. For example, the dense urban fabric of inward-looking courtyard houses and complex network of narrow streets and blind alleys that typify the 'private' Arab city, is often described in terms of biological systems. Yet this 'organic' layout is, amongst other factors, the outcome of legally explicit regulations for the protection of privacy and access.[9]

Today, as always, the predominant method of learning what to build and how to build, involving both explicit and tacit processes of cognition in varying degrees, is by demonstration, (*ie* meaning by reference to contemporary or historical exemplars). The same method facilitates orderly reproduction of those social institutions which are themselves partly encoded in building types, though not always very precisely. Nor, as used to be thought, does the

6, Malay house-on-stilts in Malacca State, with Chinese style ornamented stairway.
7, large Malay house in Perak State, near Ipoh, shows projecting front section, or anjung, *which is typical of houses in that part of Malaysia.*

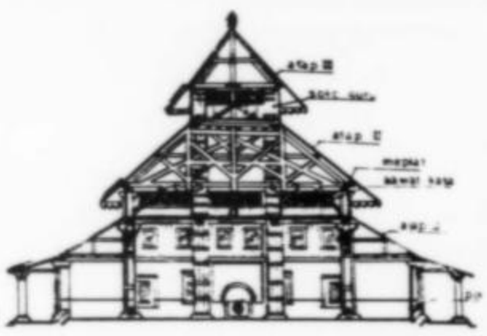


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8, cross-section of Great Mosque of Demak in Central Java, Indonesia. Meru *roof derives from Hindu-Javanese models.*
9, Kampung Laut Mosque (c1750) in Kelantan. The oldest extant mosque in Malaysia is based on Javanese model.

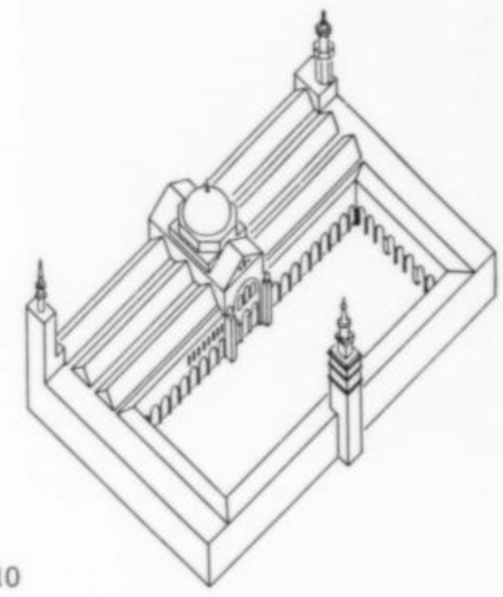


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10, Great Mosque at Damascus (AD 706-714) resembles Roman basilica-forum complex and owes much to the Prophet's own courtyard house.
11, old centre of Riyadh shows organic pattern of traditional Arab settlements. The broad street cutting straight through the middle is a recent change.



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influence of existing models hinder creativity. On the contrary, the creation of new models of architecture arises, not off any 'clean sheet', but out of a cross-pollination between existing but previously unrelated ideas and forms, a process also best described as analogical,[10] and which is often stimulated by exchanges between different cultures.

MIXED LESSONS FROM COLONIAL ARCHITECTURE

If normality, as well as due importance, were to be ascribed to the sorts of journeys made across the boundaries of time, place and culture, by persistent but adaptable models of building form, the range of possible references for contemporary regionalists might be broadened. Certain manifestations of colonial architecture figure prominently amongst potentially fruitful sources.

Colonialism required that the representatives of the metropolitan centre be settled in sufficient comfort even in the most peripheral reaches of the empire, to be able to function effectively in that role. Since functioning effectively also meant impressing local inhabitants with the power and 'superior' culture and life-style of their exploiters, those comforts might include anything from full-blown replicas of the Coliseum, to more recent Tudor-style cricket clubs and inns. Once again, South-east Asia, which has assimilated so many different cultures as to be the world's premier multi-cultural laboratory, yields plentiful examples.[11] The hill stations of Malaysia, which were themselves modelled on hill stations in British India, notably at Simla, offered not merely the chance to shake off the latest bout of malaria at a cooler altitude; they recreated the complete ambiance of the Sussex country retreat. From the cosy furniture right down to the reassuring rose bushes and mown lawns in the garden, and even the strawberries on the dining-room table (which, like the roses, flourish in the climate of the hills), the whole environment is a homage to the colonists' place of origin.

Such exacting duplication of the familiar environment was, however, by no means the whole story, and in the process of settling in, some of the colonists' architectural baggage underwent major changes, not least to accommodate the tropical climate at normal elevations. And while, as with the colonial villas of Malaysia and Singapore, such adaptation could be safely described as a straightforward response to the natural elements, it might equally well be argued that the colonists did not work it all out for themselves from scratch, but were taking their cues from the traditional Malay house. The result is an authentic hybrid series of residences, a marriage of East and West, brokered by practical builders who also knew their Palladio, and bearing clear traces, not only of ancient Rome (what better source of imperial inspiration) but also of the wide open and breezy forms of the Malay house type.[12]

It might be argued that the typical European villa and the Malay house are both detached, family dwellings, ideally standing in natural surroundings, and a practical exchange between the two culture-forms was in the offering. But British colonists also imported new building types, for which there was no conceivable local parallel, and which were also 'localised'. The solution in Malaysia, as well as in India, was to make free use of monumental Islamic architecture (imported, in the case of Malaysia, on the assumption the style was in keeping with the local religion), by which the British governors of New Delhi and Kuala Lumpur transformed their administrative and public buildings, all the better to sweeten the imperial pill. Again, it may be noted that the significant result was not any single building, but the production of a consistent series.[13] That there have been recent local changes of heart and a new willingness to regard these buildings, for all their quirks, as belonging to the national heritage, is owed to a growing sense of national self-confidence, as well as the capacity of building forms to take on new meanings. While Asians may not yet embrace their colonial past with the same equanimity with which the British regard their Norman architecture, there is an increasing awareness that more recently imported models of building make the earlier colonial forms look, by comparison, like the genuine home-grown thing.[14]

In these confusing times of the global village, some comfort may therefore be taken from observing that the true grist of regional architecture often lies in a creative process of cultural cross-fertilisation and localisation of imported models, rather than in the purified identities associated with the usual references.[15] Nevertheless, given a more liberal interpretation of what is 'regional', it must still be pondered why contemporary architects generally produce less satisfactory results than their acquisitive predecessors.

BAUHAUS LEGACY

Unfortunately, the tendency to import Western forms of architectural education along with Modern architecture brought with it the very worst aspects of the Bauhaus legacy. The ideal state of mental



12

Colonial architecture—reproduction of imperial types:
12, Coliseum at El Jem in Tunisia, built by Emperor Gordian in AD 230 for Roman colonists.
13, Tudor-style inn on Cameron Highlands, close to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, was built as a part of the colonial hill station.



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14. Palladio's Villa Cornaro (1560-70) in Piombino Dese, near Padua, is one of the likely models for the colonial villas in Malaysia.
15. hybrid colonial villas in Penang show the influence of both European and local models, especially the Perak variant of the typical Malay house, with its generous open fenestration and raised front section.
16. High Court building (1919), Kuala Lumpur, by A. C. Norman, still serves its original purpose. Monumental Islamic style imported from India.
17. 'shophouses' on Penang Road, Georgetown, Penang, could be model for contemporary mixed urban development. Note the 'Palladian window' on the upper floors.
18. cross-section through Walian House, Kuala Lumpur, by Jimmy Lim, shows influence of local traditions in timber roof construction.
19. Dynasty Hotel, Singapore. Crude kitsch 'regional' hat imposed on fundamentally modern building.
20. Hyatt Hotel in Kuantan, on the east coast of Malaysia, by Kampulan Akitek. Note the pyramidal Meru*-roof form over the reception area.*



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preparedness for students beginning architecture is assumed, in line with the 'clean sheet' theory of creativity, to be that early state of childhood innocence that historical awareness or any other cultural or educational persuasion had yet to 'corrupt'.[16] Though this all-too-efficient system of brainwashing has now exhausted its most destructive effects elsewhere, its influence amongst teachers in the developing world, who usually picked up their methods whilst completing their own education in the West, is still strong, with negative consequences for the encouragement of any sensitivity toward regional culture. While constructive experiments occasionally surface, the educational knowledge base required for any widespread and creative reinterpretation of regional history simply does not yet exist.[17]

In the more successful efforts made to solve the problem of how to assimilate new functional requirements in a familiar way, the architects responsible have undertaken a considerable amount of self-instruction in their regional traditions, to compensate for what formal education left out.

RECENT INITIATIVES

For all that, recent successes in the tropics tend to be limited to those building types, such as dwellings, resort hotels and educational buildings, where the function, limited scale, and natural surroundings permit a relatively uncomplicated adaptation of local forms and materials. Into this category falls most of the work of Geoffrey Bawa (see p44), who is also much influenced by colonial models. Less well-known but promising architects are Jimmy Lim in Malaysia, who takes Bawa as his own role model, the Kampulan Akitek group in Singapore, and Francisco Manosa in the Philippines, all of whom have produced interesting houses and hotels inspired by local precedents. Otherwise, the pastiche, or traditional 'hat' placed atop standard Modern forms, is the common answer to the problem of expressing regional character. Even some traditional building types, such as the 'shophouse' of Chinese origin, which would seem to be easily adapted for contemporary urban purposes, have, with rare exception, been ignored by local architects in favour of the usual international solutions.

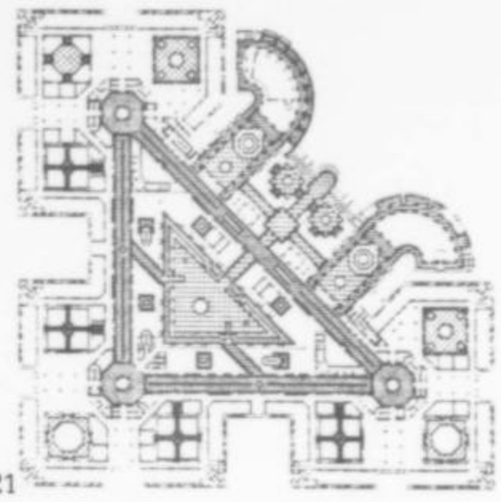
It is tempting to think that the main problems in those regions where timber is the traditional building material are the structural and formal limitations of the technology. Yet the example set by contemporary Japanese architects in producing a convincing body of regional architecture analogous with their own traditions, belies such defeatism. The Japanese success needs to be better understood (as in other spheres), but it may well be due to the uninterrupted respect contemporary architects have retained for past ways of building. As well as benefiting from the 'Modern' qualities of traditional Japanese buildings, with their flexible modular spaces and open timber-frame structures, the historical tendency towards structural expressionism evident in the larger-scale palaces and temples also presents Japanese architects with a powerful aesthetic tradition capable of translation into modern concrete or steel structures. The new Hongkong Bank headquarters by Norman Foster is one recent, if indirect beneficiary of Japanese experiments, in so far as the 'oriental' look of this otherwise ultra-modern building has not a little to do with both traditional Japanese transparency and the same exaggerated display of exposed structural elements that characterises Buddhist pagodas and the like (AR April 1986).

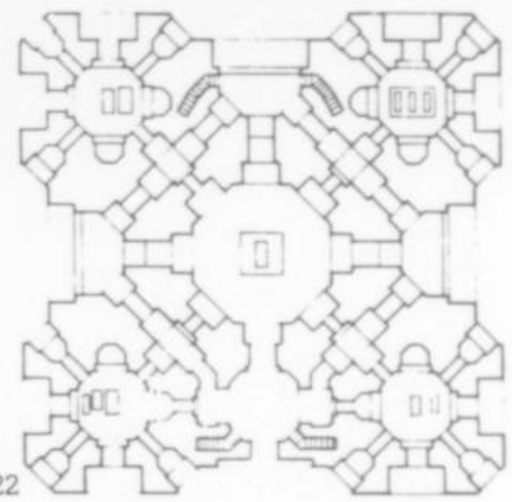
Some individual initiatives elsewhere in the developing world are also receiving much deserved attention. Charles Correa's highly eclectic regionalism draws freely upon the works of Le Corbusier, Louis Kahn, Luis Barragan and Charles Moore, as well as more local sources, to solve the various requirements of modern building programmes in India. Richard England has addressed himself to the special problems of international tourism in Malta. His hotels seem to grow straight out of the limestone rock from which the island fortress is made, and offer lessons for those developing countries wishing to exploit the character of their region, without destroying that same character in the process.

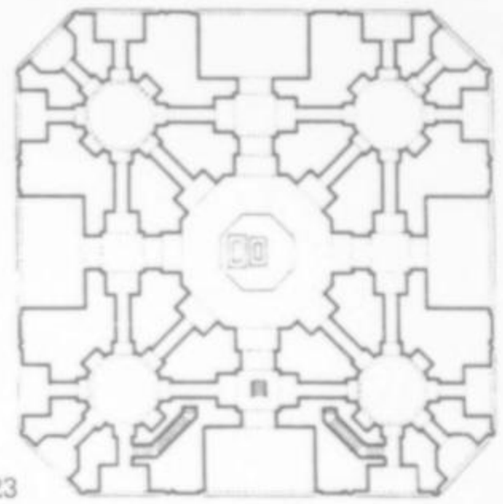
RENAISSANCE OF ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE

But it is the rediscovery of Islamic building traditions that currently offers the greatest potential, where they are relevant, for the development of a viable

21, plan of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Riyadh, by Henning Larsen, compared with plans of the Taj Mahal (1632-54), 22, and the Humayun mausoleum (1565), also at Agra, India, 23.
24, National Commercial Bank in Jeddah, by Skidmore Owings & Merrill, dwarfs preserved traditional courtyard house in front, but has analogous inward looking form.


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contemporary regionalism of consistent high quality, capable of providing for many building types, both old and new. The potential derives from the sheer immensity and richness of the heritage, which, as an adaptable language of form, diversified over 1200 years of continuous development across several continents, rivals the Classical language of the West in its range of application.

Despite its many roots in antiquity, a Renaissance of Islamic architecture could not have been easily anticipated in the West. It seems astonishing now, that though Western students of architecture are still taught the beginnings of civilisation in Mesopotamia, and are familiarised with the monuments of ancient Egypt, history lessons should thereafter abruptly change location, to be directed to the northern coasts of the Mediterranean, never to return further south. If we consider also that it was the diligent efforts of Arab scholars in resuscitating early Greek science, that eventually helped fuel the European Renaissance,[18] the sudden irreversible leap across the Mediterranean looks mightily suspicious. Add to this that the European 'Dark Ages' coincided more or less with the 'Golden Age' of the Islamic Empire, and the Eurocentric pattern becomes lamentably clear.

In turn, the lobotomies performed on architects' for historical consciousness elsewhere, were also carried out on Muslim architects practising in the Middle East. Thus it is that we have the ironic situation where some of the best new regional architecture in the Islamic world is designed by Western architects, the pick of whom have been recruited by wealthy patrons like Saudi Arabia to try to create an alternative to the prevailing international models.

As one notable example, Henning Larsen's building for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Riyadh represents an extraordinary feat of imagination. Though Larsen's appreciation of Islamic architecture has its blind spots (mainly with regard to the use of ornament), it may be asked whether more reverential attitudes would have allowed the architect to do what he did, which was to take the plan of the most famous tomb in the world, the Taj Mahal in India, to house a modern bureaucracy in Saudi Arabia, producing some memorable spaces in the process (AR July 1985).

Larsen's bold reference to a familiar Islamic monument contrasts with the more orthodox approach of Skidmore Owings & Merrill. Though SOM shun any too explicit use of traditional models, both their tented Haj terminal at Jeddah airport and their introverted office tower for the National Commercial Bank, also in Jeddah, offer dramatic metaphors for regional forms of shelter, as well as rational responses to the harsh local climate. Like Foster's Hongkong Bank, SOM's buildings give Modernism a subtle but telling shove in the direction of regionalism.


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25, souk in new urban development in the Hafsia Quarter, Tunis, recreates vaulted forms of traditional markets.
26, modern residential pattern in Malazz district, Riyadh.
27, new shopping centre in Riyadh.


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RESPONSES TO CHANGING URBAN CONTEXT

The introduction of new urban building types and their related modern social and commercial institutions, as well as modern transport systems, has been paralleled by a restructuring of the urban centres along the lines of the dispersed Western city. The historic cores, where they have been allowed to remain, now stand only as mute reminders of a recent but already remote past and way of life. The result is a complete reversal of the spatial pattern of the traditional Arab city, from a compact mass of building-with-holes-in, to the familiar international pattern of detached buildings strung along new highways.

Some attempts by a handful of committed local architects who survived their Modernist education, have been made to recreate the original dense structure of housing and *souks*, or markets, of the historic core, such as in the rebuilding of the El Hafsia quarter in the *Medina*, or old city of Tunis, by Wassim Ben Mahmoud. At a larger scale, the projects for the Bab al-Sheikh district in Baghdad, by Rifat Chadirji, and the Justice Palace district in Riyadh, by the Beehah Group, provide modern commercial facilities and apartment buildings in like form. The last team also produced a similarly inspired dense linear core of public buildings and housing for the new Diplomatic Quarter in the suburbs of Riyadh.

But such attempts to recreate or update historic urban patterns are few and far between. More typical

is the sort of standard Modernist exercise, represented, at its dubious best, by Kenzo Tange's Alkhairia Centre, also in Riyadh, which makes no concessions at all to either climate or tradition. The courtyard house type that went along with the older pattern has likewise been displaced by the free-standing 'villa'. Despite its unsuitability for this part of the world, and the lack of privacy and related inconveniences following on from the loss of the traditional internal open space, the villa is now the preferred status symbol for old and new generations alike.

It is against this changing urban context that the work of two architectural practices merits special attention. Of the two, the Egyptian architect, Abdelwahed El-Wakil, takes the more strictly traditionalist approach, and follows on from the example set by his famous mentor, Hassan Fathy. The courtyard dwellings and mosques which dominate El-Wakil's practice have enabled the architect to exploit a well-established vocabulary of form, mostly drawn from the historic buildings of his native Cairo. However, El-Wakil's carefully researched designs do more than bring back to life a neglected body of traditional knowledge and technique. They also present would-be creative regionalists with timely reminders of the old adage that, 'in order to break a rule, first know the rule'.

El-Wakil's own transformations, especially on the theme of mosque architecture, are not immediately apparent to those who see nothing but the familiar courtyards, arcades, domes and minarets (see p52). They have more to do with a subtle response to the new, low density, exposed urban context of nearly all his sites. Neither hemmed in, as his historic models are, by surrounding buildings, nor presenting dead-pan faces to the outside world, El-Wakil's buildings mostly stand apart, spectacularly isolated in the case of his mosques on the Jeddah Corniche, as delicately sculptured forms designed to be appreciated in the round. Still following tradition, the intimate spaces of the courtyards and prayer rooms beckon with no less appeal. Increasingly, as El-Wakil plays more and more freely with the sculptural qualities of his buildings, they exhibit a distinctively northern Mediterranean flavour, perhaps pointing toward another cross-cultural merger.

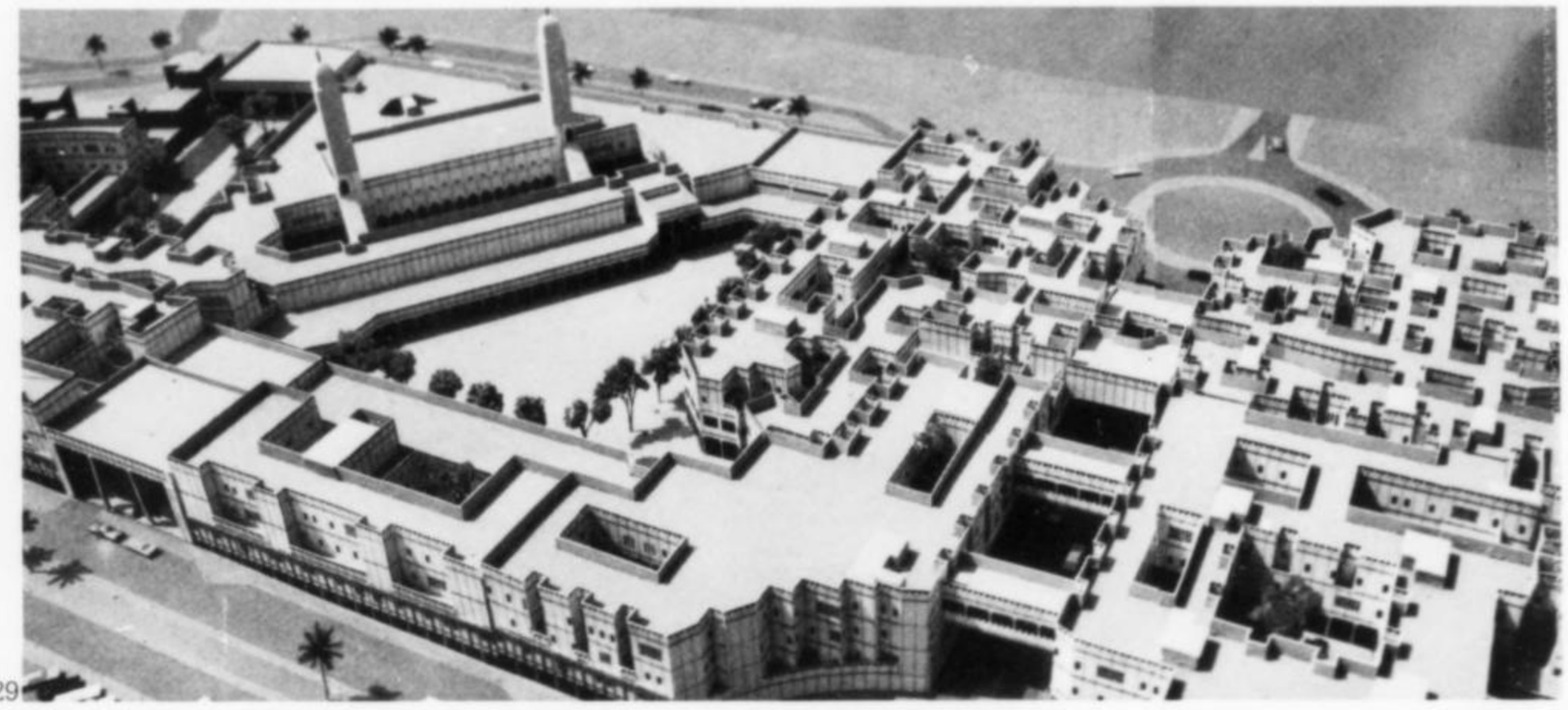
The Aga Khan University and Hospital in Karachi, by Payette Associates, affords lessons of a different kind, both in the complex nature of the modern functional programme involved, and in the way the architects approached the problem of interpreting Islamic traditions. In this last respect it is noteworthy that, though Payette Associates is an American firm, the design of the hospital benefited from the participation of Moshan Khadem, an Iranian-born consultant, knowledgeable in Islamic architecture, as well as from the architects' extensive study tour of Islamic monuments in Pakistan, the Middle East, North Africa and Spain.

The resulting architecture of the complex reflects a flexible interpretation of a set of general principles of design, deduced by the architects from their observations and understanding of Islamic monumental architecture[19], more than any direct transposition of specific forms, though there is evidence of that, too, at a more detailed level. If anything, the principal language of form used is Modern, Corbusian *brise-soleil* and Ronchamp-inspired entrance ways (much enlarged versions of the windows inside the Chapel, with their deep, asymmetrical reveals), being immediately apparent. Beyond specific features, the whole complex has something of an 'industrial' look about it, which can throw the careless observer off the track of the building's other origins.

It is in the introverted spatial pattern of connected courtyard buildings, and carefully managed sequence of oblique transitions from one discrete space to the next, as well as the very un-Modern attention to surface treatment and ornamentation, that the regional qualities of the architecture come across.

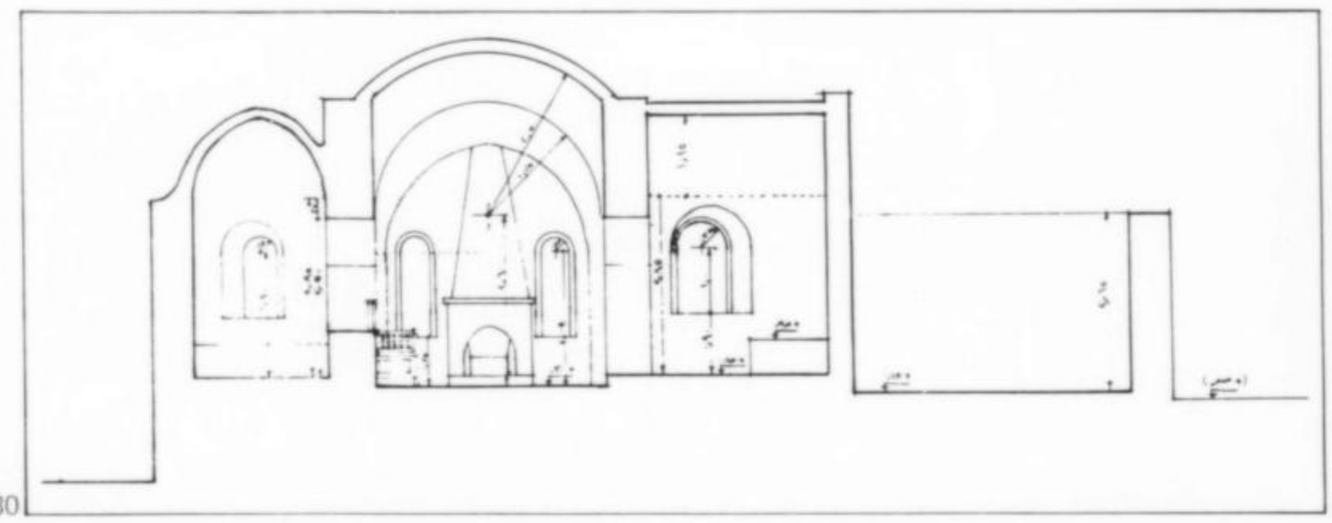


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28, old Cairo is the source of many Abdelwahed El Wakil's historic models of Islamic architecture.
29, model of linear centre for new Diplomatic Quarter in Riyadh, by the Beehah Group, updates traditional dense settlement patterns.
30, house by Hassan Fathy.
31, typical new villas in Riyadh. As shown here, screens are commonly put up between adjacent villas in order to prevent overlooking by neighbours. Windows are also usually filled with frosted glass to ensure privacy.

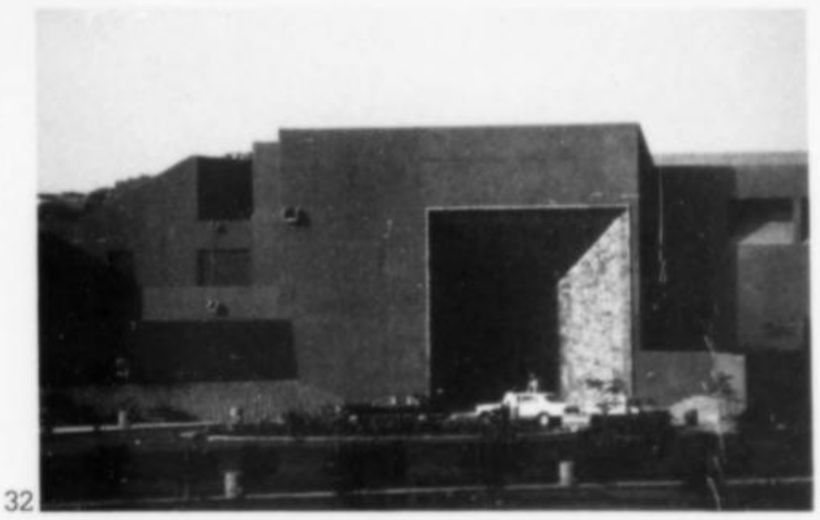


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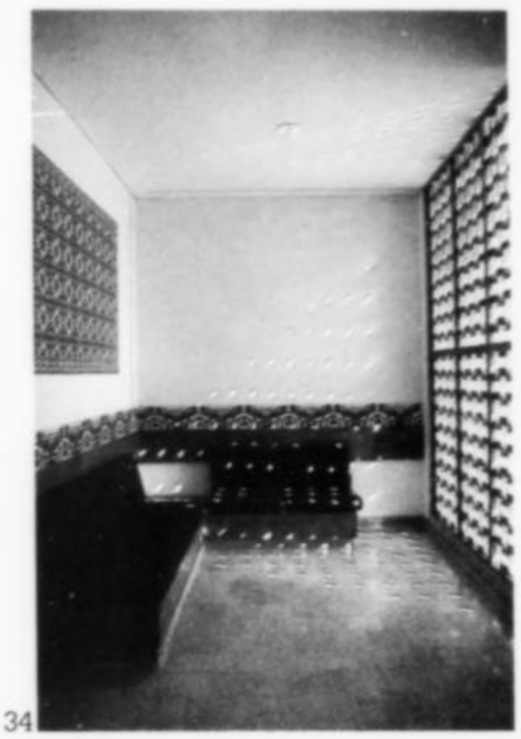
32, entrance way to Aga Khan University Hospital, by Payette Associates. Restrained, almost industrial expression yet it resonates with Islamic tradition.
33, Aga Khan University Hospital. View of wards from across lake.
34, dappled light filters through screen into waiting room. Spaces at this hospital have an Islamic sensibility.



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34

Author
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The lavish use of water, both as ornament and humidifier, and open ornamental *jali* screens also add traditional touches, and help to modify the climate. Even the low key, industrial look can be ascribed to the architects' desire to tone down the external features of the building, in favour of focusing attention on the internal spaces. Despite this, the geometry of the outward facing wards and other sections asserts itself to the point where, as in El-Wakil's mosques, a balance is achieved between internal and external aspects, in keeping with the building's open site in the suburbs of Karachi.

DIRECT AND INDIRECT APPROACHES

Beyond the individual merits of these buildings, between them the two practices define a spectrum between direct and indirect approaches to the use of traditional models of architecture, the first leaning more toward a creative interpretation of specific building forms, and the second toward designing from general principles. Neither approach can ever be mutually exclusive, each must rely to some extent on the other, but the differences between them are significant enough to suggest a wide range of alternative strategies for future regionalist architects.

A similar spectrum might have been drawn between Larsen's MOFA building in Riyadh, and SOM's buildings in Jeddah. But it is less clear at this time whether or not any of these unique buildings constitutes the making of a viable series or type. The chief strength of El-Wakil's dwellings and mosques and Payette Associates' building, is that they offer clearer promise of the development of reproducible models, capable of adaptation to the specific contingencies of place and programme. El-Wakil's mosques already constitute a series in themselves, each new building developing further the model established by the last one. In the case of the university and hospital in Karachi, it is possible to see the emergence of a more general model of building, based on what might be called the concept of an 'urban oasis', which responds to the realities of new functional programmes and urban frameworks, but offers at the same time the security and privacy of enclosed spaces and other familiar elements of traditional Islamic architecture.

CHALLENGE TO WESTERN HEGEMONY

Beyond these specific architectural achievements, a broader pattern can be seen emerging, pointing to a cultural shift of global dimensions. Given the clout still wielded by the industrialised nations, not least in the fascination American popular culture exerts throughout the developing world, it may be premature to talk of the end of Western cultural domination in architecture, no less than in other spheres. But what is both new and striking is that increasing numbers of architects and their clients in the developing world, as well as Westerners building in the same countries, are now turning to alternative cultural forms for appropriate models. After being brainwashed for so long into thinking that what is West is best, the change in attitude is a significant one. At the least it may be hoped that the divergence of cultural models might help to counteract, if not yet reverse, the convergent global patterns till now taken so much for granted.

Notes

1 Influential texts are: Bernard Rudofsky, *Architecture Without Architects*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1964, and Christopher Alexander, *Notes on the Synthesis of Form*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1964. However, deeper roots go back to the Romantic movement of the eighteenth century. See Chris Abel, 'Vico and Herder: the Origins of Methodological Pluralism', in R. Jacques and J.A. Powell (eds), *Design: Science: Method*, Proceedings of the 1980 Design Research Society Conference, Westbury House, 1981.

2 For detailed descriptions of form and technology, see: Parid Wardi Sudin, 'The Malay House', *Mimar*, October/December 1981, and Wan Burhanuddin bin Wan Abidin, 'The Malay House: Learning From its Changes', in R. Langdon and N. Cross (eds.), *Design Policy, Vol 1: Design and Society:* proceedings of the Design and Society section of the International Conference held at the Royal College of Art, London, 20-23 July 1982, The Design Council, 1984.

3 Josef Prijotomo, *Ideas and Forms of Javanese Architecture*, Gadjah Mada University Press, 1984. See also, Abdul Halim Nasir, *Mosques of Peninsular Malaysia*, Berita Publishing, Kuala Lumpur, 1984.

4 William L. MacDonald, *The Pantheon*, Allen Lane, 1976.

5 The mixed roots of Islamic architecture are widely documented. See for example: C. T. Rivoira, *Moslem Architecture*, Oxford University Press, 1918; Dogan Kuban, *Muslim Religious Architecture*, Leiden E. J. Brill, 1974, and John D. Hoag, *Islamic Architecture*, Harry N. Abrams Inc, New York, 1977. Conventional mosque designs based on Indian models, were only introduced by British colonial builders into South-east Asia at the turn of the last century.

6 Derek Parfit, 'Personal Identity', in Ted Honderich and Myles Burnyeat (eds), *Philosophy As It Is*, Penguin Books, 1979.

7 Parfit (6) describes continuities of personality in terms of 'relations of degree', which is an elegant formulation, but does not deal as well as the analogical approach with the problems of understanding change and creativity. Foundations of the theoretical viewpoint advanced in this paper are elaborated in various earlier papers by the author. See, for example: 'The Language Analogy in Architectural Theory and Criticism: Some Remarks in the light of Wittgenstein's Linguistic Relativism', *Architectural Association Quarterly*, December, 1980; 'Vico and Herder: The Origins of Methodological Pluralism', *ibid;* 'Function of Tacit Knowing in Learning to Design', *Design Studies*, October, 1981, and 'The Role of Metaphor in Changing Architectural Concepts', in B. Evans, J. A. Powell, and R. Talbot (eds), *Changing Design*, John Wiley & Sons, 1982.

8 In addition to the references cited in note (7), see, George Kubler, *The Shape of Time*, Yale University Press, 1962.

9 Saleh A. Al-Hathloul, *Tradition, Continuity and Change in the Physical Environment: The Arab-Muslim City*, unpublished PhD thesis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1981.

10 See the references in note (7).

11 Localisation of imported culture-forms is not common merely in South-east Asia, but is a defining characteristic of the history of the region. see, O. W. Wolters, *History, Culture, and Region in South-east Asian Perspectives*, Institute of South-east Asian Studies, Singapore, 1982.

12 Chris Abel, 'Living in a Hybrid World, II: Built Sources of Malaysian Identity', in R. Langden and N. Cross (eds), *ibid.*

13 *Ibid.*

14 The new tolerance and appreciation for colonial architecture was clearly expressed at two recent conferences on architectural and urban conservation: 'Strategy for Conservation', held by the Heritage of Malaysia Trust, Kuala Lumpur, 6-7 May 1986, and 'The International Conference on Urban Conservation and Planning', held by the Malaysian Institute of Architects, Penang, 23-24 June 1986. However, the colonial record is also still much criticised for its negative impact on regional traditions. See, Kamil Khan Mumtaz, *Architecture in Pakistan*, Concept Media Pte Ltd, Singapore, 1985.

15 The term, 'purified identity', was coined by Richard Sennett in *The Uses of Disorder*, Vintage Books, 1970, to describe the goal sought by American suburbanites in their flight from the complexities and competing identities of city life. It also usefully describes regionalists' preferences for indigenous architectural images.

16 It is no coincidence that Joseph Ittens' Basic Course at the Bauhaus owed much to kindergarten theory. See, Anita Cross, 'The Educational Background to the Bauhaus', *Design Studies*, October 1981.

17 Chris Abel, 'Educating Architects in the Art of Using History', *Majallah Akitek*, No 4, 1985.

18 John S. Badenu *et al*, *The Genius of Arab Civilisation*, MIT Press, 1978.

19 The design principles for the hospital are set out in, 'A Summary Statement', an unpublished working paper written by Mozhan Khadem, for Payette Associates.

BAWA AT RUHUNU

UNIVERSITY OF RUHUNU, MATARA, SRI LANKA

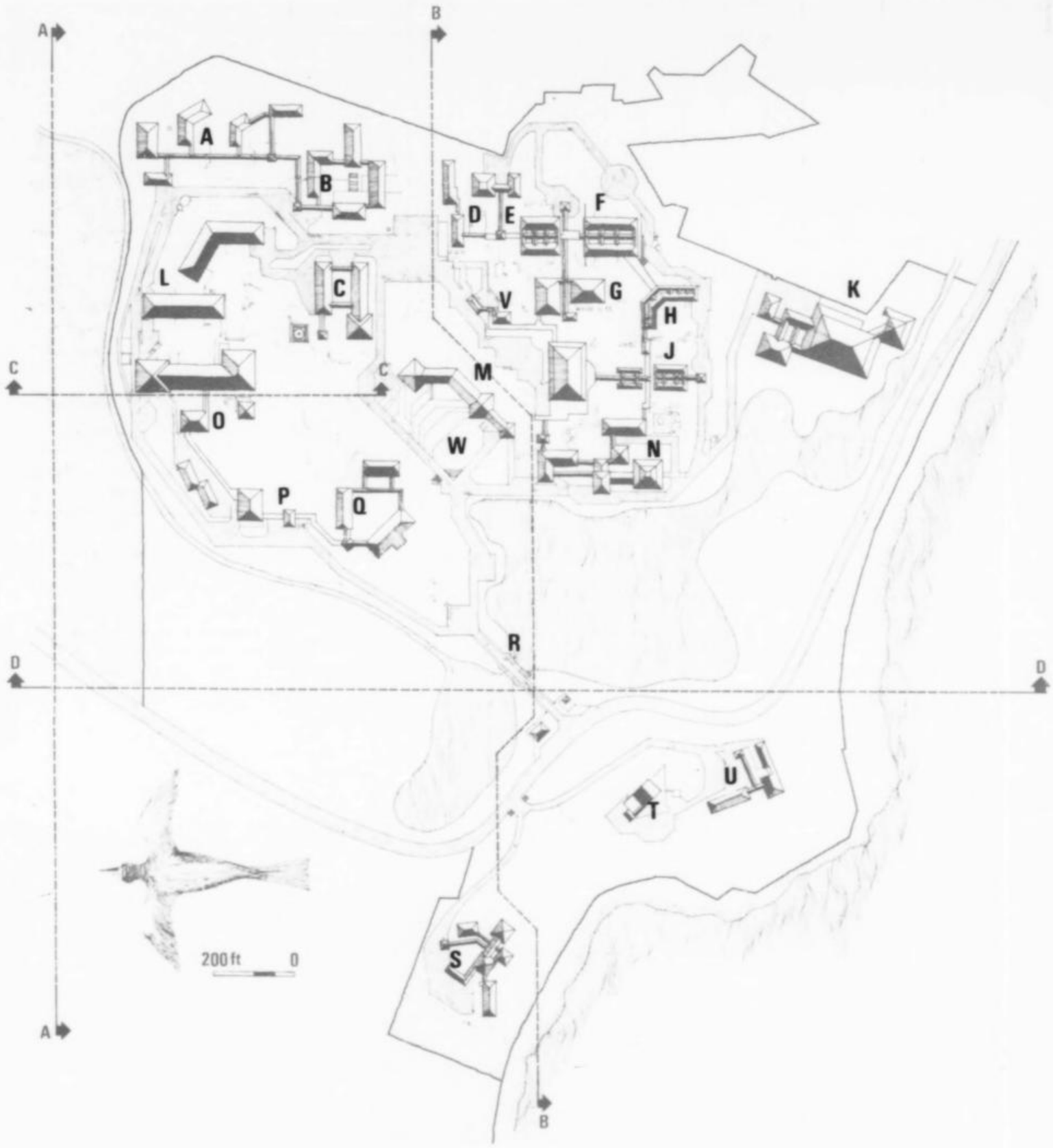
Geoffrey Bawa draws upon the long Sri Lankan tradition of assimilating influences modified by an indigenous, simple way of building, and a picturesque response to landscape. He has been able to work directly with craftsmen, making detailed decisions on site to create a series of places that both reflect immemorial life patterns and the day to day affairs of a modern university.



section CC and elevation

layout plan: the site slopes to the south-west towards an artificial lake with the Indian Ocean beyond (bird indicates north)

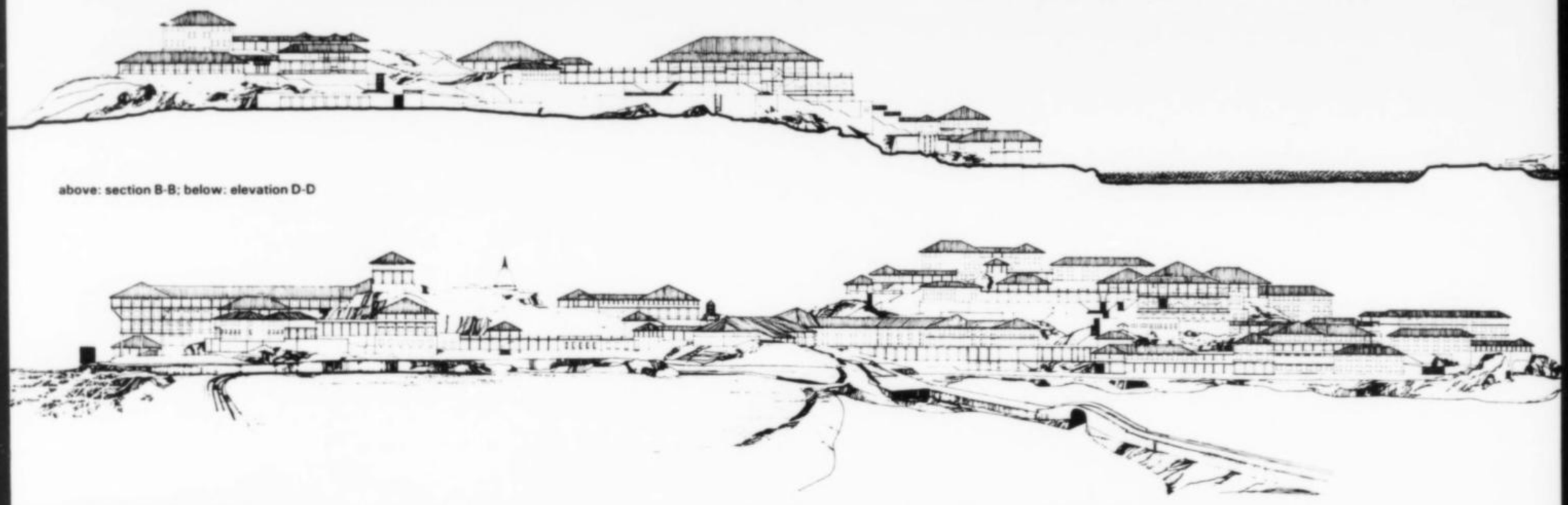
key
A, zoology
B, botany
C, faculty and auditorium
D, Sinhala and philosophy
E, lecture theatres
F, tutorial rooms
G, lecture theatres
H, geography
J, economics and management
K, student centre
L, chemistry
M, library
N, administration entrance
O, physics
P, science faculty entrance
Q, mathematics
R, bridge
S, bachelor staff
T, vice chancellor's lodge
U, restaurant and guest house
V, coffee shop
W, open-air theatre



Facing page:
1, the stepped open space at the centre of the site.
2, from the gateway, the university climbs up the slope like a hill town. This is an early photograph: vegetation will soon bind the composition together. The architect-in-charge was Nihal Bodhinayake.

2→





above: section B-B; below: elevation D-D

UNIVERSITY OF RUHUNU, MATARA, SRI LANKA

CRITICISM BY MICHAEL BRAWNE

Standing at the top of a long flight of steps which started within the shade of a colonnade, emerged into the sun, appeared to slide past a series of red tiled roofs and was lost as if running down to the sea, Geoffrey Bawa exclaimed: 'If that view doesn't turn a student into a civilised person, nothing will'. That belief in a way encapsulates the thoughts behind many of the design decisions which have created the University of Ruhunu on three hillsides overlooking the Indian Ocean in the south of Sri Lanka.

The evocative combination of buildings and landscape has for long been one of the hallmarks of Bawa's architecture. It is clearly evident in his own house at Lunuganga where the garden and even the surrounding countryside have been shaped over the years into a series of spaces that relate to vantage points, vistas and routes (AR May 1983, pp57-63). It was entirely appropriate that the recent book devoted to his work should have as its opening chapter a detailed description of that garden.* The same patient exploration of site and buildings can be sensed in most of his designs. This is true whether it is a whole complex of the most basic sheds at a farm school (AR April 1978, pp212-217) or the entrance hall of a luxury hotel (AR May 1983 pp24-29). No visitor can fail to be moved, for instance, when arriving at the Triton Hotel where at the end of a walled drive and beyond a grove of palm trees in a pool there is a great opening that reveals a cool polished floor, beyond it a blue swimming pool merging as one plane with a green-blue sea stretching to the horizon. The tropical idyll is suddenly turned into reality.

Geoffrey Bawa completed the complex of Parliament buildings on an island within a lake a few miles outside Colombo in 1982 (AR May 1983 pp17-23). It seemed as if it might be the crowning achievement of his career although certain aspects were perhaps not typical of his work. The need to create an enclosed air-conditioned building prevented both that kind of openness which makes the Triton Hotel entrance so memorable and that layering of open and closed spaces, of courtyards

3, 4, 5, the whole university is woven together with a network of covered routes, relating interior and exterior and always framing views of the lush landscape.



3



4

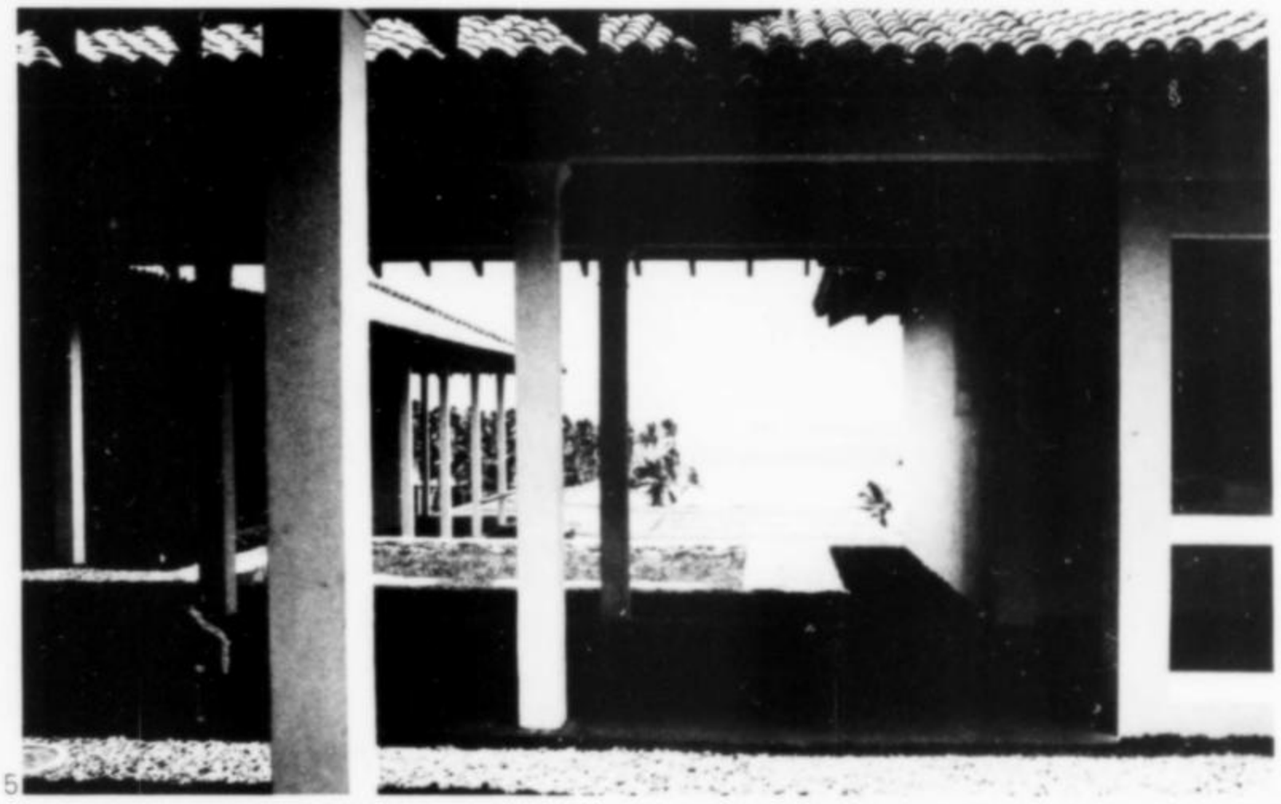
*Taylor, Brian Bruce: *Geoffrey Bawa* ('Architects in the Third World' Series), Mimar, Singapore and New York, 1986.





and rooms, which is so notable in many of his houses. Moreover, the need to work with an international contractor on an extremely stringent timetable stopped that creation of details by trial and error which allows for local variations in a building in response to unforeseen circumstances. Only current contractual arrangements in the West prevent the continuation of that historical trend where the site and the craftsman working on it are an extension of the design process. To watch Geoffrey Bawa resting on a shooting stick deciding on the height of a dividing wall while workmen move bricks, or having some paving and plants shifted in a court until they appear right, is to be aware of another era as well as one's own envy.

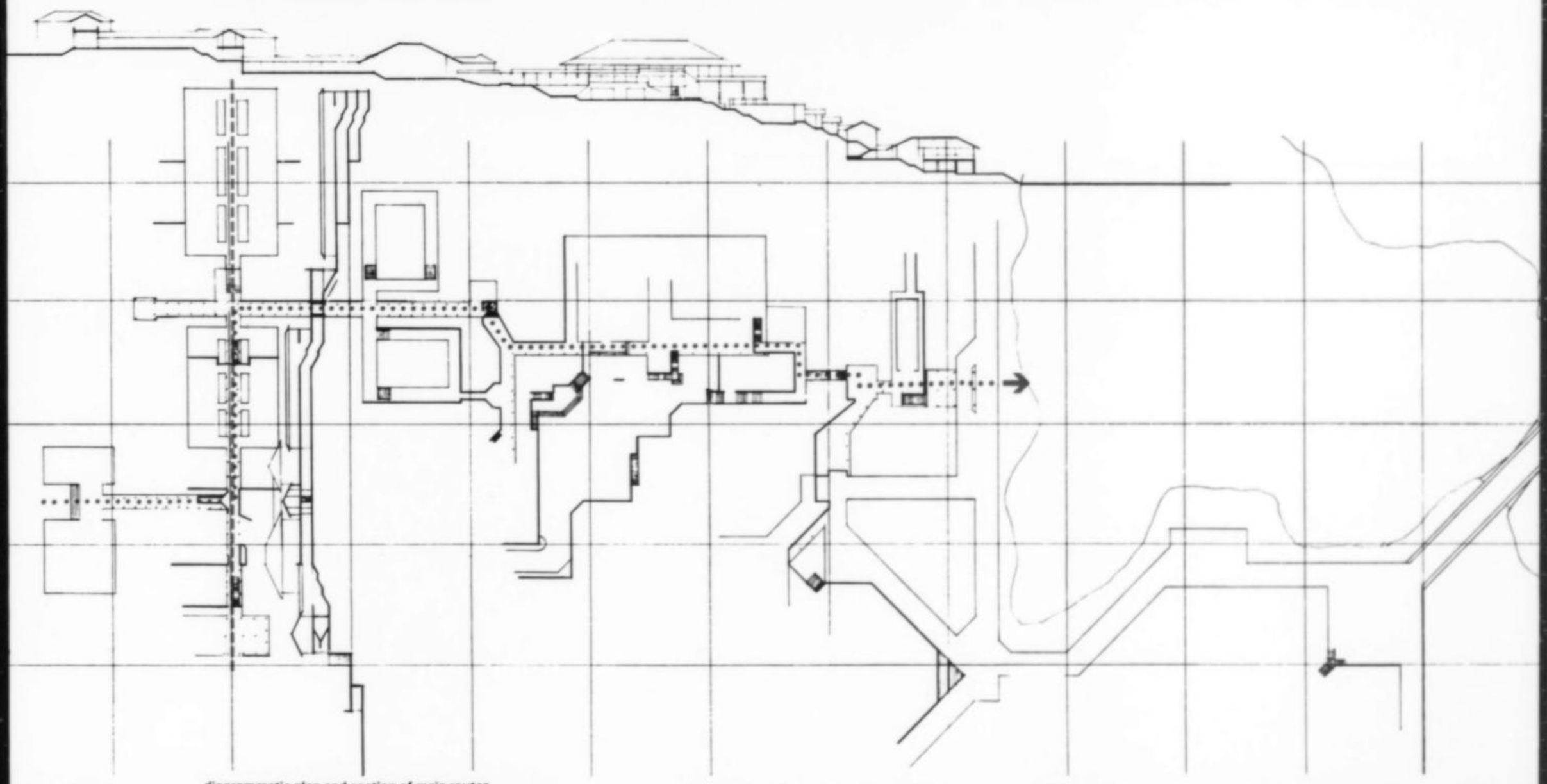
Ruhunu differs radically from the Parliament Building. It is an open group of pavilions placed on the ground as the hillside demands, linked by covered ways, stairs and terraces to make an inhabited landscape. Many years ago when working on the early designs of a new university in this country, it seemed to me that a highly appropriate and flexible solution would be a series of enlarged and linked Robie Houses, each responsive to how the last had been built for its particular needs. But there seemed no way of even drawing this so as to convince a Vice-Chancellor, his committees, the UGC or quantity surveyors working on cost plans and forecasts of annual expenditure. Administrative and contractual methods inevitably limit architectural possibilities.



