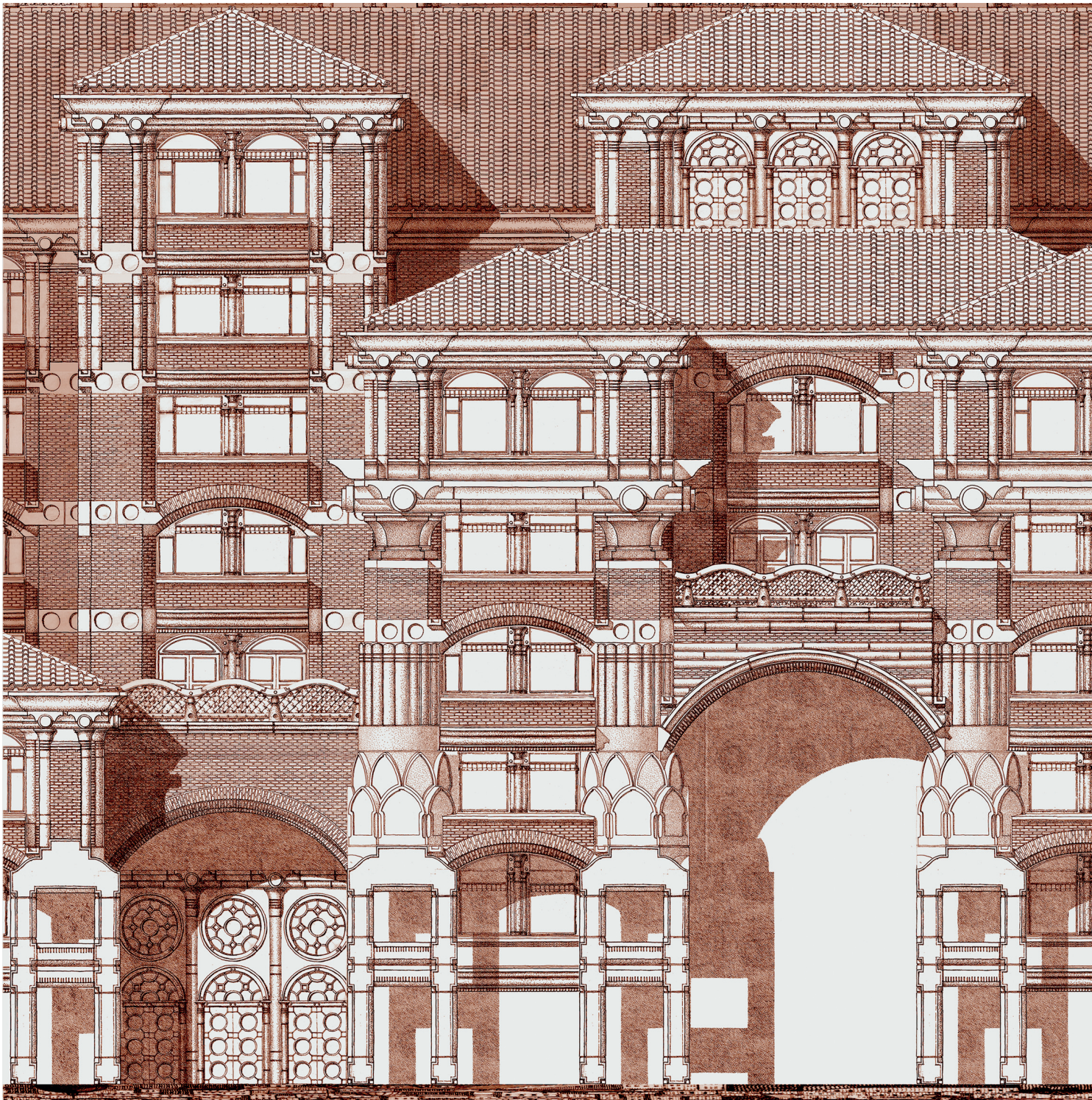# the Thirty-Eighth Lecture

## *Digesting Battersea*

JOA

I introduce this drawing of one of the four, identical, elevations of my proposal for a new library for Rice University, Houston, Texas, so as to show what I mean by a central 'doorway' that is symbolic, and a field for iconic arrays. The two smaller, side 'doors' penetrate through the building, in all four directions, as is shown by the sketch section, top right. I proposed to build the upper five floors on top of the existing library while spanning over it on four 'bridge-sized' veerendel beams. It was no more than the sort of engineering that Houston did every day for its skyscrapers. The books would be transferred upwards, the existing library demolished and the lower five floors built off the ground. The real pay-off was the huge covered space at ground level for an all-weather social centre to the campus. This design did not reach the stage of being iconically engineered.

I have already described the misunderstanding of Beaux Arts site-planning that we owe to Le Corbusier's Ville Radieuse and its banalisation of the 'narrative axis' as an elevated autoroute. My intention for the boulevard-streets of Battersea was that they would be peculiarly sacralised by being free of underground parking ramps. Deep excavations would be confined inside the plot-boundaries. Streets should be 'iconically-engineered' as solidly 'ground Level'. I would prohibit any elevator car signature denoting the ground as, for example: "Level 0". The surface of the Boulevard is a traffic route, but it is paved in stone and harbours 'forest' trees like the London Plane. Culture is understood as an idea, a fiction. But it lives on the surface of a real planet.
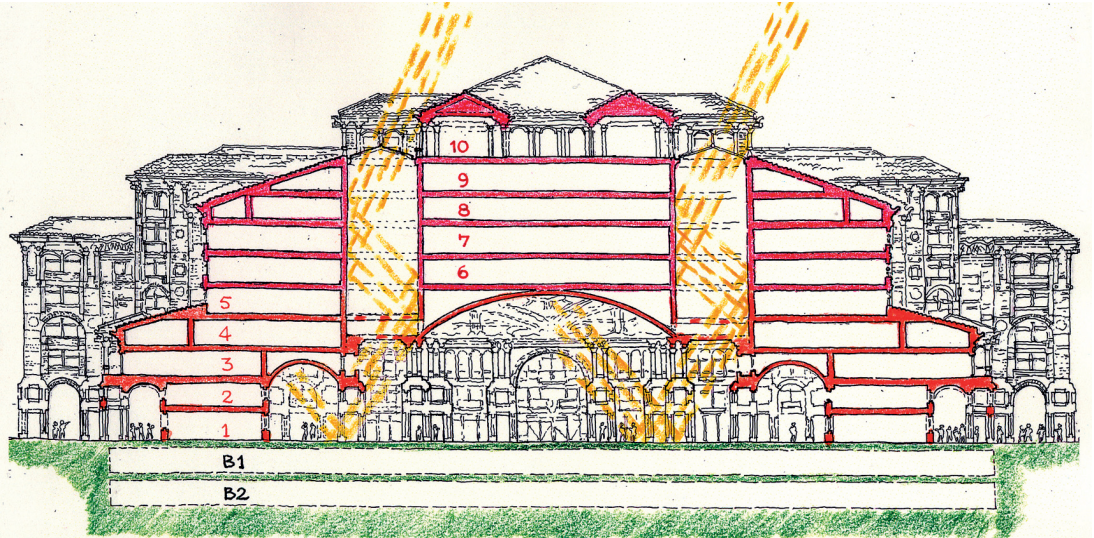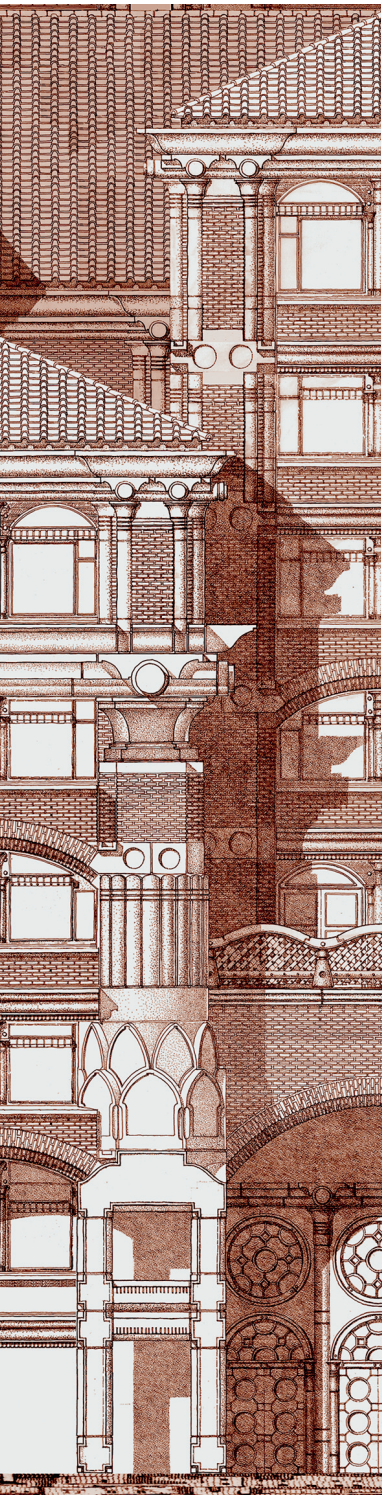
INDICATIVE CROSS-SECTION OF THE "MOUNTAIN OF BOOKS" and "MARKETPLACE OF IDEAS"
FLOORS 6 THROUGH 10: STAGE 1 "OVERBUILD". FLOORS 1 THROUGH 5: STAGE 2 "UNDERBUILD" (+B1&B2)
NOTES: THE "MARKETPLACE OF IDEAS" (OR "CENTENARY COMMONS") HAS BEEN DRAWN SO AS TO EXPLOIT THE MAXIMUM VOID SPACE PHYSICALLY
AVAILABLE UNDER THE "FLYING" SIXTH FLOOR. SUNLIGHT ENTERS THIS SPACE DOWN FOUR MIRRORISED LIGHT-PIPES IN EACH CORNER OF THE SPACE
THE DOME, FLOOR, COLUMNS ETC WOULD BE DECORATED TO CELEBRATE 100 YEARS OF RICE UNIVERSITY -USING TECHNIQUES ESTABLISHED BY JOA.
THE "UNDERBUILD" IS ALL INTERIOR WORK - OF SHEETROCK, PLASTER & PAINT. ALL EXTERNAL WALLS & ROOFS IN BOTH STAGES 1&2 CAN BE ACCESSED
BY CRANE & MOVEABLE SCAFFOLDING. IT IS BETTER TO COMPLETE EXTERNAL WALL FROM THE TOP DOWN! CONSULT <www.johnoutram.com
/fcomplex.html >
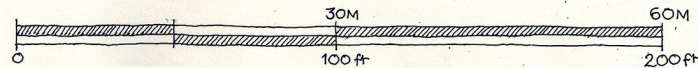
This is 'heroic' engineering turned into Architecture rather than, as is more usual at the end of the 20C, the reverse.

I thought, as I turned away from the Funstation to develop ideas about the rest of the site, of how to implement this overall design. I could see that Victor Hwang, my Owner-Client, liked the way that JOA was thinking. Chinese city-planning shares more with that of the West than might be apparent by looking at our respective Architectures. Beaux-Arts planning would pose China few problems when compared to the antipathy it can generate in a Saxon breast. Hwang had no problem at all with large ideas and symmetry. It was familiar to him. He called Battersea, and only half in jest, his 'Middle Kingdom'. Victor had been educated in Britain and I wondered whether he was familiar with Tolkien's 'Middle Earth' – (or as I preferred – Muddle Earth), that amiable shambles in which our island's natives crave to be swaddled. JOA's designs found less recognition from the Australian Managers of Parkview. Their version of Chinese culture was the commercial hell (apologies – 'urban village') my Empire had made out of Hong Kong.

