

Architects' Drawings

*The Charles H. Scott Gallery
Emily Carr College of Art and Design
April 12 to May 5, 1985*

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The Charles H. Scott Gallery
Emily Carr College of Art and Design
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Granville Island
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University Avenue Apartment Tower, night perspective by Lenscape Inc.,
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INTRODUCTION

There is something more than ironic about the fact that the art and science we refer to as architecture, one of the most fundamental elements of the visual arts tradition, does not lend itself willingly to abstract reduction on the printed page and is seldom satisfactorily served by photography. For the same reasons, it evades gallery exposition: it is a dismaying task to try to approximate scale, presence and ambient environment. These elusive qualities are shared, incidentally, by all three-dimensional art in reproduction, notoriously sculpture, but it is architecture which is least accommodated in the exhibition hall.

Architects would be the first to remind us that drawings are not architecture: neither are drafting, schematic sketches or maquettes. These are merely tools, aids in communication of design concepts which must pass between artists, clients, technicians, the community and so on. Drawings cannot replicate the finished work of art in site-specific context.

In a literal-minded sense, architects' drawing *are*, nonetheless, tangible objects, many of which are capable of standing on their own as works of two-dimensional art. Such drawings can be regarded stylistically, in terms of originality of approach, subtlety, execution, iconographic and evocative power: as images. In critical terms, presentation drawings can range from baldly commercial illustration to rare poetic utterances of substantial visionary power.

Architects' drawings have one thing in common: they are imaginary projections of actual objects. They are abstract illusions facilitated, ordinarily, through high realism, meant to be read by laypersons. The authors of these drawings make no claims on them as fine art objects, although increasingly such works may find their way to the walls of commercial and non-commercial galleries, particularly if the architect has achieved international fame.

One seldom, however, experiences critical discussion of the drawings *as drawings*. It is almost as if the subject were a mutually agreed-upon taboo. The architectural profession is as unwilling to discuss drawing, per se, as are art critics and historians. Barbara Owen, the curator of this exhibition, has approached the subject boldly and incisively because these drawings interest her, as specialized and as removed as they may seem from the conventional subject area of 'gallery art.' If one of the objectives of the framed and suspended work is to provide us with pleasurable and provocative pause, Owen has more than provided the opportunity.

For some time in this century, we have more or less agreed that making visible the invisible was more challenging from the artist's point of view. Surely this exhibition demonstrates a perhaps unconsidered adjunct to that principle.

Ted Lindberg,
Director

ARCHITECTS' DRAWINGS

Architectural drawings are one aspect of the creative process through which architects communicate to the viewer an idea or concept for an ordered environment. A typical drawing is the representation of a three-dimensional construct rendered on a two-dimensional plane. It is a practical tool used by the architect as one means to an end, which is, of course, the eventual objective of achieved enclosure. In the overall scheme, architects' drawings are and will remain a secondary endeavour.

The role of these drawings as visual language is to set up a situation for discourse between the originator of the idea and the viewer. The interested public, however, rarely has the opportunity to observe architects' drawings because they are most often reserved for perusal by the client or for those directly within the professional sphere of the architect. In this instance, the drawing is judged as much for its ability to convey to the specialist the architect's intentions with regard to plan and organization, dimension, proportion and detail as for its intrinsic aesthetic merits.

This exhibition of drawings has as its major intention the desire to bring these works into the gallery environment where their artistic qualities may be appreciated by the public. *Architects' Drawings* is a diverse selection of recent renderings from the offices of eight Canadian architectural firms which afford an intimate look at some exceptional and richly evocative architectural depictions. The works selected represent the stage beyond the exploratory sketch or preparatory "process" drawing used by the architect in the initial development of an idea. This exhibition presents, rather, the definitive, quantifiable images which express the final intent of the architect or design team.

When first confronted with these drawings one is immediately impressed by the conscious precision and attention to detail which is executed and carried through in each. The overall sense of discipline and commitment, coupled with a positive, idealized sense of form and artistic expression, becomes the obvious common denominator. One is reminded that while each drawing is, in itself, a personal vision of a particular concept, the architect is simultaneously expressing consideration to relative concerns imposed by client directives, site specificity, cost efficiency and technological restraints. The drawing becomes an aid to communicating solutions and functions as a problem-solving vehicle. In addition, the final presentation drawing expresses a specific aesthetic and comes to possess a life of its own; that is to say it stimulates in the viewer a precognition of place and habitation that does not yet physically exist.

An excellent example of these preliminary insights is the openly narrative and literate architectural depiction of the *Pyrch Residence, Victoria, B.C.* by the

Patkau Associates. This intensely dramatic image harbours a hint of ambiguity and the mystery of the asymmetrical. The forms are clothed in adaptive, organic colouring. The juxtaposition of the perspectival elevation and the rendered floor plan, both of which are locked into a landscape topography, creates an ultimate third composition of pictorial elegance which rests in the mind of the viewer as he seeks to reconcile the information presented. The exacting and delicate use of graphite and coloured pencil nurture the sense of harmony and integrity of man's manipulation of materials within the setting of nature.

An example of architectural drawing which moves beyond pure architectural intent into the realm of art historical style is the *Expo 86 Tower, Site Plan*. This proposal by the architectural team of Peter Cardew Architects consciously exhibits some traits of the style which came to be known as constructivism. Taking the themes of Vancouver's upcoming world exposition totally to heart, the design team expresses a directness of approach to form and function reminiscent of that seen in the work of the Russian artists, Tatlin and Lissitzky. Science and technology equate with clarity and economy for these contemporary designers in much the same way as they did for their turn of the century predecessors. Geometric hard-edge shapes convey emotion through efficient impact.

