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The Editor will be glad to receive MS. articles and also illustrations of current architecture in this country and abroad with a view to publication. Though every care will be taken, the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for material sent him.

THURSDAY, MARCH 20, 1941. NUMBER 2408: VOLUME 93

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

Owing to the paper shortage the JOURNAL, *in common with all other papers, is now only supplied to newsagents on a "firm order" basis. This means that newsagents are now unable to supply the* JOURNAL *except to a client's definite order.*

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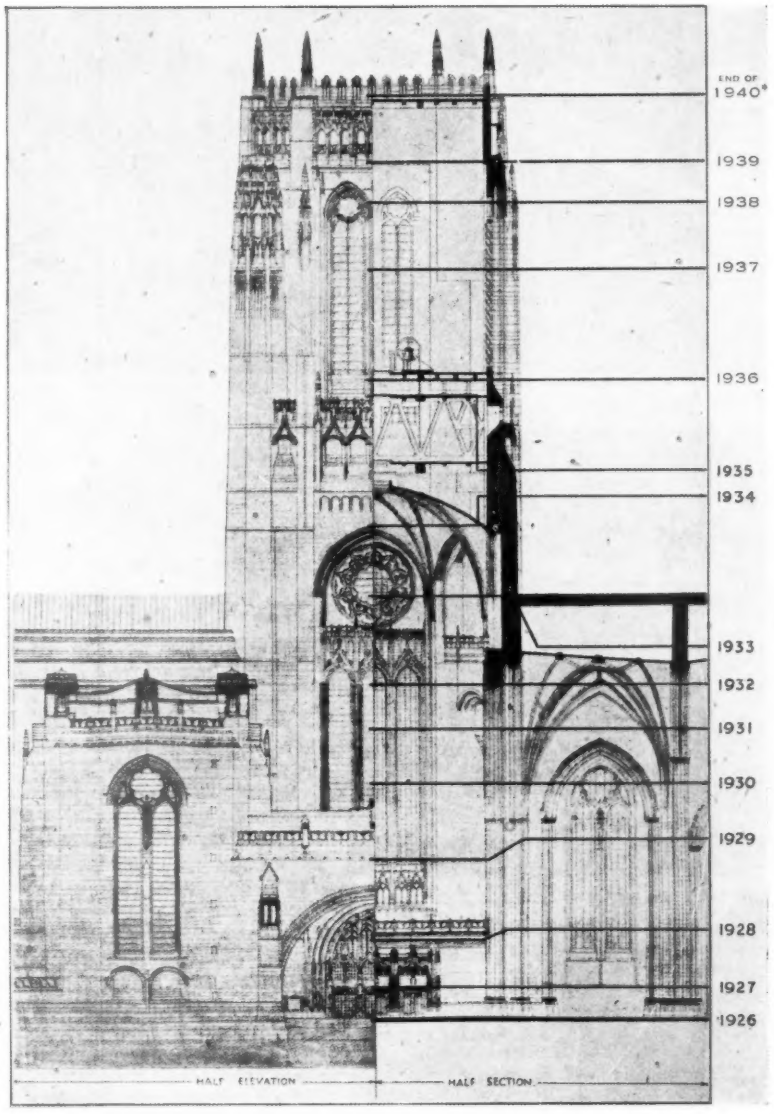
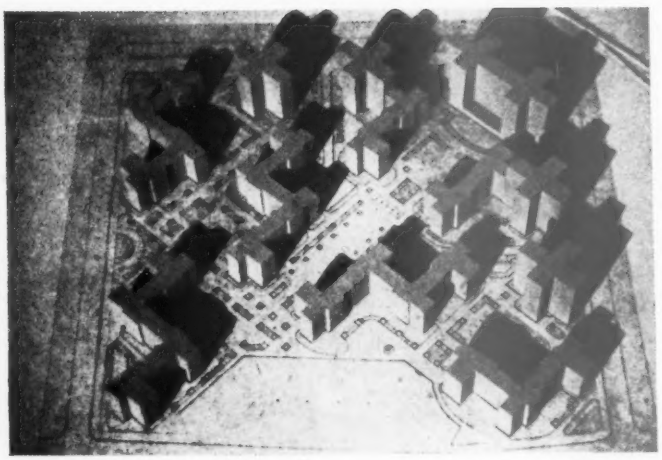
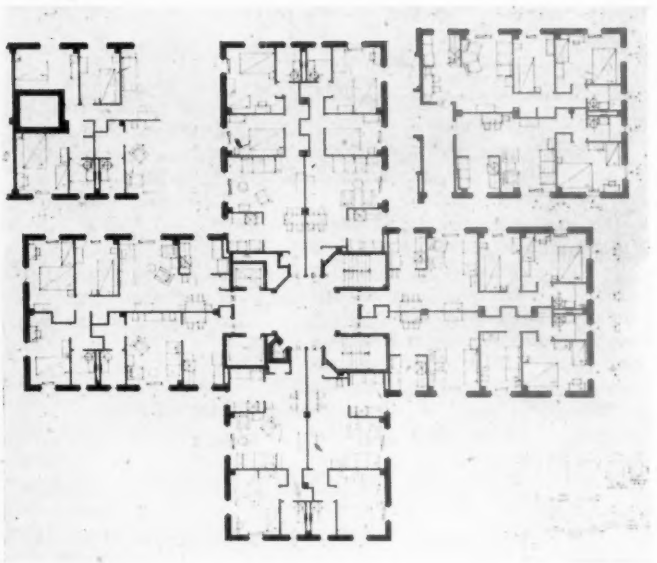
LIVERPOOL CATHEDRAL PROGRESS



The half-elevational and half-sectional drawing, reproduced above, from the Cathedral Committee's Quarterly Bulletin, shows the progress made year by year in the building of Liverpool Cathedral. Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, R.A., is the architect. The Cathedral was seriously damaged in September last, and since then has been almost nightly in danger from enemy action, yet steady if modest progress has been made towards the completion of the new section. Work on the tower was uninterrupted except during the severe weather last winter and it has now nearly reached its full height. In November a licence to complete the tower was received from the Ministry of Works and Buildings. Had there been no war there is every reason to believe that the new section would have been completed in 1940 according to schedule. Work is now sufficiently advanced that when the war ends only a few months' further work will be needed to finish the building.





A USHA HOUSING SCHEME

State subsidies and local authorities' housing schemes have played in this country a very large part in housing for twenty years, but both are still comparative novelties in the United States and considerable space is still devoted to various types of USHA (United States Housing Authority) projects in American architectural publications. The British architect has, of course, no knowledge of the special difficulties which face USHA architects, but it is nevertheless disappointing that the U.S.A., with so many ghastly mistakes in Britain to serve as a warning, should look like repeating some of them, and especially rigid geometrical layout patterns for large twelve-to-the-acre suburban schemes.

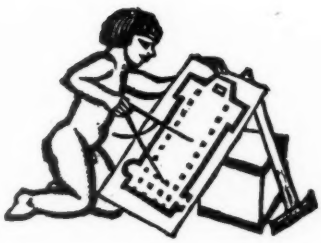
America is, however, carrying out urban schemes as well, and on this page is illustrated the East River Houses scheme at New York—a scheme which is particularly interesting in that it uses blocks of ten and eleven floors as well as those of six floors.

To British eyes the scheme appears to have too great a density (400 persons per acre), but otherwise very similar schemes on sites twice the size may yet prove to be one of the best ways in which to "rebuild" British cities.

The illustrations show: top, the site (outlined in white) on East River, New York. Centre, one of the photographs of the scale model taken under the "sun machine" at Columbia University as a check on sunlight and shadowing. Bottom, typical flat plans and arrangement of access.

The scheme provides 1,170 flats at a cost, excluding site cost, of about £1,000,000. But this figure, about double that of five-floor flats in Britain, is set off by higher rents and higher wage rates, and therefore provides no true basis for comparison.

The illustrations on this page are from "Pencil Points."



THE PRESIDENT LOOKS FORWARD

LAST week Mr. W. H. Ansell, President of the R.I.B.A., read to the Royal Society of Arts a paper called *The London of the Future*. It was an important occasion. For six months London has been suffering damage from aerial bombardment, and it is certain that it will suffer further and perhaps heavier damage before the war ends. London's citizens have been fortified during past attacks by the belief that the damage done will provide the chance to transform London into a far finer place to live in and to work in. And therefore the first forecast of the forms this transformation may take by the representative of those who will be charged with their physical execution has the greatest news value.

In preparing his forecast Mr. Ansell was faced with formidable difficulties. Just at present the thoughts of London's citizens about the city they would like to have come more from their hearts than their heads. In the midst of destruction they desire that their hopes of a beautiful city should be given direction and form, that a vague vision of the wide streets, gracious parks and civilized orderliness should be made less vague and therefore the more heartening during months to come. They ask that architects should do this for them. But just at the moment they do not want to be confronted too closely with the details of the many hard problems which will have to be solved, of the great decisions which will have to be taken, before any measurably improved London can begin to take shape.

