

Sports Complex for Trent

Architect Rizzi

In collaboration with

F. Allocca

Model F Allocca, E Burgini,

A Oradini, C Michelet

THE CHARACTER OF THE PLACE

The site, in its marginal position, adjoining the city but cut off outside it, separated from it, stands inside a sort of large enclosure set up by the railway, the banks of the Fersina and by the regional highway. An 'island' in relation to its urban surroundings, an area of refuse and of isolation. By contrast, the firmly committed programme, anticipating a rich and articulate insertion of sporting activities and services (sports stadium, ice-skating rink, bowling links, soccer fields, baseball, softball, travelling spectacles etc.), aspires to elevate the area as a generative node in the re-organisation of the entire neighbouring region. Thus the objective of the design – with respect to the figurative programme – is that of defining the place as a space of confluence between the artificial world of the city and the natural world of the countryside (sport in a constructed environment and sport in the natural environment) within a system of dis-continuity. A space in the middle, a world in between, between the urban models and the natural models, that must in fact refrain from any flowing continuities with the constructed city.

The site then becomes a fundamental text to be interpreted in which it is possible to trace the rules and the structural principles which help the arrangement of the figures extracted from the city and the natural landscape. If the morphological character of the site is defined:

- a. by its own margins that encloses it from the exterior,
- b. by the various ground levels, the natural ones of the countryside and the artificial produced by filling a stratum of 4-5 metres with landfill,
- c. by the regulating lines of the agricultural roads, with an east west orientation, these principles are translated and completely transfigured in the support network of the entire planning programme.

STRUCTURAL PRINCIPLES

The margin, the visual element that reinforces the boundaries of the area, organises the external border on which the system of pedestrian pathways, threshold points and the disposition of services is developed. It is then no longer understood as an element that excludes and separates, but as an element of connection, of knowledge, of experience, of exchange. The various ground levels articulate three levels that correspond to the different grades of function and plant:

- i. the higher for the public concourse
- ii. the intermediate for the services functions and for open-air games
- iii. the lower for the practice of sports under cover.

This layout is particularly useful in that it favours the separation of pedestrian traffic from vehicular traffic avoiding any interconnection.

Finally, the regulating lines, organise the internal area into strips or bands, running in an east-west direction. The three principal strips or 'ramparts', since in fact they end up excavated relative to the layout of levels, correspond to specific functional categories:

- i. strip A, ice-skating rink, bowling links, tennis
- ii. strip B, stadium and sports fields
- iii. strip C, travelling performances.

THE FIGURES

So placed the interweaving which structures the design is activated in the configuration encountering and working with a double set of figures in a subtle play of exchange of parts between the urban elements, such as ramps, stairs, inclines, bridges, streets, dams, and walls and natural elements such as trees, avenues, bushes, gardens, ramparts, lines of planting, tracks, foot-paths, embankments. It becomes thus a matter of setting up an installation, gently but firmly rooted in the ground with a landscape that reveals a heterogeneous succession of escarpments, depressions, plateaux, inclines, mixed into the web of the geometric order of the strips and levels. The *ramparts* are edged with grassed banks and rows of trees are cut transversely by *dams* that are simply the crossing concourses – used also for the technical installations – scanned from the distributive grid.

The design is not an investigation into the usual architecture made from buildings well individuated by base or crown but an incessant exchange of figures that read the place from the ancient memory of the regulating lines and from the weak traces handed on from the working of the earth, it seeks to act in the present with determination and figurative autonomy on the reorganising modification of the site.

With this device all the different systems – that come from the condition of the roads, accessibility, car parking, footpaths, playing fields, green spaces, trees, strongly equipped areas and service spaces – find their logical expressiveness within the continual oscillation of the elements, reverberating the one on the other (the same for the material systems that comprise the natural components and the artificial, transparent and opaque). For example, the environmental thresholds, points of exchange in the flows of region and city into the sports area, are configured like the Kleingarten, carparking-gardens, 'enclosed gardens' for cars. Enclosed by a wall they are characterised by pergolas on which will grow climbing evergreens, offering thus a variation on the theme of enclosure, border, and the organisation of the strips.

