

# Erich Mendelsohn

(21 March 1887 – 15 September 1953)

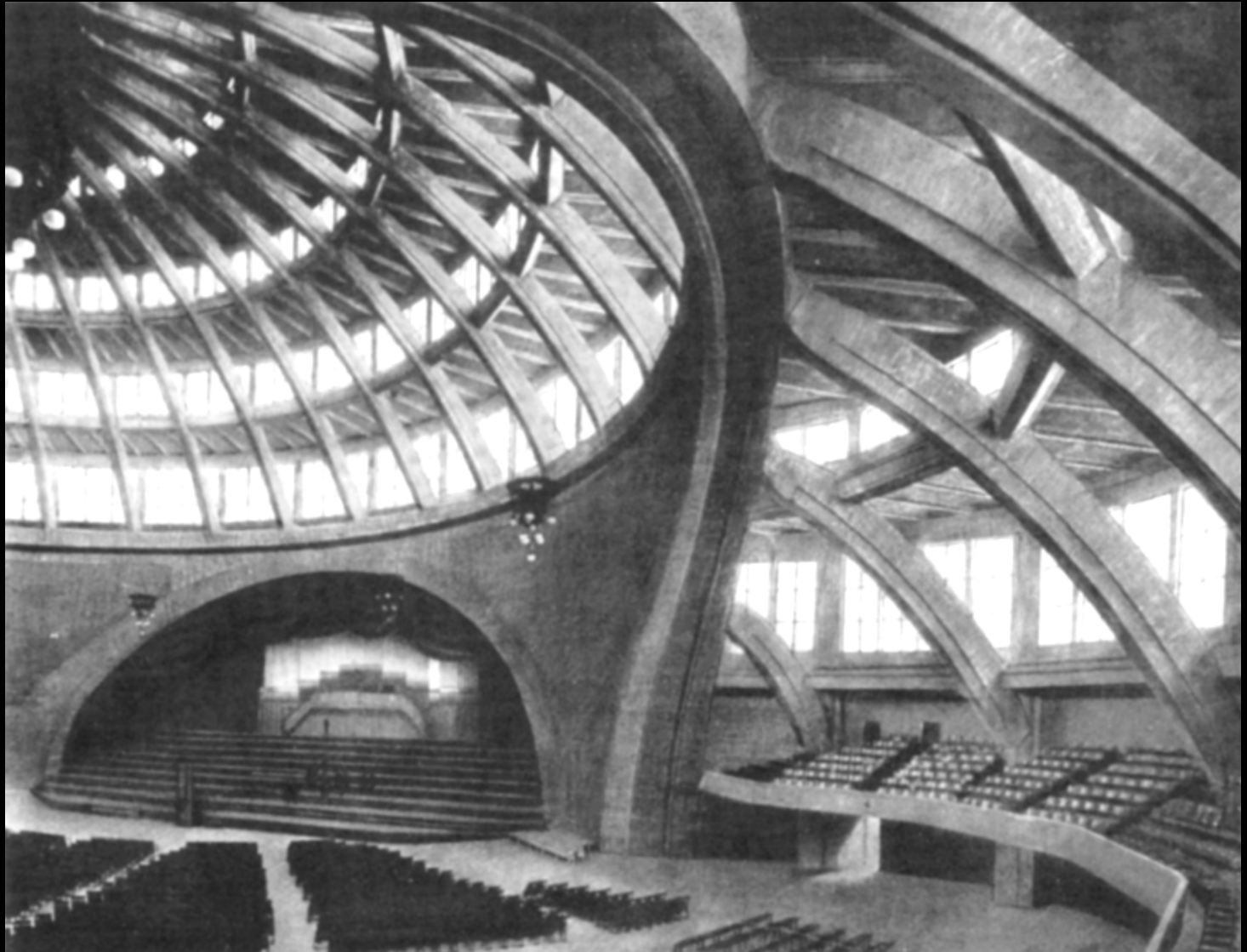


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“Every building material, like every substance, has certain conditions governing the demands that can be made on it...Steel in combination with concrete, reinforced concrete, is the building material for the new formal expression, for the new style...

The relation between support and load, this apparently eternal law, will also have to alter its image, for things support themselves which formerly had to be supported...”

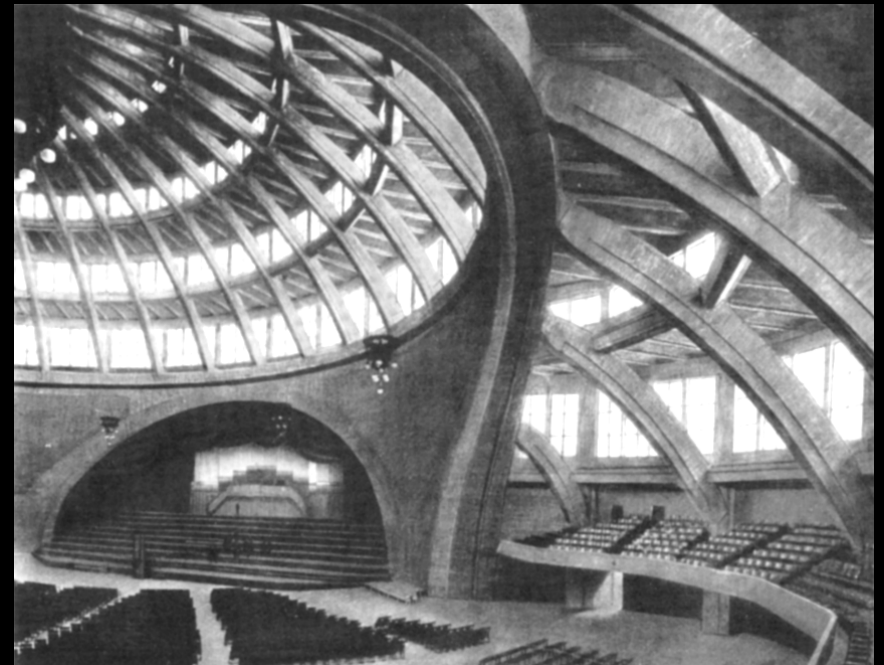
Erich Mendelsohn, letter to Luise Maas, March 14, 1914



Max Berg, Centennial Hall  
Breslau, Germany  
1913 (now Wroclaw, Poland.)



Wassily Kandinsky  
*Painting with White Border*  
1913



Max Berg, Centennial Hall  
Breslau, Germany  
1913 (now Wroclaw, Poland.)



## Expressionism



Franz Marc  
*Rehe im Walde*



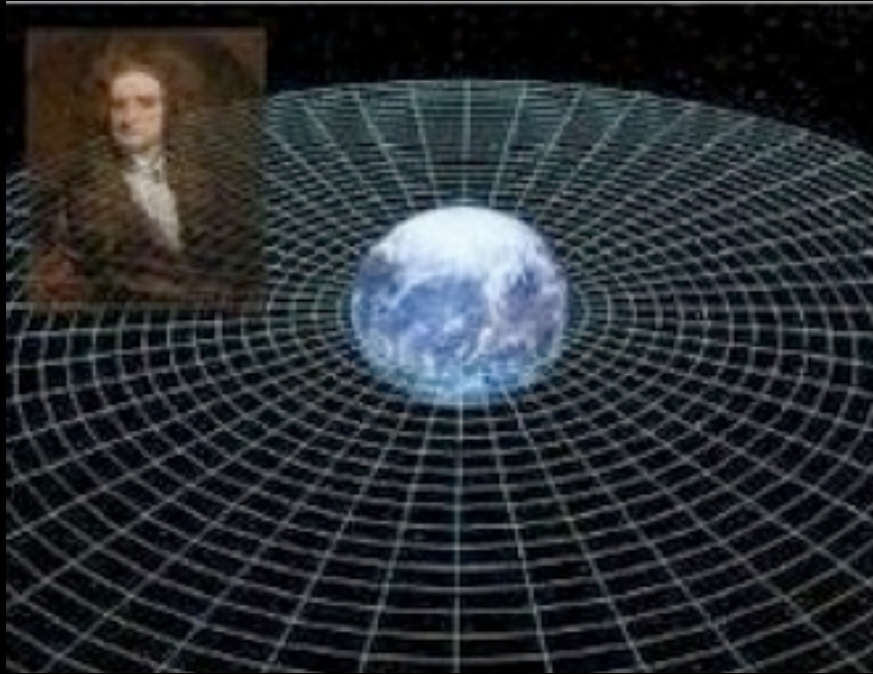
Wassily Kandinsk  
*On White II*

Umberto Boccioni,  
*Unique Forms of  
Continuity in  
Space, 1913*

Analogy between a  
particular industrial  
technology—reinforced  
concrete— and the  
human body



