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State of Illinois
Center

Helmut Jahn

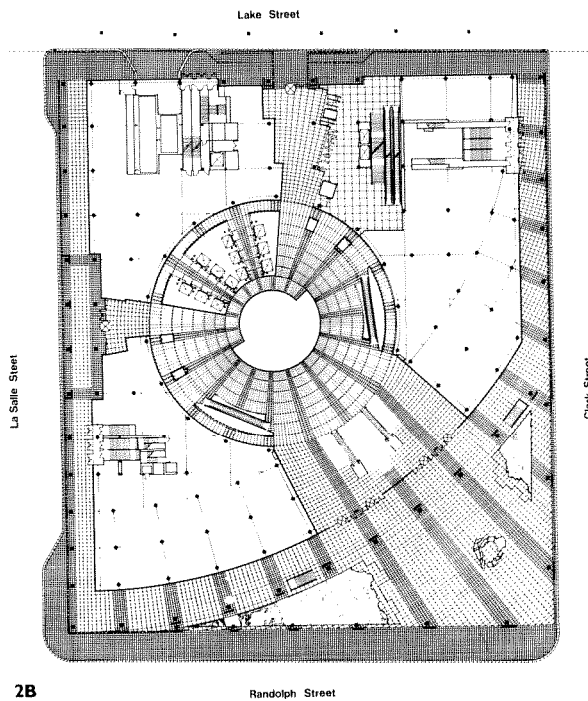
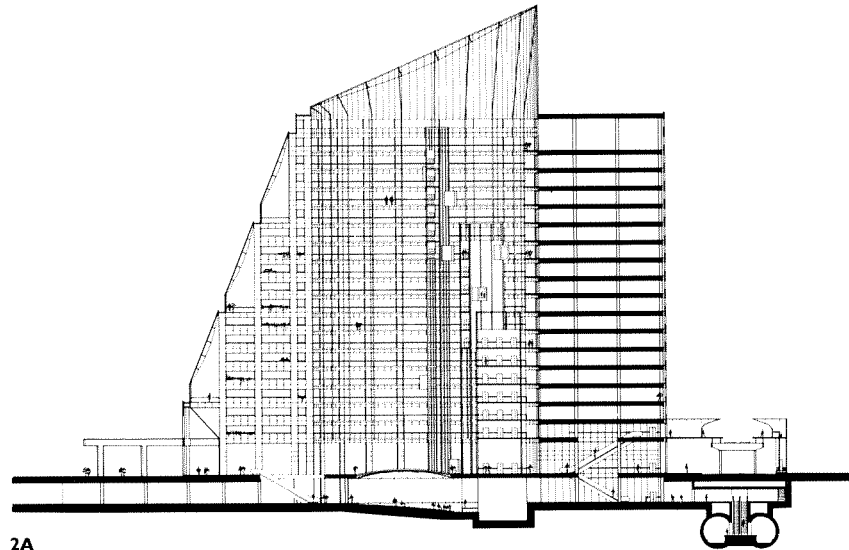


