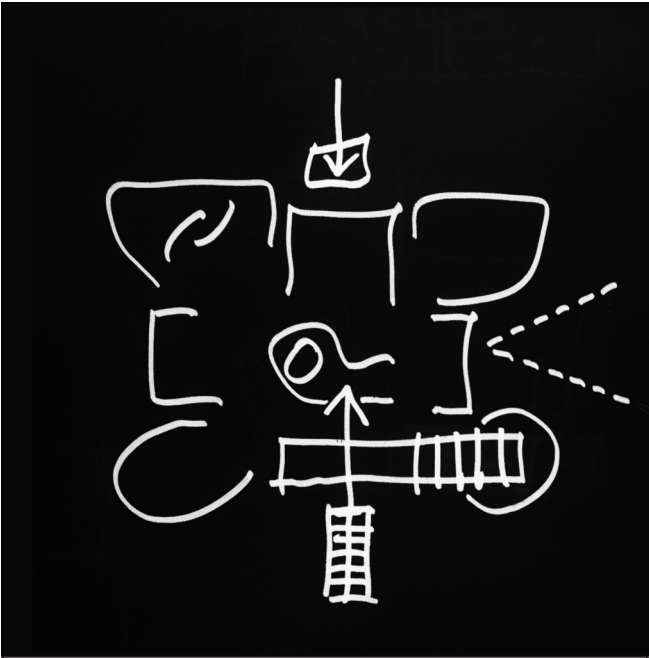
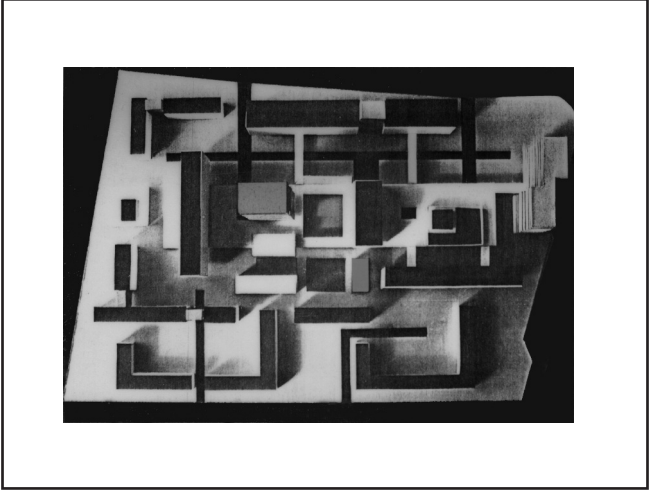


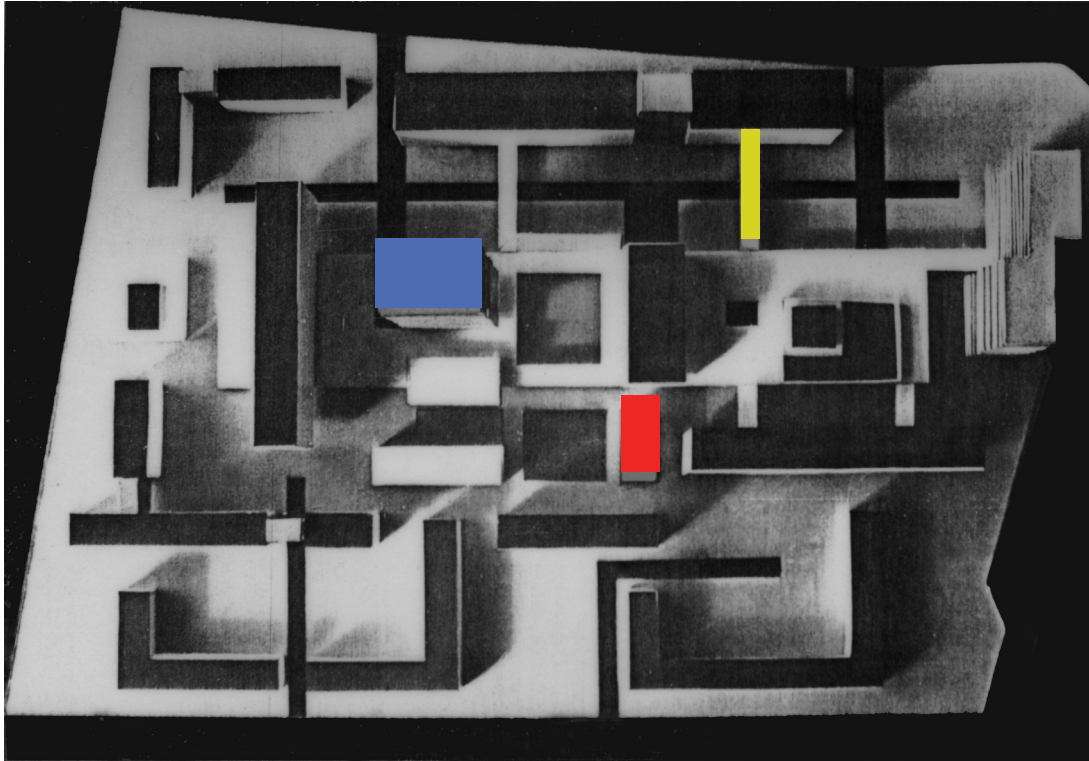
*‘Everything is a tale. What we believe, what we know, what we remember, even what we dream. Everything is a story, a narrative, a sequence of events with characters communicating emotional content. We only accept as true what can be narrated.’*

