data

Project: The Paul Mellon Art Center, Wallingford, Connecticut

Architects: I.M. Pei & Partners

Site: Choate School Campus, Wallingford, Connecticut.

Client: Choate School and Rosemary Hall

Structure: Reinforced concrete.

description

"The Paul Mellon Center for the Arts has been conceived symbolically as a gateway between two Connecticut prep schools -- Choate and its newly adopted sister Rosemary."

The new arts complex is essentially two buildings, diagonally bisected by a curving pathway and partially open to the sky, which culminates in a broad staircase."
evaluation

Concept/Parti - Geometric

The two buildings consist of lounges, studios, and auditorium. These spaces play an important role in the spatial sequence connecting the two schools. They are physically separated from the path by transparent enclosures and are never out of touch with what is going on along the path.

Correlation:

The Arts Center consists of six levels. The first floor contains the balcony and its lobby, the first of two lounges, mezzanines, and the art studios. Both buildings are entered from this diagonal plaza.

Circulation:

Circulation to both buildings works off of the diagonal axis. Inside the auditorium you descend to the main area; the lounge and studios circulate vertically.

Structure:

The structure/spatial characteristics are of co-variant design process because "the organization of form, space and structure tends to become hierarchic as a result of the co-variance of systems and its 'closed system' nature."
Unique Features:

The auditorium is flexible and expandable. For drama it seats 640, but the balcony can be closed off to create an intimate 400-seat theatre.

Image:

"The building is more than a gateway," says Pei. "It is also a trap, designed to lure the boys and girls to each other and to art."
data

Project: Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, Texas

Architect: Gunnar Birkets & Associates

Program: 17,500 sq. ft. museum for the display of contemporary art and industrial design.

Site: One-half city block fronting on a corner of the intersection at Montrose Blvd. and Bissonnet St. adjacent to the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Client: The Contemporary Arts Association, Houston.

Structure: Steel frame and steel stud with concrete slab floor and steel space frame and deck roof; exterior walls are insulated stainless steel panels; interior partitions are gypsum wallboard.

Mechanical System: Gas-fired roof units for warm air and cool air; forced air distribution.

Costs: $600,000; $34.35 sq. ft.

description

Situated diagonally across from Mies Van Der Rohe's addition to the Museum of Fine Arts is the Contemporary Arts Museum by Gunnar Birkerts.

The birth of the Contemporary Arts Association was a similar impulse to that of the MFA. It occurred at an analogous point of the city's history as the MFA -- a wave of growth. An impulse to bring to the public contemporary statements in art and industrial design was the genesis of the Association.

Gunnar Birkerts was presented with a site selected by his client, facing an expanding building by a distinguished architect. This context was also that of a changing neighborhood, for without zoning (Houston has none) the process of an evolving urban fabric was intensified at this critical junction.
evaluation

Concept/Parti - Geometric

The geometry of the CAM is clearly an inflection to the shift in street direction, as well as an urban gesture to the MFA itself. Birkerts characterizes his treatment as a "scaleless object," meant to bridge between two contextual fabrics.

Additionally, the parallelogram plan configuration resulted in greater continuous wall space for the same square footage than would a rectangle.

Correlation:

The CAM functions on a diagonal axis with a slotted entrance which opens into a wedge-shaped space that leads into the main gallery.

The administrative facilities are placed below ground to better serve their function.

Circulation:

The circulation is not a principal part to the concept. It is of "plan libre" character which "consists of an envelope of space or a loft-type space which is spatially subdivided by non-structural partitions."

Structure:

The structure is an "ordering component of the concept." On the main level the gallery space determined by its structure
is a large loft space which is flexible. The flexibility of the space determines the type of display that the curator wishes to present.

Image:

The Contemporary Art Museum and The Museum of Fine Arts are interesting in the problems they ignore. Primary among these is the question of lighting. Even in instances where artificial light was the source in the artists' studios the problem would still seem to be more than simply excluding sunlight. In this sense, the question of control of light might reasonably appear to be a basis for the museums' internal organization.
Project: Vincent Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Architects: Gerrit Rietveld, J. Van Diller, J. Van Tricht

Program: Museum and ancillary facilities to house art collection of Theo Van Gogh.

Site: Flat terrain on north shoulder, east end of museumplein, bounded by Van de Veldestraat and Paulus Potterstraat.


Structure: Reinforced concrete, steel staircase.

Mechanical System: Rooftop HVAC.

Costs: Unavailable.

description

Although the Van Gogh Museum shows a cubist form foreign to its surroundings, its scale is carefully controlled; a sizeable portion of the structure lies below grade level. What is visible is a chunky cubic mass spinning off lesser bodies.

