

Depending upon the intention of the designer, scale may be manipulated in quite distinct ways which leads us to four established categories of architectural scale: normal scale, intimate scale, heroic scale and shock scale (Raskin).

Normal scale

Normal scale is the 'mean' with which the other categories compare. Most buildings we encounter are of normal scale and generally achieve this in a relaxed fashion without any self-conscious manipulation of scale clues on the part of the architect. The size of the building and its constituent parts will be precisely as perceived and anticipated by the observer. Normal scale is most readily achieved when the building looks to be broken down into a series of lesser components each of which is 'read' and contributes to a sense of visual intensity.

Intimate scale

Intimate scale, as the term suggests, is more intense than normal scale. It is achieved by reducing the size of familiar components to induce a relaxed, informal atmosphere of cosy domesticity and is applicable to building types such as old persons' housing or primary schools where a sense of comfort and security is induced by an environment of intimate scale. This can be achieved by reducing the

height of window heads and cills and by reducing ceiling heights. Externally, eaves may be brought down to exaggeratedly low levels and entrance doors may be marked by canopies, all devices to increase the intensity of scale (**Figure 5.37**). Primary schools are equipped with furniture and fittings reduced in size which accentuate a sense of intimate scale. Although generous classroom ceiling heights are necessary for daylighting and ventilation, generous transoms or light shelves introduced at a lower level and broad, low internal cills are devices which may induce intimate scale (**Figure 5.38**).

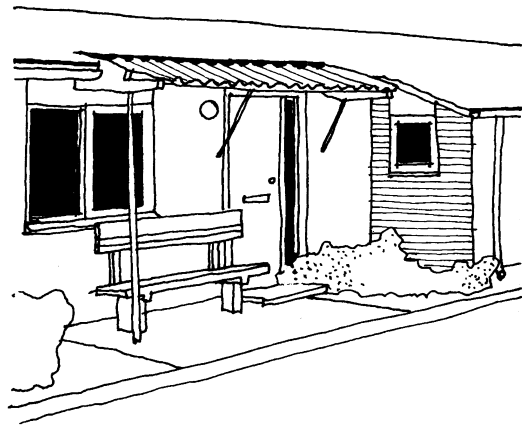


Figure 5.37 *Ralph Erskine, Housing, Killingworth, Northumberland, 1964.*

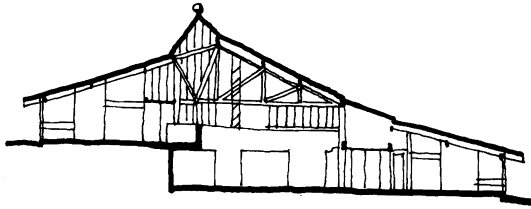


Figure 5.38 Colin Smith, *Hatch Warren Primary School, Hampshire, 1988*. From *Schools of Thought*, Weston, R., Hampshire County Council.

Heroic scale

Heroic scale is the converse of intimate scale in that rather than enhancing the ego of the user, it seems to diminish it. Architects have consistently used the monumentality of heroically scaled building elements as symbols of power and authority to which an individual is unable to relate his relative smallness. Therefore heroic scale has been consciously applied to a whole range of buildings which need to express their civic importance; in extreme cases like the monumental architecture of totalitarianism, architects used a stripped classical architectural language to symbolise the power of the regime but also to intimidate the users by undermining their feeling of security (**Figure 5.39**).

Vincent Harris used exactly similar methods to create an appropriate heroic scale for a range of civic buildings in pre-war Britain, many commissions being won in open competition. Typical of the genre was Sheffield City

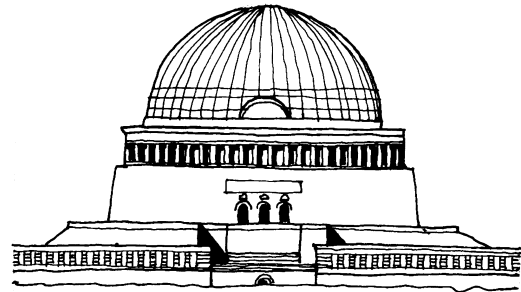


Figure 5.39 A. N. Dushkin et al., *Pantheon for heroes of the great patriotic war, 1943 (project)*.

Hall completed in 1934 where Harris employed a giant Corinthian order for a huge portico mounted on a massive podium (**Figure 5.40**). Huge unrelieved areas of ashlar remove the usual scale clues to considerably enhance the scale heroically of what is a building of relatively modest dimensions. Moreover an apsidal secondary hall is elevated in scale by the surprising device of add-

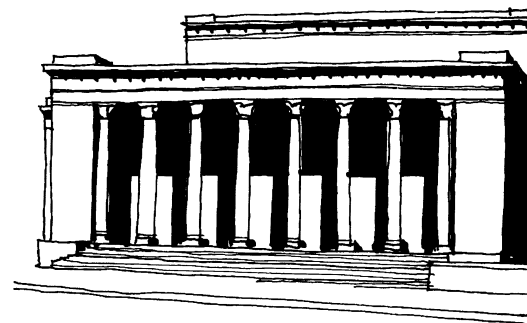


Figure 5.40 Vincent Harris, *Sheffield City Hall, 1934*.