Carlos Ruiz Zafón

**under the radar** is an anthology of drawings, images and photographs of projects both real and hypothetical undertaken (and sometimes completed) between 1956 & 1997. why start so early? - well being an architectural student in the '50's was a special time - the 'birth of cool' in the states, eames, buckminster fuller, corbusier in europe - all out there to be discovered by an immediately postwar generation of aspiring architects.... sadly (in my case) only fragments of work remain - hard to believe now, but a thesis project had to be drawn in ink on stretched whatman paper with a graphos (a cross between a quill pen and something a little more automatic). a 'crit' consisted of some famous architect being brought in to discuss a handful of the best projects whilst the rest of us stood by 'learning by example'. the workbook with it's found fragments of this era moves on through a 'local practice' experience to the sudden realisation that there was a bigger world - a more serious theatre awaiting those who braved a move to the 'smoke' (london) - for me, seeing the royal college of physicians in regents park, which together with drawings of the **UEA** published in the **architectural review** drew me to the office of **denys lasdun** which offered an altogether different way of architectural life.. 'the most unforgettable character I've ever met' - a monthly column in the once popular reader's digest would be an understatement - a charismatic and complex man - incredibly articulate both in speech and approach to architecture. for me then 5 years of true learning - lifelong friends and some extraordinary experiences. denys just couldn't understand why I would want to go to **arup associates** and I do sometimes wonder myself. in fact I went for three interviews before deciding. such things are always difficult, but I don't regret the move as it gave me the kind of responsibility which belonged only to associates in a lasdun world. later, moving to teaching as many great architectural firms crumbled in the late '70's depression - a desire to 'practice' took hold. looking back over that period and the scraps of drawings that have been brought to light, I realise that the era provided me with that most wonderful resource - students and graduates of the then famous liverpool school of architecture... it also provided work - the **new studios & galleries** - an award winning and much published project that opened the practice door leading to to **KM** (king mcallister) and later **shedkm** in 1997. this compilation hopefully brings together a feel of the times - of an architect progressing through age and experience trying to make sense of this frustrating yet ultimately totally fulfilling discipline. 'making sense' with a design approach too - throughout the book there can be seen a desire to see some kind of continuity - a philosophy, a way of doing things that I could gain satisfaction from. looking over the copy though I see only traces. there seems to be a consistent argument between classicism, symmetry, and the abstractions of modernist architects and artists. it's no co-incidence that both palladio and corbusier have had their influence - that mondriaan and donald judd sit cheek by jowl with co-op himmelblau & jan kaplicky in my architectural psyche. am I confused? - well yes, but working brings the pleasure of drawing. it's now **60** years on with my style little changed - pen & ink giving way to a computer screen and mouse - whatman paper to the excitement of digital imagery..... **dave king 2017**



a 'comprehensive redevelopment' - model by dave king

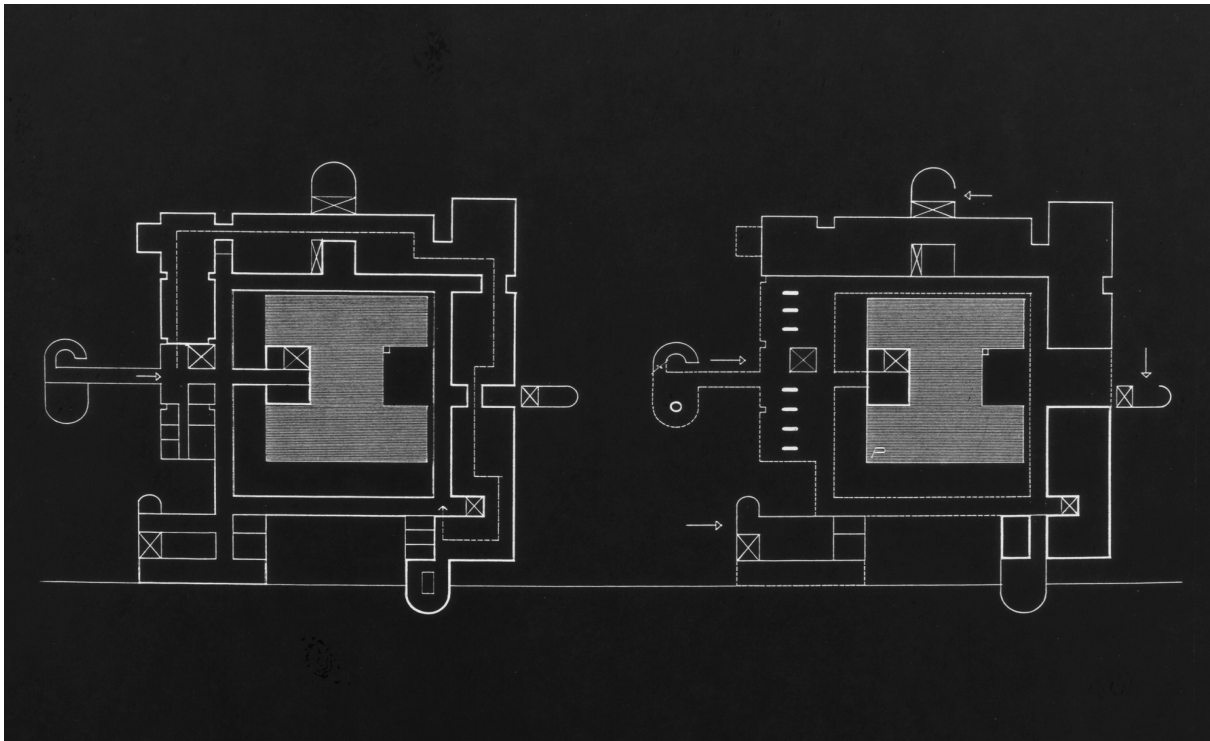


1956 - 62

it started in 1956 - 1st year diploma at **manchester university school of architecture**, I hadn't been accepted for the more famous liverpool school! a group of friends - **norman foster, gerry deitch, mike cummings & john drabble** worked and played together producing very little by today's standards. most of my work has disappeared, but I chose to retain a town centre model thinking it had **de stijl** qualities, plus an early geometric diagram of a liverpool maritime museum...



