



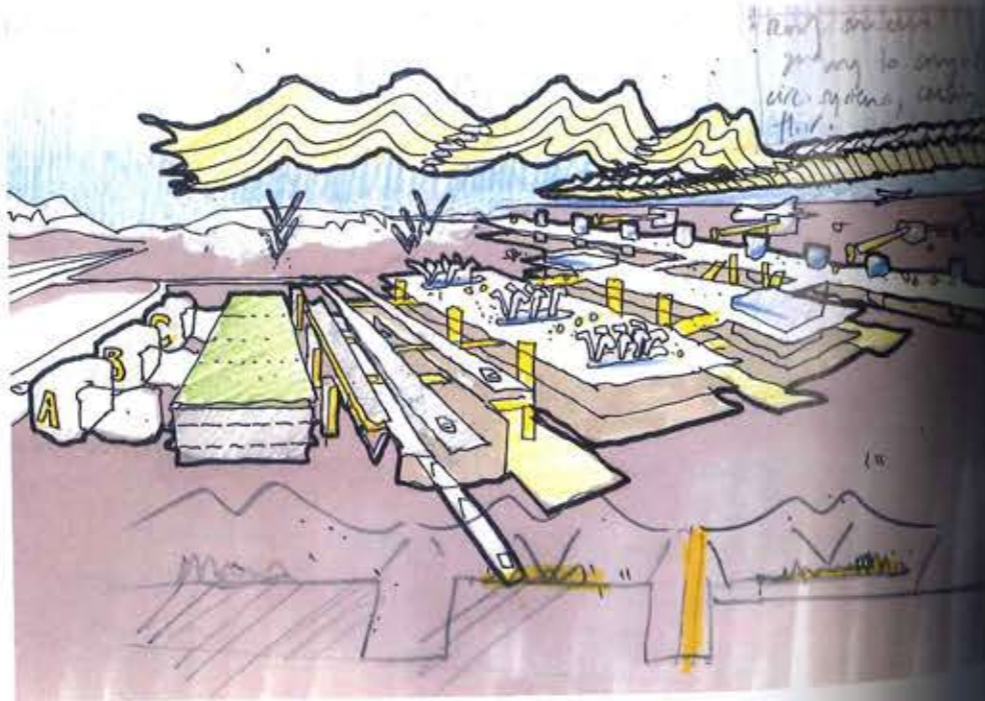
▶ drastically compressed in form. No such misfortune befell Barajas. Actually, rather than a jumbo jet, Madrid's terminal resembles a flock of birds in flight. Each of its four parallel strips of accommodation is capped in a symmetrical curvilinear roof like a pair of wings that project prominently at either end.

Inside the building, the strips stretch up to 1.2 km in length and cover six storeys of accommodation, three of which are below ground. The strips are separated by "canyons" or longitudinal voids three storeys deep. The wing roofs glide over strips of accommodation and swoop down over the canyons. They are punctuated by rapid sequences of large circular rooflights, which channel daylight into the three upper floors.

Passengers will not pass along the four strips of accommodation, as one might expect. Instead they will take the more spectacular route of cutting right across the strips at right angles and crossing the canyons on wide open bridges.

The internal form is minimal and graceful. The three-storey strips are supported along their centre lines on paired concrete columns. At third floor level, the columns split into four diagonal steel arms that reach up to support the roof. Further support comes from Y-shaped steel trees that stretch out over the canyons.

No Rogers building dare show its face without liberal splashes of primary colours. At Barajas, all the steel trees are picked out in primrose yellow, giving the vast



Top: The four strips of building are arranged in parallel and run up to 1.2 km in length
Above: Sketch showing the multistorey strips that passengers travel across between the main entrances and the waiting planes
Right: Open bridges guide passengers across the voids, or 'canyons', that separate the strips of accommodation

building a lively yet calming atmosphere. A warm, reassuring touch is added by pale bamboo strips that make up the undulating ceiling.

The combined effect is a building that is awesome in scale yet refreshingly light, airy, spacious and entirely open to view. Whereas most airports are disorientating assault courses, Barajas promises to be a model of legibility and clarity, despite its immense scale. And despite Rogers' best efforts, the odds are against T5 achieving the same success.

Project team
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