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THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

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THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

JANUARY 1950

Janvier 1950

Du fait de la naissance de la bombe atomique, il n'est plus possible, en 1950, d'ignorer complètement ceux qui mettent en doute la survivance continue de la civilisation. Cependant, l'aspect le plus sinistre à l'égard de la bombe n'est peut-être pas qu'elle puisse éclater, mais plutôt qu'elle ait engendré un esprit de fatalisme, préconisant qu'il ne vaut guère la peine de faire des plans pour un avenir qui, se peut-il, n'existera jamais.

LA REVUE D'ARCHITECTURE rejette un tel fatalisme; elle est d'opinion que c'est l'influence des hommes de bonne volonté qui détermine le futur et que, présupposant l'existence de cette volonté, l'avenir pourra encore s'orienter dans la bonne voie. Elle est convaincue qu'une architecture pleine d'entrain, virile et sympathique, et la détermination de produire celle-ci, de même que le désir ressenti par toutes personnes ayant également à cœur la création d'autres choses animées, viriles et agréables, changera inexorablement le cours des événements, et donnera lieu dans la nature à des conditions qui rendront superflue la bombe atomique. Le présent numéro spécial, qui a trait au progrès de l'architecture pendant le prochain demi-siècle, fait preuve de cette croyance de la part de LA REVUE.

Dès qu'elle décida de publier un tel numéro, la Rédaction eut à se poser la question suivante: pour quel fait principal se rappellera-t-on le prochain demi-siècle dans le domaine de l'architecture? Le plus probable, trouve-t-elle, c'est qu'on se souviendra de cette période surtout pour avoir encouragé la construction de villes nouvelles, et pour avoir redécouvert l'urbanisme, ainsi que cet aspect visuel de l'urbanisme que LA REVUE appelle le paysage urbain, qu'elle se fait un devoir spécial d'étudier. En conséquence, la Rédaction a décidé que ce numéro doit traiter de cette conception visuelle de l'urbanisme, et comme mesure initiale, elle a envoyé une équipe composée d'écrivains, de photographes et d'artistes pour entreprendre une tournée étendue de plusieurs des villes anglaises semblant offrir les meilleures potentialités visuelles.

Au cours de cette tournée, il devint évident que les bonnes constructions ne représentent pas le seul, ou même le plus important facteur dans la création d'une ville convenable. Il faut souvent considérer sur un pied d'égalité les mille menus détails dont les caractéristiques sont déterminées tout autrement que sur la planche à dessin de l'architecte—éléments tels que, par exemple, la surface des routes, les indications routières, grilles, bannes, écriteaux, enseignes, signaux, couleurs, textures, etc. Il en ressort qu'avant de pouvoir discuter sérieusement l'aspect visuel de l'urbanisme, ces éléments doivent être rassemblés, analysés, et, si l'on peut ainsi s'exprimer, 'perçus d'une manière consciente.' Celle-ci est la tâche entreprise dans ce numéro.

Le fait que l'architecte-dessinateur n'exerce aucun empire direct—et il n'y a aucune raison pour qu'il en soit ainsi—sur tant de ces éléments qui déterminent l'effet visuel d'une ville, montre

combien il importe qu'un vigoureux 'vernaculaire' moderne surgisse d'où puissent émaner les objets appropriés. Quelques théoriciens voudraient affirmer qu'on ne peut forcer l'émergence d'un pareil 'vernaculaire' et qu'il faut laisser au mouvement moderne la responsabilité de le produire à l'heure voulue. Toutefois, ceux-ci ne tiennent aucun compte du fait qu'il existe déjà toute une structure de routines établies, sur lesquelles un tel 'vernaculaire' pourrait se fonder. Quelques-unes sont nouvelles, mais la plupart sont des routines oubliées, restées méconnues et qui n'ont pas encore été incorporées dans le plan architectural moderne simplement parce qu'elles ne sont pas nouvelles—bien que leur juste conscience les rende utilisables en tout temps. Les unes, de création anonyme, sont nées de l'industrie; d'autres sont le produit de ce que l'on pourrait appeler la tradition fonctionnelle—jetées, objets marins, matériel ferroviaire et riverain; d'autres encore se trouvent dans la substance et dans les caractéristiques des matériaux-mêmes.

Ce numéro préconise donc la nécessité d'une classification des formules susceptibles de servir de simple base pour toutes décisions à prendre quant à la composition des particularités d'ordre secondaire de nos villes. Il serait possible, au moyen d'une telle classification, de créer un 'Recueil de Jurisprudence,' constituant une sorte d'étalon qui pourrait être consulté par les fonctionnaires surmenés et par les architectes affairés lorsqu'il devient nécessaire et désirable de remplacer l'invention par la routine. Les clichés des exemples composant la plus grande partie de ce numéro sont suivis de dessins par Gordon Cullen, montrant comment ces éléments, et d'autres produits vernaculaires, pourraient être adaptés à des endroits spécifiques. Il prend tout d'abord une ville actuelle, Lyme Regis, et démontre de quelle manière des améliorations basées sur un tel 'vernaculaire' seraient capables d'en intensifier le caractère. Ensuite, il applique la même technique à des sites imaginaires se trouvant dans une des Villes Nouvelles. Ces dernières mettent à l'épreuve l'architecture moderne en ce qui concerne sa capacité de rehausser l'ensemble urbain, et elles fourniront probablement la plus éloquent illustration de la nécessité urgente d'un 'vernaculaire' moderne.

AVIS AUX PERSONNES DÉSIRANT
S'ABONNER À LA REVUE

Le papier n'étant plus rationné en Angleterre en ce qui concerne l'exportation, les abonnements à LA REVUE D'ARCHITECTURE peuvent être maintenant acceptés pour la France et autres pays étrangers.

Le prix d'abonnement, franco de port, est de £2.0.0 par an, payable d'avance, et les ordres d'abonnement peuvent être envoyés soit directement aux Editeurs, The Architectural Press, 9 Queen Anne's Gate, Londres, S.W.1, soit par l'intermédiaire des principaux dépositaires de journaux et agences d'abonnement français.

Januar 1950

Infolge der Atombombe ist es im Jahre 1950 nicht mehr möglich, diejenigen mit einem Achselzucken abzutun, die das Überleben der Kultur in Zweifel ziehen. Die unheilvollste Wirkung der Atombombe ist vielleicht nicht einmal die Möglichkeit einer Explosion, sondern dass sie eine fatalistische Stimmung erzeugt hat, in der es kaum der Mühe wert erscheint, Pläne für eine Zukunft zu machen, deren Fortdauer fraglich ist.

Die ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW verachtet einen Fatalismus dieser Art. Sie glaubt, dass alle, die guten Willens sind und sich ihrer Verantwortung bewusst sind, die Zukunft bestimmen können, und dass die Zukunft infolge dessen in richtiger Weise beeinflusst werden kann. Sie glaubt, dass eine lebendige, starke und erfreuliche Architektur und der Wille sie zu schaffen und ein ebenso fester Entschluss gleichgesinnter Menschen für andere starke und erfreuliche Dinge den Lauf der Dinge unerbittlich gestalten und Bedingungen schaffen werden, die die Atombombe wesenlos machen werden. Die vorliegende Nummer, die die Aufgaben der Architektur in den nächsten fünfzig Jahren untersucht, ist das Ergebnis dieses Glaubens der ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW.

Als die Herausgeber den Entschluss gefasst hatten, solch eine Nummer herauszubringen, mussten sie sich die Frage stellen, welches sind die wesentlichen Aufgaben der Architektur in den nächsten fünfzig Jahren? Das Bauen neuer Städte, und jener optische Standpunkt, den die ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW 'Stadtschaft' (im Gegensatz zu Landschaft) nennt, erschienen ihr als die wichtigsten Ziele. Demzufolge beschlossen die Herausgeber, dass diese Nummer sich mit dem optischen Teil des Städtebaus zu beschäftigen habe. Zu diesem Zwecke haben sie Schriftsteller, Photographen und bildende Künstler aufgefordert, einige der in optischer Hinsicht meistversprechenden englischen Städte zu bereisen und ihre Elemente zu untersuchen.

Im Laufe dieser Untersuchungen hat sich ergeben, dass gute Bauten nicht der einzige, ja nicht einmal der wesentlichste Faktor im Bauen guter Städte sind. Ebenso wichtig sind oft genug die unzähligen Details, die keineswegs auf dem Reissbrett des Architekten entstehen, Dinge wie das Gesicht der Strassen, Merkzeichen, Einfriedigungen, Markisen, Symbole, Signale, Farben, und Oberflächen. Daraus ergibt sich, dass ehe die optische Seite des Städtebaus ernsthaft diskutiert werden kann, diese Dinge gesammelt, analysiert und gewissermaßen zum Bewusstsein gebracht werden müssen. Dies ist die Aufgabe der vorliegenden Nummer der ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW.

Der Umstand, dass der Städtebauer weder in der Lage ist noch in der Lage sein kann, eine direkte Kontrolle über so viele Dinge auszuüben, die die optische Wirkung eines Stadtbildes bestimmen, zeigt wie wichtig es ist, dass ein kräftiger, moderner, urwüchsiger Stil entstehe, der allen Dingen ihr

Gepräge gibt. Einige Theoretiker könnten einwenden, dass man solch einen urwüchsigen Stil nicht erzwingen könne, dass man es der modernen Bewegung überlassen müsse, ihn zu erzeugen, wenn seine Zeit gekommen ist. Aber sie übersehen die Tatsache, dass ein Corpus von gebrauchsfertigen Möglichkeiten vorhanden ist, auf die sich solch ein urwüchsiger Stil stützen könnte. Einige darunter sind anonyme industrielle Erzeugnisse, andere sind das Ergebnis dessen was man die funktionelle Tradition nennen könnte—Möbel, Nutzgegenstände, die mit Schiffen, Eisenbahnen, Flüssen und Kanälen zu tun haben, gehören hierher.

Die vorliegende Nummer setzt sich ein für die Klassifikation von Formeln, die eine Basis für einfache Entscheidungen in Detailfragen sein können. Aus solch einer Klassifikation könnte ein Musterbuch zusammengestellt werden, das von überarbeiteten Beamten und erschöpften Zeichnern befragt werden könnte, wenn sie den Punkt erreicht haben, wo es wünschenswert und notwendig ist, Routine an Stelle von Erfindung zu setzen. Die abgebildeten Photographien z.B. und die Zeichnungen von Gordon Cullen zeigen die Anwendung solcher Muster an gegebenen Stellen. In einer bestehenden Stadt, in Lyme Regis, wird nachgewiesen wie Verbesserungen, die sich auf einheimische Tradition stützen, stärkere Wirkungen erzielen könnten. Ausserdem wird das gleiche Verfahren bei hypothetischen Anlagen in einer der neuen Städte angewandt. Neue Städte sind ein Prüfstein für die Fähigkeit zeitgenössischer Architektur die gegebenen Verhältnisse zu nützen, sie sind wohl die beste Illustration für die dringende Notwendigkeit eines urwüchsigen und doch Stils.

FUER ZUKUNFTIGE ABONNENTEN

Da Papier in England für Export nicht länger rationiert ist, können Abonnements auf die ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW vom Ausland angenommen werden.

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oder bei den führenden Zeitungs- und Abonnements-Agenturen.

Januar 1950 g.

INHALT DER HEFTES

Fakt des Existenzes atomarer Bombe ist schon lange bekannt, heute im Jahre 1950, ist es, wie

schon nicht mehr ein Thema, sondern eine Tatsache, die die Aufmerksamkeit der Menschen auf sich zieht. Die Frage ist nicht, ob es eine Bombe geben wird, sondern, ob sie nicht schon da ist. Die Frage ist nicht, ob es eine Bombe geben wird, sondern, ob sie nicht schon da ist.

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW lehnt es ab, mit der Idee einer atomaren Bombe zu spielen. Die Frage ist nicht, ob es eine Bombe geben wird, sondern, ob sie nicht schon da ist. Die Frage ist nicht, ob es eine Bombe geben wird, sondern, ob sie nicht schon da ist.

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In der Fortsetzung dieser Reise ist es klar, dass die schönen Gebäude nicht die einzigen sind, die die Aufmerksamkeit der Menschen auf sich ziehen. Die Frage ist nicht, ob es eine Bombe geben wird, sondern, ob sie nicht schon da ist. Die Frage ist nicht, ob es eine Bombe geben wird, sondern, ob sie nicht schon da ist.

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Stadt, zeigt, wie wichtig ist, dass die moderne gesunde lokale Stil, von dem die Gegenstände der modernen Stil und Form entstehen können. Einige Theoretiker könnten einwenden, dass man solch einen urwüchsigen Stil nicht erzwingen könne, dass man es der modernen Bewegung überlassen müsse, ihn zu erzeugen, wenn seine Zeit gekommen ist. Aber sie übersehen die Tatsache, dass ein Corpus von gebrauchsfertigen Möglichkeiten vorhanden ist, auf die sich solch ein urwüchsiger Stil stützen könnte.

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A SPECIAL NUMBER OF THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW FOR JANUARY 1950

THE FUNCTIONAL TRADITION

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1950

The Cover The half-way mark in a century can be regarded either as just one more plodding step toward the tomb or as an opportunity to appraise the past and ponder the future. You may consider this month's cover symbolizes the latter. It is the blank sheet of paper on which the achievements of the second half of the century are to be written. How positive the resultant image turns out to be will depend on the visual principles by which those who are trying to build up a contemporary architectural style are guided. This special half-century issue discusses one of the most important of these principles: the recognition of a continuing functional tradition as the basis of townscape design.

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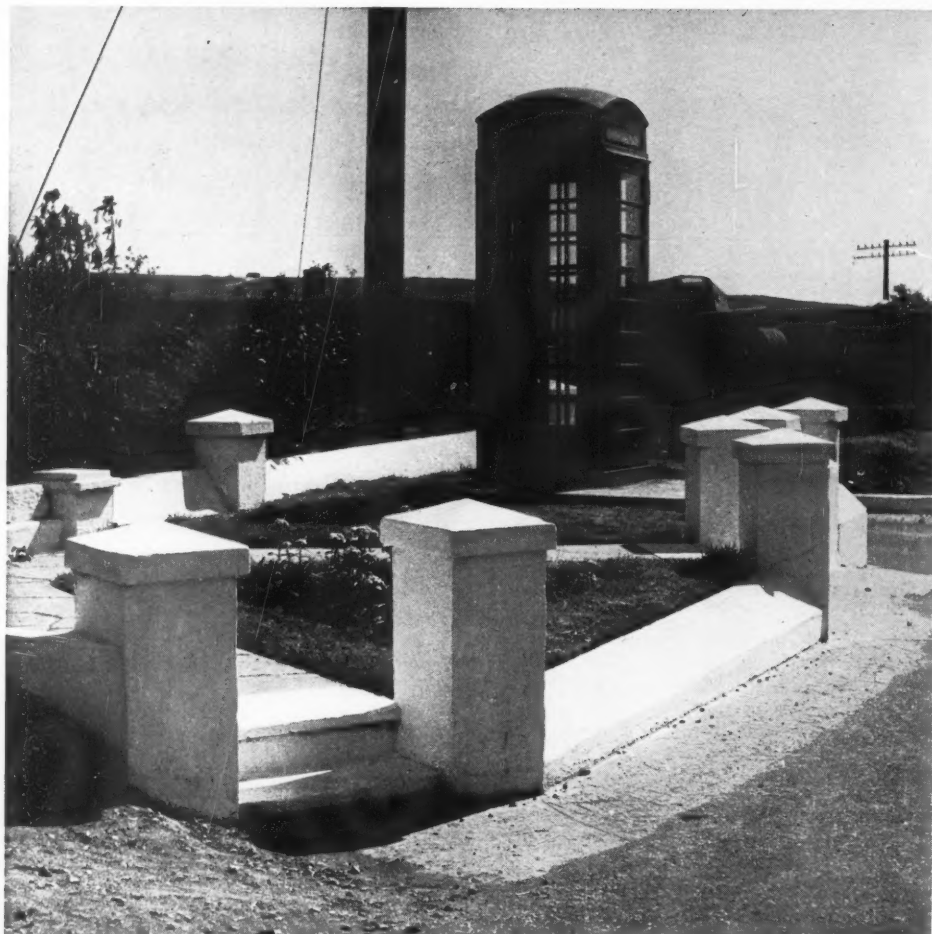
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detail Here are two fragments of the English scene, two small islands in a bigger one, each the anonymous creation of one of the many local authorities whose business it is to furnish town and countryside with what might be called its municipal trim (see page 38). Such fragments spring up every day and everywhere. No one outside the authority concerned knows who carried them out, let alone who designed them. Sometimes they are as satisfactory as the lower example; more often they are nearly as absurd as the upper. And the public only knows about them after they have happened. We can hardly quarrel with this system; such tasks have to be left to the officials. Nor can we expect that every surround to a telephone box should be designed by an architect. What we can expect is, firstly, expert guidance from the top on the subject of design and, secondly, that a code of civic taste in design be established, based on a sound convention. Such a code, and the existing formulae that might provide it with a starting-point, are the subject of this issue. Study the two illustrations. In the lower one, the workmanship may be rough and ready, even careless, but its bold use of the traditional black and white idiom and its strict observance of the function of a roundabout declares that an intelligent mind has been at work. A roundabout has a serious job to do, and this should never be obscured by a forest of artistic brickwork and geranium beds. Though this example may not be beyond criticism, it is in tune with the contemporary idiom and is clearly the creation of someone who could with confidence be trusted to expand the arterial road vernacular into an acceptable routine applicable elsewhere. If the general standard of official trim were equal to this in simplicity, comprehension and character, then this special number would not have been needed. One glance at the upper illustration brings us down to reality. This monumental approach to a telephone box may look obviously stupid and ridiculous, but every day in a thousand lanes, suburban streets and civic squares things just as silly are being done in the name of municipal improvement.

THE FUNCTIONAL TRADITION

Introduction

PERHAPS THE MOST extraordinary thing about 1950 is that it is no longer possible to treat as silly (as it was in the nineteenth and even the early twentieth century) the people who take a poor view of the future of man. The most sinister thing about the atom bomb is not so much that it may go off as that whether it goes off or not, its effects tend to be the same. Western civilization rests on its oars, awaits the issue. Result, a very appreciable slowing down of what used to be called Progress or the March of Events. 'Will the bomb go off?' by imperceptible degrees becomes 'why bother to go on—in any way that matters?'

This is not a promising state of mind in which to discuss the next half century, since it tacitly ridicules the idea of the next half century. Let it be understood at once that the REVIEW spurns such a fatalistic acceptance of the inevitable, such nervous glances over the shoulder, such cautious fingers to lips; believing that these merely invoke the circumstances they fear. Believing indeed that the will of men of goodwill and not the inexorable march of events, determines the future. That lively, virile, and enjoyable architecture, and the determination to have it, together with similar determinations by similarly minded people to have other lively, virile, and enjoyable things will inexorably alter the shape of events and produce in the course of nature exactly the conditions which render the atom bomb redundant.

It therefore seems right to repeat, at the beginning of 1950 and in a 1950 issue which deals with progress in the next half century, that the REVIEW believes in modern architecture; believes it has a great future;

believes the next 50 years will see it start the work of re-creating the human environment; believes there is no time to waste.

Accept this proposition, called by Carlyle the Great Affirmation, and you are in a position to think about the future in a positive way. For us here that means the question: what will the next fifty years be remembered for in the architectural field? The most likely answer is that it will probably be remembered best for its impulse to build new towns, its rediscovery of urbanism, in which rediscovery is implicit another rediscovery, the rediscovery of the art of landscape, or, since landscape is in this case identified with urbanism, townscape.

It should hardly be necessary to remind readers that such a definition as the foregoing is made in relation to a self-imposed preoccupation with the visual aspects of architecture, as distinguished from the technical, professional and sociological aspects. It goes without saying that all these aspects are interdependent, but the REVIEW, as statements of editorial policy have emphasized in the past, is specially concerned with the fact that in the long run architecture can only be judged as a physical thing, apprehended by means of the eye. It also goes without saying that, looked at in the largest way, the architecture of the next fifty years is also a matter of the social role of the profession, of the proper utilization of science, of the growing domination of the machine and of all the other variable issues that determine the way architects work and the means at their disposal. But every issue cannot begin by reiterating the editors' belief in the

importance of these fundamental considerations; otherwise it would get nowhere.

Taking them all for granted, the editors decided to start the half century with a special study of townscape; that is, on the visual implications of our present town-planning efforts. This journal has already devoted much space to certain aspects of the same subject; has tried to regain Westminster, the area round St. Paul's, the area round Liverpool Cathedral and so on. It was decided on the present occasion to be narrower but to go deeper.

To this end the REVIEW undertook some field-work and sent a team of writers, photographers and artists off on a long tour of some of the more visually promising English towns whose names can be discovered on page 68. On that tour an awkward thing happened. It became apparent that good architecture is not the only factor, is not even the most important factor, in the making of a good town—good townscapes depend not only on the architect and his building nor even on the planner and his plans, but also and perhaps even more fundamentally, on a number of imponderable relationships, of shape and siting certainly, but also of detail—of things like road surfaces, road signs, railings, awnings, lettering, symbols, signals, colours, textures—upon objects conceived anywhere but on the town planner's drawing board—upon decisions made by officials who are as anonymous as the results their decisions bring about.

Indeed, before townscape can be treated as a serious issue, the anonymous, the *unacknowledged*, the visually unidentified, elements and objects of the urban scene must be collected, analysed, brought into consciousness so to speak—accepted or discarded according to whether they fulfil the requirements of the contemporary idiom. Here the real issue discloses itself. The series of actions eventually producing the activity we have called townscape, since they involve decision at many levels by a wide variety of interested (but not necessarily visually interested) people, emphasizes and underlines the weakness of the planner's position when there is no robust modern vernacular from which the right kind of anonymous objects might spring.

A large percentage anyway of his material has to come from the mass-produced industrial field over which he has little, if any, direct control; but he cannot make a success of his campaign as long as he is to be general and private soldier at the same time; that is, as long as he has to plan and at the same time design every lamp-post himself. In any case much of the small-scale planning is done without any architect or planner, to whom it would

be a matter of faith and conviction to work in the contemporary idiom. Such planning, if it cannot rely on ready to hand elements cannot do well, and modern architecture can only remain a cult practised by a few illuminati, however prodigious the influence of these is and has been.

To throw a bridge from their individual achievements to vernacular building one thing is needed—a larger vocabulary of the ready-made elements just referred to, a far wider list of formulæ than is included or countenanced at the moment.

Some of our modern philosophers would say we must wait for this happy event. In course of time, they would say, the modern movement, following its inevitable course, will again spin out of itself an idiom which will provide an architectural vocabulary for all men for all purposes. This savours, though in a different context, of the fatalism referred to above. The REVIEW believes that these things happen if you make them and don't if you don't. In addition, it believes that there exists already a whole body or corpus of ready-made routines. If architects and critics tend to deny that, their mistake is that they will think in terms of newly made routines only. A few of the latter do exist—road signs by the Leicester School of Art, waste-paper baskets by the LPTB, ink-pots by the LMS, and so on—not many it is true and certainly not enough to give a vernacular a chance to grow. But there are forgotten, unacknowledged routines as well which have not yet been incorporated into the modern design idiom, simply because they are not new, regardless of the fact that their unself-conscious rightness makes them usable at any time. Some of them are industrial products anonymously designed. Some are formulæ which, because they have been practised for centuries in combination with buildings that have Georgian or other stylistic trimmings, we have not so far been prepared to find admissible; some are accessories and products of what might be called the functional as opposed to the folk tradition—jetties, marine objects, traffic signs, lettering, street furniture, railway and river equipment; and some, perhaps least recognized of all, are to be found in the nature of materials themselves, the textures of surfaces, the character of matter which, whether combined with stylistic trimmings or not, are in fact of the very stuff of the functional idea.

There are also those objects which, without actually belonging, owe allegiance to ideals so close or so sympathetic to the modern idea that they make good companions on the route to a homogeneous world; and there are those that, by the startling nature of their

contrasts, provide the antidote to uniformity. Such are the components of what may be called the Functional Nexus.

