

4 PRECEDENT ANALYSIS

4.1 1925-1932 NEW SOCIAL CONDENSERS

The Workers' Club

What was meant by a “club” in the USSR of the twenties, a country in which the word had previously been applied only to private rooms reserved for the use of a group of nobles or wealthy bourgeois. This club was exactly the opposite of what is implied by a “club” today (Kopp 1967:116).

Urbanisation

Originally, this new urban building, the expression of a new social function, was the response to a spontaneous demand. This became a centre for creative activity and diffusion of culture. It corresponded to a conception in which the home tended to become merely a place for the individual to rest, while life in all its social and cultural aspects developed in collective centres and collective forms (Kopp 1967:116).

Ownership and collectivity

Imperative to a club is that the mass of the members must be directly involved. They must not approach it or be channelled into it from the outside merely as a means of being entertained. They themselves must find in it the maximum of self-expression (Kopp 1967:116).

The role of the club is to serve as a sort of “School of culture”. Within its walls workers of every age should be able to find rest, relaxation, and a renewal of energy at the end of the working day. There, outside of the family, children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly should be made to feel as if they are members of a collective group (Kopp 1967:116).

Flexibility

The basic functions of what were essentially visualized as theatres became increasingly diversified. Functionality became more progressively integrated into the plan, thus modifying the classical rules of composition and opening the way for new possibilities.

The central element of the composition remained the theatre. The members were themselves the creators, instructors, and moving spirits. The stage was placed at the disposal of a variety of amateur groups rather than touring companies. This meant providing rehearsal rooms, modifying the capacity of the hall according to the size of the audience and the nature of the production, and tearing down the barrier between audience and actor. Thus the architect, faced with the problem of flexibility and adaptability, not only in relation to the theatre itself, but also in relation to the other rooms that together composed the club, was led to design spaces that could be isolated or combined in various ways depending on the schedule of activities (Kopp 1967:120-121).

The Zuyev club, built on Lesnaya Street, Moscow, in 1928 by the architect, Ilya Alexandrovich Golosov, was conceived as a series of intercommunicating spaces, overhanging galleries and staircases. The landings offer choice observation points, without resorting to mechanical devices of any kind. Spaces could be adapted to form a series of auditoriums of different sizes suitable for a variety of occasions (Kopp 1967:121).

Materials used

A skin of glass and a supporting structure of reinforced concrete were the primary materials. Due to modern technology the wall can be more than merely an insulating barrier, but can be made of transparent glass, widening our grasp of the dynamics of the world around us (Kopp 1967:121).

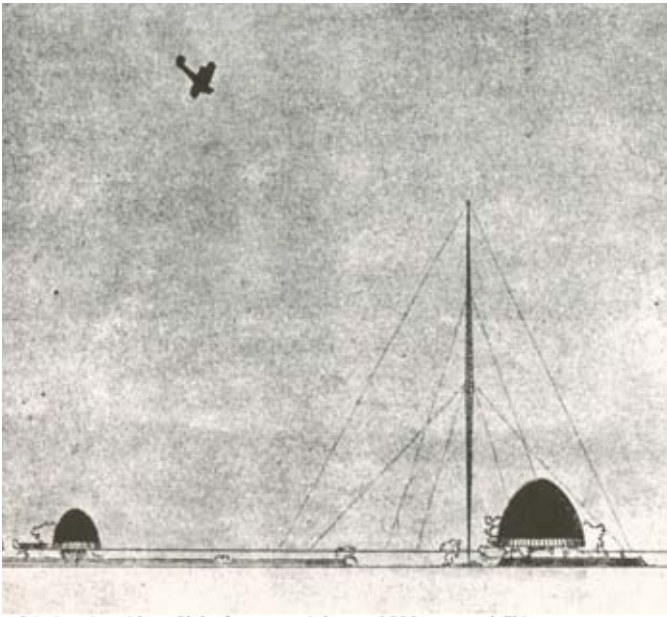


FIGURE 43 (left)

Ivan Leonidov: "Club of a new social type," 1929, proposal. This was a new conception of what a workers' club should be, no longer merely a single building but an entire urban zone reserved for cultural activities.