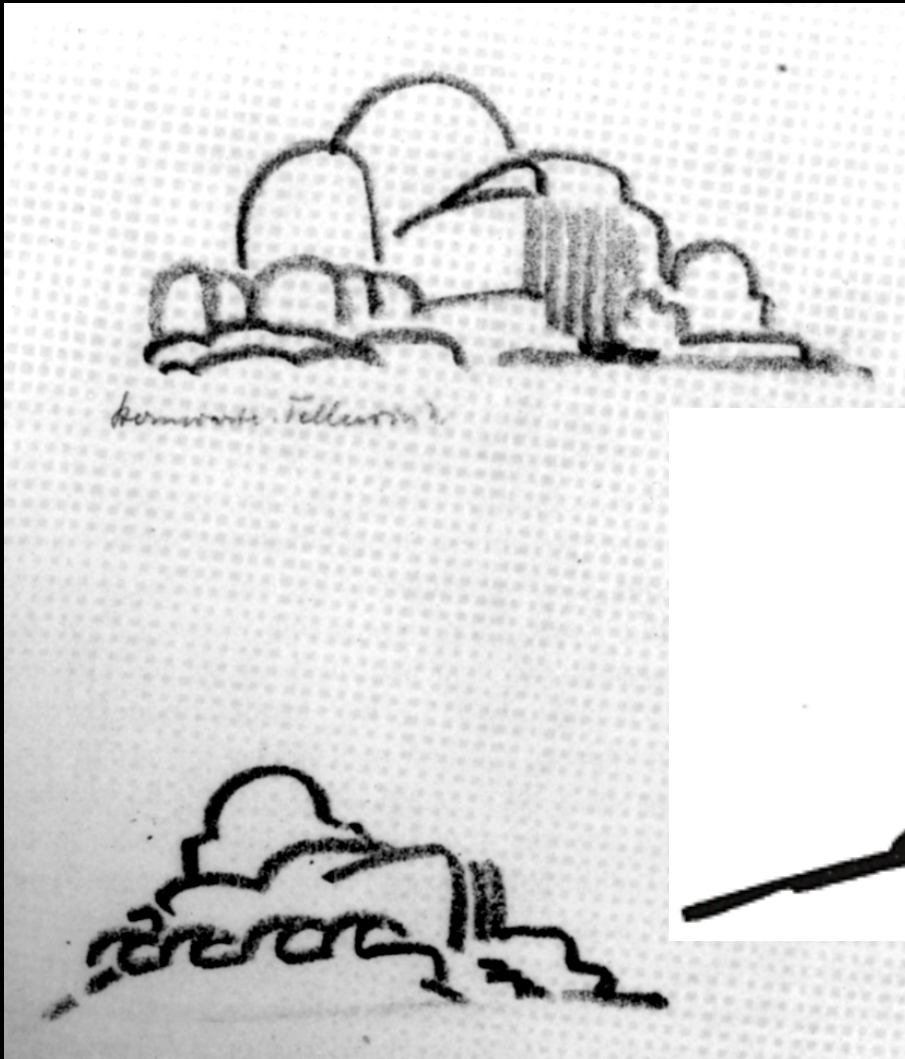




Newton's fixed space



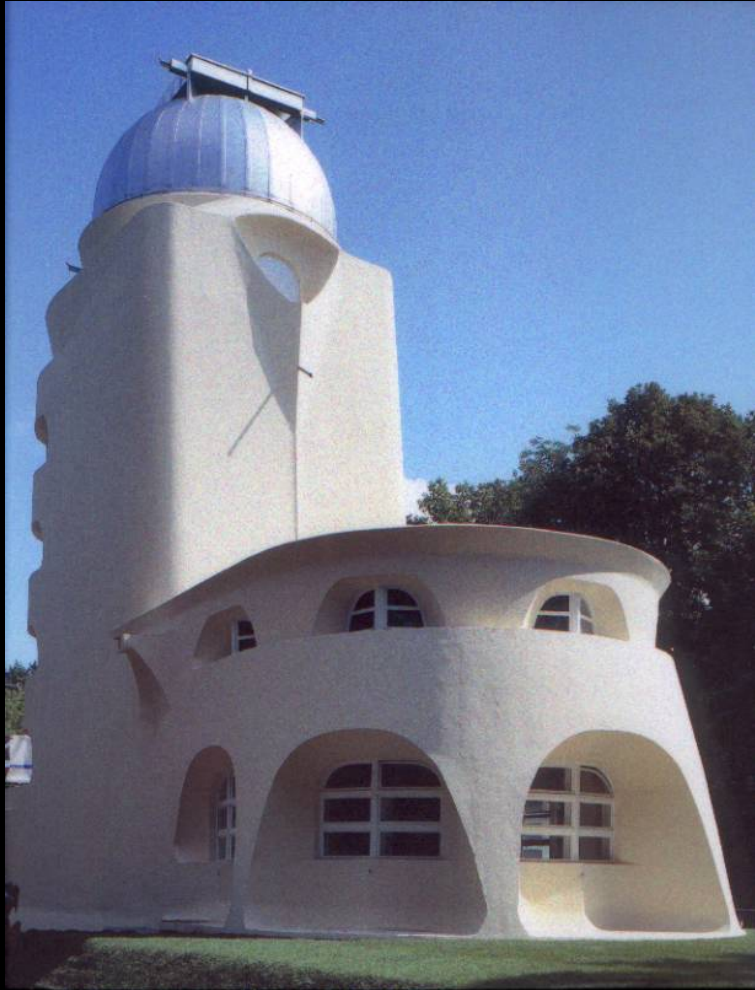
Einstein's flexible space-time



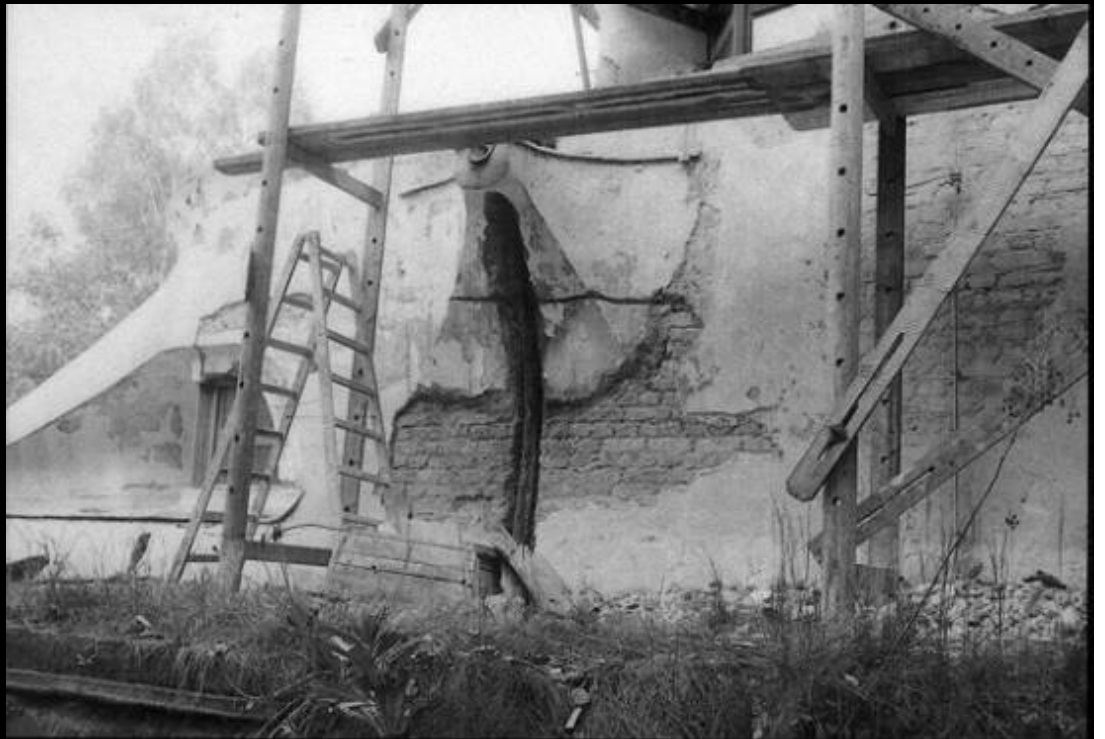
Erich Mendelsohn, sketches for the  
Einstein Tower, Potsdam, Germany  
1917

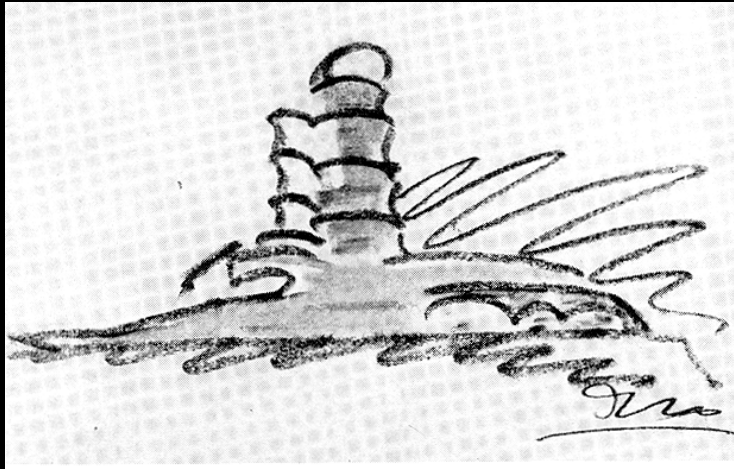
light  
space  
time



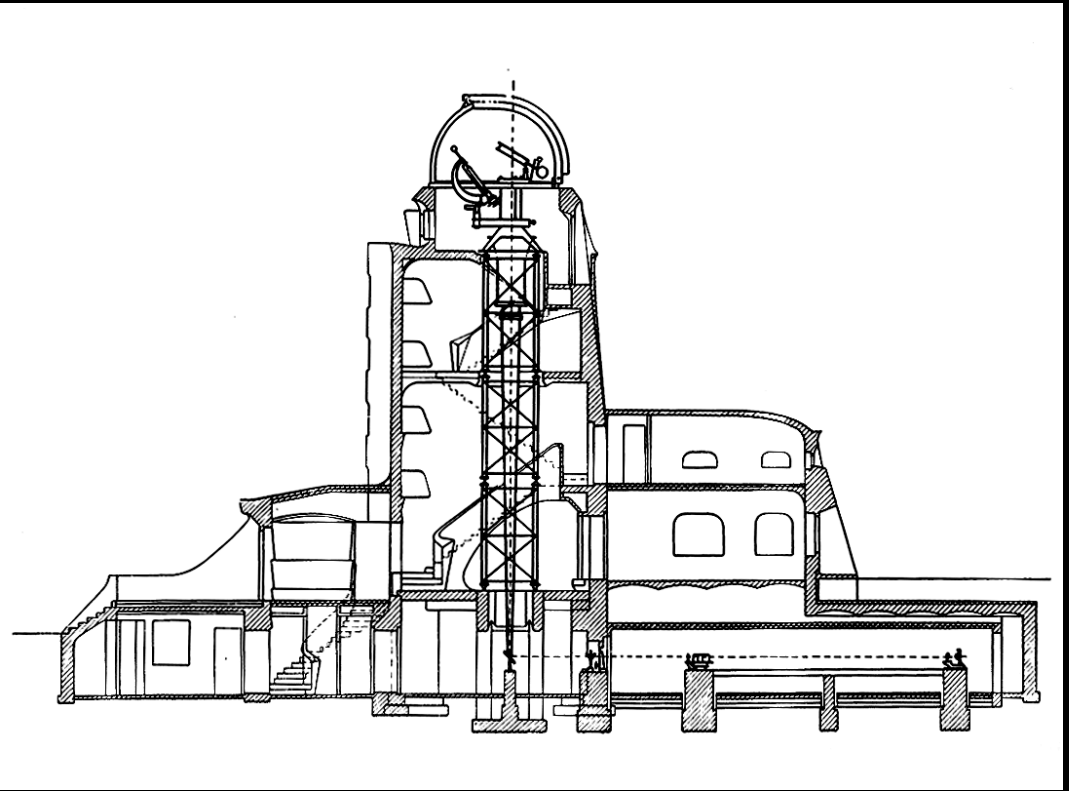
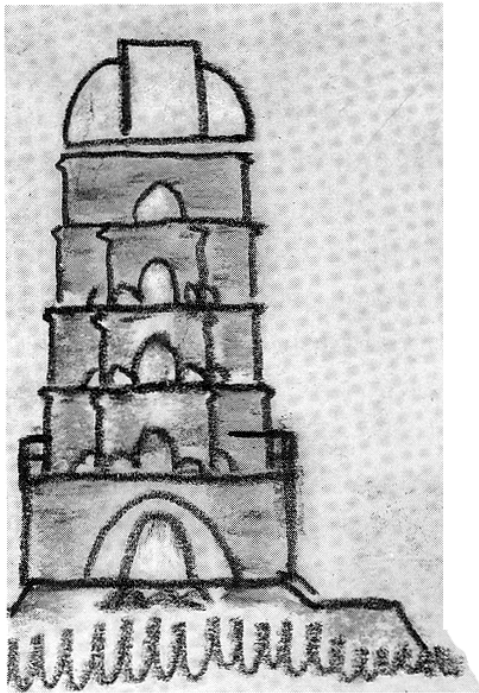


