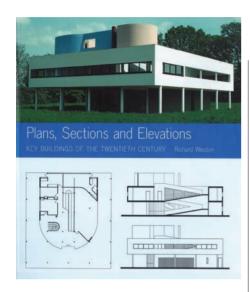
THE LANGUAGE OF ARCHITECTURE

by Barbara P. Jekot

Review of Plans, Sections and Elevations, by Richard Weston. Laurence King Publishing, London. ISBN 1-85669-382-1.



How do we communicate? Mostly we deliver written and spoken messages but the process of conveying information to other people may require illustrations, signals, body movements and so forth. Using these methods can complement any written or oral presentation.

How do architects communicate?

One can hardly convey architectural ideas without drawings, illustrations, pictures, images or models. They are crucial to read and understand architectural concepts and to speed up communication between professionals. They also serve to grab the public's attention.

Real architectural books are rarely without illustrations but these drawings tend to be limited. Often the research illustrations collected during the study and preparation for the book are not part of the final publication to allow savings on the cost of publication. We read a lot of comments about buildings but can we or should we rely on them? We are exposed to pictures of buildings but do they illustrate the reality or do they merely create illusions to impress? Having access to plans, sections and elevations could help us to investigate particular buildings. Complete

sets of plans, sections and elevations for each of the most representative and key buildings of the twentieth century have been selected for this publication. The book also features drawings of 106 buildings. The reader gets a sense of the spatial organisation of these buildings: the book allows one to evaluate them and create one's own opinions. The reader does not have to only rely on someone else's interpretation via an article and photos.

All the plans, sections and elevations in the book are based on the most up-to-date information and have been specially drawn to a common style using CAD software. The drawings are based on the architects' original designs but not to relate them back to the style of the architects' original drawings. Some drawings are less evocative than the originals on which they have been based but this ensures the aim of studying the pure spatial organisation - not stylistic expression. Unfortunately site plans for most of the buildings are not included.

An authoritative text accompanies the designs, explaining the important architectural features while also tracking the various influences. These are based on the date when design work started - which sometimes varies from its completion. It also helps to clarify connections or influences.

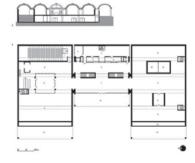
The introduction gives a brief overview of the development of twentieth century architecture, concentrating on spatial organisation. The cross-references to buildings in the book highlight the connection between these buildings. There are bibliographic references to the architects as well as to individual buildings. This book contains a representative collection of classic buildings of the twentieth century. A wide range of seminal architects and more recent ones have been selected. Some architects whose work currently seem to be out of fashion are included too.

Anyone interested in solid resources for independent study of modern buildings can benefit from this publication. It could be a

useful resource when reading any publication on modern architecture, in particular a classic like Frampton's Modern Architecture: A Critical History. It is one of the most important works on modern architecture featuring 362 illustrations but with incomplete sets of plans, sections or elevations.

The drawings in Weston's book no doubt renders the publication indispensable to architects, architectural students and teachers. The book is unique in terms of delivering solid material to help one investigate buildings one may not be able to visit, buildings one has only heard about and those not even imagined yet.





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