

«The Architect Van der Roch (sic) creator of the German Pavilion»

«The German Pavilion at the Barcelona International Exhibition powerfully attracts the visitor's attention. Constructed in accord with the new German style of straight planes and cubic masses, the most refined taste presides over it, and it is one of the most outstanding aspects of our Competition.

«Water, clear and colored glass, and marble constitute the principal elements in its construction. With them, in straight lines and an extremely skillful arrangement of planes, the German architect H. Mils Van der Roch (sic) creates a masterwork worthy of being properly studied.

«We had an opportunity to speak with Var der Roch (sic). He was not aware that he was talking to a journalist and expressed his feelings on modern art to us.

"Life has changed in relation to previous years. One lives differently today, and what satisfied us yesterday leaves us indifferent today. We have other needs, and it is logical that architecture also changes when a way of living changes.

"Life today requires simplicity and brevity. The complications of the past have no reason for being today. It is, therefore, natural that our buildings, our furniture, the interior of the home, respond to this new and every day more accentuated way of living.

"The danger of this nascent architecture lies in the possible elimination of artistic taste. Modern architecture, so thoroughly accepted in Germany, tends toward the combination of art and simplicity.

"There can and should be art in the new architecture. Using true, simple lines, smooth planes, the construction problem can be resolved without detriment to aesthetics. Rich materials should be used in order to do this. Marble, in different shades; bronze, glass, are mandatory complements to the modern style.

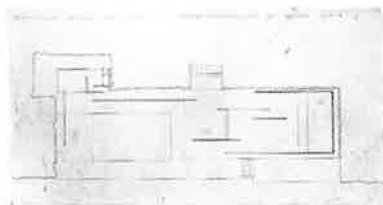
"I was given complete freedom of action in the building of Germany's Pavilion at the Barcelona International Exhibition. That is the only way an architect can carry out his work.

"In my judgement, furniture is a complement to architecture. I have conceived of some very novel furniture made with materials not used until now. They turn out to be very comfortable and in harmony with the building..."

«Thus the architect spoke to us, convinced and certain of his art, prevalent in Germany today. We recall the Leipzig Fair, that of Music, in Frankfurt; the new station in Stuttgart...

«The German Pavilion at the Barcelona Exhibition is something that merits a visit. It is a magnificent example of the new German art of building.»

**Diario Oficial de la Exposición, vol. I,
no. 12, Barcelona, June 2, 1929, p. 25.**



63 Floor plan. First preliminary sketch. Pen-

cil on drawing paper, 89 × 46.50 cm.

«The German Pavilion by Mies van der Rohe at the Barcelona Exhibition»

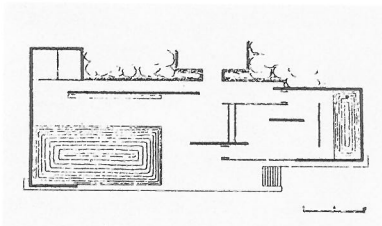
«It only contains space. It has no practical objective, material function. People comment, "It's of no use at all". It is representative architecture, like an obelisk or a triumphal arch. Some architects, in order to represent Germany by means of a type of commemorative structure, might probably have used the shape of a large dirigible for this building. Mies van der Rohe, more subtle, has given his representative monument the peaceful form of a house.

«Of course, we cannot agree upon just what is "the form of a house". When an actual house is built, it continues to be a house whatever the shape given to it. However, if something is created that is not a house but wishes to look like one, it is necessary to try to make the building approximate the well-known forms of residential architecture. This, therefore, is a "traditional" element, a conservative principle we must not overlook, and which we find, quite markedly, in Mies van der Rohe's Pavilion. Some tourists, and certain natives in the extreme avant-garde, have been able to reproach him: "This Pavilion is not quite the latest thing." They have not forgiven the architect for this, and have declared that the "almost latest" fashions should not be brought to International Exhibitions. But I shall leave these opinions and return to my subject.

«The Pavilion only contains space, and contains it, moreover, in a geometrical way, not actually or physically. There are no doors, and the rooms are only partly enclosed on three sides, with three walls, for example. In general, these walls are large, continuous panes of glass that only limit space in a partial manner. Some of this glass, in a dark and neutral shade, reflects objects and people, so that what can be seen through the glass mingles with what is seen in reflection. Some of the rooms have no ceiling; they are true semi-patios, where space is only bounded by three walls and by the horizontal surface of the water in a pond, but it is "held" by geometry.

«When we approach the Pavilion, and later, when we enter it, we are surprised by this sensation of uselessness conveyed by these open and empty rooms, by these handsome marble walls, bare and unadorned, by these unforgettable patios; we immediately feel the shock of metaphysical architecture, if you permit me the expression. But perhaps at this point I should stop for a moment to make things clearer.

