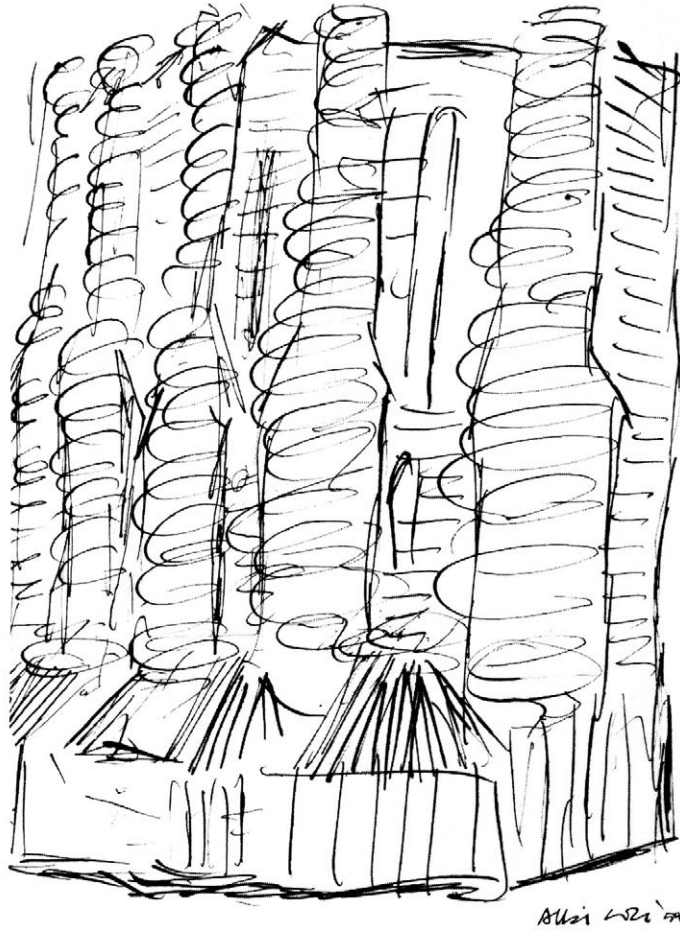


Right
Louis I. Kahn, pen and ink
sketch on paper of the
apse, Cathedral of Sainte
Clare, Albi, France 1959



'I happened to be in Carcassonne, therefore I like Carcassonne, that's all. People imagine I took that and put it in my notebook, and the next job that came around was Carcassonne.

'Carcassonne impresses me because it's Carcassonne. Not because it's a military thing, just because it's a clear picture or a purpose well expressed.

'I would admire a safety pin for the same reason. If I happened to be impressed by that, I would have said the towers at the University of Pennsylvania were inspired by a safety pin. Then you would really be surprised! But it has nothing to do with Carcassone or San Gimignano and those places. They record themselves as being marvelousness that they are phenomena of man's nature, and if they are well-said they become the example for all things you do.

'The Mellon Center is as much inspired by Carcassonne as is the Medical Towers.'

(Wurman, 1986, p.116)

On the visual evidence it would, however, be difficult to dismiss a connection between Kahn's sketches and his frequent pre-occupation with solid tower-like forms and the built Richards Medical Research Building. The relation between the past buildings and the present one already exists in the early sketches for the laboratories. Kahn denies the existence of a direct model but acknowledges the importance of the past. His disclaimer is no doubt to some extent influenced by the very considerable premium given to originality in his formative years and also by the clear distinction he always wanted to make between form and design; between the intangible and timeless and the tangible and specific.

It is thus difficult to dismiss the importance of models in the design process in view of the evidence we continually have around us. It also needs to be remembered that Kahn's own buildings have become models for others. Richard Rogers & Partners' Lloyds Building in the City of London (1979 – 84) has a plan that dramatically distinguishes between served and servant spaces which are placed around the perimeter.