

REFERENTIAL DRAWINGS

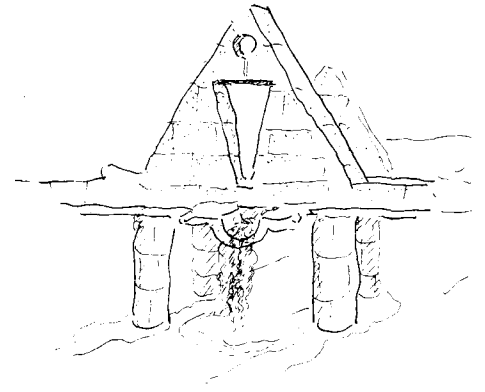
The referential drawing may be thought of as the architect's diary or record of discovery. It is a shorthand reference which is generally fragmentary in nature and yet which has the power to develop into a more fully elaborated composition when remembered and combined with other themes. In making such a record of our observations, we of course do so with a point of view. It is that very bias by which the natural phenomenon is reinterpreted, re-seen, that allows the artist to identify with the image and causes it to have special meaning for him. It goes without saying that what the architect chooses to draw, using his sketchbook as a record of observation, reveals the examination of his artistic conscience. In the following two projects, a number of drawings taken from my sketchbooks were indirectly employed in the symbolic and compositional framework.

Fargo and Moorhead are twin cities in the adjacent states of North Dakota and Minnesota, separated by the Red River of the North. In conjunction with the replacement of a vehicular bridge, a cultural center is planned which would physically and symbolically link the two communities. An art museum spans the bridge and connects a concert hall and public radio and television stations on the Fargo side with a history museum on the Moorhead side. The bridge employs enlarged symbolic elements of architecture such as keystone windows which act to bring together the two sides by providing a focus on the river and establishing it as center. The voided keystone is seen as a scupper which collects the sky and replenishes the river below through a waterfall which issues from its base. The water is pumped from the river by a windmill which is part of the history museum and reflects the agrarian base of the communities. In this way, the individual elements of the composition are seen as parts of a larger narrative.

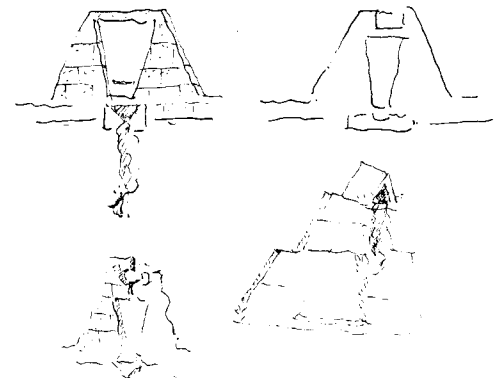
It was thought that the central building would be capable of collecting the flanks or arms into a horizontal composition not unlike that provided by the Roma Antica sketch after Stefano du Perac, where the central void tends to unify the flanks around the figure of void rather than the assumption of solid. A vertical unity is attempted by employing the river itself as the basement story, the vehicular access and the first level bridge as piano nobile, and the art museum above the bridge as attic. The horizontal linking members,

which are covered aerial walkways connecting the three cultural facilities, are seen as the cornice line of a continuous building. This allows a compositional completeness, in contrast to the disunity that would have resulted from a compositional strategy using more aggressive machine technology.

In the Plocek House, two primary site conditions were seen as the bases for strategies employing both double entry and the active participation of the landscape as an enclosive gesture or outdoor room. The building, situated on a rather steep slope, required a lower level entry for guests, which in some symbolic sense could be seen as primary; and an upper level entry off the parking court for daily use by the family. The sloping site was further complicated by a diagonal shift at its upper reaches. In an effort to engage that upper landscape a second center, this one outdoors, was seen in contrast to the primary one, that of the confluence of the lower and upper level entries in a central interior stair. Several precedents come to mind in regard to garden enclosure as room, one being the garden of the Arcadian Academy in Rome. This sort of scheme, when combined with that of twin and/or shifted centers such as one might find in the sketch for "a little building with square plan and loggia" after Bergeret Fils or the Hotel de Matignon after Blondel, can contribute to the importance of this particular site situation. Further, the building attempts to stretch or engage the greater landscape by the disengagement of the three classical elements of the building facade, namely the basement story, the piano nobile, and the attic. The basement, which is the first level above ground, employs references to a romantic and yet stabilizing view of the earth seen in its rusticated form. In this scheme, that story is pulled forward, allowing the piano nobile to use the roof of this rustic level as terrace. In other words, one establishes a new ground plane, this time man-made and reinterpreted. The primary body of the house is seen as the piano nobile, while the symbol of constructional and domestic unity is lifted from its normal key position at the apex of the organization and reinterpreted higher on the hill behind the house in the form of a keystone which contains a private study. The second entry generally used by the family is marked in a way similar to that of Lutyens' Salutation at Sandwich which employs a gating or portal frame standing as windowed sentries.



