

GILBERT

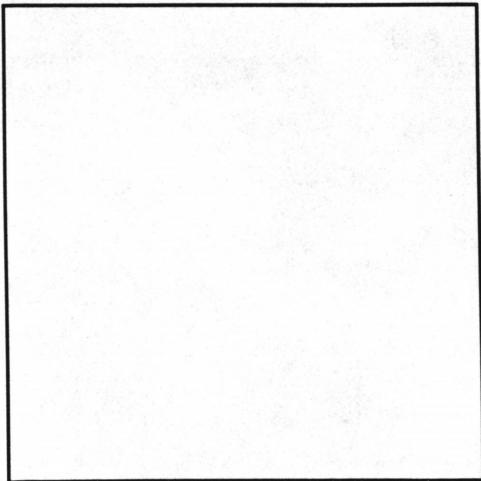
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RESOURCE BOND

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50% COTTON

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cosmos: "the conception of the world as a finite, closed, and hierarchically ordered whole"¹

The Room of the Courtyard

Thesis submitted to the
Graduate Faculty of the
Virginia Polytechnic Institute
and
State University
in partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for the degree of

Master of Architecture

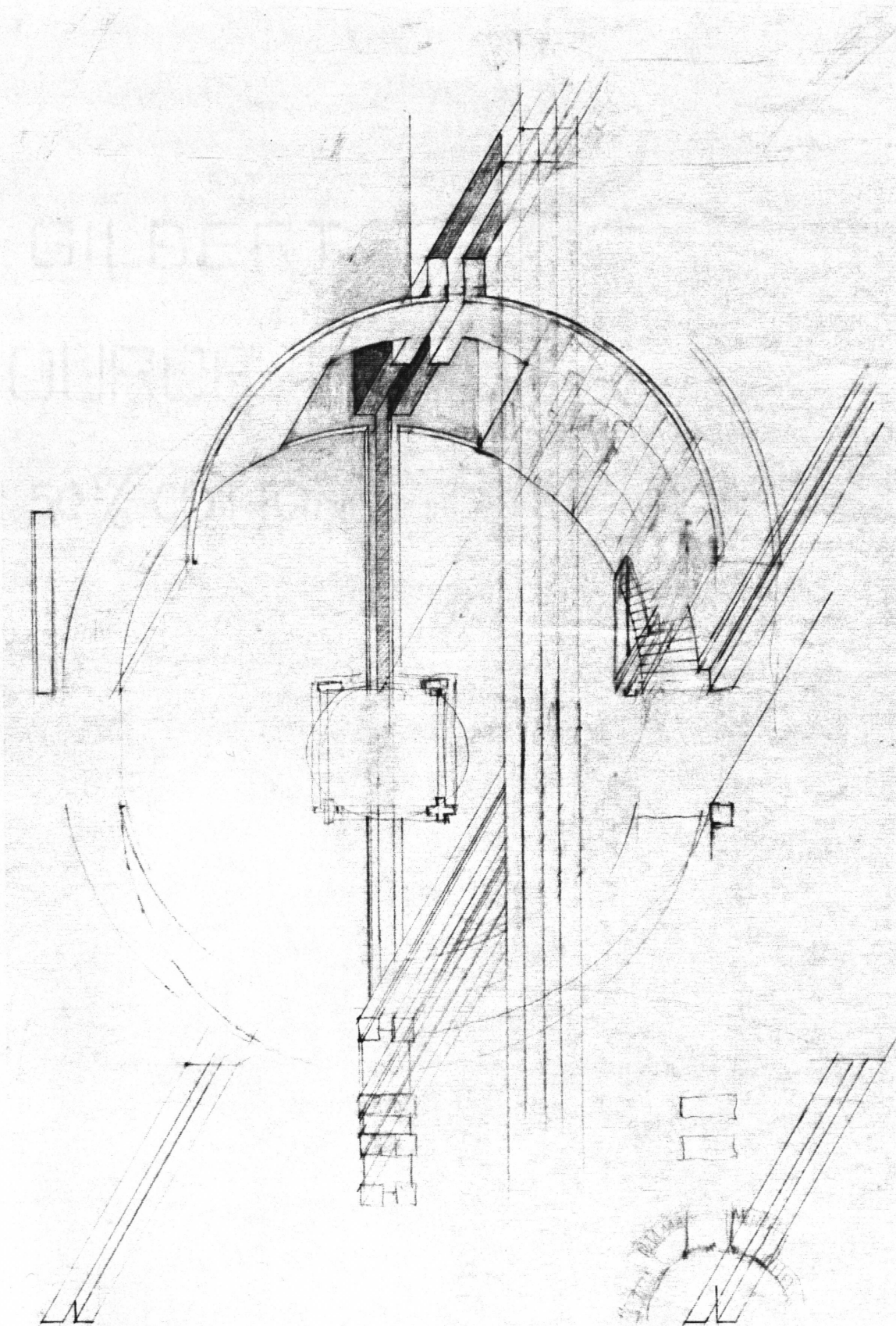
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August 1991



Stephanie Zeller

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The realm of architecture
incorporates making and
the made thing.

The architectural act asserts
rationality and establishes
order.

Architecture strives for
appropriateness.

Architecture is an
affirmation of cosmos.

The image shows a detailed architectural floor plan of a courtyard. The courtyard is a large square area with a central circular pool. A door is located at the bottom center of the courtyard, leading to an entry area. The courtyard is surrounded by buildings with various window and door openings. The plan is drawn with fine lines and includes a grid system. The text is centered within the courtyard area.

Abstract

Define a courtyard.
Buildings form the Walls
of the Room of the courtyard.

Define its
center,
a
pool of water.

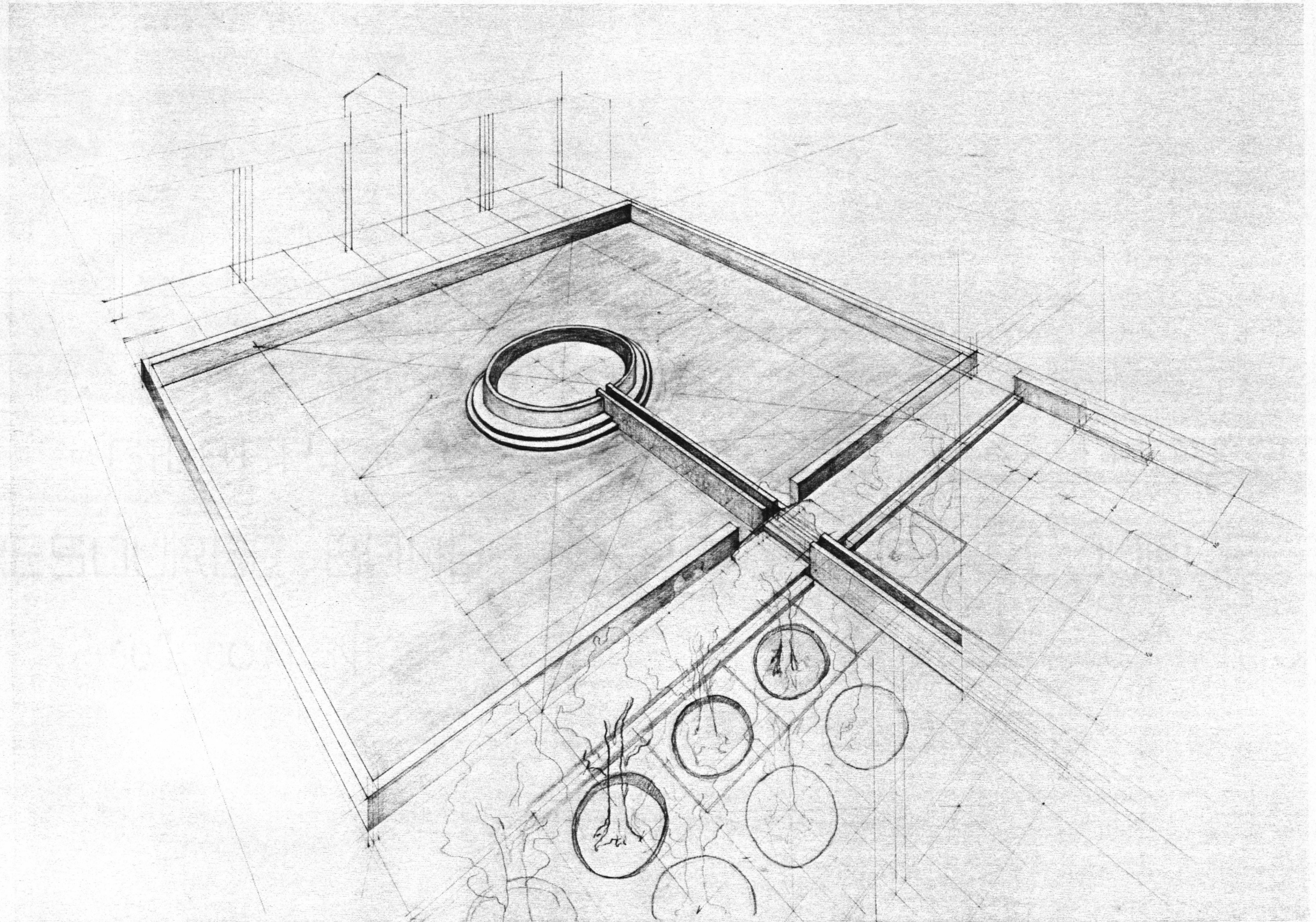
Define the axis,
controlled by the center,
leading to it, flowing from...

the entry,
the Door to the courtyard,
the microcosm of the whole,
the source of the water.

Contents

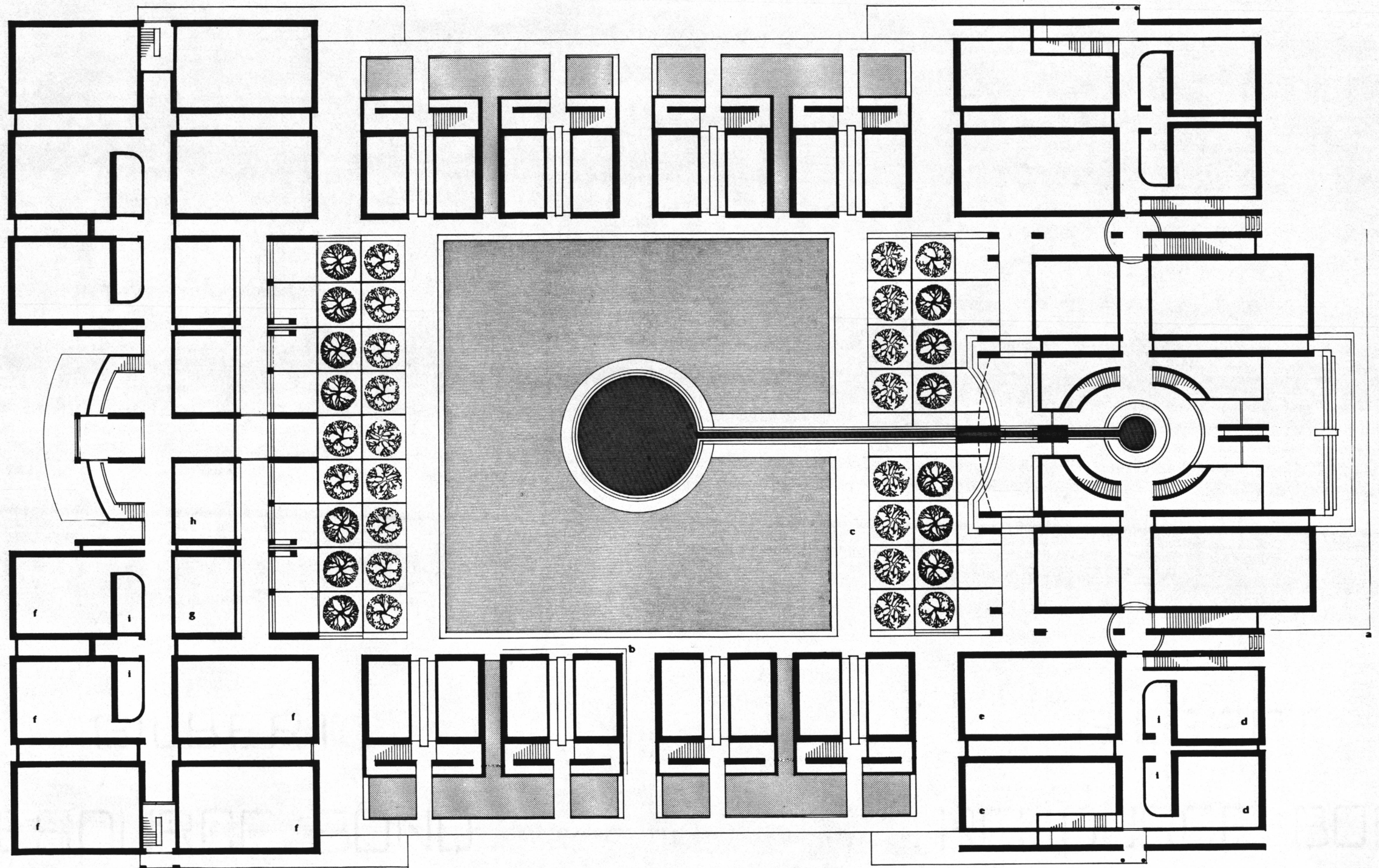
One Room	1
The Pavilion	8
The Propylaion	13
Bibliography	22
Vita	23

One Room



This thesis is the study of a complex of buildings that exist as one room.
The courtyard is the inside of the Room.
The buildings are the Walls.
The Door becomes an entire building of entry.