But a city-plan had to be bigger than any one person. If a city was to 'work', in the sense of making something that was more than its several built parts, then its area-planning culture must continue to inspire and 'govern' during several generations. I talked to Victor about the need to institute Battersea in the form of an iconography that would establish the 'meanings' of the various parts of Architecture, as well as the larger elements proper to area planning itself - such as block and boulevard.

The Library was Borghes-like in its bi-axial symmetry. it was the navel of the campus. Books have lost their primacy to the Internet yet remain each generation's access to the unknown and prohibited. This was a pyramid of browsers, looking for what they could only know when they found it. It was to hatch a cafe-culture that would discuss ideas rather than adolescent sex and sport.

But, as I talked, as ever in brief and in hurried snatches, I could see that what united us more than any similarities in our shared 'higher culture' was the vast deluge of architectural illiteracy which had slowly spread over the globe during the last 100 years, gaining ever greater momentum until it was now the universal context, without distinction, of all cultures. What could I say to Victor when his in-house Architect, suggested (and only half in jest) that our (smaller - only 500 rooms), Hotel might be themed as 'Polynesian'. Poly-Amnesian was nearer to Venturi's 'Lessons to be learned from Las Vegas' of how to make fun of ancient cultures from the insecure position of not having invented any intellectually-capable architectural culture of one's own!

Not that my intuitions were incorrect. My desire for a document that would establish the design-culture for Battersea was confirmed when I was shown around Las Vegas, later in 1997, by Parkview's chosen designers - all of them of British origin. At first I did not understand why I was so regularly contradicted each time I admired some small fragment of the iconic plethora of that city. I kept on being told that these small flashes of originality were "wrong".

I was told that they had "no style".

Yet for me they were the only fragments in this desert of kitsch with any 'style' at all! Then I understood that the professional Designers of Vegas (Architects have been demoted to mere Project Managers and no longer design anything except timelines) had, back in the office, a library of 'style-books' with titles like Egyptian, Roman, Decon, Camelot Gothic, Monte Carlo, Venetian, High-Tech, Parisian, and so on. An object was "wrong", if it did not conform to one of these received 'styles'.

'High-culture' appears a somewhat literal metaphor. It arrives via the 'Raft of the Colonists' - from afar if not entirely from above. The Raft may arrive, as with some invasions, unbidden. Like 'education' it may, at first be welcomed. But, as with the 'ducare' in that word, it brings discipline, denial and difficulty. If the gift of the Raft is the Sublime, its means are Sublimation.

Everything in Vegas is, today, a deliberate plagiarism.
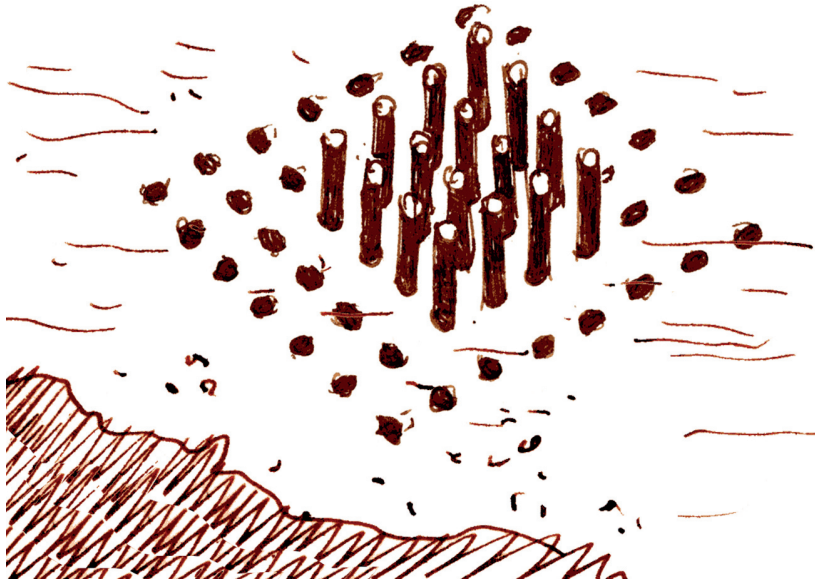

Every building in a culture that aims 'high' must record the arrival of the 'Raft of Reason' and its quartering of the mountain of detritus that is the Heap of History. It must record the breaking of the grip of the Coil of Intertia figured by the serpent of infinite resistance, so as to release the Black Sun, dormant seed of the Genius Loci. The syntax and lexicon of a 'High Architecture' goes on to inscribe the up-flowering of the Narrative of Foundation that institutes civilisation.

The Liebeskind-Zaha-Gehry 'Decon' style-manual' was already, in 1997, if not in employment, already a book of 'cuttings'. Nor was this a merely mischievous pastime for the graphically-gifted. These Designers completed 4,000-bed casino-hotels in three years. For objects of complex form and high workmanship to be sourced from all over the world, it was necessary that manufacturers shared a common 'style'. So Vegas had turned to the Museums and the Professors of Art History for the economic law of an 'aesthetics of scale'. Vegas had reversed the fruit of their labours. The Historian's style-label now births the object, and not, as in the history of the real world, the reverse. Vegas, and her multiplying offspring (she is already the fastest-growing city in the USA), is the Rome of the Michaelangelo Lampshade Empire where there is no boundary between commerce and culture.

In the words of Warhol: "It's all the same".

But then that was Modernity for you - a thing that made fictions into facts - a thing that went too fast for reality to leave its trace upon its smooth, ever-youthful, face. Modernity without blueprints is cities without plans and architectures without grammars and lexicons. The only thing wrong with Vegas, apart from amperage overloads that constantly 'browned-out' the casino lighting, is that it is all so very 'Museum'. If only it could copulate its iconics as hard as it does itself and then (of course) actually have offspring, there might be some hope of Venturi's premise (promise?) bearing fruit.

The *only way* to deliver the contemporary human lifespace from the genius of a Modernism emptied of everything except sensation is to found its design upon an iconic formalism as rigorous as any of the received 'historic styles'. Vegas proved to me that constructions of a contemporary scope, scale and speed were possible with complex iconic grammars. Why should they not be when the 20C media effect them in the film industry - that locus from whence come all of the actual designers of Vegas? All that they lack is a design language that is properly architectural, and capable of properly urbane cities.

Every human lifespace that seeks to escape from the trash that is the Kitsch of Vegas, or the deliberate trashing of contemporary (pop) culture that is the Decon of 'Face-Lift', Pixel Blur, or the Diagonal of Denial, must secure itself upon the Negation that is the Hypostylar Forest, born of the Ocean, of the time before Time began. This uses Nature epistemologically, as a familiar idea, and not as a rough-sawnboarded ticket to an unattainable, sub-human, Naturalism..

And where to seek this 'culture' but Architecture itself - a medium not yet 'practically' deciphered despite the millenia of its employment? Yet those who have sought it in 'history' from the Renaissance until Venturi have found it only in its outward forms and proposed it only in the 'tragic' mode, as the ruin of a lost medium overwhelmed by the circumstances of human use that I call the 'cataclysm of domesticity'.

But Architecture itself had, long–ago, assimilated these continuous descents into disorder – these burying–under an ever–accumulating Heap of History.
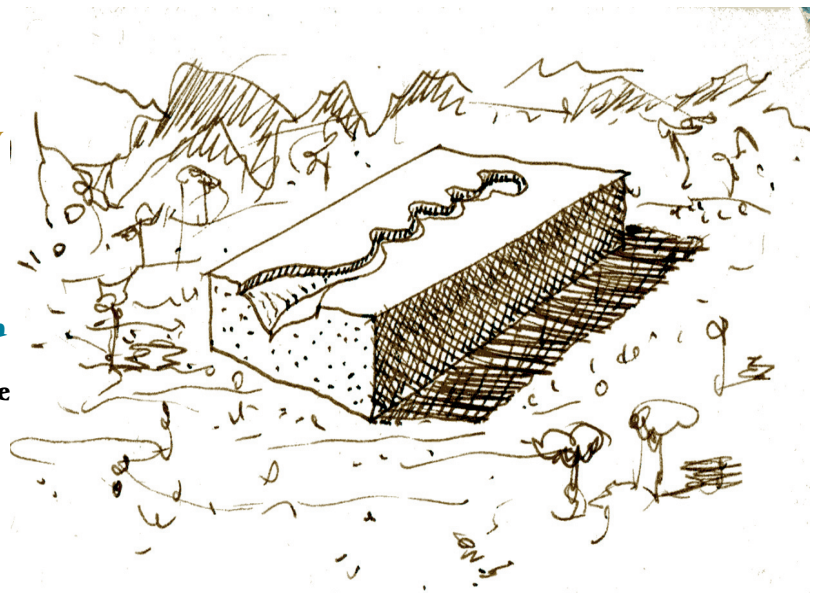
It was always the Advent of the Raft, and its triggering of the catastrophic Narrative of Foundation, that parted the heap and energised the buried seed of the genius loci (when, that is, it was ready for it). Civilisation returned, again and again, through the advent of the Rites of Architecture and their completion in the City. The drama is always subverted by the 'natural' pressures of an 'historic' entropy that tends to blur the clarity of a lifespace and a life ordered by meaning. It is an endless drama that, and here is the dismal novelty, failed to be performed during the second half of the 20C.

The fault for this can only be laid at the feet of Architects.

It can be laid, more particularly, upon the Writers who have failed to render the Medium useful to Practitioners. But then how could anyone, however clever, 'theorise' a medium of which they had no practical dexterity? For the situation at the end of the 20C was that no Practioner writes Architectural Theory. It is written by Professional Philosophers, hired for the task, who are mainly unversed in the practical exercise of the medium. For they have neither planned, elevated, nor detailed, let alone built, a real building.
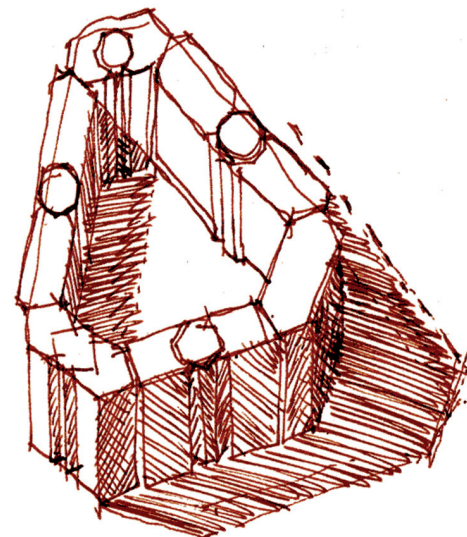
Any building that aspires to situate the citizens of its 'just modalities' in the Mirror of Eternity must, after founding them upon Nothing, submitting to the advent of the Raft of the Disciplines and the Rending of the mountainous Heap of History, then order its lifespace according to the civilities of Somatic Time. The Horizons of Mortality, deployed along their Fluvial analogy, inscribe that which it is to live a humane life. They advertise, within their Narratives, all of the Histories by which we hope to become what we can and ought to be. They create, after the long and elaborate discourses of Architecture, a Space of Appearances in which we become whole beings both in ourselves, and in the eyes of others.

The whole of the 20C was spent in attempting to invent an 'alternative Architecture' The effort failed, ending in an iconic of comprehensive denial.

Architecture is irreducible to any 'alternative'.

Nothing but the thing itself can carry the name of 'Architecture'. Nor can Architecture be generated out of anything else except its humanly-given phenomenology. While the employment of this rite can not create anything other than Architecture it can, because of the number of its rites, and their inherent contradictions and reverses, not to say negations, never be short of variety in its instances. Any culture that wishes to employ the medium has merely to discourse 'Architecture' with itself. The culture we live in today should find this easier than any in history by virtue of its hugely increased capacities.

