We communicate those choices visually as we communicate other aspects: we draw horizontal lines to suggest brickwork or we simulate reflections to indicate glass. But the most detailed communication comes verbally by an annotation on the drawing or as a clause in the specification. We have to resort to words, to a non-visual medium, to be precise about the selection we have made.

Plans, sections and elevations have a level of precision in terms of the eventual building which is difficult to produce as far as materials are concerned: when I draw a straight line on plan and a vertical line on section I know this denotes a straight wall which is not inclined; if I draw a curved line I know this would be built as a curved wall. The line, drawn while I am designing, tells me nothing, however, whether the wall is in brick or stone or concrete. Large scale construction drawings can distinguish between these materials by conventional hatching but there are no means of doing so at the early design stage although the difference between materials is then also important.

There is, in other words, a visual correspondence between the drawing and the eventual building as far as form is concerned but not as far as materials are concerned. This has, I believe, significant repercussions on architectural thought. It is notoriously difficult to get architectural students to concentrate on the material aspects of architecture; on the solidity, reflectivity, texture, colour of the stuff that makes buildings. This disengagement is partly due to an unfamiliarity with the realities and complexities of the building site; but only partly. I believe the major difficulty – for students and practising architects – to be the absence of visual means which would record both shape and material simultaneously with equal precision. Moves to make design drawings more like constructional drawings are confusing rather than helpful. To draw the studs of a timber wall or the gap in a cavity masonry wall is to introduce information which is irrelevant as far as our visual understanding of the wall is concerned; it tells us nothing about the nature of the material

of the wall. On the contrary it produces a visual density of the drawing which is spurious.

Thinking about materials has a further complication: the effect of weather over time. Is the building to be imagined as it will be on completion or after twenty years? A great deal of architectural ingenuity has been expended throughout history on detailing which would minimise, or at least make acceptable, the effect of weathering. Overhangs, mouldings, drips are in

Below
Cornice detail showing 'weatherings' in stone; from W.R. Jaggard's *Architectural Construction* manual