The exquisite drawings from the office of Barton Myers Associates present buildings created for an urban milieu. The works objectify the buildings they represent as though they were majestic pieces of sculpture. Each edifice stands alone, conveying to the viewer a sense of its strength. Each drawing, moreover, is impeccably finished to the extent that, as a drawing, it possesses an attitude of distinction. Aside from the primary purpose which is to communicate to a specific client, these drawings, rendered in graphite, coloured pencil and in some instances ink and airbrush, are superb examples of the work of a highly trained architectural draughtsman. The careful coordination of colour and paper selection softens and enhances the serious importance and earnest monumentality of the building represented. The astute attention to light and subtle shading intensifies the architectonic effect. A polish and elegance prevail. Each drawing is unmistakably recognizable as a work from the office of Barton Myers Associates.

The Bruno Freschi Architects' detail drawing of the Prayer Hall typical window elevation for the *Ismaili Jamatkhana, Burnaby, B.C.* invites our consideration because of its finely executed attention to detail and its harmony of design. The drawing reflects many distinguishing features inherent in traditional Islamic architecture, such as its use of intricate symmetry and geometrical shapes which instill in the viewer a feeling of contemplation and meditation. The mosque prayer hall drawing evokes a sensation of order and balance and bears witness to the integrity of the architect as he sought to

combine the needs of his client with his own aesthetic expression.

An innovative and effective alternative to communicating an architectural idea in the form of drawing is seen in the aerial view of the proposed *Christ Church Graduate Housing, Oxford, England* from the office of A.A. Robins and Associates. This work, astonishingly rendered in graphite to a photo-realist finish, presents a trompe l'oeil effect. This is perhaps the most efficient approach when combining the real and the imaginary. In this instance, the architect has taken great care not to offend clients whose sensibilities and concerns for tradition and existing surroundings might easily be violated. Choice of medium is increasingly vital in a competitive situation where weeks or months of time and energy may be invested in a single presentation.

Richard Henriquez' "revolving rosette" is a fresh and ingenious approach to communicating solutions to problems encountered by the architect with regard to site. The design solution and proposal for *Firehall #22, Vancouver, B.C.* is a natural and comprehensive one, obvious to anyone who has attempted to explain graphic ideas to another person seated across a conference table, i.e. the client. Henriquez has combined an axonometric projection and elevation views of the building on a rotating circular plane. Architects presumably learn to "see upside down" during more conventional presentations, but the circular rotating format facilitates more instant reorientation of the viewer to the elevations and plan of the building in question. Inset detailing on the outer ring permits visual asides, such as the thought progression for development regarding the most efficient use of an oddly shaped lot.

A bewildering task for the architect is expressing complex sets of systems within the context of geographical relief. This challenge is successfully resolved in Xavier Bellprat's projection of *Telluride Ski Village, Telluride, Colorado*. This drawing is rendered in storybook style featuring heavily emphasized, darkened apertures and lightly sketched trees reminiscent of Saul Steinberg's *New Yorker* magazine illustrations. This is not a "working" drawing that gives technical information required by contractors and engineers, but, rather, the skillfully executed overview intended to communicate to serious investors.

The *Pagebrook Building, Vancouver, B.C.* from the architects Perkins, MacDonald, Bellprat (John Perkins-Peter Wardle Partnership) depicts a structure which alludes to the classical tripartite order of base, body and head. The drawing, furthermore, expresses in three modes the concept for the inner-city highrise: a freehand work-up and two moderately detailed elevations. It is only when one comprehends the intricacies of combining planar and "intaglio" blocks of masses within a symmetrical stack does the concept reveal its subtlety. The architect's ability to conceptualize the movement of light and shadow across a vertical tableau is one of the chief differences between those who draw from "reality" (nature, mass, human form) and those who are trained to

predict reality. This drawing brings forth, to the present, architectural perspectives that have existed since the Renaissance.

