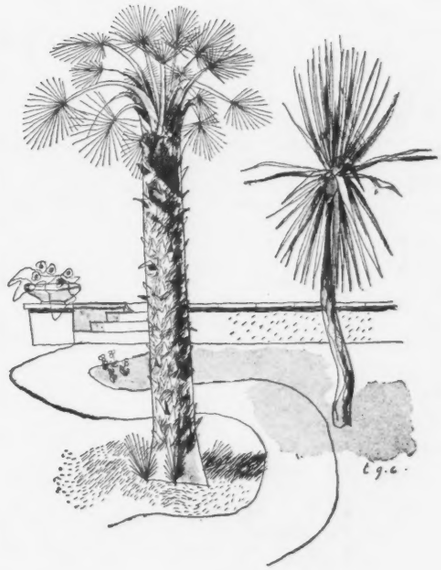
THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

A Magazine of Architecture & Decoration



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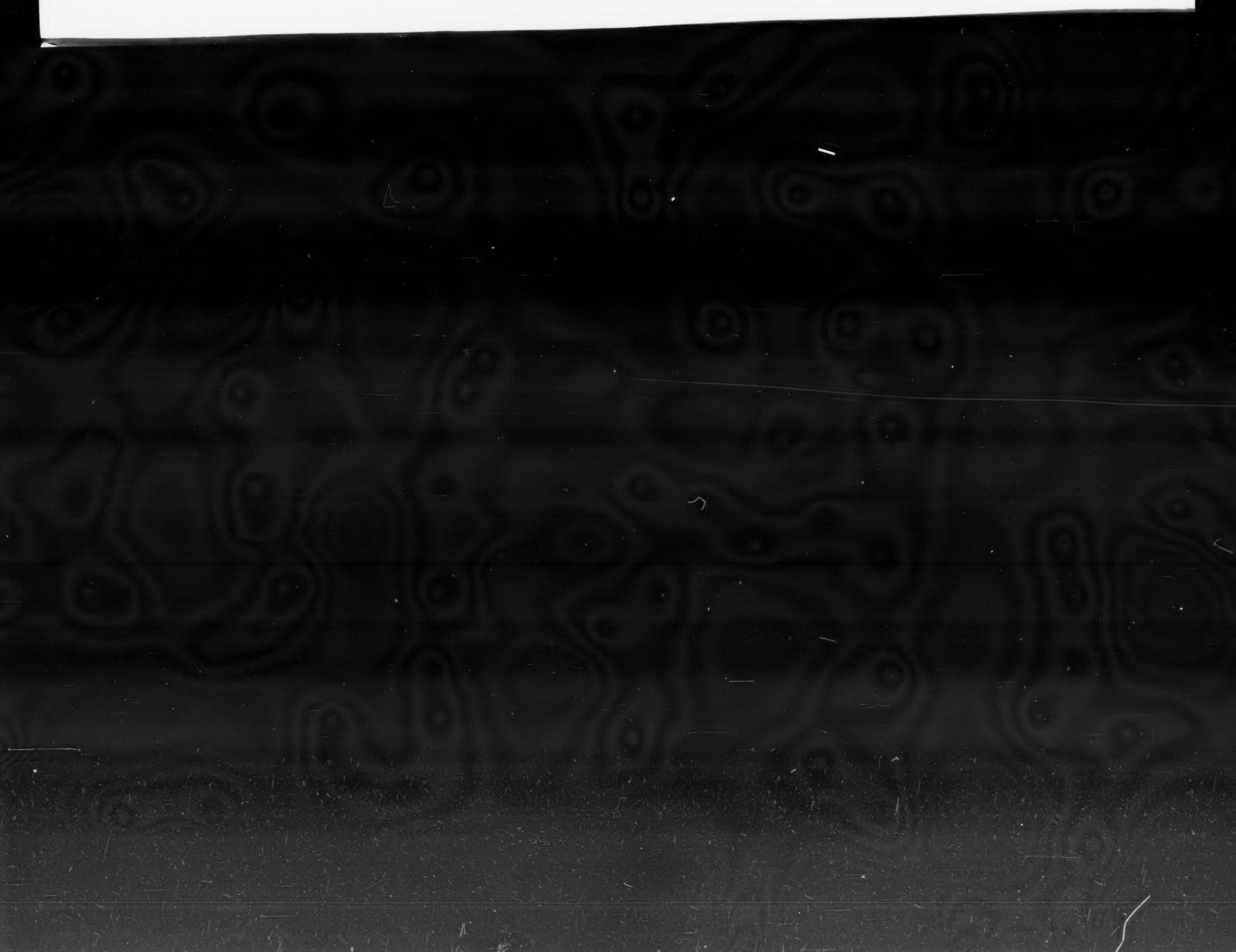

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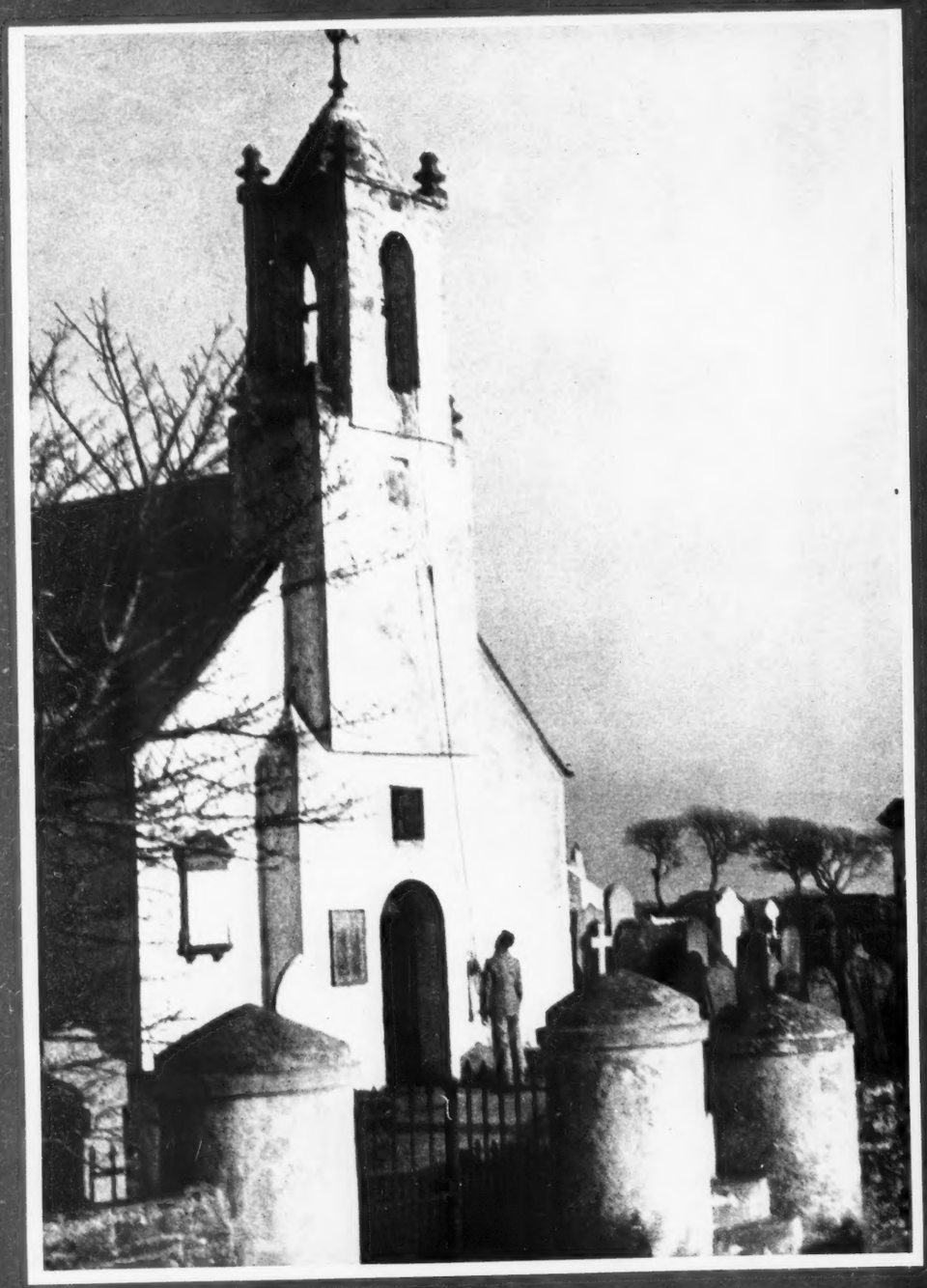


THE GHOST OF A CITY

By Osbert Sitwell

At long intervals during many hundreds of years, rumours were current in Europe about the great lost city of Angkor, but during all those centuries the whole of the Orient was a legend, a fable told to children by ingenious travellers. The stories of Marco Polo—which we know now, even when they are not accurate to an inch, to be so much truer than truth if estimated at their proper human value—were dismissed as falsehoods; constituted, almost, a standard by which to measure probability or its reverse. Yet, even Marco Millione, so christened by his contemporaries because of his supposed exaggerations, had failed to visit Angkor, or to give an account of it by hearsay. . . . In the middle of the sixteenth century, however, came a definite report: two missionaries, Fathers Ridadeneyra and Gabriel de Sant' Antonio, told of the apparition of some gigantic and singular ruins in the impenetrable fastnesses of the Cambodian jungle, palaces and temples, they said, which had been built by the Romans or by Alexander the Great. And toward the end of the same century, Father Chevreuil alludes to a temple "called Onco, and once as famous among the Gentiles as St. Peter's of Rome."

As for the living inhabitants of the forest—those beautiful beings, who, in spite of their dignity and grace, recalling those of the basalt figures of pre-dynastic Egypt, were then an oppressed and dying people, less numerous, it may be, than the images in their overgrown temples—they had forgotten long ago all their high, distinguished history: they knew merely that these soaring, tumbling labyrinths of golden stone, in the corners of some of which they yet worshipped, must be the handiwork of the gods; their parents had told them so. . . . Thus Henri Mouhot, the French naturalist, to whose intelligence and pertinacity we owe the discovery—and very largely the preservation—of the lost city, tells us that by 1860, the year in which he reached it, all traces of its history had passed into oblivion, though tradition maintained that Angkor had been the capital of a country that counted a hundred and twenty kings paying tribute and an army of five million soldiers. But even the inscriptions on the walls were indecipherable to the local sages. Indeed, when he questioned the natives and enquired who had founded Angkor Vat, they would return such answers as, "It is the work of the King of the Angels, my lord." Mouhot himself writes of Angkor Vat that to look at it, after seeing modern Cambodia—the Cambodia of 1860—was to be suddenly "transported from barbarism to civilization, from profound darkness to light." He adds that to form any idea of the city of Angkor, it is necessary to try and imagine all the most beautiful creations of architecture "transported into the depths of these forests in one of the most remote countries of the world . . . incomparable ruins, the only remaining signs, alas, of a lost race whose very name, like those of the great

"The church in the village of St. Marks is an outstanding example of the local style. In its general lines it follows the plan of the early churches, but the simple elements of plain white surfaces, entrance, bell turret, bell rope and wall tablet, are combined in a delightfully simple and natural composition. Fantasy is introduced in the slightly grotesque pinnacles, painted the colour of terracotta, and in the huge circular gate-posts." See the article, "A Little-known Outpost of Empire," beginning on page 23.

men, artists and rulers, who adorned it, seems destined to remain for ever hidden among the rubbish and the dust." And of Angkor Vat, again, he truly comments that "it could be compared very favourably with our most beautiful basilicas, and . . . is far more grandiose than anything built in the heyday of Greek or Roman art . . ." Mouhot himself died a year or two after his astounding discovery: and the world must ever be grateful to him for his realization of what he had found, that he was worthy of the apocalypse that came to him, for it was through his efforts that the boundary of French Indo-China was moved forward so as to include Angkor. And thus it was saved to the world, for the Siamese, to whom it then belonged, were using the city as a quarry—just as the Romans of the dark ages had destroyed their great buildings. . . . It is to be hoped that as he lay dying of the tropical fever he had contracted in that country, he may have judged that one instant of revelation to have been worth a lifetime.

Always, you will observe, the roads of our European thoughts return to Rome: and it must be admitted that a kind of verisimilitude is to be distinguished under the origin that the earliest of the monks attributed to Angkor, for of all the monuments of the East, those of the Cambodian jungle most nearly approximate to Western ideas and conceptions. This is in no way to attempt to disparage their originality, or to pretend that, for all this, they do not appear very strange and remote; but when you consider their geographical position and history, it is curious that there is to be found so little of India, still less of China, in them, so much more of Ur and Babylon and Nineveh, of the great cities of Persia, Assyria and Mesopotamia, those vanished metropolises of wingèd lion and bull, and of hanging gardens, from which both the later Imperial Rome and Constantinople, and, through them, Venice, were descended, no less than the Byzantine cities of nearer Asia or the capital of the Sassanian kings. Thus the *idea* of Angkor, of its "sharpèd steeples high shot up in ayre" is not unfamiliar to us: because the qualities which these ruins possess, in common, let us say, with Ctesiphon and Rome, though they plainly reached Cambodia from Indian sources, were not in themselves of an Indian origin, but of one even more remote in time. So often, outside Europe, you feel that the architectural spirit does not exist, that everything is a matter of pretty surface decoration indiscriminately applied, that, as with the constructions in stone or brick of Moor or Turk, though they often begin in a promising manner, they can never contrive to reach as far as the first storey without making a powerful blunder of some sort or other, that their owners, pashas and merchants, were never intended to indulge in more than ground-floor accommodation; but these temples and palaces you recognize, directly you see them, as architecture, just as Mouhot did, wondering at "the genius of this Michelangelo of the Orient, who conceived such a work, who co-ordinated every part of it with the most wonderful art." These buildings are Roman at least in their massiveness and grandeur of conception.

Moreover, even now, when several temples have been cleared altogether, or freed to a certain degree, of the surging invasion, there none the less manifests itself a most remarkable likeness to the Rome of Piranese's etchings, the Rome of vast broken archways and the roots of trees, of fallen statues, and drums and capitals of enormous pillars and wild, destructive, clawing branches, of trophies, of old dead roads lined with tombs and shrines, while flowers and weeds and ilex-trunks grow from their splintered and broken cornices: except that here all is exaggerated beyond the power of imagination, for the roots of the trees are so gigantic that they enclose whole sanctuaries, the branches as thick as the boles of the great oaks of Sherwood, there are flowers and birds, of the very existence of which no European could dream, and monkeys gape and chatter in the chapels, peering into the calm countenance of the Buddha or of one of his saints. . . . So it is today, though the riot of fantasy must be a little reduced from the time when Mouhot first beheld the courts and towers of Angkor Vat, where, he says, "hardly a sound echoes but the roar of tigers, the harsh cry of elephants and the belling of wild stags."

Let it be said immediately that Angkor, as it stands, ranks as chief wonder of the world, one of the summits to which human genius has aspired in stone. It is infinitely more impressive, lovely and romantic than anything that can be seen in China; than, even, the Great Wall or the Ming Tombs. Professional opinion, it is true, inclines sometimes to deny to the builders of these cities an entire comprehension of the use of stone as a medium (because, for many thousands of miles in every direction, only brick and wood had ever been used before), but were this opinion justified, their creations would long ago have been swallowed up, or dispersed under the never-ending and so vigorous assaults of the encircling forest. Proof of the contrary, we have before us, and largely intact, the material remains of a civilization that flashed its wings, of the utmost brilliance, for five centuries, and then perished so utterly that even its name had died from the lips of man.

Owing, however, to the investigations of the students in this field, we know that the civilization of the Cambodian kingdom was the heir in part of one of the greatest empires that Asia has ever known; a dominion founded by a Hindu prince, who, as a young man in the latter part of the eighth century, set out deliberately to conquer the world. Of him and his exploits, Dr. Quaritch Wales writes*: "This great conqueror, whose achievements can only be compared with those of the greatest soldiers known to Western history, and whose fame in his time sounded from Persia to China, in a decade or two built up a vast maritime empire which endured for five centuries, and made possible the marvellous flowering of Indian art and culture in Java and Cambodia. Yet in our encyclopedias and histories . . . one will search in vain for a reference to this far-flung empire or to its noble founder . . . The very fact of such an empire's ever having existed is scarcely known, except by a handful of Oriental scholars. . ."

We are not cognizant of the name of this hero, because, owing to the laws of tabu, all Indian kings of that era remain anonymous to us: but he was known to his contemporaries as Sáilendra, or King of the Mountains. His realm comprised the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, Java and Cambodia, superseding the formerly celebrated empire of Fu-nan. (Incidentally, we are told in a contemporary record, that our celebrated pantomime character, Sindbad the Sailor, once found himself, in the course of his voyages, within the territory of the King of the Mountains and Lord of the Isles, and was received by that great potentate at court.)

Whole dynasties of kings ruled thereafter in undisputed power, and then, quite suddenly and without warning, they, together with the great and intricate system that they had created, and of which they were the crown, topple over and disappear into the darkness. Indeed, the end of this resplendent and curious civilization is much more overgrown, more difficult to apprehend, than its beginning: for, after a certain date, no more buildings were constructed, and some temples, even, were to stand unfinished up to the present time. . . . The explanation of this collapse is said to be that the foreign and indigenous slaves, many of whom had been employed in carrying stone for these great works, took advantage of an attack by a neighbouring war-like tribe, and revolted, slaying their oppressors, the King himself and the grandees; and that, for two or three hundred years after this Bolshevik outbreak—until, in fact, the present dynasty, originally of humble origin, had established its power—a general anarchy prevailed . . . And at moments, withal, even in the hottest and most glowing sunshine—when colour is visible in objects, in stones and wood,

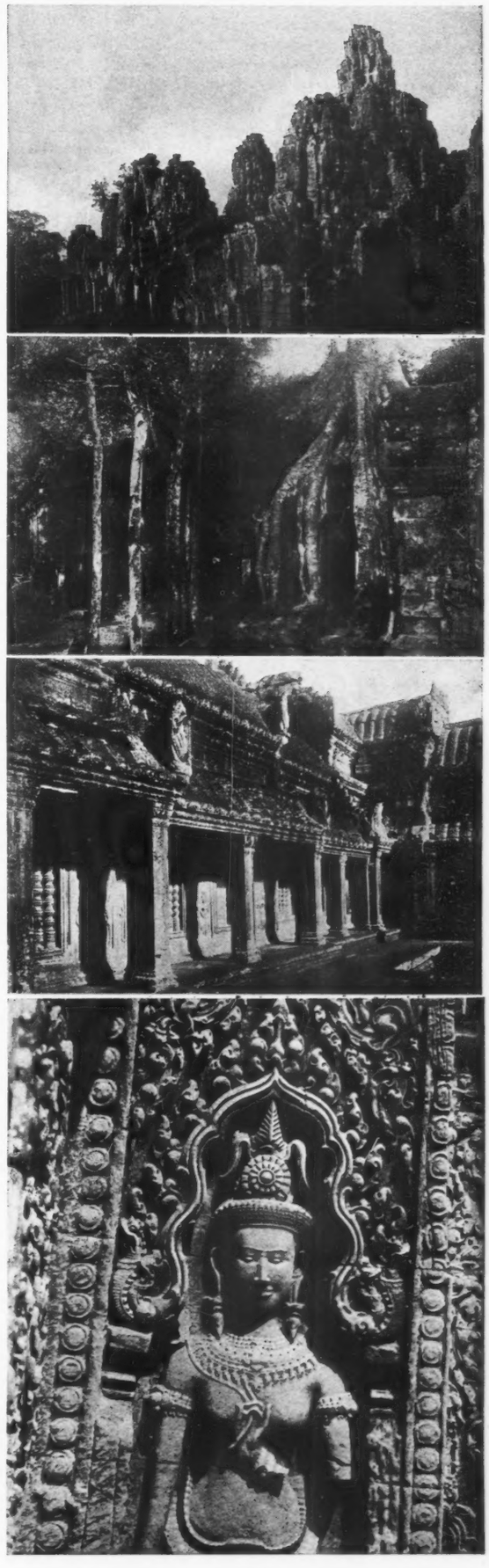
* "Towards Angkor," by H. G. Quaritch Wales. (Harrap & Co., 1937.)

that in more temperate climes have none—the terrible phantom of some indescribable massacre seems to hang over the ruins.

Meanwhile, the great works of this culture still remain. In the jungle are nearly sixty square miles of ruins, centring round Angkor; artificial lakes and basins and pools, moats and bridges, for this was a Narcissus-like beauty that loved to admire its own reflection in cool, flat mirrors of water laid upon the surface of a burning land. The four walls of whole cities now form a *hortus conclusus*, full of giant trees in blossom, of monkeys, and of animals more strange and ferocious, lurking in the tangled growth, nesting in the vast stones that everywhere lie submerged under the force of the vegetation that coils like a spring, about to leap up, or hangs down, making fresh roots, wherever it touches the ground : and there is, too, an entire population of statues—yet more, no doubt, have fallen beneath the green tide and so are lost to view—of images, and of the fabulous creatures of Hindu and Cambodian mythology.

From the central sanctuary at the summit of Angkor Vat, greatest of the ruins, the view of the courts and corridors of the temple below, and of the encircling jungle beyond, is incomparable. . . . That which must chiefly impress the traveller, as he looks down upon the elaboration of open space and mass, of sunlight and shadow, will be the sense of finely balanced proportion manifest throughout this gigantic and splendid edifice. Though permeated by a love of dazzlingly rich decoration, this is always kept in check, never allowed to run unbridled over wall and ceiling, as so often in other equatorial systems of architecture : it possesses strength and repose, as well as imagination and a power of fantasy. Here, gazing up at the lofty towers, or down, over fountain, court and corridor, terrace and paved esplanade, over the crossing lines of a thousand gabled roofs and exquisitely and boldly sculptured details, the main effect is one of supreme dignity : and next he will feel how curiously and fortunately combined in this great relic are ruin and survival. It is almost whole—by far the least injured of the temples—so that it has lost nothing by decay, and yet has disintegrated just sufficiently to produce in the heart of the onlooker an overwhelming sense of age and past glory.

From this height, too, it is possible to descry the towers of Angkor Thom, in the depths of the forest, and even, here and there, the lines of its walls. . . . Below, scattered thickly under and above the mammoth trees, in that deranged visionary world of Piranese's, stand gates and walls and water-basins, niches and sanctuaries, sculptured islands lying on pools, terraces with a frieze of elephants cut out of the stone that supports them, magnificent staircases, flying on wings from one level to another, and descending to nothing, causeways across moats and canals from which, in



The remains of a great civilization lost in the Cambodian jungle were first reported in the sixteenth century, but only brought to light in 1860*—by the French naturalist Henry Mouhot. Through his efforts the remains were incorporated in French Indo-China, as the Siamese, to whom they previously belonged, were using the buildings as a quarry for stone. Centring round the city of Angkor, the ruined temples and cities spread themselves over nearly sixty miles of jungle. The photographs on this page show, from top to bottom : the temple of Bayon; unnamed ruins still submerged in the jungle; part of the temple of Angkor Vat, the central sanctuary of the whole area, and a stone-carved figure, typical of the architectural enrichment of Angkor Vat.*

the passage of centuries, the water has receded, assuming new and unexpected positions a little distance off, leaving the channels choked with water-flowers of such luxuriant beauty that, each time you see them, they take your breath away, while birds as gorgeous in their plumage as ever was the Queen of Sheba in her attire, stalk round the edge of marsh or pool or wade deep among the blossoms. From the exuberance of the vegetation, out of the festoons and wreaths trailing from the trees, appear roofs and shattered cornices, fallen stone beams of enormous size, great stones, like boulders, jutting out at insane, because purposeless, angles, carved heads of men and lions, horses and serpents, colossal statues on their splintered plinths, round the bodies of which have wound the long, snake-like coils of some parasitic tropical plant. Tiara'd dancers point their fingers from mossy walls in the significant gestures of Cambodian ballet under cascades of green leaves or sprays of flowers, and blossoms grow, too, from their pagoda-shaped head-dresses and from the round caps of the comedians and acrobats. The walls of whole towns and monasteries now form park-like enclosures: in them the fangs of the gigantic roots of a tree clamp together the sagging door of a sanctuary, or the immense trunk itself has split, to reveal the image of Rama, or some bas-relief of ancient triumph, while, in contrary process, the roots of other trees are disrupting a cloister, so that a man's bones appear beneath a stone slab. Nature and art are engaged everywhere in ferocious battle, or merge in wild and inextricable confusion. Trees sprout like antlers from the heads of gods; lions and gryphons, as though they were alive, peer through the screens of leaves. The prone image of Buddha is being gradually raised from the ground by the force of the plants beneath his weight, and near by a stone Siva, destroyer and creator, is, in his turn, being destoyed by his creations.

City beyond city, temple beyond temple, the ruins stretch into the forest. The magnificent Bayon, a Cyclopean bulk of stone, standing like a rock from which the ocean has receded, depends entirely for its effect upon the repetitive occurrence, the rhythm, of nearly two hundred colossal, gently smiling stone faces which it displays. Then there is Pra Rup, a classical edifice, as it were, very European, its cut stones and terraces exhaling a quality that, paradoxical as it may sound, recall such buildings as, let us say, Blenheim or, even, the Pitti Palace. . . . Neak Pean, on the other hand, is a floating shrine, a small oratory of stone, carved in the likeness of a lotus blossom; and there are many other wonders, too numerous to mention here. . . .

But as we gaze upon these spectacular and lovely ruins, other questions assail us, and we try to surmise how all these monuments, and the highly-coloured life which they set off, were financed? The answer, which I have never hitherto seen stated outright in print, is one of the strangest and most romantic that can be imagined; from the *wings of kingfishers*. . . . Cambodian kingfishers were esteemed above all others in the Chinese market, because of their superior sheen and colouring, and were the chief source of national income: their flashing and iridescent feathers were shipped to Canton, where they were fashioned into those glittering blue and green tiaras, worn, until recent years, by every Chinese bride at her wedding, and which, though in China itself their sale has been forbidden, are still to be encountered, from time to time, dusty and forlorn, in English antique shops.

No wonder, then, that this was a water civilization. We need no longer be surprised at the extent of the artificial lakes, the number of pools and moats and basins, or at the existence of the water-gardens and pleasances of Angkor Vat, their fountains raised so high toward the heavens, cupped and held up as though in offering to the gods, for over all of them floated, skimmed and flashed then—as still to the present hour—the most exquisite kingfishers; larger and with a more vivid tint of green, sea-green and lime-green and jade-green, than you can find anywhere else in the world. No wonder, either, that these towers and cornices tend to aspire, to take to themselves the angle and shape of wings, for on wings they were built, and out of wings they came. Did ever a city mirror a more true or more shimmering reflection of the source of its wealth than these feathers, which, as they gleam in the water, combine all the elements, the blue of the sky, the green of the jungle, the fiery gold of this sun? For once these jewelled plumes have been transmuted by the magic of art into another medium, into something as beautiful as themselves and less transient.

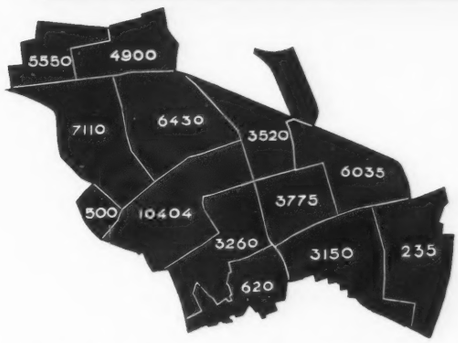
FINSBURY

MAKES A PROGRAMME

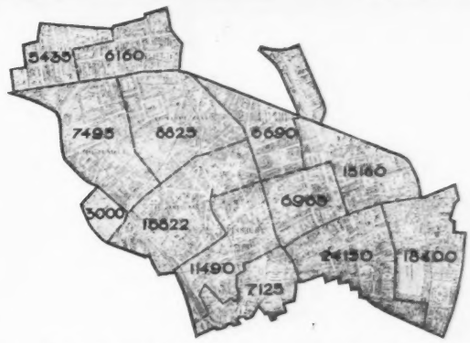
The Borough of Finsbury is the second smallest Borough in the London area. It adjoins the City of London north of the Thames, as shown on the map alongside. It is also the second most overcrowded Borough, which fact demands thorough and drastic improvement of the public services on the part of an enlightened Borough Council. Its small size means that these services can be centralized as to plan, as the Borough is not only small but compact.

One characteristic of the Borough, that must influence plans for its development, is that the northern part is largely residential, having a fairly constant day and night population, or even one that diminishes during the day, whereas the southern part, a business district, has a very small night population but a huge influx of workers during the day.

T H E T W O F I N S B U R Y S



Above, the Borough divided into wards, showing the night population, which is largest in the residential districts (mostly the north) and smaller in the business districts, where the Borough adjoins the City of London on the south.



The day population figures show how the population of the residential wards either remains the same as at night or slightly decreases, while that of the business wards greatly increases, in one case from 235 to 18,400.

A further characteristic of the Borough which strongly affects its present development is that it is split up into properties owned by a relatively small number of private landlords. These landlords prefer the more remunerative industrial development to the residential type of development, and the tendency is for them to allow their residential property to deteriorate until it is condemned as beyond repair, leaving them free to develop the property for commerce or industry. This is done, of course, without regard to any large-scale plan for development and therefore without regard to the general social welfare of the Borough.

The Finsbury Borough Council have to act within the limitations imposed by this condition and their general policy, by which they are trying to offset its evils is, first, by providing adequate social services and general amenities for the residents in the Borough to make it more attractive as a residential quarter; secondly, by gradual improvement of roads and other traffic facilities in the business areas to increase the rateable value of the commercial and industrial properties, the higher income thus obtained being applied to the improvement of public services in all parts of the Borough.

Improvements of this sort are limited in scope since under the statutory powers of local authorities they are not allowed to compete with private financial initiative; nor does the allocation of Government subsidies encourage it. Improvements are however being made and the Borough Council's programme can be summarized under the following headings.

A. Housing: provision of new housing accommodation, mostly, owing to limited ground space, in the form of

flats, to relieve the prevalent over-crowding. These flats are to have communal services and amenities combined with them.