This is the best that can be done with the shambolically rustic footprints that the 'farming' Saxons left on the quadrations of Rome. The corners and the sides can be 'composed'. I show the treatment, to the Left, of a corner-tower.
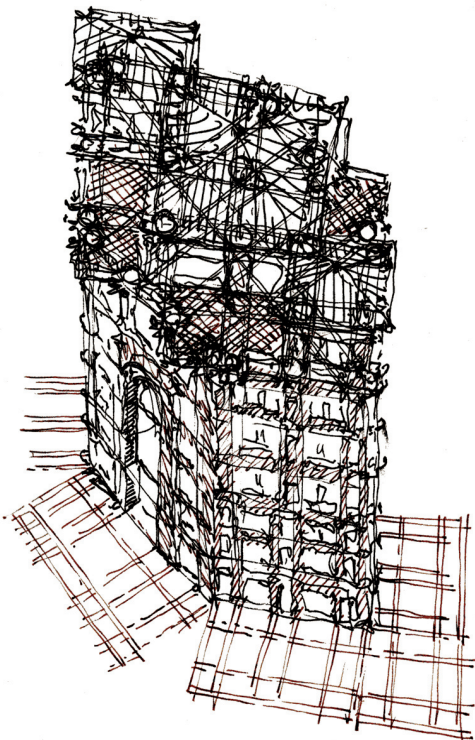
A corner-tower seen from above in Axonometric projection. An unitary hypostyle, on a shambolic Saxon footprint, is impossible. They must be crashed together like Japanese crockery.

The Taboo of the Twentieth Century had nothing to do with anything except a determination not to employ 'Architecture' to solve its problems. This was a refusal that, while originating outside of the Architectural Profession, has now been assimilated to its Professional ideologies and hierarchies. The very Profession that should be capable of providing Architecture has become one of the chief impediments to its supply.

My 'decipherment' enables me to propose that we must leave behind the 'Classical' requiems for the beautiful ruin of an incomprehensible medium. We must do as the Ancients really did, and inscribe the human lifespace with the indelible marks of an 'Architecture' as we patently understand it. These can no longer be the transcriptions of an occluded ritual, authenticated merely by immemorial practices. Architecture for us can only be the discourses of a lifespace suited to inhabitation by thinking beings. The icons which we must, and can, employ should denote ideas that are as patent and evident as they are mysterious and demanding of interrogation.

JOA prescribe 'decoration' - and most especially in colour. This is what the Ancients did, and for a simple reason. Colour transforms a mere object into a medium that comes 'alive' to the human mind by 'bearing understandings'.
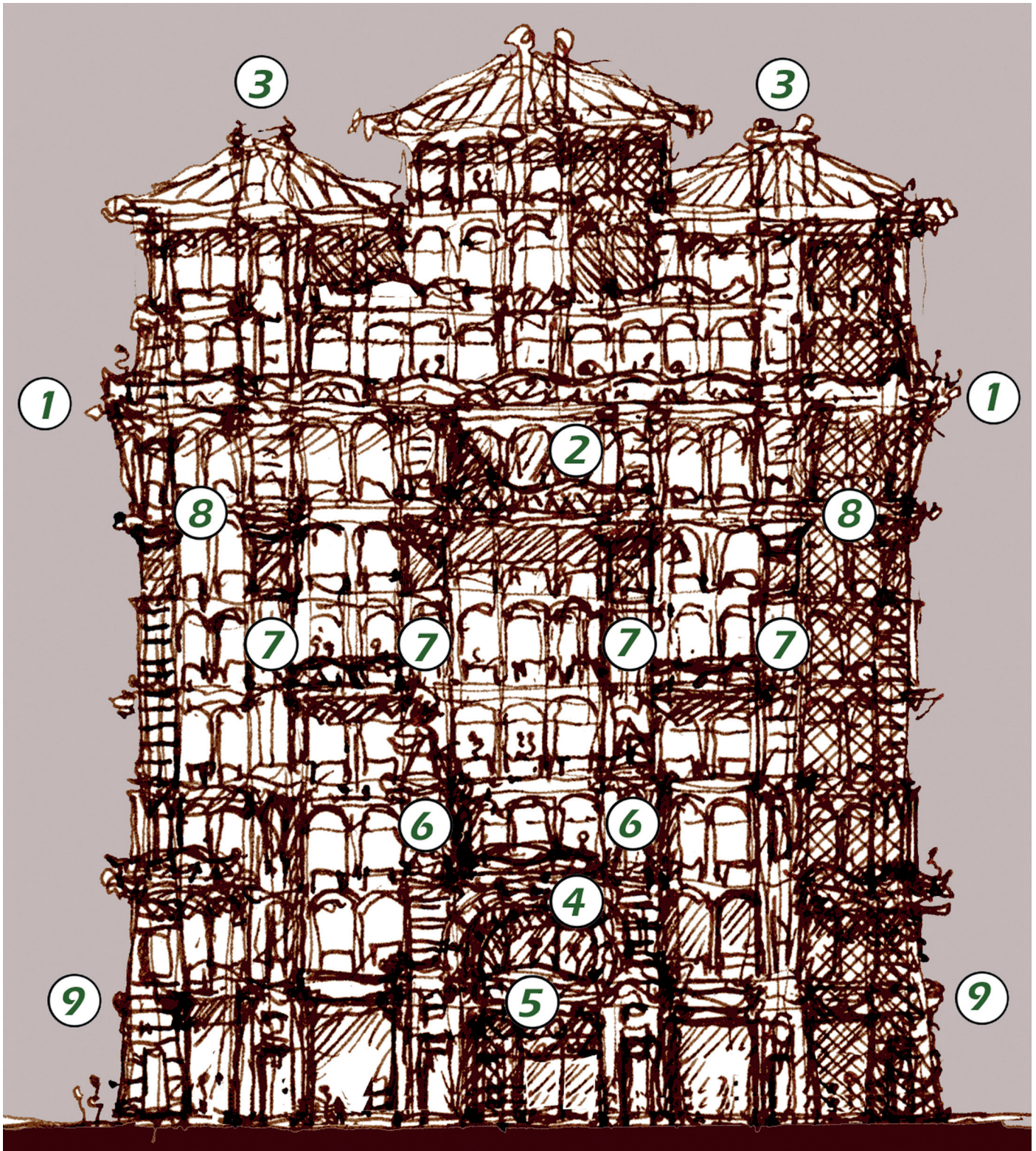
This 'Corner-Tower' is 12 storeys high. If plots are developed with an understanding of the 'law' of Lionel March, that is to say with high-dentity plot-perimeters and low-density plot-centres, than a city of 'high-densities' needs only this many storeys. Forest trees, in the Northern, temperate, latitudes, reach up only as high as the eighth floor. This level is marked with the main Entablature (1), or Raft. A balcony(2) is inset, just below this, into the centre of the Eighth floor. Like those in Duncan hall, it signs the Origin of the Fluvial Narrative. Like Duncan Hall, as well, this 'springing' is flanked by roof-kiosks (3) that allow themselves to be read as the Mountains that bracket the springing of Somatic Time. Down at street-level, the Arched Door (4) into the Valley that is the Interior, is provided with a Balcony of Appearances (5) and two small'city-gate' towers (6). These towers extend upwards as two of the four 'major-order' Hypostylar facade-columns(7) which 'support/moor' the Entablature.The sides of this tower (8) slope away from its front facade so as to align with the non-orthogonal footprint of the buildings along the sides of a 'Saxon Isola'.The extreme edge of these sides (9) is 'Rusticated' with masonry that recalls the fate of the Heap of History after it had been quadrated by the Columna Lucis. Only architectural illiterates, or those determined to deny it, build glass corners. For without the evidences of the Architectural Advent the artifice of civility will seem merely 'natural' and entirely fail.

A CITY DESIGNED ON 'FUNCTIONALIST' LINES CAN NEVER BE ANYTHING MORE THAN A PARKING-LOT FOR BOXES.

It makes no difference whether the boxes are early 20C orthogonal or late 20C morphed, skewed or warped.

They are still just boxes of different sorts united in their barren inability to match-up-to the cities of Renaissance Europe. The cities of the 20C are shanty-towns that can only be compared on scales that register a merely sensual salubrity. Conceptually, they add-up to nothing more than 'plots' for parking real estate.

It was Andrew Saint who said that, until the late 19C, all of the buildings of London had been designed as houses. It was a 'functionalist' understanding of a fact whose real meaning and nature had begun by being consistently misunderstood by Europe and the West in general, and then, during the 20C, energetically ignored, if not actively suppressed. The cities of Renaissance Europe were not designed as agregations of 'homes'. Such ideas only create Levittowns. These wonderful cities, so ignorantly destroyed during the 20C (and now the 21st), were 'urbane landscape's' which individual owners, and their Architects, ingeniously adapted, with a very primitive technology, for a great variety of uses, all of which could come and go within their permanent and relatively unchanging conceptually-sophisticated lifespace.

It has not been so difficult to turn the powerful technology of our own time to the long-neglected task of rendering the 'Architectural Landscape' capable of conceptual inhabitation. The tools that JOA have proved to this purpose are capable, as one should expect, of ordering large, city-scale projects.
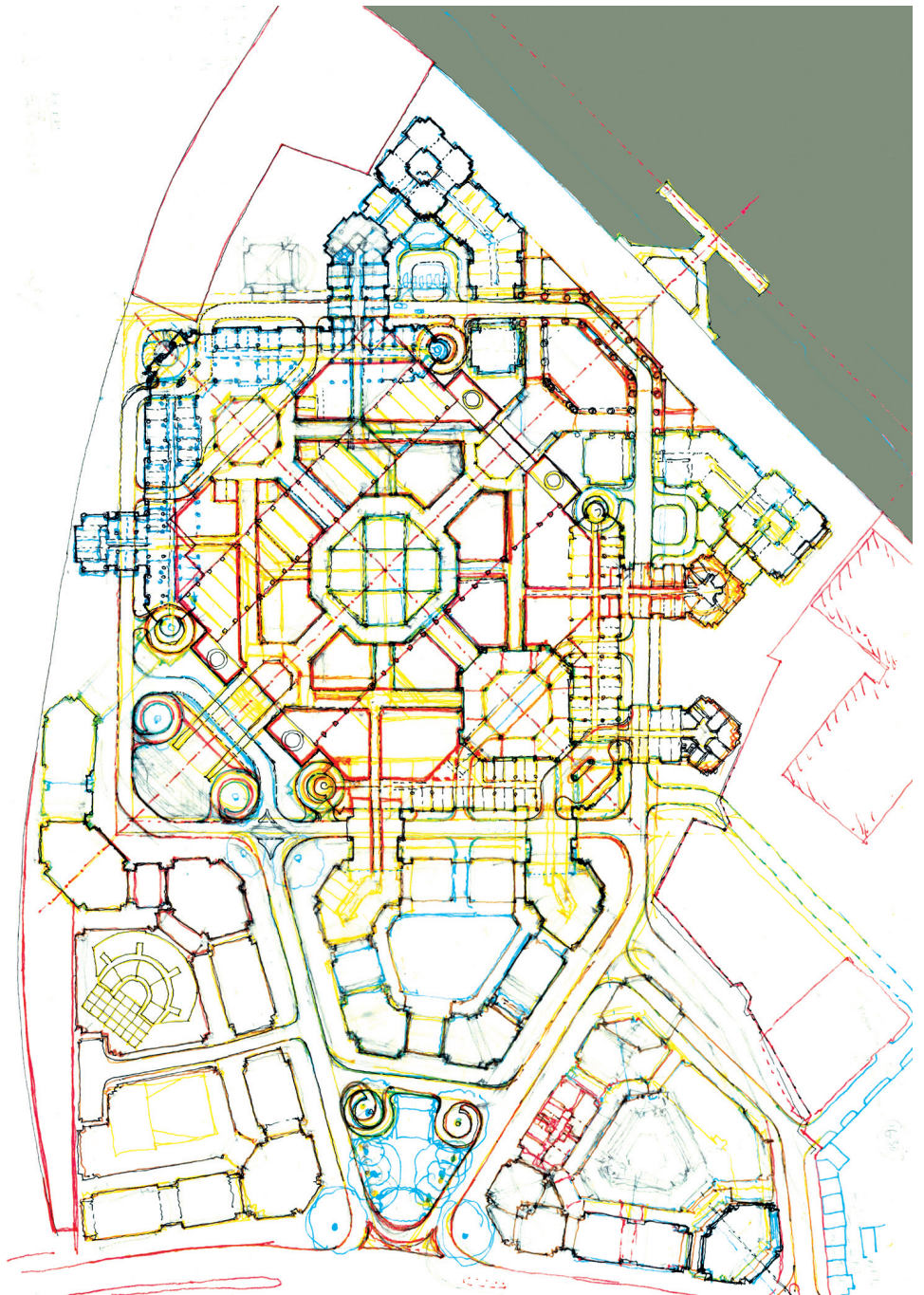
Most of the many previous plans for this project revealed their priorities by putting the old power station (like some poisonous snake) in a shapeless bag. The pristine beauty of quadration were reserved for the less problematic ancilliary accommodations. I did the reverse. I responded to the power of Scotts monstrosity by burying it inside more quadration than it could reasonably expect, and tossed the rest of the site to the picturesquely rustic morphologies to which their users would have already been inured.
Yet I was intrigued to discover that the iconic richness of the Sixth Order was able to redeem even these three, tri-angular, plots. Complexes of axes, corners, and entries came and went. This was composition of the old, pre-modern sort - before the taboos of the 20C had come to prohibit urbanity.