Mr. Ansell catered for this natural war-time feeling with shrewdness. He gave more definite shape to the hopes of Londoners by sketching architectural possibilities for some of the facets of post-war London—the Port, the Surrey side, the City churches. But, interspersed with consideration of these details, he made it clear that London could only be improved to the degree Londoners now hope for if the architecture of the design and grouping of individual buildings was preceded by and allied to the grand architecture of skilful guidance of all land utilization throughout the London area. Before an audience which was already having its fill in regard to other matters of large-scale preparation and organization, the President did not go into the details of the mechanism which would be needed for such a guidance. He merely mentioned, at suitable intervals, some of the factors on which it must be based: limitation of growth, location of industry, banishment of the haphazard dormitory suburb, development of humanly comprehensible and reasonably self-contained sub-communities within the enormous community of London, transport and roads. And as his final point he emphasized the need for a planning authority solely concerned with the reconstruction and future development of the whole London region, in great matters and small. No better final point could have been made.

Just as some architects may disagree with the President's suggestions about details of London's post-war appearance, others may be disappointed that he was not more insistent on the principles on which London reconstruction must be based, and particularly on the absolute necessity for central guidance of all redevelopment. But it should be remembered that Mr. Ansell was invited to speak as an architect, and architects are still considered by most of the public to be concerned only with external design, vistas, axes and the preservation and display of ancient buildings. For the elected representative of such men to declare, before the Lord Mayor, that architects could do little towards making London a finer place without a complete change of public attitude towards town planning would have been both unexpected and, at the moment, injudicious. At the moment the public want to be assured that they can have beauty and orderliness at a price; but they don't want the details of the price flourished too closely before them. The President has given them that assurance with illustrations which will find favour with most of them. And that is a good first step.

But architects have to bear in mind, when the first step is now past, that the details of the price which will have to be paid for a better London must be realized by the public some time, and some time before the end of the war. There are two reasons for this. The reconstruction of London will begin directly the war ends, and preparations for its guidance must therefore be completed beforehand. Secondly, the setting up of a London planning authority possessed of any useful powers will entail big changes; and apart from the opposition of interested parties a great many people will, by the end of this war, be very tired of all big changes, central controls, interference of any kind with a man doing what he likes. A cry for a new Geddes Axe is certain, and may be a very loud cry.

What happens in London will set a pattern for what happens throughout Britain. And therefore in all future pronouncements, architects should do all that they can to make sure that the future Geddes Axe does not fall on central guidance of London's redevelopment. They can do this by stressing, with increasing insistence in all public utterances, that the beauty and convenience and health of the future London depends as to ninety-nine parts on skilful guidance of its redevelopment and only as to one part on the planning and design of individual buildings or small groups of buildings.

The Architects' Journal
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NOTES & TOPICS

FIRST YEAR POST-MORTEM

WITHIN three months from the beginning of the war architects had made three unpleasant discoveries about the methods being used for the production of buildings for war purposes. First, the War Office and Air Ministry were giving vast amounts of work to a small number of big contractors on cost-plus-fee terms; second, no use was being made of architects or allied professions in the design or execution of the various schemes; third, no attempt was being made to standardize types or to divide schemes into urgent and less urgent groups for the better allocation of available materials.

*

One remembers that the profession made a fuss about these things. It pointed out that the building industry—in which time means money with a vengeance—would not have built up a uniform procedure of site survey, subsoil tests, design, specification and costing if experience had not taught them that it was just as necessary for quick building as for durable and more costly building. All to no purpose. The War Office, and to a slightly smaller degree the Air Ministry, was dazzled by the immediate time saving of cutting out surveys, engineers architects and preliminary plans. They handed a few type drawings to the chosen contractors and told them to get on with it.

*

The contractors did so, and for its knowledge of subsequent events the public is for ever indebted to the Select Committee on National Expenditure. The Fourth and Fifth Reports of this great institution have now been published* and show it still padding relentlessly after the building directorates of Air and War and exposing, with quiet objectivity, one costly floater after another.

Architects, engineers and quantity surveyors knew by November, 1939, that the system being employed for building camps was running three separate and big risks. The abolition of preliminary surveys and subsoil tests invited hold-ups from unforeseen subsoil conditions. That the contractor was not supplied with proper layout and other drawings prepared by architects and engineers employed by the clients did not mean that such drawings were dispensed with entirely: it meant that the contractor had to employ people to prepare them, and thus take on additional and quite new responsibilities at a time when his own were more than enough for him. Third, the cost-plus-fee system—without strict control—provides no incentive to speedy completion and good organization.

*

The Select Committee's Fifth Report shows that architects' forebodings were fully justified. Concerning the construction of Militia Camps it says:

> . . . the absence of plans and details before the work was commenced has undoubtedly led to avoidable delays and many variation orders with the consequent undoing of work already begun or, in some cases, completed; . . . that these delays made it necessary to pay heavy overtime charges; that the contractors had no incentive to keep the costs down; and that there was inadequate supervision both on the part of the contractor and the War Office. . . . Figures have been put before the Sub-Committee of the actual cost, so far as it is known, of the Militia camps. In almost every case the final cost has exceded the original estimate by a very large sum, sometimes by as much as four times.

These statements are strong enough to make the large body of architects, civil and structural engineers and quantity surveyors who had little or no work in the autumn of 1939, wonder why the War Office did not employ some of them if only for the sake of its own good name.

But later statements are stronger still and indicate that in the general *mêlée* even elementary standards of competence and honesty—one might almost say morale—broke down :

> . . . the Sub-Committee have paid a number of visits to Militia camps . . . they have received numerous letters and heard evidence . . . drawing attention to bad workmanship. They have also received information from certain individuals who make allegations of a very serious character against contractors, surveyors and others in official positions in connection with Militia camps. They have gone carefully into some of these charges . . . but are of the opinion that exhaustive enquiry into all the charges formulated is not a proper subject for them to pursue. . . . They consider, however, that the charges should be further investigated.

THE REMEDY

The Committee points out that the Office of Works, the one Department which is really expert in building, has made the fewest mistakes and has been able to adhere, despite the war, to sound contract procedure. It also maintains that, while it is right that Admiralty, Air Ministry and War Office should each retain control of building of a highly specialized nature, the War Office witnesses' contention that military hutting came into this category " is unsupportable "; and that the War Office should never have attempted to carry out the Militia camps by itself, but should have sought the most competent civilian advice available and appointed suitable men, well used to constructional work on such a scale, to carry it out. The Committee recommends that in future cost-plus contracts should only be used for minor works of extreme urgency and that consultation should take place with the Ministry of Building over all contracts not of a highly specialized character.

HOW THEY ARE DOING IN THE U.S.A.

Architects may legitimately feel, after the exposure of such delay and waste, that the Committee's recommendation of " consultation " with the Ministry of Building is not over drastic. They may feel it would be far better if the

* H.M. Stationery Office. Price 9d. and 2d.

M. of B. carried out in future all Service Building other than highly specialized works—and standardized for all three Services everything that can be standardized. And it is therefore of great interest to see how the U.S.A. has been tackling similar problems.

*

Over there also, private architects and smaller contractors have been left in the cold. The Army camp programme has been entrusted wholly to Federal housing agencies (roughly comparable to our Office of Works and Housing Departments of large cities) and is considered to be in a far from satisfactory state. By the end of January last, 32 out of 40 of the Army's large camps were behind schedule. It is true that they were behindhand only by periods which varied from a fortnight to ten weeks, but to the U.S. building industry this is not good enough and comment is outspoken.

*

On the other hand, the U.S. Navy, which from the start announced its intention of doing its housing work itself, has proved a world-beater in the building field—doubtless to the chagrin of U.S. housing organizations. The Navy set up a special section to execute its camps, had a good look round the various possible methods of construction and then went nap on prefabrication. Starting level with all others in mid-September (and from scratch), it gathered staff, organized, selected, placed contracts, surveyed sites and went ahead to such good effect that by January 1 this year it had 43 schemes (23,500 building units) under construction against the 5 schemes (880 units) of all the others bar U.S. Housing Authority. For about 2½ months' effective working time this would be wonderful going anywhere for Militia huts. It is doubly wonderful for buildings of which the majority are fully equipped family houses.

*

American architects are naturally tickled and impressed by the Navy's success. It was achieved by roping in the six biggest manufacturers of prefabricated steel building units and by swift co-ordination of Navy requirements, manufacturing processes, and unit sizes. The actual buildings vary from scheme to scheme as do the materials; some are single-floored and some two-floored. The most common type consists of a reinforced concrete ground floor and plinth, light steel lattice units for wall and roof framing, galvanized steel sheet roof panels, insulating board and asbestos shingles as external wall finish and wall board internally. All steel sections are sprayed with zinc oxide and stoved during manufacture. Incidentally, external and internal wall board is run over windows, which are later cut out with an electric saw.

*

The constructional methods of the U.S. Navy cannot be used in Britain in war-time, since the best materials for prefabrication are precisely those of which we are now short. But they could have been used in 1939 when the Militia camps were put in hand by the War Office, and they can be used again when peace comes.

WHERE TO GO

Two or three times in the past two months newspapers have printed the suggestion of Rescue Party leaders that people who sleep in houses in danger areas should carry a whistle in case they are trapped by debris. Not much attention has been paid to this idea—chiefly because anyone who would worry enough about bombs to carry a whistle perpetually round their necks would probably sleep in Tubes or outside the danger area.

*

Yet no one who has stood on a dark night in front of a 20 ft. high pile of rubble and planks where twenty minutes ago there was a five-floored house can help agreeing with Rescue Parties that something should be done in this matter. Rescue Parties in any district are limited in number, and a vast amount of time can be wasted while wardens try to find out from over-excited neighbours whether Mrs. James had or had not gone to the local crypt or whether her daughter and the baby had or had not been evacuated the previous week. And all the time, if the house is empty, the Rescue Party's labour may be badly needed elsewhere.