Of these components—lettering on roads, swing gates, wire-netting—many, as we have already said, are in the nature of adjuncts to building, belong rather to the environment than to the architecture. That is exactly why it is so important that they should be assembled and incorporated. They lend themselves to stereotyping; and though individually unimportant, in the mass they determine the character of the general pattern. Even more than buildings they establish the character of the environment.

Suppose the relevant department of a local authority, whether city engineer, borough surveyor, or city architect's department, has to put on hand certain alterations and improvements recommended for, shall we say, a seaside resort: heightening the sea-wall, resurfacing the main square, erecting and painting new railings to the promenade, creating a new roundabout at the main traffic junction. Let the usual state of æsthetic schizophrenia prevail and the results will show those absurdities of period or modern style with which we are all familiar; or if not absurdities of detail absurdities of general effect. While no design standard prevails, the landscape of our towns is bound to remain a mess. But let there grow up some consensus of professional opinion concerning the do's and don'ts of railing the promenade, shall we say, and at once an idiom, homogeneous as between one professional gentleman and another, one department or one city and another, begins to appear with results rewarding to all. And lest any should regard this sentiment as a reversal of the visual policy of this journal as advanced under the slogan of Sharawaggi, let us state briefly but firmly that only in such a homogeneous world can the spirit of Sharawaggi (as opposed to the spirit of anarchy) survive.

This issue puts forward, therefore, as the sort of contribution a journal can make to the new townscape, a plea for a classification of building formulæ that would provide the bases for simple decisions on municipal detailing. From such a classification could be built up a Case Book, constituting an authority which, without committing the absurdity of trying to substitute formulæ for design, would nevertheless collect and exhibit good and bad formulæ for use wherever they apply; remembering that they occupy about nine-tenths of the space of the visible urban world. Mere juxtaposition of examples even should do something to demonstrate how easily designers could assemble an expressive and homogeneous vocabulary

from customary routines and industrial products when founded upon a non-revolutionary, non-doctrinaire approach to function.

Thus it seems to us the modern movement could broaden its base so as to offer hospitality to overworked officials and harassed designers at the point where they find it necessary and desirable to substitute routine for invention. That is where the true vernacular comes into its own.

The illustrations of examples of such a vernacular which form the bulk of this issue are followed by some drawings by Gordon Cullen showing the use of these and similar vernacular products in actual places. First he takes an existing town—Lyme Regis—where the nautical (and therefore the functional) tradition is strong, and demonstrates that the sort of improvements which a go-ahead Council might reasonably wish to carry out could, by the employment of an anonymous vernacular vocabulary of the kind defined herewith, be made the occasion for intensifying the existing character instead of ruining it, as generally happens. Next he applies the same technique to hypothetical sites in one of the new towns. The new towns are a test of the ability of modern architecture to compete with the whole urban scene, and are likely to provide the best possible illustration of the urgent need of a modern vernacular. They are now being laid out by architects and planners instructed in each case by a specially appointed development corporation. But in due course the time will come when the development corporation turns itself into a town council and the planners and architects hand the place over as a going concern to the new council's technical officers. An architect may be retained as consultant but inevitably many details that still remain to be finished off or that require designing as the need arises will be left in the hands of the engineer, the surveyor, and local committees of various sorts. And these are the very details by which the character of the place must largely stand or fall: the pattern of lamp standards, the treatment of roadside verges, the arrangement of paving stones, the design of litter baskets and the positive or negative use made of all the odd corners, the flanking walls and casual spaces, that occur whenever an architect's plan is put to use as the setting for day-to-day human activities. If the people who have to take responsibility for making an architect's design for a new town *work* as a long term utility can be enabled to feel that without turning into architects themselves they can draw on a fund of reliable architectural products, the battle for design in the contemporary world will be half won.

the functional tradition The conception of a Functional Tradition, as the readers of the REVIEW will appreciate, is not one that is new to these pages. It has been touched on specifically or implied by argument on a number of occasions. Usually this has occurred where clearly some anonymous force was seen to have dictated the form assumed by a bridge, a windmill or a pub, a form that appeared so satisfactory in the circumstances that it was natural to ask how it happened.

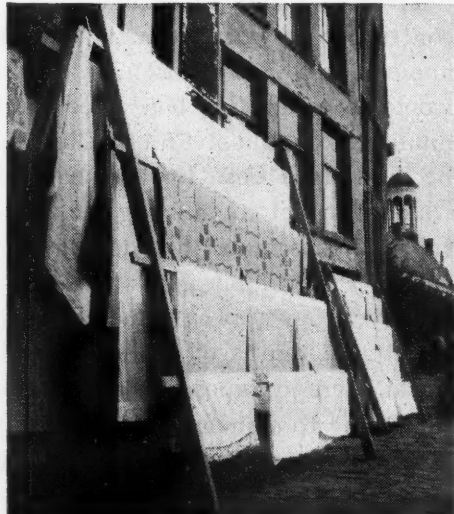
What the REVIEW calls the Functional Tradition is therefore something that ought to be examined and analysed. This issue attempts to do so on a more complete scale than before.* First of all, since we are dealing with anonymous tradition in architecture it is necessary to make a clear distinction between peasant art—an unsophisticated expression of the instinct to ornament for ornamentation's sake—and functional art. It is the latter—a fundamental approach to design that embodies a constant creative challenge—with which the following pages are concerned and which gives the examples illustrated on them their relevance to contemporary architecture.

Today we are attempting consciously to design things in terms of the most suitable materials, processes and performance standards to satisfy one or several specific functions. These same principles, unexpressed, have unconsciously controlled the forms evolved by countless generations of blacksmiths, masons, wheelwrights, millwrights and shipwrights. This is the Functional Tradition. This is the living tradition from which each successive generation can learn and has learned, and our generation is no exception. In many quarters it has of course been submerged, ignored, overlooked, even suppressed as one architectural style gave way to another, but it has nevertheless survived by virtue of its fundamental vitality and inner necessity. Today its meaning and importance is undergoing a process of reassessment, and as the contemporary designer undergoes his trial by machine, he should be able to look at familiar forms through new eyes, taking courage and drawing inspiration from a great anonymous tradition.

* On this page is a general exposition of the idea. It is followed on pages 7 and 8 by a visual definition and an indication of how ornament can be fitted into the functional picture. There then comes a photo-analysis of the Cobb at Lyme Regis, a monument in the shape of a sea-wall which can almost be considered the museum example of the theory, and which establishes, too, the special importance in the history of functionalism of the nautical tradition. There follows a Case Book of functional detail which organizes the illustrative material under the headings of Road, Railway, River, Structure, Trim, Textures and Colour. Finally, there is an essential section which attempts, in a constructive way, to relate elements taken from the preceding Case Book to their application for the functional designer of today. This exercise is applied to an existing town—Lyme Regis—and to a new town. A commentary, of which this is the first part, accompanies each section, in an attempt to deal with gaps in the illustrations enforced by lack of space, or shortcomings in the camera itself.

PEASANT TRADITION v. FUNCTIONAL TRADITION

The essential difference between peasant art and functional art is obvious when the characteristics of the churn rack and the clothes-drier are compared. The latter is a simple functional solution to the problem of drying clothes. The other, though it performs the job of holding churns, is dominated by its ornament, which, vital as it is, bears no relation to function. Both traditions have existed side by side through the ages, but it is the functional one with which this issue is concerned.







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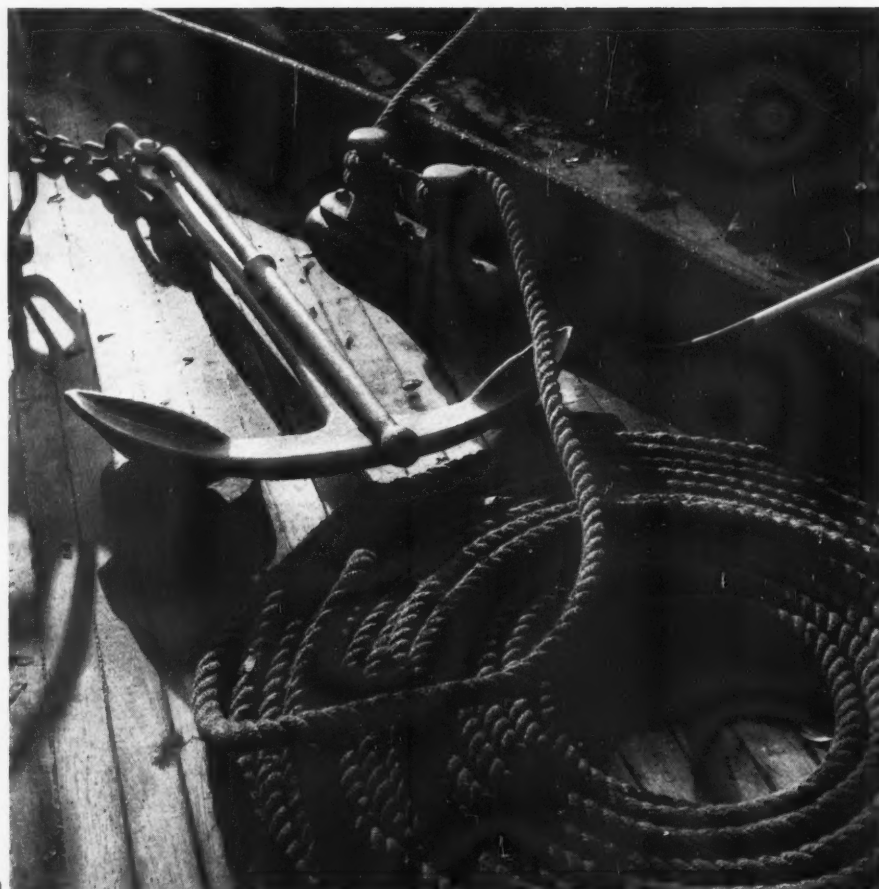
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Disciplined by natural forces and the limitations implicit in his materials, the craftsman has evolved forms which bear no relation to conscious styles. A waggon wheel, a windmill, a canal bridge, all bear the stamp of this discipline. But in England

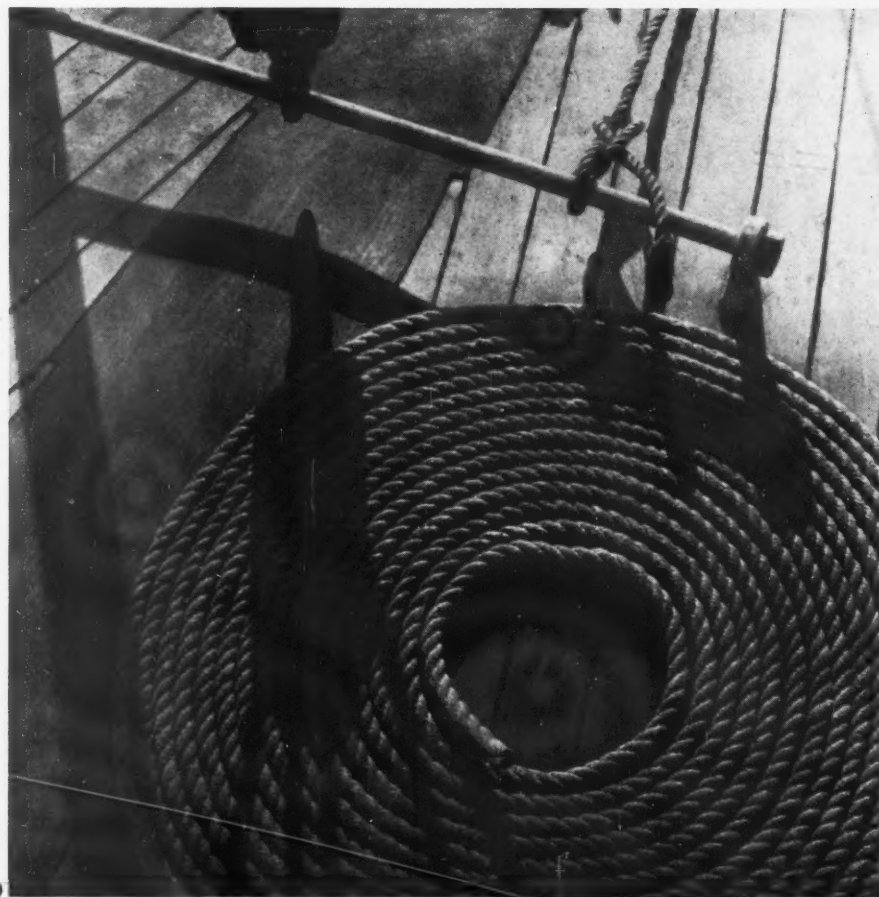
with its strong seafaring strain, it is, appropriately enough, in the nautical sphere that this tradition of functionalism has reached its fullest development, and evolved architectural qualities of its own.



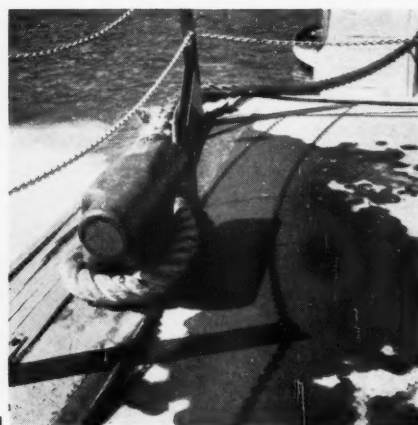
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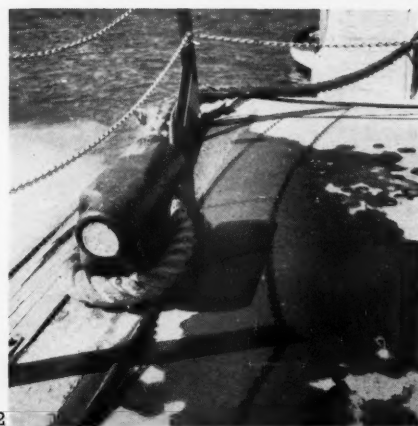
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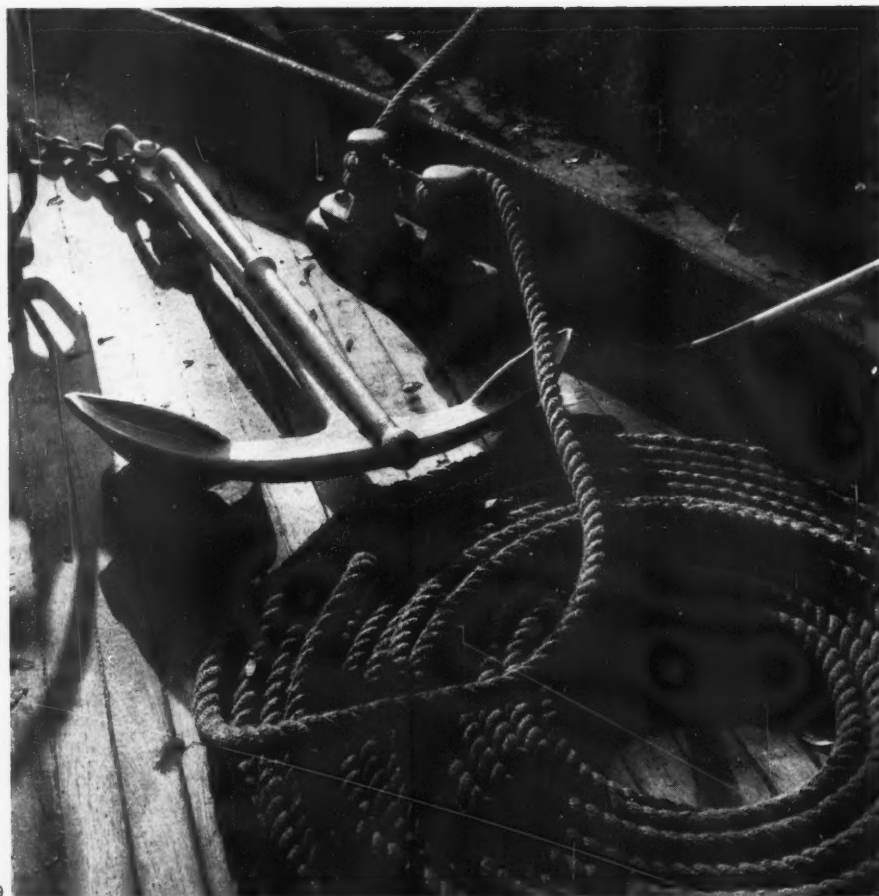
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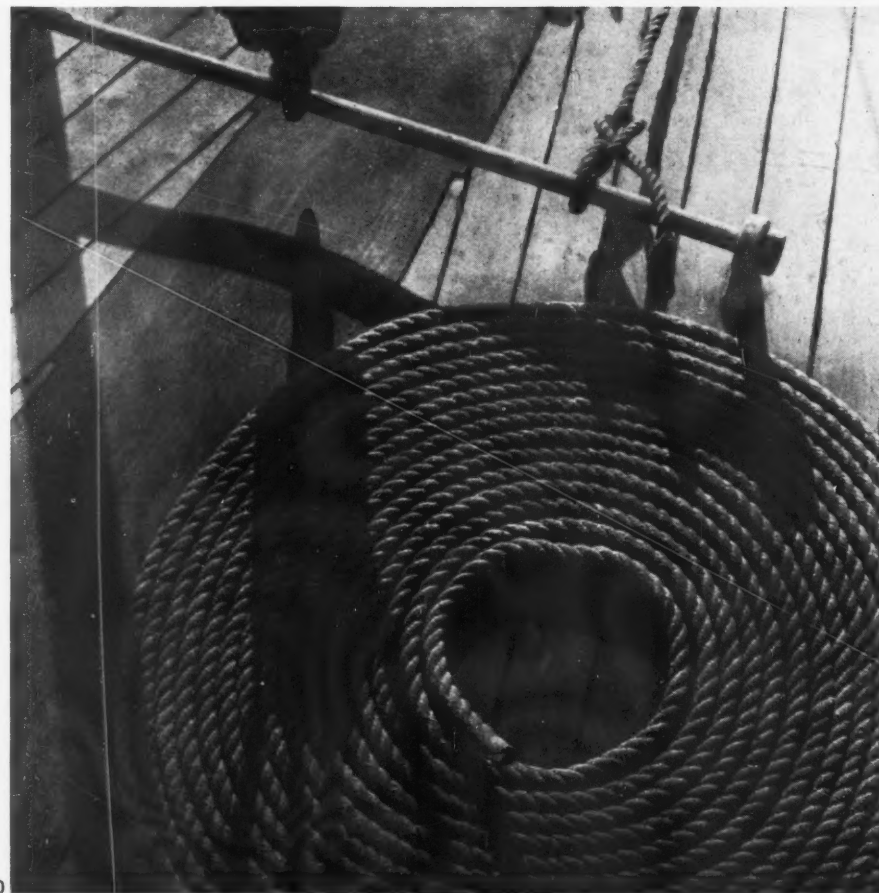
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With the nautical tradition, the true development of functionalism has not only reached its high-water mark, but it has evolved a style of embellishment in which ornament is derived from function and performs a function in its turn. Of the two bollards the upper one is thoroughly functional, the other is the same shape but the white disc is both ornamental and more visible on dark nights. In the same way while the roughly coiled warp above is a serviceable job, the perfection of the other satisfies the mariner's passion for shipshapeness, and so achieves the status of ornament.

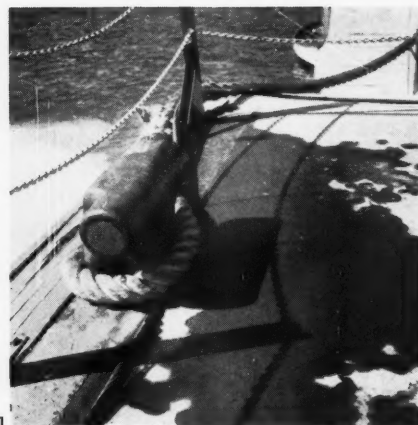




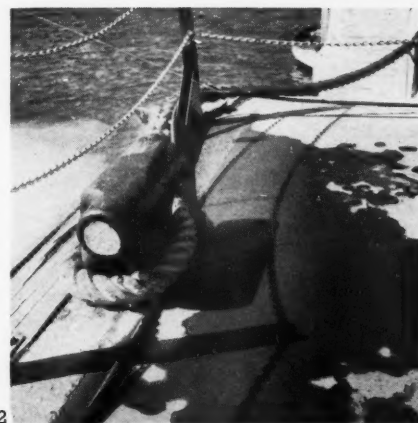
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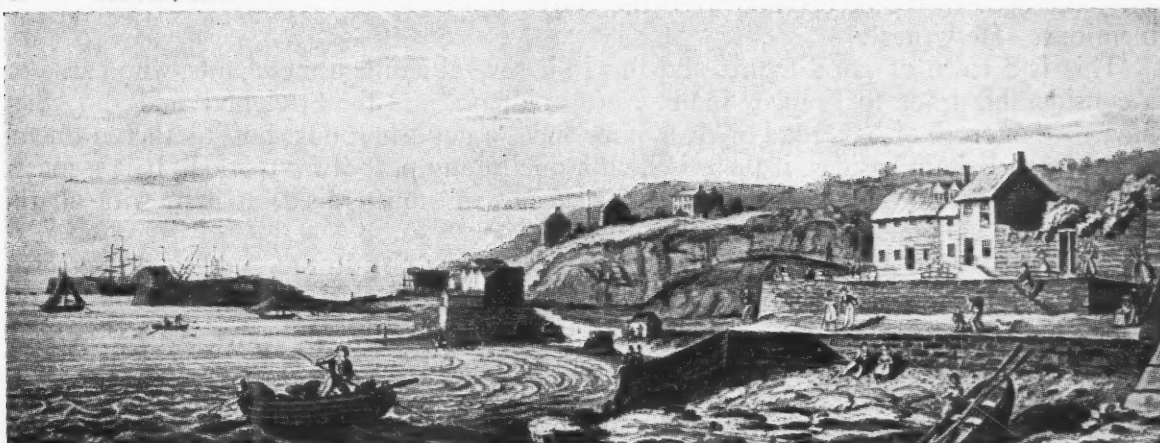
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12

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2

the Cobb Though examples of the functional tradition are to be found at every turn throughout the countryside, it is on the seaboard that these are particularly strong. The forms peculiar to the maritime way of life, the jetties, piers, lighthouses, bollards, buoys and a hundred other details demonstrate to a remarkable degree, not only the compelling requirements of this functional element, but also the freedom of form that is possible within the confines of this disciplinary code, and the vitality and variety that is possible with the simple combination of black and white.

There are several coastal towns where this unconscious but powerful tradition of visual behaviour has produced a townscape of remarkable character and vigour. A good example is Lyme Regis on the Dorset coast. The elements which constitute the character of this little seaport are analysed at length later on, and some of its imperfections are reviewed, to show where the functional vernacular has been ignored or lost in some more or less recent alteration or addition.

One of the most remarkable instances of unconscious functionalism on a monumental scale is also to be found at Lyme Regis, for the town has a breakwater known as the Cobb which forms an artificial harbour on an exposed stretch of coast. The Cobb is of considerable antiquity, and, like even the best of sea defences, it has undergone continual repair, improvement and rebuilding at the hands of many individuals throughout its long life.

In plan it has what appears to be a free form, full of interesting sweeps and curves, which at closer inspection are seen to be dictated by the position of the reef on which it is built, and the need for a seaward face that will carry the force of the sea away from its entrance. Seen in section, this curve is repeated in the manner of a glacis to seaward, and cut off abruptly within the arc, so that an oblique view provides a most interesting exercise in masses.

On still closer inspection, what in cold fact is literally no more than a half mile of stone sea wall, reveals such a wealth of detail and such a variety of surface and pattern that almost every yard of it becomes an object lesson in surface treatment, from the natural indentations of the rock itself to the haphazard continuity of paving and the restrained application of the whitewash that edges stone steps and the tops of parapets.

In the Cobb, the functional tradition and the vernacular derived from it are revealed on almost a magnificent scale. This has not been achieved by one master hand, but by the successive and independent efforts of generations of masons, controlled nevertheless by the strict discipline of function. Compare this for a fleeting second with the deadly monotony and planned dreariness of any Marine Parade in an average seaside resort, and there can be no doubt of the salutary lessons to be learned from the Cobb.