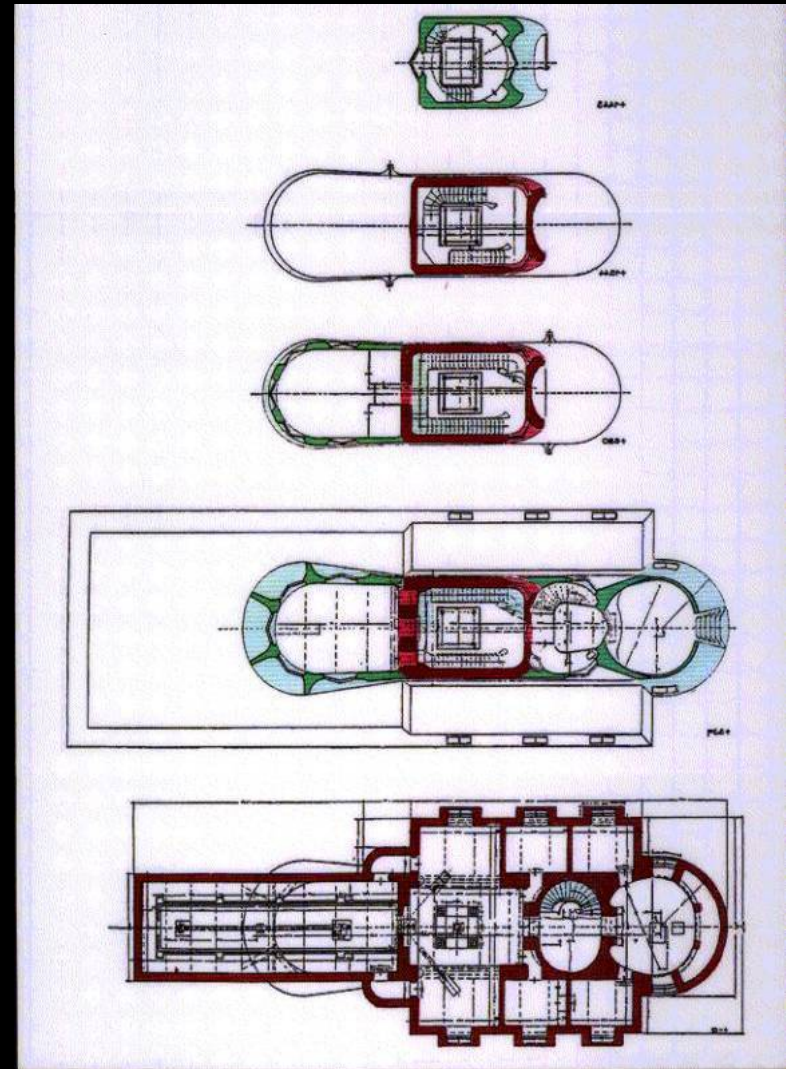
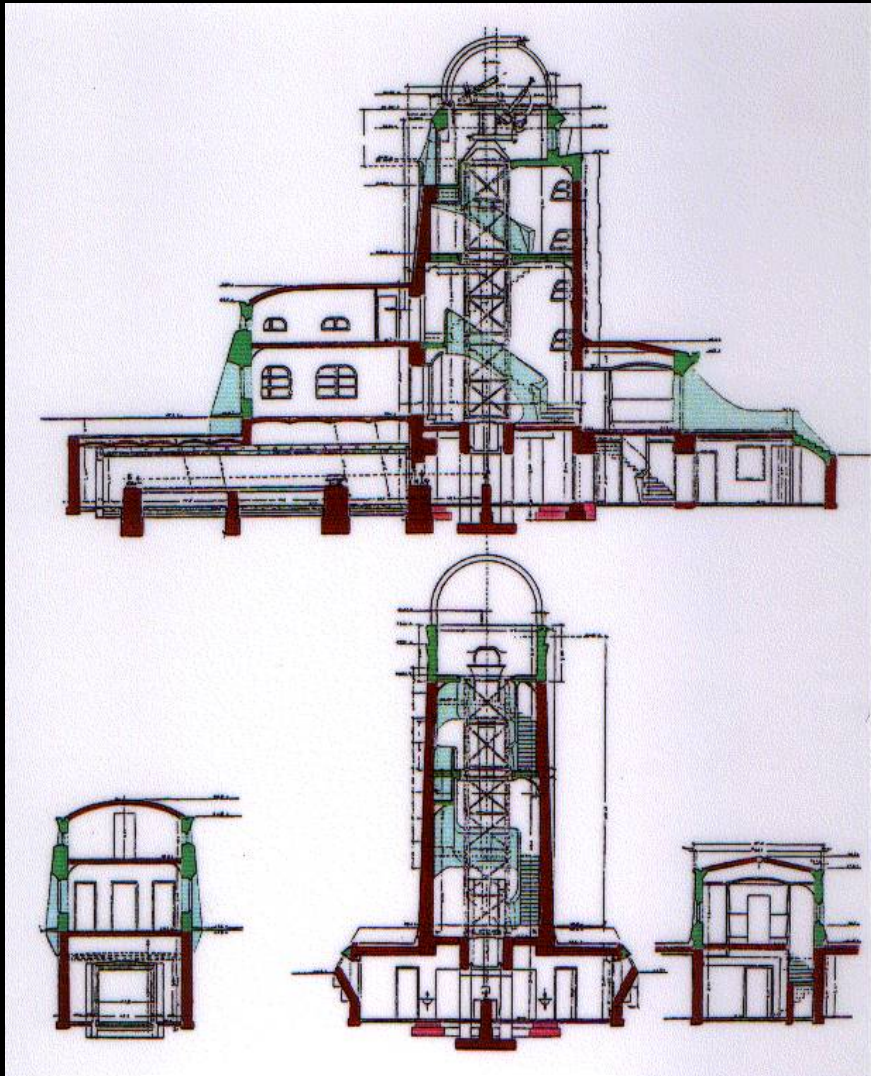






“organic”





shift in materials



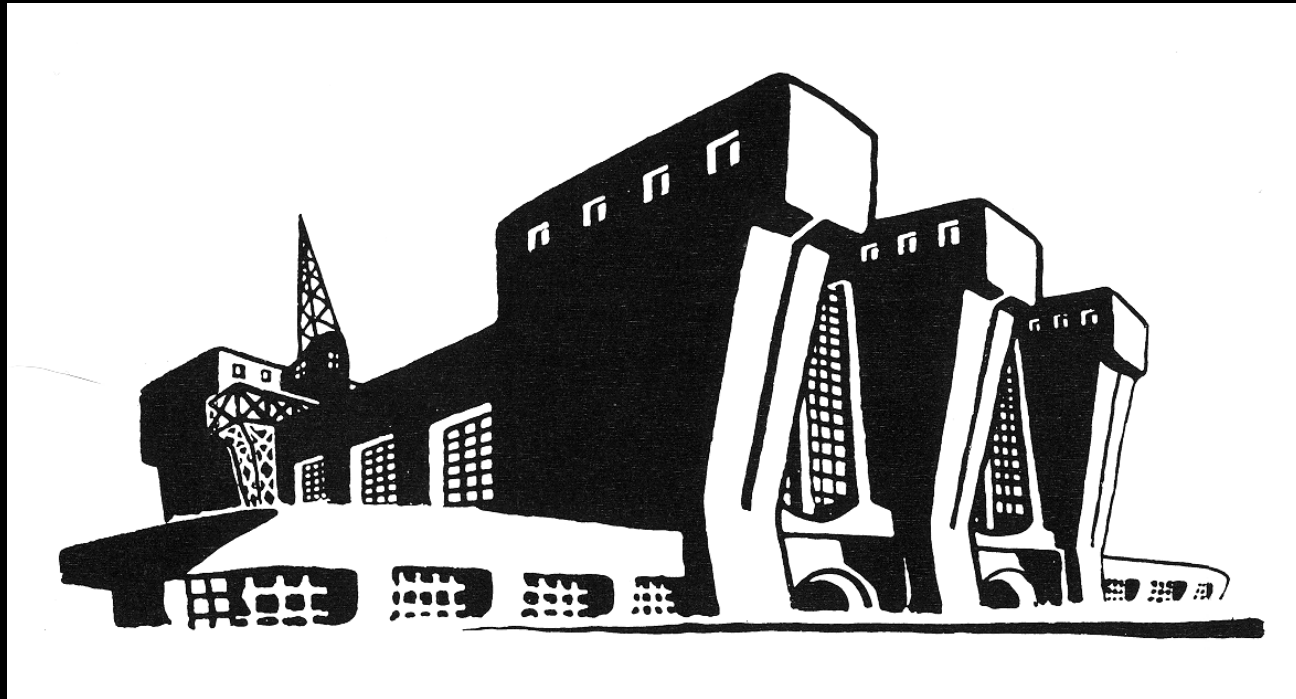
Imagery worked on several levels.  
It represented the:

1. **Truth** of reinforced concrete construction in which a steel frame or skeleton supported and stiffened the concrete flesh
2. Stresses shaping the form (the **compression and tension** of both reinforced concrete and the human body)
3. Intricate curved pieces of the human spine corresponded to his **aesthetic taste**
4. **Human presence** that could arouse the empathy of viewers.



Erich Mendelsohn,  
Einstein Tower, Potsdam, Germany  
1920-21

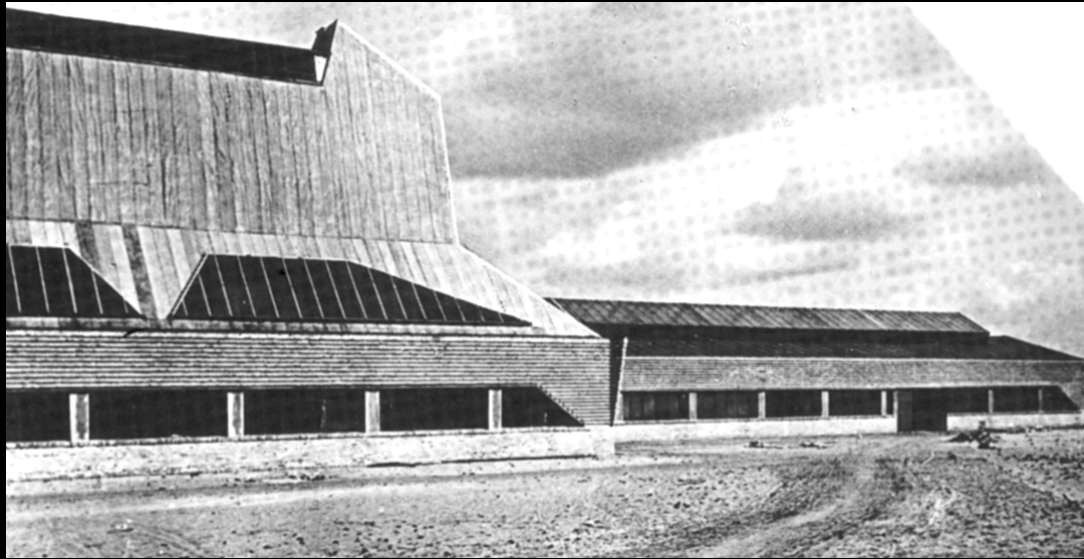
“...Walls are kept in place without the weight of the roof pressing on them and holding them together. Ceilings over our heads and vaults reach out without any intermediate supports being necessary. Towers mount and grow out of themselves with their own power and spirit and soul.”



