

WARM UP

1 How much do you remember about Richard Meier? Decide if the following statements are true (T) or false (F) then check your answers on page 205 of your coursebook.

- 1 He is a German architect. _____
- 2 He studied at Iowa State University. _____
- 3 His works have been influenced by Le Corbusier. _____
- 4 He opened his own practice in 1960. _____
- 5 He is famous for the way he uses black in his buildings. _____
- 6 He became part of a group of architects called 'The New York Five'. _____

GLOSSARY

houses: *ospita*
enclosure: *struttura che racchiude*
shallow: *basso*
skylights: *lucernari*
precast concrete: *componenti prefabbricati di calcestruzzo*
sails: *vele*
thresholds: *soglie*
benches: *panchine*
pews: *panche (di chiesa)*



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Two major projects by Meier: the Ara Pacis Museum and the Jubilee Church in Rome

The Ara Pacis Museum

This museum is situated on the banks of the river Tiber in Rome and houses the Ara Pacis, a sacrificial altar erected as a symbol of Roman peace, which was consecrated in 9 BC. This new cover building was designed by American architect Richard Meier and was inaugurated in 2006.



It is a long, single-storey glazed loggia and replaces the previous enclosure which was in ruins. The new structure has all the features of Meier's design, in particular his expansive use of glass. The glass loggia stands above a shallow podium and provides a transparent wall between the river Tiber and the circular perimeter of the mausoleum of Augustus, built about 28 BC. The building consists of an asymmetrical entry hall with seven reinforced concrete columns finished with white waxed marble



plaster, which leads to the rigorously symmetrical main hall, where the Ara Pacis is located. Natural lighting is maximised by skylights in the roof supported by four columns. Apart from protecting the ancient altar, this structure is also used for temporary exhibitions, and also contains a state-of-the-art digital library of Augustan

culture. The outdoor roof terrace makes the building easily accessible and offers splendid views of the Tiber River and the mausoleum of Augustus.

The Jubilee Church

This church was built as part of the Archdiocese of Rome's millennium project and is the fiftieth new church and community centre to be constructed in the suburbs of Rome, this time in an area called Tor Tre Teste. It was designed by Richard Meier and provides a rather isolated housing quarter of Rome with a new centre designed to strengthen the residential fabric of the community.

It is located at the centre of the housing scheme and provides a social and cultural focus point for over 8000 residents. It sits on a flat triangular site and the project features concrete, stucco, travertine and glass and is divided into four parts: the precinct with the church and the community centre connected by a four-storey atrium, a terrace to the northeast, a recreation area to the northwest and a car park to the west. The actual church building consists of three large curved walls on the south side made of precast concrete. These dramatic concrete walls or shells look like gliding white sails and form segments of spheres, with recessed thresholds in between, allowing access to the church and baptistery. The sagrato is an open square surrounded by grass with benches and trees. Inside the church, the floor, altar and priest's chair are all made of stone, while only the pews are made of wood. Natural light enters the entire length of the building through the translucent clear glass roof and at night, the light which emanates from within animates the landscape.

READING COMPREHENSION

2 Which text says...? Put a (✓) under the correct column.

	Ara Pacis	Jubilee Church	Both
1 The building serves to protect an ancient monument.			
2 Glass is a main feature of the construction.			
3 It is a reference point for the community.			
4 It is also used for exhibitions.			
5 Natural light plays an important role in the design.			
6 The construction has just one floor.			

VOCABULARY

3 Complete the text about Richard Meier with the words from the box.

refined • beliefs • philosophy • trends • enhanced • yielded • concept • features

Since entering the world of architecture, Meier has never changed his (1) _____ of building design. He has (2) _____ his own style over the years but has never (3) _____ to the temptation of following fashion (4) _____, maintaining his own design (5) _____. Although his creations have similar (6) _____ including the use of white and glass panels, each design is unique. His style reflects neo-modern (7) _____ in purist architecture and his white sculptural constructions have (8) _____ modern day architecture with their striking beauty.

EXAM PRACTICE – WRITTEN EXAM

4 **A** Write a short essay (150-200 words) on the following topic: How much can the design of a building influence the inhabitants of the surrounding area? You may wish to consider the following points.

- Aesthetic aspects
- Facilities provided
- Location
- Community requirements