«The ordinary interpretation of the words "metaphysical architecture" would appear to be: architecture of the intelligence, or of intellectual abstraction. Everyone would then understand that one means to speak of proportions, generative numbers, of the clarity, almost cruelty, of architectonic reasoning, etc., etc. In Barcelona's German Pavilion, however, architecture abandons the physical, aiming rather at evocation and symbol. This is inevitable in representative construction. The speeches of the German Commissioners have never ceased affirming it —more or less in this way: "This is the spirit of the new Germany: simplicity, and clarity of means and of intentions, everything open to the wind, like candor— nothing closes off access to our hearts. A work honestly done, without arrogance. This is the peaceful home of a Germany at peace!" The evocation has a pronounced sentimental tendency: all of the materials and even the geometry are subordinated to this tendency. It may appear surprising to encounter sentiment in a very modern and very technical work of architecture, but we must acknowledge that architecture can only with difficulty escape from the social influences giving rise to it.»

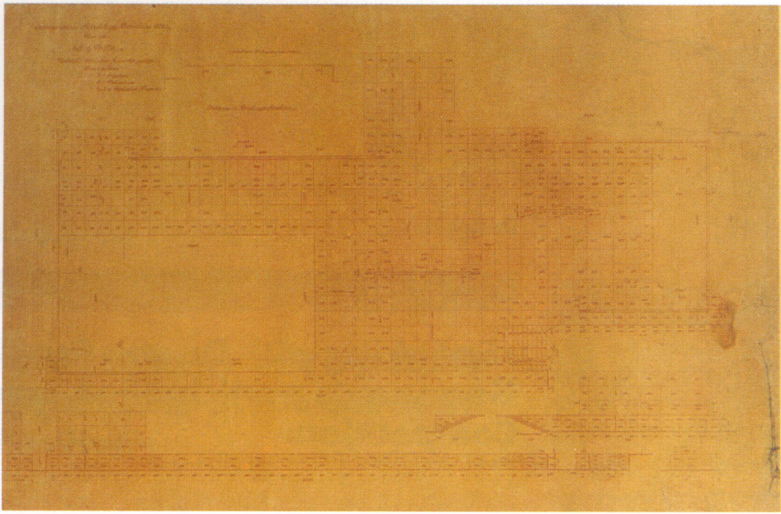


73 Pavilion floor plan by Nicolau M. Rubió

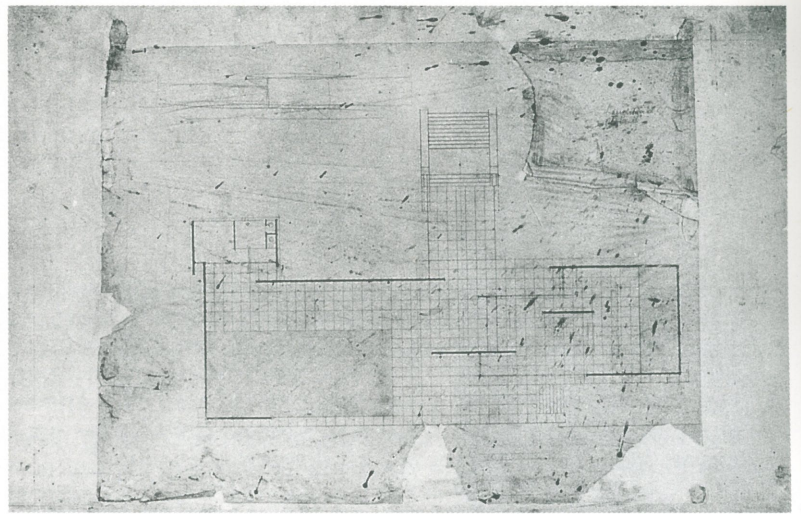
i Tudurí. Published in "Cahiers d'Art", vol.

VIII-IX, 1929.

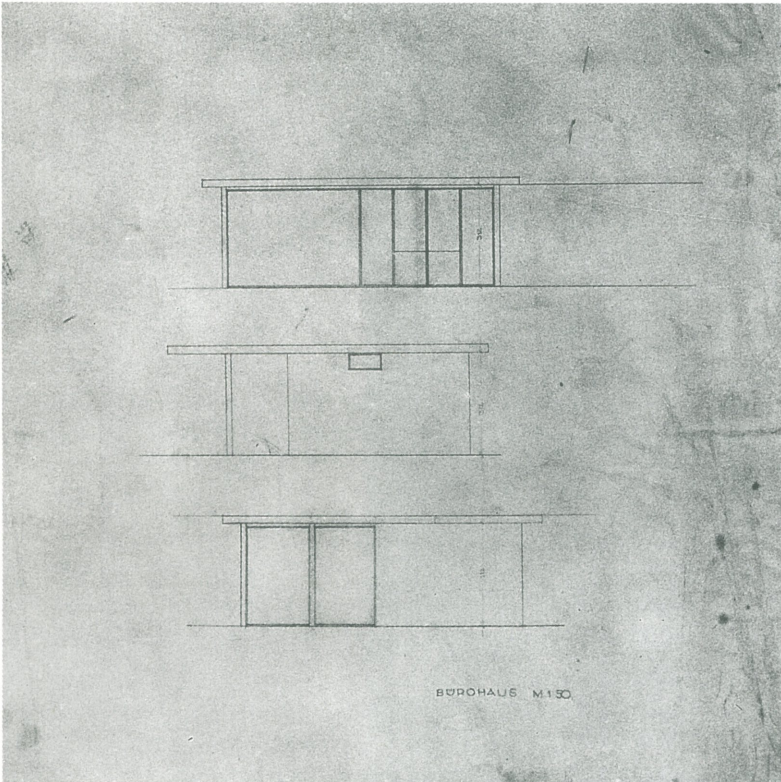
Nicolau M. Rubió i Tudurí.
Cahiers d'Art, vol. VIII-IX, Paris, 1929, pp. 409-411.