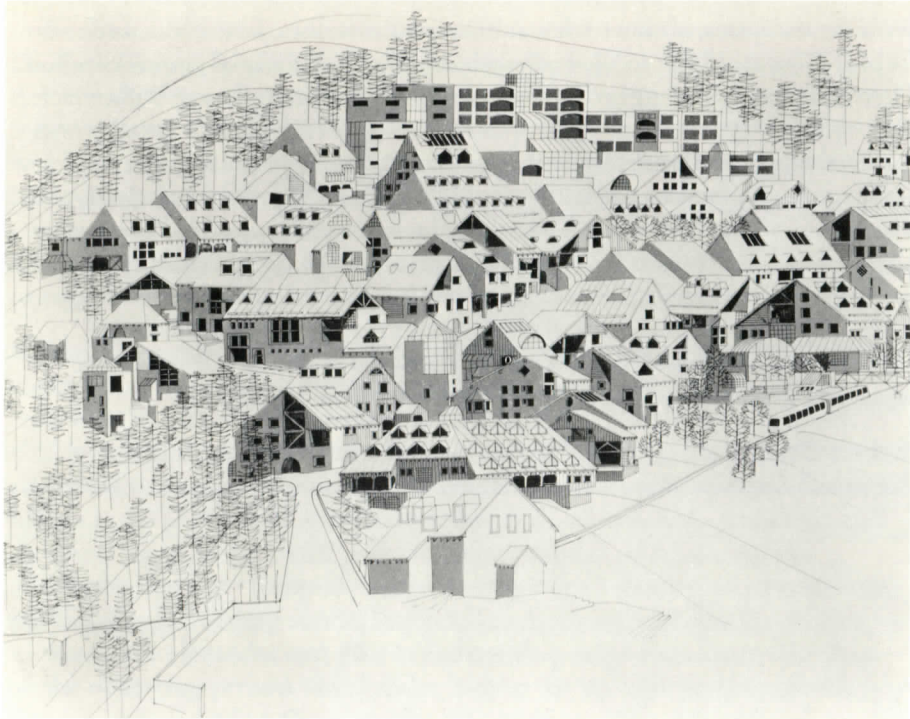
With the exception of those who embrace photo-realism, few artists, aside from architects, submit to the constraints of clearly enunciated communication. These architects' drawings reacquaint us with academic rendering skills which seem to have become otherwise lost in a period in which current taste favours "mark-making" and freehand expressionism. Architecture is a social art and architects must continue to communicate their ideals positively and clearly. The appeal of these drawings lies in their discipline and committed objectivity which affords relief from the typically loose and subjective images witnessed in other idioms of art. It is the intent of this exhibition to provide not only evidence in support of the role these drawings play in the visual dialogue between architect and client, but also to allow the public to appreciate one aspect of the creative process of the art we refer to as architecture.

Barbara Owen,
Curatorial Assistant

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The organization of this exhibition has been assisted at every stage by individuals whose hard work was indispensable to the transformation of this exhibition from an idea into a reality. I wish to extend my appreciation to all those in the architectural community who welcomed me during my visits to their offices. Special thanks must be given to those architects who are lenders to this exhibition and who have participated with warmth and enthusiasm. I am especially grateful to Linda Moore from the Vancouver League for Studies in Architecture and the Environment for her involvement and assistance.

Barbara Owen,
Curatorial Assistant



*Telluride Ski Village, Telluride, Colorado—detail (elevation),
1979, PMT of ink on vellum, 56 x 223.5 cm.*

LIST OF WORKS

All dimensions height x width.

*Telluride Ski Village, Telluride, Colorado (elevation),
1979, PMT of ink on vellum,
56 x 223.5 cm.
Concept: Perkins, MacDonald, Bellprat.
Drawing: Xavier Bellprat.*

*Ronald McDonald House, Vancouver, B.C. (compositional analysis),
1983, PMT of ink on vellum,
46 x 46 cm.
Drawing: Xavier Bellprat*

*Broadview Cooperative Housing, Vancouver, B.C. (compositional analysis),
1984, ink on vellum,
46 x 46 cm.
Drawing: Xavier Bellprat.*

*David Wetherow Cooperative Housing, Vancouver, B.C. (model cutouts),
1984, Xerox print,
56 x 56 cm.
Drawing: Xavier Bellprat, Robert Leshgold.*

*Granville Place, Vancouver, B.C.,
1985, ink on mylar,
56 x 56 cm.
Drawing: Xavier Bellprat, Bjorn Ollner.*

PETER CARDEW ARCHITECTS

Peter Cardew, Bruce Creba, Ted Feenstra, Mark Vaughan,
Sandy Wilson, Bruce Yaxley

LIST OF WORKS

All dimensions height x width.

All drawings by Peter Cardew Architects.

False Creek Townhouses, Vancouver, B.C.,
1978, graphite and coloured film on vellum,
106 x 61 cm.

