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A Magazine of Architecture & Decoration



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No. 462



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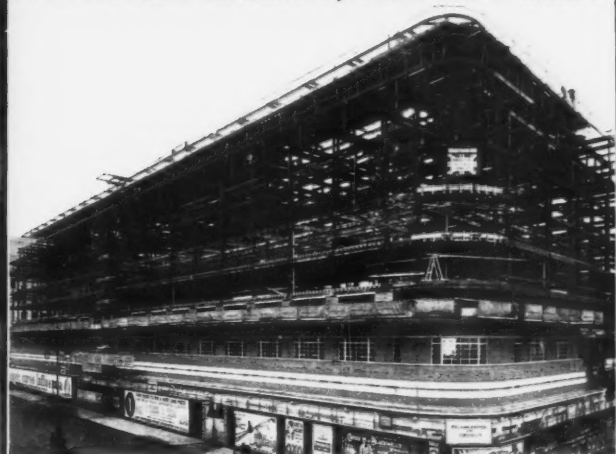
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THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

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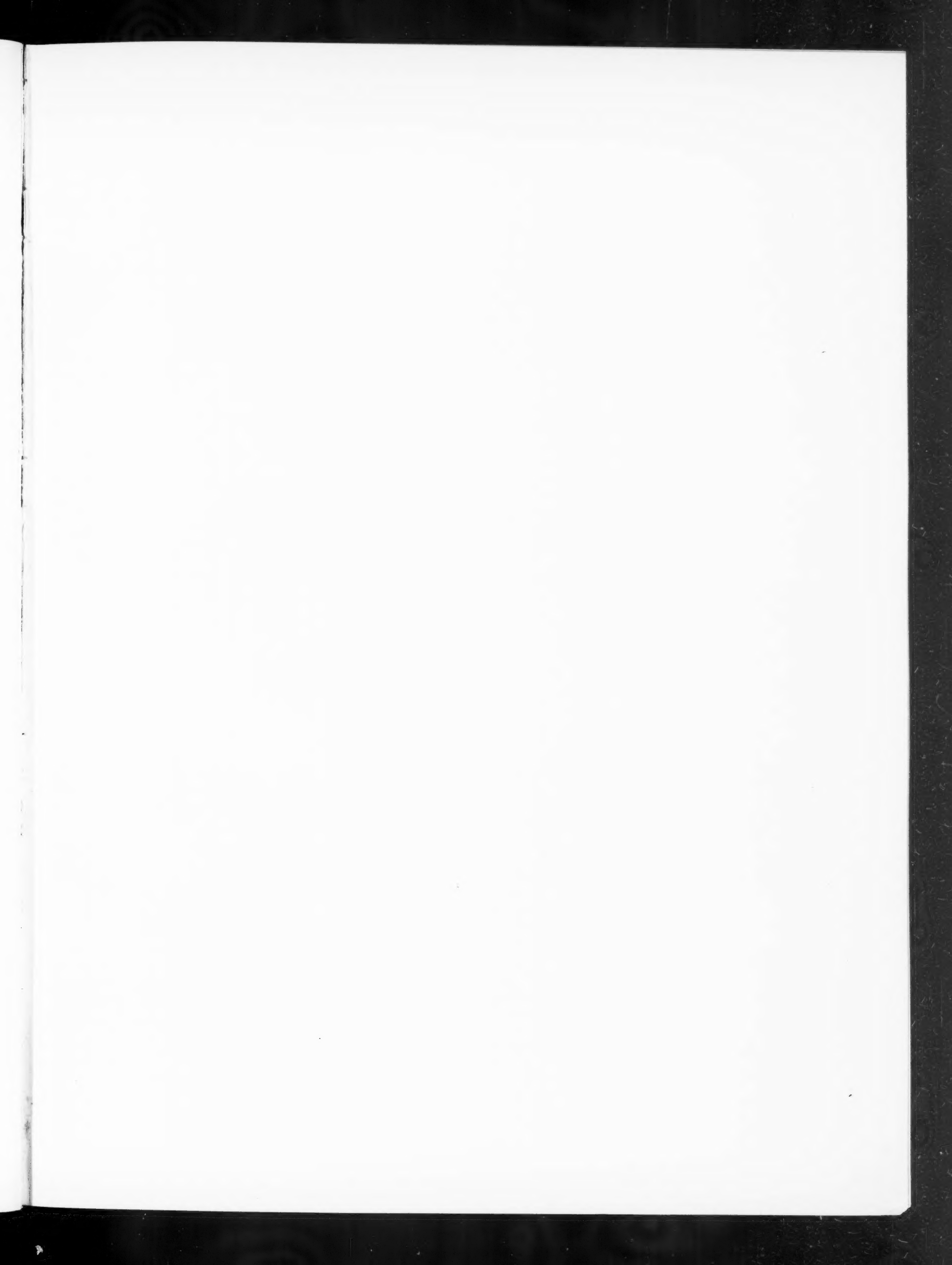
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Old and New Regent Streets, showing the
County Fire Office and the Quadrant.

PLATE I

May 1935

September 1752—May 13, 1835

John Nash

By a Member of the Public

EVER since he became a successful man, there has been what can only be described as a conspiracy to belittle Nash. It persists today. It is evident in nearly everything written about him by experts.

That is, I think, because he was of a type uniformly detested by the professional: a confident tyro in whom imagination displaced scholarship. If there is anything the scholar detests more than imagination, it is confidence.

He was slick; he was superficial; he was an opportunist; he was rather vulgar. He was small and irrepressible; and he brought things off. This combination is enough to damn any man, and it has damned John Nash from the day that he died until this the hundredth anniversary of his death.

Yet it is inconceivable that any person who is sensitive to his surroundings, could fail to be conscious of the essential fitness of this remarkable Cockney's conception of the town. I need not draw attention to details such as the dome flanked by two tall chimneys of the present County Fire Office—the focal point of Piccadilly Circus—to make my point that the rebuilt Regent Street—observe the sky-line in Plate I—is fundamentally absurd. Yet such stupidities and uglinesses in detail as it has could be born without fatigue, were the architectural essentials appreciated or even acknowledged.

They are not only not acknowledged; they are not admitted. I can only conclude because our great designers do not know they exist, and it is not altogether surprising that they do not know they exist, since essentials are naturally below the surface, and except to those with some natural feeling for architecture are naturally not transparent. The essentials of architecture are, indeed, visual attributes, and for that reason it is far harder to describe them in print than to demonstrate them in the place to which they belong—the site.

Nevertheless, I shall try, not because

I wish to explain to others what I think they do not understand, but because, having been asked to write about Nash, I see no alternative but to write about Nash's conception of architecture.

The site. That word alone is wonderfully illuminating. It suggests that the proper way to approach a building is to see it; and to see it not only from one point of view, but all round. It suggests more than that. It suggests that one should not only see the building all round, but see the shape and contour of the ground which it is on, *and even the shape and contour of the air which it is in*. Then there is the disposition of the "natural" features—the trees—and there is the distance between oneself and the various features of the site, and the effects of perspective thus called into play—the relation of each feature to oneself, and of one feature to the other.

Alas, I feel only too incapable of describing what is, after all, a visual experience, but those will know what I mean who are capable of seeing in architecture something more than a good bit of detail; who have enjoyed the experience of apprehending a lay-out as a distribution of solids and voids so integrated as to give purpose and proportion to space.

Nash, I think, had this gift in a special degree, and it was developed by his association with Repton. One feels of his buildings that they have been snatched out of space by one who was highly conscious of the bravado of the act, or perhaps one had better say that the *sites* were snatched out of space, for he was the one English architect who thought essentially in terms not of single buildings, nor even groups of buildings, but of the disposition of the ground, the building being but a part of the ensemble. Sites which have been snatched in this poetical way from the chaos of space add something to space, enriching by defining it.

Every time one passes by Carlton House Terrace—the only remaining

centrally situated piece of his work—one is assured by one's own eyes that this is not all nonsense. Were I the head of a school of architecture I should make it my business to see that the students spent, say, an afternoon a week in the spring, before the leaves come on the trees, pacing up and down the Mall in front of Carlton House Terrace. There could be no better lesson in scale and in the English monumental idea. The site of the terrace has certain advantages of height (I speak for the moment as though they were accidental), but it is not naturally spectacular, nor is the "architecture"—by which I mean what the architects call "motives"—more than adequate (though the Doric base is a lofty conception nobly, even uncompromisingly, carried out); yet the architecture of the *scene*, the architecture of sky and promenade, the sand for the gallop, the arid rows of plane trees diminishing in a perspective worthy of a foreground by Canaletto, and giving something of the effect of the great forecourt at the Escorial; the high, yet horizontal, line of the terrace, monumental, yet light and gay—Nash's particular contribution to Northern urbanism—the superb flight of steps, unmarred by motives, the York Column,* black against the surrounding buff and tawny stucco—these achieve a series of relations whose existence (no thanks to Crown lands) is open to proof by anyone who will take the trouble to visit them. Here one is made aware that the road, the avenues of trees, the railings, the etceteras, the buildings, are not just ordinary individual *things*, performing their ordinary individual functions of keeping out loafers or lovers, housing starlings, submitting to traffic—they are also components in a greater scheme. Go down to the St. James's Palace end on a sunny morning and look back. This scene is incomparably the finest piece of civic lay-out in London. It is great in scale, yet not in size; it is monumental, yet un pompous; formal,

* Not, I am aware, by Nash.



Town planning in the grand manner according to the principles of the English school of landscape gardening. St. James's Park and (on the left) Carlton House Terrace, both designed by Nash, looking towards the Horse Guards. From the lithograph by Thomas Shotter Boys.

yet gay; it speaks the international language of culture, yet sophisticated though it is, it preserves more than a trace of the country gentleman . . . Now look the other way towards Buckingham Palace and the sumptuous forecourt thereof. . . . Buenos Aires . . . !

It may be said this was a fine natural site and Nash could hardly go wrong. Why then has the Buckingham Palace end gone wrong? The Buckingham Palace end has gone wrong because it was conceived according to a false idea of the monumental—which, far from being the product of a monumental idea, is the product of no idea at all, but of a recipe. Observe with what sensibility and sense of proportion, Nash confined his monumental effects in Regent Street—which after all is only a shopping street—to Waterloo Place, the Quadrant, and the focal point at All Souls, allowing elsewhere an element of the unexpected which ensured that the uniformity was not too rigid to be a nuisance. He was too cunning to fall into the mistake invariably made by continental architects of creating symmetry for the sake of symmetry.

The amazing thing about Old Regent Street was indeed its variety within a fixed frame. It was idiosyncratic of the English genius. He deliberately allowed it to come unstuck; to have

a nodding acquaintance with the High Street of any market town where the changing needs of the community through generations impose an element of inconsequence, the essence of the picturesque. To get this effect—for an effect of course it was—he sacrificed the opportunity of being monumental on a pompous French or South American scale, a sacrifice the nature of which is simply not understood today either by the public which takes the picturesque for granted, or by professional architects brought up in a half-baked Beaux Arts tradition. Nevertheless though the result was the height of artificiality—in the eighteenth-century meaning of that word, and much the same as that achieved in a good park (St. James's, for instance, which was actually landscaped by Nash), it was romantic; and Mr. John Summerson has, I think, announced that Regent Street belongs to the romantic movement. I am far from questioning that. All I would add is that when it is discovered that something belongs to the romantic movement there is an inclination to put a mental Q.E.D. at the end as though the puzzle were solved. The important point is not that Nash synthesized the classic and romantic movements, but that he applied the principles of English landscape gardening to town

planning, which means for practical purposes that he evolved the technique of the "asymmetrical monumental." The establishment of this principle in English town planning, the rightness of which can be appreciated by an imaginative survey of its implications, should be of the greatest value to modern architects. If we add that he thought not only of town planning in terms of English landscape gardening, but thought also of buildings solely in terms of town planning, in terms of the contours of the ground and the integration of the parts, the building being but one of the parts, we begin to see why his detail was sometimes shoddy and superficial.

As long as he got the broad effect he was satisfied, for Nash was the first architect to feel that tricking out façades in fine raiment was simply Exterior Decoration, and as a true architect he refused to treat *décor* except as *décor*. When I say a true architect I mean, of course, a true modern architect, for the importance of not being earnest about decoration is a modern concept.

And therein lies the key to the study of Nash. Paradoxically enough Prinney's architect did not belong to the Age of Taste, wherein he shone with a slightly cracked effulgence. He was the first great modern architect.

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

A Liverpool Fantasy

As a change from purely technical subjects and to exercise the designer's imagination, students of the Liverpool School of Architecture are sometimes set six hour sketch designs, under the guidance of their instructor, Mr. W. G. Holford, in which the problem is to put down an idea on paper in its most direct and compelling form.

A recent subject of this sort was a drawing to represent a film setting for the film of H. G. Wells's book *The Shape of Things to Come* which is now actually in preparation at Isleworth. Any incident in the course of world events during the next hundred years could be depicted, and no restriction, either in subject matter or representative technique, was included in the programme.

The fifty or sixty drawings that resulted showed an amazing diversity of approach to the subject and of the incidents portrayed. From the collection it has been possible to illustrate here half a dozen whose forecasts range from destruction and despair to reconstruction and the building of a new world.

1. "Industrial Conflict," by T. G. F. Shore, Third Year student. Riots in the factories; drawing depicts the hall of a large chemical works with condensers for the synthetic ammonia process.

2. "The End of Mechanization," by B. T. Howells, Fifth Year. Airtight glass factory run completely by Robots. Howling mobs of starved workers surround the palace of industry, and watch the factory owner and his girl friend arrive on a visit of inspection. No Men Wanted.

3. "Overthrow of the League of Nations," by H. I. Gordon, Fifth Year. The mob attacks its former international leaders at the very feet of the League's symbol. Atlas is crushed by the forces of the world.

4. "The Return to the Simple Life," by T. Mellor, Third Year. After the devastating war of 1950 there is a reversion to primitive social conditions. Industry and Commerce are abandoned. Transport non-existent. The devastated cities fall into ruin. The drawing represents one of Liverpool's great graving docks during this period. Life goes on as represented by the boys swimming in what was once a busy centre of activity.

5. "Application of modern methods of production to agriculture, in a reasonable society," by J. A. Ashworth, Third Year. Fifty years suffices to bring back order to the world. Progress is rapid but controlled. (This drawing measured 8 ft. by 4 ft.)

6. "New Cities of Light," by W. G. Holford. At last men begin to plant new cities in which civic dignity and proper living conditions for all are for the first time united. The few office towers concentrated in one centre—the living quarters, recreation and woodland spaces are spread around. (This drawing was on plywood 1 mm. thick, sprayed with ink, and measured 4 ft. by 4 ft. 6 in.)



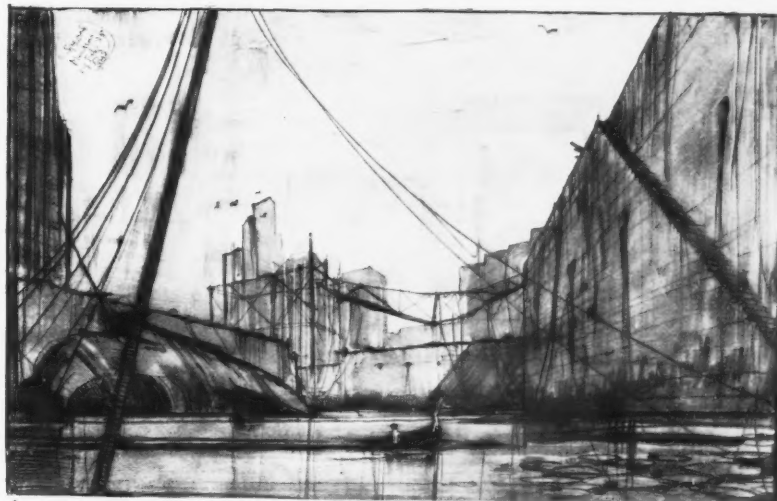
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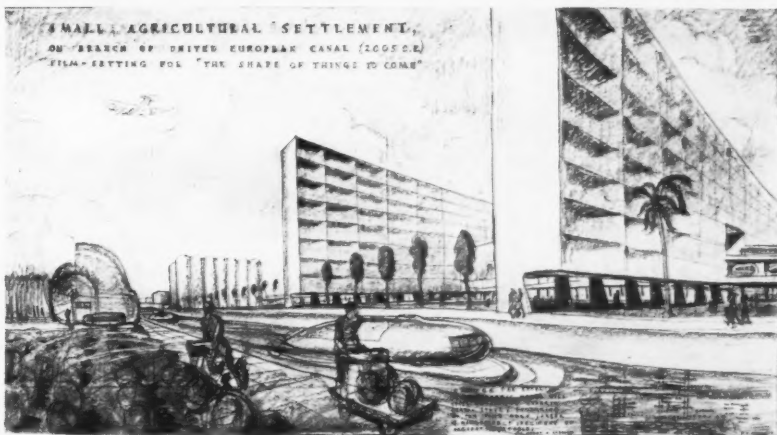
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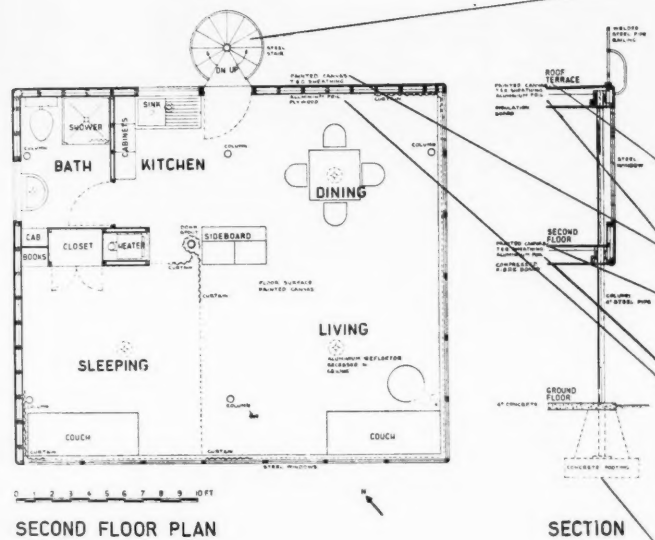
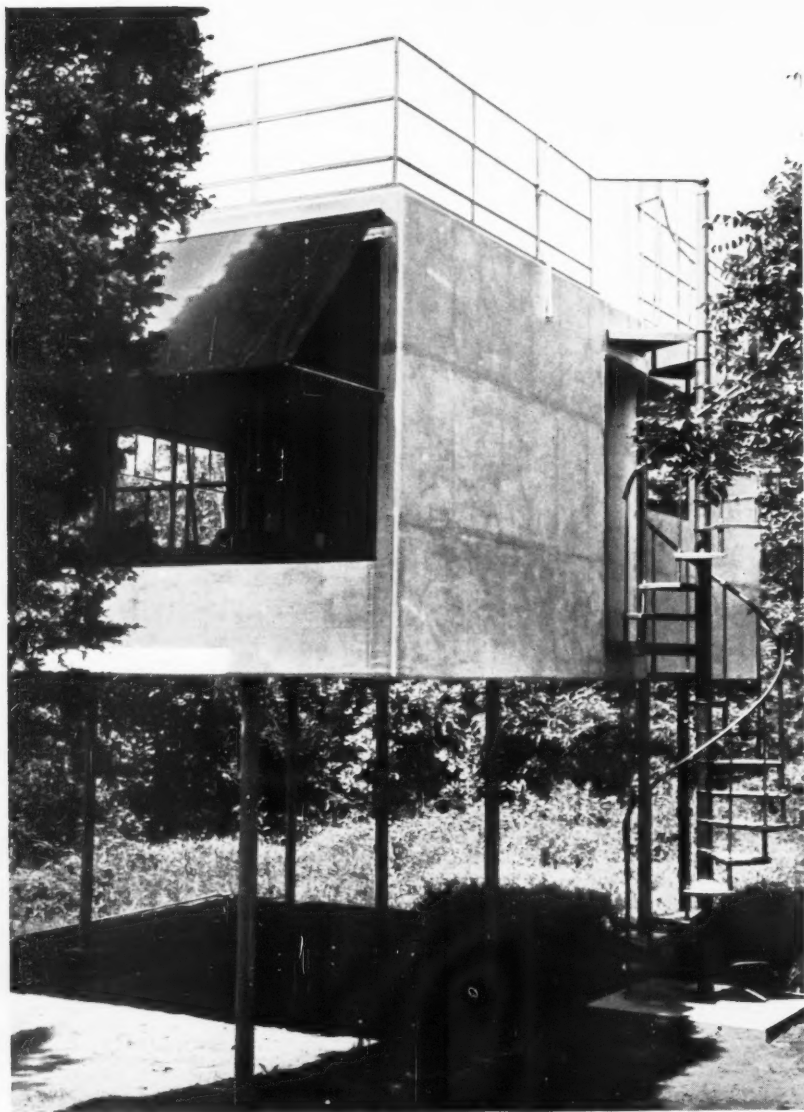


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A W E E K - E N D H O U S E

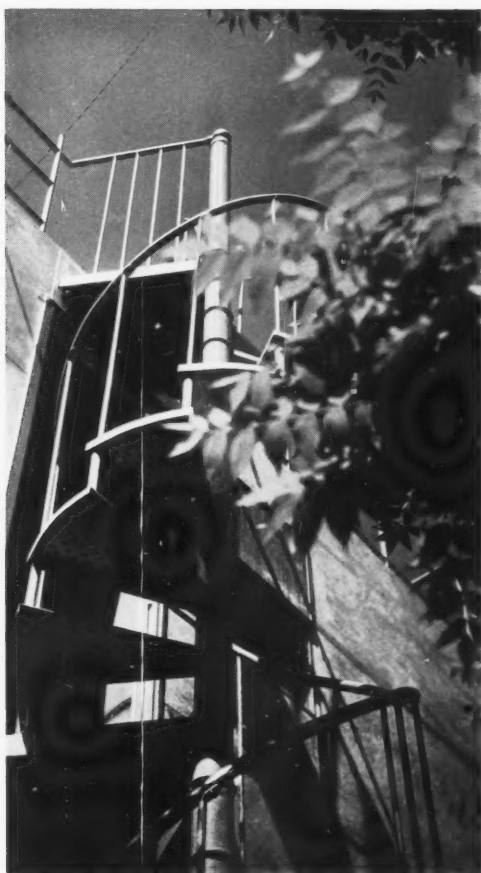


*A. LAWRENCE KOCHER
AND ALBERT FREY,
ARCHITECTS.*



This house, at North Port, Long Island, is a one-storey structure that provides three living storeys. It is supported by six light steel columns, embedded in concrete at the base. The space below the house is used as a garage for two cars. The principal floor, which is the only enclosed space, is subdivided into living and dining rooms, kitchen, bathroom and store. The living room at night may be subdivided by curtains into three bedrooms, all with access to the bathroom. The roof terrace, the third storey, is used for outdoor sleeping in summer, and for sitting and sun-bathing. The steel windows are of the projecting type, and the glass admits ultra-violet radiation: they are oriented to secure views of water and woodland. The entire exposed face of the house is of canvas duck, stretched over a grooved and tongued facing of redwood flooring. The walls are insulated by aluminium foil placed as a continuous membrane between the exterior and the interior of the 4 in. wall. The interior wall facing is of $\frac{1}{4}$ in. plywood. Curtains exclude direct sunlight on hot days, and awnings help to shield the windows.

JOHN GLOAG



An external spiral staircase of steel leads to the front door and the roof.



The texture of the canvas duck used for the external face. It takes paint admirably.

The position of the insulating aluminium foil is here indicated. The foil is paper backed.



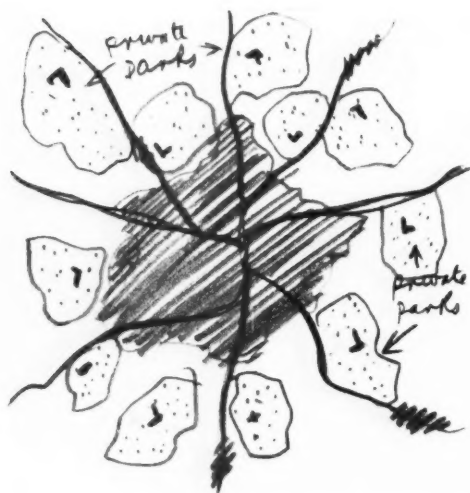
The concrete bases for the steel supporting columns in process of construction.

CRY STOP TO HAVOC

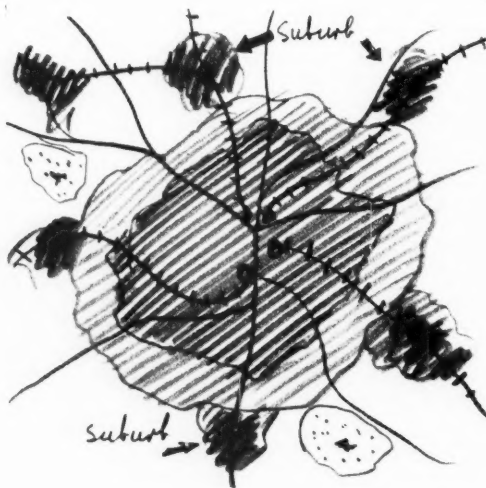
IN the pages that follow there is set out in graphic form the terms and a solution of a problem which, with the growth of modern transport and the incidence of property taxation, looms before those who have a care for the preservation of the English countryside, and some knowledge of the speed with which the towns are eating into it.