*

The remedy is plainly that Sector Wardens should compile a list of the normal night inhabitants of each house and of whereabouts in the house they sleep, and that this list should be kept up to date by a weekly check. In some areas something like this is already being done. Now that the Blitz is on again, it should be done everywhere in urban areas and at once.

FIRST STEPS

As architecture is not yet included in the syllabus for the School Certificate it is rarely mentioned in the classroom. The young Oxonian in charge of the Classical Lower Sixth may make a little play with caryatids and triglyphs and the English mistress may impart the differences between the Norman and Early English styles, but there the matter rests unregretted by one and all.

*

It was therefore with great pleasure that I encountered at a famous girls' school an exhibition of eighteenth-century architecture. It consisted of a series of large photographs, with simple captions, arranged to explain the transition from Georgian to Regency—supported by relevant books from the school library, bound volumes of *Country Life*, eighteenth-century guidebooks, and such up-to-date surprises as Shell Guides, *Pillar to Post*, Gibberd's *Architecture of England* and Richards' *Miniature History of the English House*.

*

The exhibition was being a great success, its run had been extended, and it was being backed up by tours organized by older girls to see the eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century squares and terraces of the neighbouring towns.

*

It is probable that not all who took part were enthusiastic, but it is at least probable that all *looked* at what they went to see. And that is much for a start. I overtook, later that afternoon, two fourteen-year-olds who were wandering down one street in a puzzled kind of way. One of them stared a house out of countenance and exclaimed at length, "They can't be *very* old, can they, Freda?"

*

I eased my pace a little as Freda gave a scornful laugh. "I can *always* tell a really old house," she announced. "How?" asked the other as they turned a corner. I just caught the reply as our paths diverged.

*

"By the old-fashioned curtains, of course, you ass."

ASTRAGAL

NEWS

THE NEW LONDON

On March 12, Mr. W. H. Ansell, P.R.I.B.A., read a paper to the Royal Society of Arts on *The London of the Future*. Among the points mentioned by the President are the following:

On the subject of traffic, the clamour rises; settle your traffic roads and make the city fit the spaces in between, put the traffic underground, put it overhead, put it where you like, but keep it out of the streets where citizens dwell and children play. That there is all this interest in the subject is all to the good, but the variety of the opinions expressed proves that the ideal plan can only be got, if at all, by the granting by Parliament of special powers exceeding those possessed by Town Planning Authorities under existing Acts.

It is saddening to remember that in 1910 it would have been possible for a great ring road to be formed, going generally in and out of the nine-mile radius from Charing Cross on an almost complete band of very open country, much of it then being used for agriculture, allowing for the open land adjoining the road to be preserved to form a great park way.

Alas for the dream, straggling building development has so far overrun the area referred to that a large amount of green belt land recently acquired lies outside even the fifteen-mile limit. A very little consideration shows that the rebuilding of slum areas and the planning of a decent enrivonment for all, the provision of open spaces for health and recreation, the solution of the problem of traffic congestion, are matters so interwoven, so dependent one upon the other, that they can scarcely be considered separately. They must not be considered separately, for that very mistake has in the past made failures of many well-meant efforts to improve the planning of our development areas.

We should go back and investigate the location of the industries of London. The evacuation of many industries and commercial firms to the country has proved that if permanent arrangements could be made for them there instead of temporary ones, the industry or commerce could be carried on quite successfully in the country to the definite advantage of the health and happiness of the employees.

The Port of London, so unfortunately hidden from the view of its citizens, might surely be brought into the open a little more, and our view-points of its enthralling business not confined to the bridges. Liverpool manages to leave its landing stage open to its citizens without unduly interfering with shipping needs.

It is generally agreed that through traffic having no business in the centre of a city has no business to be in the city. It should be led off by bypass or ring road to its final destination, and it is generally found that the through driver more often prefers to go round at a greater speed than to go through at a lower. There will still be the need for the main great avenues of London, and it is interesting to see that the Advisory Board to the Royal Commission on London Traffic in 1905 recommended that two great avenues should be driven through London, each 140 feet wide. One to run East and West from Whitechapel Road to Bayswater, 4¾ miles away, and one North and South from Holloway to the Elephant.

We have two great but disappointing roads in the one from Shepherds Bush to the Mansion House, and the North and South road of which Tottenham Court Road is a part.

Cheapside should be widened and restored to something of Chepe's old width and glory. It should remain a shopping street, a new and gay street with wide colonnaded pavements on which citizens could walk free of the rain, do their shopping in comfort in all weathers, and watch their Lord Mayor in appropriate state and surroundings pass from his Mansion House to Guildhall; some of the colonnades might be on the first floor. There should be a fine open piazza leading from Cheapside to Guildhall in place of the present narrow way, and round St. Paul's a clearance to free the Cathedral from its jostling neighbours and provide a Close worthy of Wren's masterpiece.

Here I come to an important point in the replanning of a great city. London, for reasons connected with its haphazard growth, has, almost without taking thought, produced main areas of varying character, communities within the great community. Such areas give delight and interest to the City life. Where there is now no clear origanization but a mixture of houses, shops and works, there should be clarification, not by individual preferences, but by broad decisions taking many things into account. The fostering of community interests would not only create a local pride and citizenship, it would tend to reduce unnecessary back and forward traffic. The formation of single-class dormitory areas with few facilities for intellectual and social development does not, however, meet the need.

The replanning of the Surrey side is too big a matter to be dealt with in such a paper as this, but it cannot be left unmentioned. The London of the future, late or soon, will certainly, as a long-term policy, tackle the difficult and thorny problem of the railways and the bridges in a big way. The twenty-nine miles of overhead railways in South London have stifled and corrupted a reasonable development. Southwark's Cathedral is strangled by viaducts, her streets are filled with the most uninspired of buildings, her stretch of river bank is unapproachable. The Thames, it has been said, does not flow through London—it flows between London and the Surrey side. The building of the County Hall on that side was hailed as a significant and bold step, and one which in time would lead to a complete transformation of South London.

The new spaciousness of London should aim at disclosing those architectural beauties which are now hidden sometimes in quite unworthy surroundings. Some large-scale plan of London should be marked with every building which must be preserved, no matter what difficulties may be caused thereby. The destruction of some of the City churches and the damage done to many others has raised again the proposal of their removal to the suburbs and the sale of their sites for commercial purposes. The fiercest opposition to this course may be expected, should it be seriously proposed.

London must be treated as a Royal patient, by the greatest practitioners of the art of fine building, not experimented upon irresponsibly. Ephemeral slogans in architecture are not required, here to-day and, unfortunately, not gone to-morrow when built in concrete, brick or stone. The scholarly modernism of to-day does not reproduce the wilder aspects of Continental exhibition housing schemes, nor merely the unadventurous horizontal alternations of concrete and glass which appear to constitute the whole stock-in-trade of some people's modernism.

How, then, can the improved London be brought into being? The remodelling, interfering as it must with many existing individual rights, cannot be done without legislation, giving to some supreme authority powers beyond those possessed by any town planning or local authority to-day, although the co-operation of such will be demanded.

So great a degree of co-operation between local town planning authorities is required in order to produce a worthy co-ordinated plan for London that I suggest there should be a pooling here also, and that these authorities should create a Planning Board for London, created for this purpose only, unhampered by routine work of city administration. This would not only be a clearing-house for ideas, it would produce the actual drawings needed, and would work with the local authorities and the Ministry. It should have the finest architects and town planners in the country in its ranks, because of their definite training in the subject, their power of considering a planning problem from every point of view.

RECONSTRUCTION OF LONDON

Major E. Maxwell Fry delivered an address entitled "Research on a Plan for London," at the Housing Centre, on March 11. He is a member of the MARS group town planning committee, and drawings showing a first analysis of their work with regard to London were on exhibition round the library walls and downstairs in the hall. Dr. Julian Huxley presided.

Major Maxwell Fry said that the MARS group had set out to find the causes of the dissatisfaction they felt with London, and to make a contribution to the principles of reconstruction. They had studied the life of London under the aspects of work, housing, transport and leisure. As to work, the London docks and industries directly dependent on them could not be moved from their present site, but there was an industrial belt on the north-west of London which might not be a necessity; as regards this the members of the MARS group had not been able to come to agreement. Then there were domestic industries spread all over London but tending to move into factories. A very much larger part of the work of London was administrative and distributive than was the case with any large provincial town—in fact, about 60 per cent.

The map in which were shown the proposals of the MARS group for the reconstruction of London, showed it rebuilt in a series of great irregular blocks of building, with an axial direction south-east to north-west, and with open spaces in between. Thus light and air was within reach of everybody, and along the parkways thus provided the Londoner could walk out towards the country.

R.I.B.A.

At a recent meeting of the Council of the R.I.B.A. the following members were elected:

As Hon. Associate (1): Fitzmaurice, R., B.Sc. (Eng.), University of Birmingham, A.M.Inst.C.E. (Northwood, Middlesex).

As Fellows (4): Farey, C. A. (London); Lovett, W. F. B. (London); Pullen, R. K., A.A. Diploma (London); and Phillips, G. G. (Bridgnorth, Shropshire).