It may well be asked how the merits of the Cobb have been ignored till now, if indeed

THE FUNCTIONAL TRADITION

it is a monument of such importance. This is a fair question, the answer to which is bound up with the very complicated question of taste. But first let it be said that the Cobb has not remained in complete obscurity, for no less an observer than Daniel Defoe made the following comment in *A Tour through England and Wales* just two hundred and twenty-six years ago. In his description of Lyme Regis, the Cobb is the only structure that he mentions. He writes :—

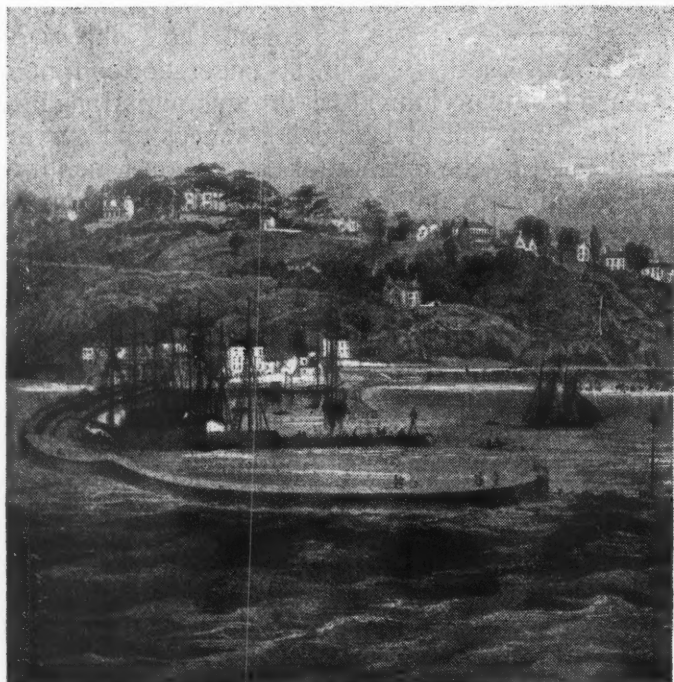
'This is a town of good figure, and has in it several eminent merchants, who carry on a considerable trade to France, Spain, Newfoundland, and the Straights; and tho' they have neither creek or bay, road or river, they have a good harbour; but 'tis such a one as is not in all Britain besides, if there is such a one in any part of the world. It is a massy pile of building, consisting of high and thick walls of stone, rais'd, at first, with all the methods that skill and art could devise. . . .

' . . . they could give me nothing of the history of it; nor do they, as I could perceive, know anything of the original of it, or who built it; . . . This work is called the Cobb.'

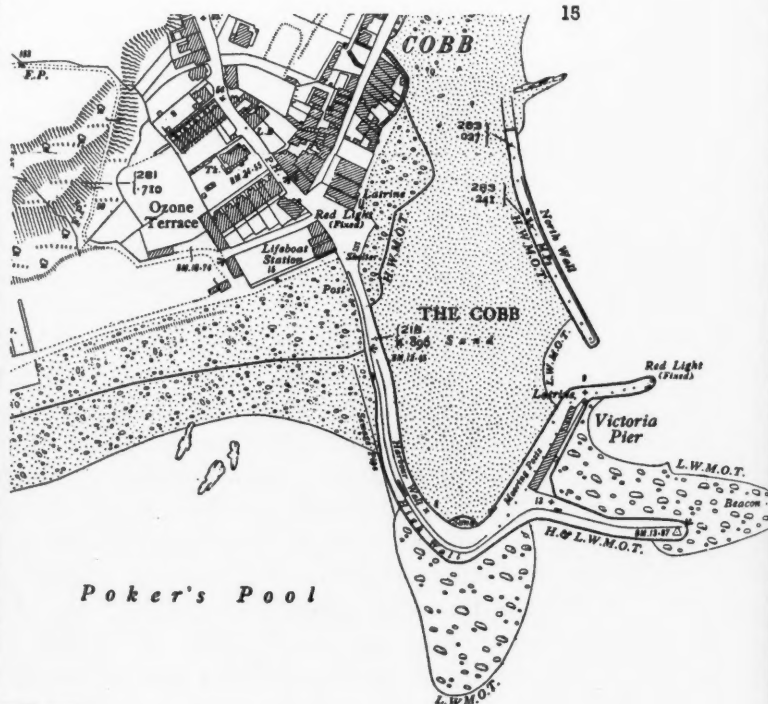
Had the Cobb perhaps been inundated by some catastrophe and later rediscovered, it might have received the recognition now enjoyed by monuments of lesser worth. There are indeed accidents of nature such as the Giant's Causeway and the Needles in the Isle of Wight that have received far more attention than this noble work of men.

There follows, therefore, a photographic survey of the Cobb, designed to bring out not only its unique character but the vitality and the infinite variety of texture in every yard of its surface. Though it cannot be claimed a work of genius, in that it is not the work of one man, it achieves the same level of perfection by a different process. It may indeed be necessary to break down the inhibitions, which a highly developed society tends to induce in the process of elevating the things created in its own image, before one can perceive the worth in something evolved from a functional tradition such as this. This tradition owes nothing to that society, is almost anathema to it, for it thrives on a strict subservience to fundamentals which that society in its complexity has to a large extent lost.

The REVIEW here puts the Cobb in its true perspective and states emphatically that Lyme Regis should be famous first and foremost for the Cobb. With this established we are then free to study more closely how the same principles, the same tradition, has produced a vernacular that is still an integral part of our landscape, and which properly applied could form the basis of an equally satisfactory townscape.



The Cobb at Lyme Regis, as it was c. 1840 and now, according to the Ordnance Survey.



Poker's Pool

U.O.T.
Bescom

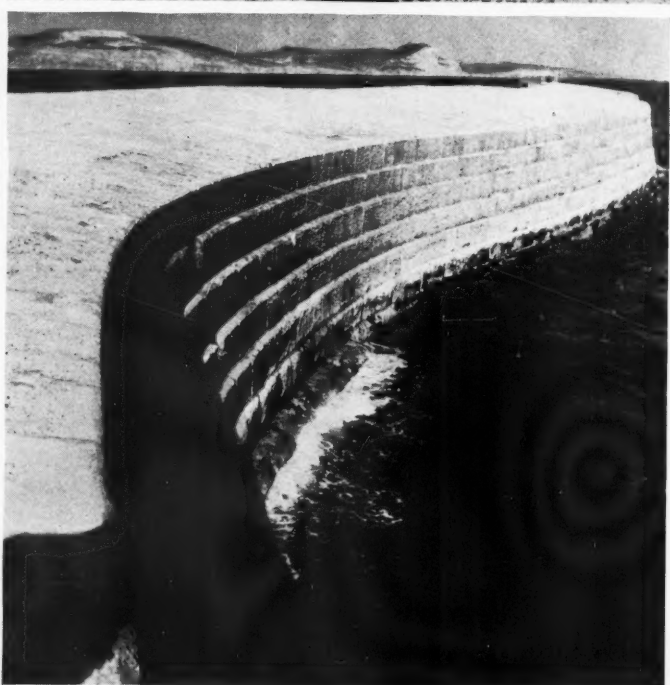


On the Dorset coast at Lyme Regis a breakwater known as the Cobb has been evolved over centuries to form an artificial harbour where no natural resources exist. It is a unique example, on a magnificent scale, of form conditioned by the strict discipline of function, yet so remarkably virile and expressive as to deserve the title of the Parthenon of the functional movement of the twentieth century.





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The Cobb, as seen in 1724, already had the beginnings of the serpentine form which today makes the superb cast shadows, shown in the photographs. The breastwork and sloping glacis are designed to withstand the sea at its worst. The persistent energy of the smallest brook will put a curve on any edge. So man learns from function and puts in the curves himself. Within the wall ships need a vertical quay to lie against, so function enforces a visual contrast. The relief pattern in the stonework, 24, introduces the textural qualities of unconscious embellishment.

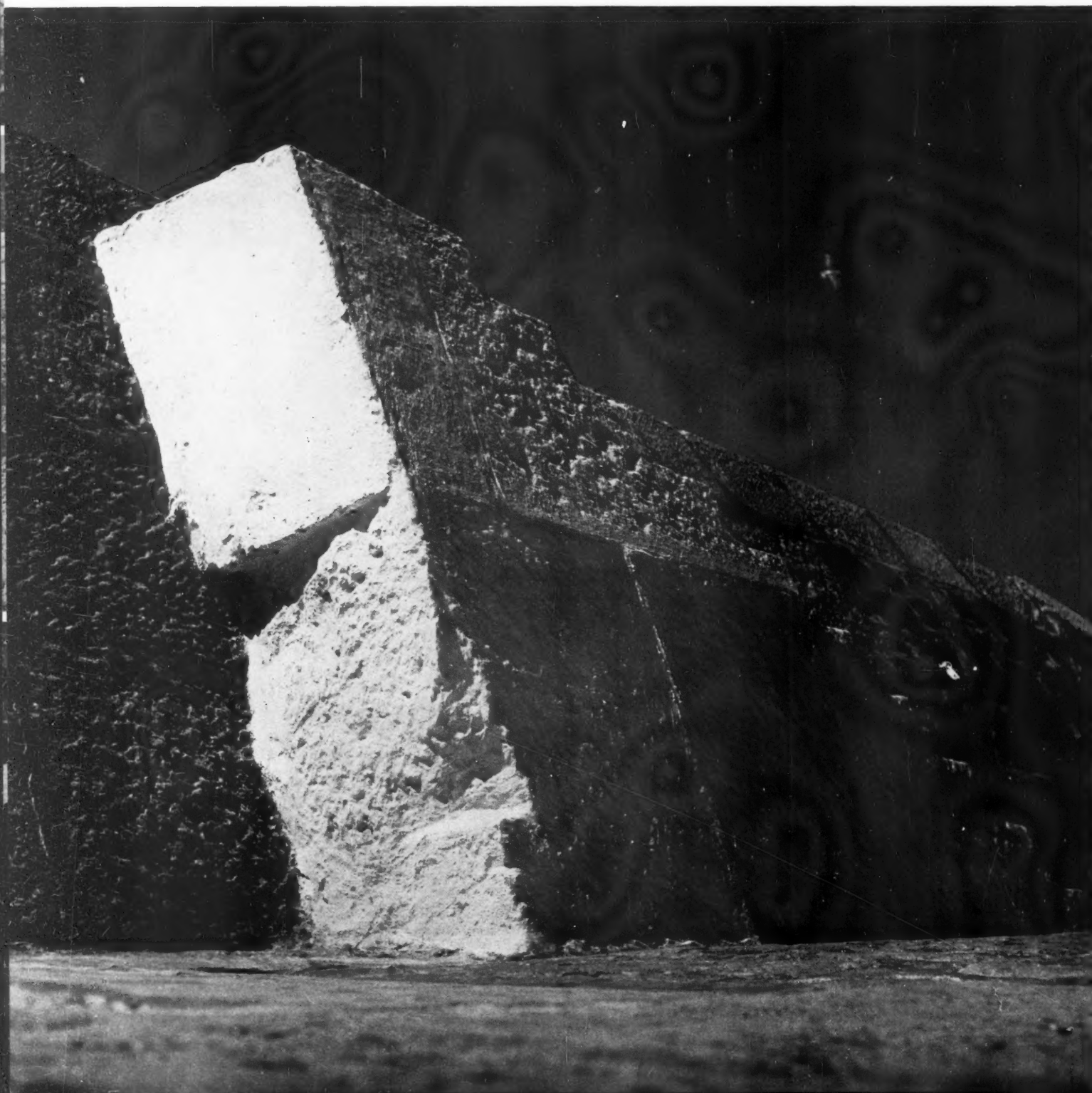


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The sea-salt trimness of whitewash against the dark texture of weathered stone suggests the first step in the development of the nautical black and white style. The Cobb pictures on page 12 illustrate the dramatic quality of this slash of colour; its essence is simplicity. Close up, the white underlines the texture of the stone beneath, besides announcing where the steps are. The steps need no railings, as they are angled in against the sloping face of the parapet, to force the user away from the edge. To fall off would need a physical effort.





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27



The obvious clear-cut edge is the one no-one falls over. If there is ample space one can sit back and enjoy the prospect without obstruction. In any case railings never kept small boys from falling into water.



28



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The function of the Cobb to withstand the onslaughts of the sea is obvious enough despite its calmness in these photographs. The form devised to meet this threat is remarkable for its effortless grace. The surface texture is as full of incident as the life of the sea itself.



landscape elements The complex nature of today's townscape, though it may have grown logically enough from the multitude of services that urban man considers essential to the ordinary everyday process of existence, confronts anyone who has eyes to see with a visual prospect that is either so cluttered with inappropriate oddments that it is indistinguishable from chaos, or is so highly organized that it is deadly monotonous.

For the purposes of this issue, buildings are consciously excluded from the scene. All attention is focused on the detail. In the contemporary town scene all detail has a purpose of some kind whether it is directed to the operation of traffic in its various forms—road, rail, river—or to the provision of services—electricity, gas, water or sewerage.

With the buildings ignored, by far the most important spatial element left is the road, whether main, secondary, back street, pedestrian way or open space—which, even when it is public park, must nevertheless be included in this category. Roads and their mess are integral with the contemporary townscape. Railways and rivers—and sometimes canals—are essentially more localized in their influence, though they frequently cleave the town in two and less frequently unite two parts of it into a whole.

The visual problems introduced by these factors are in principle the same, but road, rail and river have each in their own sphere developed forms which are eminently satisfactory for their intended purpose, as a result of a long history of practice and trial and error. They have indeed developed their own vernacular and types of functional embellishment, and in one particular instance, the use of black and white, they have adopted and adapted a traditional combination of colour to suit their own particular needs, with entirely different results, each eminently satisfactory in its respective sphere.

It may offend our civic dignity and pride to realize from this fact how much the town can learn from the finger-post of the rural lane, the small branch line to Little Bumblecombe or the painted towpath fence by the canal bank, but nevertheless it is there that the vernacular is to be found in its clearest form. It may mean acknowledging that a race of rustic craftsmen knew more about designing a gate that worked, and at the same time looked part of the landscape, than many of the educated individuals who design, make and install gates and railings in our public parks today.

But it is not really so bad as that. The simple satisfactory Belisha beacon or de-limit signs on our roads today, gleaming in their black and white paint, are worthy descendants of the same family; the art is not lost, it is merely that the essential qualities of these objects must be isolated and emphasized continually to those who are responsible for introducing them into the townscape, but are uncertain when faced with a choice and liable to be persuaded by a fast-talking salesman or just left to get on with the job by an insensitive local council.

The functional principles identified in that remarkable monument the Cobb may be traced from beacon to platelayers' cabin, from railings and fences and steps to piers and butchers' shops, from examples two hundred years old like the Cobb to a bus shelter designed yesterday. This common bond, this discipline of form related to function and its expansion into a vernacular, is slowly gathering momentum, but it will take time to provide a sufficient number of precedents for the needs of today. It is therefore a task of supreme importance to survey and identify examples that already exist, and which may themselves not only serve as models for use today, but also help to spur the development of a satisfactory vernacular. The following pages therefore exhibit an album of illustrations, which attempts to isolate the functional characteristic in a wide variety of ordinary objects. Its purpose is not only to provide the beginning of a pattern book, but also to provide an exposition of principles. To aid this exposition there is in each section a set of cautionary examples, illustrating the frequency with which an uncertain grasp of principle has littered the scene with unsuitable detail. It is only too clear that at present these cautionary examples represent the rule rather than the exception.

roads

The varied purposes to which the road is put in the town today are probably brought home best when one of the interested authorities decides to tear it up and take a look at whatever they keep buried there. The pipes and conduits of all kinds revealed in this way

would provide ample scope for reflection, if it were not for the infuriating dislocation that this event produces on traffic circulation.

The great diversity of equipment inevitably derives from the fact that roads have not only acquired equipment for their original purpose of canalizing traffic, and controlling and assisting road users of all kinds; they have also been seized on by the authorities distributing services as a convenient route from manufacturer or storage-plant to user.

In the first place then, roads have acquired equipment directly of a three-dimensional kind such as traffic islands, bollards, route signs, parking signs, lamp standards, Belisha beacons, traffic lights, roundabouts and guard rails for traffic control, as well as bus shelters, kiosks, coffee stalls, subway entrances, bus and tram indicators, letter-boxes, litter-boxes and fire-alarms. The result as we all know too well is a mess of mainly ill-conceived and unrelated pillars and posts reminiscent of an untidy forest clearing. The road surfaces themselves have assumed a two-dimensional nature in the form mainly of white lines for the purpose of indicating pedestrian crossing places, stop and danger signs, routeing signs, places where a car may or specifically may not be parked.

The second group of road equipment serves the many functions that the road has had thrust upon it, mainly of the two-dimensional variety in effect, the grilles and gratings, man-hole covers for electricity, gas, water, telephones, sewers, and drainage, movable entrances to underground storage for merchandise such as beer and coal, and pavement lights to help illuminate these caverns. This group contributes on the whole a satisfactory visual elaboration to a flat-surface, though it may not be sufficient in itself to overcome the tedium of endless asphalte and concrete.

The public parks and city squares, which also fall conveniently into the category of roads, continue to add to the multiplicity of detail with municipal band-stands, public lavatories, drinking-fountains and horse troughs, interminable little fences and railings, surrounds to flower-beds, ornamental ponds and bowling greens, refreshment stands, notices to keep off the grass or stay out of the park altogether after nine p.m. and weary miles of monotonous paths that lead round in circles.

That this list of details still has not exhausted the equipment of the townscape which falls to the lot of anonymous officials and sometimes less anonymous manufacturers to select and supply, is a measure of the degree to which our everyday scene is subject to the visual sensibilities of individuals and committees usually selected for entirely different purposes. How can they exercise choice without some form of guidance as to principle?

railways

Where the roads have spread their mess throughout the townscape, the railways have concentrated theirs as a hard core centred on the railway station. The railway mess is relatively of recent growth and much is attributable less to the railway itself than to its links with the road. From this point of view it is somewhat artificial to separate it from the road, but because it had evolved for its own purposes a healthy tradition, necessarily peculiar to its own functions, it is convenient to consider it as a separate entity.

The part played by function is particularly apparent in the objects necessary to its operation: signal boxes, some squat and some on stilts with their distinctive crenellations and windows, plate-layers' sheds between the tracks, level-crossing gates with their exciting mechanism and large round red warning discs, signal posts, iron footbridges and the multitude of black and white cast-iron direction signs and notice boards. These are all part of a railway vernacular, a superb functional vernacular still to be seen anywhere. The style evolved for the London Transport stations on the whole approaches nearer than any other recent system to the early railway functional vernacular in its use of new materials and techniques.

Recently, however, a pseudo-functional tendency has also become apparent on railway detail—in precast concrete lamp standards and fencing, in waiting rooms, restaurants, luggage offices—where a stylized form has been adopted because it 'looks modern.' Clear thinking becomes more important with the increased use of prefabricated components, or we may see a rash of badly conceived standard structures erected throughout the country, which, should it occur, will be caused by lack of sound principles at the drawing-board stage.

Something of the sort has already happened with lettering on railway stations. The type-face adopted by London Transport, for instance, is good in its way, but its conscious 'good taste' is no substitute for character. In the mass this genteel stuff becomes flaccid and lacking in virility. The Southern's pastiche 'moderne' lacks even gentility. Pursuing the same ideal of taste, British Railways are said to have decided now to standardize Gill sans; a fatal decision, for sound as Gill is, it has none of the tremendous character of the nineteenth century station lettering. For this reason (and no other) Gill appears later among the cautionary illustrations.

The same criticism applies to the equipment such as ticket kiosks, escalators, direction indicators, waste-bins and newspaper kiosks. On the London Transport system, though they represent the best of recent work, they nevertheless lack the natural vigour apparent in the iron bridges and level-crossing gates of the early railway period. In contrast, the Southern can only offer a line in modernistic clichés.

When an institution like the railways already possesses a vigorous vernacular, of outstanding quality, it is particularly depressing to see it ignoring its own example. The Great Western and LMS in the nineteenth century created a tradition of lettering especially, which remains unsurpassed, and as the illustrations show spilled over into the canal, river and road system.

rivers

By the river, and for that matter the canal, a vernacular style—less robust in character than the nautical style—has nevertheless very firm roots in the landscape. The details essential to the management of waterborne and waterside activities inland have been slow to change and—another reason—any pursuit concerned with water has always bred a respect for shipshapeness. So lock gates and weirs, bridges and bollards, boats and boat-building yards, quays and towpaths, signs and flood marks all display a common origin which in no way stereotypes them.

River equipment has always kept close to function and these influences are reflected strongly in the character of towns where the river is an important element in the life of the town. Conversely, where the importance of the river has declined owing to the rise of other means of transportation, this character is often dissipated—witness the dreary canal banks which wind their way through a desolate industrial backwater.

It is important here to differentiate between this form of desolation and the apparent disorder of many small boat anchorages. It must not be assumed that the fascinating scene of dinghies lying on the mud and boats upturned or on stocks along the bank, mooring posts of all shapes and sizes, anchors at all angles and lengths of chain, should be carefully tidied up and hidden away. This scene spells individuality; it is the product of a hundred enthusiasts, perhaps of varying ability, but all independently learning the discipline of functional requirements. Order for order's sake will get us nowhere but into the deadening groove of monotony.

The river tradition is seen at its best round busy boat-building yards and slipways where the sheds and slips and tackle, even the half-built boats themselves, tell the story of forms evolved from function. Each type of boat has its own peculiar purpose from the freight-carrying canal barge to the sleek racing shell, which, with its polished skin, skeleton of rowlocks and sliding stretchers, constitutes the smallest structure sufficient to remain afloat while eight men propel it from stake-boat to winning-post.

If one follows the towpath by the river bank with observant eyes, the same underlying principles appear repeated in the neat white painted railings that bound the riverside, the fences that separate the meadows, the gates that swing shut behind one, the little bridges that cross the creek, even the timbers that shore up the bank. Progressing, one reaches, perhaps, the beautifully conceived machinery that controls the water-flow, the weirs with their man-built rapids and sluices, the black and white spidery cat-walks that serve as bridges, contrasting with the structure of the lock itself. Here with the essential solidity of a barrier, the stone buttresses at either end curve to withstand the shock of flood and barge stem alike and brace themselves to support the great timbers of the gates themselves. Above the surface of the quay, the lock is dominated by the huge balances which extend from the gates outwards in a gentle sweep, the neat rows of

bollards, and the gears and winding machinery of the gates. Everything is orderly and frequently gay with white paint and black; everything is there for a purpose and in the right place to accomplish that purpose.

But once the lock and its equipment is complete and in order, and one looks farther afield, the scene relaxes from the severe dictation of pure function. The lock-keeper, and with him the spectator, begins to enjoy himself with ornamental flowerbeds, with the embellishment of his cottage and garden fence. His neighbours and the licensee of the 'Long Boat' react likewise with paint and spit and polish, and the result, though neat and shipshape as the lock itself, becomes a piece of landscaping conditioned by the lesson of the lock and eminently satisfying to the eye.

structures

The details of townscape dealt with under this heading constitute the background and the foreground of buildings for which the architect is normally responsible, and include many types of 'structures' which cannot be classified as architecture but which clearly constitute important details in the everyday town scene.

On the average the majority of these structures are small, even insignificant, but their multiplicity accentuates their importance. If one looks at the nautical scene, in particular at a seaside town, the most conspicuous feature of the sea-front is the variety of structures required for the enjoyment of holiday-makers in the form of ice-cream shacks, pier pavilions, kiosks that sell postcards and buckets and spades, wind shelters, bowling green pavilions, public lavatories, bandstands, beach huts. There is also of course the pier itself. Then there are the structures employed for technical purposes, such as lighthouses, custom-sheds, look-out towers, coastguard huts and lifeboat stations.

