

Aleš Vodopivec
Rok Žnidaršič (Eds.)

Edvard Ravnikar

Architect and Teacher

Friedrich Achleitner
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Preface

Overlapping Territories : On Situating Edvard Ravnikar

The architecture and thought of Edvard Ravnikar cannot be reduced to simplistic schemes of historical development. Born in Slovenia in 1907, he belonged to the same generation as Carlo Scarpa in Italy and Luis Barragan in Mexico, unique figures who like him inherited the discoveries of the modern masters and translated them to deal with the realities and myths of their respective places, times and societies. When Ravnikar was a child, Slovenia was still part of the Austro-Hungarian empire but for most of his adult life after the second world war it was a socialist republic within the federation of Yugoslavia. Ravnikar believed that architecture and urbanism should improve existence for the majority, but remained aloof from official socialist doctrines, maintaining a long term perspective on both art and the human condition. He transcended the ideological stances of his time, seeking to express more enduring symbols through a resonant abstraction. A committed modern architect, he never ceased to look to the past, transforming it in his own terms. A master of structure, construction and craft, he insisted upon the importance of the realm of ideas. A professional dedicated to architectural practice, he also liked to write, paint and express his imagination in drawings. A many sided artist with a broad intellectual and visual culture, Ravnikar was a remarkable teacher who transmitted not just technical and aesthetic skills but also ethical values in the hope that a younger generation might extend these in a fresh and critical way.

The intellectual geography of Ravnikar's mind corresponded to some degree to the historical complexity of his homeland, Slovenia - a small country standing between mountains and sea, between central Europe and the Mediterranean, between Slav, Germanic and Latin areas of influence. He lived most of his life in the capital, Ljubljana, a place which had almost the character of a miniature city state, a microcosm of a kind. But he was able to develop and expand his architecture within the larger political sphere and social experiment of Yugoslavia. While attentive to a progressive ethos and to technological change, he never lost sight of the importance of collective memory and civic continuity. Ravnikar's architecture was formed from fragments of an old world and the promise of a new one. His outlook combined a sensitivity to local differences in the Balkans, even to vaguely defined notions of Slovenian national identity, with a quest for universality in all matters of art and thought. If Ravnikar's spiritual mentor Jože Plečnik defined some of the terms of his formation – classicism and the vernacular, symbolism and materiality, structural inventiveness and craft, multivalent images referring to overlapping cultures - Picasso and Le Corbusier were his constant guides in his search for an appropriate modernity.

Ravnikar's own education began in Vienna in the 1920s and continued in Ljubljana where the somewhat traditionalist position of Plečnik supplied an alternative to 'functionalist' tendencies of the time. From his mentor he inherited a lofty ideal of architecture as an artistic and symbolic expression. Ravnikar's version of modernism combined an intellectual inheritance from the Vienna of the beginning of the twentieth century with more recent avant-garde tendencies in a variety of centres including Paris. At the end of the 1930s he worked in the atelier of Le Corbusier executing some superb drawings for one of the projects for Algiers.

Le Corbusier showed how the visual arts, architecture and urbanism might contribute to social transformation, and revealed further ways by which a modern architecture might draw upon the past. Against the turbulent political background of the second world war and the emergence of modern Yugoslavia in the 1940s and 1950s, Ravnikar was able to crystallise a personal position and to define an architectural language. Most of his buildings were designed for a socialist society but he was wary of materialist dogmas and believed that architecture is a discipline with a degree of autonomy. In the ensuing decades up to his death in 1993, Ravnikar's architectural production reflected an accelerated industrialisation. Early in his career he drew lessons from a wide variety of sources from Aalto and Nordic modernism to Terragni and Italian Rationalism. Later on Ravnikar was certainly aware of contemporary tendencies in architecture abroad but he assiduously avoided fashion, even using the distance supplied by the marginality of Yugoslavia to pursue his main guiding themes in relative isolation.

For Ravnikar one of the basic social functions of architecture was the formal expression of collective beliefs. In post war Yugoslavia the state required public monuments and here he was in his element. He had worked on Plečnik's National and University Library in Ljubljana in the late thirties then executed his own design for the Modern Gallery in the same city in 1940. A witness to the collapse of empires, to the aspirations of new states and to the disasters of war, Ravnikar was acutely aware of the impact of world forces upon the fault lines of the Balkans. He understood the role of monumentality in representing institutions and in anchoring the flux of epic events. Ravnikar's post war public buildings such as the Council Assembly Building in Kranj (1958-60) or the Revolution (later Republic) Square Complex in Ljubljana (1961-83) demonstrate his commitment to civic symbolism and the public realm. His designs for war memorials in places such as Draga (1952), Begunje (1952-3) or the island of Rab (1952-3) reveal his mastery of the basics of architecture, his control of space, his understanding of stone construction, his sensitivity to landscape, his sense of the tragic dimension in human affairs and his subtle use of abstraction in expressing a complex content in materials and forms. Ravnikar wished to interpret contemporary realities but was nonetheless drawn to archetypes in the Mediterranean world. For him there was no contradiction between the best of modernism and what he thought of as essentials of classicism.

For Ravnikar architecture was above all an art of integration, and many of his projects were based upon simple structural ideas which revealed metaphorical possibilities. The parabolic masonry roof of the 'Museum' in the Memorial Complex at Rab is a case in point, as this symbolic shelter is formed from slender stone pieces held together without mortar by lead clips and hidden steel cables : the result is a telling yet ambiguous representation in solid materials of a tent or some other archetypal structure. The Council Assembly Building in Kranj presents the image of a monumental 'house of the people' on the outside, a curious fusion of classical temple and alpine cabin, but realized in modern materials such as the reinforced concrete frame which holds the whole thing up, allowing the floors to suspended below and the façades to be suspended in front. Ravnikar absorbed some of Gottfried Semper's ideas on structure and cladding from Plečnik who explored the meaning and tectonic expression of masonry, but Ravnikar was increasingly concerned in the 1960s and 1970s with new techniques of construction and facing based upon the possibilities of concrete skeletons and frames. In works such as the Hotel Creina in Kranj of 1968-70 he resorted to a dramatic display of concrete cantilevered beams combined with ornamental patterns of brick infilling, while in other

projects of the same period he used rusted steel or ceramics in woven patterns in the curtain walls, rather like solidified textiles. In this path towards greater thinness in the skin of framed buildings Ravnika sometimes erred in the direction of a mannerised fussiness at odds with the heroic power of his early masonry monuments.

In his role as a Professor at the Ljubljana School of Architecture, where he followed in the footsteps of Plečnik, Ravnika insisted on the importance of town and country planning, not as arid statistical exercises (although he did encourage a spirit of scientific analysis) but as basically architectural activities requiring spatial intelligence, a sense of topography and climate, and a sensitivity to both social patterns and historical context. He reprimanded technocratic modernists for their brutal interventions and sought instead a fusion of civic space and buildings, sometimes integrating artificial landscape and architecture. This approach shows most clearly in the unfinished project for a tourist complex (Sv. Štefan-Miločer-Pržno) proposed in 1964 for a stunning coastal site in Montenegro overlooking the Adriatic. In effect Ravnika blended the scheme into the landscape by treating it as a series of horizontal strata perforated here and there by Mediterranean vegetation. Ravnika was attentive to the urban grain, scale and open spaces of traditional towns and hoped that it might be possible to translate some of these qualities into a modern urban architecture based upon technical standardisation and geometrical systems of order. There are some loose parallels with the urbanistic aims of architects of Team Ten at the time but in truth Ravnika had been concerned with such questions long before. The Montenegro project is not the only one by Ravnika where one feels the influence of Alvar Aalto's abstract urban landscapes with their eroded patios and cascading levels recalling a Mediterranean ruin.

Ravnika's trajectory as an individual and as an artist occurred against the background of vast political upheavals and shifting territorial allegiances. When he was born in 1907, Slovenia was still part of the Austro-Hungarian empire. After the first world war, it acquired a degree of cultural autonomy as part of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, transformed into the short-lived Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929. During the second world war it experienced Italian Fascist and Nazi invasions, then both the struggles for liberation and the civil wars leading to the creation of Marshall Tito's Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, within which Slovenia had the status of a socialist republic. During the cold war Yugoslavia resisted both the domination of the Soviet communist block and that of the capitalist west led by the United States, maintaining a non-aligned position along with states such as India and Egypt. Most of Ravnika's architectural production occurred within schemes of modernisation established by a socialist state in which the public sector played a key role in economic planning and technological development but in which there was no dictatorship on matters of architectural aesthetics as was the case in the Soviet Union. While art and architecture were able to flourish with a freedom inconceivable in the communist block, the state was more present in establishing the lines of territorial and social planning than was the case in western Europe. Ravnika lived just long enough to experience the gradual liberalisation of Yugoslavia but also its fragmentation and descent into civil war. By the time he died in 1993, Slovenia had achieved independence as a democratic republic with a strong orientation towards the European Union but with all the risks of capitalist privatisation on the horizon.

The general histories and narratives of modern architecture are far more influenced by geo-political realities than is usually admitted. It was only after Franco's death in 1975 and

Spain's admission to the camp of 'acceptable' democracies that attention was devoted to such enigmatic figures as Alejandro de la Sota (1912-95) who had developed a nuanced modernism full of subtle allusions to the past in the 1950s, sometimes in the service of a right wing, statist model of modernisation (e.g. the Gobierno Civil, Tarragona, 1957). The architecture of Yugoslavia in the same period - that of Ravnika's early maturity - was also ignored in the west but for almost opposite reasons stemming from ideological caricatures of the visual culture of left wing, socialist countries. The avant-gardist prejudices of the 'free world' rejected art forms contaminated in any way by the socialist realism or heavy handed state rhetoric of the communist world, treating them as automatically retrograde in artistic terms. It has been some time since Yugoslavia fell apart and since the Berlin wall came down but still relatively little has been done to accommodate the complexities of modern architectural development in the former 'eastern block'. Non-aligned Yugoslavia offers an interesting exception, a unique, mixed model of modernisation within which a variety of architectural tendencies was able to develop. Atypical figures such as Edvard Ravnika, who in fact avoided state dogmas, still need to be assessed against this background then situated within broader, more international schemes of modern architectural history.

Today there are dangers of another kind which risk distorting the reappraisal of Edvard Ravnika's contribution. The new democratic Slovenia sees itself as part of western Europe. Those who promote free enterprise tend to look back upon the Tito years of Yugoslavia as ones of stifling dictatorship and excessive, centralised state control. They possibly under-rate the progress made by the public sector in education, health and culture during the peaceful years of the Yugoslav consensus, and the efforts at achieving equilibrium between country and city: a balanced form of development now being sacrificed to land speculation and commercialism. Today architectural criticism has all but abandoned the social dimension and looks upon political ideology as an automatic distraction from artistic self expression - an emphasis upon individualism, iconic buildings and art for art's sake which surely says something about free market capitalism. When writing history it is best not to project the assumptions of the present on the past. Edvard Ravnika cannot be severed from the social, political and geographical context in which he worked, even if he did live in tension with some of the architectural norms and political positions of his time. In his best works (and here I think of the Memorial Complex on Rab of 1952-3 in particular) he managed to respond to tragic historical events, to stir existential questions, even to evoke a timeless dimension in powerful abstract forms. The challenge when dealing with a figure like Ravnika is to strike the right balance between his unique artistic contribution and the complex world in which he worked. It is necessary to reconstruct the overlapping territories and shifting boundaries of the past and to situate the architect's work within them, examining buildings and ideas in the light of both modern and earlier traditions.

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Introduction

With the exception of Jože Plečnik's architecture, Slovene architecture is almost unknown in the world, similar to the architecture of ex-Eastern Bloc countries, which is a kind of huge grey spot on the world map of modern art and architecture. Abroad the discovery of Plečnik was largely a consequence of interest in historicisms during the era of post-modernism. This is a kind of paradox for anyone familiar with his architecture. On the other hand, the work of Edvard Ravnikar, the most important representative of Slovene modern architecture, is little known within international professional circles despite the fact that Ravnikar became an undisputed architectural authority for the entire area of Yugoslavia soon after WWII. His biography is distinguished by a series of first prizes in competitions for the most important national projects, together with early realisations that combine the principles of modern architecture with traditional elements of construction, his pioneering role in the development of urban planning, over 200 published articles and, above all, his unique personal and pedagogical charisma.

Ravnikar never paid any attention to his personal promotion or to the documenting and preservation of his work. His designs, sketches, drawings and writing remained where he worked – at his home, at the architecture school, in various architectural offices and design institutions. His work is still not collected and archived in one place. On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of his birth, in December 2007, the Faculty of Architecture prepared an international symposium and exhibition of Ravnikar's work in collaboration with the Ambient architectural office and the Architecture Museum of Ljubljana. This exhibition presented, for the first time, the original designs, drawings, working drawings, models, photographs and paintings kept in the above-mentioned institutions and served as an opportunity to create a monograph of Edvard Ravnikar's life work.

The monograph consists of three parts. The first part is a collection of papers that shed light on Ravnikar's work in the context of 20th century architecture. The second part consists of Ravnikar's most important work, together with photographs, designs and personal sketches accompanied by his own descriptions in cases where they existed or were available. The last part comprises a selection of Ravnikar's texts that mirror the breadth of his interests.

We would like to express our gratitude to the many who helped during the process of publishing this book. Above all we would like to thank architect Majda Kregar, Prof. Ravnikar's ex-student and long-term collaborator, who was most helpful in collecting and documenting the body of his creative output from the Ambient architectural office. Her great engagement, sensitivity and knowledge made possible the presenting of Ravnikar's work to the public, first in the form of an exhibition and now in a monograph.

We would like to thank all those who allowed us access to their photographic archives and made them available for use herein. The greatest part of the photographic material is from the estate of Damjan Gale, which was generously made accessible to us by his widow Zmaga Gale. Special thanks go to Zlata Kališnik for granting us the use of her late husband Janez Kališnik's vast and extremely valuable body of photographic documentation. Part of the material that is kept in the Architecture Museum of Ljubljana was collected and edited by Bogo Zupančič with the assistance of Martina Malešič.

Students of the Ljubljana Faculty of Architecture were also involved in the preparatory work for this monograph. It was Nejc Lebar who carried out the greatest part of the time-consuming work involved in the expert research and gathering of the original archive material and reproducing of the original designs. Andrej Adamič, Miloš Kosec, Vid Kurinčič, Žiga Misjak, Maša Ogrin, Tina Špat and Meta Zupančič were also involved.

With a lot of patience and expertise, graphic designer (and former Ravnikar student) Peter Skalar succeeded in shaping this monography very much in tune with Ravnikar's aesthetic sensibilities.

Anja Planišček took on board the quite thankless task of administrative work, without which this monograph could not have been published.

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Aleš Vodopivec

Rok Žnidaršič

Essays

Aleš Vodopivec

Edvard Ravnikar's Architecture Locally Adjusted Modernism

Jože Plečnik, National and University
Library, Ljubljana

Le Corbusier, Algiers skyscraper,
Ravnikar's drawing, © Fondation Le
Corbusier

"The search for modernity led us to discover our antiquity, the hidden face of the nation."

Octavio Paz¹

In Search of Architectural Identity

After the end of WWI Slovenia was united with other Slavic nations under the joint Yugoslav state for the first time. Throughout the centuries Slovenes had lived in various states, with the majority in the provincial, less developed parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This is why Slovenes believed that with its disintegration, centuries-long struggle against foreign rule had finally come to an end. They were certain that Germanic domination was over, once and for all, and that the break with German culture was final. Clearly the general atmosphere in the nation encouraged architects, too, to search for a Slovene architectural identity. This was all the more the case since until then, building in Slovenia had been entirely under the influence of Vienna and Prague, and mostly in the hands of foreign designers and builders.

The first Slovene School of Architecture became active in Ljubljana in 1921; Ravnikar, however, began his study of architecture in Vienna, which was something he later often reproached himself for. After four years he returned home to continue his studies with Plečnik. After graduating he remained Plečnik's design assistant for two more years and worked on the designs for the National and University Library in Ljubljana. At the end of the 30s his interest in modern art led him to Paris, into Le Corbusier's atelier, where he stayed only a few months due



to the imminent onset of . His were the famous drawings of the Algiers skyscraper, which Le Corbusier did not wish to initial out of his high regard for Ravnikar's virtuosic draughtsmanship.

Although in form Ravnikar's work is hardly reminiscent of Plečnik's architecture at all, it was he who remained the most sensitive and original transmitter of Plečnik's tradition. Ravnikar discovered surprising similarities in Plečnik and Le Corbusier: "We are here talking about the same sacredness of the profession, the same seriousness and persistent unselfishness in the pur-

Edvard Ravnikar, Ossuary for the Fallen in WWI, Žale

Jože Plečnik, St. Michael's Church, Barje

suit of one's goals as well as of the morality arising out of all this; and above all, about the role and value of beauty that an architect should pursue as the final goal while satisfying the essential needs of mankind.”² In his work he united a respect for local building traditions with a belief in the revolutionary principles of modern art and architecture.

In 1946 Ravnikar became a professor at the Ljubljana School of Architecture, already recognisable by Plečnik's uniqueness. Ravnikar often stressed Plečnik's merits in “redirecting Slovene architecture towards the south. Without his work Slovene architecture would not have gained its own characteristic flavour, which also contributes to our cultural physiognomy.”³ He respected Plečnik also because Plečnik taught us to appreciate our cultural values. Plečnik was no believer in national romanticism, which is why he did not favour the attempts to invent a Slovene style. He was searching for that character or expression of architecture that would suit Slovenia: “It is about an expression that can be found everywhere. Just look at a German city, one can tell immediately that it is German, a certain character can be identified at once, which is characteristic for them.”⁴ It is in this light that we can understand Ravnikar's interest in the culturally



specific character of architecture as a kind of continuation of Plečnik's efforts, which, however, in Ravnikar's case were in line with principles of the Modern movement. Ravnikar was striving for architecture that is a unique synthesis of universal principles and regional particularities. In the local building tradition he was not looking for examples of form, but rather for the contemporariness of the traditional construction; he admired its authenticity, its structural sincerity and its spatial logic. He used to point out the elementariness of traditional architecture that is “surprisingly close to the searching in contemporary architecture”.⁵

During the times of Functionalism that did not favour tradition, he used to stress that “we learn from the old”. He was referring above all to the enduring significance of classical architecture, not in the sense of stylistic particularities but rather in that of a thinking and creative discipline based on the classical ideal: “To follow the classical ideal means above all to accept the limitations in favour of quality and less so in favour of quantity – not so much material limitations than those imposed by human thought...”⁶ This is why he maintained that the pioneers of

contemporary architecture, like Loos, Mies, Gropius, Aalto, et.al., were actually classicists, and even Le Corbusier “could not be imagined without a very extensive and thorough knowledge of the laws and rules of the classical ideal, although he applied them in a revolutionary, innovative and avant-garde manner”.⁷

Ravnikar’s interest, or rather, his sensibility for history was extensive and in-depth. He was equally involved in modern architecture and art as he was with its past; and this applies not only to our architectural heritage, but also to the world history of art and culture, to philosophy and to history in general. And last but not least, he was interested also in archaeology, in order to understand the past down to the depths of its oldest layers, which he hoped would help him to explain the logic in the space of today. It was the very thoroughness of the research of space, its physical, formal and cultural particularities, that was for Ravnikar the starting point for the formulation of the appropriate architectural design concept.

In terms of form Ravnikar’s early projects still display similarities with Plečnik’s architecture. His first independent work, the Ossuary for the Fallen in WWI, in the Žale Cemetery (1939),



is obviously modelled on Plečnik’s St. Michael’s church in Barje in terms of the treatment of materials, as well as in the motif of the formal access via staircase that extends the central axis of the composition far beyond the building. Plečnik’s examples can be found also in the Modern Gallery, the construction of which began before WWI and was finished only in 1951, in its classical, axially symmetrical composition and the relief-like treatment of the facade cladding. Due to its long construction period the building already demonstrates traces of the search for a possible synthesis of the classical and the modern.

Ravnikar’s later works are increasingly modern; however, at the same time they also display an expressively southern, Mediterranean character. Local landscape and climatic characteristics, people’s way of life, the logic of traditional construction, the qualities of local materials, etc., are all mirrored in them. In his buildings the living space is always expanding from the interior towards the exterior, towards the outdoors, into the squares, streets, passages, gardens and courtyards. A case in point is Ravnikar’s early design for a group of summer houses in Karst

*Edvard Ravnikar, perspektive sketch of
Hotel Miločer, Montenegro*

(1946-47), which was never built and includes characteristic stone walls around a traditional courtyard, a so-called “borjač”, which serves as protection from the bora wind. On a much larger scale, a similar principle is demonstrated in Ravnikar’s designs for Nova Gorica, which was to be an entirely new, modern city on the Italian border (1948-50) and was obviously influenced by Le Corbusier’s urban planning visions. Ravnikar’s drawing of the main city boulevard shows a spacious urban *parre-terre*, rich with greenery and sunlight, cafe terraces and organised plantations. A decade and a half later he won first prize at the architectural and urban planning competition for the extensive tourist and hotel complex Sv. Štefan - Miločer - Pržno (1964). The starting points for the urban planning concept were the landscape characteristics of Montenegro’s littoral region. The design excels with the preservation and completion of existing plantations of trees and with buildings placed in the space in such a way that their dynamic composition adapts to the articulated topography of the terrain, while at the same time it allows the views of the sea horizon over the greenery. Unfortunately, the only building ever completed was the hotel Maestral in Pržno (1965-71).



The Role of the Modern Movement in Art – the Assertion of the Abstraction

All his life Ravnikar was intensely involved with modern art. For him it represented the thinking and sensory framework for contemporary architecture: “In the past 50 years architecture has been regenerated by shedding all that was inessential. Thus in phase one it recognised merely bare function and bare structure. This would have led to a major impoverishment of its expression and possibly even to a dead end, had it not found an ally in the similar intentions of the fine arts.”⁸

Here Ravnikar was striving towards a resumed synthesis of painting, sculpture and architecture. If the unifying of all visual arts was considered a virtue in Classical, Gothic and Renaissance art, Ravnikar saw Le Corbusier as the herald of such a unity in the modern world. Visual arts experimentation was the basic tool for Ravnikar’s creative work. This was why he always

Edvard Ravnikar, *Mask*, date unknown, mixed technique

Edvard Ravnikar, *untitled*, 1970, guache & collage



painted, experimented with various painting and presentation techniques, studied the work of the world's master painters, sculptors and architects.

During the period 1949–50 he lectured on contemporary art to students of painting and sculpture at the Ljubljana Academy of Fine Arts. However, his view of modern art seemed too revolutionary at the time, which was why after just two years the Academy administration removed his lectures from the curriculum.

The artistic power of the abstract expression of modern art is characteristic above all for Ravnikar's designs of WWII memorial complexes. The cemetery for the internees of the Italian concentration camp Kampor on the island of Rab (1952–53) as well as the hostages' burial grounds in Draga, Begunje, Gornji Ig, etc. are conceived as poetic interventions in the landscape, which stand diametrically opposed to the exceedingly monumental figurality of the National Liberation War memorials of the communist states of the so called Eastern Bloc.

In Yugoslav architecture and fine arts social realism died a relatively quick death; in any case, far earlier than in the rest of the Eastern European countries. The reason for this was the

decline of Soviet influence, which coincided with the infamous conflict between Yugoslavia and Cominform in 1948. And yet it was only towards the end of the 50s that abstract art began to gain importance in Slovene painting and sculpture.

Ravnikar's designs for memorial complexes therefore represent a pioneering work not only in the sense of rebellion against the political direction of the arts, but also in the sense of asserting the role of abstraction in visual arts in Slovenia. As he put it himself, he tried to "transfer the architectural qualities from the decorative and structural elements to the optical ones".⁹ In this way he created an exceptionally rich world of mental associations, metaphors and parables, a kind of meditative walk through the landscape. And, above all, these works by Ravnikar express his firm belief that modern architecture, too, must be connected to the place, the landscape and the cultural tradition.

*Edvard Ravnikar, monument to the
Fallen in National Liberation War,
Vojštica, 1956*



The Meaning of Tradition

The key building essential to an understanding of Ravnikar's architecture is the Municipality Building in Kranj, built in 1960, to date believed to be the most important building of Slovene modern architecture. The building shows a clear deflection from the modernism of international canons, as it expresses a local tradition combined with the principles of modern architecture. Yet this is not a typical modernist building, standing autonomous within the space, but an example of a locally adjusted modernism, of a piece of architecture showing the recognisable cultural and local identity of its surroundings.

The design of this building shows Plečnik's influence, as well as that of Semper's theory of "the skin", or "the coat" and Le Corbusier's influence, i.e., that of Anglo-French tradition, which prioritises the authority of the structure and of the authenticity of the building material.

A highly original structure, articulated in 3D is the guiding principle of the architectural concept and the appearance of the building. The visible structure dictates the proportions, the rhythm and the scale. The building has a clear, regular geometrical composition. Its façade is axially symmetrical and is as such an original modernist paraphrasing of a classical temple. The main volume of the building is raised and above it hovers a roof structure in the form of a folded plate. The weight of the roof is carried down towards four slabs placed on the exterior of the building via two V-shaped beams. This results in an entire floor that is free of any supports and as such enables the three halls to be elegantly transformed into one volume when needed.

With his buildings Ravnikar always shaped also the exterior public space. This is why also here, in spite of modest proportions, he decided to extend the brief into a number of buildings that enclose a small square: a four-storey annex to the existing housing block, a ground-level-only cafe building, the central Municipality Building and, on the other side, a three-floor office wing connecting the new complex with the old municipality offices. In this way a so-called piazzetta was formed, the visual axis of which is determined by the Municipality Building. The tent-like roof that covers the independent volume of the central building actually delineates a part of the city centre square and by doing so elevates it into a kind of symbol of a communal house, a communal home. The development of the project from the competition entry stage to its realisation shows Ravnikar's interest in Scandinavian architecture and in Aalto's work in par-

Edvard Ravnikar, the Municipality Building, Kranj, site model

Edvard Ravnikar, the Municipality Building, Kranj



ticular. This can be seen above all in the concept of the square and in the way the open spaces connect as well as in the treatment of the interior and in certain architectural details.

The Municipality Building in Kranj demonstrates all the basic characteristics of modernist architecture: volume instead of weight, regularity instead of symmetry, the absence of any decoration while at the same time remaining loyal to classical architecture. And what made it stand out even more at the time, within its contemporary concept and modern structure traces of traditional architecture could be found: a ridged roof, logical structure, use of local materials, modest and well-considered details, simple organisation of interior and restrained solemnity. In Ravnikar's words: "The essence of it all is the hall and its interior that are visible from the square; the roof has the same importance as the formal hat that goes with the Sunday best, the entrance door is heavy, etc., which all amounts to practical, usable forms with symbolic meaning."¹⁰ Already forgotten and freshly rediscovered historical motifs, structural principles and spatial concepts in combination with modernist principles create a piece of architecture that is exceptionally rooted in its surroundings.

This design demonstrates just how complex Ravnikar's relationship to tradition was. It is best described in the words of T.S. Elliot: "Tradition is a matter of much wider significance. It cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour. It involves, in the first place, the historical sense...; and the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence... This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional. And it is at the same time what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place

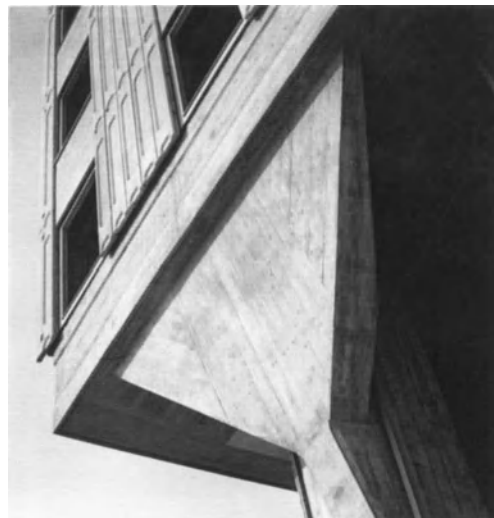


in time, of his own contemporaneity."¹¹ Similarly, Ravnikar maintains that "tradition is no sterile perseverance, but rather a certain flexible connection that searches in the past for points of reference rather than for dried-out examples".¹² And, later: "tradition is an arrow pointing towards the future... Architectural thinking needs to recognise tradition, what came before; however, seen through one's own eyes."

Poetics of Structure

In terms of development and economy, Slovenia was the most successful republic of ex-Yugoslavia. In line with the then political ideology it was industry above all else that was being actively developed, while farming and traditional crafts were dying out. Craftsmanship-based construction that had been encouraged and cultivated also by Plečnik, disappeared almost entirely after WWII. However, the local construction industry was poorly developed, and foreign markets were out of reach. This called for extreme technological inventiveness and innovation that became one of the unique merits of Slovene architecture of the time.

Ravnikar was excited by demanding, modern structures, while at the same time he researched building technologies that were available in and appropriate for Slovenia. Time and again he was testing the properties and abilities of local materials as well as the options for the industrial treatment of traditional building materials. When quarries were being abandoned as they ceased to be lucrative, Ravnikar began to develop thin stone cladding (the Revolution



Square, 1960-82). When brickworks were out of work, he demonstrated the endless possibilities of using face brick (Ferantov vrt housing, 1964-76 and hotel Creina, 1968-70). When recession hit the Slovene ironworks, he was the first to use rusty steel (Corten, Globus Department Store, 1969-73). He managed to transform the material modesty of circumstances into recognisable and distinctive values in his architecture.

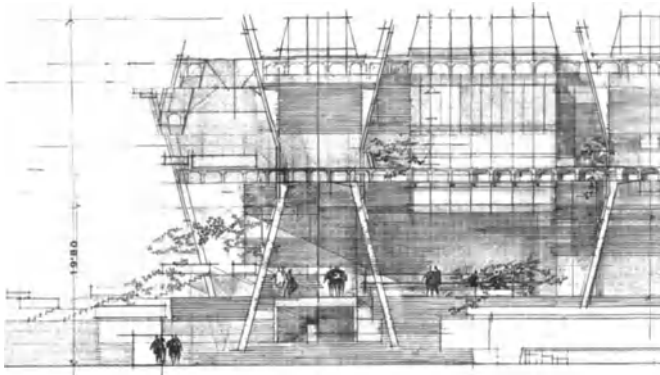
This is already quite evident even in those works that were built at the beginning of the 60s: Ljudska pravica Offices and Printworks (1958-61), two Narodna banka branches, Kranj and Celje (1959-61 and 62) and a few years later, the Faculty for Structural Engineering in Ljubljana (1960-66). By using the materials in their raw, untreated state, such as poured concrete, glass, cladding from relief concrete plates or plastic, he proved the abilities of modern architecture, which can overcome an otherwise limited choice of materials using daring structure, extremely simple details and inventive architectural design.

It is the structural logic that determines the concept of all these buildings. The appearance of the building is based on the contrast between the load-bearing ground floor and the carried

*Edvard Ravnikar, Skopje Town Hall,
Macedonia*

*The towers of The Revolution Square
during construction*

volume of the raised floors. While the ground floor is characterised by accentuated load-bearing structural elements, this is contrasted by the central volume of the building that is enveloped in a coat of geometrically ordered composition, the façade rhythm of which is dictated by the supporting structure. The envelope, or the coat, of the building expresses its inner character, usually the lamella layout of office floors. In the Faculty for Structural Engineering Ravnikar expresses the division between the central wing with communication from the teaching staff studios on the east side and higher levels with lecture rooms on the west side of the building. Above the highest floor there is always an accentuated cornice, a kind of vertical conclusion of the building. This is Ravnikar's interpretation of the traditional roof and often the most dynamically shaped element of his architecture. The roof over the Narodna banka building in Celje (1962) is an exception. Ravnikar wrote that the basic starting point of the brief was to accomplish the new building being adapted to the existing tissue of the city: "This is why the roof, which was the most problematic part in terms of urban planning, follows the roof ridges of the buildings



on the main square."¹³ In this way the rational, modern structure remains tripartite in a classical way.

Functional layout, a clear, geometrically organised architectural concept with an accentuated structure that is articulated in 3D and that determines the position and the shape of even the most modest of details, the use of local materials, etc. are the characteristic elements of Ravnikar's architecture that can be seen already in these works and that he continued to develop also later on.

Ravnikar understood architecture as a result of the construction process, its tectonic logic and not as a form a priori. The structure determines the entire concept of the building: the design and the organisation of spaces, the module, the rhythm, the scale and therefore also the external expression of the building. This is why his architecture is an indivisible whole comprised of the load-bearing structure, the usability of the building and its appearance. It is in this very unity that the poetics of Ravnikar's architecture is based.

In the 60s Ravnikar created a number of projects that excel in their exceptionally expressive

The two towers of The Revolution Square, marking the "Ljubljana gate"

Edvard Ravnikar, The Revolution Square, Ljubljana, competition entry model

structural concepts: the winning design for the Skopje Town Hall (1966), the competition entry for the Communist party of Macedonia Central Committee Building (1966), the international competition entry for the new city centre of Espoo in Finland (1967, Honourable Mention), etc.

Although Ravnikar maintained that usability is a pre-condition of contemporary architecture, he was in no way a representative of the orthodox Functionalism. He understood Modernism as the direct heritage of the social ideas of the English art reformists, Ruskin and Morris. Therefore, his understanding of the syntagm "Less is more" was not that leading to the impoverishment of architecture in terms of its shape, rather it was the social obligation of an architect to provide, with smaller means, a decent living environment for the widest circle of people. In Ravnikar's opinion bare functionality without any lyrical component does not suffice in architecture. However, this does not mean that an architect may abolish the principles of functionality that are the basis for the socio-ethical qualities of the profession.

He understood architecture to be everyone's basic need. This is where his interest in the behaviour, habits and traditions of the man of the street stemmed from. What he considered to be the social mission of architecture is eloquently illustrated by his thought: "Discussions about the most mundane matters of life are always transferred to the high level, from which, however, the view of day-to-day issues is difficult. This serves the spiritual needs rather than those of the day-to-day life".¹⁴

Dialogue between the New and the Old

For Ravnikar, to build within the city environment meant above all the challenge of how to harmonise the new, modern architecture with the existing building structures. He did not believe in self-sufficient, or, in his words, "ego-centric" architecture. In 1960 he won the competition for the Revolution Square (nowadays the Republic Square) in Ljubljana that was to shape



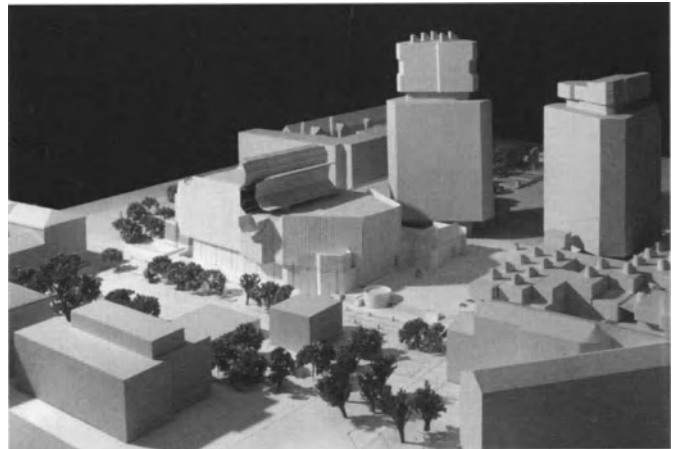
the new city centre. At the same time this complex was to symbolically mark the space of the then republic capital with the buildings of administration and executive institutions, with a monumental square and a monument to the revolution. With the well-considered placement of three independent buildings, Ravnikar solved a complex situation of the wider area in which the historical complex of the one-time monastery with the church on the one side was to be combined with the pre-WWII housing on the other. Ravnikar placed two tall towers to mark

the “Ljubljana gate” (throughout history this name denotes the particular location of Ljubljana between two hills) as a kind of symbolic portal within which the monument to the revolution was to be placed. He created a kind of barrier between the monastery complex and the new monumental square by placing a long, low rectangular block between the two. In terms of space he thus closed off the geometrically irregular composition of the monastery buildings while with the same single stroke he created three smaller squares of varied characters and scale.

However, soon after the beginning of construction, political and economic developments meant that the clients for certain buildings changed. Due to a lack of funds political ambitions had to make space for offices and shops. Construction of the entire project even came to a complete standstill for a few years, which resulted, among other things, in the changes to the original urban planning and architectural concept. The monument to the revolution was moved to the edge of the complex, the dominant verticals were lowered considerably and obtained new vertical accents, while at their feet, ground-level-only buildings appeared that changed the spatial geometry of the original concept most radically, due to the demands of the new clients. Regularity and simplicity had to give way to a more complex design of the city *parre-terre*.

While Ravnikar’s initial compositions were entirely symmetrical, he gradually moved towards more dynamic ones as can be seen from the design of the cladding of both towers as well as from the lower and horizontally accentuated Maximarket department store building.

The biggest changes, however, were needed once the majority of the square had already been completed. This was when intentions to build a cultural and congress centre in this place emerged, later taking the name Cankarjev dom (1977-83). Ravnikar adapted to the new conditions using the so-called “open design process”, which enabled him to follow changes to the brief and investment as he went along. All this demanded extreme organisational, architectural and structural engineering efforts, as parts of the extensively planned auditoria and auxiliary spaces



had to be built under already constructed structures. However, this was the only way in which the balanced proportions of the volumes above ground, on the square, could be preserved. Ravnikar envisaged a large reception hall with the main cultural centre portal above ground, whereas he placed the majority of the complex on the basement levels, accessible to visitors via the central shopping street.

Despite all of the changes Ravnikar managed to preserve the main characteristics and quali-

*Edvard Ravnikar, competition entry for
Ruissalo Island in Finland*

*Edvard Ravnikar, Regulation plan for
Ljubljana, competition entry*

ties of the original design for the Republic Square. By placing the three key buildings, the two verticals and the lying horizontal, he achieved a clear and legible composition of the built volumes, while at the same time enabling an unobstructed flow of the open space in all directions and successfully combining the new with the monastery and church complex.

Ravnikar demonstrated his respect for the historical turn of the century buildings also later when designing the Ferantov vrt Residential Complex (1964-76), right around the corner from the Republic Square. This design points out the qualities of the traditional open spaces within residential areas – courtyards on the one side and streets on the other. He took on board the existing street grid as the starting point for the placement of the new buildings along the edges. Thus he created a contemporary interpretation of residential buildings around an inner courtyard which is, in this case, big enough to be a sunny, green and well-aired space that manages to offer, above all, also peace, despite the fact that the site is located in the very heart of the city. The symbiosis between the historical buildings and the new is most obvious from the corner



building of Agroprogres. Here the entirely modernist building lives under a pitched roof that was extended above it from the neighbouring older existing buildings.

Ravnikar's interest in archaeology was responsible for his design of the building that concludes the Fernatov vrt complex along Slovenska Street. It is an original reminiscence of the antique forum: the entire building is supported by only six supports in order to enable the presentation of the Roman walls with basilica and rotunda within the art gallery on the level of the antique city. Also worthy of note is the indication of the one-time volume of the rotunda created on the façade of the new building.

Urban Planning

In his design studio at the School of Architecture Ravnikar completed a number of urban planning designs, regional plans, studies of land usage and population distribution, traffic studies, regulation and urban planning designs for cities, settlements and villages as well as competition entries for the regulation of city quarters and the design of public spaces.

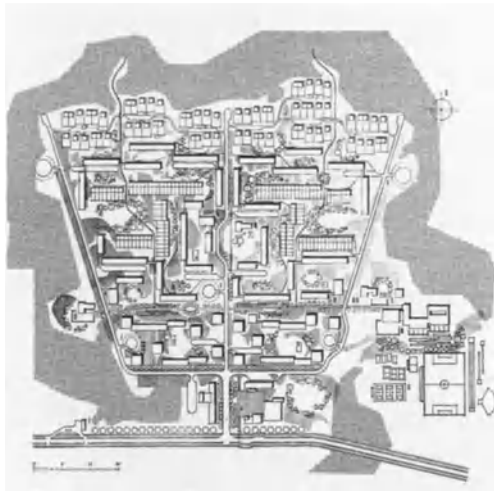
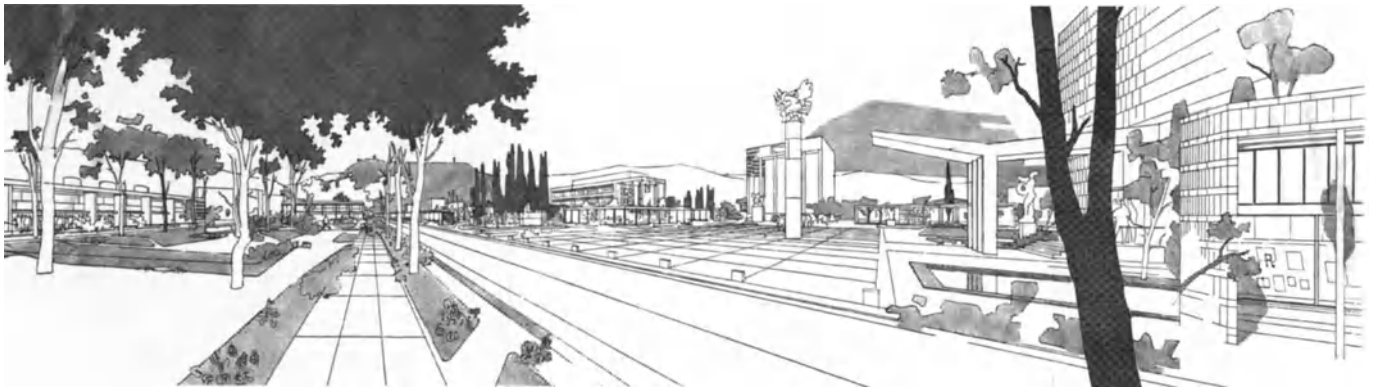
The list of his urban planning designs reveals that Ravnikar did not consider architecture and urban planning separate entities. Already in his early texts he wrote that buildings and cities

Edvard Ravnikar, perspektive sketch of the main road in Nova Gorica

Edvard Ravnikar, Ideal neighbourhood for 5,000 people

are constructed according to the same principles. Later on, one of his thoughts that he often repeated during the 70s and the 80s became proverbial; namely, that Ljubljana in the year 2000 would not be such as written down or drawn up in this or that urban planning document, but such as would be built by then with each and every single building. For him a beautiful city was primarily a combination of high quality pieces of architecture.

In this regard it is therefore understandable that he did not consider a modern urban designer to be a demiurge who solves the contradictions of the contemporary world. This is why, in spite of his admiration, Ravnikar was also critical of Le Corbusier. He considered him “a revolutionary who negates, tears down, shows new ways and generally behaves like a prophet”.¹⁵ Ravnikar did not take on this role, as he did not consider urban planning as a searching for the final, ideal form of the city, but above all the regulation of its development. He shunned the academic science of urban planning that did not address the day-to-day reality. “Architects have always been obsessed with “making” urban planning, instead of finding its meaning.”¹⁶ The



reality of life, according to Ravnikar, cannot be an obstacle for urban planning development, but rather the initial motivation and meaning for the creation of new qualities in space.

His competition entries for the architectural concept of respective buildings time and again point out the issues of spatial context. In this way Ravnikar tried to prove that no building can be considered separately from its wider context, but rather is always a part of the area under consideration. Thus he would often come up with entirely new and unexpected views and proposals with regards to the competition brief, which often proved troublesome for juries as well

as for clients. Many of his competition entries were therefore awarded special prizes outside the competition.

Ravnikar's competition entry for the new regulation for Ljubljana in 1940 that was chosen as the basis for further city regulations brought the first elements of a more modern Le Corbusian urban planning: the division of the city into zones of housing, industry, greenery, the city centre and above all, the accentuation of the importance of road and railway communications.

In 1948, soon after the end of WWII, Ravnikar won the commission for the urban planning of an entirely new, modern city that was to be built on the Slovene - Italian border, as Gorica had been ceded to the Italian side. Like Berlin, however, in keeping with our more modest circumstances, this was an opportunity for the new socialist order to show the West "something big, beautiful and proud, something that would shine across the border".¹⁷ Contrary to the classicist concept of East Berlin, Ravnikar decided in favour of more progressive urban design principles that emanated the progressiveness and optimism of modernism. He determined the starting points of the urban development by the positioning of the central activities and the main boulevard, which was to become the backbone of the city. However, Ravnikar ultimately managed to design only a few housing blocks, while responsibility for the other new-builds was transferred to the offices of local architects. The quality of architecture became diluted through designs that were increasingly less loyal to the original urban design concept. Ravnikar's belief that architecture is at least as important for the quality of a city as is urban planning was probably further confirmed as a result of his bitter experience with Nova Gorica.

Ravnikar's competition entry for the regulation of Ruissalo Island in Finland (1953) was awarded 3rd prize "owing to its general concept and artistic approach, based on the intensive aesthetic experience of the space and change of time".¹⁸ It should be noted that Alvar Aalto was among the jury members.

Ravnikar's proposal for an ideal neighbourhood of 5000 people (1958) that included various types of housing, a wide variety of public, semi-public and private open spaces, the separation of pedestrian paths from motorised traffic, shops, cultural and business premises, a primary school and a crèche, recreational areas, etc., has been used as the model for the design of housing neighbourhoods throughout Slovenia for decades.

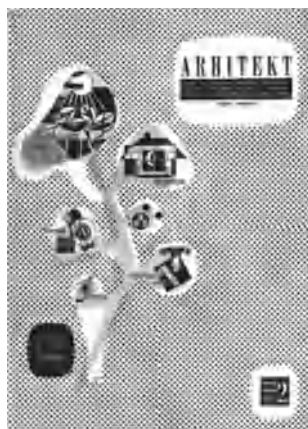
In 1964 Ravnikar won an "ex aequo" prize at the international competition for the regulation of the Tronchetto area in the northern part of Venice. Similarly to Aalto and other modern architects Ravnikar admired Venice as a symbol of the cultural and urban qualities of the Mediterranean. His competition entry showed a strategy for the possible revitalisation of the dying city in three stages and in time intervals of seven to ten years. The final aim was to enable Venice to reclaim its original character as a lagoon city connected to the mainland only via sea traffic. By moving the railway and road terminal onto the mainland, vast areas of land would be freed up for reclamation by cultural and research institutions, an international university etc., all of which would bring new vitality to the city. The architectural part of the entry excels with hovering spherical roofs that float freely and wave-like over the city and its content. Some years later drawing work on detail designs was interrupted for political reasons.

The competition entry for the reconstruction of Skopje after the earthquake (1966), too, takes pride in its modern urban planning concept, stemming from the characteristic living conditions and the role and importance of a capital city. According to Ravnikar, he was motivated by the historical buildings and spaces, people's traditions and habits, climatic characteris-

tics as well as the modest financial and technological possibilities. The overriding starting point for the new interventions was the old part of the city, around which new radial belts of buildings were envisaged that were to provide comfort for everyday activities even in extreme summer temperatures.

Writing

Just like Le Corbusier, Ravnikar, too, was extremely active in the dissemination of his ideas. He believed architecture to be everyone's existential and spiritual need. This was why he saw the contemporary architect in the role of a socially engaged intellectual, who made his views known to the general and professional public with the help of the daily press, lectures, exhibitions, etc. He was certain that architecture could not be understood if viewed "indifferently mechanically



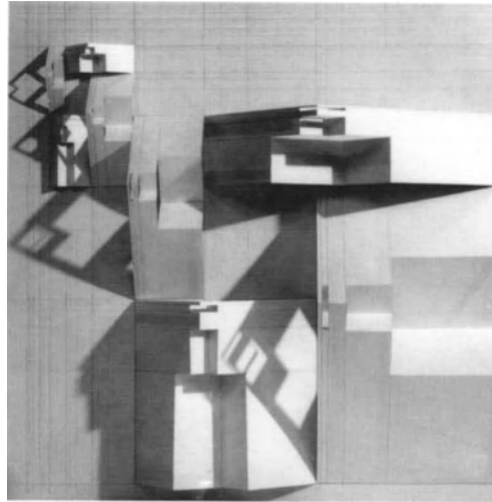
and without inner effort”¹⁹ Although he did not enjoy discussing his own work, he wrote incessantly – in order to facilitate the viewing and the “reading” of architecture also in this way, with words. It was his initiative to start with the publication of “Arhitekt” magazine in 1950, in which he regularly published and also served as editor for some years.

Ravnikar's bibliography is extensive and comprises theoretical papers, essays on contemporary art and architecture, historical reviews and evaluations, design reports, commentaries on current events within the profession and society at large, reviews, interviews, etc. The mere breadth of the subjects covered indicates that his was no classical architectural theory that could be created separately from the architect's work, but rather a clarification of his architectural views as well as the engaged and often polemical discussions that accompanied his creative endeavours. Ravnikar used to write down his ideas on architecture that clarified also his built works in the same way as he himself understood the history and critique of architecture: “in the literary sense of the word – what else but history and critique of the idea of architecture can the history of architecture and critique of architecture be?”²⁰

Ravnikar's Teaching

Ravnikar did not leave his mark on Slovene architecture only with his built work. His influence can be felt also in the work of his students, even in the architecture that is still being created today. These works display no formal similarities, which is something that often drew

criticism in connection with Plečnik's school; instead they all reveal the obvious expression of related architectural principles or, even better put, of recognisable architectural discipline. Just like Plečnik's design studio, Ravnikar's design studio was the kind of true architecture school that is today almost extinct the world over, one where the professor was present in the studio daily and could therefore direct students' work as they went along. Ravnikar described Plečnik's school as follows: "A young person went to learn with someone they had respect for as an architect... This means, they went to someone who had personality. Plečnik would work with students day in and day out and in this way, created some degree of an illusion, that they did the work themselves, which was very noble. Plečnik just led their hand and followed it."²¹



In contrast to Plečnik's school, which was based above all on the teacher's genius, Ravnikar's school was systematic, directed at the research of architecture and open to the events in the world. It reflected the breadth of Ravnikar's intellectual horizons, his interest not only in the profession but also for current events the world over, for art, philosophy, history, etc. Ravnikar's school was an original laboratory of architecture, urban planning and design, where the most varied of projects connected to the living issues of the day were worked on.

There was a particular atmosphere in the studio, one somewhat socio-critical. Ravnikar's seminar managed to plant seeds of doubt as regards the institutionalised method of solving the burning issues of individuals and society as a whole. He pointed out that the architectural profession should feel obliged to provide help above all to those that need it most. He opened students' eyes to other ways of addressing the existential issues people struggled with.

Rather than teaching architectural form, Ravnikar taught the discipline of thought, the approach and the method of architectural creation. For him architecture was the result of life philosophy, or, as he would say: "Any architect of some standing must be a philosopher; and

this can only be if he has arrived at his views of life"²². This was why his seminar was above all a school of thinking about what architecture was, what its role in the contemporary world was, and what it could contribute towards a better future.

As early as 1960 Ravnikar was striving to reform the study of architecture, working to ensure that graduates would, apart from achieving professional qualifications, also obtain "a well-rounded knowledge of construction technology, a greater ability to analyse a plan in terms of sociology, economy and function, as well as to be able to consider aesthetic issues critically and historically, which is with us completely neglected and which is what clarifies notions and thinking in architecture in a major way"²³. This was the spirit in which he alone conceived a



new curriculum for the study of architecture, the so-called "B Stream", intended to familiarise students with the basics of architectural culture already in the first year, as modelled on the Bauhaus. However, due to the opposition of many teachers, this reformed branch of study was scrapped just two years later.

It is a unique paradox that the 60s, when Ravnikar's school was at its peak, probably represent the only period in which any discussion of Slovene architecture is truly justified. Namely, Slovene architecture is a very heterogeneous mosaic of all kinds of work, which is understandable in view of the geographical, cultural and climatic diversity of the country. This is why the expression "Slovene architecture" may mean no more than the work of Slovene architects or indeed, architecture built in Slovenia. However, it was Ravnikar and his school who, for the first time, created architecture that connected our building traditions with the principles of modern architecture with clearly related starting points. This is why this architecture expressively reacts to the specificities of place, which so widely varies from Karst to Prekmurje, and from the Alps to Primorje.

Footnotes

- 1 Octavio Paz, In Search of the Present; Nobel Lecture, December 8, 1990
- 2 Ravnikar, E.: Le Corbusier (1887-1965), Naši razgledi, Ljubljana 1965 (11.9.), No. 17, p. 355
- 3 Ravnikar, E.: Arhitekt Jože Plečnik 76-letnik, Slovenski poročevalec IX, Ljubljana 1948 (24.1.), No. 20
- 4 Grabrijan, Dušan: Plečnik in njegova šola, Obzorja, Maribor 1968, p.76
- 5 Ravnikar, E.: Sedem naglavnih grehov naše arhitekture, Sodobnost, Ljubljana 1963, No. 10, p. 924
- 6 Ravnikar, E.: Razmišljanje ob Omahnovi knjigi, AB št.30-31, Ljubljana, 1976, p.7
- 7 ibidem
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William J. R. Curtis

Abstraction and Representation: The Memorial Complex at Kampor, on the Island of Rab (1952-3) by Edvard Ravnikar

“Abstract art at its base is the result of a kind of crystallization process. Perhaps that is why it can be grasped only intuitively, though in and beyond the work of art there are constructive thoughts and elements of human tragedy.” *Alvar Aalto*¹

The Memorial Complex at Kampor on the island of Rab off the coastline of Croatia was designed by Edvard Ravnikar in 1952-3 as both a war cemetery and official state monument. It contains the graves of prisoners of war who lost their lives in an Italian Fascist concentration camp built nearby in 1942. With its rough stone walls, its sequence of horizontal platforms, its low lines of graves, sliced off columns, vertical stone slabs and ceremonial route, the Memorial



Memorial Complex at Kampor, Rab designed by Edvard Ravnikar (1952-3). Early photographs showing: (right) view towards the north west and the sea, with entrance platform, sliced columns and 'funerary urn' in the foreground, rows of graves, vertical 'obelisks' or 'stelae', and vaulted Museum in the background; (centre) receding perspective of different sized 'stelae'; (left) view with the smallest 'stela' in foreground fusing with largest one in background to read as a single vertical line cutting the horizon.

Complex develops an architecture of restrained monumentality. It is both a symbolic landscape and a city of the dead. The visitor moves gradually across the site from the entrance gate by means of a descending stone path which cranks to the left towards its end, revealing a low vaulted structure in stone, a primary form with vaguely sacral associations. But throughout the scheme direct reference to the imagery of particular religions is assiduously avoided. It should not be forgotten that this is a secular war cemetery conceived in the context of the post-war Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.²

Early photographs of the Memorial Complex at Kampor, taken in the years immediately after the project was completed, reveal the stark anatomy of the scheme; the rows of parallel graves, the rubble enclosure walls, the precisely cut slabs and cylinders in local stone, the processional route proceeding south-east to north-west, from land to sea. In these images time seems to have stopped. A strong Mediterranean light bathes the forms and the architect's intentions shine through with clarity. The complex is seen as a geometrically controlled landscape with a clear overall hierarchy. The vertical objects in the scheme seem to beckon to the horizon and to invite in the surrounding landscape. They also introduce compressed perspectives and visual tensions. With its stern masonry, horizontal platforms and processional structure, the

Memorial Complex at Kampor, entry platform with rows of graves in the background. The first column is incised with the arms of Croatia, the second one with those of Slovenia.

Memorial Complex suggests a field set aside for ritual. It is as if Ravnikar had distilled and transformed an ancient ruin then recast it in terms of modern architecture.³

When one visits the Memorial Complex today, the long views to the sea and the horizon are obscured by overgrown trees, but the atmosphere of the place is highly charged. To enter this precinct on a beautiful island in the Adriatic is like penetrating a mythical world. The visitor is steered through a series of spaces and moods, some of them inward looking, others expanding towards the surroundings. The experience of nature is heightened by means of carefully controlled views. The Memorial Complex supplies a sequence of echo chambers which encourage meditation upon death, loss and tragedy, even as they intimate the possibility of a more hopeful future for society. Architecture here supplies a framework for remembrance and catharsis. By means of an intense abstraction, Ravnikar succeeds in fusing modern and ancient forms while touching the observer at subliminal levels.

The Memorial Complex on Rab marks the spot of an informal burial ground where many of the victims of the nearby Italian concentration camp were buried. The architecture sublimates



this terrible past, yet still evokes its horror. Arguably the parallel stone burial slabs allude to the regimental rows of tents or huts, while the oval, metallic discs on stems over each individual grave in the collective framework, recall the identification tags that prisoners were obliged to wear. The structure by the entrance, especially on its street façade, has a markedly fortified appearance, not unlike a bunker. Recent research has revealed that Ravnikar's ideas for the filigree metal gate at the entrance originally included an aperture for looking at the horizon in the distance, not unlike a machine gun sight. The gate itself may perhaps be read as a perforated, semi-transparent version of a prison door. In the Memorial Complex, Ravnikar seems to oscillate back and forth between dark and light, despair and hope, enclosure and expansion. The power of his forms relies in part upon this tense recognition of the interplay between present beauty and past evil.⁴

While the Memorial Complex at Rab permits and encourages private grief and reflection, it is also a public, communal work and, in a deep sense, a political one. Most of the prisoners of war who died in the Rab camp were Slovenes from the vicinity of Ljubljana or Croats from areas around Rijeka; there were also Jews from various national backgrounds. In the post-war federation of Yugoslavia both Slovenia and Croatia had the status of political entities – they were de-

Memorial Complex at Kampor, central street showing angled masonry and central groove for drainage, with graves on each side.

financed as socialist republics - and their emblems appear engraved into the stone of the sliced-off columns on the entrance platform of the Kampor Memorial Complex on Rab. At the other end of the scheme beyond the curved Museum there is a vertical stone slab with attached metal tags commemorating the Jews. Ravnikaŕ avoided direct narrative in his design but still had the job of giving shape to the aspirations of the state and to the official version of events. As a Slovene he may have felt a particular sympathy with this project when he was first approached by the 'Society of Slovenian Servicemen', a committee of Partisans, to design an appropriate memorial cemetery. The overall themes of the Memorial Complex have to do with the celebration of the ideals of the new Yugoslavia which rose from the ashes after the war. In effect, those who lost their lives in the fight against Fascism were here inserted into a larger 'official' national narrative: sacrifice for the higher ideal of a more just, socialist society.

It could be argued that monuments have always idealized and simplified complex and contradictory historical realities. Post-war socialist Yugoslavia under the leadership of Marshall Tito needed to integrate a multiplicity of Balkan fragments, internal and external conflicts,



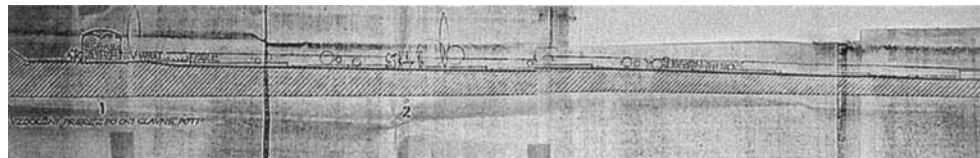
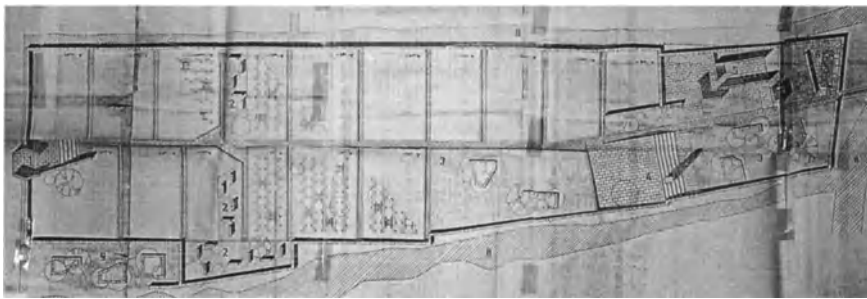
contrasting national ambitions, diverse political identifications, religions and historical identities. State propaganda of the early 1950s emphasised the secular unity of the larger nation: the Yugoslav Federation. On Rab, Ravnikaŕ looked beyond the ideological imperatives and passing agendas of his own time, and sought out more enduring, epic forms. He avoided facile imagery, seeking instead to embed meaning in the expressive structure of his work. Abstraction permitted Ravnikaŕ to suggest things without declaring them openly, even to touch upon several levels of association simultaneously. Ravnikaŕ's Memorial Complex eventually included the obligatory statue of the patriotic soldier executed in a 'Socialist Realist' mode, but this was several years after the inauguration of the project and the figure was kept outside the main enclosure; it is seen as one approaches across the fields in the direction of the entrance. For the rest, Ravnikaŕ's work may be seen as a reaction against the standardized iconographic formulae and heavy state propaganda of much Yugoslav funerary design of the post-war period: "there were already enough monuments showing horribly deformed figures and Partisan martyrs."⁵ The aim was to invent a modern monumentality avoiding excesses of rhetoric while incorporating a greater complexity and universality of meaning.⁶

In Ravnikaŕ's case this meant working with basic and essential architectural ideas: walls,

Memorial Complex at Kampor,
conceptual design, site plan and section,
Edvard Ravnikar, 1953.

openings, platforms, slabs, a procession, controlled views. It also meant using light, shade, proportion, material and scale to conjure an emotional reaction in the observer. Architecture is above all a matter of relationships, and in this project space itself is modulated and charged with atmosphere. Movement is central to the concept and the project is masterly in the way that it draws the visitor from one point to the next, establishing an ever-changing dialogue between natural and artificial worlds. Ravnikar avoids clumsy, retardataire images, and relies upon an underlying order to guide the human figure and to evoke states of mind. There are no direct historical references, but the past is present in a deeper sense. Basic types such as the platform, the ceremonial gateway or the ritual space with columns, are here transformed. Without being ponderous, Ravnikar achieves *gravitas*. His architecture works along a knife edge between the weight and mass of traditional masonry construction, and the slenderness and planarity of modern architecture. While his architecture impresses with its intense materiality, its ambitions lie ultimately in an immaterial realm.

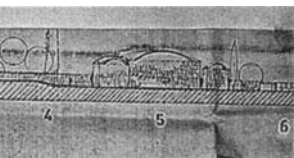
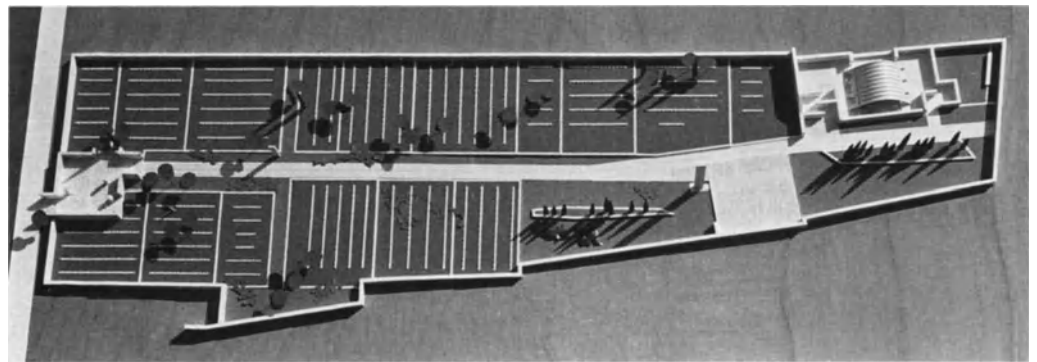
At Rab, Ravnikar has organised the scheme as a processional route or *promenade architectu-*



rale. The term comes from Le Corbusier with whom Ravnikar worked briefly in the late 1930's, and it implies the dimension of time in architectural experience. The moment that the visitor to the Memorial Complex opens the screen-like metal gate, he is drawn into the spatial dynamics of the scheme. Ahead stands a massive stone cylinder on a receding base, an object vaguely suggesting an Antique funerary urn. This contains samples of soil gathered from the points of origin of prisoners buried in the cemetery. A powerful form in itself, this symbolic object is framed by an opening cut in the wall behind it. Visible through the same opening to the right of the urn, but at an uncertain distance in the background, is a vertical slice of stone. This proves to be angled slightly in anticipation of the change of direction in the path at the other end of the scheme. In the days before the cemetery became overgrown it would have been possible to perceive the giant 'obelisk' or 'stèle' in the distance directly behind the smaller one. They would have been telescoped together to read as a single vertical accent cutting the horizon: a line of liberation between sky and sea in the distance. The background would have been 'flattened' in Ravnikar's carefully controlled view, as if in a picture with a reversed perspective. At Rab, the architect fused two conceptions of space, one from the perspective tradition, the other from Cubism and abstract art.⁷

Memorial Complex at Kampor, site model as built.

Thus the architecture itself immediately spells out some of its main themes, only to deny them, for there is no direct way down into the cemetery along this visual axis. Instead, the visitor is drawn along a diagonal to the left by the two sliced off columns with delicate fluting, one narrower than the other, receding in perspective. The one in the foreground bears the arms of Croatia, the one in the background those of Slovenia, and these are subtly incised in the stone. The cylindrical forms suggest abstracted versions of classical columns and they have an immediate physical impact. The visitor is deflected towards a low stone bench in an opening in the left side wall, with an alluring view of the landscape beyond. The bench is a strong sculptural statement in and of itself, and suggests an archaic, Mediterranean form. Possibly too it alludes to an anvil and to the biblical injunction in favour of peace: “beating swords into ploughshares”.⁸ From here one can see down the main route through yet another opening. The side rims and central drainage groove of the stone path draw the eye towards a third ‘stele’ in the middle distance. It is an inviting perspective and one descends the steps into the main burial ground. In the subtlest manner the visitor has been shifted from the gateway axis to the primary axis of the scheme.



At Rab the local stone is used in ways which underline the main themes of the design. The principal walls of the scheme are rough-hewn, thick and traditional in their construction, and rustic in their effect. But the ends of the walls are usually treated to precisely cut masonry with a diagonal recess and tapered end, so that the walls themselves are ‘read’ and experienced as being much thinner than they actually are. This distinctive angular detail is often used on each side of an opening or entryway in a way that suggests concavity and invites the human figure to move through. The relationship between space and form is thus rendered active. It is felt physically and is sensed through empathy. In other places, the angled masonry is employed vertically, so providing horn-like profiles which frame and capture the view. This diagonal shape (used in the bench near the entrance) provides a curiously primitive feeling, and yet serves to dematerialise the masonry in a modern way. Later in life Ravnika would have recourse to a similar configuration on a large scale, notably in the diagonally sliced skyscrapers forming a sort of colossal portico to the Revolution (now Republic) Square Complex (1961-83) in the modern part of Ljubljana.

One cannot forget that Ravnika was a student of Jože Plečnik, and thus heir to a highly sophisticated culture of masonry construction rooted in, among other things, the writings

Italian concentration camp at Kampor, island of Rab, 1942-3, known officially as 'Campo di concentramento per internati civili di Guerra - Arbe'. Photograph showing valley with tents and huts, probably taken in 1943.

of the 19th century theorist Gottfried Semper, but evident above all in Plečnik's own complex metaphorical vocabulary with its numerous allusions to the origins of architecture.⁹ Ravnikar inherited much from this mentor, including a desire to transform the past and to fuse the forms of diverse civilizations in a new symbolic language. At Rab, Ravnikar uses 'basic elements' such as platforms, columns, walls and openings, in a way that oscillates continually between common, vernacular usage, and monumental form. Great attention is given to joints, textures and contrasts of stone finishes. For example, the main path is detailed with diagonal paving to suggest movement, while the central channel is rougher to give a primitive, 'natural' feeling to the stonework and to make the rain water ripple when it runs off. There is the suggestion of an ancient 'sacred way', or even of a river: a latter-day version, perhaps, of the River Styx, associated in Antiquity with death.

The Memorial Complex at Rab stands in a beautiful Adriatic landscape and it is hard to imagine that during the period between July 1942, and September 1943, when the Italian concentration camp existed here, the site was transformed into a living hell.¹⁰ The majority of prisoners

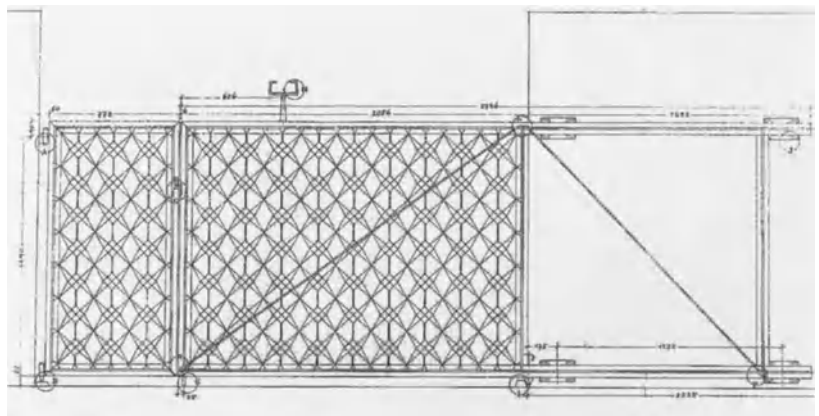
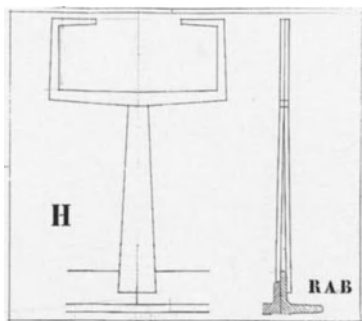


were civilians, including men, women, children and old people. Many were from areas along the Slovene-Croatian border and their villages had been burned or destroyed by the Italian military who suspected them of contributing to or harbouring Partisan resistance groups. The territories thus emptied of population were to be replaced by settlements for families of dead or wounded Italian soldiers in what was a blatant act of 'cleansing' and colonisation.¹¹ In the Slovene and Croatian parts of the camp, set up in July 1942, men were separated from women and children. Prisoners were crammed into roughly one thousand tents each holding six people, although some rudimentary huts were constructed later. The sanitary conditions were subhuman, there was a starvation diet, there was forced labour, there were many epidemics and there was minimal protection from the extremes of the weather. Old people and children began to perish first. By the time the camp was liberated in September 1943 it held more than seven thousand people. Earlier it had swelled to more than ten thousand prisoners but some of these had been transferred to other camps. In the space of a little over a year almost one thousand five hundred of all age groups had died from disease, exposure or starvation. About one thousand more died subsequently from physical exhaustion or despair.

The Jews, most of whom arrived in June-July 1943, and who eventually numbered approxi-

Memorial Complex at Kampor, design for a peephole on top of the gate recalling a machine gun sight, 1953, Edvard Ravnikar, not executed.

Initial design for entrance gate using steel wire, 1953, Edvard Ravnikar, not executed.



mately two thousand seven hundred, were housed in an adjacent enclosure in better conditions. In fact they had solidly constructed huts, running water, basic sanitation and more ample rations of food. While the Slovenes, Croats and few other Slavs were referred to as ‘repressivi’ (literally ‘repressed’), the Jews were referred to as ‘protettivi’ (literally ‘protected’).¹² The Italian authorities perceived the former group as a direct political threat and intended to starve them and steal their land and property. But they seem to have taken a different, albeit, enigmatic attitude towards the Jews. Much historical work needs to be done to unravel the official Italian position here, but the title of ‘protettivi’ seems to reveal the aim of not allowing the Jews in Italian occupied Dalmatia to fall into Nazi hands and be sent to death camps; it may also have been a way of guarding them against the murderous activities of Croat ‘Ustasha’ ultra nationalists who were pro Nazi and who were rampaging in nearby coastal areas. In effect, members of the Italian military elite may have been wishing to distance themselves from Hitler’s ‘Final Solution’ for the Jews.¹³

By summer 1943 it was surely obvious that it was all up for the Italians, that they had lost the

war, that the separation from the Axis was inevitable. At the end of July 1943 Mussolini fell and on the 8th September Italy signed an armistice with the Allies. Almost immediately, on the 13th September to be precise, there was an uprising of the prisoners on Rab who overwhelmed their jailors and took their arms as well as stocks of food. Over two hundred Jews founded a ‘Rab Battalion’ which joined forces with the Slovene and Croat rebels, who formed four Battalions of their own. Taken together these five Battalions constituted the ‘Rab Brigade’ which went by ship on 13th September to the island of Cres and then to the mainland.¹⁴ Other volunteers joined the Jewish Battalion which soon increased threefold. The combined total of former prisoners willing to fight thus ran to about one thousand seven hundred and fifty. Mostly Slovenes, they were under Slovene command. The majority of these poorly trained combatants soon integrated with Partisan forces in Slovenia to continue the struggle against oppression. The revolt at Rab took on a certain legendary significance in retrospect because it was carried out by individuals who took their destiny into their own hands. It is as well to remember that the resistance forces in Yugoslavia went on to defeat the Nazi occupiers and their collaborators without the direct intervention of either the Western Allied armies or their temporary allies to the east, the forces of the Soviet Union. As for the roughly two hundred Jews who stayed on the island of

Illyrian Monument to Napoleon, Ljubljana, 1929, by Jože Plečnik.

Memorial Complex at Kampor, the large 'obelisk' or 'stele' on its tilted platform, seen from the direction of the Museum.



Rab, they were captured by the Nazis who replaced the defeated Italians. They were all sent to Auschwitz and none of them survived.

Edvard Ravnikar was first approached to design a memorial cemetery on Rab by the Society of Slovene Servicemen, a group of Partisan veterans, in 1952. The intention was to mark the tenth anniversary of the liberation of the concentration camp and the founding of the Rab Battalion: the 13th September 1953.¹⁵ The initial proposal for a memorial made by the committee was relatively simple: it involved gathering up the scattered human remains and disorderly graves surrounding the site of the former concentration camp and installing these in a monumental ossuary. Even without experiencing the site first hand, Ravnikar steered the scheme towards a more noble and evocative concept: a cemetery as a formalised landscape including an entrance platform, a descending route, parallel rows of graves, several abstract obelisks, a sequence of outdoor rooms, some parabolic structures and a form of museum. In effect this was a type of necropolis or city of the dead, an abstraction possibly of a Dalmatian town plan with its gates, central street, squares and stone walls. Thinking of future trees the architect also referred



to his scheme as a 'grove'.¹⁶

Ravnikar had this general plan in mind when he visited the site on Rab in 1953. At this point he could experience the topography first-hand, gauging with more precision the traces of the camp and its informal cemetery, the slope of the land, the placement of levels, the drainage of the site and the views towards the surrounding landscape. The horizon was an essential consideration and in the finished scheme the horizontal platforms mark points of stasis or gathering places which also reiterate the basic idea of a relationship to the distant line between sky and sea. As Ravnikar developed his project he also introduced proportional systems to regulate the positioning of the main elements, working with simple geometries such as circles and squares for the platforms, ellipses for the identifying tags on the grave slabs and a parabola for the Museum.¹⁷ He considered the idea of a gate with wires in tension to recall the razor wire of the camp but this was not tenable structurally so he replaced it with the present design based upon a diagonal metallic lattice of interlacing geometries sensitive to light and shade. He elaborated a language of masonry detail to express his intentions and to match the local stone available. In a sense Ravnikar was an 'idealist' who adhered to the notion that architecture should touch the mind; but he was also committed to the expression of ideas in construction through an appropriate use of materials.

Memorial Complex at Kampor, exterior view of Museum.

Museum at Kampor, detail showing stone pegs capping the ends of the internal steel cables.

Interior of Museum with mosaic by Marij Pregelj and twin receptacles for relics from the concentration camp.



For the Kampor Memorial Complex it was necessary to work quickly in order to complete the project by the symbolic 10th anniversary of the overthrow of the Italian concentration camp. Ravnikar's scheme permitted a degree of separation between specialised skills for the cut masonry and unskilled labour for the rough stone walls. It is an irony of history that this monument to human freedom standing on the island of Rab should have been constructed in part using the forced labour of Yugoslav political prisoners held on the neighbouring island of Goli otok ('Barren Island'), a desolate and rocky outcrop only kilometres away. Some of the stone used in the Memorial Complex was also quarried on Goli otok by inmates of the prison, working in conditions of punitive, hard labour, sometimes in extreme temperatures. Among the political prisoners were Communists who did not sympathise with Tito's separation of Yugoslavia from the Soviet block in the late 1940s, including at least one individual – irony of ironies - who had been involved in the revolt against the Italian Fascists on Rab in 1943.¹⁸

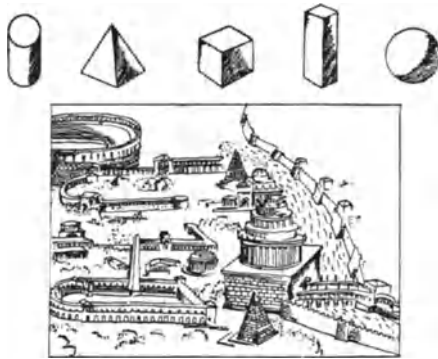
It should not be forgotten that the liberation of Yugoslavia from Italian Fascism and German Nazism was achieved by groups with conflicting allegiances and agendas, and that there were

inevitably accusations of collaboration especially since the Independent State of Croatia, which existed between April 1941 and September 1943, was openly Fascist and pro-Axis in its orientation and its actions. The expulsion of foreign enemies from Yugoslavia was accompanied and followed by what became in effect a civil war for domination and legitimacy. Marshall Tito's victory was soon followed by the break with Soviet Communism in 1948. Such are the harrowing complexities of lands which are situated on the fault lines of history, constantly pulled in multiple directions by the dominant powers and clashing ideologies of both the present and the past. The architectural memorial is supposed to recall historical events, but it does this in a selective way, at times suppressing inconvenient facts or advancing half-truths to accord with retrospective, official national myths. In the case of the Memorial cemetery on Rab the aim was to transform the horrors and divisions of war into a poetic and cathartic work of art responsive to the beauty of the surrounding nature.

Throughout Ravnikar's project, concept, form and material work closely together. The gravestones are laid out in continuous strips, but the upper surface is angled to accommodate the line of sight of someone looking down, and to introduce a vibration of light and shadow just above ground level throughout the entire complex. As for the vertical slabs of stone—the

Sketch of ancient Rome and primary solids, Le Corbusier, *Vers une architecture*, 1923. © Fondation Le Corbusier

Memorial Complex at Kampor, entrance platform with sliced off columns.



‘obelisks’ or ‘stelae’—these are cut in a way which emphasizes their planarity. The largest one rises from the main platform where the path changes direction. The platform provides a stage for commemorative events and slopes slightly to drain rainwater into an underground cystem for irrigating the cemetery. The resulting, tilted surface is also yet another foreshortening device drawing the surrounding landscape into the experience of the observer. On closer inspection, the vertical stone shaft is found to be assembled from separate pieces stacked one on top of the other and held in place by steel cables within. Plečnik’s monumental pylons come to mind—for example the Illyrian Monument to Napoleon (1929) in Ljubljana—but this is more massive, almost like a monolith. At Rab, by contrast, the tension wires permit a much more slender, ‘modern’ form. With its deep grooves and mouldings capturing the shadows, and its curved ‘notches’ revealing the assembly, the vertical slab reads almost as a pilaster or grand classical order, trans-



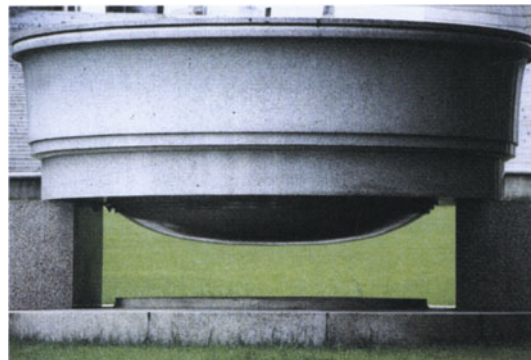
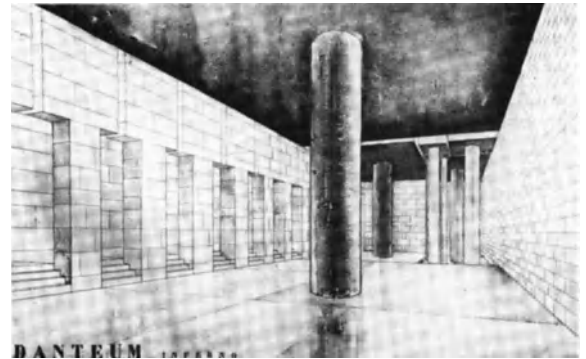
formed and simplified to become a free-standing blade in space.¹⁹ The same element resonates well beyond the site, even engaging with the horizon.

This feeling for ritualistic structure is given full expression in the curved ‘shelter’ covered by a parabolic stone vault discovered further down the path to the left. Officially known as the ‘Museum’, this building suggests a vaguely defined sacral function. As on the entry platform, a change in direction is engendered by a controlled meander, this time between walls - not the only time at Rab where one recalls an ancient labyrinth. One descends to a slightly lower level by means of steps. The vaulted, parabolic structure is a *tour-de-force*, with its slender facets of dressed stone, its polygonal ribs and its angled legs lifting the structure free of the ground. It reads as a graceful, curved plane floating in space. It is in fact held together without mortar. The angled ribs do the main structural work, the stone facets of the arches being clipped together by means of lead clamps. Lateral stability is assured by three steel cables which cut through the roof transversally and are covered by stone caps where they protrude at the edges of the roof. As

Detail of page from *Le Corbusier, Vers une architecture* (1923), with photograph of Doric columns of Parthenon in ruins.
© Fondation Le Corbusier

Granite bowl in the Paradise Garden in Prague Castle, 1924, by Jože Plečnik.

Project for the 'Danteum', 'Inferno', 1938 by Giuseppe Terragni.



with the main 'obelisk', Ravnikar here combines tradition and modernity, tension and compression, subverting normal expectations of masonry construction with a hidden technical device from the industrial era. The light creeps in from the side and bathes the underside of the pale, amber coloured stone. The curve is flatter than would be the case with a traditional masonry vault. The resulting space is calm and serene: it is made for meditation.

This parabolic shelter hovering above the surrounding walls suggests a mimetic version in stone of a wooden or woven primitive hut; possibly too it alludes to those curved, corrugated metal structures found in military and prison camps, or even to the tents which were in fact used to house people in miserable conditions in the concentration camp at Rab. The building contains a large mosaic by Marij Pregelj which is displayed on a stone screen, slightly curved in plan. Dominated by the emaciated figures of two prisoners, one of them in chains, the broad

theme of the mural is the transition from Fascism, war and despair to Socialism, peace and hope. Facing the mosaic, and disposed symmetrically, are two hollow stone basins which inevitably recall the 'antique funerary urn' at the entrance to the complex. Initially these contained relics from the concentration camp such as a whip used on the prisoners by the prison guards. But in this case there is the suggestion of 'a sort of altar which does not belong to any religion.'²⁰ In fact the two cylindrical stone receptacles on slender bases evoke baptismal fonts. Perhaps there is the notion here of a new beginning, a baptism of the new society, a resurrection after a period of disaster and despair?

Again abstraction plays a role in transforming objects from history, retaining some past meanings, rejecting others. Both Le Corbusier and Plečnik in their different ways were masters of this technique of metamorphosis and displacement. Le Corbusier looked upon history as a vast repertoire of ideas and forms, of '*objets trouvés*', which he could transform into terms of modernity. The drawings and photographs of classical ruins in his book *Vers une architecture*

St. Jacob's Cathedral in Šibenik, 1443 - 75, by Juraj Dalmatinac.

Museum at Kampor showing parabolic structure and articulation of stone.



(1923) supply a suggestive background to Ravnikar's project for Rab: indeed the project itself recalls a ruin of perforated walls and cut off columns in an arcadian landscape. Ravnikar was quite capable of seeing and portraying historical remains in his own way, still there seem to be echoes of Le Corbusier's sketches of the partition walls, rectangular openings and framed views of landscape at Hadrian's Villa. Ravnikar may also have absorbed Le Corbusier's interpretation of the Acropolis in Athens, including the processional *promenade architecturale* over the rocky strata of the site, the strong forms in light, and the sense of the Parthenon projecting its energies to the distant horizon. A caption in *Vers une architecture* schematises the broken classical columns on the Acropolis in terms of abstract geometry: 'From what is emotion born? From a certain relationship between definite elements: cylinders, an even floor, even walls.'²¹

As for Plečnik, we have only to think of his own numerous projects for funerary monuments in the Cemetery at Žale, Ljubljana, or of his metaphorical landscape for the new nation of the Czech Republic in the Prague Castle Scheme (designed in the 1920s), to see how skilful he was in taking types or fragments from history—such as slices of Doric columns—then transforming

them into basins or abstract forms charged with memory. Ravnikar's stone cylinders on Rab seem to emerge from a similar family of forms. But beyond the formal debts there was an approach to the problem of symbolising the overlapping identities of central Europe and the Balkan world by means of complex, often multivalent allusions. Ravnikar inherited from Plečnik a rich and diverse architectural culture which stood out from the doctrinaire modernists of the 1920s and 1930s, but which nonetheless combined aspects of twentieth century culture with ancient Rome, high traditions and low ones, regional accents and universal elements. Like his mentor, Ravnikar was interested in the notion that architectural origins could be traced to the vernacular but also to primary, even primitive, classical forms.

While Ravnikar's Memorial Complex on Rab contains classical echoes, the intention was never to anchor a reference to one particular example, place or time. On the contrary, abstraction was this architect's means for distilling the past, for fusing sources, for seeking out an essential nature, a sort of archaic, eternal present—a search for certainties after the mechanized destruction and fragmentation of modern warfare. Like Plečnik, Ravnikar inhabited a world washed by many cultures and civilizations. If his 'modernity' relied upon Le Corbusier, Vienna, Italian Rationalism, abstract painting, German aesthetics and a social ethos of emancipation,

Edvard Ravnikar (far right) with his students – collaborators (right to left) Marko Šlajmer, Vladimira Bratuž and Branko Kocmut on Rab.

his historical culture was deep and wide-ranging. The Dalmatian coast where Rab stands has itself absorbed the waves of different invasions and empires, from Ancient Rome, through Byzantium, to Venice and beyond. The littoral and islands are dotted with archaeological remains and the complex at Rab seems to echo this architectural heritage in a general way. The curved vaulted structure in stone in Ravnikar's scheme seems to hark back to the stone vaults and ribs constructed without mortar in the 15th century cathedral of Šibenik (designed by the mason Juraj Dalmatinac).²² Ravnikar's curved shelter for social regeneration may well allude to the Baptistry of the Cathedral, with its monumental stone font under a vaulted roof. Possibly there are longer range continuities too, for this early Renaissance example in turn recalls stone structures in the Roman palace complex at Split (Spalato) built by Diocletian at the beginning of the 4th century AD.

Evidently Ravnikar was far away indeed from those 'functionalist' modern architects who advocated a clean break with the past. At the same time it would be simplistic to claim a direct descent from Plečnik. Ravnikar lived in critical tension with his fellow Slovenian and



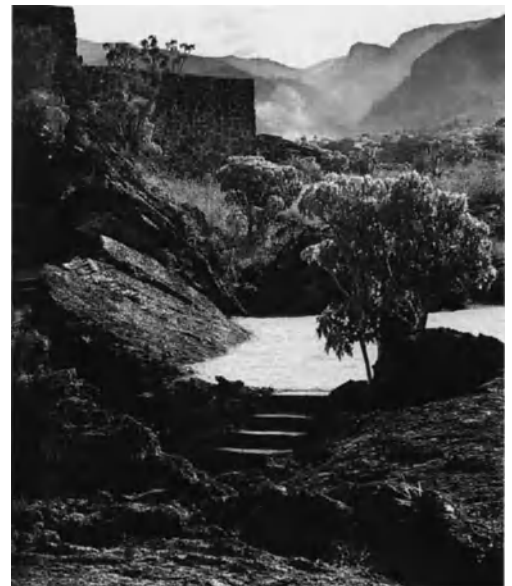
mentor, and sought a means to translate lessons from the past into a more crystalline modern statement. In this process he undoubtedly drew lessons from the Italian Rationalists of the 1930s and 1940s, especially Giuseppe Terragni. The historical irony is considerable since the prison of war camp on Rab was set up by Italian Fascists. Like Terragni, Ravnikar was interested in the substratum of the past, in the basic types, and in their metamorphosis into modern spaces and forms. One wonders if Ravnikar knew of Terragni's unconstructed project of 1938 for the 'Danteum' to stand alongside the Forum in Rome with its pure cylinders evoking simplified columns and ancient temples.²³ The Forest Crematorium at Enskede near Stockholm (1938) by Asplund and Lewerentz may also have influenced Ravnikar: a funerary landscape with a processional way, outdoor rooms, spaces of assembly and distilled classical forms, inspired in part by ancient ruins in the landscape. For Ravnikar the modern and the classical reinforced each other: 'If I go to the beginnings of the modern, I come across Cézanne, and we know that after him all of Mondrian's development was simply a reflection of his shadow. This means the geometrically ordered vision which derives from classicism. This is present in all modernism.'²⁴

Ravnikar was well versed in modern painting and sculpture as well as architecture, and

*Brion Family Cemetery, San Vito
d'Altivole, 1969-78 by Carlo Scarpa.*

*Gardens in volcanic lava, El Pedregal,
San Angel, Mexico City, 1945-50 by Luis
Barragan.*

wrote several essays on the question of abstraction. He had studied the aesthetic theories of Konrad Fiedler and Teodor Lipps and was attracted to the notion that forms may speak directly to the feelings. For him abstraction was a way of avoiding simplistic representation and expressing a more complex content. Ravnikar intended in the Kampor Memorial Complex on Rab to stir the senses as well as the mind, to bring materials alive through a direct presence, to create symbols of a certain ambiguity which might unearth hidden sentiments. To do this he evolved forms which distilled certain classical conventions yet injected them with new meaning, exploring the frontier between the modern and the archaic. When one continues further down the path towards the end of the complex one comes across a curious, curved collective grave next to a long low stone structure with angled ends. The forms in themselves are haunting and disturbing. Like several other horizontal landscape elements in the cemetery they touch upon the idea of a flat burial mound, not unlike an ancient Egyptian 'mastaba', a word which also refers to a bench. In his nearly contemporary funerary monuments at Draga, Sv. Urh and Begunje, Ravnikar uses abstract forms in stone to evoke the feeling of hidden human presences, even to imply the scattering of people in a collective massacre.²⁵



Finally the route through the cemetery at Rab descends to its lowest point at the north-west end, an opening in the wall giving onto marshy ground and leading to the shore and the sea. Throughout the entire sequence the horizontal levels of this formalised landscape inevitably reassert the relationship with the distant horizon. This sensation of expansion reinforces the themes of freedom from imprisonment, and movement towards a better future. It appears that Ravnikar even imagined a ship of liberation sailing away towards the line between sea and sky.²⁶ Ravnikar - like Le Corbusier - thought that architecture should give shape to and materialize ideas, and that it should embody a social interpretation. The project on Rab evokes the optimism of a certain period even as it acknowledges horror. It triumphs precisely through its

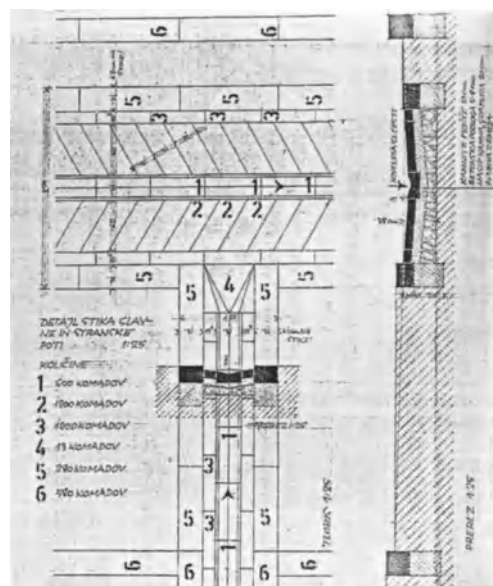
Stone pathway leading up to the Acropolis, Philopappos Hill Area, Athens, 1954-57 by Dimitris Pikionis.

Memorial Complex at Kampor, detailed design for the stonework in the central street showing angled masonry and central groove for drainage, Edvard Ravnikar, 1953.



understatement. One can visit and revisit the place and always discover some new dimension of the architect's skill in constructing images and ideas in a durable form. Ravnikar's work engages all of the senses but also embodies an ethos: it encourages reflection upon human destiny and the meaning of historical events.

The Memorial Complex on Rab is a unique work. It has nothing to do with the 'movements' that inhabit history books, and is remote indeed from the dominant preoccupations of post-war architecture in the West. Its spiritual cousins seem to lie far away and Ravnikar was probably not influenced by them. One thinks for example of Luis Barragan's interventions at El Pedregal, Mexico City (mid 1940s) in which abstract planes cut across the volcanic landscape; or of the poetic topographies designed by the Greek architect Dimitris Pikionis in the 1950s, such as the extraordinary path made from stone fragments, leading up the hill towards the Acropolis in Athens. In retrospect, one guesses that Carlo Scarpa may have learned something from the Memorial Complex on Rab in his design for the Brion Tomb in the Veneto of the late 1960s, although this was built for a wealthy Catholic patron rather than being a secular state monument. There are precise similarities such as the curved, bridge-like structure known as the 'Arcoso-



lium' above the family tombs, which surely owes something to the Museum at Rab. Then there are more general resemblances in the idea of a necropolis of fragments in a precinct: a symbolic landscape full of hermetic allusions and hidden implications.²⁷ In the more recent past, the architecture of Aleš Vodopivec's Srebrniče Cemetery outside Novo mesto in Slovenia (1999) surely reflects the influence of Rab in its overall thinking as well as its forms.²⁸

Monuments come about in particular historical circumstances but part of their function is to defy time. The words 'monument' and 'memory' share the same root and architecture may sometimes be used to rewrite history and to idealize it, encouraging the remembrance of some things, the forgetting of others. The problem in post-war Yugoslavia was to lay the founda-

Memorial Complex at Kampor, framed view from entry platform towards rows of graves with metallic identity discs and smallest 'stele'.

Recessed and faceted wall endings in cut stone.

tions of a new society, to cement national unity, to cover up troubling divisions related to Italian Fascist and German Nazi occupations, to internal civil war and to the massacre of civilians. Ravnikar's Memorial Complex at Kampor on the Island of Rab had to grapple with these questions, whether they were fully spelt out or not. The architect attempted to translate transient political ideology into a more lasting mythical substance through the medium of his art. Beyond secular and socialist aspirations he sought out a generalised sense of the sacred without direct religious references. Through the modernity of the situation he sensed ancient continuities. By means of a profound and resonant abstraction he translated the imperatives of the present into an evocative landscape of memories for an unknown future.