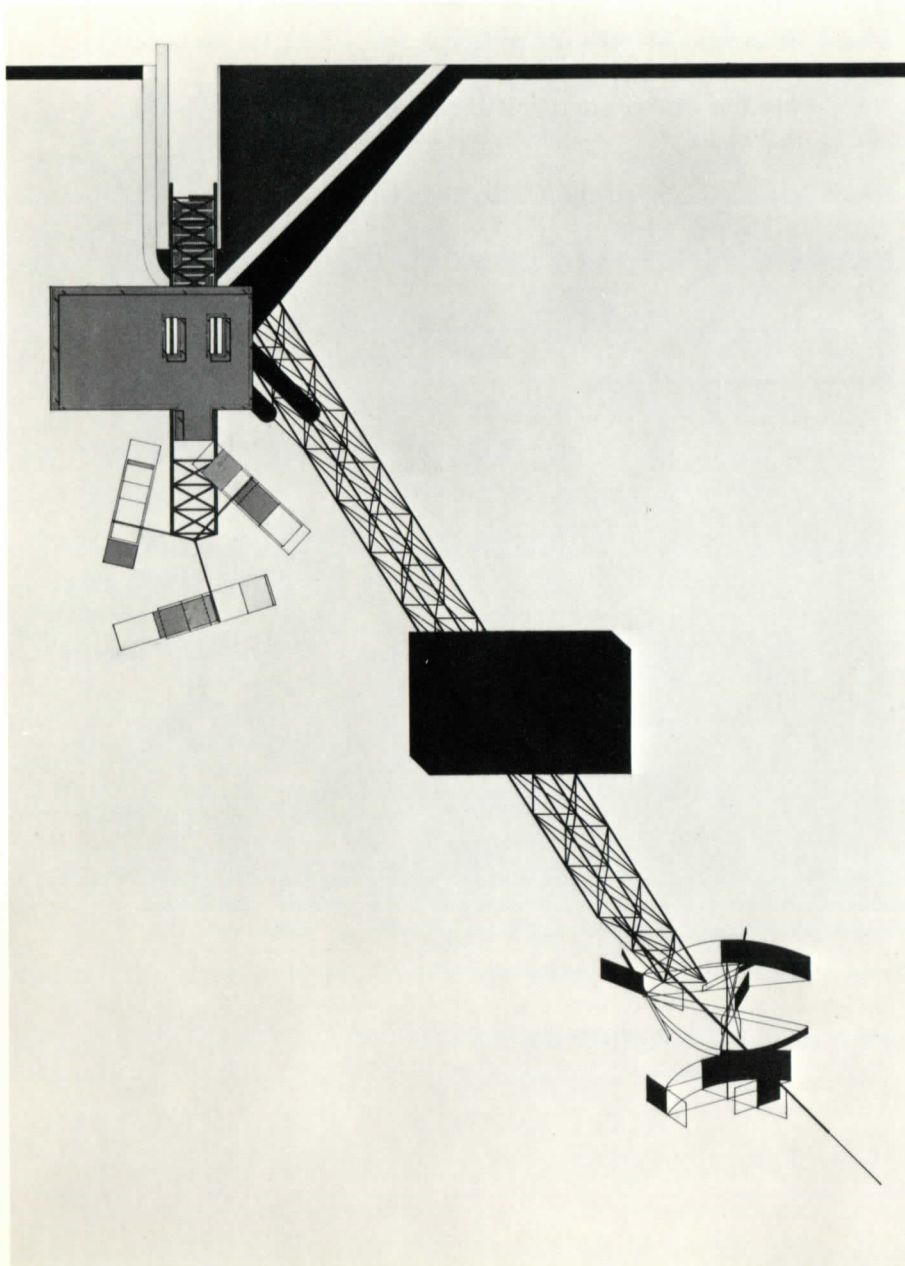
Mississauga City Hall Competition, Mississauga, Ontario,
1982, ink on mylar,
36 x 51 cm.

Mississauga City Hall Competition, Mississauga, Ontario,
1982, ink on mylar,
37 x 51 cm.

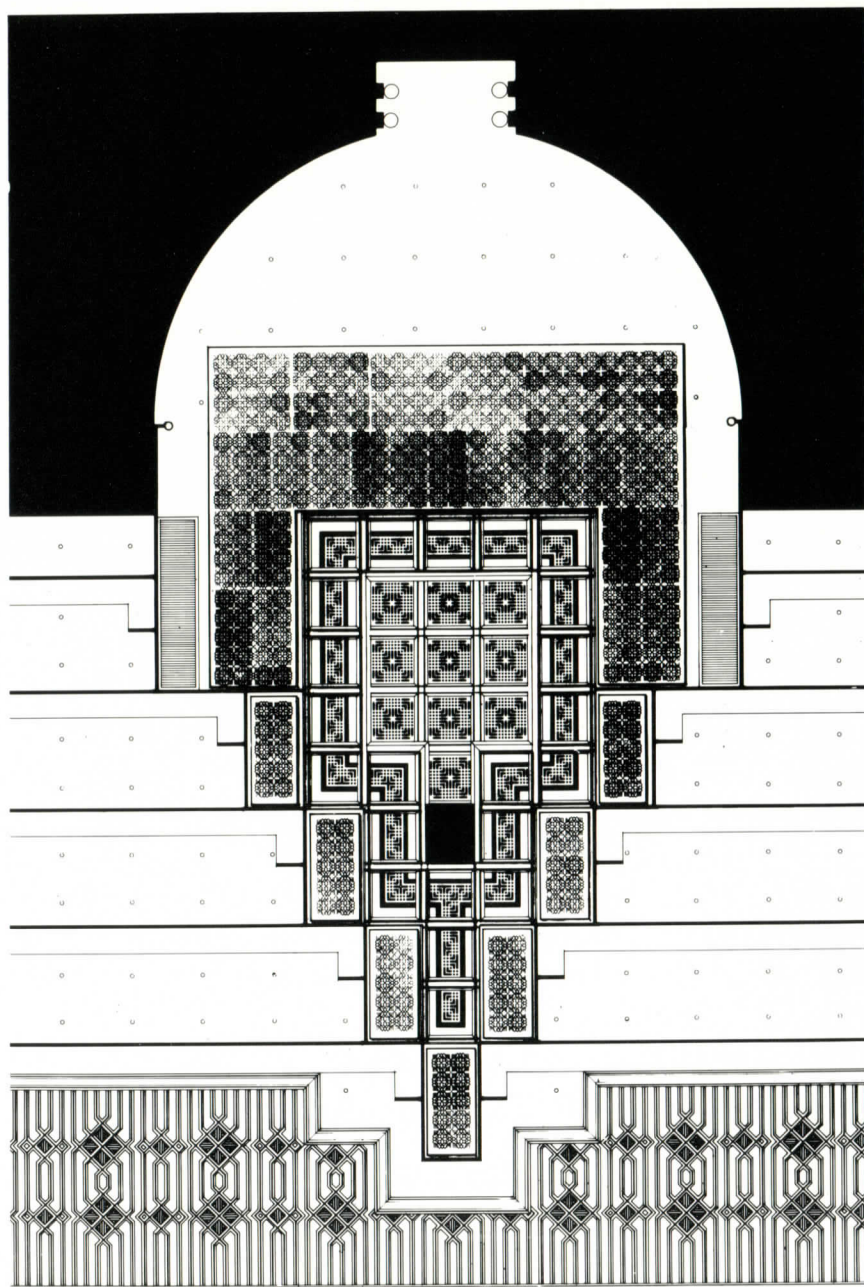
Expo 86 Tower, Vancouver, B.C. (site plan),
1984, ink and airbrush on acetate,
110 x 61 cm.

