



THE WISCONSIN ARCHITECT

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE STATE ASSOCIATION OF WISCONSIN
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1949

VOL. 17 NO. 4

NOTICE of Called Membership Meeting

Plankinton Hotel

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

June 24, 1949

THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE
OF ARCHITECTS
JUN 16 9 57 PM '49
THE DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

THE WISCONSIN ARCHITECT

Official Publication

The State Association of Wisconsin Architects

Wisconsin Chapter, The American Institute of Architects

Producers' Council Club of Wisconsin

LEIGH HUNT, F.A.I.A., *Editor and Publisher*

ELIZABETH SCOTT HUNT, *Managing Editor*

3800 N. Humboldt Ave., Milwaukee 12 EDgewood 2-2113

Published Monthly

Subscription, \$1.00 per year

Address all communications for publication to Editor

3800 N. Humboldt Ave., Milwaukee 12 EDgewood 2-2113

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE

The American Institute of Architects' Executive Director is Edmund R. Purves, F.A.I.A.

Just what is the job?

The By-laws devote most of a page to telling of The Executive Director's duties and responsibilities, which are many. The first paragraph, however, might serve to convey a general impression: "The Executive Director shall be and act as the chief executive officer of The Institute, and as such shall have general management of the administration of its affairs, subject to the general direction and control of The Board and the supervision of the administrative officers of The Institute."

Edmund R. Purves is no newcomer to The Octagon, no stranger to The Board of Directors. He was elected a Regional Director for the Middle Atlantic District in 1938, served his constituency for the customary three-year term, and was then engaged by The Board as Washington Representative, then a new Institute activity. After a busy year in this work, the war called, and Purves was granted a leave of absence, which extended to 1945. The captain in the Army Air Force who was hustled off to the Pacific theater came back a major. Meanwhile, D. K. Este Fisher, Jr., had been pinch-hitting as Washington Representative.

Under the new structure of The Institute, the Washington Representative's function was swallowed in the larger office of Director of Public and Professional Relations, and Major Purves expanded his activities to fit the new measure.

Upon the retirement of Edward C. Kemper, The Board had no difficulty in deciding upon his successor, but more difficulty in persuading Purves to turn from the lure of private practice. However, The Board usually accomplishes its objectives, and this one was no exception.

Edmund R. Purves was born a Philadelphian, June 20, 1897, started his education at the Germantown Friends' School and studied architecture with the class of 1918 at the University of Pennsylvania. Here, as twenty-five years later, war services beckoned and Purves interrupted his college career to enlist in the American Field Service with the French Army in 1917, later joining the A. E. F. to serve in six major battles. The Croix de Guerre with Silver Star, the Verdun

Medal, the Field Service Medal and the Victory Medal with four Battle Clasp — these are eloquent testimony to this service in World War I.

Returning to the University of Pennsylvania, Purves won his B. S. degree with the Class of 1920, finding time also in that year to compete as a finalist for the Paris Prize. He then went to Paris and studied in the Atelier Gromort for a year, followed by two years of travel and study in Europe.

After serving an internship with Zantzinger, Borie & Medary in Philadelphia, Purves founded a partnership for private practice with Kenneth M. Day (Purves & Day). After five years the partnership was dissolved, Purves practising alone for another five years, when he joined with Thomas Pym Cope and Henry Gordon Stewart to form the firm of Purves, Cope & Stewart. This association ended in 1941 when Purves became The Institute's Washington Representative.

Meanwhile, Purves had held various offices in the Philadelphia Chapter, and was elected President of the Pennsylvania Society of Architects in 1936 for a two-year term. He is registered in the states of Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and New Jersey. Since 1948 he has been President of the Architectural Alumni Society of the U. of Pa. In 1946, he served as a delegate to the International Technical Congress in Paris. For the last two years he has been chairman of the Federal Works Agency's Construction Advisory Committee.

In civic activities Purves has been Vice-President of the City Parks Association of Philadelphia; a member of the State Board of Examiners of Architects, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; and member of Washington Board of Trade's City Planning Committee, the U. S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Parks Association, and the Institute of Pacific Relations.

With his wife and two sons, Purves makes his home at Valley Farm, Media, Pa., but from the advance base of his Washington apartment, he sees it only at week-ends.

This is the man who, says The Institute By-laws, "shall have general oversight of all of the departments of The Institute and in general shall be the interpreter of the directives of The Board and The Executive Committee." — H. H. S.

