



# Progressive Architecture

(PENCIL POINTS)

February 1949

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## Newsletter

→ Birth-rate figures give some clue to work ahead for architects. Normal prewar rate of 18 per 1000 had jumped in 1947 to 26.2. This means that the 18½ million children now in elementary school will reach a peak of 26.6 million by 1957; the 6½ million high-school children will climb to about 8 million in 1960; colleges, after a drop, will again be crowded by 1960, and will reach a high point about 1965.

Arguments for school planning now to meet these statistical loads are completely valid. Home planning will likewise be affected as today's newborn citizens marry. In the 1960's we can look for another housing "emergency," unless there is better planning than now seems probable.

→ Administration's new housing bill would provide 1,050,000 public-housing units in seven years; increase interest on housing authority bonds to 2½% but eliminate tax exemption; boost allowable construction cost per room to \$2500.

President Truman's threat of government-built steel plants overshadowed his request for additional allocation controls for all scarce materials. U. S. Steel says industry can produce 68 million tons in '49 - enough to meet all but "extraordinary" demands. Size and duration of the extraordinary demand is point that will have to be settled.

→ There are some indications of slight drop in building costs. In the east several recent big jobs have been bid at lower than estimated costs. In the Midwest similar buildings dropped about 15 cents a sq. ft. in successive bids a month apart. Estimates for construction in midyear are lower than for work to be done at once.

This is good news for designers, but raises the question whether to advise clients to wait. Best present guess is that buildings planned now will get advantage of price slump during year; waiting would be likely to run construction into new rise later.

→ First prestressed concrete structure of importance in the U. S. is new bridge in Philadelphia. Recent international conference in Belgium highlighted European interest in this subject. Increasing interest in this country presages more such designs.

Yale's Howland Memorial prize goes this year to Sven Markelius, Swedish architect. N.Y. A.I.A. Chapter's Medal of Honor goes to Louis Skidmore. Douglas Orr has been made an honorary member of the R.I.B.A.

→ Experiments are being made with a stainless steel paint. It is not yet in production, but preliminary tests indicate that, suspended in various vehicles, it may have many applications, can be used on wood, metal, some types of masonry.

Survey by The Housing Institute indicates that mortgage interest rates have increased (average now 5%), ratio of mortgage to sales price is dropping (to about 51.2%) and average maturity period has shortened.

# A shape to have in

Wood, stone and brick have each dominated periods of design. Today the material is metal.

A sheet of metal shaped like this is in its strongest structural form. This is the shape of a Robertson Q-Unit.

"Q" stands for Quick. It symbolizes Robertson's engineering of wall and floor units specifically to meet problems in construction today which did not exist a few decades ago. They also relieve today's builders of much of the unpredictable element in field labor which penalizes other materials.

**Q-PANEL**

Q-Panel is a metal Q-Unit, plus incombustible insulation, plus a sheet of flat metal.

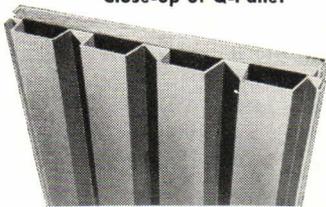
A Q-Panel only 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick has a better U-factor than a 12" masonry wall. Panels come in two-foot widths and are light in weight. They arrive at the site requiring a minimum of field labor. A crew of 12 men can erect an area equal to an acre of wall in one week.

Q-Panels are the logical complement

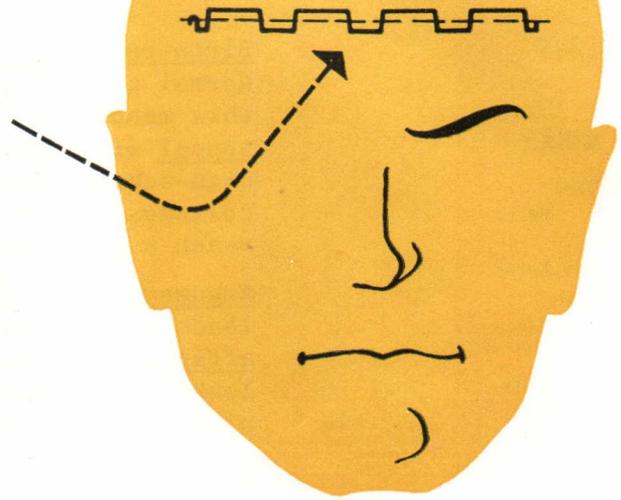
to steel framework. They are curtain walls and use metal to its utmost efficiency. They are a basic building material offering today's designers modern variations in appearance never before available. Exterior surfaces can be flat or fluted or combinations of both, achieving contrasts in light and shadow. You have the choice of metal coated steel, stainless or aluminum.