Expo 86 Tower, Vancouver, B.C. (north elevation),
1984, ink and airbrush on acetate,
110 x 61 cm.

Expo 86 Tower, Vancouver, B.C. (west elevation),
1984, ink and airbrush on acetate,
110 x 61 cm.



Expo 86 Tower, Vancouver, B.C. (site plan),
1984, ink and airbrush on acetate, 110 x 61 cm.



*Ismaili Jamatkhana, Burnaby B.C. (typical window elevation),
1983, brownline diazo print, 122 x 106.7 cm.*

LIST OF WORKS

All dimensions height x width.
All drawings by Lynne D. Werker.

*Ismaili Jamatkhana, Burnaby, B.C. (detail drawing 1:10, Prayer Hall,
typical window elevation),
1983, brownline diazo print of ink on mylar,
122 x 106.7 cm.*

*Ismaili Jamatkhana, Burnaby, B.C. (detail drawing, full size, Prayer Hall window,
½ cast marble-dust tile),
1983, brownline diazo print of ink on mylar,
61 x 46 cm.*

*Ismaili Jamatkhana, Burnaby, B.C. (detail drawing, full size, Prayer Hall Mirhab,
½ sandblasted marble inlaid with brass),
1983, brownline diazo print of ink on mylar,
61 x 46 cm.*

LIST OF WORKS

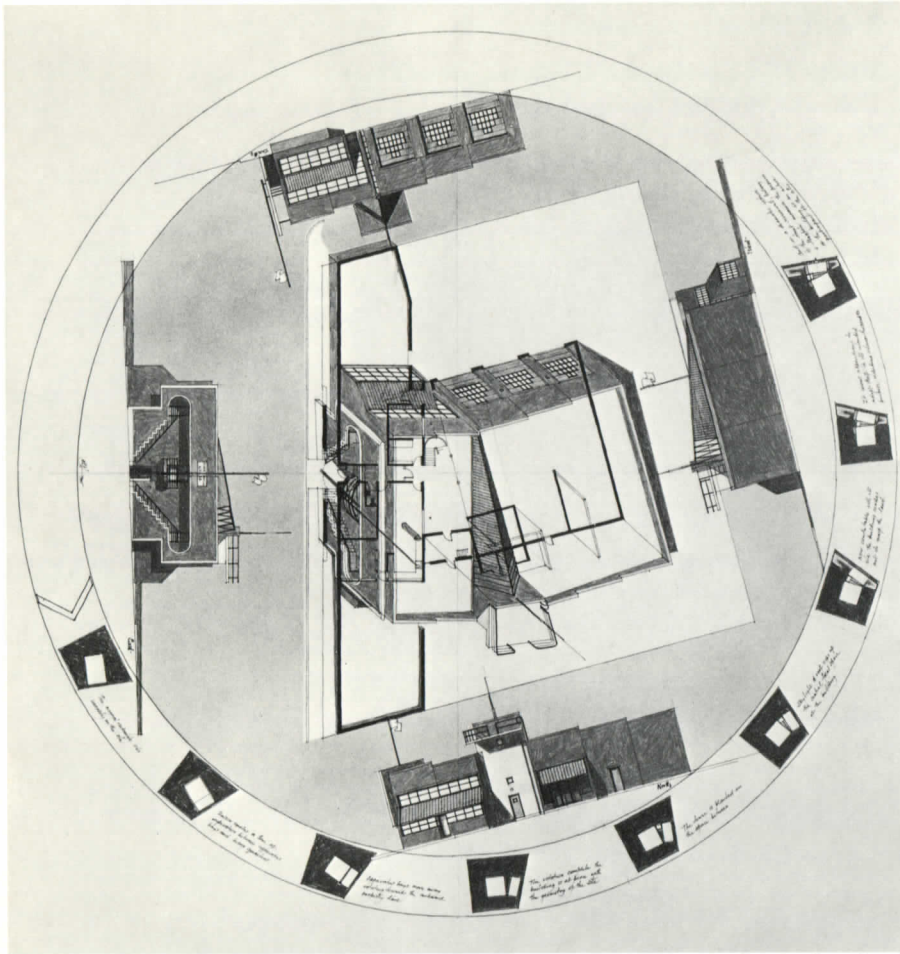
All dimensions height x width.
All drawings by Richard Henriquez.

Firehall #22, Vancouver, B.C. (combination axonometric projection and elevations),
1985, ink, coloured pencil and airbrush on vellum,
94 cm diameter.

