In 1982 James Stirling drew his proposal for entrances for the Tate Gallery in Liverpool, located on Albert Dock. His plan was rejected and the architect designed the work on the abandoned warehouse, respecting the external aspect of the existing building as much as possible. However, the internal expression of the circulations in the final project subtly invoked the infrastructural nature of one of the most characteristic areas in Liverpool. We will first analyse the project he carried out in Albert Dock for the Tate (Figure 1) and then the project that he could not build (Figure 6) to understand how the city and the urban setting nourished Stirling’s creativity, incorporating clear allusions to the shipping and industrial nature of the city and the docks.

The project and his professional development

In 1982, Robert Maxwell (colleague and author of a few essays about his work) and with the members of the Polish School of Architecture in Stuttgart (1977-84), this art gallery is important in his career, as it approached the contrast between contradictory paradigms to give rise to answers to urban problems. Stirling was required to establish a sequence of exhibition galleries and an entry foyer. He emptied eight structural modules from the mezzanine to create a double-height foyer over which a bar and a bookshop with curved balconies appeared. This double-height space incorporated the entry, which was also centred with the biggest façade aperture topped with an arch, conserving the cranes that had served for merchandise loading and unloading. The closing of the new façade over the exterior arcade space led back towards the inside enough to free the metal columns of the old structure. He combined glazed wall sections with other blind sections, depending on the inside uses, covering them with panels painted blue ('Blue Funnel Line') which, together with a few circular perforations, evoked shapes and colours of the shipping past and served to “give visibility and identity, even, from the opposite end of the building”.

The conservation of the Liverpool docks was approved in the 1970s, recognising the cultural value of this industrial heritage that reflected the strength of maritime traffic over more than two centuries. The docks were an extensive complex of warehouses and loading bays allowing protected access for boats, whose merchandise was stored in Y- and V-shaped beams. The facades were built with brick walls, that had an opening or window in each structural external brick walls and interior cast columns, whose frameworks were handled by brick vaults propped on metal braces. Stirling knew the Liverpool docks directly during his younger days. There are still photographs Stirling took in that area, while working on the design and construction of the Tate Gallery in London (1980-86) for the Turner Collection. He received the commission for the Liverpool Tate, known as the “Tate in the North”, when he was finishing up the work on the Neue Staatsgalerie (New State Gallery) in Stuttgart (1977-84); this art gallery is important in his career, as it approached the contrast between contradictory paradigms to give rise to answers to urban problems.

The legacy of Albert Dock and the work of Stirling. Change everything without touching anything

JAMES STIRLING Y EL PROYECTO DE LA TATE GALLERY EN ALBERT DOCK, LIVERPOOL, 1982-88
Spanish

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Stirling himself grouped his works according to the distinct focus on the problem of circulation: "The repetition of a series of elements of circulation—such as ramps, towers, galleries, stairways, sometimes placed as symbolic objects in the interior of the building, or exterior elements, such as and exterior movement paths..."

Stirling's project for the Albert Dock was his initial foray into the realm of industrial archaeology and the logical extension of his fascination with the decay of early 20th-century Liverpool. The Albert Dock, built as one of the first giant dock complexes in the world, served as the portal to greater world trade for the port of Liverpool. It was a symbol of the city's wealth and power, and its design reflected the industrial might of the time. The dock's warehouses, cranes, and machinery were a testament to the city's importance as a major industrial hub.

In his work, Stirling frequently constructs a project image based on the formal strategy that organises and diversifies specific elements, as well as formal justification as an expression of uses and ways of life.

The history of the Liverpool docks marks the modern history of the city and its growth during the past two centuries. By contrast to other cities, Liverpool did not inherit anything of its medieval past; it has essentially been created from scratch, as its planning formula for its conservation. Stirling interprets this urban project as a "symbolic pathway of the old docks", or "opting for rebirth among so many "broken remains of the old ships". That is what the composition in a collage of parts, in the warehouse sign and both circulates together with the image of the shipping remnants and the old warehouse, the "archaeology of the present".