B. Open spaces: provision and improvement of gardens, playing fields, children's playgrounds, etc.

C. The organization of Day Nurseries, and Maternity and Child Welfare centres.

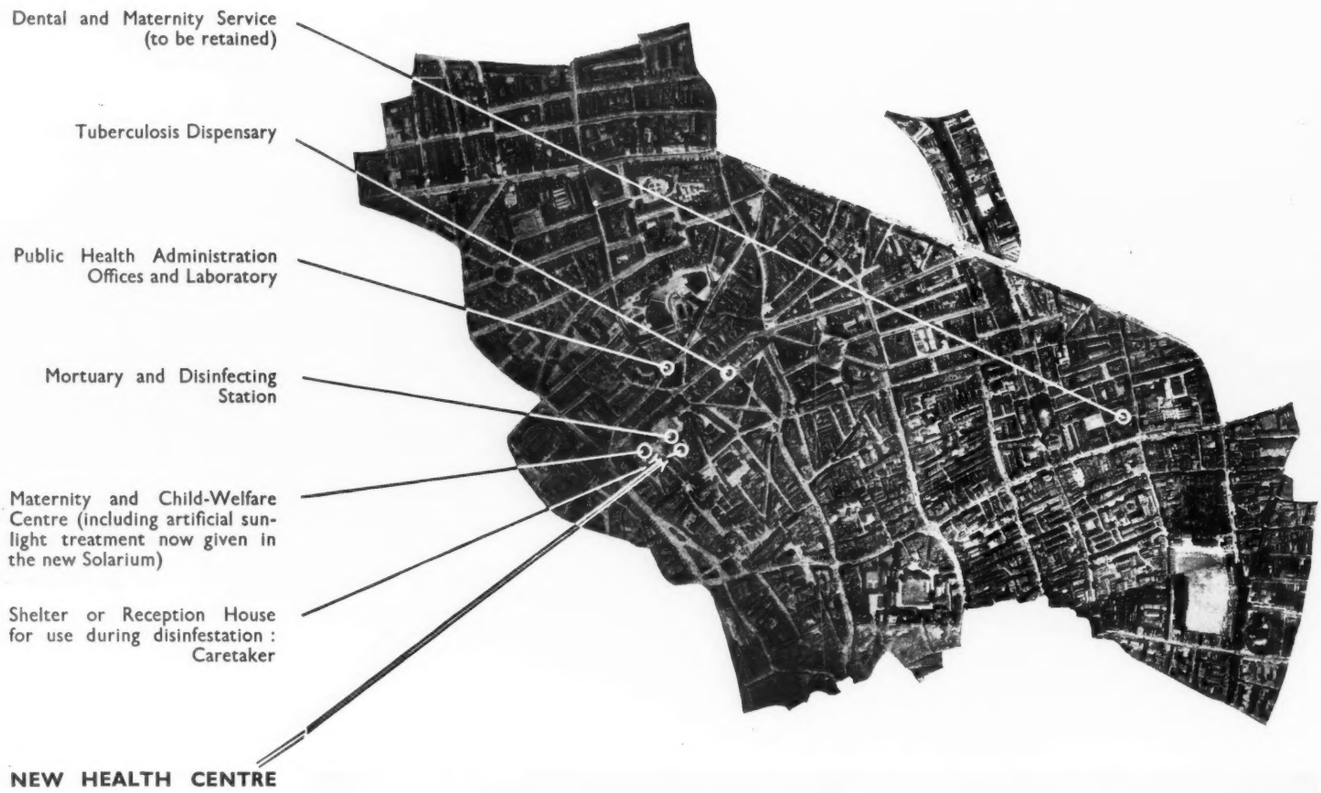
D. The provision of Baths, Public Wash-houses, etc.

E. Air-raid Precautions: organization and constructional plans (shelters, etc.), including the provision of special medical services.

F. Health Services.

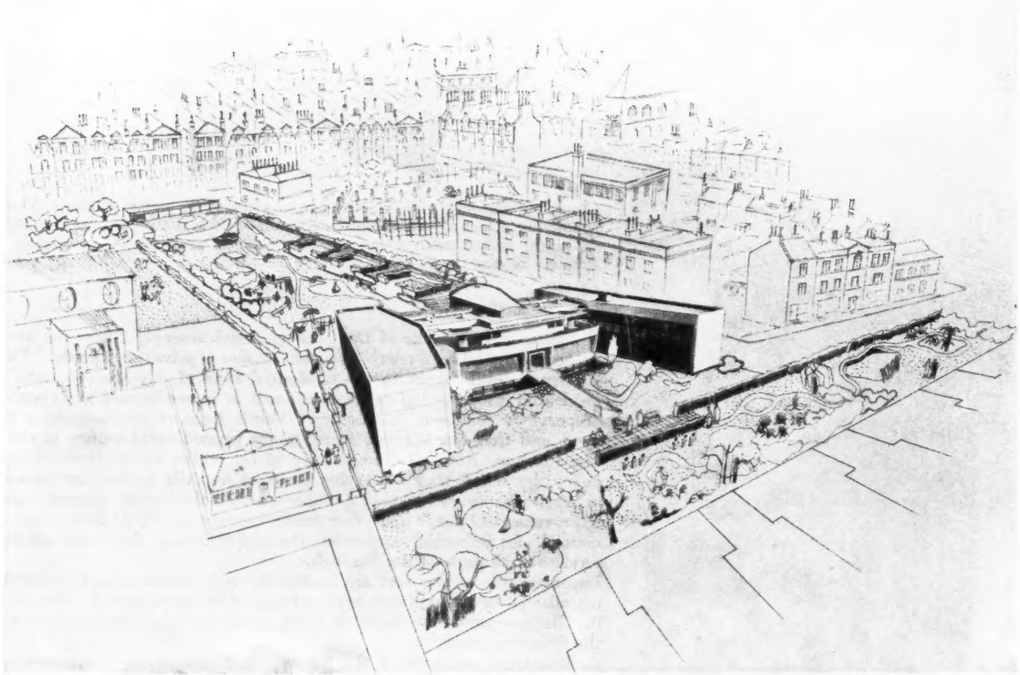
Some portions of this programme are actually in hand; others are in early stages of planning. In all of them the Borough Council is taking an unusually enlightened view of the responsibilities of a local authority, and is planning for a long term on the basis of the whole area of the Borough. It is also showing particular appreciation of the possibilities of modern architectural technique applied to municipal problems, and is in fact one of the first Boroughs to become a patron of modern design.

The first of the items in the above list of improvements to reach the finished state is that of Health Services. The Council have just completed a new Health Centre, which is illustrated and described on the following pages. Previous to its construction all the various health services were scattered throughout the Borough, as the following aerial view shows. They are now incorporated in one building.



NEW HEALTH CENTRE

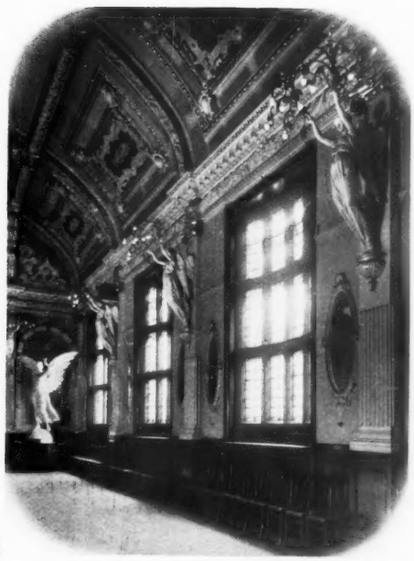
The new Health Centre, co-ordinating the health services of the Borough as described above, has been built on the corner of Pine Street and Northampton Street near the south-west boundary. The site was previously occupied by houses which were in a poor state of repair and provided bad living conditions. The remaining row of these houses, which can be seen in the photograph on page 10, is shortly to be pulled down and the space it occupies to be thrown into the large garden space which is eventually to surround the Health Centre. The scheme is proceeding slowly owing to the difficulty of acquiring land, but it includes further demolition in front of the building and the closing of Pine Street, with a garden taking its place as shown on the drawing. It is hoped eventually to throw the site open to the Farringdon Road, one of the Borough's main arteries, as recommended in the Bressey Report. The ground between the Health Centre and Farringdon Road would also be laid out as a garden but portions of it might be utilized for smaller public buildings such as a branch library.



1

HEALTH CENTRE FOR THE BOROUGH OF FINSBURY

TECTON, ARCHITECTS



2

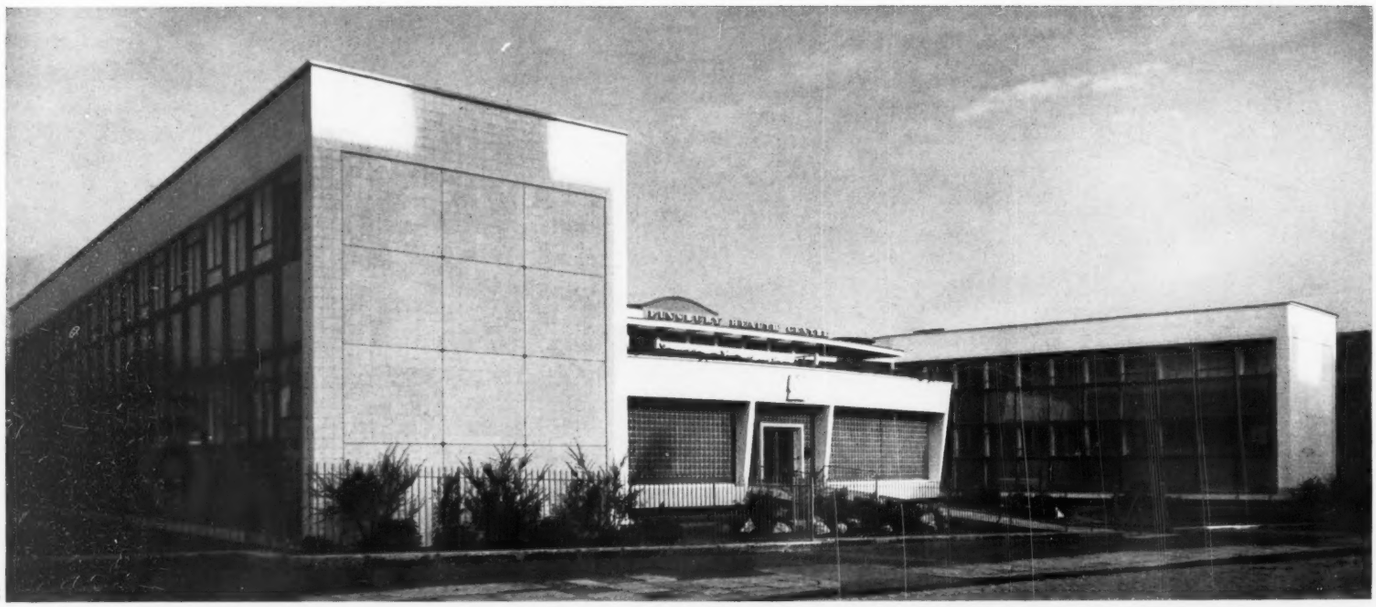
The purpose of the building is to co-ordinate all the health services, which were previously scattered over different parts of the Borough (see plan on the facing page). It contains clinics and treatment centres of various kinds and the offices of the Medical Officer of Health and the Sanitary Inspector, all these being accommodated in the two wings. The centre block contains the public waiting and enquiry hall, a lecture theatre, staff lavatories and rest rooms and, in the basement, cleansing and disinfecting stations.
The general view above, **1**, taken from an adjoining roof, shows the symmetrical plan of the building with the main entrance in the centre. The entrance is approached up a ramp which crosses the entrance forecourt. The latter has been temporarily laid out as a railed-off garden, but will eventually be thrown into the open space which is being created in front of the building (see drawing on the facing page).

By way of contrast to the type of architecture represented by the Health Centre, in the encouragement of which Finsbury is giving a lead among London Boroughs, **2** shows an interior of the present Finsbury Town Hall. It was built only in 1900.

The photographs on these pages are a series specially taken for THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW by M. O. Dell and H. L. Wainwright, its official photographers.

3 and **4,** the main front of the building by day and by night. It is a concrete frame structure, faced with cream-coloured frost-proof tiles 6 ins. square. The end walls of either wing have a solid concrete wall, faced with the same tiles, that acts as a buttress, taking all horizontal stresses. It also encloses vertical service ducts. The sides of the wings have thin teak sub-divisions and consist of alternating rows of windows and of panels faced with insulating glass. These panels enclose all the horizontal service ducts. In the centre block the frame is filled by 8 in. square glass bricks, reinforced.

5, the main entrance in the centre of the principal front, showing the illumination at night. The marble surround of the door is set in the glass-brick wall. The doors themselves are of bronze. One of the boxes either side of the entrance is an ordinary letter-box and the other is for pathological specimens. The Finsbury coat-of-arms over the door is carved in white marble.



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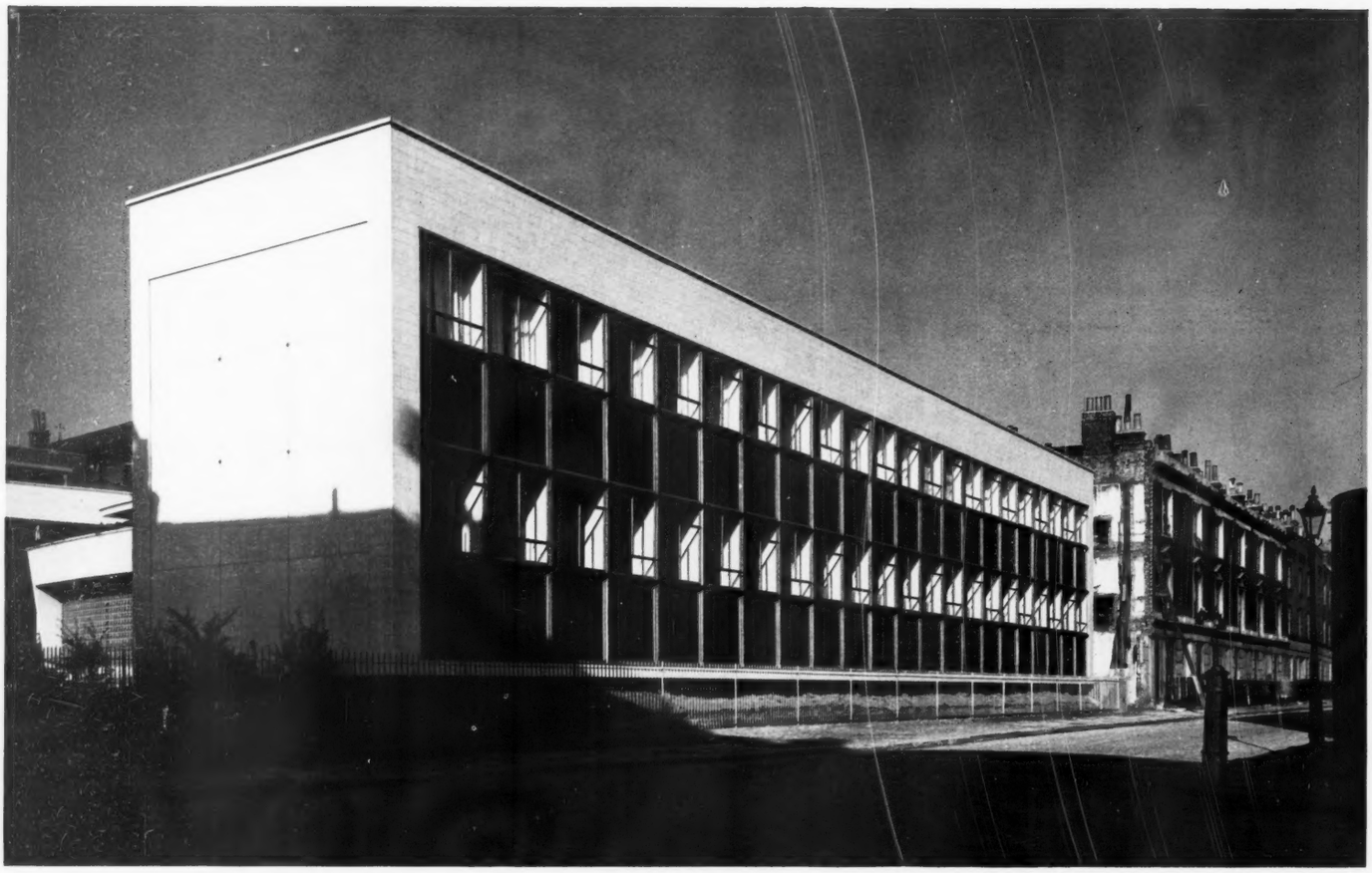


6

6, looking along Northampton Street, showing the exterior façade of one of the two wings. At the far end is a ramp entrance for disinfecting vans, leading to the disinfecting station in the basement. The houses beyond are to be demolished and a public garden built (see drawing on page 6).

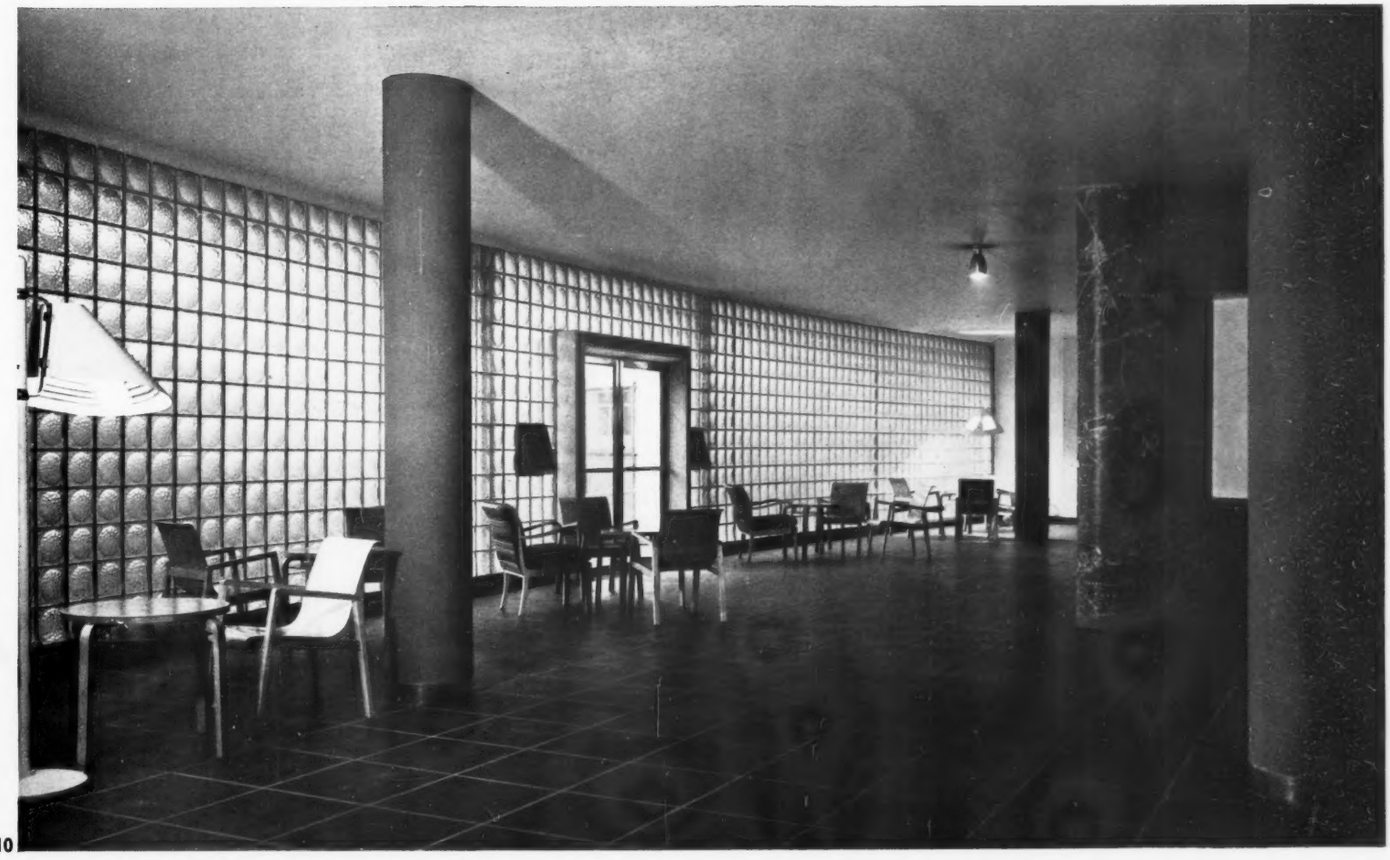
8

9

8, 9 and **10,** three aspects of the main entrance hall, the only portion of the building to which the public have regular access. The curved wall facing the entrance, shown in **9,** is covered with an ordnance map of London printed white on black with the Borough of Finsbury picked out within the rectangular recess. In front of this a counter and janitor's desk, with signal call system, will eventually be placed. The back wall on either side has a mural decoration by T. Gordon Cullen incorporating health propaganda. A portion of it is shown in **8,** The floor consists of matt brown tesselated tiles, grouped in squares of eight tiles within a wide joint. The columns are painted bright red. A point of the furnishing is the provision of separate chairs, with tables holding periodicals, for the use of the public waiting for clinical treatment, etc. : a contrast to the institutional benches usually provided.

7

7, the entrance front of the centre block, showing the ramp approach to the main doors, bridging the area which lights the service rooms in the basement. The range of glass-brick walling, which has an over-all length of 70ft., is divided by four vertical bitumen expansion joints, one of which can be seen as a dark stripe on the left.

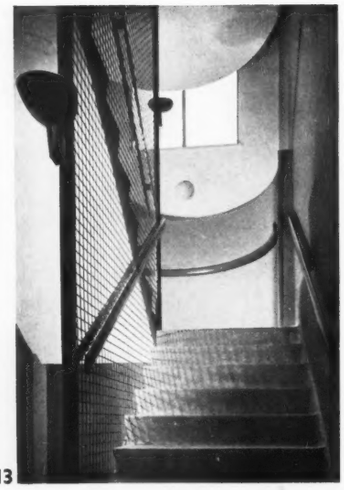


10

11

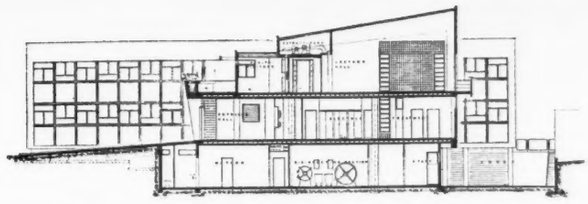
11, a typical clinic interior : the electrical treatment room on the ground floor on the axis of the main entrance. In the centre are two carbon arc lamps for group treatment. Curtains screen off this centre portion for privacy when group treatment is taking place. Along the walls are dressing cubicles, and in the far corner is a shower-bath. Beyond the column on the right is the control panel, with an observation window glazed in dark glass for the nurse, viewing from her reception room. There is a mechanical extract ventilation system.

12

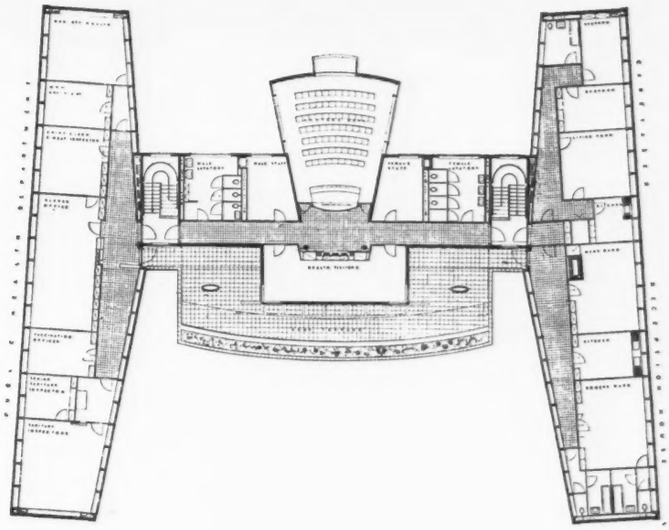


13

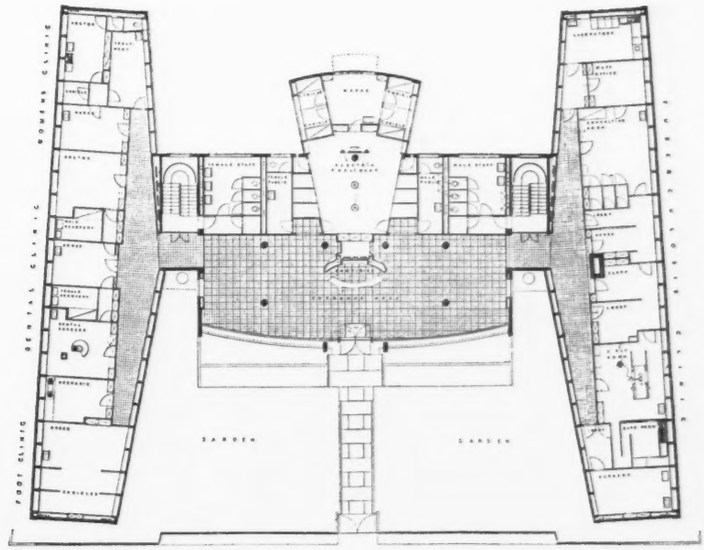
12 and **13,** two staircase details. **12,** from the first floor landing; **13,** looking up the basement stair. The flooring is terrazzo containing non-slip carborundum dust. The balustrade is of copperized mesh, with plastic handrails. The electric light wires run up inside the post on the left of **13**.



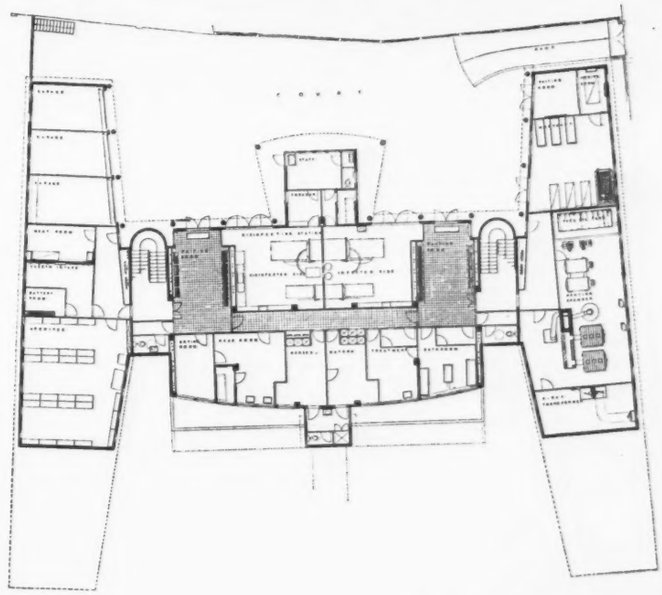
SECTION THROUGH CENTRE BLOCK



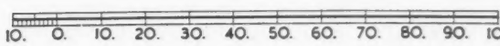
FIRST FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR

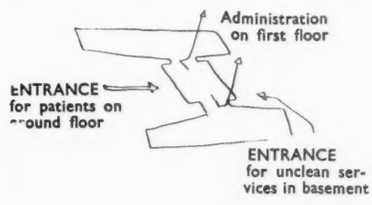


BASEMENT



The Design Examined

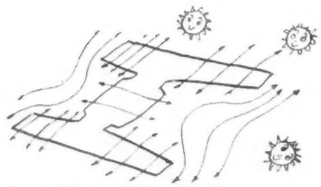
IN a building to which the public have access circulation is a dominant factor in planning. The public spaces must be sufficient for the maximum pressure of crowds and the public must easily find their way to whatever parts of the building they are to use. Moreover the internal circulation must keep the coming and going of officials working in the building clear of the public. In the case of this building there is an extra circulation to be allowed for : the public using the cleansing and disinfecting station, who must be kept independent of the public using the clinics. The cleansing and disinfecting station is placed in the basement with its own entrance from a rear courtyard at basement level. In effect it is a separate building with its own carefully controlled system of internal circulation. It is only connected with the main portion of the building above it by a pair of services staircase closed to the public. This main portion is planned so that the part to which the patients have access is all on the ground floor. It is immediately reached from the central entrance and waiting hall, while the offices and the other administrative sections on either wing of the first floor can communicate with each other along a corridor over the entrance hall, so that the various circulations are effectively separated, thus :



Another factor determining the arrangement of the plan was that the clinics, which occupy a large proportion of the ground floor, as well as the offices on the upper

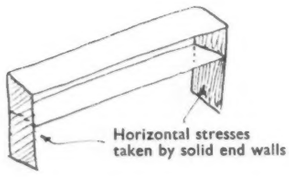
floor, had to be flexible as regards the subdivision of their floor-space : new kinds of electrical and other treatment and alterations in public health administration mean changes in the allotment of space. On the other hand, certain elements in the plan could be labelled as fixed : the public entrance hall, the lavatories, the lecture hall and staircase and other service units. The logical solution was to place the latter elements in the centre, to form a fixed nucleus to the whole building, with the public entrance and waiting hall as its core, and to place the variable accommodation in two wings of a simple rectangular shape that could be constructed so as to be quite free of internal supports.

By arranging the whole in the shape of a letter H, with the fixed nucleus as its crossbar, separating the rear courtyard from the main entrance forecourt, an ideally open plan could be obtained. Apart from the expressive form this gave to the exterior and the natural axis that was created leading to the entrance, it made cross-ventilation possible throughout the building and left all parts open to fresh air and sunshine, thus :

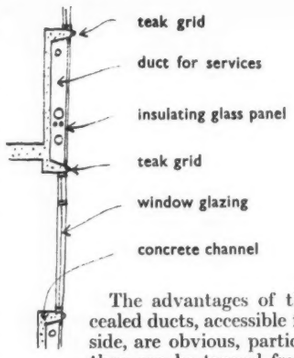


Fresh air and sun to all parts

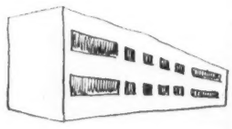
The plan form being determined, the method of construction must not interfere with the advantages created by the plan. The centre block, of fixed plan internally, could be of normal concrete frame construction with fixed points of support in suitable positions, though the entrance hall must be kept free from interruptions in the floor-space. The lecture hall on the upper floor, requiring extra ceiling height, is allowed frankly to break into the roof line, and its curved roof serves externally to emphasize the building's symmetry about its central axis. For the two wings a constructional system in reinforced concrete was devised, consisting of concrete slab floors (without cross beams) supported by channel-shaped concrete beams forming part of the wall-structure. These floors and beams are stiffened by regularly spaced concrete columns acting as window mullions, take all vertical stresses, horizontal stresses only being taken up by the solid end walls to each wing, thus :



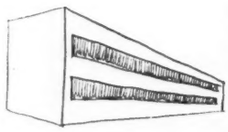
The external wall treatment of the side of each wing consists of a square grid composed of light sections of oiled teak, the vertical members of which coincide with the concrete columns. The infilling of the teak grid consists of ordinary glazing to the windows, and opaque insulating glass in a removable frame below each range of windows, giving access to the horizontal channel-shaped beams which forms ducts for all the plumbing and heating pipes :



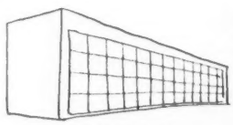
The advantages of these concealed ducts, accessible from outside, are obvious, particularly as they can be tapped from within at whatever point the variable internal planning demands. The system of wall construction can be summed up by illustrating three alternative treatments, as follows : A solid panel wall pierced by windows, simple, but inflexible, thus :



A system of weight-bearing strips of wall with strip-windows in between, giving flexibility of internal planning so far as partitions are concerned, but allowing no parallel flexibility of service ducts, thus :



And the system actually employed, in which horizontal windows and ducts are conveniently continuous, but an unwelcome horizontal emphasis is avoided as the square teak grid divides the façade into panels vertically as well as horizontally :

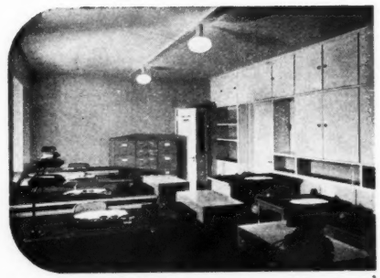


THE WING UNIT

Moreover, the materials used within the framework, of a light nature, are not only pleasant in themselves but act as a contrast to the more massive structural framework with its tiled surface. They are also suitable for frequent cleaning and renewal as necessary. In the rhythm of the windows, avoidance of excessive directional emphasis is also obtained by placing a fixed pane alternately above and below the opening portion of each window. This gives an interesting exterior pattern as well as allowing the ventilation inside to be varied. The structural concrete on all except the rear elevations of the building is covered with cream-coloured square tiles, completing, with the glass brick wall of the entrance hall, a series of impervious non-absorbent materials suitable to Finsbury's urban atmosphere.

