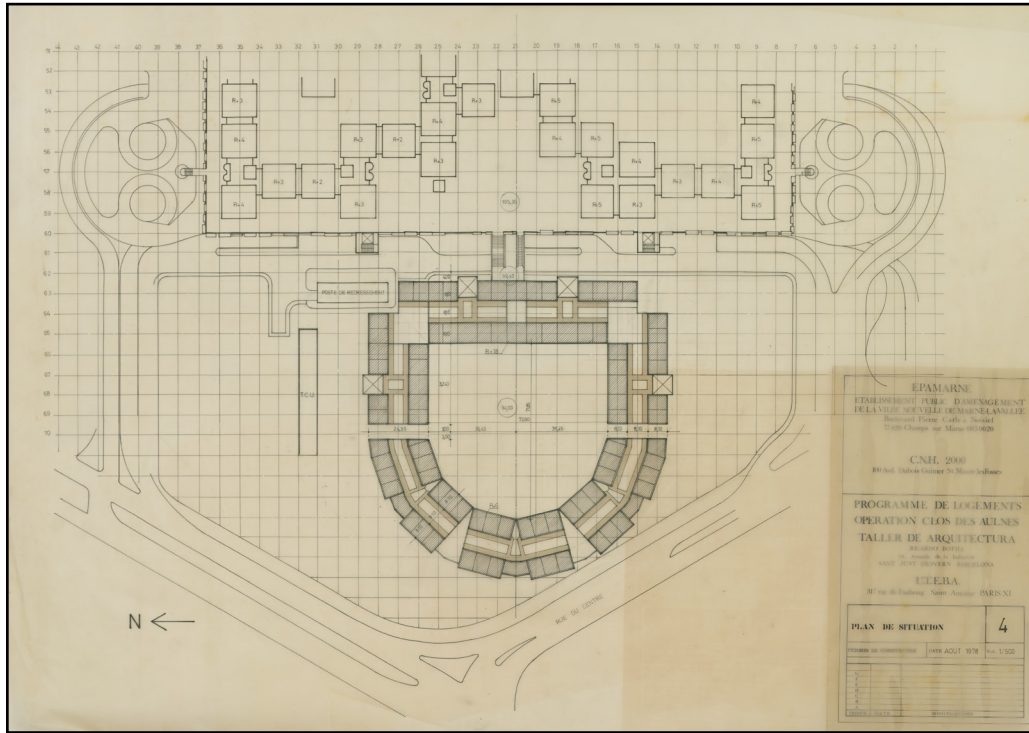




# Les Espace D'Abraxas

## ARCHIVAL DATA

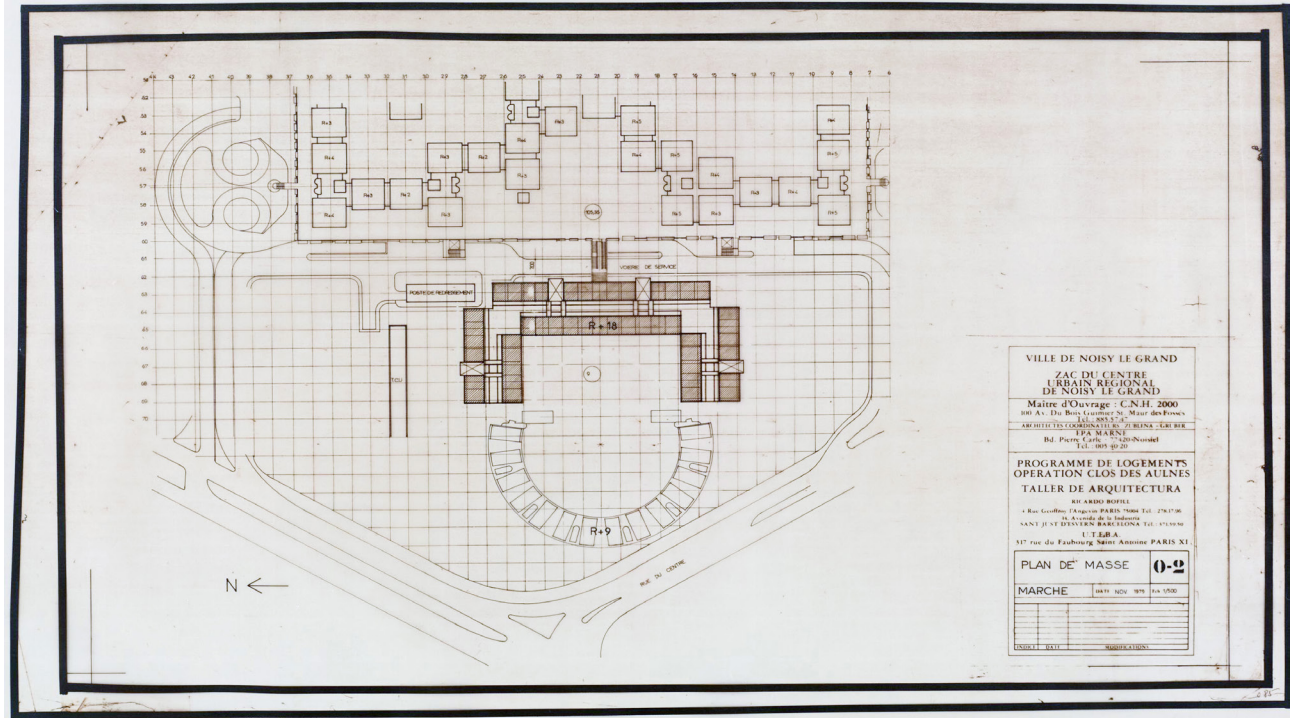
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|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| DATE          | 1978 (design) 1982-1983 (realization)                                                                       |
| PLACE/ADDRESS | Marne-la-Vallée, Region of Paris                                                                            |
| COLLABORATORS | Peter Hodgkinson, Ramón Collado, Thierry Revescki, Jean-Pierre Carniaux, Patrick Dillon, Xavier Listosella. |
| CUSTOMER      | Le Théâtre and L'Arc: Société d'H.L.M. Les Trois Vallées, Le Palacio: Soc. d'HLM C.N.H. 2000                |
| SOURCES       | RBTA Archive                                                                                                |