Preservation by sterilization is not possible on a wide scale. It is a negative and costly process which may apply to a few well-known beauty spots for the purchase of which private benefactors can be found or public money spent; but eventually preservation must become part of an *active* policy of development, or we must suffer the gradual spoliation of wide tracts of now open country, through an unregulated exploitation for small house building which town planning has so far been entirely unable to prevent.

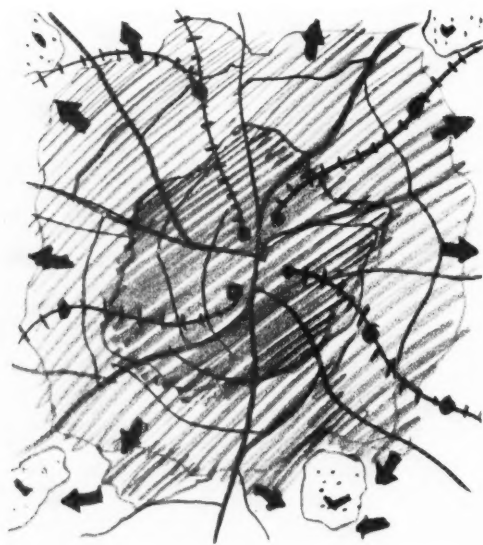
Up the Thames valley this pink blight is spreading, and from the ramparts of Windsor Castle the river meadows that once stretched away in unbroken green are disappearing beneath the plague of brick and tile. Only to the west, where the great park and forest mark the Royal lands, and where the hills are still well timbered over a dozen large estates, is the prospect unchanged. If this too were to fall the Castle and its park would remain landmarks in a featureless domain. Yet it is possible to preserve and still develop: to save this landscape for those who, until now, by the mere act of living in it, have been forced to destroy precisely what they came to enjoy.



17th CENTURY. The town surrounded by its wealthier members—a green belt of plutocratic estates linking town and country.



19th CENTURY. Came the railways and with them the first general exodus, suburbs and satellites springing up round the railway stations.



20th CENTURY. Old roads, railways—new roads, motor cars—these are the forces of unregulated expansion. The town moves outwards.



CLOSE UP. Is there no better solution than this featureless expansion? Are we to destroy completely the ordered countryside built up by our ancestors?

or preservation by development

THIS FINE OLD HOUSE AND PARK FOR SALE

The grounds of 33 acres, including beautiful gardens and lawns, contain some of the finest timber in the south of England, the estate having been laid out in the eighteenth century manner after the destruction of the Elizabethan mansion during the lifetime of the sixth Baron B . . .

Extract from Catalogue of Sale.

WHAT ARE WE GOING
TO DO ABOUT IT?

EITHER—

it is to be destroyed, its trees felled and its lawns and shrubberies cut up by roads and fences into desirable building plots for family houses, each a law unto itself, none with a view except of its neighbour,

OR

the trees and gardens and lawns that have taken hundreds of years to perfect *can be saved* to serve an equivalent number of people living a modern life within a landscape preserved for their pleasure.

This is the solution: preservation by concentrated development.



Population 40 people



Population 500 people



Population 500 people



WHITE AND PINK
CAMELIAS
PHOTOGRAPHED IN THE OPEN
JANUARY 25TH 1935

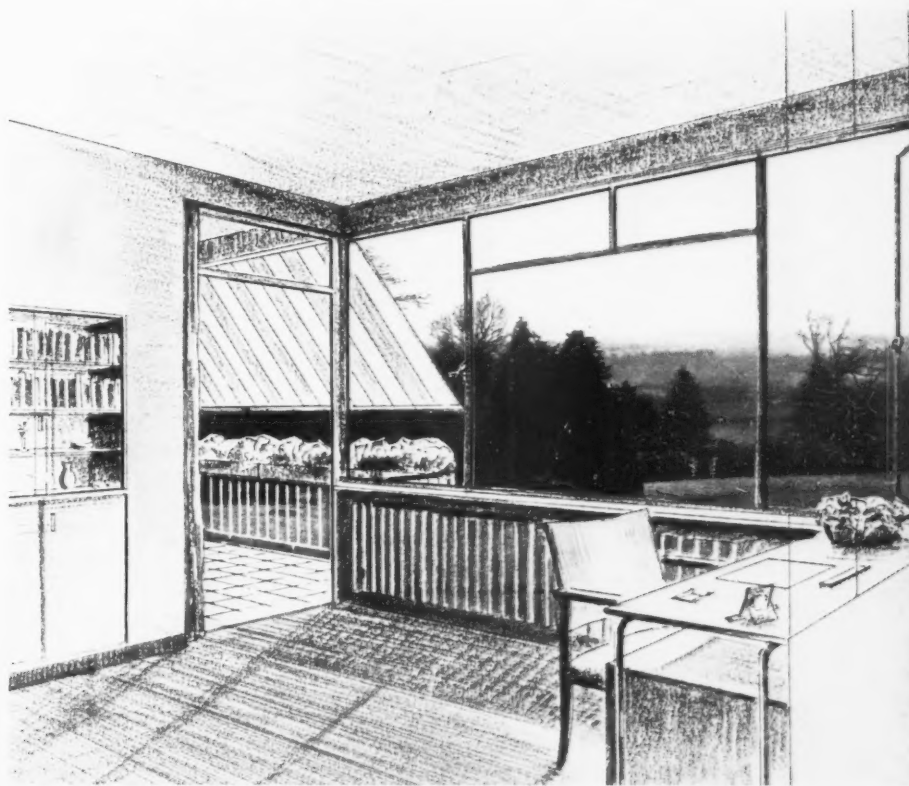




Here is an aerial view of the development of part of an estate. These buildings will be the fourth in a succession of houses built upon this ancient and historic site; and the terraces and lawns, with trees that have come to maturity from the earliest plantations, are carefully preserved to form the setting for the last-comer.

On every side of the central space are woods, protecting the buildings from the east and north winds, and spreading westward until they merge into Windsor Forest.

The sports grounds, including tennis courts, squash courts and swimming pool occupy the sheltered sunny side of the old kitchen gardens.



The windows of every flat look out over parkland and forest, preserved for all time. Yet such is the freedom of this form of development that where 32 out of 33 acres remain as open space, no one overlooks his neighbour. This view belongs to everybody.



CRY STOP TO HAVOC

This scheme is not fiction but is actually taking shape. It is the enterprise of Isokon who are responsible for the Lawn Road Flats in Hampstead designed by Wells Coates. The new scheme which at present is called "Isokon No. 3," will consist of 110 flats and apartments, together with a restaurant, a lounge and a ballroom.

The flats are designed for those who want some approach to a country gentleman's life near London—busy people who are tired of expensive and squalid living in fashionable parts of the West End—the rents being from a little over £100 per annum to £500 per annum and the flats from one to seven rooms. In all except the single room flats the living room and dining-room run through the building so as to command the morning and evening sun, and the magnificent view on both sides. Both rooms are so designed that they can be thrown together, making one large room approximately 14 ft. by 35 ft. Garages are provided out of earshot of the main buildings, and service of all types from window cleaning to valeting is to be available according to a specific code. For children a secluded part of the park has been put aside for a nursery and play garden, with a fully qualified person in charge, so that they can if necessary amuse themselves under sane supervision away from the disturbing adult.

This can be regarded as one of the first efforts to reconcile the English tradition of good living with the requirements of contemporary town and country life.

Part of the park at St. Leonard's Hill, taken from the site of the new development and looking towards Eton.

Professor Walter Gropius and Maxwell Fry (of Adams, Thompson and Fry) are joint architects for the scheme.



The English Tradition in the Countryside

By W. A. Eden

III* The Re-birth of the Tradition



SYNOPSIS

Is it possible to discover any consistent motive prompting the various changes which man has brought about in the English landscape during the last four thousand years? What prompted the men of the Bronze Age to forsake the hills and settle in the valleys? Why were the woodlands cleared and the marshes drained? For what reason were the common fields enclosed, and, most important of all, why was the planting of trees carried on with such vigour in the eighteenth century? It seems obvious that the reason for these changes was the desire of man to improve his environment, either economically, or aesthetically, and that we may justly claim that the tradition of the English countryside is a tradition of improvement rather than of preservation. But this might be said of many landscapes, so that we must seek further if we are to discover the essentially English features of the tradition. We have seen that what may be termed the essentially English features of our landscape, the hedges, the hedgerow trees and the decorative but not rigidly formal plantations, were added to it during the eighteenth century. Each of these has a similar effect in shutting out the distances and reducing the landscape to a more human scale, and this human scale is the most distinctive characteristic of the English landscape. Ours is, in fact, a humanized landscape. To the great end of humanizing the landscape all the improvement schemes of the eighteenth century were directed. Every small squire of the period was simply trying to make his immediate countryside the open-air part of his home. But with the industrial revolution came expansion in industry and enormous increase in urban population. The new centres of industry grew into crowded and insanitary conglomerations of shoddy houses and factories, so abominable that men turned from them and sought solace in nature. Couper's proverbial assertion that "God made the country, and man made the town" acquired a new meaning. The inference was that the towns were evil because they were man-made, and the country was good because it was God-made; and the less interfered with by man, the better. Wild scenery came to be regarded as the finest form of landscape.

Captains of industry had no such reticence, and went about their business with total disregard for the countryside. Communications kept pace, bringing roads, railways and telegraph poles; but the artists didn't go with them. When they could not escape to nature, they escaped to history, and men like Pugin shuddered at the thought of gas-works. Art and industry were hopelessly estranged.

At first towns were kept within limits. The railway station was the nucleus. Now they have burst their bounds, with cheap public utilities, cars and bus transportation. Landlords have been forced to break up their estates to pay death duties and have found a ready buyer in the speculative builder. Estate Development Companies have had only one interest in the land—to make it pay. Ribbons of houses have sprung up on bus routes from town to town until Wells's dream of a vast suburbia covering the whole country looks like being realized.

A gesture of protest came in the form of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, and undoubtedly it is better to preserve the countryside than to hand it over to the mercy of the speculative builder, but this aim, surely, is fundamentally inadequate.

It is perhaps hard for us, living in the midst of this world of make-believe, to retain any faith in the coming re-birth of the tradition. Hemmed in as we are by signs of a seemingly universal mortification of the spirit, we turn and turn about in a frantic effort to find a way out from the almost unbearable nightmare of it all, 2. Those of us who live in towns, and more especially those whose habitation is in the wilderness of a northern industrial town, or amid the desolation of its suburbs, are subjected to a continual buffeting of the senses, and are too often left numbed and dispirited in the end. How few are the objects, among all those we daily look upon, which provoke spontaneous joy; and where such joy is to be found, among the relics of other days, in the unspoilt country and its precious ornaments, are we not paralysed in our enjoyment by the fear of the destruction which awaits the object of our delight? Can we, in these days, believe well of man, when we have so many signs and portents of his lack of grace? Is not the sensitive man's only refuge in clinging desperately to what is left of loveliness in a world which is becoming more unlovely at every turn? It may be so, but if it is there is no meaning in our conception of tradition, and, it may be added, there can be no meaning in life itself.

Our conception of tradition has led us to the conclusion that, inevitably, we must hand on as well as receive. Immediately we are under the necessity of deciding what we shall hand on. What indeed? Shall it be nothing but a tale of vulgarity and an ever-diminishing supply of "beauty spots"? Surely our civilization has something to offer us out of which we can create new beauties, not simply in spots, but generally throughout the land. At least it is necessary for us to believe that it has, and to this end we must learn to know our civilization. Meanwhile we may take heart from the knowledge that this is not the first time in history that the Englishman's world has, so to speak, tumbled about his ears. The countryside is going through one of those periodical crises which have arisen at various periods in the past. The outcry against the speculating builder in these days is no more vehement than that raised against that "covetous and unsatiable cormorant"—the ingrosser and encloser of the sixteenth century; and similar, or more fatal, objection was no doubt taken by the prehistoric hunter to the clearing of his forest by the agriculturalist—"the old wind in the old anger." Have we not reason to hope that the old wind of anger may once more be the means of scattering the seeds which will quicken into a new birth?

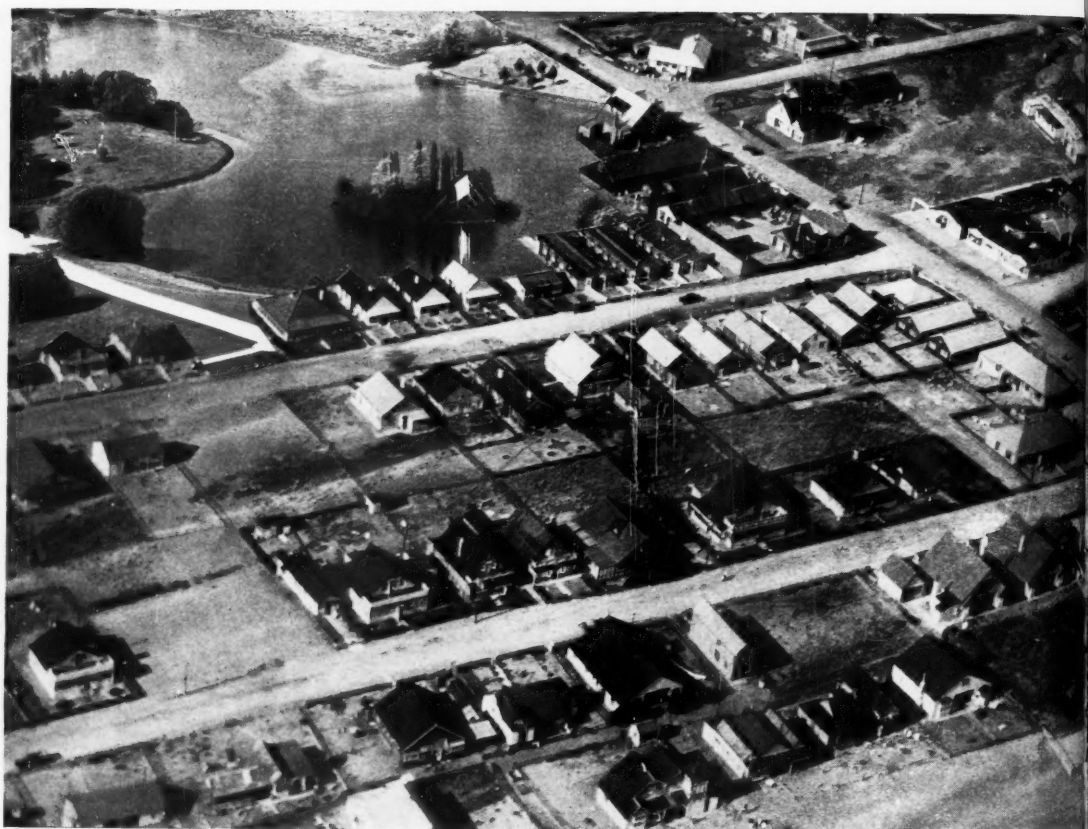
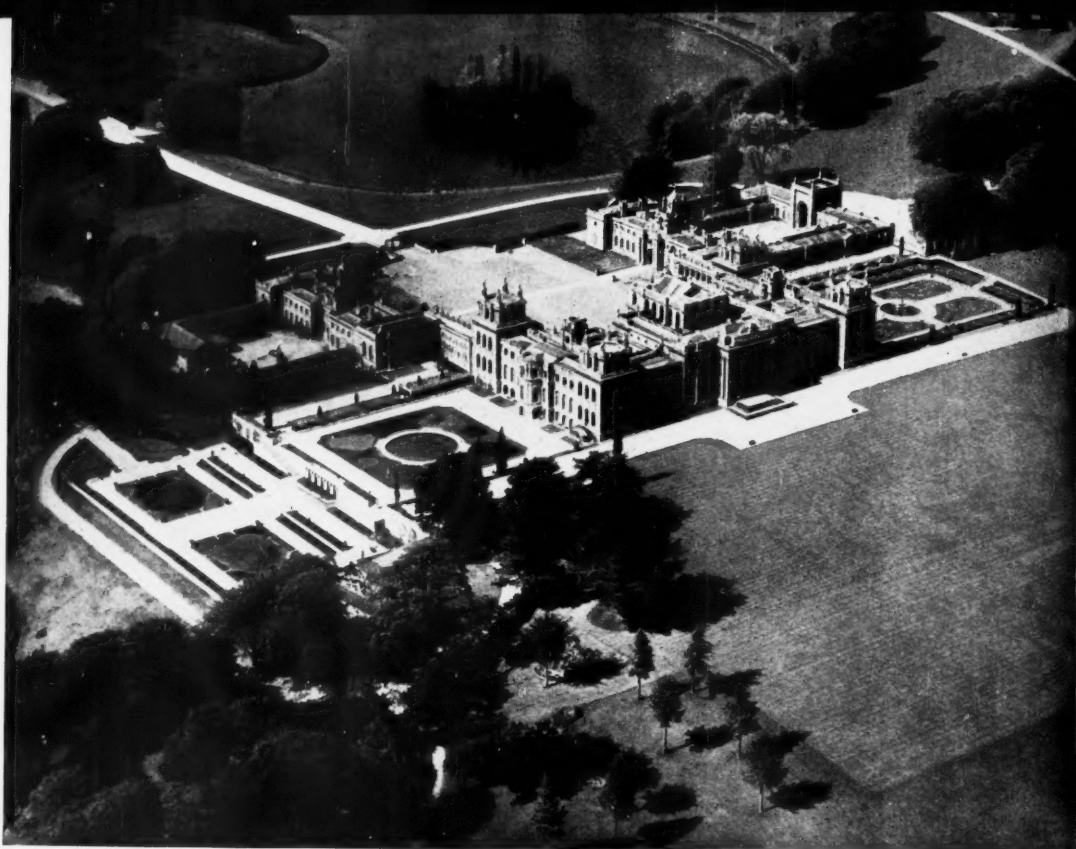
The present crisis in the countryside is of the first magnitude. On the one hand a complete redistribution of the population is taking place, consequent on the development of modern transport and other essential services, 4; and nothing can prevent this redistribution, even if it were desirable

*Previous instalments were published in the March and April issues.

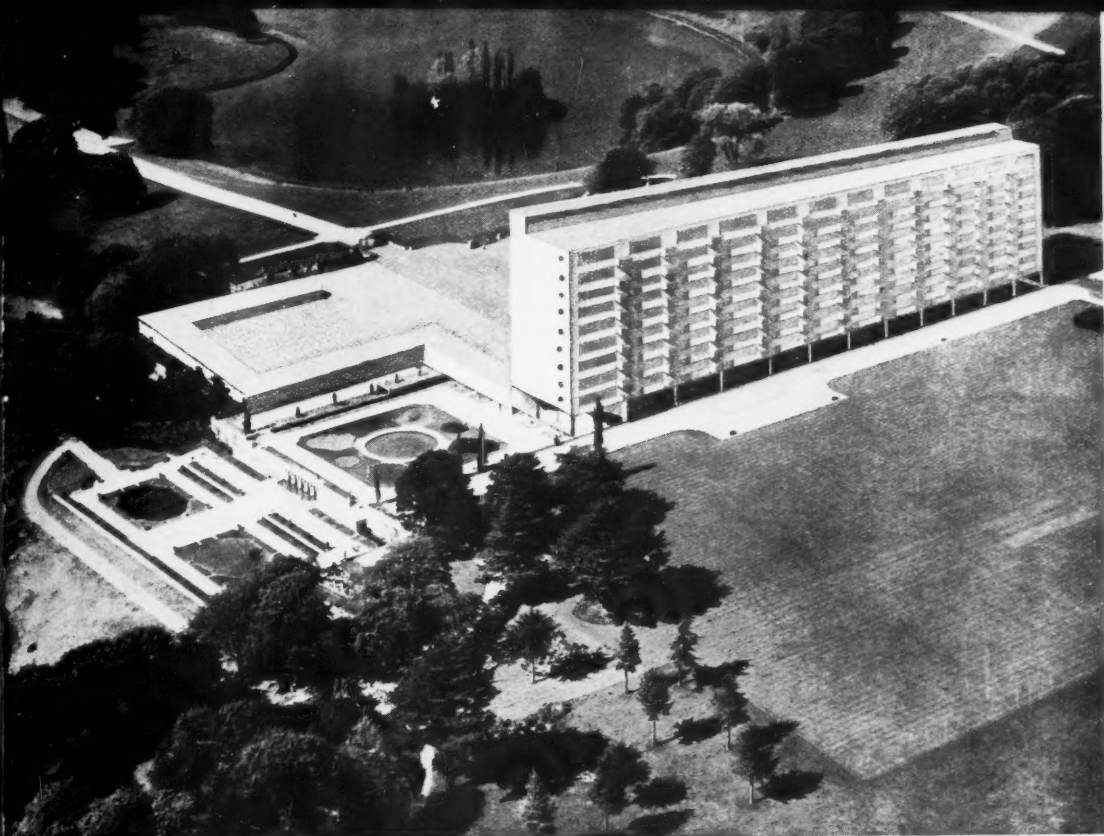
that it should be prevented. This side of the matter is a problem of urban development, but it is the aspect of the subject which is at present affecting the countryside, regarded as landscape, most severely. On the other hand the depressed condition of agriculture has largely facilitated the process of redistribution. In fact it has made the process too easy, since almost any land has become potential building land, thus providing the towns with land to waste. The balance which existed in the eighteenth century between town and country has been destroyed, and the disorderly spreading of the towns is the visible sign of this unbalanced state of affairs. The real problem confronting the community to-day is the problem of how to reconstitute a balance between the claims of town and country. It is a problem which involves both industry and agriculture, and the proper solution of it depends on the due consideration of its technical and social aspects. Viewed in this way it becomes evident that urban and rural development must be regarded as indivisible. The salvation of the countryside must be sought for in the reconstruction of the towns, and the reconstruction of the towns can only be effective if the countryside is strong enough economically to resist the forces of disintegration which are at work in the towns.

It also seems to be self-evident—if one may return for a moment to the discussion of the preservationist point of view—that the preservation, here and there, of a few hundred acres of fell or parkland can make no material contribution to the solution of this nation-wide problem. There is not much value in the removal of one obnoxious advertisement from the already derelict area of the Wirral Peninsula; the preservation of the Lickey Hills becomes almost pointless when Birmingham can spread in hopeless confusion all about them; and a green belt round London will hardly do more than effect a slight dilution in the strength of the poison. All such proposals leave the main question unanswered—the question of how the land of England, as a whole, can be developed so as to afford the greatest measure of enjoyment to the people. It is because it suggests no answer to this question, because, indeed, it never even formulates such a question, that the policy of countryside preservation seems to be altogether inadequate.

The proposition that must now be stated is that the problem can only be solved by a general return to the improving tradition of the English landscape—the tradition which was for the time being swamped by the developments of the nineteenth century. Our interpretation of "the people" has broadened since the last great period of improvement, and therein lies one opportunity of adding to the tradition. We can attempt to do for the whole community what the eighteenth century landowner did for his own enjoyment, and only incidentally for the benefit of his tenants. This, as we have seen, was to make his estate the open-air part of his home, 1. The



Three alternatives in the life of a great country estate, the latter two being, it need hardly be said, imaginary. Blenheim is fortunately still intact, but every day great estates are being broken up and broken into by the speculative builder. 1. Blenheim as it is, and as we hope it will remain. 2. Blenheim "developed" according to the best modern ideas—notice the hoarding on the island and the careful way in which the amenities of the lake are preserved. The houses are an air view of an actual piece of English building development. 3. Blenheim developed on another principle. The park and the garden are retained and in place of the house



3



4

a block of flats is built to house a hundred and twenty families or nearly double the number of families shown housed in 2, but with a great deal more privacy. Blocks of such flats disposed amongst trees at determined intervals would house people in genuinely rural surroundings, whilst the parks would give expression to their communal life. Under present conditions the escapist from the town is for ever pushing out further into the country in pursuit of a rural or semi-rural life which, like a mirage, gets further off the more he pursues it. If the landscape in 4 is photographed again in ten years' time, how many trees and fields will remain?

home-like quality he imparted to the landscape by reducing its scale through tree planting and enclosures is the distinguishing characteristic of our countryside. If we can have the vision to realize the essentials of our tradition this quality shall not be lacking in the future. We may, and indeed eventually we must in some manner, substitute the community for the individual landowner, 3, but we can still regard the landscape as the open-air part of man's home—a home which is supported by agriculture and industry, and upon which man, for his enjoyment, sets the emblems of his affectionate possession. In making the land more productive, more convenient, and more expressive of the idea of our common home we may see a true basis for improvement which shall be in the great tradition of the English countryside.

If we accept this point of view, it becomes obvious that what was an adequate home for the landowner and village community of the eighteenth century can no longer be regarded as suitable for the needs of to-day. The scale of life has entirely altered. The average county is now as accessible to its inhabitants in all its parts as was many a parish a hundred years ago. The setting of our daily lives has expanded so that a journey from one end of the country to another may be undertaken with no more inconvenience than was experienced by most contemporaries of Dr. Johnson in making a twenty-mile excursion to their county towns. Hundreds of market towns, once centres of country life within a five- or ten-mile radius, have lost their ancient status, and are becoming empty show places catering for the week-end tourist trade, whilst the business which called them into existence is now transacted forty or fifty miles away at the nearest manufacturing town. The speed of modern transport brings together a diversity of scenes which once could rarely be realized in their relationship to one another, except perhaps in a view from some high place. To-day we can journey to the limits of the view from the Chilterns or Brecon between tea and dinner, whilst in the aeroplane we have an altogether new viewpoint from which it is possible to see several counties laid out like a map beneath us, 5.

