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CLASSICIST ARCHITECTURE AND LARGE BUILDINGS

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ziya UTKUTUĞ
Res. Asst. Yonca AL HÜROL

ABSTRACT

The criticisms directed to high-rise buildings by the leaders of modern classicist architecture are different as compared with those directed to long-span and ordinary scale buildings. The aim of this paper is to specify the criticism directed to high-rise buildings and to criticise high-rise buildings which are constructed in Turkey after 1970.

INTRODUCTION

The differences between, architectural schemes which are emerged after 1900's, can be explained according to their use of architectural form components as a means of expression and if they are, what do they try to express.

The architectural form components are; structural and architectural mass form, of structural members, form of construction systems, form of mechanical systems, colour and texture. These architectural form components can be used in two ways. As an aim or as a means.

If it is aimed to have architectural form components, structurally and constructionally in the best form, it can be said that, form is an aim. But if expression of a subject is aimed and at least one of the architectural form components is not structurally and constructionally in the best form, architectural form is a means.

The scale component of architectural form has a different property, when compared with the other architectural form components. When used as a means of expression, scale can only introduce the economic power of

the owner and high technology, while all other architectural form components, can express technology, history or other subjects.

After the discovery of new architectural materials, structural systems and building methods (the beginning of Modernism), architectural form components were used as an aim to express new technology. But in 1950's the number of those buildings increased so much that, using architectural form as an aim lost its power of expressing new technology (1). Because at these years new technology had started to be well known and there were nothing meaningfull to express.

Because of above reasons, in the architectural schemes which emerged after 1950's, the expression of technology, history or other subjects is obtained by using at least one architectural form component as a means.

Evaluation of architectural schemes which emerged after 1970, shows that, in the architecture of 1990's, using architectural form components as a means is accepted. It can be said that, most of these architectural schemes are classicist.

These classicist architectural schemes can be classified in two ways. They can be classified according to their tendency of using a specific architectural form component as a means, or according to their effect on people as ironic, monumental and classicist, traditional etc.

Trying to classify classicist architectural schemes, according to their tendency of using a specific architectural form component as a means, brings the danger of neglecting what they try to express. But in order to evaluate the criticism of large scale buildings by the leaders of classicist architecture (Venturi, Jencks, Klotz, Stern), it is necessary to differenciate the criticisms directed to architectural form components of each building.

Buildings can be classified as large and ordinary scale buildings, according to their structural scale. Large scale buildings include long-span and High-rise buildings.

The leaders of classicist architecture, supported some large scale buildings while criticising negatively some others, especially depending on the perception of their scales. The criticisms that were directed to long-span and ordinary scale buildings are usually very close to each other. But the negative were directed to high-rise buildings were more in number

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(1) Baydar, L., Gazi University, faculty of Engineering and Architecture, Depatment of Architecture, Lecture notes of the course named Theories of Modern Architecture I, 1989-90

and different in content. Because one can best perceive a high-rise buildings scale from outside. Consequently, these buildings can introduce and symbolize high technology and the owners economical power to the world in the best way.

These negative criticisms of the leaders of classicist architecture directed to high-rise buildings are the reasons of acceptance of high-rise buildings as important examples of Modernism (2). For example, the Seagram Building of Mies and Johnson (Figure1), which has and architectural solution derived from structural criteria, 90 degree angle architectural form and which displays glass and steel at its exterior surface became a symbol of Modernism. But there are many high buildings which can be classified under the heading of Classicism.

The aim of this paper is to clarify difference of criticisms directed to high-rise buildings by the leaders of classicist architecture and to evaluate high-rise buildings which are constructed in Turkey after 1970, according to these criticisms.

I. THE HIGH- RISE BUILDINGS SUPPORTED BY THE LEADERS OF CLASSICIST ARCHITECTURE

Stern classifies classicist architecture in five groups (3). If similar pirinciples are tried to be used, high-rise buildings that are supported by the leaders of classicist architecture can be classified in six groups.

The first group includes high-rise buildings which can be qualified as repetition of historical high-rise bulidings. Erith and Terry's Dufours Place which was constructed in London between 1981 and 83, can be a good example to this group of high-rise buildings (Figure2).

The monumental high-rise buildings in which architectural mass form is used to remind historical classicist buildings can be reviewed in the second group. Rossi, Braghieri, Oks, Ciocca and Schever's office building which is designed for Buenor Aires in 1984 but which war not contructed is an example for this group. In this building, architectural mass form consists of elemantary geometric forms (Figure 3).
The third group consists of high-rise buildings, in which architectural mass form is used to remind subjects other than technology or history. There are two good examples to this group of high.rise buildings. The first one

(2) Zeka, N. (ed), PostModernizm, Kiyi Yayinlari, Istanbul, 1990 p. 74
(3) Stern, R.A.M., Modern Classicism, Thames and Hudson Ltd., London, 1988, pp. 59,63

is Johnson and Burgee's 885 Third Avenue Building, which was constructed in New York between 1983 and 86 (Figure 4). Because of this buildings elliptical mass shape and red colour, people call it as"lipstick building". The second good example to this group is Pelli's World Financial Center Towers, which are designed for New York and constructed between 1982 and 87 (Figure 5). These buildings are good examples of anthropomorphism.

The high-rise buildings in which structural and constructional members are used to remind historical classicist and traditional architecture can be reviewed in the fourth group. Pittsburgh Plate Headquarters Building of Johnson and Brugee (Figure 6), AT&T Building of Johnson (Figure 7) and Reliance Development Group Office Building of Fox (Figure 8) can be reviewed in this group.

In Pittsburgh Plate Headquarters Building which was constructed between 1979 and 84, the additions made to the structural mass form and contructional systems are used as a means of expression to remind 19th century Neo-Guthic buildings. The planar addition which is applied to the top of ATT&T Building which is in Nev York and constructed between 1978 and 84, is also a means of expression. In Reliance Development Group Office Building, which is in Los Angeles and constructed between 1985 and 87, constructional system that covers the buildings exterior surface is used as a means of expression in order to show the number of storeys less than the reality.

The fifth group includes the high,rise buildings in which especially the architectural mass form is used to remind historical classicist and/or traditional architecture but which are not monumental. There are many examples of this group of high-rise buildings. Roche and Dinkeloo's New York Morgan Bank Headquarters Building (Figure 9) which was constructed in 1983 and Graves's Humana Tower (Figure 10) which is in Kentucky and constructed in 1986, are good examles to this group of high-rise buildings.