The first list includes a large number of structures that are anything but functional in design; the second, in contrast, has a high proportion based on sound functional lines. But when we leave the seaside, we find the landscape and inland townscape suffer universally from structures that are in no way related to their function. It is easy for even the non-discriminating to pick these out, in the indiscriminate clutter, for instance, bordering many of our highways. There are roadside workshops and cafes, petrol installations, electric transformer stations, roadside telephone and first-aid stations. A comparison between the average structure of this kind and those illustrated on page 29 demonstrates at a glance how a sound functional approach produces structures which not only have character but look right in their surroundings.

Far more complicated than the country scene, in which the incongruities are emphasized by their isolation, is the urban scene. Unfortunately observation here is more difficult because the architecture itself is often of such a mediocre standard. Most obvious among these town structures are the shop fronts, for in busy and less busy shopping centre alike they practically determine the appearance of whole streets.

The examples of butchers' shops illustrated on page 32, straightforward functional solutions of shop-front design compared with the examples alongside them, suggest at once how infrequently one finds these qualities in the average shop. Not that every shop front has to be functional—here, if anywhere, is a field for the free play of whimsey. But there must be a functional basis and it is good to know that throughout history certain types of shops (butchers' shops for one) have drawn their particular character from the exploitation of function, and still do. The cautionary examples illustrate the appalling problems that face the designer when he departs from that basis in a self-conscious effort to be gay or fantastic. Whimsey demands light-heartedness and spontaneity, two things it is difficult to come by today. Whimsey upon function equals moderne.

In the less dense parts of the city the lower rates attract workshops, small factories and service industries like laundries, bulk petrol installations, small warehouses and the like. Frequently these become literally depressed areas created by the characterless structures of which they consist. Contrast the character of those on page 29. These exhibit such a sound approach to workshop design that it is difficult to imagine how their functional basis can be ignored in the evolution of a satisfactory townscape.



Road signs must be clear and make their message at a glance. The white letters painted on a black road do not obstruct, and they site their message in the spot most easy to see. In this satisfactory way the road takes over the nautical black and white. Quite apart from their function, from whichever direction one looks, white lines on black roads create interesting patterns. Where suitable they are far preferable to the visual daze of three-dimensional placards on posts. If a vertical sign is necessary the simple but bold easy-to-read kind as in 30 is exemplary. The 8-miles-speed-limit board becomes redundant as soon as the very excellent symbol has gained currency. At the moment, so far as we know, the symbol is unique to Bournemouth—Bournemouth's crowning glory.



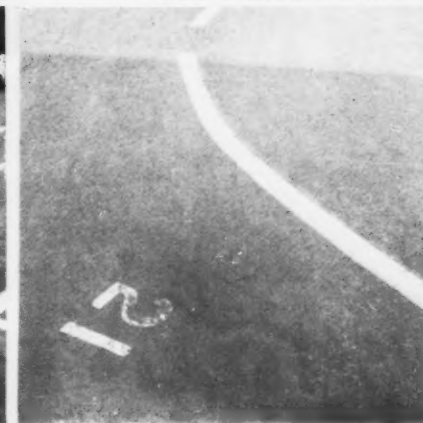
30

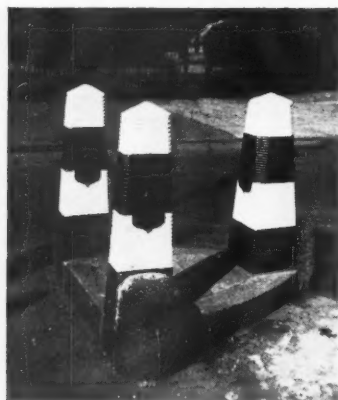


31
32
33



34
35
36





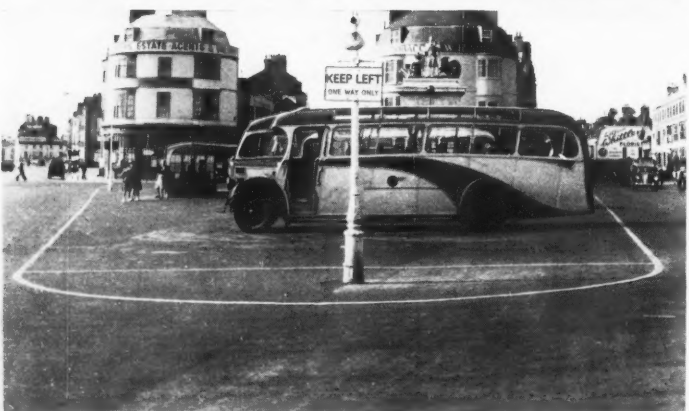
37



38

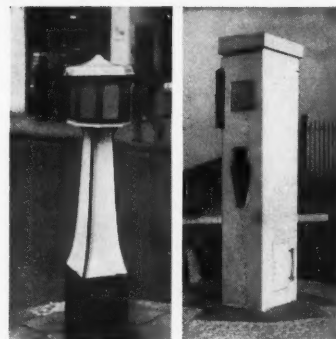


39



40

Bollards, traffic signs, lamp standards, represent the repetitive vertical elements of the street scene. They have multiplied rapidly with the increasing density and speed of traffic. This puts a premium on simplicity and clarity, which is clearly the reason why street symbols have borrowed freely from the nautical language of black and white.



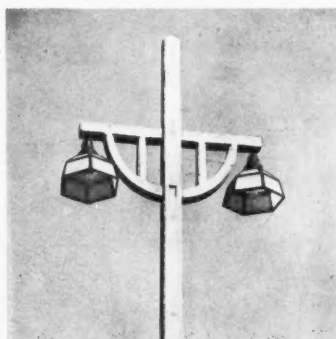
41

The fussy or flashy in bollard design is inexcusable with the precedent of those opposite to follow.



42

Road signs at complicated crossings should not confuse their message with poorly designed extras.



43

Lamp standards are among the worst street offenders. 39, left, straightforward enough, bends uncomfortably at the top. 39, right, from Holland, is fit for any situation.



44

When a white line can effectively circulate traffic, 40, an elaborate roundabout of brick and geraniums is an unnecessary complication.



Wherever this yellow strip occurs (except for the frontispiece on p. 2), it indicates the 'cautionary' object—that is something which exhibits, on the part of designer or maker, a failure to recognize the moral of the functionalist tradition. The objects condemned may not necessarily be badly designed (although some of them certainly are) but a more frequent fault, insipidity, is considered equally worthy of rebuke.



The railway, being a product of engineers, developed at an early stage a vernacular of its own for all the details not solely concerned with operations. The engineers had nothing to guide them in this, but functional requirements. Their efforts are the prototype for all station equipment to-day, and their influence could, with benefit, spread to other parts of the townscape. Railway level crossing and yard gates, the small

structures that fit between railway lines and provide storage and shelter on railway platforms, the typical canopies above the platforms, the clear and simple signs in black and white all express the character that can only come from this functional approach. With very few exceptions this tradition has degenerated into either complete confusion or at best an insipid orderliness.



45



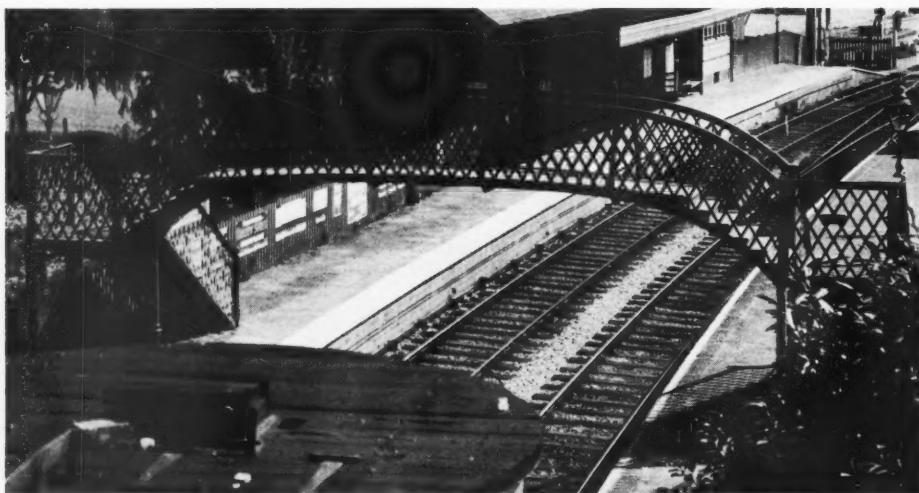
46



47



48



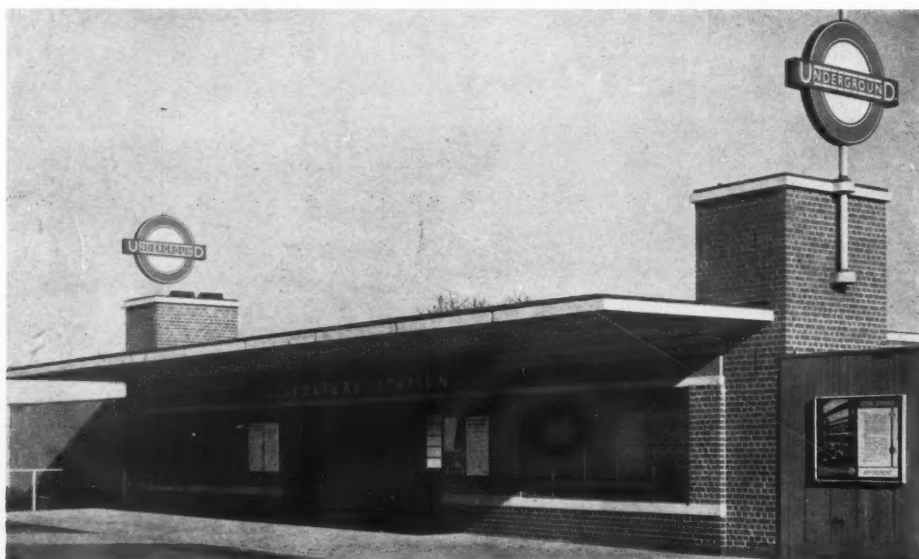
49

The early railway vernacular is a prolific source of excellent functional detail. This simple iron passenger bridge, for example, is obviously suitable for assembly from mass-produced parts.



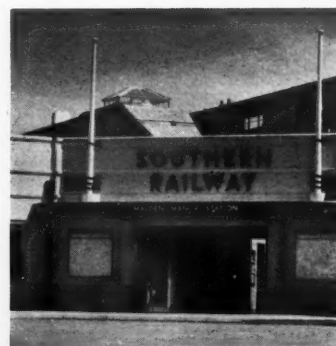
52

A roof on the excellent bridge opposite merely results in boredom.



50

London Transport has evolved a contemporary statement of railway detail to suit new urban requirements. Though occasionally lacking character, at least it has the virtue of orderliness.



53

Pseudo-functionalism, fussily embroidered.



51

This shows some of the railway detail that inevitably encroaches on to the road, and how carefully designed functional objects, when properly placed, can enhance contemporary architecture.



54

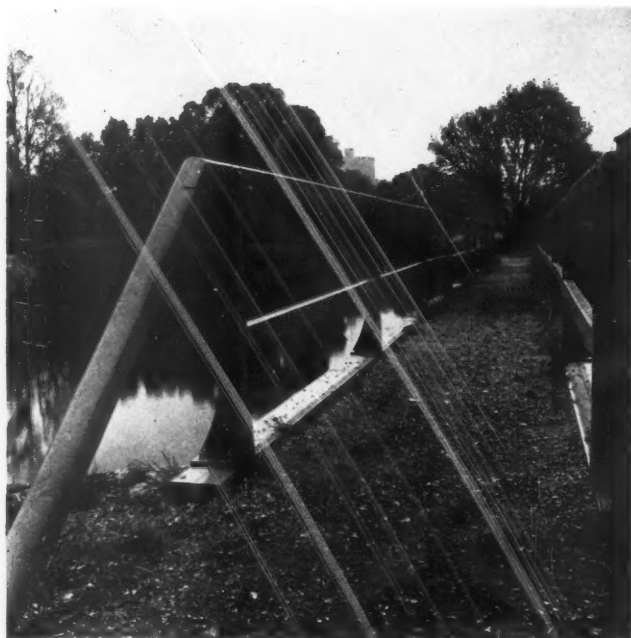
The poor detail here shows the usual standard where road and rail meet.

The embellishment that flows naturally from function is shown in the black and white of this lock-gate. It transforms a compact but complex mass of timber into an intricate pattern of light and shade, and shows how the nautical tradition proper has penetrated inland, by means of the waterways. The idiom of sea-wall and jetty reappears modified in the more protected canal and riverside scene, whence it often spreads its influence into the real landlubber's countryside of farm and village.

55



The bridge over the tributary can be a boundary rail to the main stream or a break in a vista, depending from where it is seen. Of wood, it combines verticals and horizontals or a camber; in iron it lends itself to a graceful arc and an intricate trellis. The slowness of structure above eye-level, like the trees around it, contrasts with the solidity of the lock, the weir and the ground itself. Compare the spare athletic grace of 56-61 with the self-conscious clumsiness of 62-64.



56



58



57



59



60



61



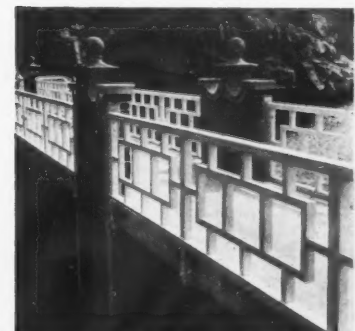
62

It would be difficult to believe, if this were not here to prove it, that so graceful a thing as a bridge could be made so heavily and monotonously dull.



63

A bridge in an ornamental paddling pool; incoherent and entirely unsuited in scale to the young.



64

Rustique for grown-ups clearly reared on the example above. Consciously pompous and self-satisfied.



65

A complex of essential parts, a bridge and a sluice with a railing and a gate. Each part is functional except, perhaps, for the ornamental curl to the rail end, but the most functional detail of all, the mechanism, is in itself ornament, particularly the spoked wheel black against white. The fan-shaped railing, superficially ornament, is, nevertheless, as functional as the pier beneath it. Hence ornament that looks functional and function that looks ornamental.



66

Structure implies emphasis on the functional element. The variety achieved unconsciously by grouped masses in the warehouse, 66, is achieved by the flat effect of the brickwork, the textural value of the weatherboard superstructure and strong counter-emphasis of the vertical grouping of the open doorways. The structures in 68 and 69 show various solutions to the transparent workshop wall. These specimens of unconscious functionalism run right through from the eighteenth century to the present day. In fact the addition in 68 is a relatively recent one, and its parallel with more sophisticated functional structures, underlines the point that functionalism has a vernacular tradition, which holds many lessons for its more recent professional exponents. In 67 the ornament of the scalloped canopy has begun to take charge of the situation and shows how the functional vernacular side-tracked into peasant art.



67



68



69



70

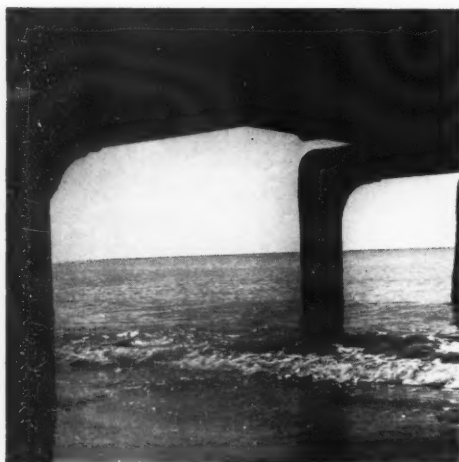
The rib idea applied to structure is as old as the first wicker basket or as new as an aircraft fuselage, and one of the best media for emphasizing pattern in structure combined with minimum use of material and maximum enclosure of space. It lends itself with extraordinary success to a vast number of practical uses and ornamental effects.



71

A truly functional approach to design may either produce a unique structure like the Cobb or a prototype ideal for mass production. 70 shows the pier pavilion at Broadstairs. This light structure carries a canvas awning in the summer which can be rolled up in the winter. It is the minimum structure for the job, an object lesson

to other pavilion-minded municipalities. 71, the marquee, with oars in the foreground, employs the same principle in another way. 74, the terrace awning where drinks are served; the same idea again, modified to suit a different site. 72, 73, a landing stage (half pier, half bridge), another prototype for mass-production.



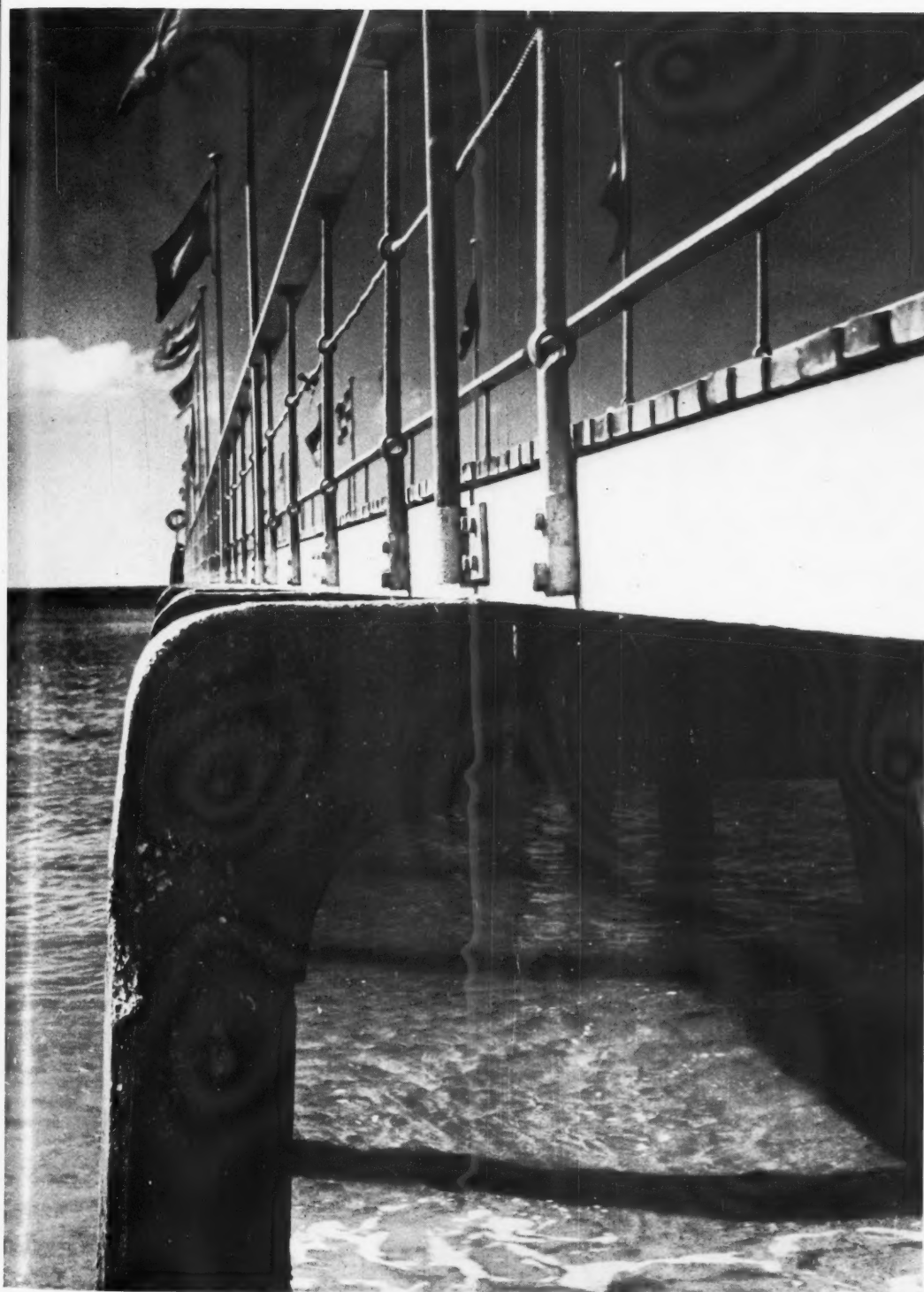
72



73



74



75



76

Ostentatious iron and brickwork make this public lavatory ridiculous instead of merely convenient.



77

Typical waterside clutter can destroy the excellence that even a derelict windmill possesses.



78

The contemporary standard for riverside building; a sad falling off from a powerful, elegant tradition.

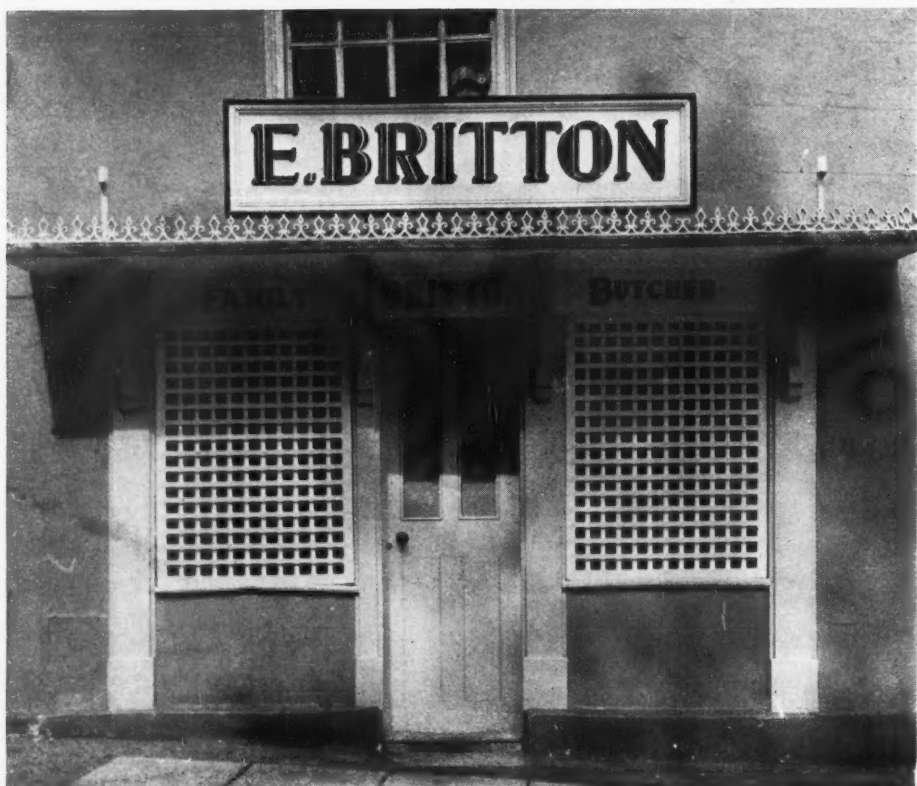


79

Pseudo rustic self-consciously tries to fit a fairy-tale landscape and merely becomes limp and featureless.

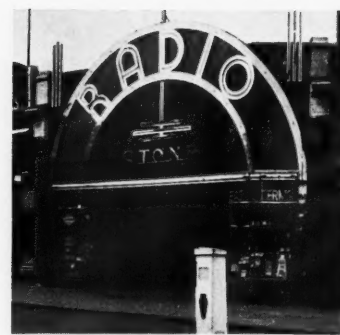


80



81

For some reason butchers' shops—especially in small towns—retain the simple clarity and dignity of an uncomplicated tradition. Opposite is the kind of confusion that has almost entirely replaced it.



82

Whimsy without zest is stale.



83

Modernity without a functional root means mere novelism.



84

Simplicity without a functional root is without life.

trim

It has been convenient so far to present civic detail under the broad headings of Road, Rail, River and Structure, but there is much that does not fit this framework. For these oddments the term 'Trim' is adopted, because its meaning both as a noun of technical application and as an adjective of general implication suggests what is required of civic detail.

First, such details as railings, fencings, gates, steps, seats and the edging of municipal flower beds, come to mind as playing a very important part in the visual scene in every town. Then there is display lettering, which is used today to such an extent that hardly ten yards of townscape are free of it.

Each object, each bit of display, was added at some time, either by public or private owner, with some specific purpose to perform, and often a sound vernacular has developed from this original functional requirement. In the comparisons drawn on the following pages the simple, unassuming rightness of the functional principle underlines the insipid qualities of the other. In particular it will be seen throughout how the nautical use of black and white, as an embellishment based on function, is an idiom that holds good in all circumstances.

MARE

BRIGHTON

MAN

LONDON

ONE PENNY.

