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A Boat Yard

Steve Johnson

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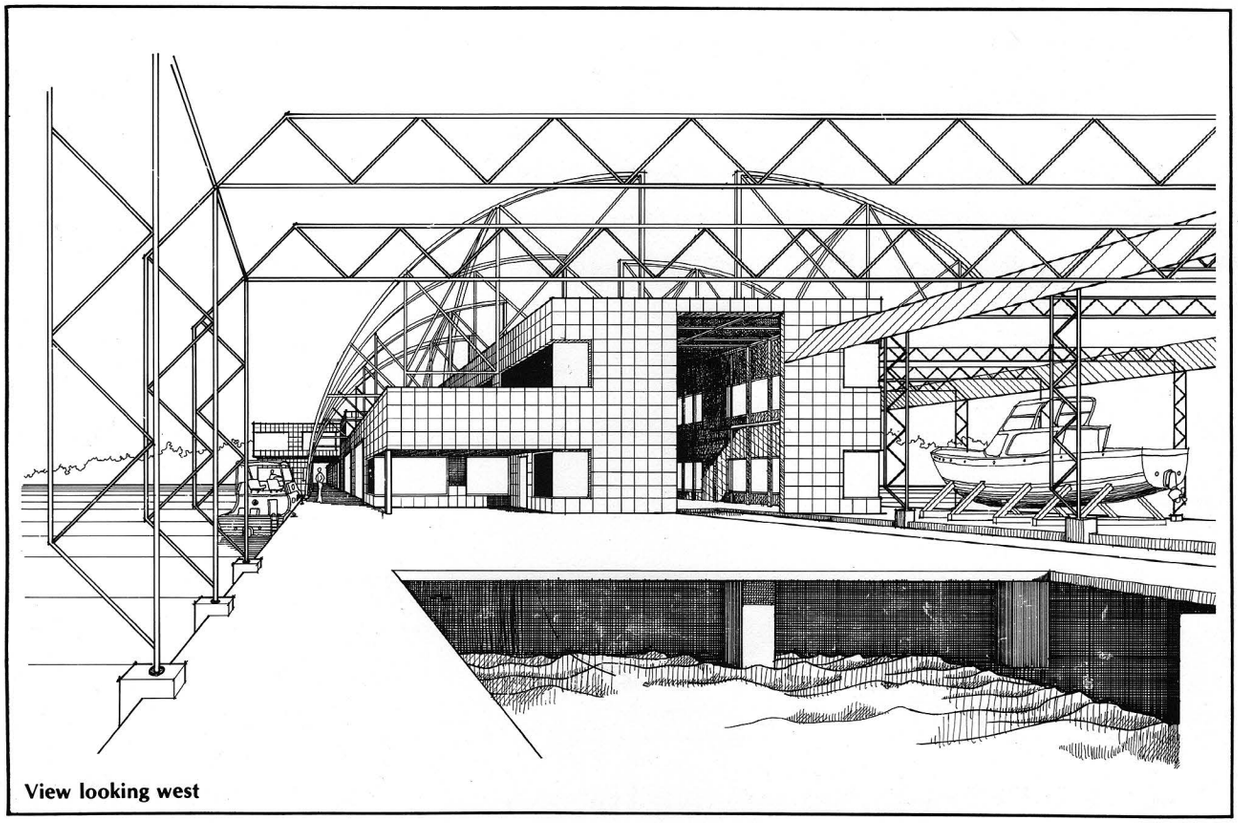
Steve Johnson
Critics: Dale Bryant
Richard Wagner

The project called for the design of a new boat yard to replace one which had been destroyed by fire. The new yard was to be placed on a site composed 80% of water located on Lake Union, a major fresh water trafficway near Seattle, Washington. For this reason, the facility was equipped to construct and service both commercial and pleasure craft.

The program required the building to contain three major spaces; construction, service, and administrative. The construction portion of the yard included the total process from conception of the craft to the final fitting out of the vessel. This process involved design, drafting, lofting, hull construction, engine rebuilding and installation, electrical wiring, plumbing, and painting. The yard was to be large enough to accommodate the construction of a fifty-five foot boat along with the repair of ships up to eighty-five feet in length. The service area included such facilities as engine repair, hull repair, general maintenance, and refueling.

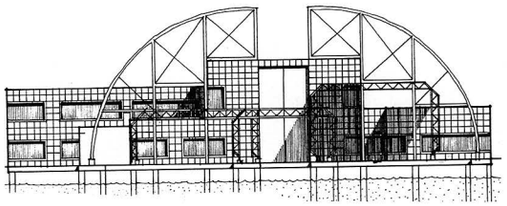


View looking west

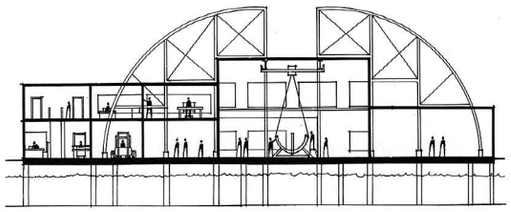
The realization of this design began with the development of the plan. Since the main construction bay occupied the majority of the yard square footage, it was used as the ordering device around which the other spaces were grouped. This became the basis of a radial organization with the construction bay forming the central space while support spaces clustered around it. This plan allowed not only a close, functional arrangement, but also an articulation of the hierarchy of spaces which read on both the interior and the exterior. This arrangement removed the need for space consuming corridors linking the various sub-units to the main construction and repair bays.