— *Journal of The American Institute of Architects*

URGES ARCHITECTS TO USE MODULAR DESIGN

James M. Ashley, president of the Producers' Council, urged all architects and builders to adopt the principles of modular coordination on at least one new house or other building so that they may observe for themselves the extent of the savings in construction cost which can be attained.

"Those in the industry who thoroughly understand modular design are certain that it will bring about substantial reductions in the cost of building," Mr. Ashley said, "and many designers are planning buildings on the modular basis.

"When a number of these buildings have been completed and the actual savings can be compared and averaged, it will be possible to cite authoritative figures on the economies which have been effected.

"These savings may be even greater than is gen-

(Continued on Page 4)

NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING



PLEASE TAKE NOTICE THAT A SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE MEMBERS OF THE STATE ASSOCIATION
OF WISCONSIN ARCHITECTS WILL BE HELD

**June 24, 1949, at 2 p. m.,
In the Lotus Room of the Plankinton Hotel,
In the City of Milwaukee, Wisconsin,
for the following purposes:**

1. To hear a report of the Joint Committee of the State Association of Wisconsin Architects and the Wisconsin Chapter of The American Institute of Architects, relative to UNIFICATION of both organizations by the organizing of a new, single, state association of Wisconsin architects, a Chapter of the A.I.A.
2. To consider and take action on a resolution to dissolve the State Association of Wisconsin Architects in connection with said UNIFICATION.
3. To authorize and direct the Board of Directors and the Officers to do, or cause to be done, everything necessary or desirable to accomplish such action as may be approved by the members relative to such UNIFICATION.
4. To transact such other business incidental to any of the foregoing as may come before said meeting.

Only members of this Association in good standing by 2 P.M., June 24, 1949, will be entitled to vote at said meeting.

Milwaukee, Wisconsin, May 23, 1949

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

LEIGH HUNT, Secretary

erally expected, but there is no doubt that they will be great enough to warrant the adoption of modular coordination on at least an experimental scale by everyone concerned with designing and putting up buildings.

"Aside from the economies which arise in on-site construction as a result of reducing the waste of both time and materials, there are further savings in the form of time saved in design, greater mass production in the manufacture of materials, and lower inventories to be carried by producers and distributors.

"In addition to the Producers' Council, modular coordination has been endorsed by The American Institute of Architects, the Housing and Home Finance Agency, and other industry groups which have given it careful study. Any one who actually adopts the plan is certain to be repaid in the form of lower building costs."

ON TO MEXICO

By TRENT ELWOOD SANFORD

Author of "The Story of Architecture in Mexico"

They tell in Mexico of when the world was in darkness and all the gods were sad, a fire was built on the summit of a great pyramid and one of the gods jumped into the flames from which he rose as the Sun, and from that time on there was light. Another god, jealous of the honor, followed, but, missing the heart of the flames, fell to earth, where ashes still cover his pyre; and to this day his ghost shines only dimly in the sky. Those great pyramids can still be seen in the sacred city of Teotihuacán ("Where the Gods Dwell"), which is about thirty miles northeast of modern Mexico City.

A more scientific version of their origin is that they were erected by a mysterious race of builders (for Toltec means "architect") who preceded the Aztecs in the Valley of Mexico. The sculptures which adorn the Temple of Quetzalcoatl are powerful and dramatic; and the largest monument, the Pyramid of the Sun, covers about the same area as the Pyramid of Cheops in Egypt, though it differs in both function and construction. It was built, not as a single pyramid, but as a series of superimposed, progressively smaller, truncated pyramids with terraces between, and a broad stairway leading to the top; and it served, not as a tomb, but as a base for a temple, of which there is now hardly a trace. At one time a host of priests climbed those heights in colorful procession, where they seemed to disappear upward into space, to communicate, at a point unseen, with the gods who lived in the sky.

As if to counteract the effect of the pagan legend, the early Augustinian friars built one of their first monasteries just a short distance away at Acolman. The road to Teotihuacán leads past this fortress-like group, which is a superb example of a combination of Gothic, in the buttressed, aisleless church with vaulted ceiling; Plateresque, in the richly carved entrance portal; and Romanesque, in the quiet, secluded cloister. Here were combined the capriciousness of the Moor with the austerity of the Christian Spaniard, both influenced by the new Renaissance from Italy, all implanted upon the traditional habitat of the medieval friar, and, in addition, taking into consideration the need for defense in a new and still hostile

land. Four hundred such monastery-schools were built in Mexico by the Franciscans, Dominicans, and Augustinians during that century before the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock, and, an easily accessible sample, San Agustín Acolman is one of the finest.

