



# Pencil Points

the magazine of

Progressive Architecture



September, 1944

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## More Planning Is Wanted—Not Less

Like the famous geyser, "Old Faithful," Mr. Robert Moses may be depended upon to erupt publicly at regular intervals, emitting quantities of high pressure steam and vapor and scalding any one who happens to be in his way at the time. New Yorkers are used to this—Mr. Moses has been around for a long time. He gets away with it because he does his real job—which is not planning, but the execution of plans developed by others—with exceptional energy and skill. Perhaps it is time, however, to question his right to further enjoyment of repute as a "Planner."

In the *New York Times Sunday Magazine* of June 25, 1944, Mr. Moses burst out with a wholly gratuitous attack on a group of what he calls "long-haired planners." The rather distinguished objects of his wrath included Eliel Saarinen, Walter Gropius, Frank Lloyd Wright, John Graham, Jr., Eric Mendelsohn, the Uthwatt Committee of the British Ministry of Works and Planning, *Fortune Magazine*, Lewis Mumford, and Rexford Guy Tugwell. From the written or spoken utterances of each of these, some choice paragraphs, carefully isolated from their context, were quoted. Our militantly short-haired hero bobbed in briefly between citations to deliver himself of a few words of leering comment, cunningly designed to distort true meanings and to arouse vague fears and prejudices in the conservative minds of habitual *Times* readers. Apparently the gentlemen and institutions honored by Mr. Moses' onslaught had upon different occasions opposed him or questioned his proposals. It seemed to him a good idea to lump them all together and dispose of them once and for all by damning them as foreigners, radicals, and impractical dreamers.

The technique of doing this is, of course, not one of Mr. Moses' personal inventions, but was imported to this country from Berlin via the Dies Committee of fragrant memory. Its use is hardly worthy of a man whose earlier career was associated with liberal principles. Can it be that he has, through years of self-identification with Baron Haussman, become like his prototype an autocrat ready to "ride roughshod over all opposition"?

The serious thing about this attack, which makes it of national rather than local importance, is that it is really directed not at the individuals named but at the whole idea of planning. By making it, Moses tacitly admits that he is not at heart a democratic planner—a fact that should have been evident from his record for a long time. Unfortunately, the public has grown to credit him with the planning of all the bridges, express highways, and other public works executed under his direction. The truth is that these were largely conceived, years before Moses came on the scene, by real planners in the Russell Sage Foundation and the Regional Plan Association. Others were worked up by able members of his staff.

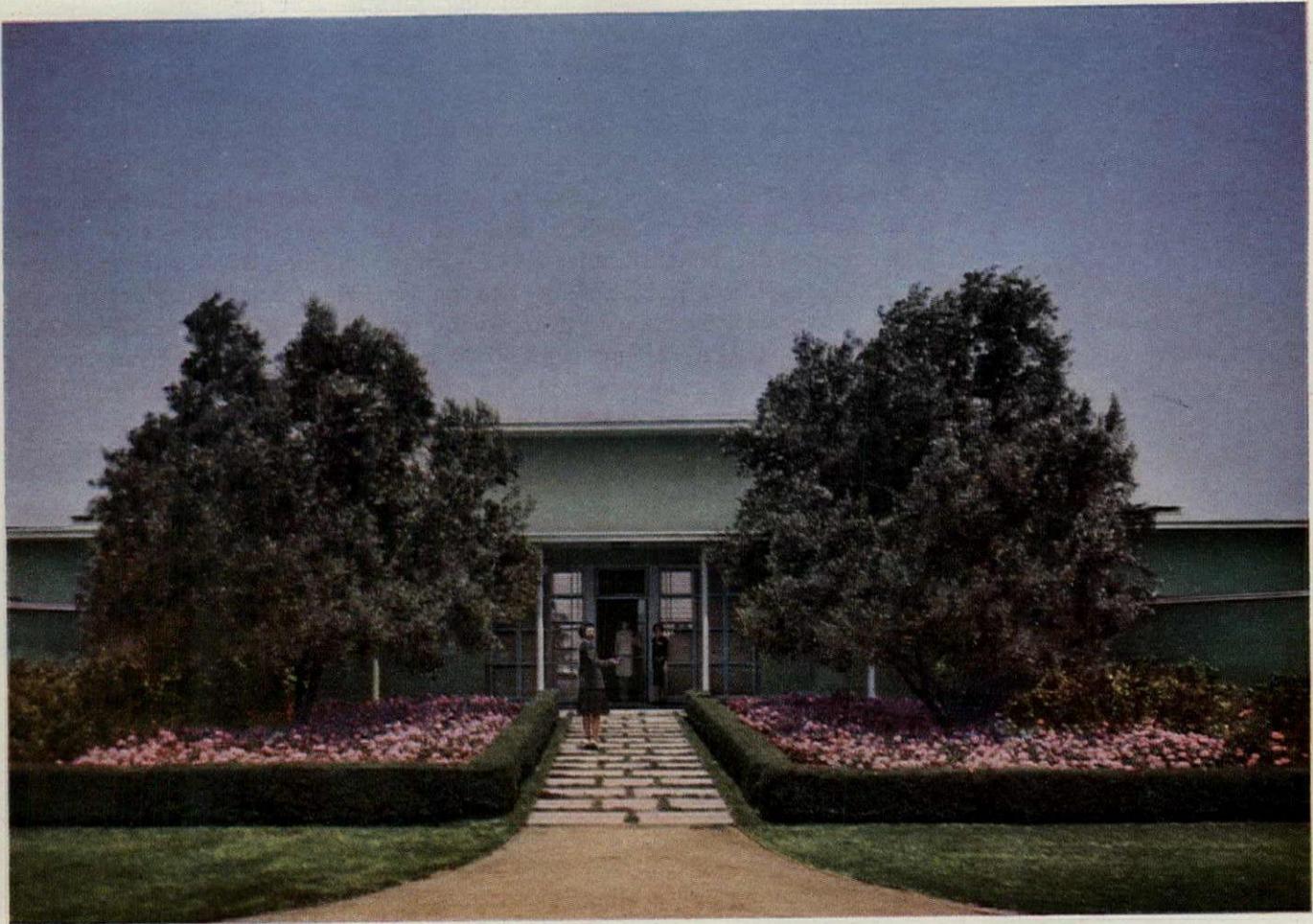
Moses has consistently and inexplicably opposed the development of a comprehensive master plan for city and region as a preliminary to determining specific projects within it. The New York City Postwar Program reveals this failing. His performance in Portland, Oregon, showed his reluctance to tackle the all-over job promised in nation-wide press reports circulated before he went out there. His fight on Stuyvesant Town demonstrated his unwillingness to think of a city neighborhood as something that should be integrated with its surroundings as a part of a general scheme. His vaunted one-man suppression of the Tugwell plan for New York before the people had a chance to see and consider it does not jibe well with his declaration that "no great program of municipal construction can rest on any other basis than that of an informed majority public opinion, and that majority must be substantial."

Planning implies intelligent and purposeful change for the better. It must have broad as well as limited objectives. Sincere planners, who have the general welfare at heart, insist on looking beyond the immediately practical details to visualize the ultimate broad goals toward which the details should be directed. If Mr. Moses does not wish to be classed among the anti-planners intent on maintaining the status quo, he should refrain from deriding the views of the men of vision among us, without whom there would be little progress. If he would, instead, put his well-known capacities into the battle for more planning—not less—he could take his place in history as a truly great man rather than as merely an outstanding administrator.

KENNETH REID

Pencil Points

PROGRESSIVE ARCHITECTURE



## Baldwin Hills Village

**ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS:**  
**REGINALD D. JOHNSON, AND**  
**WILSON, MERRILL, AND ALEXANDER**

**CONSULTING ARCHITECT:**  
**CLARENCE S. STEIN**

There is a series of landmarks in the replanning of American communities since the end of the First World War. The new movement began with the planning of Sunnyside Gardens in Long Island City (1924): a fresh experiment in large scale planning and housing, and by no means the least important, even now. Had the positive and negative lessons of Sunnyside been better digested, the crude economies and disordered layouts of so much government housing since 1932 would have been impossible.

The next large experiment was Radburn (1929). This was the first community plan to incorporate in its design the fundamental division of functions that the elder

Olmsted had first worked out, with masterly skill, in the design of Central Park — a division that Mr. Robert Moses's planners have, with his usual brashness, turned their backs on. Radburn's dull and conventional architecture kept it from being as esthetically stimulating as Ernst May's Römerstadt; but it represented a more radical approach to modern planning. In the use of the super-block, the blind residential street, the continuous internal park belt, the complete differentiation of footways from motorways, it was the first concrete demonstration of a fundamental new order, different from every historic type of city layout, and possible only through the use of modern technology.

The next landmark was Greenbelt (1935). Greenbelt was an advance upon Radburn in that the architecture and the community design were closer to being of one piece. In outline and execution Greenbelt was one of the high points of American planning: comparable to the great hydro-electric structures erected by the Tennessee Valley Authority. The very name Greenbelt was a happy word for the "horizontal wall" which Sir Ebenezer Howard had correctly regarded as essential to the integrity of the modern community. Whether this belt shall be spinal, as in Radburn, or peripheral, enclosing each neighborhood, and finally encircling the city, remains to be worked out experimentally. (The term "green belt" was first used, I believe, by Sir Raymond Unwin around 1920.)

Since Greenbelt many neighborhood communities have been planned and built: too many of them handicapped by the conditions laid down by Congress for slum replacement: conditions that in many cases provided that an old semi-slum should be replaced — as in New York's Ft. Greene development — by a new super-slum. One of the handful of projects that stands out as a fundamental advance in both planning and architecture is Baldwin Hills Village in Los Angeles. Here every part of the design speaks the same robust vernacular: simple, direct, intelligible. I know no other recent community that lends itself so fully to strict scrutiny, simply because every aspect of its physical development has been thought through.

The site plan represents a further development of the Radburn idea, made possible by the use of the row house, with the removal of the garage to the service road. One of the most important facts about this plan is its clarity and readability; the buildings all form a comprehensible whole, which can be taken in at a glance; the stranger is not puzzled or led astray by any mere jugglery of the structures for the sake of achieving specious esthetic effects or pinchpenny economies. Such order is a vital attribute of a modern urban environment.

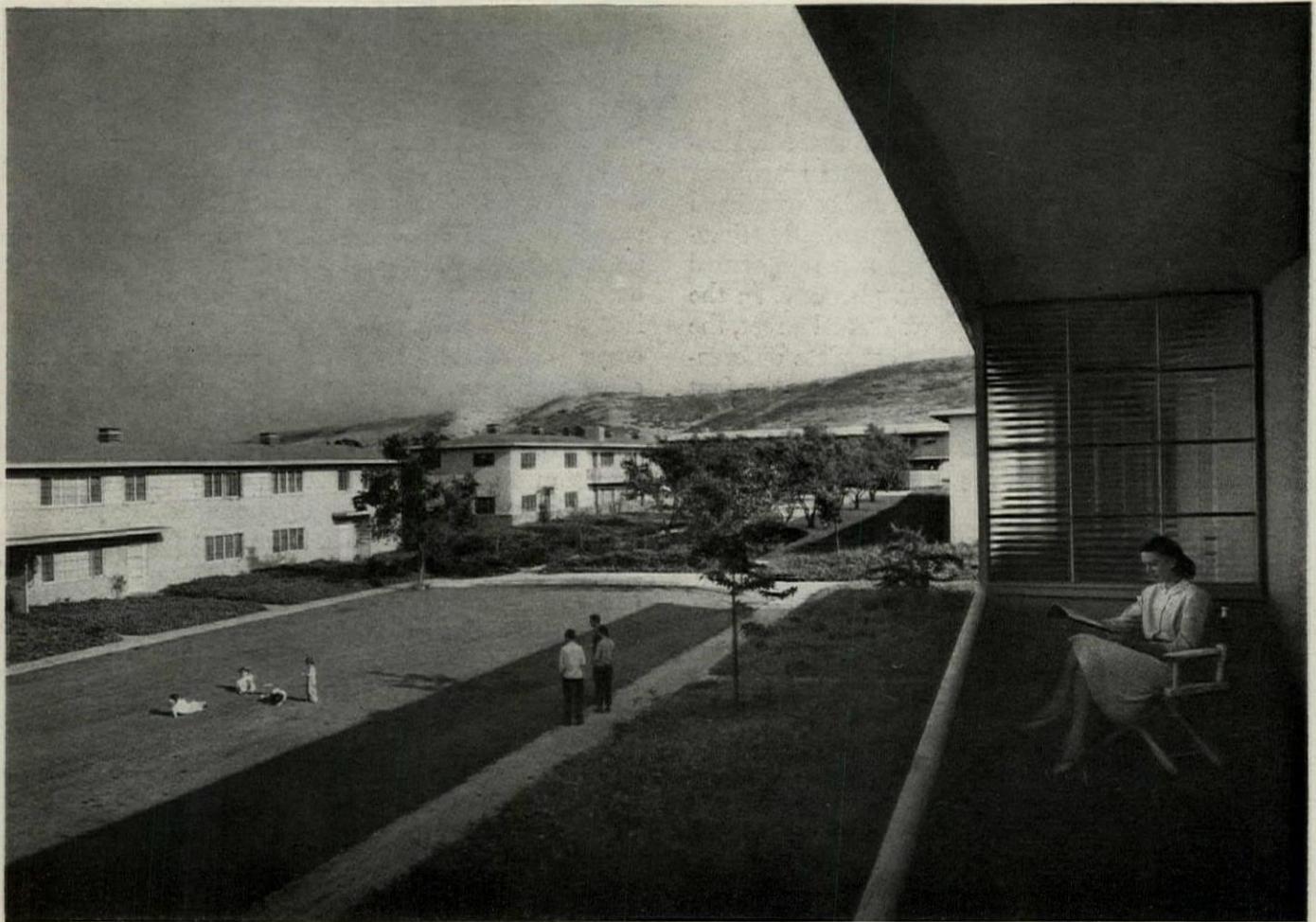
Unlike Radburn, unlike most English examples, Baldwin Hills Village uses the long row as the unit of building. That is perhaps one of the secrets of its economy, its spaciousness, its fine urbanity. The free-standing small house, or the short row of semi-detached houses, does not create either esthetic harmony or economy. When such units are standardized they look dull, and when the architect seeks to cover this dullness by trivial variations, the whole effect is fidgety. Worse still, the individual houses lack both usable land and visual privacy. In Baldwin Hills Village, on the contrary, there is a maximum provision of continuous green space, framed by long rows whose restful horizontal planes are differentiated only by their colored walls. Such a pattern could be universalized, with minor variations, just as the eighteenth century squares were universalized in the building of so much of early-nineteenth-century London. With all our talk of standardization, it is high time that we achieved such a standard and addressed ourselves firmly to living up to it in city planning.

The details of these Baldwin Hills Village houses are as well thought out as the general plan. The provision of little closed-in garden areas, for sunbathing and dining and idling, fully protected by a high fence against the cool afternoon winds that are characteristic of the West Coast, is a fine regional adaptation. Within, too, the rooms are spacious: they have been planned for active housekeeping, and would not become oppressively small and disordered through the presence of a few children. (Is it perhaps not an accident that few architectural photographs of modern "economic" housing show the occupants? Their rooms are already crowded before people enter them.)

Baldwin Hills Village is a challenge to a whole school of housers and planners who have ruthlessly pared down the first costs of building without bothering to note the depressing long-term results. The planners of this community have proceeded as if they themselves were going to live in it; and as a result, it will still be a livable community when a good part of our existing housing projects have succumbed, once more, to premature blight. These houses are, happily if a little ironically, the crown of Reginald Johnson's career as a designer of spacious private mansions; and in the plan itself, for which Clarence Stein was consultant, his experience with Sunnyside, Radburn, and Greenbelt came to its richest fruitage.

Here, then, is a standard for what modern community building may be. Better we may still have; but lower than this no large-scale development should fall.

*Lewis Mumford*



## Description and Appraisal...Baldwin Hills Village

by Catherine Bauer

*Fundamental to the project, promoted as it was by a group of progressive architects, was the clear conception of "Thousand Gardens" (the Village's original name) as a demonstration of modern community design. This private rental development was designed to—and does—provide not only openness and privacy usually available solely to well-to-do home buyers; but also, many amenities and services possible only when both design and management of the entire community are unified. Balcony, walled patio, and landscaped central Green typify one extraordinary provision: that for outdoor living.*

The loudest postwar controversies in the building field may rage around proposals for public action and subsidy for slum clearance, urban redevelopment, and low-rent housing. But how much progress can we expect from private builders?

Business, industry, and labor; officials, intellectuals, reformers of every color—all assume that housing and large-scale redevelopment must play a central role in postwar adjustment. Everyone assumes that public policy will be required to guide private action, public action necessary in one form or another to supplement and promote private action. But the kind and extent of public stimulation cannot be determined without first trying to answer such questions as: What proportion of the potential housing market will private builders reach? Can modern improvements in plan, form, or equipment stimulate basic changes in the standard of demand? (This factor alone could have great economic significance.) Or is everyone satisfied with the same old thing done the same old way?

These are big questions, not to be answered categorically; but they are so vital to the development of sound postwar housing and city planning policy that all progressive trends in the private housing field should be closely scrutinized.

Baldwin Hills Village in Los Angeles is probably the most seriously progressive experiment in home building by private enterprise since Radburn, New Jersey, was started eighteen years ago. Therefore it has national significance and is worth careful evaluation. Although wartime conditions have prevailed during its two years of operation, it is nevertheless possible to begin to answer from practical



experience some questions that had to be decided on purely theoretical grounds in the course of design. Is there really a market for spacious, modern rental housing and highly developed community facilities? For what sort of families? Does the bold plan really work; does it raise new problems?

The density is extremely low—about seven per gross acre—and interior space standards are unusually high; this is probably the most spacious urban rental housing ever built in the United States. Is this openness worth while? How should it affect standards for postwar building, particularly for re-using expensive central sites?

What about costs? If this is "optimum," even luxurious, large-scale housing, how much more does it cost than the minimum "decent, safe, and sanitary" standards of low-rent housing? Is the difference so little that some increase in minimum standards is warranted? What types of initiative—limited dividend, cooperative, insurance company, national building outfits (and with what form of public participation) are likely to be most effective in broadening the new market here opened up?

In this article I can only suggest answers to a fraction of such questions, tentatively and personally. It would be well worth while for a competent research staff to dig up some real answers—much more worth while, I think, than some recent efforts to reach statistical conclusions on whether housewives launder small articles before undressing, or vice versa.

#### History and Purpose

As early as 1934 a group of Los Angelenos had spotted this stretch of open farmland just inside the southwest city limits, sloping gently up under rough desert hills, as a likely site for a modern community. Reginald Johnson had for some time devoted his entire energies to housing and city planning. His associated firm, Lewis Eugene Wilson, Edwin E. Merrill, and Robert E. Alexander, had likewise considerable experience in housing. Clarence S. Stein, a prime mover of Radburn and many other eastern community

experiments, was brought in as an active consultant.

The Rental Housing Division of FHA provided the only likely means of financing such a project (barring 100% equity investment as used by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company). The National Housing Act permits mortgage insurance up to 80% of capital value on approved rental projects which limit the return on their equity to 6%. Rent levels are also limited. The FHA proved to be actively interested.

The big difficulty, even with FHA guarantees, was to secure capital for the 80% mortgage at 4% interest (plus ½% for the insurance). After many months of fruitless negotiations with banks and insurance companies, capital was finally secured from the National Mortgage Association (RFC). It is a significant fact, indicating the heavy hand of financial tradition, that this sound, serious enterprise required public financing to start. There was actually more public money in it than there is in most public housing!

By 1941 arrangements were shipshape and construction started. Just as the first rentals were being made, came Pearl Harbor. Which means, of course, that the Village has never yet known "normal" operation. Gas rationing meant that a private bus line had to be put in between the project and the nearest main artery, half a mile away. New individual telephones lines were out, so an exchange had to be set up in the Administration Building. Rents, which average around \$12 per room or \$52 per unit, were frozen before operating costs were known. And the mass influx of war workers to Los Angeles caused a general housing shortage so severe that it is impossible to tell whether the long waiting list is due primarily to selective popularity or to necessity.

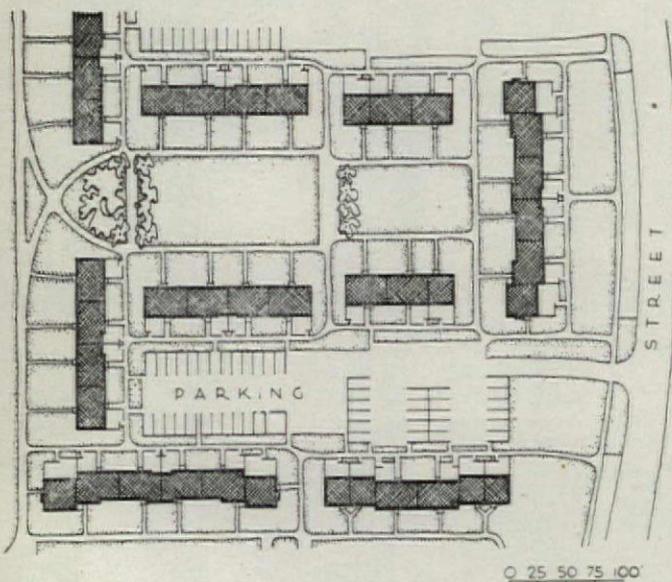
Baldwin Hills Village was never intended for low-income families. It is no substitute for public housing; and at present it doesn't even reach very far into the middle group, although principles and techniques used may have great significance for this vital building market.





## Site Development

*Above, in front of units, ground cover and flowers, rather than formal lawns, simplify maintenance problems, give privacy to ground floors. Below, portion of plot plan shown on facing page, with alternating service and garden courts. Garages and laundry drying space occupy service courts, which open to surrounding streets; garden courts are extensions of the central green.*



Nor is it intended as a universal solution, even for the economic group it does serve. Many settled families want outright ownership of large private yards and individual houses . . . although even here it is likely that some of the Village's communal amenities and services may become popular and influence the whole process of city planning and subdivision. In the past, however, only two broad choices were open even to well-to-do families—the choice between a house-and-garden, normally purchased and taken care of by the occupant, and a rented apartment, usually without facilities for outdoor living and in a poor environment for children. Projects like the Village fill this gap.

### Site and General Character

About 8 miles from Los Angeles' Civic Center by highway, 25 to 35 minutes by bus and trolley, Baldwin Hills Village is not ideally accessible in wartime. But the center of decentralized Los Angeles has little routine meaning for the average citizen, and the Port industries, Culver City, and Hollywood are considerably nearer at hand.

Breezy, cooler in summer than most of Los Angeles, sometimes foggy because the Pacific is not many miles beyond the wild, treeless hills to the south, the site is curiously San Franciscan in feeling. Viewed from the hills to the south, the pattern of the Village is as distinct, unified, and unlike the rest of Los Angeles as some Italian medieval town, or Robert Owen's sketch for the Ideal Community. Its long buildings are set in orderly fashion in a clear-cut green rectangle, 1000 by 3000 feet, no roads crossing it, highways around the edge, and beyond that, except for a school to the north and a sprinkle of speculative houses at the northeast corner, only open yellow fields and victory gardens on the lower hill slopes. This protective belt is

probably transitory, however, except for the hills, which may yet be saved since they do not invite subdivision. (These hills have double importance, incidentally, as their rugged incline persuaded the city to permit streets officially platted across this site to be closed.)

The community's real protection must come from its own character and form. Its spaciousness provides, perhaps, the one basic weapon against future blight. But low density alone can be cancelled out by bad planning. So the second, equally important, line of defense for Baldwin Hills Village is its pattern, inward turning toward 20 acres of quiet, permanent Village Green.

There are drawbacks: one wonders why no school was provided within the development. A temporary school is located across Rodeo Road, which will some day be a main highway. Eventually a permanent school will have to be built on a more advantageous site. On the other hand, there is an excellent high school nearby.

The block to the east is set aside as a commercial district for this whole section. I have no means to judge whether this is speculative romance or sensible civic planning: the site does adjoin a major artery, but is pretty rural now. However, Los Angeles will probably have at least one more wave of outlying development. Perhaps it is more urgently important to give sensible expression to this new building on the fringe than to haggle over areas already spoiled.

Experience seems already to suggest that perhaps community facilities cannot be as rigidly segregated as they were originally, with only social and administrative buildings inside the project. A nursery school, left out of the final building scheme, proved to be really needed, and two dwelling units had to be remodeled for the purpose. A general store, lunch-counter, beauty and barber shop perforce took additional units. Even after the big commercial center is available these interior neighborhood services will probably still be required.

#### Organization of Space

The primary planning axiom, already suggested, was spaciousness. The land was cheap, \$2,300 per acre, the site flat enough for freedom. The architects wanted an open suburban character, orderly but informal, dominated more by green than by buildings. The result was the extremely low density, for these 627 family units, of 7.3 per gross acre. This amplitude of space had to be clearly articulated according to function: for community amenity, recreation, and interior communication; for auto access and services; and for private outdoor living. This meant discarding traditional concepts of streets, sidewalks, lots, or yards. It was decided that about one-third of the project should be planned for families without children, to the advantage of both childless families and those with children.