The lower storey structural members and architectural mass form of Morgan Bank Headquarters Building and all architectural form components of Humana Tower are used as means of expression.

The sixth and last group of high-rise buildings that are supported by the leaders of classicist architecture includes buildings in which architectural mass form, structural and constuructional members are used as means of expression, in order to remind historical classicist buildings. 125 Summer Street Building (Figure 12), which is in New York and constructed be-

tween 1984 and 86 can be shown as examples of this group of high-rise buildings. Both of these buildings architectural mass form, constructional and structural members are used as means of expression and the designer of both buildings is Fox.
The properties of high-rise buildings which are supported by the leaders of classicist architecture can be summarized as, being lower than 30-35 storeys, having a structural system other then tubular systems and by having at least one architectural form component used as a means of expression, reminding subjects other than technology.

2. THE HIGH-RISE BUILDINGS THAT ARE CRITICISED NEGATIVELY BY THE LEADERS OF CLASSICIST ARCHITECTURE

The properties of high-rise buildings that are criticised negatively by the leaders of classicist architecture can be outlined, as being designed to be the highest building of the world country or city; having such dimensions that being qualified as city in the city; by having all architectural form components designed in the best form according to structural and constructional criteria including no meaning and by having at least one architectural form component used as a means of expression reminding high technology.

Kaplicky and Nixon's Project 112 (Figure 13) which was designed in 1985 for New York and Jahn and Murphy's The Columbus Circle Project (Figure 14) which again was designed in 1985 for New York can be shown as examples to the high-rise buildings that are designed to be the highest buildings of the world. This kind of buildings are ciriticised a lot by the leaders of classicist architecture. Because, rate of increase of technological development of 1990's is accepted normal by the people and copying the beliefs of 1930's high-rise building architecture, the result will be caricatures of Empire State and Chyrysler Buildings.

The high-rise buildings which are designed after 1980 do not have architectural form components that are designed in the best form according to structural and constructional criteria. Because it is accepted that this kind of buildings mean nothing including technology. This is very clear when high rise buildings are considered. The number of high-rise buildings, which are designed in the same architectural form is so increased that having one more meant nothing.

Designers of 1990's do not design buildings which do not have any explanatory power. But high-rise buildings of 1990's which have tubular structural systems have a special condition. Because of the structual limitations of these systems, there is a tendency to design these buildings in order to have their architectural mass form as a means of expression.

which reminds high,technology only to the people who know the behavior and structural limitations of tubular systems. For the people who don't know tubular systems, the architectural mass forms of these buildings are ordinary. This kind of buildings are criticised negatively by the leaders of classicist architecture. Sixty State Building (Figure 15) and Tange's New City Hall Buildings (Figure 16) can be shown as examples to this group of high-rise buildings.
Prix and Swinzinsky's Media Tower (Figure 17), Mackler's Eschersheime Landstrasse Tower (Figure 18), Bank of China Building (Figure 19) and Meier's Madison Square Garden Buildings (Figure 20) can be shown as the examples of the high-rise buildings which has at least one architectural form component used as e means of exprassion in order to remind high-technology. These buildings are also criticised by the leaders of classicist architecture, because they use technology in a wrong way to remind technology.

CONCLUSION

The property of buildings which are supported by the leaders of classicist architecture is expression of subjects other than technology, by using at least one architectural form component as a means of expression.

The negative criticisms directed to all buildings, including large and ordinary scale buildings are:

-Expressing technology by using all architectural form component in the best form, according to structural and constructional criteria, can be effective when the technology is not applied frequently.

-Expressing technology by using at least one architectural form component as a means of expressed technology in a different manner than what it is in reality. The difference of negative criticisms of the leaders of clasisicist architecture that are directed to high-rise buildings as compared with those they directed to other buildings can be summarized as follows:

-Designing the highest building of the world, country or the city in order to introduce and symbolize high technology and economic power of the owner, can be effective only in such periods when the rate of increase of technological development is very high.

-Using tubular structural systems which brings many constraints to the formgiving procedure, results in buildings which have no meaning even it is tried to do so.

If the high-rise buildings constructed in Turkey after 1970 are evaluated, it can be said that, high-rise buildings other than Mersin Skyscraper can be evaluated according to the same criteria with ordinary scale and long-span buildings. Because, all of them are Lower than 30-35 storeys and they don't have tubular structural systems.

Bektaş's Mersin Skyscraper is in the worst condition according to the above criteria. Because this building is designed to be the highest building in Turkey, it has a tubular structural system, and, also, in this building none of the architectural form components are used as a means of expression.

But, when we compare the design of the Mersin Skyscraper with the existing tubular skyscrapers, the non-use of a futile effort such as using only the architectural mass form as a means of expression, must be favourably accepted.

Figure I. Seagram Building, NY, 1958
Source: Stern, R.A.M., Modern Classicism, Thames and Hudson Ltd., London, 1988, p.31