One Room



- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|---------------------|
| a | Propylaeon | f | research laboratory |
| b | Pavilion | g | office |
| c | Courtyard | h | meeting room |
| d | classroom | i | lavatory |
| e | instructional laboratory | | |

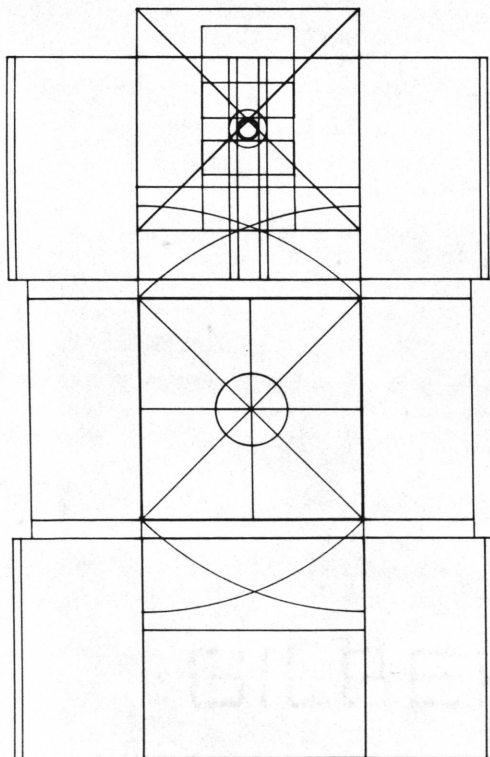
One Room

The nature of the Room:

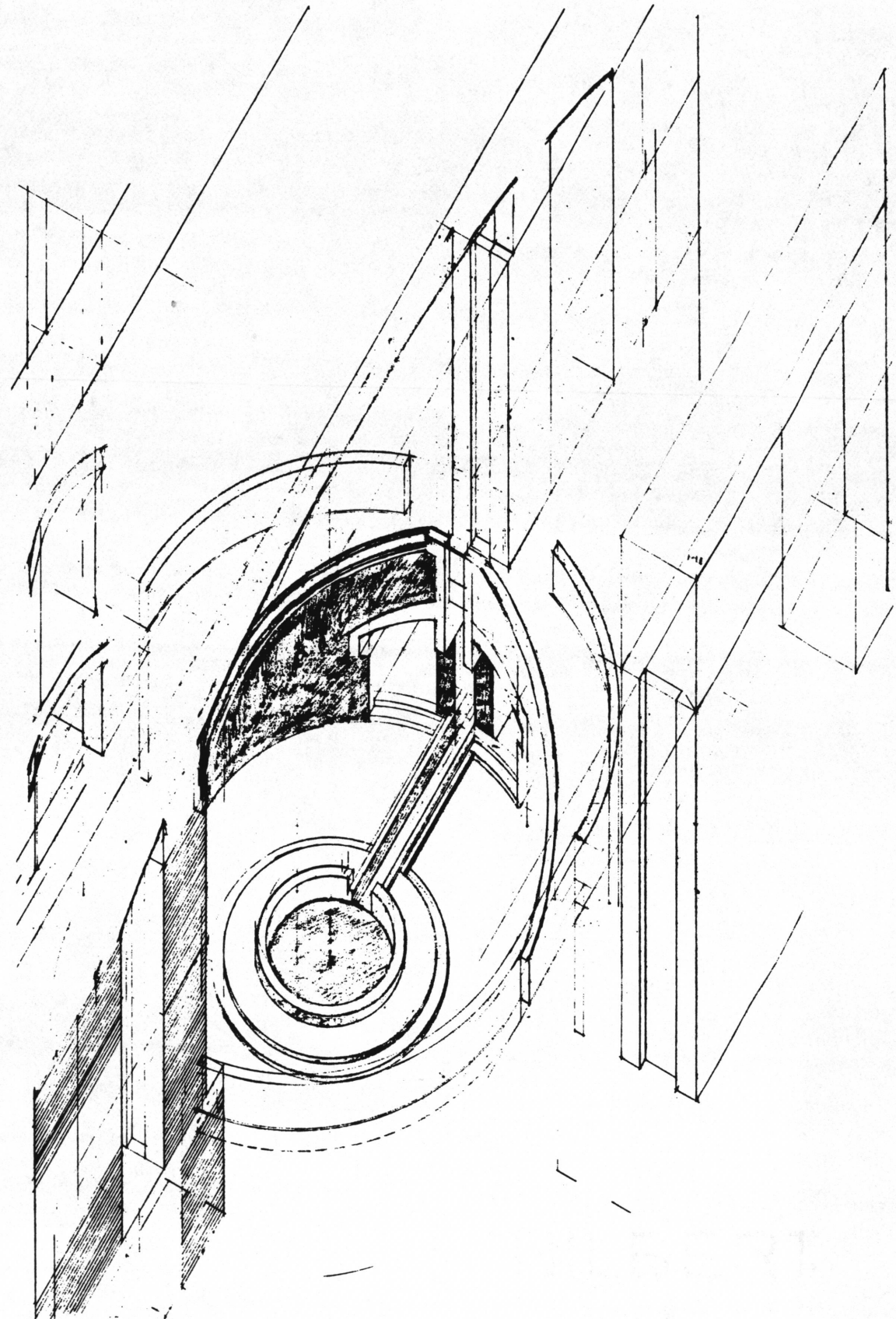
The project is siteless and based on a generalized program that would fit the needs of a university center for the disciplines of mathematics and physics.

The parts define the whole and are subservient to the whole. The entry building, the Propylaion, reiterates the whole... feeds the whole - the water flows from its interior to the courtyard.

The center of the courtyard is a pool of water, 44 feet in diameter, set in a grassy enclosure that is 144 feet square. The courtyard is extended the length of the square's diameter. The square becomes the defining unit of the complex.



The courtyard pool is the center of the complex, but the pool inside the Propylaion is the heart of the complex. The Propylaion pool is the center of the main entry space. The walls of the library stairs form a backdrop for it. The Propylaion houses the library on its second and third floors. One must pass under the library stairs to go from the main entrance to the courtyard. The library becomes part of the ceremony of progression from outside to inside.



One Room

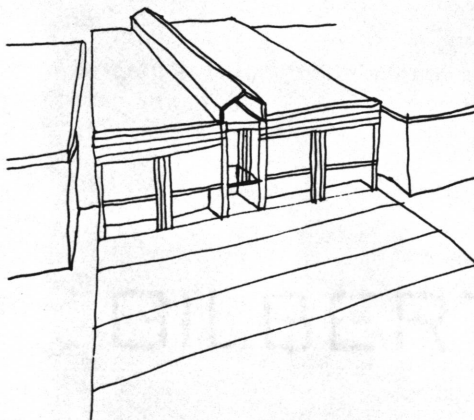
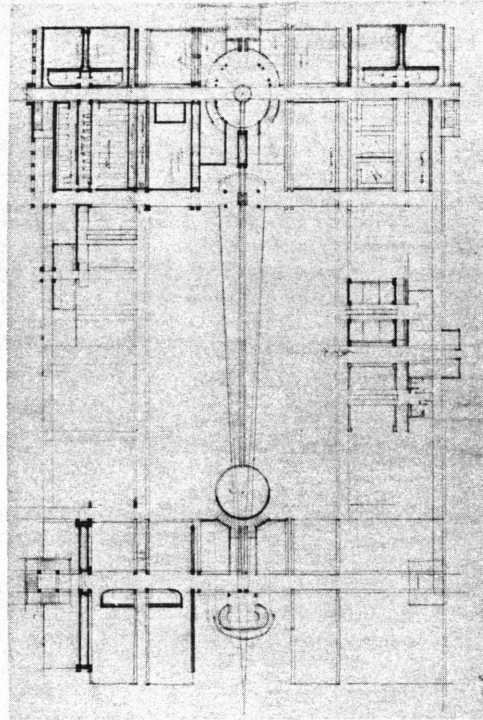
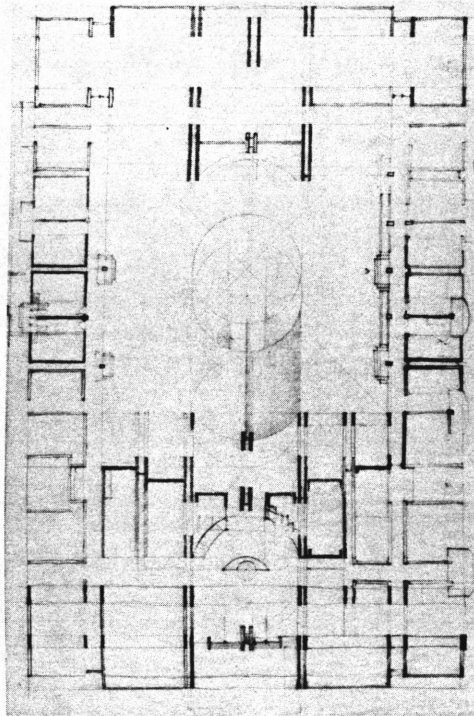
Center versus Axis:

The main axis is the connective strip of water.

It is subordinate to the pools of water. Beyond the courtyard pool the axis does not continue.

Therefore the complex is not split; it is centered—focused on the pool.

If the main pool was in contact with the end buildings the internal focus would be lost, the complex would be split.

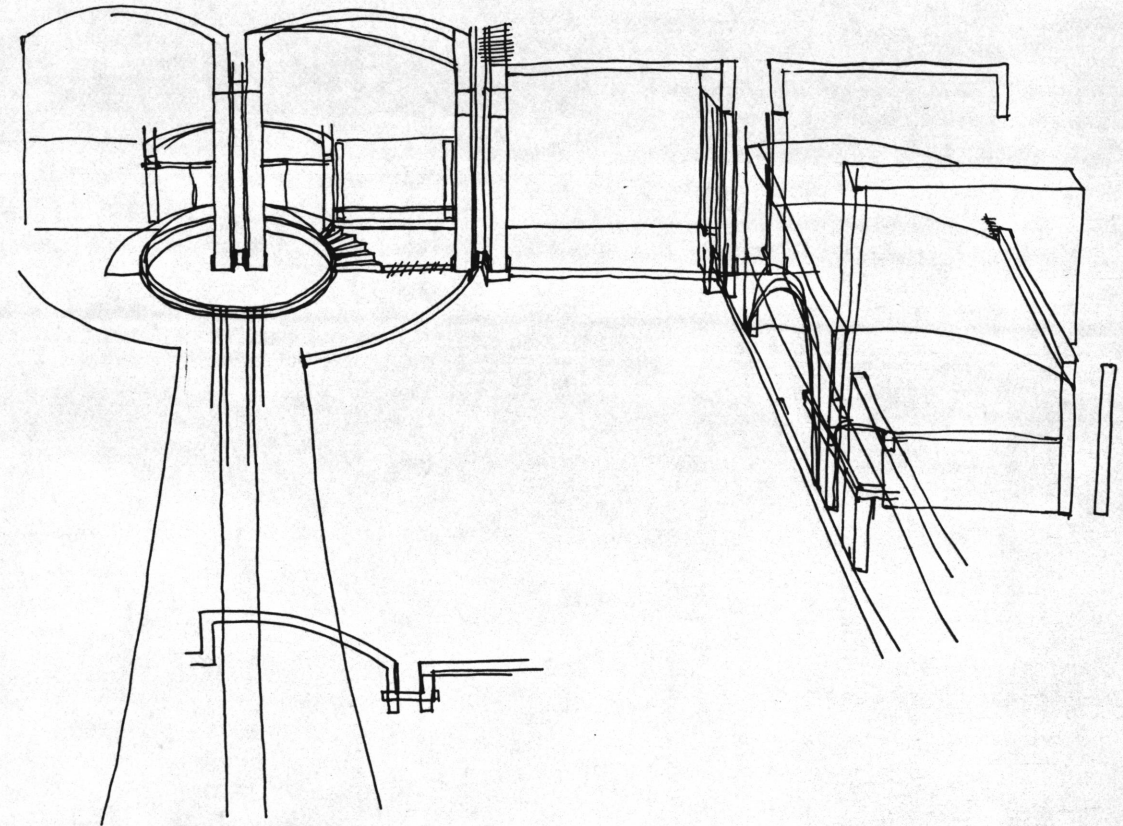


The buildings of the far end of the complex form a wall. They are a backdrop to the interplay of the pools of water.

