Plan type

So much for a broad perspective of typologies as another backdrop to creative activity, but how can we harness specific typologies to help us develop our building as a three-dimensional artefact? Le Corbusier famously declared, 'The plan is the generator'; putting aside for a moment that much meaning was lost in the English translation ('the three-dimensional organisation is the generator' would have been nearer the mark) it nevertheless suggests that plan types can indeed provide one of many departure points (others will be discussed later). Further putting aside whether your building will adhere to free or geometric forms, or both, it is still possible to distil a remarkably limited range of basic plan types which tend to be variations on linear, courtyard, linked pavilion, shed, or deep-plan organisations (**Figures 3.13–3.17**). There are, of course, massive variations on each type and most buildings combine aspects of more than one to satisfy the needs of a complex brief. Nevertheless, this initial stab at establishing a plan form which will provide an appropriate 'frame' to sustain specific social activities, is one crucial decision which allows the design to proceed.

Building type

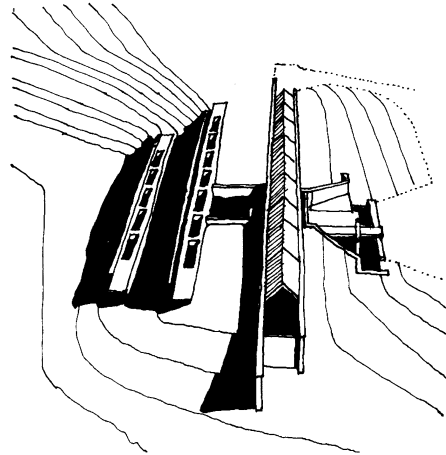Historically, of course, plan types like, for example, the 'basilica' or 'rotunda' were

Figure **3.13**   *Barry Johns, Technology Centre, Edmonton, 1987. From* Architectural Review, *May 1987, p. 82.*
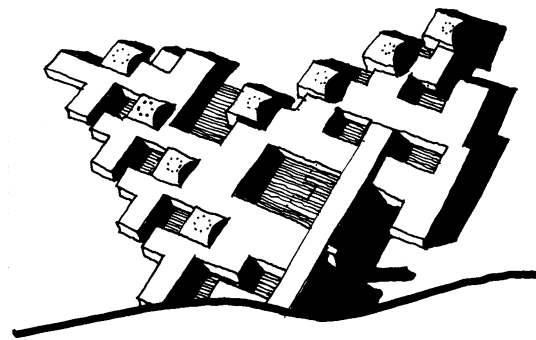

Figure **3.14**   *Aldo Van Eyck, Orphanage, Amsterdam, 1960. From* The New Brutalism, *Banham, R., Architectural Press, p. 158.*
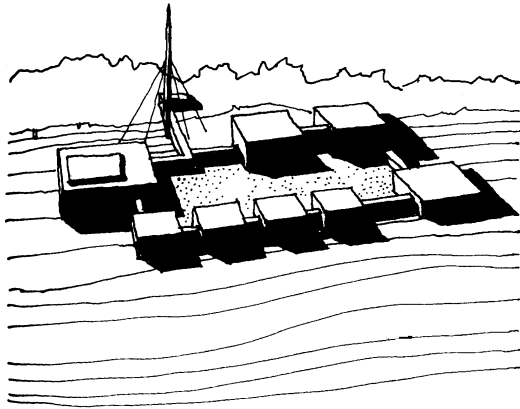
Figure 3.15   Eiermann and Ruf, West German Pavilion, World's Fair, Brussels, 1958. From A Visual History of Twentieth Century Architecture, *Sharp, Heinemann, p. 223.*
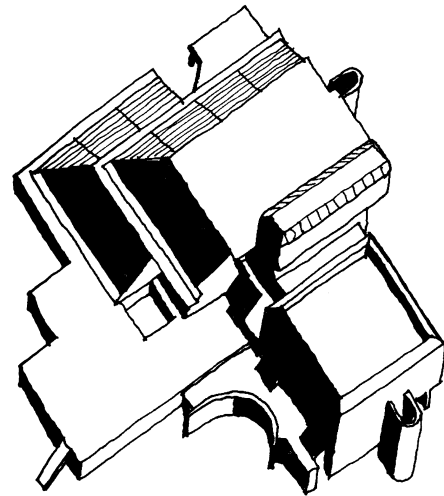

Figure 3.17   Ahrends, Burton and Karolek, Portsmouth Polytechnic Library, 1979. From ABK, Architectural Monograph, *Academy Editions, p. 99.*
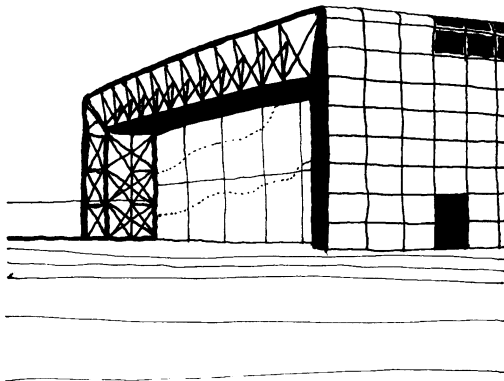

Figure 3.16   Norman Foster, Sainsbury Building, University of East Anglia, 1977.

often closely associated with specific building types and this linkage between plan and building type has, if less dogmatically, nevertheless still persisted in characterising twentieth-century architecture also (**Figures 3.18, 3.19**). But inevitably such orthodoxies are challenged from time to time and these challenges are generally recorded as important catalysts in architectural development.

Thus the linked pavilion type of post-war school buildings in Britain was challenged by the Smithsons in 1949 at Hunstanton School where a courtyard type was adopted (**Figure 3.20**), but also by Greater London Council Architects' Department in 1972 at Pimlico