The conceptual approach to the three dimensional form of the building grew out of the industrial environment in which the boat yard was located. The problem was to create a response which would be in character with the area while at the same time allow it to stand out as a clear image to passing boaters. This duality of responses is executed through the use of exposed arched trusses which at one level speak to the highly industrial contextual image and at another create the desired focus of the yard. The arched trusses also support the construction crane which runs the entire length of the construction bay along with supporting portions of the building. This begins to articulate the notion of direction and movement through the structure.

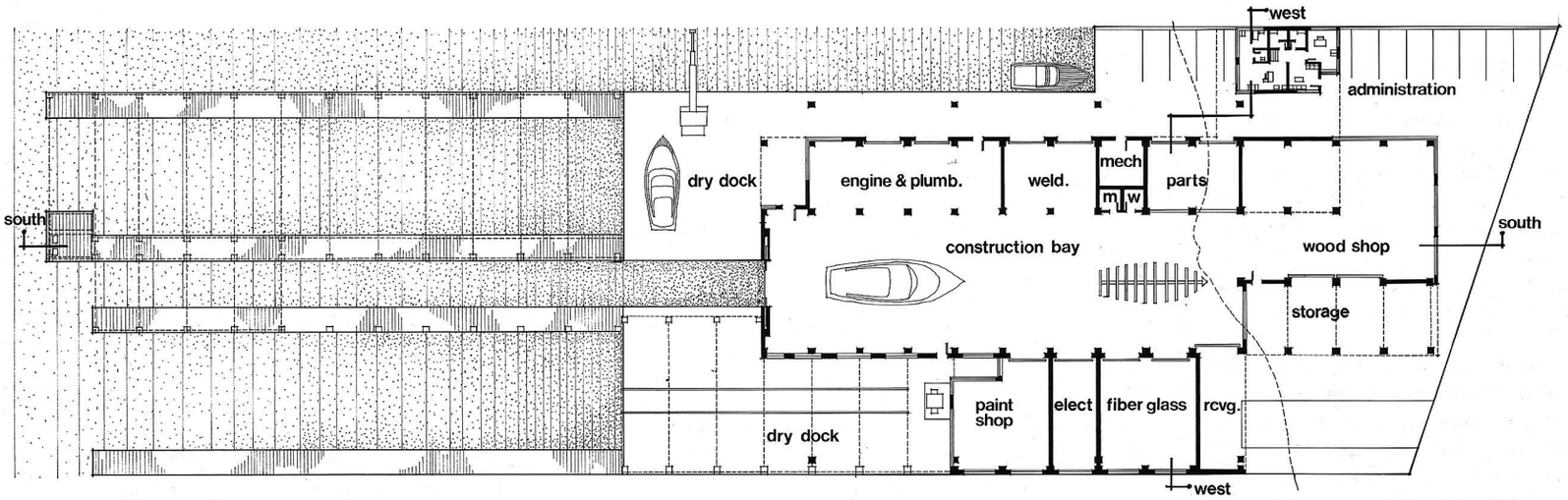
In addition, the program required the inclusion of drydock and exterior work spaces that were to be covered. Large canvas canopies were added on steel frames as a covering for these spaces. The canvas could be rolled up on the framework on sunny days and rolled completely down to block wind-blown rain.



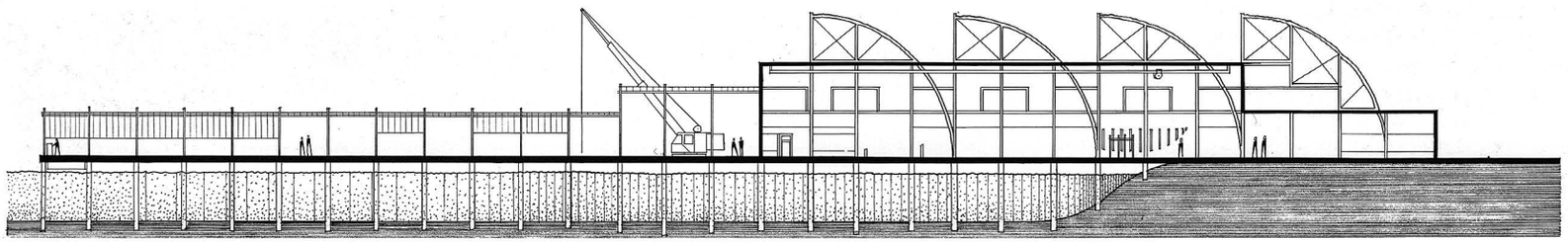
West elevation



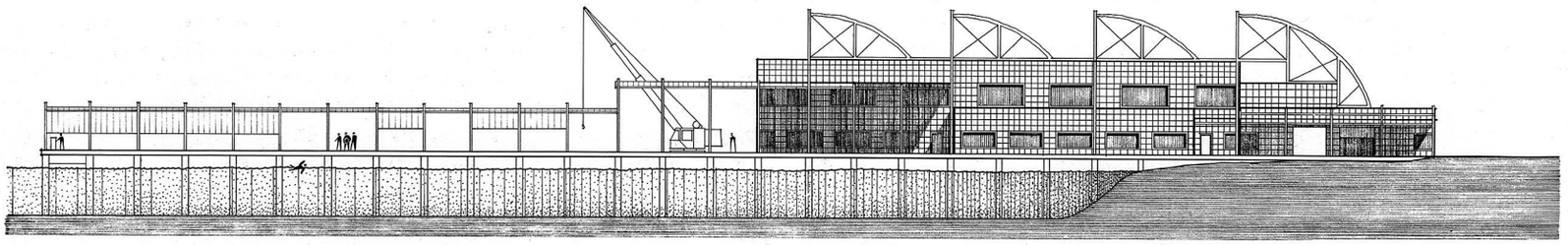
Cross section



Plan



Longitudinal section



South Elevation