The entire area, about 80 acres, was considered one huge super-block, with residential and community buildings all turning in toward the open green core. In most suburban neighborhoods the skeleton is the street-system: indeed, the very word "subdivision" implies a cutting-up process. But

*Plot plan (right) is bold, a huge superblock with three separate systems of open space: connecting parks and pathways; service and access courts; private outdoor living areas. Density is very low—about seven per gross acre.*



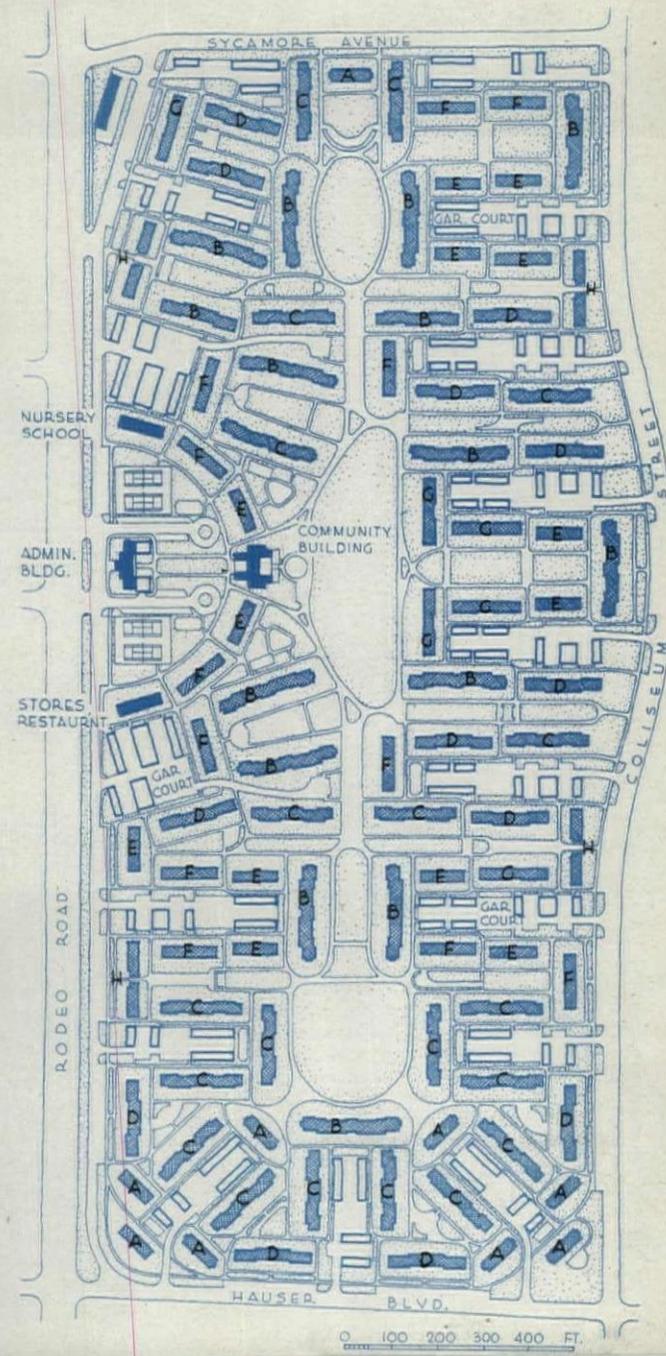
in Baldwin Hills the entire scheme is determined by a flowing central park area: the Village Green, in three segments, radiating out on all sides into smaller garden courts surrounded by residential groups, with at least 100 feet between facades. Access roads, garages, and service courts form an entirely separate system, indented from the outside. In this project, for the first time in large-scale rental housing, another type of space was recognized as essential: private outdoor living areas, which are provided by patios, usually wall-enclosed, and to a lesser extent by balconies.

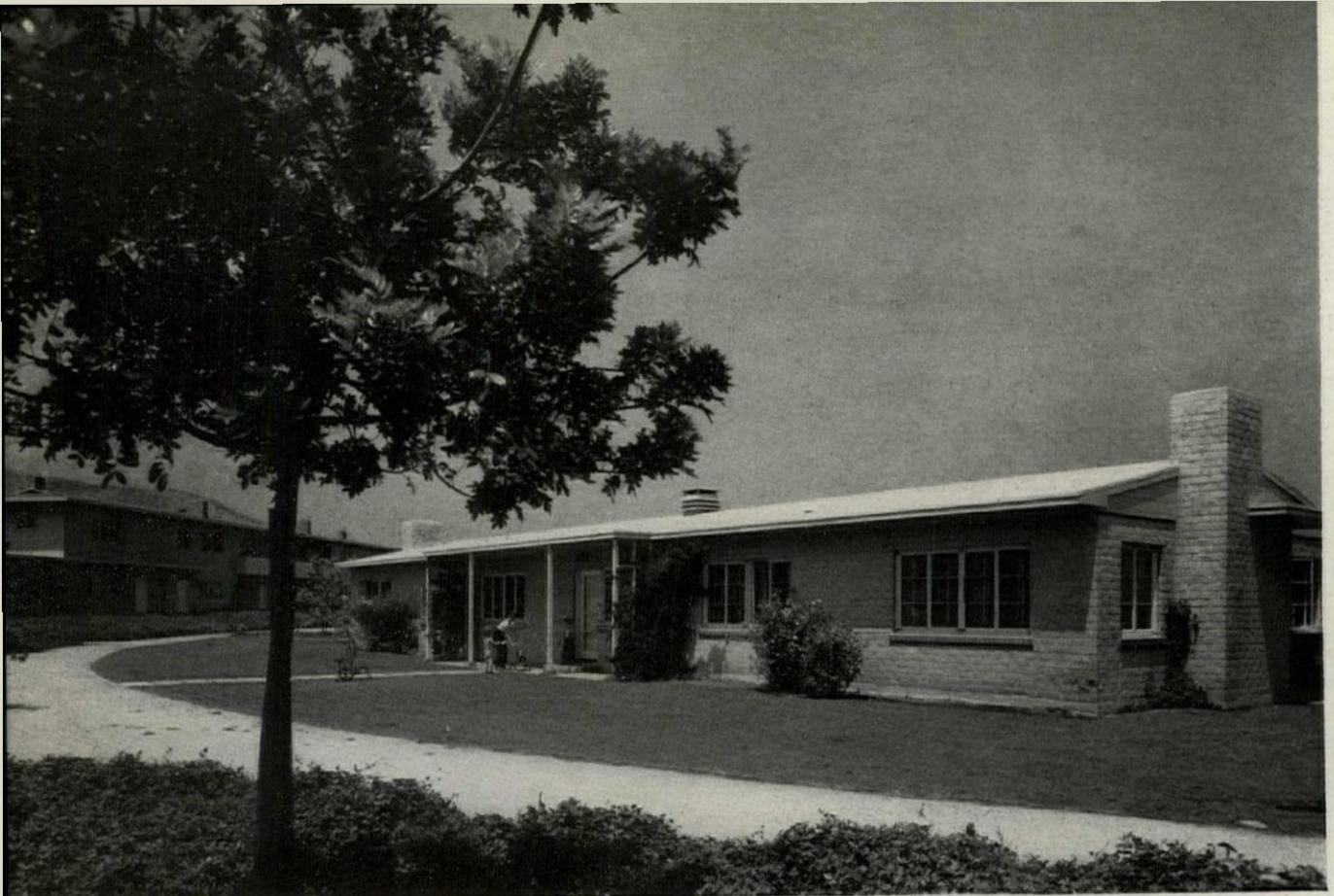
#### Community Space

The central park and garden court have varied purposes: large grass areas for general use; flower-plots, trees, and a pool for pleasure; playgrounds, tennis, and badminton courts for specific use; and finally, a 20- to 30-foot strip of ground-cover (usually ivy) along the fronts of all residential buildings, to insure privacy for ground-floor rooms and discourage children's play too close to open windows. Maybe the Green is too "pure"; there is nowhere to sit, for instance.

#### Service Space

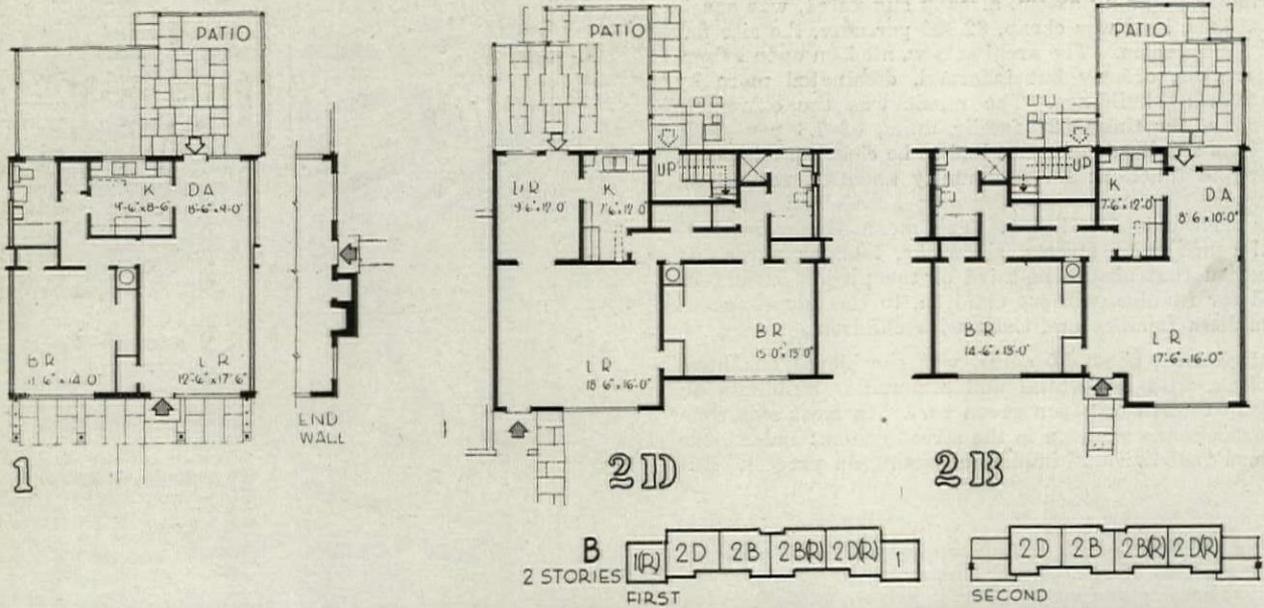
Access roads come into seventeen paved garage courts, with individual car-shelters, each with a locked storage bin in the upper part of the rear wall, suitable for trunks and such. (This is the only rough storage provided; it seems satisfactory.)





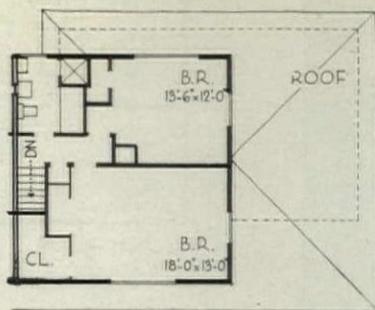
## Dwelling Units

A 1 STORY 1(R) 1 1

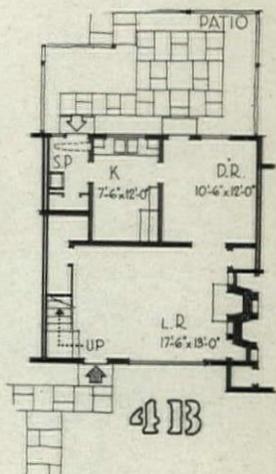
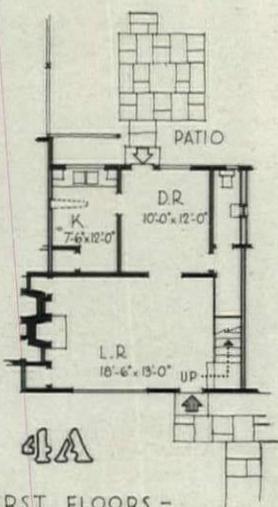
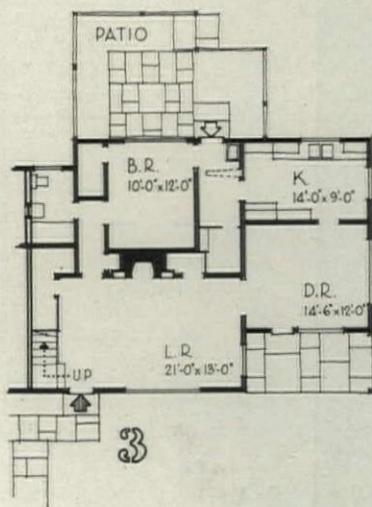
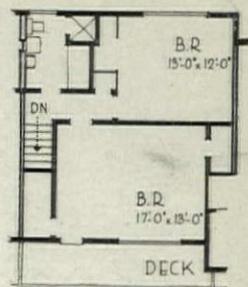
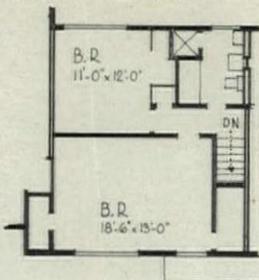


Two-story buildings, 175 to 225 ft. long, predominate, with a few shorter one-story units, and some two-story in the middle stepping down to one-story at each end. (Such "broken" buildings, Catherine Bauer says, always seem rather awkward.) Facades fronting on the central Green are all two-story, all very plain—balconies and patios are in the rear—and the effect, with ivy-ground-cover already up to the lower window levels, is somehow English-at-its best; buildings vary in color: cream, salmon, light green.

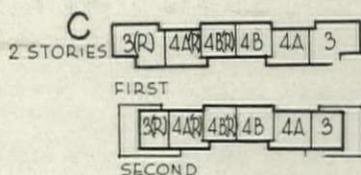




SECOND FLOORS -



-FIRST FLOORS -



Considering the buildings individually, one must admit that while they are contemporary in feeling, relatively simple and honest, they are nevertheless not exactly exciting as "modern" architecture. Connoisseurs of modern design won't find them esthetically interesting, whether or not the essential, bold modernity of the whole is appreciated. Yet this lack of sophistication may have certain values: it helps to emphasize the basic innovations in plan and pattern of living envisioned; and the fact that it does not startle the average citizen with superficial strangenesses may actually increase its worth as an educative force toward good large-scale planning.

Most garages are reasonably close to dwelling units; a few may be up to 150 to 200 feet away, 300 in extreme cases. Years ago, everybody said such a distance would never be accepted in America; yet at Baldwin Hills people recognize that the amenities they get in return for this minor inconvenience are more than worth the price.

One curious fact, demonstrated by two years of experience, is that a walled garage enclosure is more important than roof-shelter. Cars in cubby-holes apparently make fascinating play-dens for children: a bonfire was even built under one. Now the management is gradually closing them in.

Adjacent to all the garage courts are public laundries and drying yards. (Hooks are also put up in garages, for drying in wet weather.) Only the largest dwellings have utility rooms and laundry tubs of their own, and even they must use the public yards for outdoor drying, as this is

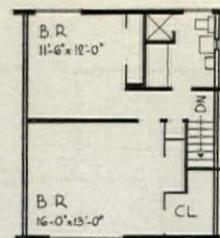
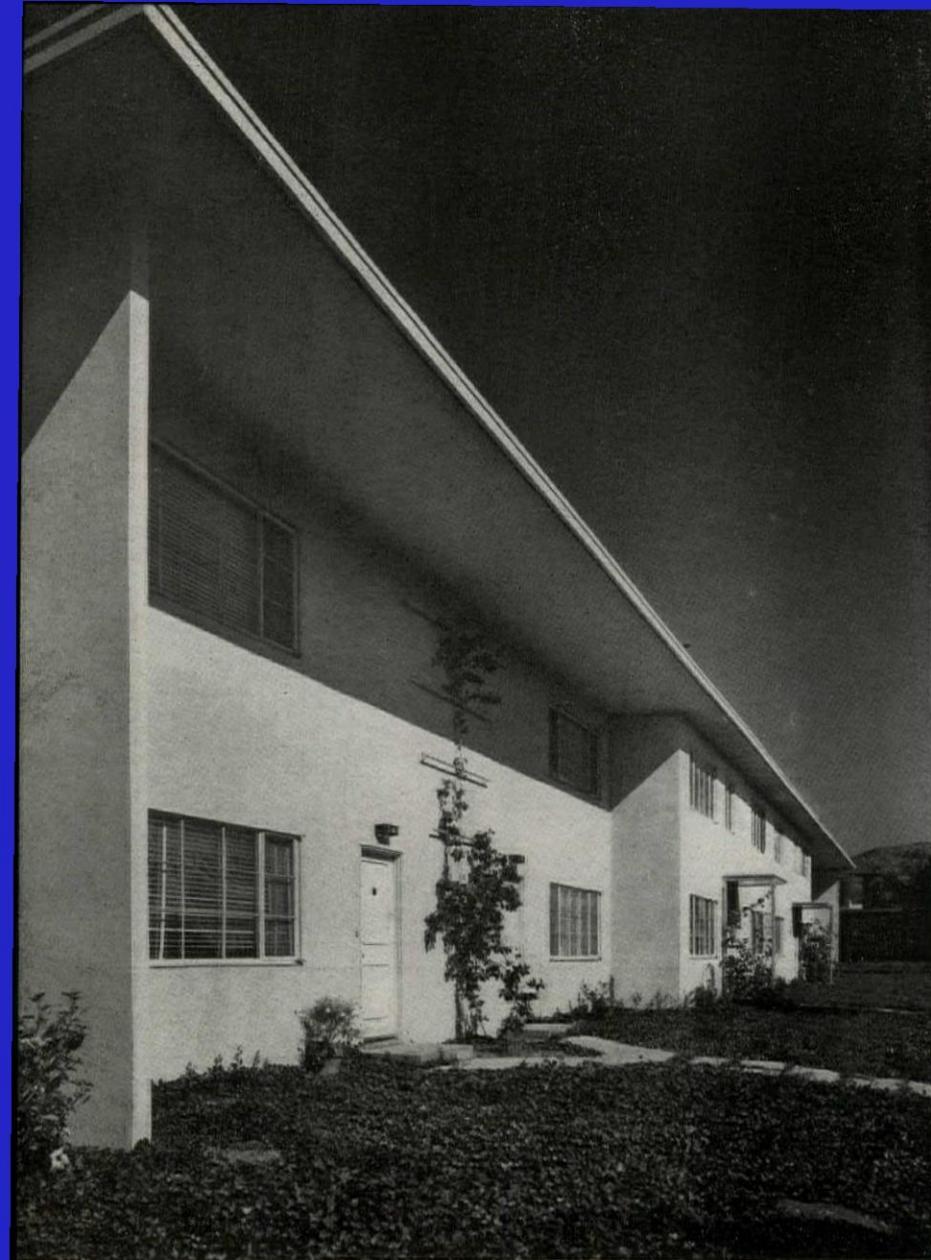
**DWELLING UNITS, POPULATION, RENTALS**

NUMBER OF UNITS		UNITS BY SIZE	
1-story	55	1-bedroom	275
2-story	216	2-bedroom	312
Flats*	356	3-bedroom	40
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>627</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>627</b>

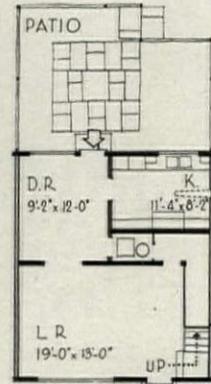
\* Flats in 2-story units, each with ground-floor entrance. POPULATION Total is approximately 2000, of whom 435 are less than 5 years old.

DINING FACILITIES PROVIDED		EXTRA SPACE	
Dining Rooms	356	Patios	450
Dining Alcoves	143	Balconies	126
Eat in Living Room	128	Utility rooms	80

RENTALS Range is \$45 (1 BR, B, LR, K, D; or 2 BR, B, LR, K, Patio) to \$80 (3 BR, 2B, LR, K, D, Patio). Average rent: \$12 per room, \$52 per unit, including water, garage, garbage collection, excluding heat and light.



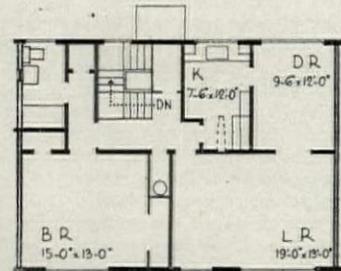
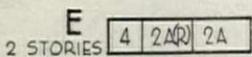
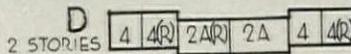
SECOND FLOOR



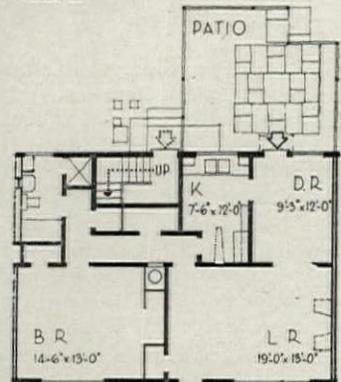
FIRST FLOOR

### Dwelling Units (cont'd)

*Interior spaciousness is relatively as great as exterior: Average area per dwelling unit is 1,080 sq. ft., average room count, 4.3 per unit. Permanent public projects in Los Angeles area average 750 to 850 sq. ft., with higher room ratios. Net living space per 2-bedroom unit in Baldwin Hills (excluding halls, stairs, closets) is 44% greater than in Dana, 67% than Channel Heights, 93% than Normont (all public projects).*

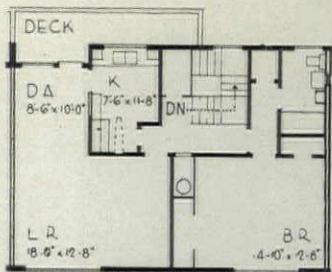


2A SECOND FL UNIT

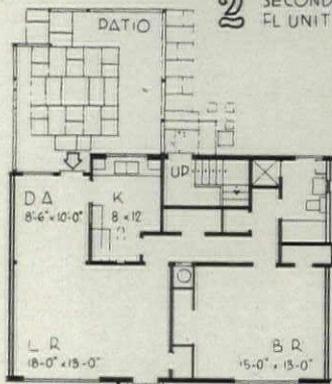


2A FIRST FLOOR UNIT

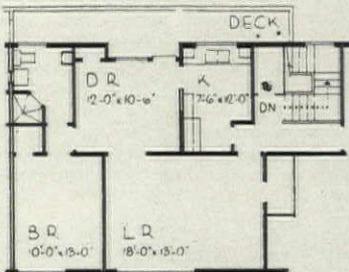




2 SECOND FL UNIT



2 FIRST FLOOR UNIT



2C SECOND FLOOR UNIT

rigorously prohibited in patios (on the grounds, rather unconvincing to me, that second-floor living rooms should not have to look down on wash-lines). Laundries have nickel-in-the-slot wash machines and space for privately owned machines. Schedules are carefully worked out for use of both laundries and yards, the latter considerably larger in the non-adult sections. Apparently this is one unsolved problem—or perhaps the wartime volume of home laundry and shortage of help are aggravating factors, particularly at this income level. But almost everyone felt that the only ideal solution would be a utility room or porch, and drying yard, for each home, though that would add considerably to costs. It was originally expected that most laundry would be done commercially, and perhaps, after the war, this will be the case.

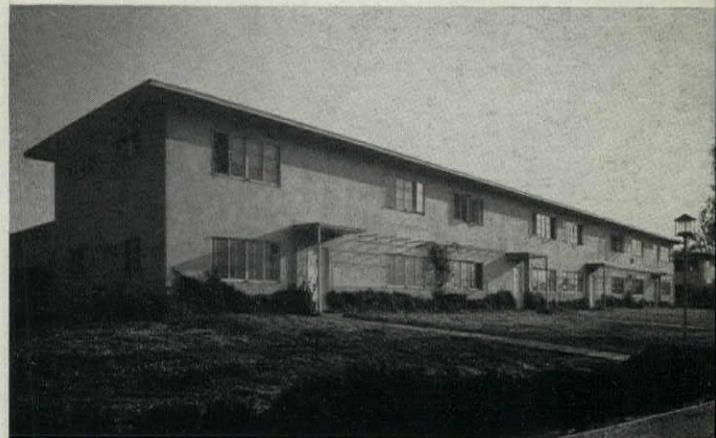
**Private Outdoor Space**

Of the 627 dwellings in the Village, 450 have private patios, most of them enclosed by 6-foot walls, the rest by hedges. It is now agreed that practically all should have walls, and that almost all dwellings should be supplied with them. This whole principle seems to me one of the things we should try to get accepted as a *minimum* standard.