As Associates (34): Baxter, D. (Ilford, Essex); Brown, B. G. (Cambridge); Bushell, P. E. (Blackpool S.S., Lancs); Chilton, E. R. (Northallerton, Yorks); Clayton, R. W. (Leeds); Coates, L. R. (Consett, Co. Durham); Currie, (Miss) M. E. (Glasgow School of Architecture) (Lenzie); Cuthill, C. M. (High Wycombe, Bucks); Frearson, A. (Grange-over-Sands, Lancs); Freeman, A. M. (London); Gemmell, A. (Leeds); Haddy, J. A. (Wallasey, Cheshire); Hamilton, H. J. D., Dip.Arch.Glas. (Glasgow School of Architecture) (Glasgow); Hazlewood, W. R. (Liverpool); Henderson, H. (London) Holtby, R. (North Ferriby, East Yorkshire); Hunter, D. M. (Glasgow); Kay, H. A. (Penwortham, near Preston, Lancs); Lennon, J. D., Lieut. R.E. (Dorking); McLelland, J. (Newcastle-on-Tyne); Medd, D. L. (Architectural Association) (Beckenham, Kent); Milstone, R. (The Polytechnic, Regent Street, London) (Wembley); Mirza, M. A. (The Polytechnic, Regent Street, London) (London); Mundy, W. H. (Farnham, Surrey); Peat, E. F. (Newport, Isle of Wight); Robinson, P. J. (Architectural Association) (Dublin); Salisbury, G. (Southport, Lancs); Stone, S. J. (Aldershot, Hants); Thomas, R. B. (London); Thornton, W. R. (Portadown, N. Ireland); Tocher, W. R. (Dunoon, Argyll); Upright, M. (Tunstall, Stoke-on-Trent); Wilson, H. E. (Southport, Lancs); and Yardi, S. R., Dip.Arch.London (University of London) (Edinburgh).

As Licentiates (6): Cassidy, W. J. (Blackpool); Crofts, E. G. (Pontefract); Hill, W. E. C. (Devizes, Wilts); Keighley, J. (Burnley, Lancs); Turner, R. J. (London); and Upton-Prowse, J. A. (Leeds).

RECOGNITION OF NOTTINGHAM SCHOOL

The War Executive Committee of the Council of the R.I.B.A. has approved the Visiting Board's Report on the Nottingham School of Architecture, recommending that the five years' Diploma Course of the School be recognized for exemption from the R.I.B.A. Final Examination.

LETTERS

Architects and Reconstruction

SIR,—I should like to congratulate you on the leading article, "Reconstruction: First Thoughts," appearing in your issue for February 20. It should be read and re-read by all architects, for immediate action is essential if the profession is to play its proper part in reconstruction and not wait, as you rightly suggest may be the case, until it becomes merely "a matter of sites and elevations."

From a long experience in the local government service, I fully endorse your plea for "a positive planning policy and local administrative reform," and both will doubtless precede large-scale reconstruction.

But already many local authorities are considering preliminary schemes for replanning and redevelopment and, because the profession as a whole has been reluctant to urge the advantages of the appointment of official architects, much of the work is being done by engineers and their surveying assistants. Unless the profession insists that in these great schemes architects should at least co-operate with engineers and urges the necessity of such co-operation upon the Government and upon local authorities, it will stand condemned for the failure which must result if architects, through their lack of interest, find their work restricted to the development of sites and to designing the elevations of buildings thereon.

I know full well that it is in the offices of the local authorities that the first steps for reconstruction will be taken, and it is there that the architect should be engaged on the solution of those phases of the problem which rightly concern his profession. For this reason I have addressed a letter to the Secretary of the Royal Institute of British Architects asking that body to consider immediate action. Individual architects should also press this view in such channels as are open to them. But I am afraid that for reasons of self-interest, or for lack of interest, a great opportunity is in danger of being thrown away and that the chief contribution made by the profession will be represented by a series of letters appearing in *The Times* from some of its leading lights, rarely on the central problem, more often dealing with some of its subsidizing aspects. If this continues there is the greatest danger that architects will find themselves "in a world in which they understand not one single thing."

OFFICIAL ARCHITECT

SIR,—Mr. J. A. Slater raises a matter of vital significance to all in the architectural profession. Representative views clearly cannot be ascertained under existing conditions, therefore new methods must be adopted if "the profession" is to be publicly stated as holding "general views."

A series of conferences would no doubt clear the air, but the *status quo* would be maintained owing to absence of many younger men on war service. Therefore a form of "questionnaire" appears to be the fairest solution for obtaining a comprehensive vote on all matters of fundamental policy. I have, as a matter of fact, put this suggestion direct to the Institute, but it was considered "unnecessary" in the case of reservation. The method, however, might be considered useful on other subjects if all members—including those in the Services—were to be circularized.

At all events, it will be admitted by everyone concerned that sectional interests should be ungrudgingly subordinated to those of the profession as a whole—and to those of the nation at this critical time.

FRANK ANDREWS

The Blitz and Buildings

SIR,—Owing to a series of mischances I did not receive a copy of your New Year issue until several weeks after publication and it is therefore only recently that I have had a chance of reading my article on "The Blitz and Buildings."

In this article some extensive cuts, of which you informed me, had to be made at a very late hour in order to conceal the identity of certain places and incidents; and I realize that certain alterations to the remaining text were needed to give it continuity.

These alterations have, however, in places changed the sense of what I wished to convey—particularly in the section called "Recognition of Damage." For instance, the comparison between a direct hit and a bomb falling in the street should read as follows:

"A direct hit, whilst being far worse for the one or two buildings concerned, usually means less damage to *surrounding* property than an explosion in the street itself." The wording which has been substituted does not convey this meaning.

Structural damage caused to buildings by bombs is a subject on which, in my view, every statement should be so carefully weighed and phrased that I should be glad if you would publish this correction.

DENIS POULTON

[*The* JOURNAL *greatly regrets that portions of Mr. Poulton's article had to be cut at so late an hour that final proofs could not be submitted for his approval.*

As a result the published article makes some of his conclusions appear in a different light from that intended in his original MSS.—ED. A. J.]

UNCLE CHARLES

By Robert Donat.

[*When Mr. Robert Donat, the film actor, married the niece of Mr. C. F. A. Voysey (who died on February 12), Mr. Voysey became, for him, Uncle Charles. This article, which Mr. Donat has just broadcast to Australia, does not pretend to be an assessment of the work of a great architect, but is a purely personal study of—and tribute to—a unique man.*—ED.]

USUALLY I called him "Uncle Charlie," until I got into trouble for it. It turned out that he hated abbreviations and pet names of any sort. From then on it was Uncle Charles.

Until a few months ago, if you had wandered through various rooms of the Arts Club in Dover Street, London, any time after eleven o'clock in the morning until about the same hour at night, you would almost certainly have noticed an elderly gentleman with features greatly distinguished by the cut of his nose and the arch of his brow, the extraordinary sensitiveness and pugnacity of his mouth, and the distant, dreaming look of the visionary in his eye. Probably the first thing you would have noticed was the narrow, immaculately clean starched collar, the colour of which was the brightest thing in the room. It was a beautiful blue. *Butcher* blue, as he insisted on calling it (and butcher blue it was, if you can remember the days of blue-striped butchers' aprons). You would probably also have noticed that the collar of his jacket had no lapels. He designed all his clothing himself, and he had a rooted objection to anything that harboured dust or dirt of any description. Therefore there were no unnecessary nooks and crannies in his clothing, nor even cuffs to his trouser bottoms. He was clean and prim and gentle, but of a firm disposition.

He was the sort of man you would never dream of taking any liberty with. You would probably have hesitated very much to introduce yourself. Automatically he commanded your respect. There was nothing forbidding about him and yet there was aloofness and distinction in abundance. And there was a great strength in him for all his frailty. And frail he was; frail and delicate, like an old bird; the sort of bird you see again and again in your favourite zoo; you are fond of it, *very* fond of it—you don't dare to feed it or to poke it with your finger through the bars, and somehow, in spite of your affection, you feel quite certain that you needn't be sorry for it, not that your sympathy would be spurned, not that your sympathy would be wasted. Simply that your sympathy is not needed.

There he sat for years, gently and appreciatively pecking at his sherry, of which he was very fond, occasionally chirping to his friends and always commanding their deep and respectful attention. I never heard him say any-

thing he didn't firmly believe in, and any word he spoke had the golden touch of wisdom wrapt round it.

He was an architect. A great architect in some people's estimation. A famous London newspaper once referred to him as the greatest architect since Christopher Wren. A few years ago, on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, some of his dearest friends and admirers presented him with an illuminated address. It was a tribute to his work for architecture and to his unswerving integrity as an artist. It was signed by Sir Edwin Lutyens and many other famous architects and artists of the day.

Now, before I go any further, let me be quite sure that I have not maltreated his portrait. If I have conjured up a vision of a very sweet, gentle, kind old gentleman I have only half succeeded, because there was so very much more to him than that. You may have got the impression that butter wouldn't melt in his mouth. It certainly wouldn't, unless it happened to be the very best butter. But if there was the slightest defect in the butter I'm afraid, without more ado, he would have spat it out. He liked only the best of everything. He knew only the best. He was sensitive to a degree. But he was by no means perfect. For Heaven's sake throw away any impression I may have given you of a pink-and-white, honey-and-milk-and-water creature. Oh, dear no. The honey was there, the milk of human kindness was there, the purity of water was there, but there was more than a dash of vinegar too. The very best wine vinegar I should say—and any amount of it, when necessary. This remarkable mixture was easily accounted for. He was directly descended on the one side from John Wesley and on the other from the Duke of Wellington.

