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No. 527

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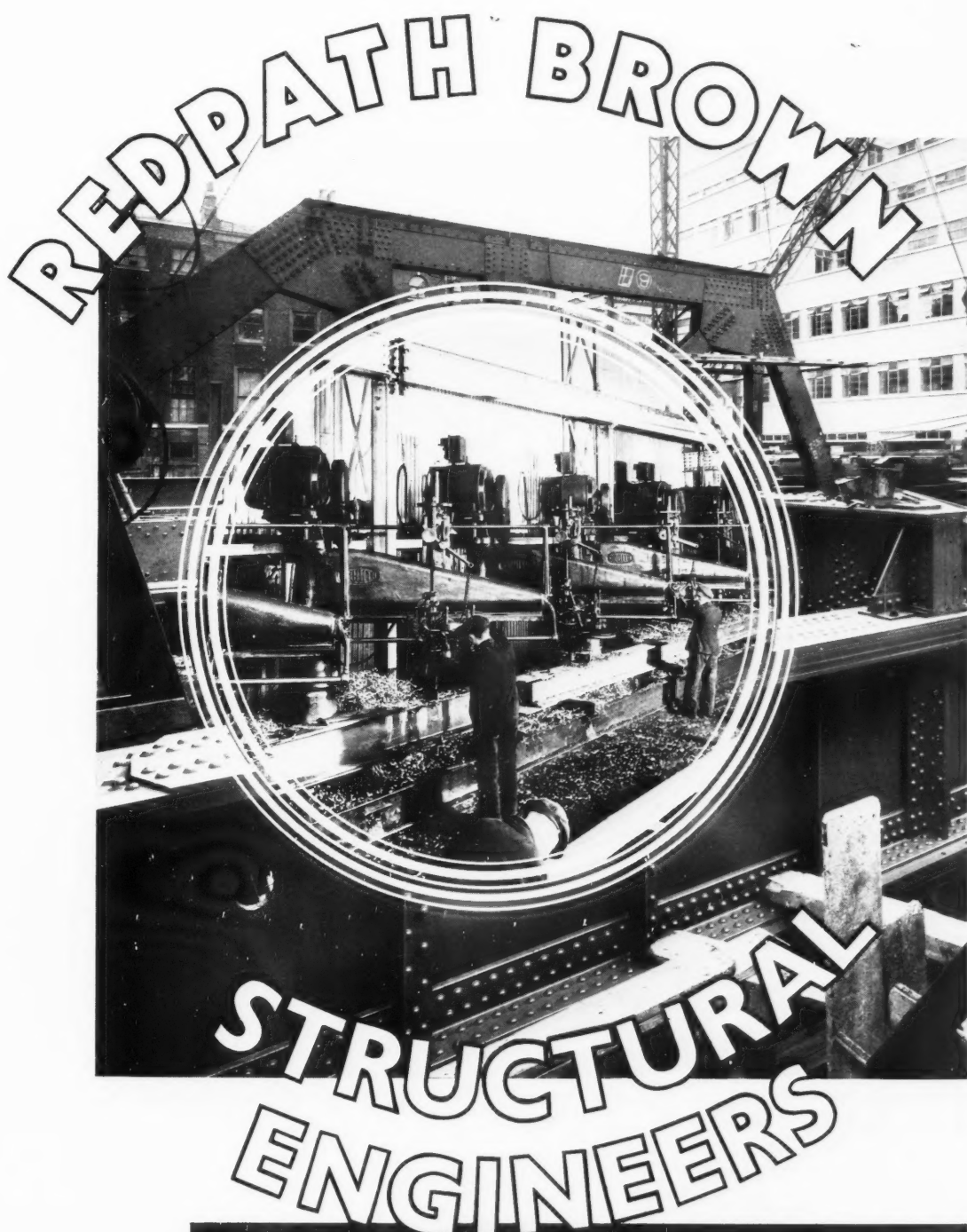
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THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

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VOL. LXXXVIII No. 527

October 1940

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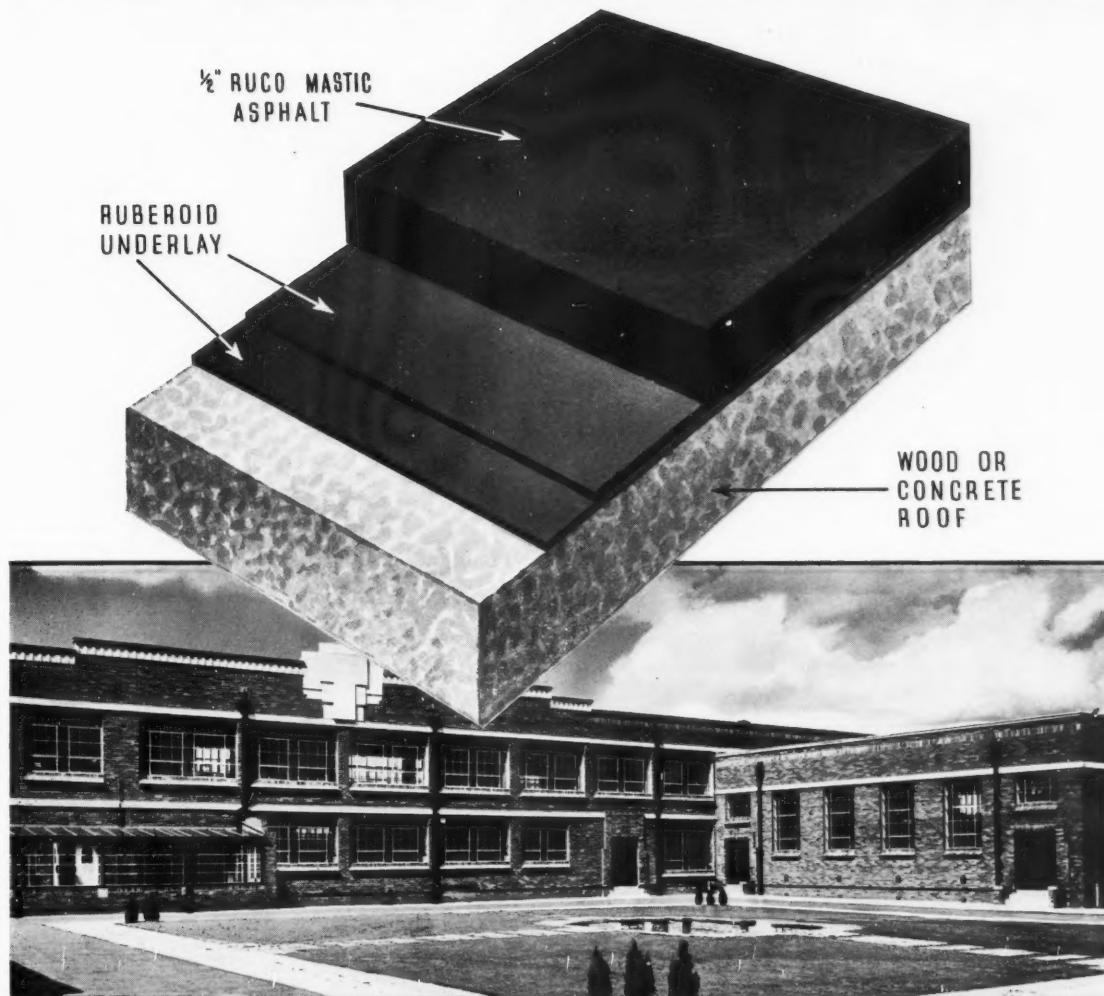
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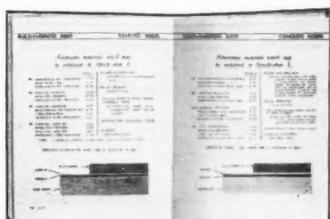
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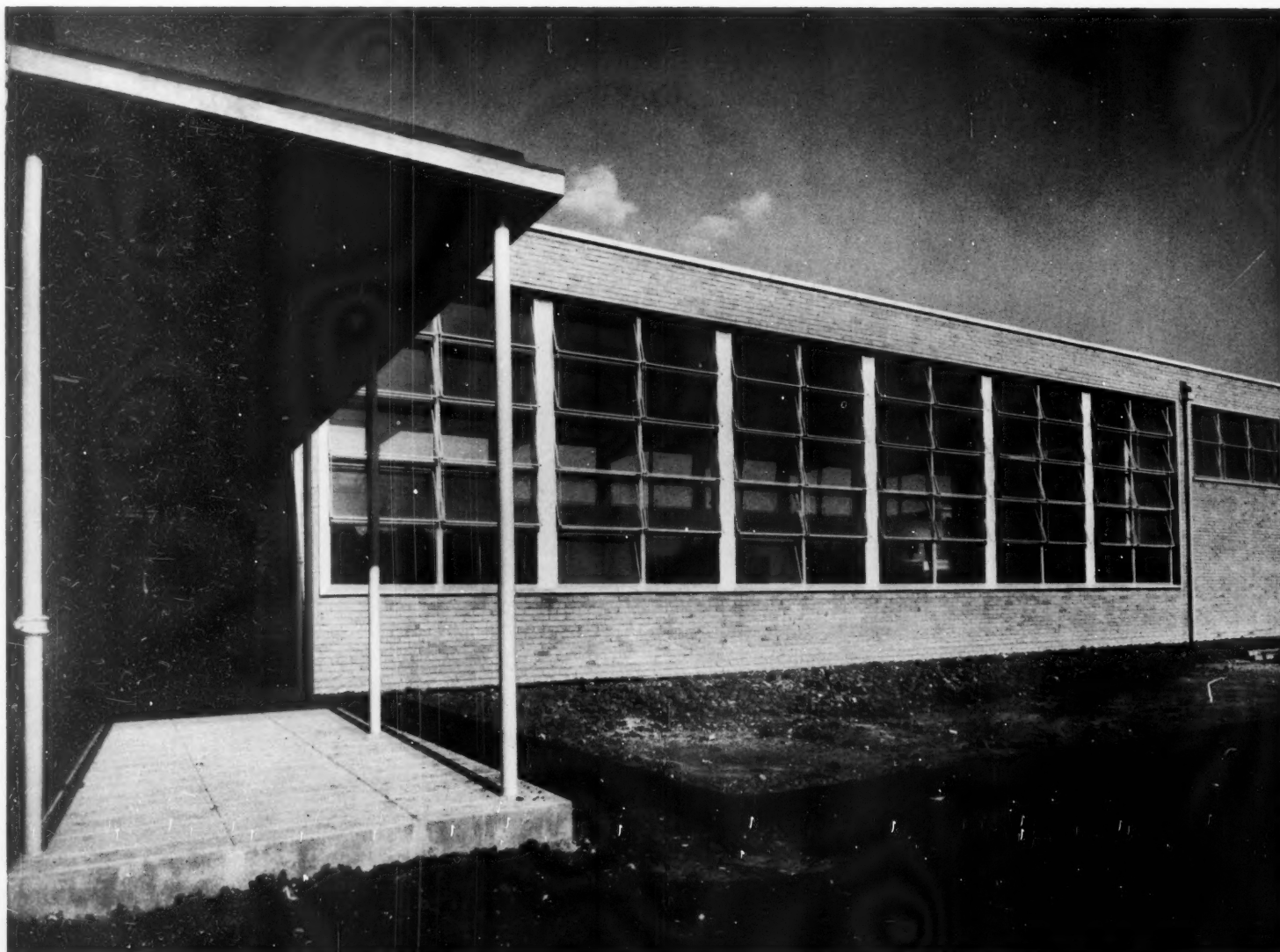
(illustrated on pages 101-105)

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During recent years what almost amounts to a revolution has taken place in school design. Despite the opportunities modern architectural technique offered of providing the light airy buildings that educational needs obviously demanded, schools were until lately among the most backward building categories in the country. But it is fortunate that the immense programme of new school building occasioned by recent educational reforms following the publication of the Hadow Report has coincided with a timely, if belated, recognition on the part of Education Authorities of the great contribution modern architecture might make to the improved educational system they were planning. Schools are being built all over the country which, if not beyond criticism, represent an immeasurable advance beyond the gloomy barrack-like Council School of a

generation ago. Two of them, both only just completed, are illustrated in this issue. What is important to note is that these excellent buildings are not freakish ventures by progressive private schools but are ordinary state elementary schools designed as part of the normal school building programme, in one case by a private firm of architects, in the other by an official architect. The three points where improvement is most noticeable are the free, open planning—usually all on one level, the admission of the maximum light and air and the recognition that education is not a fixed but a constantly changing thing and that flexible planning is accordingly essential. Above is the assembly hall and pupils' entrance of one of the two schools illustrated on pages 101-108. It is at Guildford, and the architects were Leslie Hiscock and Duncan Scott.

A NEW STANDARD IN SCHOOL BUILDINGS

Roger Fry: a summing up*

By R. Ironside

IT is agreed by those who heard him that Roger Fry's brilliance and persuasiveness as a lecturer on art would have been remarkable even if, as one would wish, the competition in that field were greater than it is; the story of his career, as told by Virginia Woolf, reveals him as pre-eminently a speaker. The exploratory, experimental character of his writing suggests the need at each stage in the progression of his argument for the telepathic assent or expostulation of an audience, if not for the vocal comment of a companion. Something, certainly, of the urgency of his voice can be sensed in the pages of his essays, but the force with which he held his views at a given moment no longer has the same power to beguile. His readers are asked to test a theory; they cannot, in the same measure as his listeners, enjoy a sensibility, so much, it would appear, was this an emanation of his physical presence.

Ruskin's more inspired passages, which Fry (whose use of clichés, often, indeed, of his own devising, was fearless and disarming), might have classed as "purple," were the complete antithesis of the careful and surprisingly consistent discussions of which *Vision and Design* is mainly composed. The sincere critic must at times be inconsistent, and it seems clear that Roger Fry did not wittingly attempt to modify the variety of his aesthetic experience to suit any pre-conceived theory. The transformations, however, took place within definable limits. He habitually found an explanation for his excitement in his response to the grasp of form, to the excellence of design, to the quality of colour (where it assisted form), displayed in a particular work. The satisfactory apprehension and isolation of these qualities, ignoring, if not belittling, all those others which most works of art so obviously embody, was, he felt, the essential task of the art critic. Acting on experience, he was rarely prompted, and probably never tempted, to seek the ultimate significance of a picture beyond those limits. The contrast of recession and projection, the interplay of planes, the progression of form sequences, composed for him a "music and a melody," and their coalescence into an ordered unity had the power to satisfy and elate him in much the same way, it seems, as the demonstration of a complex mathematical equation may be exhilarating to a mathematician. "I can well remember," he said, "when I first understood the implications of the statement that two and

two make four, I had . . . a shock of pleasure." His critical attitude was noticeably the reflection of his scientific training and of an inherited scientific bent.

Convinced that his reaction to a work of art was above all a reaction to an abstract formal relationship and not to less inhuman factors, he was bound to postulate the existence of a pure aesthetic emotion. The nature and potency of the reaction could hardly be classified in any other way. His response to a picture or a statue might be spiritual, a word he used to describe "those human faculties which are over and above our mere existence as living organisms." It was certainly also amoral; his doctrine was really one of art for art's sake in which the values which might properly be considered as art were confined within a narrow, but in his view a pure, scale. The doctrine was the more attractive for being capable of universal application. Formal values of a kind are present willy-nilly in all works of art. It was plausible to assume that the powerful responses they provoked were of a purely aesthetic character, divorced as, of course, they were from commonplace human emotions, gaiety or melancholy for instance, which may or may not be present in a particular work and consequently are no key to artistic excellence.

The flaws in such a point of view are evident. The lofty functions it assigns to plastic formulae could only be magically bestowed. To believe in them requires belief of a mystical kind. We may enjoy, for its own sake, the interplay of shapes in a picture, statue or building, but, even if we are more susceptible to such pleasures than, for example, to those which may be conveyed by the artist's interpretation of his subject, that is not a valid reason for supposing that the quality of a work of art is revealed exclusively in its formal harmonies or discords. We cannot, to begin with, be certain that it is at all possible to isolate these values from others, to consider them in a void apart from the natural objects they may serve to describe; and assuming such a separation to be possible it could only be undertaken on quite arbitrary grounds. Moreover the intrinsic value of a formal arrangement is ultimately quite imponderable. No test of excellence is possible on this basis, unless we are to submit ourselves to the dictates of a priest in the matter, accepting his views of what constitutes and what does not constitute a satisfactory formal

relationship. Without a magical belief in the supreme importance of "plasticity" in a work of art, in the obvious absence of any rational means of determining what shapes have aesthetic merit and what have not, the whole point of view must appear somewhat arid and unmanageable.

The earnestness of Roger Fry's belief in the peculiar power of formal values to move us aesthetically will not be called in question, but we must deplore the self-denying ordinance which limited the field of true aesthetic experience to their action. It would be intolerable to have to believe that our aesthetic responses to *Sacred and Profane Love*, Correggio's *Danae* or Rouen Cathedral were, or ought to be, the result merely of some formal equilibrium. Yet Roger Fry discounts the work of Turner in its final and most lovely phase on the grounds that it is "unsupported by any structural unity," asks us to consider the rhythm of a few sweeping diagonals in an El Greco as directly exciting and only to "tolerate the gloomy and terrible extravagance of El Greco's melodrama." Effective appeals do occur, throughout his criticism, to emotions less specialized than those stimulated by a harmonious arrangements of shapes; he remained, however, until shortly before his death, fundamentally convinced that "the one constant and unchanging emotion before works of art had to do always with the contemplation of form and that this was more profound and significant spiritually than any of the emotions which had to do with life"; it was, he felt, purely aesthetic.

Roger Fry disliked mixed motives and impure desires in art; he seems to have wished our enjoyment of it to be of an almost ascetic kind. Emotions which had to do with life were trespassers upon the rather bleak Parnassus to which he had climbed. Though he admitted that the creation of an absolutely pure work of art in the sense he envisaged was improbable, it is extremely doubtful whether, as he positively asserted, art should even aspire to a condition of purity. The presence in art of mixed motives or impure desires need not be equivocal or deceptive. Indeed, one would have thought it quite evident that great works of art spring from a variety of impulses, that the whole range of human passions, aspirations and delights are open to them, that their forms and colours can simultaneously describe a gesture, express a state of mind, help out a design; their complex existence, conceived in the mind of a human personality, reflecting its qualities and eccentricities, cannot be distilled. Their very impurity might be said to be a vital attribute. We must admit that it seems

* What will presumably stand as the definitive biography of Roger Fry has just been published: "Roger Fry," by Virginia Woolf (London: The Hogarth Press. Price 12s. 6d.).

probable from his latest writings that Roger Fry would have modified, had he lived longer, this belief in a pure æsthetic emotion.

Fry's theories are chiefly valuable as a revelation of the means whereby a work of art may be produced, and not of the purposes it achieves; he demonstrates the workings of the machinery, but fails to clarify the functions of the product. His analyses of pictures are often intriguing answers to the questions "How does it work?" and "What is it made of?" We may ask, however, like the children in Beaudelaire's *Morale du Joujou* who break open their toys, "mais où est l'âme?" Fry himself claimed no more for his analyses of form lines, sequences, rhythms, etc., than that "they are merely aids for the uninitiated to attain to the contemplation of form." Form was for him the *soul* of the matter. Yet though this view is narrow and, without the help of faith, unpalatable, though we may feel with Beaudelaire's children that "c'est ici que commence l'hébétement et la tristesse," it need not prejudice the value and interest of Fry's analytical approach. He was capable as perhaps no other critic has been of unravelling the complications of a design, exploring the nature of a transition from one plane to another, of demonstrating the harmony and subtlety of a series of shapes which might appear clumsy to a less practised eye.

The widespread success of his essays, and lectures was due to the fervour with which he presented his ideas, to the impression he gave, and meant to give, that he was initiating his audience into the delights of a sixth sense, to the scientific flavour, doubtless, of his arguments upon a question hitherto treated in a more romantic manner, but it was also due to what was evidently a most acute sensibility to the structure of a work of art, to the mechanism which brings it into being; he was able to expose, so to speak, the physical processes of a picture. The fascination of his empirical approach smoothed the way to the acceptance of his arbitrary deductions. The effects of his success seem today to have been profound. The whole attitude of the public interested in art has been transformed under his guidance. The day dreams, the nostalgic associations which a picture might suggest, and which Roger Fry detested, have been swept aside. Fry's terminology has become a commonplace in criticism. Art history is now normally taught with emphasis on the elements to be valued; and the artists to whom he reacted most vividly and to whom, therefore, he felt his theories to be specially applicable, have been accepted with admiration by a public who were certainly not predisposed to appreciate them. If he did not actually force the trend of taste in this country, he continually expressed and directed it.