At the same time we have a new aggregate of population to consider. The village, with its 200 inhabitants, is no longer a unit in design, and the market town cannot be considered separately. Even the city of a million inhabitants constitutes an inadequate unit, since its ramifications may extend over several counties and into the territories of a score of local authorities. It is impossible nowadays to deal satisfactorily with any unit of landscape smaller than the geographical region, and the overlapping of the various regions and their complementary nature forces us to the conclusion that the soundest basis for dealing with the landscape must be a national one. Even then it is necessary to remember that the corn-growing lands of England, which used to be grouped round ten thousand English villages, are now in North America and the Argentine, and in Australia.

These are some of the conditions out of which it is our business to create a new home for the community. That home must have working space, living space and playing space, and each may be contrived in such a manner that it contributes to our pleasure in the whole. In the countryside we are concerned with each of these broad divisions of the use of land, but principally, on account of the greater area which it occupies, with the working space which is devoted to the agricultural industry. It is strange that one should have to insist that the future of the countryside, as countryside, depends mainly on the development of agriculture; that the fields and lanes and woods have a purpose other than the provision of so much open space for the benefit of the townsman on holiday; and that pleasing as all these

vegetables will be more than ever the main business of the farmer. These are the commodities which can be produced better at home than anywhere else, and if the population is such, and is likely to remain such, that the country cannot be made agriculturally self-supporting (even if this were desirable from the point of view of our export trade) it seems reasonable that we should endeavour to increase our production of these things rather than attempt to grow crops which can more easily be imported. But whatever the ultimate trend of production, all authorities are agreed that the land can be improved so as to give a considerably larger return than it does at present. A very conservative estimate puts the possible increase at something over 33½ per cent., whilst a hundred per cent. increase has been

and the Fylde district of Lancashire to poultry. Small mixed farms, adding variety to the landscape in their chequer-boards of arable and pasture, may be doomed to disappear. Improved transport facilities may mean that it will no longer be necessary even for fodder crops to be grown in the districts where they are consumed. If this is so we may well imagine a future landscape which will gain in unity what it loses in variety, though it must be remembered that the extraordinary disparity of soils which often exists in England within a very limited area, may exert a contrary influence in favour of the retention of the variety.

The consideration of production from the point of view of the unit, as distinct from the region, may also prove an important factor in determining the future appearance of the land. It is assumed that factory farming will have become the generally established practice before many decades have passed away, and this being so, that the size of farms will tend to be increased. This coming mechanization of the farm may mean that lanes and hedgerows will have to be straightened and the fields enlarged in many districts where the existing divisions, determined by the piecemeal methods of early enclosure, are wasteful and unsuitable for mechanical husbandry. It might be well here, in view of the popular idea of rusticity, to recall the words of William Marshall, who, writing in the eighteenth century, laid it down as an axiom that "in Rural Economy, straight lines and right angles are first principles, which can seldom be deviated from, with propriety: either in laying out a farm, or in planning Farm Buildings." A further effect of the reorganization of the unit may be that many old farm-houses may become unnecessary, and have to be demolished. Certainly many will have to be rebuilt on more hygienic lines and provision made in the new buildings for the required mechanical equipment. The picturesque jumble of house, barns and byres with its dung heap and its yard deep in mud will have to disappear. In its place we may hope to see an efficient factory with living quarters at a convenient distance, all spotlessly clean and well-kept. 7. For it is time we ceased to regard the farm-house as the legitimate home of ancient customs and quaint old-fashioned ways. The agricultural industry must be as up to date in its equipment as any other.

The improvement of agriculture involves also the proper organization of the industry for the marketing and distribution of the produce. It is assumed that this will take place on a regional co-operative basis. It may not be at first apparent how regional co-operative organizations can do much to affect the appearance of the land, but the connection becomes plain when it is considered that many of the existing markets are redundant and that the industry would benefit greatly by a thorough reconsideration of their sites, with a view to closing superfluous ones and to the creation of new centres with better transport facilities. It is possible to envisage the growth of new towns to serve the needs of a reorganized



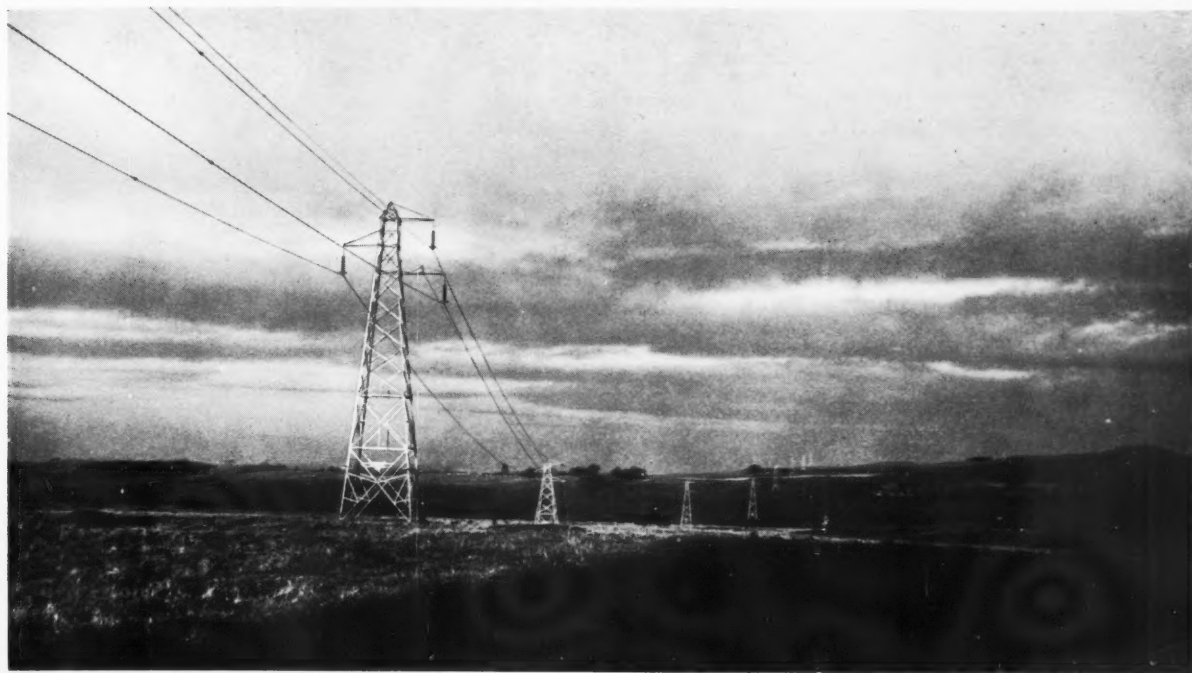
5. *The New Scale: To-day we can journey to the limits of the view from the Chilterns or Bredon between tea and dinner, whilst in the aeroplane we have an altogether new viewpoint from which it is possible to see several counties laid out like a map beneath us. It is impossible nowadays to deal satisfactorily with any unit of landscape smaller than the geographical region.*

things may be, they will have to disappear if they do not fulfil that purpose. Nor is their disappearance to be regretted if what is provided in their place is considered from the point of view of the aesthetic, as well as the economic, improvement of the landscape.

It would be impossible even for the agricultural scientist and the skilled economist to forecast the exact future of farming in England. All that can be said is that it is probable that the production of perishable foodstuffs such as dairy and poultry produce, fresh meat, fruit and

thought attainable by some. At the same time, the number of people employed on the land can be proportionately increased, and agricultural wages brought to a more human level, if the improvements are effected on a logically planned basis.

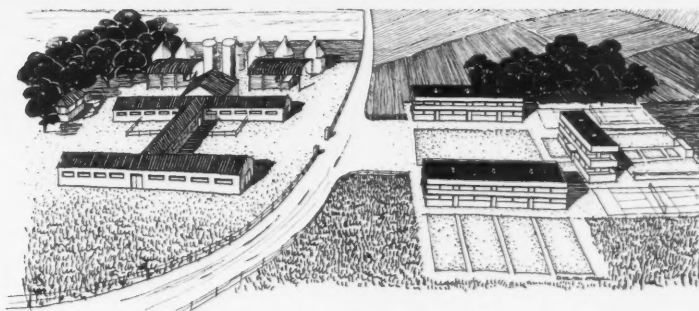
The planning of the agricultural industry involves, first of all, the consideration of production on a regional basis. There may be an increase in the tendency for certain districts to be devoted predominantly to the production of special commodities, as the Vale of Evesham and the district round Wisbech are devoted to fruit and vegetables,



6. *The New Scale: The electricity grid system has incidentally given us, in the pylons, one of the few fine additions to the landscape of modern times.*

agriculture, and it is not improbable that farmers' co-operative associations, formed primarily to assist in trading, may interest themselves in providing social facilities for their members, and even in questions of housing for agricultural workers. In this way they might bring back to the countryside that sense of corporate life which disappeared when the village moot ceased to function at the time of the enclosure of the common fields.

If the number of people employed on the land is to be increased the housing of the rural workers will become a matter for serious consideration. Whatever the event existing conditions will have to be improved, and the rural slum abolished along with that of the town. The reconditioning of picturesque old cottages may appeal to the townsman as a means to this improvement, but the gratification of his taste for the pretty-pretty is no compensation to the farm labourer who has to live in what, at the best, can only be considered a makeshift. There is no reason why the rural worker should not be housed as well, and in as up-to-date a manner, as the town worker. Indeed, one hopes that the rebuilding of the villages, when it comes, will be carried out on more logical and imaginative lines than those adopted for the extension of the towns. The English village was almost perfect for the purpose for which it was built, but its purpose having changed, the village must change too. Its planning will have to be related to the changed conditions in agriculture, and it will be governed also by considerations of modern transport, modern



7. *Design for a modern farm, by D. Wilson Spreull.*

hygiene, and modern social ideals. It may be found advisable to encourage a better understanding between the industrial and agricultural communities by providing for the housing of both in the same place, as has been suggested in the event of the development of the Kent coalfield. The electrification of many industries, and the improvement of the electricity grid system (which incidentally has given us, in the pylons, one of the few fine additions to the landscape of modern times, 6) will make such a proposition eminently practicable, to the mutual advantage of both town and country.

Space is lacking in which to deal in any but a summary fashion with the remaining aspects of the problem. The improvement of communications so as to give the farmer, wherever he may be, equal facilities with the manufacturer for the transport of his goods; the provision of water, involving the protection of sources of supply, to villages and farm-houses throughout the country; the sewerage of new and old villages; and the provision of pleasantly situated recreation grounds and open spaces for the benefit of town and country—these are some of the matters which will affect

the future appearance of the land. Another positive work of improvement which might be undertaken immediately is the reclamation of land which has been laid waste through the processes of an improvident industrialism. Wide areas of pit mounds in districts like the Black Country, for instance, might be converted into green open space and planted with screening belts of trees at very little cost to the community, whilst the newer and more discreet pits of the Warwickshire coalfield and other places might be made still less obnoxious by judicious tree planting.

The improvements we have imagined will not come of their own accord: the organization must be there to guide and plan the future development of the countryside. Nor can a great progressive movement such as this be brought about through the agency of restrictive legislation, such as is at present applied in matters of town and country development. If it is a matter of urgency to the community that these, or similar, things should be done, the community must do them, and not continue in the pious hope that the world will get better of its own accord. Enough has

[Continued on page 202]

It has been seen that the basis of the English Tradition in the Countryside has been Improvement, which means, of course, improvement upon "nature." This improvement has sought to reconcile what is profitable—the improvement of crops—with what is pleasant, and it was the achievement of the eighteenth century that it found for farming, the basic industry, an expression which was both beautiful and humane. The countryside is the classic example of art in industry in which the art and the industry are indivisible; the landscape as we know it today, far from being natural, is an industrial landscape conceived in harmony with human standards. Into this eighteenth-century picture comes the new age equipped with steam, internal combustion engines, steel, electricity and wings. The new age, symbolized as the new road in the drawings which follow, makes new demands upon the countryside, especially in the way of an increase in scale; but it is a misconception to regard the revolution which this re-adjustment entails as something terrible and strange. History shows that the countryside itself has been in a continual state of "revolution," and it has been the aim of the English tradition not to impede but to express change in terms of improvement.

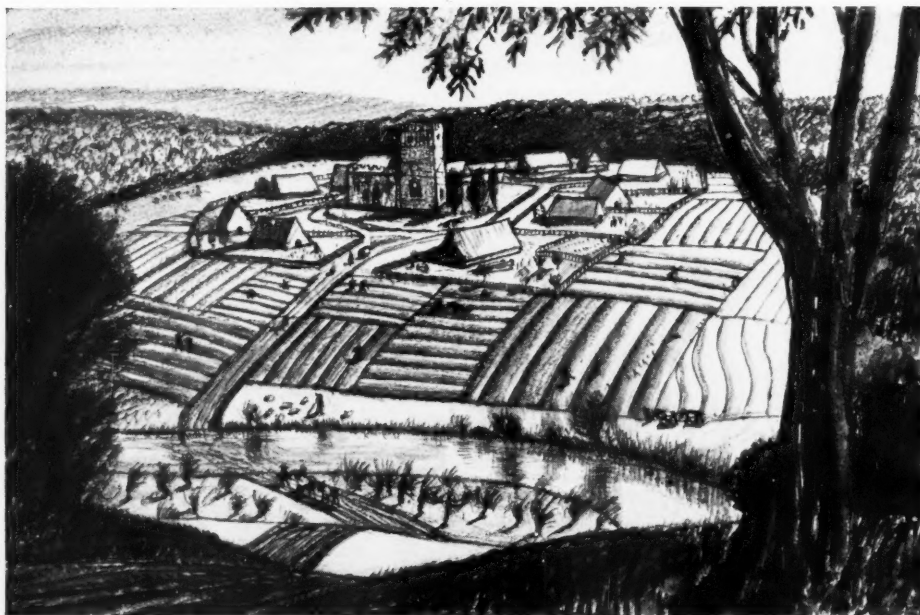
Primeval Forest

The history of the English landscape is the history of the gradual winning to man's use of the richer lands of the river valleys, and of their conversion into highly productive arable and pasture farms. The first stage in the process may be called the age of settlement. As we know, the progress of this first great revolutionary movement was slow, since primitive man was dependent on inadequate tools for the clearing of the forest and the draining of the marshes.



The First Revolution: The Clearing

Even under Roman rule the area under cultivation was surprisingly small, and with the coming of the Saxons it is more than likely that much good agricultural land was allowed to revert to a wilderness. It was left to the Saxons of the Christian period to undertake the settlement of the heavily forested districts, and the process was not altogether completed at the time of the Domesday Survey. The general aspect of the country must then have been that of a vast tangle of woodland, heath and marshland, dotted with innumerable clearings of agricultural land, in the midst of which stood the clusters of dwellings which developed into the villages and towns of today.



Drawn for *THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW* by
ROBERT AUSTIN.

The Second Revolution: Enclosure

Enclosure was successfully resisted until such time as the improvement of pasture by the cultivation of new grasses in the seventeenth century had lessened its evils to the poorer members of the community. When it did come, mainly between 1730 and 1850, the neat square fields into which hundreds of parishes were divided by the Enclosure Commissioners, differing from the earlier enclosures in being larger, more regular, and in having less smooth wood in the hedges, had the effect of reducing the landscape to a more human scale.



The Third Revolution: Humanization

We have seen that what may be termed the essentially English features of our landscape, the hedges, the hedgerow trees and the decorative but not rigidly formal plantations, were added to it during the eighteenth century. Each of these has a similar effect in shutting out the distances and reducing the landscape to a more human scale, and this human scale is the most distinctive characteristic of the English landscape. Ours is, in fact, a humanized landscape. To the great end of humanizing the landscape all the improvement schemes of the eighteenth century were directed. Every small squire of the period was simply trying to make his immediate countryside the open-air part of his home.

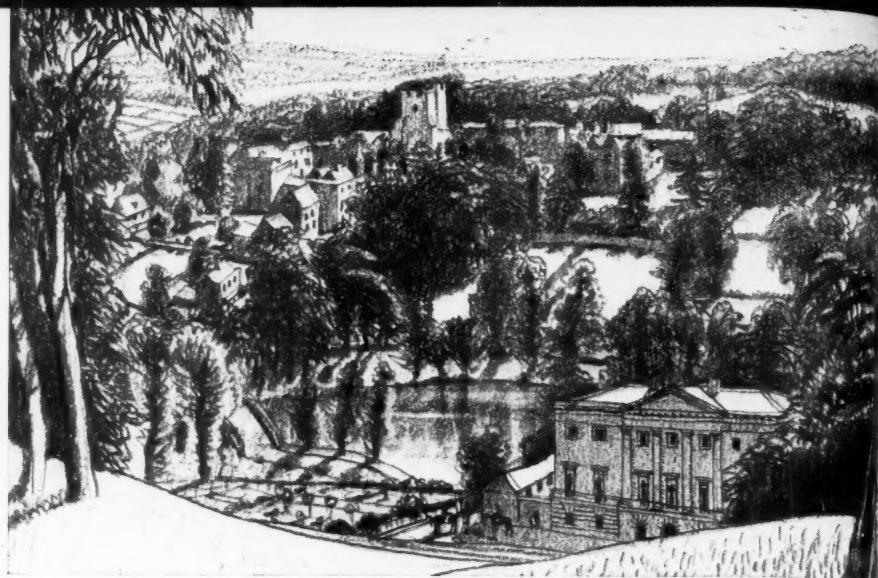


The Fourth Revolution: Machine Power

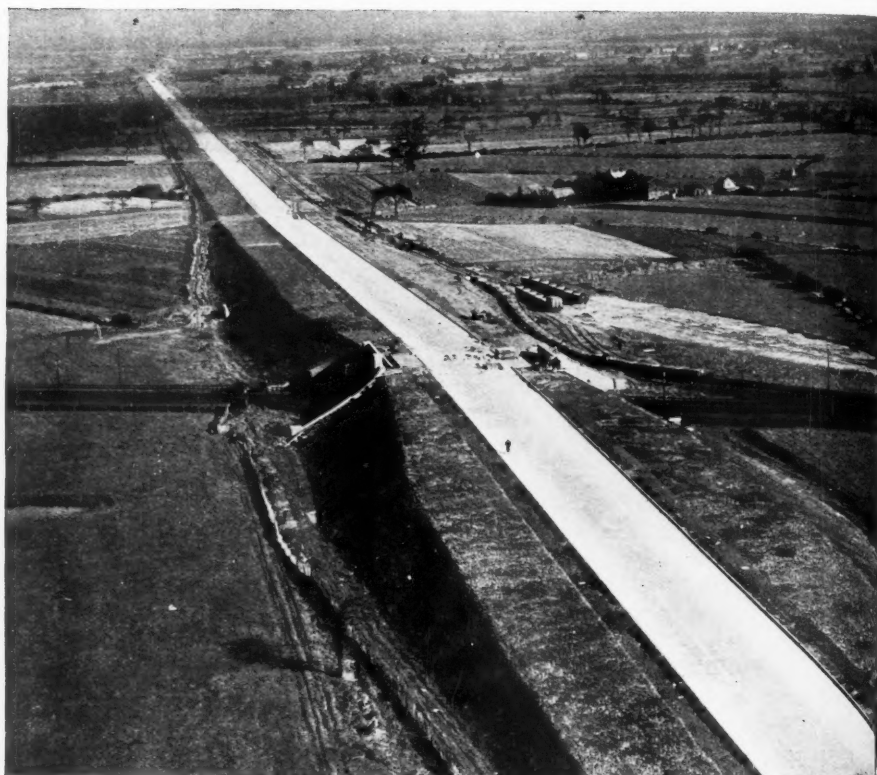
The present crisis in the countryside is of the first magnitude. A complete redistribution of the population is taking place, consequent on the development of modern transport and other essential services; and nothing can prevent this redistribution, even if it were desirable that it should be prevented. Hundreds of market towns, once centres of country life within a five or ten-mile radius, have lost their ancient status, and are becoming empty show places catering for the weekend tourist trade whilst the business which called them into existence is now transacted forty or fifty miles away at the nearest manufacturing town. The speed of modern transport brings together a diversity of scenes which once could rarely be realized in their relationship to one another except perhaps in a view from some high place.



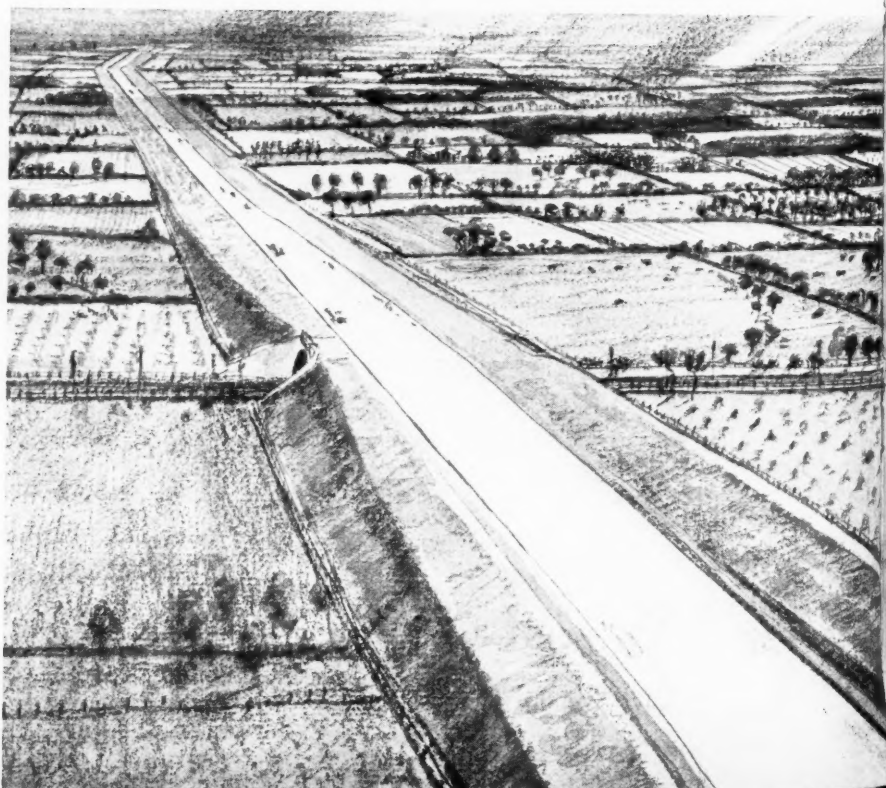
Suppose this piece of countryside is made a test case for the problem which has already been stated—the new arterial road.



When the new road passes through a landscape of this character which, owing to the absence of natural features and human design is large in scale, it is not difficult to imagine that



with a revival in farming and farming methods, a synthesis may be arrived at between the road with its enormous range and a more mechanized field pattern—a synthesis which will have a certain austere grandeur. But when the road



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meets the village, the product of an earlier civilization, ribbon development is only one aspect of a general condition of disruption, including a disruption in scale, which sets in as a result of the collision between two opposing ideals. Clearly neither improvement nor progress is served by compromises which destroy the *raison d'être* of the village, and for its own sake



the road built for speed should pass by, choosing land which is not built over (and which the law must protect from being built over when the road is constructed). This piece of country, not far from and similar in character to the village, is chosen for the site of the new road. What will be



the effect? Small-scale intimacy is lost but in its place there is discovered a great panorama which suggests new possibilities in landscaping. And this is achieved without any change in the character of the landscape. Future developments in farming may make the countryside "bigger" but it is designed already on lines which are monumental as well as intimate, and thus a relationship can be established at once between the new road and the old landscape which, if the improving tradition is observed, will lead to new combinations of beauty.

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THE ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE

perhaps been said to make it clear that the subject must be treated on a national basis. Further, if the State, as representing the community, is to undertake the planning of national development, it must have a proper control over the use of land. The manner in which this is to be achieved may be left to the politicians, but the planner would be falling short of his duty to the State if he did not declare against the system which forces the community to compensate the individual for the privilege of preventing his committing an anti-social act. Finally, in whatever manner the question is settled, the State must ensure the co-operation of all who are concerned in the use of land—farmer, manufacturer, builder and the rest—and the work of all must be co-ordinated by the designer. Country planning, or landscape design, must be recognized, as it was in the eighteenth century, as an extension of architectural design. Only in this way can the problem be tackled on the scale which it requires.

It is not considered that all these changes will be accomplished in such a way that they will, as a matter of course, constitute improvements in the landscape. Whether they will be improvements from the point of view of appearance depends entirely on the spirit in which they are carried out. We may be progressive, and we may be honest, but we may still fail to create a home. If our work is to represent a true

development of the English tradition we must be quite clear what we mean by a home for the community. A home which is furnished with the bare necessities is a long way from fulfilling all that we require of it. Something is needed to complete the conception, something that was expressed in the country house of the past by exquisitely-kept lawns, ornamental lakes and plantations of fine trees, something which is done for the sheer joy of doing a thing well, I. And then, again, it must not be done too patently well. The English mind shrinks from the "hundred-per-cent" as from something too obvious, leaving nothing to the imagination. Who, for instance, has not felt the difference between the English country house and the Hollywood imitation of it? The knowing where to stay the hand is an essential part of the tradition of an English home. It is a tradition of reserve, shunning pomposity. It turned away from the formal avenue, and developed instead the subtler formality of the naturalistic park. The danger in its path is that of a lapse into futility and incoherence, but if our improvements are begun from a sound economic and sociological point of view, that danger will be nullified.

