

## **Acknowledgements**

We gratefully acknowledge the following individuals and organizations, without whose dedication and generosity, this symposium could not have occurred.

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SAS Airlines  
NSW Government, through the Ministry of the Arts  
Joseph Skrzynski  
Johnson Pilton Walker  
Arup Acoustics  
Steensen Varming (Australia) Pty Ltd

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## Introduction

The first international Utzon Symposium brings together international architects and academics, who have known, worked with and or written about Jørn Utzon. They present and discuss their understanding of Denmark's most original and acclaimed modern architect. Although it has not been possible to publish all these presentations in these proceedings, due to deadlines, we have been fortunate enough to be able to include Kenneth Frampton's keynote address.

The symposium examines the sources of Utzon's inspiration and Nordic background, considers the range of his work, built and unrealised, with particular regard to the evolution of his greatest achievement, the Sydney Opera House, and provides an insight into Utzon's current proposals for the future development of the building. Furthermore, it presents appraisals of the significance of Utzon's work within world architecture and presentations by architects who have been personally inspired and influenced by Jørn Utzon.

The reviewed and accepted papers among these proceedings approach their subject in the following general themes:

*Natural Structure and Form.* The renowned art historian Herbert Read once wrote that "the two types of contrasted art – geometrical and organic – persist all through the history of art." Utzon's architecture unites these oppositions. How does Utzon's work relate to a wider historic tradition in architecture of organic thinking and can one see a continuation of this tendency today? Is the sensible use of nature that which provides integrity between form, structure and landscape in Utzon's architecture?

*Virtual Utzon.* Can the medium of computer visualization and virtual modeling, provide an appropriate and satisfying means of presenting architecture, such as the unrealized sketch proposals of Jørn Utzon. What are the aims and critical criteria of creating such virtual representations? How does the use of sketching and modeling in the design process of Jørn Utzon equate in relation to those architects today who sketch using the computer? Can this contemporary form of sketching "catch the poetry"? Model-making was an integral part the design-process of the Sydney Opera House. How does model-making and the development of advanced architectural form relate to each other? What are the consequences for contemporary architecture that model-making has become a virtual discipline?

*Nordic Architecture.* What is Nordic Architecture? In what ways does it derive from the influences of landscape, climate, cultural and social values? In what aspects can Utzon's work be seen to derive from and continue a Nordic approach to architecture? Is there a continuity of thought from Gunnar Asplund, through Arne Korsmo and Alvar Aalto to Jørn Utzon and the present day? Can Utzon be seen to have brought a Nordic approach to architecture internationally and influenced contemporary world architecture?

The papers included in these proceedings all deal with one or more of the above aspects of Utzon's architecture, and as such provide a rich source of material and research, both in the present and for the future.

Adrian Carter  
Michael Mullins  
August, 2003

## Keynote Address: On Jørn Utzon

Kenneth Frampton

*It seems to me that past, present and future must be active in the mind's interior as a continuum. If they are not, the artifacts we make will be without temporal depth or associative perspective.... Man after all has been accommodating himself physically in this world for thousands of years. His natural genius has neither increased nor decreased during that time. It is obvious that the full scope of this enormous environmental experience cannot be combined unless we telescope the past.... Architects nowadays are pathologically addicted to change, regarding it as something one either hinders, runs after, or at best keeps up with. This, I suggest, is why they tend to sever the past from the future, with the result that the present is rendered emotionally inaccessible, without temporal dimension. I dislike a sentimental antiquarian attitude toward the past as much as I dislike a sentimental technocratic one toward the future. Both are founded on a static, clockwork notion of time (what antiquarians and technocrats have in common), so let's start with the past for a change and discover the unchanging condition of man.*  
- Aldo Van Eyck

It is an embarrassment that the first edition of my *Modern Architecture: A Critical History* (1980), made no reference to the work of Jørn Utzon. Even within the constraints of a concise history such an omission now seems inexcusable and in subsequent editions I have attempted to redress this lapsus. Over the past decade the canonical importance of Utzon has become increasingly evident, not only because of his authorship of one of the most significant and daring monuments of the twentieth century but also because both before and after the realization of the Sydney Opera House he would project a wide range of equally seminal works, together with a number of compelling realizations. Given the exceptionally fertile character of his career, he is, in his eighty-fifth year, an indisputably fitting recipient of the Pritzker Prize. It is a bittersweet occasion in that one feels that it is an honor which would have been of more use to him in the struggles that followed his winning of the opera house competition in 1956, at the age of 37, at a time when nothing approximating to such an award existed.