Figure 2. Dufours Place, London, 1981-83
Source: Ibid, p. 169

Figure 3. Office Building, Buenos Aires, 1984
Source: Ibid, P. 136

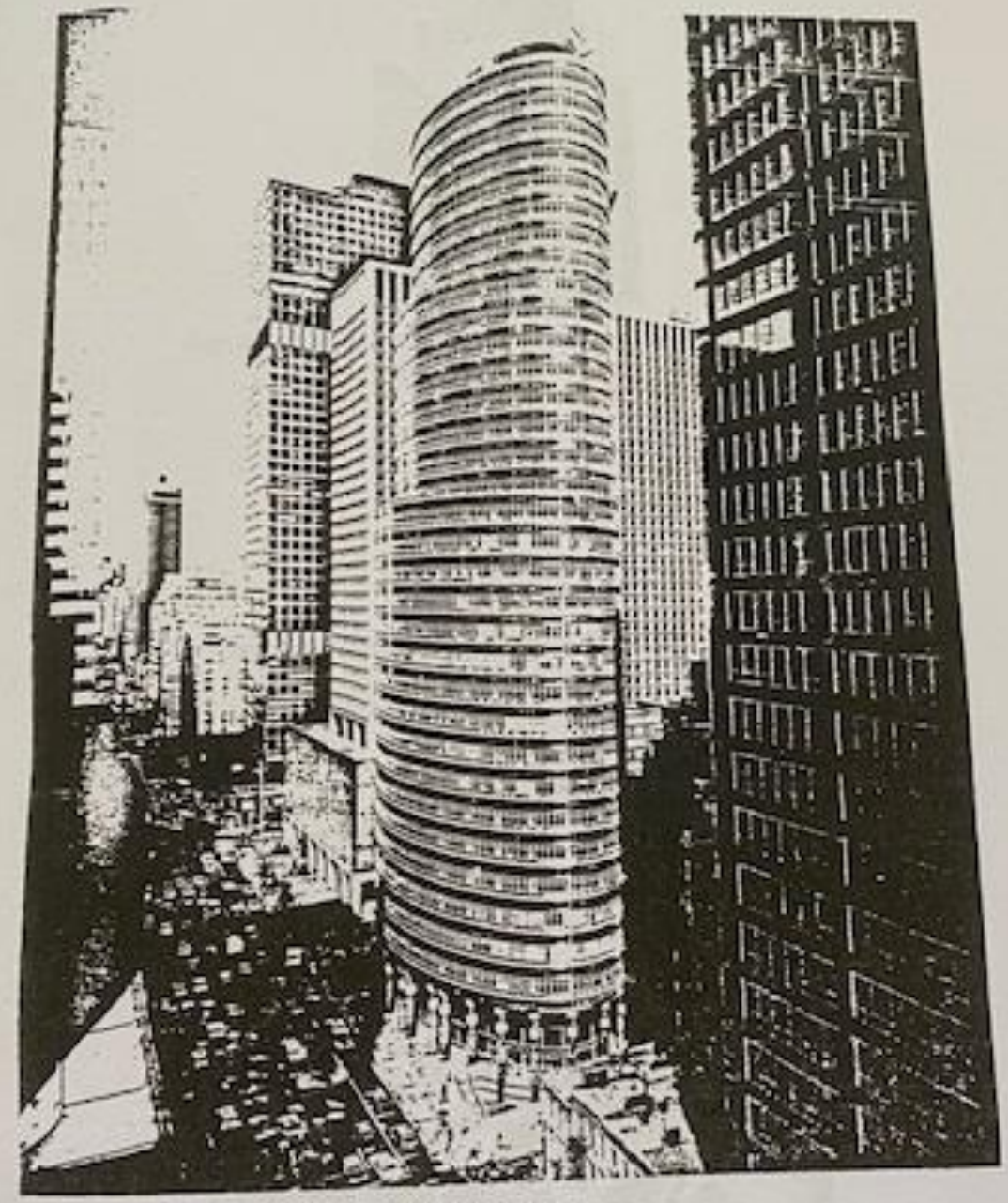


Figure 4. *885 Third Avenue, NY, 1983-86*
Source: Jencks, C., Architecture Today, Academy Editions, London, 1988, p. 237

Figure 5. *World Financial Center Towers, NY, 1982–87*
Source: İbid, p. 237

Figure 6. *Pittsburgh Plate Glass Headquarters Building, 1979-84*
Source: İbid., p. 236

Figure 7. AT T Building, NY, 1978-84
Source: Stern, R.A.M., Modern Classicism, Thames and Hudson Ltd. London, 1988, P. 85

Figure 8. *Reliance Development Group Office Tower, Los Angeles, 1985-87*

Source: Jencks, C., Architecture Today, Academy Editions, London, 1988, p. 256.

Figure 9. *Morgan Bank Headquarters Building, NY, 1983*
Source: Stern, R.A.M., Modern Classicism, Thames and Hudson Ltd., London, 1988, p. 206

