

# **Ricardo Bofill and Léon Krier : architecture, urbanism, and history**

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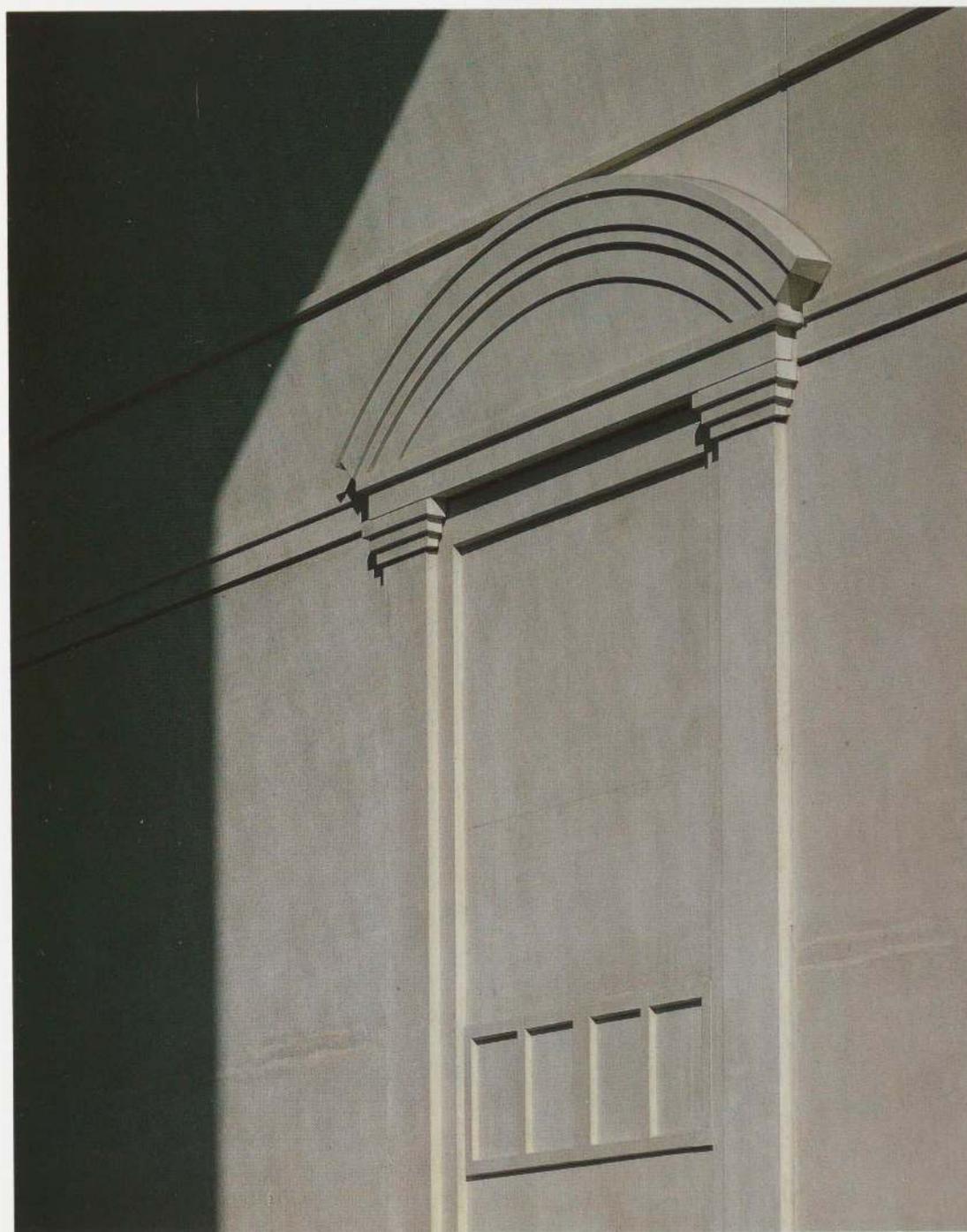
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RICARDO BOFILL AND LEON KRIER  
*ARCHITECTURE, URBANISM, AND HISTORY*



Ricardo Bofill, "Les Echelles du Baroque," Paris XIV, France

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK

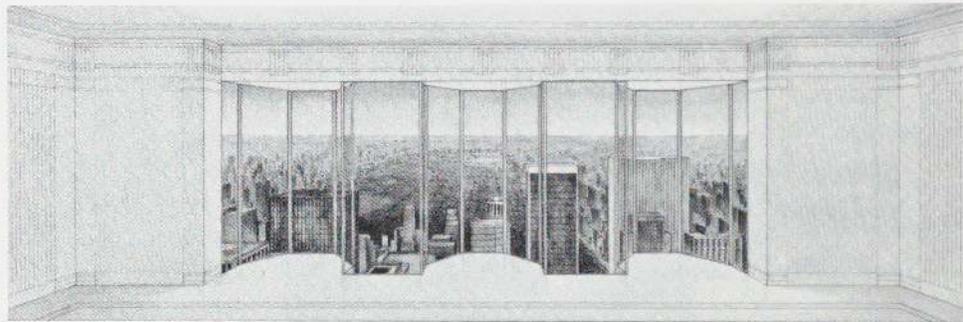
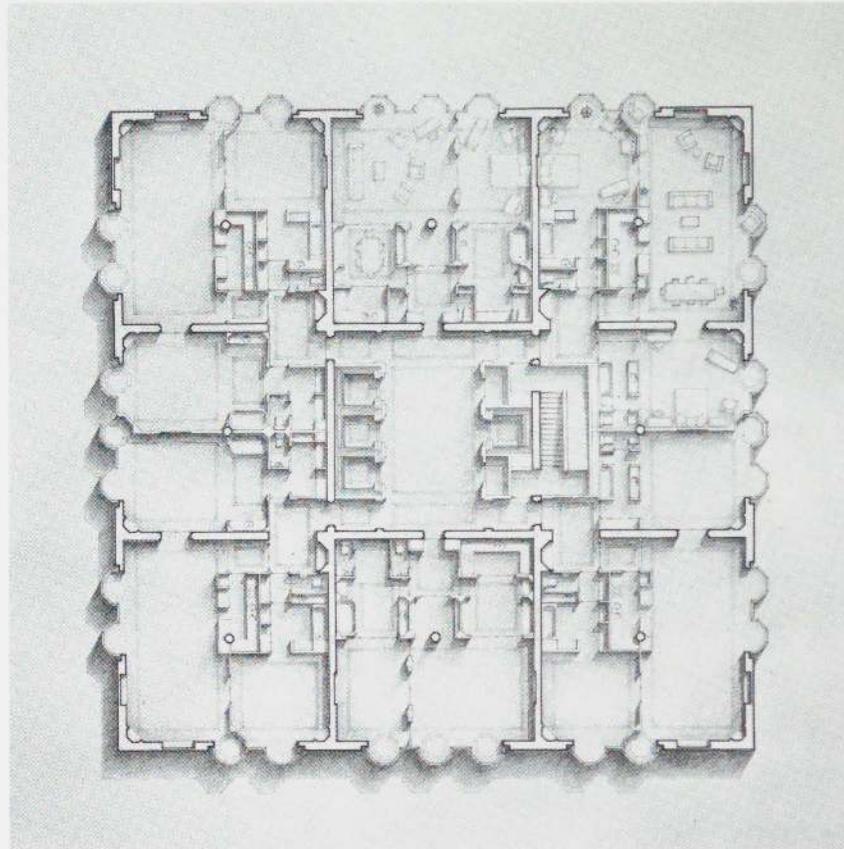
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Ricardo Bofill Taller de Arquitectura



Front Cover:  
Ricardo Bofill Taller de Arquitectura  
"Les Echelles du Baroque," Paris XIV, France, 1979-85.

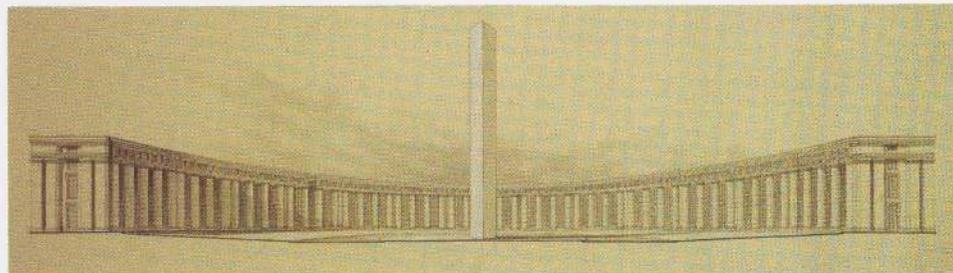
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## New York Tower, 1985

*This tower is designed to be a vertical landmark among the hundreds of variations which make Manhattan like a large rock-crystal. We wished to present a building that renews the best values of the New York tradition: constructive rationality, abstraction, minimalism, but also decorative composition. Our new tower is poly-functional: apartments, hotel rooms and offices can be mixed or separated.*

*The tower is a square in plan, measuring 30 x 30 meters, and is 210 meters high. Its 67 floors are composed in seven squares, with the base standing firmly on the ground. The five squares of the shaft are broken down into vertical orders, and the top, where the system is transformed, is like a temple against the sky. From afar, in silhouette, this composition appears as a single entity, which takes us in a voyage across time to the purity of San Geminiano's towers. R.B.*



## Cergy-Pontoise, near Paris, France

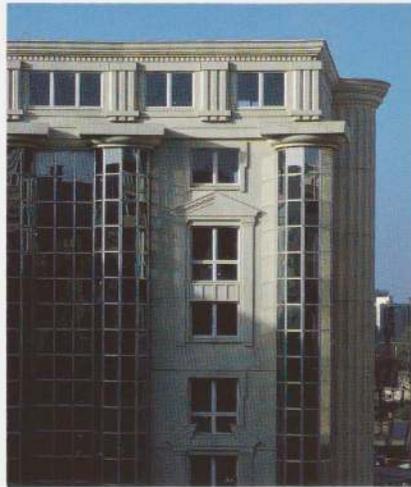


"The Green Crescent"

380 apartments, shops. 1981-85

*The program was subdivided into two types of complementary spaces. The first consists of three ante-rooms, two square and one rectangular, which articulate the transition between the new city and the beginning of the 3 kilometer long green axis leading to the Oise river. The second is designed as a grand semicircular colonnade, a horizontal monument. Its rhythm is voluntarily constant and repetitive, but with a variation which maintains a delicate disequilibrium within a perfectly harmonious space.*

*A vertical landmark, slightly inclined, located at the geometrical center of the green plaza, designed by the sculptor Dani Karavan, will create the only element of tension in this classical and abstract universe. Artificial stone or white architectural concrete give this building a powerful and solid construction. Their white and grey are well adapted to the changing light and sky of the Paris region. R.B.*