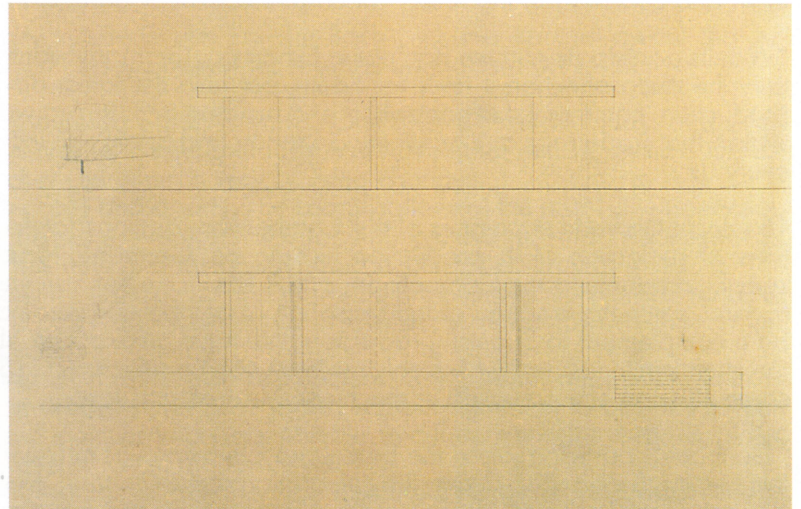
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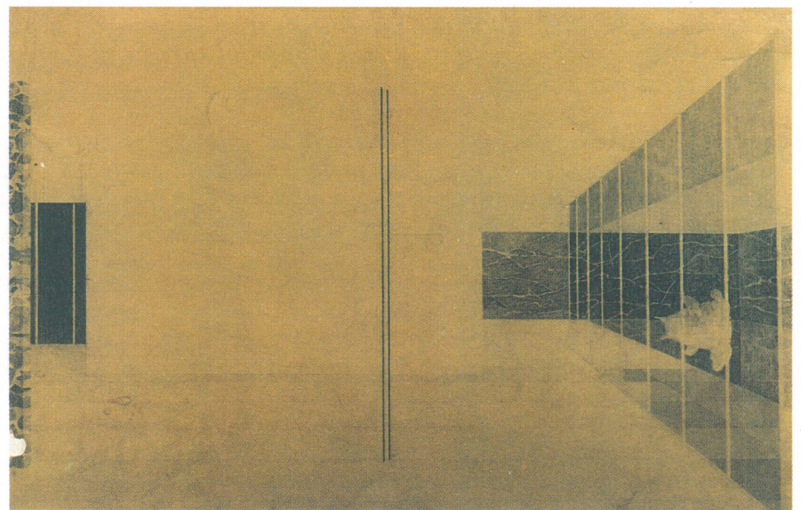
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65 Flagstone paving plan and elevation for the stonecutters. Blueprint paper, 100.33 × 75.50 cm.

66 Blueprint. Colored pencil and pencil on tracing paper.

67 Elevations for the offices ("Bürohaus"). Pencil on paper.

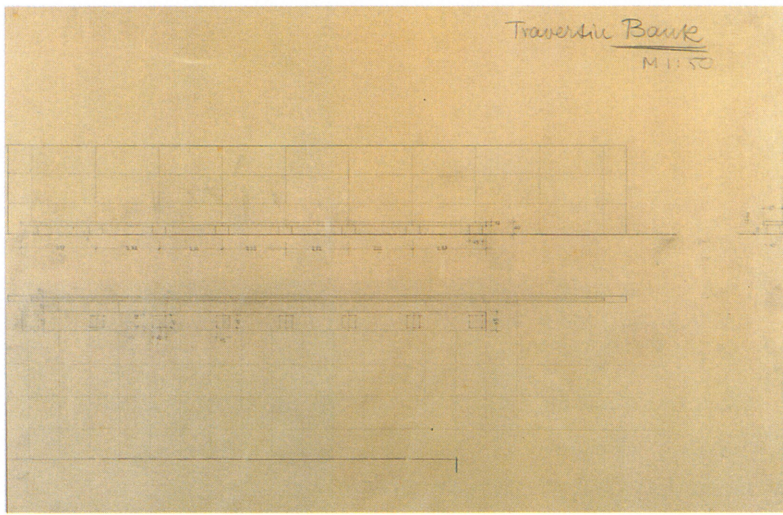
68 Exterior elevations. Pencil on drawing paper, 56 × 38 cm.