His early preferences in art were not relatively of a startling kind. Raphael and the Italian painters of the Renaissance first engrossed him. Among the moderns, he admired Watts and felt, in common with enlightened opinion of the time, that the torch of progress was in the hands of the social realists of the New English Art Club. It was not until, rather belatedly, towards 1910, he lit upon the achievements of modern French art, that his magic power as an advocate began to be fully displayed. The force of his pleading thrived upon the outraged opposition which greeted his introduction of the independent art of France to the London public. The repute he had already acquired as a picture expert and art historian further assisted his case, compelling some sort of serious attention and adding almost an element of scandal to the new found

enthusiasm. It is to be regretted that this enthusiasm was not in fact supported by any clear historical grasp of the origins and tendencies of modern French painting. The famous exhibition of 1910, called "Manet and the Post-Impressionists," of which Roger Fry was one of the chief movers, unveiled a world of beauty of which the public in this country, and many of the painters, had hitherto been barely aware. The word "post-impressionist" was, we are told by Virginia Wolfe, suggested by a journalist; it was accepted and persistently employed by Roger Fry and has now passed into the national usage. It is due to him that everyone interested in painting is familiar with the term "post-impressionism" as designating an artistic movement. There are, however, only the faintest grounds for conceiving that such a movement ever took place. The art assembled under this mantle, with Roger Fry in the role of Schutz-Madonna, included such disparate, even conflicting, forces as Cézanne, Gauguin, Redon, Matisse, Denis and Picasso. Stanley Spencer and Van Dongen were among those who joined the group in 1912. The link with Manet, implied in the title of the first exhibition, provided a fitting *soubassement* to this august Babel.

It will not be thought pedantic in this case to attach importance to the inaccuracy of a label; the word "post-impressionism" was used to propagate a misconception of the character and motives of the painters concerned. The pretext for the misconception was offered by the genius of Cézanne; his preoccupation with the treatment of solid form, his means of rendering it without obvious recourse to the method of chiaroscuro (rejected by the impressionists) were taken to be the springs whence "post-impressionism" flowed. One is tempted to take the view, such was the influence of Roger Fry's enthusiasm for Cézanne, that the true practitioners of "post-impressionism" are such artists as Duncan Grant, Vanessa Bell, Frederick Porter and Fry himself. In this sense, the movement had one source in Fry's penetrating but narrow analysis of Cézanne's manner. Fry is reported to have declared that Flaubert and Cézanne were the same, an opinion which has since been expressed less positively by Venturi. Fry, however, evidently forgot that both Flaubert and Cézanne were the authors of a *Temptation of St. Anthony*. As in so much of his criticism, he treats the structure, the scaffolding, of Cézanne's productions as the very essence of his inspiration. The formal subtleties of Cézanne's manner contribute, doubtless, in a quite special way to his effects; but, though the principles of Cubism are implicit in some of his pictures, it is quite misleading to father his patient manipulation of volume upon the symbolists. In 1910, English painters were barely beginning to chew the cud of impressionism. The flood of new ideas, each one heavy with the possibilities of development and exploitation, presented by the "Post Impressionist" Exhibition proved difficult to digest. Fry's championship of the art of Cézanne in its formal aspects, as the key to the whole revelation, must have hampered any instinctive response to the different romantic, if not literary, impulses behind the art of Gauguin and Redon; impulses which, it might be thought, were more nearly akin to the English genius. In view of the inclusion in the exhibition not only of Gauguin, but of Redon and Picasso, the cause of Cézanne was almost a reactionary one.

It was, nevertheless, a desirable result to have compelled, on whatever grounds, a serious respect for these painters, even to have succeeded in canonizing the art of Cézanne in this country;

and, in doing so, to have made evident to large numbers of the public that it is not necessarily a function of painting to imitate natural appearances. In fact, the struggle he conducted was, in the last resort, valuable and useful as a struggle against philistinism, not as a struggle for "post-impressionism."

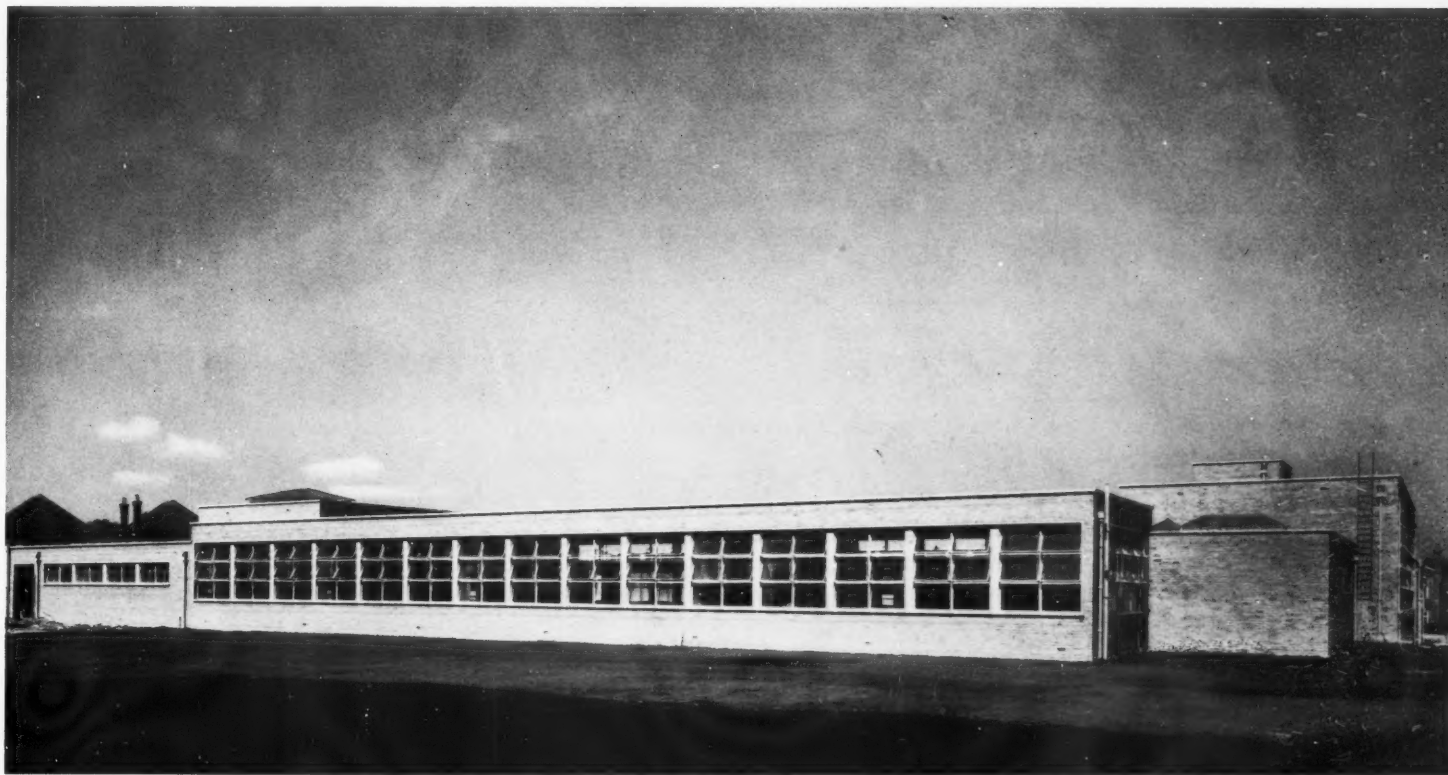
Fry's criticism and its influence extended over the whole field of artistic activity; though it was to the consideration of painting that he usually preferred to apply his powers, he responded to pots, textiles and furniture in fundamentally the same manner as he did to the most illustrious pictures. His views must have assisted the "healthy" tendency which still characterizes the applied arts to attend to the harmonious shape of an object rather than to the problems of ornamentation. His practical efforts, however, to help the artists he admired by organizing them to produce industrial art met with early but not lasting success. William Morris and Co. continued to attract custom long after the Omega workshops had closed. Of architecture, it is surprising that he wrote so little; he loved structure in a picture and treated the problem of painting almost as an architectural one. Buildings are peculiarly adaptable to the type of analysis he was more accustomed to devote to an apple or a bottle by Cézanne. His account of Durham Cathedral or the Pitti Palace would, one must believe, have been most stimulating and instructive, if conducted in that manner. His Essay, *Towards a Possible Domestic Architecture*, is a disappointing fragment. He deals too exclusively with the fulfilment of his unaccountable desire to build himself a town house in the country. The forbidding and incongruous aspect of "Durbins," reproduced by Virginia Wolfe in her biography, is proof of his success. The general recommendations included in the essay are now popularly accepted if not practically followed. The architects' search for a new "old style," however, has perhaps already been too emphatically decried; that genuine style may be sought in the architects' "careful choice of proportions within the limits defined by the needs of the owner," that it is through the architects' feeling "for the plastic relief of the whole surface" that a house may become a work of art—these are principles which ignore the element of ornament and the positive, æsthetic contribution which purely adventitious fantasy in the shape of a building may afford; and to frown upon the "gentleman's house" could only be justifiable in our own and recent times. But we should recall that it was against the usual vulgarity of late Victorian and modern domestic architecture that his strictures here were directed.

It is chiefly as a force contributing powerfully during his lifetime to the elimination of what was feeble, ostentatious and cheap, as a successful propagandist for the simple fact of the importance of the visual arts, that our agonized civilization owes Roger Fry some debt. It cannot be denied that a too eager acceptance of the articles of his faith led many people to a desert; but as many others went beyond it, those whose interests had first been aroused by his sense of the urgency and importance of his subject, who had been captivated by the deceptive simplicity with which he solved its problems and, pursuing these problems themselves, discovered the arid confines of his attitude. Among those who owe him most may be those who, having once surrendered to his lucid conduct of an argument, now reject him most emphatically—while still acknowledging and even venerating the independent value of such a quickening of the imaginative life as he produced, however transitory in its effects, however ultimately misdirected.

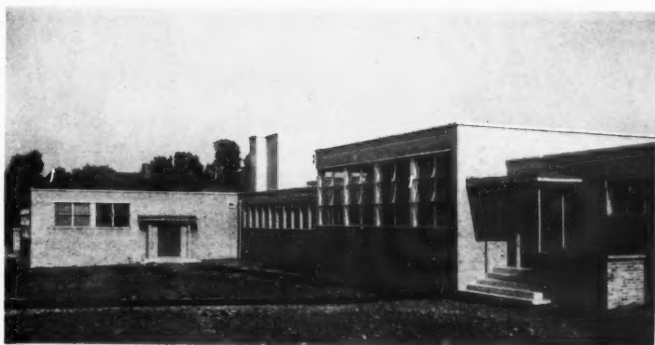
TWO ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

I SCHOOL AT GUILDFORD

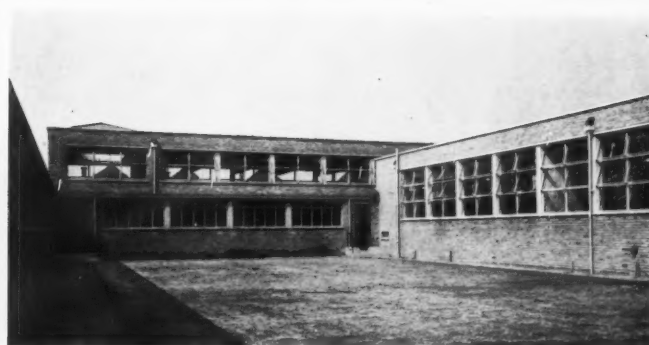
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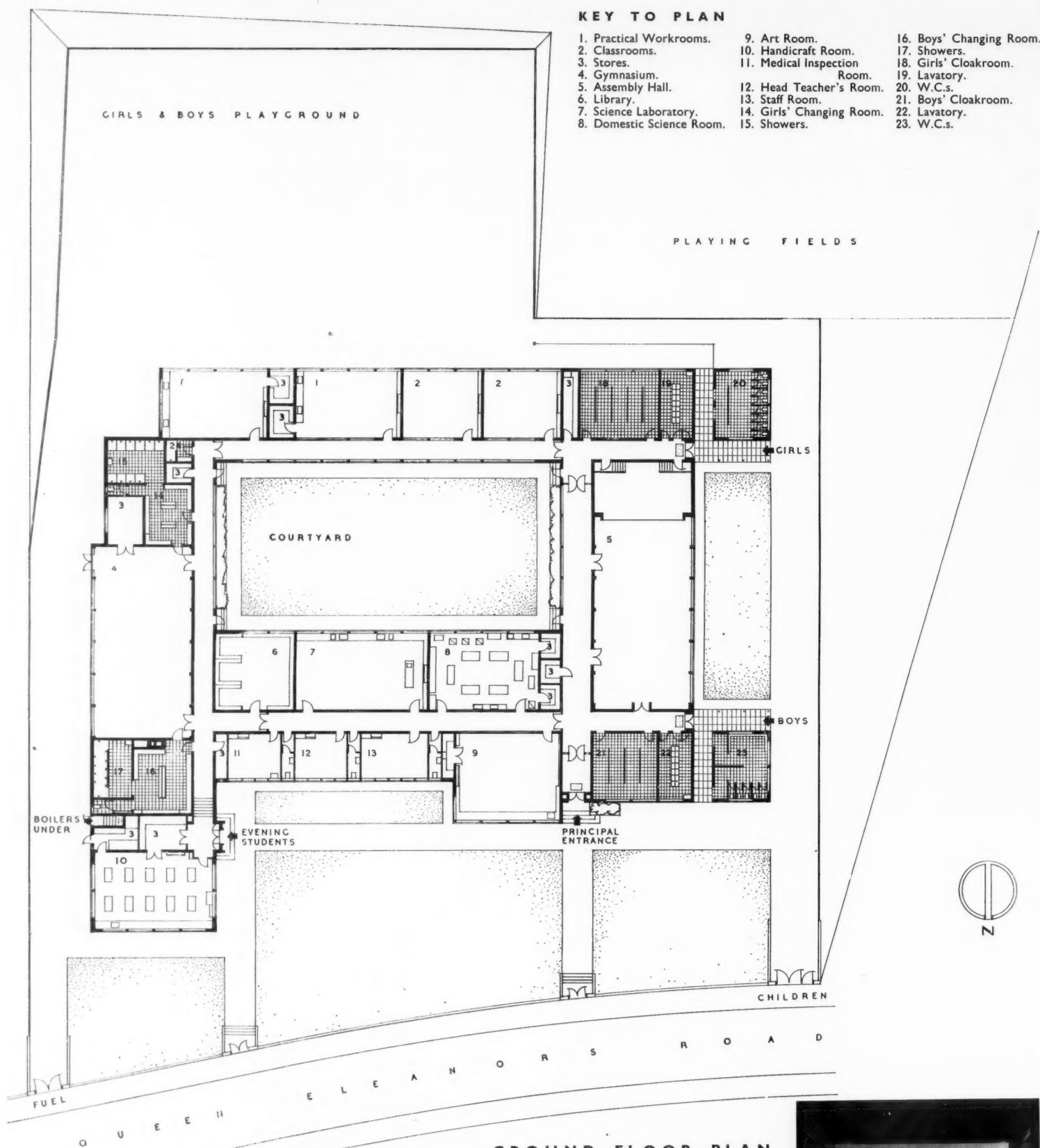
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1, the south side of the building seen from the playground, showing the continuous range of classroom windows. 2, from the road. The projecting block on the left is the handicraft room with its own entrance

for evening students, in the centre is the art room with the staff rooms alongside and on the right is the main entrance. 3, the courtyard looking towards the assembly hall.

This building is part of a scheme for the re-organization of the public Elementary Schools in the Guildford "Town" area. It is a mixed Senior School with accommodation for 280 to 320 pupils, but in conformity with up-to-date educational practice the County Education Authority also intend that the buildings shall be used by young people of the neighbourhood for social and recreational activities, and the planning has been done with this in view.

The site is one of $5\frac{1}{2}$ acres and lies about three quarters of a mile from the centre of the town, near the new cathedral. The site sloped towards the road on the north side, but had two fairly level areas, a large one at the rear, which is occupied by playing fields, and a smaller one at the front, on which the building has been placed. All the accommodation is at one level, planned round a central courtyard. It is divided into four main parts. First, the hall suite comprising hall, stage, cloakrooms, etc. Here are the pupils' entrances, on either side of the hall. This is the unit that is planned for use independently of the main school for social purposes. Second, the gymnasium suite, comprising gymnasium, changing rooms, showers, handicraft room and library. This is placed on the east. The handicraft room is to the north of this unit, isolated to avoid noise penetrating to the other rooms. The library is placed close to this unit and has been planned on a



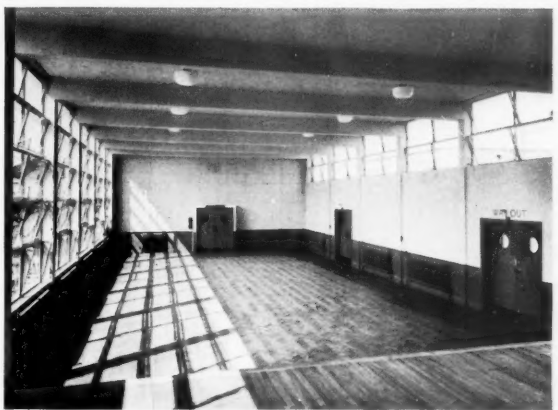
more complete basis than usual for a school to enable it to be used as a District Library for young people up to eighteen, under a scheme approved by the Libraries Committee of the Corporation. The whole of this unit can be similarly cut off from the remainder of the school. Third, the classroom block, containing two practical rooms and two classrooms, placed on the south side of the courtyard to obtain the correct south-east aspect. The domestic subjects and science rooms are placed on the north side of the courtyard, again facing south-east. Fourth, the staff rooms, leading off the corridor serving the science rooms and gymnasium and facing north. This staff room unit is within easy contact with both the main entrance and the entrance used by evening students. Cross-ventilation has been provided in every room.