Another experience of the margin is announced suddenly. Running along the shaft of the concourses that link them – that became in fact the principal collector of the entire pedestrian system and of the support services placed on the intermediate level – one can observe from its privileged position either the broad landscape outside – the landscape of the river, of the hill, of the countryside but also the suburbs – or the landscape inside, made up of the different rooms, environments for the sports practice and for games. A theatrical space from where one can watch but from where it is possible also to be seen.

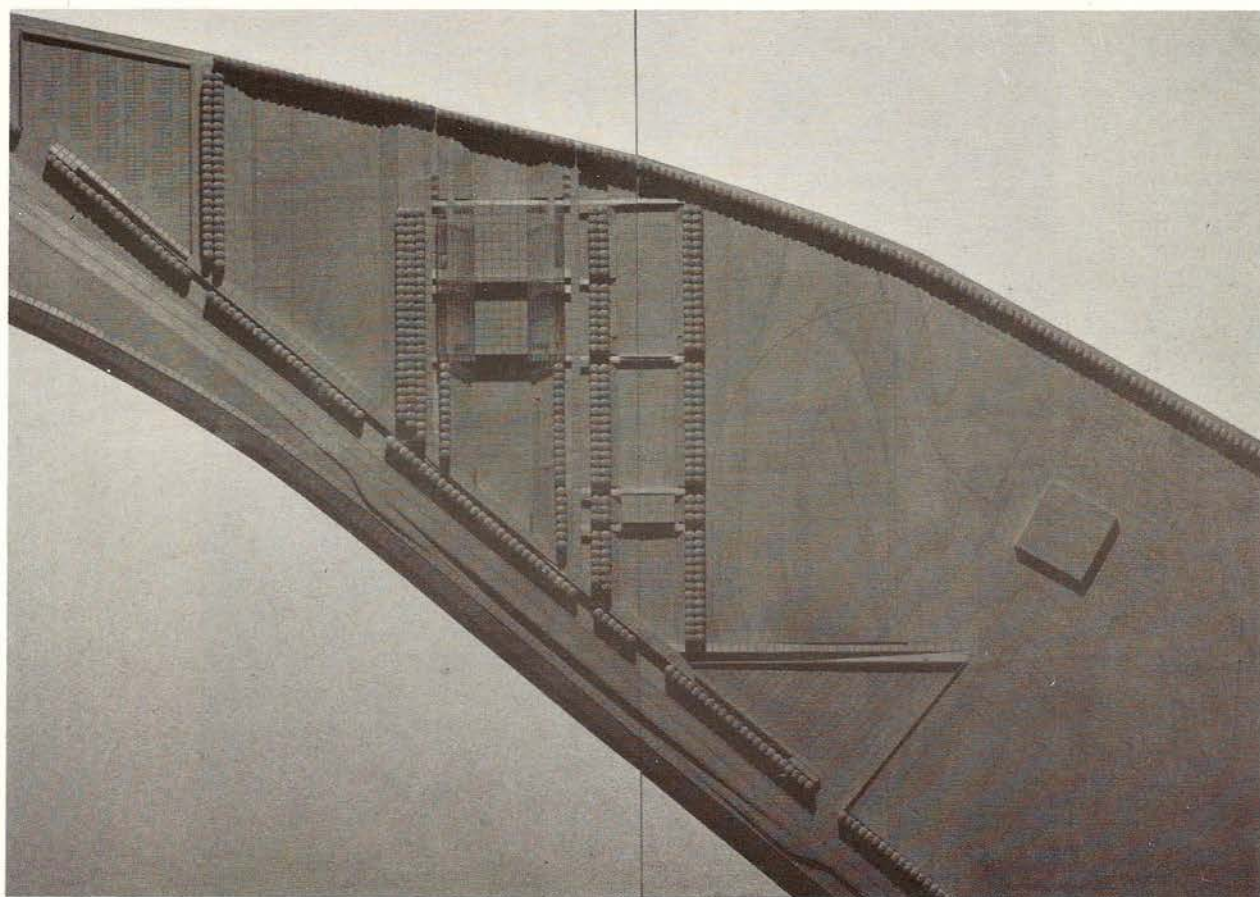
THE SPORTS BUILDING

Analogously, the sports stadium ends up broken down, involved in and assimilated into the general morphology of the complex. The external 'strips' penetrate and generate the playing fields, such as the margins to the side of the concourses – the grassed inclined embankments – they inadvertently brings the form of the ground levels inside the palace, in a perceived continuity. The treatment of the roof in opaque and transparent areas, corresponds with the strips of the fields and with the zones of the ground levels, endeavouring to underline and accentuate the building's belonging to the characteristics of the region, reproducing at a different scale the strategy used in determining the general plan.

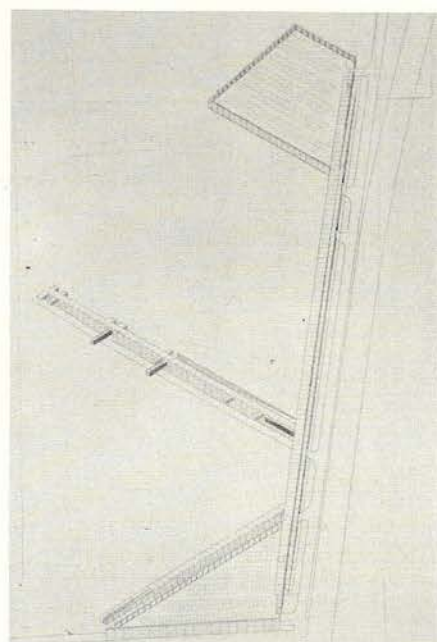
One distinctive emblem of the building, almost a sort of architectonic memory, is the high, fine vertical blade that cuts it transversely, emerging from the roof plane housing the machines and the dividing walls that like a guillotine divide the great hall.

The resulting plot of land is modelled and organised as a large building and the building in its turn as a plot of land. Paradoxically one could say that a single sports building does not exist, but rather many, one of which is covered and the others are open. The sports area then is not understood as a specialised place for practicing the different disciplines, but represents a place of integration for other uses, for other existences, a place where the dimensions of play, amateur sports and competition can co-exist. One can walk, pause, hide, disguise oneself, take shelter in the thick of the trees, cross the site completely without ever interfering in the activities. It is a place of representation because it is all a device for its observation.

The urban and natural models are transfused in this middle space, since the first elements are always crossed by the second, and vice versa. The organising logic of the parts and the whole that belong to an urban way of thinking is sustained largely by the natural elements which are called upon to play an ambiguous role in their serried ordering arrangement. A natural world and an artificial world seek here their own abode. An acquiescent figure that brings together the world of institutions and rules and a world free and open.

