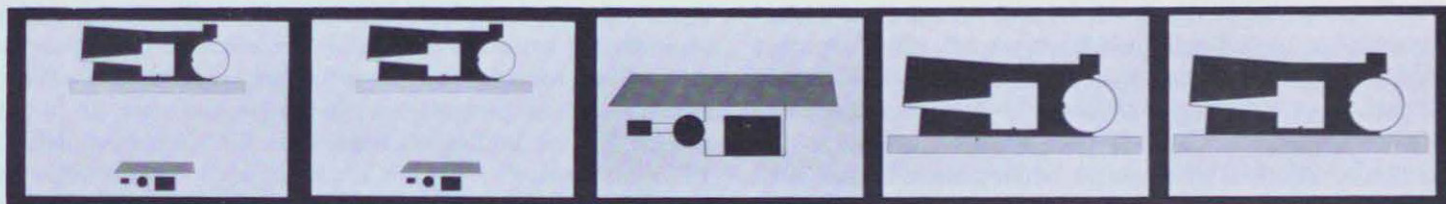


MISSISSAUGA:



MISSISSAUGA CITY HALL: A FORMAL ANALYSIS OF THE WINNING ENTRY-BY BARRY BYRNE

La publication de Mississauga City Hall, A Canadian Competition par Rizzoli suggère qu'il est temps d'entreprendre une discussion sérieuse à propos du projet.

Les exemples qui ont servi de précédents pour le projet (les travaux de James Stirling et de Leon Krier) devraient être explorés et une analyse formelle du design pourrait être entreprise.

Cette article se termine en commençant le point de vue de Trevor Boddy, lorsque celui discute la validité du bâtiment en tant qu'architecture Canadienne régionale.

The recent publication by Rizzoli of *Mississauga City Hall: A Canadian Competition* would suggest that the time is ripe for a detailed and serious discussion of the winning entry, by Toronto architects J. Michael Kirkland and Edward Jones, and of the implications for architecture of a project which James Stirling has stated is "of high quality by world standards".

Despite the fact that the Mississauga City Hall is still in progress, the care and detail-work evident in the competition entry make a fairly close critical reading of the project possible, even before its actual completion. My assertion of the significance of the project is based on reading of the contemporary architectural milieu. The idea of a post-modern architecture is clearly in the wind, however many practitioners and critics may wish to decry the label. Already a more focused definition of the new trend is emerging. Philip Johnson's AT&T Building, unfortunate example though one might find it to be, has served to put a sort of *nihil obstat* to the fashion. The Portland Building and the Human Foundation Building, both by Michael Graves, have already exerted a stylistic influence in Toronto as can be seen in the most recent work of Eberhard Zeidler and even in the recent redecoration of the Manulife Centre at Yonge Street and Bloor. If the Mississauga City Hall simply lives up to the promise of its drawings (and one might reasonably expect it to exceed that promise), Toronto may well find itself in possession of not another watered-down imitation of the new architecture but rather an example that others will hurry to imitate.

This is not to say that the Kirkland and Jones project is without its own immediate pedigree. In fact, any real understanding of the methodology, intentions and implications of the scheme demands some examination of that pedigree in its several manifestations. When we note the presence of James Stirling as the most prominent member of the Mississauga competition jury, an initial exploration of trends in Stirling's work would seem indicated.

The early Stirling impresses one as willful, yet so thoroughgoing as to be able to make his willfulness stick.

For all that Stirling continued to impress and shock, from his student days at Liverpool University in the 1950's over the next twenty years, he remained solidly within the framework of established modernist concerns—the expression of structure, the expression of function.

In 1970, however, one sees something quite different in Stirling's work, and it is notable that this surprise appears in one of two projects that had as their co-author the young Leon Krier. The project was an entry to a limited competition for Derby Town Centre.

The preservation of an historic facade was suggested. Stirling tilted it back (to form a band shell roof) definitely detaching it from a former context and theatrically crashing it to another; ad hoc preservationism at its most astounding, witty and even considerate, since the facade was a familiar but not a remarkable sight.¹

The authorized biography of Stirling tends to suppress both the mention of Leon Krier and the idea of any particular change in the direction and focus of Stirling's work, stressing instead the aspect of a continuity of preoccupations, and in fact there are strong currents of a continuous nature to be discerned in the *oeuvre*. Nonetheless, the clear expression of concerns that one could loosely classify as historicist appear from this time onward.