Figure II. *125 Summer Street, Massachusets, 1985-88*
Source:Ibid., p. 197

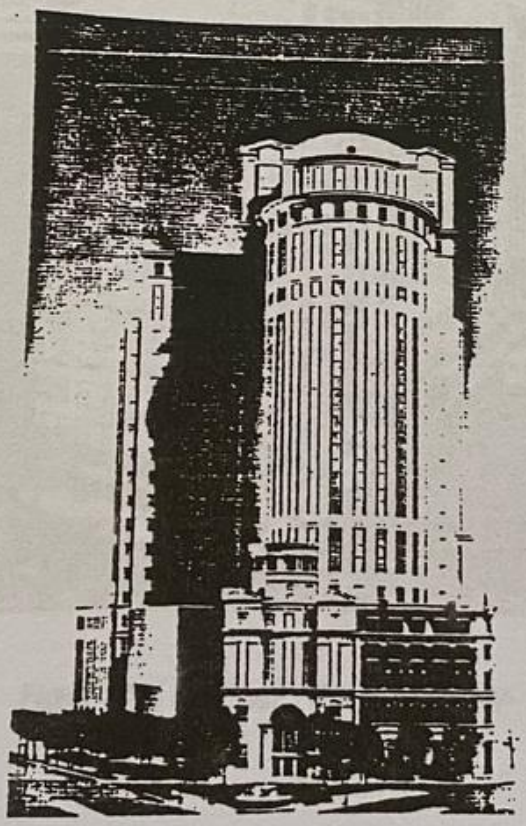


Figure 10. *Humana Tower, Kentucky, 1986*
Source: Ibid., p. 202

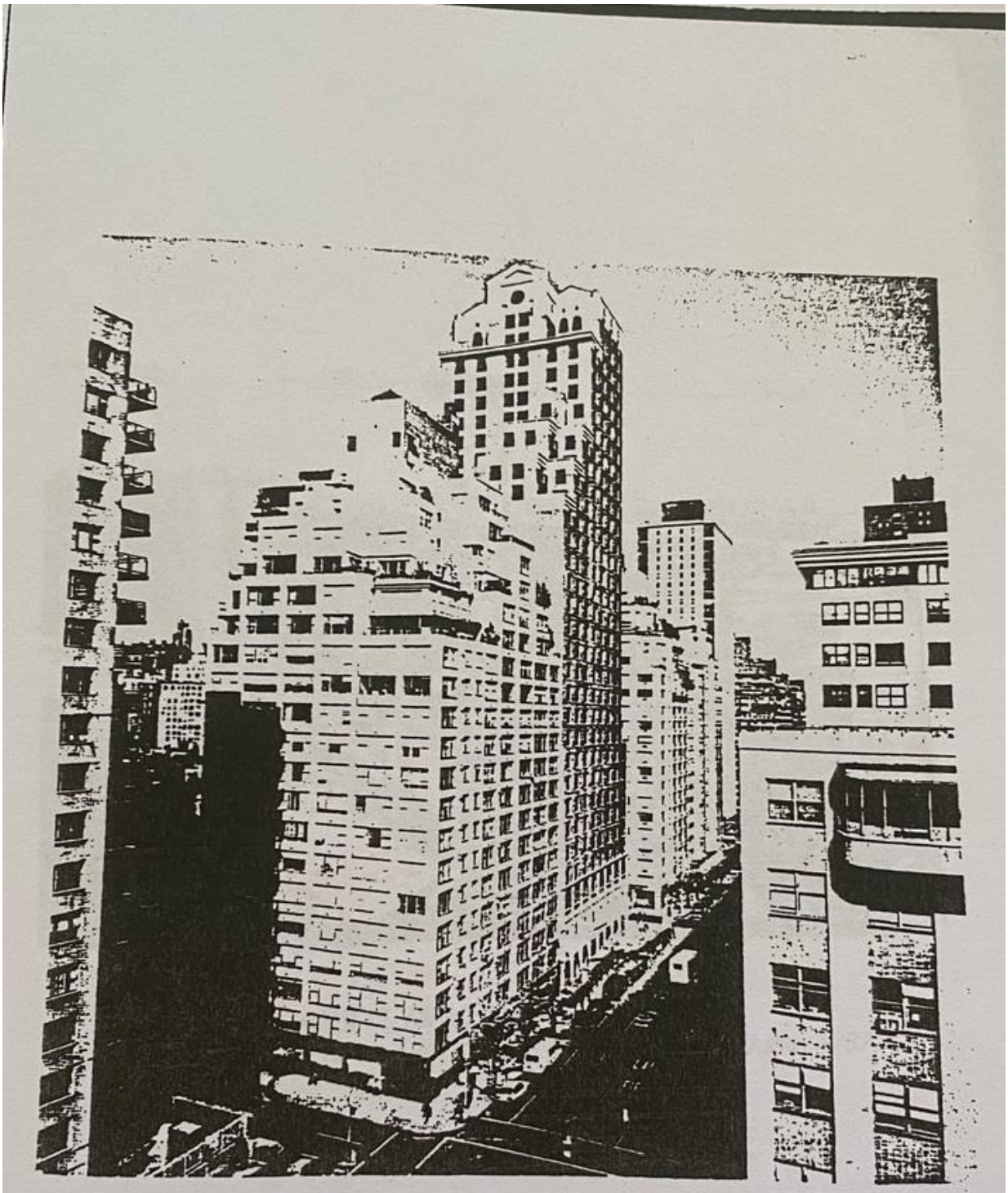


Figure 12. 180 East 70th Street, NY- 1984-86
Source:Ibid., p. 195

Figure 13. *Project 112, MNY, 1985*
Source:——, Les Tours, Techniques & Architecture, June, 1987

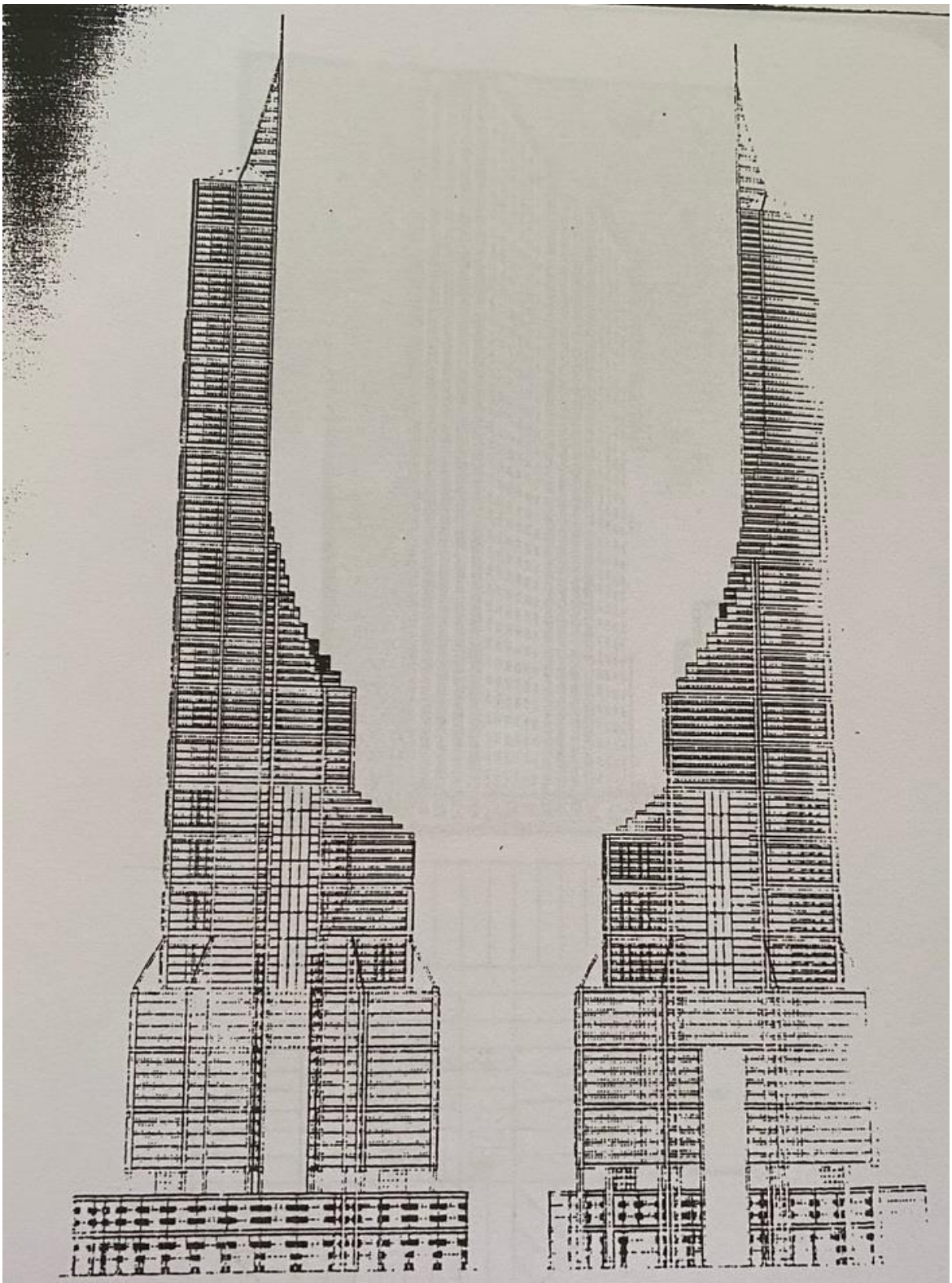
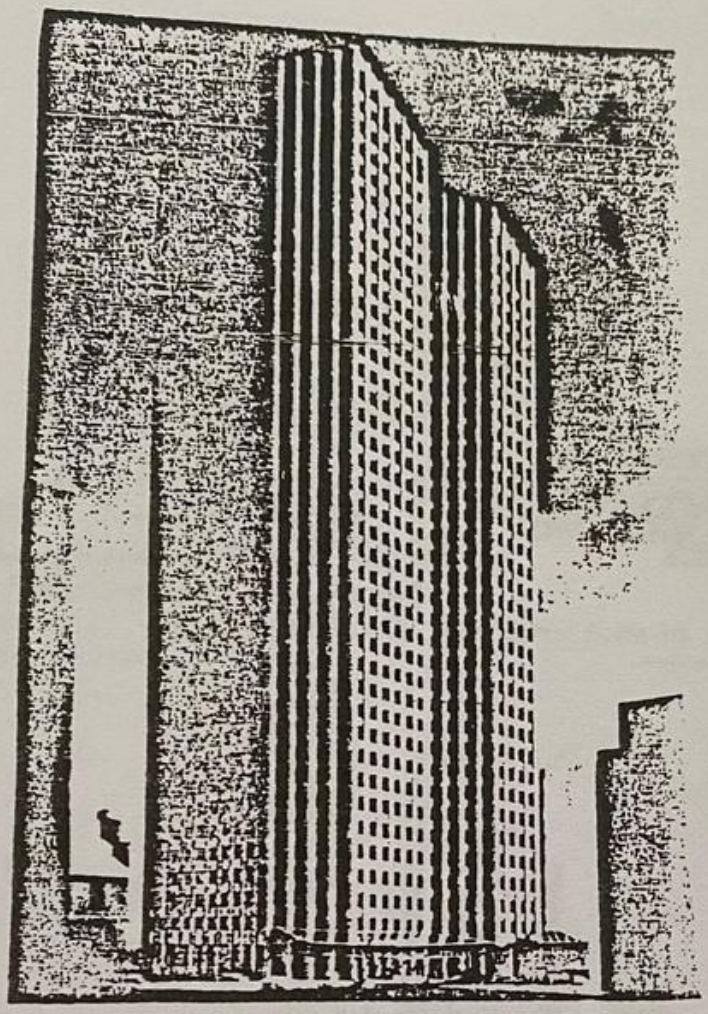