FIGURE 44 (right)

I. Golosov: Zuyev club, Moscow, 1928. The multipurpose hall during a meeting for young people.

4.2 CHATSWORTH YOUTH CENTER

The centre in Chatsworth, Kwazulu Natal, designed by architect Sue Clark, was built as a means of addressing social problems amongst the youth in Chatsworth. The aim was to provide an alternative recreational place for youngsters other than clubs, shopping centres and streets, where they are often exposed to drugs, alcohol and violence. The centre offers a pleasant, light-filled place that attracts the youth.

Structure

The structure consists of a steel portal frame (flexible robust structure), independently filled with glass, masonry or lightweight composite panels.

Programme

The centre offers the many activities and attractions, including a pool, arcade gaming, computers and sporting amenities. It contains a multi-purpose hall that doubles as theatre space. It also provides educational and counselling facilities that support a learning culture. The spatial relationship established between the more vibrant activities and the

more serious facilities make them accessible and user friendly. Most spaces extend to the exterior as open gathering or private counselling spaces.

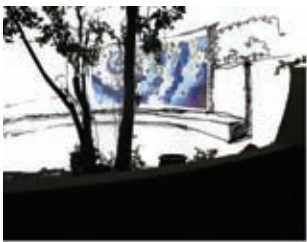
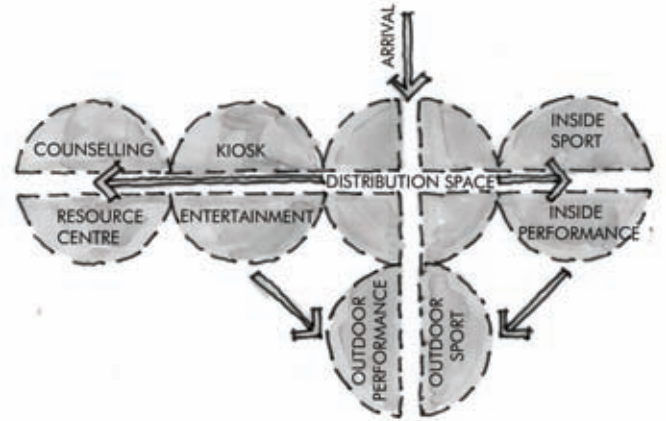
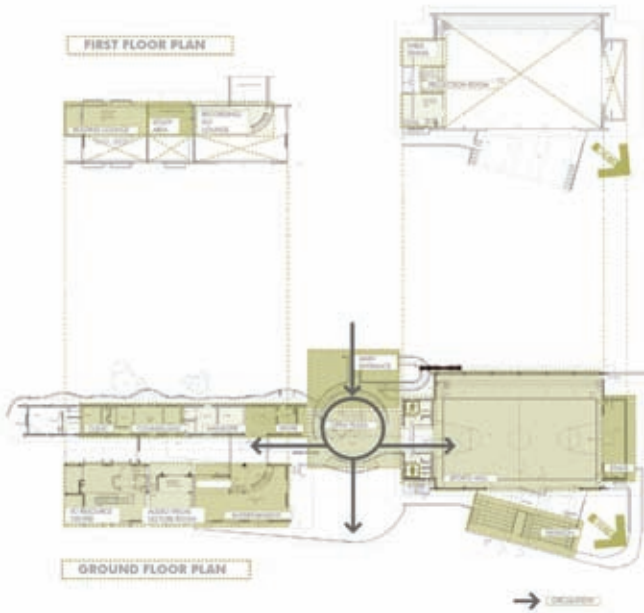
Funding

Donations were made by Irvin and Johnson foods, Nandos, Daimler Chrysler and Debis fleet management.



FIGURE 45

Photograph taken of Chatsworth Youth Centre, sports hall.



