

Sub-spaces

This whole question of spatial hierarchy may also be applied to sub-spaces which are subservient to a major spatial event like side chapels relating to the major worship space within a church. At the monastery of La Tourette, Eveux-sur-Arbresle, France, 1959, Le Corbusier contrasted the stark dimly-lit cuboid form of the church with brightly-lit side chapels of sinuous plastic form which were further highlighted by the application of primary colour against the grey *béton brut* of the church (**Figure 3.54**). Such a juxtaposition served to heighten not only the architectural drama but also the primacy of the principal worship space.

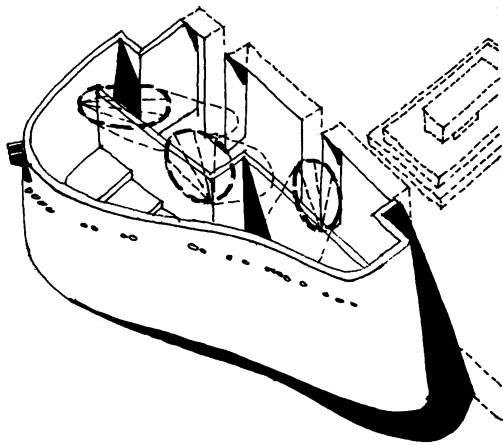


Figure 3.54 Le Corbusier, Monastery of La Tourette, Eveux, 1955.

Although using a different architectural vocabulary, C. R. Mackintosh sought similarly to clarify a major space (bedroom) at Hill House, Helensburgh, Scotland, 1904, which associated sub-spaces enriched rather than challenged (**Figure 3.55**). But the means were the same; by means of a taller ceiling and a simple rectilinear geometry, the major space retains its dominance.

Similarly, public buildings like theatres must establish a clear distinction between public and private domains of 'front' and 'back' of house. Lasdun's National Theatre, London, 1976, articulates this distinction through external architectural expression, but more directly by means of a clear planning strategy which is

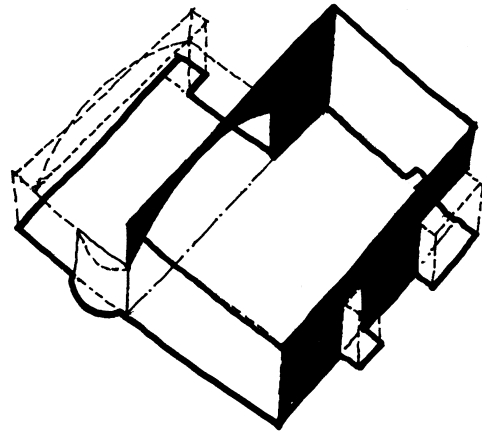


Figure 3.55 C. R. Mackintosh, Hill House, Helensburgh, Scotland, 1903. Main bedroom.

immediately comprehensible (**Figure 3.56**) and avoids any hint of ambiguity.

Inside-outside

Establishing and then articulating these spatial hierarchies within the context of a functional plan has exercised architects throughout history; a system of axes employed by Beaux Arts architects, for example, greatly facilitated this pursuit. But many architects of modernist persuasion, in their desire to break with tradition, have shed such ordering devices and have espoused the liberating potential that developments in abstract art and building technology seemed to offer. One outcome was functional planning freed from the formality of symmetry

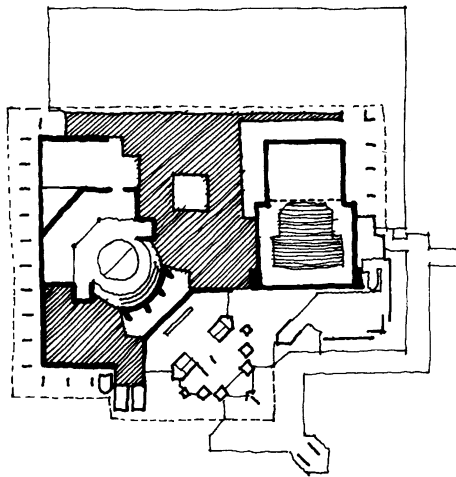


Figure 3.56 Denys Lasdun, *National Theatre, London, Plan*. From Denys Lasdun, Curtis, W., Phaidon.

and axially (**Figure 3.57**) but another was a concern for establishing an almost seamless relationship between inside and outside spaces. This allowed the designer to punctuate the plan with external spaces which were expressed as internal spaces without a roof. Moreover, the development of glazed curtain walls as movable screens allowed the complete correspondence between outside and inside uninterrupted by major structural intrusion.

Even by the mid-1920s modernists had developed such techniques to a remarkable level of sophistication; Le Corbusier's Parisian villas at Garches, 1927, and Poissy, 1931, deploy controlled external spaces as an

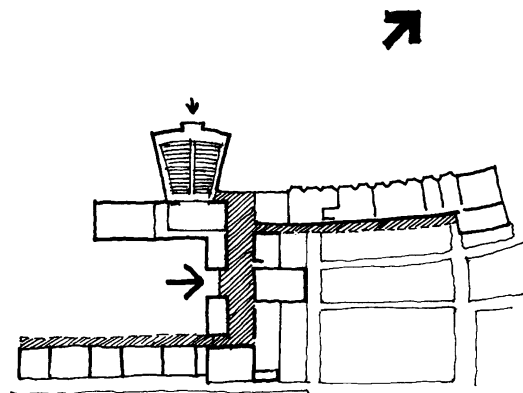


Figure 3.57 Walter Gropius and Maxwell Fry, *Impington College, Cambridge, England, 1936, Plan*. From Walter Gropius, *Bardini, P.*, Gustavo Gilli, Barcelona, p. 155.