Figure 14. *The =Columbus Circle Project, NY, 1985*
Source: Klotz, H., Sabau, L. (ed), New York Architecture, 1970 to 1990, Rizzoli International Publications Inc., NY, 1989, p. 156



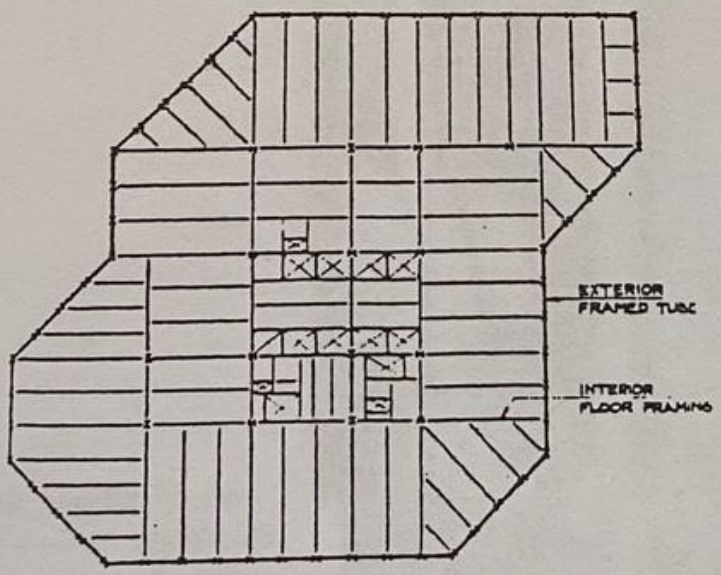


Figure 15. *Sixty State Street Building*
Source:——, Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat, Advances in Tall Buildings, Von Nostrand Reinhold Comp. , NY, 1981, pp. 160-61

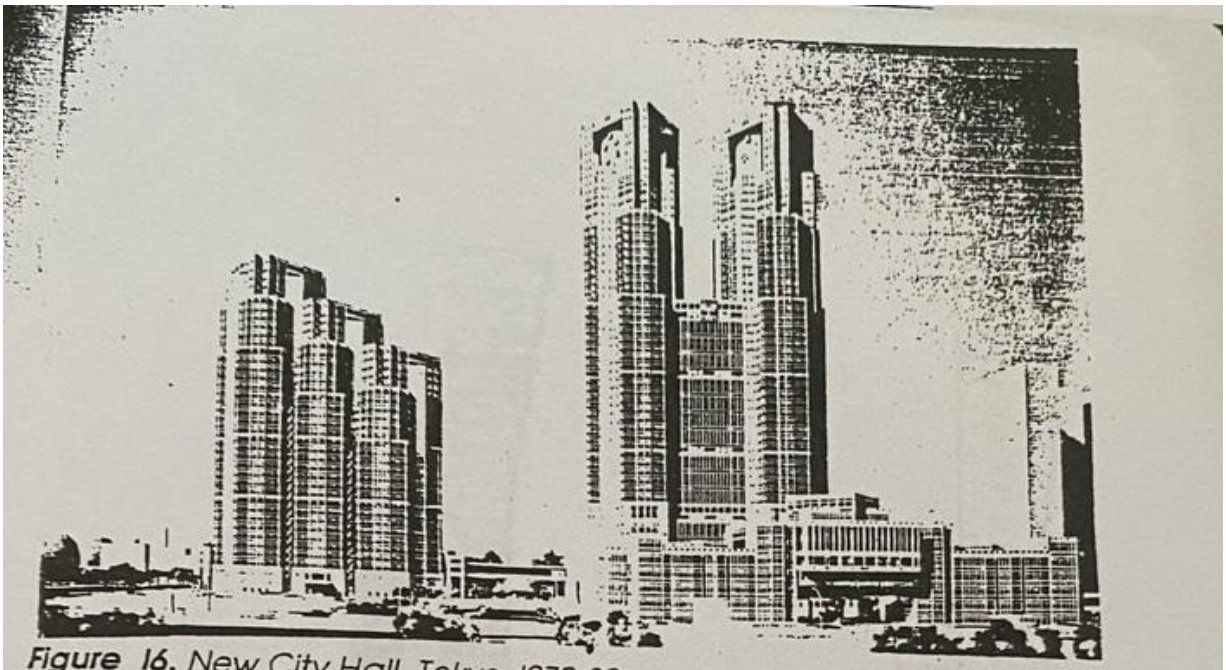


Figure 16. New City Hall, Tokyo, 1972-82
Source: Jencks, C., architecture Today, Academy Editions, London, 1988, p. 234