The Van Gogh Foundation established conditions: paintings should be exhibited mainly in overhead daylight; the museum should be a place of creative recreation; a lecture hall and meeting rooms should be provided.
evaluation

Concept/Particle - Court

Rietveld's design deals with lighting and urban scale. The building steps back progressively from the basement to ground floor on one side, ground floor to first floor on three sides, and second and third floors on two sides. The spaces in the interior are arranged around a central atrium so that each floor level would receive direct overhead light from a flat roof pierced with glass.

Correlation:

A sense of spatial movement is expressed as one enters the building. "The ground floor shows an awareness of Rietveld's definition of space: a convergence of planes and lines. The spaces on each level surround the central core resulting in a pinwheel motion."

Circulation:

The Van Gogh Museum's circulation is in relationship to the central atrium just as the spaces are. This type of movement is situated for better security of the art objects themselves. It provides a separation of viewer and object, but does not isolate the two. Principal means of public vertical circulation is a freestanding staircase in a corner of the atrium.
Structure:

A grid of 11 by 11 bays covered by 5-meter cubes are piled roughly into a pyramid. Here the structure becomes "an ordering component of the concept." All levels deal with the atrium, which in turn is developed through the structure.

Unique Features:

The lighting and interior form and color were fashioned to provide a neutral context for the art of Van Gogh. Natural light passes through a suspended "brise de soleil," 22½ pyramidal skylights, and a plastic diffusing grid to enter the space.

Image:

Even though the museum shows a "cubist pedigree" foreign to its surroundings, it presents the character of something to be visited. The progressively stepping back and the strong sense of spatial movement reinforce this.
Project: Art for Living Center, Henry Street Settlement, New York City

Architect: Frentice & Chan, Ohlhausen

Program: The new structure would provide theatre support facilities and flexible studios for music, dance, drama, television, film, photography, pottery, painting, and sculpture. An 80-seat recital hall plus exhibit areas and offices are also included.

Site: 23,900 sq. ft. on a busy thoroughfare in New York City's lower east side.

Client: Henry Street Settlement

Structure: Reinforced concrete frame with waffle and ribbed slab flooring, masonry infill.

Costs: $2,370,000, including renovation of playhouse; $56.17 per sq. ft.

description

This building is simply a modest, well-designed, community-based arts center for New York City's Henry Street Settlement, a non-profit social service organization. Yet, the Arts for Living Center by Frentice, Chan and Ohlhausen represents certain professional attitudes toward the role of architecture in general, and cultural centers in particular. "The architecture may be modest, but it is significant."
evaluation

Concept/Parti - Wall and Object; court

Sited in a lower east side neighborhood of low and medium rise block apartment buildings, houses, shops, and police stations, the rather boxy structure with its dark red brick takes on the "dumb and ordinary" character of its surroundings.

The architects sought to respond as sensitively as possible to the scale, proportion, and massing of the older structure. First, they maintained the street line by designing a "wall" building with an amphitheater/plaza boldly carved out of its entrance plane. The architects also play tricks with the alignment of the walls on either side of the carved-out plaza. One continues with the playhouse's facade to the west; the other is set back 5 ft. to align with a supermarket to the east.

Correlation:

To amplify interior space, The Arts for Living Center's recital hall shares its lobby with the Old Henry Street Playhouse on the subterranean level. And where the space was left between the curved entrance facade and the corridors on the second and third floors, the architects placed a double-height painting studio to overlook the plaza. The rest of the studios were designed essentially as double- or single-height containers to accommodate any variety of functions. These areas are placed around the plaza which provides for a neighborhood gathering space.
Circulation:

Circulation is also in connection with the plaza surrounding the studio space with a rational corridor system.

Structure:

The structure/spatial characteristics are of co-variant design process because "the total building form is the result of simultaneous resolution of the building form system, spatial form and organization system and structural system."

Image:

It is a neighborhood arts center; the building accommodates a number of art programs, provides a neighborhood gathering space, and (it is hoped) promotes community spirit. In doing this it communicates to the public a sense of accessibility as well as retaining its own prominence and identifiability.
2.3 SITE ANALYSIS

MUNCIE ARTS CENTER
DIAGRAMMATIC LAND USE PLAN

LEGEND

LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

AVERAGE DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

HIGHER DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

COMMERCIAL

INDUSTRIAL AND RAILROAD

PUBLIC AND SEMI-PUBLIC
existing traffic movements
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T - Trace, amount too small to measure

* - Less than 1
edge conditions

delaware county bldg.

main st.

SITE

Hard/Non-Enclosure/Insensitive to Street Activity

Hard/Non-Enclosure/Sensitive to Existing Parking

Hard/Enclosure/Sensitive to Mall Activity

high st.

public parking

walnut plaza

shops
3. SCHEMATIC DESIGN
There were three concepts in the beginning of this project that were factors in leading to major decisions.