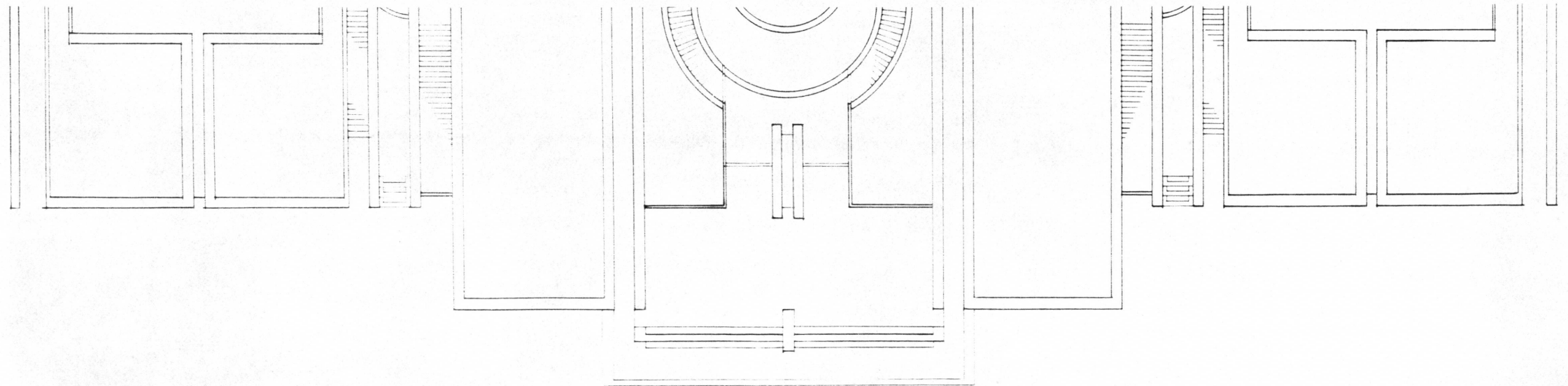
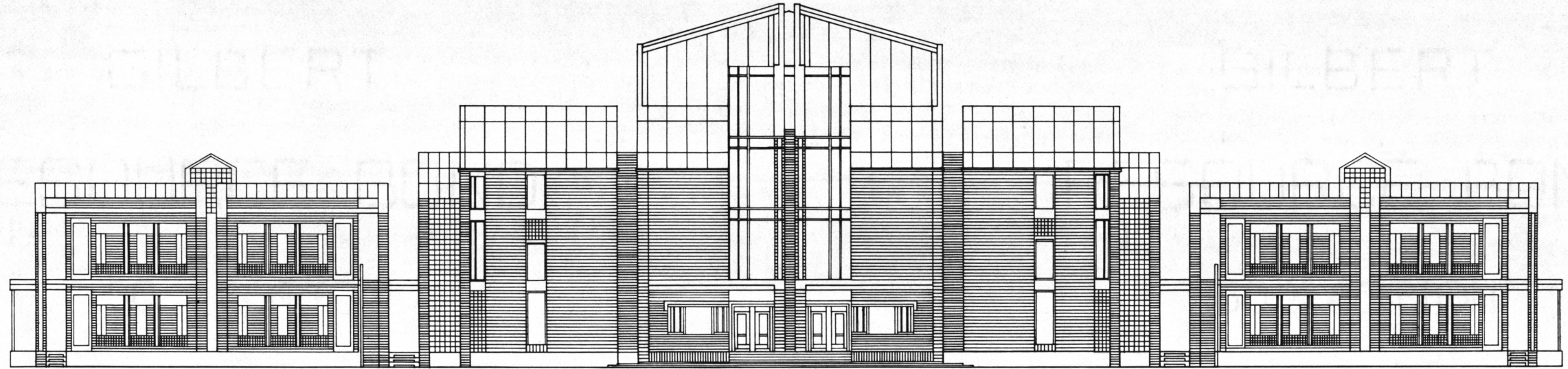
The detachment of the end buildings is appropriate.

Functionally they would work as the research laboratory area and would stand apart from the areas devoted to teaching.

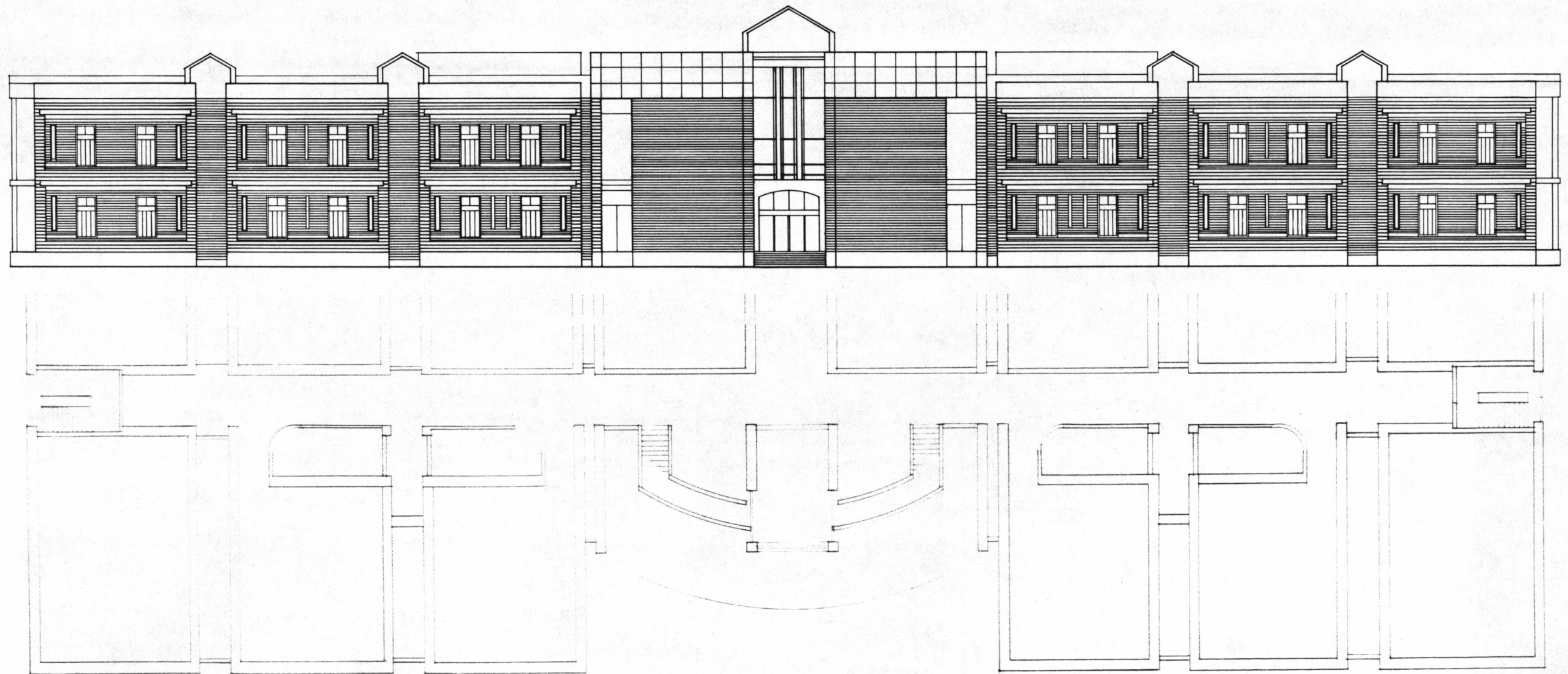
The research area is juxtaposed to the library. The place of active research faces the place of contemplative research across the length of the courtyard.



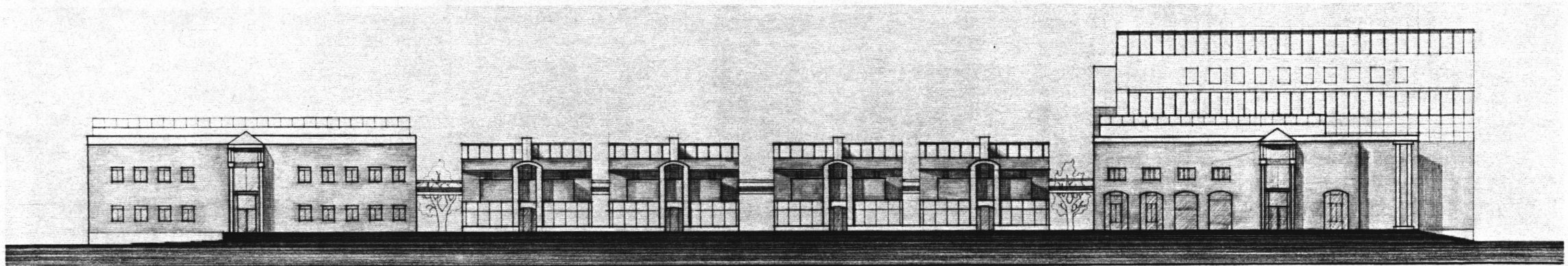
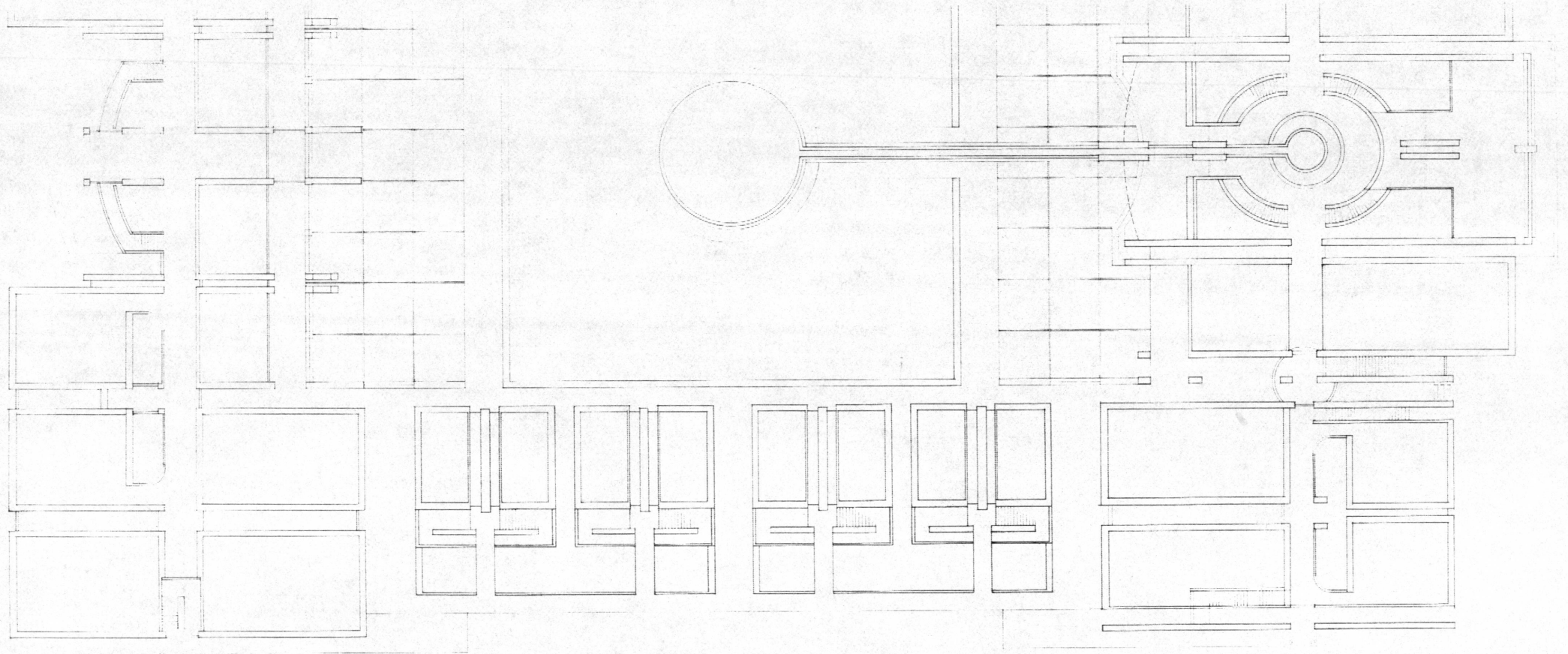
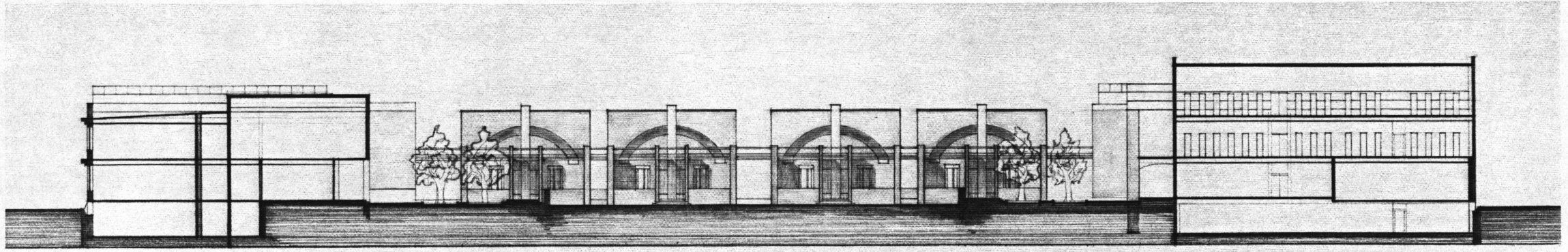
One Room



