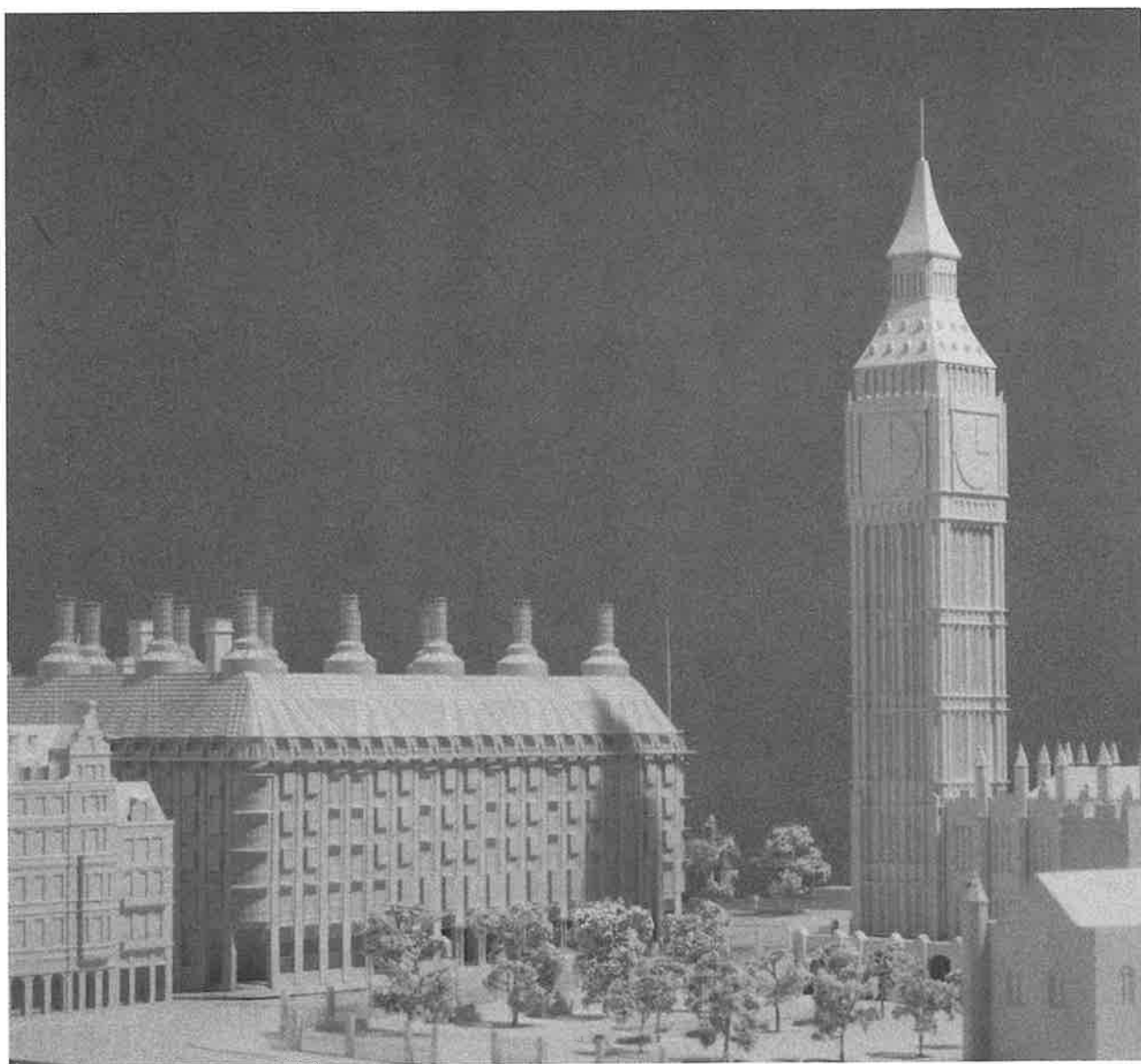


New Parliamentary Building,
Westminster, London



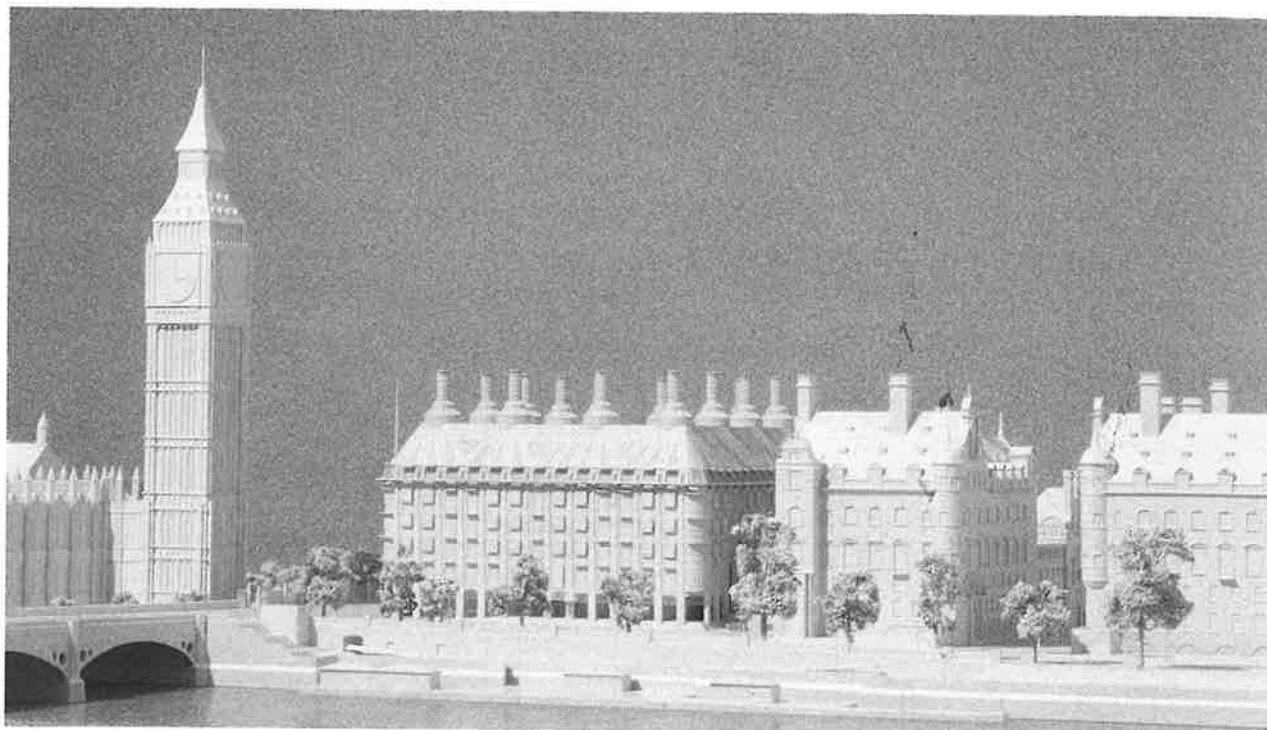


Fig. 1. View of model as seen from Parliament Square

The new parliamentary building by Michael Hopkins and Partners will stand in London's most important ceremonial square, Parliament Square. In fact the site on the corner of Bridge Street and Victoria Embankment is just outside the square, but the new building will face the Palace of Westminster and Big Ben on its south side, and the River Thames on its east side where it will be seen standing between Norman Shaw's buildings for new Scotland Yard and the river front of the Houses of Parliament. The Palace of Westminster, Westminster Abbey and St. Margaret's Church have been designated a World Heritage site.

The building sits on top of a new Underground station and therefore cannot put any of its accommodation or plant in basements. The designs of the Underground station and the new parliamentary building have been closely coordinated so that the station's substructure will provide the necessary structural support to the building above. The accommodation for 208 Members of Parliament is planned around a central covered court which contains the cafeteria, bar and library reading area. The surrounding building contains the library, dining-room and Sergeant-at-Arms department on the ground floor; and members' rooms, committee and conference rooms and committee clerks' offices on the five floors above. The ground floor has a colonnade in Bridge Street and Victoria Embankment, giving the building a base and a street presence. Inside the colonnade are shops and entrances to the building and Underground station. Members have direct access from the Palace of Westminster via the existing parliamentary subway under Bridge Street.

