Your work to date has been involved with juxtapositions, contradictions, and collage: early buildings seem consistently 'modern' in their materials and formal caprice, whereas your recent work includes more 'traditional' ideas in its juxtapositions. This is especially true of the museum projects: Düsseldorf, Cologne, Stuttgart, the Tate, and the Sackler. They are all 'contextual' projects, and all utilise traditional typologies and materials. Yet among these projects the Sackler is unique: it is small, it is a teaching museum, and it fills the available envelope of the site, becoming as much urban fabric as monument.

As a teaching museum, the building seems elegantly and functionally arranged, and the public sequence of entry hall, grand stair and galleries is a powerful idea. Some planning decisions seem especially crucial, however for instance, why are offices on the outside and galleries on the inside? And other decisions about the type of internal spaces also seem important: why are the galleries traditional rooms, and why is the stair abstract, severed at its ends, and treated as an outside space?

JS
To respond to your question about the stair 'that doesn't go anywhere', usually one thinks of the grand stair as a feature in a continuous sequence. But I prefer to think of this staircase as an event in itself. The circulation flow in the Sackler is interrupted by a series of centre axes and step movements as you move from the entry hall and up the stair to the top-floor galleries. The in-between transitional elements normally found in Baroque ensembles, such as vestibules and ante-rooms, are here excluded, making for an abrupt juxtaposition of basic elements. The staircase is therefore more of a picturesque and less a sequential element in the spatial whole.

MD
Harvard has several good traditional rooms, and it has one very beautiful space—a room 'inside out' almost—in the Carpenter Center. But in the back of my knowledge, there are no grand modern rooms as compus, so the presence of your entry hall is a gift. I also agree that the stair is a place in its own right. However, you wouldn't deny that it is part of a grand sequence of large entry hall, grand stair, and galleries above, with an implicit connection back to the Fogg Museum. In your mind the connection, and the interior courtyard of the Fogg is very much a part of your conception. I would further argue that you can't understand the Sackler unless you know the Fogg.

JS
Absolutely. When you arrive at the big window, having gone through all the galleries, you're confronted with the Fogg and with the desire to make the crossing as it were, ideally, of course, through a long gallery connecting the two museums. I hope that visitors moving through the Sackler will experience a succession of