Erich Mendelsohn, project for an AEG factory, 1914



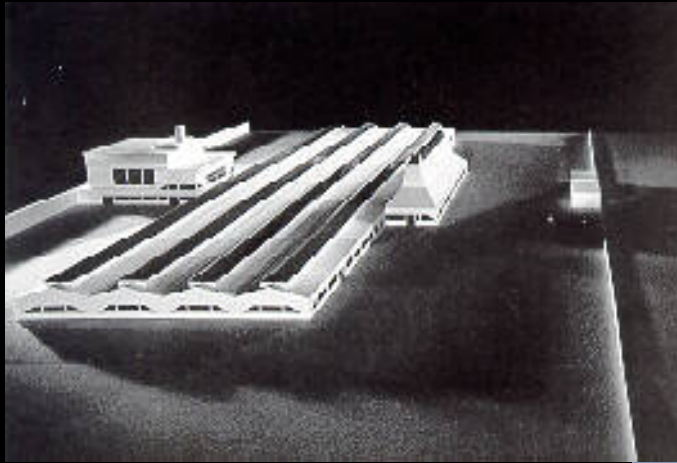
Sketch for World University, Berkeley Hills, California, 1943



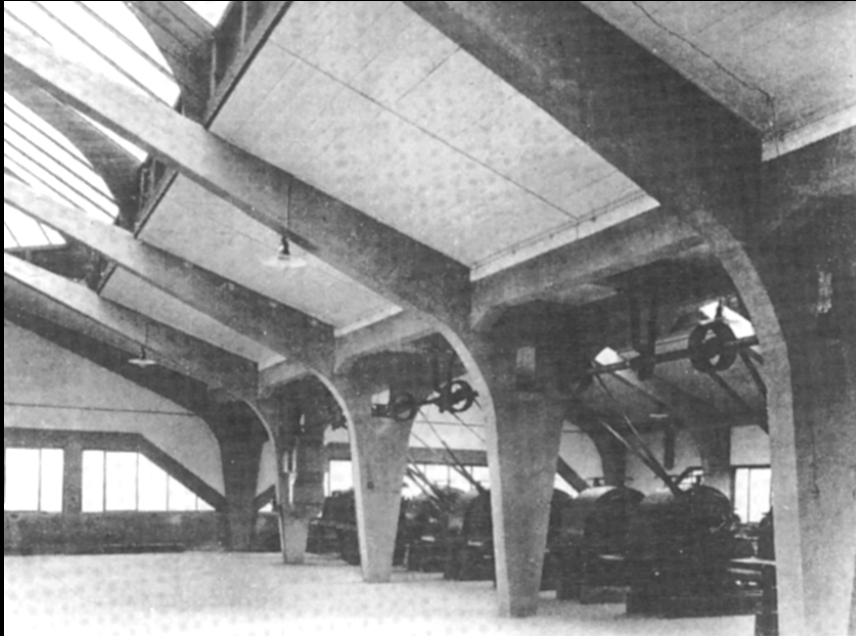
“dynamic  
functionalism”



Erich Mendelsohn, The Steinberg, Hermann Company Hat Factory,  
Lukenwalde, Germany, 1921-23

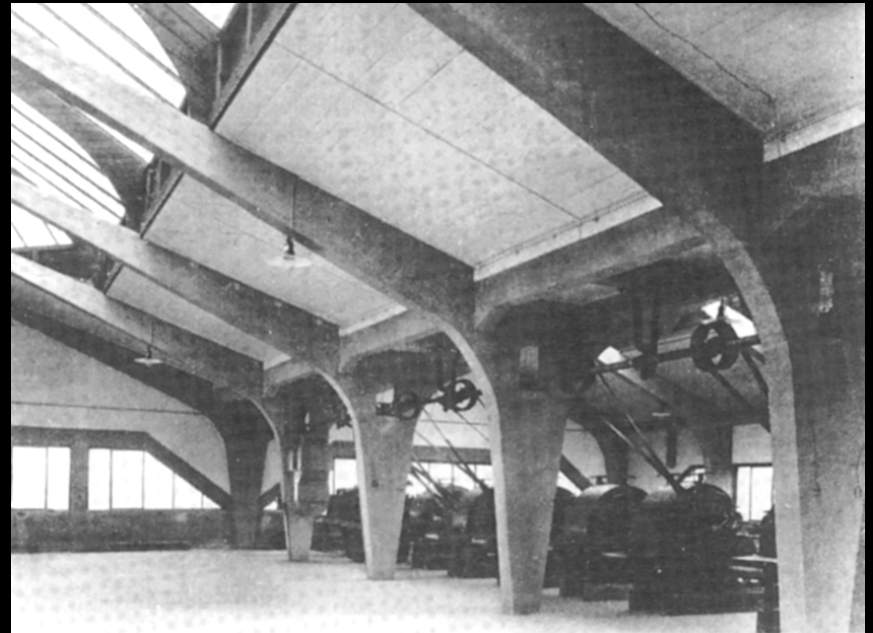


Erich Mendelsohn, The Steinberg, Hermann Company Hat Factory,  
Lukenwalde, Germany, 1921-23



Erich Mendelsohn, The Steinberg, Hermann Company Hat  
Factory, spinning room

ventilation system



Allgemein Hochbau Gesellschaft,  
Fritz Cohen Company textile factory  
Gladbach, Germany, 1923

Mendelsohn believed that **horizontal compositions** best expressed the character of reinforced concrete slab construction and overthrew a dependence upon columns and piers that dated back to ancient Greece.

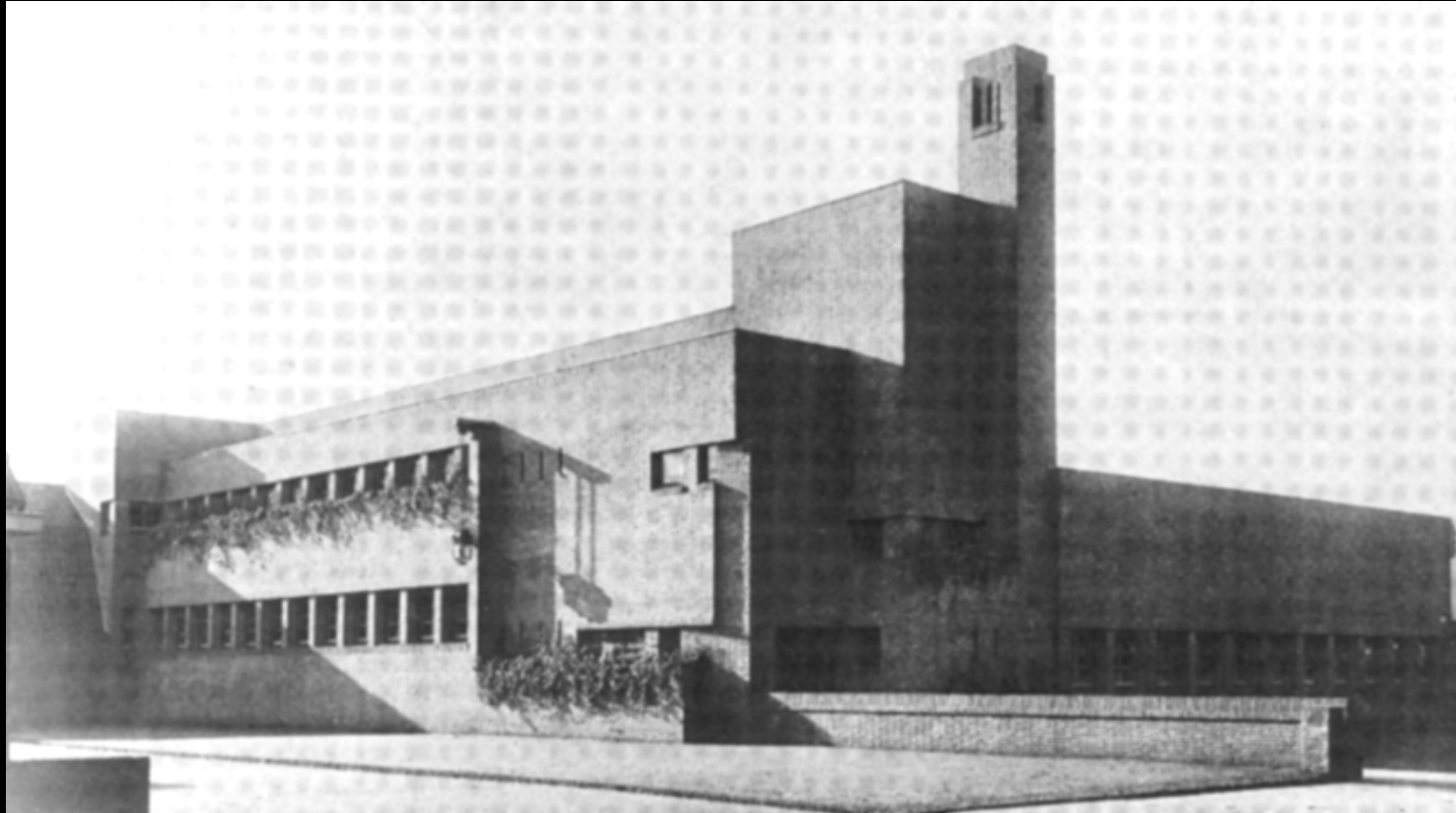




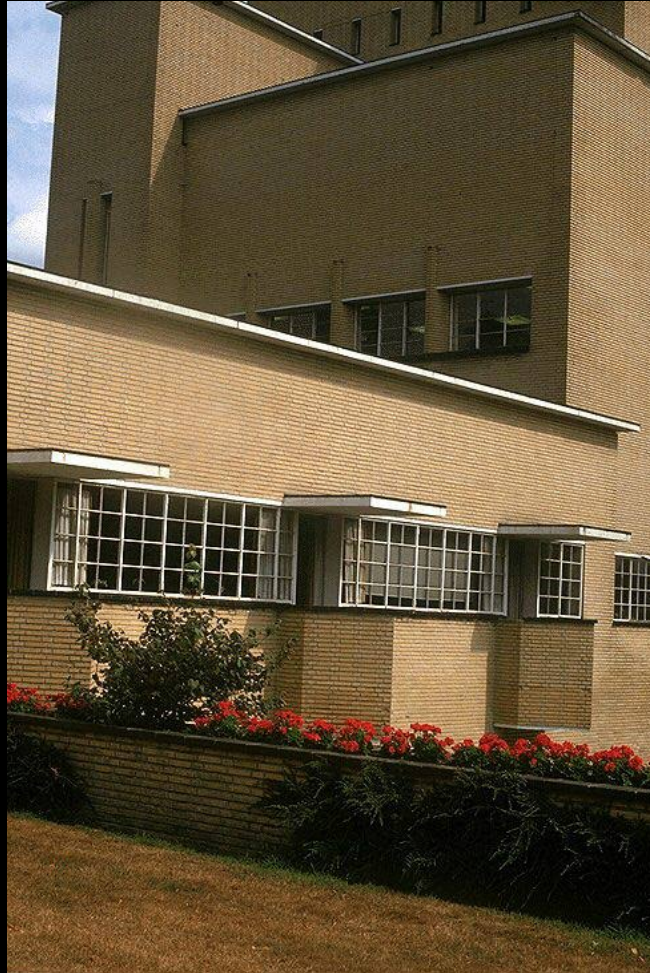
Erich Mendelsohn, Richard Neutra and Rudolf Paul Henning,  
Mossehaus renovation and addition, Berlin, Germany 1922-23

“...no political reception rooms for weary monarchs but hygienic workrooms for the busy representatives of their people[;] no back corridors for backstairs diplomacy but open glazed rooms for the public negotiations of honest men.”