JOA found it very possible to accommodate the different sorts of lifespace required by the Developer of the Battersea Site.

The **Right Bank** was always the 'wrong' side of the Thames. Low-lying and prone to flooding, mists and miasmas, it was the site of the cheaper sorts of whoring, Shakespeare's playhouses and, today, assorted gasometers and power stations. The railways dived underground, out of sight, in the elevated North. They rode high over the depressed South, spewing noise and smuts over London's poor. It was the perfect site for my ambitions. Battersea promised no 'view out'. Its " rolling fields" clattered with the clang of rolling stock. Its "rushing rivers" were perfumed by rubbish-barges. If deliverance was to be had it was only by Battersea 'looking-in' upon what Battersea itself had made of itself, for itself. This could be no bland glass box advantaging its dull self-image by gazing out over a Corbusian park-jungle titvatingly ornamented with the ruins of incomprehensible, but envied, urbanities.

But what else was there to look-out upon, in the high-density, low-rise design prescribed by the city-planning authority of Wandsworth (with which I was in entire agreement), but that long-dead medium of 'Architecture'?

My pleasure at this terrible fate can, dear Listener, be easily imagined!

This early, computer-modelled, design shows the quadrated 'isola' of the Funstation at a more developed stage than that of its three ancilliary Isolae along Battersea Park Road. The railway can be seen along the bottom of the page. It was projected that most day-visitors to the Funstation would arrive at its Station, directly opposite one facade of the old Power Station.The 'tent' of the Ciirque du Soleil, and the Disney theatre can be seen in the 'back-lot of this Isola. I saw no reason to reveal their blind walls, which would either be cheap and nasty or covered in giant (temporary) Mickey-Mouse figures in internally-illuminated plastic. So they are wrapped-around in some 'thin', daylit-hungry, commercial space whose corner-plots would be designed to carry the heavier iconic loads of the entrances to the two theatres.

The back-side of the central Isola was going to be invaded by two extensions of the larger, 700-room, hotel. Its facade to Battersea Park Road was composed of two corner-towers joined by a short communicating block in which an prominent Dentrance would give onto a deep-space Isola-interior proposed for the somewhat mysterious 'Showroom' user. The third Isola, furthest from the Railway Station, was mainly residential. It had an inner garden, which could be built-over some commercial space - in the manner of my 'Handy-Square' model.

What else was there but the 'street (that I elevated to the abjured Francophonism of 'Boulevard'), and the back-yard that I graced with Alberti's project of the "philosopher's garden".

An octagonal roof (1) marked the intersection of the central axis of the Funstation with the long curve of the Station platform. This uses a North-European tradition of entering under a single tower'. The 'tent' of the Cirque du Soleil (2) occupied the back lot between the Station and the 'Plaza' in front of the Funstation. The entry to the Cirque was 'through' a Corner-Tower (3) The roof of the tent' is sloped to allow light and air to reach the lower floors of the 'thin', street-side building (4).

The West Rise (5) is planned as a boulevard with forest trees planted into solid earth floored in stone. No parking ramps disfigure its 'geological' tranquillity. Ramps are found only after crossing the plot-boundaries into the blocks.

The Central Isola is shown sectioned through the rotunda (6) at the centre of its three roof-glazed arcades. These serve the three floors (7) of 'Product Showcase' users. A garden (8) for residents' use is shown planted on the remainder of the Showcase roof. Service trucks circulate around a sunken perimeter road (9) whose height is divided into two to be used as vehicle parking (10).

Most of the commercial space is allocated to the thin-body building along the heavily-trafficked and noisy Battersea Park Road (11). The residential accommodation is located along the quieter, tree-lined new boulevards of West and East Rise. All residential apartments and duplexes overlook the quiet, noise-shielded roof-gardens (8) inside each isola-block. The 'product showcase'space was required to expand into the Easternmost isola-block. It is entered here through the sides of the block (12) rather than through its corner-towers (13), as in the central block.

STATION   CIRQUE DU SOLEIL   SERVICE ROAD   APARTMENTS   WEST RISE   APARTMENTS
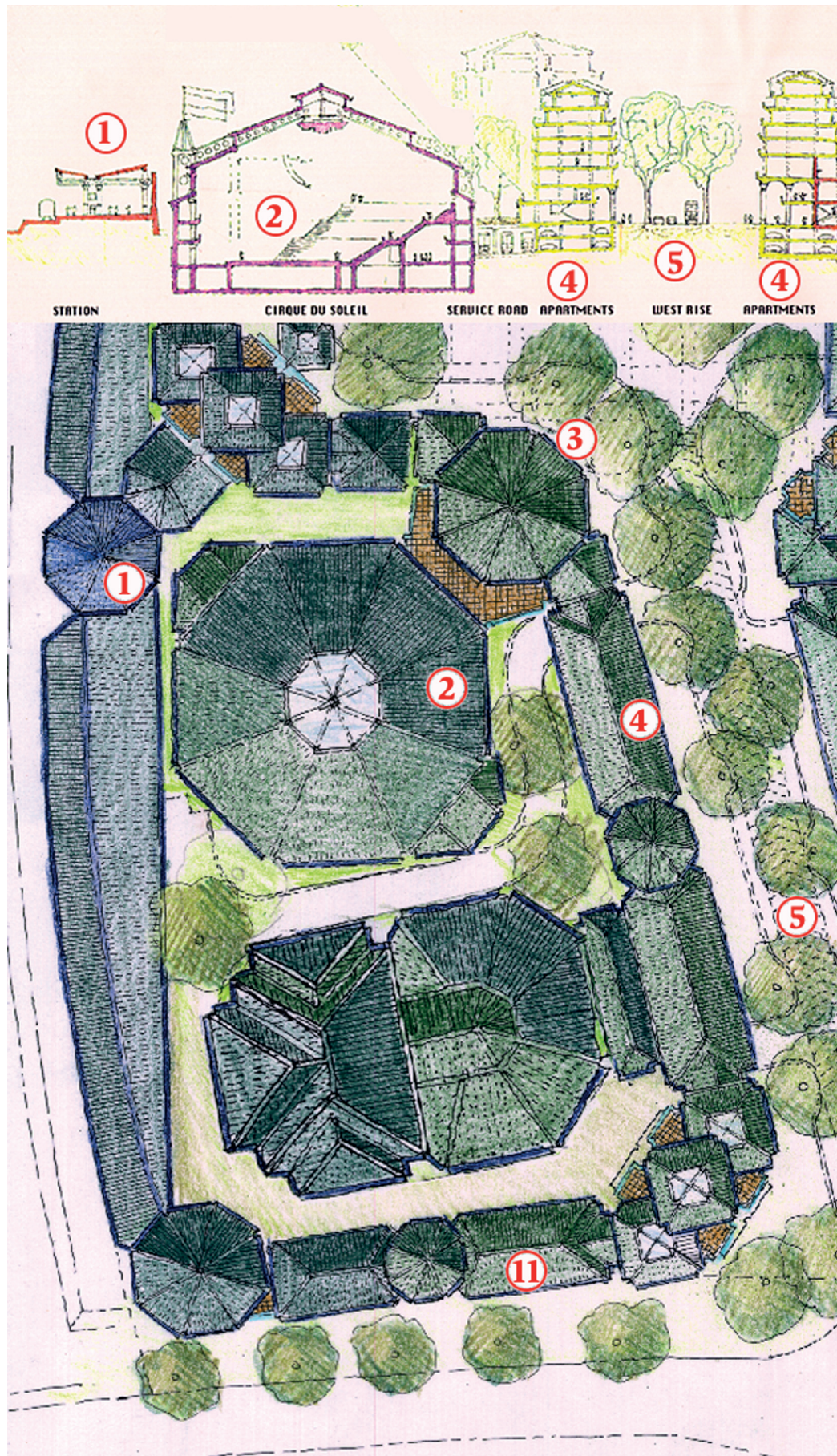
This is the opposite of contemporary 'parking-lot'' city-design in which increasingly wonky iconic boxes are merely littered about. A human lifespace designed around a set of urbane narratives becomes a simple, easily-manipulated, city-planning syntax. This allows us to shape any site, however wonkily Saxon, so that it becomes not anly lexically patent but capable of carrying ornament capable of dominating the trash of popular commerce.
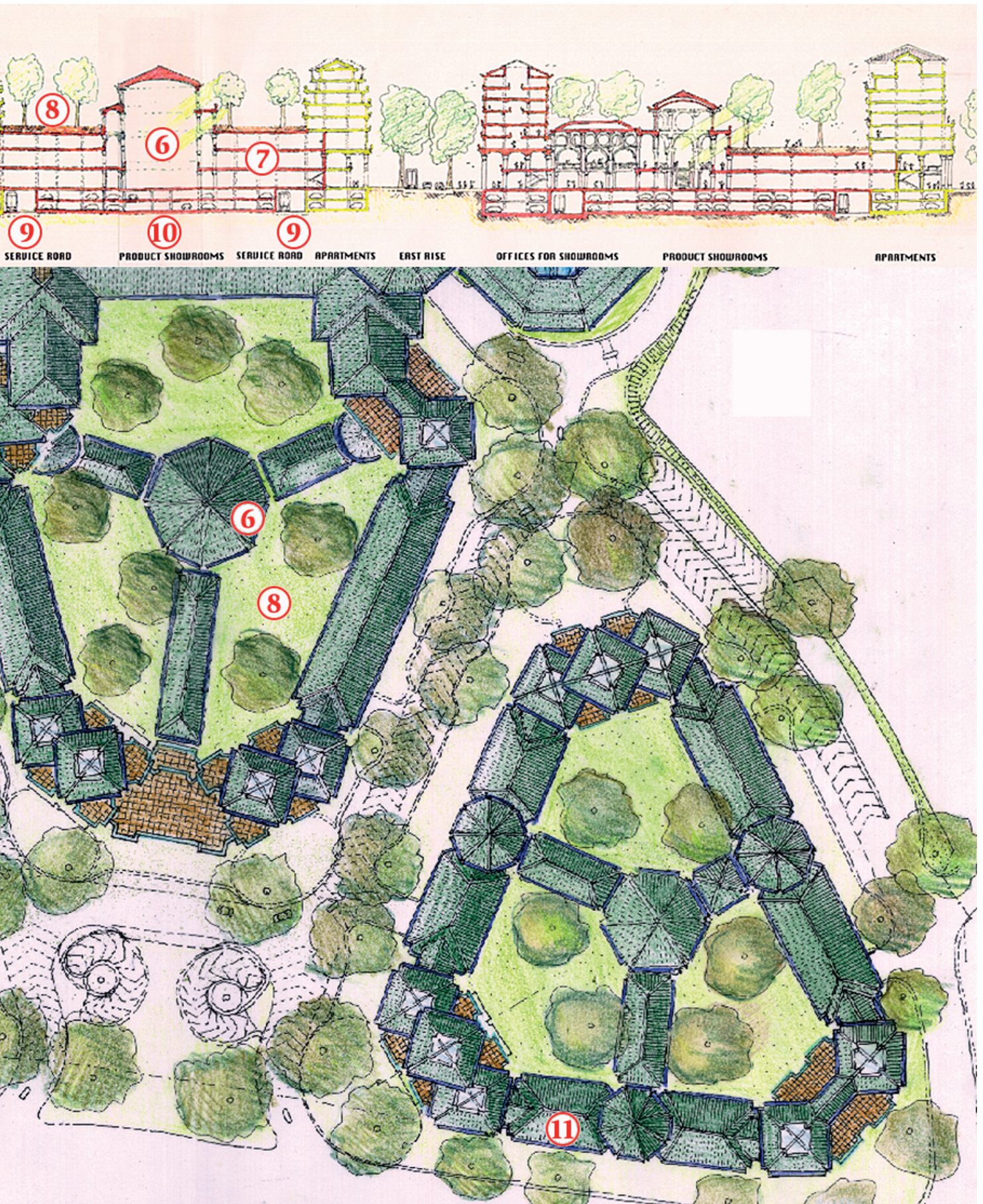
Paradoxically, this 'putting into its place of commerce' allows its iconic populism to flourish. I showed this by putting a Macdonalds into my facade for Blackfriars. It thrives, and is dwarfed. The iconic richness of an Architecture that has been re-founded on my 'decipherments' is easily capable, when built with the material, technical, and intellectual resources at our disposal today, of keeping the human mind a "king of infinite space" within the confines of the plazas, courts and boulevards of a city. Constraint is the precondition to freedom.