Comparable in subtle ways to the protean achievements of Le Corbusier, Utzon's architecture emerges today as paradigmatic at many levels not least of which is the manner in which, from the beginning of his career, he would totally repudiate the assumed superiority of Eurocentric culture, including its avant-gardist moment, lasting from around 1918, the year in which he was born, to around 1945, just after the Second World War, the year that he returned to his native Denmark, after having been exiled in Sweden.

The other equally basic postulate of his architecture, which remains as challenging now as when it first appeared around 1947 turns on its irreducible grounding in the opposition of earthwork versus roofwork. In my view two seminal preconditions attend this dialogical principle; first, the recovery of the roof-form, hitherto largely repressed in the Modern Movement with its fixation on the flat roof, and, second, the equally intrinsic import of the earthwork as a necessary landform capable of integrating a structure into the surface of the earth.

Aside from their mutual preoccupation with the inherently topographic aspect of architecture, Utzon came to share with Frank Lloyd Wright, whom he met in 1949, a common drive to project a global building culture which, while equally inspired by both occidental and oriental paradigms, would nonetheless exploit the technological capacity of the epoch while simultaneously responding to the contours of a particular site and the latent expressivity of a specific program. In the last analysis we can say that the tectonic potential of advanced engineering form perhaps played a more decisive role in the evolution of Utzon's architecture than it did in the case of Wright, so that shell concrete construction, after the exemplary work of Maillart, Candela and Torroja, and folded plate construction in post-tensioned reinforced concrete, after the inventions of Pier Luigi Nervi, patently informed the earliest flights of his imagination, not only in his remarkable proposal for the Crystal Palace site in London, designed with Tobias Faber in 1947, but also in his equally epic studies of the time for a permanent world exhibition site in Copenhagen (1959) and for a utopian settlement in the turbulent mountain landscape around Elvira in Spain (1960). Apart from its shell concrete roofs that became the touchstone of his early style, the Elvira project was also directly inspired by experiencing the Mayan ruins in Chichen Itzá, Monte Alban and Uxmal; a civilization that provided him with the essential format of the stepped platform or podium to which he would return repeatedly throughout his career.

For Utzon, as for Wright and Aalto, there would be no necessary contradiction between an unequivocally modern architecture and a building culture that hypothetically would be more generally accessible to the society at large, just as for him there was no inherent rupture between modernity as such and the more enduring and inspiring continuity of universal civilization, seen as a differentiated whole. The subtlety of this position is brilliantly exemplified by Utzon's 1953 project for a restaurant tower which was envisaged as being built on the Langelinie promontory in Copenhagen; a proposal as much inspired by the antique form of the Chinese pagoda as by Wright's S.C. Johnson laboratory tower built at Racine, Wisconsin in 1947. Utzon aimed at realizing a popularly accessible work in much the same sense as Wright's Guggenheim Museum would be well received by the general public a few years later.

The validity of this subtle approach would never be more convincingly demonstrated than by the two low-rise, medium density housing schemes that Utzon built in North Zealand, Denmark between 1956 and 1963, the first at Kingo near Helsingør and the second at Fredensborg. Both of these single-story residential communities were based on an atrium typology comprising an L-shaped dwelling in plan, set within a square court and enclosed on all sides by brick walls. Featuring mono-pitched roofs capped by Roman tiles and draining into the private courtyards, these standard dwellings, virtually square in plan, were assembled into continuous chevron formations and fed by automobiles in such a way as to conform to the American Radburn principle of separating vehicular and pedestrian movement. In both settlements each house, attached to its neighbor, is accessed in two ways; first from the relatively blank, brick-faced exteriors fronting onto streets feeding into the

fabric and second from an interstitial greensward permeating the settlement, exclusively restricted to pedestrian use. What Utzon was able to postulate with these two interrelated schemes was an alternative suburban land settlement pattern for a megapolitan, ex-urban world, one that has never been equaled, neither culturally in terms of accessible imagery nor environmentally from an ecological standpoint. He would proceed to show in a remarkable proposal for Odense University, dating from 1967, how this same typology could be deployed to achieve much higher densities by replacing the interstitial greensward with public courts and vehicular-free pathways leading into the *res publica* of a civic center, flanked by civic facilities and crowned by a shell concrete assembly hall.

