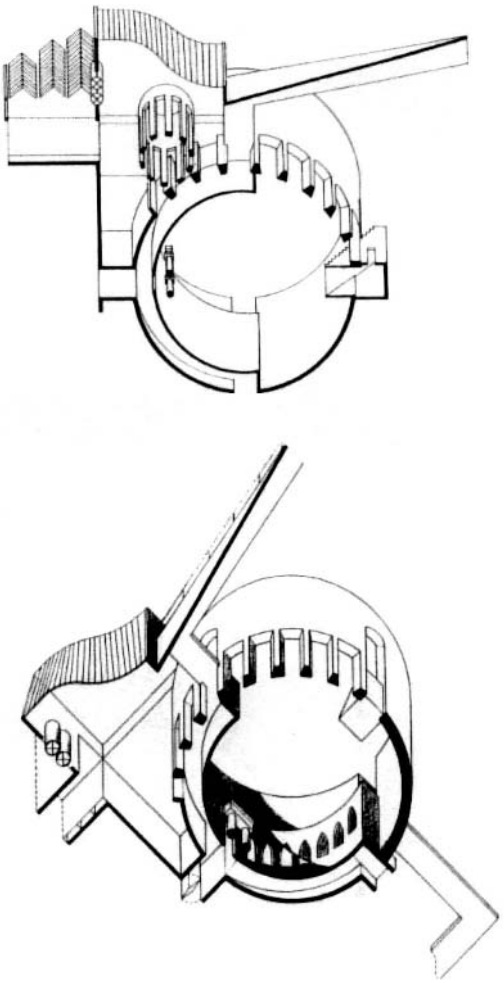

**Figure 2.7** Axonometric up-views of major elements in the Stuttgart Museum design.

## Postmodern representation

The 1970s are often referred to as the decade of the emergence of postmodernism. The architectural critic Charles Jencks (1982) lists the Stuttgart museum by Stirling as one of the major examples of postmodern Classicism, which, he claims, is "one half of the style toward which Post Moderns turn" (ibid., p. 12). The other half grows out of Late-Modernism and its style is marked by a desire for richness of form, achieved through compositional play and dissonance of elements. Skewed grids, violent juxtaposition of volumes and exaggerated solids, voids and building components are some of the means used to attain the wealth that architects who subscribed to this style aspired to. Postmodernism is, however, pluralistic and eclectic; purity of style is not one of its values and no sharp borderlines separate between these twin postmodern styles. Tzonis and Lefaivre (1992) see the "spring of 1968" as the

decisive point in time that marks the beginning of a new era in Europe, inclusive of its architecture. Among the important characteristics of the architecture of the two decades following the 1968 events, they name populism, neo-rigourism, skin rigourism, and the call to disorder. By neo-rigourism they mean the "true" expression of functional and structural aspects of buildings. Skin rigourism alludes to a certain "emancipation" of the surfaces of which the envelope of the building is made in terms of composition, materials and detailing. The treatment of the envelope, in this view, is no longer in the exclusive service of the functions embodied in the volumes it encloses. Instead, it can be made of independent elements that have their own intrinsic goals – aesthetic, technological and otherwise. The call to disorder, where it is manifest, is a need to break with order as representative of old times, a desire to escape from the past and facilitate the emergence of a new world view. Tzonis and Lefaivre (ibid.) point to past "periodic eruptions of love for disorder and a desire to escape from the ideas of coherence and system of the type . . ." (ibid., p. 20). An example they give is constructivism, with its architectural and artistic manifestations in the 1920s in Russia.

In *The History of Postmodern Architecture*, Klotz (1988) proposes that "the characteristic objective of postmodernism – [is] to create an architecture of 'narrative contents'" (ibid., p. 128). He sees the pursuit of this objective as a reaction to the "radical functionalism" dogmas of Modernism. In Klotz's words, postmodernism "deflects one's attention [from "the bare factuality of architecture"] to the completely different realms of environment as a narrative representation" (ibid., p. 128). The notion of narrative representation is one we will return to shortly. Klotz sees the postmodern programme as an attempt to liberate architecture from the "radical abstraction" that marked "the architecture of functionalism" and which was "something dry, rigid and lacking freedom." The latter pejorative characterization of abstract architecture is taken from Karl Friedrich Schinkel who was dissatisfied with the architecture of his day (early 19th century) for similar reasons to those that motivated the "rebellion" of postmodern architects in the 1970s and 1980s. As already pointed out, Schinkel was, among others, a source of inspiration for James Stirling, especially in his work on the Düsseldorf and Stuttgart museums.

The writings of Jencks, Tzonis and Lefaivre, and Klotz, are faithful representatives of literature about postmodern architecture. They expose and analyze roots, trends and intentions in one of the most significant periods of transition in the architecture of the modern era. However, they do not address the question of the representation of this architecture: the representational means with which architects carried out their design explorations and presented them to themselves, their colleagues and to the public at large. It is true that transformations in graphic means of representation were nowhere as dramatic as the changes we witness in the architecture they convey. Conventions of graphic representation, as established during the Renaissance, have served designers well for centuries and continue to do so as we speak. But if we look a little closer we will find that, within and around the basic modes of representation that are embodied in orthogonal projections and perspectives, a wealth of variations, combinations and novel representational types have appeared over time.

Innovations in representational modes are neither random nor arbitrary phenomena. We propose that they come into being when powerful new design