

ing to some universal sequence of decision-making. Moreover, design theorists urged designers to delay as long as possible the creative leap into 'form-making' until every aspect of the architectural problem was thought to be clearly understood. But every practising architect knew that this restrictive linear model of the design process flew in the face of all shared experience; the reality of designing did not conform to a predetermined sequence at all but demanded that the designer should skip between various aspects of the problem in any order or at any time, should consider several aspects simultaneously or, indeed, should revisit some aspects in a cyclical process as the problem became more clearly defined. Furthermore, the experience of most architects was that a powerful visual image of their embryonic solution had already been formed early on in the design process, suggesting that fundamental aspects of 'form-making' such as how the building would look, or how its three-

dimensional organisation would be configured in plan and section, represented in reality an early, if tentative, creative response to any architectural problem.

The act of designing clearly embraces at its extremes logical analysis on the one hand and profound creative thought on the other, both of which contribute crucially to that central ground of 'form-making'. It is axiomatic that all good buildings depend upon sound and imaginative decisions on the part of the designer at these early stages and how such decision-making informs that creative 'leap' towards establishing an appropriate three-dimensional outcome.

These initial forays into 'form-making' remain the most problematic for the novice and the experienced architect alike; what follows are a few signposts towards easing a fledgling designer's passage through these potentially rough pastures.

2 THE CONTEXT FOR DESIGN

It's a hoary old cliché that society gets the architecture it deserves, or, put more extremely, that decadent regimes will, *ipso facto*, produce reactionary architecture whilst only democracies will support the progressive. But to a large extent post-Versailles Europe bore this out; the Weimar Republic's fourteen-year lifespan coincided exactly with that of the Bauhaus, whose progressive aims it endorsed, and modern architecture flourished in the fledgling democracy of Czechoslovakia. But the rise of totalitarianism in inter-war Europe soon put an end to such worthy ambition and it was left to the free world (and most particularly the New World) to prosecute the new architecture until a peaceful Europe again prevailed.

This is, of course, a gross over-simplification but serves to demonstrate that all architects work within an established socio-political framework which, to a greater or lesser extent, inevitably encourages or restricts their creative impulses, a condition which would not necessarily obtain with some other design disciplines

like, for example, mechanical engineering (which, incidentally, thrived under totalitarianism).

This brings us to another well-worn stance adopted by progressive architects; that architecture (unlike mechanical engineering) responds in some measure to a prevailing cultural climate in which it is created and therefore emerges inevitably as a cultural artefact reflecting the nature of that culture. Certainly the development of progressive architecture during its so-called 'heroic' period after the First World War would seem to support this claim; architects found themselves at the heart of new artistic movements throughout Europe like, for example, Purism in Paris, De Stijl in Rotterdam, Constructivism in Moscow or the Bauhaus in Weimar and Dessau. Inevitably, such movements generated a close correspondence between architecture and the visual arts so that architects looked naturally to painters and sculptors for inspiration in their quest for developing new architec-