#### XIV Arrondissement, Paris, France



“Les Echelles du Baroque”  
272 apartments. 1979-85

*This project adapts itself to the profile of the existing streets which surround it. The composition is made up of three spaces which define open plazas: a circular one, another elliptical, and a third in the shape of a theatre. The plan of the ensemble can be read like a Baroque building, where each facade responds to the urban space in front. For this reason each facade is different, not only in its overall design but also in the architectural language used. R.B.*



## Montpellier, France



“Antigone: La Place du Nombre d’Or”  
288 apartment units and shops. 1978-84

*Today’s city, at the end of the 20th century, must be conceived as an ensemble of neighborhoods where different activities take place, where housing, shops, offices, workshops and public facilities are mixed in a continuous fabric.*

*A monumental axis is the vertebral spine of this neighborhood. The Golden Number Plaza is a perfectly harmonious space inspired by the neoplatonic tradition and based on a form which is above time and cultural influences. The walls containing the apartments support the beginning of a dome cut by a series of horizontal lines, leaving the sky as a natural ceiling to the space. R.B.*

*“Antigone . . . is the revival of the real city, a living neighborhood . . . It is the very image of Montpellier, enterprising and resolutely turned toward the future.”—From a statement by Georges Frêche, Member of the French Parliament, Mayor of Montpellier.*



## Marne-la-Vallée, near Paris, France



“Les Espaces d’Abraxas: Le Palacio, Le Theatre, L’Arc”

598 apartments. 1978-82

*This building was conceived as a landmark, a point of reference, a habitable monument in an amorphous suburban context, in opposition to post-war urban planning and zoning methods.*

*The central space, a void like a plaza defined by the solid volumes of the buildings, becomes a grand urban theatre. Orchestra gardens, scene and backdrop produce a simultaneous relationship between actors and spectators.*

*Thanks to a system of heavy prefabrication, we have been able to master and apply a complex and wide architectural language. Different readings of the buildings, constant change in scale, and various references to Ledoux, Gaudi and Gabriel, among others, have yielded the eclectic vocabulary which characterizes this project. R.B.*



## St. Quentin en Yvelines, near Paris, France



"Le Lac: Les Arcades du Lac, Le Viaduc, Les Temples du Lac"  
655 apartments. 1971-83

*The Lake project has been designed as a modern interpretation of a French garden. Axes, cross-axes, and symmetries compose a carved forest where clearings have been built and the central space is a void treated as a sheet of water, which at times reflects symmetrical elements and at others distorts the image.*

*The Aqueduct extends over the lake as if advancing towards the Temples located on the opposite end. These new buildings, presently under construction, are a paradoxical synthesis between classicism and industrial and constructive rationalism. R.B.*



### St. Quentin en Yvelines, near Paris

"Les Arcades du Lac; Le Viaduc," 1971-83

Program: 389 subsidized apartments for sale, underground parking (Les Arcades); 74 subsidized apartments (Le Viaduc)

Client: FOYER DU FONCTIONNAIRE ET DE LA FAMILLE, Paris

Area: 31,200 m<sup>2</sup> Number of Floors: 4, Arcades; 5, Viaduc Floor to Ceiling Height: 2.50 m.

Price per Square Meter: Arcades: FF. 2189.50—1978; FF. 2995.16—1980;

Viaduc: FF. 2203.39—1978

Construction System: In situ concrete tunnel system with factory-cast concrete cladding panels.

Architectural Team: Peter Hodgkinson; Xavier Llistosella

Construction Team: Ramón Collado, Bernard Torchinsky, José Mari Rocías

Consultants: Jean-Pierre Aury, concrete, Yves Serra, engineering



### Marne-la-Vallée, near Paris

"Les Espaces d'Abraxas: Le Palacio, Le Theatre, L'Arc," 1978-82

Program: Le Palacio: 441 apartments, government subsidized; Le Theatre: 130; L'Arc 20

Client: C.N.H. 2000, Le Palacio S.A. D'H.L.M. LES TROIS VALLEES, Le Theatre, L'Arc

Area: 47,000 m<sup>2</sup> Number of Floors: 18, Le Palacio; 10, Le Theatre, L'Arc

Floor to Ceiling Height: 2.50 m.

Price per Square Meter: Le Palacio: FF. 3306—1980; Le Theatre, L'Arc: FF. 3583—1980

Construction System: In situ concrete tunnel system with factory-cast concrete load bearing and cladding panels.

Architectural Team: Peter Hodgkinson, Jean-Pierre Carniaux, Xavier Llistosella, Patrick Dillon

Construction Team: Ramón Collado, Thierry Recevski, Hilario Pareja

Consultants: Jean-Pierre Aury, concrete, UTEBA, engineering



### Montpellier, France

"Antigone; La Place du Nombre d'Or," 1978-84

Program: 288 apartment units; shops

Client: L'HERAULTAISE

Area: 30,000 m<sup>2</sup> Number of Floors: 7 Floor to Ceiling Height: 2.50 m.

Price per Square Meter: FF. 2470—1982

Construction System: In situ concrete tunnel system with in situ cladding and attached pre-fabricated concrete panels.

Architectural Team: Jean-Pierre Carniaux, Patrick Dillon, Thierry Recevski, Xavier Grau, José Mari Rocías

Construction Team: Ramón Collado, Omar Migliore, Hilario Pareja

Consultants: Jean-Pierre Aury, concrete, Yves Serra, engineering



### XIV Arrondissement, Paris

"Les Echelles du Baroque," 1979-85

Program: 272 apartment units; shops

Client: S.A.G.I.

Area: 22,000 m<sup>2</sup> Number of Floors: 7 Floor to Ceiling Height: 2.50 m.

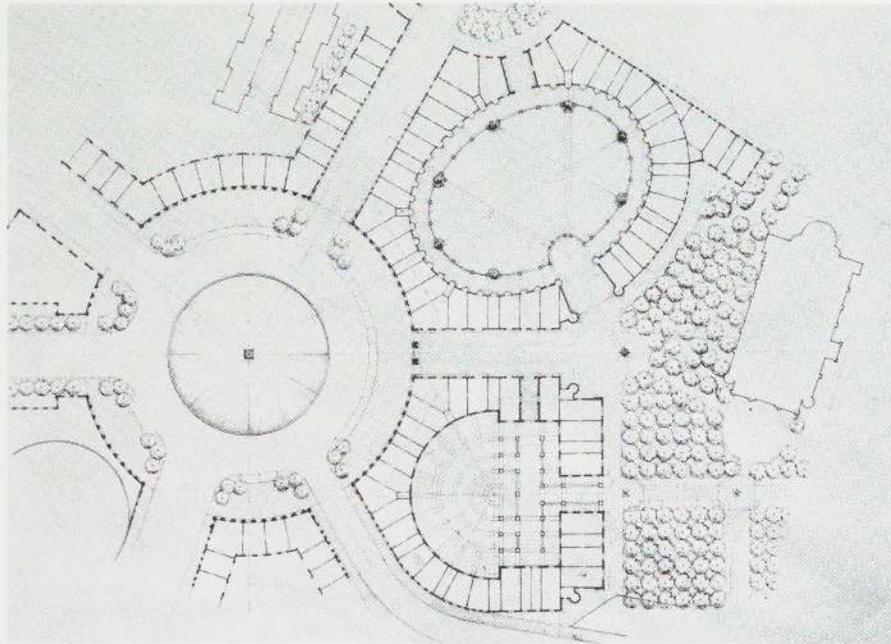
Price per Square Meter: FF. 4662—1982

Construction System: In situ concrete tunnel system with factory-cast concrete load bearing panels.

Architectural Team: Patrick Dillon, Patrick Genard, Xavier Llistosella, Thierry Recevski

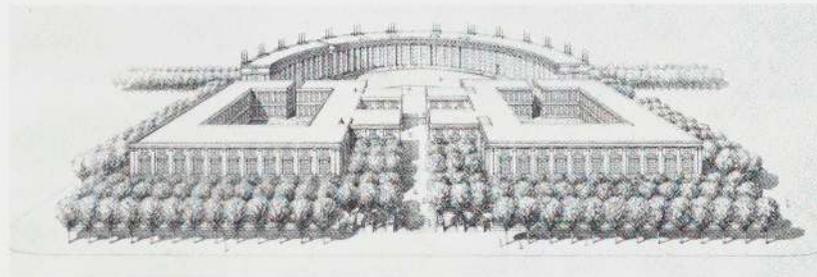
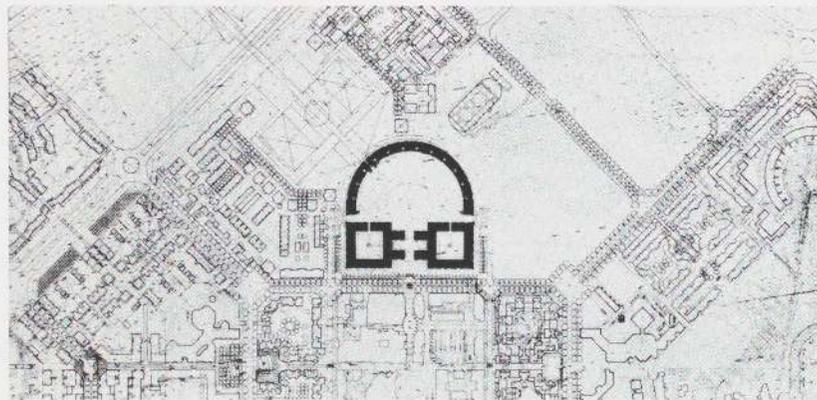
Construction Team: Ramón Collado, Hilario Pareja

Consultants: Jean-Pierre Aury, concrete, Yves Serra, engineering



### XIV Arrondissement, Paris

"Les Echelles du Baroque"  
Site plan with built units at right.



### Cergy-Pontoise, near Paris

"The Green Crescent," 1981-85  
Site plan; aerial perspective.