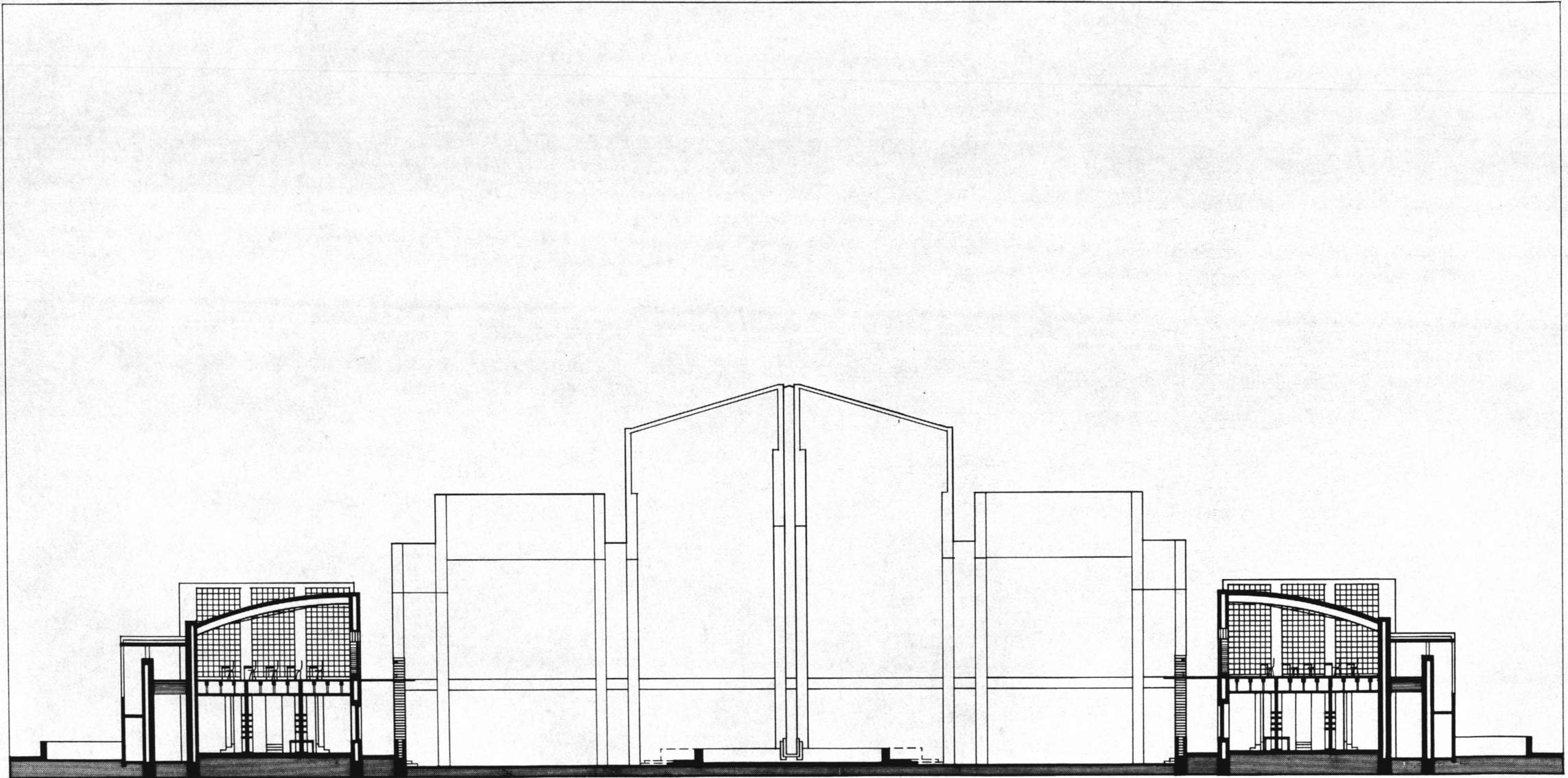
One Room



One Room

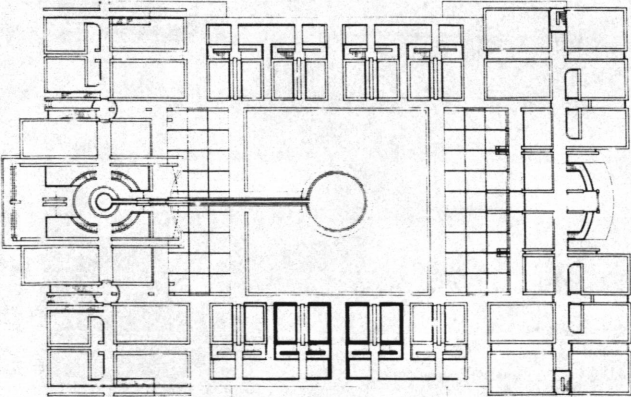
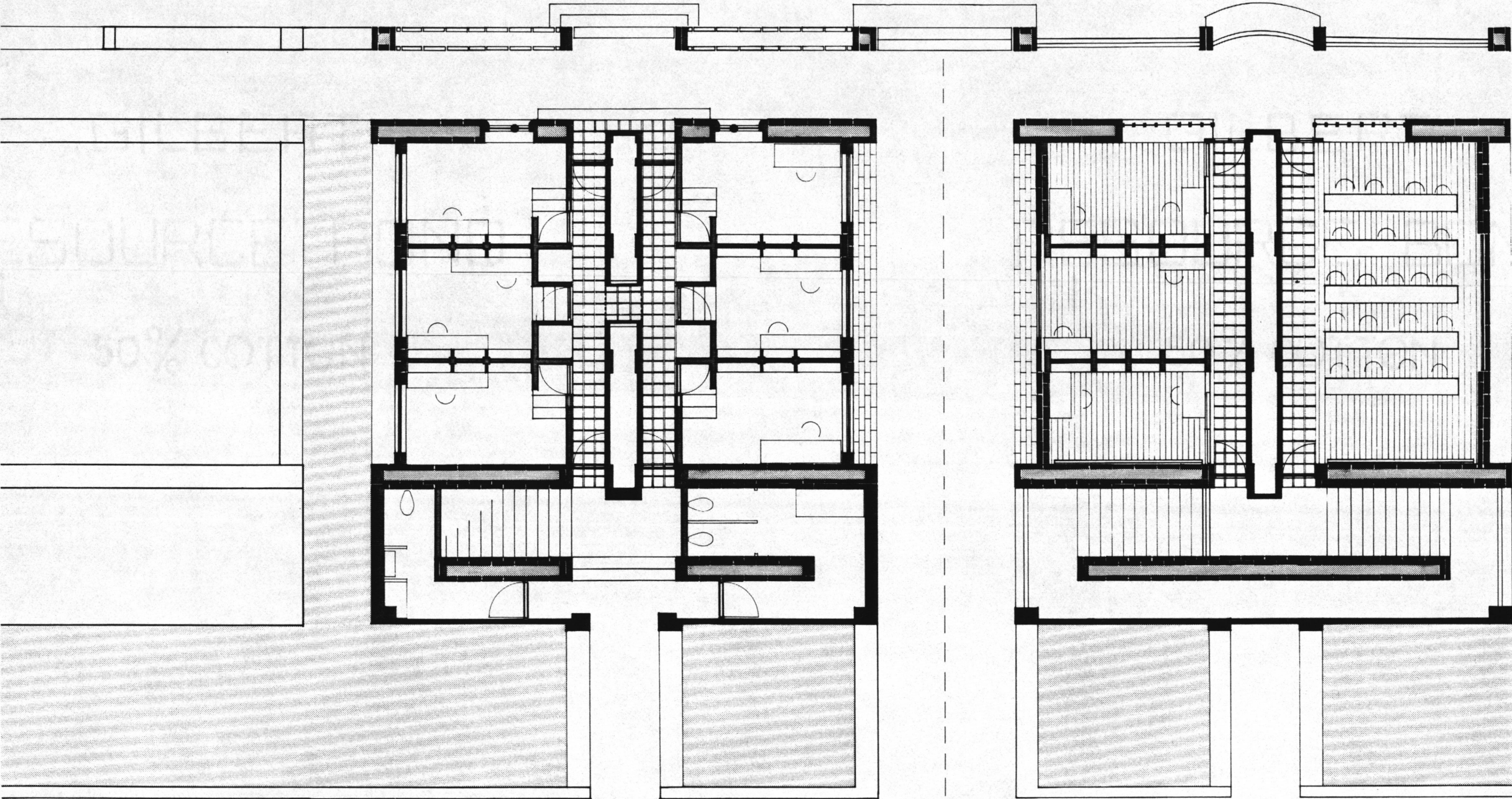


The Pavilion



The Walls that form the edge of the courtyard are the Walls that mark the boundary of the complex...
The pavilions are the Walls.

The Pavilion



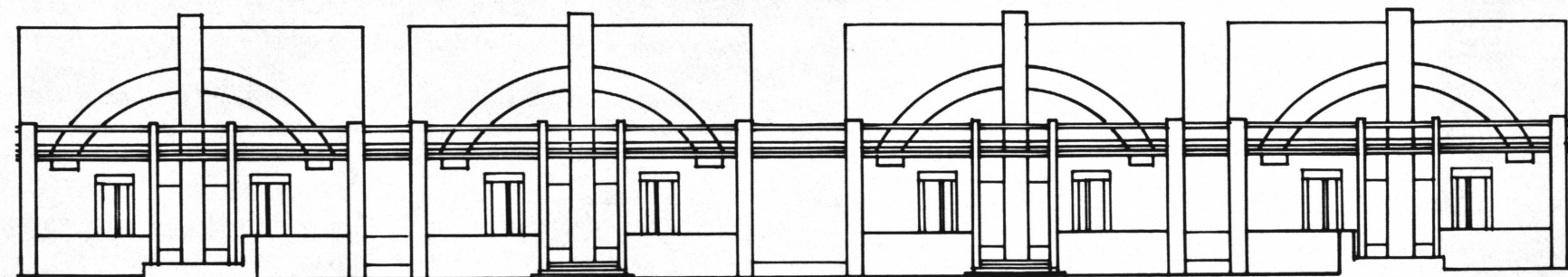
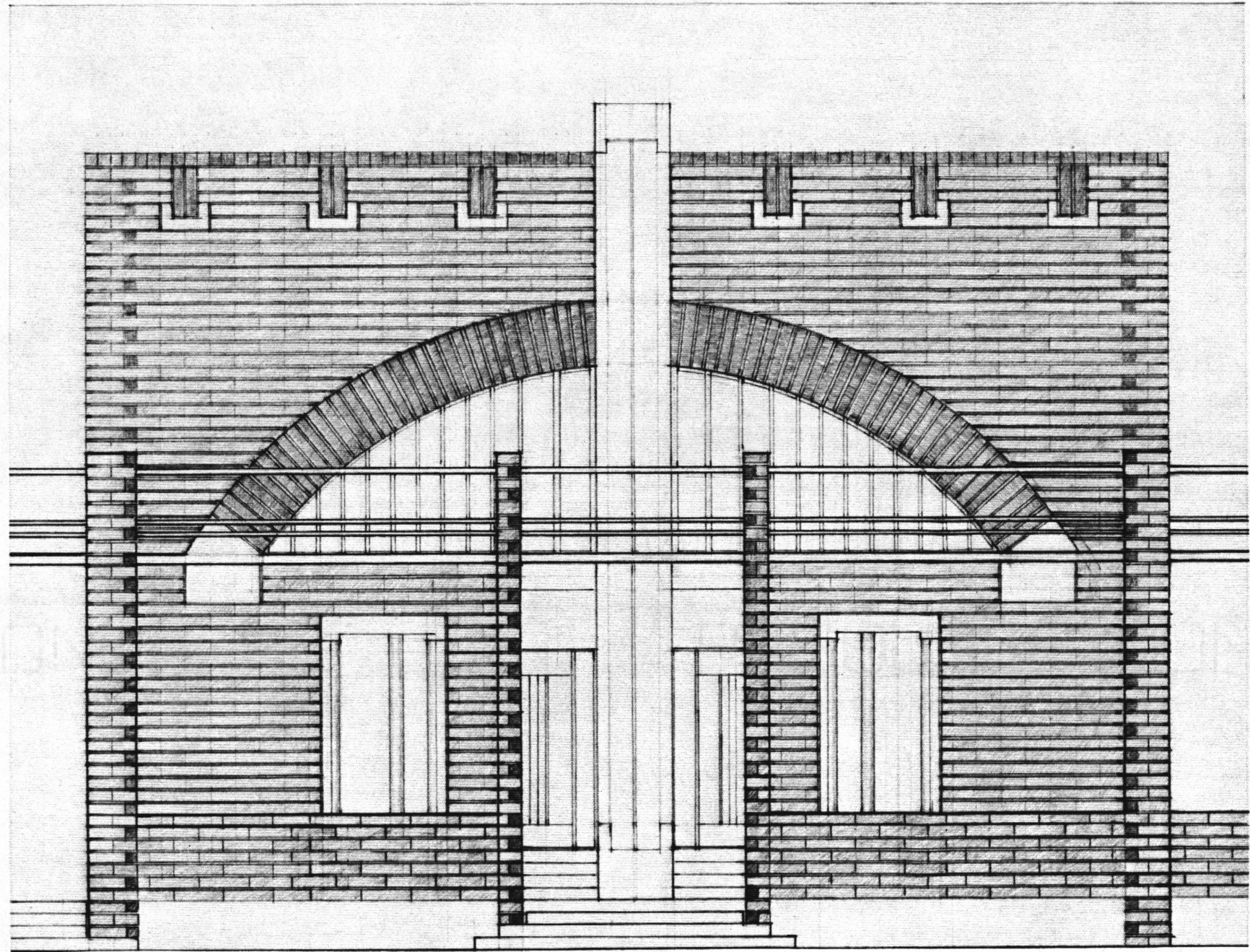
First floor:
offices for one
or two professors;
lavatories