About the same distance to the southeast can be seen a bit of the Valley as it must have appeared in the days when the Aztecs brought flowers and vegetables to their island capital in heavily laden canoes. To all good Mexicans, and to most visitors, Sunday is the day for the floating gardens of Xochimilco, to be poled along in flower-bedecked, canopied boats among the flower vendors in dugouts, floating orchestras, and paddling tortilla makers. And for Chapultepec Park, at the opposite end of the city, with its brilliantly and expensively garbed charros and its magnificent *ahuehuetes* dating from the days of Montezuma. And for the *corrida de toros* with its pageantry, rhythm, and excitement. Architecture in the city can be seen another day.

Another day. Eastward from the Avenida Juárez, now lined with interesting examples of the modern, International Style of architecture, the narrow and busy Avenida Madero leads to the Plaza Mayor, the heart of the city, and popularly called the Zócalo. It was here that the Aztecs made their last stand against Cortés in 1521, and here that the intrepid conqueror established the government of New Spain.

The National Palace occupies one side of the square and is visited chiefly for its great murals by Diego Rivera; the City Hall faces another; but dominating the plaza is the great Cathedral on the north. It is an interesting study in historical styles, with late Gothic, Baroque, Churrigueresque, and Neo-Classic all present; but more appealing is the smaller Sagrario Metropolitano with its delicately carved double facade, one of the finest of early Churrigueresque structures. Somewhat later is La Santísima Trinidad to the east of the cathedral, and still later, and more florid, is the Balvanera Chapel of the Church of San Francisco. Little is left of the old church begun at the time of Cortés, but that chapel may be found at the rear of a garden merely by dodging taxis in crossing the Avenida Madero almost directly from Sanborn's, which is sure to be the headquarters of the architect in his less serious moments (and of his wife in her more serious ones). Incidentally, the building which that store and restaurant now occupies, and which has had a stormy history, is one of the finest tiled mansions in the country, even outdoing Puebla, the home of tile.

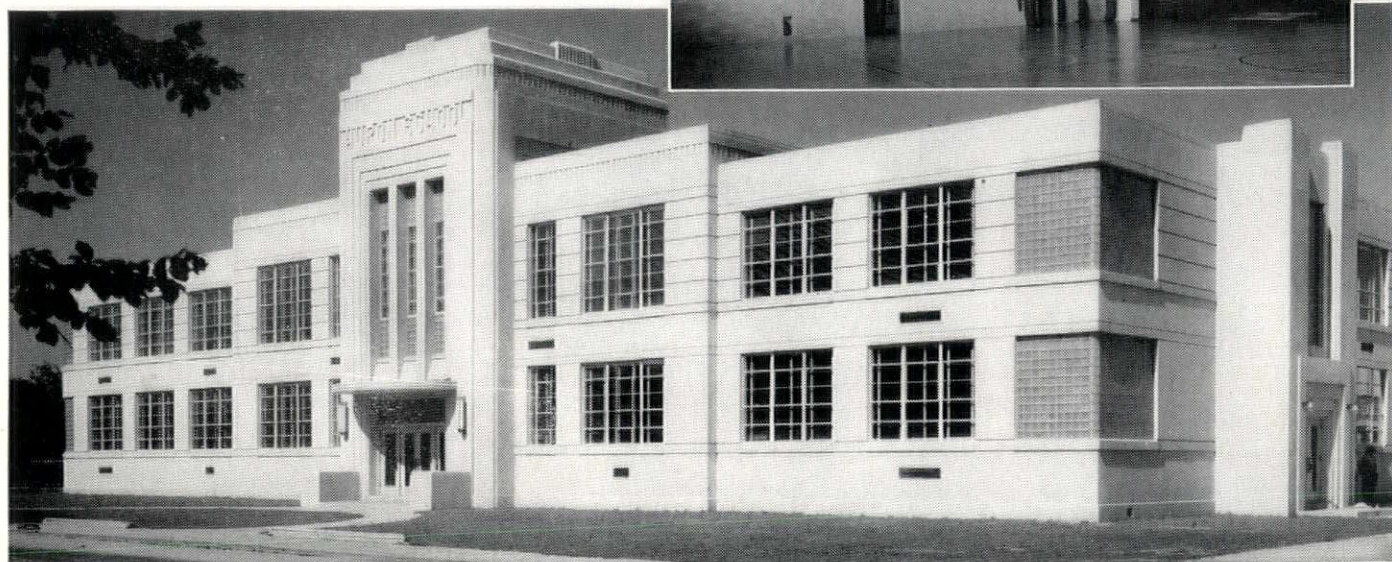
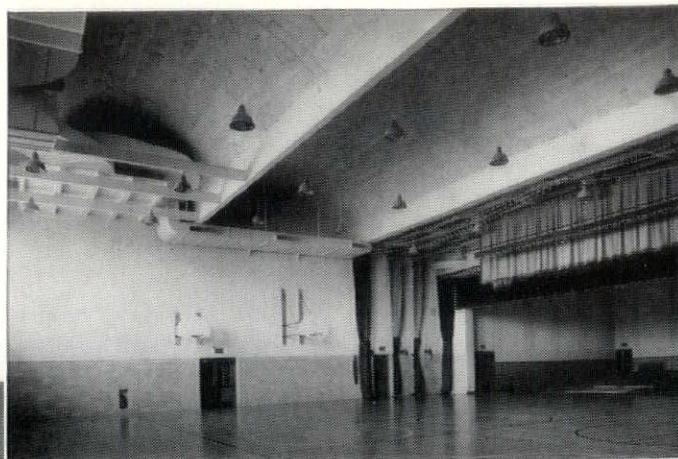
A tiny jewel of the Churrigueresque style can be seen in the Chapel of the Well at Guadalupe-Hidalgo (Villa Madero), where the patron saint of Mexico first appeared to a credulous Indian. But the most elaborate, perhaps, and the most complete example of the style is the Jesuit church and seminary at Tepotzotlán, about thirty miles north of Mexico City. Close scrutiny of the facade of the church will be richly rewarding, if the army is not still camped in the front yard; and the altars fairly burst with ornament.