Program: 380 apartment units; shops

Client: FOYER DU FONCTIONNAIRE ET DE LA FAMILLE, Paris

Area: 31,000 m<sup>2</sup>. Number of Floors: 7, Crescent; 4, Square

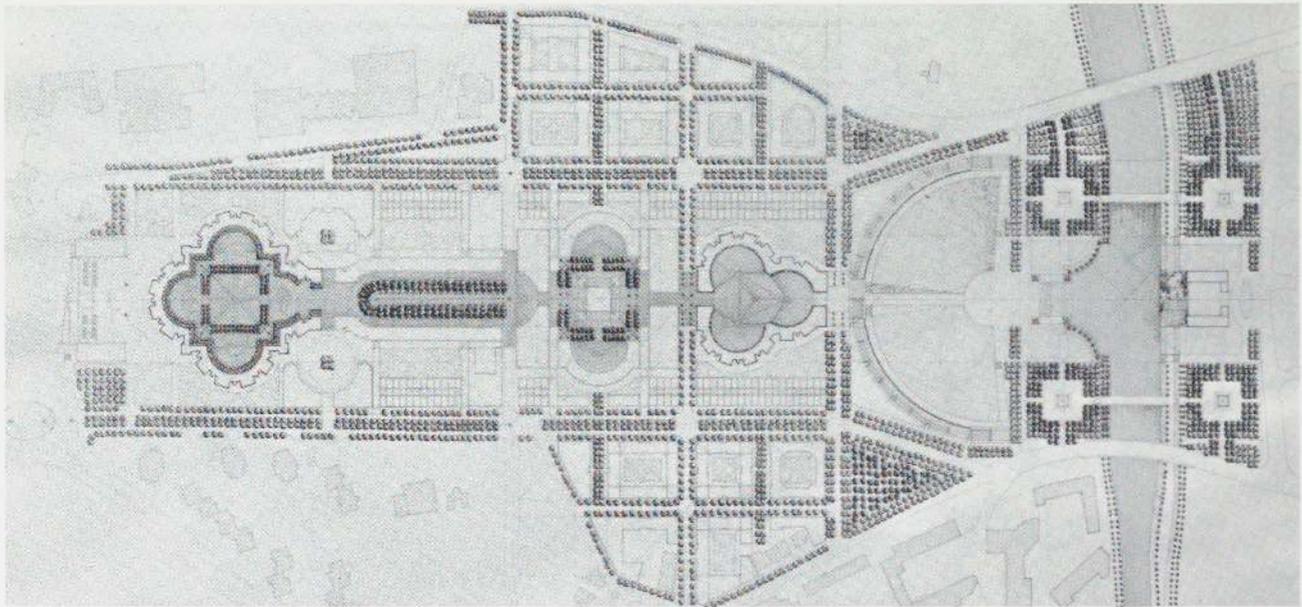
Floor to Ceiling Height: 2.50 m. Price per Square Meter: FF. 2779.90—1982

Construction System: In situ concrete tunnel system with in situ cladding and attached pre-fabricated concrete panels.

Architectural Team: Peter Hodgkinson, Patrick Genard, Rogelio Jimenez, José Mari Rocias

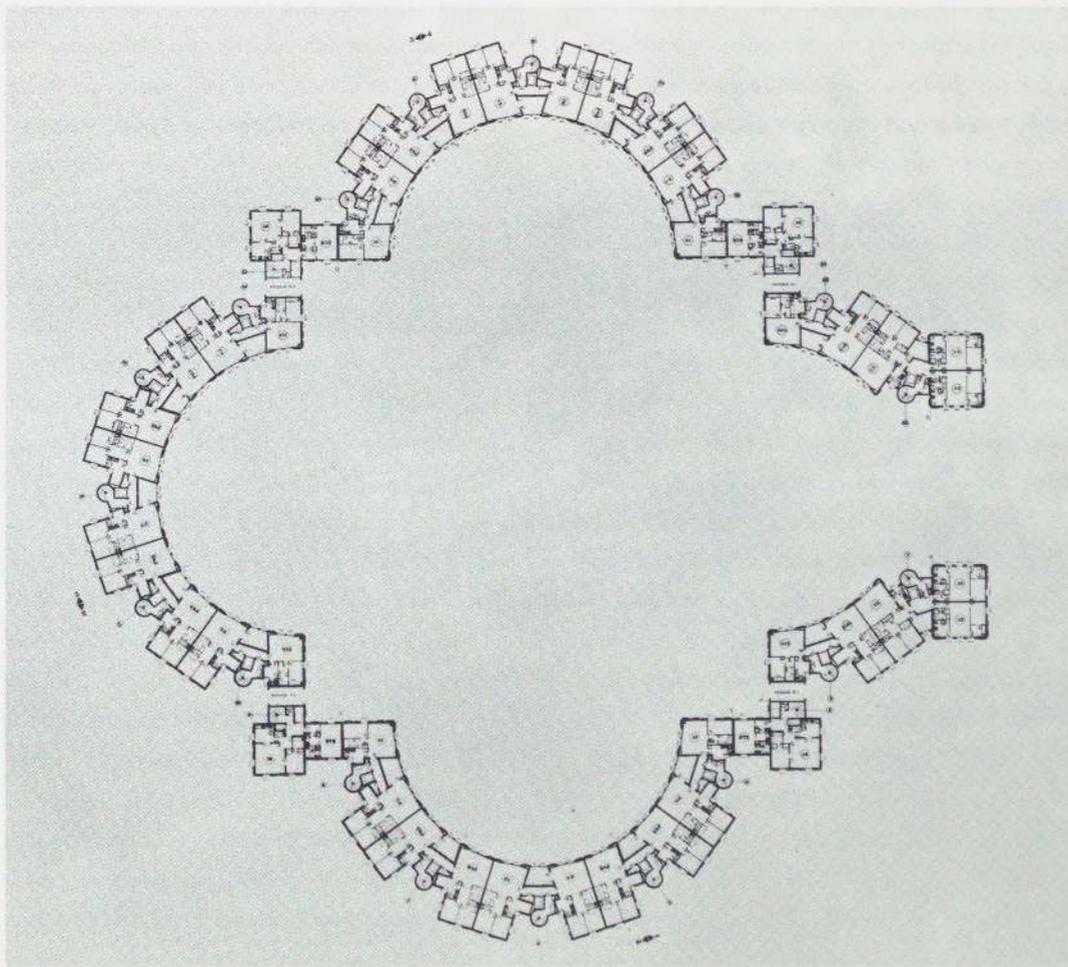
Construction Team: Ramón Collado, Thierry Recevski, Hilario Parja

Consultants: Jean-Pierre Aury, concrete, Yves Serra, engineering



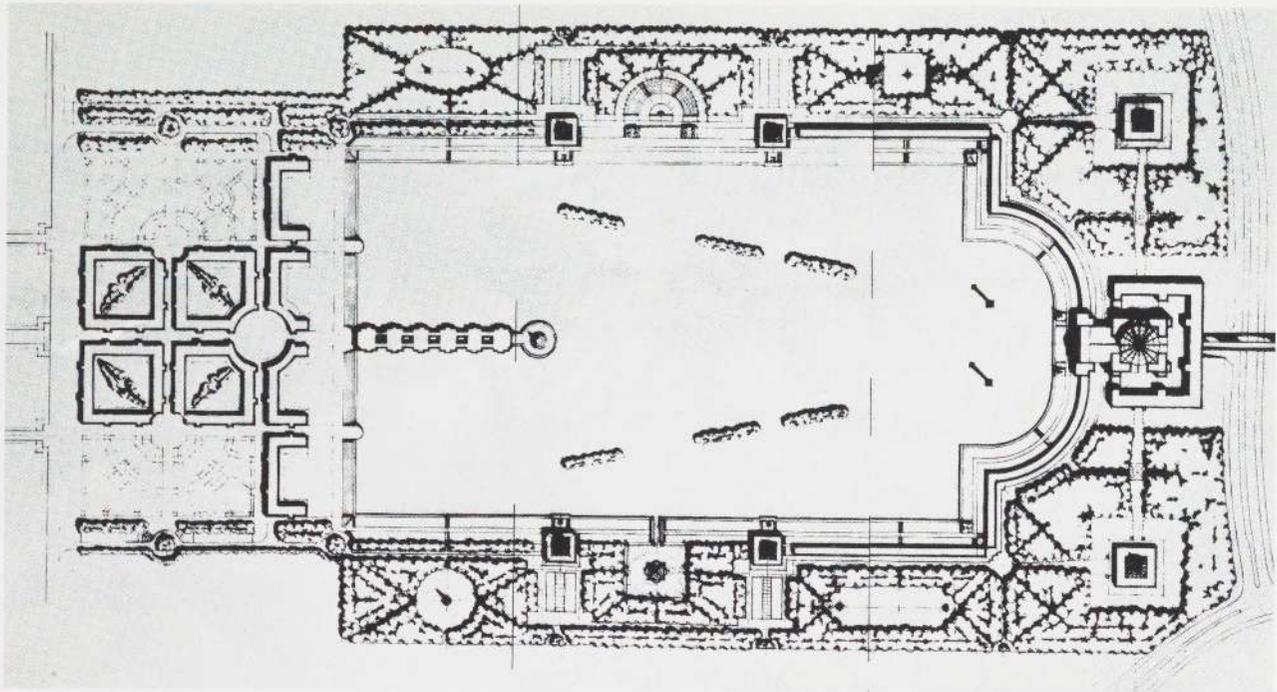
### Montpellier, France

"Antigone: La Place du Nombre d'Or"  
Site plan with first built unit at left.



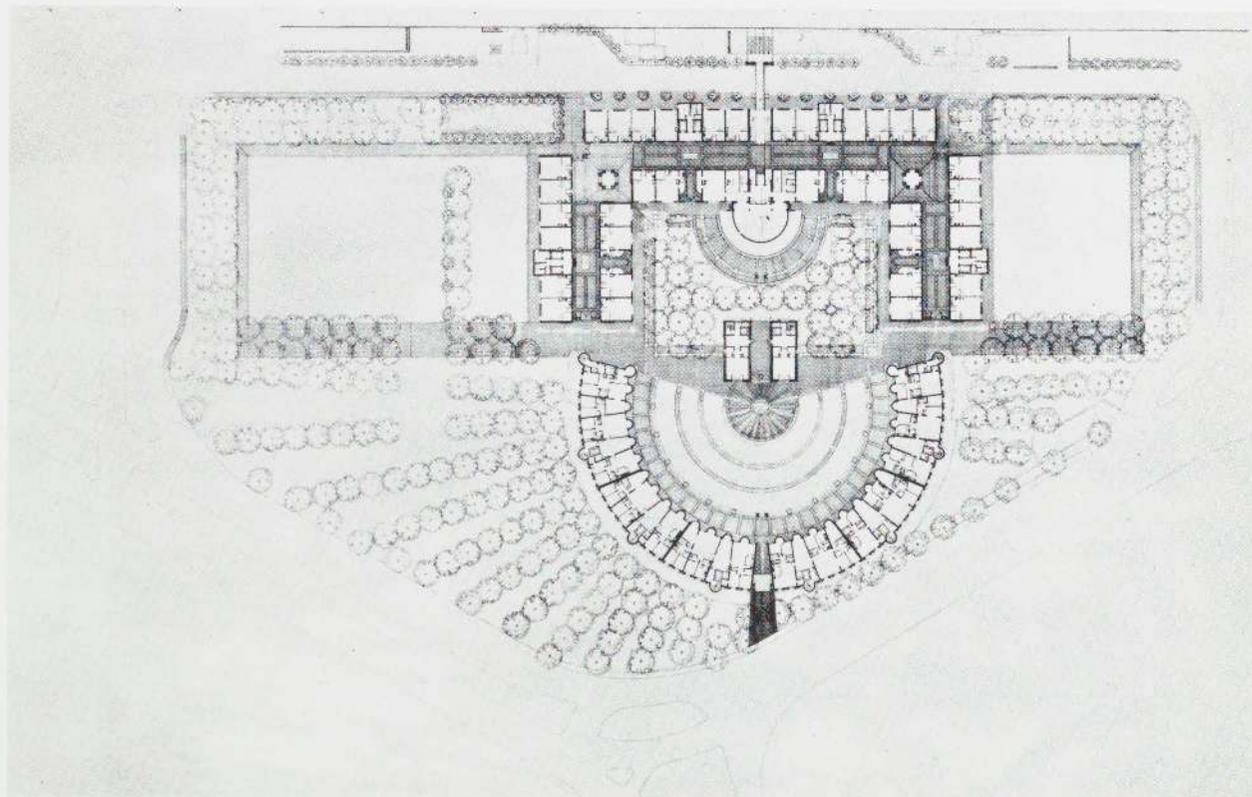
### Montpellier, France

"Antigone: La Place du Nombre d'Or"  
Plan of typical apartment floor.