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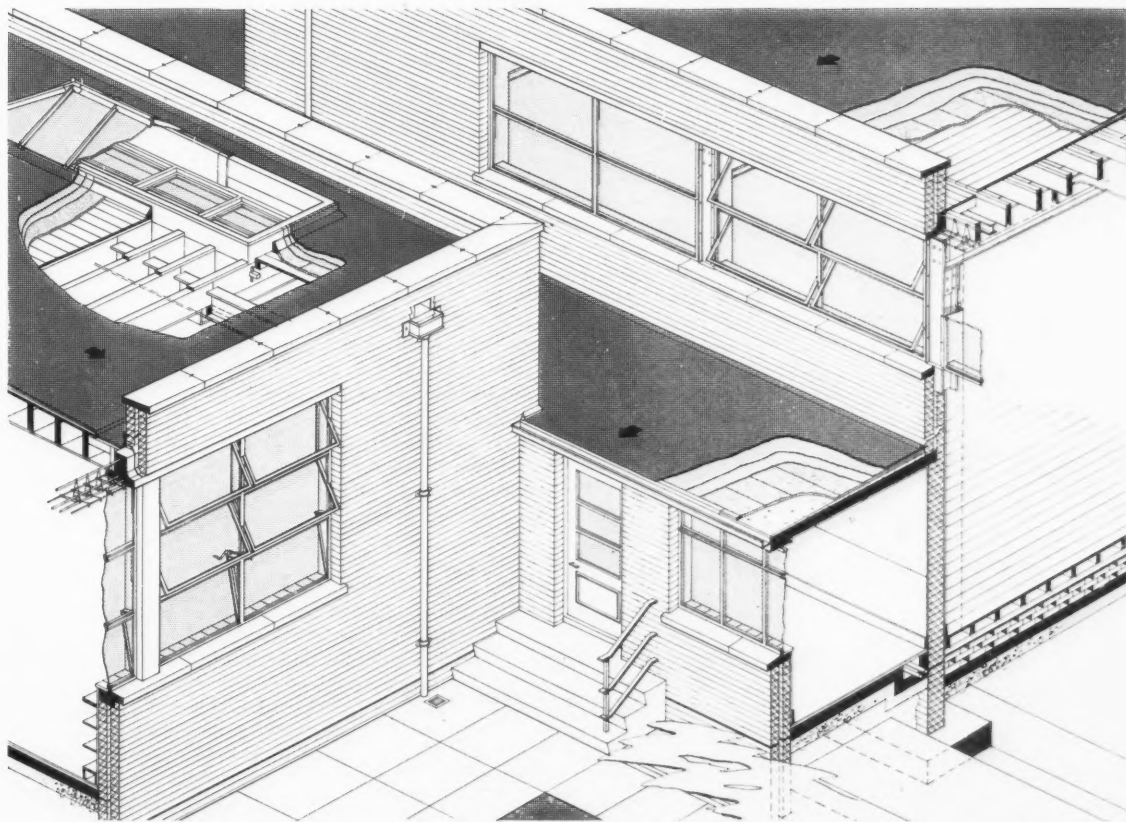


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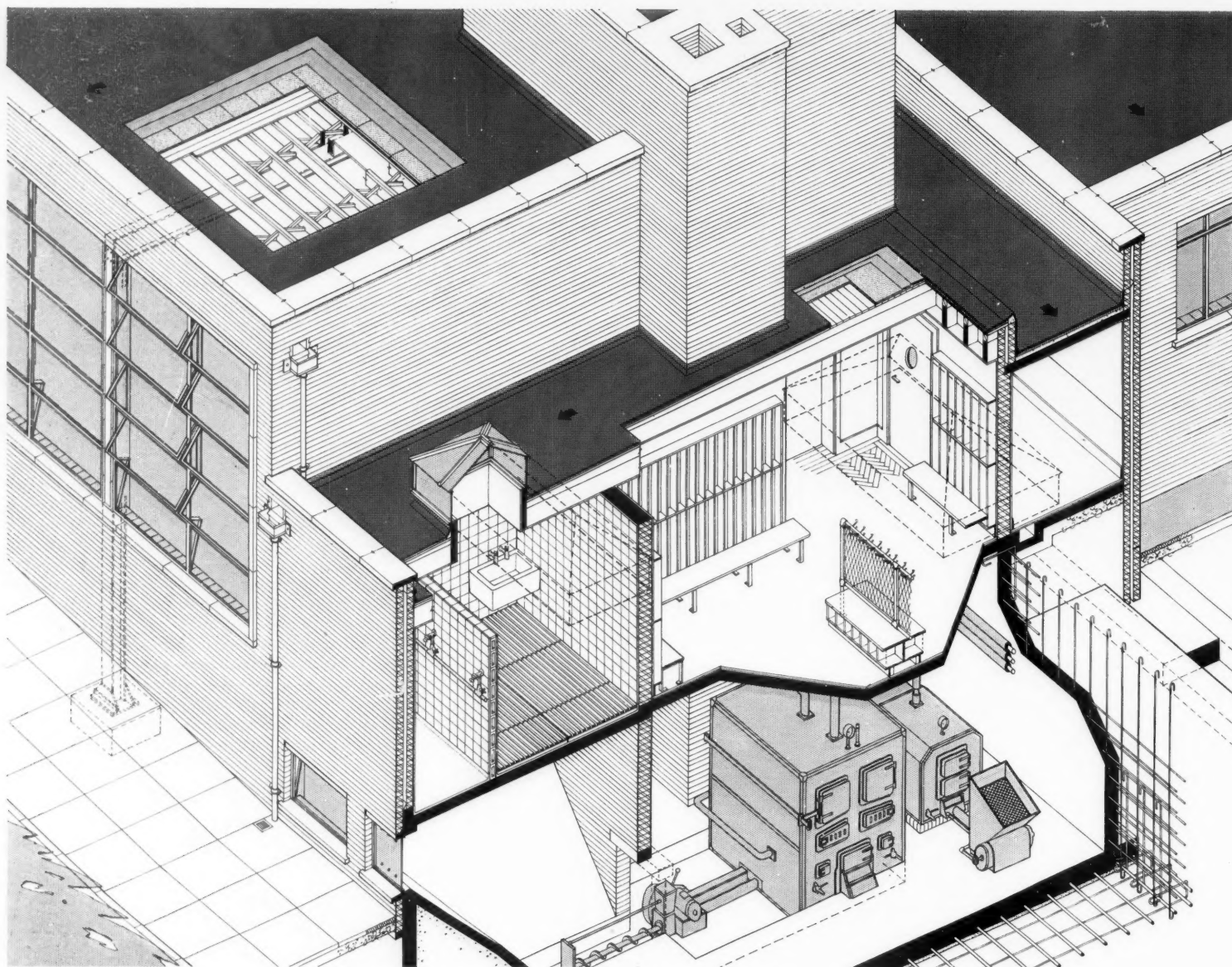


7

4 (facing page), looking down the school corridor. 5, the library, which is planned as a District Library as well as to serve school purposes. The fittings are in oak, wax polished. 6, the assembly hall, taken from the stage. For the exterior of this hall, see the frontispiece to this issue. 7, a corner of the gymnasium. This photograph shows the type of metal window used in most of the important rooms. In this case they are of combined hopper and centre-hung type. The clerestory windows of the gymnasium seen in the diagram on the right are centre-hung.



DIAGRAMMATIC SECTION THROUGH LIBRARY, CORRIDOR AND GYMNASIUM SHOWING TYPICAL CONSTRUCTION



DIAGRAMMATIC SECTION ACROSS END OF GYMNASIUM WING SHOWING TYPICAL CONSTRUCTION AND EQUIPMENT

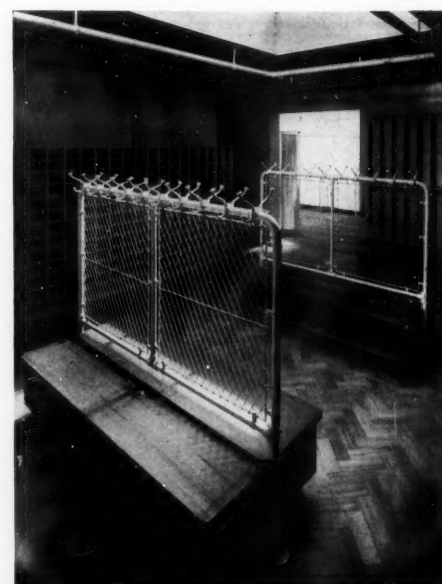
CONSTRUCTION—Generally the construction is of weight-bearing brick walls, with steel used to a limited extent for roofing and in the construction of the assembly hall and gymnasium. 11 in. external brick walls are faced with golden brown stocks. Roofs generally are of timber covered with boarding, cork felt underlay, and asphalt. The classrooms are divided by 9 in. structural walls which carry the steel spine joists supporting the roof. Roofs of internal corridors, covered ways, hoods etc. are of reinforced concrete. The windows are of metal; those to the classrooms, assembly hall and gymnasium being horizontally pivoted or of the hopper type, side hung casements being used in corridors and smaller rooms. Ranges of windows are set in precast reinforced concrete frames.

FINISHES—Walls and ceilings are plastered and colour distempered, generally in light cream and pink shades, dadoes being of a grey shade of dis-

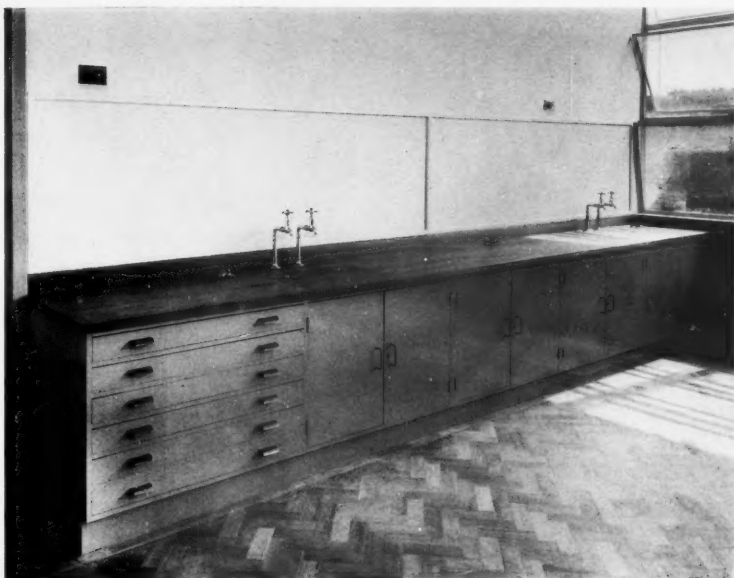
temper. At the end of the maintenance period dadoes are to be painted. The flooring generally is beech block wax polished, maple strip flooring being used on the assembly hall stage and oak strip flooring in the gymnasium. Doors generally are of flush type, with observation panels. Classroom fittings, benches, teachers' cupboards, pigeon-holes, blackboards etc. were all specially designed and included in the main contract. The library fittings are in oak, wax polished.

HEATING—The heating is by low pressure hot water, the radiators being of the Beeston Hospital type. The library has panel heating. The heating boiler is fed by an automatic stoker.

COST—The total contract cost including a caretaker's house, playground and site walls was £26,301. The cost per place for the maximum number of pupils therefore works out at £82 3s. 9d.



8, the standard clothes-peg and locker fittings in the pupils' cloakrooms. These can be seen in place in the constructional diagram above.



9



10

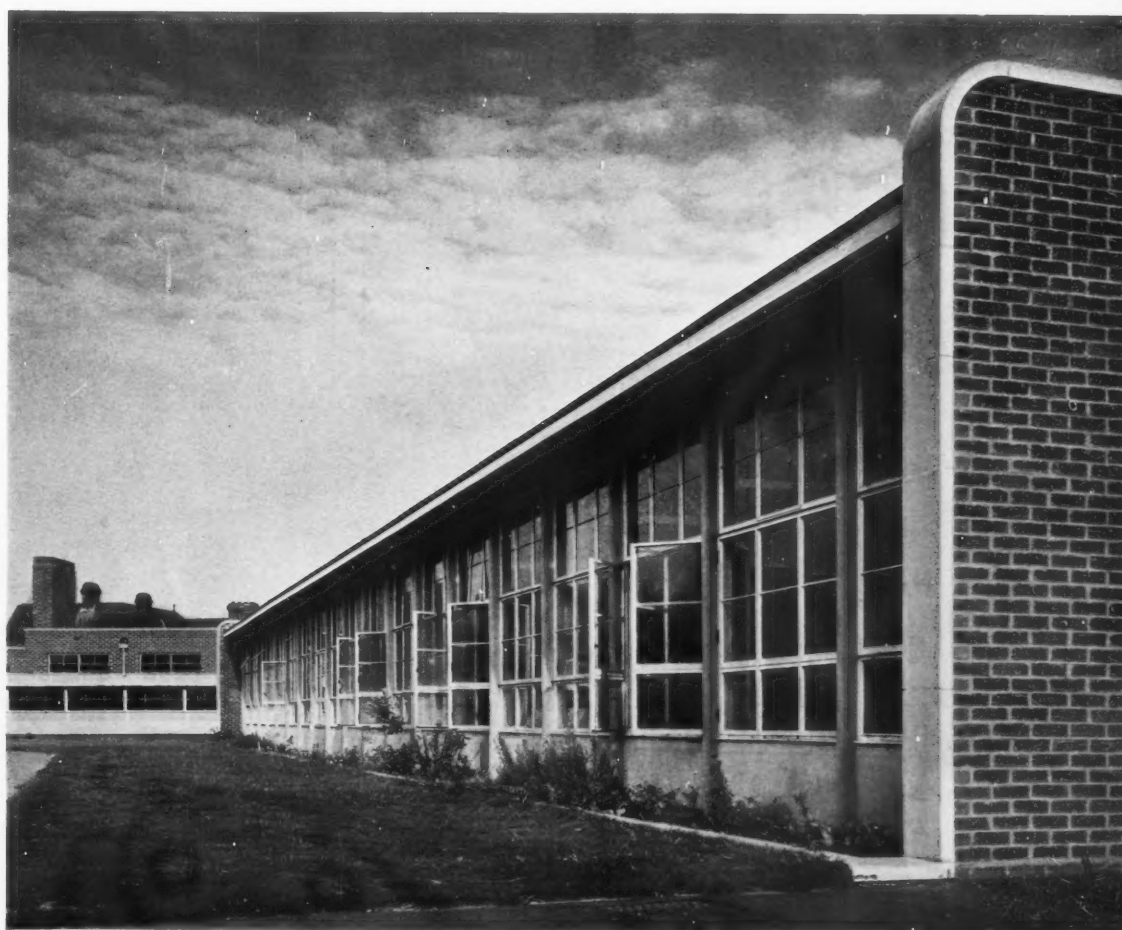
9 and 10, two details of equipment: the built-in work-bench and sinks across the end wall of the handicraft room, and equipment in the science laboratory. 10 shows the standard window system for practical rooms and classrooms: large windows on one side coming down to work-table level, and clerestory windows on the other looking over the corridor roof.

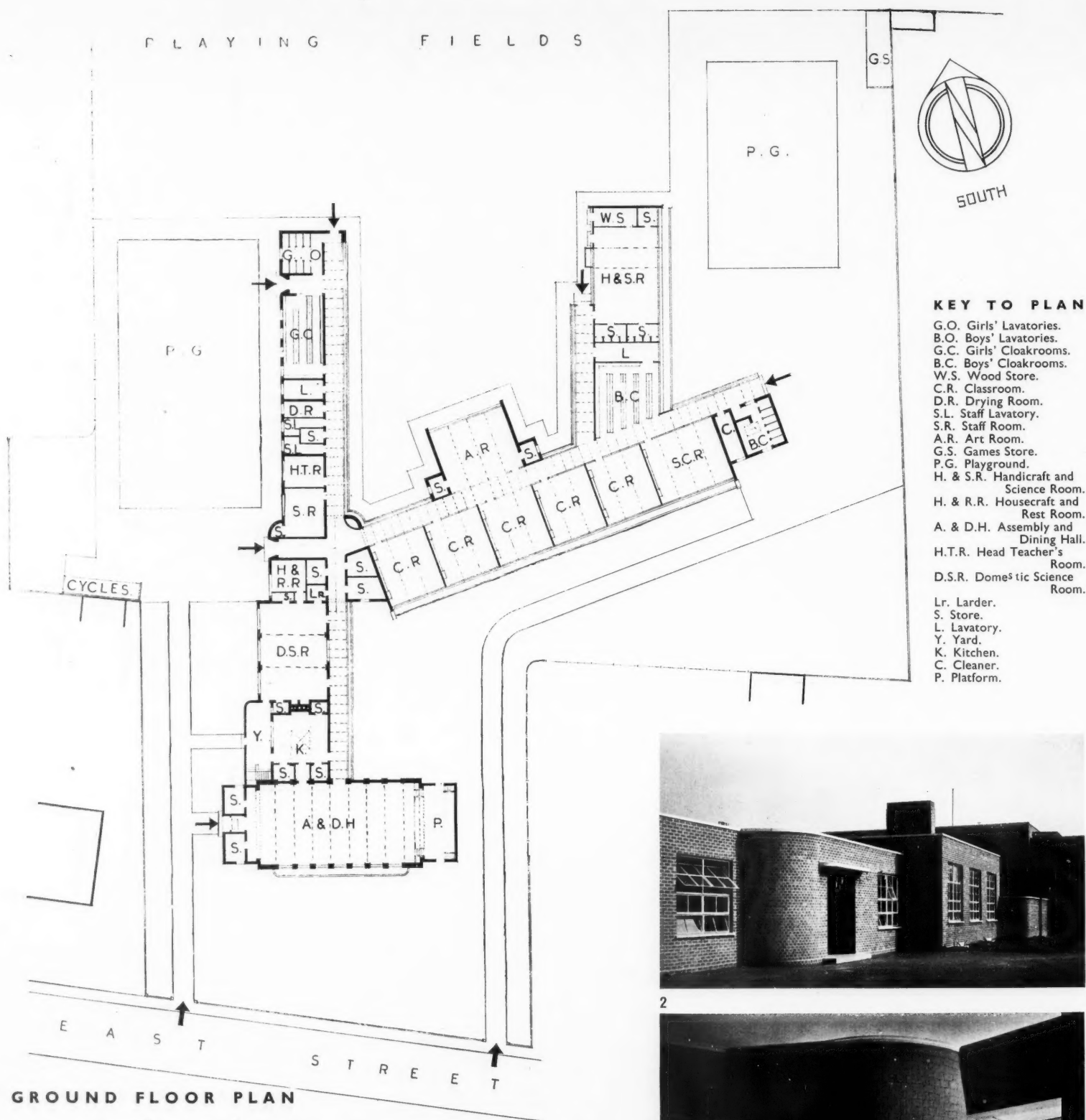
2 SCHOOL AT SELSEY

C. G. STILLMAN, SUSSEX COUNTY ARCHITECT

This also is a mixed school. The site, of six acres, had a bottle-neck on the south side. This, being unsuitable for playing-fields, was made use of to accommodate the assembly and dining hall and the main entrances to the school buildings, the classrooms, etc. occupying wings running back at an angle into the open part of the site. By this arrangement the administration section is kept close to the road, being set back 70 ft. behind a garden forecourt, and the assembly hall is kept available for use after school hours by the public and by physical training classes without involving the opening up of the whole school. This arrangement also eliminates any danger of noise from the activities carried on therein interfering with the classrooms proper. The space in between the two wings running back to the north (which comprise

1, looking along the south front of the classroom wing, with, in the background, the corridor linking the assembly hall block with the rest of the school.



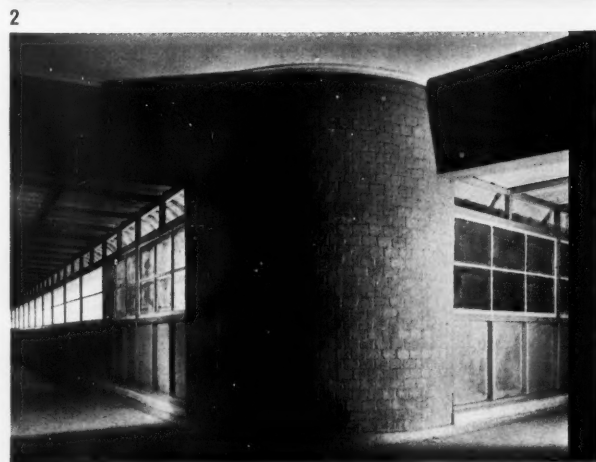


cloakrooms, staff rooms and handicraft and science room) has been laid out by the head teacher of the school to form enclosures for domestic pets and poultry, which the children are encouraged to look after themselves. In the centre is a pond with various types of fish.

The main entrance to the school is on the west side of the long block and gives immediate access to the staff rooms and classrooms in the two wings. The two playgrounds are well away from the classrooms while

still in an open position and in full sunshine.

Perhaps the most interesting part is the specially constructed classroom wing with a south front of glass to within 1 ft. 10 ins. of the floor. Proper control of the ventilation is obtained by vertically pivoted windows and hoppers, and the full glare of the sun is obviated by a projecting roof coming out some 2 ft. 6 ins. from the external wall face. A flower border runs immediately under the window cills.



2, the west side of the administration block seen from the pupils' main approach path. Beyond the entrance are the windows of the domestic science room. 3, the junction of the two main school corridors, serving the staff and cloakroom wing and the classroom wing.

4, from the road, showing the administration and assembly hall block occupying the narrow front portion of the site, with the classroom wing running away at an angle behind it.



4

5, the rear classroom wing, containing the handicraft and science room with, in the foreground, the open end of the main classroom corridor. This photograph well illustrates the nature of the classroom construction which is of light steel sections designed to be semi-permanent only, with a view to future alteration to suit changing needs. The corridor is of similar construction with permanent ventilation contrived beneath the overhang of the roof.