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Footnotes

- 1 Alvar Aalto, 'The Trout and the Mountain Stream', in Goran Schildt, ed., *Alvar Aalto, Sketches*, MIT, 1978, p 98
- 2 I first heard about the Memorial Complex on Rab in 1997 through articles on 'Edvard Ravnikar' by Aleš Vodopivec, Vojteh Ravnikar and Meta Gabršek Prosenec in *Piranesi 4, III*, 1994, pp 8-31. I first visited Rab in October 1999, was moved by it, and quickly grasped the character of the site and some of the intentions of the project by making rapidly drawn sketches. The present text develops interpretations which I first made in a lecture at the Faculty of Architecture, University of Ljubljana in October 2001. An initial, shorter version of this text was published in Slovenian and English under the same title: William J. R. Curtis, 'Odmišljanje in prikazovanje / Spominski kompleks Edvarda Ravnikarja v Kamporju na Rabu (1952-53)', 'Abstraction and Representation: the Memorial Complex at Kampor on the Island of Rab (1952-3) by Edvard Ravnikar' in Andrej Hrausky, editor, *Arhitekt Edvard Ravnikar, spominski kompleks na otoku Rab, 1953 / Architect Edvard Ravnikar; Memorial Complex on the Island of Rab, 1953*, DESSA, Ljubljana, 2004, pp 17-35 (other authors who contributed texts were: Andrej Hrausky and Miha Dešman, Tomaž Krušec, Aleš Vodopivec). This book was published as the catalogue of the Republic of Slovenia's exhibition in the 9th International Architectural Exhibition in the Venice Biennale, Italy in 2004. The exhibition and the catalogue were largely financed by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia. The present text has been brought up to date by integrating more recent research; it also includes more on the political context of both the concentration camp of 1942-3 and the Memorial Complex itself ten years later.
- 3 For valuable overviews of Ravnikar's career see France Ivanšek, editor, *Hommage à Edvard Ravnikar 1907-1993*, Ljubljana, 1995, especially p 99 ff; and Aleš Vodopivec 'Edvard Ravnikar (1907-1993), Fragments of a Biography' (in English and Slovenian) in Hrausky, editor, op cit, pp 70-85. See also Vodopivec's text 'Edvard Ravnikar's Architecture, Locally Adjusted Modernism' in the present volume.
- 4 See for example William J.R. Curtis, 'Modern Architecture, Mythical Landscapes and Ancient Ruins', *Annual Sloane Lecture*, London 1997
- 5 Concerning recent research: I am grateful to Tomaž Krušec for having shown me the drawing of the gate with the machine gun sight, in October 2001. Krušec has since published his findings on Rab in more detail in a valuable study 'The Kampor Memorial Complex on the Island of Rab' (article in Slovenian and English) in Hrausky, editor, op. cit. pp 36-39, see note 2 above. Krušec's study concentrates upon the architecture, makes a perceptive analysis of the visual and spatial structure of the Ravnikar's scheme and reconstructs some of the design process. It also includes information about the history of the concentration camp of 1942-3, the layout, the different sectors, the terrible conditions and the informal burial ground. My own discussion of the camp below is based in part upon Krušec's discoveries and sources. See also note 10 below.

- 5 Report of Veteran's Association of the National Liberation War of Slovenia (no date), cited Vojteh Ravnikar, op. cit., p 13
- 6 These themes were developed in William J. R. Curtis, Slade Lectures 2003-4, University of Cambridge, October-December 2003 series title: 'Modern Architecture and Monumentality'. The last of the eight lectures 'Monument, Memorial, Myth' was devoted to Ravnikar's project on Rab. For the problem of secular, republican monumentality in countries with complex religious or ethnic identities, see for example Curtis, 'Le Corbusier's Capitol Complex in Chandigarh as a Cosmic and Political Landscape', *A+U*, Tokyo, May 1999, p 116 ff
- 7 Ravnikar's pictorialisation of architectural space has much to do with his own activity as a painter but may also owe something to Le Corbusier's fusion of the different arts in architecture.
- 8 This is an entirely personal reading and there is no evidence for the moment that this meaning was intended by the architect.
- 9 For an overview of Plečnik see for example Francis Burkhardt, Boris Podrecca, Claude Eveno, editors, *Jože Plečnik, Architect 1872-1957*, MIT, 1989.
- 10 Much archival work still needs to be done on the Kapor concentration camp on Rab. Among valuable sources cited by Krušec op. cit. notes 2 and 4 above: Ivo Kovačič, *Koncentracijski logor Kapor na Rabu 1942-1943*, Rijeka, 1983; Božidar Jezernik, *Italijanska taborišča za Slovence med 2. sv. vojno. Društvo za preučevanje zgodovine literature in antropologije*, Ljubljana, 1997; Herman Janež, *Kapor-Rab: koncentracijsko taborišče 1942-1943*, Ljubljana, 1999. There seem to be different versions concerning the numbers of people in the camp at given times and the numbers buried there.
- Several recollections of the camp exist in literary form, see for example Metod M. Milač, *Resistance, Imprisonment and Forced Labour: a Slovene Student in World War II*, Studies in Modern European History, vol. 47, 2002. For the Slovenian version see *Kdo solze naše posuši: Doživetja slovenskega dijaka med drugo svetovno vojno*, Celje, 2003. This is a horrifying personal account of imprisonment in Italian Fascist and German Nazi camps during the wartime occupations of Yugoslav territories; it deals too with purges accompanying the emergence of the post war Socialist Federation of Yugoslavia under the leadership of Tito.
- See also Thomas Fuller, 'Survivors of War Camp Lament Italian Amnesia', *New York Times*, 29th October, 2003, particularly for eye witness accounts of the camp at Kapor and for the remarks by the Slovene Professor Jezernik of the University of Ljubljana on the tendency to cover up the troubling history of the Italian concentration camps in Dalmatia of 1941-3.
- For several accounts by former prisoners of Kapor in the form of a DVD of filmed interviews see Stane Kotnik (director) *Italijanska koncentracijsko taborišče na otoku Rabu*, ZZB-NOB Slovenije, 1996. Kotnik was himself a prisoner at Rab. Among other things his reconstruction, which combines documentary fragments with interviews, affirms that: the first and main group of prisoners of mid 1942 consisted of families (men, women and children) whose houses along the Slovene-Croatian border were burned because this area was strongly involved in Partisan resistance; that people were herded into tents and that many in the camp died through disease and malnutrition during the winter of 1942-3; that bodies were rarely buried correctly; that at the end of 1942 there were about eleven thousand prisoners, roughly two thirds Slovenes and one third Croats; that the Croats in the camp were mostly rebels against the pro Fascist and pro Nazi Independent State of Croatia founded in April 1941 (which folded when Italy did in September 1943); that many prisoners were transferred to another camp at Gonars, near Palmanova in Italy in the first half of 1943; that the Jews arrived in June-July 1943 and were placed in an adjacent camp with cabins instead of tents; that the 'Rab Battalion' was formed by Jews who helped those in the other parts of the camp to overthrow the Italian jailors when Italy capitulated in September 1943; that several hundred former prisoners (including a large number of Slovenes, and a lesser number of Croats) formed Battalions themselves, which along with the Jewish Battalion constituted the 'Rab Brigade'; that they succeeded in leaving the island by boat; that their number increased to over one thousand five hundred and that they marched northwards through inhospitable terrain eventually joining the Partisan liberation forces in Slovenia, although it is possible that some joined other Partisan troops instead. Estimates concerning the numbers who died at the camp vary from roughly one thousand four hundred to one thousand five hundred; estimates concerning those who died afterwards from pernicious effects vary from eight hundred to one thousand. I am grateful to Jurij Kobe for acquiring a copy of this DVD for me and for translating some of the essential points.
- 11 Zdravko Dizdār in a study entitled 'Italian Policies Towards Croats in Occupied Territories During the Second World War', *Review of Croatian History* (1/2005), Zagreb, 2005, has taken the position that the Italian occupants 'did not hesitate to commit war crimes in order to transform occupied territories into ethnic Italian territories'. General Mario Roatta evidently told a conference of Italian officers in Kočevje in August 1942 that the official policy was to combine punishment of Partisan sympathisers, even of innocent people, with a 'cleansing' that could open up areas of former Yugoslav territory to Italian occupation. Krušec op. cit. notes 2 and 4 cites the historian F. Potočnik, *Koncentracijsko taborišče Rab*, Koper 1975 as claiming that the Italian authorities intended to transport a considerable population from the province of Ljubljana and eventually re-settle it in townships on Rab.
- 12 The precise title of the Kapor camp on Rab ('Arbe' in Italian) was 'Campo di concentramento per internati civili di Guerra -Arbe'. The policy of treating the Slovenes and Croats savagely as the 'repressivi' (literally 'repressed'), and of treating the Jews better and describing them officially as 'protettivi' (literally 'protected'), clearly needs a great deal more documentary scrutiny, especially using material from Italian archives. It has also to be evaluated with a degree of scepticism and understood within the complex local and international contexts of the time. According to Professor B. Jezernik cited in the *New York Times* article of 2003 (see note 10), the Italian authorities had not up to then been forthcoming with such evidence. Concerning the precise number of Jews who passed through the camp, figures cited in secondary sources vary between two thousand two hundred and about three thousand three hundred. There seems to be some confusion between the total number who passed through altogether, and the maximum number who were present at any particular time. Here too, unexamined archives may lend greater precision. Among former prisoners who have spoken of their experiences on Rab, one may include Anton Vratuša, who later became Yugoslavia's Ambassador to the United Nations. Cited in the aforementioned *New York Times* article of October 2003 he referred to the various spatial divisions of the camp (four in all and a fifth for the dead) and to the 'protected' Jews in particular: 'We were prisoners; they were protected people. We used their assistance'.
- 13 For an interpretation of the 'protection' given the Jews at Kapor suggesting that members of the Italian military may have wished to distance themselves from the Nazi 'Final Solution', see Jonathan Steinberg, *All Or Nothing: The Axis and the Holocaust 1941-43*, Routledge, 2002, p 34. For an account of Italian policies of internment in occupied territories see also James Walston, 'History and Memory of the Italian Concentration Camps', *The Historical Journal* 1997, 40, Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp 169-183. Among the eye witnesses cited is the Slovene Franc Potočnik, later to become a historian, who also noted obvious differences in treatment between the Slovenian/Croatian and the Jewish parts of the concentration camp on Rab.
- 14 For recollections of the formation of the Rab Brigade, the contribution of the Jewish Battalion, the liberation from the camp and the voyage by ship see Kotnik op. cit. and Fuller op. cit. note 10 above. The Rab Brigade was under Slovene command and Anton Vratuša (mentioned in note 12 above) was the deputy commander. Apparently the escaped prisoners requisitioned Italian supply ships on which they found not only arms but also enormous stocks of parmesan cheese. The senior officer in charge of the camp was arrested but committed suicide.
- 15 For details of the architectural commission see Krušec op.cit. p 43. notes 2 and 4 above.
- 16 For a possible analogy with Dalmatian city structure, in particular that of Dubrovnik, see Andrej Hrausky and Miha Dešman, 'Meta-

morphosis and Memory', in Hrausky, editor, op. cit. pp 10-14, see note 2 above. Interestingly Ravnikar himself referred to the Complex on Rab as a 'grove', Hrausky editor op. cit. p 5.

17 For a valuable analysis of the geometrical systems used in the Complex at Rab see Filippo Bricolo, 'Edvard Ravnikar, il memoriale di Kampor, la grammatica della memoria', in Luciano Semerani (editor) *Memoria, ascesi, rivoluzione. Studi sulla rappresentazione simbolica in architettura*, IUAV, Marsilio, Venezia, 2006. For a comparison between Ravnikar's work and a more flamboyant style of designing memorials in Yugoslavia, see Filippo Bricolo, 'Il paesaggio della memoria. Edvard Ravnikar, Bogdan Bogdanović : luoghi e architetture celebrative nel territorio della ex Jugoslavia / The Landscape of Memory. Edvard Ravnikar, Bogdan Bogdanović : war memorials in former Yugoslavia', in Carlo Quintelli (editor), *Documenti del Festival dell'Architettura 4 2007-2008, Parma, Reggio Emilia, Modena*, Parma, 2008, pp 44-61.

18 For a brief allusion to the historical ironies surrounding prison camps and shifting ideologies in post war Yugoslavia see Slavoj Žižek, 'Knee-Deep', *London Review of Books*, 02/09/2004. See also Milač op. cit. note 4 above. Much work needs still needs to be done upon the precise details of the people imprisoned at the concentration camp on Rab in 1942-3, and upon the identities and political orientations of political prisoners pressed into constructing the Kampor Memorial Complex in 1953 ten years later. It seems that the camp at Goli otok contained a wide range of dissidents from hardline Communists, to separatist nationalists, to people who quite simply criticised the Tito regime.

19 For Plečnik's Monument to Napoleon see Andrej Hrausky, Janez Koželj, Damjan Prelovšek, *Plečnik's Ljubljana*, Ljubljana, 1997, section A, 14. I believe that Ravnikar's largest 'obelisk' or 'stele' at Rab may have been influenced by Michelangelo's grand order pilasters on the Capitoline Palaces on the Campidoglio in Rome. The same example may have influenced Ravnikar's Council Assembly Building at Kranj, 1958-60, especially in the handling of flat piers. Arguably the urban space in front of the building in Kranj contains some echoes of Michelangelo's Piazza del Campidoglio as well.

20 See Gabršek Prosenec, op. cit., p 25, see note 2 above.

21 See Le Corbusier, *Vers une architecture*, Paris, 1923, especially the chapter on the Parthenon entitled 'Architecture, pure création de l'esprit' ('Architecture, pure creation of the mind'). Le Corbusier reinforced his themes with black and white photographs of the Acropolis taken by Frédéric Boissonnas in another context, and by his own sketches made during his 'Voyage d'orient' of 1911. Ravnikar worked with Le Corbusier in 1939 and drew some of the stunning perspectives of the Algiers project, but he had certainly absorbed many lessons from Le Corbusier long before this.

22 For a possible connection with the Cathedral at Šibenik I am indebted to Deborah Howard, discussion after lecture cited in note 6 above, Cambridge, December 2003. For more on Šibenik and its architect see also Howard, 'San Michele in Isola: Re-reading the Genesis of the Renaissance' in Jean Guillaume, editor, *L'invention de la Renaissance*, Paris 2002, p 27 ff

23 For Terragni's Danteum see Thomas L. Schumacher, *Surface and Symbol, Giuseppe Terragni and the Architecture of Italian Rationalism*, NY, 1990, p 192 ff

24 Cited in Aleš Vodopivec, 'Pogovor z Edvardom Ravnikarjem', *Nova revija*, 1985, št 35-36, p 297, translation into English Tomaž Krušec.

25 Ravnikar's interest in, and writings on, abstraction were relayed to me by Aleš Vodopivec, October 1998. For example, Edvard Ravnikar, 'Lojze Spacal', *Arhitekt*, 1956, pp 31-33. His war memorials using abstract forms deserve a special place in the history of the genre. The repeating rectangular blocks of masonry and evocative shapes of the the Memorial Complex at Begunje, for example, anticipate by roughly half a century aspects of the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin designed by Peter Eisenman (with some earlier input from Richard Serra) in the late 1990s, and completed in 2005.

26 In my lecture in Ljubljana October 2001 (see note 2 above) I developed the hypothesis concerning the importance of the horizon to the very idea of Ravnikar's project. After the lecture his grandson Martin Ravnikar explained to me that the architect himself had told him about his image of a ship sailing towards the horizon. This poetic image of a ship of liberation gains extra force when one knows that on 13th September 1943 some former prisoners, including certain members of the Rab Battalion, did indeed leave the island by a ship. According to one of the recorded accounts, on arriving at the frontier of Slovenia some of them made a solemn oath to the Slovene Partisan leadership. op. cit. Kotnik, see note 4 above.

27 Concerning Ravnikar's 'spiritual cousins', it appears that he certainly knew about Pikionis but it is less certain that he knew about Barragan (conversation with Aleš Vodopivec 12/08/2009). The bridge structure in Scarpa's Brion Tomb is known as the 'Arcosolium' and may have corresponded to Scarpa's conception of Early Christian burial rites. See 'Note on Brion Tomb' in Francesco dal Co, editor, *Carlo Scarpa, The Complete Works*, Milan, 1984, p 175. See also Bricolo op. cit. note 12 and the article by Luciano Semerani: 'Archaic, i.e. Modern' in the present volume.

28 See William J. R. Curtis, 'A Clearing in the Forest, Srebrnice Cemetery, Novo mesto, Slovenia by Aleš Vodopivec', *Architectural Record*, NY, July 2002 for a discussion of the transformation of themes from the Memorial Complex on Rab half a century earlier.

Boris Podrecca

Cladding the City

Edvard Ravnikar's Archiculture



TR 3 at the Revolution Square (today, the Republic Square), Ljubljana

From a pan-European perspective, there is hardly a country in which the architecture from between the two world wars and after was similarly marked by two figures forming a teacher-pupil relationship than it was in Slovenia. This may have something to do with the fact that due to the small population of the former Yugoslav republic – the first of the republics to claim independence in 1990 – a pyramid-like erection of the shining pinnacles of an architectural landscape was absolutely necessary for socio-political reasons. The fact is that liberation from the *historical* architecture of Jože Plečnik and the transition to the *modern* architecture of Edvard Ravnikar unfolded without revolt, and even today the process of change is perceived as having taken place in the spirit of peaceful coexistence between something resembling two nationalities. This duality serves to enhance the archicultural image of Ljubljana – the old, new capital maintains its *presence* in the face of constantly changing architectural trends, whether in the sense of either historicising or structuralist reconceptualisations. One could also argue that even in times of digital paradigmatic changes, conceptual analogies for Plečnik's as well as Ravnikar's pronounced passion for ornamentation can be found. It is precisely this anachronistic streak which summarises the imagery of this city.

If we are not to speak of a visible loss of tradition then we should at least clarify the matter of constancy and coherency. For both Plečnik and Ravnikar agreed that architecture, being the strongest of all mass media, should underpin the accelerated process of national sovereignty. Both Plečnik's architecture – marked by pathos, popularity and universalism – and Ravnikar's



– motivated by functional comfort, standardisation and modernism – aimed for a transdisciplinary model. Both succeeded in liberating architecture from its *applied* role and positioned it as a critical, scientific discipline.

The symbolic density of macro- or micro-architectures one sees in Ljubljana generates a steady parlance, an amalgam of periods and cultural sources out of which dramatic dissonances scarcely protrude. It is in the truest sense of the word a culture of civil construction which reflects echoes from the whole of Europe, from the south up to the far north.

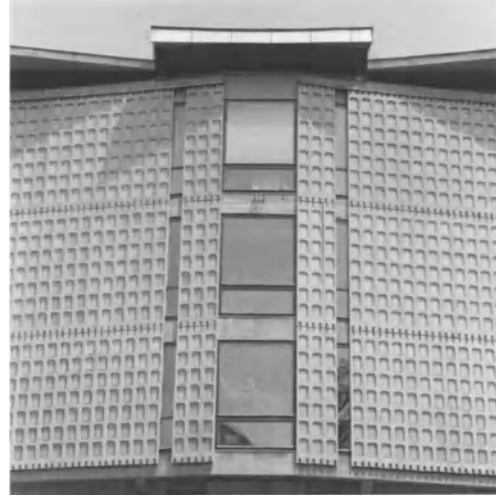
If it holds true that Edvard Ravnikar was the doyen of Slovenian architecture in the years following the war, then two perspectives are necessary for the evaluation of his work. The first reflects the power and perseverance of the passing on, as a teacher in Ljubljana, of his knowledge to several generations; and the second focuses on his integration in a pan-European context.

As regards his doctrine, he confronted compensatory shortcomings and insufficient resources with social and technological time parameters. Despite his Bauhaus-influenced outlook, he was concerned with not devaluing Ljubljana's beloved Baroque. In contrast to Plečnik's introspective doctrine, focussed only on himself as the master and well insulated against *external dangers*, Ravnikar, Plečnik's legitimate successor, developed a system of factual knowledge which was not isolated from nor disjointed from the *discourse* of the time.

In opposition to the *superficial knowledge* (Adorno) of today's *iconic* designer, Ravnikar tried to install a wide-ranging compendium based on his humanistic education. Alongside the reclaiming of the opening of modernism in communications and the media, the columns, the architrave, and the regalia remained for him at the same emancipatory level as that which was *new*.

TR 3 at the Revolution Square (today, the Republic Square), Ljubljana

Cankarjev dom, Cultural and Congress Centre, Ljubljana



Ferantov vrt Residential and Commercial Complex, Agroprogess building, Ljubljana

National Bank srs, Kranj

His commitment to reform was largely expressed in the style of Gropius with his emphasis on design and perception theory, on the periodic appearance of professional journals, on information in the media and exhibition types. All in all, he was concerned with creating a climate that would suit a temperate socialism in an emancipated society. Although he was boycotted repeatedly by the authorities, Ravnikar succeeded, thanks to his talent and commitment, in building bridges that provided the younger generations free access to modernity. That his behaviour was not particularly loud or captivating, and that one sometimes had to guess what he was saying as though observing him through the space of an only slightly open door was, due to his authority, accepted unconditionally; his introverted manner was, in a certain sense, even attractive. In this way Ravnikar and his pupils succeeded – in stark contrast to the current *liquidation* of architecture – in institutionalising homogenous yet individual differences; something one can definitely identify as belonging to a specific school of construction. Far too little known by the broader public in this region are the works of the 60s and 70s by strong but nondescript architects such as Bonča, Mihelič, Sever, Jugovec and many others through whom Ljubljana gained its very own third modernity. This wealth of buildings, which are unfortunately suffering the ravages of time, could from today's perspective be seen as a moment of glory in Central European architecture. Moreover, this phenomenon shows that the culture-specific distinctiveness of architectural language is often found away from the metropolis, in places like Tessin, Porto, Graz, and even in those ten years of Ravnikar's school in Ljubljana.

The counter-movement against Plečnik's encyclopaedic primacy, which Ravnikar implemented in the 1940s, and the differentiation process against Le Corbusier, after a short experience in his workshop, prevented a collision between modernity and the past. Instead it was far more a case of maintaining, like Loos, a careful attitude vis-à-vis the avant-garde,

Ferantov vrt Residential and Commercial
Complex, Ljubljana

Faculty of Structural Engineering,
Ljubljana

and vis-à-vis the *newly found* despite detachment and descaling.

Ravnikar's path, similarly to that of Alvar Aalto's (from whom he learnt many aspects of organic architecture), is the path of a moderniser and not that of an avantgardist in the manner of the revered Le Corbusier. In the beginning, both took a safe classical approach followed by free formal development, and in the end there was the *falling-back* to the classical period, into the *White of Phydia*. In Aalto's work this could be seen in the Enso-Gutzeit building, and in Ravnikar's work it was reflected in the postmodernist extension of the National Gallery in Ljubljana, his last construction.

In Italy, Austria and Switzerland there were attempts to move in this direction, towards a reformed, Protestant, northern style of living; against the loud propaganda of radical white modernity and against the arrogance of the *Plan Voisin*; nevertheless, these were only episodes.



Only in Slovenia (whose neighbouring western countries embodied a political status immediately after the war incompatible with the regime and stigmatised as bourgeois), the social democratic north was considered with envy as the Mecca of *everyday life* – a sentiment that was experienced as temperamental and enduring.

Nowadays, this deviation by Ravnikar can be seen as a performative step forward compared with the general doctrinal modernisation of Zagreb, Belgrade and Sarajevo immediately after the Second World War. Similarly to the way in which Josef Frank rejected the emphasis of the city or Roland Rainer worked with his Nordic ideogram of *social and landscape imagery*, and roughly in parallel with the *rebels* of Team 10, Ravnikar elaborated his programme more in the sense of interdependence than the dissociation of functions, spaces and proportionality.

Candilis, Woods, de Carlo, Van Eyck, Bakema, the Smithsons and others established a range

Globus Department Store, Kranj

*High school annex at the Revolution
Square Complex*

of fresh urbanistic approaches, behavioural segments, and interactions which also reached Ljubljana. Above all, the socialising aspect of the tempered architecture of Sweden, a country that hadn't known war for more than 200 years and launched, among other things, a progressive housing policy, served as the inspiration – far removed from Plečnik or Le Corbusier – behind the reconstruction and expansion of Ljubljana. The ten-year programme of the Swedish parliament which was proclaimed in 1965 proposed, among other things, the ready-made solutions of *Catalogue Homes* and *Multiple Homes*, and later Denmark offered Utzon's *Espansiva* and in Finland the *Moduli 225* by Gullichsen and Pallasmaa was mass-produced.

Many of these things affected Ravnikar's urbanistic visions, further enhanced by his pupils' bringing home their practical experiences from up in the north, adopted accordingly and later transformed on Slovenian soil. This niche situation in the reformative architectural production



of the socialist East protected Slovenia from a general internationalist Esperanto, visible today amidst the ontological change in the status of architecture and the contamination of design which proceeds from it. Ravnikar succeeded in curtailing the loss of tradition and in consolidating the foundations of and commitment to a third modernity in his country.

The *Nordic*, the imprint of Aalto or Utzon on Ravnikar's design process, is expressed periodically almost as a brand label and time analogy. The fluctuating cloud and wave-type ceiling edges of the Tronchetto halls and many other such instances are proof of it. And this is what different echoes of the folk culture of particular geographical references emphasise, and then allow Kaare Klint or Fritz Höger to look through the seams of his tiling.

There are many different composition methods which led to distinctive, regional arrangements and were subsequently subsumed into Central European archiculture. Also, the new con-

cepts of ornamentation, preferred today by the representatives of digital picture theory, offer a retrospective of Ravnikar's *ornare*. Ornament, which from Semper to Loos found no entry into the structural thought-process of the technical/industrial age, plays a key role in the feminisation of Ravnikar's interiors, especially in his later years. It aims for a communicative symbolism and mimetic, as is ostensibly expressed in current pictorial techniques.

Ravnikar often effectuates a transformation in the status of the pure ornament into a structural architectonic element. In the variations of his wall coverings, in the *hangings* of his stone, concrete and wood *carpets*, Ravnikar keeps to Semper's *theory of material transformation* (Stoffwechseltheorie) and acts entirely in the manner of the Wagnerian *Tables* (Tafelwerks) and their textile origins. To a certain extent, he behaves in even more Wagnerian fashion than Plečnik, though he never came into direct contact with the theory of textile art but simply inherited it from Plečnik, who never wanted to betray Semper's concept to his pupils. In the *layered thought* that follows from this, Ravnikar liberates himself even more from the Platonic and monolithic physical proportions of Le Corbusier. He purges these elements and instead leads them on to a reappraisal, a type of collage technique, away from rationality toward a vividly sensual layered effect.

Ravnikar's architecture expresses a graphically accentuated pictorial consciousness. His expressive potential does not so much seize the space, the desire for a shaped vacuum, the dramaturgy of volume and the poetics of empty spaces, as Plečnik demonstrated to us in his *Roman* retrospective. Rather Ravnikar's timeliness lies in tactility, sensory properties and materiality – all themes which are neglected in today's digital discourse surrounding the image. The ambivalent relationship with an architecture of space is generally expressed, both now and then, in the eloquence of Slovenian modernity. For the coming generation, this sets particularly high standards and poses a demanding challenge upon which to build – upon the foundations of both Ravnikar as well as Plečnik.

Luciano Semerani

Archaic, i.e. Modern

Memorial Complex, Kampor, Rab: view from the entrance platform along the main axes towards the sea.

View of the Museum vault at the Rab Memorial Complex, Kampor, Rab

Before the end of the path that runs through the Kampor Memorial Park an *arcosolium* is hidden within a low labyrinth. Another *arcosolium* lies within the exterior wall around the San Vito d'Altivole Cemetery in Treviso Province in a similar labyrinth of paved channel terraces. Carlo Scarpa rescued it from oblivion in the monumental vault devoted to the founder of the Brion/Vega factory. Those who study history of architecture will probably wonder whether Scarpa, who realised his work between 1968 and 1978, knew of Edvard Ravnikar's *arcosolium* from 1953.

Others may wonder whether the *arcosolium* in a vault dedicated to a *tycoon* has the same meaning as that in a memorial complex, devoted to *the slaughter of internees*.

We, artists and architects, are here reminded of the first beautiful image of an *arcosolium*, that from a new hypogeum in Via Latina in Rome, in which Elijah's ascension to heaven is depicted.

A sarcophagus is cut within the wall and a semicircular niche arches above. On its bottom is a quadriga of a chariot of fire, with which the ecstatic Old Testament Prophet is ascending into the sky in broad daylight.

We feel that Elijah did not die and will be back before the end of the world to convert the



Jews. The *arcosolium* is populated by domestic animals, buffalos, pheasants and peasants, complicit in the slaughter of the Phoenician priests that was initiated by Elijah.

Arcosolia, which were most common in the 3rd century A.D., were known also to the pagans. They most probably represented one of the archetypes of the Hypogean vaults.

And this is what I find today particularly interesting.

The terms *archetype*, *architecture*, and *archaic* are related by the Greek word **arhe**, which means **a beginning, an origin**.

It was first used by Anaximander to denote “*the material pre-substance of all things*”.

Contemporary architecture from time to time probably forgets that the knowledge of **arhe** is a necessary precondition for **archi-**, the first element of the compounds that originate from



Greek and Latin and indicate the leading position, supremacy; e.g. **architect**, *arciduca* (arch-duke) or *arciprete* (dean).

In the search for the symbolic representation of “the memory” Ravnikar and Scarpa connect architecture with an archetype in order to unite the ancient emotions in a single, exclusive image.

The use of archetypes in designing architecture leans on the kind of knowledge that originates in the iconic properties of an object.

The archetype of an *arcosolium* is in its shape both concave and convex; it is a “*discovery*” within an *archaeological* site; it is a space within a *complete whole* that is in itself both complete and transient; it is an achievement of the late Roman *knowledge of structure*, while at the same time it does not conform to *any rules*. On Dalmatian islands the *arcosolium* is a reminiscence of the *myth of Archaic Medterraneity*; and it is through these parts that Medea travelled.

The myth of our existence, the existence of the cosmos itself, inspires a pre-logical meaning beyond any scientific realisations or technological developments that are today themselves both a part of the myth of the realisable.

However, the return to the archaic ascribes a ritual value to the execution of a usable object itself, and this includes architectural structure.

In Le Corbusier's modernity and already in his "modulor" that Ravnikar studied in Paris, we see but the tip of an iceberg, under which, as is the case with all masters of Modernism, a deep interest in the world of wisdom, esoterica, antropo-physics, theosophy and alchemy is hidden that is so characteristic of the greatest part of 20th century culture.

Asplund, Lina Bo Bardi, Bogdanović, Pikionis, Plečnik, as well as numerous masters of Italian architecture that Ravnikar knew, demonstrated *a feeling for the antiquity* that is a moving



backwards, towards the archaic, the primeval and towards the search for the original symbols, towards **arhe**. This tendency has nothing to do with historicism or the post-Modern; however, it had already been recognised in the circle of "the young ones" who used to gather in the 1930s around Quadrante magazine: Figini and Pollini, Banfi-Belgiojoso-Peressutti-Rogers.

In any case, in 1957 Ravnikar explained the following – and though he was talking about Plečnik, this partly relates also to himself:

"On the other hand Plečnik famously mastered the expression in architecture. The expression that means a part of life, written into the building material. Perhaps this particularity is the most inaccessible characteristic of architecture; namely, that the trace of the human hand in the building material is one of the most intimate records that addresses human intelligence directly. It can be fluently read centuries later, even if it was created on the other side of the world. And anonymity only makes it more powerful."

In May 1983 Edvard Ravnikar opened a seminar in Venice that I organised on the occasion of the Italian translation of the 62/63 issue of **ab** magazine, in a most refined manner.

The title of the Italian publication was at the same time also the title of the seminar: Jože Plečnik – il ritorno del mito (Jože Plečnik – The Return of a Myth).

"(We wonder) about movements and architects, who are not "great"; why we are interested

in them just now and what they have in common... When International architecture was in full swing, they could not be related to each other, they remained personal and particular, in a particular place or at a particular time... since they did not allow themselves to be imprisoned by a system or by sterile contrasts they were able to remain in touch with history and their homeland. At the same time they were developing an original and free expression that does not exclude ratio; on the contrary, it is owing to this very freedom that they were able to take into consideration the rational bases of architecture. Their architecture is conceived for ordinary people, which means that it tried to answer all of the spiritual and material needs of the widest of classes... Even though they were not insensitive to abstraction, monumentality and pure form, they were always excited, above all, by symbolism, folk architecture and richness."

Lecture at Ravnikar Symposium in Ljubljana, 4.12.2007

Friedrich Achleitner

On a Quotation from Edvard Ravnikar:

“Today architecture can only be found in underdeveloped countries”

Edvard Ravnikar, Hotel Creina, Kranj

I know that one is well-advised not to weigh every word of Edvard Ravnikar’s often provocative, ironic remarks, but they are not to be underestimated either. The more the truth is hidden, the more persistently it stands its ground. And I cannot get the phrase I heard from him, probably forty years ago, out of my head: “Today architecture can only be found in underdeveloped countries”.

At that time, at the end of the 1960s, schools of architecture revelled in technological uto-



pias. Everything was mobile, flexible and variable, geared to the latest developments. The car had long ceased to serve as the model example of functional, let alone functionalist architecture; both had been replaced by the space capsule. It may very well be that in countries that were then not yet able to take part in this race one might have been resigned to the conviction that architecture, subject to the forces of gravity, linked to specific places and tied up in political and cultural straitjackets, could only survive in “underdeveloped countries”. Around this time, for example, Buckminster Fuller actually declared, in a lecture in Vienna, that Vienna’s St. Stephen’s Cathedral was far too heavy – from which one might conclude that he meant that it was also poor architecture.

Unfortunately, I cannot remember the tone of voice in which Ravnikar offered this declaration. Without a doubt, there was an accompanying undertone typical for that “old fox”, who at the time was some twenty years younger than my generation is today. I should qualify that by saying that I did not really know Edvard Ravnikar very well, that in fact I actually only met him once – which meeting, however, lasted three whole days, when he showed my wife and me around Ljubljana in 1971. Our target-sites focussed almost exclusively on Jože Plečnik; we did, however, stop by his housing estate “Ferant Garden” (Ferantov vrt) which at the time was about to be completed, and he gave me some material on the hotel in Kranj because I wanted to write

about it. For the trip to Carinthia he recommended some good pubs and gave us an introductory lecture on (Slovenia's uniquely light and sour rosé wine) "Cviček". I remember another remark which I thought characteristic of his personality. When he was considerably late for our second meeting, he apologised by saying that he had had an appointment at the hospital and since he did not make use of the privileges of a professor, he had to wait for a long time together with all the other patients. It occurred to me that this story would have to be related to professors back in Vienna.

Now to the subject-matter:

The very designation "underdeveloped country" – if by that he meant the Yugoslavia of that period – was already coquetry. He knew perfectly well that we Austrian students and young architects of the 1950s and 1960s were looking with some envy in the direction of Yugoslavia, because the architectural scene there seemed to us more vivid and varied – particularly in Slovenia and Croatia, where after a long Central European monarchist tradition and the myth of the Otto-Wagner-School, the influence of Le Corbusier too was in fruitful evidence.

We had, if I may confess, discovered contemporary Yugoslav architecture rather by chance and did so by means of the detour of anonymous architecture which then was a special subject of research further down through Greece and into Turkey. We were driven not so much by historical interest, but rather by the search for the sources of the development of new forms of residential buildings, particularly housing projects. My first trip, around 1960, with a tent from Istria down to the Neretva Delta and back via Sarajevo (where you could still pitch your tent amidst Bogumil tombs) opened up a new world for me, and not only with regard to architecture. During subsequent trips one was time and again taken by surprise when one found oneself standing in front of buildings that looked as if they had "fallen from heaven", already redeeming a future we could only dream of.

In the course of reviewing Viennese modernity and the Otto-Wagner-School, (initially inspired in the 1950s by my fellow student Johannes Spalt, 10 years my senior) we also came to focus on Max Fabiani and Jože Plečnik.

And now I would like to make the leap forward in time to Edvard Ravnikar. In order to give you a brief impression of the situation around 1970, allow me to quote two paragraphs of my first paper on one of his buildings:

Quote: Architecture and urbanism (bauforum 24/1971)

Housing estate "Ferant-Garden", 1964-71

In Ljubljana, our "new discovery" that built objects should not be considered isolated organisms but as integrated in a larger urban planning context, is smiled at with a little condescension. In this city architecture and town planning were never separated. The tradition of urbane thinking has in any case never been interrupted since Camillo Sitte, Max Fabiani and Jože Plečnik. Present-day architecture continues to be determined by this tradition of thinking. This is what makes this city's architecture so fascinating, and at every turn one feels how different architects dealt with it.

Perhaps it is also part of the tradition of the Slovenian Republic and the nation's capital city, with its approximately 200,000 inhabitants, that one architectural approach remained dominant at a time, embodied in a single person or school. The heritage of Jože Plečnik, who left his mark on this city like no other, was doubtless taken up by Edvard Ravnikar. But he also had to accept the typically Slovenian fate that he be overlooked in the wide-meshed registries of modern architectural historiography. A very special kind of minority problem seems to be at stake

*Edvard Ravnikar, Ferantov vrt
Residential and Commercial Complex,
Ljubljana*

here. The big nation states simply have more and better opportunities to present their cultural productions in the light of the larger world stage. It is only in Ljubljana that one understands Ravnikar's concept of architecture as something local which can only be understood in the context of its surrounding circumstances.

The first question would be whether the situation in which Edvard Ravnikar worked really was "underdeveloped", and whether the answers he found to the problems of his city and his time were really behind the times. Already at this point the precariousness of the modernistic scale of progress flashes through one's mind, and one might well say that whoever does not release architecture from its historical and social responsibility must at least maintain a critical distance to the trends of his time.



As one can see, Ravnikar's provocative statement inevitably emphasises the tension between local and global architecture. And I do not want to play one off against the other, but want to try to maintain a somewhat tolerable distance to both. Of course, I am obviously relying on speculation and allegations in this matter. But I do not wish to construct antagonism between international, global and regional or local architectures, which in any case would only be a dubious endeavour, but rather between two fields of work and purpose-oriented attitudes articulated, at present, particularly through the development or the explosion of information media. There have always been supra-regional phenomena in architecture, even if they did not affect

the entire globe. Gothic architecture, for example, due to the migration of the guilds of masons (e.g. from Paris to Budapest), was expansive and not tied to a particular place, and obviously had to rely on the local for material and personnel. Baroque, the expansive “propaganda architecture” of Christianity, even made its way as far as South America. Architects such as Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680) who was welcomed in Paris with great honours, could already be designated the star architects of their day. And one must not forget that these were “upper class phenomena”; demonstrations of power by often related dynasties that were part of a European network, and that they represented a very small segment of the architectural production, for the most part churches, monasteries and castles.

In order to continue with our subject and get a closer look at Edvard Ravnikar, I would like to point out a contradiction, an area of conflict to which architects today are particularly exposed and which, in some way, has always existed but which, due to the speed of the development of information networks, has developed a special quality.

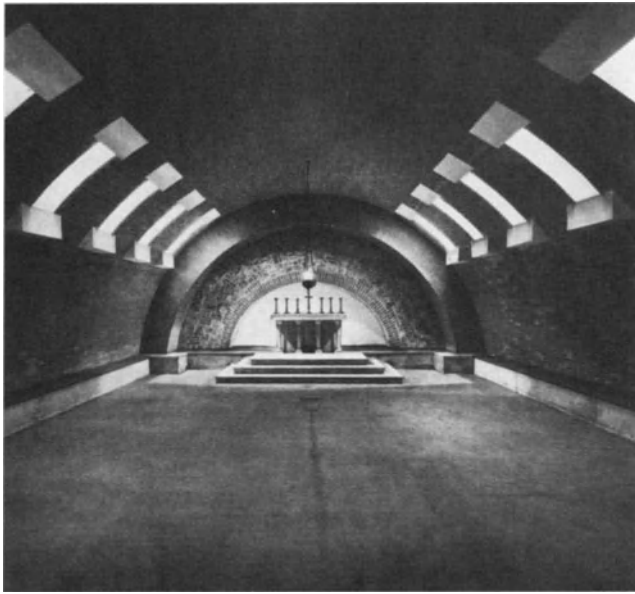
Let’s call them by their name: the so-called star architects, though I prefer to call them big architects, the international, even global opinion leaders, a caste of individual producers of trends, subjects, images and forms who rightly or wrongly lay claim to progress and offer (often rapidly changing) catalogues rich with tendencies. We would not be living in the age of neoliberalism if this did not involve an instrumentalisation of market laws, fashions, competitions or games of public presence. I will try to talk about this in a value-free way, even if this expression once fell into disrepute. It cannot be denied that a Frank Gehry, a Zaha Hadid, a Rem Koolhaas or (the other way round) also a Peter Zumthor did indeed move something in the minds of thousands of architects. And not in the minds of architects alone. The so-called Bilbao-effect is no illusion nor delusion, but a real change in the life of a city. And it’s not only architects that make pilgrimages to Vals, only many civilised persons don’t know that they will also meet Plečnik there. The problem of big architecture is less the content offered (the intent might often be annoying) than the fact that this architecture becomes the subject of the global distribution of effects, news, sensations. In this world of architecture, mechanisms come into play which rise from the lowlands of tourism to rivalry between cities and groups of companies. And paradoxically locations are not only upgraded, highlighted, but also reinvented or successfully established.

One can say not only that this segment of “big architecture” has grown, but that roles too have been changed and changing: museums, exhibition spaces, operas and concert halls, global corporate headquarters and more are forced to face global visual competition, if they want to be noticed at all. Here the neoliberal economy is combined with individualist rankings, the playing-fields contrasting increasingly with their living space, architecture enters the stock exchange and submits to the vast interests of managers and shareholders. And all of this is linked to the concepts of speed and tax deductability. This architecture is designed for a rapidly-moving market, depreciation periods last 30 years at most, then the architecture is discarded, if it wasn’t formally worn out long before. Buildings degenerate to become clearly visible symbols of this change: they survive in documentation, not through conservation. Of course this architecture also has to be seen in connection with the changes in the technical production of buildings, which can be traced back to the great world fairs of the 19th century, the Crystal Palace remains the “flagship” of a myth of the revolutionary progress of modernity. Naturally this “big architecture” provokes the highest of individual performances which then return as standards to the

Jože Plečnik, the crypt of the Church of the Sacred Heart in Prague

quiet places of local building. And I know that this one side of building cannot be seen as an isolated phenomenon. It changes our life too much and we are, honestly speaking, also far too dependent on it. But what does the other side look like, the side which modernity denounces as conservative, if not reactionary? What, by contrast, is the concept of architecture of somebody like Jože Plečnik who could not (better, did not want to) disconnect architecture from the simple but extensive foundations of its existence.

Architecture that deals with people in their social situation, their thinking, their history, their material needs, cannot ignore their living space, their places, their sociotopes and biotopes. Global speed is automatically transformed into local slowness. As a matter of fact, this life-world (this “small world” with its small architects who often achieve great things) does indeed take notice of the big one. But it reacts differently, maybe more sedately, with more precaution, more scepticism. I suppose Edvard Ravnikar felt an obligation towards this world, although, as his town planning and major projects suggest, he had the makings of a “big ar-



chitect”. This was not a comfortable but a radical position, and, metaphorically speaking, came close to the “priestly attitude” his teacher Plečnik demanded with regard to architecture. Architecture responsibly intervening in a living space, on a building site, which the architect does not abandon once back aboard his or her private jet after completion, but for which he or she continues to assume responsibility, follows different criteria; and I suppose that these will rather be called perseverance, sustainability (to use a word that once was “in”), durability, permanence. It’s easy, of course, to discard these attitudes as reactionary and underdeveloped. But I have the impression that buildings designed with a longer time horizon, that accept collective memory, that conserve a cultural remembrance, that such buildings not only age materially less quickly, but also their effect remains youthful. To refer once again to the national architectural patron saint, Jože Plečnik, during each visit to his buildings I discovered something new, surprising, always came away with a new idea, even if only some small new aspect, like his confrontation with Gottfried Semper.

Example: dialectics between structure, corporeality, space and surface, ornament. The windows of the crypt of the Church of the Sacred Heart in Prague (1928-31), photographed three weeks ago. The crypt is a room with a barrel vault and prominent brickwork. At the windows, i.e., where it is broken up, it becomes flat, one might even say it has the effect of a wallpapered surface, and the white surface, the prototype of a dematerialised surface, is transformed into its opposite and all of a sudden creates strong volume. In this way architecture speaks through its autonomous means.

I suppose that in 1970, Edvard Ravnikar, who at that time was not even so much of an “old fox”, used “underdeveloped” as a metaphor for something very positive, for something that was always progressive, because it was challenging, i.e., because it was architecture that does not let itself become enchained by political, economic or commercial interests (alone), but consciously assumes responsibility for all people and forms of living, i.e. accepts also ethic categories beyond aesthetic exploitation. In Edvard Ravnikar’s work, this effort can be felt throughout, even if he did not reject the call of the “great wide world”. Maybe his urban planning, perhaps too the “Square of the Revolution” should once be discussed from this perspective of a comprehensive notion of architecture. His teacher Plečnik formulated new ideas in seemingly old-fashioned language and gained inspiration for new daring spatial and formal concepts from an intimate knowledge e.g. of Roman antiquity. Ravnikar, in his reformulation of locations (such as the square-like extension of the old city centre of Kranj), closer to the present day and with an enlarged scope, did something similar with the so-called genius loci, by combining all elements he found there with those that he added, to form a new unity.

And seen in this way, perhaps architecture can really only be found in “underdeveloped places” today (I intentionally leave the notion of countries out of it), or rather: in cultural situations that can afford the luxury of slowness, perseverance, responsibility toward people, historical awareness, collective memory and a permanent reflection on their own standpoint. This, of course, also requires a knowledge of global developments, constraints and seductions, trends and fashions, illusions of speeds, the aroma-less digital world of images, in order to be able to appreciate the aroma of Cviček at all. We have to continue, I think, to afford for ourselves research on location, patience in dealing with problems, respect for needs and conventions; in short, to treat ourselves to the requisite luxury of being attentive but also imperturbable with regard to life.

Lecture at Ravnikar Symposium in Ljubljana, 3.12.2007

Meetings with Edvard Ravnikar

Edvard Ravnikar: “Almost everything is architecture”

Ravnikar made this statement almost forty years ago, probably in reaction to the enigmatically triumphant slogan of the Viennese architect Hans Hollein: “Everything is architecture”.

Ravnikar changed this slogan into a “bon mot” revealing a greater truth. It leaves more space for further reflection, includes almost everything, yet not everything.

Typically Ravnikar, roguish and with a wink; against anything apodeictic. Ravnikar was a Socratic questioner, scarcely allowing a glimpse into his own inner life. Our friend Sokratis Dimitriou¹ said Ravnikar was a Byzantine person whose secret world could never be entirely fathomed; if one door was opened, one would find others closed; no matter how many keys one used, his inner life could never be “unlocked”.

As we said, Ravnikar was a questioner. His questions made his students as well as his friends think, reflect, even guess. He pursued this course even in the realm of the banal.

He once asked his architecture students: “Which is the most important book of architecture?” The answers to this riddle ranged from Vitruvius to Alberti, Palladio, Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright, and finally to Giedion’s “Space, Time and Architecture”.

To all suggestions Ravnikar shook his impressive head.

Then came his answer: “NEUFERT – well, the Neufert”. Neufert’s Architect’s Data was the most important book of architecture, he said. It is to be found on all drawing boards in all architecture studios in all countries, has been translated and published in all languages; the “Neufert” is consulted everywhere and by all designers; in it one finds out about dimensional relations, space requirements for different building tasks; its system representations are internationally communicable; everybody consults the “Neufert”; no architect can do without it.

I remember meeting Edvard Ravnikar personally six times:

1. When we showed a Plečnik exposition for the first time in a German-speaking country, in 1967 in Vienna, organised by the Austrian Society for Architecture, which had been founded just a short time previous, to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the death of the Slovenian giant – 40 years ago that is – Ravnikar was there. Podrecca had invited him.

Marjan Mušič and France Stelè had also come to visit the Viennese exposition. (It disappeared in Prague during the suppression of the Prague Spring in 1968, by the way.)

This year marks a strange link between Plečnik and Ravnikar: the 50th anniversary of Plečnik’s death has been commemorated and now we are commemorating the 100th anniversary of Ravnikar’s birth.

My prediction on the occasion of the Plečnik exposition in Munich in 1987, that “The wings on Plečnik’s works will grow ever stronger, allowing them to ascend into timelessness” has proven true all over the world during the past decades. In the course of time we will see whether Ravnikar’s life work will succeed in climbing all the way to the top of Mount Olympus.

2. At the TRIGON competition of the neighbouring countries Austria, Italy and Yugoslavia in 1969, in Graz, we were both jurors for the “architecture and freedom” competition, together with the Swiss Max Bill, Franca Helg (the partner of Franco Albini) from Milan, Friedrich St. Florian from Graz (who now lives in the USA) and the director of the “New Gallery of the City

of Graz”, Wilfried Skreiner. It was at this occasion that the words quoted in the title – “Almost everything is architecture” – were spoken. In his selection process Ravnikaŕ had a feeling for sensitive projects. In the Trigon catalogue Ravnikaŕ wrote a short text “Architecture and Freedom” that began thus:

“...The purpose of our activities in the field of architecture encompasses rational and also ir-



rational values. The former are measurable, generally accessible and easy to describe. The latter, however, remain mostly hidden...

... Freedom as such is an abstract concept; if you want to be free, you have to be able to be free of something. Man actually needs a complex of individual freedoms, which for each of us mean general freedom. A well organised city offers freedom from provincial despair. Having one’s own apartment liberates one from oppression from the social environment, etc.”

3. In December 1970, the Austrian Society for Architecture organised the three-day “First Austrian Congress of Architecture” on the one-hundredth birthdays of Adolf Loos and Josef Hoffmann (which are only 5 days apart: Loos 10.12.1870; Hoffmann 15.12.1870) at the Berghaus (Khuner) which had been designed and built by Loos and Heinrich Kulka in 1930, known today as “Pension Alpenhof” in Payerbach on the Semmering.

Ravnikaŕ was among the invited foreign guests and sometimes made cryptic remarks.

4. In October, 1971, we made a trip to Slovenia as the Society of Architecture. Plečnik’s buildings were of course the first to be visited. We started in Bogojina. When we arrived, by bus, in the evening in Ljubljana, a group including France Stelè, Ravnikaŕ, Plečnik’s colleague Tone Bitenc, and the young art historian Damjan Prelovšek were waiting for us at the Prešeren memorial. The next day we visited the most important Plečnik buildings. Ravnikaŕ was very reserved, almost shy when he presented his own buildings, most of which were residential.

We spent the evening drinking Cviček with our new Slovenian friends in a Ljubljana wine bar. I can still remember the melodious sound of the German-speaking Slovenians.

I had already followed Plečnik’s tracks in Ljubljana earlier, in 1963, (with Maria), but I had not been sufficiently informed about his late works.

Jože Plečnik, Church in Bogojina

Although I was not yet familiar with the architect Ravnikar, knew nothing about him, the printers' building designed by him as well as the office building near the Dragon Bridge, not far from Plečnik's Flat Iron Building, attracted my attention. It was exactly this type of structural tectonic clarity that we were striving for in architecture.

On the ground floor there was a bookshop in which I searched in vain for literature on



Plečnik, but at least found a book by Neidhardt & Grabrian.

Back to the Slovenian excursion: on the third day Ravnikar took us to Istria, to Piran and Poreč, to Motovun, Grožnjan, Hrastovlje. There Ravnikar was on home turf. The Adriatic, the Venetian influence, the Karst were his local background, his territory.

On the fourth day, the day of our return journey, Ravnikar showed us his latest buildings in Kranj: The "Creina" hotel, a reinforced concrete building with exposed brickwork panelling and impressive interior spaces, and the entirely different "Globus" department store. We also visited the municipality building with the vaulted roof built ten years earlier.

Ravnikar's buildings showed equally constructional-structural clarity, enormous feeling for materials and subtle furnishings.

5. Around 1980 I was on a jury for the enlargement of the opera house in Graz together with Ravnikar. He was working on the Cankarjev dom project, the cultural and congress centre in Ljubljana, and had gathered valuable experience in theatre and stage construction. Wawrik won.

6. In February, 1981, Ravnikar gave a guest lecture at the University of Technology in Munich on the subject of illegal building in Slovenia. I remember that at my faculty of architecture the lecture was announced on posters as "The Black Houses of Slovenia". I had the pleasure of introducing Ravnikar in Munich.

We now know more than what I have related about these encounters which took place between the 60s and 80s of the last century, thanks in particular to the publication "Hommage à Edvard Ravnikar 1907–1993", edited and compiled by France Ivanšek.

Ravnikar saw Slovenia gain its independence in 1991 only a short time before his death.

I never detected a nationalist attitude in Ravnikar. He appeared a man of the world, a citizen

Edvard Ravnikar's Ljudska pravica Print Works next to Plečnik's Flatiron Building, Ljubljana

Edvard Ravnikar, Globus Department Store, Kranj

Edvard Ravnikar, Ossuary for the Fallen in WWI, Žale

Edvard Ravnikar, The Modern Gallery, Ljubljana

of the world, a cosmopolitan European who could communicate in all countries, in all cities; in Venice and Trieste, as well as in Vienna and Paris, and who possessed a commanding knowledge of his subject.

As one may know, Ravnikar studied in Vienna for four years as a young man, between 1926 and 1930; then continued his architectural studies in Ljubljana with Plečnik and earned his diploma in 1935; and later, during the first half of 1939 he worked with Le Corbusier in Paris.

Before that, he built the rotunda for the fallen soldiers of the World War I in Žale in 1937-1939 – still tied entirely to Plečnik's style of sacred architecture.

His "Modern Gallery" in Ljubljana near Ljubljana's Tivoli Park reveals an inner conflict between Plečnik and Le Corbusier. In the structure of the building I discovered reminiscences



of Otto Wagner, on the wall surfaces echoes of the Plečnik-school, but also a hint of Corbu-elements such as the canopy.

Out of Plečnik's legacy Ravnikar was still in possession of the ornamental; this was cleared away by Le Corbusier. Ravnikar's later, subtle handling of materials and details kept fragments thereof alive, albeit in a covert, almost invisible way it seems to me, available to the eye and to the haptic faculties. But he did end up renouncing ornamental-decorative forms.

With a lot of imagination, together with the support of perfectly matched construction engineers he developed his structural measures void of any decorative components.

The end of World War II must have been a great relief in Slovenia, as it was in Austria. As early as 1940 Plečnik-Corbusier-architecture gave way to Ravnikar architecture which, for the next five decades, entirely guided and determined his building activity; he had come into his own as an architect.

The culmination of this developmental process was his later Square of the Revolution in the centre of Ljubljana – known today as the Square of the Republic. Here he provided the former early Roman settlement of Emona (emona = hebrew: faith) with a modern city centre for the late 20th century.

In early sketches we already see a twin-tower shape emerging, first cubic, with a triangular

layout; initially with two sides of the equilateral triangle in a parallel arrangement; and suddenly, in the 70s, rotated so that two bevelled points of the triangle are arranged opposite each other – a stroke of genius!

The wind coming from the Karawanken (mountain range) over the plain to the Ljubljana castle can now whistle through this narrow pass.

The towers face each other like magnets and electrify the square ensemble. Things could easily go wrong when building high-rises in an old city centre, which almost happened in Vienna four years ago, when the “Wien-Mitte” towers were planned to stand only 800 meters from St. Stephen’s Cathedral.

In the case of Vienna, the centre of the city was already there: St. Stephen’s steeple, 137 me



tres high. But here in Ljubljana the concept fit. Ravnikar’s instinct for each particular location is admirable. Ravnikar was not only a great architect, but also a great town planner. He responds to what the place is saying or intervenes through his architecture to make it speak.

There is so much more that deserves attention, like Ravnikar’s drawings. Not only did the art of his architectural drawings become a personal mode of expression, but so too did his free drawings; his sketches are visual delicacies. His characteristic diagonal crosshatching conveys a spatial atmosphere – analogue drawings that cannot be produced by the digital machine or process.

As one has undoubtedly noticed, I remain incorrigibly analogue. The local organisers had rather a hard time with me: no mobile phone, no fax machine, no e-mail; only the telephone, the old snail mail and railroad connections. But I do believe – and without the aid of media – in Ravnikar’s statement, that “almost everything is architecture”.

Lecture at Ravnikar Symposium in Ljubljana, 3.12.2007

¹ Sokratis Dimitriou, 1919–1999; co-founder of the Austrian Society for Architecture, editor of the journals *Der Aufbau* and *Bauforum*; Professor of Architectural History in Graz.

Buildings and Projects



The Modern Gallery, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Cankarjeva 15, Ljubljana

Designed: 1936-39

Constructed: 1940-51

Whenever designing a museum or a gallery we are faced with the task of how to enable the visitor to get to the collection that interests him without sending him on a tiring and disturbing search through various spaces. In the case of the Modern Gallery this problem was solved by making all exhibition spaces accessible from the central hall that is to serve as a vestibule and as a space that separates and connects respective exhibition spaces.

Every artist is an individualist and individual artists, divided into groups, do not want to appear disregarded when presented to the public. This is why it is necessary that all exhibition spaces be of equal importance and on the same level. If divided into many levels, respective artists may feel discriminated against. This is another reason why a clear articulation of the plan is needed, as every group wants the public to find their way to it without following winding routes.

The arrangement of spaces on a single level is better also because it enables the visitor to gain immediate and good orientation.

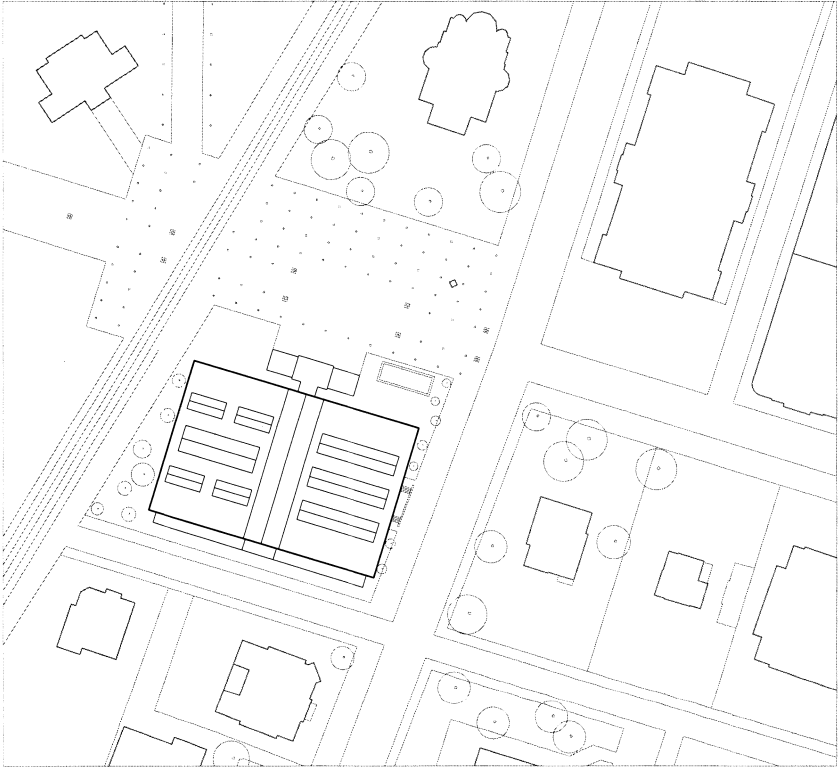
Exhibition spaces in the Modern Gallery will be of varying sizes. There will be one large hall of 12 x 15 m, three spaces of 8 x 25 m and four small spaces of 12 x 6 m. Apart from these there are spaces that enjoy light coming from the side, which allows free arrangements (the American way; the windows are adjustable). Here painting and sculpture can mix and there are special walls for paintings and graphics. Every part of the exhibition is accessible directly from the central hall, while the exit from the exhibition could be separate. Orientation of the building is N – S, which is why all the spaces that are lit by skylights with high light from the side have equal southern and northern light, whereas all the spaces in

the central part have eastern and western light. We Slovenes are building this contemporary art gallery without the financial means that would be needed to achieve the modern ideal on the whole. Sophisticated lighting devices and other technical equipment used in wealthy countries (Switzerland, the Netherlands, Sweden, England, etc.) are for us beyond reach due to modest financial means. Still, everything was done to achieve as favourable and as variable a lighting as possible and to provide spaces that allow for flexible arrangements. All exhibition spaces have surfaces without reflex within heights that can be graphically determined. Exhibition spaces are furnished with skylights that are far more economical than intermediary glass ceilings and prisms.

Edvard Ravnikar

Kronika slovenskih mest, Year VII, No. 2, Ljubljana 1940, p. 65-74

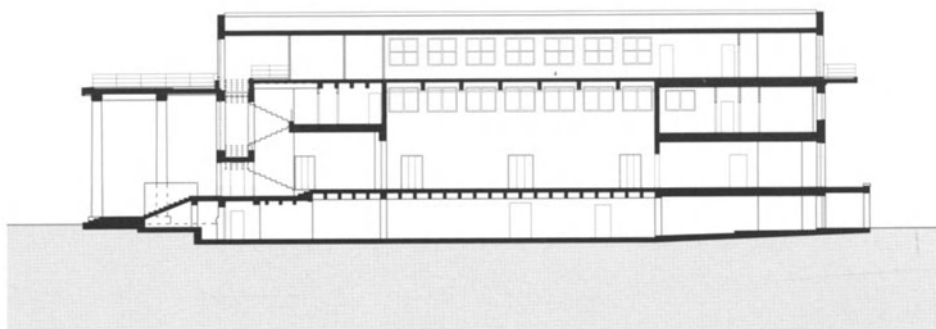
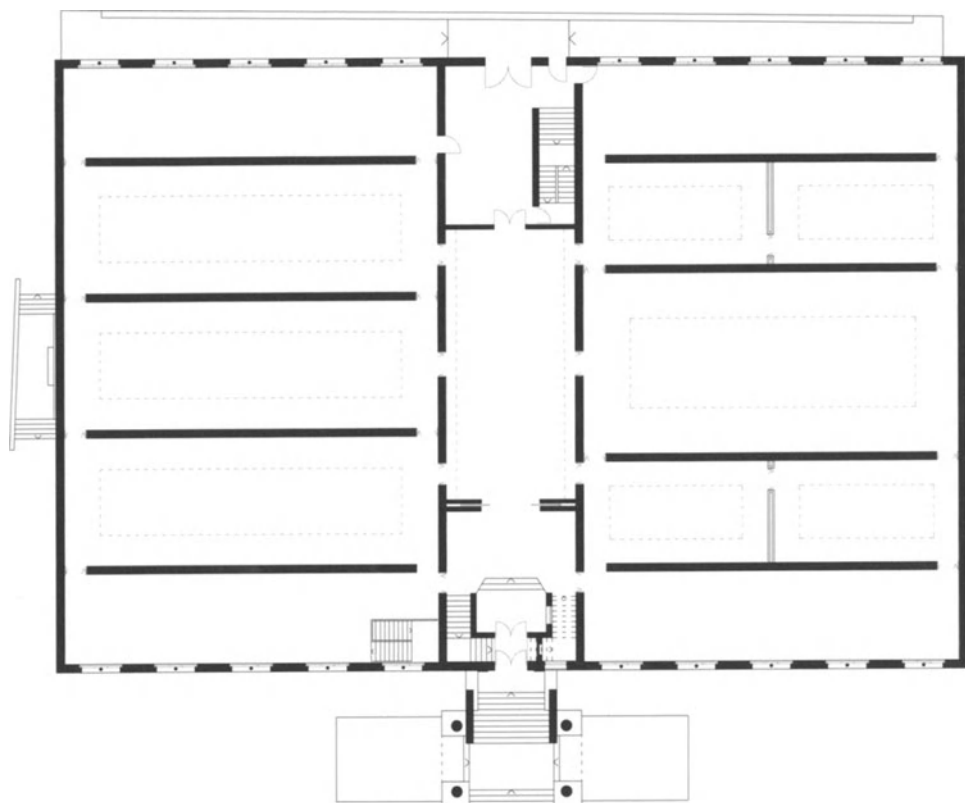
site plan



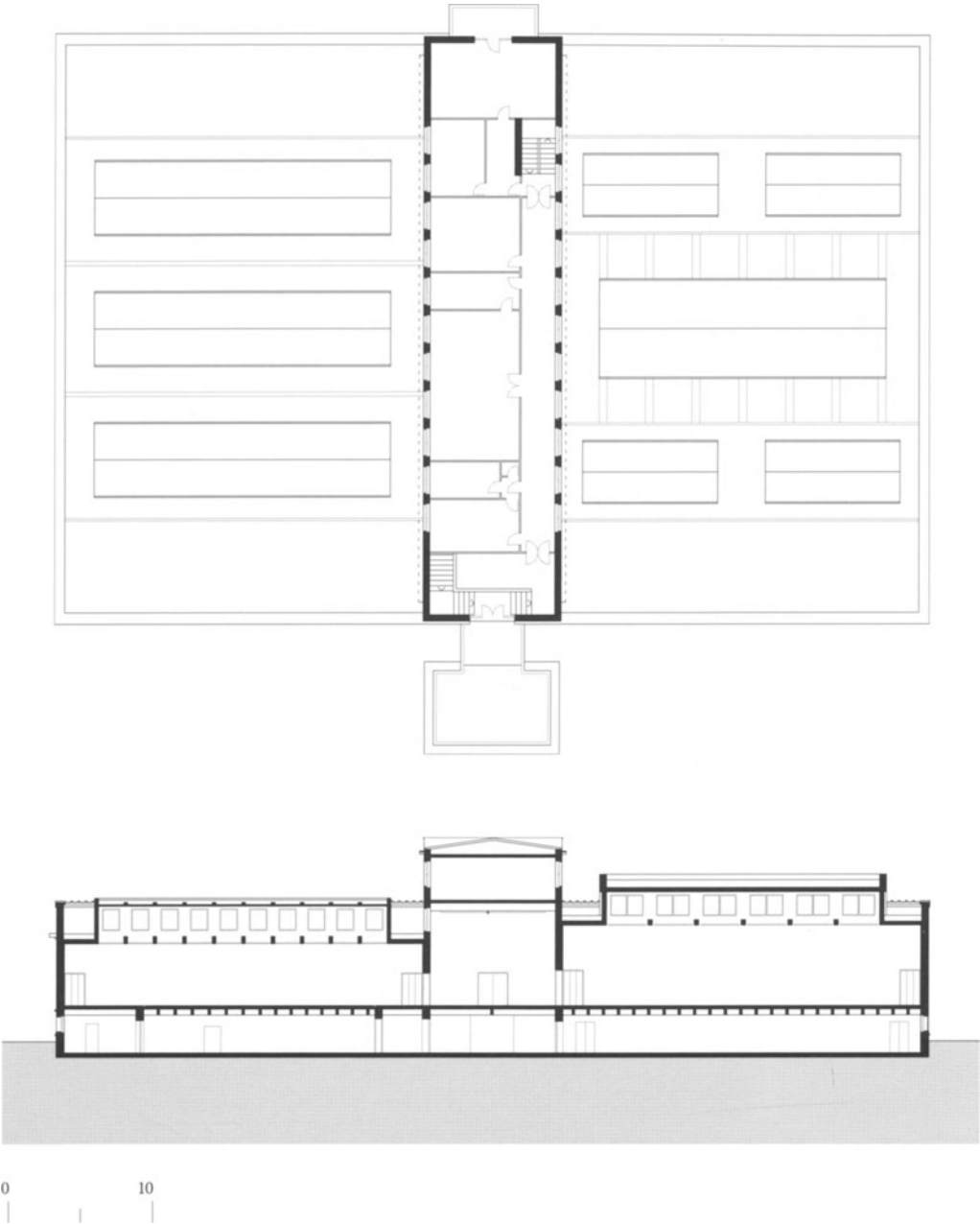
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ground floor, section



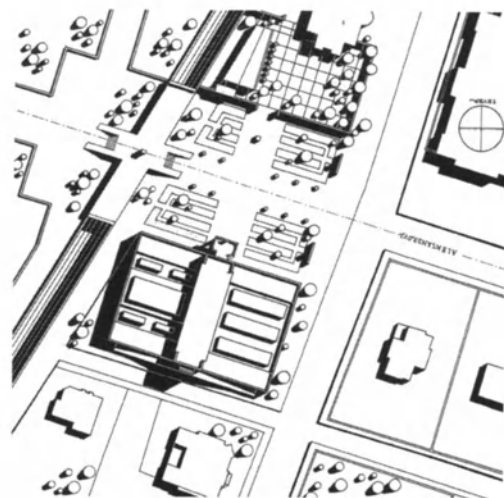
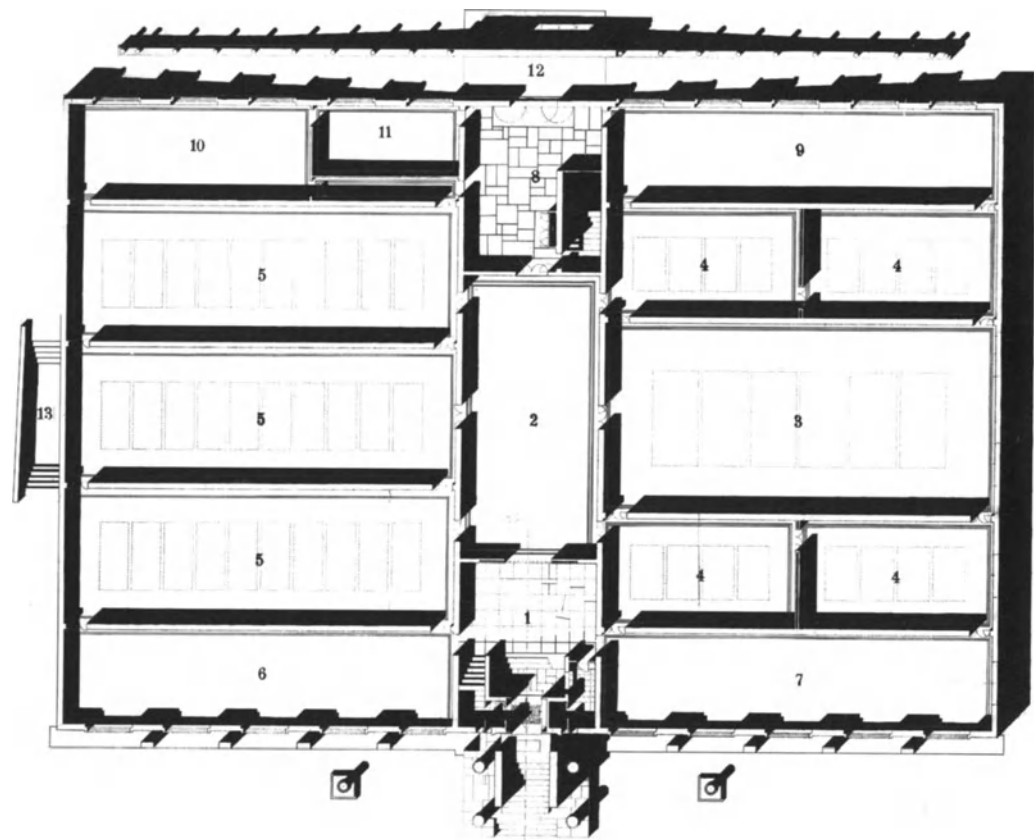
first floor, section



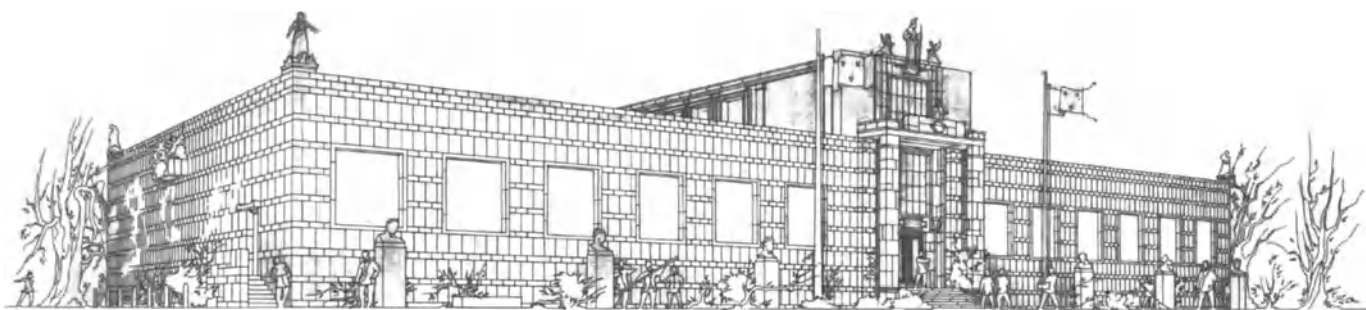




exhibition floor, unrealised site plan

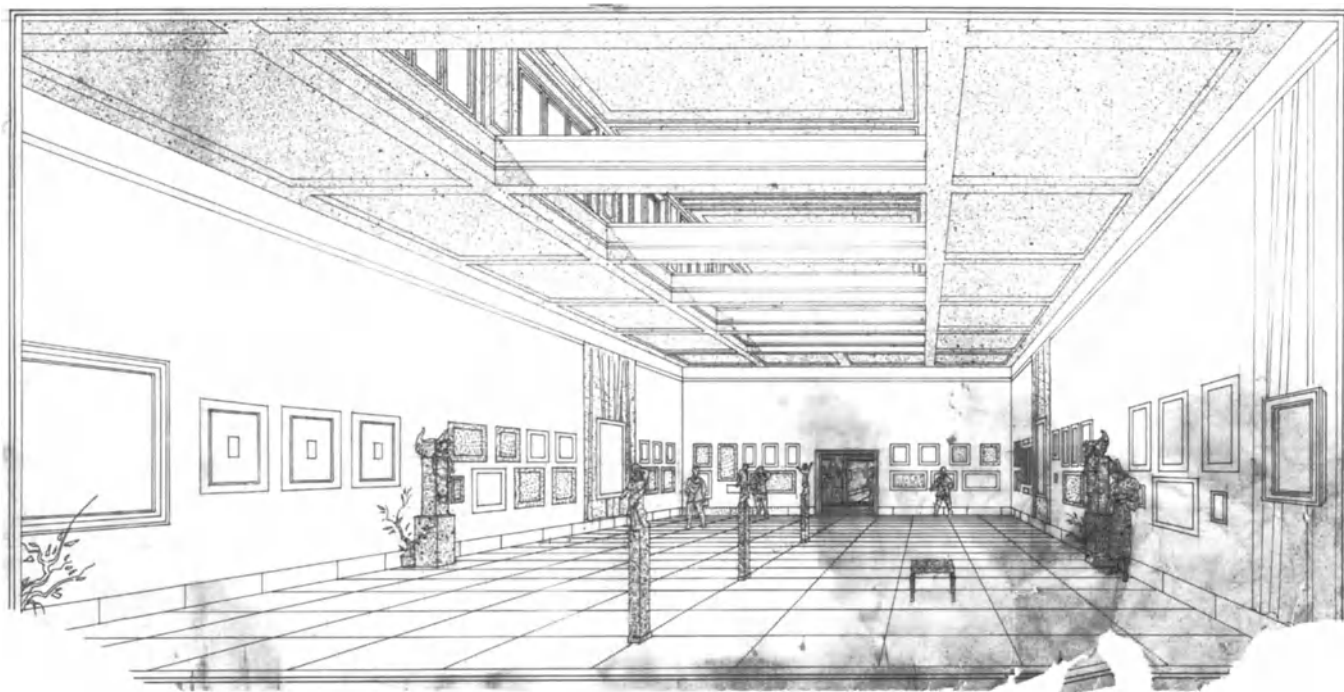


early sketch



*perspective drawing, central hall
(below)*

facade detail drawing (right)





central exhibition hall (left)

exhibition hall (right)



S STANOVANJA
 OZL OZZ IN LOKALI
 ZBR ZBORNIČE IN RESTAVRACIJA
 SE SERVISI
 SO SODIŠČA NOTRANJA UPRAVA
 ZA ZAPORI
 L TRGOVSKI IN GOSTINSKI LOKAL
 KB KOMUNALNA BANKA
 SOE SOŠKE ELEKTRARNE
 SP STANOVANJSKO POSLOVNE STAV
 TR TRŽNICA
 SZ SOCIALNO ZAVAROVANJE
 ZD ZDRAVSTVENI DOM
 OG OSEMLETKA IN GIMNAZIJA
 I INTERNAT
 KD KULTURNI DOM
 KI KINO
 LK LETNI KINO
 AP AVTOBUSNA POSTAJA
 R RESTAVRACIJA
 H HOTEL
 DU DOM UPOKOJENCEV
 OV OTROŠKI VRTEC
 O OBSTOJEČE ZGRADBE
 G GARAZE
 TP TRAFOPOSTAJA
 S12 ETAŽE
 P PARKING
 OI OTROŠKO IGRIŠČE
 SI ŠPORTNO IGRIŠČE
 J UMETNO JEZERO
 PP PEŠPOTI

PROFILI CEST:



Regulation of Nova Gorica, Slovenia

Designed: 1948-50

Partly executed

When as a result of peace negotiations Gorica was definitively lost and dreams of a Yugoslav Gorica went up in smoke, we took up our task with even greater eagerness. We were told to build something great, beautiful and proud, something that would shine over the border. And everybody – from peasants to those in the highest of political offices – was excited about this. Modern urban planning thus became for us a weapon in the national and political struggles.

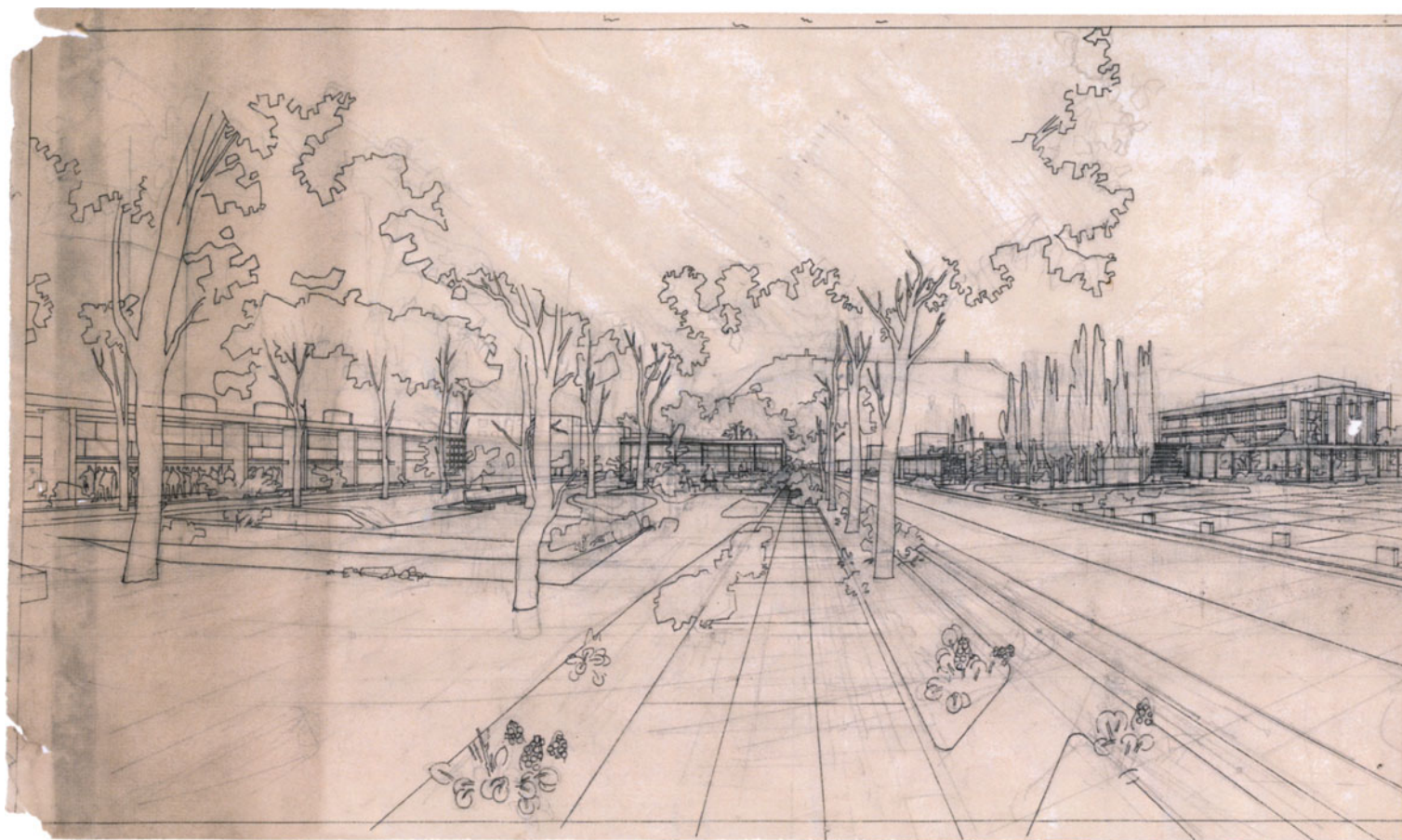
Therefore the concept has to emanate a kind of generosity and breadth without major mistakes in scale, an urban beauty without the empty megalomania of built masses and above all, it must include large planted areas and vegetation, characteristic for this region. The concept we submitted was already resonating with Le Corbusier's urban planning philosophy that we had already encountered prior to WWII through Slovene architects who had worked in his office.

According to Le Corbusier's theory of the city, which we then believed in fully, the division of the city into four parts coincides with the city's four main functions: centre, living, industry and leisure – at least for cities of a certain scale. Looking back now, since most of our cities are of this size, it was perfectly justifiable to use this principle as a departure point when designing the future Nova Gorica. The main road with north-south orientation was to be the backbone of the centre, its upper part the recreation area, its left part housing and its right part the industrial area. Along this almost 2-km-long street, densely planted with plane trees, a Mediterranean type centre would emerge, with public buildings on both sides, which would open its branches and shops out onto the pavements.

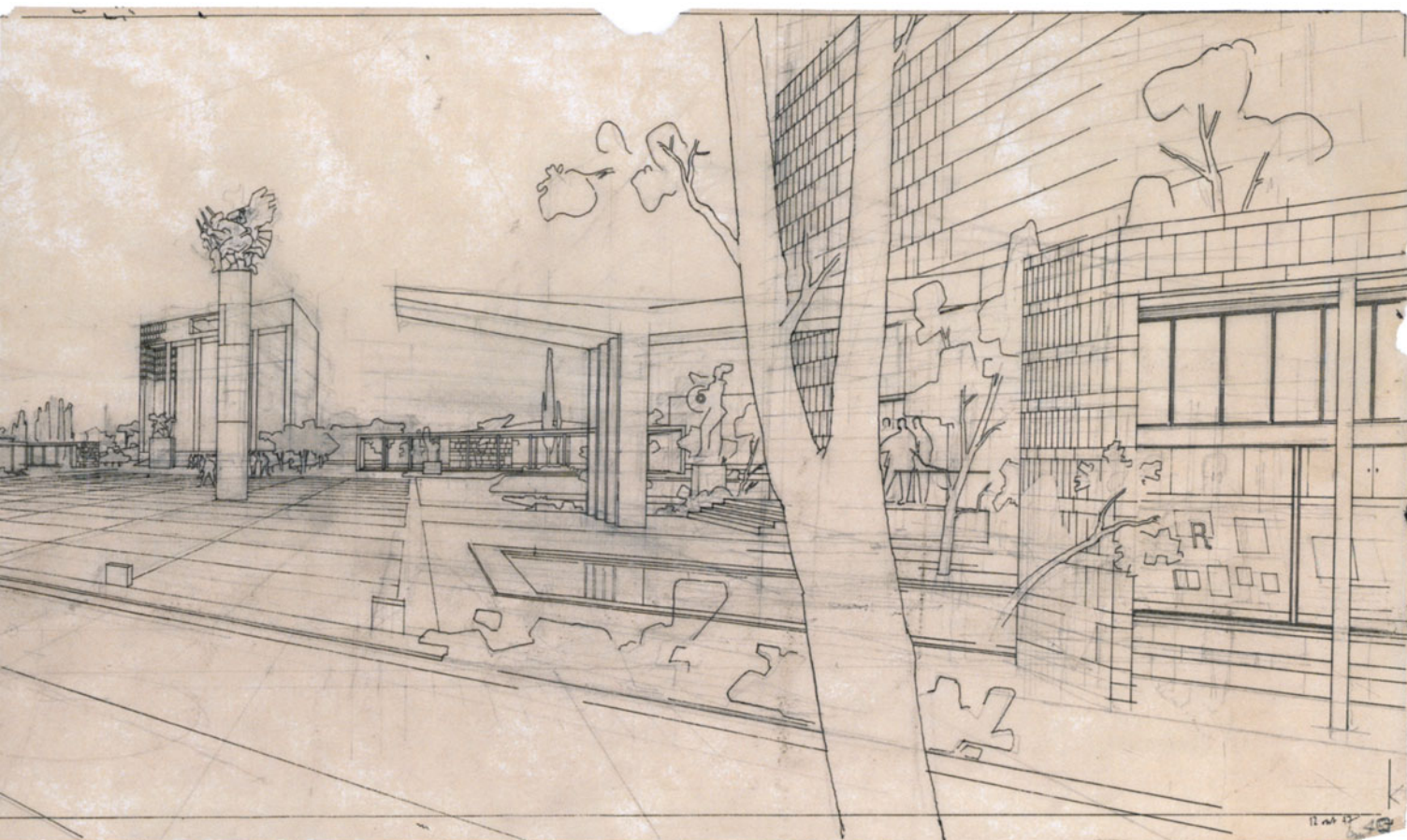
The architect envisaged a street composition of Empire style, as seen in Italy and southern France and, to a certain extent, in Slovenia as well, one which would fit into the surrounding landscape beautifully. In section, right next to the street, a few lines of densely-planted large trees (e.g. plane trees) were envisaged, under which shopping and other general urban activities would take place along a wide pavement and service road, together with apartments, business and other public buildings. This would add up to an open-air public space some 80 metres wide that would accommodate everything that takes place in a city of this size.

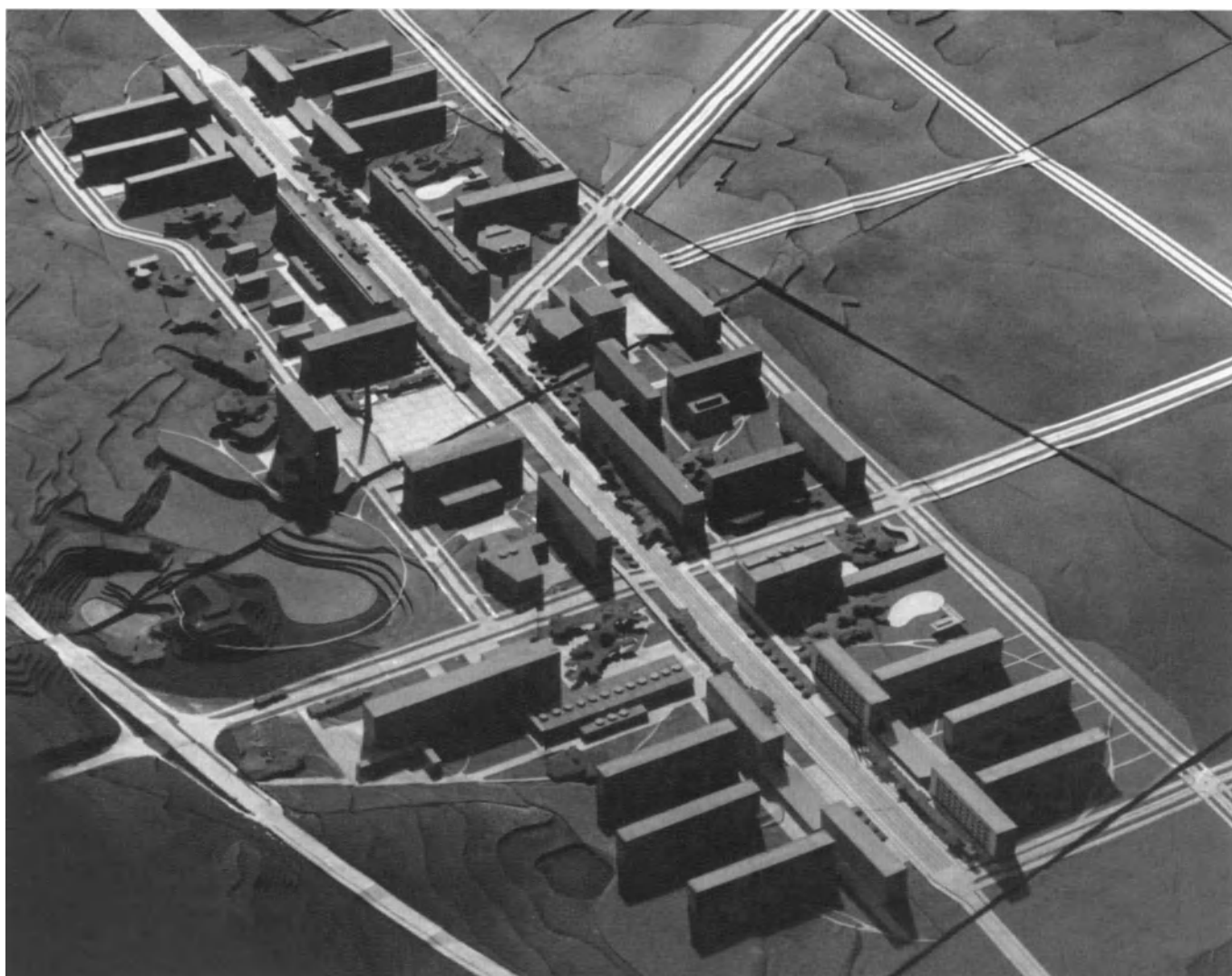
Edvard Ravnikar

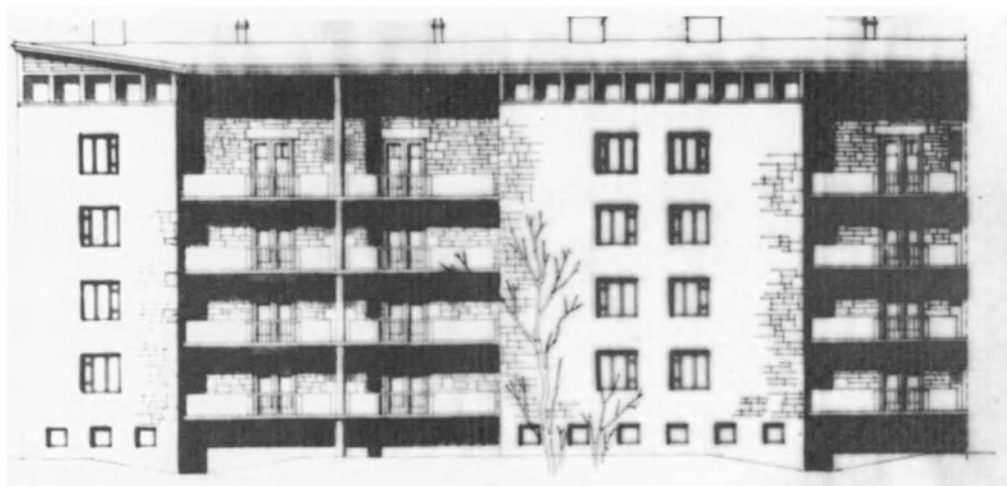
AB, Ljubljana 1984, No. 68-69, p. 43-46



*perspective drawing of the main road in
Nova Gorica*





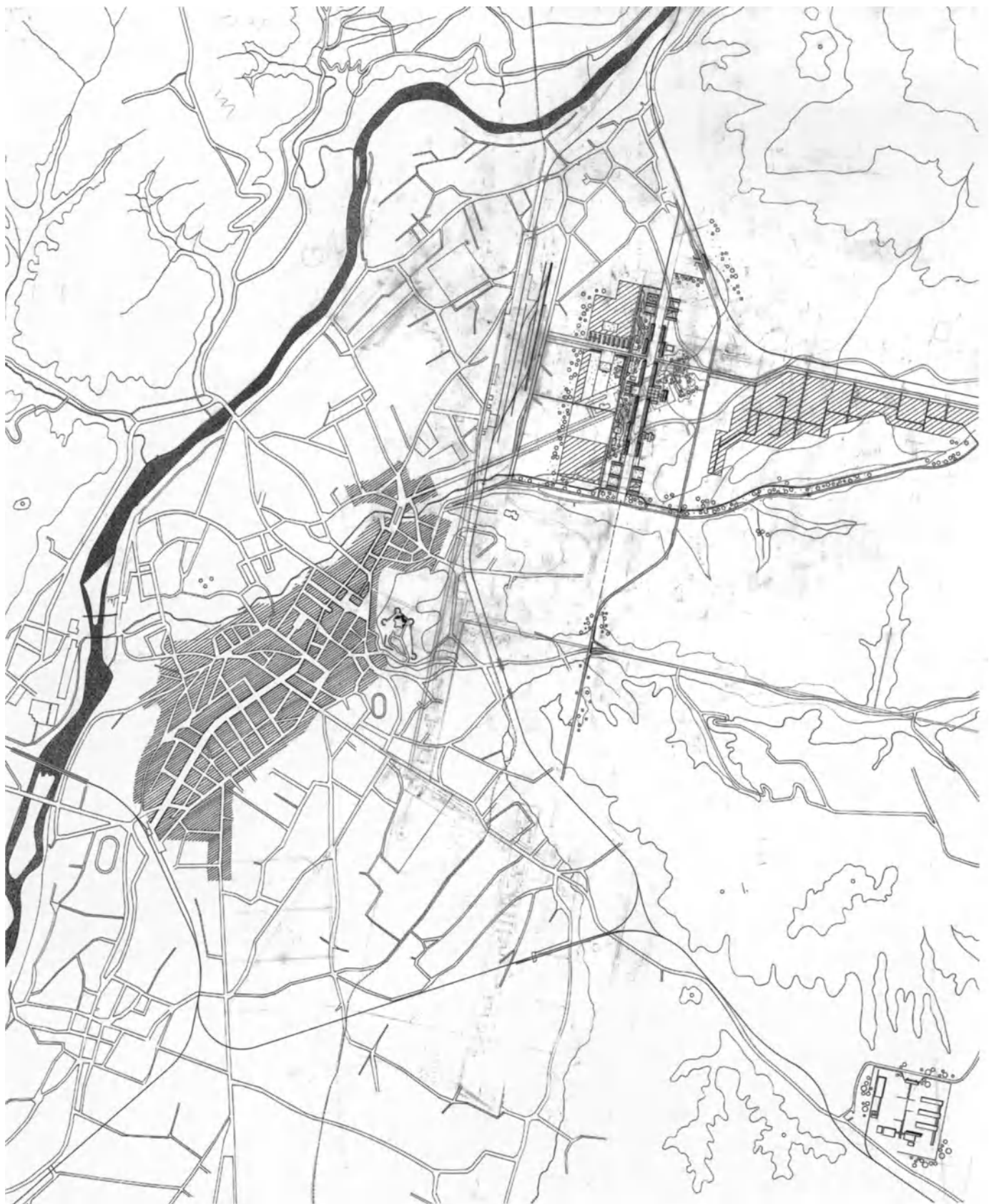


model (left)

*apartment block, elevation drawing
(above)*

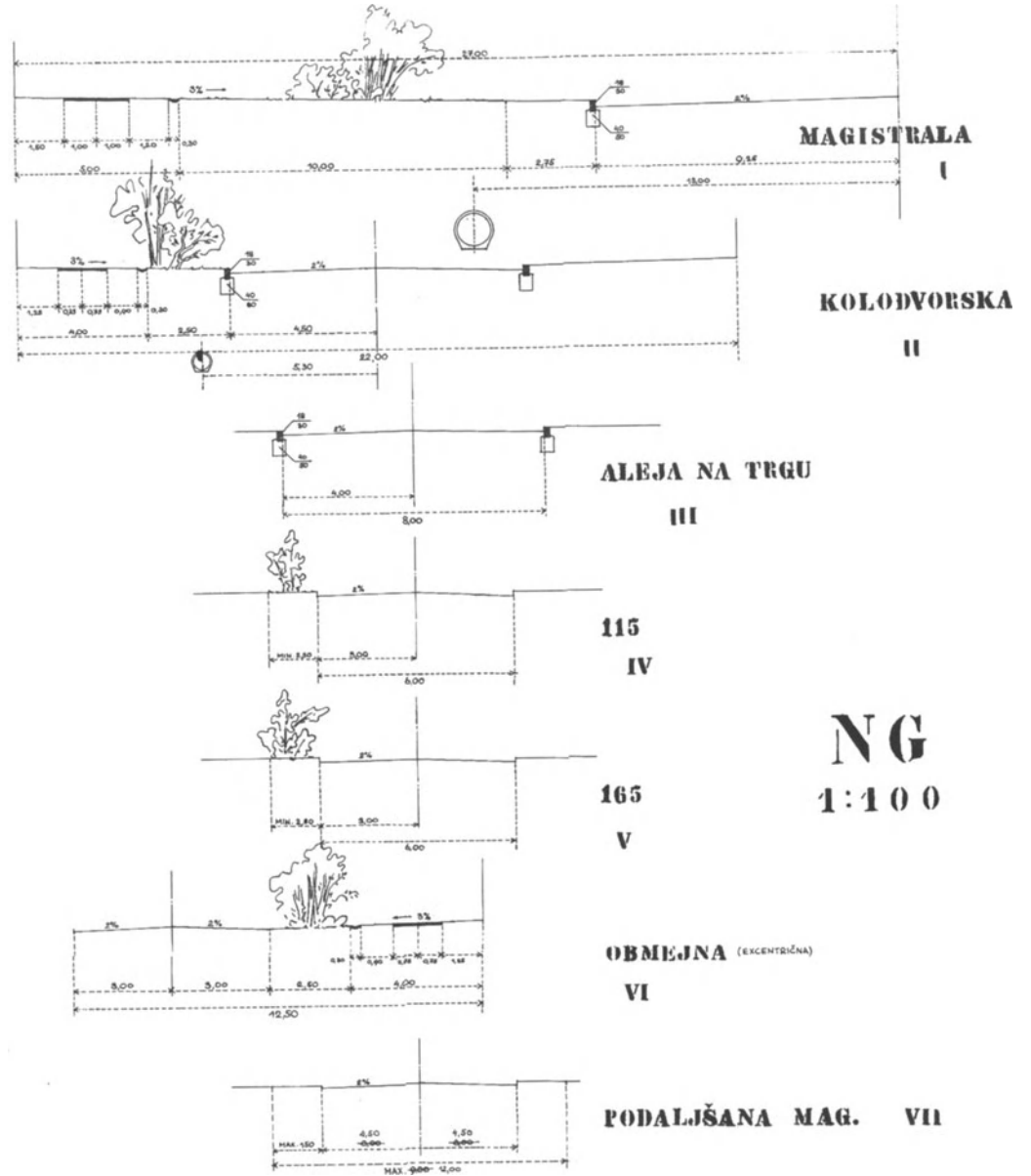
*view of the four blocks, designed by
Edvard Ravnikar (right)*





Gorica on the Italian side and Ravnikar's
plan for Nova Gorica (left)

proposed street profiles /sections (right)





POTOČNIK
JAKOB

PIRS
ANTON
DOMLJE

PLESTENJAK
(FONCI)

KRALJIC
IZIDOR

JAGO

Hostages' Cemetery, Draga near Begunje, Slovenia

Designed: 1952

Constructed: 1952-53

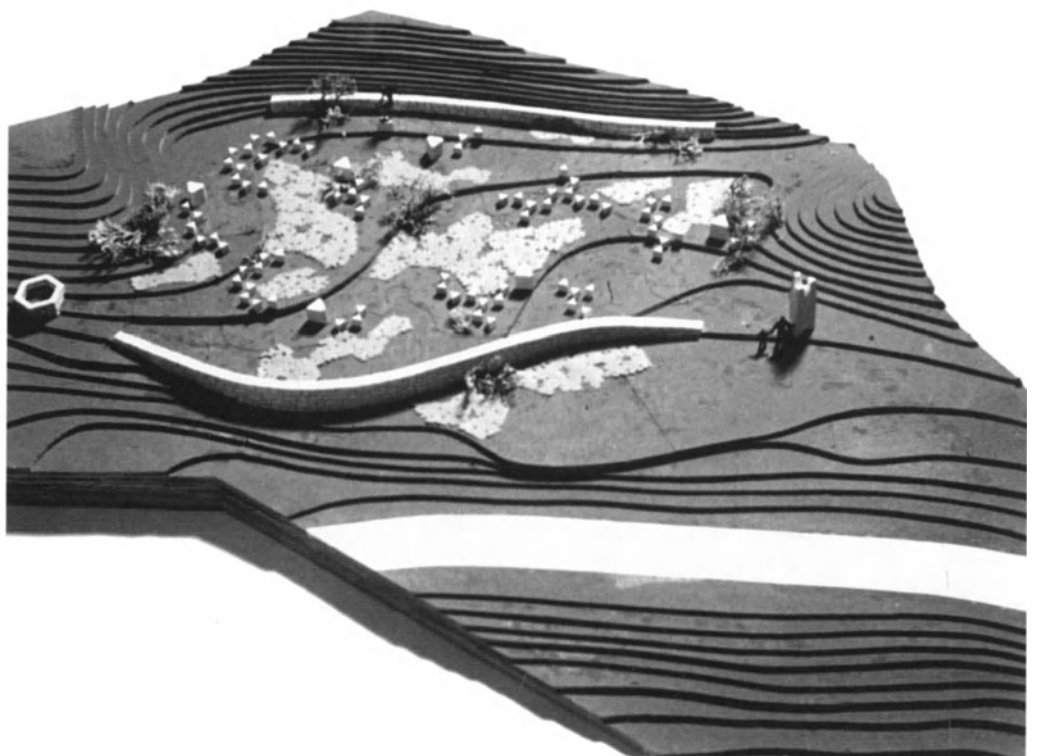
Collaborators: Marko Šlajmer,
Janja Lap, Vladimir Braco Mušič, Stanko
Kristl, Savin Sever

The burial grounds are designed in such a way that the multitude of uniform stones creates a powerful representation of the high number of victims of the German forces, while at the same time they enable the creation of individual memories according to the wishes of the relatives of the deceased. Larger common stones are envisaged to denote the memory of the rest.

