

# Dizengoff Square, Tel Aviv

## White City Architecture and Its Many Origins



Dizengoff Square is centrally located in the White City of Tel Aviv and has provided citizens with a central, well attended public space since 1935. In 1929, this square was designed by Sir Patrick Geddes as part of his modern urban plan. Its design features many modern elements and makes some exemplary references to the teachings of the Bauhaus for the White City:

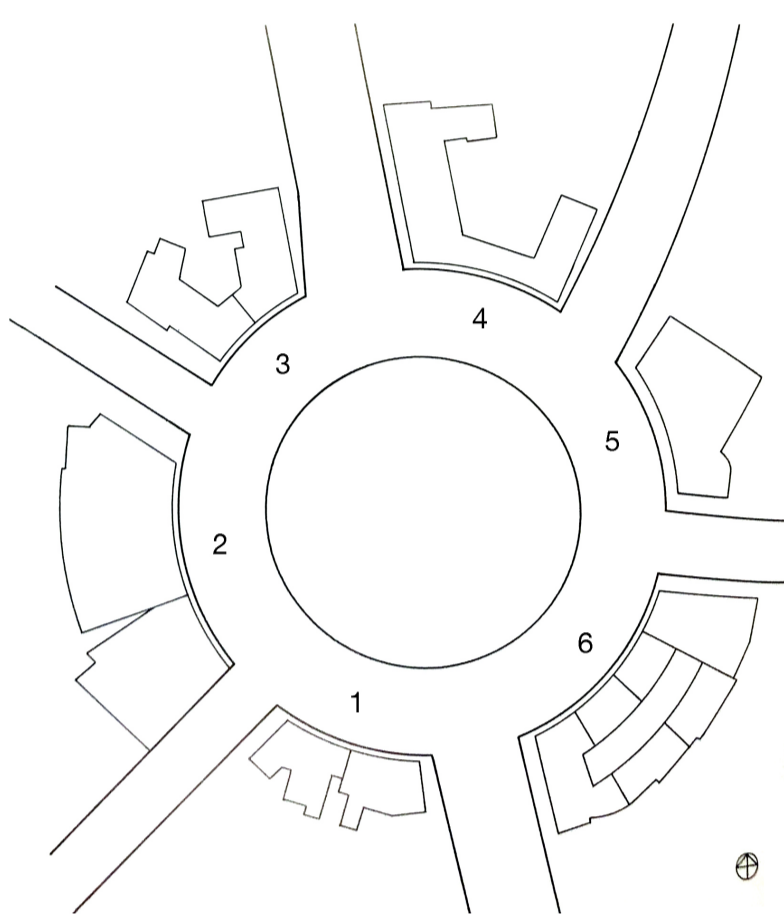


Fig. 1: Dizengoff Square Ground Floor Plan

Ornaments are omitted and the white facades are structured by a set of simple horizontal lines (fig. 9). At the top, they are mainly bordered by flat roof edges (fig. 4). This modern design language was cleverly adapted to the climatic conditions of Tel Aviv. Furthermore, identity and origin played a decisive role in the development of the city. Through a puristic architectural language an attempt was made to build a new city that is unencumbered by historical influences. In addition, the buildings were designed to stand out from the Arab architecture.

The young architect Genia Averbouch (1909-1977) won a competition for the design of the square in 1934. She was inspired by Erich Mendelsohn's organically curved department store facades (fig. 10). Since its construction, the square has been rebuilt several times and is now back in its original design (fig. 2).



Fig. 2: Dizengoff Square, July 2019

Six streets run in a star shape towards the circular square, which measures 100m in diameter (fig. 1). The square is lined by six buildings, originally with two to four floors. They contain apartments, cinemas, offices and shops. The square was planned from the beginning as a 'public living room' and was also used extensively as such. The Chen and Ester cinemas located there complemented the leisure facilities very successfully (fig. 5+9).

Horizontal concrete ribbon structure the facade floor by floor (fig. 7). Some of these balconies shade the windows, and while others are functionless concrete parapets. The concrete band is divided into two strips to prevent hot air from accumulating in the balconies. The windows are pushed into the background by the concrete bands, and so the different uses of the houses are concealed. Consequently, only the facade communicates with the square. As all facades are constructed according to the same principle, the points of the compass are not taken into consideration climatically. The horizontal structure continues into the streets that lead into the square. Thus, the corners are curved. The adjacent buildings were planned under strict design conditions by various architects such as Arie Sharon, Yehuda Magidovitch and Averbouch. The building designed by Sharon was built later in 1949 and is the only one that differs from the overall curved design (fig. 3+8).

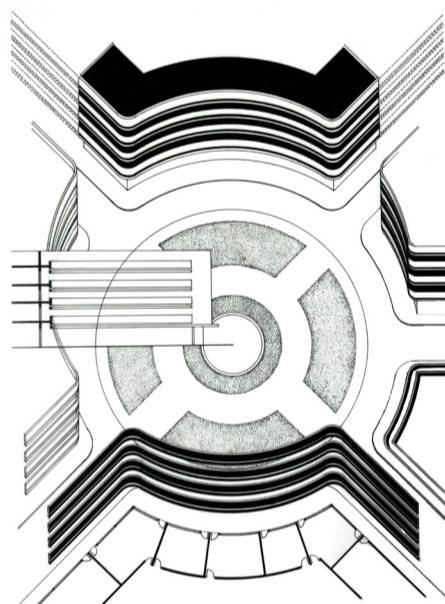


Fig. 3: Sketch Dizengoff Square



Fig. 4: Curved facade at Dizengoff Square



Fig. 5: Cinema Chen designed by Arie Sharon, 1949

Through the strict implementation of the design idea, the square stands in contradiction to the functional principles of the Bauhaus School, based on constructive honesty. Averbouch studied at Gent and was inspired by other modern designs alongside the Bauhaus. Hans and Wassili Luckhardt's competitive proposal for the reconstruction of Alexanderplatz in 1928 also worked with a strong horizontal division of the facades (fig. 11). The design of the square in Berlin features monumental gatehouses, while in Tel Aviv the circular form is drawn over the entire square, creating a calm and decentralized square.