When we have established a connection to Leon Krier in Stirling's work, it is not particularly surprising that Edward Jones himself cites Krier as a major influence on his work. A final connection remains to be made. This is the influence, most probably indirect and through the work of Stirling, of Colin Rowe, who was Stirling's thesis tutor and a continual source of inspiration to his work. One might then also draw

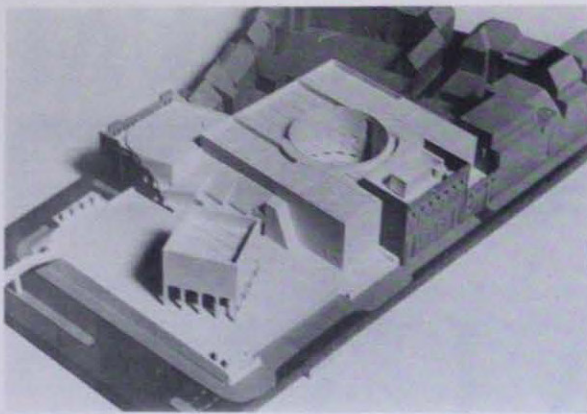


Fig 2

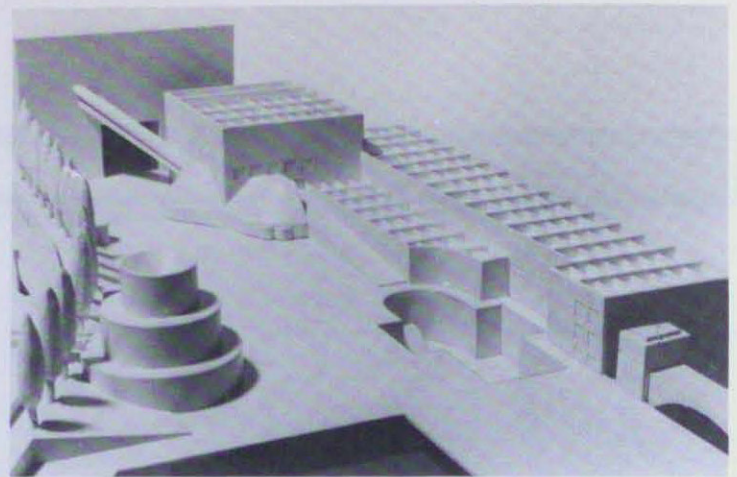


Fig 3

into this net of architectural influences the recent works which were strongly influenced by Rowe. Considering the "net of influence" that has been sketched out above, however, it is entirely reasonable to perceive various streams of a larger evolutionary moment in architecture, so that some more finely detailed theoretical observations from one "stream" may be employed to shed light on the underlying assumptions and ambitions of another "stream", in this case represented by the new Mississauga City Hall.

The primary relevance of the "Cornell school" is to be found in two notions, neither of them particularly new but both of them applied with a vigour unusual in the architectural world since the Second World War. To begin with there is the notion of a "plan aesthetic", the consideration of the plan as something to be considered, two-dimensionally, as a composition in its own right. This is an approach which is instructive in itself, and can be applied with profit equally to the production of the Ecole des Beaux Arts or the plans of Le Corbusier, Aalto, or Mies (especially the Barcelona Pavilion and the Tugendhat House). It was the particular genius of Michael Dennis to explore this method of perception in relation to the plans of the French *hôtel particulier* dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. His exploration was given force by the application of "figure-ground" analysis. From this interaction was derived the notion of figural space, and a critique thereby of the free plan.

It is probably safe to say that the free plan produced great spaces, but not great rooms. Whereas the traditional plan articulates the difference between spaces, the free plan articulates the differences between objects, and the consequent emphasis on spatial continuity and unity of the whole is bound to be at the expense of the identity of the part. Rooms therefore become "areas" and continually shifting relationships make a sense of place difficult to achieve. In the living room of Garches for example there can be no real sense of arrival, but only an outward thrust towards the garden. The space is all for circulation, and even the "correct" furniture might be an intrusion.²

Thus one comes to see a central opposition. On one hand there is the "fried egg" plan, possessing an ideal, geometric centre (a figural space) and an eccentric perimeter. This is most strikingly exemplified by the Hôtel de Beauvais, by Antoine le Pautre, 1655. The inverse of this, on the other hand, is clearly shown in Le Corbusier's Villa Stein at Garches, where the perimeter is ideal and geometric, while the interior plan displays marked eccentricity.

In a survey of the work of James Stirling after 1970, the terms of reference examined above yield considerable insight. There is apparent the evolution of a dialectic between

figural space and figural object. In the project for the Museum for Northrhine Westphalia, Dusseldorf, 1975, an opposition is set up between major figures, one (object) a cubic pavilion and the other (space) a circular court (fig. 2). In the project for the Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Cologne, also of 1975, one finds a cruciform, round-headed court set into an occupied ground plane, a very strong figural space that becomes at the same time a figural object in an interestingly negative way by virtue of its visibility *in toto* from the ground plane. (It becomes, paradoxically, an "object" that can be seen in the round to an extent impossible with usual objects) (fig. 3). In the Dusseldorf project, eccentricity is found in the existing context, a fragment of historic wall, which then serves to connect and set off the figures already mentioned. In the 1977 project of the Dresdner Bank, Marburg, Germany, the geometrical regularity of the existing context, a sixteenth century mill, is opposed by the eccentricity of a "free-form" glazed wall which makes a circulation route between and through the combined structure. In the work following the Dresdner Bank project one can perceive further transformations of the relations between figural space and figural object, particularly in the project for the Bayer AGPF Zentrum, Monheim, Germany (1978), the Staatsgalerie New Building and Chamber Theatre, Stuttgart (1977-83), and the project for the Science Centre in Berlin (1979).