The capital contains a wealth of earlier Baroque architecture in all of its phases, both institutional and domestic, as well as ecclesiastical. The Iturbide Palace tops the latter group and is but a short distance down the Avenida Madero. Other examples are the build-

(Continued on Page 7)

Huron School, Huron, Ohio, designed in architectural concrete by Harold Parker and C. Edward Wolfe, associate architects of Sandusky, Ohio. R. C. Reese of Toledo was structural engineer. Contractor was the Juergens Co., Lakewood, Ohio.

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Friday, June 24

AT

2 P. M.

ings now occupied by the National Bank of Mexico and by the offices of the National Railroads. Of educational buildings, outstanding are the Colegio de San Ildefonso, now the National Preparatory School, which contains murals by Diego Rivera and by Orozco, and the immense structure popularly known as Las Vizcainas, the Basques. Of churches there are many, only a few of which can be named. Among the most interesting are Santo Domingo, La Profesa, San Juan de Dios, San Hipólito, and La Enseñanza in the city, and the Franciscan church at Churubusco with its little tiled chapel of San Antonio Abad.

Westward, the Avenida Juárez leads past "the little horse," one of the finest equestrian statues in the world (it weighs about thirty tons including the rider, who is never mentioned), into the beautiful Paseo de Reforma and on to Chapultepec Park. Southward are San Angel and Coyoacán, where the conquistadores first built their homes, and beyond, over wooded mountains and in a sub-tropical valley, lies Cuernavaca.

A short detour to the east takes one to Amecameca and the Sacro Monte, and, incidentally, one of the most dramatic views to be found in North America. Across the highway from Amecameca, a pilgrimage road leads up the sacred mountain, where the devout visitor may stop to kneel at each Station of the Cross, but even the most devout will be forgiven, I am sure, if he turns around at intervals to admire the view framed by Spanish moss hanging from great trees. At the top of the hill is a little chapel which may be recognized as the one reproduced for the Mexican

Village at the 1934 Chicago World's Fair. But, to the east lie, or rather rise majestically, Popocatepetl, the Warrior, and Ixtaccíhuatl, the Sleeping Woman. Camera fans, be prepared!

Cuernavaca is Spanish for "cow's horn," but that is incidental and just because the Spaniards could not pronounce Cuauhnahuac, which is Aztec (Nahuatl) for "Near Wooded Mountains." It was here in the soft sub-tropical air that Cortés first introduced sugar cane to Mexico, and where he built himself a summer palace. Much of the red castellated structure is a restoration, but the original gallery at the back should be visited if only to see more famous murals by Diego Rivera. These should not be permitted, however, to interfere with examination of the carving on the Indo-Romanesque column caps, or the view out through the arches.