In plan the patio is simply an old-fashioned, enlarged back porch, opening off the dining space near the kitchen. Its outside door is really the service entrance, and opens on a narrow path walled or hedged off from the garage court. In area the patios range from 250 to 400 square feet. When I first saw them, under construction, I felt they might be rather cramped, particularly as they are in part service yards as well as outdoor living rooms, and include meters and sunken garbage-pails. But on seeing them again after two years of use I changed my mind. They seem to offer adequate if not luxurious leeway for outdoor eating, sunbathing, infants' play, and varied, if small-scale, gardening . . . though obviously not all at once. The patio would



F 2 STORIES 4 2A(R) 2A 4(R)



G 2 STORIES 2A(R) 2(R) 2 2A

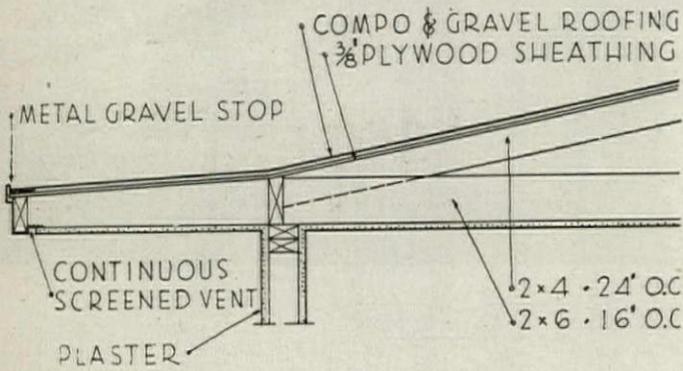


H 2 STORIES FIRST 2A(R) 2(R) 2 2A SECOND 2A(R) 2C(R) 2C 2A

*Typical Room Areas, Baldwin Hills Village:*

Living Room . . . 255 sq. ft.	Kitchen . . . . . 98 sq. ft.
1st Bedroom . . . 208 sq. ft.	Dining Area . . . 120 sq. ft.
2nd Bedroom . . . 132 sq. ft.	Bath . . . . . 68 and 48 sq. ft.

*This is really optimum standard space: a living room in a \$60 unit takes a grand piano easily.*



TYPICAL CORNICE DETAIL

### Children's Play Space

Several enclosed play yards are scattered through the community. In these, mothers of families are getting organized to spell each other for group supervision. Apparently this kind of cooperation doesn't come very easily, perhaps particularly in this upper-middle economic and social group.

One successful garden court treatment is the use of wide gravel areas spotted with trees. Perhaps this might have been more widely adopted; the Tuileries has always seemed an ideal urban park, more useful than a lawn for strolling with the baby carriage and for children's play. Long unit above occurs only at four exterior walk entrances, emphasizes the feeling of entering a protected retreat. Like other buildings it is long and low, with 2½-ft. overhang at eaves.

have been more serviceable as an extension of indoor living area had floor-to-ceiling windows been used at this point.

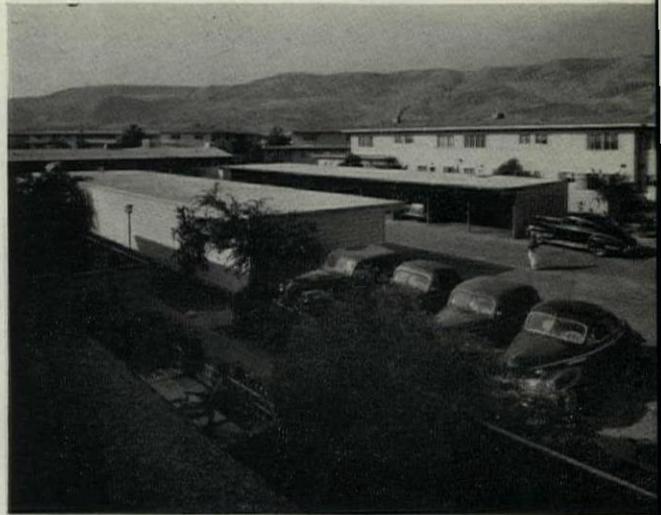
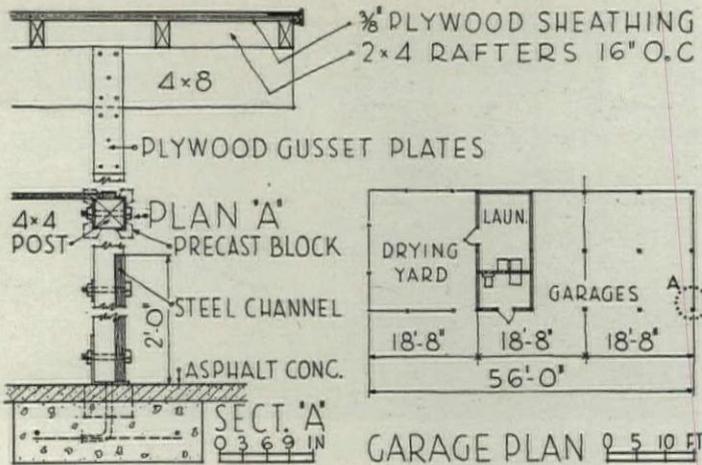
Refuse is collected by the management from every patio or rear entrance twice a week, and brought to a central station for city collection—a rather expensive process. Incinerators were originally considered, and opinion is divided as to whether they would be better than the present system.

Balconies afford outdoor living space to most of the upstairs flats. 126 units have balconies, some 40 of them patios as well, and some have 2 balconies. They are large enough for eating and sitting but, although they are greatly in demand, seem to a casual eye seldom used except for baby carriages or play pens. We have never in America taken to balcony life as they have in Europe; whatever the reason, it is generally agreed that a balcony is no substitute for a patio.

Perhaps a word should be said about the "front" and "back" situation. Here much the same problem exists as in Radburn and many public projects. The front door, theoret-



## Garages



ically, opens from the living room into the public gardens and Green. Yet this is rarely used; anyone arriving by car will naturally come in from the garage court, entering usually by the patio and dining space. Perhaps this is quite okay, but I am not entirely satisfied that dwelling plans yet quite recognize that the "service" door is, in actuality, THE main entrance.

One theory, which has had considerable currency among the planning intelligentsia, I am glad to see blasted anew: namely, that in the interest of scientific orientation all dwellings must face the same way in a modern plan, thus disposing of any difference between one side of a row and the other. The invidious distinction between Queen Anne fronts and Mary Ann backs was thus to be liquidated. Actually, there never was a time when the functional difference between recreation space and service space was more necessary than it is today. If necessary, differentiation in use and treatment of courts would have to take precedence over orientation. Variation of floor plans from one side of a court to another will usually take care of problems in room orientation.

### Building Masses: Construction and Architecture

Construction is of standard Southern California frame and plaster, except that 9% of the apartments have reinforced brick exterior walls. All buildings rest on two slabs of concrete with membrane waterproofing between. Second floors, when different apartment units are on top of each other, are of floating construction for noise isolation. A few minor cracks have developed on the outside, probably less than would normally be expected, and none whatever on the interior. Windows are steel casements with two or three horizontal panes and are simple and quite large if not particularly dramatic. Permanent screens and venetian blinds are included. Heat is furnished by gas-fired, forced-

warm-air, unit heaters. Many units have wood-burning fireplaces. Ground story floors are oak finish.

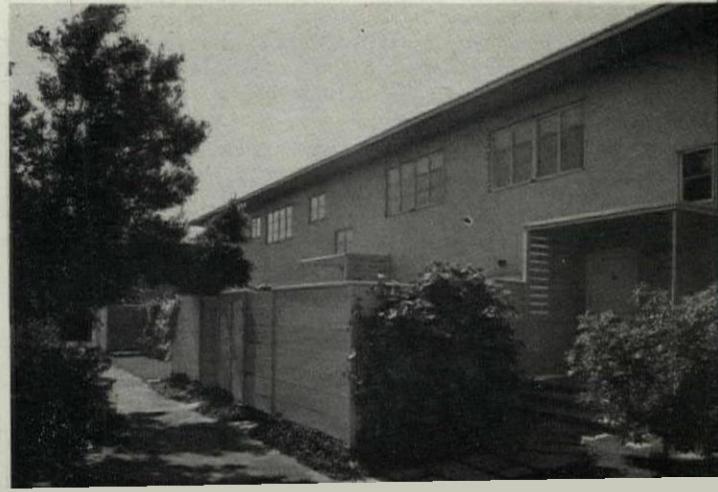
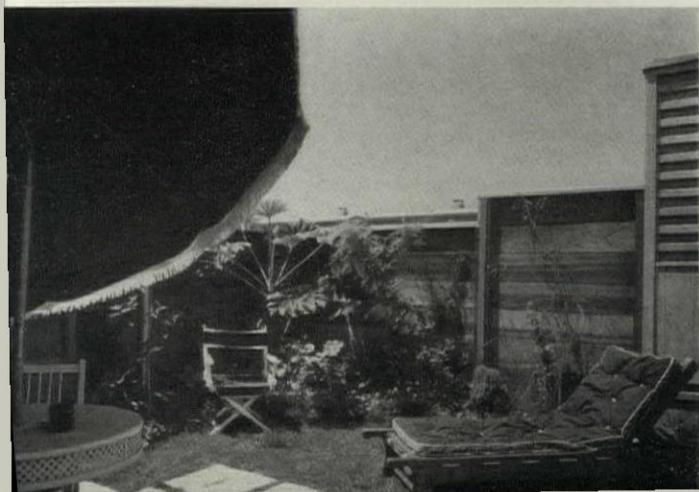
Colors are pastel, and to this eye seem a little too pale to have much effect on the pattern of the ensemble, although this may be due partly to post-Pearl-Harbor paint. One also misses the bright flower-masses originally planned, but omitted for lack of maintenance.

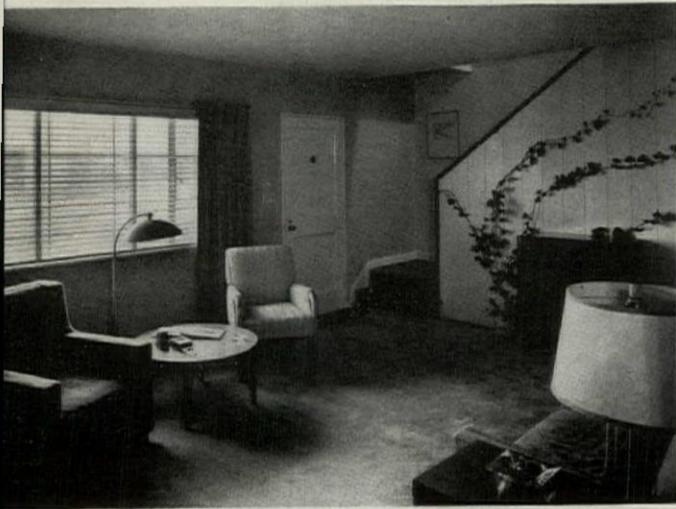
The community group—2-story green administration building and apricot club-house with a broad terrace—is on a strong central axis which bisects the Green. They are set in bright formal gardens, crisp with massed geraniums, low hedges, rows of olive trees, grassed squares, and gravel paths. A pool, waterless until someone figures out a way to keep babies out of it, lies toward the Green.

The emphasis on the central axis seems to me curiously out of key. Not merely unfashionable, it implies a monumentality completely belied by the entire spirit of the undertaking. Prime factors for unity and harmony are the long, low buildings and the standard roof design, with its 2½ to 12 pitch curving down into a flat 2'-6" overhang, very light and almost Oriental. The "architecture," if it isn't striking or exciting, is nevertheless sound, pleasant modern vernacular, much better than if it had been pretentious and failed.

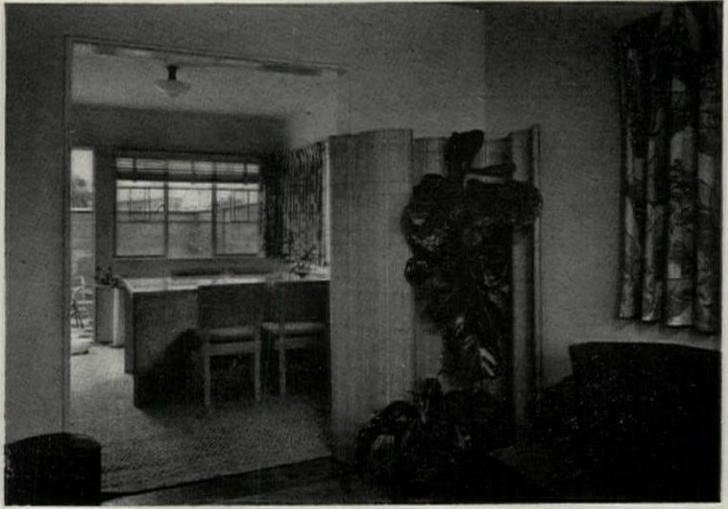
One fact-of-life about large-scale housing design has further proof in Baldwin Village, as its architects are happy to acknowledge. Minor variations for variety's sake are quite meaningless in anything so large. Special refinements in plan can usually only be appreciated on paper or from an airplane: on the ground they are either invisible or tend merely to cause slight confusion. Subtle variations in building design or landscaping are often even less effec-

## Private Outdoor Area





Typical living room



Dining area

tive. Only bold contrasts really count. Real variety and visual interest is perhaps most likely to come from big simple rhythms: the *dick-dick* and *dock-dock-dock* of repeated standard dwelling forms punctuated by the *Bong!* of buildings designed for special purposes. A well designed nursery school, or a new building for neighborhood services, or a swimming pool, would greatly enrich the Village. As for preferences in dining space—i.e., whether it should be a separate room, an alcove off the living room, or merely extra space in kitchen or living room—there are as usual no clear-cut conclusions. In 80% of the units there is either dining room or dining alcove making an ell with the living room . . . with few vestigial inches of partition framing the opening. There is no eating space in kitchens except in a few of the largest units. In 128 smaller units, dining is in the living room.

This seems satisfactory and the architects feel they hit it about right. However, the able manager, Mrs Jennings, thinks that many families would like kitchen dining space, and that some would give up a separate dining room to get it, if they had a living room large enough for fancy dinners. Probably the typical Baldwin Village arrangement is the best general solution. But I do believe that ideally efficient kitchens should include some extra space, for eating, comfortable sitting, a play-pen, or just elbow-room.

One change the architects would make if they were doing it over would be to have more 1-story structures, and fewer flats one over the other. People like to be at ground level, more could have patios, and they would be more private. Also, with all the insulation between floors, noise still gets through. The greater ground coverage from more 1-story structures could easily have been absorbed at this low density.

The error (or what seems an error at this time) for which FHA was primarily to blame was too many 1-bedroom units (40%). A prime purpose behind the enterprise was to provide good rental housing for families with children, yet FHA's conviction that rental units are usually temporary lighting places for small adult families was too strong. Actually, whether or not wartime experience is a fair indication, the 1-bedroom units are least in demand and many families apparently seek permanent residences.

#### Village Facilities: Pros and Cons on "Community Living"

The central office, in addition to receiving packages, telephone messages and such, provides one unique service: even in wartime, it maintains a pool of maids, who are paid on a monthly basis by the management and may be employed by tenants for 60¢ an hour. This seems to me, in its opportunity for professionalizing domestic service, to offer the rudiments of the only sensible future answer to the "servant problem."

On the social side the children's angle may be considered first. A temporary elementary school with complete athletic and playground facilities lies across Rodeo Road, and

the excellent high school is within easy walking distance. Inside the Village, the nursery school, which occupies two remodeled dwelling units, takes care of about 30 children at a time. A large enclosed playground a few yards away has sand-boxes, a large shelter, swings, etc.

Administration of the nursery school has gone through three stages. At first it was run by the management, on a concession basis; later it was taken over directly by a tenants' organization, the Children's Center Association, and it was finally decided to arrange to put the school under the Lanham Act, which reduces the cost for full daily care and makes it available to all working mothers, whether in a war-industry or not, regardless of income. On this basis the school's enrollment could be trebled overnight, but part-time care cannot be provided. If Lanham Act developments are a sign that sooner or later nursery schools will be part of the public school system, or receive public assistance, the problem of integrating their sites into neighborhood patterns will be more important than ever.

There seems to be a general conviction that the Village works perfectly for infants. For children from the age of about 4 to 8 or 10, however, there is some feeling that an old-fashioned back yard still has advantages over the limitless Green. To offset part of the difficulty, a tenant group is sponsoring the employment of a professional recreational director for the summer to supervise the school playground across the road.

Every tenant is automatically a member of the "Villagers," an organization without dues, which initiates much of the social activity and publishes a neighborhood news sheet. Entirely independent of the management, the Villagers have stuck to social matters. There is, however, a "Committee of Three" which handles "little gripes" with the management. Presumably if a major issue arose the existence of a responsible well-established tenants' organization would help.

Not many, I think, object seriously to the rules and regulations, which are as a matter of fact very few. Initial policy regarding pets was to charge \$2 a month for a dog, \$1 for a cat. Now, however, they are trying to eliminate dogs entirely and keep cats at home. For what they are worth, I have my lonely doubts about such regulations as the following: "Tenants are asked not to air or sun their babies at the front door of their apartments . . . in order to maintain the character of the Village. . . . Tenants are reminded that laundry must not be hung from balconies or in patios." Another, much larger, question, in which I am probably even more alone, is this matter of "careful selection" of tenants. I have a strong chemical reaction against everything this phrase implies: racial discrimination, and the conscious effort to create a one-class community of nice, conforming, socially acceptable people.

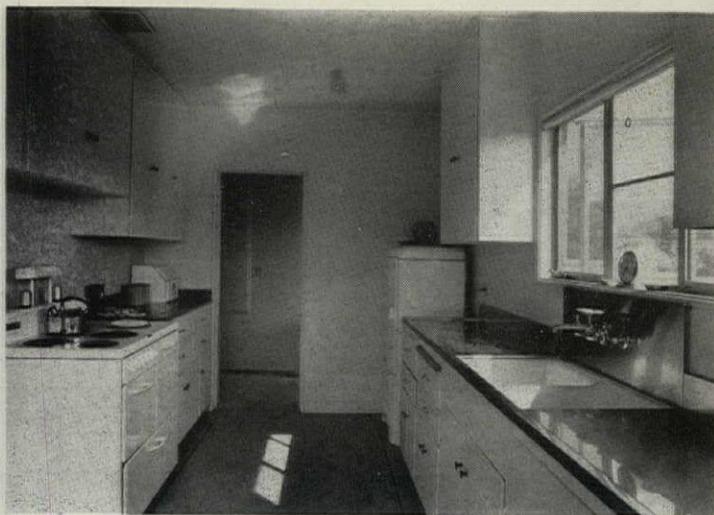
On the other hand, one must be realistic if one believes in gradual progress. I might not choose to live in *any* select middle-class neighborhood, planned or unplanned, but a great many of the very people discriminating enough to



*Bedroom*

appreciate the physical advantages of Baldwin Hills Village will also demand neighbors as much like themselves as possible, rightly or wrongly. If they were organizing a cooperative to produce their own housing, they should certainly have the privilege of getting together a congenial group. So why can't that principle be extended to the selective process in a development like the Village? Perhaps this is all a Bohemian hangover, a matter of my own personal taste.

And yet, discrimination and class-segregation are somehow more positively crystallized when they are practiced in such an efficient, official, wholesale way than when they develop accidentally and imperfectly. To proceed from the latter to the former is hardly gradual progress: it's moving backward. I don't know the answer—and it's almost as difficult in public housing. But perhaps one can hope for a group of hardy cosmopolitan souls with positive ideas about de-



*Kitchen*

mocracy in each and every community development, to persuade the rest gradually that the most interesting, stimulating, mutually enriching communities are made up of *different* kinds of people . . . and that anyway, people aren't nearly as different as they are sometimes made out to be.

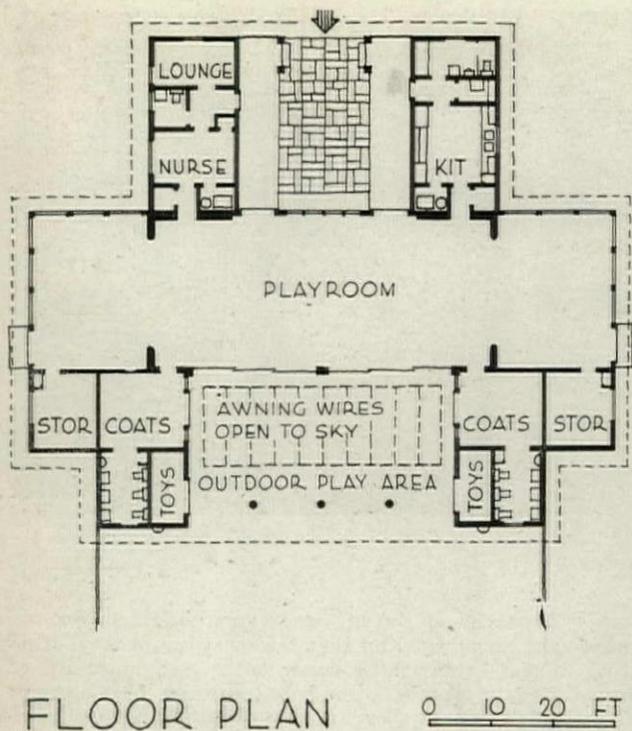
**Optimum versus Minimum: the Cost Differential between "Good" and "Decent" Housing**

If Baldwin Hills Village is in many ways the most attractive, livable rental community in the country, how much does this extra degree of amenity cost? Some of it comes from good modern planning techniques, of course, and costs nothing but sense and sensibility on the part of the planner and entrepreneur. And cheap land facilitated great openness. But a lot of the attractiveness of the Village derives from standards of space, facilities, and equipment meas-

**Interiors**

*Below, living room. Storage space is better than in many tailor-made expensive homes. Some apartments have 7 closets, most have 5, with 25 to 30 ft. of pole. Each master bedroom has a whole wall of closets faced with painted vertical boards. The kitchens, large, ordinarily have no eating space, but are equipped with stainless steel drainboards, large divided sinks, ample cupboard space. Most of the tiled baths have stall showers.*





## Club House

*This building was first intended for a nursery school; now it houses facilities for games, rental library, darkroom, kitchen, parties. In the village are courts, etc., for several types of games. Nearby are four public golf courses; a playground adjoins.*



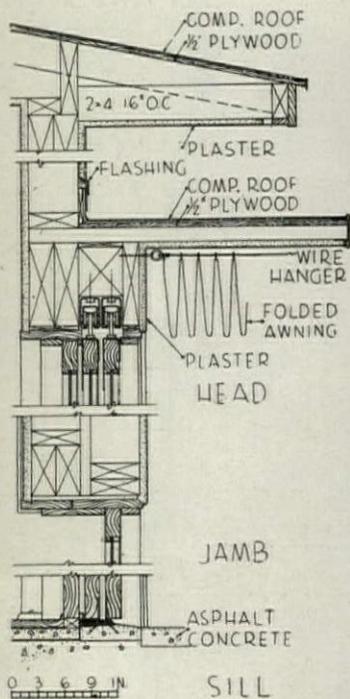
urably higher than those in other large-scale housing, public or private.

It has always seemed to me that the minimum standards developed by USHA for permanent public housing were in some respects too low—particularly in the matter of space, exterior and interior. Since much war housing has necessarily pared even these standards down still further, the whole subject requires fresh, careful study.

All housing costs are subject to varied conditions dependent on time and place. And in the early 1940's other fluctuating conditions entered the picture which make any rigid comparison difficult if not impossible. Nevertheless the Los Angeles City Housing Authority, an efficient agency which employs good architects and has achieved about the highest local level of public housing quality in the country, did build a number of projects at about the same time as Baldwin Village. And perhaps it may be worth while to set down

a few figures on some of these projects next to the figures for the Village, to see what suggestions they offer. (See table.) I would have liked to include the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company's Los Angeles project, but figures were not readily available.

The overall cost per dwelling unit for Baldwin Village is \$4911, and the average for the five public projects is \$4385—11% lower, or a difference of \$526 per family. This is not a fair comparison, however, due to the high cost of central sites and slum clearance for three of the public projects. From a planning point of view this is very significant, of course, and these few figures indicate difficulties in the way of any central redevelopment which includes modern amenity and decent space standards. They also tend to show that use of cheap outlying property entails land costs relatively so small that density can be very low indeed—lower, in many instances, than the old USHA prescriptions. For a





"... pool, waterless until someone figures out a way to keep babies out of it ..." was designed for children to wade in.

closer comparison it seems desirable to eliminate the land factor and also, because its peculiar site resulted in abnormal land development costs, to exclude Channel Heights entirely. Excluding land the cost per unit of Baldwin Village is \$4597, and the average for the four public projects is \$3547 . . . 23% lower, or a difference of \$1050 per family.

No resounding generalizations should be drawn from these figures, which are only roughly comparable. But perhaps it would be reasonable to claim some evidence that, excluding the land and location factor, permanent community housing of "decent, safe, and sanitary" but minimum standards cost 20% to 25% less than community housing of luxury standards in Los Angeles in the early 1940's. What does one get for this extra \$1000?

Landscaping and outdoor recreational and service areas much more highly developed than in public projects, and covering about twice as much open space per family;

Garages; lawn sprinkler system; laundries with enclosed drying yards; enclosed playgrounds; athletic facilities;

Private patios and balconies;

Much larger rooms, particularly living-dining areas; luxurious storage space;

Better heating and hot water systems, plumbing and electric installations;

Oak floors, tile baths, stainless steel drainboards, Venetian blinds, etc.;

Many fireplaces, some extra bathrooms.

