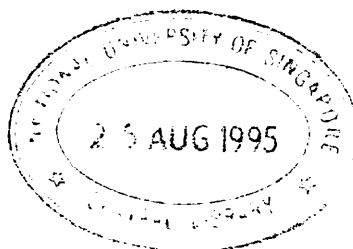




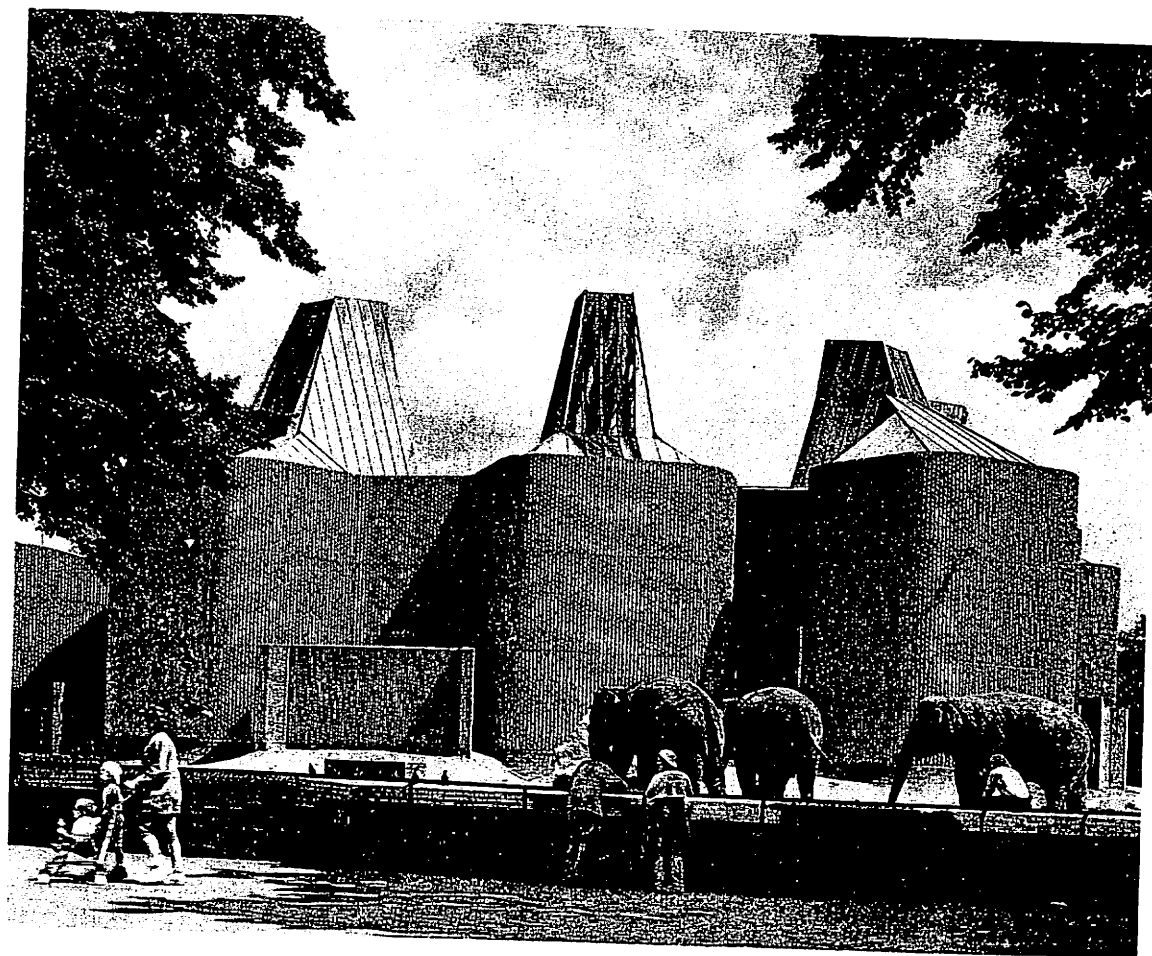
*The Buildings of*  
**London Zoo**

Peter Guillery



ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF ENGLAND

1993



## Elephant and Rhino Pavilion

Plan 4:39

The Elephant and Rhino Pavilion [37 to 42] was built as a successor to Anthony Salvin junior's Elephant and Rhinoceros House of 1868–9 [7 and Plan 2:7]. Plans for a new building had been prepared by Tecton in 1939, but the outbreak of war prevented their implementation. The site was chosen in 1950 and the building became the principal southern focus of Casson's 1958 redevelopment plan.