The burial ground in Draga is built from local materials and is of simple execution. A smaller gathering point is envisaged at the memorial stone (in the shape of boundary stone), with the hostage standing almost on the floor. Access to water for watering flowers is envisaged as is a small waste area for dead flowers. Between the stones there is Alpine greenery together with colourful flowers in bloom.

Edvard Ravnikar

Project description, extract

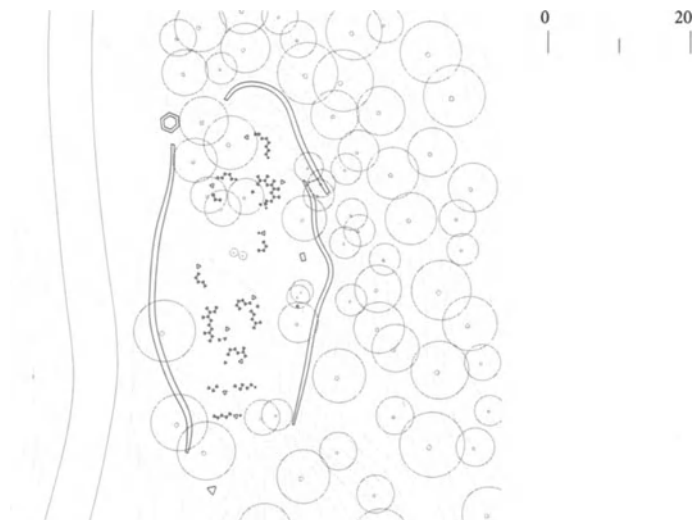








site plan





The Rab Memorial Complex, Kapor, Island of Rab, Croatia

Designed: 1953

Constructed: 1953

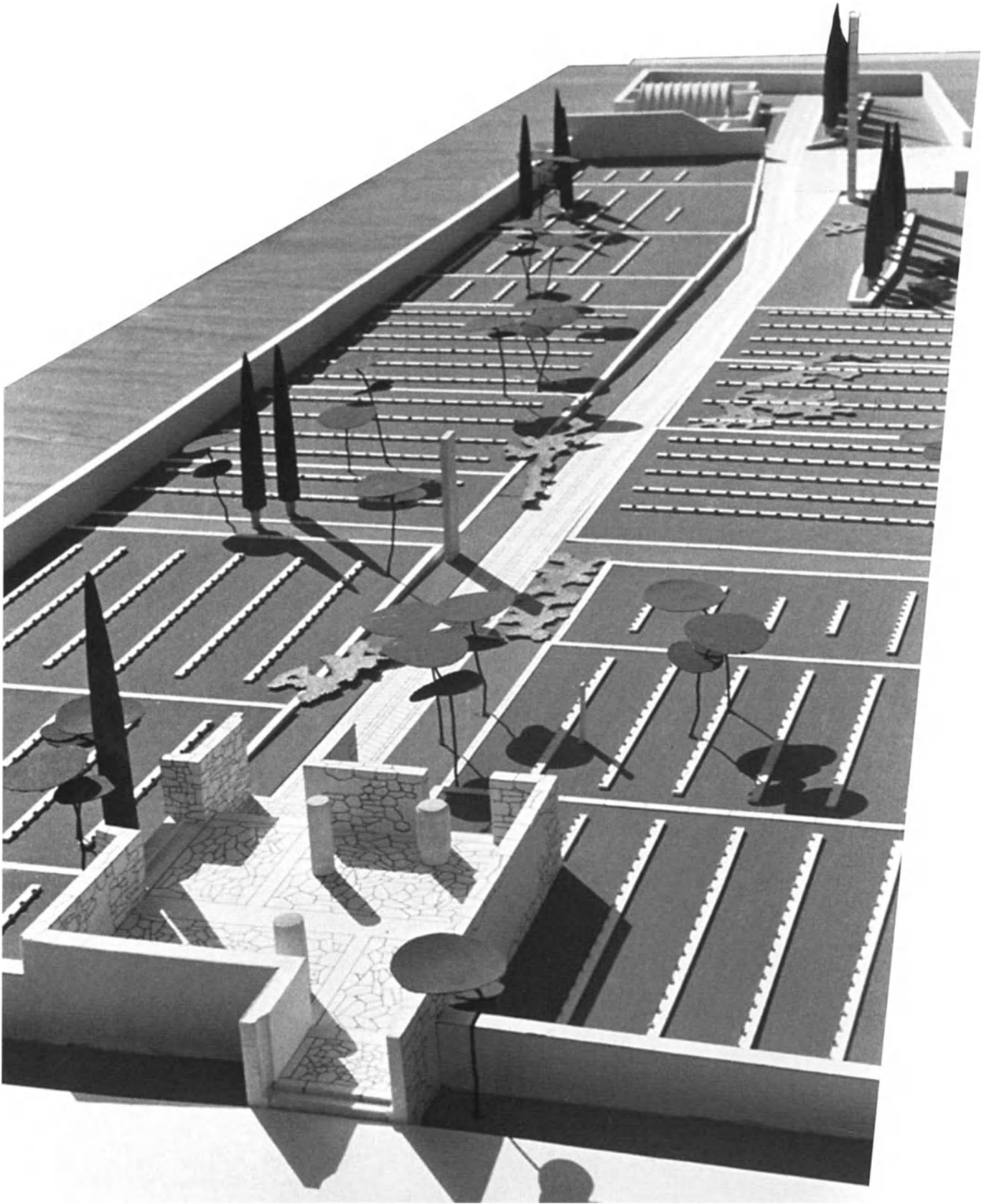
Collaborators: Marko Šlajmer,
Ivan Kocmut, Savin Sever, Miloš Bonča,
Vladimira Bratuž

During WWII one of the most notorious Italian concentration camps for Slovenes and Croats was located on the island of Rab. The Kapor memorial complex lies at the bottom of the valley that runs out into the sea and is therefore surrounded by slopes with lush greenery, trees and fields on both sides, with the sea and the contours of the island of Krk in the background. The concept envisages the organisation of the enclosed site in terraces, which are always horizontal to prevent any further washing away of the soil. It has two architectural emphases: the entrance plateau, a space shaped by walls and monolithic elements, and a covered hall of parabolic shape, a space envisaged for remembrance, which includes a memorial book, two showcases and a wall mosaic by academic painter Marij Pregelj. This element is built entirely out of stone with lead joints. Both architectural emphases are connected by a path that serves also as a rainwater channel during the winter season. Next to the path a 12 m-high obelisk made of large stone blocks is positioned as a visual landmark. Due to the great force of the bora wind the stone blocks are connected with a wire all the way up to the last-but-one stone.

The architect tried to transfer the architectural qualities from the decorative and structural to the optical. Colour contrasts provided by the stone and the greenery of the environment and the blue of the sky, the verticals of the architecture and the horizontals of the sea, together with the composed views that connect existing landscape elements with the new are the main means that the architect uses in order to influence the visitors.

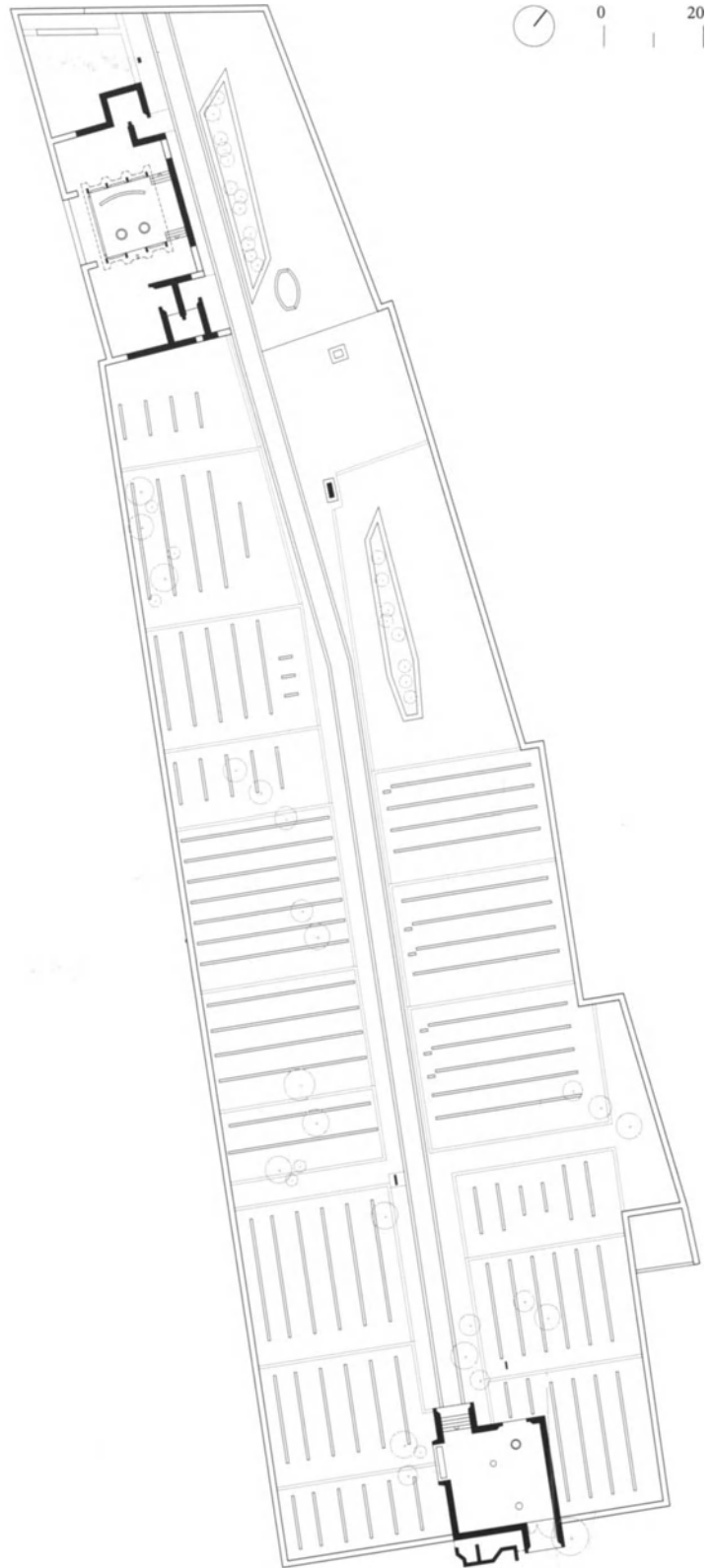
Edvard Ravnikar

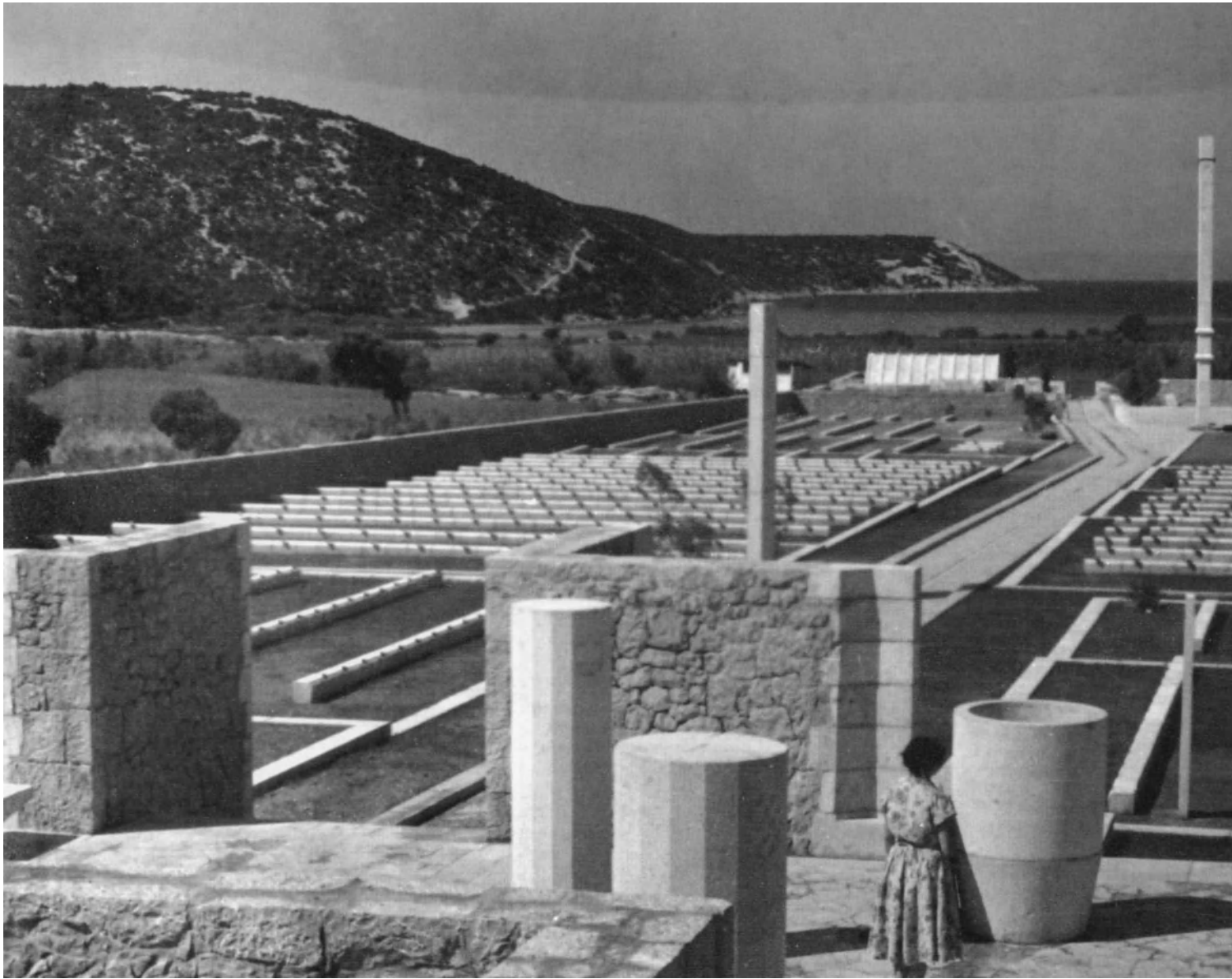
Arhitekt, Ljubljana 1954, No. 11, p. 14-15

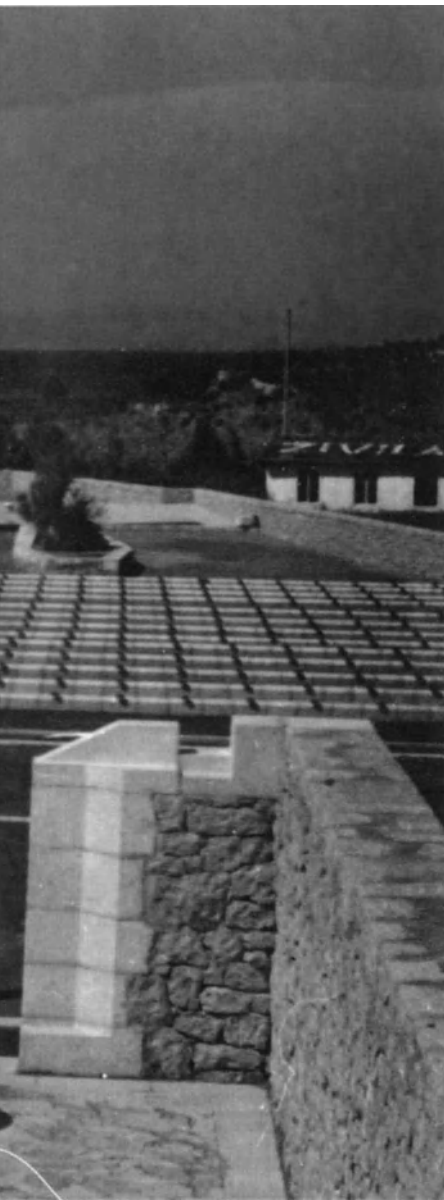


entrance platform (below)

site plan (right)







large obelisk (below), detail

large obelisk (right)





entrance gate (left)

entrance platform (right)



view from the entrance platform







*the central street with graves on each side
(left)*

entrance platform (right)





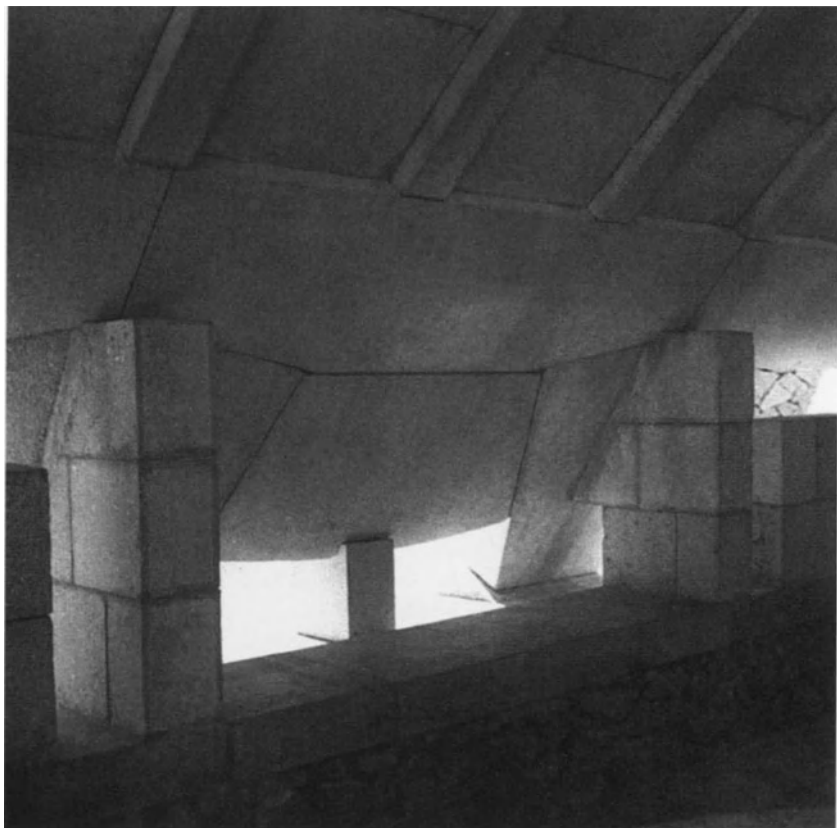


exterior views of Museum



Museum interior





*Museum interior with mosaic by Marij
Pregelj*





The Municipality Building, Kranj, Slovenia

Slovenski trg 1, Kranj

Designed: 1954

Constructed: 1958-60

Collaborators: Janja Lap, Marko Šlajmer

Is an architect allowed to wish that the public would see his building in a way in which it was actually intended? Architectural values are becoming part of a conscious value-system even with architects, let alone the general public. If someone happens to discern between building particularities from history, this suffices for people to find them capable of knowledgeable judgement. It is far more difficult to find an observer who would easily move within the world of contemporary architectural design. However, there is at least something from the movements in architecture of the past 50 to 70 years that has become public property. This is the fact that a building's value runs somewhat in parallel to its general usability, its functional interior arrangement and, in parallel with this, by its sober and often unfortunately dull exterior. This kind of viewing, however, puts architecture in a position that is all too one-dimensional. For an architect who understands life as a rich and interconnected whole the notion of the function of an architectural work cannot end with the above description. A visual experience of a well-designed factory e.g., is not based only on the observation of the working process being organised in a certain order or on the constellation of the parts of the factory; it is

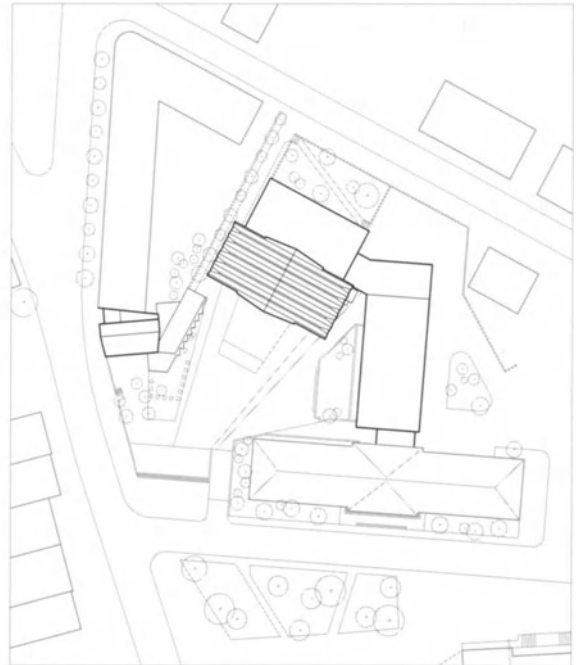
based also on the observation that everything in this factory, from every detail to the whole, speaks about whether life under its roof is pleasant or not. Both represent and symbolise society in a most unambiguous way. And society is represented equally well by a well-organised housing estate, as it is by a public building or any other built work.

Edvard Ravnikar

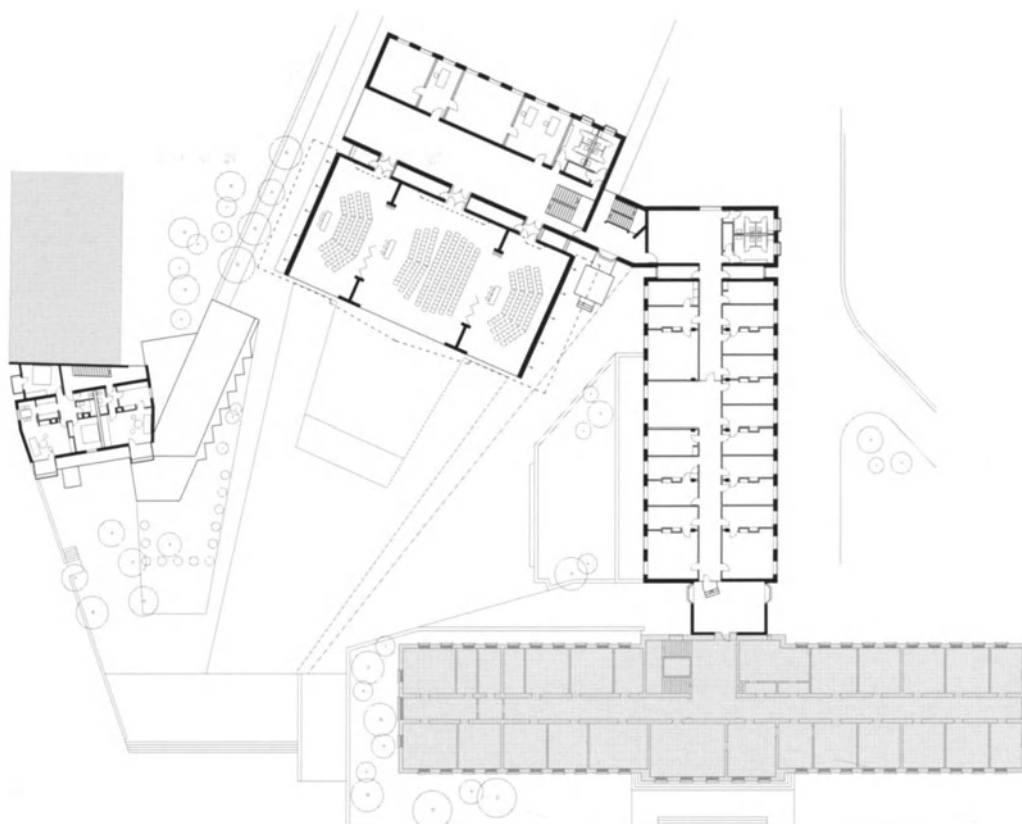
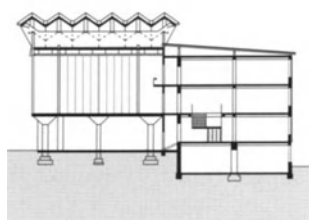
Arhitekt, Ljubljana, February 1960, No. 2, p. 17



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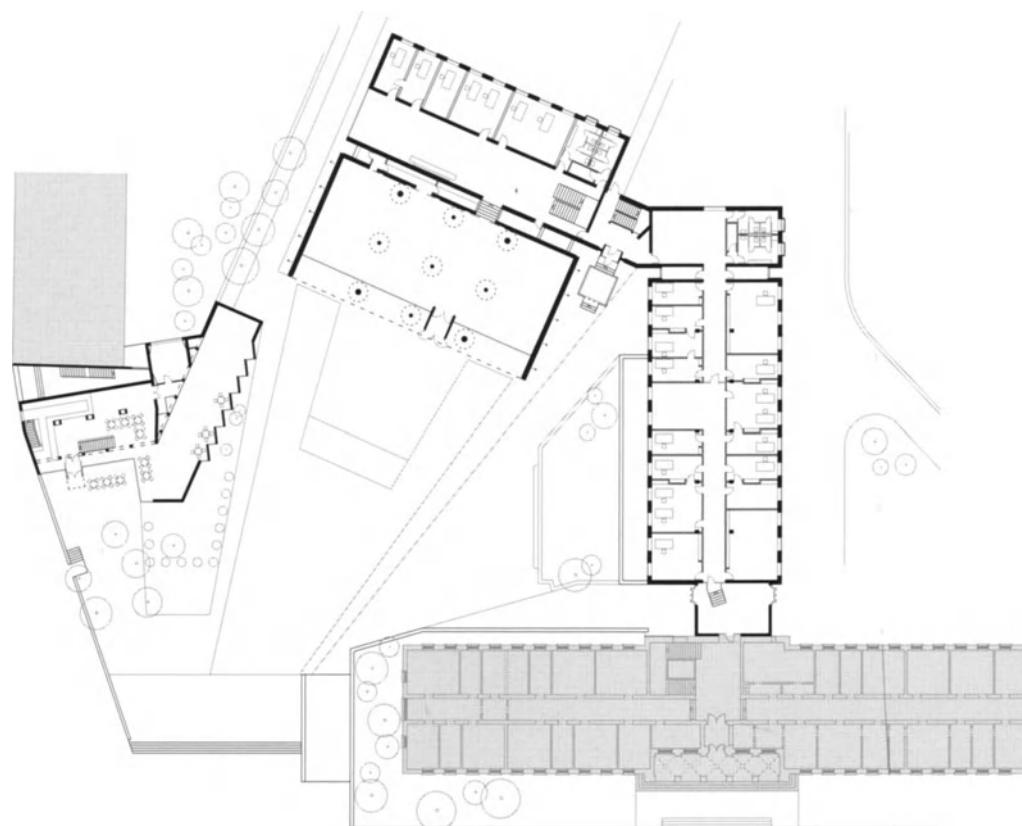


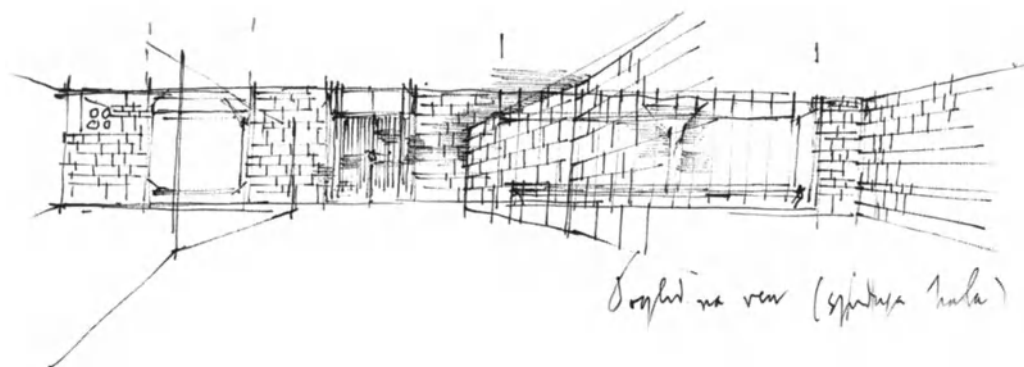
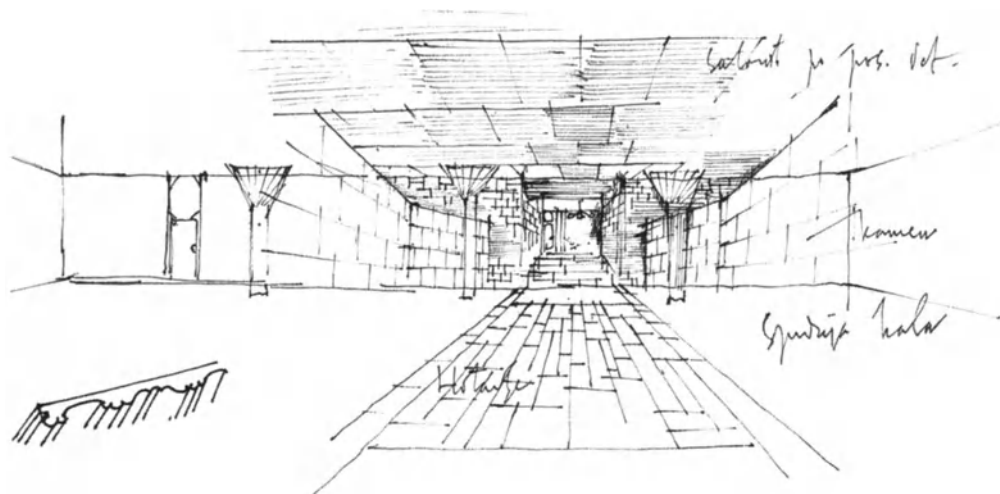
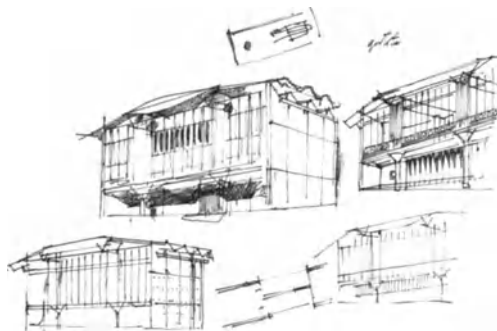
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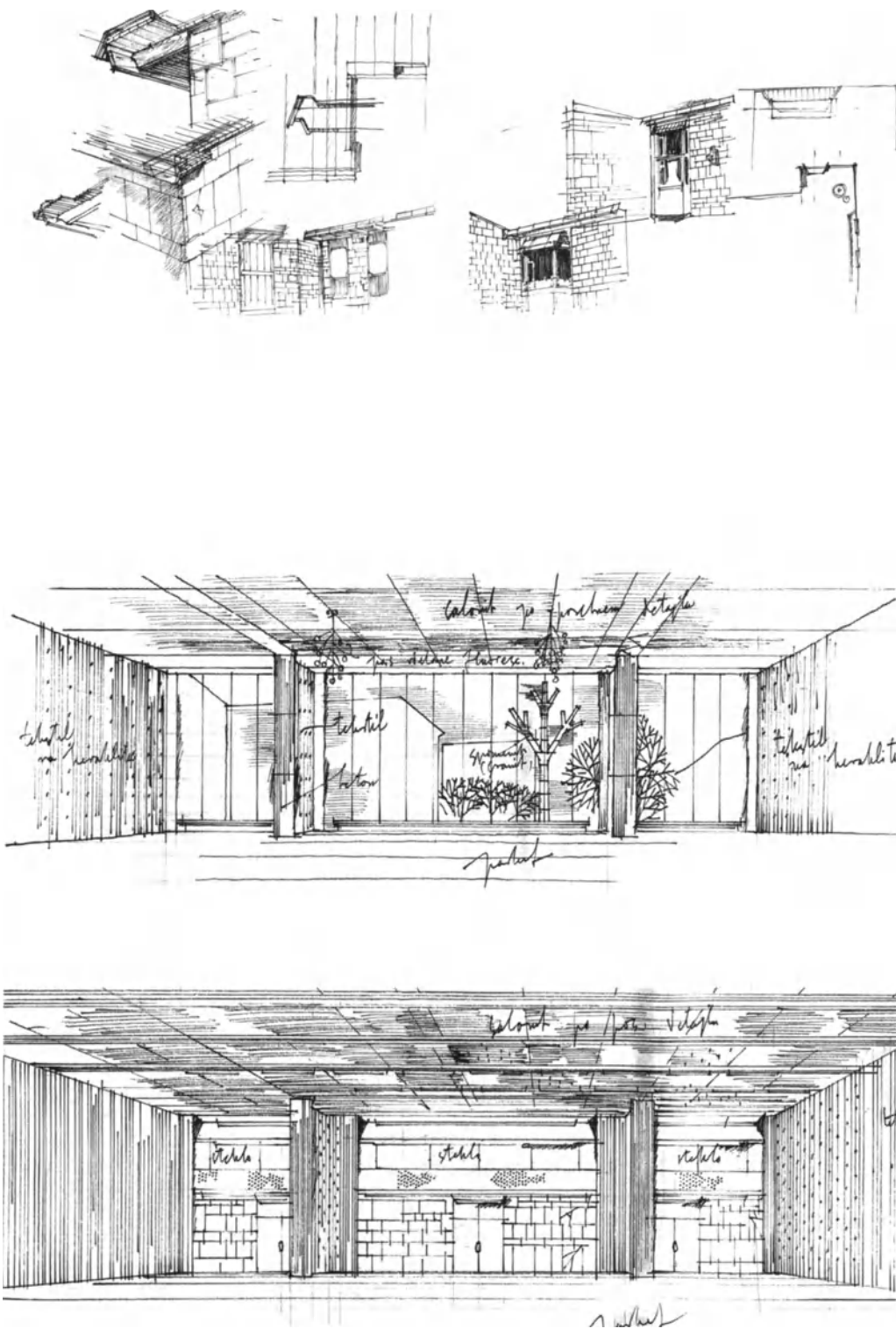


site plan (left)

first floor and section (above), ground floor (below)







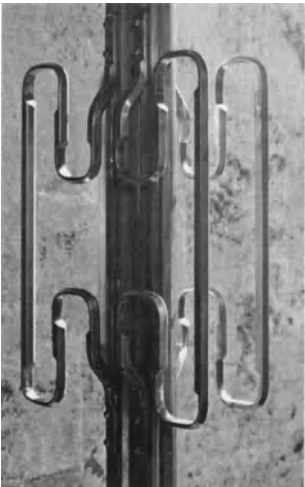
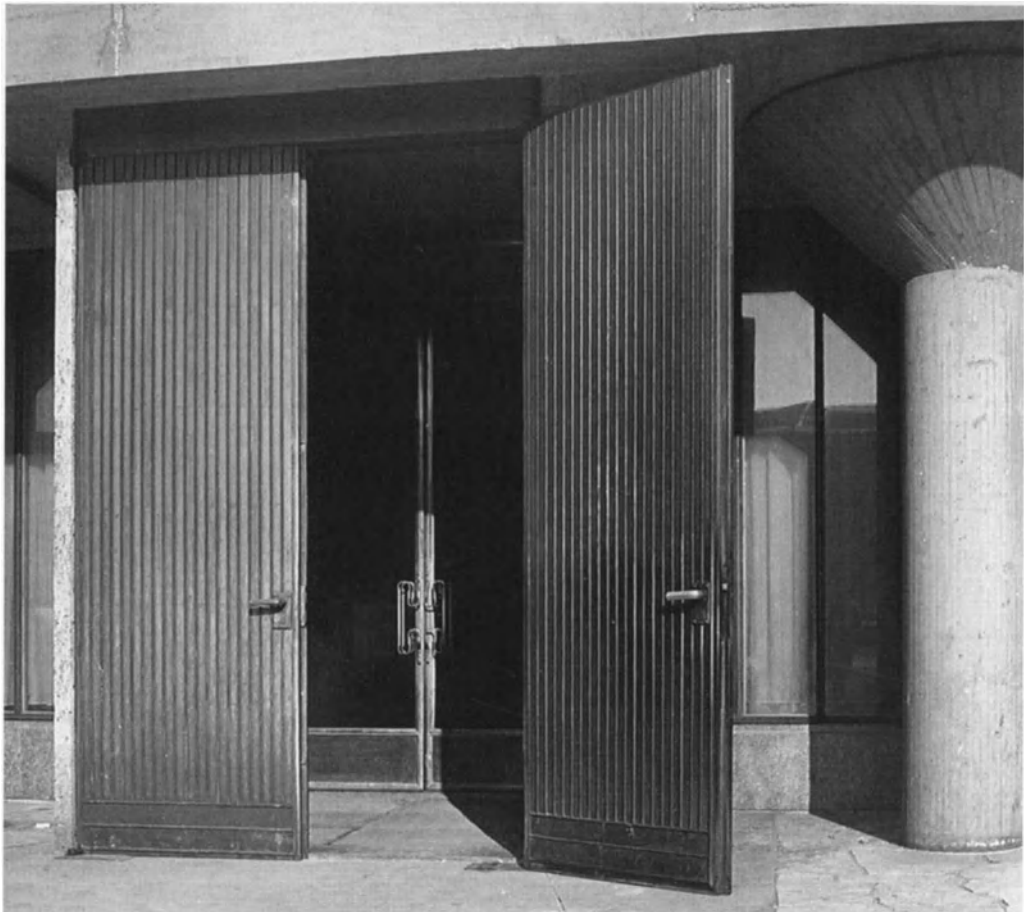




entry/reception hall

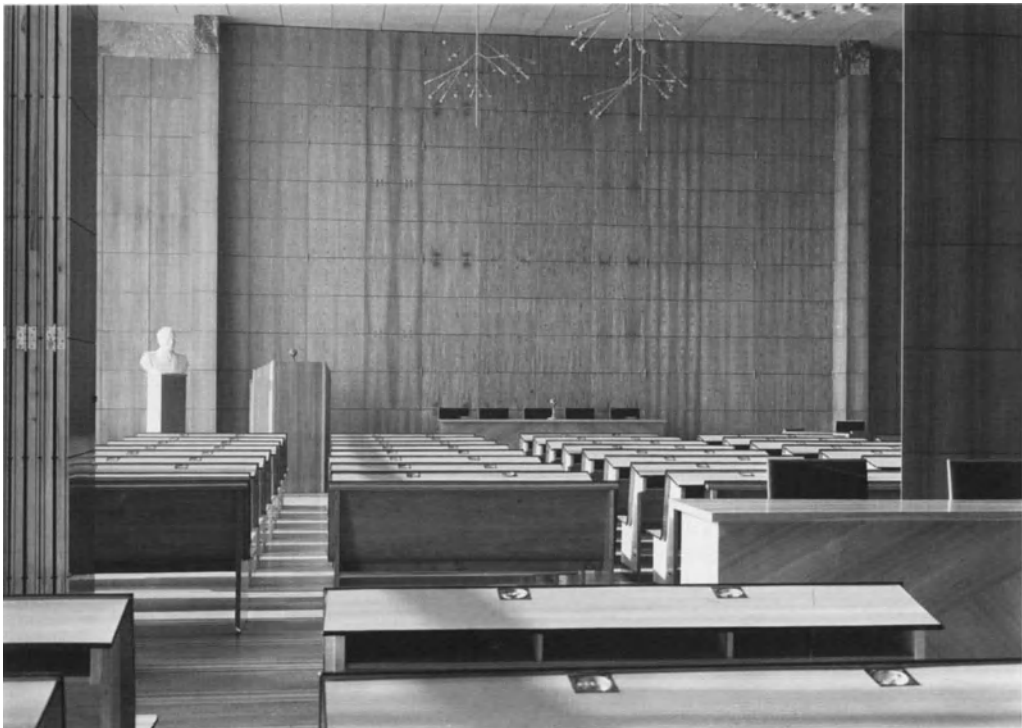


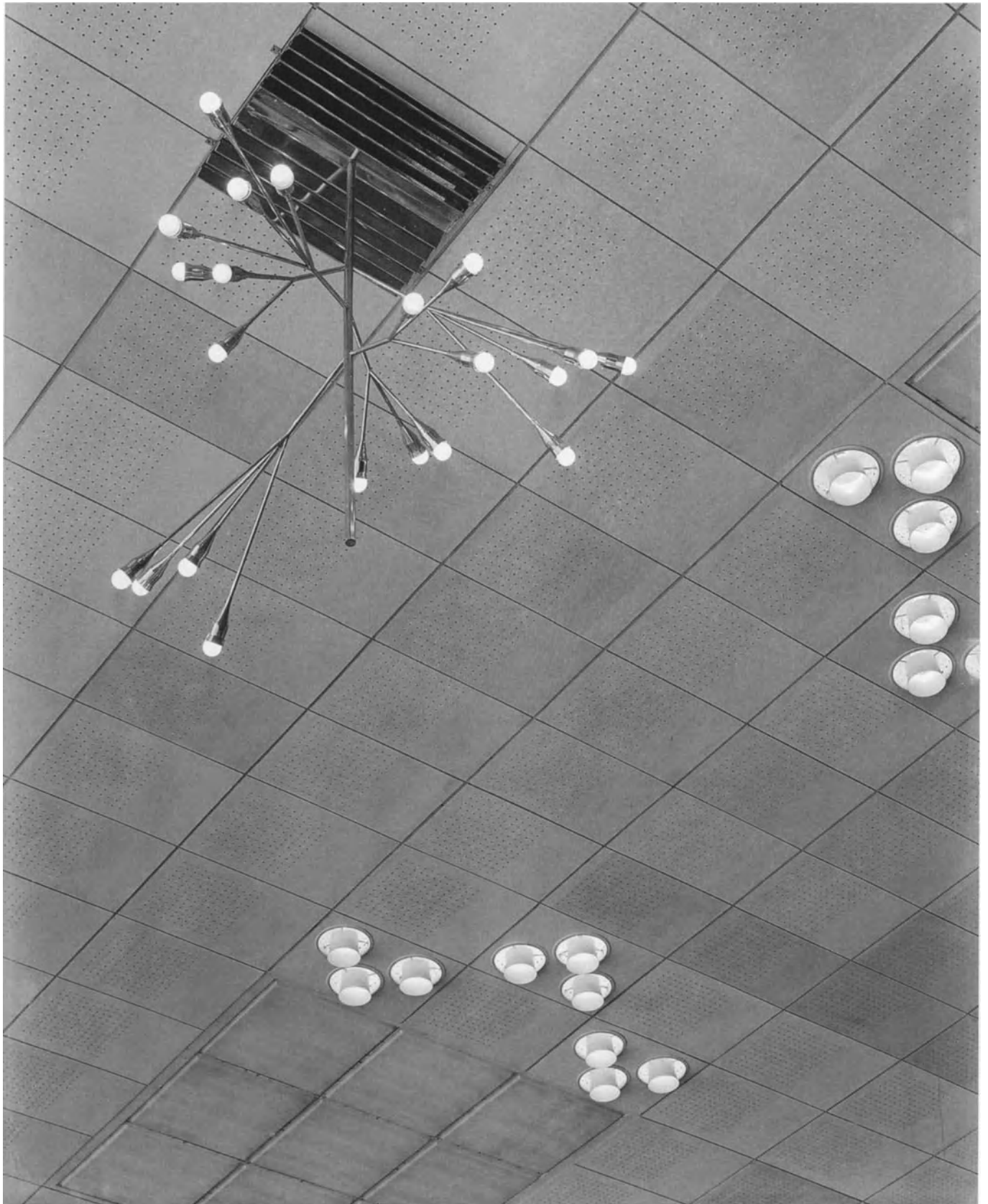
main door, handle





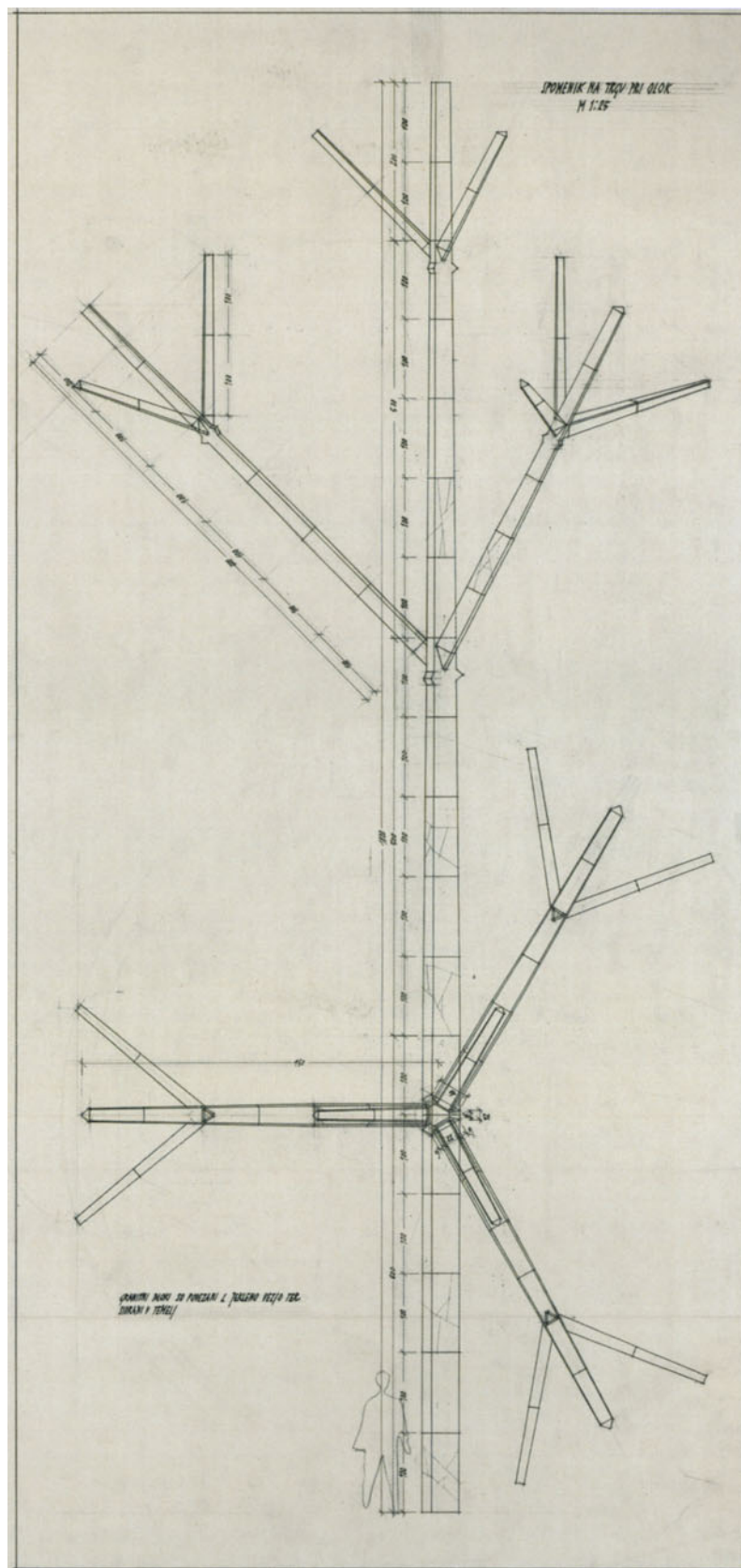
auditorium with original furniture





ceiling lighting (left)

drawing for unrealised obelisk at building
entry (right)





Ljudska pravica Print Works, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Kopitarjeva 2, Ljubljana

Designed: 1957

Constructed: 1958-61

Collaborator: Savin Sever

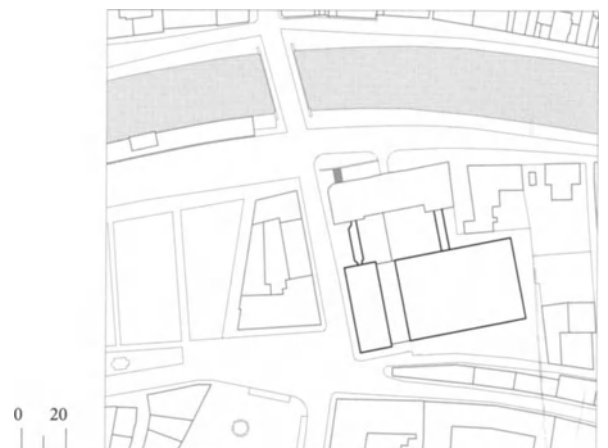
In terms of urban design this was a difficult building, as the new building had to be incorporated among the existing buildings of old Ljudska pravica, Plečnik's Peglezen and the former Financial Directorate, all of which originate from their respective eras and styles. What could therefore be the guiding principle to connect all this into a logical and aesthetic whole? Sizes, materials, colours and surface treatment, together with the requirement to realise the brief for the new building regardless of the interests outside the brief left the architect with only one choice: the option to naturally coexist, with the common denominator of high-quality architecture and faith in aesthetic surprises, which are sometimes the result of such improvisations.

This environment is, at the same time, visually connected to the old part of Ljubljana and yet the site is outside the area of the old city core and outside the city gate. It could therefore represent a natural perimeter of the old urban organism, particularly with the greenery provided by the old plane trees next to the new building. The view from the new building towards the cathedral is richer due to the greater architectural mass of the Pravica building, while the area of the Baroque Ljubljana is closer to the centre as a result of the buzz that the new building provides. This is something that has not been the case in the past 40 years.

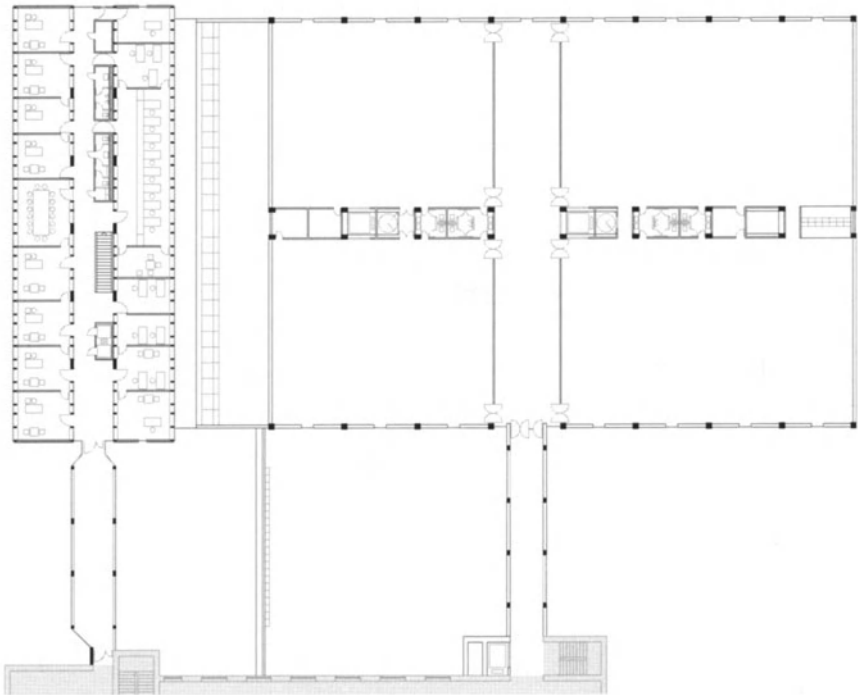
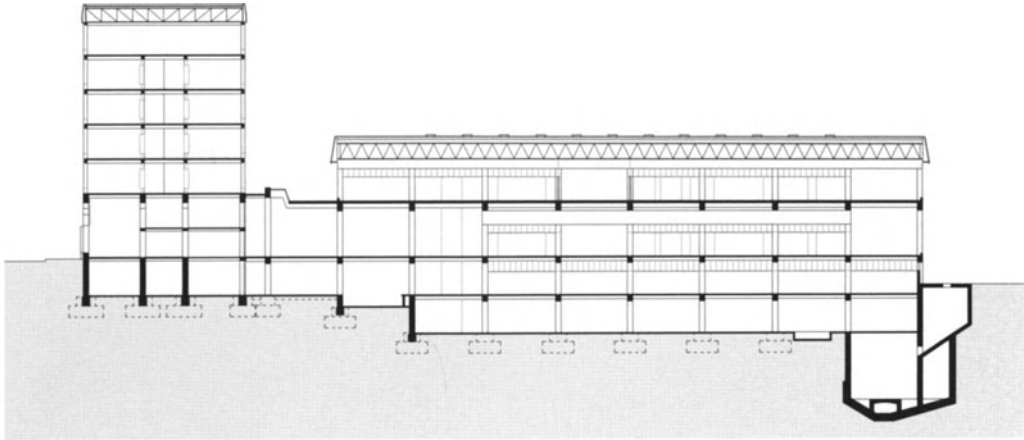
Part of the task was to locate an industrial building within the city. The print works are connected to intense intellectual work, which normally takes place in the city centre; on the other hand, however, they require the proximity of the printing process. This project required also extremely cost-effective construction - the use of contemporary materials in their crude, unprocessed state: poured concrete, glass, plastic and aluminium. All this had to be used with great care for the articulation of the whole, of the details, the precision of execution and finally for the use of colour, which in the case of this building raises so many objections. However, the very yellow used is traditionally a colour used in graphics, while on the other hand it provides the only colour emphasis among the surrounding grey buildings and intense greenery. Thus an intended unity of the perceived colour is achieved in this environment.

Edvard Ravnikar

Arhitekt, Ljubljana 1961, No. 2, p. 20 - 21



site plan (below left)
section and ground floor (right)



0 20











National Bank srs, Kranj, Slovenia

Slovenski trg 2, Kranj

Designed: 1959

Constructed: 1961-62

Collaborators: Tine Legat, Roni Nemec,
Marko Hočevár, Broni Fajon

The two office buildings in Kranj and Celje are bank branches of approximately the same size. Each has ca. 120 work places and the arrangement of spaces common for this kind of building: a banking hall, archives, office spaces, spaces for calculators, auxiliary spaces, etc.

The Celje branch is located within the old city centre. In terms of urban planning the brief was to adjust the new building to the existing tissue of the city at least in broad terms. This is why the roof, which was the most problematic part in terms of urban planning, follows the roof ridges of the buildings on the main square. The main façade is concluded only within its width, so that at one end a small space is formed between the bank building and a row of residential buildings that are perpendicular to it. This space is to become a public space with some greenery, a bench, etc.

In the case of Kranj the location has less constraints although the plot is squeezed within a number of heterogeneous buildings of similar heights. In terms of the building footprint the site offers good potential.

Raw concrete is the main building material for structure as well as for the infill elements. Since in terms of colour and texture concrete is a dead material, it gained the nobleness that a building of this kind undoubtedly requires by careful shuttering of visible structure elements and by precise execution of cladding plates. The structure is visible also in the interior; in Kranj also in the case of the ceilings and horizontal brackets.

In terms of structural solution these two projects somehow neglect the principle of the shortest and most-direct routing of the forces into the ground. If applied routinely in the case of a stereotypical skeletal building, this principle is usually manifested in a clumsy forest of columns between the two ceilings. Whereas a man is naturally able to clearly understand the routing process of the forces in, say, timber or stone, he is already less capable of understanding this process in steel profiles, while concrete is entirely illegible to a lay person because the steel core, an essential component of the construction, remains invisible.

If we had wanted to make the expressionless concrete legible, we would have had to satisfy this unique and unusual demand by applying special effort. While we definitely increased the amount of intellectual work, we managed to give or return to architecture that source of design ingenuity that is inherent in the structural component of architectural concept. In the case of the Celje branch this can be seen from a harnessing system, where the upper grid-like part rests on a mighty beam above

the ground floor that transfers the load to two strong walls. In Kranj, on the other hand, the same can be seen in the transfer of a line of columns from the plane of the exterior wall of the archive into the plane of the exterior walls of the upper part. In both cases, however, this is closely linked to the functional need to have a single unified space on the ground floor.

Edvard Ravnikar

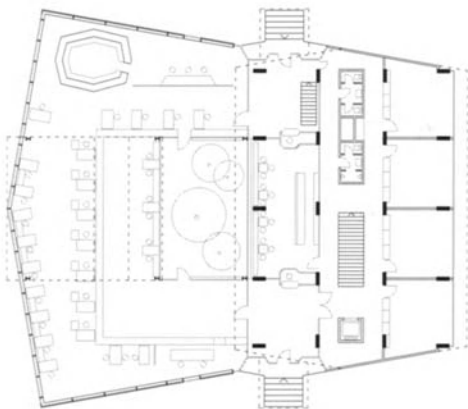
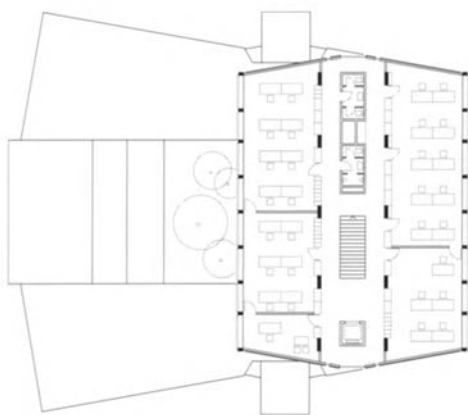
Sinteza, Ljubljana 1964, No. 1, p. 26-29



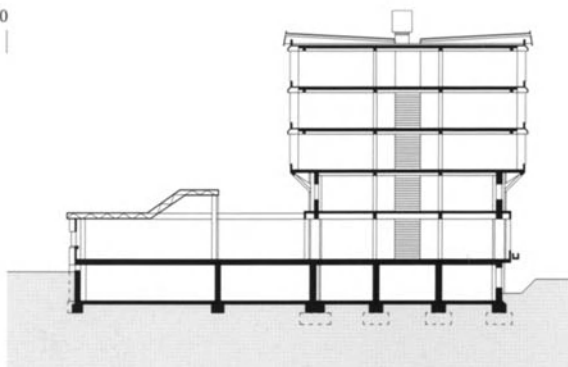
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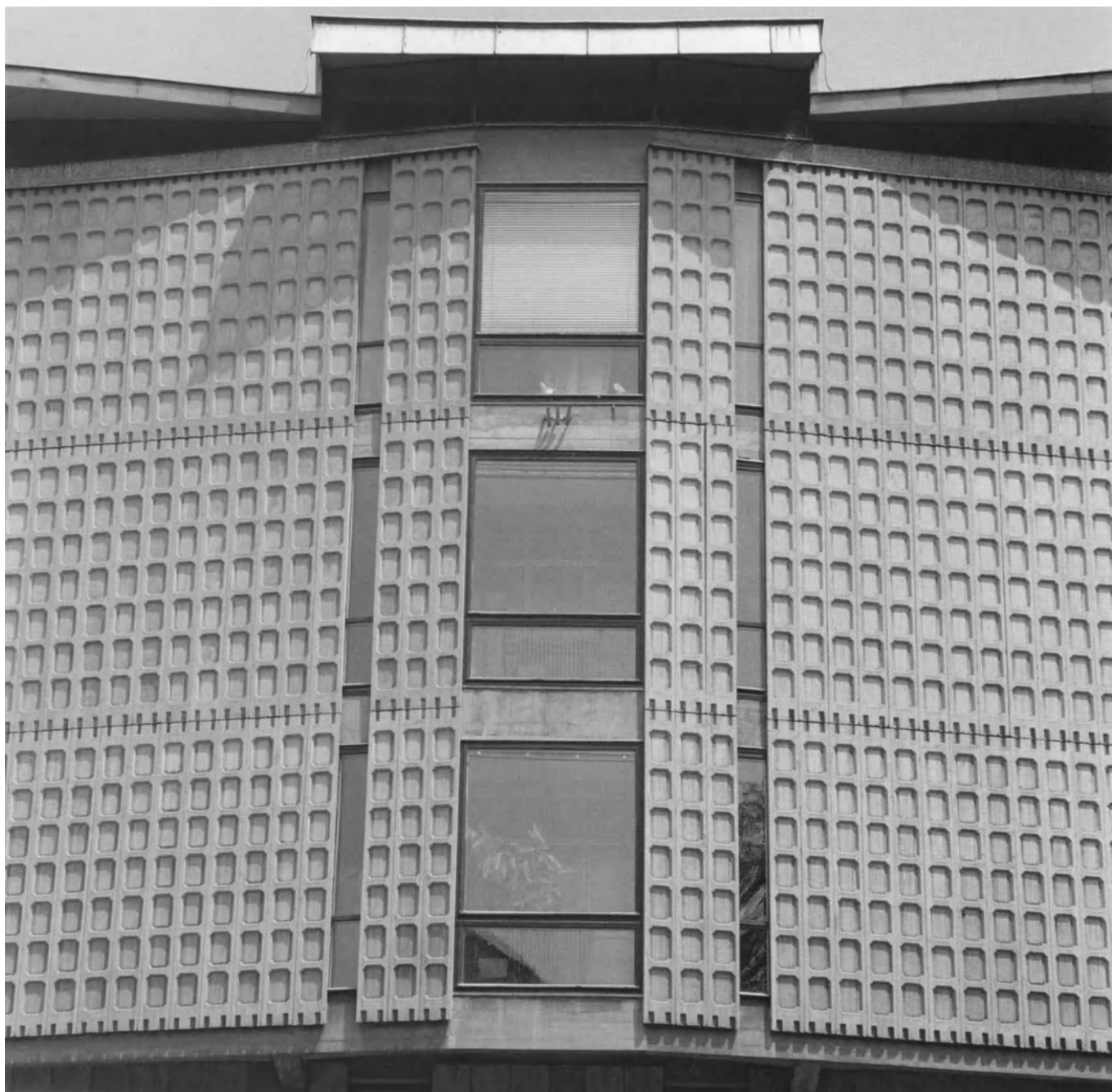


site plan, first and ground floors, section



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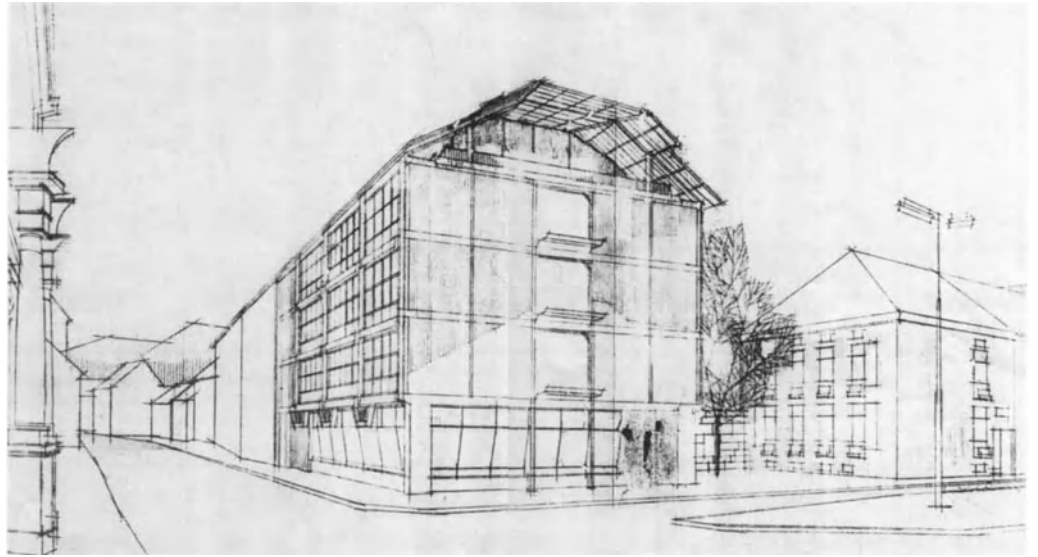
National Bank, Celje, Slovenia

Prešernova ulica 27, Celje

Designed: 1959

Constructed: 1961-62

Collaborator: Mirko Kajzelj

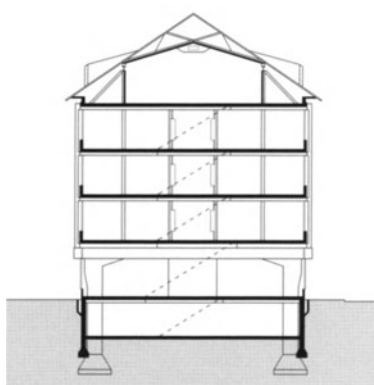
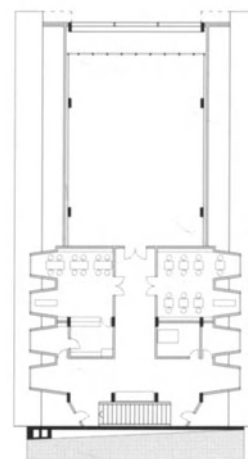
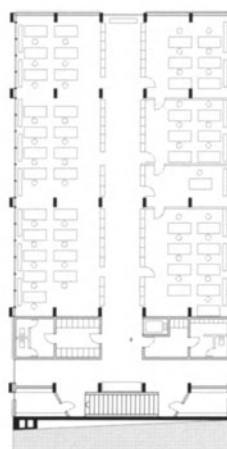




site plan, ground, first floor and top floor,
section



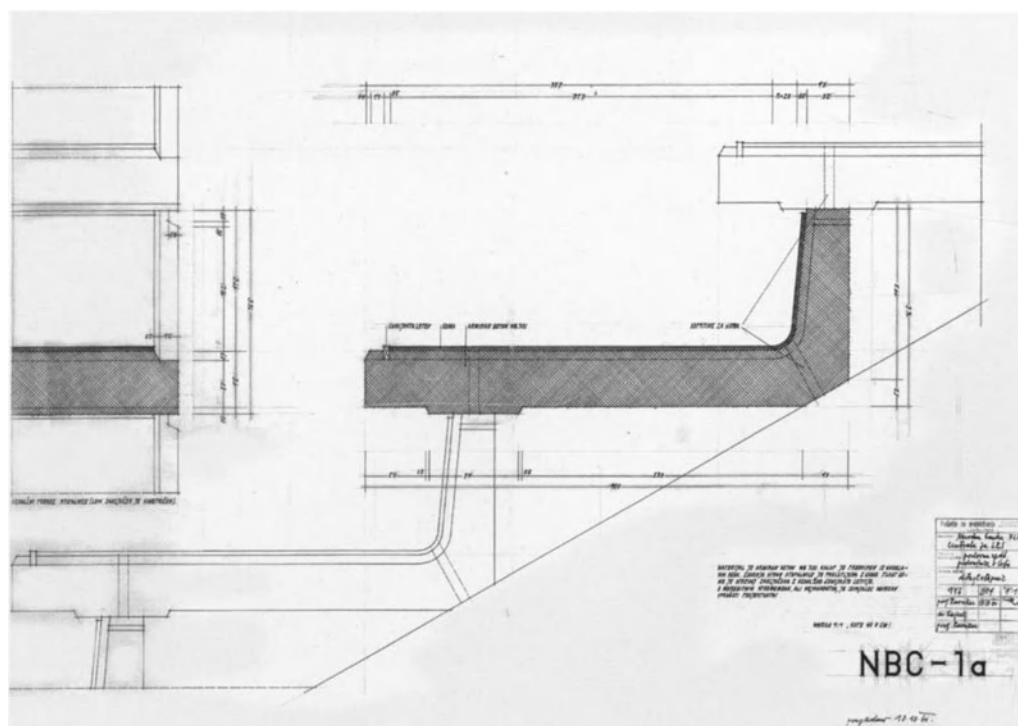
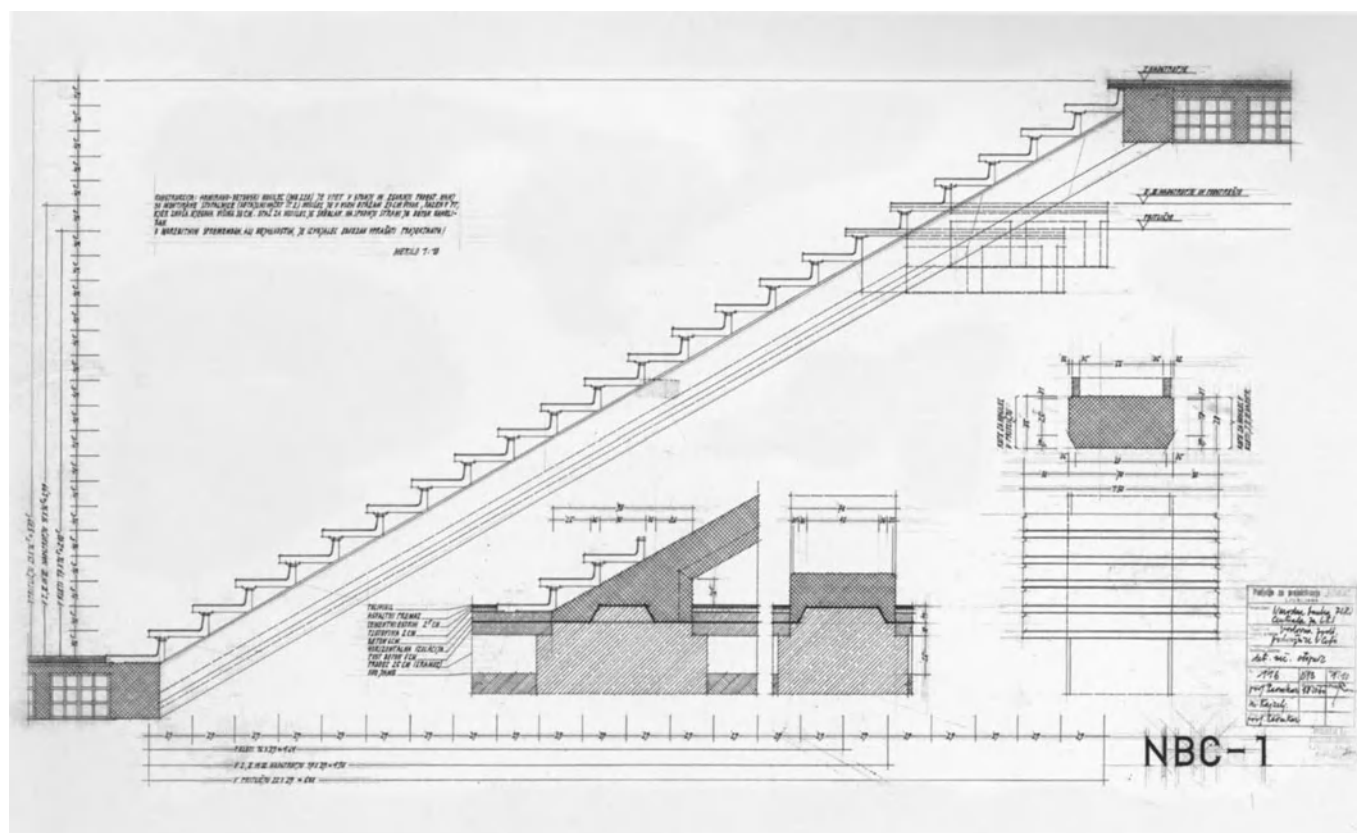
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Layout of The Revolution Square, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Trg republike 1, Ljubljana

Competition entry: 1960

Constructed: 1961-74, 1975-82

Collaborators: Anton Bitenc, Miloš Bonča, Jože Koželj, Anton Pibernik, Franc Rihtar, Vladislav Sedej et. al.

In times of uncertainty, change of briefs and interests, wavering of opportunities and functional needs, it is difficult to avoid the established working processes that go back to the Renaissance and its tendency towards a static finality. From our practice it still follows that we should look upon a city as a large group of things – objects, buildings, sometimes as a sequence of images, as an “urban design” with a system of sequences and aesthetic exclusivity, which is often the way in which we try to replace the missing space of the social energies by contacts and harmony. In this case a city is not only an exterior appearance, although this is very important and necessary, but also a place where things happen. A good example of this is The Revolution Square on a working day compared to the same site on a Sunday. Therefore the creation of The Revolution Square is not so much the path towards the aim to create a festive image as it is a path through a certain process that is in this case the first clear and directional intervention in Slovenia.

The old-fashioned role of an architect, who sees in a city above all and only something to look at, whereas he has to strive towards “a city as a process” is little noticed and yet an essential shift in the design process. When building new environments, this means as much as overcoming the gap between solving the technical part of the brief and organising future activities.

The concept of the urban complex as part of The Revolution Square construction process also demands a change in the relationship between the client, the architects and the company. When talking about the usefulness of professionalization compared with the situation in the West, what we were used to practicing previously was a possible and successful institutionalisation that had to battle with the old-fashioned mentality: the breaking down of the brief, lack of consensus, making technology work and professional ethics. If the process of discovery took fourteen years it is interesting to know how this kind of mechanism works in our country.

Sooner or later we find that the following is very important: a concept, intuition, human reason and reasonable measure, an open “design”, a programme during the process of discovery, sequence of execution, technology, structure and services. These are the conditions in which it is far easier to discuss the architect’s ease, optimal technological decision-making, financing and programme. Here intuition is not isolated, it is not limited to respective parts of the concept. Its permanent presence is a continuous source of ever-new encouragement

for primary and even more for secondary concepts. In such an operative constellation it is its generative nature that should be noted in particular, as the wholesomeness of the content is created of its own accord, during the process, as time goes by.

When describing this experience, still so new to us, we do not think that it is some new and wondrous means for achieving the success of a conceptually-shaped will when faced with the complex issues of urban environment. Yet it shows that the traditional way of “designing to the last screw” has, for some time, not been able to cope with the goals and complexities of today’s needs. Another way exists, that takes into consideration the unpredictability of future situations, the changeable constellation of partners and the changeability of financial and technological possibilities while trying to not only control the flow of events but also to ensure the quality growth of the realised intention.

We are thinking of the near future, when the importance of life within this space will become ever greater. It is informatics itself – as the quality activity with as diverse an environment as possible and a great differentiation of branches – that is entirely favoured in this small scale type of urban planning and architecture in comparison with stiffer, inflexible structures. In reality this is increasingly becoming a place of movement, freedom, access and internal flow in an infinite variety of entrances, passages, underground passages, staircases and a covered underground shopping gallery as opposed to, what is still very common, a lining up of separate buildings into squeezed blocks in order to conform to production and traffic, which necessarily results in ugly back façades with service courtyards. The existing content of a bank, office areas, shops, restaurants and special services is already taking shape in the form of an interesting social environment that the further construction of the Revolution Square Complex will enhance with further new content; via the opportunity to organise events in three auditoria, which will expand opportunities to mingle, through the organisation of exhibitions of industrial production, by offering many opportunities for fine arts exhibitions and ever more open air events, from theatre to every kind of social gathering. All this creates an entirely new basis for a very necessary higher level of life in our city that stems from its environment. We may say that this is an initial, albeit modest, step towards a more pure and richer urban content that Ljubljana lacks, urgent though it may be.

There are already some noticeable more frequented pedestrian paths in The Revolution Square. These are increasingly gaining the char-

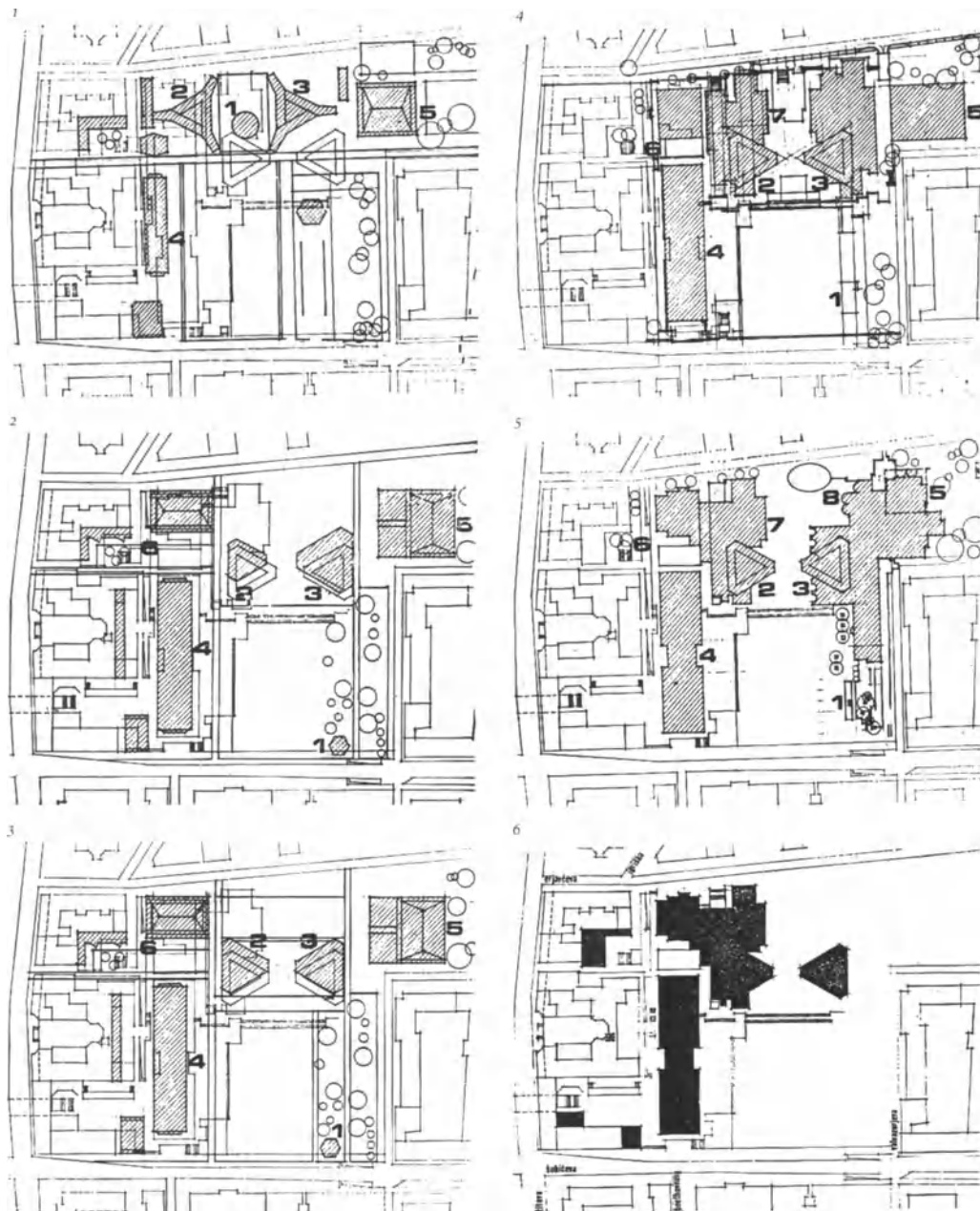
1- 5 We can say that the first concept of The Revolution Square was nothing but an unknown. To wish for something more is, if we do not know what this "more" is supposed to be, quite unusual for our times. When intending to build something big, a factory e.g., we know what it would look like and what it will produce.

Here we started only with an uncertain wish to prepare the environment for an important national monument. In this way the initial brief was but a symbolic record of still unknown functions, only a starting point for little active building masses. The initial ambition, however, was already pointing towards a certain need for a large central public space, a component that remained unchanged till the end.

As every space we create is, by default, a social space, so too is this square; though we did have to start out with "afunctional functionality" for which we knew that a certain degree of aggression was required (e.g. twenty-storey towers or the obligation to transform a one-time monastery garden into a "concrete desert".)

The preceding could be the description of a political space; however, it is characteristic for us and our times that this would not suffice. An important additional task was to connect the emerging and to bring the new dimensions of the city closer into play and into life, while adding the imaginary, hallucinatory quality of the structure that could easily have gone in another direction. The aim is to find the architectural language that would, on the psychological level, become very differentiated, rich and exciting.

The creation of the concept is chronologically described above; however, its inner growth cannot be understood from the sequence of facts as it was a process the initial starting points of which could have been a consequence of mistaken suppositions that still teach us a lot while they are being tested. Work on a concept is therefore its gradual inner enrichment. And this is so very different from what we are used to in practice: comparison to anything similar anywhere or even repetition of established and respectable buildings. Inner enrichment happens when, due to realisation, we further purify the already-achieved results that, at a certain point, already seemed solid and unproblematic, as this is how we gradually learn from mistakes. We could say that we walk along the path on which it is always only experiment that leads us towards new discoveries that are none but those that mean further enrichment. This is also where the unusual but famous realisation originates from; namely, that an architect does not and cannot know how, in the end, his work will look.



acter of a street that is still the main carrier of life within the city. This is a belt with opportunities to shop, to meet without disturbance, to relax and to observe; a belt without cars, – although they are near by – a multi-purpose belt with surprises, open to wind and rain, cold and heat. To sum it up, this is an exterior in which we encounter many things that we are normally used to in an interior.

Contemplating the border of this complex and its border columns is very encouraging and excit-

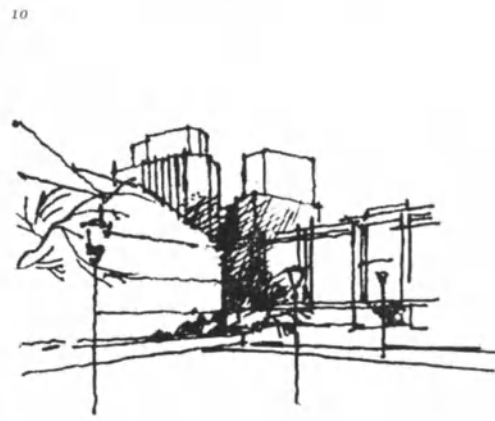
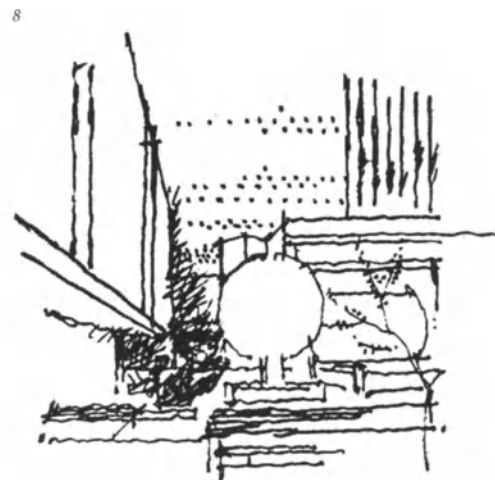
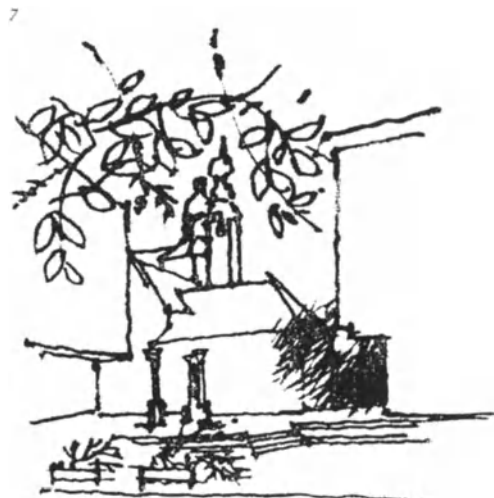
ing. On the one side there is the University with its relentless source of youth and youthful energy that will shape this space, whereas on the other side there is a complex of buildings housing the highest authorities, and on the third the centre of contemporary Ljubljana and in particular of Ljubljana past, the Baroque city and green Tivoli park. These are all interesting spaces that are naturally a part of the gravitational point that this square is, while at the same time they are also a part of the wider city

Legend 1-5

- 1 The site for the central memorial to NLW in the wider context of The Revolution Square; Later: transfer to a richer environment close to the Heroes' Vault.
- 2 Administration building of business organisations; Later: a branch with an extensive annex
- 3 Republic administration building;
- 4 Department store; Later: possible expansion and completion with restaurants and similar.
- 5 Government Institution building; Later: possible expansion and combination with the wider content of No. 3 with reduced scope of original content.
- 6 Centre of Social Technical Organisations; Later: Expansion of No. 2 and 7.
- 7 Ground floor expansion of No. 2.
- 8 Ground floor expansion of No. 3.
- Monastery complex refurbished to serve museum and conservation activities between No. 4 and 6.

6 The extent of completed construction of The Revolution Square to date (1974).

7 - 10 Space getting denser close to the contact points of the longer sides of the built environment. Here respective spaces merge with one another as attractive objects within these transition spaces invitingly announce the next space. This complex seems megalomaniac to our people who are not used to such scale, while others again find it too insignificant. The truth, however, can be found only through its daily use, when we experience it as a place of encounters, as a central space for national celebrations as well as a space for necessary social events for which areas this size would be difficult to find elsewhere. The Revolution Square appears in the life of the city as a very handy focal point for mass events, for mass meetings and for collective entertainment.



area. The Revolution Square is opening up an opportunity for Ljubljana to become simultaneously a University City, a city of leisure and fun, a city of cultural events and eventually a great city of educational exhibitions and a city where people love to be. Architecture is purposely non-exchangeable without being exhibitionistic in its forms or materials; yet everything visible is enlivened by greenery, water and sculpture within built areas, as well as with refreshing views towards the green mass of the Rožnik hill. The sculpture by Tihec complements the sharp verticals of architecture and is here a fresh sculptural experience of circular lines, which gives its beauty a different meaning than usually experienced. And if for a moment poetic vision wins out over the dominant technology, the architect has found what he was looking for.

The knot of functions and masses also includes a one-time nunnery that has maintained its eccle-

siastical services in the smaller wing, whereas in its larger wing it opened newly refurbished exhibition spaces for the purposes of the museum and heritage institute, as well as for purpose of publicity. As the monastery is untouched, refurbished and cleaned, it represents a precious component of the whole concept together with the awareness that old monuments are a necessary complement to anything new, like the greenery that offers its precious help.