Second floor:
seminar rooms;
student offices

The Pavilion

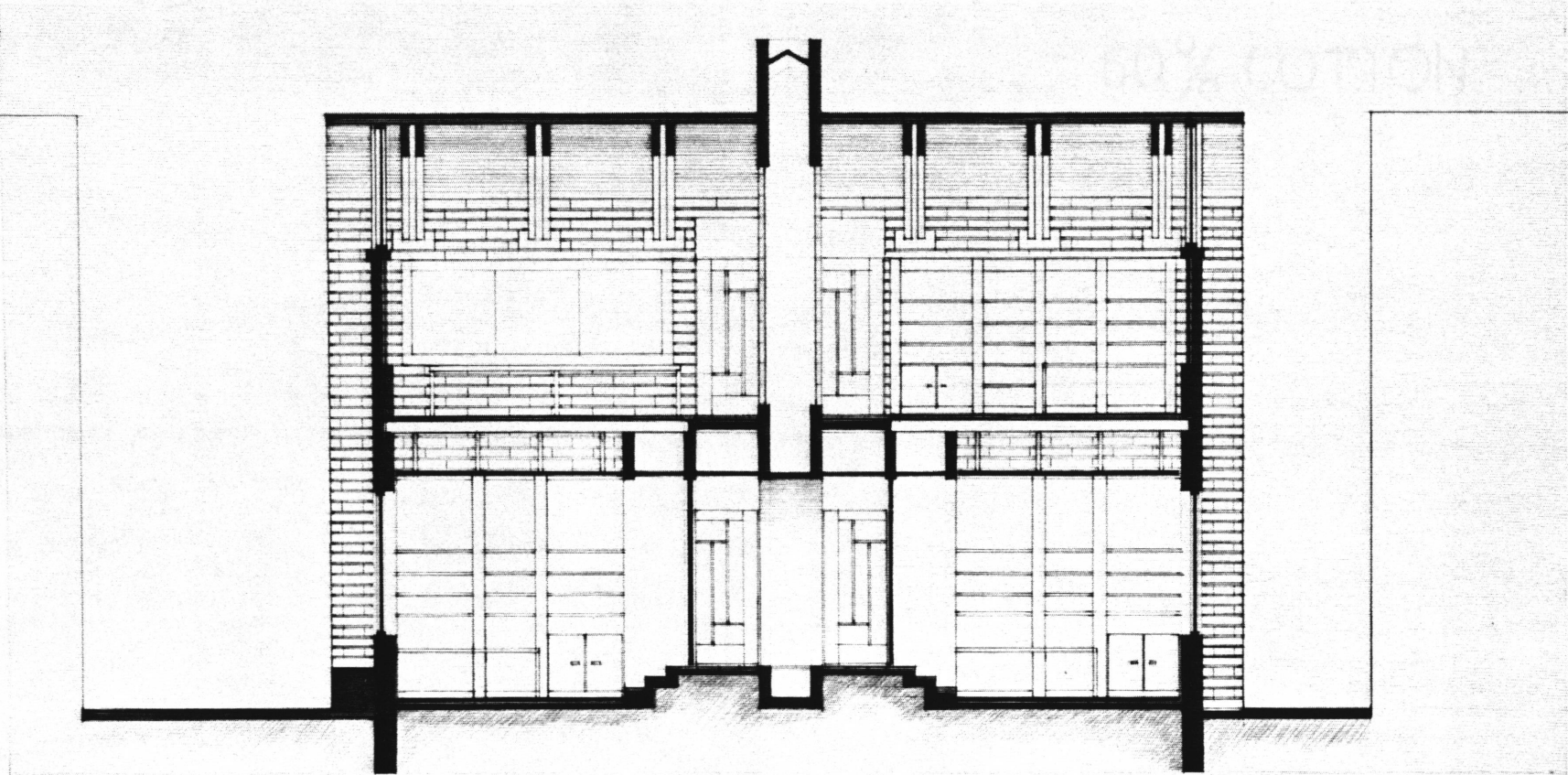
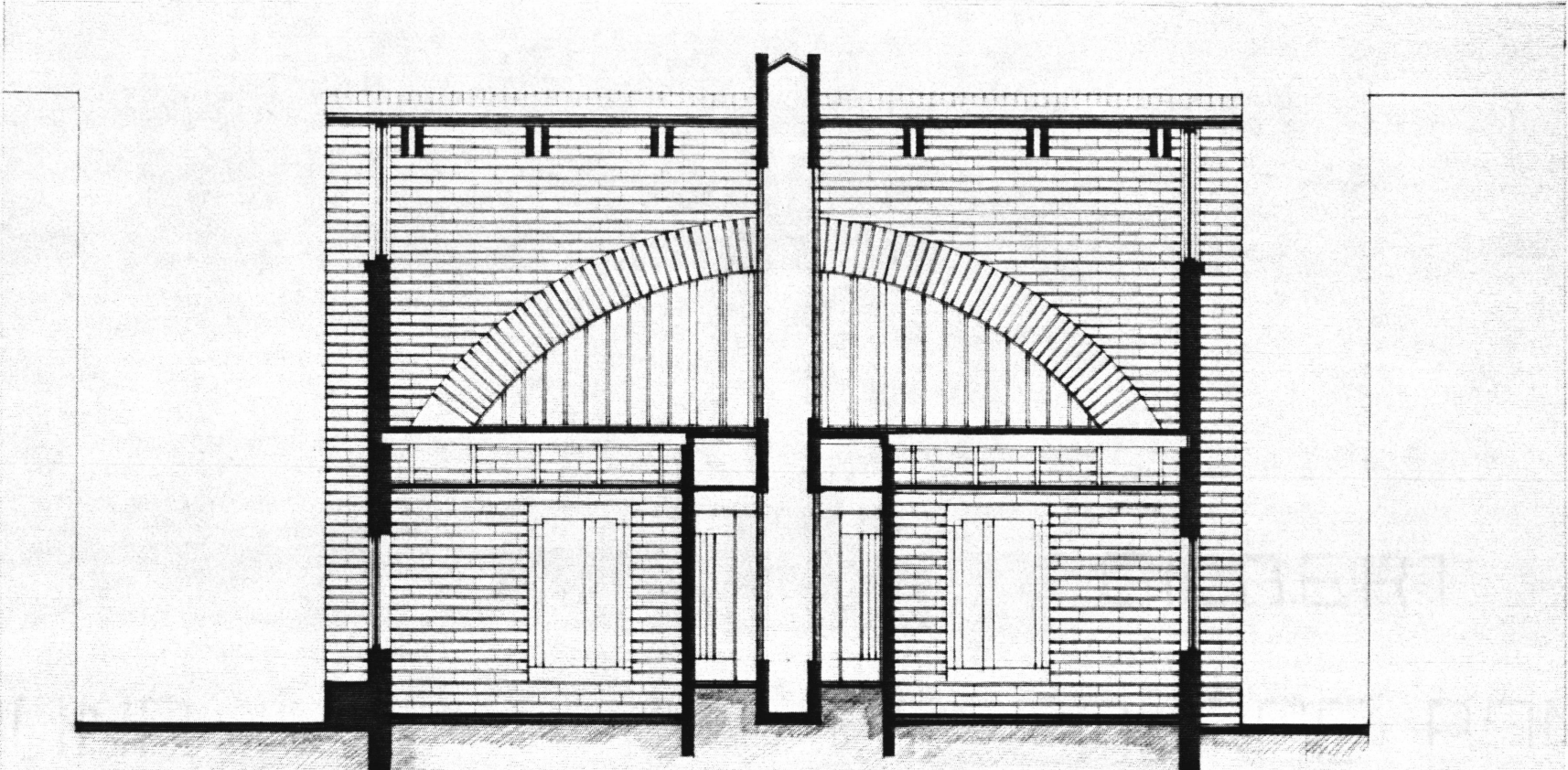
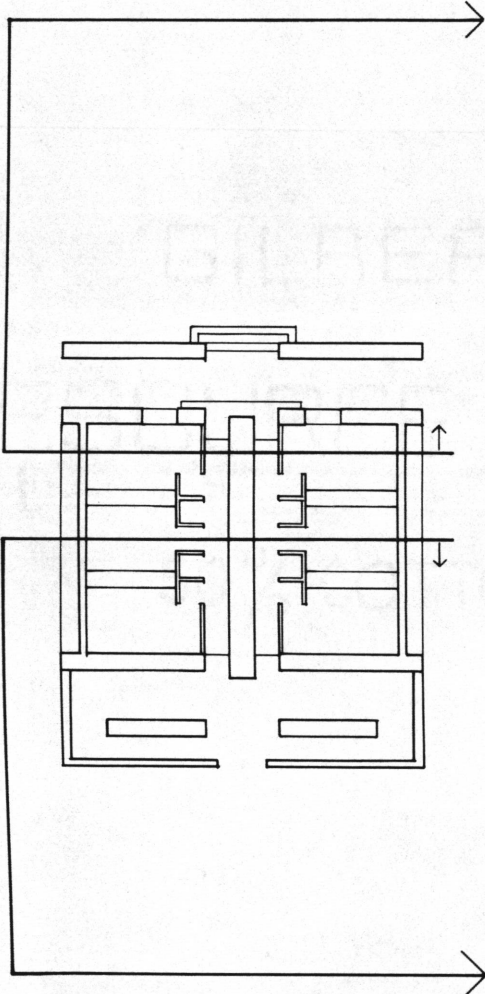
The nature of the pavilion is that of a boundary. The pavilions define the sides of the courtyard along its length. The walls of the pavilions lie parallel to the main axis of the complex.

Each pavilion is split by a hollow wall that pulls light into the center of the building. This light-wall is the core of the pavilion. The core is established counter to the walls and directs the focus of the pavilion toward the courtyard.

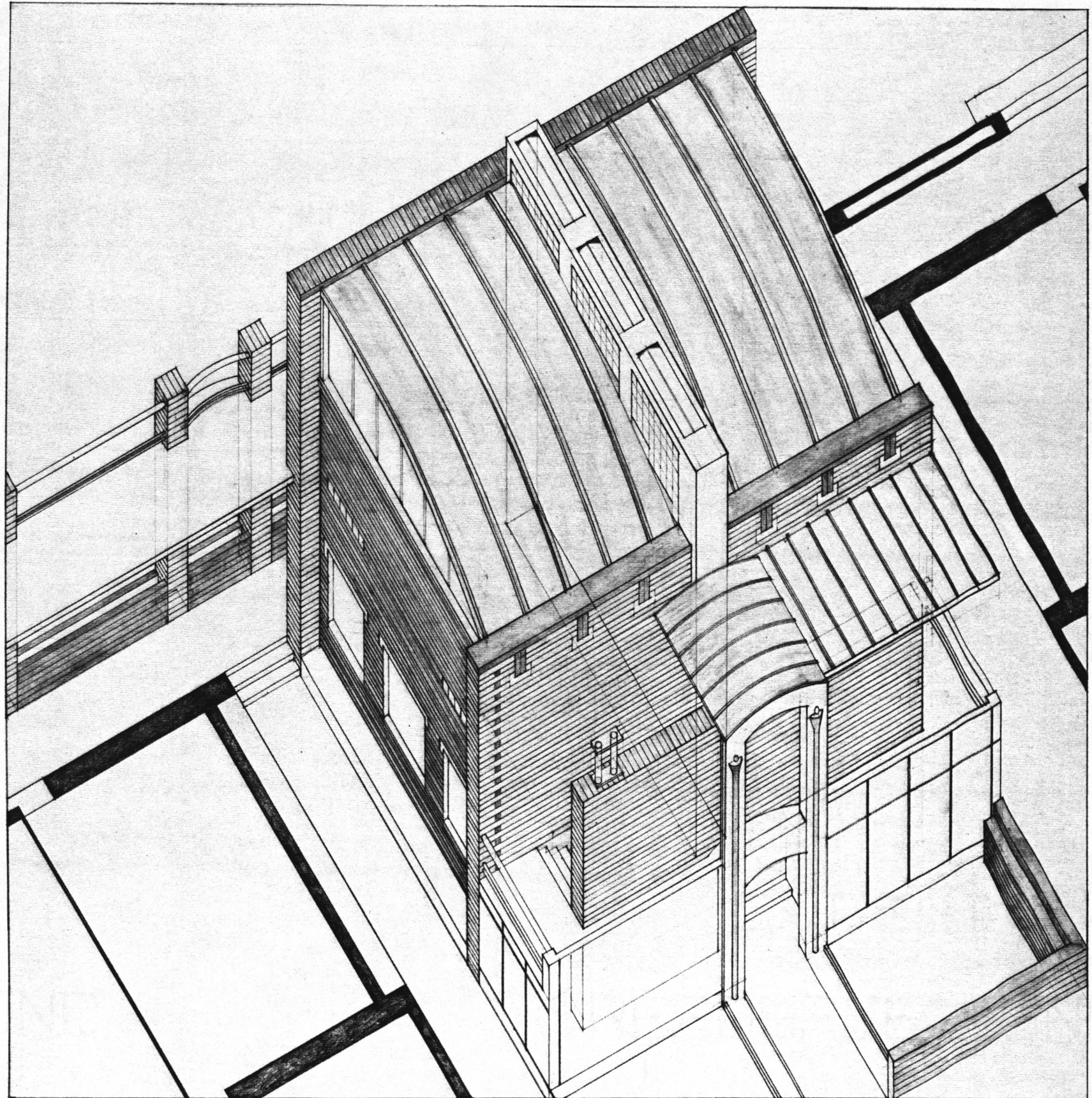
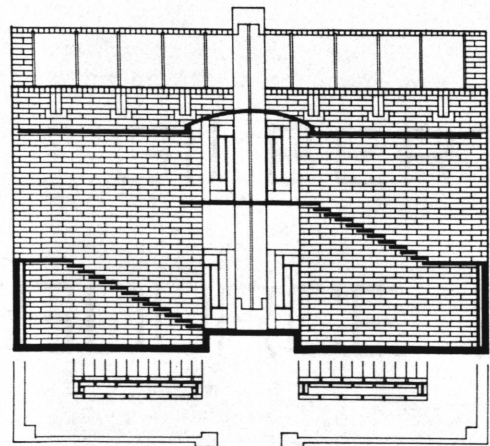