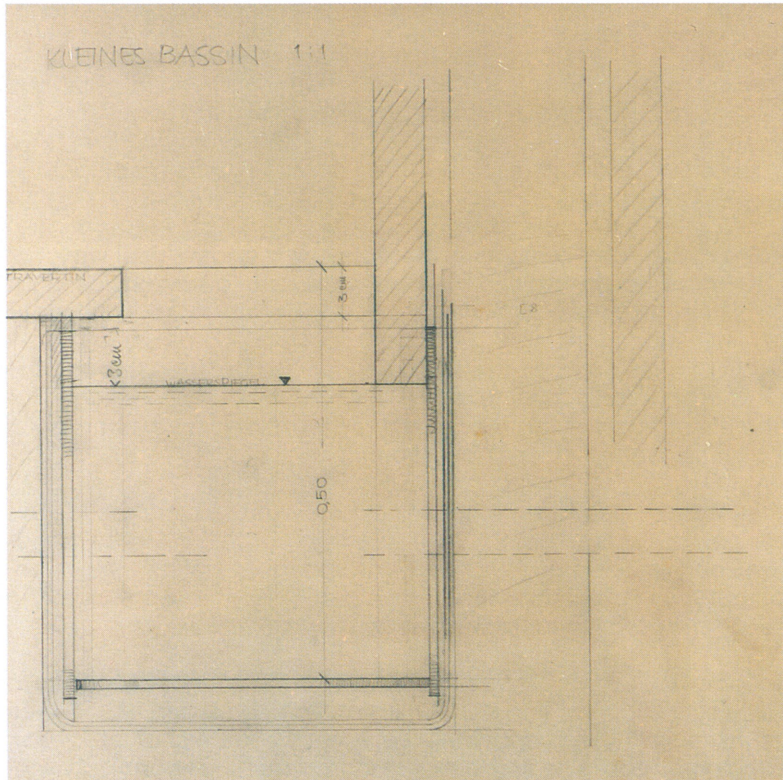
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69 Interior perspective. Pencil and crayon on stiff paper, 131 × 100 cm.

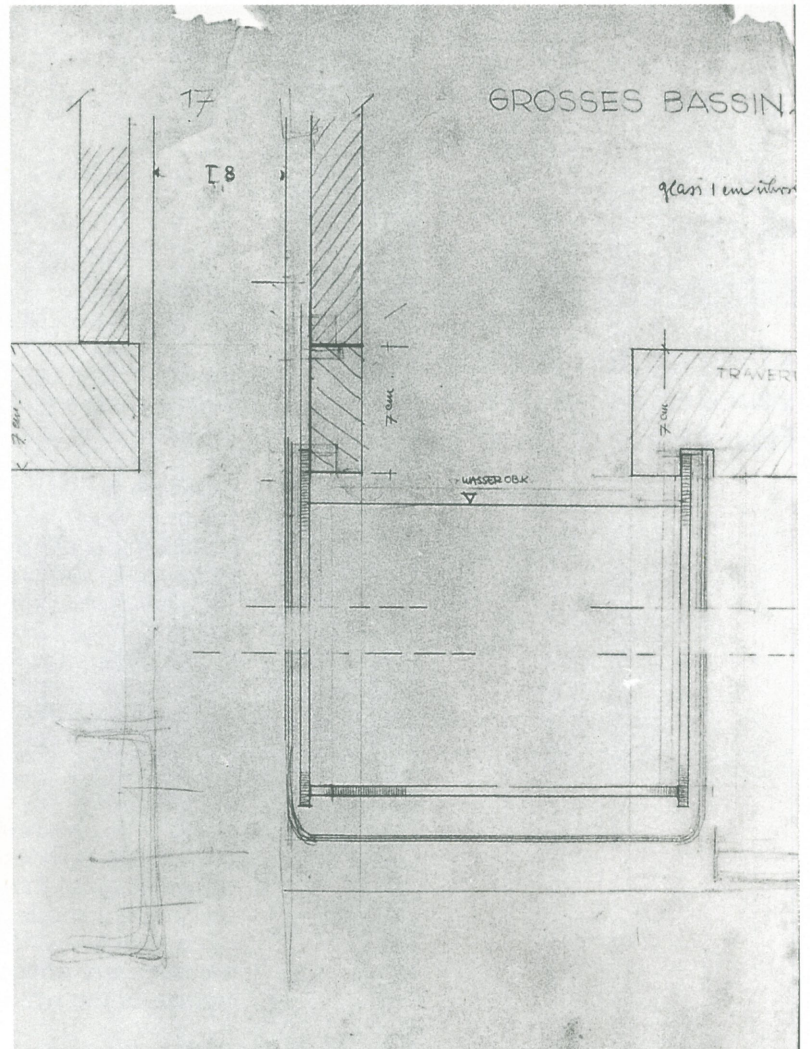
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70 Travertine bench. Floor plan, elevation. **72** Large pool. Pencil on tracing paper.

Pencil on drawing paper. 54 x 39.50 cm.

