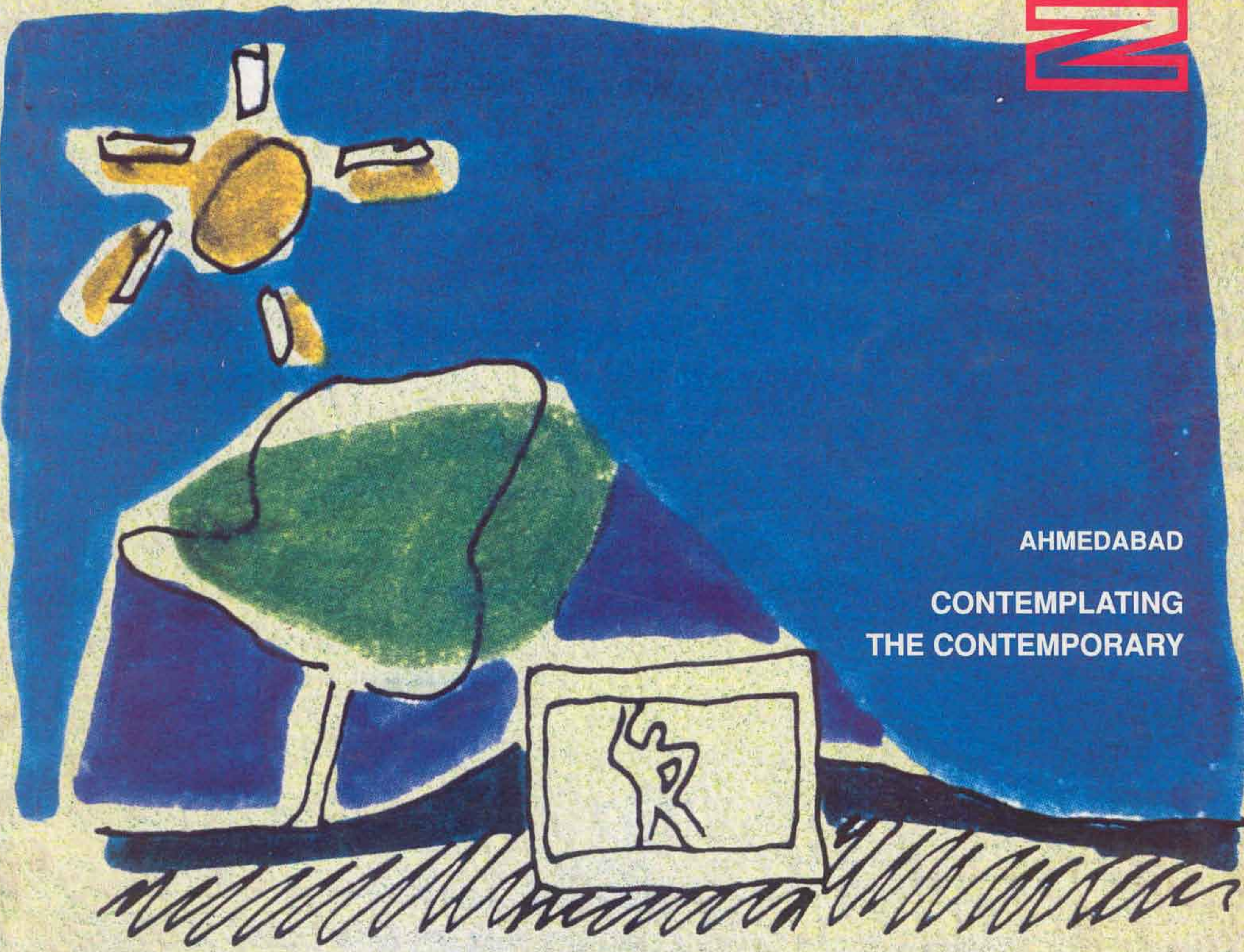


# ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN

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AHMEDABAD

CONTEMPLATING  
THE CONTEMPORARY

## BIMAL PATEL



*Bimal Patel, after taking a Diploma in Architecture in 1984 from the School of Architecture, CEPT, Ahmedabad, joined the University of California at Berkeley, USA, for a Masters degree in Architecture and City Planning. He is currently enrolled at the same university for a Phd. He has been a Graduate Student Instructor at both, the Department of Architecture, and the Department of City and Regional Planning, of the University of California, Berkeley, USA. Currently a Visiting Faculty member at the School of Architecture, CEPT, Ahmedabad, he is also a Partner at M/s Hasmukh Patel. The Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India, which he was awarded in a design competition in 1985, won the 1992 Aga Khan Award for Architecture.*