This is a lot, and few would feel that *all* of it is necessary in public housing . . . or in cooperative or other forms of enterprise to meet the needs of that famous "middle" group. But surely there is evidence that even 10% more leeway in the costs and standards of "minimum" modern housing might bring a social return much greater than 10% in more space, more amenity, and more convenience.

Perhaps the most significant single item is the cost of site improvements, landscaping, and utilities. The cost per unit for Baldwin Hills Village is \$637, for the public projects (excluding Channel Heights) \$403 . . . only \$234 difference, although the Village has only half the density of population, and open space far more highly developed for varied use and beauty than do the public projects. (Some allowance should probably be made on the other side, however, for the extra cost of footings and such in clearance projects.)

Some discrepancy appears, it should be noted, in the item on Community Buildings, since the figure for Baldwin Village does not include the cost of the nursery school, shop,

## COSTS PER DWELLING UNIT

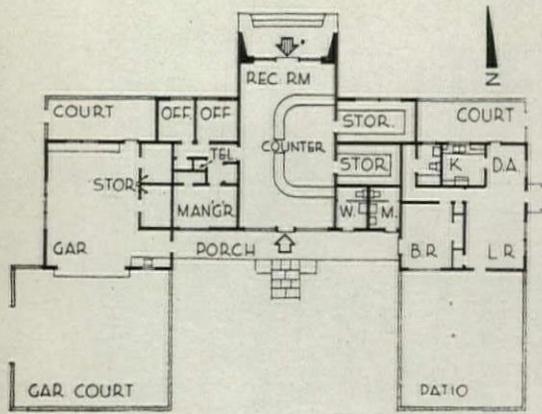
Project	BALDWIN HILLS VILLAGE	PICO GARDENS	ALISO VILLAGE	ROSE HILL COURTS	HACIENDA VILLAGE	CHANNEL HEIGHTS	AVERAGE COST FOR PUBLIC PROJECTS
<b>Sponsorship</b>	Private, FHA Insured	Los Angeles City Housing Authority; mostly for war workers, but all "permanent," all but Channel Heights built under U. S. Housing Act.					
<b>No. Units</b>	627	260	802	100	184	600	
<b>Construction</b>	Stucco, wood frame (ex. 9% masonry)	Stucco, wood frame	Some masonry; some stucco, wood frame	Stucco, wood frame	Wood, stucco, wood frame	Wood, stucco, wood frame	
<b>Families per gross acre</b>	7	16	19	16	10	9	
<b>Height</b>	2 story, some 1	2 story	2 and 3 story	1 and 2 story	1 story	1 and 2 story	
<b>Rooms per unit</b>	4.3 (FHA count)	5.2 (FPHA)	4.3 (FPHA)	4.4 (FPHA)	4.3 (FPHA)	4.2 (FPHA)	
<b>Contract awarded</b>	Feb. '41	Jan. '42	Feb. '42	Dec. '41	Nov. '41	May '42	
<b>Completed<sup>1</sup></b>	Oct. '42	Aug. '42	Mar. '43	June '42	July '42	July '43	
<b>COSTS: Land</b>	\$314	\$1311 <sup>2</sup>	\$1022 <sup>2</sup>	\$796 <sup>2</sup>	\$279	\$103	
<b>Site impvmt.<sup>3</sup></b>	637	407	437	357	412	1163 <sup>4</sup>	
<b>Dwelling construction<sup>5</sup></b>	3730	2977	3441	2912	2704	2825	
<b>Garages</b>	138	none	none	none	none	none	
<b>Community buildings</b>	92 <sup>6</sup>	107	132	165	138	236	
<b>TOTAL PHYSICAL COST PER UNIT</b>	\$4911	\$4802	\$5032	\$4230	\$3533	\$4327	\$4385
<b>TOTAL, EXCLUDING LAND</b>	\$4597	\$3491	\$4010	\$3434	\$3254	—	\$3547 <sup>7</sup>

NOTES: Figures include Contractor's, architect's, engineer's fees; supervision. Excluded are carrying charges, pre-occupancy, administrative, or financial expenses.

<sup>1</sup>, occupancy often earlier. <sup>2</sup>, including slum clearance. <sup>3</sup>, including utilities and landscaping.

<sup>4</sup>, extremely rough site. <sup>5</sup>, including equipment. <sup>6</sup>, including administration, club, and laundry buildings, but not dwellings now used for nursery school, etc. <sup>7</sup>, excluding Channel Heights.

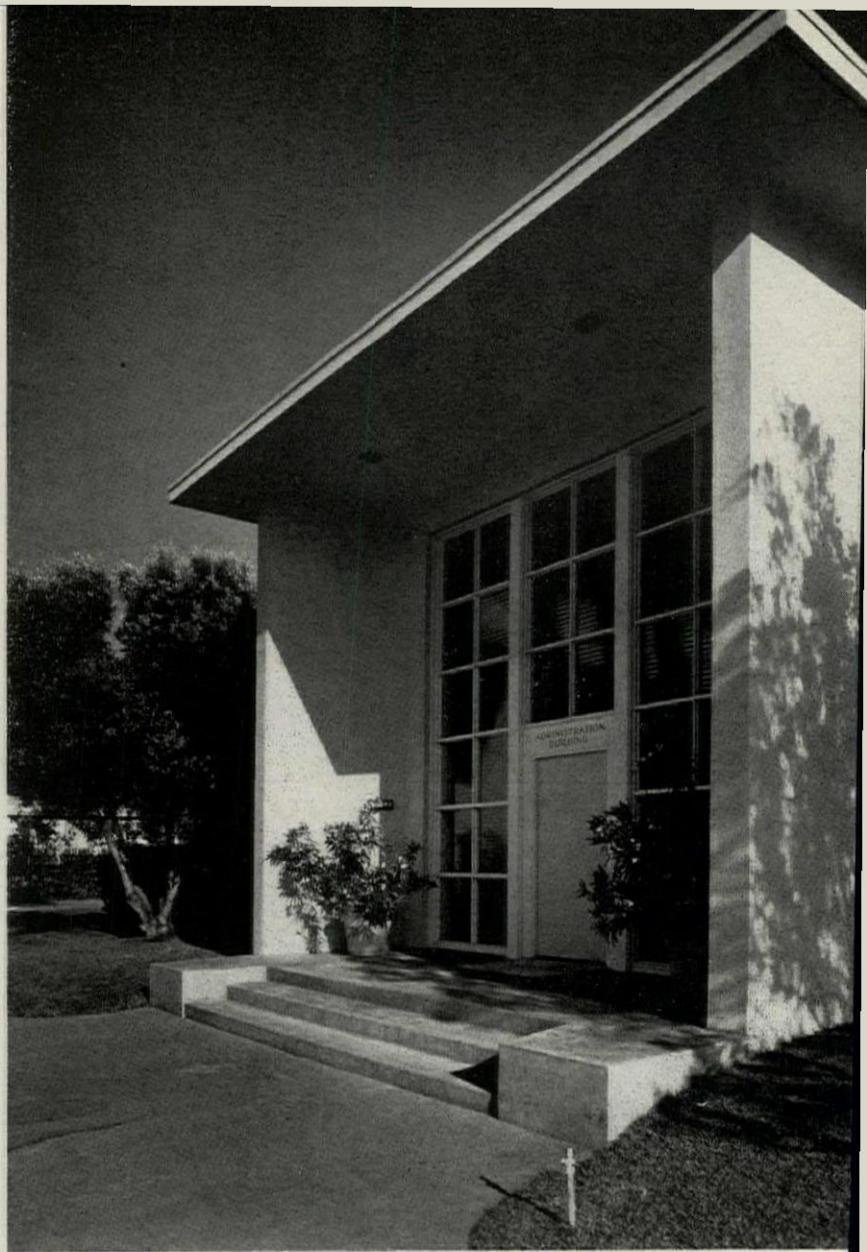
## Administration Building



FLOOR PLAN

0 10 20 FT

All administrative functions are carried on in this building, whose area seems adequate even for such abnormal functions as the telephone exchange (required because of war conditions). The central hall, where most tenant business is carried on, is high and airy, with clerestory light coming in over the entrance doors through ribbed glass. The lower part of the opposite wall is clear glass (see photo, page 44) and through it one can look across a formal garden to the Club House. Above the glass is a mural by Rico Le Brun.



etc. temporarily transformed from dwelling units while some of the public projects include these facilities.

If these few superficial figures help to stimulate some organization to initiate a thorough cost analysis, from the angle of standards and quality, of our vast and varied experience with large-scale housing, public and private, they will have served their purpose. Such an analysis should of course go much farther than a mere breakdown of capital costs. In annual costs—which are what tenants and owners actually pay—operation, maintenance, and repairs, interest and amortization rates, are just as important as first costs. Some figures before me seem to indicate that there is surprisingly little difference between the operating and maintenance costs of Baldwin Village and that of public projects. But they require much more exact definition.

To summarize the improvements upon "minimum standards" which seem to me most vitally needed:

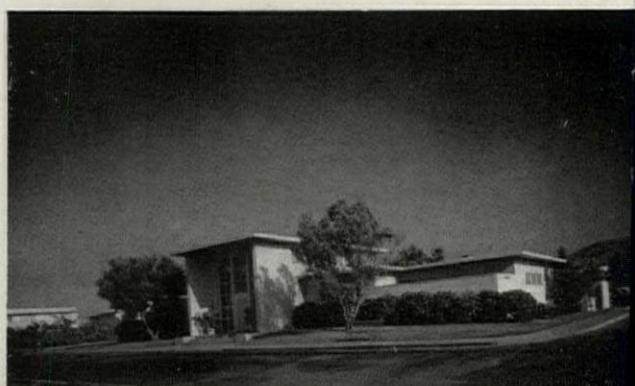
1. Lower densities. (On cheap land this can be achieved with little, if any, added cost. Expensive central sites will require special subsidies toward land acquisition—already recognized as the heart of Urban Redevelopment policy.)
2. Bigger rooms and more storage and utility space.
3. Space for *private* outdoor living for every family, whether in patios, enclosed gardens, or good-sized balconies.

Baldwin Hills Village leads the entire housing field in all three of these qualities. That is the basic reason for its markedly greater livability and attractiveness.



Reception Room

Exterior from Rodeo Rd.



## Perspectives



### A Head, Heart, a Soul, and a Purpose:

#### Robert Evans Alexander

*Editorial Note: We asked Larry Perkins of the Chicago firm, Perkins, Wheeler, and Will, to do a piece on his friend, Bob Alexander, one of the architects of Baldwin Hills Village. In the course of reviving memories and getting up to date, Larry received from Bob a long, revealing letter on the stationery of a famous aircraft company where Bob is now a departmental executive. Part of the letter follows:*

*"As you know, I was hired by Vega—now Lockheed, Factory A—in 1942, and haven't been found out yet. I have been in the Production Control Division during this time, and have lost plenty of hair off my head in the process. This has been compensated for by a corresponding growth on my chest. At present, I am engaged in what some call Industrial Engineering—finding ways and means to produce more and better service for less cost . . . (For a while) I was in a fury of work . . . Things have cooled off noticeably since we overcame the problem of multiplying production by five. The planes are rolling out as fast as ever, but with one-third less effort . . ."*

The key to Bob as an architect is contained in these phrases: "more and better service for less," and "the planes are rolling out as fast with one-third less effort." Notice that he landed in production control—probably after vigorous persuasion to stay out of plant maintenance drafting. He is where he can apply a flaming creative imagination to the problems of "one-third less effort." I seriously doubt that he hasn't been found out yet; nor does the manpower shortage account for his continuing where he is. What more logical place could there be for a mind trained to plan, visualize, and act than in improving methods of doing things? This job Bob holds is a distinct contribution to a profession which is fighting out from behind the impractical dreamer reputation; for, make no mistake, this is no hybrid "Architectural Engineer" or practical man. In the old sense he would be considered a plain, straight designer and a red hot one at that.

Robert Evans Alexander is concerned with beauty—he draws fast and accurately—his sketches are vigorous and brilliant. Here he is applying an ability to analyze and synthesize a set of conditions (as we all tell our clients we do) not related to building—and it works! Well—so it should; but the public and the profession can absorb such object lessons as this one to advantage.

Organizing a production situation to get high results at low cost is not a new experience for Bob. Lakewood Village, for which he was one of the architects, made one of the unsung contributions to the "Construction Industry" (quotation marks at request of R. E. Alexander). This was built as war housing near Los Angeles. Its significance is that a varied and interesting city was created out of—if I remember correctly—seven basic plans. The most impressive thing about the drawings was a series of schedules for each component of the building. Nearly the whole project was in code. House 3 on location 215 had its two-car garage in position 5. It had roof R3 and entrance E2. It had basic color 17 and trim color 12 on material 4.

This keyed back to a mill set up on the site. When a trainload of lumber arrived, the operator knew that he could cut 376 studs, 8'-16", and 48 fascia boards, size so and so. Bob could and did organize mass production economics right where they counted most: at the site. The foundation man could organize and repeat; ditto the plumber and painter. The advantages hoped for in prefabrication were here largely realized with the sky for a factory roof. Very low costs were achieved, and in my opinion it was because the original design, in which Bob had a leading part, was conceived around repetitive, mass-produced parts for everything.

This schedule was also simple enough for a real estate salesman to understand and use in selling. With the key schedule photographed down, he could consult his notebook and tell the prospective customer: "This hole in the ground will have plan C, the one that fits your needs. The garage will be in this location (position "C"), the entrance #4 will look like that one over there, and furthermore it will not be a repeat of anything else here. It will be *your* house." In short, the well composed themes and variations in color and form were as apparent on the schedule charts as the harmonies and movements in the score of a symphony.

This impressive performance (which led, I presume, to the present aircraft job) was no isolated outburst. As a member of the firm of Wilson, Merrill and Alexander, associated with Reginald D. Johnson, Bob was very active in the work on Baldwin Hills Village. This project started toward life under the name "Thousand Gardens," which Bob promptly corrupted to "Lots O' Plots." In spite of this irreverent attitude he carried entire charge of working drawing production, both architectural and

engineering, as well as taking an active part in the site planning and unit design.

Bob is a man to act on his convictions. When he was a new partner in his firm and could have justified a feeling of having arrived, he decided that he didn't know enough about housing, so he took a year's leave to go back to New York to work on Parkchester for Metropolitan Life's Board of Design. It took some nerve to go back on a salary after denying himself and his family plenty to get the position he had won. His own description of his duties connected with Parkchester is: "Set up and ran production of building plans, unit plans, and coordinated these with other departments." R. H. Shreve was his boss, Irwin Clavan, the Office Manager, and Walter Graydon, Chief of Production.

From 1939 to 1942, in the firm of Alexander, Risley, Witmer and Watson, he worked on the Estrada Courts housing project in Los Angeles. I shall not soon forget the ingenuity of the detail of that job. For instance, the little balconies derive stiffness for their supports by taking advantage of the compressive qualities of the plaster inside the wall. Bob has done plenty of other work but this is not the place for a catalog.

Bob is 37 years old, married, and has two children, a girl, 9, and a boy, 5. In the seventeen years I have known him, in school and since, he has not bored me once. He is an enthusiast. He was an ardent air raid warden. He had fun playing football at Cornell, where he not only won his letter on the varsity team, but earned his Bachelor of Architecture degree. I remember a hostess who has not forgotten a series of flying leaps from the arms of a fragile chair in pursuit of a circus inspiration. I remember many fevered discussions of politics and architectural philosophy against a background of highballs and the Franck D Minor Symphony. I once worked beside him all night when I didn't have to, rather than miss the show.

After Cornell, Bob worked in offices in both California and New York. In the summer of 1930, he accompanied Garrett Van Pelt on a European trip that took them to France, Spain, and Italy.

Being too serious has never been one of his faults. In response to some probing questions he supplied the following: "As to habits, you know I smoke too much and have other habits which I shall not define as good or bad. I do have the bad habit of hanging my head, but not in shame. It started when I was a rather tall little boy. My best friend was a little shaver who made me feel out of place if I stood up straight. Rather than walk on my knees all the time, I broke my neck, slightly. This was abetted by several years of saxophone playing and given the coup by sleeping on drafting boards.

"I like any kind of fishing and intend to do just that at Ensenada August 1st to 12th. I like Leidekrantz cheese and strong black coffee (just had some). Read *Time*, *Life*, *Readers' Digest*, *Arts and Architecture*, and the new *Journal of the A.I.A.*"

Bob becomes wholly serious when discussing the status of the profession, the things he believes that it not only could but should do. "Architecture can supply the greatest need in our culture today—creative thought," he asserts. To accomplish this task, he feels it is incumbent on the wiser heads to devote more time to serious study of all phases of human endeavor, and to insist that architectural education be realigned for this broader approach. "Teach two generations how to analyze, visualize, and plan—nothing more," he advocates. "Re-adjust State laws and professional society by-laws to recognize the new ideal. Take architects to the people. Make 'Architect of the Peace' no empty phrase."

With adoption of this bold, affirmative philosophy, Bob

Alexander foresees an ever-widening field for the architectural man's talents. If the profession and the individuals that make it up will view their opportunity enlarged to this scale, Bob confidently expects to find architects holding rightful places on City Councils, in State governments, and in Congress; architects in food dehydration plants, in helicopter factories, on land-reclamation authorities; more architects of airports, dams, and canals. "I am quite serious when I say that this country may not survive unless such a program is carried out by some profession. The element of creative thought must be developed, expanded, and introduced into government and industry.

"Architectural training has the advantage of a head start in the right direction and could supply it," he concludes. "I believe it will."

As to Bob's hopes for the future of architecture and building, again let him speak for himself. (I can't add to it except to comment that Bob's unabashed idealism has not kept him from effective positions on important work in the past. I think he will continue to cause things to happen.)

"I hoped to learn something about industrial methods which could be applied to the so-called 'Construction Industry' (sic). I believe I know now what is ahead of us and what it takes to remove the laugh from this phrase. I know what could be done if even a handful of the great companies in this field got together with labor and government now, when resistance to change is at low ebb. But I am just as sure what will happen if we delay our planning until the heat of the battle of peace is upon us.

"Today, the grand strategy of the 'industry' should be planned. More can be done in two years before peace than in twenty years after. There never before was an opportunity like it and it won't knock twice. All objections to the industrialized house vanish when you assume the lower third income bracket moving into the middle third range and the house cost cut in two, three, or more. I'm sure it's coming, but it has little relation to 'reconversion.' It is not even conversion. It is revolution, or creation of something which never existed before.

"You probably gather that I don't give a damn for the Big House, the Small House, the Country House or the Town House. I want the Best House and the Most House for the Best People, i.e., the Most People, the 80% we never touched before. And it must be unobtrusive as a house, the little house that isn't there. You are living on a bit of earth. The inside is the outside and vice versa. Your house is not a burden, financially or physically. It protects and comforts and helps you live.

"But you know the form of the house is absolutely unimportant. In the field of form, the community plan is the only important thing. It must have size and shape, a center, a head, heart, a soul, and a purpose. Which reminds me—I just read Thomas Wolfe's 'You Can't Go Home Again' and I recommend it as the best criticism of city planning yet. He knew what the score was and called it every time. City planning is my main dish, so I won't elaborate on it.

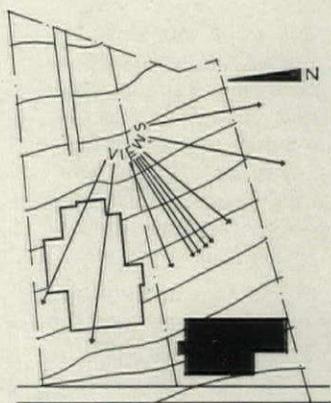
"As to clients, I've seen 'em all, and I give up with one exception. Tomorrow's client is the people and it is not a beast. From the little experience I have had with such, I believe the clients with whom I can talk the most sense and really get down to earth in the future are the labor unions, cooperatives, and like woolly characters. We must take architecture to the people and vice versa or kiss the boys good-bye."

LARRY PERKINS



*Photos by Roger Sturtevant*

*From the end, the hillside apartment-garage structure forms a bold pattern of redwood and plaster walls.*



## Intermediate Step in a 3-Way Plan

Berkeley, California

**WILLIAM WILSON WURSTER, A.I.A., ARCHITECT**

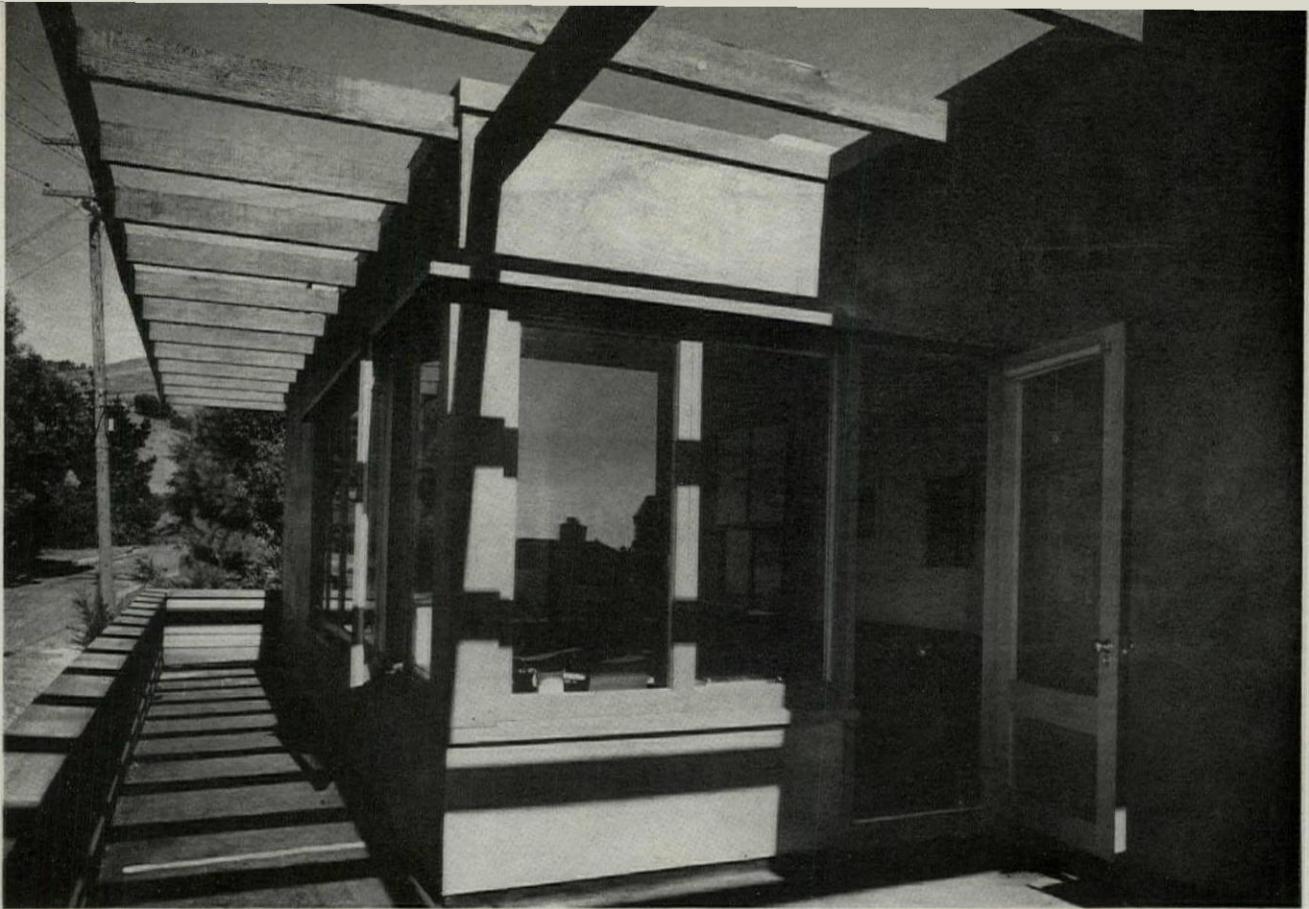
This unusual unit of a small apartment above four garages, interesting enough in itself, is considerably more than meets the eye. A study of the plot plan shows how it actually is the crux of a situation, serving as it does to inject new life into an old house next door and constituting an important element of a building plan that

### **On Outwitting Obsolescence . . . . .**

That the whole community benefits from intelligent, over-all planning, including land-use control, is clearly demonstrated in Baldwin Hills Village. Perhaps no one advantage is more obvious—or more welcome to tenant, landowner, and municipality alike—than the insurance this type of long-range planning provides against the factor of obsolescence which is the inevitable, ugly by-product of uncontrolled city building. Obsolescence, like disease, usually creeps up unobserved. Similarly it is best treated when prevented.

In succeeding pages, we show several samples of how good planning can outwit obsolescence. Some—like Baldwin Hills—are instances of prevention: an income-producing unit in California; TVA's latest developments in demountable houses; and a country house in New England, skeleton-framed to allow for future alterations. Others, in the form of remodeling projects, demonstrate successful cures for cases of incipient obsolescence.