Three years later in a seminal article published in the Danish magazine *Architektur* Utzon elaborated his concept of an additive architecture, a principle that was already evident in the Odense project. In so doing he would touch on what has remained one of the more intrinsic challenges that are inherent to his approach, namely the combination of prefabricated components in a structural assembly in such a way as to achieve a unified form that while incremental is at once flexible, economic and organic. We can already see this principle at work in the tower-crane assembly of the segmental pre-cast concrete ribs of the shell roofs of the Sydney Opera House, wherein coffered, tile-faced units of up to ten tons in weight were hauled into position and sequentially secured to each other some two hundred feet in the air.

Utzon's drive towards additive prefabricated form was inspired by traditional Chinese architecture, wherein sculptural roofs with varying pitches are invariably arrived at not through the use of trusses as is common in western building practice but rather by an arrangement of stacked beams stepping up towards the ridge of the roof. While such a system was not literally employed in Sydney, it is clear that the additive precept was analogically present in other aspects of the fabric above all in the bent plywood mullions that were designed to carry the faceted curtain wall extending between the soffit of the shells and the modular paving of the podium. The kind of tectonic challenge latent in this proposition is one that Utzon would confront on many occasions in refining his design for the opera, not only in his derivation of the shell geometry from a 246 foot diameter sphere whereby all the ribs could be assembled from a set of identical components but also in his attempt to develop an equally modular system for the undulating, acoustic plywood ceilings of the auditoria.

We may recognize a certain tension in Utzon's architecture between, on the one hand, the plastic potential of in-situ reinforced concrete, implied surely in his 1962 proposal for Asger Jørn's Silkeborg Museum and, on the other, his preoccupation with constructing complex geometrical assemblies out of prefabricated concrete components; an ambition that took on a particularly ingenious civic form in his 1962 proposal for the new town center of Farum in Denmark.

If there is one building in Utzon's career that highlights this opposition between in-situ and prefabricated concrete it is his Bagsvaerd Church completed outside Copenhagen in 1976; a building which aside from this tectonic dialectic, also stands out as his most compelling Danish work following his return from Australia. The referential complexity of this structure is such that it is difficult to account for all the cross-cultural ramifications of its form. An early sketch indicates that the folded-plate roof of the nave was derived from a vision of an open-air congregation, gathered under a cloudy sky; an image of *ecclesia* in the original Greek sense of the term. At the same time, the wide nave and the narrow aisles deliberately recall the type-form of a Nordic stave church, while the undulating folds of the in-situ reinforced concrete roof, spanning 18 meters across the nave, evoke the subliminal image of a suspended pagoda roof, as we find this in an early Utzon sketch of a Chinese temple.

Wood plays a decisively expressive role in this work, not only in terms of the stark, bleached unpainted timber furnishings of the interior, but also with regard to the floor-to-ceiling, unpainted, exterior fenestration, the proportions of which are vaguely evocative of oriental building; once again, surely referring to China. Lastly the blank facades in prefabricated concrete planking and blocks, combined with standard greenhouse glazing, poised above the aisles, jointly produce the gestalt of an agrarian building and it is just this ambience that would enable him to create one of the most compelling religious structures of the last half of the twentieth century. There is also, one might also add, the festive aura evoked by battens of spotlights set on either side of a nave, engendering an atmosphere appropriate to the choral tradition of the Lutheran faith. Other features serve to reinforce this character; among them boldly patterned raiments designed by the architect's daughter, Lin Utzon, and white-metal organ pipes stacked in timber cases. All these elements have surely contributed to the communal acceptance of the church as a spiritual space. Finally one should note the specific way in which this church has been integrated with its suburban site, first, by virtue of its deft siting in relation to a nearby pond that reinforces by association the implicit agrarian character of its form and second, because of a stand of young birch trees that were planted by the architect not only in relation to the main body of the church but also with respect to the adjacent parking lot. At the time of the building's completion these all but imperceptible saplings made one hyper-aware of the way in which architecture is unavoidably projected across time, so that one immediately realizes that Bagsvaerd will remain incomplete until such time as these trees have attained their full height. One senses that only at this moment will this barn of a building attain its full poetic character; that is to say when it is finally experienced as a mirage within a veil of silver birches.