In ways related to Stirling's work, the work of Leon Krier offers an emphasis which runs against the major thrust of canonical modernism. Stirling's use of pre-modern precedent is accompanied by a vaguely ecumenical tone in his rhetoric. One senses that Stirling, who has built a number of projects, is adept at being politic about the more iconoclastic aspects of his work. Krier, who has not built, who in fact has stated, "Nobody who builds nowadays can be called an architect", is decidedly not as politic, and by virtue of this his rhetoric is much more to the point.

...the prison-like structures which have resulted from social engineering have—in less than 200 years—destroyed a thousand year old typological and constructional consciousness. I do not believe that intelligent human beings can continue to concern themselves with trivialities which "express our age"—its essence, its speed, or even its frightening fragmentation. Architecture cannot continue to concern itself with such nonsense. The concern of architecture and building can only be architecture and building—that is, the creation of a world which is inhabitable and beautiful, solid, durable and elegant.³

This "inhabitable world" is to be fostered through architectural means, an assertion which for Krier does *not* imply social engineering. It implies, rather, an exploration of the

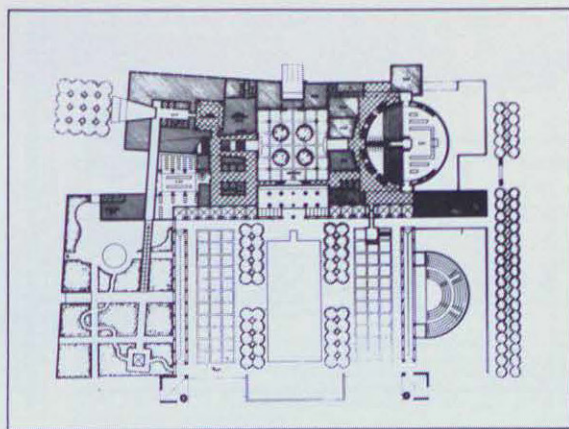


Fig 4

architectural wisdom and tradition which can be understood as preceeding the Modern Movement. One is reminded of Kirk Train's assertion in *Perspecta 16*: "while one can invent form, one cannot really invent meaning. Meaning accumulates through time." Krier writes:

The symbolic value which buildings must attain...is always created by society, by the *act of inhabiting*, by *custom*, and by the mental activity of associating certain buildings with specific social activities. The architect can neither force nor dictate these associations, nor can he invent them as he wishes. He can only help them to take place, make them apparent through appropriate iconography, and above all, through typological proposals which have proved their appropriateness throughout the ages. Iconographic attributions and signatures must always be laconic and remain within the limits of their art.⁴

Having introduced the work of James Stirling and Leon Krier, as well as the theoretical explorations of Colin Rowe and those more or less of his persuasion, it remains for us to link this body of work and criticism with the Mississauga City Hall design in its specifics.

The figural aspect of the scheme provides a good starting place. Two sets of figures dominate a reading of the scheme. One is the ensemble of the city square and the hall, or lobby, for which the figure of the "wall building" slab acts both as a definition-giver and a mediator. A sequence of forecourt, entrance and interior court is distinctly outlined and the use of wall and broken wall in counterpoint with colonnade serves to emphasize these figures. Of interest also, is the apparent displacement of half the circular figure that marks the council chamber in such a way as to provide a termination to the lightly defined cross-axis of the city square. However, a further examination of this ensemble in terms of plan aesthetic suggests that the clarity of the figures is somewhat weakened by the treatment of figural boundaries and the transitions from figure to figure. The colonnaded passages framing the city square seem to reverse their orientation upon meeting the slab, so that what was interior, the more lightly textured colonnade, becomes exterior to the square at the slab, while the denser wall elements on the *outside* of the framing passageways are reversed and form the *inside* boundary of the square at the slab (north edge). These passages then turn a second time to run north again, framing the lobby figure, where they seem to fade away at their northern ends. It becomes unclear whether the passages or the square and lobby are really the figure. The penetration of the slab by the passages compounds this confusion. Figure and ground are confused. In a similar way the conservatory, operating as a transition between the lobby and the city square, is not ade-

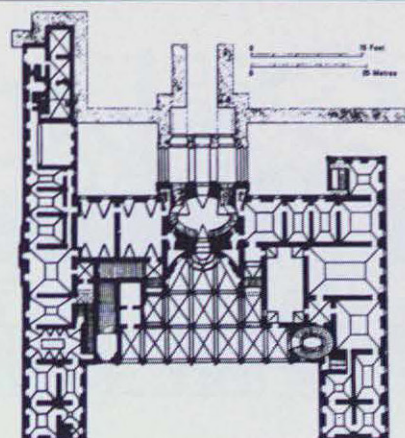


Fig 5

quately distinguished from either major element and seems by turns to be a part of both elements as one examines the second floor plan together with the ground floor plan (fig. 4). One need only think of the Palazzo Barberini to see the relative weakness of the disposition of the transitional element here (fig. 5). It should be emphasized here that the above analysis is limited to a consideration of the plan aesthetic and does not even attempt to deal with the landscaping of the city square. The entry sequence as it will be *experienced* is obviously clear and satisfyingly well-ordered and the city square stands commendably in contrast to the amorphous, residual, and difficult-to-inhabit civic spaces bestowed to us by Modernism. Considering the Palazzo Barberini, however, also clarifies some other problems. One immediately looks for a garden or at least a memory of a garden to the rear (north) of the city hall. The transition to the exterior on this face of the building, however, is handled in a relatively perfunctory manner and leaves the impression that this part of the scheme was not really finished, that this was only a residual problem in the process of composing the design.