The cathedral group, with its maze of domes and halfdomes, is just a short distance away, and after the sixteenth-century fortress-like structure, originally begun as a Franciscan mission with its later graceful Baroque tower has been examined by day, the garden should be visited again, alone, at night. Nowhere are the skies blacker and the stars brighter and closer.

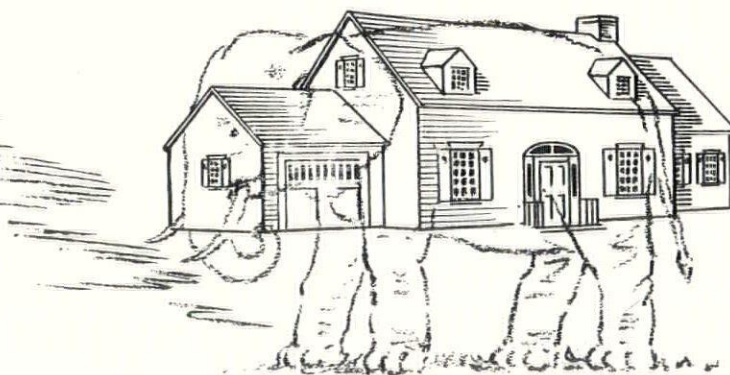
The Borda Gardens, though not kept up as in the days of that wealthy mine owner, nor in the much later days of Maximilian, make a beautiful retreat, especially when one is hungry; and the whole town is a garden of bougainvillea.

A little beyond Cuernavaca, a side road leads, for the archeology-minded visitor, to Xochicalco, the site of another Toltec city, less extensive than Teotihuacán,



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but with a more striking hilltop site, and a pyramid-temple containing extremely interesting carved stone ornament. But, as Burton Holmes would say, we have not time to linger, so we make our way over a winding mountain road and soon find ourselves in one of the picture cities of America.

Taxco, built on the pattern of a crazy quilt which has been subjected to the throes of an incurable insomniac, is notable for its sea of red tile roofs, no two on the same level, its cobblestone trails, and its great Baroque church, which is so large and so elaborate that it is commonly mis-called a cathedral. But the town itself, which is just as often mis-spoken of as "typical," came right out of Grimm's Fairy Tales, or a Maxfield Parris fantasy, and, in spite of some critics who discovered it too late, was not designed for a movie set, nor merely for the benefit of tourists. Originally founded on silver, the town was first brought to the attention of Americans by an architect, William Spratling, who visited there some twenty years ago, and stayed to revive the almost lost art of design in silver. He has been followed by a host of artists and artisans, and the town has become famous for its silver work.

The great church faces a small plaza shaded by huge Indian laurel trees, the center of life and the locale of fiestas. From the plaza, the streets drop steeply down behind the church, or climb to the mountainside high enough, I have been told, to see Cuernavaca. After climbing in all directions, you will be ready to sit, and, drawn by the strains of popular Mexican songs, you will probably go to Doña Berta's by the corner of the great church to enjoy the Taxquenini variation on a theme by Tom Collins.

After three or four, you will want to join Vicente on the windowsill with his guitar.

It is to this cobblestoned, precipitous plaza that the Acapulco bus pulls up at intervals to disgorge and devour passengers en route to that tropical Pacific port which has recently become such a mecca for all good Americans. There is no outstanding architecture there, but there are outstanding swimming and fishing. For deep-sea fishing the port has long been famous; and nothing is more restful than to lie on the white sand and let the sand and the tide scratch your back. But one good friend visiting there insisted that, fine as were both the swimming and the fishing, they were exceeded in sheer joy — and certainly in sheer laziness — by his favorite sport, which was to lie

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in a hammock in the shade outside his cottage, toss empty beer bottles over the cliff at suitable intervals, and see how far he could count (not too fast) before he heard the faint tinkle of glass answering him from the rocks far below.

A word as to your reception. It will be warm and welcome. You will be made to feel that Mexico is yours, but you will not be expected to take it all with you. It will be considerate. The Mexican will be kinder about your mistakes in his Spanish than you probably will be about his in your English. Your every comfort will be considered, your every desire granted, if possible. I recall, in one delightful city hotel, not only did the management's solicitude for our comfort leave nothing to be desired, but even our privacy was protected. Wedged into a corner of the framed mirror above the lavatory in the modern blue-tiled bathroom was a notice neatly typed on the back of the assistant manager's card. It read: *For your convenience, be sure that the shades are down while you are dressing.—The Management.* Shamelessly appropriating it as a desirable souvenir, I dropped it into a pocket of my briefcase. On returning to the room a short time later, after a brief visit to inspect the appointments in the cocktail lounge, I found my ten-year-old daughter, with a conscience born of her New England ancestry, laboriously hand-lettering on the back of one of my professional cards a copy of the notice to replace the one I had stolen.