In-situ versus precast will also play a comparable role in the parliament building erected for the state of Kuwait to Utzon's designs in 1982. Here the additive principle will be applied to the orthogonal compound of the ministerial offices, enclosed as a city-in-miniature by a high perimeter wall. These repetitive patio structures are offset by three monumental shell-concrete canopies, once again designed as a series of folded plates. The first of these, within the compound, faces northeast while the second, of a more elongated proportion, lies just beyond the enclosure and faces northwest towards the sea. Both are supported by pre-cast concrete pylons that taper towards the point of bearing immediately beneath the canopy, where, as Utzon puts it, "You see very clearly what is bearing and what is being carried." With these words he would evoke the time-honored distinction between the load bearing and the load borne, while at the same time alluding to the manner in which the pre-cast spanning elements are post-tensioned in order to achieve the required span. A third continuously undulating canopy covers the east-west route that leads from the main entry to the covered open square facing the ocean, beneath which power would represent itself to the populace at large. The analogy is that of a tribal leader under a tent, wherein the broader symbolism has connotations which are at once both cosmic and institutional, for as Utzon remarked, "...The hall seems to be born by the meeting between the ocean and the building in the same natural way as the surf is born by the meeting of the ocean and the beach..."

From his late fifties onwards Utzon gradually removed himself from everyday practice to focus successively on the two relatively modest houses that, over a twenty-year period, he will build for himself on the island of Mallorca; Can Lis built on a falaise facing the sea in 1971 and Can Feliz, set within dense pine scrub, on which work started around 1990. Both houses are orchestrated so as to provide a sequence of carefully constructed views, while both are, at the same time, conceived as

microcosms which transcend the normal concept of a single dwelling to constitute, particularly in the case of Can Lis, a series of independent dwellings clustered together to form a single whole. Built of local sandstone blocks with pre-cast concrete roofs that are capped by local tiles, Can Lis breaks down into a sequence of discrete spaces and courts that are equally disposed to living in the open as to sheltering behind glass. Thus the spatial chain unfolds as an entry; courtyard-cum-stoa, with a kitchen, a sitting room, a paired bedroom suite and a guest suite. These last are in effect self-contained rooms, lit by thick embrasures of stone; openings that are angled towards the sea and protected by large single sheets of surface-mounted plate glass, similar to the glazing method employed by Sigurd Lewerentz in his flower Kiosk for Malmo Cemetery. As Richard Weston has observed these dwellings testify to Utzon's capacity to work in high and vernacular modes simultaneously; a synthetic drive made easier by the implicit classicism of the Mediterranean domestic tradition; latent above all in the patio house paradigm to which these houses aspire in different ways. As with his habit of spending his spare time in Australia, sailing on the open sea, it is significant that both houses are framed in such a way as to give onto the panorama of an unspoiled, pre-apocalyptic universe.

Utzon belongs to that generation of architects who still believed that the primary responsibility of the profession was not only to meet the building needs of society on an ad hoc, daily basis, but also to evolve generic types and modes of practice that were appropriate to the unprecedented conditions of modern life. He belongs to those whom Sigfried Giedion identified as members of the Third Generation, that is to say those, who, while no longer believing in the manifest destiny of modern architecture to engender a new utopian order, were nonetheless still committed to the notion that architects should attempt to provide models and methods that are appropriate to the conditions of daily life. Hence the somewhat surprising paradigmatic nature of his buildings and hence also his lifelong concern for evolving non-reductive building methods in order to facilitate their realization. This last is surely the prime mover behind his preoccupation with additive architecture; his realization that society not only needs appropriate type-forms but also ways of achieving these forms in an economic manner. While all of this is of the utmost importance, one cannot emphasize enough the transcultural ethos of his architecture, its hyper-sensitive attempt to go beneath the superficial stylistic tropes of different civilizations, to redeem, as it were, certain common structural principles, lying beyond the periodicity of history, so as to recast anew, at a deeper level, the constantly fluctuating play between the species being and the constraints of nature.