All of the legally permitted floorspace was accommodated within this thick-and-thin body city-planning strategy. The outer street-walls, containing mainly offices, were of a modestly conventional height along the main road (1). The entrance to the interiors of the isola-blocks was marked by single, slightly-emphatic, towers (2). The main entrance to the whole site was not confused by any pusillaninous'plan-libre' diffidence, but opened, at a bend in the centre of the street-wall, as 'Gateway Square' (3). It fore-courted a pair of 'Corner Towers' (4) that bracketed a walker's entrance (5) that led into the arcaded Retail-Showrooms of the Central Block (6). This central block was bracketed by the two Corner-Towers (7) that ended the isola-blocks along Battersea Park Road. Automobiles were siphoned-off early, by two ramps in this square, (8) into parking under the Square and the Blocks. At this point, following Beaux-Arts principles, the main circulation bifurcated. West Rise, to the left (9) , framed the Southern face of the Power Station. East Rise, to the right (10), led around the perimeter of the site to reach the two hotels and the River. The ballroom of the biggest, 700-room, hotel can be seen overhanging its porte cochere (11).
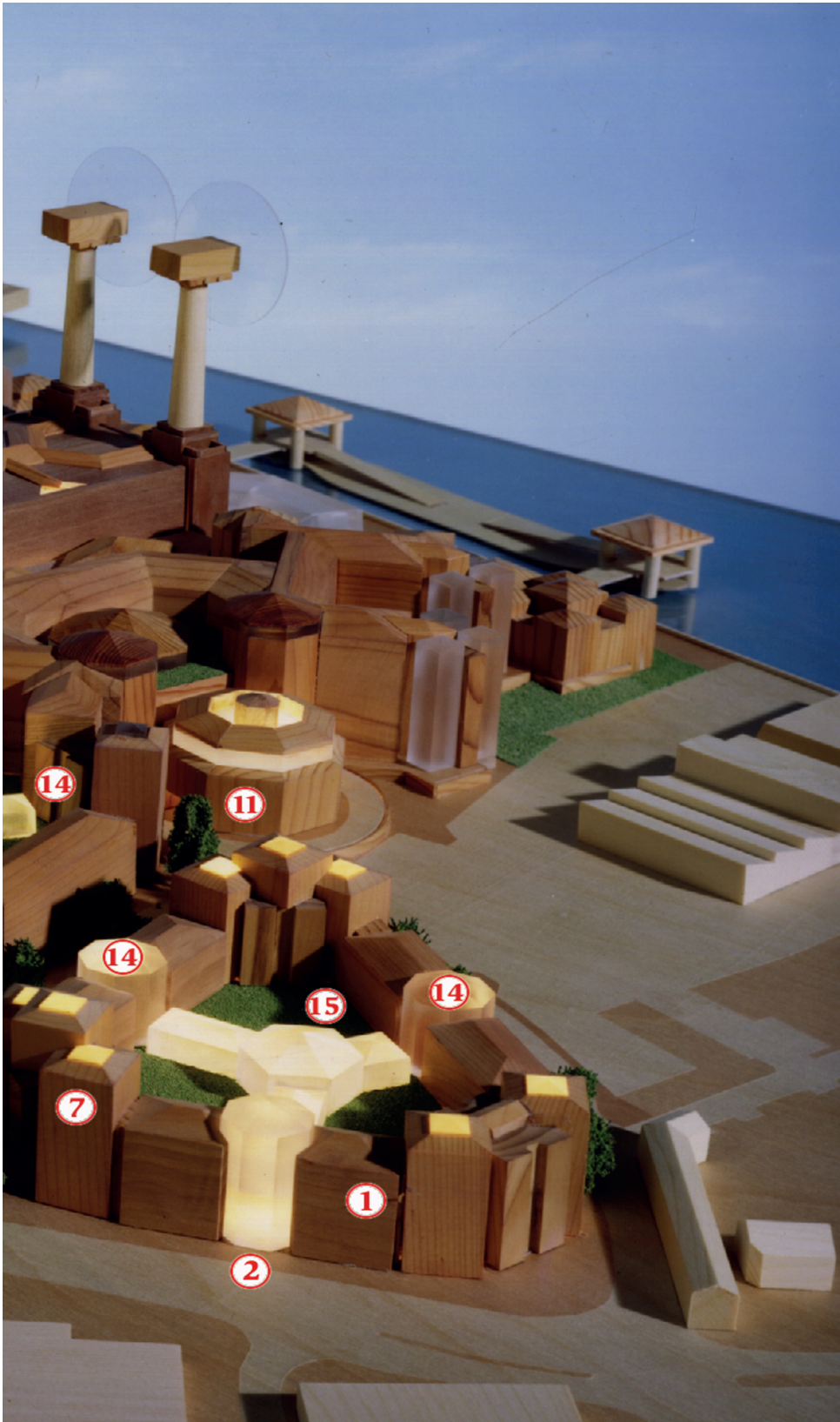
The fly-tower of the (thick-body) Disney Theatre (12) can be seen in front of the (thick-body) 'permanent tent' of Cirque du Soleil (13). Their un-windowed walls provide none of the 'eyes on the street' needed for public safety. So they do not make good street facades. Being largely invisible from the street, they can also be cheaply-built. 'Thick-body' buildings can advertise themselves by roof-top extensions. But, as with the Retail showroom arcades in the centres of the central and right-hand isola-blocks, thick-body buildings hidden inside the block advertise themselves mainly wherever they penetrate the wall to the street (14). The upper levels of the thin-body buildings are used for apartments and duplexes which can access the quiet, noise-shielded, private gardens (15) in the centre of the island-blocks.

Architects find that it takes years of experience before they can predict with accuracy how a little drawing can turn into a complete human lifespace. It can hardly be surprising, then, that a tiny model of a building, seen from above, will invariably mislead. Our eye remembers what a material feels like. We feel our way down streets and over roofs. Do we ever do such a thing in real life? I do not think so.

So I ordered mahogany for a model presented to English Heritage in the late summer of 1997. I did not order the pale beech or the self-illuminated perspex favoured by my professional peers. I wanted to make the point that this was neither a crystal city of glass nor an equally vacuous composition in nameless white planes.

Dark red mahogany swallowed the light.

IT WAS LIKE THE SKINLESS RED MEAT OF A FLAYED CARCASS.

I needed to force the observer to intuit that the making of this design was, first of all its gross distribution around the thick-and-thin body syntax, and second its iconically rich inscription by a literate Architectural lexicon.

It was the modelmakers, Tetra, who thought of enlivening the dun brown mass by illuminating the vertical and horizontal internal circulation of the blocks by shining a light up perspex blocks from below.

I wanted the model to be studied and understood, not to be a 'thing of beauty'. Like drawings, models to the city-planner are not the thing itself. They are merely a tool, a means to an end.

THICK-BODY BUILDINGS.

- **(1)** **Main Hall of the Power Station**
- **(2)** **Side Halls of the Power Station**
- **(3)** **Cirque du Soleil**
- **(4)** **Disney Theatre**
- **(5)** **Product Showrooms**
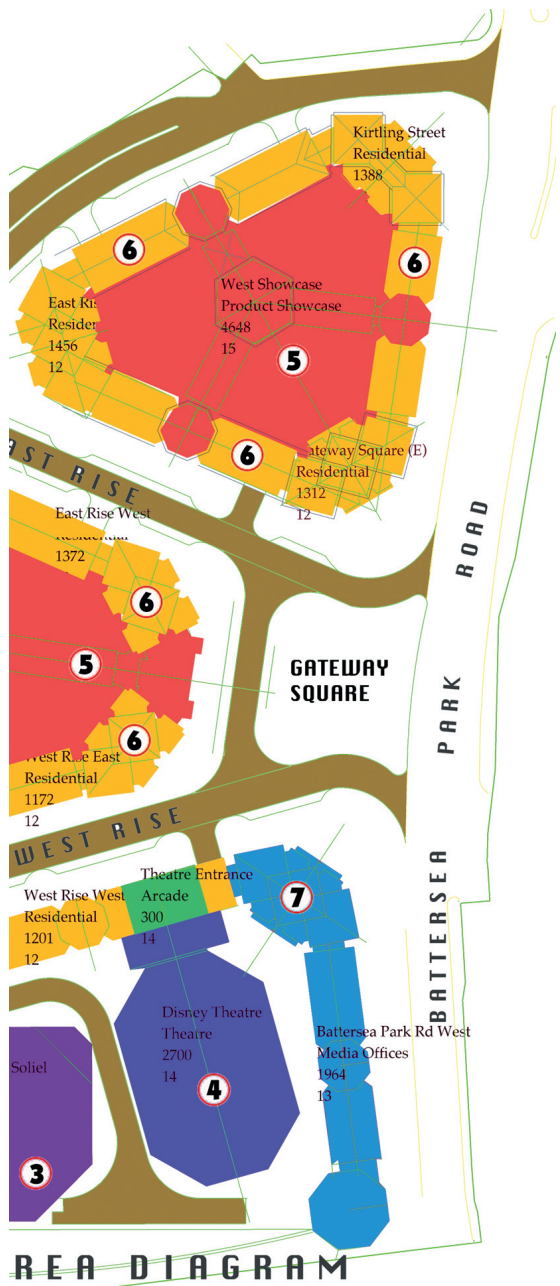
THIN-BODY BUILDINGS

- **(6)** **Residential Apartments**
- **(7)** **Offices & B2 Industry**
- **(8)** **500-room Hotel**
- **(9)** **700-room Hotel**

Lantana East
Post production Studios
2361
16

East Hotel
Conference Hotel
11178
17

Lantana West
Post Production Studios
2361
16

Showcase West
Product Showcase
6102
15

Battersea Square Garden
Retail
21335
18

West Hotel
Family Hotel
7583
17

Cirque du
Theatre
3713
14

Station
Residential
1675

S C H E M E 'B' – A

Attic buildings broken into "huts"

gateway towers with kiosks at roof level.