5

What can be seen at Ruhunu above its new lake near the sea is an assembly of buildings at domestic or just above domestic scale; occasionally they might be thought part of some minor palace. The 45 or so separate buildings have been put up over six years by an international contractor from the Netherlands who has learned to work with Geoffrey Bawa and his office so that the accidental, the unique, even the apparently idiosyncratic still find their place. It is an architectural as well as a managerial achievement in which Bawa's engineer partner, Dr K. Poologasundram, played an important role.

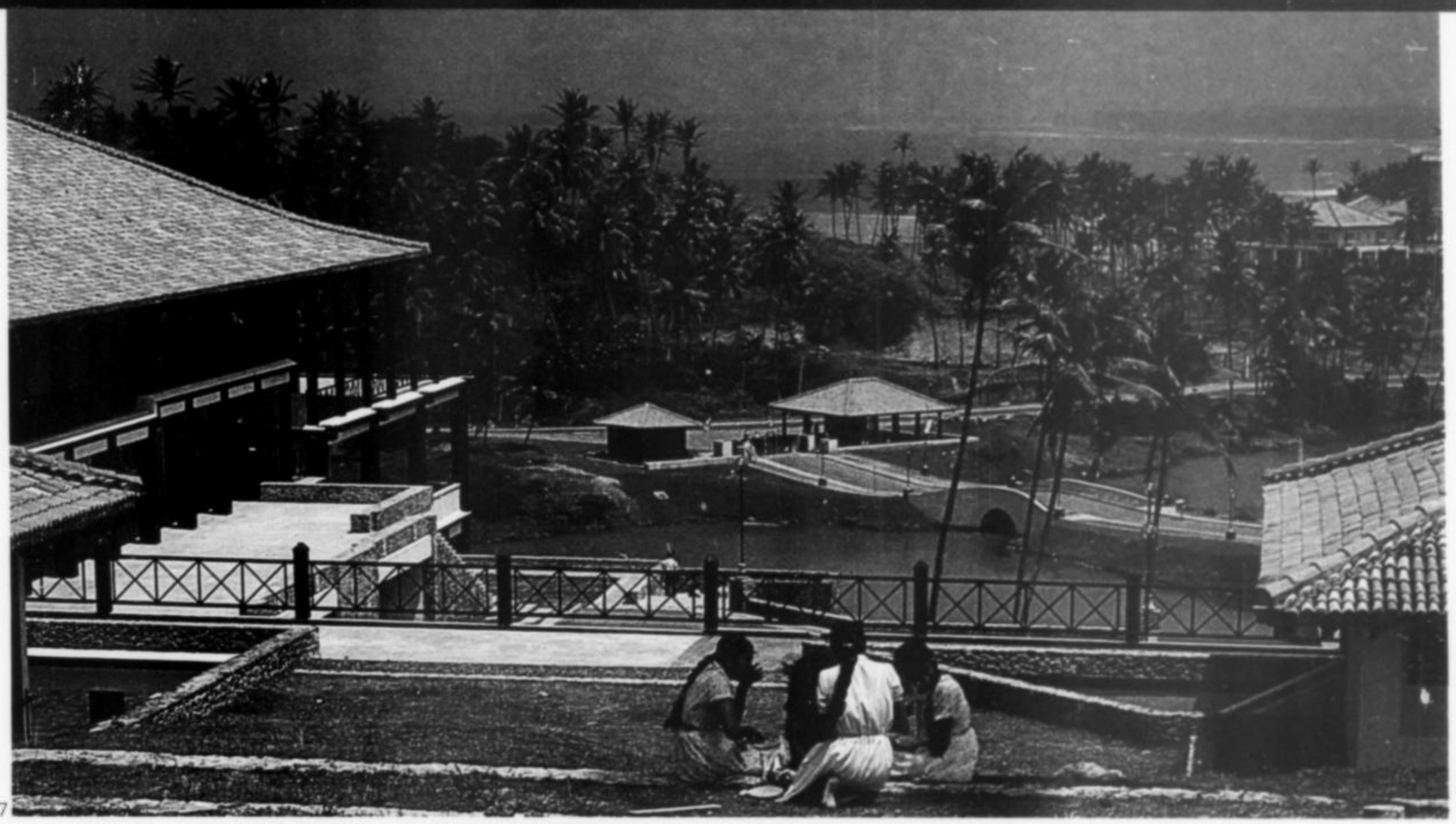
The buildings differ from each other quite obviously though clearly certain common themes run through them: the importance of the roof, balconies, the preservation of the wall plane and the emphasis of the openings made in it, asymmetry as governing the general arrangement even if locally parts are composed symmetrically and—perhaps



diagrammatic plan and section of main routes



UNIVERSITY OF RUHUNU, MATARA



7



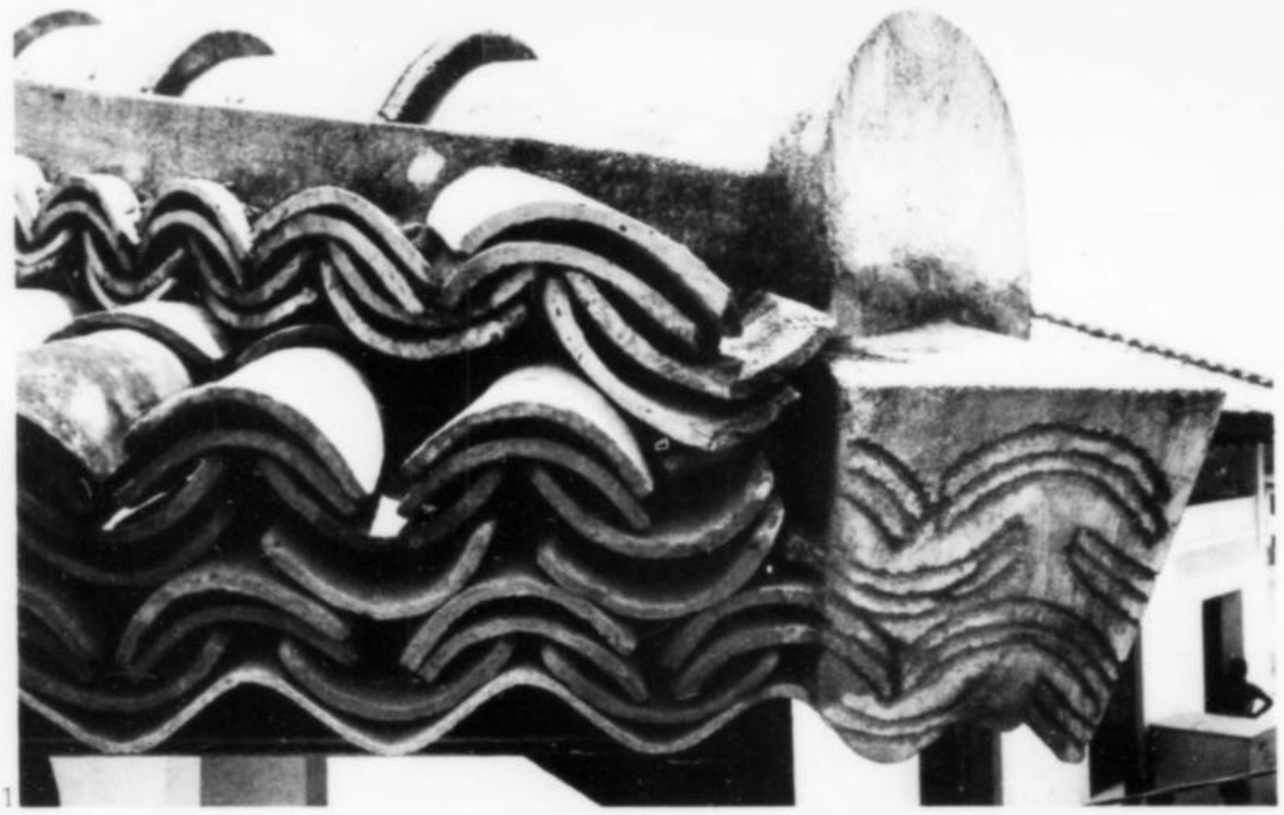
8

6, physics building: 'the paradoxical combination of openness with solidity'.
7, views from the amazing site are exploited whenever possible: this vista greets the visitor emerging from the long covered way at the eastern side of the site.
8, 9, the buildings differ from each other quite obviously but are united by common themes: roof, balconies, wall plane openings.
10, the routes widen into small spaces (both covered and uncovered) which are intended to act as social nodes.

9



10



11

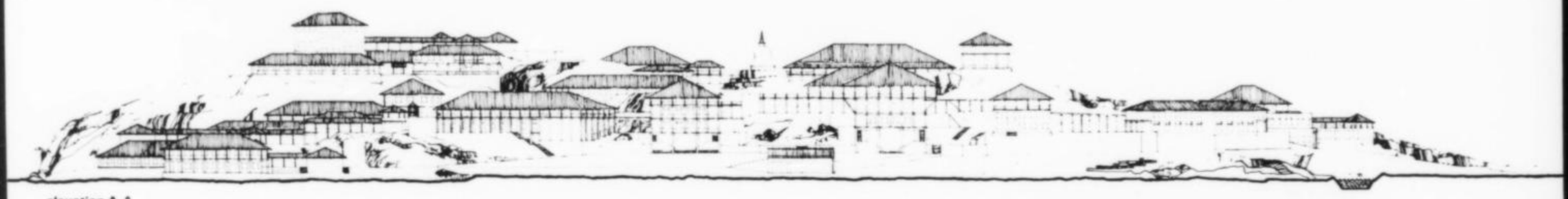
11, eaves detail used throughout. Bawa piles up the last few courses of tiles to get a thick, rich, ripply edge. The craftsmen suggested the decoration on the cement corners.
12, most of the university had to be designed to be seen from above.

most important of all—the paradoxical combination of openness with solidity. The breeze blows through but there is nothing flimsy about any of the construction.

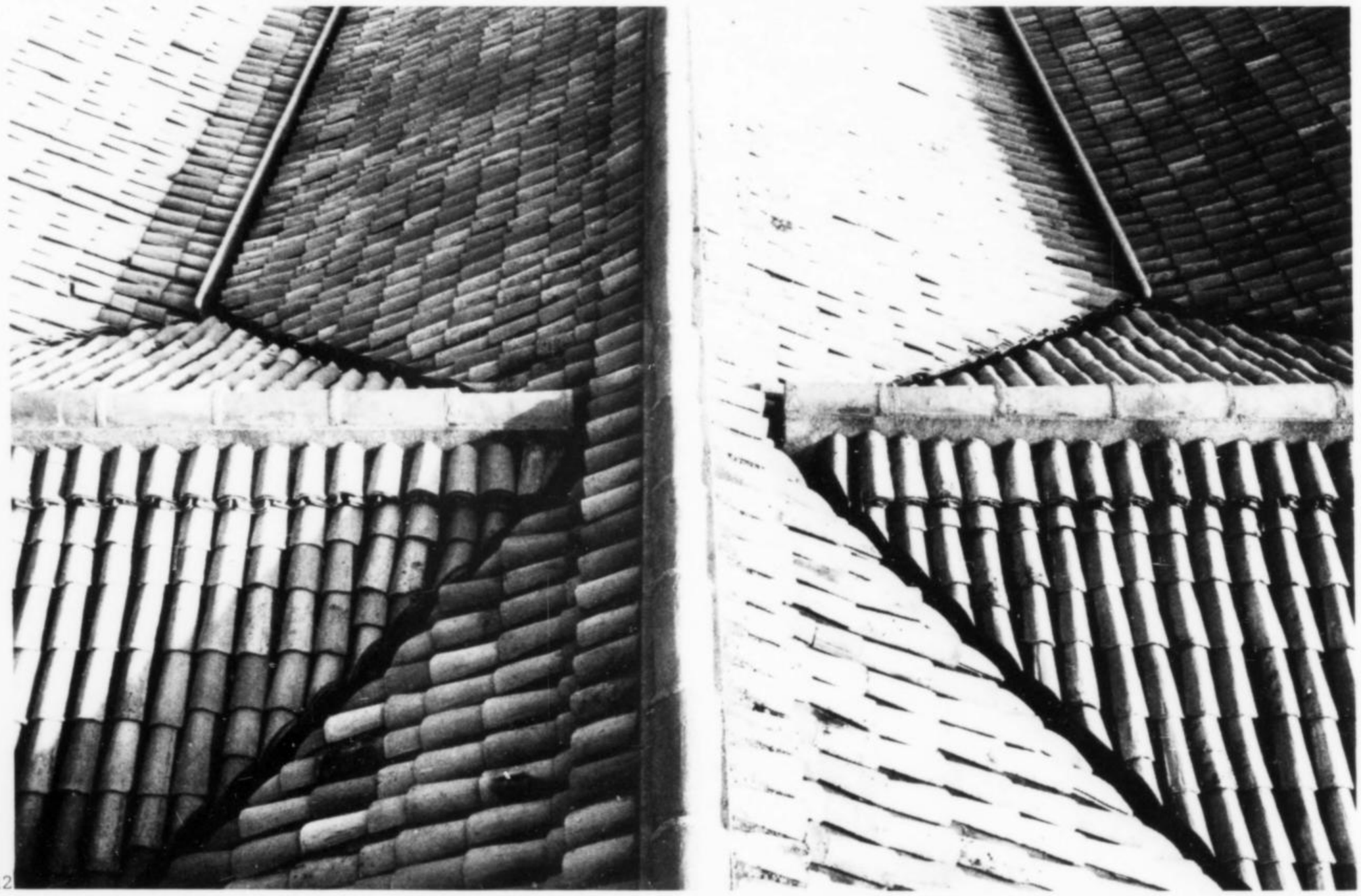
What of course binds it together is the design of the landscape, that usually vestigial percentage which appears at the end of the Bill of Quantities as 'external works'. It is the long, linking, covered ways punctuated by gazebos, the stone retaining walls, terraces and stairs, trees, shrubs and the new lake between the road and the first buildings which are the fabric which can be embroidered with buildings. Large parts of Sri Lanka have hillsides just like those of the University site; many are terraced with iridescent green rice fields backed by trees. At Ruhunu the terraces have become bigger, more sculptural, but they still maintain that balance between horizontal and vertical which marks so much of the landscape between the coast and the upland tea plantations.

The irregular stepped composition could of course be related to what can now be seen among the ruins of the great cities at Anaradapura and Polunnaruwa or at the foot of the rock outcrop at Sigyria. To ascribe direct historical influences, however, would in my view be wrong. Just as I believe that stylistic labels of 'critical regionalism' or 'contextualism' or 'historicism' would be inappropriate. Not just because they are extremely difficult to define but because they would be both wrong and right. Of course the attitudes that lie behind these labels are an influence but they are not necessarily a sufficient and only explanation.

There is a long-standing building tradition in Sri



elevation A-A



12

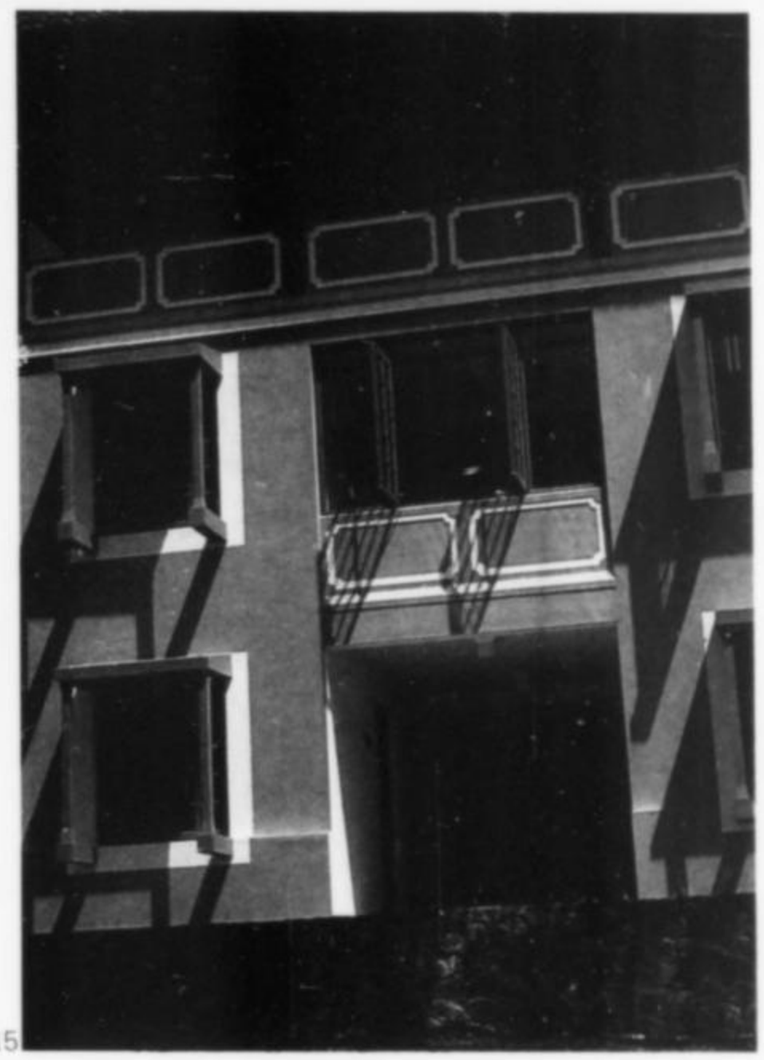


13



14

13, almost archaic rubble retaining walls are often needed to cope with the changes of level as here at the terraces of the lecture theatre.
14, colonnaded perambulatory of the department of geography: 9in gap in valley creates soft internal light.
15, 'The emphasis on openings'.
16, entry to library.



15



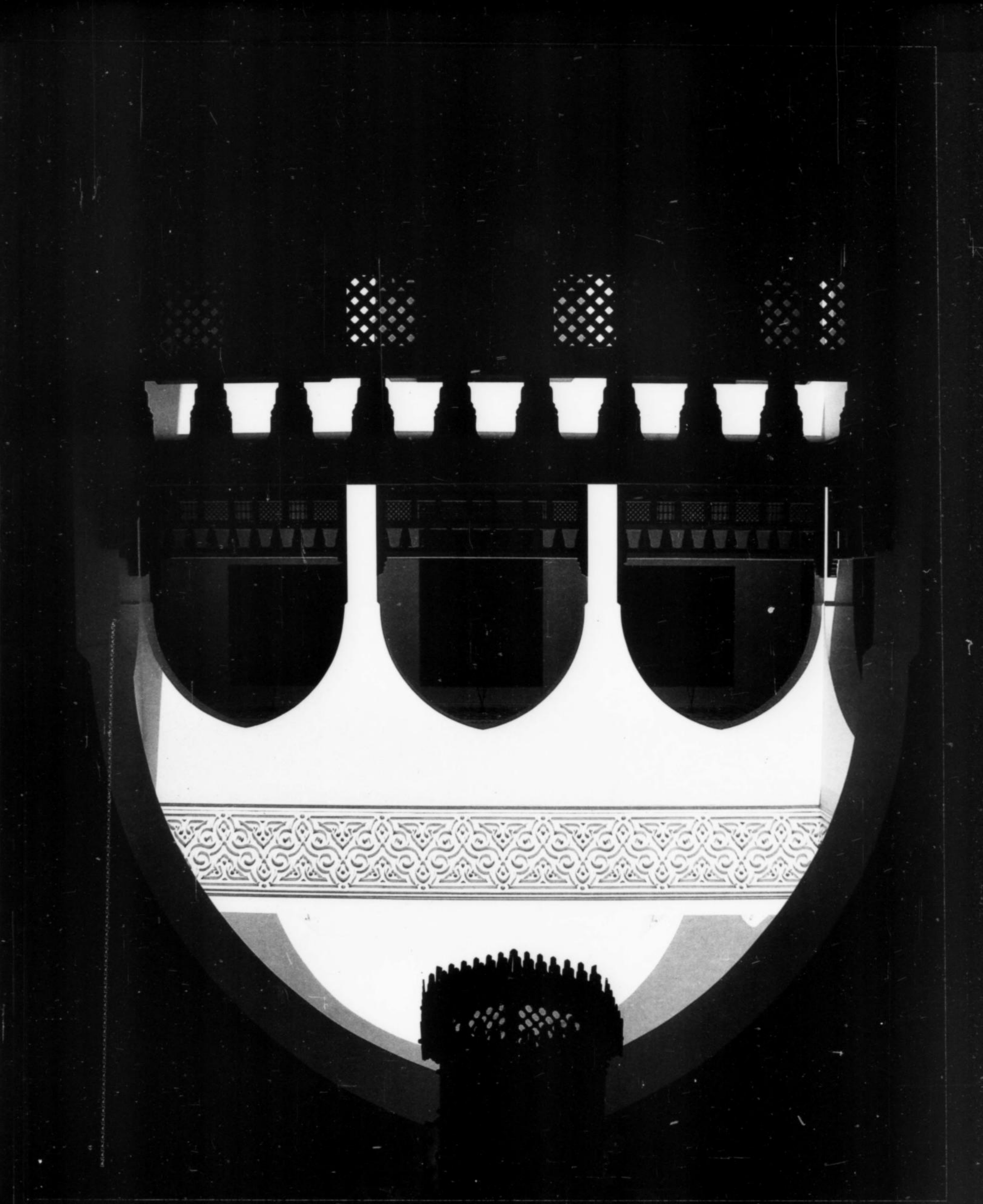
16

UNIVERSITY OF RUHUNU, MATARA

Lanka which is an amalgam of a wide range of influences: Buddhist architecture from India, building methods of the Mediterranean brought by Muslim Arab traders and Portuguese colonists, Dutch and British modifications of European styles. All of these are superimposed on and modified by an indigenous, simple way of building in the tropics with mud, mud brick and woven palm fronds. Geoffrey Bawa is part of that tradition; he knows it and uses it.

It would be fair to add that this might not always have been the case. During a conversation in 1982 just before he was awarded the Gold Medal of the Sri Lanka Institute of Architects, Geoffrey Bawa was outlining a proposal he had to send Sri Lankan students of architecture on a study tour of India. They would perhaps start at the marvellous palace complex of Padmanabhapuram in Kerala, sit under the red sandstone roof of an open pavilion at Fathepur Sikri, have tea at the Taj Mahal Hotel in Bombay and eventually reach the carved stone city of Jaisalmer at the far end of the Sind plain. And then Bawa added almost as an afterthought, but nevertheless as an important aspect of such a journey: '. . . and they need not even see a single modern building.' It is I suspect not a comment he would have made in 1957 on his return from studying in England or even more than a decade later when designing the Ceylon pavilion for Expo '70 at Osaka. That move, however, is part of a general shift in architectural thought and of our views about appropriateness of models. The completed buildings at the University of Ruhunu show thus how successfully that general shift has been adapted to the conditions of a tropical island and the peculiarities of those hillsides at the edge of the Indian Ocean.

The students' journey also included tea at the Taj. This was not a flippant remark made just to amuse but, like the belief in the civilising influence of the seaview, is part of a deep-seated commitment to the idea that architecture plays an important role in making our lives fuller and richer; that tea at the Taj will not be the same as tea elsewhere and that somehow the simple act of having tea will be celebrated by the surroundings in which it occurred. To watch the new students at Ruhunu open their leaf-wrapped parcels of rice and curry and have lunch under a great roof—partly covering a terrace, partly a withdrawn cave—with a view of red roofs, palms and the sea is to have that belief strongly reinforced and to see its results produce just such a happy celebration.



Chris Abel

Work of El-Wakil

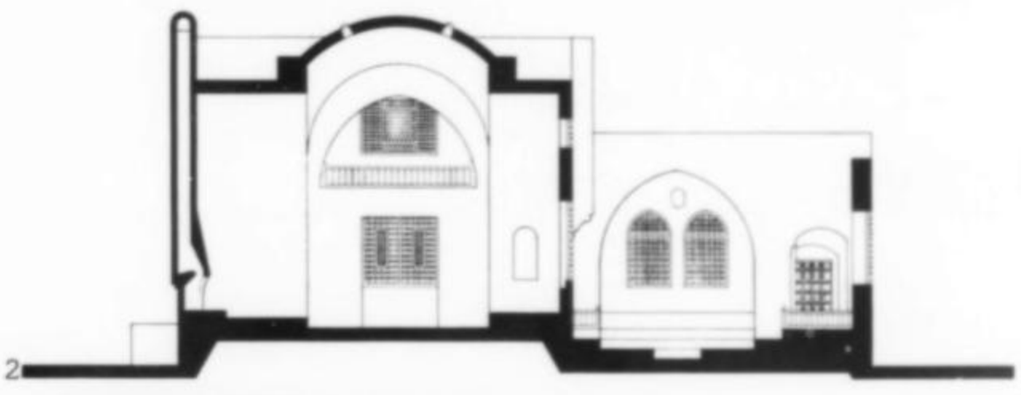
Abdelwahed El-Wakil's work is the most literal and traditional shown in this issue. It is an attempt to understand the Muslim heritage, to learn to work within it—and to reinterpret it for contemporary conditions.

Abdelwahed El-Wakil's background fits precisely that of the self-taught regionalist. Having rebelled against the usual Westernised architectural education, El-Wakil sought inspiration closer to home. He found it in the example of Hassan Fathy, whose name and work were, he recalls, hardly mentioned, and then only in disparaging terms, by his Modernist teachers in Cairo.

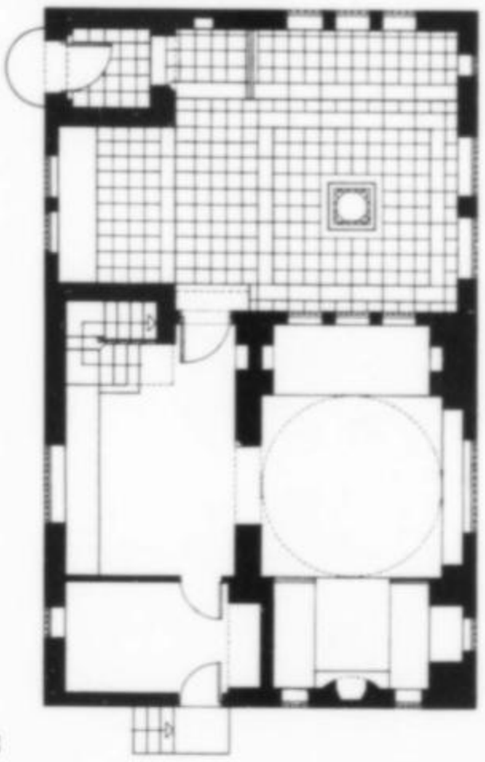
However, though most of El-Wakil's structures are also made from the same craft technology of stone, sunburnt brick, and hand-carved timberwork that he learnt from Fathy, the buildings themselves represent a different focus of attention from the rural situation which was the old master's main concern. What El-Wakil has been able to demonstrate is the extraordinary flexibility of use, within a contemporary urban context, of the basic elements of Islamic architecture. Whether building a modest weekend house, like the Hamdy house outside Cairo, or residences on the grand scale, like the Sulaiman Palace in Jeddah, or one of his group of mosques along the Jeddah Corniche, the same masonry technology and formal language of vaults, domes, arcades, internal courtyards and wooden screens is repeated, but always with considerable freedom and invention in the total ensemble.

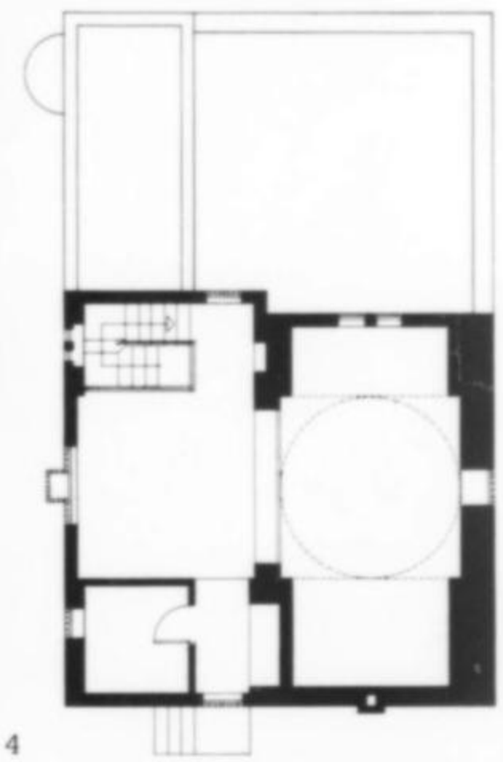
The flexibility of the architecture derives from the way the major building types of Islamic culture were frequently put to more than one use. The first mosque, for example, was both the home of the Prophet himself, and a place for communal worship, and provided for other community and political activities. The tradition of mixed residential and community functions was continued in later developments of the mosque, where the *immam,* or leader of the congregation, was also the political leader, whose residence frequently backed onto the mosque. Even when the *immam* was not

1 (facing page), Al Sulaiman Mosque: the continuation of tradition.
Hamdy house, a modest weekend house near Cairo re-uses many immemorial patterns:
2, section.
3, ground floor plan.
4, first floor plan.
5, the relatively non-committal street facades.
6, sleeping alcove.


2

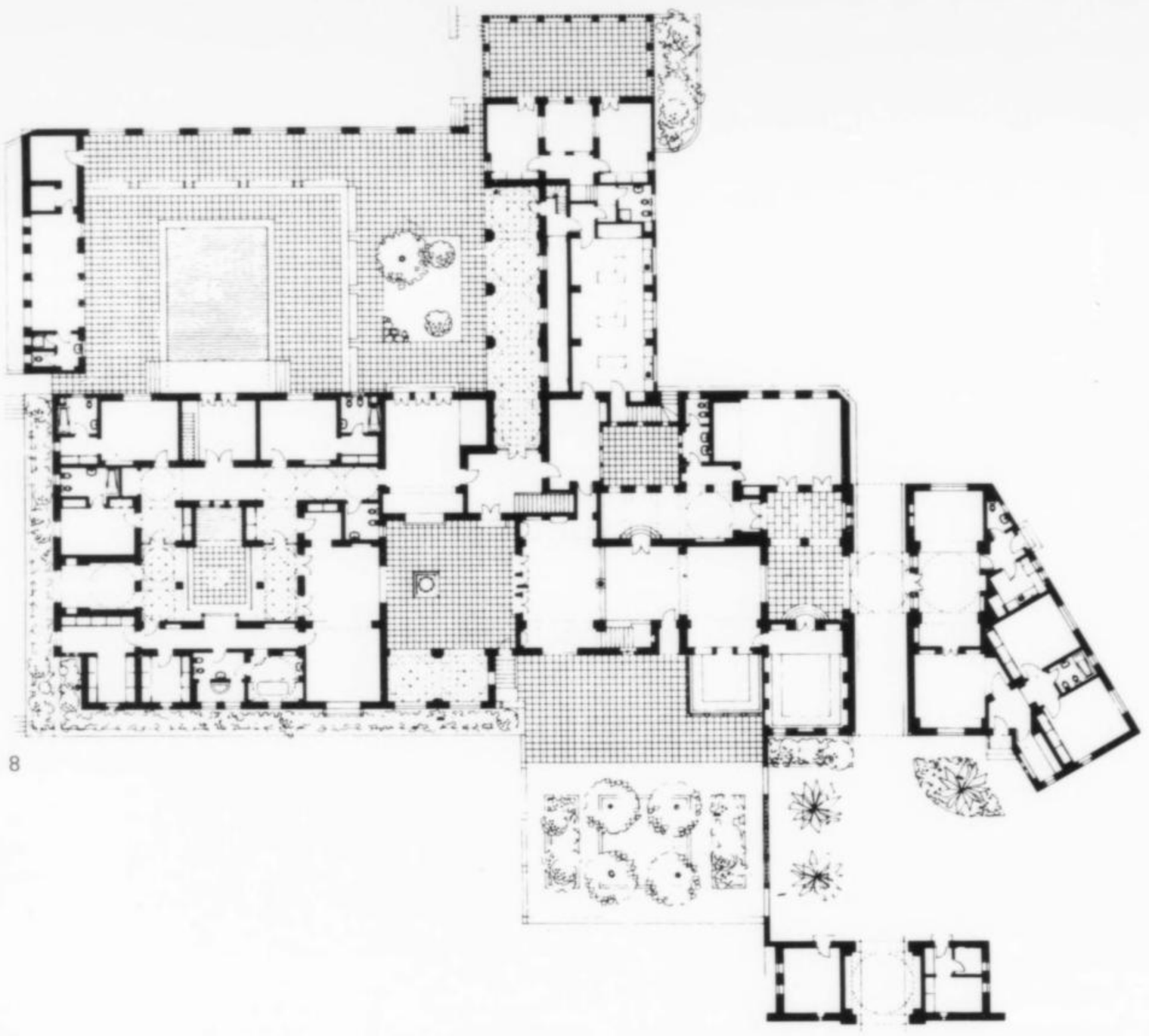

5


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4


6

Sulaiman Palace, Jeddah:
7, filigree dome over courtyard.
8, plan . . .
9, 10, . . . and section and aerial view: a complex of internal and external spaces closely meshed together.



8



7



9

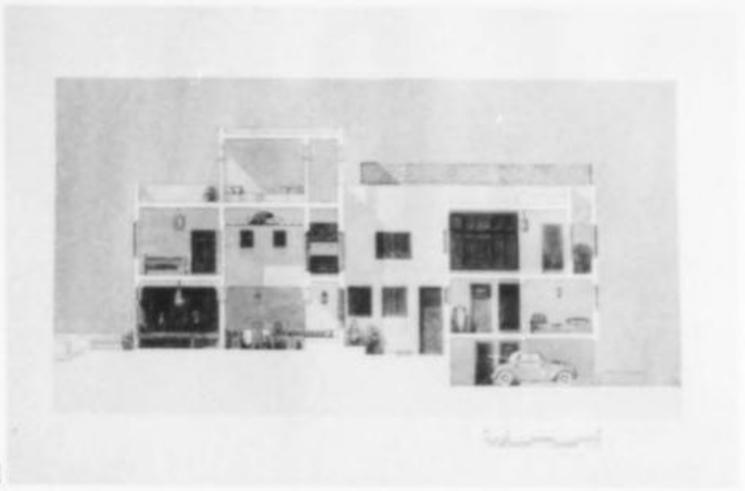
the ruler, residential accommodation might be provided for himself and his retinue. The Madrasa, or school for religious instruction, also combined residential and religious uses.

However, the buildings on which El-Wakil models his own architecture stood in very different surroundings to those in which he must now work. Closely hemmed in on all sides, often sharing three party walls with neighbouring buildings, the compact structure of the traditional Arab city—in

El-Wakil



10

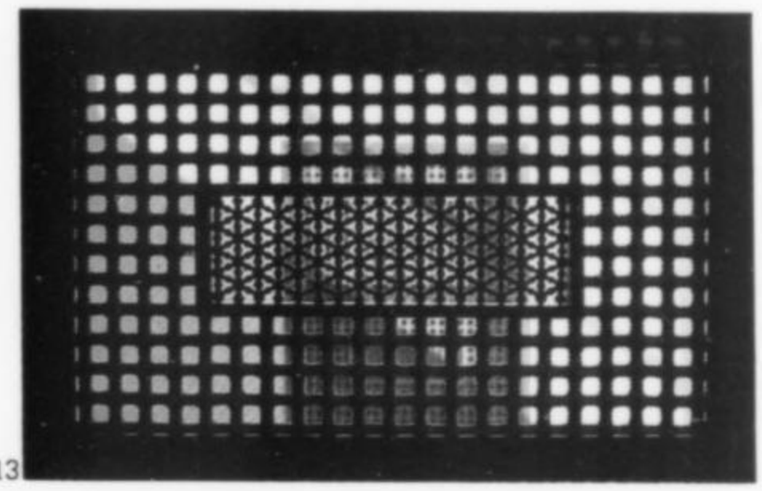


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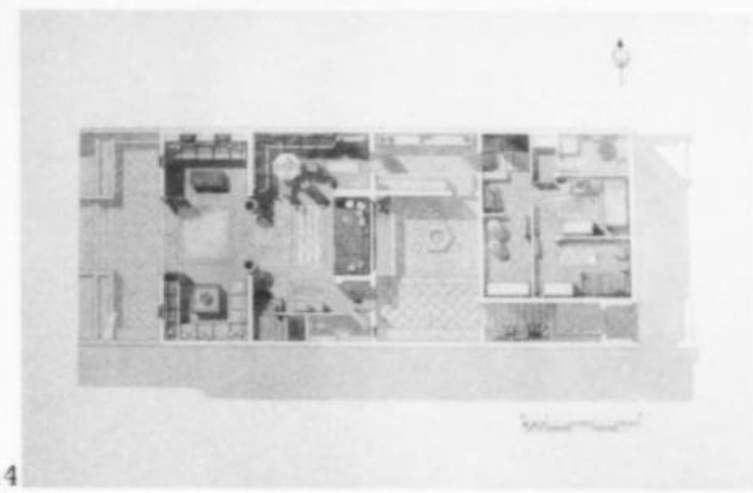


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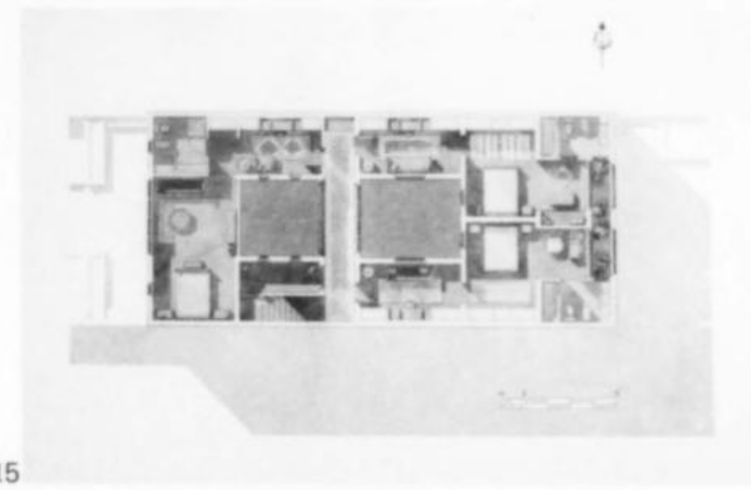
Chourbaggy house, Giza, Cairo: 11-15, a reinterpretation of the spatial, luminous and detailed qualities of the traditional Cairene house.



13



14



15

keeping with Islamic customs—prevents any single building from drawing attention to itself, other than in the most discreet fashion. Wealthy and poor often lived side by side, the only sign to give the richer man's home away being a more elaborate, decorated entrance, set into an otherwise blank wall. Even the local mosque would be mostly hidden from view, identified only by its tall minaret.

El-Wakil's buildings, by contrast, are mostly free-standing (a notable exception is the Chourbaggy house, a prototype for compact urban terraces), often on exposed sites, a situation which places entirely new demands on the traditional language of form El-Wakil works with. Though focused on internal open courtyards, they also pay due respect to the external observer. El-Wakil's architecture therefore possesses an expressive sculptural quality which is lacking in the historical models drawn from Cairo and also in Fathy's more reticent architecture.

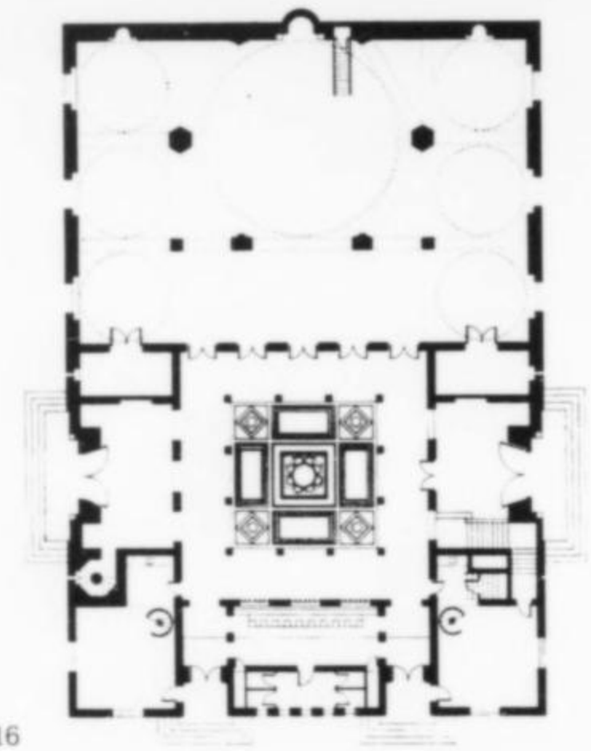
This concern for the external as well as internal aspects of his buildings applies to both large and small residences, but especially to his mosque designs, all of which have so far been built in Jeddah, under the enthusiastic patronage of that city's Mayor Muhammad Said Farsi, himself an architect. The first of these, the Al Sulaiman Mosque, stands completely isolated between two highways running parallel to and slightly inland from the Corniche. Externally, it is the least complex of all the Jeddah mosques, being a simple rectangular brick box dominated at the entrance end by a single minaret, and by masonry domes over the prayer room at the other, which is reached in the traditional sequence through ablutions and across an open courtyard. The impact of this straightforward geometry is enhanced by the raised platform on which the mosque stands, which further serves to emphasise the building as a detached object. Nevertheless, despite a strong presence, the most attractive features of the building are found within, in the arcades surrounding the courtyard, and the impressive main dome, which is modelled after the dome of the Sokullo Mehmet Pasha Mosque (AD 1571-72) built by Sinan in Turkey.

It was not until El-Wakil began to build the series of smaller mosques standing on the very edge of the Corniche itself, that he began to fully develop his architecture as sculpture-in-the-round, in response to the dramatic sites he was now given (it is interesting to note that the original commission requested by Mayor Farsi was for a sculpture expressive of the Islamic faith, to be set alongside the abstract modern sculptures already dotting the length of the Corniche). The first of three such mosques, the Island Mosque, stands virtually out into the sea, on a newly created peninsula of rock, not much bigger than the building itself. This extraordinary, seabound location is exploited by El-Wakil to the maximum. Orientation toward Mecca dictates that the prayer room is kept to the landward side, with the adjoining entrance courtyard facing seawards. Privacy is thus ensured, while giving worshippers a splendid view of the open sea, exquisitely framed by the pointed arches of the surrounding gallery. The asymmetrical complex of domed prayer room, minaret and gallery presents an extraordinarily powerful silhouette against the Red Sea.

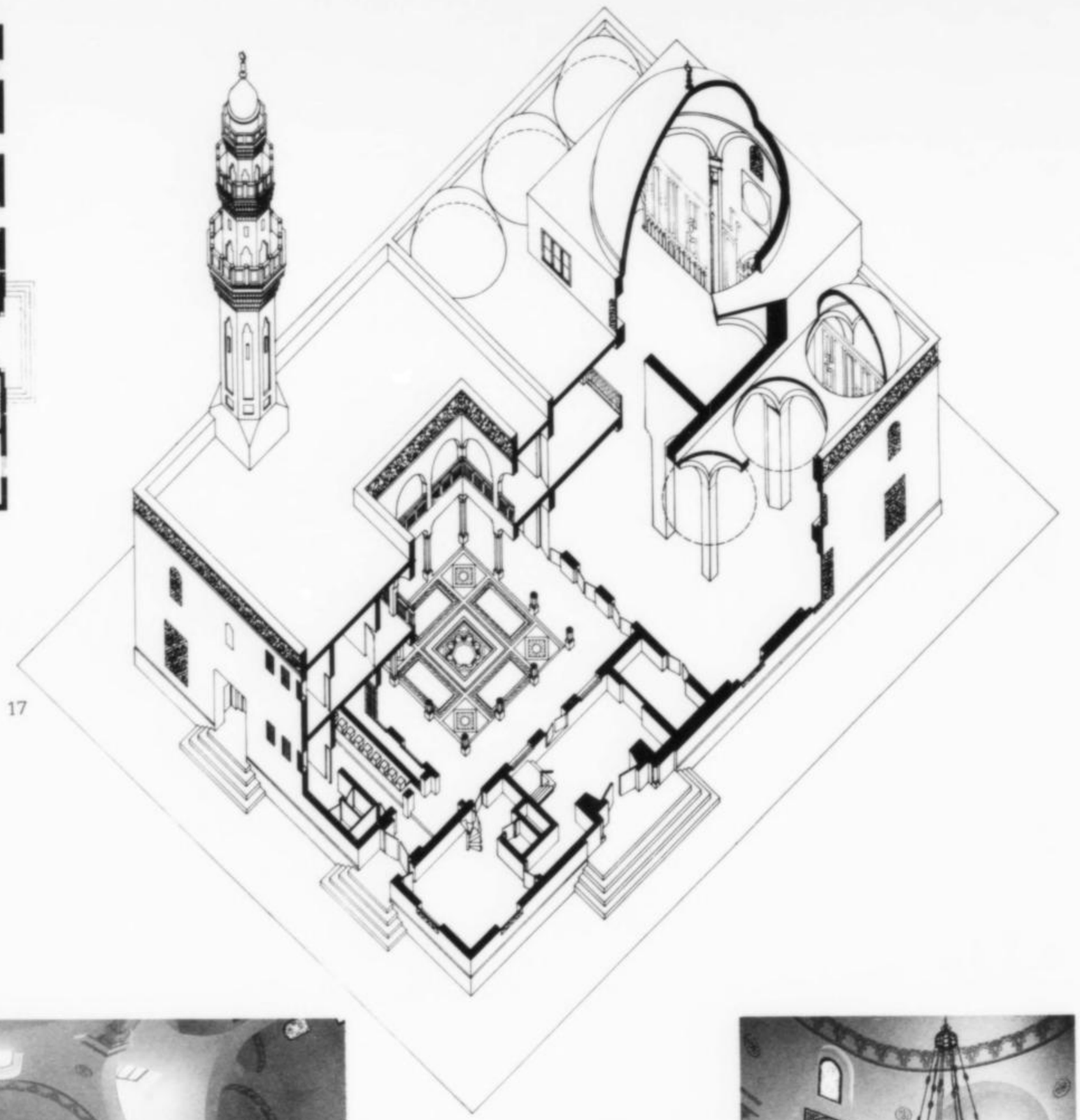
The other two mosques in the series exhibit progressively freer forms. The Corniche Mosque is even smaller, its bunched-up shapes and chunky minaret taking the concept of the minimal mosque to the absolute limit. Yet, both externally and internally, it possesses a three-dimensional quality and authority that belies its minute size. The Ruwais Mosque is both larger than the other two and also the most Modern in the plasticity of its forms, the tiered succession of flowing vaults over the entrance court contrasting with the more conventional shapes of the domes and minaret.

The most recent of El-Wakil's mosque designs are on an altogether different scale. The King Saud Mosque under construction in Jeddah is closely modelled on the monumental Mosque-Madrasa of Sultan Hasan in Cairo, built in AD 1396-99. It has a similar four-*iwan* plan, which, after the building of the Sultan Hasan Mosque, came to supersede the conventional hypostyle mosque as the principal model. The main difference between the original model and the King Saud Mosque is that, where the corners of the former plan were filled with the ancillary accommodation needed to fulfil the dual function of mosque-madrasa, El-Wakil filled the corners of his mosque with domed hypostyle halls. The design therefore combines features of both early and later historical models, and demonstrates El-Wakil's increasing freedom of command over the traditional elements he has chosen to work with.

22,23→



16



17

El-Wakil

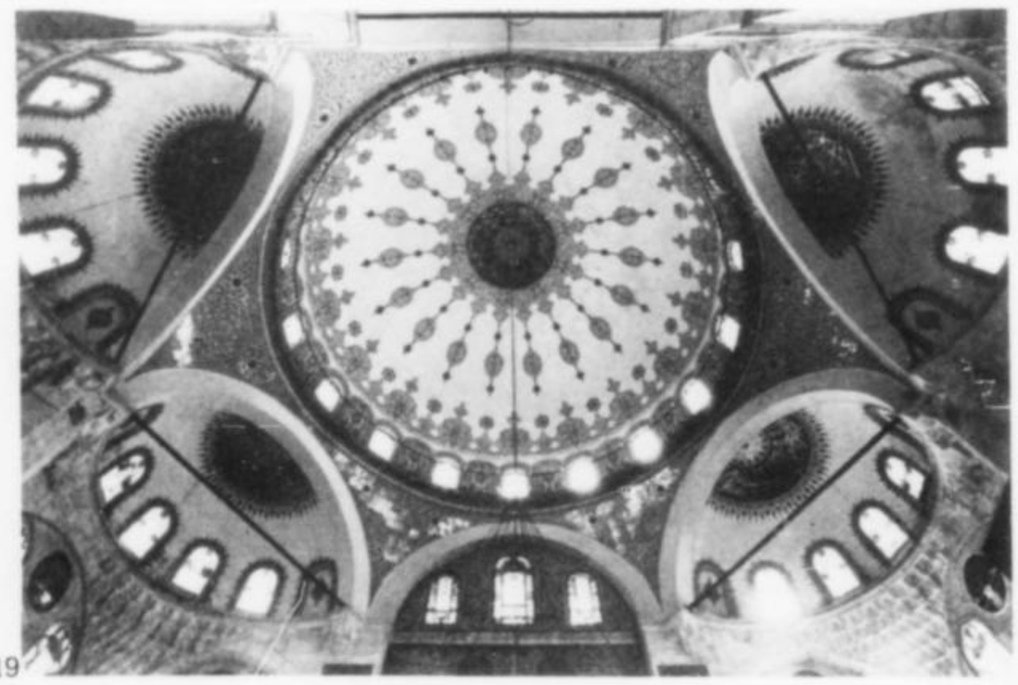


18

Al Sulaiman Mosque, Jeddah:
16, 17, plan, axonometric—the traditional sequence of spaces.
18, the dome of the Al Sulaiman,
19, is modelled on that of the sixteenth-century Sokullo Mehmet Pasha Mosque.
20, prayer room.
21, courtyard.
22, the simplest of El-Wakil's mosques on the Jeddah Corniche, the Al Sulaiman, is a box dominated by minaret, 23, and dome.
24, the traditional arcaded courtyard.