## Utzon's Place on Majorca

### *Four Projections of Can Lis*

Michael Asgaard Andersen, Architect MAA, PhD student

*The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture*

*www.karch.dk*

**Abstract.** This paper discusses the notion of place through an analysis of Jørn Utzon's own residence, Can Lis, built in the early 1970s on Majorca, Spain. Situated on a plateau facing the Mediterranean Sea, the complex expresses a strong monumentality relating to both past and present in its architectural language. Following the trajectory of the atrium houses from the early 1950s and of single-family houses, the paper explores how Utzon developed the concept of the courtyard and arrived at the multiplex ensemble of Can Lis. The paper further examines the principles of Utzon's 'Additive Architecture' in comparison to the building method and materials used at Can Lis in order to discuss the impact of these principles on the notion of place. At Can Lis, the unique window openings and the built-in furniture connect the human body to the place in even other ways. In its overall expression, the complex relates to both local Majorcan building tradition as well as to other contemporary and ancient building traditions. As such, Can Lis brings Utzon's notion of place into a contemporary discourse on cultural interchange.

**Keywords.** Can Lis; Place; Courtyard; Additive Architecture; Furniture.

### **Monumentality**

The notion of place is central to the work of Jørn Utzon, both as a starting point and as an objective for the built. It is incorporated into his way of creating architecture and unfolds throughout his career as one of the steadiest conditions, while different understandings and interpretations of place contribute to the continuous renewal of his work. For Utzon, place relates not only to the locality and the near cultural setting, but it also refers to other building traditions around the world, giving his architecture a "transcultural intention" Frampton (1995). This expands the scope of place to go beyond basic notions of topography, climate and character to include factors beyond the specific building site, such as the impact of globalization. Interrelationships between the local and the global are investigated at multiple levels and scales in Utzon's work.

In the early 1970s, Utzon designed Can Lis as a residence for himself and his wife on Majorca, Spain. It was built two decades after he completed his first residence at Hellebæk and two decades prior to his most recent residence, Can Feliz, on Majorca.

An analysis of Can Lis reveals many facets of Utzon's perception of place from the monumental to the intimate. He explored the notion of place in every aspect of the project from the overall layout, through each of the five buildings and their courtyards, to the details of the window openings and the built-in furniture. Can Lis was built during a period when Utzon worked with the additive principles. This interest manifested itself in the building complex through the construction method and the architectural expression.

Can Lis emerges as a majestic and archaic complex remotely located overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. A dismissive cliff rises straight up from the sea forming a plateau. The five buildings of the complex are placed on this plateau. The interplay between the cliff and the complex gives the place a monumental character.

Along the cliff several low fences aligned with the winding coastline are the first primitive demarcations of a place. The fences set up the basic geometry of the

complex behind it. At first glance, the layout of the complex appears to be a simple sugar cube composition like many other of Utzon's buildings. However the five buildings, four with both interior and exterior rooms and one with only an exterior, are far more elaborate and multifaceted in their configuration.

The buildings have flat roofs at varying heights according to their intended internal use and external appearance. This creates discontinuous horizontal rooflines. Some of the buildings have multiple roofs that provide varying ceiling heights inside. Originally, the walls of the building met the sky without any transition, which gave it a strong sculptural quality.<sup>1</sup> Later on, a parapet of tiles was added, purging the primordial exterior form and instead providing a more conventional meeting of building and sky.<sup>2</sup>

A decade prior to Can Lis, Utzon had stated that "to express the platform and avoid destroying it is a very important thing, when you start building on top of it. A flat roof does not express the flatness of the platform," Utzon (1962). The flat roofs at Can Lis give primacy to the verticality of the walls, and the plane plateau is expressed in the interplay of multiple walls with varying heights.

