

FAST FRAME-UP



Alameda Street scene: Corten-finished tower rising behind space-framed conference complex

Chile has good cause to be proud of its new 39 000 m² conference centre in Santiago. Not only is it a splendid building, but it was erected in just eleven months.

The reason for the hurry was that Chile had agreed to be host in early April 1972 to the third United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, but had nowhere suitable to house 2 500 delegates. Also the programme for the new building was not completed until the end of April 1971.

But now it exists, known by the name UNCTAD, the initials of the conference which spawned it. It stands

in such a key position, facing the principal street — the Alameda Bernardo O'Higgins — that none of the current big political demonstrations seem to occur in front of or near it.

Eric Hogsbawn could probably explain this fact; though it could never have been part of the original intention when it was decided that the building be conceived as a symbol of the U.P. Government's decision to make culture available to the people.

It is a very striking building complex — notable for the massive Corten steel space-frame roof floating over the main building, independently supported on free-standing columns, and providing shelter all round.

Set back underneath are the steel-clad conference rooms. Two floors of the building are below ground, three above.

The front is broken by a great ceremonial entrance plaza topped by a stained glass skylight. Access is from here to all levels; up wide stairs to the main conference level; straight ahead to the lower conference level; right through to the other side of the building; and (one day in the dim future) down to a Metro station.

In a quiet, carefully-landscaped plaza behind the conference building, and connected to it by a three-level service bridge, stands the UNCTAD tower secretariat — originally designed



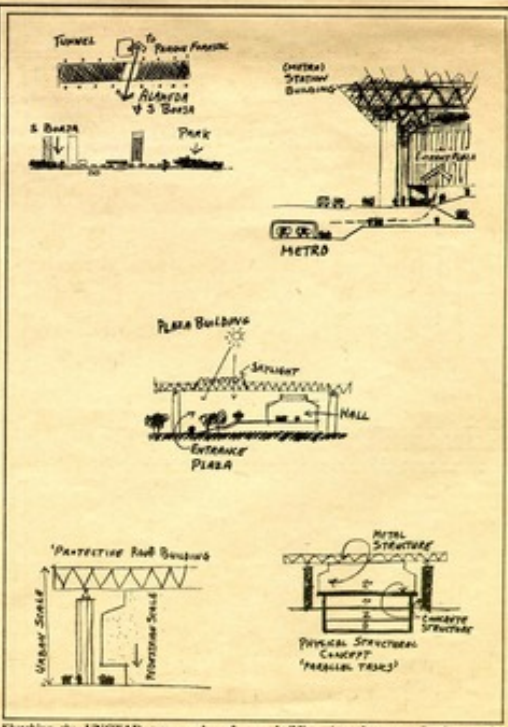
With the wrapping still on — the main conference hall has Chilean furniture and fittings



Main conference lobby looks like airports should: simple volumes; large-scale decorations



Along the stairs and under the space frame is the full ceremony of main conference hall



Sketching the UNCTAD tower and conference buildings into downtown Santiago setting

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