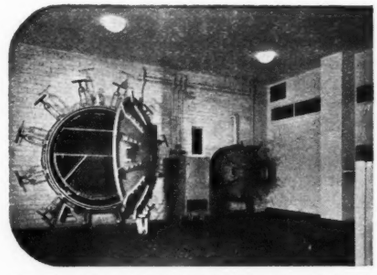
Another point worth observing in the design of the two wings is the recessed base. This gives a lightness to the wings which is in deliberate contrast to the greater solidity of the centre portion, with its bowed front, bold free shapes and sunk basement, expressing the flexible nature of the one and the more permanent, more "architectural" nature of the other. Finally, the symmetry of the whole building raises an interesting point of æsthetic character. Symmetry is, of course, consistent with a logical arrangement of the accommodation demanded, but from the point of view of architectural expression symmetry is often considered inseparable from monumentality. However, on this relatively small scale, it is an asymmetrical composition that becomes assertive, while a design of absolute symmetry, like a small piece of machinery, exact in craftsmanship, represents an appropriately impersonal conception. From the point of view of site-planning, furthermore, the neat symmetrical plan, though unexpected in the haphazard planning of Finsbury, suggests that it is the first element in a new plan for the Borough, and it will in fact eventually form part of a larger symmetrical layout.

J. M. R.



14, *a typical office interior : the clerks' general office, looking towards the chief clerk's office. The range of cupboards (which forms the corridor partition wall) is based on a standard unit but varies in detail in each office. The electric wiring runs inside the top row of cupboards. The desks, light-fittings, etc., are standardized.*

15, *a typical clinic interior : the foot clinic, looking from the nurse's portion to two of the treatment cubicles. The windows, as on the right, have a sand-blasted glass screen for privacy.*



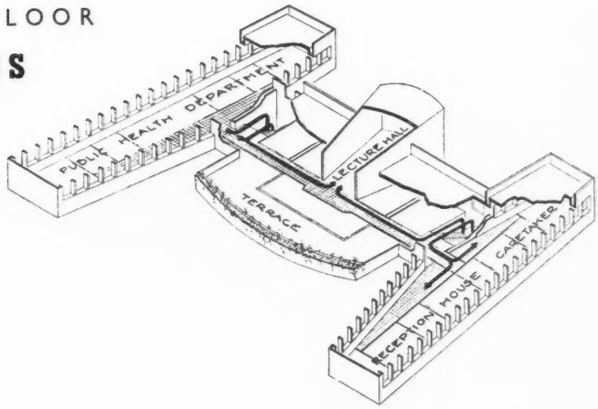
16, *the clean side of the disinfecting station in the basement ; that is, the side on which the disinfected material comes out of the machines. The large machine is for mattresses and the smaller one for clothing.* *See also page* 13.

Circulation

The centre block contains the fixed elements in the plan : entrance hall, staircases, lecture hall and service rooms such as lavatories, and is permanent in internal arrangements. The wing unit, repeated on either side, is flexibly planned internally to provide clinic accommodation on the ground floor and office accommodation on the first floor that can be adapted periodically to changing needs. The basement contains cleansing and disinfecting stations and mortuary, the remaining space being given to storage and service rooms. Access both for the public and for those using the clinics and offices is from the forecourt on the south side, which is open to Pine Street, but a courtyard at the back, at basement level, reached from Northampton Street, gives independent access to the cleansing and disinfection stations, the mortuary and the garages. The diagrams below show the independent circulations for the various users of the building.

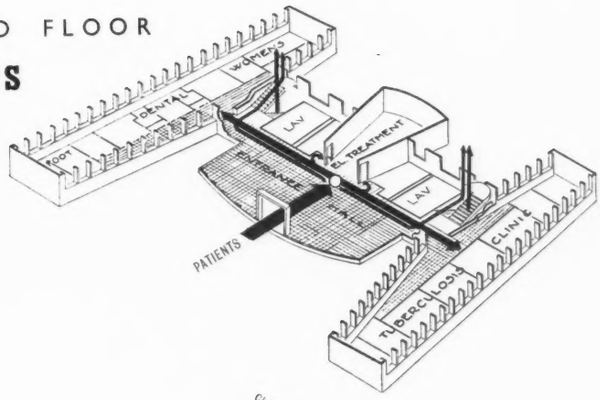
FIRST FLOOR

OFFICES



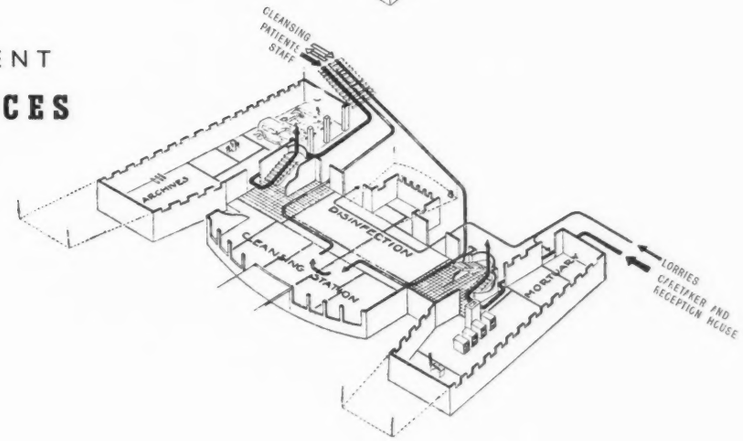
GROUND FLOOR

CLINICS

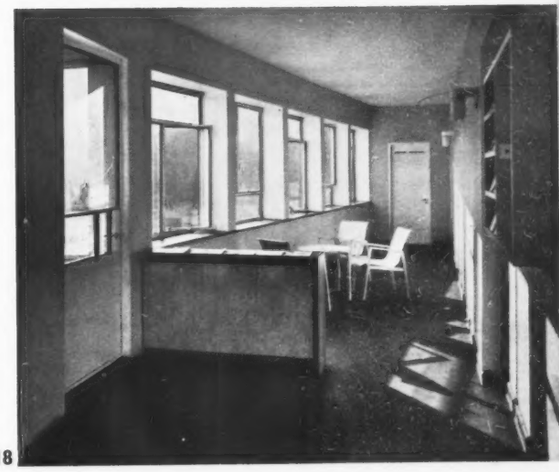


BASEMENT

SERVICES



17



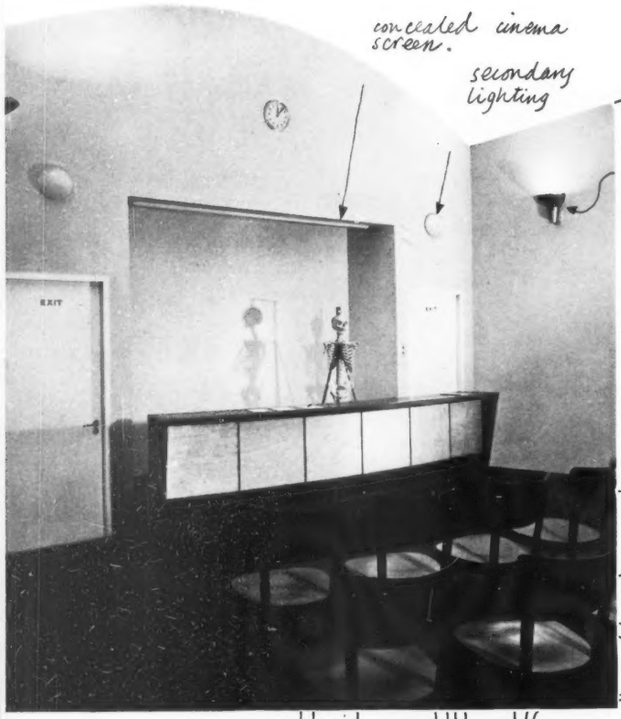
18

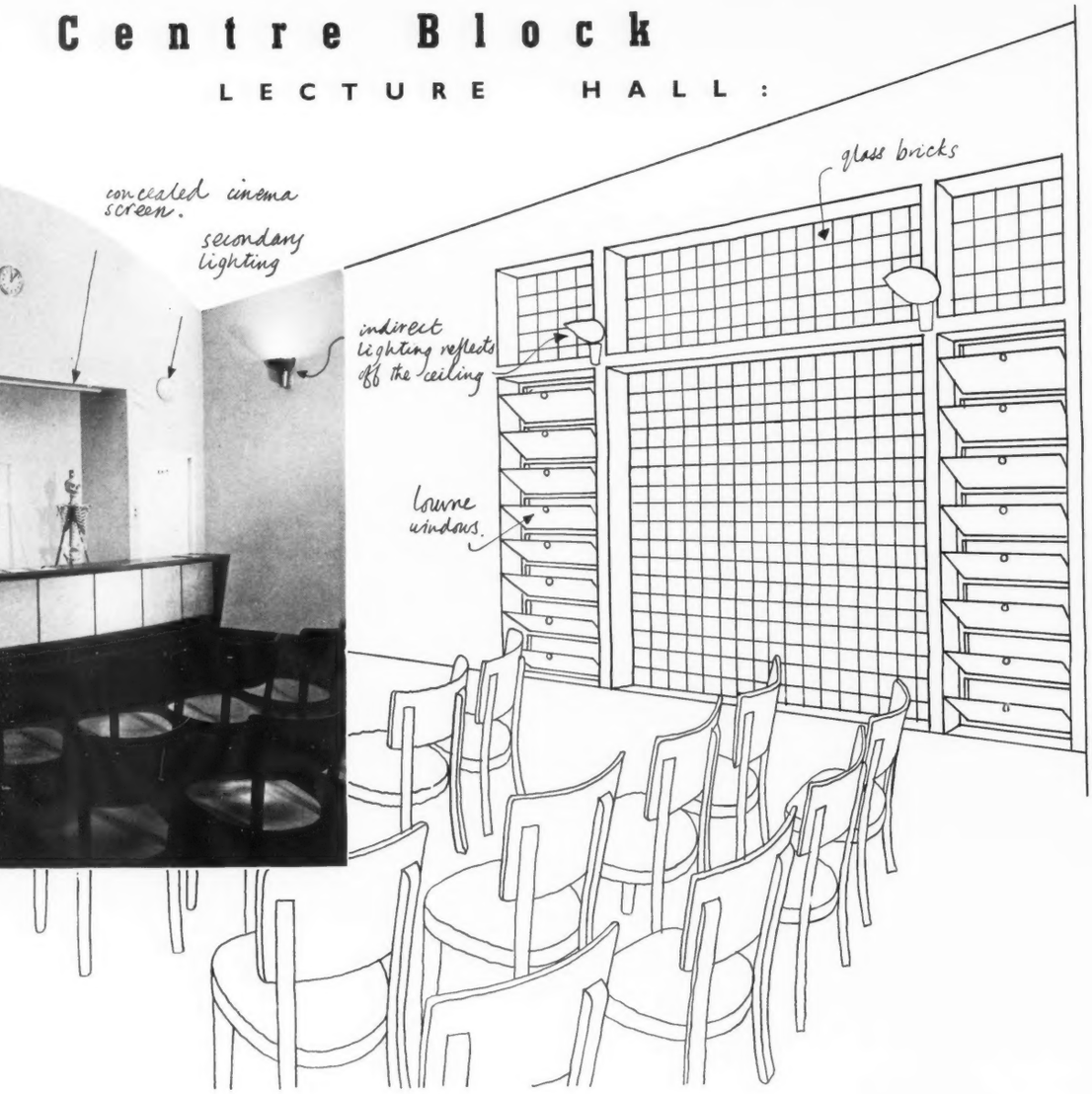
19

17, an aerial view of the building, looking south over Vineyard Gardens. The church spire in the distance is that of St. James's, Finsbury. In the centre is the curved roof of the lecture hall (see overleaf). The unusual plan-shape of the wings can also be seen, produced by the tapering corridors. **18**, one of the tapering corridors inside. The corridor illustrated, on the first floor of the north wing, serves as waiting space for the Public Health Department. The racks and shelves are designed to take the standard sized health propaganda leaflets. Particular attention has been paid to the comfort of the waiting accommodation for the public. **19**, easy chairs grouped round a table, with standard lamp to give a reading light, in the public entrance hall on the ground floor.

The Centre Block

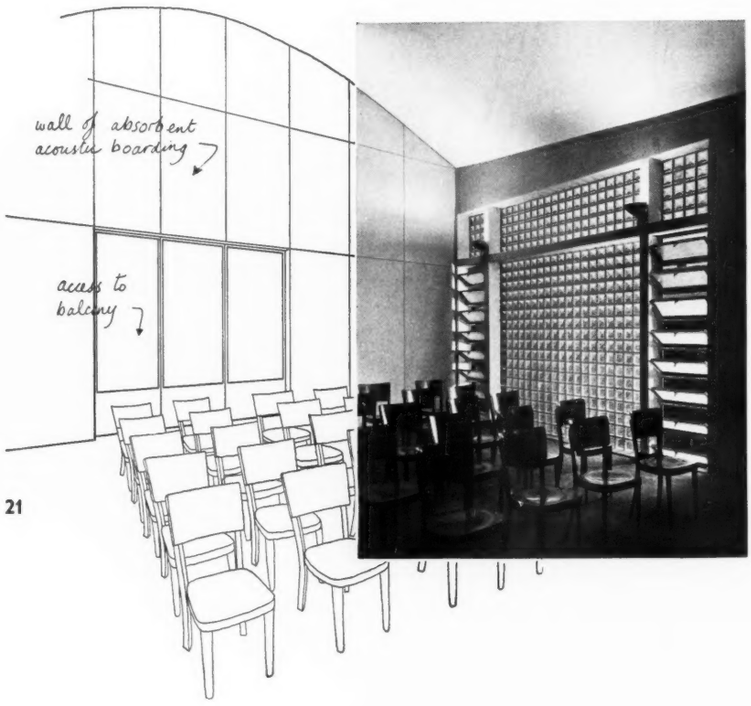
LECTURE HALL:





20

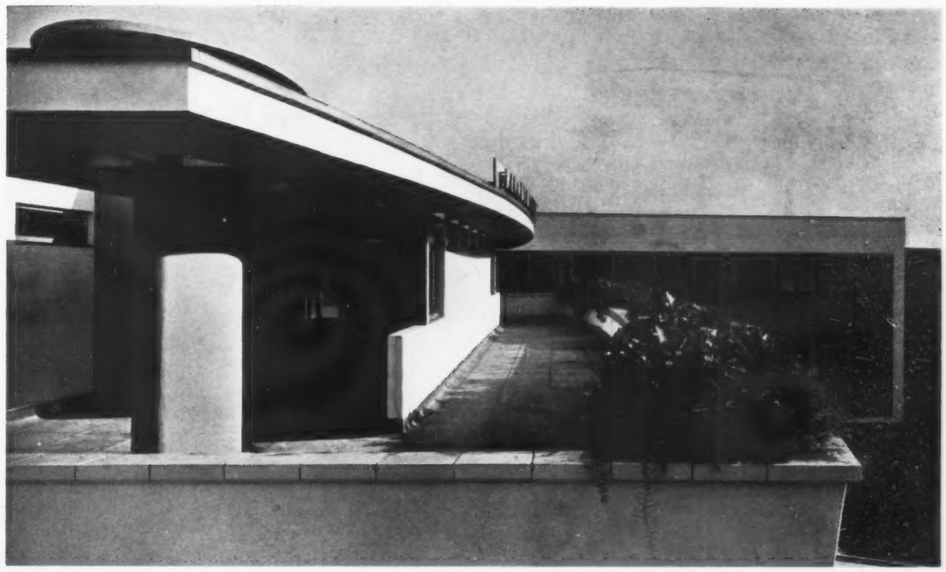
The centre block (see plan on page 13) contains the entrance hall and the electrical treatment clinic, which are illustrated on pages 10, 11 and 12, and, on the first floor a lecture hall, illustrated on this page. The lecture hall is used for Public Health and A.R.P. lectures. It has a curved roof, seen externally in the aerial view of the building, number **17** on the previous page. The curve of the ceiling serves to reflect the indirect lighting as well as being designed acoustically. Secondary emergency lighting, run from batteries, is provided in accordance with L.C.C. regulations. The back wall of the hall is faced with absorbent boarding for acoustic reasons. Heating is from the floors, and there is a mechanical extract ventilation system.



21

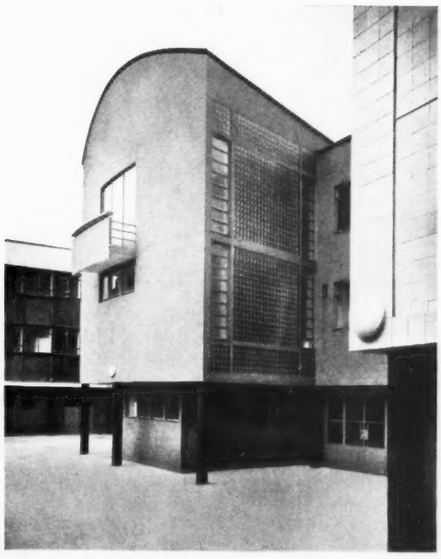
ROOF GARDEN : CLEANSING STATION

22



23

The front portion of the centre block contains a roof garden over the entrance hall, accessible from the first floor corridor either side of the Health Visitors' room. **22,** a portion of the centre block photographed at night from the forecourt, showing at the top the canopy over the roof garden. **23,** the roof garden photographed from a corridor window in one of the wings. The elliptical column on the left-hand side, as well as supporting the canopy, houses the ventilating shaft.



24

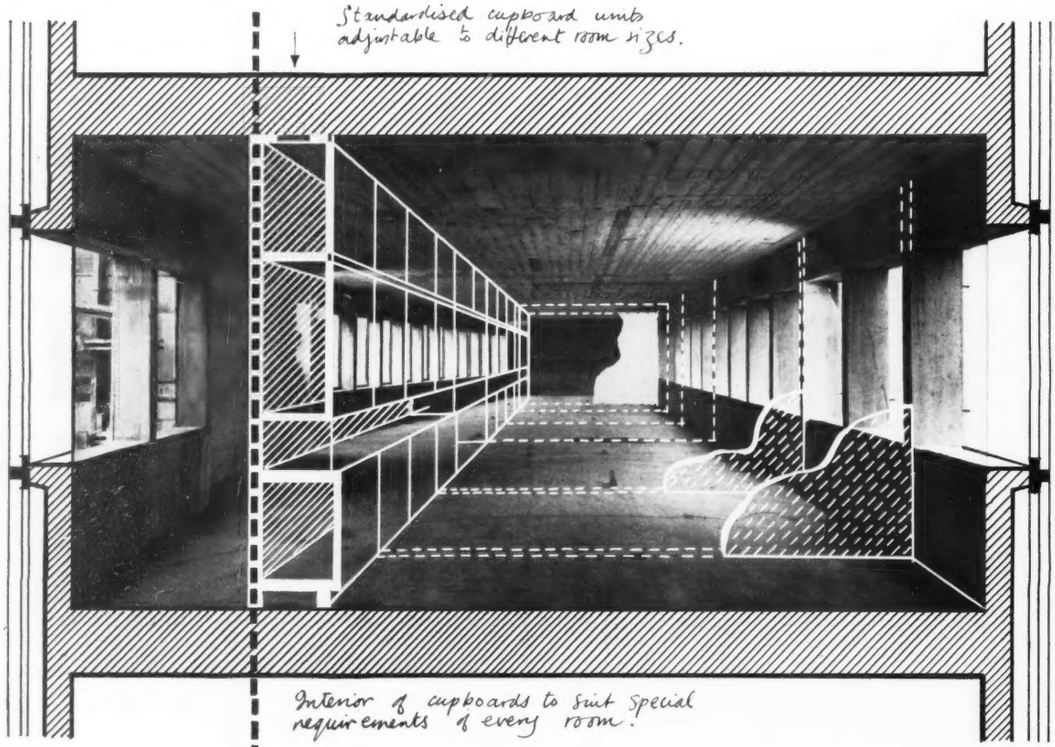
25

24, the exterior of the lecture hall (see facing page) from the courtyard at the back of the building. The back elevation of the centre block is of painted concrete in dark grey and red. The courtyard gives access to the departments housed in the basement : the mortuary, the entrance to which is on the extreme left of the photograph; the cleansing and disinfecting stations, the entrance and exit of whose one-way circulation are either side of the projecting lecture-hall block; and the garage accommodation, which balances the mortuary in the opposite wing. **25,** the waiting hall immediately within the entrance to the cleansing station. The large size of the room is due to the fact that it has to accommodate a bus load of L.C.C. school-children at the same time. It has a quarry-tile floor with coved skirtings, and fixed benches designed to avoid the retention of dust. The notice-boards display the borough's health-propaganda posters. The disinfecting station also serves for the disinfection of bedding and mattresses from infected quarters of the Borough (see bottom illustration page 14); and of second-hand clothing, the export of which is an important local industry. According to export regulations all second-hand clothing must be disinfected before leaving the country.

The Wing Unit

On the preceding pages the centre block has been illustrated. The wing unit that flanks it on either side and contains the clinics and offices, differs from the centre block in that it is planned primarily for flexibility. The design of partitions, and electrical, heating and plumbing services has been based on this necessity. On this and the following pages it is explained how flexibility has been achieved, taking in each case one standard floor only, which is shown in the upper photograph in its bare structural stage.

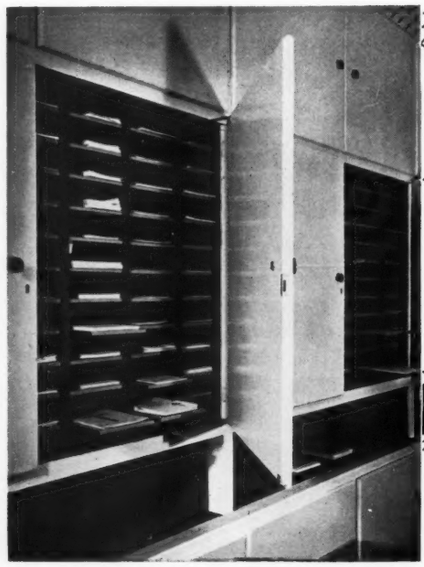
1. FLEXIBILITY



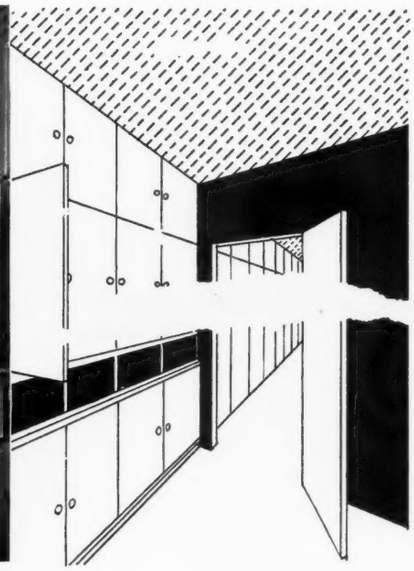
As a result of the yearly incidence of various diseases, the size and planning of clinics may vary; also new methods of treatment may require changes in planning. Therefore the wings are designed with clear uninterrupted floors without columns or beams. Regularly spaced window mullions are capable of taking light partitions in positions required. Public corridors are separated from working rooms by a row of cupboards designed to the requirements of individual rooms, but of a standard pattern. The corridors, instead of being uniform rectangular channels, are shaped in plan for decreasing circulation to give directional sense and relieve the monotony.

Well lit and airy corridors give variety to form and facilitate the circulation. Tesselated tile floor finish with cove skirting

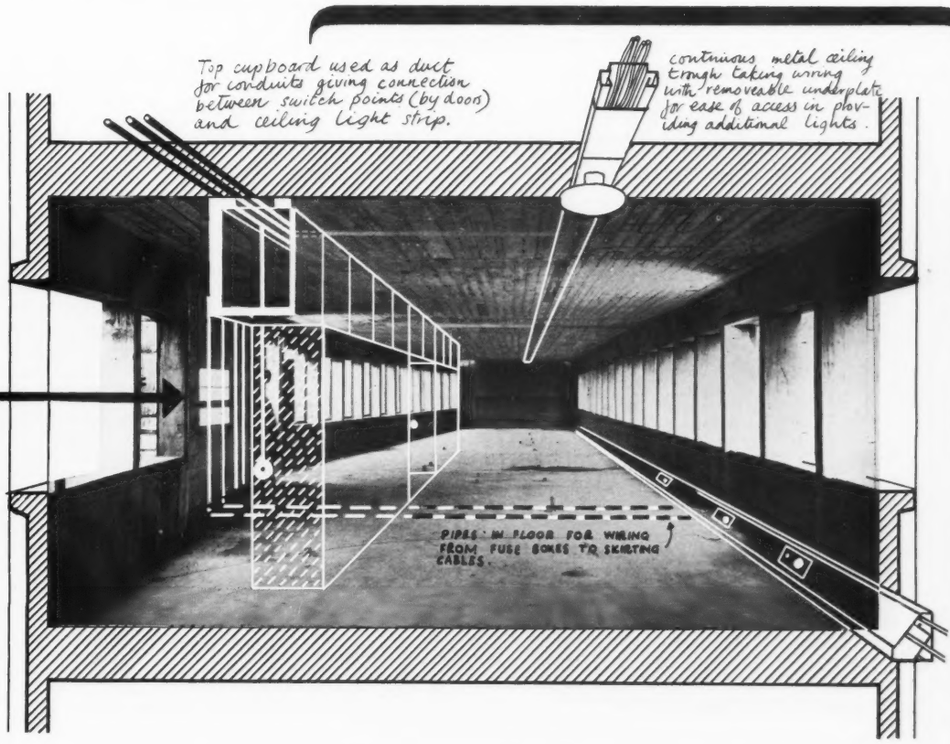
removable metal shelves to take the different sizes of propaganda leaflets of the Public Health dept.



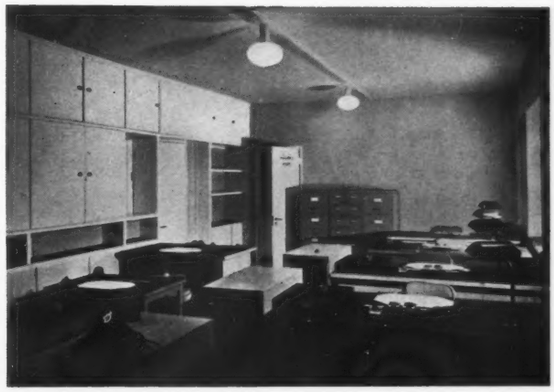
Interior of cupboards subdivided into bookcases with adjustable shelves, storage space etc as necessary.



2. ELECTRICITY



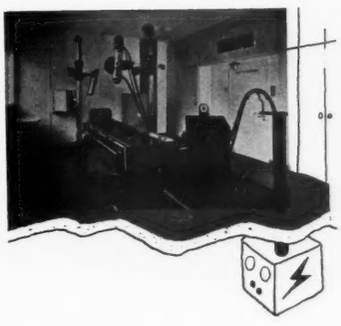
VERTICAL DUCT FOR FUSE BOXES AND MAIN ELECTRICAL SUPPLY RISING FROM INTAKE ROOM
FUSE BOXES ACCESS DOORS USED AS NOTICE BOARDS AND PROVIDE SPACE FOR POSTERS



For the sake of complete flexibility in use, all internal and external telephones, bells, power and lighting cables, have been taken in a metal skirting duct with removable cover plates, so that additional points can be provided at any time. The disposition of furniture and equipment has been considered in relation to the running of short flexes to this skirting.

The ceiling points are fixed to a built-in metal duct with removable under-plate in order to facilitate changes in the positions of light points. Conduits in the upper portion of cupboards give connexion between the ceiling duct and switches by the doors wherever they are required.

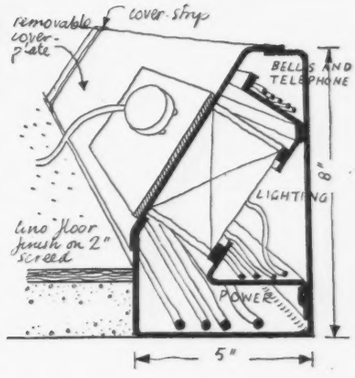
The current to each floor is supplied through easily accessible vertical ducts.



Transformer apparatus in basement below and H.T. cables brought up through ‘sbe in the floor

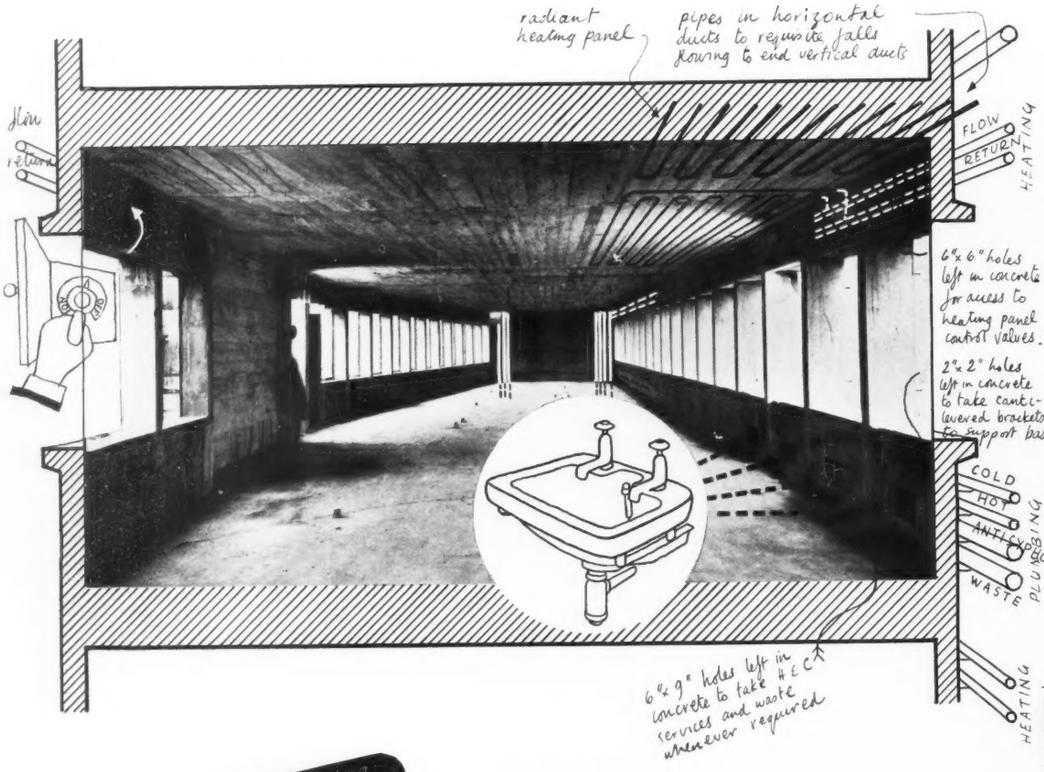
This allows normal room height by abolishing extra height required for overhead ... tension cables and avoids cluttering up the floor space with cumbersome equipment.

metal box skirting containing cables for internal & external telephones, bells, power and lighting with removable cover plate giving easy access to cables.