The second major figural ensemble consists of the council chamber, the lobby, and the long, false-perspective stair disposed along a single axis parallel to the slab of the wall-building, which acts as a datum line for the circle, square, and acute triangle. The transformation of sensibility which differentiates this design from those of a Modernist cast is sharply delineated by a comparison with Le Corbusier's Salvation Army Hostel. In Le Corbusier's project the geometric figures set in opposition to a datum line (or plane, in three dimensions) are *objects* and can be read as such immediately (fig. 1). In the Jones and Kirkland project they are *not* objects, but rather geometrical rooms, figural *spaces*. Because a reading of these figures depends on a perception of their sectional elaboration, it is necessary to move from plan to plan in order to evaluate the compositional qualities of the ensemble. Again there is some difficulty with unresolved or rather half-hearted transitions. The clarity of the figures varies from floor to floor, being somewhat more convincing at the second and fourth floors and less so at other floors. The eclectic nature of post-modern *à la* Cornell can be perceived in that these spatial figures are also treated to some degree as *objects*. This is most obvious in the handling of the council chamber, which can be understood as a distinct object from the north, east, and south views. The north elevation allows one to understand the lobby as a pyramid-topped object inserted into the mass of the building, and although this interpretation is not ambiguous; the lobby is also indicated by a change in the pattern of "rustication" on this elevation, while the use of an analogue to a giant order on the south elevation

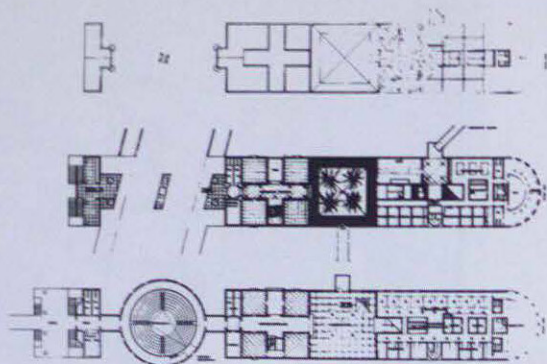


Fig 6

indicates its position very unambiguously. The stair, on the other hand, disappears into the mass of the building. Nonetheless, the "three-ness" of the composition survives in both north and south elevations, with the office tower filling in for the stair as the third element.

The theme of a linear disposition of architectural figures has an immediate precedent in the project for the Schinkel Archives Building for Berlin, 1981, by Edward Jones with Margot Griffin (fig. 6). Here one finds a disposition of circle, square and long stairway without any remarkable figural presence. As at Mississauga, the transitions between figures are not uniformly handled with clarity. Taking the Schinkel Archives project in conjunction with the Mississauga scheme, one begins to perceive a general formal approach. In addition to the aforementioned linear disposition of figures, there is also the development of a cross-axial strategy, in which one figure is chosen to operate in two directions. In the Schinkel Archives scheme a circle is used, logically, to handle the not-quite-perpendicular relation of road to building, while a square is employed to handle the entrance at right angles to the axis of the project, as is done at Mississauga. The linear strategy here outlined is characterized by a lack of hierarchy among the figures. This is much less noticeable in the Mississauga project where the logic of the symmetry of a triad of figures serves to lend emphasis to the central element. The 1981 scheme at Berlin is much more revealing in this aspect, indicating that considerations of hierarchical ordering are not strongly present in this formal method. Leon Krier's 1972 project for the Sprengel Museum in Hanover shows the same features of formal organization noted, as does his 1977 project for the La Villette competition in Paris. The Stirling Staatsgalerie project of 1977-83 at Stuttgart shows a formal organization, especially in the entrance level plan, that cannot but remind one of the Mississauga City Hall, but the clarity of the ordering of the figures at Stuttgart makes manifest by comparison the weaknesses of the City Hall plans (fig. 7). The central building of Stirling's Bayer AGPF Zentrum, 1978, shows a related linear arrangement of figural elements, but here the central element, the U-shaped administration building is separated from the other elements, both in scale and spatiality, allowing the development of a forecourt to the complex (fig. 8).