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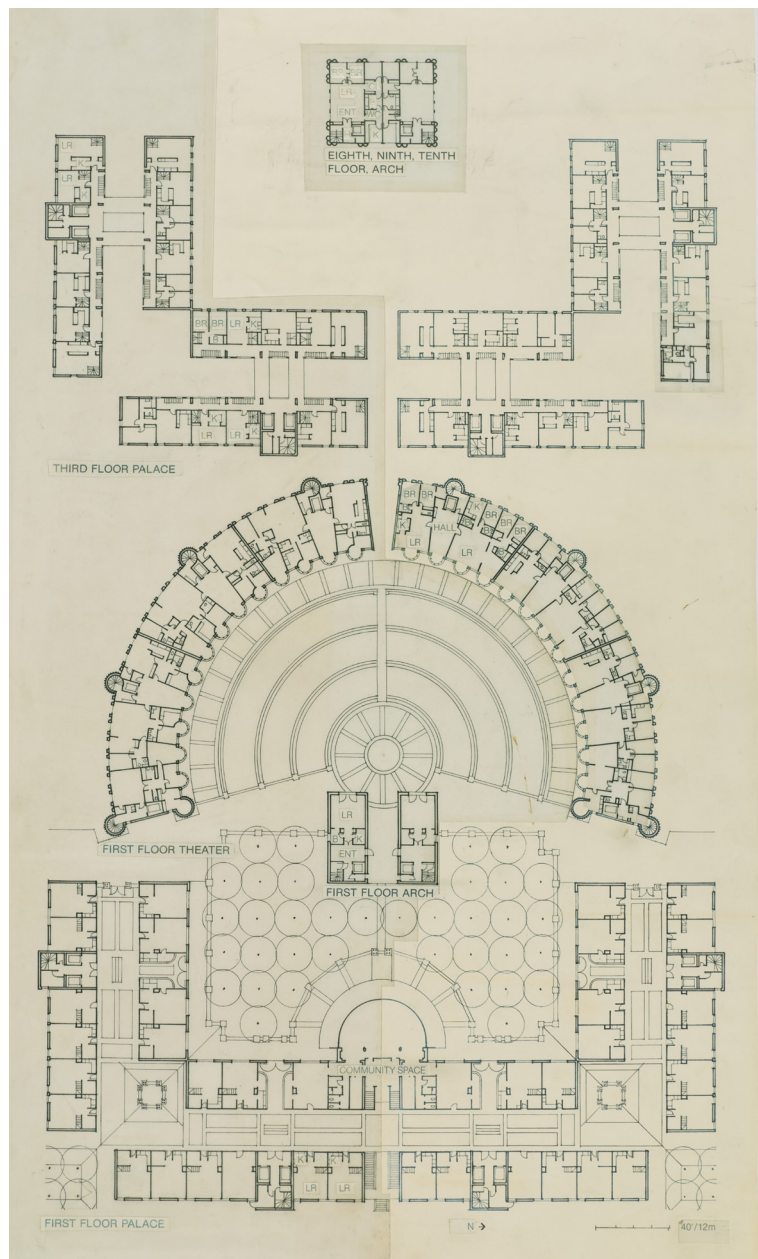


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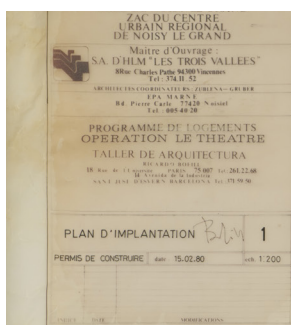
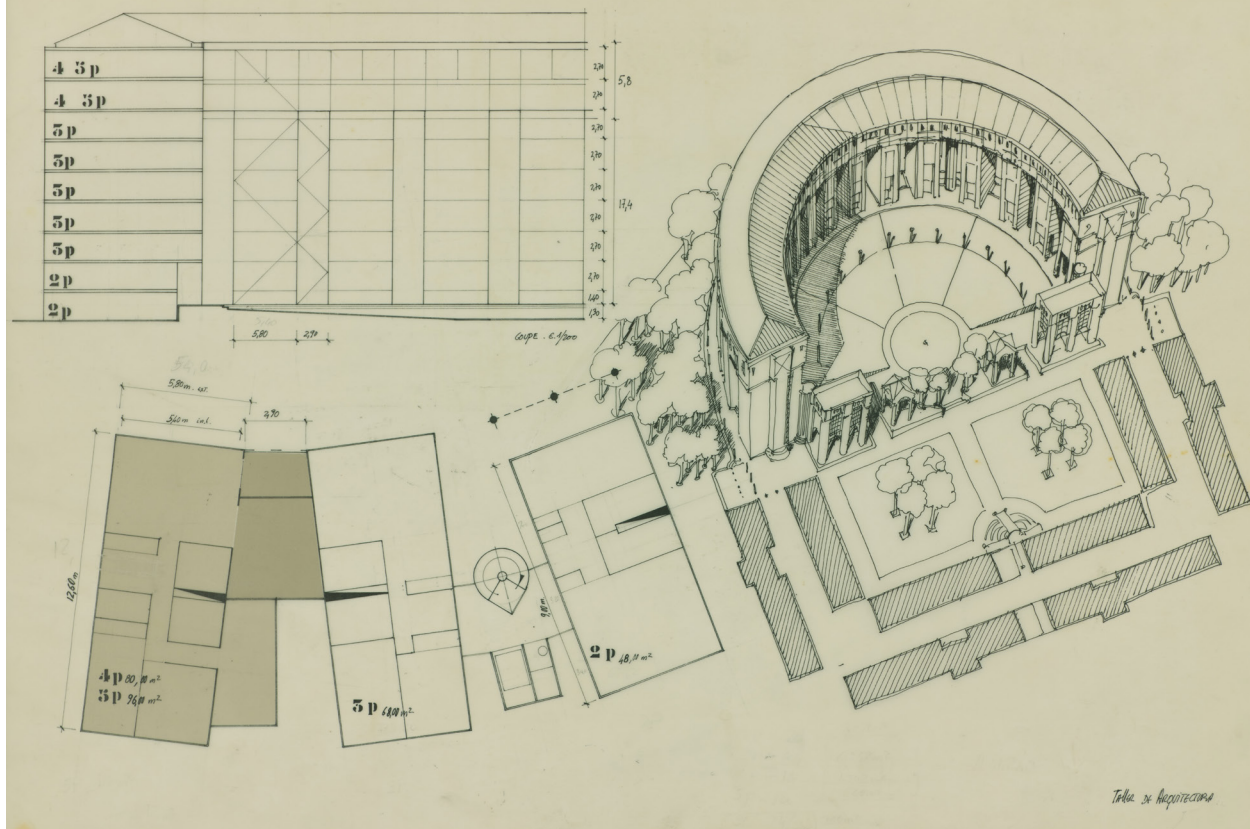
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IMG.1: Les Espaces d'Abraxas, site plan, Aug. 1978; IMG.2: Les Espaces d'Abraxas, master plan, Nov. 1979; IMG. 3: Les Espaces d'Abraxas, general plan: Le Palacio, first and third level floor plan; Le Théâtre, first level floor plan; L'Arc: first and eighth to tenth level floor plan, BTA Archive.