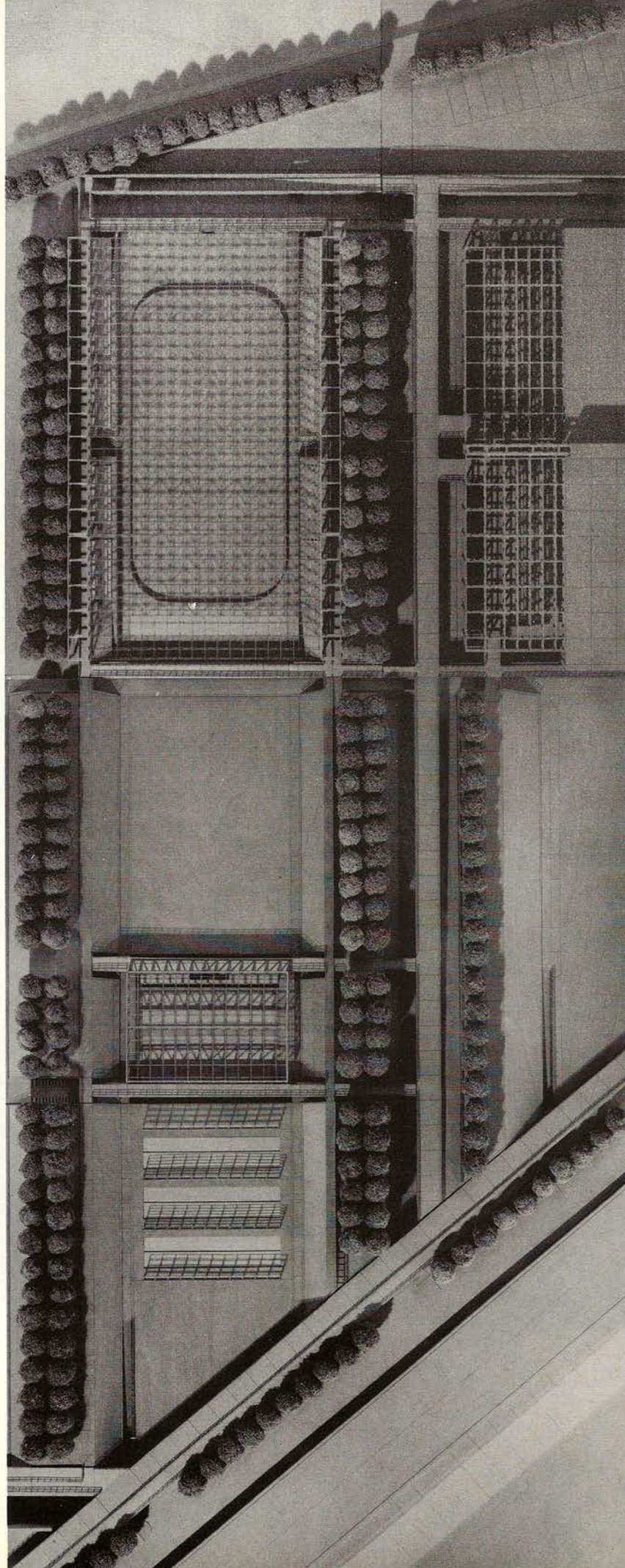


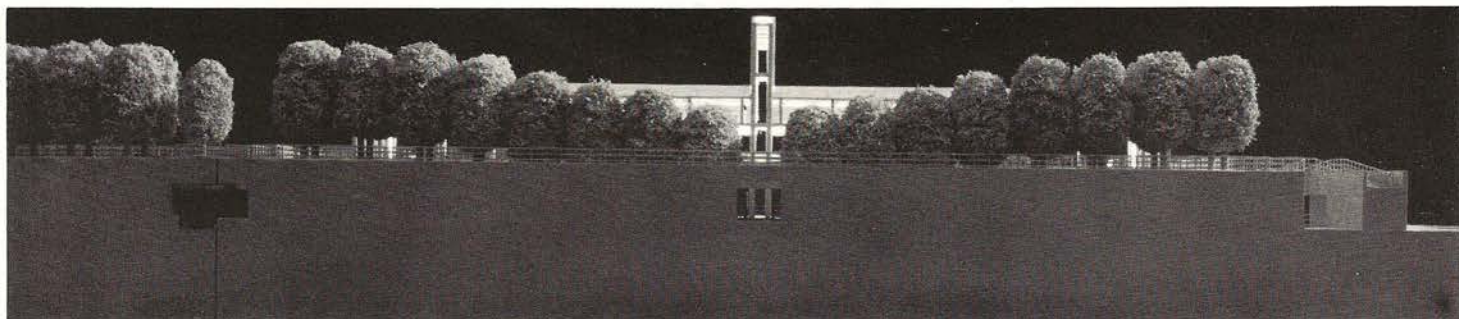
Plan view of model scale 1:500



The principle system of pathways connecting the sports area and the car-parks