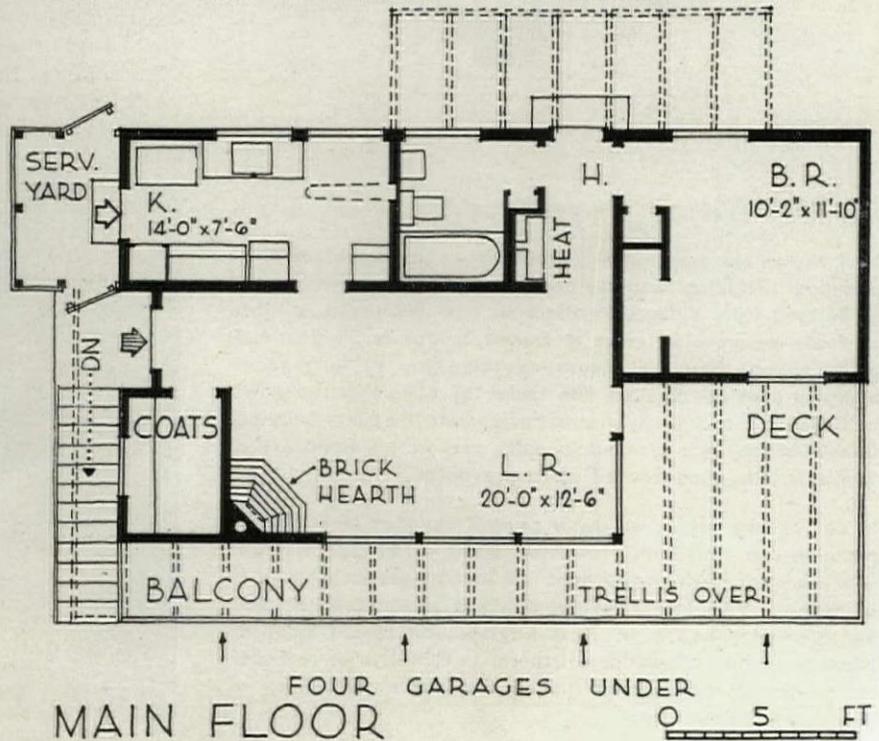




will go forward after the war.

The owner acquired two adjoining lots; one was vacant; on the other was a substantial but dated, two-apartment house, for which there were no garages. Actually, the best location for a house on the entire property was on the higher ground at the rear from which extraordinary views of San Francisco Bay area open up. But it was impractical at once to build this final house. With the architect's advice, the connecting-link structure shown here was worked out.

If ever a building could be said to kill two birds with



The apartment deck and balcony (above)

The garden side of the house is protected against the strong prevailing winds (below)

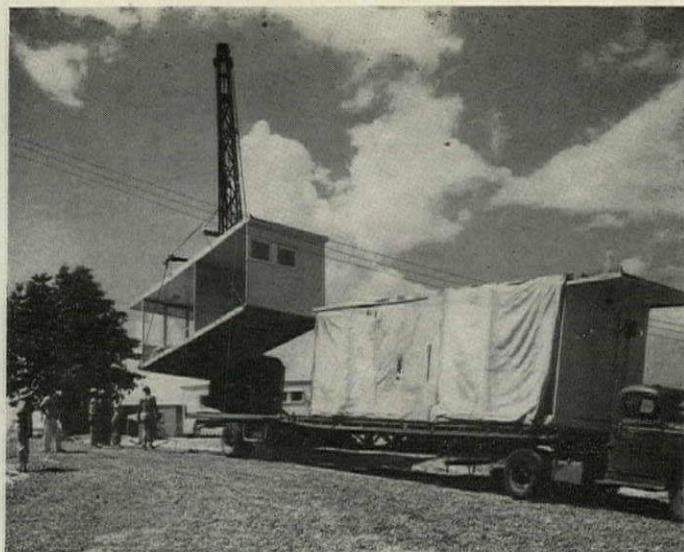


one stone, this is it. The two apartments next door are each now provided with a garage which considerably enhances their value as rental units. There is car space for the fine little new apartment, which in itself is an excellent temporary abode. And when it becomes possible to build the final home on the upper part of the property, this will have a garage already built. Meantime, the fourth garage is a good rental unit; and when the postwar house is built, the apartment will undoubtedly be easy to rent, for the University of California is not far distant, and good facilities of this nature are much in demand.

*The floor of the living room (above) is hardwood; walls are of pine plywood. The windows frame a typically dramatic San Francisco view. For heating, a gas unit is supplemented by a Franklin stove in one corner of the room shown in this photograph.*

*In the kitchen, as well as in the bathroom, the floor is finished in linoleum. The walls, here as elsewhere in the house, are plywood-surfaced.*





## TVA Three-Dimensional Demountables

Quantity-Assembled by Power Crane

In addition to the possibility of providing mass markets with serviceable, permanent dwelling units at low cost, prefabrication offers a flexible device for outwitting extraordinary forms of obsolescence. For communities of a temporary, uncertain, or fast-changing character, the technique makes it possible to "knock down" a single house—or a whole village for that matter—transport it on trucks, and reassemble it in some more promising location. Hardly a "long-haired" theory, it is a practice already repeated many times under the war demand for providing good housing at unlikely places on the double quick.

To architects whose chief concern is planning for the betterment of human environment, it is cause for rejoicing that with the advent of these standardized units, TVA has set so high a standard.

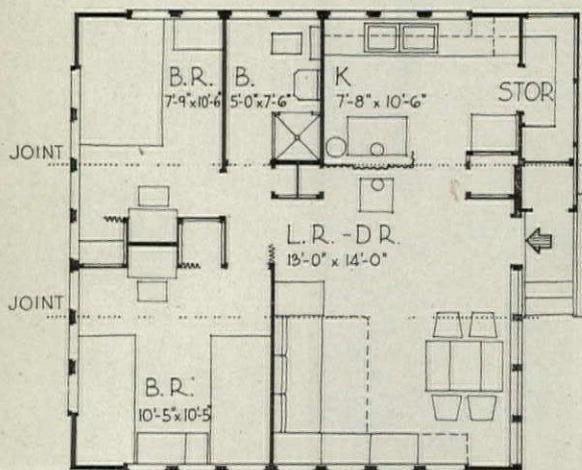
The ones shown on these pages are the largest and most technically refined of TVA's three-dimensional prefabs to date. It is also significant that, according to the

records, the manufacturers who undertook contracts for the work ended up with satisfactory financial results.

In these projects, involving large-scale installation of the units, a provocative new technique of unit assembly is introduced through use of boom crane, transforming a somewhat cumbersome operation into a readily answered mechanical problem. TVA architects are the first to point out, however, that so far, the expense involved in commanding the services of so specialized and huge a building tool makes this technique impractical except in the case of sizable developments. Nor, as they remind us, is crane assembly in any sense a *sine qua non* for the three-dimensional prefab's success. On previous projects, house sections have been placed on foundations by the use of nothing more complicated than ordinary truck jacks and old railroad ties for cribbing.

Nonetheless, the tempo made possible by the power crane's employment opens up challenging new areas for research and experiment. There appears to be no reason why the method could not easily be used for constructing two-story (or higher) structures from three-dimensional parts similar to the ones shown here. The photographs on this page record the latest chapter in the progress of TVA's demountables along the road to quick assembly at the site.

General view of 2-bedroom unit



FLOOR PLAN

0 5 FT





Far left: Transport of prefabricated house sections; each section is 8' x 24' plus roof overhangs. Sections have been transported in this manner for as far as 700 miles. Other views show assembly of sections that have been delivered on a 55-foot long trailer body instead of on the truck and trailer combination shown in first photo.

Sections are hoisted by a crane by means of hooks at the end of wire ropes that support steel angles placed under the short end of sections. In this case, the foundations are creosoted lumber, as these dwelling units are temporarily located to serve a war purpose. In more permanent situations, foundations of cinder block, asbestos board sheathing on wood or masonry posts, and shiplap or tongue and groove siding have been used to create a better and more conventional appearance.

Notice how few workmen are engaged on the site. On sectionally prefabricated houses, total labor costs divide about 90 to 95 percent in the shop and in transportation, and 5 to 10 percent on the site. This may prove a distinct advantage in the postwar period for sites in rural locations where a large labor force is not available.

### The Three-Section, Two-Bedroom House

The 3'-6" roof overhang protects the entrance door and controls sunlight. Beyond the stoop, the projection covers a storage section which was prefabricated in panels but erected on the job. Since this detail proved the most bothersome of all assembly problems, in future designs these will be sectionally prefabricated like the rest of the house.

In some particulars, the house departs from TVA's design: the entrance feature (contractor designed); the mast for electric supply; and a dark-colored composition covering for roof joints in place of inconspicuous sheet metal channels.

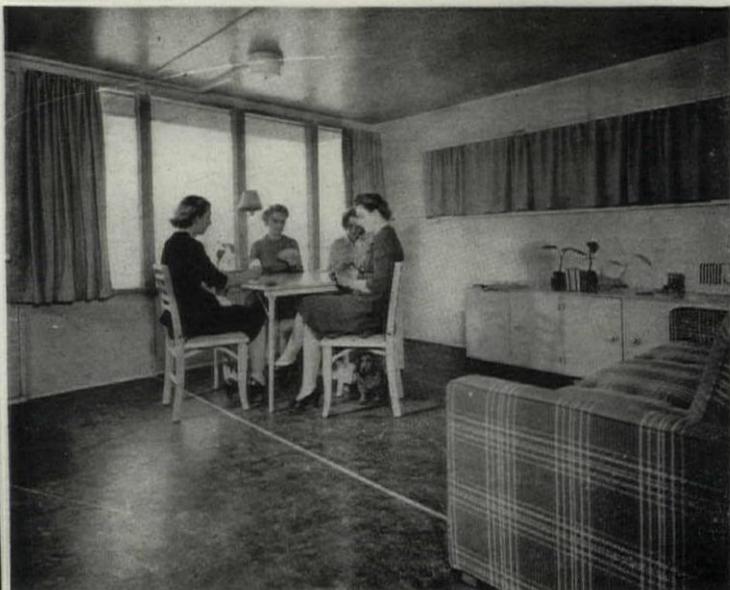
The interiors show furniture supplied in accordance with TVA designs, under the same contract as the houses themselves. Cabinets are of 1/2-in. plywood built in modular sizes to coincide with window and room dimensions. The bridge-playing photograph shows the use of the dining table, one leaf of which is open; with both leaves open, the table seats six. With both leaves dropped, the table takes its position as part of a sequence of cabinets; the chairs are collapsible. The big windows in the living room are fixed glass, whereas the high-sill windows operate in awning fashion.

In the bedroom, all windows are high because of the expectation that during wartime the houses will be crowded close together, and high sills will increase privacy. Walls of this room, as throughout the house, are plywood with a pigmented varnish. The ceiling is the exposed plywood underside of the stressed-skin roof panel.



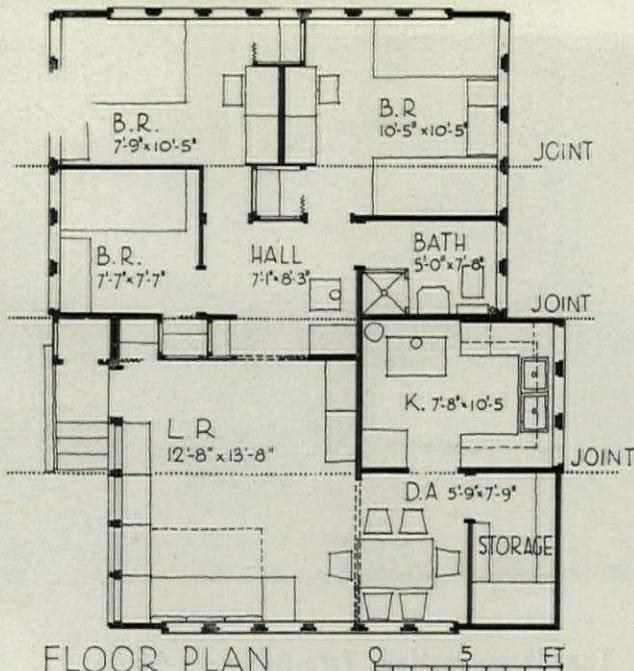
Typical bedroom, using TVA modular furniture

Two views of the living room. The floors are surfaced with linoleum





General view of 3-bedroom unit



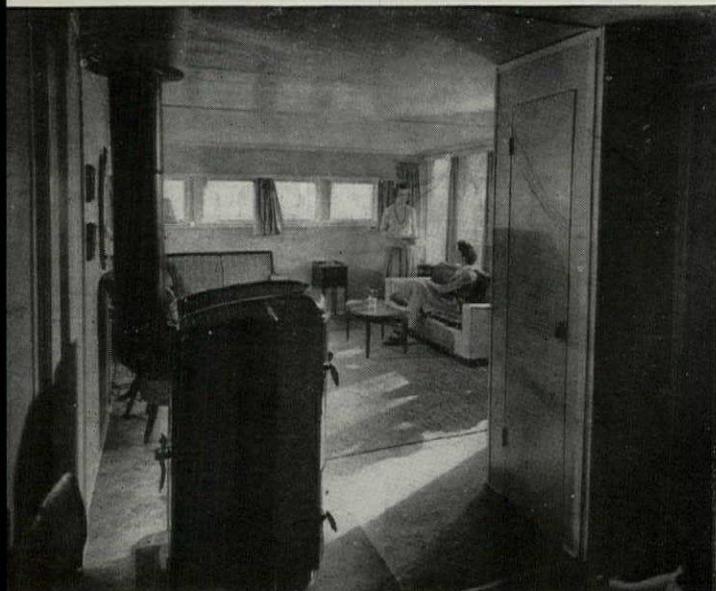
### The Four-Section, Three-Bedroom House DESIGNED BY TVA

As in the case of the two-bedroom houses shown on the preceding page, the entrance detail, roof-joint covering and power-line masts are deviations from TVA's design. Also, in this case, tenant-owned furniture was used in place of the TVA modular furniture. A roof overhang on the three-bedroom houses protects the stoop entrance and fixed living room windows; in assembling this house, the four sections or cells are staggered in pairs on the foundations, so that the overhang is reversed on the two cells containing the bedrooms; this device both insures cross ventilation in rainy weather and adds considerably to the appearance of the house. House heating is by coal, with the choice of heater limited to those available in wartime; if available, electricity, gas or oil units could be used quite as well. The kitchen equipment is arranged in a U shape and has cabinets at an intermediate height (right of photo) as well as base sections and continuous rows above the windows. Sinks and laundry tubs are built into a continuous row of base cabinets, with counter tops of linoleum, extended up the walls to sill height. Linoleum edgings and moldings are of plastic.

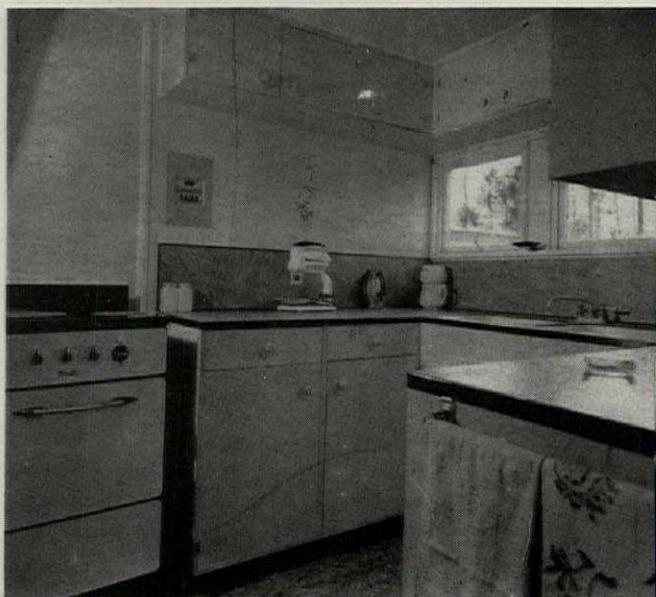


Looking toward the dining alcove

Living room, showing heater location



The U-shaped kitchen





*"Cultivated land comes right to the house . . ."*

## A "Permanent Investment" Core Surrounded by a "Temporary Investment" Shell

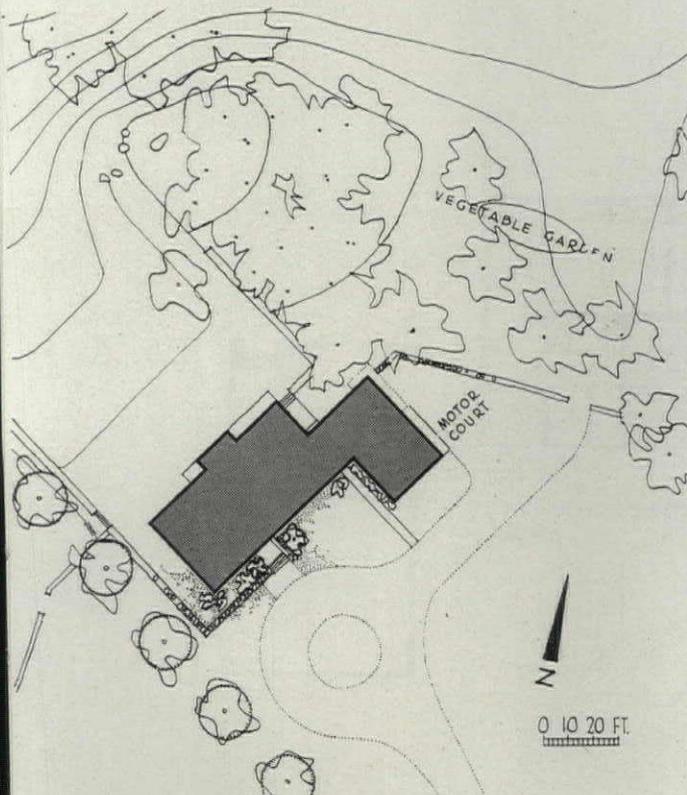
Lincoln, Mass.

### Description by CONSTANTIN

We own fifty acres of land with a beautiful and which is undoubtedly very New England. Ten acres are occupied by the apple orchard. The balance is a wooded valley which opens up to form a bay of a secluded little lake. The land is hilly; the house does not occupy its highest point, yet it is nearly 100 feet above sea level. The land has never been built upon but it is, in a sense, old land and parts of it have been cultivated generations ago. It shares fully in that charming geometry of human work of the past that is so characteristic of New England landscape: the tracery of old stone walls crosses the woods, runs down to the lake, is revealed by the young orchard. This geometry has been recognized in the design of the many new stone walls that surround the house. The land has an old name dating back to the Biblical days of New England: "Canaan pastures."

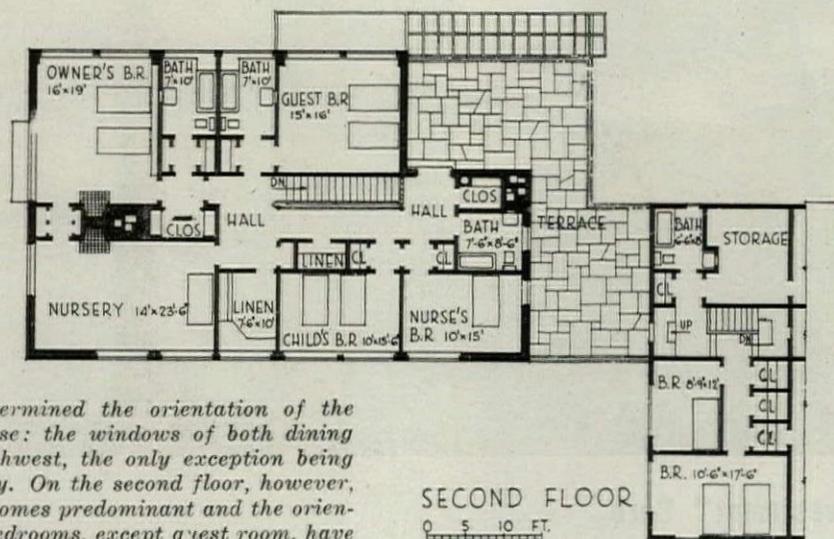
This land, its contours, its use, its "geometry," the magnificent fifty-mile view of distant mountains beyond the lake—above all, its very distinct personality—not only determined the layout of the grounds, the location and orientation of the house, but influenced to a certain degree its design as well.

The house stands on two or three fairly level acres between the orchard and the valley. Cultivated land comes

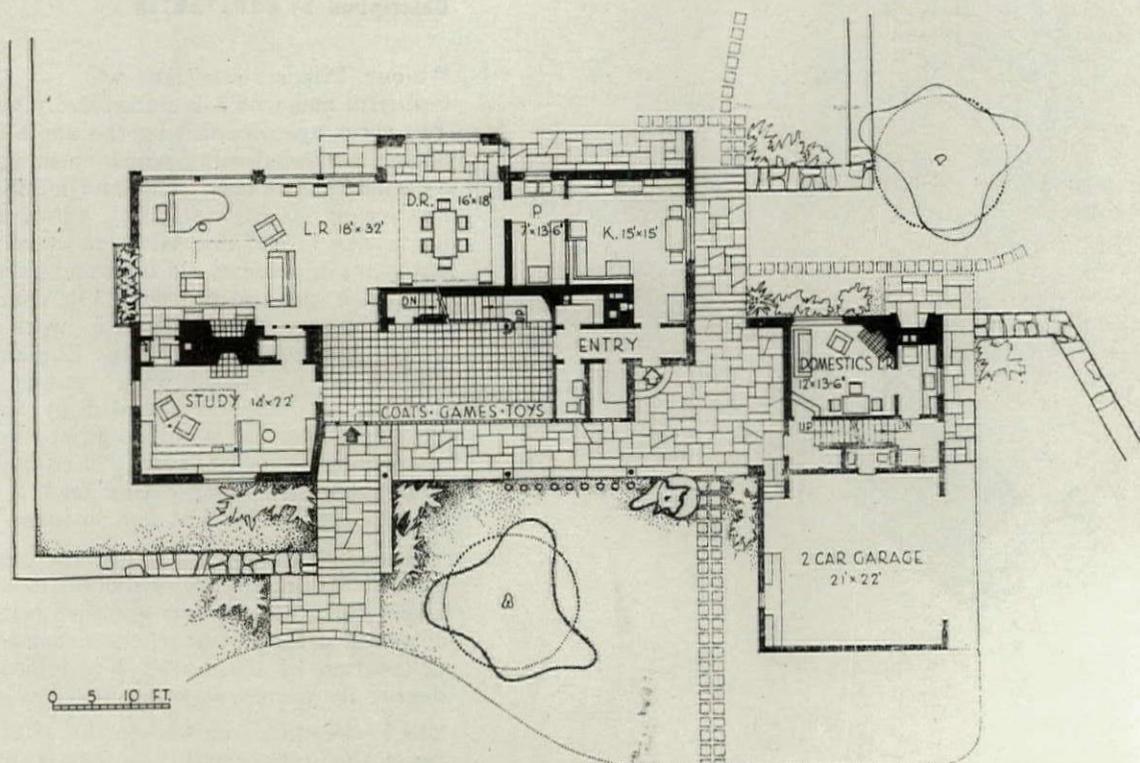




"The position of the service wing . . . is identical with the position of a barn in a New England homestead . . ."



"The exceptional view determined the orientation of the principal rooms of the house: the windows of both dining and living rooms face northwest, the only exception being the southwestern flower bay. On the second floor, however, the question of sunshine becomes predominant and the orientation reverses itself—all bedrooms, except guest room, have either southeastern or southwestern windows. This reversal of orientation normally would have created a complicated planning problem but in our case it suggested an arrangement of first floor communications which was in harmony with our requirements."





*On the view side, lawns merge into a meadow forming an open space of nearly an acre*

right to the house, orchard on one side, rather extensive vegetable garden on the other. Lawns are cut down to a minimum except in the view side where they merge into a meadow forming an open space of nearly an acre. The fundamental aesthetic relationship between the house and the land is identical with the one long ago established in the New England landscape. It is essentially the relationship of contrast: in this case, as in the case of many farmhouses, it is the contrast between a simple, white, geometric form and an ungraced but mellowed landscape. I believe that utmost simplicity and clarity of form is of fundamental importance in this relationship. I tried to achieve this clarity of form.

The house is a simple rectangle with an "L," the service wing, attached to it by an open passage. Both the house and the service wing have forms that are easily perceived. Their relationship is also clear. The house as a whole appears to "read" well even at a considerable distance. The position of the service wing is, by the way, identical with the traditional position of a barn in a New England farmstead: it shelters the house from the northern and northeastern storms. The single pitch roof of the wing offers the minimum wall area to the storm and the maximum to the sun. The roof itself appears to function as an effective deflector.

It was not our intention when we moved to Lincoln to lead in the country a suburban existence. We do not pretend to be farmers but our interest in the land goes beyond the lawn and the flower borders. Work in the garden, in the orchard, and in the woods very quickly became our chief recreation and sole exercise. In these days of shortages of everything, we take considerable pleasure in the fact that our land's production of apples and firewood is measured in scores of truckloads. Although we still seem to be able to secure adequate labor, a great deal of our production depends not only on our management, but on our actual participation. This use of the land quite properly influenced the design of the house. One instance of this influence is the prominence of communications between the house proper and the triangular court formed by the garage and the shed around which most of the equipment is stored and beyond which lie the vegetable gardens. Another instance is the absence of provisions for the lounging variety of "outdoor living" so overemphasized in modern residential architecture.