CANTERBURY

R

H

FOREIGN

H

ABCDEFGHIJKLM

R

R

R

S

ABCDEFGHIJKLM

I
M

T



85

A comparison of this with earlier sans types shows the degeneration that has taken place.



86

The Trajan letter has the virtue and the vice of being in 'good taste.'



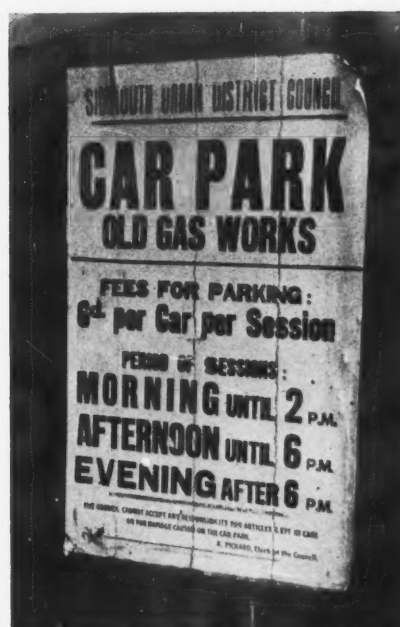
87

This debilitated sans lettering, with its deformed characters, overlooks the prime need for legibility.



88

An affected sans 'moderne' with none of the vitality of the good functional display type.



89



90



91

The traditional nineteenth century sans serif types adopted for the routine purposes of road, rail and river signs were simple, well formed, well spaced and legible, in a word functional. White letters on a black ground are clear and effective when used in the proper place.



92

Since the day when the town-crier no longer needed to shout himself hoarse, but could paste up a notice that most people were able to read, display types have never ceased to multiply in quantity and variety. Practically every yard of townscape has a house-name, placard, road sign, shop fascia board, advertisement hoarding, bus route sign, road name. Every vehicle on road or rail, everywhere, has a printed announcement that someone is supposed to notice and read. Legibility, however, often seems to be the last consideration, either due to poor type or poor arrangement. The truly functional type-face is the one that, properly spaced, makes its message clear at the distance from which it is intended to be read. It may be bold, black and purposeful—or alternatively bold and white on a black ground. It may be trim, slim and well-formed when its message is secondary to the bolder one. In all cases it is a type with character. Many of the early nineteenth century play-bills and similar productions bristle with such type-faces, and have never been improved on. They provide much better models for imitation than most of the moderne display types produced today, and there is an immense variety still available, and still used—by auctioneers, canal authorities, and jobbing printers.

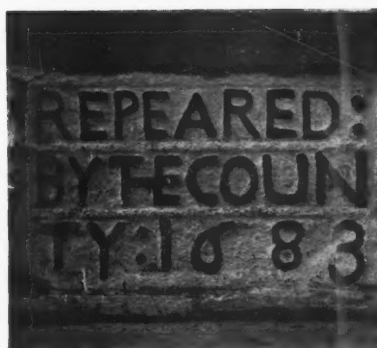


93



94

36



95

Sans through two hundred years: as different as could be but full of character.



98

Sans, as all too commonly used today; functionalism without feeling—result, complete characterlessness.



96

Bold and colourful, particularly on the inn sign. The contrast with RAC is too obvious to mention.



99

Similar to the type opposite but ruined by distortion.



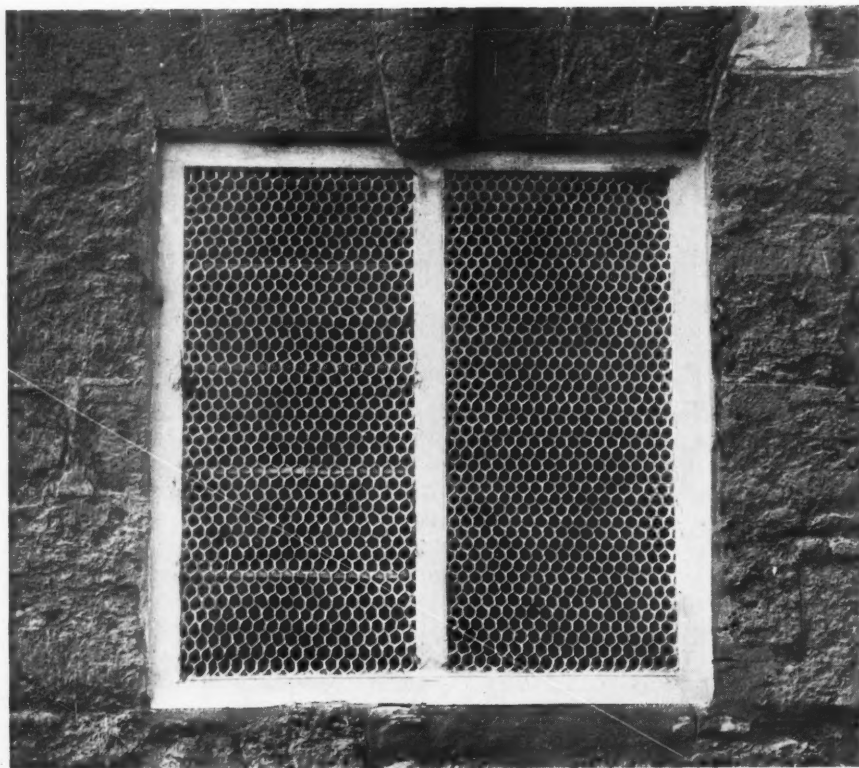
97

Nineteenth century railway lettering—good if not 'good taste.'



100

A modern example: refined and lacking all character and punch.

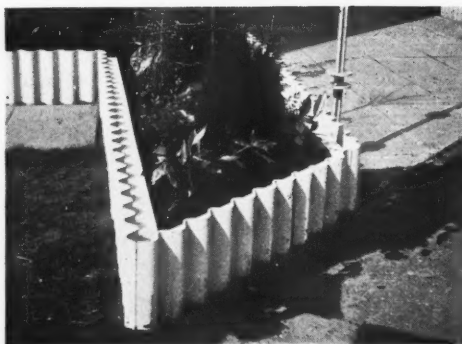


101

Just as the wire window above fits snugly and trimly into its solid surround of stonework, the smallest details of the street or civic open space should fit into the townscape in performing their individual functions. The circular seat and the corrugated edging are representative of the vast complexity of detail met with in civic gardens and squares that are frequently referred to as 'ornamental.' These two examples are selected for the satisfactory way in which they avoid such a description, yet achieving, in their functional way, embellishment of a far higher quality. Below is a public lavatory, but it might have been a bandstand, a tea kiosk, a telephone booth or any other of the small structures that are essential to life in the park or the Marine Parade. The reader will have no difficulty in making a mental comparison with a dozen municipal works in any of these categories, which fall far short of this example because they depart from a vigorous tradition.



102



103



104

trim: detail



105

A typical section of a modern resort-scape, crammed with irrelevant and confusing detail.



106

The conscious pomposity of the fountain with nothing effective to do merely obstructs the view.



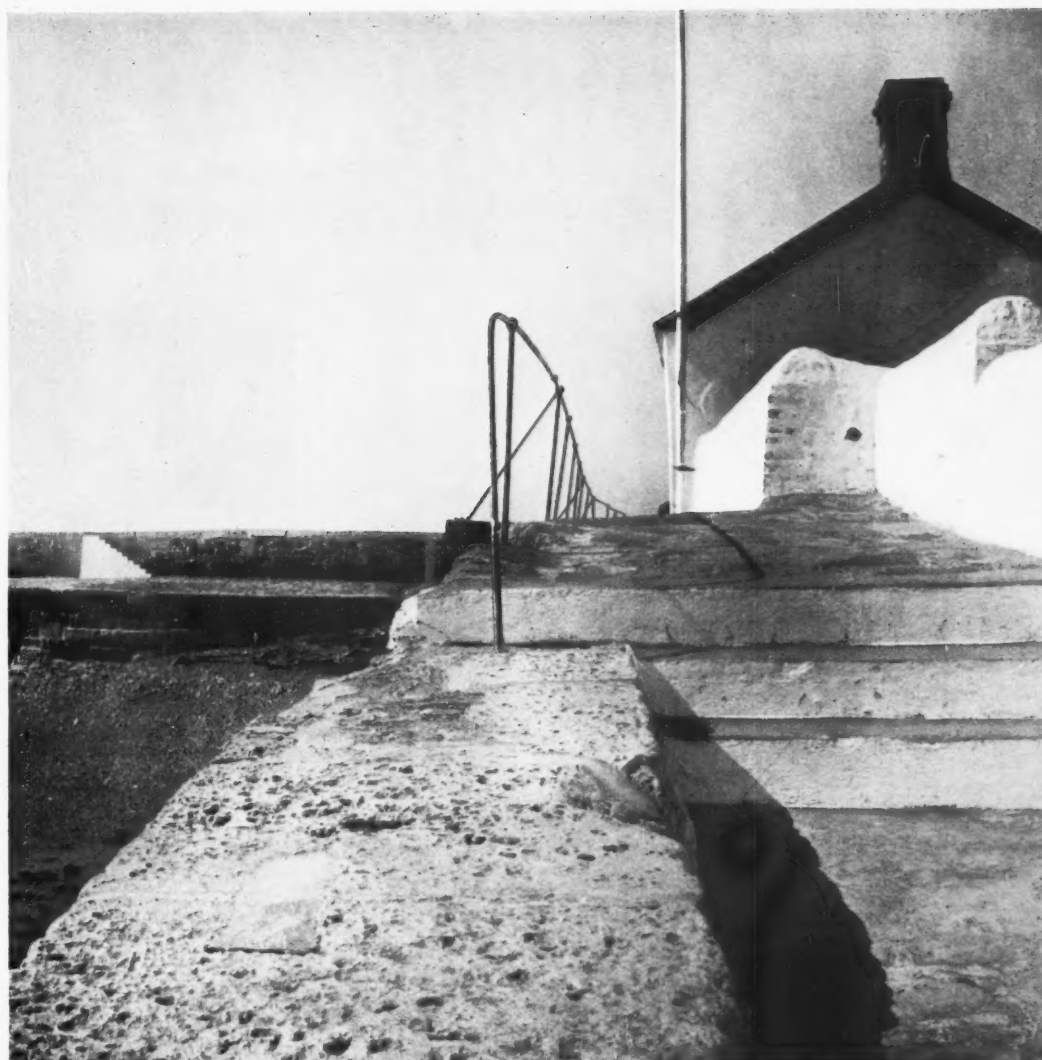
107

A surround of fussy railings cancels out the carefully tended flowers.



108

Fussy, florid and flaccid, the exact antithesis of everything nautical.



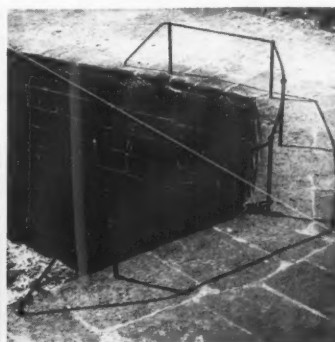
109

The function of a railing is to give a visual, then a tactile warning—'so far and no further.' In this way it differs from a fence or wall, the purpose of which is to contain, and obstruct physically. The warning given, the railing has fulfilled its purpose. Even a guard rail for children at a road crossing can do no more without becoming more than a railing. Railings are often one of the most unsightly parts of the townscape when their true function and economy are ignored in a maze of conscious fussiness. In the illustration above of the approach to the Cobb, the railing is the simplest affair of tubes and an occasional angled strut, following the irregular

contours of the seawall. It is the minimum necessary and thence derives its character. The strip below shows simple railings employed at specific danger spots, as a handrail on a bridge, a guard rail at a curve in a jetty, or above a flight of stone steps. In each the bare minimum of tubing or chain is used. No more is needed unless you dislike the principle of economy of design. The argument here of course is that economy of means to ends is the basis of any possible contemporary vernacular as it is of machine design. Hence the significance of the nautical style.



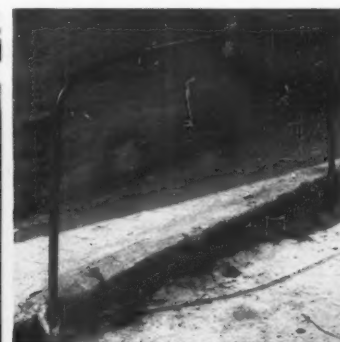
110



111



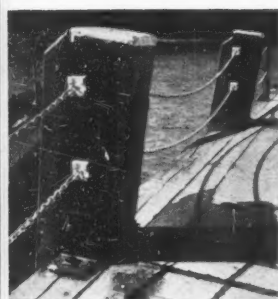
112



113



114



115



116



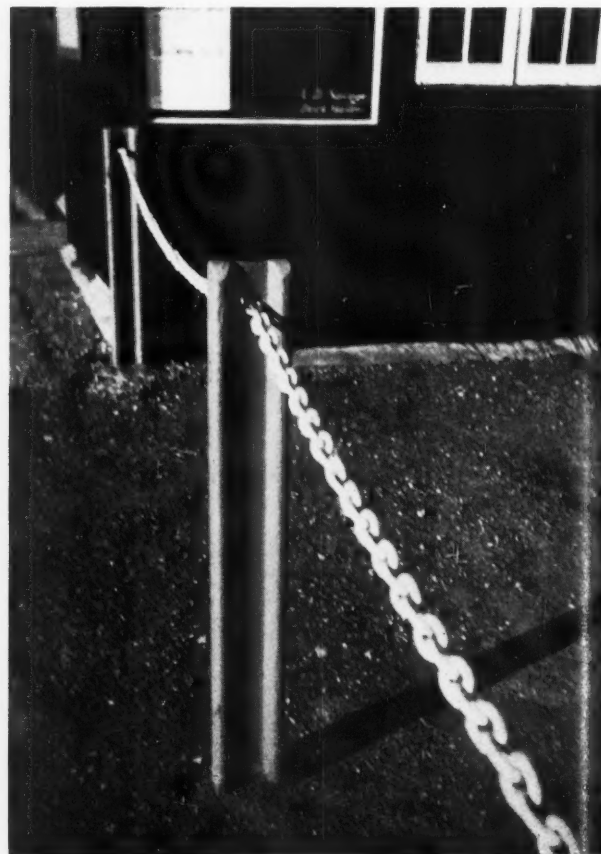
117

The straightforward lines of metal pipes and stanchions sparsely placed are given variety by a sweeping curve at the approach to the bridge, 114. This is a functional use of the material. The

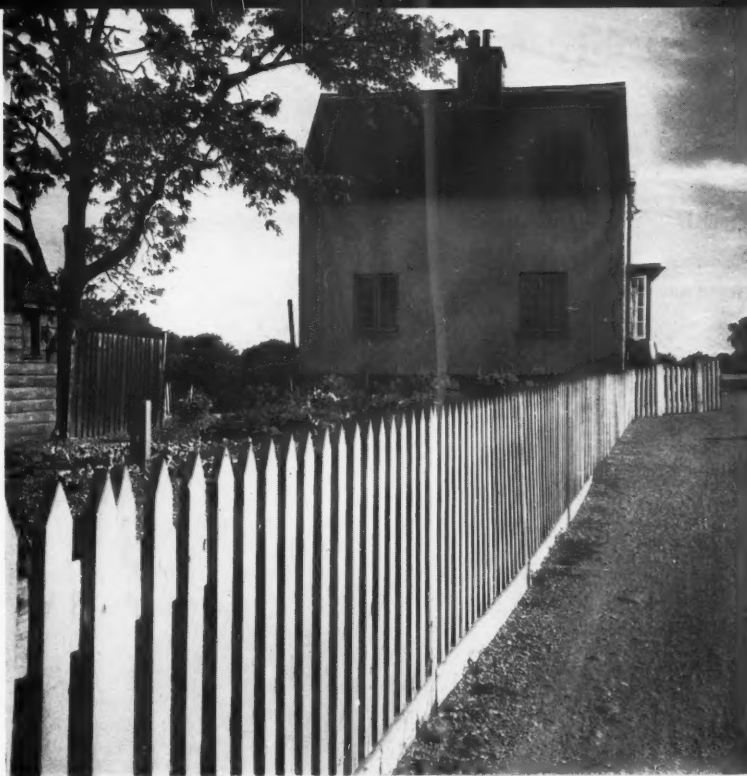


118

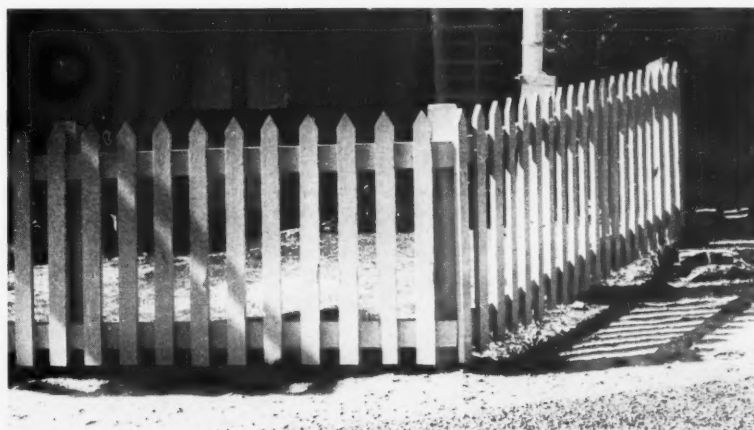
curl at the end is a piece of ornament quite suitable for terminating a pipe, introducing, as it does, more finality than cutting it off close to the upright. Naturally, this will not work with a chain, an equally satisfactory method, when combined with pipe standards, sawn off rails or even the massive wood supports of the quay.



119



120



121



122

A fence has to be an enclosure, a physical barrier, and in this sense is more like a wall than a railing. For a thousand years, perhaps a lot more, the most economical type has been the picket fence and it remains essentially modern. There is enough of it to establish the idea of a barrier, but it still gives a hint of what is beyond. Its simple structure creates the basic pattern, but there is scope for variation, as shown above. The tops can be pointed or curved, the spaces between can vary in width within narrow limits, the base can be solid or raised from the ground. Paint it white and the spaces read as black.

trim: railings



123

Half fence, half railing, this rustic solution fails at both jobs.



124

This composite contrivance of chain, post, curb, fence and wire is a mess.



125

The typical municipal railing, ponderous, smug and unnecessary.



126

This incongruous union of three fences shows how the virtues of good elements can be dissipated.

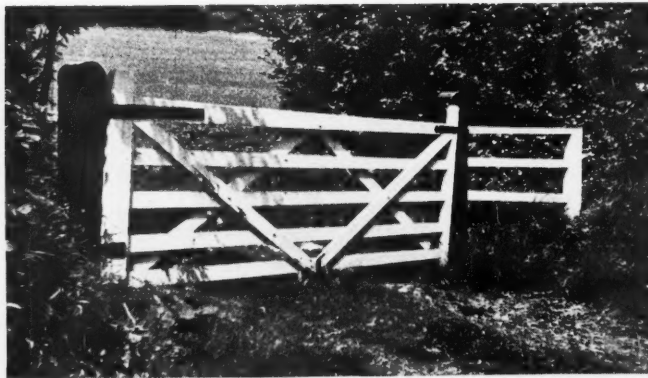
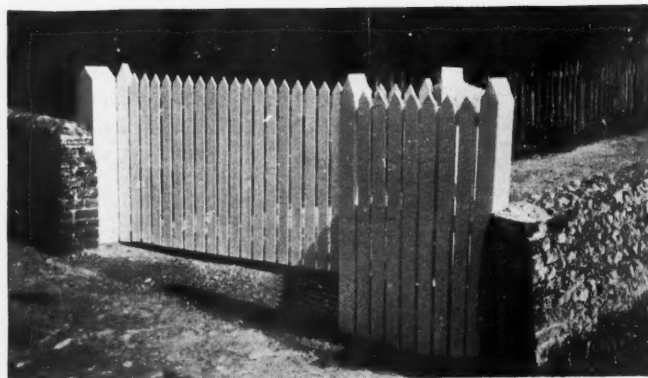
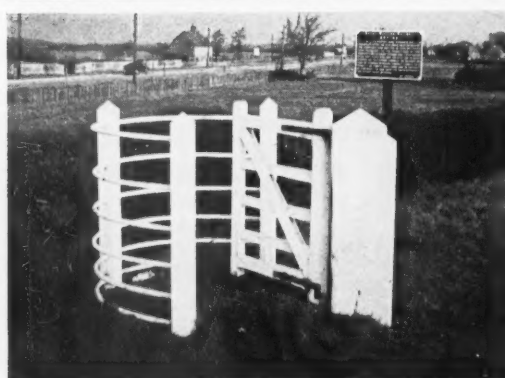


127

The gates on this page are an assembly of vertical, horizontal and diagonal lines designed to make them hang properly and stay that way. No ultra-complicated forms are needed for this. In fact the pattern dictated by the simple mechanics of the thing could hardly be improved upon and, as the few examples here show, can be endlessly varied. The odd thing is that nowadays the lesson of the thousand and one excellently straightforward gates to be found up and down the country is nearly always passed over in favour of the pompously unfunctional.



128

129
130131
132



Steps come nearer to structure than most forms of trim. In 133 a certain formality appears in the arched shelter, the cavity is an integral part of a double flight of steps. The whitewash face, the white edge to each step and the black base supply the correct functional elaboration.



The worst of both worlds.



The steps in 134 and 135 are practically part of the wall. The latter is designed most ingeniously to get one safely up a sloping parapet, where a railing would only be a hindrance.



The steps are good, but ill-conceived railings destroy their simplicity.



When the flight of steps has to be poised in mid-air, as on the diving board, 136, or the ladder-form of 137, a railing is essential for safety, but the minimum safeguard is sufficient.



Again, good steps but spoiled by unwanted orientalism at the top.

The sleek, streamlined mass-produced forms of the machine enhance by contrast the value of the broken texture of natural things. Variety, interest and vitality can be given to the townscape scene by the proper use of textured surfaces, as the following pages indicate. Here the soft surface of weather-worn stone is given further point by contrast with the hard, spare character of an iron rail.

141



The sleek, streamlined mass-produced forms of the machine enhance by contrast the value of the broken texture of natural things. Variety, interest and vitality can be given to the townscape scene by the proper use of textured surfaces, as the following pages indicate. Here the soft surface of weather-worn stone is given further point by contrast with the hard, spare character of an iron rail.

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texture and colour It is significant that, setting out to look at townscape in terms of architecture and planning, to take as it were the large intelligent view, the compilers of this issue (see p. 4) found their intentions wholly seduced by the visual interest of the details of the scene. Instead of market hall or cathedral precinct it was the angularity of a groin, the texture of a wall or the rhythm of a flight of steps which focused their attention.

This can hardly have been mere chance, promoted by some trick of the light, or some emphasis of the English spring. To seek one thing and find another implies at least a disinterested vision. Here we had a team of photographers, writers and artists feeling compelled to record not an intellectual appreciation of commodious architecture, not the spatial niceties of the English planning tradition, but simply the qualities of what they saw.

Far too often in recent years the progressive architect's attention has been directed to the big idea, the town plan, the national plan, the cosmic pattern, to the exclusion of more local and particular interests. The result has been that he has begun to lose his ability to see other than with the mind's eye. In many ways he is uncomfortably like the child who, after an earlier period of uninhibited pleasure in simple visual experience, finds his interest in seeing atrophied by his preoccupation with learning; that is, his growing intellectual development—with disastrous effect on his creative faculties.

One might say that the more sensitive architect today staggers under the weight of his realization of the facts of life. The burden of technical awareness hangs heavily on the student and practising architect alike, and the sense of social responsibility often assumes the proportions and character of an incubus as well as a stimulant. A wholly satisfying, virile architecture cannot flourish unless in its practice social justification is lavishly compounded with personal pleasure—a wholesome delight in the creative process itself as well as an appreciation of the end in view. There is no need to regard such naive delight as almost sinful or morally irresponsible, since without the ingredient of sensuous enjoyment the practice of architecture must inevitably degenerate into little more than a sordid routine, or at the most the exercise of mere intellectual cleverness.

The relevance of the REVIEW'S tour to this necessity is obvious: the pungent vitality and vernacular richness of the examples illustrated constitute a challenge to the architect, who must maintain enough freedom from enervating committee-room responsibilities and large scale technical and economic worries to preserve his interest in, and derive continual pleasure from, the practice of his art at the practical level.