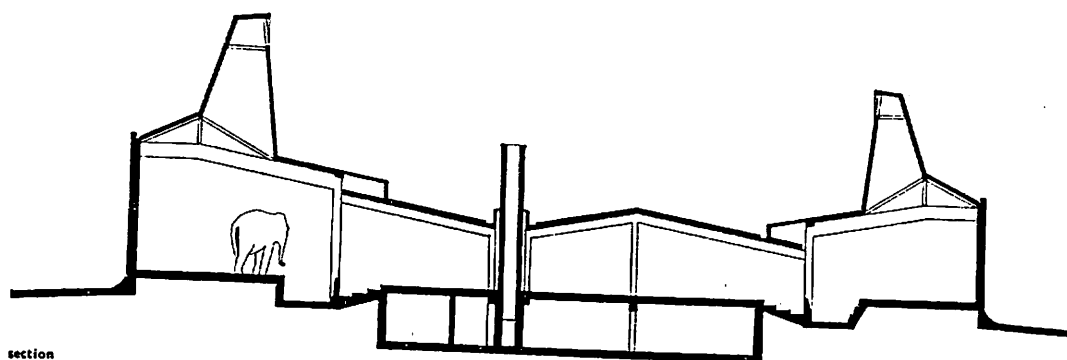
The resulting building could not have formed a greater contrast to its 'Swiss chalet' predecessor. Its style can be characterised as zoomorphic New Brutalism, marvellously expressive of its inhabitants. Despite its dramatic exhibitionism, little about the building is not functionally justified. Textured concrete walls over curved brick plinths, for example, prevent the animals from damaging the fabric.

The main walls are in differing grades of vertically rilled reinforced concrete, hand-hacked to expose the aggregate, with no disguising of the 'lifts'. There are tall copper-felt covered vent and

1962–5, brief by Desmond Morris, Curator of Mammals; Sir Hugh Casson, Neville Conder and Partners, architects; John Mowlem and Company Limited, building contractors. Paddock pool added 1971. Rhino moat altered 1988.

37 (Above) The zoomorphic architecture of the Elephant and Rhino Pavilion (BB92/21620).

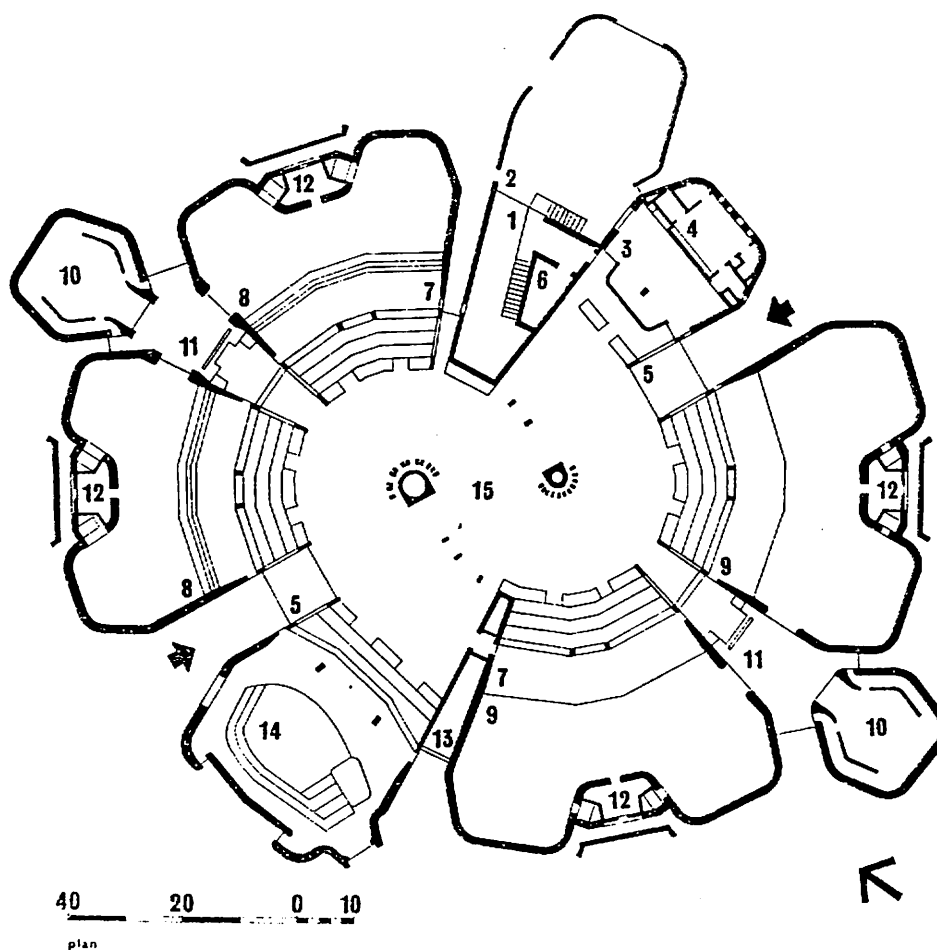
38 The Elephant and Rhino Pavilion, plan and section in 1965 (from the Architectural Review, July 1965).