## Gujarat High Court, Ahmedabad

The campus for the Gujarat High Court is under construction on 34 acres of land located on the highway linking Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar. It includes 33 courtrooms with ancillary facilities; chambers and facilities for 50 judges; offices and ancillary facilities for the administrative staff (about 100 employees); 200 chambers for advocates; offices and ancillary facilities for the Bar and Bar Council; records storage facilities; canteen and kitchen facilities; communication and infrastructure facilities; and parking for staff and visitors.

The functional requirements in this campus are complex, not only in the wide variety of spaces required but also in their inter-relationships. The buildings and the spaces within them had to provide adequate settings for the

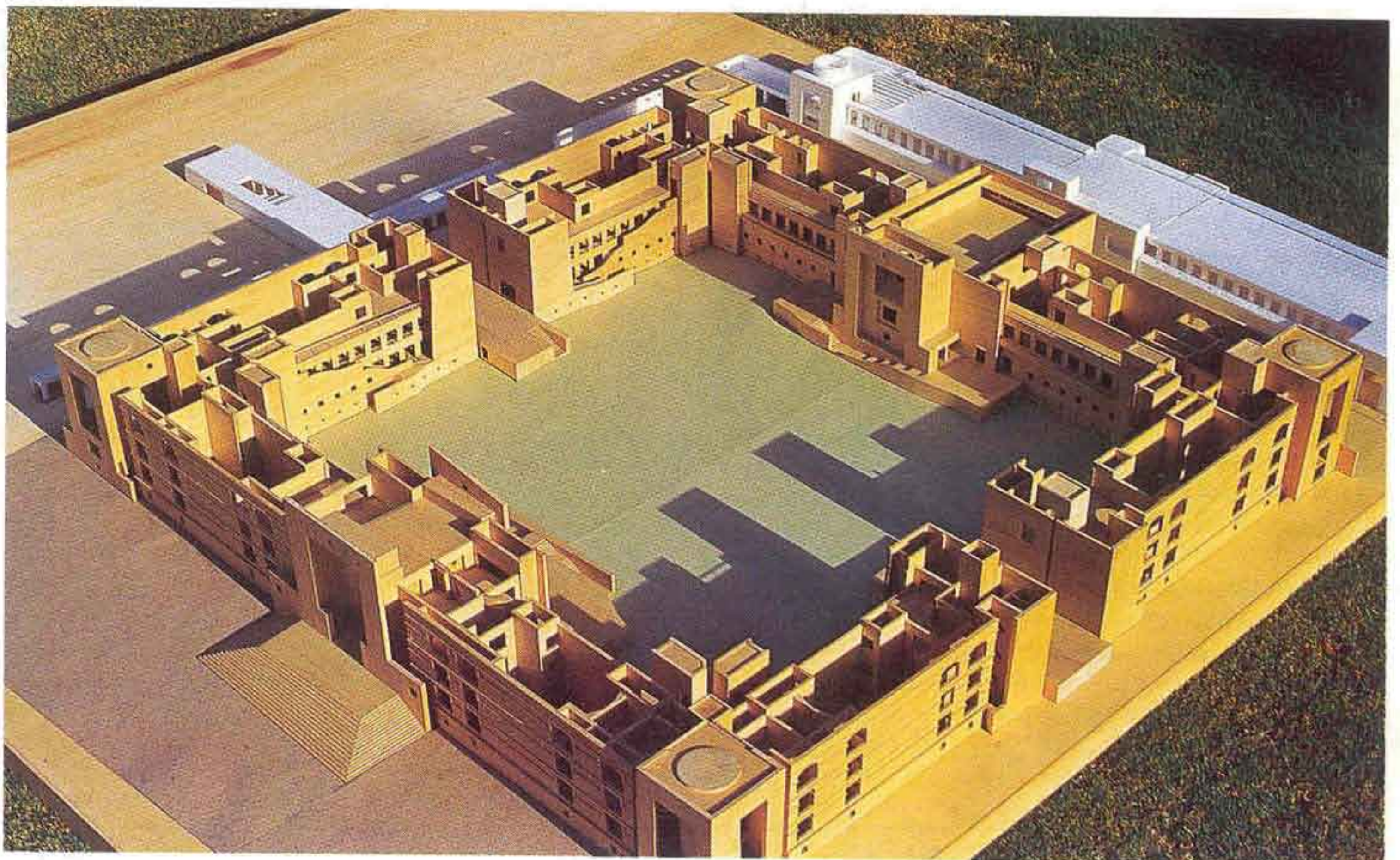
various 'rituals of justice'. We felt that the architectural vocabulary had to do both, draw from historic patterns and be contemporary. While the schematic design for the entire campus is complete and basic structure of the central block is nearing completion, detailed design for some of the buildings is still being completed.

