

the neutral backdrop of the vertical wall is replaced by the bland horizontal surface which 'displays' a collection of architectural tours de force.

The Saint Dié model was employed by Gollins, Melvin and Ward, albeit in much diluted form, to extend the university campus at Sheffield in their competition-winning entry of 1953 (**Figure 6.17**). However, whereas Le Corbusier's plan for Saint Dié represented a symbolic rebirth of a town destroyed by war, Gollins' arrangement of rectilinear slabs and towers was extending the courtyard (centripetal) typology of a typical late Victorian British university. But the same devices emerge; a

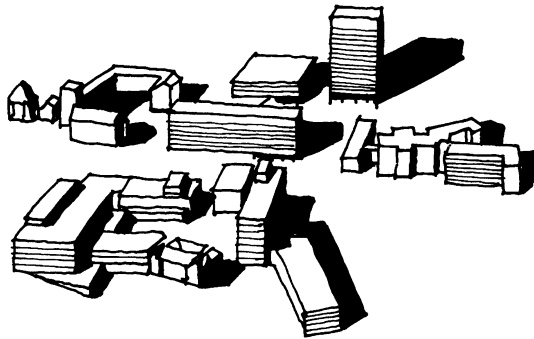


Figure 6.17 Gollins, Melvin, Ward and Partners, Sheffield University, 1956 Master Plan. From Britain's Changing Towns, Nairn, I., BBC, p. 78.

massive tower addresses the major open space and provides a visual focus for the entire campus with lower slab blocks providing a secondary rectilinear order.

The Economist Building, St. James Street, London, provides an equally potent application of centrifugal principles to urban space. Here, three towers of varying height and of similarly exquisite detailing emerge from a plaza slightly raised above the level of St. James Street (**Figures 6.18, 6.19**). The buildings, themselves raised on delicate pilotis, appear to hover over the paved plaza which again forms the backdrop to considerable architectural incident.

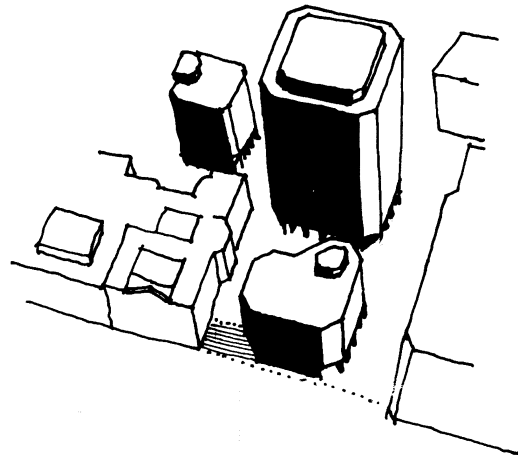


Figure 6.18 Alison and Peter Smithson, Economist Building, London, 1965. From *The New Brutalism*, Banham, R., Architectural Press, p. 90.

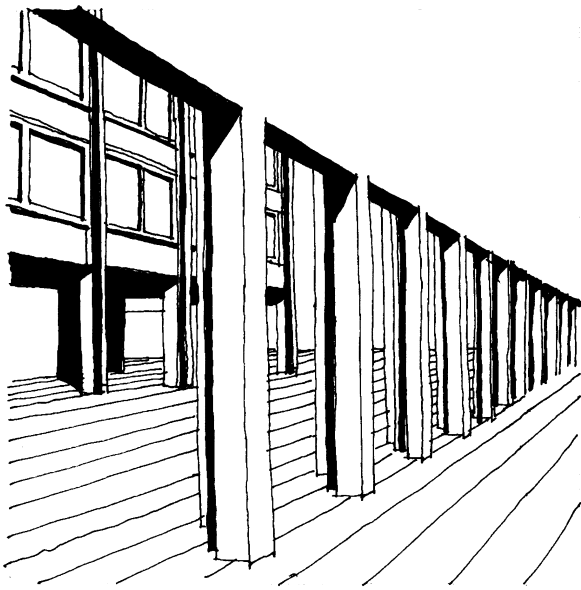


Figure 6.19 Alison and Peter Smithson, *Economist Building, London, 1965.*

URBAN SPACE TYPOLOGY

Just as the notion of 'type' may be applied to buildings (and, indeed, to the elements which constitute them, such as structure, services and cladding), so may it be applied to urban spaces. The concepts of 'centrifugal' and 'centripetal' space represent two fundamental 'types' of urban space. As already discussed, spaces around a central monument or 'figure' (centrifugal) assume the role of a backdrop or

'ground', whereas spaces enclosed by building façades (centripetal) are themselves 'figures' within a passive architectural backdrop, or 'ground' (Moughtin).

Square – enclosure

Within this framework of centrifugal and centripetal, secondary 'types' emerge, which, historically, have constituted familiar structuring elements of our towns and cities. Modernist 'centripetal' typologies reversed the accepted orthodoxy of the enclosed square, and, in the process, did not contribute significantly to its development. The traditional enclosed square (Figure 6.20) as a focus for social and commercial activity, as well as being the symbolic core of the community, has rarely been successfully reiterated where enclosure has been subsumed by an ill-defined open space



Figure 6.20 *Enclosed square.*