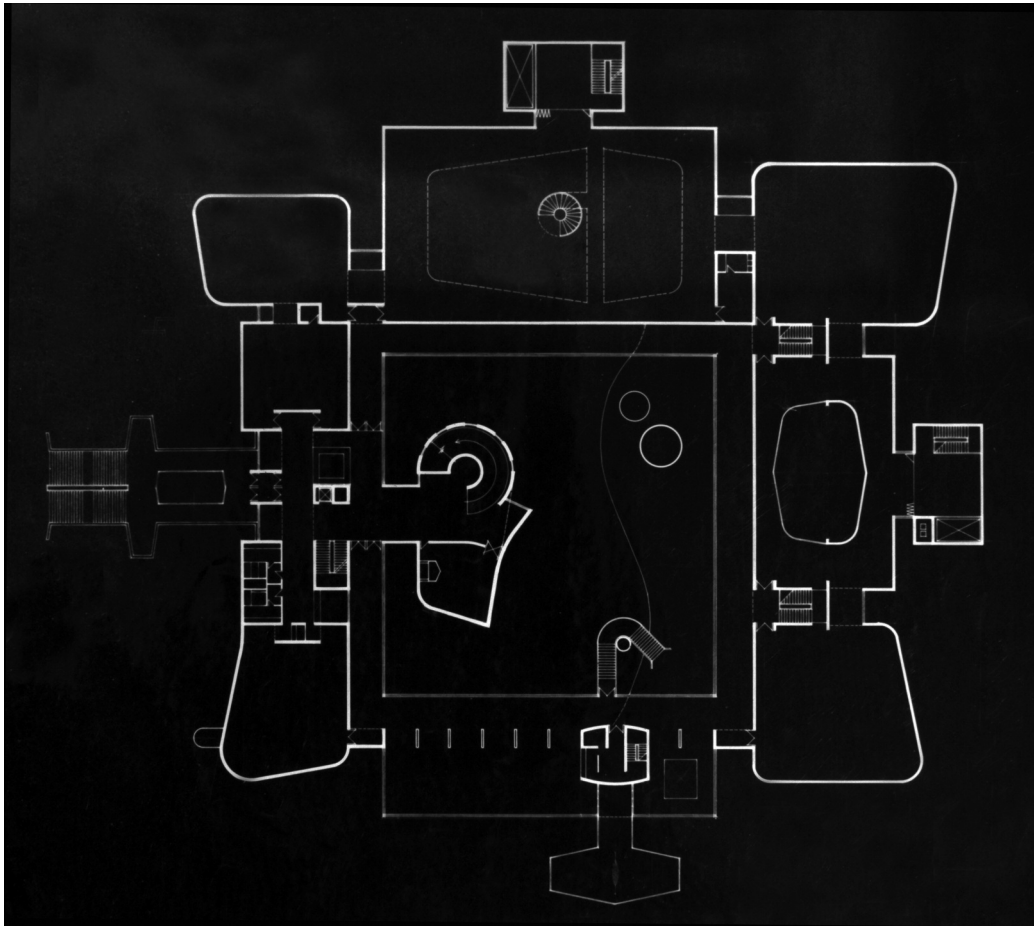
maritime museum - from original ink on tracing paper



1956 - 62

*trying to find a thesis subject was always a difficulty... we had virtually no help - little tuition. mine was a maritime museum at the pierhead liverpool. I met the curator - he was enthusiastic having a huge store of amazing ship models to display. my idea was to design a kind of 'mini' dock - a water space enclosed by a string of buildings maybe referring to **hartleys albert dock**, but more likely my own idea that it could be some kind of exhibition marina - as in the london boatshow...*