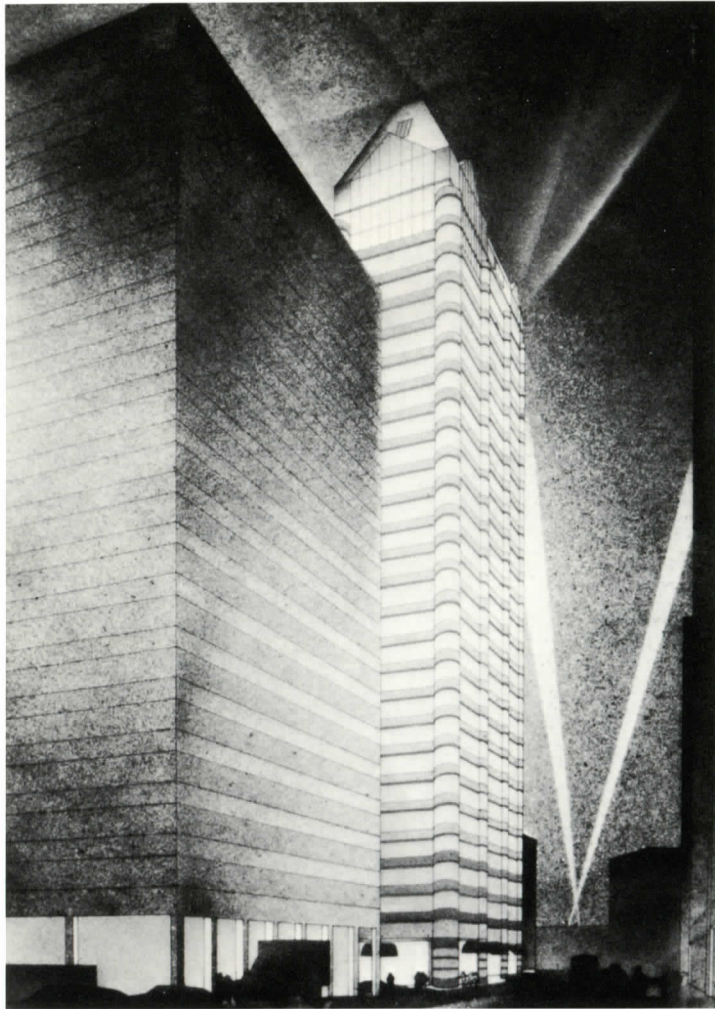
Sylvia Hotel, Vancouver, B.C. (combination axonometric projection and elevations)
1985, ink coloured pencil and airbrush on vellum,
94 cm diameter.

Gordon Neighbourhood House, Vancouver, B.C. (elevations),
1985, blueprint, coloured pencil and ink collage,
50.8 x 63.5 cm.

Sinclair Centre, Vancouver, B.C.,
1985, Xerox enlargement with airbrush, coloured pencil, graphite and ink on vellum,
86.4 x 55.8 cm.
Concept: Henriquez & Partners, Toby Russell Buckwell & Partners.



Firehall #22, Vancouver, B.C. (combination axonometric projection & elevations),
1985, ink, coloured pencil and airbrush on vellum, 94 cm diameter.



University Avenue Apartment Tower, Toronto, Ontario (night perspective),
1982, ink and airbrush, 48.3 x 48.3 cm.

LIST OF WORKS

All dimensions height x width.
All drawings by John Shnier.

Spadina Quay Harbourfront, Toronto, Ontario (elevation),
1981, graphite and coloured pencil,
38 x 99 cm.

Spadina Quay Harbourfront, Toronto, Ontario (elevation),
1981, graphite and coloured pencil,
60 x 88 cm.

Bunker Hill, Los Angeles, California (elevation),
1981, graphite and coloured pencil,
74 x 38 cm.

University Avenue Apartment Tower, Toronto, Ontario (elevation),
1982, ink and airbrush,
66 x 37 cm.

University Avenue Apartment Tower, Toronto, Ontario (night perspective)
1982, ink and airbrush,
48.3 x 48.3 cm.

King and York Office Building, Toronto, Ontario (elevation),
1982, ink and airbrush,
66 x 46 cm.

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario (sectional study of court and porch),
1983, graphite, coloured pencil and airbrush,
54 x 71.1 cm.

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario (site plan),
1983, coloured pencil and airbrush,
71.1 x 71.1 cm.

*National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario (longitudinal section
and elevational study),*
1983, coloured pencil and airbrush,
54 x 71.1 cm.

Seagram Museum, Waterloo, Ontario (section),
1984, graphite and coloured pencil,
61 x 85.6 cm.

Seagram Museum, Waterloo, Ontario (elevation),
1984, graphite and coloured pencil,
61 x 85.7 cm.

Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto, Ontario (elevation),
1984, ink and coloured pencil,
93 x 67 cm.

Office Tower for Wang Corporation, Los Angeles, California (two elevations),
1984, graphite and coloured pencil,
74.9 x 116.8 cm.

All dimensions height x width.

All drawings by Patricia Patkau unless indicated otherwise.

Nine Hole Miniature Golf Course, Prototypical (axonometric projection),
1977, graphite on vellum,
55.8 x 67.3 cm.

Galleria Condominium, Edmonton, Alberta (interior axonometric projection),
1978, graphite on vellum,
55.8 x 67.3 cm.

Fournier Residence, Edmonton, Alberta (exterior axonometric projection),
1981, ink on vellum,
71.1 x 63.5 cm.

Fournier Residence, Edmonton, Alberta (conceptual organizational drawing),
1981, ink on vellum,
64.7 x 49.5 cm.

Blue Quill School, Edmonton, Alberta (west elevation),
1982, photograph of graphite and coloured pencil on vellum,
15.2 x 30.4 cm.

