A Winery in the Countryside

Bolivar, Maryland, Fall 1994

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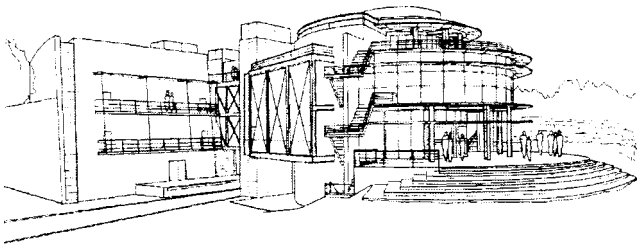
This project was completed to satisfy the requirements of a pair of co-requisite courses: ARCH 600 Comprehensive Studio and ARCH 611 Advanced Technology. These courses entail a semester-long project exploring the relationship between conceptual and technical aspects of architectural form and assembly. The underlying premise is that the same level of creativity, enthusiasm, and personal initiative must be applied to realization of an architectural idea as its original conception. This pair of courses won an American Institute of Architects Education Honors Award in January 1995, as well as a Lilly Center for Teaching Excellence Award in April 1995. The work presented here served, along with the work of nine other students, as supporting evidence for the strength of the cumculae in these award submissions.

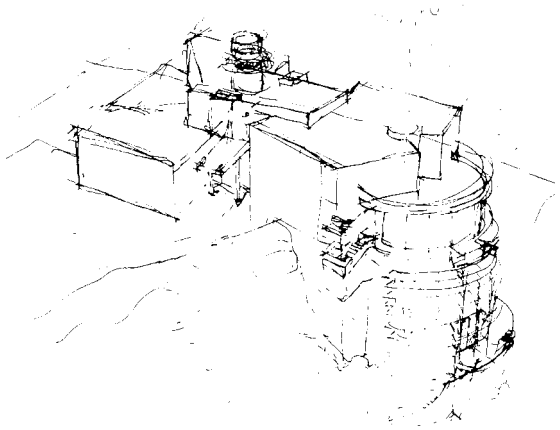
The study of architectural form traditionally takes place in the design studio, while the materials and methods of producing those forms are studied in technology courses outside studio. The intent of ARCH 600/611 is to narrow the gap between design and technology by concentrating on the impact of material and technique on architectural form in a studio setting. In order to study the integration of technical, compositional, and thematic issues, students create conceptual drawings of the structure, mechanical systems, lighting systems, framing models, framing plans, wall sections, and large scale details. End products include a set of design development drawings explicitly showing how the structure and environmental control systems fit into the architectural composition, the study of the exterior walls relative to the structural system, plus construction of a large 1/2"=1'-0" model of a paradigmatic portion of the project.

The students learn by doing, and develop a critical attitude toward their initial solutions. Through an iterative process, they continually refine the project. James Michener describes this process in the following passage about a carpenters beginning efforts to learn boat building:

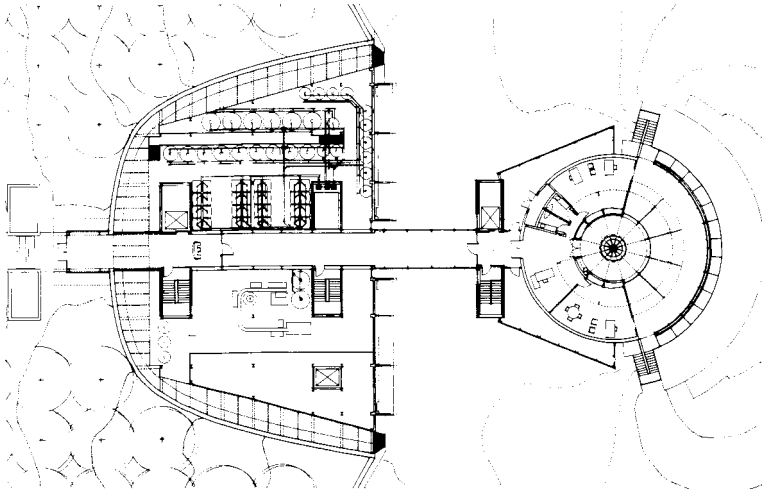
> He had seen a great deal about decking a ship and building bulwarks and finishing off the gunwales, but like the artist who rides a horse a hundred times, and never comprehends it until he tries to draw it, or like the novelist who has witnessed a human situation repeatedly but has not really understood it until forced to state in cold words what happened, he had lived in the heart of ships but had not seen them. ***(Chesapeake,*** James Michener, Random House, 1978)