St. Quentin en Yvelines, near Paris

"Le Lac: Les Arcades du Lac; Le Viaduc, Les Temples du Lac"  
Site plan with first built units at left.



Marne-la-Vallée, near Paris, France

"Les Espaces d'Abraxas: Le Palacio, Le Theatre, L'Arc"  
Site plan and typical apartment floor.

The history of Architecture after World War II has been a fascinating debate about ideas, drawings and buildings, which in a way interpret our epoch, as well as about a method of representing the future of our civilization.

Architecture continues to be a discipline of synthesis directly related to political, economic and technical problems. In today's specialized world, architects are the only ones who can imagine an idea which will then be transformed into a space where man can live.

The drawing of a chair and the design for a city have become confused within the same art, in such a way that in the public's mind the debate has become esoteric. But architecture has retaken, definitively, the first place in the visual arts due not only to the continued need to live under a roof, but also because of man's need to have a place, a space, as cultural reference. Despite that, present civilization has worked hard towards the compression of time, the accumulation and exchange of information, but it has worked very little towards the creation of identifiable spaces which can contribute to building man's personality.

The real history of post-war architecture is centered in the United States, around the immense talent of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. This German craftsman succeeded in reducing architectural facts to simple and pure forms. He used steel and glass and reduced the language to several terms derived from the exaltation of a few materials and techniques. This intelligent synthesis, because of its simplicity of use, pretended that architecture was no more than the result of a linear method applicable to any place or climate. Other civilizations and cultures protested against this simplification of the world, and manifested their impotence when they participated in a technology and form language which could only be seriously built in Chicago or New York.

Alvar Aalto, with the sublimation of craftsmanship, and Louis Kahn, with the poetic interpretation of classicism, showed new ways. These were taken by peripheral countries, producing groups of designers later labeled critical regionalists. These interesting vernacular architectures, designed in the 1960's, were being built at the same time that a series of utopias appeared, in technological or sociological writings, in relation to the culture of each country.

These utopias destroy geniuses and masters. In the 1970's architecture begins to concentrate on itself again. Architects rediscover the pleasure of creation, and their craft. General ideas disappear. We go back to the drawing board to rediscover this ten thousand year old art which has existed in all civilizations.

The language of Mies van der Rohe is today excessively reduced. Aalto and Kahn have died prematurely and new thinkers and masters are needed. In this way, a long investigation of time and space begins. Wright, Gaudí, Ledoux and Wagner in the beginning, but Palladio, Michelangelo and Borromini later, become living masters through their built work. Journeys to the desert or to the Far East reveal local architectures, but also the constants, the immanents of an architectural essence. In this way, living architects learn historicism and try to widen and perfect the languages. The 1970's are over, and with them the ideological debates about style and vocabulary.

Now, in the mid-80's, history has taken a new course, a cycle has ended and another, wider one, begins again. Some constants appear somewhat more certain. Architecture continues to be necessary; new neighborhoods, better housing and places of work must be built. The world is complex and multiform, and different cultures have to coexist in the same place. Every great culture has its own expression. Architectural vocabulary is free, the second industrial civilization has already begun and the most sophisticated technology is absolutely necessary to build a work today. All of this is true, but underneath it, in the substratum, is the essence of the art of projecting architecture, the need for a constant improvement, purified and minimal, for a perfect logic in creation.

In the 1980's the *raison d'être* of architecture itself appears again: the building of symbols, monuments and archetypes capable of generating pleasure about living in a space.

This is my own history, my own biography, the path of my team which in twenty-five years has gone through the most critical regionalism to the most classic modernity.

Ricardo Bofill

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## Ricardo Bofill and Leon Krier: *Architecture, Urbanism, and History*

*This exhibition and catalog are part of the Gerald D. Hines Interests  
Architecture Program at The Museum of Modern Art, New York.*

Ricardo Bofill has built his most important work in France but was born in Barcelona, where he maintains the home base of a studio called the Taller de Arquitectura. Leon Krier, born in Luxembourg, lives and works in London. Both have rejected modern architecture, and both have reasserted the importance of western architectural traditions to the renewal of our cities. Although in many respects their attitudes and careers differ, they have been brought together in this exhibition because they confront modern architecture with a coherent and powerful challenge.

Bofill makes good use of modern construction techniques, particularly precast concrete. Krier, who designs but does not build, has repudiated modern technology in favor of an architecture small in scale and craft-intensive. Bofill rejects vernacular forms, old or new, and seeks to reinstate a kind of classical grandeur once associated with the Court and the Church. Krier has virtually invented his own vernacular, to which he has lately added buildings of more obviously Greco-Roman origin. Bofill has built some of the most humane and beautiful large-scale public housing of this century, succeeding dramatically where modernism has so often failed. Leon Krier has produced images that are among the most compelling alternatives yet seen to modern and postmodern architecture: his projects, highly personal in style, also raise questions about the kind of society that might bring them into being.

Krier's rejection of technology makes his return to the western classical tradition different from other people's architectural historicizing. He rejects not simply the style of modernism but the social and technological facts adduced to support it. He accepts the consequences: "I can only make Architecture, because I do not build. I do not build, because I am an Architect," he has declared, and although he could be persuaded to build the world has not yet shown a disposition to build on his terms.

Krier is a superb polemicist. His arguments are often persuasive even without recourse to specific architectural solutions, but his architectural ideas have an equally independent, and perhaps ultimately more important, life of their own. Some of his themes have the poetic intensity of childhood memories: the framework open to the sky and fitted with flapping curtains, which he calls "Monument"; and a narrow tower capped with a room open on all sides but with a roof that makes it look like a small temple (page 16, 17).

If much of Krier's philosophy and many of his images seem moti-

vated by benevolence, there is another and very different aspect to his work. An important project is "an open public space" which "becomes at the same time a public building with a collective dimension . . ." Several dramatic versions of this were designed for a 1978 exhibition called *Roma Interrotta*. Architects were asked to insert new urban configurations into Giovanni Nolli's 1748 map of Rome, famous for showing all major public spaces including those that are roofed. Krier's "interruptions" are gratuitously hostile: one of them is a triangular colossus projected into the Piazza of St. Peter's, and the Piazza itself has been turned into a kind of swimming pool. Public assembly is thus confined to Krier's building, which is intended for workers. This urban intervention has less to do with renewing the classical tradition than with sabotaging the Vatican, but the idea of a group of buildings forming a covered public space is original and tantalizing (page 16).

At the opposite extreme is the reassuringly intimate project for a school, commissioned by Ricardo Bofill for his housing complex at St. Quentin en Yvelines, near Paris (page 18), unbuilt because dividing the program into many small buildings multiplies the cost. Like his "reconstruction" of Pliny's Villa—a virtuoso fantasia in which the Roman's confusing description of his country house is made to yield a combination palace and baroque monastery—the school project seems to comprise decades of patient building.

Before 1985 Krier's most intriguing urban studies were for the Berlin-Tegel district (page 20, 21). Here the influence of Camillo Sitte is mastered; effects seem less artfully picturesque; and individual buildings like the Odeon synthesize formal and vernacular elements convincingly. But Krier's proposals for Washington D.C. (page 22) are by far his most ambitious. Knowing the actual city, its origins and its meaning for Americans, the reader may well react all the more strongly to the logic and poetry of Krier's transformations. What are we to think of a plan that makes such beautiful use of water, of multiple perspectives and interesting objects to close them, and that removes most of the Mall and other places of public assembly while at the same time proposing practical solutions to housing and self-financing development?

Utopia, Colin Rowe has suggested, is the best frame of reference for understanding Krier's work: it is desirable but unattainable. Not so with Ricardo Bofill: he has astonished the world by doing just those things everyone has known cannot be done. Modern times cannot accept monumentality for low cost housing, or indeed for

anything else—yet Bofill has built five government-sponsored housing complexes in the manner of Versailles. Modern architecture, we have believed, should be at “human scale” despite the stultifying repetition that usually means—yet Bofill denies human scale and manipulates floors and windows and everything else at will, to make architecture again more resilient. Classical details cannot be used, we have supposed, with such bravura—and here we hold our breath. At Marne-la-Vallée Bofill and his colleagues seem to have tried everything at once: a massive mannerism at the back, a thin Kahnian decor at the sides, and an “American” mirror glass glitter within (page 5). It succeeds, perhaps, by sheer exuberance, but not until the projects in Montpellier and in Paris (near the Gare Montparnasse) do the advantages and limits of classicism begin to act in concert (page 4, 3).

At Montpellier there is an important distinction between the scales appropriate for external and internal facades. Outside, a row of what look like small town houses politely turns to greet the neighborhood; inside, the space they encircle is orchestrated into one great crescendo. The effect is ennobling, and one understands why the delighted municipality is proceeding quickly with the rest of a truly ambitious plan. At Paris the complicated configuration saves the streets, and the simplified architectural detail used for windows is neat, light, and dry. Nothing more pleasing has been built in Paris since World War II.

In all these projects, financed by varying combinations of government and private agencies, and for the most part triumphing over the bureaucracies, low cost, low income apartments are provided that would be considered luxury housing in New York City today.

Bofill has proved that the axial geometries and grand scale of French neoclassical planning can yield pleasures that cost nothing. If buildings that are too large seem inevitable now, despite Krier's exhortations, connecting them to history and to the grandeur of cities may yet restore the idea of a public good. Bofill is saying something of great importance regarding urban life at the end of this century: it is both desirable and practical to dramatise housing. Rather than being mere background, or an indifferent prop on the urban stage, housing can become the stage itself.

Krier, arguing in favor of very different convictions, taps a psychological substratum more potent than nostalgia for the small and precious. His work invites a wider participation in the making of buildings. “Small is Beautiful,” E. F. Schumacher's brilliant critique

of “economics as if people mattered,” was published in England in 1973 just as Krier's ideas were becoming clearer. The connections between the private and the public, as described by Hannah Arendt, and between what we do and how we do it, as analyzed by Schumacher, are made more accessible by the work of these two architects. The possibilities they have shown us go far beyond questions of architectural style.