Wilhelm Dudok, Dr. Bavink School, Hilversum, the Netherlands, 1921



Wilhelm Dudok

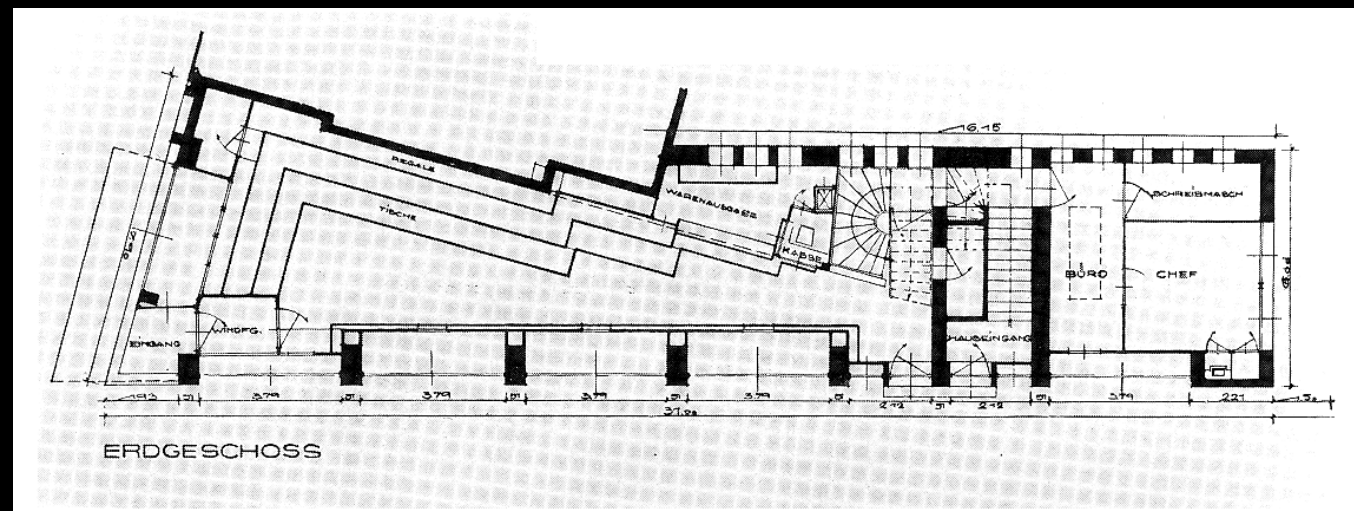
Erich Mendelsohn,  
Weichmann Silk Store,  
Gleitwitz, Germany, 1922  
(now Gliwice, Poland)

plan of ground floor.

juxtaposition of  
masses  
captured the  
dynamic tension  
between tensile  
and load-  
bearing  
capacities of  
reinforced  
concrete

eroded corners

asymmetry





Erich Mendelsohn, Schocken Department Store  
Nuremberg, Germany, 1925-26



Erich Mendelsohn, 1922  
competition entry: a high-rise office building on Kemperplatz, Berlin,



Erich Mendelsohn,  
C.A. Herpich Sons, Furriers,  
Berlin, 1924-28





Alfred Messel,  
Wertheim Department Store,  
Leipzigerplatz façade, Berlin, 1887-1904





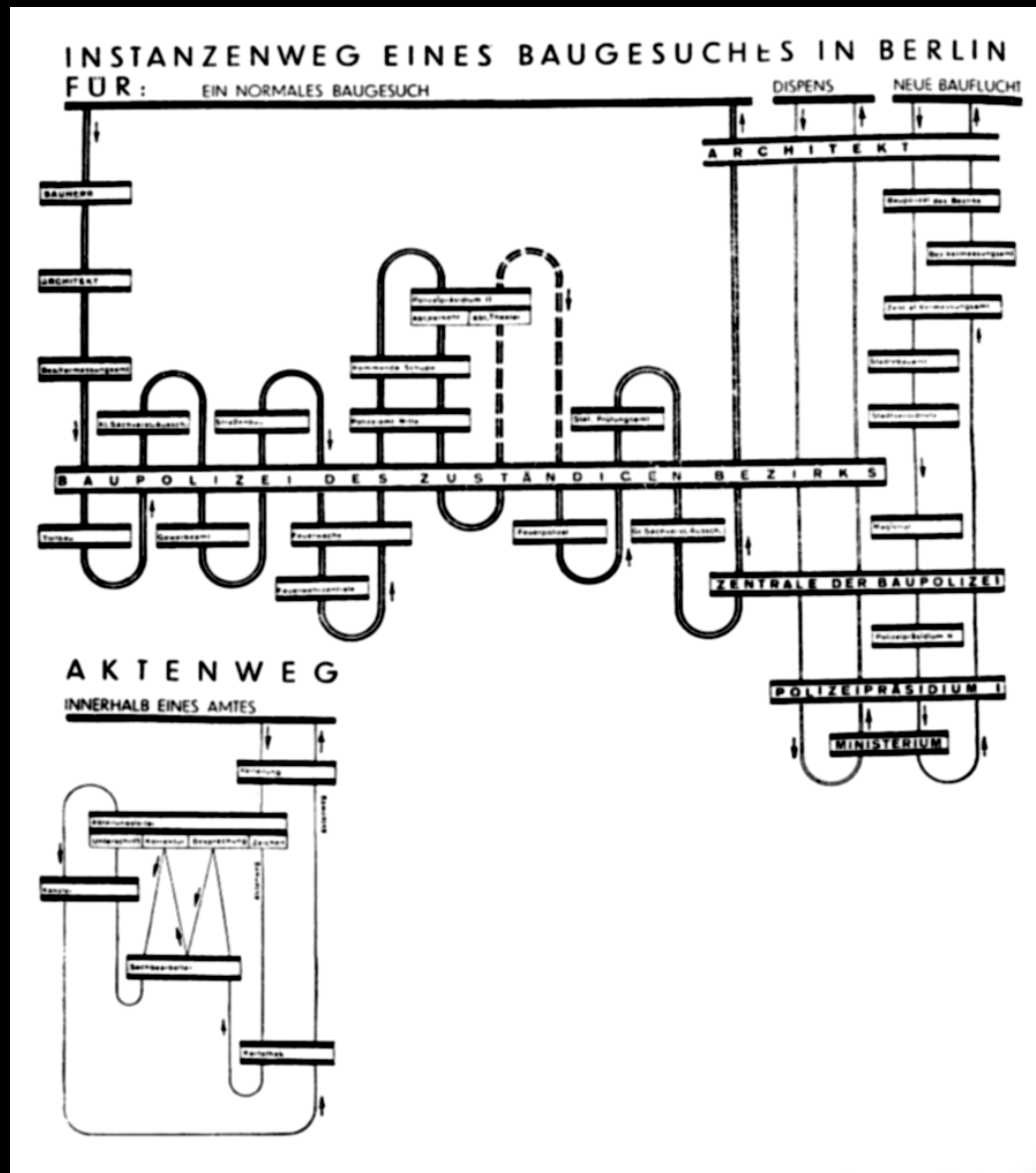
Alfred Messel,  
Wertheim Department Store,  
Leipzigerplatz interior, Berlin, 1887-1904