"big" coloured cornice simpler "wall" treatment

"double volume" treatment with "piano nobile" and balcony.

rectangular paving with roadway marked by bollards and trees.

HOW TO MAKE AN "URBAN(E) ROOM"

This sketch shows how to transform a traffic-duct into a boulevard fit for walking human beings. The floor is patterned and the cornice is projected to conceptually enclose the boulevard-space. The traffic-duct, which is theoretically of infinite length also needs to be terminated by corner[kiosks/

The coloured plan, above, shows how the thin-body buildings wrap around the thick-body ones. There are three types of buildings that require daylight – Apartments (6), Offices (7) and Hotels (8&9). Of the thick-body buildings that need less or no daylight there are four sorts– the Funstation itself (1&2), the 'permanent tent' of the Cirque (3), the Disney Theatre (4) and the two blocks of Product Showrooms (5). These last have gardens on their roofs so the amount of skylighting to their central circulation competes with the areas of verdure available to the apartment-residents.
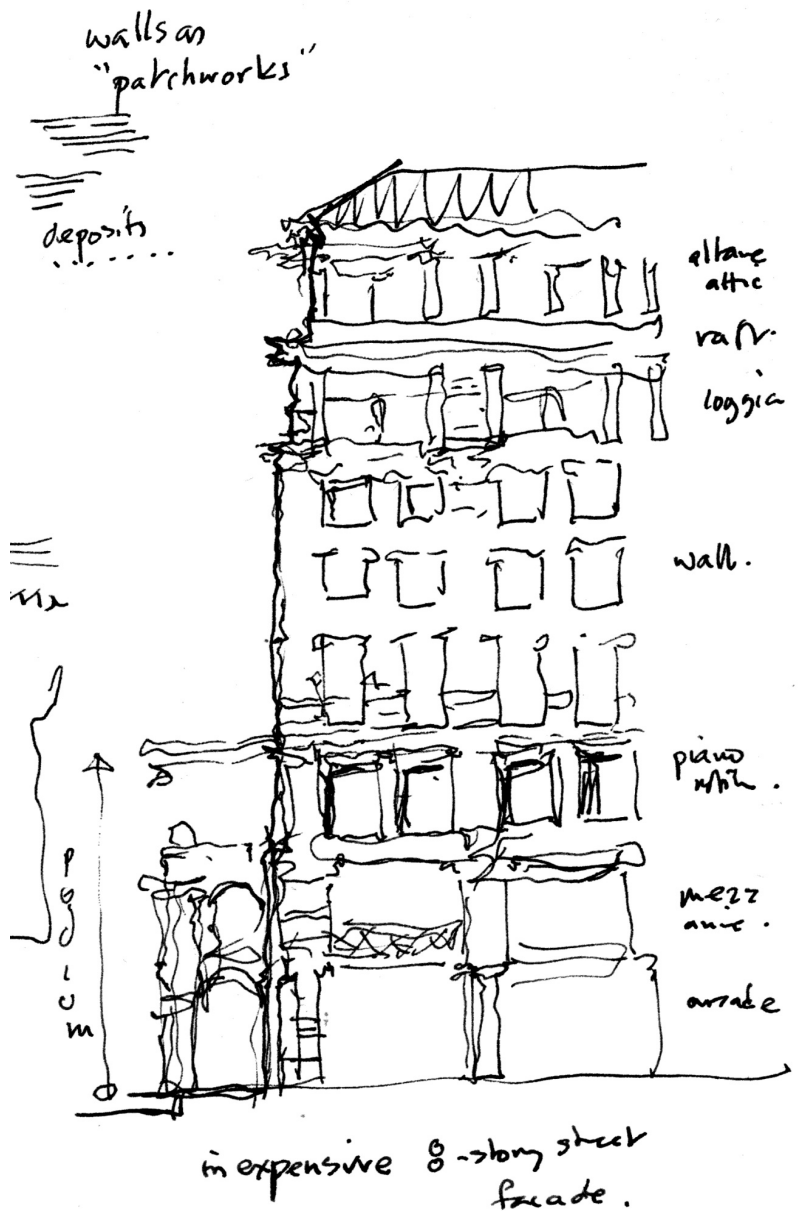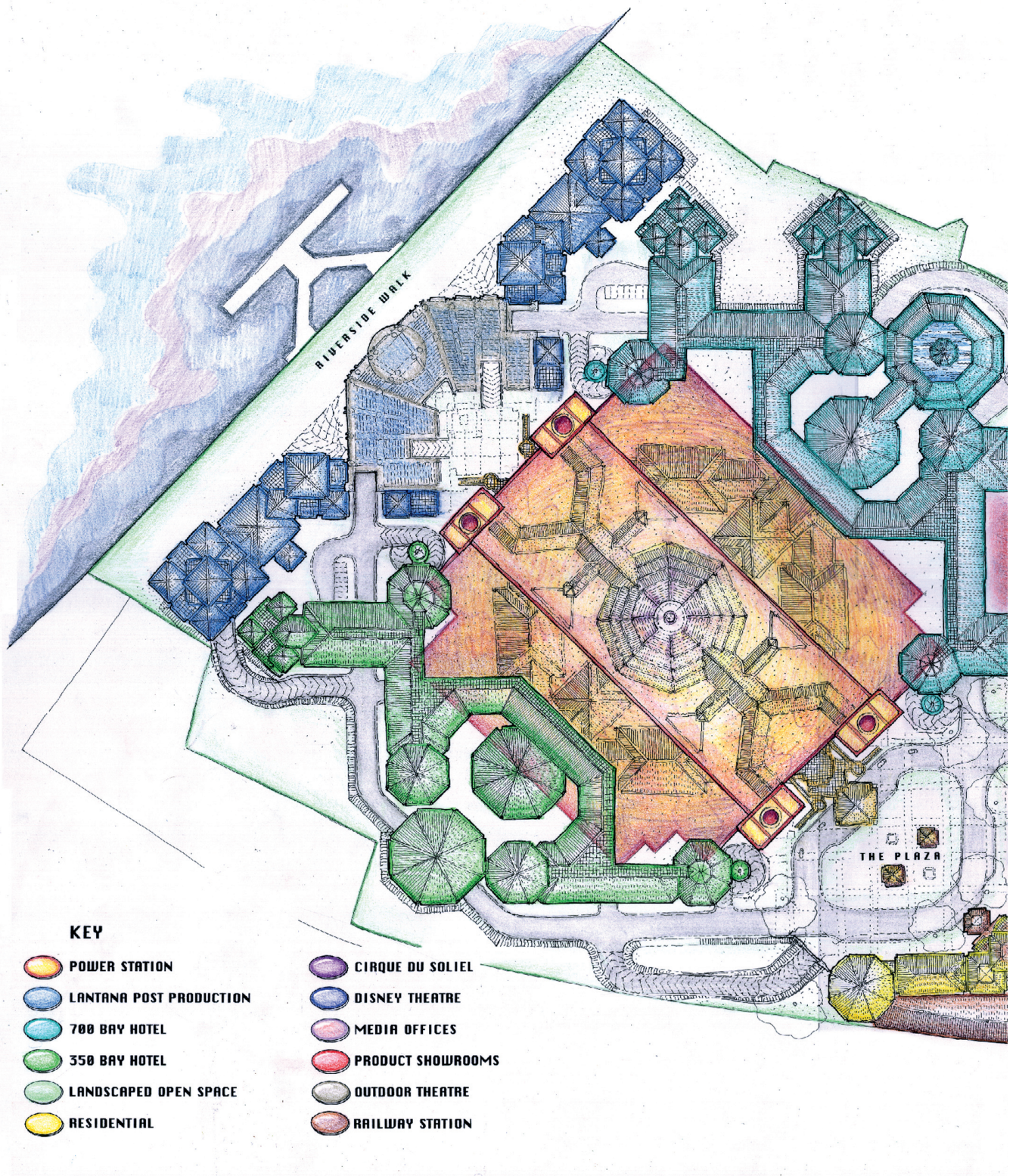
This sketch elevation of a typical isola-block shows a corner-tower at each end. There is a 'kiosk-tower in the centre of the side block which will contain both its own vertical circulation and an entrance to the retail showroom arcade under the roof-garden for the residents.

walls as "patchworks"

deposits...

altare attic
raN.
loggia

wall.

piano nobile.

mezz anine.

arcade

inexpensive 8-story street facade.

REA DIAGRAM

Kirtling Street Residential 1388

East Rise Residential 1456 12

West Showcase Product Showcase 4648 15

6 6 5 6

Gateway Square (E) Residential 1312 12

East Rise West Residential 1372

6 5 6

West Rise East Residential 1172 12

GATEWAY SQUARE

PARK ROAD

EAST RISE

WEST RISE

BATTERSEA

West Rise West Residential 1201 12

Theatre Entrance Arcade 300 14

Soliel

Disney Theatre Theatre 2700 14

7

Battersea Park Rd West Media Offices 1964 13

3 4

Gateway Square presents a towered-gate composition to Battersea Park Road. It would be possible to enter the central isola-block and walk through the showrooms (5) into the Funstation. The road circulation then bifurcates around this 'showcase' street entrance. The left hand fork sights the huge southern facade of the Funstation (1) and the right-hand one glimpses its destination in the Ballroom-cum-conference room/rooms of the larger hotel (9).
The road-circulation rejects the idea of a giant circle that would have been a mere bag in which to insulate, like a cordon sanitaire, the impossible bulk of the indusrial hulk. A square plan locates 'doors' at each corner. The corner-door with the railway-station is opposite the river-boat pier. The two hotel-doors are at the other two corners. 'Quadration' is "entered into the lease"!

The podium divides, in the case of a street-facade, into arcade, mezzanine and piano nobile. The Shaft has little articulation. The Entablature divides into Attica, Cornice and Loggia. A modern timeline of ontogenetic and phylogenetic progress can be easily interwoven, both in gross and in part, into these received, traditional, architectural components. The number of storeys can be expanded to 12 without over-stretching the 'shaft' in the un-successful way that was done in early-20C Chicago.

