

chapter 05

the precedent studies

The significance of the architectural languages evident in the music precinct necessitated a detailed analysis of the buildings within the context: the Aula, Rautenbach Hall, Musaion and Music Building. Their architectural legacy inspired a further investigation of Campus buildings in general and the languages such as Pretoria Regionalism, Monumental Modernism and New Brutalism which inspired their design as well as many other buildings across the city of Pretoria.

A collaboration of these influences inspired the design of the new music school in terms of contextual response, form, spatial organisation, structure and technology, materials, façade treatments and circulation.

The following buildings analysed in this chapter do however not conform particularly to these architectural styles, yet, their design and approach to certain building elements assisted in formulating a conversion of the Modern influence to a contemporary one.

fig. 5.1 : Artist's impression - Faculty of Law Building, University of Pretoria, Hatfield Campus



fig. 5.2 (below) : Thumbnail drawings of the Law Building in support of the study.
fig. 5.3 - 5.5 (opposite page) : Photographs of the Law Building showing the double volume entrance, the vertical circulation towers and the transparency of the glazed south facade to the Oliver Tambo Law Library.



5.1.

law building

Main Campus, University of Pretoria
KrugerRoos Architects, 2006



fig. 5.3

fig. 5.4



fig. 5.5



notes

double-volume walkway / interaction space to courtyard
floating screen to define human scale

glazed south facade - relationship to 'fever' tree-lined avenue

entrance extends into Tukkies Avenue

facades express internal functional spaces

formal grouping of similar functions
central atria connect separate functions

circulation expressed as sculptural towers
auditoria as 'free-standing' formal organic entity

building defines south edge of precinct

library - public - light - clarity of information
contrast to acoustic spaces - private - solid

continuity of flow at ground floor
network of circulation & interaction spaces

The new facilities for the Faculty of Law are the result of an architectural competition initiated by the client, the University of Pretoria. At the heart of the building is a circulatory spine, expressed as a multi-storey walkway or gallery under a light steel canopy seemingly detaching itself from the main structure. Trees screen the fully glazed Oliver Tambo Law Library, which claims most of the south façade. To the east the library is flanked by the entrance – aligned with an existing avenue – and an administrative block dressed in deliberate white walls that are carefully punctured, a pattern expressing similar functions elsewhere. Wings housing office and seminar spaces are formally grouped around two courtyards open to the walkway. Circulation towers – suggestive of their function – and auditoria protrude from the main body of the complex.

As an urban intervention the building resolves the previously frayed edge on the north-eastern periphery of the University's Main Campus. Purposefully but sensitively wedged into its context, the building embodies some of the higher ideals associated with the legal fraternity – gravitas and transparency – by contrasting visually weighted solids to lighter steel components and glazing. The innovative use of natural light throughout the building appropriately strengthens this concept.

The design competently addresses pragmatic concerns through a legible, rational structure and with spatial clarity, best expressed through the interconnecting walkway. This element eloquently integrates light, rhythm and natural ventilation throughout the building. The designers, mindful of Pretoria's moderate climate, have skillfully managed the comfort of traversing external and internal spaces.

(www.artefacts.com: September 2009)



fig. 5.7

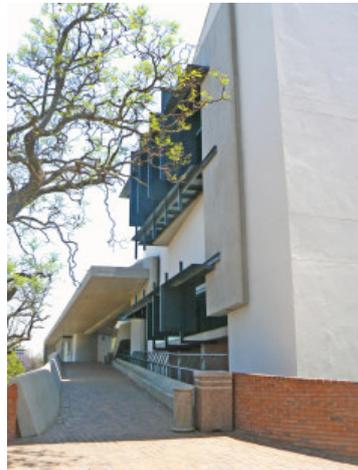


fig. 5.8



fig. 5.9



fig. 5.6

fig. 5.6 - 5.12 :
Elements, form , scale and materials of the new Centenary Building on Main Campus reflect a conversion of the Modern Style architecture of Campus to a more contemporary language.

5.2. centenary building

Main Campus, University of Pretoria
EarthWorld Architects & Interiors (Braam de Villiers), 2008

notes



fig. 5.10

conversion of the modern language

sensitivity & respect towards existing fabric

continuing of existing grids / edge lines

The Centenary Building on the Main Campus of the University of Pretoria was officially opened on 17 June 2009. It is the first lecture hall complex on the campus since the Chancellors of 1959. The building houses six lecture halls of 300 seats each and fully fitted with state of the art audio-visual equipment. The lecture halls are mostly used for undergraduate lectures and examinations.

The architecture of the building reflects various aspects of a converted Modern language, synonymous with the Campus and the city of Pretoria. The building blends well with the neighbouring Law Building by continuing the street front and lines.

ramp - transitional foyer - internal spaces

circulation route as interactive / seating space

fig. 5.11

As in the previous examples, a ramp was introduced to gently draw visitors and users in from the Ring Road to the foyer space above. The ramp simultaneously serves as a circulation route and gathering space with concrete seats provided as an integrated part of the ramp's edge. Due to the ramp with its hovering concrete canopy above and the communal foyer as a transition space, the entrance is well defined which leaves the physical entrances from the foyer to the specific areas within the building to be somewhat downplayed.

