

of the building will appear as one walks around it. However, there is also considerable symbolic intent. The circular form was a strong liturgical statement, and the whole was topped off by a dramatic glazed structure representing the crown of thorns. Some of the decorative work in the concrete was let out to a rather remarkable sculptor called Bill Mitchell. Mitchell showed me a wonderful model he had made for the bell tower representing the resurrection, but the actual built form is much less imaginative and very heavily redundant. Apparently Gibberd had quite clearly given instructions asking for the eventual sculpture to be 'less busy' than the initial model. The sculptor quite distinctly felt that it should be busy, as 'it was the resurrection and there was a lot going on'. Architect and sculptor had thus not been on the same wavelength in terms of the balance of formality and symbolism. Regrettably, but inevitably, the architect Gibberd won the argument.

The language of modern architecture

As an architect, I am all too frequently made aware that many people have not followed architects in the journeys they have made over the last century into the development of architectural form. Once one is able to get past the initial hostility, which can be very significant, one can often see some of the basis of complaint in terms of what we have been discussing in this chapter.

Of course all forms of art by their very nature move forward, and thus their contemporary manifestations may seem strange to those less involved in the movement. It is not new to find music, painting, sculpture, literature and architecture alienating and even scandalizing their contemporary societies. Architecture, however, plays so many other roles beyond that of an art form that this book suggests we must regard it differently. In the twentieth century architecture adopted a number of characteristics which, when combined together, seemed to lose touch with people. The modern movement abandoned the use of historical styles in the West. It had been preceded by periods in which earlier historical styles had been 'recycled' by architects even as they developed new building typologies – thus Scott was able to use largely gothic rules of architecture when building a great railway station like St Pancras in London. Although this in a way may seem strange now, it enabled people to continue to be able to read the architecture using their implicit knowledge of the redundancy or internal structure of the gothic style.

Just as the modern movement was abandoning historical rules, it gained enthusiasm for expressing the materiality and technology of the building. There were several problems here for ordinary people trying to understand this architecture, but two seem particularly important. First, this technology was itself also new and strange and developing