Above all, the tradition of the English home is an intimate, small-scale tradition, 8. We have noticed that human scale has been multiplied five or ten times during the last

hundred years. New developments in the landscape will be in accordance with the new scale of human activity, but they need not on that account abandon the feeling of intimacy. Intimacy at fifty miles an hour is different from intimacy at ten or five miles an hour, that is all: and it will still be necessary for man to walk occasionally. The sense of enclosure which is flattering to the heart of man will remain. In other countries we may expect to see, as a result of modern developments, a greater magnificence, perhaps, or a vaster scale. We have another contribution to make to the pattern of the earth. In the words of William Morris, whom, after all, we are proud to honour as one of the founders of the modern movement, ours "is a little land, sirs, too much shut up within the narrow seas, as it seems, to have much space for swelling into hugeness; there are no great wastes overwhelming in their dreariness, no great solitudes of forests, no terrible untrodden mountain walls; all is measured, mingled, varied, gliding easily one thing into another; little rivers, little plains, swelling speedily-changing uplands, all beset with handsome orderly trees; little hills, little mountains, netted over with the walls of sheep-walks; all of it little, yet not foolish or blank, but serious rather, and abundant of meaning for such as choose to seek it: it is neither prison nor palace, but a decent home."



EDGAR WARD

8. "Neither prison nor palace, but a decent home."—William Morris.



1. Fresh air and sunshine on the roof playground. The railings curve inwards so that it is almost impossible to climb up and fall over.

The Pioneer Health Centre

Designed by Sir E. Owen Williams

With photographs specially taken by M. O. Dell and H. L. Wainwright, official photographers to THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW.

One cause of the centrifugal tendency of the present-day urban population; of its perpetual striving to escape from the town either right into the country or into some more expedient substitute for it, is the lack of any cohesive nucleus within the town, round which a genuine urban life could revolve. To the average town-dweller the town is merely the entourage of his work or business, in which he is immured for economic reasons. His instinct, in his out-of-business hours, is to escape into the only place he knows where desirable ends are visible unobstructed by the complication of the means; actually, if he can afford it, to

the country; if not, to a suburb or garden city where some illusion can be maintained of the more civilized country gentleman's existence, which is his ideal—or to the cinema, and such-like distractions from actuality. The town as a congregation of individuals for the benefit of each other's company has, except commercially, ceased to exist. The inhabitant of it gets little social benefit from its being a town; and this is responsible to a large degree for wasteful decentralization of building, for the endless suburbs with their instability of population and difficulties of transport, and for the progressive disappearance

of the countryside. The difference between town and country must be redefined. They must be appreciated as two distinct things with different uses, not as different degrees of the same thing. This can only be done by making a full and energetic life possible in terms of urban existence; that is the great social value (quite apart from the medical value) of an organization like the Pioneer Health Centre. It provides a focal point at which the town as a workshop coincides with the town as a community. It is one of the answers to the town-planner's question: I know where people ought to live, but how can I make them live there?



2

The Centre stands on a site in St. Mary's Road, Peckham, of about two acres. The unbuilt-on portion is simply laid out as a lawn and gardens. There will be a running-track round the perimeter of the site. The front (or south-west) elevation, 2 and (at night) 3, overlooks the greater part of the garden, the building being set the greatest possible distance back from the road. The open portion at ground level, shown in greater detail

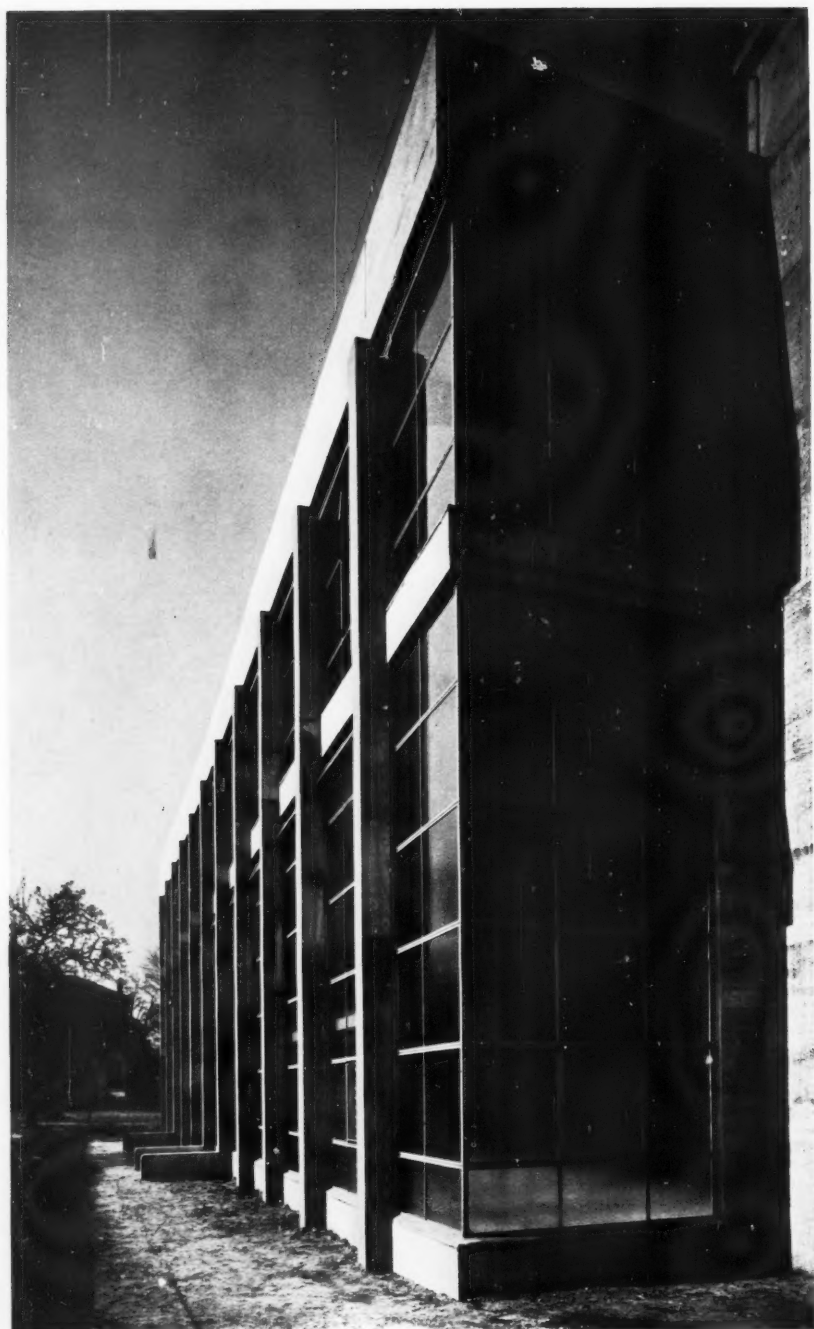
in 4, is the children's playground, the spacious covered portion of which is planned in direct contact with the nursery and the children's bathing pool. On the ground floor on either flank are a gymnasium (whose tall illuminated windows are seen in 3 on the right) with direct access from the garden, and an assembly and lecture hall. These rise through two storeys of the building. On the first floor across this front is the main lounge, and

above it the library and rest room. To these belong the sliding windows set in circular bays. The structure is based on a standard reinforced concrete column of minimized cruciform shape, examples of which are seen in 4. The circular bays are cantilevered 6 ft. beyond these, continuing the concrete floor slab. They terminate in flower boxes, and an iron railing. The concrete piers are left, indoors as well as out, with a natural untreated surface.



3





5

Looking along the outside wall of the lecture hall, 5, and at one of the lecture hall emergency exits, 6; the latter photographed at night with the hall illuminated. These exit doors are of metal, set in the large metal and glass windows. The concrete piers carry a span of 24 ft., the width of the lecture hall and gymnasium. This is the only variation from the standard 18 ft. span between columns elsewhere. Along this side of the building is also the approach to the main entrance, which is planned away from the road with a staircase giving access to all floors at either side of it. 7 is a corner of one of these staircases, also taken at night.



6



7

The Idea Behind the Idea

By J. M. Richards

THE basic unit of society, the lowest common denominator into which all society can be resolved as well as the natural biological unit, is the family.

The human family, like any other zoological species, can only be properly studied in its own environment, to which problems of health and physical and mental standards are closely related.

The preservation of health, not the treatment of disease, is the true function of medicine.

The average medical practitioner has no opportunity of observing the onset of disease at a sufficiently early stage or to examine his patients at sufficiently regular intervals for preventive practice to be possible.

The average working-class family, under present conditions, is doomed to a "C3" standard of development through lack of instruction in an intelligent basis of living, and lack of opportunity of benefiting from scientific advancement.

This is the series of axiomatic statements out of which grew the idea behind the Pioneer Health Centre at Peckham. The enterprise has been described by the doctors responsible for it as a field experiment in applied biology. It takes the form of a club to which the family can belong as a family—individual members are non-existent; where members are able to cultivate health inseparably from pursuing a normal, fully expanded existence. It is designed to fulfil at the same time two interdependent functions: while providing the members with the opportunity of becoming healthy and responsible citizens by way of the Centre's social activities, it also provides the doctors with the material for their first-hand field investigation—the results of which can, of course, be applied, besides to the general interests of science, to the progressive improvement of technique in work for and amongst the members.

With the incontrovertible limitations of present medical practice in mind and realizing the immense possibilities for good in such a centre the two doctors, G. Scott Williamson and Innes H. Pearse, some years ago decided to launch a preliminary venture by which they could test the practical applicability of their theories of social salvation. They chose Peckham as a suitable locality for this first experiment, because it appeared to possess a fairly stable artisan population, definitely working-class in character but yet not living in extreme slum conditions or in a state of actual destitution; the latter conditions needing economic remedies outside the scope of the Centre before the victims of

them could be fit to play their part in the Centre's activity. They acquired a private house in Peckham and converted it to serve as fully as possible the purpose of the Health Centre they had planned. They lived in Peckham themselves and operated the Centre on that relatively small scale for two years. The results of those two years are described in their book *The Case for Action*. The experiment was a complete success. The doctors learnt much, and were very much encouraged by the enthusiastic co-operation of the working-class members. After the two years they closed the Centre in order to set seriously about collecting funds for, and organizing the establishment of a building to house a Health Centre large enough for its full possibilities to be exploited and for it to serve sufficient families to make it, when running at full capacity, financially self-supporting. Funds were, as always, the obstacle; but by the beginning of last year enough money had been collected at least to enable a start to be made. More funds are still needed, but the completed building is now beginning to operate.

From the medical point of view the Health Centre doctors have immense advantages over those engaged in merely therapeutic practice. First, the ordinary doctor has no opportunity of observing his patient till disease is strongly apparent to the patient himself—often, for economic and occupational reasons, not till the point of incapacitation; he can only study conditions that should never have been allowed to arise; he cannot study the same conditions in the act of arising. The Health Centre doctors, living among the members, can study them in terms of their environment and help to control that environment; they can not only achieve a continuity of observation by being always among the members and being available when they are needed, but they can acquire the confidence of the members, which is a most important step in establishing influence and authority. In this sense they can reintroduce to a whole mass of families, accustomed to a somewhat unsympathetic relationship with a busy panel doctor, the principle of the old-fashioned family doctor of a more leisured generation and class, who was as much the ubiquitous friend of the family as merely its medical adviser.

The Centre provides for each family joining it a periodic medical overhaul, enabling the doctors to observe the members' reaction to prescribed treatment, and to check specific maladies in an early stage; in the case of the young child member, to control the all-

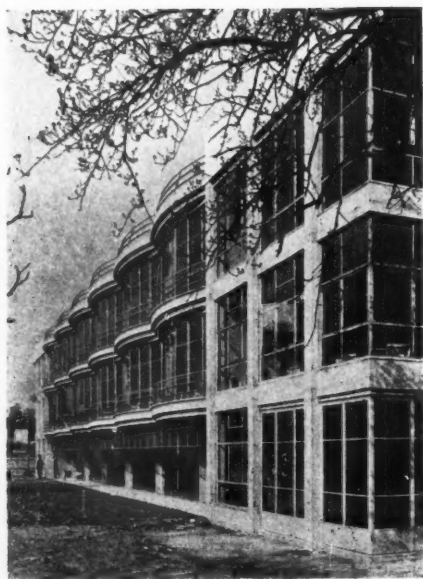
important environmental factors by which good or bad physique and liability to or resistance to disease is conditioned. Actual treatment of disease is not given at the Centre, so it does not compete with existing medical services. The doctors, in the case of manifest disease, only pass the members on to their regular advisers; but by constant watchfulness and early diagnosis, the probability of cure can be greatly increased.

The family is the working unit for medical reasons, so that common characteristics can be studied as symptoms of common environment or antecedents, as well as for social reasons; though, of course, a definite line cannot be drawn between the two.

The present-day tendency is always towards disintegration of the family; all normally available means of development entail individual isolation. The Centre aims at preserving the family, by providing suitable activities for each member, all under one roof and all contributory to one idea. The new building has, appropriately, a swimming bath as the core of its plan. Overlooking that are the main social gathering place and the cafeteria, where the family can assemble in their leisure hours and drink beer, away from the sordid surroundings with which beer-drinking is apt to be associated. The kitchen attached to the cafeteria serves also for the practical application of the doctors' dietetic experience. Above are the library and study and recreation rooms, where are available all the opportunities of self-development that working-class conditions deny. Women can make their own clothes and members can occupy themselves with social and recreational activities in encouraging surroundings. On the ground floor are perhaps the most vital departments of the Centre's regenerative services: the antenatal and child-welfare clinics, the nurseries and the children's playground and bathing pool. Here advice will be given to mothers—and fathers—on the care of their children, a proper relationship between them can be established and expectant mothers can obtain experience of handling and dealing with children. The mother, instead of being tied to her home by the children that have to be cared for, can leave it when her household chores are finished, deposit her children in the afternoon nursery, and attain the luxury of undistracted social intercourse upstairs. Controlled exercise is provided for, as well as in the swimming bath, in the gymnasium, on the outdoor running track that will encircle the building, and on the flat roof. The assembly hall will be available for lectures, dances, concerts and theatricals. Each family pays one shilling a week, and it is hoped that this subscription, when the full working capacity in the new building of 2,000 families is reached, will enable the Centre to be self-supporting.

Typical of these times is wide-spread devitalization rather than manifest disease. The most important step towards revitalization of the masses of the people is improvement of their environment. That can only be achieved through study of their reaction to environment and by work among them within their environment. The Pioneer Health Centre deserves its name of pioneer because it demonstrates a method of applying medicine and sociology strictly in terms of these necessities.

ANALYSIS



The building's most striking characteristic is the accuracy with which it reflects the multifarious though interdependent nature of the activities it houses. Just as each activity is a part of and a contribution to the central purpose of establishing an intelligent basis of existence, so, by means of open planning, every compartment is made to merge into another, visually when not actually; and the function of each part is quite clearly subsidiary to the function of the whole. Apart from the private medical research quarters and the machine room, there is no one part completely isolated from the others. Even the conventional vertical separation into storeys has been partially eliminated by the internal flexibility of levels and the linking up, through glass panels, of rooms belonging to different floors. Circulation is not canalized, but merely consists in logical progress from one activity to another. Only in parts where movement of people must be controlled does the plan contain actual passage-ways—in the entrance, staircases and swimming bath approaches, which have been made deliberately narrow for orderliness and ease of control. Freedom, in fact, is the salient characteristic of the plan. The building, from inside, appears to merge into the open air: it is extrovert in character, if that term can be applied to architecture. The views right through it from trees on one side to trees on the other and the sight of restaurant windows overlooking blue water are appropriately unfamiliar

attributes of urban building—generally the type of absolute self-sufficiency and introversion.

These structurally incidental though functionally vital factors apart, complete flexibility was obviously the only principle possible. The building is without precedent; so far there is no type plan for health centres based on experience, and what was required was a not too exact allocation of function; the kind of plan that will be adaptable to any alteration of use or change of emphasis experience may demand. The plan is, in fact, merely enclosed space defined in a skeleton of regularly disposed columns. The "positive skeleton" of structure and the "negative skeleton" of services here exactly coincide, all pipes, conduits, etc., being taken down within the angles of the cruciform columns. Between the columns span the continuous flat-slab floors of standard 6-inch thickness.

On first glancing at the plan one might question how justifiable is the symmetrical lay-out. A persistent bias towards symmetry is so often, at any rate in this country, the last symptom to survive of the pre-scientific days of design by formal preconception that symmetry itself, in the present transitional stage of modern architecture, has become suspect. But on closer examination the formal symmetry of the plan is found to be illusory. The plan does, indeed, balance about an axis, but there is no formal centralization of interest—only the regularity that comes from repetition (for structural or other reasons) of the same unit and the central placing of a dominant item.

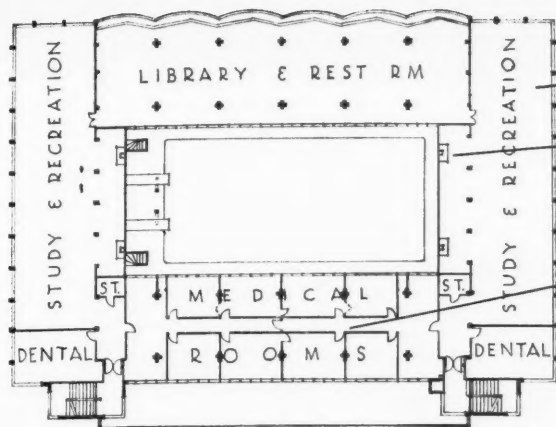
The site is not gigantic for a building with the purpose of this one, but the most has been made of it by setting the building right back on it and by placing the entrance behind, and on the upper floors the kitchens, medical quarters and so on, also behind; so that the whole of the front can be devoted to uninterrupted window space, taking the greatest advantage of south-west sunshine and fresh air. These windows on the upper floors have an unusually open aspect for this part of London.

The detailed lay-out of each floor is a good example of the ultimate simplification of which really good planning consists. On either side of the "dead" ground occupied by the depth of the swimming pool (useful storage space is contrived under the shallow end) are changing space, lavatories, etc., for men and women. The lavatories are in

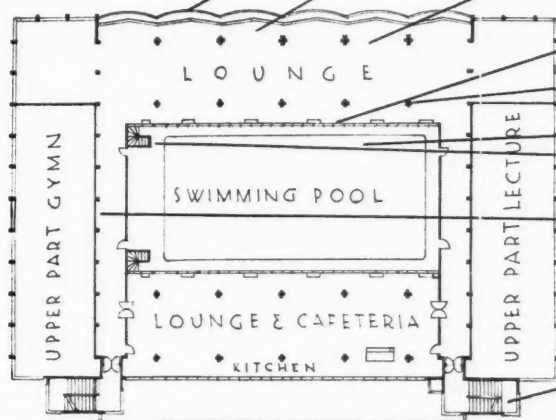
convenient contact with the entrance. A logical progress is indicated on the plan from the open air, through glazed doors into the gymnasium via changing room and sprays up to the swimming pool; another from the garden and the children's covered playground that is open to it, through the day nursery to the children's bathing pool. Balancing the gymnasium at the other side of the building, the lecture room occupies an independent position. The very long, high shape the symmetrical plan imposes on it is likely to make the acoustics difficult to control. On the first floor the bath is the core of the plan, though only in visual effect, access to it being vertical not horizontal. There is a vista right across this floor, looking over the bath through the long glass panels which run the whole length of it on either side, or down into it through a similar panel in the second floor wall above. The simple clean rectangular shape with the minimum of obstructions (marred slightly by a clumsy and unwieldy concrete diving stage), the pure bright colours and the floods of light invest the whole floor with an appropriate salubrious spirit. The high-pitched glass roof may make heat losses hard to counteract, but then a more scientifically devised swimming-bath roof would have been many times more expensive than this simplest form of covering. On the first floor, spanning across the whole face of the building, is the main lounge with scalloped glass bays that can be thrown open to the air: the central place of social congregation. Views through more internal windows down into the lecture hall and gymnasium, giving them by that means inspiring scale, together with the uninterrupted vista across the middle, increase the expression of the interdependence of all the Centre's activities. On the second floor, away from coming, going and swimming, are the rest and recreational rooms and the private laboratories, isolated by doors painted red to indicate "no thoroughfare," where the medical examinations and research are carried on and the medical records filed. Higher still the flat roof, up to which both staircases continue, is available for all sorts of out-door exercises and recreations.

The rooms are planned to accommodate a crowd, but even when fully inhabited the lounge, for example, acquires no sense of congestion. The semi-privacy of the bays along either side preserves the feeling of stability necessary to counteract the restlessness a mobile

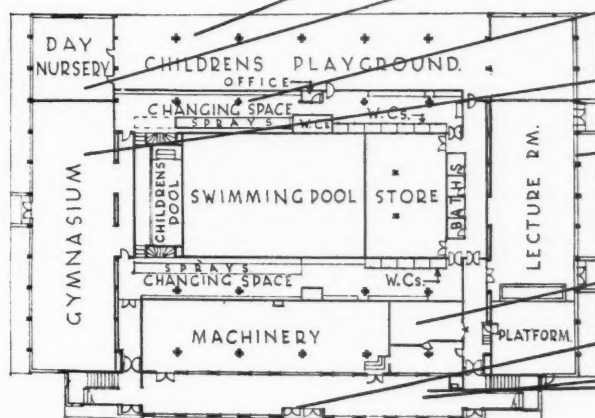
population would tend to induce. The appearance of the rooms inside is consistently one of absolute simplicity dictated by practical considerations as well as by economy. In a sense there are no "finishes"; except the insulating lining of cork on the walls and ceiling and the cork surfaces to most of the floors. The concrete columns are left untreated, and, with their haunches making effective junction between horizontal and vertical, the whole interior view appears strongly framed and has at the same time the elegance that accurate structural elimination produces. From the outside, on the front elevation, the same slightness and grace that comes from a minimum structural solidity is somewhat spoiled by the depth of the front edge of the cantilevered slabs supporting the curved bays. This edge has the appearance of being structural and therefore, with its great thickness, of being unwieldy, though actually its weight is due to the thin structural slab being increased in depth to provide flower-boxes. This appearance of heaviness and unnatural solidity is probably accentuated by the difference in contour between the curved bays and the faceted windows, causing an extra deep shadow to be cast. Far greater precision and apparent lightness is seen in the simpler surfaces of the back elevation. There is a clumsy junction, also, between the range of curved bays and the square terminal pavilions at either side of the main front, particularly where the railing abuts on the parapet of the latter; a piece of incomplete consideration that does not give the central bays their due as quite logical ways of extending a cantilevered slab. It gives them the effect of an afterthought—almost of a compromise with the picturesque. Nevertheless, despite such small crudities both inside and out—for in the interior unconsidered details (or, at least, not sufficiently early considered) are also noticeable, for instance in the run of the service pipes—serve only to emphasize the fundamental architectural qualities of the design. This building bears out the universal principle that, so long as the designing of a building is approached in the right spirit; so long as it is designed on a strictly realistic architectural (as opposed to antiquarian) basis, standards of detail design are only important as detail. This building is architecturally alive, and no crudity of execution can destroy that vitality—any more than elaborate consideration of detail can bring a dead building to life.



SECOND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

The rest, recreation and occupational floor: a partial separation of sexes because different occupations demand it.

Open fireplaces for psychological reasons. The rooms can be adequately heated without, but the fireplaces provide a focal point round which social mixing is natural.

The medical department isolated from the public: separate entrances for men and women, who are divided by a central door.

Sliding windows the whole height of the room can be thrown open in fine weather.

A cantilevered slab can be logically trimmed at its edge to any shape that is useful, without interference with its structural simplicity. Here shallow bays give relief to the angularity of plan in the main social gathering place and encourage natural congregation into groups; but they are not sufficiently pronounced to invite marked separation into cliques.

Might it not have been more logical, both as regards structure and plan, to have designed the bays with the points of support on the axis of their centres, instead of on the axis of their junctions? That would have made a simpler connection with the square side pavilions easier to contrive.

Activities in the swimming bath are visible through glass panels from both sides (an open vista, therefore, right across the building), but the bath is only accessible from the changing rooms below.

The flat slab construction on minimum cruciform columns allows absolute flexibility of planning: no immovable partitions.

No separation of sexes, the family being the working unit.

Where circulation has to be controlled space for it is reduced to a minimum.

Where circulation is to be free it is enlarged to a maximum.

The stairs are sufficient in width. Narrow stairs control circulation and offer no temptation to linger. All the centre's activities being simultaneous, no great crowds will want to use the stairs at the same moment.

A covered playground for children with unobstructed connection with the open air. A cantilevered overhang gives a better sense of continuity between garden and shelter than would a wall with holes in it.

The day nursery: planned in contact with the children's playground and the children's bathing pool. The large windows can be thrown open in fine weather.

Changing space: rows of sprays are arranged so that, after undressing, the bather is compelled to pass through one of them before reaching the staircase that takes him to the swimming bath.

Planning in logical sequence: the open air—outdoor exercise; the gymnasium—indoor exercise; the swimming bath, and upstairs for rest, recreation and refreshment.

A whole wall of glass will be difficult to curtain for cinema and such-like performances after dark. Perhaps that can be done from outside.

The whole building is planned on a grid 18 ft. square, varied on either wing to give a 24 ft. span to gymnasium and lecture hall.