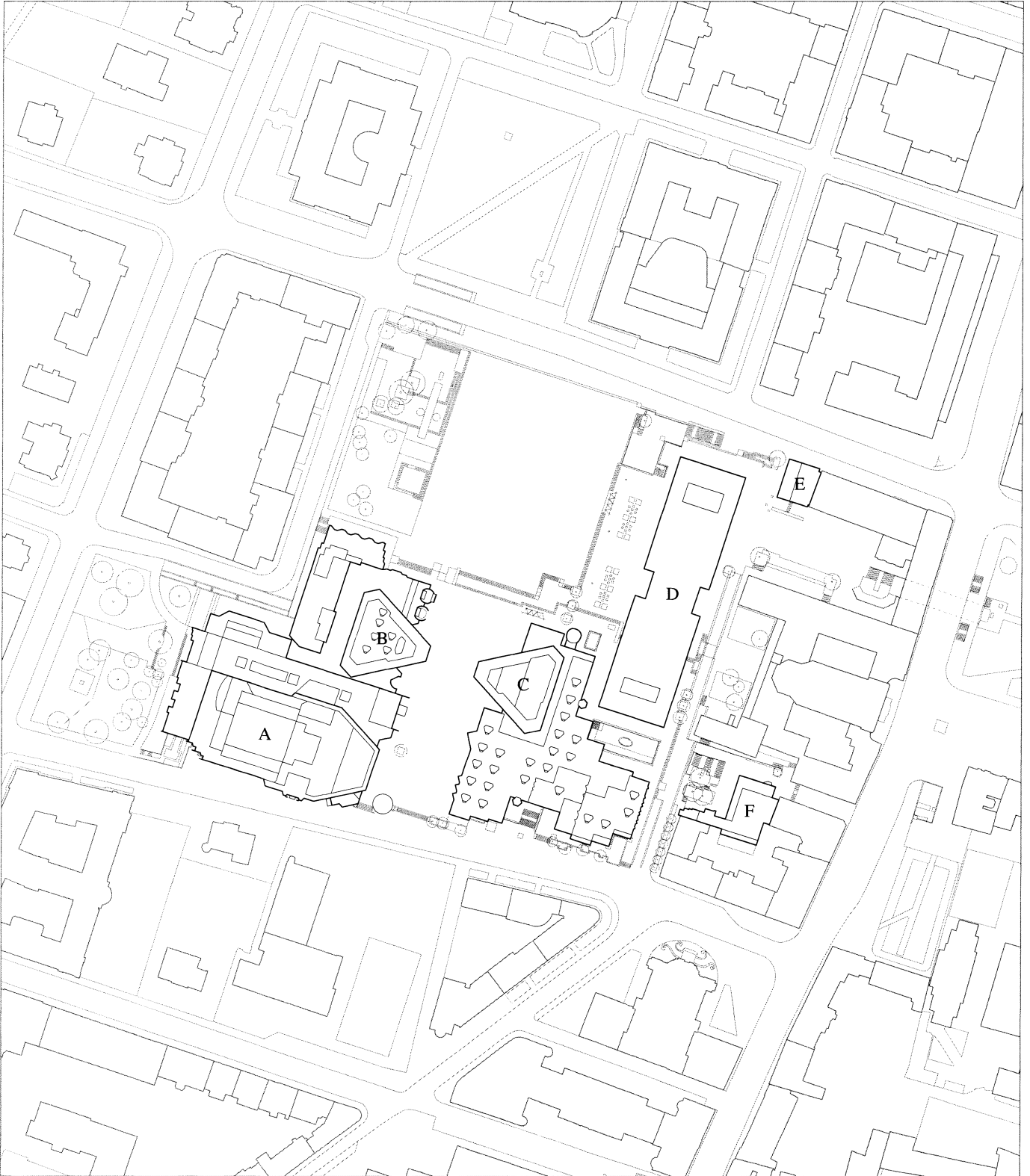
Edvard Ravnikar

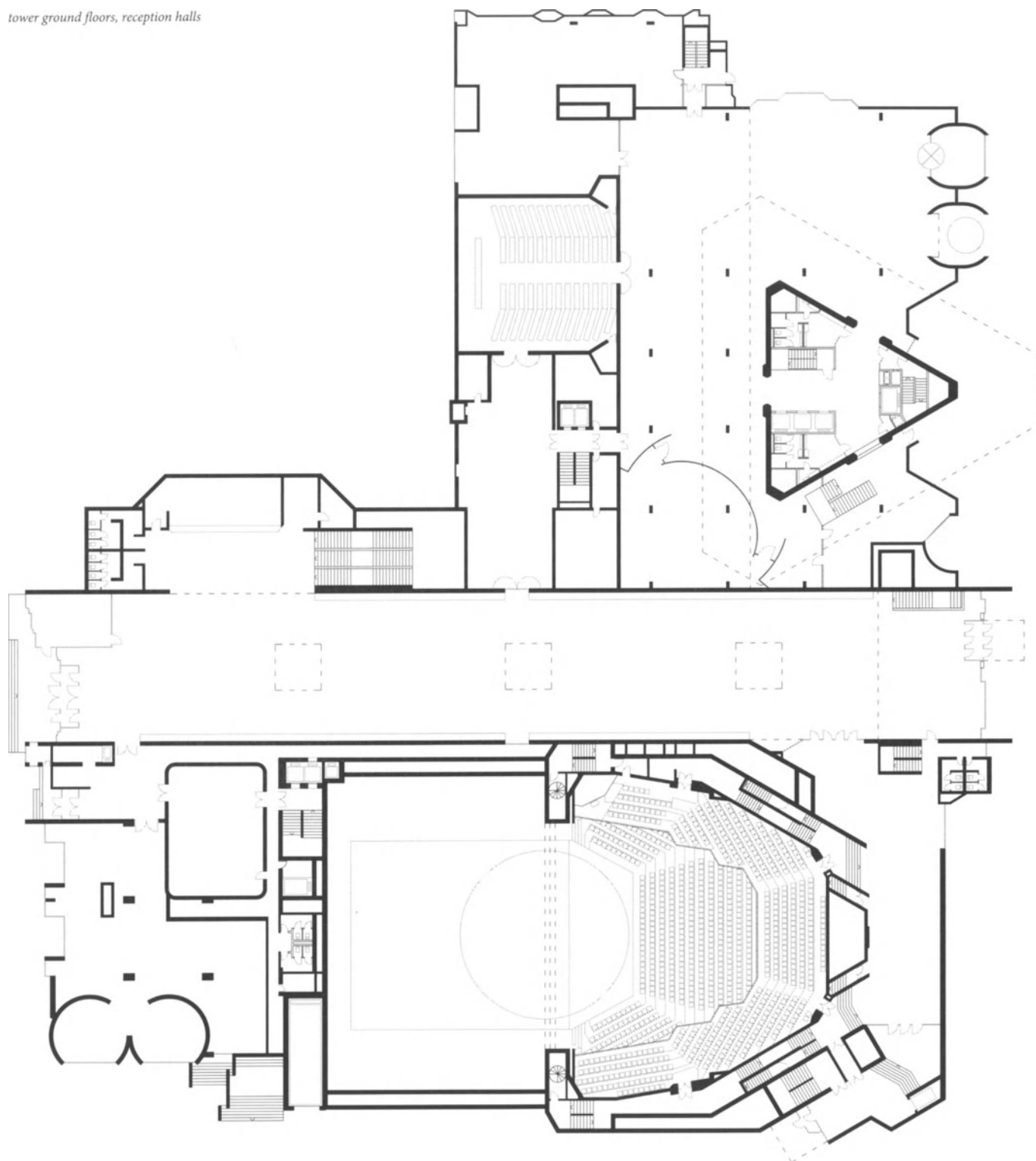
Sinteza, Ljubljana 1974, No. 30, 31, 32, p. 81-83

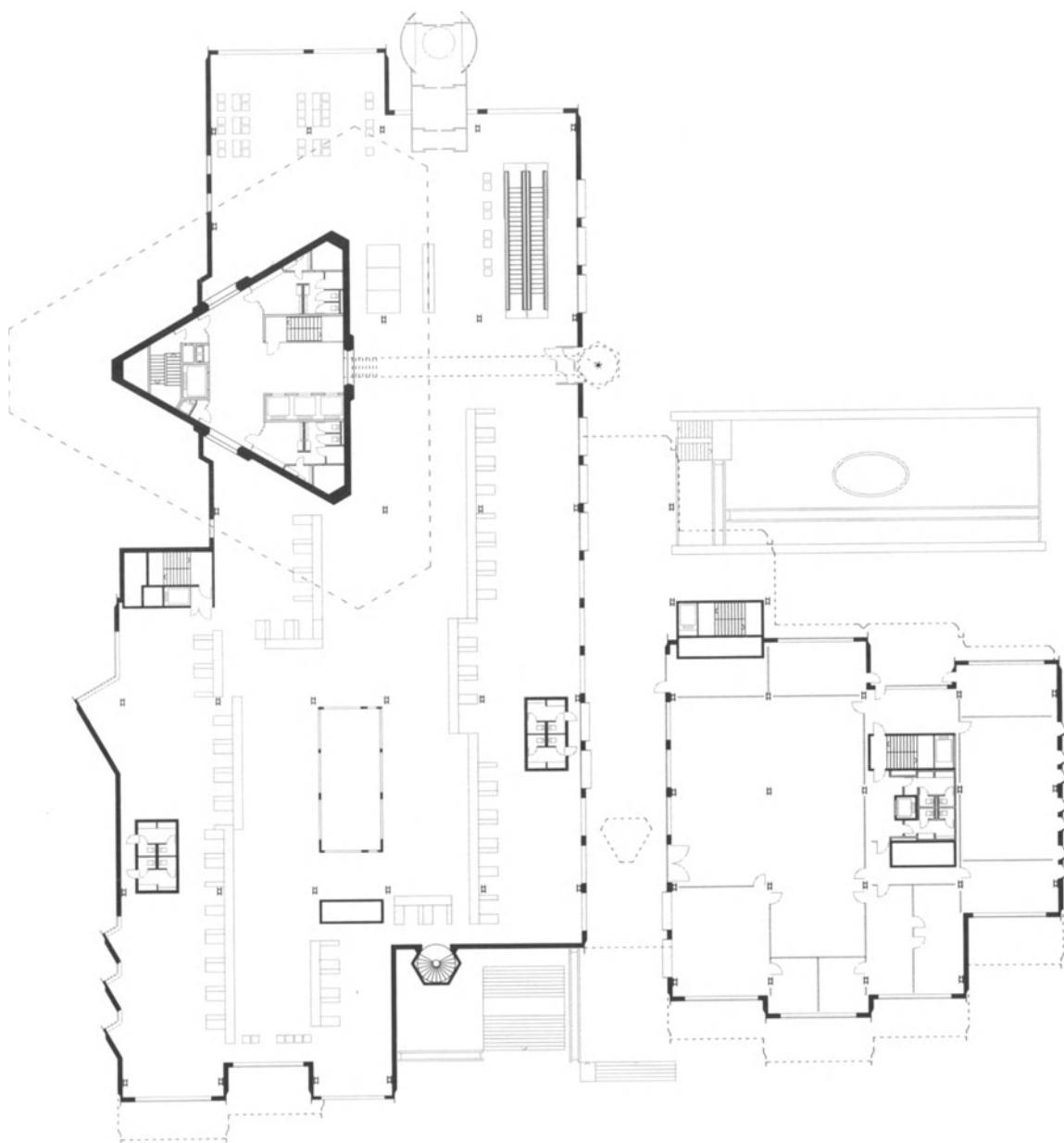


legend (right)
A. Culture and Congress Centre
B. office tower – TR3
C. office tower – NLB Bank
D. Maximarket department store
E. high school annex
F. office building

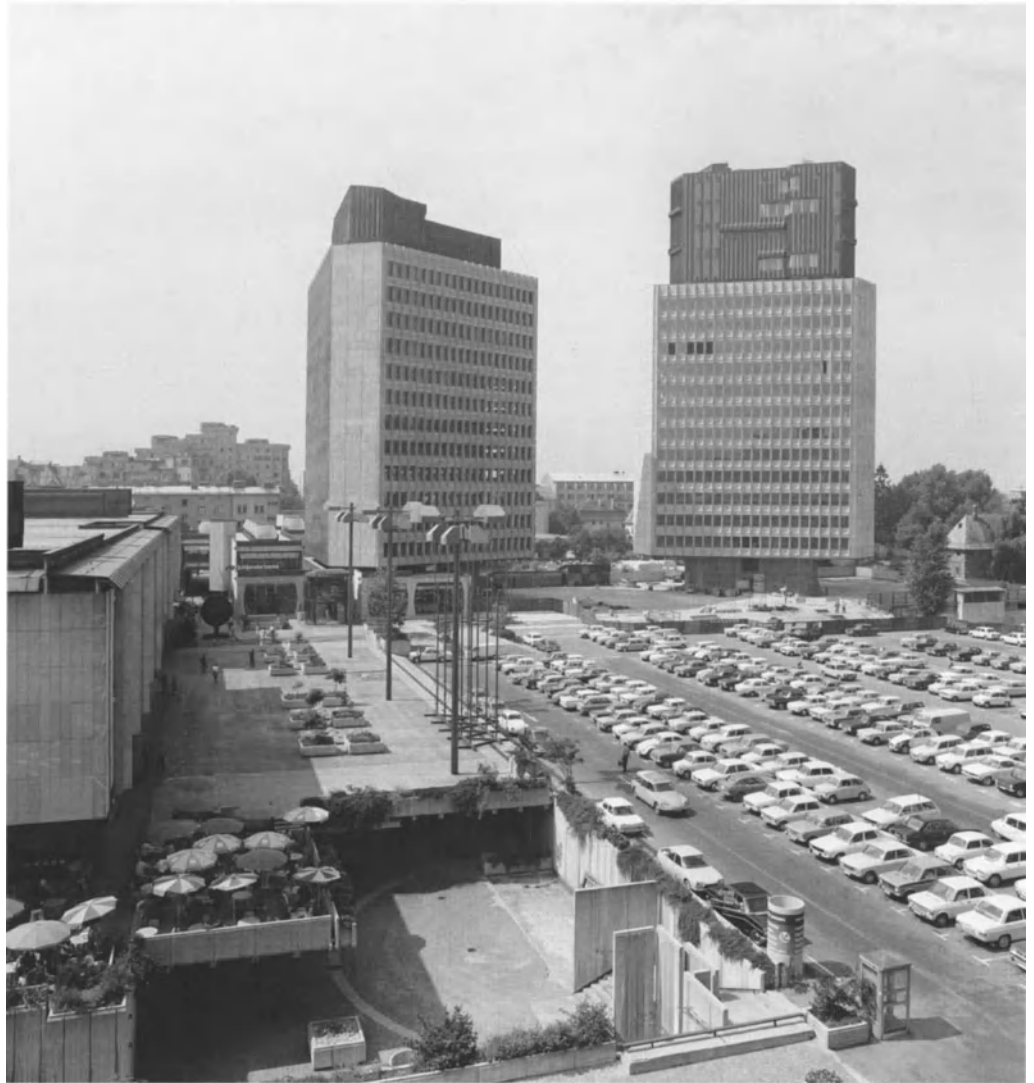
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main entrance, NLB Bank



reception hall, NLB Bank



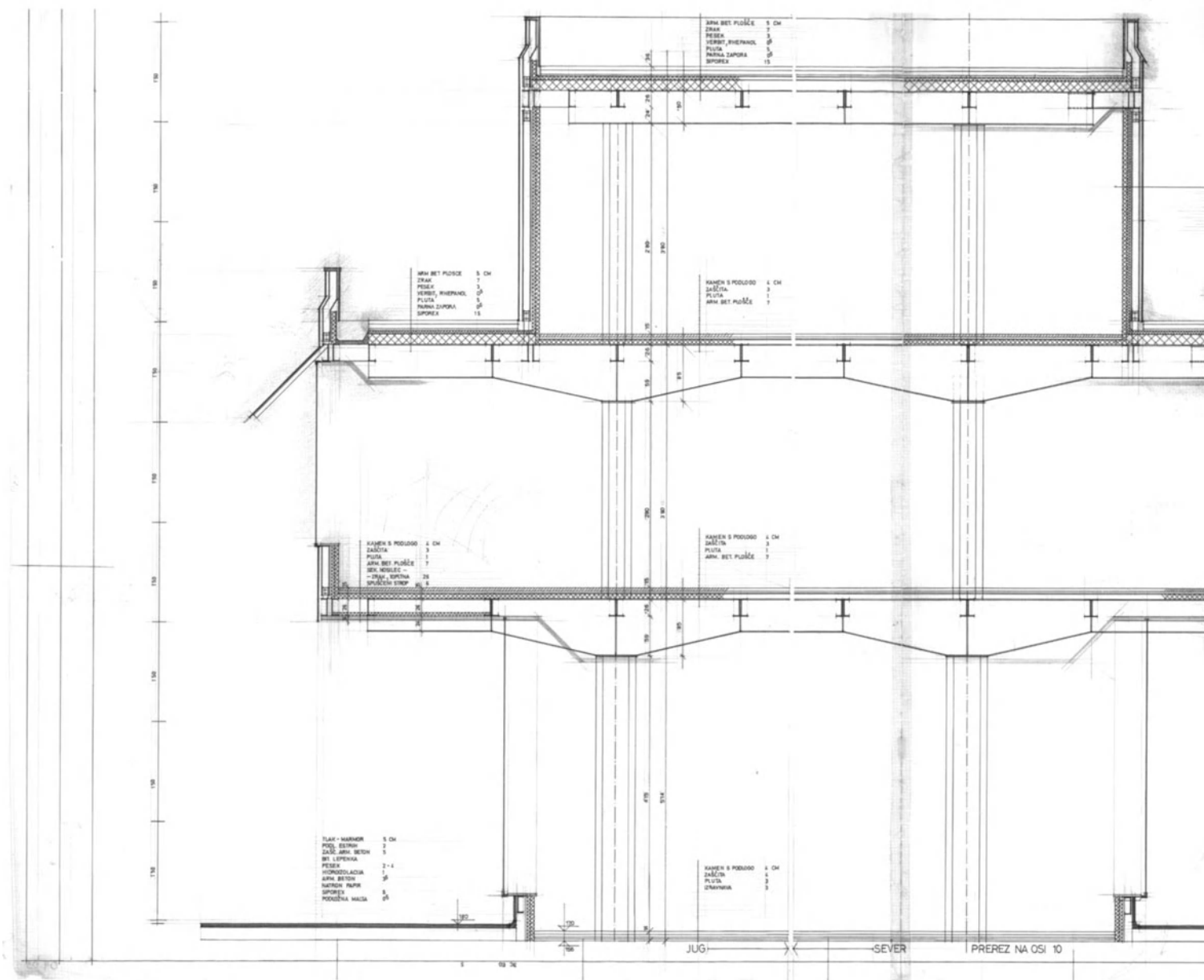
reception hall, TR3



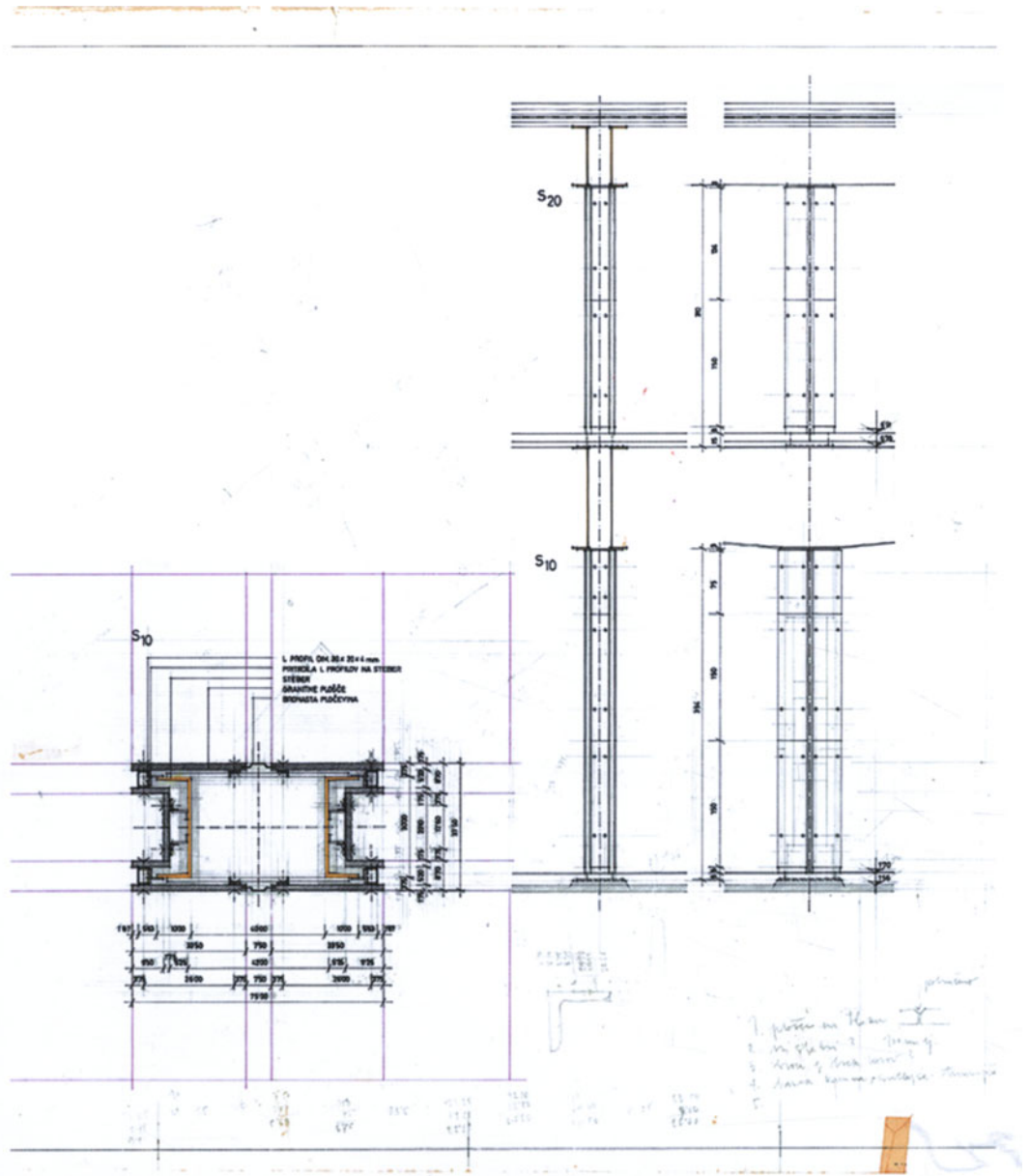
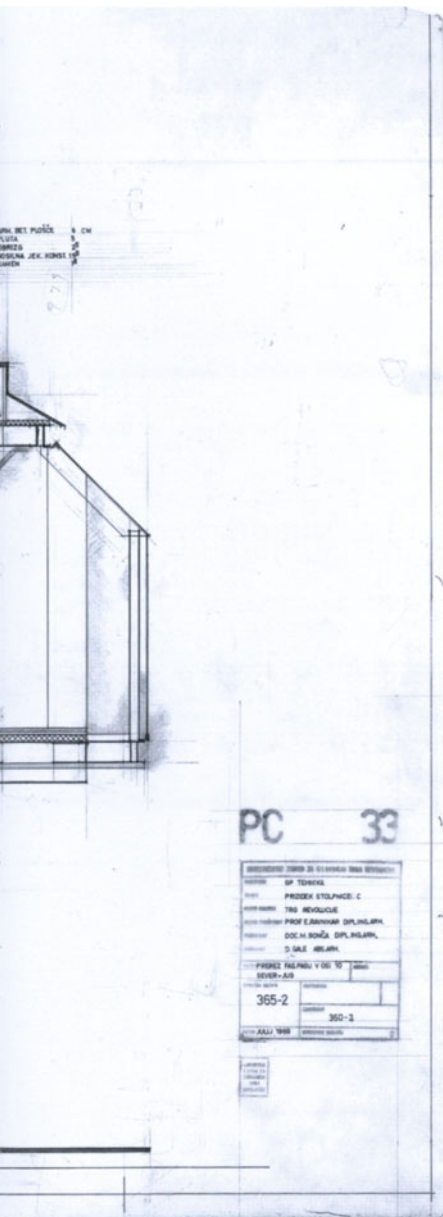
access to underground passage



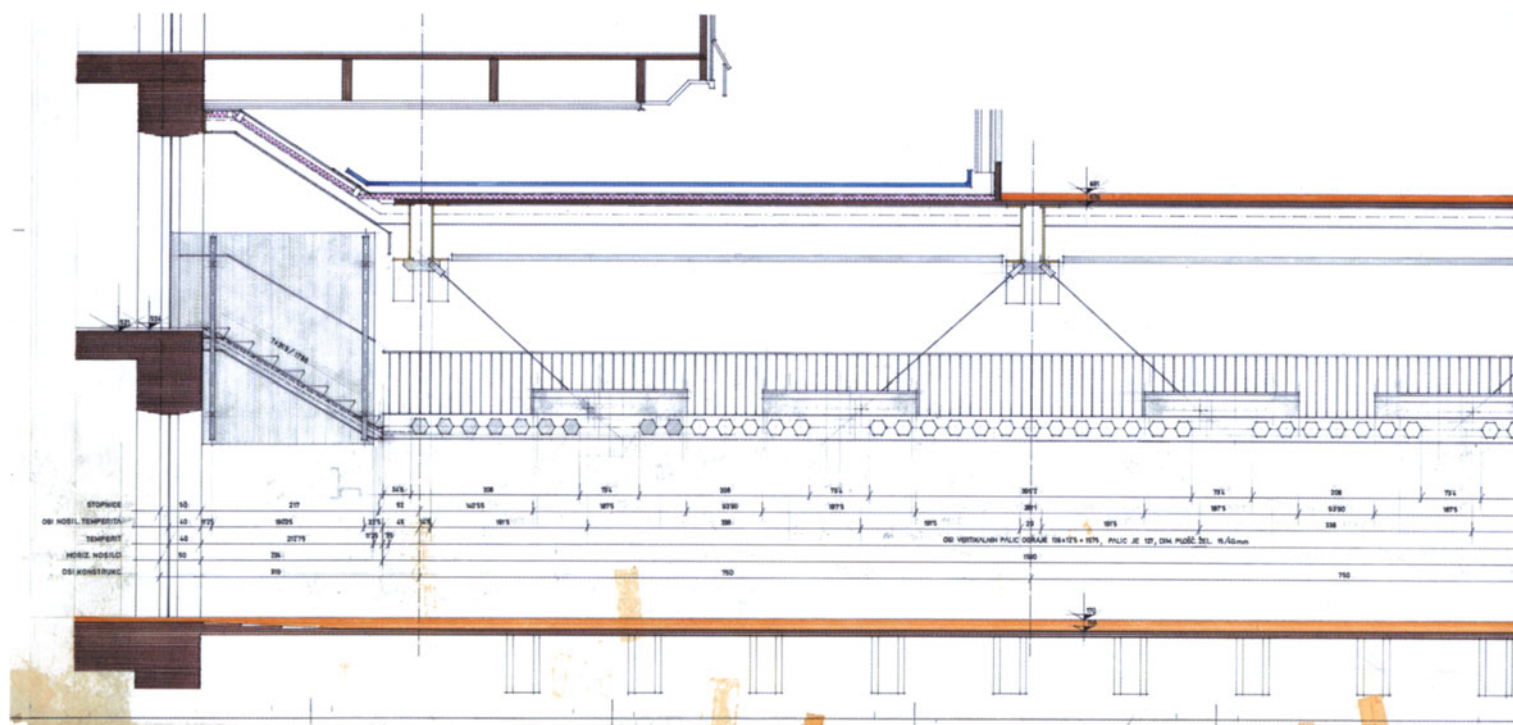
c. office tower – NLB Bank, section
through annex



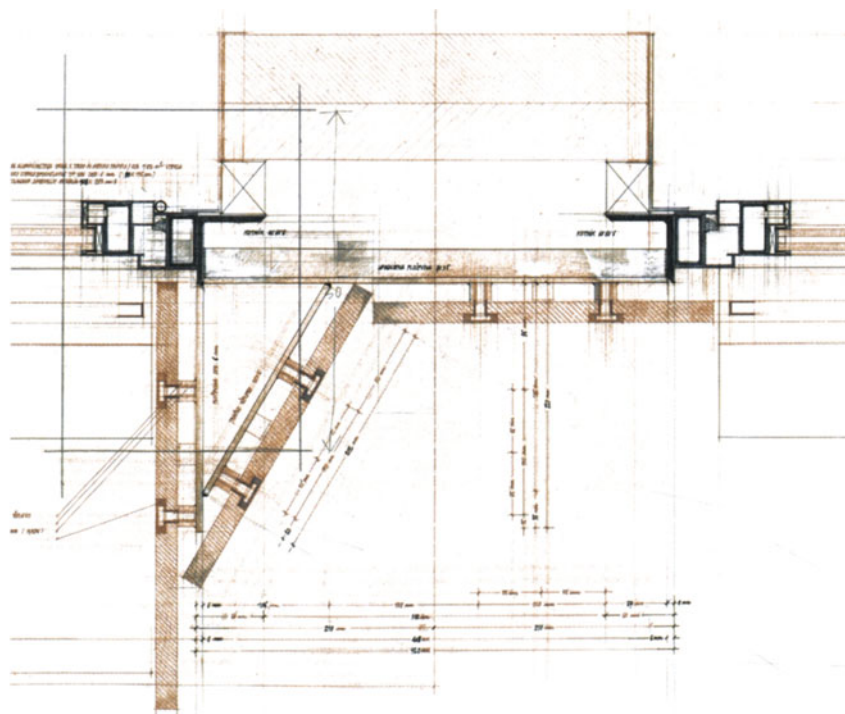
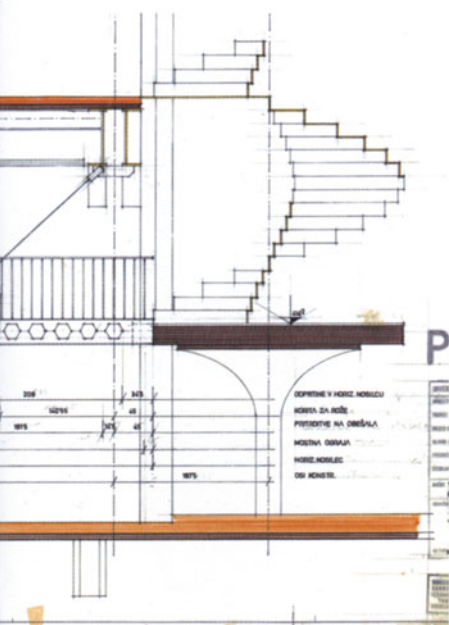
detail of the column cladding



pedestrian bridge, reception hall, NLB
Bank



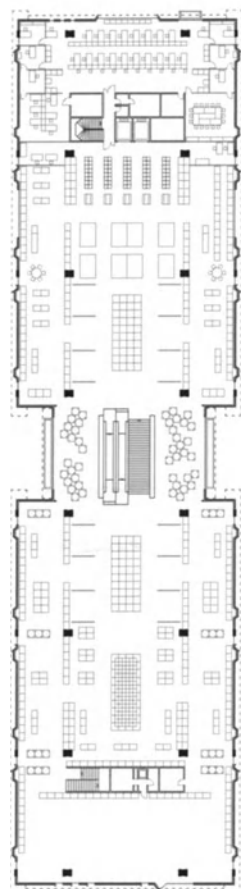
tower stone plate sun shades, detail



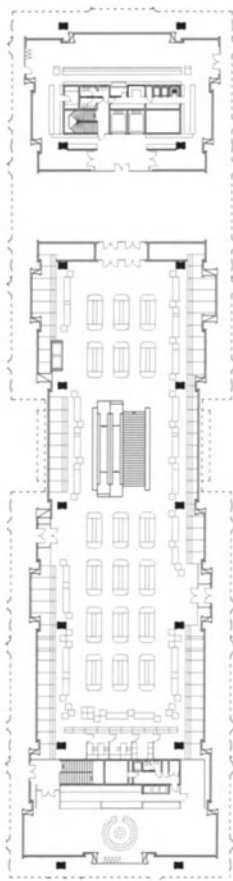
D. Maximarket department store



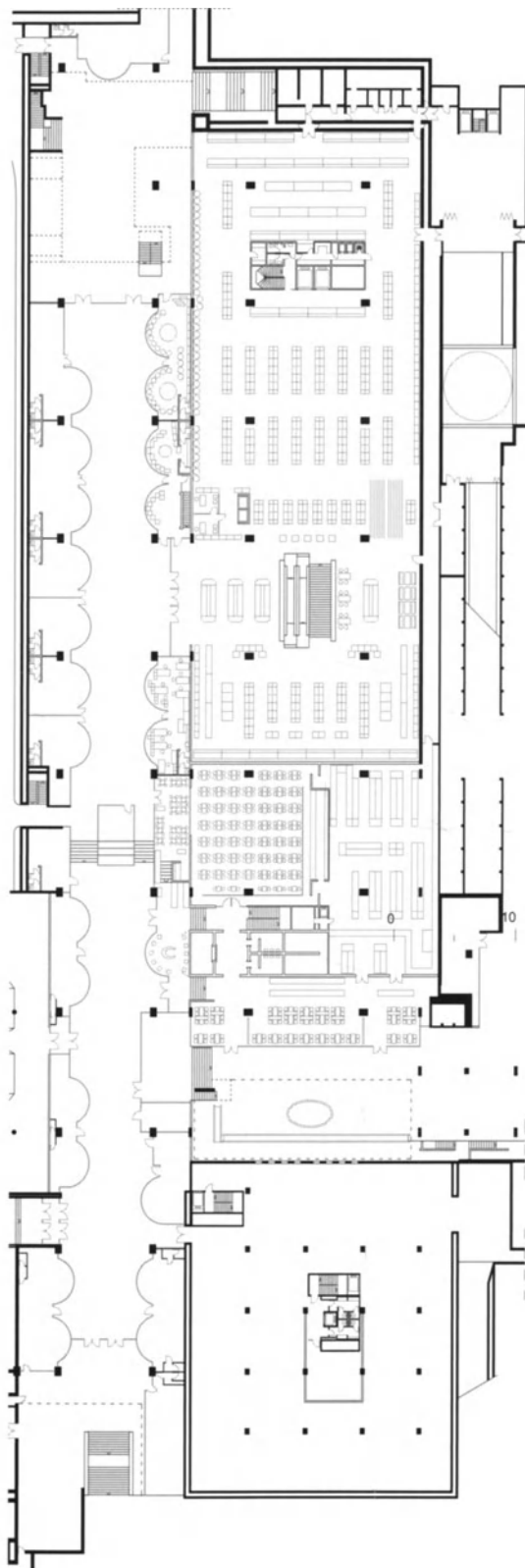
first floor, ground floor, basement



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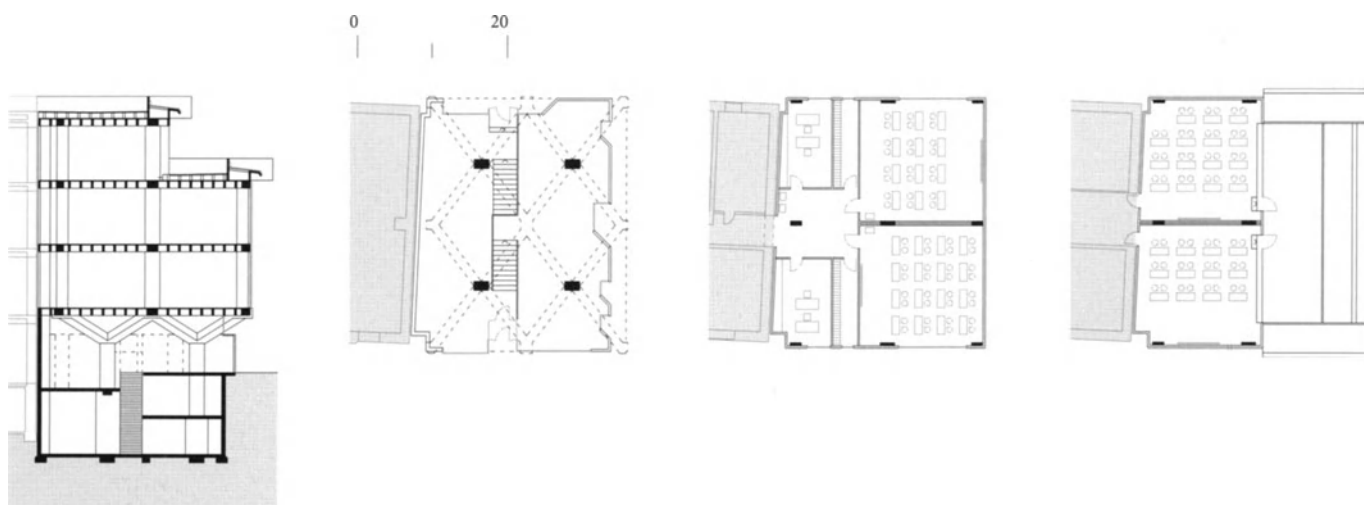
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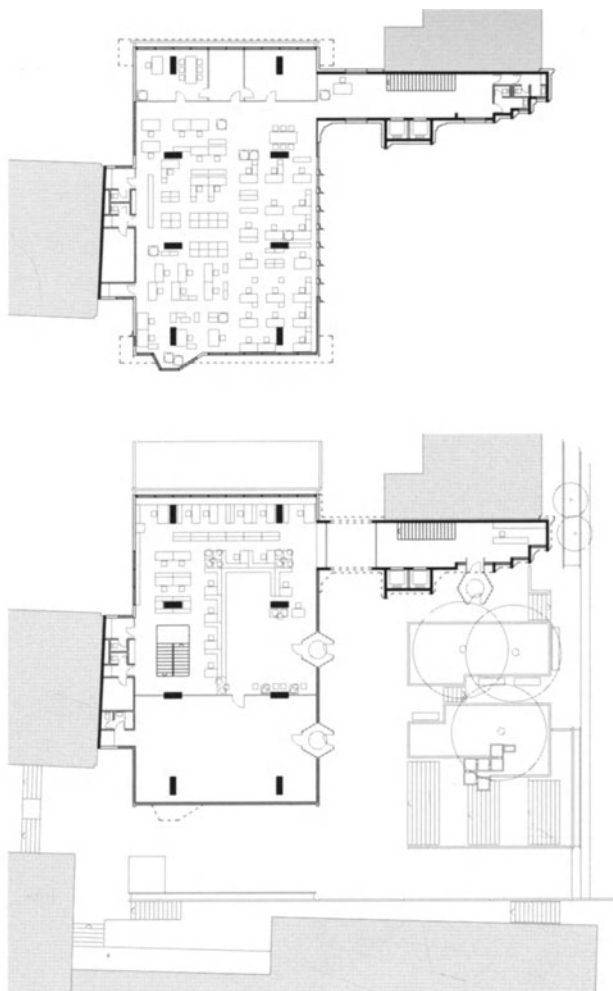
E. high school annex

section, ground floor, first floor, third floor (below)





first floor, ground floor



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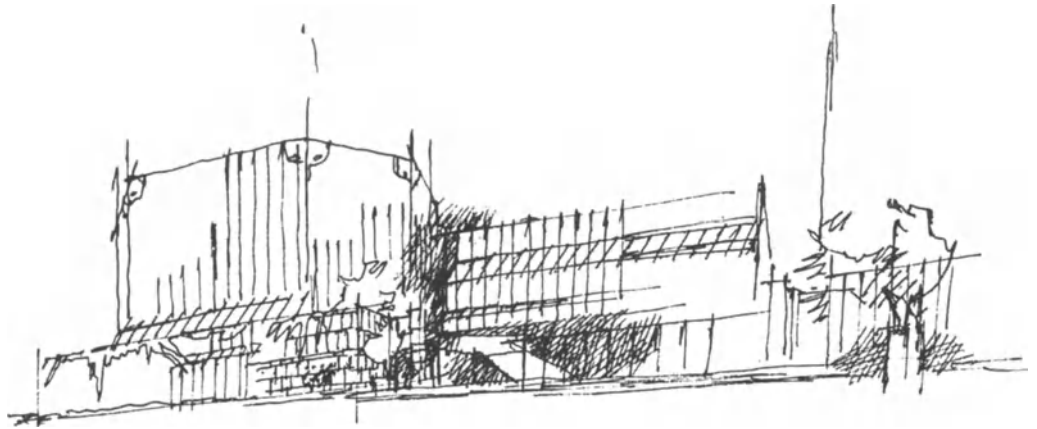
Cankarjev dom, Cultural and Congress Centre, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Prešernova cesta 10, Ljubljana

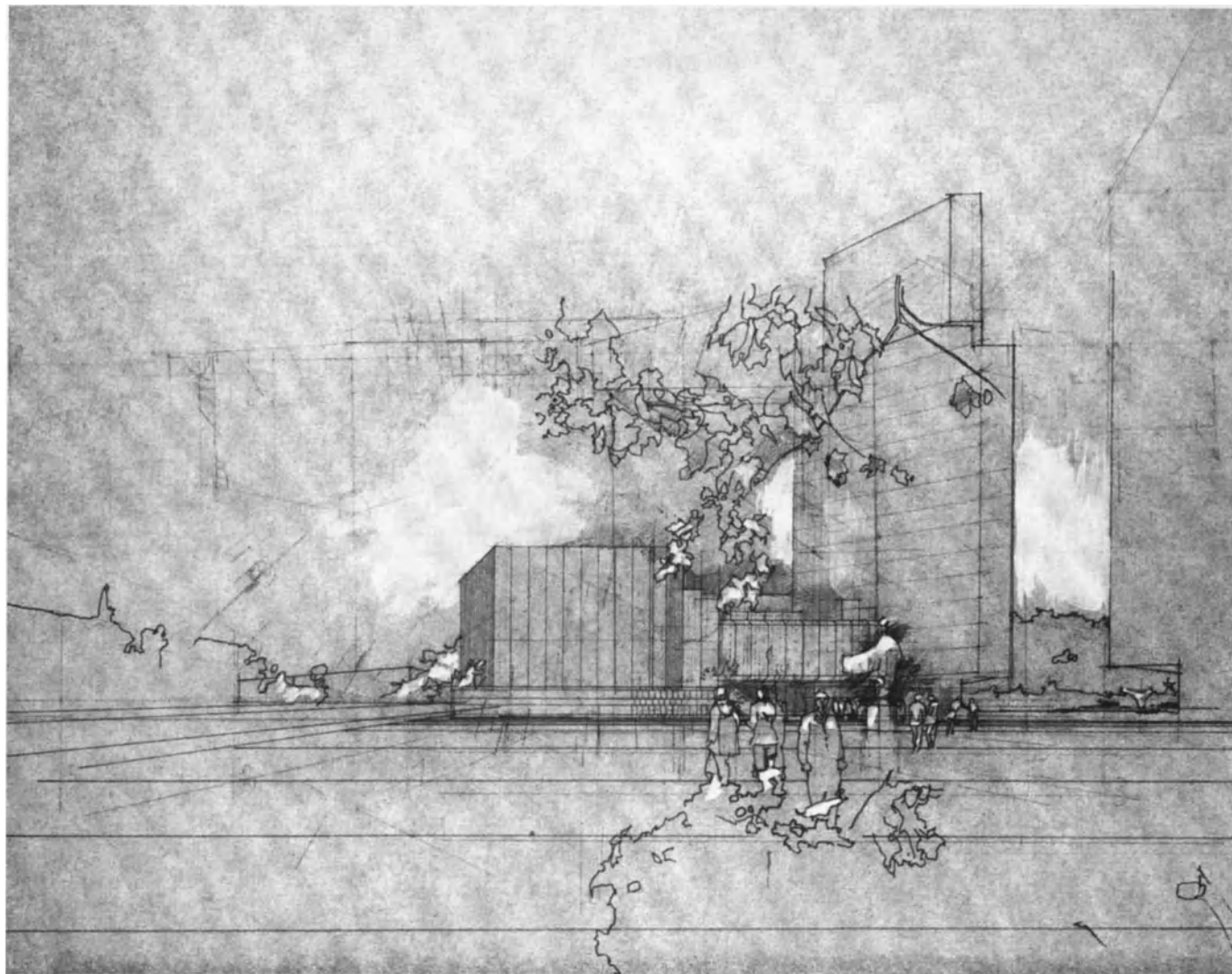
Designed: 1977

Constructed: 1982-83

Collaborators: Tomo Jurčič, Mika Berlič,
Roza Pajović, Marta Tobolka, Majda
Lukan, Andrej Kasal, Aleš Stanovnik,
Jože Barši, Janja Barši, Boris Briški,
Monika Fink

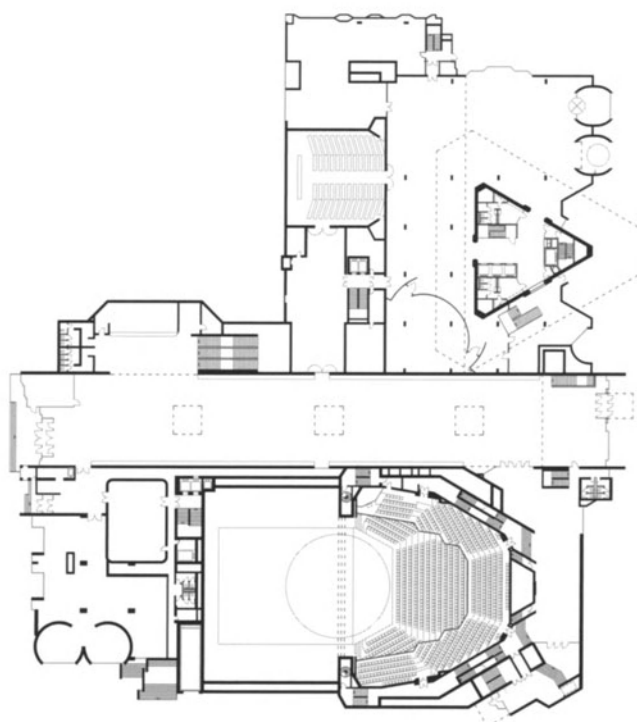
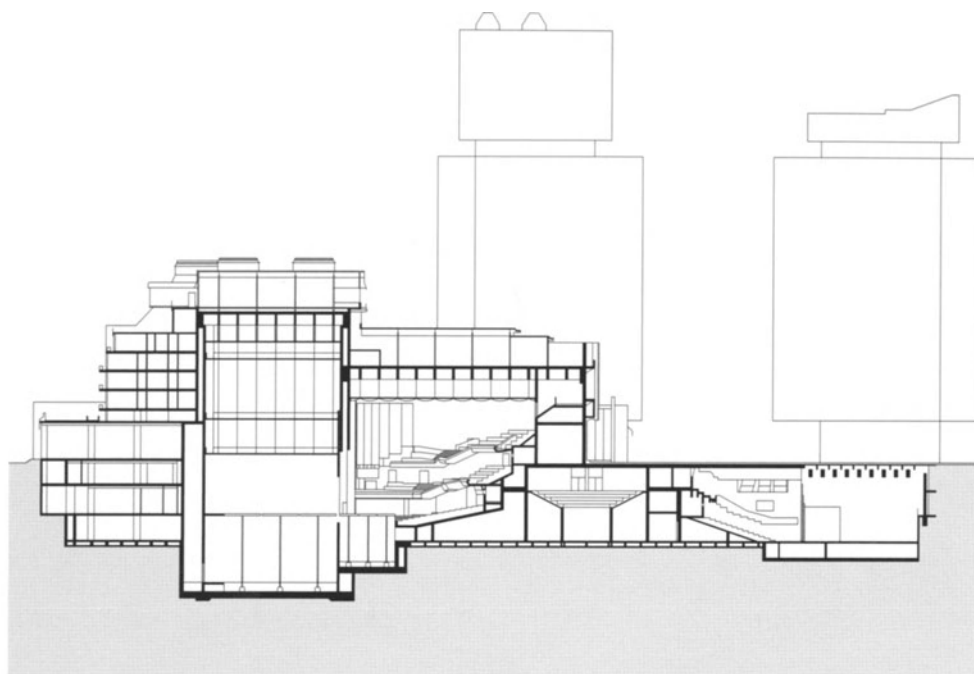






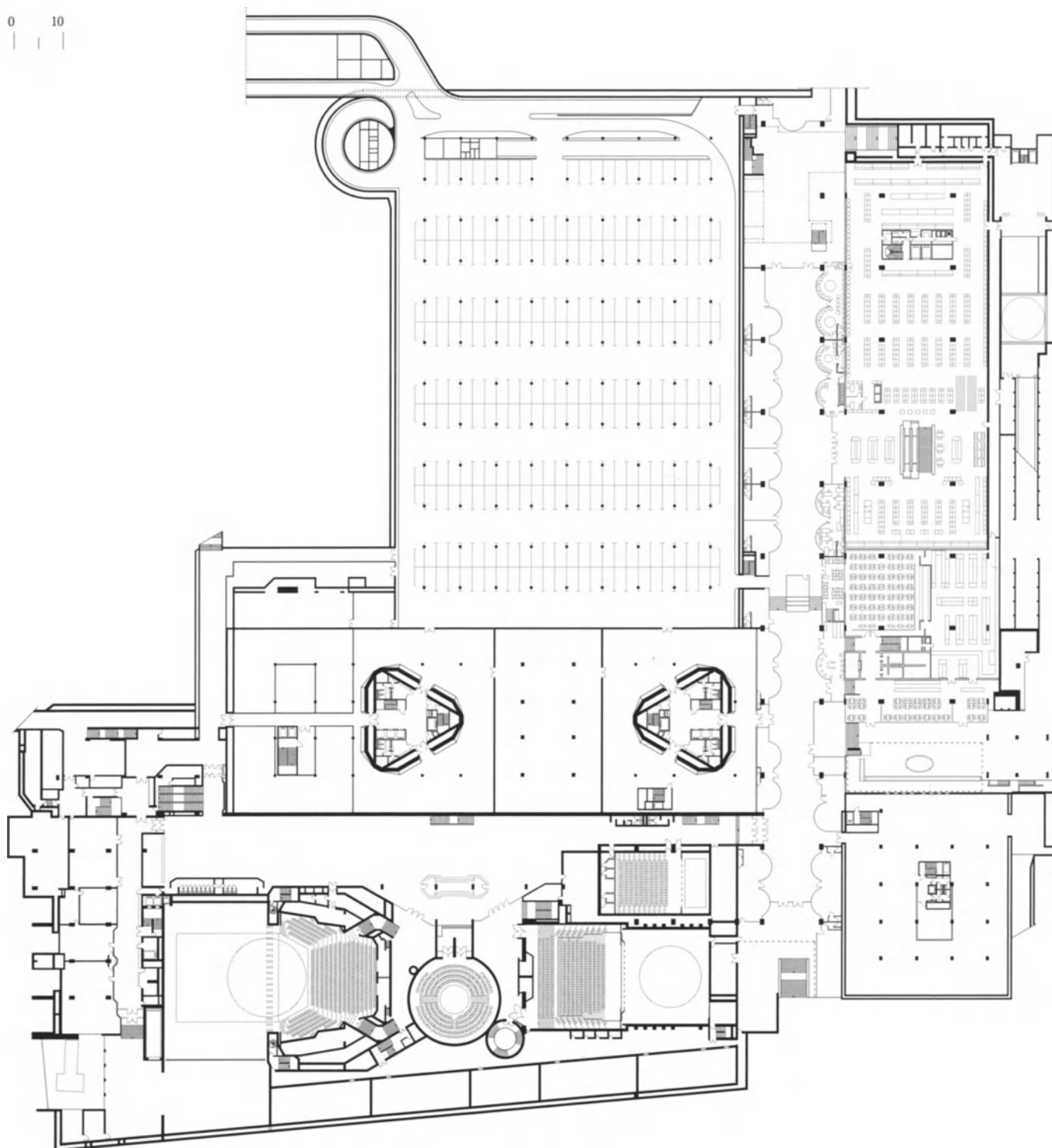
section and ground floor

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basement

0 10



entry from park (below)

main entrance, from square (right)







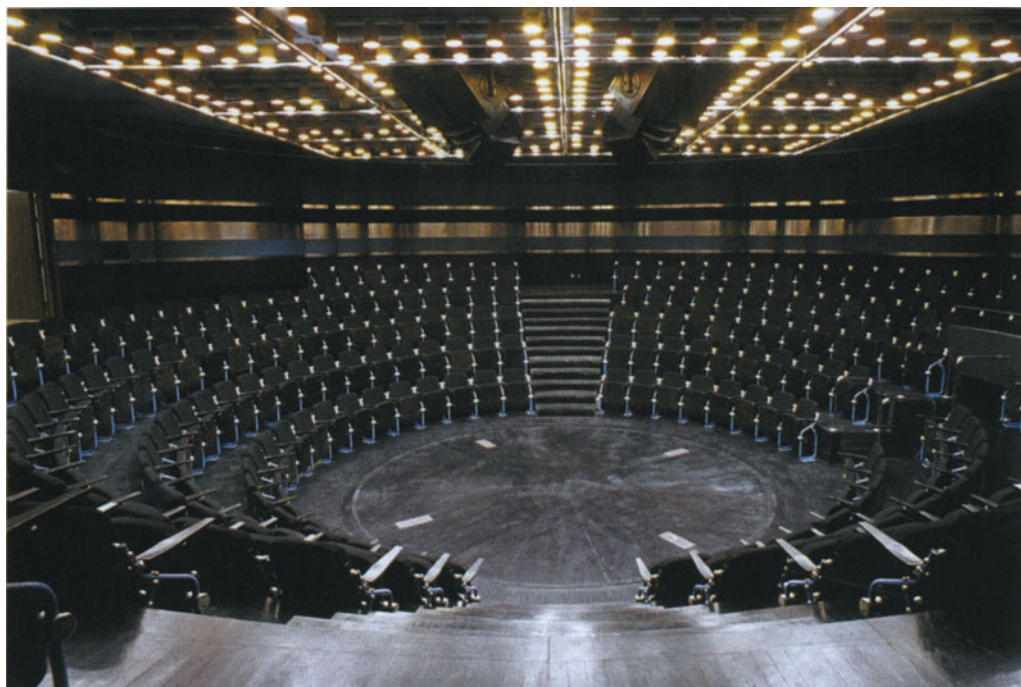
main auditorium





middle auditorium (left)

round auditorium (right)



reception hall



foyer area





Pržno - Sv. Štefan, Montenegro

Competition entry: 1964

1st Prize

Collaborators: Majda Kregar,
Edo Ravnikar jr.

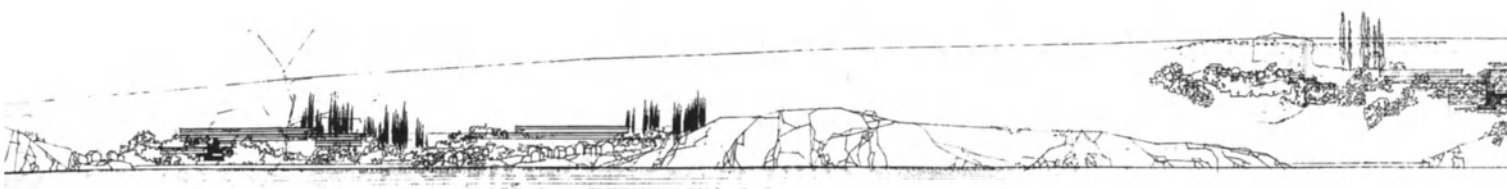
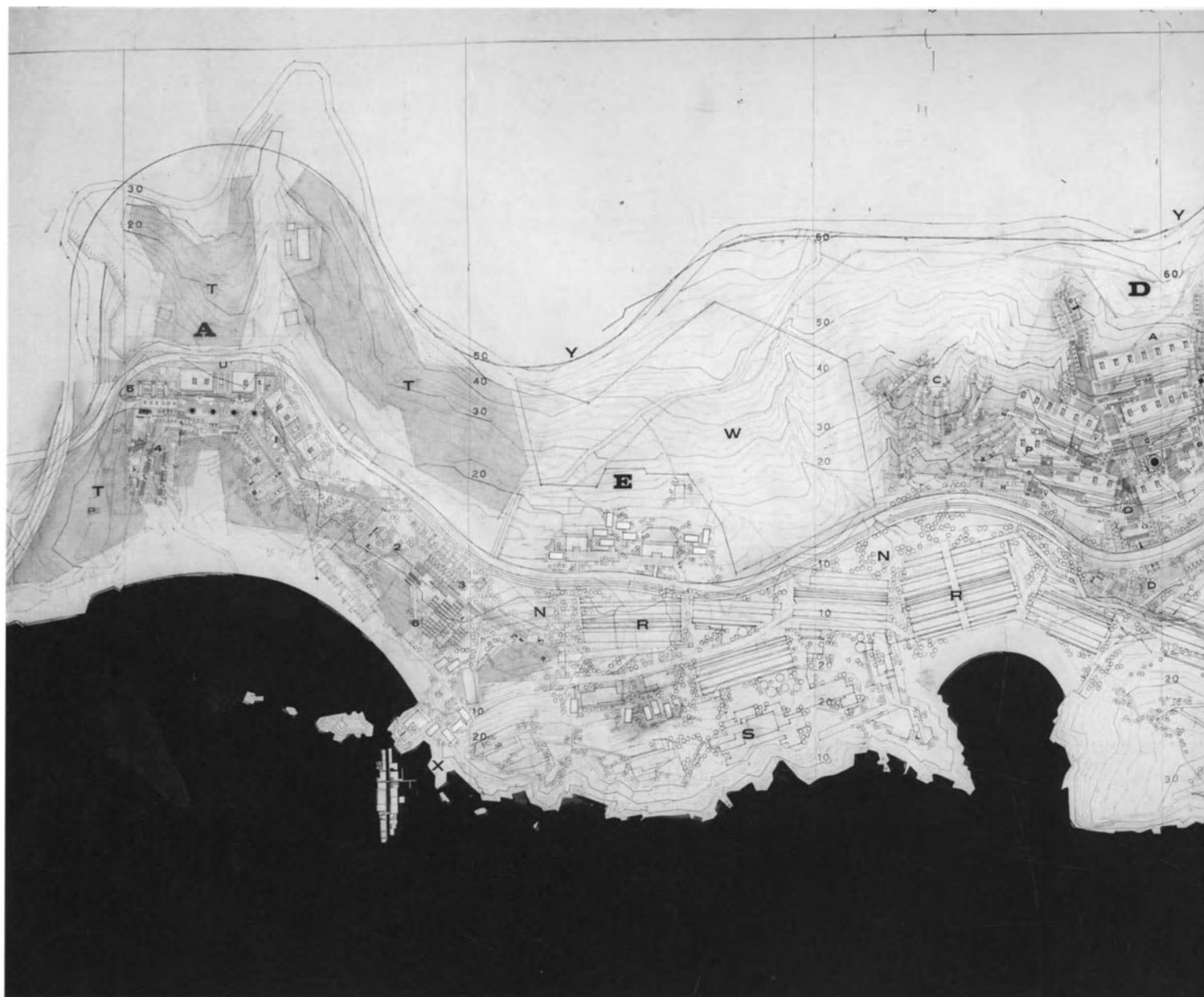
This part of our coast is intended for luxury beaches of lasting international importance. This will be no Nice, St. Tropez or Rimini, but rather a notion of its own kind. The development principles therefore have to originate in indigenous lifestyle characteristics. Firstly the entire landscape with its slopes, the sea, rocks, vegetation, climate and lifestyle have to be taken into consideration. In this area, the main concern of the urban planners must be functional integrity, perfection even, in all of the elements of the whole that are connected to the atmosphere of the landscape and local lifestyle. The system of functions provides a legible and rational meaning that is rich in variety, as does the work of man that is in tune with nature, its scale and its charms. In the end this landscape has to be both natural and cultivated, elementary yet lavishly organised, technically perfect yet rich in unexpected and surprising impressions... The precious living substance of this environment needs to be protected with as much care as possible, in order to enable the inspiration of real life that would stem from it. The longitudinal shape of the communications belt that represents the backbone of the space is meant to offer an opportunity for so-called intense living, familiar from the promenades of touristic cities around the Mediterranean. This is where experiences are concentrated, as are encounters, trading, information, leisure and rest, which taken together represent the basic and permanent tone that is complemented by swimming, city- and nightlife. Parallel to this backbone the coast is divided into multiple belts: the belt next to the coastline – the beach, park belt, communication belt, and a belt of buildings. The longitudinal disposition is further accentuated by the two gravitational points of the two city life cores, by the two centres of the amplitudes of daily living.

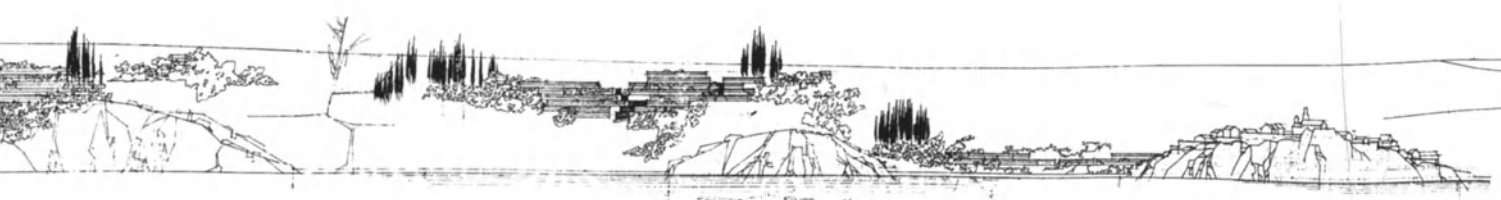
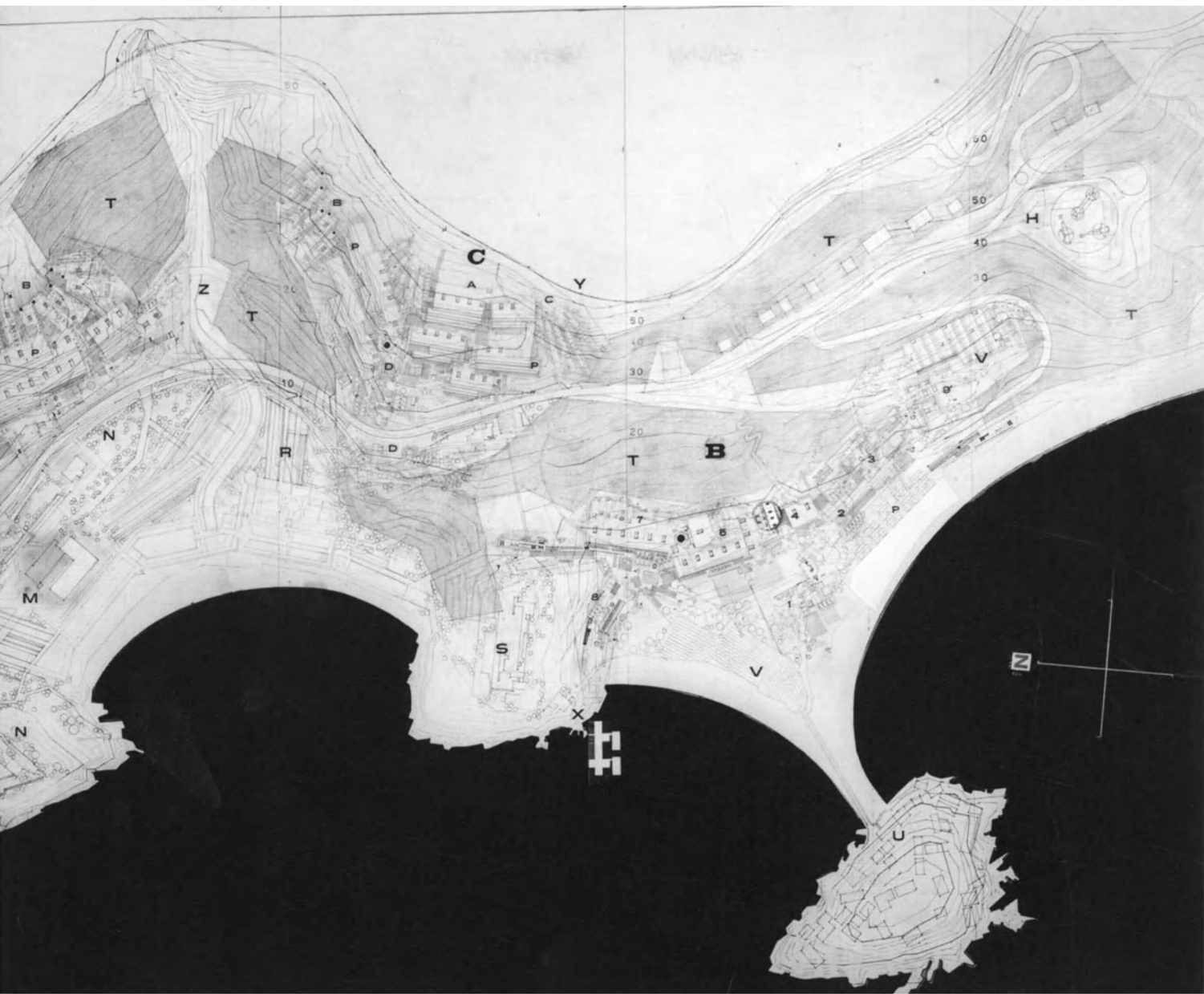
How can all these demands be satisfied while at the same time allowing nature to remain protected as much as possible in spite of the relatively large-scale construction brief? The concept of this project stems, above all, from these two elements: the traditional house, growing from nature itself, and from additional horizontal layered elements. We believe that by repeating the character of the traditional village house we would not infringe on the character of the landscape, while the layered parts can be successfully blended into the green from the sea or from above, using the typical structure of the section. In this way the height of the new buildings would not exceed the height of the existing buildings, terraces and other ameliorations. Prism-like multi-storey buildings, excessively high support walls and loud ameliorations should

be avoided above all. It is imperative that the olive groves are preserved and that the natural beach and the coastline in its entirety are not touched. The vineyards that are demolished need to be replaced in the form of pergolas that hang over the houses. We propose that the existing park be widened along the entire length between centres A and B between the main communication lines and the coastline.

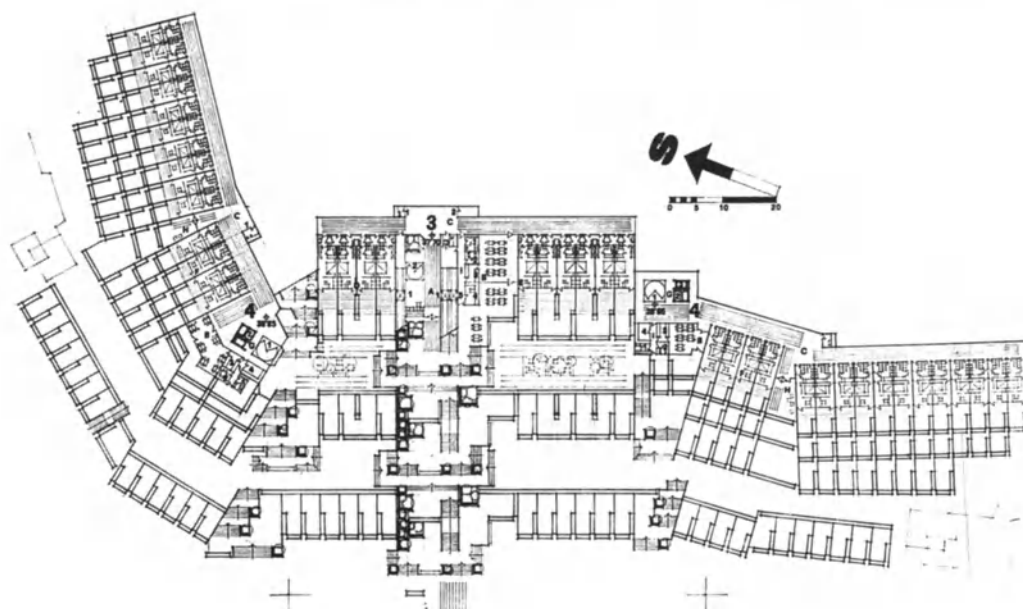
Edvard Ravnikar

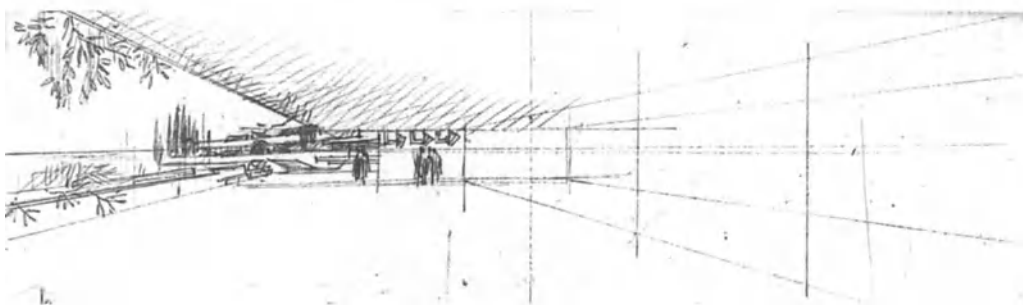
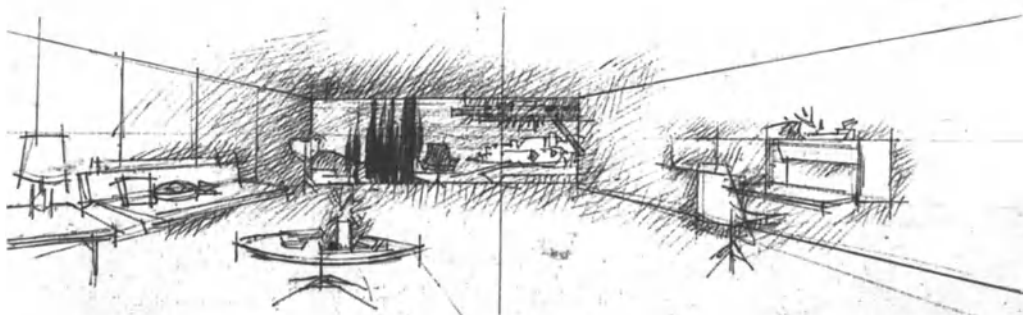
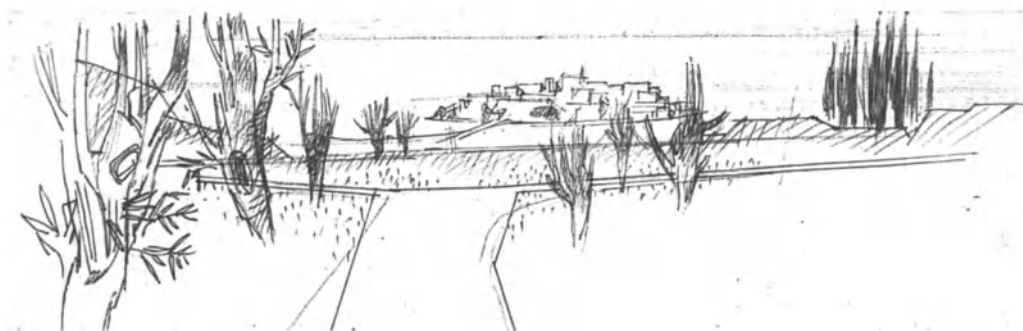
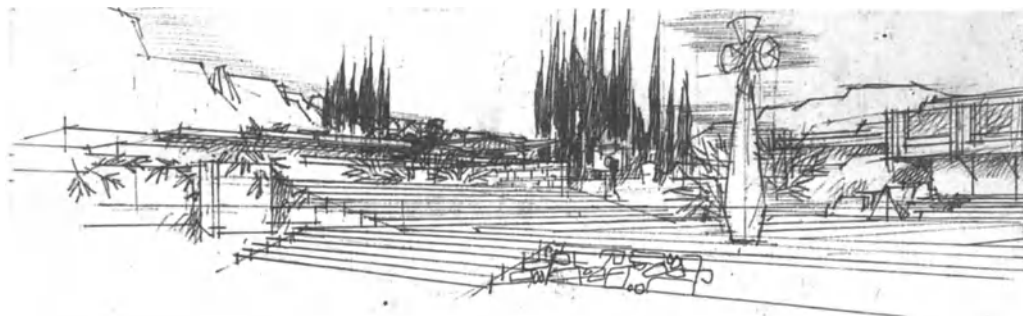
Sinteza, Ljubljana 1965, No. 3, p. 85-86





Hotel Miločer, site plan







Ferantov vrt Residential and Commercial Complex, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Gregorčičeva ulica, Rimska ulica,
Slovenska cesta, Ljubljana

Competition entry: 1964

Constructed: 1967-73

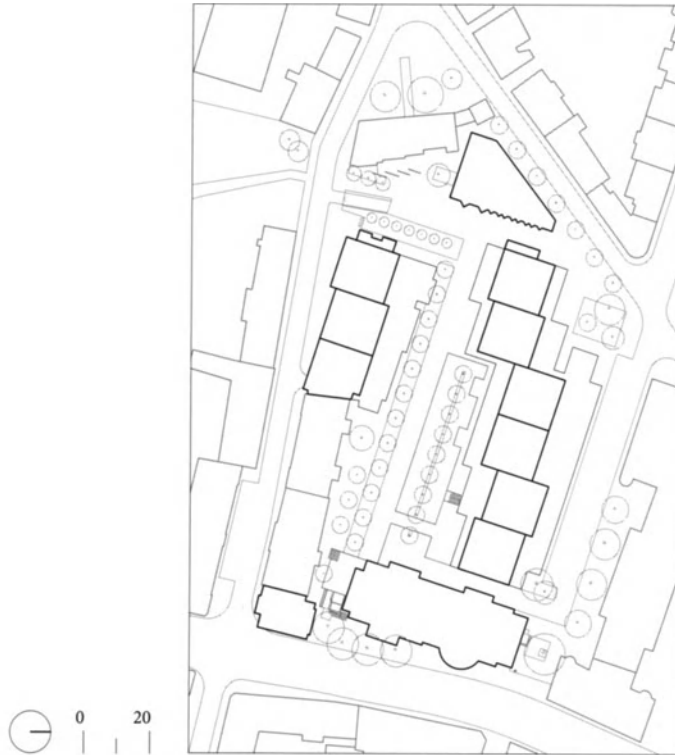
Collaborators: Jože Koželj, Mika Berlič,
Judita Černič

Although the Ferantov vrt housing complex comprises a relatively large number of flats it does not represent an organised micro-region within which social relationships would be reflected in a spatially perceived articulation that could be repeated. It represents but a cluster of housing units that is to complement the existing housing fund in the city core of Ljubljana. As this part of the city is surrounded by facilities of every kind, old-fashioned though they may be in most of the cases, the brief for this construction enterprise did not envisage them to be either complemented or refurbished. It did, however, include some shops, a small number of garages, civil engineering regulation, etc. In the vicinity of the major cultural institutions of Ljubljana, within the city, this was a much-needed intervention that is actually similar to a kind of transfusion. This is not a regeneration of an old part of the city; yet with its scope it represents the beginning of the transformation of southern Ljubljana into a more metropolitan milieu. One side of the complex forms a part of the space of Titova Street (today Slovenska cesta) and as such it will have to be treated in its entirety as a transitional and transparent barrier between our main street and the space devoted to the Ferantov vrt housing, which must not become a courtyard. The design and the executed standard are complex, the materials more durable and the contours and gestures of the construction details are conceived as an important part of the building.

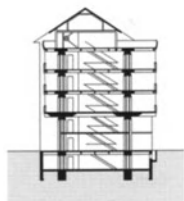
Edvard Ravnikar

Arhitektura i urbanizam, Beograd 1969, No. 55, p. 10-11

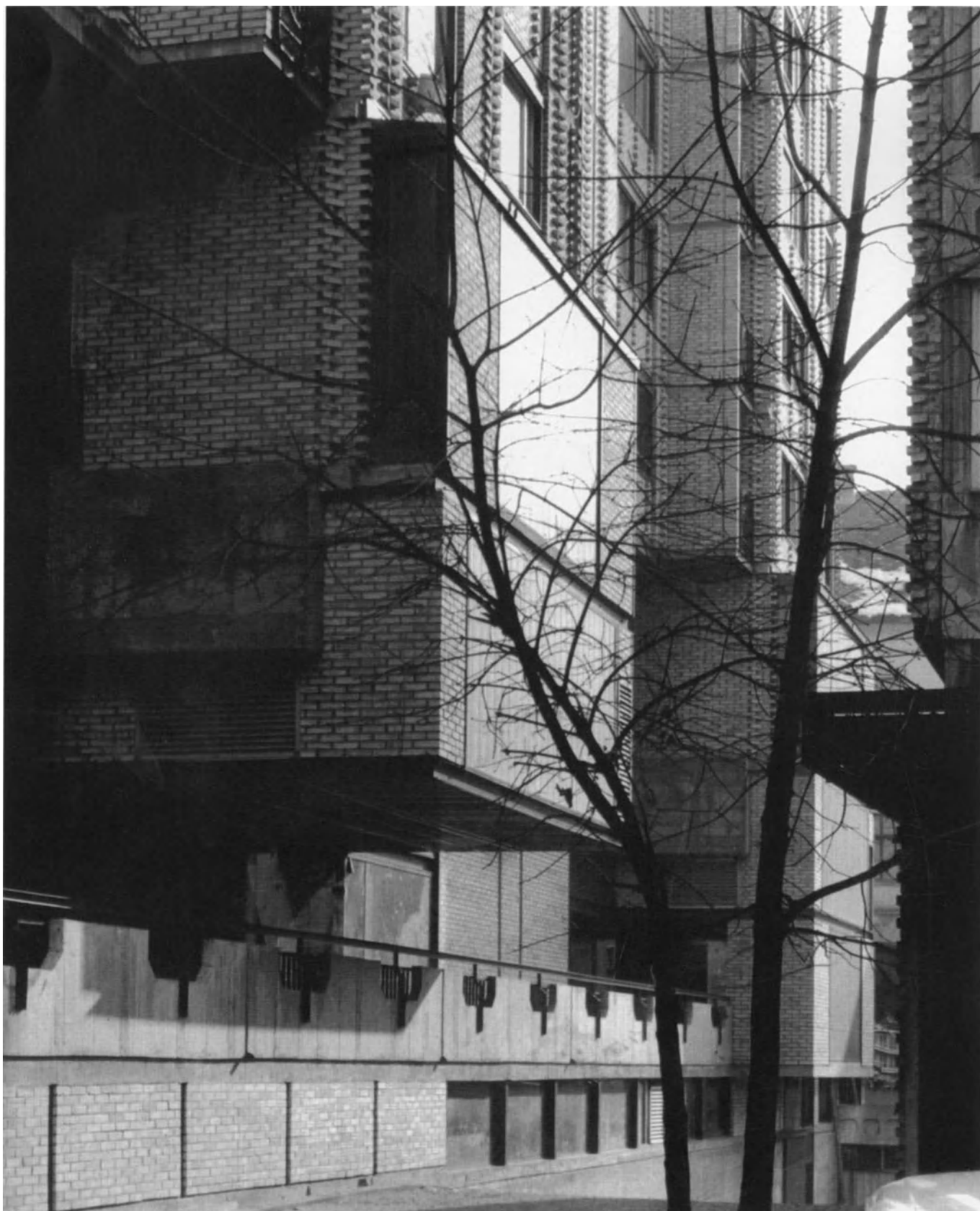
site plan, section



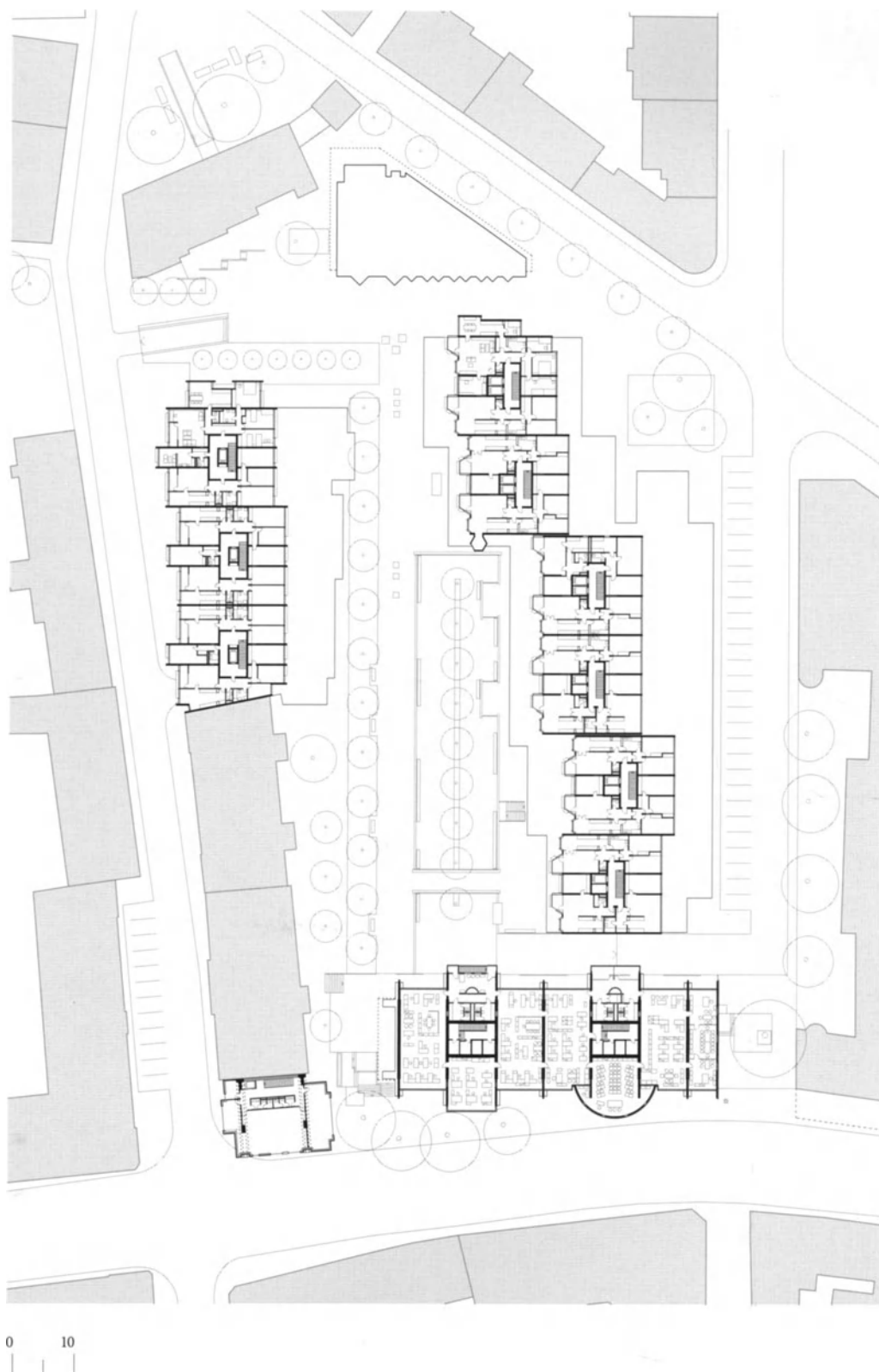
ground floor



0 10



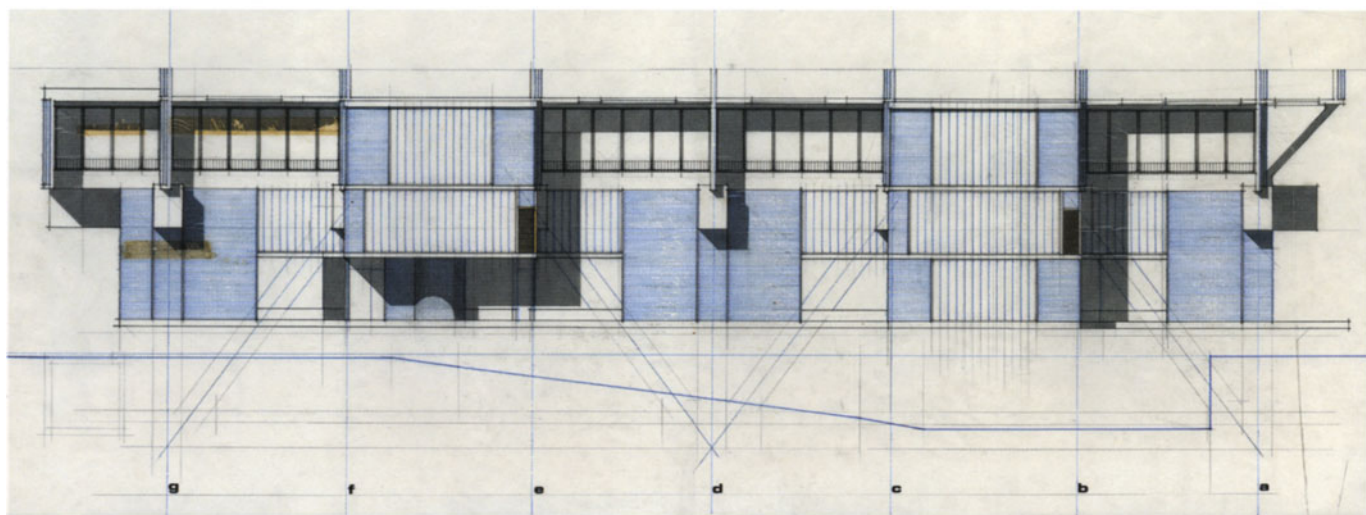
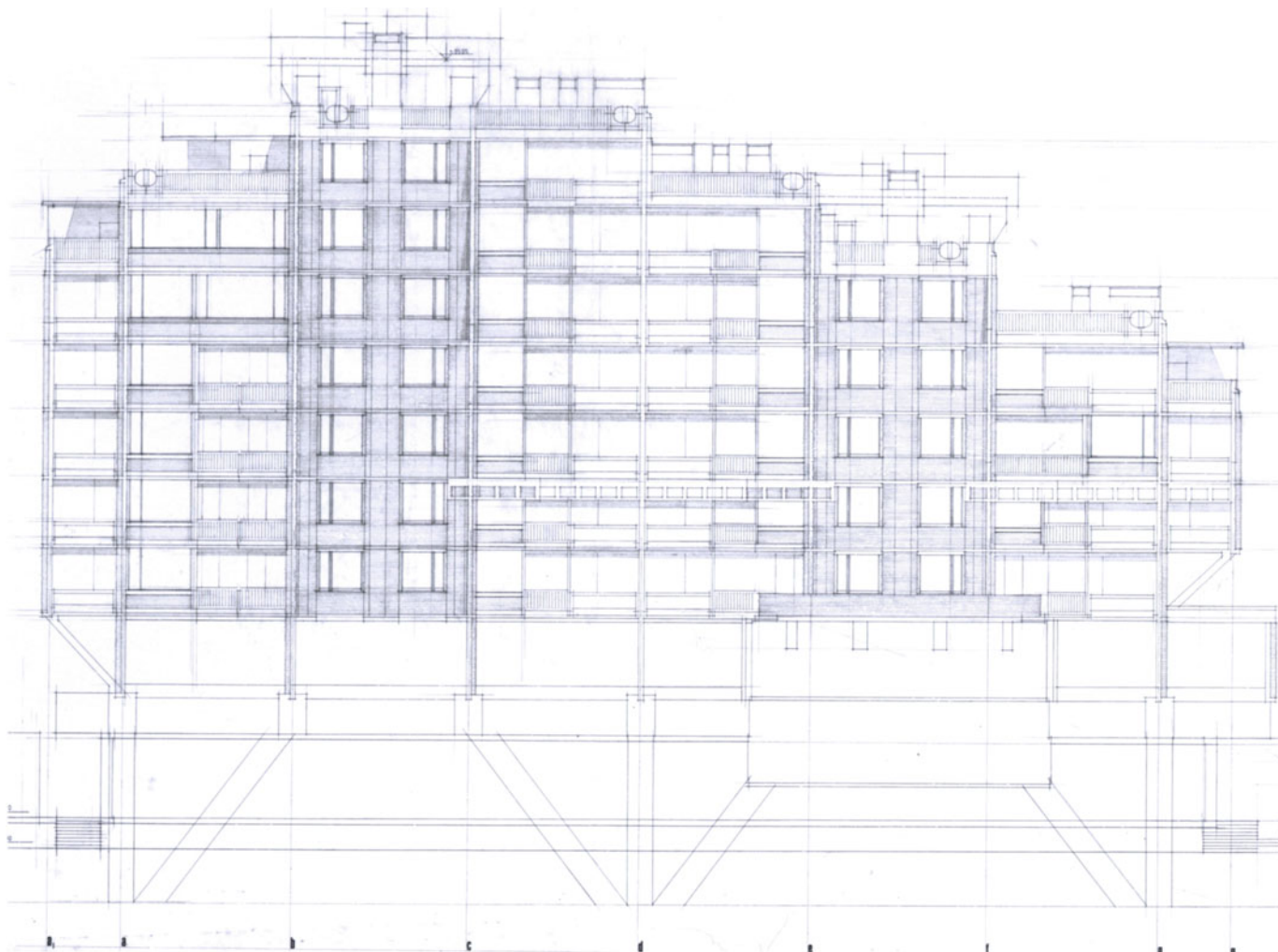
first floor



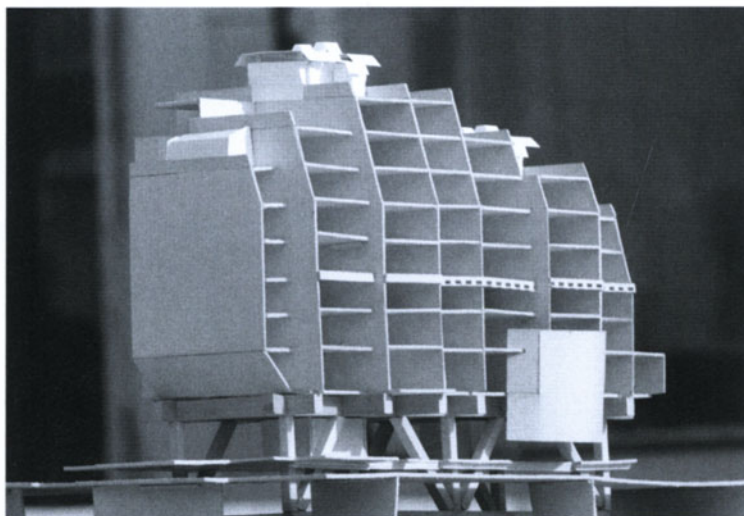
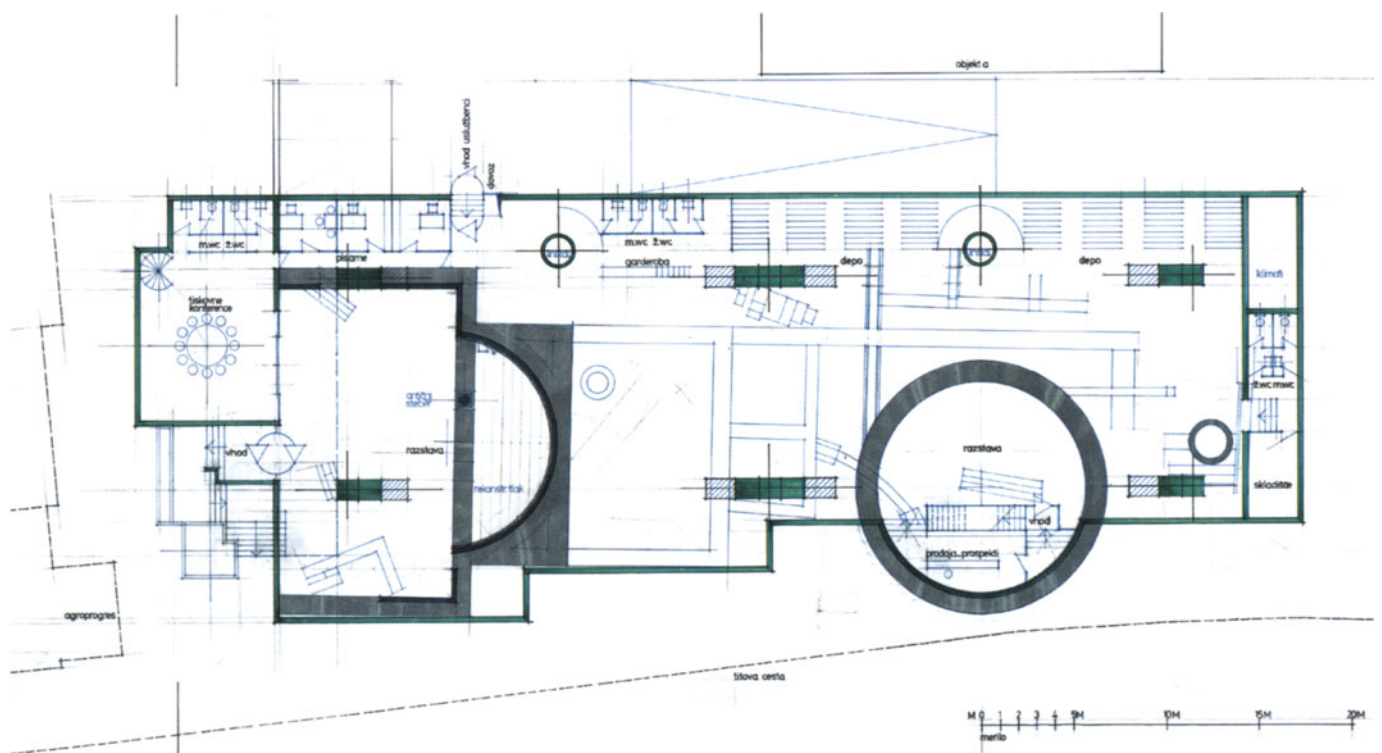




*apartment block, raised above Roman
excavation site, street & courtyard
elevations*

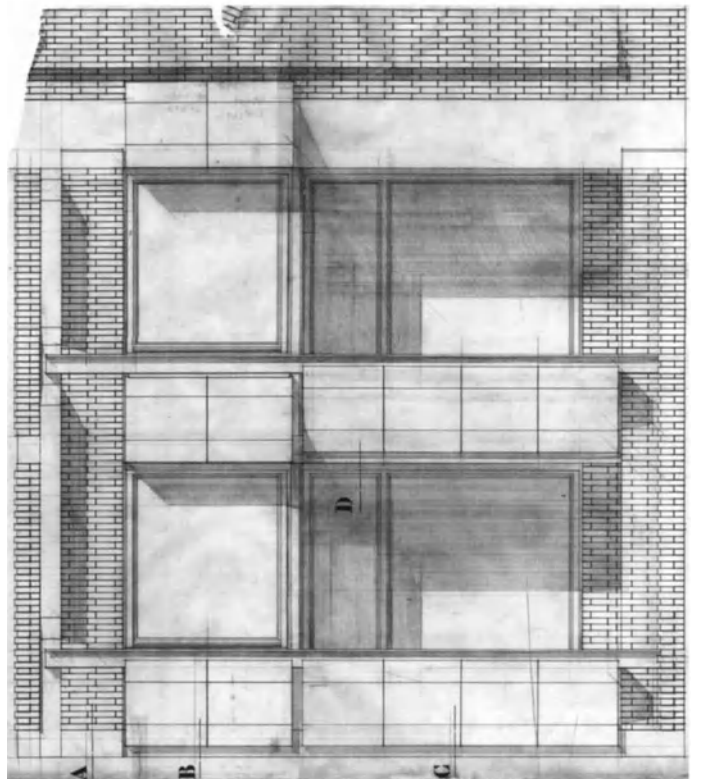
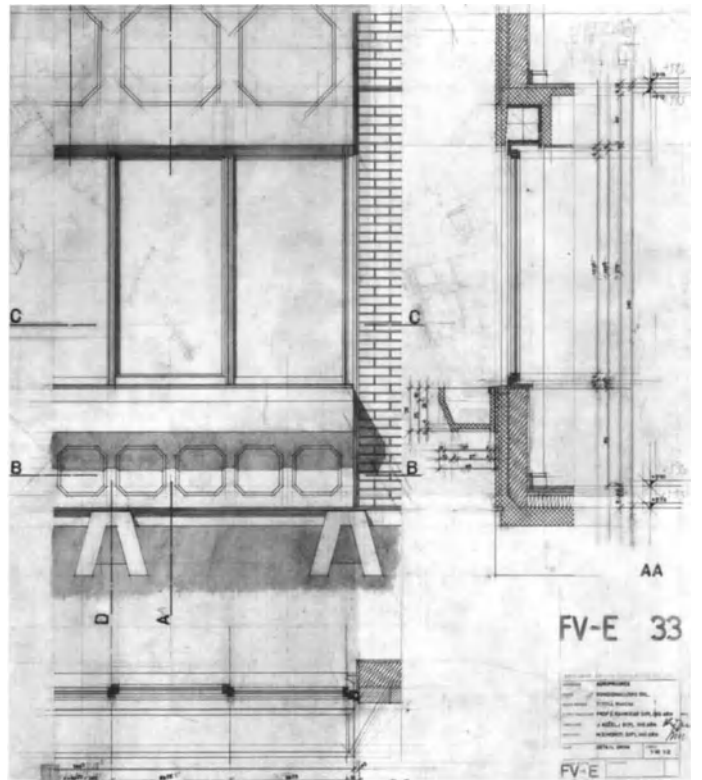
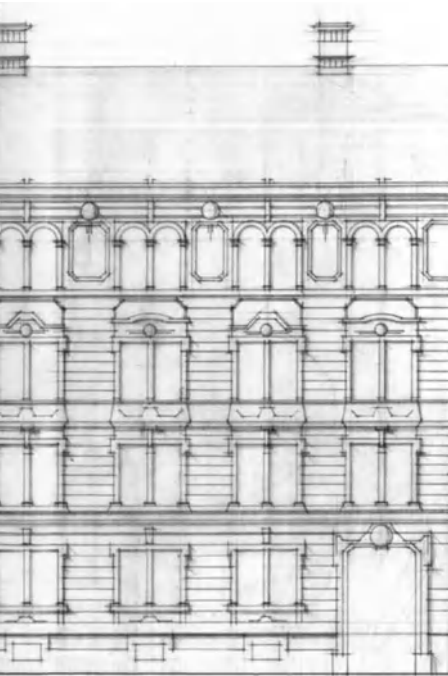


lower ground floor, exhibition gallery
with remains of ancient ruins



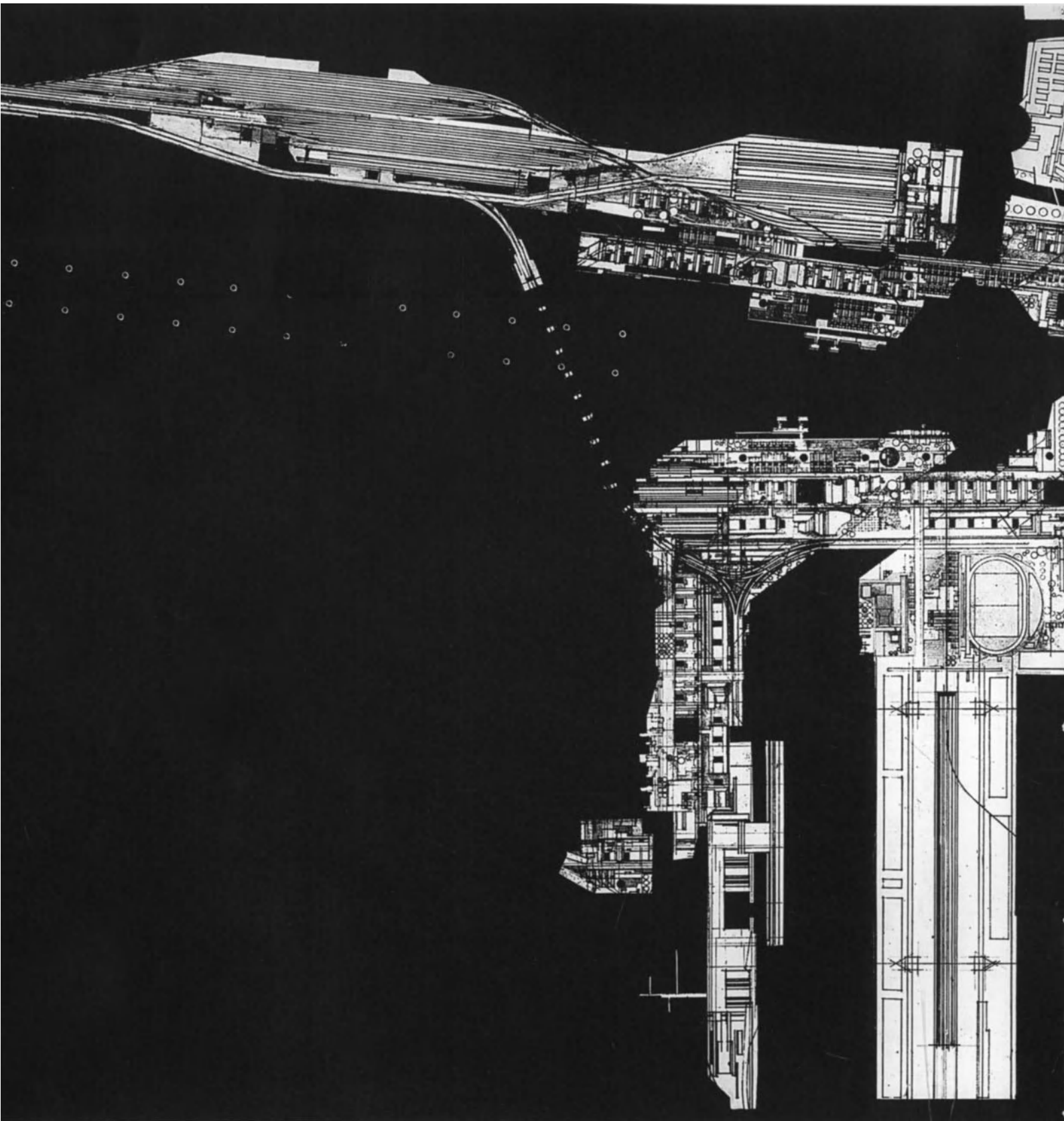
street elevation













Tronchetto, Solving the Venice Region Complex, Italy

Competition entry: 1964

1st Prize ex-aequo

Collaborators: Majda Kregar,
Edo Ravnikar jr.