He must not forget that, however admirable maybe a proper appreciation of the contemporary need for firmness and commodity, without an innate sense of delight his work will never be more than weakly impersonal—competently dull.

Let the modern architect then drop his mental gaze from the great distances, sufficiently to notice the qualities of the ordinary things around him, in the same way that the REVIEW'S team were compelled to do when they started out to look for something else.

Let him study the surface of a rock, for instance, and experience afresh the sudden realization of how the values inherent in its textural qualities have re-occurred in walls, buildings, roads, giving them a complexity and a vitality which are completely passed by in the present-day townscape.

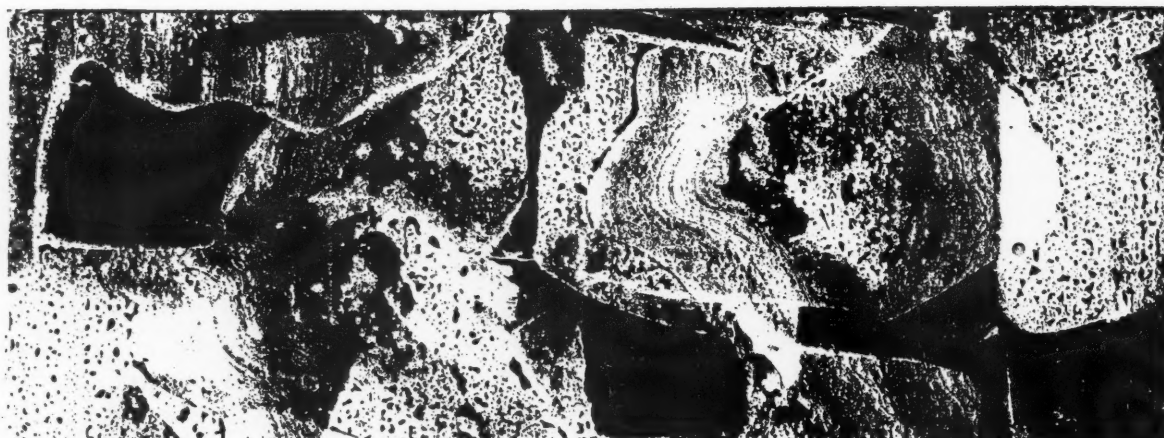
In the case of road surfaces, the breaks in the traditional surface were all there for specific purposes. Materials were required for paving and draining the much used

roadway. Certain parts needed reinforcing where others did not. A change in the surface denoted the boundary. A paving of lesser strength was sufficient for the footpath. In dealing with all these requirements a variety in texture was achieved quite unconsciously, which we today can regard with a visual pleasure that we are rarely able to derive from the mechanical roadway of today.

The latter is of course the result of machine production, the effect of monotonous surfaces with which we have been content because the machine can do it best that way. But it has made us aware of what we are on the point of losing, and now focuses our eyes on the things that give visual delight. It is not a question of abandoning the machine but one of mastering it before its drug-like influence has drained the vitality from the ordinary simple things that can mean so much.

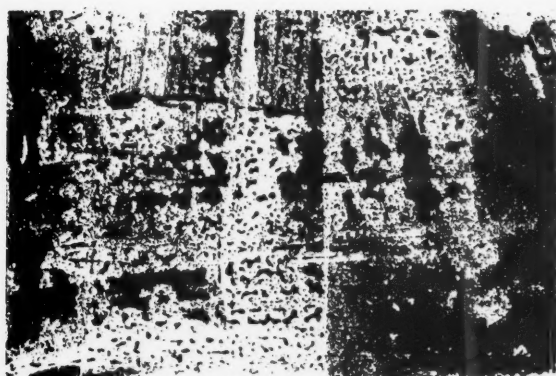
The textures of wall surfaces, on the other hand, do not derive directly from function to the same extent, and they have permitted a new element, a lighter side, to enter into the scene. The decorative surface of flint or stone, though an integral part of their structural character, also constitutes a tradition of embellishment. When these materials received their first dabs of tar and whitewash, still another tradition of embellishment was established, the tradition of black and white. The essential character of these colours is due to their close link with their underlying texture. They are not just colours applied—a new surface arising from a trick of technique. They establish by virtue of their own inherent properties qualities of light and shade and form which the underlying surface is unable to achieve by itself, and then proceed to develop textural characteristics which are entirely their own.

The colour tradition of black and white, nautical in its origin, but, as the preceding pages demonstrate, almost universal in its application, has the quality in two dimensions that texture creates with three dimensions. It has the vivid characteristics of opposites, the dramatic force of light and shade and the simplicity which is the essence of unconscious functionalism. It achieves embellishment and at the same time fulfils a function as white lines on black roads, as warning bands on bollards or as a black ground to a white letter, and has established itself in a way that no other colour combination possibly could. In its original nautical sphere, it has produced a vernacular form of decoration which at times achieves a remarkable degree of sophistication—witness its use on the low-fronted buildings in Lyme Regis and other seaports. In this form, as in its more closely functional aspects, black and white is a tradition capable of infinite adaptation to the modern town scene where its character and vitality could make good much that is sadly missing.





142



143

The comparison here is that of natural texture and mass produced texture. The vast blocks of rough-cut stone bear all the signs of the forces that created them in a fascinating worry of surface strengths and weaknesses. With flint-work the mason has evolved a technique of structure that re-creates most satisfactorily the variety of natural textures.



144

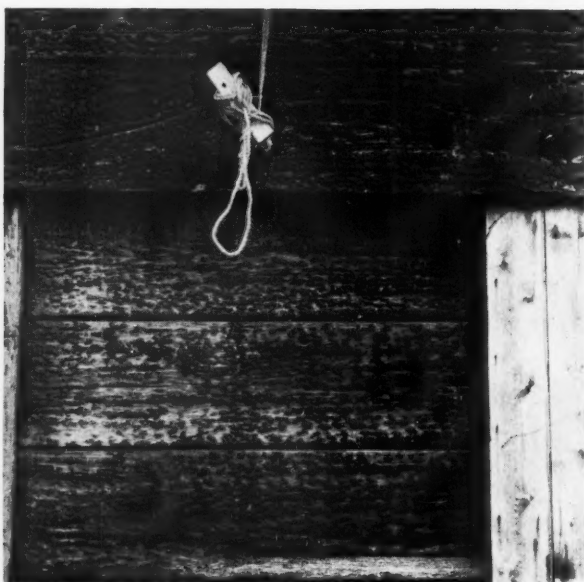
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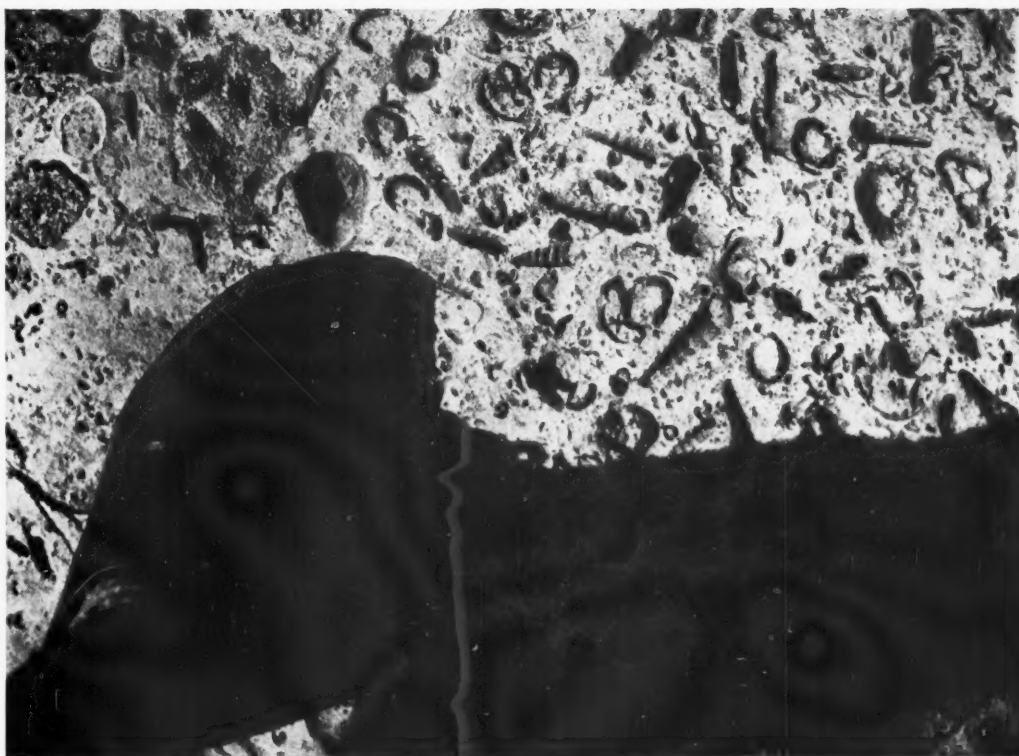


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151

The effects of texture achieved by accidents of nature or by man's lack of precision tools, are now appearing desirable in themselves, to people surrounded by the monotony of machine-produced regularity. Those on page 48 demonstrate effects on wall surfaces on a wide range of scale. The great blocks of stone in the sea-wall, 145, textured themselves, need a cement bond which emphasizes their massive character. The mixed boulder construction of the wall, 147, and the irregular stone blocks of the sea-wall, 148, require more elaborate cementing to prevent the sea from undermining them by penetrating the crevices. In 149, the finer flint structure, facing elements

of lesser force, can depend more on a relief effect to supplement the natural roughness of the material. Even in dried out tar, 150, there is satisfactory variety of surface. 151 and 152, close-up views of the stonework of the Cobb at Lyme Regis (see also pages 9-16), reveal the incredible variety in the stone surface itself. Produced by enormous pressure on primeval seabed, or the white heat of volcanic disturbance, a texture results every bit as vital and stimulating as the conscious work of man. 153 is remarkable for the unconscious addition of man to nature, a piece of machine-made paving setting off the natural quality of pitted stone.



152



153



154

Different kinds of material perform different functions in the roadway. The stone slabs take the strain of the cart-wheels, the sets in the centre are easier for the horse to grip. The stone bollards keep the wheels off the wall and are set back to avoid the hubs. This necessity gives varied texture to a flat surface. The hundred and one functions of the road surface produce in it a continually variegated pattern. It has to drain surface water, lead it somewhere, get it down a drain, funnel air to cellars and differentiate pavements from road, private ground from public pavement, denote doorways, change levels, and provide covers to all the services using the road. A dozen ways of doing each job have been evolved during successive generations, producing the fascinating variety that makes the traditional floorscape. A glance at the twelve examples on page 51 is a startling reminder of all the things one sees and walks on day in and day out, without ever noticing that they exist, far less appreciating the beauty of them, and recognizing their contribution to the vocabulary of townscape.



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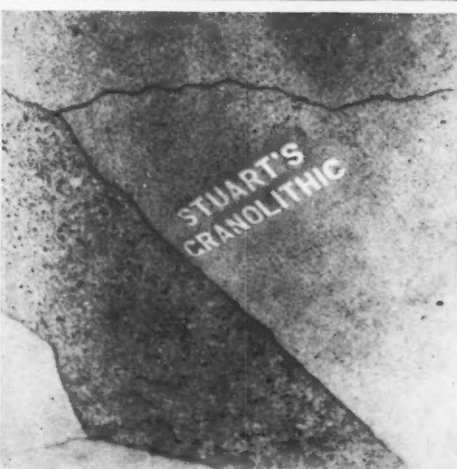
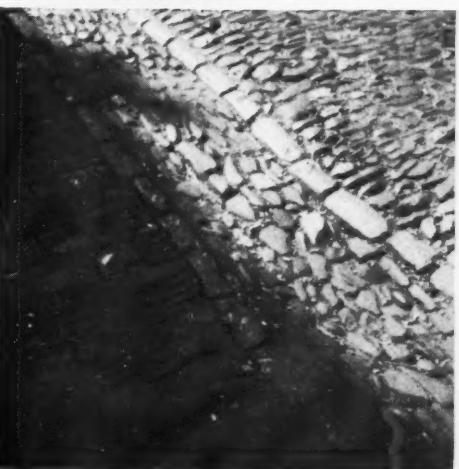
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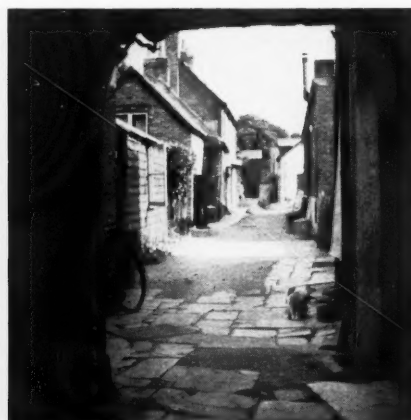
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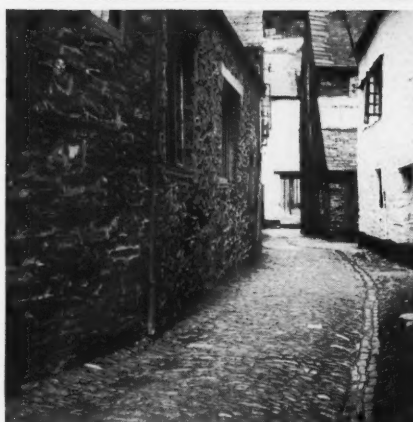


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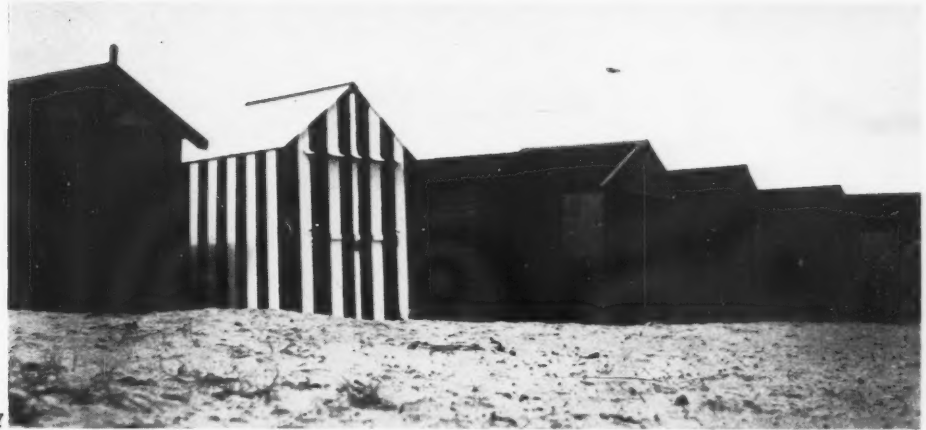
On this page we stand back and observe the composite effect of wallscape and floorscape. 169 and 170 show the character of a curving footway economic in its use of paving. 171 has a sufficiently regular floorscape to match the variety of its elevations. 172 and 173 contrast the focal effect of a concentrated vista with the relaxation of a rambling back street. Variety of floor surface combined with whitewash enliven the back alley, 174. The functional cobbles and black and white of 175 become almost formalized in the neat paved strip and wallscape that stamps the character of 176.



171
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177

Whitewash and tar are the basis of the colour-scheme that belongs to what has been called the Nautical Style. Their use constitutes the first step in embellishment of function by colour, but in colours which often perform a function at the same time. The two doorways, 178 and 179, make the whole point. Like the two bollards compared on page 8, the first is plain and functional, the second is embellished, for the whitewash on the door surround establishes the structural character and frames it for a dark night, doing the same for the steps 181 and the parapet 182. This white has become so firmly established that the bay-windows of 180, when they have to be painted, naturally get a coat of white paint. In the bathing hut 177, the stripes are pure ornament, virile and robust against the neighbours. 183, a monumental tarred wall, shows the value of occasional unrelieved black.

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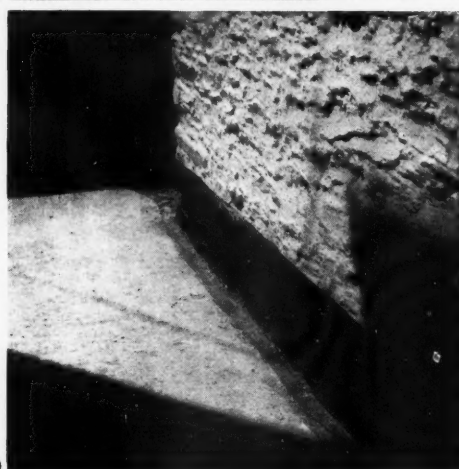
Both black and white applied to rough wall surfaces produce an interplay of accentuated high-lights and shadows, bringing out the texture of the underlying surface. Added textural effect is contributed by the nature of the pigment itself.



187



188



189



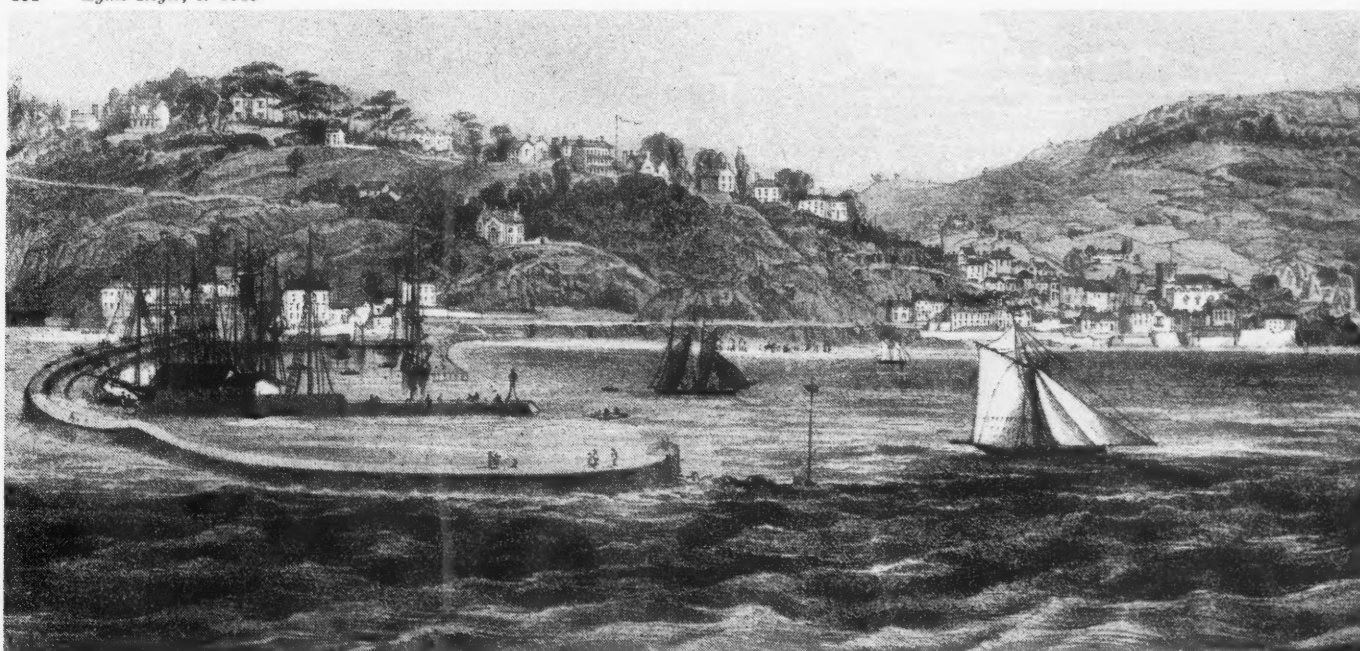
190

6

application On the next few pages, Gordon Cullen attempts to show how it is possible to apply the kind of ready-made formulæ selected and isolated in the earlier part of this issue. He has chosen two towns where the conditions are widely different. Accompanying each drawing is a key by which the individual components may be identified.

The first town, Lyme Regis, has already been mentioned both because it possesses to a remarkable degree the qualities of nautical functionalism, and because it is as unspoiled as any seaside town could expect to be. The second is a new town. It might be Stevenage or Harlow or any other—the lesson of this issue applies to all. One of their problems is that because they are being built in open land or from small beginnings there is little local genius to inspire the designer. The solution is the functional tradition, which can offer that ready-made vernacular which is the basis of all that we find so visually satisfying in Lyme Regis.

191 *Lyme Regis, c. 1840*

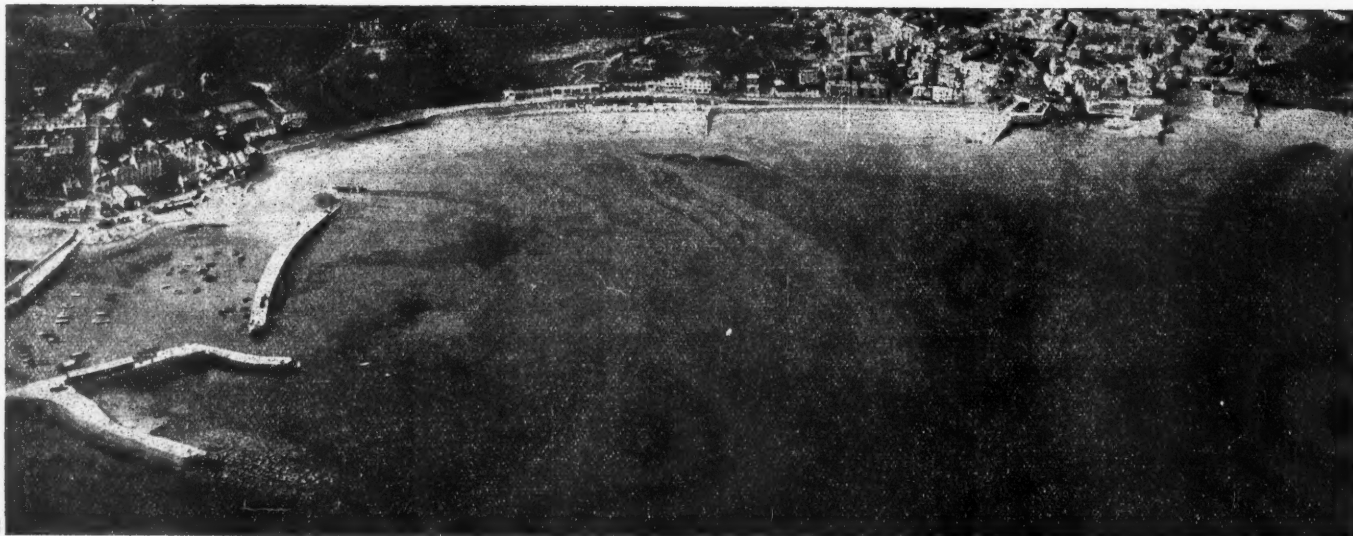


Lyme Regis *This little town in Dorset has, fortunately for itself and for us, never been infected by the urge for improvement suffered by so many other seaside resorts which, at one time, possessed the character which we see in Lyme to-day.*

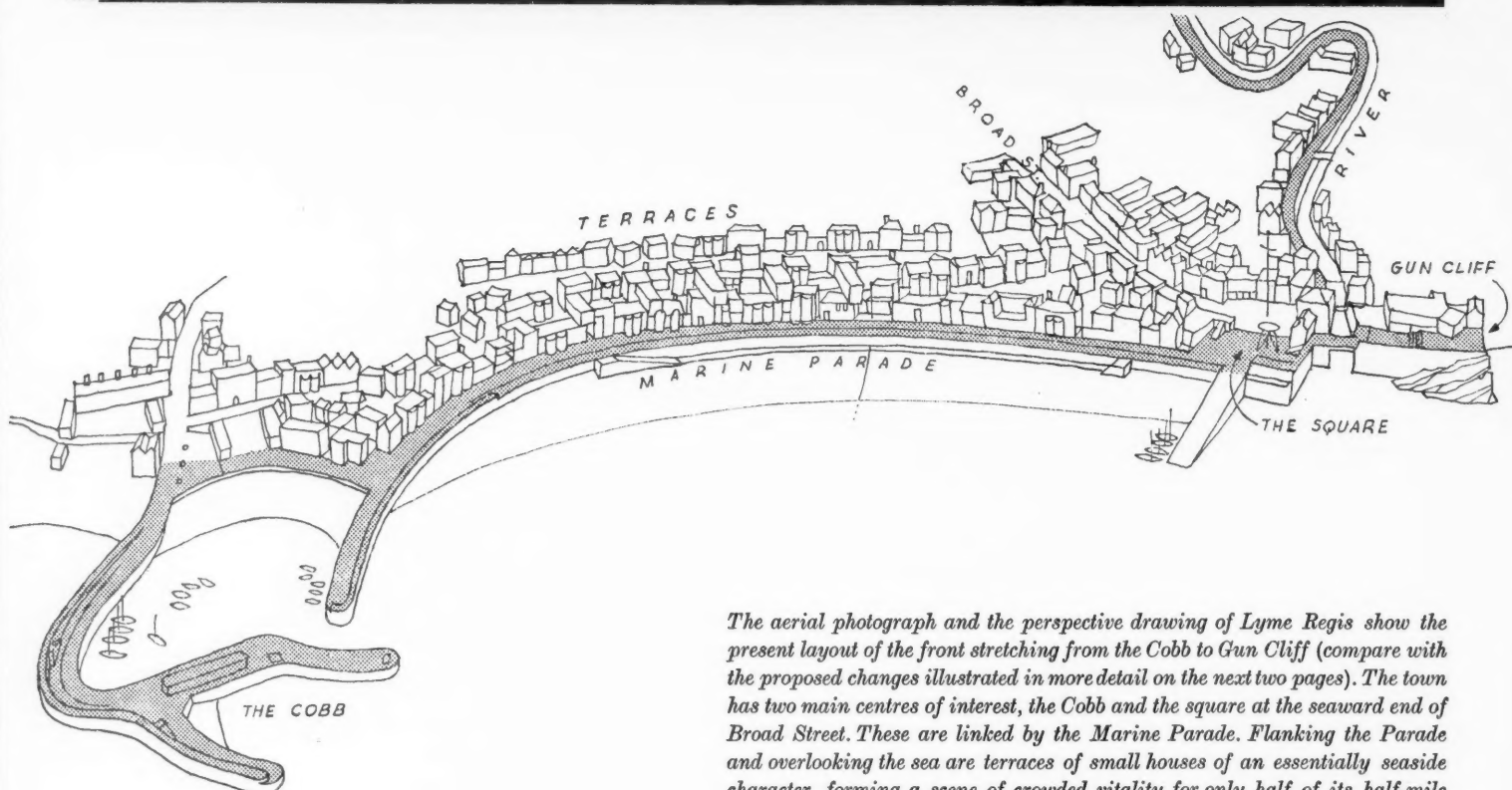
The principles of nautical functionalism are reflected strongly in Lyme's great monument, the Cobb, whence they have spread throughout the structure of the town. Its buildings are inevitably a mixture of eighteenth and nineteenth century influences, but these have been so firmly dominated by their situation that their character ceases to suggest a style; it has become part of an ageless vernacular. Its front has the coherent irregularity that can only come from embellish-

ment originating in function, its streets, paved and faced with continually varying and expressive textures, evolve a sense of fullness that would be impossible to capture except through the same basic process that evolved Lyme itself.

