

compositions comprising photographs, various kinds of drawings, diagrams and maps, and reproductions of artwork. Figure-ground reversals are very frequent, sometimes within the same plan, as illustrated by the plan of Wiesbaden that is reproduced in Figure 2.10. It seems that Rowe and Koetter selected a graphic mode of representation that came as close as possible to an embodiment of their profoundly postmodern arguments. According to them the book's text was completed in 1973 and, for the next few years, they collected and edited the illustrations which they considered crucial to the arguments they wished to present. Stirling, who designed and published the German museums while Rowe and Koetter were busy working on their book's graphics, acted in a similar manner: his buildings were composite masses, mini-cities consisting of "extensive series of episodes" that he wanted to represent in this way. The collage nature of the representations was designed to reflect the characteristics of the buildings.

Axonometric Drawings, Sketches, and the Design Process

As we already know, the axonometric drawings, and especially the "worm's-eye axis" that were included in the museum publications, were made after the fact in Stirling's office when the design work had already been completed. The architects named them "analytical drawings." The *Architectural Review* called them "after drawings" and later they were referred to in the literature also as "conceptual diagrams" or "schematic drawings" (see note 2). As mentioned above, the production of these drawings was not unusual in Stirling's office where they had become a standard routine, especially for the purpose of display and publication. Why were these axonometric views drawn? Certainly *not* in order to represent the way a building would appear to the eye, a task for which a perspective drawing is infinitely better suited. A partial explanation for the choice of axonometric down and, even more so, up views was given by Krier (see Girouard 1998), who testified that he had produced such drawings in order to project a particular image that he thought (and Stirling agreed) was especially appropriate to the nature of Stirling's work. Why project an image? Would the buildings and projects not speak for themselves if they were represented with faithful adherence to the way they actually appeared?

Evidently, this was not considered good enough. Stirling thought the appearance of buildings was not an independent aspect of their design. The appearance was a function of an overall composition of masses which were combined using functional criteria. Appearance was dictated by the choice of materials and by the syntax of joinery, at the level of detail and building-volume alike. Elevations were drawn late in the design process (Tzonis and Lefavre's (1992) principle of "skin rigourism" may be helpful in explaining why a postmodern architect found it unnecessary to develop elevations early on). Indeed, aesthetic qualities were an outcome of design decisions made largely for other reasons. Therefore, there was no need for and no point in showing buildings as they appeared, as appearance is presented almost exclusively for the purpose of aesthetic demonstration and assessment. Were there any other reasons for representing buildings publicly? According to Stirling, there certainly were good reasons for doing so, but it was not so much the buildings themselves that he wanted to represent, but his thinking *about* the buildings that he wanted to expose as best he could. He was interested in

emphasizing what he found most important in the designs, the reasons for acting as he did and making the design decisions that were eventually made. The “essence of the idea” and the “architectural understanding of the building, as distinct from an impression of how it might look in reality” were the important representational concerns (Wilford 1996, p. 32). The “essence of the idea” was the “underlying elements of [movement] continuity” which could not be fully expressed through conventional drawings, and the architects looked for a mode of representation that would do justice to the “clarity and dramatization of pedestrian circulation” (Wilford 1994, p. 5).

Axonometric views were a very appropriate medium for this kind of communication with the public. Unlike perspectives, axos show masses and can give information about their volumetric properties. Geometric relationships can be conveyed, and joinery explicated. They have analytic qualities and are capable of presenting design principles and concepts. These were exactly the things that Stirling wanted to convey. In addition, axonometric rendering makes it easy to be selective about what is included in the presentation, and therefore abstraction was made possible by way of extracting and drawing only limited components of the scheme. Hence elements of the “promenade architecturale,” for instance, could be treated as an independent system without as much as a hint of the rest of the building and its features (e.g., Figures 2.6 and 2.7). By presenting not one but several axonometric views, it was possible to dedicate each to one specific aspect, one dimension of the overall message. As Evans (1997) made clear, a single architectural drawing “is always partial, always more or less abstract” and “never gives, nor can give, a total picture of the project” (ibid., p. 199). This is doubly true when it is not the end-state of the project that one wants to represent, but the ideas behind it. Up-view axos stressed this abstraction even further, and this is why they were made, as if to say: “do not expect a simulation of what you might see when looking at the building or at conventional representations of it. Here we treat you to an account of our rationale for having designed it as we have.”

This implicit statement was innovative. “We do not face you with a fait accompli,” the presentation announced. “We invite you to go back in time and witness the emergence of this design, join us in our thinking about it. Do not wait for what the critics have to say – we are giving you the information at first hand, for you to interpret it yourselves and to judge it as you will.” This was, in fact, an act of great faith in the audience who received credit for being able to follow and understand the architects’ reasoning. Stirling was a great believer in “democratizing” architecture, in the sense that it should be understandable and accessible to all people and not just to “specialists.” Submitting his thoughts about the design of the building, and not just the building itself, to public scrutiny was therefore an uncommon and courageous act. But Stirling went even further in the process of exposing his thoughts to the public (a public of peers for the most part, however) by sharing his preliminary little sketches, the “doodles” that recorded thought-in-progress (Figures 2.1 and 2.2) and not only “after” analyses.

The “front-edge” phase of designing in which architects converse with themselves (and possibly with their close associates) about design ideas and options through rapid freehand sketches is considered very private, and was certainly seen as an intimate affair in the 1970s. To open up this private chamber and invite the public to take a look bears evidence not only to an unusual confidence in one’s work, but also to a deep cultural change, one that