To take full advantage of the site, the house was endowed with a certain degree of transparency: there is an axial relationship between many doors and corresponding windows on the opposite walls; the front door is not only set in a glass block panel but is perforated

as well; the open passage between the house and service wing which frames a very charming view is duplicated in the design of the shed.

Although as a rule we entertain moderately and informally, the house is taxed to its full capacity, once in a while, by a large musical gathering. On these occasions, the living room and the dining room function jointly as a music room. Circulation of the first floor was studied with due regard to the problem of handling these considerable gatherings. The entrance hall for this reason was made very spacious; the three principal rooms of the first floor are intercommunicating, can be used en suite and can be serviced from either end.

The only other unusual feature of the house is the complete separation of the servants' quarters from the house proper. The servants' quarters developed into a complete little house consisting of a living room, kitchen, two bedrooms, and bath. It has a sheltered connection with the main house through the basement and an open air one through the first floor passage. This arrangement makes possible the employment of a couple with a child; and furthermore it endows the house with a flexibility which may prove to be very valuable in these uncertain days: either the house or the service wing can be used independently with the other one closed or both can be used together as they are used now.

The clarity of form and the simplicity of relationship of various shapes preoccupied me fully as much in the design of the interior as they did in the exterior. Spaciousness was emphasized rather than size. The whole plan, particularly the arrangement of circulations, was deliberately kept as straightforward as possible. I believe the plan "reads" well; like the general mass of the house, it is easily grasped.

The materials used in the interior are in keeping with the general character of the house. With the sole exception of teak used in kitchen counters and in bathroom floors, all materials are native and some local. Most of the rooms are simply plastered and painted. Wallpaper is used in some rooms upstairs. There is only one paneled wall—it separates the living room from the work room.

The entire design is subordinated to a 16' rhythm. This unit and its subdivision of 8' and 4' determined to a considerable extent the interior arrangement. I believe that a simple rhythm of this sort consistently carried through is not only an aesthetic asset but results in considerable simplification of the structure and consequent reduction of costs.

The construction problem was approached in the fol-



*Main stair and floor of entrance hall are green slate, with natural cleft surface*

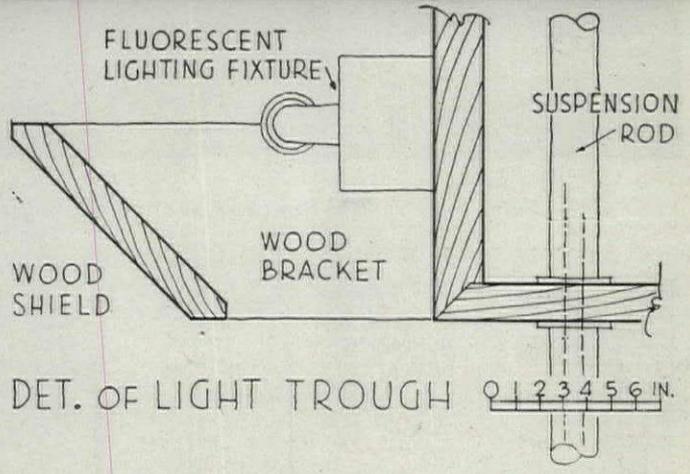
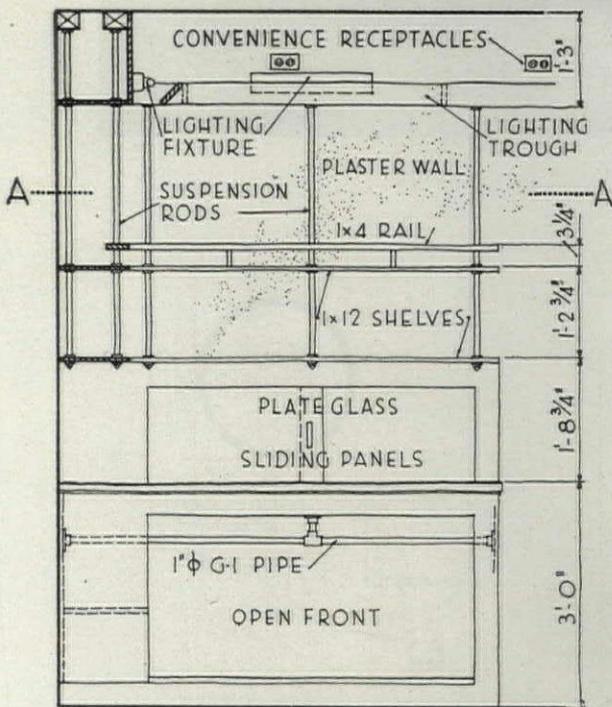
*"The skeleton construction is of particular importance. It is actually possible in our case to remove practically all exterior and interior walls of the main house without destroying the bulk of the investment. Needless to say, this offers unusual opportunities for future alterations of the plan, appearance, and even of function and purpose of the house. Our house of course is not even remotely the answer to the question of flexibility. It is merely a tentative step in what I think is the right direction. It only suggests a feasible alternate to that dream of real estate men—the house that would automatically fall apart as soon as the mortgage is paid up. It will certainly require no technological or any other revolution to make possible the construction of houses in which a highly durable primary structure will permit an easy rearrangement or replacement of all vertical surfaces, both exterior and interior. Granting the accessibility of mechanical equipment, a house of such type will have the faculty of renewing itself periodically without undue economic loss."*

lowing way: I subdivided the problem according to the principal structural functions, studied these functions separately and tried to find in each case the best solution. The enclosure of space by vertical planes, the subdivision of the space by horizontal planes, and the bearing of loads I assumed to be these principal structural functions. One may argue that this brief list can be added to more or less indefinitely but in my opinion none but the above three affect directly the development of the structural philosophy of a given building. Even these three are not very easily separated from each other. For example, the principal function of the horizontal planes of the building—the floors—is, obviously, to carry loads and it seems absurd to consider this function separately. Only when one thinks in terms of columns and girders whose sole purpose is to carry loads—the membrane function of the floor becomes apparent.

In this case the primary frame is of fireproofed steel. The exterior walls which are non-bearing (except when one story high) were designed primarily to resist weather. These walls are of brick, 8" thick, of a type developed by Professor Voss of Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The first floor is of re-enforced concrete and so is the paved terrace above the kitchen. These two slabs enclose in incombustible and fire-resisting shells those parts of the house where 90 percent of fires normally originate. All other horizontal surfaces of both house and service wing are of heavy timber "slow burning" construction. This construction was chosen because it gives a degree of fire protection quite adequate for a residence and because it is a great deal more flexible while considerably less expensive than re-enforced concrete. I did not consider lightweight unprotected steel floor construction because I am not satisfied with its fire resistance. The cost comparison of the heavy and light wood constructions is quite interesting. I will not go into details but I will say that the principal

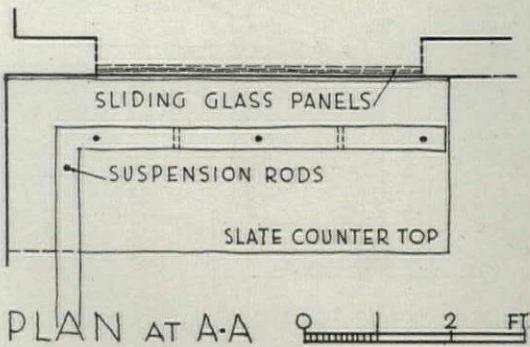
*Living room paneling and the work room woodwork are white oak, waxed; the first floor is black walnut, also waxed; the second floor is white oak*

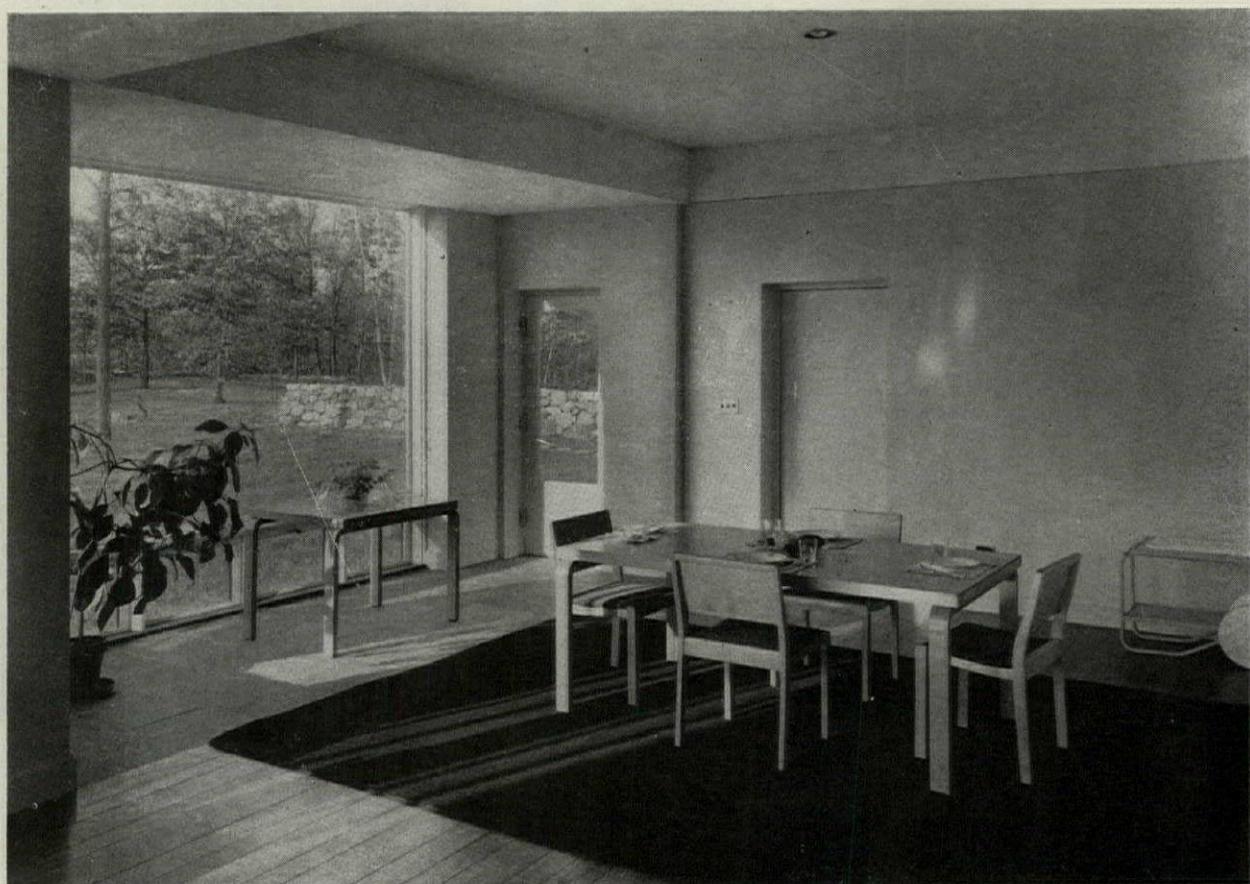




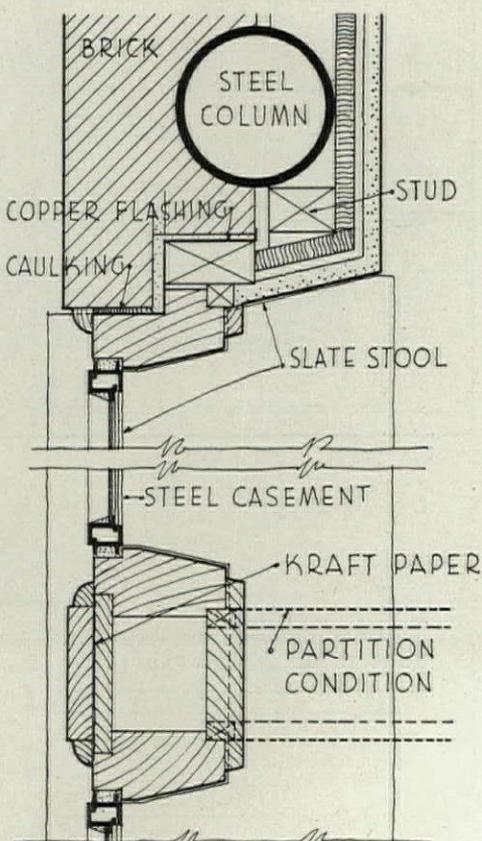
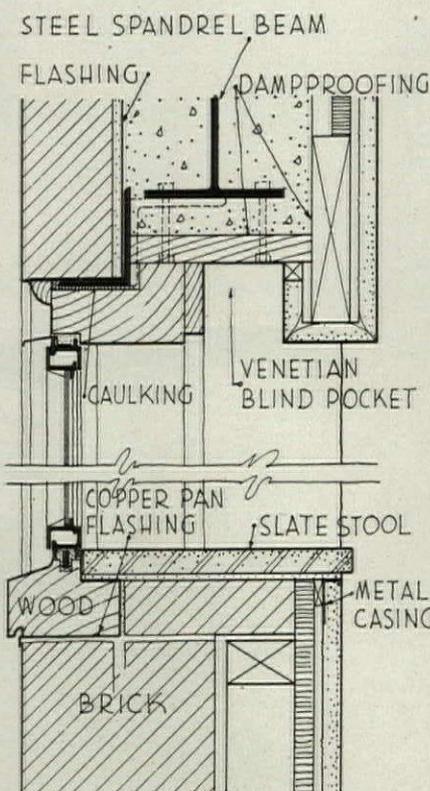
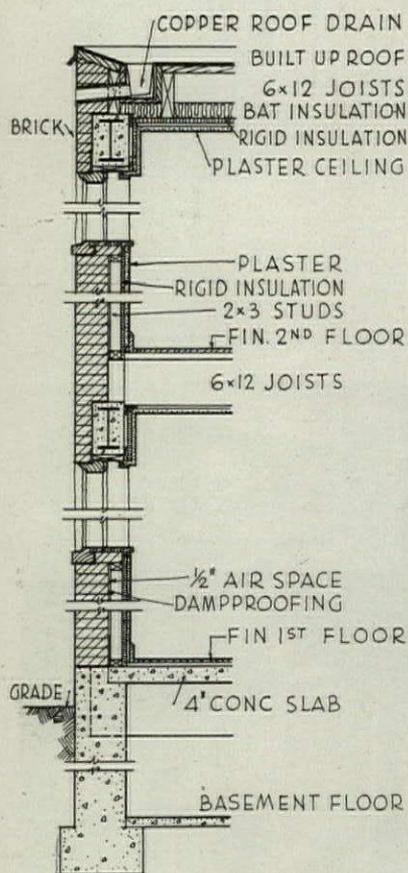
*Kitchen and pantry cabinets and shelves are birch; treated with a solution of cellulose; work counters of teak are oiled*

ELEVATION





*Floor of the dining room window bay (used as a radiant heating panel) is of purple slate*



TYPICAL WALL SECT. 0 1 FT.

HEAD & SILL 0 6 IN JAMB & MULLION.

cost item is the increase of thickness of floor boards (from  $\frac{7}{8}$ " to  $1\frac{3}{4}$ "). There are other items of course but they are cancelled by various economies. Briefly speaking, there seems to be no reason why the increase in cost of construction caused by the use of heavy timber should exceed the value of one board foot per square foot of floor. In the case of our house, the total increase as compared to conventional wooden construction was about \$200. Heavy timber construction has one advantage which is of very great importance from the standpoint of flexibility of the plan: it is possible to design it in a way that removes all limitation in placing of partitions. It virtually becomes "platform" construction.

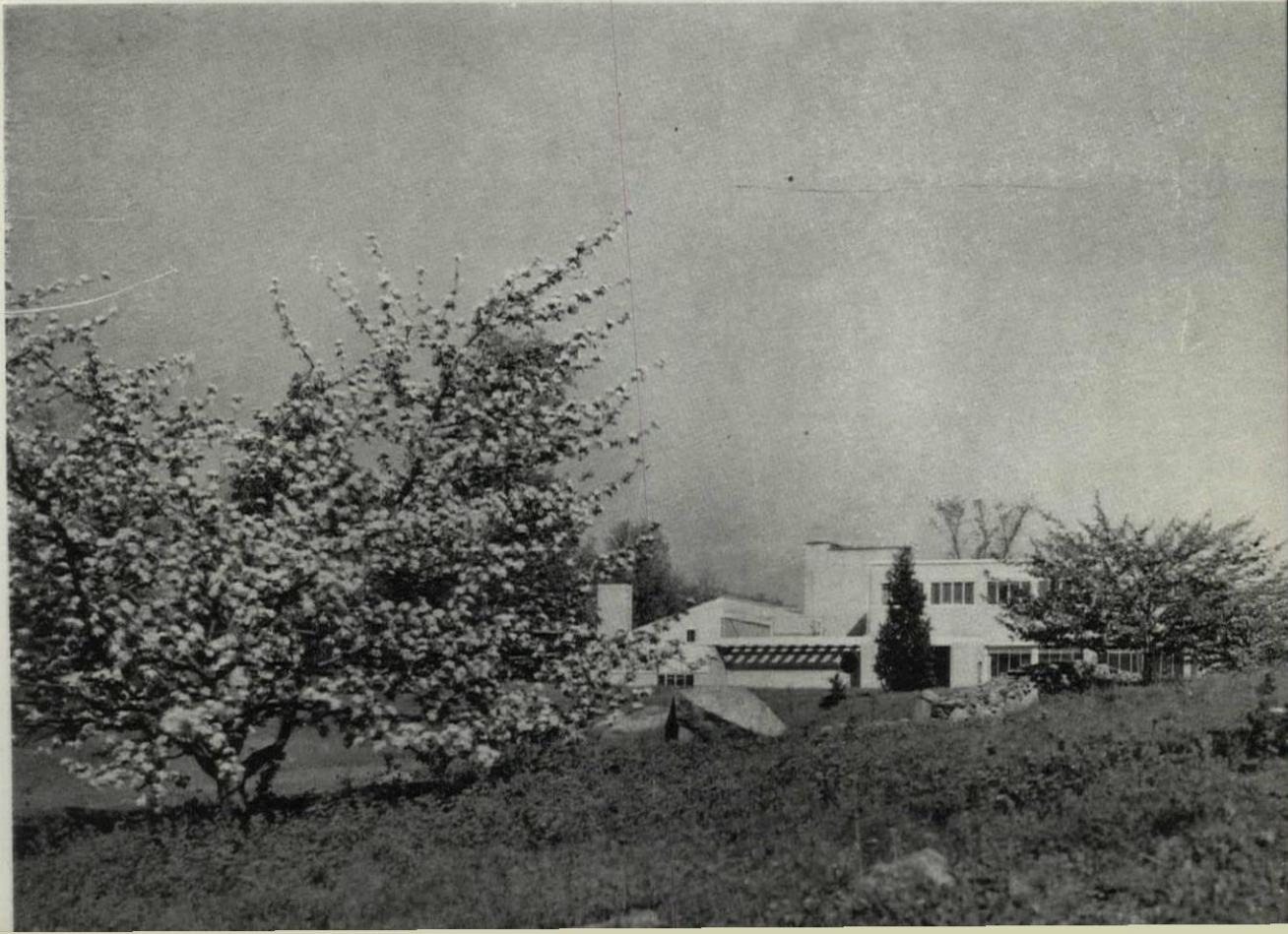
The conception of a functional house seems to have penetrated deep enough into the consciousness of at least the younger groups of our profession. Yet in actual practice this conception, if recognizable at all under a thick layer of mannerisms, often takes the form of undue emphasis on some peculiarity of the client's requirements with the consequence that the house becomes capricious and essentially frivolous. There is no need to be too pedantic about it but one should recognize that this tendency to design a house as if it were an orthopedic shoe—useless on another man's foot—ignores the fact that a functional house should function properly both in time and in space. Its usefulness should be extended for as long as possible and should have as broad a social base as possible. The business of building a house involves, in my way of thinking, the assumption of a definite obligation toward the community by both owner and architect. It is hardly logical to preach the tearing down of houses before they become obsolete and keep on designing houses which carry the germ of their own premature obsolescence. The question of speeding up the turnover of residential building is a tricky, technical, legal, and economic problem. An individual architect can do very little about it. But the

same architect can do a great deal in his everyday work to increase the usefulness of his houses. First of all, he can emphasize those requirements of the family in question which are in harmony with today's ways of living and, insofar as it is possible, with tomorrow's trends—this will broaden the social usefulness of the house. Second, he can endow his houses with a far greater degree of flexibility than they now possess. There are two kinds of flexibility: the flexibility in the use of an existing house and the ease of alterations. By the separation of the servants' quarters from the main house and by the choice of a skeleton type of construction, I tried to incorporate both kinds of flexibility in the design of our house.

In conclusion, a few words dealing with another aspect of construction. I am appreciably older than the majority of modern American architects. I completed my formal training in the middle twenties. In some respects it was not the best time to complete one's education (I tried to correct this by returning to the status of a student over and over again) but it had one distinct advantage: I was able to acquire a great deal of practical experience before the crash came. It is fashionable now, among the younger sets, to speak sneeringly of the state of the profession in those remote days. Bad as it may have been in many respects, it had one quality which is in danger of being lost: I think that at least the leading American offices in the decade of prosperity established standards of quality of construction and of thoroughness of preparation of drawings and specifications which, as a whole, have not been equalled anywhere in the world and approached only in England.

I sincerely admire the daring, resourcefulness and sometimes downright talent of many a young architect; but frankly, as often as not, I am appalled by the low quality of construction. Sometimes this lack of quality is excused by the experimental character of the building.

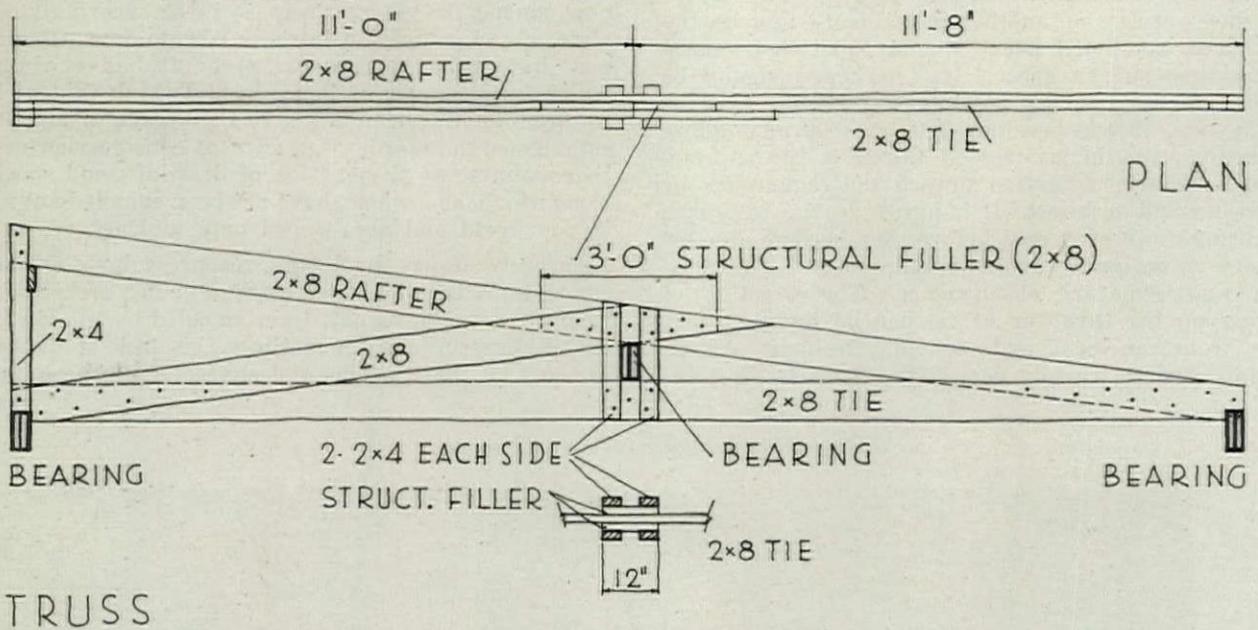
*"The house stands on two or three fairly level acres between the orchard and valley . . ."*





*Service wing living room, looking through to the kitchen*

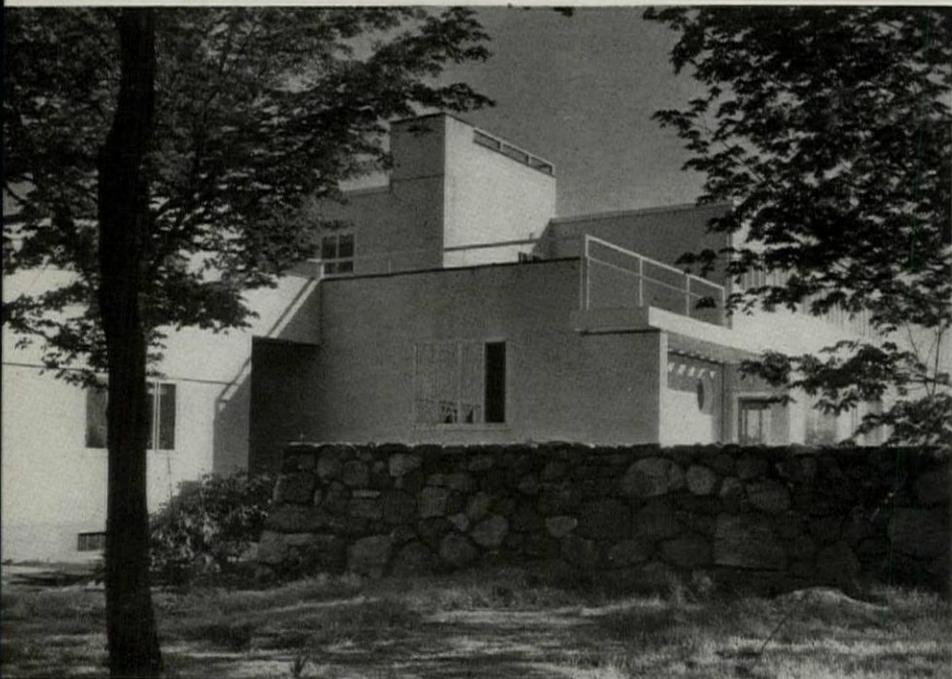
*Detail of truss in service wing*



but sometimes it is obvious that the young man in question did not know any better.