20

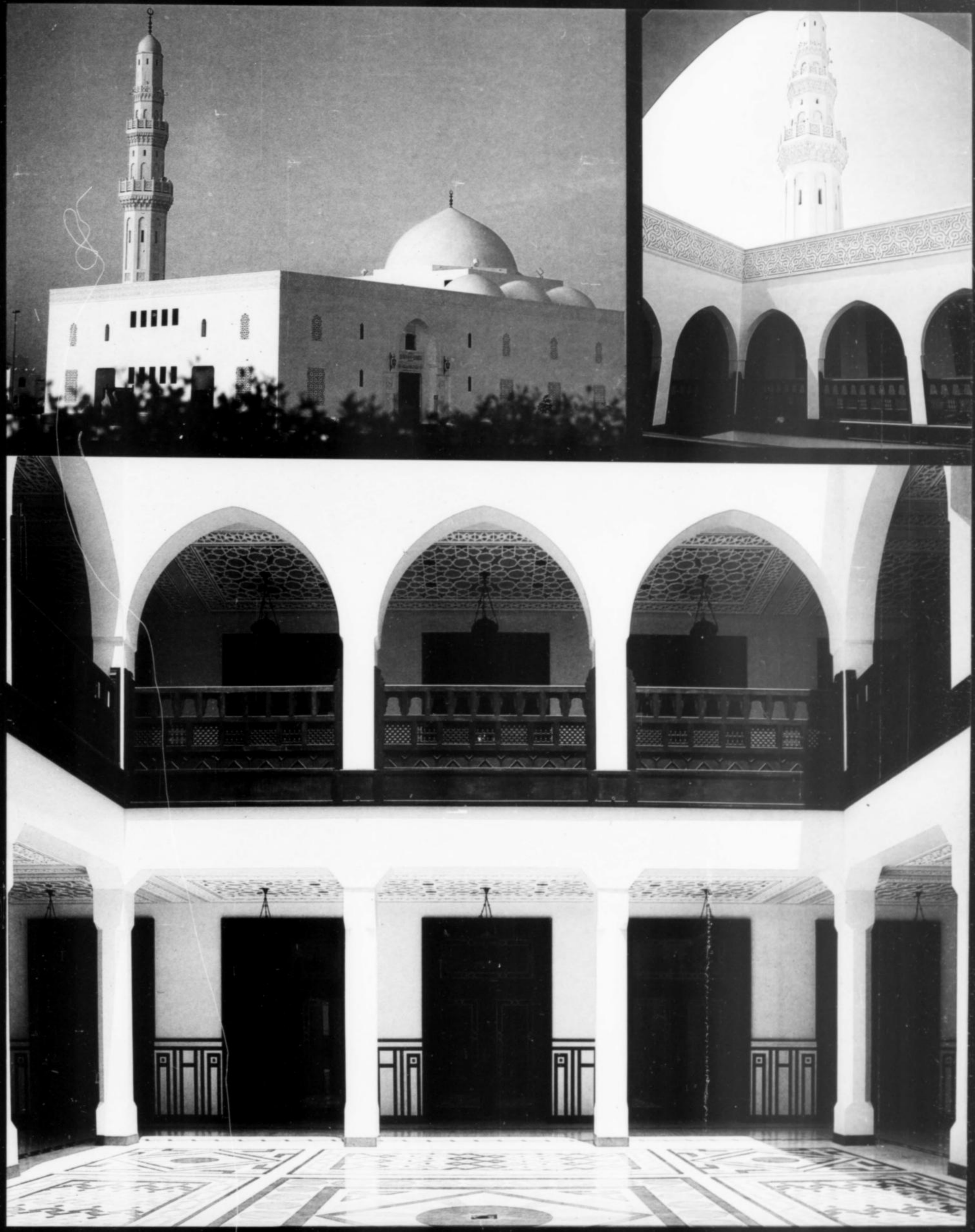


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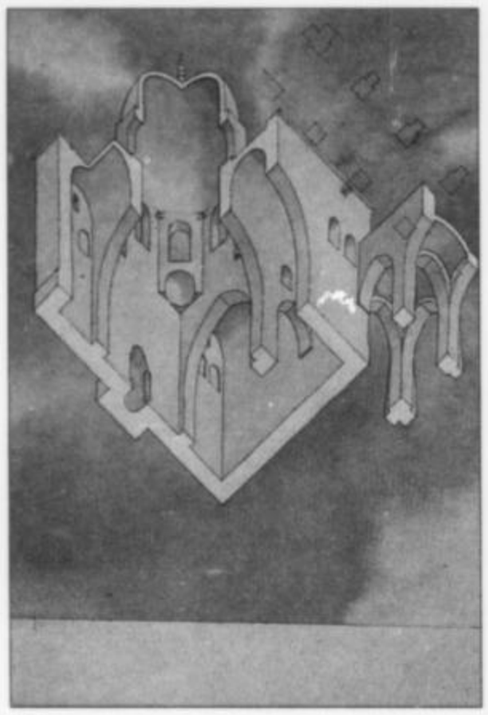
21

24→



Island Mosque
25, site plan.
26, the mosque stands virtually in the sea on a man-made island.
27, axonometric.
28, because the prayer room must be orientated towards Mecca, the entrance court is on the seaward side.
29, dome is created in traditional fashion without centering.

El-Wakil



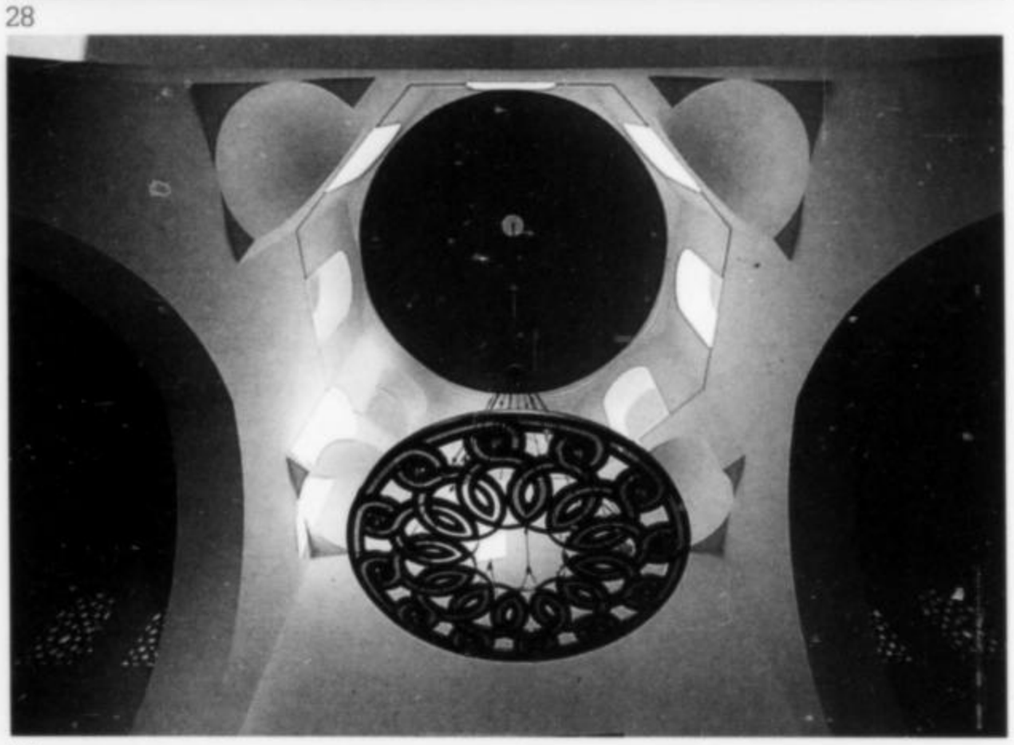
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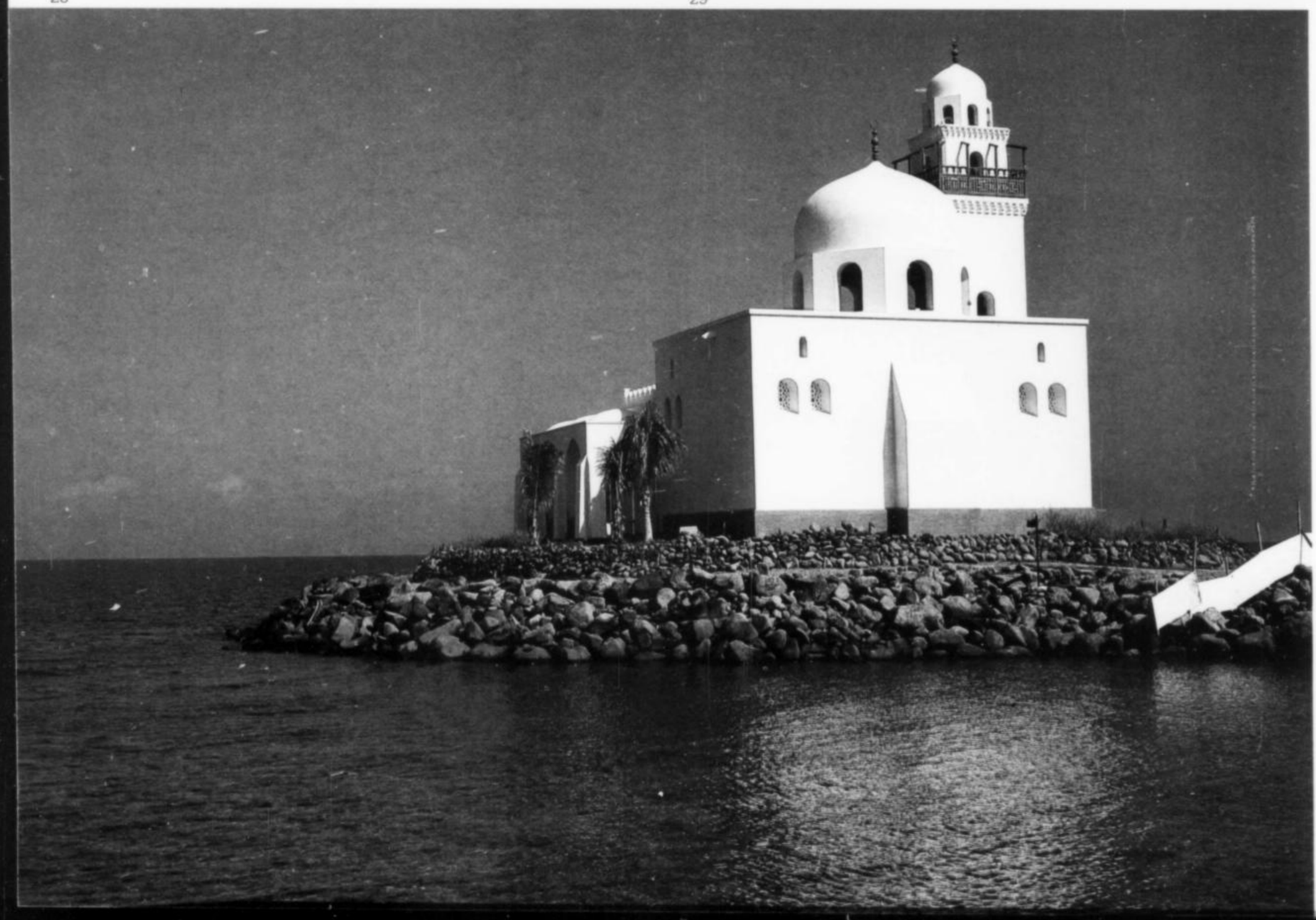
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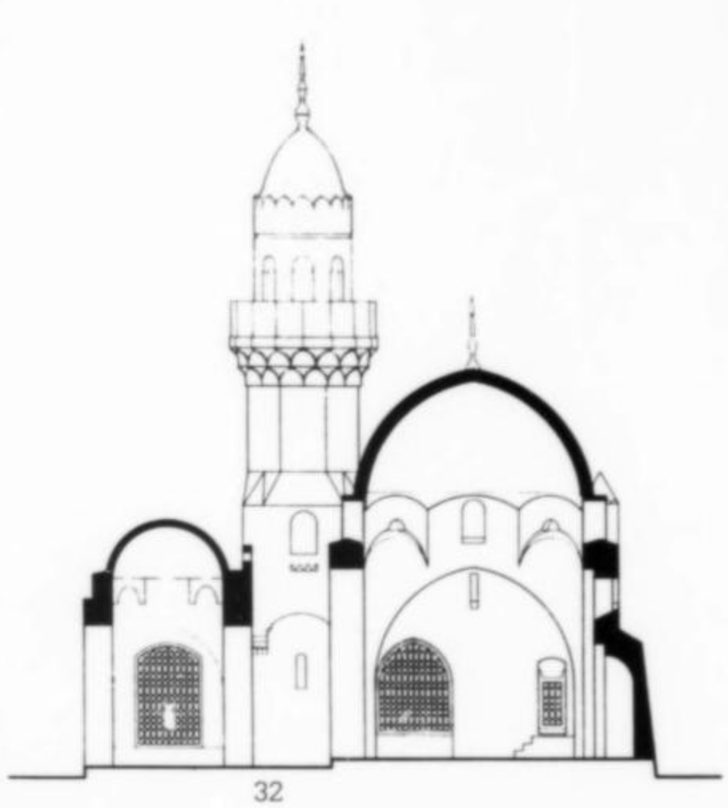


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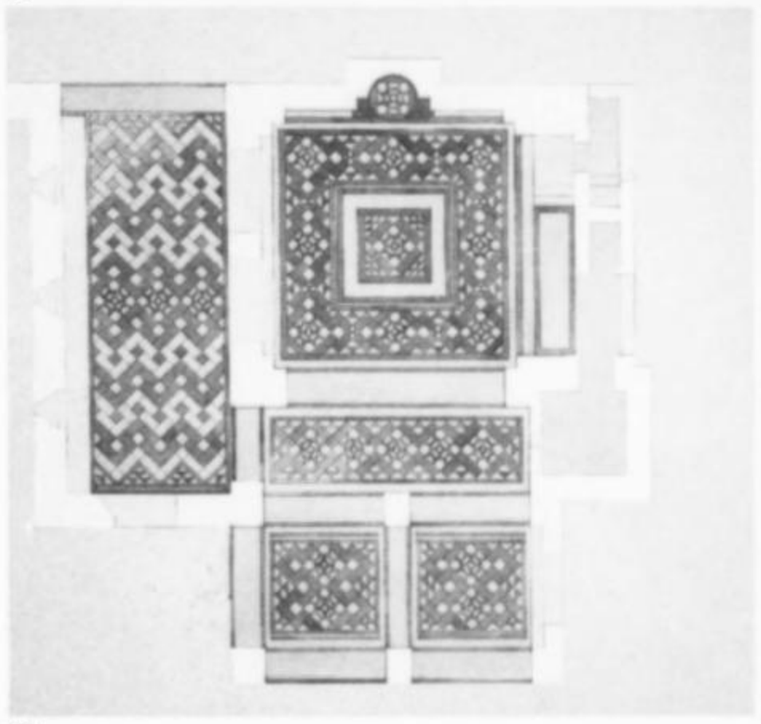
Corniche Mosque
30, 31, the idea of the minimal mosque taken to the absolute limit.
32, section.
33, plan (north is to the top).
34, between prayer room and vestibule is an extraordinary innovation—a slot open to the sky which frames the minaret.



31



32



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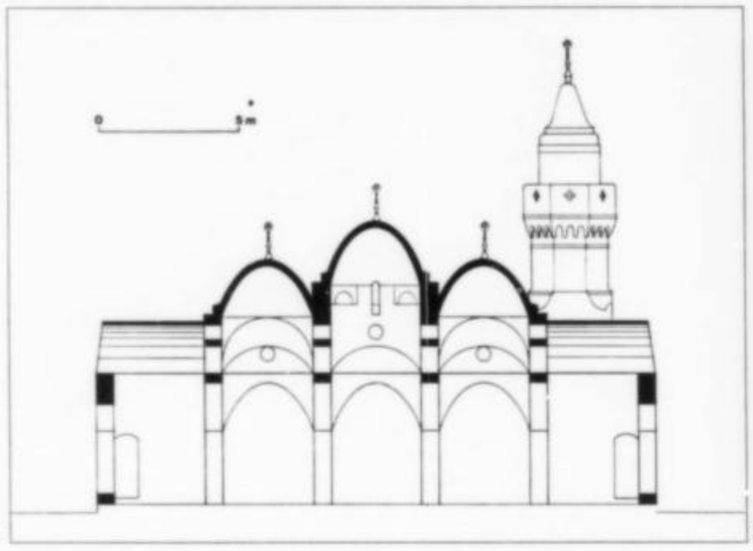


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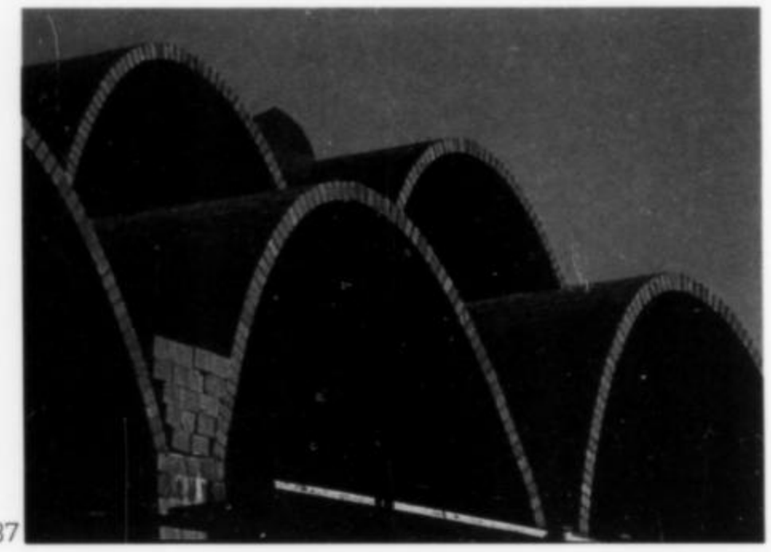
El-Wakil



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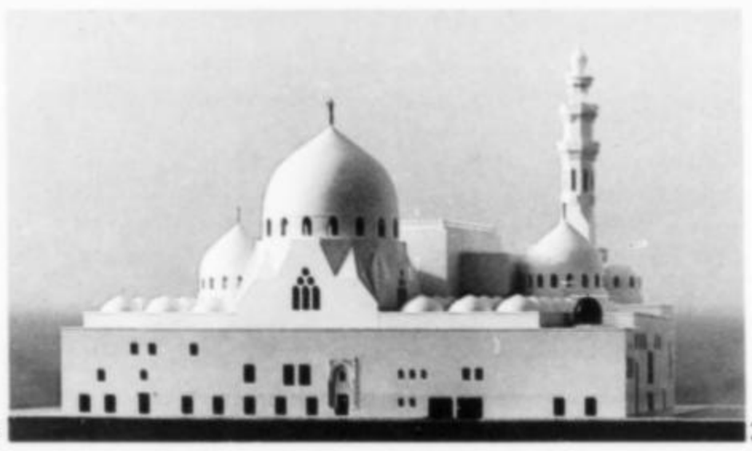


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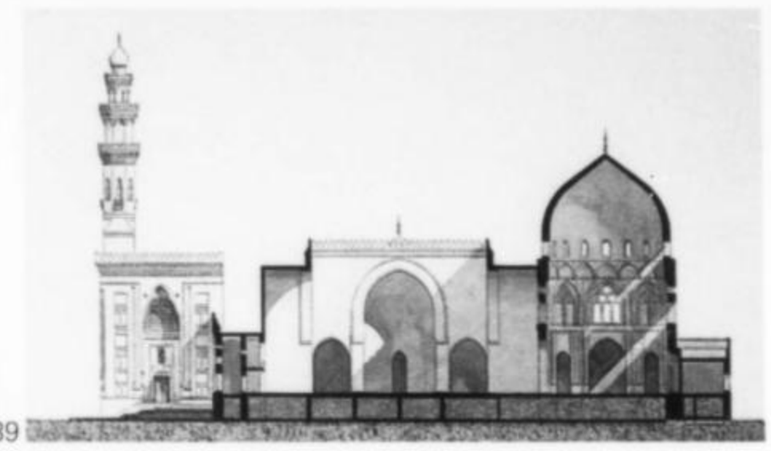


37

Rewais Mosque (project)
35, from the sea, the mosque is dominated by the almost Modern flowing vaults over the entrance court.
36, section.
37, vault construction in progress.

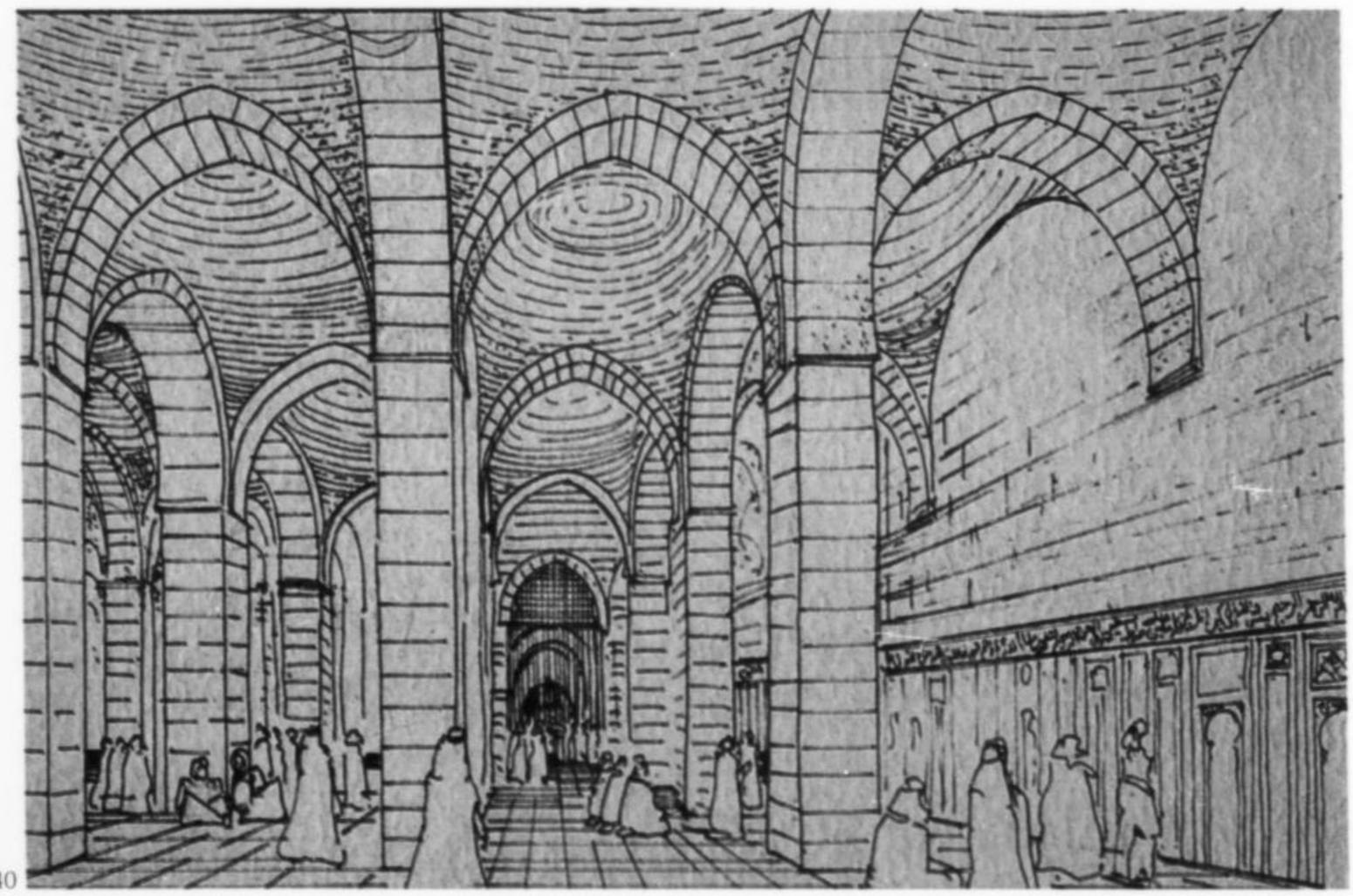


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39

King Saud Mosque (project)
38, the most monumental of El-Wakil's mosques, it combines features from historical models of different periods.
39, section.
40, perspective by El-Wakil.



40

Winfried Nerdinger



1, Garrison Church at Ulm (1908-11): early and daring use of concrete married to an affection for locality.

1

THEODOR FISCHER

Fischer was grandfather of German organic architecture based on region and tradition. Winfried Nerdinger explains his approach and influence. The article is translated by Peter Blundell Jones.

A well-worn Modernist legend has it that Gropius, Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier are supposed to have worked side by side in Peter Behrens' office, absorbing a seminal influence. But in fact it was only after Gropius had quarrelled with Behrens and left that Le Corbusier arrived, and he remained in the office for but a few weeks. Looking back later on his German visit, it was not his time with Behrens that he especially remembered, but a longer stay with Theodor Fischer, in Munich. He wrote in 1932 that among all examples of new German architecture which he saw at that time, only Fischer's buildings stood out in his memory.

In the years before the First World War, Fischer's reputation as an architectural teacher was legendary. No other master attracted so many of the best talents at that time, for among his pupils were Erich Mendelsohn, Bruno Taut, Hugo Häring, Ernst May, Otto Bartning, Paul Bonatz and Fred Forbat; J. J. P. Oud also came on his own initiative to Fischer's office. Because of his considerable standing Fischer was chosen as chairman of the newly-founded Deutscher Werkbund in Munich, and was responsible for the dominant central building at the famous Werkbund exhibition of 1914 in Cologne. He held back from the rigorous Modernism of the '20s without fully rejecting it, and when the Bauhaus was closed by the Nazis in 1932 he was the only architect of the older generation to register a complaint, publishing a strongly-worded open letter. Despite an enormous architectural *oeuvre* of more than 120 completed buildings and his leading role as teacher, he became more and more forgotten as Modernism spread internationally, even in Germany. In any objective consideration of the general development of twentieth-century architecture, however, Theodor Fischer should surely be given a central place.

Born in Schweinfurt Franconia, in 1862, Fischer was the youngest of six children, son of an upper-class Protestant merchant. He studied architecture at the Technische Hochschule in Munich from 1880, where he was taught by Friedrich von Thiersch, only about 10 years his senior, a brilliant draughtsman who was successful in numerous competitions, later responsible for several large buildings demonstrating virtuosity in many styles. Fischer found the examination system of his day deeply abhorrent and left the school without qualifications to take up a place that Thiersch had obtained for him in the office of Paul Wallot, then engaged in the construction of the Berlin Reichstag, the largest commission in Germany. Here Fischer learned a new freedom in the use of historical motifs and met some important colleagues. From Otto Rieth he picked up the relaxed unacademic drawing style which was to become the hallmark of *Jugendstil*, while Wilhelm Rettig was responsible for his appointment to the newly-founded Munich planning office in 1893. Between leaving Wallot and taking up this post, Fischer practised on his own for a while, and also assisted in Gabriel von Seidl's office.

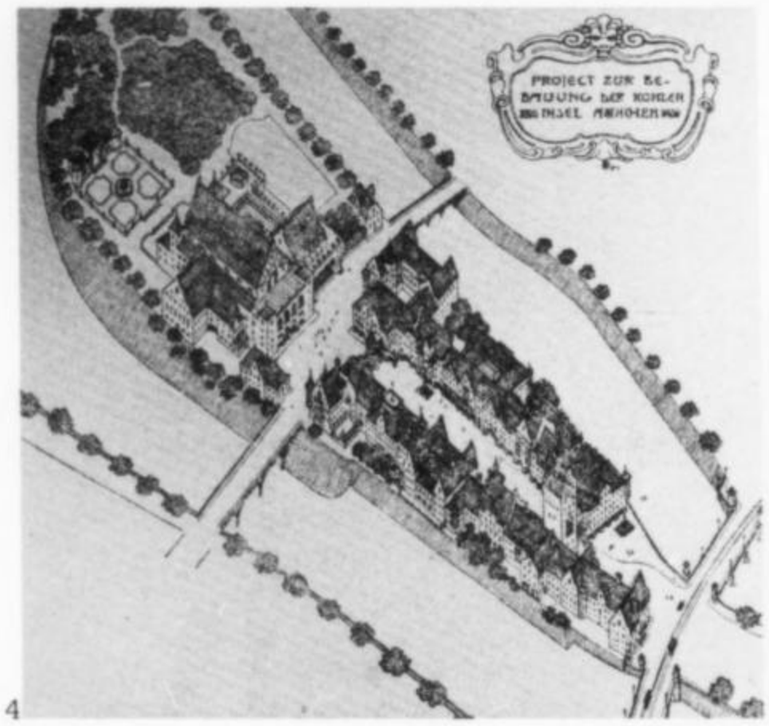
The Munich city planning office was set up to implement proposals resulting from the recently-held city expansion competition. This was the first time in Germany (and only the second in Europe, following the 1871 competition for Ofen and Pest) that the development of a whole city had been the theme of an open competition. Fischer's eight years in the planning office, which ended with his appointment at Stuttgart in 1901, were of decisive importance to him. Daily confrontation with planning problems laid the foundations for his later work as first professor for town planning at the Technische Hochschule, Munich (from 1909). Planning experience also developed the exceptional sensitivity to context which Fischer was to demonstrate in his later work, developing each design



2



3



4



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2, Haimhauser School, Munich (1897). One of a series of schools by Fischer which were influential throughout Germany.
3, school on Elisabethstrasse, Munich.
4, project for developing the Kohleninsel, an island in the River Isar, Munich, around the turn of the century. Influenced by the planning ideas of Camillo Sitte, this was Fischer's version of an ideal Bavarian town.
5, the Gustav Siegle Haus in Stuttgart (1905-12) which contained a large public meeting hall.

according to a concept in which building and surroundings are indissolubly linked. A decisive influence on Fischer's work at this time was Camillo Sitte whose new ideas about town-planning were propagated in his famous book of 1882, *Der Städtebau nach seinen künstlerischen Grundsätzen*. This had also influenced the first prize winner of the Munich Competition, Henrici. Starting with the town structure as it had developed and the particular topographical layout in each case, Fischer put forward a large number of proposals for new streets and squares, leading curved streets along existing features towards selected views and focal points as Sitte had recommended.

The legal implementation of this new method of town planning required a revision of the old building acts organised by Fischer and implemented in 1904, thereby controlling the development of Munich for half a century. The new and pioneering aspect of this 'ranked building organisation' (*Staffelbauordnung*) was that, rather than prescribing a manner and density of building for whole quarters or separate 'zones', Fischer instead laid out a ranking of buildings street by street in terms of height and density. By such means he could, for example, continue the natural course of growth of major streets right out to the periphery with dense development, while dividing off areas for purely residential use.

Fischer's work of the 1890s is important for another reason. The first great building boom following the foundation of the German Reich in 1871 came to an unfortunate end in the late 1870s with countless bankruptcies. At the end of the 1880s a second great wave of building began throughout the country which resulted in the pre-industrial appearance of cities and landscape being drastically changed through radical demolition and speculative rebuilding. Fischer had already experienced the first wave of changes as a child, while the second came upon him as a young architect in a circle of like-minded friends who were all much influenced by the ideas of Nietzsche, Langbehn and Lichtwark. He championed for example the tendency towards renewal through nature and tradition as defended by Ferdinand Avenarius in the famous journal *Der Kunstwart*, and took part in the newly developing societies for preservation of heritage and landscape. As representative of a generation who witnessed invasion by industry and destruction of long-established tradition, he saw the double face of progress and sought, in all approval of the new, to counteract its destructive and inhuman side by giving emphasis to individual and regional elements. In contrast, representatives of the next generation not of his school, like Gropius or Mies van der Rohe, abandoned themselves blindly to a belief in universal happiness through technical and industrial progress.

As well as the planning work of his first period in Munich, certain other aspects of Fischer's work are important. After a long struggle, craft work was for the first time admitted to the famous annual exhibition at the Glass-Palace in 1897. Theodor Fischer and Martin Dülfer designed two exhibition rooms in the new un-historical free style of *Jugendstil*, which was pioneered in Germany by Riemerschmid, Pankok and Obrist, and later referred to as the 'cradle of Modernism'. As a first demonstration of his approach to architecture, Fischer built a series of schools in Munich around the turn of the century. In response to the progressive educational ideas of 'learning by doing,' spread in Germany by Max Kerschensteiner, he developed a school-type with art and craft rooms, gymnasium and school garden whose external appearance showed resonances with historic regional building forms, but whose massing and distribution of elements was organised in response to function and context. This gentle renewal on the basis of sympathy with old Munich styles and organic addition to the urban structure proved influential and the Munich school buildings soon became an example followed throughout Germany.

In an exemplary project for the development of an island in the River Isar, produced in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Bavarian Arts and Crafts Society (*Bayerischer Kunstgewerbeverein*), Fischer's architectural attitudes are clearly expressed. He planned a kind of small ideal Bavarian town, a seed for the renewal of architecture and a way of life, with curved streets, houses of individual character, tower, market place, and in the centre a town-hall or social hall as

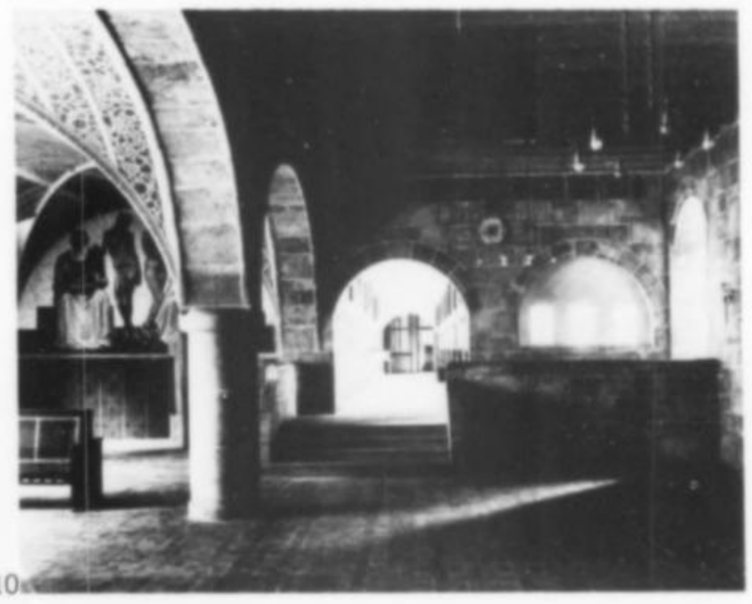
meeting place. This idea of a '*Volkshaus*', the central element of the renewal movement based on homeland, tradition and society (*Heimat, Tradition, Volk*) which took place at the turn of the century in Germany, was described by Fischer in an article in *Kunstwart* entitled 'What I would like to build'. There are over a dozen projects for such a place of meeting and renewal among Fischer's many works, three of which he completed during his period in Stuttgart, the Pfullinger Hallen (1904), the Gustav Siegle Haus in Stuttgart (1905-12),


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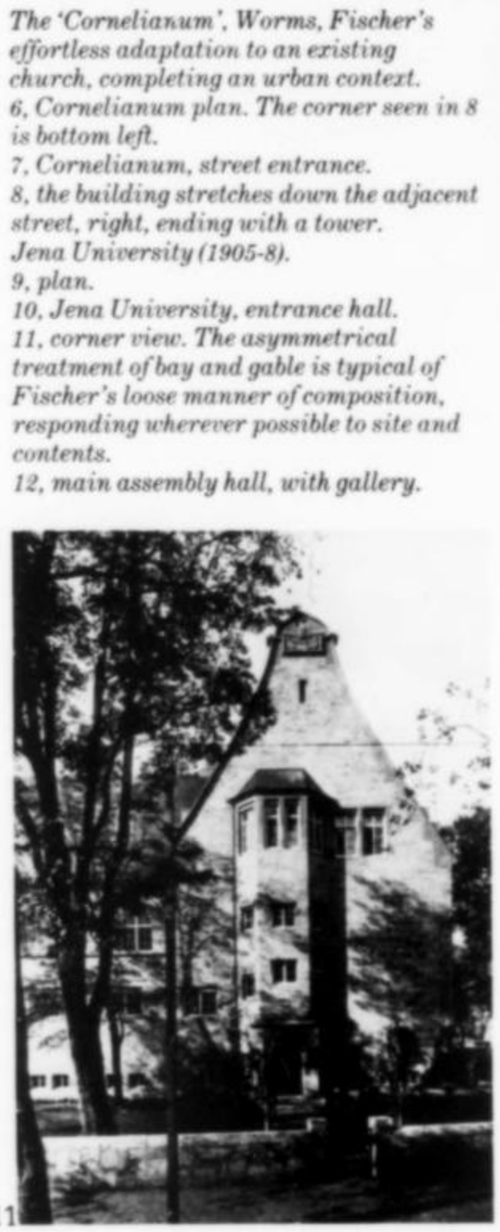

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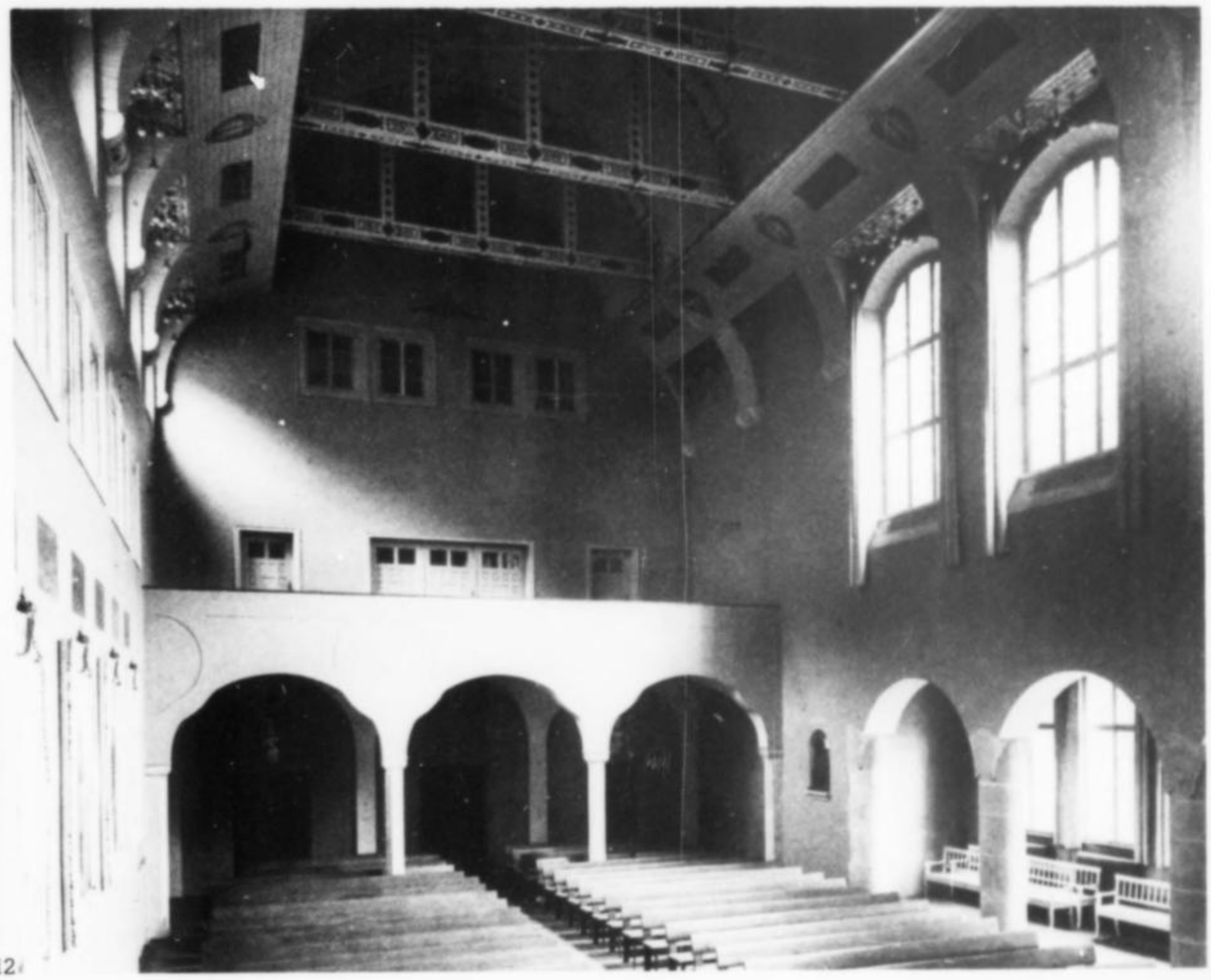

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The 'Cornelianum', Worms, Fischer's effortless adaptation to an existing church, completing an urban context.
6, Cornelianum plan. The corner seen in 8 is bottom left.
7, Cornelianum, street entrance.
8, the building stretches down the adjacent street, right, ending with a tower.
Jena University (1905-8).
9, plan.
10, Jena University, entrance hall.
11, corner view. The asymmetrical treatment of bay and gable is typical of Fischer's loose manner of composition, responding wherever possible to site and contents.
12, main assembly hall, with gallery.


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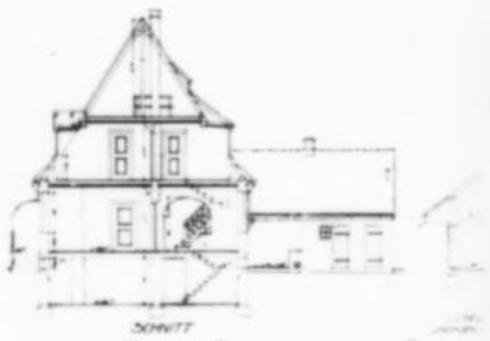
13, bird's-eye view of the Alte Haide housing development on the edge of Munich (1918-28). This was a pioneering example of this kind of linear layout, relieved by a variety of special incidents.
14, houses on the estate today. The green areas between house rows are divided into a series of private gardens.
15, drawings for a house type for a workers' suburb at Limburgerhof (1911-13): built for BASF at Ludwigshafen.
16, old persons' home, Munich (1925-27): Fischer at his most modern. The building is rather less forbidding than it looks—the scale is deceptive.



13



14







15

Facing page: Garrison Church, Ulm (1908-11).
17, Garrison Church plan.
18, Garrison Church interior. An early and celebrated example of in-situ concrete construction.
19, Garrison Church entrance porch. The two principal Ionic columns rest on stylised deer and lion. Fischer used such sculptural elements frequently in his work.
20, village church at Gaggstatt, Würtemberg, 1901. A simple design in local materials with a strong Arts and Crafts flavour.
21, interior detail.
Art gallery, Stuttgart (1909-12).
22, the portico, seen from one side. The two main entrances were symmetrically placed, but the projecting bay breaks the symmetry.
23, a surprising reinterpretation of Brunelleschi's Foundling Hospital portico, grand enough for a prominent site, yet not forbidding on scale.
24, 25, workers' suburb, Gmindersdorf (1903): a whole settlement planned by Fischer.

and the Cornelianum in Worms (1905-13).

When Fischer moved to Stuttgart he received a large commission from an industrial firm to construct a workers' housing estate in Gmindersdorf. He began with a detailed study of the local landscape and building tradition in order to 'learn to speak Swabian' as he himself put it. His workers' housing fits in admirably with its surroundings and local buildings, and Fischer put into practice a hitherto unheard-of kind of user-participation, in which the wishes of the workers were taken into account. The semicircular ring of buildings which closes the layout acts as an architectural symbol of society, a characterisation of function which seemed particularly important to Fischer.

But Fischer 'spoke' not only Franconian, Bavarian or Swabian, for in 1905 he won the competition for the new University of Jena with a scheme which is so much in harmony with the *genius loci* of the city and the Thuringian landscape, that the extensive complex of buildings gives the impression today of being quite organically integrated into the grain of the urban structure. Fischer resolved the layout with articulated elements expressing their various functions, yet always in precise harmony with the setting, neighbouring streets and available views. From the rich collection of regional motifs he selected several elements which he managed to incorporate without copying or historicism.

This attitude was also evident in the planning course he gave to students. Fischer claimed that there were two kinds of architect; 'one kind imposes his own ideas on nature and surroundings . . . the other kind wishes to adapt himself to the situation, he is prepared to submit to given relationships, whether in terms of landscape or built form, thus allowing a unity to grow'. Typically students of his like Bruno Taut and Ernst May had no wish to break up the established order of a city with their housing developments, which was quite the opposite of the universalist, levelling intentions of a Gropius or a Hilberseimer. Fischer taught his students to respect the 'lines and wrinkles' that history has carved in the ground and not to sacrifice them 'to make life easy for the geometer'. Tradition and locality should be both a compulsion and an incentive to architects, for without them wilfulness takes over, 'and wilfulness inevitably becomes schematic and mannered'.



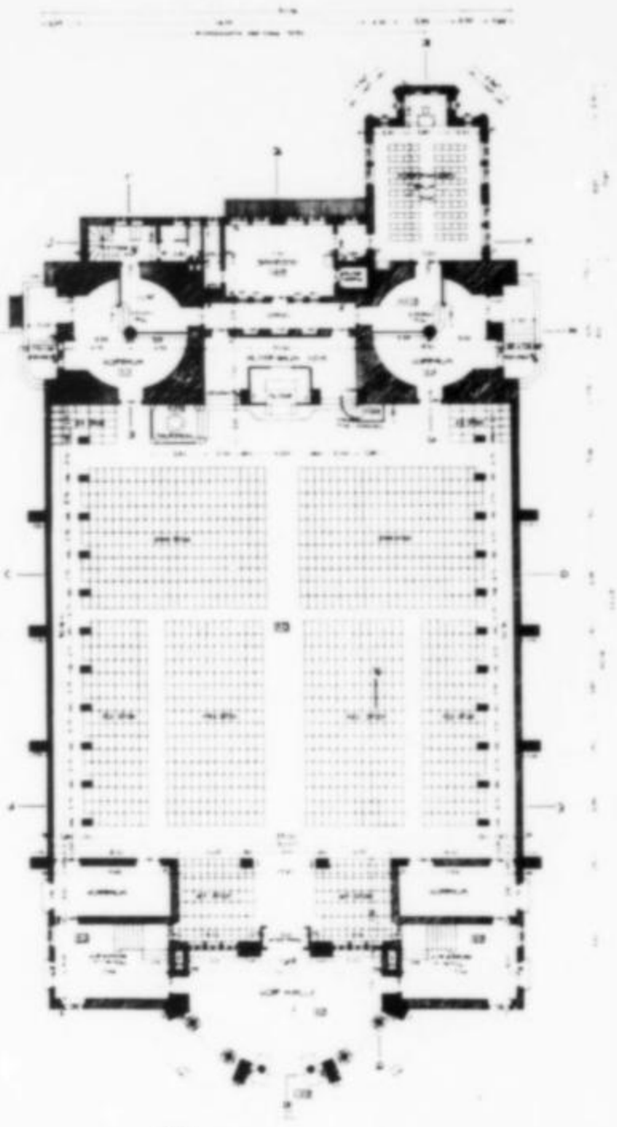
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Despite this stress on tradition and adaptation, Fischer by no means supported a slavish and conservative adherence to tradition, indeed when he considered it necessary he was prepared to break entirely new ground. His Garrison Church at Ulm (1908-11) with its unconventional and impressive twin-towered facade aroused so much indignation that it was vehemently denounced as ungodly. Here Fischer used a concrete frame construction for the first time in an important interior, and created thereby a totally new kind of spatial effect which was later much imitated. Fritz Schumacher considered that this church marked a decisive turning point in the development of modern architecture.

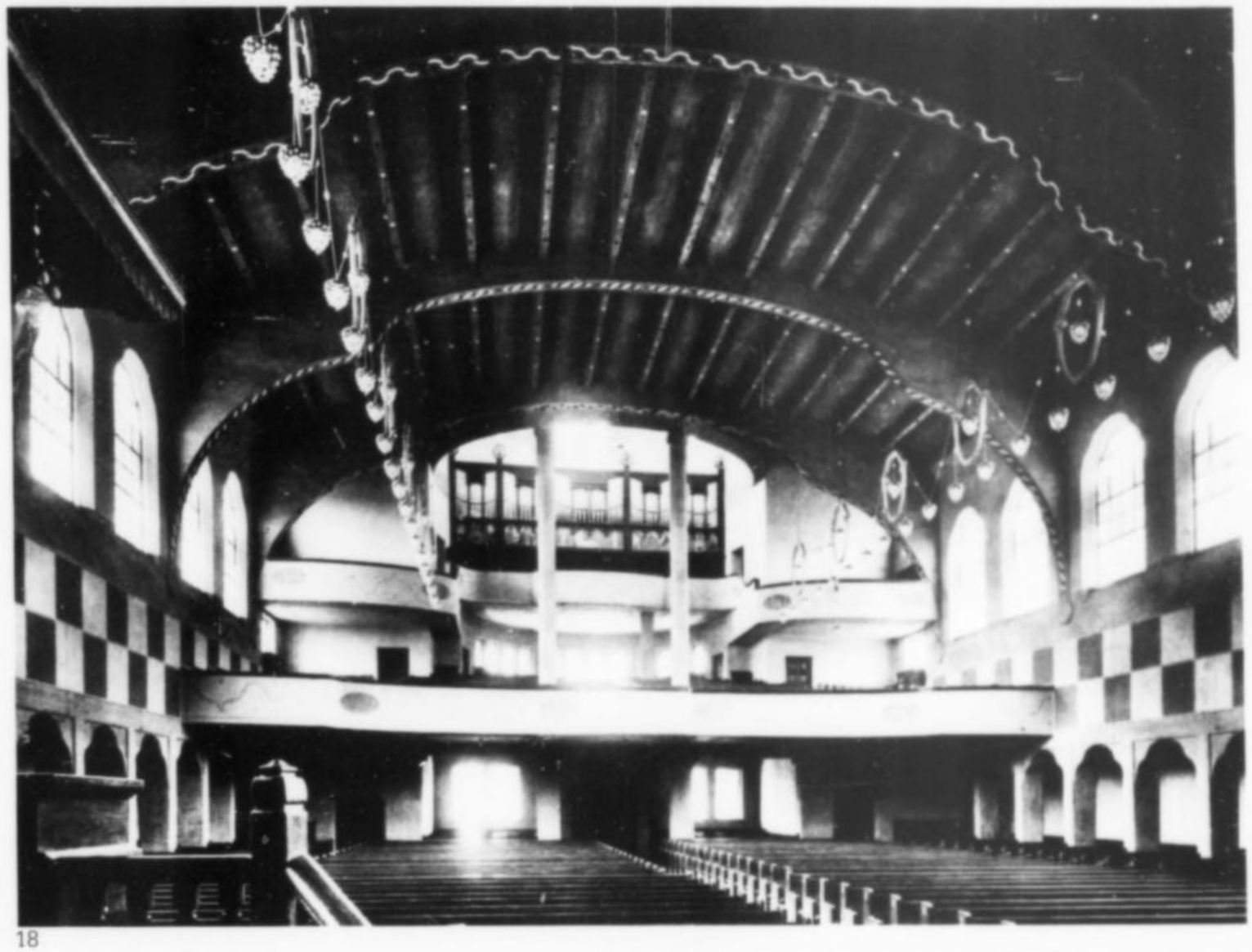
In 1908 Fischer was just leaving Stuttgart when he received the commission for a new art gallery on the Schlossplatz at the city centre, directly opposite the Baroque ensemble of the Neue Schloss. He decided on a fully self-sufficient solution which retains a strong presence in this grand neighbourhood despite being at considerably smaller scale. Above an elegant central circulation hall which Wölfflin praised as the finest columned hall north of the Alps, he placed a modern reinforced concrete cupola with thin slats, which exceeds the eaves height of the Schloss, but centres the new building without placing it in competition with the old. This mastery of the most difficult kind of urban context is seen equally in his other large buildings of the period before the First World War, such as the police headquarters in Munich, the museums in Kassel and Wiesbaden or the schools and post office in Tirol.

Just after the first War Fischer produced another revolutionary work. Some distance outside Munich he built 'Alte Haide', a workers' housing development in a strict system of parallel rows, long before this kind of layout was proposed in Berlin, Dessau-Törten or Karlsruhe-Dammerstock as the urban form of the future; in any case the rigid and mechanical repetition of his followers was quite alien to Fischer. Even in one of his last works, the old people's home (1925-27)—once again set in the conservative architecture of Munich—he made a statement of uncompromising modernity. But even here he did not turn to modernity for its own sake: as in all his buildings he wanted to allow 'inner directional forces to radiate outwards, while the surroundings must also project inwards, just as iron filings attempt to align themselves with a magnetic field'.

As the barbarity of Nazism took over power in Germany, the ageing reclusive Fischer stepped once more into the limelight to hold a public lecture in Augsburg in October 1933. He, who had earlier received countless honours as 'the German master builder', explained that he did not know what German Art was: 'It was never my conscious intention to be engaged in German art, it simply happened that way, and if I speak of it today, it is only to warn you that this is something which must in the most profound way be allowed to develop by itself, and not be instituted through a programme'. This penetrating recognition resulted in Fischer's isolation and his lonely death in Munich in 1938. Yet today, his teaching about organic building based on tradition and region with a glance to the future is surely more relevant than ever.



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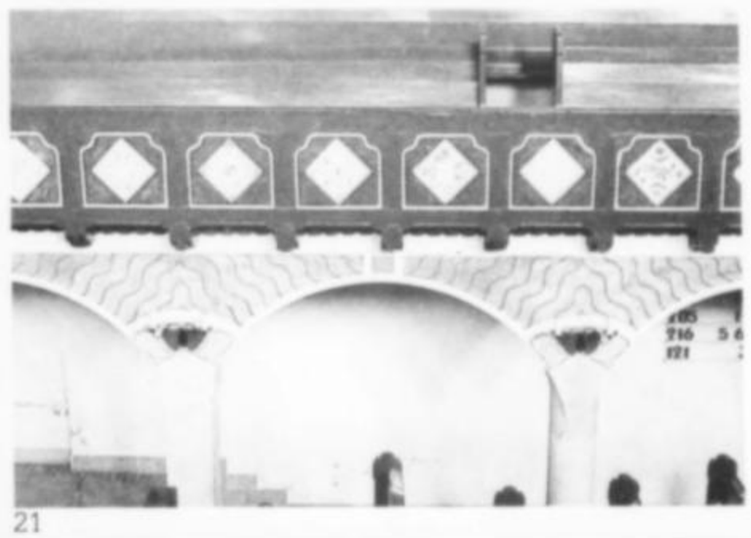
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THEODOR FISCHER

Note
The author is preparing an extensive presentation of the life and work of Theodor Fischer in connection with an exhibition in 1988. Copyright for the collected drawings and photographs remains with the Architectural Collection of the Technical University, Munich.