Q-Panels are available now.

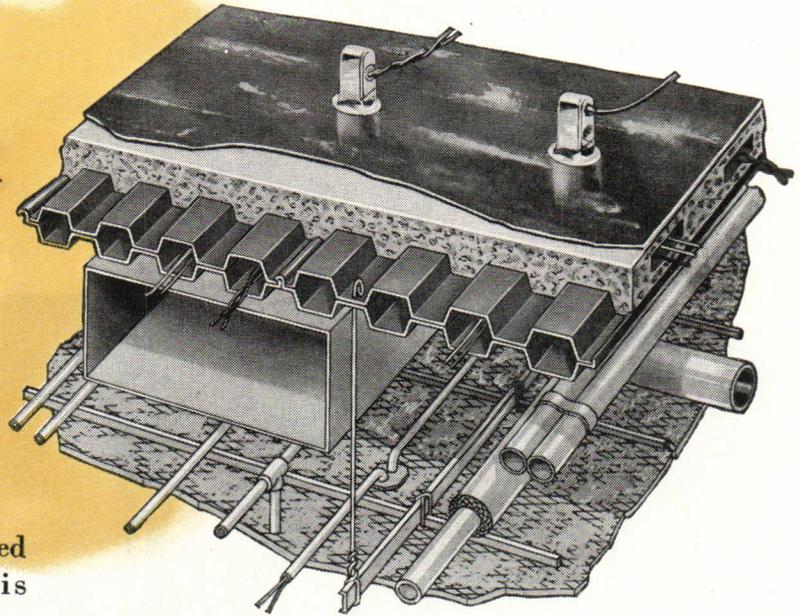
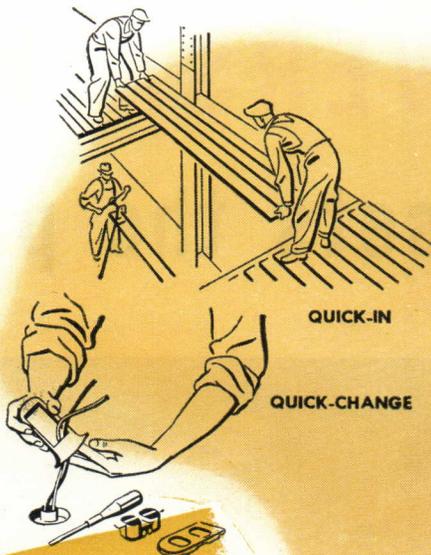
Close-up of Q-Panel



Federal Telecommunications Laboratories, Inc., Nutley, N. J. For buildings 1 and 2, the architect was Louis Weeks, of New York City. Buildings 3 and 4 and Tower are by Giffels & Vallet and L. Rossetti of Detroit, Michigan. Contractor was George A. Fuller Co., of New York City. Exterior walls are Robertson's aluminum Q-Panel. Floors are Robertson steel Q-Floor.



# mind while designing in the 20th Century



Steel Q-Floor is shown here with suspended ceiling and a condensed presentation of mechanical equipment needed in a modern building.

## Q-FLOOR

Q-Unit engineered as flooring is Q-Floor. It answers the need of modern buildings for unlimited electrical availability. Q-Floor is the steel subfloor. The cells are crossed over by raceways which carry wires of any electrical service. It takes but a few minutes for an electrician to drill a small hole and establish a fitting on any six-inch area of the entire exposed floor.

Partitions and electrical outlets need not be planned until occupancy. This saves drafting room work. Also, the owner's investment is protected against obsolescence. With electrical alterations so easy, facilities can be kept up to date long after appearance may be outmoded. This is a financial point appreciated by builders. You can see Q-Floor

Fittings at any General Electric construction materials distributor's.

Q-Floor, because of quick installation (delivered pre-cut; two men can lay 32 sq. ft. in 30 seconds), and dry construction, has reduced construction time 20 to 30%. Also, it requires no preset inserts. Including suspended ceiling, Q-Floor weighs less than forty pounds per sq. ft. and has a four-hour fire rating.