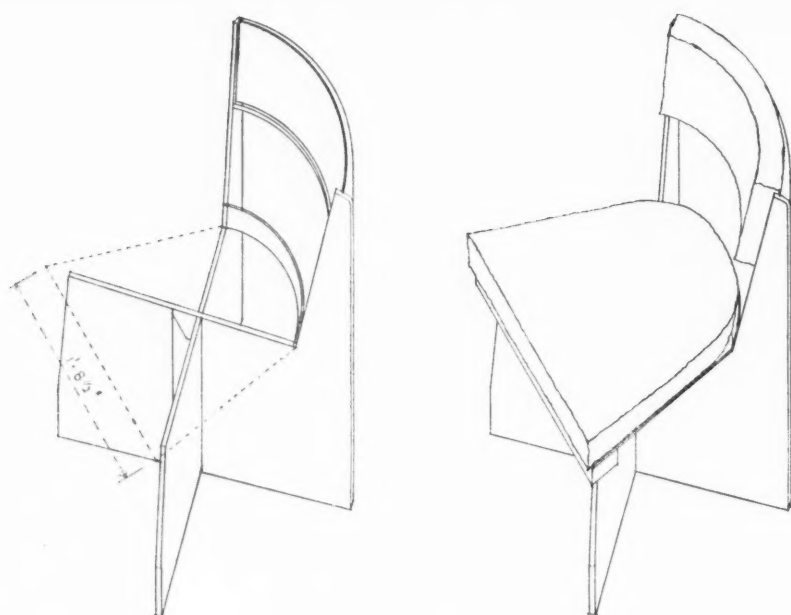
The entrance is sensibly placed at the back, leaving the whole of the front, unobstructed by passage-ways, for the maximum utilization of sunshine and an open aspect.

Accommodation for perambulators.

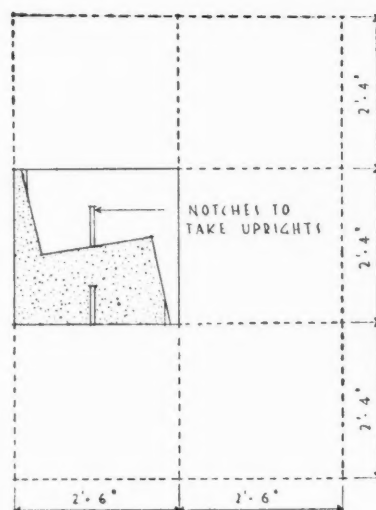
No imposing ceremonial entrance hall or staircase: the entrance is a piece of machinery with which absolute order and control is necessary. Space that encourages self-determination in movement is more appropriate in the rooms where social activities are carried on.

J. M. RICHARDS

T H E P I O N E E R H E A L T H

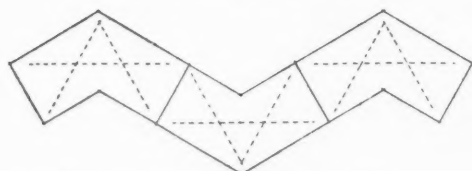
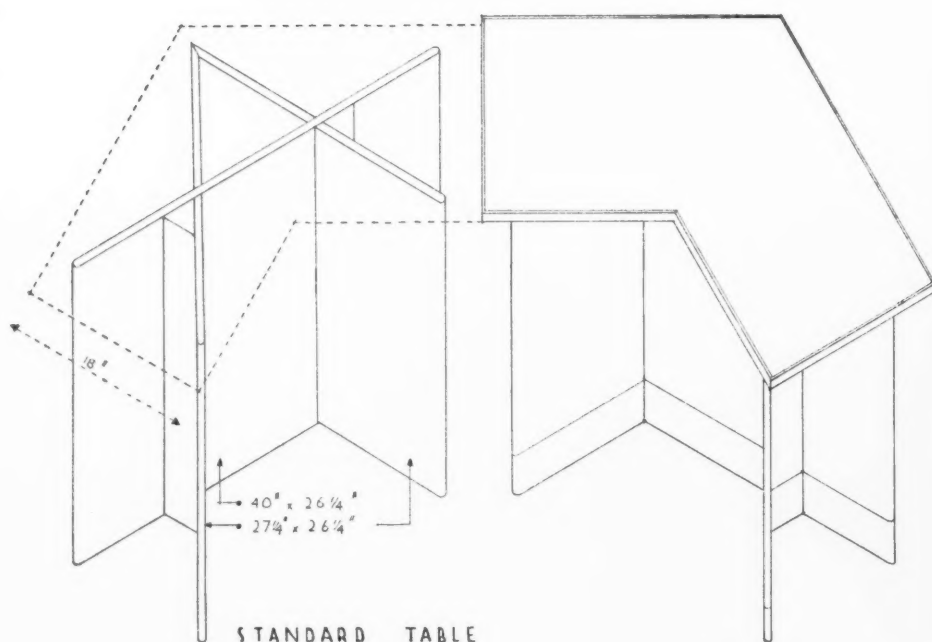


• ISOMETRIC DETAILS OF STANDARD CHAIR



SIX PAIRS OF UPRIGHTS ARE MADE FROM ONE STANDARD SIZED BIRCH MULTI-PLY SHEET - 7'-0" x 5'-0" x 12mm

WHITE POLISH FINISH TO PLY CHAIR SHOWN IS FITTED WITH DUNLOPILLO 2 1/2" THICK



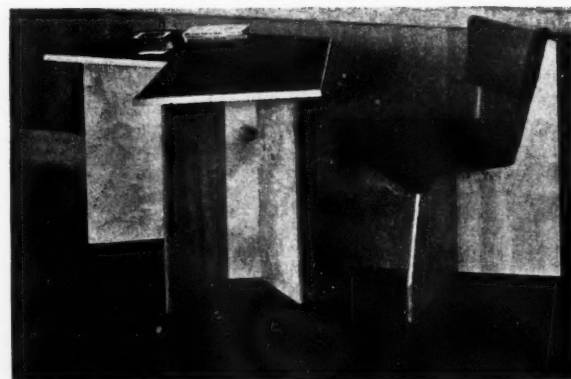
BLOCK PLAN SHOWING TWO ARRANGEMENTS POSSIBLE WITH UNITS

8

The equipment of the building has been standardized as much as possible. Sketched above, 8, are the standard chair and table for use in the lounge, cafeteria, etc. They were designed by Christopher Nicholson, ingeniously for economical mass fabrication. The structural parts of six chairs are cut from one standard size sheet of plywood, with no wastage. The table forms a unit that can be grouped according to requirements.

UPRIGHTS FORMED OF 3 SHEETS OF MULTI-PLY 3/4" THICK SECURED AT ANGLES WITH SOLID BIRCH BLOCKS. TABLE TOP COVERED WITH 1/8" BLACK LINOLEUM WHITE POLISH FINISH TO PLY BASE EBONISED 4"

9 is a photograph of the table and chair. As entrance to the swimming bath a standardized spray is provided, planned so that the bather, after undressing in the changing-room, 10, is compelled to pass through it to reach the narrow passage, 11, that gives access to the bath.



9



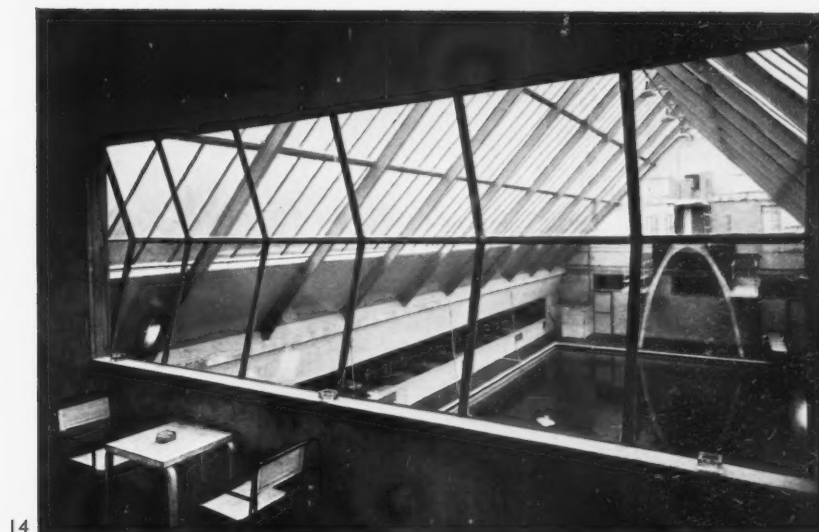
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C E N T R E

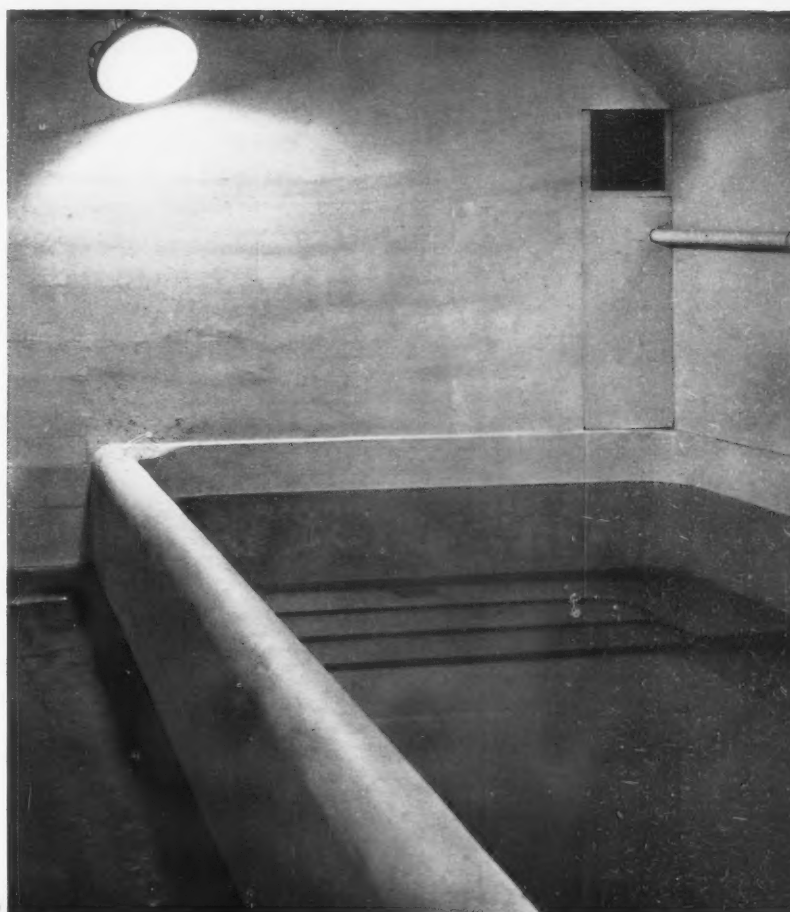
The swimming bath is the core of the plan on the first floor. It is entered at either corner by staircases leading direct from the changing rooms below. The bath is of standard Olympic size, with the exceptional maximum depth of 10 ft. 9 ins. A diving stage at one end has a high diving board 21 ft. above the water. 12 is a view looking down into the bath from this diving stage. In the same view one of the long windows is seen, through which the swimming bath is visible from all over the first floor. Another view down into the bath, 14, is obtainable from one of the recreation rooms on the second floor. The same window, which is splayed outwards in section, to make a downward view more comfortable, is seen in the interior view of the bath, 15. The bath has a simple pitched roof of steel joists, covered with glass. The lower slope of the roof is lined with cork, for acoustic reasons. The pool itself is of reinforced concrete, as is the arched diving stage seen in 14 and in the cross section, 13. The pool holds approximately 130,000 gallons of water, which is filtered and purified every four hours. The heating of it, as of the rest of the building, is electrical. A thermal storage system is employed, the hours of use being automatically restricted by a time switch. One low-tension electrode boiler serves for the heating of the water in the bath and the warming of the building. There is a 7,000 gallon storage tank for heating and a 2,000 one for hot water. An electrical interlock is provided so that the electrode boiler will automatically be switched off should the circulating pump, which passes the water from the bath through the filtration plant and the heat exchanger, be stopped. The boiler can be employed for heating the swimming pool, the storage cylinders and the circulating systems together or separately. For air-conditioning and hot water supply thermal storage systems are also used. Air-conditioning is provided in the swimming bath, lecture hall and gymnasium. The ventilation grilles along one side of the bath are shown below the long window in 12. All the mechanical equipment is housed in one chamber at ground floor level, behind the swimming bath. 16 is the children's bathing pool, which is on the ground floor close to the nursery. It measures 29 ft. by 8 ft. 6 ins., and the depth of water can be varied up to 3 ft. The children's pool is provided with sunlight lamps.



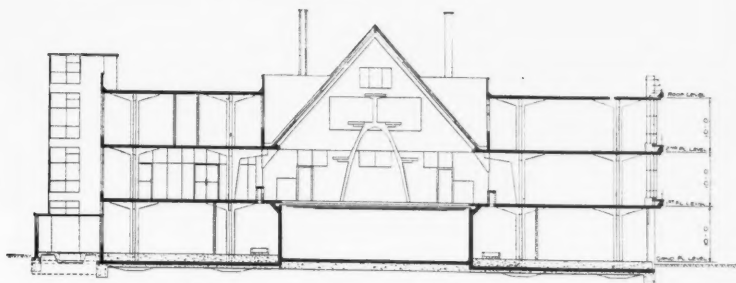
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15



16



13

213

T H E P I O N E E R



17

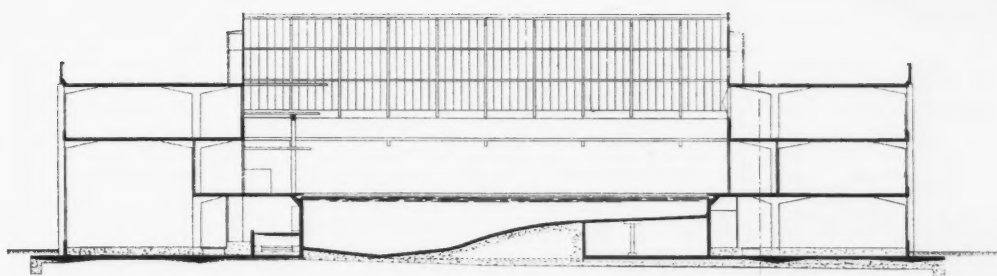


18

HEALTH CENTRE



19

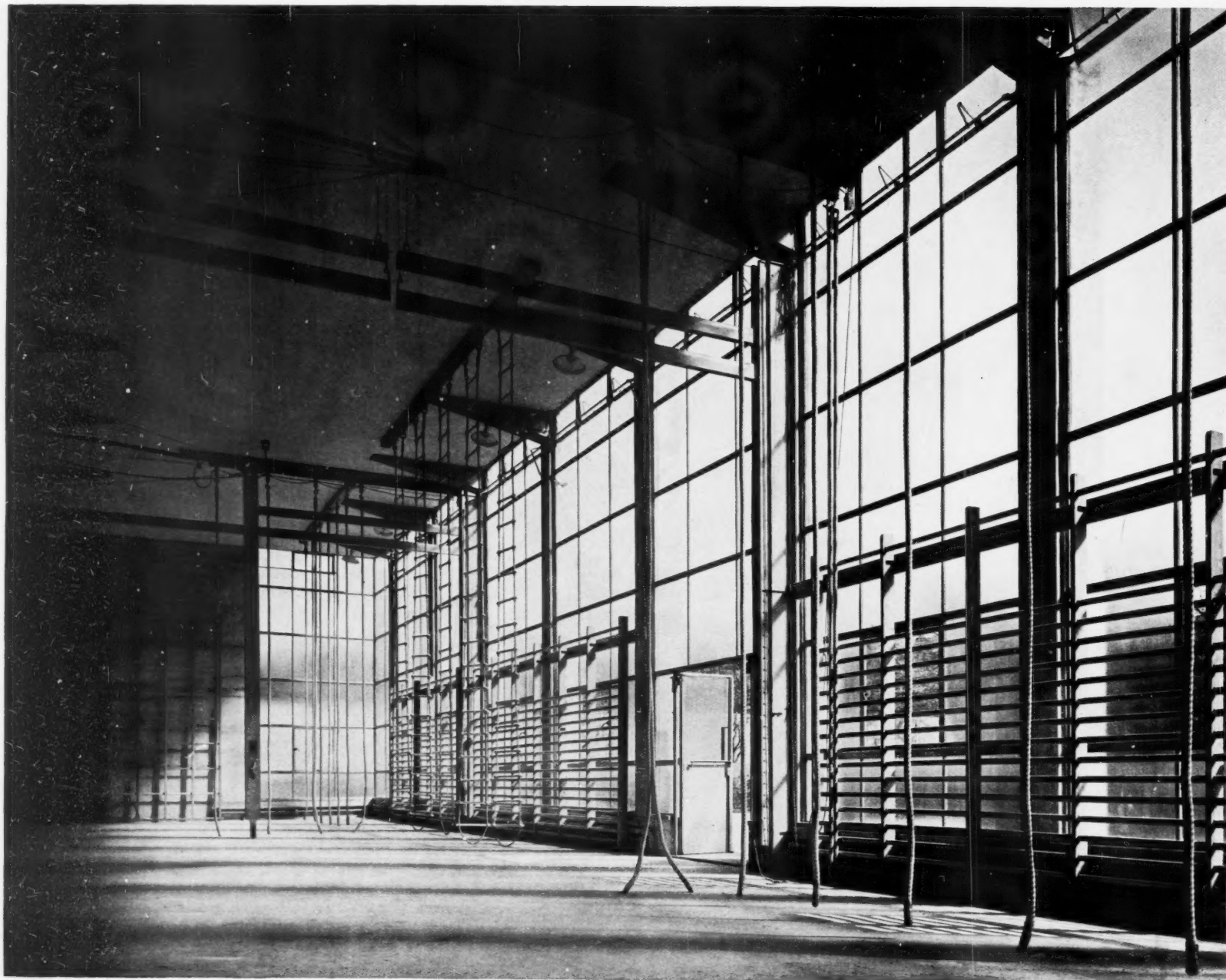


Characteristic of the planning and purpose of the whole building are the views right across one floor, as in 17, where the cafeteria-lounge is seen across the swimming bath through the window that runs along the back of the main lounge. 18 is taken in the cafeteria-lounge, looking through the glass screens that divide it from the kitchen. Above the main lounge is the library and rest room, 19, with its range of sliding windows the full height of the room, scalloped into bays, 20. The concrete piers and haunches are left untreated. The ceiling is lined with 1 in. thick cork slabs, for insulation and acoustic purposes. The floor is of polished cork. It was found unnecessary to colour the surface of the ceiling, as its white paint is given a warm tone by the floods of light reflected off the orange-brown floor. The method of heating by ceiling panels is seen in 19. The total cost of the building, including machinery and equipment, was just over £31,000, which gives the remarkably low figure of 1s. 3d. per cubic foot.



20

THE PIONEER HEALTH CENTRE



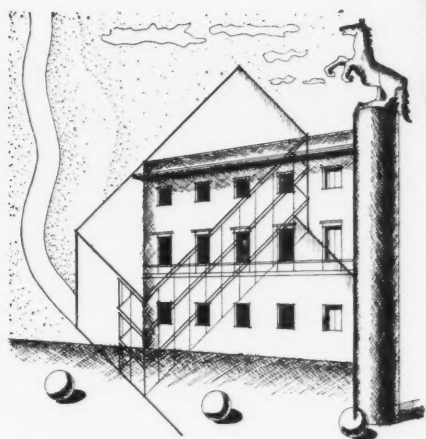
21



22

Gymnastic apparatus supplies detail of a kind appropriate to the building's clarity of line and surface and the taut muscular character its structural simplicity gives to it ; so that the gymnasium is pictorially most typical of the building's airy qualities. 21 is a general view inside the gymnasium, showing the glass door leading into the garden. The non-structural partition walls here, as in the rest of the building, are of breeze blocks, covered with $\frac{1}{8}$ in. cork sheeting, and the floor has a cork surface. 22 is a view down into the gymnasium from the long glass panel in the wall of the first floor lounge.

Criticism



[NOTE. In this series of articles Professor Reilly is discussing recent buildings, and the degree to which he considers they fulfil the rational principles of contemporary architectural design. It should be said that the articles are aimed not so much to elevate the understanding of the architect as to fan the ardour of the layman, who to-day is sometimes tempted to follow the cross currents of architectural thought.]

3. The Modern Store

By Professor C. H. Reilly

NAPOLEON called us a nation of shop-keepers. Our cheaper daily papers pay homage to the heads of our great stores as if they were Napoleons. Yet in spite of the glory of these gentlemen, in spite too of their advertisements, explaining how up to date they are, not one of the firms they speak for so far possesses a modern building. They may have recent buildings,

*The previous articles dealt with Town Halls and Churches and were published in the March and April issues.

some indeed quite new ones, but not frankly modern ones announcing they are great shops and nothing else.

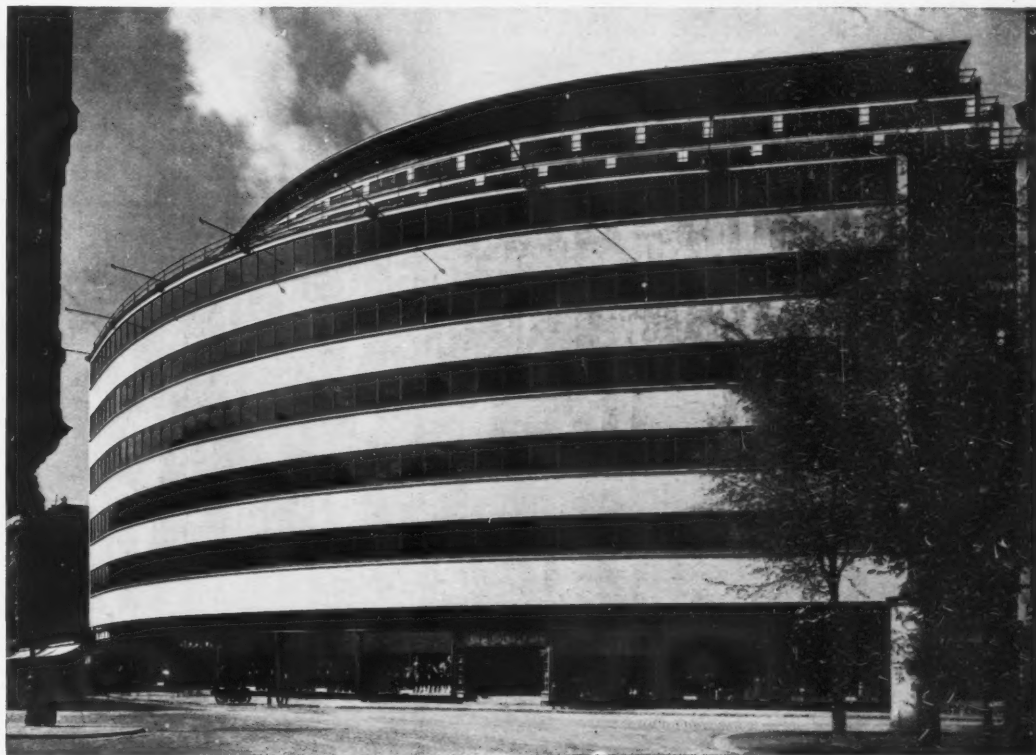
Most of their buildings above a row of ground floor shop windows look like hotels, more or less cheap and commercial. Tier after tier of what are obviously bedroom windows peep out between the columns or other embellishments, 7, 8, 9, 12. One or two following Mr. Selfridge's example, 4, try to make their buildings look like a palace or a great bank 3, 10. There is a new store building at Kingston, 11, which tries to flatter its royal neighbour at Hampton Court. That may be very well intentioned, but is it really a compliment? Is it not a little on the lines of the gentleman who owned a circus and then had himself christened Lord, so that he could call his business Lord George Sanger's Circus? Mr. Selfridge no doubt said to himself when he first smilingly approved his row of great columns, and speaking with that real sentiment for competitive business, which only an American can produce with complete honesty: "Business is fine, columns are fine, why should not a business have

columns?" Like a Roman emperor, therefore, he ordered columns and for many years they have no doubt been a fine advertisement. If in future we may want to build a new royal palace in London, for the House of Windsor, we shall have to avoid columns. They now belong to the drapery business. Such is the muddle we get ourselves into by this inveterate habit we all have, when we come to buildings, of dressing up. If we would only consent to be practical, and think of the material ends first, everything would be so much plainer and easier. But our great shop-keepers will be such poets. If they would but train themselves to be in reality the plain business men they love to call themselves, we should long ago have evolved a definite type of store building all would recognize.

If we think for a moment what a large departmental store really is, we see that it has very distinct characteristics of its own which makes quite unnecessary the pose of being either a royal palace or a commercial hotel. A store is nothing more than floor after floor of unimpeded



1 and 2. Night and day views of the Schocken store at Chemnitz. Erich Mendelsohn, architect.



selling space as large as the site and the by-laws allow. It is neither a hive of little rooms above the ground floor as Harrods, 3, appears to be, nor a series of exactly similar state apartments as Selfridges, 4, 5. Now selling space requires light ever more abundantly. The logical thing, therefore, is to give each layer of selling space as much window as possible, that is to say, a continuous window from end to end of the site, or all round the building if it is an island site. If daylight electric lamps were really perfect and cheap, and artificial ventilation too, another logical solution might be to exclude the daylight altogether, and have blank walls on the inside of which to hang things. Till these rather unlikely things happen in this country without water power, we need not consider the blank wall solution.