Arthur Drexler

On behalf of The Museum of Modern Art I wish to thank Ricardo Bofill and Leon Krier for their time and effort. In addition to writing texts for this catalog, they have also prepared projects especially for the exhibition. We are very grateful to Warren James for his translations of Mr. Bofill's texts. Mr. Krier has done all the work himself; Mr. Bofill's associates in Barcelona and Paris have helped greatly: I wish particularly to thank Aline Charransol, Jean-Pierre Carniaux, and Serena Vergano in Barcelona, and Bertrand Julien La Ferriere and Patrick Dillon in Paris for their unfailingly good-natured assistance. Beautiful photographs were provided by Annabelle d'Huart; and by Stephane Couturier and Serena Vergano.

For lending, or helping to obtain, Krier drawings we wish to thank: Phyllis Lambert, Director of the Centre Canadien d'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal; Antonio Cordero, Turin; Pierre Apraxine, Curator of the Gilman Paper Company Collection, New York; Maurice Culot, Institut Français d'Architecture, Paris; the Antonia Jannone Gallery, Milan; the Max Protetch Gallery, New York; Der Scutt, New York; and D. Wong, London.

Special thanks are due to Barbara Balch for designing this catalog in the usual difficult circumstances, and to Marie-Anne Evans and Robert Coates for enterprising assistance in preparing the exhibition. A.D.

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Exhibition and catalog organized by Arthur Drexler, Director, Department of Architecture and Design.  
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## Traditionalism Versus Modernism *A Global Ecological Reconstruction*

Defending our land and values against its foes or building great houses, palaces and cities are all equally noble patriotic deeds and duties.

A homeland is not just made of people and their history, but of all the things which our eyes can see, which our senses will embrace. If we cannot love them, if they do not inflame our hearts, they will lead us to hate ourselves and our fellowmen. They will drive us to escape to far away lands or to lose ourselves in artificial paradises, in illusory and unreal worlds.

The supreme purpose of the architect is to build and maintain the homeland. A world of beautiful landscapes, of splendid cities which we will carry in our hearts and which we can long for, of places we are proud to come from, proud to inherit and proud to bestow upon future generations.

Alas, our modern world is deeply wounded by abstract, oversized and awkward structures which will never gain our affection. Today the very idea of homeland only survives unscathed in those corners where industrial modernism has not completely established its empire.

An "industrial homeland" is indeed a contradiction in terms.

Two score years of modernism and two score centuries of traditional architecture stand now side by side to be compared and to be judged. Only half a century ago modernist movements arrogantly claimed to have in their grasp the *final solution* for all environmental and artistic problems. In their own global triumph they were but to prove that architecture would have been better served without such definitive experiments. Today it is tragically evident that without traditional landscapes, cities and values our planet would be little less than a global nightmare.

To modernists—peace and retirement! Of modernism there is little to be saved. It is but the negation of all those ideas, values and principles which made architecture worth having... no roofs; no walls; no columns; no arches; no windows; no streets; no monumentality; no individuality; no decoration; no craftsmanship; no grandeur; no history; no tradition!

It is but the next logical step, to negate such negations. After forty years of modernist starving, there is now in all over-developed countries a great craving for traditional architecture and beauty, for imposing and monumental occasions. That is quite natural, but hunger is seldom a good cook. We must not underestimate the ruthless determination of the tyrant who usurps the throne of our great art; because more than ever do fashions offer light architectural entertainment and industrial ersatz, while ignoring and trivialising the larger problems of city and land. We must now face the truth.

Industrial civilization is doing bad housekeeping, bad town-keeping and bad land-keeping.

As mankind is now creating greater ecological problems and disasters than it is able to solve, it has but two choices: either go on and face collective suicide, or make a Copernican return and cut environmental problems down to manageable sizes. Town planning and architecture largely determine how we live our daily lives, how we use our resources and time. Once one realizes that one is leading people in the wrong direction it is either mad or criminal not to change course.

My generation is faced with a colossal and almost inhuman task of *global ecological reconstruction*, of relearning the timeless principles and the secular skills as artisans and artists, as foresters, farmers and town-builders, as legislators.

Although to be successful this grandest of enterprises will have to become the goal of a whole people, it requires at first the concord and leadership of a handful of individuals, the total dedication of a nation's best minds. Their determination, their moral temerity and good sense must equal nothing less than the legendary virtues of America's founding fathers.

Leon Krier

### The Power of Classical Architecture

The futile destiny of many contemporary institutions and organizations is clearly legible in the crude shapes of their buildings.

All great human institutions are to this day symbolized by classical monuments. In St. Peter's in Rome, in the Capitol in Washington, and in Westminster Palace in London, institutions and buildings form an indissoluble unity, forever linked as long as men will remember—the dignity of such bodies is made visible in the grandeur of their architecture. On it depends their authority as well as their own self-respect.

The universal principles of traditional architecture—harmony, firmness, utility—are concordant with the fundamental goals of all significant human establishments. In all great cultures they have been the chosen means of wise polity and civilizing action.

In the whirlwind of all things human, they have been the guarantors of social bond stability and peace, the visible realisation of a common moral world.

### Architecture and Morality

Cities and landscapes are the tangible realisation of our material and spiritual worth, for good or for ill. Each image we draw, each structure we build is an integral statement on how we want or don't want the entire world to be. We either work on its construction or on its destruction. We complete or we fragment it. The first rule of ecology is that we cannot do one thing alone.

### Res Publica

Public space and monumental architecture are like precious jewelry. Too much of it is a false luxury. Too little of it is a false economy.

The good city can only be made of streets and squares. The square, a most natural place of convention, is the choice location of all things public, of *res publica* and its noblest expression: monumental architecture.

### False and True Monuments

The skyscraper is a con-monument. It is private matter in public garb or posture. Not only does its symbolic nakedness show through the curtain-thin-walls, but its sheer bulk humiliates the dignity of genuine public structures.

The civic and religious Halls and Palaces, the arenas, the temples, shrines, theatres, libraries, the spires, fountains, *thermae* and memorials are the true public and symbolic features of the city. They are the privileged objects of monumental architecture. The public squares and the city's skyline are its inviolable realm and stage, its sacred protectorate.

### The City of Communities *The Cities Within the City*

Cities which are but random collections of "commercial-strips," "office-parks" and "condominiums" cannot become a permanent home for mankind.

If we dissect a living body, we kill an individual. Yet that is what functional zoning does to human settlements. It is the root cause of most modern ills; of the wastage of land, energy and time; of social isolation, anxiety and frustration.

After a period of overexpansion, and schematization, cities have to be vastly shrunken and reorganized.

Man must be returned the privilege to use his legs for better purpose than walking to his car, subway or plane.

It should be man's constitutional right to perform all daily and habitual deeds without the use of mechanical means of transport; to walk to his place of work, his club, his church, his restaurant, his shops, his clinic, his school, his library, his gym and park. (Now it is but the rare privilege of a few.)

The good city provides by law the totality of urban functions within a comfortable walking distance. It is a complete urban community, member of a larger family of independent cities, of cities within the city, of cities within the countryside.

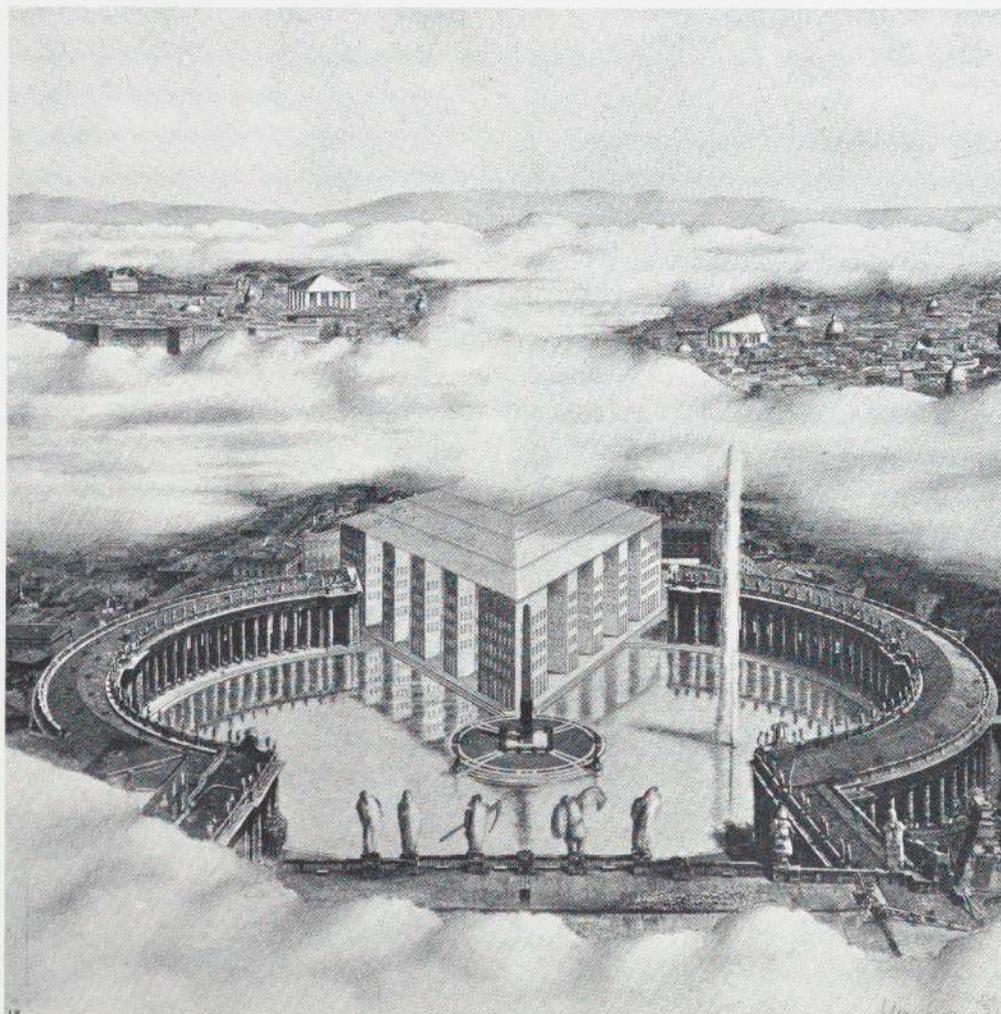
Monument with (faded) Red Flags, 1974

Anonymous loan



Roma Interrotta, 1977

Social Center in St. Peter's Square; in background, Piazza Navona and Via Corso  
Courtesy Max Protetch Gallery