THE REMOVABLE SKIRTING DUCT

3. HEATING AND PLUMBING



New methods of treatment may require alterations to the plumbing system. Special external ducts carry all the service pipes to the vertical ducts at each end of the wing. Access to the horizontal ducts is from external removable panels, and holes are left in the concrete wall for future tapping through to the service pipes, these holes being temporarily filled with breeze and plastered over.

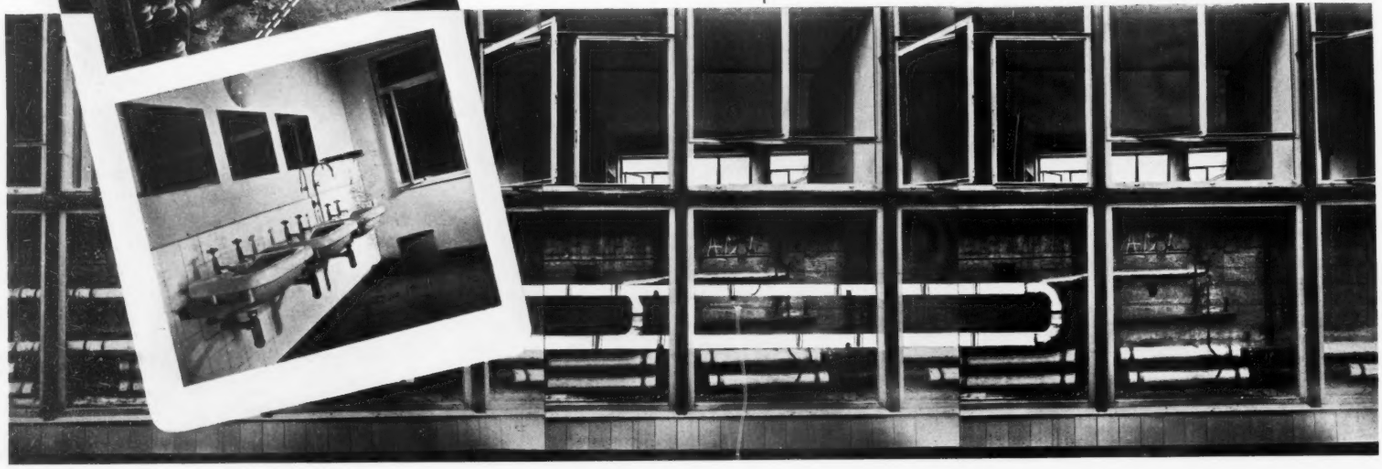
A radiant panel heating system in the ceilings is controlled through panels over the windows, giving access to the insulated flow and return pipes in the outside ducts. This system allows alterations in the distribution of partitions.

SYSTEM OF PLUMBING IN CENTRE BLOCK

Taw basins and W.Cs are grouped vertically above each other and all services are concealed in accessible ducts.

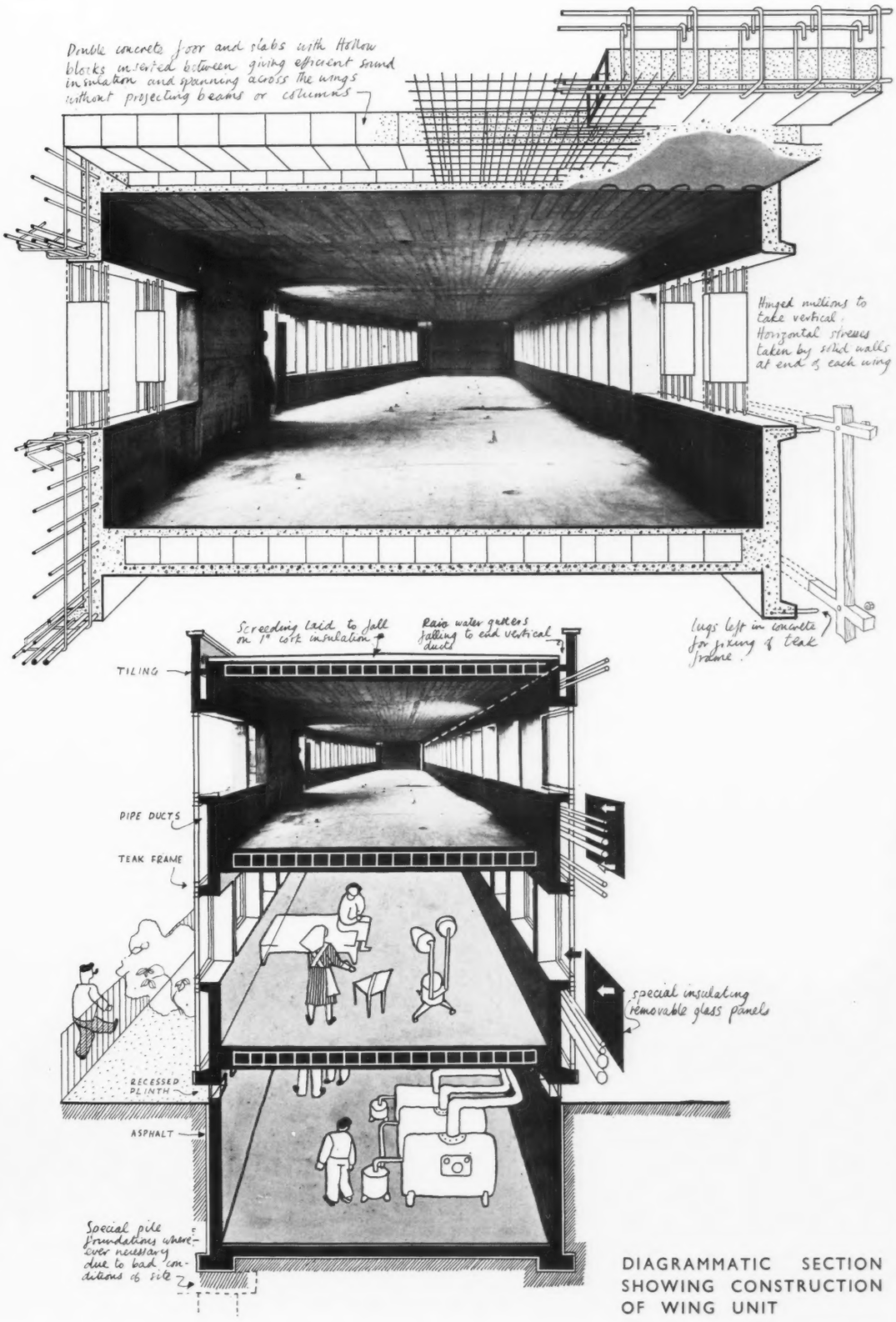
Pipes in horizontal ducts in process of being insulated ready for special glass panels. Pipes are held in position by brackets adjustable to the required fall of pipes

Sandblasted screens provide privacy



The preceding pages have illustrated a section through a typical floor of one wing, and have explained the method of planning and servicing in terms of this standard unit. On this page the same unit is explained structurally, and, below, it is illustrated in its place as part of a complete structural section. Materials and finishes are described overleaf.

4. CONSTRUCTION OF THE WING UNIT



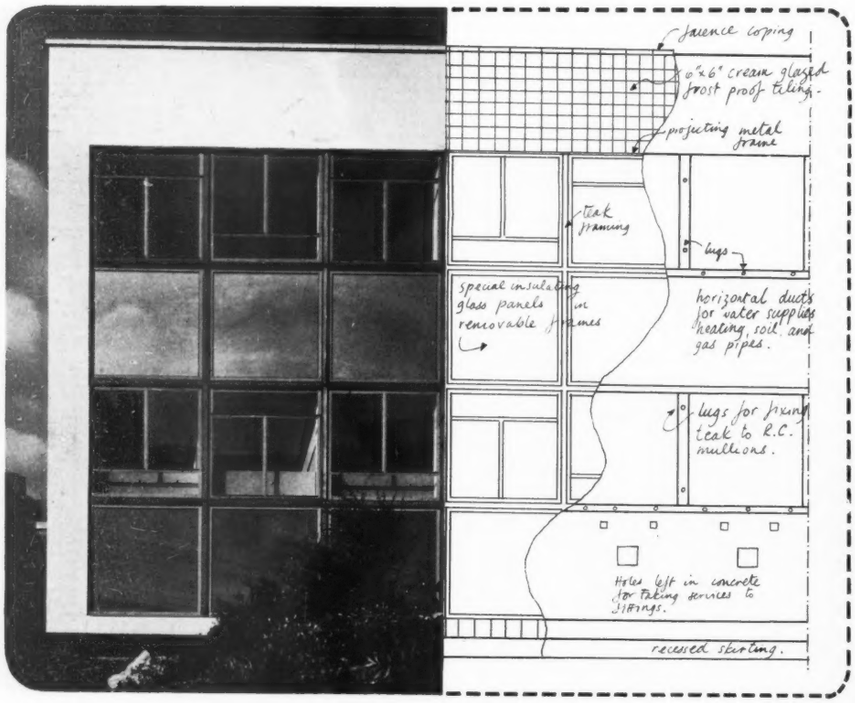
DIAGRAMMATIC SECTION SHOWING CONSTRUCTION OF WING UNIT

Thick double concrete floor slabs with hollow tile infilling span across the wing between channel-shaped concrete beams which form the service ducts. This gives unobstructed ceiling and floor spans for flexibility of structural alteration.
The channel-shaped beams are supported one over the other by a series of regularly spaced hinged mullions designed to take only the vertical stresses, the end solid walls taking the remaining stresses.

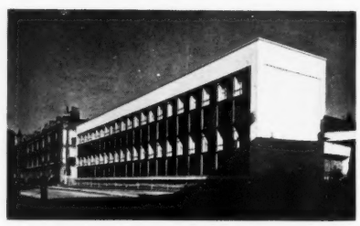
The rear portion of the south wing in three stages of construction: the concrete frame with floor-beams and mullions complete; the teak subdivisions and window units added; and the tiled and glazed finished exterior.

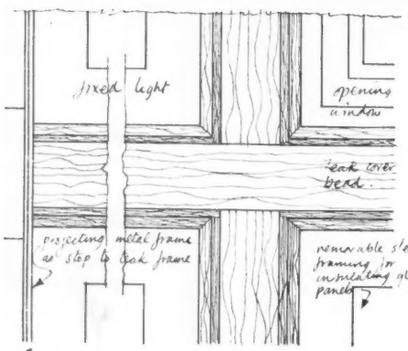
5. CONSTRUCTION AND FINISHES

In the sooty atmosphere, it was considered essential to provide easy cleaning surfaces. Concrete surfaces have been tiled, and special grooves were formed in the concrete walls to provide a strong key for the tile bedding. This was obtained by fixing steel rods on the side of the shuttering and ripping these rods away from the concrete after the shuttering was removed (see photograph on right, below). The teak framing is applied to the concrete mullions with lugs fixed during concreting, and serves as a support to the steel window frames and to the removable steel frames for the special insulating glass panels, which cover the ducts.
The recessed plinth separates the main mass of the building from the surrounding gardens.
Alternating top and bottom ventilation is provided in the glazing of the windows, and this also introduces variety, rhythm and scale to the elevations.

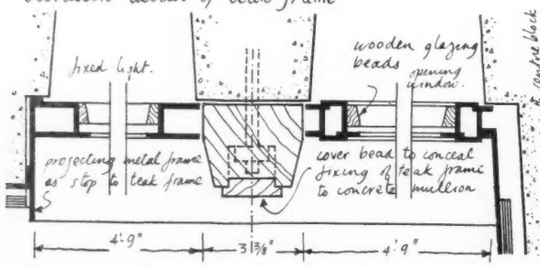


Below, the Northampton Street elevation in a partly finished and in the finished state. The first state shows the rough concrete which gives a key for the tiling.

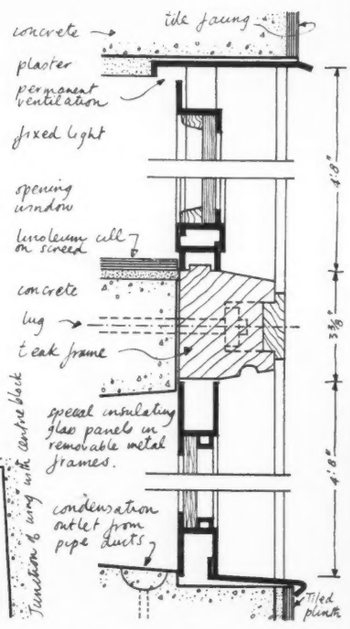




Elevation detail of teak frame

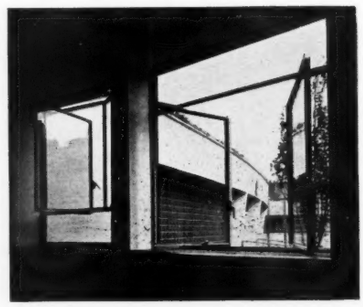


Plan showing details of steel window frames and teak framing



Section through upper window and lower insulating glass panel.

Below, the standard window unit, photographed from within. All windows open outwards in two leaves but a fixed pane alternates at top and bottom along the wing.



" At 6 p.m. a light air came from the East, a fine brig with a billet head passed us steering South ; about sundown the breeze again died away. One of the most lovely and delightful scenes was now before us, the vapours and mists which hung upon the horizon obstructed all view of the land, but they were not sufficiently dense to obscure the sun which as it dipped marked in its own compass the broken outline of one of the mountains of the Island. This served to guide and confirm our near approach to the land and had a most beautiful and pleasing effect. The sea put on the placid appearance of a lake and the shoals of fish we observed sporting on the water induced us to throw out the bait, but without success."—Latham and Walmsley, *1815.*

British Overseas Possessions

A LITTLE KNOWN

OUTPOST OF EMPIRE

ISLE OF MAN

This outline study of a regional architectural tradition in relation to its setting is based on a survey prepared by J. A. Ashworth and T. Mellor

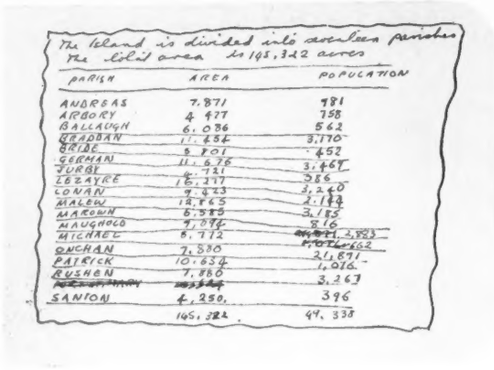
" The bold and rugged coast next demanded our attention; as even at a league's distance it seemed to threaten us with approaching ruin. In some places it sunk into deep and gloomy caverns; and in others was overhung with frowning precipices, while the solitary screeches of the sea mews united to fill the mind with an awful melancholy."—*Tour of David Robertson,* 1794.

THE Island is thirty-three miles long from north to south and twelve miles across at its widest point.

Within this small area there is great variety of scenery — two mountain masses with summits over 2,000 feet high; deep river valleys; large areas of agricultural land; and a coast generally rugged and steep but varying from sandhills in the north to the 1,400 foot cliffs in the south-east.

The natives are often short and strongly built, with straight dark hair and florid complexions. Their faces are usually broad, with high cheek bones, straight noses, and small chins. They are courteous to strangers, but tenacious of their customs and rights, and suspicious of any reforms or suggestions, particularly when these come from without or are put forward by people from the mainland.

In the past, travellers have described them as being indolent and superstitious; quarrelsome and fond of litigation, and ascribe this and their religion to the influence of a wild



The Island is divided into seventeen parishes
The total area is 145,322 acres

PARISH	AREA	POPULATION
ANDREAS	7,871	781
ARBORY	4,427	788
BALLAUGH	6,036	562
BRADDAN	11,454	3,170
CRIDE	5,901	452
GERMAN	11,678	3,467
JURBY	6,781	586
LEZAYRE	15,277	2,260
LONAN	9,423	2,183
MALEW	12,965	2,185
MAROWN	8,985	3,185
MAUGHOLD	7,996	816
MICHAEL	8,772	2,823
ONCHAN	7,330	10,662
PATRICK	10,634	2,691
RUSHEN	7,980	1,016
SANTON	4,250	3,267
	145,322	396
		49,338

"There are not so many strange characters resident here as formerly, the late Act placing the Island within the reach of the English laws for criminal offences."—Latham and Walmsley, 1815.

and desolate environment—"to a gloomy imagination thus nourished by indolence and solitude may perhaps be imputed the general influence of Methodism on the Island.*" They were convinced believers in the supernatural "and endeavour to inspire into everybody else" (sometimes with success) "that there is not a crack nor cranny on the Island but what is haunted either with fairies or ghosts" . . . "as to circles on the grass and the impression of small feet among the snow, I cannot deny but I have seen them frequently" and, Doctor Langhorne observes, "the Island is now almost the only place where there is any possibility of seeing a fairy."

Today a scepticism bred of modern education struggles with the vigorous mythological tradition that peopled the Island with glashtins and goblins, Bugganes and Fairies, Cabbyl Ushteys, Water Bulls, Dooiney oie and Phynodderree.

The isolation, the mixed racial elements, the mystic imagination of the people and the influence of climate and environment have produced an interesting and independent development of craftsmanship and building. A strong maritime character is predominant in much of the architecture, due to the importance of fishing and the sea in the pre-nineteenth century life of the inhabitants. It has all the qualities of a nautical style—directness, strength and generous use of material—combined in clear cut compositions of simple forms. In many instances details of design and construction are clearly derived from the sailor's craft.

The strong winds and frequent rainstorms to which the Island is subjected during half the year, resembling the extremes of heat and cold in southern Europe, have also produced a peasant architecture with the same general appearance of solidity: with small windows, and thick stone walls covered with stucco. This architecture is one of simple geometric forms. Outbuildings, walls and gateposts are important elements of composition. This simplicity of form is further defined by strong colour and the clarity of the atmosphere, which emphasizes the contrast with the natural setting.

The common local building material is greenish grey slate which can only be roughly dressed and is therefore unsuitable for roofing. When used for walls it is normally rendered with rough plaster and whitewashed. Later examples are sometimes stuccoed and painted various colours. Before the importation of foreign roofing slates, all the buildings were thatched. The more recent slate roofs sometimes have the joints between the slates filled with mortar and the whole painted white.

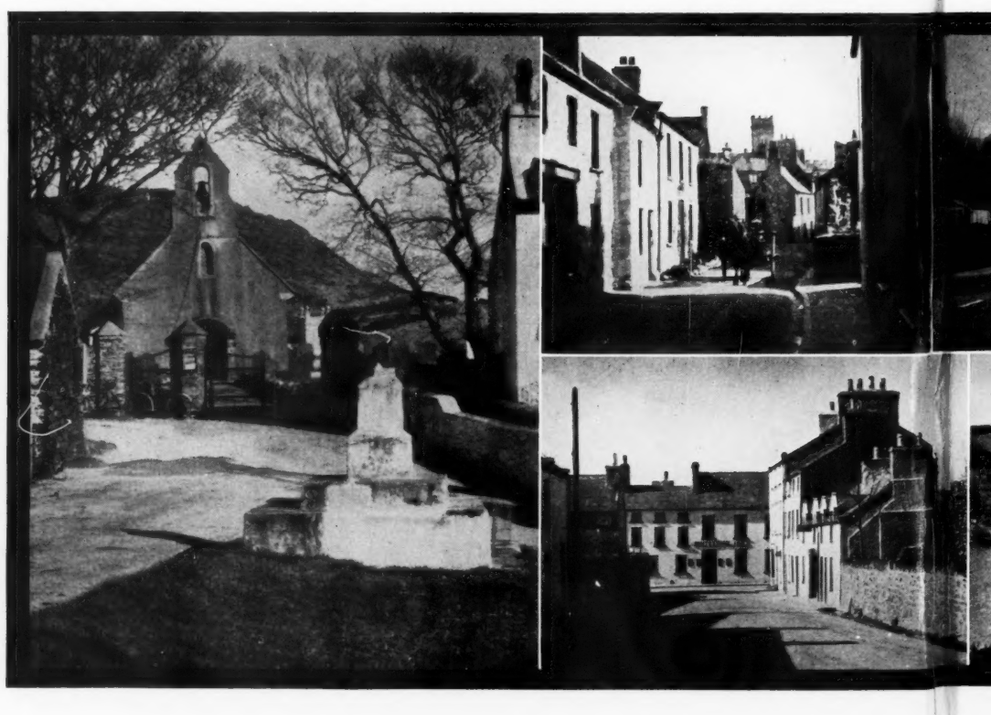
The older cottages are possibly the last remaining examples of a tradition imported by early missionaries who converted the Islanders to Christianity in the sixth and seventh centuries. These are sometimes built of turf, strengthened with stones and pebbles. The thatch is tied down with horizontal and vertical strands of straw rope fixed to projecting stone pegs in the walls. This superimposed net, presumably designed to preserve the thatch against storms, is now only found on the Island and in its construction possibly imitates the fishing net.

The isolation and poverty of the inhabitants from the tenth to the early eighteenth century preserved the primitive building tradition intact. The Renaissance ideas of neighbouring countries were absorbed into this tradition and, favoured with a period of increased prosperity and improved communications, produced more ambitious buildings.

The new theories and improved craftsmanship and materials combined with the native tradition to produce a simple formality of outline. The older parts of the towns belong to this period and have a clean, hard and coldly

* David Robertson, 1794.

THE NATIVE ARCHITECTURE



angular look, with regularized façades and a predominance of white and grey plaster. The strength and simplicity of those early buildings contrast with the elegant subtleties of the imported English Regency manner which later filtered in with the English trade.

But it is in the churches that we find the most outstanding examples of local character, for here, in addition to the other characteristics of the vernacular an element of fantasy expresses the imagination and mysticism of the people. The early churches were simple rectangular buildings, domestic in character, but a strong revival in church building, influenced by the ideas and ideals of the Renaissance on the mainland, took place during the early eighteenth century, under the auspices of the "Good Bishop.*" The earliest and most curious of these new churches is near the village of Ballaugh. It is of rough, unrendered dark grey stone with characteristic pinnacles and bell turret, and a heavy, roughly modelled, arched entrance porch. Its uncompromising grimness suggests the struggles of the early Church against the dæmonical activities of the Buggane and the glashtin. In more recent years the giant pinnacled gateposts have settled on their foundations and lean perilously inwards as if to entrap the unwanted visitor.

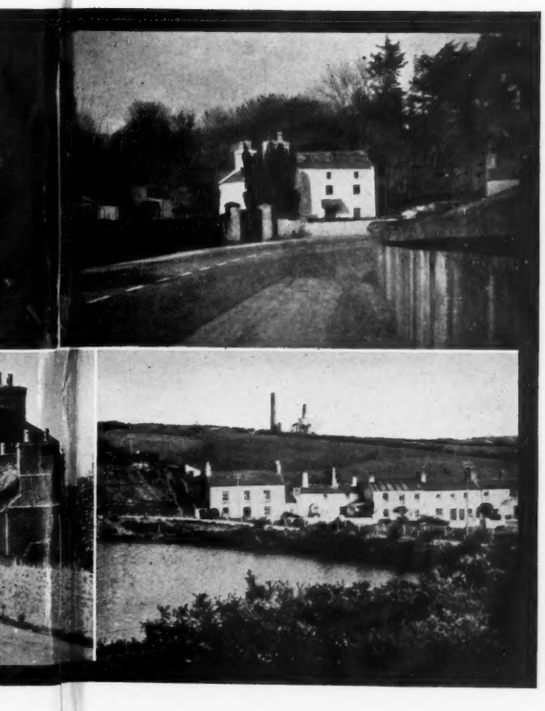
The church in the village of St. Marks, built in 1772, is an outstanding example of the local style. In its general lines it follows the plan of the early churches, but the simple elements of plain white surfaces, entrance, bell turret, bell rope and wall tablet, are combined in a delightfully simple and natural composition. Fantasy is introduced in the slightly grotesque pinnacles, painted the colour of terra-cotta, and in the huge circular gateposts.

Pinnacles, painted black or red, are common features of the churches of this period and it is interesting to find one nineteenth century chapel where they are combined with Gothic windows and multiplied in astonishing profusion.

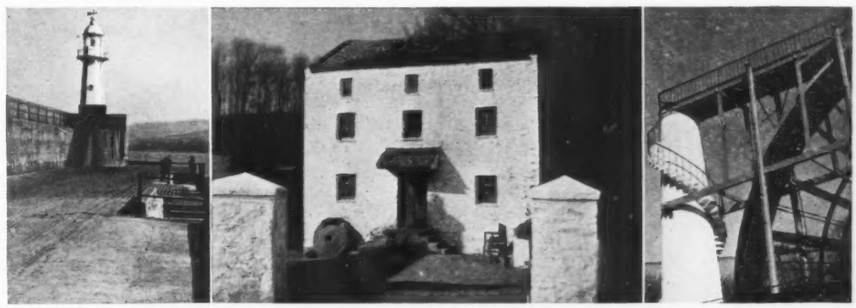
The early nineteenth century saw an influx of emigrants from England—"men of retiring and domestic habit, averse from public broils, people of limited incomes, half pay officers, and indeed all such as are desirous of having a shillingsworth for sixpence." To accommodate them and their families terraces of elegant

* Bishop Wilson, 1698-1763.

E OF THE ISLAND



ITS NAUTICAL QUALITY

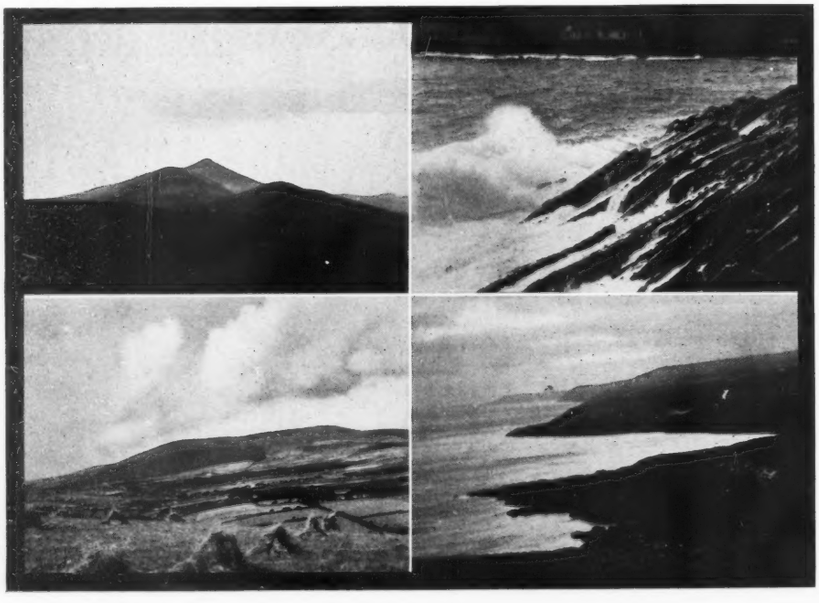


ITS DESCENT FROM THE WORK OF THE EARLY MISSIONARIES

AND ITS AFFINITY WITH THE VERNACULAR OF SOUTHERN EUROPE

THE LANDSCAPE OF THE ISLAND

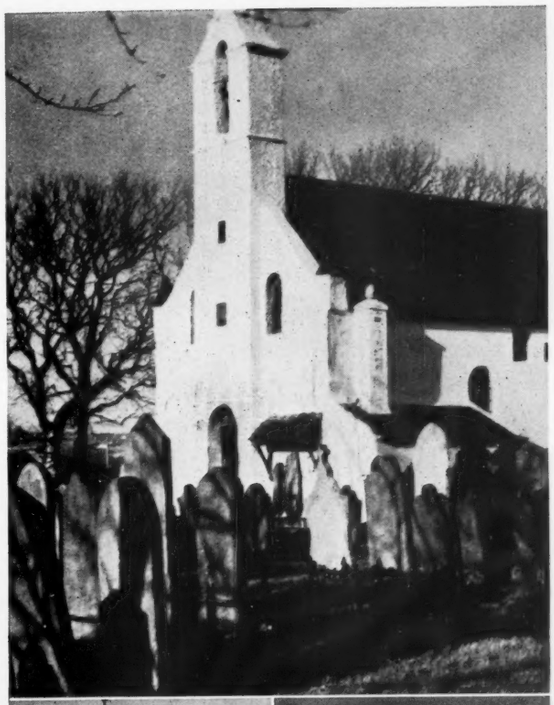
The central range of mountains which forms the backbone of the Island runs in a direction nor'-nor'-east to sou'-sou'-west, and is divided into two groups by a valley which runs across the centre. Hill lands extend from this central range towards the sea, and terminate on all sides except the north in rocky cliffs, forming a rugged coastal landscape. In the north the mountain range dips steeply to an alluvial plain. An elevation of the Island to ten or fifteen feet above its former level, which probably took place during Neolithic times, left a raised beach of shingle on which the older parts of the coast towns are usually built. The low cliffs of glacial drift along a section of the coast show that erosion is still continuing. The whole of the Island has an equable climate. Compared with normal temperatures in its own latitude, the Island is much warmer in autumn and winter, similar in spring and cooler in summer. The equable climate enables flowers to flourish in the open air which in many countries require shelter. Hydrangeas, fuschia, palms, cactus and eucalyptus grow in abundance.

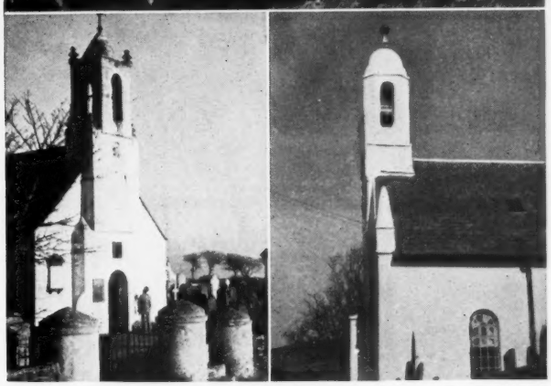


classical houses, blossoming later into the first tentative essays of the Gothic revival, appeared surprisingly among the severe, clean-cut and vigorous town houses of an earlier period.