Apart from strictly figural relationships to the work of Stirling and Krier, a number of other similarities are to be observed in the Mississauga City Hall. These range in scale from details to more general moves of the *parti*. The use of stone cladding in bands and colours is the most immediately obvious example. Here the debt seems to be primarily to Stirling. One finds banded stonework in the Chemistry Com-

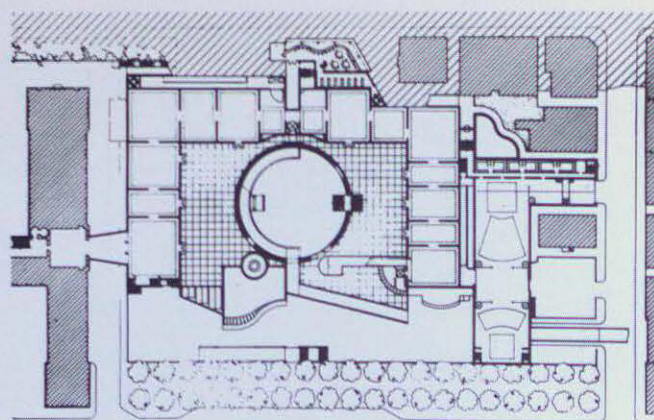


Fig 7

plex courtyard at the Bayer AGPF Zentrum, at the Stuttgart Staatsgalerie, and at the Berlin Science Centre. Similar banding is to be found in the Assembly Hall of Leon Krier's 1978 project for a school at St. Quentin-en-Yvelines, France. This project is extremely important in another respect, in that its relation to the Mississauga project reveals a distinctively non-modern approach to the process of design. A comparison between the early conceptual sketches of Edward Jones and Krier's sketch-manifesto for St. Quentin-en-Yvelines shows a striking resemblance between the two tentative schemes (fig. 9). Given that Krier's scheme appeared in the same publication, *Classicism is not a Style*, as Jones' Schinkel Archives project, one must assume that a fondness for a certain number of non-functional, purely architectural moves formed the basis for the Mississauga scheme without much reference to the nature of the institution or the site. Dereck Revington and Val Rynnimeri, well within the tradition of Modernist criticism, find this reprehensible.

...(Barton) Myers' design has a clear conception of itself as a building type derived from a careful analysis and disposition of the programme, something which the Kirkland-Jones scheme attempts by the layering of imagery and reference. The ultimate failure of the latter to deal analytically with the programme, and to establish an overall hierarchic interdependence between those formal types found in its images and in the activities the forms enclose, leads to an ultimate impotence of its forms and language.⁵

Revington and Rynnimeri attempt to see in the Jones-Kirkland project a "sensitivity towards the diverse aspirations of the suburban city", but it should be clear that the design approach is instead based on a desire to see certain forms juxtaposed, a picturesque sensibility, rooted in an architecture that is essentially *about architecture*.

In a consideration of the desired forms that appear at Mississauga one need not look too far to find their precedents. The projecting belvedere is a favorite motif of Leon Krier's, appearing over and over again in his projects. The use of an even number of bays, leading to an odd number of columns and a giant centre column is a feature of the school at St. Quentin-en-Yvelines, and a similar three-column arrangement is to be found in the Malmö Crematorium in a competition entry of c.1926 by Sigurd Lewerentz, also published in *Classicism is not a Style*. Another Scandinavian connection can be discerned in Gunnar Asplund's Stockholm City Library, 1920-1928, as related to the Mississauga council chamber. This has two aspects: as a cylindrical form projecting above a lower roof line and in terms of its entrance, from below, to the middle of a large cylindrical room. It is not surprising to see Krier also borrowing from Asplund here in his

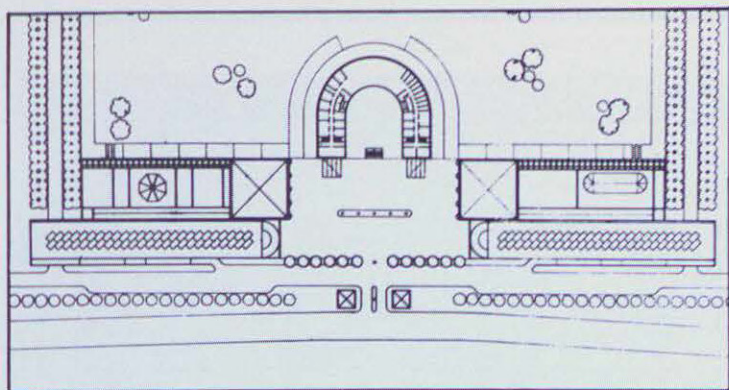


Fig 8

European Parliament Building of the 1978 Luxembourg project, in which one also finds a loggia contained within a pediment, again as at Mississauga (fig. 10). The form of the cornice of the council chamber is unmistakably related to that of the U-shaped administration building at Stirling's Bayer AGPF Zentrum. The arched entrance between the anomalously located conservatory and the lobby at Mississauga and in fact *both* the south and north walls of the lobby are obviously taken from Krier's perspective drawing of the Place de la Marie in his La Villette scheme (fig. 11), whose drawing is almost reproduced by Jones and Kirkland in *their* perspective of the lobby (fig. 12). The glazed canopy over the north entrance to the city hall is derived from Stirling and in general the use of shed-glazing at Mississauga can be traced to a preoccupation with this device on Stirling's part that seems to be a holdover from his pre-Krier years. The long stairway in the city hall has a fore-runner in the stairway at Stirling's Fogg Museum, although the combination of this with the precedent of Scala Regia in the Vatican to produce a resolution of the site geometry is without precedent.