Of all his remarkable attributes, the most remarkable thing about him, I think, was his smile. It was a lovely smile. There was more kindness and more simple delight in humour and more sheer affection in that smile than in any smile I have ever beheld. One of his greatest friends was his brother (who happens to have the misfortune to be my father-in-law). To see these two brothers together was always a delight. They were both inordinately fond of oysters, and on one or two occasions I had the pleasure of taking them out to a famous restaurant on Piccadilly Circus and watching them consume a dozen or two of the best. But consume is an inadequate word—a ridiculously inadequate word—to describe the gradual disappearance of those oysters. There is only one writer who could convey to you the joy with which each oyster was sacrificed, and that writer is Charles Dickens. It must have been quite a pleasure to be an oyster to be appreciated so much, and any oyster, I am quite certain, would gladly have died for Uncle Charles.

There the two brothers sat, beaming with an utterly unconscious and unaffected affection and taking an open and unashamed delight in each other's company.

My father-in-law has many of the attributes of an actor. In between the oysters and the brown bread and butter and the glass of wine, out would pop a quip or two, a bit of mimicry or a well-told joke. Then, and only then, the oyster would stop on its way to the sacrifice and Uncle Charlie—(I beg his pardon, Uncle *Charles*)—would be all attention, watching his brother with his eyes popping out, the most appreciative audience in the world. Never shall I forget—on one occasion, after one of these impromptu performances, Uncle Charles flung down his oyster (no, not "flung"—Uncle Charles couldn't ever fling anything—he replaced it, gently but firmly, on the platter) and he gave forth this delicious pronouncement: "Ellison, if you had gone on the stage, Henry Irving wouldn't have been in it."

He was fond of me, I think; but he was very much fonder of my wife, and no one appreciated her more than he did. I met him by accident, hopping along Piccadilly once, just beaming all over with happiness and contentment. "Hello, Uncle Charles," said I, "where have you been?" "Oh, I am lucky," he said. "God is very good to me. I have just had tea with that *lovely* wife of yours." And it's beyond the power of any actor to convey to you the wealth of meaning he squeezed into the word "lovely." He was always delighted to have news of me, but chiefly, I think, because I belonged to his niece, and because I happened to be his brother's son-in-law. He was always very delighted if I had a success. But once, I regret to say, he was persuaded to go and see one of my films, and this was too much for him. He stuck it for about twenty minutes I think—twenty minutes of sheer agony for Uncle Charles. He told me about it later. Straight from the shoulder, and no hit on the chin was ever delivered with more grace or less malice. It was rather like a father chastening a son because he felt it his duty to do so. "Oh, Robert, those dreadful films! And that awful noise! I am sure it's all wrong. Quite wrong. And why did they keep on slipping in a huge picture, a huge portrait of you?" I explained, rather timidly, that that was called a "close-up." "Oh, I see. But why?" That rather stumped me, I must confess. "Why so big? Why such a huge one? Good gracious! It isn't necessary. Damn it all, we are not as stupid as all that! We can see who it is and what he's doing, without having it stretched far and wide across a great big space. No, no, my dear Robert, promise me, promise me you will never ask me to see one of those things again."

On February 20, 1940, His Majesty the King presented Uncle Charles with architecture's highest award, the Royal Gold Medal. To his great alarm and embarrassment, he found himself in the newspapers. Suddenly he hit the headlines. He actually found himself being interviewed. The interviewer was about as capable of understanding and appreciating Uncle Charles as a bullet is capable of understanding the work of art in which it finds itself embedded during one of Hitler's boss-shots at a so-called military objective. She was bent on what I believe is called the "journalistic angle." Her preconceived notion was of a neglected, forgotten old man, living in poverty, probably starving, and so on. Neglected he was, to a certain extent, but neglected by his own choice. He drew apart from the world, like many a great artist before him, simply because he couldn't altogether cope with his work and with the world at the same time. He chose his loneliness, but he didn't particularly like it. He had all he needed and more, and his rooms in St. James's Street, though simple, were extremely comfortable and were filled with beautiful things of his own designing.

The agonizing interview ground itself out (and it must have been very agonizing for poor Uncle Charles). I can picture him writhing beneath the lash of her insensitive questioning. On she went, leading him up the barren garden of her thoughts, until finally came the last, cruel question: "What do you most want to do?" Without any hesitation Uncle Charles replied, "Most of all I want to die."

"To die?" said the interviewer. This, of course, was exactly what she had expected to hear. This was the natural wish of a dejected, disappointed, disillusioned old man. Quickly the pencil flew to the note-book. "I see, you wish to die because there is nothing left for you to live for, and when you die (of course) it will be all over." And now came the shock, the great shock. The angels in heaven must have been waiting for this moment, and no doubt the cherubs burst into loud and triumphant song when they heard Uncle Charles's reply.

"All over? Good Lord, no! I am grateful for my afflictions. I have an infinite faith in my Creator. He knows best, and I am perfectly certain that a step *out* of this world is going to be a step *up* and not a step *down*."

Charles Francis Annesley Voysey, F.R.I.B.A., passed away on February 12, 1941, at the age of eighty-three.

I am as certain as Uncle Charles was that wherever he may be now, he is in good hands and in safe keeping. If ever I am good enough and wise enough and strong enough to grapple to myself the simple faith that upheld Uncle Charles throughout his earthly days, I shall be a very enviable creature.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

At a time when the major requirement of British aerodromes is that they should be invisible, when control rooms are placed not above but thirty feet underground and aeroplanes are put anywhere but in the hangars, the following illustrations of the new LaGuardia Field—New York's Airport and the largest in the world—will be of special interest to British architects. The scheme is also of interest by showing that the U.S.A. has been no more successful than Britain in escaping a certain modernistic heavyhandedness in its most prominent air buildings.

NEW YORK AIRPORT

DESIGNED BY DELANO AND ALDRICH

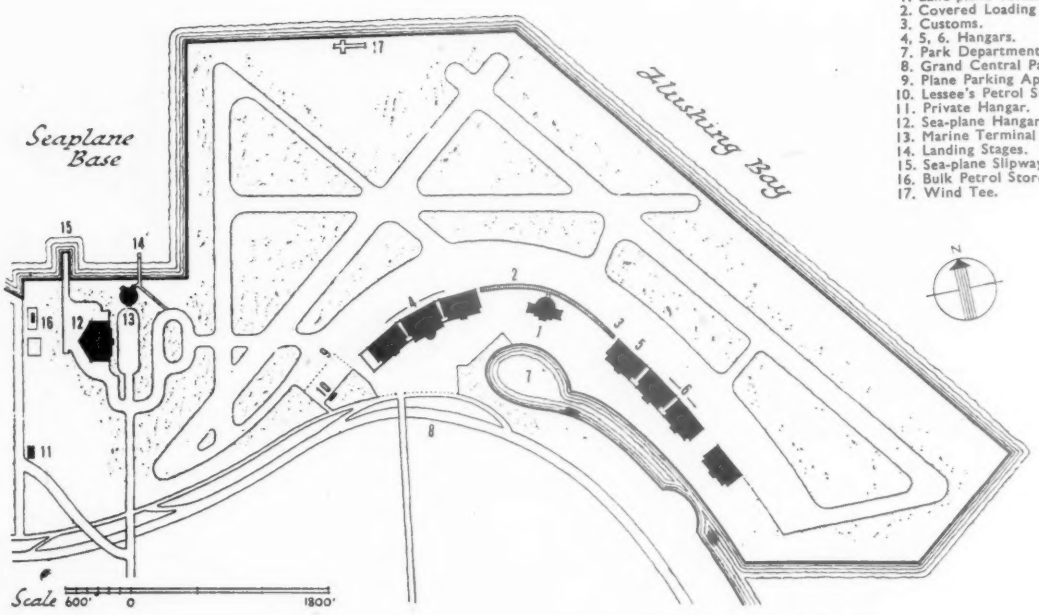
PROBLEM—Land and seaplane airport for the City of New York at LaGuardia Field, North Beach, New York. The scheme comprises land-plane runways for heavy machines and many variations of wind, a sea-plane harbour, slipways and landing stage, land and marine terminal buildings, hangars and workshops for the various companies, and accommodation for passengers and spectators.

Above: The aerodrome side of the land-plane terminal building, showing on the left the raised spectators' promenade and the passengers' bridge running through it. Right: The control room above the terminal building.