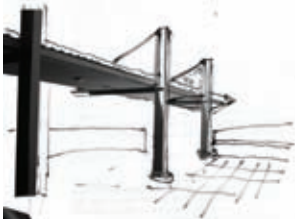
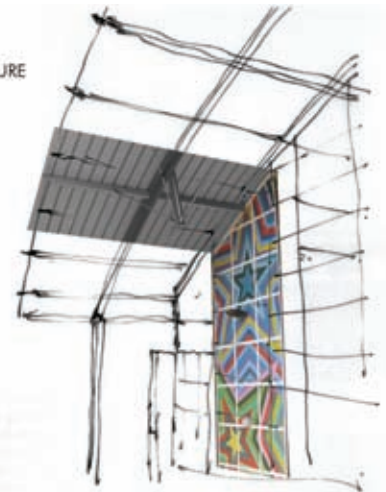
SURFACES



PROGRAMME

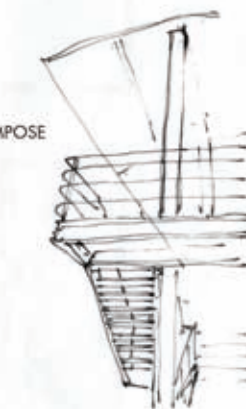


STRUCTURE



LINES

DECOMPOSE



SURFACE & LINES



EXTEND

FIGURE 46 (top left)
Ground and First floor plan.

FIGURE 47 (top right)
Functional organisation.

FIGURE 48 (bottom)
Collage depicting manipulation of space and connections.

4.3 REGIONAL TECTONICS – ENRIC MIRALLES

The design philosophy of Enric Miralles and partner Carne Pinos originates from the integration of pragmatic conceptualism with poetic metaphor, and holds a strong reference to nature in architecture that develops into a site specific tectonic expression.

Olympic archery pavilions (1989-1992), Barcelona, Spain.

Miralles describes the archery pavilion as mediation between athletes, spectators, and the sports hall that rises above the playing field as a visage that surveys the sports field (Arcidi 1992:74).

LeCuyer (2000:29) aptly describes architecture's effect on the individual in the public realm:

In addition to the enhancement of individual experience, its architecture is directed towards the creation of shared social landscapes, rather than being an esoteric private dialect of the elite, the richly expressive language of the art of construction, is firmly engaged in the public realm.

Massive metal gutters correspond to the contours in the landscape, highlighting articulation and tectonic expression where different materials meet, especially where weightlessness is achieved. The finishes

are utilitarian, the lighting exceptional: curved walls of cerulean blue tile are silhouetted by the perforated concrete walls (Arcidi 1992:78).

LeCuyer (2000:30) states that "tectonic" suggests:

a preoccupation with materiality and a championing of craft that respects the trace of the hand and the expressive potential of construction.