5



6

6, a typical classroom, the plan of which minimises the amount of cutting involved in the lay-out of the sheets of fibre board with which the ceilings, and the walls above dado level, are faced. The lower part of the walls is faced with a hard surfaced asbestos wall-board. On the corridor side the partition consists of a fixed glass screen down to 1 ft. 10 ins. from the floor, with panels of the same wall-board below. The floors are of natural rock asphalt coloured red. 7, the interior of the assembly hall, looking towards the stage. 8, one of the long corridors that serve the two rear wings. The roofs are of light steel sections and permanent ventilation openings, designed, however, to avoid draught, are placed beneath the overhang. 9, a typical cloakroom.



7



8



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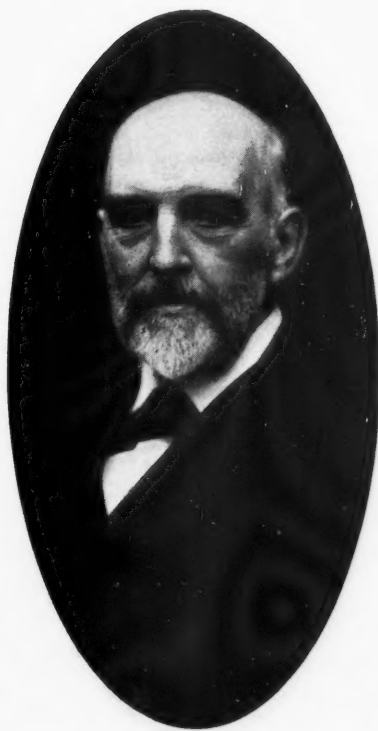
CONSTRUCTION—The front (administration) block has 11 in. cavity walls with rustic fletton facing bricks on the outside. Damp proof courses are of slate. The roof is of timber covered with asphalt. To allow for the changing needs of education the construction of the classroom wings is of a semi-permanent kind, so that at any time the cross partitions can be taken down and re-erected and the size of all the rooms varied. Light steel sections are used, bolted together and covered with waterproof rendered asbestos sheeting. The roof trusses over the classrooms are built up of steel angles and flats to form a very light type of roof support. On top of these trusses are wooden joists laid at 18 in. centres, covered with boarding and natural rock asphalt. On the south side a canopy is cantilevered out on steel T-irons, the bridging between being carried on the

wood joists. The soffit of this canopy is filled in with asbestos sheeting coloured cream.

FINISHES—For acoustic reasons classroom ceilings and walls are lined with fibre board with V jointing between, and below dado level with an asbestos wall board sufficiently tough to provide a surface not easily damaged. Classroom floors are of natural rock asphalt, which can be easily washed and is comfortable to the feet. The corridor floors are granolithic. Elsewhere they are teak block or maple strip. The flat roofs are covered with bitumen sheeting and asphalt. Flashings are copper.

EQUIPMENT—All windows are metal. Doors are of wood, solid or half glazed. Heating is by low pressure hot water radiators and pipes. The hot water supply is provided by an independent boiler.

How much an architect is born and how much made is a question that has been endlessly discussed. The story of Richard Watt, late Victorian glove merchant with a flair and enthusiasm for architecture, suggests that a highly developed spatial imagination can exist quite independently of the professional training out of which it is supposed to emerge. For underlying the absurdities, which were all his contemporaries saw in his rather naive compositions, is a genuine appreciation of the geometrical essence of architecture, which his critics were the poorer architects for having lacked. Nearly all his work was done in the town of Knutsford in Cheshire, between the years 1895 and 1906. On the right is the laundry, typical of his own very personal mixture of derivativeness and original handling of simple geometrical forms.



An Unprofessional Genius

By Aileen and William Tatton Brown

RICHARD Watt was a glove merchant by trade; his business was in Manchester, though it took him over three quarters of the globe. He lived in Bowden, a few miles out, until the last years of his life, when he moved to Knutsford. Here, at the birthplace of Mrs. Gaskell, in the streets and lanes immortalized in *Cranford*, he built a laundry, a post office, a coffee house and ten houses. There is only one other house designed by him, and that is at Wimbledon.

From his earliest youth he was interested in drawing. He made sketches of everything he saw, keeping a kind of graphic diary. At the end of his life he tore out all the pages and pasted them into ten bound volumes.

These are arranged by countries and as they cover a period of fifty years they form a useful record of his life. The earliest drawing is a tiny sketch of Morecambe, made in 1856 when he was fourteen years old. It is followed three years later by a landscape of Inverary and a drawing of Rusholme Church and Furness Abbey. His technique rapidly improved and by 1864 there are some charming water colours of Madeira, which he made while *en route* for Australia.

He travelled out on "The famous Black Ball Clipper Ship, the *Young Australia*, one of the fastest vessels afloat, 87 days to Australia, superb accommodation, 1,500 tons." It was afterwards wrecked in 1872. On the voyage out he met a number of prospectors who were going to Brisbane. He accompanied them there and worked for some time at the surveyor's office, where his talent for drawing and capacity for organization won him a temporary post. He did not, however, intend to spend his life on an office stool, for in 1867 he was

back in Europe, this time sketching a cricket match in the Bois de Boulogne. A year later he was drawing Kensington Palace and attending an art school, at which the Science and Art Committee saw fit to award him "A second grade Certificate of Competency to teach Drawing." He never did so, however. For although he was a sensitive draughtsman and an able water-colourist, he did not want to make a career of it. Sketching for him was no more than a hobby, and the only exhibition he ever held was on behalf of Bowden Congregational Church Sunday School, when he showed his pictures of Palestine.

Watt was much more interested in the things that he drew than in the drawings themselves. Stones fascinated him. Over one sketch of Baalbeck there are no less than three entries about the size and weight of a particular monolith. Details are noted with affection, and there is evidence even in his early sketches that he was more of an architect than an artist. The chief interest of his sketch books lies in his choice of subjects. He travelled from one end of the world to another, through every kind of climate and among every style of architecture. But the curious thing is, that wherever he went the buildings which he drew have all a kind of family likeness. They were all passed through the sieve of his selective observation, and those that remained and were reproduced in his sketch books possess a striking similarity. No matter whether he was drawing minarets in Damascus or Romanesque arches at Castle Rheinstein, the form and arrangement of his material, as it appeared in his sketches, was individual and characteristic. Out of all the diversity of shapes and silhouettes that he saw,



A page from Richard Watt's sketch-book, showing a gateway from the Rue St. Ours, Aosta, drawn in 1896; and the gateway that he built in Legh Road, Knutsford, ten years later.

he was creating a "style." Soon this "style" was going to be something more than just a passive receptive matter of observation and selection and to become instead a burning active force demanding a positive expression of its own. He no longer wanted to travel abroad to nourish his architectural predilections, but to stay at home and, with the aid of the fortune he had accumulated, to realize them in bricks and mortar.

So in 1895, at the age of fifty-five he moved to Knutsford and built his own house. Henry Brooks, F.R.I.B.A., was the architect, and Watt took a keen interest in the construction. He visited the site every day and studied carefully the different stages of the job. The design did not much reflect the ideas which he tried to express, and was dictated chiefly by Brooks. But Watt was sufficiently enthusiastic to wish to start again, and two years later he began his series of houses in Legh Road.

At this time he played very much the rôle of the intelligent patron of the eighteenth century. He selected his architect and bought his site and pro-

ceeded to commission plans. It seems probable that he would have preferred to carry out his ideas in this way. Architecture would then have been a relaxation from glove-making, and as a merchant prince he could have indulged his fancies with the same facility as the princely patrons of a century before. But it was not to be. In spite of the youth and freedom from prejudice of his new architects—Fairhurst and France, Watt found great difficulty in conveying his intentions. So he took Fairhurst to Italy while the first house was in progress. They travelled for a month in the greatest comfort, Watt taking his architect each morning to some favourite vantage point, where he was left to sketch, while he himself retired to the business quarter. There he would do a good morning's work before rejoining Fairhurst for lunch and an agreeable afternoon with some wealthy Italians. It is stated that while in Rome they hunted with Prince Umberto, a personal friend of his. They returned to England with sketch books full of details of chimneys and towers, and notes on composition, grouping, and terraces. But it was too late to alter the design of the house, which remained obstinately "Cheshire Style," all but the chimneys.

Watt soon realized that he could not remain a patron and must take a more active part. This period was a critical one for him. He was learning how to read a plan, and how an architect set about designing. He used to spend hours discussing details, frequently altering them after they were built, for his robust three-dimensional sense prevented him from understanding elevations. He used to invent a "Friend," who criticized the architects' construction, in order to sting them into a detailed defence of their design. In this way he learnt enough about the theoretical and structural basis of architecture to appreciate the limitations under which his own conceptions would have to be carried out. He was beginning to see that it was impossible for him to realize his ideas through the medium of a professional adviser, and after a few more discussions of future plans, he parted company with his architects.

His next associate was a young draughtsman called Longworth, who went through the same initiation as Fairhurst. On this visit to Italy, however, Watt bought details, as well as drawing them, and they returned home laden with fountains and iron work in addition to well-filled sketch books. Watt made Longworth sign a paper undertaking to play the part of architect's ghost, and precluding the mention of his name in connection with any buildings which they undertook. He was confident now that he could carry out his own ideas and he wished to reserve all the credit for himself. This incident is worth noting, for Watt was an unassuming man in ordinary life. But building had become a passion with him, and he was determined to spend all the money that he had accumulated in thirty years of glove-making on architecture. His houses were uneconomical and costly. The fact that he built for himself and had no client to consult, enabled him to give full reign to his imagination. And if you had reproached him with lack of functionalism, he would have countered with a quotation from Ruskin: "Architecture proposes an effect on the human mind, not merely a service to the human frame."

It was natural that such a man should find difficulty in fitting into the contemporary pattern of building conventions.

His keen business sense made him a difficult customer for the local builders, and this, coupled with his passion for the picturesque, led to a number of conflicts. One firm left him after being made to put up and take down a tower three times. The

foreman of another, exasperated by continuous alterations, is said to have gone to the station to meet Watt, on his return from Manchester, armed with a gun. In the end, Watt was forced to build by direct labour, ordering his materials himself and employing his own craftsmen with Longworth acting as foreman.

There is nothing very strange in these adventures. They are the common lot of all who try and do anything new or revolutionary. They show however, that the buildings which Richard Watt left are not the whims of a rich man's fancy, but the result of a long and painful process of trial and error, carried out not on paper, but first of all in clay models and afterwards in actual bricks and mortar. For Watt never learnt to draw plans



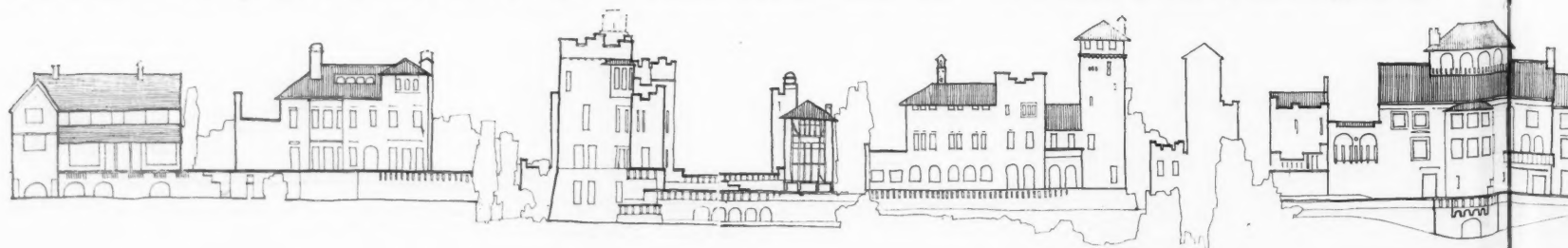
Watt's first building enterprise, his own house designed for him by Henry Brooks in conventional Cheshire Style. The tower was added by Watts himself when he built his other houses after working out his own original style.

himself. He would make thumb-nail sketches on the borders of his *Manchester Guardian*, or draw perspectives in his sketch book. Longworth would then make large-scale models and Watt would mark on them in red and blue pencil. Red pencil meant a brick recessed; blue a brick projecting. These touches gave texture to his rendered surfaces, and make them pleasant to look at even today when they are no longer freshly painted. Most of the materials were bought from the house-breakers. Watt would collect a couple of columns from St. Peter's, Manchester, and a lodge from the Royal Infirmary. Architraves and lintols would arrive on the site and be measured and then fitted into the elevation. It was naturally a difficult way of building, but it had many advantages. Old materials were already weathered; they were beautiful and they were cheap. Besides he could put them up and take them down, and alter their position until he was satisfied.

Watt hated symmetry. The charm of architecture for him was the attraction of a living thing. He liked to watch his compositions grow, adding a terrace here and a garden house there, building up his effects with towered stables and battlemented gate lodges. He loved towers and added one to his own house, and was continually developing the effects which he had created in Legh Road and the coffee house.

He was also an idealist and reformer. He believed that architecture could influence men's lives and that it had a social function. In this spirit he bought two tumble-down public houses in King Street and built a coffee house on the site. Here is an account of it from *The Stockport Advertiser* for July 19th, 1907:—

"The King's Coffee House has been built by Mr. Richard H. Watt, a public spirited gentleman, whose picturesque yet substantial architecture has already much improved the





appearance of the town. The idea of the originator has not been to compete with existing houses of refreshment, but to supply a need he considered had not hitherto been met. Perhaps some of the character of the new institution may be conveyed if it is said to partake somewhat of the character of an hotel, a club and a café. It is obviously intended for comfort without the least appearance of ostentation. . . . Here the Knutsford artizan is welcome to spend an evening with pleasure and profit, and without spending more than he likes or can afford. . . .

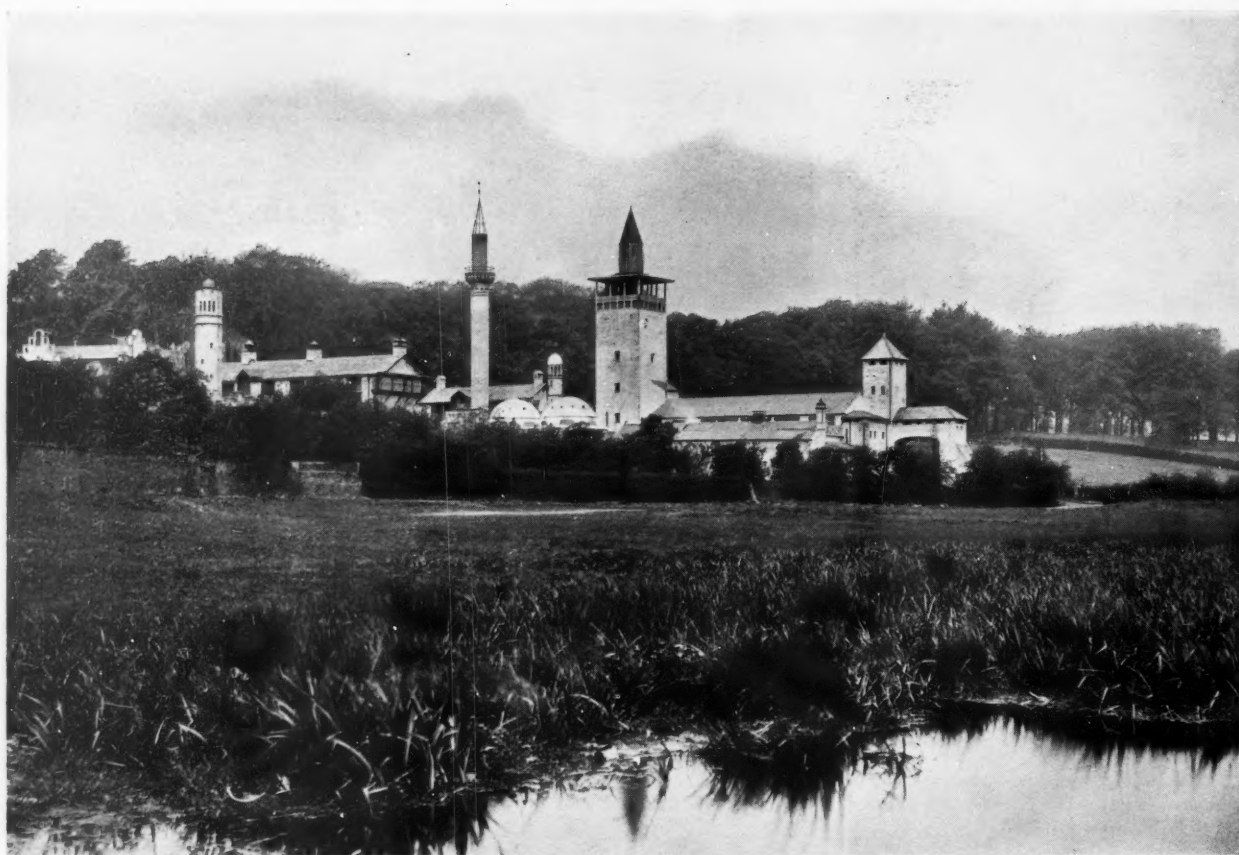
Watt had great hopes that the coffee house would prove an attractive alternative to the public house, and built an enormous oven so that all the working class population could come and eat freshly baked cakes on the premises. But although he ran it on a non-profit making basis, he could not compete with invincible British conservatism, and the coffee house never became more than a pleasant tea-shop for the well-to-do.

In 1906, at the age of sixty-four, Richard Watt married. His wife did not share his passion for building, and from then on his output decreased considerably. But his interest never failed. He was continually planning improvements to his houses and supervising the planting of trees and the arrangement of terraces. House-breakers continued to send him lists of tempting architraves and balusters, and his favourite drive was still

Modern architects are sometimes tempted to think that they were the first to grasp the basic importance of mass and spatial effect, yet in this group of houses, built in a row at Knutsford between 1896 and 1906, Richard Watt shows an architectural talent that rests on just these qualities. The tower on the left above, as part of a domestic composition, is as daring as any of the "horizontal-or-vertical-ismuses" which startled the post-war world. While on the right is an example of Watt's use of space as a means of achieving effect, which is even more eloquent than his handling of the picturesque. The building illustrated is a stables with gardener's flat above—part of one of the houses—seen through one of the embrasures of the terrace. Below are three views of the gate-lodges, towers, chimneys and outbuildings which form such a characteristic feature of Watt's architecture. His use of silhouette far exceeds that of any later architect and is reminiscent of Vanbrugh in its theatrical quality. Notice, also, the way in which one house serves as a background for the next, and how the whole builds up like the wings of a stage-set bound firmly together by the strong horizontal of the terrace. His studied use of rectangular openings seen for example in the curiously contrived shadows cast by the terrace wall on the grass in the right-hand picture is also slightly reminiscent of Frank Lloyd Wright whose early work was done at just about the same time, though then it was quite unknown in England and was in any case founded on an entirely different philosophical basis. As a matter of fact Watt seems to have been quite unaware of the pioneer work being done by his professional contemporaries such as Mackintosh.



Left, an extended elevation of the houses on Legh Road, seen from the opposite hill side. On the extreme left is the first house designed by Fairhurst and France. Typical of the work of the beginning of the century, it enables us to measure, by comparison with his subsequent houses, the extent of Watt's departure from the tight, self-contained elevations of his day.



"Combining Feature with Function" was Watt's description of the minaret in which he enclosed the chimney of his laundry at Knutsford. On the eight-sided tower he fixed in green tiles a quotation from Ezekiel: "Let your garments always be white." Above, the laundry seen from across the marsh. Watt made dozens of studies for this building, all drawn from just this viewpoint. He clearly grasped the opportunities which the site offered, and exploited the requirements of the plan to suit his silhouette. The two domes house a boiler house, and the minaret a chimney stack. The composition is brilliantly handled and gives a unique character to the whole town. Left, two views of the Gaskell memorial tower and the King's Coffee House, Knutsford, showing that Watt could be equally successful on a cramped site as when he had a whole hillside to compose.

along Legh Road. Here he would pause, standing up in his carriage to get a better view of his well regimented loggias, temples and towers. One day as he stood like this, contemplating his martial array in the spring sunshine, the horse suddenly shied. He was thrown out on to his head and died a few hours later. He was seventy-one years old.