The history of Venice was created by a sequence of desires, and developed in a way similar to that of a human being – freely and gradually. Venice is an entirely artificial formation. From the piles from the other side of the Adriatic on which Venice stands to the equilibrium of the lagoon where man is the master, Venetians were always fighting nature and the position that they had chosen. Why would all this not be even more valid nowadays? If we want to come up with utopian ideas on the regeneration of the city life on the lagoon that are based on a similarly sound basis – and we think that understanding the problem is the first step towards that realisation – then the first thing we have to realise is that we think of time as “the time dimension”, which is the most difficult lesson for an architect. This means thinking of Venice in the year 2000 and of its characteristic urban planning which is a continuous and flexible process, well known to us as hundreds, even thousands of years-long experience with the very shaping of St. Mark's Square. Next comes the wondrous phenomenon of modern technology that is entirely different from that of the 19th century. Looking at life in Venice from this perspective seems truly and unmistakably valid. The latest technology allows us urban planners to re-think and discuss the fate of the pedestrian within large city centres. It will also give a new lease of life to the gondola, the symbol of Venice. The technology of hovercraft, bateaux-mouches and other means of traffic that are becoming the backbone of water traffic connections are as if created to solve the issues in Venice, while they are at the same time efficient, elegant and adaptable to the needs of water traffic in Paris, Amsterdam and Zurich. There are no obstacles for the use of these means to the greatest extent and success. This will happen when Venice once

again comes to life around its gravitational centre, when the entrance to the lively core is once again between St. Mark's Square and Rialto, and the edges of the city are free to accommodate the needs of contemporary living. An old Venetian engraving tells us that Venice is an island connected to the mainland that feeds it only by water. Let us try to understand the lesson of this engraving. The transfer of the port, the railway and the end of the automotive bridge to the mainland at Mestre would create, in the most natural way, the situation that big cities like Paris, Rome and London strive for: it would terminate all traffic at the point that is far enough from the centre and transfer it to other, internal means of transport, and therefore create, or rather reinstate, the conditions for normal human existence in a centre that is not suffocated by traffic. In this way Venice would fully regain its lagoon character; even more, the areas now taken up by the port, the railway and road access with parking could be regained for modern urban elements, green areas, sport and recreation areas, new institutions, etc. And thirdly, a restored Venice would represent a key factor in terms of its new regional character. With quickly-developing industry in Marghera, Venice is becoming an important factor in the prospective infrastructures of the grid of Adriatic ports and navigable waterways towards Milan, Switzerland, Central Europe and the Danube valley, as well as in the connections of this complex with the new African states. Different means facilitate exchange between Europe and the East that would far surpass the exchange that once created the wealth of the European cities and the onetime Venice. The new organisation of the Venice region as a city-region complex of larger and smaller cities that could count up to 1 million inhabitants offers Venice the position of the above mentioned city as the centre of a large and rich region with a life-pulse as powerful and yet different from that of the past. To regenerate Venice – what a dream for contemporary urban planning!

Edvard Ravnikar

Sinteza, Ljubljana 1965, No. 2, p. 85, 89-91



The Principles of the Regeneration Strategy for the Renaissance of Venice according to the Programme Venice 2000

1

The “Time Dimension” draft plan in time units of 7 to 10 years

a |

Phase 1: Up to the completion of Phase 1 designs, increased possibilities of connections with mainland are still observed for a certain period of time. New parking is built in Tronchetto as an urban planning element of permanent character that is suitable for a prompt change of use – to shops, administration, hotels and social institutions. Extensive regeneration and desiccation of unhealthy areas. New housing on mainland in an organised environment. The first hovercraft line.

b |

Phase 2: Gradual abolishment of car and port traffic and consolidation of these newly-acquired areas for the urban purposes of the future Venice.

The last extension of the Canal Grande as a homogeneous urban zone that is, in every way, an equal component of the central urban zone. Continuation of regeneration and gradual revitalisation of historic parts with contemporary functions. Large housing and other construction activities on mainland. More hovercraft lines, a draft of a connections grid for the entire lagoon with new means of traffic. Greater Venice is becoming a reality.

c |

Phase 3: Abolishment of railway traffic and expansion of refurbishment of the Tronchetto complex to the areas of the railway lines and railway station. In its place a new university complex with a Contemporary International Arts Department. Extension of the Canal Grande and its completion also on the other side. The old entrance to Venice is reinstated. Accelerated continuation of regeneration in central Venice is always complemented by new functions. The city on the mainland with 400,000 to 500,000 already lives a life of its own.

1



2



3



Industry is expanding, becoming more rational and moving towards research. Traffic connections throughout the lagoon with the latest and most contemporary means of transport are organised into an effective traffic system. Greater Venice exists.

2

Spatial Plan Draft:

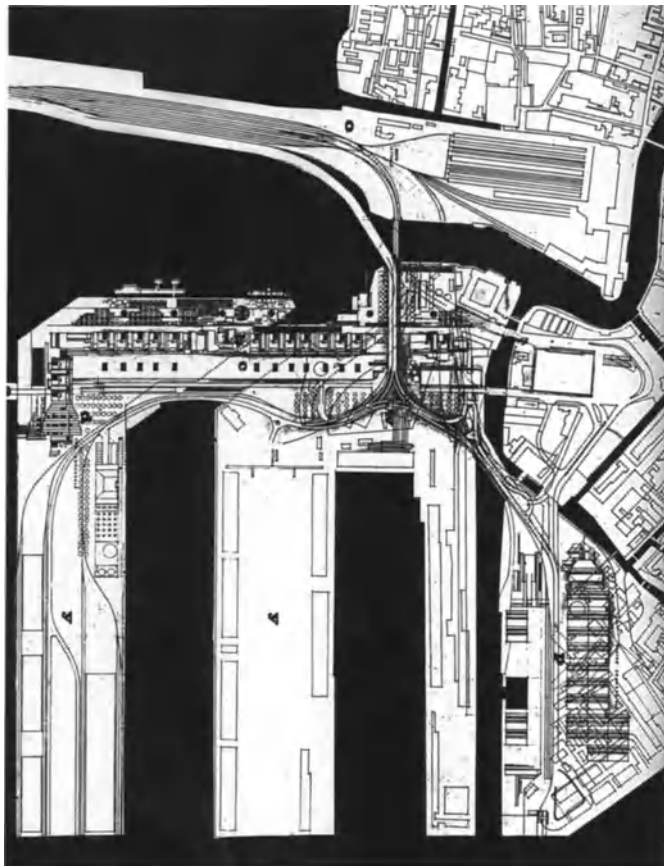
Venice and islands as the core of the central part of the region with borders on the shore at Mestre. Industry intensely developing on mainland, a secondary city core in Mestre, housing in organised units, new means of transport: fresh water canal between the Po Valley and the Danube Valley, roads towards north and south, an airport. The backbone of a region with one million people. Tronchetto intended as a new quarter in the scale of Venice and as its last extension with a wide potential of uses that can serve the life of a contemporary city.

phase 1

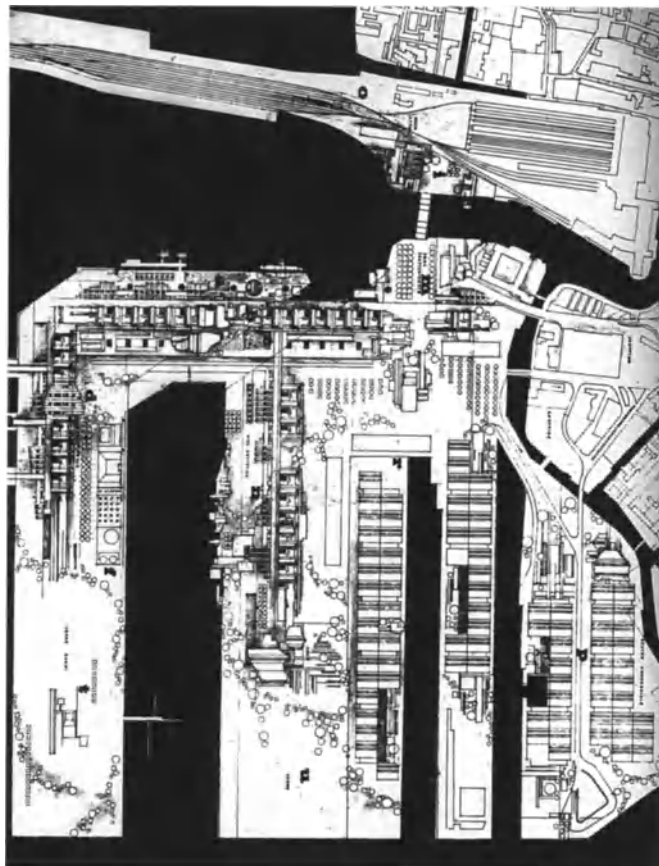
phase 2 (below)

phase 3 (right)

1A



2A



1 and 1A. General plan of Venice-Mestre city-region and Phase 1 of the new S. Lucia Quarter (Tronchetto).

2 and 2A. General plan of Venice-Mestre and Phase 2.

3 and 3A. General plan of Venice-Mestre and Final Phase.

A, B and C. Infrastructure on various levels with interconnected areas by means of staircases, ramps and escalators that are reserved for pedestrians, life outside your door, pursuit of shadow. After the third wave of regeneration these areas are also meant for offices, shops, tourism, hotels, etc. Roof openings enable lighting and airing of spaces at lower levels.

d | Customs, port administration

e | Passenger ship piers

f | Sewage, electricity, gas, water, fire brigade

g | Space for a new complex of International Free Art University buildings on the site of the existing railway station.

h | University Campus

i | The first connection of the two shores via the new bridge after the completion of Phase 2.

k | Clubs, social life, parties

m | New local centre

n | Centre for arts, studies, studios, etc.

o | The area of railway lines still existing in Phase 2

p | Main square in Venice, silos, auxiliary services

r | Small service and luxury industry

s | Sports centre

u | Newly-gained green areas, parks

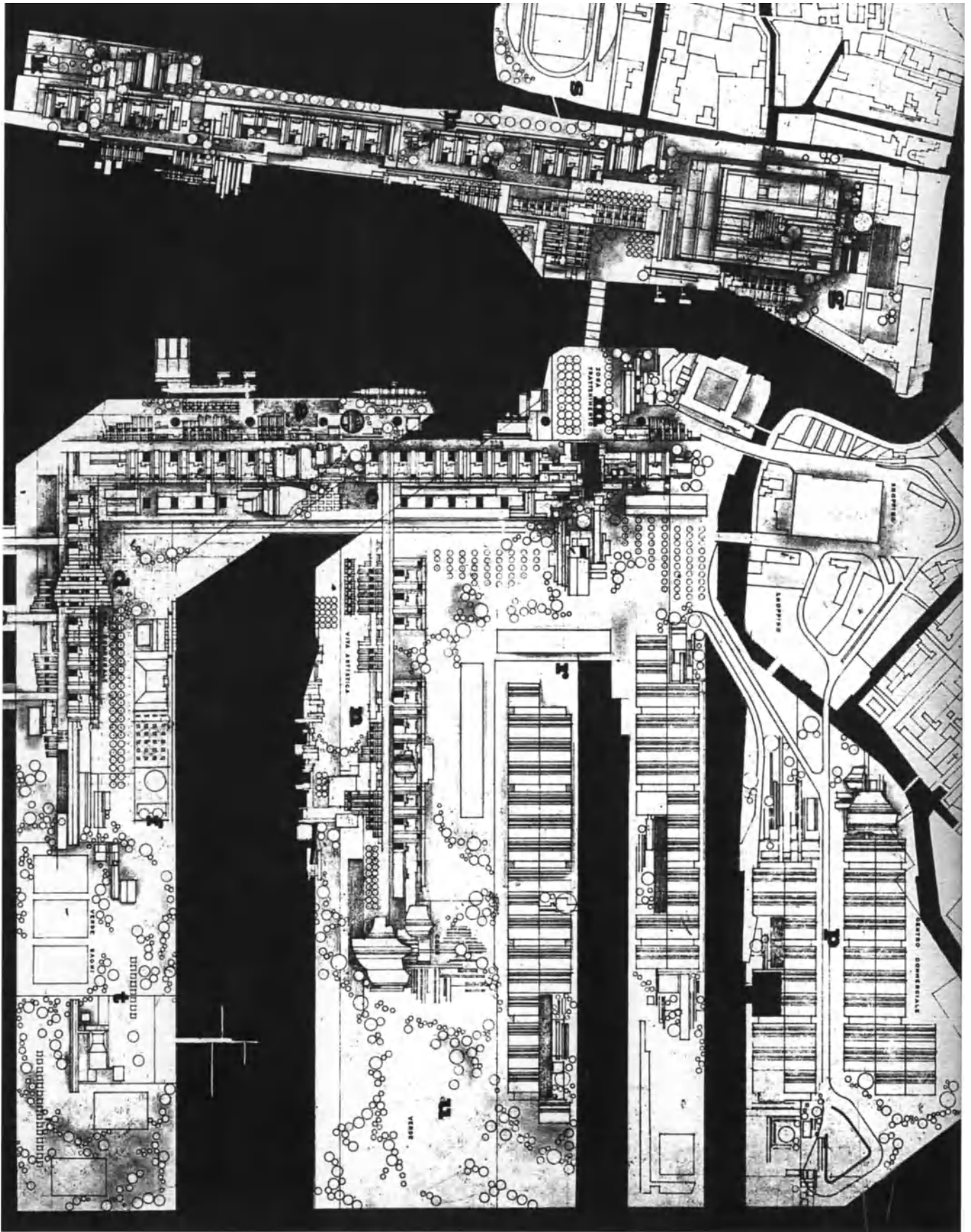
t | Green areas for recreation, beaches, boating clubs, yacht clubs

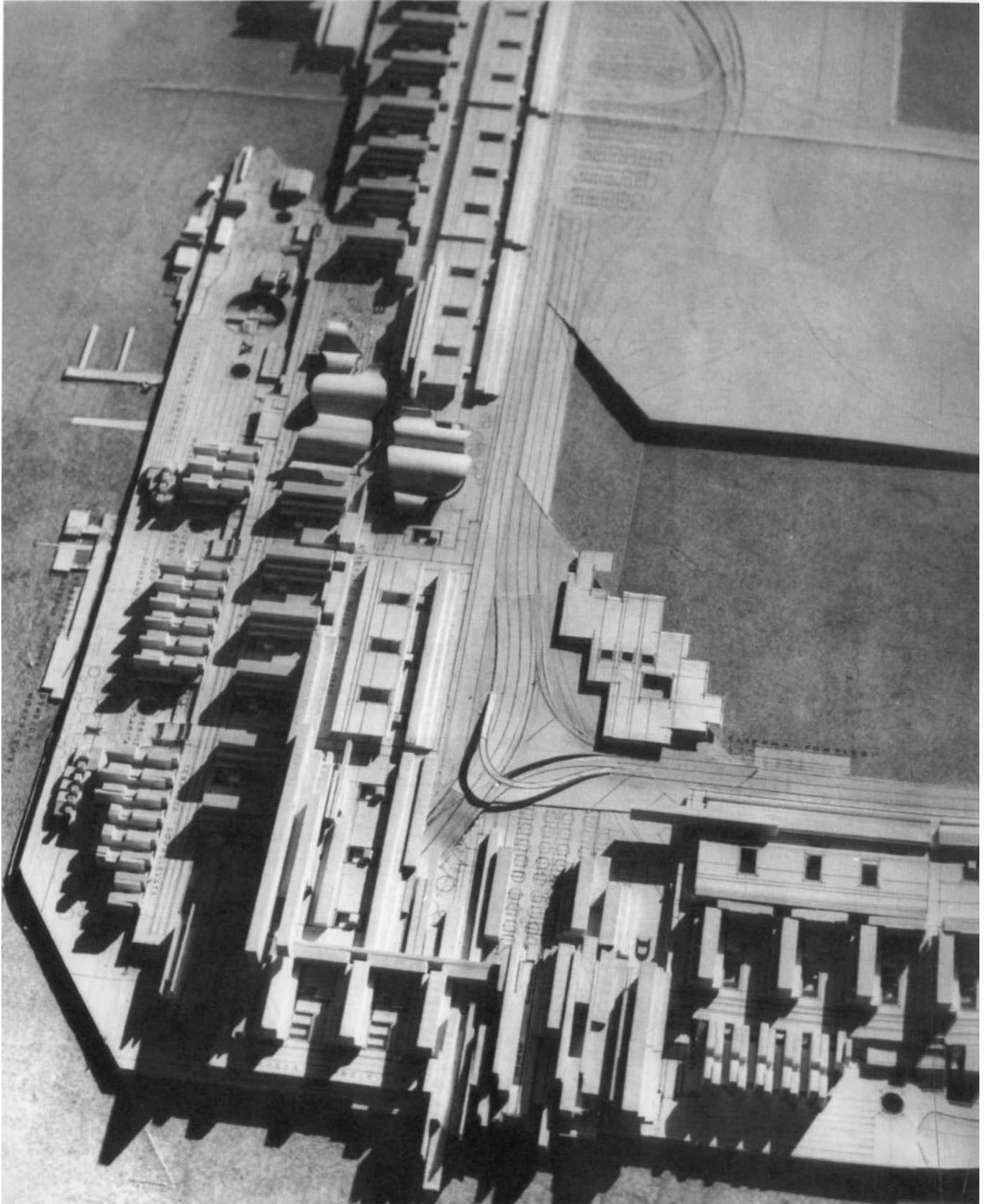
w | New steel road junction; to be demolished after Phase 2

x | Hovercraft station connected to bateaux-mouches stations and gondola stations

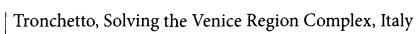
y | Port, piers, warehouses

Sinteza, Ljubljana, July 1965, No 2, p. 89-91





*cross section at various points of the
central part of Tronchetto (below)*





Hotel Maestral, Pržno, Montenegro

Competition entry, 1965

Constructed: 1970-71

Collaborators: Majda Kregar, Friderik Polutnik, Ana Mavko, Alenka Kocuvan Polutnik, Miha Kerin, Edo Ravnikar jr.

In this area, the main concern of the urban planner must be functional integrity, perfection even, in all elements of the whole that are connected to the spirit of the landscape and local lifestyle particularities. The system of functions provides a legible and rational movement system that is nevertheless differentiated, as well as human activities connected to the natural environment, its scale and qualities. In the end this landscape has to be simultaneously natural and cultivated, elementary, yet providing lavish regulations, technically perfect, yet rich with unexpected and surprising impressions.

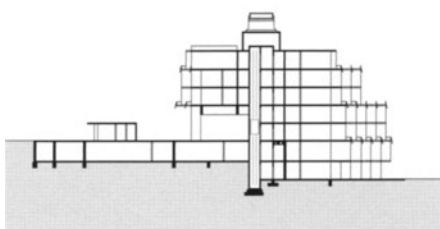
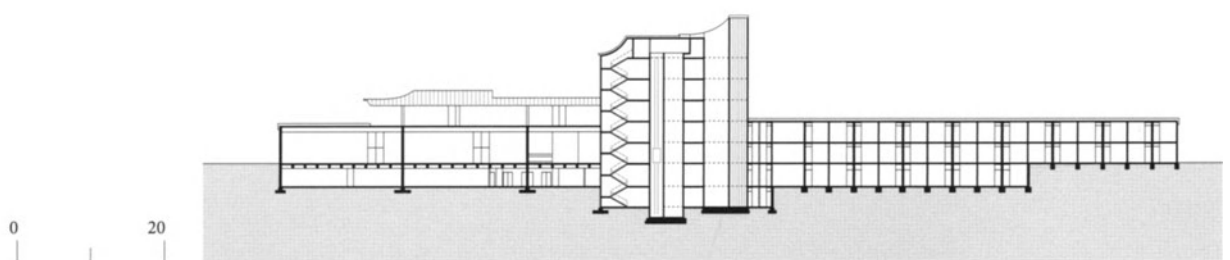
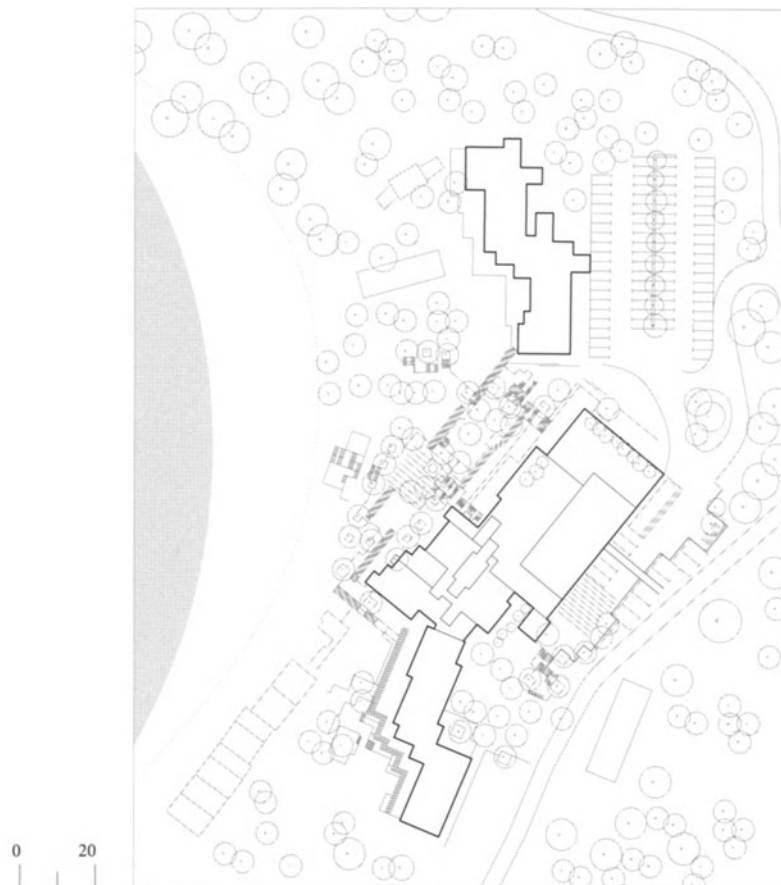
A medium-size hotel requires a standard that is close to contemporary demands for comfort and fittings. The hotel requires a large staff, which is a decisive factor for its operating costs. Apart from good equipment and organisation, a functional layout of the building is also important. In this case particular attention was devoted to internal communications, to the same staff dealing with various tasks, to double-use spaces and facilities. The layout favours shorter routes for staff before those for guests.

The hotel in Pržno is, above all, a holiday hotel with adequately furnished common spaces, such as dining rooms, a banquet hall and a quiet salon. This categorisation dictates also the room arrangements that are meant for families with children, as well as the elements evoking a home environment (garden, greenery, views, swimming, etc.) And, finally, the hotel's location within Pržno encourages the idea of a hotel within a park, i.e. a hotel within a wider green environment.

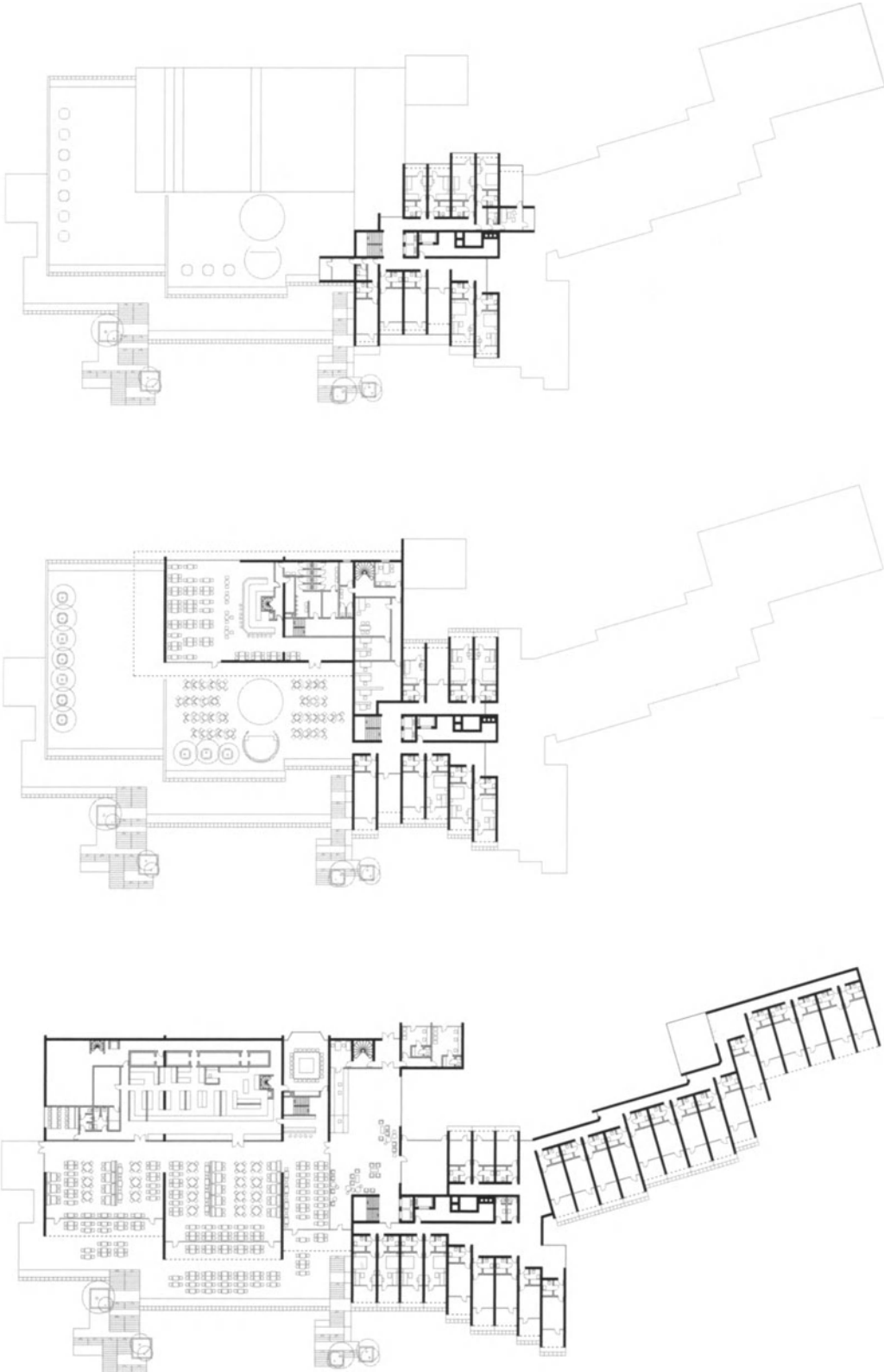
The layout of the hotel is articulated (guests have the impression of being among nature) with compact vertical communications at its core. Even though positioning of the rooms on both sides of the corridor may seem more economical at first sight, in this case, where the site is big enough and unique, it is better that all rooms have a sea-view. This is why the building is designed as the combination of an articulated part with accommodation and a compact part for administration, catering and social activities.

Edvard Ravnikar

Čovjek i prostor, Zagreb 1971, No. 224, p. 8-9

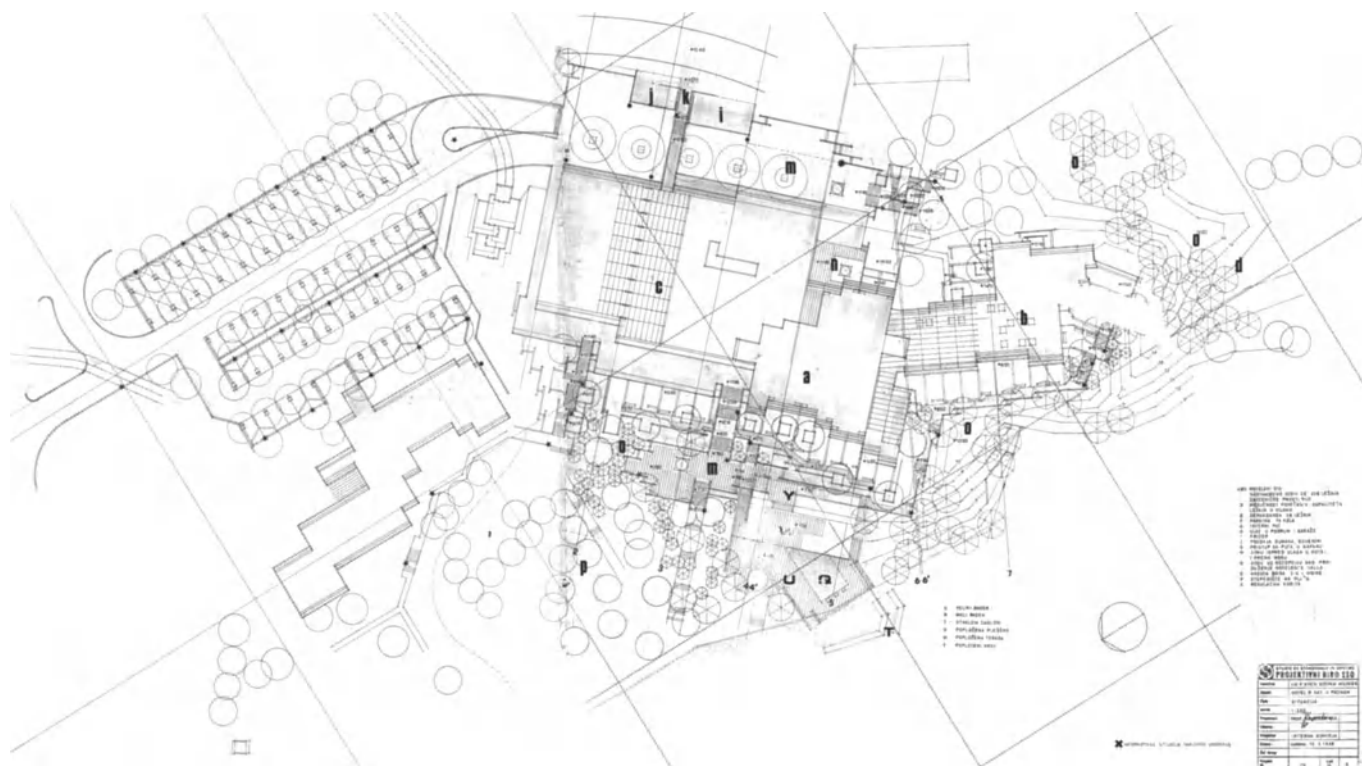


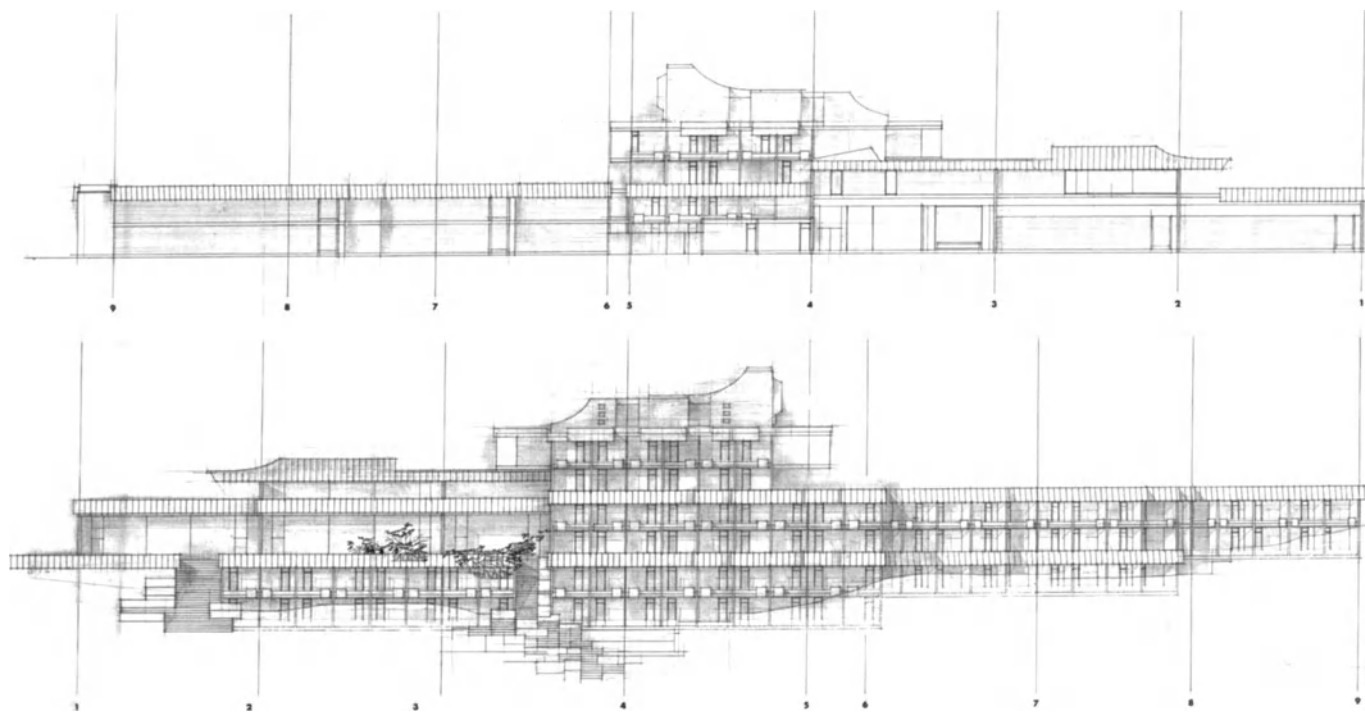
top floor, first floor, ground floor















Skopje Competition Submission, Macedonia

Competition entry, 1965

Collaborators: Majda Kregar,
Edo Ravnikar jr., Ana Mavko

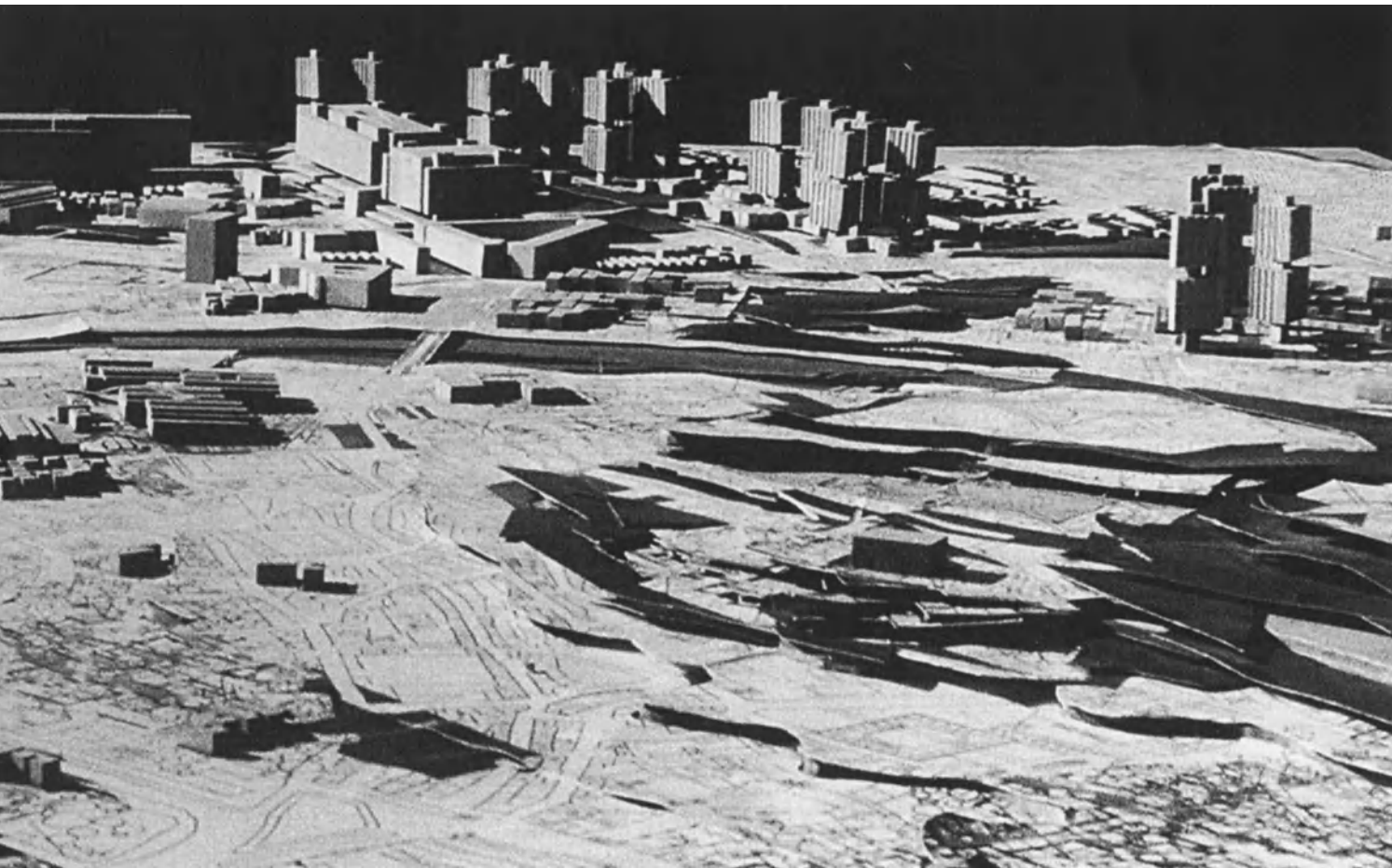
This project is an attempt to create a modern city based on the living conditions and functions of a small capital city in the given environment. Heritage, traditions, national characteristics, climate as well as modest financial and technical means point towards a different view of the internal structure, while on the other hand old Skopje has to be respected. Above all the issue of the railway crossroads needs to be addressed. If the designer is courageous enough not to strictly observe the requirements of the competition brief, some valid new aspects can be discovered. For instance, is it really necessary to move the railway station if it is not to have a larger role in the wider region; or, if this larger role is realised, is the suggested location justified? Shouldn't we first look at providing an area for parking, which would be large enough and similar in character to the famous Skopje park? Next, shouldn't the housing be provided with sound seismic-related conditions, which are also healthy? Isn't the old centre of Skopje its most precious part; or, shouldn't new Skopje be able to be ventilated naturally, so that it could live an intense life also during the months of long, hot, summer days?

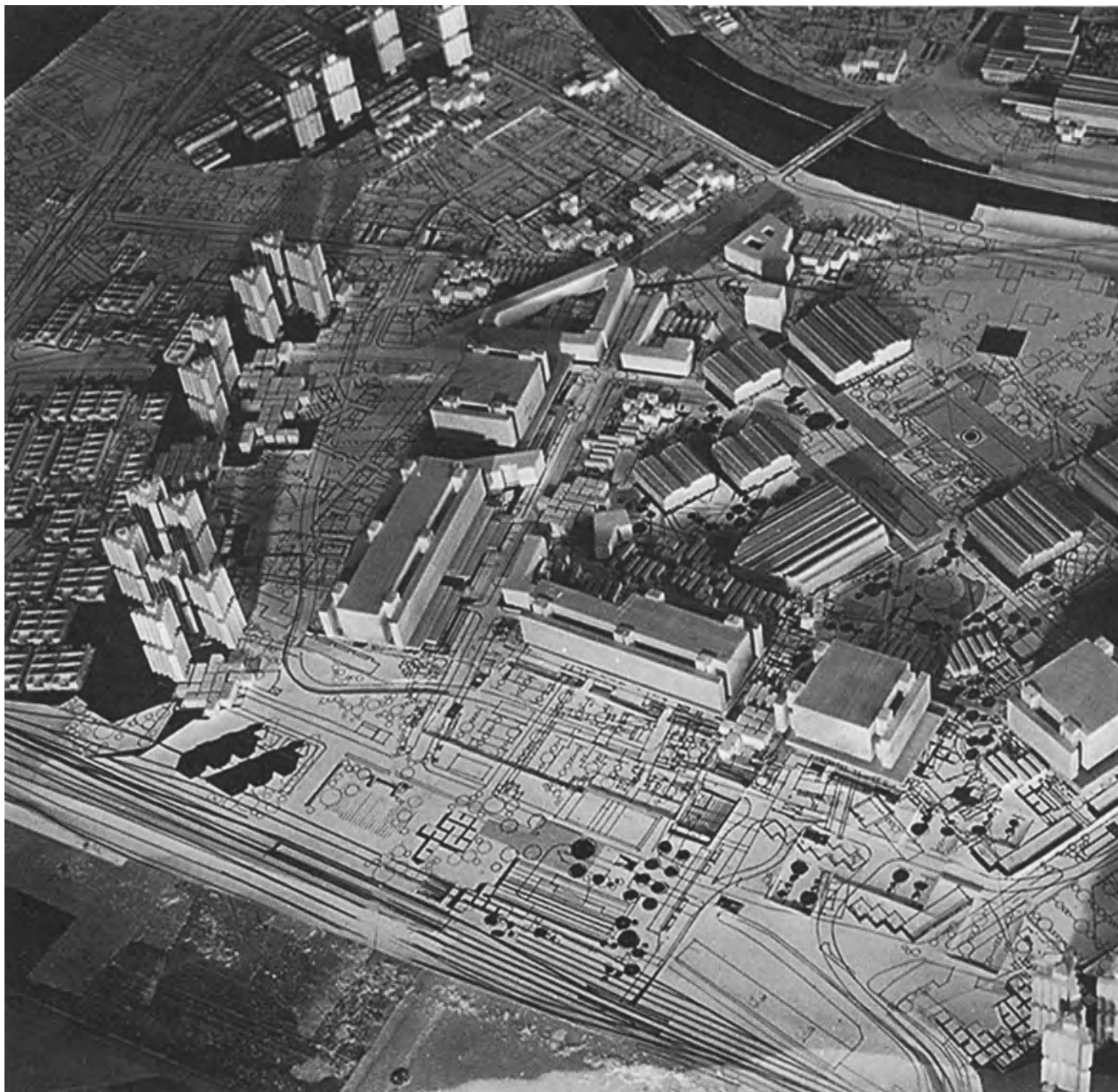
Here we have a system of rings, which are layered around Skopje's geographic centre, with a housing ring in the centre, a parking ring placed within a lush park, a rich shopping street with a combination of modern shopping and traditional bazaar. A ring of central institutions follows, as does a ring of entertainment areas and finally a completely open area of symbolic Macedonian landscape with a national monument. All this is combined into a tapestry of layers, from which a living, picturesque and well-functioning capital of a small nation can emerge. The left side should be entirely devoted only to an area for culture, a university and modern single-storey housing, which would replace the scale and the quality of the housing units of former Skopje. This project envisages providing the concept of the modern city with radial boulevards, where pedestrians are the privileged users. In this way traditional ways and wisdom are recognised once again. The division of pedestrians and cars surely means that man gets what is rightly his. This division should therefore be implemented in the entire city and not only where this solution would benefit the car.

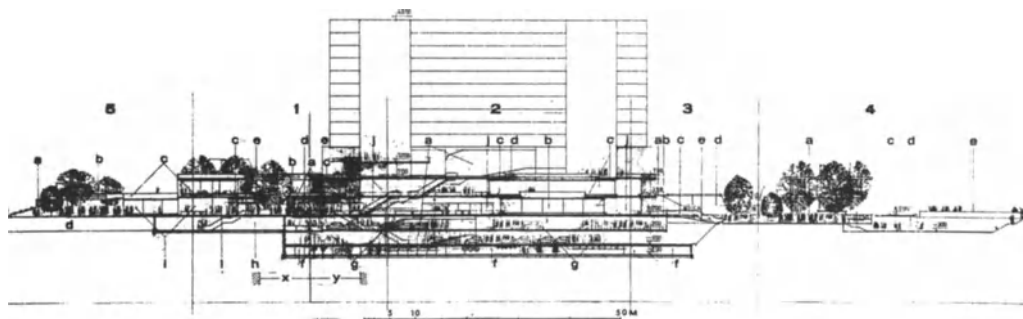
Edvard Ravnikar

Sinteza, Ljubljana 1966, No. 4, p. 12-16







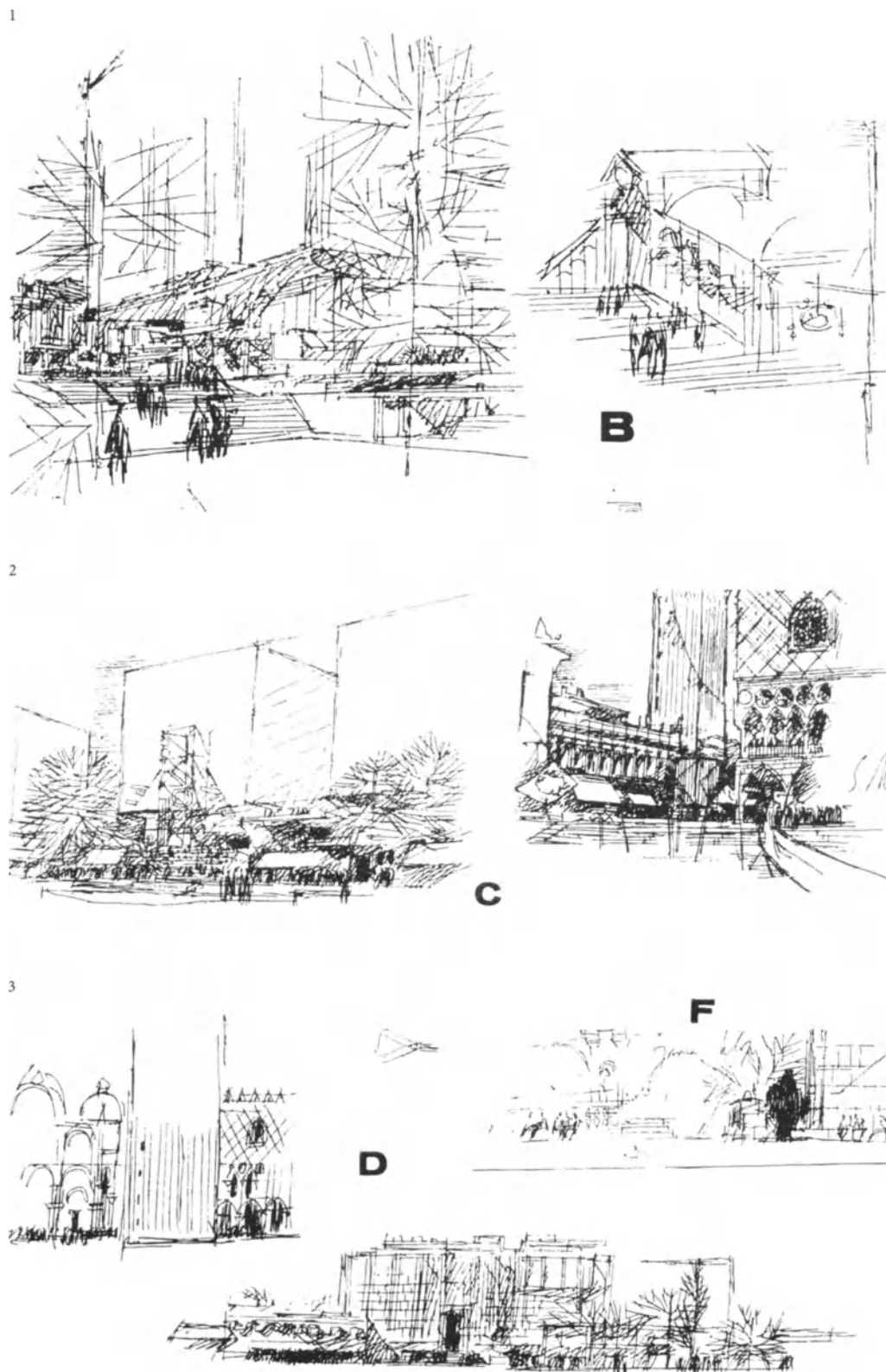


Study sketches

1
The intensity of commercial traffic and encounters at the gate to the core is reminiscent of the lively pace on Venice's famous Rialto Bridge (B). The gates to the city are actually various pedestrian approaches to the core of the city and not some kind of a mechanised terminal.

2
The analogy of lively seasonal commercial activities, 18th century Venice (C) and the future Skopje city centre host similar activities. The ground floor is little noticed and not accorded sufficient value in terms of urban activities.

3
D - The most important public buildings in Venice are positioned near the very flow of large crowds of people. Isolation and abstractness of similar central administration buildings has to be abolished by connecting them to the liveliest area of commerce and leisure. This would also make the politicians frequent these parts.
F - Venice offers wonderful opportunities for rest within its centre. Next to more lavishly designed central buildings this would become possible also in the future centre of Skopje.



4
M – In Venice, ascending and descending to various levels is made easier by a partial gradation of heights. This is also how we intend to facilitate the problematic underground passages at the entrance to the city core in the future Skopje: by dividing the height into several smaller height differences (see section).

N – The entrances into the centre of Venice are often scarcely noticeable openings along the Canal Grande.

5
A composed vision of the city and a well-designed city image that are appropriate for the capital are, at the same time, a clear representation of the city, which is what a driver needs. If possible, the monuments are well presented and, moreover, even the vehicles are included in the experience of the urban aesthetic; namely, the views from the driver's seat or the experiences of trips outside the city centre complement the centrifugal visual experience in the city centre with a centripetal visual experience.

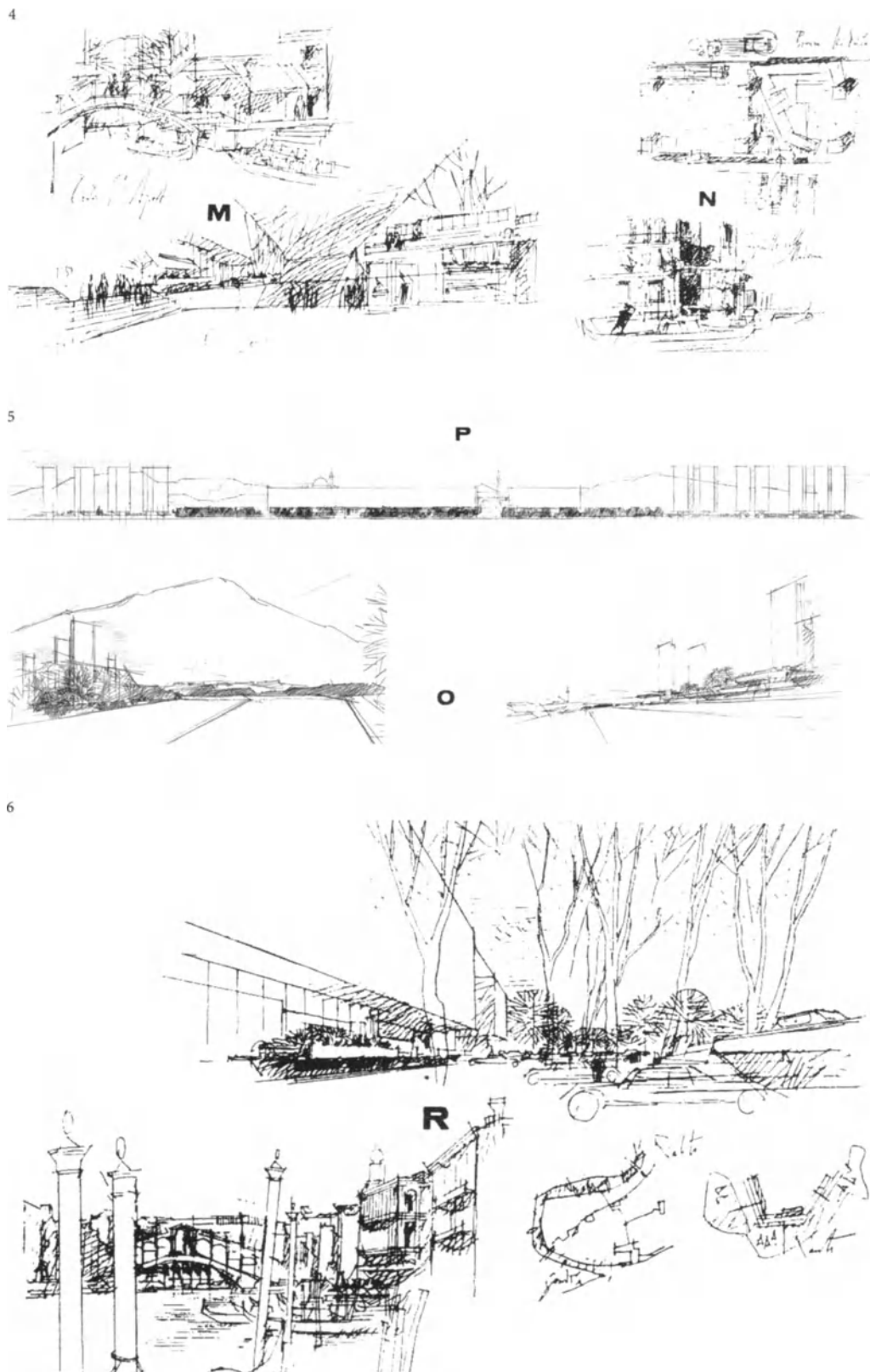
P – The façade of renovated Skopje from Vodno

O – Two views of the path that contains the city centre and becomes an element of the city that is visually connected to the architectural and landscape elements of the surroundings.

6
R – The Canal Grande – which is actually a large parking place for gondolas – is at the same time a luxurious living space in the city centre. An analogy can be drawn here: we can imagine our parking belt as a precious complex of parks, similar to the gorgeous Skopje park, as a central transitional area for cars and pedestrians together with all accompanying functions and experiences.

S – Our circumstances still offer enough organisational potential to create what we nowadays call "the main structure" or urban architecture. This is similar to the situation in Venice and in the West about 200 years ago.

7



Venice as an example

In order to revive the forgotten ideas of what importance the true urban elements actually can have within a city, we are trying to present some analogies from Baroque and contemporary life in Venice. They point to certain ways of how the new Skopje centre and in particular its city core could be designed. U – Mass events at Piazzetta in Venice in the 18th century and the possibility of organising similar contemporary events around large commercial and office buildings, were they designed appropriately.

8

A system of greenery

a – Symbolic landscape, cultivated greenery within the centre and dense greenery of parking areas.

b – Longitudinal boulevards

c – Natural parks

d – Belts of greenery continuing large natural green complexes

Four types of plantation that intertwine Skopje and greenery together with trees within gardens and those next to various tower complexes.

9

Elements that improve the unfavourable natural climate in the city core. We are trying to turn the shopping promenade into an attractive oasis with greater potential than bazaars of medieval Damascus or Baghdad once had. Apart from "The Great Shade" that is created at the edge of the wall plane around the core, other natural options for the improvement of the climate within the core are introduced.

a – A system of falling water

c – Seating below luscious trees

e – Massing of shadow within large concrete structures

g – Airflow through deep, tall buildings

h – A green screen of wild vine as seen in the Istrian village of Bertonigla

k – Areas of still water, 3 to 5 cm deep, of various sizes

10

The hierarchy of sounds

c – The area of silence, the rustling of water, leaves in the wind, birds and chitchat;

d – Noise level of a playground, talking, amateur theatre performances, folk dancing, etc;

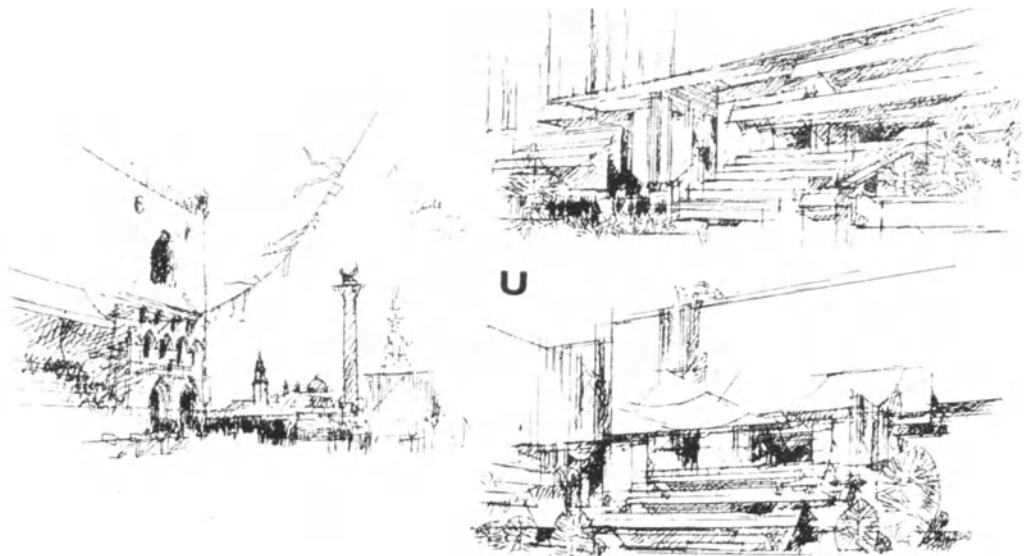
e – Lively shopping street noise level, advertising, calling out, loud quarrelling, etc.;

f – Noises of office origin: typewriters, elevators, telephones, business conversations, etc.;

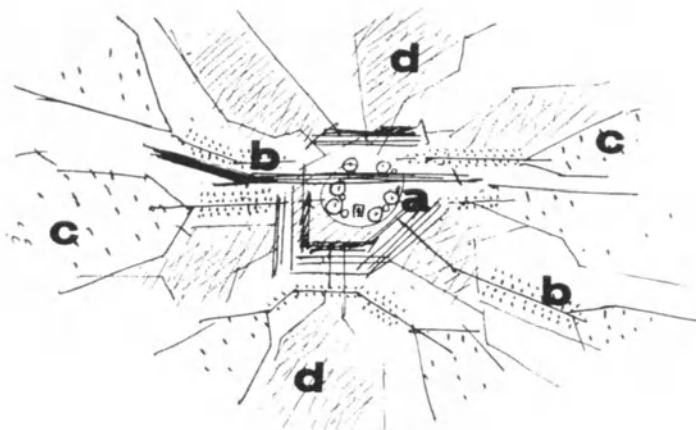
g – Large parking area noise;

h – Roar of fast, heavy traffic.

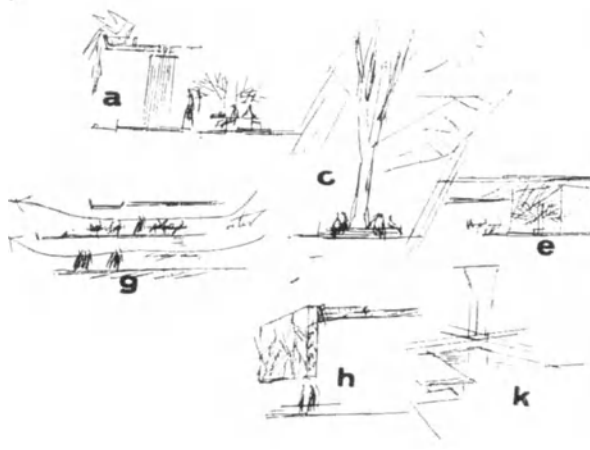
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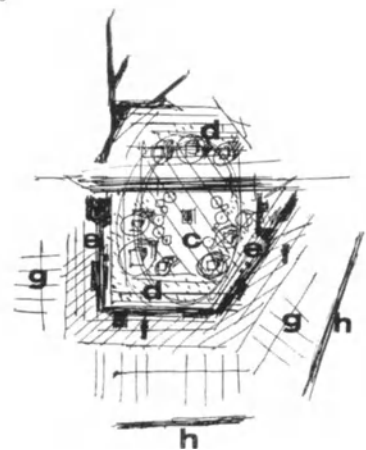
8



9



10



The analogue organisation of the second mosque

The section of these extension spaces enables them to be used for various purposes: as function rooms, museums shops, hotels, halls with necessary height and depth, open terraces, etc. The advantage of these "auxiliary" annexes enables the creation of a wholesome environment on the slope that will house a memorial.

12
Analysis of solar exposure throughout the seasons for three characteristic wall sections of a commercial and business building:

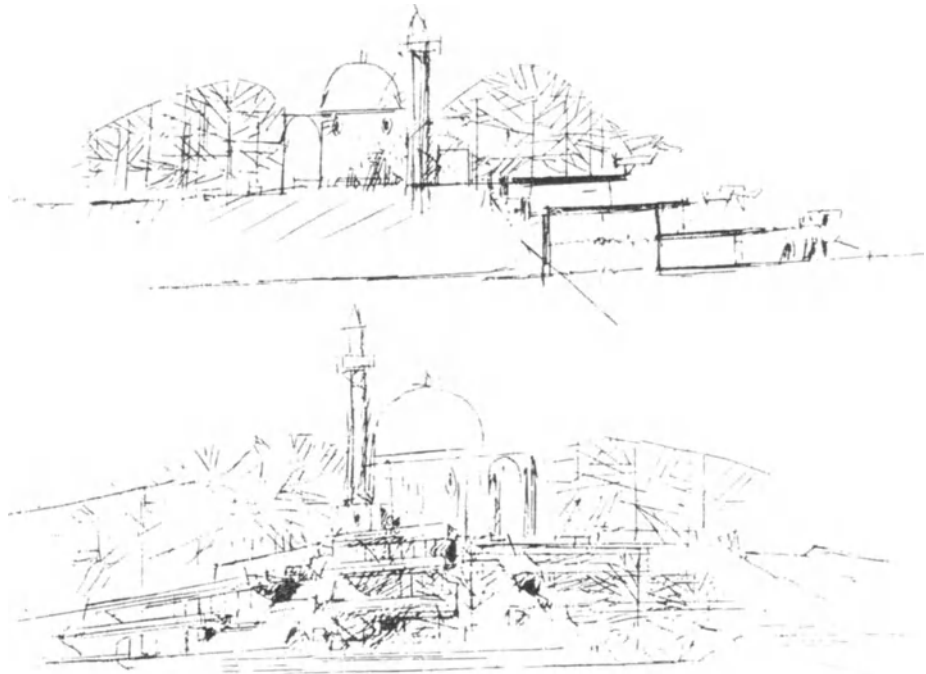
2h - protection from the sun at noon
- west side of the city core

- a) with trees
- b) with linen shading
- c) with wild vine screen

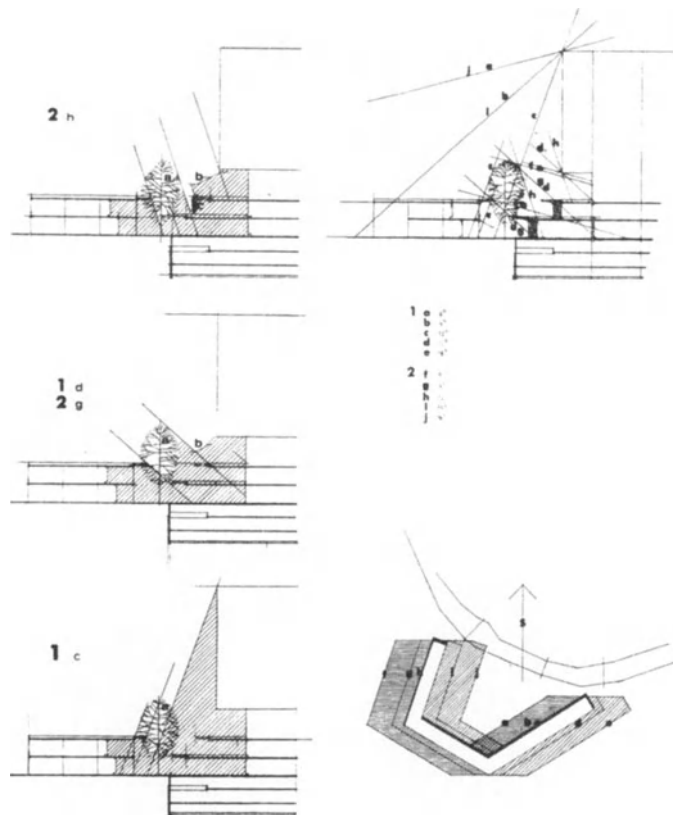
1d - protection from the sun at 3:00 p.m. - east side of the city core

- a) with trees
- b) with linen shading
- 1c - protection from the sun at noon - east side of the city core with trees

11

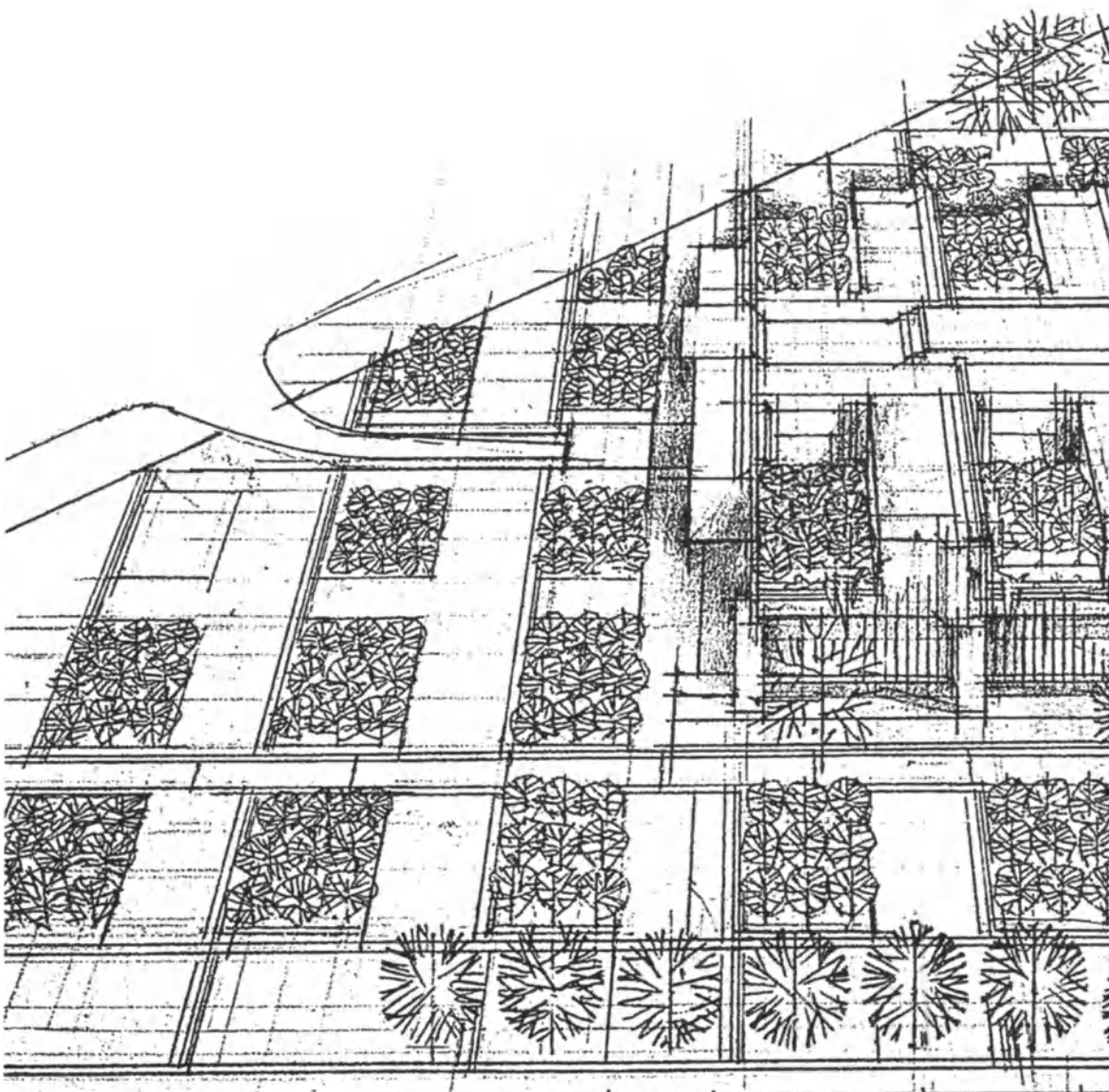


12

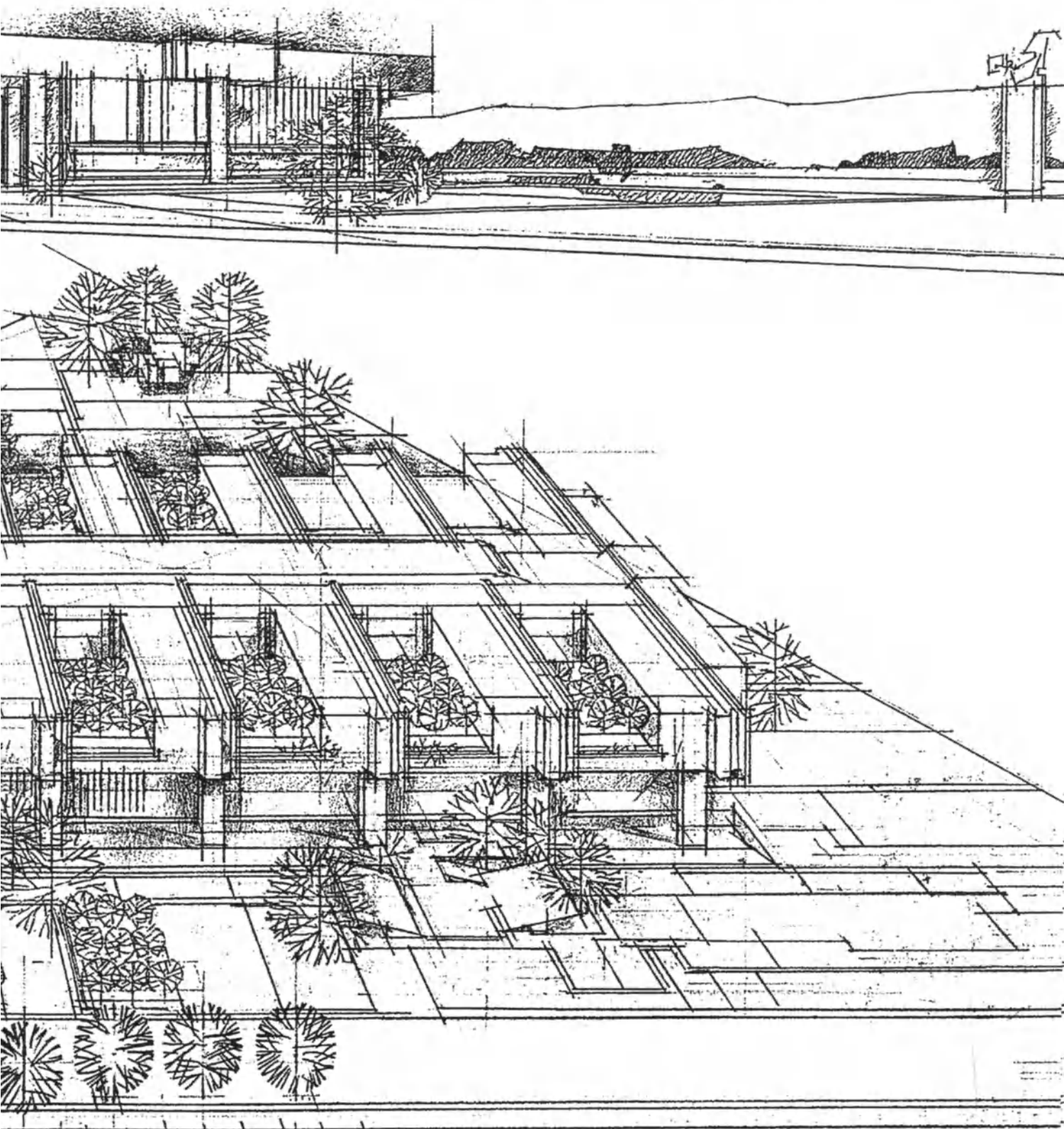


Competition entry, 1965

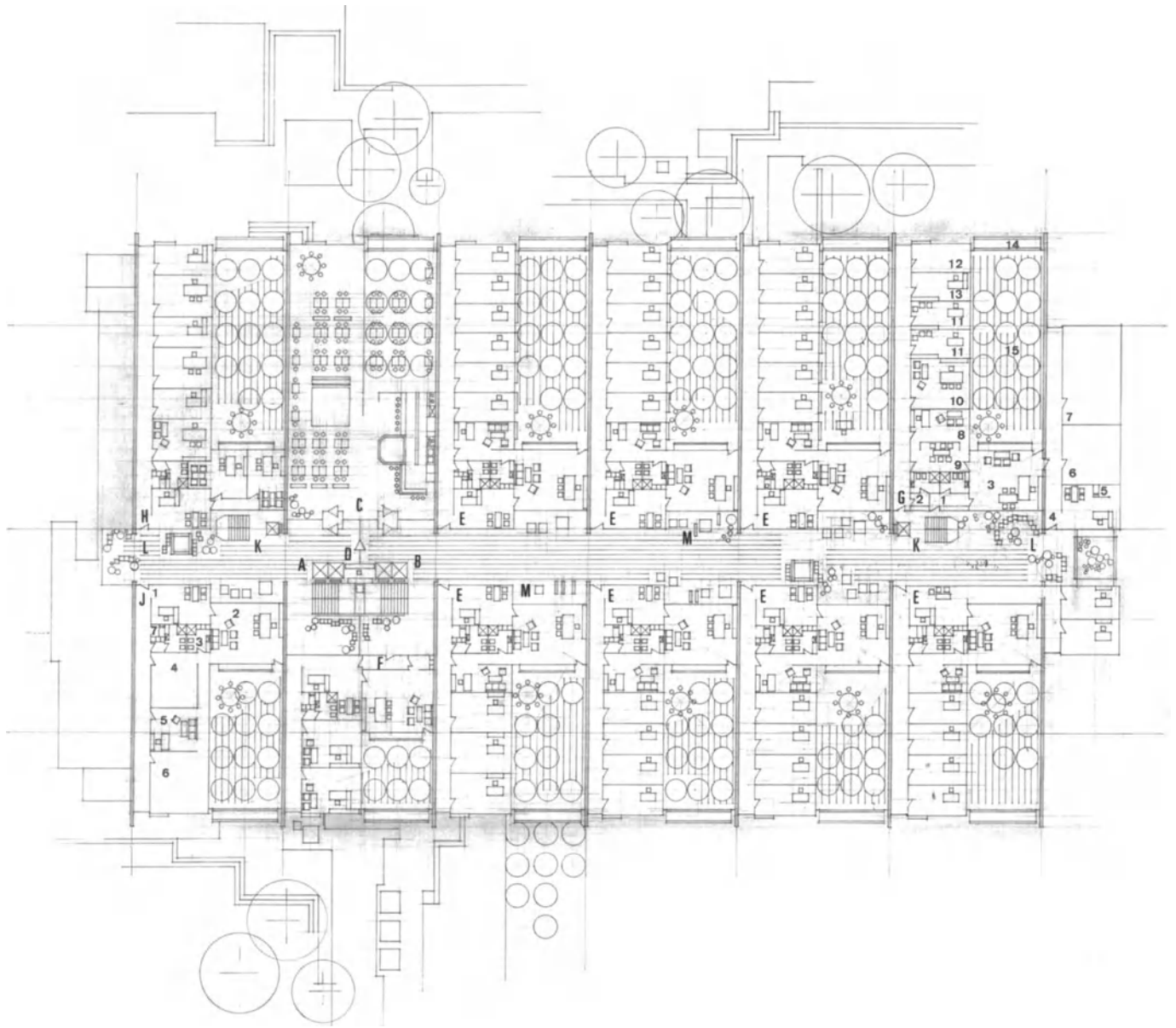
Collaborators: Majda Kregar,
Ana Mavko



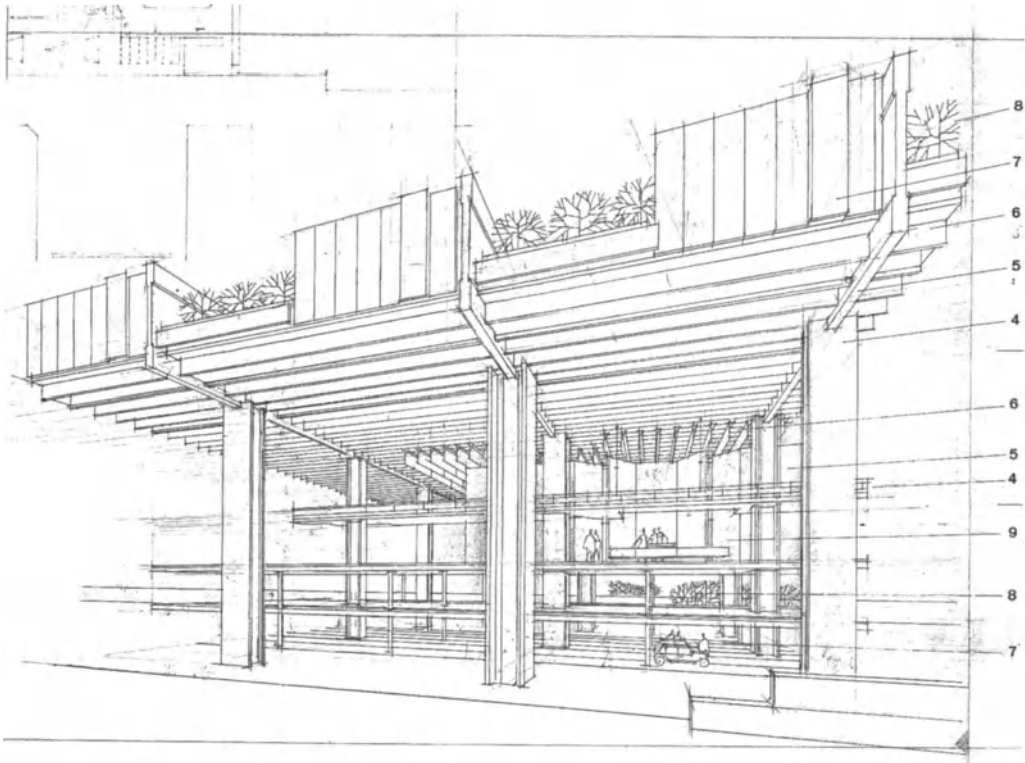
Building for The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Macedonia, Skopje, Macedonia

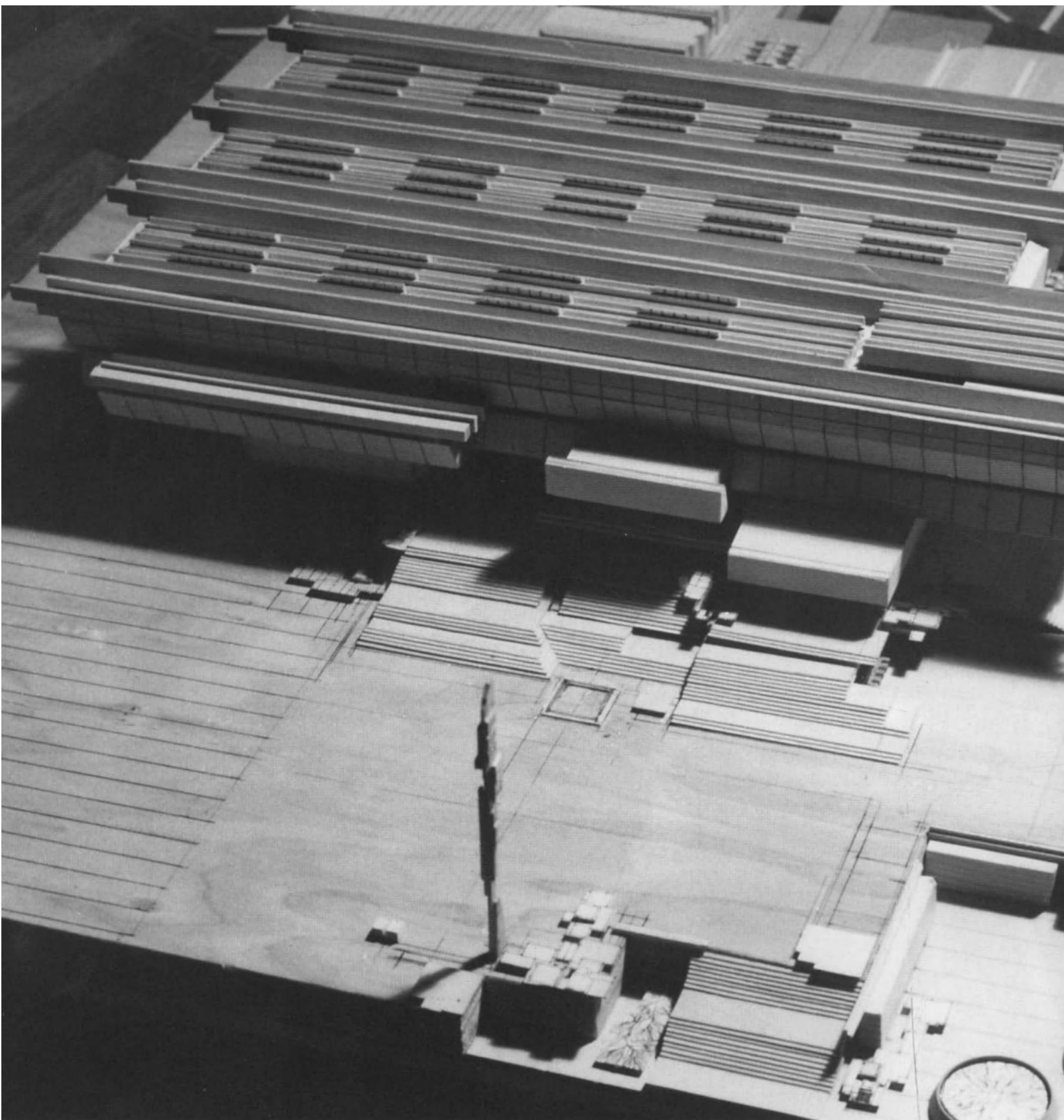


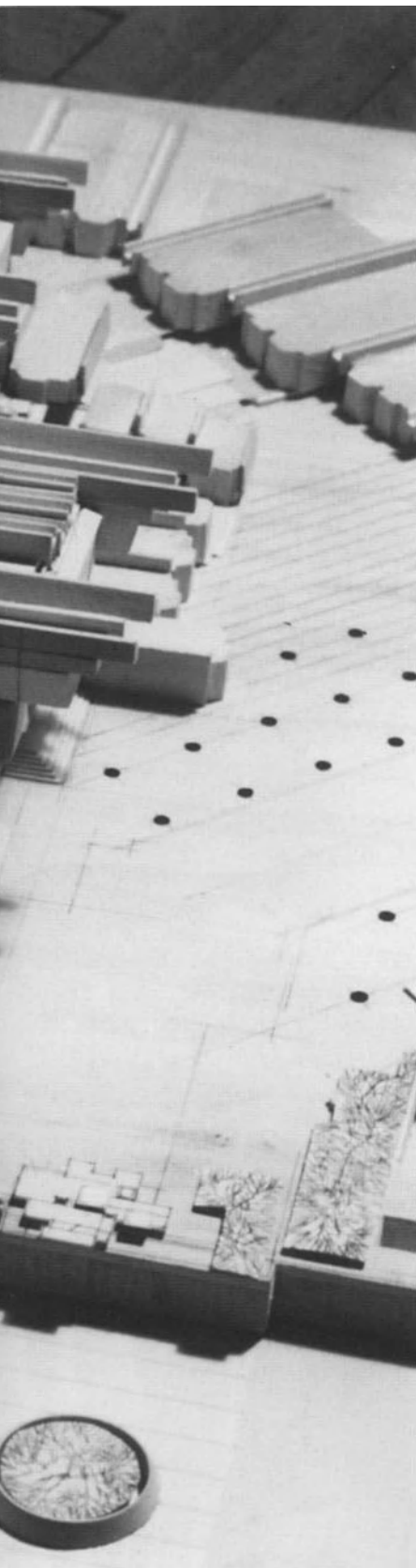
ground floor



perspective sketch





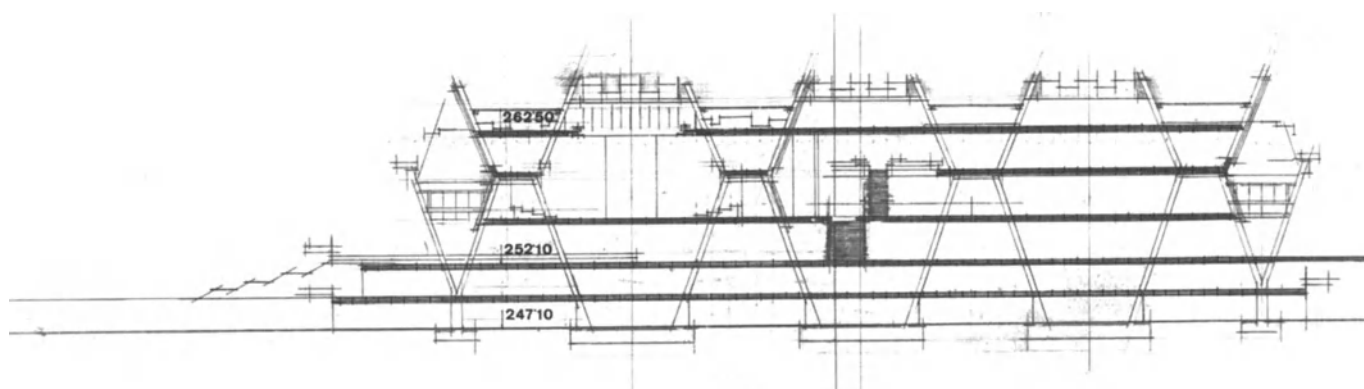
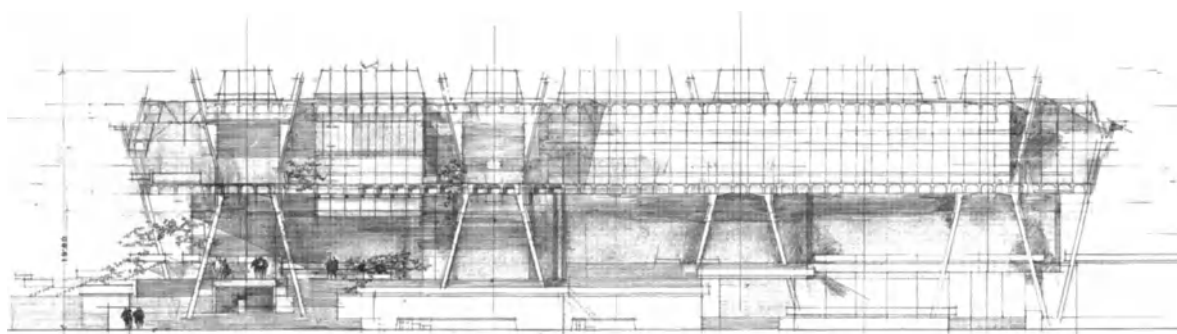
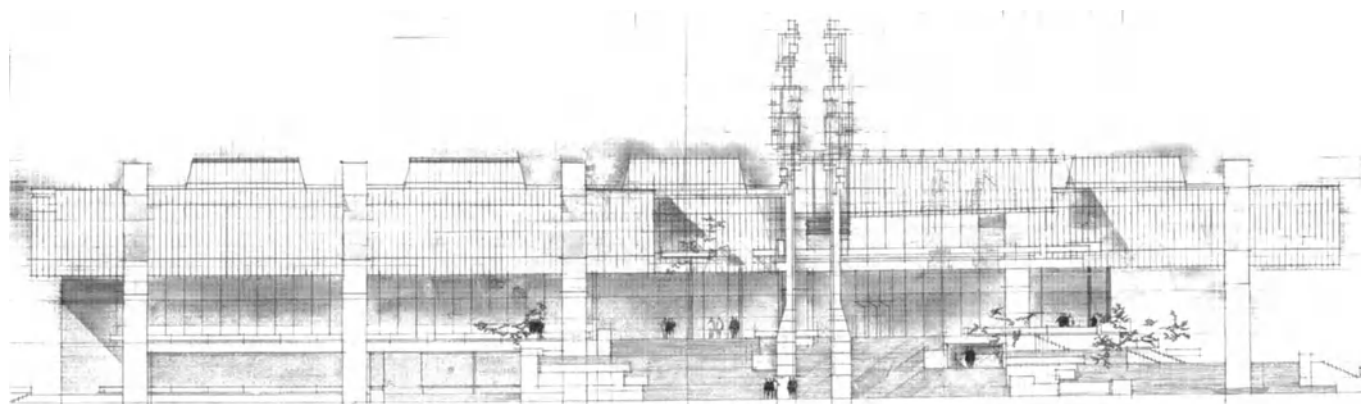