Quality of construction is not a luxury. A certain minimum, not very low at that, is an economic necessity in any type of a house if one analyzes properly the upkeep charges. This minimum can be dispensed with only in temporary shelters. Quality of construction is not synonymous with expensive materials and methods of construction. In fact, a high degree of quality is much easier to achieve if the type of construction is simple and straightforward and if a wide selection of materials is readily available. Neither is the quality of construction necessarily limited to buildings of conservative type. The thorough and detailed study which should be a prerequisite of any worth while experiment will inevitably result (if the experiment is successful) in a high degree of quality. In fact, the lack of sufficient quality will necessarily destroy the value of the experiment.

The understanding of quality of construction and the uncompromising insistence on a suitable degree of it belong (to my way of thinking) to the very essence of an architectural mind.



*An open, covered passage separates the house and service wing*



*Photos by Ernest Graham*

## **Total Cure for a Sorry Case** **Cleveland, Ohio**

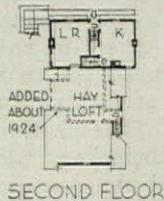
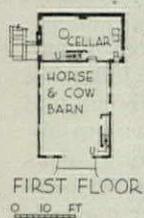
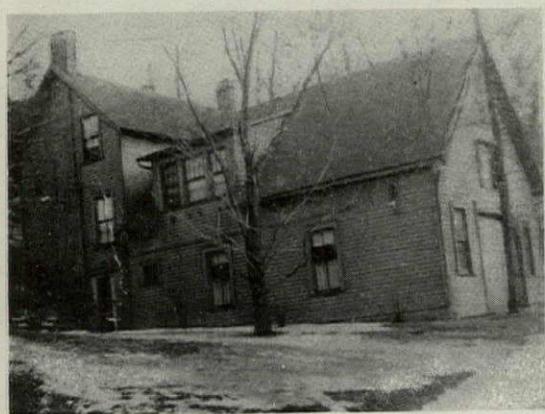
**BASCOM LITTLE, ARCHITECT**

"Something old and something new" might constitute the theme song for the wholesale remodeling and extension treatment that was given to this old house, original photographs of which appear on the following two pages. The place is the architect's own home and office. As Mr. Little puts it: "The problem was to obtain the advantages of contemporary planning ideas and still retain all of the old structure. Where large areas of glass were not required—on the north elevation, for example—it was found sensible to use the old window frames; whereas on the south (photo above) with its sun, view of the woods, and best breezes, a whole wall of glass was used. The only concessions to traditionalism are the shutters, which were used to improve the proportion of existing window frames."

The resultant house is something of a stylistic Mulligan stew, but as in a well-brewed stew, the disparate elements have been intelligently blended to form a satisfying whole.

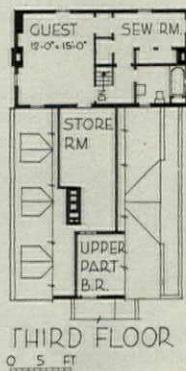


Motor court entrance. The house walls are painted red; trim and shutters are white

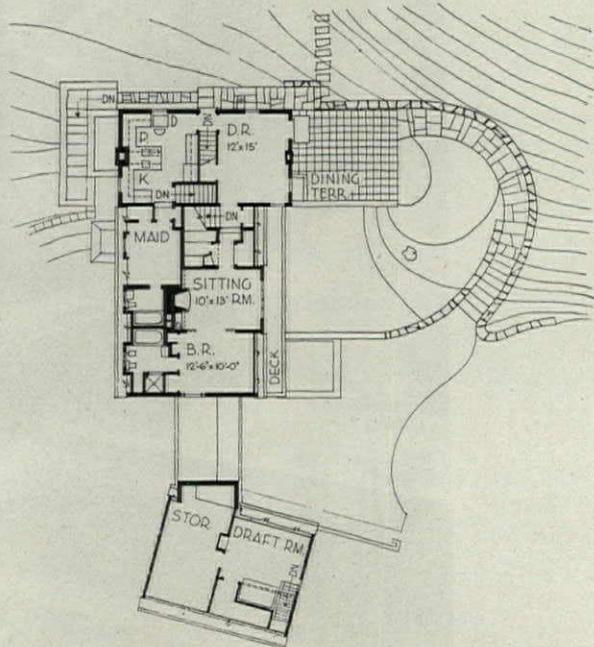


Before

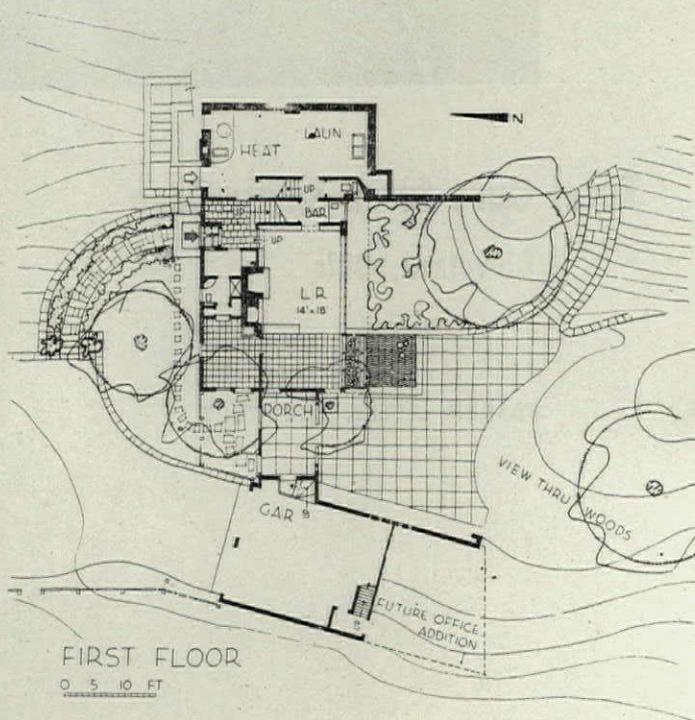
**BASCOM LITTLE, ARCHITECT**



THIRD FLOOR  
0 5 FT



SECOND FLOOR  
0 5 10 FT



FIRST FLOOR  
0 5 10 FT

This house is a good example of the usual form of war on architectural obsolescence—application of a vigorous cure to a structure otherwise nominated for oblivion. The architect inherited the steep, wooded hillside property, located near the border between Cleveland proper and Cleveland Heights. The site is large—some 3¾ acres, with a 600-foot frontage—with the existing house placed well toward the rear of the property. Since it has as near neighbors Western Reserve University and the University Hospitals, development along the frontage is a promising future possibility; it therefore seemed a sound investment to reclaim the old house.

The existing 4-room house with attached barn and hay-loft, built in 1888, was anything but promising. It is the more remarkable that in the finished job, as the “Before” and “After” snapshots clearly show, practically all of what existed structurally was maintained.

According to the architect, “the new part of the house (the garage and connecting porch) was carefully designed to gain privacy. The garage with its peaked roof shuts out a view of a busy street to the west from both first- and second-floor windows.”

In detail, the floor plans appear unduly complicated and full of strange breaks, but we learn that this is “due to the need to accommodate a number of built-in features (such as dust-proof wardrobes) which were brought from another house.”

Among other items to be accommodated was an unusual collection of antique furniture. Many home owners and architects, too, would have at once assumed that this condition required strict adherence to traditional settings. In this case, however, the sanctimonious approach was eschewed; clean wall planes without moldings were built, with the curious result, as Mr. Little points out, that “the antiques are actually con-

siderably more effective than they were in the linen-fold oak-paneled room for which originally bought.”

At the time this job was done, various rejects from a nearby government housing project were available at low cost, and the architect took delight in using some of the unorthodox items from this source that could hardly have been anticipated by a specification author. Discarded plywood formwork was used for finish floors; 4" x 4" shoring from the same source became studding and rafters; exterior doors were also rejects from the housing project; the lintel over the living room fireplace is a piece of old blackboard; a junk shop provided the wash basin in the first-floor lavatory; stone for the retaining walls was obtained by intercepting a load of excavated material on the way to the city dump. This was acquired at the extremely reasonable cost of two bottles of beer for the truck driver.

*Before*



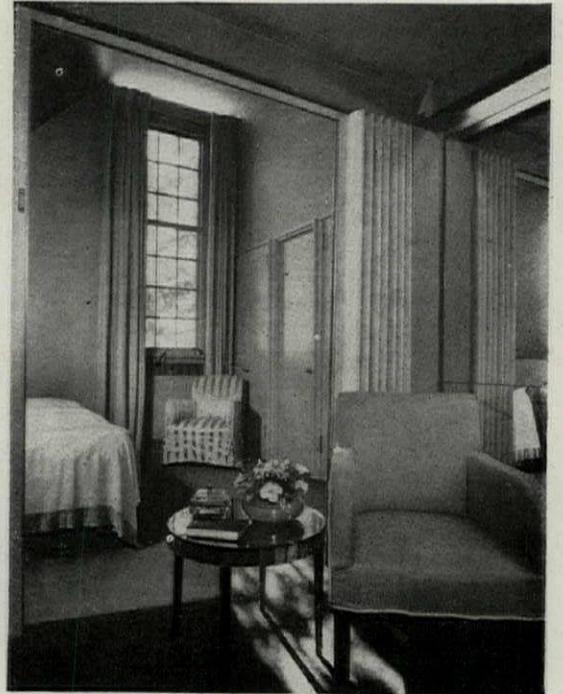
*Southern hillside front. The living room window wall is shaded by an overhang calibrated to the angle of the sun*



*Living porch, showing use of discarded  
4" x 4" shoring for framing members*



*Bedroom*



*A twentieth century setting displays eighteenth  
century furniture to good advantage*





**ACT I.**  
The awkward old house, built in 1903



Frederick L. Confer, Architect

**ACT II.**  
The "Colonial" period, 1936-1941

## Remodeling Job in Three Acts, Berkeley, Calif.

**Howard Moise, A. I. A., Architect for the Final Act**

In 1941, this property passed to the hands of its third owner at a cost of \$9,500—and thence to Mr. Moise for further alteration. Doctor's orders had forced the owner to look for a house with a downstairs bedroom and bath, not too brightly lighted, and he bought the house chiefly because it provided that feature. Furthermore, with the many changes made by its previous owner, it had become a pleasant, commodious, livable house in most respects. But there was one exception—a serious one: it had no provision for outdoor living; no porch, no garden, no contact with the outdoors except by way of the front door and the brick stoop. There was also a lack of functionally separated living or play

**ACT III. The present house, designed for better living**

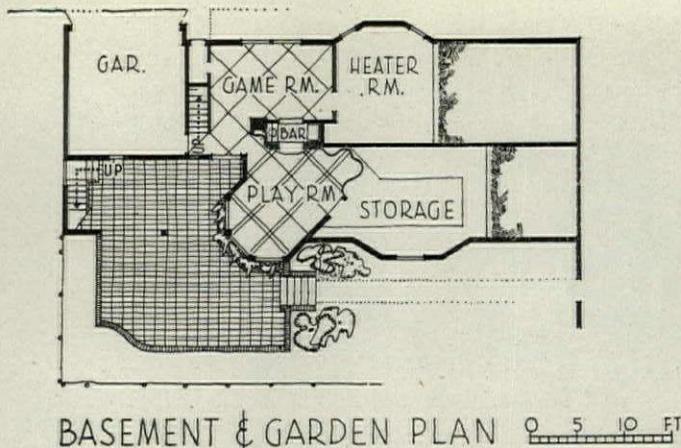
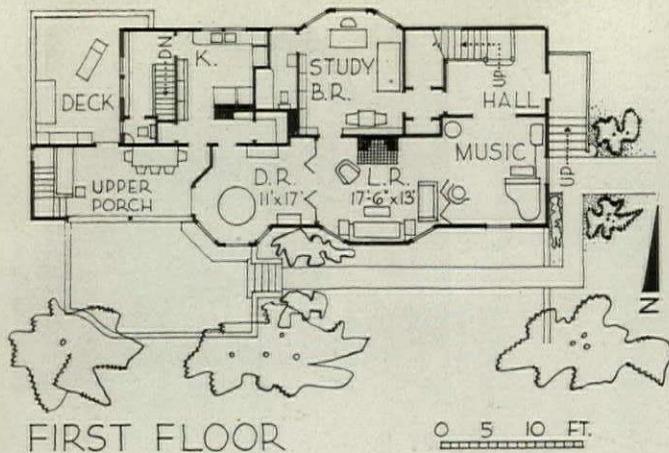


**Before**

**After**

*Photos (of new work)  
by Roger Sturtevant*





spaces for the different age groups of a family including parents, two children in college, and one of high school age.

The correction of these two faults and the creation of facilities whereby the owner's wife could indulge her predilection for gardening constituted the chief conditions which the architect for the second major remodeling operation had to meet.



*Arrangement of furniture and folding screens breaks up the long living room into functionally separate areas.*



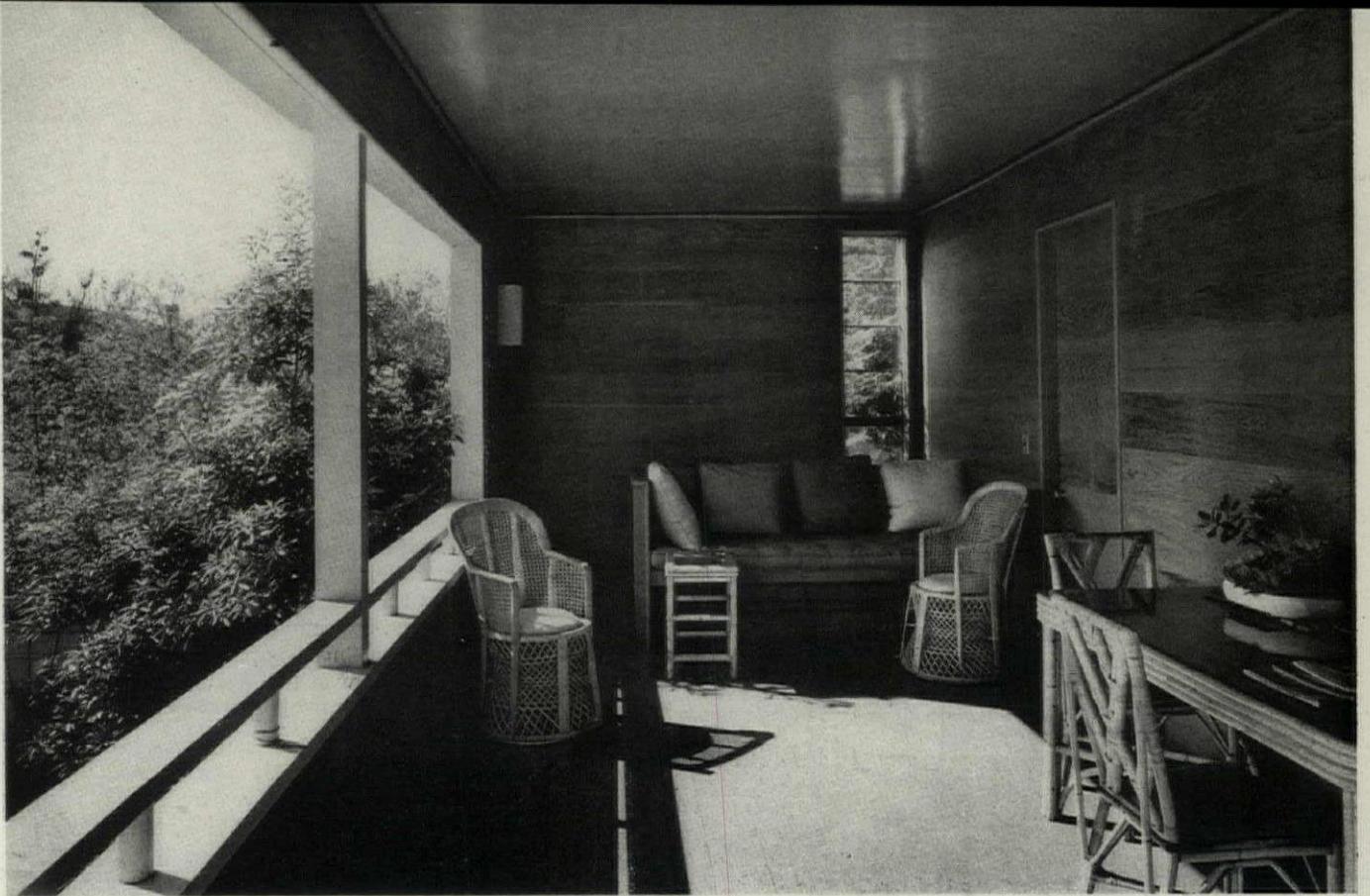
*The bamboo-pole surface on a portion of the playroom walls helps increase the room's apparent height.*

Very little was done to the existing interior of the house except to paint the main rooms bone white (eliminating wallpaper), move some picture moldings, and carefully plan and supervise the furnishing. The owner's downstairs bedroom was lined with bookshelves and painted an "operating room" green for maximum eye comfort. But the chief improvement was provision of the badly-needed facilities for outdoor living.

In the space between the dining room and the rear lot line a generous porch or outdoor living room was constructed, wide open to the South sun but closed on the North and West against the chilly winds which blow in from San Francisco Bay. The bare back yard, which had previously served only to harbor a dog kennel and the garbage can, was converted into a brick-paved patio. A lower porch provided a shaded extension to the patio and increased its apparent size. A high screen of lattice and glass-like fabric converted the exposed garage roof into a sheltered, out-of-the-way work place and sun deck. Finally, the basement area under the dining room and kitchen was developed into a play room and game room, with a two-way bar, for the use of the younger members of the family.

The creation of these two rooms and of the lower porch was achieved by taking advantage of favorable grade conditions. The main floor of the house was well above grade in the front, and the lot sloped several feet toward the rear. At the back of the house the underpinnings were high enough so that, by lowering the grade and foundations only about 18 inches, it was possible to insert an additional story under the main floor. The ceilings are low, but the effect is not unpleasant. Finally, attention should be called to the ingenious solution of the small but important problem of where to put the garbage can for a kitchen a story above ground and without access to the back yard. A garbage closet with an unlocked door on the street for the use of the garbage man, and a trap door, equipped with a foot-operated cover, in the floor of the service porch do the trick.

The cost of the improvements and the total investment which the house in its present form represents (exclusive of architect's fee and cost of landscaping) was \$7,028. The landscaping cost came to approximately \$272, the architect's fee, \$700, or an over-all total of about \$8,000. Of the \$9,500 paid for the house, \$2,000 may be considered as the value of the land. Adding the remaining \$7,500 to the \$8,000 expended for alteration brings the total cost of the house itself to \$15,500. Is this too much to spend for a remodeled house? The answer would seem to be that a new house of similar construction and equipment and of equal floor area, figured at the rate of \$6 per square foot (the figure in general use for estimates at the time of the latest remodeling), would have cost at least \$25,000.



Walls of 10-in. redwood siding, treated with one coat of oil-thinned pink paint wiped off, shield the upper porch from the prevailing—and sometimes disagreeable—winds. The ceiling is pink-painted plywood. White trim frames the view of garden and patio.

The patio paving brick, laid on 2-in. cement grout, with vertical joints sand-filled, is continued to form the flooring for the lower porch or loggia. The stairway provides an agreeable connecting link between the main floor of the house and the garden level.





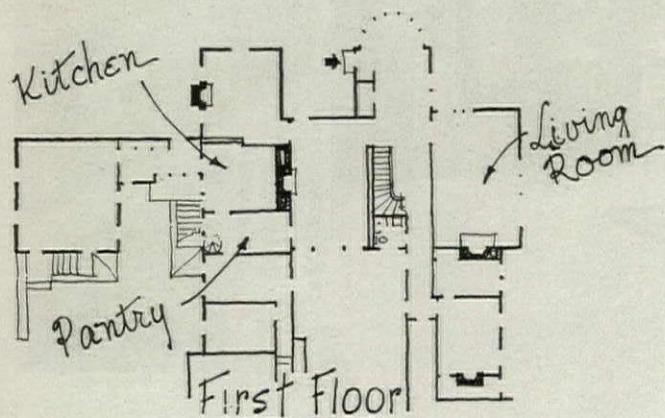
Exterior view of the house

This veritable ark of a house had been in the architect's family for many years, accumulating wings and oddments as it rocked along. One particularly plush period had even seen the addition of a grand ballroom! Long since, the place had passed beyond the confines of any definitive unit, and under ordinary circumstances might have been considered hopeless today. But there the house was, and as the war produced its full measure of family readjustments, it became desirable for various segments of the family to find a suitable place in which to "carry on." The result was the partial rejuvenation of the old place.

No claim is made that what has been done is a model for others to follow, and certainly the over-all house still remains a bulky and unlikely dwelling for any average family. Even to the owners, the remodeling is frankly a temporary expedient, and in most of the work the least elaborate of materials—composition board, sheets of plywood, etc.—have been employed.

Nonetheless, the renaissance that has been brought to the individual rooms is instructive to any architect commissioned to improve existing facilities in an old house; for while the house as a whole is exotic, the separate rooms are not untypical. And the architect, in addition to achieving the results with modest materials, has so organized them that the rooms constitute contemporary design of a high order.