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Rory Spence

REX ADDISON IN QUEENSLAND

Rex Addison is an Australian architect who has worked in both Papua New Guinea and Queensland. In both places he has managed to combine the local vernacular with his own highly idiosyncratic kind of timber Modernism. Rory Spence discusses.

1, Addison's own house at Taringa, Brisbane: street front, with new timber slatwork and entry porch.
2, Addison house: living/dining room.
3, Capalaba house, Brisbane: central hall looking towards kitchen/dining room and verandah (see also p74).
4, typical traditional suburb of Brisbane, with extreme examples of 'highset' stump houses in the background. Typical early twentieth-century Brisbane bungalow, similar to 'Redicut' type, in the foreground.
5, California bungalow, Brisbane, adapted to Queensland timber vernacular.
6, Federation style bungalows, adapted to the Queensland vernacular.

Queensland, it is generally accepted, has developed a more recognisably distinct, regional vernacular idiom than the other Australian states and territories, perhaps because of the long-dominant tradition of building in timber. Fashions such as the Federation (Australian 'Queen Anne') or California Bungalow styles, introduced from Sydney or Melbourne, were generally adapted to the Queensland stud-frame tradition and often acquired a characteristic local flavour.

This regionalist tendency is still strong in one-off domestic architecture.[1] In the work of several younger architects in the Brisbane area, there is a close involvement and creative interaction with regional traditions, in form, constructional technique and use of materials, that is rare in Sydney or Melbourne.[2] Brisbane architects are very much more pragmatic and less theoretical or aesthetically purist than their southern counterparts.

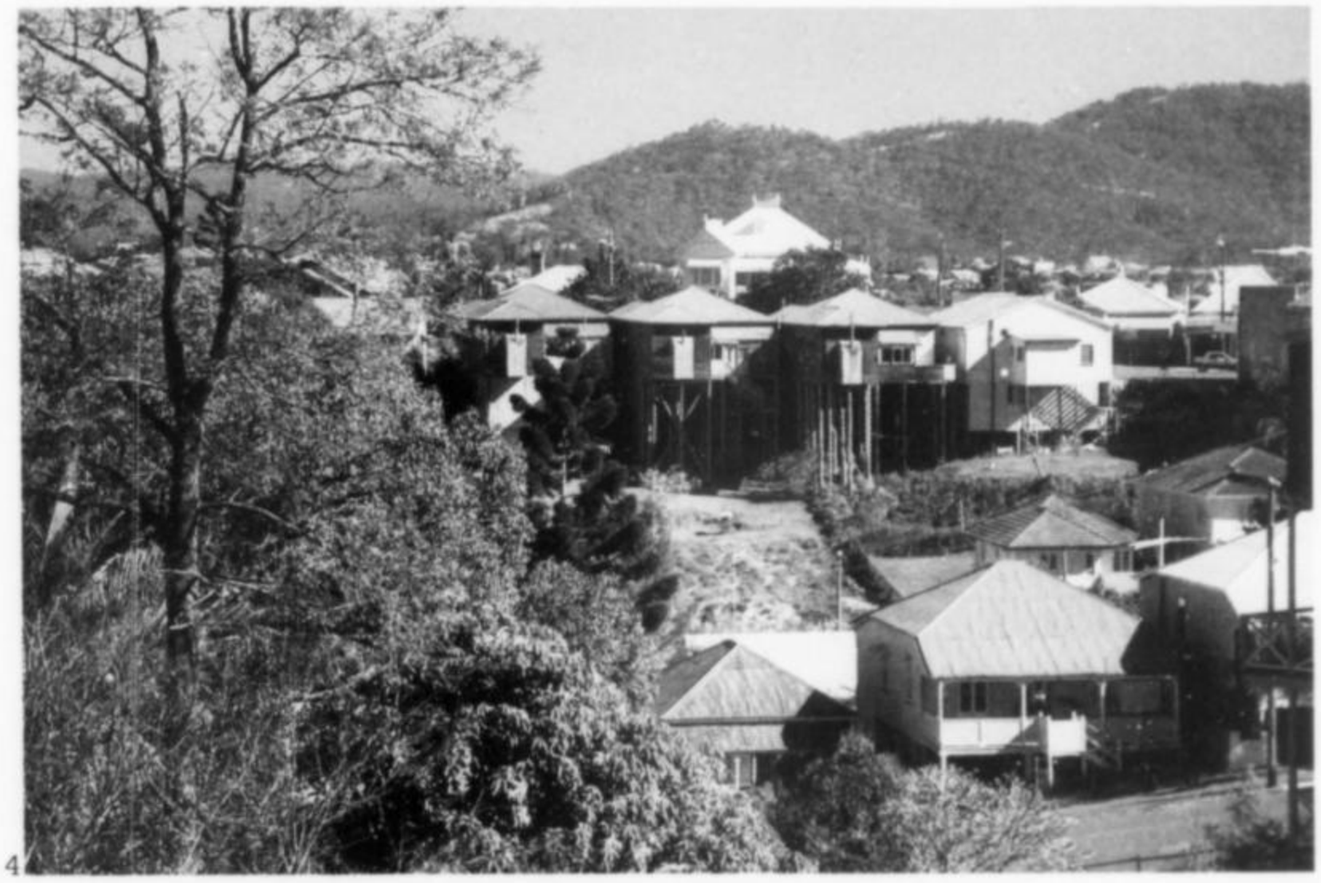
Rex Addison, one of the most interesting of the Brisbane group, has described how, as a student, Le Corbusier's Mediterranean-inspired architecture seemed alien in suburban Brisbane, where his grandfather built traditional Queensland 'highset' timber houses, raised up on 2 m tree stumps.[3] Initially encouraged by the example of Gino Valle and pre-Las Vegas Venturi, he is developing a contemporary regional architecture by reinterpreting familiar elements and conventions of the local vernacular and reassembling them in new combinations of great individuality, setting up a dialogue with older buildings in the area. However, his inventive manipulation of plan and section and his analytical approach to functional problems such as climatic design, indicate that the contributions of Modernism are not forgotten.

Addison's first four years in private practice in Papua New Guinea (1978-82), where there was a plentiful supply of work, gave him the opportunity to experiment at a rapid rate in a country with strong cultural traditions and in a tropical climate similar to, but more extreme than Brisbane. It also gave him early opportunities to design larger buildings, which, in Australia, are hard for a small new firm to come by.[4]

For the Raun-Raun theatre company, which produces popular plays with didactic social and educational content, Addison in association with Paul Frame, adapted the thatched Round House form of the Papua New Guinea Highlands, creating an exciting new building that nevertheless has clear links with indigenous cultural traditions. In his building for the Coffee Industry Board, against the odds, he gave the



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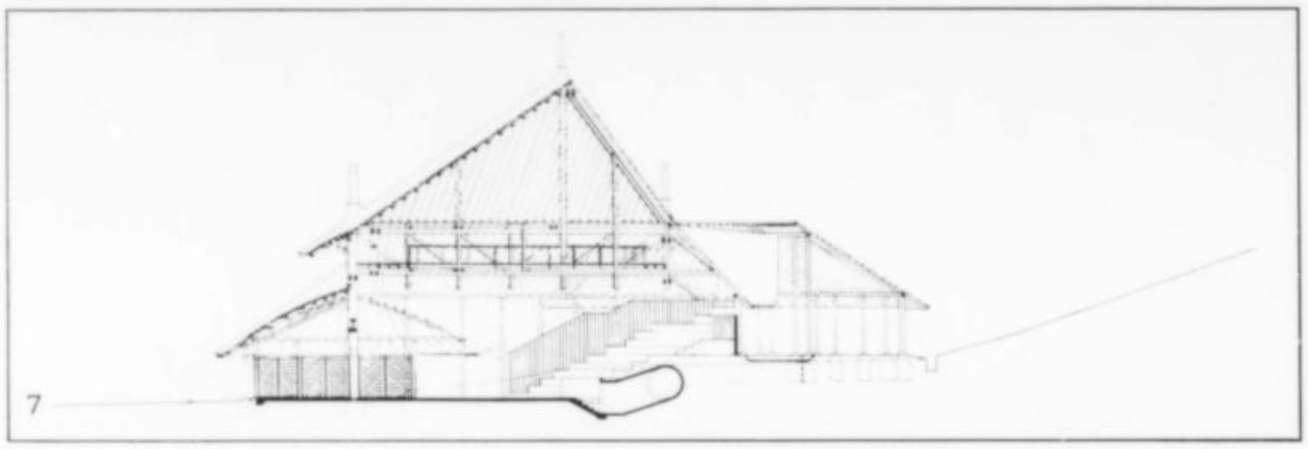
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office of one of Papua New Guinea's major export industries a tropical character with much use of slatted sun screens and timber venetian blinds, and organic shingle roofs evocative of village thatchwork traditions, rather than the usual prestigious Western image.

Also in Papua New Guinea, Addison began a series of designs for small houses and groups of houses that is still continuing. The Malahang house, for himself, was designed specifically to rival the mean 1960's



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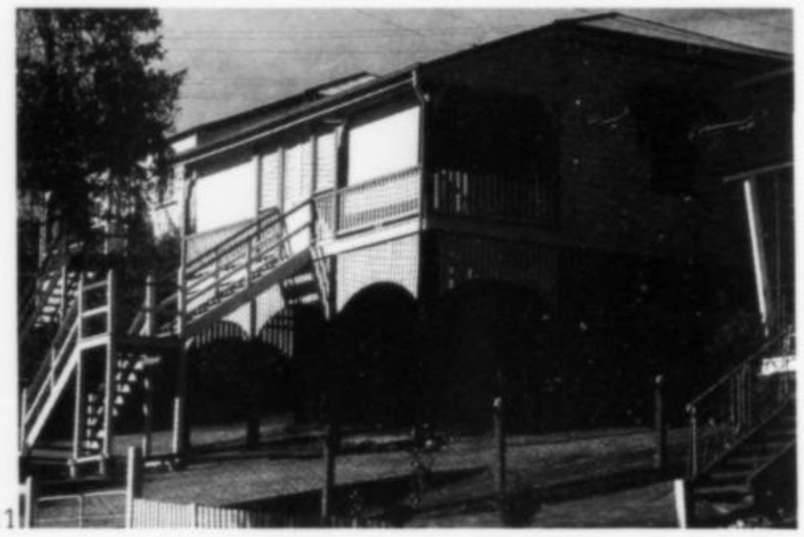
7, Raun Raun theatre, Goroka, Papua New Guinea, designed with Paul Frame, 1979: section, showing Arup-designed roof structure. The thatched conical roof forms were inspired by the traditional Round House of the Papua New Guinea Highlands.
8, plan of Raun Raun Theatre.
9, Coffee Industry Board offices, Goroka, Papua New Guinea, 1981.
10, 'Redicut', 'highset' bungalow. Timber frame, cladding and lining pre-cut. Exported to Papua New Guinea from Australia, its climatically appropriate form was adopted by Addison in his own work.
11, typical 'Redicut' house in Brisbane.



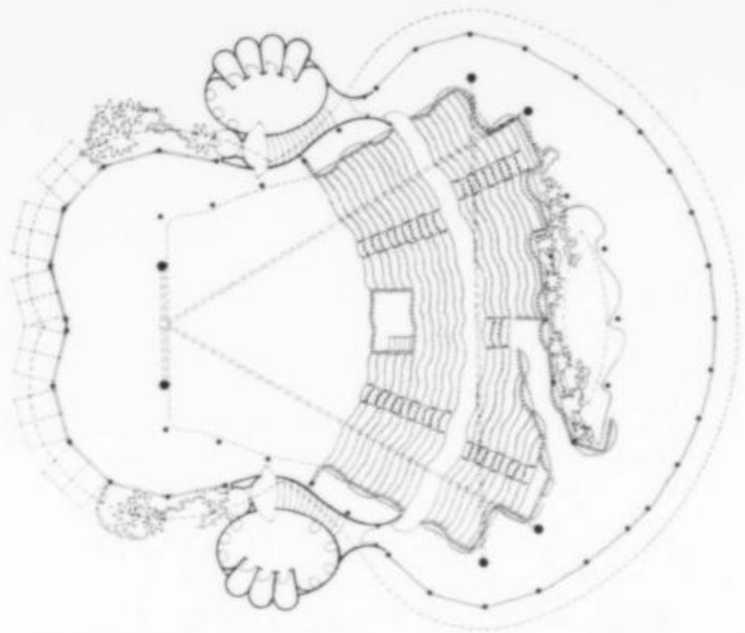
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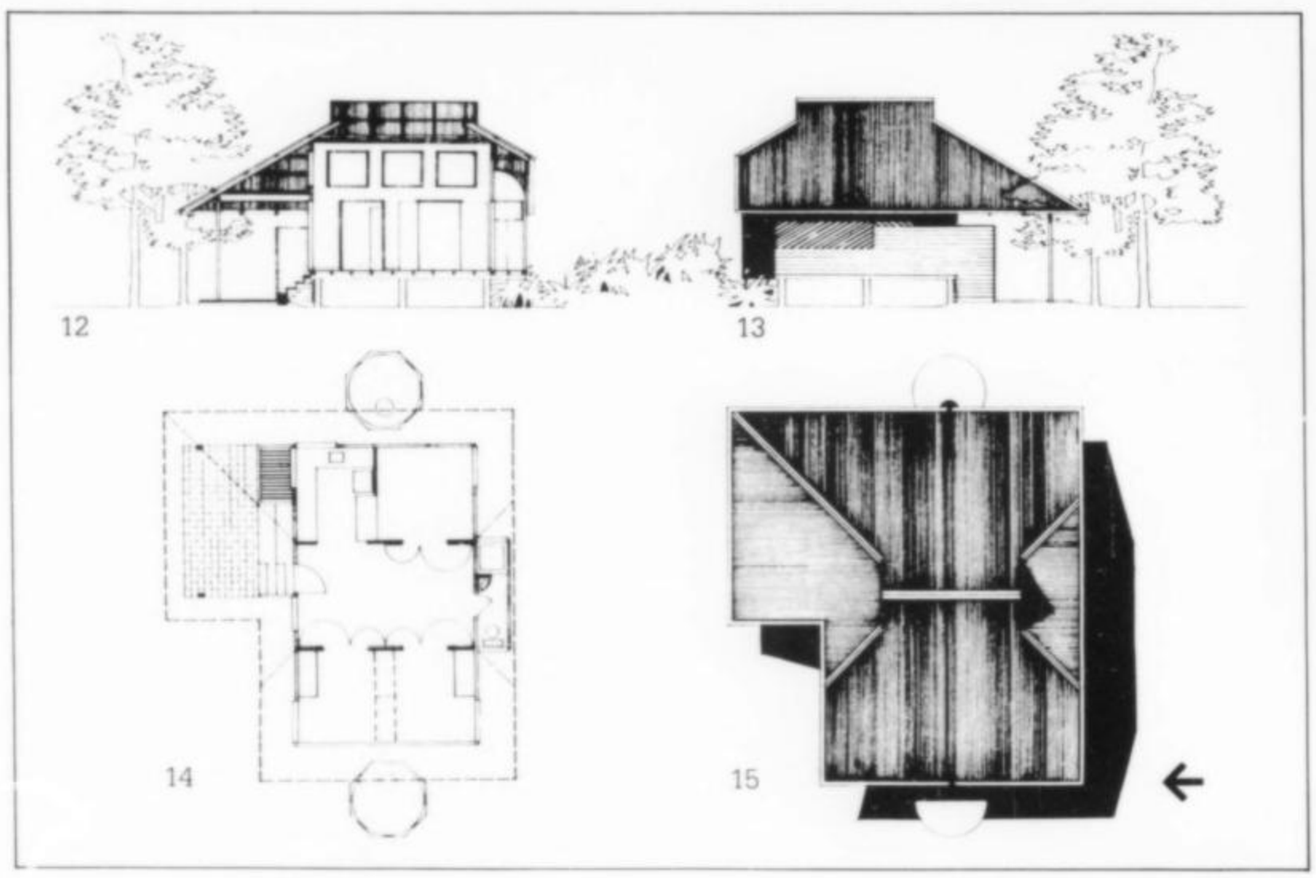
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Government standard types of stud-frame construction with fibre-cement cladding and low-pitched corrugated steel roofs, which, appallingly, have now become status symbols for Papua New Guineans. Addison observed that the earlier 'Redicut' stud-frame house types, imported from Australia under Colonial rule, worked better climatically and were visually much more appropriate and dignified than the more recent Government houses. These pre-cut timber houses, erected to standard plans chosen from a catalogue, have become a yardstick of modest, sensible housing for Addison's subsequent work.

The ingenious square plan of the Malahang house, with its cool, ventilated double-height central hall, surrounded by perimeter rooms like a semi-enclosed verandah, functioned well and forms the basis of his small domestic work in Queensland.

Since returning to Australia in 1982, Addison set up a design-build firm, 'Edifice Builders', with Lon Murphy of the Raun-Raun Theatre, and has constructed a number of small houses, refining types developed in Papua New Guinea such as the Malahang house, and adapting them



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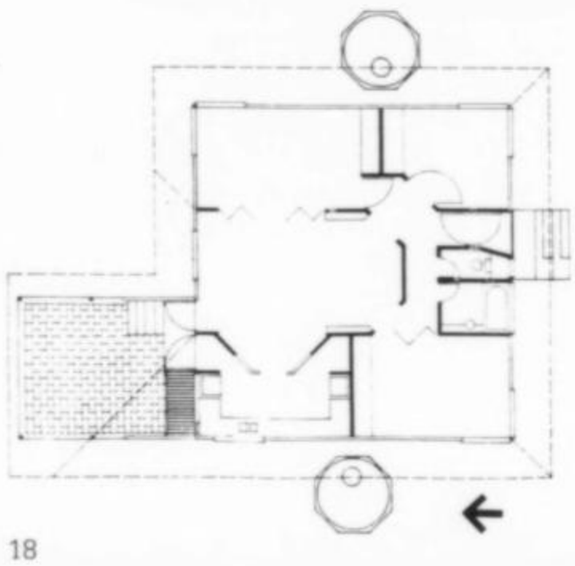
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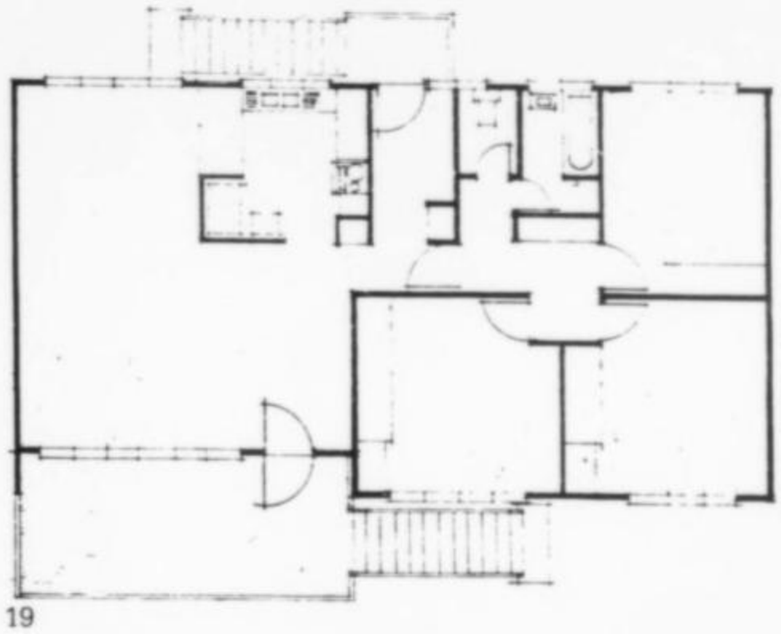
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Unbuilt project for bungalow, Lae, Papua New Guinea, 1981. Prototype for Macleay Island house, (p72).
12, section (scale 1:300). 13, elevation. 14, plan (scale 1:300). 15, roof plan
Malahang house, Lae, Papua New Guinea, 1981. Prototype for Capalaba house, Brisbane. 16, section.
17, Malahang house. Parts of the walls are flyscreen and timber slats, for ventilation. 18, plan (scale 1:300).

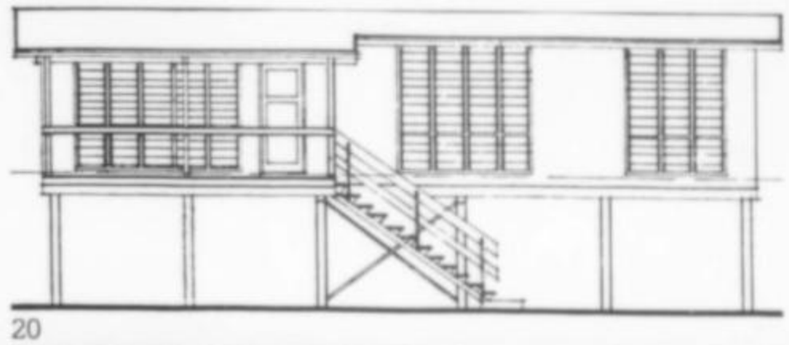


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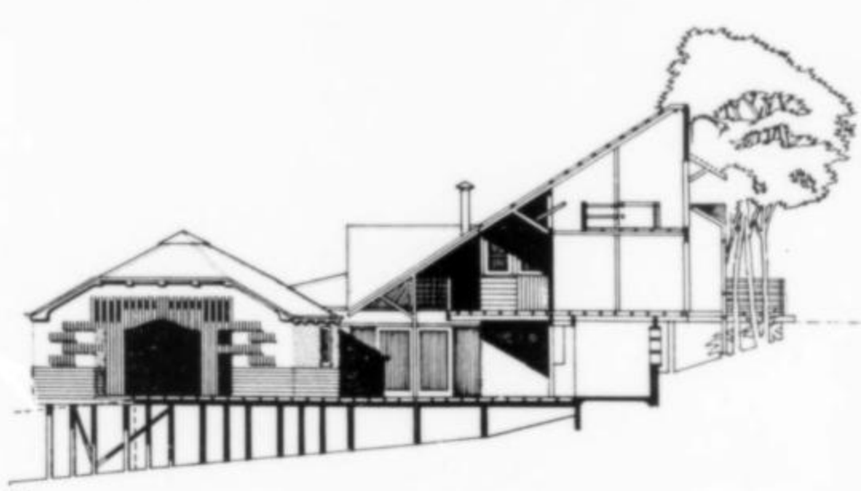
Mean '60s three-bedroom Papua New Guinea Housing Commission standard type, known, even to residents, as an 'H 90'. The type that Addison reacted against.
19, plan.
20, front elevation.



19

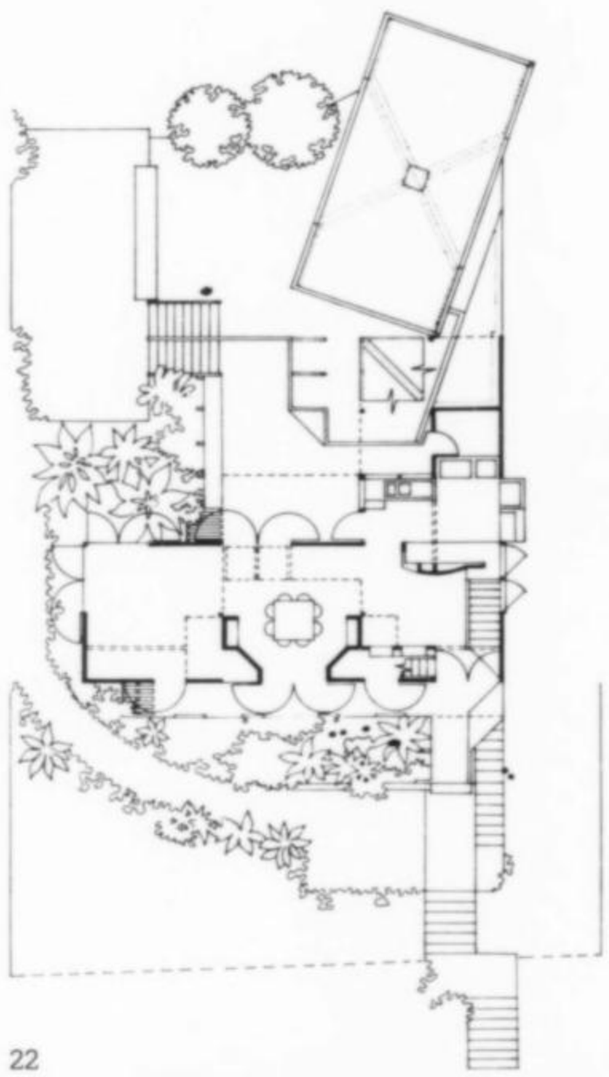


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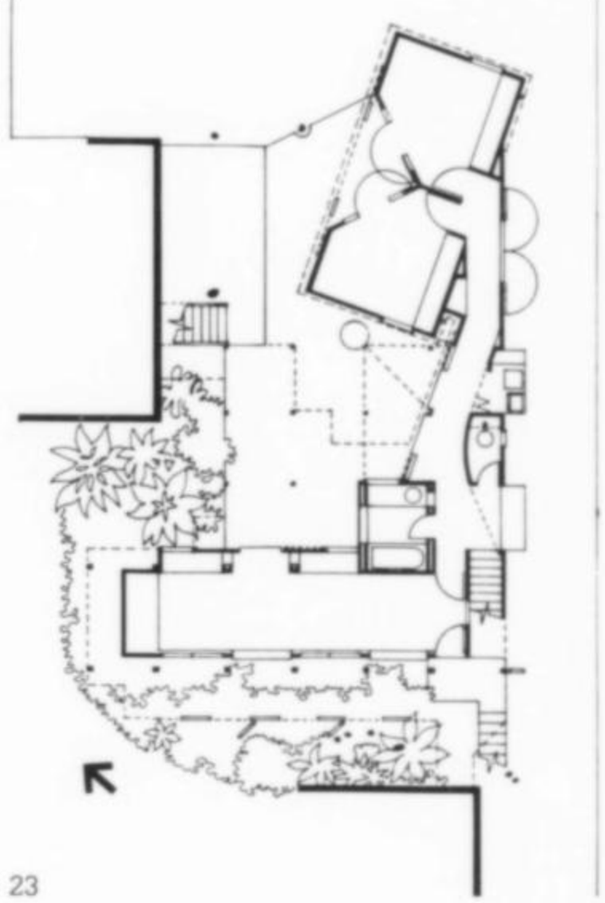


21

Addison's own house at Taringa, Brisbane. Original house (front part) 1974; children's wing, new lower-floor office and general re-organisation, 1982.
21, long section (scale 1:300).
22, upper level plan.
23, lower level plan (scale 1:300).
24, outdoor terrace.
25, entry porch.



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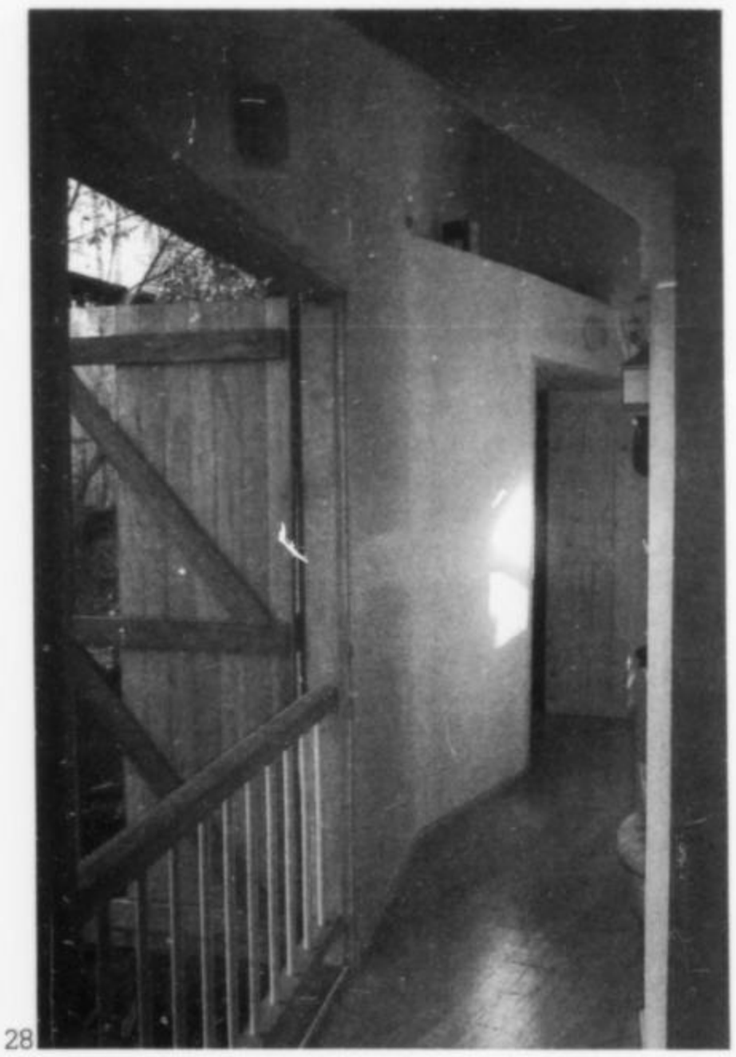
Addison's own house, Taringa:
26, panoramic view from court.
27, children's wing.
28, corridor to children's wing, with 'barn doors' open, looking back to main house. The end tongued and grooved board on each door is reversed, to house a panel of glass which is let into the grooves on either side, replacing the penultimate boards.
29, outdoor terraces.



27

to different circumstances and requirements. He is most interested in the common features of his suburban house types rather than the individual variations for each client. He has developed two general types, for flat and hillside sites, with adjustments according to access, orientation etc., and he has contemplated the production of standard types which can be bought 'off the shelf', an idea also being investigated by other architects in Brisbane and Sydney, such as Russell Hall, John Andrews and Glenn Murcutt.[5]

In his recent domestic work, Addison re-examines the suburban traditions of Brisbane. His houses deliberately address the street in a more or less conventional manner, usually with a prominent gable, while the sides and back are often less formal. Slats are used in the form of screens and decorative valances to filter sunlight and provide privacy and rich entry sequences, in the colonial Queensland Manner, and liberal use is made of 'Thurlow' external timber



28



29



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30, Post Office, Nerang, Queensland, 1983. Street front. The roof form echoes the bungalow next door; the half hip is roofed in corrugated clear plastic to light the public hall, similar to the Capalaba house.
31, Nerang Post Office, rear elevation.

venetian blinds, a marvellous locally-made product which has survived the era of unthinking international Modernism and is once more coming into its own.

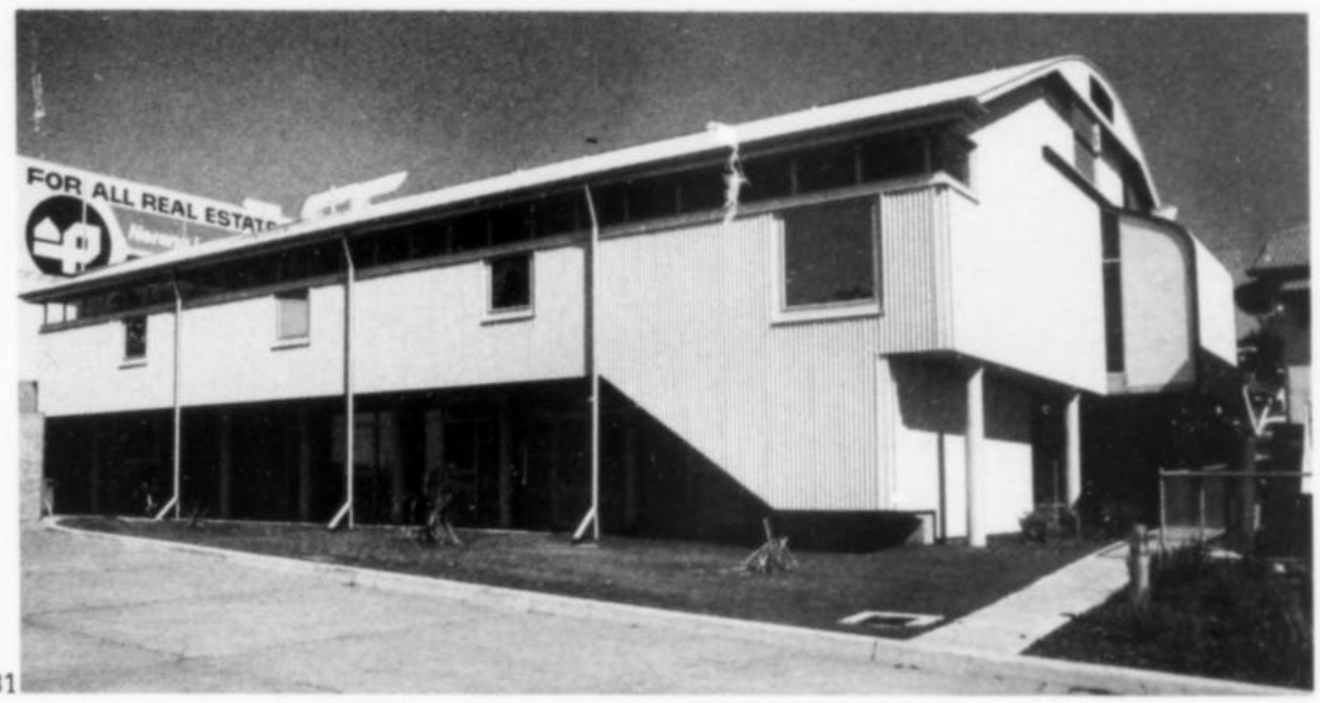
Addison used his own Brisbane house (1974),[6] which he had to extend to accommodate two young children, as a testing ground for new ideas and techniques, while at the same time creating a wonderfully rich and complex series of stepped outdoor decks and terraces, which are for much of the year the major living spaces of the house. The children's wing is a prototype for subsequent work, including the Thoss house, both in its appearance and in its use of render mechanically applied—without expanded metal—directly to the rough reverse side of the fibreboard cladding. It is angled to face away from the living and parents' areas, and the corridor connecting it to the original house is cleverly distorted to accommodate a new lavatory and laundry, at the same time creating an eventful sequence of changing forms, lighting and views. In addition, the front gable of the house has been given greater presence and richness with layered slatwork screens and a new porch.

More recently, Addison has been commissioned by the National Capital Development Commission to design two housing schemes for Canberra, Australia's capital and architectural showpiece — a kind of non-stop *'Bauausstellung'*, only national rather than international (with the exception of Giurgola's new parliament building). His domestic work is therefore moving away from the individual private house to government-subsidised group housing, and his design-build partnership has now folded. It will be a pity, however, if he loses touch with the problems of the small, economical private house, which so desperately need attention—particularly in Australia.[7]

Addison's entry for the Darwin Parliament House competition, which won second prize, showed that his idiosyncratic domestic style can, surprisingly, be adapted very successfully to a larger building, in the form of a low-slung, sunscreened architecture, with much use of planted courtyards, very appropriate for the predominantly low-rise capital of Australia's tropical Northern Territory.

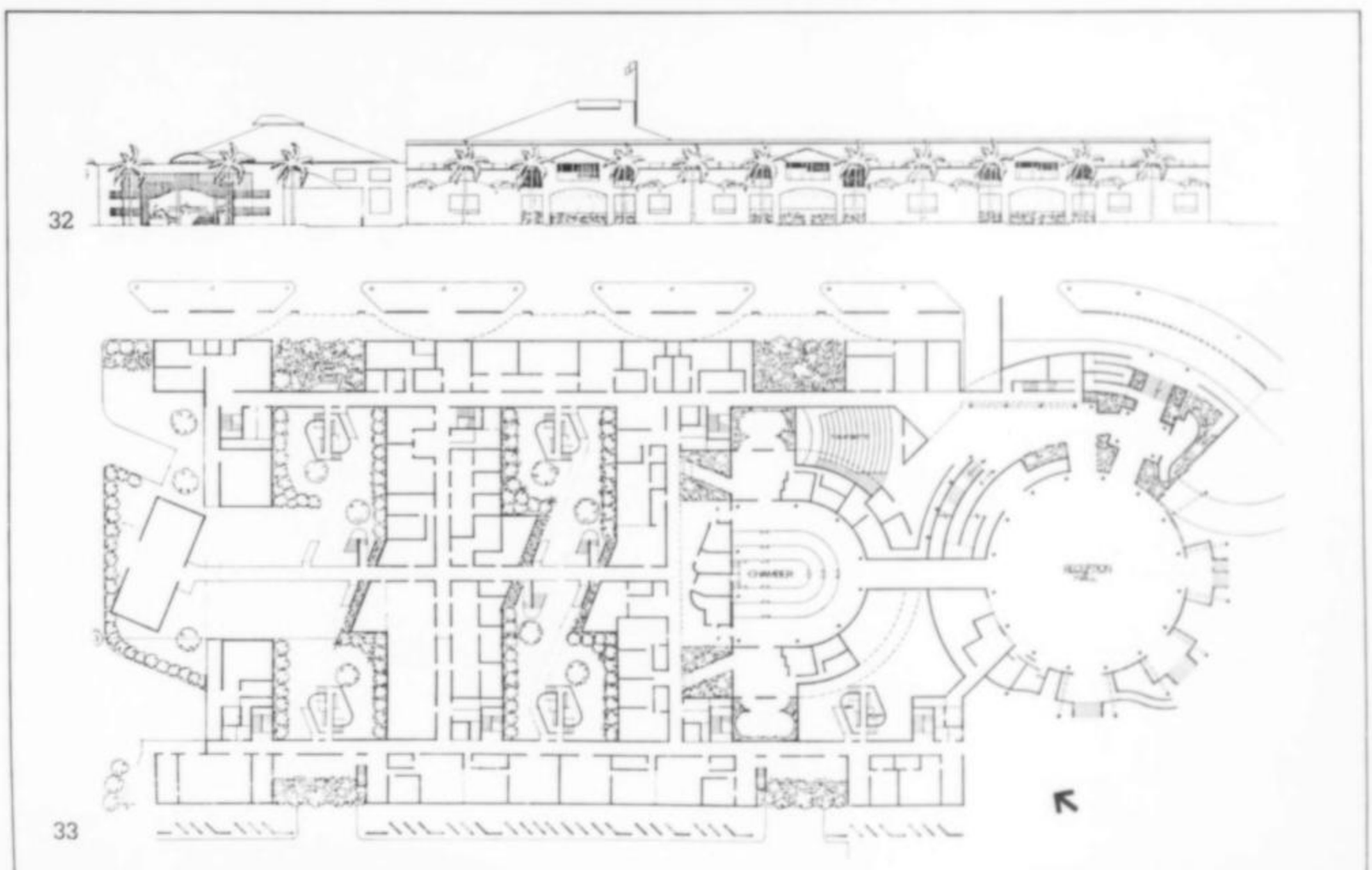
On the smaller scale, Addison has completed a new Post Office for Nerang, a small Queensland country town, using similar elements from his suburban domestic work, including the half-hipped front gable used for the house at Capalaba.

If Addison is given adequate opportunities, we can look forward to some exciting regional architecture from him in the next few years. It will be interesting to see whether he can adapt to a more formal, higher density urban context—Brisbane sorely needs some better architecture in the inner city, which has been devastated more than most in the last 20 years.



31

32, second prize entry for Darwin Parliament House competition, 1984. North-east elevation.
33, Darwin Parliament House competition. Plan (scale 1:1200).



32

33

References

1 Noel Robinson house, Brisbane (AR February 1986, pp76-78).
2 Australia: Sydney/Melbourne (AR December 1985, pp22-96).
3 Leplastrier house in NSW (AR August 1986, pp48-51).
4 For Addison's work in Papua New Guinea, see *Architecture Australia* (March 1983, vol 72, No 2). For the work of Addison and other Queensland architects working in Papua New Guinea, see *International Architect* (No 8: vol 1/issue 8, 1982).
5 The success of such a venture, however, depends on adequate marketing. Murcutt is working in association with a corrugated-steel shed manufacturer, and received several orders for his standard house type before the prototype had even been completed.
6 See AR September 1978, pp195-197; and *UIA International Architect*, issue 4.
7 Addison finds, like many others, that it is almost impossible to make a living off the design of small one-off houses, and even more difficult as an architect/builder. In Sydney, it is a little easier as budgets tend to be higher.

HOUSE AT MACLEAY ISLAND, MORETON BAY, QUEENSLAND



34

Macleay Island house, Moreton Bay, Queensland: 34, approach. The capricious geometric play of roof forms is typical of Addison's domestic work.
35, central hall looking towards front door, showing traditional exposed studwork, usually used on the exterior of Queensland houses.
36, central hall looking towards backdoor.
37, cross section.
38, plan (scale 1:300).
39, from the north-west.
40, from the north-east: an elegant and witty visual commentary on the ad-hoc *tradition of rural Australian small holdings.*

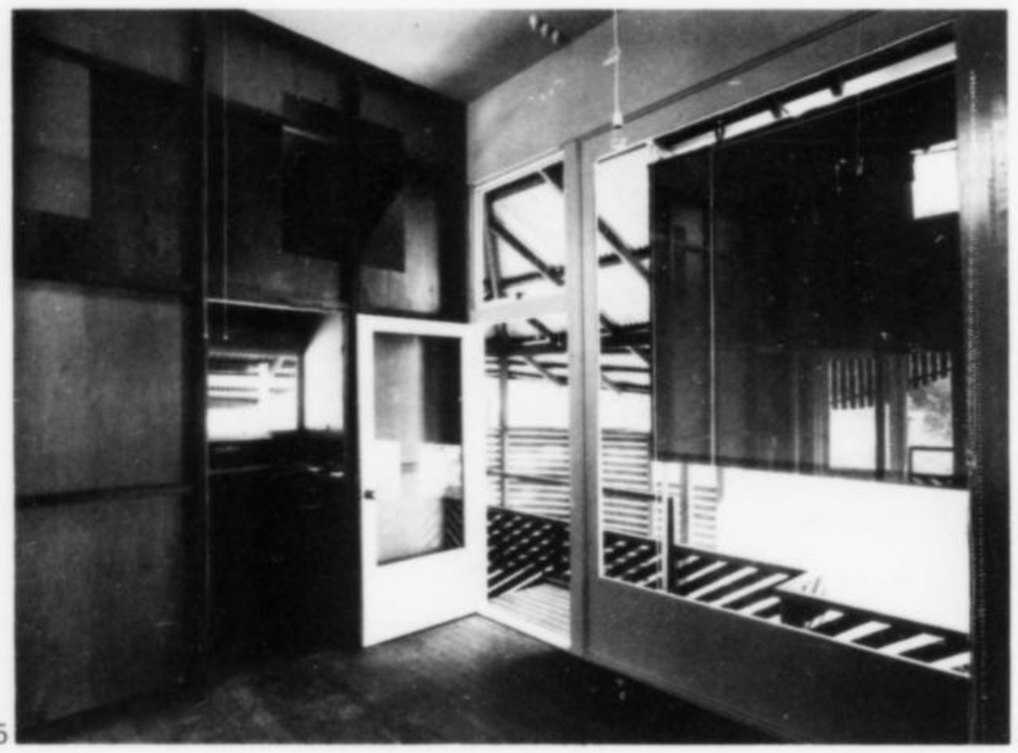
The Macleay Island house (1984 contract price $35 000—around £14 500) is smaller and cheaper than that at Capalaba (p74). It has a whimsical, informal character, more in keeping with its country setting close to the sea on an island of holiday houses.

Here the central living hall is, appropriately, more open at its ends, shaded by a canvas blind and timber slats, allowing views of water and trees to the north and south, while the carport, verandah, lavatory and laundry are tacked on in an *ad-hoc* manner very typical of rural Australia, but designed with an uncharacteristically delicate and artful touch. The north elevation, in particular, is full of freshness and wit, exploring the extraordinary versatility of corrugated steel with contrasting curved and straight sheets, including two standard circular water tanks at each corner and a laundry lean-to derived from the traditional Queensland stove recess (also used, more literally, on his own house).

The walls are clad in unpainted off-white fibre-cement panels, arranged so that the joints are close together, highlighted with blue and green for cover strips and timber slats, echoing and deliberately caricaturing the colours of the treed seaside setting.

Here, Addison used the economical exposed stud wall, traditional for the outside walls of Queensland houses (with studs facing out),* for the high internal partitions between living hall and side rooms. The hall is ventilated by natural convection through a hole in the ceiling around the stove flue pipe. This little house, however, although based on a similar idea to the Capalaba house, but with fewer rooms, displays its richness in its inventive and varied external forms rather than in its simple interior.

*External exposed stud walls with only a single thickness of timber boarding on the inside, if sheltered by deep eaves provides adequate insulation and weather protection in this benign, sub-tropical climate.



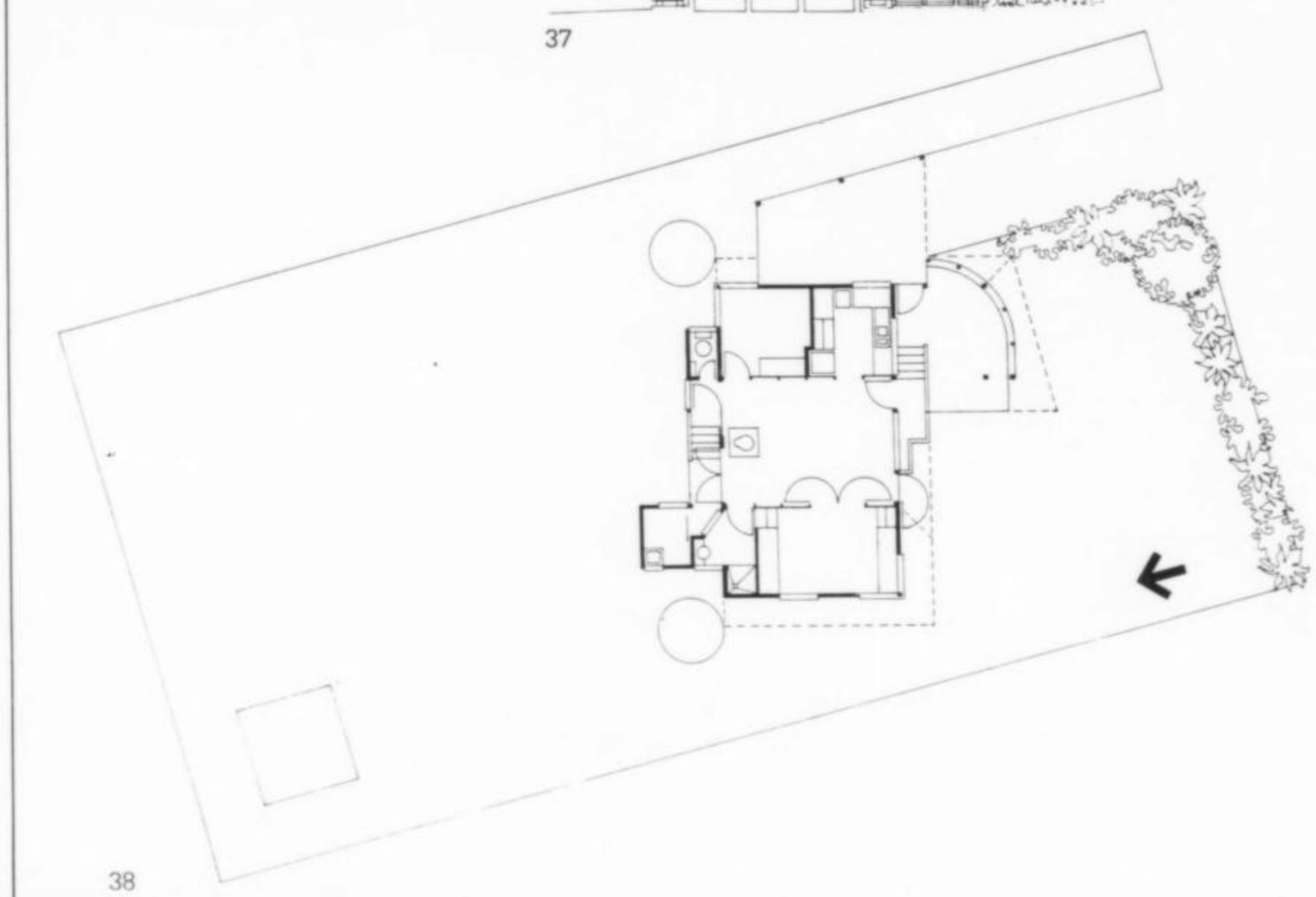
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HOUSE AT CAPALABA, BRISBANE

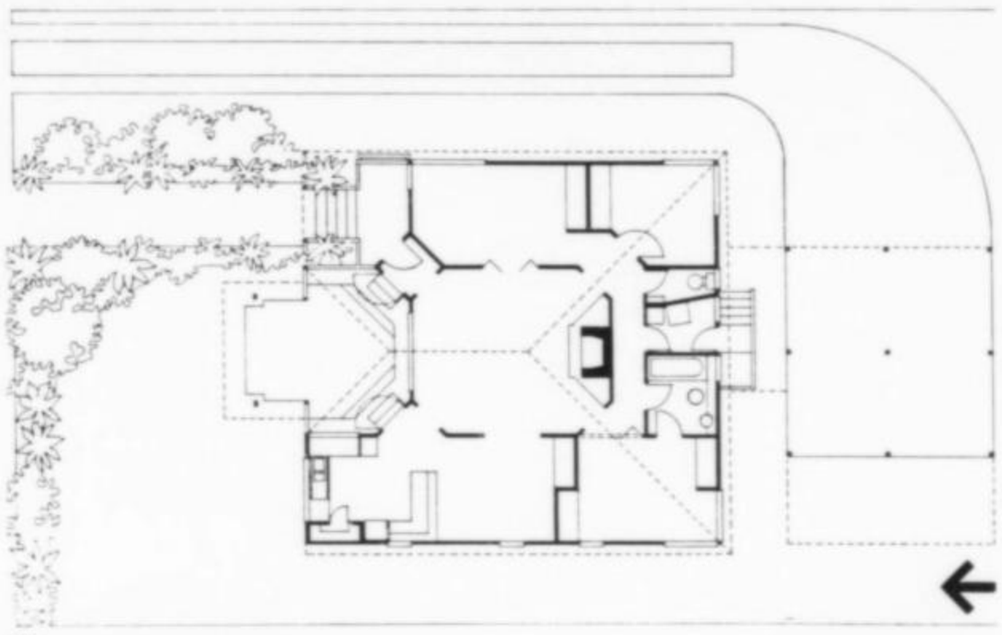


41

Capalaba house, Brisbane: 41, street front. Front path intended to be divided from front garden by hedge. Verandah/outdoor room has clear plastic roof to allow light into the central hall beyond. Lean-to roof is corrugated steel.
42, section.
43, plan (scale 1:300).
44, entry porch, looking through to verandah, with clear roof over.