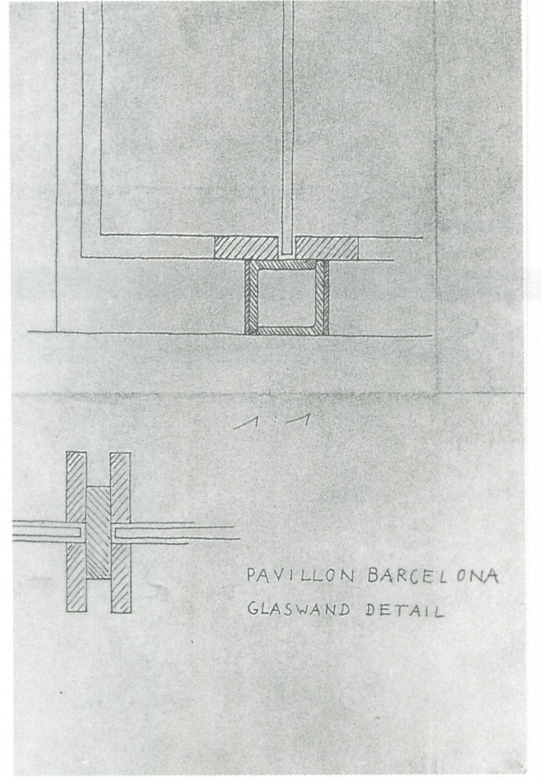
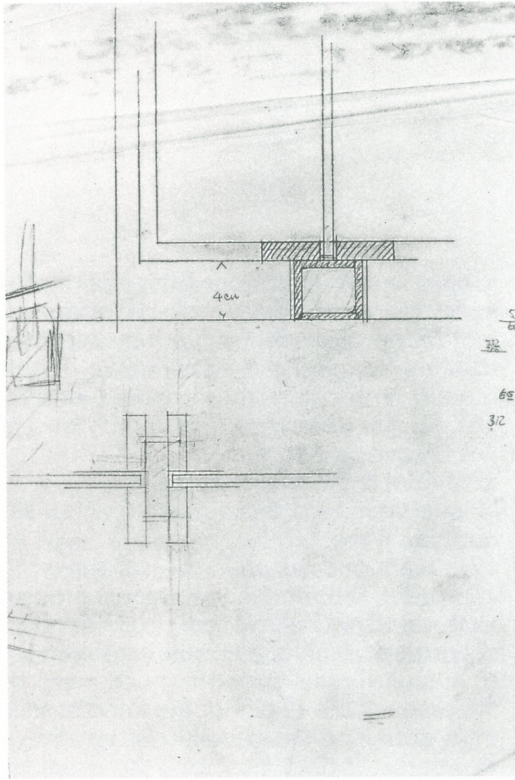
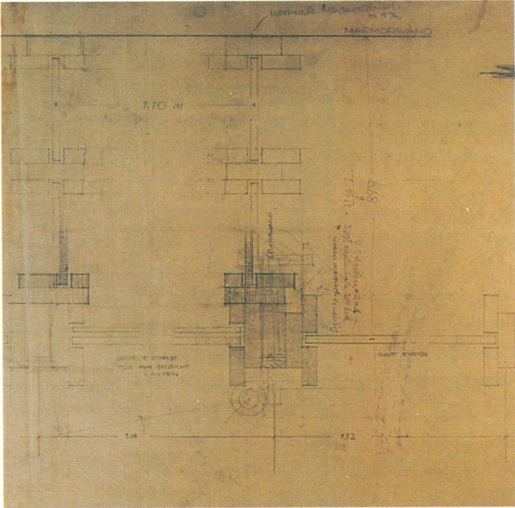
71 Small pool. Section. Pencil on drawing

paper. 47.20 x 49.50 cm.

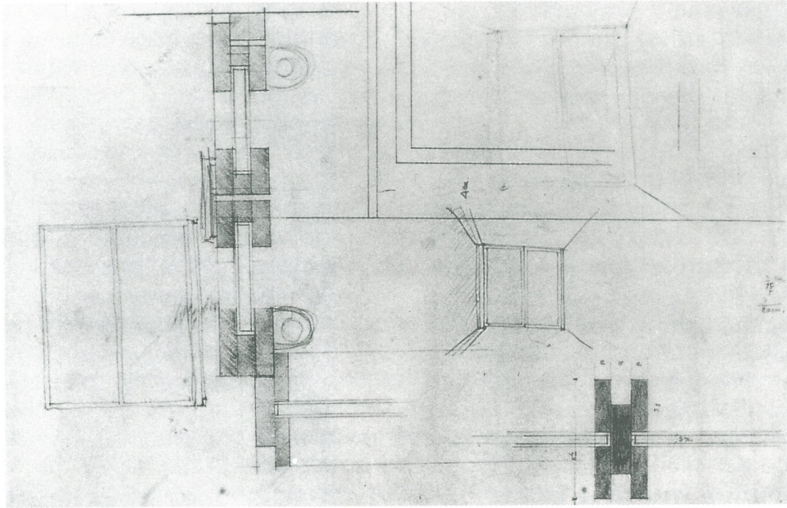
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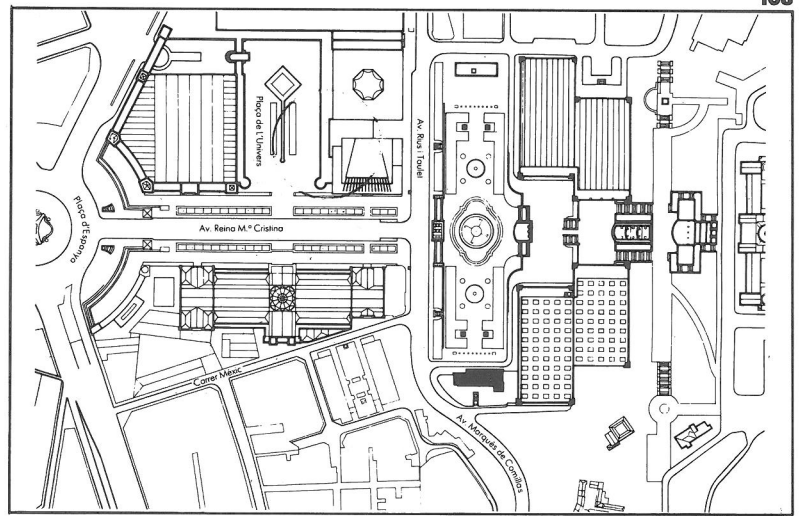
74 Glass partition wall. Section. Pencil on drawing paper. 61 x 42 cm.