If we had then in all our shopping buildings continuous layers of glass window alternating with continuous layers of solid, just deep enough to satisfy the by-laws and cover the edges of the floors and the women's ankles, we should certainly have reached a new sort of structure in this country. No other kind of building, I think, would be really comfortable with quite so much glass. Such a glass front must, of course, be carried in cantilevers from piers some way back if it is not in itself to be interrupted by piers. If it is at regular intervals, as in the new design for Messrs. Evans' premises in Oxford Street, 6, not only will a certain amount of daylight be excluded by the piers, but what is perhaps more important, a monumental effect will at once have been introduced. Such an effect is, to my thinking, contrary to the idea of a building where thousands of trifling and ephemeral articles are sold daily. Surely it is a little ridiculous, if not embarrassing, to imagine some filmy little scrap of lingerie, or a pair of silk stockings, being sold behind Mr. Selfridge's great imperial columns? The fragile screen of glass which at night lights up into long silver bands, and through which in daytime one can see little figures flitting about and the glint of coloured goods, appears to me to be the typical as well as the ideal solution. Of course, Erich Mendelsohn found it out first, confound him. That cannot be helped now. His Schocken store at Chemnitz, 1, 2, is the classical example. But there can still be varieties of it. All new stores need not be baby Mendelsohns. The glass can, for instance, be carried over the solids, giving with the windows to the whole building a reflecting surface for the clouds to play upon. In doing this, the glass will have to be held in a series of vertical lines as well as horizontal ones, and these can be constructed as in the Columbus Haus in Berlin—Mendelsohn again, bless him. One hears rumours of such a store by a young Liverpool man to be erected in Sloane Square, but one must not deal with rumours.

Here are the facts: the too, too solid facts. Here are our great English modern store buildings. Look at them. There is nothing to be said. *De mortuis*. A respectful silence is kinder.



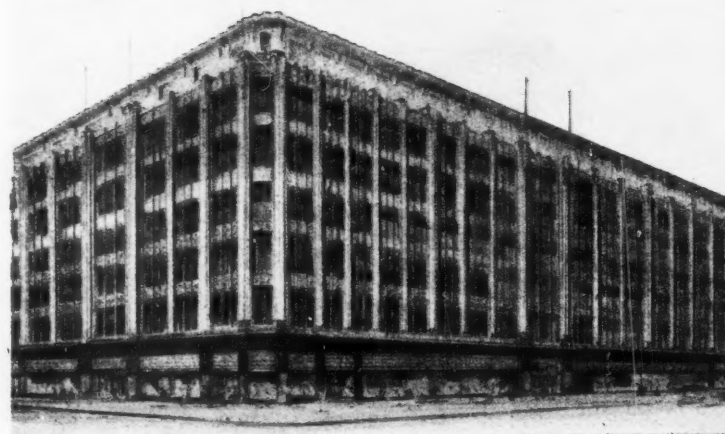
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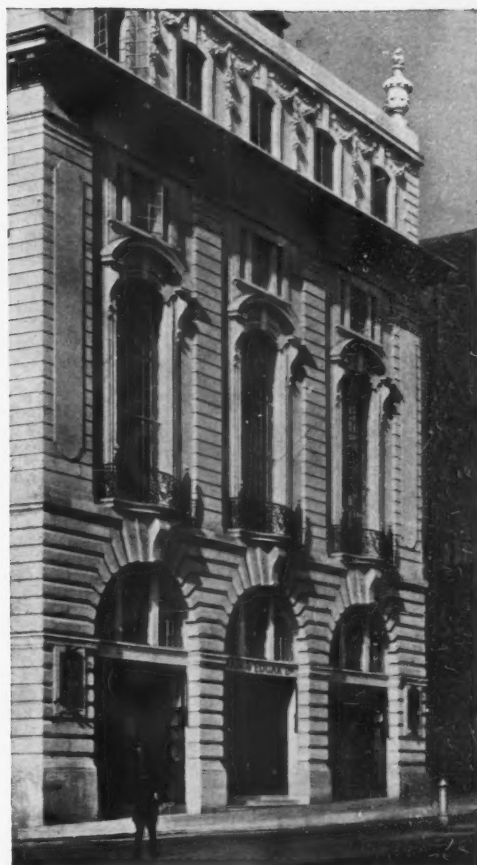


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3. Messrs. Harrods, Brompton Road, London. 4. Messrs. Selfridge, Oxford Street, London. 5. One of the "state apartments" at Selfridge's, designed in the monumental manner. 6. Messrs. Charles Evans' store in Oxford Street. 7. Messrs. Gamages, Holborn, London. 8. Messrs. Lewis's store at Manchester, and 9, at Liverpool. 10. Messrs. Swan and Edgar, Regent Street, London. 11. Messrs. Bentall's store at Kingston-on-Thames. 12. Messrs. Wallis's, Holborn.



10



11



12



"Abstraction." A water-colour painting by Paul Nash in the exhibition of his recent water-colours at the Redfern Gallery, London. The exhibition closes on May 11.

Book of the Month

Society Architect

By Kingston Lisle

JOHN NASH. Architect to King George IV. By John Summerson. London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd. Price 10s. 6d. net.

NASH had the least attractive characteristics of the typical society architect: amongst his betters, a glib, almost unctuous, social sense, which sat on him like a too West-end suiting made for a musical comedy cad actor. He departed from type only in physique, for he shared with Handel and George Robey a pair of preposterous eyebrows, and with Hogarth what Mr. John Summerson calls

a facetious Cockney mouth and snout. He had, in his own words, a "thick, squat, dwarf figure, with round head, snub nose, and little eyes," and by way of compensation, he was too, too affable, making splendid promises without keeping them, hiding "calculated intentions behind an apparently frank and spontaneous demeanour."

The type has always existed, exists today; but seldom has the social architect's technique been better illustrated than in the famous letter to Soane, which hides intentions inherently unscrupulous—Nash

was "snatching" the palace from his friend—under a *bonhomie* whose spontaneity creaks.

EAST COWES CASTLE, ISLE OF WIGHT,
September 18, 1822.

BROTHER SOANE,

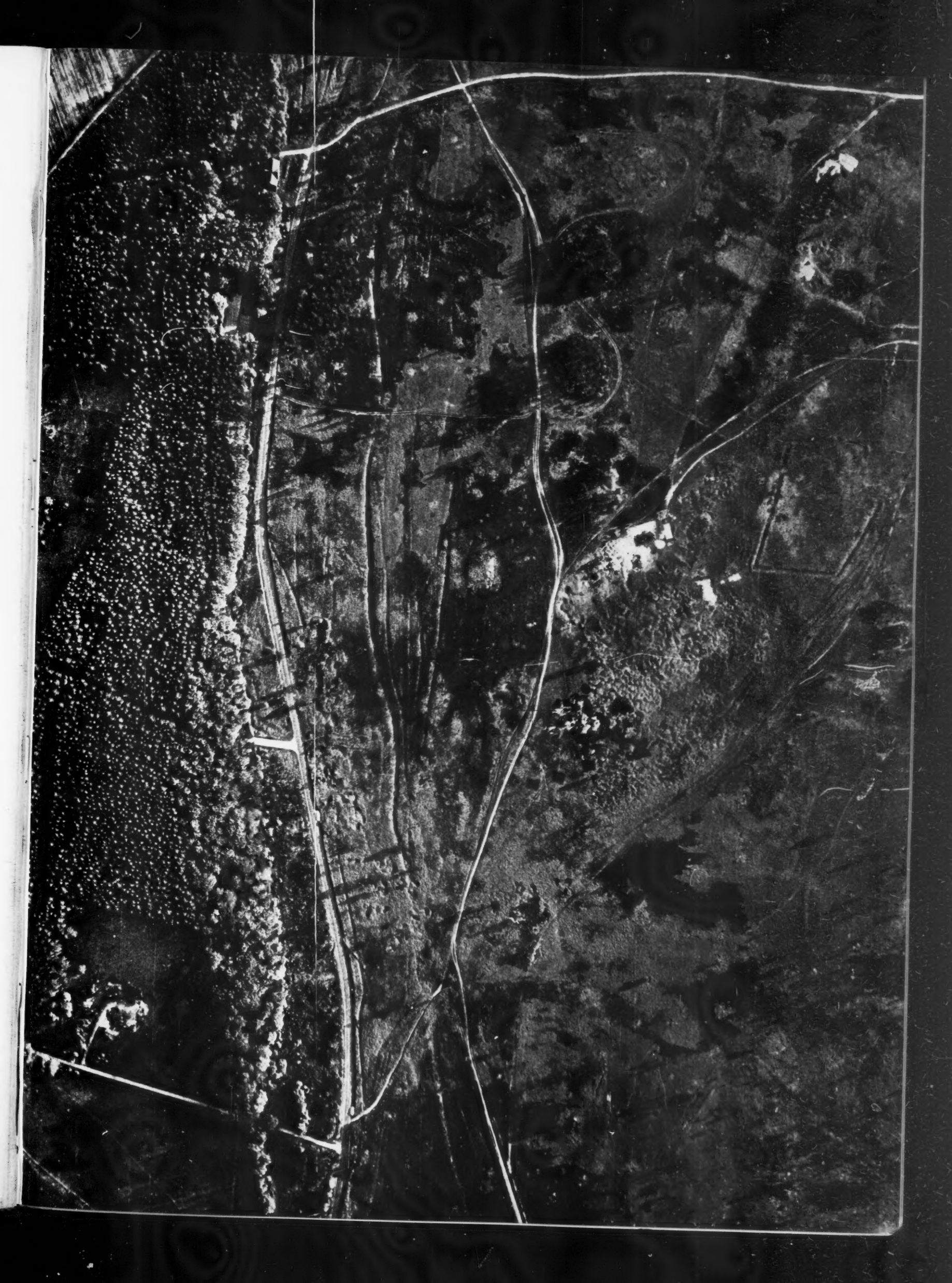
You was in a miff when I saw you at the head of Your Masons. One of the Masonic rules, I am told, is to acquire a meek and humble spirit, I fear therefore You are not qualified for Grand Master. Now, if You will but come here and copy me for a month, You will certainly be appointed to a higher niche in Your Lodge when You next meet, and see poor Bloomfield with kinder aspect than You were wont to do, and do penance for the hard thoughts You expressed of him. He is as innocent of the crime You imputed to him, as You are of *any* crime—but, my dear Soane, I did not mean to sermonize when I sat down to address You, but to say that I cannot come up as soon as Sunday and therefore thought it due to You to give You the earliest notice, and absolve You from the appointment for Monday, which You were so kind as to accede to. The Churches must therefore be without our architectural consecration till we meet, unless You and our colleagues will perform the ceremony, and which I much wish You would do, as I am anxious the trowel shall be used on one of them (St. George's) before the winter sets in, which I smell every morning about 6 o'clock, an hour which I suppose finds You . . . (in bed).

When I left You—musing upon Your wild-goose chase of Bloomfield—it occurred to me that our appointments are perfectly Constitutional, I the King, You the Lords, and Your friend Smirke, the Commons, and the blood instantly rushed to my face seeing, or fancying, that You wanted to dethrone me. It then struck me that You wanted to be both King and Lords, and in fancy I heard You cry out—"Off with his head, so much for Buckingham," and I sighed "why should he so long for my empty chair when a few years would give him that without offense which has occasioned in him so offensive an act," for I am old, but feeling my head on my shoulders I marched off to Buckingham House. I had not gone 6 steps before I was stopped by the *Black Rod*, he demanded whether the south aperture of the arcade was to be stop'd up. I took him by the arm and pointing my finger said "Lo! the architect of the fabrick," and would have ushered him into the presence; "shall I usher you," said I, but, whether the term smelt too much of the shop, or he thought I meant to insult him, I know not, but off he marched. I recollected myself and had a quarm, I beg your pardon, I mean quarm "something too much of this."

I have scribbled so much that I am in doubt when next we meet You will wear a face "most in grief or anger—" I hope neither, but lighted up by smiles, not such smiles as would seem "to scorn Your spirit that would be moved to smile at anything," but the smile of cordiality which, be assured, I feel for you, or, if you strain a point and present Yourself at our drawbridge, I shall believe you actuated with the same spirit, and, till you do so, the sumptuous dinner You gave my trio at your elegant, doublefaced mansion will not sit quite easy on my stomach. The portcullis will rise at the touch of Your masterly finger and the master spring to give you welcome.

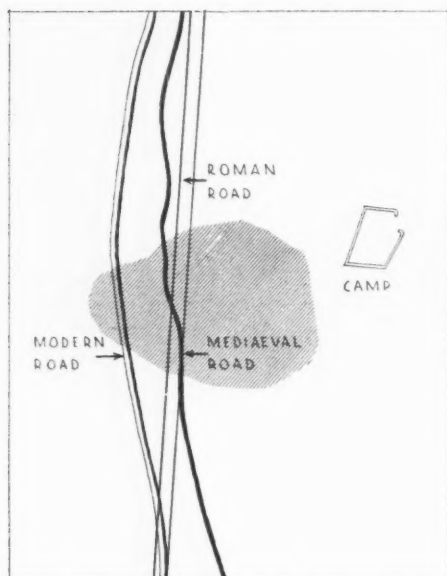
With You dear Soane,
I've picked a bone,
And fain I would requite it;
Should You refuse,
I cannot choose,
Ah! let me not indite it.
But fist or stick,
A bone must pick
With you and out must fight it.

Very bad! very bad! Off! Off! Well I am off, but one word more at parting, Mrs. Nash and the "Sweet Ann Page" desire me to say that they will expect you, and believe me I often think of You. As a proof, I have Your figure before my eyes, a thin black shadow standing on the foundation walls of the new arcade, with arms folded contemplating the mode of laying bricks. Oh that I had leisure for such contemplation, and that some friend could



OVERLEAF, AT CLOSE RANGE

MARKS ON THE SURFACE OF A MINOR PLANET: A NEW VIEW OF HISTORY



Traffic through the ages has always worn for itself a way across the surface of the earth. The creature wending its way to the spring, the farmer bringing his produce to market, and the god in the Machine have all had in common their motive of

proceeding from point to point across the land. Behind the cattle paths leading to the drinking pool, the wagon ruts from farm to market and our modern highways, the fundamental need has been the same. Different centuries have beaten different tracks; the tracks themselves have been obliterated or have altered to suit different needs.

Now, from the air, with the help of a vehicle which itself requires no pathway, photographs have been taken which show up in an extraordinary way the tracks made on land through the centuries. In this aerial view, which might be regarded as a close range shot of the earth taken from Mars by means of a great telescope, three very distinct roads of three different ages can be traced. One only of these is clearly recognizable from the ground.

The Roman road lay 60 ft. wide, perfectly straight across the country, and is shown in the photograph by the parallel ditches which flanked it. This road was already overgrown and forgotten when pack-horse traffic wore the mediaeval hollow way which shows as a dark straggling mark. The present road is almost parallel to its predecessor.

An interesting discovery in this photograph is the Roman camp, the four-sided figure on the right-hand side.

PLATE II

May 1935





1. Rockingham, near Boyle, Co. Roscommon. A water-colour, probably by George Repton, in the author's possession. 2. John Nash. A wax miniature by J. F. Couriguer in the possession of James Pennethorne, Esq. 3. Mary Anne Nash, his wife. 4. John Nash. Miniatures in the possession of Mrs. Pennethorne. 5. Regent's Park, as proposed; a view from the "circular road" on the outer edge of the Park. Part of a panorama in the possession of the Commissioners of Crown Lands. From "John Nash."

describe my thick, squat, dwarf figure, with round head, snub nose, and little eyes, in such an act of contemplation; but I must be shot *flying*. All joking being at an end with my paper (luckily for you), I conclude in sober sadness a l'ordinaire, but with truth not appertaining to the custom, that I am, My dear Soane,

Very Sincerely Yours

JOHN NASH.

J. SOANE, Esq., Architect to the whole Peerage of England.

To which the architect to the whole peerage of England replies—

13 LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS, LONDON.
Sept. 24, 1822.

Many thanks, my dear Sir, for Your very kind serio-comic Epistle. Be assured I have long since known that "Seneca is not too serious nor Plautus too light" for Your prolific brain. I will endeavour to follow Your advice and tread in Your steps, and although I cannot, at this time, quit business and enjoy the festivities and hospitality of East Cowes Castle, I will strive to fancy myself at least of your party. You, my dear friend, may smile at my attention to professional pursuits, but I am convinced there are few persons more anxious of fame, and who would make greater sacrifices at the shrine of public approbation, than yourself.

Fame You possess, and you also have a friend who if ever the bitter shaft of envy and malice should reach You, that friend would kiss away the falling tear and smooth the pillow of sadness.

Again let me offer my best thanks for Your kind

and friendly invitation to Cowes, and with sincere wishes for the health, happiness and prosperity of Mrs. Nash and Yourself, believe me, with sentiments of regard, My Dear Sir,

Very truly Yours

JOHN SOANE.

Kiss away the falling tear! Soane's letter is equally revealing, as a piece of evangelical humbug veneered upon a biting and inarticulate chagrin. One can see him standing in his room in Lincoln's Inn Fields with his hands clenched over his head, and that smile, that winning smile on his face, that smile which, whether he was purring over a Peer or choking over a slight, had always the same inevitable charm, the symbol of the termagant.

Both as a designer, in the strict sense, and as a "case" Soane is more interesting than Nash. Nash was physically and mentally common, a little Cockney clown with nothing to distinguish him, but a volatile wit and lots of pep: a go-getter, a tough guy, who owed the King's patronage, if Mr. Summerson's insinuations mean anything, as much to his wife's talent for retaining the interest of her sovereign, as to any abilities of his own. Worse, his "detail was bad."

Here is no hero, even for architectural romance. Why is it then that we find it impossible to forget him even though we pull him down? Some credit is due to Mr. Trystan Edwards for giving the Regency "an outline which, from its chaste simplicity, must always please the Eye of Taste," and some goes to Sir Reginald Blomfield for his artfully contrived publicity. But these are hardly reasons why Prinney's favourite should be regarded as more than a successful speculative builder.

The answer is a simple one. Nash was an architect. He was an architect in the real meaning of the word. To us today, who are struggling with Victorian fallacies about the artist, he is a portent. Nash was no artist, had no temperament. How that bit of wrought iron-work would look when it was up, whether small houses should have leaded panes—a question I understand which has lately rent half Oxfordshire in twain—these things didn't interest him a bit. Indeed, it is related that a certain John Joseph Scoles, architect, disliking Nash's façade for Gloucester Gate, which he was obliged to build, tried to improve it by doubling the scale of the

mouldings. When Nash saw the handwork of Mr. Scoles, he passed it, merely remarking that "the parts looked larger than he expected."

The "badness of his detail" which is always brought up to show that Nash wasn't really a good architect, is indeed the clue. What did interest him was the organization of great developments and the lay-out of large areas. Just as his partner Repton, with whom he quarrelled, set out to organize with exquisite art the forests, the flowers of the field, even the contours of the ground into relation with man, so, at the age of sixty, Nash set out to impose his will upon the city; to bring its sprawling chaos and fictitious uniformity into relation with a greater visual ideal.

His motives were not unmixd. He was ambitious; he wanted money; he was a hunter born; he was not an idealist. Yet underneath his material desires there was that urge which one calls the impulse of the architect: not merely to design fanlights, but to impose order on great areas. It was an insatiable itch. And with this urge to plan went that other urge which is essential to a great architect, the urge to organize. He would do deals with business men, manipulate finance, reorganize the building trade, go with indefatigable vitality into the mazes of private property—and bob up the other side, cocksure, vitality undiminished, all ready to build.

Mr. Summerson pays lip service to these

qualities in Nash, but he can hardly be said to have stressed the point that it was precisely these qualities which made him a great man. Indeed, Mr. Summerson has stressed nothing. As a historian he is sound; as a scholar precise; his exact and lengthy descriptions of buildings, which read like the construction of a plot in a detective story, are technically superlative; yet if one did not suspect that it is Mr. Summerson's well-laid design by means of his own masterly moderation, to entrap both admirers and detractors of Nash into explosions of feeling, one might feel inclined to be a little critical of his deliberate understatements. When one looks at the chaos of modern Regent Street, one is forced to conclude either that the living architects are incompetent bunglers, which is naturally absurd, or that he who manipulated the difficulties of the street with ingenious tricks like the deft round towers such as those which still stand in the Strand—for how long?—and sealed an awkward change of axis by such a masterpiece as All Soul's, Langham Place, one of the most imaginative conceptions in Europe, was after all even in detail, little inferior to Sir Reginald Blomfield, and deserved something more from Mr. Summerson than "the portico is at least respectable."

If today there were an architect living of anything like Nash's calibre, the great problem of the epoch, the housing problem, would be as good as solved.

£25,000 (or at any rate a substantial portion of it) and to translate itself into actual terms of steel and glass and concrete in so short a time? And why (for instance) did not the B.M.A. rise up and unfrock the pioneers as guilty of unprofessionally progressive conduct? Why did not prudent men more effectively stress the stark impossibilities of doing the thing on so fantastically heroic a scale in such an obscure and unwealthy place as Peckham?

This astounding feat of demonstration and conversion in so short a time is veritably a portent. What does the Pioneer Health Centre set out to do? To conserve and build up the health of a neighbourhood by constant education, examination and supervision ("early diagnosis") of the members of what is in effect a health club; and incidentally to make a formal study of individuals and their reaction to environment; to be a school of positive health.

A fine gymnasium and swimming bath, a large restaurant (which can also be a dance hall or a lecture room), a library, rooms for reading and gossip (that grateful exercise being frankly accepted as a healthy function of social life), various types of consulting room with appropriate equipment, crèche, solarium—all this is the apparatus. The medical staff does not treat patients for disease if that is discovered, but sends them to their ordinary physician. (The cynic might perhaps suggest good reasons why this should be so.)

It is difficult to believe that the originators of this glorious experiment who have already proved their quality in the difficult stages will fail to make a spectacular success of it; difficult to believe that any set of borough councillors who are not quite dead, and who wish to acquire merit with everybody of every party, will not be rushing up health centres on the Peckham plan.

And therein, indeed, lies the gravest danger to the cause of which the present Centre is the pioneer, "Let's have a Peckham Health Centre!" every progressive Town or Borough Councillor will cry for pure or less pure reasons, thinking in his simplicity you can make a replica of the Peckham affair by merely duplicating the Owen Williams Building or rushing up a hasty travesty of it.

You can make another health centre when you have found another Scott Williamson and Pearse, and when they have trained a staff and a band of co-operators from the district to be benefited. The money so difficult to get before proof will be the least of the difficulties after proof. Ill-considered, hasty imitations—these will be the enemy.

As to the immediate hazards of this pioneer work, the threat does seem to lie not in any failure of direction or any flaw of theory or technique, but in the incurable snobbishness of the British middle class. Will, in fact, the local doctor's or solicitor's family find it possible to associate and play and bathe with that of the grocer or haberdasher, or artisan? In so far as snobbishness prevails the experiment will be frustrated. But we have learnt much in these last few years of trouble and perhaps this fine old British bogey will at last be laid. Peckham has the advantage of being a place of reasonably homogeneous structure, chiefly compounded of respectable artisan and smallish shopkeeper.

A Free Commentary

By Junius

THOSE of us who are inclined to shiver a little over Corbusier's stark idea of the house as a machine to live in need have no hesitation in accepting and applauding the new Owen Williams building at Peckham, illustrated elsewhere in this issue, as a superb machine for a Health Club.

Often a logical, austere modern building set in old-fashioned, not to say drab, surroundings has an effect of intrusion and we all hopefully conjecture that the intrusion will be less noticeable when time and weather and smoke shall have given it some tactful protective colouring and when use and wont have mitigated the effect of shock. In this Peckham affair, however, it is not the new building that appears to be called upon to offer discreet apology but the solid solemn surrounding Peckham houses which have the air of being entirely in the wrong century—incredible, assertive, fatuous.

I do not in fact imagine the old inhabitants as now saying in the accustomed conservative protesting manner, "What have they put up that outrage for?" but rather, "What extraordinarily heavy, clumsy, dark, grotesque, irrational boxes we're living in. Can we stand it much longer?" Mr. Maxwell Fry's

sane inviting little block of flats nearby may well have begun the process of disillusionment. Sir Evan's building will have (so to speak) rubbed the corporate Peckham nose in it.