Alfred Messel,  
Wertheim Department Store,  
interior



Erich Mendelsohn,  
C.A. Herpich Sons, Furriers  
interior



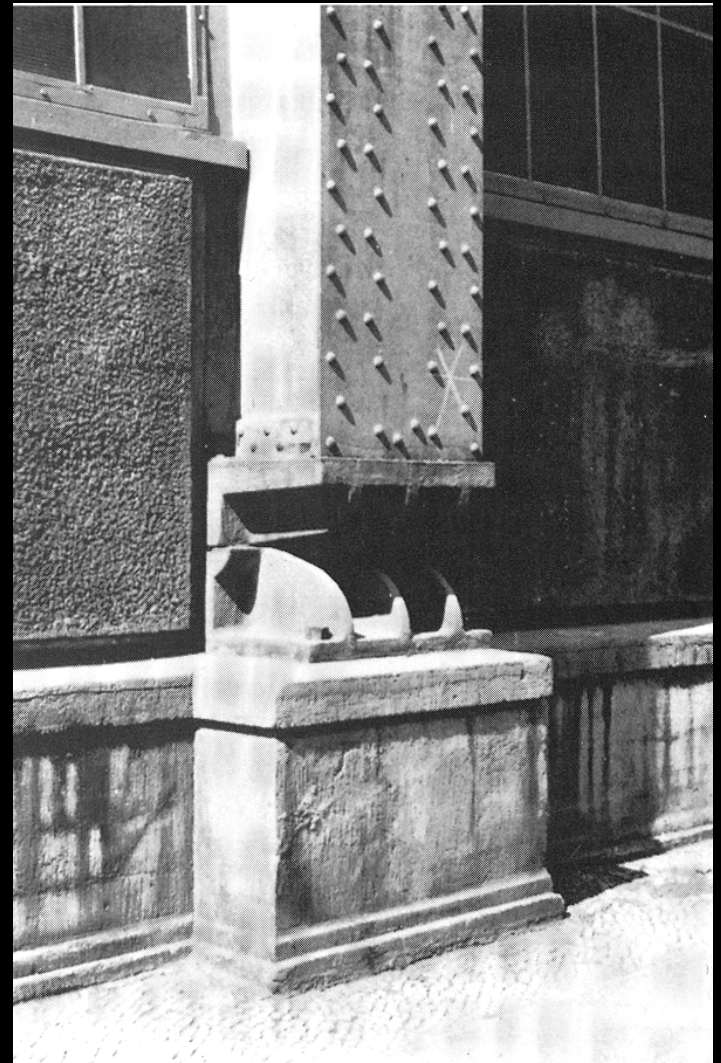


Erich Mendelsohn,  
 diagram of process of getting a building permit in Berlin

# The Ring

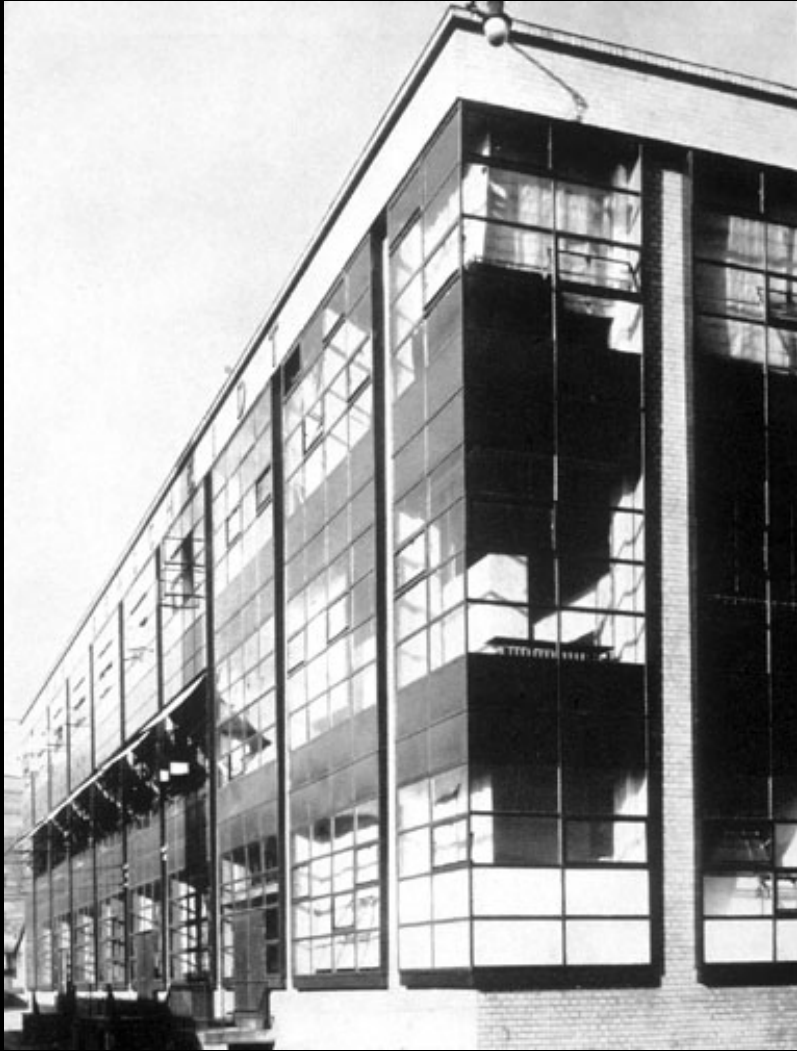
April 1924

- Peter Behrens
- Otto Bartning
- Walter Gropius
- Hugo Haring
- Erich Mendelsohn
- Mies Van der Rohe
- Hans Poelzig
- Bruno and Max Taut



Peter Behrens, AEG turbine factory, Berlin, 1909

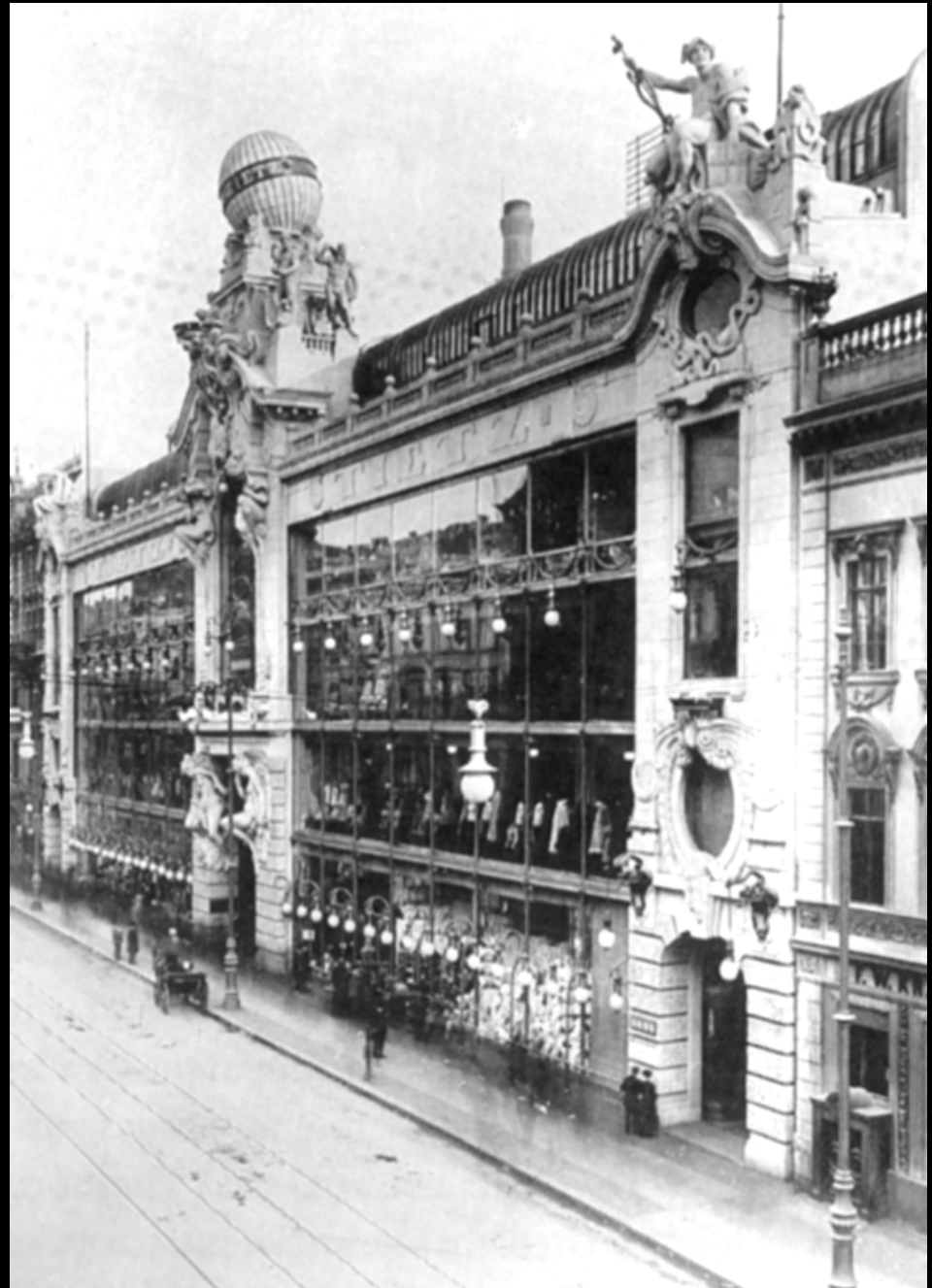




Walter Gropius and Adolf Meyer,  
model factory, Werkbund exhibition,  
Cologne, 1914