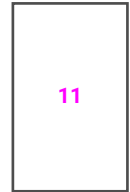
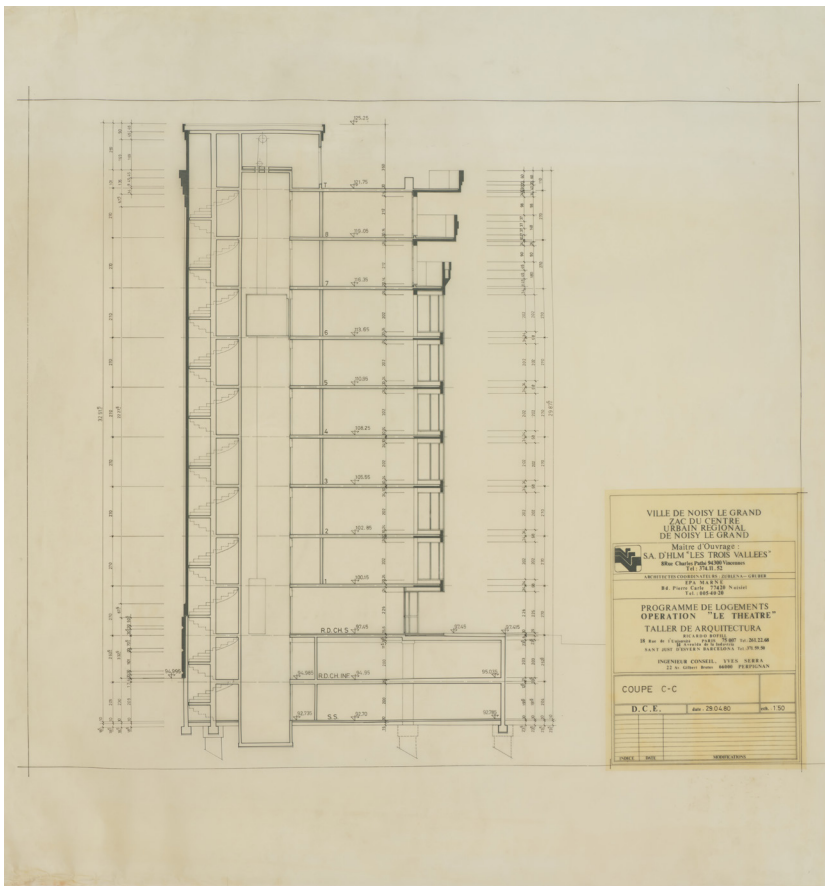