Other examples of borrowings can be adduced, but it would seem that the foregoing list is adequate to make the point: simply that what we are dealing with here is more a *style* than anything else—social, functional, or contextual *post facto* rationalizations notwithstanding. In this regard, however, there is one more rather interesting observation to be made. The Mississauga scheme utilizes the *form* of the pediment in a new way. Although the resemblance to the early sketch from the St. Quentin-en-Yvelines project is clear, the way in which Jones and Kirkland utilize the form is quite different from Krier's use of it, which is basically fairly traditional. One is reminded at Mississauga of Venturi's deliberate mis-reading of the domestic window form, based, as he would have it, on the child's drawn perception of a rather diagrammatic house. This reinterpretation of the pediment as a largely monolithic solid rather than as a composition of tectonic elements finds an interesting echo in the pediment-shaped entrance to Stirling's Clore Gallery—Turner and Tate Gallery Expansion, London (1980). One thinks of Le Corbusier's transformation of the traditionally massive podium to a void at the Villa Savoye. Here there is something that goes well beyond the use of precedent, involving a transformational, and somewhat mannerist, attitude to the material of history, and suggesting that this style might be expected to continue to develop in new directions, expanding the lexical resources of the architecture of our time in a much-needed way.

Finally, it is appropriate to explore the Jones-Kirkland project in terms of itself, as an institutional building. The aspect of the Mississauga City Hall which first inspires one's re-



Fig 9

spect for the scheme is probably the fourth floor plan (fig. 13). The stair, the lobby, and the council chamber show an elegance of resolution in relation to the southernmost "wall building" and the north-facing skew. In fact, there is a quality of virtuoso performance throughout. The programme of the competition is particularly demanding and the functional "fit" of the programmatic requirements to the formal moves of the *parti* is, by and large, surprisingly good. Exploring this relation excites an admiration for the "compactness" of the scheme, for the repeatedly deft interlocking of formal and programmatic themes. Thus, the aldermen's access to the council chamber on the third floor is entirely appropriate and at the same time enhances the internal composition of the chamber. The stairs to the rostrum overlooking the lobby, fitted as they are over the entrance arch between the conservatory and the lobby, show a complex "tightness" in three dimensions. Similarly, the distribution of departments and facilities about the great stair seems to fall in place in a rather unforced way. This is apparently the result of the latitude in planning afforded by the circulation scheme. One can distribute the programme into three basic parts: an eastern segment serving the council chamber; the "wall building" serving office needs as an extension of the volume of the tower on the second, third and fourth floors (characteristically overlapping the council-serving spaces on the fourth floor while providing appropriately separated day-care facilities on the first and second floors); finally, the western segment, dominated by the tower, providing office space for governmental bureaucracy, easily accessible public facilities, and, on its upper floors, rental space which can be distinguished from the public functioning of the municipal government by virtue of a visible physical separation (i.e., by its being contained *just* in the tower). In a sense one can understand the south slab as allowing planning flexibility, acting as a buffer to the planning needs of the two major (eastern and western) functional regions of the project.

If one were to search for a "weakest part" in this ensemble, it would probably be found in the council chamber region of the building. Although one finds again a spatial virtuosity in the interlocking of moves on different levels, some things seem rather improbable, perhaps because of self-imposed pressure to maintain the *parti* intact. Definitely open to question is the matter of public access by escalator to the council chamber. In the first place, escalators require maintenance and are subject to breakdowns, necessitating out-of-service status usually for several days at a time, and the reversible escalator proposed would be even more prone to this. This is very problematic, considering that it is the primary means of public access. In addition, the uni-directional na-

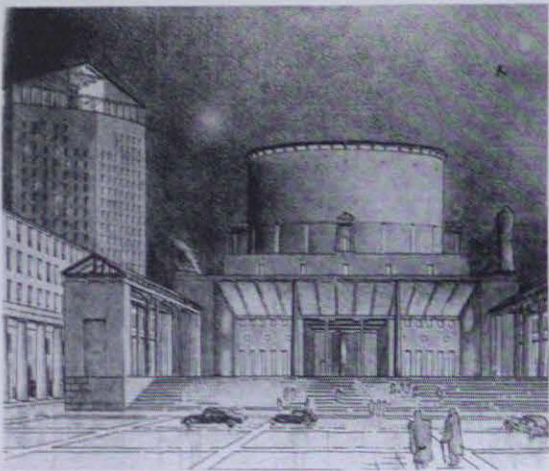


Fig 10

ture of this system suggests that the attendance pattern will be like that of a movie theatre, with practically everyone arriving before the "show" and leaving together at the end. Moreover, the position of arrival in the chamber at the top of the escalator, dramatic and centre stage front, is not really appropriate for latecomers. There is alternative access to the chamber on the second floor, but this is also in the front and shared with the official access of the aldermen's lounge and the offices of the city manager and the mayor. Given that the aldermen's access pays obvious deference to the decorum appropriate to the chamber, the absence of such concern for the public access indicates a lack of resolution. The arrival point in the centre is more obviously appropriate in the Asplundian precedent. (It seems to me to suggest a dramatic way for a prisoner to appear in the dock, as in a French courtroom).