75 Detail of the glass wall. Pencil on tracing paper.

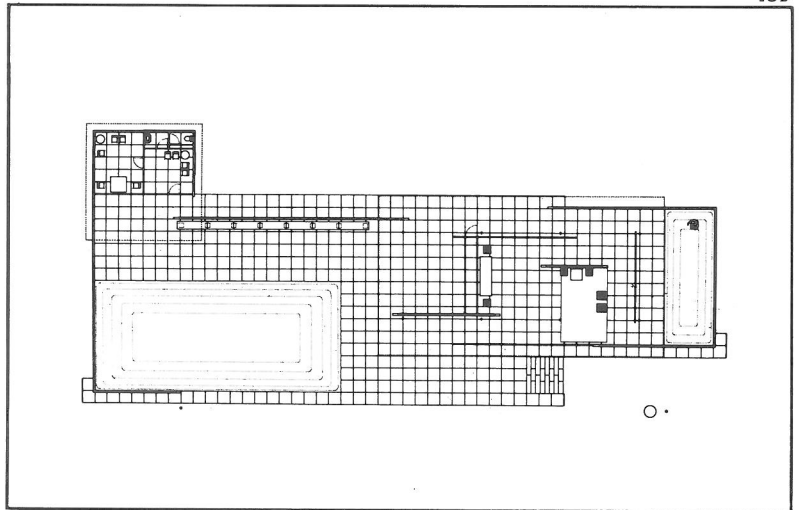
76 Detail of the glass wall. Ink on tracing paper.