The Pioneer Health Centre for which the architect has thus provided the mechanism, is the most interesting and heartening adventure we have come across for many a year. Here is indeed a corner of the veil of the future lifted. Something vital and radical and general is clearly happening in this country where, as it seems to us in our black moods, nothing forward-looking seems to happen. Who would have thought it likely or even possible that because a little group of biologists who had also full medical and surgical training, began a three-years experiment no longer than nine years ago in a modest Peckham house, an experiment in the pursuit of positive health as opposed to the restoration of health already lost, an experiment in social (or as they would no doubt say, biological) technique in the form of a health club with family, not individual, membership—who, I say, would suppose that, in England, such an experiment, however demonstrably successful, would have been able to impose itself on the imagination of the benefactors who have already provided the

DECORATION

5



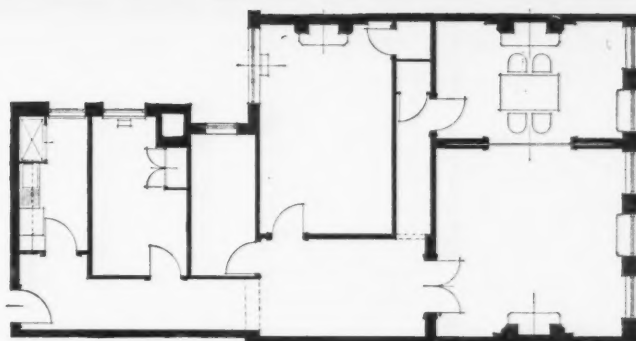
SERGE CHERMAYEFF,
ARCHITECT



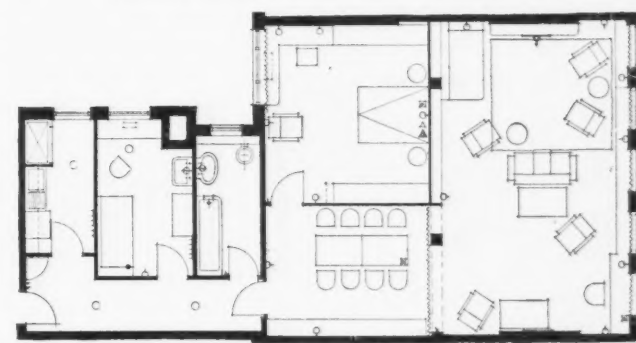
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A RECONSTRUCTED FLAT AT No. 42 UPPER BROOK ST., LONDON

1. A view of the living room through the dining recess, which can be shut off by a curtain running in a special curtain box. 2. The dining recess showing the sideboard on the left, with the service top covered in white rubber. The door leading to the hall is in bronze glazed in prismatic glass. 3. Plan of the flat before reconstruction showing the dark hall, a narrow passage to the dining room situated at the furthest point away from the servery. 4. Plan of the flat after reconstruction, showing the hall opened to the living room and made into a dining recess.



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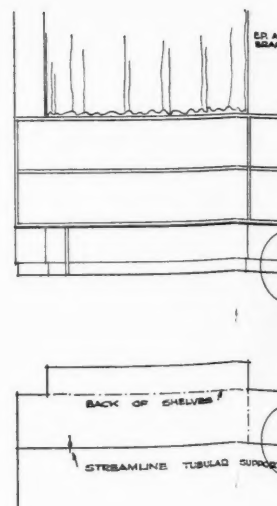
The original plan divided the available area into small rooms, with the particular disadvantages of a dark hall virtually wasted as a living space, because it was merely an enlarged passageway, and the dining room was furthest removed from the servery by the entrance door, which communicated with the kitchens below, thus necessitating trays being carried the whole length of the flat down the dark passage between the bedroom and living and dining rooms. The removal of all partitions other than those of the bathroom and service suite allowed the logical use of the area available to create a great sense of space and increase the size of each individual room.

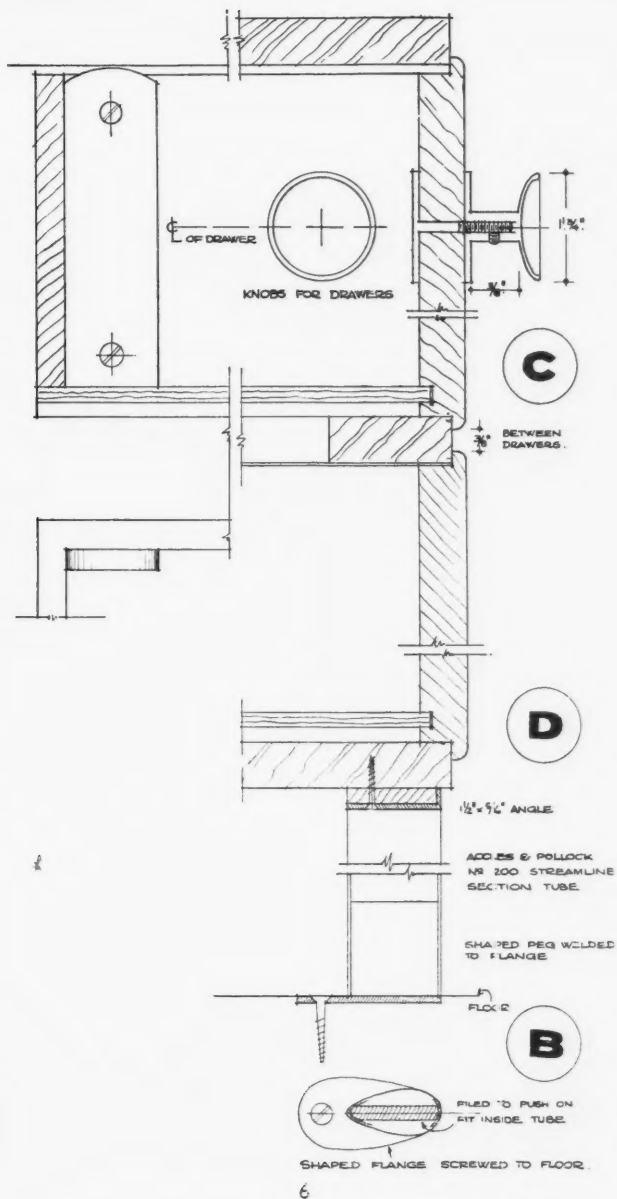
5. A detail of the living room fitment, showing a desk in the foreground and a typical perforated radiator grid and bookshelf beyond. All general lighting in the flat is through indirect lighting standards. All special purpose lighting, as the desk light, is fixed to the wall.

6. Section of the writing desk in the living room. 7. Elevation and plan of the built-in furniture under the windows in the living room, comprising bookshelf, radiator covers and a writing desk.

8. The new partition between the living room and the main bedroom showing the built-in bookcases and cupboards on the living room side, painted in a surround of French walnut.

9. Looking towards the electric fire in the living room, a view taken through a mirror showing the built-in fitment under the windows in walnut and bronze. All chairs are *Plan* chairs in steel and wood, covered in browns, blues and reds.

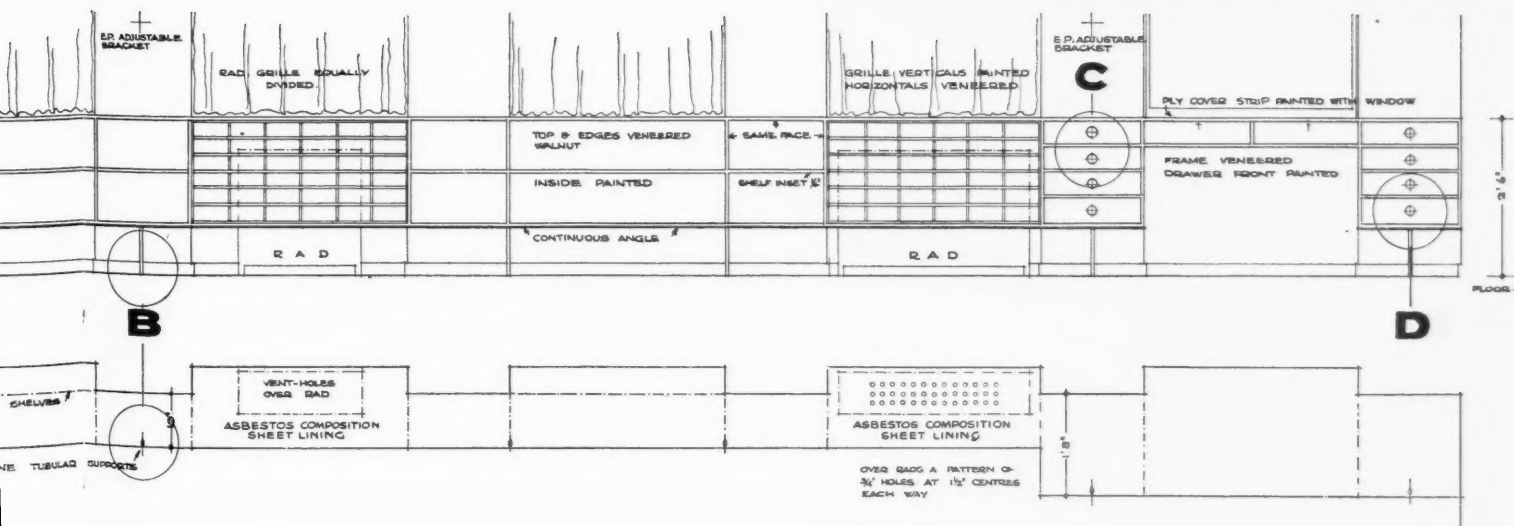




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10. The bedroom, showing the man's dressing table, with a full length mirror and small shelf for brushes, etc., and with cupboards containing all his clothes. In the mirror can be seen the lady's dressing table opposite. The fitments on the man's side are sycamore and bronze. Those on the lady's side are paint and bronze.

11. A detail of the lady's dressing table. This room has been designed with two distinct dressing portions to ensure maximum convenience for the two occupants.

DECORATION

5. Sociological Influences

By Geoffrey Boumphrey

LIGHTLY I wrote, towards the end of the preceding article, that the third reason for the decay of façade was the emergence of an uncultured middle-class. Lightly I wrote it, never suspecting the ramifications that a closer scrutiny would reveal: the origins and history of decoration and of patronage, economics, taste—even the fashionable enigma of Art in Industry—all these things clamour to be explored. I can see now that this third reason would have been better described by some such portentous legend as the sub-title above. Well, readers were warned at the outset that our journey was unlikely to follow any direct course: they must now be prepared to take a dive into the past after the origins of decoration.

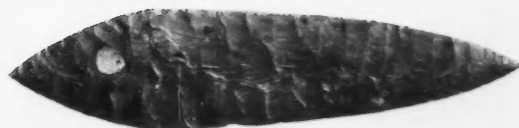
We shall not be far wrong if we divide decoration into two groups—pattern and picture. Of these it

seems probable that pattern made the earlier appearance by far. There is, in even the most primitive human being, a spontaneous appreciation of repetition, especially of ordered repetition, whether appealing to eye or ear. It is possible that this may be due to the fundamental rhythms of life itself—the beat of the heart, the action of breathing, the alternation of day and night, summer and winter, or even (more subtly) to the intricacies of molecular or atomic structure. At any rate, the impulse which causes man to dance and accompany his dancing on percussion instruments must presumably have been responsible for the pleasure with which he observed the first examples of fabricated pattern. These were, no doubt, fortuitous. I see no reason why we should ascribe them to any later craftsman than the flint-worker of the end of the Early Palæolithic Period.

Seeking the origins

of decoration, we

find that it began



BRITISH MUSEUM

It is impossible to look at this beautiful Solutrian implement (perhaps 25,000 years old) without feeling that the maker must have taken pleasure in pressing the flakes off his intractable material as regularly as possible—thus forming a crude pattern. Ten or fifteen thousand years later, the Neolithic Age brought basket-work; and here at once pattern was thrust very much before the eye. When, later on, pottery came to be made without its early wicker

foundation, it was common for the potter to incise it with lines reminiscent of basket-work—as this bowl well shows. Decoration had taken a great step forward: pattern, from being an accident of manufacture, had come to be deliberately applied. And notice that already the heavy hand of tradition had begun to make itself felt—the pattern chosen was based on the memory of an obsolete process of manufacture.

as Pattern,

first accidental

and later deliberate.



BRITISH MUSEUM

But in the meantime—certainly by the Later Palæolithic Period, to which this painting in the Altamira cave belongs—the picture had arrived, suggested, perhaps, in the first instance by the shadow. Whether, at this initial stage, the picture can properly be ranked as decoration, it is hard to say: my own feeling is that representational art must at first have appeared so marvellous as to be magic, and so have been reserved for mystical purposes only. Later, as we know, the ban was lifted: both picture and pattern found increasing use as elements of decoration. Moreover, picture came to be used as an element of pattern.

But here a most significant fact comes to light:

Then came Picture,



Naturalistic or picture pattern shows a persistent tendency first to become stylized and then to revert to pure abstraction.

Mr. Herbert Read has lately called attention to this (though his classification is rather different). He suggests as a possible and partial explanation that "an unconscious judgment is at work, which finds abstract ornament more appropriate on an object of daily use." I myself suffer from an unconscious or subconscious mistrust of any argument involving the unconscious or the subconscious; and I shall therefore offer an alternative explanation presently—merely noting here the fact that a succession of copies, extending perhaps through generations, must obviously tend to differ increasingly from the original design, and that unless extraneous influences come into play, the differences will naturally be in the direction of greater simplicity and ease of execution.

And now let us skim lightly through the next ten or fifteen thousand years, noting a few salient facts about decoration *en route*. The first is that picture, by its magical attributes, gained prestige over pattern from the very beginning. The second, that picture was always more difficult to execute. Almost anyone could stick his thumb-nail into wet clay and make something like a pattern; but picture called for the services of a man gifted (in one direction at least) beyond his fellows—the artist. These two things had an effect which seems

to me immensely important. Picture was immediately taken up by the Best People and reserved, very largely, for the Best Places. Priest, chief and king were the first patrons; temple and palace the first art galleries.

I realize that all the foregoing is extremely shallow. Innumerable holes can be picked in it; innumerable examples cited in opposition. Its generalizations are wickedly vague. Nevertheless, I believe that as a sketch of tendencies it is essentially sound. Note that, although no line has yet been drawn between Applied and Fine Art (that does not become apparent until the fifteenth or sixteenth century), picture and pattern intermingle and are at times indistinguishable, and, consequently, that pattern takes on a certain amount of kudos from picture. Note, too, that although I have said that the artist's work was especially prized, I have not thereby affirmed that he was regarded as anything but a superior craftsman. Nevertheless, when the Best People wanted the Best Work, they went to the artist for it. How much artistic snobbery there was in ancient Greece, I am not fitted to say; but certainly it becomes apparent in Roman times. From then until the present day, its growth is clearly traceable, fluctuating with the various set-backs to what we are pleased to call civilization.

The association of art (by which I mean, at the moment, either picture or pattern of superlatively high quality) with the Best People had two main results. Art itself became more and more esoteric, fully comprehensible only to the elect; and the Best Work (i.e., where there was money to be spent and an impression to be made) looked always to art for its finishing touches and, nearly always, for its principal effect.



ALINARI



It still does. The plain job itself has never been given a chance—not in the Best Work. This is not to say that admirable restraint has not frequently been exercised, and admirable results obtained—BUT the plain job has never had the opportunity of showing all it could be without embellishment.

Let us now turn abruptly to the present-day and see what has happened. The patron belongs to a dying race. There will quite possibly always be rich men; but they will not be rich men with generations of culture behind them. The artist, on the other hand, has become the Artist. Disgusted by the lack of understanding of—or even sympathy with—his ideals, no less than by the decreasing demand for his products, he has withdrawn more

and more into himself, cut himself off more and more from contemporary life. This is an age of specialization we are frequently told: the Artist has specialized in specializing.

This is fortunately a treatise not on Art, but on decoration; and there is nothing to prevent us leaving the Artist where force of circumstances and his own tactics have placed him, and hieing back to explore those suggestive words "contemporary life."

which merged at times with Pattern.

But Picture was largely

monopolized by the Best

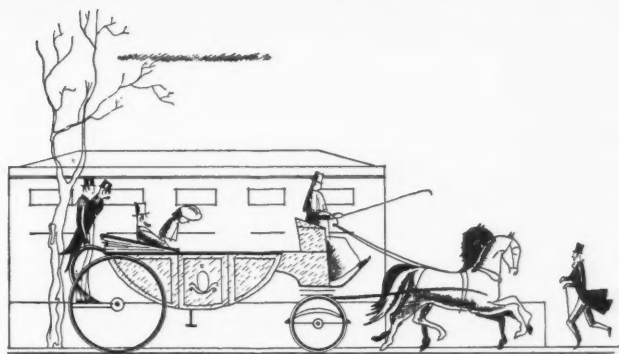
People and thus came

to be reserved mainly

for

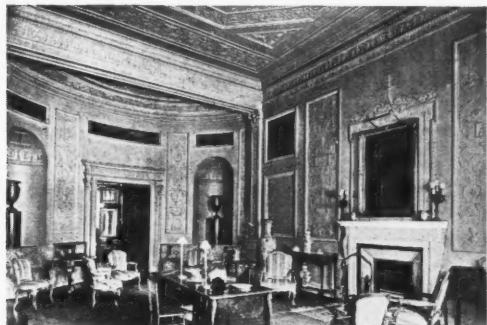
the Best Work

with some consequent neglect of the Plain Job.



His successor, the man who pays the piper, is our old friend, the man-in-the-street. And he is, mainly, of the uncultured middle-class—that body whose emergence I cited as one reason for the decay of façade. We are now in a position to see whether the charge can be substantiated.

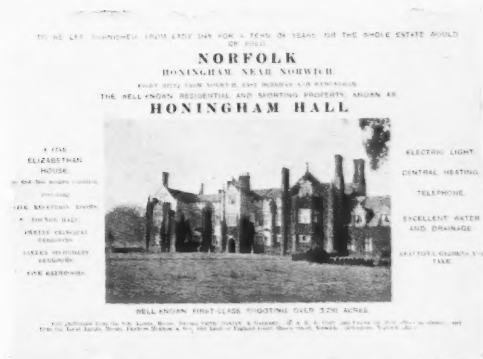
I pointed out that, in the course of centuries, Art, diligently patronized by a certain class, tended to become increasingly esoteric. Its conventions—the conventions of façade, in fact (since Art, in so far as it touches decoration, *is* façade), were built up by sophisticated people and became a useful lan-



They adopted façade, repeated its conventions parrot-fashion without understanding, garbled them, used them in the wrong places and in the wrong quantities.

As a result of this misuse, the language ceased to be significant, withered—and died. By the parrots this was not observed, since they had never read any meaning in it; but to the more sensitive mind it was apparent. Hence the race of Ruskins, Morriszes and others, who set about demolishing the structure of façade without clearly recognizing what they were trying to put in its place. They blamed the machine for what was really its misuse.

Which way is design to go? Along the line of carefully-modified traditionalism—



Today the Best People

are a dying race. The

new patron is the

man-in-the-street

who apes

without understanding

the culture of his

predecessors, thus

bringing it

to ridicule.

What is the solution?

To perpetuate

an outworn

tradition?



and when the consumer himself is a new creature, rapidly changing his habits in an environment that is changing with no less speed? It seems hardly wise.

The alternative is to begin again. It has come to my notice that there is, today, a strong swing towards Function in the minds of many intelligent and highly-educated people—towards Function as the only safe ground on which to build up a new design-argument. The old structure of design has collapsed, they say. We have got to begin again from the foundations and erect a new building. The men who hold this view—who are called “modern” because the discovery of this elementary principle is a recent one—do not claim to have reached the end of all design: they merely say that this is the beginning—and that design must start again from that beginning because it has already got to an end.



There needs no further proof that it *has* come to an end than the fact that there is today no established school of design—which would have been unthinkable in the eighteenth century.

I confess that this doctrine seems to me to have much to commend it. Economically it is suited to the lean years in which we live. Sociologically it seems no less satisfactory. The principal consumer is, we have seen, of an uncultured, upstart class. If he is ever to build up a sound cultural tradition, he must tread the path trodden by the older patron class, and begin at the beginning, with function, rather than try to join in uncomprehendingly at the end. Even those who would claim some cultural background have had their eyes poisoned and their taste perverted by the welter of bad design in which they have grown up. A period of plain living (I had almost added “and purgatives”—when I remembered that these abound) is an essential step towards the full recovery of health. Technically the new creed should ensure the assimilation and proper use of the many new materials which lie to hand. And aesthetically? Here I am inclined to see one of the strongest arguments of all. The plain job, as I have said, has rarely or never been given a chance. English domestic architecture of the eighteenth century undoubtedly came nearest to it—but, on the whole, the job and nothing but the job has never been exploited to the full. At any rate, it has never enjoyed the immense advantages of “snob-value.” We of the modern world are not, as a rule, characterized by excessive modesty. We claim (unwisely, as it seems to some) to have conquered nature, annihilated space and so on. But in the æsthetic field things are very different.

[To be continued]

Unlike mankind at any really healthy period of artistic creation—who have not hesitated to scrap a masterpiece to make room or material for what they were firmly convinced would be an improvement—we are oppressed by the achievements of the past. The Golden Age is behind us. How can Mr. So-and-so of Chelsea ever rival Pheidias, or Messrs. Truwood of Chipping Campden make a chair to equal a Chippendale? If we return to Function, it seems possible that this incubus may be lifted from our spirits. Since we are so civilized, should we not hope to show it? And why not by the creation of a new type of beauty, more austere, perhaps, less obvious, but no less real than the best which the past has left us? Function holds out this possibility.

It seems to me, as it has seemed to others, that the first glimpses of the new beauty are to be seen even now by those who know what to look for. This, surely, is what the man-in-the-street OUGHT to want. I shall assume so. And in the next article—the last before I come to my investigation of the work of the actual designers (for surely we can now drop the word “artist”?), I shall try to formulate certain criteria by which to measure its quality. This one question has been pursuing me from the beginning; and it has caught me at last. I can evade it no longer. I am now irrevocably committed to the rôle of Superior Person, and, next month, I shall play it to the best of my ability and discourse at length on Taste.

Or begin again

as an escape

from confusion?

We examine the
latter alternative
with some care
and eventually
adopt it.

And now for Taste.

ANTHOLOGY

MARGINALIA

Two Points of View on the Brighton Pavilion

As we see it today the Pavilion, alas, is incomplete, in that it lacks so much of the fantastic furniture designed for it; gone are the tall pagodas of porcelain, the china fishermen in their alcoves, with lanterns as their catch, the gilded and silvered sofas, with their dragon motifs, the lamps, shaped like gigantic tulips; yet even now, as it stands, forlorn and degraded by popular festivals, what other buildings exist in England, or, as for that, in Europe, to compare with it in individuality and exotic beauty? However much a Chinaman of taste might resent the *chinoiserie* flights of Europe, he would, I think, appreciate the qualities of this building. How is it, we ask ourselves, through what process of magic, did George IV contrive, with his great panels of lacquer, red and black and gold, and with his painted and carved dragons hanging from silvered ceilings and crawling down pillars, to recreate so successfully that palace of Khubla which Marco Polo describes: where "the sides of the great halls and the apartments are ornamented with dragons in carved work and gilt, figures of warriors, of birds, and of beasts, with representations of battles" . . . and where "the inside of the roof is contrived in such a manner that nothing besides gilding and painting presents itself to the eye"? And still more does it resemble that pavilion he describes in Shandu (or Xanadu): "a Royal Pavilion. . . Round each pillar a dragon, likewise gilt, entwines its tail, while its head sustains the projection of the roof, and its claws or talons are extended to the right and left . . ." where "the roof, like the rest, is of bamboo cane." In examining its details, one cannot help but wonder what dream inhabited the Prince's mind, as he drew out of the recesses of his imagination this fabulous miniature palace?

OSBERT SITWELL and MARGARET BARTON. "Brighton." (Faber and Faber).

* * *

Today the Pavilion is a curiosity which rouses only a vague, transient wonder in the visitor. Its ornaments are scarcely more extravagant than those of the roundabouts at Hampstead, which they closely resemble; for singularity of form it has long ago been surpassed by the Crystal Palace and the White City; and for richness it compares unfavourably with the Granada Cinema at Tooting. Its intrinsic beauty is small; surprise and novelty were the great things about it, and the thrill of such ephemeral virtues is not easily recaptured.

In its own day it was the target of every wag, Byron, Cobbett, Wilberforce, Hazlitt, Sydney Smith—all had their fun with it, mingling contempt with laughter. To radicals it was a red rag; to connoisseurs a monster of stylistic impurity. Today it is simply a minor historical monument; and to the citizens of Brighton a familiar curio containing halls which may be hired for lectures and concerts.

JOHN SUMMERSON. "John Nash," (George Allen and Unwin).

Lighten Our Darkness

The high laws of coincidence, as certain Athenian dramatists were well aware, tend to the creation of situations of an exquisite irony. The present year marks the centenary of the death of John Nash, and Regent Street is to be floodlit for a period of months.

It happens also that no less an authority on the new Regent Street than Sir Reginald Blomfield, R.A., is a contributor to the April issue of *The Fortnightly Review*. His specific subject is *Modernism*, a term of his own contriving which embraces every aspect of contemporary activity in architecture, painting and poetry to which Sir Reginald takes exception. Ingeniously enough, however, he finds room for the statement that "Nash's ridiculous travesties of classical architecture were the fashion of the Regency period," and Norman Shaw is remembered as one of those who "did their part to retrieve a hopeless situation." The century that yawns between urbanity and suburbanity has no need of floodlights. It is illuminated by the busy lanterns of people engaged in creating and retrieving hopeless situations.

FRANCIS WATSON

A Railway Prospect of a Provincial Town

Beside those spires so spick and span
Beneath an unencumbered sky
The old Great Western Railway ran
When someone different was I.

St. Saviour's with the prickly nob
And iron spikes and coloured tiles,
Where old Aunt Maud devoutly bobs
In those enriched vermilion aisles.

St. George's, where the single bell
But rarely drowned the trams for prayer;
No papist sight or sound or smell
Disturbed that gas-invaded air.