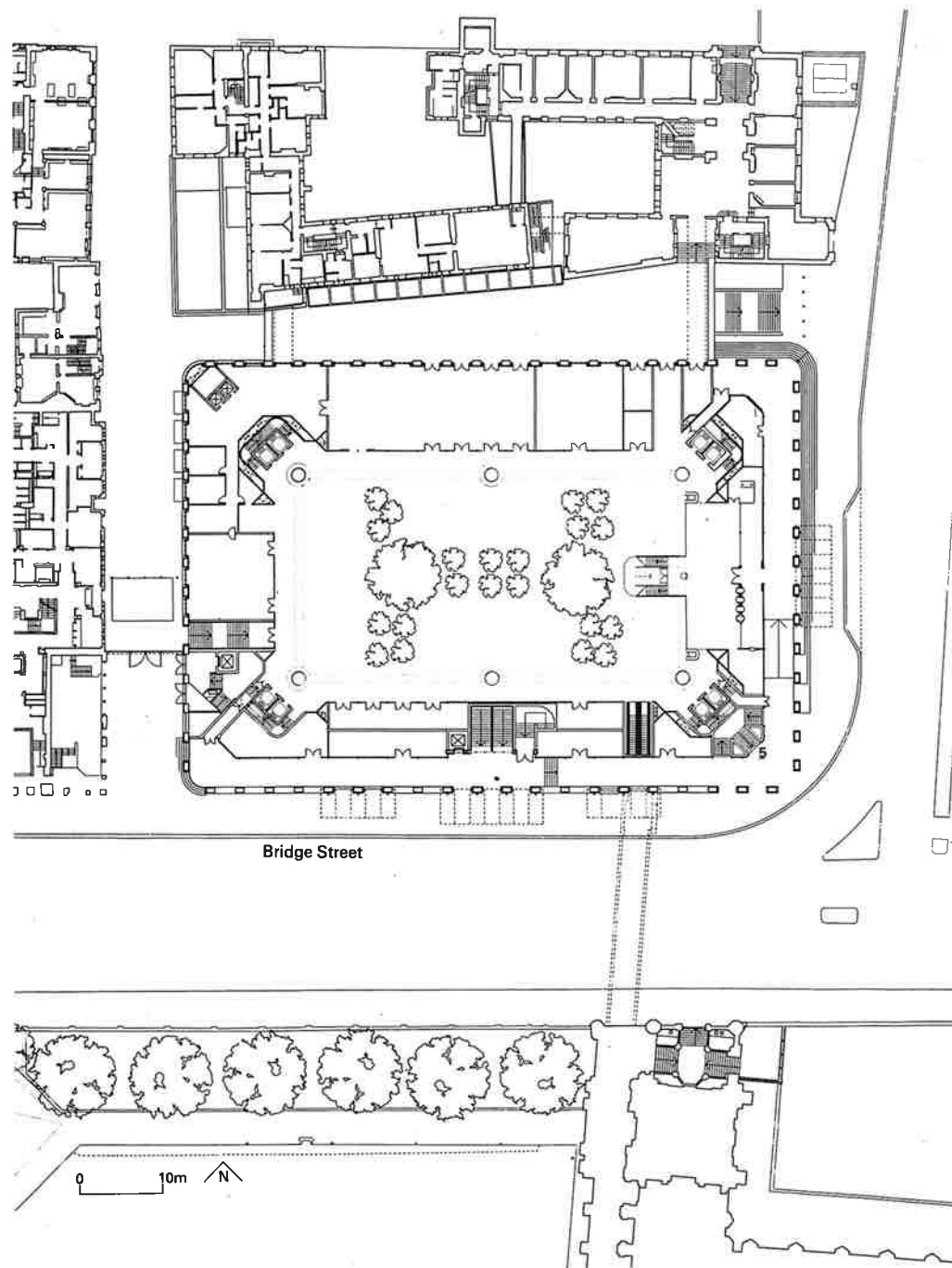
In the river view the architect has kept the new building firmly below the ridge line of Norman Shaw's buildings to maintain the existing dip in the roof-line. The walls and

Fig. 2. View from the River Thames, with the new parliamentary building between Big Ben and Norman Shaw's buildings

