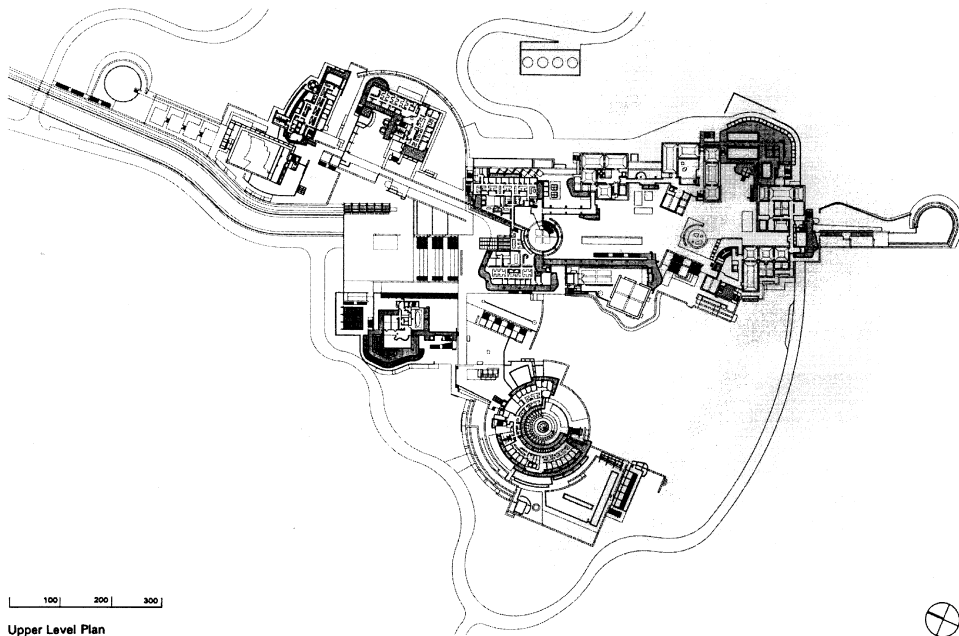


Below
Richard Meier & Partners, The Getty Center, Los Angeles 1984–97; constructional drawing showing rain screen stone cladding, concrete structural wall and metal framework of inner lining; the space between the inner wall and the structural wall is a return air duct keeping the wall carrying pictures at the same temperature on both sides

buildings; it carried an unacceptable visual overload. A rougher surface would cast shadows and create a more three-dimensional and, in essence, a more massive effect. In order to produce such a surface, a special guillotine was developed at the factory near Rome, close to the quarry where the travertine originated. The riven surface of the stone slabs is now a visual characteristic of the Getty; a close-up photograph forms the dust jacket of Meier's (1997) *Building the Getty* in which he wrote: '... I had set myself the contradictory task of using stone in such a way that one would be aware of both its weight and thickness *and* of its non-loadbearing status as a rain screen.' In the design sequence P_1 to P_2 a great many initial problems are self imposed and often arise from visual choices.

In his penultimate valedictory paragraph in the same book Richard Meier makes a perceptive assessment of his contribution:



'Those familiar with contemporary architecture will no doubt concur that my approach is evolutionary rather than revolutionary. While the creation of tectonic form must entail the introduction of totally new elements, my work remains grounded in the heroic tradition of the modern movement dating back to the end of the 1920s. I would rather be remembered for the overall civic balance of my work and for its modulation of light and space rather than for any kind of idiosyncratic display of form as an end in itself.'
(Meier, 1997, p.193)

Below
Frank O. Gehry & Associates, The Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, Spain 1991–97; entrance side facing the town; the building is clad in titanium 0.3 mm thick

Frank Gehry's Guggenheim in Bilbao at first glance suggests a revolutionary and novel form that perhaps has no model. It is questionable whether that conclusion can be justified. The museum shop, for instance, sells vases by Alvar Aalto without in the showcase giving an attribution. Many unfamiliar