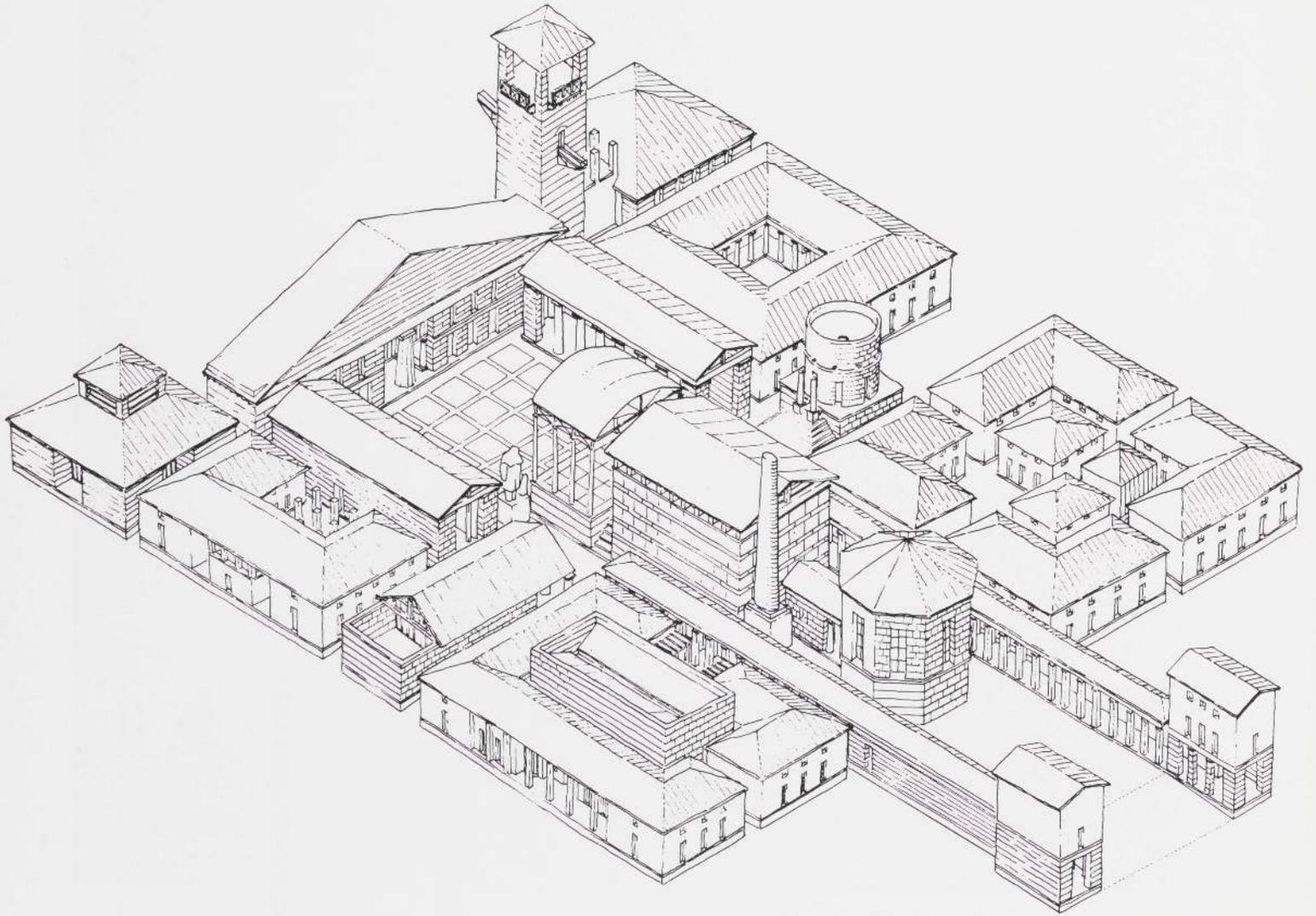
House for G. Mayer, Bagnano, Tuscany, 1974

Collection Antonio Cordero



School, St. Quentin en Yvelines, 1977-79

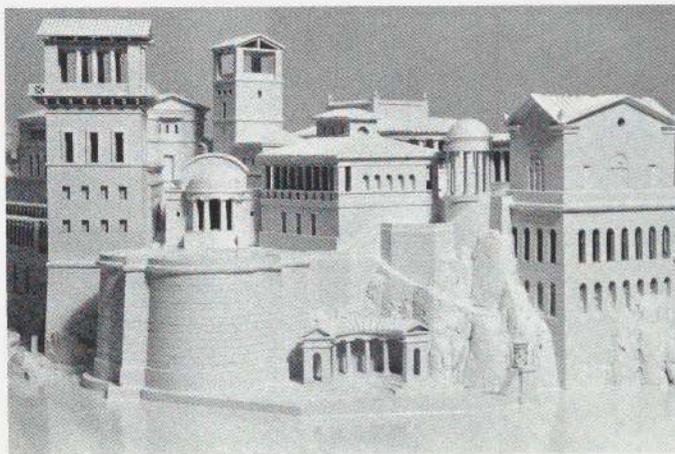
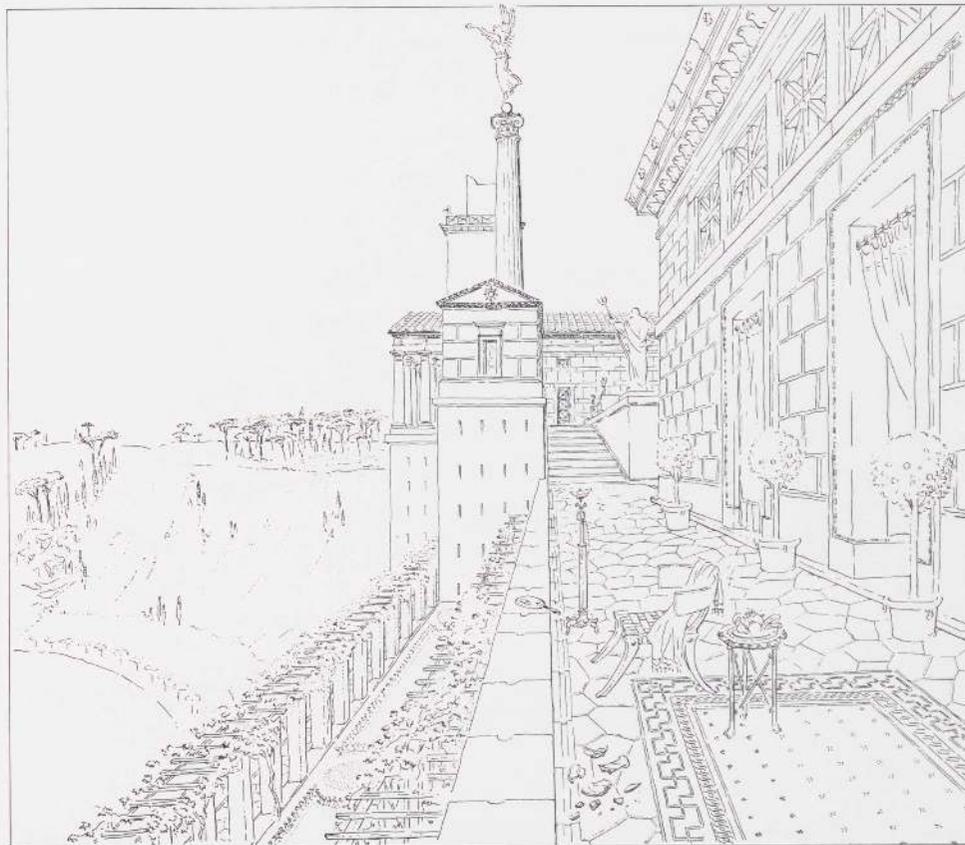
Collection Leon Krier



## Pliny's Laurentine Villa, 1981-82

*Top:* Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/  
Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal

*Bottom left:* Model, Courtesy Institut Français d'Architecture  
*Bottom right:* Panoramic view by Rita Wolff. Collection Leon Krier



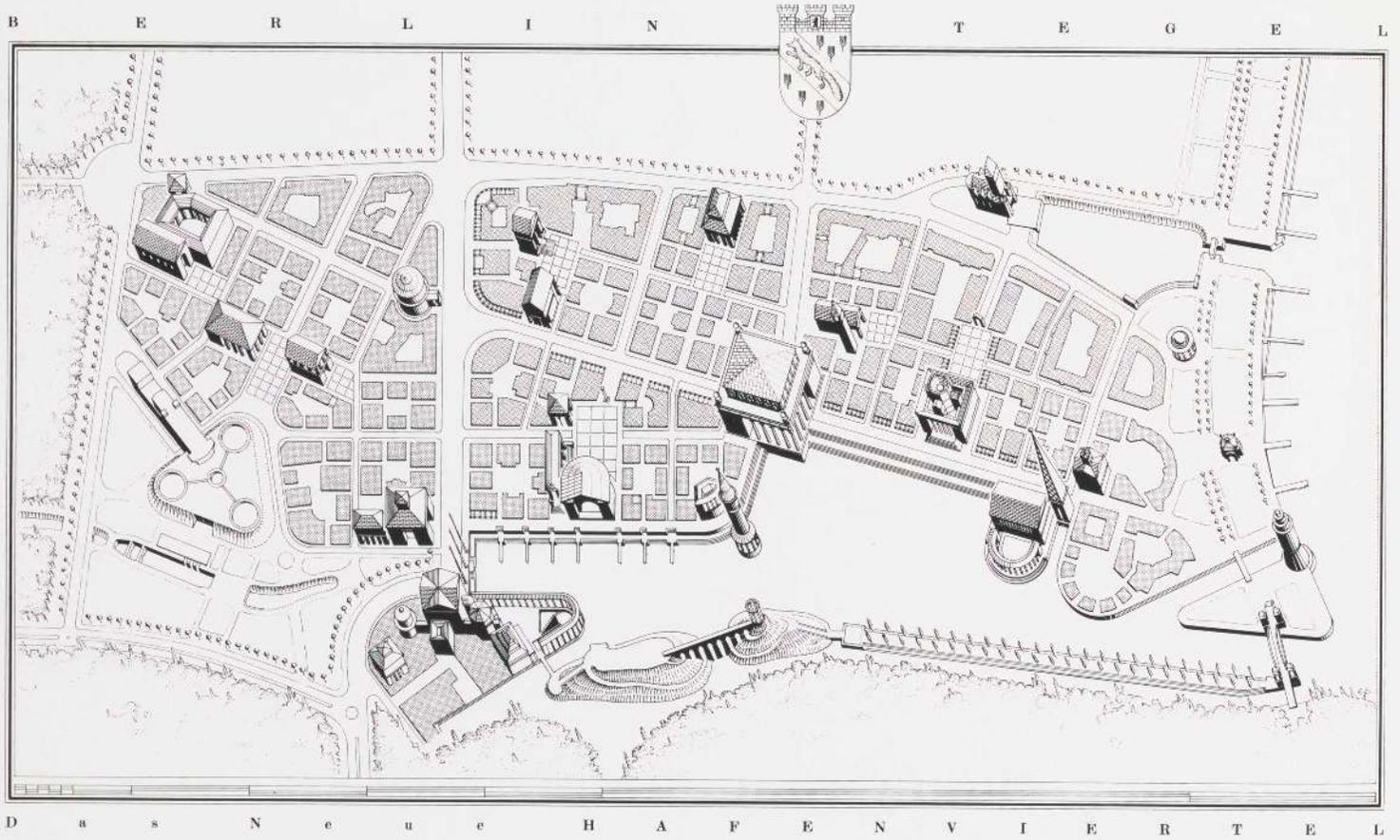
*The reality of a place may seldom match the intensity of a vision which a poetic description has impressed upon your mind. However, great monuments and landscapes invariably surpass the wildest expectations. That is the meaning of classical invention.*