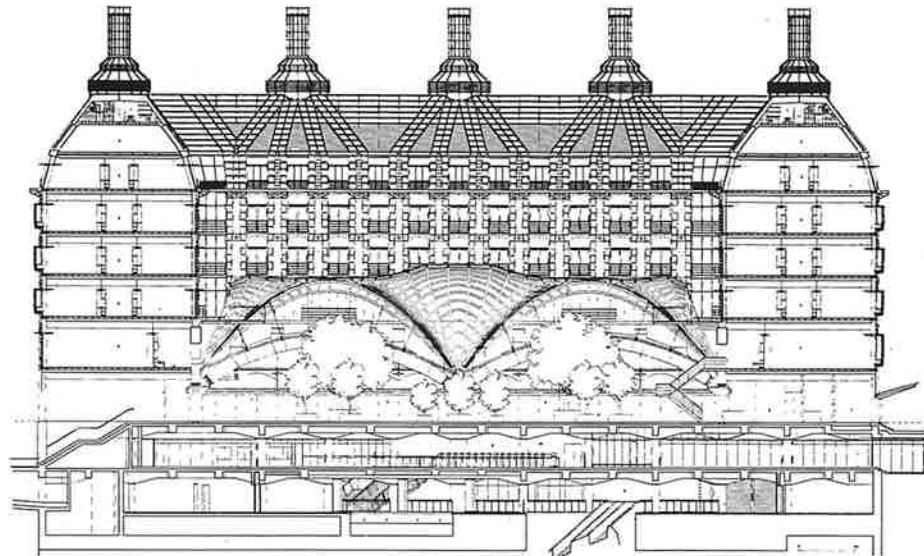
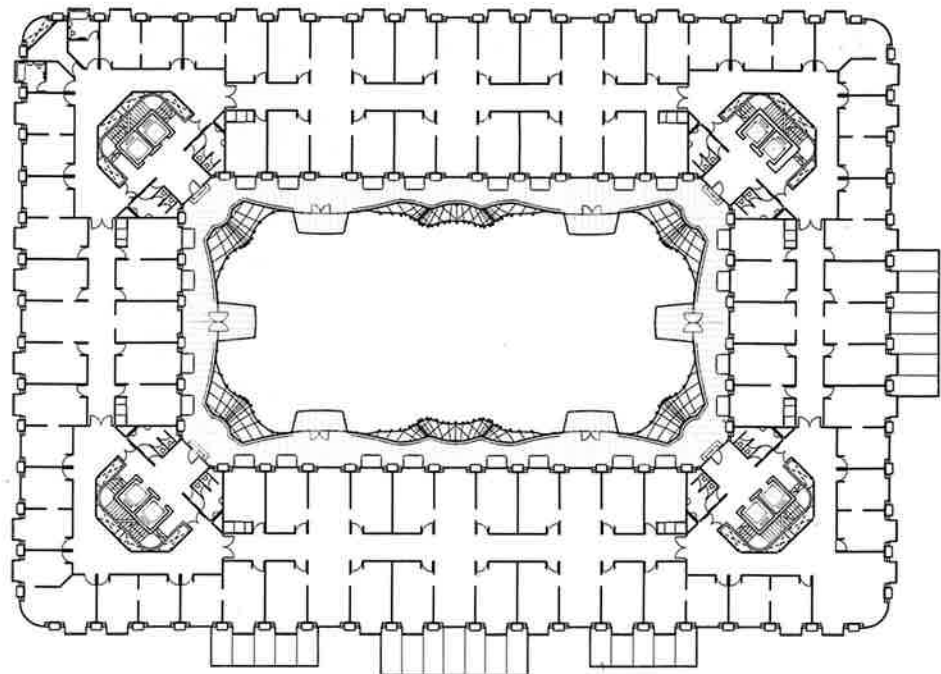
roof of the building are intended to be dark like Norman Shaw's buildings to allow the Palace of Westminster, with its much lighter colour, to remain distinct from the other side of Bridge Street. The outer walls consist of closely spaced solid stone load-bearing piers which decrease in cross-sectional area with perfect structural logic as the load lightens on their journey upwards. On either side of the piers vertical bronze ducts increase in cross-sectional area as they gather more air on their way up, also providing a vertical face for the windows which fill the space between the ducts. Bay windows denote members' and committee rooms and provide the façades with variety and rhythm.

The direct expression of structure and services is continued in the roof which is intended to be more like a continuation of the wall bent backwards than a traditional pitched roof. The roof structure consists of groups of eight structural bronze ducts which continue the line of the façade air-ducts on either side of the piers, and are gathered and bolted together at the top to provide a stable portal frame and to connect with the air ducts inside the fourteen chimneys which give the building such a distinctive silhouette. The chimneys both exhaust stale air gathered up from the ducts connected to the offices below, and draw in fresh air at their base through heat-recovery units to supply the fans housed in the roof space. Roof glazing between the ducts in the lower part of the roof, to light members' rooms and plant areas, will let light filter through at night, emphasising the pattern of the roof ducts and helping to make the roof seem like a continuation of the façade.

The design for the new parliamentary building is undoubtedly strong and original. The expression of structure and services in the walls and roof has few parallels. The site is of worldwide importance and any building on it will



*Fig. 3. New Parliamentary Building:
ground floor plan*



*Fig. 4. New Parliamentary Building:
ground-floor plan*

have to stand comparison with the Palace of Westminster. The remarkable quality of the design is greatly enhanced by the choice of superlative materials and by the way these materials are used. The aim has been to create a building

which will sit comfortably in its historic setting whilst at the same time providing all the facilities and energy efficiency expected of a late 20th century building.



Fig. 5. Detail of façade