- 1 THRESHOLD
- 2 BAR
- 3 SHOWER
- 4 CHANGING ROOM
- 5 REFEREE CHANGING ROOM
- 6 PUBLIC TOILET

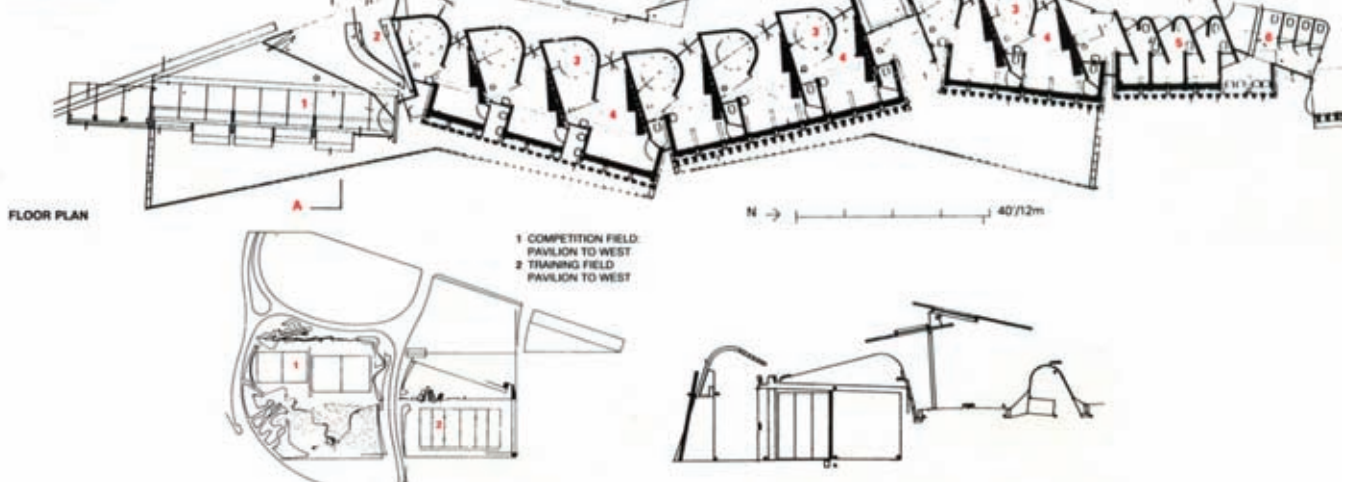


FIGURE 49 (top)

The lockers lined with grated doors that fold on the horizontal. The curved roof is integrated with the wall and perforated.

FIGURE 50 (bottom)

Plans and section showing the folding retaining wall that encloses locker rooms, Miralles & Pinos's concrete archery pavilion lines and competition grounds.

4.4 BARCELONA'S URBAN RENEWAL

Barcelona's struggle to reinvent itself in the post-Franco years resulted in a commitment to urban renewal. It achieved transformation by creating public open spaces that include plazas, parks, playgrounds, and refurbishing streetscapes. Using an approach that Richard Serra termed "darning urbanism", emphasis is placed on making repairs to the existing urban fabric and on improving the quality of life city wide. The expression of a focus on specific local urban design needs was manifested in 76 different open spaces, rather than through the outcome of a broad master plan. A variety of areas reflect various responses to different neighbourhoods and programmes, and existing conditions. This reinforces the individual characters of the city districts.

The object was to revitalise neighbourhoods that formed the basis of the city's traditional social structure. The need to satisfy multiple requirements has resulted in a fairly consistent design strategy, often featuring spacious paved areas for sports set off from equally large landscapes of grass, shrubs, and trees. These are indented for refuge and leisure, and share a design vocabulary of distinct regional features and materials (Beardsley 1985:76).

Sculpture plays a significant role in the success of these open spaces. *Woman and bird* by Catalan sculptor Joan Miró is one such example. It is the focal point of parc Joan Miró and rises from a pool on a terrace that overlooks a shaded landscape of vine-covered trellises set between contrasting rows of palms and irregular groves of pine trees.

Barcelona's parks are generally defined by strong edges. They are divided into discreet parts, such as a strong grid, which dissolves into serpentine paths.

Sculptures are situated at crucial points. For example, one marks the entrance.