The varying roofs in the living and sleeping areas give the rooms several different ceiling heights. These ceiling heights subdivide each room into smaller zones for specific functions. In one sleeping area, it divides the room into three zones comprising an alcove, a place for standing and sitting, and a daylight opening. In each zone, the ceiling height follows the stature of the human body.

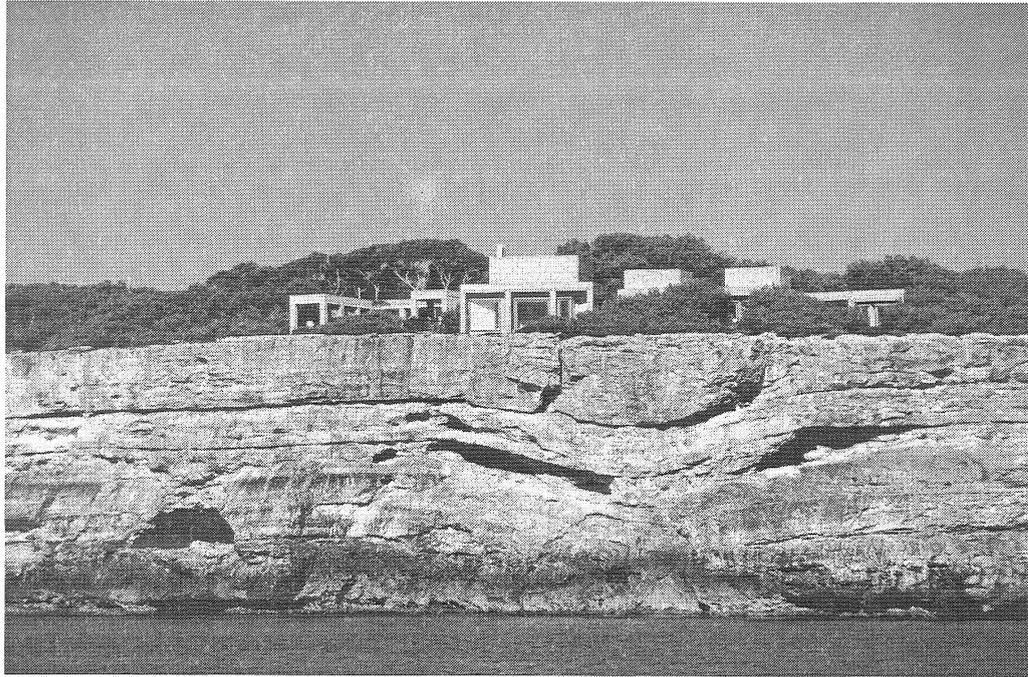
In line with the surroundings, the buildings are made out of local sandstone from a nearby quarry. This gives them an earthbound quality and links them to their locality. So where many of Utzon's other buildings are separated into earthwork and roofwork respectively, Can Lis grows solely out of the ground.<sup>3</sup> The materiality and horizontal rooflines of the building complex negotiate with the layering of the cliff as well as with the colors and light of the surroundings to bring the landscape into being as a place.

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1 Françoise Fromonot describes the original parapet of the buildings as amplifying the "primitive resonances of their volumes" in Jørn Utzon, *The Sydney Opera House*.

2 The notion of primordial is based on Christian Norberg-Schulz's *Jørn Utzon and the Primordial*.

3 The Semperian notion of earthwork and roofwork in Utzon's work is from Kenneth Frampton's *Studies in Tectonic Culture*.



*Figure 1. Can Lis from the waterside as photographed by Flemming Bo Andersen.*

The complex is composed of simple Euclidian forms with classical proportioning. The two most prominent buildings are those for living and dining, which together provide the complex with a dual monumental character. The building for living is the tallest of them with two triangular chimneys crowning the top. The chimneys anchor the building vertically to the site. The trisected front projecting out from the rest of the complex further emphasizes the building's monumentality. The building for dining has the largest footprint of them all. It consists of an open courtyard surrounded by colonnades on three sides that embrace the landscape. The interaction with the surroundings makes the landscape an integrated part of the overall composition. A wide stair stepping down to receive the land underlines the monumental quality of the embracing.