What are we to think of Richard Watt? Is his architecture just a three dimensional *réchauffé* of a prodigious Cook's tour? Or has he some claim to be a forerunner of the modern movement?

Certainly he was not interested in function, nor did he care for engineering technique. So far from trying to exploit new materials, even the bricks which he used came from demolition dumps. His only speciality was in the old-fashioned economies of the nineteenth century, for whom labour was always the cheapest commodity. But his interests

lay in other and more important directions. He was concerned with spatial relations, with form and mass. Years before modern architects were working out the possibilities of plain surfaces and open planning, Watt had broken away from the tight, self-contained designing of his day. His contemporaries deplored his contempt for purity of style and disregard for professional conventions. But Richard Watt could afford to ignore their criticism. He was an artist, a romantic and an amateur. He did not need to bother about what was "done" or "not done" by those in high places. He just did what he liked to please his own fancy, with all the amateur's enthusiasm and absence of restraint.

One can recognize, I think, glimpses of the robust qualities which inspired Vanbrugh's work and some of the scenic effects of Inigo Jones—a certain vitality which characterizes all men who come to

architecture after a vigorous apprenticeship in the world of affairs.

As for the reproach that his work was but a jumble of motives "cribbed" from every style, we are fortunate in having his own answer. When taxed with this comment he would lash himself into a fury, and assert that there was no such thing as "style." You could not say that a building was Italian style or Moorish style or Gothic style. For him there was only one thing, and that was architecture—independent of period or country or climate—a kind of distillate possessed by all good buildings everywhere—which his genius had recognized in fifty years of travel and observation. This architectural quality might have been evinced by more buildings abroad than at home, but he saw no reason why, if he could recapture it in his own work, it should be considered inappropriate for this country.

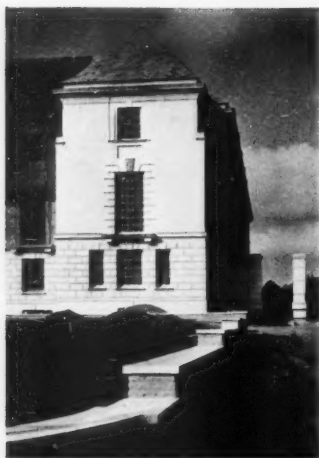


COUNCIL OFFICES

P. D. HEPWORTH

SITE These new offices for the Wiltshire County Council are at Trowbridge, which is on the outskirts of the county but was selected owing to the conveni-

1, looking along the main front of the building. Trowbridge is a small town with predominating stone built (and stone roofed) eighteenth century architecture, with which the new building is intended to be in character. The weather vane on the fleche is surmounted by a "Great Bustard," the symbolical bird of Wiltshire, in gilt metal. The new gleaming white building forms so conspicuous a landmark that it has been decided to camouflage it, and it is now completely covered with netting. The photographs show some of this netting already in position.



2



3

ence of road and rail communications. The site is an old sports ground, slightly sloping and raised about four feet above the road. The main railway line runs along the back, and immediately adjacent and opposite are miscellaneous small buildings.

PLANNING The buildings consist of a main office block flanked on the front by two small buildings, the County Record Store and the Resident Engineer's dwelling, and at the back by two blocks of garages and cycle stores. These rear blocks are separated from the main building by large car-parks. The main building consists of three principal floors, housing the offices of the usual departments. On the first floor, in the central portion, are the council chamber, chairman's and members' rooms, and seven committee rooms. In addition, by the use of dormer windows and a specially designed type of timber roof truss, a complete extra floor has been formed in the steeply pitched roof. This was intended for future extensions, but most of the space has already been allocated. In the basement, under the whole building, are storage and strong rooms and, overlooking turfed areas at the back, a fully equipped kitchen with meal rooms for members and staff. Layout, balconies, lamps, etc. are still to be completed.

CONSTRUCTION AND MATERIALS Weight-bearing walls, stone faced, with light steel stanchions and beam construction to corridors, etc. The roofs are of Cotswold stone slabs. The wall-facing is Corngrit stone, a hard stone from the county which has not previously been used in a large building. It is of fine surface and colour and has a shelly texture, more akin to Portland than Bath stone. The clock flèche is of weathered oak.

EQUIPMENT Ceiling panel heating has been chiefly used, served by hopper-fired coke boilers in the basement. There is a full plenum ventilating system to the council chamber and the larger committee rooms, the plant being in the centre of the roof below the air intake in the flèche. Hot water is provided by local electrical heaters.

2, the corner of the main building showing the gate piers that link it to the small subsidiary buildings. 3, from the north, with the Record Store in the foreground. 4, from the south (showing further signs of camouflage in progress). 5, from the west.



4

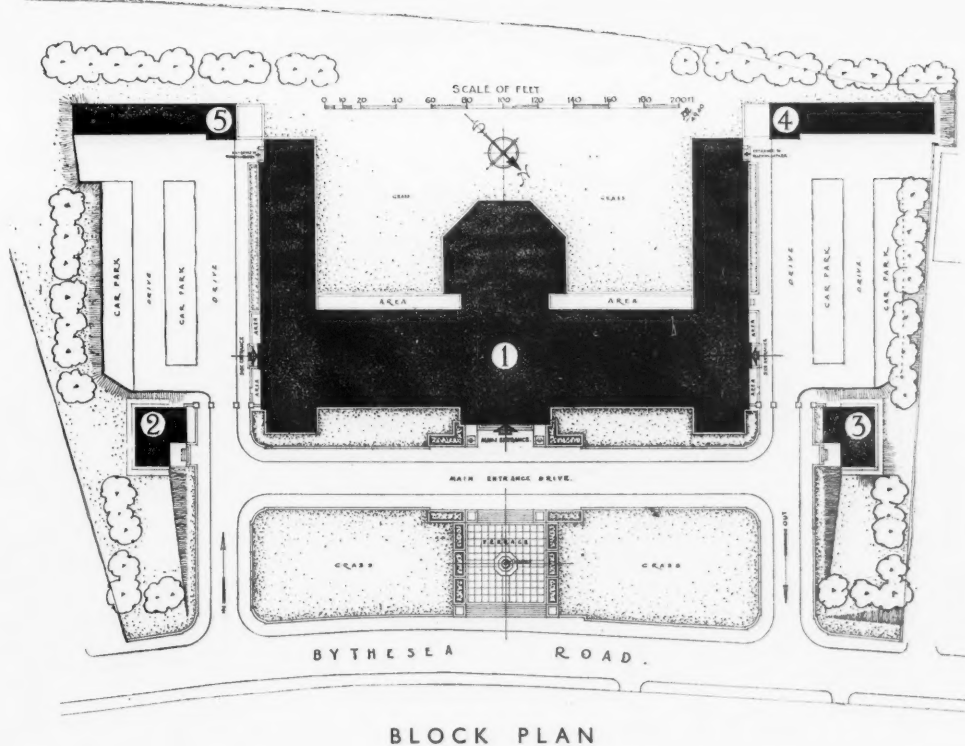


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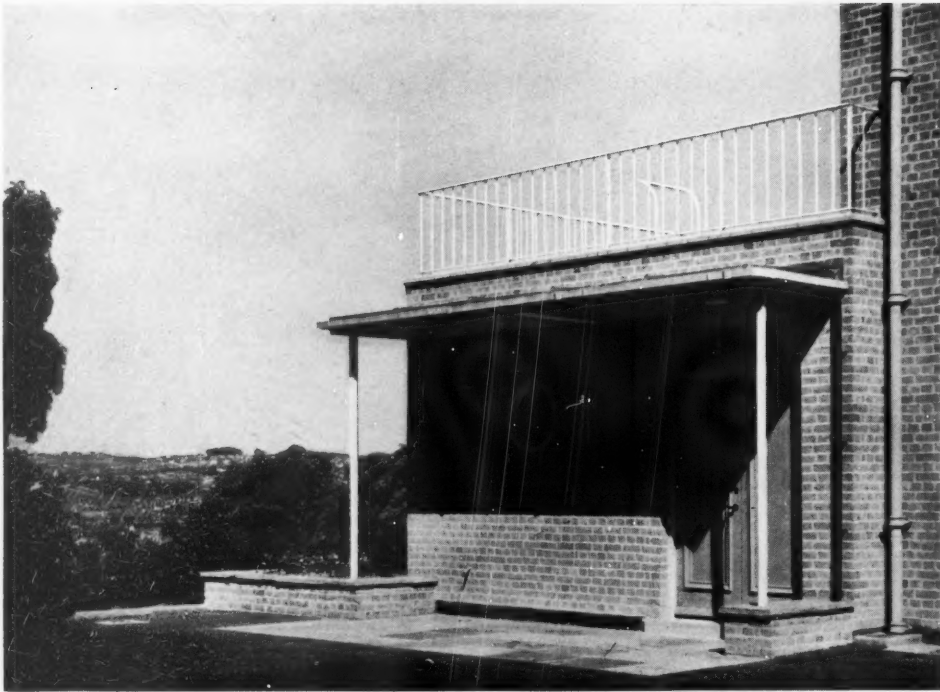
6, a detail of the main façade. The walls are faced with Corngrit stone, quarried in the county, and the roof is of Cotswold stone slabs. The key to the numbers of the plan alongside is as follows: 1, main building; 2, caretaker's cottage; 3, county record store; 4 and 5, garage and cycle stores.



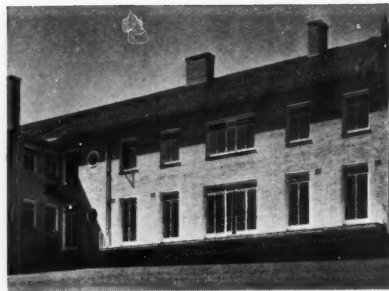
COUNCIL OFFICES

P. D. HEPWORTH

SANATORIA



2



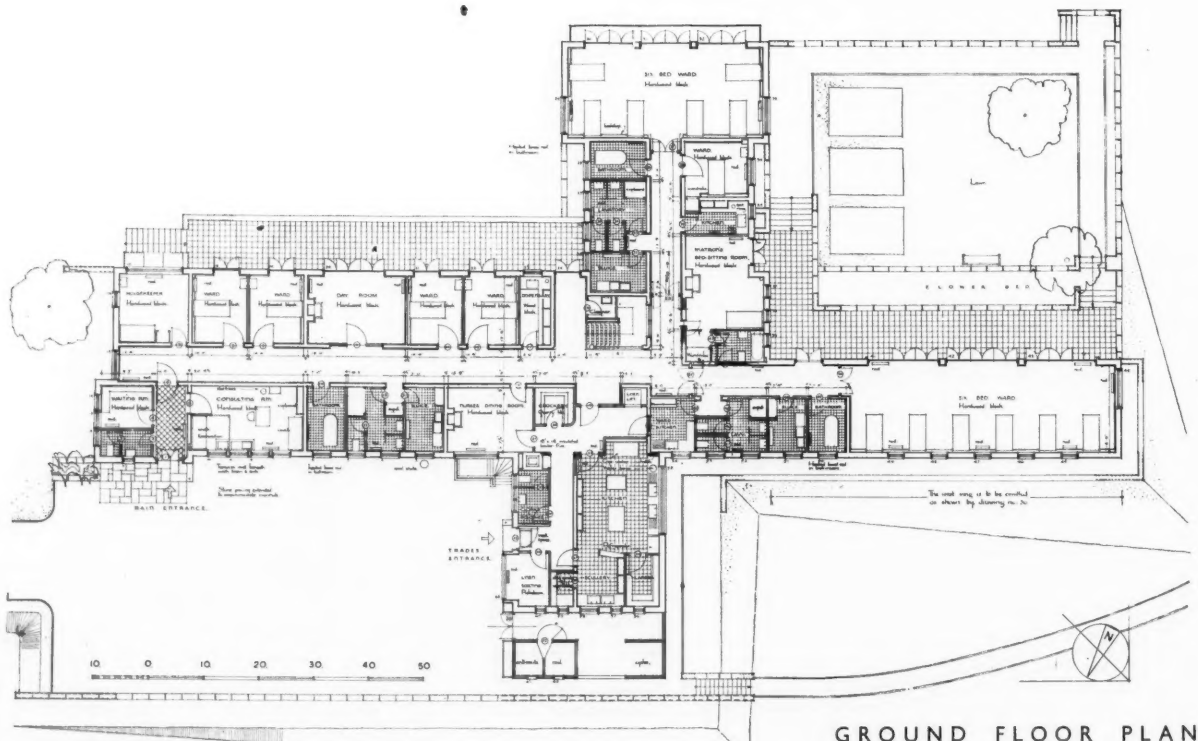
3

1, the main entrance at the end of the east wing. The photograph shows the high situation of the sanatorium, on a steep hill-side. 2, a general view of the building from the east; 3, a detail from the south-east, showing the tall windows of the day-room and smaller wards opening on to a terrace.

SITE At Wycombe Abbey, Bucks. The building is a new sanatorium for the girls' school and is situated within the school grounds, on a steep hill-side which gives the wards an extensive view southwards over park land.

PLANNING The arrangement of the plan was dictated by the necessity of sub-dividing it into self-contained units that can be isolated from one another in case of infectious epidemics. The building takes the form of a cross, comprising three independent wings, each with windows to the south, and a service wing on the north side containing the central kitchen on the ground floor and nurses' bedrooms above. For reasons of economy the building of the west wing has been postponed, but full provision has been made for it.

CONSTRUCTION Brick, the external walls being faced with brown brick. Roofing to the main east-west wing is of bright red sand-faced pantiles. Flat roofs are of insulating tile laid on 3-ply bituminous felt. Suspended floors and roofs are of hollow tile.



RITE, SON AND
FAIRWEATHER

construction. Windows are of metal in wood frames with buff quarry-tiled external cills and reveals rendered cream colour. The brickwork over openings is carried on a concrete nib of the lintol, and is also rendered. Wrought iron balustrades are provided to terraces and balconies.

FINISHES The walls of all principal rooms are finished in plaster and enamel, other rooms being distempered. All ceilings are distempered except sanitary rooms and ward kitchens, which are enamelled. The floors of all wards, housekeeper's and matron's bedrooms, dispensary, waiting-room and nurses' dining-room, day and consulting rooms, have hardwood block floors in either teak, oak, maple or Jarrah, with either teak or oak skirtings. Nurses', maids' and assistant matron's bedrooms have cork carpet with oak skirting. Corridors have rubber floors with terrazzo coved skirtings and margins. Staircases are finished in terrazzo with non-slip tile nosings. The main kitchen and sanitary rooms have buff quarry tile floors and coved skirtings.



4



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



5

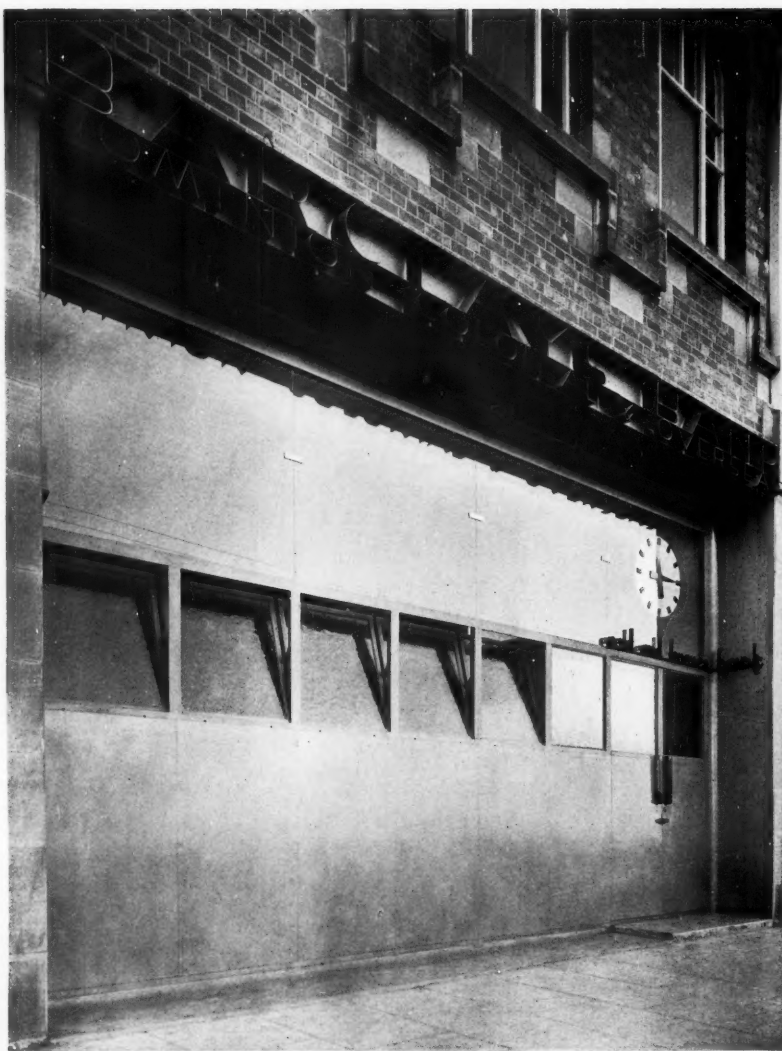


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4, a detail of the end of the south wing. On each floor the three large windows light a six-bed ward which occupies the whole width of the wing. 5, the main staircase in the centre of the building. 6, a typical ward kitchen.

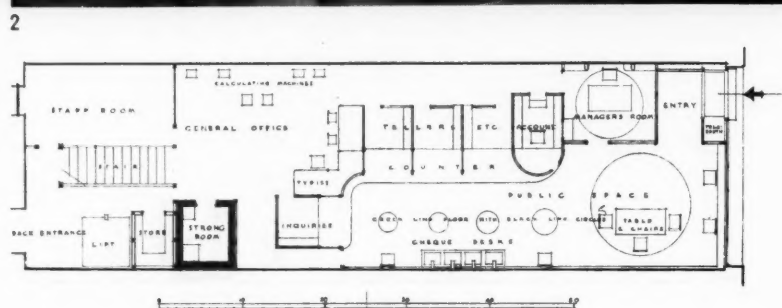
BANKS

NORMAN EATON



SITE AND PLANNING This small branch bank occupies the ground floor of an old building on the fringes of the Indian shopping quarter in the east end of Pretoria. A luxury finish was not therefore required and materials were chosen for their durability and ease of upkeep under hard wear. Owing to the extreme narrowness and depth of the site careful consideration had also to be given to the problem of natural lighting and ventilation.

EQUIPMENT AND FINISHES The bank front itself, which is slightly recessed, consists of a solid metal dado below a row of hopper light windows glazed with obscured glass. Above the transom line the remaining space is filled with sheets of clear plate glass butt-jointed, which allow the maximum of light to penetrate to the back of the interior. Ventilating flues are fixed immediately below the metal lettering. Internally the walls are distempered above a polished plywood dado and the floor is covered with green and black linoleum tiles. The elaborate ceiling was already existing. The main counter is faced with lap-jointed polished plywood and is divided into separate compartments by glass panels. Small "cheque desks" are provided for clients. A glazed screen across the full width of the room separates the main part of it from the staff quarters at the rear. A small manager's office is provided close to the entrance.



1, an external view. The reveals of the metal letters are painted scarlet. 2, the interior looking towards the rear. Behind the screen on the right is the manager's office.

These monthly articles are frankly about æsthetic questions. They are written in the belief that the rational and scientific basis of architecture has now been fully re-established by modern architects, and that matters of external appearance are therefore once more a proper topic of architectural criticism. This month the author takes an important recent building, the new Bodleian Library at Oxford, and examines it, not from the point of view of the technical man who is interested in its construction or the librarian who is interested in its planning, but from that of the Man in the Street who can judge only by what he sees.



From fairly close up the new Bodleian Library shows only its two street façades, the elaborately modelled asymmetrical one to Broad Street (on the left) and the more academic, symmetrical one to Parks Road. One asks why the latter, which is only seen along a narrow street, should be the one whose design depends on an axial rather than a perspective view. From further away the main block of the building, the multi-storey book stack, can also be seen and the two street fronts are revealed in their rôle of independent façades displayed round the base of this central mass. In the photograph above the two balustraded pavilions that crown the latter can just be seen.

