brick panels mounting diagonally towards the Lodge: a gesture of greeting optimising in the New-Georgian strumming surviving from the hospital. Going back to the terrace we pass through the green revolving door. We tread now on shiny Scotch granite and see in front of us the grand staircase. This is set sideways and we recognise it not by welcoming flights of stairs but by the fault profits of its solid, making pure white balustrade: up, along, then up; along again. The fascinating thing about this staircase, we soon discover, is that it leads not towards but away from the Turner galleries, so that if you are making for the galleries (which is the novel likely reason for being in the building at the) you must first climb the stairs, then turn about and retrace its length along a corridor. This is open on the staircase side so that you look down over the balustrade at the people on the granite floor who are looking up at you, wondering why you are going the wrong way. That is, your right way you can be sure because a rounded-opening (the only one in the building) encircles in provocative colours, drawn you like a moth to a candle and signals the entry to the galleries. If, before reaching this archway, you cast your eyes upward you find no ceiling; the staircase and corridor are, as it were, in a chasm, rooted by a skylight, a very long way up. It is almost as if the corridor was an outside balcony which held self inside and, sure enough, the wall is gridded on the same scale and pattern as the outside. It is an intriguing tactile experience and when you do it in the arched opening you do not pass through it; you are able stepped upon sawing doors. Once it is white here you are in the Turner galleries. Now you walk a third time round the staircase.

I find myself writing about the building as if it were a lot of bark, and not, in its functionally and structurally, barks and the way it makes you think and feel. Stirling’s performances are rare and unique. The chemistry between the people and the place, it is tempting to laugh. I cannot laugh with the building, not of Stirling. Laughter is a work which English architecture has denoted itself for a hundred years and which returns with Stirling because he has the courage and imagination to be at once wonderfully irresponsible and robustly sane. In the galleries Stirling retires and the great painter engages. There are three walls on all: first, a big room, then a long ‘spiral’ room which has much the same proportions and proportion as the Eltham long gallery; four smaller rooms lead of this and in one of these is a Stirling-esque version of what the Eltham called a ‘new’ room which is to say a bay projecting into a peaked oculus. As metal lights, painted green, make a somewhat important appearance in the centre bay of the outside elevation. This happy ‘Tudor’ concession to the memory of our common fadges largely has the eccentric touch in the Turner suite which concludes with another big room, connecting with gallery D of the old Tate. A separate room, adjoining the first big room, darker and differently decorated, and is reserved for watercolours.

The lighting, which has been the subject of intensive research since 1979, combines natural and artificial light, and adjusts itself automatically to the conditions prevailing in the external world. Turner and his contemporaries ascribe an essential role to natural light or no at all. Technological expertise allows, at least in theory, to enjoy the fluctuations and accidents of the natural and when this is to be, to control with near-perfect artificially.

**COLOR COLLECTION**

The colour scheme is identical throughout all the Turner rooms except the one devoted to watercolours: buff fabric and off-white paint. There have been objections to it. It is said that rich and intense tones would have more to Turner’s taste and more to the advantage of the paintings. The first may be historically right but the second I doubt. It would lead to an ambiguity to the historical correctness of the hanging and I hardly think we would want to know the pictures hung frame to frame and reaing in leading ranks as they were seen at Somerset House. We merely welcome the generous spacing and the cheerful non-committal columns which have followed us through the building seem to be about right.

One or two things have escaped mention. There is a bank entrance, suitably low-profiled, for school parties. There is an elegant but not especially exciting auditorium to seat 300. There is a social room for occasional use, with a spiral staircase in one corner leading to the secretary’s room. That office can look over the balustrade into the room, or outside to the terrace (through a tiny, peaked oculus), or inwards to the staircase hall (through an open archway) with scarcely a movement. In the yard or her desk, I am reminded of Norman Shaw’s ‘don’t’ above the highwindow in his dining-room at Hampssted. And finally there is the garden, laid out with a curve garden, constructed on a curve which both bring you to a paved road point with concave corner steps (Bramante in miniature) leading down to the terrace.

How, I wonder, will the London public take to this new access to its architectural collection? Not I, suspect, with acclaim. Stirling’s two-‘Modern’ game in his own, highly dispositive way. He abandons the recent past and from history. He selects and re-invents. Then, in the ‘new’ room, a new synthesis which is now, probably shocking and something which neither he nor his collaborators has done before. Nobody can be sure now seriously to take it, and that is always a worry. Stirling is a great player. Some years ago I wrote an article about him titled ‘Vitruvius Lasted’ (Mar 1983). After that I wrote I prefer ‘Vitruvius Hidden’. With Stirling there is always laughter somewhere in the works.

**CLORE CONTEXTUALISMS**

The Clore Gallery will be unique as your building is some kind of memorial to J. M. W. Turner. The gallery space can be contextualised as follows:

**CJ** I wouldn’t hope there were more than two. As you come through the Entrance Hall and up to the galleries the interior may have a slightly aloof atmospheric. The exterior relations to the gardens in front of the Tate and there are service elevators to the back which are very different in character. There are there some four different levels of elevations on this small building, and each makes specific response to its context.

**JS** You referred to the collection. It’s a paradox.

**CJ** I like late Romantic pictures—painters like Caspar David Friedrich in Germany and Turner in England—the transition between Neo-Classicism and Romanticism. I think the transitional periods are rather exotic, more on these periods which have settled down and become rather more in their output.

**JS** You are so forced to provide a traditional background to his paintings.

**CJ** We created a neutral wall zone, on which the paintings are hung. At the top of this picture zone there is a non-functional picture rail, a deep red which was designed right to an angled ceiling above which goes on upwards, behind which a stone wall has been brought in and then is suspended on the picture rail. The centre of rooms may be slightly darker than the walls and we hope this will be an ideal atmosphere for looking at pictures.

**JS** And the light scopes allow you to have very nice sculptural shapes in the ceilings.

**CJ** You may contribute to the feeling of a slightly mysterious light source, like Soane’s interiors, where lights reflect on days but walls and you’re not quite sure where it’s coming from.

**JS** At the main gallery level you have nine different rooms which correspond to different periods of classical art, and you have possibility of taking visitors through in some kind of linear order. It’s a paradox, because you have two entrances so that you could enter through the end of his life.

**JS** The paradox is always there of our galleries. At the Tate gallery, when we had the extension and after that we turn off the old building through the new one. However it’s similar to the one with the Courtauld and the Courtauld is even smaller compared to the original building. Nevertheless, we had to plan for the public coming from both directions and this may perhaps be the way to handle such places as to how they hang their pictures.

**CJ** Each room shapes are Classical and axial, with a minor shift off axis in one room where you can have a view to the outside.

**JS** That’s because the bay window, where visitors can all down with a view to the river, is central on the external wall and the shift is caused by relating to axis, the axis of the entrance and the axis of the opening into the gallery.

**CJ** It’s perfectly logical, but it looks arbitrary.

**JS** I’m not sure that with nine rooms, where door openings are all centrally placed, to have something which is shifted off axis isn’t a relief. The same happens with the internal entrance from the Tate, it’s also off axis, though it’s on the central axis of the room with the wall.