RIVERSIDE WALK

THE PLAZA

KEY

- ⬭ POWER STATION
- ⬭ LANTANA POST PRODUCTION
- ⬭ 700 BAY HOTEL
- ⬭ 350 BAY HOTEL
- ⬭ LANDSCAPED OPEN SPACE
- ⬭ RESIDENTIAL

- ⬭ CIRQUE DU SOLIEL
- ⬭ DISNEY THEATRE
- ⬭ MEDIA OFFICES
- ⬭ PRODUCT SHOWROOMS
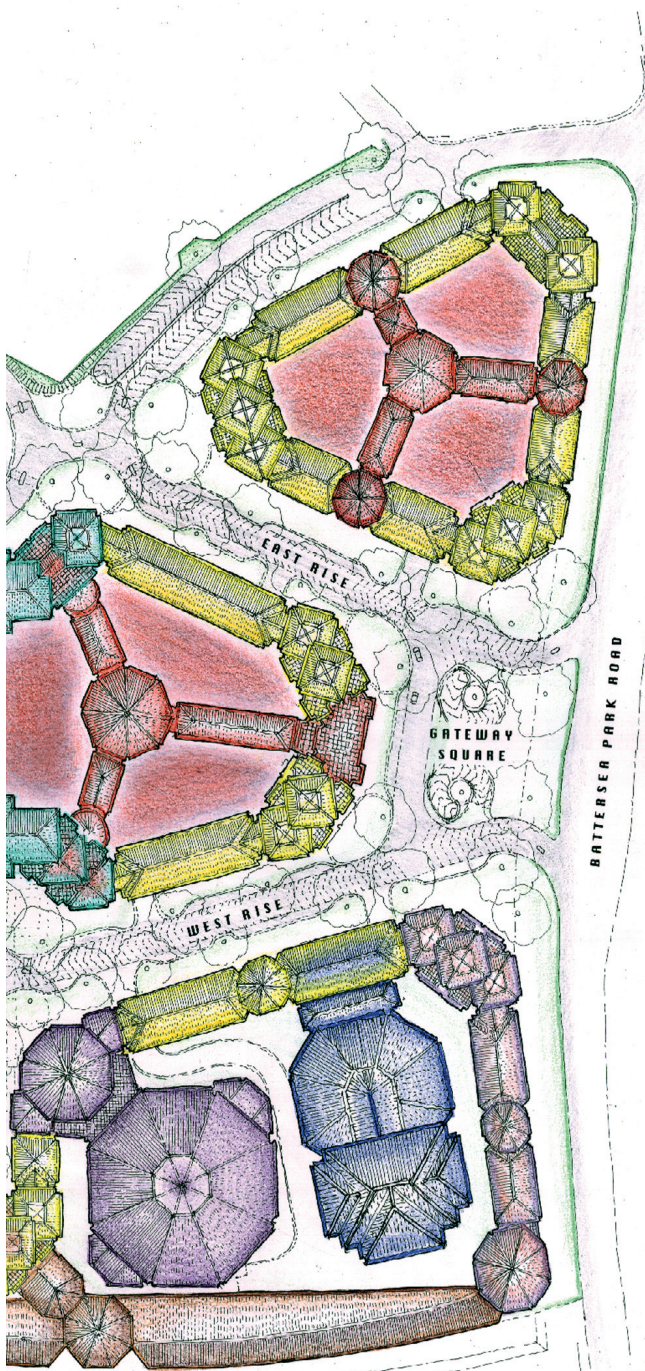- ⬭ OUTDOOR THEATRE
- ⬭ RAILWAY STATION

There are as many ways of drawing something as there are of thinking of it. This one is an x-ray that looks through the physically and visually-apparent body of the building to the human activity inside. I refrain from calling this the 'life' of the building, for it is this Vitalistic fallacy that has destroyed the conceptual, or communicative, role of the physical form and the surface decoration of a building. If Form is always to follow mere physical necessity then Man condemns himself to a lifespace that is a building-site dedicated to impermanence, chaos and meaninglessness.

A sloping roof leaks less than a flat one. The geometry of their intersecting pitches is a taxing design discipline. The conceptual reward is that a regular roof-shape allows the Viewer to imagine the totality of a building while only being able to see one side of it. The pyramidical, vaulted, or even domed roof becomes useful if a city wishes to adopt Alberti's 'pre-picturesque' city-design strategy of the 'occluded temple'. But, conceptually beguiling though such cities were, who can propose to accommodate the modern citizen in burrows tunnelled out of the chaotic urban detritus of a 'cataclysm of domesticity'? Who, also, can propose to reproduce the chaotic 'charm' of Mediaeval muddle in the 20C when everyone, from the late 19C onwards, has failed? The Albertian strategy not only implies that the 'temple' is 'obscured' within a formless cataclysm of domesticity, but is such an unbearably beautiful evocation of the Golden Age that the imagination craves for it to be liberated from its urban carapace.
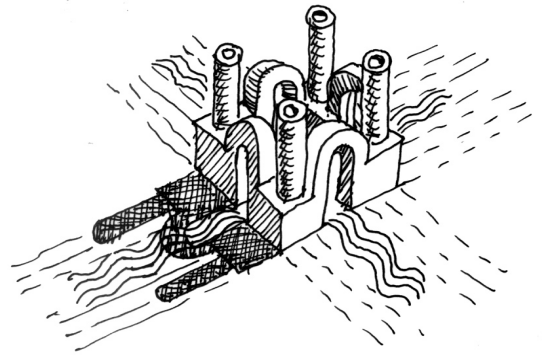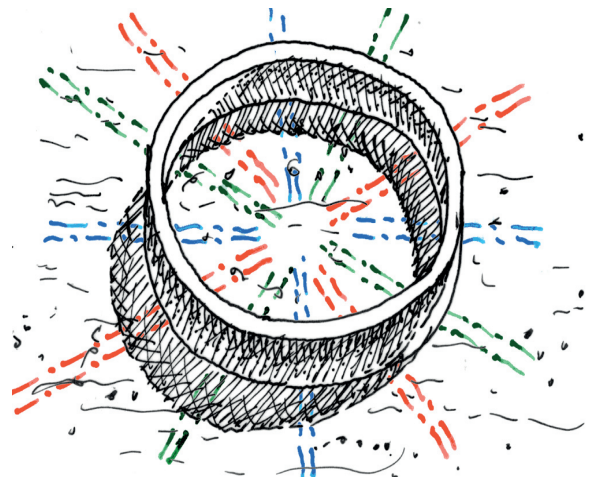
The 'temple' is a 'vertical axis reified to flow outwards to the four quarters through its arched and tower-bracketed doors.

The circle has neither primary not secondary axes. It has no towering corners blasted apart to reveal the theatre of humanity. It is a mere bag - the triumph of uniformity over difference.
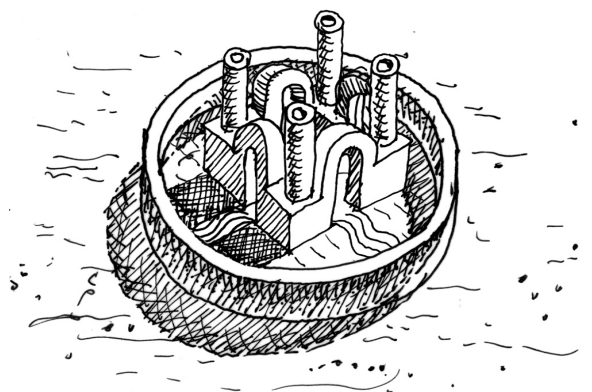
Earlier site-plans sealed the Power Station within a circular 'cordon sanitaire' that prevented the heroic sacrality of the temple from flowing out to seed the city with the order of its 'New Foundation'.
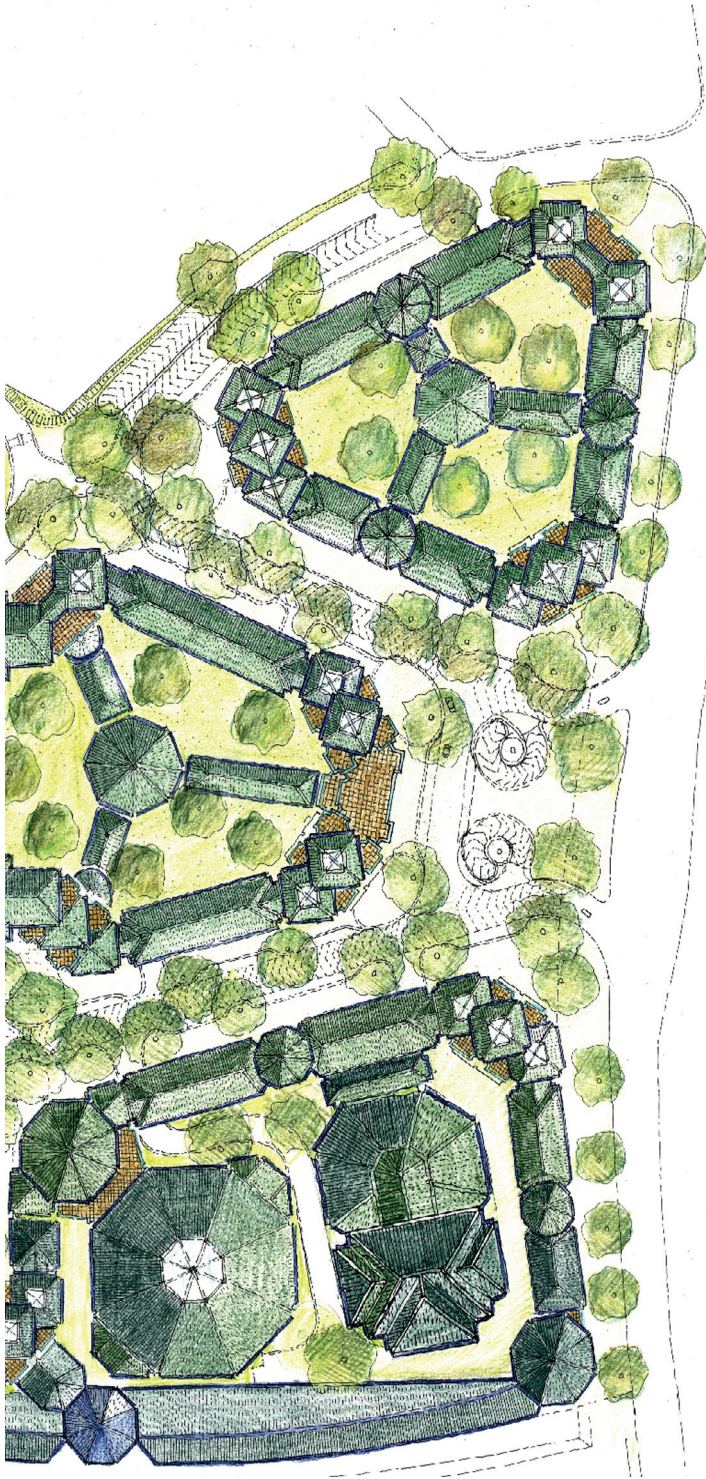
LAND USE JOA

The 'thin-body' buildings could, after a suitable fit-out, be used for anything requiring daylight. The same applies, in the thick-body buildings for uses not needing the light of day. This is a long-life, loose-fit city whose precise 'User' (that holy grail of Functionalism) is defined according to urbane terms (and rent).

The mind, upon coming to know the architecture of the Temple, dreams of it standing forth, primitive and pure, upon its aboriginally Arcadian site. But what if the great temple was not the primal home of some Hellenic god, giant or hero, but a smoke-begrimed, chemically-polluted monument to the alchemy of converting coal into electric power? The sikaras of Hindu temples or the belfries of gothic pinnacles, amalaka-urns of liquid light that shed their conceptual clairty, like the peals of bells, upon all who would receive their vision? But what if the four towers of this temple were merely pipes that maximised the updraght of hot gases that burnt coal more efficiently? What is the pure, Arcadian, landscape that the 'buried temple' of Battersea brings to light? It is a vision of Hell - a furnace surrounded by open-cast heaps of spoil lit by fires reflected in a smoke-bound sky.

The Artist, drawing a clothed model starts with the skeleton and muscles. He draws the nude before the garments that hang on her. Yet it is the garments we see first, and before even that the face. It is the surface that communicates. The Architect is the same. He must design from the inside outwards. The Client buys the body. But it is the outside that the public sees and knows best. A city is known through her facades, her faces. Only the intimates enter, and get to know, the bodies of her buildings. This, then, is neither face nor body. It is a view of what only a bird would contemplate. Yet is allows one to 'get to know' the body of the city - her streets and squares. One can imagine walking around its sunlight and shadow. One may 'get to know' the invented, artificial world that is the real city - not some agonised fiction. Here one can register the indecipherable geometry of the three Battersea-Road isola-blocks versus the huge, hypostylar, palatial, symmetry of the riverside Funstation.