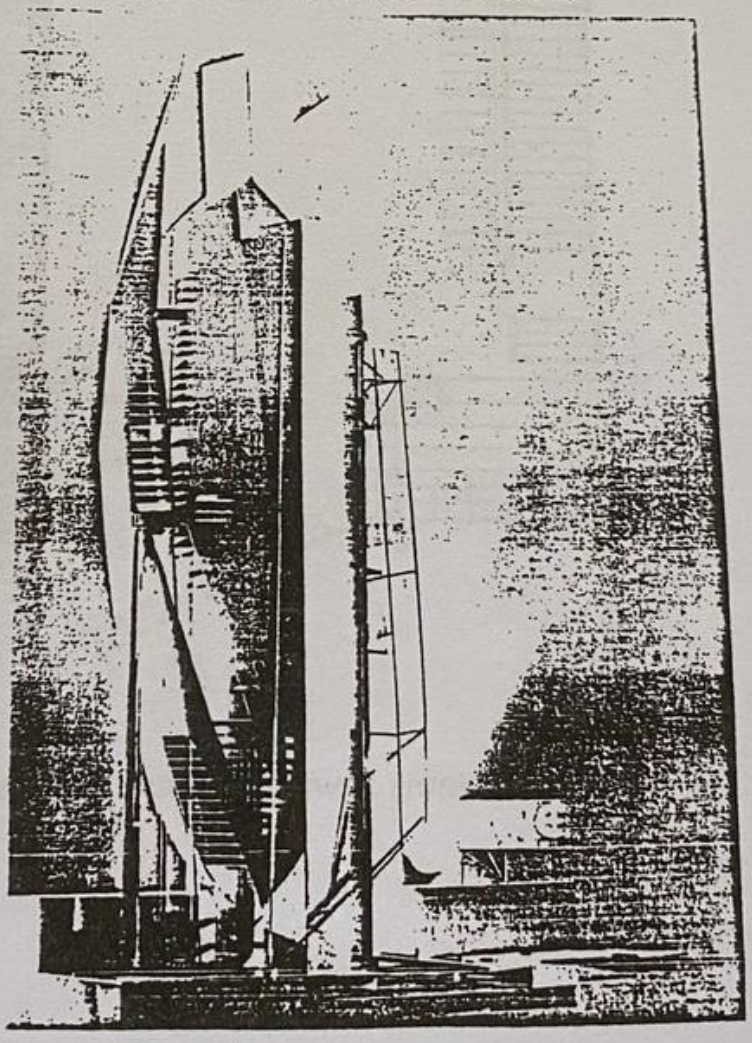


Figure 17. Media Tower
Source:———, Les Tours, Techniques Architecture, June, 1987, p. 46