A spatial tension arises in the juxtaposition of the building for living that projects out and the building for dining that folds in. This tension is created through the interplay between the positive and negative volume, which is counterbalanced by the solidity of the plateau. The two buildings are complementary, emphasizing one another and together establishing a dual monumentality. The tension in this duality and the integration of the landscape creates a genuine sense of place with both a history and a presence.

### **Animated courtyards**

The courtyard has played an important role in Utzon's work throughout his career both in public and private buildings. From his early housing designs of 'Private Life,' Kingo houses and Fredensborg houses to some of his later single-family homes, the concept of the courtyard evolved radically. This evolution was in part due to the changing economic, social and architectural circumstances of his specific projects, but it was also due to shifts in Utzon's architectural language.

There are many traits in the development of the formal and functional aspects of the courtyard that point towards Can Lis. Because it marks the border of an outdoor area, the courtyard is key to Utzon's creation of place. Utzon uses the courtyard as a

tool for organizing various functions and for making spatial sequences. The courtyard also works as a threshold that relates the complex to its surroundings, mediates between the individual and society, and shapes different cultural influences into new and original expressions.

An early example of Utzon's use of the courtyard is the competition entry, 'Private Life,' which he designed for a Swedish housing project in the early 1950s. The design consists of square atrium houses defined by four external walls. The courtyard is at the center of the square surrounded on all four sides with buildings. The mixture of living, dining and sleeping areas is located along two sides while covered outdoor areas comprise the other two sides. The buildings have glass facades that face the courtyard. The courtyard creates a very private domain for its inhabitants, with only a minimum of openings in the outer wall to create entrances and views, and to provide light.

The atrium house is essentially a primordial dwelling type (Frampton, 1995). Utzon's inspiration for the atrium house seems to derive from several different places. The influence from ancient Roman building tradition and its Etruscan precedents is evident. Tobias Faber also points to Utzon's studies in the Mediterranean as well as in Scandinavia, North America and Asia, and argues that it is in a metamorphosis of these sources that Utzon's conception emerges (Faber, 1991). In Utzon's reinterpretation, the courtyard appears in a new fashion to accommodate the needs of a family today.

The courtyard concept of the atrium house from 'Private Life' is further developed in Utzon's realization of the Kingo houses and the Fredensborg houses in northern Zealand a few years later. Whereas the Kingo houses are clustered around a lake and a slope, the Fredensborg houses are organized along a continuous string on a southern slope facing open fields. The niches and projections of the building-formations create places of varying enclosures along and across the contours of the site, making the landscape the main focus outside the house.