As with Bermuda, the institution of a regular steamship service and the facilities for every kind of recreation also began to attract visitors to the Island, and between 1800 and 1870 there was a slow but steady increase. In spite of this the number of visitors was small and conditions primitive until the opening of the Victoria Pier in the principal town in 1873 brought about a new phase in its history. It was now possible to bring steamers alongside the pier, and passengers could land without the inconvenience of being rowed ashore in small boats. The annual number of visitors showed a sudden and phenomenal increase, from 60,000 a year in 1866 it rose to nearly 350,000 in 1887, and to over 400,000 in 1899. Terraces of bay-windowed seaside-Gothic boarding houses were rapidly built to meet the sudden demand. The principal town doubled in size, and others grew with increasing rapidity.

The natives quickly rose to the occasion and supplied in great profusion the oddities and marvels that were so attractive to the nineteenth century holiday maker. Instruction was combined with entertainment, and mechanical ingenuity and natural curiosities mixed together in true Victorian fashion.





THE CHURCHES

In the churches are found the most striking example of an architectural character peculiar to the Island. Before 1800 they seem to have been entirely independent of external influence, and those of all periods make their effect out of simple geometrical forms, the later examples being stuccoed white. In all cases they are aisleless with the entrance at the west end under a bell-tower. Pinnacles, painted black or red, are common features and are sometimes combined with Gothic windows. The sketch is of the church near the village of Ballaugh, called by the natives, "The Cronk;" late sixteenth century with additions of 1717; built of glacial boulders, left unrendered. It is now falling into decay as it has not been repaired since 1878.

THE ENGLISH INVASION

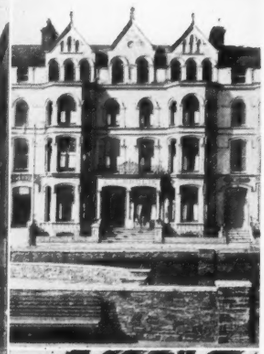
During the boom period of English settlement from 1890 to 1910 numerous terraces of bay-windowed boarding-houses (see overleaf) as well as solitary examples like that above, were built along the inhabited parts of the coast. They were very durably constructed and remain, next to the churches, the most difficult things to destroy. In design they chiefly show English influence, reflecting the styles current at the time, but tending to exaggerate any element of fantasy and favouring particularly a grim Gothic manner.

The annual number of visitors continued to increase until 1914, but dropped to a fraction of its previous figures during the war. It has since remained comparatively stationary near the pre-war level, and the towns have remained much as they were before the war. The boarding houses and sideshows, dance-halls, bandstands and promenade shelters erected during the boom years of 1890 to 1910 have proved adequate and durable, and have remained, without alteration or extension, astonishingly ugly and completely intact.

Today the Island is fascinating for its contrasts and complexity, being peopled with artists, antiquarians and seaside landladies; farmers, fishermen, and retired English tradesmen. These, ruled over by the Lieutenant Governor and the Lord Bishop, exist and function among Victorian Gothic and Regency stucco; horse trams, palm trees and camera obscuras; against a backcloth of mountain and sea with an off-stage chorus from the Buggane and the glashtin and the talking Mongoose.

VICTORIAN SENTIMENT

The considerable influx of English settlers began during the first years of the nineteenth century and reached its climax with the end of the century. This movement was naturally reflected in the architecture of the Island, the native styles being largely replaced, first by simple Renaissance villas with their fashionable appurtenances and urban terraces, and later by typical Victorian buildings, in which the qualities of exuberance and fantasy were not altogether out of character with the sub-tropical vegetation.



AND MODERN BEASTLINESS

The more recent developments show the importation of the worst aspects of twentieth century English civilization. The approach roads to the towns and villages have been peppered with indiscriminately scattered small houses and bungalows, and temporary wooden buildings litter many of the most attractive and most accessible parts of the hinterland. These latter are often supplemented by advertising notices put up by the owners of hotels and beauty spots, of a particularly aggressive kind. There has recently been formed however (March, 1938) a society for the preservation of the amenities of the Island.

See also page 54

1

HOUSES, 1

F. R. S. YORKE AND MARCEL BREUER

THE SITE

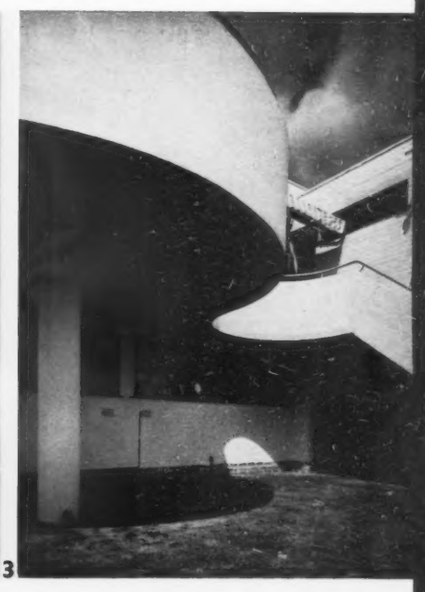
A flat corner site at Angmering-on-Sea, Sussex. From ground level the view is poor, but from first-floor level there is an uninterrupted view over the sea. The local authorities' building line on two sides of the site fixed the position of the projecting wing in the centre of the plot.

PLANNING

The factor of a poor ground-level view suggested the raising of the main body of the house to first-floor level, on which were placed the living- and dining-rooms with their adjacent terrace in addition to the bedroom and bathroom accommodation. The ground floor is thus occupied only by a minimum entrance hall, kitchen quarters, maid's room and garage. A further consideration suggesting the same solution, of raising the main rooms to the first floor, was that the bedroom wing, centrally placed on the site to conform with the building lines mentioned above, would have divided the garden space into two narrow and almost useless strips, a fault that was avoided by continuing the lawn under the raised part of the house.

1, a general view from the west showing the first-floor terrace to the living- and dining-rooms and the external stair connecting the terrace with the garden. 2, the south face of the bedroom wing. 3, a detail of the terrace. The windows beneath are to the kitchen and maid's room.

2



3

HOUSES, 1

F. R. S. YORKE AND MARCEL BREUER

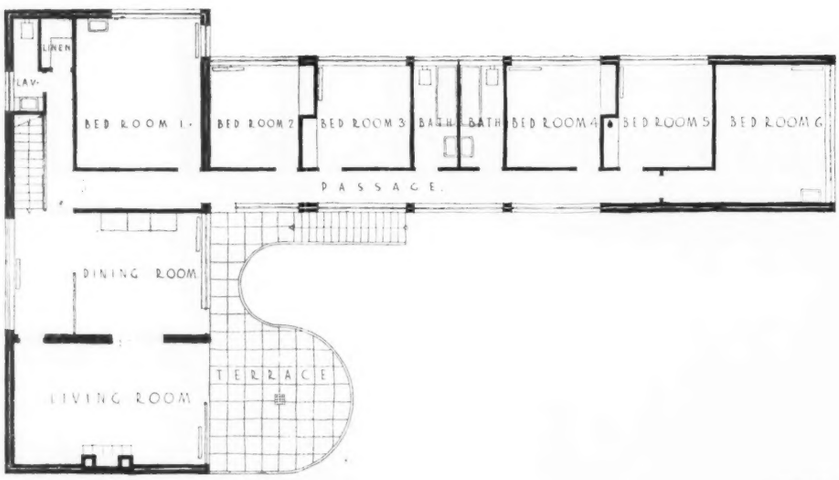
4

STRUCTURE AND MATERIALS

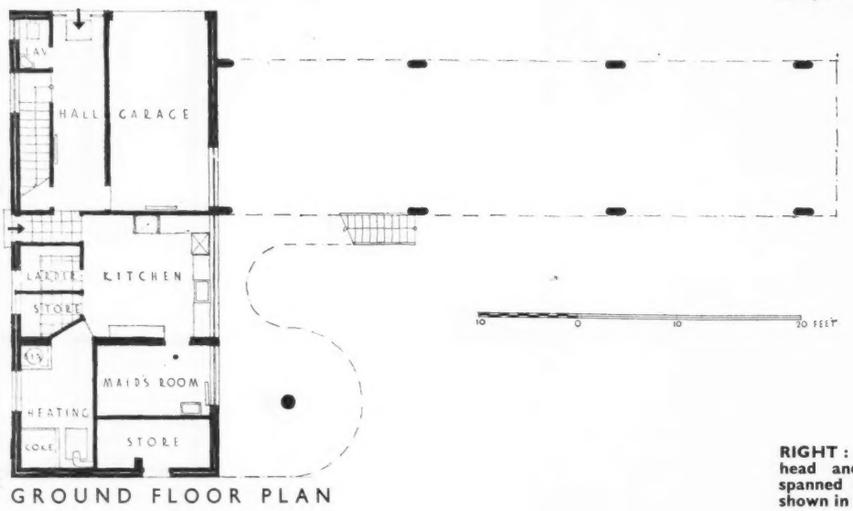
The two-storey wing of the house is built in 11-inch brick cavity bearing walls, the bedroom wing being supported on reinforced concrete columns and a reinforced concrete floor slab carrying the 11-inch cavity brickwork. A continuous reinforced concrete beam at window-head height runs round the whole block and spans the wide window openings.

EQUIPMENT AND FINISHES

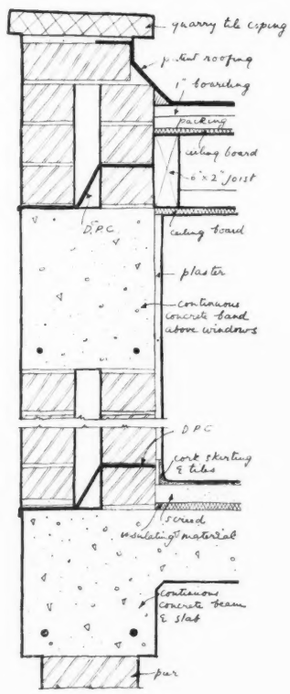
The living-room, dining-room and terrace are equipped and intended for use primarily as one rather than three units. Built-in furniture in the dining-room includes a sideboard combined with a service lift connecting with the kitchen beneath. In the four smaller bedrooms of the bedroom wing, which are intended for the children while on holiday, built-in wardrobes are provided. The finish to the whole of the main living floor and to the internal stair is of polished cork tiles in 12-inch squares. Walls are finished uniformly in white, with woodwork finished in metallic grey gloss paint. The terrace sun-blind is in red-and-white striped material.



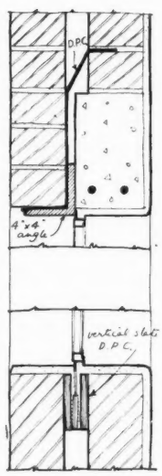
FIRST FLOOR PLAN



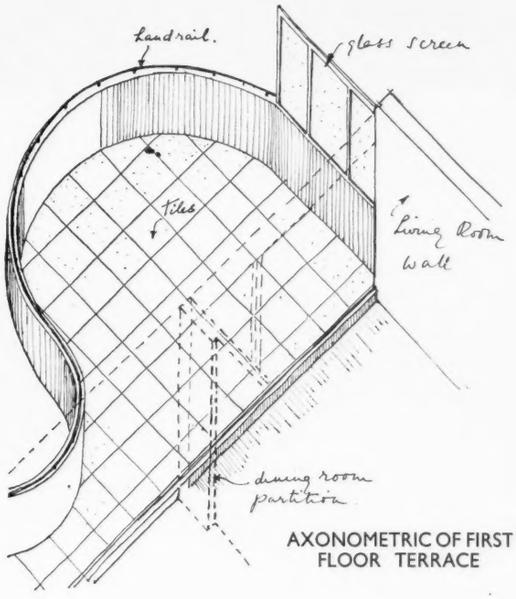
GROUND FLOOR PLAN



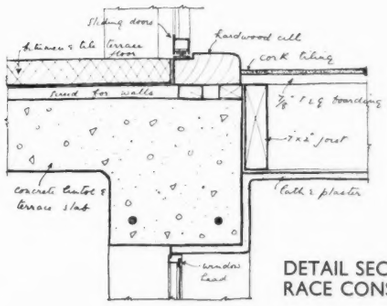
RIGHT : a section through the reinforced concrete floor slab and parapet of the bedroom wing.



RIGHT : a section through a window head and cill other than those spanned by the continuous beam shown in the first section.



AXONOMETRIC OF FIRST FLOOR TERRACE



DETAIL SECTION OF TERRACE CONSTRUCTION

7

5

6

THE VIEWS ILLUSTRATED

4, a general view from the south-west. 5, the projecting reinforced concrete terrace seen from the lawn under the bedroom wing. 6, an interior view from the top of the stairs, showing the passage to the bedrooms on the left, and the dining-room on the right. 7, the dining-room, looking towards the living-room.

HOUSES, 2

F. R. S. YORKE AND MARCEL BREUER

THE SITE

Two identical houses were required on adjoining sites for masters at Eton College. The requirements were that for a given accommodation, and including built-in furniture, lighting fittings, architects' and quantity surveyor's fees, etc., the houses should cost not more than £2,500 each.

PLANNING

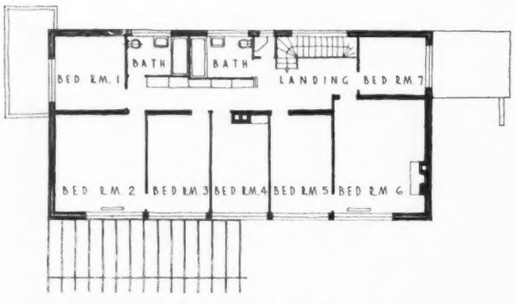
The accommodation provided includes a large living-room, flanked by dining-room and study, seven bedrooms and two bathrooms. The problem of cost determined the final compact form of the plan.

STRUCTURE AND MATERIALS

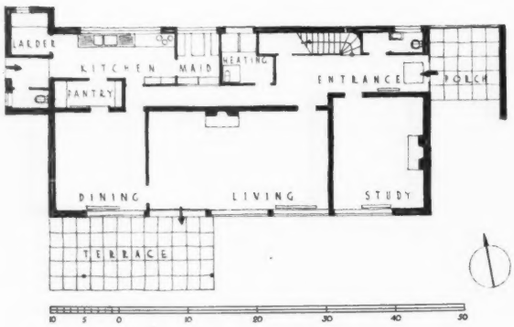
The houses are built in 11-inch cavity brickwork, with reinforced concrete lintels and steel angles carrying the brickwork over window openings. The windows, with the exception of the horizontally-sliding window in the living-room, have standard sized opening casements, with fixed lights of a special size. The facing bricks are of a yellowish-brown colour with light mortar joints.

EQUIPMENT AND FINISHES

Externally, two main features are the large porch providing shelter for bicycles and perambulators, and the terrace on the south front, with its timber-framed pergola of which a drawing appears on the facing page. Giving on to the terrace, one of the living-room windows descends to floor level, and being designed to slide horizontally, it opens up to a width of 8 ft. 6 inches to connect living-room with terrace. The living-room is decorated with coffee-coloured walls, having a light-coloured carpet and ceiling. The front entrance door is constructed with a steel frame and glazed with Georgian-wired plate glass.

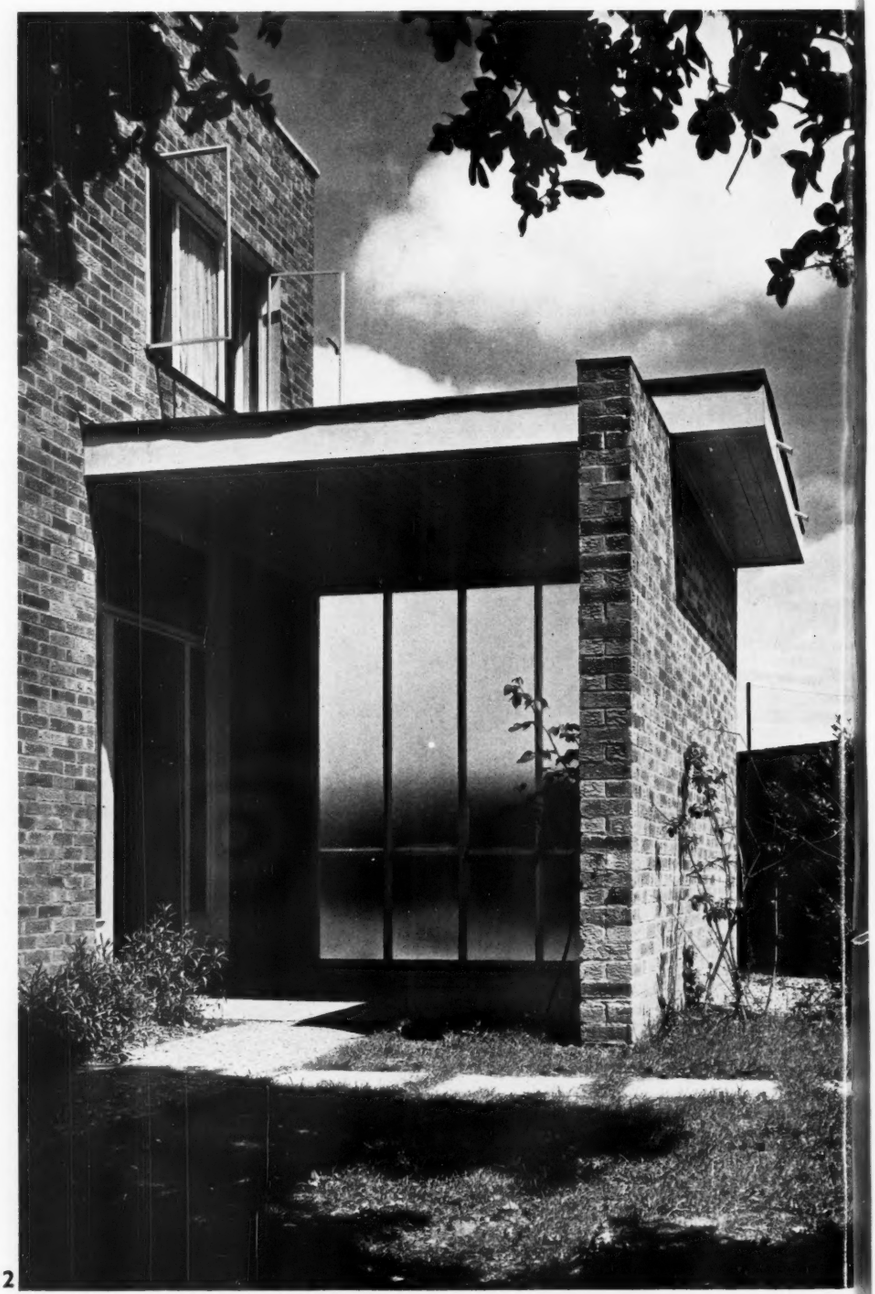


FIRST FLOOR PLAN



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

1



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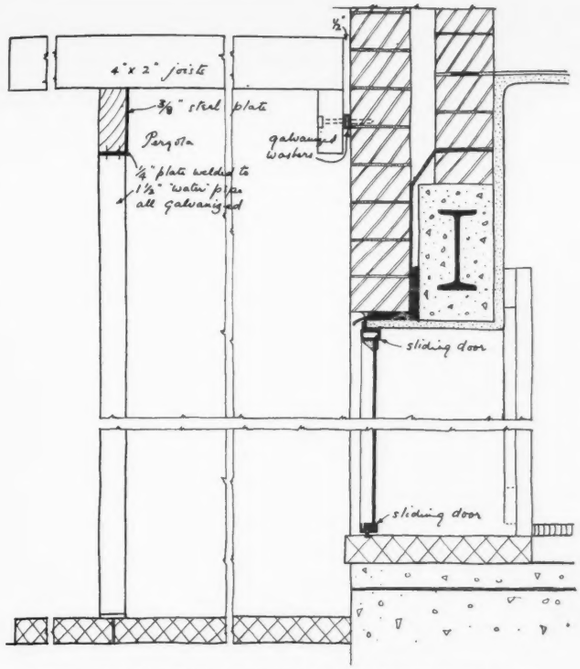


SECTION THROUGH PERGOLA AND SLIDING GLAZED DOOR TO LIVING-ROOM

3

4

5

THE VIEWS ILLUSTRATED

1, a detail view of the garden front showing the dining-room and living-room on the ground floor. 2, a close-up of the entrance porch, the rear wall of which is entirely glazed. 3, a general view of the garden elevation. 4, the steel framed entrance door seen from the hall. 5, the living-room with the dining-room beyond. Above, is a drawing showing details of the pergola construction and a section through the glazed sliding door to the living-room.

HOUSES, 3

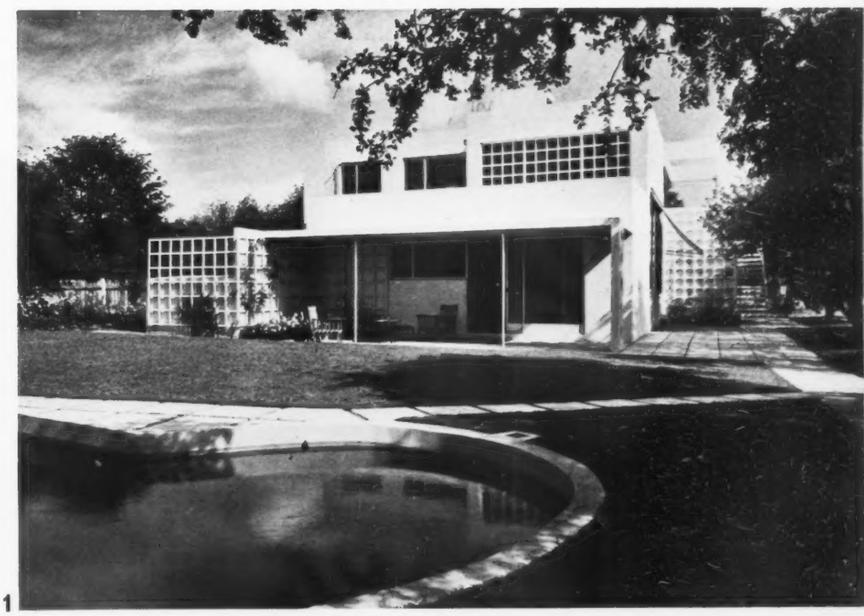
F. R. S. YORKE AND MARCEL BREUER

THE SITE

At Lee-on-Solent, the surrounding garden consisting mainly of lawns with fruit trees and a rose garden.

PLANNING

The living space measures 32 ft. by 22 ft. at the dining recess end, and the main section extends up to the full height of the house. The staircase is included in the room itself and the staircase landing at first floor level becomes a gallery overlooking the living space. A self-contained apartment, appearing on the plan as " Playroom," is the living quarters for the butler and his wife, being approached by a separate staircase outside the house.



1

HOUSES, 3

F. R. S. YORKE AND MARCEL BREUER

PLANNING (*Contd.*)

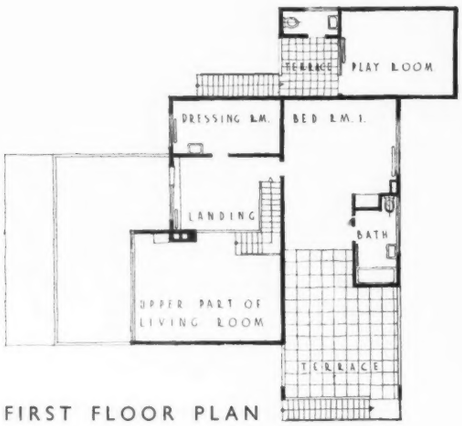
The principal bedroom suite gives on to the upper part of the living space, through the landing, and on to the garden, via terrace and external steps. The bedrooms on the ground floor are intended for guests.

STRUCTURE AND MATERIALS

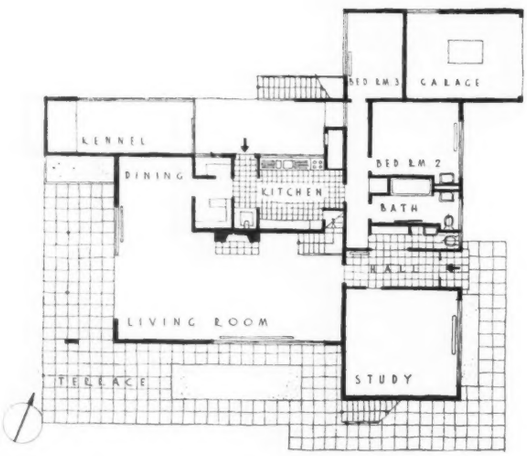
The house is constructed with monolithic reinforced concrete walls of 5-inch thickness, finished externally against horizontal wood-board shuttering and painted a pinkish-white colour with soffits and projections a light blue. An external reinforced concrete cantilevered staircase leads from the terrace outside the main bedroom suite on the first floor to the plunge pool on the south front.

EQUIPMENT AND FINISHES

Walls generally are white with metallic-grey wood and metalwork. The floor to the living-room and dining recess is in polished birch plywood squares.



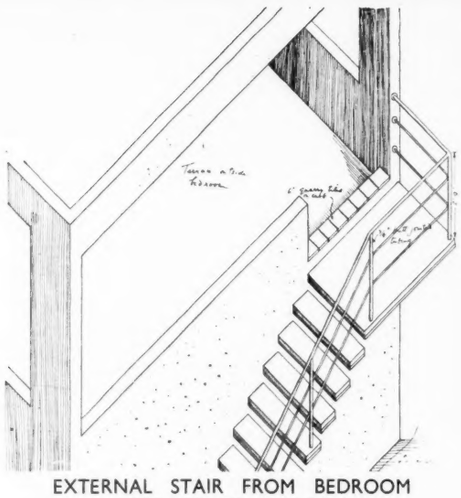
FIRST FLOOR PLAN



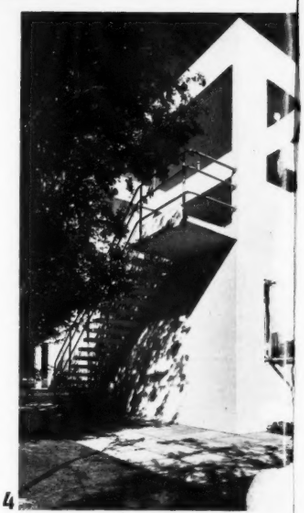
GROUND FLOOR PLAN

2

3



EXTERNAL STAIR FROM BEDROOM TERRACE TO GARDEN



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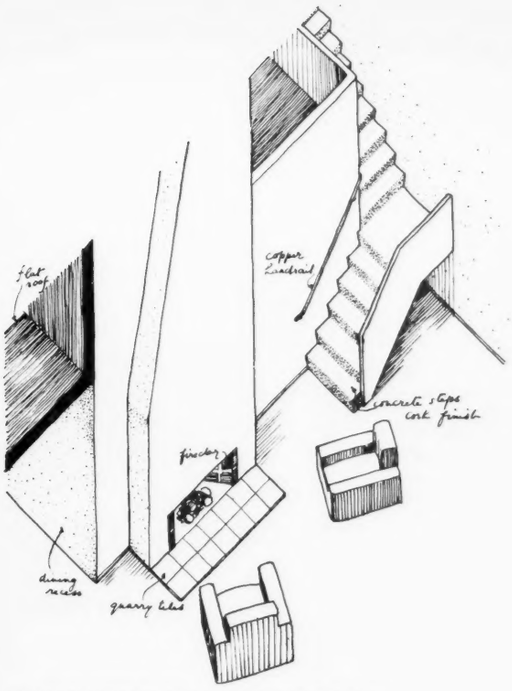
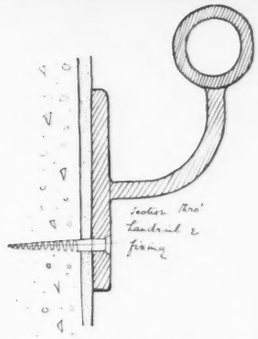


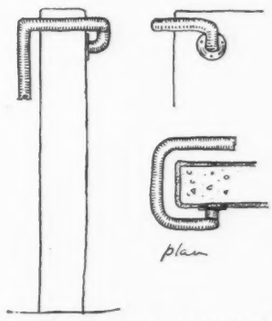
AXONOMETRIC OF THE LIVING-ROOM

5



SECTION THROUGH STAIR-CASE HANDRAIL

6



RETURNED END OF HANDRAIL ON LANDING

7

EQUIPMENT AND FINISHES (*Contd.*)

Floors to the bedrooms are close-carpeted, bathroom and passage floors and the staircase treads being in polished cork tiles. The kitchen and hall floors are paved in light buff-coloured quarry tiles. Furniture is in birch and Indian white mahogany, with chair covers in nigger brown, matching curtains with a nigger brown pattern on a light ground. In the study on the ground floor are built-in divans to serve as extra guest accommodation if necessary. In the axonometric drawing above, the varying heights of the 9 ft. dining recess, the 17 ft. living space, the stair and first floor landing are shown in relation to each other. The decoration and furnishing of the interior was by Mrs. Hugh Rose, the wife of the owner.

THE VIEWS ILLUSTRATED

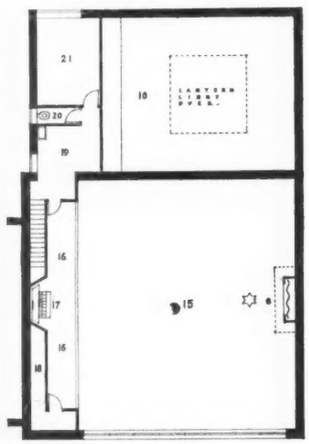
1 (page 33), the south front. 2, the road elevation, facing east, with the garage and butler's suite over, to the right. 3, the side elevation to the garden. 4, the external cantilevered reinforced concrete stairway leading from the main bedroom suite terrace to the plunge pool. 5, a general view of the living-room looking west. 6, the living-room from the first floor landing. 7, the dining recess off the main living space. To the left of 6 and 7 are detail drawings of the specially designed metal-tube hand-rail to the staircase.

SYNAGOGUES

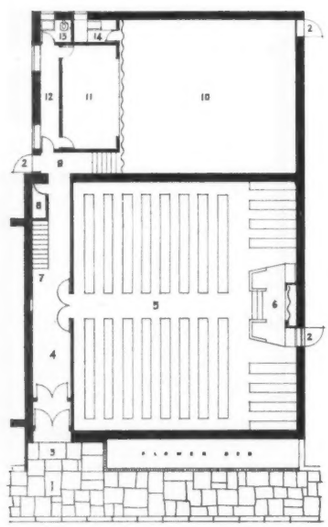
EDWARD LEWIS

THE SITE

Hove : the site being already occupied by a gymnasium dating from last century, and the present Liberal Jewish Synagogue being remodelled from the original building. The necessary accommodation included a main hall containing the Ark and the twin pulpits, a social hall containing a stage, a gallery overlooking the main hall, and the usual robing rooms and offices with the addition of a small kitchen.

