PAVILLON SUISSE
LE CORBUSIER, 1930 - 1932
7 BOULEVARD, JOURDAN, PARIS 75014 FRANCE
"My duty with me, my research, it is to test to put this man of aujourd'hui out of misfortune, out of the catastrophe, to put it in happiness, the daily joy in harmony."

-Le Corbusier

Completed in 1932, the 'Pavillon Suisse' (Swiss Pavilion) was built in the University International City of Paris. Collaboration with Pierre Jeanneret, Le Corbusier designed the building emphasizing his five points of architecture: pilots, free plan, free facade, strip windows, and roof garden. This was the beginning of the collective "machine to be inhabited": a kind of ideal urban place that Corbusier sought throughout his life.

It corresponds to a program of 42 rooms of students, with an apartment of function, a cabin of caretaker, a refectory and a library. It can be regarded as a prototype of the apartment buildings in the shape of "bar". Curved walls, painted walls, multicolored ceilings and rough concrete, the sets of matters and chromatics give this place a sculptural impression.

From 1st floor to 3rd floor, the layout of the plan is all identical. Here, Corbusier incorporates the idea of free plan. At the entry of each room, a medical corner (shower, wash-hand basin, etc...) is separated from the part "rest and work" by a wall cupboard forming an open space where a wall can be placed anywhere anyway one wants.

On the top floor, another five points of architecture is established: the rooftop garden. Technical reasons, economic reasons, reasons of comfort and reasons of sentimental lead him to accept the roof top garden. With flowers, shrubs, trees and grass, it becomes opulent.

Also there is a small library space, as withdrawal from a life of the house, is appreciated like a room of study for its calmness.

Two of Corbusier's five points of architecture are presented on south elevation. One is the strip window and the other is the free facade which in this case makes the whole elevation transparent. Except the 4th floor, the facade is covered in glazing which makes it very vulnerable to sun heat since there is no shading device. However, in later years, a shading device is added.

When the building was first built, the windows looked over the open field and athletic tracks which made the view quite pleasant.

In contrast to the south elevation, north elevation has series of punched openings which seems to be placed without any order since they do not align with the doors inside thus enabling to have a cross ventilation.

The wall on the circulation tower is curved in contact with the orthogonal bar. The random rubble wall of the public space on the ground floor creates a great contrast with rest of the building making it special and attractive.
Six pilotis raise the bar, allowing a space underneath for a public use. And by having the main entrance right below the ‘bar’, it creates a dynamic experience for people who enter the building.

‘Dog-bone’ shaped pilotis are designed to withstand a lateral force of wind.

By combining the ideas of free facade and strip window, Corbusier took a further step to his principles. The result was a complete glazing on the south elevation.

The glazing on south side with no shading device was great to incorporate so much light into each unit but was a failure to avoid heat during hot days. (Shades were added in later years.)

Open on the top floor with roof garden and on south side with the massive glazing create the openness of the building. They both create the very close relationships between the outside and the inside when one is in the roof garden or the room.

The circulation is straightforward and simple. One will enter through the pilotis underneath the “bar”, through the public space with murals all around, up the stairs or the elevator which leads to the long hallway and then finally into the room.

By lifting the private space within the “bar”, it allows the whole ground level to be the public space. The circulation tower is used as a transitional space while the hallway can be seen as a sub-transitional space. So as one goes up higher, it gets more private.

The top floor has two special units with roof garden for director being the highest privacy.

Solid and void is executed successfully with pilotis raising the “bar”. They free the ground and keep the natural flow on the ground level.

The massive glazing on the south elevation helps people in the rooms to have a nice visual connection with the outside. By being close to the nature and see and feel it, it provides a comfortable and peaceful environment inside this concrete building.