The nearer my **detailed design** approached to the old Power Station, the more it seemed to unravel. The **footprint** of the **three blocks** along Battersea Park Road were **entirely shapeless**. I had **adapted their 'Saxon' geometry** to the **preconditional chaos** required to **effect the Mediaeval half** of the **Mediaevo-Humanist urban magic**. But the **Power Station**, for all of its **monstrous Sumerian-Deco architecture** could **not fulfil the role** of the **achingly nostalgic temple** to a **Humanist Golden Age** that even Corbusier appeared to crave. It was just the **ruin of a smokestack imperium**- a **Babylon of Old Carbon**.
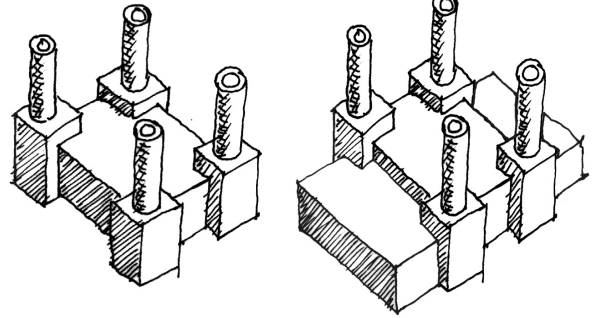
The 'temple of Steam' had only one axis.

Adding the turbine halls blocked the cross-axis. Focality was lost.
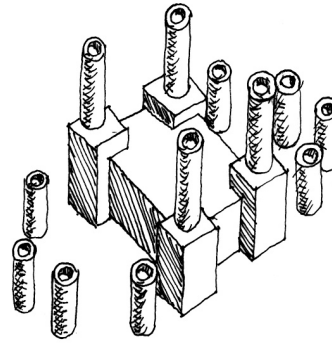
JOA's plan added 'Towers of Entry' to the East and West. sides

My wayward inkpen doodles had, many weeks earlier, telegraphed the crisis afflicting my Albertian Humano-Mediaeval model. The power of the 'templum' was radiating outwards.

By using the two hotels to open a cross-axis JOA gave the Funstation a Central point - a central 'pole' or mundus - around which the whole composition could turn like a gigantic wheel..

My hand had been happily a-hypostylar while designing the three blocks along Battersea Park Road. But now it had adopted a rigorously quadratic theme along the spatial highway of the Thames - London's widest 'street'. It seemed that here, my hand was proposing a Beaux-Arts level of degagée symmetry quite foreign to the Saxon chaos of London herself. A vast palace was taking shape, but a palace for what, and for whom?

# AND NOT ONLY WAS THIS PALATIAL FOOTPRINT QUADRATIC, IT WAS OCTAGONAL!

I was proposing not merely four potential enfilades, but eight!

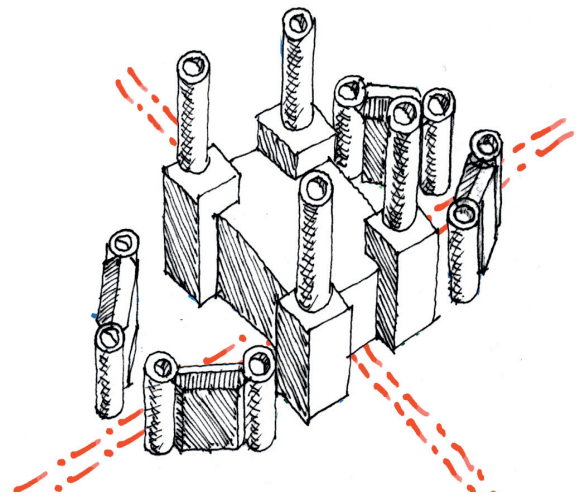The footprint of the Funstation was a 'star' made by rotating two squares at 45˚ to each other.

The Northern Facade of the Power-Station forms the towering centre (1). It is eighteen storeys high to the top of the brown brick bases to the white chimneys. It is fifteen storeys high to the mainly featureless and unwindowed brick curtain walls that stretched between them. (2) marks the roof garden over the reception of the 500-room Hotel. (3) marks the main function rooms (ballroom) over the porte-cochere to the 500-room Hotel. (4) is the Northernmost bedroom wing of the 500-room Hotel. The Northernmost wing of the 700-room hotel balances the composition around the giant body of the Hulk (5). The Ballroom/Functions room (6) is over the porte-cohere to the 700-room Hotel which occupies the Eastern corner of the quadrated site of the complete Funstation+Hotels composition.

English Heritage wanted the Power Station to be situated, like the ruin of a deconsecrated cathedral, on a grassy English lawn running down to the river. But what do they know of city-planning who only ruins know? I proposed the giant hulk as a backdrop, lit by the violent pyrotechnics that accompany outdoor pop-concerts. The monstrous chimneys could also perform some role in these noisy trashings of the musical medium. I had no ambition to make this outdoor auditorium of curved glass (7). But my Model-Makers built it in perspex. Perhaps, aware of EH's passion to see this dirty ruin from a river (whose surface is usually far below the bank), my Client thought to pretend to the usual fakery of glass masquerading as 'non'existence'. Flanking this I sketched two low buildings whose use was, at the time planned to be, commercial, but which would easily sell as flats with a view of brown tidewater (8 &9).

The wide spread of railways that enter the mainline Victoria Station forms the Western boundary of the project (10). One of London's largest gasometers, framed by the afternoon sun, looms to the Southwest (11), across from the Railway Station (12) for the Fun-Station. Finally, on the opposite side of the development, on the river to the East, is the refuse-crushing station (13). The sweetish smell of its decaying contents wafts-in on the rarer Eastern breezes.
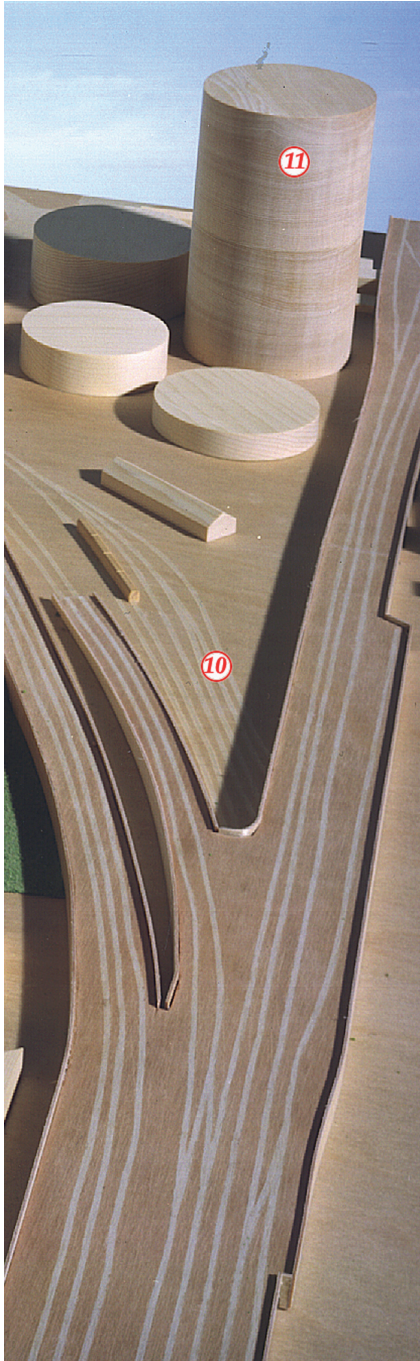
The view across the River, from Pimlico, showed it as a great palace.

THE DEVELOPER ALREADY OWNED THE POWER STATION.

The two hotels were going to be built with his own capital. Everything in the background was entirely under the control of a single 'principe'. The two small buildings in the foreground had a 'river view' and could therefore not fail to be commercially successful - whatever their user.

A composition, capable of both projecting as well as integrating the 'Battersea Hulk', was commercially feasible.

Encouraged by this fact, JOA continued to develop the design of the Hotels that would frame the decapitated trunks of its four headless columnns.

It has long been a principle, communicated to more than one of JOA's Clients, that one should welcome the opportunity to build in the shadow of a powerful piece of Architecture inherited from the past. Such preserved 'monstrosities' provide the excuse, seeminigly needed by our times, to design a building that does not go out of its way to jettison, if not positively deny, every last vestige of Architectural culture. This is because, lacking any rational theory of either Architecture, City-Planning or Public Art, let alone how these might constitute a rational future,, Town Planning Committees tend to fall back on the idea of 'keeping in keeping'.

BESIDES WHICH, BATTERSEA PALACE, AS I BEGAN TO CALL IT, PRESENTED A NUMBER OF LONG VIEWS FROM OVER THE RIVER AND FROM TRAINS, MOST OF WHICH 'VIEWS' WOULD BE MERE PROFILES, SEEN AGAINST THE SOUTHERLY SUN.

The 240M (750 ft), mirror-symmetrical, Northern, river-frontage of 'Battersea Palace' seen, looking South, from the Pimlico shore of the Thames. The height of the flanking hotels is designed to reveal the side walls of the Hulk. Only the tops of these are ornamented. Most of the time the faces would be in shadow, with the forms read as mere profiles.

AFTERWORD for the THIRTY-EIGHTH LECTURE:
"DIGESTING BATTERSEA".

Like the double-jointed jaws of a python, the 45˚-90˚-135˚ plan footprint geometry, aided by the division of the accommodation into shallow/daylit buildings and deep/dark buildings helped to digest all of the old Generating Station except, just as in Baroque Rome, its towering short-end street-facades.

I still think that my idea of a Museum of the Empire' was the best use to which this giant hulk could be put. This is not only bcause the Empire was a phenomenon worth commemorating, and because most first-hand knowledge of it is dying out, but, possibly more importantly, such a Museum reminds both others and ourslves, of the cultural continuity between it, the present day Britain, and the present-day cultures which the Empire once included. Such connections remain the true basis for a future to this, the severed head of the first global community.

It is futile to pursue the idea that Britain could have some sort of 'ethnic culture'. The possibility of that was destroyed, centuries ago, by the power of London's capital. First it defeated Welsh, then Irish and finally Scots independence. Spreading around the globe, it defeated all its seaborne rivals. A huge commerce, exporting products and importing food, destroyed the island's Agri-culture - the basis of all 'ethnic' culture. Everything British has been globalised for centuries. We retained the illusion that this global culture was 'natively British', because everyone on the globe, out of respect for the fact of the huge empire run from this tiny island, called it British. But now that the real-estate is no longer pink and English is spoken better in India than in Britain, banking globalised, and cricket played all over the place, what is really 'English'? Being 'English' or 'Scots' and so forth is a trivial pursuit when possessed of the global language. Britain's best hope of useful skill, the respect, and self-respect due to skill, and the revenue that will derive from the dominance of a field, is to address the major global concerns and invent (for Britain remains one of the most inventive of cultures), their best solution.

One of these 'new opportunities' is that over half (and growing) of humanity has now shown it intends to be urban. What have the English Intellectual and Political Establishment to say about that? Where is the glorious record of urbane culture upon which we may 'rest our case? At the outset of the 20C England was, after Holland, the most urbanised patch in Europe. Since then we have been driving, in the diddy little autos we do not even make any more, away from everything urbane and towards everything suburban. The cult of country-house suburban pseudo-rusticity has infected everything in England. The English language, which now, via the USA, dominates world intercouse, carries this deathly lifespace-culture with it. Others might say that it is not global urbanity that needs England, but the reverse.