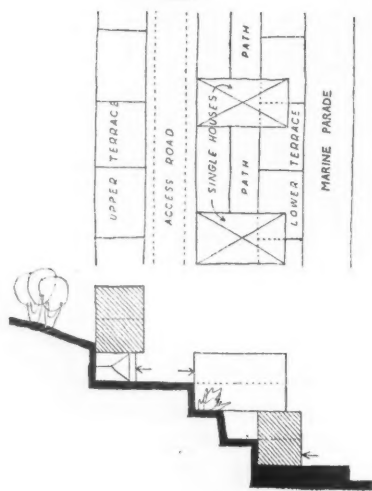
Even here the excellent character shows signs of slipping away, and it is inevitable that in the next few years, more 'improvements' will be proposed in the name of progress. Gordon Cullen suggests how the most prominent parts of the town could be remoulded to suit contemporary needs merely by applying the principles from which its qualities derive—principles which are entirely consistent with those that have inspired the modern movement in architecture.



192



The aerial photograph and the perspective drawing of Lyme Regis show the present layout of the front stretching from the Cobb to Gun Cliff (compare with the proposed changes illustrated in more detail on the next two pages). The town has two main centres of interest, the Cobb and the square at the seaward end of Broad Street. These are linked by the Marine Parade. Flanking the Parade and overlooking the sea are terraces of small houses of an essentially seaside character, forming a scene of crowded vitality for only half of its half-mile length, giving way to a sort of alpine public garden. It is proposed that this terracing should be extended both along the front and up the slope behind with more houses—and perhaps hotels—as shown in the plan and section on the left. In addition, the north wall of the Cobb, at present broken (see photograph), would be completed, linked with the Parade and carried right on to Gun Cliff and round to join the Cobb-like river walk already existing (see p. 57, no. 194). This proposal is indicated by the shaded area on the perspective. The square now obliterated by rows of cars, would be converted into a pedestrian centre where locals and visitors could take their ease, or buy the local produce.



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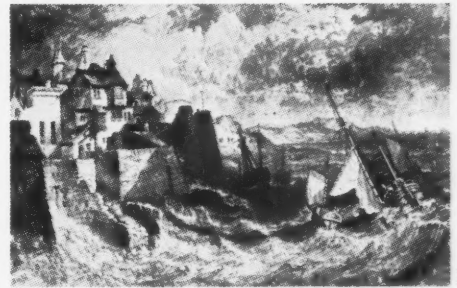


194



195

Gun Cliff, Lyme Regis.



196

Gun Cliff in 1832.

The Cobb, curving in from seawards, shelters the townsmen from the wild might of the sea but at the same time binds them to carry inland that respect for natural forces which the Cobb personifies. Its dignity and strength are echoed in the quiet stream which, flanked by stone jetty and domestic buildings, meanders like a back-water through the centre of Lyme Regis. There, too, resigning in course of time and in gentler surroundings its excessive robustness, it reappears in the undulation of the typical seaside-town bay window, a form of embellishment closely related to the functional tradition. Here is the basis on which the new Lyme should be developed.



197

In Lyme Regis we find the basic qualities of the nautical tradition—simplicity, strength and character—embodied in the rugged stone seawall, in the textures of stone surfaces elsewhere and in elementary essays in the use of tar and whitewash. A land vernacular has thus originated in the tradition of the sea and, developing in terms of the same functional principles but in a new framework, has penetrated from the seawall throughout every nook and corner of the town itself. If we follow the visual evidence we can begin to see what this tradition could mean to the townscape of today.



198



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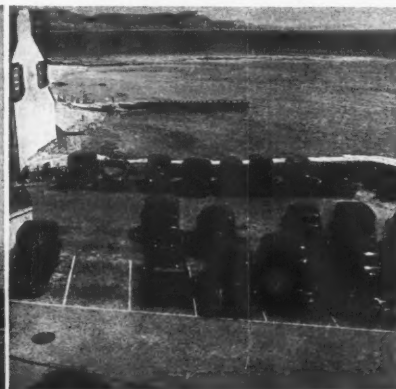
Lyme Square The drawing above assumes that Lyme Regis, in the course of the next few years, will attract many more summer visitors and excursionists. More amenities will

therefore be needed and better provision will have to be made for increased motor traffic. Development could spoil the whole character of the town. These proposals are intended to avoid

such a disaster. Lyme's square, situated at the east end of the front (see sketch on page 56), and at present used as a car park, is wasted. Motor vehicles should be excluded from it to free it for better use. Part of it could be equipped with stalls for the sale of fish and shell-fish, another part might become a place where tourists can sit. The hard when enlarged would become a fair-weather centre for fishing-boats. From it, the main parade is shown continued as a footpath, across the river to Gun Cliff. Another footpath leads into the town along the river. This will entail a new section of seawall, a footbridge and access eastwards. If these proposals were handled in a sensible, functional way, along the lines of the nautical style previously described, they would not only preserve but intensify the character of the town.



204



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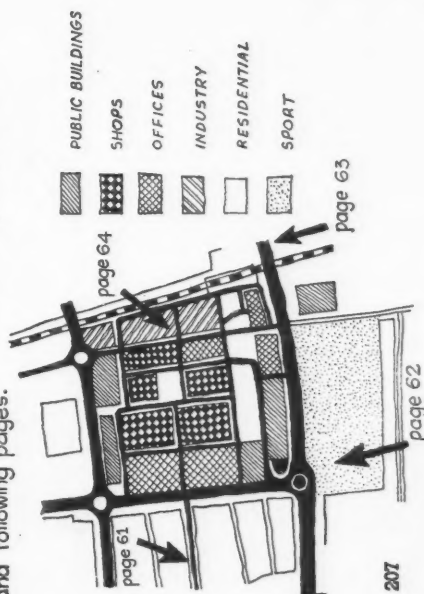
206

Lyme Parade Lyme will undoubtedly attract more permanent residents and to maintain its vitality the necessary additional building must preserve the undulating, close-packed character of the present houses. The town has an intimate domestic personality and if, for instance, new buildings were allowed to straggle over its hinterland, as has so frequently happened elsewhere, this would be entirely dissipated. Though local competitive feeling may favour a vast esplanade, a solarium, cunning rock gardens, bowling greens and

lavish swimming-pools, these should be left to the resorts that already specialize in mass holiday-making. To enhance the lively and individual character of present-day Lyme, it is proposed that the north wall of the Cobb be completed to link up with the Parade, and new housing built along the new shore line from where it ends now, right up to the Cobb. More houses could then be extended inland as terraces, up the steeply sloping hillside in a manner that reflects the excellent character of the buildings already fronting the sea.

Stevenage Turning from Lyme Regis, the town which sets its own stage for the future, to Stevenage where the stage is all but bare, Gordon Cullen applies the lessons of the functional tradition to the problem of contemporary townscape. Incorporating the experience of the modern movements in architecture and town planning, he shows some of the considerations with which the missing art of townscape will have to deal.

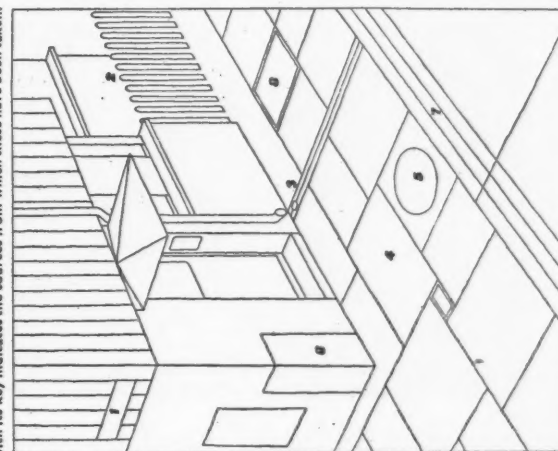
Diagram plan based on Stevenage new town centre showing the view points of the four drawings on this and following pages.



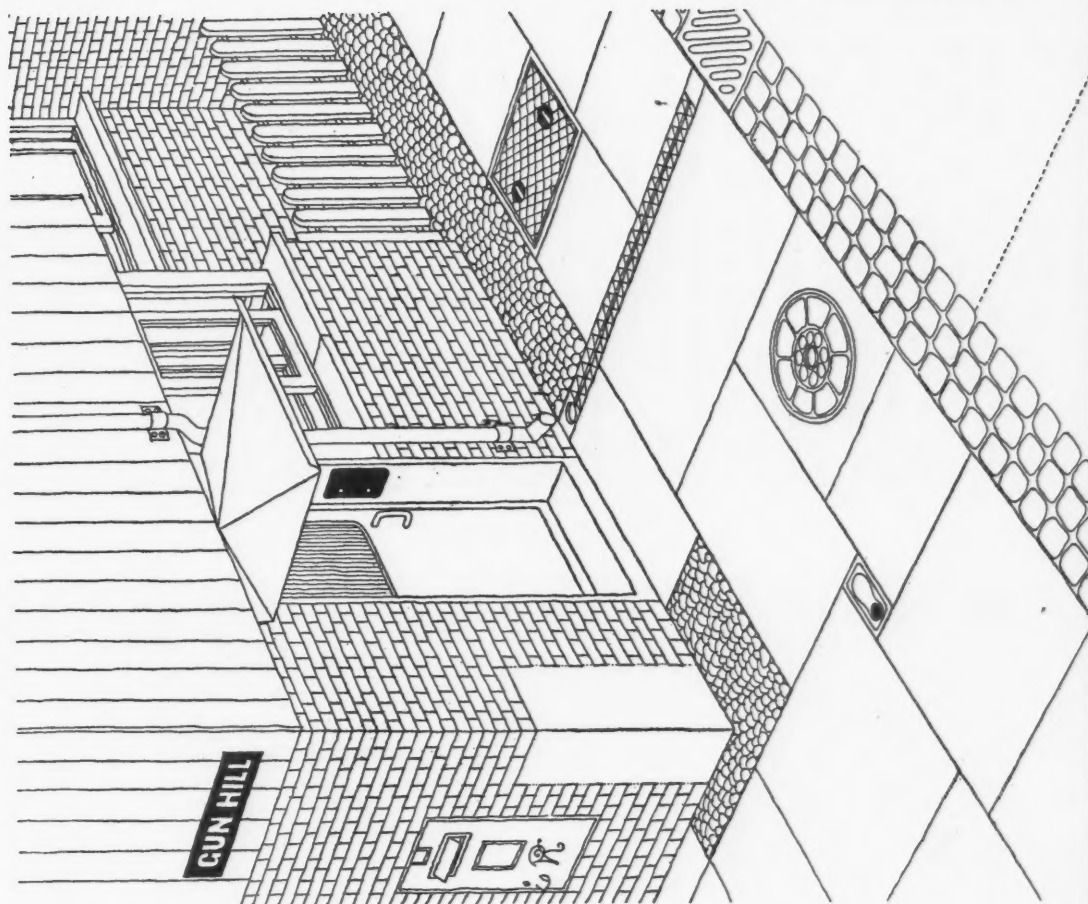
Nearly all the details shown in the drawings on this and the following pages are to be found earlier on in this number and the diagram below with its key indicates the sources from which these have been taken.

key

- 1 p. 33. 2 p. 41, no. 122. 3 p. 51, no. 160. 4 p. 51, no. 160. 5 A.R. August 1948, p. 50. 6 p. 58, no. 199. 7 A.R. December 1949, p. 354. 8 standard manhole.



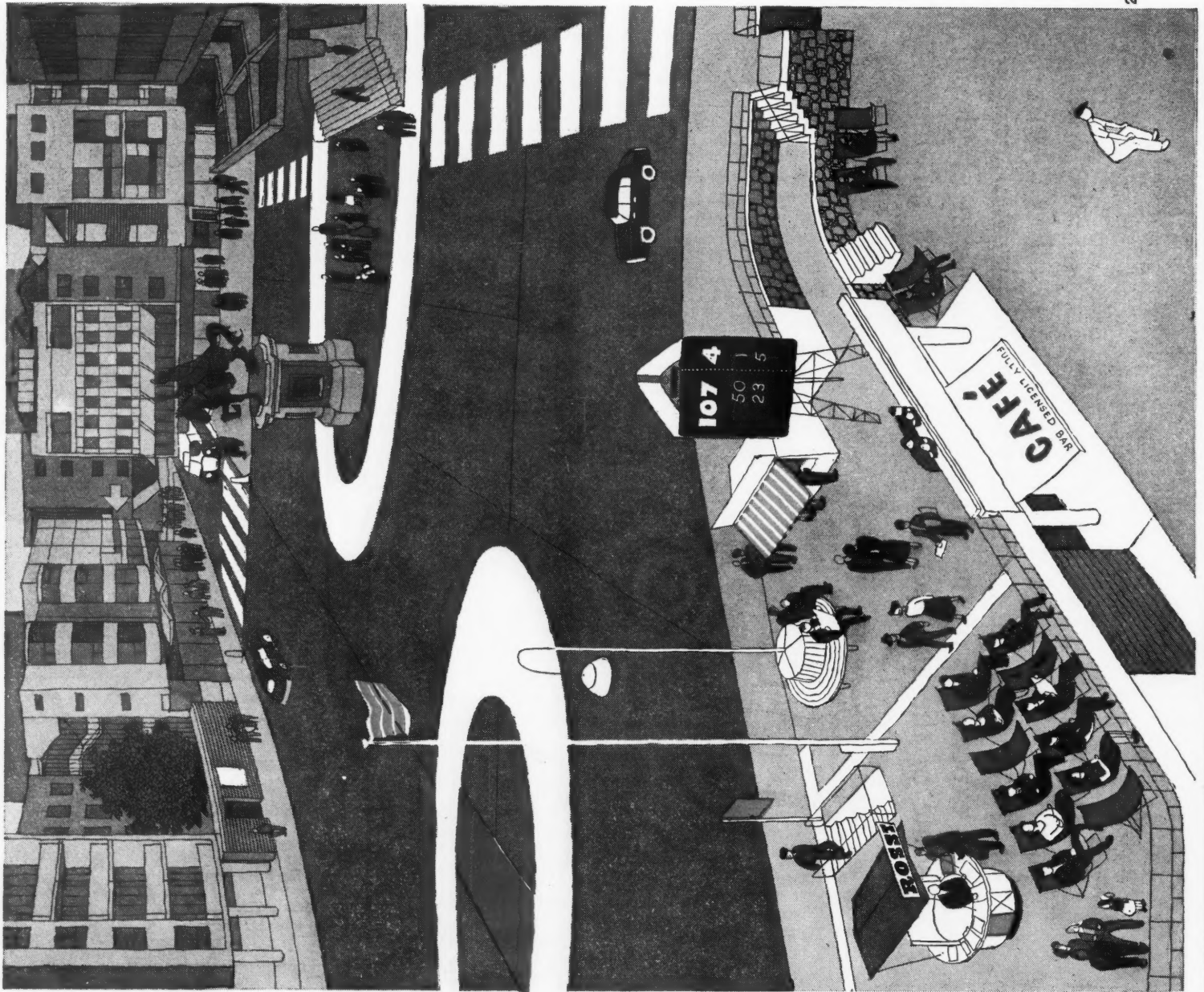
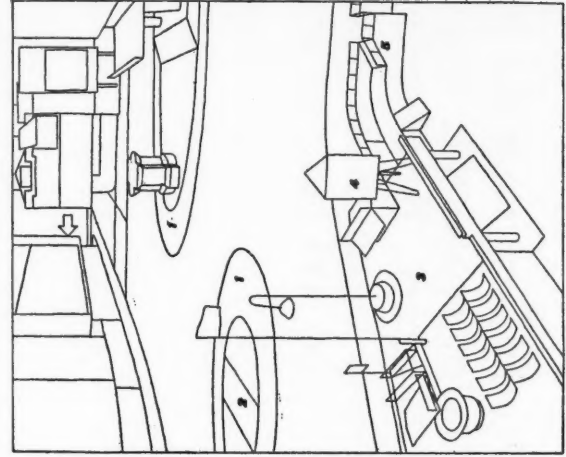
The drawing illustrates an elementary extension of the designer's field, suggesting the treatment of the road surface where it abuts against the vertical surface of a modern building. The exercise is one in planes and thus becomes a problem of texture. Each part has a function to perform, whether as doorway, pillar-box, walking surface, driving surface, drain, manhole cover or simply visual punctuation.



Far too often the full value of an open space is negated by some curious urge to compartmentize the activities of a town. This town square for Stevenage (see plan on p. 61) is arranged as a unit, necessary traffic circulation is organized with red and white paint, making the three-dimensional roundabouts of the Stevenage plan unnecessary. Pedestrian crossings protect the foot passengers. The sports ground is already intelligently sited. With the levels suggested here, passers-by, walking along the pavement, have the pleasant feeling that they are on the 'Front.' By using the roof of the cafe, this widened pavement can become a public centre where people can meet, take their time, and enjoy their town.

Key to sources of townscape detail shown in drawing

- 1 p. 22, no. 40. 2 standard continental 'No Entry' sign. 3 p. 38, no. 102. 4 p. 35, no. 92.
- 5 p. 43, no. 134.

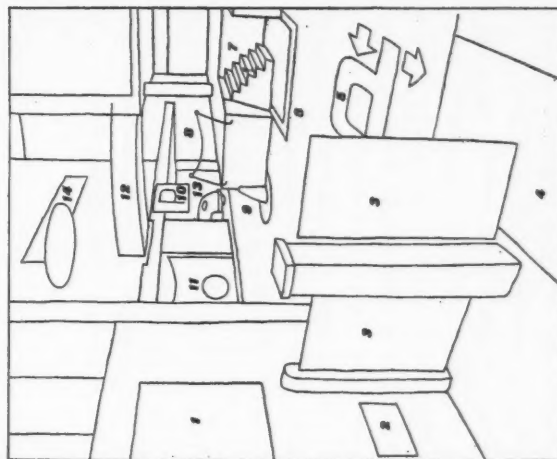




We have met most of the elements in this picture before: gate, lettering, steps, railing, street signs, bridge, and in the picture we can see how great a part they play in the make-up of urban scenery. The white line enclosing the staircase indicates that it should be kept free of stationary vehicles. The staircase is black and white for visibility. Chain railings are used for their ease of opening when unloading goods. Lettering is clear and legible. The red arrow on the road indicates 'no entry,' a system in use in Holland.

key to sources of townscape detail shown in drawing

1 p. 33. 2 p. 36, no. 93. 3 p. 42, based on no. 131. 4 p. 50, no. 155. 5 p. 21, no. 32. 6 p. 22, no. 40. 7 p. 14, no. 25. 8 p. 39, no. 112. 9 p. 50, no. 155. 10 standard parking sign. 11 based on p. 21, no. 30. 12 p. 26, no. 57. 13 car park. 14 p. 33.