The concepts involved the location of the building and activities that were best suitable for the site. Major issues were pedestrian and vehicular movements, service areas for the building, and the type of activities best suitable for the needs of the patrons and users of the facility.

After careful consideration of each of these concepts, one was chosen which evolved into the final design of the Muncie Arts Center.

The main points of the concept chosen are the stepping back of the original facade of the Wysor Building, the wrapping of functions around a sculpture court atrium, and letting the theatre establish its own identity.
Major objectives of the concept chosen included the preservation of the original facades of the Wysor Building and the shops to the west because of their character, 19th century detailing, and their importance to Walnut Plaza.

During schematic design the treatment of the facades was of major concern. The approach taken was to physically separate the original facades of the Wysor Building from the new functions to create something new and yet relate to Walnut Plaza and its activities. This stepping back behind the original facade to Walnut Plaza was repeated inside with the design of a system of balconies which opened at all levels to a glass-covered atrium.

In this phase the criteria for the building were broken into steps to arrive at a rational design. The first of these steps was to define, in a graphic method, the concept parti. This was done with a space relationship diagram in which the major spaces in the center would be wrapped around a sculpture court. These spaces were intended to have both direct and visual access to the sculpture court.

The second step was to determine a rational circulation pattern. On the first level it formed a "T" shape circulation, which was derived from the location of the entries into the complex. The three entries are on the east from Walnut Plaza, on the north from Main Street, and on the south from the existing public parking. On the upper levels the circulation was based on the movement of the patrons around the sculpture court and into the theatre.
The third step was to determine the structural grid for the building. It was attempted to investigate the structure of the Wysor Building and the three shops and utilize as much as possible of the existing structure. For the theatre there would be a new grid that would offer flexibility to highlight certain areas such as the new entries and lounges.

Items that were not determined were major materials, environmental systems, the connection between the existing building and the new theatre, and access for servicing the building.
BLDG. TO SITE

POSITIVE SPACE
COUNTY BLDG. COURT CAN GENERATE ACTIVITY FOR OUTDOOR EXHIBITS

NEGATIVE SPACE
PARKING LOT PROVIDES USE OF SPACE
CIRCULATION
CIRCULATION - LOWER
STRUCTURE
THIRD LEVEL
4. DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

MUNCIE ARTS CENTER
During this phase many decisions and changes took place which brought the center into a unified design.

Major changes that occurred are as follows:

THE THEATRE:

The theatre was turned on a 45° axis for the purpose of giving it a stronger form and identity. Also, the interior lounge space gave the patrons more of a diversity to view the sculpture court and other works of art. The result of turning the theatre also led to outdoor spaces (terrace and balcony) which related to the major streets and the activities that took place. This also offered a visual connection to the street through the development of the fenestration for the lounges. The support spaces for the theatre were wrapped around the main acting area, forming a buffer for sound attenuation.

The major materials selected in this phase were brick for the "base" of the theatre and limestone for the portion of the house and staging area above. The reasoning behind this was to make a material relationship with the Wysor Building.

The structural grid for the theatre is based on a 20'x20' bay system. This would offer the flexibility in the interior spaces adequately. The seating would be formed of a folded plate of concrete. Major materials for the theatre would be concrete, concrete block, and brick.
WYSOR BUILDING:

The stepping back and cantilevering of spaces behind the original facade was terminated at the third level. It was determined to extend some of the exhibition space out to the original facade to offer a better visual connection to Walnut Plaza and its activities.

The structural grid was determined in the Wysor Building from drawings obtained from John Reynolds, an architect located in Muncie who had designed a new interior. This existing grid established the length and width of the cantilevers and step back. It was found that the structural materials were steel, wood, and bearing wall for the Wysor Building. The three shops were assumed to be divided by masonry bearing walls and wood joists for lateral support.

THE TRANSITION CONNECTION:

Since the theatre was to be three levels, it was determined to make a straight connection to the Wysor Building. This connection would be circulation space where the wall area would be used for viewing art. This made it possible to link the two areas smoothly and offer the viewing of exhibitions to the patrons during intermission, before, or after the performance.

It was also determined to use pyramidal skylights in areas that would highlight certain art sculptures instead of using a space frame with penetrating light over the entire sculpture court.

Where the new entries were formed became another transition area. It was determined
to connect the old and new areas with a band of glass. The glass would offer a separation between the materials and it thus became a smooth unifying material bringing the two together.

SERVICE:

All servicing for the building was placed below grade to better serve this function. The alley was then ramped for the purpose of vehicle entrance and exit to the service area.

The service area itself is separated into two receiving spaces: one for exhibition and one for the theatre. This was the result after determining the amount of goods received and how often they were received.
WHY THIS

STUDIO'S

STUDIO