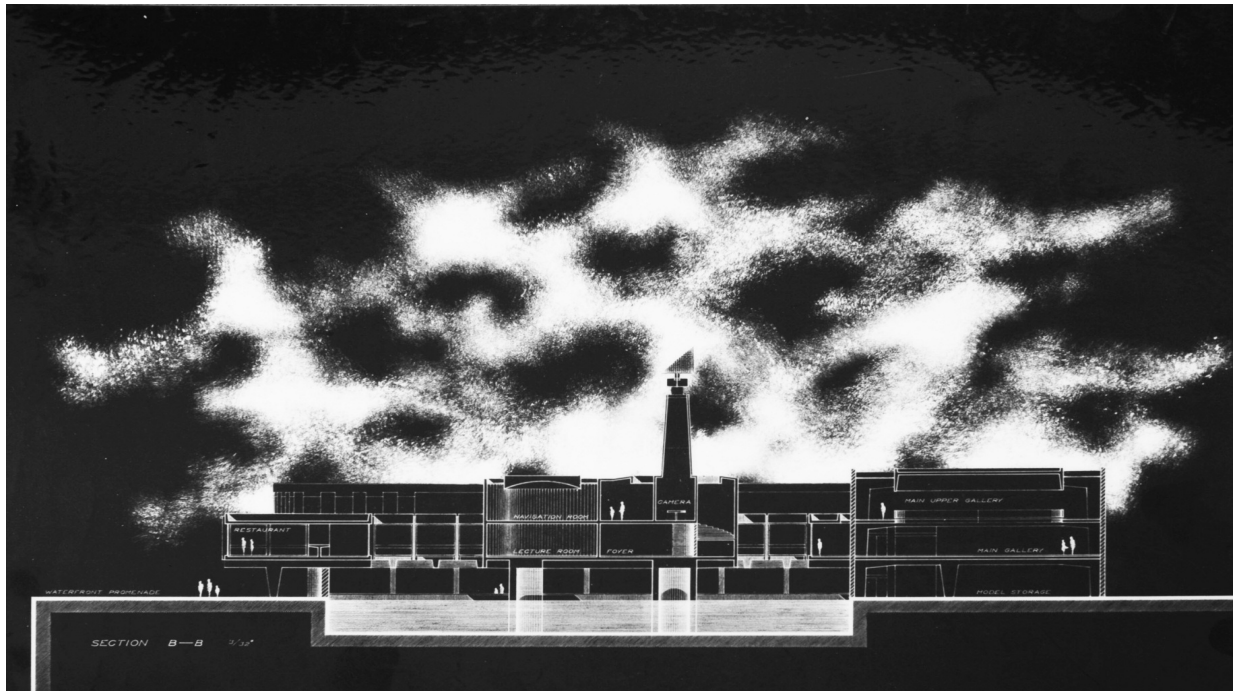
revised plan - from original ink on art paper



*at the time I'd been massively influenced by the first **le corbusier** exhibition held in the walker art gallery (odd to think that over 50 years later I'd be instrumental in arranging sponsorship for the third of these held in the lutyens cathedral crypt, and also in london's **barbican centre**). I'd also heard of **louis kahn** when a lone young visiting american tutor persuaded me to put curves and angles into the enclosing array of galleries. was this an improvement? I'm not entirely convinced - but...*

1956 - 62

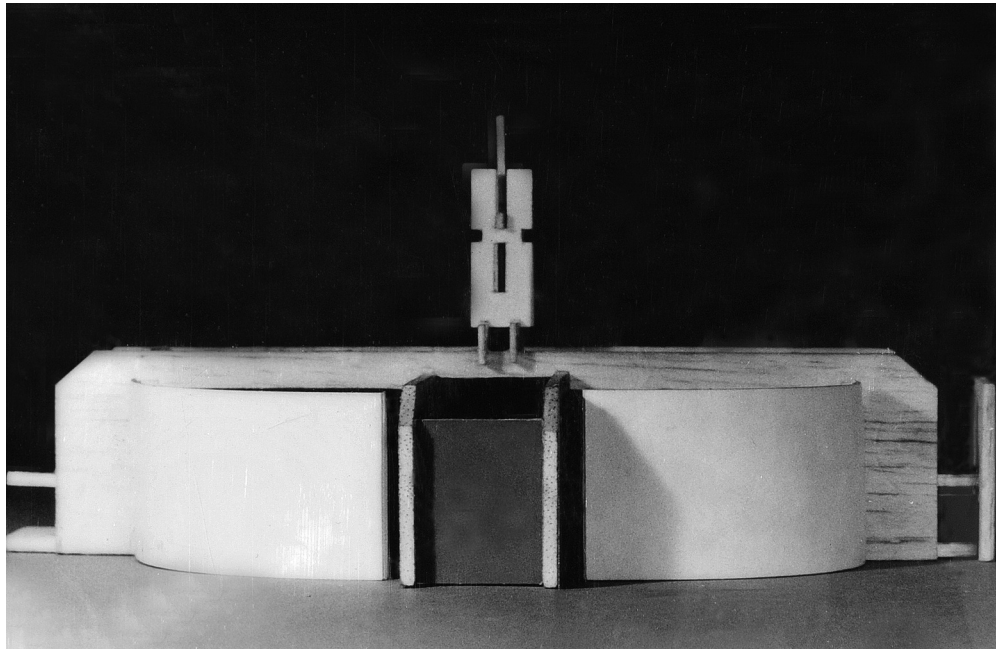
from original ink on art paper - drawn by dave king



1956 - 62

*there was also the curator's idea of a camera obscura placed centrally so that a precise view of liverpool's grand array of docks could be appreciated from end to end. today of course, electronic solutions would be used - but there's something about a camera obscura that I still like... the tall space, the architectural drama, the intimate experience (only a few can view at a time) plus of course the fisheye camera rendering that requires concentration & a bit of experience to enjoy...*