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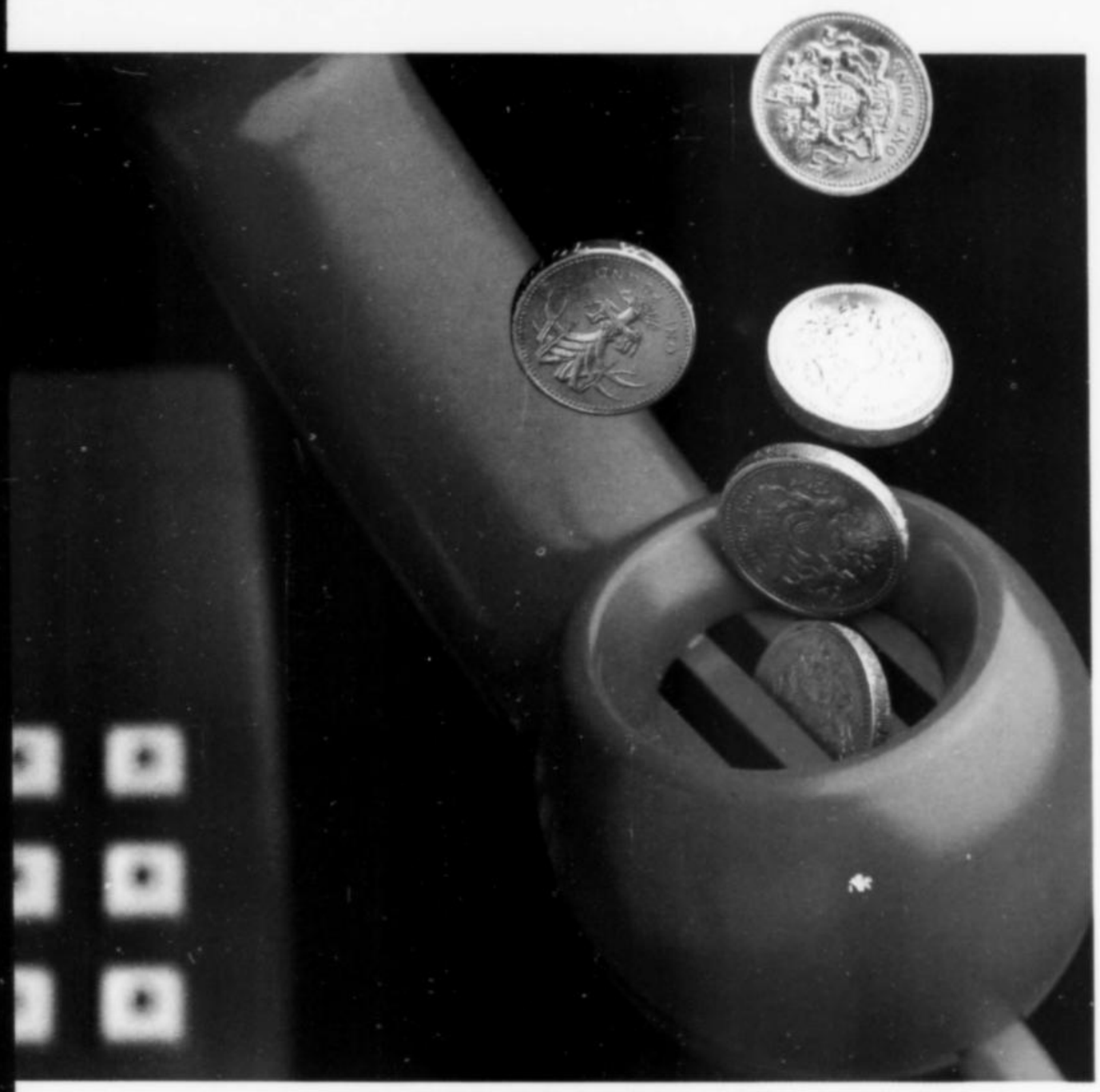


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Designed for the foreman of his Coffee Board Building in Papua New Guinea, this house at Capalaba (1984 contract price $58 000—around £24 000) was Addison's first after his return to Australia. It is set in a typically dreary recent suburb of low-hipped roof 'brick veneer' bungalows with the odd two-storey house. Addison was anxious to give it some individuality without making it too startlingly different from the rest of the street. He has to some extent achieved this with the simple, corrugated-steel pitched roof, but the big half-hipped roof form and gable is much bulkier than the adjacent roofs and more reminiscent of some California Bungalows of the 1920s, the 'Redicut' bungalows, and other earlier timber houses of the Brisbane area. Unlike Corrigan & others in Melbourne, Addison and the Brisbane group have little affection for recent suburban idioms. Rather than 'brick veneer', the upper part of the stud walls are clad in fibre-cement, rough-rendered in yellow ochre, and the lower part in red-ochre stained weather-boards, referring back to earlier Queensland traditions. Only the somewhat awkward, barge-board echoes the crude detailing of recent speculative housing.

In contrast to its neighbours, Addison's house uses its sunny, north-facing front garden for outdoor living and the car is relegated to the back. The front path, intended to be separated from the front garden by a hedge, leads to a delightful entry porch, screened by slatwork. The porch unexpectedly turns out to be linked spatially with the adjacent top-lighted verandah of which one catches a glimpse through timber slatwork.

Once inside, this modest square house reveals that it is dramatically different to the standard suburban types. It is planned around a high central living hall, like the Malahang house (p68), with smaller rooms on the perimeter. Corner doorways allow long diagonal views across the house and out through corner windows, giving an astonishing sense of spaciousness to what is in reality a very small building. On the north side, the huge hall window looks out into the verandah—an outdoor room sheltered partly by a lean-to roof on posts and partly by the clear corrugated plastic-half-hip of the main roof, which allows sunlight to penetrate the interior. The great height of the inner verandah and hall prevent heat build-up and the hall is in any case ventilated by natural convection via slots between the roof truss members and out through a ridge ventilator. Clerestorey openings between the living hall and the side rooms and corridor further aid ventilation and allow borrowed light into hall and corridor. The larger bedroom and dining room can be opened up to the central living hall giving additional spaciousness; but this is somewhat marred by the rather oppressive, inverted trusses. The most striking feature of the house, however, is the spatial richness and variety within the compact, square plan so typical of the Australian suburban bungalow.



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Richard Guy Wilson



Learning from the 1

AMERICAN VERNACULAR

'It is incorrect to claim that all regionalist architecture is indebted to the vernacular but there is obviously a sympathy of interest.' Richard Guy Wilson traces the many forms that the interest took in the work of Richardson, McKim, Frank Lloyd Wright and some of their descendants and shows how the vernacular can inspire conscious architecture at many levels. (1, design no6 from *Woodward's National Architecture*, 1869—patternbook vernacular.)

In the broad context of nineteenth- and twentieth-century American architecture, the concept of the vernacular as a progenitor of architectural ideas has been a central motif. For architects in general, there were three possible strategies to follow: the academic, the new, and the vernacular. The academic remained with the received wisdom of the academies and the books as it had been passed down, codified and reformulated by Vitruvius, Serlio, Durrand, Guadet and Harbeson. The second choice was to forge a totally new architecture, free from the academy and history. Since this was impossible and the academy was unacceptable, where did one turn? The third strategy, to look for architectural ideas based on the actual buildings of a locality, or a region, increasingly became an answer. In a sense, the vernacular combined the best of both worlds: it was both conservative and radical, pragmatically based in experience but a source for new architectural solutions. This third tradition, the vernacular, has gone to the heart of American architecture for it has modified Old World forms into a unique American structural idiom.

In studying how architects have learned from the vernacular, one must both delineate a theoretical position and then closely examine the specific architectural responses and concrete details used. The questions that must be asked are: why do architects turn to the vernacular? what have they seen or defined as the vernacular? and, how do they use the vernacular?

Architects turn to the vernacular to re-establish contact with the fundamental nature of building, and to re-create a basic architectural form. For many architects the words 'vernacular' and 'nature' are synonymous. Vernacular *is* nature, or the nature of architecture. It is a return to the roots, or fundamentals, uncontaminated by an academic overlay, whether Classical, the Beaux Arts or Modern. Writing in 1908 about his work, Frank Lloyd Wright could say: 'Radical though it may be, the work here illustrated is dedicated to the cause conservative in the best sense of the word. At no point does it involve denial of the elemental law and order inherent in all great architecture; rather, it is a declaration of love for the spirit of that law and order'. Wright denies the validity of 'seeking inspiration in books and adhering lavishly to dead formulae'. 'Nature' is his inspiration. Nature for Wright meant not only the garden and the woods but, more fundamentally, buildings that reflected adjustment and response to the inhabitants and the landscape. Two years later, in 1910, Wright expanded upon this idea: 'Folk-buildings growing in response to actual needs, fitted into the environment by people who knew no better than to fit them to it with native feeling—buildings that grew as folklore and folksong grew—are today for us better worth study than all the highly self-conscious academic attempts . . .'[1]

Some years earlier, Charles McKim had commissioned photographs of early colonial houses in Newport, Rhode Island, and wrote in conjunction with the publication of one photograph: 'The picturesque surroundings and architectural merit of many of these old buildings are not to be disputed; . . . if they *are* ugly at least they are never aggressively so, like too many of their more modern neighbours.' They were, McKim asserted, admirable in detail, 'simple in outline,' and while they were popularly viewed as 'curious objects, or as haunted houses,' they were really '*Architecture*. The architects are their true historians'.[2]

Present in both Wright and McKim's observations is an obvious spirit of dissent, of heterodoxy, and the attempt to separate oneself from the crowd. They have turned towards the vernacular because it represents a truth of fundamentals and is more at home in the landscape. This is characteristic of a regionalist response, and though it would be incorrect to claim that all regionalist architecture is indebted to the vernacular of that region, there is obviously a sympathy of interest.

Definition of what is the vernacular never has been consistent but rather it has included a constantly changing repertoire of buildings, forms, details and other aspects. Beginning in the nineteenth century there was an enlargement of what was conceived of as both the



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2, the pursuit of the natural: 'Old House at Newport, Rhode Island' from *New York Sketch Book of Architecture*, 1874.
3, Henry Hudson Holly, 'Small Cottage or Lodge' from *Modern Dwellings in Town and Country*, 1878.
4, an architect's reinterpretation of wooden vernacular: Henry Hobson Richardson, F. W. Andrews house, Newport, Rhode Island, 1872-73, demolished. (Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson & Abbot.)
5, Andrews house, plan, a typical American 'L'. (Hitchcock, *Richardson*, 1936.)



4



5

vernacular and as architecture, with the consequence that today practically every structure, from the bicycle shed to the cathedral, is now perceived as architecture. In this process a dialectic has existed between the accepted and the ignored, or between what is admitted as architecture and what is classed as vernacular. Inevitably, the vernacular comes to be included as part of the architectural language of a period and it is left for a new and younger generation to once again go out and find and appreciate some ignored building form or type. Throughout the nineteenth century the vernacular meant to most architects folk buildings, or non-architecturally designed structures from the romantic and generally medieval past. Half-timbered yeomen's cottages became the source of architectural form and imagery. Later, at the turn of the century, a few architects in both England and America began to look critically at Georgian buildings as a native vernacular. Others saw different vernacular sources; for Frank Lloyd Wright the anonymous square houses of his native Midwest became the vernacular.

In the nineteenth century only a few writers perceived the American vernacular as residing in American technology. Horatio Greenough writing in 1843 and James Jackson Jarves writing in 1864 claimed the sailing ship, the trotting carriage, the Mississippi River steamboat and the locomotive as exemplary of American genius and embodying ideas that architects should emulate.[3]

To a degree this perception was realised in the twentieth century as the industrial vernacular of the factory became the new source of design. Certainly this idea underlay the work of Gropius, Mies and many of the twentieth-century radical Modernists. As the industrial vernacular has been transformed into the common architectural language of the mid-twentieth century, the younger generation has tended to look in two directions: the commercial vernacular of the strip, and history and the revivals. Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour's, *Learning from Las Vegas* (1971) is really a recognition of a new vernacular: the large sign, applied symbols, and the parking lot. The other reaction, as in the work and writings of Alan Greenberg and Robert A. M. Stern, has been to claim that the true American vernacular is the classic house which has appeared and reappeared throughout American history.

CONTINUUM WITH EXTREMES

To categorise the response—or how architects use the vernacular—is essentially to visualise a continuum with two extremes. One extreme would be a response of replication, seeing the vernacular as a style or an image that is reproduced as closely as possible. The opposite extreme would be an interpretation of the underlying principles or the fundamentals of the vernacular: environmental adaption, structure, materials, form, or image. Obviously the extremes can seldom be realised, no building can be completely replicated except as an exhibition structure since: changed circumstances and requirements almost always assert themselves. To derive principles from the vernacular avoiding any apparent reference to style or image is likewise difficult to attain. Consequently, most responses to the vernacular exist between these polemical poles and involve what the architect is most interested in: image, materials, style or form.

The actual response of American architects to the question of learning from the vernacular can be seen in a group of wooden houses dating from the 1870s to the 1930s. Clear separation of motives on the part of architects can be difficult, as can be the categorisation of response, and while the selection of these houses for investigation does have a certain arbitrariness—as all scholarship does—they do indicate certain American attitudes to the vernacular, and how it has been used.

The American architectural situation in the later nineteenth century was one of confusion, a feeling that while great gains were being made industrially and in the

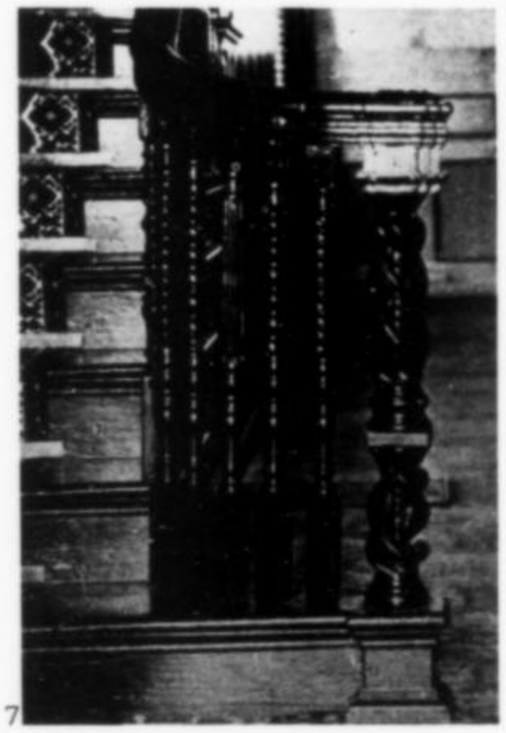
material comforts, artistically and culturally there was a lack of a clear American idiom, especially in architecture. The editors of the first professional architectural journal, *The American Architect and Building News*, wrote in one of the early issues in 1876: 'We have to create an architecture, and we are expected to furnish it ready made. We are not given three or four centuries to develop it in. . . academic conservatism we have none, old traditions and standards we have none.[4] Behind such sentiments lay the intellectual heritage of Ruskin, Viollet-le-Duc, Herder, and Morris.[5]

European ideas were well known among the more thoughtful members of the American architectural community and these ideas led American architects to examine their own vernacular instead of looking abroad for architectural inspiration. For the editors of the *American Architect* the American vernacular was above all the wooden house as exemplified in the house pattern and builder's guide books of men such as George Woodward and Henry Hudson Holly: 'They are, in short, the American vernacular architecture: on a level with the public demand,—no better and no worse,' commented the *American Architect*, they are the 'American style'.[6] The illustrations in the pattern books 'present an accurate picture of the commonplace forms in American buildings,—forms such as give to American towns their characteristic expression, and which have been in great part legitimately developed out of our condition of living.'[7] The wooden country houses shown in the pattern books with their jigsaw ornament, were 'distinctly American and not English—a sublimated derivative from Dutch or Yankee wooden farmhouses.'[8] Holly's architecture clearly came out of the American wooden house idiom, and yet at the same time, he felt, as he claimed in 1877, that a 'germ of a vernacular style was planted here 200 years ago' and his designs in some way reflected this earlier genius.[9] Unfortunately Holly was more an *agent provocateur* than a designer of great talent; his buildings of the 1870s do not rise much above the vernacular level, they lack substantiveness. However, a climate of opinion was being created which



6

6, McKim searching for informality: the back of 'Prescott's Headquarters—West Road' from Charles McKim, *Old Newport Houses*, 1875.
7, hall of Pell House, from McKim, *Old Newport Houses*.



7

would direct American architects to seriously examine their own wooden vernacular, both that of the present and the colonial past. The results for the next 70 years would be a lineage of distinctive, interesting and sometimes original buildings.

The F. W. Andrews house in Newport, Rhode Island, built in 1872-73 by Henry Hobson Richardson, can serve as our entry point; it is a sophisticated instance of an architect's reinterpretation of the American wooden vernacular as illustrated in Holly's book. Richardson had travelled widely in Europe and England and also studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Later historians have noted the possible vernacular origins of the Andrews house, but they have also claimed that the house reflects Richardson's interest in the contemporary work of Richard Norman Shaw of which Leyswood, Sussex (1867-9), is a good example.[10] It is highly unlikely that Richardson knew much of Shaw's 'Old English manner' at this point, and revealingly he did pay Shaw a much more literal homage just two years later in the William Watts Sherman house, also located in Newport. The plan of the Andrews house is an 'L', typically American with the additive accretions attached to the rear. The main living space—the hall—may owe something to English examples, yet Richardson treats it as a more centralised space, and includes the main staircase, making it the primary communication area.

More specifically American, and derivative of the builder's wooden vernacular as personified by Holly and Woodward was the exterior of Richardson's Andrews house. A large piazza—or porch—engulfs the building on nearly three sides, and tall floor-to-ceiling windows allow free passage between the interior and the exterior. Timber was the primary building material for the house, and here Richardson draws most clearly upon the vernacular builder, and transforms the image. The Andrews house was a wooden extravaganza displaying a multiplicity of textures and forms, and yet Richardson rejected the common gingerbread or the cut-out wooden detail. Instead the building is conceived in flat planes; flat panels, their edges and underlying structure crisply delineated provided a volumetric cover over the wooden studs. The actual covering materials are clapboards on the first level and shingles above. Shingles in particular were a vernacular exterior covering, first developed in the seventeenth century by the early colonists. In the nineteenth century shingles were commonly used in the construction of ordinary buildings like sheds, barns and storehouses, especially along the New England coast. About mid-century Andrew Jackson Downing had advocated the use of shingles in a cottage design, but the custom had not caught on.[11] In the design of the Andrews house, Richardson set other patterns such as vertical board and batten friezes, some diagonal wood stripping, and flat transom covers against the shingles. He rejected the standard turned-wood porch posts for straight studs. The capitals are self-consciously crude flat wooden wedges. The balustrade is a series of flat wooden panels, small blocks of wood, and a railing. A wooden trellis surrounds the foundation. For Richardson in the Andrews house, the vernacular meant an investigation of building materials and processes, and then through refinement a comment on the idiom. For him, vernacular materials and process create an image.

MCKIM THE RECORDER

Concurrently with Richardson's Andrews house, Charles McKim—also in Newport—was looking at a somewhat different architectural source. McKim had been in Richardson's office and indeed may have worked on, or supervised, the construction of the Andrews house. He also had attended the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and travelled widely in France and England.[12] McKim, as noted above, had become involved with recording early Newport buildings. The photograph of the old Newport house was actually the rear of the Bishop Berkeley house of 1729. In choosing this view McKim explicitly avoided the more formal five-bayed Georgian front, and concentrated upon the long broad sweep of the textured, shingled roof, and the small, double-roofed, gable accretion. Other photographs by McKim indicate much the same preference for simple outlines and forms, growth by addition, and then more complex details such as twisting newel posts, balusters and spindles. In this search for the vernacular McKim was aided by other American architects and certainly the entire enterprise was spurred on by foreign observers such as the English architect John M. Bryden, who wrote in 1877: 'If ever America is to become possessed of an historical style, it must spring from the work of the old colonists.'[13]

The consequence for McKim and his partners William R. Mead and William Bigelow (to be replaced in 1879 by Stanford White) would be two different directions: an additive type of composition and, alternatively, a compact massing, simple in outline. The first direction is seen in the Samuel Grey Ward summer house of 1877-78 located in the Berkshire Hills of Western Massachusetts. Sited with superb views to the south over the

8, Informal additive composition: McKim, Mead & Bigelow, Samuel Gray Ward House, Lenox, Massachusetts, 1877-78, demolished, from C. A. Morley, *Lenox*, 1886.
9, Ward house, plan (*Century Magazine*, 1886.)



8

Tanglewood bowl, the house stretched 200 feet along the hillside; corridors and passageways allowed full advantage to be taken of the outlook. On the exterior, the massing was additive. The house was conceived of as a series of parts, of separate and discrete elements that had been added over time as the family had grown and usage changed. Gables, both large and small, were juxtaposed, and butted rudely—at different points—into each other. A great roof over the mid-section appeared to sweep almost down to the ground level. Overall continuity was maintained by the use of shingles which covered all the exterior surfaces, though different shapes and patterns lent an air of spontaneity. The vernacular image was noticed by a critic writing at the time: 'The house has such a quaint look, that but for a few Queen



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10, compositional control by simple outline. McKim, Mead & Bigelow, William Dean Howells house, Belmont, Massachusetts, 1877-78.
11, Howells house, plan.
12, Howells house, dining room.
13, the apotheosis of the big gable: McKim, Mead & White, William G. Low house, Bristol, Rhode Island, 1886-87, demolished.



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Anne fantasies it might pass for an old Puritan's Homestead.'[14]

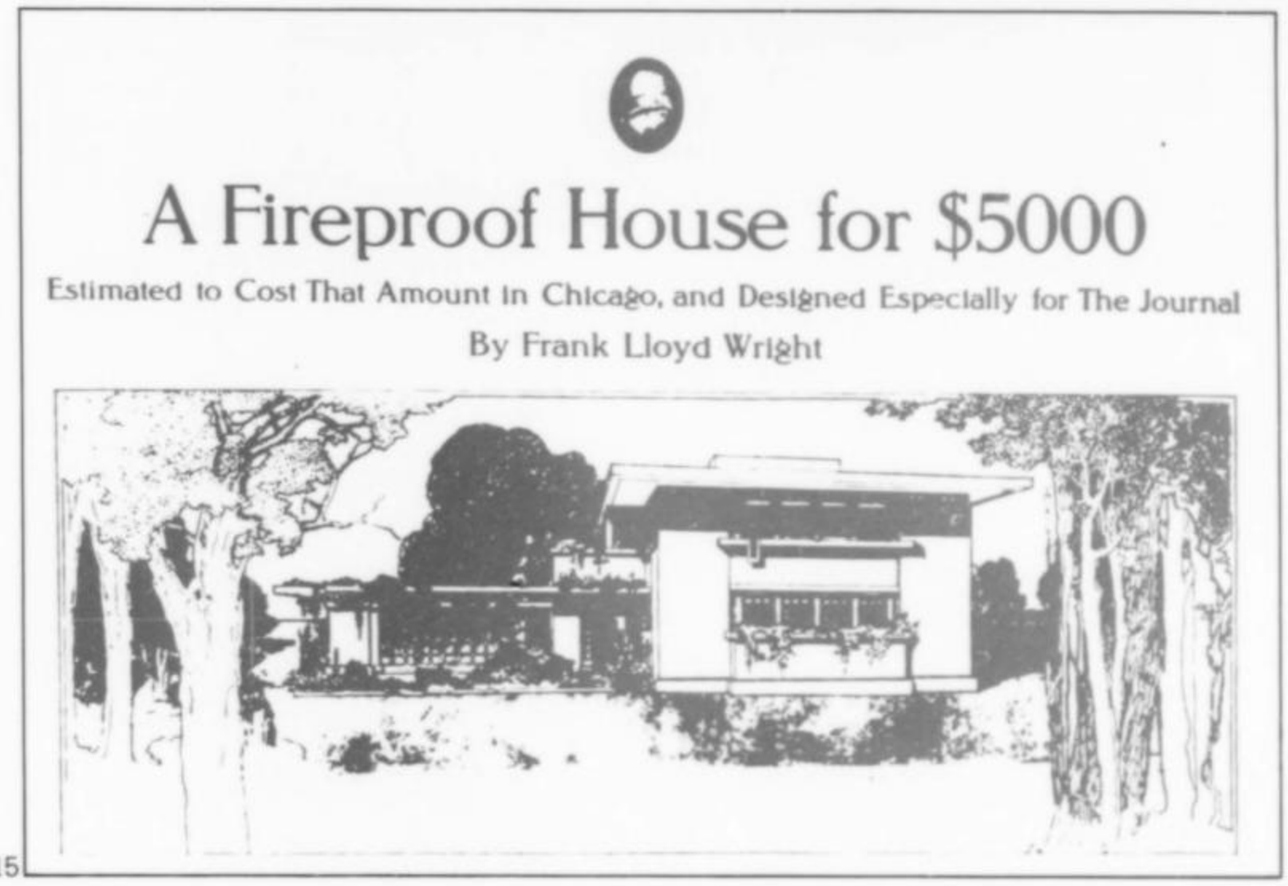
The other major compositional lesson McKim derived from the early American vernacular, compact massing and simple outline, can be seen in the various large gable houses he and his partners designed in the 1870s and 1880s. These are in a sense an almost direct transcription of the long spreading rear roof of the Bishop Berkeley house. The Howells house in Belmont, Massachusetts of 1877-78 is one of the earliest; here a large gable pulls all the discrete elements together into a whole. Set on a red brick base, redwood shingles originally covered the upper floors and the roof. The roof especially was singled out as a colonial feature.[15] The plan may owe something as well to McKim's early American 'researches', for it is basically a central-hall scheme, although the parts have been deformed by programmatic demands. For instance, Howells, being a noted literary personality, required a large library. The panelling here, as in the dining room, is a conscious attempt to reflect the olden time. Thin, contoured cut-outs, resembling pilasters surround the overmantel. To Elinor Howells, the dining room looked '200 years old'.[16]

McKim, and his partners, would continue to exploit the large gable shape reaching a culmination in their William G. Low house of 1886-1887 in Bristol, Rhode Island. In

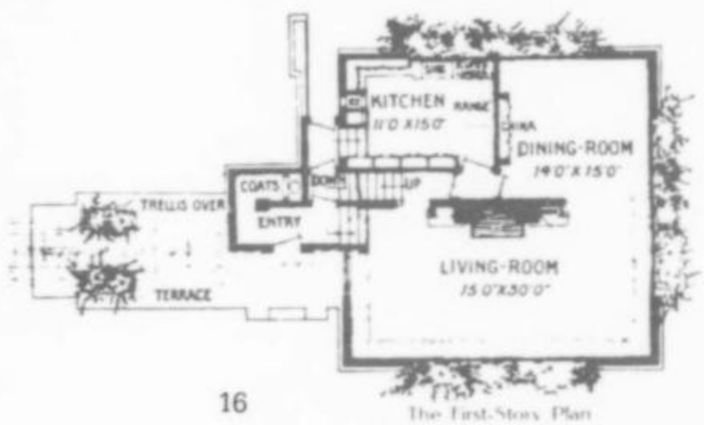
14, house, Ames, Iowa, *c*1900, designer and builder unknown. The ubiquitous square Midwestern house.
15, Frank Lloyd Wright, 'A Fireproof House for $5000', from *Ladies Home Journal*, April 1907. The square Midwestern type simplified and made stronger.
16, 'Fireproof House' plans.
17, Frank Lloyd Wright, Dr G. C. Stockman house, Mason City, Iowa, 1908.
18, Stockman house, planter detail.



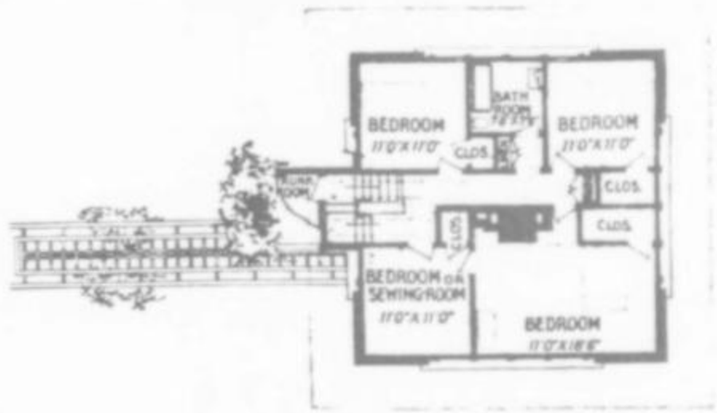
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16 The First-Story Plan



The Second Story



17

the Low house all elements are subsumed to the powerful gabled roof. The piazza becomes simply a penetration at one end. Interior functional requirements are organised into symmetrical window bands, and only the slight bulges of window bays break forth from the continuous straight cut shingle skin.

For McKim and his partners the vernacular was early American architecture and they consciously looked at it for an image, but an image to be updated and not repeated. These shingle-covered houses which were later christened the 'Shingle Style' were not known as such at the time, but rather were examples of the 'modernised colonial style.'[17] Materials were certainly of some importance to McKim, but more important was the image. This attitude would continue as they updated their researches in the 1880s by looking at the more formal Georgian fronts of the eighteenth century. Designs such as the H. A. C. Taylor House of 1883-86, while more obviously pretentious and classicising than what had gone before, were essentially an adaption of what McKim, Herd and White saw as American vernacular style.

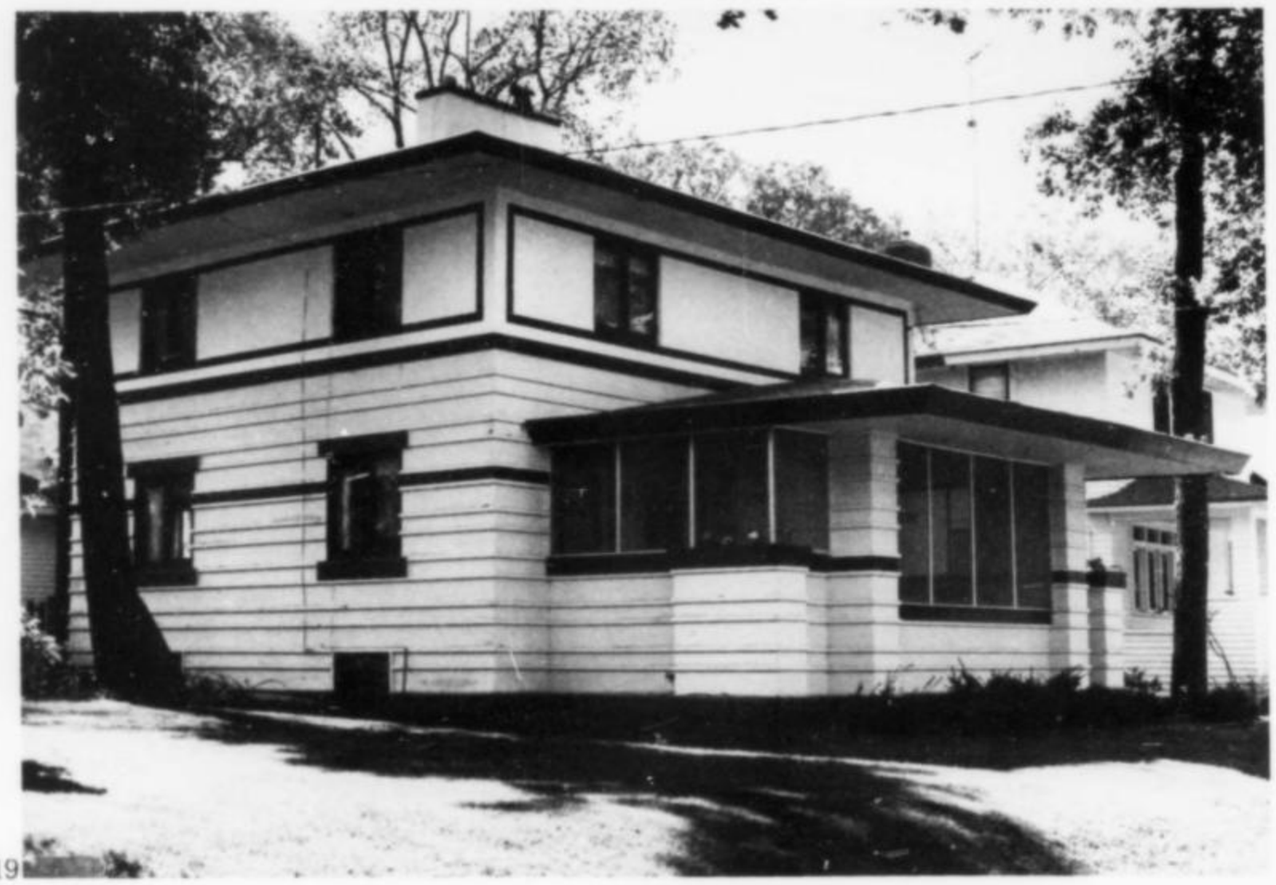
The relationship of Frank Lloyd Wright's early work (such as his own shingled and high-gabled Oak Park, Illinois house of 1889) to the East Coast reinterpreted colonial vernacular of McKim and others has often been noted.[18] It is also possible to see much of Wright's work during the years around 1900 as a rationalisation and formalisation of the essentially additive nature of many early American houses[19]. In a sense his long cross-axial schemes are a restatement of the theme that preoccupied Richardson in the Andrews House, and McKim in the Ward house. However, Wright saw himself as an architect of the 'Middle West', and others confirmed this[20]. What has not been generally recognised is how much he owed to the Midwestern vernacular, and especially to the ubiquitous square house.[21] One does not have to drive far in the Midwest to see these rather plain, boxy houses, prismatic in their rectitude. The commonest variety is built of wood, though brick can be found. Roofs are generally hipped and often the eaves have a slight extension. Porches are always present and can either be across the front or on the side. Ornament is generally minimal: sometimes brackets under the eaves (hence the name 'Bracketed style') and pediments over the windows. Wright's 1906 scheme, 'A Fireproof House for $5,000' is essentially a restatement of this Midwestern vernacular, or as Wright wrote, 'an improvement over the usual cut-up, overtrimmed boxes doing duty in this class, wherein architecture is a matter of "millwork" and the "features" are apt to peel.'[22] To the square box Wright imparted a dynamic energy, windows pulled into banks, corners strengthened, and miscellaneous trim eliminated. The worm's eye perspective emphasises the



18

roof as a sheltering feature—a flat slab with greatly extended eaves. The typical 'L' or rear porch addition to most American houses is organised by Wright into a dual front-and-rear entrance placed at the side. The front porch becomes an extended pergola or trellis terrace. The plan is simple and open, the hearth is at the centre and the living and dining areas extend around it on three sides.

The 'Fireproof' in the title refers to Wright's proposal that such houses be built out of monolithic concrete,



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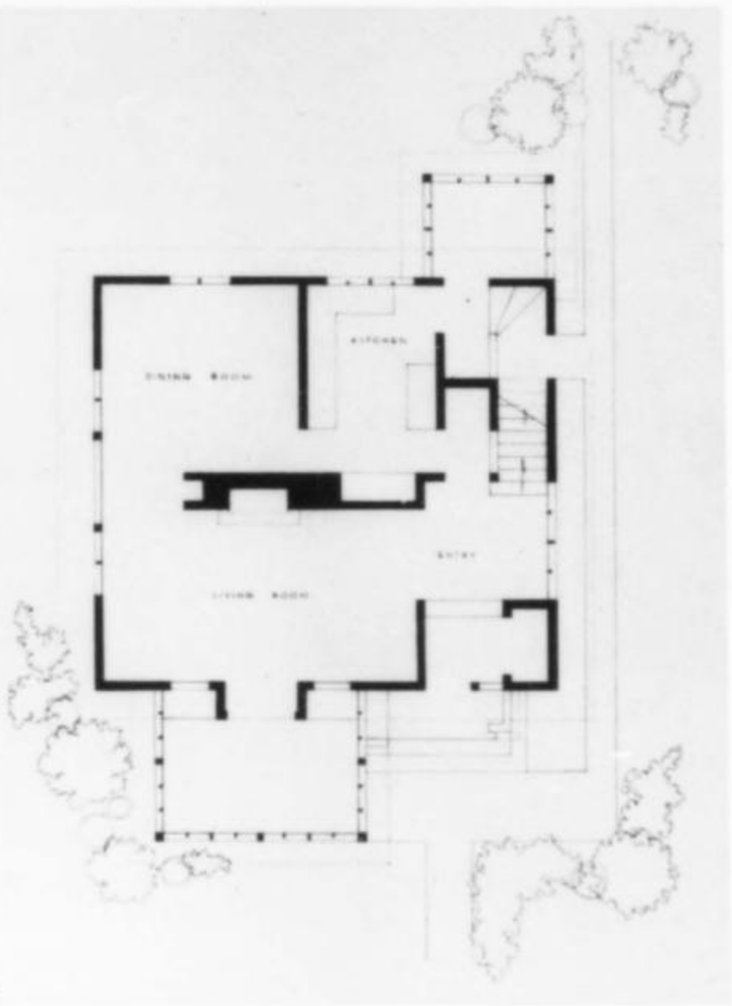
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creating an economical and safe dwelling. None was ever constructed out of concrete, but the design was easily translated into wood and stucco and a number were built. The G. C. Stockman house in Mason City, Iowa (1908) shows the transformation into wood. The materials are a wooden balloon frame over which is laid sheathing boards, felt paper, metal lath, and then stucco. Wright has modified his original project by removing the pergola, but he retains the entrance accretion, and balances it on the other side by a porch that has been

19, William Drummond, Curtis Yelland house, Mason City, Iowa, 1910-11.
20, Einar Broaten, builder, E. V. Stillman house, Clear Lake, Iowa, 1917.
21, Kohl house, Hampton, Iowa, *c*1920, designer and builder unknown.
22, competing with the speculative builder: Purcell, Feick & Elmslie, A. B. C. Dodd house, Charles City, Iowa, 1910-11, plan.
23, Dodd house, elevations. (Northwest Architectural Archives, University of Minnesota.)
24, Dodd house.
25, Dodd house, exterior detail.
26, Dodd house, interior living room.



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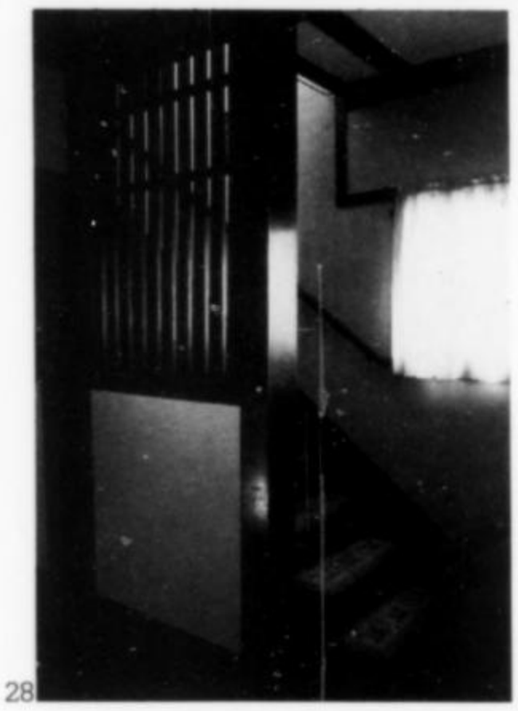
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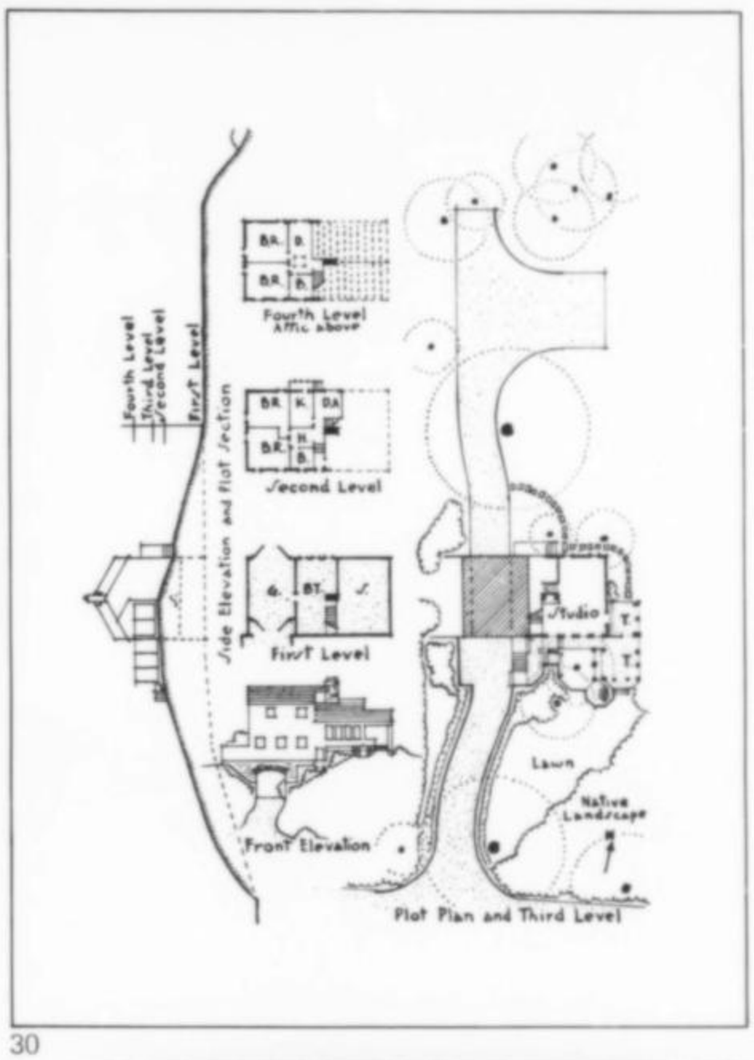
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27, Dodd house, front door.
28, Dodd house, interior, entrance hall and staircase.
29, John Lloyd Wright, Wright house, Long Beach, Indiana 1923-24.
30, Wright house, plans and elevations from *Architectural Record*, 1926.



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enclosed. Flat wood trim helps to emphasise the fenestration pattern and the corners. The flat slab of roof becomes a low-rising hipped cap. On the interior, the dining room and living room surround two sides of the fireplace and open into each other. Thin raised wooden bands unite and differentiate the spaces.

Wright tends to view the vernacular as an image and, more importantly, as a form which he transposes into something new. His square box design would inspire other Prairie School architects such as Walter Burley Griffin, Percy Dwight Bentley and William Drummond to either imitate him or return themselves to the vernacular. William Drummond's Curtis Yelland house (1910-11), also in Mason City, draws upon these examples. Drummond had been in Wright's Oak Park studio-office and his debt to Wright is obvious, yet the clarity of his forms is somewhat muted. Throughout the Midwest one can find a tremendous number of houses by unknown architects or local builders that follow Wright's example and restate the Midwestern box. In a sense, Wright's example re-invigorated the builder's vernacular.

PRAIRIE SCHOOL PURCELL

The desire to design an economical house for the middle class that could compete with the standard builder-designed house preoccupied many of the members of the American Arts and Crafts movement, and perhaps none more than William Gray Purcell, a Prairie School architect of Minneapolis. Purcell in 1909 went into partnership with George Grant Elmslie who had been Louis Sullivan's right-hand man for over 20 years. Together, Purcell and Elmslie created some of the finest Midwestern designs between 1909 and 1916.[23] A house Purcell designed for A. B. C. Dodd in Charles City, Iowa (1910-11) illustrated the attempt to create an acceptable image for the local drugstore owner in a small Midwestern farming centre not dissimilar to the town Gopher Prairie described by Sinclair Lewis in *Mainstreet* (1920). Purcell draws directly upon another ubiquitous Midwestern type, the rectangular wood-framed house with a gable roof. The architect's hand is basically in the details on the exterior: the windows are banked, flat trim defines the first floor clapboarding which increases the tautness of the wall plane, the eaves are extended and elaborated by raised battens, and the entrance is elaborated by trim and a seat. The porches, both front and rear, are treated as accretions and little attempt is made to integrate them into the design in the manner of Wright. On the interior the plan is opened between the living and dining areas, the hearth is the centre, and built-ins are used. The trim is flat, lumberyard stock, sanded and varnished.

With Purcell it can be seen that the question of the vernacular—especially when dealing with the question of economical middle-class housing—meant accepting both the form and the image of the vernacular builder. To meet the cost and get the local builders to agree to put up a house, he could not go to extremes. The consequence is that the architect's role is, for the most part, reduced to designing details; he improves on and slightly elaborates what has already been given.

SON OF FLW

The concern with finding a source of inspiration in the wooden vernacular American house continued into the 1920s and '30s. An architect whose lineage fits well into the pattern outlined above and can serve as a conclusion is John Lloyd Wright. John Lloyd Wright was the second son of Frank Lloyd Wright and received his architectural training in various offices in Southern California and then his father's office in Chicago.[24] In 1923 he moved to Long Beach, Indiana, a small resort and suburban village about 60 miles east of Chicago located on the shores of Lake Michigan. His own house-studio, drawing directly upon the shingled beach house vernacular, is a series of unpretentious shingle-covered volumes along the top of a sand dune. Architectural distinction comes through

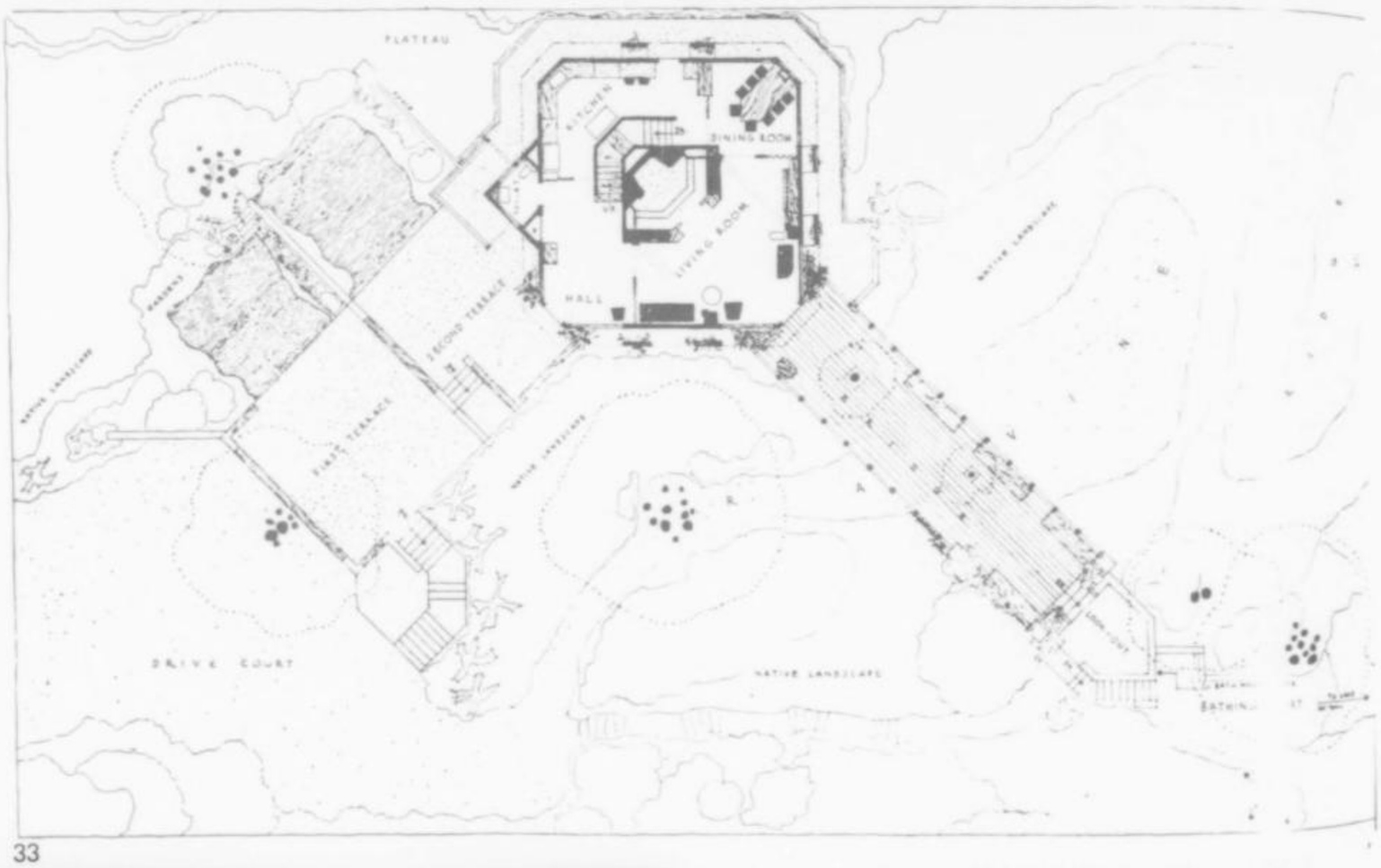
31, 32, The square box elaborated: John Lloyd Wright, 'House in Wood', Ken Holden house, Birchwood Beach, Michigan, 1933-34.
33, Holden house, plan of first level from *Architectural Forum*, 1937.
34, Holden house, bedroom.



31



32



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Footnotes

1 Frank Lloyd Wright, 'In the Cause of Architecture' *The Architectural Record*, XXIII, March, 1908, p3; Preface to *Ausgeführte Bauten*, 1910, reprinted in *Frank Lloyd Wright: Writings and Buildings*, NY, 1960, p89.
2 'Old House in Newport, Rhode Island', *New York Sketch Book of Architecture*, 1, December 1874, p145.
3 Horatio Greenough, 'American Architecture', in *Form and Function: Remarks on Art*, H A Small, ed, Berkeley, 1947; and James Jackson Jarves, *The Art Idea*, New York, 1864, pp286-314.
4 'American Architecture-Present', *American Architect*, 5 August 1876, p251.
5 For background on this subject see my: 'American Architecture and the Search for a National Style in the 1870s', *Nineteenth Century*, 3, Autumn 1977, pp74-80.
6 'American Vernacular Architecture', *American Architect*, 2, 1 September, 1877, p280.
7 'American Vernacular Architecture, II', *American Architect*, 3, 25 May 1878, p182.
8 'American Vernacular Architecture, III', *American Architect*, 3, 8 June 1878, p199.
9 Henry Hudson Holly, 'The American Style', *American Architect*, 2, 18 August 1877, p267.
10 Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *The Architecture of H. H. Richardson and His Times*, Cambridge, revised edition, 1966, p134; Vincent Scully Jr, *The Shingle Style and the Stick Style* New Haven, revised edition, 1971, pp9-10; James O'Gorman in *Building on Paper: Rhode Island Architectural Drawings 1825-1945*, edited by William B. Jordy and Christopher Monkhouse, Providence, 1982, p146.
11 Andrew Jackson Downing, *The Architecture of Country Houses*, New York, 1951, p127; and Scully, *Shingle Style*, pp8-10, 14-15. The continuance of shingles as an east coast custom can be seen in the photographs of G. B. Brainard taken in the 1860s and 1870s of Long Island, in the collection of the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities, Setauket, New York.
12 See my, 'The Early Work of Charles F. McKim: Country House Commissions', *Winterthur Portfolio, 14, Autumn 1979, pp235-67.*
13 John M. Bryden, 'A Few More Words about "Queen Anne"', *American Architect*, 2, 6 October 1877, p322.
14 Correspondence, *American Architect*, 2, December 1877, p394.
15 Letter, William Dean Howells to William Bigelow, 25 February 1978, Amhurst College Collection.
16 Letter, Elinor Howells to William Mead, 3 July 1878, Amhurst College Collection.
17 George William Sheldon, *Artistic Country Seats*, New York, 1886, vol 1, p23.
18 Scully, *The Shingle Style*.
19 Siegfried Giedion, *Space Time and Architecture*, Cambridge, 3rd edition, 1959, p361.
20 C. R. Ashbee, 'Frank Lloyd Wright' in *Ausgeführte Bauten*, 1911, reissued as *Frank Lloyd Wright, the Early Work*, edited by Edgar Kauffman Jr, New York, 1968, p3; and Wright. 'In the Cause', p5.
21 H. Allen Brooks, *The Prairie School*, Toronto, 1971, pp124-136; and Richard Guy Wilson and Sidney K. Robinson, *The Prairie School in Iowa*, Ames, 1977, p6.
22 Published in *Ladies' Home Journal*, April 1907, p24.
23 For their work see: *Prairie School Architecture, Studies from 'The Western Architect'*, edited by H. Allen Brooks, Toronto, 1975, and Brooks, *The Prairie School*. See also, David Gebhard, 'William Gray Purcell and George Grant Elmslie and the Early Progressive Movement in American Architecture from 1900 to 1920', PhD dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1957.
24 John Lloyd Wright, *My Father who is on Earth*, New York, 1946; and various materials drawn from the collections of Frances Lloyd Wright and Leonard C. Rosenberg.
25 Wright, *My Father*, p115; and John Lloyd Wright and Hazel Wright, 'The Designer's Description', *The Indianapolis Star*, 19 April 1936.

siting and details. The entrance walk is composed of polygonal concrete forms. Attention was paid to preserving the native vegetation and landscape and a drive-through arch penetrates the base of the house. On the interior, the trim is very simple. An elaborate dining-studio and lounging space of three levels occupies one end.