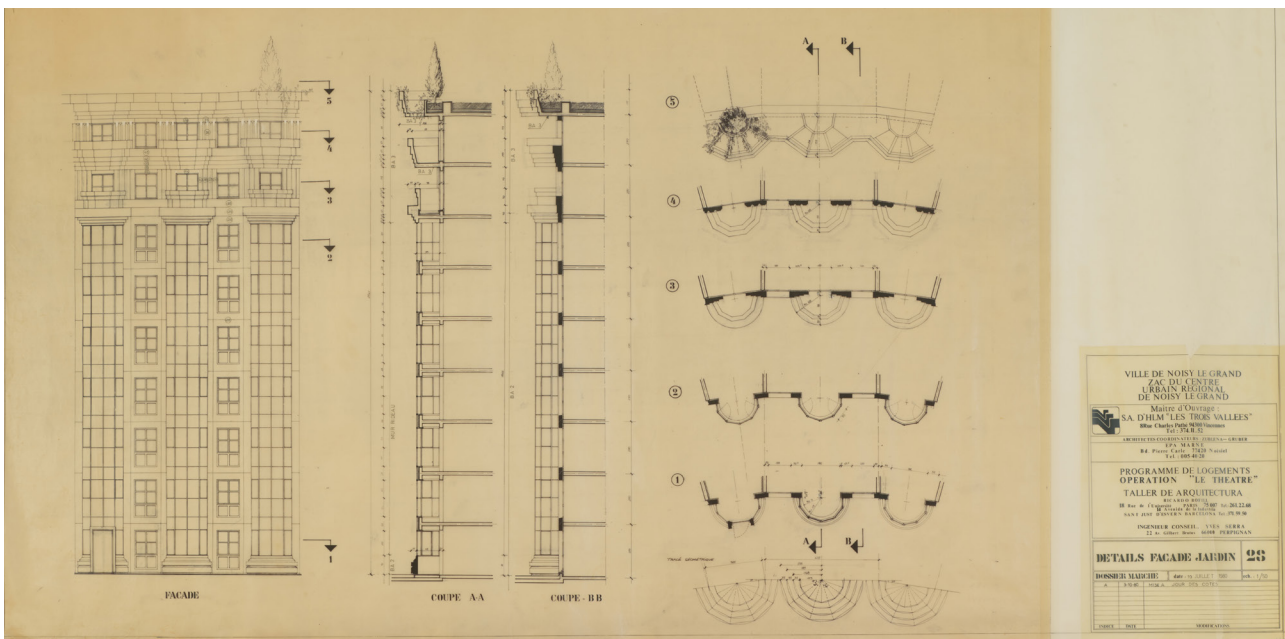


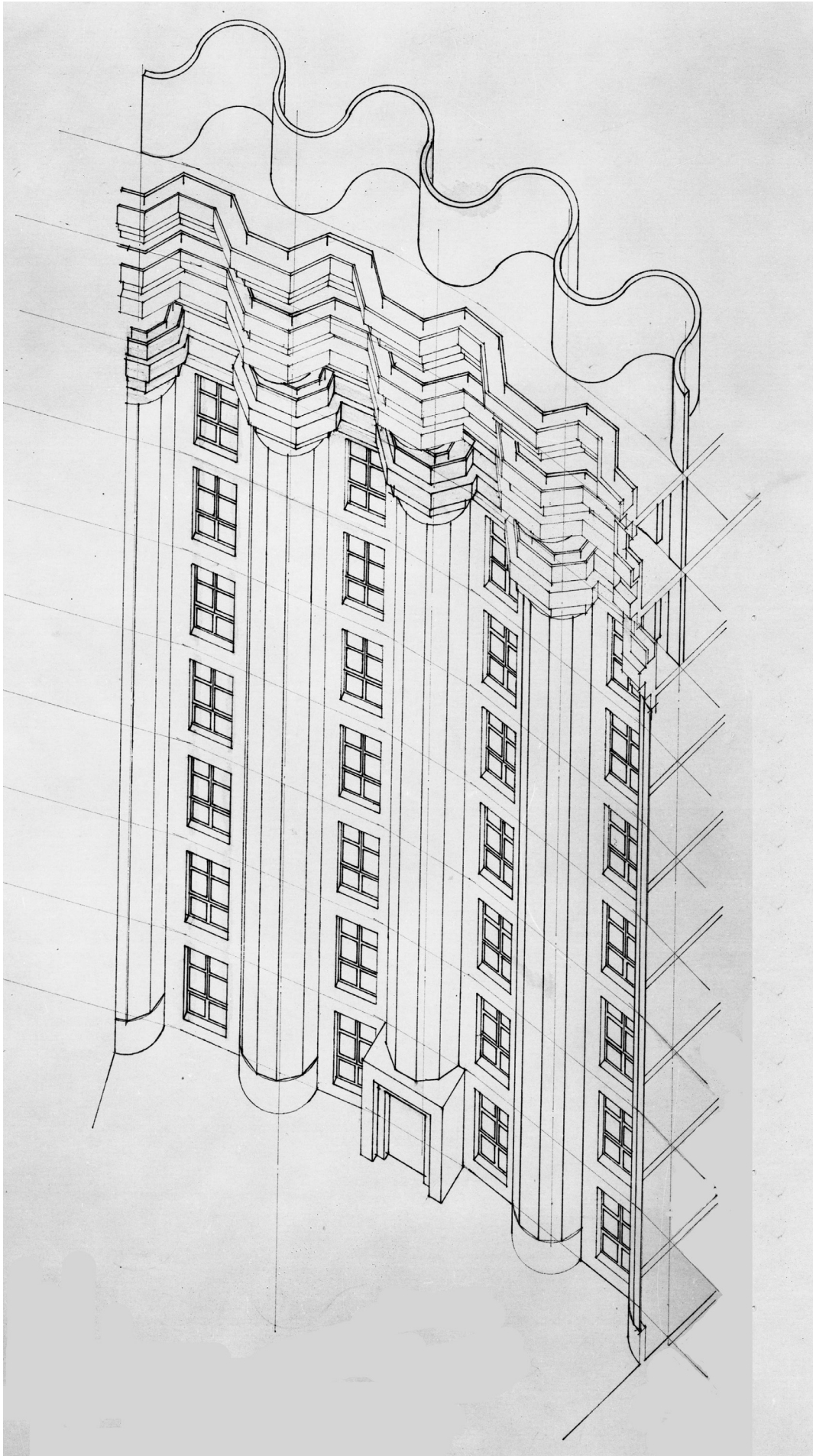




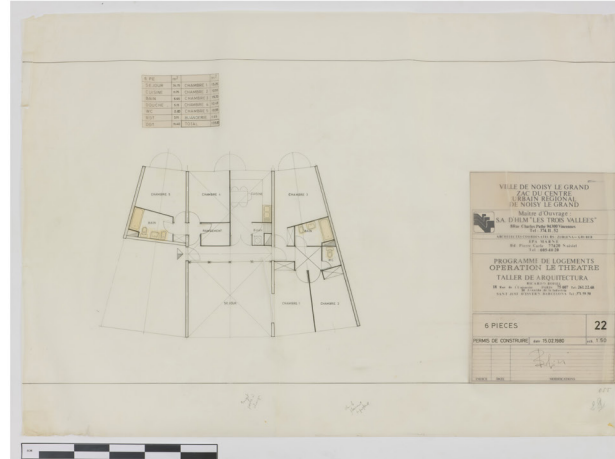
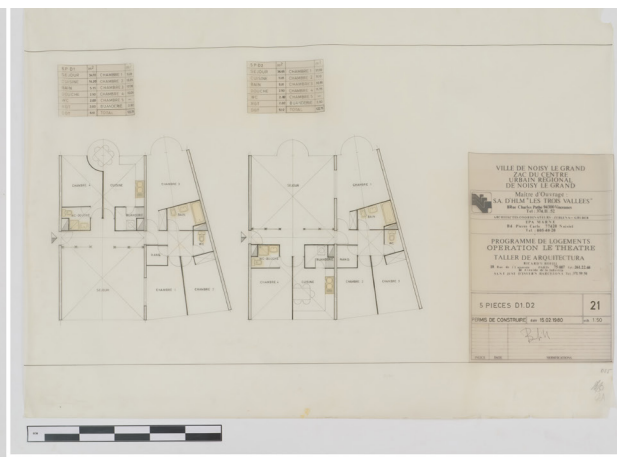
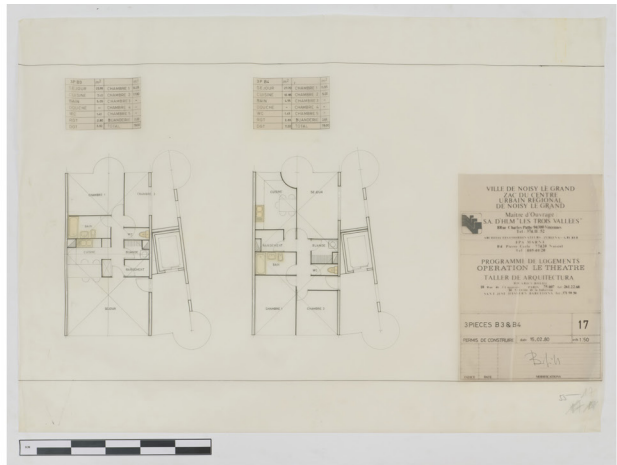