Mexico City, Cuernavaca, Taxco, and Acapulco comprise the perfect preliminary taste of an exotic historical and architectural blend. But to the east, over a high mountain pass, lies Puebla, which, with its satellite villages, has more color on the fronts of its churches than all of Italy; beyond are the lush gardens of Fortín and the drowsy languor of Córdoba; and on to the south is Oaxaca with its sturdy buildings kissed with the delicate green of nature in the early spring.

To the west, over a higher mountain pass, is Morelia, with a boulevard thoroughfare which has more of architectural merit in proportion to its length than New York's Fifth Avenue; and beyond, Guadalajara, with a cathedral ill-treated by earthquakes and worse-treated by architects of restoration, but recompensed by a gem of ornamental exuberance in the Church of Santa Mónica; farther to the north, Querétaro, a colonial architectural museum; San Miguel Allende, a gold mine of art; and Guanajuato—

But they belong to the next trip, when you are sure to stay longer. Perhaps you will just stay. For, as the saying goes, once the dust of Mexico has settled upon your heart, you will never be happy in any other land. *Hasta la vista!*

— *Journal of The American Institute of Architects*

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CONDUCTING SPECIAL RESEARCH PROJECT

The extent to which modular coordination can reduce the cost of building homes will be measured in a special research project being conducted by the Small Homes Council of the University of Illinois, Charles M. Mortenson, executive secretary of the Producers' Council, stated.

"The test, in which the cost of constructing a masonry home with non-modular materials will be compared with the cost of an identical dwelling constructed of modular-sized products, will provide the first actual measurement of the savings which can be obtained through coordinating the dimensions of materials," Mr. Mortenson said.

"Heretofore, the savings have been self-evident but theoretical, and the amount of the reduction has been undetermined. As a result, many manufacturers, designers, and builders have waited for proof that substantial cost reductions actually can be realized. The Illinois test will provide the evidence that has been lacking.

"The plans for the homes selected for the new test are those developed in the Industry Engineered Housing Program sponsored jointly by the Producers' Council and the National Retail Lumber Dealers Association. Six of the engineered homes already have been constructed at the University.

"An earlier research project conducted while those houses were being built demonstrated that labor savings up to 10 per cent could be realized by using the principles of the engineered housing program, but the further savings from the use of modular materials were not measured. This new test will supply that information.

"The dimensions of materials manufactured on the modular basis vary by intervals of 4 inches, and the dimensions of individual products are coordinated with those of other materials in such a way that they can be put together with a minimum of costly cutting, fitting, and patching and with a minimum waste of material.

"The amount of the savings in both time and materials will be measured in the test."

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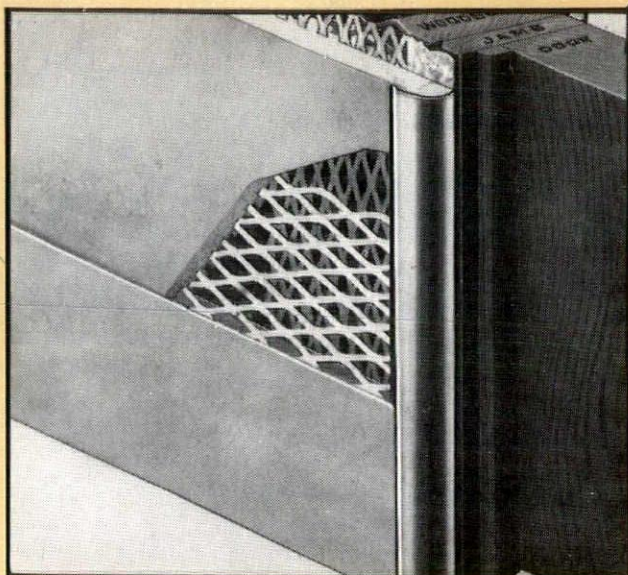
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Friday, June 24

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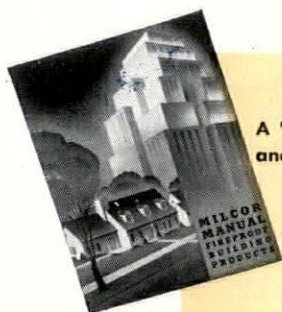
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