church of christ the king - early model

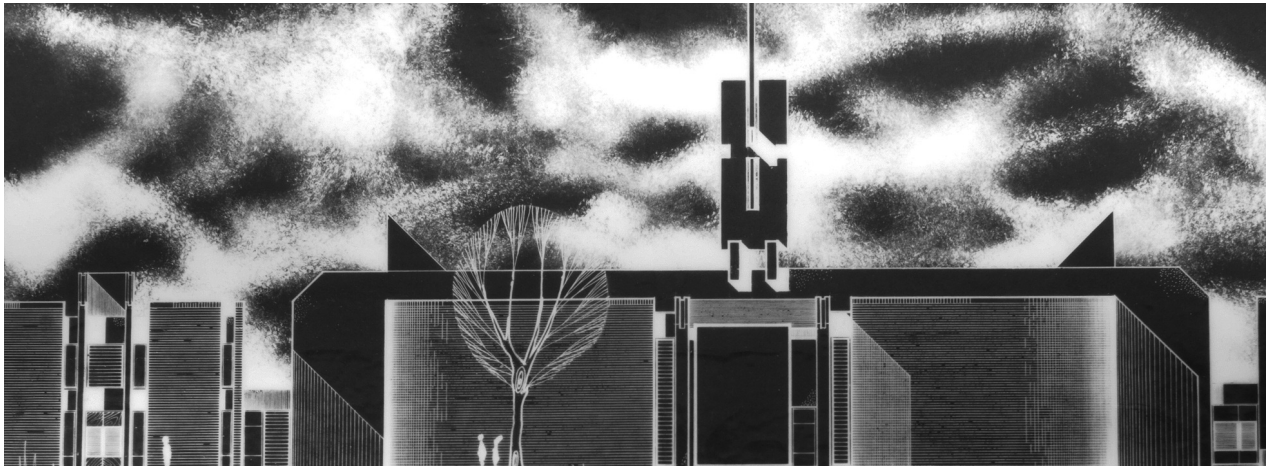


1962 - 65

*leaving school of architecture (no reviews or final crits those days), I ended up in chester working for a firm where everyone wore white coats and there was a hierarchical tree on the wall. **ken martin** (later **professor lobster** of TV fame) & I soon moved on. **frank pritchard** the liverpool catholic architect gave me a school then a church to design. st james orrell was a story in itself, but the **church of christ the king** queens drive with its elliptical brick walls was my best claim to fame...*



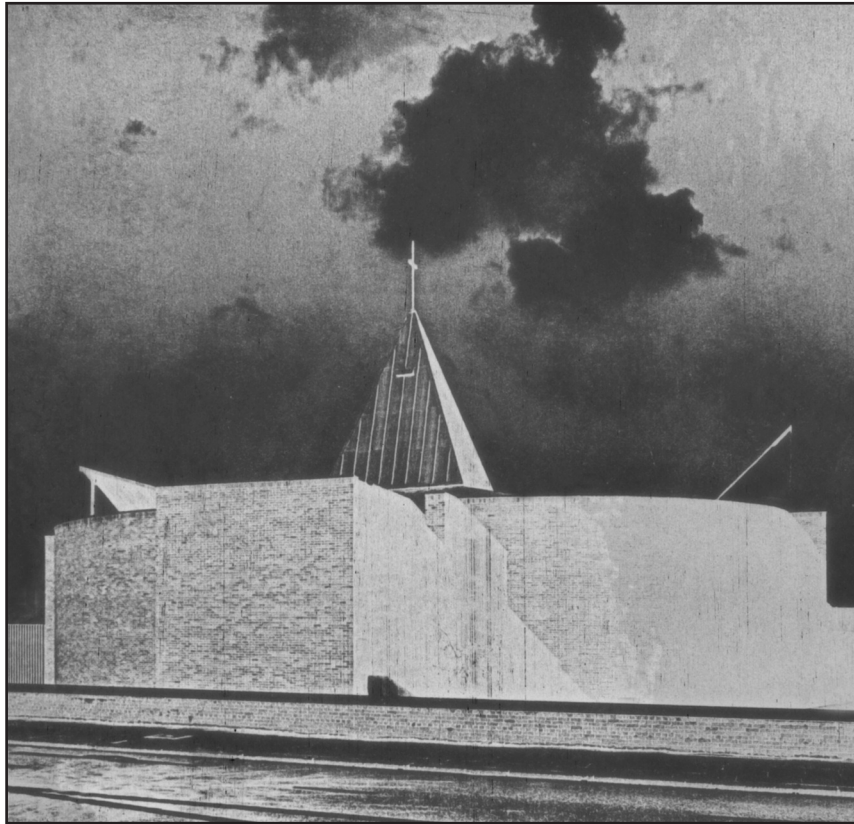
ink on tracing - drawn by dave king



1962 - 65

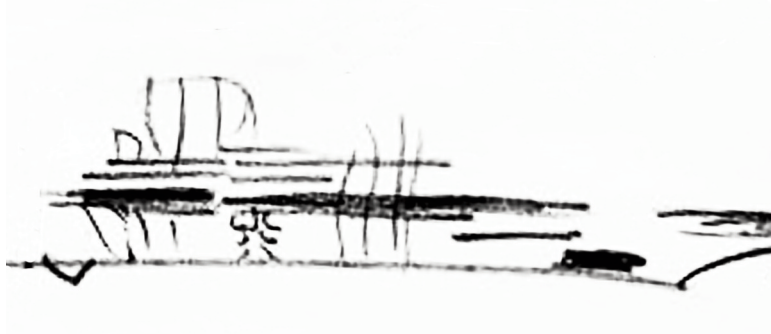
*somehow this project (first designed by **brian anson** as an 'unbuildable' egg) had come my way - frank was a volatile character and everyone in the office seemed to be designing a church or delivering crates of christmas sherry to our 'reverend fathers'. his first reaction to my cruciform plan with concrete portals and a sculptural cross on the roof was 'it needs a pyramid' and the portals have to be timber supplied by **walter holme** (liverpool laminated timber experts) - or else...!*