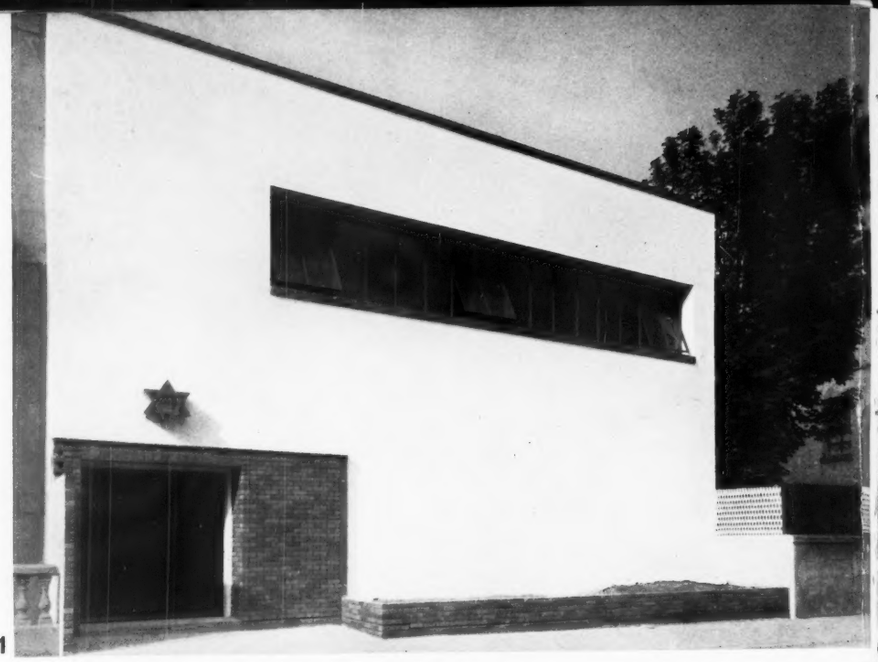


FIRST FLOOR PLAN



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

1 PAVEMENT
2 EMERGENCY EXIT
3 MAIN ENTRANCE
4 ENTRANCE HALL
5 MAIN HALL
6 ARK AND PULPITS
7 STAIRS
8 ELECTRICAL GEAR
9 LOBBY
10 SOCIAL HALL
11 STAGE
12 WOMEN'S CLOAKS
13 WOMEN'S LAVATORY
14 KITCHEN
15 MAIN HALL, UPPER PART
16 GALLERY
17 ORGAN KEYBOARD
18 PIPE SPACE, STORAGE
19 MEN'S CLOAKS
20 MEN'S LAVATORY
21 RABBI'S OFFICE AND ROBING ROOM



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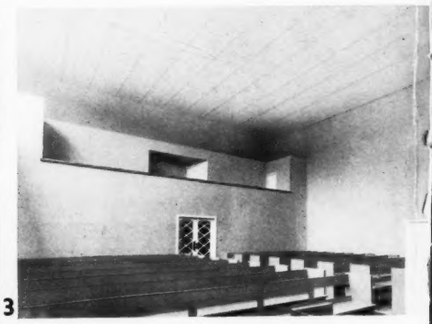

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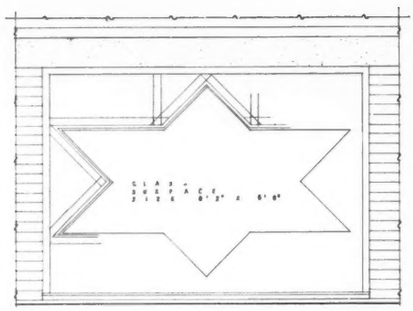
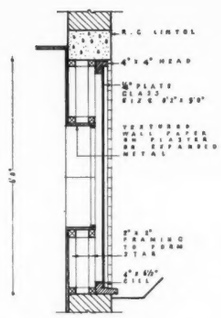
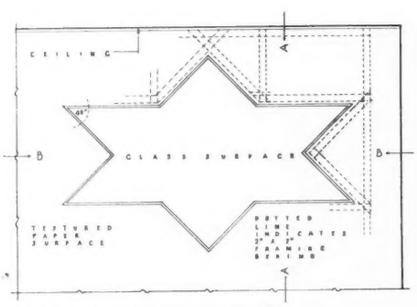


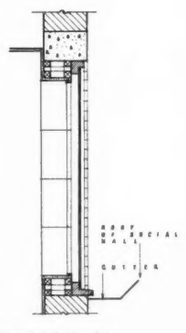
EXTERNAL ELEVATION



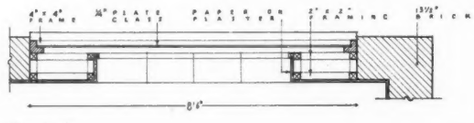
SECTION AA



INTERNAL ELEVATION



SECTION AA



PLAN

DETAIL DRAWINGS OF WINDOW TO MAIN HALL

PLANNING

The reconstruction of the 19th century gymnasium building presented few problems of planning since the synagogue is of the simplest character. The main feature internally, providing the focal point for the whole scheme, is the Ark in which are kept the sacred scrolls of the Law. In this case the Ark, which is a shallow recess 18 inches in depth by 7 feet 6 inches in width, has been given a considerably greater height than is customary, 20 feet, in order to dominate the several elements of the interior.

STRUCTURE AND MATERIALS

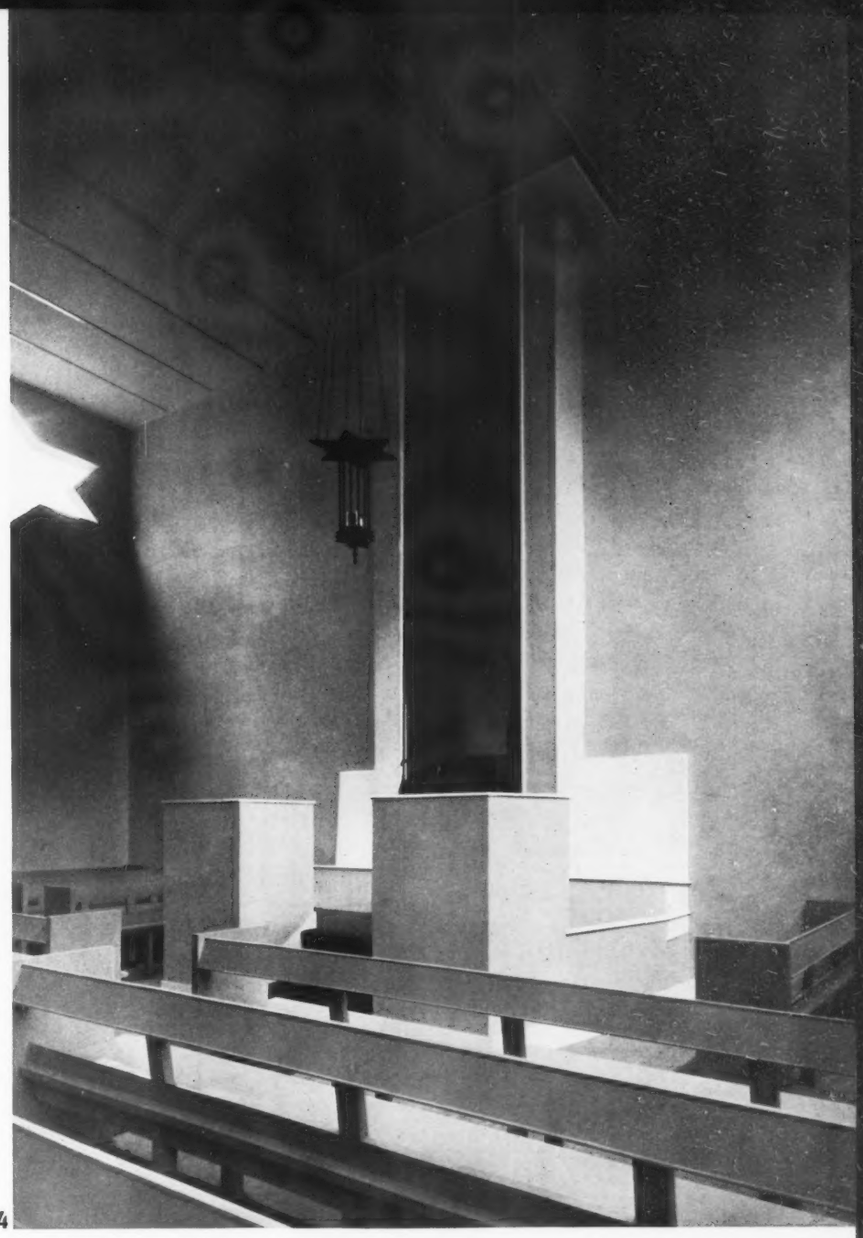
Construction is of solid brick walling, rendered externally with a cream-washed cement stucco, the exposed brick facings to the entrance surround, plinth, window cills and flower boxes being in hand-made rough-textured Shropshire bricks in tones of brown and red.

EQUIPMENT AND FINISHES

The main hall of the synagogue is lit entirely, with the exception of the symbolic oil lamp hanging before the Ark, by a concealed lighting trough, 14 inches deep, at the back of the gallery. Throwing the light at a very shallow angle the whole of the ceiling surface is illuminated by this means, reflecting an even, non-glaring light over the whole of the main hall. The wall finish internally is in a textured buff-coloured wallpaper, with woodwork painted in cream and light brown. The Ark recess is finished in gold leaf, with curtains of deep red velvet. The six-pointed star of the Shield of David is the dominating decorative motif, appearing externally over the main entrance porch, in blue-painted deal, and in the form of a window to the main hall, illuminating the Ark.

THE VIEWS ILLUSTRATED

1, the main entrance front. 2, view of the main hall from the gallery. 3, a view of the main hall from the opposite direction. 4, a detail view of the Ark and pulpits.



4

LABORATORIES, 1

STANLEY HALL AND EASTON AND ROBERTSON

THE SITE

At the New River Head, Rosebery Avenue, London, to the north-east of the central offices of the Metropolitan Water Board.

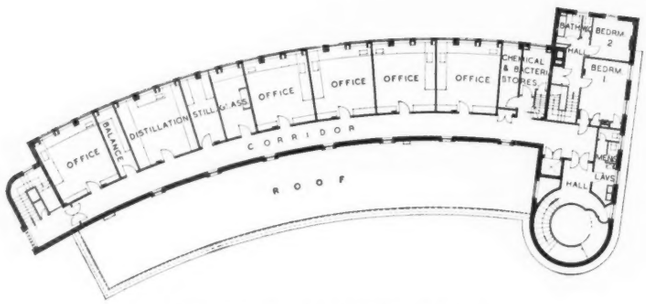
PLANNING

The accommodation is disposed on four floors. A circular stair at the east end of the building has been made the main external feature of the design. On the face of the brickwork above the vertical fenestration to the main stair, are the arms of the Metropolitan Water Board carved in Portland stone by John Skeaping. 1, a general view of the south front.

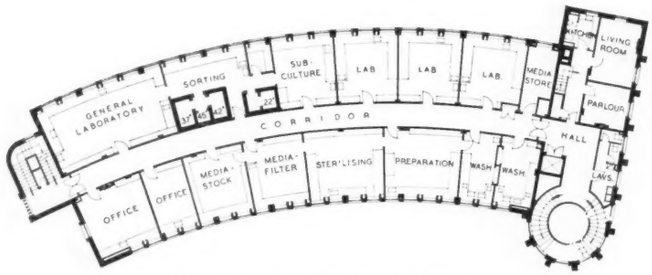
1

LABORATORIES, 1

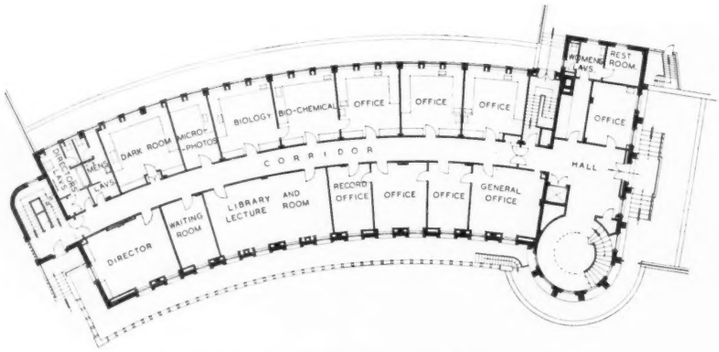
STANLEY HALL AND EASTON AND ROBERTSON



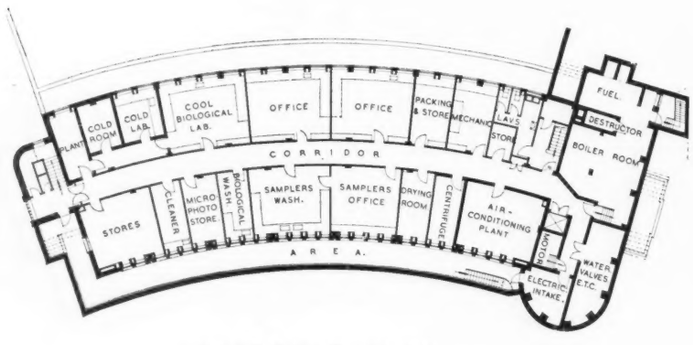
SECOND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



GROUND FLOOR PLAN



BASEMENT PLAN

2

STRUCTURE AND MATERIALS

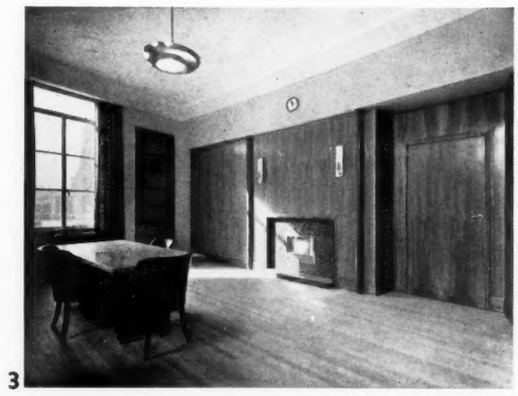
Construction is in steel frame, walls are in brick with facings in Himley bricks of a brownish-red colour. Floors and roof are hollow-tile, the roof being insulated with a layer of cork covered with special tiles. Steel windows are fitted to the laboratories and offices, those on the south front being glazed with heavy plate glass to prevent noise transmission.

EQUIPMENT AND FINISHES

The main circular stair is lit by glass-brick panels and finished in a yellow terrazzo which is also used to the floor of the entrance hall. The staircase balustrading is in wrought iron with a bronze handrail, the plaster ceiling over the stair well being painted a deep grey-blue and ornamented with the sign of Aquarius incised in the plaster and gilded. Floor finishes to all corridors are in rubber, laboratories in tiles, offices in hardwood and linoleum.

THE VIEWS ILLUSTRATED

2, a general view of the south front taken from the west, showing the Portland stone balustrading to the basement. 3, the director's room. 4, the preparation room.

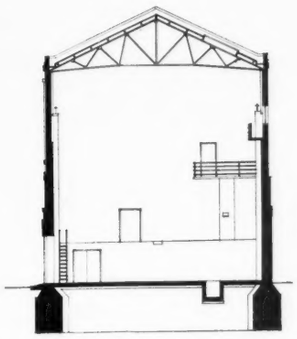


3

4

LABORATORIES, 2

ADAMS, HOLDEN AND PEARSON
IN ASSOCIATION WITH HAROLD G. CHERRY



SECTION

THE SITE

Cambridge : the High Voltage section of the Cavendish Laboratory, being the first stage in the reconstruction scheme for the whole laboratory group.

PLANNING

The requirements consisted of a main hall and four research rooms, the hall being used to house electrical generators producing voltages of one and two million respectively. The research rooms at each end of the hall are screened by concrete and copper mesh against electrical interference from the high voltage apparatus.

STRUCTURE AND MATERIALS

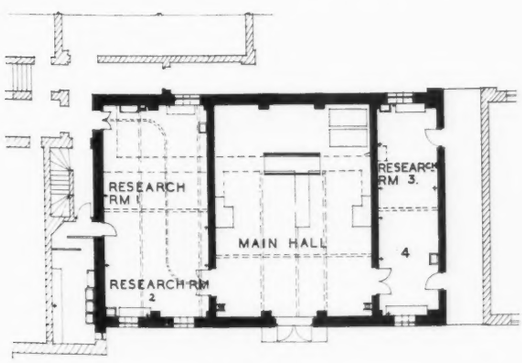
The main walls are of solid brickwork. The roof to the large hall was designed to be carried by an open steel truss as shown on the section but was executed with a plate truss. Internally the walls are plaster-finished, and externally faced in a light-coloured brick.

EQUIPMENT AND FINISHES

The laboratory is used for researches on the transmutation of matter. Research equipment in addition to the electrical generators, includes large vacuum tubes to which the high voltage is applied. The vacuum tubes perform the function of guns, directing a flow of atomic projectiles down into the research rooms where they are used for experiments. Floors throughout are in hardwood block.

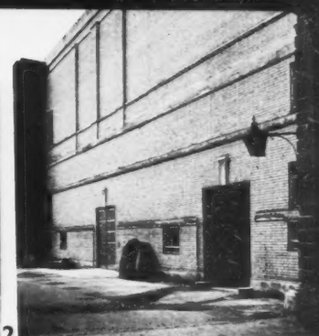
THE VIEWS ILLUSTRATED

1, a general view of the entrance front adjoining the existing laboratory. 2, the main entrance door. 3, 4 and 5, views of the electrical generators and vacuum tubes in the main hall.



PLAN

1



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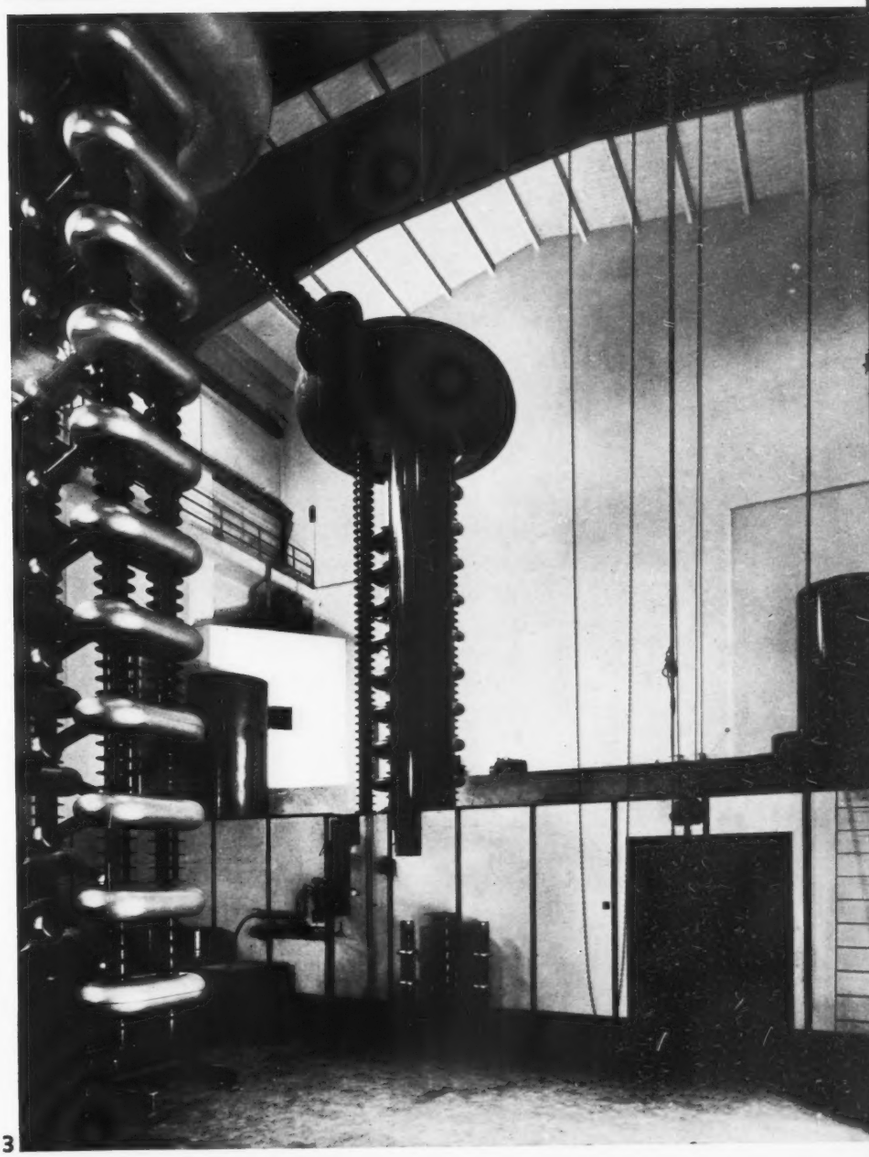

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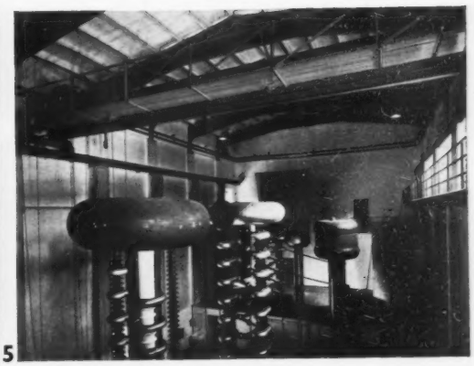


5

OFFICES

A. S. AND R. A. EGGLESTON

THE SITE

Melbourne, Australia. The building is occupied by the owners, the Provident Life Assurance Company, the surplus accommodation being leased to tenants ; it thus combines an investment for surplus funds with publicity value for the Company. This latter becomes a consideration in the treatment of the design.

PLANNING

Excluding basement floors the building contains 12 storeys, rising to the full height permitted by the city building act, 132 feet. The service area is grouped and reduced to a minimum on each floor, leaving office space to be sub-divided by movable partitions.

STRUCTURE AND MATERIALS

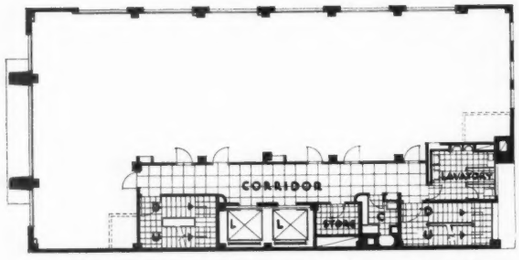
The building is steel framed encased in concrete. The base, and the decorative shafts extending to the full height of the principal elevation, are faced in highly polished local granite slabs, the dark green of the granite contrasting with the white painted stucco of the remaining wall surface. Window spandrils are faced in glazed faience tiles.

EQUIPMENT AND FINISHES

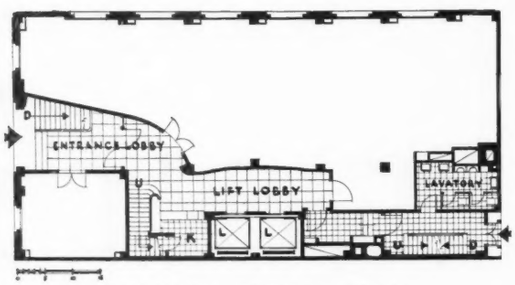
The main entrance hall is faced with a polished local pink marble, and lit by recessed louvre fittings. The elevator hall is faced with mottled black tiles, stairs generally are in terrazzo with grey rubber to treads and blue marbled rubber to corridor floors. Two express lifts serve the 12 floors.

THE VIEWS ILLUSTRATED

1, the main entrance front, showing the " publicity " granite shafts decorating the elevation. 2, the entrance hall. 3, the elevator hall.



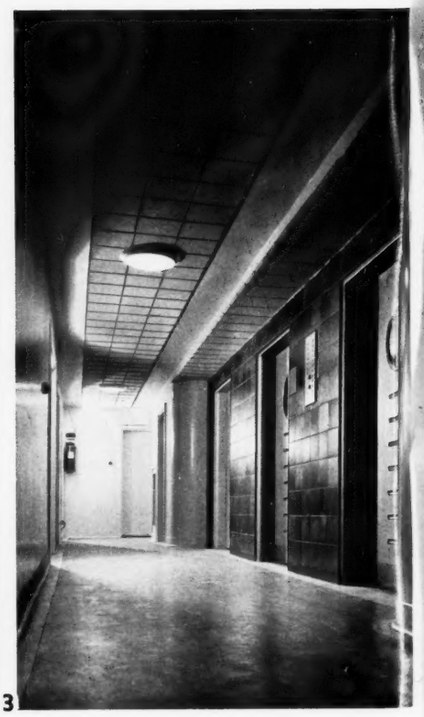
TYPICAL UPPER FLOOR PLAN



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

1

2



3

WATER GARDENING

The decoration of water by plant life (as distinct from the exploitation of the decorative qualities of water *per se*) is a comparatively modern pastime. In the years before 1849, when the *Victoria Regia* first flowered in Europe at Chatsworth (thus providing an impetus to the cultivation of water lilies everywhere) water in the garden implied the gay fountain pool of the Italian and Dutch fashions or the dark romantic serpentine winding between the new plantations of the eighteenth century or lapping its contoured grass. Plants other than the flowering rush, the arrowhead, the *Nuphar*, and a handful of similar natives (which, some may think, have never been outclassed by arrivals from the swamps of China) were unknown.

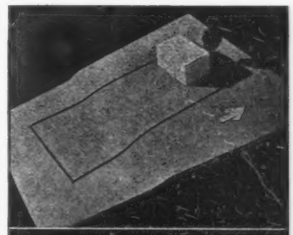
Water in this country is a gloomy element. Except in special places like some chalky soils it is almost never clear. Perhaps the eighteenth century gardeners were right in their treatment of it as a cloudy mirror of created landscape. "The ideal position for the pool is right out in the open," says the author of a new book* on this subject, and so it is for the arums, flags, calthas, the water hawthorn, bog bean, pickerel flower, and many other lovely weeds of this and foreign climates. But the reader must not imagine that a situation away from overhanging trees will keep his liquid glitteringly pure. The obscurant duckweeds (with the exception of the ivy-leaved sort which accommodatingly stays at the bottom of the pond) and green groping algæ are even more fond of sunshine, which increases the reproductive power of the latter beyond the limits of well-bred plant behaviour. So that, unless he possesses or can make a shallow stream bed for running water, or imports quantities of fish and fresh water winkles, by making his garden in the shade or sun the pond keeper can only vary the colour of the inks, so to speak.

Happily, there are compensations. This book, which is in effect a nearly complete and very useful planting list, also describes plants which are happiest near water

* *WATER GARDENING. By Frances Perry. Country Life, Ltd. 15s. net.*

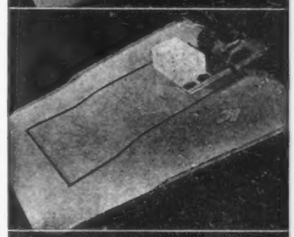
THE SUBURBAN PLOT
A STANDARD GARDEN PROBLEM

A narrow rectangle of ground, perhaps 40 feet wide and 120 feet long, is the raw material from which the suburban householder has most commonly to contrive his garden. The illustrations below build up in model form a garden that aims at providing what is required in a simple way. It is assumed that the owners of such a garden would keep no gardener and might occasionally want to leave it altogether unattended.



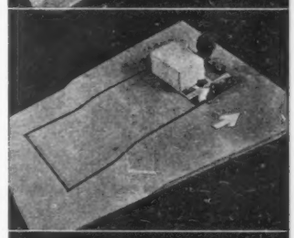
1

It is assumed that the plot runs north and south, with the road at the north and a slight slope at the southern end. The house, as is customary, is placed a little way back from the road, leaving the usual small front garden, in which stands an existing tree. There is a passage through at one side.



2

The front door is at the side of the house, so as to leave the front garden free of paths and so that the living-room windows in the front of the house are not overlooked by callers. A stone-paved path leads to the front door, which is flanked by small flower-beds, suitable for rose bushes.



3

The front garden, being rather public, is not used for recreation and is planted with a simple lawn and a hedge that can easily be kept tidy. As no gardener is kept only one small herbaceous border (which is a form of planting needing considerable attention) has been provided alongside the path.

4

The stone-paved path is continued along the garden side of the house to form a terrace on the south side, on which side it is presumed that the principal living-room windows would open. The terrace terminates in a shelter for out-of-door meals. At the other end is a sand-pit for children.

5

Immediately in front of the terrace is a small lawn, large enough for recreation and for sitting out-of-doors but not so large as to be a nuisance to look after. The lawn is framed by beds of flowering shrubs which serve as a windscreen. These have the advantage that they need little attention and provide something to look at in winter as well as summer. Stone flags preserve the edge of the lawn.

6

A double row of trees continues the axis of the path from the front gate and leads to the far part of the garden. Poplars have been chosen because they are quick growing and their regular vertical form provides a useful contrast to the low planting elsewhere.

7

The end of the garden, down the slope, is planted with grass that can be left rough, being only occasionally scythed, and with fruit trees, arranged geometrically. Daffodils and other bulbs can grow in the grass in the spring. If the owner wants to cultivate vegetables a kitchen garden can be dug here.

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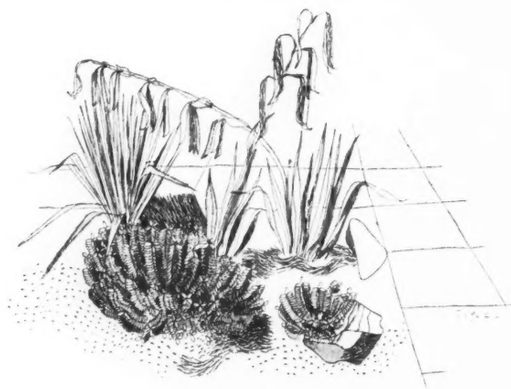

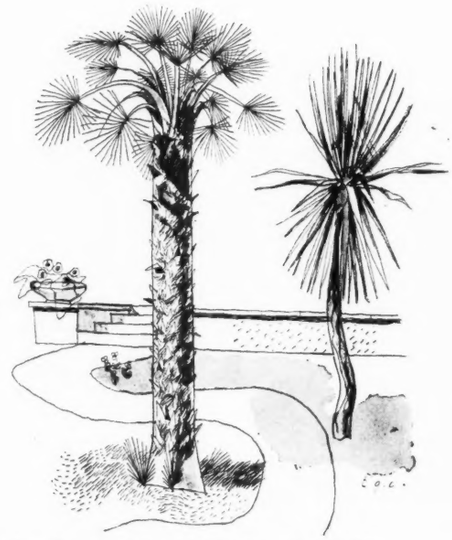

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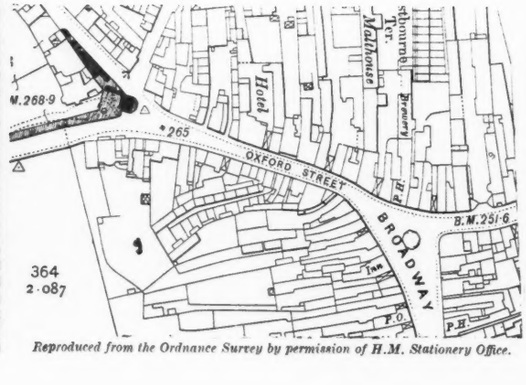

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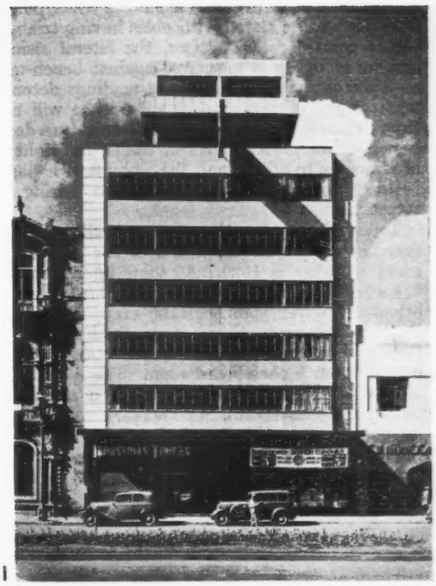
By now only our Colonel Blimps will be unprepared for the final liquidation of art. The National School of Construction, founded in 1932 with the official blessing of the Minister of Public Instruction, "treats building purely as a branch of engineering." (Ironically enough the year following a law was passed setting up an Architectural Council, consisting of the same stamp of men as run the School, that has to approve the design of every new building in Mexico City.) When hot on the heels of this crowning enormity we read that the sort of thesis a student "sends in" for his university degree in architecture is a minimum working-class home, which the candidate has already constructed and equipped in a thoroughly proletarian district, the anticlimax is too badly timed to arouse more than a passing shudder.