CRITICISM By James MacQuedy

ONE of the severest tests modern architecture has to face comes when the site is a university city, or any place with a strong inherited architectural character. It is a test of integrity as well as manners, for I have no hesitation in saying that the architect should have the courage of his convictions and not try to compromise with the conventions of the past, as a mistaken gesture of respect. Nothing, as a matter of fact, is so insulting to architecture deserving of respect than to parody it in its own stronghold—far better pay tribute to the unchanging principles it stands for by setting up beside it something as worthy of the best our time can do as it is of its own time.

The opposite method, that often practised by the Victorians, which consists of careful copyism, carried out with such fanatical pedantry that there is in fact no possibility of resemblance to the supposed prototypes, is richly exemplified in our ancient universities: in Oxford alone one can instance Waterhouse's work at Balliol, Gilbert Scott's at Exeter and Sir Thomas Jackson's Examination Schools,* but the universities also contain many instances where courageous building for the builder's own time is supremely justified. The most celebrated is, perhaps, the view of King's College, Cambridge, from the Backs, where the Gothic chapel and the Classical Gibbs' building stand side by side in perfect harmony and dissimilarity.

The principle of honesty to our age admitted, however, we are still left with the peculiar difficulties that building in a university city entails; for in a subtler sense the existing standards of architecture must still be conformed to. The very presence in one city of so many distinguished buildings—albeit of mixed period—and the fact that these

represent a more consistent corporate life than modern cities generally possess, produces an atmosphere—a ready-formed character, if you like—that has nothing to do with the trappings of architectural styles but which is none the less an architectural quality. To pay due regard to the existence of this atmosphere is not to compromise with the past; it is simply to look at a new building as part of an existing whole, but one in which the geographical unities predominate over the chronological.

This is a difficult world for modern architecture to compete with as its quality is so bound up with those associational values and atmospheric overtones that the architecture of a transitional age has not yet had a chance to acquire. But it is not, I repeat, a matter of style. I would define the particular qualities a modern university building should have somewhat as follows. First, absolute integrity in the method it employs to get its effects; nothing is more out of place than clever tricks. Secondly, a deadly simplicity; for only by concentrating attention on the essentials of the work can its truth to its own time be made effectively to tell, alongside the assured elaboration of its neighbours, which latter is justified by the centuries of right they have on their side. Any kind of pretentiousness will lead to immediate downfall: as in the case of the young spark making his way in society, who is wise if he affects a becoming simplicity rather than a flashiness his standing does not warrant. Thirdly, it should pay careful attention to local precedent in matters of material, scale and siting so that the existing architectural unity is not upset. In order again to make my meaning quite clear I repeat that using a traditional material does not mean contriving some kind of compromise design. The material can be used in a straightforward modern way; it is only that, as a matter of general conformity, one would not use an aggressively experimental or synthetic facing material in a city, like Oxford, that is dominated by fine stone

buildings, any more than in Cambridge, with its characteristic low fenland skyline, one would deliberately upset its reticent scale with an enormous tower.

Oxford University has just acquired one of the most important additions to its architecture of recent years in the shape of the new Bodleian Library, designed by Sir Giles Scott. Let us see how it fulfils the conditions I have just set out. First, the question of material. Sir Giles has quite rightly faced his building with stone. Now a lot of the charm of stone, in Oxford as elsewhere, lies in the patina it acquires with age. But age, I am afraid, is the only recipe for this patina, and I cannot help thinking that it was a mistake to have tried to compensate for the initial lack of it by an assumed rusticity of texture. The building has rough-surfaced rubble walls composed of small irregular-sized stones that certainly produce some immediate charm of surface; more immediate, that is, than if the effect of time had solely been relied on. But it appears to me to be only a synthetic charm, and moreover one that will become more tiresome instead of mellowed with age. This pattern of stonework, which belongs to the Cot-

wold manor house, has nothing to do with the dignified urbanity, expressed in smooth ashlar-work, of Oxford.

Another quality I have suggested that a building in this situation should have is simplicity—or perhaps reticence would be a better word. I feel the new library fails in this through being over-designed. A conscious striving after good taste always defeats its purpose, and here it produces a fussiness that is aggravated by the oddness of the scale, especially when the building is seen against the dignified grandeur of the Clarendon and Sheldonian buildings opposite. The elaborately modelled façades, combined with rather infelicitously squat proportions, produce an unfortunate air of vulgarity, rather—to revert again to a human analogy—as frills and flounces of however much intrinsic charm, instead of disguising the lack of an aristocratic figure, actually make it more apparent. This particularly applies to that curious range of pilasters, crowned by a heavy entablature, along the Broad Street front, resembling a series of shop windows. They are detailed like an Oxford Street department store but in fact having no existence except as an



2, The view looking up Broad Street from the corner of Holywell Street. This is the direction from which the building composes best. In this photograph and in the one above can be seen the row of windows recessed in an architectural framework resembling a shop-front, which is referred to in this article.

* In this unavoidably sweeping generalization I do not intend to condemn all the Victorian work at Oxford. That carried out in a revived style but possessing original architectural character of its own, I would place in a different category. Cockerell's Taylorian building, Butterfield's Keble chapel—even Woodward's museum—may have been designed in pursuit of unsound ends, but they are far from being the product of blind antiquarianism.

architectural conceit. Conceits like this have their place, but they must rise to the occasion, catching the spirit of the fantasy to which they owe their origin. Here I see only the pedestrian spirit of architectural elaboration serving as a token of respectability.

There are some things about the general massing of the building that I like. It has obviously been designed with care in relation to at least two of its approaches. The main entrance is well placed on the axis of the old Clarendon buildings—and as this axis strikes almost the corner of the site it must have needed skilful handling to utilize it; and the view from Holywell Street shows real imagination, particularly in the way the projecting block at the west end of the Broad Street elevation breaks forward to provide a terminating point to a receding façade that composes well in perspective. This is site planning in its proper sense, though I am puzzled by the strange method of filling the triangular space left in front of the Broad Street façade by this break forward. Instead of being planted in some way, or otherwise made use of, this triangle of ground is raised to a level of about three feet above the pavement—just too high to sit on—in the form of a solid stone platform, forbidding in appearance and at close quarters making an unsatisfactory base to the building, as its arbitrary outline is quite at variance with the precise geometrical silhouette of the superstructure.

Another thing that is puzzling, seeing the understanding of three dimensional composition that has gone to the building up of this Broad Street façade, is why the other principal façade, that to Parks Road, is treated in a much more academic way as a symmetrical elevation with a strong centre of interest, when the street is so narrow that this façade is never seen except at an acute angle, and its axial planning therefore never tells. There is, in

Some details of the new Bodleian Library at Oxford, by Sir Giles Scott, discussed in this article. 3, the elaborately modelled Broad Street façade with the rather puzzling classical framework to the ground floor windows. In front of these windows is the stone platform, referred to in the article, that occupies the triangular space formed by the breaking forward of the extreme west corner. 4, the main entrance, near the corner of the building but ingeniously planned to utilize the existing axis of the Clarendon buildings. This photograph illustrates the strangely mixed style of detail characteristic of the building: the Baroque doorway, the windows with square stepped reveals in moderne style and the upper windows behind the parapet separated by pilasters bearing stylized sculptural ornament. 5, another, more whimsical, motif—the curly gables on the gardener's cottage adjoining the Parks Road front. 4 and 5 both show the conscientiously rough textured stone which has been used to give charm to the building but is contrasted in the article with the smooth and dignified ashlar-work characteristic of Oxford.

fact, in several parts of the building a conflict between conventionally symmetrical planning and real site planning of the kind observed on the Broad Street side. This is finally revealed in such more distant views as can be obtained—say from the courtyard in front of the Radcliffe Camera—when the dominating mass of the building is seen to be the huge central book stack rising squarely from the middle of the site—this cannot be seen from Broad Street—which is given an emphatic axis by its two ends being raised a little to form balustraded pavilions, but an axis quite unrelated to the unsymmetrically developed façade at the base of it.

Finally, I am puzzled by the strangely various detailing throughout the building: the inconsistency, for instance, between the conventional classical detail of the range of pilasters along the Broad Street front that I have already referred to, the much more romantic—not to say theatrical—treatment of the ornamental entrances, the whimsical gable of the gardener's cottage in Parks Road and the relatively severe detailing

of the upper windows, which have reveals composed of a series of square set-backs more typical of *l'art moderne* than of the romanticized Renaissance idiom the rest of the building is based on.

Dare one suggest that this very inconsistency of detail is the key to the strangely immature character the whole design seems to have? One knows from his other work Sir Giles's great abilities as a designer, and the consistency—not to say orthodoxy—of his scholarship.



3

Can one interpret his rather cavalier attitude to the niceties of style on this occasion as representing his contribution to contemporary emancipation? Offered by the times he lives in an inch of freedom from the customary pedantry of university architecture, is he taking an ell: freedom to substitute an improvised charm for any architectural system at all? If so, the building is an illustration of the fact that architecture is not a personal art. Even the greatest

M O N S T E R F I E





4

talent cannot steal the thunder of the moderns by accepting the liberties they offer without the responsibilities as well, responsibilities which include the modern equivalent of the eternal verities: scale, proportion and the like. Modern emancipation is not intended to make architecture easier and vaguer, but more precise—only in a creative instead of an antiquarian way. Charm, in short, is not enough: it is the flesh of architecture without the bones.



5

I E L D By Paul Nash



HAVE you ever known a place which seemed to have no beginning and no end? Such was Monster Field.

Although I went there two or three times I could never remember the way. How do we get to Monster Field I would ask. Or, we would be motoring miles from home in what seemed to me an unfamiliar part of the country when suddenly my companion would murmur—Monster Field. Where, where? Over there, to the left, the next field beyond the hedge. It was always the same, elusive and ubiquitous.

We called it Monster Field for an obvious reason. Upon the surface of its green acres, which flowed curiously like a wide river over the uplands, there jutted up, as if wading across the tide, two stark objects. They were the remains of two trees, elms, I think, felled by lightning during a furious storm some years ago. So violent had been their overthrow that the roots of one had been torn out of the ground. The other had broken off from a splintered shaft upon which it was leaning, its great limbs sprawled backwards over the grass.

Both trees were by now bleached to a ghastly pallor wherever the bark had broken and fallen away. At a distance, in sunlight, they looked literally dead-white, but at close range their surfaces disclosed many inequalities of tone and subtle variety of ashen tints. Also in many places the bark still clung, a rich, dark plum-coloured brown. Here and there the smooth bole, gouged by the inveterate beetle, let out a trickle of yellow dust which mingled with the red earth of the field.

Of course there are many such stricken trees lying in the fields throughout the country. I remember a line of them stretching across

the grass meadows at the foot of Ballard Down between Whitecliff and the sea. These were the victims of a holocaust which swept through the valley—most of them elms, trees with a dangerously shallow grip of the earth and given to hollow-ness. Yet, look at them how you will, they are no more than fallen trees; interesting to draw for their personal characteristics, as I found, but, though they lie on the very shores of Swanage, quite innocent of further implication.



The trees of Monster Field were another story altogether. If they had been no more than trees in their perpendicular life it was as much as you could believe. Horizontally they had assumed or acquired the personality of monsters.

To begin with, like many objects who suffer change, they were now, as it were, in reverse. In the old life as trees, they were accustomed to stand more or less solidly attached to earth, growing outward and upward, waving their crowns against the sky. In the new life their roots and trunks formed throat and head. The uplifted arms had become great legs and hoofs outstretched in wild career. What were they like? What did they most resemble in life?

In life? Let me be clear upon that point. We are not studying two fallen trees that look like animals, but two monster objects outside the plan of natural phenomena. What reference they have to life should not be considered in relation to their past—therein they are dead—they now excite our interest on another plane; they have “passed on” as people say. These now inanimate natural objects are alive in another world; but, instead of being invisible like so many of that huge community, or only made visible by the complicated machinery of spiritualism, they are so much with us that I was able to photograph them in full sunlight. Not that I made this record in any spirit of scientific research. Both as a painter and a collector of objects it was impossible for me to ignore the occupants of Monster Field. I had taken a series of snapshots to supplement the water-colour drawings I was now making. Also I had a sense of urgency in the matter. I felt convinced that it would not be wise to stay in the field after a certain hour . . .

Once more, what on earth or in heaven did they resemble?

The one now before me could have but one equivalent. The horse in William Blake's interpretation of the “sightless couriers of the air.” Blind and blank stretched out its pallid mask and its long back and neck lay flat; and its legs, of which there were five or six, jerked out with epileptic force as it bore the cherubim through the startled skies. Did it then crash to earth, fusing its image with the rigid tree? . . .

I wandered across the field to where on the higher ground the second denizen appeared in similar frenzied movement in the opposite direction. The declining sun suffused the evening sky to a brickish red beneath which the Malverns piled up intensely blue. A cornelian glow illumined the heavy summer green. The strange creature at hand seemed more ghastly stained by the sweet tint. Something about its headlong purpose recalled Picasso. It was eminently bovine yet scarcely male. Surely this must be the cow of Guernica's bull. It seemed as mystical and as dire.

As I continued my drawing the figure of my friend appeared walking slowly towards me. Her steel-blue hair ruffled against her white face and red mouth echoed the now fading colours of the scene. She seemed to be followed at a little distance by a youth or farmer's boy who stopped when she stopped but always pressed rather nearer until, noticing him, she waited for him to come up with her. He appeared to deliver a message. There was a slight altercation, then he turned on his heel and returned the way he had come, glancing back from time to time uncertainly. What is the matter with him? I called out. Foot and mouth disease she called back, not quite hearing what I said. Presently it transpired that elaborate precautions were being taken on these parts and that strangers coming from a distance, from walking in other fields maybe, were not encouraged to wander about the local grazing meadows for fear of carrying infection. We had been warned off in fact.

I noticed for the first time the herd of quiet cattle roaming, seated here and there crookedly chewing the cud. It would be, indeed, a stupid and terrible thing for us innocently to destroy these innocent beasts. They would be infected through the grass . . . Suddenly a more disturbing thought occurred to me. Supposing the monsters became infected, how would they react. I did not know the nature of foot and mouth disease. It sounded highly dangerous, like rabies and, perhaps, milk fever, madness, stampede; all sorts of words and images started going off like fireworks in my head. The after-glow had burnt to ashes and the vast undulating field, becoming each minute more like a wide river, was losing its light. I drew on my overcoat and slung my camera and field glasses over my shoulder; with my companion carrying the book of sketches we waded out into the green tide.

B O O K S

Folk-building in Wales

THE WELSH HOUSE; A STUDY IN FOLK CULTURE.
By Iorwerth C. Peate. London: the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion. Price 15s.

A BOOK about Welsh cottages, written by a Welsh museum official and published by a Welsh learned society, might seem to be a work of very strictly limited interest. So it is as well to state at once that Mr. Peate's book is important—one of the few really firm contributions to the study of folk-building in these islands. What gives it this importance is precisely the fact that it has been written as part of this larger subject and not merely as a monograph on the architectural “by-gones” of a particular region. The only two English workers in the larger field worth mentioning—S. O. Addy and C. F. Innocent—were seriously handicapped by the absence of detailed regional research such as the subject demands. Addy was a Sheffield solicitor with a flair for philology rather than building; Innocent was an architect, with the architect-writer's characteristic aptitude for generalization. Both did work of inestimable value, but it is work which needs criticism and revaluation of just the kind which Mr. Peate is equipped to supply. Would that English scholars of Mr. Peate's standing would tackle the English regional vernaculars in a similar spirit!

The problems surrounding what one may call the “natural history” of European building are inexhaustible. It is very tempting to link specific building-types with specific races, but unfortunately the more data that become available the less is anything of the sort possible. All the main types are extraordinarily widely distributed. Cruck construction, for instance, which Innocent too innocently described as “peculiarly British,” is found in North Germany and as far away as Roumania. Again, the “Saxon” house, which was long regarded as the speciality of Jutland, Schleswig-Holstein and the Lüneburg Heath, is really no more the characteristic product of those parts than is a certain type of “long-house” (what German scholars identify as the *quergeteille*—cross-partitioned—house) which bears a close resemblance to some of the Welsh buildings described by Mr. Peate. While, if the generally accepted arrangement of the houses of the Welsh laws is correct, they appear to bear no little resemblance to

1, a typical example of the “pitched” floor found in farmhouses in the eastern half of Montgomeryshire. It is formed of small stones or pebbles set on edge, cobble-wise, in geometrical patterns. Owing to the difficulties of keeping them clean these traditional floors are unpopular with housewives and the surviving examples are unfortunately disappearing. This one is at Plasau Duon, Carno, Montgomeryshire. It appears in “The Welsh House,” reviewed here, and is reproduced by courtesy of the National Museum of Wales (photo., I. C. Peate).





2

the "Saxon" house which the older authorities like Henning and Meitzen conceived to be something essentially regional.

The truth is that the whole story of the original creation and interpenetration of building types is utterly lost to us. Few stone and virtually no timber structures older than the middle ages exist even in fragmentary form. All we can do is to surmise on the flimsy, tantalizing basis of traditional usages which have survived into comparatively recent times, and of scattered allusions embedded in poems and legal codes.

In such evidences as these Wales is peculiarly rich, and it follows that a study of the Welsh material is relevant to the whole enormous subject of ancient building forms. Take, for instance, the circular house. There are the round huts on prehistoric sites in Anglesey, Caernarvonshire and Glamorganshire; and as putative derivatives of these there are Welsh pig-sties of corbelled construction which, Mr. Peate shows, may more logically be regarded as descendants from a type of human habitation than as freaks of invention arising solely from the exigencies of pig-keeping. These structures are humble collaterals, no doubt, of the "bee-hive" villages of Calabria and Apulia, with their *trulli* of beautifully laid dry masonry. Both descend directly from the settlements of the early Iron Age.

Then there is the Welsh type of cottage-cum-farm sheltering people and animals under one continuous roof, which Mr. Peate calls the "long-house." The plans of these buildings bear a most instructive resemblance, in proportion and general arrangement, to farms in Jutland and Schleswig, and one feels that the author might have developed these similarities instead of merely pointing a more or less unimportant contrast by reproducing the accepted but not wholly typical "Saxon" plan in this contest. Clearly, there is nothing particularly "Celtic" about the Welsh "long-house"; its persistence in Wales, Ireland and parts of Scotland is probably due merely to delayed cultural development. Its persistence in Jutland, on the other hand, accompanies relatively high cultural standards and is marked by the development of the type on a sophisticated plane rather than a departure from it as in the wealthier counties of England.



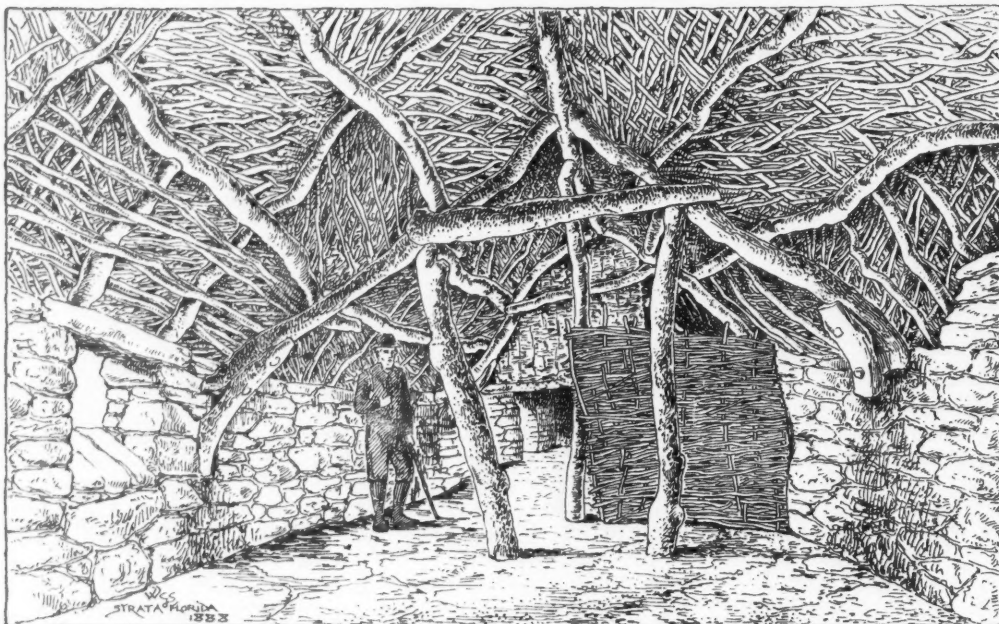
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In a subsequent chapter, Mr. Peate tackles the problem of the house-types referred to in the famous Welsh tribal laws, codified in the tenth century. Evidently the more important of these houses were aisled structures of two bays. Their precise construction is problematic. Mr. Peate is clearly right in assuming that each *gafael*, or as we should say "roof-truss," comprised a pair of crucks. But did the crucks spring from the inside or the outside of the aisles? If the crucks are identical with the "six columns" stated as being part of the roof, it means that the aisles were thrown out beyond them (as Seeböhm, for instance, assumes), but this would involve a structural anomaly in the fitting of pent-house aisles to the already sloping central structure. If, on the other

hand, the crucks sprang from outside the aisles, there must have been vertical interior columns as well. This suggests a result extraordinarily similar in appearance to some of the Danish *schuppen* illustrated by Werner Lindner (*Das niedersächsische Bauernhaus*) and, incidentally, to the famous Strata Florida house illustrated in Innocent, in the latest (1934) edition of Addy, and again by Mr. Peate, who hints that this curious building "may well represent the house of the Laws at the lowest end of the social scale." If it does, however, much of Mr. Peate's neat and plausible interpretation of the laws goes by the board!