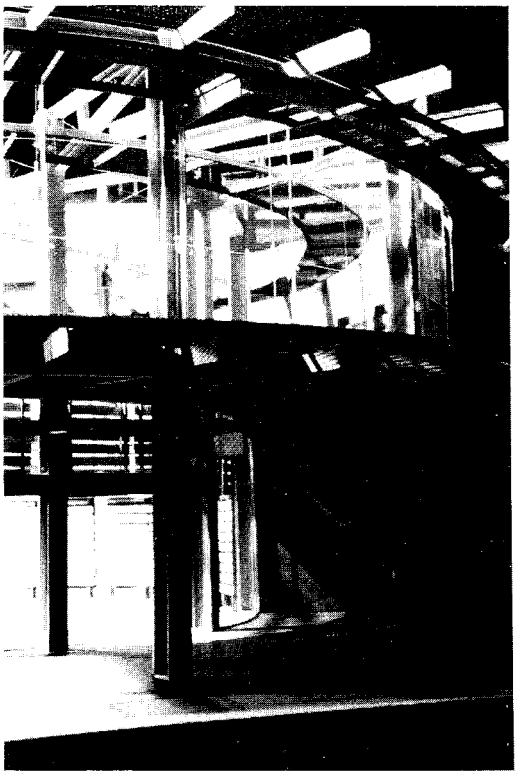
Thus, the large scale models serve to mke vivid the building elements, their assembly, and the architectural entity they constitute. By building their projects in the form of these large scale models, students achieve a greater understanding of how to make architecture.





Above: Perspective
Right: Concept sketch

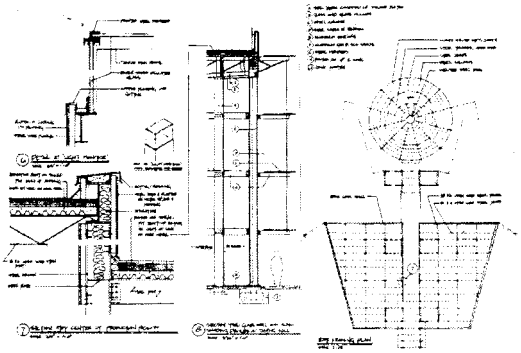




Regarding the specific program of the work shown here, the student's intentions for this project include explorations of its possible interpretation of a machine in the garden. This winery in the landscape takes its cues from rural archetypal agricultural and industrial forms, and thus explorations regarding its symbolic and technical content included ideas of the machine in the garden. Situated on higher ground, it takes advantage of the southerly panorama of rolling hills and forests, benefitting climatically by being partially interred in the ground at the sites steepest slope. The interplay of the three major components and its structural expression conveys specific ideas of human interaction with nature through industrial processes.

The spatial experience commences by passing below the bridge on approach. A dramatic entry at the upper level allows visitors to cross a chasm separating the production area from the earthen dam. A tour of the wine-making process begins after descending within this production volume. Visitors then cross through the bridge towards the silo containing the museum, wine-tasting hall, wine library, and administration.

The production facility's allusion to an earthen dam is expressed through the use of a canted, curvilinear exposed concrete wall. A vernacular expression of a trussed bridge links the production facility to the cylindrical volume, which references a grain silo, common in rural landscapes. At night, the lighting scheme silhouettes mechanical and structural components to the surface, completing the machine in the garden concept.



Above left: Entry (Upper) Level plan
Above right: Wine-tasting Hall
Above: "Technology Sheet," structure, framing
Below: Longitudinal section