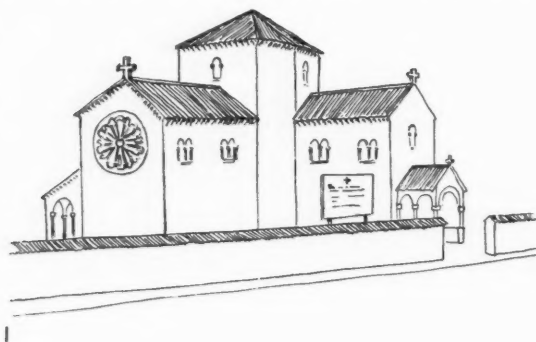
St. Mary's, where the Rector preached
In such a jolly, friendly way,
On Cricket, Football—Things that Reached
The Simple Life of Every day.

And that United Benefice
With entrance permanently locked,
How Gothic, grey and sad it is
Since Mr. Grigson was unfrocked!

The old Great Western Railway shakes,
The old Great Western Railway spins,
The old Great Western Railway makes
Me very sorry for my sins.

JOHN BETJEMAN

PUBLIC BUILDINGS AT PELVIS BAY BY OSBERT LANCASTER



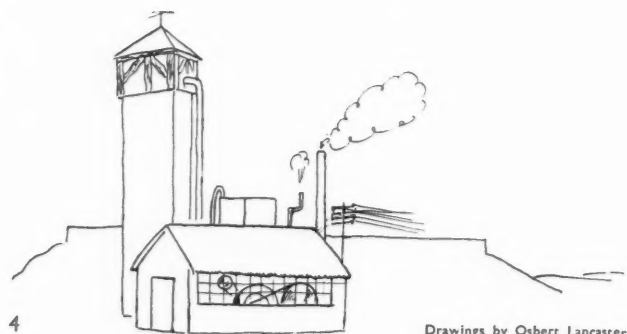
1. The hundred and twenty-second Church of Christ-Scientist. This handsome place of worship is a recent and welcome addition to the long list of sacred edifices of all denominations in the town. Built of red brick in the modified Romanesque style to which other temples of this sect all over the country have accustomed us, the stern and restrained quality of its massive silhouette and the beautiful texture of the brick are in pleasing contrast to the more richly decorated, almost lace-like, beauty of the Gothic St. James-the-Less (C. of E.), the humble simplicity of the corrugated-iron S. Philip Neri (R.C.), and the somewhat chilly classicism of the Spurgeon Memorial Chapel (Baptist).



2. Most visitors to the town on first catching sight of the new Cottage Hospital imagine it to be a particularly well-preserved example of late seventeenth-century country mansion, and are very surprised to learn that this dignified pile was only erected last year, and is one of the most modern and best equipped hospitals in the country. The wing on the left contains the electricity plant, that on the right the laboratory.



3. Few people imagine that Pelvis Bay can boast many manufactories, nor until a few years ago could we. In 1928, however, following on an enormous expansion of their business, Lead Gnomes, Ltd., the well-known firm of garden ornament manufacturers, decided on building their new factory on a site on the outskirts of the town. Within a year the present magnificent premises were complete, and provide an admirable object-lesson to those who imagine that a factory must of necessity be an eyesore. One would never dream, on first catching sight of this fine pile that behind the handsome neo-Egyptian façade, with its lotus pillars and decorations of coloured tiles, is the most up-to-date plant of its kind in the world, throbbing away constantly with a daily output of over four hundred gnomes, fountains and Japanese storks.



Drawings by Osbert Lancaster

4. Waterworks are not usually an addition to a rural landscape, and when recently the Borough Council were faced with the problem of their erection, every care was taken that they should blend with the countryside. The result is, as a recent visitor so happily phrased it, that unless one is near enough to hear the pumping, one would imagine one was face-to-face with an old-world barn alongside a giant dove-cote.



The new Rood Screen at Woodchurch, in Wirral, Cheshire. Mr. Alan Durst, the sculptor, was allowed complete freedom by the architect, Mr. Bernard Miller, in his interpretation of the theme. The screen is in English oak, and replaces one of nineteenth-century Gothic design.

Biography

Excerpts from "*Philip Webb and his Work*," By Professor W. R. Lethaby. London: The Oxford University Press, Humphrey Milford.

Fun at Red House

When playing whist, Burne-Jones and Faulkner arranged a pack of cards so that Morris had a hand over which he beamed, but he lost everything, and flung his cards down. "You fellows have been at it again." Another time they "took in" and sewed up Morris's waistcoat and charged him with getting even abnormally fat. Again, Burne-Jones, reckoning on Morris's interest in the weather, got up a dispute on the heat, having previously boiled the thermometer.

The Perfect Hunger

To try to see and to value Webb's building work we must put it against its historical background in the atmosphere of the time. When Webb and Morris came to London nearly seventy years ago it was still practically the city of Dickens, with fresh scars made by the unconsidered bringing in of the railways. The Houses of Parliament were new and the Law Courts were not begun. Horse buses and river steamers seemed as if they would go on for ever. It was a time

of expansion and of new hope after the hungry forties. Science sometimes seemed to offer the hope that it might be used for amelioration rather than for violent exploitation. The "Gothic revival" sometimes appeared to offer promise of regeneration in the arts. Burne-Jones, referring to Rossetti in some words given in *Memorials*, significantly speaks of "the perfect hunger for romance that was spread abroad in the world at the time he came into it." People are fed according to their hunger.

Fun Again

At Gatti's one evening, after a Protection of Ancient Buildings meeting, Morris was reminded by some incident of how in the old Queen Square days, when business was low, a letter came in an utterly unreadable handwriting, except that words like glass, painting, and furniture could just be made out. From this it was supposed that it might be a large order, and Morris decided to take it to a writing expert, when Burne-Jones owned up. Another time a roll-parcel came to the impatient Morris, of which the wrapping—and it was all wrapping—was gummed throughout to the core. On a boating excursion Faulkner put the bottles overboard attached to a string, and pretended that they had been forgotten.

The First White Room

The drawing-room here (at 26, Queen Square), when Morris moved in, was painted white. This was the beginning of white interiors in London.

Pre-Raphaelite Practicality (Warrington Taylor's Memo. on Furniture)

"A glass of hot brandy and water, if slightly upset, produces an ugly ring on an ordinary French-polished mahogany table.

"At all dining-tables you are continually subject to have this upsetting of wine, brandy, etc., consequently constant re-French-polishing.

"On our stained black and green furniture, these marks become much more offensive—the stain comes off, repolish or not, mark remains.

"*Summa*.—I do not think stained furniture is practical, we ought to be content with natural wood.

"Oak is always cracking. With heavy Elizabethan furniture this does not matter, but with our furniture which, in some way, resembles the highly polished hard-wood work of the last century, such cracks are inconvenient and out of place.

"*Summa*.—We ought to use only walnut; if you cannot get black mahogany, could that dark rosewood, like Broadwood's pianos, be used sometimes?"

Professor Lethaby on Architecture

In the Middle Ages the "architecture" to which we give the modern name "Gothic" was the customary way in which masons and carpenters did their work. In Italy, as the Middle Ages neared their close, the people of the land, who had long been dominated by German rulers, awoke to the thought that they themselves were not *Tedeschi*, but Italians and Romans. Then, national consciousness being reborn, a movement was initiated for the "revival," that is, the copying of classical Roman art in Italy. At first, and this has not been sufficiently understood, the Renaissance of the arts was part of a national, patriotic, and political movement. When this natural native movement had proceeded far in Italy, travellers from other countries, clergy and nobles, saw that the fruit was fair to the eye, and they set about grafting and then transplanting the more or less natural growths of the Italian soil into northern lands, not seeing that the Renaissance, which was national in Italy, was anti-national in Germany and Britain. The new way of building imported into these lands was no longer a customary art growing up from the bottom and out of the hearts of the people. It was a "taste" imposed on the top as part of a subtle scheme for dividing off gentility from servility. In England, Italian art (so-called) became a badge of the superiority

claimed by travelled people, especially those of the grand tour, over the people at home. It was an Architecture of Aristocracy provided by trained middlemen of "taste," who now wedged themselves in between the work and the workers, who were consequently beaten down to the status of mere executioners of patterns provided by an hierarchy of architectural priests. So fully was the myth of the foreignness of "culture" accepted that the national arts were flattened out and destroyed in the name of gentility, learning, and "taste." The practical building artist was thus terrorized into accepting the belief that his "betters" knew mysteries and correctitudes, and that his part was but to do and obey in working out their whims: a sad business, but so it was and remains.

So general, so universal, was the acceptance of Italian forms, that after a time, when they had been fully absorbed, building became almost a customary art once more. Soane had become a modern thinker in building and a most able constructor. The general average of architectural skill was remarkably high. London squares, and new schemes of building at Bath, Brighton, and Buxton were conducted on liberal and reasonable principles: service buildings in country towns were often very well done: the markets at Exeter by Fowler and the old city building at Birmingham are excellent. If builders had only been let alone they were coming round to doing rational work again. But they were not to be left alone—it would never have done—the suppliers of whims would have fallen out of employment. One set of men of taste now showed their taste by more correctly copying Greek buildings, while another group showed their taste in imitating the shapes of the great national art which former men of taste had de-

ULTRA-MODERN IDEAS



"This house, near Port Talbot, the only one of its type in the country, makes the modern house look old-fashioned. The windows are constructed so that while a good view can be got from inside, it is impossible to see in."—From "The Star."

rid. The Gothic whim outlasted the other for a time and (to anticipate) was itself tending to turn into reasonable building, when there was another outbreak of professional style tasters who shouted "Back to Greece" once more, and set to work copying Paris and New York. And so it must be while "architecture" is conceived as "design" and not as building development; as style rather than structure.

Two Sorts of Architecture

Mr. Halsey Ricardo says: "He (William Butterfield) accepted the service of the circular saw for his joists and rafters, and reasonable modern sizes instead of the necessarily extravagant

scantlings of medieval carpentry. The character of his wrought work in stone, wood and iron was what the workman of his day could intelligently carry out, and get a reasonable amount of pleasure in so doing. Chimney flues were shown on the contract drawings and were set out to his approval on boards put up on the scaffolding and followed by the bricklayer; the consequence is that of all the many flues in Keble College not one requires a cowl or help to the draught.* The gas-points were shown on the plans, and the brackets, etc., on the sections."

* This is architecture indeed; compare fashionable recent works in the styles. In fact, notwithstanding all the names, there are only two modern styles of architecture: one in which the chimneys smoke, and the other in which they do not.—Professor Lethaby.

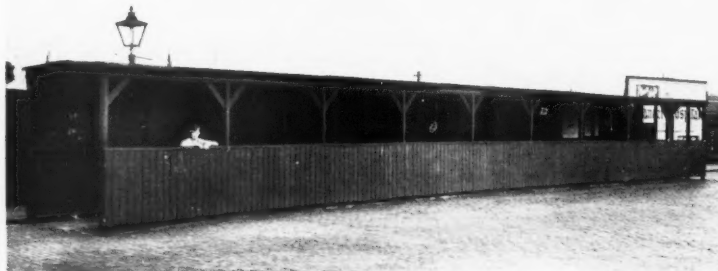
A T M O S P H E R E



A



B



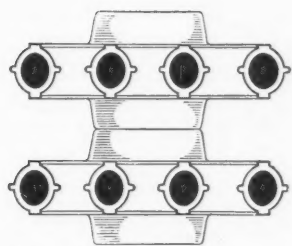
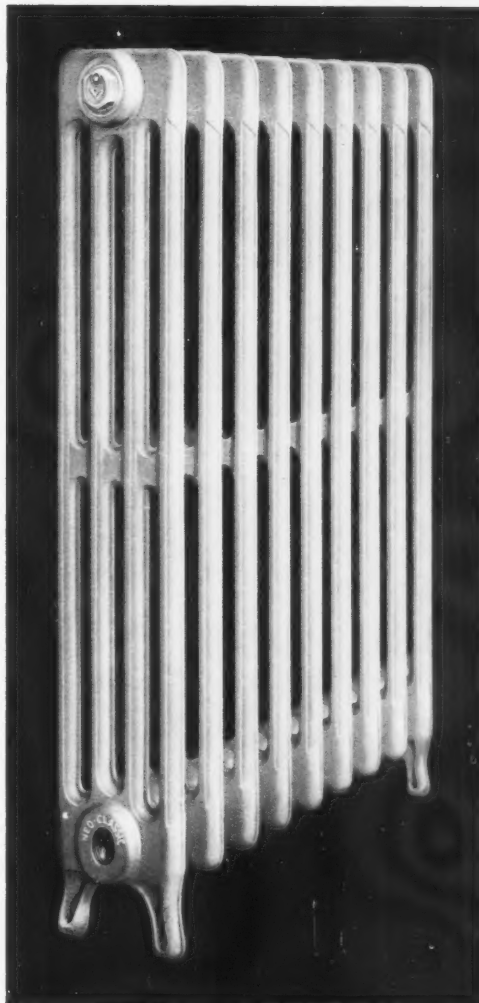
C

These are three of the types of shelter provided by the L.P.T.B. for its passengers. They are interesting as an indication of the Board's sensibility to the individual atmosphere of the various districts which it serves. Thus the Banstead example, A, in alliance with the Board's excellent posters, may succeed in convincing you that you really are in the country when you pay a visit to Banstead. Swanscombe, B, on the other hand, is at the awkward stage. Too self-conscious of its recent recovery from savage rusticity by the erection of neighbouring cement works, nothing will suit it but proper doors in the doorways and windows with glass in them. But with Woolwich, C, things are quite simple. It is a place where men understand the art of lining-up. All the Board had to do was to provide another place for them to line-up in. But it isn't everybody who would have thought of breaking the force of the wind with the wire-netting which covers the front.

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Cross section showing free air space between columns and sections.

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Trade News and Reviews

By Brian Grant

The Ideal Home Exhibition, Olympia

The sophisticated, the hypercritical "high-brow" critic must, of course, regard the Ideal Home Exhibition as something almost completely unworthy of his serious attention. I have met gentlemen of this particular specie wandering somewhat sadly round the Olympian avenues and have been hailed with a very bored "Ye Gods, Grant, come and have one!" Having had "one," or perhaps two, my sad friend (stifling a yawn) murmurs that "Perhaps we'd better have a stroll round." And so, we do stroll round . . . AND we are entertained.

This hardy annual, organized by the *Daily Mail* and staged, very ably I think, by Ian Jeffcott is good entertainment. If you approach it in a very serious and philosophical mood, then woe is you. Regard it, rather, as a cheery sort of market place

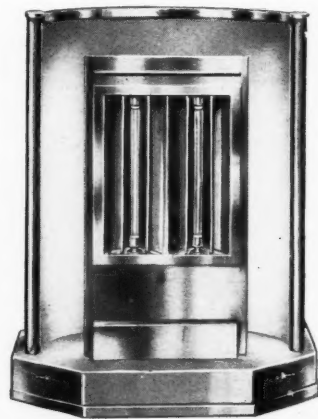
where are gathered together all manner of things, good, bad and indifferent. 'Tis sad that the bad and indifferent things should so outnumber the good: 'tis maddening to find amongst the exhibits the most ill-mannered suites of furniture in both "ye olde" and the very "moderne" style.

Entering Olympia by the Addison Road entrance the stand of James Powell and Sons (Whitefriars), Ltd., was the first to welcome me. This was a happy beginning, for Powells do produce some very excellent glassware. Rather many of their vases and bowls were too ornate and highly coloured but some of their simpler shapes were really beautiful.

Two good displays of contemporary furniture were to be found on the stands of Bowman's, of Camden Town and Pel, Ltd.,

the latter being an exhibit of tubular steel furniture. You will not be wasting a penny stamp if you write to Bowmans for a copy of their latest furniture catalogue.

I was more than a little disappointed to find that Arthur Sanderson and Sons had devoted their main exhibit to an example of imitation wood paper. They are producing some excellent wallpapers these days: I paid a visit to their showrooms in Berners Street a few weeks back and enjoyed myself thoroughly for half an hour. Let wallpaper stand upon its own merits as something that will provide an almost endless variety of colourful and decorative backgrounds.



The "Haloberry" electric fire.
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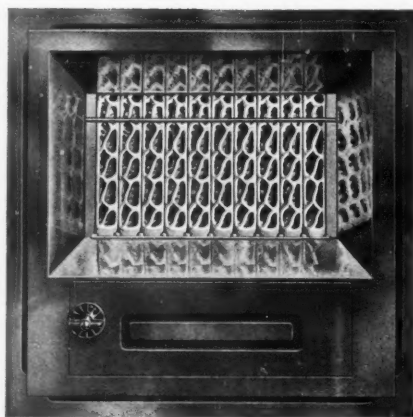
In a very neighbourly position at the foot of the main staircase I found the gas and electricity exhibits—both practical and informative.

Gas refrigerators, gas geysers and water heaters in wide range—mostly good to look at, strictly utilitarian and no frills. The built-in type of gas fire was much in evidence and the design of these is generally much improved. The "Panella" fire, product of the Davis Gas Stove Company and well known to all architects, is still amongst the best of its class; another "intelligent" looking model is the "Sunsquare"—the fire front is recessed 4 in. behind the face of the wall or surround, the stainless steel bevelling giving a mirror-like effect which adds appreciably to the attractiveness of the fire when lighted.

I noticed a general and marked improvement in the design of gas and electric fires. The Bratt Colbran display was a good one, and W. N. Froy exhibited a useful series of electric fires of the flush inset type, ranging in price, if I remember rightly, from 17s. 6d. upwards. The Berry "Floodray" electric fire appealed to me (Berrys Electric, Ltd.), and also the Berry "Haloberry" electric fire.

The refrigerator section was almost inspiring—refrigerators are undeniably good to look at, the standard of design is quite high.

On the first floor of the Empire Hall there was a display of modern bathrooms and bathroom equipment designed and erected by W. N. Froy and Sons with the collaboration of Howard Robertson. I liked best the "Club Bathroom" carried out in black and



The "Sunsquare." A new type of flush built-in gas fire. In stainless steel the price is £13 15 0.

white glass, though I dwelt longest over "Milady's Bathroom," an exotic pink and white scheme. In "Milady's Bathroom" two features intrigued me—firstly, the floor, a combination of rubber and marble, rubber strips, in diamond pattern, being inlaid to counteract the rather treacherous surface of an all-marble floor; lastly, but not leastly, "Milady" herself—she was just 100 per cent.

• • •
Away up in the gods, so near the stars that I almost missed it, was exhibit No. 421

arranged by the Building Centre—"an attempt to portray some of the changes which have taken place in building during the period of King George's Reign" (quoted from the exhibition catalogue). This did not come up to my expectations; one anticipates a high standard of design and exhibitionism from the Building Centre.

I was glad, however, to find this exhibit at Olympia. I would like to see it next year on a much more ambitious scale and it should be situated on the ground floor in the Housing Section.

The Housing Section— Jubilee Village

No, not good enough, gentlemen of the *Daily Mail*! Not nearly good enough! Apart from the King's House, Jubilee Village was . . . well, less than the dust.

• • •
And so we leave Olympia and the Ideal Home Exhibition for twelve more months. I shall go next year, and the next and the next . . . for it is *good entertainment*.

Modern Street Lighting and the G.E.C.

• • •
I receive from the General Electric Co. a short note drawing attention to the inefficiency of so many present-day street lighting installations. They say "it does

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not need any deep scientific knowledge to realize that the average residential street suffers from a lack of light which is not merely insufficient but actually dangerous." With these words I concur most vehemently. Indeed, why confine the criticism to the "average residential street"? There are mighty few main thoroughfares that meet with my critical approval. Street lighting in this country is by no means as good as it should be. It may, I think, quite truthfully be said that the great majority of our streets are over "beaconized" and under-illuminated, and I am certain that the G.E.C. are perfectly right when they say that "adequate street lighting is not merely possible but economically practical." Examined, too, from a pure design point of view lamp standards, lamp-posts, etc., are woefully inelegant. Here's a job of work badly in need of the doing. Let lighting experts like the G.E.C. collaborate with design experts, like architects, in revolutionizing street lighting throughout the whole country.

The G.E.C. refer in their note to a "new principle" in street lighting which they have now established as the result of intensive pioneer work in their research laboratories; they call this new form of lighting "road-brightness" and, as the name implies, it aims at an even degree of brightness over the whole road surface. I shall welcome further details.

An example of G.E.C. interior lighting is shown in the accompanying photograph of the Venetian Room at the National Gallery.



G.E.C. lighting at the National Gallery. A view from the Dome into the Venetian Room.

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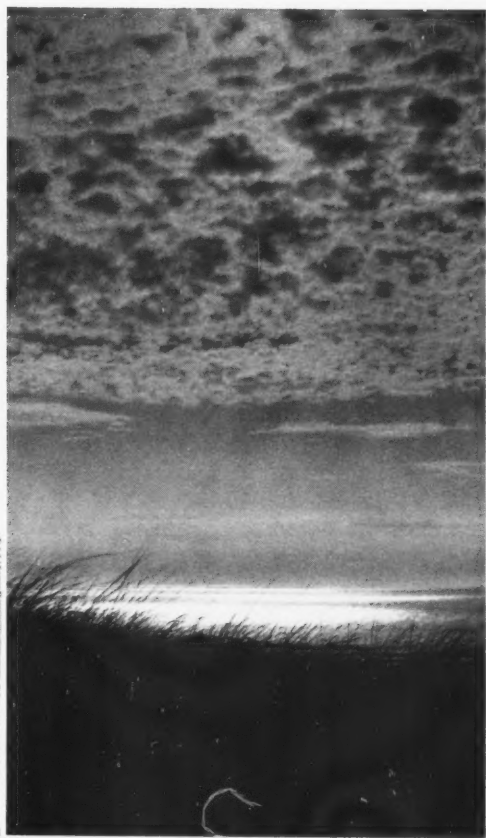
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Radiation

(Opposite Bond Street Underground)

Artificially lighting a picture gallery is no simple haphazard task and, it does not surprise me to learn that the lighting system now adopted at the National Gallery is the result of careful experiment over a long period. The main feature of the lighting is that a high intensity even illumination is cast on to all the picture walls while the arches of the galleries are left relatively dimly lighted—the result is to attract the eye naturally to the pictures and to avoid glare and over-brilliance generally. Other difficulties to be overcome were the avoidance of reflection from glazed or varnished surfaces of the pictures, and the danger of artificial lighting disturbing the colour values: in certain cases the colour has been varied slightly according to the pictures to be illuminated.

Architectural Acoustics

Sound insulation problems must today be amongst some of the knottiest that architects, engineers and builders have to contend with. One might wonder why this question of acoustics has in recent years increased so much in importance—the reasons are not far to find. Firstly, the strain and racket of present-day industrial and business life is such that the abatement of noise has become a very vital necessity. In the average large office building, in very many flats and homes, the occupants are daily subjected to a perfect barrage of sounds, from the tip-tap of the typewriter

to the rumble of heaviest traffic. Moreover, modern economic conditions demand a use of the minimum of material in building, thus adding very considerably to the problems of sound insulation.

I was discussing the science of acoustics recently with N. E. Thompson, the technical representative of Messrs. Honeywill and Stein, Ltd., and finding myself deplorably ignorant, asked him to recommend to me some publication in which the subject is dealt with concisely yet comprehensively. He suggested that one of the best authorities in the country is C. W. Glover, A.M.Inst.C.E., L.R.I.B.A., and referred me to Mr. Glover's article in the current edition of *Specification*. I heartily commend this article to others

interested. Honeywill and Stein will be known to most readers of the REVIEW as acoustic and sound insulation engineers and manufacturers of a wide range of acoustical materials in addition to Gyproc wall and ceiling board and Gyproc and Rocbord lath. Mr. Thompson has only recently joined their staff, having resigned his position as architectural representative to the India Rubber Gutta Percha Company—in his new appointment as Technical Representative to Messrs. H. and S. his work will be confined entirely to contact and collaboration with architects in relation to the many building products of the Company and their service as acoustical and insulation engineers.

The Building Illustrated

THE PIONEER HEALTH CENTRE, PECKHAM.

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Resident Engineer: H. J. Emsden.

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(heating and ventilating), Crittall Manufacturing Co., Ltd. (window sashes), Davis Bennett & Co., Ltd. (sanitary fittings and plumbing), Exeel Asphalte Co., Ltd. (asphalte), Joseph Freeman, Sons & Co., Ltd. (cementone for swimming pool), B. French, Ltd. (electrical work), T. M. Gardiner, Ltd. (swimming bath and gymnasium equipment), Lift and Hoist Co., Ltd., (service lift), Mander Bros., Ltd. (paint), Parker, Winder and Achurch, Ltd. (wire fencing), Pilkington Bros., Ltd. (glass), Plastering, Ltd. (granolithic finishings), Vigor & Co., Ltd. (painting), Joseph Westwood & Co., Ltd. (steel partitions).



Design 5382.

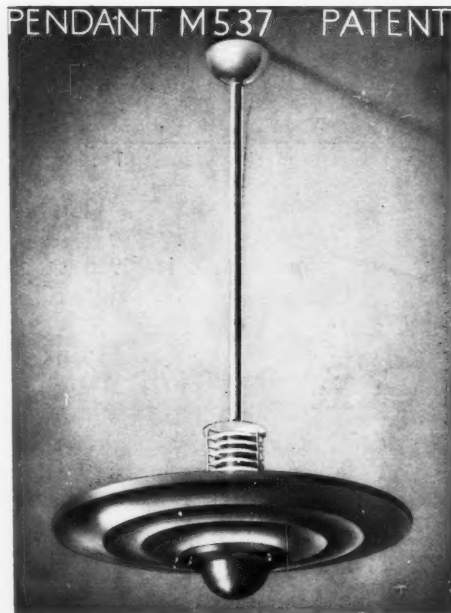
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