Blue Quill School, Edmonton, Alberta (cross sections),
1982, graphite and Letrafilm on vellum,
19 x 54.6 cm.

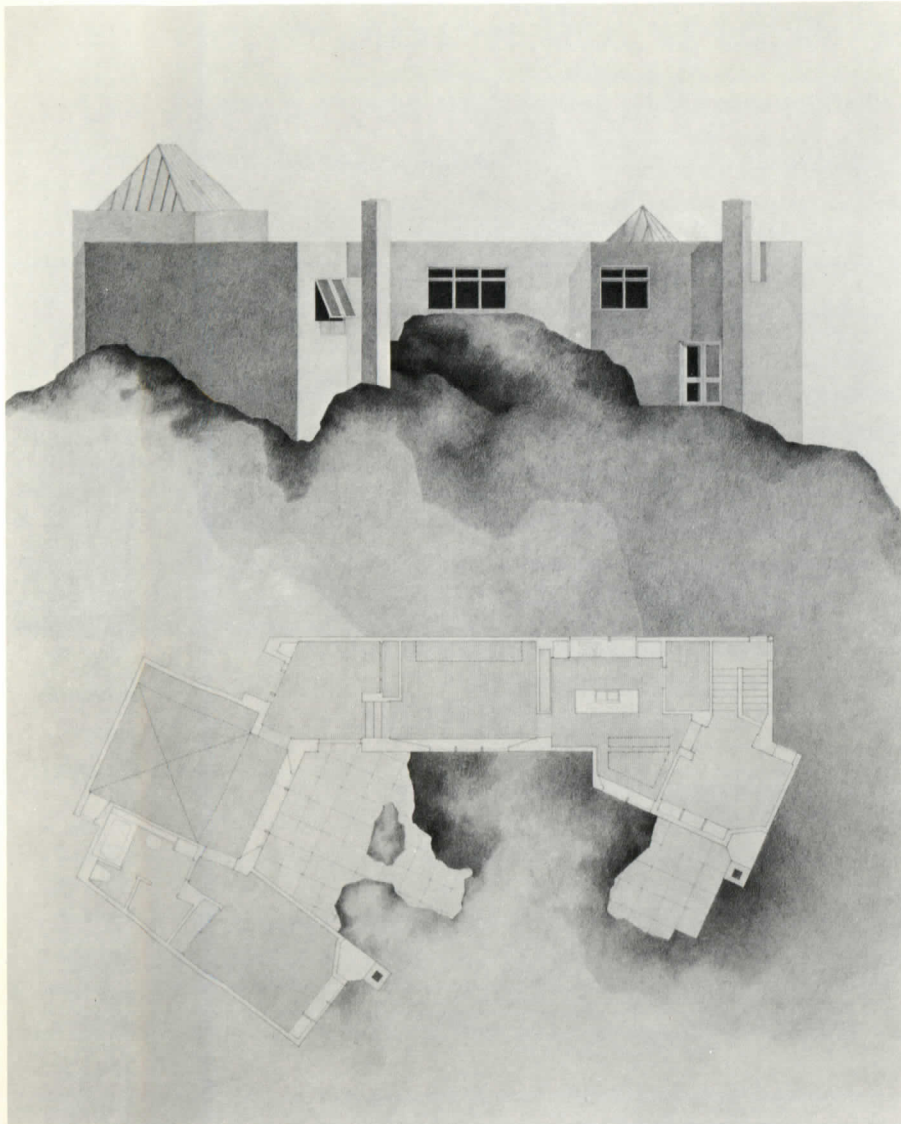
Blue Quill School, Edmonton, Alberta (axonometric projection),
1982, graphite on vellum,
59.7 x 72.4 cm.

Drawing: Jacqueline Wang, John Patkau, Patricia Patkau.

Pyrch Residence, Victoria, B.C. (combination plan and elevation),
1983, graphite and coloured pencil on vellum,
68.6 x 55.9 cm.

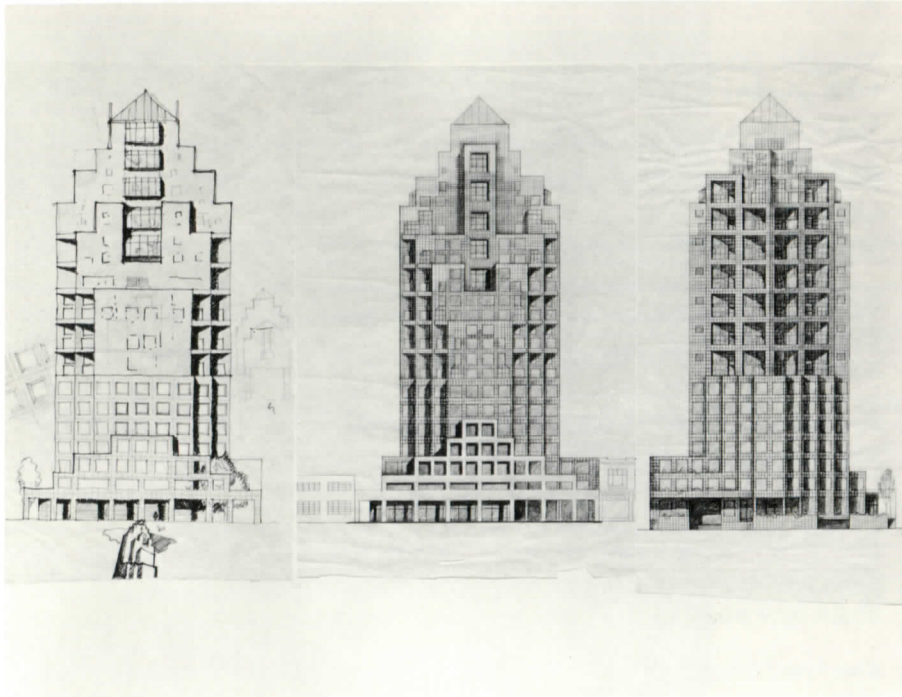
Jacques Cartier Square Fountain Proposal, Montreal, Quebec (elevations),
1984, graphite and coloured pencil on vellum,
19 x 81 cm.