2 Atrium.
Photograph by James R. Steinkamp.

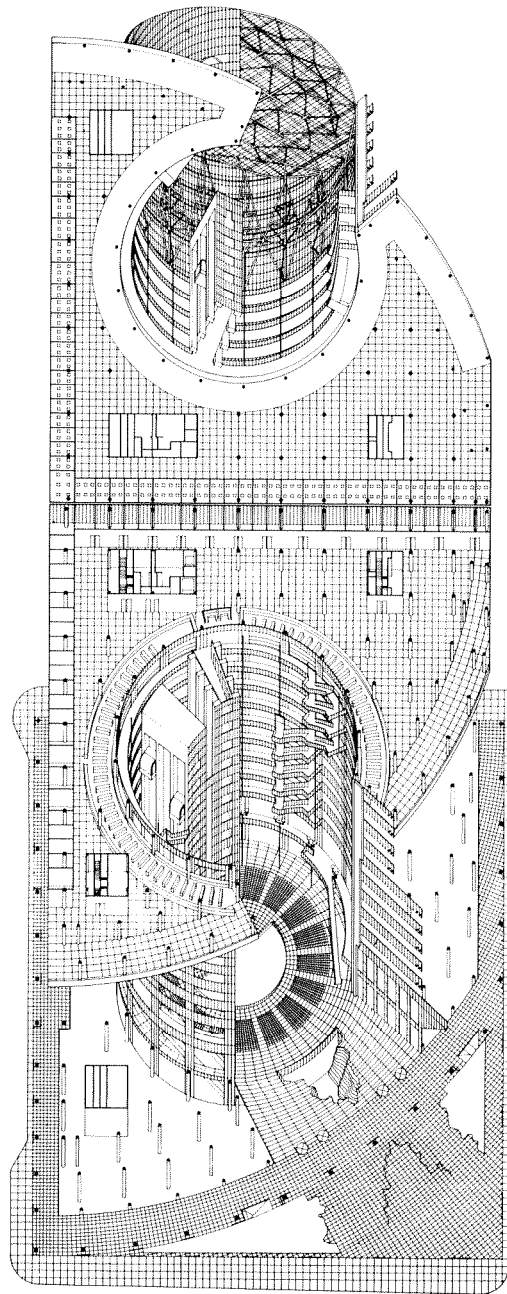
The State of Illinois Center, as a major government building, required a new ideological base. It is a complex amalgam of historical precedent, technology, and urban design. Through a process of fragmentation, it transforms the representative model (Henry Ives Cobb's now demolished federal building in the Loop) into an open, democratic building, meaningful in its urban context and purpose.

The regularity of the square building lot is at once accepted and denied. The triangular plan has two sides aligned to the square site, but the third is rounded to form a giant crescent background to a pedestrian plaza. The arcade surrounding the building breaks down into individual pilasters, which diminish toward the entry at the corner. These structures mentally reestablish the traditional "squaring" of the block, which is contradicted by the built volume above, using a multitude of transparent, reflective, and colored glass to decorate and reinforce the office container. At the ground floor, consideration has been given to continuity with the surroundings, and this is contrasted by the treatment of the upper part.

The spatial sequence of forecourt, arcade, and rotunda establishes the "interphase" between inside and outside and, above all, creates public space as a gift to the city. The duality of the language on the outside is continued here through the Campidoglio-like treatment of the plaza combined with the structural and futuristic