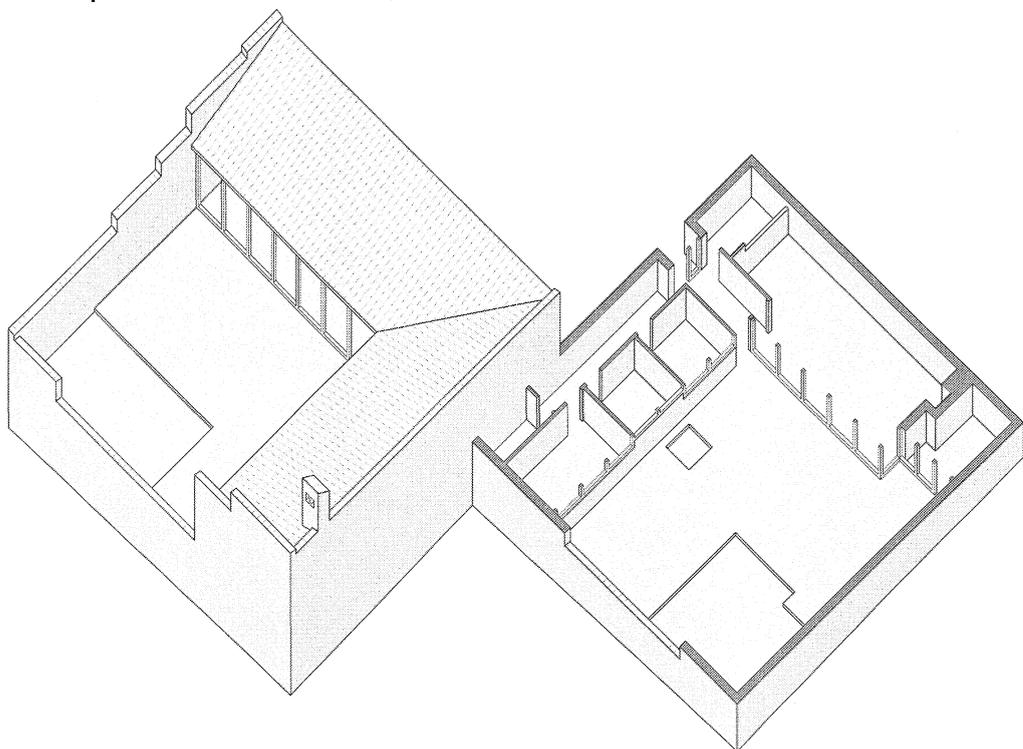


Figure 2. Plan of a Fredensborg atrium house.

The Fredensborg atrium houses, of which there are four variations, is a further investigation into the possibilities of the courtyard as the centerpiece of a house. In comparison with the 'Private Life' design, the atrium house only occupies two sides of the courtyard to form an L-shape oriented to receive sunlight from the southeast or southwest. The functions of the interior have also been more clearly divided. In the L-shape building, one side is used for sleeping, whereas the other side is used for living and dining. The building is thus separated into a socializing section and a more private section with the courtyard serving as the common focal point.<sup>4</sup>

The expression of the chimney also evolves. In the 'Private Life' scheme, it penetrates the inward sloping roof of the building and is not part of the exterior wall. In the Fredensborg design, the chimney becomes an integrated part of the outer wall. It towers above the individual buildings and, along with other chimneys of varying heights, serves as a marker of both the individual and the communal. The integration of the chimney is fulfilled at Can Lis, where it is completely within the wall and is only signified by two triangular stones at the wall's top.

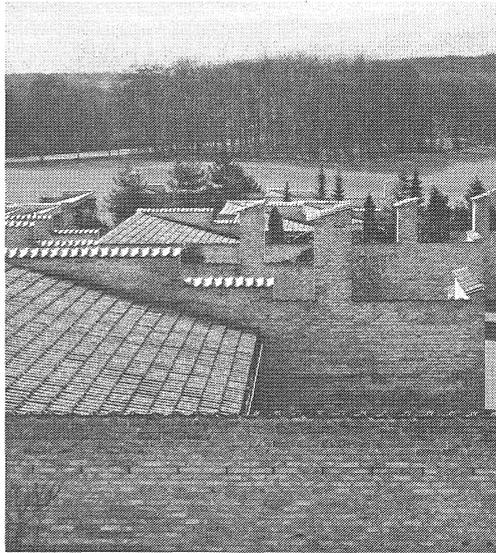


Figure 3. Fredensborg houses as photographed by Keld Helmer-Petersen.

The often shared outer wall that defines the boundaries of privacy in the Fredensborg houses is altered from building to building by variations in height that allow for precise and site-specific views and for daylight to flow into them. This gives the repeating outer walls a differentiated and individual character that is shaped by their specific location. A similar site-specific strategy for grounding the buildings reoccurs in the construction of Can Lis.

A typical feature of the atrium houses is that they all have large areas for the social part of family life, whereas the individual sleeping areas are kept to a minimum size. As a result, the importance of being together as a family becomes a central concept in Utzon's houses.<sup>5</sup> The houses are built in an affordable fashion providing a framework for a high quality family life to unfold. As the competition title 'Private Life' hints at, the houses are somewhat introverted to shelter the inhabitants. The courtyard becomes

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4 See Tobias Faber's Jørn Utzon, Houses in Fredensborg for a thorough description of the Fredensborg atrium houses.

5 Richard Weston often refers to the high priority placed by Utzon on family values in Utzon, Vision Inspiration Architecture.