Note: The description of referential drawings and further discussion of these and other kinds of drawings appear in "The Necessity for Drawing: Tangible Speculation" by Michael Graves, Architectural Design, Vol 47, No. 6, 1977, pages 384-395.

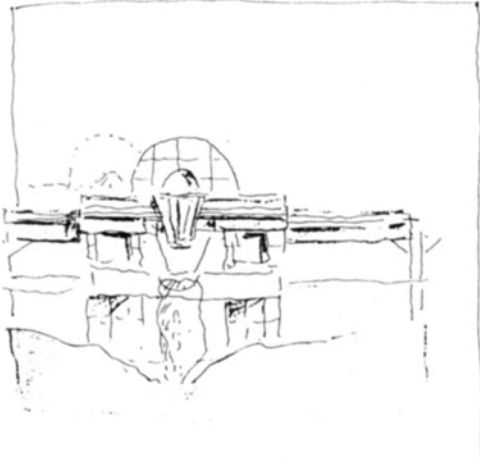


Fargo-Moorhead Cultural Bridge. Sketches.



Fargo-Moorhead Cultural Bridge. Sketch and errant chair.

Michael Graves, born in 1934, obtained his B Arch at Cincinnati and M Arch at Harvard. From 1960-2 he was a Fellow at the American Academy in Rome. His work has been featured in GA Houses 2 and Five Architects, as well as other periodicals. He has won several awards and his drawings have been widely exhibited.



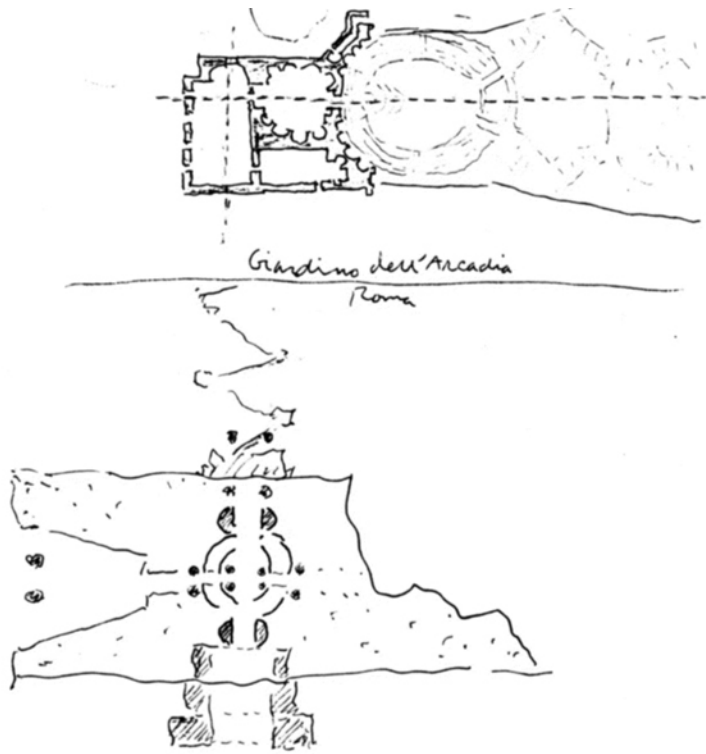
Referential drawing: Roma Antica di Stefano du Perac, 1574.



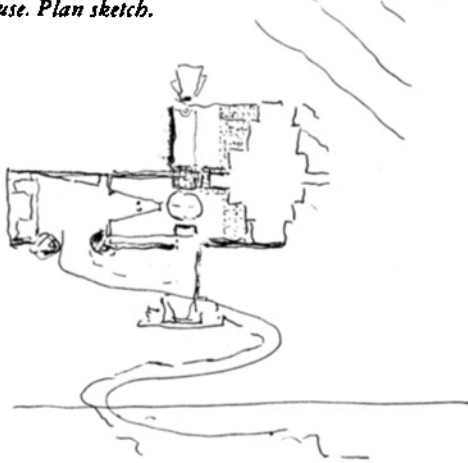
Referential drawing: Fontaine de Marie de Medicis, Jacques de Brosse, 1620-3.

Fargo-Moorhead Cultural Center. South elevation, preliminary.





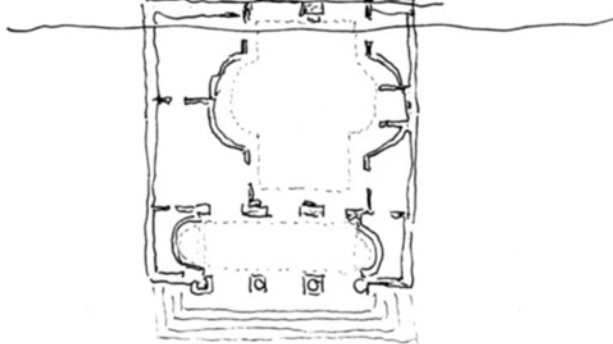
Top. Referential drawing: Giardino dell'Arcadia, Rome. Bottom. Plocek House. Plan sketch.