*This group of buildings, pavilions and belvederes, crowded around a promontory above the turquoise expanse of the Mediterranean Sea, was more or less what I saw when reading Pliny's description of his beloved Laurentina.*

*Even though I have lived in their vicinity, I never dared to explore the now wretched and barren ruins south of Ostia. So far the vision lives on paper, in plaster and in a panorama by Rita Wolff. Tomorrow it may rise again under the sun and shady pines . . . sometimes words have more permanence than marble or bronze. . . . L.K.*

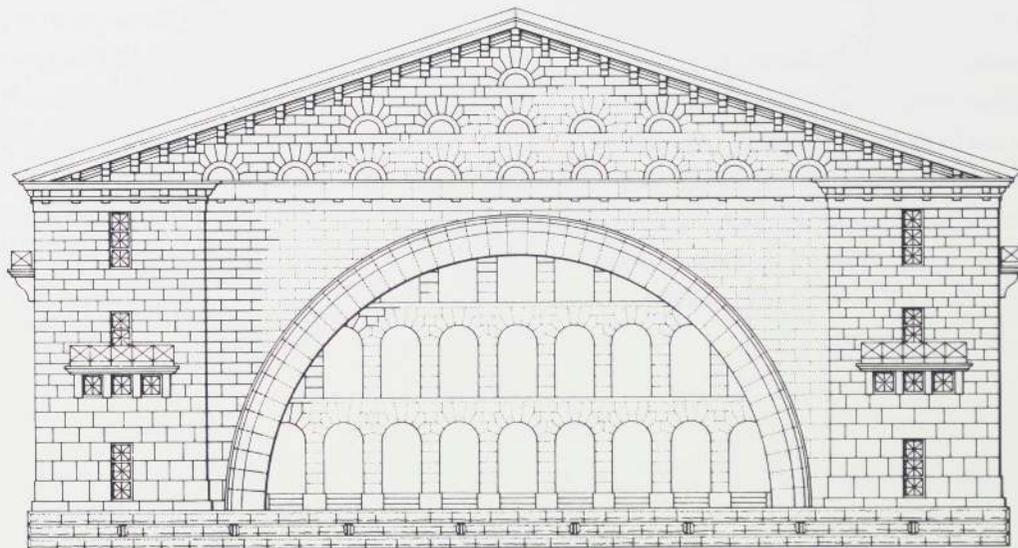
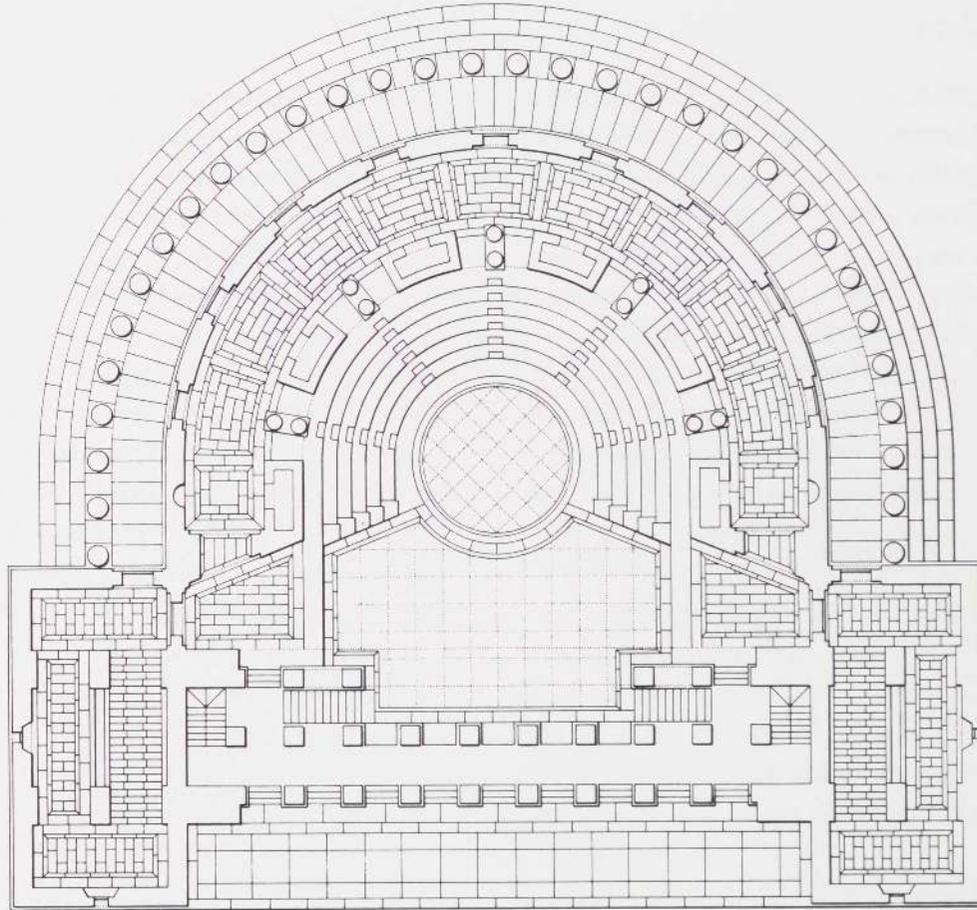
# Tourist Plan, Berlin-Tegel, 1983

Collection Der Scutt, Architect, New York



Odeon, Berlin-Tegel, 1980-83

Courtesy Max Protetch Gallery



## The Completion of Washington D.C. *A Bicentennial Masterplan for the Federal City*

However beneficial America's achievements in law, science and technology may have been for human civilization the parallel export of its modern urban planning methods has been a global ecological disaster. The worldwide adoption of the American "down-town," "sub-urb" and "strip" model have not only laid waste the cities and landscapes of her friends and foes alike, but meant for American urban culture a historic tragedy of unprecedented dimension and gravity.

The places where the majority of American citizens go about their daily occupations are now in shocking contrast to the seductive comforts of their domestic environs. Surely the vulgarity of the "commercial strip," the hostility of "down-town," the unreality of the "suburb" and the tyranny of compulsive commuting are not part of the good "American way of life."

In the historic districts of Charleston, of Savannah and of reborn Williamsburg the United States possess tangible examples of how "small-town America" wants ideally to live and what it wants to look like. The fervor with which these places are revered by their inhabitants and by countless visitors, have made them not merely nostalgic national shrines of the past but desirable and attainable urban models of the future.

No such emblematic models exist so far for the great metropolitan centers. Where they did exist, their coherence has been shattered out of recognition by recent "urban improvement programmes" and (over) "development."

The eyes of the nation are turned towards Washington at all times. Beyond being the symbolic heart of Democracy and seat of government I believe the Federal City is destined to become the touchstone and criterion for the rebirth of urban life and culture; of civilized social intercourse, of simple grandeur and elegant simplicity. What Venice is to us, Washington will be for our children; the ultimate urban paradigm, child of heart and intellect, of Art and Industry. America owes it to itself and to the world.

So far Washington's monumental core is but an outline sketch of a great city to be, a grand skeleton with noble limbs but little flesh. In those hundreds of empty acres I see but an unfinished canvas, an incomplete portrait which craves for completion. The seed of this inspiring national project was placed by its founders and past builders; we must not leave it to rest before it has borne fruit.

The same enthusiasm which our parents and grandparents felt for the reach to the planets and the conquest of the Far West now fills us for the rebirth of urban culture and life. The Bicentennial master plan for the completion of the Federal city merely hints at the undiscovered treasures which lie buried in the ground of America's National capital. I wish to thank Mr. Arthur Drexler for giving me this opportunity and equally Mr. J. T. Robertson who instilled in me the love of that great city and to whom this work is dedicated.

Leon Krier

### The New Federal City

The Federal City as confined by New York Avenue, Pennsylvania Avenue, Maryland Avenue and the Potomac river will be divided into four independent towns, each no larger in surface and population than the neighboring George-town and henceforth named as *Lincoln-Town* (North-West), *Washington-Town* (North-East), *Jefferson-Town* (South-East) and *Capitol-Town*.

The much enlarged Tidal-Basin, named here *Pyramid Lake* (after the proposed Civil War memorial) will be bedded with white coral sand, and the bright turquoise-colored waters, contrasting agreeably with the dark Potomac, will wash against the tree-lined and arcaded marble banks of the new Federal towns, the White House grounds and Potomac Park. In the central axis of the fan-shaped Mall a gradually narrowing Grand Canal will stretch from the *New Stylobate* of Washington Memorial to the vast *Constitution Square*, itself cut into the flanks of the Hill under the west front of the Capitol building. The reflecting pool in front of Lincoln Memorial will be widened to join with Pyramid Lake.

Within the confines of Federal City a community of approximately 80,000 residents will enjoy all the amenities, comforts and pleasures of the national and international Capitol in a dense pattern of tree-lined streets, squares and gardens, and within walking distance of their professional activities. No non-public building will exceed the height of the National Gallery's main cornice line.

A Federal development agency will insure the sale of the newly divided non-public blocks conditional to a strict adherence to volumetric, stylistic and functional guidelines. The considerable profits made from the sale of this finest of prime urban land will directly go to the erection of public buildings and the high quality finishes and adornments of public spaces and gardens.