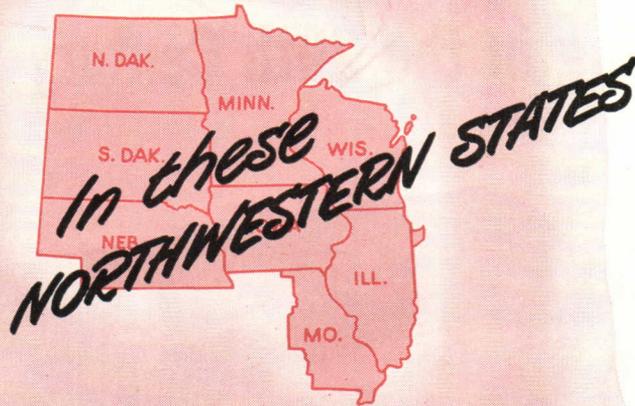
Q-Floor is available now. For more details, call a Robertson representative or write

# H. H. ROBERTSON CO.

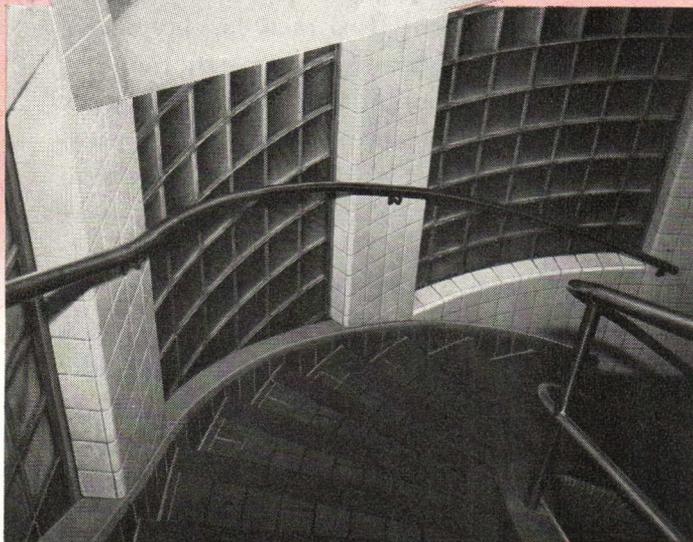
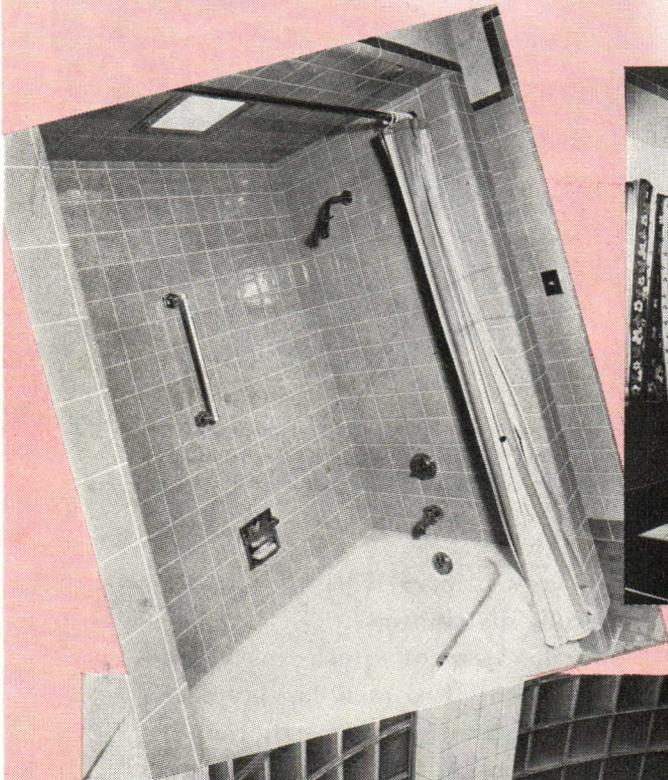
2405 Farmers Bank Building  
Pittsburgh 22, Pennsylvania



Offices in 50 Principal Cities  
World-Wide Building Service



# VERSATILE sets the pace



ABOVE LEFT—Residence, Taylorville, Illinois. Contractor: Homer Shetlar, Taylorville, Illinois. Authorized Suntile Dealer: Brinkoetter Tiling Company, Decatur, Illinois.

ABOVE RIGHT—Residence: Bloomington, Illinois. Authorized Suntile Dealer: F. C. Clothier & Sons, Bloomington.