Private Residence, West Vancouver, B.C. (conceptual landscape),
1985, graphite and coloured pencil on vellum,
66 x 35.6 cm.



Pyrch Residence, Victoria, B.C. (combination plan & elevation),
1983, graphite and coloured pencil on vellum, 68.6 x 55.9 cm.

JOHN PERKINS ARCHITECTS
John Perkins-Peter Wardle partnership



Pagebrook Building, Vancouver, B.C. (elevations),
1981, Pentel marker, graphite and coloured pencil on tracing paper, 53.3 x 91.4 cm.

LIST OF WORKS

All dimensions height x width.

Pagebrook Building, Vancouver, B.C. (elevations),
1981, Pentel marker, graphite and coloured pencil on tracing paper,
53.3 x 91.4 cm.

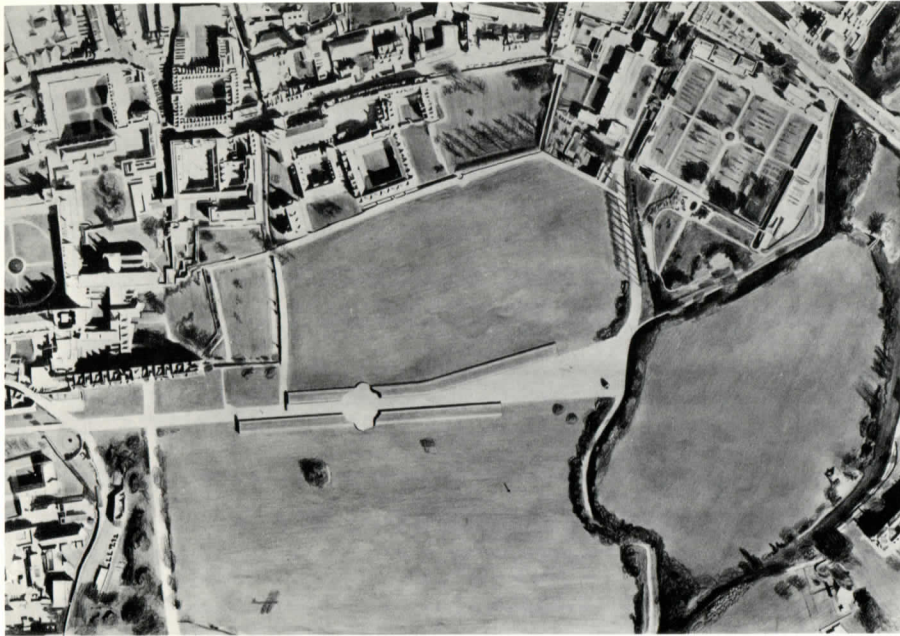
Concept: John Perkins.

Drawings: Andrew Cheung.

*Seaforth Park, Vancouver, B.C. (Chestnut St. elevation, Courtyard elevation,
York St. elevation, Cypress St. elevation),*
1982, photographic reproduction of blackline print and coloured pencil,
40.6 x 99 cm.

Concept: John Perkins.

Drawings: Virginia Barton and Bernd Hermanski.



Christ Church Graduate Housing, Oxford, England (aerial view),
1981, graphite on bond paper, 44.5 x 63.5 cm.

LIST OF WORKS

All dimensions height x width.
All drawings by A.A. Robins.

Hodson House, Oxford, England (gallery plan),
1981, ink on watercolour paper,
44.5 x 31.8 cm.

Hodson House, Oxford, England (axonometric projection),
1981, ink on watercolour paper,
44.5 x 31.8 cm.

*Christ Church Graduate Housing, Oxford, England (combination plan,
elevation and worm's-eye view),*
1981, ink and coloured pencil on bond paper,
44.5 x 63.5 cm.

Christ Church Graduate Housing, Oxford, England (aerial view),
1981, graphite on bond paper,
44.5 x 63.5 cm.

First Avenue Townhouses, Vancouver, B.C. (south elevation),
1982, ink on vellum,
44.5 x 44.5 cm.
Concept: A.A. Robins & E.H. Cavanagh.

First Avenue Townhouses, Vancouver, B.C. (north elevation),
1982, ink on vellum,
44.5 x 44.5 cm.
Concept: A.A. Robins & E.H. Cavanagh.

*Eighth Avenue Office Building, Vancouver, B.C. (north, south, east
and west elevations),*
1983, ink and coloured pencil on vellum,
28 x 28 cm each (4 pieces).
Concept: A.A. Robins & E.H. Cavanagh.

York Townhouses, Vancouver, B.C. (elevation),
1985, ink and coloured pencil on vellum,
34.3 x 69 cm.
Concept: A.A. Robins.