advertising  
transparency  
light

Bernhard Sehring,  
Hermann Tietz Department Store,  
Berlin 1899-1900





Fritz Lang, photograph of Times Square, 1926

colored lights and chaos: America

Erich Mendelsohn,  
C.A. Herpich Sons, Furriers,  
Berlin, 1924-28



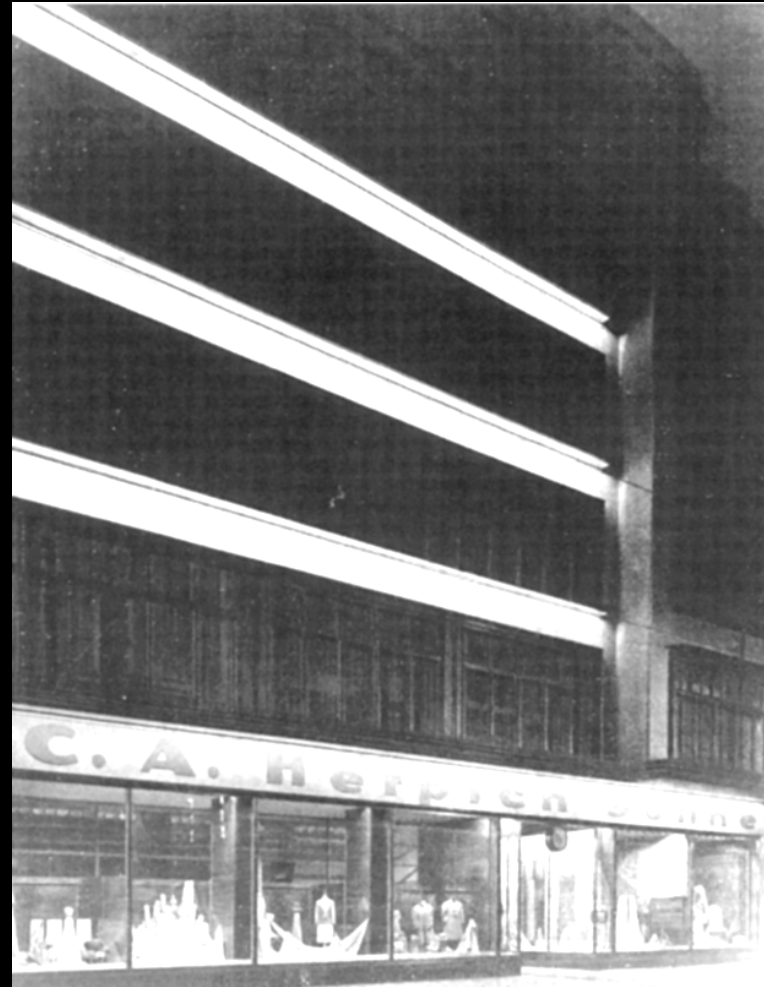


Erich Mendelsohn, C.A. Herpich Sons, Furriers, display windows

Erich Mendelsohn,  
C.A. Herpich Sons, Furriers  
night view

exploit lightness and transparency  
of the steel frame

cladding the frame in travertine



Erich Mendelsohn,

Leiser Sons shoe store, Berlin, 1930



Cohen-Epstein store

Duisberg, Germany, 1926-27



Erich Mendelsohn, C.A. Herpich Sons, Furriers,  
construction photograph, 1925



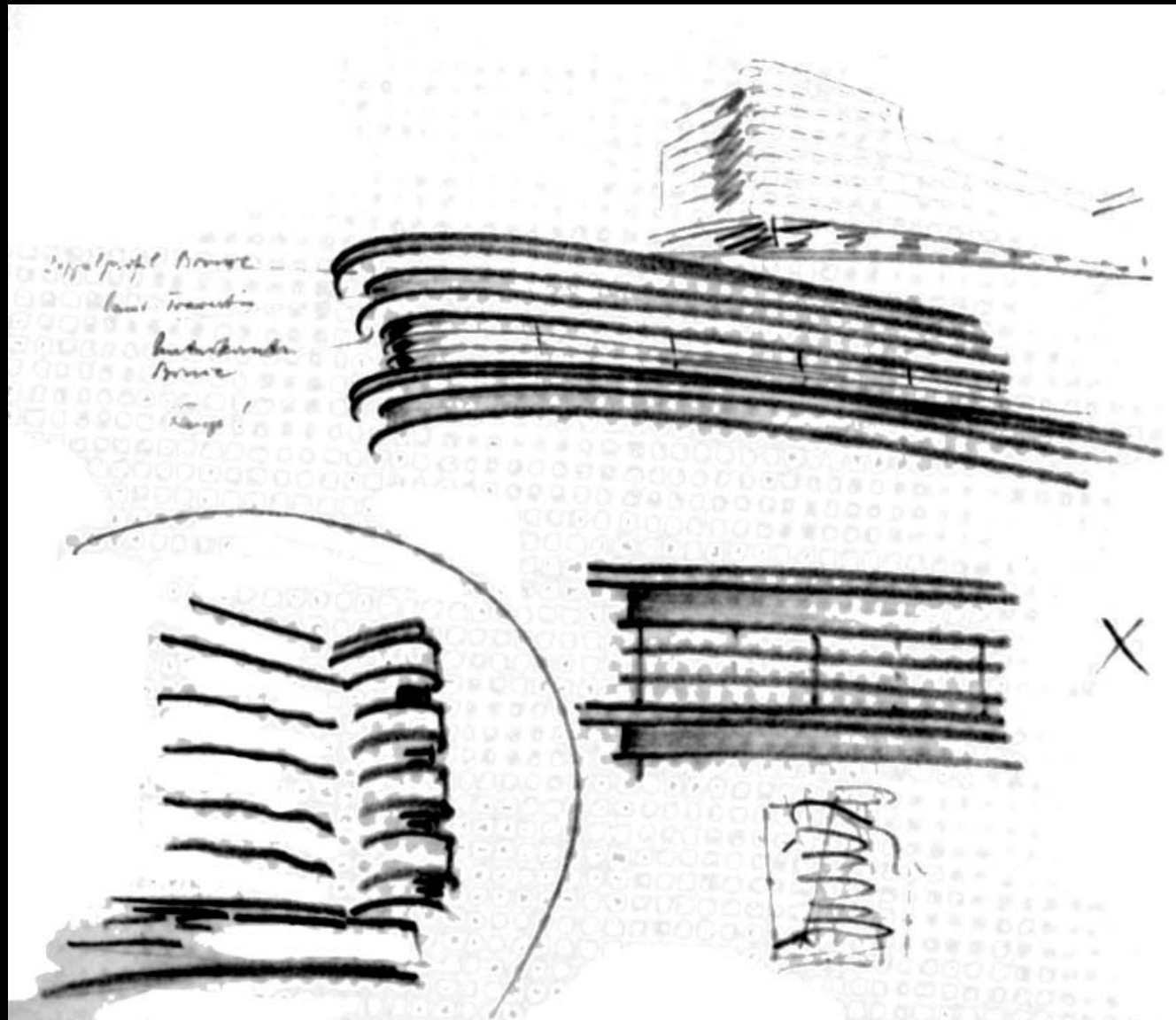


Erich Mendelsohn,  
Rudolf Petersdorff store,  
Breslau, 1927-28



Steel Skeleton  
Glazed cantilever (4.5 meters)  
Reflective materials





Erich Mendelsohn, Rudolf Petersdorff store,  
perspective and elevation sketches

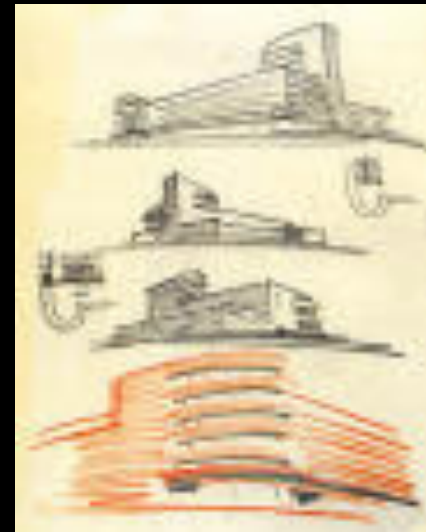
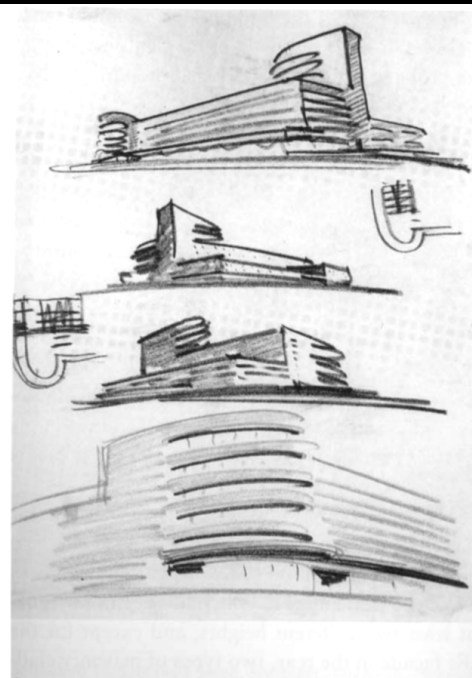
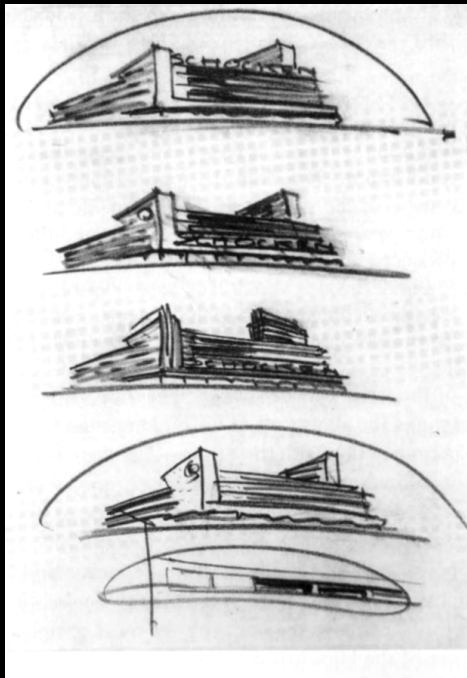
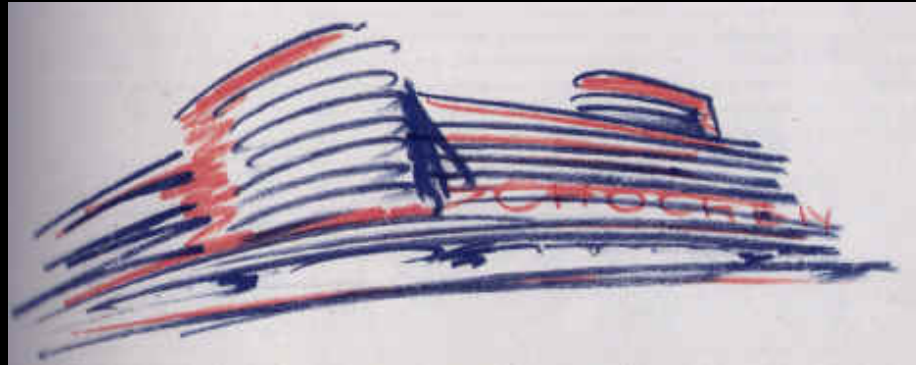


Erich Mendelsohn,  
Rudolf Petersdorff store,  
Breslau, 1927-28  
night view

Bronze mullions  
speed of construction

"...like a glowing curtain hanging  
down from the sky"

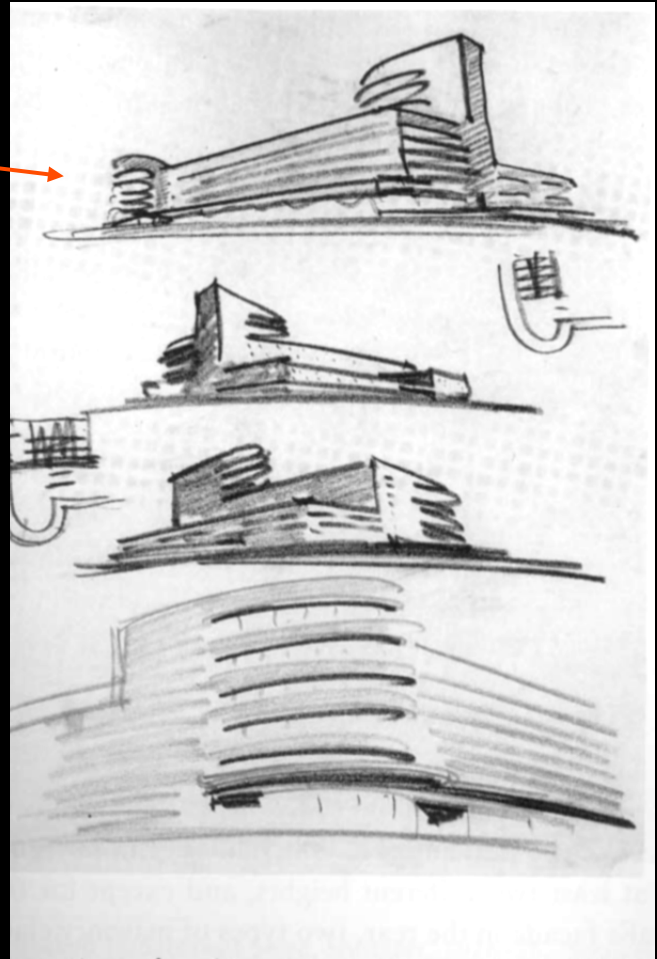




Schocken Department Store, Stuttgart,  
perspective sketches and some plans, 1926