As in many elderly great houses, the old kitchen was located at a considerable distance from the dining room, and communication with the family part of the house involved a good hike. By bringing the kitchen and pantry together in an efficient unit immediately adjacent to the dining room and including a spiral staircase from

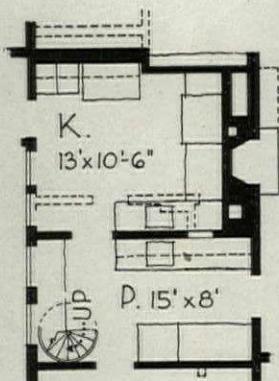
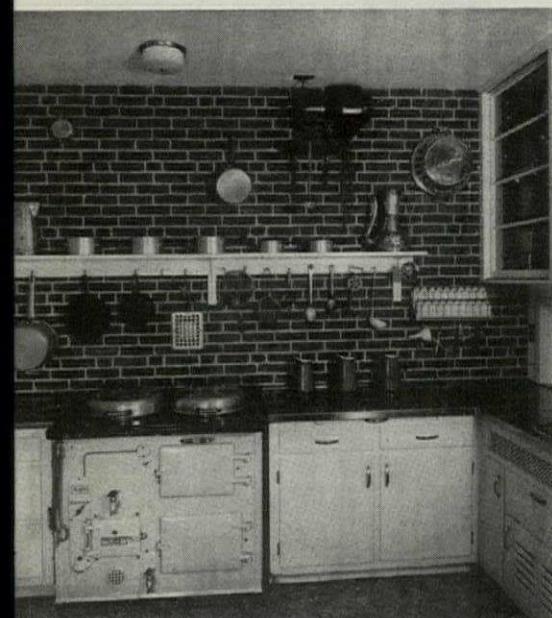


## An Oldtimer Undergoes Surgery

Prides Crossing, Massachusetts

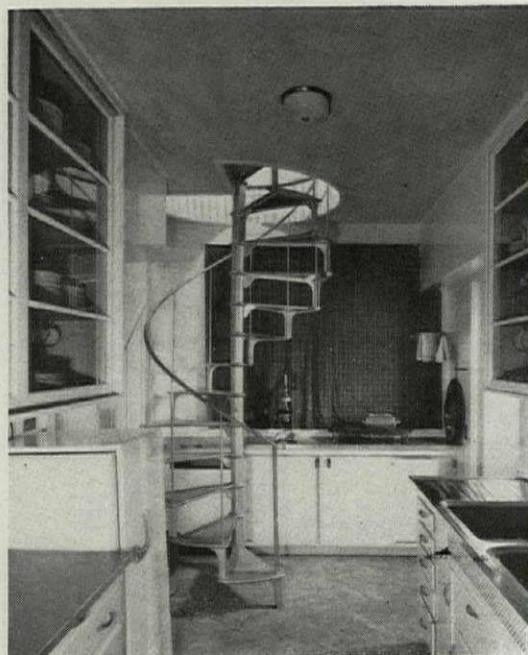
LOUISA VAUGHAN, ARCHITECT

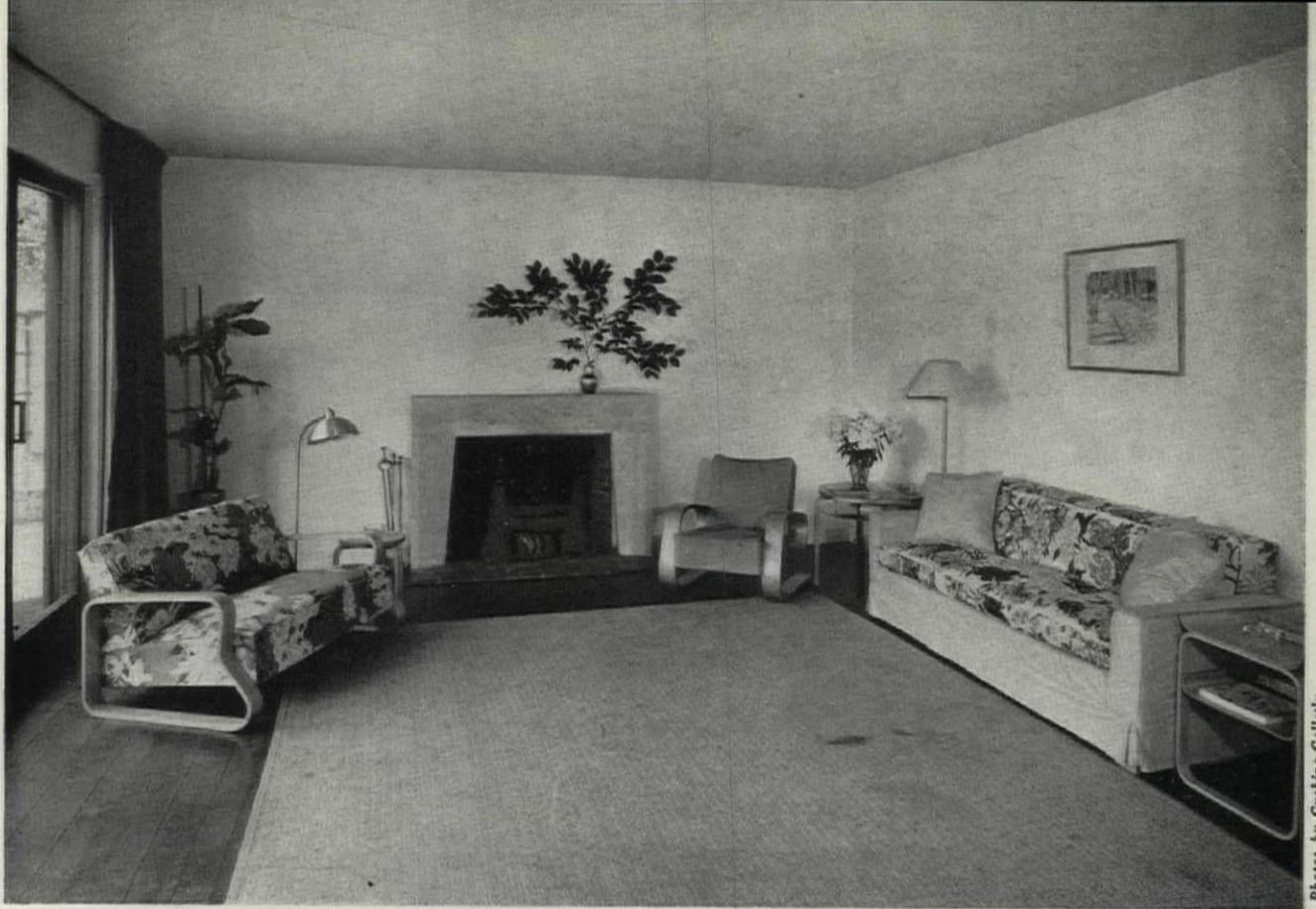
Kitchen (left) and pantry (right); spiral stairs lead to the upstairs hall



KITCHEN & PANTRY

0 5 FT





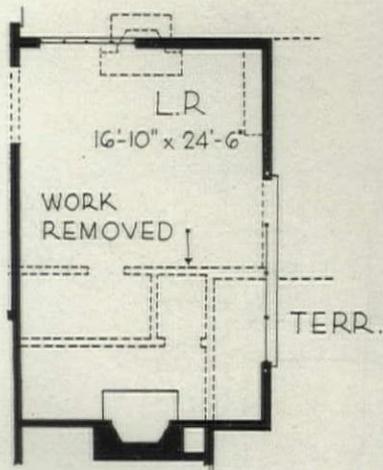
Photos by Cushing-Cellardy

The remodeled living room: walls of smooth white plaster; ceiling, sand-float finish in light gray blue; fireplace, travertine of a pink-beige tone.



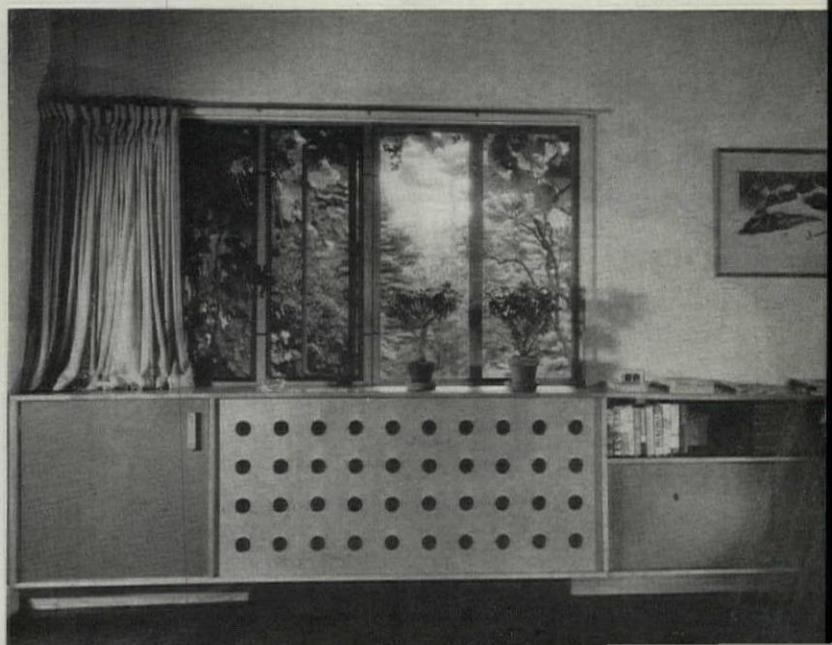
Exterior, showing window wall of the remodeled living room

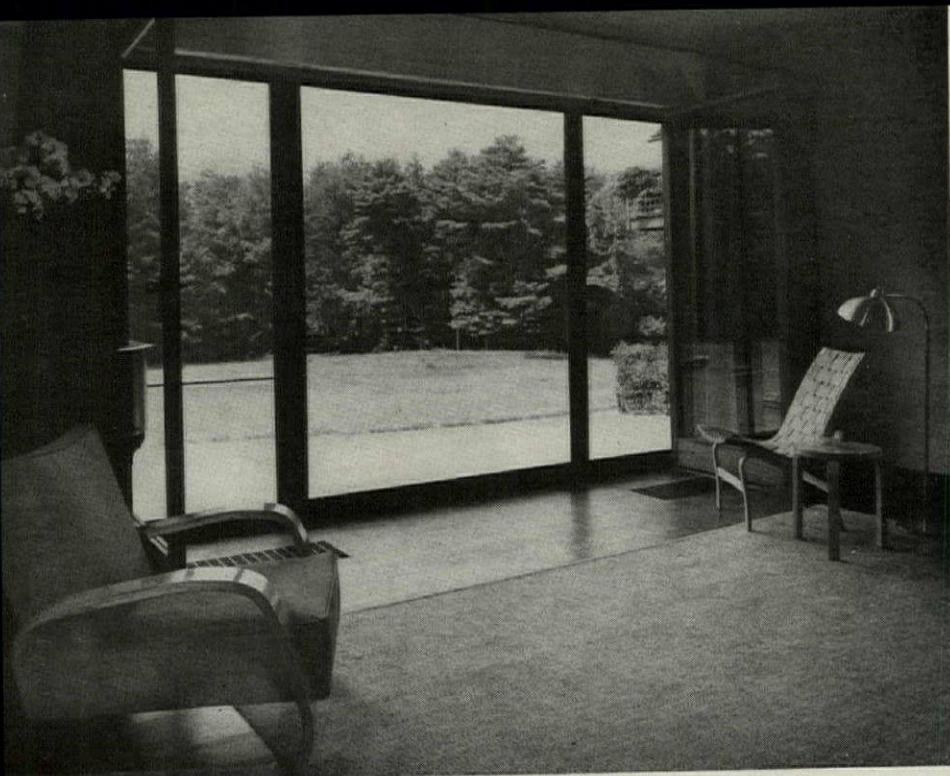
Storage cabinets and radiator screen are built of hard composition board and natural birch plywood



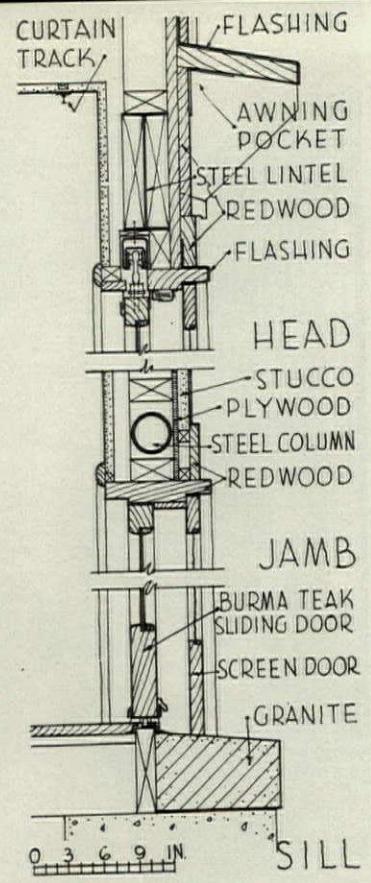
LIVING RM.

0 5 FT.

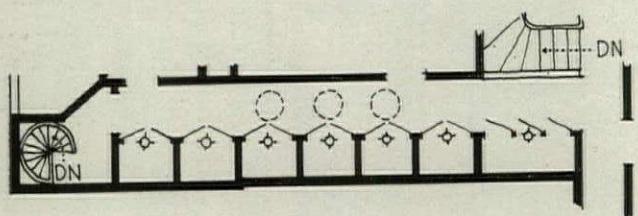




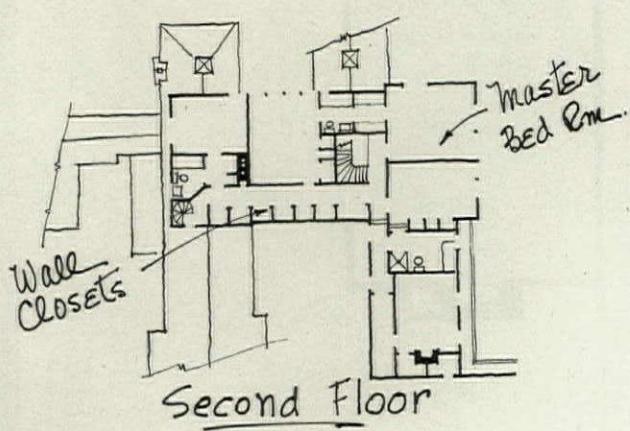
Glazed panels, hinged to fold back, make up the huge view window in the living room

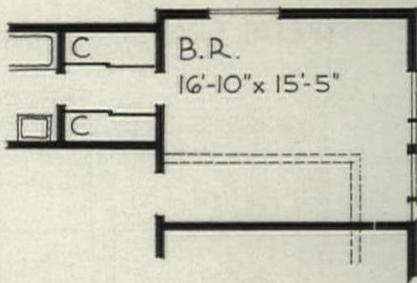


Closet wall of the upper hall; details and photos below



HALL WALL CLOSETS  
0 5 10 FT.





## MASTER BED RM. & DRESSING CLO.

0 5 FT.

*The new subdivided closet in the dressing room is equipped with sliding doors.*



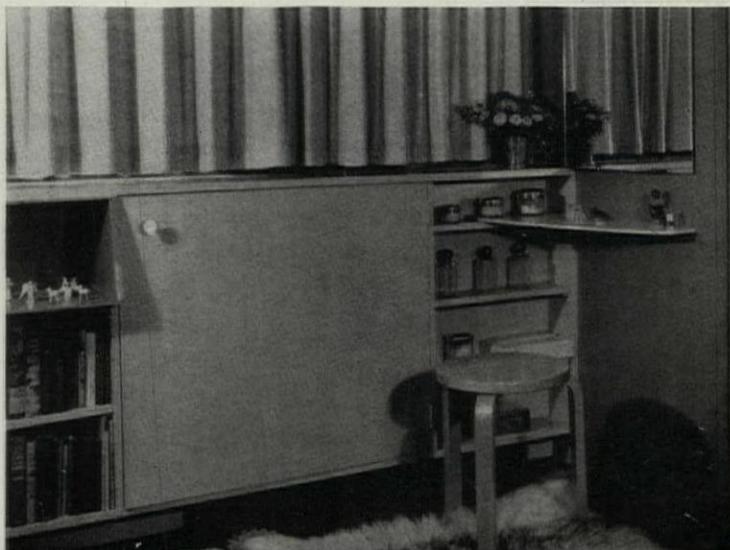
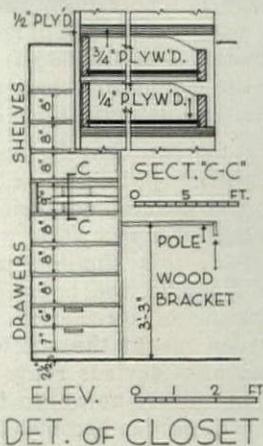
*New sash and a new color scheme have enlivened this bedroom. Three of the walls are pale pink smooth plaster; the fourth, behind the beds, is painted dove gray. The curtains are natural basket weave fabric with a printed leaf pattern in gray and dark green.*



the pantry to one end of the upstairs hall, innumerable unnecessary steps have been eliminated. Organization of the new culinary department is along the efficient lines of the most up-to-date kitchens. And the spirit of the rooms has been raised with a bright color scheme of red and white. Walls and cabinet work have a white gloss-painted finish; cabinet interiors are left natural fir plywood; a washable, hard-surfaced tile covers the wall areas between the underside of cabinets and counter tops; work surfaces are either stainless steel or red linoleum. The floor is covered with gray marbled linoleum, and the curtains are a red cotton plaid.

The upstairs hall closet wall (following page) is worked out for efficient and central organization for the belongings of various members of the household; the central, under-window cabinet is painted cream color; the other closet surfaces are painted rose red; the floor is wine-red linoleum.

*The enclosure for a bedroom radiator has been extended to form shelves and a small dressing table unit.*



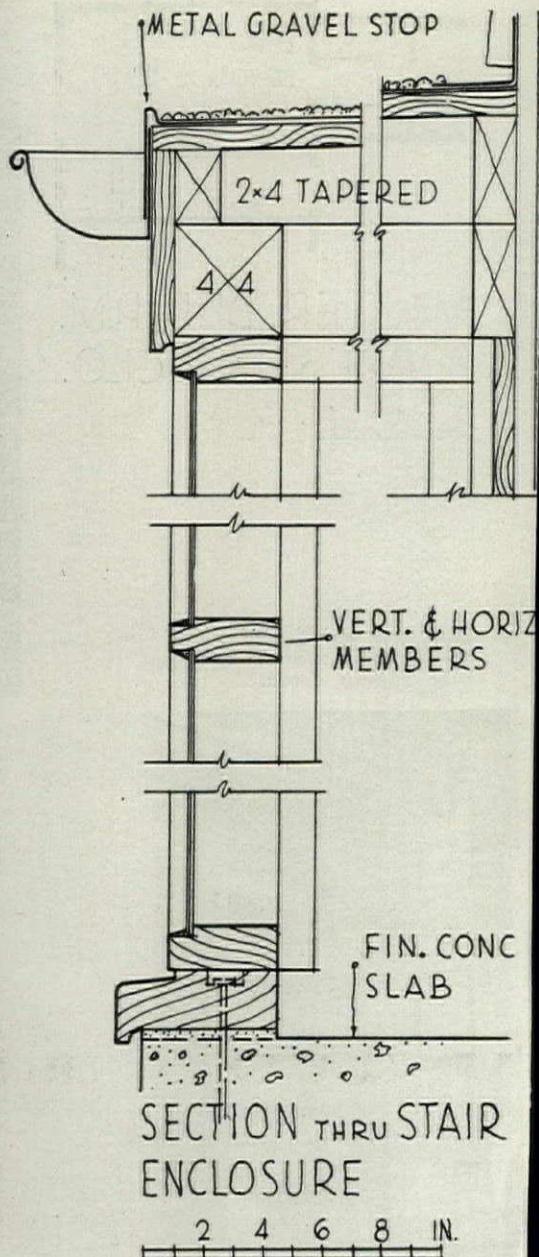


Photos by Roger Sturtevant

## Imaginative Flight From House to Garden

Berkeley, California

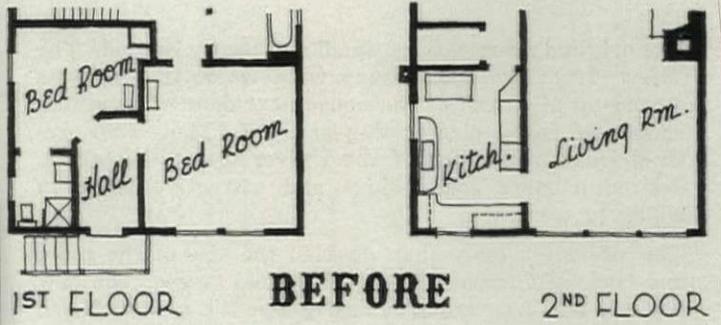
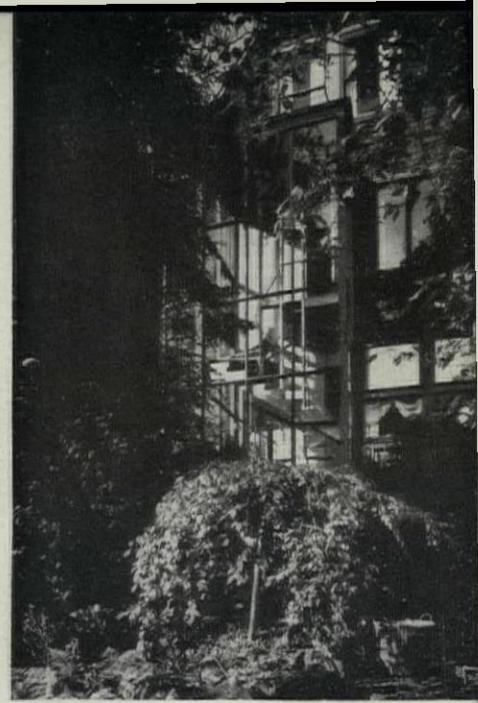
WILLIAM WILSON WURSTER, A.I.A., ARCHITECT



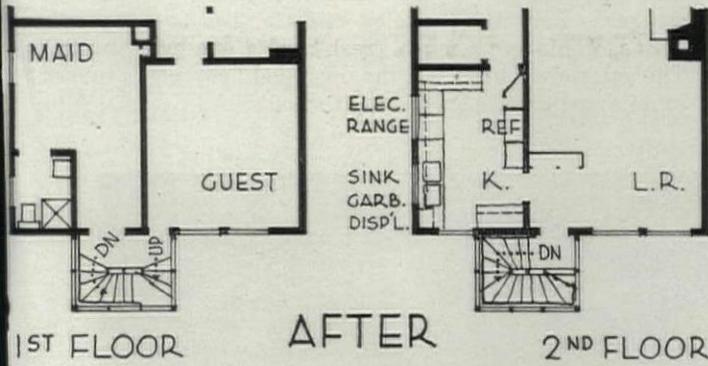
From the viewpoint of an owner whose chief delights are gardening and cooking, this high-waisted house had two abysmal flaws: there was no way to approach the garden from the house except by an ungainly little kitchen stoop with steep, ladder-like stairs; and the kitchen was poorly arranged and ill-equipped, was altogether inefficient and unpleasant.

Through the architect's good offices, both of these "essentials" have not only been provided, but dramatized in a most exceptional way. The new kitchen might well impress Oscar of the Waldorf, and the new backstairs achieve the combined aspect of a shaft of light, a tower of glass, and an articulated spiral eyrie.

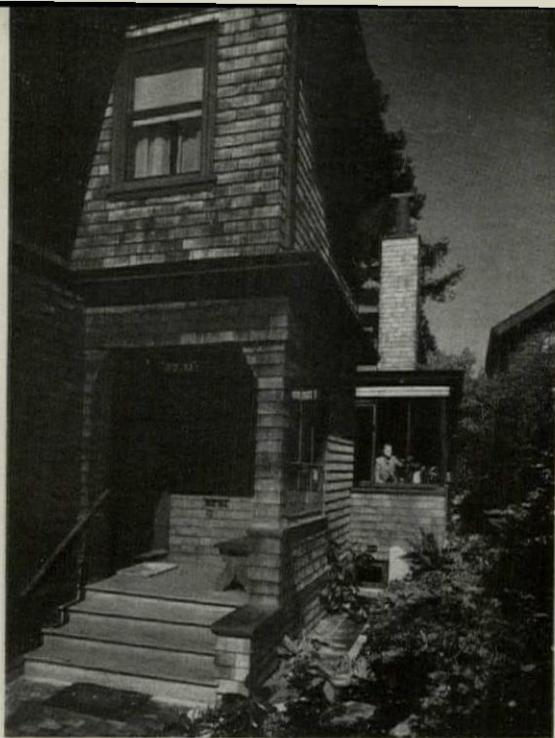
It is important to note that by appending the stairs outside the existing building wall, interior cutting, patching, and the general confusion usually involved in the introduction of a new stair were almost entirely avoided. In effect, this single extraordinary element provides three floors of the house with a wholly new hallway and means of circulation. Where, before, a trip to the garden meant the equivalent of a visit to the garbage can or a devious route to lower levels via private rooms, new doors now open from each level, and the approach to the garden becomes an experience not to be duplicated for miles around—if anywhere.



0 5 10 FT.



The kitchen (photos at left) where meals have been prepared for as many as 54 dinner guests and where, at Christmas time, the owner turns out 4,000 cookies for lucky friends, is regally outfitted with a series of built-in electric units comprising oven, broiler, and warming cabinet, counter tops of stainless steel with shallow steel sash above, and a splendid array of cupboards and shelf cabinets with a place for everything. The silver drawers are made with fitted covers so that when the owner is away, the drawers become strapped boxes exactly sized for storage at the bank.



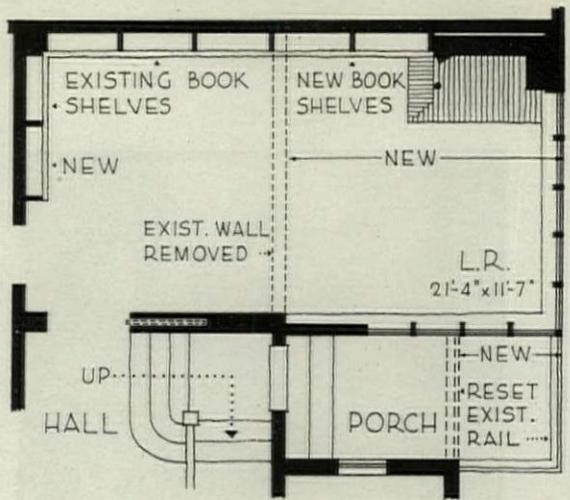
Photos by Roger Sturtevant

*On the exterior, no attempt was made to do more than match surface treatment with existing work: natural shingles, green-painted trim.*

## One-Room Improvement

Berkeley, California

*Walls and cupboard doors are of waxed redwood plywood; ceiling: plaster board, painted pink. The upholstery is oyster white, and the rug repeats warm tones found in the fireplace brick.*



PLAN

0 5 FT.

**HOWARD MOISE, A.I.A., ARCHITECT**

The original room was too small and poorly lighted. The "view" from two double-hung windows on the east was a close-up of a wall of the house next door. The stilted ceiling of coved plaster was at 9'-6". The owner, retired Dean of Women of the University of California, desired a more commodious and attractive room in which to work.

The alteration more than doubled the size of the room and bookshelf space. To shield the old "view," the new easterly windows are of ribbed glass; the new southern windows admit abundant sunlight and allow a glimpse of front garden and street. Two sections of the steel sash are hinged to open and are provided with roll screens. For the Berkeley climate, the architect explains, "This is as much fresh air as one ever wants." The end tier of bricks of the open-end fireplace is turned at an angle to protect adjacent woodwork.