The pavilions provide office space for professors and graduate students and have small classrooms for seminars.

The Pavilion

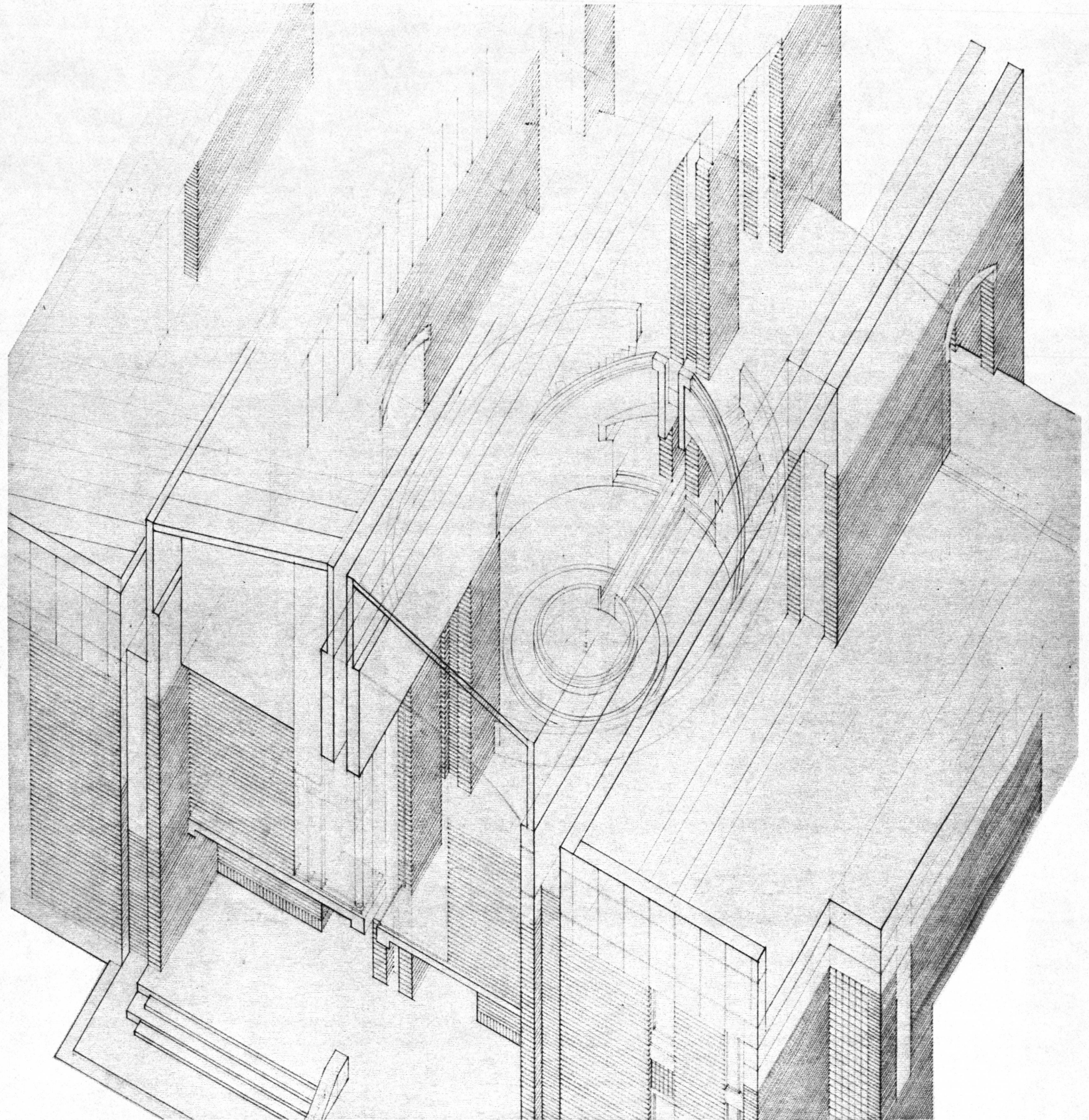


The Pavilion



50% SECTION

The Propylaion



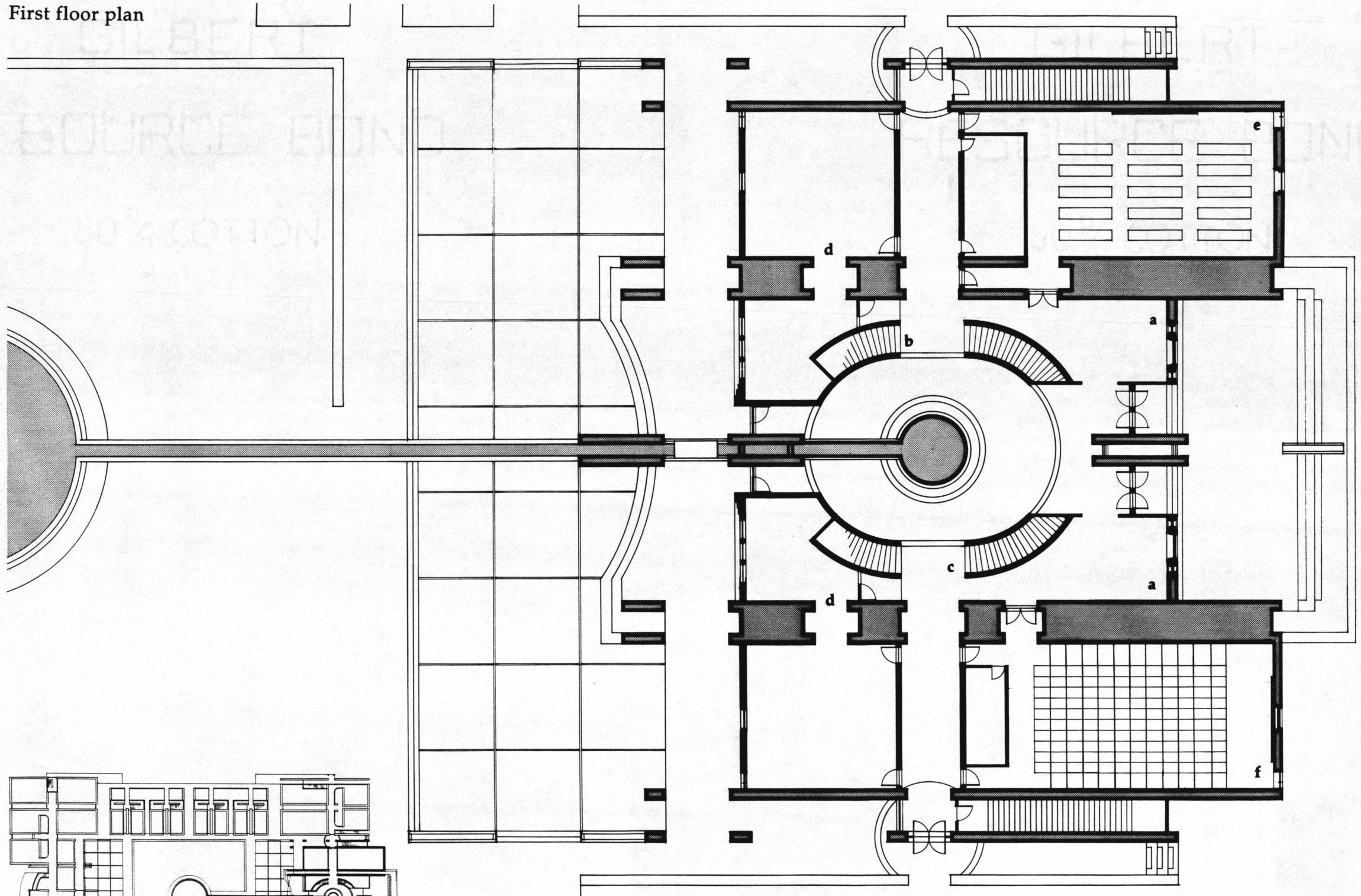
The Door of the Room of the courtyard

The gateway, the place of entry

The source of the water

The Propylaion

First floor plan

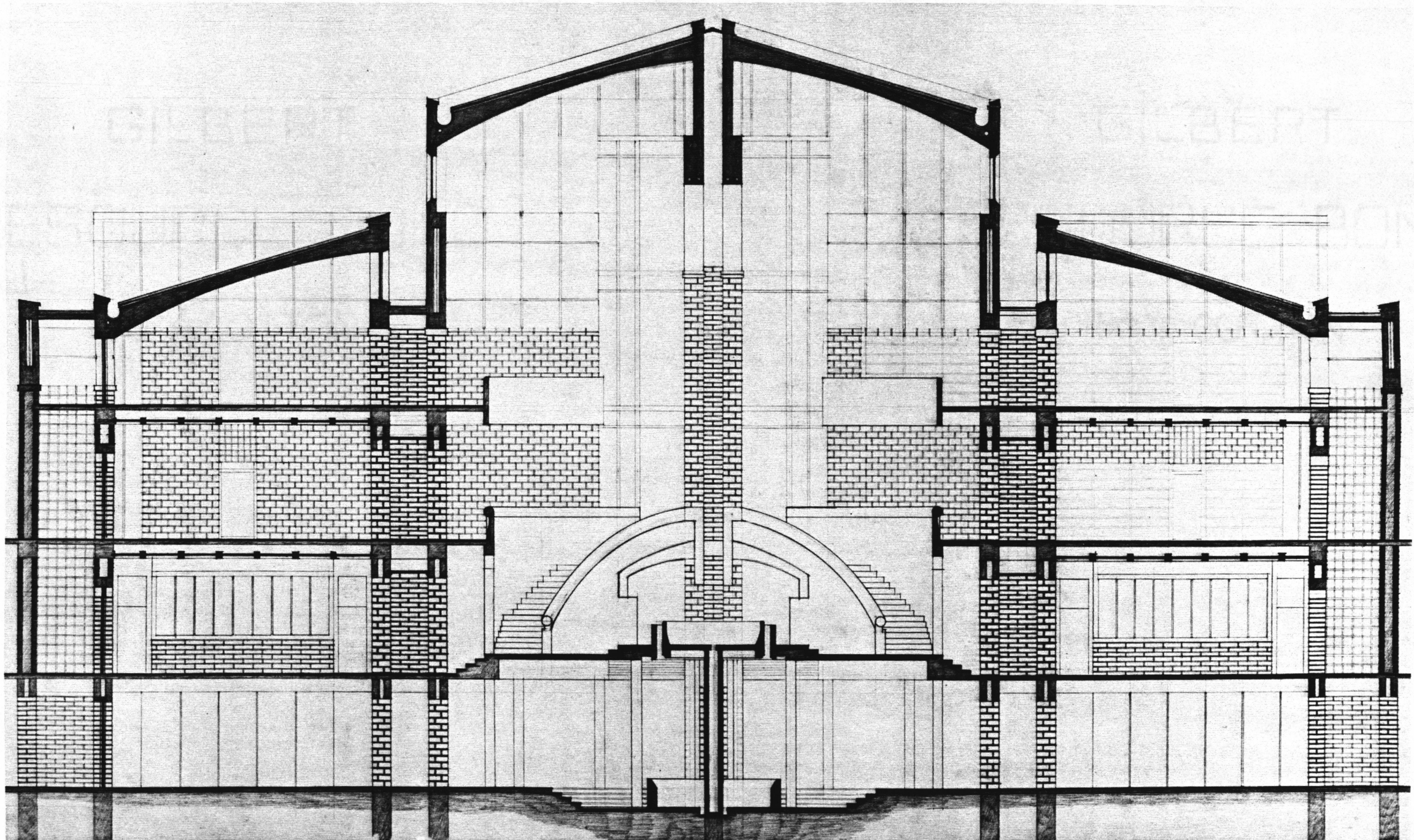


- a lounge
- b stairs to library
- c stairs to subterranean pool
- d departmental office
- e small auditorium
- f large auditorium