christ the king - photo dave king



1962 - 65

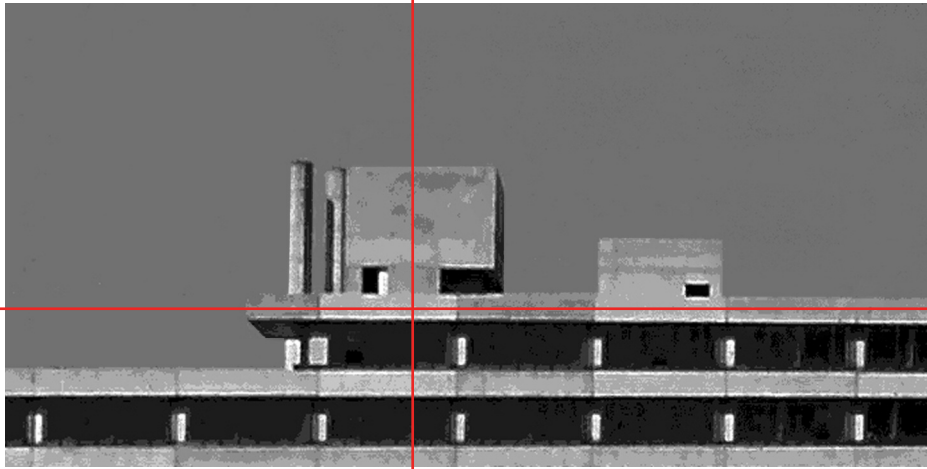
*tyson's*, the then famous liverpool contractors got the job - but elliptical brick walls on a site subject to flooding? they actually made a template in their joinery shop and lifted it course by course 'foundations upwards. I had never really liked 'frank's pyramid' (as we called it), and had my revenge by glazing it with orange perspex (which later had to be replaced). nevertheless the plan to behad a certain symmetrical logic - re-entrants, shadow gaps later to be repeated many times...



**the national theatre** - from an original sketch by sir denys lasdun

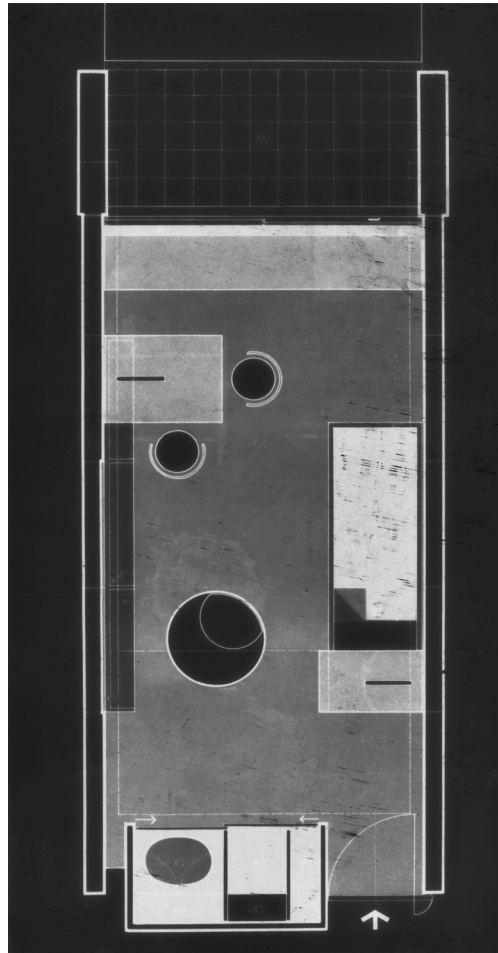


UEA arts building - photo dave king



*I then moved to london to work for **denys lasdun** in 1965. quite a drastic shift - from a small liverpool practice to one of the UK's most highly regarded architects... 2 years working on the university of east anglia's arts building (then on site) was an immediate introduction to the world of concrete, smoke filled site huts, taxis, the norwich train from liverpool st and **malcolm crowder** the university's estates officer. **john loring** was the friendly if somewhat ascetic project architect...*

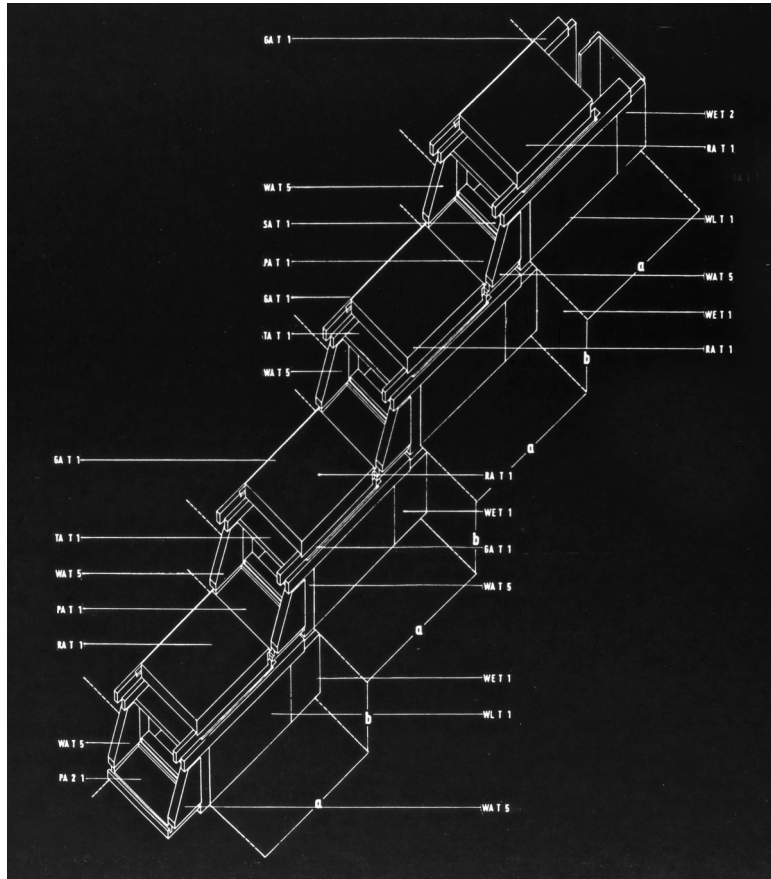
from an original tracing - drawn by dave king