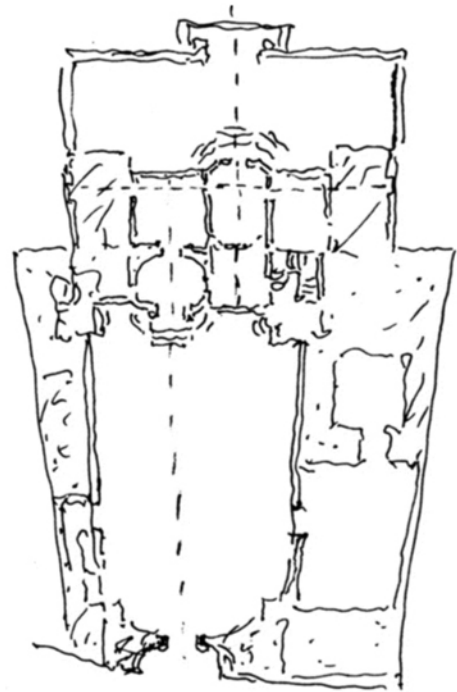
Plocek House. Plan sketch.



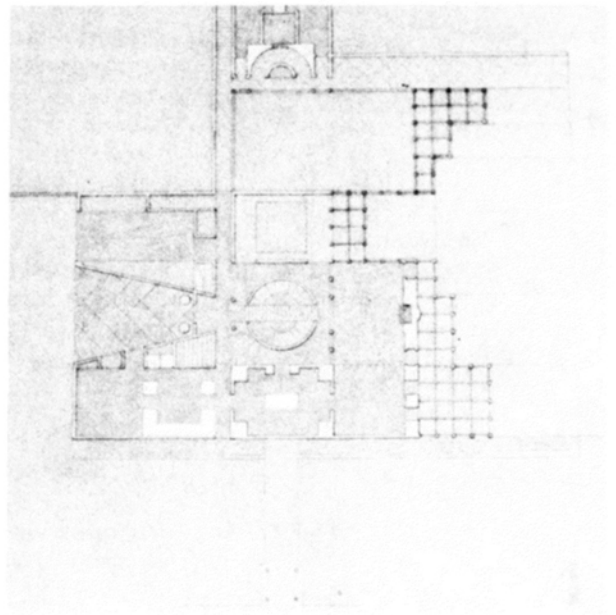
possible record foreground
(alternative view)
of French garden from:
"Manoir Antique Change en un
Chateau Elegant"



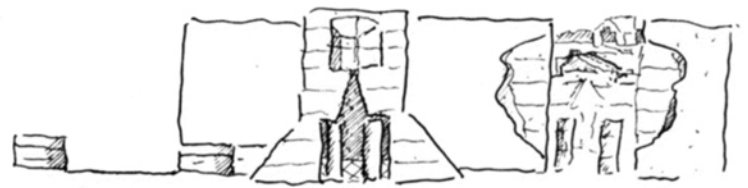
Referential drawing.
Top. From "Manoir Antique Change en un Chateau Elegant".
Bottom. "Projet d'un petit batiment de plan carre avec loggia", Bergeret
Fils.



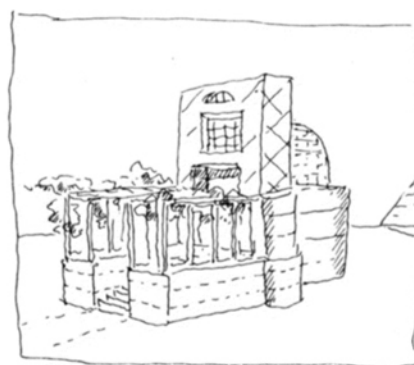
Referential drawing: Hotel de Matignon, 1721, after Blondel.



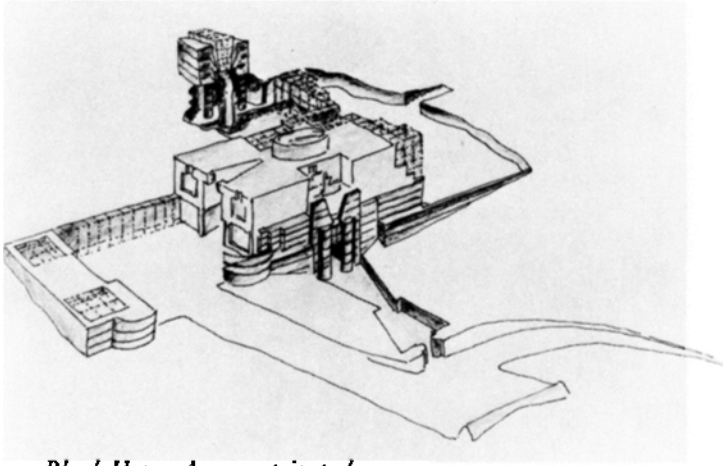
Plocek House. Ground floor plan, preliminary.