2A Building section
2B Ground floor plan

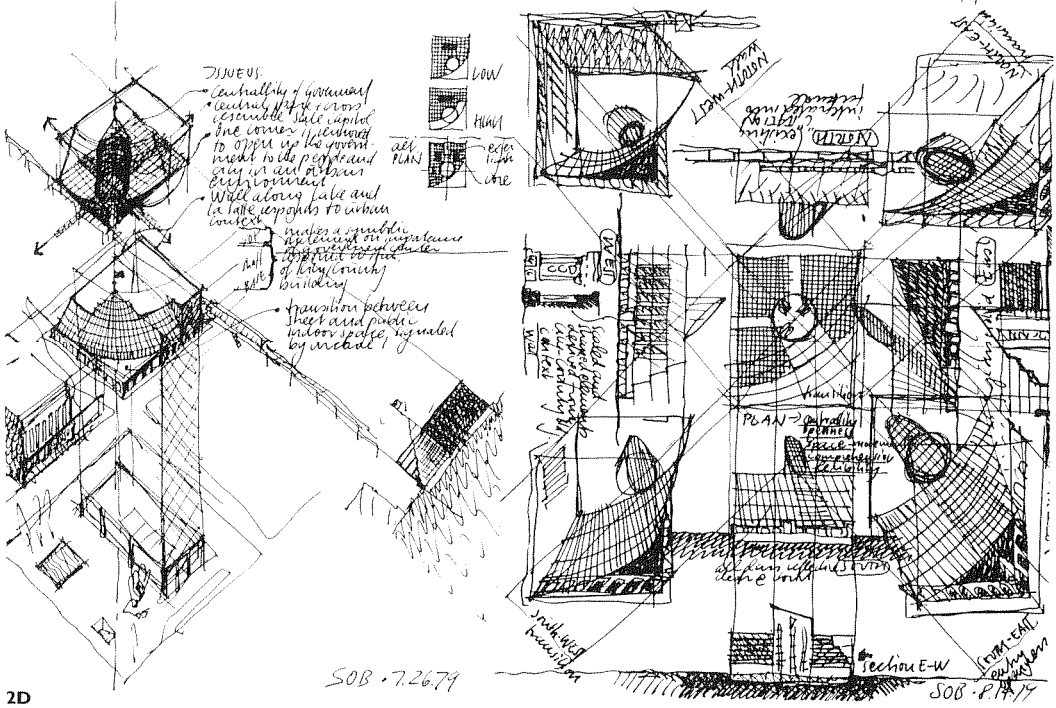
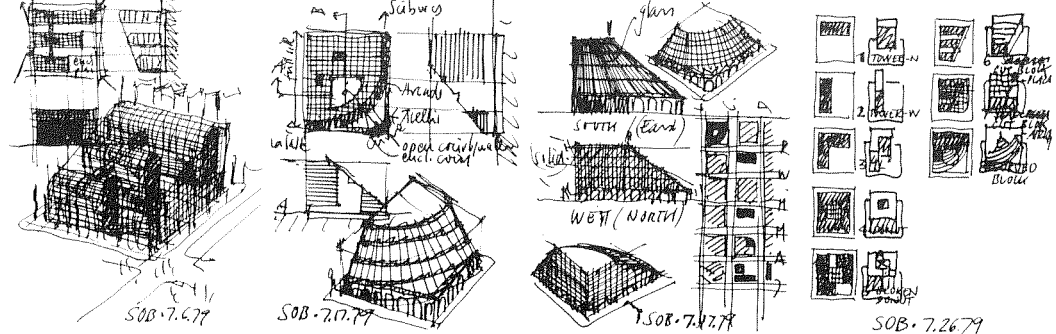
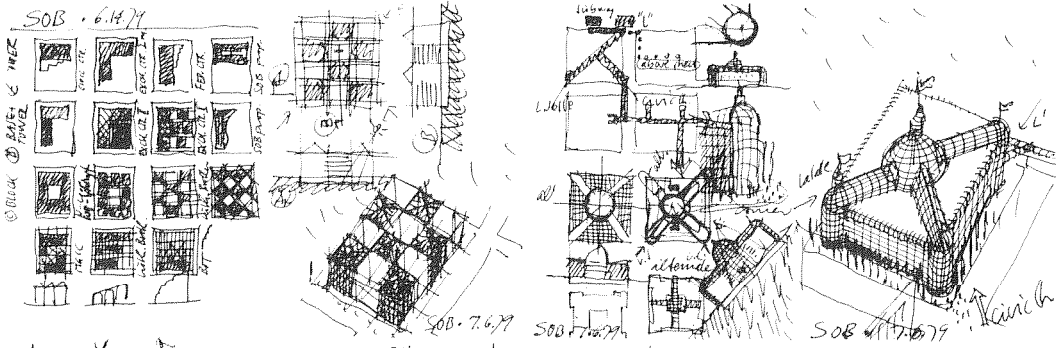


treatment of the vertical surfaces and the top, the mechanistic animation of the elevators and the dynamic movement of the escalators and stairs.

This duality between historic reference and technological imagery is a bold, optimistic statement in a world today so preoccupied with conservatism and historicism. There is still promise of harboring the benefits of technology for life and society.

2C

2C Up and down axonometric views
2D Conceptual sketches



2D