The Propylaion



The Propylaion

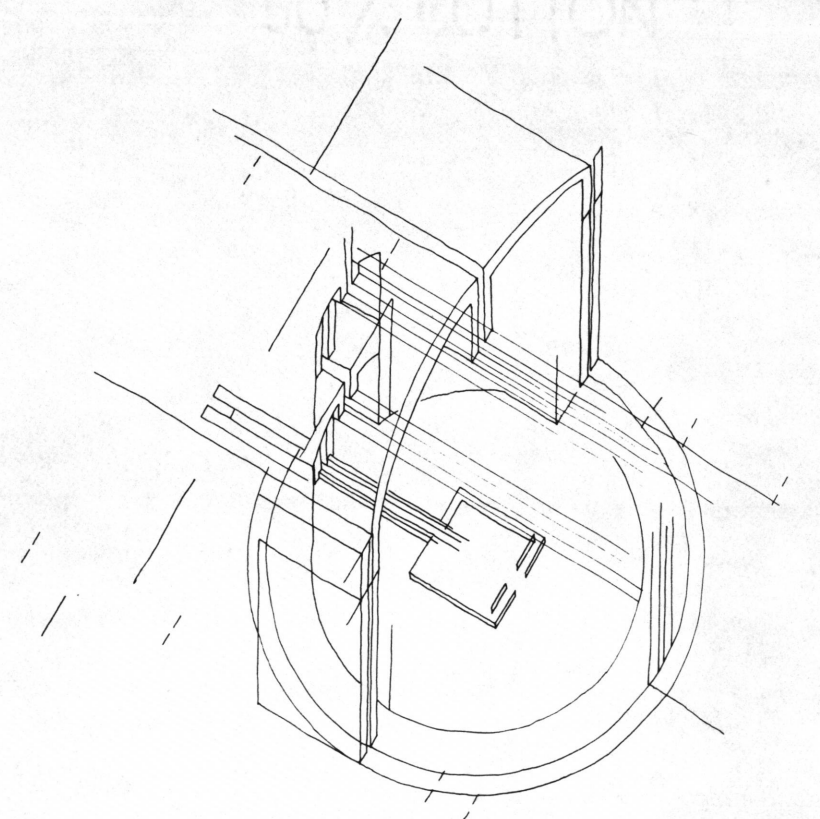
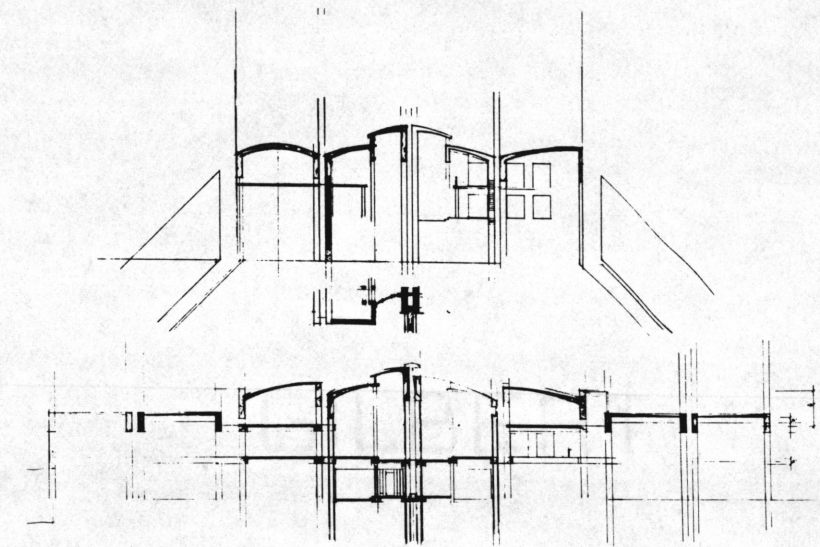
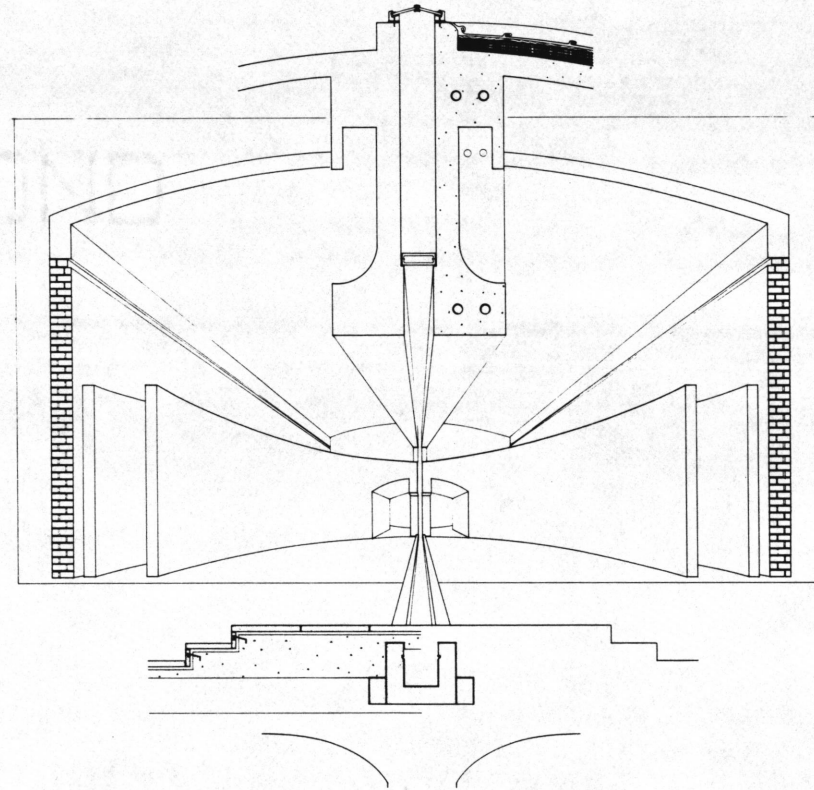


The Propylaion

Rationale for the motif of the split arch:

The split arch is a formal theme in the thesis. The waterway functions as the severing device for the arch.

The keystone area of the arch becomes a void. A set of parallel walls flank the water's path and support the arch. The arch becomes two curved channels that imply a complete arch.



The motif of an axis breaking a curve is addressed throughout the thesis. The generated parallel walls become the geometric structure of the complex.

The Propylaion

Basement plan

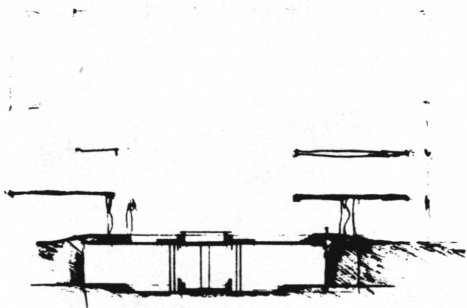
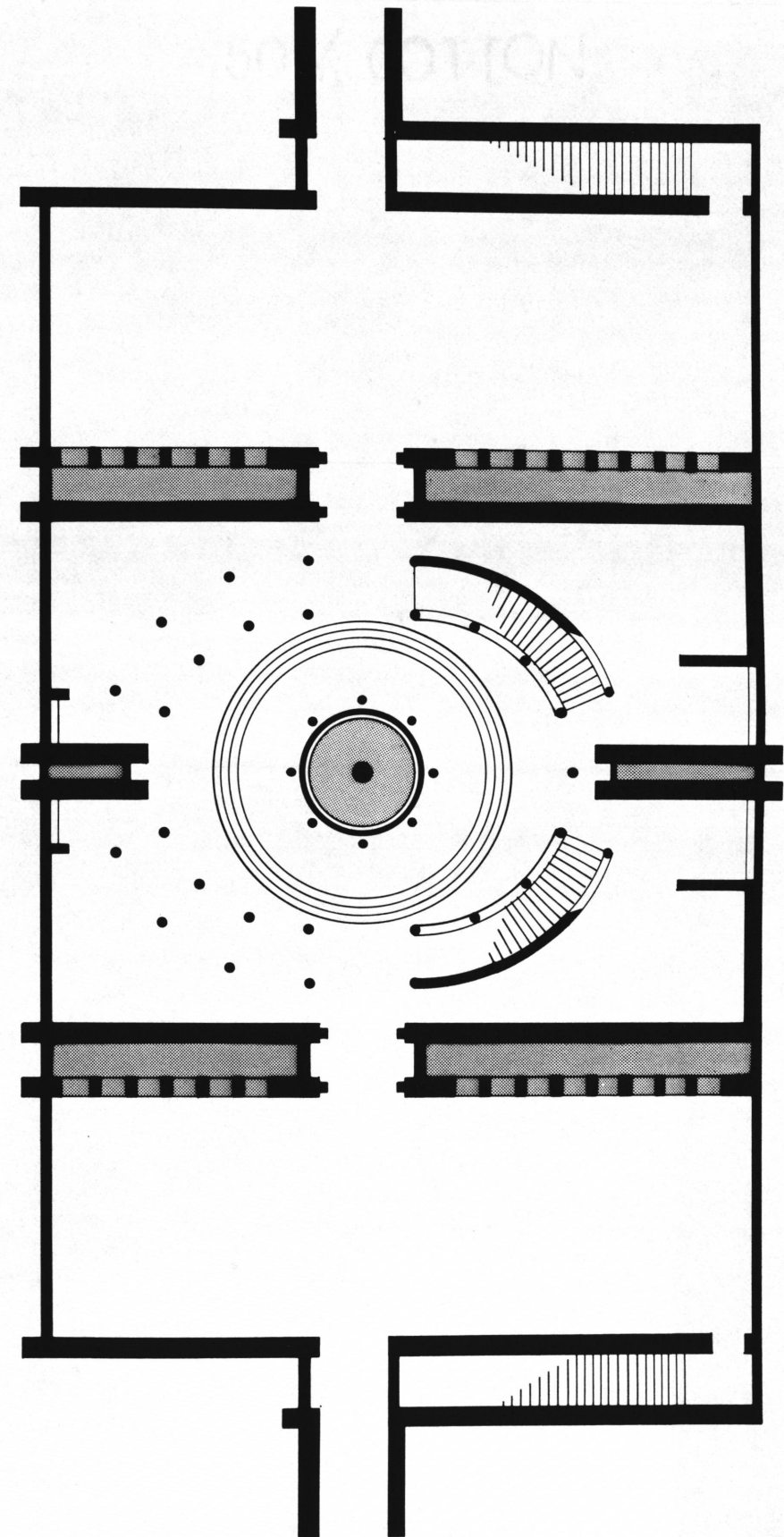
The source of the water:

One volume is defined as the transitional space from outside the complex into the courtyard: the Propylaion.

Its center is the crux of the whole. It is the source of the water that is the center of the complex. The water of the Propylaion pool overflows into a channel of water that feeds the courtyard pool.

