with the bridge. An outspoken building was evidently expected, and
some had Gohy's Bilbao in mind.

Respect for Cook and Fournier's design, and for the wisdom of the
jury in choosing it, increases as you examine the other proposals, many
by highly talented architects. The context was irregular and complex
even before the need to incorporate the existing buildings, making it
impossible to impose an independent set-piece and precluding any
straightforward symmetry. In addition, many competitors were
obscured with the problem of the road cutting off the building from
the river bank. The conditions rather suggestively allowed cantilevering
over it with a clearance of five metres, but it was forbidden to close
the road or to interfere with the services beneath it.

Cook and Fournier kept within the site boundary, and their amoeba-
like form allowed them to follow the irregularities of the site while still
producing a recognizably unified form. The continuous surface helped
by removing the requirement for distinctions between wall and roof,
eliminating all need for ridges, eaves and even changes of plane.

Crucially, this also produced the convex under-belly which makes the
amoeba readable from below, in contrast with the flat open entrance
platform. The strong form remains dominantly there, yet the glass walls
allow the public to filter through, to wait and meet, to buy tickets and
catalogues. They can even enjoy a meal in the trendy café Les Vitrées
which is set between the river view and the visitors rising to the
galleries on the great diagonal traveler. It is a real public place,
convincedly transitional and anticipatory.

Cook and Fournier also managed to treat the Eiserner Haus, which
seemed forgotten or overwhelmed by many competitors, quite gently.
It had been much reconstructed over the years, so all that could be
restored physically were the elaborate cast-iron façades to south and
east (constructed without cold-bridges in 1847), but the original floor
heights could be readapted, and also the flat roof to regain the original
terrace and railing. The complete contrast between the Eiserner Haus' 
trabeated form and the bulging, fluid amoeba simply serves to
clarify their relationship.

The amoeba form contains galleries at two levels, irregular in shape
with the intention of accommodating any kind of arrangement, for
pictures, sculpture or installations. They are reached by the two
travelators, called 'the pin' in the competition version, which define
two crucial diagonals through the building. These vertical connections
offer themselves clearly, and the view of disappearing entrance and
appearing gallery as you penetrate the underbelly is spectacular,
enhanced by the fact that you stand still as you are carried up. Event:
the experience is soon over and is not easily repeatable, since there is
no down travelator. With a stair or ramp you can daily and retrace
your steps, and so retain control on the travelator speed is already
dictated and you are captive.

The second travelator connects well with the first and conveys you
diagonally through to the upper floor and the big main gallery space.
Again, the visual experience is a revelation, opening the full effect of
the roof, but the only way down from either floor is a dog-leg stair.
one of the bunker-like concrete service cores which must rank as a
disappointment. The upper travelator heads towards a corner with a
terace leading to 'the needle', another crucial element in the project,
but you have to use the bunker stair to get up to it. From outside, this
horizontal glazed gallery with rounded ends makes an effective
contrast to the amoeba and a convincing semi-formal transition with
the Eiserner Haus. From within, it offers spectacular views of the
Harris, the city centre and the Schlossberg. Most of the time it serves as
a lookout space for a continuing file of visitors to enjoy the view, but
its openings and other social events it is used as a bar, with a mobile
servery brought in and coupled to a service point. In the floor, water
and all, a detail amusingly reminiscent of the Archigram project
"Ropeloft and Logplag".

The competition presentation made much of the nozzles in the roof,
and a series of cantilever-like projections which face north and bring daylight
into the upper gallery: one of them also highlights a view from within
of the clocktower on the Schlossberg. The amoeboid form is
unthinkable without them, and not only for their zoomorphi...