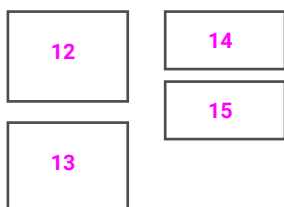
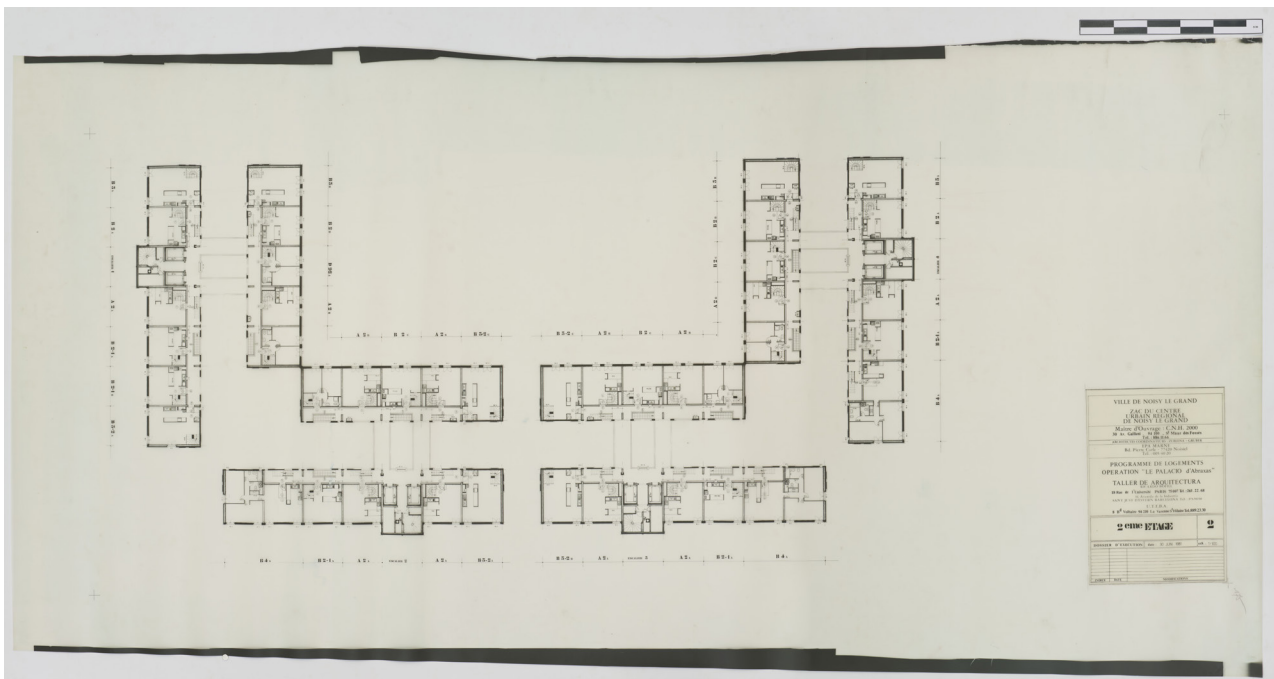
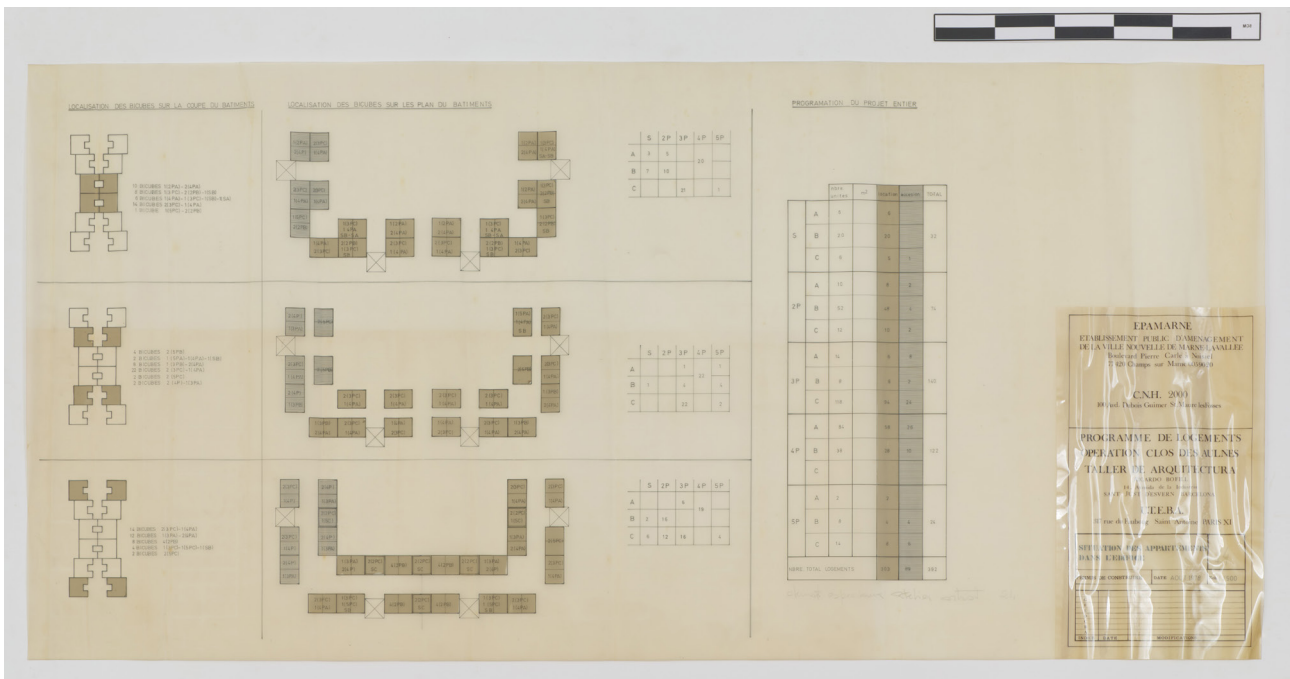
IMG.9: Les Espaces d'Abraxas, Le Théâtre: section CC, Apr. 1980.  
IMG.10: Les Espaces d'Abraxas, Le Théâtre: Garden façade elevation, section and plan details, Jul. 1980. IMG. 11: Les Espaces d'Abraxas, Le Théâtre: Garden façade, partial axonometric perspective, BTA Archive.