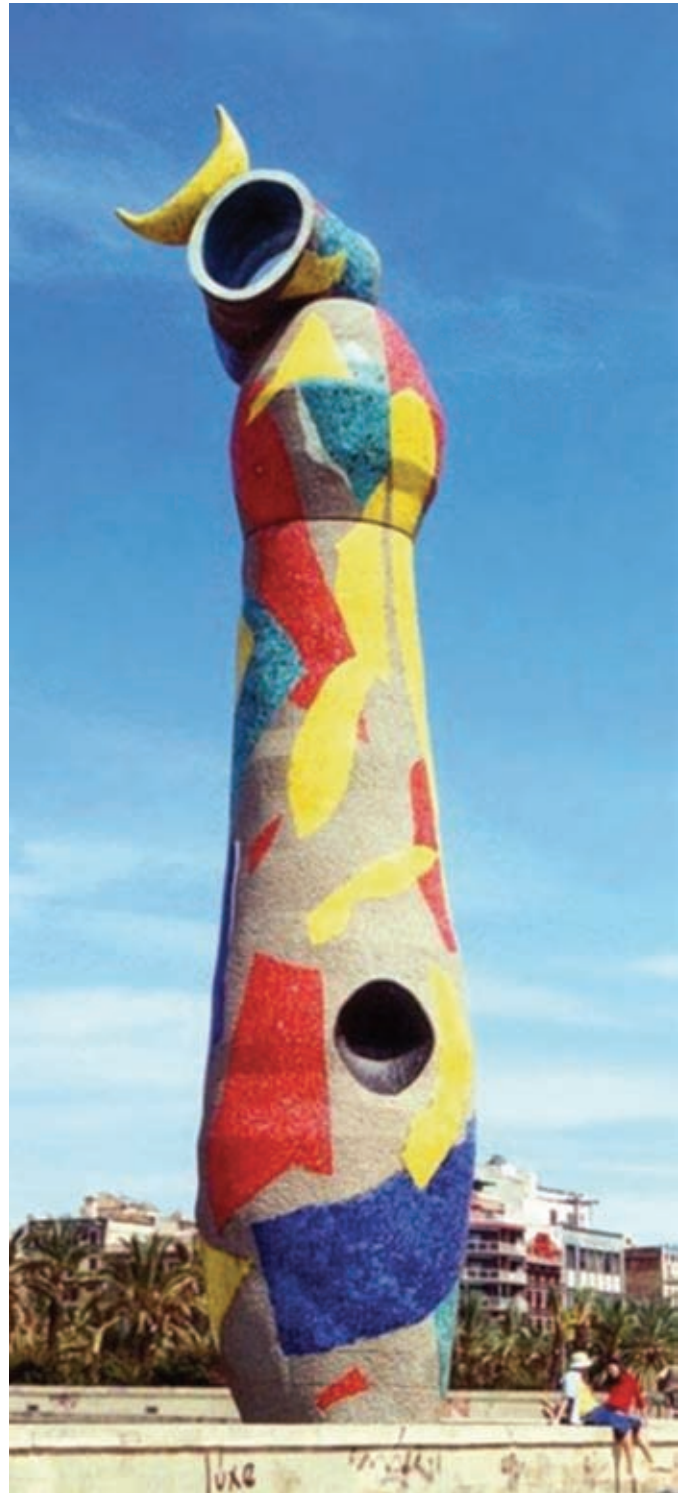


FIGURE 51

Woman and bird by Catalan sculptor
Joan Miró.

4.5 LEÇA DA PALMEIRA SWIMMING POOLS - ALVARO. SIZA
1966

Designed by Alvaro Siza in 1961, Leca de Palmeira tidal pool illustrates the seamless integration of building and landscape.

The programme includes a café, changing facilities and two swimming pools. The café and changing facilities are level with the road and located in a linear structure orientated parallel to the road. The existing terrain was accommodated so as to limit construction costs and preserve the landscape. The entrance descends into a maze of concrete walls, obstructing the view leaving the visitor only audibly aware of the ocean. This acts as a transitional feature between that which is man made and that which is natural. The maze creates different paths to use and discover.

The materials used blend into the landscape; rough concrete for the walls and smooth concrete for the walkway. Viewed from the ocean, the structures appear as carvings in the landscape.