The circulation between east and west regions of the building is inadequate on the second floor and only problematically satisfactory on the third floor. (The passage on the third floor conflicts in function with rostrum to the lobby, which, however, one cannot imagine being in use very often). In general, one must feel unhappy about the rather diagrammatic division of space as the plan steps down in scale from the major figural moves. The attention to producing usable and convenient division of space must earn one's respect for the effort obviously taken to resolve the requirements of the programme. On the other hand, as a method, this falls short of producing *rooms* and in the end remains a partitioning of what one might assume would otherwise be open-plan office space.

There is also the problem of the windows in the offices of aldermen room numbers one and eighteen, one of whom must inhabit a totally interior room, while the other finds himself with a window that, no doubt through some clever illusionism, disappears entirely from the facade. In fact, the offices of the aldermen, city manager and mayor are not given any special treatment outside of locating them more or less conveniently around the council chamber. I do not think this is appropriate; such offices have public significance and this should be reflected in their location and arrangement, so that there is an official presence either in the lobby or on the facade. The aldermen's lounge, on the other hand, seems to have been accorded visibility and size (and thus public significance) that do not really match its function. One can see the utility of this element in the composition of the north facade, where it stands in opposition to and equal importance with the central pedestrian entrance while at the same time working to complete a composition of deceptive pseudo-symmetry centering on that pedestrian entrance. The semi-

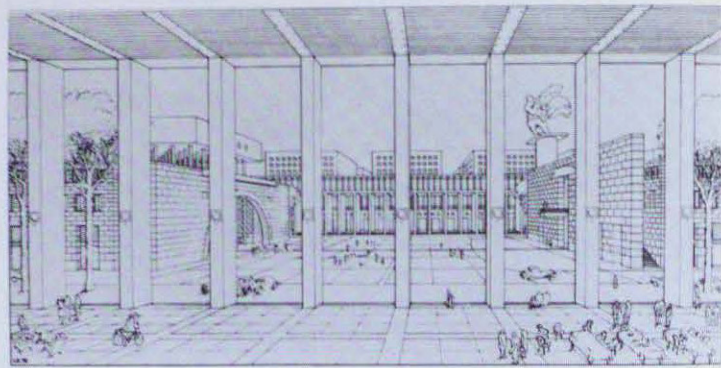


Fig 11

circular, keystone arch window is, however, out of place on the facade, finding an echo elsewhere in the building only in the arch between the conservatory and the lobby.

A larger problem presents itself in a consideration of the north facade. The base, i.e., the first four stories, can be understood as a wall which conceals architectural objects and is eroded at the east end, thus allowing a reading of the north elevation as layered. One could even begin to understand this as part of a former city wall, behind which would be found the "buildings" of the city which appear above the wall. Considering the scheme's indebtedness to Leon Krier and his ideas, this would appear to be an appropriate reading. The coplanarity of the "wall" with the tower at the west end of the facade is thus doubly disturbing in the confused reading it promotes both for the tower and for the four-storey "wall". There is a recognition, if not a resolution, of this difficulty in the eaten-away entrance to the roof-garden and running track at the fifth-floor fitness centre.

The front elevation of the city hall is its most interesting feature. The "representational facade" is a provocative re-interpretation of the pedimented temple front. It suggests, as does the north elevation, the wall of a city, thus promoting an understanding of the city hall as a compound. There is a happy convergence in these readings, as both "temple front" and "walled compound" signify ritual uniqueness and gravity. The facade manages the difficult task of avoiding the quality of caricature that pervades so many North American attempts at the re-use of historic motifs. It is clearly not a one-liner. That this is so is probably a function of the duality of reading mentioned above. Given the neo-classical implication of such a pediment, however, one might be vaguely uncomfortable that there is no accompanying reference to *trabeation*, the other "signature" of neo-classicism. The panels of the upper facade and the proportions, if not the form also, of the loggia likewise seem not entirely resolved. One might also be a bit troubled by the multiplication of small pavilion-like structures according to no apparent overall compositional intent. That there is a serious-minded (and quite acceptable) romanticism at work here is undeniable, but one might prefer a more thoroughgoing compositional approach.

There is at the same time a problem in the organization of the elevation which is only suggested by the perspective view of the south face. In the competition entry, the council chamber would be only barely visible at the southernmost edge of the plinth, and even then not across the whole width of the terrace. This, like the problem of the offices of the aldermen, city manager and mayor, would have been an unfortunate loss or representational expression for a city hall, but I