Skopje Town Hall, Skopje, Macedonia

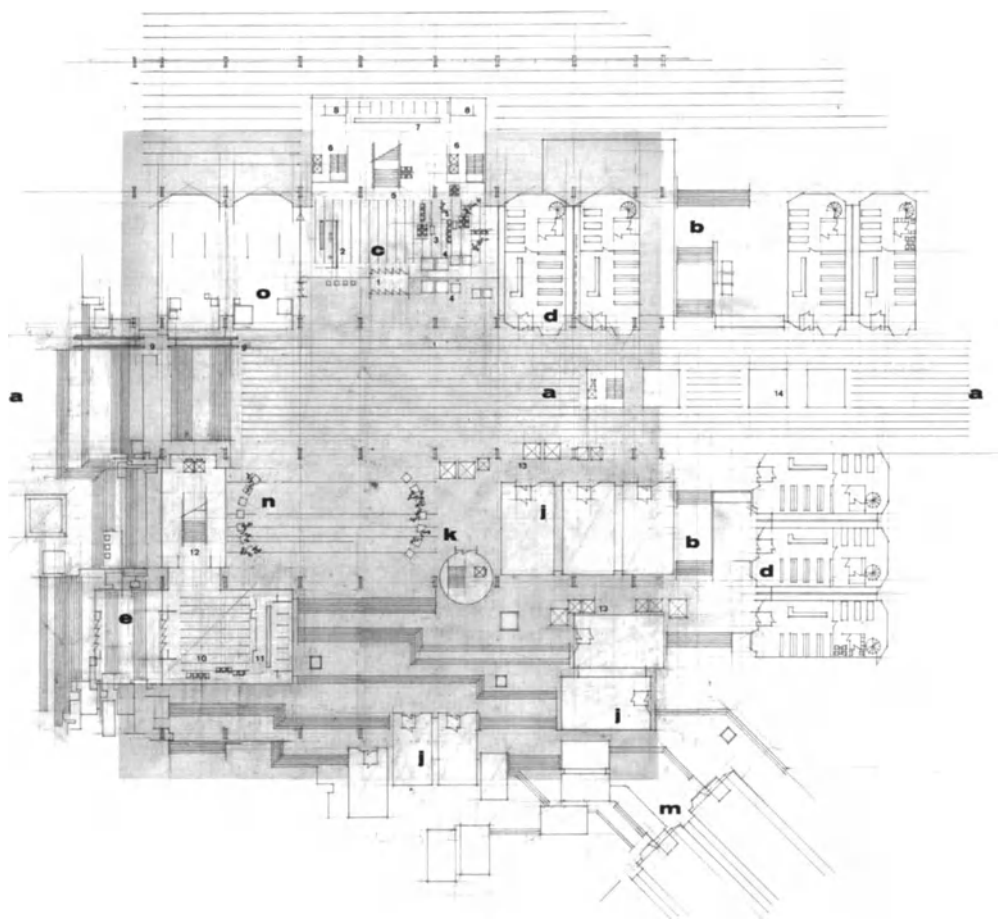
Competition entry: 1966

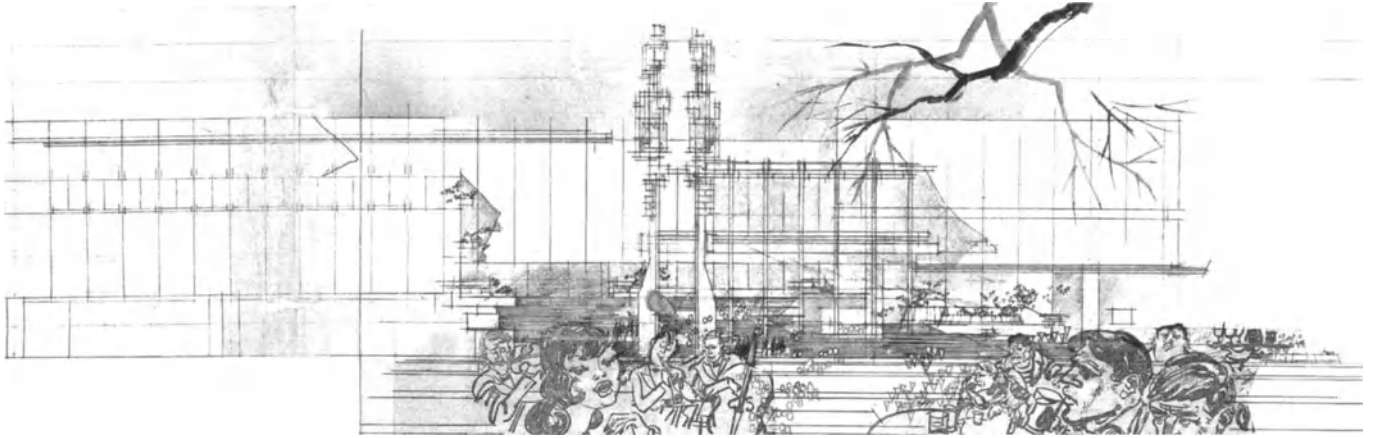
1st Prize

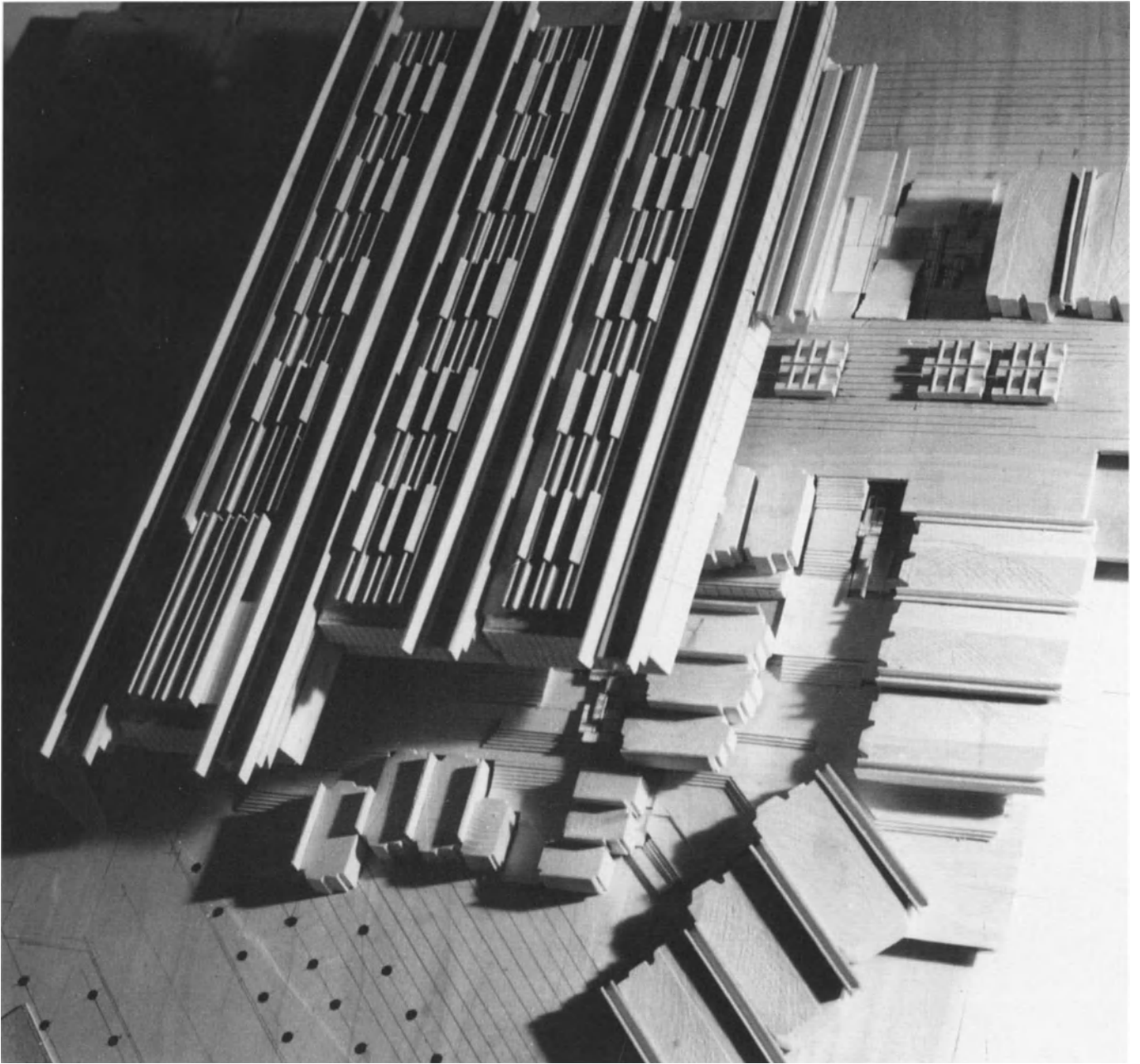
Collaborators: Majda Kregar, Ana Mavko



ground floor



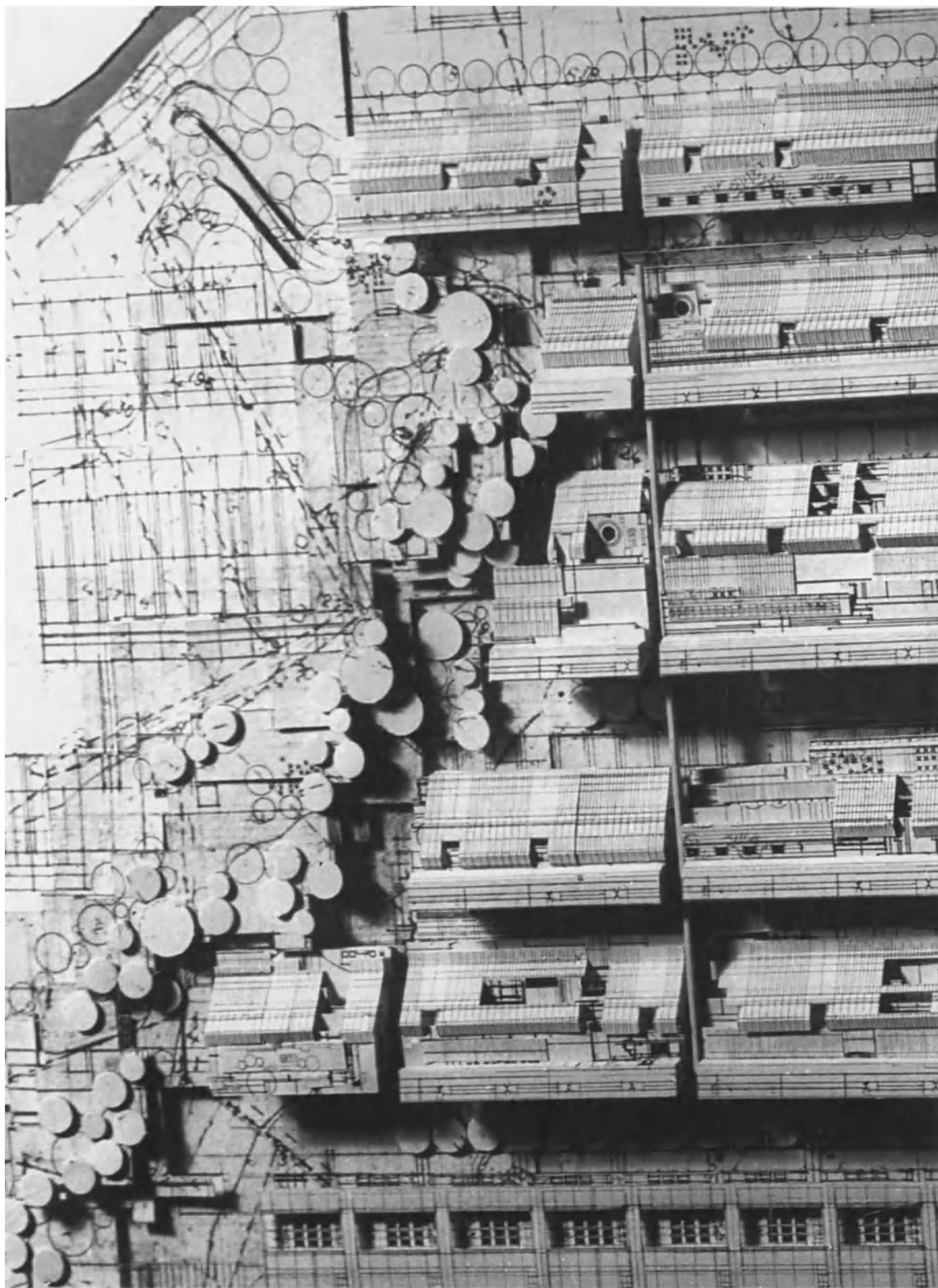




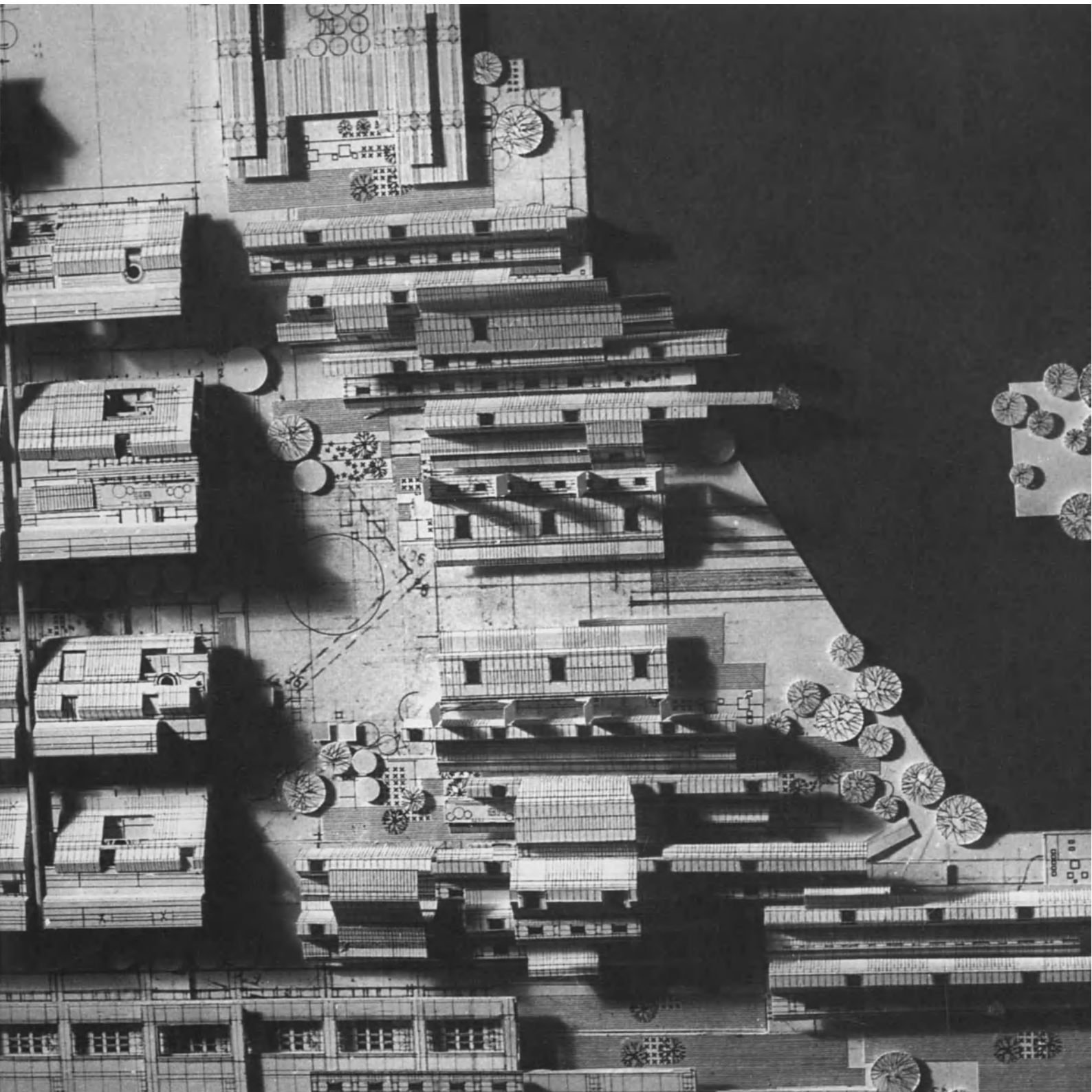
Competition entry: 1967

Honorable mention

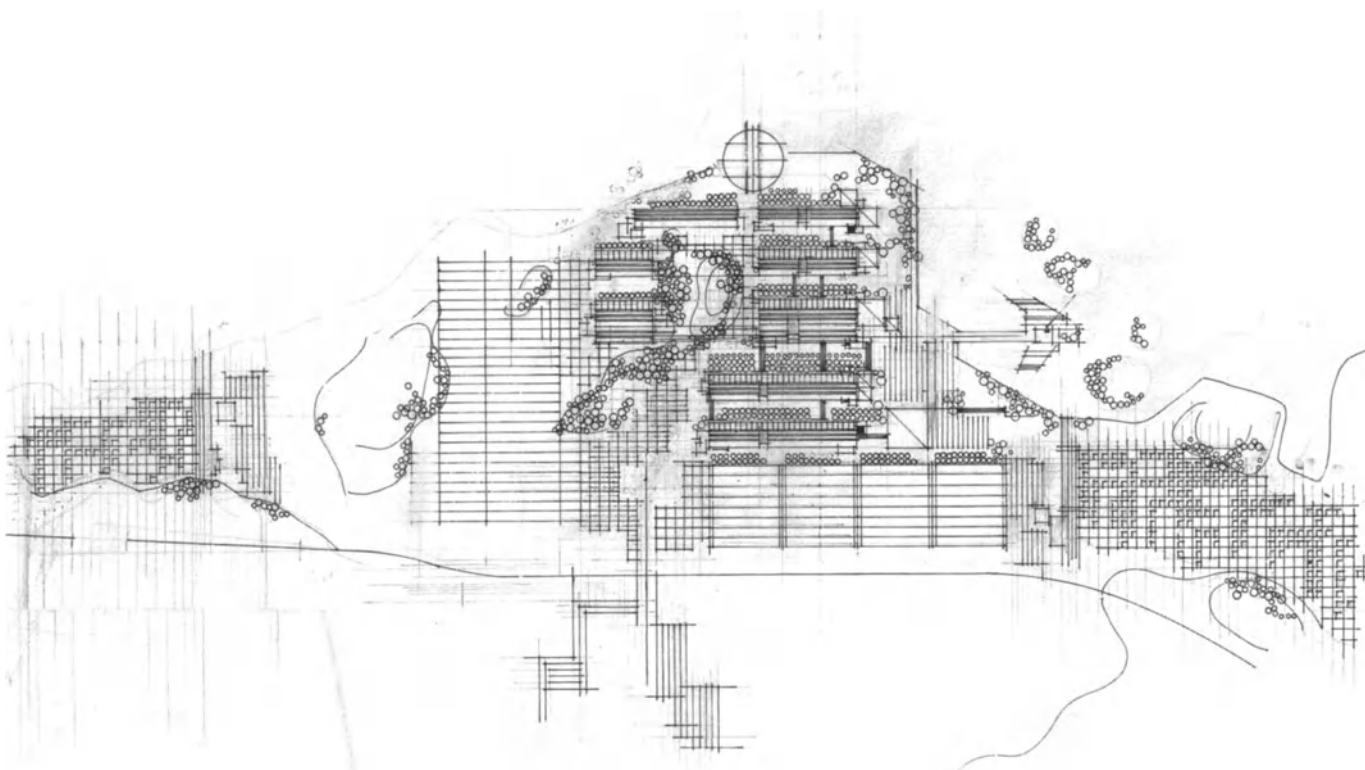
Collaborators: Majda Kregar, Ana
Mavko

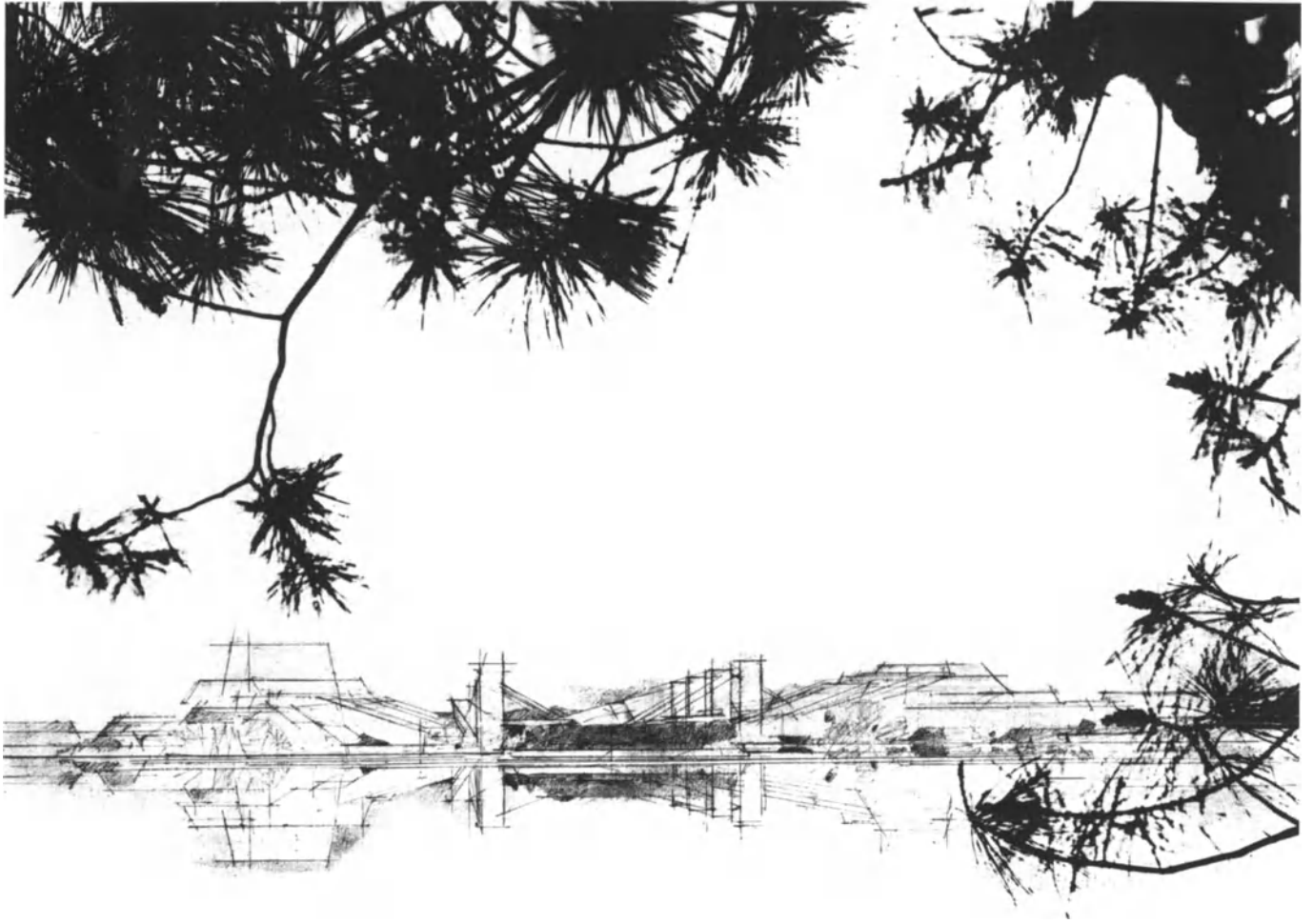


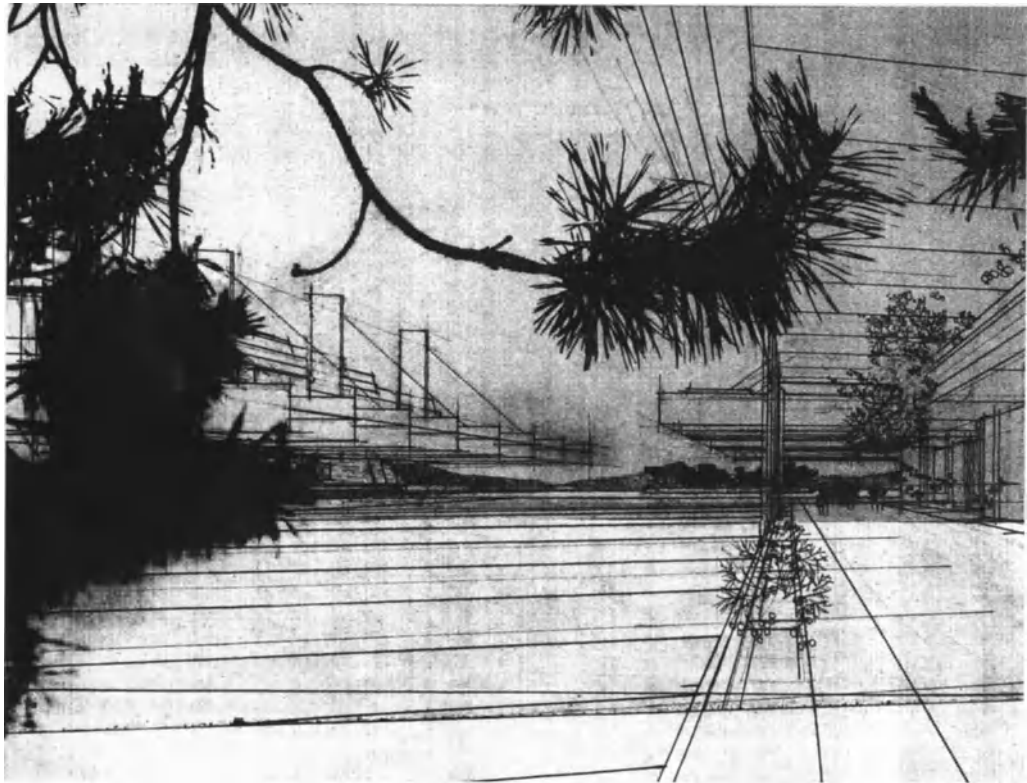
Espoo City Centre, Finland













Hotel Creina, Kranj, Slovenia

Koroška cesta 5, Kranj

Designed: 1968

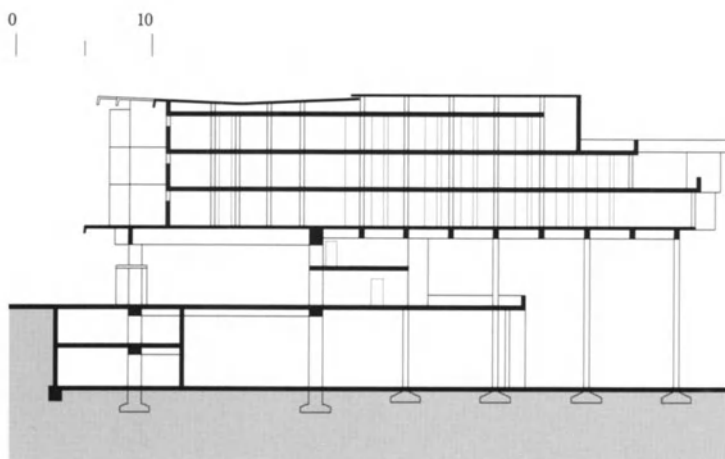
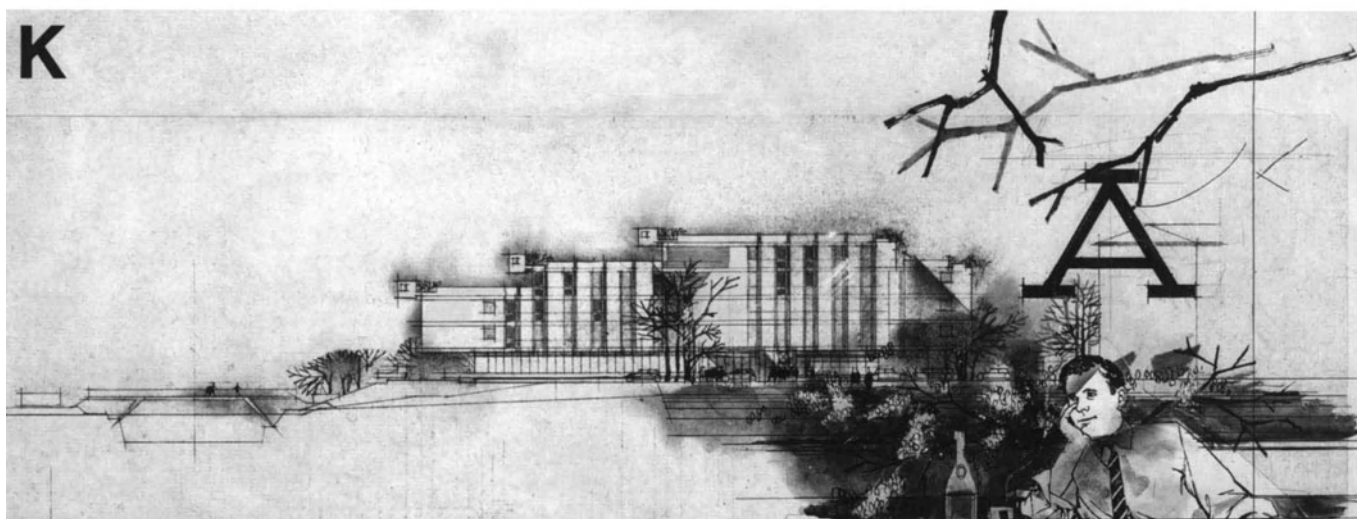
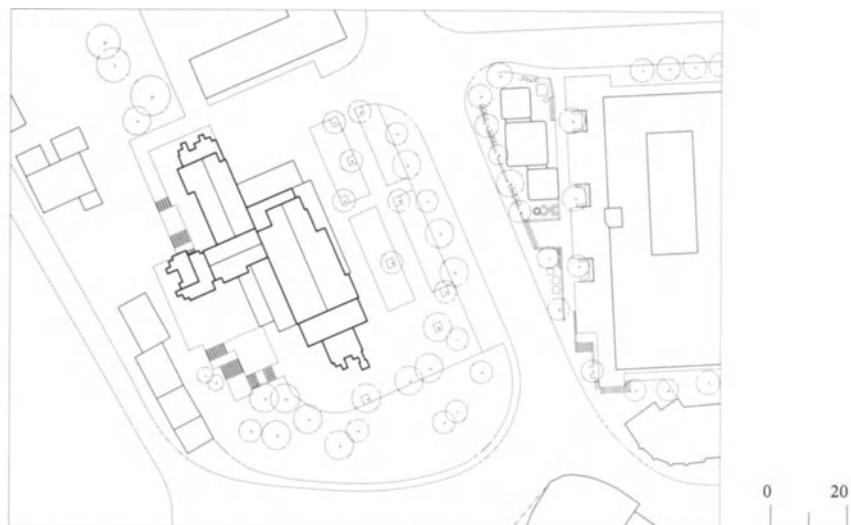
Constructed: 1969-70

Collaborators: Tomaž Medvešček,
Neva Holec, Miha Kerin, Majda Kregar

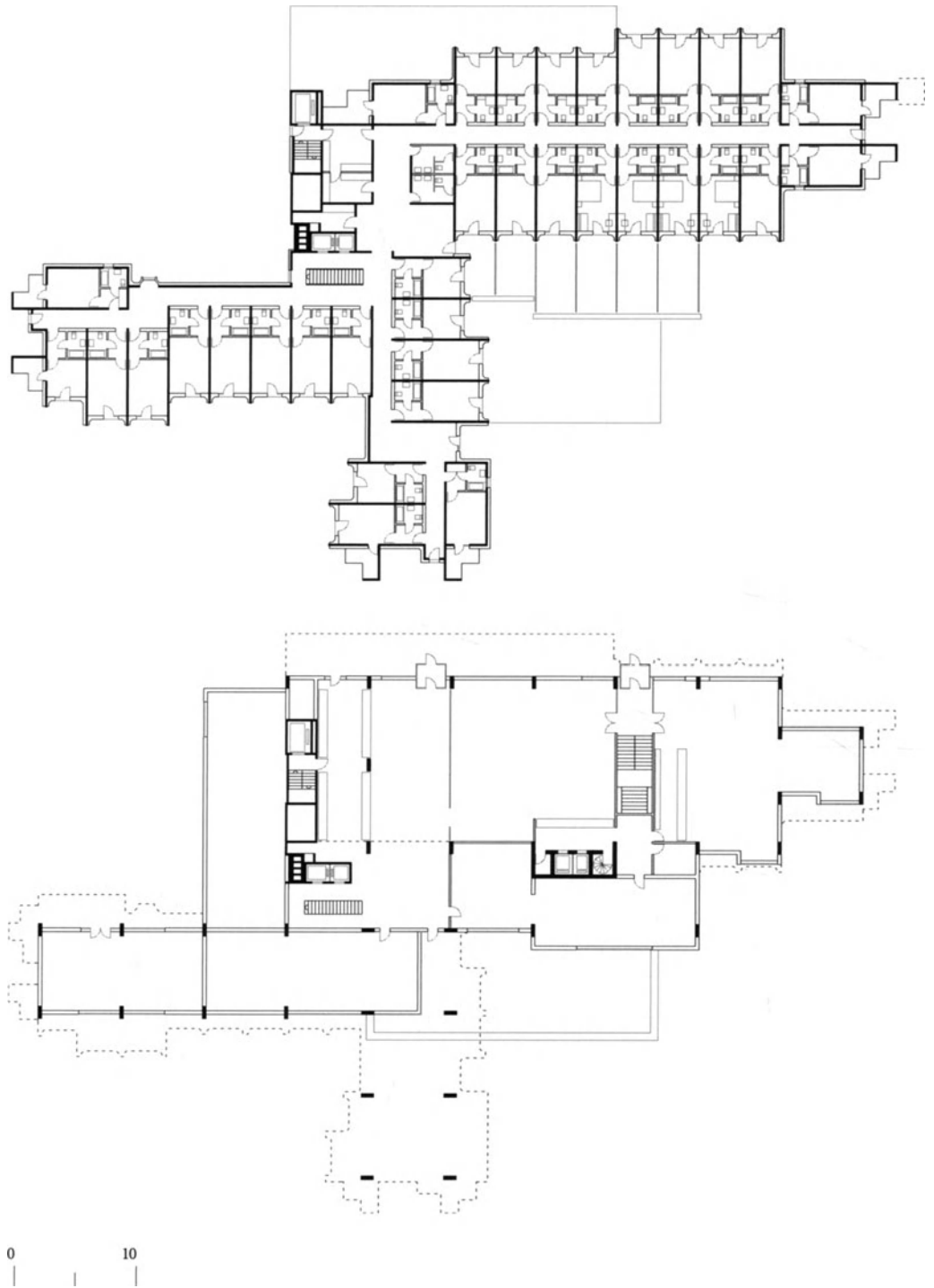








first floor, ground floor



0 10
| |















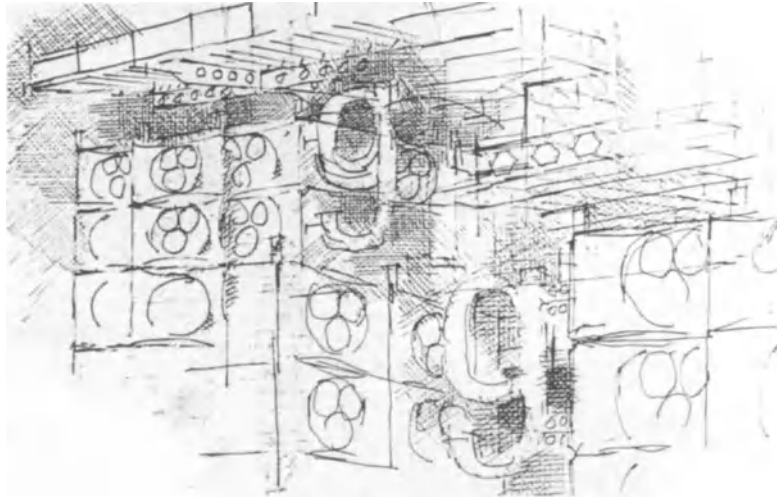
Globus Department Store, Kranj, Slovenia

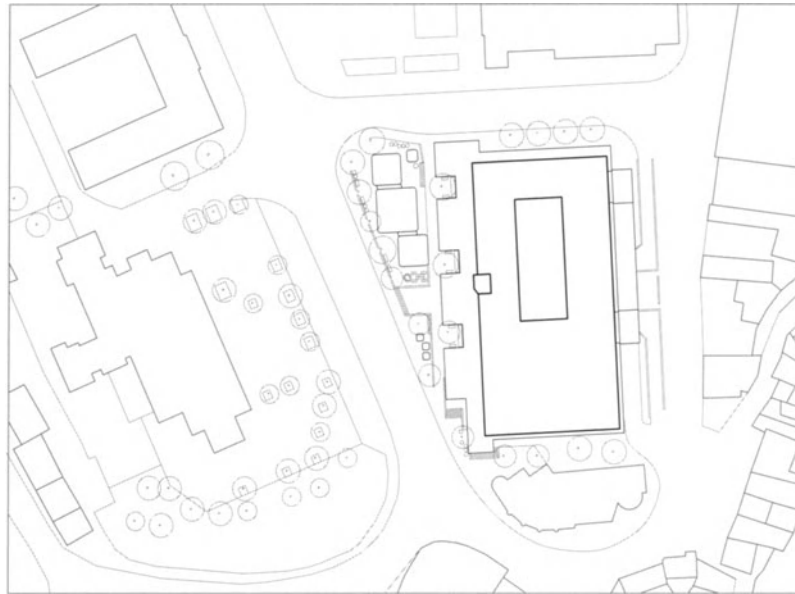
Koroška cesta 4, Kranj

Designed: 1969-70

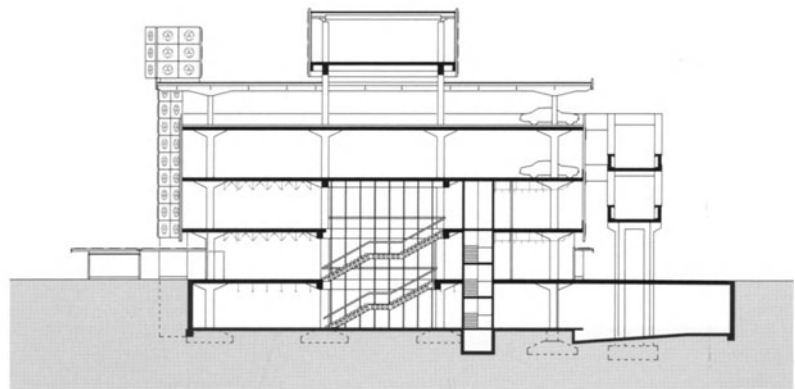
Constructed: 1970-73

Collaborators: Marija Bobnar, Tatjana
Krašovic Guštin, Miha Kerin, Majda
Kregar, Edo Ravnikar jr.



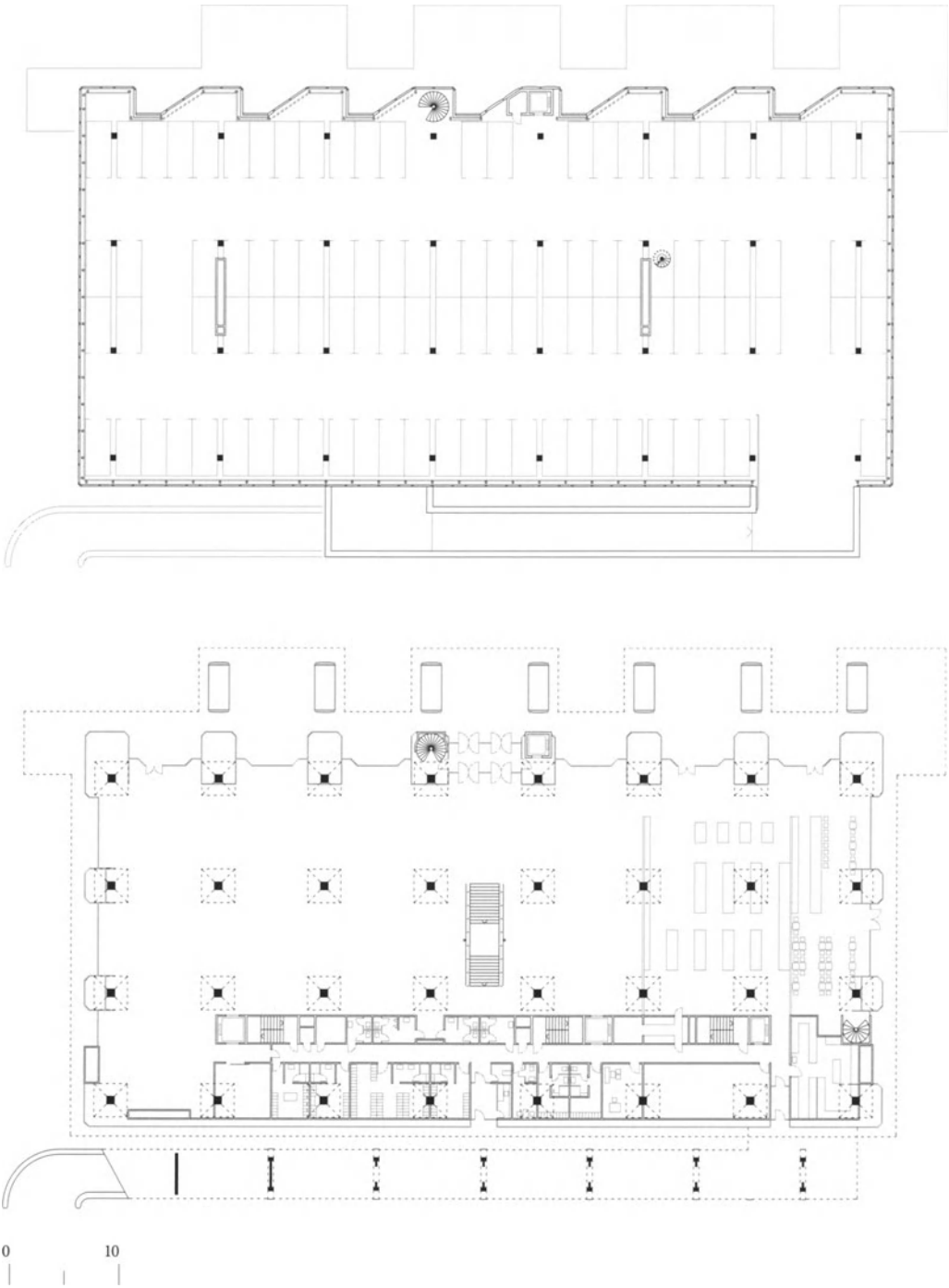


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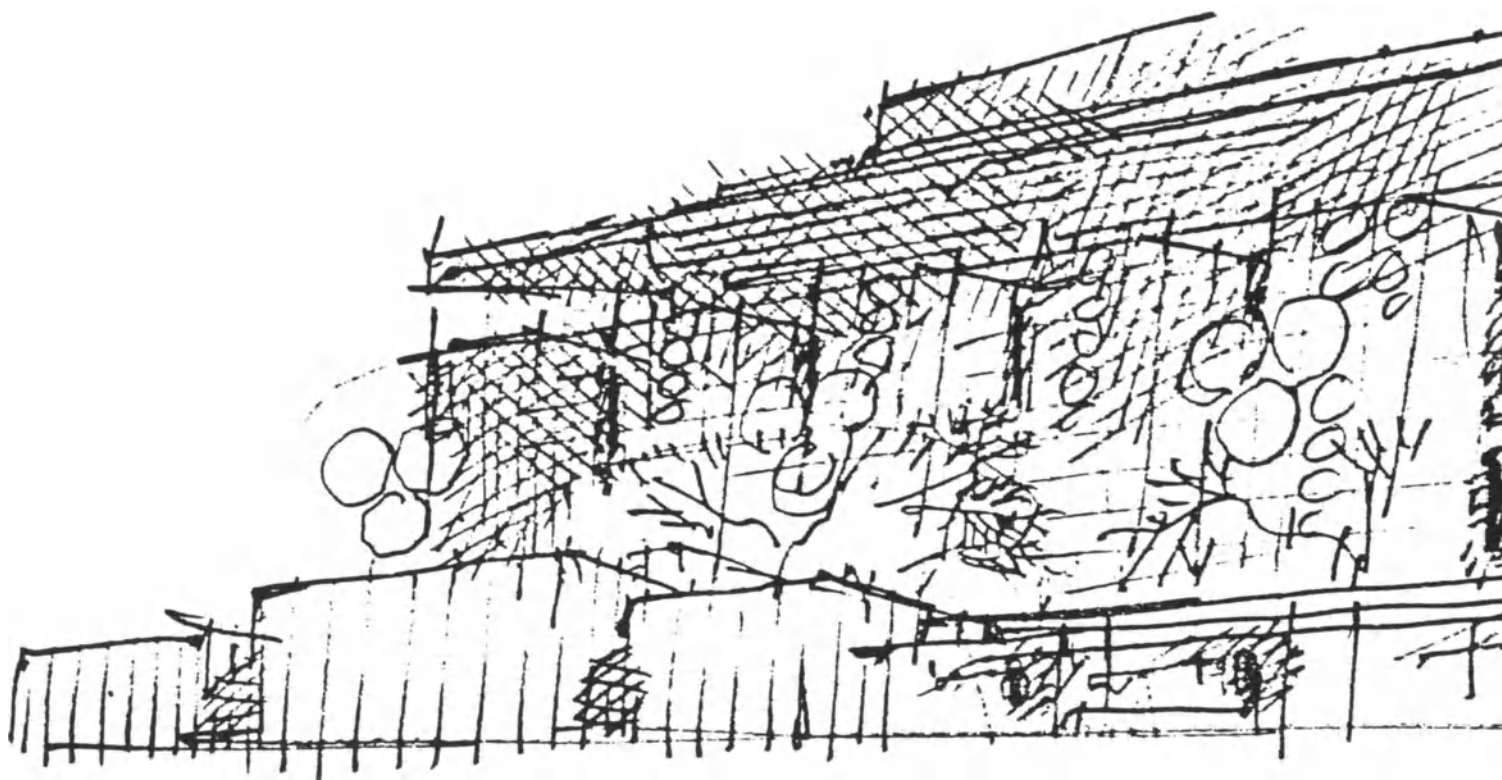
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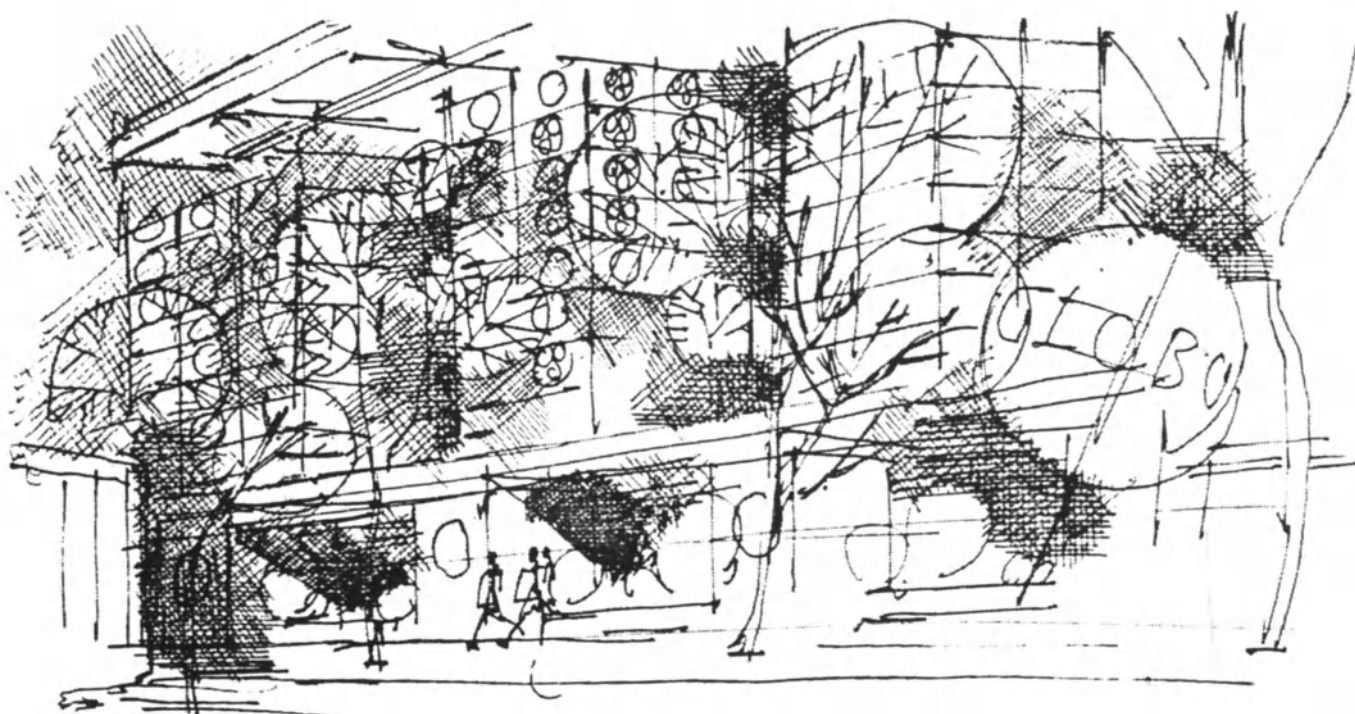
top floor (parking), ground floor













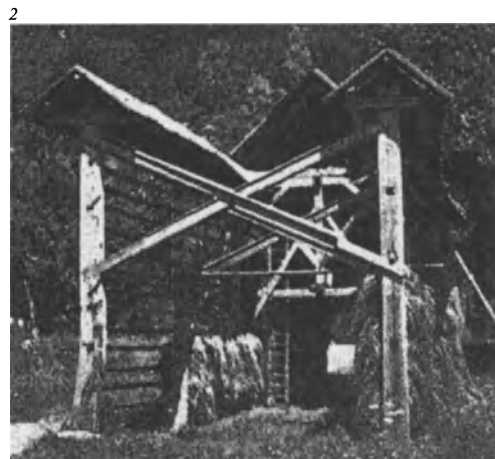
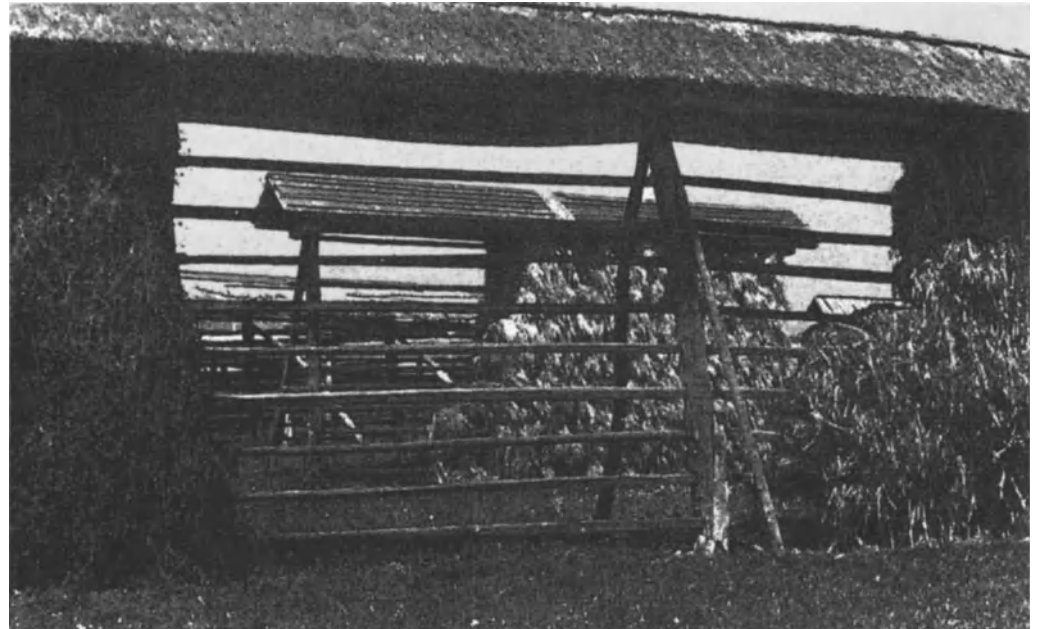


Writings by Edvard Ravnikar

Traditional Architecture in Yugoslavia

Primitiv arhitektura u Jugoslaviji, Byggnästaren, Stockholm, 1955, A5, p. 136-139

1, 2 Kozolec – The hayrack is a construction for drying hay in Slovenia. Farming produce is kept in or under it and is protected from autumn rain.



If we are familiar with Yugoslavia's historical and geographical circumstances it is not difficult to understand its rich folklore. Architecture usually vanishes first, but in this area it is still well preserved. Yugoslavia has not yet been influenced by technological development, a frequent enemy of cultural heritage. In recent centuries, new times and new technologies have often resulted in the destruction of heritage, as has often been the case in Western Europe.

Yugoslavia consists of three distinct types of landscape. The Mediterranean landscape runs parallel to the mountainous Karst, which in the north borders on the Alpine landscape, characterised by high, steep mountains with bare peaks. The third landscape is the lowlands of the Sava and

the Danube rivers, which forms a part of the large Pannonian lowlands.

Various geographical conditions influenced people's lives and resulted in their use of various building materials. The choice of materials depended on the characteristics of the climate. Traditional architecture in Yugoslavia made use of all kinds of natural materials: from stone and burnt clay in the Mediterranean region, to timber and shingle in the mountainous areas, and timber, clay and straw in the lowlands. The nations of Yugoslavia, who speak similar languages, were ruled by various foreign lords – Austrian, Italian, Hungarian and Turkish. Throughout centuries of foreign rule the influence of these respective countries was felt and resulted in cultural differences. These differences were first noticeable within the educated minority and later also within the wider population. Foreign rulers were mostly feudal lords and the native population their thralls. However, this relationship is the reason that many ethnographic remains are still incredibly well preserved. This is true for old traditions and customs as well as for traditional villages.

Apart from ethnographic remains, historical heritage is also preserved in these areas. It is an unambiguous monument to old times. In the Mediterranean landscape archaic remains from the times of Venetian and Roman rule are preserved, as are even older remains of Greek and even Illyrian origins. In the Alpine landscape not only typically Alpine, but also pre-historical forms, customs and buildings are preserved. In Slovenia a special

3 This kind of timber structure was created in the Alpine areas predominantly for protection from snow.

3



4 The hayrack shows extreme variations in design. Shown here is a so-called double hayrack from the area of Slovenia where fields are predominantly large.

4



5 Farm house in the Alps

5



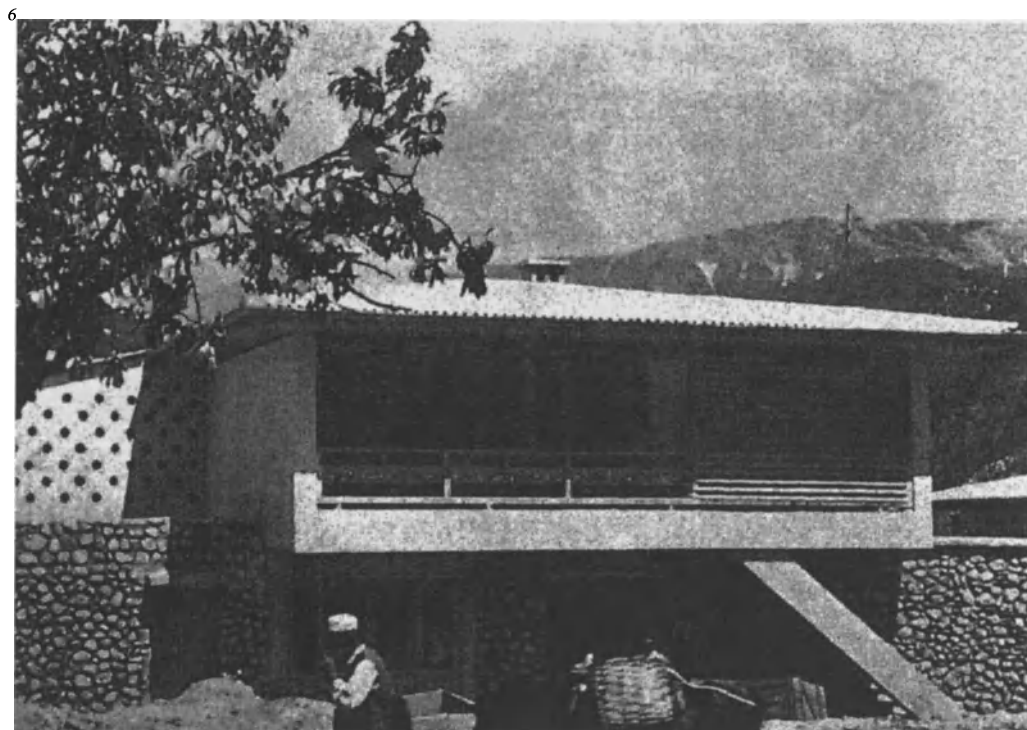
peculiarity can be found – a hayrack. This is a timber construction used for drying hay. In the low-lands houses made from solid wood can be seen, as can those made traditionally from clay, painted in lively colours and covered with thatched roofs.

The Balkans have always been known as the melting pot of many nations. Their culture consists of many respective folklore characteristics of numerous nations. In Yugoslavia various cultures lived side by side. The border between western Greece and eastern Rome ran through this space. This relationship was mirrored in people's lives as well as in their architecture and culture.

Finally, let me add, that contemporary Yugoslav architecture tries to use these traditional elements also in modern construction. Especially in Bosnia many architects are eagerly trying to transfer the character of the old, traditional Bosnian house to smaller housing units, especially those intended for labourers. The same goes for Slovenia, where the "vernacular style" represents an interesting attempt at design, which fits in the exceptionally beautiful landscape as an alternative to the simplicity of modern construction.

Selected illustrations show examples predominantly from the southern and the northern landscapes, which are particularly interesting. Housing in southern Macedonia is a direct derivative from Greek houses, whereas in the north, in Slovenia, they are built out of timber in the traditional Alpine style. None of these examples are widely known.

6 A contemporary one-family house in Bosnia with characteristics of a traditional Bosnian house. Architect: A. Čičinšajin



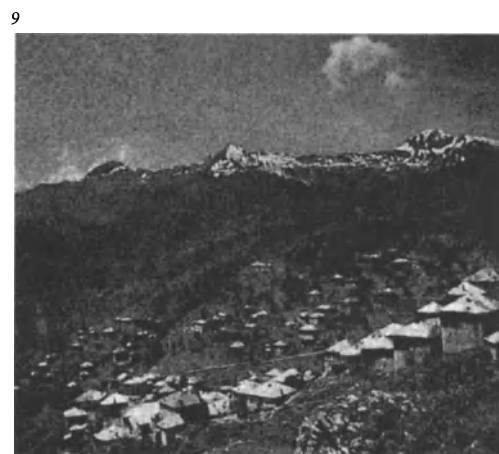
7. House in Macedonia

8 An extension to this farm tries to fit in with construction traditional of Alpine architecture. Architect: E. Ravnikar



9 Macedonian landscape

10, 11 Typical Macedonian house



When speaking about visual arts there are two strongly opposing points of view: the first view is represented by children and uneducated people (primitive nations and our uneducated contemporaries as well as ancient nations with great artistic traditions up to the Hellenistic period), while the other view is comprised of those who deal with visual arts professionally: teachers, secondary school art teachers, students of art schools and academies and most painters. Two worlds – the first based on the vital design force not yet touched by teaching, which lives its undemanding life oblivious of the other camp and therefore takes no interest in it; and the other camp, forced into a continuous, bitter struggle with everything that does not comply with the narrowly-limited learned knowledge out of unreflective professional duties and professionalism. While the first becomes a fresh and endless source of joy and ever-new initiatives, the other increasingly turns into the unpleasant nightmare of the pedantic yet outdated discipline. Artistically it has nothing left to offer, at least not in its general form.

When trying to describe the two principles of visual art the second takes less time. It is easier to understand and learn, especially for those who lack a greater ability to experience the world in an ambitious way. What I have in mind here is the almost too familiar representation of a three-dimensional space by linear perspective, which had been developing from the Hellenistic period of Antique Greek art and was perfected in the High Renaissance. Nowadays this principle can be explained very clearly with the creation of an image on a photographic plate. Mechanical projection of the world through a lens onto a flat surface results in an image, which involves only one viewing point and only one moment. The same is achieved when the rules of linear perspective are used. According to these rules we can complete an image without being touched by anything that we have drawn in any way at all. The Renaissance era developed only this type of perspective (for this is just one of the many options) when deep artistic experience was becoming but an appendix of skilful craftsmanship. Ever since a more powerful artistic experience in painting is but a dispensable guest. The truth is that everything we value as real art since then in some way or other deviates from these rules or neglects them. And yet the belief in these one-time truths, which are at odds with sincere and direct design, is the very reason why it is so easy to be an "artist". So, how do children paint and what are the values that we favour? Above all it is obvious that children are not "knowledgeable" about anything, yet we

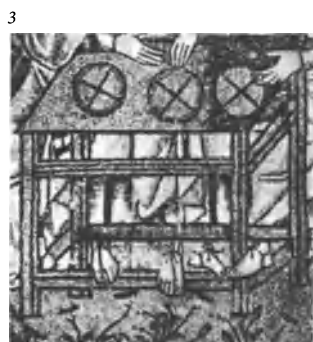
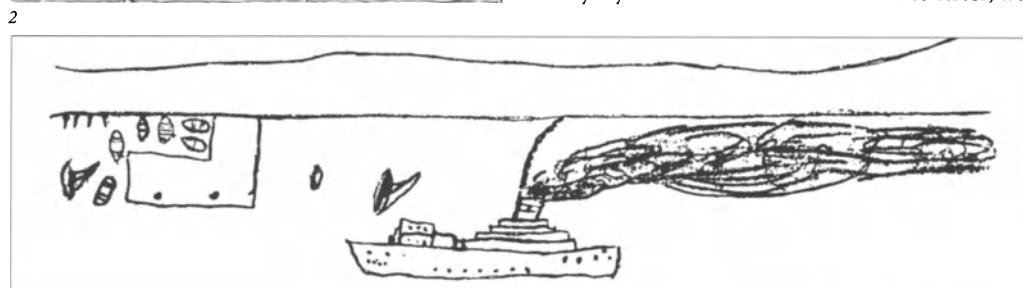
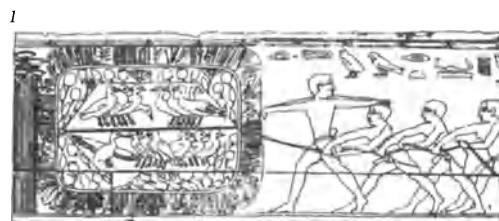
find their drawings highly interesting and engaging. A virtuoso perspective painting by a painter who "knows a thing or two" is interesting only until we discover "what it is" and then we are done with it forever. It does not interest us any more as it has not excited us in any way. A simple painting by a child, however, forces us to observe it longer. Through this observation we see the child's "what is it" as an experience. The child's soul is present in his drawing. He forces us to look through his eyes and for a moment experience the world the way he does.

It is understandable that this results in misunderstandings. The child's way of drawing is not considered as anything more than a game or as material for psychologists. We say: a child doesn't know any better, this is why he works the way he does. He who has studied and knows something naturally works in a different way. To do things the way a child would do them is therefore an act of deliberate ignorance on the part of a schooled person. It is not serious, and what is even worse, it appears to us as the degeneration of a healthy taste.

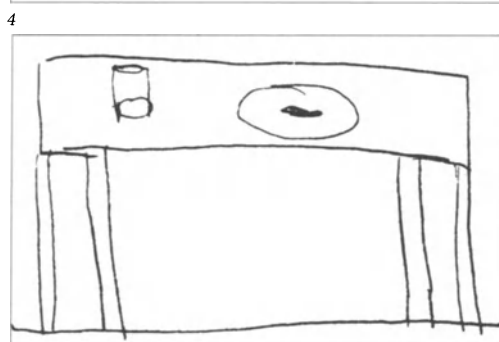
So what is true here? A child's taste for drawing may be elementary, as it is not yet distorted by advice, and his visual expression may be poor but it is experiential, deeper, richer and more precious. A child draws only when he feels like it, when he wants the drawing to make his wish come true. What a child wants but cannot have he draws, and the drawing becomes his reality (e.g. he draws an airplane on a sidewalk and then flies off in it). The only reason a child draws is that he wants the desired thing to be there in front of him. All the children's drawings on the walls, from cars to erotic symbols, mean only this. A child's drawing is never created without inner fire. This is also true for all great periods of art, from cave art to the victory of naturalism in the High Renaissance. Man always used drawings to make his dream come true. This is one of the essential foundations of true visual art. However, a "real" painter does just the opposite: he copies nature without it touching him in any way, without inner fire. He may only worry that the leaves he is trying to paint will fall too quickly. Such a painter is painting directly from eye to hand, his thoughts may even wander, as he "knows what he is doing". A child has a soul, while such a painter "has a hand".

A child considers the surface on which he has drawn an object to be an element in which it is alive. The tangible reality of paper or a wall is transferred to the drawn object: we are born with the knowledge of the greatest mystery of painting. A child considers what he drew in the plane to be

1, 2 The plane and its main view in a child's drawing compared to an example from ancient Egypt. Collapsible grid and sea-port in a characteristic view from above. Fishermen and steamboat from the side (5-year-old from Ljubljana).



3, 4 Two tables with flat objects on them (a plate and pieces of bread). A child's drawing is entirely comparable to that from Byzantine art.



real, for him the objects in the plane are truly alive. We should imagine that this is similar to how people "in effigy" were treated in the Middle Ages. As long as we let him have this ability and pleasure he remains "a little artist". Once we begin to force him to do it "the right way", his pleasure is no more and we wonder where his talent went. This is why the respect for the plane is entirely justified as one of the main characteristics of all great art of all times. Therefore, when in its own way good modern art again turns to the plane it comes closer to man, and thus needs elementary, powerful means of expression.

In their drawings children usually exagger-

ate and distort visual elements, which represent objects in a plane. A child sees only the essential parts, which he presents in a way appropriate for the particular experience. Deformation is here the first means of expression which is, however, not "expressionistic" but merely similar to our everyday conversations: what we want to stress, we

decide to exaggerate a bit. A line in a child's drawing is all the longer and an object all the bigger, the longer his feelings are engaged by it. This is how it used to be during the great periods in art and how it is with some modern painters who are often accused of producing "modern monsters" while they sincerely work in this way.

Children are not scared of three-dimensional objects. Nature provided them with an elementary approach, which is the same for all: time. Drawing a plate, a cake or a tablecloth is easy for a child. In his mind he feels around it and then draws it with a pencil. The essence of the object is clear, it could not be any easier. However, a three-dimensional object puzzles a child's little soul. Such an object has many planes and many views, all of which need to be sought out and somehow connected. A child uses time sequence: first one, then another and then yet another side (this is similar to the way a shoemaker looks at a shoe: from the side, from above, from below, until he forms a unified image from all views; it is also similar to the way in which an architect dismantles his thought into respective views). Therefore, a child gets "to the bottom" of an object when he understands an object from its planes. A three-dimensional object is real in its

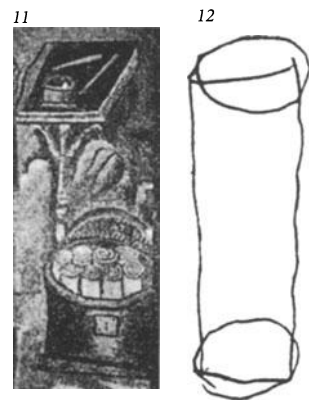
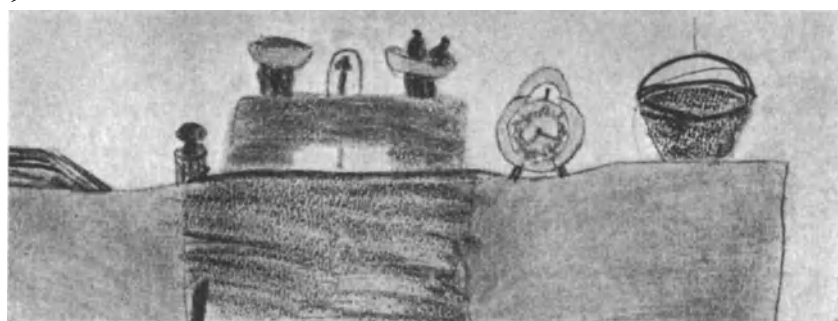
5, 6 A child and a modern painter observe and draw a three-dimensional object with the help of time sequence. In Picasso's painting we can see the bull from behind, from the side and from the front, whereas his head is shown from the front above and from the side below. This is almost exactly the same as in the child's drawing of a head (5-year-old boy from Ljubljana).



7, 8 Surprising similarity of two images showing interior vs. exterior in a painting by Giotto and in a 7-year-old's drawing.

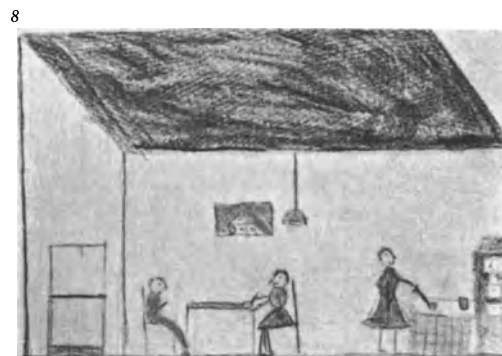


9, 10 Objects on a table. Loyalty to the plane forces a child as well as a contemporary painter to adopt the same approach. The objects are "on" the table, literally on the edge (5-year-old girl and Picasso).



11, 12 A three-dimensional object in the plane from a child's drawing and in a Byzantine mosaic. From left: A glass is rectangular from the side and round from above and below; however, these shapes can be combined. From above it is usually possible to see the inside (children's drawings on the right: 4 to 6-year-olds from Ljubljana).

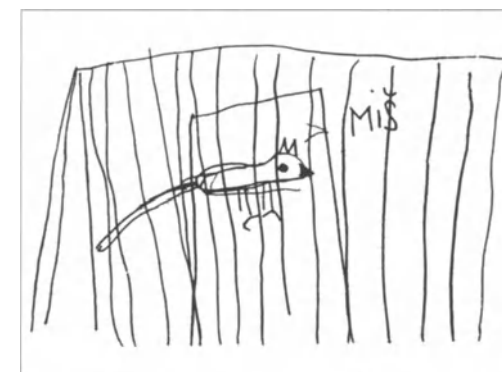
13, 14 A bird in cage, drawn respectively by Picasso and a 7-year-old girl, is realised in the plane so similarly as to need no comment.



belts that lay on the plane one above the other. The plane is the reality for him. Here he also uses time sequence as his aid. In the same way we say, e.g. "first" (or "below") there are the spectators, "then" (or "in the middle") there is a whale, and "then" (or "at the back") there is a house.

In the same manner he can also draw a house, which shows its interior and its exterior simultaneously, in a time-sequenced yet unified drawing. Modern relationships between time and space are therefore very old and are a part of all of us. All great periods of art were aware of them.

Children draw only from memory, even when they are trying to convey the things that are in



front of them. Every impression has to make its way to the interior first, where the painter sorts it and finds the most appropriate shape that will realise his impression on the paper. Children are always very active when they are drawing; this is what makes them different from many painters, who see the biggest and the most important effort in the direct imitation of nature. This is the essence

achieve in terms of visual arts. This is why we can only regret that our schools, our critique and our education of the public are so stuck, out of ignorance, in their way of thinking so contrary to this. Namely, sincerity of experience and the simplest way of expression will always remain the main foundation of every healthy creation.

In his book "Art and Society", Herbert Read

15,16 Deformation is a way of expression for children as well as for modern painters. Picasso's drawing uses deformation to speak about gravity and separation from it. A child's drawing depicts a small monkey (left corner) being threatened by a horrible wolf, shown with a body and limbs that are too big. The monkey is defending itself with its paws, which are drawn between it and the wolf (5-year old boy from Ljubljana).



of Cézanne's influence: when faced with nature, he wanted to draw by heart, which is what enabled him to find so many new ways of powerful modelling and drawing.

A child is creative from first impression to end. He has an elementary relationship with drawing, the kind that created all great art and many a painterly personality of today. This is where the powers that make a draftsman into an artist originate. No one who is only copying from nature can become one of them. Whether one understands art or not is entirely a matter of their point of view. Do we want art and its enjoyment to be creative and have all the richness and joy of this activity, or do we want the opposite: a documentary, an impersonal copying of nature, where creativity is but a rare exception? All great art was created and preserved by experiencing and creating, which is the way of working we generally encounter in the contemporary child. More developed and established, this kind of art still represents the ultimate a man can

sometimes relies on the bourgeois psychologists, whose points of view we find only partially acceptable. Despite this his thoughts can serve as incentive for discussion, which would be both necessary and useful among us as well.

Whatever may be true for educational procedures in general, we must, when speaking about art education, return to the roots of the meaning of this word and try to discover what is hidden or suppressed in a child's personality. Everyone involved in childhood education would agree that children manifest a natural aesthetic initiative roughly up until the time they reach the age of 11 or 12. Up to this age, children have an intuitive sense for colour harmony, composition and inventive construction. With the onset of puberty, these instinctive abilities become obscured by more logical abilities and with this, by appropriate activities that replace or exclude aesthetic ones. However, even if we take into consideration the fact that in Nordic children the onset of puberty at 11 is rare, this explanation is somewhat overly simple. What really takes place is a gradual development that is accelerated by some sudden shock in the child's education. Gradually a conscious and critical "super ego" develops in a child, which controls and suppresses all that is instinctive. Instincts that find their expression in aesthetically driven activities may seem harmless enough; however, there is something we must bear in mind. The tendency at this stage of development is that the principle of the game – which is up until this stage the only principle in life – is replaced by what Freud calls "the realistic principle" and the idea of correct behaviour according to teachers and parents. Super-ego, according to Freud, is what represents all

17, 18 A child and a painter from ancient Egypt work in the same manner. They do not draw the visual impression mechanically but according to what they know: a child knows, e.g., that there is a layer of underwear under our clothing and they both know that there is a body under the clothes (the long dress is no veil).

17



18



19, 20 The comparison between this drawing and the Egyptian relief speaks for itself. Everything that is going on in the depth dimension is shown in the plane in the only possible way. Apart from this, in the relief we encounter other specificities described in this paper, such as deformation (the size of the pharaoh compared to the guards next to him, the way in which the three-dimensional objects are shown, etc.).

19



These questions are highly complex and their explanations undoubtedly lie in both the physical and psychological realms. Generally speaking we can say that these cases occur in a way similar to all psychological abnormalities. Sometimes we believe that this minority is endowed with exceptional physiological characteristics, that these personalities are of a somatic constitution that is more sensitive to outer stimuli, such as light, colour, sound and mass. If their enjoyment of these material qualities is powerful enough, they can effectively resist those influences that try to redirect their energies towards those activities of which society approves. There are

20



moral limitations, it is the advocate of the striving for perfection and, as such, of all "higher" things in life. Generally speaking, parents and other authorities follow the directives of their own "super-egos" when bringing up children and are therefore pedantic and strict. They have forgotten the troubles of their own growing up and are happy to be able to compare themselves with their own parents who used to restrain them just as strictly. This is how a child becomes harnessed to the cart of tradition and all "eternal" values, which are handed down from generation to generation.

In the case of some children (who we call "talented" with particular aesthetic sensibilities) this suppression does not occur.

Therefore, from the point of view of education related to aesthetics, two interesting questions emerge:

1. Why such exceptional cases?
2. Is it desirable to see this number increased and if so, how?

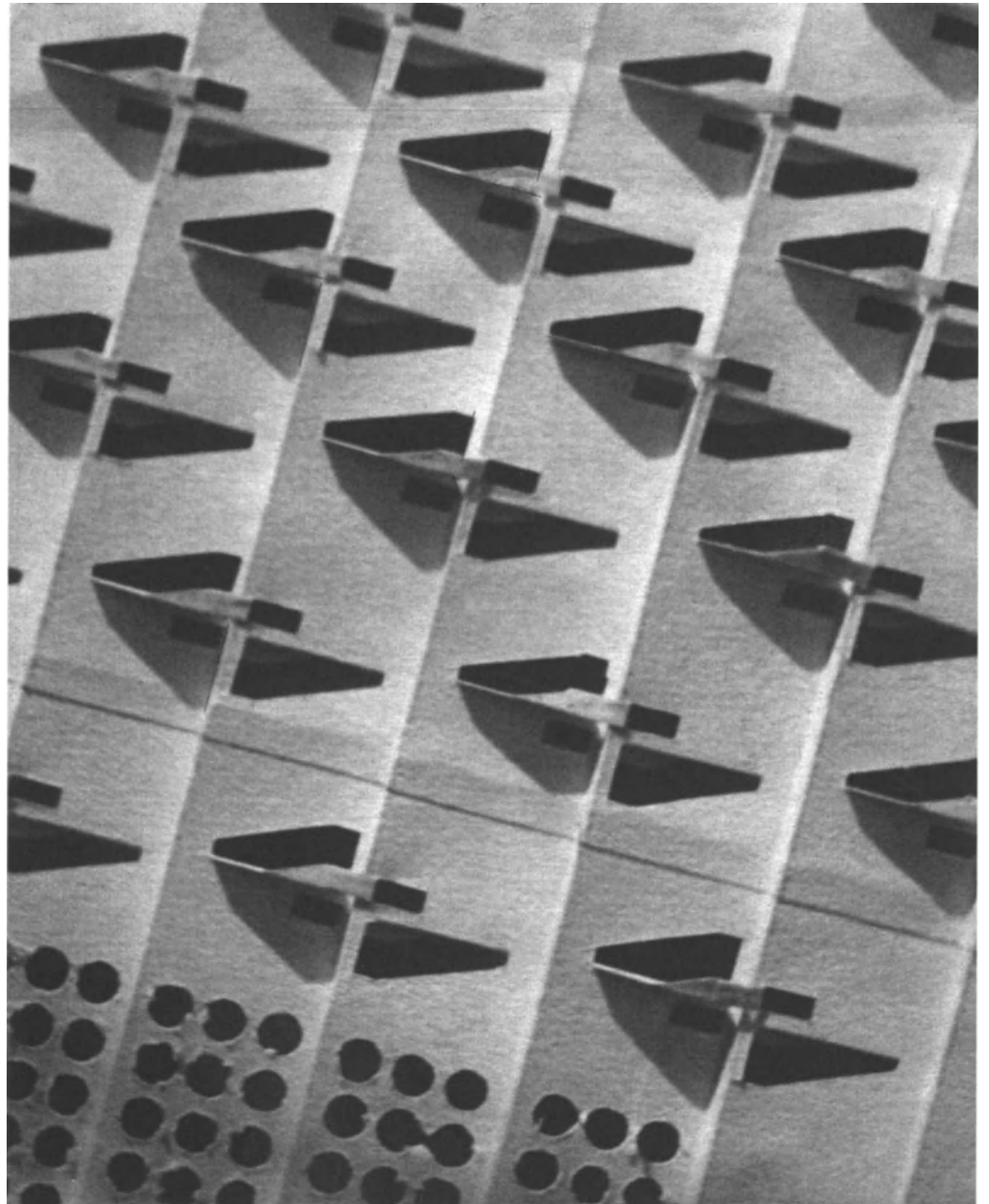
numerous examples of “artistic temperament” which do not conform. Goethe is generally recognised not only as a great poet, but also as a normal and rational man. He too, however, is a case of evident psychological abnormality.

It can be said that all children are born with all physical and sensorial equipment needed in order to become artists. There could indeed exist a minority, which is only physically developed and is completely insensitive to sound and colour and is therefore not capable of aesthetically induced reactions. However, even this proposition needs to be scientifically confirmed. A large majority is aesthetically sensitive from birth and the events of the first years determine whether a child is going to have the ability to express himself aesthetically, i.e. to communicate his feelings openly and harmoniously.

Therefore, we are all born artists and yet we became the insensitive citizens of a bourgeois society:

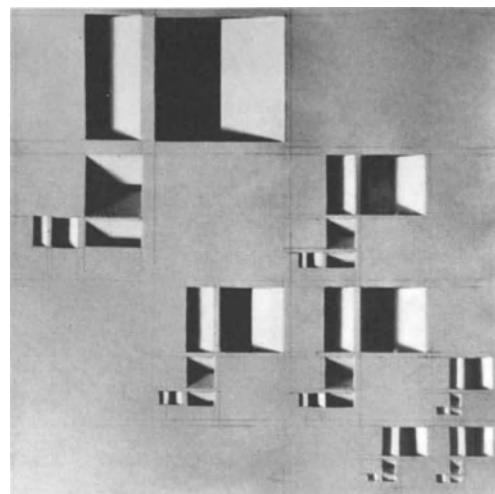
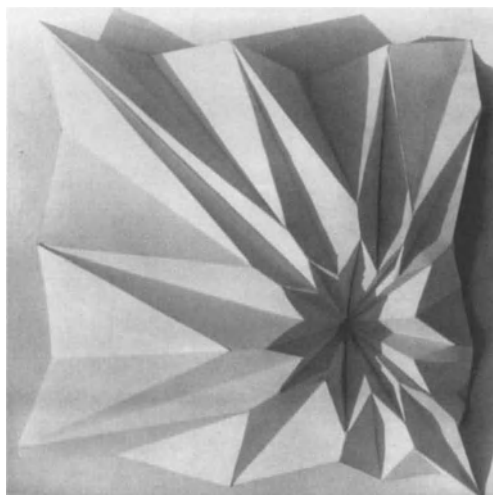
1. Be it because we were physically deformed during the education process in such a way that our bodies can no longer express themselves in natural and harmonious movements and sounds;
2. Be it that we are psychologically deformed because we were forced to accept society's ideas of the correct, which excludes free expression of artistic initiatives.

Elements of the contemporary study of design are being tested also at the Ljubljana School of Architecture. This experimental work and tests, which are here illustrated but modestly, are not a part of any study plan and are done in addition to the "official" study curriculum. However, foreign examples have proven that these methods are essential, as they mean that the students gain contact with materials, tools, basic three-dimensional effects, structures, etc.



I do not know whether in any other profession pedagogical issues are discussed as much as they are in architecture. Our profession is comprised of ever-wider areas, which are, on the one hand, extremely specialised, while on the other they are highly integrated and interrelated. The obvious consequence is the ever-increasing busy lifestyle of young people. The more architecture branches out, the greater the need for the graduate to have as general a knowledge as possible. Nowadays new

teaching methods are sought everywhere, which would enable a young person to continue their development in many directions. Here is how this should work: they would get to know life and society, establish a constructive and responsible attitude towards them, acquire technical knowledge and a general ability to create an order out of given disorganisation, which would be useful in life. We look to a young architect to be sensitive, diligent and creative, all at the same time. This can be seen



in the diagram showing the character of the architect's work by a Slovene architect living in the United States, J. Jager:

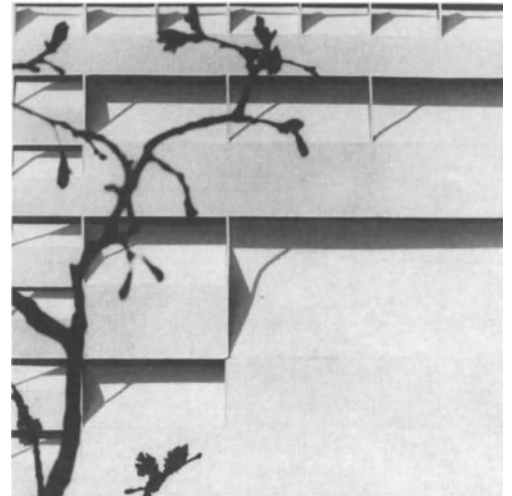
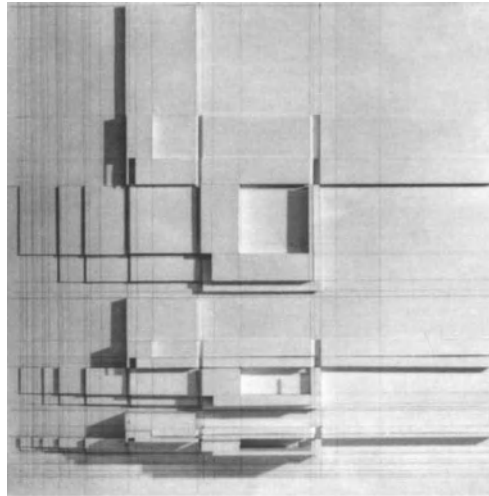
	Taste	Joy	Imagination			
Thinking	<	Searching	<	Testing	<	Creating
	Diligence		Courage		Consideration	

Reforms in architectural studies began in the 1920s and are by now already widespread and have influenced many schools. This development ran parallel to a new understanding of architecture, which has spread as widely as it has by the very reformed schools. What is the essence of the new way of teaching? Study time has been compressed into four years and begins with certain courses, which get down to work on the student's design abilities immediately. In parallel, students are taught about mankind and society (history, sociology, psychology, ethnography of contemporary cities etc. and building materials). From the second year onwards, students can work directly on projects for realisation. In this way they are directly involved in seeing and judging for themselves whether their way of thinking and decision-making is the right one. To facilitate this, workshops, teaching construction sites and connections with factories are needed, as is increased and ongoing contact between students and teaching staff. At the moment, the new school for design in Ulm represents the best hope with regard to these conditions. Ulm even has its own boarding school, which, however is more open than the expression implies. Contact between students and teachers is therefore continuous and is tied to the basic study plan only in the broadest of terms. Therefore the teaching staff must only have more of that which is expected from the students. They must possess those creative abilities which are so difficult to describe and which, though not

particularly tangible, we all sense and admire.

There is another issue, closely related to all of the above: the selection of student candidates. It is only natural that the number of candidates cannot be excessively high, nor without certain restrictions. There is a general rule of no more than 20 to 25 or even less (12) students per teacher. However, while this rule reduces the number of students considerably, it also means that some kind of ability for this kind of work is an important advantage in entering an architecture school. These schools prefer, above all, elementary educational methods, away from the verbal and into the practical and generally active teaching. This is why in such schools there are but a small number of lectures and even these do not touch upon immediate subjects but rather provide general views and orientation in the areas that architects are likely to encounter. This ideal teaching arrangement is already widely recognised, particularly in the "new" regions of the globe, where old traditions, habits and prejudices do not hinder more innovative efforts to achieve something that is obviously good. This is very different in the old world and of course also with us. Anyone watching the situation can clearly see that despite the attempts almost everywhere to adjust the new teaching methods to their circumstances and to apply them in a useful manner, the greatest obstacles are the old ways, which are, as we all know, so difficult to abandon. The old systems have at least one other fatal downside. This lies in their more or less bureaucratic organisation, which easily encourages tomorrow's professionals to take precisely the same attitude towards their work.

What is the situation here in Slovenia? Slovenes have had their School of Architecture since 1920. Its curricular system was modelled on the Vienna Polytechnic and has always been applied in a way (influenced by Plečnik, who was



Wagner's student) that was essentially closer to the newer methods than to the old. Fewer students, close contact, work in practice, firm principles on the role of architects and architecture, articulated ethical principles etc. were basically just what the new architectural pedagogy was looking for.

In Zagreb and in Belgrade, however, the situation was very different. The number of students was always greater, the teaching largely verbal, the project tasks required mostly mechanical execution and the destiny of graduates was of little concern. In other words, the main objective of study there was the demand for what was, in essence, a formal fulfilling of all of the conditions for the diploma. According to these principles, it is for a scarce few that architecture is truly accessible – to the detriment of the remaining 95%. After the war, our university complied with all of the systems in place in Zagreb and in Belgrade as part of unification. This also meant that the notion of architectural composition, which is difficult to dismantle, was distributed over and among a few subjects. Apart from this, an additional ballast of so-called theoretical subjects was also introduced, apparently according to the Russian example. Many other things have changed, too. The number of enrolled students has increased. This is the result of a greater demand for architects as well as a belief among students that this is an easy discipline, as relatively little knowledge of mathematics is required. And finally, the admissions process is still badly organised as it is regulated from outside.

...In the past 50 years architecture has been regenerated by shedding all that was inessential. Thus in phase one it recognised merely bare function and bare structure. This would have led to a major impoverishment of its expression and possibly even to a dead end, had it not found an ally in the similar intentions of the fine arts. The first steps of the new architecture – whose huge role in contemporary life as well as its qualities are now undeniable – are closely related to a generation of artists – seekers, who are justifiably symbolised by Picasso.

From these common beginnings a new visual system has emerged and developed. It became, and is still today, almost the only aid for the study of architectural design, in a manner of speaking, from “spoon to urban planning”.

With the help of but a single example, modest, insignificant and little noticed that it is, I would like to show how it is usually truly difficult to understand the value of a fine arts experiment unless we know the reasons and the realisations behind it (I think in times of progress, architecture and fine arts never existed without it). For the new is found in the most unexpected of places and on the least important occasions, and it is in this way that potentially wide-ranging notions and laws emerge.

Among the many of Picasso's experiments from the thirties, there is also a “sculpture”, consisting of a roughly-hewn shape, resembling a head and resting on a whitewashed radiator. What laughter it provoked from the connoisseurs of the real, non-corrupt art, how much abhorrence it evoked with its charlatan's daring and of course its obvious lack of knowledge! And yet this action, which is only one of many, means something great, something essential. Technical sciences, which always had to exist in the shadow of some more decent decoration, all of a sudden assumed their own independent aesthetic existence. Picasso's sculpture helped to sensitise us to the beauty of a simple technical object and convinced us that beauty can be found everywhere, even without marble, gold or silk. And this is essential. This is what makes good quality contemporary architecture and urban design tick and this is their main inner driving force.

1 Chalgrin, Arc de Triomphe, Paris, 1806, detail

2 Palais Central de l'Exposition, Paris, 1889, an example from the heritage of Baroque synthesis, detail



3 Garnier, Paris Opera staircase, 1861-1874, detail



Many are under the impression that we live in times of general disorientation with regard to the good, the right and the correct in matters of fine arts and architecture. Thus Izidor Cankar openly maintained that up until Impressionism one could still distinguish the issues, whereas afterward, chaos sets in. This impression is even stronger when speaking about the synthesis of the three visual arts activities: architecture, sculpture and painting. We do not know whether this lack of clarity, this confusion, is limited only to our cultural sphere or whether it is a general condition in today's world of art. And finally, is it possible to find a new connection with this issue, and if so, how should this be done, should this turn out to be necessary?

From the very beginning it seems that without due consideration we are thinking of this desired new integration in terms of something that needs only to be re-awakened, to be somehow re-assembled with the help of a forgotten formula; in a word, that we are dealing with something that has been forgotten and that therefore needs only to be rediscovered.

However, the matter is far more complex. For a long while the three branches of visual expression have no longer been internally connected by a common design ideology in the way in which this was still the case in the Baroque era. It is obvious that today it is only possible to follow the three respective movements separately. Nowadays this feels entirely natural to consumers and they feel no particular wish for a connection with respective related arts. Therefore, by suddenly raising the question of synthesis, a doubt emerges even before any answer is given. This doubt concerns the true need for integration of the visual arts in the ways we know and appreciate in iconic pieces from the history of art. It has to be established from the very outset that the notion of unity, which is based on the traditions of the Renaissance and the Baroque, is irrevocably dead in spite of all the efforts of both the 19th and 20th centuries. It has enjoyed less and less significance, less and less power and less and less use with every post-Baroque decade that has passed. When viewing the synthesis in this way, it is obvious that what we have in mind must be a synthesis of a new and different kind. But how can we today possibly think about the synthesis effectively? On the one hand, like true representatives of our times, we expect solutions from conferences, meetings and symposia, due to the belief that the cure for the lack of integration may lie merely in better communication between artists and architects, in professional striving for equality in common projects; or even, as the most

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4 A city today

5 Auguste Rodin, *Hell's Door*, 1880-1917, detail

6 Victor Horta, 4 Avenue Palmerson, Bruxelles, 1894, Secessionist bourgeois environment, interior

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concrete suggestion, in a certain percentage of construction costs that would be intended for the arts. On the other hand, however, we know only too well, unfortunately, that the synthesis of the three branches, which are today developing separately, could not exist but as a loose structure of an improvised neighbourhood in a common space. For the moment therefore nothing too defined but rather something that should serve as a basis to replace the existing principles with better ones, once they are established. Characteristic concrete conditions of our cultural environment must be also taken into consideration. Although there is no doubt that a common desire to achieve something in this sense exists, various random, particularly subjective circumstances, influence the formation of spirit and work.

The 19th and part of the 20th century form a bridge and a transition from the last period in which the branches of the fine arts were united. During this period most of the old traditions can be observed; however, so can many early indicators of the complexity and final chaos, which renders us powerless and inactive while hoping for their integration. In this transitional period, inherited aesthetics and art techniques remain stubborn, as does the relationship between the artist and the society, which looks back into history, and as do the themes, the content, the proneness to allegory and exemplary turning back to the Renaissance. This is true in particular for the relationship between the two arts of sculpture and architecture. Apart from this, strong tendencies for the autonomy of the three branches have been present for some time, although the early 19th century saw architecture and sculpture still strongly interconnected, even in those solutions, which are no longer in the Baroque style, e.g. in Chalgrin's *Arc de Triomphe* or in Ledoux's semi-utilitarian designs and representational buildings from the end of the century. However, there are more and more examples of public buildings, which have no use for sculpture, and of sculpture, which is free of architecture. Rodin, for example, already needs his own original architectural design if he wants to provide his sculpture with a floor and give it life, whereas the architectonics of Bourdell's sculpture could find its place only in the capitals of South America, and the Parisian boulevards had to wait until WWII to be able to accommodate Rodin's *Balzac* within the city image. In this way the sculpture of the 19th century already became independent while it was at the same time becoming also isolated.

Similarly, 19th century man is already different from that of the 18th century. His fine arts theories are still quite comfortably included in appropriate philosophical systems up to Manet. However, when discussing the last shared vision of art and life of

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7 Zeus in Olympia, 5th c. B.C., an example of synthesis from the Greek Archaic period

8 Ivan Meštrović, Grgur Ninski, peristyl, Split, 1929

9 The temple of Arthemide, Korkyra, 6th c. B.C., an example of synthesis from the Greek Archaic period

10 Delphi, an example of a creative plentitude of the space in the Greek Archaic period

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the 19th century – namely the Secession and Art Nouveau – can more be said than that these were but new clothes for old content?

In the 20th century fine arts conform even less to any unified philosophical principle. They have shaken off their philosophical framework in a way similar to what physics did, in order to be thrown into exclusive discovering of new aesthetic realms with full force. The last style (if it can still be called by this name at all) was the Secession, which is the last artistic expression of a certain social layer's philosophical principle. After the Secession, everything is called "modern", and this term is used to denote the incomprehensible, the undefined and the abstract. And yet this is the art that was discovered as the art of modern man. People from the 18th century, used to a certain discipline in behaviour and to complete control of the emotions, would be taken aback by our shapeless and crowded cities just as much as they would be, were they to meet us, by the rough tendencies of the manner in which our life is expressed, by our emotions and communication. In the same way, our contemporary art would seem to them void of any criteria, shape or beauty. Our contemporary life would probably seem funny to them, just as the elementary characteristics of the main characters in Moliere's comedies used to create a comical effect. Similarly, the whole of contemporary art seems foreign and more often than not, ridiculous to those of our contemporaries who persistently adhere to art-related principles typical of the Baroque here in the middle of the 20th century out of tradition, habit or lack of education.