### Masterplan as Constitution

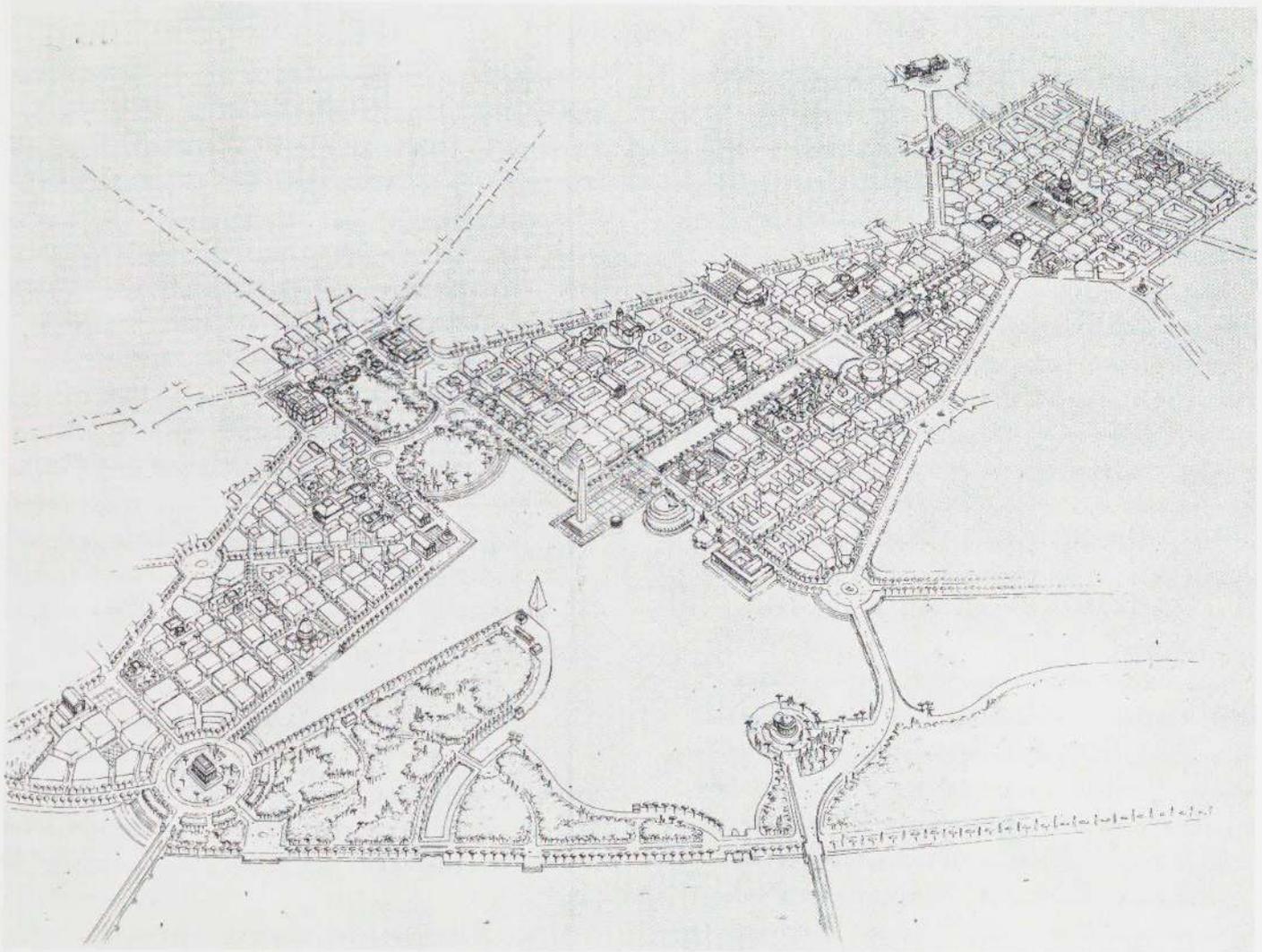
The masterplan is to the shaping of a city what a constitution is to the life of people, it is both of a topographical and moral nature. A good masterplan will allow man to satisfy all his material and spiritual needs within walking distance. It will not promote any one of them at the expense of the others.

The masterplan of a city must be good independently of its architecture, people and vegetation because not even the best buildings or gardens can redeem a bad masterplan; or change a suburb into a city. Conversely not even the worst intent or taste will be able to erase the beneficial order of a good masterplan; or pervert a true town to become a mere down-town, business or shopping district.

The intent to corrupt a masterplan is as grave a crime as the aim to subvert the constitution of a people.

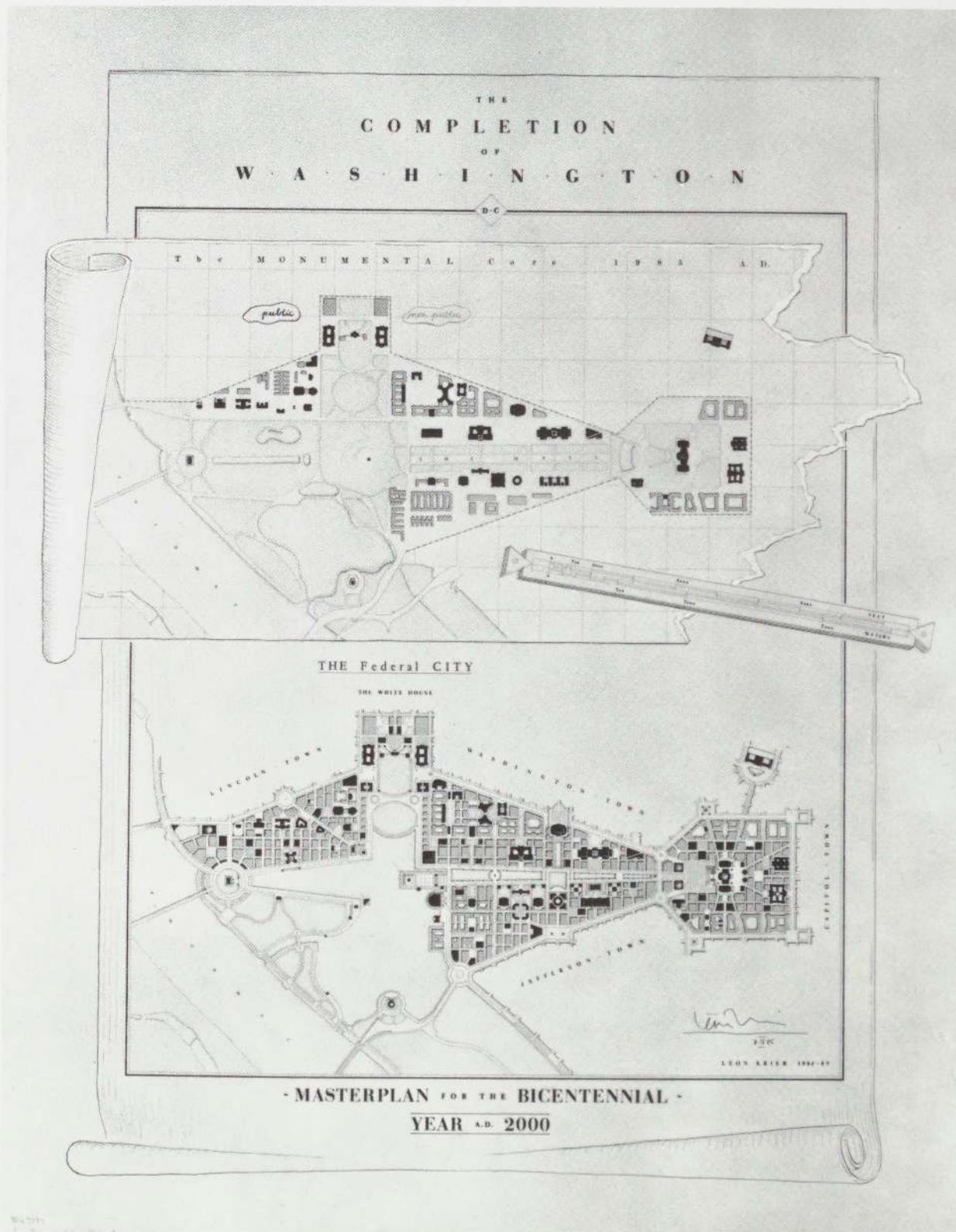
Completion of Washington, D.C., 1985

Aerial Perspective. Collection Leon Krier

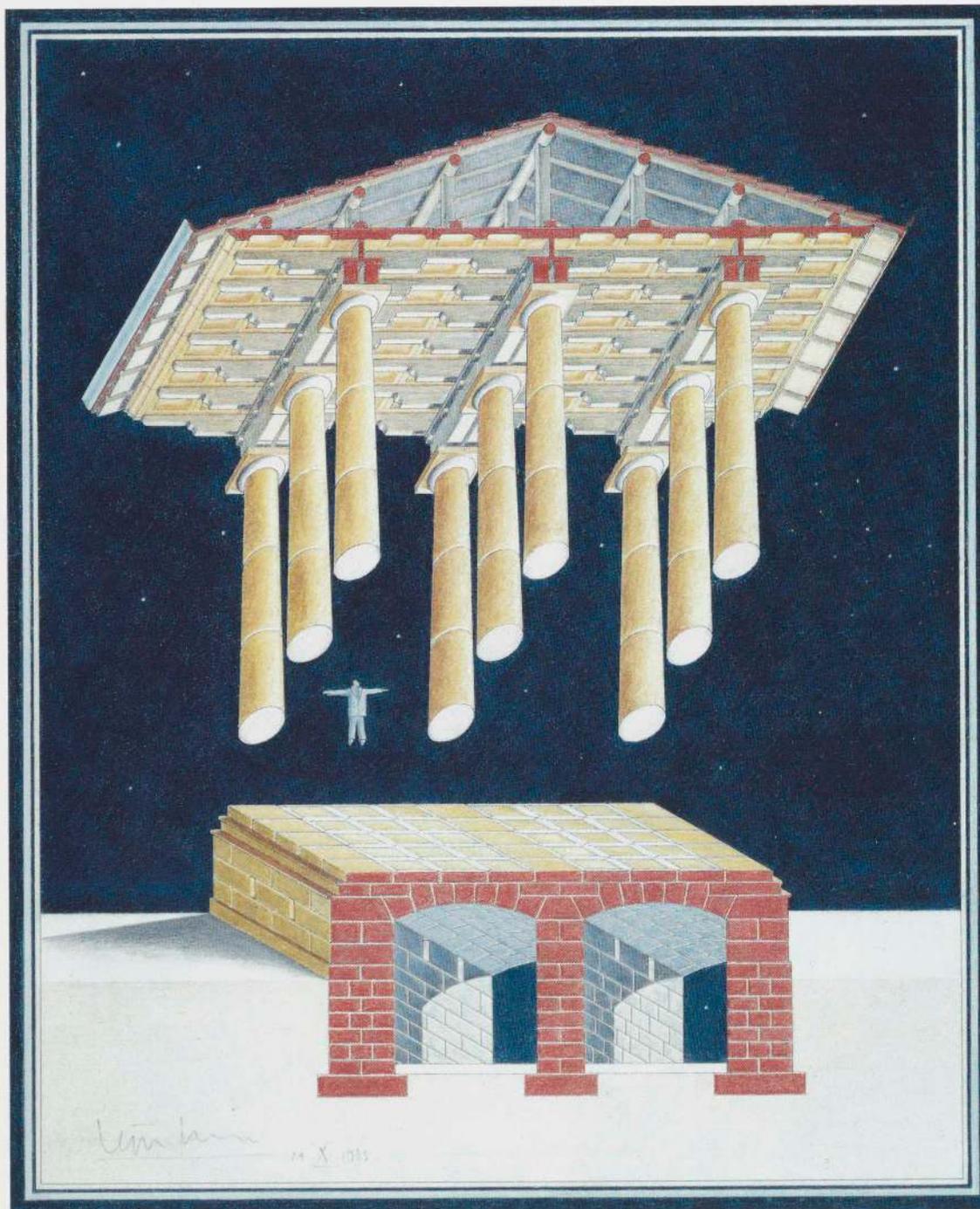


# Completion of Washington, D.C., 1985

Plan. Collection Leon Krier



RICARDO BOFILL AND LEON KRIER  
*ARCHITECTURE, URBANISM, AND HISTORY*



Leon Krier, "The Market of Antiquities, Berlin-Tegel"

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