77 Removable doors, used as a security measure. Pencil on tracing paper.

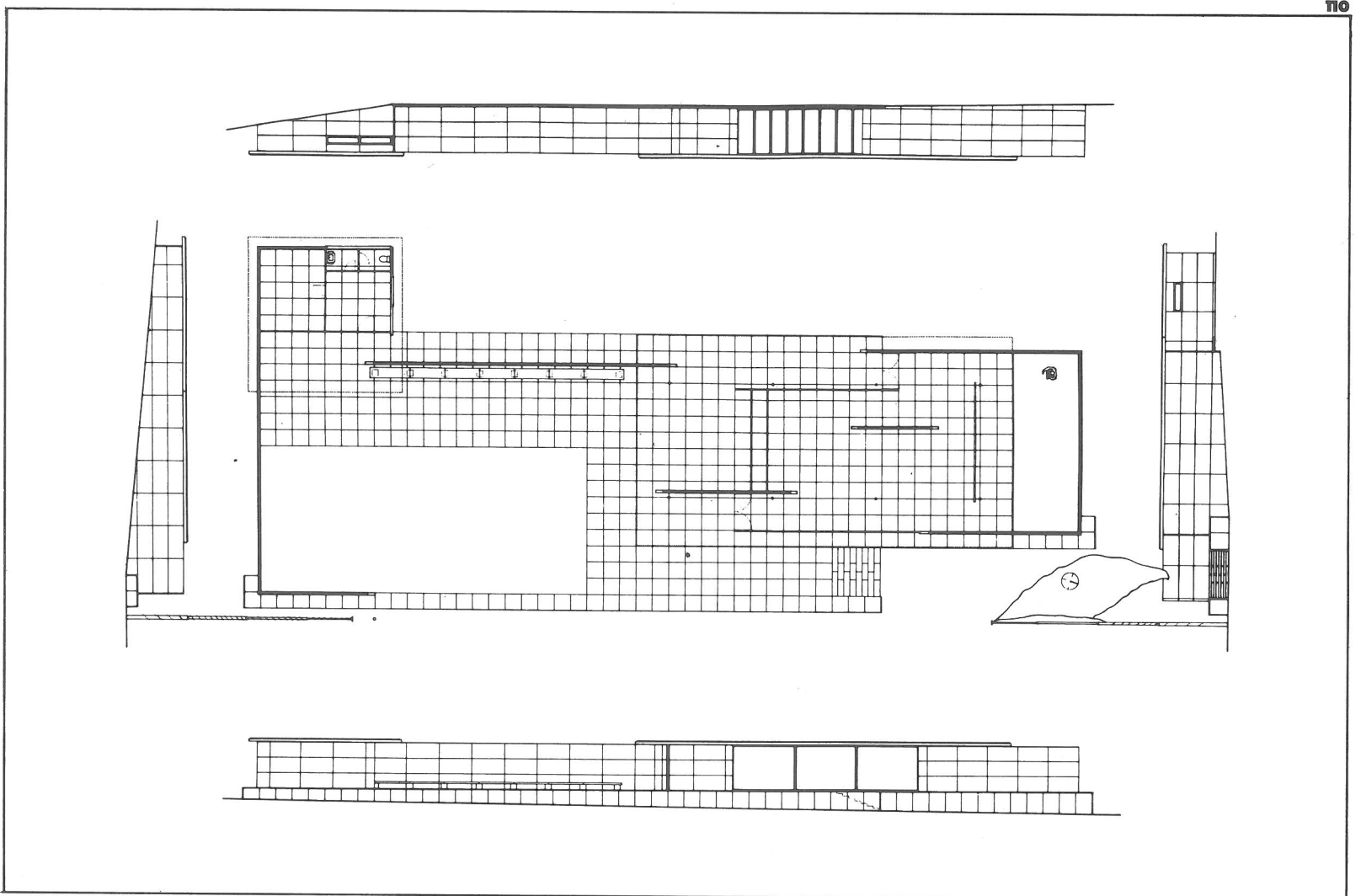
Blueprints and drawings

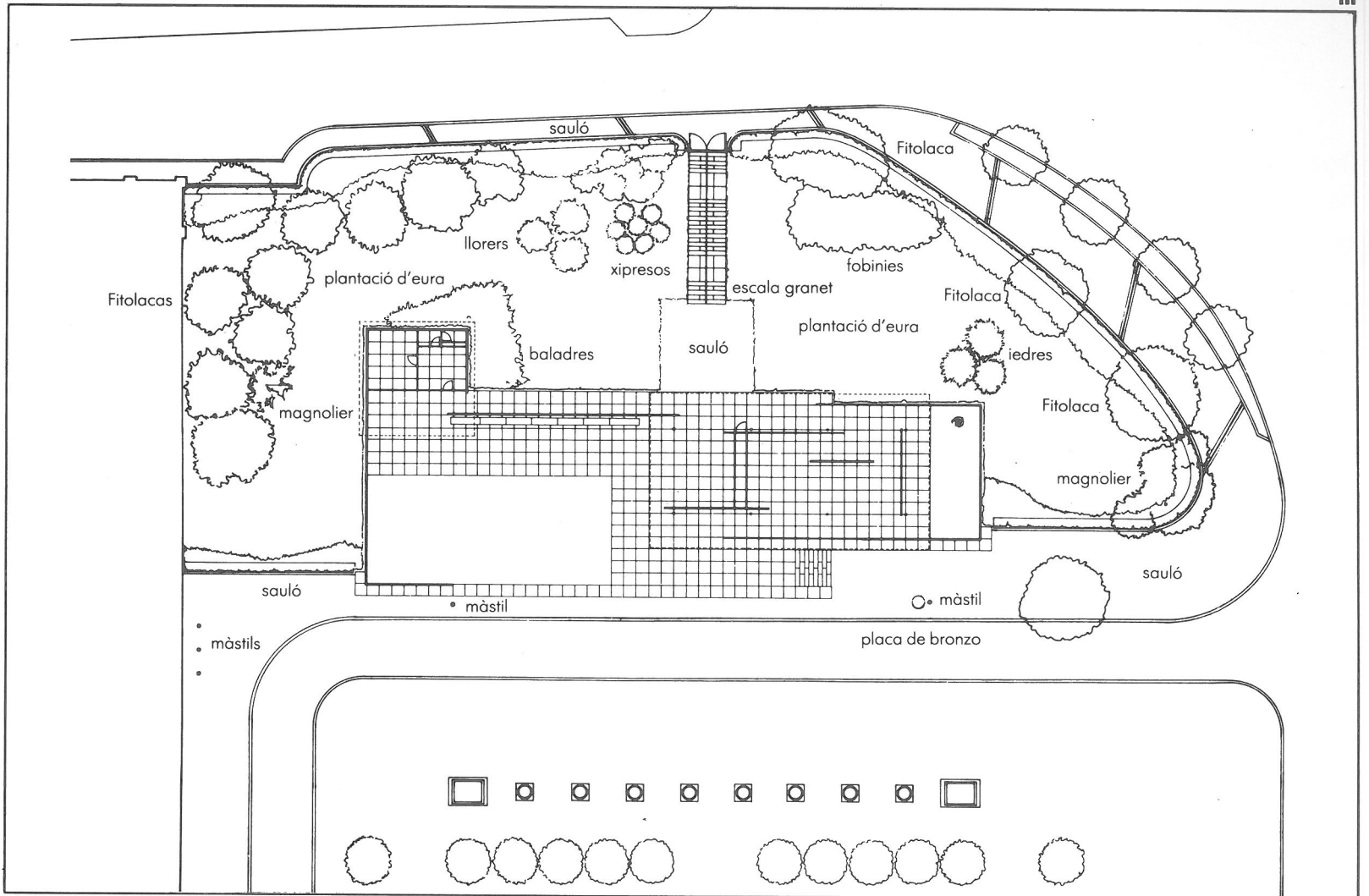


108 Location within the grounds of Montjuïc. Drawing by the architects responsible for the reconstruction —Cristian Cirici, Fernando Ramos and Ignasi de Solà-Morales.