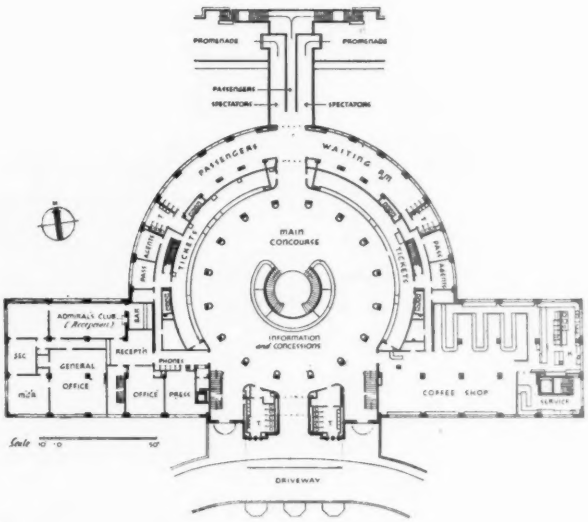
LAGUARDIA AIRPORT, NEW YORK:

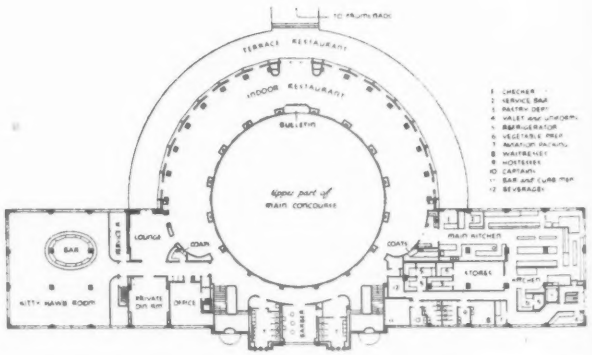
KEY

1. Land-plane Terminal Building.
2. Covered Loading Deck with Promenade above.
3. Customs.
4, 5, 6. Hangars.
7. Park Department Basin.
8. Grand Central Parkway.
9. Plane Parking Apron.
10. Lessee's Petrol Store.
11. Private Hangar.
12. Sea-plane Hangar.
13. Marine Terminal Building.
14. Landing Stages.
15. Sea-plane Slipway.
16. Bulk Petrol Store.
17. Wind Tee.

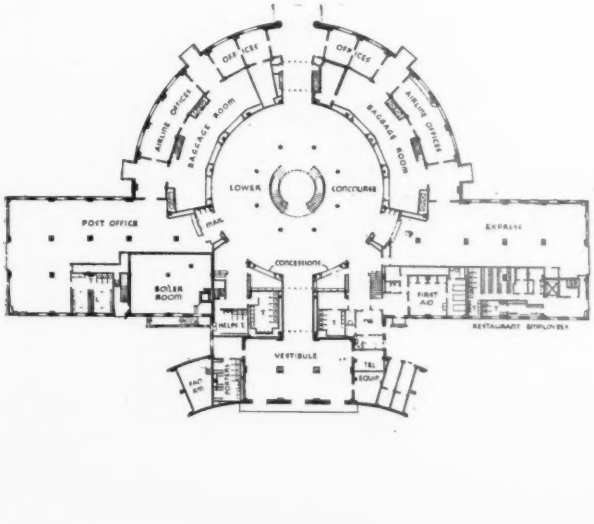


GENERAL LAYOUT PLAN





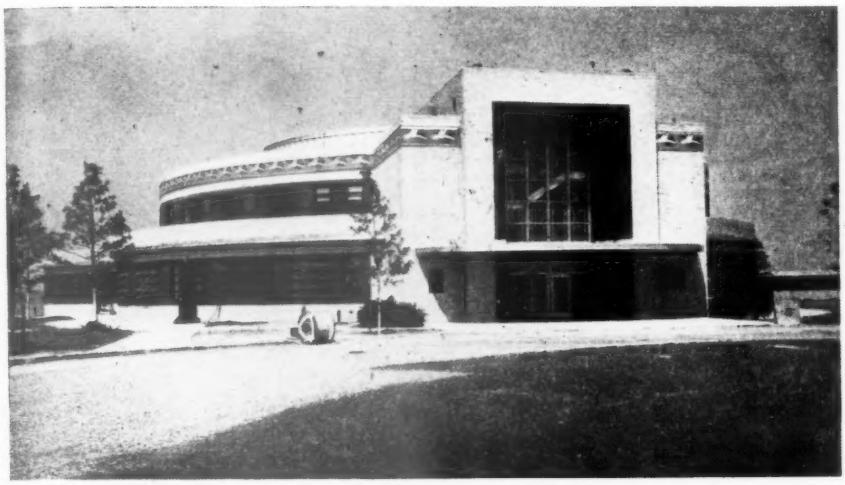
GROUND, FIRST AND SECOND FLOOR PLANS OF LAND TERMINAL BUILDING

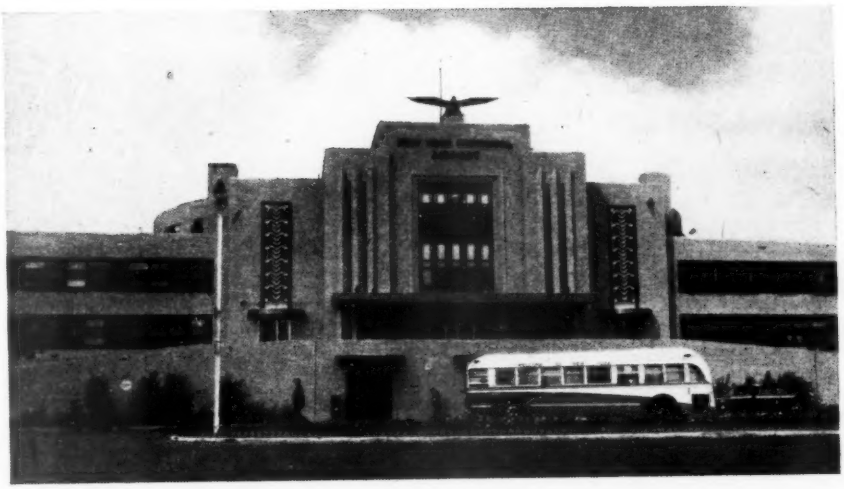


PLAN—The central unit of the airport plan is the land-plane terminal and administration building, which is approached from the Grand Central Parkway, and is flanked by car parks and, on the aerodrome side, by a long loading deck and promenade. The terminal building contains a large circular concourse, surrounded on various floors by offices, restaurants, etc. The ground floor is devoted to mail and freight and the first floor to passengers.

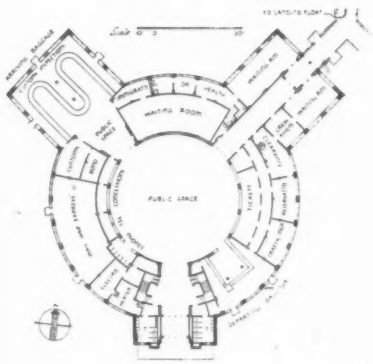
On the opposite page, top : The marine terminal building, main entrance.

BY DELANO AND ALDRICH



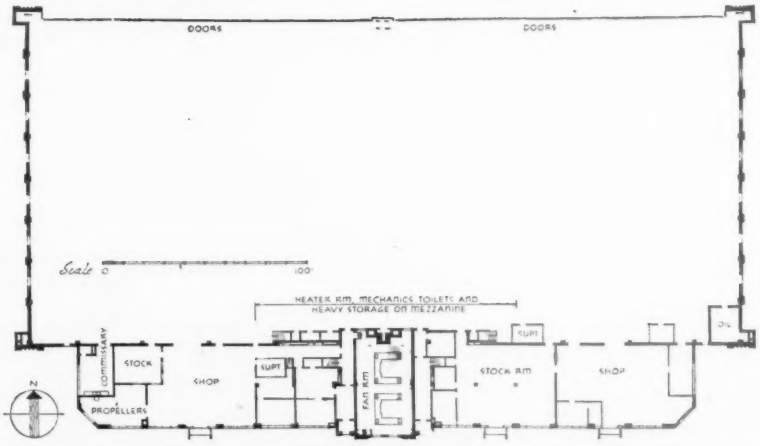


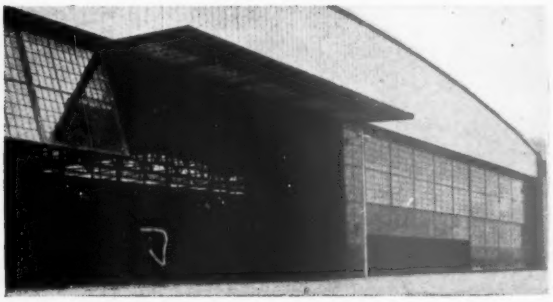
THE MARINE TERMINAL BUILDING: MAIN FLOOR PLAN.

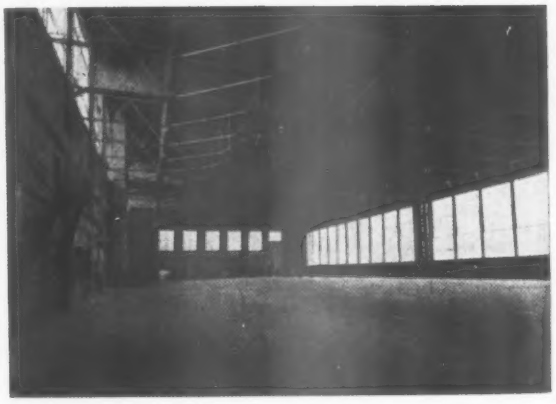


Centre: The south-west front of the land terminal building showing the raised approach for passengers and the doors for mail and freight below. The marine terminal building has a similar layout but is of smaller size.

Bottom: The main concourse in the land terminal building, showing ticket desk. The frieze is finished grey with Zodiac signs in gold leaf.