IMG.12: Les Espaces d'Abraxas, Le Théâtre: housing unit floor plans: 3 rooms apartment, typologies B1, B2, B3, B4, and 4 rooms apartment, typologies C1, C2, C3, C4, , Feb. 1980.Feb. 1980; IMG. 13: Les Espaces d'Abraxas, Le Théâtre: housing unit floor plans: 4 rooms apartments, typologies C5, C6; 5 rooms apartment, typologies D1, D2, and 6 rooms apartment floor plan, Feb. 1980; ; IMG. 14: Les Espaces d'Abraxas, Le

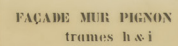
Palacio: layout of the units, plan, section and general scheme, Aug. 1978; IMG. 15-16: Les Espaces d'Abraxas, Le Palacio: second and third level floor plan, Jun. 1981, BTA Archive.



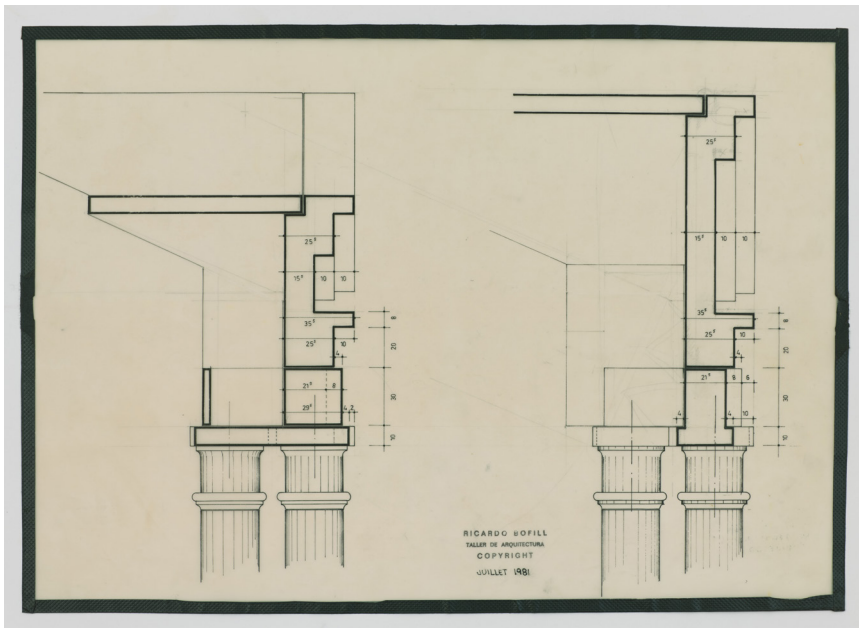
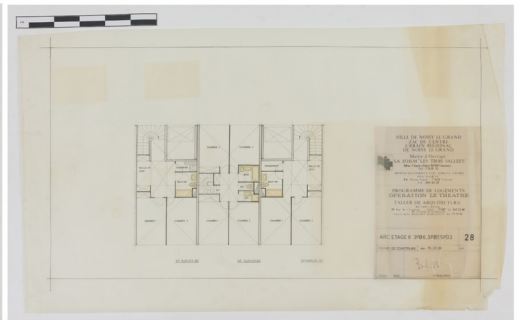
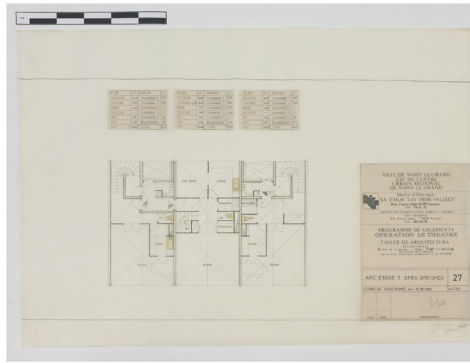
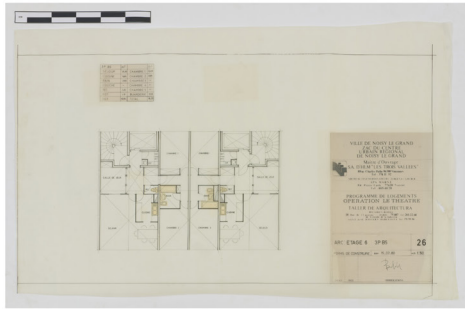
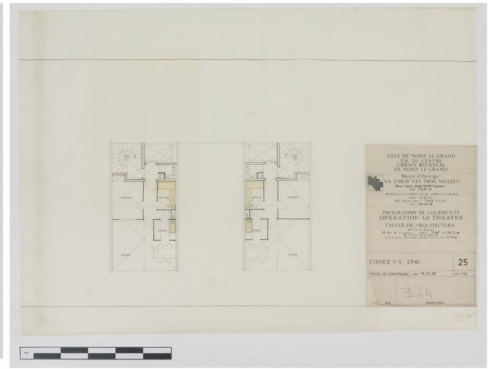
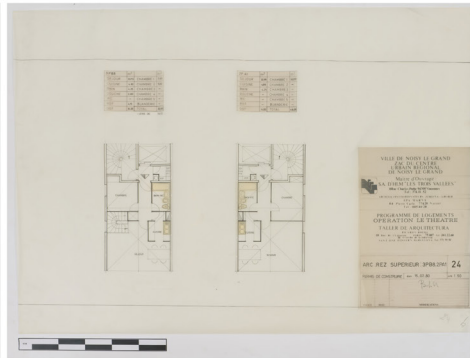
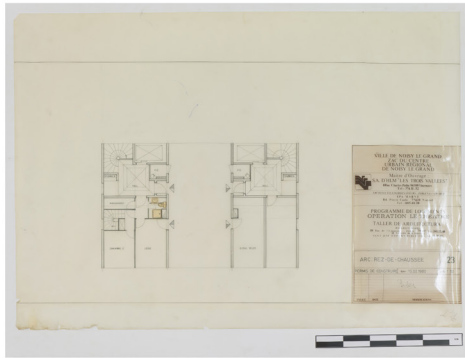