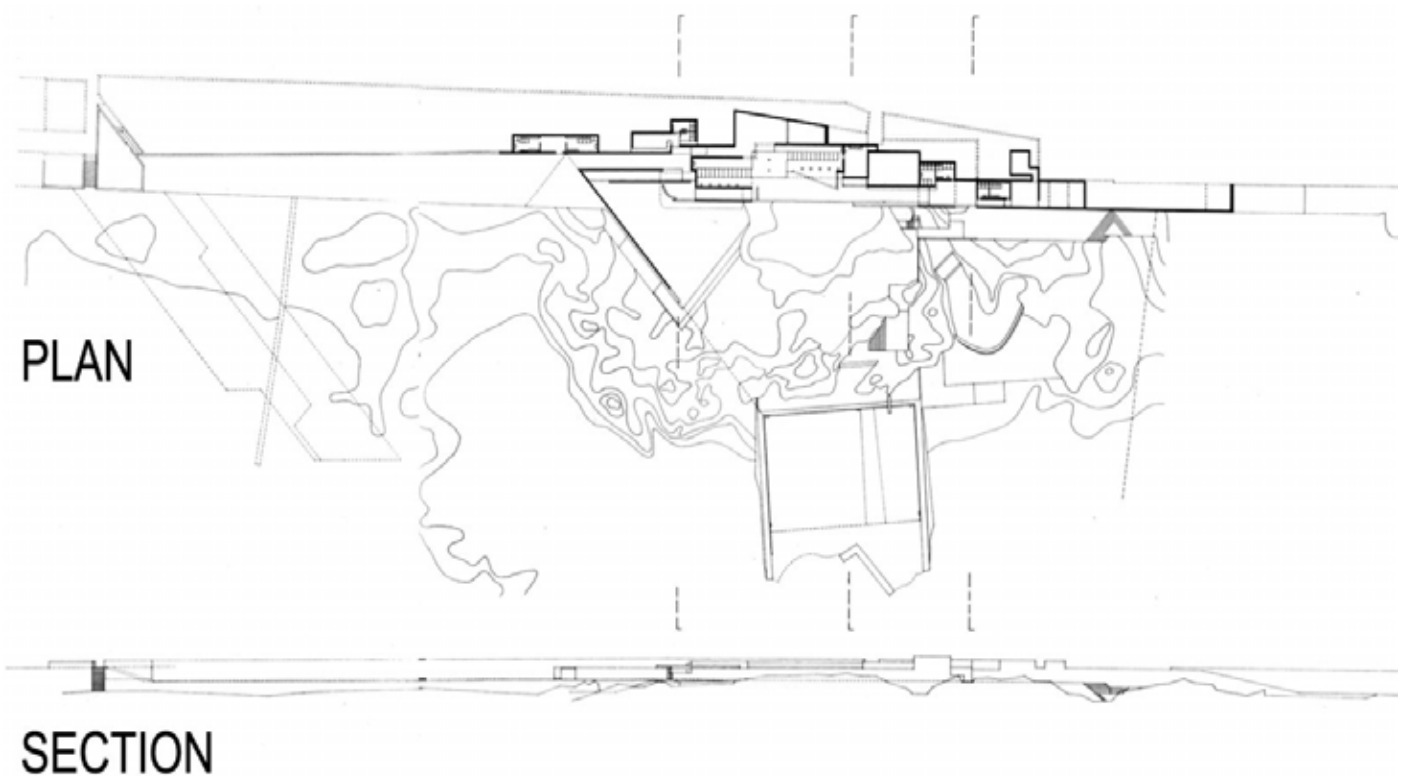


FIGURE 52 (top)

Site plan with section.

FIGURE 53 (bottom)

Bridge over entrance to –childrens pool at a height as to deter grownups.

4.6 HILLCREST MUNICIPAL SWIMMING BATH

Located in Hatfield, Pretoria, the residential setting forms the backdrop to the municipal pool.

The modernist building is disguised on a residential scale facing the outside with only low level walls, the only extraordinary feature being four flood lights. From the outside it appears as a conventional building, while the inside comprises a steel column grid layout for adaptable interior configurations.

A front arcade leads to the symmetrically laid out entrance. The building structure is designed around the main programme i.e. the swimming pool.

The pool is two meters below ground level and surrounded by concrete terraces. This feature serves an organisational function. The terraces are used as seating, leaving a 3 meter threshold between the pool and seating. The terraces lead to recreational surfaces on the east side and a pavilion on the west side.

Regional elements include the use of red bricks and corrugated iron, both of which was manufactured in Pretoria during the time of construction.

The edge bricks have rounded corners to prevent injury against rough surfaces.



FIGURE 54 (top)

Towel drying area.

FIGURE 55 (middle)

Secondary open changing room servicing the more formal/closed changing rooms.

FIGURE 56 (bottom)

Perspective view of Hillcrest swimming pool.