Plocek House. Sketches.



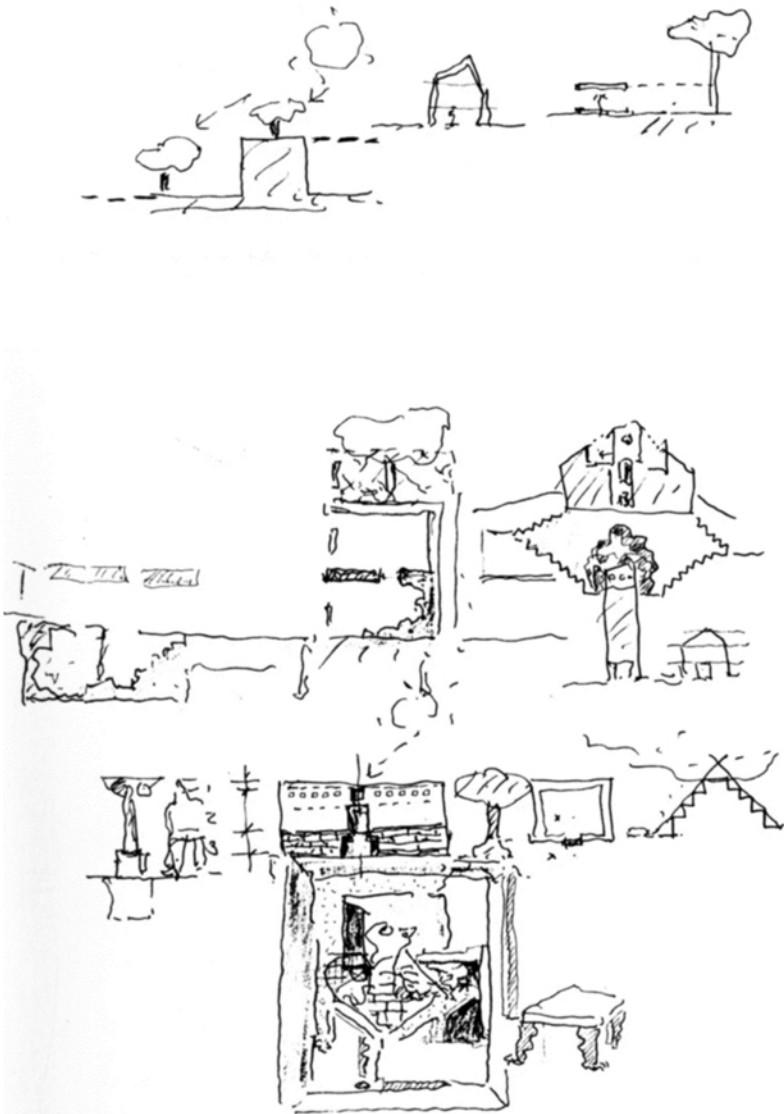
Plocek House.
Axonometric study.



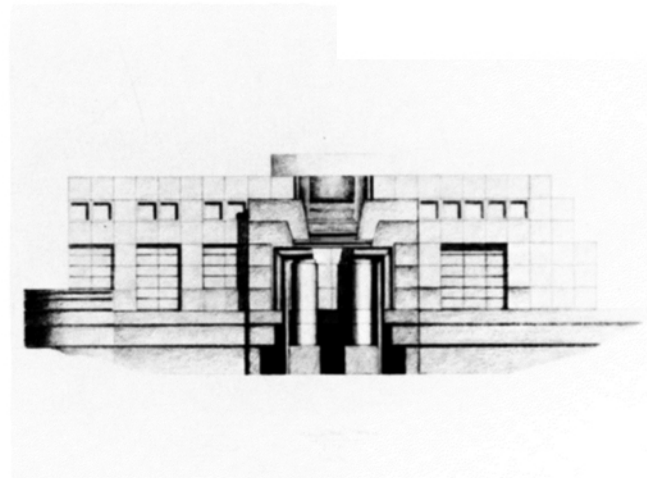
Plocek House. Axonometric study.



Referential drawing: Ledoux, 27 l'Avenue de Paris.



Referential drawing: Gate House from Road, The Salvation, Sandwich, Lutyens.



Referential sketches for Plocek House.

Plocek House. Street elevation. 27