leaving the **UEA** team led to a quite difficult spell on **christ's college cambridge** student residences. I was to design the study bedroom which was to be the geometric lynchpin of the whole development. this led to a massive concrete learning curve with **ove arups** (see next page), but initially a confrontation with denys who accused **philip wood** the modelmaker and I of proceeding too fast whilst he was on holiday! I still think this helped my future relationship with the great man!

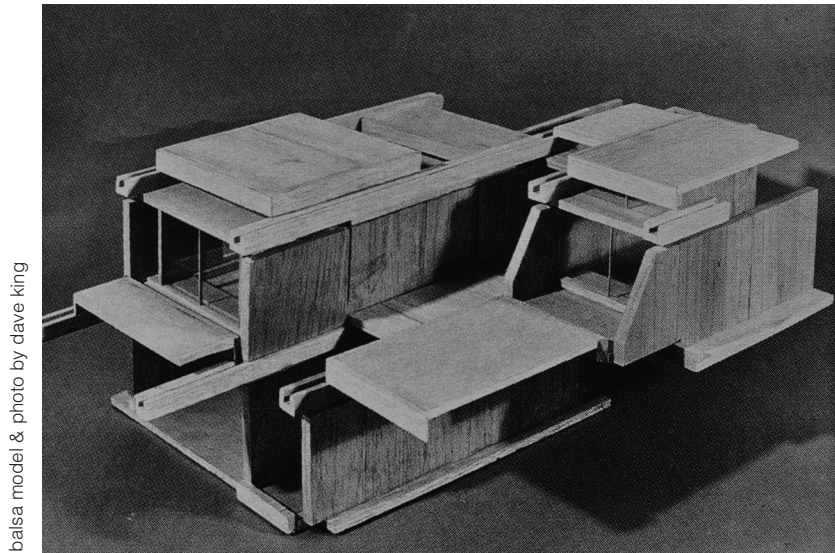
1965 - 70

christ's college precast system - 6 ink drawings by dk



1965 - 70

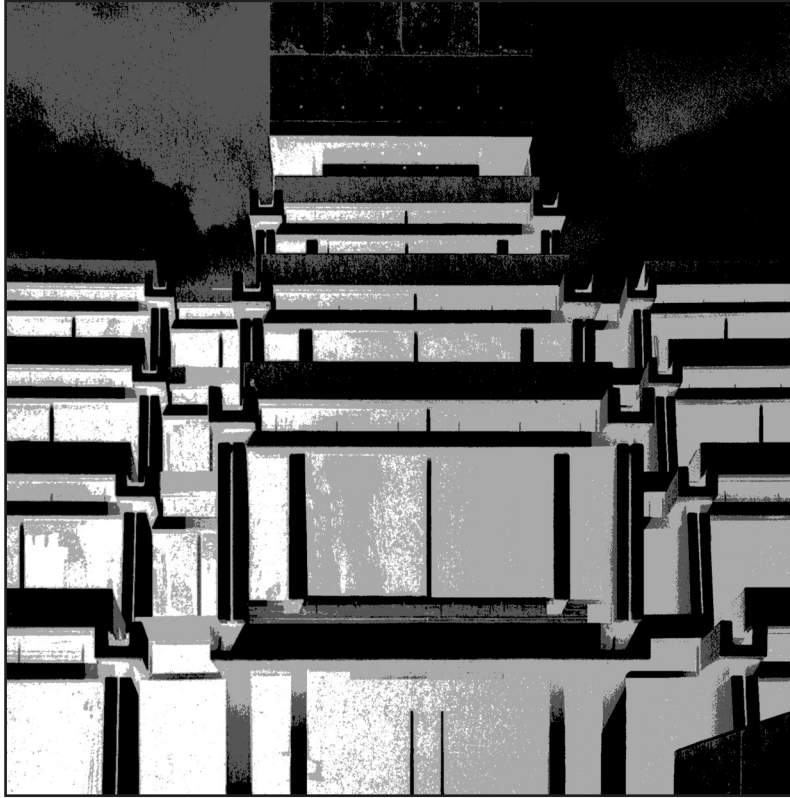
there followed a deep involvement with the development of a pre-cast system which would give the building its particular character. **bob emerson** (later to become chairman of arup) was the project engineer & I broke all lasdun's rules by visiting his office almost daily - but together we evolved the system of units which were a pre-cast manufacturer's nightmare (or dream if money was the object). every unit - and there were many types, had everything cast in - nothing at all exposed!