These are some of the more problematic issues dealt with in this excellent and scientific work.

2, a cottage in the Pont-rhyd-fendigaid district, Cardiganshire, photographed in 1910 and a surviving example of the very primitive one-room dwelling. It will be noticed that there is no window in the hearth end. The old lady is wearing a Sunday School long-attendance medal. 3, cruck construction, on which much of the Welsh folk architecture is based, seen in a barn at Lloran Ganol, Llansilin, on the Montgomeryshire-Denbighshire border. Both these illustrations are from "The Welsh House" and are reproduced by courtesy of W. R. Hall and the Archaeologia Cambrensis respectively.



4, a farmhouse interior at Strata Florida, Cardiganshire. 5, a circular pigsty at Hendre, Pontypridd, Glamorganshire. A number of similarly constructed pigsties survive in Wales and they are of importance as evidence of the type of construction once used for primitive dwellings. Both these illustrations are from "The Welsh House" and the latter is reproduced by courtesy of the National Museum of Wales (photo., I. C. Peate).

Later chapters describe the maturer stone and timber types encountered in Wales, and there is an admirable survey of building materials and finishes. Both Mr. Peate and his sponsors, the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, are to be congratulated on making a first-class contribution to our knowledge not only of Welsh, but of English and European folk-building.

JOHN COOLMORE

Planning and Purpose

TOWN PLANNING. By Thomas Sharp. London: Penguin Books. Price 6d.

THE importance of terminology in democratic education has always been disregarded, yet it continues to misdirect large numbers of an intelligent public. In this book and in another recent "Pelican," *An Introduction to Modern Architecture*, terms used in the titles fail to convey the contemporary meaning of the subjects dealt with. Town Planning is probably the worst offender of a bad crowd. In its long and varied history as a definition of an important social activity, it has changed its meaning beyond recognition. To the layman it still conveys an idea of vistas and axes or of restrictive byelaws. In the last twenty years it has perhaps acquired a certain news value in

dramatic building programmes and reclamation schemes, but its real meaning, as Mr. Sharp sets out to define it, remains almost unknown.

Town Planning is no longer concerned with urban problems in particular. It is concerned with the problem of a way of living. It can "guide us in creating a civilized physical background for human life." In reading this book we must decide whether it is still possible to tackle each separate problem of this way of living, one at a time; the physical, the spiritual, the economic background, each with a separate solution; or whether the structure of human civilization is so inter-dependent that the solution of one must be the solution of all. Thomas Sharp in his simple but accurate statement on man's physical background, rather precariously sits on the fence. The layman may conclude that at least some part of his ambitious vision can be achieved at the present day; and the author gives examples to support this view.

We live in an industrial civilization. We are governed by industrial economic systems. If we accept this, seeing in their achievements possibilities for a happier and better life, we must design the living organization most suited to run it successfully. In his *esquisse* of this organization, Mr. Sharp wishes to prove that democratic government is the only system which can truly realize social planning. Where he avoids the issue is in failing to define democratic government. That this would entail a long argument beyond the scope of his book is no answer. The England he wants to see cannot be achieved, not because the machinery for a National Planning Commission cannot be set up, but because as things are at present it could not function. The machinery can be set up tomorrow, but for whom and by whom it is controlled is in the end, the measure of its value. This fact is recognized only in his remarks on the planning achievements of Germany and Italy, which though materially great are socially sterile. In including Russia in this same category he makes a grave mistake, later admitted by the very description he quotes of the successes of the Russian social planning programme.

Instead, for the defence of democratic planning, he gives as examples Holland, Sweden and Norway. The small European democracies have long been the straws to which a drowning civilization has clung. But it has required a war to show us how uncertain are the democratic foundations of these small states. Remove the goodwill of their powerful neighbours, with whom their real economic control rests, and they become straws indeed. The only great example of social planning in an economically independent state, outside Russia, is in the United States: the work of the P.W.A. and the Tennessee Valley Authority. But here,

too, it was only as a result of a world depression, when the stranglehold maintained by American finance on the lives of the people began to slip, that the New Deal became a possibility. With the return of partial prosperity, the further development of the experiment on an ever-widening scale is condemned. The ordered thought of social planning and the economics of *laissez faire*, like oil and vinegar, can never mix.

Town Planning is none the less an important addition to the "Pelican" series. It embraces for the first time, in a short and readable book, the problems of rural as well as urban living. It outlines the probable development of English agriculture, a subject of vital importance to us, yet beyond the knowledge of almost all but the most diligent of laymen.

It could have been doubly valuable if a brief analysis of the present controlling factors of town and country development had been given; land ownership, speculation, the building industry, monopoly control of imports and exports of agricultural produce, and all the ramifications of subsidy control; sufficient to indicate where the shoe pinches, so that the layman could work out his own ideas of how Mr. Sharp's vision of the future could be made a reality of the present.

LEO DESYLLAS

The Gothic Charmer

HORACE WALPOLE: A BIOGRAPHY. By R. W. Ketton-Cremer. Duckworth. Price 16s. net.

IN Mr. Ketton-Cremer's biography of Horace Walpole you can enjoy for a few hours the company of one of the wittiest, kindest men of the Georgian age, a man who, above all other things, had mastered the art of living gracefully, and who adorned a society so gracious, so well-mannered, and so sensitive to excellence in architecture, painting, literature and music, that by comparison almost any section of present-day society seems boorish, crude and lop-sided with specialized talents, which deny to its members the capacity for universal appreciation of merit in the arts. Horace Walpole's undisguised delight in the pleasures of conversation, the exchange of gossip, and the fashionable diversions of aristocratic society, naturally earned the disrespect of the nineteenth century; and he would, no doubt, be censured by the puritan left-wingers of today, particularly those who regard architecture as an exercise in social and economic research.

He deliberately designed for posterity a vast, documented record of his own century. Too many people who claim to be educated still regard him as the creator of a gim-crack Gothic house and as a spiteful tittle-tattler; but Mr. Ketton-Cremer's biography should correct such views. Horace Walpole knew that Strawberry Hill was a toy: he never invested it with any real architectural significance; but he and his circle of friends derived much agreeable stimulation from discussing and planning additions to it, and their lively and informed interest in architecture prevented the house from ever becoming the botched, bastard thing it would have been a century later, when the moral earnestness of Ruskin had turned Gothic architecture into a form of religion. Strawberry Hill, like its gay master, had a charming elegance, with a nice adjustment of sombre shadow and rich colouring. Its growth and conception, and the work of the collaborators who helped Walpole to enlarge and embellish the "little plaything house" that Mrs. Chenevix had once owned, is traced in considerable detail by the author of this biography, which may certainly be acclaimed as the best unprejudiced study that has yet been produced.

Mr. Ketton-Cremer has had access to the remarkable collection of Walpole material in the possession of Mr. Wilmarth S. Lewis, of Farmington, Connecticut, and his book includes some hitherto unpublished matter. It is an easy book to read, not only because it is written in an easy, agreeable style, but because it is an admirable piece of typography, and as such would have enchanted the owner of the Strawberry Hill Printing Press.

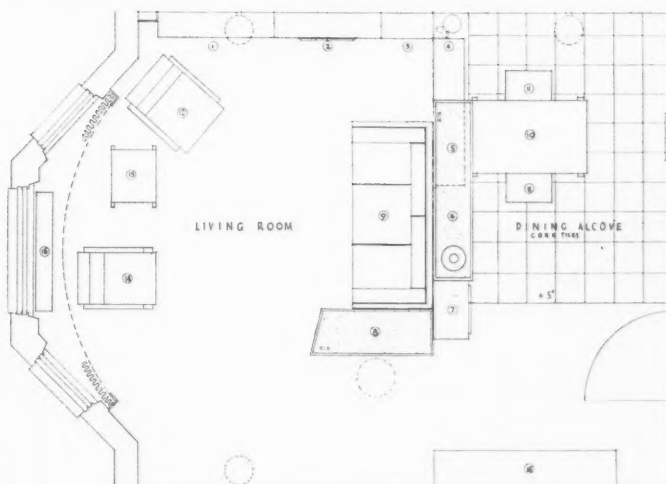
JOHN GLOAG

DECORATION



A MULTI-PURPOSE LIVING-ROOM

This room provides a good example of the modern practice whereby a large interior space is subdivided up to a certain level by built-in furniture which divides it into zones for various uses. It is the principal room in a flat designed by R. Jelinek Karl for his own use, in a large London house converted by the same architect into twelve flats. The room is 22 ft. long and 16 ft. wide. The ceiling and side walls are in white stipple except the end wall which has flat egg-shell blue paint. Furniture is of waxed Australian walnut except for the dining-alcove fittings and the table at the head of the settee which are painted the same blue. The table has a large-grain cork top. The carpet is beige Wilton and the curtains are of a yellow rough wool material. The picture on the wall is one painted on glass by Henry Hague and is framed in natural oak.



KEY TO PLAN

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. 4 ft. book-case. | 8. Writing table. |
| 2. Electric fire. | 9. Settee. |
| 3. 21 in. book-case. | 10. Dining table. |
| 4. Concealed light. | 11. Chairs. |
| 5. Bookshelf. | 12. Easy chair. |
| 6. Sideboard. | 13. Table. |
| 7. Built-in radio. | 14. Easy chair. |
| | 15. Radiator. |
| | 16. Cabinet. |

Decoration as Storage

The series of articles of which this is the fifth are an attempt to examine the possible decorative use that can be made of one particular function of the interior, namely storage. It will be realized on reflection that it is not far from the truth to say that nearly the whole of interior architecture is concerned with the problem of storage. The designless home is that in which all the owner's possessions are heaped in a litter on the floor; the well-designed home is that in which each object has its appointed place; and the well decorated home is that in which the necessity of storing innumerable pieces of property is made the opportunity for an interesting sequence of shapes and patterns. The bedroom is as much dominated by the wardrobe and chest-of-drawers as by the bed

and the modern kitchen often appears to consist of nothing but an array of cupboards from floor to ceiling and wall to wall.

In these articles, by taking each object that has to be stored in turn, it is hoped to show what decorative effect the ingenuity of architects can extract from an efficient accommodation of it. The heading of the first article was Books; of the second Kitchen Storage; of the third Clothes; of the fourth Studio and Writing Materials. This month it is China and Glass. The same subject has already been touched on under kitchen storage, but here it is brought into the dining-room where it is often displayed rather than merely accommodated, after the precedent of the old-fashioned dresser. The notes are by Frederick Gibberd.

5 CHINA AND GLASS

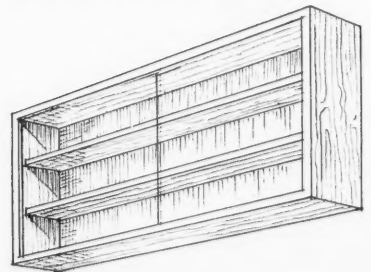


1, a typical example of a modern dining-room in which the china and glass storage provides the most striking decorative motif in the room; the dining-room in a London flat (F. R. S. Yorke and Marcel Breuer, architects). The storage unit is a long horizontal cupboard cantilevered from the wall. It is of black cellulosed wood with sliding glass doors through which the contents can be seen at approximately eye level.

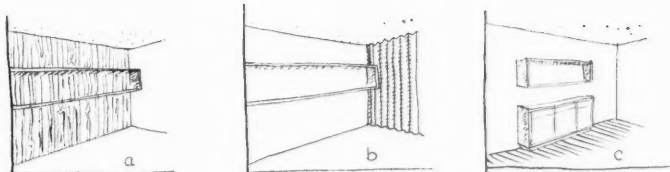
The traditional storage for glass and china was the dresser with open shelves at the top and deep cupboards under, forming a sideboard for serving. On the shelves plates were stood on edge, mugs hung from hooks and tureens and similar articles arranged to make the most effective display. The less decorative objects were stored in the cupboards. Although present-day storage methods are very different from their prototype the chief object in their design is still the exploitation of the decorative value of the glass and china itself.

Because of this, in even the most "modern" treatments there is still a reminiscence of the old dresser—witness the example on the left where the dresser shelves have become a suspended glass case, the serving table a trolley, and the cutlery and pot drawers have been banished to the kitchen. We still have then the same purpose of display and the same methods, the shelf and the hook, but beyond this the similarity ceases as modern china and glass require a setting in keeping with their more fragile and precise character.

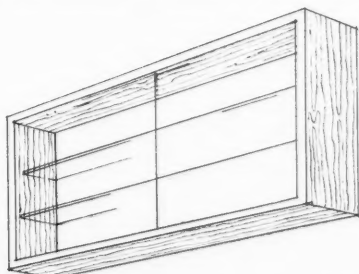
Considering first the simplest method of storing china and glass, this consists of plain wood shelves, sealed at the ends with wood uprights and at the front with doors to protect the articles from dust. The doors are, of course, glass and they are usually made to slide straight in grooves so that the maximum display is possible.



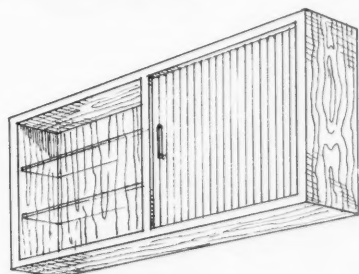
Unless the fitting is hung at or below eye level—and it must be remembered that more time is spent in a room sitting than standing—the shelves themselves obstruct a complete view of their contents. Furthermore, they must be carefully lit or the fitting will look very dark, since, for instance, bands of heavy shadow would be cast under the shelves by a central ceiling point. For this reason it is common to substitute plate glass for wood shelves. We now have a rectangular wood carcase enclosing and framing the china and glass rather than a series of shelves upon which



they stand. This effect of framing the objects, as one does a picture, has its maximum effect when the background to the fitting is of the same colour and texture as the surrounding walls.



There are many examples of storage cupboards combined with shelving. These generally have sliding wood doors or roller shutters to give them an affinity to the glass doors. If the enclosed portion is equal to or dominates the fitting it is usual to back the glass shelving by the same material as the rest of the fitting.

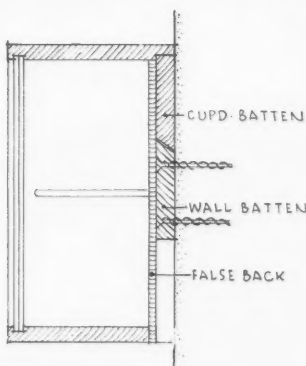


Hanging cupboards, as a rule, have a very dominating character and require carefully relating to the general surface finish and texture and the other elements of the room. For example, in most cases a long fitting requires its direction broken down by a vertical treatment on the wall against which it is hung, as in the diagram *a*, or on the adjacent wall, as in *b*. With comparatively short fittings the design may be rendered static by the breadth of

the wall surface surrounding it, or by a fitting placed under and associated in design with it, as in *c*.

In 1, the strong horizontality of the fitting, which has come about through its narrowness and dark background, is reflected in the placing of the table, and is resolved by the folds of the curtain on the adjacent wall. 2, on the other hand, does not cut the wall in half as does 1, but is surrounded by the wall surface which is repeated in the back of the fitting. This, together with its wider proportion, reduces the horizontal direction and makes a compensating vertical treatment unnecessary.

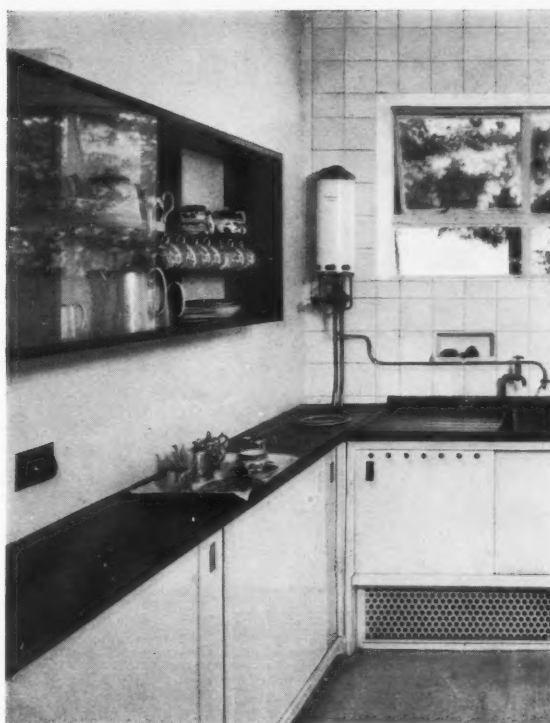
The fixing of hanging cupboards is of interest as unless heavy brackets under the fitting are used—and these being supports are incompatible with the required feeling of hanging—the weight of the fitting tends to assert a shear on the points of fixing, and if it does not snap the screws or whatever else is used for fixing it tends to drag them out or bend them downwards. Flat iron brass bars built into the wall and recessed into the underside of the top of the carcass are sometimes used, but the brick or partition-block courses into which these are built do not always coincide with



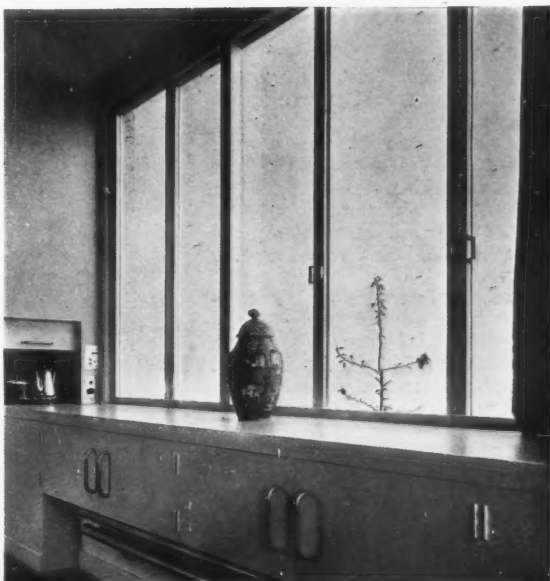
the exact height required, and the bracket with its fixing screws may look ugly where it is recessed into the carcass.

A satisfactory method is shown above.

2, a rather similar cupboard to that shown in 1 hung from the wall of the kitchen in a Nurses' Home at Macclesfield (Frederick Gibberd, architect). 3, another long horizontal cupboard for storing china and glass in a house in Buckinghamshire (Christopher Nicholson, architect). In this case it is kept low and the top serves as a shelf immediately beneath the window. At one end of the shelf (on the extreme left in the photograph) is the hatch opening from the kitchen. Another use of the china and glass storage unit is to form a partition between living- and dining-rooms or living-room and kitchen. In 4 the dining recess is divided from the living room of a house at Gablonz (Hans Lauterbach, architect) by a built-in sideboard. It consists of solid cupboards below and a glazed one above, the latter having glass shelves. It is continued up to the ceiling in the form of a glazed screen.