The principles of Renaissance and Baroque art, which are still immovably anchored in our bones as a norm, no longer offer anything encouraging to an educated contemporary. This is especially so because archaeology and art history discovered many other worlds of art, which spiritually feel very close to us, like Greek art from the Archaic period or art from the early Gothic period do. On the other hand, the expression of these periods feels alien to us as the edifice of conservative art principles feels alien to everything in design that is elementary. However, this art, which is homogeneous as a perfect and complete aesthetic canon as well as an exciting and unexpected style, feels so appropriate for the sensibilities and expectations of this time. It opposes the principle of representing and explaining the world. This style attracts us with the fascination of a world created by the designer with its expression, its authenticity of design as the spectator's experience, and with its material sincerity.

This is why we are attracted to the tectonic structure of the Archaic Greek period as the image of the entire world, which is expressed in realistic images and is moved by a mighty inner rhythm.

11



11 Togashi Hajime, *Forma viva*, Portorož, 1961, an expression of immediate action

12 Michael Grossert, *European Sculptors Symposium*, St. Margarethen, 1960, an expression of immediate action

13 From the Greek Archaic period, inlaid eyes

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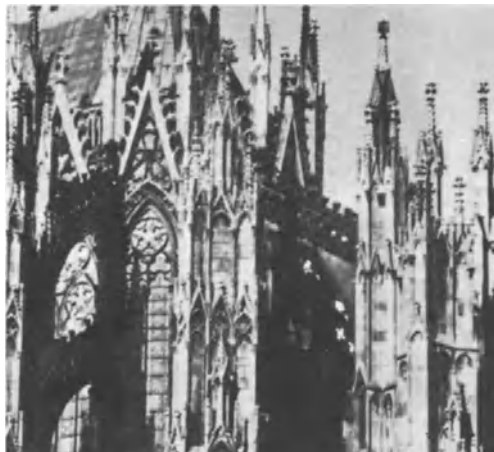
This is an aesthetic triumph of a most unusual opulence as it is colourful yet strict in terms of forms and colour. The whole is raw, yet harmonious, the architectural forms are sturdy and the lines of elements and symbols passionate. The peaceful fronts of the figures with a sharp look, the demon-like quality and the fascinating ugliness of Gorgone on the façade, the magic power of a number of symbols representing the powers of nature, the designers of man's destiny, all of this affects the subconscious. The rigour and aloofness of the colossal figures, the power that these sculptures emanate, precious metal accessories, inlaid eyes, gold-leafed hair and lips, mysterious symbols and inscriptions, all this in a dramatic landscape, among revered trees and a crowd of people dressed in rich and colourful clothes. The shock of the archaeologist, who was startled by the inlaid eyes on the face of the sculpture he was unearthing, is characteristic for our contemporary. And what would a contemporary man say upon encountering a girl from the 6th century with a wide, intensely red line-shadowing around her eyes making them seem even bluer, or a hand the fingers of which have been painted red all the way to the middle knuckle! We, the contemporaries, are not used to recognise this as art, as we consider it to be perfect only when in its static greyness. We, here in particular, still believe in the colourless antiquity and in the whiteness of cathedrals. When G.B. Shaw said in *Split*, "Either Grgur or peristyl", he was probably not thinking that one day his victory would come so easily. He did not know that in the case of peristyl the mentality of contemporary paralysis would win over Meštrović's profound feeling for the expressive power of a space filled to its brim with sculpture. The same fate later awaited Plečnik's solution, which would come as a compromise: to transfer the statue to the Diocletian's Mausoleum.

The strivings of contemporary sculptors are in many ways close to the Archaic principle. We, however, react incredibly slowly when confronted by the sincerity of workmanship in the traces of the tools, techniques or bonding, or when we see invented or transformed shapes which the heart itself welcomes immediately, as they appear alive, animated, even when confronted by the contemplative composite objects or their parts composed in expressive elements, which are not "like something". Man's full-blooded expression of the elementary, dark tendency to adore the material of the sculpture is alien to us, as is a direct cut into the material and a taste for an articulated surface; as Ruskin put it, "...a relief is raised in planes, which shine like pearls and within which light is caught...that these artfully chiselled planes resemble a girl's face is entirely secondary."

In the world of design it is difficult to say where

14 Köln, 1218-1322, the characteristics of Gothic cathedral

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15 Notre Dame, Paris, 1163-1330, detail

16 Brightness, the characteristic of Gothic cathedral

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17

17 Notre Dame de Laon, 1160-1205, humanity abridged in the Gothic way, detail

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18 Darkness, the characteristic of Romanesque period

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architecture ends and sculpture begins, where it ends and where painting begins, and vice versa. However, in the creative crush around an Archaic temple it is quite easy to find that unified artistic experience for which the modern term 'synthesis' has been assigned. Unfortunately this can no longer mean anything other than a stereotypical notion of painful integration of ultimately individual contemporary strivings in fine arts. A similar feeling of uncertainty can be experienced by a man used to today's fragmented action and atomised ambition when confronted by a distant image of the early Gothic, which seems so touching and so mysteriously attractive in its uniformity.

What is a cathedral? Grown from the Platonism of the Middle Ages is the idea of a celestial church which is materialised as a vision of a symbolic city with its numerous towers, walls, doors, streets and squares in stone, which offer to the believer a refuge from the evil spirits that reside outside these city walls. A cathedral is also a wonderful phenomenon of style, it is a crystalline mass of chiselled forms, a fund of accumulated competing valuables, creating consecutive and partial discoveries; it is work never finished amidst the ever-evolving idea of the world and its expression in architecture, which is never the same and never like that of the other cathedrals.

The suggestivity of irrational components, which speak to the sub-conscious, as well as rationality, which was a necessary component for every city-dweller in the Gothic period, are here still found interlocked in that complementary relationship which certainly does not exist in modern technical thought and in that other, unknown component.

The sturdiness of a cathedral depends in equal measure on the belief of the architect that the number of columns has to be equal to, say, the number of apostles, as it does on the geometric approximations, which illustrate the loads and forces in the pointed arch and in the sinewy systems of rising supports. These structural solutions are alive and acceptable even to the scientific eye of today and to our sense for structure, which is the result of study. When architecture was transformed from the dark and heavy Romanesque style into the light and bright Gothic style, and into a world imbued with the supernatural and woven from a suspended material and light, the sculpture also ascended into the same sphere. In terms of style it is the drapery that binds the sculpture to the whole most visibly. On the other hand, the art of the hovering figures is no less independent; they absorb the spirituality with the tyranny of their image.

True, these two episodes from history cannot reveal how or what a modern synthesis should be; they can, however, help us understand what syn-

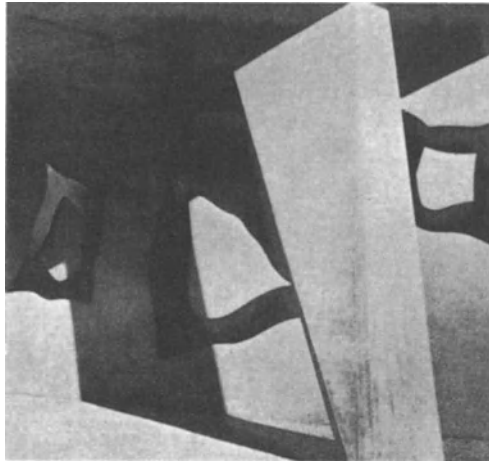
19 An example of Baroque synthesis, interior

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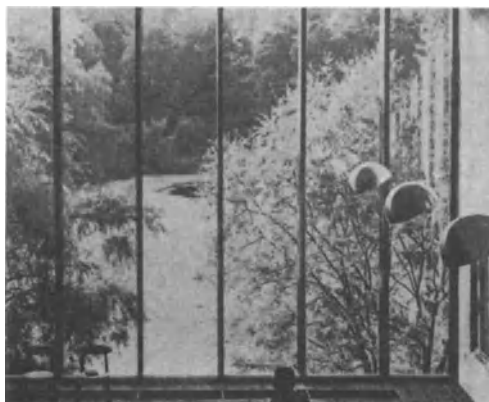
20 UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, 1958, Jean Arp, an attempt of contemporary integration, detail

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21 Jorgen Bo + Vilhelm Wohlert, the Louisiana Gallery, 1956, interior

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thesis essentially is. They are both quite intelligible for the stereotypical contemporary understanding. It follows that synthesis is, above all, never stagnation, that it can only be action. The Archaic Greek period is characterised by endless happening, replacing and taking away, whereas in the Gothic there is continuous transformation and an eternal setting out. And then there are further examples of why there is a quantum leap between the above and our current practice: from the large to the petty, from the experienced to the mechanical, from the essential to the decorative, all the way to the immoral point of view, which maintains that art can significantly improve architecture, which we sometimes welcome – at least to a degree.

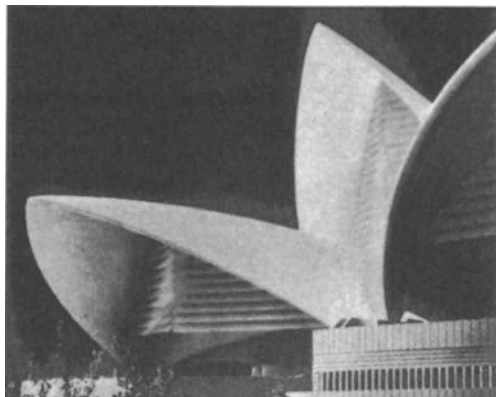
However, aesthetics, which is emerging alongside Functionalism, does not allow for this. One of its essential characteristics is an orientation towards the qualities of the building itself and towards the aesthetic possibilities that it offers. This kind of architecture combined with realistic sculpture is nowadays impossible to imagine, as is the other way around. Let us look at an example of an attempted compromise in the new vestibule of the ZIS building, where the architect tried to approach Pregelj's mosaic with a very "modern", i.e. smooth neo-classicism, which, however, is the very style that does not combine well with the wall treated in the same way. Supposing that this particular work of art has to be just such, then the architecture should be different in order to be able to become its carrier: it should take on the neutral role of a modern museum environment.

The fact that Stalin's monuments were torn down at the same time a new kind of architecture was emerging in the Soviet Union and in other Eastern European countries is part of the same truth: that inadequate values resist a mechanical combining process. The fine arts component has to have some kind of functional reason, be it only "something more" than what is, in some special way, allowed and useful. In the well-known drawing of Bill's plate for children this has a psychological reason; however, the author is confronted with a moral issue when tempted to decorate. Although the functional solution exists, it can be ambiguous.

We appreciate the furnishings, the tableware, the embroideries and the cutlery of the Baroque and Empire, and continue to use them as some special kind of luxury, whereas contemporary decorated ceramics have an entirely different meaning. This becomes more obvious when comparing the environments of then and now, e.g. the experience of a room. Nowadays a room contains a large window, which visually connects us directly to the exterior and therefore to the real world. The former room would allow us to experience a completely different space with our inner eye, and with

22 John Utzon, *Sidney Opera*, competition entry, 1956

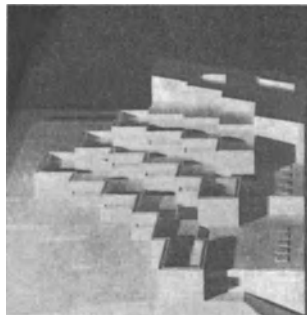
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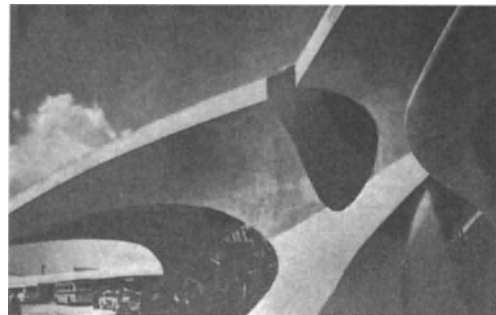
23 Oswald Mathias Ungers, *Girls' College in Andernach*, competition entry, 1962

24 Eero Saarinen, *TWA Aviation Centre, Idlewild*, 1962, detail

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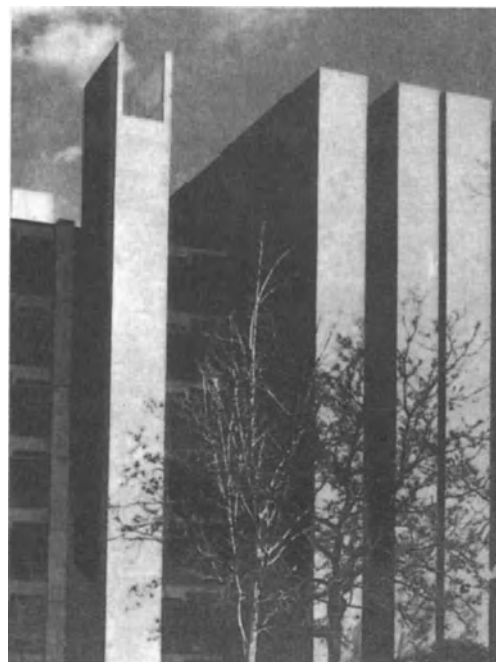


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25 Louis I. Kahn, *Medical Laboratories in Pennsylvania*, 1957-1961, detail

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that particular quality that is nowadays called the atmosphere of style. Similarly, a Baroque façade is a complete, sculpted mass of expressive sculptural and logical architectural elements all in one. These components radiate into space and impart its content and meaning. A contemporary façade, on the other hand, is merely an equivalent component of a designed environment, correct and good, when executed as a part of nature. It is therefore rare that we see a photo of modern architecture without natural greenery being included in one way or another.

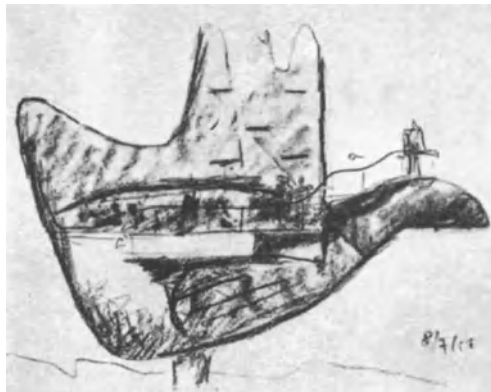
Therefore, due to their rational principles, contemporary architects are not striving for the possibility to express themselves with emotional and purely formalistic elements. Contemporary architectural elements originate from function and structure, and their logic is therefore very distant from the former sources of invention. Although the creative practitioners of the Cubist period were still bound by an aesthetic doctrine which was unified enough, even then examples of important or influential attempts of synthesis were few and far between. One such instance is Picasso's backdrops for Russian ballets and a number of other coinciding events. While even in 1950 Le Corbusier still intended to establish a centre for integration within the framework of UNESCO, today this seems but a distant, belated wish which was to be realised at some later time. It is not very different from the improvisation with the tapestries, mosaics, ceramics and sculpture we saw in the UNESCO palace or from the respective, somewhat tangential ecclesiastical works of certain other veterans of Cubism. Is the UNESCO palace, integrated at least to the degree that many today imagine and strive towards, really more than just flexibility in amalgamating the heterogeneous design elements typical for Cubism, or than the harmony of the famous names of Picasso, Miró and others? True, they give the work an invaluable market and artistic value, but they do not have an influence over the quality of the architecture. Is this therefore a classical and belated event or the contemporary beginning of a new integration?

In spite of due optimism, the truth is closer to the first option. The Cubist period seems to be the end of a development rather than a beginning, and the architecture under its influence a world of forms in its stagnation.

Once past the first half of the century architecture suddenly moves into other visual arts endeavours, away from the postulates, which used to be fiercely fought over. Is this a movement from rigidity to relaxation, from unbroken to broken, from form to formlessness, from whole to partialness, from circle to ellipse? Is it a movement to a world of forms, where motifs connect to their rhythmical

26 Le Corbusier, *The Open Hand* monument, Chandigarh, 1956, sketch

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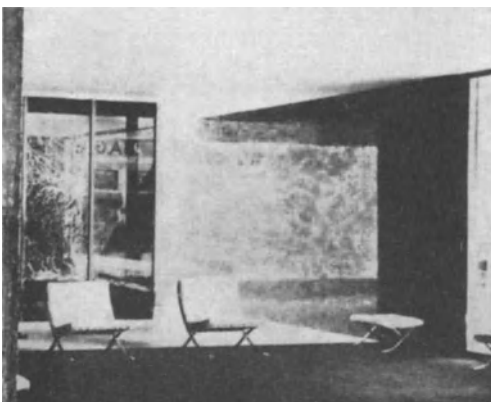
27 Eero Saarinen, *Student Campus*, Yale, 1962, a sculpture by Konstantin Nivola

27



28 Mies van der Rohe, *interior*

28



29 Michelangelo, *Day*, the tomb of the Medici family, Florence, 1521-1534

29



30 Michelangelo, *Porta Pia*, Rim, 1564 - detail

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echoes and where the usual rational relationships are no longer valid, where the dynamics of a union of shapes is closer to an expressive movement of the hand than to a mass organised in a crystalline manner which is purposely deformed in order not to have a cold and impassive effect? Do all of the changes in the modern architecture of the second half of the 20th century categorically mean a conscious negation of its precious achievements, which are also connected so deeply to its autonomy? Does the fact that the architecture of our decade is becoming more articulated not offer opportunities for a synthesis? Is Saarinen's most recent work not what can be seen as an already excessively serious violation of the principles of Functionalism's traditions, so much so that it should not be repeated? This we do not yet know, but we firmly believe that Functionalism remains the essential quality, although it has somehow expanded as a notion.

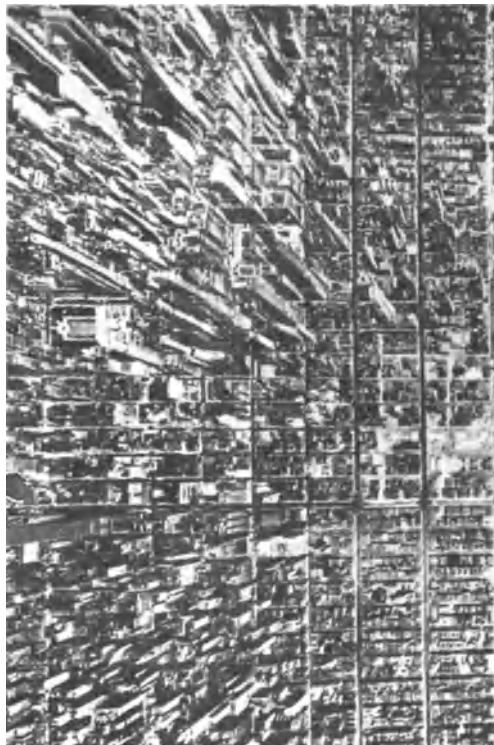
Does this somewhat pessimistic conclusion mean that the hope for the striving for a unity of the visual arts in the traditional sense is lost and that it is not justified? Should it be sought elsewhere and in some other way than the eclectic symposium in the UNESCO palace suggested? More in line with the new pulse of development of contemporary architecture, where some components can undoubtedly be recognised that will shed their own light on this issue? We are tired of the cold rational thought of the thirties, the anonymity of the architectural box tires us with its mass uniformity. The first phase of Functionalism seems too cold to us and all too transparent to still have any kind of emotional attraction.

What seems new to us in the works of Saarinen, Utzon, Ungers, Kahn, Rudolph and others is a sign that new tensions, unknown until now, are emerging in recent architecture. As a result of the unexpected language of forms they act as a new shock, as something which seems to be created in order to puzzle the already disoriented observer of contemporary architecture even further by rendering the mystery even more insolvable. It has to be added, though, that that for someone without prejudice it is just as easy to comprehend as any other sincere and live phenomenon.

While yearning for integration so much we must realise that it is not going to be easy and that the troubles related to its content are going to be far greater than those related to its organisation or financing. Since we cannot count on the architects to abolish the principle of functionality as the essential component of their progressivity and the basis of their social and ethical qualities, and since it is likely that, due to their isolation (which is a consequence of development), the sculptors would take part in these mutual projects only to earn their bread and butter, and only rarely with

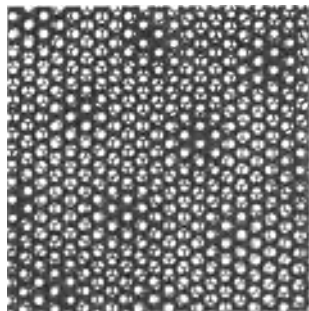
31 *Macro-world, an aerial photo of New York*

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32 *Joël Stein, Plates in Motion, 1963, timber, metal, motor*

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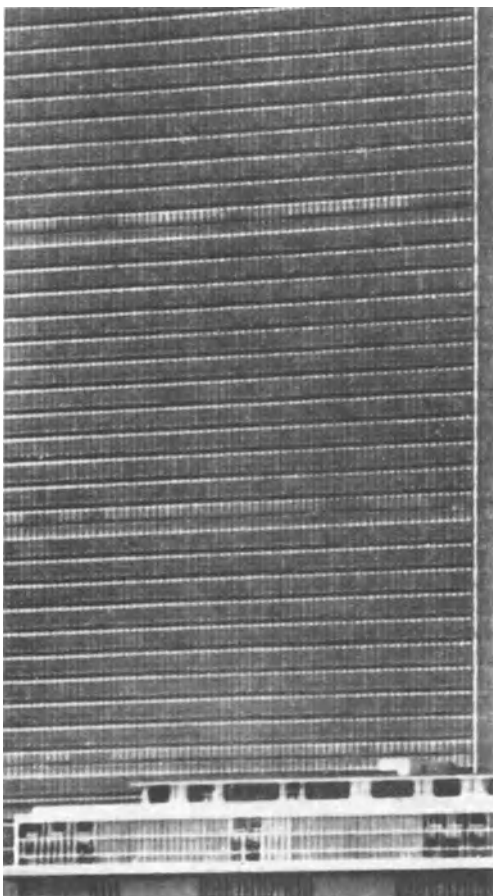
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33 *Antonino Virduzzo, Graphics No. 22, 1962, colour etching*



34 *W. Harrison, Le Corbusier, Marcellus et al., the UN Headquarters, New York, 1949-1951, the texture of the façade*

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35 *Antun Augustinčić, the UN monument, bronze, 1952-1954*

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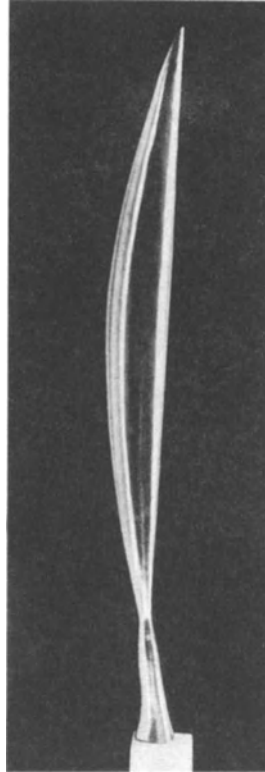
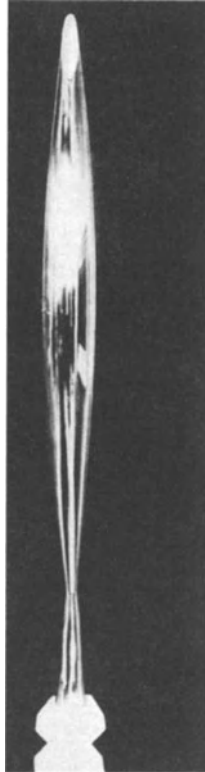
such fervour as when working for an exhibition or a museum, the door to collaboration (which used to be the norm) is open far more narrowly now than it was only a few decades ago. The developing language of forms, which we see in contemporary architecture, has an entirely different origin than that of sculpture. It is founded from within the work itself as an interpretation and realisation of the brief into a design concept, as a dialect with a unique purpose, which does not mimic anything and is only sometimes timidly representative. On the contrary, the sculptural form always receives its impulses from outside the sculptor's personality, which is just as subordinate to the shift in our concept of the world.

It is more than apparent that the long-standing identity, now thousands of years old, of architectural and sculptural expression is no more. Never again will it be possible to talk to Cellini and refer to architecture as something which is both rational and artistic in the Renaissance manner, to that architecture for which it is difficult to discern where it ends and where sculpture begins and vice versa, as, e.g., in the case of Michelangelo's late works. The situation is different with Le Corbusier, who maintains that he can be understood only by those who recognise that he is also a sculptor, though his sculpture is nowhere to be seen. Moreover, his sculpture is sometimes architecture itself, as in the case of the open hand in Chandigarh. However, his sculpture is different from that of Michelangelo's, which is, even when it is architecture, still solely the sculpture of a human body. According to our contemporary notions, true architecture can leave behind the explicit goal of realising the brief only in order to become architecture itself. This is similar to the statement that a painting by Matisse becomes a work of art with an independent life of its own only when it leaves behind the object, whose name it carries. Even those pioneers of modern architecture, who are lesser sculptors than Le Corbusier, do not neglect the issue of synthesis entirely, although they remain within the realm of architecture itself. Here we should remember the cool, strict Puritanism of Mies's works, where the only sculptural objects, i.e. those that are more accessible to people, are his pieces of furniture, typically arranged into a square; or Wright, for whom the only thing he took from sculpture was the changing of light and shadow in the rhythms which are a reflection of the meaning they once had in Gothic architecture! However, this is no longer the main purpose of design. Beyond the interpretation of the brief, there is, at most, the addition of the subjective impression of life, the creative intensity of which can be greater or lesser or coloured by something or other.

Thus the innermost feelings of contemporary

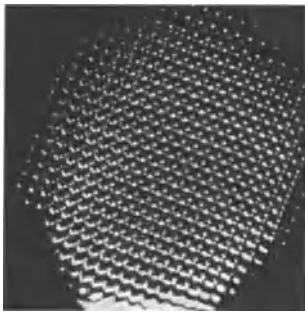
36 Constantin Brancusi, *Bird*, 1940, polished bronze

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37 *Micro-world*, a photographic enlargement of a structure

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38 Henry Moore, *Internal-External Shapes*, 1951, bronze

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39 Henry Moore, *Time - Life Screen*, London, 1953, concrete

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architects are what distinguish them most acutely from the artists. This is evidently manifested in Bill's thinking that were the drawing at the bottom of the children's plate justified enough in terms of functionality, it would not amount to an offence against the first law of contemporary architecture.

While architects and their public found a connection relatively quickly, the same could not be said for artists and their public. Typically they stand in opposite corners. The number of artists is huge and is constantly growing. And an artist has to be original, and different from everyone else, and must not repeat himself. This is difficult, even though new visions, unexpected and mysterious, emerge continuously alongside new discoveries in the environment around us and according to particular scales of space and time.

It used to be so different in the Baroque era, when the treasure chest of themes and design principles hadn't changed for ages and the artist was a craftsman, rooted in his environment, who produced the same kind of paintings and sculptures that were produced elsewhere and everywhere. Nowadays we find ourselves wondering when the number of national and international biennali will suffice to provide every artist with at least some kind of affirmation and position in their environment, though it may be less tangible than that enjoyed today by an artist belonging to the École de Paris.

The situation of the consumer is somewhat similar. Among laymen, those in the know are few and far between, since a continuous interest or even study is required, as enthusiasm and inclination are not enough; what is required is almost a kind of talent. The wider public feels excluded and at the same time attracted. However, rich, exciting and systematic propaganda heightens interest in this side of life with books, reproductions, films and lectures of every kind. As a result, incomprehension surrounding the visual arts is slowly receding on all fronts. All levels of society feel a distinct and articulate need and the number of those who do not want to drown in the sea of stupidities propagated by the contemporary media, newspapers, radio and TV, records and bad press, is on the rise. The same goes for those who think that aesthetic awareness and broadening of culture are among the most important goals of social development. Even the vaguest of formulae become clear and accessible with time. Today the vision of the Impressionists is the vision of masses, the vision of the Cubists is slowly becoming accessible to large numbers, and it is only the visual world of immediate contemporaneity that still remains the exclusive domain of a small circle. These expanses of time could be shortened and so they should be; however, this should only be done

43 *The Louisiana Gallery*

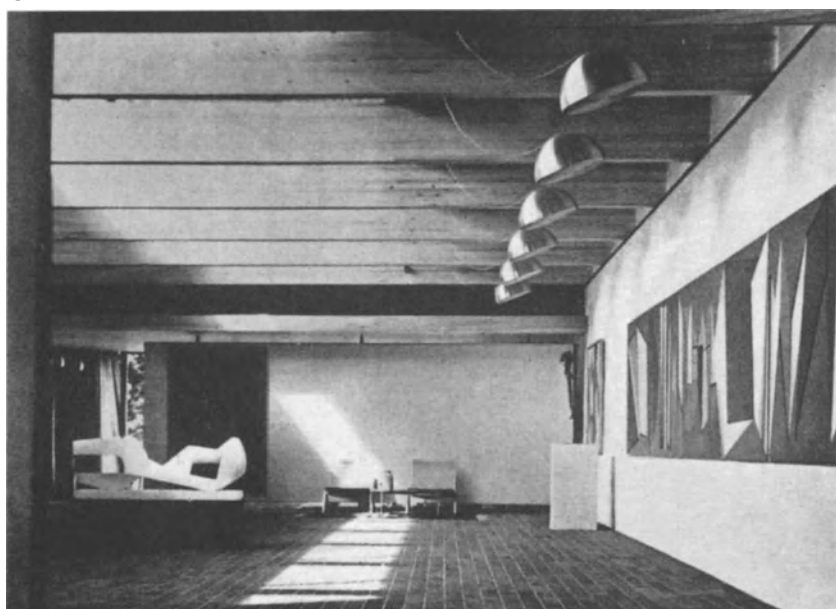
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44 *The Louisiana Gallery*

45 *Pablo Picasso, Bathers, Louise Leiris Gallery, Paris, 1957*

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However, there is something that makes architecture and art of the same period very similar and internally connected even though they exist separately. As Pevsner puts it, this is their structural character and technology, which are, in both cases, removed from the craft of art and architecture of the Renaissance and Baroque eras. A sculptor uses the same materials and techniques as an architect: timber and metal, minerals and plastic masses in their original form and as semi-manufactures. Sculptors of today cut, carve, cast, weld, stick, solder, plane, file and hammer; the forms, if need be, are as smooth as machine parts, as sharp as cut metal joints, they retain the texture from the mechanical tool that made them, or remain as crude as broken rock or torn wood. However, obviously all this is not enough for the hypothesised synthesis to emerge of its own accord.

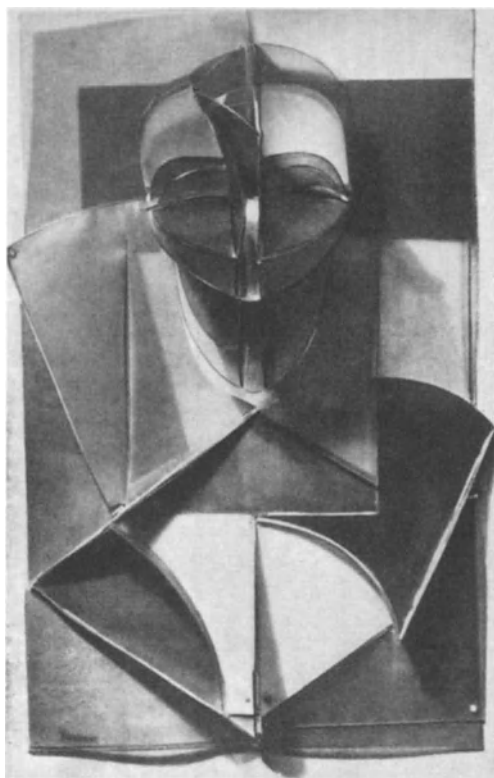
When we say that contemporary artists managed to secure the autonomy of their art due to their long, ongoing efforts, we are trying to say that by this they gained not only their highly valued freedom and independence, but also the loneliness that came with it. The concept of the contemporary artists' mission is far from revealing the contours of any explicit social manifesto; and it is obvious that their somewhat less-tangibly coloured cultural ways are not enough to gain their art the recognition as indisputably useful, which is something we seek today in all of our endeavours. The tower of avant-guard artistic production has but a few entrances and as in the case of scientific research, here too, the path that leads to the exploitation of the found is very long indeed.

Should society then – as the potential consumer of artistic production (for this is what we have to think about when thinking about money, without which there is no art) – look for opportunities to unite the total inner independence and the need for money in order to harmonise two such opposing principles – which seems almost impossible?

In any case, the artists expect that their independent intentions will interest at least a thin layer of connoisseurs. But is it at all possible that such a layer would exist in our midst and that it would offer real support to artists who have no intention of renouncing their independence, which is the greatest achievement of contemporary creatives, while they are fully aware that the work of artists is usually recognised in retrospect and never in advance? Society is therefore supposed to take care of art, but how can this be effected justly in this situation? Let us imagine an ideal scenario, one in which the community buys as much art as possible, and uses it for some general purpose. Two options emerge immediately: either society ensures the development of a particular branch of culture in a rational way, i.e. by creating optimal condi-

40 Antoine Pevsner, *Portrait of Marcel Duchamp*, 1926, celluloid on zinc

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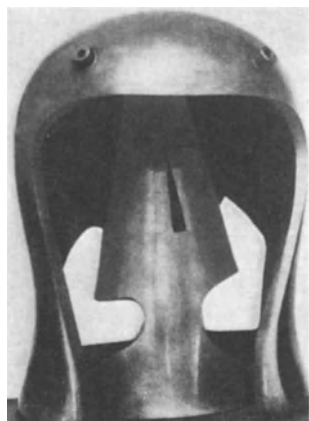
as part of an active and well-organised effort.

As already stated, changes in the development of art in the 20th century advance at a terrific rate, yet our situation is characterised by the tradition of Rodin and Bourdelle, which is still alive. Its understanding of form includes very expressive lines with an architectural character. However, to include these within architecture would require the application of partially outlived concepts. The uneasy situation in which the designers of the UN building in New York found themselves because of Avgustičić's equestrian sculpture served as a great reminder. It showed that intensive action in architecture and art inevitably pushes such interventions into an exclusively decorative category and this is, of course, not what synthesis is about.

As we can see from the revival of the ability of the sculpture to express itself, sculptors of the Cubist era and those that followed are no longer concerned with those design themes that could logically tie sculpture to architecture in terms of content. This is particularly so because purely aesthetically-driven endeavours of today spontaneously lead to disinterest in commissions, although sculpture is still sculptural in the old sense of the word; namely, in its concept of what a work of art is: a bust or a figure and still life, only shaped in a new way. Sculptures by Laurens, Lipchitz or Zadkin address only those issues that are inherent in the works themselves. This is why even in the case of the famous monument in Rotterdam all the dilemmas and pitfalls of that situation can be felt. On the one hand this is still sculpture in the true sense of the word, whereas on the other it is an aesthetic task set out in a manner that is entirely Cubist. All that old Zadkin could do was to give it a powerful symbolic expressiveness.

Any new step in the development of modern sculpture always means also a step further away from architecture and deeper into the realm of autonomy. Even though when observing the logical timelessness of Brancusi's shapes we still recognise birds and sea animals in them, we should realise that what is essential in them is a basic equilibrium that reaches further than these similarities. Also, when we look at Arp's elementary forms, so unconventionally simplified and connected by a humorous benevolence; or at Moore's sculptures, saturated with the learned disharmony of natural objects; and then, again, when we realise that in Pevsner's constructivism the new aesthetic values are sought in a manner different from those of the Cubists; and when we see, regularly, an increasing number of young people discovering new relationships of form, new possibilities in technology and materials, then we realise that the tendency to halt this process of development and to establish a stability characteristic of the Renaissance is nowhere to be seen.

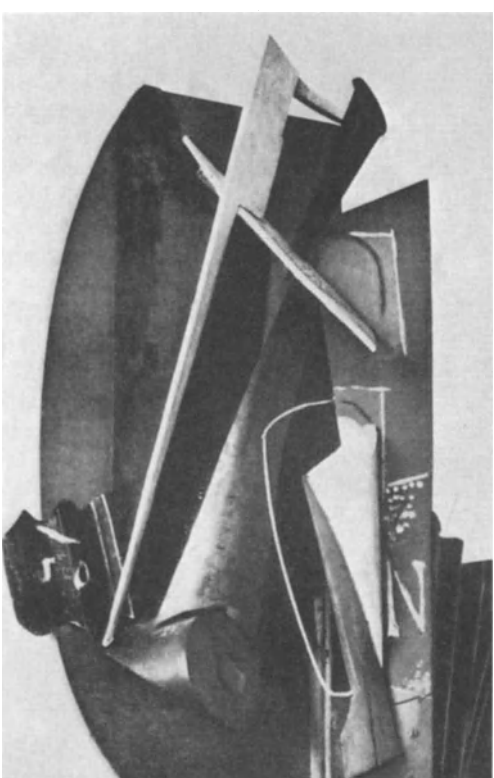
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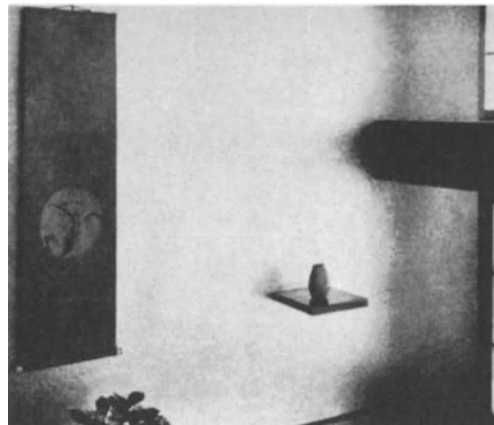
41 Henry Moore, *Head with Helmet No.1*, 1950, bronze

42 Henri Laurens, *Bottle and Newspaper*, 1919, painted timber and metal

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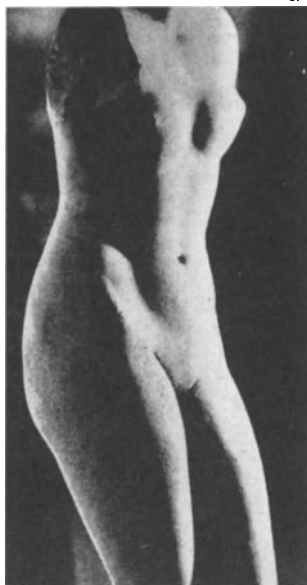


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47 Aphrodite of Knidos, Roman copy after Praksiteles

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48, 49 design of space in Eastern cultures

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tions for development to everything that is within the broader curve of development; or it shares out the means, demanded by artists, indiscriminately and "justly" and therefore encounters a more critical question: not only the question of whether it should share the money out justly, but whether it can share it out at all, and where the limits of such a practice are drawn.

State-owned industrial institutions could become patrons of the arts and engage art directly through commissions and purchases. However, where will we look for and find the assurances that in any given case a cultural act was indeed committed in so doing? Would this not be an opportunity for questionable art to gain importance, owing to the tastes of directors and workers' committees? And the work of art – after having been bought and, as a result of not receiving an allocated inventory number, would it not end up in the realm of things beyond use because of its vague applicability? Or would a work of art share the same fate in the case a professional committee was involved, which could and in most cases even would, find and choose exactly the kind of art the patron didn't want? And finally, if we consider the percentage of building costs allocated for the arts, regardless of whether a piece of art is needed in a new building or not, how is it possible to achieve a just distribution of commissions which will exhibit a taste of superfluity already in advance?

After all that has been said, we realise that synthesis will not be achieved with some measure or a number of measures and rule-books, but by a more continuous effort. This new reconciliation will be the result of a longer process and will have new foundations. This is why it is not, by far, enough that society provides the artist with art and money. More important is the issue of how art could gain a new function in harmony with architecture, while at the same time observing the essential condition that they share a common brief.

Nothing can expose the decadency of our relationship with everyday issues of synthesis more than the role that is assigned to works of art in the contemporary environment. We commission works that we paint over at the first opportunity, we position a sculpture in a place where it is out of the way or where it cannot be damaged. It is only rarely that we can see a work of art that was commissioned or purchased occupying the space it needs to be alive. The erroneous decorative aspect remains the one and only aspect and is still the guiding principle in the positioning of works of art when, by some fluke, we come to own them.

Looking more closely, we can see that in spite of everything said, such works of art could be truly welcome in many places even today, e.g. in schools, hospitals, libraries, in certain parts of the city, etc.

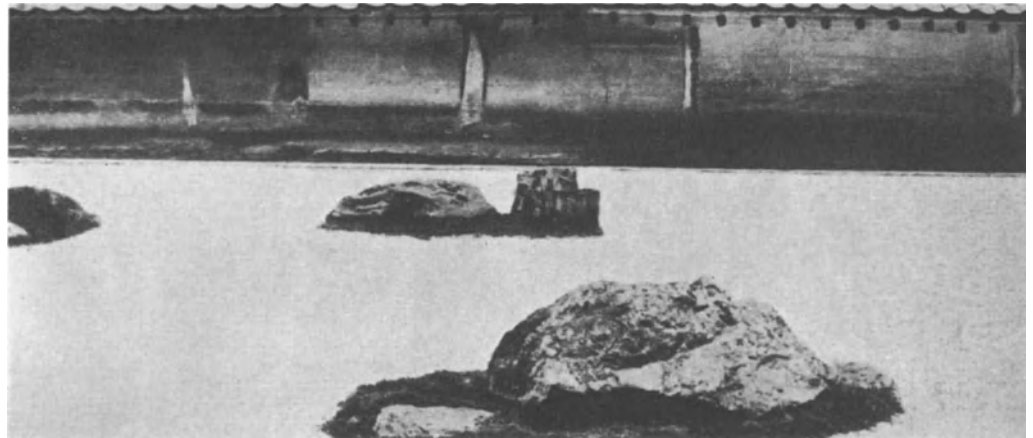


50 Ernst Barlach Museum, Hamburg, 1961-1962, an example of the role of trees in modern architecture

51 design of space in Eastern cultures

These are places where contemporary people have the chance to relax and compose themselves, where there is opportunity for contemplation, without which any work of art is simply an object like any other. In our rational times concentration is limited to the private sphere of the home and places of study, to the private collections of reproductions and publications, slide projections and TV programmes, to the silence of solitude, to the environment which must still remain the domain of exhibitions and museums if they want to remain attractive. The museums are ever more accomplished; they must maintain the illusion of isolation the way they are organised, with their lighting, their refined environment and their comfortable in-

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teriors. It is only these qualities that provide the intimate atmosphere in which our contemporaries are still able to apprehend artistic experiences. It is only from this perspective that we can understand the great difference between the cultural life of our contemporaries, which takes place closed between the walls and is characteristic of this period of huge reproductive potential, and the lack of culture that can be seen when factual and original public installations receive only lukewarm reactions from the viewers.

How is it possible to transfer the acceptance that art enjoys within the private sphere as well as its great accessibility there, also into a live happening in space? This condition is undoubtedly substantiated by millions of reproductions and by successful events. The answer to this question would offer possibilities for a true synthesis, one which is alive and is the only kind that would have both a new meaning and new reasoning.

Our contemporaries are not adverse to art; this is clear from the intimate relationship that they have with it; however, they reject it whenever it appears in a rhetorically-axial manner, when it is pathetic or senselessly empty within a public place. We should not conclude that art is desired only as

a reproduction and within the museum. However, if we want art to be alive even when it is a part of public works, it must approach the viewer in a typically contemporary manner. The above-mentioned technique of modern museums is anchored above all in our psyche; the intention is to capture that moment in the spectator's daily life when he is ready. A pupil, for instance, might be at his most relaxed and ready for some special intimate experience on his way from school, when in a state of passive attention. In such a moment we can imagine that he would be able to experience a sun-lit sculpture within greenery, instead of being shown a dusty fresco of a historic battle in a stuffy hall which, instead of introducing him to art, forces

him to detest everything connected with it. True, the autonomy of the branches of fine arts has torn art away from architecture, but at the same time it has brought it much closer to the people. As such it should be returned to a state of harmony in a contemporary way. The paths to this can be discerned and they are very different from those in the tradition of the Renaissance and Baroque periods.

And what are the natural possibilities for synthesis – if we ignore the declamatory Baroque concept that is still going strong?

The first alternative is for the aesthetic of coincidental mannerism to emerge spontaneously, springing from the current coexistence of the most varied and rarely harmonising visual phenomena in the central urban spaces. This aesthetic has been emerging since the middle of our century and is a reaction to the strict aesthetic principles of the Neo-Classicism of the first half of the 20th century. Our tastes would further adapt to the coincidental, the contradictory, to chance and the transitory, which is what the cities of America and Europe are full of as a result of intense yet barbaric treatment of the environment. This is something we partly reject, but also partly gladly accept as tourists.

The second alternative, which is the complete

opposite of the first, is the combining of the three branches into one notion. This could happen after art has completed the necessary scientification and has finally rejected the influences of traditional aesthetics, which are burdened with subjectivity and romanticism. Alongside this, industrial production would be introduced as an effective instrument and a tool for the speedy socialisation of material and spiritual values. The difference between science and art would be bridged by a visual arts engineer. With his inventions and research he would gradually introduce general rules, which would become the main objective of art, while the notion of art would fade away. This engineer would construct a world with new areas of designing of ideas and matter and of new methods of thinking. He would also set out clear outlines of goals that would not remain isolated exclusively in the realm of the artist's profession. Instead these rules would coincide well with the social needs of contemporary people. After fifty years of efforts in this direction much of this indeed seems a reality, which is, for certain spheres of life, already the only possible visual concept.

The third alternative might seem that which is closest and most promising to a cultured person. It is the patient building of a new visual world with more demanding goals while taking into consideration man and his psyche as understood today. What encourages us to take this direction are not only the accomplished examples of the ancient Eastern cultures, the age-old creations which maybe show a way into the future, but also many contemporary examples from the various environments, more developed in a material and cultural sense, which mean something similar to the emerging reality.

Perhaps a permanent coexistence of all respective aesthetic worlds will emerge, one which we who live in this century have already grown accustomed to?

The progress in architecture feeds on observations of the world and its fair explanations and leans on knowledge from the fields of technology, economics, sociology, physiology and psychology. This is why our professional thinking too often tends to become mechanical, repetitive and conventional. More often than not it also impoverishes the very environment we wish to be alive and encouraging. To discover and to animate the human interior in the sense of design means to make, as Klee put it, the invisible visible. In terms of space this means nothing more than the expansion of the outward expression of the living organism that is a human being. Only in this way can the necessary enrichment of the environment include an essence, which operates entirely on par with technology.

And yet even if, for example, we think of such

a tiny, yet so noticeable a piece of architecture as a door handle – the function of which is familiar to everyone – we cannot but face the truth that the possible shapes are many and that we have to make a choice. And this is no longer an entirely objective decision, so the personal will still remain visibly present in our work. The analysis of functions in contemporary architecture does not yet therefore constitute the whole truth; there are things that will still remain a matter of certain disposition and taste.

The people of ancient Greece perceived and managed their world via myths, which is why a marble Aphrodite was a useable object in their homes. The same goes for temples, as their existence played a role in their lives. It is possible that art could play just such an important role also in our times. In the world of technological man, art could make visible those invisible things that matter so much in life. This is why, in the wide construction site of the new human environment, artists should be ready to take on the role of needed and desired collaborators who are, at the same time, also understanding and engaged.

Le Corbusier (1887-1965)

It is actually not easy to view a key personality like Le Corbusier from our perspective. The events surrounding his work are difficult to illustrate with familiar examples from our life here. And yet, on the other hand, we must recognise the fact that he influenced the development of architecture in Yugoslavia and in Slovenia in a direct and vibrant manner. This after all gives us some freedom to observe the object, in this case Le Corbusier himself, in the manner of Cubism, while moving around him. On the occasion of his death we should imprint on our memories at least a fleeting image of his accomplishments.

The appearance of Le Corbusier, who the world counted among the three most famous personalities in the history of modern culture, together with Chaplin and Einstein, was possible for many reasons.

After WWI Paris became the capital of the victorious France and more than likely the capital of spiritual life for the entire world as well. An encounter with Cubism and inspired attempts to apply its principles toward a new kind of architecture could be fruitful only for an observant beginner with a good knowledge of fine arts, who acquired his insight into the profession in important workshops in Paris and Central Europe.

The foundations for a new visual world constitute Cubism's greatest contribution and its main historical achievement. At first sight it may be somewhat difficult to connect the intentions of architecture with the painting of colourful three-dimensional objects in the plane and their inclusion into the unity of this plane; however, everything that can be said about design in painting and sculpture holds true, in its own way, for architecture as well.

Therefore we have to return to Cubism if we wish to gain an in-depth understanding of what would later happen in architecture. In Cubism we encounter the principle of the mediatory and expressive role of the lyrical in painting, a notion, which 20 years later Le Corbusier truly succeeded in applying also in architecture. This principle teaches us to see beauty in the simplest forms of those objects, a beauty we would not normally even notice because of their insignificance. And yet these are the objects that will be lit forever by their radiant beauty thanks to the painter. This is also the essence of Le Corbusier's lyricism. His first urban design concept even carries this name: radiant (Ville Radieuse). In Cubism objects are represented in the simplest of manners: cylindrical tree trunks, cube-like houses and round fruit, obviously according to Cézanne's principle that this is how

Le Corbusier (1887-1965), Naši razgledi, Ljubljana 1965, No. 17, p. 354-355

nature should be observed – through the shapes of a sphere, cylinder and cone. Le Corbusier summed this up in his famous statement: "Architecture is a rational game of objects in sunlight".

After travelling, working abroad and having completed six buildings, Le Corbusier finally settled down in Paris in 1917. Here he found Cubism already a very rich, well-known and attractive vehicle for expression. It had been ten years since the exhibition following Cézanne's death. He met his precious friend Ozenfant in one of the Parisian painting schools. Ozenfant may well have been less talented as a painter than he was a researcher and a fervent debater. As if in regret over the ten years they had missed, they announced their Purism, which was their own style of painting and designing. This style later became very precious for the treatment of architectural issues. Although they started out together, it was only Le Corbusier that later continued with the style and developed it further. He was also the only one who continued what they had begun together in the field of debate.

These painting efforts of his were never fully acknowledged. Criticism of his work always included a shade of doubt as to whether this was not actually architecture rather than painting. With his very successful involvement with tapestry as "the wall art of the nomads" in his final years, Le Corbusier might have confirmed these doubts himself. He only began working in sculpture much later on, just before WWII, and again this was through the hands of a carver who worked on his architectural models.

The Cubists infused the language of painting with unimagined freedom. All of a sudden art was no longer tied to the "similar" registration of the world through the eye. This registration is divided into partial registrations, which we follow over the painting one by one. The viewer has to connect them and grasp their variety with only a single look. However, he has to know how to do this, how to "read" the painting and to do this, he has to get used to its language. Without this he remains behind a closed door, which is obviously the main reason why modern art, which is otherwise so rich, is not widely understood.

This is precisely what we encounter in Le Corbusier's architecture. Its concerns are not connected to copying from nature but to copying from the existing in architecture (naturalism in the architecture from the Stalinist era is a soulless copying of the existing and is the twin of copying from nature in the painting of the same era). In the same way Cubism uses a transformed nature for painterly purposes, we encounter in Le Corbusier's architec-

ture partial observances of the old values of good-quality architecture time and again. Depending on the purpose, these values are conceived afresh and the well-unified concepts are reorganised to serve a new purpose. Cubism is denoted by the somewhat ambiguous term of Neo-classicism, and the same holds true also for Le Corbusier's architecture.

According to the Cubists, beauty is not found in that which is pleasant and pretty, but rather in the relationships between the basic forms. Secondary elements, which are merely present in a piece of art, are rough in shape, tangible and raw on the surface. However, in this very way they accentuate the nobility of lyricism with the poetry of insightful composition.

The same goes for architecture: its lyricism lies within its main and primary relationships, within the rhythms and contrasts and in the game of objects in sunlight. The details, on the other hand, are as direct as possible: rough, heavy and as recognisable as possible in their materiality. Only in this way can we make sense of the architect's poetic descriptions on the one hand and the unusually careless and obviously intentional roughness of the architectural details on the other.

Before Le Corbusier became so completely entangled in what we call Cubism, be this term correct or not, he had come a long way. From his initial architectural attempts working on housing projects in the period of rebuilding during and after WWI, to his work on standardisation and prefabrication, all the way through to the first designs for his great modern architecture, his path was one of searching, hard work and research, which placed his creations above 'mere' pure function, into the world of fine arts.

In line with the concepts of Cubism, to which he and Ozenfant had tried to add an additional hue of Purism, Le Corbusier progressively abolished the remains of traditional concepts, which were still lurking everywhere. He reviewed every scale of architectural expression. He considered the design process to be the writing and the record of the spatial experience and not in any way some well-suited repetition of an existing work in terms of content. In this way he managed to create a new architectural language which was able to express a particular thought and develop it entirely – literally – from within. This also explains his immense opus, created as a result of the fact that constant, deliberate discovery gives rise to tirelessness.

Whoever remembers the old, large, 5 to 7 storey studio blocks on Montparnasse, with a view to the Pantheon cupola, will easily recognise the same kind of spatial organisation in Le Corbusier's Citrohan: its main two-storey studio and barely articulated auxiliary spaces, slim-wall construction technology in a tiny concrete skeleton, single glaz-

ing within a steel grid and more. Only this kind of comparison can reveal the fact that the quality of architecture depends on the design of the space with the most rational technology, whereas the content should be provided by the man with those objects that reveal his inner needs. This thinking is consistent with the (above-mentioned) principles of a consistent Cubist: in the old Paris of traditional values, one can discover a world of beauty which consists of the most mundane "courtyard" buildings, gardens on covered terraces, complex corridors, staircases and passages, all of which were built with the lowest possible rent-levels in mind. However, with the touch of an architect's hand, lyricism can transform this (poor) material into a true palace and provide it with the kind of beauty that Gris called "appended".

The "painter's mathematics" and its shiny example of the Golden Section may well be those values rediscovered by the Cubists that are ideal for architects. True, the Golden Section itself cannot create a composition, but it can help organise its elements immensely. This is what Le Corbusier did when designing the famous elevation of the Algiers skyscraper. All he needed had been ready for at least 10 years when he started out in Paris; however, it was he who returned these expressively architectural procedures to contemporary architecture as an essential aid in composition. With his universal Modulor he tried to create a system of measurements for the classical world as well as for its extension into the tiny scale of the realm of mere atoms and on the other side, into the vastness of the cosmos.

Cubism was crucial for the design of the created visible world. However, when talking about Le Corbusier's work, we must consider whether that which Cubism provided for the development of the Dutch De Stijl, of Russian Constructivism and of the German Bauhaus would, in itself, have been enough for a renewal of architecture on this scale. The proof that this would not have been easy is found in the plenitude of Le Corbusian architecture that flooded Russia before 1930, especially that designed by the brothers Vesnin, Ginsburg and Lubetkin. Had it not been for Le Corbusier's work, when would the richness of this architectural expression have been created? It is only this expression, due to the lyricism that Le Corbusier connected to the notion of modern architecture, that made it possible to compare the new architecture with the old and celebrated architecture. One thing is certain: today would have been quite different, especially if we take into consideration the large number of very influential designers who have passed through the atelier at 35, Rue de Sèvres.

In the designs for the League of Nations palace in 1927, Le Corbusier's language, built from within,

was already so rich that he was able to execute his famous design for the real palace by using only the means for “true” architecture of unhallowed construction technology, acknowledgement of modern-day needs and that famous Cubist-like lyricism. The oddness of this new architectural world in combination with its surprising suitability caused a scandal, after which the defamed Le Corbusier became famous. This is similar to the way Stravinsky had become famous after the scandal surrounding the opening of *Petrushka* in the Paris Opera¹ 15 years before.

Cubism’s freedom of movement in the domain of objects also moved painters to deal with the issue of time. Picasso expressed his thoughts on time connected with painting and sculpture; they were only far later realised in the work of other artists, whereas Le Corbusier discovered that this could be performed more naturally in architecture. The composition of the villa in Garches is a composition in time and therefore a creation and an experience of greater importance. His later life brought Le Corbusier closer to his better-known three-dimensional solutions. He became the architect of large buildings in contemporary metropolises, an urban designer who worked on all the continents; however, he also became further alienated from the deeper architectural thought. We do not yet know how deeply we should regret this fact.

An architect can find those same values Cézanne discovered during his search also in the urban landscape. An example of this can be seen in the painterly depth of the sea landscape, which is closed off by the mountain ridge above the sea’s horizon. This is the same depth as that of Le Corbusier’s architectural landscape. The movement of three-dimensional elements around an invisible centre that can be seen in Le Corbusier’s perspective views of urban space, or the three-dimensional rhyme that can be seen in the similarity of the shape of the jug with the shape of the pear next to it, could also be found in the formal agreement of a building with the accent of a mountain behind it in an urban panorama. The saying: “A landscape has to be limited and given dimensions with a sturdy decisiveness” could well have been Cézanne’s. A respect for the wall as an element, which limits space while at the same time also creates it, can be seen in the still life paintings of both Cézanne and Picasso. This respect imbued Le Corbusier with the attitude that encouraged him to consider the wall to be a living element that we cannot arbitrarily drill or cut, but which can instead only be divided into whole, essentially unaffected pieces. The interior panel become one of the main elements with which Le Corbusier designed both space and architectural form.

¹ Editor’s note: Possibly the opening of “The Rite of Spring” ballet in Paris (1913)

Ever since the early days back in 1925, and all the way up to WWII there were always a large number of Yugoslavs in the atelier at the famous address of 35, Rue de Sèvres. Young architects saw many an opportunity to forget the dusty stagnation of Central European urban planning. The atmosphere at his atelier was, for many, tantamount to that of discovering something spiritual, a very special atmosphere, which can surround the work of architects; for others it was an experience akin to the atmosphere that surrounded Plečnik and his studio. We are here talking about the same sacredness of the profession, the same seriousness and persistent unselfishness in the pursuit of one’s goals as well as of the morality arising out of all this; and above all, about the role and value of beauty that an architect should pursue as the final goal while satisfying the essential needs of mankind. Of Plečnik’s school Le Corbusier used to say: “Votre belle école de Ljubljana.” Our young architects warmed more to his principles, techniques, analyses and three-dimensional presentations of urban planning than to those of the architecture *per se*. Yugoslavia’s modest developments in urban planning before the war and its highly apparent shortcomings after the war made Le Corbusier’s approach to urban planning an invaluable instrument. In reality the hopes placed in this trust were not entirely realistic. In the face of our demanding circumstances it was too much to expect that a single, wide sweep of no-matter-how-subtle-the-form would fix everything that should have been done before. However, our urban design culture, the existence of which we must accept at least conditionally, would not be what it is, had it not been for these near-familial connections that reach all the way back to the outset of Le Corbusier’s great discoveries in urban design.

The many new horizons Le Corbusier explored were accompanied also by words. This is something that also the Cubists saw as necessary, as witnessed in their frequent statements and especially in the writings of Juan Gris. The multitude of pamphlets, manifestos, articles and books, all of which contain but one theme continues to amaze. This theme is the transformation of that part of the contemporary world that belongs to architecture that follows those discoveries that exist on par with the rest of the great discoveries of our times.

Due to its incomprehensible obstinacy France never recognised Le Corbusier’s universal and eager apostle-like activities, a development similar to what befell Cézanne years earlier. Up until a few years before his death, Le Corbusier had not been commissioned for a single public project. Only then did the omnipotent Malraux break this strange silence surrounding Le Corbusier and officially commission him to design the Museum of

the 20th Century as well as to organise and design the building for the new French High School of Architecture. This school was meant to begin teaching classes within four years' time, and was, among other things, also intended to resolve the increasingly controversial role of the École des Beaux Arts. Le Corbusier's theoretical work made his situation similar to that of Alberti's in the Renaissance. Somehow the world had come to look to Le Corbusier only for his thinking, which was drastically and tragically manifested in the case of the UN building. His designs were appropriated by a pack of speculators who transformed them into a lesser, routine architecture under the very eyes of their powerless author. As an architect Le Corbusier was far more respected outside France, in South America and in India and, to a lesser extent, here and there in Europe.

Upon the commemoration of his death, we feel the fairest note to anyone who feels close to Le Corbusier in any way, is this: his work must be "read" and not approached in the way a naturalist observes nature, i.e. carelessly, mechanically, without an inner attempt to recognise the power of lyricism that was born out of Cubism and which, thanks to Le Corbusier's efforts, illuminated also contemporary architecture. Although many consider Le Corbusier as a late and uninvited guest at the Cubists' table, it is he who paved the way for Cubism to enter also into the world of contemporary architecture. As a result it seems even more likely for Cubism to be considered the definitive style of the 20th century.

The Presence of Psychological Aspects in Design

The Presence of Psychological Aspects in Design; a chapter from the study Design; 1969, manuscript

The phenomenon of mass consumption of various functional objects, in which we now find ourselves on the heels of the second period of industrial production, especially those products rolling off the conveyor belt, has such far-reaching, multi-directional implications as regards usability that design has now become, beyond usability itself, an important philosophical, psychological and sociological issue as well.

Relentless market laws are just as important for design as are other factors like flawless performance, the function of the engineering work or "good shape" and other additional qualities. However, the market also has increasingly to take into consideration man as he is, as well as his psyche. A buyer expects that an object will offer him something more, that it will touch him emotionally. This is where the role of the informative content of the object begins, which exists in the attracting of the buyer with surprise. In the psychological selling technique this appears as a sought-after quality, which is of the greatest interest to both the producer and the seller, while at the same time it allows the buyer to get excited about the object over and over again and enables him to build the next stage of his social prestige.

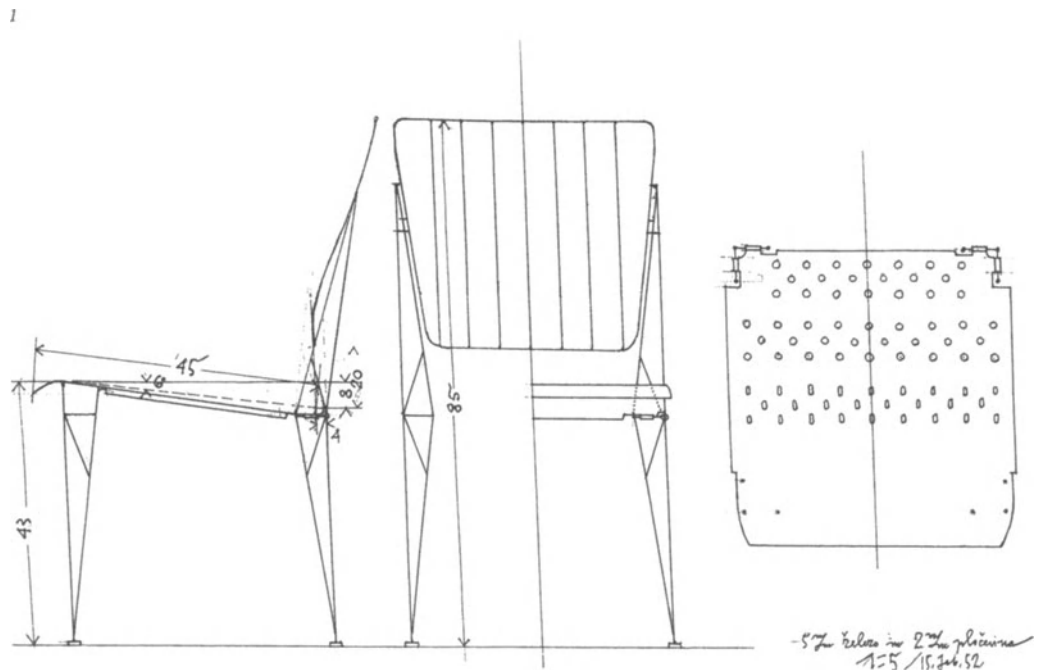
The psychological needs of man could be described in two ways: as a general need for a more defined idea of culture and as his will to establish himself at a certain level of society. Technology

searches for pure and fully functional solutions, while the man always brings some intermediate, very flexible and adapted content as well as a part of himself. Only in this way is it possible to connect the variety of technological products into formal and artistic syntheses. If design is to solve psychologically centred tasks, this means that it is also creating our symbolic environment and as a result assumes, we could say, the status of art.

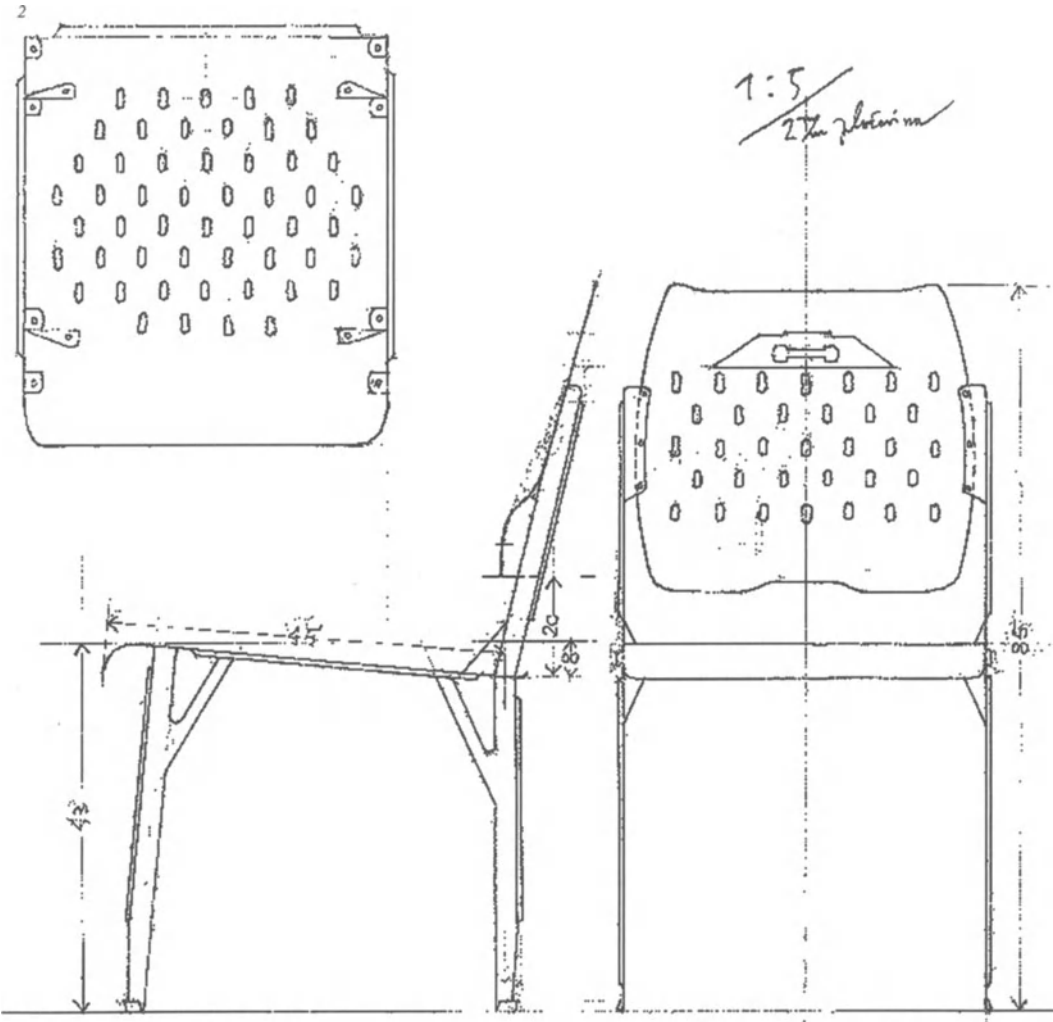
There is a difference between the technical order, the logical relationships and everything that can be expressed by mathematical notions on the one hand and the searching for and discovering of the ever-changing form and its meaning. The world of forms is unclear and as such not easily articulated, as it is all too general and its borders hazy. This is why we live in a fragmented world of so many personal tastes without realising that even in today's world Form still exists. While we clearly recognise it when looking back on the past, we are but slow in discovering our own contemporary Form. It is very easily noticeable how the object's usability is all that matters when it first appears on the market. However, soon afterward, the psychological demands appear: it is connected to symbols, information, sentiment, pride, humour and other potential components connected with thought and emotion.

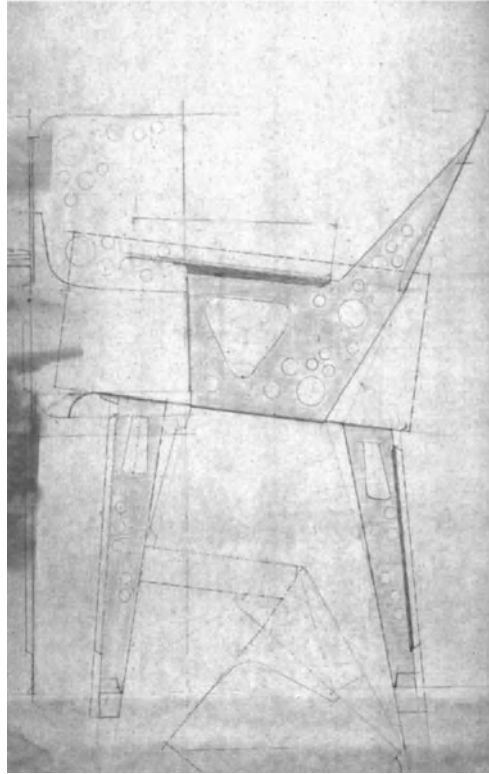
As a basis for appropriate evaluation, the shape of the object is closely linked to psychological sen-

1 Study for metal chair, from Ravnikar's design studio, 1952



2 Study for metal chair, from Ravnikar's design studio, 1952

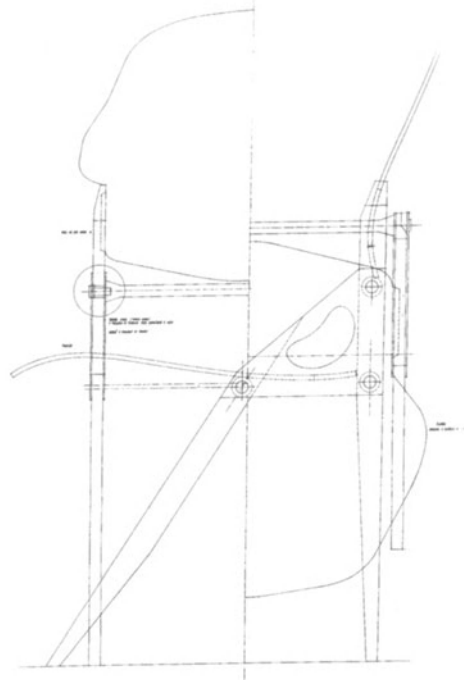
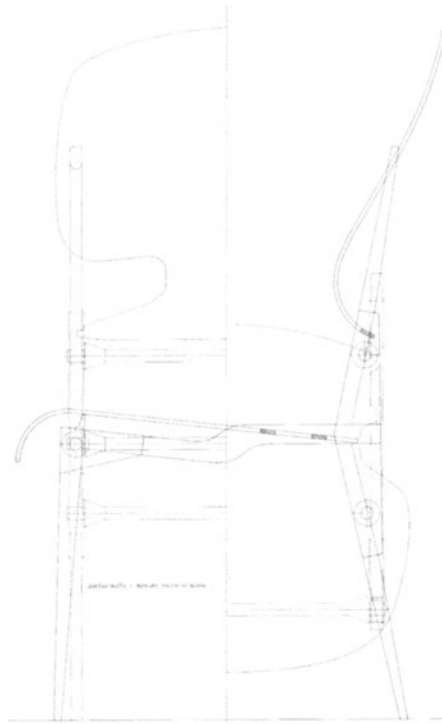




sitivity and it is a known fact that the nuances in the psychological value of objects change together with the individual through time and space. This psychological value usually manifests itself as the appearance of the object, which compensates for the missing experience. It becomes the substitute for something that we often do not have. This is also the situation by which the meaning of the object is manifested in its entirety. In an indirect way it expresses the entire elementariness of the need or the wish, from the most intimate to the collectively communal and the all-encompassing.

If somebody orders furniture in the style of Louis XV, he chooses it as a symbol of his climbing the social ladder. If a badly-developed industry chooses to make its products look more Braun-like, then it uses a certain way of design as symbolic compensation for the missing fervour in invention and production. We all know from ourselves how little noticeable the psychological component of objects is, and yet how often it is the very component that decides everything. We feel fully seduced only if apart from finding the object fully and above all practical, we intimately expect from it something more, although we are unable to express this. We can observe big psychological contrasts in this sense in our everyday life. We only have to think of a teapot on the one hand, which is functionally perfect and has an additional expression of a pleasant feeling of homeyness, with

its obvious recognisability of the noble calm that imbues the ritual of pouring tea; and on the other hand its opposite, the completely cold functionality of the dentist's extraction forceps, which we immediately read as an object connected to the painful inevitability of a violent intervention in our body. The complexity of similar experiences is too much to describe and yet it is always present between the creator of the object and its user. It can take on great importance if this relationship takes the form of a special high-level dialogue, which is essential. In this case the designer can know how to design for a certain client. When, however, the object is intended for mass consumption, which is usually the case in modern design, such a dialogue cannot take place, and all the designer can do to replace this orientational contact with the consumer, is to observe himself. When designing a teapot, the designer imbues it with information and with his knowledge of the object, which is not part of any functional system and in so doing so he expresses his chosen attitude. In this way banal and trivial reality can be overcome and an individual and receiving state of being can be achieved, which leads to a higher "reality" of the object. This is why art and design always have so much in common, be it as a collective vision of the aspirations of a certain time and society, that is, however, also a vision of the symbolic object in its role of the basic component of the man's immediate environment.



It is difficult to differentiate, for example, between a piece of pure art and a piece of ambitious design during the Secessionist era at the end of the 19th century. The artistic components of both are so close together. Nowadays, however, objects are in a way close to the artistic forms of, say, Arp or Moore, which is again the consequence of the unity of the contemporary vision of the object as an expression of today's conception of space and the subconscious creative inner power of both these artists. Each time creates a certain category of forms, which are sometimes more, sometimes less obvious. The bridge between art and design and vice versa has always existed; however, it is more easily perceptible in hindsight than in the present. Byzantine architecture and the clothes on the Justinian portrait in Ravenna, the architecture of the fortresses of the 17th century and the clothing of the Three Musketeers, a Renaissance palace and the attire of a contemporary fashionable young man are entirely harmonious as seen from the distance of today, yet in those days they seemed insurmountably separated by their different roles and applications. As E. Sottsass puts it, looking through the less clear atmosphere of today, we are tortured by the wish to find a corresponding ideology of design according to this analogy, yet we can only find it within the artistic idea of our times. This ideology would already include the union between science, industrial technology, and artistic design.

The direct synthesis between technology and vision can be experienced only when the conditions are given for the emergence and realisation of the corresponding way of thinking of a particular time, the Form.

The poetry, which despite everything still lives among us and which is only rarely found in architecture, could more easily find its place in the realm of design. The creation of poetry through forms, from the barest to the richest, is precious when we are faced with complementing the lack of a designer's vocabulary and our environment in general. The very design that is often seemingly a kind of escape into the imaginary world is, due to its particular aspect, at the same time capable of challenge and action. This is where much of the new appears first, after which it is disseminated also into architecture and engineering.

Baudelaire defines poetry by saying that art is always contrary to everything existing. Creative design, too, is in its essence a permanent revolution in the world of forms of the human environment. Therefore the position of design is in many ways defined by the position of art in modern society. Art, too, has become merchandise just like any other object and when, along with these changes, we encounter a complex apparatus of supply and distribution techniques for objects, we realise that this same technique applies also to art. In the future, too, man's psychological needs will be taken

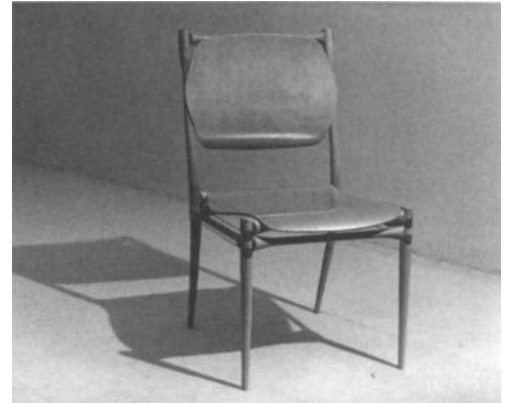


care of by art with the help of the very same distribution practices that are being developed in the area of design.

The psychological and sociological issue of the depreciation of form in the sense of its obsolescence due to the uncontrollable race after the latest thing is, as yet, not well researched. However, we realise that the consumer as well as the producer are closely linked to this issue. They both equally acutely sense the tiredness of a form and its inevitable wear and tear, which is why they always have to react at the right moment with a newly-created wish for purchase or with a promising and sufficiently different usable content. Here the psychological interests and the interests of the selling technique stand directly opposed. However, a more penetrating new psychological need usually changes also the rest of the entire design machinery mechanism. As we can well see, the depreciation of forms has its laws: for instance, how the speed of it increases from the large collective creations to the smaller and the tiniest individual creations, the ephemerides. In spite of centuries of changes in life and times the great cathedrals are still alive. This is due above all to still-baffling exceptional intellectual and technological achievements. On the other hand the smaller Gothic buildings became victims of ongoing, exhausting disuse, and those tiny in-

timate objects that were just as intensely imbued with the spirit of the time, disappeared entirely.

Measured in terms of time, the rhythms of depreciation can be differentiated according to day, season, generation and belonging to a certain period, whereas in terms of their sphere, they stretch from the intimate to belonging to society and the state, from fashion and personal style to the enormous and real simulation of the cosmos, as is the case with Versailles in the time of Louis XIV and his motto "L'etat, c'est moi." Certain elements of design define it according to their inner needs. Industry's ever-more conscious need for fast-growing production and the parallel necessity of waste production must wish for the maximum pulse-rate of the renewal of demand. This can clearly be seen from any kind of packaging, especially from the packaging design of large companies, where the psychoactive contents represent irresistible information, precisely the component that increases the value of the object through psychology. A small gift can gain an incredibly dazzling appearance with the right kind of packaging. The designer's task can become extremely complicated when the target-consumer is particularly cultured or even more cultured than the designer himself. An example of this is our shoe industry, used to undemanding local tastes of the small provincial home-town, yet



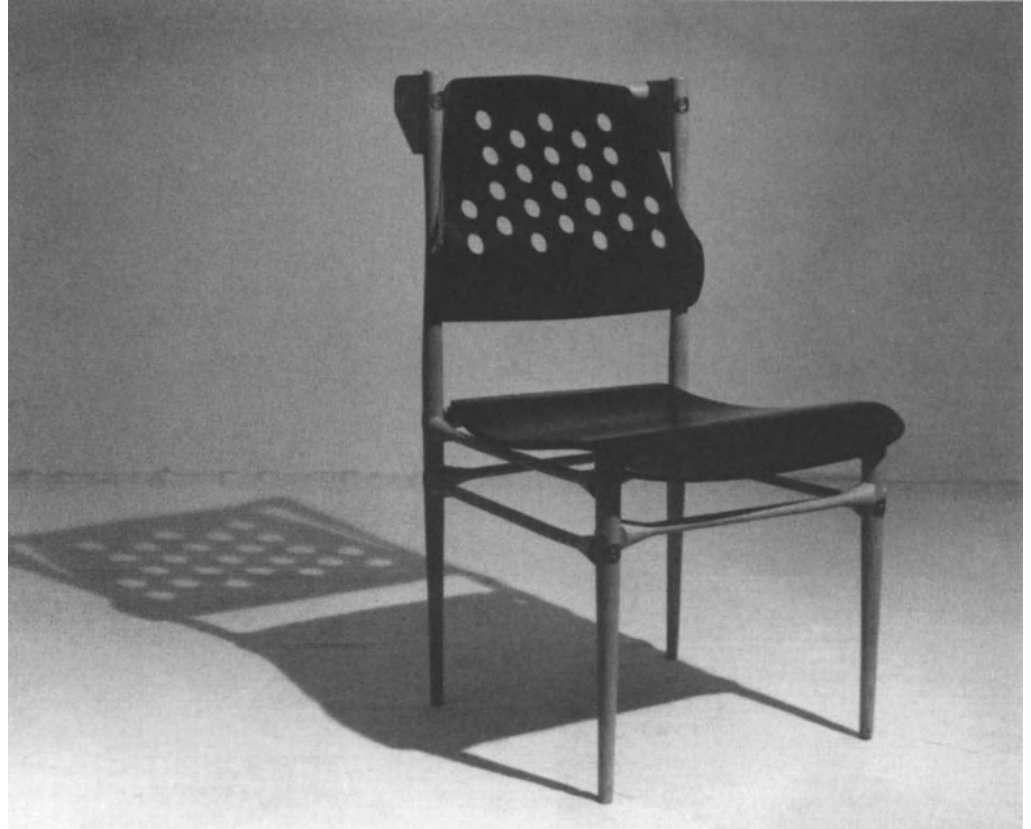
forced to keep up with the demand for the latest fashions required for export to foreign markets.

The pace of obsolescence can be slowed down or artificially enhanced with a number of psychological techniques. An example of this is the widely-employed combining of a piece of clothing with accessories. Glittery as they are, they have to change quickly if we want them to be effective; and as the viewer forgets them quickly they can be reused over and over again in different combinations. Whether the shape of the object is a lasting one or quickly becomes obsolete depends also on many other factors, e.g. on the weight of the object. The lighter the object is the sooner its form will change. This is why important international trade has always dealt in small, expensive objects, and this is also what practical tourist souvenirs have always been like. The situation is different for larger objects like cars, which work with an effect weighing thousands of kilograms in luxuriously-crafted steel. The greater the amount of engineering and technical input and the better it is, the longer the duration of the aesthetic quality. With machines this can be almost limitless, whereas we would not expect the same of objects with a relatively smaller input-amount of engineering, like toys and small appliances. With aircraft, boats and cable cars this sense of sturdiness is the essential psychological

component of the design, which is why we always imagine them only in light colours that convey a better presence and feel more tangible and safe.

Electronics with its complex ways of thinking and variations on the composition of objects is now entering the world of design. This means moving away from the one-way logic of objects from the conveyor belt and their constrained usability to objects which will be more involved in the continuity, in which the past, the present and the future connect to form a closed circle. Durability will become richer as new meaning will be added to this notion. By rotating build-on components an object will become limitlessly durable in a new way. The concept of an object will, apart from the object itself, also include a system, as is the case with most service and farm machinery as well as with many appliances and machines. A washing machine and a modern camera are ambitious apparati, which "do just about everything" within specific areas of activity, and are limitlessly durable as long as we keep replacing old accessories with new ones.

Many issues in contemporary design, such as exciting novelty, help explain its position, whereas on the other hand this does not always justify it, since the explainable does not include also the justification for the need to excite the consumer. We would like to know whether the novelty with irre-



sistible yet seductive power is not just the producer abusing or exploiting this effect. All these observations complement the efforts to better understand the particularity of design, which stem also from the needs of the human interior.

In recent years a sophisticated public has begun showing a growing interest in naïve design and in everything traditional that is characterised by the widely-employed wealth of powerful colourful surfaces and voluptuous contours. This expresses a simple and uncomplicated effect on the emotions and on the eye. The artistic value of such objects is mostly random; however, the need for natural and direct contact with things that we encounter on all levels of society as a desire for a share of uncomplicated warmth is based precisely on the search for durability that is distanced by time. It is true that the intrusive relative of all this, the styling, which is often just a cosmetic treatment of the objects, is only cheap; however, it is the best proof that modern man no longer wants to live exclusively with the puritanical functionality of objects. On the contrary, he is willing to look for what the designer does not provide in his own helpless way.

Max Bill, a Bauhaus student and a consistent seeker of the elementary in the visual arts, believes that by the diligent and sensitive combining of objects for everyday use it is possible to create a

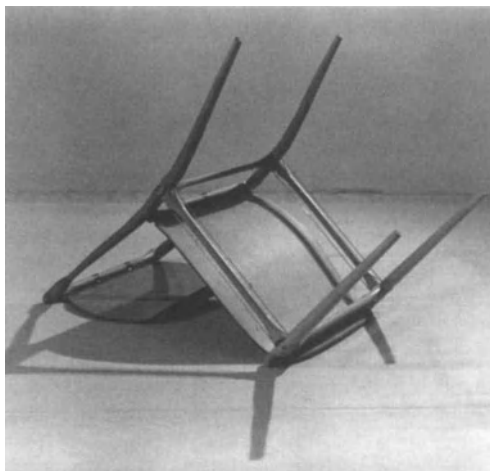
human environment from the tiniest object to an entire city, without ever resorting to "applied arts" and beautification.

The Modernist chaos of shapes inside the house, in cities and in landscapes should be replaced by a harmonious state, in which every single object would fulfil its purpose and have its natural shape, which would correspond to its purpose. "I choose the function as a starting point," says Bill. The function in this case is an elastic notion with differentiated and rich content, which includes also its psychological component. Design, architecture and art in the first instance mean order with a certain purpose. Bill's famous study of a hairbrush as an object as well as representative of any object, which includes everything that belongs to the realm of the functional, defined in this way, is in a certain way the foundation stone of the creation of the new environment. Loos still maintained that all of this has already been made and that all that is left to do is to use it with prudence. And yet today we realise that this is not enough, as today's man searches for what is beyond mere usability.

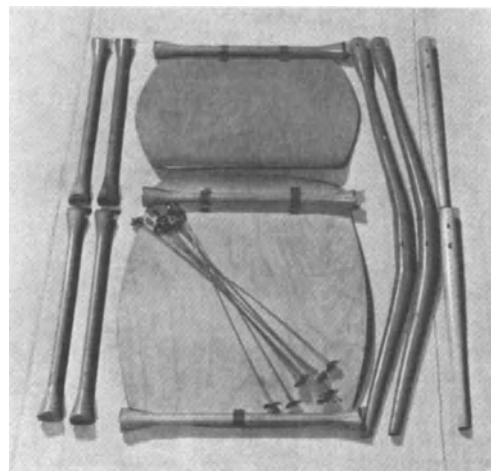
Design is faced with yet another great task. It needs to apply the objectivity with which it learned to deal with the functional and commercial issues also to solving the ever more important psychological ones.

9, 10, 11 Ravnikar's "Artikulum"
assembled furniture series, 1952-53

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10



11



Simple Architecture and the High Science of Town Planning

Architects are always obsessed with the idea of realising their own town-planning projects instead of giving expression to popular demands. They advance ahead of time which stubbornly insists on an architectural language full of symbols. The man in the street is likely to resist their aesthetic and rationalistic creations out of little known internal reasons. In his mind, a house is an architectural failure if it does not correspond to the forms he is accustomed to. This factor is stronger than the builder's determination, and the house eventually conforms to the shape it has been squeezed into, while a certain durability of almost metaphysical and subconscious values still awaits Freudian analysis. (1,2,6)

A breakthrough into the world, where our professorial councils might really come into their own, is with us no more than an exception rather than the rule. It would be a world in which reliance on economics and more modest means is linked with the rare discipline of joint activity and increased sensibility. (3, 4)

1 A villa built for a well-known opera singer by order of a rich solicitor in Ljubljana, was designed by a distinguished architect. It contains a metaphoric representation of Juliette's home with a balcony, a Gothic arch and red-painted external walls.

2 One of the Slovenian impressionists endowed his home of rather modest form with Baroque elegance. Curving lines and the mask under the roof structure represent the symbol of his spiritual status.



As regards the actual existing new building mass with which our broadest masses come into daily contact, a common man, as we all know, has his own entirely elementary and determined opinion which is, by the nature of the thing, most closely connected with him and with his needs. On the other hand, and separately from this, we talk about town-planning and regional projects in a perfectly formed style and on a strictly scientific and professional level. Obviously it could not be otherwise, for the former and the latter originated, from the very beginning, separately from each other and remain separated.

As regards the former, we still know, in fact, very little and therefore we are obliged, from time to time, to confess our helplessness in order to acquire in this field a clearer insight, and to establish that we are unable to deal with such subjects in any other way but in the light of the various – if possible – latest town-planning theories and with the unavoidable presence of science. Thus discussions on the most common of life themes are always conveyed into the high spheres from which it is very difficult to view everyday problems. It is, however, strange, that we do not remember all of this more frequently, and it looks as if we have not seen this conflict in many spectacular domestic and international gatherings, nor in the reports of both special and mass media. How is it possible that we do not see that all this happens only in the ideal world of luxury publications, delegations for the exchange of experiences and in symposiums, in the vicious circle of the neo-Platonistic thought whose cultivating better serves more spiritual needs yet very little the reality of everyday life.

What makes us anxious, with good reason, is the ever-increasingly complete division of this idealistic world and the increasingly intense spread of common, poor quality daily architecture which envelops our entire area.

It is an obvious fact that we have become, in our profession, so estranged from the capacity of

Simple Architecture and High Science of Town-planning, Arhitektura i urbanizam, Beograd, 1971, No. 64 - 66, p. 86 - 88

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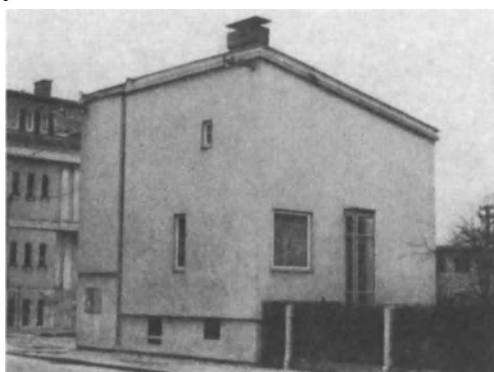
observing our immediate surroundings that we no longer see either the phenomena or their relationships with sociological, economic and cultural values. As the saying goes: we occupy ourselves with the forestry and have forgotten the tree and its life.

If science be considered an objective observation of life, why do we not view this widespread common architecture as the field of our research? Why do we not even try to find the answers to the question that asks in which way could we distinguish some notions or even discover determined lawful relations which could be reunited into an integral view as a necessary basis of our entire theoretical approach? No matter that there would be much of the trivially empirical and that it might even seem unscientific to many whom it may concern. In every example we could hope that at least our abstract theorising — in which we have already come very far — and the fertile banality of everyday truth would come to be subject to the neces-

sary confrontation. It is high time to view critically our high-flying reasoning, which means that there should be added some healthy doubt concerning all promises that have been made in the course of the past 20 years. In the tone and diction of some of our experts we still observe that well-known frame of mind from our former planning era and from the knowledge of analogous activity presently prevalent in the East. Very characteristic here is a determined “esprit de corps” which remained uninjured and which is reflected in the founded or unfounded belief in one’s own omniscience, in the control over large financial means, in various allowances and in the well-known, highly antiquated sense of hierarchical order.

3

3 This individual house, by its spare outside decoration, suggests a richer and more cultured atmosphere inside but remains unacceptable for the builder under 8 as an image of a house.



If we take as an example the formerly given general lines of the plan in Slovenia with their obvious failure and think of difficult struggles which could have brought important economic success, quite independently from the endeavours of the above mentioned factors, we see, in a very illuminating light, the difference between the irregular idealistic-authoritarian approaches to things and regular, living ones. Well-known proofs, such as development of industry at Novo Mesto (Krka, IMV), “Gorenje” at Velenje, the Port of Koper, the Vrhnika—Postojna motorway, etc. belong to the greatest successes of Slovenian industry in the course of recent years, which was made possible

5

5 By its complete symmetry, the home of a university professor and his son-in-law reflects familial inter-connectedness, emphasised by its complete isolation, size, facade painted an intense red and its single approach. A personal note is introduced only in the difference between the front and garage doors.



only when the management experts for development let it go.

Over the course of the past three decades we have made large investments in domestic planning, working efforts and engagement, we formed an unprecedentedly great institutional apparatus and formed a very large number of qualified staffs. However, to our regret, we must recognise the fact that the greatest part of these investments and efforts have remained without effect, and in many instances have even given rise to a feeling of disappointment. It looks today as if the entire system of uniform institutions has become petrified and that we cannot expect from it either new ideas or fresher working forms, and still less rejuvenated

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impulses toward development.

The predominant part of these efforts were expensive analyses based on statistics, which we usually undertook with great enthusiasm and a great amount of perseverance in order to be able to discover, as efficiently as possible, some trend; but they always ended half-way, because the statistics, as a Yugoslav “enfant terrible” chronicle has never been able to offer up a usable idea about ourselves. With such a state of things which we all – consciously or subconsciously – feel rather clearly, there hardly remains any other way but that of our characteristic nervous flight forward and escape into as great a spatial or chronological remoteness as possible. We are giving the domestic audience a report about the tiniest details concerning town-planning developments which are far from our immediate life and local worries, we disturb them with demagogic sensations, such as affected fear of a disastrous increase in population, we minutely cultivate the fable of romantic planning values where they are not imperilled, and in general we’ve thrown ourselves passionately into the idolatry of abstract American planning, which we have substituted for that of the Soviet type, etc. We are ascending, more and more, into the spheres of the highest science in which it is spoken of in the terms – difficult to understand – of meta-ur-

6 The builder is subconsciously aware of disorientation in treatment and the use of space. He tries to escape into symbolic presentation of his feelings. Squeezed into a denser system such as that of Candilis, he might become victim to revolt and urban aggressiveness - a consequence of the lack of our urban freedom.



7 A suburban house, conceived by means of local modern architecture and at the same time, the incorrect understanding of such. Extensive means are not linked with intellectual deficiency which is indispensable in the above mentioned paradox.



8 The free growth of an unplanned settlement is an important experiment in nature. It reveals man's desires, aspirations, social concessions and an aesthetic based on social equality. This is reflected in a voluntary acceptance of similarity or character of windows, roofs, fences etc.

banism, of infra-disciplines, of comparative town-planning and all new aspects of research activity in the field of planning. Unfortunately, there exists a deep-rooted opinion that all of this ends in the blind alley of imaginary activities, which are their own only purpose. Therefore, we have invented that particular world in which all this turns, in a moment, to reality, that of all international and domestic symposiums, most of which actually take place in supernaturally beautiful ambiances and in the choicest of scientific company, away and apart from any vulgar reality whatsoever.

In such a situation, what could our vital needs really be? It could be, for instance, an acceptable theory of man's needs, based on real foundations, needs which can be measured and those other needs which are connected with his will. It is high time for us to start realising how little we know about what man wants and wishes and about his behaviour in relation to the objects that populate his environment. We are becoming increasingly aware of the fact that man, as town-planning subject, does not behave in conformity with scientific "town-planning" forecasts and we get the impression that decisions are artificially imposed by means of a determined outer manipulation which drives the man to dissatisfaction, to revolt, to open aggression against the symbols of an inadequate order in a development of which we can be persuaded every day by means of new, concrete

proofs. In the new environment we have created by means of town-planning science, our man frequently behaves in a pathological way and we have to draw the conclusion therefrom that even in our science - which is, in the first place, of a social nature - we have to descend to the level of our man and to develop our activity on that level.