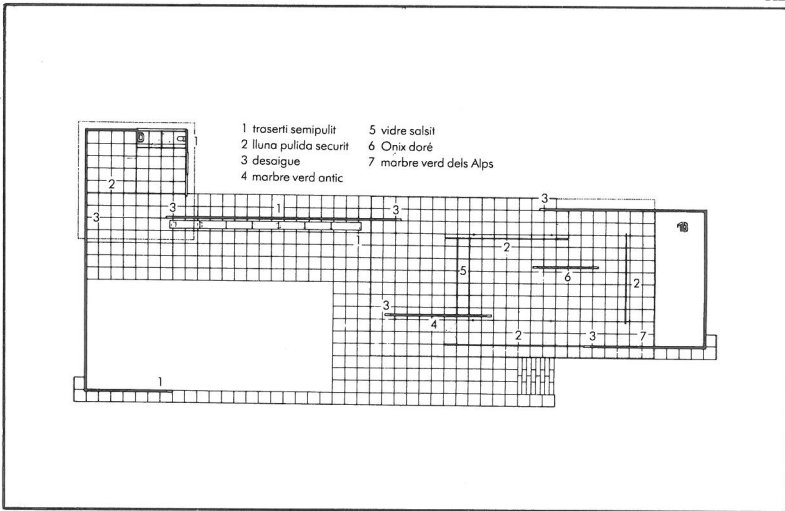


109 Floor plan of the Pavilion (architects' drawing). **110** Elevations of the various façades (architects' drawing).

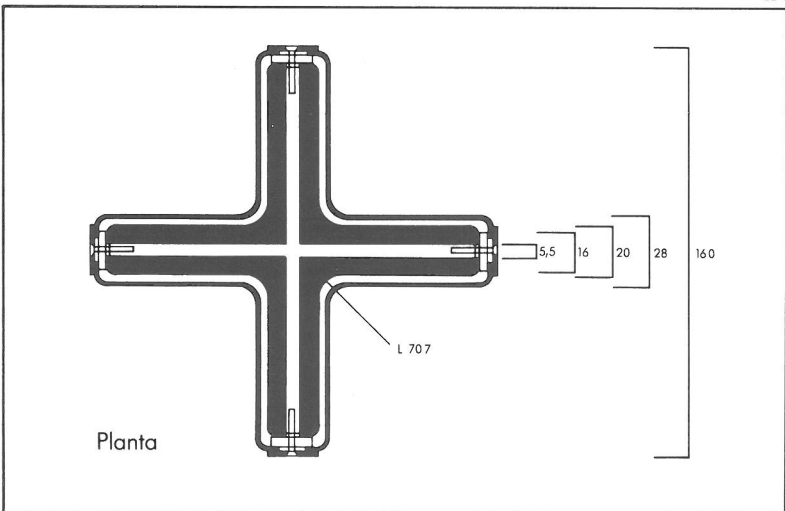




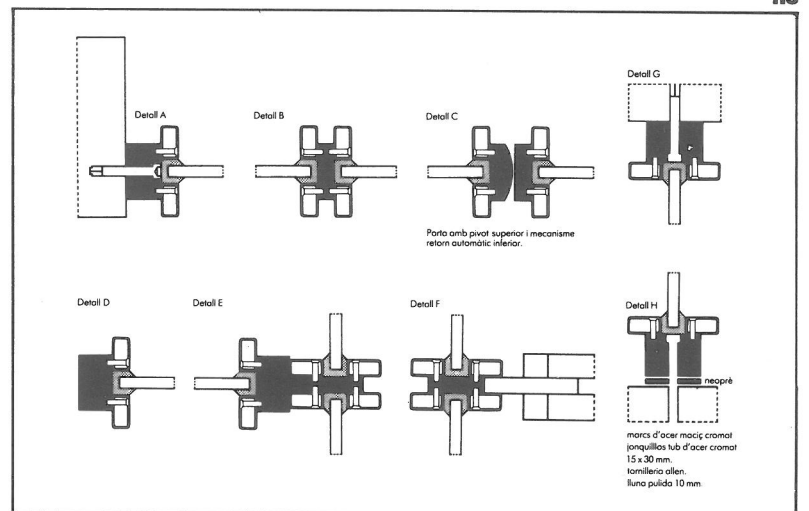
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T11 Plantings (architects' drawing).

T12 Sectioned floor plan and material (architects' drawing).

T13 Sections and details of the metal structures (architects' drawing).

T14 Section of a column (architects' drawing).