John Lloyd Wright's 'House in Wood', or a beach house for Ken Holden at Birchwood Beach, Michigan (1933-34), comment upon both the shingled modernised colonial resort house and also the Midwestern square box vernacular. Placed on top of a sand dune, the complex geometrical configuration contrasts with nature. The house itself is basically a square box, though it spreads outwards through a long bridge and a series of terraces. Below the terraces are located garages and equipment rooms. The basic square plan of the house is manipulated into a duodecagon on the first level. Interior movement is rotational around the off-centred hearth. The first level space is open; folding screens are used as room dividers. On the second level, the bedroom shapes are pentagonal, hexagonal and septagonal. Except for the concrete slab floor, the structure is wood-stud balloon frame, with an exterior covering of shingles over insulation and wood sheathing. The interior walls are covered in plywood, which is layered, or cut back into geometric patterns, and then stained with watercolour to provide an integral ornament. John called this style of ornamentation 'lichenaceous.' The top level is a penthouse surrounded by a deck, the entire effect recalling a Mississippi River Steamboat pilot's house. At the base on one side, a sharp prow sticks out and overhead an elaborate triangular roof recalls gantry work for loading cargo ships. Such whimsical, not to say humorous, references are obviously John's ironical comment on the 'beach house' vernacular idiom. For both John and his father (who wrote a short piece on the Holden house), the intention was to produce an American house in both image and materials, and it was intended to be in very direct opposition to the 'machine for living' image they saw invading the country through the International Style.[25] The design reaches far back into the American vernacular past, and combines a concern with image, form and materials, as well as an environmental/regional response.

Certainly the story of American architects learning from the vernacular wooden house could be further extended. There is the more recent work of Pietro Belluschi, Harwell Hamilton Harris, William Wurster and Charles Moore, and there are many others who could be cited. The question is not about the number of designers, of which there have been many, but the responses which range from a concern with materials and building process, through style and image, to form and details. There is no set pattern of response nor of usage. To learn from the vernacular requires looking with new and fresh eyes, and especially the eye of the poet or the artist at the common and the everyday. The material is there and remains to be discovered anew.

Supplement to The Architectural Review

The Aga Khan

1986 Awards for

Architecture

Award
Yaama Mosque,
Niger

Award
Restoration
of Al Aqsa
Mosque,
Jerusalem

Honourable mention
Shushtar
New Town,
Iran

Honourable mention
Said Naum
Mosque,
Jakarta,
Indonesia

Award
Dar Lamane
housing
community,
Casablanca,
Morocco

Award
Mostar
old town
conservation,
Yugoslavia

Award
Social security
offices,
Istanbul,
Turkey

Award
Bhong Mosque,
Rahim-Yar Khan,
Pakistan

Honourable mention
Kampung
Kebalen
improvement,
Surabaya,
Indonesia

Honourable mention
Ismā'īliyya
development
projects,
Egypt

Honourable mention
Historic sites
Istanbul,
Turkey

This set of Aga Khan awards for Muslim architecture does not look so very different from the last ones shown in AR October 1983. Indeed, in some ways, the results are less dramatic. There is nothing which quite rivals the romantic marriage of Modernism and tradition of Zlatko Ugljen's White Mosque in Visoko, Yugoslavia, or the tender vernacular charm of the Tanjong Jara Beach Hotel in Malaysia.

Yet, in many ways, this year's awards go deeper than their predecessors. Some of the buildings given awards in the first series (AR November 1980) only just steered clear of a westernised kitsch version of Islam. Both then and in 1983, hotels or tourist complexes achieved accolades. Not so this time. That they did so before perhaps indicated a lack of cultural sureness: were the awards really celebrating Islamic architecture or a kind of touristic recreation of Muslim building? This year, there can be no doubt, for even the most touristically orientated development (the conservation and recreation of Mostar old town in Yugoslavia—p94) has—as the jury points out—greatly enhanced the life of the local community.*

All this time's awards (save perhaps one—restoration of the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem) have had deep resonances with local community and with its economic and social development. As usual with the Aga's awards, we can be reasonably sure that the social claims made for award winners are not just wishful thinking on the part of architects and jurors. All candidate projects (which must have been standing for at least three years to qualify for entry) are thoroughly examined in use by qualified assessors. This time, they have evaluated projects which vary in social background from the mosque at Yaama in Niger (p87), built in immemorial tradition by all members of the community, to the highly elaborate and explicit socialist programme that enabled the restoration of Mostar.

At last the Aga Khan scheme for recreating and celebrating Muslim architecture begins to make sense at a level which can be influential in the rest of the world—precisely because the winning schemes seem more deeply rooted in very diverse Muslim traditions and cultures. The scheme can now be considered as a useful contribution to the world debate about the relationship of building to society: about what architecture and the environment could be and how they should be made.

This crop of awards contains at least two which are very challenging to conventional wisdom. The Dar Lamane housing project in Morocco (p90) questions received well-meaning opinion that prefabricated system building is no good for the poor of developing countries (or for that matter the relatively rich of the West). The Bhong Mosque in Pakistan so goes against our conventional architectural notions that it raises many critical issues of popular and professional taste. This is not a superficial matter. It poses questions about whether the people who design buildings should enjoy a separate sensibility from the people who use them.

The whole thrust of the Aga Khan programme is an attempt to identify identity clearly. It is an attempt to relate very diverse societies to their tradition, locality and ways of building.†

In its celebration of diverseness and in its reinforcement of the belief that variety and authenticity must come from a deep understanding of particular cultural roots, the Aga's programme now begins to teach all architects of whatever religious persuasion worldwide.

Peter Davey

*The jury adopted a classification system by type advocated by us in our criticism of the last awards (AR October 1983). 'As a working method, the submitted projects were grouped under five headings, and an endeavour made to find at least one project which was judged worthy of an award in each group: 1, mosques; 2, public, commercial and industrial buildings; 3, human settlements, rehabilitation and improvement; 4, housing; 5, conservation and adaptive reuse.' It did not work quite as the jury had intended: sadly no award went to a neighbourhood improvement scheme—though commendations did (p106).

†It should be recorded that one jury member, Doruk Pamir, lodged a minority report in which he condemned the general romantic bias towards 'traditionalism, historicism and the vernacular'. Noticeably lacking, he thought, was 'recognition of those projects which engage in the search for answers to the kind of technological issues which still face architects in regions where modern technical development cannot be taken for granted. Also curious was the tendency to suppress the creative hand of the architect through the predominance of awards to projects which involved a minimum of ''design'' concerns.' That the award system can now expose serious internal debate on such fundamental issues shows new self-confidence and augurs well for the future.
Hans Hollein joined Doruk Pamir's plea that Louis Kahn's Dacca Capitol complex should be given an award (it was refused an award this time because of insufficient user evaluation). Hollein decried the 'consistent bias of the majority of the jury'.

The Jury

The master jury for these awards was Mahdi Elmandjra (Moroccan economist), Abdelwahed El-Wakil (Egyptian architect), Hans Hollein, Zahir Ud-Deen Khwaja (Pakistani architect and planner), Ronald Lewcock (Australian architect and conservationist), Fumihiko Maki (Japanese architect), Doruk Pamir (Turkish architect), H. Soedjatmoko (Indonesian expert on international development and politics), and Robert Venturi.

Awards are given triennially. The jury meets twice—first to review projects which are recommended by selectors in each country. The jury makes a short list of schemes which are visited and analysed by technical assessors. The assessors' reports are reviewed by the reconvened jury when it makes its final selections for award. This year, for the first time, the jury decided to give five unpremiated honourable mentions as well as the six awards which will share the US$500 000 prize money. The prize money is shared by clients, contractors and craftsmen as well as the architects and planners according to their contributions as evaluated by the technical assessor. In poor societies, the bulk of the money usually goes to the community, rather than particular individuals (who, none the less, receive large sums in their own terms).

Award

Yaama Mosque, Niger

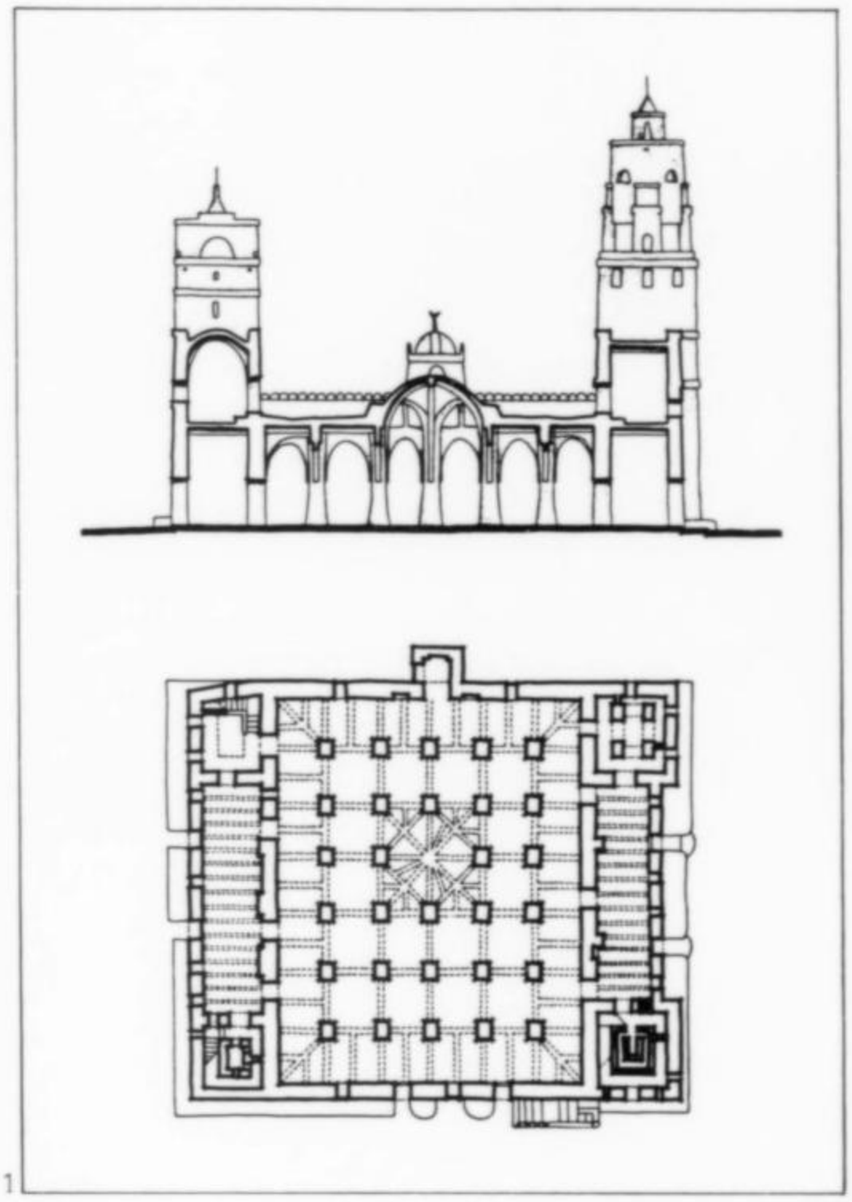
Architect and master mason

Falké Barmou

Yaama is a village in the semi-desert region of Niger. Even after more than 60 years of French colonisation (which ended in 1960), the area is remarkably untouched by outside influence. So when the village decided in 1962 to build a Friday Mosque in which everyone could gather for prayers they chose to use traditional methods: everyone made a contribution, from the landowner who donated the site, to the people who made mud bricks, carried the water and gathered wood.

They chose Falké Barmou to supervise the work and Barmou, who (like everyone else in the village) earns most of his living as a farmer, made a design which has been cumulatively refined and made more monumental since the project was started in 1962.

Initially, the mosque was a simple, severe hypostyle hall with the column spacing determined by the spatial demands of kneeling worshippers. In 1975/6, the original roof structure was replaced by a series of bentwood vaults covered in mud (a method not traditional to the region but adapted from models seen by Barmou on his pilgrimage across Africa to Mecca). At the same time, one of the columns was removed to allow a more or less central dome to be constructed over a clearing among the forest of hypostyle columns. In 1978, towers were built at the four corners and in the next few years galleries were built between them.



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1 Plan and section.

2 The hypostyle hall is roofed in bentwood vaults creating a mysterious forest.

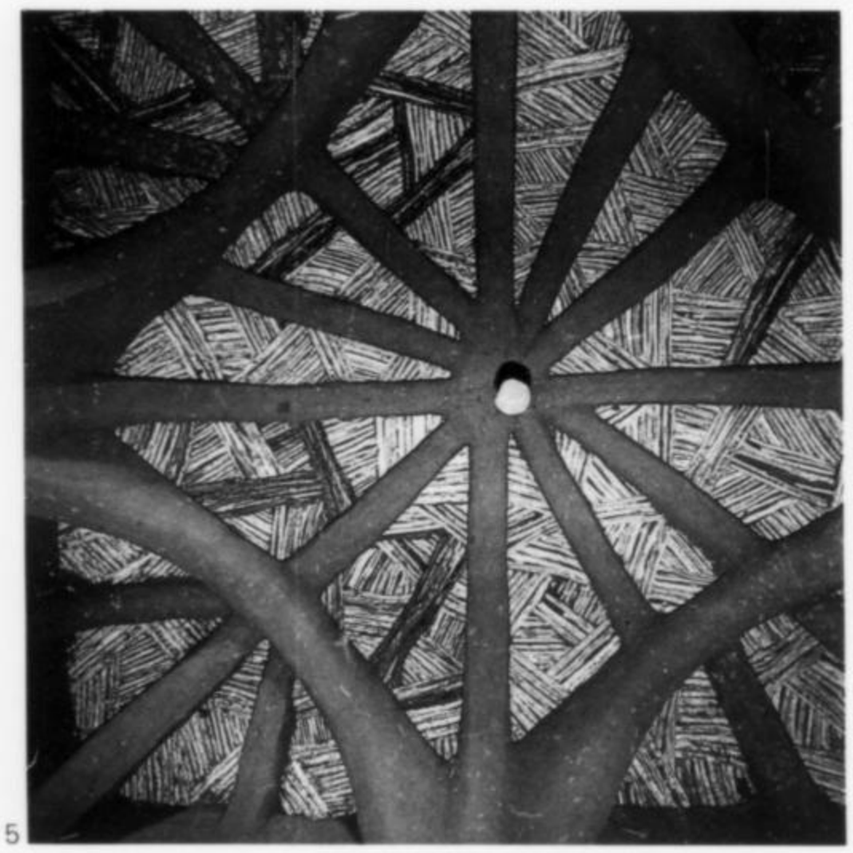
3 The mosque grows naturally out of the village.

The process of change and renewal continues today. Mud brick buildings in such climates need much maintenance and, as the building is maintained (by the whole community as it was built) it is gradually changed and adapted.

The master jury was plainly moved by the building and by the apparently almost Arcadian innocence with which it has been built and cared for. Jury members 'were grateful to have an opportunity to recognise (the) divine spirit manifested within the work of such men'. But the award was not given only for this. At Yaama 'there is a manifest will to use traditional techniques in a creative manner, to experiment with them and to achieve results that induce a new awareness of their possibilities. . . almost everywhere traditional architecture is losing its momentum, but in this case it is very much alive and exploring its possibilities.'



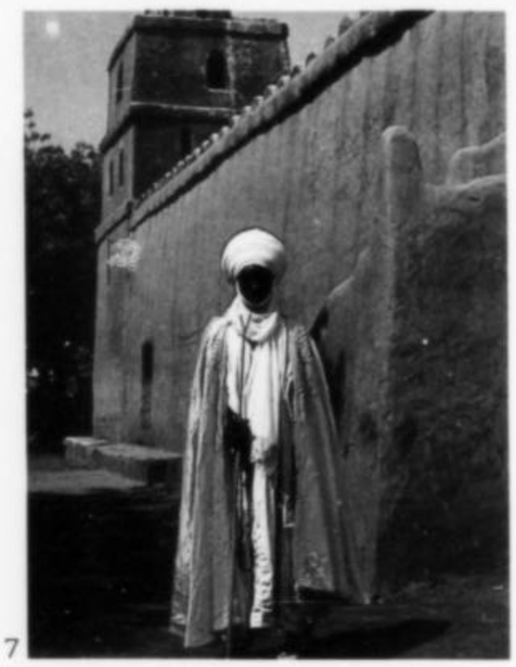
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	Yaama Mosque
4	The mosque started as a simple hypostyle hall: corner towers were added later.
5	The bentwood dome which covers a clearing in the forest of columns.
6	The grain silos are the village's most distinctive feature.
7	The *immam*.

Yaama Mosque

8 Master mason Falké Barmou at work.

9, 10 Groves in the hypostyle forest.

11 The mosque was built in traditional fashion with every member of the predominantly agricultural community playing a part.



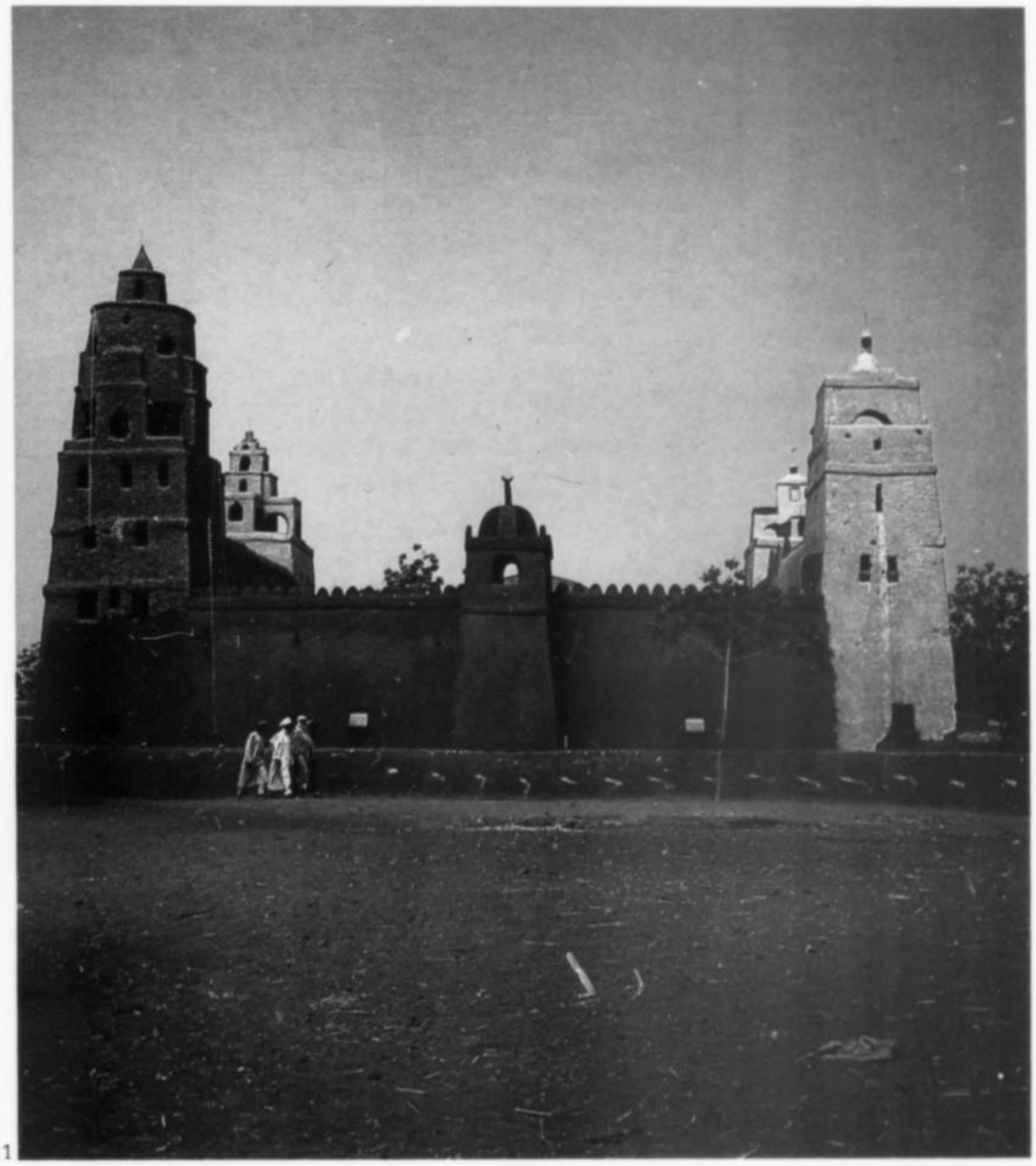
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Award

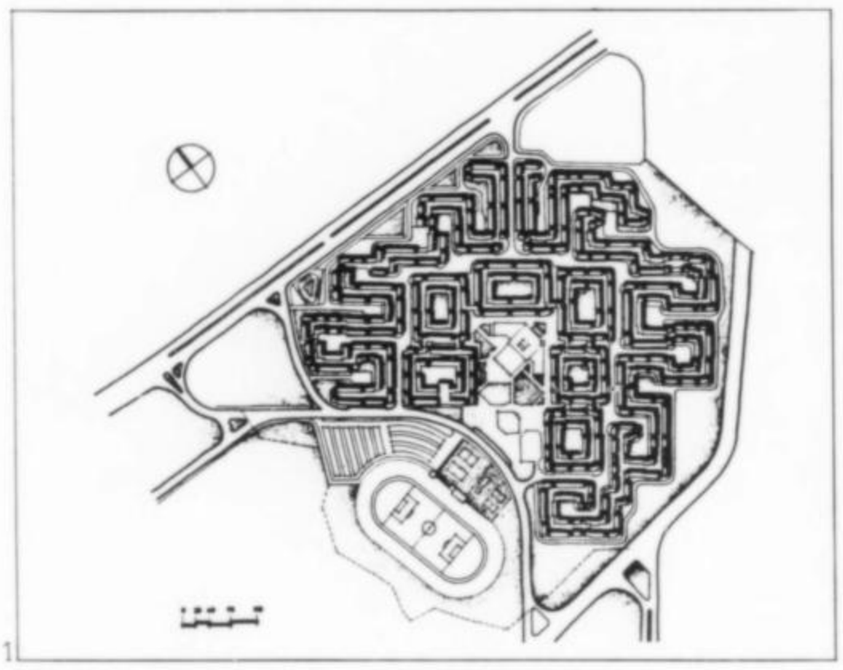
Architects

Abderrahim Charai and Aziz Lazrak

Dar Lamane housing community, Casablanca, Morocco

In what must be one of the most successful and sophisticated low-cost industrialised housing schemes ever to have been attempted in Africa, the organisers of the Dar Lamane housing scheme provided over 4000 family units in a design and construction period of less than 30 months. They were built in prefabricated concrete (now wildly execrated in all proper-thinking third world housing circles—see AR August 1985). But, after three years of use, the scheme is apparently extremely successful both environmentally and socially.

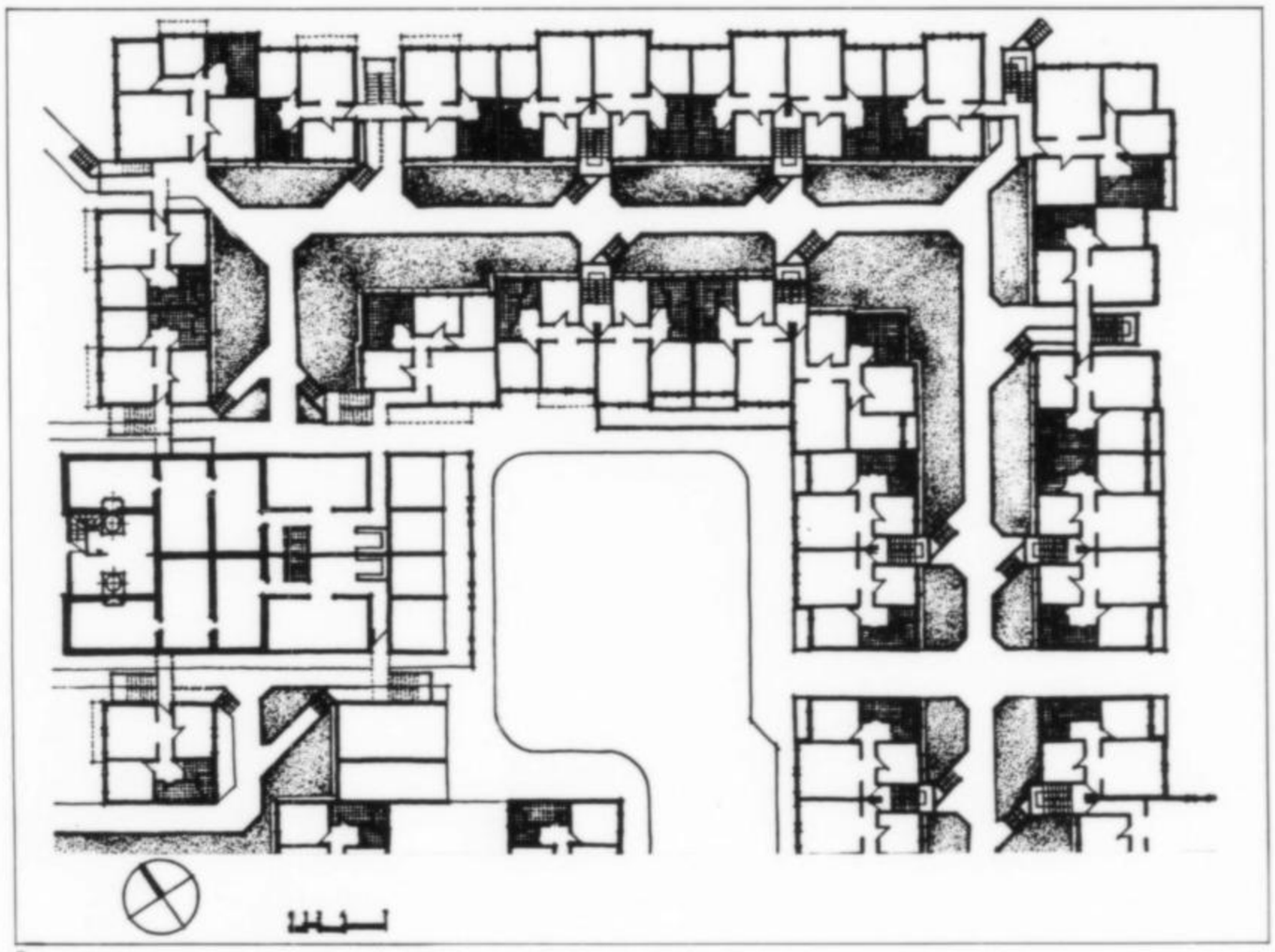
The key to success seems to be in the basic planning which consciously resembles the spatial organisation of traditional Moroccan settlements. The central space, with mosque, markets and community hall, is flanked on three sides by six housing clusters (*dars*), each consisting of two concentric rectangular strips of four-storey flats surrounding a communal courtyard. The strips are separated by a pedestrian street allowing a safe area for communal and family life fringed by small gardens of the ground floor families. The *dars* are separated by market streets (*suqs*) which are lined with shops and restaurants and made formally significant by gateways at their entrances. This inner core of the scheme is surrounded by an irregular pattern of parallel strips of flats arranged with many of the same principles but incorporating *cul de sac* parking areas approached from peripheral roads. In many ways, the scheme resembles, develops and translates to local culture the ideas of perimeter planning developed in Britain in the 1970s (AR April 1980), but there are no acknowledged direct links between Dar Lamane and the English schemes.



1



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1 Layout plan: central space is surrounded by six housing clusters (*dars*).

2, 3 Plan and section of one of peripheral courts which, like the *dars*, consist of two parallel blocks of housing.

The jury praised the cheapness of this wholly owner-occupied scheme (less than US$100 per m^2), its size and speed of construction, and pointed out that, by using computer-aided techniques, every flat has been made different in layout without sacrificing the economies of scale given by mass production.

This is system building as it should be: able to respond to individual, local and regional variations. The scheme will undoubtedly be influential not only in Morocco (where new developments are starting on the same principles) but all over the world. The obviousness of a few rather Post-Modern details should not prevent detailed study of a most impressive achievement.

4	Small, intimate access spaces contrast with . . .
5	. . . the semi-public space in the centres of the *dars* and . . .
6	. . . the *suqs*, which are heralded by gateways.



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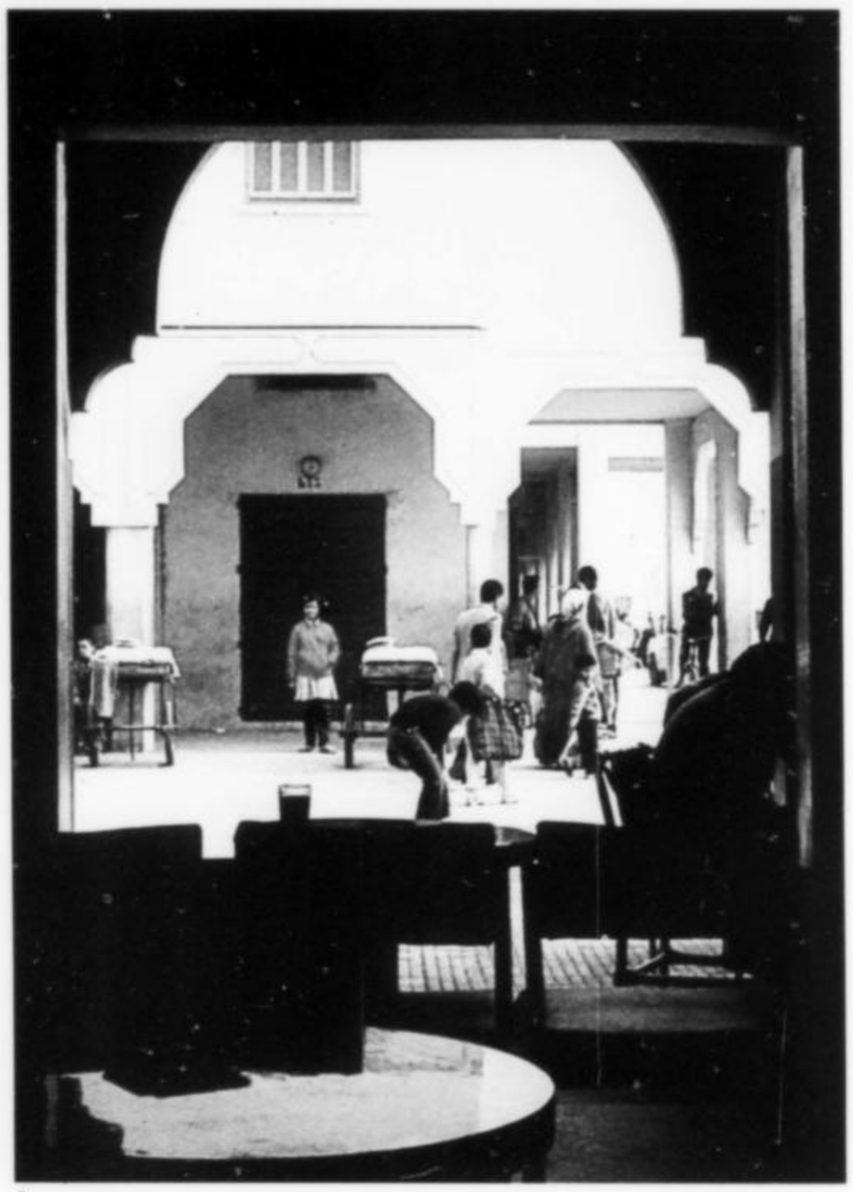


7



9

	Dar Lamane housing complex
7	The central space.
8	Coffee house on one of the *suqs*
9	Pedestrian space between the two dwelling strips in a *dar*.



8



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11



12

Dar Lamane housing complex

10 Wedding procession and the normal commercial life of a Moroccan street, 11, show that the Dar Lamane complex has been accepted by its inhabitants.

12 The blocks are set close together but an otherwise austere effect is softened by the small gardens of ground-floor flats.

Mostar old town conservation, Yugoslavia

Award

Organisers

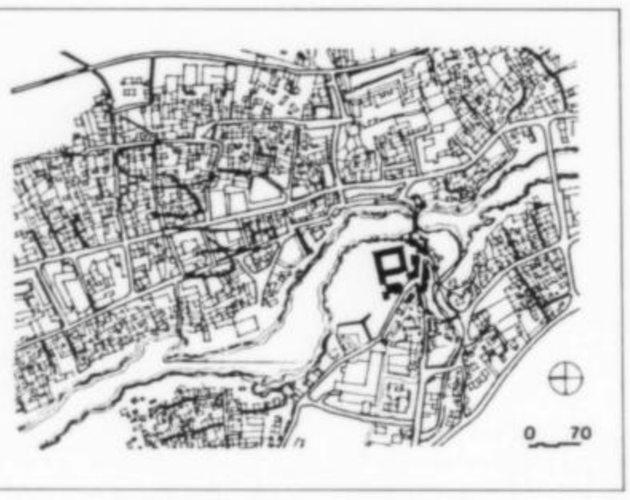
Stari-Grad. Dzihad Pasic, director. Amir Pasic, assistant director

Mostar is an Ottoman town in Herzogovina, 150 km north-west of Dubrovnik. It is built on each side of the river Neretva which is crossed by the famous pointed bridge (built by a pupil of Sinan in the mid-sixteenth century), an image of which is locked into European consciousness by thousands of tourist posters.

The community of Mostar founded the *Stari-Grad* organisation in 1977 to restore and preserve the old town. Dzihad Pasic, formerly Inspector of Monuments of the Republic of Herzogovina, was appointed director and under his guidance a thorough programme of recording, re-enlivening and preserving the ancient parts of the town, was started and still continues. The creation of *Stari-Grad,* a virtually autonomous organisation, is probably possible only under Yugoslavia's exemplary system of socialism. Initial funding began with a sort of tax on entertainment—advertisements, cinemas and so on. Now the organisation's main source of income is from a 40 per cent levy (like VAT) on the added value of any new building project created outside the historic core—only fair, in a sense, because the new development would not have been possible without the centre. (If only countries more devoted to capitalism—whether of the state or market kind—could develop similar financial



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1, 2 The effort has been concentrated on the middle of the old town which focuses on . . .

3 . . . Mostar's famous bridge, Stari Mostar.



4



5

4 Shops and offices have been restored on the bank of the Neretva river; all details have been faithfully reproduced according to traditional methods.

5 Much less grand structures, like this traditional house, are being restored. It is now a museum but all the objects shown belong to the owning family.

mechanisms, the despoliation of historic centres within both the American and Russian spheres of influence would be a great deal reduced.)

Pasic and his team began with a very thorough survey of the existing fabric of the old town, decided on key targets for restoration and rebuilding and commenced a thoroughgoing analysis of local opinion on proposed projects. This included questionnaires distributed to the whole community and many public meetings with published resolutions.

The first project was restoration and stabilisation of the town's symbol—the bridge. Since then, other major landmarks have been restored and made available for new uses (many for artists and craftsmen who serve the tourist trade, increasingly attracted to the town because of its enhanced appearance). Lost buildings have been restored from photographic evidence. Traditional buildings crafts flourish. There is now a long waiting list for offices and shops in the old town and, even in winter, when no tourists are about, the centre has acquired a great deal of new life.

As the jury remarked 'nothing is overdone or touristic. . . The overall impression is excellent and fitting. . .'.



6

	Mostar old town conservation
6	Many of the formerly decayed or destroyed houses have been renovated or rebuilt to house artists and craftsmen.
7	The bridge was subject to settlement with its footings eroded. Shaken by German tanks in the last war, the joints were beginning to let in water. All is now stabilised.



Award

Architect

Isam Awad with the International Centre for the Study of Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM). Paul Schwartzbaum, chief conservator

Restoration of Al Aqsa Mosque, Jerusalem

The Al Aqsa mosque is the *other* major monument on top of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, it stands near the Dome of the Rock (containing the outcrop from which Mohammed ascended into heaven on his Night Journey). One of the three most important monuments of Islam, the mosque was built in 711 AD and has been successively renewed over the centuries. A particularly damaging restoration in the '50s and '60s reconstructed the outer dome in concrete and replaced its lead sheathing with anodised aluminium (while retaining much of the internal fourteenth-century decorations). The leadwork has now been restored and the wonderful arabesques of the timber inner dome have been faithfully rediscovered and restored, using the *tratteggio* technique—a complete and exact reconstruction using fine vertical lines to distinguish reconstructed areas from original ones. The result is exemplary—would that more restorations of great buildings could be undertaken with equal honesty and fidelity.

Work is continuing and a small but dedicated (and now expert) team of craftsmen will eventually restore the whole complex, including the Dome of the Rock.



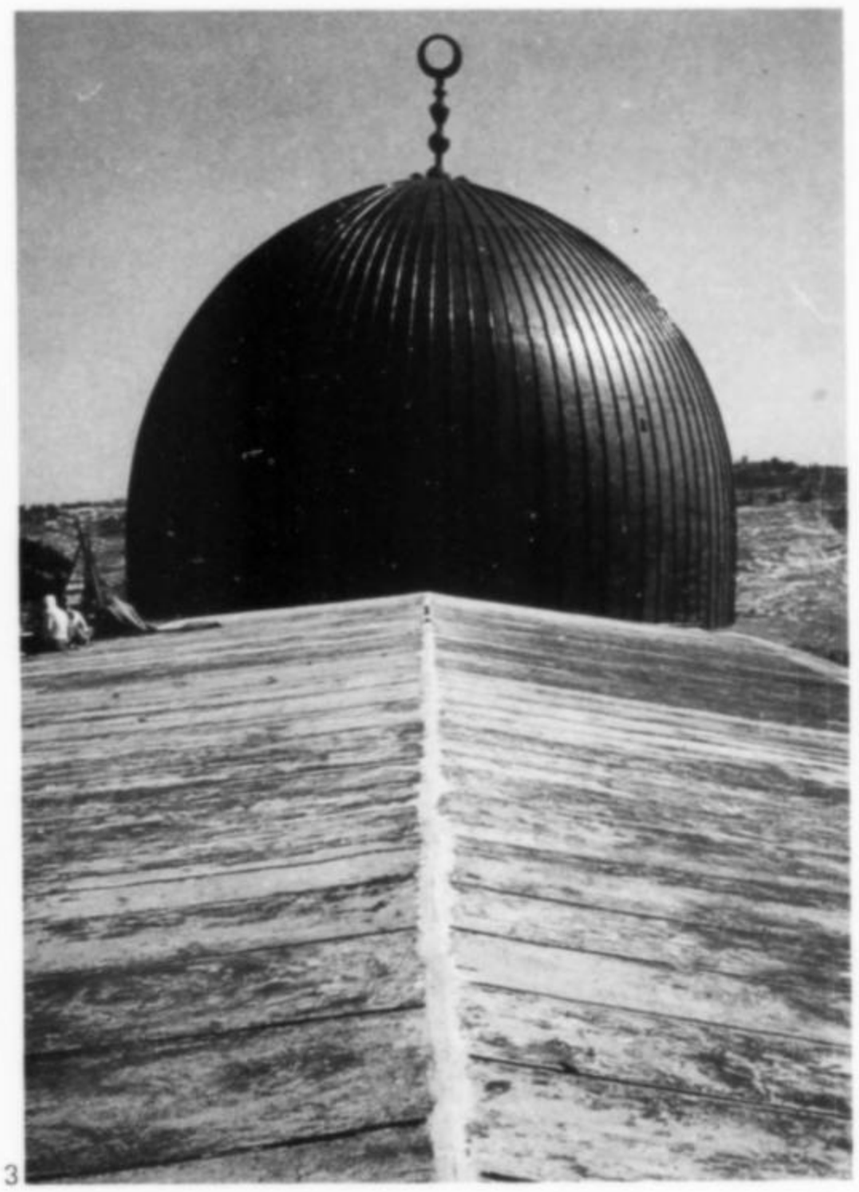
1 Section through original roof—now restored.

2 The richness of the interior original decorations has now been restored as has . . .

3 . . . the lead cladding on the exterior.



2



3



4



5

4 The Al Aqsa Mosque (left) is the other great building on top of Jerusalem's Temple Mount besides the Dome of the Rock (right).

5 Decoration is restored to distinguish between original work (left) and new (right).

Award

Social security offices, Istanbul, Turkey

Architect

Sedad Hakki Eldem

One of the problems of the Aga Khan Award (and indeed of Muslim architecture generally) is to find authentic Islamic expressions for modern building types. It is quite easy to classify a fine piece of restoration, a mosque or a housing scheme as worthy of award. But what would a Muslim factory be like? How would it differ from a Christian or an atheist one?

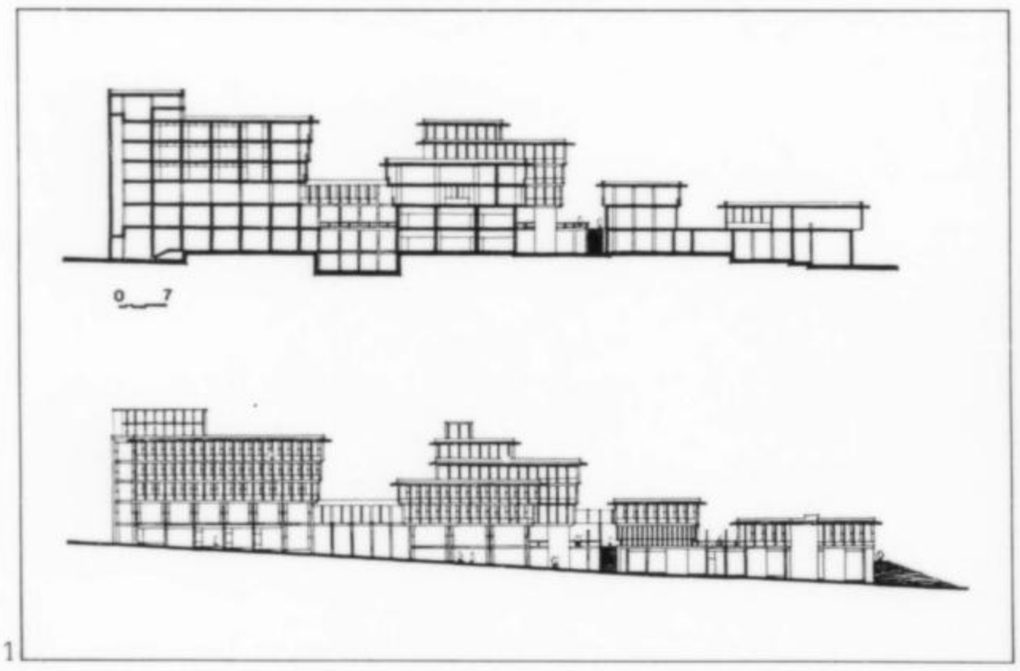
It is significant that no industrial building has yet been given an award, but the inclusion of the Istanbul social security building in this year's batch of winners indicates that at least in that particularly twentieth-century type—the very large building for bureaucracy—it may be possible to discern some sense of Islamic identity.

In fact, the Muslim nature of the building (completed nearly 20 years ago) arrives at second hand from the pattern of the city. The master jury hailed it as 'one of the earliest and most refined examples of contextual architecture in the international Modern Movement'. Built in the Zeyrek, a very old quarter of the city in which patterns of Islamic life had overlaid each other down the centuries, the building was intended by its architect, Sedad Eldem, to resonate with its venerable surroundings both in its massing and in detail; the progressively slightly overhanging floors and the strong rhythmic repetition of mullions are a meditation in concrete on the traditional timber domestic architecture of the area. It was also intended to mediate between the scales of the densely woven haphazard texture of

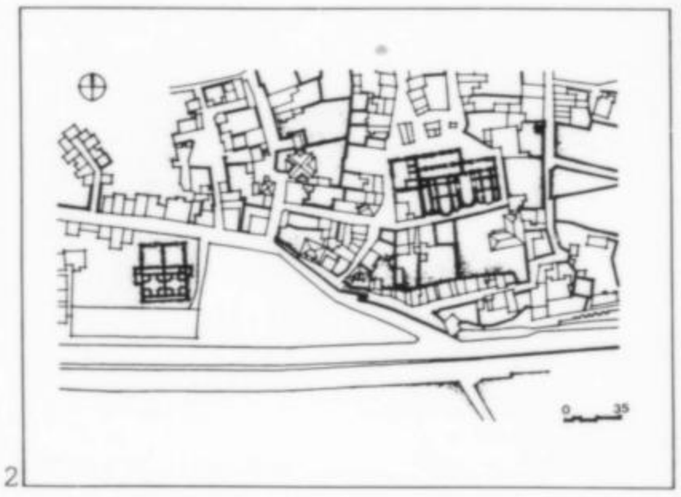
1 Section and elevation to Atatürk Boulevard.

2 Location plan: site is shown blank with Atatürk Boulevard to south.

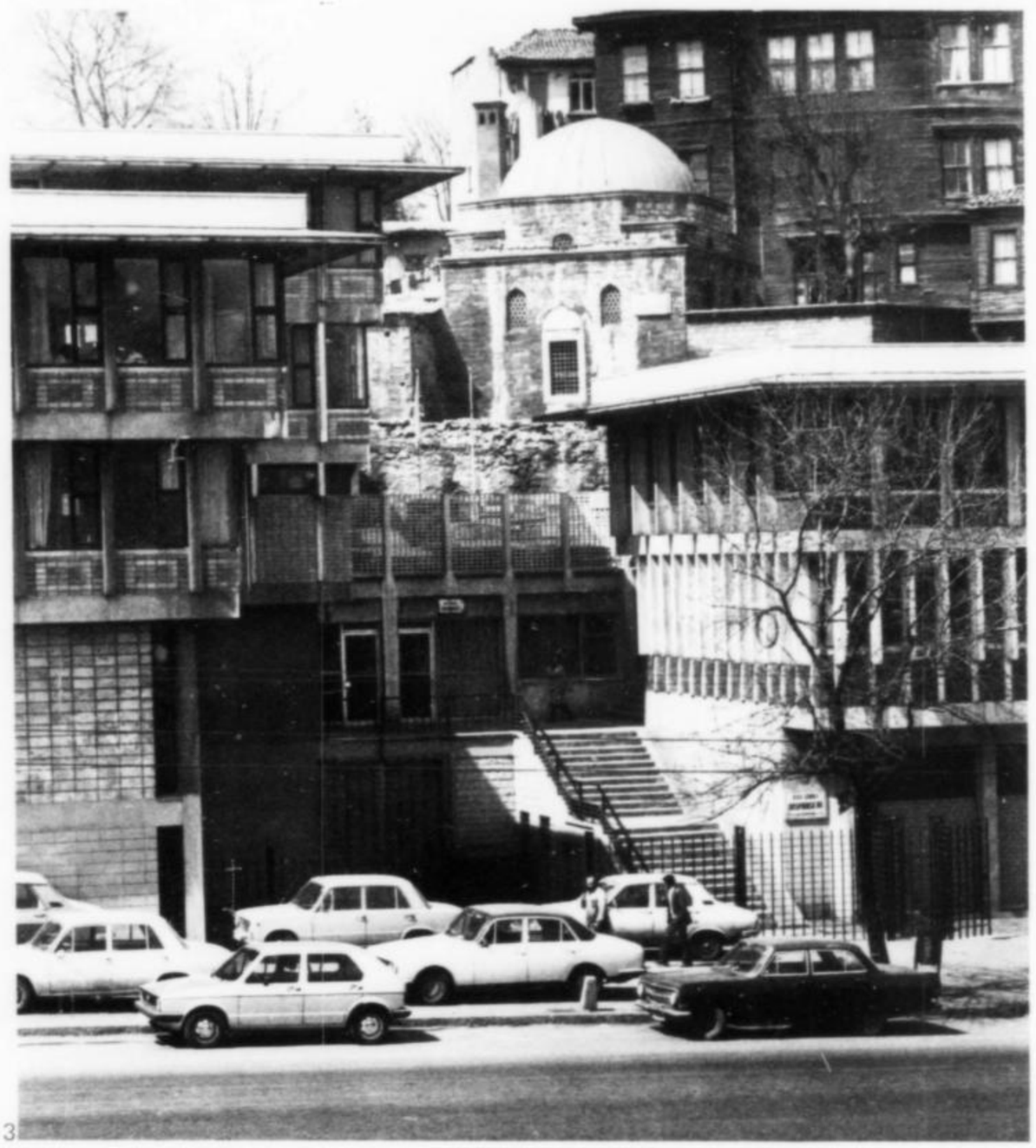
3 The aim was to create a series of courts connected by internal arcades.



1



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3

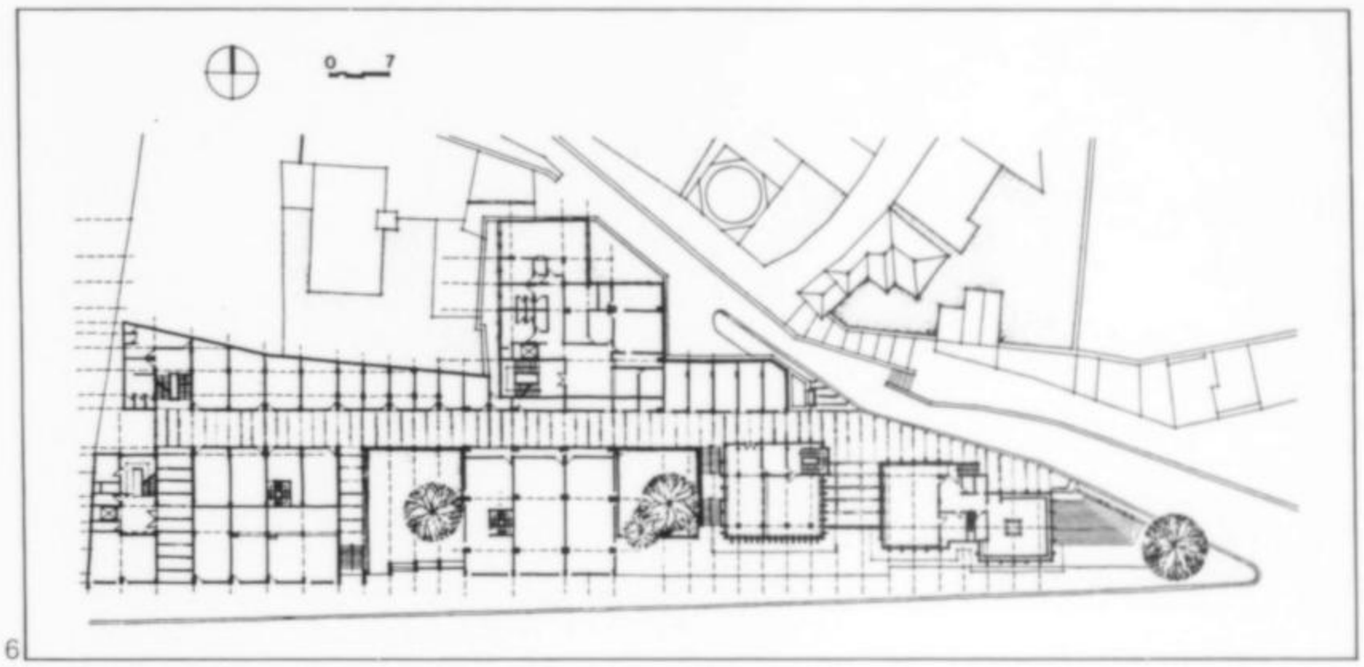
the old quarter on the hill and the rows of Modernist object buildings lining Atatürk Boulevard which was ruthlessly driven across the bottom of the slope a quarter of a century ago. And the intention was to keep some of the traditional functional mix by including shopping and restaurants along internal streets.

Sadly, things did not work out as the architect hoped. The beautiful old houses surrounding the site have been progressively demolished so this would-be contextual building has lost its context. And the complex was never used as originally intended—the main covered shopping arcade became, according to the technical assessor, a 'kafkaesque space' full of 16 million files; the open courtyards were fenced in and became a car park and rubbish collection centre.