Schocken Department Store, Stuttgart, 1926-28



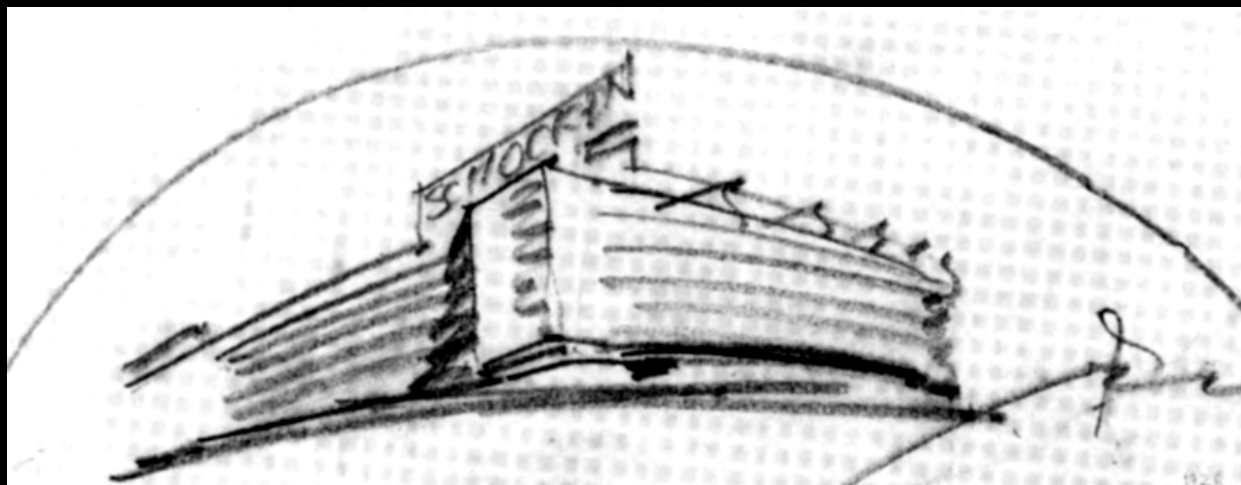


Schocken Department Store, Stuttgart





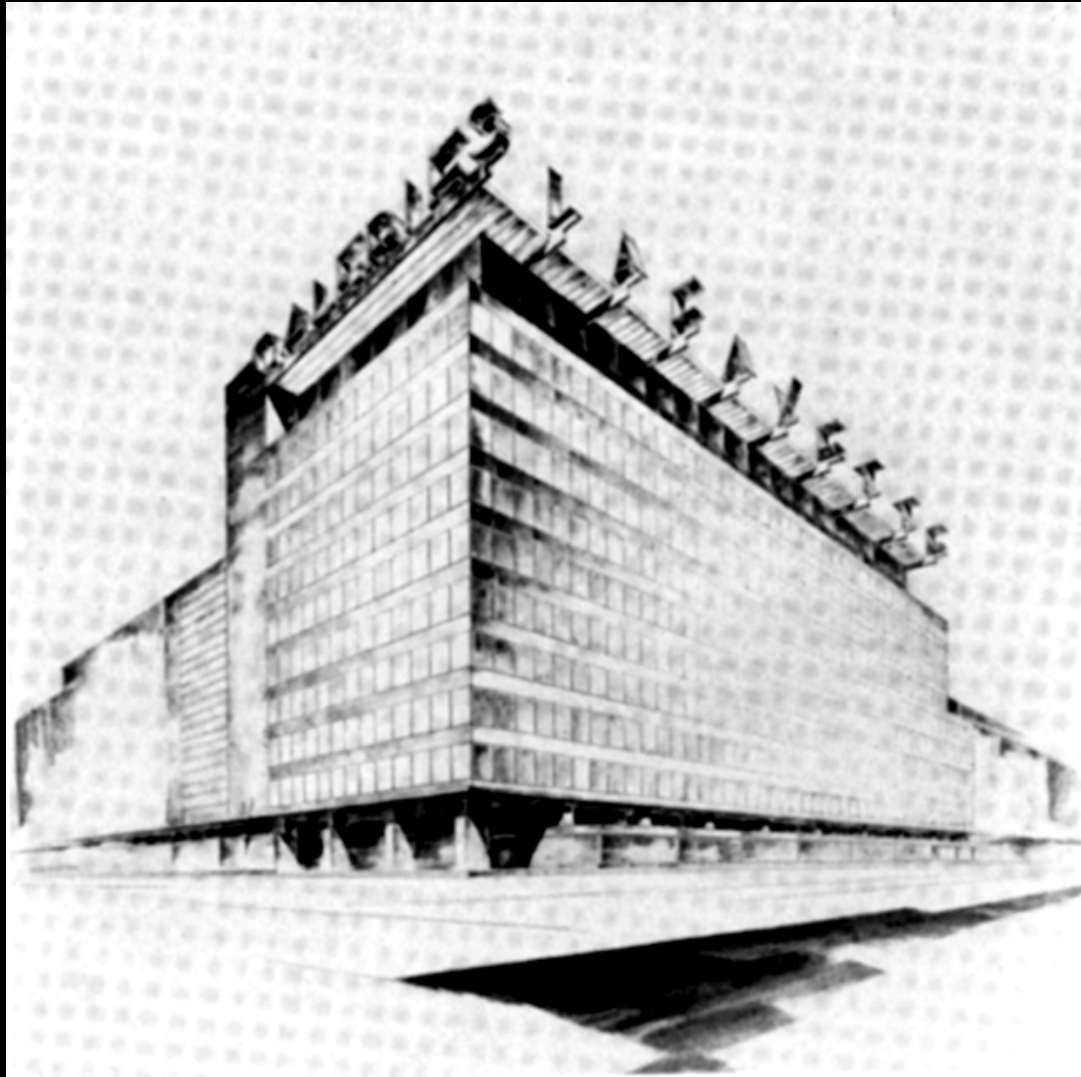
Schocken Department Store, Stuttgart, night view



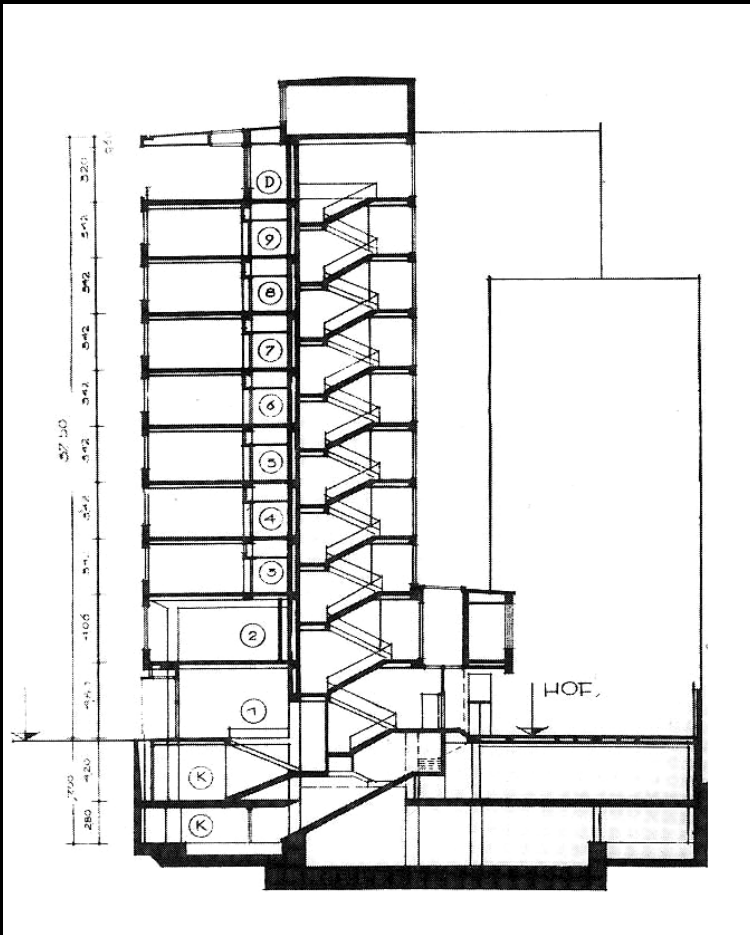
Erich Mendelsohn, Schocken Department Store, Chemnitz,  
perspective sketch, 1929



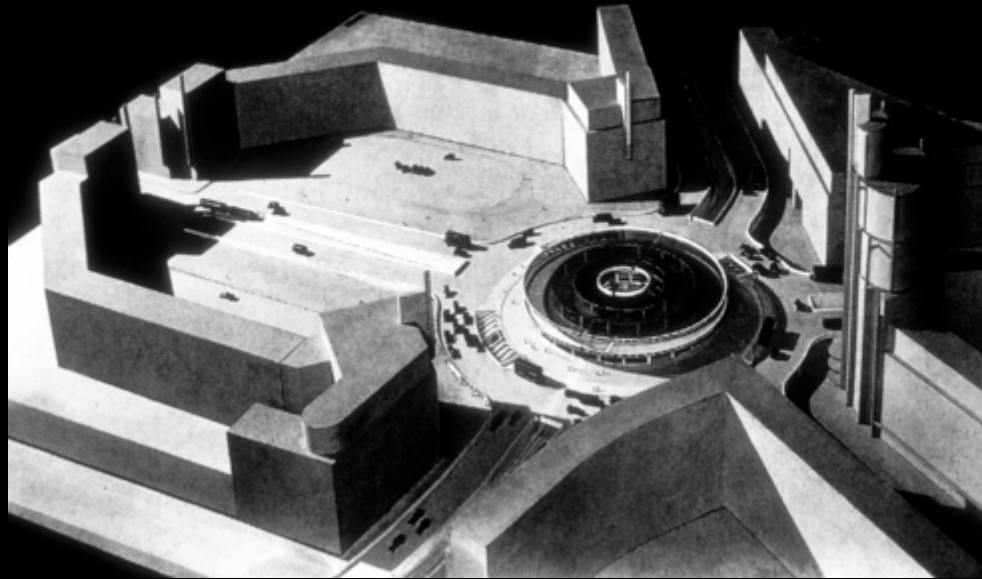
Erich Mendelsohn, Schocken Department Store,  
Chemnitz, Germany, 1928-30



Erich Mendelsohn,  
project for the Galleries Lafayette department store, Berlin, 1928



Erich Mendelsohn, Columbushaus, cross section



Erich Mendelsohn, Columbus House, Berlin 1931-32





Erich Mendelsohn, Columbushaus, Berlin 1931-32





Einstein Tower 1920-21



Mossehaus 1922-23

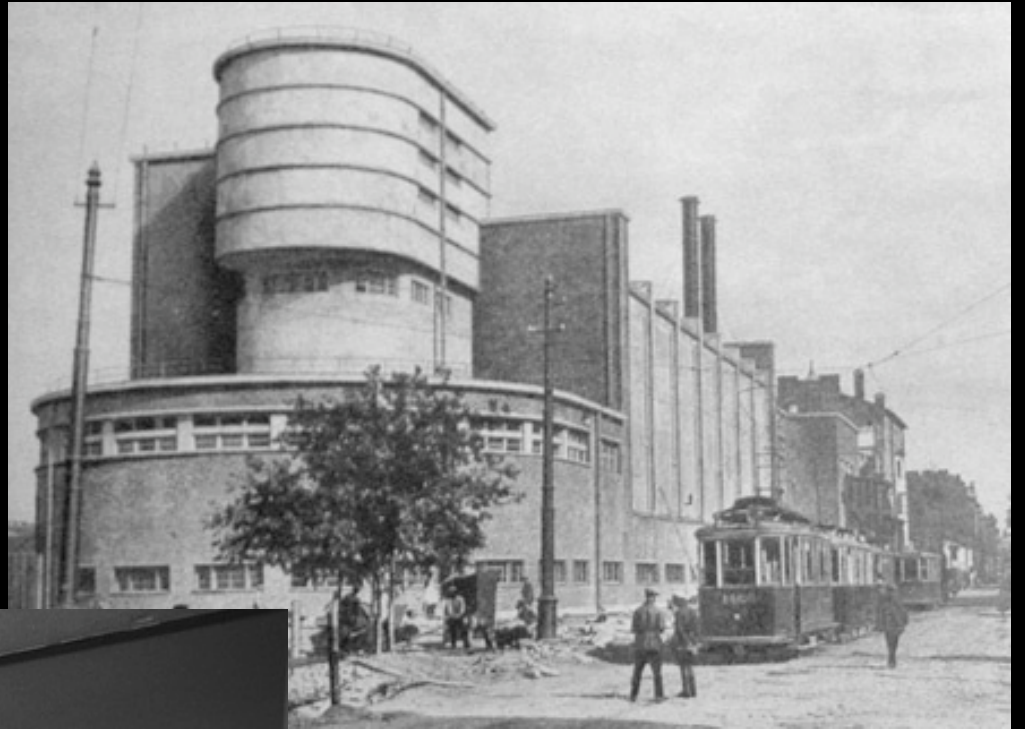


1920-21



Erich Mendelsohn, Rudolf Mosse Pavilion, Press exhibition, Cologne, 1928

Red Flag Textile Factory under construction in 1926



De La Warr Pavilion 1935

## In Pittsburgh

“Do you want beautiful skins pumped up with air or do you want first to build scaffolding out of steel, visible, preferably naked and powerful rather than draped with pearl necklaces, a dollar apiece?”

[a reference to the inexpensive necklaces worn by Larkin Company secretaries, which he had admired earlier in the letter]



“...do you want first to build scaffolding out of steel,  
visible, preferably naked and powerful...”



Mount Zion Temple  
St. Paul, MN