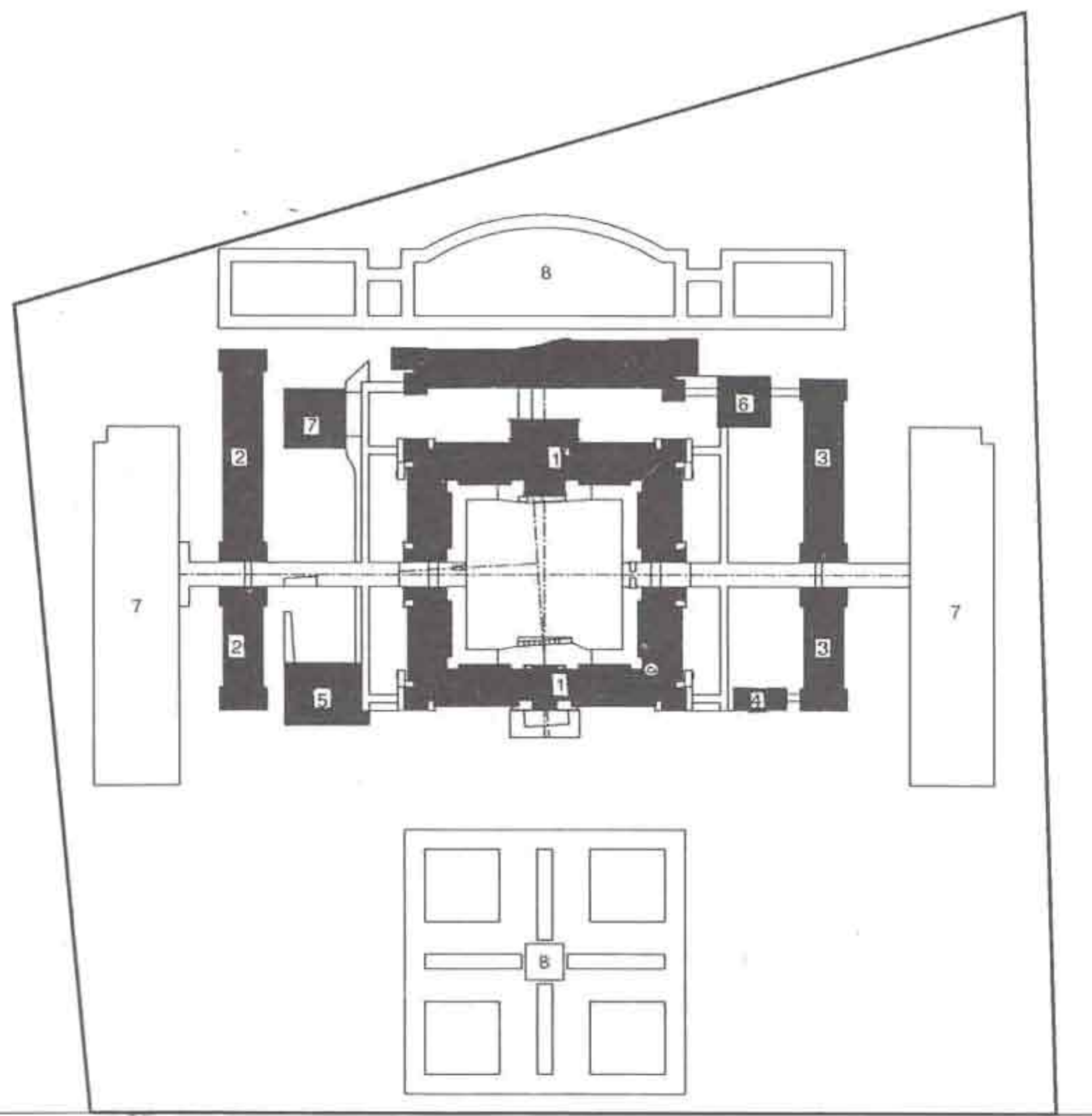
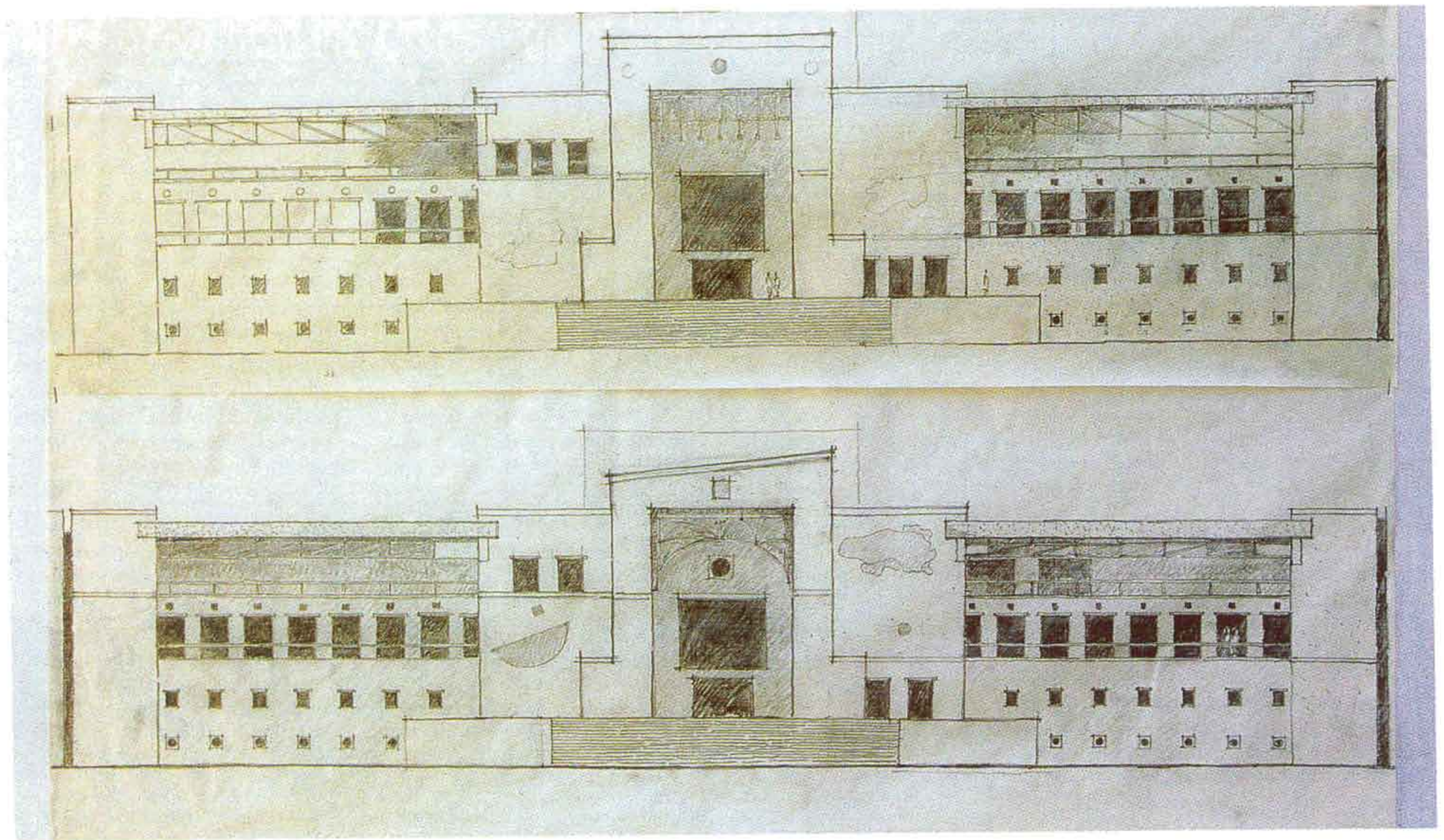
The main building, housing the thirty-three courtrooms and contiguous chambers for judges is organized around a large square open-to-sky courtyard. The powerful symmetry of this building is broken in a number of places so as not to create 'too perfect' a setting. While we felt that historic devices — like the use of symmetry — could be used effectively to create a setting for 'the ritual of justice', we also felt that they should be