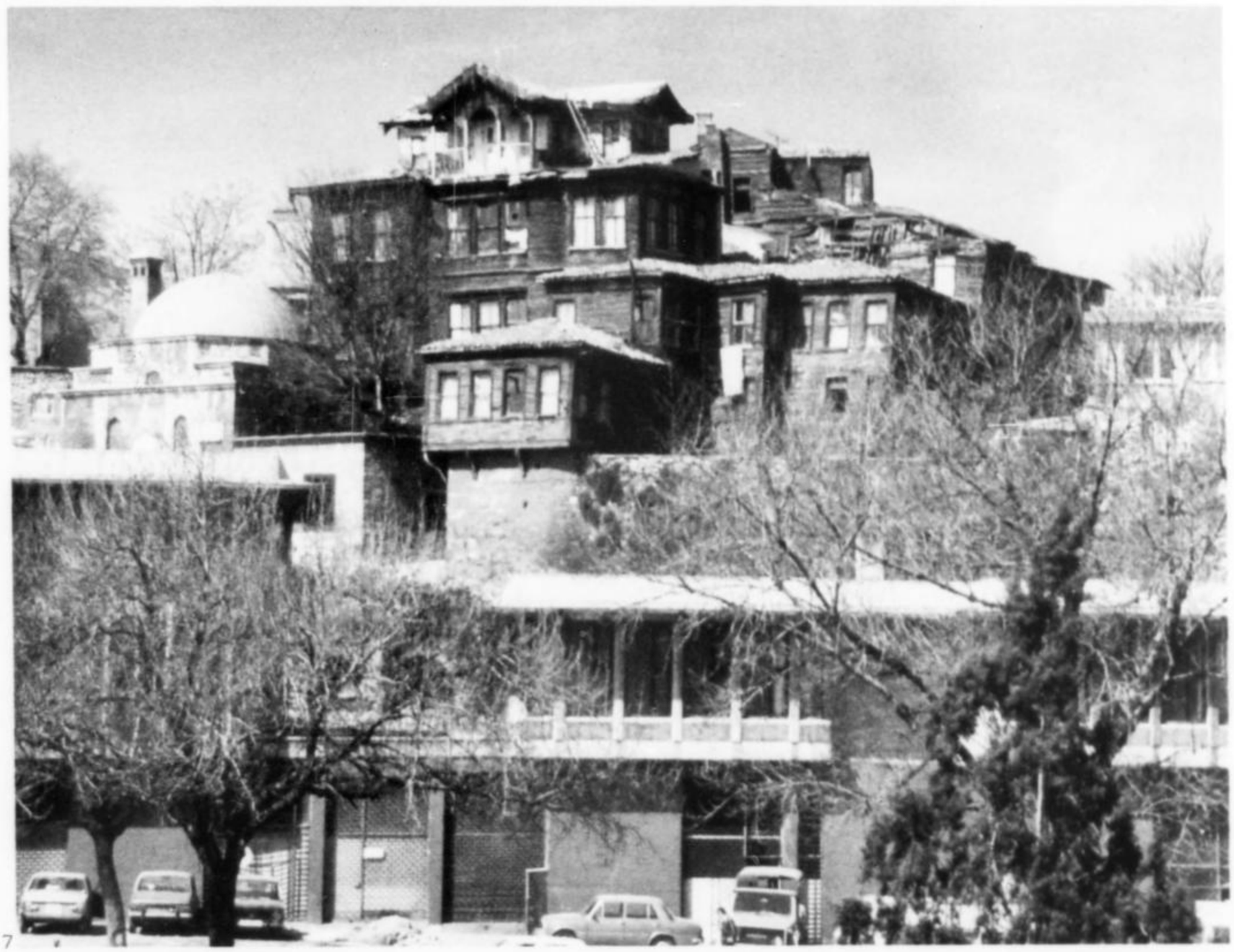
But now, the social security organisation is going to move out and there may be a hope that the building could be given its originally proposed uses and begin to act as the positive social and environmental contribution to the area that it was intended to be. Its Aga Khan award should help.



5



6



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5 Elevation of site with profile of new building shown white.

6 First floor plan showing intended shopping arcade.

7 An attempt to resonate with the ancient grain of the city.

Patron/designer

Ghazi Muhammad Rais

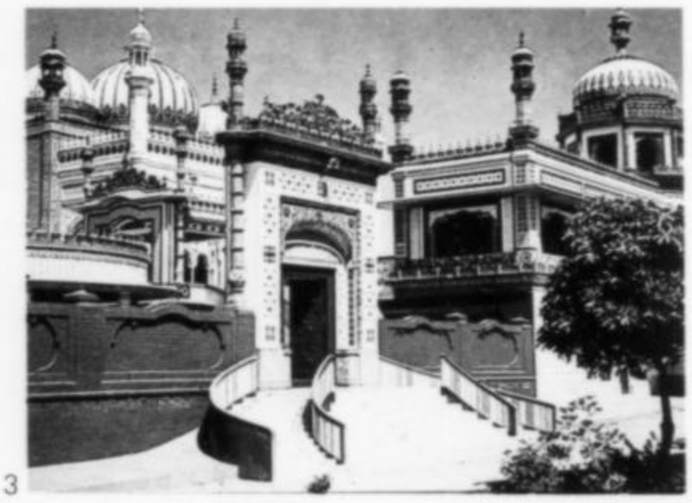
Award

Bhong Mosque, Rahim-Yar Khan, Pakistan



1

1	An almost Chirico-like tower sticks out from the heavily ornamented main mass.
2	The glittering porch.
3	Main entrance: a riot of traditional motifs.



3



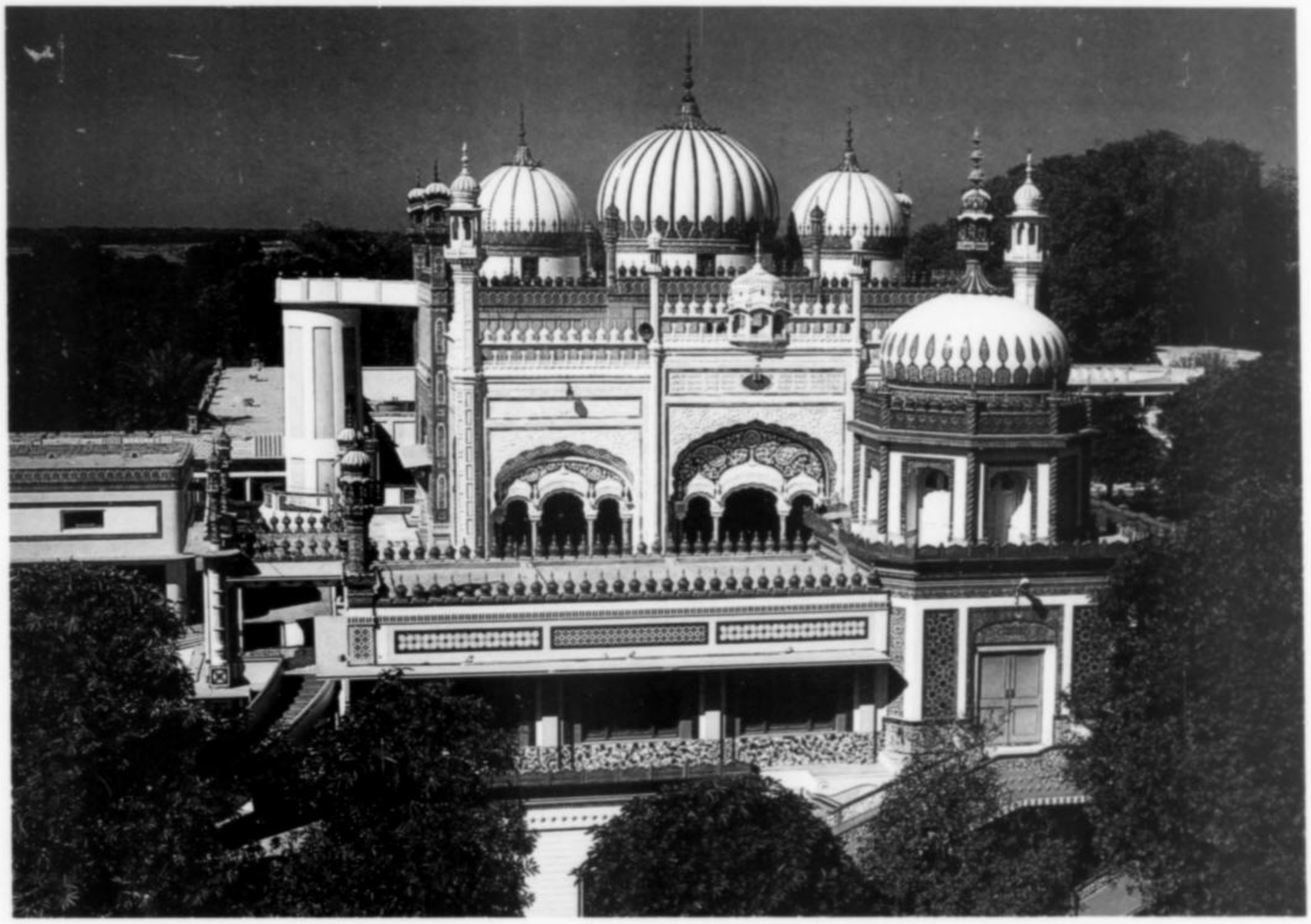
2

Any jury which contained Venturi could be relied on to celebrate popular culture. The Bhong Mosque will be difficult for most architects to take because it so closely echoes, in built form, the wonderful, prolific, tinselly, kaleidoscopic glitz seen in every lorry cabin in the sub-continent.

The local landowner, Muhammad Rais, started to build the mosque complex in 1932 and it was finished 50 years later. He was determined to create a grand and splendid building to celebrate man's worship of God. He had none of the prejudices acquired after an architectural training so everything happens in remarkable and unconventional ways. There are no clear hierarchies of form or material: he could use carved marble at the top of a structure and common glazed bathroom tiles at the bottom nearest the worshipper. He could project an almost Chirico-like concrete tower from the ornate mass of the main mosque and still see the composition as a whole.

But, however difficult the building may be to appreciate as architecture, it has had immense effect on the community. It became a popular pilgrimage place so a road was opened from the village to the wider world; it caused the introduction of electricity, irrigation and running water. It became an important centre of religious instruction. It was a training site for two generations of craftsmen who have since gone on to restore some of the great Islamic monuments of Pakistan.

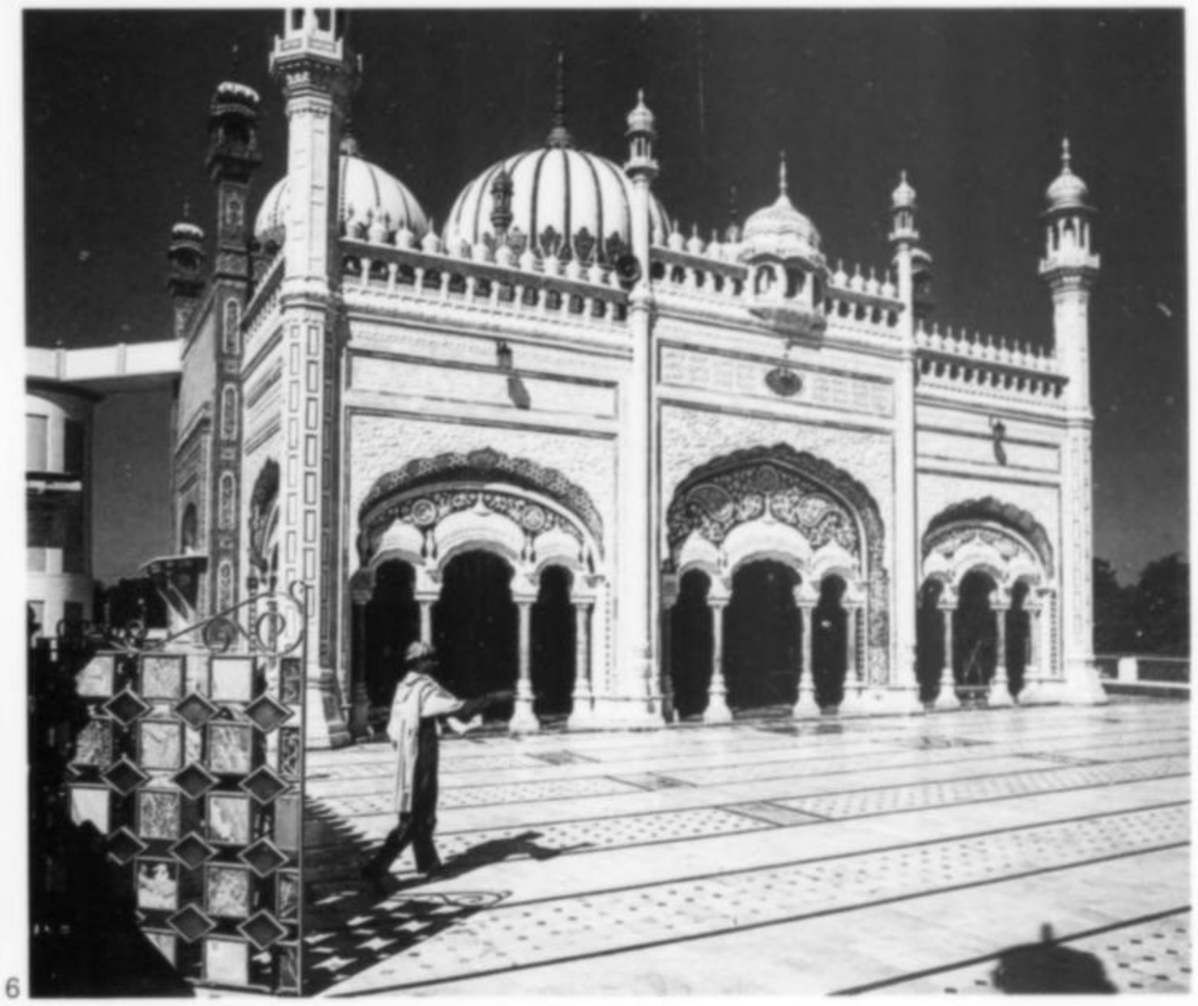
The jury decided that the Bhong complex 'enshrines and epitomises popular taste in Pakistan with all its vigour, pride, tension and sentiment. Its use—and misuse—of signs and symbols expresses appropriate growing pains in transition, and yet may prove significant for the future.'



4



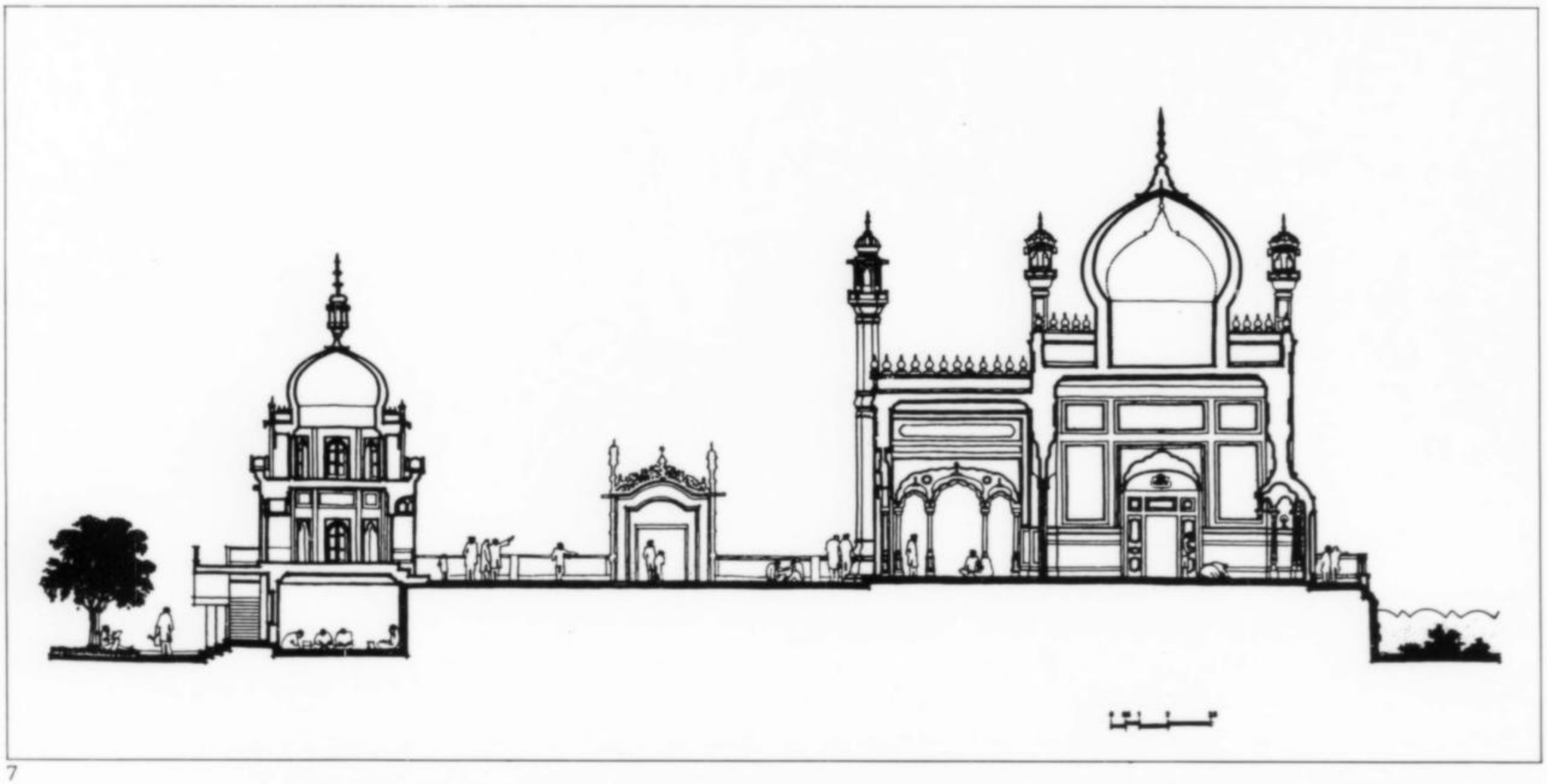
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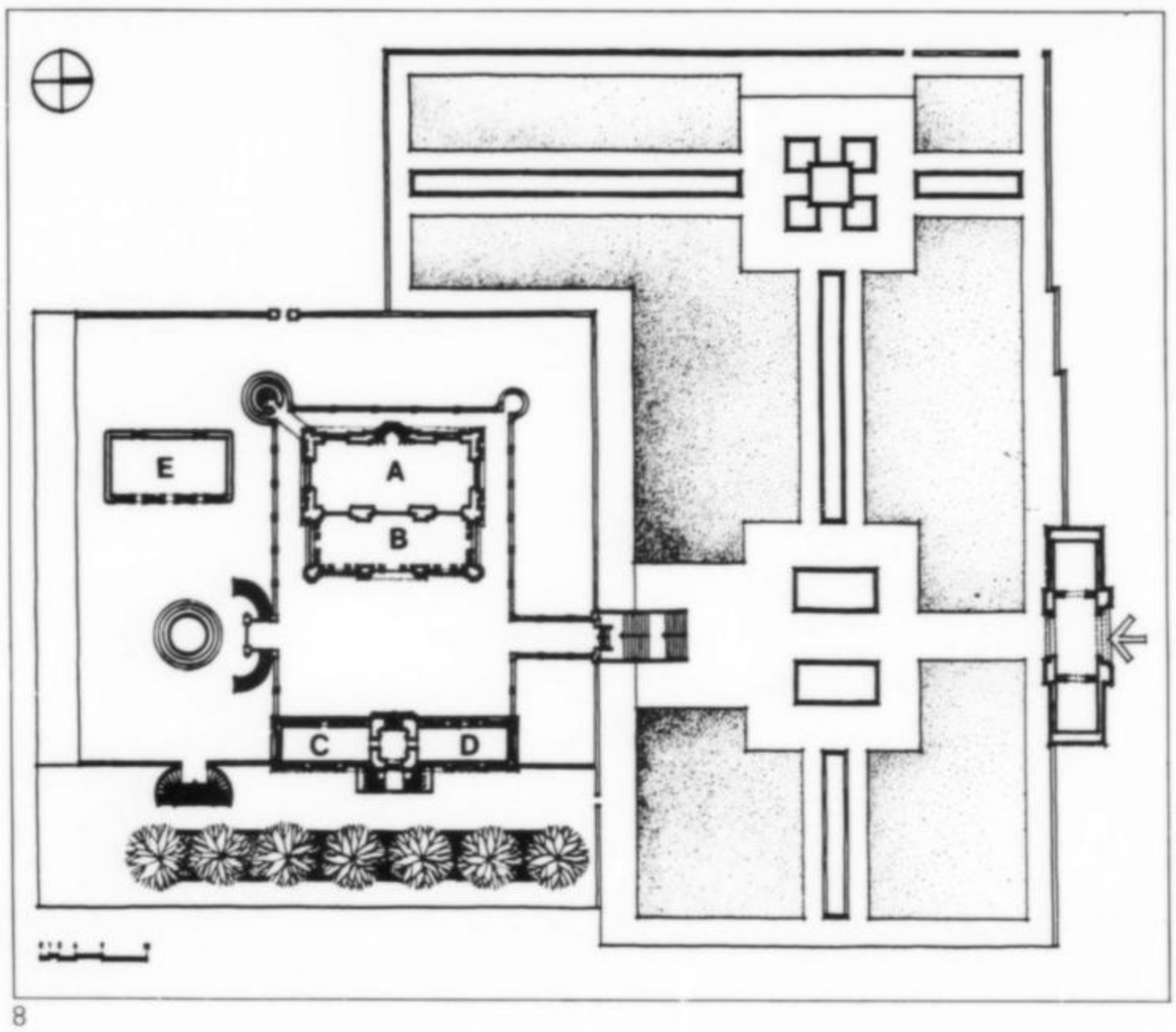
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	Bhong Mosque
4	Juxtaposition of disparate elements at different levels.
5	Sometimes the work has real (traditional) quality.
6	Mosques stand on manmade platform raised three metres from ground.

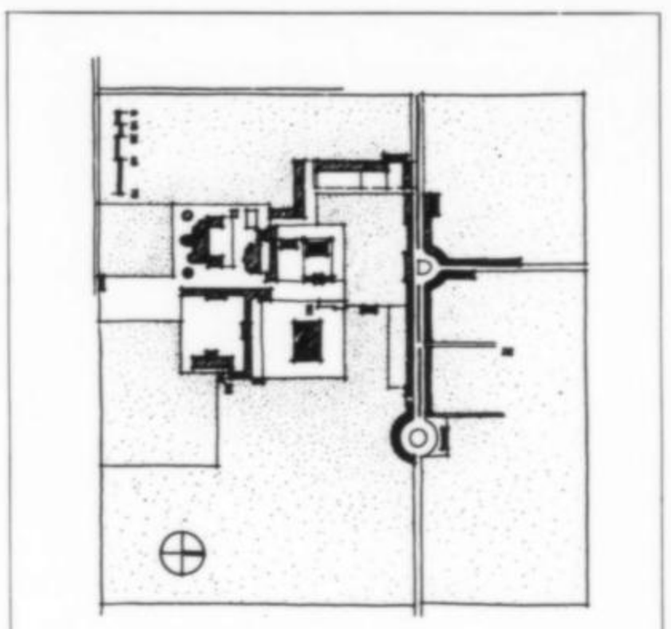
	Mosque
7	Section through platform.
8	Plan (A, main prayer hall; B, porch; C, library; D, women's prayer hall; E, school hall).
9	Layout plan.



7



8



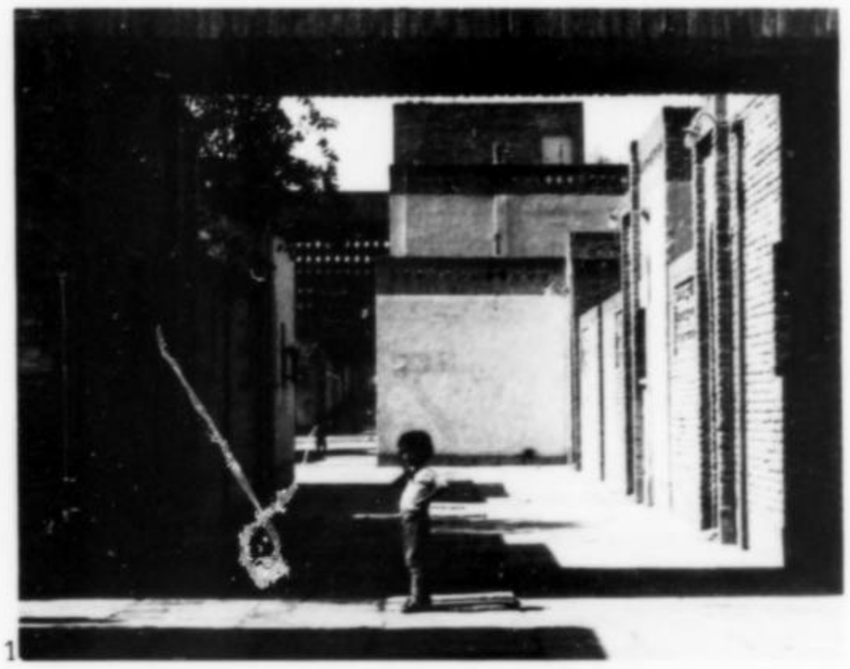
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Honourable Mention

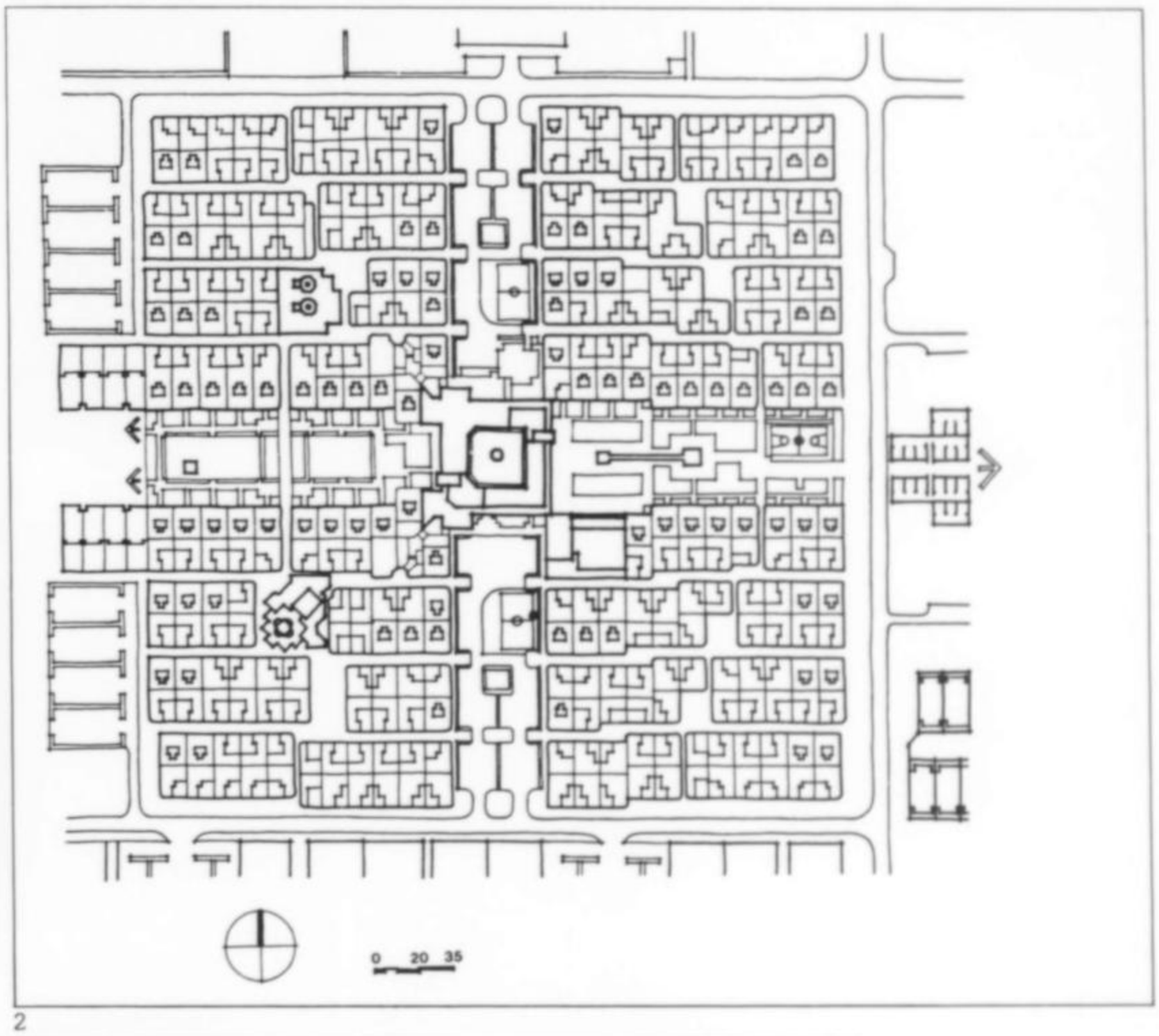
Architects

DAZ Architects & Planners, Tehran; Kamran Diba, principal in charge

Shushtar new town, Iran



1



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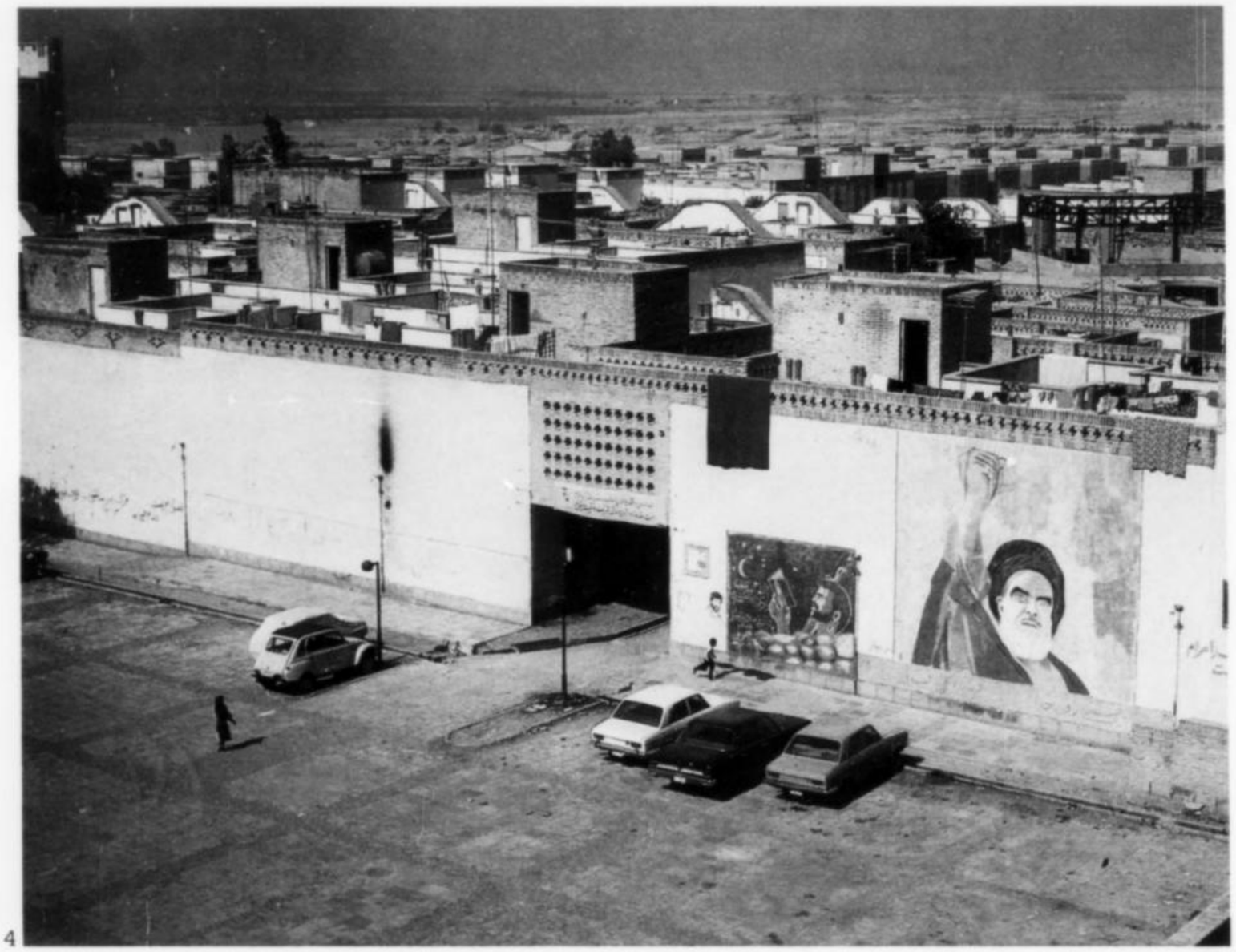


3

The new town is an extension of Shushtar and is joined to the ancient city by a bridge across the Shatit River. Erected to provide accommodation for the workers of a large new industrial complex, it takes its form from a rationalisation of the intricate maze of mud brick courtyard houses of the old town. Pedestrian streets (narrow to provide shade) run parallel to the central tree-lined boulevard; they are carefully juggled in plan to avoid endless vistas. Public buildings are set at 45 degrees to the grid to give a social and spatial centre to each block. Traffic is segregated, Radburn style, from these small streets and from the boulevard.

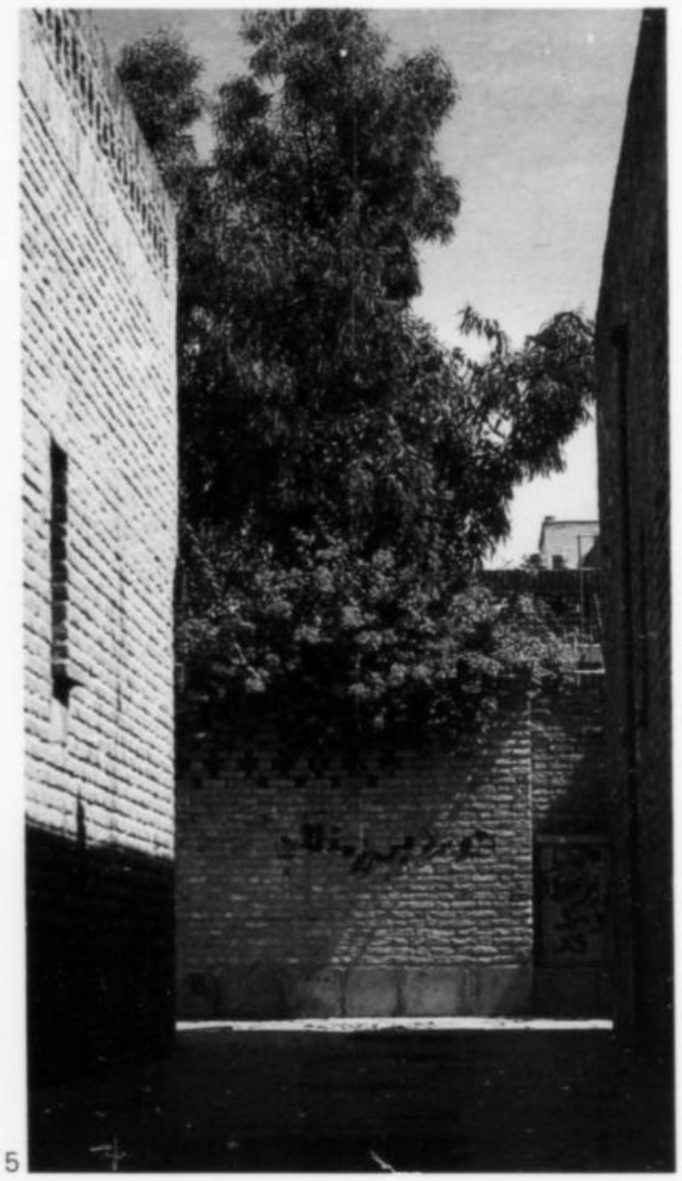
Each house in the residential clusters uses the traditional organisation of multi-functional rooms arranged round a central court with roof terraces for sleeping on. The street elevations of these inward-turned houses are, Mediterranean style, non-committal and the streets are enlivened only by decorative brickwork grilles provided beneath windows and on roof parapets to give ventilation. Mosaic tiles mark house entrances.

1	Narrow pedestrian streets wind between walls ornamented only by pierced brickwork.
2	Part of central area with boulevard, pedestrian streets and public buildings set at 45 degrees to grid.
3	Layout plan.



4

	Shushtar new town
4	The new town has a hard edge like traditional settlements.
5, 6	Vegetation has gradually softened the hard geometry of the streets.



5

Construction is of (fired) brick; the thick walls carry steel beams which support shallow jack (floor) arches on which the sleeping platforms are based. The massive construction provides a thermal flywheel effect appropriate for southern Iran.

It is difficult to see why this excellent project, with its elegant, sensible and sensitive combination of modern rationalism with immemorial patterns was awarded only an honourable mention and not an award. It seems to be exemplary in every way. Perhaps history has something to do with the decision. The first phase of the new town was completed in 1977 and, though work still slowly continues, the place was occupied by squatters during the 1979 revolution so it has never been used as it was intended. It is now in the war zone and design and direction are in other hands than those which created the place.



6



7



8

Shushtar new town

7 Each house has a sleeping platform on the roof. The old town of Shushtar can be seen across the river.

8 One of the private garden courts.

Honourable Mention

Planners

Surabaya Kampung Improvement Programme with the Surabaya Institute of Technology and the local community

Kampung Kebalen improvement, Surabaya, Indonesia

From their inception, the Aga Khan awards have recognised that humble and unostentatious neighbourhood improvement schemes are as worthy of recognition as prestigious housing projects or major renovations. But the jury's decision must be staggeringly difficult to make: how can you compare provision of drains and footpaths to a major piece of monumental architecture?

Perhaps because of this problem, no improvement project has been given an award this year. But the provision of new infrastructure for the Kampung Kebalen in Indonesia's second city, Surabaya, is plainly an important model, both environmentally and socially and it gets an honourable mention.

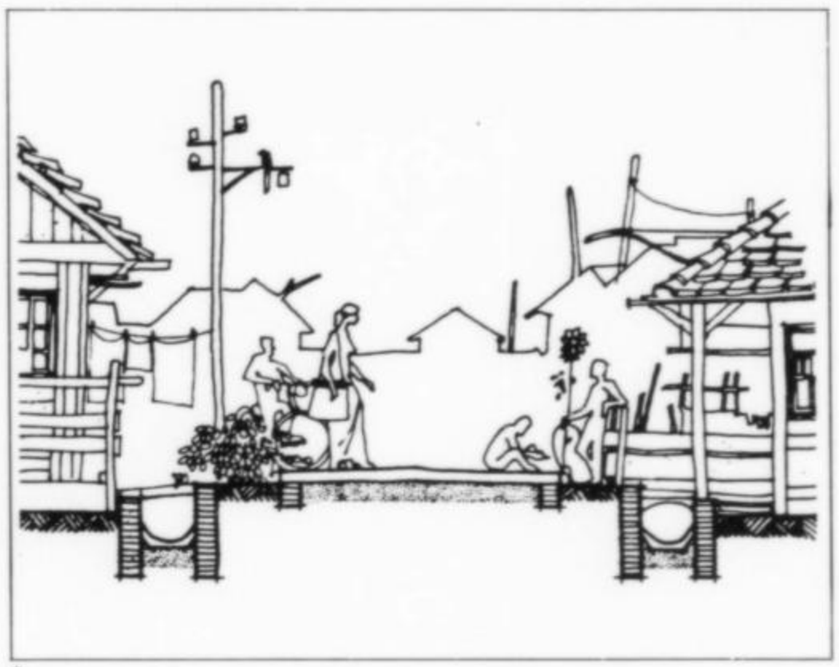
Kampungs are unplanned agglomerations in which most of Indonesia's low-income urban population lives. Originally, they covered five per cent of Surabaya's area yet contained 70 per cent of its population. Now, they comprise half the city and contain two-thirds of the people. At Kebalen, 60 000 people live in 20 000 houses at an average density of 800 people per hectare; average income is between US$35 and $65 a month: the area is near the harbour and was subject to periodic flooding; it had no proper drainage or water supply.

The improvement programme (which started in 1981) provided new footpaths and a drainage system. Water taps were laid on at the rate of one for every two houses. Schools and clinics were injected into the mass of housing. Now, although the footpaths tend to flood in the rainy season and the drainage ditches stagnate in the dry period, the houses themselves remain dry. So families have acquired the confidence to improve their dwellings which are largely modelled on the traditional Indonesian bamboo type. Trees, shrubs and flowers have been planted along the footpaths and the whole area has vastly improved environmentally. All design decisions were taken in consultation with the community.



1

1	The water supply was introduced at the rate of one outlet for every two houses.
2, 3	The main improvement was to raise the footpaths and provide drainage ditches to keep the houses dry. Now people have the confidence to improve their own houses.



2



3

Ismaïliyya development projects, Egypt

Honourable Mention

Planners

Culpin Planning. Project partner, David Allen





2



3

1 The agency divided the site up into separate plots and made them available to individuals at cheap rates.

2, 3 Commercial activities were encouraged amongst the housing.

Hai-el-Salam is a sites-and-services housing development on the outskirts of Ismaïliyya on the Suez Canal. It gets its honourable mention not for conventional architectural quality but for effectively channelling public housing subsidies towards local initiative and the poor for whom they are intended.

Previous public housing in the area tended to become the preserve of the middle classes and to be too expensive for the poor. At Hai-el-Salam, the government made land available free to the project agency. The agency divided the site up into a gridiron of serviced streets and offered sites at less than market prices by means of low interest loans; it also made a range of house plans available to families who could not afford professional help and the individual dwellings were put up either by families themselves or constructed by builders within the project.

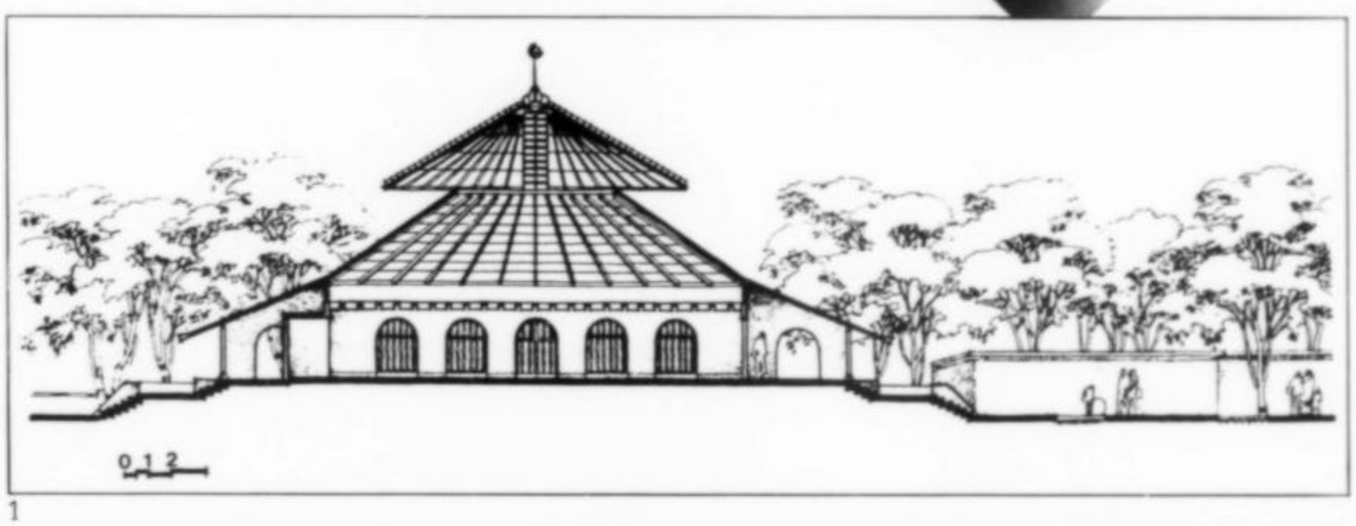
The agency, initially set up by London-based Culpin Planning, was committed to training local administrators to run the process, and another project on the same lines has been started in the area. Its principles of minimal formal intervention and commitment to progressive self-generative improvement using income from land sales are beginning to be influential throughout Egypt and elsewhere in the Third World.

Saïd Naum Mosque, Jakarta, Indonesia

Honourable Mention

Architects

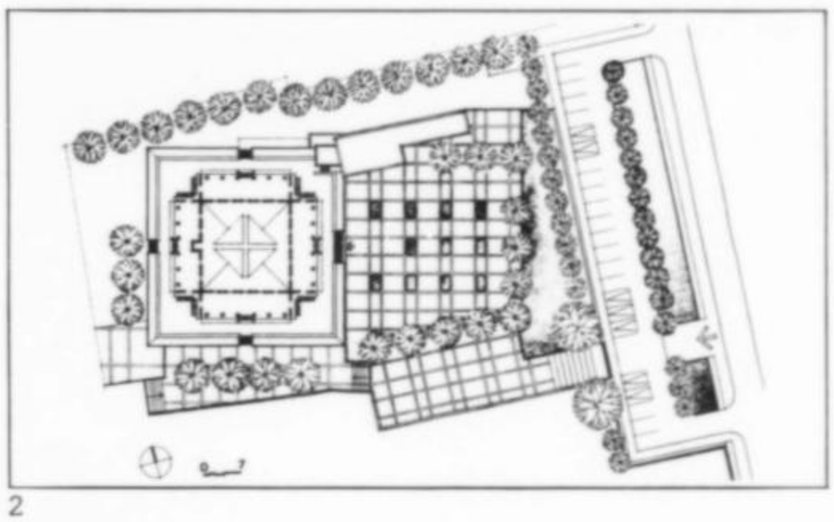
Atelier Enam



1

1 Section.

2 Plan.



2

The double Meru roof is traditional in Indonesian mosques: the central part of the square-plan hipped roof is raised on four columns creating a lantern that lets light into the middle of the building and encourages ventilation by convection. The lower part of the roof projects beyond the screen walls, providing a verandah all round the central space.

The architects of the Saïd Naum mosque took this pattern and varied it by turning the upper roof at 45 degrees to the lower one and inserting roof lights glazed with stained glass on the ridges to form an X shape of light over the middle of the space.

To achieve this, the traditional timber structure had to be abandoned and the roof is now primarily supported on steel beams—a device made doubly necessary because the covering is concrete tiles and not the traditional wood shingles.

It is difficult to understand why this design, with its wilful and expensive departures from tradition, was thought worthy of an honourable mention.

Historic sites, Istanbul, Turkey

Planners/clients

Touring and Automobile Association of Turkey. Secretary General, Çelik Gülersoy

Honourable Mention

In the vast, ancient and ramshackle city of Istanbul, fine old buildings perish almost daily either from neglect or under the developer's bulldozer (p98). So the initiative of the Turkish Touring and Automobile Association in acquiring fine old buildings and restoring them for contemporary use is a very welcome one. The scheme, which has been running since 1974, has included important monuments like the Khedive's palace on the Bosphorous and pavilions in Yildiz and Emirgan Parks. Landscapes have been restored and there have been street improvement schemes which, with their emphasis on restoring facades, improving paving and sorting out street furniture, resemble many worthy projects undertaken in old towns in Europe since the War.

But there is a more questionable side to the operation. In some instances, fine old timber houses (albeit in ruinous condition) have been bought, demolished and re-created in concrete: one such row is built against the outer wall of Topkapi itself. The concrete structures allow the new buildings to be used as hostels and hotels. But their outsides are covered with clapboard and the result is of pretty poor quality.

So it was plainly impossible to give the programme an award but sensible to mention the scheme—for it has made Istanbul actively aware of conservation and renewal—not before time.



1



2



4



3

1 Malta pavilion, Yildiz Park, Istanbul. Restored as restaurant and tea room.

2 Real old Istanbul houses and, 4, restored facades in the Kariye district.

3 New pudding shop faces renovated Kariye Museum square.

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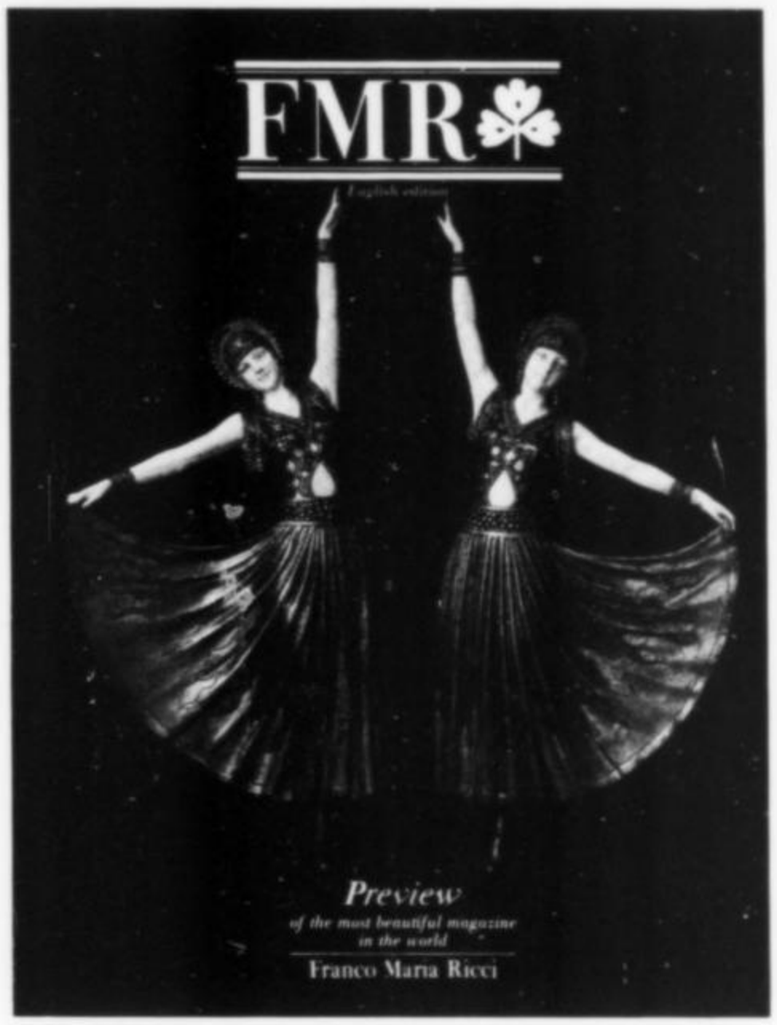
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Design review

Slating and tiling

Rosalind Pilling

Traditional roofing materials are staging a comeback, but with a difference. Gone are the days when cost and supply difficulties put the older materials into the luxury class and swung roofing over to the concrete market. Mergers and a growing export trade have strengthened the production base of slate and clay products, while the concrete manufacturers have fought back with increasing sophistication.

The revival of interest in pitched roofing, with the generating effect which it has on the plan form, is matched with an increasing awareness of the visual subtleties of materials, natural and man-made. This has been heightened by the growth of the refurbishment industry. Both residential and commercial properties are being reclaimed, often with the addition of a pitched roof specifically intended to dispel the images of former speculation and economy. Flexibility of product application, sympathy with existing materials, and costs in use are all major considerations in this field, leading the designer back to well-practised detailing methods and a more appropriate end product. The cost margins between the two ends of the spectrum are narrowing and other considerations such as increased structural costs, the need to blend with the surroundings and a longer maintenance-free life lead to the acceptability of a higher initial installation cost.

The variety of materials and techniques available is extensive and the manufacturers' information and sample services are excellent. Literature is specifically explanatory and well illustrated. Products within some ranges are interchangeable while there is a wide choice of accessories designed to suit every application, particularly the ventilation provisions required by the 1985 Building Regulations. Products which more closely resemble historic materials now cost little more than the standard type and have the advantage of simplified installation techniques such as the single lap interlock, and dry construction methods.

With such a buoyant industry making such advances technologically, it is imperative that designers should take up the challenge and familiarise themselves with the ranges and capabilities available to them. While the methods of construction used are based on sound traditional techniques there need be little fear of the dramatic failures of the flat roof era.



1, the latest product on the market is the 'Cambrian' interlocking slate from Redland. Expected to be fully available by the end of 1986, the combination of a very slate-like appearance with the fixing simplicity and accessories of a single lap interlocking tile, this slate looks set to sweep the market. Costs are not much higher than the plain equivalent and so far the product has been well received abroad, having had extensive development investment pumped into it. Redland's 'Dry-Tech' system of ridge, verge and other accessories (including the 'Thru Vent' tile ventilator, 2) breasts the state-of-the-art race and hardly seems capable of improvement.



2

Rosemary Clay plain roofing tiles offer traditional machine-made plain tiles, some of which come very close in appearance to handmade tiles—'the Cheslyn Stock', 3. Recent takeover by Redland should ensure retention and enlargement of the range, with the benefits of extra investment in modernisation and a wider distribution network. The extensive range of colours, accessories, ornamentals and specials available, with the small modular size make these clay tiles supremely versatile. The return of the roof with a rather steeper pitch, as in this supermarket in Hereford, 4, will assist in the revival and continuing interest in the product.



