and valleys, and even be permitted to build in a poorer suburb of the city, so long as the world at large didn’t know. Visitors were not told about the building for a long time. In the end, however, architectural maestros and politicians (who are notoriously unfeeling of things visual) are doomed to fail. So it is that, eventually, Berlin’s U-Bahn/underground by Ludwig Leo and Fränkischer Hof by Hinrich and Erkkinen Haller have seen through the net with Günther Doméngen’s ‘Z’ bank as pieces of noticeable, intriguing and discussable architecture. Moreover, his enjoyment of the international scene has caused Doméngen to pitch his latest University buildings for Graz up to the levels of refinement that are more characteristic of American college buildings, without their formal sterility. He has been the hero and spokesman for the ‘Grazer Schul’ despite the inevitable Austrian predilection for bitching between friends. Interestingly, it is with the two Viennese, Prinz and Schwitzgibb, that he can talk most freely. They in turn acknowledge the fellow feeling with the Grazer, perhaps because they themselves had enjoyed years and years of studied indifference from an edgy Viennese scene.

Not for the first time do I have to make direct comparisons between Vienna and London. The differences first: that London is infinitely more international and suffers from the feeling that ‘everybody comes through at some time’ which allows one to make easy lead to complacency— and that London does have more work for architects (it’s just that they’re the wrong architects, etc., etc., etc.). But the similarities are more intriguing: the shared ambition, the shared astonishment at two or three different drinkers in the bar being intellectual enemies but social friends (impossible in New York), the feeling on the part of the most outrageous innovators that whatever they do is merely part of the inevitable metamorphosis of the city. It breeds at

often indifferent German mainstream consciousness as foreign—but (as Austrians) not very foreign, as artistic but not apt, as weird—but in the end perhaps not weird enough, so that their handsomest architecture at the National Gallerie in Berlin two years ago seemed to be saying ‘here we are in Mies’ basement, now will you take us seriously.’ The seeming opportunities of Düsseldorf’ (money, buildings, energy) have also been its trap. In London or Vienna they wouldn’t have built much either, but they would have had tougher rivalries, stranger conversations and, perhaps, that curious brotherhood that eventually emerges between creative rivals who are aware that the architectural world at large (maybe 200 000 or 300 000 people) is hardly interested in any of them. John Hejduk, head of New York’s Cooper Union, often talks about the essential isolation of really new architecture and about power, in this he is not referring to the mandate enjoyed by Philip Johnson but the issue of trajectory. As he points out, a certain naïveté is necessary—perhaps a foolish enthusiasm which certainly links many of the people I am discussing, I can still recall it in the atmosphere of the Archigram Group. Somehow we were conscious that forward-thinking architecture could only come about by pitching it against the general stream. This ‘Futurism’ was often said as a phrase of encouragement to the Group’s companion. The theme was known and understood to be the polite, acquiescent, wanting-to-be-seen-to-be-all-right architects of London town. We knew that a studied indifference would be the inevitable reception to our work... but there were unknown silences scattered here and there. The Archigram publication set off the chain... We are a small group in Prague, we call ourselves the ‘Continualists’... Perhaps you might be interested in the catalogue of my

wood, sheets of almost anything flat that could be bent at will, and tacky materials like bitumen tiles and staples. Frank Gehry took inspiration directly from his artist friends and did with whole rooms and edifices what they might have done with gallery installations and driftwood—and better. Moreover, he was prepared to go and live in them. This more than anything else gave impetus to young architects, who were suspicious of four-square surfaces and impermeable substances, to go out and collage-together buildings in space. The politics of the situation have