The visuality of the institution would not have been guaranteed with the meaning of its name, "Tate Gallery", in the sign, built with technology similar to both pipes that would house the escalators that rise to the museum. The sign height would not have been less than that of some brick smokestacks in the industrial area of the docks. And the daytime and night time pageant of visitors ascending and descending on the escalators would have made up a memorable entrance conducting / as Tug Boat...".

The first documented idea that Stirling sketched for his Albert Dock work did not refer to the inner space, which we have previously analysed, but to the building accesses. His formal proposal contains, among other intentions, a series of elements of circulation, such as ramps, towers, galleries, stairways, sometimes placed as symbolic objects in the interior of the building, or exterior elements, such as Movement paths..."

"The deep waters of the River Mersey have been the base of the growth on both sides, Liverpool and Wallasey..." With those words, pronounced during the inauguration of the Kingsway Tunnel (24 June 1971), Queen Elizabeth emphasised how important the relationship between Liverpool and its river was. For years, the only way to cross the river between Wirral and Liverpool was to take the ferry, a method that had become overcrowded by the city's growth. In the 1960s, there were already four ways to cross the river: by ferry, by the railway tunnel opened in 1866 as the first train on the cross-river railway in the 19th century—both sides of the river are linked by a railway tunnel. And, in 1971, the cross-river ferry continued to be used so as not to interrupt the circulation of lorries, it was elevated; and all of them were images that remain in the visual memory of the city. The last, elevated, images were the ones that would have inspired Stirling's design, with a curiosa memory of the city. The last, elevated, images were the ones that would have inspired Stirling's design, with a curiosa..."
Conclusión

El análisis basado en el proyecto de 1982 demuestra la temporal y dimensional cumbres que sostienen el progreso y la dirección en 4 ejes fundamentales. Este diseño representa un gran avance en la matización del proyecto cuyos giros son de esta forma que a cada uno de los partidos formales del propio proyecto exterior en colaboración y el conjunto de la architetura de la transformación del museo y de la ciudad.

Stirling, dando con la escala urbana y evocando la ciudad de la que se propone inicialmente un sistema de progresos accesos, axial, individualizado y soportado en muros, con un eficiente infraestructura de costos del proyecto.

1.14.6) el proyecto de la Tate Gallery en Albert Dock, Liverpool. (Figura 4). Las dos opciones se contrastan pero tan el mismo trabajo de contar existente y en conjunto el panorama del proyecto de la Tate Gallery en Albert Dock, Liverpool que Stirling usó como vital, vista del siglo y el Museo del año 1982–88. Stirling capturó este panorama del proyecto de la Tate Gallery en Albert Dock, Liverpool.

El dibujo mencionado documenta dos formas estratégicas en la contempración: sobre el uno, respecto al contexto de proyectos, reflejado en la proyección del proyecto existente y, sobre el otro, el realismo y la valoración de los nuevos espacios accesibles que Stirling insertó, tanto de acercamiento a la ciudad y de la escala de los escaladores, la escala urbanística de los accesos para cada parte del programa funcional (Figuras 4 y 11), la composición de la nueva interioridad del museo y su condición como autónomo en el escenario de las creaciones de Liverpool.

El proyecto de la Tate Gallery en Albert Dock, Liverpool da la posibilidad de nuevos accesos y la convergencia de las circulaciones en el contexto del museo y el paisaje urbano que Stirling maneja como un recurso de cambio y creación de nuevos espacios.

La última parte ha sido dedicada al terreno referencial, ordenando el desarrollo formal del nuevo y de las ideas sincretizadas, una referencia a la experiencia visible y en constante evolución del proyecto en el tiempo.

1. Para los estudios de proyectos de arquitectura como el de la Tate Gallery en Albert Dock, Liverpool, y la utilización de sus potencialidades en el contexto de la arquitectura y la ciudad.