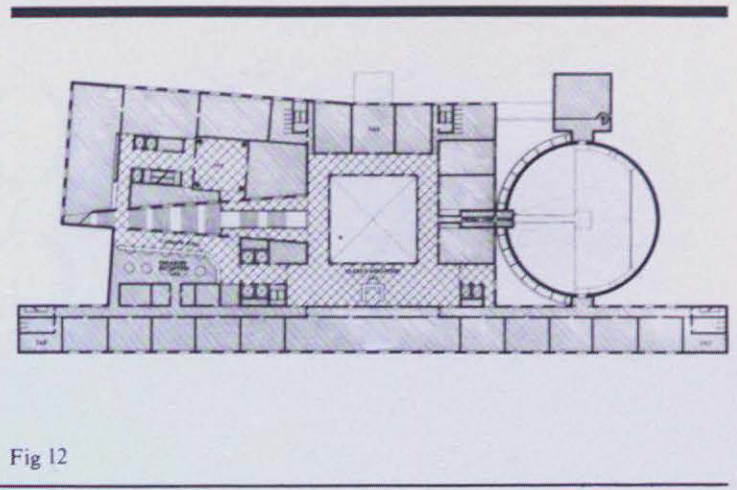
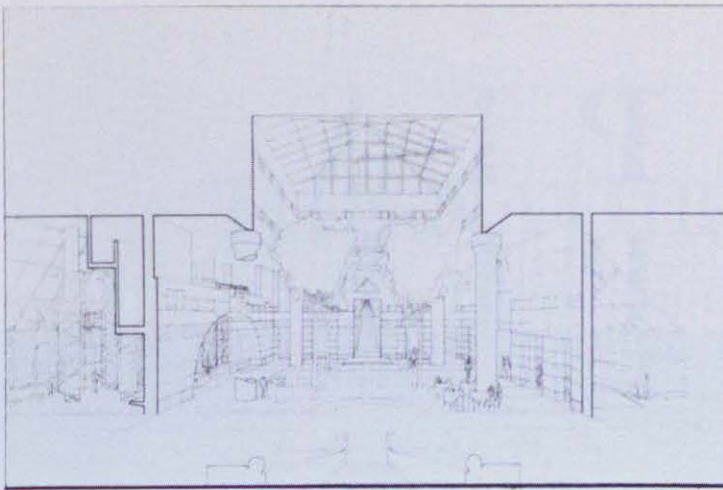


Fig 12

understand that this has been remedied since that time by a reduction in height of the wall-building. Apart from the pediment-front, the other elements which call attention to themselves from this viewpoint have little or no correlation to the functional expression of the institution. That this should be so in the case of the tower has ample precedent. The tower has a long history as a primarily symbolic element, no matter what function it may originally have served. The clock-tower here serves that symbolic function, but it is doubled by the office tower, which then has the gabled projecting belvedere on its west face, which seems to be another repetition of the motif for little or no reason. If the council chamber and politicians' offices were accorded more prominence, one would find this all simply an attempt at symbol-making of a potentially charming sort, but in the absence of such clarity it is a little bothersome.

Finally, after all of this detailed examination and sometimes admittedly nit-picking criticism, there arises the question of the significance of the Mississauga City Hall in more general terms. The Canadian critic Trevor Boddy sees the project as significant primarily in terms of its import for an embryonic Canadian regionalism in architecture. (This is not to be confused with Kenneth Frampton's grab-bag of favourite architects, whom he has termed, confusingly, "critical regionalists".) Boddy's assertion would find support in some matters of detail (the use of copper roofing, the "earth tones" of the stone-work) and the supposed derivation of the City Hall's formal language from regional examples of farm-building complexes, grain silos and barns. He even goes so far as to see the restaurant building in Krier's St. Quentin-en-Yvelines School as some kind of barn. This argument would only appear supportable if one were willing to equate a temple with a barn. Similarly the council chamber, with its graceful cornice, is to be seen as somehow equivalent to a quite differently proportioned grain silo, the geometry of which is strikingly unarticulated. There seems to be in all this a wishful attempt, in the service of theory-making, to perceive causal relationships where there are none. Nonetheless, the formal language of the Kirkland and Jones project *does* seem sympathetic to the rural vernacular of the region. In addition we can mention again the assertion by Revington and Rynnimeri of "a sensitivity towards...the suburban city". The Mississauga project seems to be able to reconcile the urban with the suburban, the rural vernacular of the region with the memory of the long history of Western architecture. That it can do this is hardly ascribable to a "Nordic character", as Trevor Boddy might have it. One might more appropriately look for precedent in Ledoux, not in his visionary projects, but rather in his *barrières* and his rural architecture, where a

richness of formal invention firmly based in the classical tradition gives rise to an architecture equally suitable to city and country, while also, notably, successfully dealing with the transitional context of the suburb. It is in a consideration of the variety and richness of Ledoux that one can begin to appreciate the potential for a revitalized architecture in the work of Stirling and Krier and, finally, in the Mississauga City Hall of Kirkland and Jones.

NOTES:

1. James Stirling, *James Stirling, Catalogue of the Exhibition, Royal Institute of British Architects, Heinz Gallery, 24 April—21 June 1974*, 2nd edition (London: RIBA Publications Ltd., 1976), p.87.
2. Michael Dennis, "The French Hotel," (Xerox Copy; Harvard and Cornell Universities, no date, 1976), p.46.
3. Leon Krier, "School at St. Quentin-en-Yvelines, France, 1978," in *Classicism is not a Style*, Demetri Porphyrios, ed. (London: Academy Editions/St. Martin's Press, 1982), p.61.
4. *Ibid.*, p.64.
5. Derek Revington and Val Rynnimeri, "Mississauga: Two Visions," in *Section a 1* (1983): 15.

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