deconstructed sufficiently; the illusion should not be flawless.

Judges' facilities are located behind the main building and are isolated from the rest of the campus. The administrative building and advocates' chambers flank the main building — they are separated by landscaped open-to-sky areas. The vocabulary used in these buildings is functional and largely rectilinear—the main court building is a stage. Actors arrive on it from four sides; from the wings as it were.

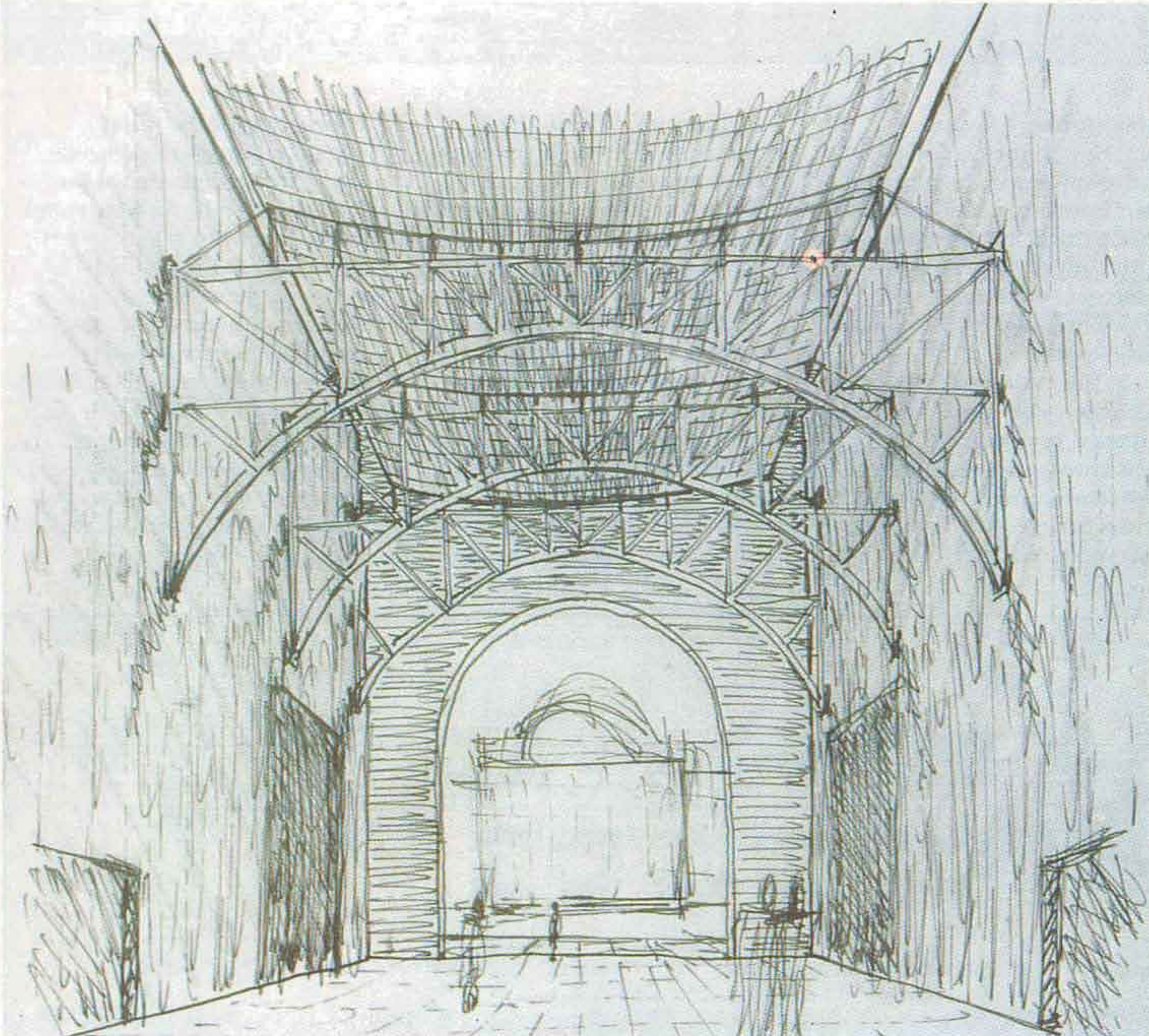
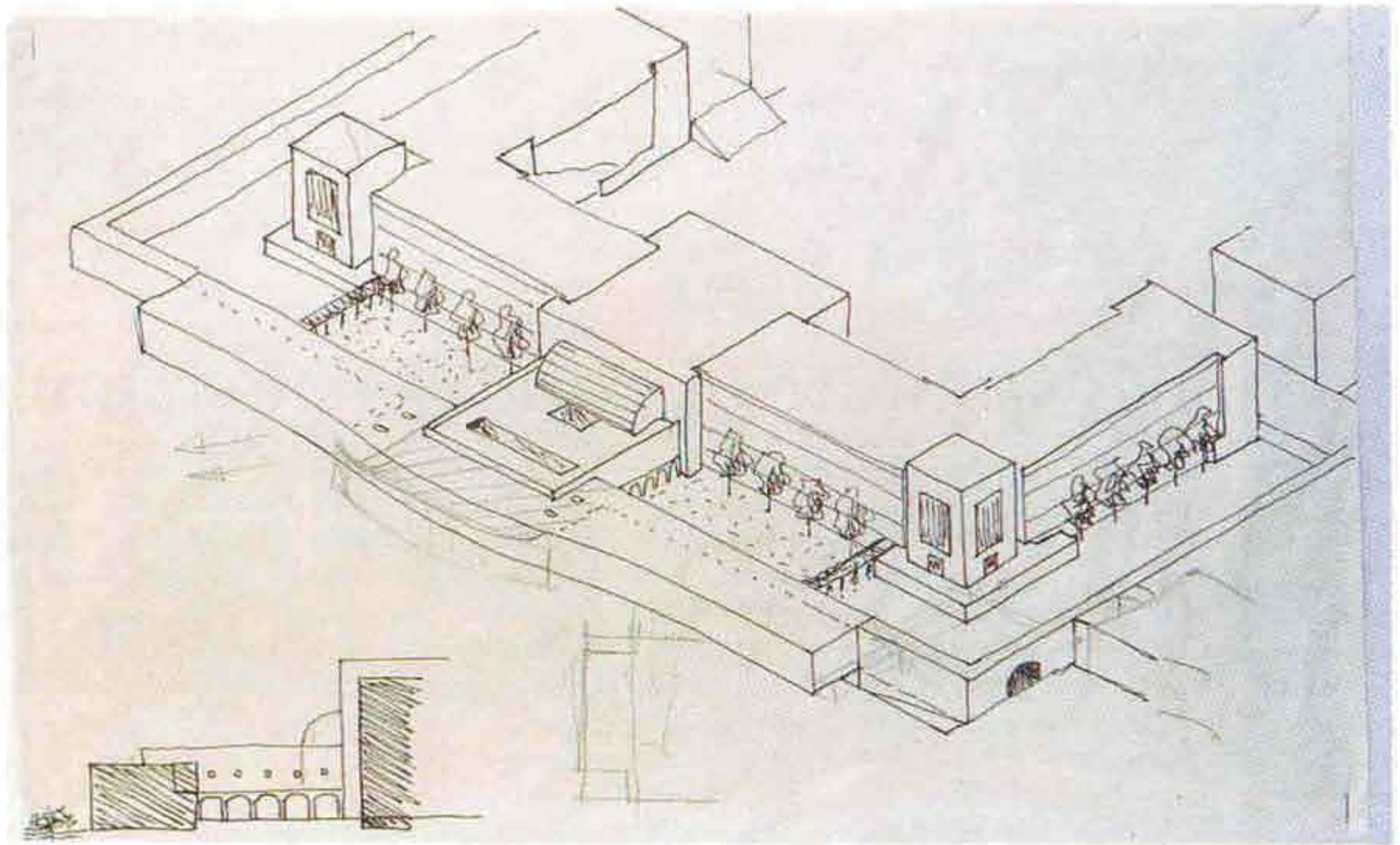
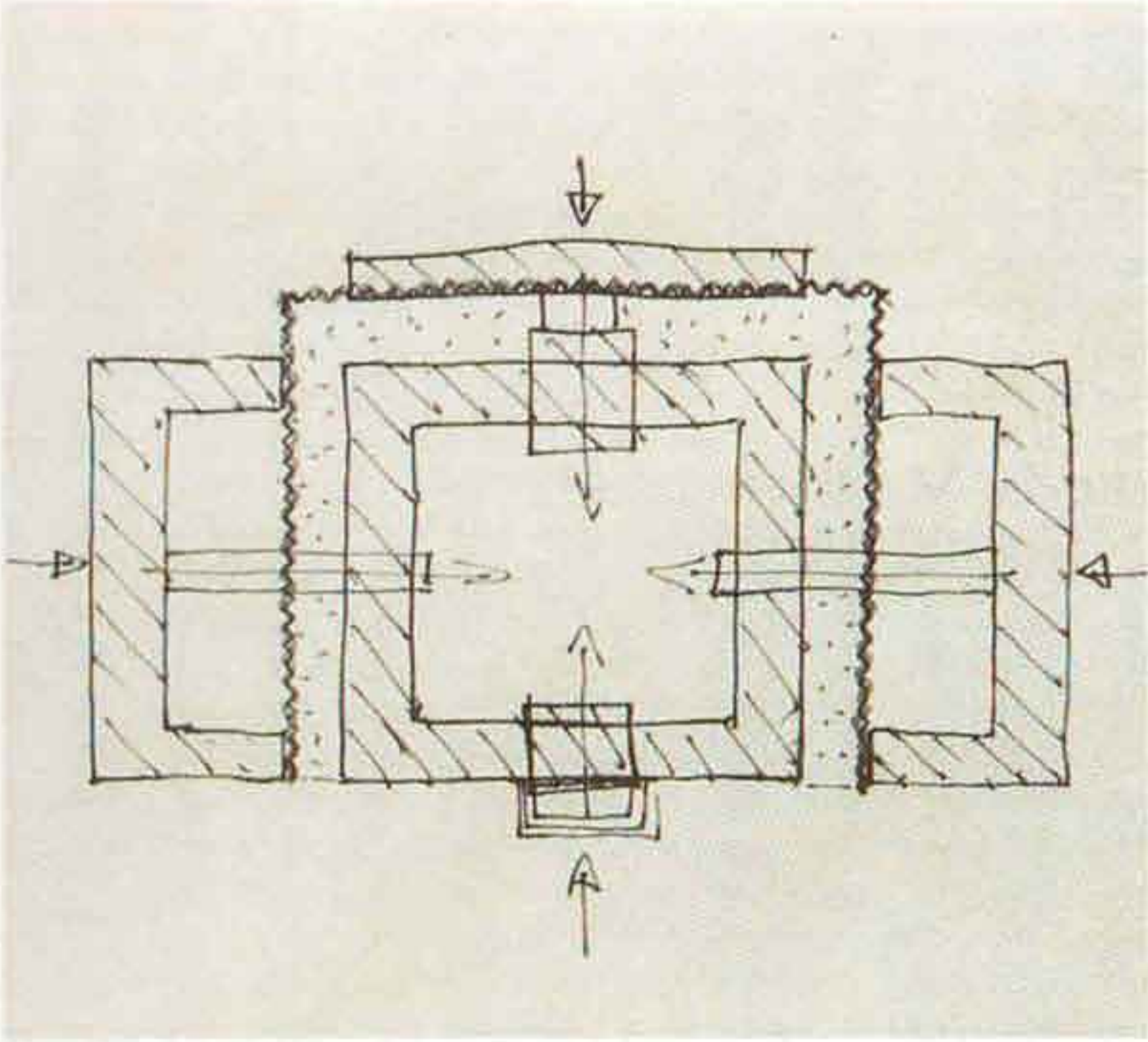
The central building, by and large, is a four-floor load-bearing structure. Most of the other buildings are framed structures. Finishing materials to be used are stone cladding, exposed concrete, and plaster. Doors and windows are wooden, and the floor in stone.





- 1 COURTCOURTS/JUDGES' CHAMBERS
- 2 ADVOCATES' CHAMBERS AND FACILITIES
- 3 ADMINISTRATION
- 4 CANTEEN
- 5 BAR COUNCIL FACILITIES
- 6 KEY ADMINISTRATION FACILITIES
- 7 PARKING
- 8 GARDENS

SITE PLAN



*Photographs by Wouter Deen*

**Client** Government of Gujarat  
**Design team** Bimal Patel, Hasmukh Patel, Jayant Gunjaria, Wouter Deen, P Venugopal, Vijay Parkara, P M Mistry, and Satyen Rawal. Harshad Jhaveri, Sanjeev Amin and Ramendra Patel (electrical)

**Consultants** M/s Vakil Mehta Sheth (structural), M/s N K and Associates (plumbing), Mihir N Patel (air-conditioning)

**Contractors** Ajay Structure Engineering Works (civil and plumbing), Apsara Electricals (electrical)

**Construction management** Parel Rawal, Mahendra Patel of M/s Hasmukh C Patel

**Built-up area** 48,750 sq m

**Cost** Rs 2,500 lakhs