

The thinking diagram

The last decade has seen a burgeoning fascination with infographics in popular culture, and with mapping as a research method in architectural culture. The role of the diagram in architectural production and research can be seen afresh in these contexts. Architectural diagrams have a pedigree – as illustrated in previous issues of this journal (**arq** 16.1, 2012; **arq** 20.3, 2016) – from the eighteenth-century comparative analyses of J. N. L Durand to mid-century modernism via the work of Rudolf Wittkower and Colin Rowe. In plan and section, at a variety of scales, diagrams can be projective, setting out an architectural idea and providing a touchstone to which designers can return throughout the progress of a project. Or they can be analytical, interpreting lessons from built architecture for the benefit of knowledge and practice. Diagramming thus has a place in research culture as a distinctively architectural way of thinking and knowing.

Three articles in this issue of **arq** illustrate the potential of thinking through diagrams. Pedram Ghelichi and Jingxiang Zhu study the design development of Sverre Fehn's famous Nordic Pavilion at the Biennale Gardens in Venice, 1962, in relation to a previous pavilion Fehn had designed at the 1958 Brussels World Fair (pp. 226–238). Partly working through diagrams, they examine how the integrity of the Nordic Pavilion's *parti* diagram held up through the processes of structural and detail design in Fehn's office. Similarly, referring to plan diagrams of model classrooms, Paula Lacomba Montes and Alejandro Campos Uribe report on the innovative mid-century school designs of Mary and David Medd, breaking away from the idea of classrooms and incorporating the concept of 'centres' in architectural discourse (pp. 251–264). Meanwhile, using diagrams to encapsulate the outcomes of ethnographic work and post-occupancy evaluation, Rebecca McLaughlan and Alan Pert question the evaluation of healthcare settings in terms of well-being (pp. 265–276). They indicate lessons that can be learnt by architects in the production of future designs. Taken together, the thinking diagrams of these authors illustrate further the uses and potentials of the diagram in architectural research.

THE EDITORS