Fig. 6+7: Detail curved facade Dizengoff Square, 2019

Dizengoff Platz shows that the architects in Tel Aviv in the 1930s were not only influenced by the Bauhaus, but also by other modern architects such as Erich Mendelsohn and by historical European models of urban design. In particular, one might conclude, the circular form of the square is based on the design of Leipziger Platz by Karl Friedrich Schinkel in Berlin (fig. 12).



Fig. 8: House „Hamashbir Lazarchan“ by Arie Sharon, 2019



Fig. 9: Cinema Esther designed by Yehuda Magidovitch, 1938-1939



Fig. 10: department store in Stuttgart designed by Erich Mendelsohn, 1928

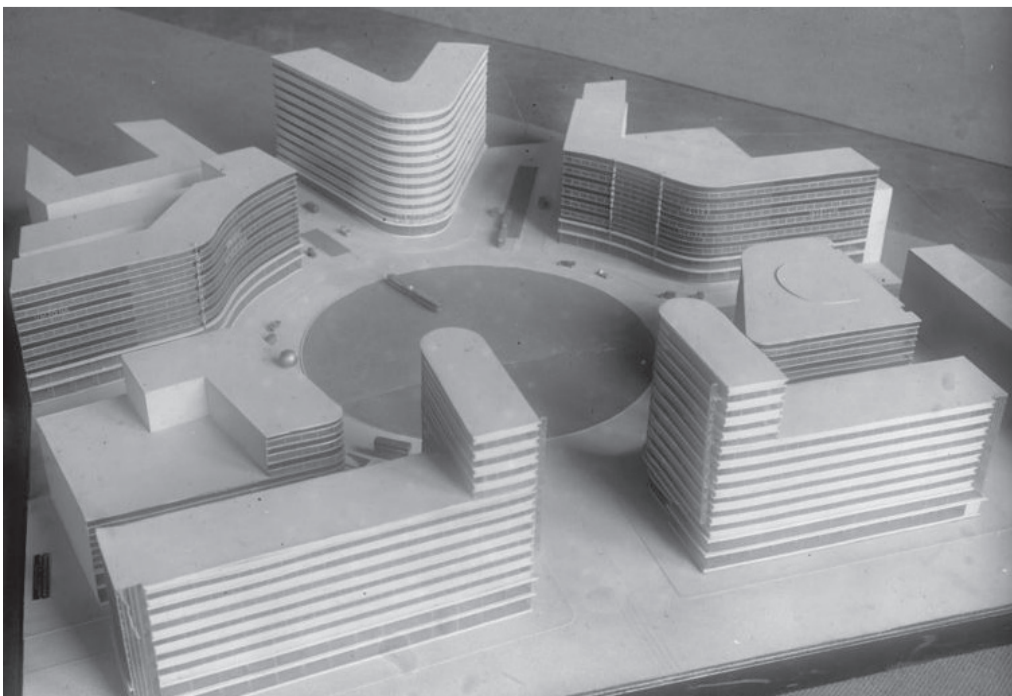


Fig. 11: Hans and Wassili Luckhardt's competition model for Alexanderplatz, 1928

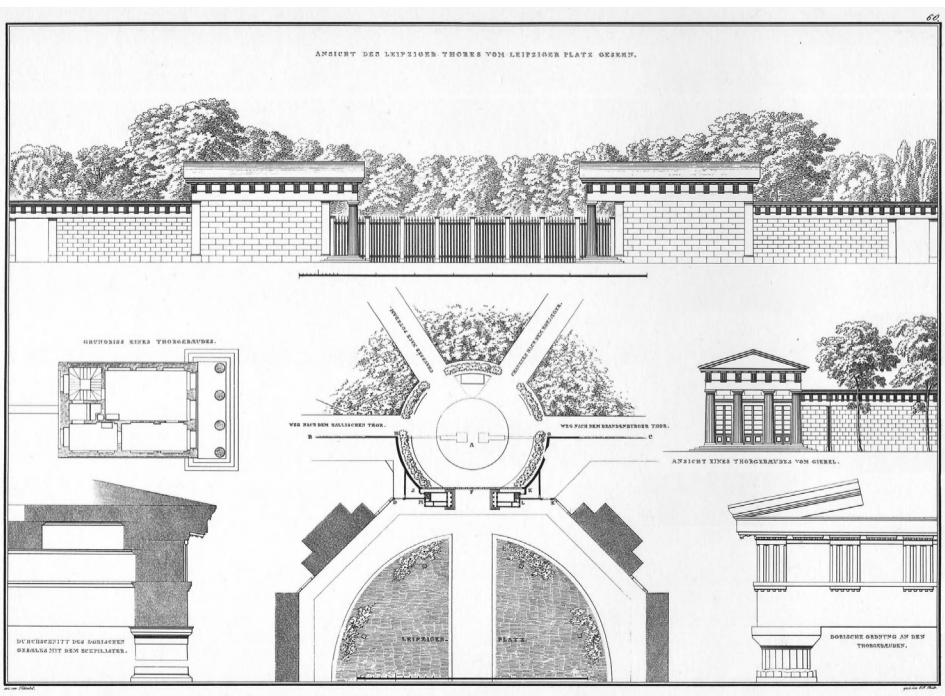


Fig. 12: Karl Friedrich Schinkel's design for Leipziger Platz, around 1866