W. H. Bendfelt Company, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Contractor: Grassold & Johnson. Authorized Suntile Dealer: Schwarz Tiles Inc., both of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

COLOR BALANCED

**Suntile**

..... A real clay tile  
 .... Bright with color  
 ..... Right for life



*Suntile* OFFERS YOU BOTH —

# Suntile

## for beautiful, practical interiors!

Up here in the great Northwestern States, there are many owners of homes and business places who are pointing with pride—

—pointing with pride to interiors decorated with color-balanced Suntile!

These owners know that some very effective color blends have been achieved with this real clay tile—that walls and floors have been expertly installed.

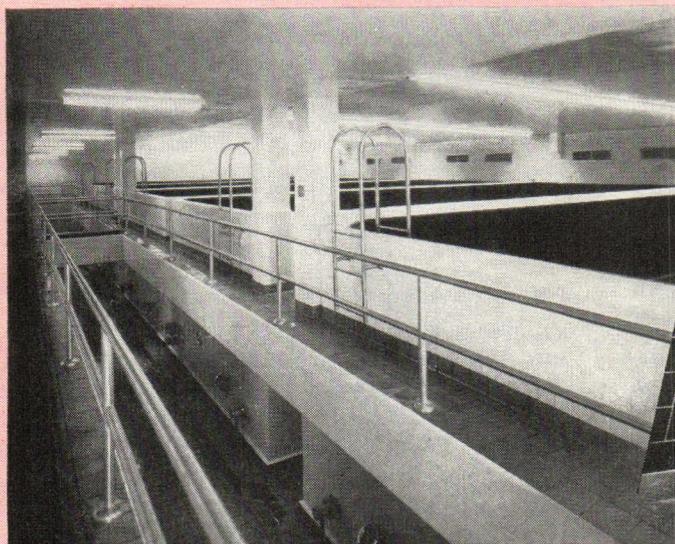
They're thoroughly sold, too, on Suntile's ease of maintenance—the way it stays beautiful with simple soap and water cleaning—the way it holds up without chipping, marring or cracking. And they like, particularly, the fact that no painting or redecorating will ever be needed.

As time goes by, each of these owners will find his Suntile installation every bit as bright and new as it is today.

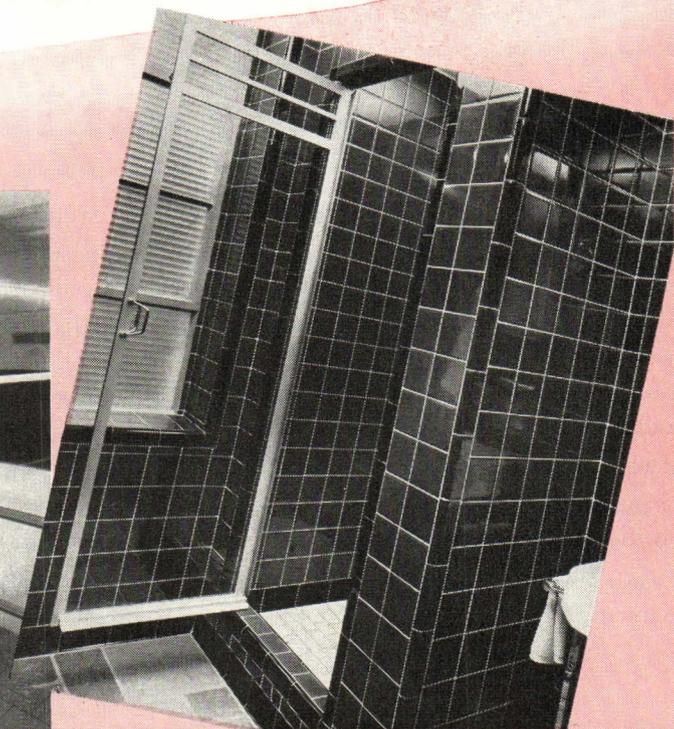
This is customer satisfaction every architect likes to achieve in the finished job.

It is lasting satisfaction, too, for Authorized Suntile Dealers, carefully selected and trained, see to it that every Suntile installation reflects the excellence of the product they represent.

Let us send you the name of an Authorized Suntile Dealer who can serve you. See Sweet's Catalog for complete information on colors, shapes and sizes. The Cambridge Tile Manufacturing Company, Cincinnati 15, Ohio.



Hamm Brewing Co., St. Paul, Minnesota. Designers: Borsari Tank Corp. of America. Constructors: Wm. Baumeister Construction Co. Authorized Suntile Dealer: Drake Marble Company—all of St. Paul, Minnesota.



Residence, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Authorized Suntile Dealer: Durner Company, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

*Better Tile.... Better Installation*