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IMG.17: Les Espaces d'Abraxas, Le Palacio: interior street section through stairs and façade, May 1979; IMG. 18: Les Espaces d'Abraxas, Le Palacio: transversal section-façade and particular plans of the facade, BTA Archive.





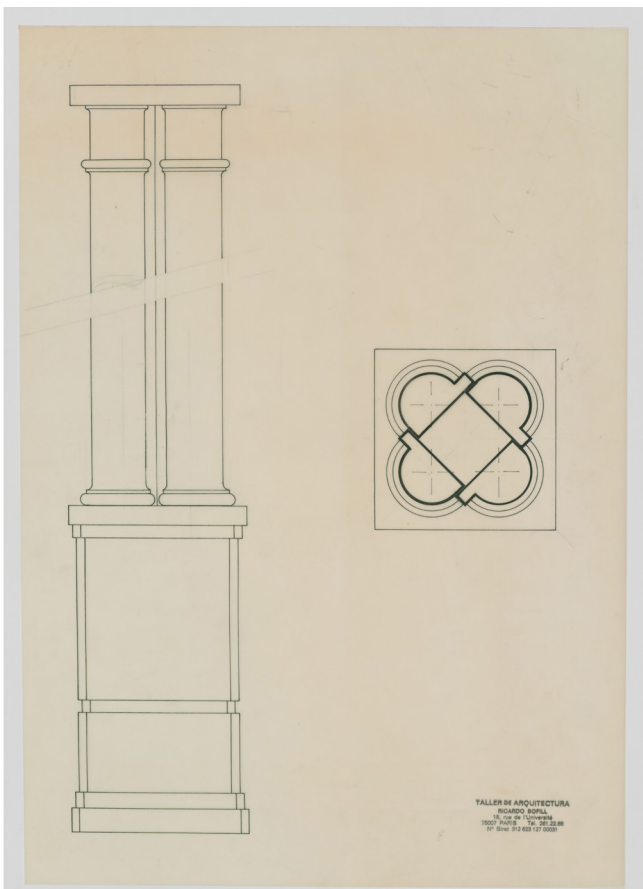
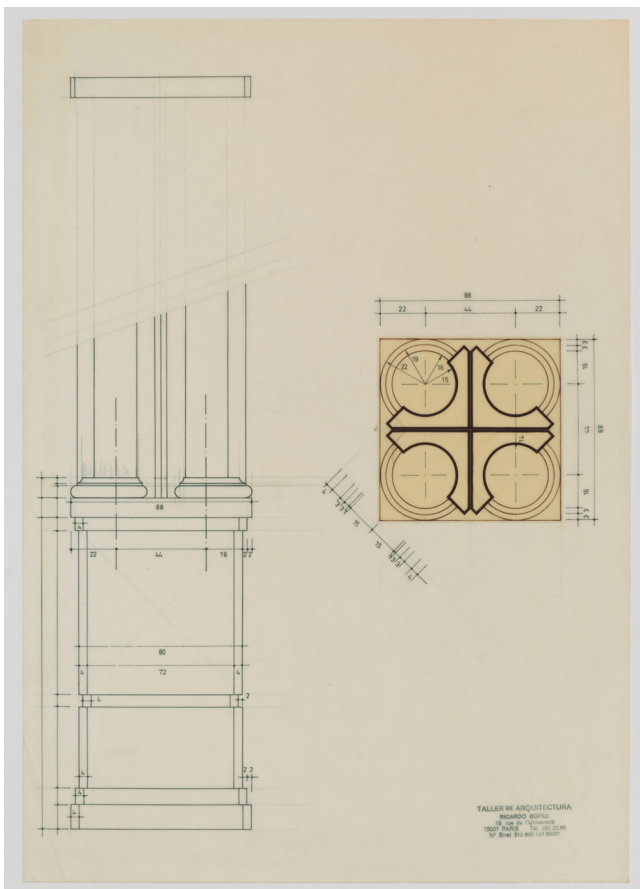