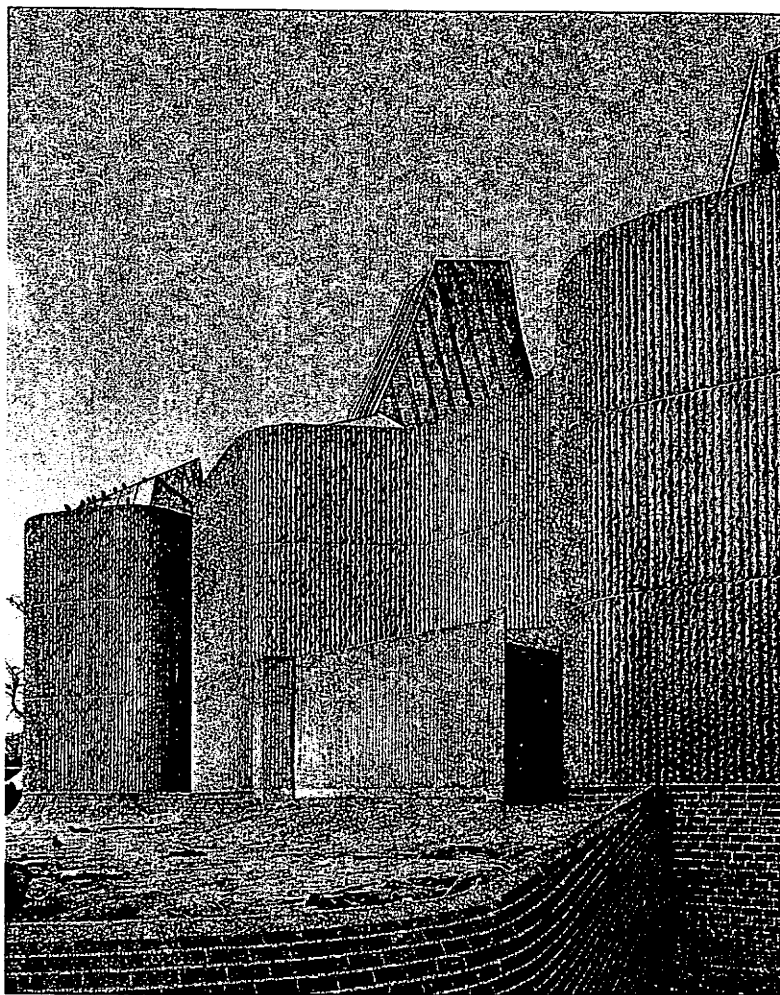


section

key

- |                           |                     |                   |                           |                       |
|---------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. ramp from service yard | 4. staff lavatories | 7. animal ditches | 10. sick bays             | 13. main rising ducts |
| 2. service yard           | 5. public entrance  | 8. rhino pens     | 11. pen lobbies           | 14. elephant pool     |
| 3. staff mess room        | 6. store            | 9. elephant pens  | 12. drinking trough areas | 15. public space      |





39 The hand-hacked reinforced-concrete walls of the Elephant and Rhino Pavilion (BB92/6435).

lantern towers and the public entrances have boldly cantilevered timber canopies. In the paddocks, screen walls shield access to the drinking troughs and protect the keepers. The moat is used as an enclosure for agoutis (rodents of the guinea-pig family).