*extended external walkways
foyer as place of choice
uncelebrated physical entrances*



fig. 5.12

*concrete fins / pilotis on a grid
continuity at ground floor*

articulation & formal expression of spaces

True to the Modern idiom the building sits on pilotis on a fixed grid. This allows for a continuity of the urban space at ground level. The building's internal spaces are articulated and some are expressed externally as a wrapped concrete skin with glass infill. The formal organic volumes of the lecture halls to the back of the building also reiterate the Monumental Modern language. Although the practical requirements of the six auditoria necessitated a form driven design, a multi-dimensional result was achieved.

similar material palette as existing / surrounding buildings

iconic corner - human scale towards entrances

Even the selection of materials resonate materials used elsewhere on Campus. The texture of the red brick and off-shutter concrete creates a pleasant contrast to the smooth, stark white, plastered volumes at the back. Despite the scale of the volumes, the street façade to the Ring Road maintains a human scale in spite of the public nature of the building.





fig. 5.14



fig. 5.15

The Carpenter Centre is classified as a brutalist building and truthfully adheres to the elements of the language: extended external walkways leading to concealed entrances, intersecting geometric forms, expressed services and circulation, finish in beton brut, continuity of flow on ground level and large spaces on concrete fins, to name but a few.

fig. 5.13 - 5.19 :



fig. 5.13

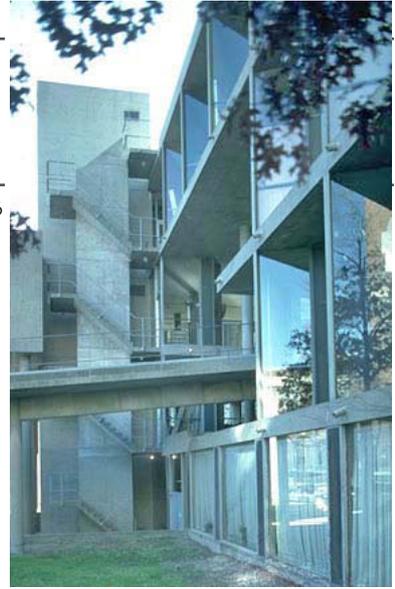


fig. 5.16

5.3.

carpenter centre

Harvard University, Massachusetts, USA

Le Corbusier & Guillermo Julian de la Fuente, 1963

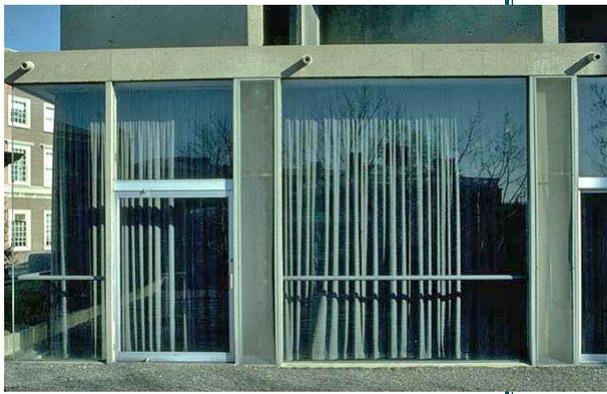


fig. 5.17



fig. 5.18



fig. 5.19

notes

The Carpenter Centre for the Visual Arts at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts is the only building actually built by Le Corbusier in the United States and one of only two in the Americas (the other is the Curutchet House in La Plata, Argentina). Le Corbusier designed the centre in collaboration with the Chilean architect, Guillermo Jullian de la Fuente at his 35 rue de Sévres studio. The on-site preparation of the construction drawings was commissioned to the office of José Luis Sert, then dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Design. He had formerly worked in Le Corbusier's atelier and had been instrumental in winning him the commission.

The Carpenter Centre houses the Department of Visual and Environmental Studies of the University, as well as the Harvard Film Archive, the largest collection of 35mm films in New England. It screens a large quantity of independent, international and silent films.

The design concept of the building was inspired by a direct response to the initial circulation problem. A continuous ramp was introduced to link the building with the two street edges. The ramp functions as a central circulation spine through the building with the main exhibition spaces leading off it. The two vertical circulation towers also communicate their function.

Pilotis on a fixed grid support the two identical, organic, public exhibition spaces that hover above the urban space at ground level, as well as the levels above. The composition of the building is that of intersecting formal geometries with the exception of the exhibition spaces. This contributes to an articulated roovescape of flat concrete roofs.

Facades are also articulated by the use of integrated sun control measures such as the diagonal concrete fins with perpendicular glass infill on the east side. The internal spaces and their various privacy levels are also expressed externally on the facades.

building axes along existing pedestrian routes

ramp to link building with Tukkie Avenue

*ramp extends as circulation through building
functional spaces branch off central spine*

structural support - columns on grid

*continuity of urban space underneath
building*

functional blocks as intersecting rectangles

flat concrete roofs at different levels

brise soleil / setbacks to north & west facades

internal spatial expression on facades