Indignation being exhausted and the capacity for amazement with it, the incidental information that the soil of the city is really a "jelly" (formed of three parts water to one of fine volcanic ash), floating on a subterranean lake can be assimilated as easily as predigested food. As the jelly never ceases wobbling no building ever attains more than temporary stability, those of uniform height tending



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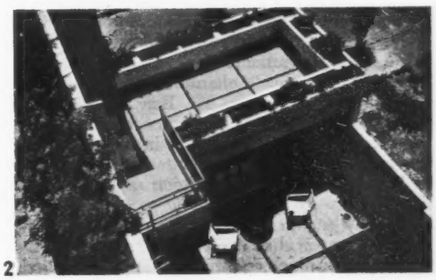

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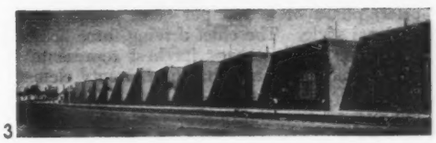

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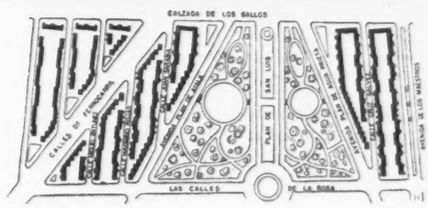

PLOT PLAN OF SAN JACINTO DEVELOPMENT

1, an office building in Mexico City, designed by José Arnal. It was the city's first important modern building and caused a great deal of protest and discussion when it was erected in 1932. 2, the sun-deck and terrace of a house designed for himself by José Villagran Garcia. 3, workers' housing in Mexico City, designed by Juan Legarreta. The scheme, known as the San Jacinto Development, incorporates, as the plan shows, parks and playgrounds and consists entirely of one- and two-storey terrace houses. Reproduced from "The New Architecture in Mexico."

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perpetually choked by Bath road and Oxford road traffic. This street, incidentally, might have been widened ten years ago when much of it was rebuilt, but the chance was not taken. Further on traffic is again held up in Broadway (see map) where the London road and the Winchester and Southampton roads add their traffic to the congestion in the main shopping street of the town. Here an obstructive shelter has been built by the Town Council, 3, necessitating a roundabout and more complication. Eventually through traffic must be made to by-pass Newbury, but meanwhile piecemeal "improvements" that disregard the large problem only destroy Newbury's character and produce nothing in compensation.

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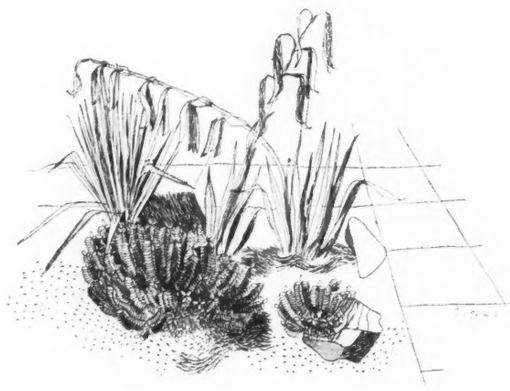

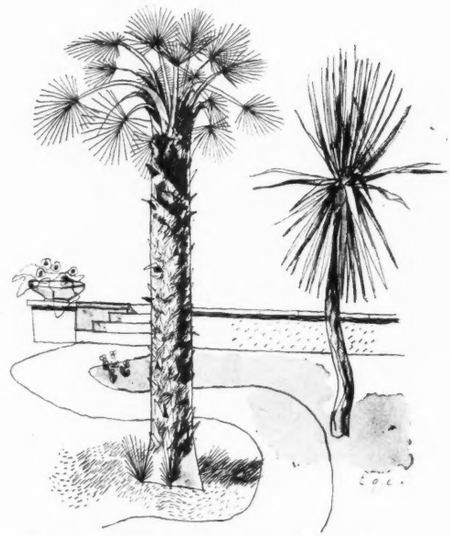

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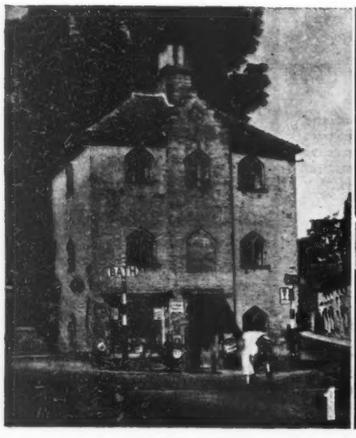

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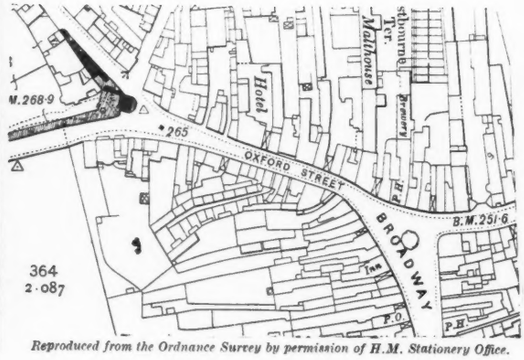

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THE NEW ARCHITECTURE IN MEXICO. By Esther Born. Kegan Paul. 21s. net.

THIS is a book of wholesome shocks. The first is administered, as the evening papers say, by the illustrations on opening it almost anywhere: a shock Mr. Beach Riley describes (for Americans) as realization of "the fact that Mexico has an architectural movement of probably far sounder and more extensive development than anything in the United States." Slightly dazed by your initial surprise you may reflect, on recovering from it, that after all Mexico once had a civilization of its own and its great Gringo neighbour has not got further than half a one yet. The text provides a series of staggering blows for architectural genteelism which thumps the European solar plexus just as hard. Mexican architects are their own contractors; they even go in for quite a lot of speculative building. Señor E. Sanchez Fogarty—the Irish seem to have colonized Mexico quite as effectively as the Spaniards—scorns apology for this awful heresy. Instead, he lavishes his pity on gentlemanly American architects having to waste their energies over disputes between clients and builders, for which he thinks it is high time a special profession of "attorneys-at-building" were evolved. It appears that the average house is better built as well as better designed as a result, and that young architects learn their job far quicker and more thoroughly by having to obtain their own materials and supervise their own workmen. Well, that is very much how John Nash began, but we have it on Sir Reginald Blomfield's authority that he was no sort of architect!

By now only our Colonel Blimps will be unprepared for the final liquidation of art. The National School of Construction, founded in 1932 with the official blessing of the Minister of Public Instruction, "treats building purely as a branch of engineering." (Ironically enough the year following a law was passed setting up an Architectural Council, consisting of the same stamp of men as run the School, that has to approve the design of every new building in Mexico City.) When hot on the heels of this crowning enormity we read that the sort of thesis a student "sends in" for his university degree in architecture is a minimum working-class home, which the candidate has already constructed and equipped in a thoroughly proletarian district, the anticlimax is too badly timed to arouse more than a passing shudder.

Indignation being exhausted and the capacity for amazement with it, the incidental information that the soil of the city is really a "jelly" (formed of three parts water to one of fine volcanic ash), floating on a subterranean lake can be assimilated as easily as predigested food. As the jelly never ceases wobbling no building ever attains more than temporary stability, those of uniform height tending

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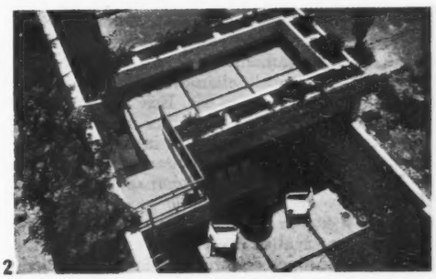

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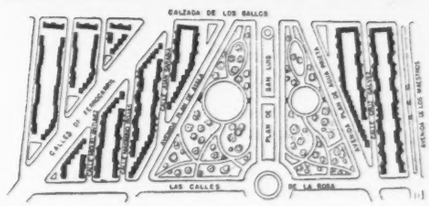


PLOT PLAN OF SAN JACINTO DEVELOPMENT

1, an office building in Mexico City, designed by José Arnal. It was the city's first important modern building and caused a great deal of protest and discussion when it was erected in 1932. 2, the sun-deck and terrace of a house designed for himself by José Villagran Garcia. 3, workers' housing in Mexico City, designed by Juan Legarreta. The scheme, known as the San Jacinto Development, incorporates, as the plan shows, parks and playgrounds and consists entirely of one- and two-storey terrace houses. Reproduced from "The New Architecture in Mexico."

an- ning muddle

ffic pro- several e centre nded to l, which Bath and r road- as going onsider- y would resign ll House chestnut and the the fine in the will not Oxford otograph which is

perpetually choked by Bath road and Oxford road traffic. This street, incidentally, might have been widened ten years ago when much of it was rebuilt, but the chance was not taken. Further on traffic is again held up in Broadway (see map) where the London road and the Winchester and Southampton roads add their traffic to the congestion in the main shopping street of the town. Here an obstructive shelter has been built by the Town Council, 3, necessitating a roundabout and more complication. Eventually through traffic must be made to by-pass Newbury, but meanwhile piecemeal "improvements" that disregard the large problem only destroy Newbury's character and produce nothing in compensation.

to sag at the centre like a galosh when pinched. Sites have to be tested with poles having triangular metal points, called *testigos*, the lateral rising or sinking of which is measured against bench-marks on a distant mountain. These readings determine what degree of upheaval or subsidence will result from excavating the ground; and this in turn decides how deep foundations may be taken, the right sort of structure to adopt, and the amount of ballasting required to maintain its equilibrium during construction.

Tenochtitlán, as the Aztecs called it, was founded on the largest island in the biggest of a group of lakes in 1325. At some later period the town was joined to the shore by four causeways, oriented to the points of the compass, and the shallows between them were finally filled in. Cortés, who razed it to the ground in 1521, rebuilt it on a chessboard plan. The liberation of Mexico in 1821 found its capital a mixture of baroque, "churriguera," and adobe hovels. Though largely rebuilt in Neo-Classical and neo-everything-else, during the following decades, the city's real expansion dates from the sequestration of the Church lands. Today, with 1,200,000 inhabitants in unconscious search of a regional plan, it is—or till very lately was—being progressively remodelled on modern functional lines. As the by-product of drastic and violent social changes that idiom was "a popular and indigenous affair" in Mexico, but it has lost some impetus since its protagonists began to receive less active patronage from the government. The present Cabinet contains many vocal champions of "a national Mexican style," for, as Mr. Beach Riley observes, when social urgency and higher utility decline the new-rich soon put their spoke in the wheel and the modern rapidly becomes modernistic.

None of this New Architecture of the Mexicans is really very good, but a great deal of it is decidedly encouraging. In its present quality and future promise alike it recalls the sort of work done during the nineteen-twenties in Czechoslovakia: another country that went through the (mercifully brief) phase of a 100 per cent. genuinely bogus national style. The chief driving force behind the movement, and perhaps its best representative—a man that can take a batch of twenty elementary schools in his stride—is Juan O'Gorman, the founder of the National School of Construction Without "Architecture"; and he is the son of a Mr. Cecil Crawford O'Gorman, born at Foxcote House, Warwickshire, who went out to Mexico in 1887 as a mining-engineer and has since become a leading painter and decorator there.

This is an interesting book, but some of the blocks might be better, or perhaps it is the photographs. Far too many pages are devoted to those dreadful Buffalo Bill murals of Diego Rivera depicting Moses-Marx holding aloft "*Das Kapital*," stoney as the tables of the law, behind foregrounds of execution-squads and crowds of manual workers ecstatically imbibing their first doses of *Kultur*.

P. MORTON SHAND

Pictures of Shops

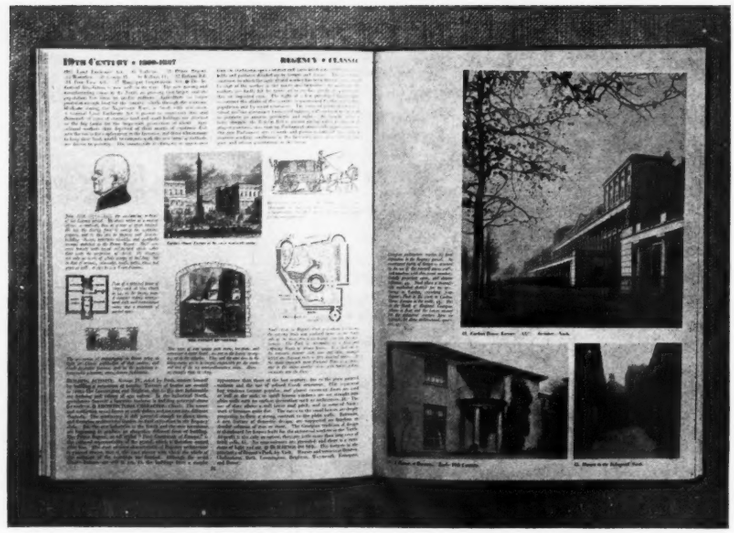
HIGH STREET. By J. M. Richards and Eric Ravilious. Country Life, 7s. 6d. net.

I PITY the children that are given this book. Their elders and so-called betters will seize it from them, as eagerly as if it were a model-railway; the children will protest, will be disregarded, will scream, will be punished, or, if the parents are "advanced," be given an oh! so reasonable explanation of the reasons why adults should have the first use of Christmas presents.

Mr. Eric Ravilious has made an anthology of shop windows and interiors, familiar shops like Hooper, the coachbuilder, Bassett-Lowke and Buszard, rare shops like those that sell diving-suits and fire-escapes. His lithographs are very subtly and delightfully coloured; here are rockets, pin-tables, lobsters, clerical collars, stuffed birds and coffins, to say nothing of wedding-cakes being inspected by Her Majesty Queen Mary. Mr. J. M. Richards writes an account of each shop, packed with curious information. The carriages on Hooper's first floor belong to Lord Crewe and Lord Londonderry; the columns of wedding-cakes, being made of gum paste, are edible, though not intended to be eaten; the inside part of a horse collar is called the forewale; the manufacture of fireworks became legal only in 1860; Catholic priests are not allowed to wear cassocks in the street; Stilton cheeses were first manufactured at Melton Mowbray, but are named after Stilton in Huntingdonshire, where they were first sold; chefs have small feet and wear rather pointed shoes; the Marquess of Bute had two stuffed elephants mounted on rockers for the nursery of his children.

Lovely to look at and lively to read, this book—dare I add—is also useful. It is an object-lesson in the pleasure of using one's eyes. We are taught at school to solve equations, to bowl, to conceal our misdeeds, to suck up to the powerful, but few of us are taught to use our eyes. This may be to protect us: if town-dwellers really looked at the buildings, Swiftian madness might ensue. But even in modern cities, even in Oxford Street and Regent Street where every prospect displeases, the trained, hunting eye can mark down beauty. This gay enchanting book teaches us to stalk.

RAYMOND MORTIMER



"The Architecture of England," by Frederick Gibberd, showing typical page lay-out.

History Condensed

THE ARCHITECTURE OF ENGLAND, FROM NORMAN TIMES TO THE PRESENT DAY. By Frederick Gibberd. London: The Architectural Press. 5s. net.

I MUST confess to a prejudice—perhaps I am stodgy—against reading magazines or books which arrange their matter in what I may call the *Daily Mirror* manner—several parallel chronicles going on at the same time on different parts of the same page, and in various printing types. But in the book before us there is certainly something to be said for such a method. It enables the author to present to the eye and mind of his reader a fairly inclusive account of an architectural period—its buildings, dress, methods of transport and social habits generally—so that it is apprehended as a single entity. Its disadvantage, which is shared by newspapers of a similar type, is that the reader, seeing the whole feast set out under his eye, with its little illustrations explanatory of the text, is apt to make his own contribution to the hurry of the occasion, and skim the text so rapidly (after all reading is more trouble than looking at pictures) that he does the writer less than justice.

And in this case so epidermic a treatment of the text would be unfortunate. In his twenty-two pages of illustrated text Mr. Gibberd gives a very sane and readable account of life in this country as indicated by and as affecting its architecture and similar activities. After a glance at Greece and Rome, he gives a page each to the medieval centuries, two each to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, three each to the eighteenth and nineteenth, and four to the twentieth. This might perhaps seem an undue amount of space for the forty years of our own time; but it is natural and healthy to be primarily concerned with one's own day and its problems. One remembers the impatience one felt with Ferguson, in his stately and eminently sensible survey, for his view of architecture as a past activity of mankind, which really came to an end with the middle ages. To our generation what now is and what is to come is of surpassing interest. Some of us are happiest to feel we are handing on a torch bequeathed from the past: others are more interested in the brightness of the flame they are brandishing; but no architect would like to think that all achievement lay in the past, or that there was no problem which our ancestors were not better qualified than ourselves to solve.

Mr. Gibberd is an advocate of today's methods of building, with the sweeping athletic simplicity of mass and outline which, at their best, they can achieve. He perhaps does not make it sufficiently clear that, while post construction and screen wall may logically create such frequently delightful forms, the original impetus towards this method of building arises from two demands—a need for long span openings, and a desire to save wall-thickness where land is expensive and a meticulous care for space important. Where neither demand exists, and often they do not, the weight-bearing and weather-excluding wall, as laboriously perfected by past experiment, seems, if less exciting, more reasonable. What present-day architecture needs, to give a firm foundation to its undoubted æsthetic appeal is more attention to function, more painstaking experiment in that very matter of the screen-wall, so that it may be for generations both water-tight and fair to look on. We have all seen works, swift and limber in their conception, works that in the sunshine of early photographs have a virgin austerity and charm, relapsing in a year or two into a crazy shabbiness from which the cottages of Cromwell's time or the brick terraces of Goldsmith's are still free today.

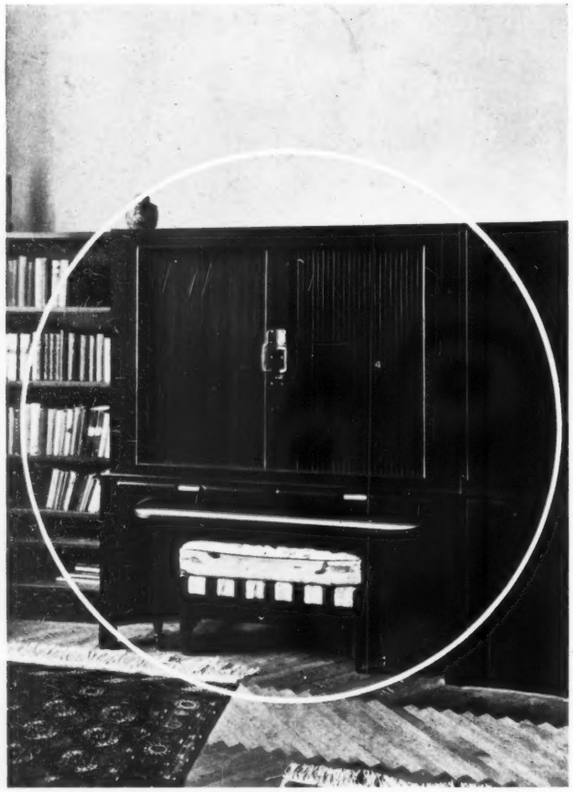
Probably Mr. Gibberd feels this as strongly as anyone else. Certainly there is no fault to find with the sympathy and insight with which he discusses the various activities of all our predecessors in the architectural arena, whether it is the medieval craftsman bringing his wares ("like the butcher and baker") to the building of a cathedral, or the contribution of the great Georgian land owners to the English scene as we have learnt to know and love it, that typical countryside for which "not God but eighteenth-century man was responsible." The illustrations facing the text are many of them a delight (Durham, York and Salisbury, for example, and the thatched Wiltshire cottage). No doubt the eye particularly appreciates, as a contrast with the facing page, a whole sheet devoted to one picture. And possibly more should have been made of the country houses of a generation ago, the little silver age of English domestic architecture.

W. G. NEWTON

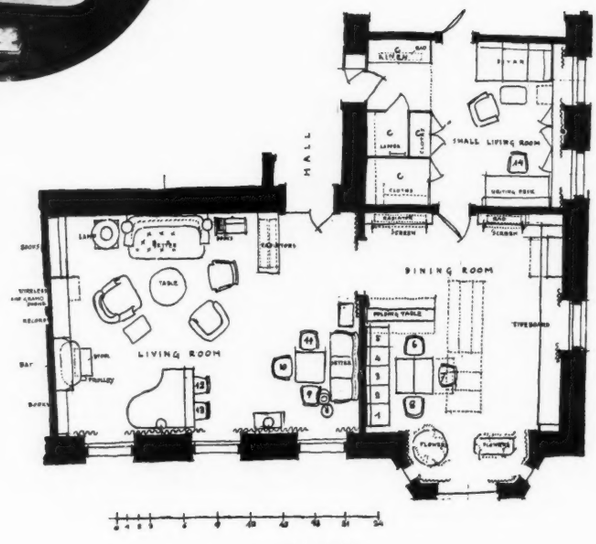
DECORATION

A living-room in a flat in Vienna. The book-shelves, built-in cocktail bar and radiogram are in mahogany. Further illustrations of the same flat are on the next page. Architects, Karl Hofmann and Felix Augenfeld.

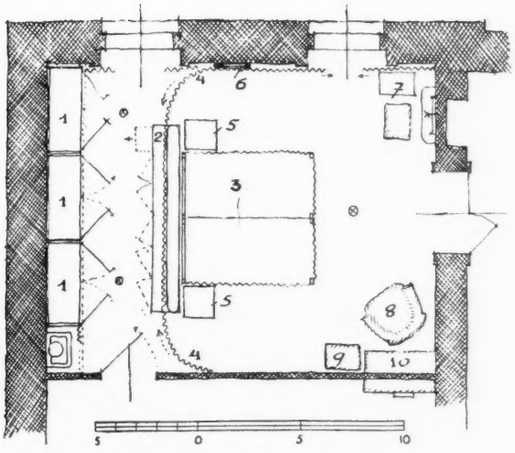
The living-room of the flat is illustrated on the preceding page. Above is a view from the living-room looking into the dining-room. The continuation of the photograph on the right shows the long dining-room sideboard in walnut and rosewood.



The living-room contains a built-in mahogany cocktail-bar, above. In the circle, to the right, the cocktail-bar is shown with its sliding doors thrown back.

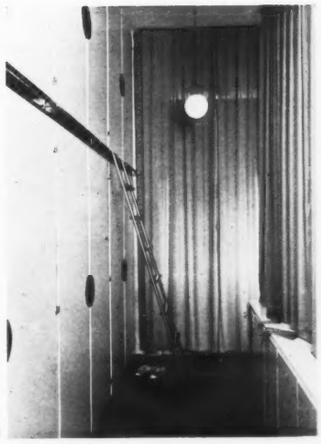


PLAN



PLAN

1. WARDROBE
2. BUILT-IN CUPBOARDS
3. TWIN BEDS
4. BED CURTAIN
5. BEDSIDE TABLES
6. LADDER
7. DRESSING TABLE
8. ARMCHAIR
9. FOOTSTOOL
10. HEATING STOVE



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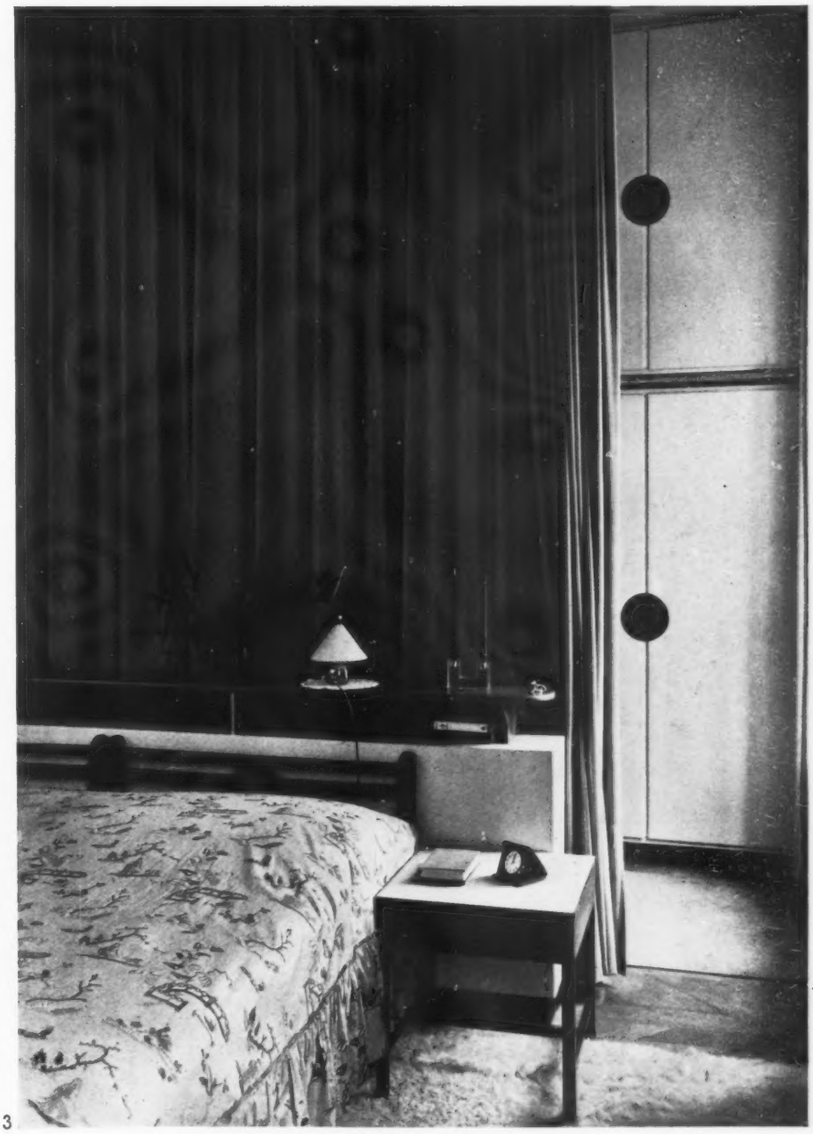
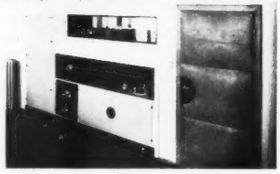
The design of this bedroom was suggested largely by lack of wall-space for built-in cupboards and wardrobes. A large wardrobe was therefore designed to occupy almost the whole of one wall, extending to the ceiling. The twin beds were placed in the centre of the room with curtains behind, thus forming a dressing space, 1, between beds and wardrobe, the upper part of which is reached by a ladder. 2, the beds with the cream-coloured curtains fully closed. 3, a curtain partly drawn back to disclose the wardrobe. The beds are in walnut, with bed covers in pink patterned material. The wardrobe is painted cream.



3

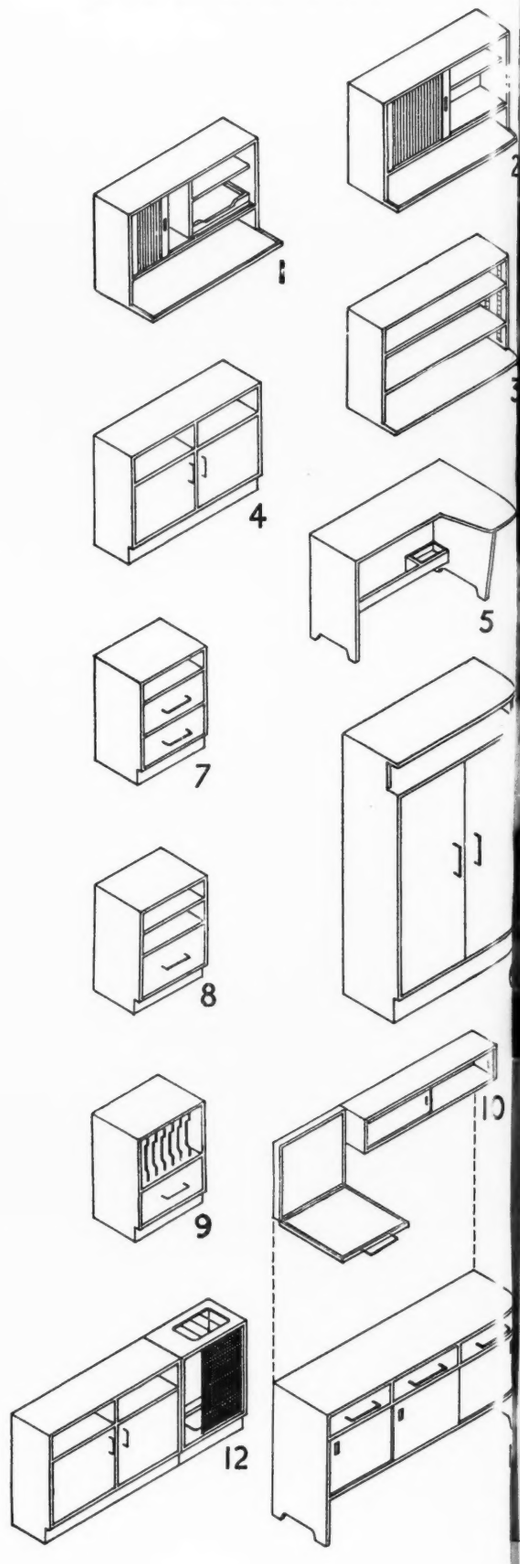
EDROOM IN A VIENNA FLAT: ARL HOFMANN AND FELIX UGENFELD, ARCHITECTS

Above is the corner of a bedroom showing a built-in wall mirror which when closed forms a panel covered with snake-skin. The small easy chair to the left is covered with pigskin. Bed coverings are in blue and white. On the right the same mirror is shown open.