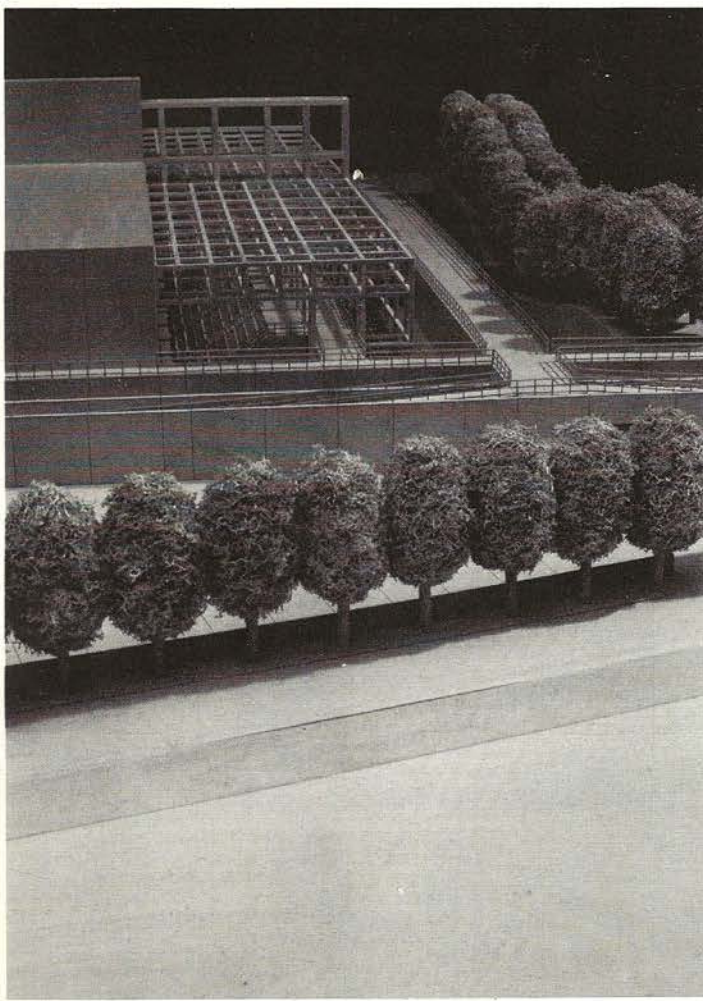
Plan view of model scale 1:100

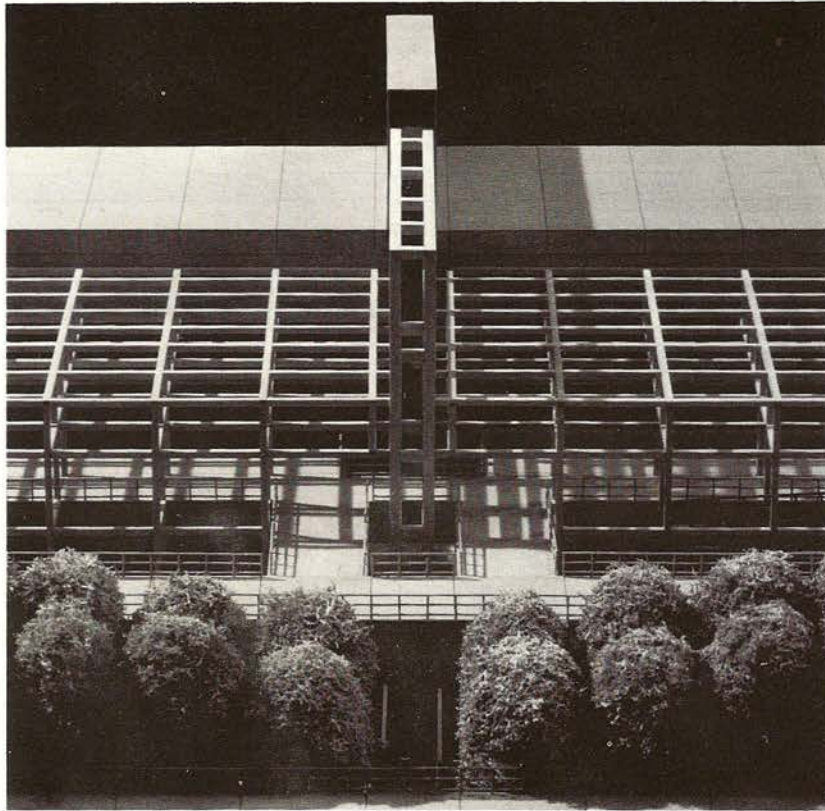




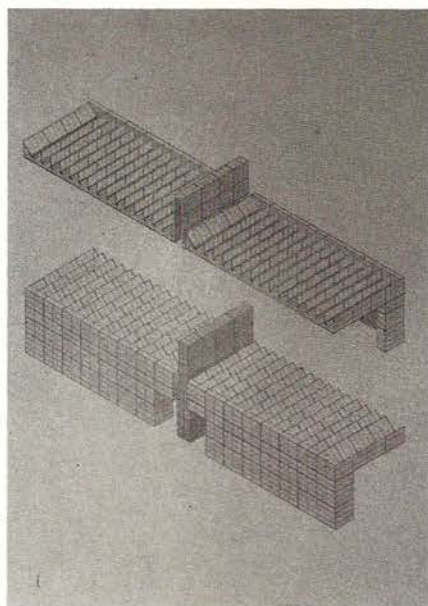
Section view of model

Partial view from on via Fersina, to the East.

