Figure 1.4b Diagram by Bernhard Hoesli of Le Corbusier's Villa Stein. Dessins de B. Hoesli. Courtesy FLC. © 2003 Artists Rights Society (ARS)/ADAAGP, Paris/FLC.

are more distant from the viewer than others. But the perceptual qualities of that reading that were so critical to Rowe and Slutzky's analysis are reduced to hypothetical relationships and are no longer the concern of Hoesli's analysis. Thus he alters the wording of Kepes' definition of transparency to say:

Transparency arises wherever there are locations in space which can be assigned two or more systems of reference – when the classification is undefined and the choice between one classification possibility or another remains open.

(Hoesli 1997, p. 61)

Kepes, Rowe and Slutzky do not ask us to classify the planes or distantiate their locations; they ask us to see them in relation to ourselves and to each other, to consider their perceptual interaction, to understand their depth. As Merleau-Ponty ruminated in his working notes for *The Visible and the Invisible*: "Depth . . . is pre-eminently the dimension of the hidden . . . of the simultaneous. Depth is the means the things have to remain distinct, to remain things. . . . Whereas by virtue of depth they coexist in degrees of proximity, they slip into one another and integrate themselves. It is hence because of depth that the things have a flesh. . . ." (Merleau-Ponty 1968, p. 219).

Like so many other Corbusian elements they are obedient to the exigencies of the eye rather than those of the work, to the needs of the conceiving subject rather than the perceived object.

Colin Rowe on Le Corbusier's La Tourette

If depth is not a property of an object but a subjective perception, is it possible to identify examples of representations that are concerned with revealing perceptual depth rather than objective distance? On the surface it would seem that the perspective view, the view that Panofsky identified as "the objectification of the subjective," would be just such a representation. However, among the contemporary thinkers who have sought to disinherit the *cogito* from our world-view, many, including Merleau-Ponty with his reference to

"the traditional view," have condemned perspective representation as a mathematically constructed view of the world, a Platonic deception, a "synthesis of experience into mental abstraction."[5] The subjective view that Panofsky assumed to be present in perspective has, for the most part, been eradicated by our habit of objectification. Nevertheless, it is the perspective view in which the perceiving subject can most easily be implied.

In the absence of texts that make reference to the subjective viewer, all evidence must be sought in the artefact of the representation. In perusing published sketches for traces of the presence of the subjective view in the generative stages of design, it seems that there are exceedingly few examples.[6] The following examples are, for the most part, expository drawings and photographs that document the design object, whether completed or in development. In searching for such documentation, it is surprising to see how frequently such drawings and photographs, though devised perspectivally, do not admit a corporeal viewer. In other words, the station point of the perspective view is one that is impossible or irrelevant with respect to the experience of an actual body coming into contact with the architectural artefact. One may notice, for example, how many representations actually place the station point in a slightly elevated position with respect to the gravitational ground plane (Figures 1.5 and 1.6). The eye and the mind are thus disembodied. The scene is an abstraction of the mind's eye; the corporeal viewer is absent.[7] If depth *is* visible in such representations, the question is, *to whom?* The point of view in these images is devised for the observer of the simulacrum.

As Martin Jay has remarked, Merleau-Ponty attempted to save perspective from the fate of intellectual assimilation with his concept of non-transcendental perspective that "reunited [humans] with the objective world" (1994, pp. 303–304). He rejected the notion that all such images are enframed and therefore privileged when he said: "The fixed point is not made by intelligence: the looked-at object in which I anchor myself will always seem fixed, and I cannot take this meaning away from it except by looking elsewhere." (Merleau-Ponty 1964, p. 52). Thus another avenue to the discovery
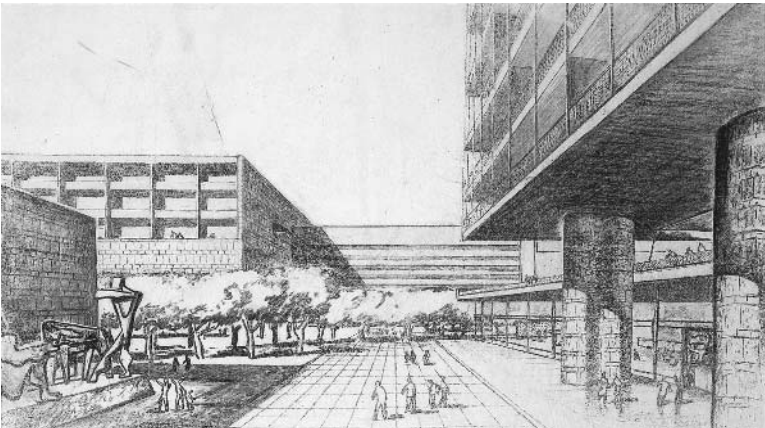
Figure 1.5 Louis Kahn, project for the Philadelphia Midtown Civic Center Development. Courtesy the Louis I. Kahn Collection, The University of Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania Historial and Museum Commission.