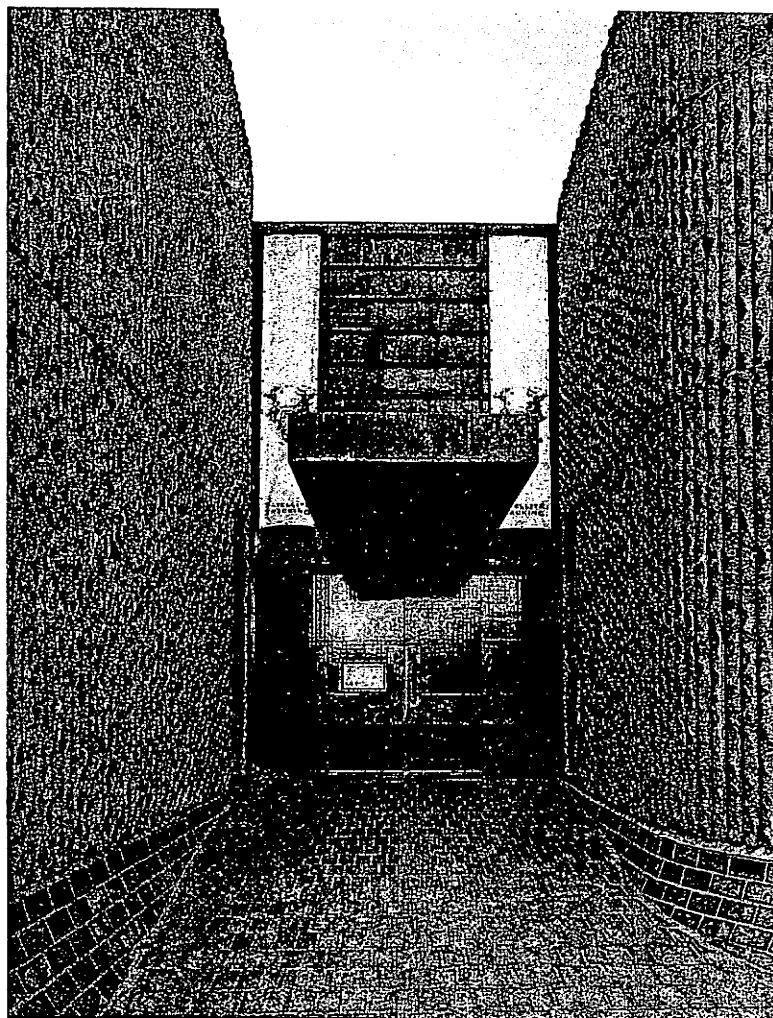
The irregular plan evolved as an unfettered expression of the requirements for space, temperature and light, as specified by zoologists. Circulation is directed around an S-plan public area, visitors moving from one animal pen to another in sequence with low-level viewing areas so that those who linger do not impede the flow. Light comes into the pens from the lanterns, while the public area is low and dark, with radiating laminated beams (24 ft/7.3 m in span) disposed in a tree-like manner to evoke a 'jungly' impression, an effect that has not been enhanced by the introduction of signs and banners.

Two groups of four pens in pairs, each pen served by a drinking trough, are supplemented by enclosed sick bays. Curved mosaic-tiled interior walls and doors with robust rounded concrete surrounds were intended to minimise damage by the animals and allow for

40 (Right) *The Elephant and Rhino Pavilion, eastern entrance (BB92/6434).*

41 (Far right above) *The interior of the Elephant and Rhino Pavilion in 1965 (Emap Architecture and the Casson Conder Partnership).*

42 (Far right below) *The interior of the Elephant and Rhino Pavilion in 1992 (BB92/6432).*



easy cleaning. To the west there is a washing pool and to the east there are staff rooms. Ditches with minimally obtrusive railings separate the public from the animals. A flue and an air intake rise through the centre of the building, partially disguised by timber columns.

The basement has heating and ventilation plant, food storage and preparation areas and wide passages for the clearance of quantities of dung, swept down into carts from ground-floor lobbies up to which food is hoisted.

#### Sources

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