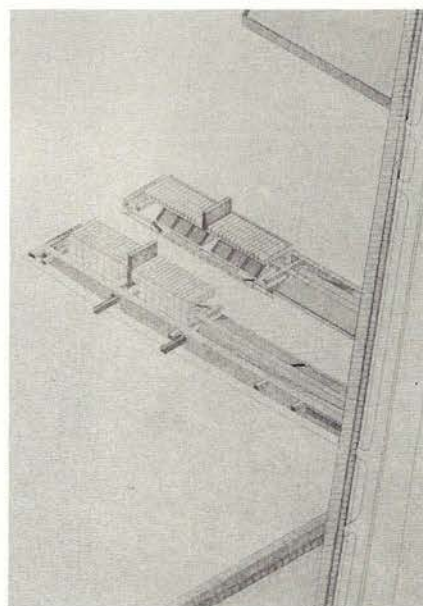




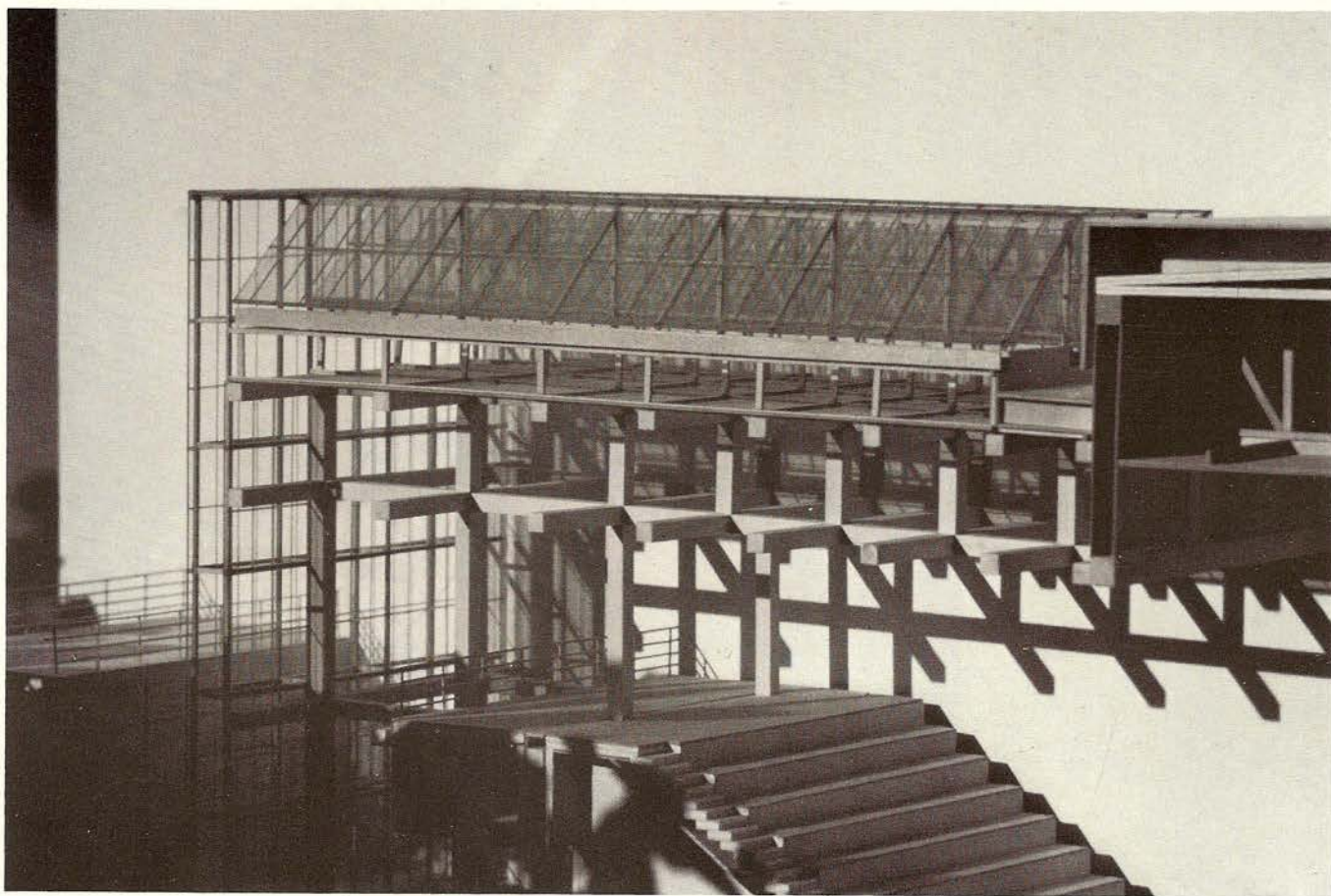
View of model showing structure
of front façade and the central
dividing "blade".



a

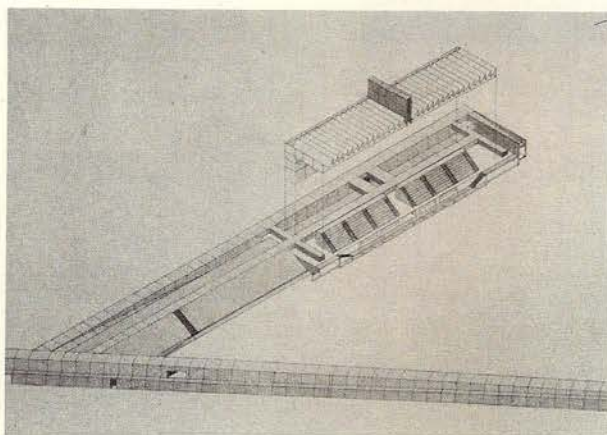


b

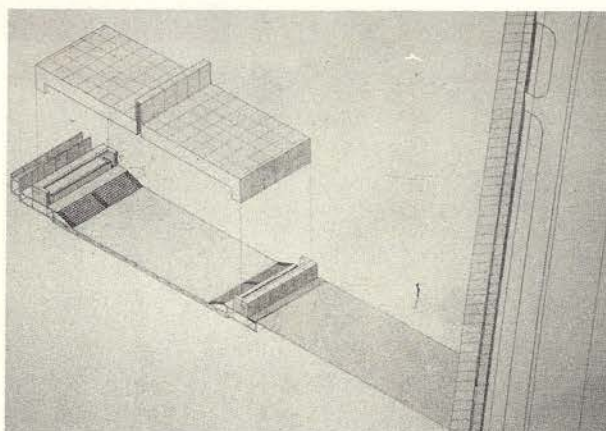


Section through model study of transparent roof and seating in large pavilion

a,b,c,d Axonometric drawings explicating the structure and arrangement of the large enclosed sports pavilion and relationship to principal concourse



c



d