3



4

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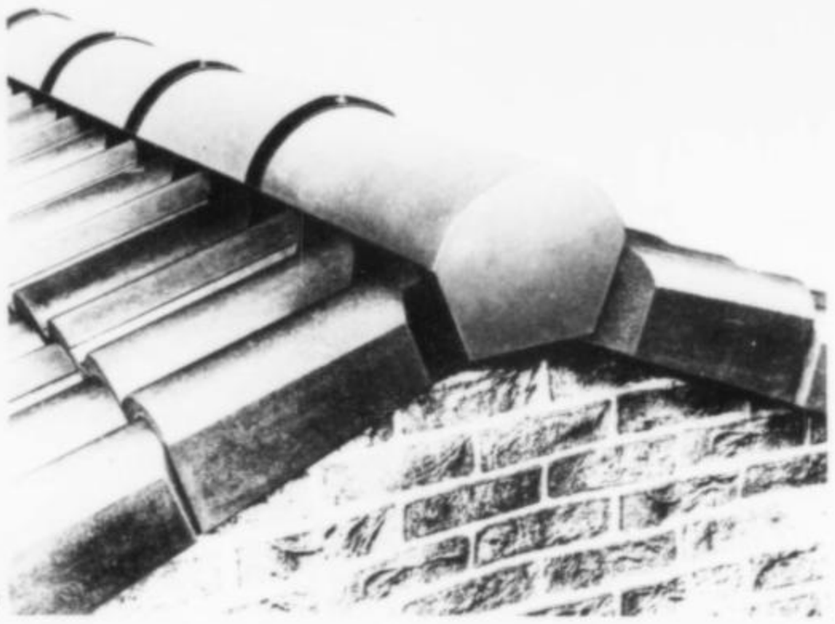
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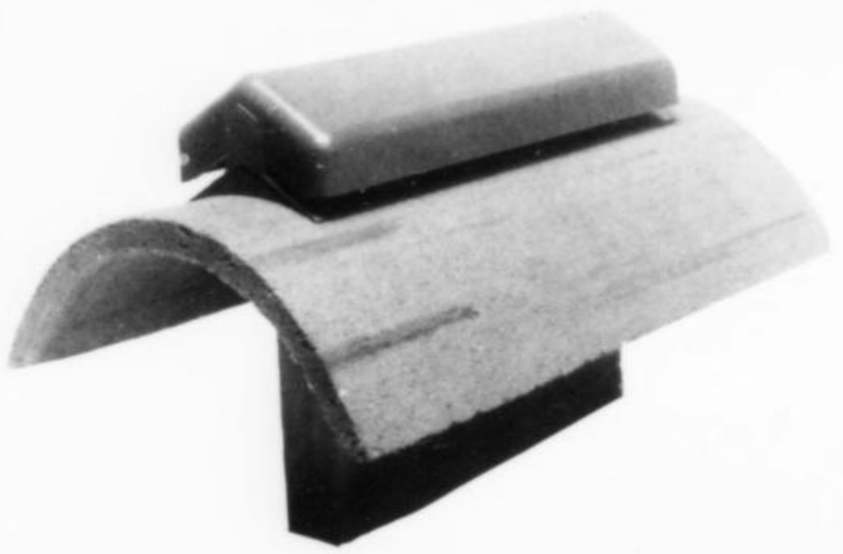
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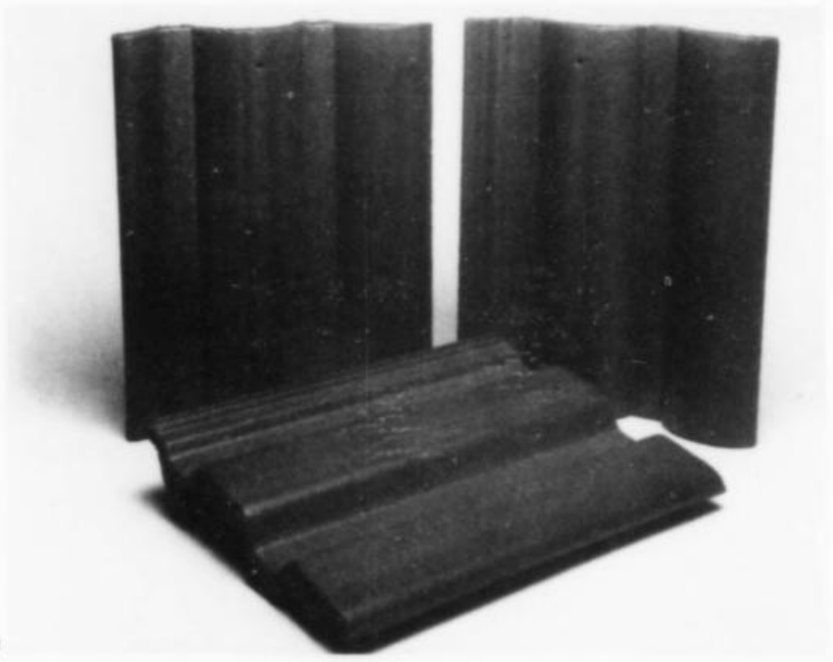
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7



8



9

5, Spanish natural slate is now imported and sold here at an economic rate and may prove a lower-cost alternative to British slates. Concern about the life of the slate, used in a climate other than its native one, may lead the designer to be cautious in specification. However, the Spanish slates comply with the British Standards and guidance on specification may be obtained from the National Federation of Roofing Contractors.

Fibre cement slates are now recognised as a category of their own rather than as a poor substitute for real slates. Eternit 'TAC 2000' and 'Duracem' fibre cement slates, with a comprehensive range of accessories, colours, shapes and sizes, have an excellent



6

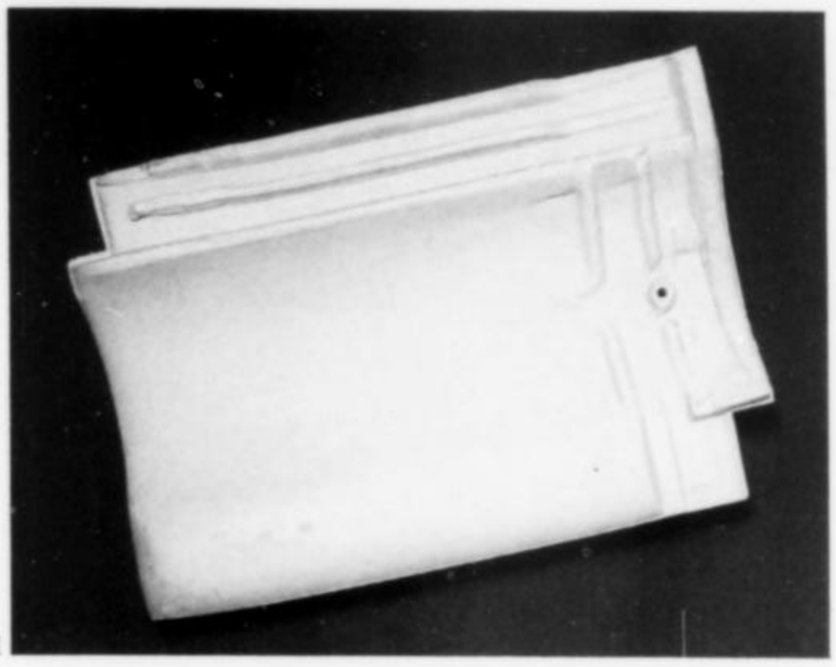
appearance and at just over half the cost of new slate are a preferable alternative to concrete tiles whose appearance (and actual weight) is often too heavy. The new 'Rivendale' slate with a textured finish gives even greater verisimilitude. 6, business apartments by Wiggins Group at Waterside on the Isle of Dogs.

Set up by ARC and Tarmac after a monopolies commission report, Tarc Tiles is a new company offering a sensible middle range of concrete interlocking tiles. Costs are low, and fixing and detailing straightforward. While the range is unexciting, careful use in the right situation should produce a serviceable and attractive solution. 7,



10

'Tarctile's' all-weather dry roof system consisting of ventilated ridge and covered verge. 8, Tarc ventilating ridge available in red, slate blue and rustic brown colours. 9, 'Tarctile' plain or four profiled interlocking tiles now available in new colour—antique orange. 10, 'Tarctile' new angle ridge, available in red, rustic brown and slate blue.



11

11, Langley's 'Sterreberg' clay interlocking pantiles may appear to be in the luxury market, but costs are similar to a new Welsh slate roof. A range of glazed and unglazed colours is available; the unglazed ones are silicon-coated to minimise water absorption. The flat underside ensures stable fixing and only minimal accessories are required as traditional methods can be used.

Keymer hand-made clay tiles will always be in demand. Costs are high, but modernised methods in the drying process should ease production and reduce delivery times. 12, Keymer tiles on Micheldever Primary School (Hampshire County Council architects' department). 13, Keymer roof and wall tiles.



12



13

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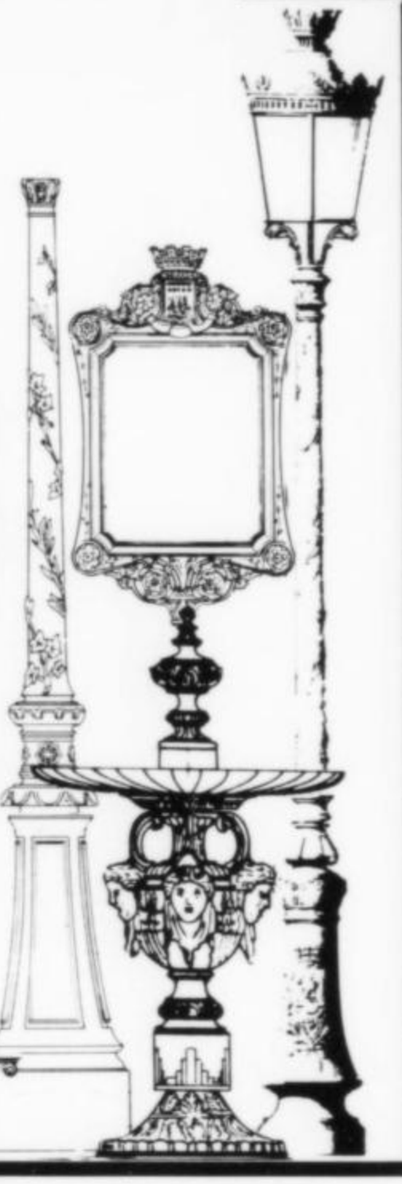
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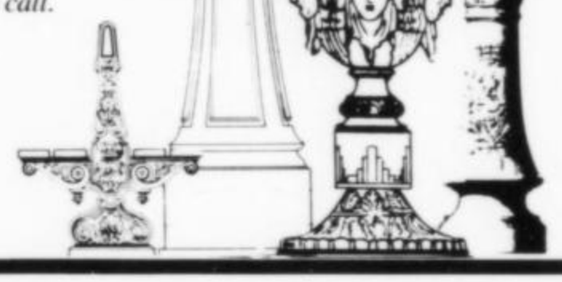


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Books

The notion of place, and of a regional approach to architectural expression, was deeply rooted in the English Arts and Crafts movement. The Arts and Crafts approach to identity was very diverse as two recent biographies of key architects and theoreticians of the movement, C. R. Ashbee and W. R. Lethaby, show. As Peter Davey suggests in this double review, these long dead architects both have a great deal to teach to present practice.

Diverse duo

C. R. ASHBEE: *Architect, Designer and Romantic Socialist. By Alan Crawford. New Haven and London: Yale 1985. £35. 499pp.*

WILLIAM RICHARD LETHABY: *His Life and Work 1857-1931. By Godfrey Rubens. London: Architectural Press. £30. 320pp.*

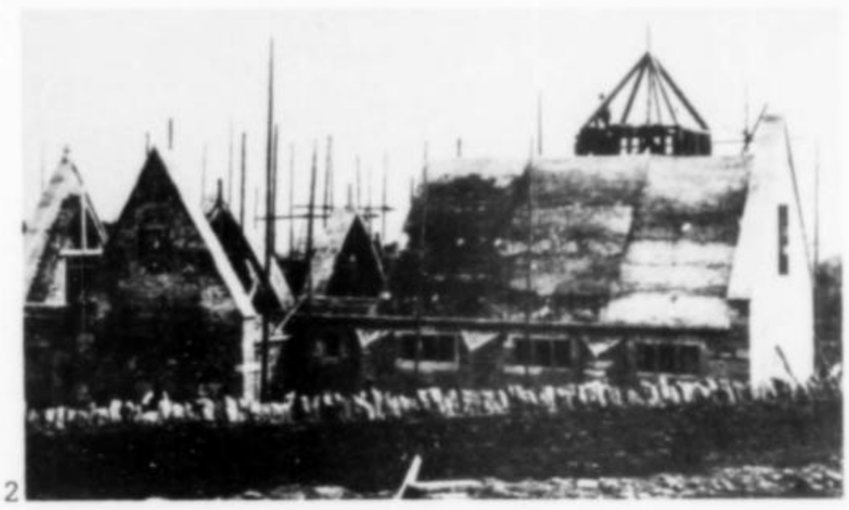
Lethaby and Ashbee were the wordiest of Arts and Crafts architects and so the most difficult to understand. Of an extraordinarily talented generation, they were the most diverse. Rarely have the skills of architect, educator, theoretician, social idealist and designer been so closely and coherently amalgamated as they were in the lives of these two men. Reasonably, they should by now be part of a British canon of saints—as, for instance, Hoffmann is in Austria or Saarinen in Finland. And yet they are not. It is perhaps because of the comparative sparseness of their built work that they are not very highly regarded as architects. Not one of their contemporaries could compare with them as theoreticians—but if you want to understand the nature of turn-of-the-century British architectural thought you will go to their buildings as well as read their many books. Each of their architectural works (until Ashbee lost architectural drive about halfway through the first decade of this century) is an essay in careful placemaking: each transforms the locality in which it is made and yet respects it.

I am awed by Alan Crawford's book on Ashbee, its sweep and depth.

Long, exhaustive (but not exhausting), the biography sets Ashbee's extraordinary range of talents



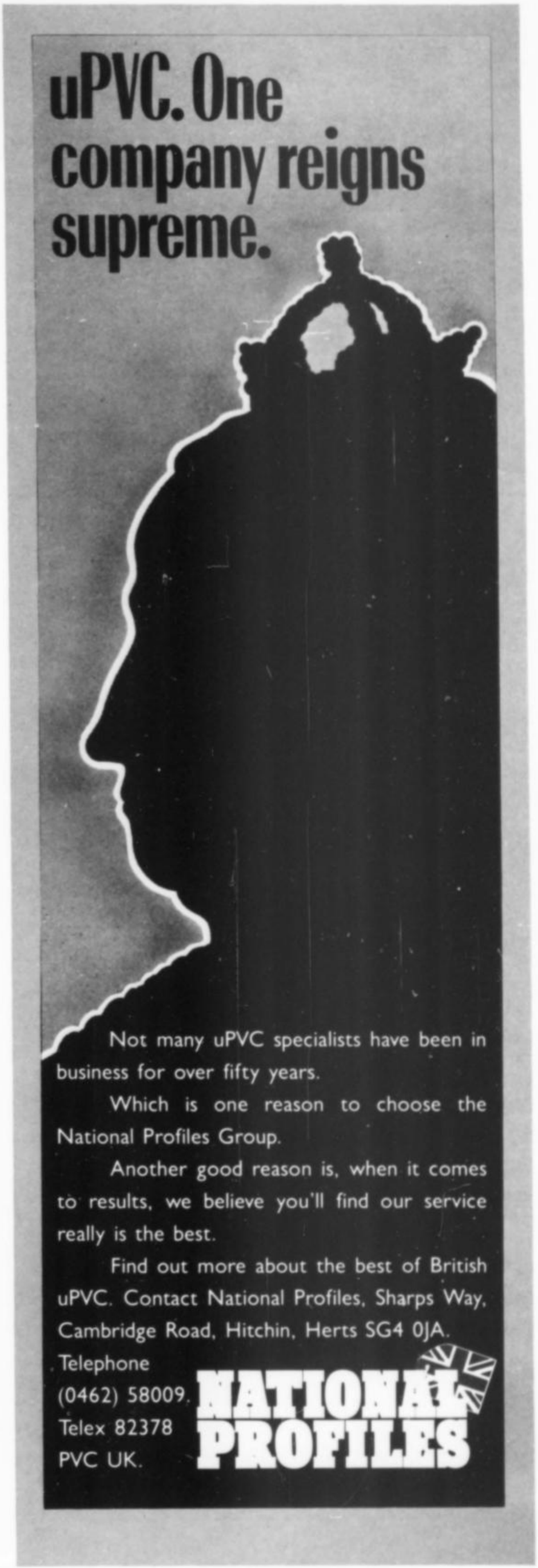
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2

1, Nos 71-75 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, designed by C. R. Ashbee in 1896-1912; bombed 1941.
2, Lethaby's Brockhampton Church under construction.

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into a kind of coherence. Of all the Arts and Crafts folk, Ashbee was the most well-travelled. Varying from jewellery to printing, with architecture as the mother somewhere in between, Ashbee's work transfixed Europe and America. Every aspect of his life and output is clearly analysed by Crawford and the breadth of scholarship is amazing.

You can be a reasonably sound historian of architecture, design or social idealism. Outstanding is the scholar who, like Crawford, can explore and relate them all—and can quote as aptly from German and American contemporary sources as from British ones. Unless Ashbee's Journals at King's College, Cambridge, or his Memoirs in the V&A are ever published (unlikely for they are both vast and straggly) we shall never know Ashbee better than we now can from the portrait that Crawford has made (though Fiona Macarthy's excellent book on the Cotswold years adds to Crawford's account of this critical period).

Crawford adopts a scheme in which Ashbee's life takes up the first part of the book; it is followed by six chapters on different aspects of the work, and the conclusion draws together Ashbee's thought and influence. The arrangement is sometimes cumbersome and can cause a good deal of turning over pages but, as Crawford says, it is difficult to see how any other form of organisation could make any sense of all Ashbee's activities. Ashbee was forever fizzing about the world and founding new enterprises. His most dramatic and noble adventure was the move of the 150 men, women and children of his Guild of Handicraft from the slums of London's East End to live, work and learn in harmony with nature in Chipping Camden—an attempt to achieve the Good Life for all his comrades (this idealistic social experiment failed because economic circumstances became increasingly inimical to the Arts and Crafts approach).

Lethaby was never as dramatic. When he wanted to change education, he worked through established institutions like the London County Council and the Royal College of Art rather than founding his own schools. As an architect his work is even more sparse than Ashbee's rather meagre output (but each of his six major works was a gem—and he never descended into banality as Ashbee did in his later buildings; Lethaby simply gave up building). Lethaby's more ordinary existence allows a more cohesive approach to the man and his output. Godfrey Rubens' account works more or less chronologically through life and work simultaneously: apprentice, architect and designer, educationalist and Surveyor of Westminster Abbey. But Rubens has to provide a penultimate chapter on Lethaby as writer and theoretician which chronicles and draws together the changes in his thinking. Starting as an apologist for a kind of neo-Renaissance style, Lethaby published *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, in 1894, in which he attempted to establish from the most diverse anthropological sources (*The Golden Bough* had been recently issued) a kind of universal way of building and decoration, with, for instance, 'ceilings like the sky and pavements like the sea'. It was an attempt to generate a universal approach to architecture justified by appeal to archetype. In many ways its attempt to give nineteenth-century agnostics historic sanction for architectural form-making parallels Pugin's appeal to the Gothic which had so appealed to the highly religious society of 60 years earlier. The rest of Lethaby's life was devoted to arguing that architecture should be free of overt historical stylism: that it should draw its expression from the life of humanity and from the nature of the building process itself.

If, as Rubens points out, a late nineteenth-century architect had thrown out the historical styles, there was little for him to rely on in terms of form-making except good building and craftsmanship. The curious paradox of Lethaby (which Rubens does not quite grapple with) is that though he started as an idealist, as he got older he become more and more materialist. Towards the end of his life, the process of building seemed to matter more than anything. In 1918, he said 'although all these modern activities frighten me, and I would rather be dealing with rubble and thatch than with concrete and steel. . . I have seen much which causes one to look again, in great bridges spanning a valley like a rainbow; in roofs meshed across with threads of steel. . .'. No wonder that he became virtually the only acknowledged British forefather of two generations of pragmatic and often brutal English post-Second World War architects.

In today's climate, Lethaby's *Mysticism and Myth* needs to be re-examined much more extensively than Rubens did in this book and in his introduction to the re-issued edition of 1974 (Architectural Press). The book still raises many questions that the money grubbing posturings of Post-Modern Classicism have recently tried to answer. But there must be more to creating an architecture for everyman than presenting capitalism in popularly acceptable, glitzy wrapping papers.

This was a fundamental belief shared by both Lethaby and Ashbee. Intellectual descendants of Ruskin and Morris, they thought that everyone is creative; that architecture can help ennoble humanity; that life and art can be one. And they tried to live out this truth.

PETER DAVEY

Third World hope

THE NEW LANDSCAPE. *By Charles Correa. The Book Society of India. 1985. Obtainable from RIBA Publications, £6 and 60p postage.*

By the year 2000 over 40 cities in the Third World will have a population of 15 million people and more. In spite of their continued growth, and contrary to expectation, there are signs that they can pull through. How successfully will depend on the degree of public intervention that takes place, and how it is done. This book is about a range of solutions which can be applied to enable a new landscape to be generated.

Correa, RIBA Gold Medallist in 1984, is a Bombay architect who in the 1960s with two colleagues, fought for state and government support for their idea of a satellite city, New Bombay, across the water from Bombay. This would house at least half of the projected 4 million people arriving in the region within 20 years. Many of the ideas in this lively book stem from the experience gained from the new city. Importance is given, for example, to the strategy of government intervention, essential as a technique for rapid urbanisation, their offices 'akin to a travelling circus' which pitches tent and moves on, generating other jobs by a factor of five. Most important is the acquisition of land which, once it is in public ownership, can avoid large-scale private speculation. Correa condemns high-rise housing in the Third World as being too dependent on profits and skills, and really only achieving high densities through high room occupancy. Low-rise is advocated as being quick to build, low-cost, renewable with low maintenance and capable of giving sufficiently high densities to support an adequate public transport.

Today in New Bombay families of squatters are pitching camp, a sure sign that the city is taking off, and before the camps grow too large their occupants are encouraged to take out mortgages and are provided with serviced sites where, with guidance from the authorities, they build their own homes. Correa illustrates one such scheme he has designed (AR October 1985 p32), full of variety and containing many of the essential ingredients discussed in the book such as the private courtyards open to the sky, and usable for 70 per cent of the year (monsoon excepting). These give on to small public spaces, adequate for recreation but quite unlike those lavish *maidans* loved by Bombay cricketers. A strong plea is made for self-help city schemes to develop outside the existing ones, poly-nuclear in form, like the Dutch Randstad, with good transport connections between. In this way sufficient breathing space within the existing cities can be created to allow housing to be inserted in the right location where it is accessible to work places.

The book is full of powerful images in both text and photographs—like the one of the two friends drinking tea in the steel pipe—an example of the survival of human values. The conventional Western image of the 'sea of humanity' in the Third World is condemned as an excuse to *do nothing*. In fact the Third World is full of hope and opportunities given the right political will. Correa rightly makes an impassioned plea for the innovative and imaginative architect to get involved, particularly in the field of low-cost housing where his energy and talent can produce something beautiful for society.

BRIAN RICHARDS

Regional glamour

CARIBBEAN STYLE. *By Suzanne Slesin and Stafford Cliff, Jack Berthelot, Martine Gaumé, Daniel Rozensztroch. Photographs by Gilles de Chabaneix. London: Thames & Hudson 1985. £25.*

Caribbean Style is an enchanting picture book put together by five authors and one photographer from their personal experience and love of the islands. There is glamour on every page with views of buildings set in seascape and lush foliage which call up the magic of the sunlit tropical island as well as evoking in imagery the poignant history of the many different peoples in fact and fiction who have populated the Caribbean.

As a picture book it is a *tour de force*. It would be wrong indeed to read more into it than a visual exposition of how the mix of Spanish, French, English, Dutch, African, Asian and other cultures has brought various ingredients of architectural flavour to the Caribbean. The writing which is limited to three of the 280 or so pages, tries to do more and wrestles with the notion of architectural style as applied to this huge region which stretches from the Lesser Antilles to the Bahamas. In the two-page introduction Jan Morris argues both for and against an architectural style in the real meaning of the word but doubt prevails and in the end, when all logic is set aside, the author conjures up the metaphysical:

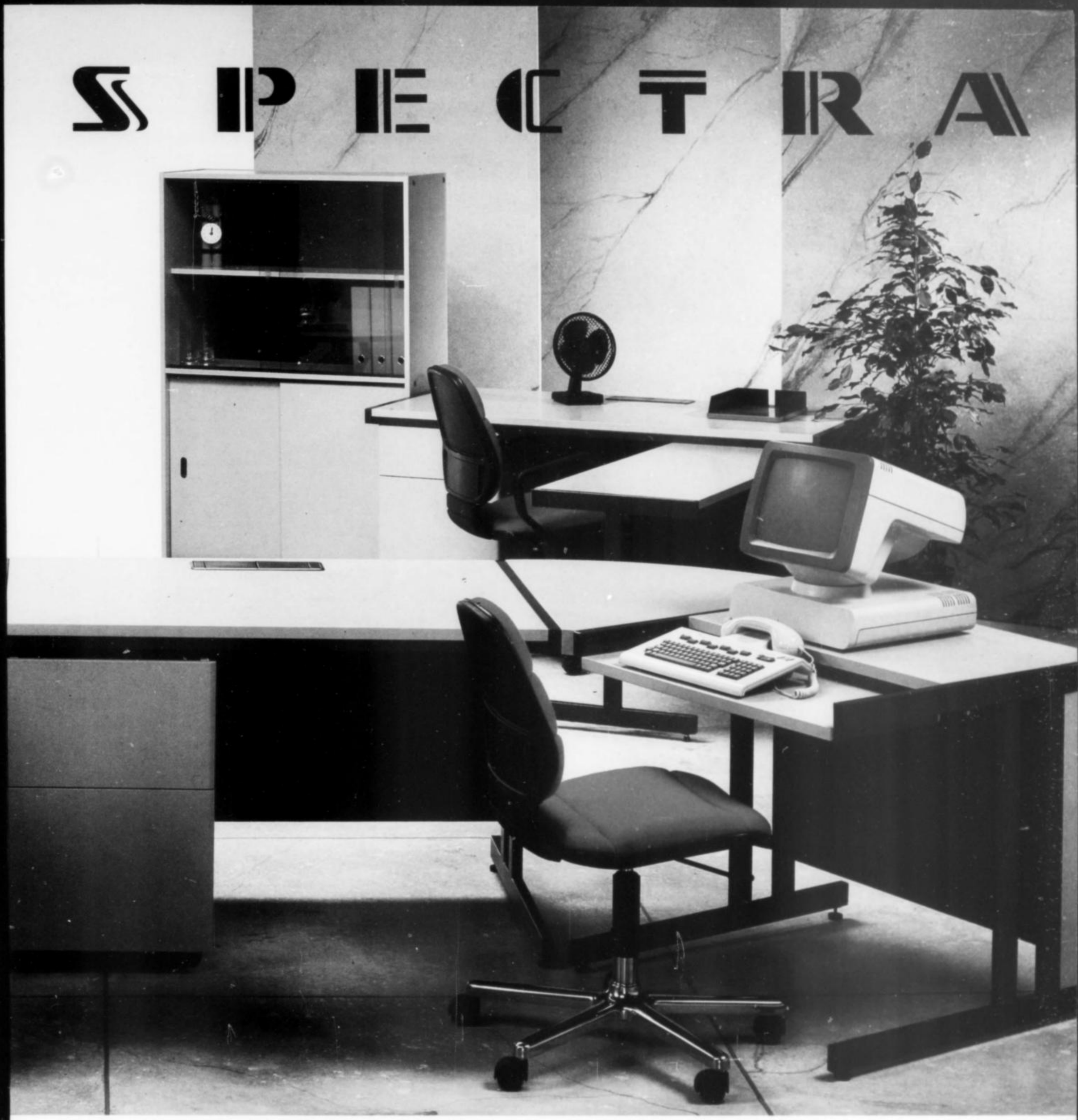
'Does it really add up to one, definable Caribbean style? Perhaps not in the exact fact, or the particular object: but as I summon into my mind all the dazzling images of those seas, all the hints and secret scents of the spice-and-sugar places, I perceive it most distinctly as a style in the imagination—and out of many imaginations, living and dead, it has reached now a more formal unity in the pages of this book.'

The book follows previous volumes in the series of *French Style, English Style* and *Italian Style* and perhaps it was to be expected that its authors would feel obliged to think of style in the Western sense as of monumental and universal cultural significance. This could never be mirrored in the small-scale charm of the climatically modified eclecticism of the buildings of the thousand or so islands of the Caribbean.

Of necessity the illustrations are highly selective and everyone will have their own pet islands and buildings which have been excluded. The French influence in the Lesser Antilles and Haiti, for example, is well illustrated but there is very little about Trinidad which boasts its magnificent seven houses, and the remarkable construction of the English Harbour in Antigua is glossed over in two pages.

This book is really the colour supplement of a book yet to be written on the architecture of the Caribbean.

JOHN PARTRIDGE



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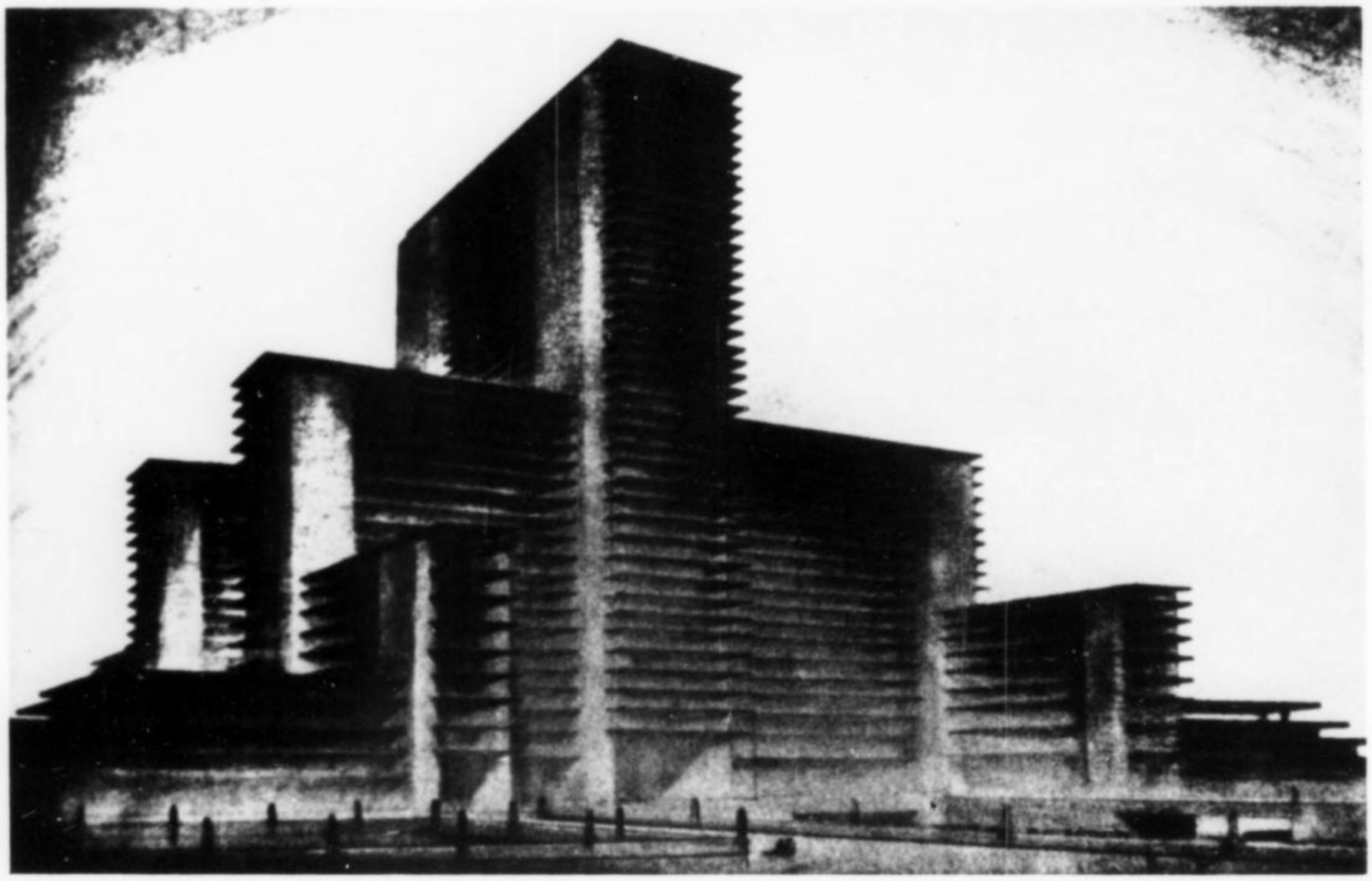
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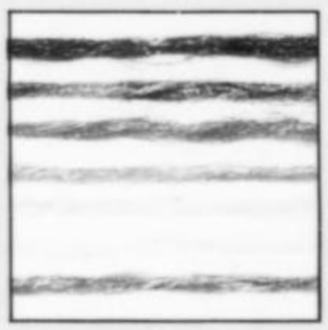
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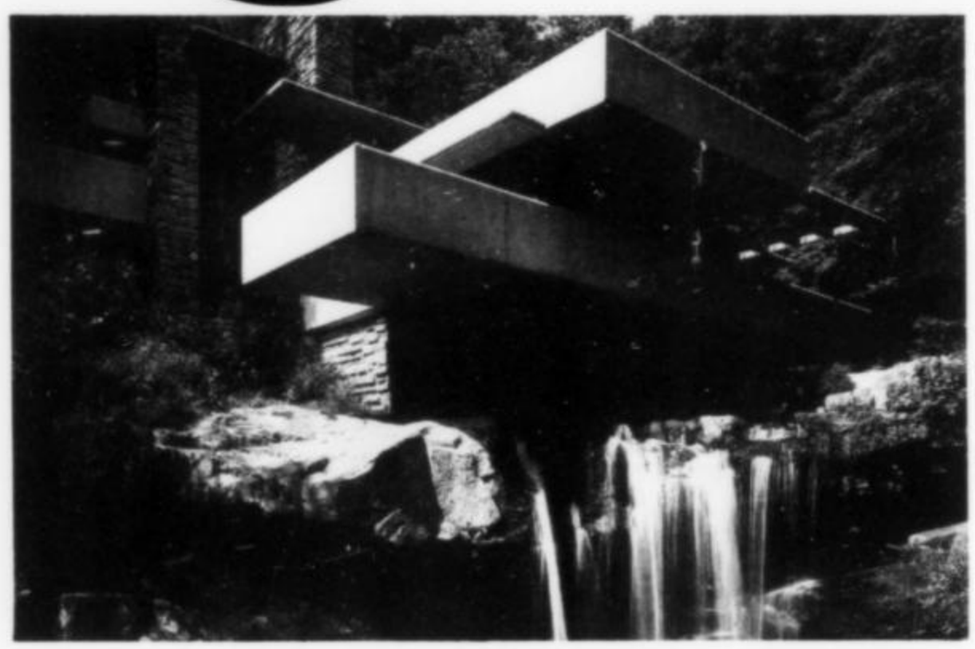
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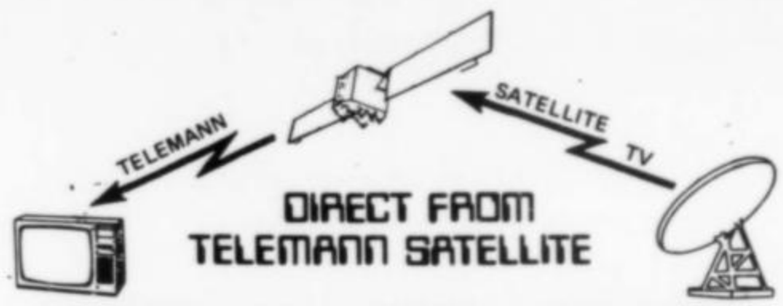
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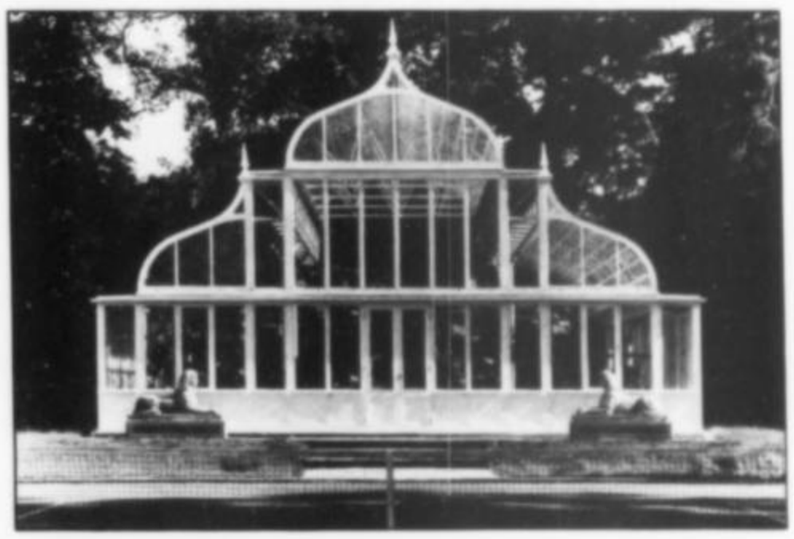
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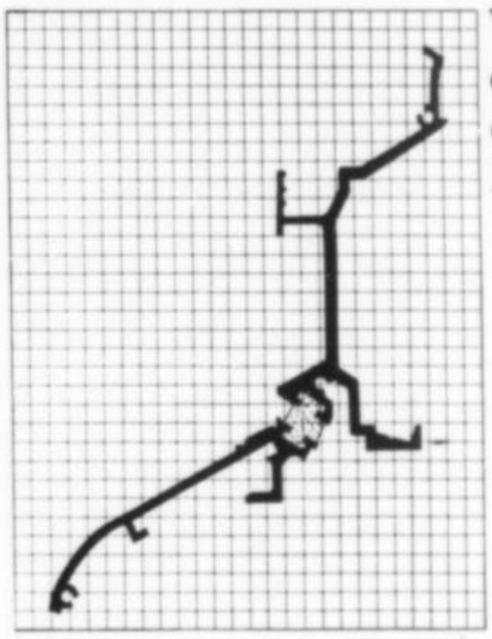
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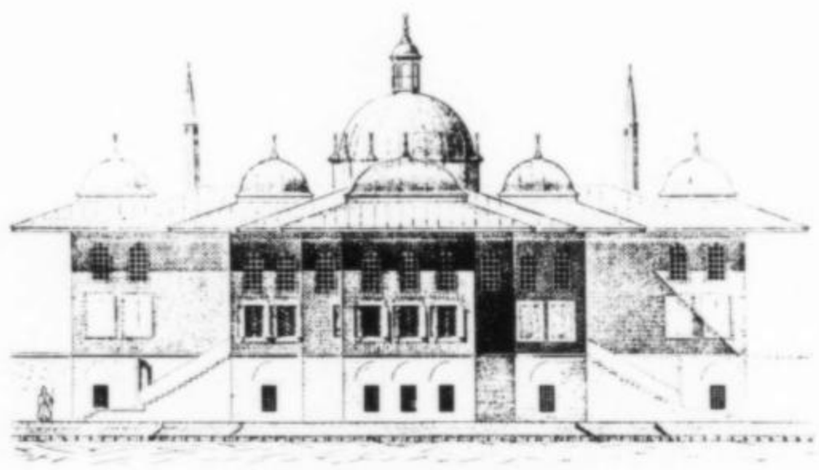
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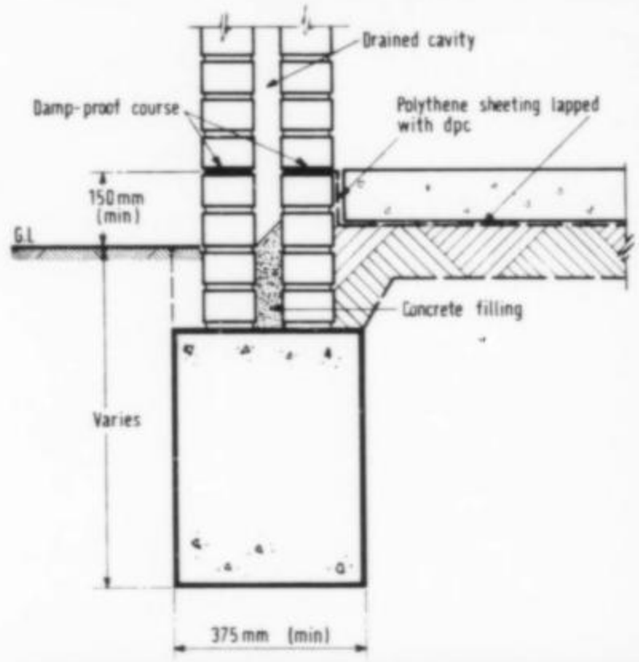
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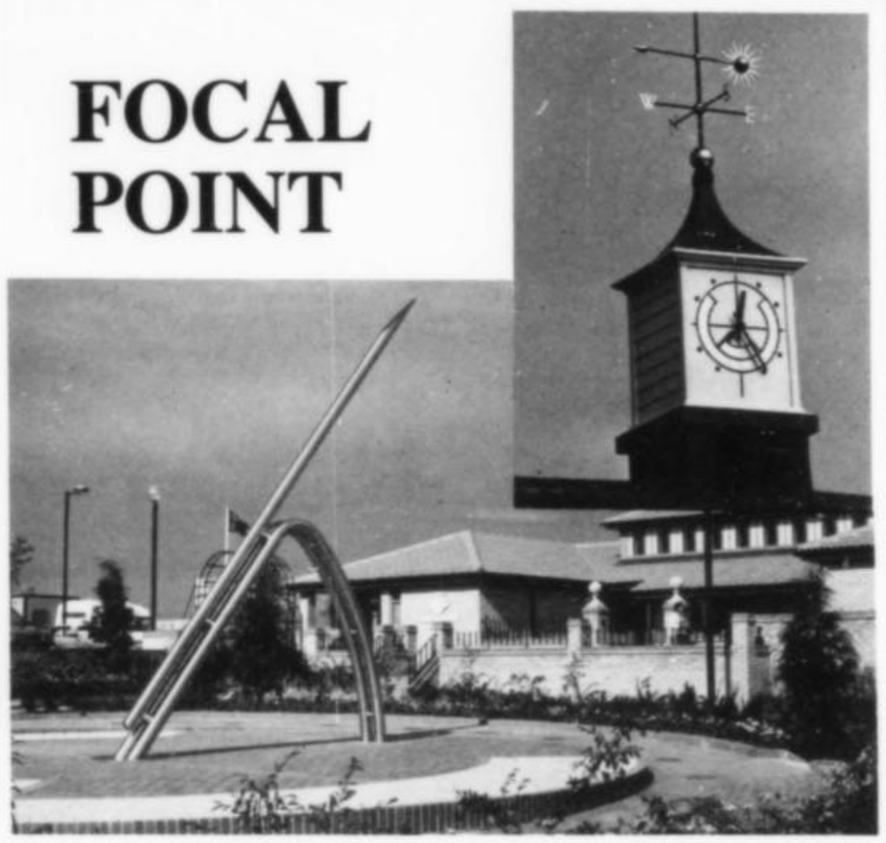
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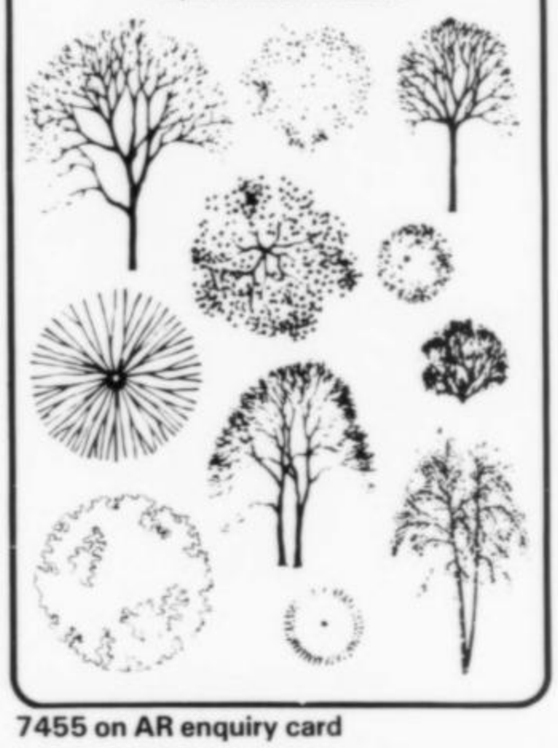
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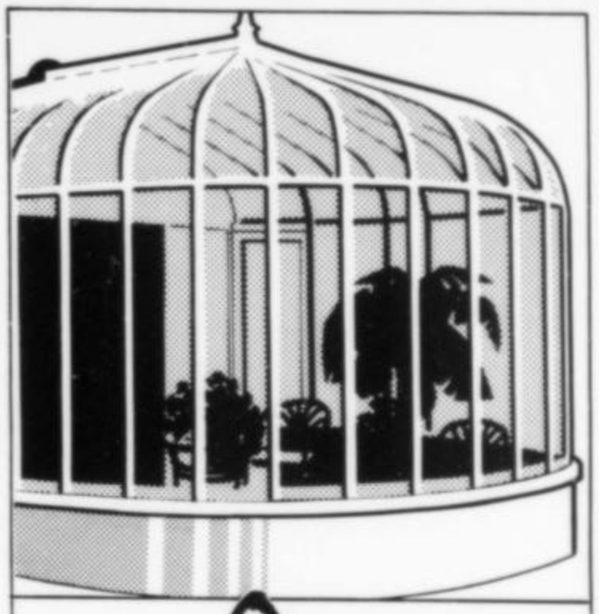
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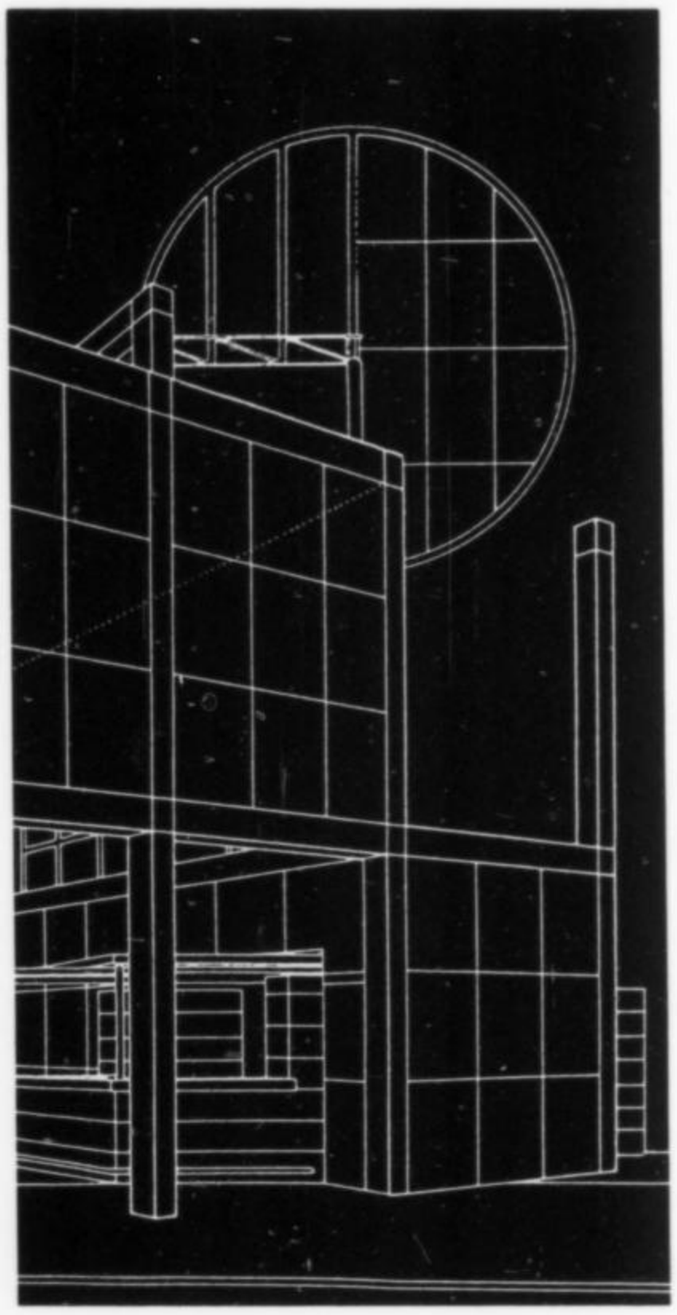
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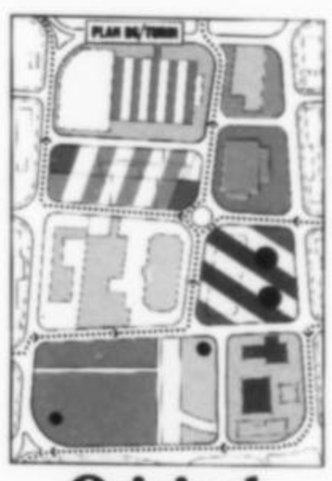


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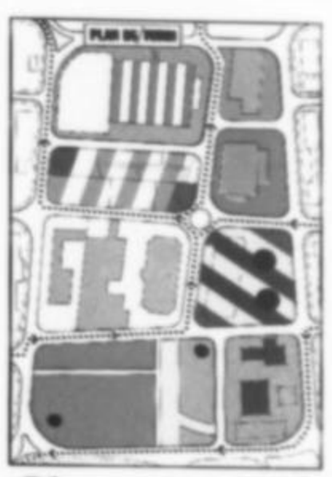
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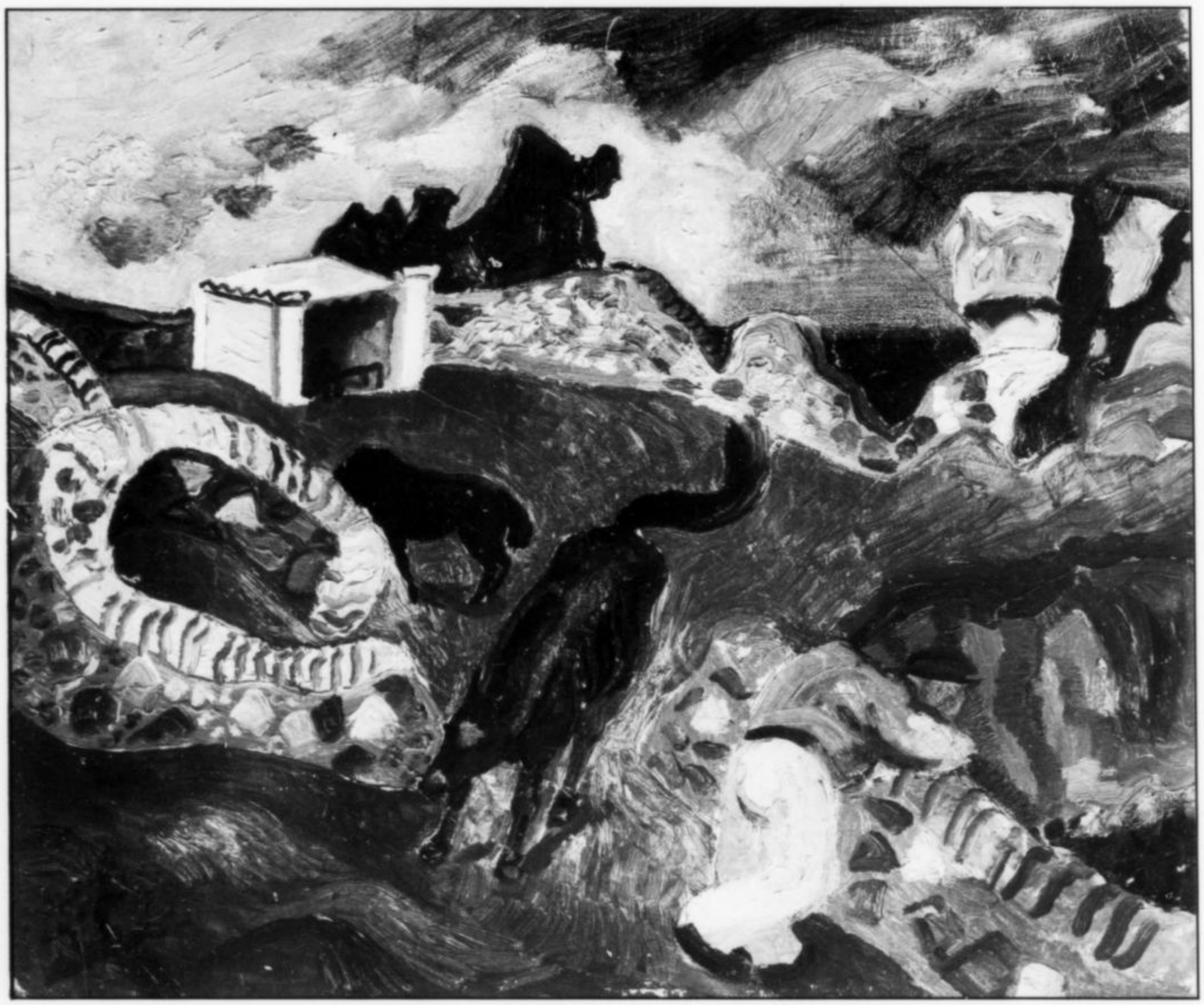
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