It would be well to look at the aims of town-planning rather in the sense of a concretisation of freedom of possibilities, as well as of social and psychological freedom. The plan should be a means for setting up the norms of true freedom - not as something abstract but of that natural freedom to which the present "man of the street" is susceptible. What are those town-planning solutions we should wish for? In this sense this remains before us as one of the great problems of our profession. For the present, people are left to themselves in search of their own town-planning, and a genuine expert aid could be of great use to us in these endeavours.



The Vitality of Plečnik's Neo-Classicism

The Vitality of Plečnik's Neo-Classicism, AB, Ljubljana 1982, No. 62/63, p. 3-7

Much has already been written about Plečnik. Thinking far back, Altenberg sang his praises to Zacherl House and newspapers have published many an article. Then there are books on Plečnik, of which the first, written by Strajnič and published in Zagreb soon after the war, even today seems the best in terms of its concept and its exquisite beauty.

Later it was Dvořák's student Stele who worked on the popularisation of Plečnik in a more systematic and consistent way. He tried to approach Plečnik with the help of the theory of the Viennese Art History School in terms of the history of the spirit, which can lift the artist to great heights and up to perfection itself. Stele's followers went down the same route of the three-periods theory: the beginnings, maturity, and the demise. However, their opinion of Plečnik was entirely contrary, as they considered him an old-fashioned creator of many faults, grave mistakes and entirely useless concepts. This could all be seen as a valid position, if we take into consideration his incredible productivity.

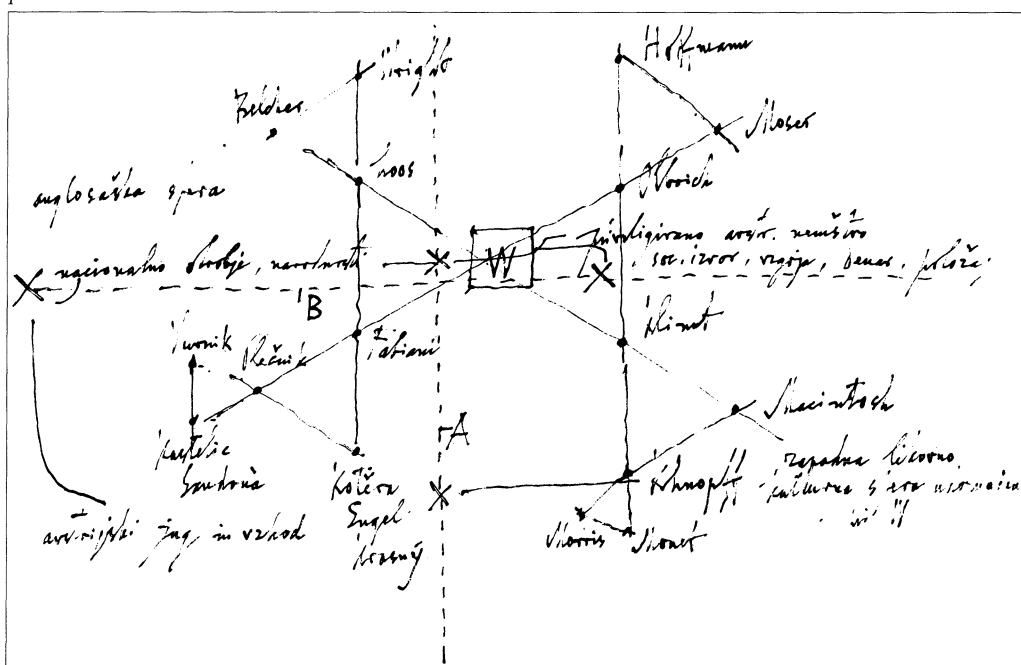
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It seems only right that we are finally beginning to see Plečnik from a more modern perspective, namely as a wholesome personality, formed under important and powerful influences. They can be seen in everything from Plečnik's early maturity to old age by anyone who feels Plečnik's creative pulse and who is not set on pigeonholing his work. It is this that comes to mind when we wonder from where Plečnik's special design

personality and its characteristically specific aesthetic world originates. This world we keep hearing about, yet it is never explained. Obviously it is not easy to describe; however, it is not very likely that it is unexplainable, or at least this should not be the case.

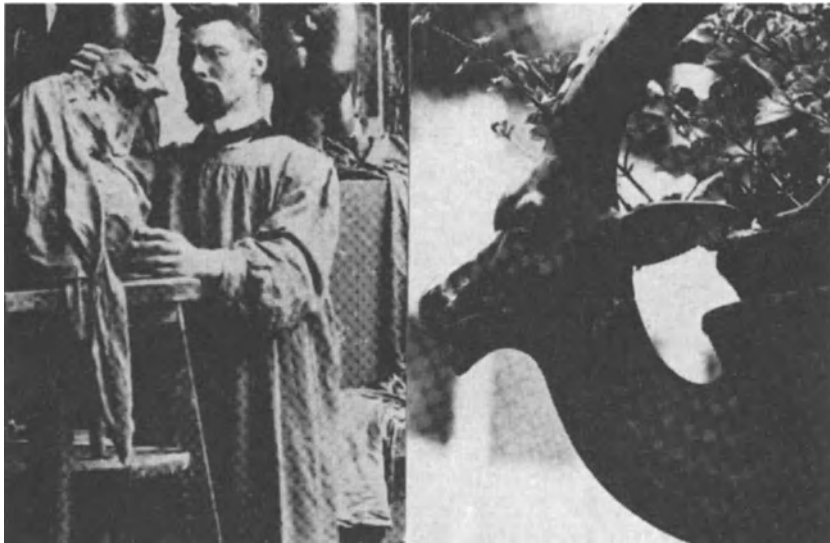
Where to begin? The first major doubt regarding the usual approach of artist biographies alerts us to the fact that we should not overstress the importance of the family environment in which he grew up; neither should we consider as particularly important his place of birth and later Graz, although of course all these should not be entirely neglected. This becomes even more apparent when we realise that Plečnik generally began his development, which was ultimately very rapid, only much later in life, between 1895 and 1905. This was the time when the Secession was first peaking and then declined, when Impressionism ended, and when the English movement of Arts and Crafts saw its first influences in Austria. This movement began to change the way in which Plečnik's entire generation thought, initially quite slowly and imperceptibly, yet decisively. Even then Plečnik himself was not far from Loos as the main representative of this movement within Wagner's circle. Loos's discoveries stemmed from his own observations; however, they can also be seen in Plečnik's Zacherl Palace. Its façade, which began in Secessionist style, ended up close to the ideals of the Arts and Crafts movement once finally executed. We can point to

1 Wagner's Galaxy is a complex of styles and influences that were created by the organisational and spiritual power of Otto Wagner at the end of the 19th century in Vienna. The constellation of names, which is probably incomplete, is organised into a grid in which we can see the placement and the connections of respective personalities among themselves and at its centre, Wagner.

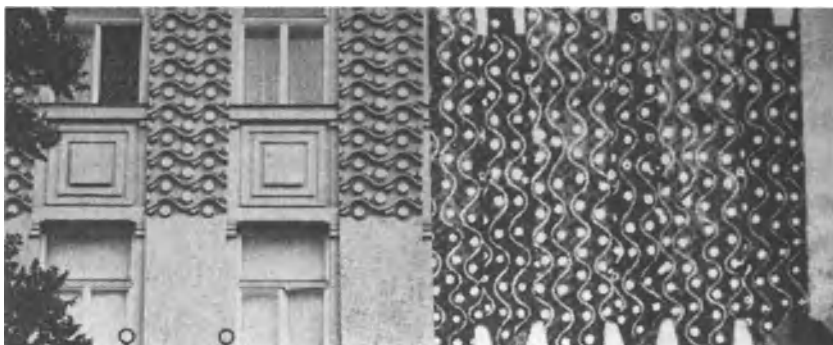


2 Another characteristic of Plečnik's personality is also his Renaissance-esque and Symbolist's need for the visual unity of architecture, sculpture and painting. His architecture is connected to sculpture not only in Zacherl House, but also in many buildings in Ljubljana. Examples of this are: the sculpture as a connection between the bank and the sky-scraper, the corner sculpture on the red building on Miklošičeva street, etc. Plečnik writes from Italy that he may still be a sculptor when he is thirty. We can see him modelling two bronze vases with goats and eagles on a photo from Engelhart's atelier (see Strajnič, Borromeo's Fountain). On the model of Prešern's tombstone in Vrba he wrote a kind of

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fragment of his made-up biography in broken sentences:

"Anton Baron, two months after his death that created such interest (he was)* undoubtedly the greatest colourist of (his)* era, a great man, etc.

Thanks to the one-sidedness*, the creator of shapes (the architect) was not opposed by the colourist.

He was here and there, at home nowhere."

*Corrected in terms of grammar and logic

the ornament, which, in the initial concept, represented the main means of design and was later replaced by a refined material – stone – which was finished industrially. Just like other architects of the era, Plečnik, too, found space for sculpture (the cornice) within the texture itself.

The Arts and Crafts movement originated in the ideas of Ruskin and Morris, and Plečnik's letters from Italy already reflect them very clearly. The teachings of these two great minds represented the leading thematic thought for Plečnik throughout his life, in architecture and elsewhere. On every page of these letters we find Ruskin's comments on famous works as well as on how we should see them.

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Even after 1920 Plečnik could be heard as if repeating Ruskin's sermon in our school: "The Young have to return to the nature, with all the simplicity of their hearts and persist with it with stubbornness and faith with one thought only: to discover its meaning, to always repeat its teachings, without omitting the smallest detail, without appreciating anything too little or without dealing only with individuals." (J. Ruskin: Modern Painters II, 1843).

According to Ruskin and Morris, art and beauty have a social mission, which has to remain above all else. Plečnik also agreed with many other of Ruskin's original ideas regarding contemporary issues. Like Ruskin, Plečnik, too, did not like the railway, considering it ugly; yet he travelled by train at length in both Italy and Austria. He, too, forgave the popes as long as they were handsome; and like Ruskin, he, too, dreamt of aesthetic holidays in the monasteries, he designed their schedules, costumes and stations for processions. Plečnik also thought about museums for workers, he planned the sale of objects designed by students from carts in the city, he ventured into publishing low-cost postcards showing good-quality Slovene architecture that anyone could afford, etc. He experienced the picturesque times of guilds from Ruskin's ideas and Morris's activities. Even Plečnik's Shaker-like way of dressing is no doubt connected to all of this: his hat directly from the stand, shoes cut straight at the front, jacket down to mid-calf and the leather tie. His hygiene habits concerning washing, eating and sleeping also represent an interesting reflection of the views of both famous English heralds.

Classicism's centuries-long tradition and its many variations have opened up possibilities for solutions that are in line with the emphases an architect chooses to give to his projects, while he manages the universality and the discipline of this classical method according to his personal abilities. In so doing the personal tone of his individual imagination and sensitivity are also expressed.

Of course Plečnik's work is led less by external motives than by internal ones. An example of

3 The motif for the facades of a private house at Wienzeile (Vienna) is taken from Klimt's work "Yearning for Happiness", 1902.

In the final years of the century, Vienna was flooded with a new aesthetic, which pushed aside the use of the rules of Classical perspective, which had been in use until then. The American artist Whistler is the most responsible for its spreading. Together with the Pre-Raphaelites he discovered the arts of the Far East, especially Japanese art. Traditional décor was replaced by an imported one and the art culture of the developed West identified with it. The dominant tectonics was replaced by the world of lines, constant movement, sinewy motifs and lines, which were taken from the fans, as well as from images which were appropriated by Symbolism: the peacock, swan, butterfly and panther.

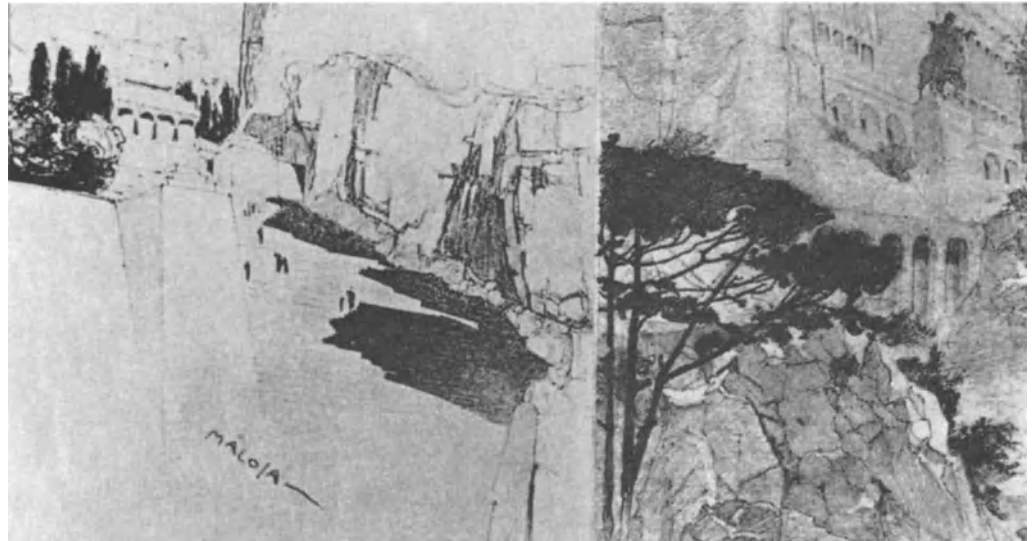
4 The façade of Langer Villa (1900-1901) and the inner wall of the cupboard by Frances Mac Donald in the Austrian Museum of Applied Arts are interrelated, as they are connected by decorative symbolism according to Sullivan, with bends, curves and a kind of dynamic tension which is somehow Neo-Rococo. The surface of both is made of inlaid parts of blossoms and stems. Plečnik made them out of prefabricated concrete parts, Mac Donald made them out of metal. The floral motifs themselves are giving way to the treatment of a unified and infinite decorative surface.

5 Graphics as a hobby in Wagner's School and mutual influences. Mario Sandonà, for example, an Italian from Trento was, whenever possible, Fabiani's collaborator as well as a good friend of Plečnik. It is difficult to decide whether this drawing technique is his or Plečnik's, although the former seems more likely. It was characteristic of Plečnik to directly enrich his knowledge with the knowledge of others. He tried to do everything that others could do: a competition in Wagner's circle for the best sketch English-style.

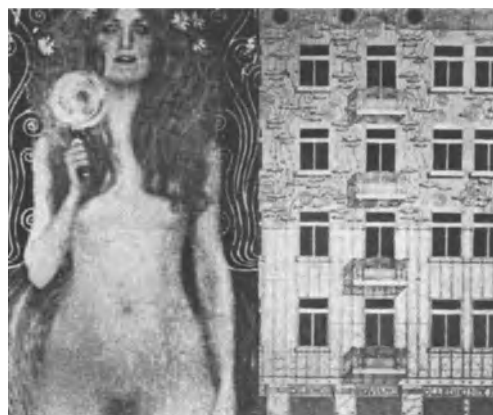
6 The initial idea for the façade for the Zacherl House is taken from the motif of Klimt's sensational creation "Nuda veritas", 1899. Plečnik grasped the new way of designing with intensity, and was ahead of his colleagues in his searching and trying it out. His most intense reference was the painter Klimt, who was Wagner's great friend. This enabled him to gain insight into new possibilities.

this is his continuous perfecting of a composition begun, his personal views as well as his acquired discipline. There is no question of seeking out and comparing methods, as Classicism is rich enough in itself as is. There are fewer doubts over the norms in the techniques of the Beaux Arts, as the options provided by their system of rules are so open and flexible as to allow many innovations in the most varied of situations. Neo-Classicism made good use of this flexibility as well, as is clearly seen in Plečnik's options for the church of the Holy Spirit. They are all valid, while at the same time they are all completely different and even extend as far as the very liberal composition of forms for the

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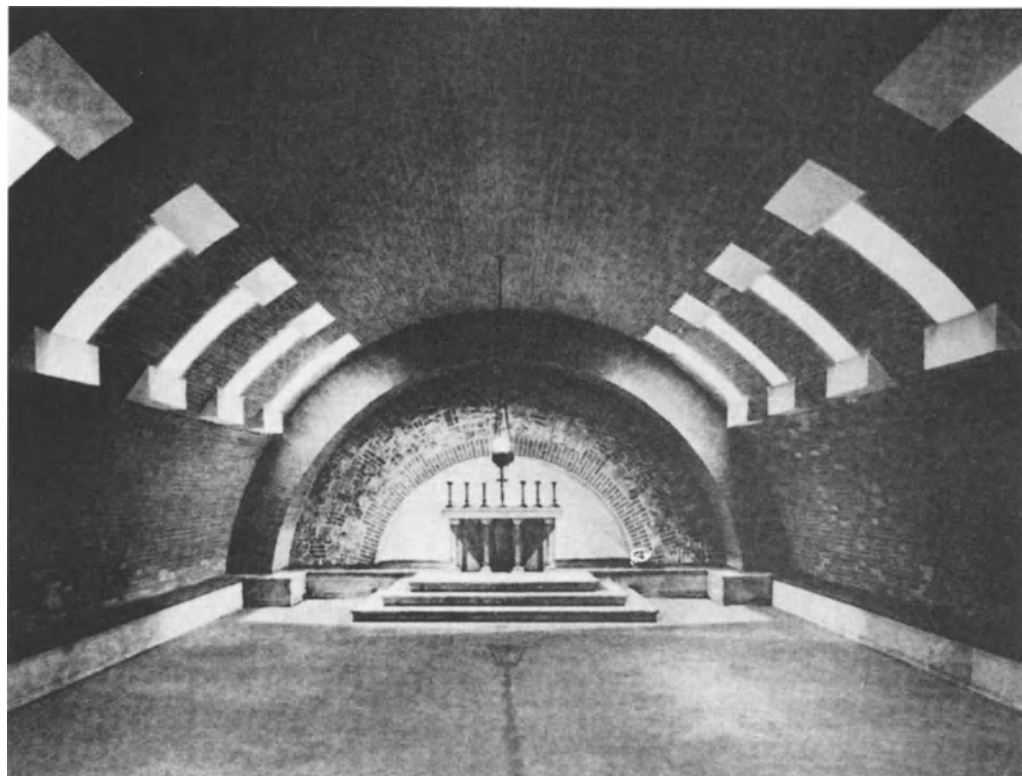
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church in Trsat. At this time Arts and Crafts and Beaux Arts have already drifted far apart, as can be seen from the way in which classical forms are used. With Loos, for instance, between 1900 and 1910 we see fewer and fewer decisions that involve looking back into history and more and more difficult, creative ones. The same goes for the rest of the world, as Classicism with its organisational potential at this time represents the basis for all the world's architecture, particularly for architecture in America, as well as for the most prominent architectural works of today. The special value of this vital Classicism is in its shift to Neo-Classicism. This shift can be recognised and described also

7, 8 Townsend's U.F. Church north of London was built in 1904. In it we can observe the usual originality of "Arts and Crafts", which has developed from certain historic predecessors. This relaxed manner had a great influence on Plečnik. It is rooted in the "American Romanticism" of H.H. Richardson. Its traces can be seen in various monumental church crypts by Plečnik, like the Vinohrady church in Prague.

9, 10, 11 Plečnik designed the writing desk and chair for the Weidmann House from 1902 some 5 – 7 years later then Van de Velde designed his furniture. He transferred his symbolist thoughts into architecture in a thinned out, diminished and diluted form. The legs and the rests are designed as long, slim plant stems in early growth, when they are still sensitive and fragile. Influences from Gothic to Orientalism and contemporary sculpture by Rodin are all felt simultaneously in these shapes. Van de Velde, looking at himself through his own eyes.



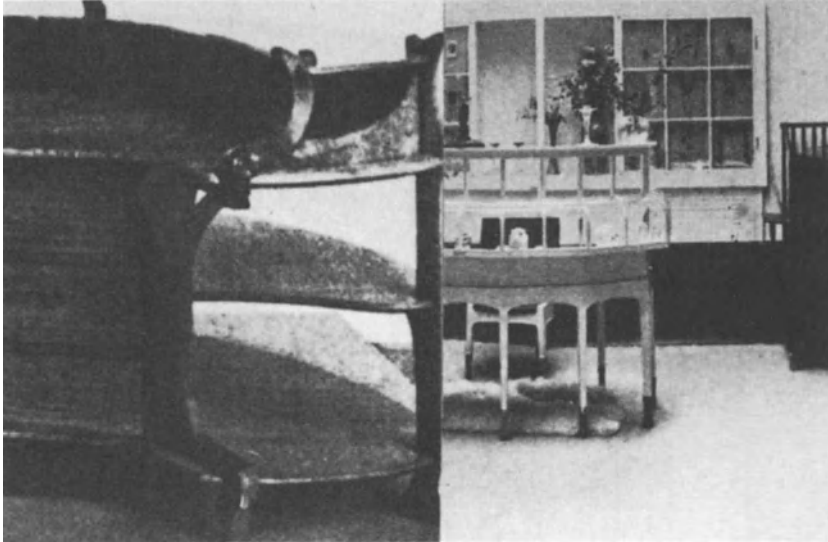
in Plečnik, who was able to demonstrate his ability to assimilate the one-time great architectural values in his early Neo-Classical period (from 1900 onwards) more expressively than before. He was able to revive the styles of the past in a special way, when Art Nouveau, which turned away from historical styles, showed him the way to his own invention and character by confidently using past styles as models for his own thinking. The creative process already leans more on the enumeration and juxtaposition of closed and aesthetically harmonious ensembles in the interior as well as in the exterior of the building. This is close to the behaviour of similar geometric compositions in the emerging Cubism. Plečnik's work from that period is based on previous rational decisions, his work is becoming increasingly well-considered from the

start and thought through to the end. This approach has replaced the combining of interesting, exciting and original Secessionist details from his early phase of 1895 to 1900.

The end of Impressionism and Secession in the last years of the century pushed Plečnik's generation (Loos, Hoffmann, etc.) imperceptibly into the currents of Arts and Crafts. This is why London became more interesting than Italy and Paris. And yet this transition was very difficult for everyone. Plečnik was among the first who felt it. He demonstrated this in Zacherl House, in its metamorphosis from Secessionist shapes into those of the structural system (from Art Nouveau into Arts and Crafts). This he achieved with the greatest artistic endeavour, albeit less clearly and consistently perhaps than Loos managed to do with his building in Michaelerplatz almost 10 years later.

It was the unbelievable power of Neo-Classicism, which sprung up in so many places and with such varied temperaments and moods, that led Plečnik, too, to his best realisations, an example of which is the Prague Castle. In some of his other work, Plečnik came very close to the important work that had been built elsewhere, which is, for instance, noticeable in the similarity between Asplund's National Bibliotheque in Stockholm and Plečnik's National and University Library in Ljubljana.

The Arts and Crafts movement also means a



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critical attitude towards the usual design methods. It means finding out which components within the traditional Classicism are those that are still alive and useable for new tasks. This was very clearly expressed by J. Blecher in his book "Essentials of Architecture" in 1907, in which he threw critical light onto the tradition of the Beaux Arts, which had conquered the world with its weaker side, i.e. with stiff historicism, as well as with its good side – the organisational power of the classical plan layout, composition and detail. Arts and Crafts served as preparation for the Neo-Classicism to come. From its beginnings it grew into all those movements that we call modern: into the International Style, the Modern Movement, Functionalism and the Bauhaus. Without it we cannot imagine Van de Velde, nor Wagner, Le Corbusier, Wright and the other "pioneers". Everything that came after them, including today's Post-Modernism, is unimaginable, too.

When talking about Plečnik we are of course interested in his relationship with these developments, for in terms of generations it belongs to the centre of his time and space (1895-1905).

The issue here is the relationship with the movements and architects who are not "great" (Pölzig, Berlage, Belcher, Voysey, as well as, of course, Loos and Plečnik), but who we now find topical because they are anti-Rationalists as opposed to followers of "some other already renowned tradi-

tion", which would be completely unacceptable for our deeply conservative Post-Modern times. We wonder why we find them interesting right now and what they have in common. But it is better that we first establish how they are different from each other and how they don't follow the movement, or rather that progressive line of development into which we are forcing them without consideration. When International architecture was at its peak, they could not be connected, as they remained personal and special, in a particular place or in a particular time. These are the architects of entirely personal experience (not, however, egotistical), who are not subordinate to some ideology, doctrine or system of forms. Because they did not allow themselves to be constrained by any system or any sterile contradictions, they could remain in touch with history and their native environment. At the same time they developed an expression that was original and free, which does not exclude *ratio*; on the contrary, it was due precisely to this freedom that they could take into consideration the rational foundations of architecture.

Their architecture is conceived for ordinary people, which means that it is trying to answer all spiritual and material needs of all classes. In all phases of work, intelligence regarding needs is present (this is what architect Tomažič called "prudence"). Although these architects were not insensitive to abstraction, monumentality and pure form, they were most excited by symbolism, traditional architecture and richness. They wanted the particularity of every function to be visible and alive, they wanted to be exceptional in everything, since true architecture is recognised by the heart. In their work they tried to introduce innovations, which were often "naïve" and far removed from contemporary technological progress. This we can see in Plečnik even more so than in the other Neo-Classicalists. However, what is still valid is Plečnik's opposition to the degradation of spirit, to consumerist society and its aesthetics of the banal. Plečnik resisted Functionalism and the abstract as the mysticism of the new art, since they negate everything emotional. With Ruskin, for instance, he disagreed on ideas about social reform, like in 1935, when he said to his students in all seriousness: "But there has to be a revolution".

Nowadays, when many see hope in a return to Romanticism, all these are peculiarities that con-

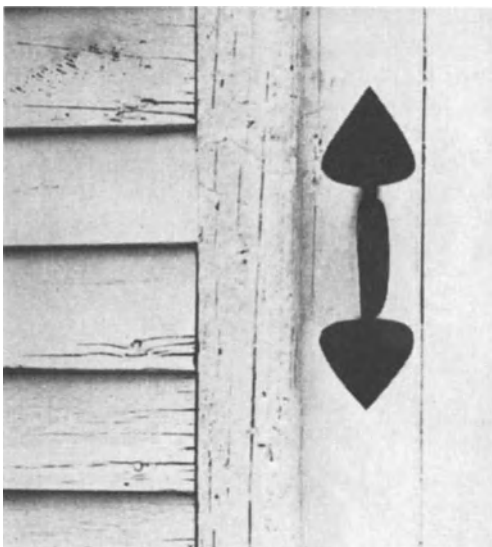
12 - 16 Knopff – the Vestal of Symbolism. Shakers' clothing, hat, coat and everyday objects, which Plečnik always tried to get close to in form and in his work. Distant reserve and a feeling of loneliness are the misery and the pride of higher people.

The spiritual atmosphere of Wagner's circle was the Viennese reflection of the Symbolism of the final ten years of the century. Not only in art and architecture, but also in their personal lives, an obligatory and characteristic feeling was present, which was expressed in content and forms. Visual and notional manifestations, which Plečnik encountered, are gathered in a collection of paintings connected only by a certain emotional colour.

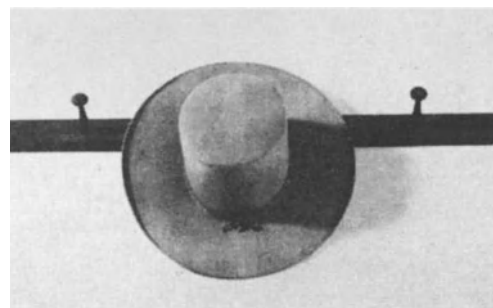
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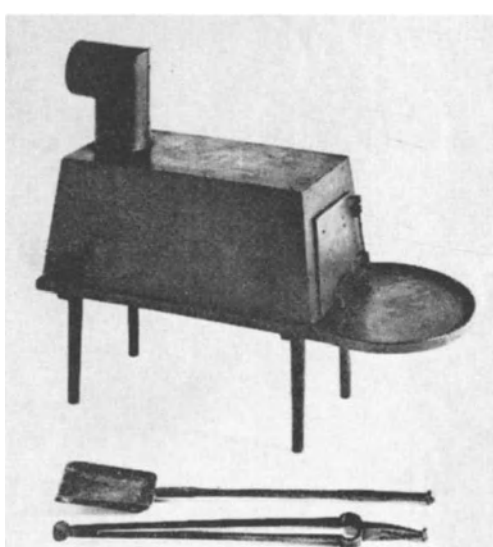
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17 Jože Plečnik

18 Knopff – A portrait of Rosetti's sister "I Lock My Door Upon Myself", a timid internalization achieved by extreme severity of lines, circles, symbols and plant parts of the composition. Any design by Plečnik can be described with exactly the same words.

nect Plečnik to the Neo-Classicists of all generations.

This version of Neo-Classicism, which can be recognised by its youthful ease and a number of options in accordance with the particular emphases that an architect can assign to various problems, as well as by the ability of an individual architect, despite the universality and abstract Classicist method, is further characterised by personal flashes of wit which originate in the individual's own sensitivity. This architecture is not in any case problematic as regards the outside conditions; instead it is a systematic solving of those inner ones that stem from one's own desires. This is also why Plečnik does not wonder about the method's

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19 Belcher - Royal London House, 1905

20 Loos - Goldman & Salatsch, 1910



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town halls, libraries and other large buildings, typical for pre-Modern times, exploit conceptual possibilities that were already a part of the system; namely the axial directions, the symmetrical division and the geometric order of constituting parts. With this in mind it is always possible to find and establish their proper place, which is in line with the best professional tradition. The advantages of this can still be seen, for example, in Wagner's Neo-Classicism: in the position of the stairs and in the directions of movement (this is also exactly what Plečnik did in the National and University Library), which enables the transition towards large conceptual dimensions. The scope of the possibilities of these measures is obvious, as are their limitations in terms of technology, planning and economic components.

The situation was similar in Europe: the basic discipline was the same, albeit without such rich options for experimentation.

The renewal of architecture with the help of Neo-Classicism opened the way for many personalities and artistic characters who had something in common, despite the fact that they came from entirely different cultural and economic circumstances. Therefore an Asplund 10 years younger is just the Neo-Classicist that Plečnik is, as were many others. We recognise them according to some similar character traits: the same kind of work discipline, the same everyday habits, the same moral sense and the same aspiration to perfection in work. Neo-Classicism, this wondrous realisation in Modern architecture, engulfed Plečnik in the first continental generation (born around 1870), which immediately followed the first in England (Townsend, Voysey, Belcher) with Loos and Hoffmann, whereas Asplund is somewhat different from this first generation on the continent. His work up to 1939 (the Stockholm exhibition) is a consistent preparation for this shift. He already had a greater knowledge of technology, a wider horizon and better working conditions.

The construction of Nova Gorica is probably the most eloquent example of the fate of urban planning in Slovenia after the liberation, only that in this case the most appropriate expression is 'tragedy'. However, Nova Gorica is not our only pain, since we are familiar with similar misfortunes, as we did not manage to realise well any of the predominantly mid-size urban planning tasks in such a way that they would result in lively, well-rounded and beautiful new towns. With no previously existing foundations we could not demonstrate what, with our urban planning culture of that time, we were capable of. A fate similar to that of Gorica was then repeated also in Velenje, Portorož and some other new towns.

A distance of almost 40 years makes questions regarding the reasons for this situation reasonable. What were the obstacles that prevented the desired results in spite of adequate resources?

The old principle according to which urban planning designs and architectural designs are closely linked into one inseparable whole is still topical. However, in those days it was abolished by the newly introduced abstract and technocratic bureaucratic frame of mind. This demanded a specialist functionality of ever more separate construction tasks, something which is still present today. Our momentum failed to result in anything more than a few awkward beginnings: the Panovec tunnel, some major roads with drainage systems, the Municipality Building, six housing blocks and some other projects which were less and less included. In the ever-increasing tempo the initial wish to create something "that would shine across the border" began to make way for pragmatism of conceit and ignorance that was finally entirely overtaken by anarchic subjectivity (hotel "Argonavti" etc.). The last illustration of this paper is a precise and wholesome image of this above-mentioned "tragedy", a document perfectly legible to the trained eye.

1



In 1945 new social conditions brought changes also into urban planning. Some years previous, the normal practice was rigid and its administration old-fashioned. Flashes of wit pertaining to the wider way of thinking were rare and there was neither space nor understanding for a young and specialised professional. New generations of architects and their realisations suddenly resulted in the new distribution of competencies. Everything from the breadth of the new urban planning principles to the system of decision-making and administration was completely new. New study centres were born which began to develop more successful design techniques and society started to take urban planning seriously. This was what we had previously missed so much. However, today we realise that a lot had been skipped and missed and many important, essential issues got entirely out of hand. However, we realised that before the war certain progress had nevertheless been made. This had been connected to the excitement of the young architects who had already recognised the tension between the uselessness of the old cities and the explosive discoveries of the new concepts connected to new technologies. It was only these people and components that enabled a deeper, more serious analyses of the existing as well as of the visions of what was possible in connection with modern technology and revolutionary design. It was Le Corbusier who demonstrated the majority of these key inputs with his examples and his words.

Contact with Le Corbusier's work and his personality was essential for our connection with progress in the urban planning of the world. We only have to remember how we considered him our role model with his most intense momentum

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of the pre-war years and we realise that we were not mistaken: even today this are the starting points for the healthiest direction of modernity.

It can be said that certain subjective initiatives were present when working on the great task on the Italian border. This initiative would have been able to put into effect appropriate professional and moral principles, which would suffice for a successful beginning and development of the design. Knowledge, appropriate organisation and necessary means would have been able to tame the tempestuous events of the day. After all, this was a long-awaited moment, when our spirits were at their richest and when we could still wish that this new city would not remain isolated in its newly-emerging life and culture. Then we could still see its mission in the historic, cultural and social process of this region, which is so interesting for us.

In those days a certain clarity of synthesis still held the door open to the future and to the breadth that an architect had acquired with his studies and with constant reading of new literature on the structures of the cities of the future that would emerge from the forces of events in the society to come.

Art and architecture have been given to us in order to teach us the truth about ourselves. They enable us to become familiar with the necessary theories and design skills together with the mutual enrichment of all participating disciplines. In that moment we had a unique opportunity for a well-qualified entry into the world of modern urban planning which would, as we can see now, have proved useful for decades to come. However, the present situation in Nova Gorica testifies to the fact that we did not succeed in making use of all

3 Legend of Nova Gorica basic urban planning concept, 1946

X and Y) Road cross as the basis for the city road grid

A) Bohinj railway becomes a state border

C) The line denoting a 500m safety belt from the railway/state border

B) The main road becomes the axis of the central city space 800m away from the border

E) Central square with main public buildings and a monument

D-D) City space along the main road, 80m wide, as envisaged in the initial concept; to the right, a belt of public buildings

G-G) 130m-wide belt of convenience buildings: shops, health centre, restaurants, crafts workshops

H) Old cemetery

N) Hotel

H) Schools

L) New railway station

S) Housing

F) Industry

Q) Health Care

K) Exhibition centre

R) Solkan

O-O) Railway

P) Initial position of the envisaged entrance to the tunnel below Kostanjevica

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1) Old Gorica

2) State border

3) Nova Gorica centre

4) Industry

9) Options for the railway routes for connections with Ljubljana (not over Jesenice)

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1) Large square next to the main road

2) The space next to the main road

3) The envisaged city

4) Perimeter road

5) Transverse road as part of the road cross

6) Stadium, which closes the main road towards Panovec instead of the entrance to the tunnel

7) Old brickworks, once used as an operational starting point for the construction of Nova Gorica

8) Spare areas for housing

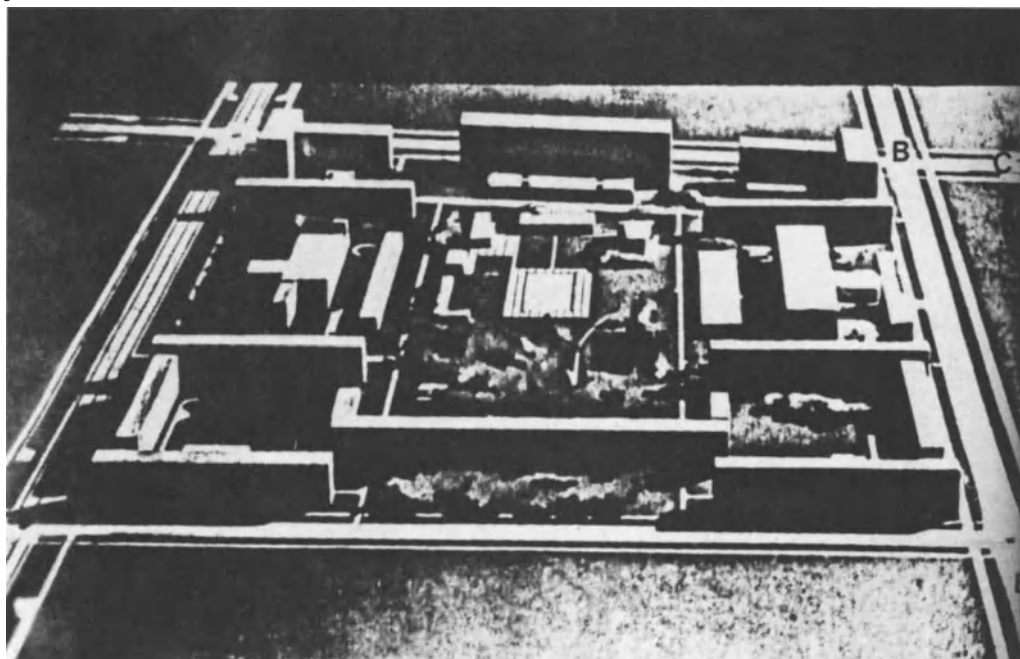
9) City park

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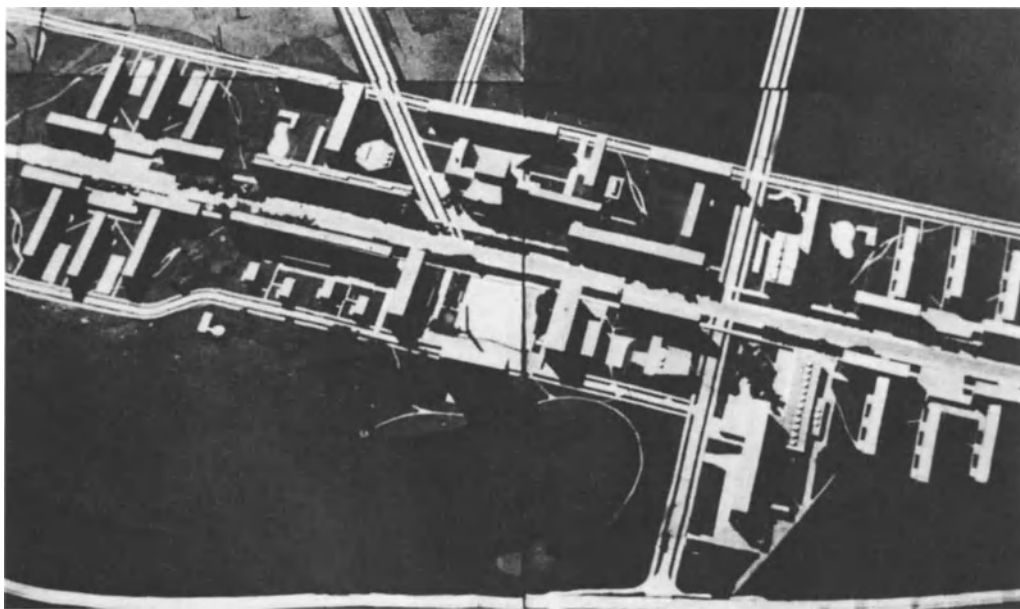
6 Example of a housing unit along the cross road (C) and the main road (B)

6



7 The core (1st phase of Nova Gorica construction) including the buildings for the most essential cultural and administrative requirements (Central Committee, the Council, theatre, unions, schools etc.)

7



8 View along the main road towards Sveta gora:

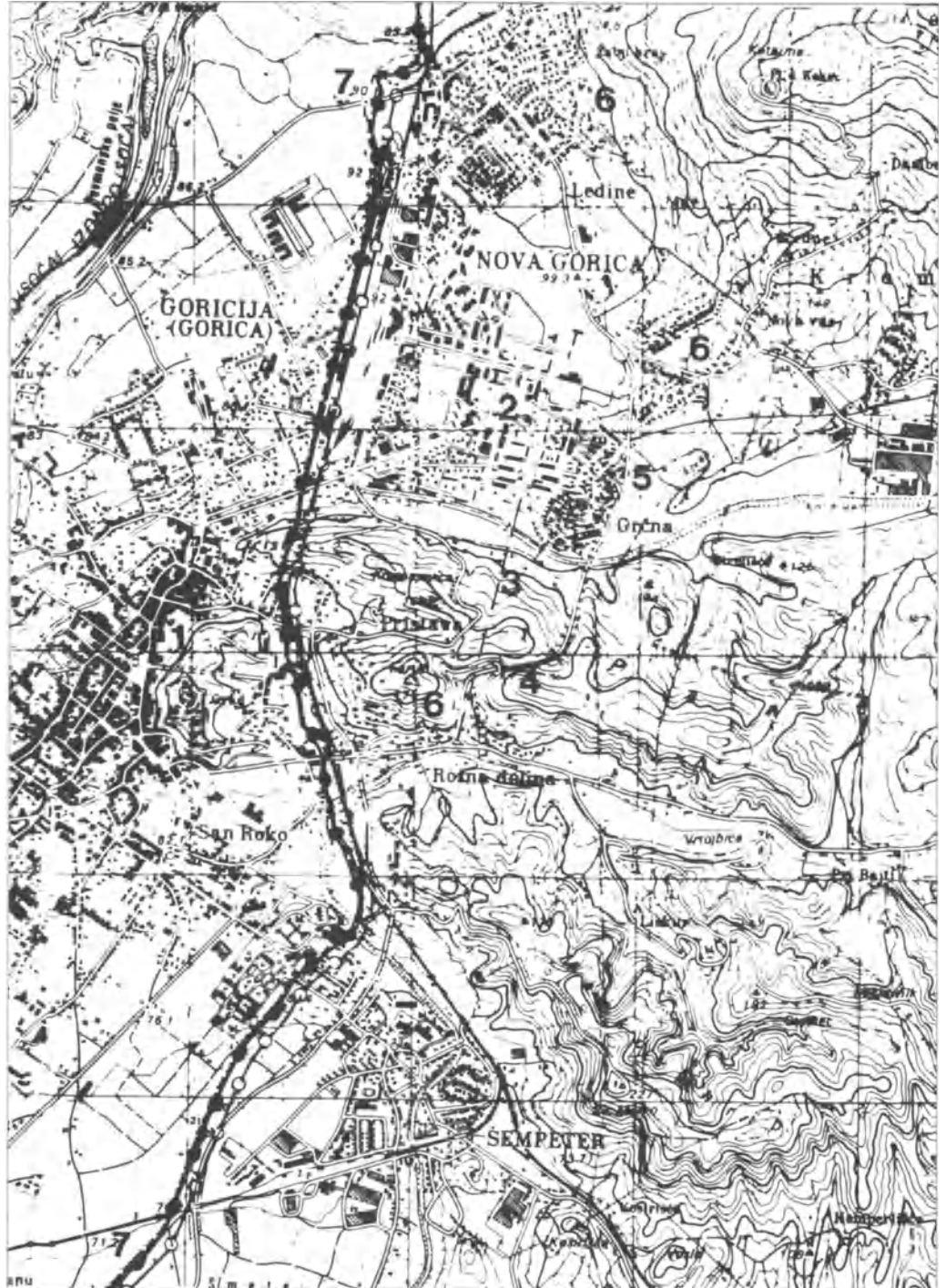
- A) Central Committee Building
- C) Council offices
- D) Organisations
- E) Exhibition pavilion
- F) Housing unit along the cross road
- G) Sveta gora
- H) Department store

8



legend:

- 1) old Goriza
- 2) Nova Gorica
- 3) initial route of tunnel under Panovec
- 4) shortened version of tunnel (built)
- 5) perimeter road
- 6) cancerous spread of unplanned housing
- 7) new state border



the opportunities at hand. This is why today we wonder whether there is a way to improve what we missed out on and whether we can, at least in our minds, recreate the tensions that existed then.

After the war, the urban design we had in mind was not only something new and momentous, it was far more than that: a premonition and a knowledge of what could be, the expectation of a

solution to all problems, be they social, technological or aesthetic in nature. During the war an architect became someone who used to be a puzzle: an essential manager and teacher of new life. All of a sudden these kinds of illusions and endeavours knew no more ideological or material obstacles. Or rather, we did not see them as there has never existed a society nor a man who, when in this kind

of situation, would not freely let their mind wander through thoughts of a better future and its realisation in an inviting, utopian vision.

The situation after the final fixing of the boundaries between Yugoslavia and Italy was in itself a reason for all-round optimism with regards to development. Had we known how things would develop in reality, we should even then have asked ourselves about the true value of our thoughts and about the need for strong leadership in the construction of such an important project. We should have wondered about the damage that was to be done later as the result of a lax attitude towards the anarchy and rampant growth of the suburbs that destroyed a lot and gained but little. The present situation proves that it was this very anarchy that defeated us while at the same time it delivered us from the demanding task of hard, systematic and promising work. If we now regret all the missed opportunities, then we regret at the same time also not having the occasion of, nor possibility for, the new quests and a continuous refreshing of the initial driving concept, which was good. True, urban planning is still proceeding down a winding road full of curves, naïve simplicity and shy prudence, yet along one of some clever, sober ideas as well. And this is the very all-too-familiar-path of urban planning reality, to which Nova Gorica, too, was surrendered.

The eastern part of Gorica, which was allocated to us, was annexed in the autumn of 1946. It was almost empty, people had moved out and the harvest was over. The border ran along the railway, with the railway itself and the station on our side, which seemed very unnatural to us. The first intervention proposed by the professional team of the then Ministry for Construction of SR Slovenia was to connect both parts of our side, the Solkan area, north of Kostanjevica, and the southern part around Šempeter by, say, a road, which would run right next to the railway. This would have required a minimal technological and financial effort and could have been done in a minimum of time. As soon as we started working on this proposal, our side established a safety belt, where no construction was allowed, which cut very deeply into our area. In the meantime, intensive discussions took place regarding the potential of both of the parts the ridge of Kostanjevica divides into the northern and southern parts. Both areas had their own defenders. Large free areas, rare buildings, dry and solid terrain and a relatively good infrastructure obviously favoured the northern part, while a strong bora wind and difficult access along old roads and paths came out against. The problem of exposure to the bora was later solved to a great degree as a result of planting and new buildings. The southern side had a sunny disposition, was

protected from the bora and enjoyed existing road connections with both Gorica and the Vipava valley. Although these were obviously favourable, the available area of the southern part was far smaller, the configuration of the terrain less favourable, and the farm land more precious, all of which made this part less easily accessible by both road and rail.

It was only natural that the first design idea proposed expanding the core of the old city onto our side. Even during Austro-Hungarian rule some parts had already begun to spread out over the railway, like the new cemetery and the timber industry. The role of Solkan was also growing. At the same time there was a feeling that everything we were going to build on this side was a temporary separate activity, which would gain its ultimate meaning only once the two Goricas were united again. However, if the division from 1946 was to be final, the issue of the independence of our part of the existing Gorica was raised. The open border later showed a certain third way, which speaks in favour of the unified approach. In this way the design of Nova Gorica already represented a new and essential part of the potential Velika (Greater) Gorica.

When as a result of peace negotiations Gorica was definitively lost and dreams of a Yugoslav Gorica went up in smoke, we took up our task with even greater eagerness. We were told to build something great, beautiful and proud, something that would shine over the border. And everybody – from peasants to those in the highest of political offices – was excited about this. Modern urban planning thus became for us a weapon in the national and political struggles.

However, although this project started out as a project of federal dimensions, it began to lose importance relatively quickly. What had once been such a great task was then almost shyly transferred to the level of the republic, into the Ministry for Construction in Ljubljana. And when, due to administrative reform, urban planning, too, was transferred to district offices, the regulation of Nova Gorica ended up in the Ajdovščina District Council until its actual design finally ended up in the City Architectural Office. Of course this also meant that project architects in charge of its concept design were changing and did not talk to each other. This is why there was no continuity, which naturally ended up inflicting increasing damage on the design, to a point that design anarchy prevailed fully as did the arbitrariness of ignorant interested parties.

However, despite all possible points of view, we are left with at least one permanent and indisputable value: the concept of a new city, its practical usability and social usefulness. Therefore the concept has to emanate a kind of generosity and breadth

without major mistakes in scale, an urban beauty without the empty megalomania of built masses and above all, it must include large planted areas and vegetation, characteristic for this region. The concept we submitted was already resonating with Le Corbusier's urban planning philosophy that we had already encountered prior to WWII through Slovene architects who had worked in his office.

The great innovative value of Le Corbusier's work and his practical experience - by then already twenty years old - was very suggestive and convincing. Le Corbusier's ideology spread among young architects like fire. However, from this hermetic world it did not reach out into the political and economic spheres and did not become the leading principle of the administrative and executive fora. There was a chance that resources and energy would have resulted in something more than just good-quality urban planning and urban life, had they not been later squandered by architecture without architecture or architecture designed by bad architects. The momentum that existed then was full of the pathos of great historic changes in urban planning and architecture. They were seen as an alternative to the war and armament, as something that would resolve all essential problems of human society around the world, help abolish the differences arising from borders, races, and classes and begin with immediate socialisation of life with immovable conviction.

After so many years we are now regretting that we did not do everything we could have done, had the design discipline and its realisation been able to save at least the essence of the initial design. A quick succession of changes in terms of who held responsibility for the political and architectural design of the project, together with a deterioration of finances slowly brought about the decline of the professional competence and the continuity of good practice with which this task had originally been approached. Concern for the quality of life in the city, for the design of the environment, and for the important finalisation of many details was also neglected; and finally, an ongoing eagerness to develop and progress with the work at hand gave way too.

Over the years the initial concept had begun to crumble fatally. This was the result of ever-new city administrators who were no longer familiar with the original intentions behind the scheme. There was also a lack of necessary knowledge. Decision-making and solution-seeking began their long and winding path from one person to the next, from forum to forum and into the domain of the growing arbitrariness of changing designers. The initial concept was an opportunity of that time to give the hundred-year-old Gorica agglomerate a new momentum together with a new historical situation,

new opportunities and new ideas. The years before the war opened and shaped completely new general starting points for great, anticipated changes in the functions of modern urban planning, which were already strategically very well established. In the designing of Nova Gorica, a fresh breeze was confronted and confounded by the entirely old-fashioned principles of this one-time Italian province. Still today, the life and development of Nova Gorica is overshadowed by these tensions, which were then not overcome. After forty years this has intensified into a general regret and disappointment over this "new city". The familiar natural features and character of this environment were ideal for a city concept, which was as if "from under the skies of Provence".

Since its beginnings in 1250, Gorica's regional constellation has been conditioned by the concurrence of three main directions: the valleys of the Soča and Vipava rivers and the Karst highlands, which comprises its entire area on the left (south-east) side of the Soča river, while its right (north-west) side gravitated towards Udine. This was the consequence of hundreds of years of natural development during which this river divided the Friuli area along one bank from the Slovene area on the other. As a result of the settlement decision at the end of the war, the central part of Gorica was therefore cut off from its hinterland. This is why the issue of its replacement (Nova Gorica) on our side was raised, as was the issue of all the other functions this new centre could and would indeed need to take on. Urban planning decisions were made even more difficult by the predominant idea that the city, which was dismembered by the railway and the border, should one day, or as soon as possible, be united again. Border security radically reduced our space along the railway with the decision to maintain a 500m belt completely empty. Moreover, any construction had to maintain a distance of at least 80m from this belt. As a consequence, the idea of the two eastern suburbs, which were ready to assume their role in the anticipated Velika Gorica, had to be abolished. What remained essential for the vision of the new city was a good connection between Solkan and Šempeter.

This connection was first sought in the east, along the axis of today's main road and was meant to connect to the Vipava road through a longer tunnel. In the end we had to change direction so the tunnel became, as seen today, far shorter. The main road became and still is an excellent basis for establishing a system of communications. This was still the case even after both parts above Kostanjevica and below it could no longer be connected by a new road along the railway. In the case of Nova Gorica it was very simple and easy to apply Le Corbusier's principle of the road cross which di-

vides the main zones. According to Le Corbusier's theory of the city, which we then believed in fully, the division of the city into four parts coincides with the city's four main functions: centre, living, industry and leisure – at least for cities of a certain scale. Looking back now, since most of our cities are of this size, it was perfectly justifiable to use this principle as a departure point when designing the future Nova Gorica. The main road with north-south orientation was to be the backbone of the centre, its upper part the recreation area, its left part housing and its right part the industrial area. Along this almost 2-km-long street, densely planted with plane trees, a Mediterranean type centre would emerge, with public buildings on both sides, which would open its branches and shops out onto the pavements.

In this way the main road became the main city street, without transit traffic, which was transferred to the new line of communication. The centre would have a very wide and festive scale, which could display some glamour as promised, and which could have been achieved had the quality of the landscaping been better. After all the initial trouble, when we let the road designers take the lead, we were still calm in the knowledge that not all was lost and that a city with some kind of southern atmosphere could still be created. We were hoping for something that would, on the other hand, also embody some of our national characteristics and which would become and remain of permanent value, typical for our Nova Gorica and for Slovenia as a whole.

This sequence of events, however, did not allow for the continuation of the initial concept in a way that would still observe the lines of modern post-war concepts of the city, and which could also serve as a basis for the greatest number of precious urban values.

If Nova Gorica was supposed to be something "that shines across the border" then this would undoubtedly have been the case – had the described concept been accepted and applied in the given unique landscape. We had the opportunity to show that we could handle this task and that we were ready and able to effect its realisation. Little did we know that we were handing it over to the administrative and technical apparatus, which did not understand the task. The authorities unreservedly confirmed the design when there were no petty revisions committees involved, nor were there institutions that carried out this kind of project according to the principle of "turnkey contract". We had already gained considerable experience with these kinds of projects when working on the competition for the regulation of Ljubljana in 1940, which had tried to establish whether modern urban design concepts could be adapted to our scale and

conditions. The example of Nova Gorica proved that this was entirely feasible and that with a lot of hard work it could have been achieved despite the then modest resources. Finally, yet another factor has to be mentioned, which is characteristic for our circumstances: the obligatory and overruling advice of the politicians in matters of a professional nature, their interference in both Ljubljana and on site with decisions which usually ran entirely contrary to professional opinion.

Therefore, due to the differences in views over the main street, which surfaced in the course of discussions between the designer and the politicians during its creation, the main intention of the meaning of the core of Nova Gorica might have been overlooked; as was its design and its programmatic integrity. Therefore the width of the main street narrowed to exactly 73m after the initial suggestion of 80m, even though a width of 60m had, in the process, also been discussed. The architect envisaged a street composition of Empire style, as seen in Italy and southern France and, to a certain extent, in Slovenia as well, one which would fit into the surrounding landscape beautifully. In section, right next to the street, a few lines of densely-planted large trees (e.g. plane trees) were envisaged, under which shopping and other general urban activities would take place along a wide pavement and service road, together with apartments, business and other public buildings. This would add up to an open-air public space some 80 metres wide that would accommodate everything that takes place in a city of this size.

The organisation of Nova Gorica would have been closer to the notion of a wholesome city so sought after following the end of the war. As it is, it is more like a housing colony from post-WWI days with the addition of some public functions, which makes it similar to what we later called "housing neighbourhoods". What the architect envisaged next to the existing Gorica was therefore a city which, after WWII, was known as a new city, or a self-sufficient satellite city; i.e. a city entity which includes all of the requisite elements, content, numbers and standards. This stands in contrast to the notion of the colony from 1928, which is but a housing complement to the existing city. This is why, when dealing with this task, the notion of a new city or a satellite city was so long-sighted and so correct a starting point; on the other hand, however, we are aware that this would have required far more demanding materials, as well as spiritual, political and professional preparations. It is with bitterness that we say today that Nova Gorica, as a pioneering concept, did not succeed; and it leaves us wondering what could still be done to make it successful.

Chronology of Works

- 1 ZDENKA REJA'S TOMBSTONE, Ljubljana, Žale Cemetery, Designed and executed 1930
- 2 RAILWAY STATION, Ljubljana, Competition Entry 1934
- 3 STATE PRINTING PLANT, Belgrade, Competition Entry 1936
- 4 OPERA, Belgrade, Competition Entry 1936
- 5 SCHOOL, Ljubljana- Vič, Designed 1936
- 6 REGULATION OF ST. MARY'S SQUARE, Ljubljana, Competition Entry 1937
- 7 Ossuary For The Fallen Of WWI, Ljubljana, Žale Cemetery, Competition Entry 1937, 1st Prize, Constructed 1938-1939
- 8 BATTELINO FAMILY TOMB, Ljubljana, Žale Cemetery, Designed 1938, Constructed 1938, Relief by Slavko Pengov
- 9 CULTURAL CENTRE, Trbovlje, Competition Entry 1938, 1st Prize
- 10 HOME FOR THE ELDERLY, Ljubljana, Bokalce, Competition Entry 1938, 1st Prize, Production Drawings 1940 (Constructed without the author with significant changes)
- 11 SWIMMING POOL KOLEZIJA, Ljubljana, Competition Entry 1939, 2nd Prize
- 12 MONUMENT TO KING ALEXANDER 1ST, Ljubljana, Congress Square, Competition Entry 1939
- 13 GOVERNMENT BUILDING, Vilnius (Lithuania), Competition Entry 1939
- 14 LJUBLJANA CENTRE, Ljubljana, Congress Square, Competition Entry 1939
- 15 SETTLEMENT MEDLOG ABOVE CELJE, Competition Entry 1939-1940, 1st Prize
- 16 HOSPITAL, Jesenice, Competition Entry 1940 1st Prize
- 17 HONORARY CHAINS FOR THE MAYOR AND VICE-MAYOR OF LJUBLJANA, Designed 1939, Prize
- 18 MODERN GALLERY, Ljubljana, Designed 1939, Constructed 1940-1951**
- 19 SINGLE-FAMILY HOUSES, Ljubljana, Competition Entry 1940
- 20 ATELIER AND HOUSE OF VIDA PENGOV, Ljubljana, Bežigrad, Designed 1940-1941, Constructed 1948, Including substantial changes
- 21 VILLA HRIBAR, Ljubljana, Črnuče, Designed 1940
- 22 CITY RAILWAY GRID, Ljubljana, Designed 1940
- 23 REGULATION DESIGN FOR THE CITY, Ljubljana, Competition Entry 1941, Purchase
- 24 BEACHSIDE SWIMMING FACILITIES, on the Adriatic Coast, Design for the National Examination in Belgrade 1941
- 25 VILLA VIDMAR, Ljubljana, Ježica, Designed 1941, Constructed 1943-1945
- 26 LAYOUT PROPOSAL, Ljubljana - "Pavlin", Designed 1942
- 27 LAYOUT STUDY, Fužine at Ljubljana, Designed 1942
- 28 LAYOUT PROPOSAL, for the area of Poljanska Street-Krek Square-Streliška Street, Ljubljana, Designed 1942
- 29 URBAN PLANNING STUDIES OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF VILLAGES, Designed 1945-1946
- 30 COUNTRYSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, SHELTERS AND BUILDINGS FOR THE COOPERATIVES, Standard Designs 1945
- 31 REGULATION DESIGN FOR LJUBLJANA, Designed 1945-1946, Project suspended away 1947
- 32 REFURBISHMENT DESIGNS, for Žužemberk, Sodražica, Cerknica, Kočevje and Ribnica, Designed 1946
- 33 MUSEUM OF THE NATIONAL AND LIBERATION WAR, Ljubljana, Study 1946
- 34 MEMORIAL WAY, at sv. Urh near Ljubljana, Competition Entry 1946
- 35 SLOVENE NATIONAL LIBERATION COUNCIL COAT-OF-ARMS, Designed and executed 1946 (Three-dimensional work by Božo Pengov)
- 36 EXHIBITION "FIVE YEARS OF THE LIBERATION FRONT", Narodni dom, Ljubljana, Designed and executed 1946
- 37 YUGOSLAV EXHIBITION PAVILION, Paris, Competition Entry 1946
- 38 NEW BELGRADE (WITH THE PALACE OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF YUGOSLAVIA), Belgrade, Competition Entry 1946 First 2nd Prize (1st Prize not awarded)
- 39 PALACE OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF YUGOSLAVIA, New Belgrade, Idea Sketch 1946
- 40 PROPOSAL FOR THE PALACE OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF YUGOSLAVIA, New Belgrade, Idea Sketch 1946
- 41 PALACE OF THE PRESIDENCY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE FEDERAL AND PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA, New Belgrade, Competition Entry 1947, 3rd Prize
- 42 REPRESENTATIONAL HOTEL, New Belgrade, Competition Entry 1947, 2nd Prize
- 43 HOUSING BLOCKS, New Belgrade, Competition Entry 1947, 2nd Prize
- 44 OPERA, New Belgrade, Competition Entry 1947
- 45 MODERN GALLERY AND NATIONAL GALLERY, New Belgrade, Competition Entry 1948, 1st Prize
- 46 SUMMERHOUSES MADE OF STONE, in the Carst Area, Designed 1946-1947
- 47 INSTITUTE FOR LOW- TENSION CURRENT, Ljubljana, Designed 1946-1947, Constructed 1950-1954
- 48 CENTRAL POST OFFICE, Ljubljana, Competition Entry 1947, Shared 1st and 2nd Prize
- 49 HOUSING, Ljubljana, Šiška, Study 1947, Partly constructed
- 50 HOUSING, Ljubljana, Sv. Križ, Designed 1947
- 51 STUDY OF LAYOUT OPTIONS FOR THE NUNS' GARDEN, Ljubljana, Designed 1947
- 52 REGULATION OF NOVA GORICA, Designed 1948-1950, Partly executed**
- 53 THE BUILDING OF THE DISTRICT PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE, Nova Gorica, Designed 1950
- 54 INSTITUTE FOR FORESTRY, Ljubljana, Designed 1947, Constructed 1948
- 55 6 HOUSING BLOCKS, Nova Gorica, Designed 1947, Constructed 1948**
- 56 FACULTY FOR PHILOSOPHY AND NATURAL SCIENCES, Skopje, Macedonia, Designed 1947, Constructed 1948-1949
- 57 PRESIDUM OF THE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA, Ljubljana, Competition Entry 1947, 1st Prize
- 58 THE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA, Ljubljana, Tivoli, Competition Entry 1947-

- 1948, 2nd Prize Ex Aequo (1st Prize not awarded)
- 59 REGIONAL DESIGN FOR THE FREE AREA OF TRIESTE (STO), From Ankaran to Novigrad, Designed 1948-1949
- 60 STUDENT CAMPUS, Ljubljana, Designed 1948, Constructed 1950-1957
- 61 HOUSING SETTLEMENT, Kidričevo (Strnišče), Study 1950
- 62 EXTENSION OF THE SETTLEMENT, Ljutomer, Designed 1950
- 63 PRINTING PLANT, Ljubljana, Designed 1950
- 64 REGIONAL PLAN OF KRANJ, Competition Entry 1950
- 65 EXTENSION OF THE SETTLEMENT, Lendava, Designed 1950
- 66 TWO MONUMENTS TO THE WOMEN'S DEMONSTRATIONS DURING THE WAR, Ljubljana, Next to the Government Palace and in front of the Diocese, Designed 1951, Executed 1951
- 67 MONUMENT TO THE NATIONAL AND LIBERATION WAR, Nova vas on Bloke, Designed 1950, Constructed 1951-1952
- 68 SELF-ASSEMBLY FURNITURE "ARTICULUM", Designed 1952, Prototypes made 1952, Never serially manufactured**
- 69 PREFABRICATED ONE-FAMILY HOUSE FROM RECLAIMED TIMBER, Designed 1952
- 70 TWO ONE-FAMILY SETTLEMENTS, Ljubljana, Dravlje and Stožice, Designed 1952
- 71 HOUSING SETTLEMENT, Maglaj (BiH), Designed 1952
- 72 HOSTAGES' BURIAL GROUND, Begunje, Designed 1952, Constructed 1952-1953
- 73 HOSTAGES' BURIAL GROUND, Draga, Designed 1952, Constructed 1952-1953**
- 74 EXHIBITION SYSTEM I, Exhibition of Swiss Posters Ljubljana, Designed 1953, Executed 1953
- 75 RUISSALO (Finland), International Competition Entry 1953, 3rd Prize
- 76 PARTISANS' BURIAL GROUND, Pokljuka, Designed 1953
- 77 EXHIBITION SYSTEM 1, Exhibition of Atomic Physics Ljubljana, Designed 1953, Executed 1953
- 78 EXTENSION OF "NAMA" DEPARTMENT STORE, Ljubljana, Competition Entry 1953, 1st Purchase
- 79 STUDY OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL OPTIONS OF LJUBLJANA, Designed 1953, Partly executed
- 80 INTERNEES' BURIAL GROUND, Island of Rab (Croatia), Designed 1953, Constructed 1953**
- 81 GYMNASIUM SECONDARY SCHOOL, Mostar, Internal Competition 1954
- 82 CANTEEN FOR THE STUDENT CAMPUS, Ljubljana, Competition Entry 1954, Raised Purchase (extra)
- 83 PARLIAMENT, Sarajevo, Competition Entry 1955
- 84 URBAN PLANNING INSTITUTE, Kranj, Designed 1955, Partly executed
- 85 COUNCIL ASSEMBLY BUILDING, Kranj, Limited Competition 1954, Designed 1955, Constructed 1958-1960**
- 86 TIMBER SUMMERHOUSES, Fijesa (Istra), Designed 1955
- 87 INTERIOR ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, Ljubljana, Competition Entry 1955
- 88 KITCHEN, Ljubljana, Designed 1955, Prototype 1956
- 89 REGIONAL DESIGN FOR PIRAN PENINSULA, Designed 1956, Partly executed
- 90 MONUMENT TO THE FALLEN IN THE NATIONAL LIBERATION WAR, Vojštica, Constructed 1956
- 91 HOUSING TOWER, Ljubljana, Competition Entry 1956, Purchase Ex Aequo outside competition
- 92 HOUSING BLOCK, Ljubljana, Competition Entry 1956, 2nd Prize outside competition
- 93 LAYOUT FOR THE CENTRE OF LJUBLJANA, Ljubljana, Competition Entry 1957, Highest Purchase outside competition
- 94 "LJUDSKA PRAVICA" PUBLISHING HOUSE AND PRINTING PLANT, Ljubljana, Designed 1957, Constructed 1958-1961**
- 95 UNIVERSITY HOUSING BLOCKS, Ljubljana, Prule, Designed 1957, Constructed 1959
- 96 IDEAL NEIGHBOURHOOD FOR 5,000 PEOPLE, Designed 1958
- 97 TWO MONUMENTS TO THE NATIONAL AND LIBERATION WAR, Zgornji Ig, St. Peter/Pivka, Designed and Executed 1958
- 98 NATIONAL LIBRARY, Belgrade, Competition Entry 1958
- 99 HOTEL AND CULTURAL CENTRE, Črna na Koroškem, Designed 1958, Constructed 1960-1961
- 100 "HAUPTSTADT BERLIN", Urban Design, Competition Entry 1958
- 101 SECOND-HAND BOOKSHOP TRUBAR, Ljubljana, Designed and Executed 1959
- 102 NATIONAL BANK, Celje, Designed 1959, Constructed 1962**
- 103 NATIONAL BANK OF SRS, Kranj, Designed 1959, Constructed 1962**
- 104 LAYOUT FOR THE REVOLUTION SQUARE, Ljubljana, Competition Entry 1960, 1st Prize, Constructed 1961-1974**
- 105 HOUSING TOWER, Ljubljana, Designed 1958, Štefanova Street, Constructed 1960
- 106 TWO HOUSING TOWERS, Ljubljana, Hrvatski trg, Designed 1958, Constructed 1961
- 107 FACULTY FOR STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING, Ljubljana, Jamova Street, Designed 1960, Constructed 1963-1966
- 108 OFFICE BUILDING, Ljubljana, VI/th Congress Square, Competition Entry 1960, 2nd Prize
- 109 LAYOUT FOR THE AREA BETWEEN TITOVA, DALMATINOVA AND MIKLOŠIČEVA STREET, Ljubljana, Competition Entry 1963, 1st Prize
- 110 HEALTH CENTRE, Ljubljana, Rudnik, Designed 1959, Constructed 1960
- 111 MOTEL, Kranjska gora, Designed 1960, Constructed 1961
- 112 "SLOVENIJALES" OFFICE BUILDING, Ljubljana, Miklošičeva Street, Designed 1959
- 113 MODERN GALLER, Belgrade, Competition Entry 1960
- 114 NEW CHAIRS, Competition Entry 1960
- 115 , Brazil, Competition Entry 1960
- 116 CELJE CITY CENTRE, Competition Entry 1960
- 117 EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF SLOVENIA, Ljubljana, Designed 1960
- 118 MONUMENT TO THE NATIONAL AND LIBERATION WAR, Jesenice, Designed and executed 1960
- 119 STANDARD DESIGN FOR A HOUSE, Bohinj, Designed 1960
- 120 "DELO" OFFICE BUILDING, Ljubljana, Competition Entry 1962, 1st Prize Ex Aequo
- 121 TWO HOUSING TOWERS, Ljubljana, Pražakova Street, Designed 1963, Constructed 1963
- 122 URBAN DESIGN SOLUTION FOR A TOURIST SETTLEMENT, Playa Biron, Cuba, Competition Entry 1963

- 123 POLICE BUILDING, Ljubljana, Moša Pijade Street, Competition Entry 1963
- 124 SERBIAN NATIONAL THEATRE, Novi Sad (Serbia), Competition Entry 1965, 1st Prize, Production Drawings 1965-1973
- 125 UNIVERSITY, Dublin, Ireland, Competition Entry 1964
- 126 YUGOSLAV EMBASSY, Moscow, Competition Entry 1964
- 127 TOURIST CENTRE, St. Stephan – Pržno (Montenegro), Competition Entry 1964, 1st Prize, Partly executed (one hotel)**
- 128 URBAN DESIGN FOR THE AREA IMMEDIATELY NEXT TO TITOVA STREET, BETWEEN TOLSTOJEVA STREET AND SPORTS STADIUM, Ljubljana, Bežigrad, Competition Entry 1964, 1st Prize
- 129 LAYOUT DESIGN, Varna (Bulgaria), International Competition Entry 1965
- 130 Regional Design, Bled, Designed 1965-1967
- 131 FERANTOV VRT RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL COMPLEX, Ljubljana, Competition Entry 1964, 1st Prize, Constructed 1967-1973**
- 132 RAVNIKAR'S APARTMENT IN FERANTOV VRT
- 133 MEMORIAL COLUMN AT FERANTOV VRT, On the site of the house of Plečnik's birth, Erected in 1976
- 134 DESIGN FOR TRONCHETTO ISLAND, Venice (Italy), International Competition Entry 1964, 1st Prize Ex Aequo, Production Drawings 1965-1967**
- 135 Department Store "Beograd", Belgrade, Competition Entry 1964
- 136 THEATRE, Budapest (Hungary), Competition Entry 1965
- 137 WORLD EXHIBITION PAVILION, Montreal (Canada), Competition Entry Sketch 1965
- 138 HOTEL "MAESTRAL", Pržno (Montenegro), Competition Entry 1965, 1st Prize, Constructed 1970-1971**
- 139 FACULTY FOR MECHANICAL ENGINEERING, Priština (Kosovo), Competition Entry 1965, 1st Prize
- 140 URBAN DESIGN, Skopje (Macedonia), International Competition Entry 1965**
- 141 EXTENSION TO THE MUNICIPALITY ASSEMBLY, Nova Gorica, Competition Entry 1965
- 142 DESIGN FOR THE PLAZA CIVIC CENTRE, San Francisco (USA), Competition Entry 1965
- 143 HOTEL MILOČER, St. Stephan (Montenegro), Designed 1966-1981
- 144 BUILDING FOR THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF MACEDONIA, Skopje (Macedonia), Competition Entry 1966**
- 145 URBAN DESIGN OF A NARROWER AREA, Zagreb, Klajićeva Street, Competition Entry 1966, Purchase
- 146 BUILDING FOR LJUBLJANA RADIO AND TELEVISION, Competition Entry 1967, Purchase
- 147 TOWN HALL, Amsterdam (Holland), Competition Entry 1967, Commendation
- 148 URBAN DESIGN PLAN OF THE NEW CENTRE, Kranj 1966, Competition Entry
- 149 TOWN HALL, Skopje (Macedonia), Competition Entry 1966, 1st Prize**
- 150 THEATRE AND CONCERT HALL, Skopje (Macedonia), Competition Entry 1967
- 151 ESPOO CITY CENTRE, Espoo (Finland), International Competition Entry 1967, Honorary Commendation**
- 152 LAY-OUT OF KAMNIK – BAKOVNIK SETTLEMENT, Designed 1968, Executed 1969-1970
- 153 HOTEL "AVALA", Budva (Montenegro), Competition Entry, 1st Prize 1968
- 154 "RUSKI CAR" NEIGHBOURHOOD, Ljubljana, Bežigrad, Competition Entry 1968, Prize
- 155 PETROL STATION, Ljubljana, Designed 1968, Constructed 1968-1969
- 156 HOTEL "CREINA", Kranj, Designed 1968, Constructed 1969-1970**
- 157 PRE-QUALIFICATION COMPETITION FOR THE SELECTION OF THE DESIGNER OF THE LJUBLJANA CASTLE, Ljubljana, Competition Entry 1969 1st Purchase
- 158 NEIGHBOURHOOD AT THE SPORTS STADIUM, Ljubljana, Bežigrad, Competition Entry 1969, 1st Prize
- 159 BEDROOM WING FOR MOTEL, Medno, Designed 1969, Constructed 1970
- 160 "GLOBUS" DEPARTMENT STORE, Kranj, Designed 1970, Constructed 1972-1973**
- 161 OFFICE BUILDING, Ljubljana, Igriška Street, Designed 1964, Constructed 1972**
- THE REVOLUTION SQUARE, Constructed 1961 – 74,**
- 162 Basement Garages and Commercial Outlets**
- 163 Maximarket and Tower C (Ljubljanska banka)**
- 164 Tower B (Iskra) and, Tower C (Ljubljanska banka)**
- 165 Building F (Annex to Ljubljanska banka)**
- 166 UNIDO BUILDING, Vienna (Austria), Competition Entry 1970
- 167 TOURIST SETTLEMENT, Lučice (Montenegro), Competition Entry 1970
- 168 HOTEL ON THE CLIFF, Ulcinj (Montenegro), Competition Entry 1970
- 169 ANNEX TO THE GYMNASIUM SECONDARY SCHOOL, Ljubljana, Šubičeva Street, Designed 1970, Construction 1971**
- 170 HOTEL "PARK" AND THE CENTRE OF BLED, Competition Entry 1971, 2nd Prize
- 171 OPERA, Belgrade, Competition Entry 1971, 2nd Prize
- 172 HOTEL, Petrovac na moru (Montenegro), Competition Entry 1971, 2nd Prize
- 173 UNIVERSITY, Priština (Kosovo), Competition Entry 1972, 1st Prize
- 174 HOTEL "AVALA", Budva (Montenegro), Designed 1972
- 175 HOTEL "BABYLON OBEROI", Baghdad (Iraq), Designed from 1974 onwards, Constructed from 1983-1984
- 176 YOUTH CULTURAL CENTRE, Banja Luka (BiH), Competition Entry 1974
- 177 HOTEL "KRVARICA", Makarska (Croatia), Competition Entry 1974-1975
- 178 "BALLHAUS", Vienna (Austria), Competition Entry 1975
- 179 PUBLIC BUILDING EXTENSION, Düsseldorf (Germany), Competition Entry 1975
- 180 GOVERNMENT PALACE EXTENSION, Ljubljana, Erjavčeva Street, Designed 1975
- 181 ANNEX TO THE SLOVENE ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES, Ljubljana, Designed 1975
- 182 HOUSING SETTLEMENT, Zagreb - South (Croatia), Competition Entry 1976
- 183 CREMATORIUM, Ljubljana, Žale Cemetery, Competition Entry 1976

- 184 HOSPITAL, Sombor, Competition Entry 1976
- 185 HOTEL, Cetinje (Montenegro), Competition Entry 1976
- 186 CANKARJEV DOM, Cultural and Congress Centre, Ljubljana, Designed 1977, Constructed 1982-1983**
- 187 CENTRE FOR SOCIAL ORGANISATIONS, Ljubljana, Competition Entry 1980, Special Prize outside Competition
- 188 EXTENSION TO CANKARJEVA ZALOŽBA, Ljubljana, Kopitarjeva Street, Designed 1981, Constructed 1981-1982**
- 189 ARCHITECTURAL VISIONS, Exhibition in Graz (Austria), Designed 1984, Executed 1984
- 190 OBELISK CELEBRATING THE END OF THE WAR, Ljubljana, Congress Square, Designed 1984
- 191 DESIGN COMPONENTS FOR THE URBAN DESIGN OF LJUBLJANA, Competition Entry 1985, Recognition
- 192 SOUTH BEŽIGRAD NARROWER AREA, Ljubljana, Competition Entry 1986, Purchase
- 193 LJUBLJANA CENTRE, Between Aškerčeva Street, VI. korpusa Street, Kidričeva Street and Titova Street, Study 1986
- 194 MESSEPALAST, Vienna (Austria), Competition Entry 1987
- 195 DESIGN FOR PREŠERN SQUARE, Ljubljana, Designed 1988, Partly executed 1988
- 196 VERTICAL EXTENSION OF THE MODERN GALLERY, Ljubljana, Designed 1988-1993
- 197 NATIONAL AND UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, Ljubljana, Competition Entry 1989, Commendation
- 198 NATIONAL GALLERY EXTENSION, Ljubljana, Puharjeva Street, Competition Entry 1989, 1st Prize, Constructed 1992-1993

Works indicated in bold are presented in this monography.

This Chronology of Edvard Ravnikar's works is taken from
Hommage à Edvard Ravnikar, ed. by France Ivanšek, Ljubljana
1995

Biographies



Edvard Ravnikar

Professor Edvard Ravnikar is the central figure of Slovene post-war architecture. His buildings, projects, writing and teaching left a decisive mark in Slovenia. As Plečnik's most prominent student and Le Corbusier's collaborator on the designs for Algiers, Ravnikar managed to coin an original combination of Plečnik's architectural poetics, relationship with material, concern for detail and sophisticated architectural drawing with Le Corbusier's approaches to modern architectural and urban planning.

Ravnikar was an independent artistic personality, who laid down the principles of Slovene Modern architecture. From the middle of the 20th century until his death he directed the development of Slovene architecture. During this time he created the most impressive architectural opus of Modern architecture in the country. However, his work cannot be limited to his built projects alone. Ravnikar was crucial also for the development of the Ljubljana School of Architecture and was an important contributor to the Slovene and foreign architectural press media. All of this greatly influenced entire generations of Slovene architects and is the reason Ravnikar's influence is present in all landmark moments in Slovene architecture, urban planning and, to some extent, even design.

Ravnikar was born in 1907. He studied architecture in Vienna and Ljubljana. He graduated as Prof. Jože Plečnik's student in 1935. After graduation Ravnikar worked for two years with Plečnik on his designs for the National and University Library. In 1939 he worked in Le Corbusier's atelier in Paris for several months. From 1946 to 1980 he served as a professor at the Architectural Department of the Ljubljana University. He died in 1993.

Ravnikar's most important works include: the Modern Gallery in Ljubljana, 1951; the Rab Memorial Complex, 1953; the Cemetery for hostages in Draga and in Begunje, 1953; the National Banks in Celje and in Kranj, 1959; the Municipality Assembly Building in Kranj, 1960; the Ljudska pravica Publishing House and Printworks in Ljubljana, 1961; the Revolution Square, 1961-74, including Cankarjev dom, Cultural and Congress Centre in Ljubljana, 1983; the Structural Engineering Faculty in Ljubljana, 1966; Hotel Creina in Kranj, 1970; Hotel

Maestral in Pržno, 1971; Globus Department Store in Kranj, 1973; Ferantov vrt Residential and Commercial Complex in Ljubljana, 1973; Hotel Oberoi in Baghdad, 1984, and more.

Ravnikar was also known outside what was then Yugoslavia. In 1953, he was awarded 3rd prize at the international competition for the regulation of Ruissalo island in Finland; in 1964, an ex aequo prize for the regulation of Venice's northern Tronchetto district; and in 1967 he was awarded an Honourable Mention for his entry in the international competition for the Espoo town centre, again in Finland. He was a visiting professor and lecturer at many foreign universities and conferences and a member of many international professional associations.

Finally, Ravnikar was awarded the most prestigious cultural and professional awards: the Prešern Award in 1961 and in 1978, the Plečnik Award in 1975 and in 1987, the AVNOJ Award in 1982, the Herder Award in Vienna, Austria in 1988, and an honorary doctorate of the Technical University in Graz, Austria, in 1988. He was a member of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, and a corresponding member of the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts.

Friedrich Achleitner

Friedrich Achleitner was born in Schalchen, Austria, in 1930, and later studied architecture at Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien, under Clemens Holzmeister. After graduating in 1953, he studied in a Master Class in stage design under Emil Pirchan. He worked as a freelance architect until 1958, when he embarked on a career as an author (member of the „Wiener Gruppe“), an architecture critic (*Abendzeitung* and *Die Presse*) and a writer/journalist.

He taught, first at the Academy of Fine Arts and later as Professor of History and Architectural Theory at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna 1963-83; and as Head of the Department, 1983-98. In 1998 he became Professor Emeritus.

Achleitner is the author of numerous literary works including: *Quadratroman* (1973), *Kaas* (1995), *Die Plotteggs kommen* (1995), *Einschlafgeschichten* (2003), *Wiener Linien* (2004), *Und oder oder und* (2006) and *Der springende Punkt* (2009); as well as architectural publications including: *Österreichische Architektur Im 20. Jahrhundert* (in 4 volumes, 1980-95), *Nieder mit Fischer von Erlach* (1986), *Die rückwärts gewandte Utopie* (1994), *Wiener Architektur* (1996) and *Region, ein Konstrukt? Regionalismus, ein Pleite?* (1997).

His prizes and awards include: 1957 Theodor Körner-Preis (with J. G. Gsteu), 1980 Award for architectural writing by the Austrian Architectural Association, 1982 Prechtl-Medal from Vienna Technical University, 1983 Camillo Sitte Award, 1984 State Award for Cultural writing, 1990 City of Vienna Prize for Cultural writing, 1994 Award for Building Culture in Carinthia, 1995 Golden Award of the City of Vienna, 1999 Award from Architecture Museum Basel 1999, 2004 Mauriz-Balzerek-Award, and in 2009 he became an honorary member of the Vienna Secession.

William J. R. Curtis

William J. R. Curtis is a historian, critic, painter and photographer. Born in England in 1948, he studied at the Courtauld Institute, London and at Harvard University. He has taught at many universities including Harvard University, the University of California, ETSAB Barcelona and the Architectural Association, London and in 2003-4 occupied the post of Slade Professor of Fine Art in the University of Cambridge.

Among his best known books are: *Modern Architecture Since 1900* (Phaidon, 3rd edition, 1996, German edition, *Moderne Architektur seit 1900*, Phaidon Verlag, 2002); *Le Corbusier: Ideas and Forms* (Phaidon, 1986, German edition, *Le Corbusier: Ideen und Formen*, DVA, 1987); *Balkrishna Doshi: an Architecture for India* (Mapin, Rizzoli 1988); and *Denys Lasdun: Architecture, City, Landscape* (Phaidon, 1994, German edition, *Denys Lasdun: Architektur, Stadt, Landschaft*, Ernst & Sohn, 1994).

Curtis has written on a wide range of subjects, ancient and modern, and is a regular contributor to the daily and weekly press (for example *El País* and *Building Design*) and to international reviews such as *Architectural Review*, *Arquitectura Viva*, *Architectural Record*, *ARK*, *Arkitektur DK*, *Bauwelt*, *D'Architectures* and *Il Giornale dell'Architettura*. He has published many critical texts and

interviews in *El Croquis* on figures as diverse as Alvaro Siza, Rafael Moneo, Tadao Ando, Herzog & deMeuron and Juan Navarro Baldeweg.

Curtis has written numerous introductions to monographs and catalogues, among others: *Le Corbusier: Architect of the Century* (London, 1987), *Finland Builds* (Helsinki, 1992), *Alvar Aalto in Seven Buildings* (Helsinki, 1998), *The Pritzker Architecture Prize* (Chicago, 1999), *Abstractions in Space* (Pulitzer Foundation, 2001), *Téodoro González de León: Complete Works* (Arquine 2004), *Barcelona 1992-2004* (Gustavo Gili, 2004), *RCR Aranda Pigem Vilalta Arquitectes* (Gustavo Gili, 2004), *Alvar Aalto, Maison Louis Carré* (Helsinki, 2008). His most recent book is *La Estructura de las sombras / The Structure of Shadows, Bell-Lloc* (Barcelona, 2009).

Curtis has had several exhibitions of his paintings and drawings accompanied by catalogues, including *Mental Landscapes* (Alvar Aalto Academy, Helsinki, 2000) and *Mental Landscapes/Paisajes Mentales* (Círculo de Bellas Artes, Madrid, 2002). He has also exhibited and published his photographs, for example: *Structures of Light* (Alvar Aalto Academy, Helsinki, 2007).

Among his awards are: the Alice Davis Hitchcock Medal of the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain (1984), Silver Medal, World Biennale of Architecture (1989), a National Honors Society Gold Medal in Architecture and Allied Arts (USA) (1999) and a Medal of the Museum of Finnish Architecture Commemorating the 50th Anniversary (2006).

Friedrich Kurrent

Professor emeritus Friedrich Kurrent was born in 1931 in Hintersee, near Salzburg, Austria, and today lives in Vienna and Sommerein. He studied architecture at the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna, under Clemens Holzmeister. Since 1952, when he graduated, he has worked as a freelance architect.

He was a member of Arbeitsgruppe 4 (until 1964, with Wilhelm Holzbauer and until 1973, with Johannes Spalt), and worked as an assistant to Konrad Wachsmann and Ernst A. Plischke. In 1965, he was a founding member of the Austrian Society for Architecture (Österreichische Gesellschaft für Architektur). From 1973 to 1996, he was Professor of Design, Interior Design and Sacred Architecture at the Faculty of Architecture, Technical University of Munich. Since 1987, he has been a member of the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts.

Kurrent's built projects include: Church in Salzburg-Parsch (with the Arbeitsgruppe 4); Ennsleite pastoral care centre in Steyr (with the Arbeitsgruppe 4 and Johann Georg Gsteu); Sankt Josef college in Salzburg-Aigen (with the Arbeitsgruppe 4); Floridsdorf central bank in Vienna (with Johannes Spalt); Nobilgasse flats in Vienna; mountain chapel in Ramingstein; Evangelical Segenskirche church in Aschheim; Catholic parish church of Sankt Laurentius in Kirchham; and the Maria Biljan-Bilger exhibition hall in Sommerein.

Among his awards are: 1979 City of Vienna Prize for Architecture, 1997 Austrian Award for Science and Art, 1998 special prize for "exemplary construction using glued-laminated timber", Holzbaupreis, Bavarian State Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Forestry (for the Segenskirche church in Aschheim), 2001 Golden Award

of the City of Vienna, and the 2007 Silver Award of the State of Salzburg.

Boris Podrecca

Boris Podrecca grew up in Trieste, and later studied in Vienna under Roland Rainer. Today he has architectural practices in Vienna and in Venice.

He has served as guest professor in Lausanne, Paris, Venice, Philadelphia, London, Vienna, and Harvard-Cambridge (Boston). Since 1988 he has served as a professor at the University of Stuttgart, as Director of the Institute of Design and Theory of Space.

His many built projects include several residential and public buildings in Austria, including Vienna Insurance Group headquarters, Graz; in Vienna the Millennium Tower, the Insurance Offices Basler, the conversion of the Ringturm and the Vienna International Biocenter.

International projects include conversion of the Museum of Modern Art Ca'Pesaro and the residential housing Judeca Nova in Venice; the Grifone Area and hotels in Bolzano, Italy; conversion of the University of Maribor, Slovenia; hotel Mons in Ljubljana, Slovenia, hotel resorts in Dubrovnik and Zadar in Croatia, and Campione Lago di Garda, Italy (under construction). Also under construction is the Museum of Porcellaine in Limoges, France and the Museum of Science and Technology in Belgrade.

He has also authored public spaces in Vienna, Salzburg, Leoben, St. Pölten, Ottensheim (Austria), Cormons, Verona, Motta di Livenza, Ravenna, and Trieste (Italy), Piran and Idrija (Slovenia) as well as Split (Croatia).

Podrecca's honours and prizes include Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres, Paris; Kulturpreis der Stadt Wien für Architektur; Jože Plečnik-Preis, Ljubljana; Premio San Giusto d'oro, Trieste; Doctor honoris causa, University of Maribor; Ehrenzeichen für Verdienste um das Land Wien; and Doctor honoris causa, University of Belgrade.

Luciano Semerani

Luciano Semerani is Professor and Director of the PhD program in Architectural Composition at the University IUAV in Venice. He has also served as visiting professor at the A.B.K. in Vienna and at Cooper Union in New York.

He is the co-author of several large-scale realisations, including the Trieste hospital complex Cattinara; the Venice hospital SS.Giovanni e Paolo; as well as urban plans for Grado, Pesaro, and Trieste.

Luciano Semerani was scientific curator of the "Trouver Trieste" exhibition (Paris, 1985) and "Lina Bo Bardi architetto" exhibition (Venice 2004; Sao Paulo, Brazil 2006); and chief curator of the Architectural Gallery at the Fondazione Masieri in Venice, between 1988 and 1992.

He has also served as editor of the architectural magazine "Phalaris" (1988-1992) and "Dizionario critico dell'architettura" (1993). He has published thirteen books, among them: "Gli elementi della città", Bari 1970; "Passaggio a Nord Est", Milano 1991; "Progetti per una città", Milano 1980; "L'altro moderno", Torino 2000; "Quaranta domande a Luciano Semerani", Napoli 2005; "Memoria,

Ascesi, Rivoluzione", Venezia 2006; "L'esperienza del simbolo", Napoli 2007; and "La casa", Milano 2008.

He has lectured at seminars and conferences including the Biennale Young Architects in Paris, Quadriennale di Roma, Biennale di Venezia, Triennale di Milano, and at the Salomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.

Luciano Semerani is an honourable member of the "Accademia di S.Luca" and the Gestaltungsrat of Salzburg, and received a Medal of Honour by the Order of Italian Architects.

Peter Skalar

Peter Skalar graduated in architecture at Ljubljana University in 1966 with Prof. Ravnikar. Since 1966 he has worked in the field of visual communications as a freelance designer. In 1969 he was one of the co-founders of the MSSV Studio. He was a member (1980-84) of the committee that formed the Design study program at the graduate level at the Fine Arts Academy of the Ljubljana University.

Since 1984 he has taught at the Design Department of the Fine Arts Academy. From 1988 he was the Chair of the Department and since 1992, served as its Vice-Dean. In 2003 he co-founded the Brumen Foundation and became the board president.

Peter Skalar has taken part in numerous national and international exhibitions, including: Slovene Graphics in Moscow & Frankfurt; 100 Posters from Yugoslavia, Zagreb; Contemporary Slovene Design, Beograd, Novi Sad, Zagreb, Celje, Maribor; BIO Ljubljana, where he won 3 Gold Medals; Zgraf Zagreb; the Warsaw Poster Biennale; and the Biennale of Applied Graphics Brno.

His work has been widely published in, among others, Sinteza, Top Symbols and Trade Marks of the World, Graphis Annual, and Graphic Elements of the World. His work includes the visual identity for Ljubljanska banka (with J. Skalar, J. Suhadolc, M. Vipotnik), signage for Cankarjev dom and Ljubljana Clinical Centre, artist monographs, and a book on Edvard Ravnikar.

For his work in the field of design his awards include the Zupančič Award, the Prešeren Foundation Award, Plečnik Medal and the collective Prešeren Award.

Aleš Vodopivec

Aleš Vodopivec graduated in architecture at Ljubljana University in 1974 from the class of Professor Edvard Ravnikar. While in architecture school he also pursued the study of philosophy. From 1978 to 1993 he worked as a freelance architect, and in 1994 he received a doctoral degree in architecture from the Architectural Faculty of the University of Ljubljana, where he joined the faculty in 1993.

Now a full professor at the Faculty of Architecture, he has served as a visiting professor and lecturer in, among others, Austria, France, Italy, the Czech Republic, Greece, Turkey and Israel.

Aleš Vodopivec continues to write on architecture and urban design as well as education and other cultural issues, as he has done for more than three decades. He also edited a book on Edvard Ravnikar's writings that appeared in 2007.

His main architectural realisations include the annex to Hotel Jezero, Bohinj; Memorial and Service Buildings, Srebrniče Cemetery, Novo mesto; and a residential complex in Maribor (with G. Medvešek and N. Gabrovec).

Publications featuring his work include *Architectural Review*, *Detail*, *Architectural Record*, *Architecture Today*, *Costruire*, *ARH*, *Architektur+Wettbewerbe*, *Oris*, and *Piranesi*.

Among his awards are the two Plečnik Medals, the Piranesi Award, the Prešeren Fund Award, the Piranesi International Award, and the Plečnik Award.

Rok Žnidaršič

After graduating from the Faculty of Architecture in Ljubljana in 2004, and winning the Plečnik student award for his diploma thesis 'Edvard Ravnikar's Design Method', Rok Žnidaršič became an associate member of the architectural studio ATELIER arhitekti. Since 2005 he has served as Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Architecture, Ljubljana.

He is the author of several completed built projects for private clients in Slovenia and Croatia: House at Uršna sela, 2000; The house facing the sun, Dolenjske Toplice, 2001; Architect Herman Hus house, refurbishment and annex, Ljubljana, 2004; House at Mengeš, 2004 - present; Mali Vrh house, 2006; House at Kurešček, 2006 - present; The Dravlje atria, residential complex, 2006 - present.

Competitions and public projects include exhibition designs for centennial of architect Edvard Ravnikar, (with M. Kregar, M. Kerin), Ljubljana, Vienna, Spittal, Nova Gorica, 2007-08; 1st prize for urban design and architectural project for Mesarski bridge and Petkovšek embankment in Ljubljana (with N. Blažko, T. Bojc, J. Kobe, M. Kovačič, S. Mlakar, U. Podlipnik, T. Habič, J. Brdar), 2008; 1st prize for urban design and architectural project for Old City hall and square refurbishment with new Public library Maribor (with D. Fortuna, N. Lebar, J. Kobe, T. Stanič), 2008.