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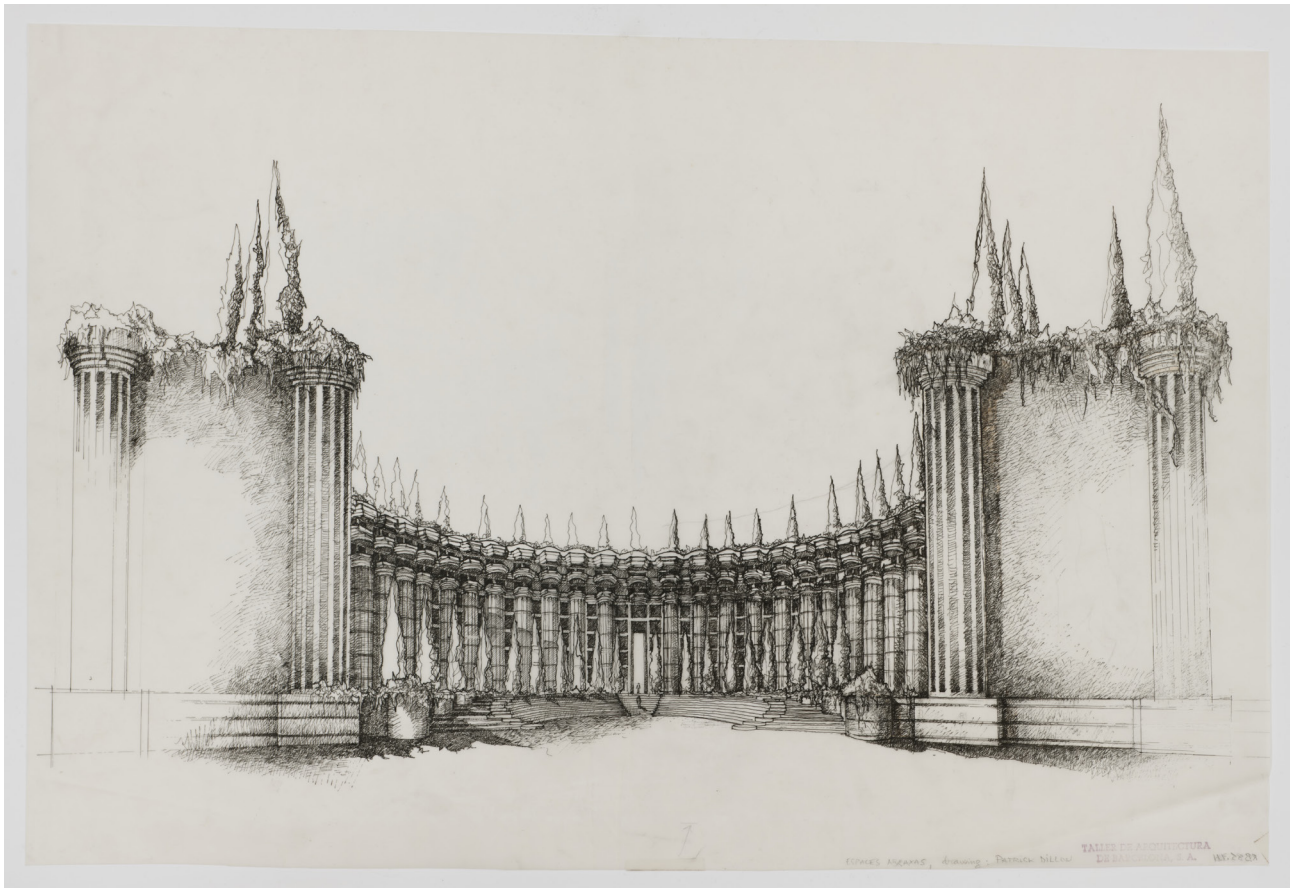
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IMG.19: Les Espaces d'Abraxas, L'Arc: housing units, ground level to upper level floor plans, Feb. 1980; IMG. 20-21: Les Espaces d'Abraxas, architectural details, plan and sections; BTA Archive.







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IMG. 22: Les Espaces d'Abraxas, Le Théâtre: general perspective, sketch, BTA Archive.

## Selected extracts from the RBTA project description

The degradation of cities provokes their disappearance. Suburbs and public housing both evoke an urban cancer and assuage its presence. Marne-la-Vallée, in this context, is sublimated by architecture. It is public housing supported by socialists and communists. As a place of residence which creates a rupture with the working world, it allows for a fresh look at its environment. The complex is composed of three buildings: the Palacio, the Théâtre, and the Arc. Different orders participate in their composition; they articulate sudden changes in scale. Each prefabricated architectural element is used to the limit of disproportion, and the relationship between elements is exalted by the inversion of spatial structures, producing a striking dynamic. Historical references are present throughout the work, both in the configuration of the whole and in the characteristics of certain details. Classical shapes, very much rooted in French culture, are transformed and renewed by the way they are put to use. A careful analysis of the project will demonstrate, for example, how a composition *à la française* (1/4, 2/4, 1/4 vertically) is interrupted by volumetric manipulation, and by a second historical element which contradicts the first: the frieze, inspired by the cornices of the buildings of Étienne-Louis Boullée, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, and Jean-Jacques Lequeu. Thus, a baroque space is created, in the primitive sense of the word, which takes into account all spatial viewpoints and is defined as the introduction of movement into a built volume. Placed at the centre of the interior space, the Arc is designed for habitation. We wanted to render functional a symbol that has been considered functional throughout its long historical use. With its modest dimensions (nine floors), this vital central element was designed with parts leftover from the construction of the other two buildings. It strives for an appearance of age which is elegant but somewhat outdated. Diverted from its usual symbolism, its final appearance is more like a romantic rather than triumphal arch. It serves as a focal point; it's a stage curtain, an open filter between two spaces—the Théâtre and the Palacio. The Arc obstructs a view of the whole, while also framing certain details. The Palacio has a U-shaped plan, with an X-shaped section, and its neoclassical appearance is cancelled by volumes with a "negative" function. The topmost part is a frieze that references a change of orders, emphasising the double order of the general composition. The urban palace stands as a monument against the skies of Marne-la-Vallée, creating an identifiable silhouette on the skyline. It's both monument and palace, place and space. Spatial sensations are never the same after you see the Palacio. The Théâtre is a semicircle, the size of a Greek theatre, and shaped by a system of regular grids, vertically and longitudinally. The theatrical quality of this inhabited temple is produced by the vertical order of a series of glass columns that change with the light, very much like an enormous piece of optical art. A fluid theatricality offering an exploded view of the elements contrasts with the closed convex space which is rigorous, yet changing. The open space is enveloped by the building's circular form, whose convexity gives a sensation of protective shelter. An impression of privacy flows from it, inverting the initial expression of monumentality. The roofs of the Théâtre and the Arc are planted with trees but remain inaccessible. The former can be seen from the Palacio. The ground floor and an underground space are reserved for

parking. A Greek amphitheatre descends gradually like a stairway onto the stage from the first floor on the side of the plaza. The façades are built from prefabricated sections, cut according to their individual shapes and not in framed panels, so the joints are invisible. The goal of using a contemporary material like concrete, which harmonises with the urban centre while remaining discrete, is to rediscover the qualities of stone. It has its appearance and solidity as well as its aesthetic and cultural references. The new formal language being used by architecture is still incoherent and lacks the precision needed to express its ideas and clarify projects which are still in gestation.