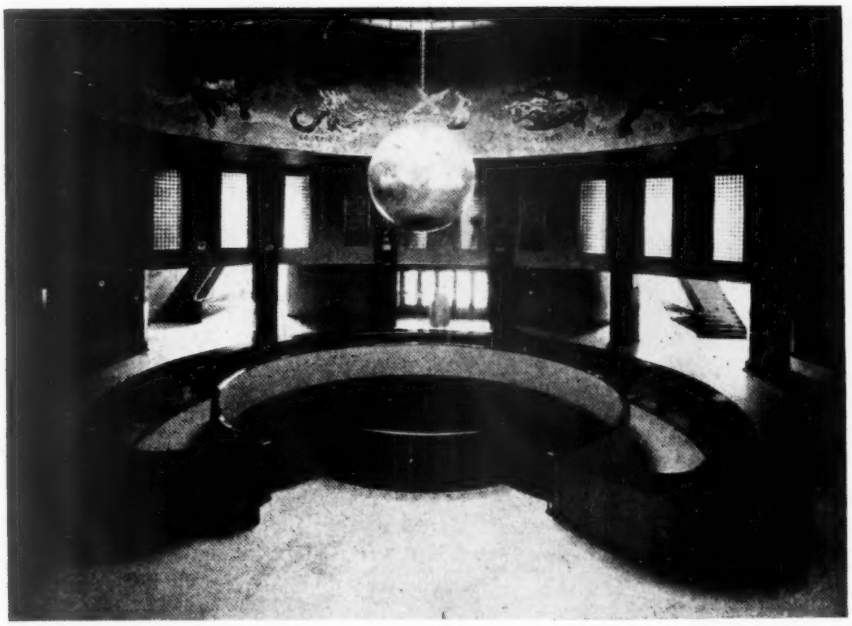






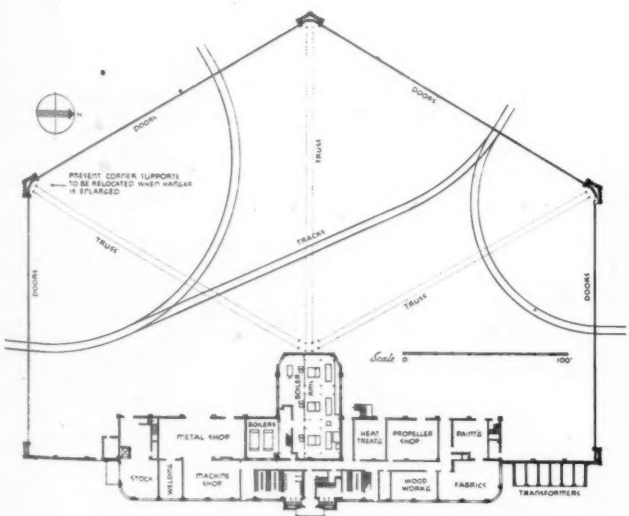
DESIGNED BY
DELANO AND ALDRICH

LAGUARDIA AIRPORT,



Right, top : First floor main concourse of land terminal building, showing enquiry desk and entrance from roadway.

Right : "Icarus Falling," a section of the murals by James O. Brooks in the marine terminal building.



N E W Y O R K

On opposite page :

Top: Typical land-plane hangar at LaGuardia Field. The south and east windows of hangars are specially treated to minimise sun glare, and the ventilation is carefully controlled in order to carry off at once inflammable vapour from petrol, paint-spraying plant and other sources. Lighting is by incandescent and mercury vapour lamps. The hangars measure about 350 × 150 feet.

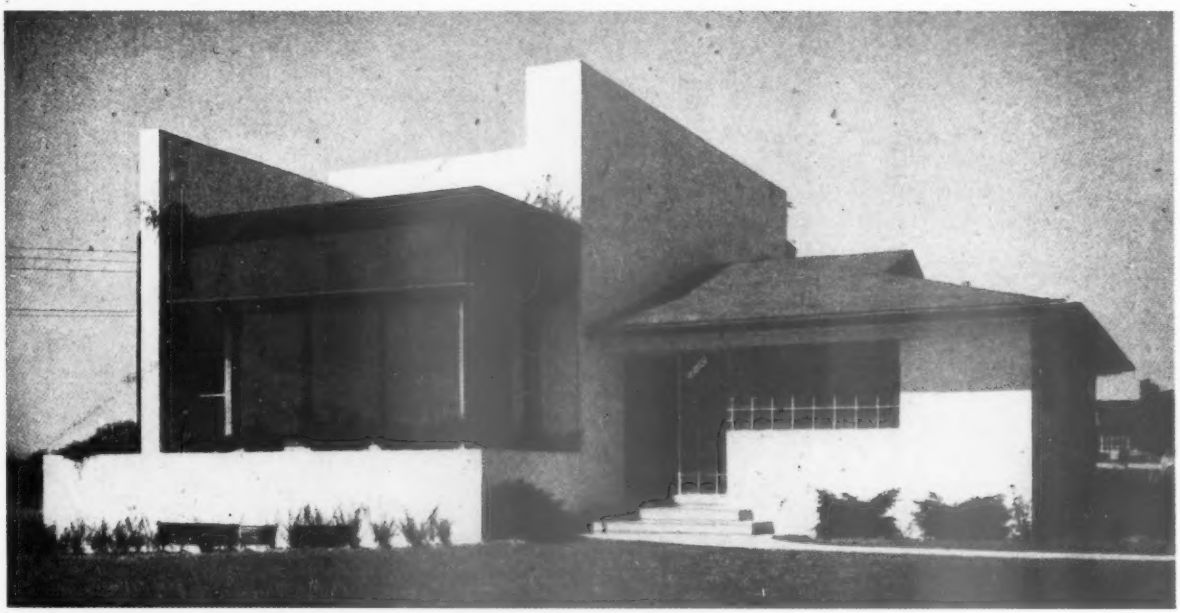
Centre, left : Doors of a hangar. In order to prevent unnecessary heat loss, the lower parts of the doors open vertically to allow passage to smaller planes while retaining warm air behind upper part of doors. For largest planes, the upper part of doors is hinged at top to open outwards. The doors are 40 feet high in the clear.

Centre, right : Interior of land hangar showing the excellent natural lighting. The high standard and impressive simplicity of aerodrome engineers' work in both Britain and U.S.A. puts aerodrome architects very much on the defensive.

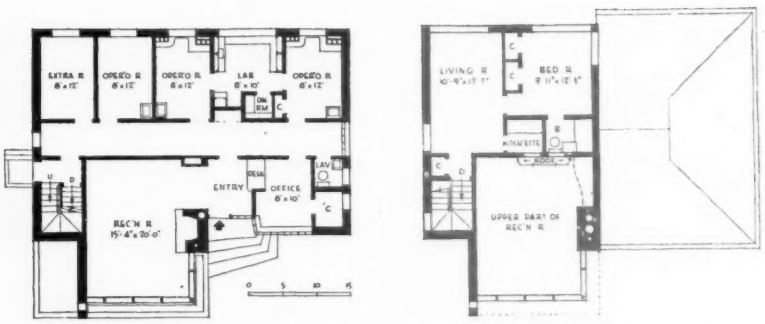
Bottom: Exterior and (on this page) plan of sea-plane hangar. Sea-plane hangars require clear spaces even larger than those needed for land-planes. The main doors of this hangar are just under 200 feet wide.

The illustrations of New York Airport are reproduced from "Pencil Points."

DENTIST'S SURGERY IN MONTANA, U.S.A.



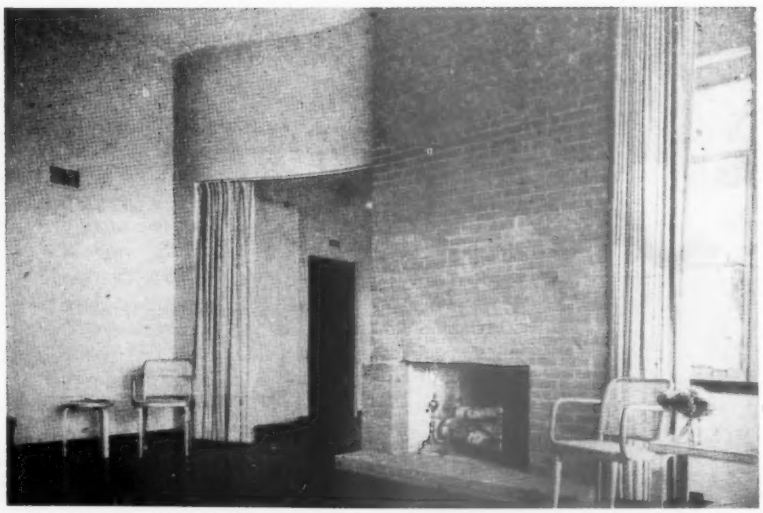
The south front



GROUND AND FIRST FLOOR PLANS

DESIGNED BY HARRIS ARMSTRONG

The reception room



PROBLEM—Dentist's surgery in a residential district. The small separate flat on the first floor was included for two reasons: to enable the surgery to be built in an area zoned for houses only, and to make some contribution towards the cost of the building.

PLAN—The requirements included a comfortable and large reception room, three dentist's rooms and laboratory and secretary's office.

CONSTRUCTION—Walls are of hollow tile and brick, stuccoed. Partitions, floors and roofs are of timber. Fixed windows are double, with built-in pans of calcium chloride over which passes all air circulating between windows: moisture is thus removed and frosting and sweating prevented.

The illustrations on this page are reproduced from "The Architectural Record."

SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED THIS WEEK:

★ *CAN you tell me of a diary for 1941 which contains sound technical and trade data?* - Q672

★ *HAS any new cheap method of rot-proofing sand bags been introduced?* - - - - Q673

★ *WHERE is it possible to obtain steel drawing pins with three points instead of one?* - Q675

THE ARCHITECTS' JOURNAL

INFORMATION CENTRE

THE Information Centre answers any question about architecture, building, or the professions and trades within the building industry. It does so free of charge, and its help is available to any member of the industry.

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Questions should be sent by post to—

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—but in cases where an enquirer urgently requires an answer to a simple question, he may save time by telephoning the question to—

VIGILANT 0087

The reply will come by post.

Q671

ARCHITECT, PUBLIC UTILITY COMPANY.—

1. *Is it possible to claim for RE-DECORATION externally AND internally if damaged as a result of ENEMY ACTION?*

2. *Can complete redecoration be claimed when the decorations were obviously in such a state before the damage that redecoration should have been done perhaps a year or two previously?*

3. *What is the position in the case of a crack in a wall or ceiling and no other damage to the decorations; can complete redecoration be claimed?*

4. *If the tenant is liable for internal decorations, should he apply for compensation or should the owner apply with the rest of the claim?*

5. *If it is possible to apply for redecoration, should the cost of complete redecoration be submitted or a proportion in accordance with the age of the decorations?*

We do not think that there can be much doubt that in the case of claims based on the diminution in

market value, the state of the decorations before and after the incident are important factors which affect the market value. Our remarks are, therefore, confined to claims based on the cost of reinstatement.

1. The Government Compensation Scheme (First Report, para. 1) refers to physical damage arising from enemy action, etc., and decorations are not specifically excluded. There is no reason, therefore, why claims should not include damage to redecorations.

2. The fact that decorations were imperfect before receiving damage cannot alter the principle. Theoretically they should only be reinstated to their former condition, but if walls were painted before receiving damage, the only possible method of reinstating them is to repaint them, even if the old paintwork was worn. In the same way the only method of reinstating a wall that has fallen down is to rebuild it. and the fact that the new wall may be stronger than the old wall cannot affect the issue.

3. The extent to which redecorations can be claimed if only a small part of the decorations are affected has not been defined and may only become clear after test cases have been settled and made public. "Reasonable reinstatement" is defined as "the expenditure which a provident person might be expected to undertake, regard being had to all the circumstances of the particular case" (First Report, para. 5), and it seems reasonable to suppose that if repairs to one crack substantially affect the whole appearance of a room, redecoration of the room could legitimately be claimed. In this case the state of the decorations before damage and the purpose for which the building is used would be important factors.

In the absence of definite information we suggest that you claim everything to which you consider you can reasonably be entitled.

4. As the tenant is not liable to repair war damage unless he has served a notice of retention, it would probably be simpler for the owner to submit the whole claim.

5. The facts relating to the Government Compensation Scheme are set out in the First and Final Reports of the Committee on the Principles of Assessment of Damage (H.M. Stationery Office, price 2d. each), and we cannot take any responsibility for our interpretation of them. In our opinion the extent of reinstatement may be affected by the condition of the building and the purpose for which it is intended to be used. Thus, in a first-class block of flats reinstatement could hardly be achieved by redecorating only the actual wall damaged, whereas if the state of the decorations, before damage, was far from perfect, this treatment might constitute reasonable reinstatement. On the other hand, having determined the extent of reinstatement, no reduction should be made because the final condition happens to be better than the original one.

As you are probably aware, the War Damage Bill may soon be passed, when the original Government Compensation Scheme will become obsolete.

Q672

ENQUIRER, WARWICK.—*Can you tell me of a DIARY for 1941 which contains sound technical and trade data? I applied for the A.A.S.T.A. Diary, but owing to enemy action the publishers cannot supply it.*

We suggest "The Builder" Pocket Diary for 1941, which costs 2s. 10d. inclusive of Purchase Tax; by post 3s. Obtainable from "The Builder," 4 Catherine Street, Aldwych, London, W.C. 2.

Q673

ARCHITECT, LONDON.—*I remember reading, fairly recently, an article on RENDERING SAND BAGS ROT-PROOF, but am unable to trace it. I should be glad if you could let me know whether any new cheap method has been introduced, and where I can obtain the necessary information.*

You are probably referring to a method introduced by the Imperial Chemical Industries from whom full particulars can be obtained.

Briefly, the method is:

Use 11½ lb. of soda crystals in 5 gallons of water and stir this solution into a solution of 10 lb. of copper sulphate crystals in 30 gallons of water. Add 2 oz. of Calsolene Oil H.S. to 40 gallons of the mixture and stir well. The vessel for mixing should not be of iron or galvanized iron.

Bags should be immersed in the solution for at least 5 minutes if cold water is used and should be wrung out and dried at a low temperature.

As you are probably aware, "Notes on the Construction, Maintenance and Replacement of Sandbag Revetments," issued by the Ministry of Home Security, Air Raid Precautions Department, and obtainable from H.M. Stationery Office, price 2d., gives several methods of rot-proofing sand bags.

Q674

ENGINEERS, LINCOLNSHIRE.—*Can you kindly inform us of some of the makers of combined KITCHEN SINKS AND DRAINERS in Stainless Steel.*

The names of three makers of stainless steel sinks and drainers are given below.*

Q675

ARCHITECT, HANTS.—*Can you answer the following queries:*

1. *Where is it possible to obtain steel DRAWING PINS with three pressed-out points instead of the usual single one? They possess advantages in use over the ordinary horn centre in that the holes made are of negligible size. Those I have seen bear on their surface certain marks and are sold complete with pin-lifter. Could you tell me the price?*

2. *What is the correct title of the official publication dealing with "The Requirements in PLANNING PLACES OF PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENT"?*

1. Drawing pins of the type you mention are of Swiss make and are not now imported into this country. No large stocks are held, and it is unlikely that you will be able to obtain them anywhere, although you might be lucky enough to find an isolated shop which still has a stock.

2. As far as we are aware the requirements in planning places of public entertainment are not covered in detail by any one publication. Such buildings must, of course, conform with the local bye-laws, which can be obtained from the Local Authority, and with the provisions of the Public Health Act of 1935, the Restriction of Ribbon Development Act 1935, and any restriction on town and country planning which may be in force in the particular district. The various Acts can be obtained from H.M. Stationery Office.

Section 59 of the Public Health Act of 1936 gives the general requirements for places of public entertainment, and a book of considerable interest

* *The Stainless Steel Sink Co., Ltd., 40, Wood Street, Westminster, London, S.W.1 (Planned); A. Johnson & Co., Ltd., Duke's Road, Western Avenue, Acton, London, W.3 (Savestane); Benham & Sons, Ltd., 66 Wigmore Street, London, W.1 (Nevastane).*

is the "Manual of Safety Requirements in Theatres and other Places of Public Entertainment" (1935), issued by the Home Office, which can be obtained from H.M. Stationery Office.

REFERENCE BACK

[This section deals with previous questions and answers.]

Q634 and 626. *January* 9, 1941

The Centre wishes to correct a mistake in the answers to Questions 634 and 626. We stated that the cost of demolition would become a charge on the property and the salvaged materials would be credited and set against this cost. These statements were incorrect.

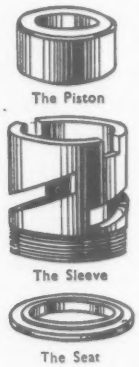
Q635. *January* 16, 1941

Window Braces. In replying to this question we quoted extracts from Bulletin B 6 issued by the Research and Experiments Department of the Ministry of Home Security. Messrs. Pilkington Bros., Ltd., have kindly pointed out that it might be assumed from the answer given that all methods of bracing plate glass windows are comparatively ineffective. This is, of course, not true, as wood braces which have almost the effect of reducing the pane to a number of small panes, are decidedly useful. A report of tests, with illustrations, was given in THE ARCHITECTS' JOURNAL of December 12, 1940, and in conclusion it was stated that "when a stiff grille is bedded direct on glass and braced to ensure contact throughout, considerable reinforcement is obtained, danger from falling glass is greatly reduced. . . ."

TRADE NOTES

"Arkon" Seat-in-Sleeve Valve

A frequent cause of valve breakdown is the wearing of the seat by steam whilst the valve is operating in a slightly open position. This can usually be attributed to the necessity for working valves in what is technically referred to as the "clacked" position when fine regulation is required and the valve is opened just sufficiently to allow the passage of small quantities of steam. In the "Arkon" seat-in-sleeve valve the stainless steel seat is protected by a sleeve in which the valve clack moves. The ports cut in the sleeve ensure that no steam passes until the valve clack clears the ports and is well clear of the seat, thus all wear due to the sudden rush of steam is taken by the sleeve; it is possible therefore to get very fine regulation, by having the valve only just open, without wearing the seat.



Working parts of the "Arkon" Seat-in-Sleeve Valve.

No matter how worn the ports in the sleeve become, the valve will shut tight and firmly when screwed down on to the seat. The valve seat is reversible and all internal parts are renewable.

Two types of the "Arkon" valve are manufactured: "B" for saturated steam up to 150 lbs. pressure, and type "D" for superheated steam up to 650° F. and 300 lbs. pressure; they are available in all the usual pipe sizes, with screwed or flanged connections.

Manufacturers: Walker, Crossweller & Co., Ltd., Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, and 6, Gordon Square, London, W.C.1.