balsa model &amp; photo by dave king

*probably the biggest geometric problem (apart from the impossible rear elevation) was a series of junctions where the building's footprint conformed to a gentle curve. these were to encompass larger units called the '**fellow's flats**' - I was to solve this hugely difficult junction - the only solution (as I saw it) was to keep the flats orthogonal and take up the slack with a wedge in between. I made this model - denys gave it the OK and we proceeded to build. how complex can you get..!*

photo taken from 'denys lasdun' - (william curtis)



1965 - 70

*well it worked in practice - I've stripped this photo of the actual building back to basics to show it almost as the model. **denys lasdun** liked balsa models - there are many stories about this. he used to spend a lot of time in the model shop where the modelmaker **philip wood** conceded to most of his whims. philip didn't like this junction, so I made the model in balsa which then became fullsize. christ's is still a great building - almost shocking in its presence in the quiet fellow's garden...*



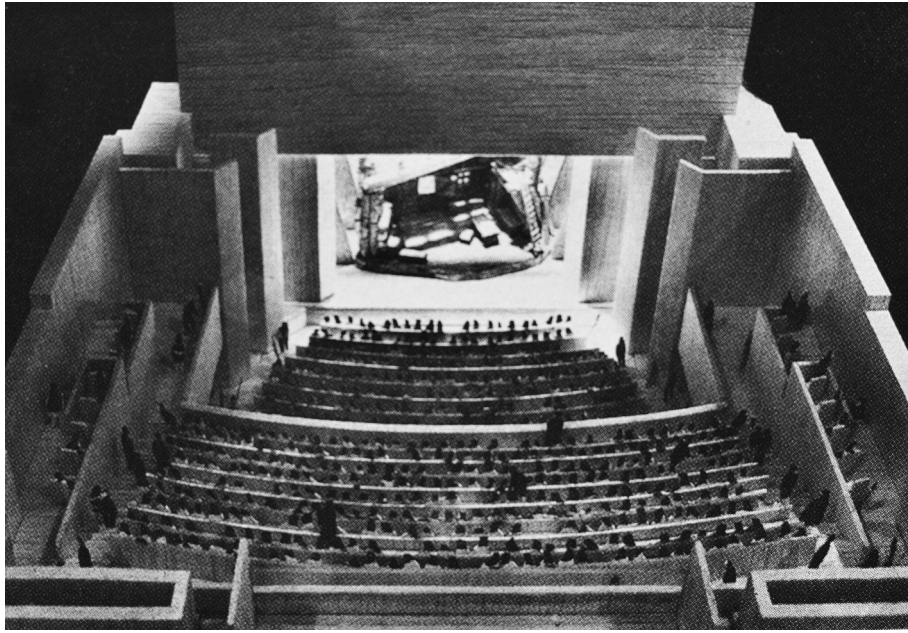
1965 - 70



all photos by dk (iPhone)

*I've added this as a result of the recent re-emergence of 'concrete talk'. I took the photos recently & formatted them on my iPhone whilst travelling to town on the 55 bus! technology has come on but it would be hard to better this pre-cast with white cement & needletooled with margins - a very very complex system which has stood for nearly 50 years and still looks pristine. a tribute to rock asphalt too - that malleable natural material that was used before 'hi tec' membranes took over.*

balsa model & photo - dk

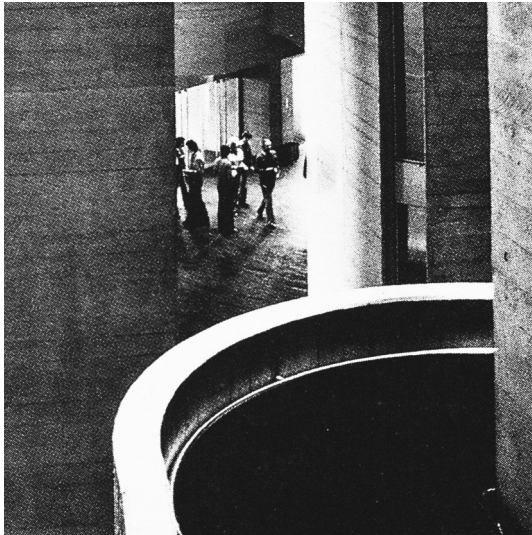


1965 - 70

*but then the **NT** (national theatre) - the modelmaking guru came knocking on my door and I was summoned to make one of the **lyttleton theatre** on a friday (to be ready by monday). this in some ways was a relief, as with christ's well underway on site, I'd aspired to the theatre team for some time. saturday morning came and suddenly **sir laurence olivier** was in the room clutching a bottle of sherry for us. he was a legend even then, worth every minute of that weekend work...*



from 'denys lasdun' - william curtis (adapted)



1965 - 70

*the national theatre is a huge subject - I was on the team for two years mostly as project architect for the front of house (without much responsibility I should add). my only significant contribution worth recording was to persuade denys that there should be some round ended staircases at several critical points (he didn't care for curves), and to take a photo that made me some money over the years. **'the national theatre through the trees'** was used over and over again by the NT.*



the national theatre through the trees - photo dave king

*I've retained the photo, not because I designed the building (only bits of it), but because it kept me in touch with both denys & the theatre for many years after I left - it paid for all my nikon's and it reminds me of formative years in that office. most of the team are still around (the 'lasdun' group), but one of the critical designers, my good friend **bob lerch** has only recently died - it's hard to forget these people and the magic of the late 60's. working for lasdun was very special indeed...*