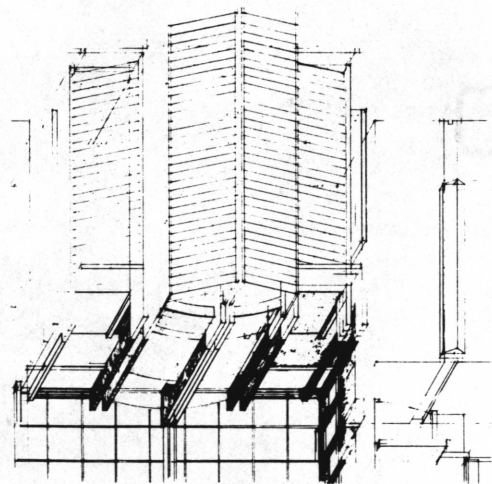
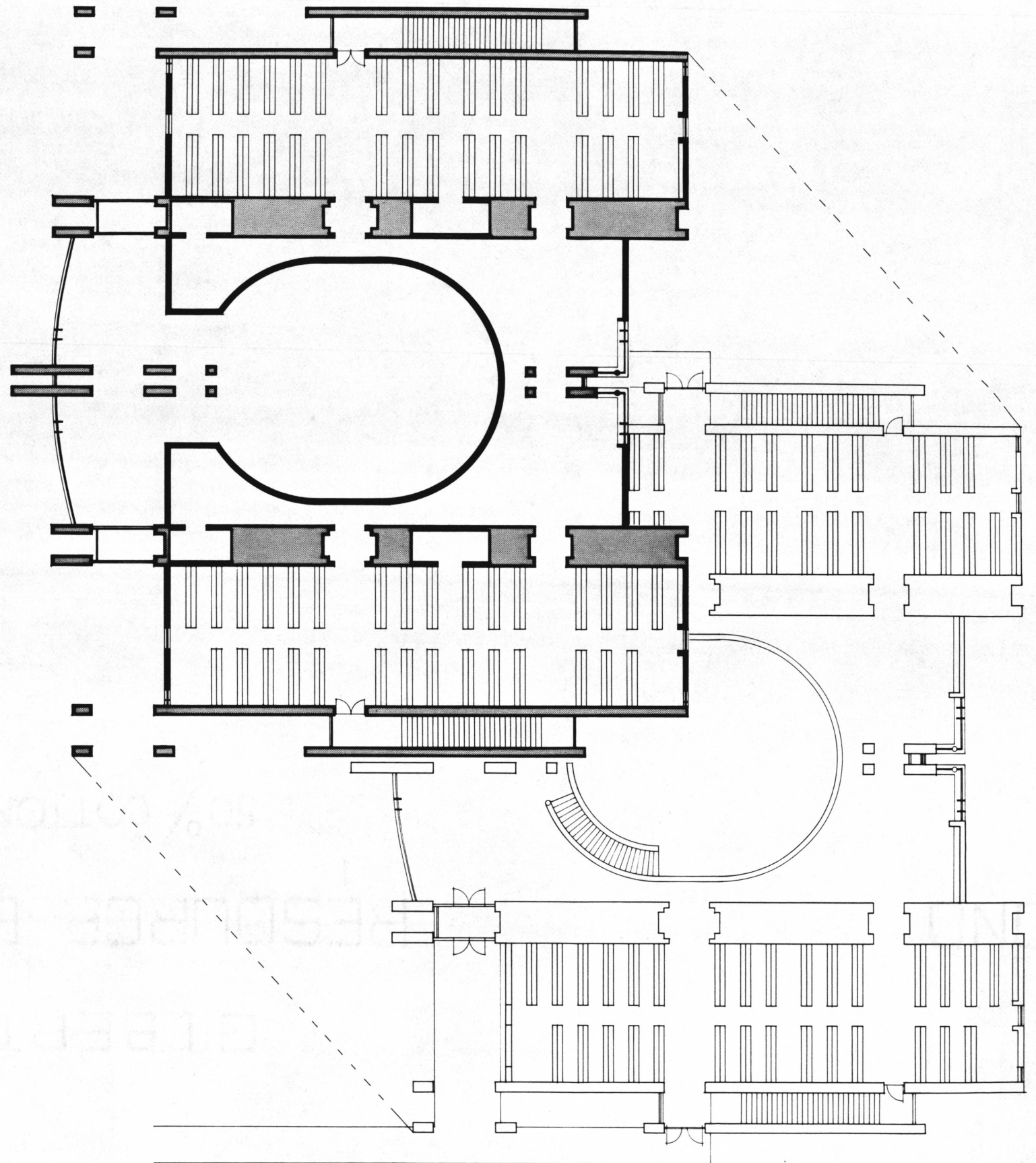
The rest of the overflow spills into a subterranean pool. The water in the lower pool feeds the upper pool; a constant cycle is maintained. The subterranean pool is a complete circle; it is not broken by an axis.

The basement of the Propylaion becomes the sacred place of the water.



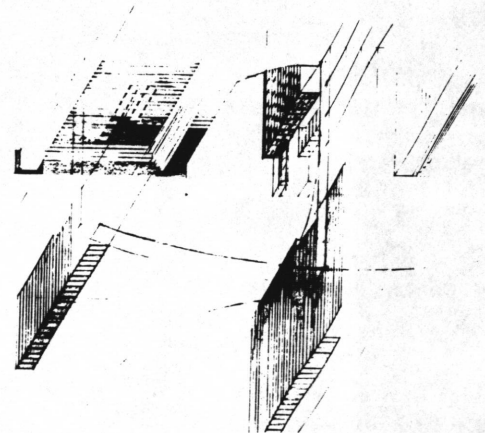
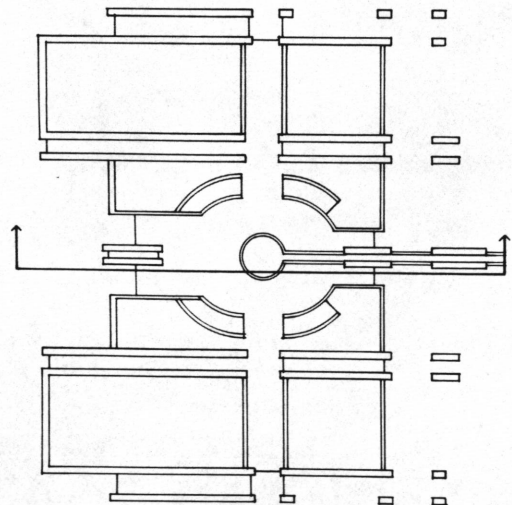
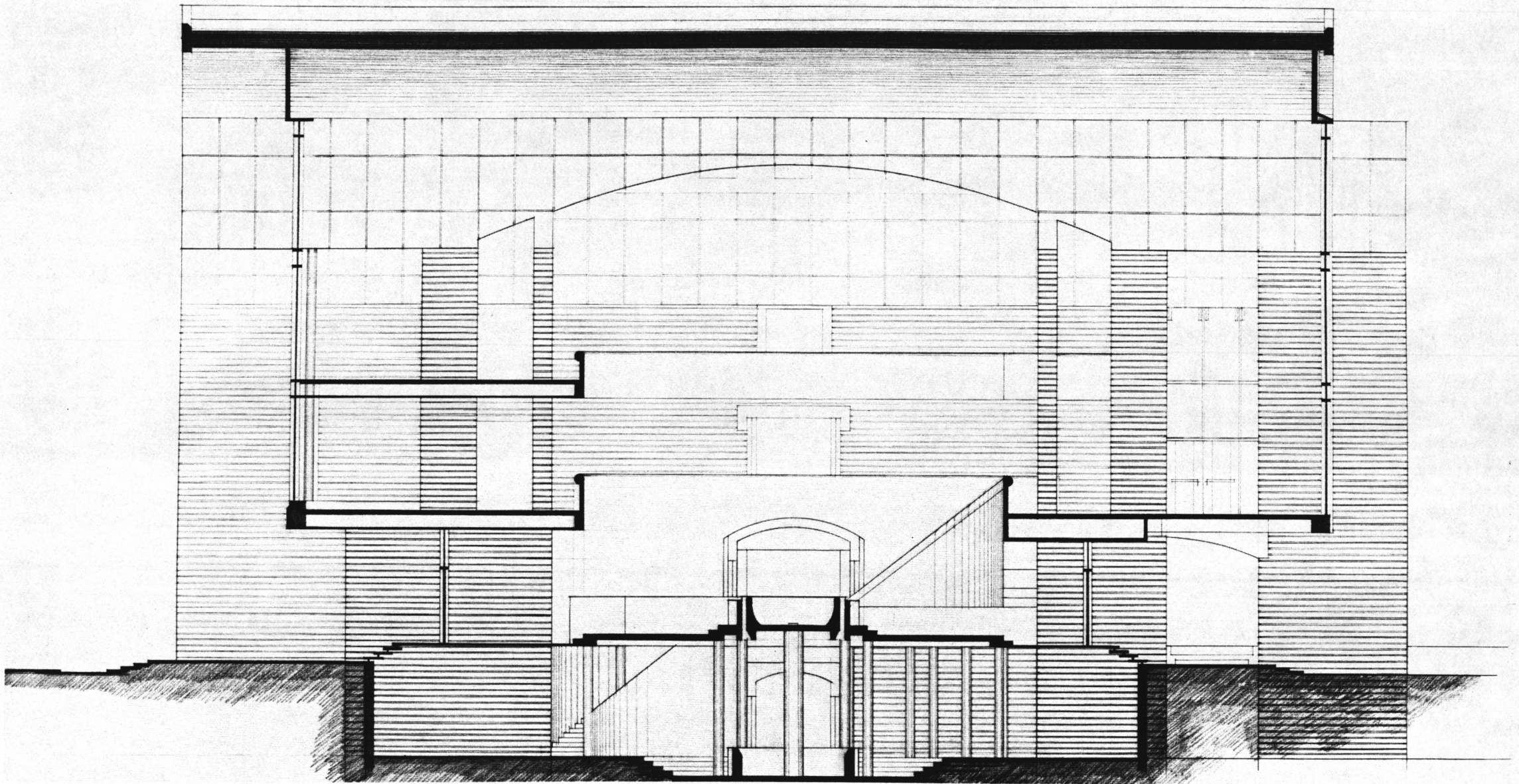
The Propylaion

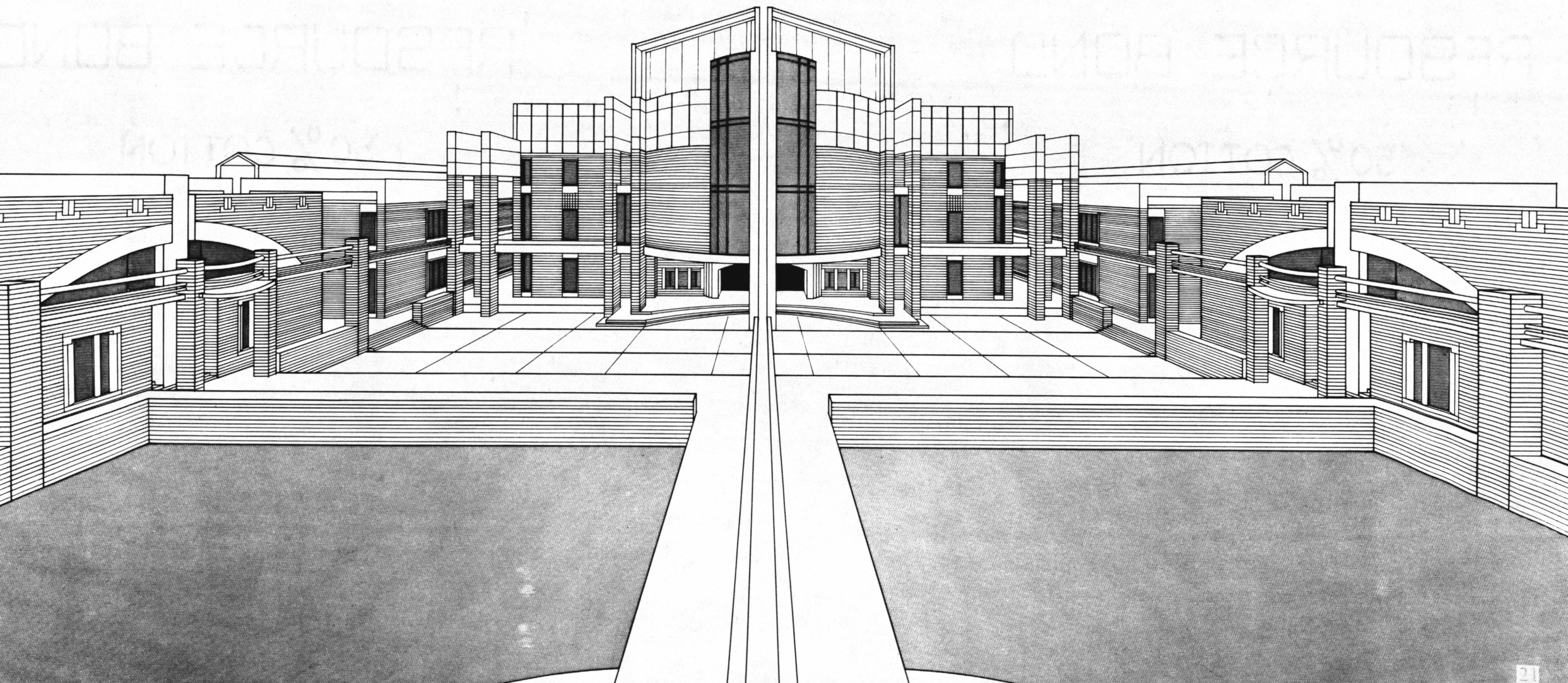
Second and Third floor plans:
the library.



The Propylaion

20% BOTTOM





Bibliography/ Footnotes

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1. Koyre. page 2.

2. L'Engle. page 7.

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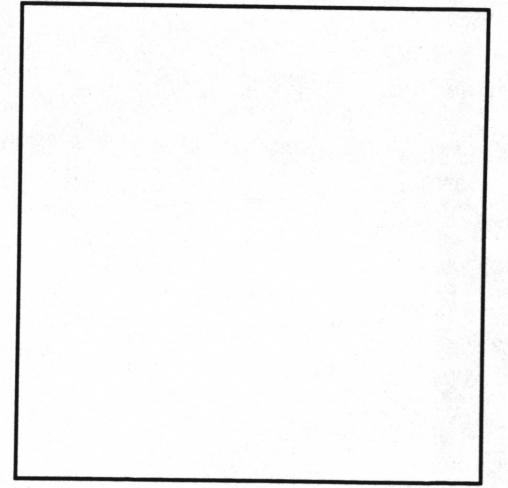
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**"All art is cosmos,
cosmos found within chaos."²**