2



3



4

The principle is to fasten back a deep batten to the wall—the deeper, and in consequence the wider apart the fixing screws, the better—and to fasten a similar batten to the fitting itself, the latter being preferably constructed as an integral part of the fitting. The cupboard batten sits down on the wall one, the meeting edges being chamfered to resist the outward drag, and are made the full intended length of the cupboard so that there is a tight fit at the edges. A false back is put in to give an unbroken background.

The contemporary living space with its large floor and window area and few dividing walls, limits the wall space available for a hanging cupboard. There are instances therefore, where it may be preferable to keep the china in low cupboards which may project into the room as screens or may be built in under the window. 3 is an example of the latter treatment. The top is taken right back to butt against the metal window section forming a very deep cill upon which articles can be displayed, and the bottom is recessed to take the heating tubes. A hatch is provided in the kitchen wall so that china can be delivered straight through to the cupboards after washing up.

4 shows an arrangement which is very similar to its prototype the dresser. Cupboards with solid doors at the base house the large china articles and serve as a sideboard, whilst a light glass superstructure carried on tubular metal supports makes an effective display for the glass ware.

China and glass, particularly fine specimens, may be displayed to emphasize some particular characteristic. The essential qualities of glass, for instance, are ductility and transparency and the essential form, except with pressed glass, is the bubble. In 6 there is an emphasis on transparency; the glass is suspended on shelves between the rooms so that there are equal intensities of light on either side of it. The light both shines through and is reflected off the curves of the glass, so that its translucence is exploited to an absolute maximum. It will be noticed that the shelves are spaced so that there is not a lot of "air" round the glass.

When glass is placed against a solid background, as in 5, there is reflection from its surfaces but not through them; the glass stands in dark silhouette, against the background and its form is emphasized rather than its transparency. Emphasis on translucence is perhaps most appropriate to thin fragile glass whose edges catch the light or to glass with fine designs etched on the surface. Emphasis on form might be devised with deep coloured or pressed glass where ductility and not transparency is the chief characteristic, or with heavy cut glass whose facets reflect the light.

With pottery the emphasis may be on form texture or colour. Ordinary "every day" pottery which is made from a material intermediate between earthenware and porcelain has a smooth surface and little charm of texture, its setting should bring out its colour and shape. Unglazed earthenware has considerable charm of texture which might have a complementary background. Porcelain on the other hand, being an altogether more fragile material with a glassy surface, requires corresponding refinement in its setting.



5

These three examples might be called modern versions of the old-fashioned dresser. 5, consists of shelving recessed into the end wall of the dining portion of the living-room in a London house (Denys Lasdun, architect). The shelves, which have solid cupboards beneath, are symmetrically disposed either side of a service hatch. The wood is kyesingo and there is a $\frac{1}{4}$ in. painted bead round each recess. In 6, the dining-room of a house at Esher (Patrick Gwynne and Wells Coates, architects) the sideboard is also set into the end wall and also incorporates a hatch. In this case the shelf for the display of china and glass is above the hatch opening and the cupboards are below it. 7, a dresser set into the kitchen wall—immediately within the dining-room door—of a house at Milan, Italy (Franco Albini, architect). The front is of obscured glass through which the contents can be faintly seen.



6



7

The House Beautiful

Every town and village along that vast stretch of double-river frontage had a best dwelling, finest dwelling mansion—the home of its wealthiest and most conspicuous citizen. It is easy to describe it: large grassy yard, with paling fence painted white—in fair repair; brick walk from gate to door; big, square, two-storey “frame” house, painted white and porticoed like a Grecian temple—with this difference, that the imposing fluted columns and Corinthian capitals were a pathetic sham, being made of white pine, and painted; iron knocker; brass door knob—discoloured, for lack of polishing. Within, an uncarpeted hall, of planed boards; opening out of it, a parlour, fifteen feet by fifteen—in some instances five or ten feet larger; ingrain carpet; mahogany centre-table; lamp on it, with green-paper shade—standing on a gridiron, so to speak, made of high-coloured yarns, by the young ladies of the house, and called a lamp-mat; several books, piled and disposed, with cast-iron exactness, according to an inherited and unchangeable plan; among them, Tupper, much pencilled; also “Friendship’s Offering,” and “Affection’s Wreath,” with their sappy inanities illustrated in die-away mezzotints; also Ossian, “Alonzo and Melissa”; maybe “Ivanhoe”; also “Album,” full of original “poetry” of the Thou-hast-wounded-the-spirit-that-loved-thee breed; two or three goody-goody works “Shepherd of Salisbury Plain,” etc., current number of the chaste and innocuous Godey’s “Lady’s Book,” with painted fashion-plate of wax figure women with mouths all alike—lips and eyelids the same size—each five-foot woman with a two-inch wedge sticking from under her dress and letting-on to be half of her foot. Polished air-tight stove (new and deadly invention), with pipe passing through a board which closes up the discarded good old fireplace. On each end of the wooden mantel, over the fireplace, a large basket of peaches and other fruits, natural size, all done in plaster, rudely, or in wax, and painted to resemble the originals—which they don’t. Over middle of mantel, engraving—Washington Crossing the Delaware; on the wall by the door, copy of it done in thunder-and-lightning crewels by one of the young ladies—work of art which would have made Washington hesitate about crossing, if he could have foreseen what advantage was going to be taken of it. Piano—kettle in disguise—with music, bound and unbound, piled on it, and on a stand near by: Battle of Prague; Bird Waltz; Arkansas Traveller; Rosin the Bow; Marseilles Hymn; On a Lone Barren Isle (St. Helena); The Last Link is Broken; She wore a Wreath of Roses the Night when last we met; Go, forget me, Why should Sorrow o’er that Brow a Shadow fling; Hours there were to Memory Dearer; Long, Long Ago; Days of Absence; A Life on the Ocean Wave, a Home on the Rolling Deep; Bird at Sea; and spread open on the rack, where the plaintive singer has left it, Ro-holl on, silver moo-hoon, guide the Trav-el-lerr his way, etc. Tilted pensively against the piano, a guitar—guitar capable of playing the Spanish Fandango by itself, if you give it a start. Frantic work of art on the wall—pious motto, done on the premises, sometimes in coloured yarns, sometimes in faded grasses: progenitor of the “God Bless Our Home” of modern commerce. Framed in black mouldings on the wall, other works of art, conceived and committed on the premises, by the young ladies; being grim black-and-white crayons; landscapes, mostly: lake, solitary sail-boat, petrified clouds, pregeological trees on shore, anthracite precipice; name of criminal conspicuous in the corner. Lithograph, Napoleon Crossing the Alps. Lithograph, The Grave at St. Helena. Steel-plates, Trumbull’s Battle of Bunker Hill, and the Sally from Gibraltar. Copperplates, Moses Smiting the Rock, and Return of the Prodigal Son. In big gilt frame, slander of the family in oil: papa holding a book (“Constitution of the United States”); guitar leaning against mamma, blue ribbons fluttering from its neck; the young ladies, as children, in slippers and scalloped pantelettes, one embracing toy-horse, the other beguiling kitten with ball of yarn, and both simpering up at mamma, who simpers back. These persons all fresh, raw and red, apparently skinned. Opposite, in gilt frame, grandpa and grandma, at thirty and twenty-two, stiff, old-fashioned, high-collared, puff-sleeved, glaring pallidly out from a background of solid Egyptian night. Under a glass French clock dome, large bouquet of stiff flowers done in corpsy-white wax. Pyramidal what-not in the corner, the shelves occupied chiefly with bric-a-brac of the period, disposed with an eye to best effect: shell, with the Lord’s Prayer carved on it; another shell—of the long-oval sort, narrow, straight orifice, three inches long, running from end to end—portrait of Washington carved on it; not well done; the shell had Washington’s mouth, originally—artist should have built to that. These two are memorials of the long-ago bridal trip to New Orleans and the French Market. Other bric-a-brac: Californian “specimens”—quartz, with gold wart adhering; old Guinea-gold locket, with circlet of ancestral hair in it; Indian arrow-heads, of flint; pair of bead moccasins, from uncle who crossed the Plains; three “alum” baskets of various colours—being skeleton-frame of wire, clothed-on with cubes of crystallised alum in the rock-candy style—works of art which were achieved by the young ladies; their doubles and duplicates to be found upon all what-nots in the land; convention of desiccated bugs and butterflies pinned to a card; painted toy-dog, seated upon bellows attachment—drops its under-jaw and squeaks when pressed upon; sugar-candy rabbit—limbs and features merged together, not strongly defined; pewter presidential-campaign medal; miniature cardboard wood-sawyer, to be attached to the stove-pipe and operated by the heat;

CORRESPONDENCE

Horizontal Window Panes

The Editor,

THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW.

SIR,

In his article in your August number Mr. MacQuedy, in his effort to prove that glazing bars are not necessary to “give scale,” reproduces an old drawing showing voids as solid black. In this Palladian type of façade there is undoubtedly enough patterning to give scale without the aid of glazing bars, and Mr. MacQuedy is therefore quite right. But what about the typical Georgian House? Here the close rhythm of white painted glazing bars is almost the only patterning of the façade and a vital factor in maintaining its scale.

I agree that the scale of a modern style façade is increased to such an extent that window subdivisions will not “give scale.” Of course, as Mr. MacQuedy says, that is why modern architects avoid them. I was surprised to learn that the horizontal pane type of window was introduced from Scandinavia after the A.A. visit there. I always thought this type of window was traditional in England, and was used side by side with the more “correct” Georgian sash type in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Yours, etc.,

JOHN HARRISON.

Birmingham.

The Editor,

THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW.

SIR,

I have been interested by the articles of your contributor James MacQuedy: in particular those on the viril: Victorians, and that on horizontal windows.

Possibly he, or you, will be interested to see the enclosed photograph. It is of a house in Hull, near where I live. It was built in 1817. You will observe that the windows are divided by horizontal bars. This applies to all the windows in the house, including the five sash windows on the front elevation. The sash windows are as old as the house and the division is very beautifully proportioned. I am not certain about the larger windows on the flanks—the two upper side panes of which are hung at top to open outward. Their proportion is not quite as refined; still they are thought to be contemporary and they have certainly been as they now are for thirty years. Indeed when the whole elevation is examined the horizontal division appears inevitable.

There is a small house nearby which is probably a hundred years older. It is now called “Wellington Gardens.” In this house there is a three-light Yorkshire slide window (inserted after the house was built) which has horizontal panes. In my opinion this window is earlier than 1817. There are some other examples in the neighbourhood where a like horizontal division was used before 1850; e.g. Kingston Cottage c. 1830, Kingston

small Napoleon, done in wax; spread-open daguerreotypes of dim children, parents, cousins, aunts, and friends, in all attitudes but customary ones; no templed portico at back, and manufactured landscape stretching away in the distance—that came in later, with the photograph; all these vague figures lavishly chained and ringed—metal indicated and secured from doubt by stripes and splashes of vivid gold bronze; all of them too much combed, too much fixed up; and all of them uncomfortable in inflexible Sunday clothes of a pattern which the spectator cannot realize could ever have been in fashion; husband and wife generally grouped together—husband sitting, wife standing, with hand on his shoulder—and both preserving, all these fading years, some traceable effect of the daguerreotypist's brisk "Now smile, if you please!" Bracketed over what-not—place of special sacredness—an outrage in water-colour, done by the young niece that came on a visit long ago and died. Pity, too, for she might have repented of this in time. Horse-hair chairs, horse-hair sofa which keeps sliding from under you. Window shades, of oil stuff with milkmaids and ruined castles stencilled on them in fierce colours. Lambrequins dependent from gaudy boxings of beaten tin, gilded. Bedrooms with rag carpets; bedsteads of the "corded" sort, with a sag in the middle, the cords needing tightening; snuffy feather bed—not aired often enough; cane-seat chairs, splint-bottomed rocker; looking-glass on wall, school-slate size, veneered frame; inherited bureau; wash-bowl and pitcher, possibly—but not certainly; brass candlestick, tallow candle, snuffers. Nothing else in the room. Not a bathroom in the house; and no visitor likely to come along who has ever seen one.

That was the residence of the principal citizen, all the way from the suburbs of New Orleans to the edge of St. Louis. When he stepped aboard a big fine steamboat he entered a new and marvellous world: chimney-tops cut to counterfeit a spraying crown of plumes—and maybe painted red; pilot-house, hurricane deck, boiler-deck guards, all garnished with white wooden filagree work of fanciful patterns; gilt acorns topping the derricks; gilt deer-horns over the big bell; gaudy symbolical picture on the paddle-box, possibly; big roomy boiler-deck, painted blue, and furnished with Windsor armchairs; inside, a far-receding snow-white "cabin"; porcelain knob and oil-picture on every state-room door; curving patterns of filagree-work touched up with gilding, stretching overhead all down the converging vista; big chandeliers every little way, each an April shower of glittering glass-drops; lovely rainbow light falling everywhere from the coloured glazing of the skylights; the whole a long-drawn, resplendent tunnel, a bewildering and soul-satisfying spectacle! In the ladies' cabin a pink and white Wilton carpet, as soft as mush, and glorified with a ravishing pattern of gigantic flowers. Then the Bridal Chamber—the animal that invented the idea was still alive and unhanged at that day—Bridal Chamber whose pretentious flummery was necessarily overawing to the now tottering intellect of that hosannahing citizen. Every state-room had its couple of cosy clean bunks, and perhaps a looking-glass and a snug closet; and sometimes there was even a washbowl and pitcher, and part of a towel which could be told from mosquito netting by an expert—though generally these things were absent, and the shirt-sleeved passengers cleansed themselves at a long row of stationary bowls in the barber shop where were also public towels, public combs, and public soap.

MARK TWAIN

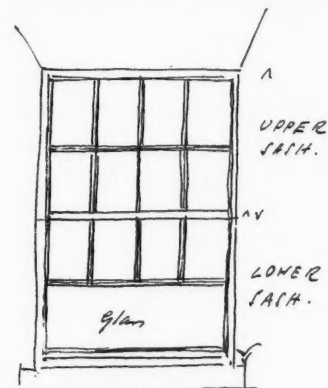
(*Life on the Mississippi*, 1882).



The upper storey of a house in Hull, the date of which is approximately 1817, showing the horizontal-paned windows, which are undoubtedly part of the original structure. See Mr. Dudley Harbron's letter on this page.



with the back of the pavement. It might be thought that this had been done in order to provide a clear space to letter the name of the firm upon, (today a few have names on). But I do not consider this the reason, as one of my youthful recollections is of the horror expressed to me by a descendant of one of these merchant families, that



an "upstart" should have disgraced the Street by lettering his name on his window. In buildings of the Gothic Revival, it appears as if the saddle bar had been brought to the front, the leaded glass discarded and the sheet glass glazed into the bar, thus evolving a horizontal pane.

I don't think the A.A. visit had much to do with the recent craze. Dudok and others used the mode several years earlier.

Yours, etc.,

DUDLEY HARBON.

Hull.

[Mr. MacQuedy writes: Of course Mr. Harrison is right in saying that there are eighteenth-century precedents for the use of window panes of a horizontal shape, and Mr. Harbron's extremely interesting notes bear him out. The details Mr. Harbron sends constitute exactly the sort of information I hoped to extract from readers by my rather tentative historical footnote.

I may add that what I was really discussing was not the occasional use of this motif but the craze for it. That is an entirely modern phenomenon and I persist that, although many factors contributed to it, one of them was the Swedish fashion fostered by A.A. visits.]

Cause and Effect.

It was Oscar Wilde who said that nature imitates art. Now it appears that real life imitates the humorous papers, if one can judge from the following report from an evening paper:

"When a case concerning a piano was heard at Bow County Court to-day, the Judge asked the woman buying it on hire purchase, 'Do you play the piano?'

"The Woman: No, none of us knows how to play it, but it makes a nice ornament, and to put photos and other things on top."

This very remark has long been a stock joke, and one can presumably now expect reports of actual instances of the other similar jokes: the bath in the new housing scheme being used to keep coal in, the architect forgetting the staircase, the modern picture being hung in an exhibition upside-down, and even the seaside landlady adding the date on to the bill.

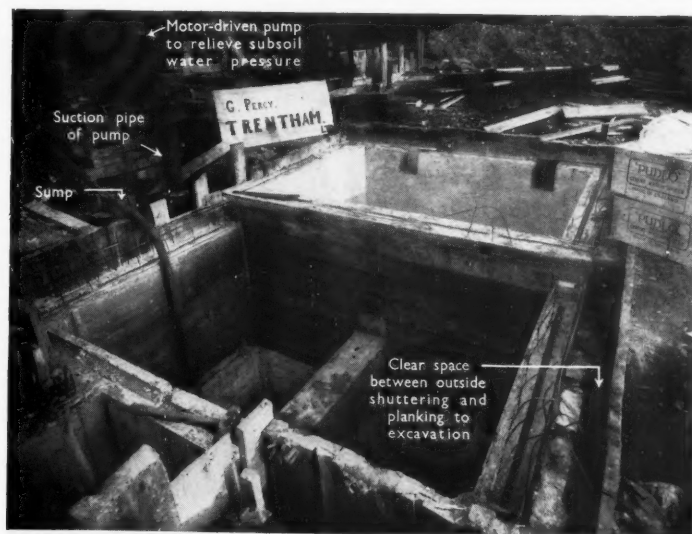
Mass Observation, in fact, will be a matter of reading *Punch*.

[Continued from page 129]

College 1837, Sculcoates Workhouse c. 1850. There is a disused school in Humber Street with the same horizontal fenestration, and an old mill in Lime Street. These are about 1860.

Whilst on the subject, I think there is some sort of relationship between the plan, elevation and window division in the Regency examples. Alternatively, the notion may have come from a utilitarian angle. In High Street, there are several eighteenth century houses formerly the residence and counting house of the old merchants. Several of these have a feature which may explain the origin. The lower sash windows, which would normally be divided (as are the upper) into sixteen panes, have only thirteen—the four lowest panes are combined as one horizontal whole. Whether this has been done subsequent to their making I cannot say without stripping the paint. The sashes are as old as the buildings, and the whole of the ground floor windows, in any building which has the arrangement, are treated alike. It appears as if the three lower vertical bars have been intentionally omitted to afford an uninterrupted view of the narrow street on to which they look, the front of the houses being lineable

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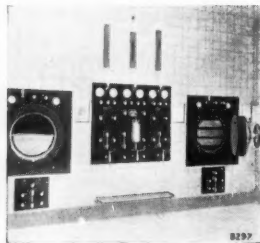
Sons (window blinds), Constructors Ltd. (changing room equipment), James Gibbons Ltd. (cloakroom fittings), Wilson and Gardon Ltd. ("Unique" blackboards), Spencer, Heath and George Ltd. (gymnasium equipment), Franks Harris Bros. Ltd. (playground paths and roads), Constable, Hart & Co. Ltd. ("Aztec" surfacing to playground and paths), George Jackman and Sons Ltd. (planting), Smiths' English Clocks Ltd. (electric clocks).

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Architect: C. G. Stillman.

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Wilts County Offices, Trowbridge.

Architect : P. D. Hepworth.

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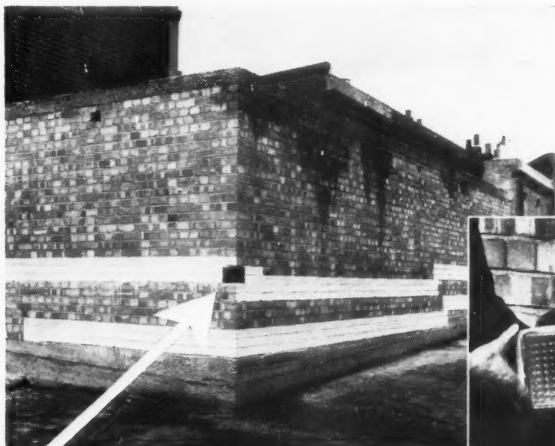
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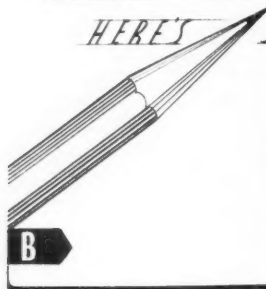
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