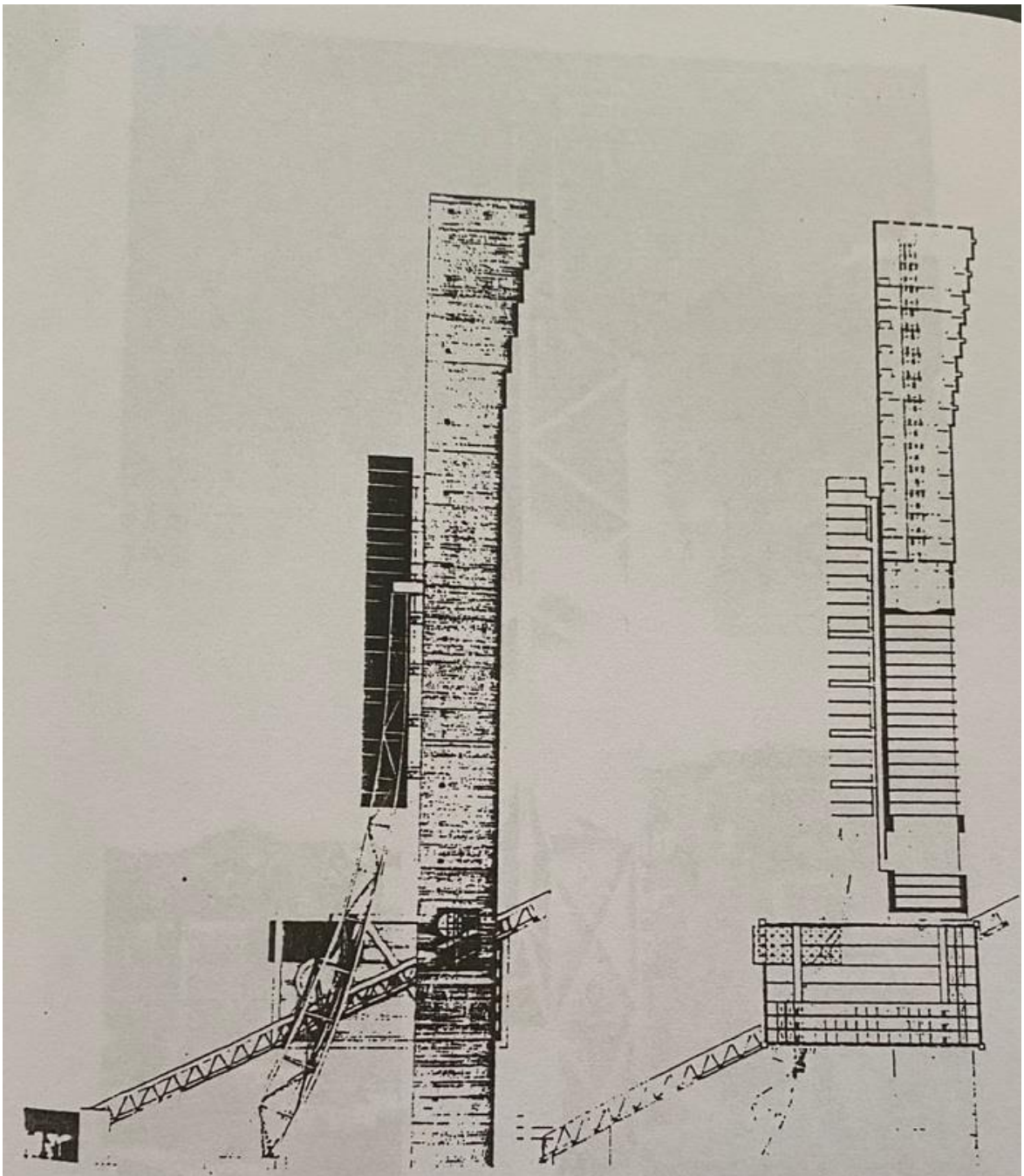


Figure 18. Eschersheimer Landstrasse Tower, Frankfurt
Source: Ibid., p. 55

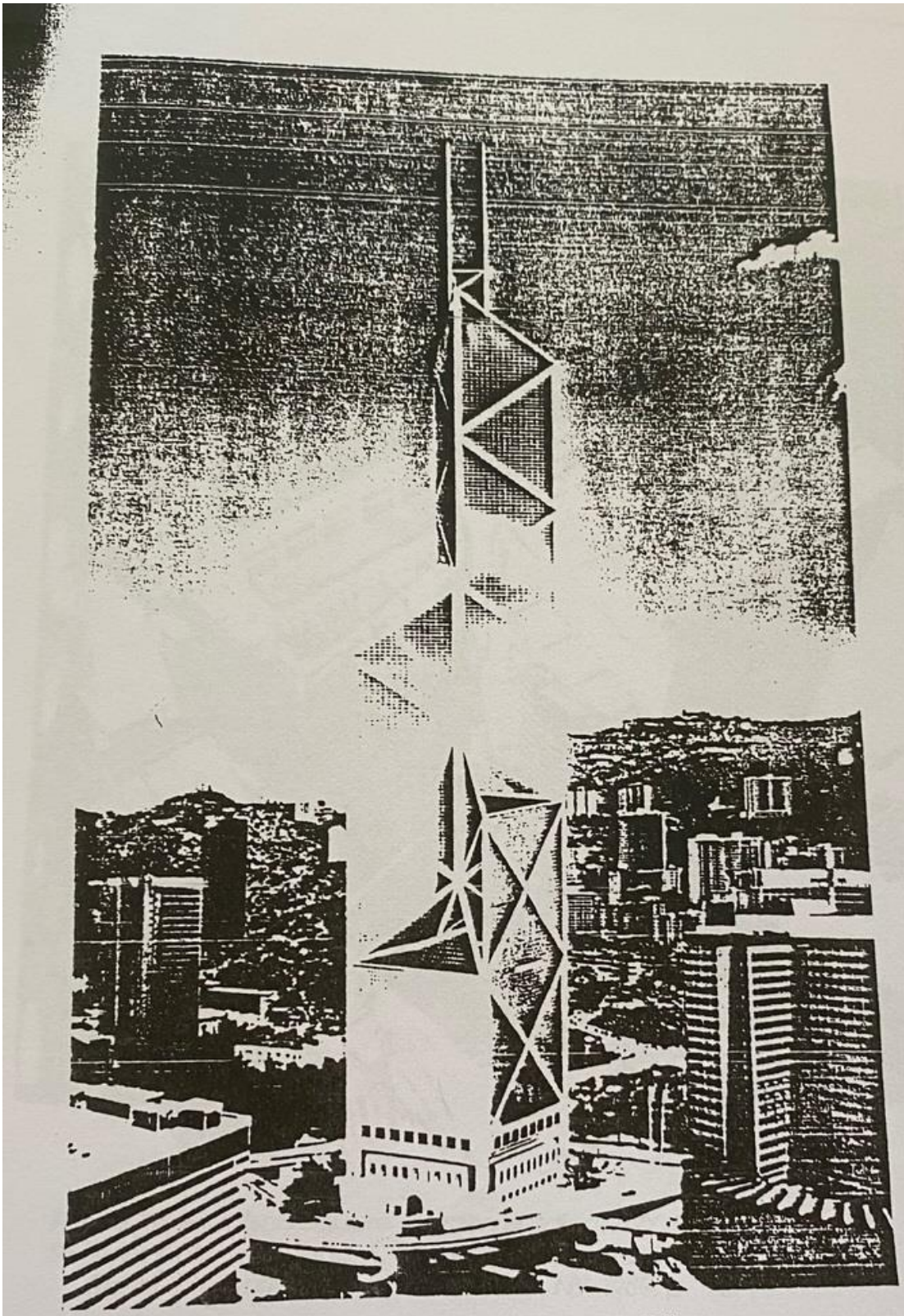


Figure 19. *Bank of China Building*
Source: Ibid., p. 80

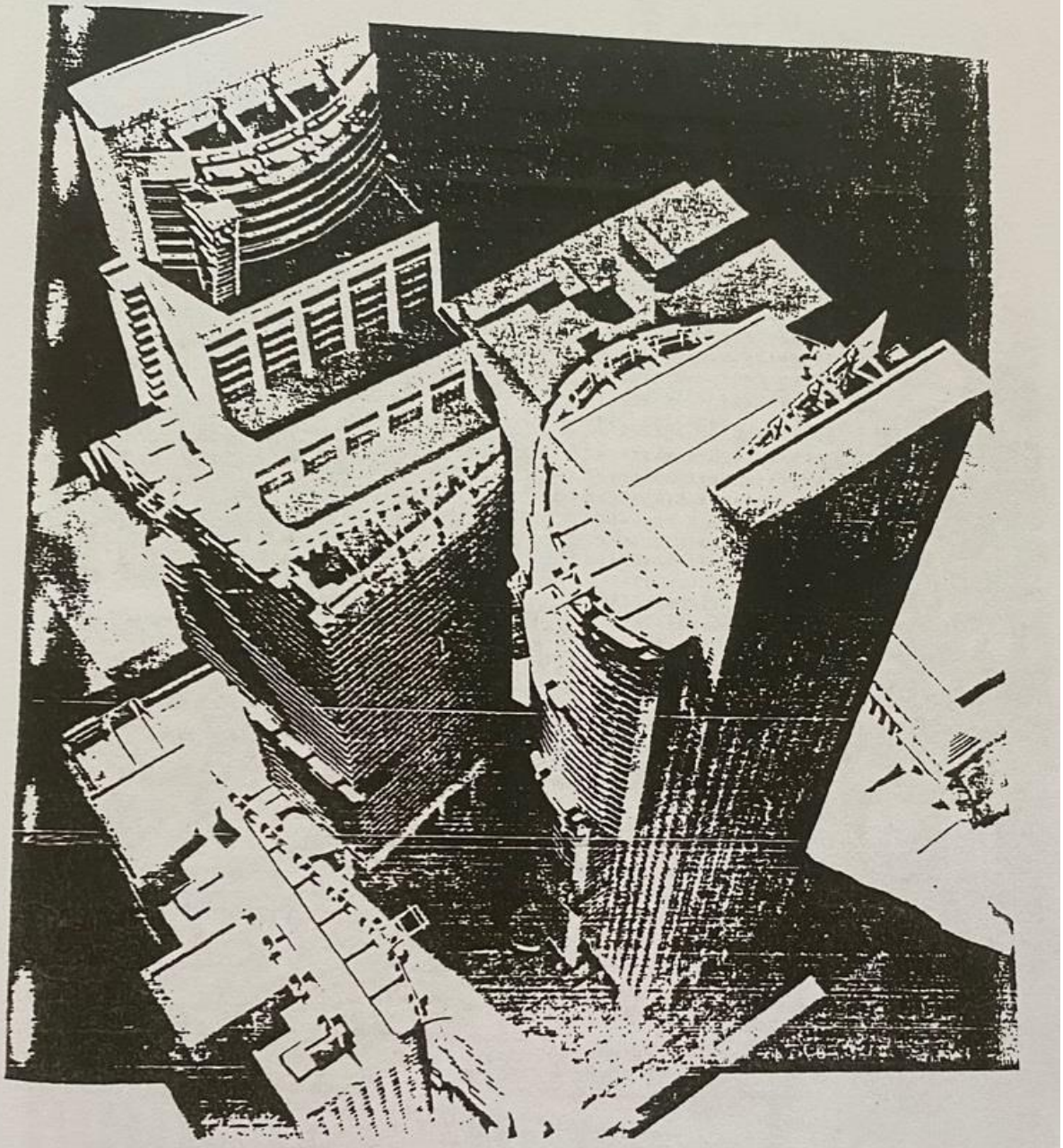


Figure 20. *Madison Square Garden Buildings, NY, 1987*