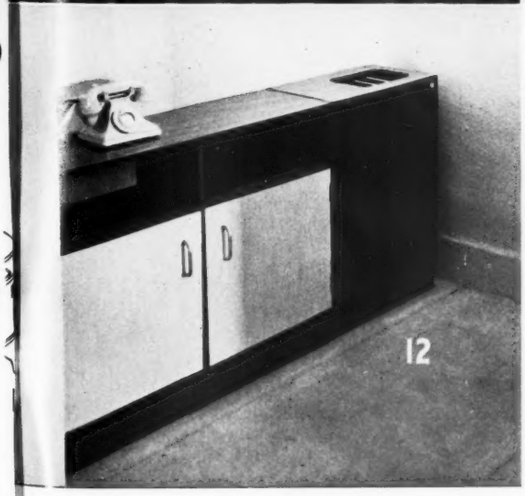


The illustrations numbered 1 and 2 are views of a living-room in a house just outside Vienna. 1, built-in book-shelves arranged within easy reach of the couch; 2, the writing desk. 3, a detail of the dining-room in the same house, showing the sideboard with its serving hatch; the door to the right is covered with pigskin. 4, a combined writing desk and wardrobe in Swedish birch wood, for a bedroom.

INTERIORS IN VIENNA BY KARL HOFMANN AND FELIX AUGENFELD



STANDARD DESIGNS



Unit furniture designed by Martin, Speight and Napper. In mahogany and sycamore with door surfaces in beech block board. Units are all natural wax finished. 1, Wall unit, 3 ft. 6 ins. by 2 ft. 2½ ins., cocktail cabinet with roller shutter front, white linoleum covered shelf, tray draw, cellulosed inside. Price: £4 10s. 0d. 2, Wall unit, 3ft. 6 ins. by 2ft. 2½ ins., cupboard with shelves, roller shutter front. Price: £3 17s. 6d. 3, Wall unit, 3 ft. 6 ins. by 2 ft. 2½ ins., bookshelves. Price: £3 2s. 6d. 4, Floor unit, 3 ft. 6 ins. wide by 2 ft. 4½ ins. high by 1 ft. 3 ins. deep, cupboards and shelves. Price: £4 10s. 0d. 5, Desk unit, 3 ft. 6 ins. wide by 2 ft. 4½ ins. high, white linoleum top. Price: £2 17s. 6d. 6, Hall cupboard, 3 ft. 6 ins. wide by 6 ft. 0 ins. high by 1 ft. 6 ins. deep, with hat shelf. Price: £7 5s. 0d. 7, Floor unit, 1 ft. 9 ins. wide by 2 ft. 4½ ins. high by 1 ft. 3 ins. deep, drawers and shelf. Price: £4 10s. 0d. 8, Floor unit, 1 ft. 9 ins. wide by 2 ft. 4½ ins. high by 1 ft. 3 ins. deep, drawer and shelves. Price: £4 10s. 0d. 9, Floor unit, gramophone record rack and draw. Price: £4 10s. 0d. 10, Wall units. (*a*) Wall cupboard 3 ft. 6 ins. wide by 9 ft. high, with sliding plate glass doors. Price: £3 2s. 6d. (*b*) Folding carving table, 1 ft. 9 ins. by 1 ft. 9 ins., white linoleum top. Price: £1 12s. 6d. 11, Sideboard 5 ft. 3 ins. wide by 1 ft. 5 ins. deep by 3 ft. 0 ins. high, baize lined cutlery drawer. Price: £8 10s. 0d. 12, Hall units. (*a*) Umbrella stand 2 ft. 6 ins. by 1 ft. 9 ins. wide. Price: £1 17s. 6d. (*b*) Floor unit, cupboards and shelves 3 ft. 6 ins. by 2 ft. 6 ins. high. Price: £4 10s. 0d. W. Rowntree and Son.

HOUSE IN CLIVEDEN PLACE
OLIVER HILL, ARCHITECT

This house has been remodelled by the architect for his own occupation. 1, the stair with, to the left, a table in polished Portland stone, the top being inlaid with silica; 2, the living-room, which is draped in curtains of ambergine velvet and blue taffeta. The floor silver-grey waxed oak, and the ceiling is of painted yellow; 3, a bedroom showing a rococo four-posted bed. Further illustrations of the house are overleaf.

1

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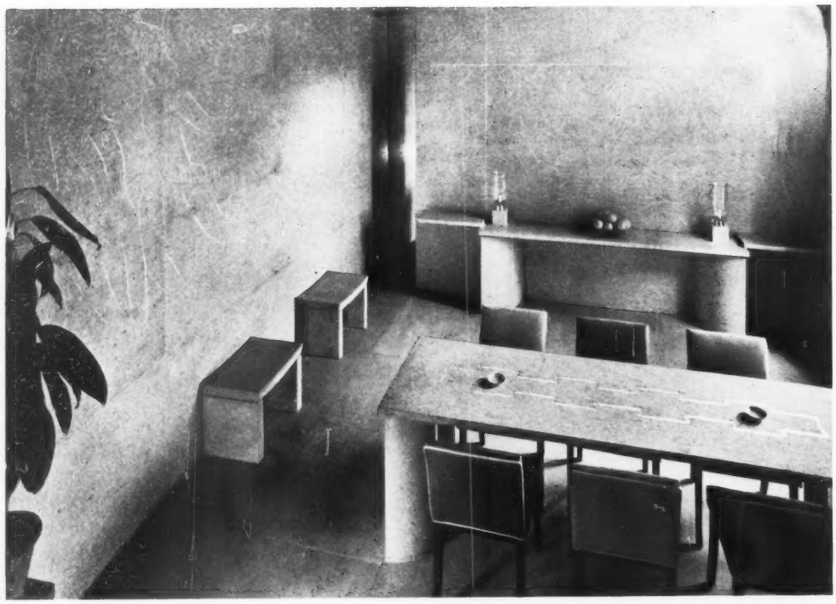
The photographs and drawings on this page show the two principal living-rooms in the house, the dining-room and drawing-room. 4 and 5, two views of the dining-room, the drawing below giving the materials used. The dominant colour is that of shell-bed Portland stone, a warm putty shade, polished to an eggshell finish. Rectangular slabs are used in the walls and to the main part of the floor, while dining table and side table are of the same material. Variation of surface is obtained by the use of incised murals, and a silica inlay to the table-tops. Subsidiary colours are orange, yellow and white. 6, the living-room. Here the decoration is in ambergine velvet and gorge-de-pigeon taffeta curtains with murals, again by Eric Gill, on grey paper. The floor is of silver-grey waxed oak and ceiling rough-textured and painted yellow.

HOUSE IN CLIVEDEN PLACE
OLIVER HILL, ARCHITECT



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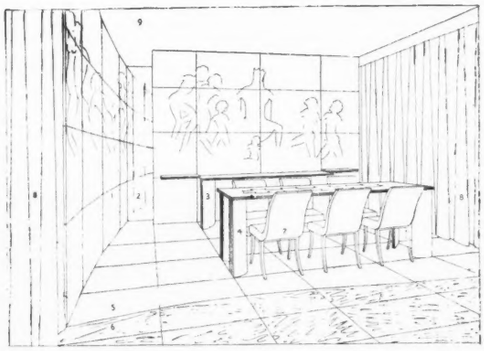
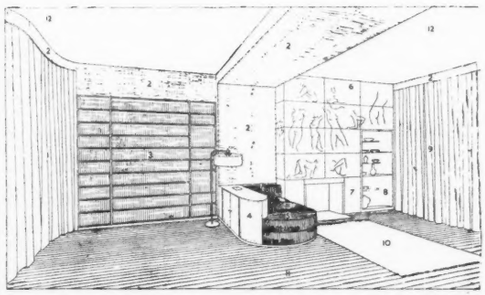


DIAGRAMMATIC SKETCH OF THE DINING-ROOM

1, wall lining of shell-bed Portland stone with incised decoration by Eric Gill. 2, mirror-back recess. 3, side-table. 4, dining table. 5, main part of floor in Portland stone. 6, polished Ashburton marble. 7, walnut chairs, upholstered in pale orange and yellow calfskin. 8, curtains in ivory white satin. 9, rough-textured ceiling painted orange.

6



DIAGRAMMATIC SKETCH OF THE LIVING-ROOM

1, curtains in pale ambergine velvet. 2, matt-surfaced cedarwood. 3, book-shelves. 4, radiogram in Macassar ebony. 5, chaise-longue covered in bottle-green corduroy velvet. 6, figure drawings by Eric Gill on grey paper placed behind plate-glass. 7, open fireplace in green slate. 8, glazed display case. 9, taffeta curtain in gorge-de-pigeon. 10, yellow Chinese pillar rug. 11, silver-grey waxed oak floor. 12, rough-textured ceiling painted yellow.

ANTHOLOGY

The Rude Architecture of the American Indian

The rude founders of Tenochtitlan built their frail tenements of reeds and rushes on the group of small islands in the western part of the lake. In process of time, these were supplanted by more substantial buildings. A quarry in the neighbourhood, of a red porous amygdaloid, *tetzontli*, was opened, and a light, brittle stone drawn from it, and wrought with little difficulty. Of this their edifices were constructed, with some reference to architectural solidity, if not elegance. Mexico, as already noticed, was the residence of the great chiefs, whom the sovereign encouraged, or rather compelled, from obvious motives of policy, to spend part of the year in the capital. It was also the temporary abode of the great lords of Tezcuco and Tlacopan, who shared nominally, at least, the sovereignty of the empire. The mansions of these dignitaries, and of the principal nobles, were on a scale of rude magnificence corresponding with their state. They were low, indeed; seldom of more than one floor, never exceeding two. But they spread over a wide extent of ground; were arranged in a quadrangular form, with a court in the centre, and were surrounded by porticoes embellished with porphyry and jasper, easily found in the neighbourhood, while not unfrequently a fountain of crystal water in the centre shed a grateful coolness over the atmosphere. The dwellings of the common people were also placed on foundations of stone, which rose to the height of a few feet, and were then succeeded by courses of unbaked bricks, crossed occasionally by wooden rafters. Most of the streets were mean and narrow. Some few, however, were wide and of great length. The principal street, conducting from the great southern causeway, penetrated in a straight line the whole length of the city, and afforded a noble vista, in which the long lines of low stone edifices were broken occasionally by intervening gardens, rising on terraces, and displaying all the pomp of Aztec horticulture.

The great streets, which were coated with a hard cement, were intersected by numerous canals. Some of these were flanked by a solid way, which served as a foot-walk for passengers, and as a landing-place where boats might discharge their cargoes. Small buildings were erected at intervals, as stations for the revenue officers who collected the duties on different articles of merchandise. The canals were traversed by numerous bridges, many of which could be raised, affording the means of cutting off communication between different parts of the city.

From the accounts of the ancient capital, one is reminded of those aquatic cities in the Old World, the positions of which have been selected from similar motives of economy and defence; above all, of Venice—if it be not rash to compare the rude architecture of the American Indian with the marble palaces and temples—alas, how shorn of their splendour !—which crowned the once proud mistress of the Adriatic. The example of the metropolis was soon followed by the other towns in the vicinity. Instead of resting their foundations on *terra firma*, they were seen advancing far into the lake, the shallow waters of which in some parts do not exceed four feet in depth. Thus an easy means of intercommunication was opened, and the surface of this inland " sea," as Cortés styles it, was darkened by thousands of canoes—an Indian term—industriously engaged in the traffic between these little communities. How gay and picturesque must have been the aspect of the lake in those days, with its shining cities, and flowering islets rocking, as it were, at anchor on the fair bosom of its waters !

W. H. PRESCOTT (The Conquest of Mexico, 1843)

MARGINALIA

Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Architekt

The voice from Sinai, or rather Berchtersgarten, has once more spoken on the subject of architecture :

" The purpose of this exhibition is to show people how to build and what diligence and toil lies in these new buildings.

" In the past everybody had a frivolous and superficial critic. Many architects have been shocked, a few have been driven to death.

" People have no idea how difficult and endless this work is.

" We are not building like those before were built. We are working for generations to come, and we take into account the needs of the future.

" For instance, in the days of democratic development they built a cathedral in Berlin, the principal church for 3,500,000 people, which has 2,400 seats.

" I cannot imagine how this can cater for 3,500,000 souls. They should have built a cathedral with 100,000 seats. How this big church would have been filled is certainly no concern of ours.

" Our buildings must be as big as possible. They are destined for the nation and for all time to come.

" The Reich has not built for one day, but it will stand for ever, based on a united people. Our monuments will stand when we have passed on."—Herr Hitler reported in the *Evening Standard*.

How careless and flippant we have all been ! Little have we cared for all those architects who have been driven to a suicide's grave by the carping and facetious critics; Messrs. Betjeman, Lancaster and Co., have indeed got much to answer for. For although it seems unlikely that their works have ever achieved a very extensive circulation in the third Reich, who knows but that the same fearful results have not accompanied their ill-mannered gibes in this country? However, apart from this remarkable revelation, the most important statement in the whole speech seems to be, " Our buildings must be as big as possible." Here is a straight-forward view plainly expressed, and all those Marxist, Non-Aryan and Democratic authorities on architecture who love to conceal their true meaning behind a web of subsidiary clauses and unnecessary provisos would do well to emulate such manly terseness. Simple ideas, simply expressed are what we want today.

The R.A's. New President

The architect's lot may not, as Herr Hitler assumes, always be a happy one, but for Sir Edwin Lutyens at least, it has had its compensations. His latest honour is one that all will welcome, for few men have been so admirably suited to the high position to which he has just been elected. The office of President of the Royal Academy is one that calls for more qualities than purely artistic and academic ones; a presence, a social sense, and a ready wit are all, if not essential, highly desirable and who, in the whole muster of academicians, possesses these qualities in so generous a measure as Sir Edwin Lutyens?

His two architect predecessors in the office of P.R.A. had both many admirable qualities but none of the talented Mr. Wyatt's quips have attracted the attention even of his biographers nor, diversified as were the accomplishments of the late master of the pre-war neo-Imperial style, had Sir Aston Webb any reputation for wit.

Curiously enough, unlike painters, architects have seldom been remarkable for this quality; while Whistler, Degas and Ingres, to name but a few, have all been celebrated for their *bons mots*; one can think of no architect who has ever attained a comparable fame. However, it is possible that their humorous talents were only displayed to small and exclusive circles and that we may still be surprised, and gratified, to learn that Sir Gilbert Scott had an inexhaustible fund of limericks and that Viollet-le-Duc's animal imitations were the delight of the Tuilleries.

Open Spaces

Once more Parliament Square is in the news. The dreary and completely uninteresting group of buildings in the north-west corner is at last doomed, and a chance now occurs of acquiring the site as an open space; a chance which will never recur in our lifetimes. Since the George V. Memorial scheme fracas an idea seems to have gained ground that it was too late to attempt to create a really dignified open space in the centre of the capital, but this is by no means the case. The L.C.C., the Middlesex County Council and various other bodies have allocated substantial sums towards the acquisition of the site and it only now needs a comparatively small government grant to see this admirable scheme an accomplished fact.

If the War Office, at a time of enormous military expenditure, are of the opinion that the moment has arrived

WELLINGTON BARRACKS, ST. JAMES'S PARK

THREATENED WITH DESTRUCTION

The Wellington Barracks, on the south side of St. James's Park, is the latest London building of the eighteenth or early nineteenth century to be threatened with destruction. The authority anxious to destroy it is in this case not a speculative builder but the War Office. The accommodation the barracks provides is out-of-date, though it is said that the necessary modernization could be satisfactorily carried out by rebuilding behind the existing façade. The building is not one of outstanding architectural merit, though it is a decent example of the neo-grec idiom of its day. Its value lies in its eminent suitability to its site, balancing Carlton House Terrace across the Park and framing with it the forecourt to Buckingham Palace. This aspect of the question, and the history of the building, is discussed in a note on this page. It is understood that the design for the building that would replace it in the event of its destruction being unavoidable has been submitted to the Royal Fine Arts Commission, whose report will have been published in time for comment in next month's issue.

to replace the Wellington barracks, surely the Chancellor of the Exchequer can spare the cost of half-a-dozen shells to increase the amenities and dignity of the capital.

As one of the chief results of the above scheme, if it is carried through, will be to expose the façade of the Middlesex Guildhall to a wider horizon, the following elegant description of its beauties, culled from the *Children's Encyclopædia* may perhaps be of interest. But let it not discourage anyone from supporting the scheme itself.

" But the queen of the Guildhalls in London stands out of the city and faces the Westminster Towers. This is the Middlesex Guildhall in Parliament Square, built by Mr. T. S. Gibson in our own time, finished in the year before the Great War. Already the London grime is staining its fair and lovely shapes, but it is nevertheless an abiding joy. To walk round the building and see it alone, taking no heed of surroundings, is to be transplanted to another world. Numberless little figures, carved by Mr. M. C. Fehr, are poised over its windows and doors, and take us from one realm of imagery to another. It seemed that the architect wanted to place in that solemn square, charged with heavy history, something of the lovableness of life and the happiness of fairy tales. Before some of our great buildings we stand in awe and reverie; in the presence of this our hearts grow warm, and we want to say as we pass on, ' Good-bye beautiful house. I shall not see anything so dear until I come this way again.'

The makers of London have changed the face of the capital during the last and present generations."

Down to Brass Tacks

The following passage is taken from an article by the Rt. Hon. Herbert Morrison, M.P., in the Christmas number of the *Geographical Magazine*, entitled " Plans for London " :—

THE GREAT OBSTACLE

" But in the way of the successful accomplishment of nearly all these schemes—slum-clearance, the Bressey report, the Green Belt, the preservation of amenities, though more particularly in the case of the first three—there stands one great stumbling-block, namely, the present system of land-tenure. At the present moment the L.C.C. owns about four per cent. of the total area of land in Greater London (about ten per cent. of its own area), and this proportion increases very slowly as time goes on. It is worth pointing out, on the other hand, to those who regard the acquisition of land by the L.C.C. as a piece of the grossest Socialist robbery, that the City Corporation, that home of Conservatism, and its associated bodies own a substantial area within and without the City of London—and there are no Dukes between Temple Bar and Aldersgate."

Wellington Barracks

It was with rather more than the usual shock that we learnt that the Wellington Barracks were the latest addition to the list of buildings to be swept away to clear a path for the chariot of progress. Not that it can seriously be maintained that they are an irreplaceable part of our national architectural heritage, but because they had earned a justifiably high place in our affections through their meritorious inconspicuousness and good manners. With regard to the exterior, at least, one can truly say that they admirably exemplify the virtues of " fitness for purpose "; no better background could be imagined for the parade ground manœuvrings of red-coated guards than these stern, unadorned neo-grec façades. That any building likely to arise on its site will fulfil so delicate and necessary a purpose with anything like the same discretion and satisfaction is a hope which nothing in the study of recent London architecture encourages one to entertain.

Around the origin of the present buildings there exists something of a mystery. It has been confidently stated recently in several serious publications that they were erected in 1814. The only discoverable grounds for such an assertion rest on a statement in an early guide book that the barracks in St. James's Park were first occupied in the year before Waterloo. That these were the buildings we see today seems in view of their style highly unlikely. What we do know is that until 1814 an armoury, a building of one storey in the Chinese style, raised on arches to permit the passage of pieces of ordnance, stood on the corner of Birdcage Walk, and, one cannot help regretting, was then pulled down to make way for new buildings in almost certainly a more utilitarian style. That these are the buildings we see today seems in the highest degree improbable, and the more usually accepted date for their erection 1834. As for the name of the architect even less information is available, but the most likely choice appears to be Sanders, who was at that time architect to the War Office and responsible for much of the work at Sandhurst. The name of Pennethorne has also been mentioned in this connexion, solely one imagines on the ground that he was then architect to the Office of Works. A third possibility is that the present buildings were erected to the plans of an anonymous officer of the Royal Engineers.

However our ignorance appears to be scarcely more profound than that of contemporary writers, who in one case at least, felt themselves to be freed from any restraint in criticism on the grounds that the architect had not come forward to put his name to his works, and went so far as to accuse him of having been guilty, in the Chapel, of the grossest violation of the Order in which it was built. Of the justice or otherwise of his criticism one is not today in a position to judge, as the Chapel was largely rebuilt by Street in 1877, who completely remodelled the interior and closed up the whole of the lower range of windows on both north and south walls.

However, whatever the violation of the Orders involved, the Wellington Barracks remains a pleasant and inoffensive building (which incidentally would show to even greater effect and make a better pendant to Carlton House Terrace across the park were they painted in cream colour, rather than

the dingy field grey they boast at present) and the prospect of their demolition and probable replacement by some red brick structure in Office of Works Queen Anne, is not one that we can face with any equanimity.

A Repository of History

When Professor Holford was composing the paper which he recently read to the R.I.B.A., under the title "The Next Twenty Years," he discovered an enlightening method of illustrating changes in architectural thought: that of quoting from different editions of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. We reprint below the portion of his paper in which he gives the results of this interesting research:

The article on "The Present Position of Architecture" in the ninth edition was contributed by George Edmund Street and Hayter Lewis. Speaking about places of business, they wrote:—

"We can at least say that the new work is an improvement upon the old. In no instance perhaps is the advance more to be noted than in the clubhouses and the great warehouses for storing the lighter class of goods."

(In parenthesis, I hope you have noticed the delightful implication that clubs stock only the heavier class of goods!)

"Our plan, too," they proceed, "of letting each owner build to a considerable extent according to his own design results in a more picturesque arrangement of our streets than those of a Continental town which usually present lines of uninteresting houses, all of much the same design. . . . In civic buildings, if we have not rivalled Ypres or Louvain, we have at least improved on the wretched civic buildings of the last century. . . . Our railway stations are in the main great vaults of glass on iron ribs. . . . The hotels which in most cases form the frontage of our stations, are, for the most part, worthy of the striking positions which they occupy; but they are chiefly by living architects, and so beyond the scope of our criticism."

The authors' speculations on the immediate future include the following paragraph:—

"If a church is to be built, we may safely predict that it will be in one of the many pointed styles. . . . One might also be tolerably sure that a monument to a distinguished person would not be a granite column with a staircase up the middle and a statue almost out of sight, with a lightning conductor through the head at the top, as at the Duke of York's column, London. But, short of this, almost any prediction as to the style might come true, and as nearly every building of note throughout the world is brought to the eyes of the public by means of engravings and photographs, there seems little chance of its being otherwise."

There you have, in Street's period prose, a glimpse of the architectural outlook of sixty years ago—the end of the Gothic revival and the beginning of eclecticism, pointed forms for churches and monuments, individualism in the streets, disparagement of the work of the immediately preceding period, the effects of photographs, and the seemly reticence about the work of living architects.

Our next step brings us to H. H. Statham in the eleventh and twelfth editions of the *Encyclopædia*, published a few years before and a few years after the war. The article is concluded in these words:—

"The separate development of a national style has become almost an impossibility. . . . The civilized countries have almost with one consent returned, in the main, to the adoption of a school of architecture based on classic types. The taste for medievalism is dying out even in Great Britain, which has been its chief stronghold. . . . What course the future of modern architecture will take it is not easy to prophesy. What is quite certain is that it is now an individual art, each important building being the production . . . of a personal designer. . . . Two influences may have a definite effect on the architecture of the near future. One of these is the possible greater *rapprochement* between architecture and engineering of which there are already some signs to be seen. . . . The other lies in the closer connexion between architecture and the allied arts, so that an important building will be regarded and treated as a field for the application of decorative sculpture and painting of the highest class."

You will notice the change of emphasis and the use of the words "modern architecture." The unfortunate gap between the architectural and engineering professions is being bridged, industrial and commercial buildings have thrown their weight on the side of the revival of the classic style, personality and a hint of *art nouveau* are introduced, and cosmopolitan architecture reigns supreme.

The most recent edition of the *Encyclopædia* (the fourteenth) changes all that. The article is written in a brisk American style and is copiously illustrated by views of skyscrapers and visions of the city of the future. "The problem that architecture sets itself," says Mr. Harvey W. Corbett, "is how best to enclose space for human occupancy. For early attempts at a solution see *Archæology*."

He then goes on to deal with construction and design:—

"The transition of steel from merely strengthening stone to carrying the masonry load at each floor was the most momentous step in the history of architecture since the days of Rome. . . . It is now the accepted method of construction. Artistically, architecture is the result of a search and struggle for beauty . . . the architect is a sculptor in building masses. . . . With the concentration of population in cities, city architecture became the art's most important phase, and the architect is now called on to help to solve many problems not properly his own (see *Town Planning*)."

The architect of Bush House goes even farther than his predecessors in the matter of a national style. "Science," he says, "has knit all parts of the world so closely together, and so reduced time and distance, that for any nation to develop a purely indigenous architecture would mean that the material and spiritual status of its people had been untouched by modern inventions."

And he concludes: "Architecture was at a low ebb throughout the nineteenth century . . . a period that today seems to have been compounded of pompous and complacent materialism. . . . Modern architecture is becoming more truly expressive of contemporary culture; changes indicate that a new flowering of the

PROGRESS AT THE WORLD FAIR

The construction of the New York World Fair, which opens next April, is in full swing. The numbers on various sites in the above recent photograph, are: 1, United States Federal Building, with the Halls of Nations extending toward the lagoon, all partly enclosed over steel; 2, The Court of Peace; 3, Canada, foundations started; 4, Argentina, foundations started; 5, Norway, foundations started; 6, Eire, foundations started; 7, Roumania, up in steel; 8, U.S.S.R., foundations completed; 9, Czechoslovakia; 10, Japan, foundations started; 11, Belgium, steel partly enclosed; 12, Sweden, foundations started; 13, Turkey, foundations started; 14, Lagoon of Nations; 15, France, steel being erected; 16, Brazil, foundations started; 17, British Empire, steel completed; 18, Italy, steel completed; 19, Chile, foundations started; 20, League of Nations; 21, Portugal; 22, Venezuela; 23, Poland, foundations started; 24, Netherlands, foundations started; 25, Switzerland. In the foreground are shown exposition buildings and those of private exhibitors, many in an advanced state and ready for interior decoration.

ANIMAL LIFE IN APPLIED ART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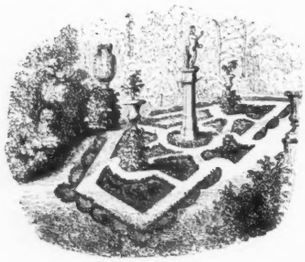
The large number of animal motifs in stone, cast iron and a variety of other materials scattered about London, although a constant joy to animal-loving children, is perhaps by the adult public rather underestimated. Above are reproduced seven of the most striking examples. Readers are invited to guess their whereabouts. The answers will be found printed at the bottom of this page.

Renaissance is not impossible. The demand for beauty is growing on every side. . . . It may well be that the interest taken from the fine arts by printing will be returned to them by this reasserted will to have things beautiful—and by the accomplishments of the machine."

It is curious, is it not, with what assurance each generation treads on the neck of the previous one to justify itself and climb to its place in the sun. Already one can watch the revolt from many of the tendencies that are pointed out with such pride in this article—specialization, the neat pigeon-holing of function and beauty in separate compartments, the universal applicability of steel construction, the wholly beneficent nature of all inventions, especially mechanical ones, and the business man's faith in bigger and more congested cities.



The Engravings

The vignettes dividing the various paragraphs on these pages are taken from Loudon's "Villa Gardener," 1850. This noble work was a reprint of the same author's celebrated book on Suburban Gardens edited by his talented widow. A large number of the illustrations first appeared in the "Gardeners' Magazine."

Readers of the article under the above heading, beginning on page 23, will probably have discovered that the Island described is the Isle of Man, a British Possession that retains a remarkable degree of unique and even exotic character considering that it is only 75 miles from Liverpool.

The drawings and most of the photographs that illustrate the article are by Messrs. J. A. Ashworth and T. Mellor, the authors of the survey referred to on the first page. They are reproduced anonymously as their purpose is chiefly to indicate the natural and architectural characteristics of the Island, but for those whose curiosity demands a more specific identification the following descriptions are added.

Page 23: at the foot of the page is an early eighteenth century print of Douglas, taken from the south.

Page 24: the two circular photographs show Peel Castle and Douglas Harbour; and the group of photographs illustrating native architecture show, from left to right, Maughold Church, Queen Street, Castletown, Ballasalla, Garwick Village and Eairy.

Page 25 (right-hand side), top row: lighthouse on Peel jetty, Garwick Mill and Laxey water wheel; middle row: Ballavitchell farm in Marown parish, a cottage on the Northern plain and the village of Craig-Neash; bottom row: a farm at Crogga, a farm near Maughold, Rushen Parish Church and a Street in Peel.

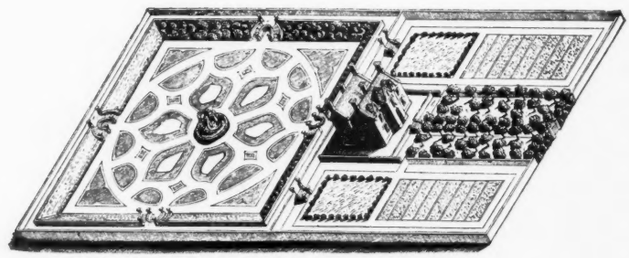
Page 26: the landscape photograph at the top is taken looking towards the Point of Ayre from the head of Druidale, and the group of photographs at the bottom show the view north from the summit of Snaefell, the "Plains of Heaven" in the central valley, rocks at Port Soderick and the view south from Maughold Head.

Page 27: the group of churches consists of, top, Santon Parish Church, bottom left, St. Marks Village Church, bottom right, Rushen Parish Church; the drawing in the top right-hand corner is of Ballaugh Church, and the boarding house is at Port-St.-Mary.

Page 28: the single photograph at the top shows the "House of Industry" at Douglas. The upper group of illustrations shows the Market Square at Castletown, a street of yellow and red brick houses in Hilary Park, Douglas, Douglas Head Marine Drive and typical boarding-houses on the Douglas promenade. Alongside is a sketch of the Early English clock-tower at Douglas. At the bottom of the page are, top row, The Smelt, and Coastal Development near Kentraugh; bottom row, typical semi-detached villa near Colby, amusements on Onchan Head and a general view of Port Soderick.

Acknowledgement

The photographs of Fritz Spanjaard's work on the New Dutch liner, the *Nieuw Amsterdam*, reproduced in a recent issue of THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW, were taken by Erna Fernhout-Besnjö.



The examples of animal life in applied art illustrated at the top of this page are located in London as follows: 1, the Natural History Museum, South Kensington; 2, the Zoological Gardens, Regent's Park; 3, Messrs. Marks & Spencer's, Oxford Street; 4, the Victoria Embankment; 5, the Natural History Museum, South Kensington; 6, South Africa House; 7, the Victoria Embankment. The camel seats, 4, were the gift of the Grocer's Company.