Source: Klotz, H., Sabau, L. (ed.), New York Architecture: 1970 to 1990, Rizzoli International Publications Inc., NY, 1989, p. 176

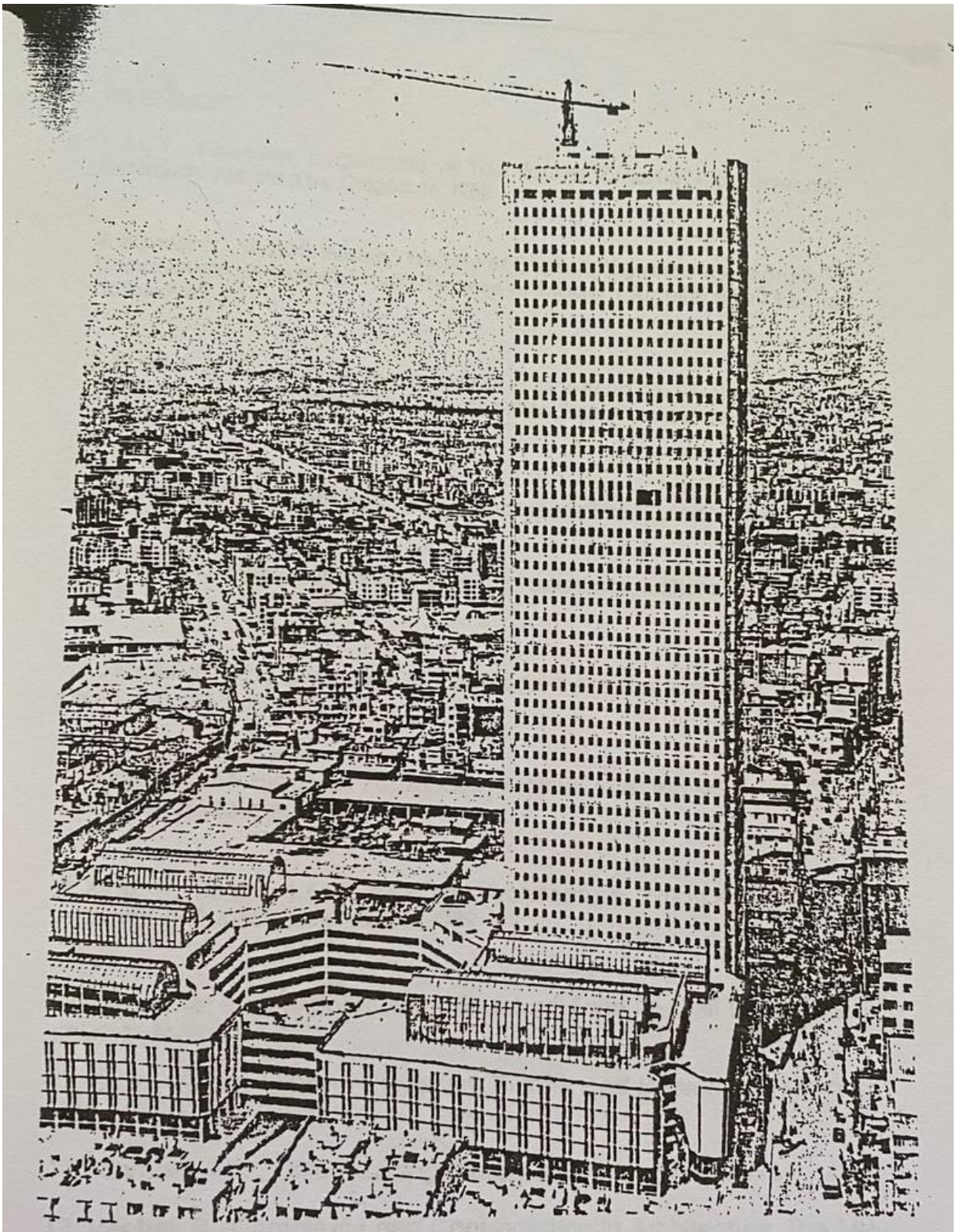


Figure 21. Mersin Skyscraper
Source: Poster of Mersin Skyscraper

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