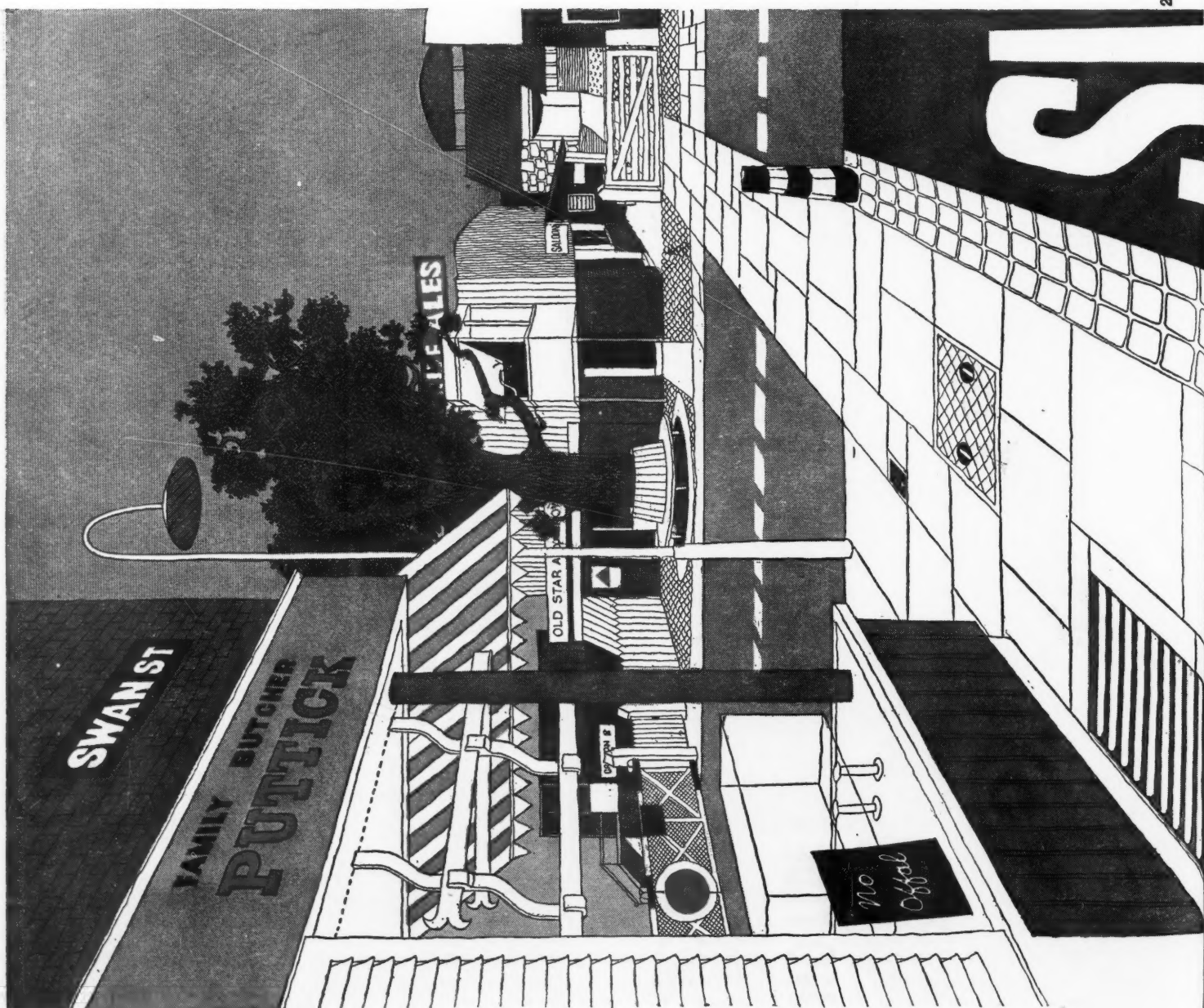
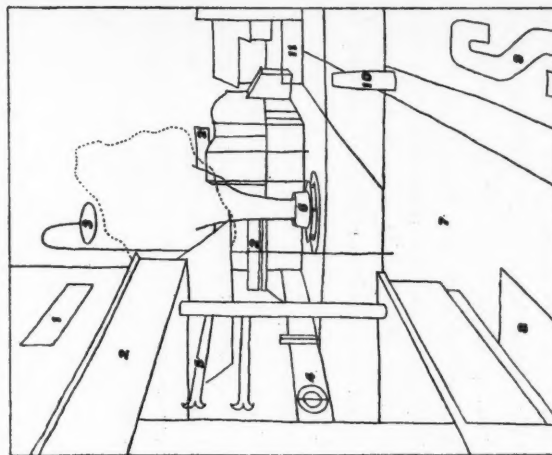


application: Stevenage

Despite the crowded character of this piece of townscape, hardly one of its numerous parts falls, strictly speaking, within the architect's province. Each object is taken from the case-book contained on earlier pages in this issue, each is a traditional solution, each is there to be used, each can be taken away if it ceases to be useful, without destroying the rest. Additions in the same tradition will never look out of place. This flexibility is possible because the scene reflects no particular school or style, but is composed of basic elements drawn from the functional vernacular.

Key to sources of townscape detail shown in drawing

1 p. 35, no. 89. 2 p. 33. 3 p. 22, no. 39. 4 standard level-crossing gates. 5 standard butchers' meat rails. 6 p. 38, no. 102. 7 p. 51, no. 157. 8 p. 51, no. 162. 9 p. 21, nos. 31-36. 10 p. 22, no. 37. 11 p. 42, variation on no. 130.



7

conclusion In this issue we have endeavoured to serve architecture best by ignoring it completely, or at least by pushing it to one side. Thus it has become possible to focus attention on all the components of the static visual scene which, in their multiplicity, have the power to wreck the best contemporary architecture. This possibility is the more alarming when it is realized that this power is not only wielded anonymously, but unwittingly and often with the best of intentions, however misguided. We have assumed therefore that these anonymous powers are open to argument, in fact would welcome guidance as to how to go about it when the municipal council, for example, decides something must be done about a new public lavatory on the promenade, or new lighting in the High Street.

On the face of it, it may seem remarkable that one whole issue of the REVIEW can be given over completely to such a subject, when the architectural air is full of planning, sociology and large scale shiftings of population. The latter are very proper subjects for the architect to study; in fact they are of necessity as continually before his mind as the manifold practical problems with which he has to deal in his daily practice. But, as the foreword to this issue said, there is always the danger that in concentrating on the long-range view of social purpose and the short-range view of building technique, he may lose the ability to see architecture whole, as an assembly of visible objects scattered about the countryside or packed close together to form towns, which determine the character, agreeable or otherwise, of the environment in which we pass our days.

The year 1950, the beginning of a new half-century, seems a good moment for architects to ask themselves how far they are satisfied with the environment thus produced, how they think it might be improved and what degree of responsibility they feel prepared to accept. As this issue has been at pains to point out, the bulk of architecture—in its wider sense of all the elements that compose the townscape—is produced outside the field of normal architectural practice. The preceding pages have suggested the need for a fund of formulæ—of ready-made routines sympathetic to the spirit of our time—available for use by individuals and departments who do not claim the creative ability of the architect. They have further suggested, by means of the illustrations, that a nucleus of such formulæ exists in the tradition of anonymous functional design of which examples are to be found in many places, dating from many periods.

To recognize this anonymous tradition and build it up again for future use is an obvious first step towards making the town-planning we all talk about a three-dimensional reality. As we have said already, the next half-century is likely to be remembered by history either for the greatest destruction ever of civilized townscape or for the greatest advance in building a civilized townscape. The REVIEW believes it will be the latter and that the visual foundation lies in the material that has furnished the subject of this issue.

INDEX to places which have contributed to this issue and **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS** of photographs

FRONTISPIECE (page 2): 1, Road to Lulworth Cove; 2, North Circular Road, London. **PHOTOGRAPHS**: 1, Galwey, Arphot*; 2, Hastings, Arphot.

1. THE FUNCTIONAL TRADITION (pages 6-8): 3, Stap-horst, Holland; 4, Dokkum, Holland; 5, Sussex wagon; 6, Wetheringsett, Suffolk; 7, Great Haywood Canal junction; 8, Brixham; 9, coiled mooring rope; 10, coiled mainsheet; 11, 12, Weymouth. **PHOTOGRAPHS**: 3, 4, Hastings, Arphot; 5, John Piper; 7, 9, 10, Eric de Maré; 8, Galwey, Arphot; 11, 12, Cullen, Arphot.

2. THE COBB (pages 10-16): 14 to 24, Lyme Regis, Dorset. 14, reproduced from the Ordnance Survey Map, with the sanction of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office. **PHOTOGRAPHS**: 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, Galwey, Arphot; 17, 24, McCallum, Arphot.

3. THE LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS: roads (pages 21 and 22): 30, Bournemouth; 31, Bridgwater; 32, 33, Sandbanks; 34, 36, 40, Weymouth; 35, Wells; 37, left, Primrose Hill, London; 37, right, 38, 41, right, 42, North Circular Road, London; 39, left, Waterloo Bridge, London; 39, right, Stap-horst, Holland; 41, left, Hornsey, London; 43, Richmond Station, Surrey; 44, Cheam, Surrey. **PHOTOGRAPHS**: 30, 32, 33, 34, 36, 40, Galwey, Arphot; 31, 35, Cullen, Arphot; 37, left, Richards, Arphot; 37, right, 38, 41, right, 42, McCallum, Arphot; 39, left, Spectrocolour; 39, right, 41, left, Hastings, Arphot; 43, Charles Borup; 44, Reed, Arphot.

rail (pages 23 and 24): 45, 47, 48, Looe, Cornwall; 46, Taplow; 49, LMS; 50, Cockfosters, London; 51, Arnos Grove, London; 52, Ruislip, Middlesex; 53, Malden Manor; 54, Richmond, Surrey. **PHOTOGRAPHS**: 45, 47, McCallum, Arphot; 46, 48, 49, Richards, Arphot; 50, Topical Press; 51, 52, London Transport Executive; 53, 54, Charles Borup.

river (pages 25-28): 55, Bray; 56, Romney; 57, 59, near Binsey; 58, Shiplake Lock; 60, Boveney Lock; 61, Old Windsor; 62, off North Circular Road, London; 63, Hythe; 64, Sidmouth; 65, Godstow. **PHOTOGRAPHS**: 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 61, 65, Eric de Maré; 60, 62, McCallum, Arphot; 63, 64, Galwey, Arphot.

structures (pages 29-32): 66, Rye; 67, Withersham; 68, Pulborough; 69, Midhurst; 70, Broadstairs; 71, Henley; 72, 73, 75, Weymouth; 74, Marlow; 76, Wood Green; 77, Thurne; 78, Ludham; 79, Lowestoft; 80, Sidmouth; 81, Thaxted; 82, Stoke Newington; 83, Oxford Street, London; 84, Folkestone. **PHOTOGRAPHS**: 66, 74, 77, 78, 79, Cullen, Arphot; 67, 68, 69, 70, Richards, Arphot; 71, Central Office of Information; 72, 73, 75, 80, 83, 84, Galwey, Arphot; 76, 81, 82, McCallum, Arphot.

4. TRIM: lettering (pages 35-37): 85, 100, Ealing Broadway Station; 86, London Fire Brigade Headquarters; 87, 88, Oxford Street, London; 89, left, Sidmouth; 89, 91, 95, Looe; 90, Thames, near Windsor; 92, Cookham Lock; 93, Clifton Lock cottage; 94, Marlow; 96, Lyme Regis; 97, Bontnewydd Station, Merion.; 98, Carteret Street, London; 99, Villiers Street, London. **PHOTOGRAPHS**: 85, 100, GWR; 86, Charles Borup; 87, 88, 90, 96, 99, Galwey, Arphot; 89, left, 91, Richards, Arphot; 89, 95, right, Cullen, Arphot; 92, 93, Eric de Maré; 94, 95, left, 97, 98, McCallum, Arphot.

trim: detail (page 38): 101, Abbotsbury, Dorset; 102, Bude; 103, Glasgow exhibition; 104, LMS; 105, 106, 107, Weymouth; 108, Folkestone. **PHOTOGRAPHS**: 101, Cullen,

Arphot; 102, 103, 105, 107, Richards, Arphot; 104, John Piper; 105, 106, Galwey, Arphot.

trim: railings (pages 39-41): 109, 110, Lyme Regis; 111, 113, Charlestown; 112, 116, West Bay, Dorset; 114, Bray Lock; 115, Weymouth; 117, Lizard, Cornwall; 118, Lymington; 119, Bridgwater; 120, Sandford Lock cottage; 121, 122, Lulworth, Dorset; 123, 125, Folkestone; 124, Hythe; 126, Bournemouth. **PHOTOGRAPHS**: 109, 115, 116, 126, Cullen, Arphot; 110, 111, 113, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, Galwey, Arphot; 112, McCallum, Arphot; 114, 120, Eric de Maré; 117, 118, 119, Richards, Arphot.

trim: gates (page 42): 127, Portesham Church; 128, near Port Madoc; 129, Thames-side gate; 130, near Dorking; 131, Aldermaston; 132, Glynde. **PHOTOGRAPHS**: 127, 128, Cullen, Arphot; 129, Eric de Maré; 130, 131, 132, Richards, Arphot.

trim: steps (page 43): 133, 135, 139, Lyme Regis; 134, Looe; 136, Runnymede; 137, 140, Sidmouth; 138, Chelsea, London. **PHOTOGRAPHS**: 133, 134, 137, 140, Galwey, Arphot; 135, 139, Richards, Arphot; 136, Eric de Maré; 138, Reed, Arphot.

5. TEXTURE AND COLOUR: walls (pages 44-48): 141, 142, 145, 147, 148, Lyme Regis; 144, Lewes; 146, Looe; 149, Sidmouth; 150, West Bay. **PHOTOGRAPHS**: 141, 142, 145, 146, 149, Galwey, Arphot; 144, Richards, Arphot; 147, Cullen, Arphot; 148, 150, McCallum, Arphot. 143, drawing by T. G. Cullen.

texture: floors (pages 49-52): 151, 152, 153, Lyme Regis; 154, Charlestown; 155, 156, 160, Marlow; 157, 161, 162, 171, 173, Lymington; 158, Fowey, Cornwall; 159, Bridport, Dorset; 163, Abbotsbury, Dorset; 164, Corfe, Dorset; 165, Clare, Suffolk; 166, Exeter; 167, 168, Sidmouth; 169, 170, Bideford; 172, near Kew; 174, Downham Market, Norfolk; 175, Looe; 176, Rye. **PHOTOGRAPHS**: 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 165, 171, 174, McCallum, Arphot; 156, 157, 159, 160, 164, 169, 170, 176, Cullen, Arphot; 158, 161, 162, 163, 166, 167, 168, 173, 175, Galwey, Arphot; 172, Eric de Maré.

black and white (pages 53 and 54): 177, Par Sands, Cornwall; 178, Charlestown; 179, Abbotsbury; 180, Port Isaac; 181, 182, 183, 184, 186, 188, 190, Lyme Regis; 185, 189, Sidmouth; 187, Fowey. **PHOTOGRAPHS**: 177, John Piper; 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, Galwey, Arphot; 183, 190, Cullen, Arphot.

6. APPLICATION: Lyme Regis (pages 55-60): 191 to 206, Lyme Regis, Dorset. **PHOTOGRAPHS**: 192, Aerofilms Ltd.; 193, 194, 195, 198, 199, 200, 201, 205, Galwey, Arphot; 197, 202, 204, Cullen, Arphot. Drawings on pages 56, 59, 60, Gordon Cullen. **Stevenage** (pages 61-64): Drawings, Gordon Cullen; key diagrams, D. Dewar Mills.

Translators of the *Résumé*: French, J. R. Nunn; German, Dr. R. Schapire; Russian, Mrs. Mary Japolsky.

MARGINALIA: (pages 67-74): 1, Hanover Gallery; 2, Victoria and Albert Museum (Crown copyright); 3 and 4, Arcade Gallery; page 70, Peter Taylor; page 72, left, Topical Press; page 74, drawings taken by Steinberg from the catalogue of The Detroit Institute of Arts Exhibition, 'For Modern Living,' held from September 11 to November 20 of last year.

* 'Arphot' after the name of a photographer denotes an ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW photograph.

ANTHOLOGY

Hogarth as Functionalist

Fitness of the parts to the design for which every individual thing is formed, either by art or nature, is first to be considered, as it is of the greatest consequence to the beauty of the whole. This is so evident, that even the sense of seeing, the great inlet of beauty, is itself so strongly biased by it, that if the mind, on account of this kind of value in a form, esteems it beautiful, though on all other considerations it be not so, the eye grows insensible of its want of beauty, and even begins to be pleased, especially after it has been a considerable time acquainted with it. . . . The bulks and proportions of objects are governed by fitness and propriety. It is this that has established the size and proportion of chairs, tables, and all sorts of utensils and furniture. It is this that has fixed the dimensions of pillars, arches, etc., for the support of great weight, and so regulated all the orders in architecture, as well as the sizes of windows and doors, etc. Thus though a building were ever so large, the steps of the stairs, the seats in the windows, must be continued of their usual heights, or they would lose their beauty with their fitness: and in ship-building the dimensions of every part are confined and regulated by fitness for sailing. When a vessel sails well the sailors always call her *a beauty*, the two ideas have such a connection!

WILLIAM HOGARTH (*Of Fitness—Analysis of Beauty*), 1753.

MARGINALIA

This Month's Anthology

Hogarth's analysis of beauty, which was intended to fix 'the fluctuating idea of Taste,' took as starting point the precept attributed to Michael Angelo that a figure ought always to be 'Pyramidall, Serpent-like and multiplied by one, two or three'—which compares interestingly with Cézanne's dictum about the forms of nature being reducible to the cone, the sphere and the cylinder. Hogarth was no great logician, but his theorizing at least has the merit that it appeals to first principles rather than the practice of the Masters, and it is fitting that so bold an opponent of academic eclecticism should be among the first writers to discuss the beauty of pure functionalism.

Year Book from New Zealand

The *Year Book of the Arts in New Zealand*, of which number four has reached the REVIEW offices, is a substantial and notably well-produced volume. Six New Zealand painters contribute well-illustrated notes on their own work and outlook, while among other things there are reports on the New Zealand theatre, and architecture is represented by photographs of a number of small houses, the best being those by E. A. Plishke and Vernon Brown. (Next time, might we not have plans too, please?) The editor, Howard Wadman, writes in his thoughtful and sensible introduction: 'In political maturity, in the natural and social sciences this country has made such progress as to draw the world's praise. Literature and music are enjoyed here by a sizeable minority at least equal in proportion to that in Britain itself. It is in the visual arts that New Zealand has failed and continues to fail.' This year book suggests that New Zealand has both the determination and the men to cope with the situation; it is published in Great Britain by

Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press at 25s. (New Zealand: The Wingfield Press, Wellington.)

UIA Congress

The second congress of the International Union of Architects will be held in Warsaw from September 3 to September 10, 1950. The theme of the congress is described as 'How the architect is facing up to his new tasks,' and there will be a national exhibition related to this theme on view in Warsaw at the time of the congress, which will be directed by a committee consisting of Roman Piotrowski (Poland), President, Nicolas Baranov (USSR), Cesare Chiodi (Italy), Hugo Van Kuyck (Belgium), Marcel Lods (France), Tage William-Olsson (Sweden), Porfirio Pardal-Monteiro (Portugal), Thomas Sharp (Great Britain) and Jean Tschumi (Switzerland). The British Committee, of which the chairman is H. S. Goodhart-Rendel, will be responsible for arranging for papers dealing with the subjects of the conference from Great Britain. Steps are being taken to overcome currency and other difficulties, and architects who wish to attend the congress should write to the Secretary of the British Committee of the UIA at 66, Portland Place, London, W.1.

About Stevenage

So far, the public relations side of the New Towns project has not been conspicuously well managed, with the result that a great deal of misinformed prejudice still prevails among the public at large. For this reason the Stevenage Development Corporation's initiative in publishing an illustrated account of their aims and methods is to be warmly welcomed. The *New Town of Stevenage* is described on the wrapper as a booklet, but with more than fifty pages of text, thirty illustrations (including plans), and stiff covers, it is what nowadays is more often called a book. Costing only 2s. 6d., it should do a very useful job. In view of the

public which it is designed to reach, not the least useful section is that in which, by means of question and answer, advice is given to those who wish to live, trade, or manufacture in the new Stevenage.

Yorkshire Georgians

The Georgian Society for East Yorkshire is a body whose activities and influence are by no means commensurate with its not-yet-large-enough membership. One of its activities is the annual publication of *Transactions*, of which the number for 1947-8 came out recently. Among other contributions it contains accounts of two good 'middling' houses and an article entitled 'John Carr's Contribution to the Gothic Revival' by M. Edward Ingram, who, quoting several hitherto unpublished letters from the architect, shows that the four-towered 'Gothick' mansion of Grimston Garth, Holderness, was Carr's work.

INTELLIGENCE

The formal action has now been taken to effect the merging of the Illinois Institute of Technology with the Chicago Institute of Design. The aim is to establish closer relations between the designers of structures and those engaged on the objects which the structures contain.

The Architects' Registration Council of the United Kingdom offer for award in June, 1950, certain Maintenance Scholarships in Architecture, consisting of a grant for the payment of one-third of the School fees and, when necessary, a maintenance allowance. The Scholarships will be renewable from year to year until the student has finished his or her School training. Particulars may be obtained from The Secretary to the Board of Architectural Education, ARCUK, 68 Portland Place, London, W.1.

The Cement and Concrete Association announces a competition open to engineers and architects for designs for pre-stressed, reinforced or plain concrete bridges over motorways. Prizes are £500, £300 and £200. Applications for conditions, which were available from December 1, 1949, should be made in writing to Cement and Concrete Association, 52 Grosvenor Gardens, S.W.1, accompanied by a postal order for one shilling.

Liverpool Corporation Housing Committee is to embark on a project at Childwall to build 2,890 municipal houses and 1,840 houses by private enterprise. Accommodation will be provided for about 24,000 people.

The master plan for the South Bank Exhibition has been prepared by the Design Group whose membership is as follows: Misha Black, Hugh Casson, James Gardner, James Holland, Ralph Tubbs. The following Staff Architects have assisted in the general co-ordination of the layout of the Exhibition: L. H. Gooday, H. B. Leather, C. W. Noble, J. Sheldon, J. Young. The following are concerned with the design and advice on landscape matters: H. F. Clarke, Mrs. M. T. Shephard, P. Youngman, P. Shephard. Freeman, Fox & Partners are Consultant Engineers to the Festival Office. The resident Site Engineer is Colonel L. S. Adlard. The General Contractor for the Upstream Section is Messrs. Richard Costain; for the Downstream Section—Messrs. Holland & Hannen & Cubitts; and for the area between the Shot Tower and Waterloo Bridge—Messrs. Kirk & Kirk.

Italian Housing

The Centre for the Study of Housing of the Italian National Council of Research, which organized the 1947 Triennale in Milan, recently organized an excellent exhibition in Turin that took as its subject the modern house. It is interesting to see how in Italy the housing problem has become one of the most important national issues. Convinced that the mere study and discussion of it is not enough, the Centre of



Studies has sponsored numerous experiments with model houses, interesting itself not only in their planning and construction, but in their furnishing as well. In Naples the Centre is concerned with a whole experimental area, Posillippe.

Cité Internationale des Arts

The municipality of Paris has given a piece of ground on the Seine, behind the Hotel de Ville, for the foundation of a Cité Internationale des Arts, which should give foreign artists the opportunity of living and working in Paris. Several countries, mainly the Scandinavian ones, have officially agreed to participate. Besides studios and lodgings, there will also be a library and lecture room. International conferences, etc., will be held, designed to break down the isolation of the artist, or at least to further the better exchange of ideas.

Society for Swiss History of Art

The Annual General Meeting of the Society (now comprising 5,600 members) was held in Sitten on September 3-4. The meeting was told that the publication of the *Kunst-denkmaler der Schweiz* made excellent progress. The second

volume of *Zurich* (city) has now been published, and it is hoped that from now on two volumes a year will be issued, since, in many cantons, young art historians (some of them full time) are engaged in making a complete inventory. These volumes serve not only the purposes of scholarship, but also help towards the protection of monuments, by drawing the attention of a large number of readers to existing works of art and thus furthering the care of them. Most of the work of the society is done by Dr. Louis Blondel (Geneva), Prof. Dr. Hans Hahnloser and Dr. Max Wassmer (Bern), Dr. Hans Schneider and Dr. Ernst Murbach (Basel).

Exhibitions

The exhibition of paintings by John Piper commissioned for the British Embassy in Rio de Janeiro, held recently at the Victoria and Albert, had a double significance. On the one hand, in an age when there is so much talk about the need for the State to become what the private patron used to be, here was the State actually being it: the paintings are said to be the first ever to be commissioned by the Government for a British Embassy—and that is, indeed, a solemn thought. On the other hand, here was also the best living English painter of architecture given the chance to work on a fairly large scale—each of the panels measures 6 ft. 7 in. by 4 ft. 2 in.—and making the very most of it. These five paintings, of Georgian architecture at Brighton, Cheltenham and Bath, are as much evidence of the continuing vitality of Piper's art as they are of the possibility of intelligent state patronage.

To state patronage again, though in this case of a less direct variety, we owed the recent exhibition of contemporary British art at the New Burlington Galleries (re-opened after ten years); for all the works here were from the permanent collections of the Arts Council and the British Council. On the face of it this was a pleasant, well-mannered show, perfectly in keeping with the discreetly non-committal scheme of decoration which has been contrived for the galleries by the Ministry of Works. A closer inspection showed that many good painters were well represented, but also that others at least as good were not represented at all; and not all the omissions, surely, could be due to the absence of all the works of the painters in question on temporary loan. There was only one piece of sculpture, Frank Dobson's bust of Lydia Lopokova.

One of the painters *not* represented at the New Burlington Galleries was Francis Bacon. It could hardly have remained a pleasant, well-mannered show if he had been; one of his roaring gentlemen with dissolving crania would be enough to break up any party. The least squeamish visitor to Bacon's own recent exhibition at the Hanover Gallery must sometimes have sighed for the less horrifying conventions of ordinary Surrealism: a limp watch would have been a positive comfort in those surroundings. And the fact that Bacon manipulates the surface of his paint with such loving care and appreciation of texture does nothing to diminish the power to dismay of these remarkable works.

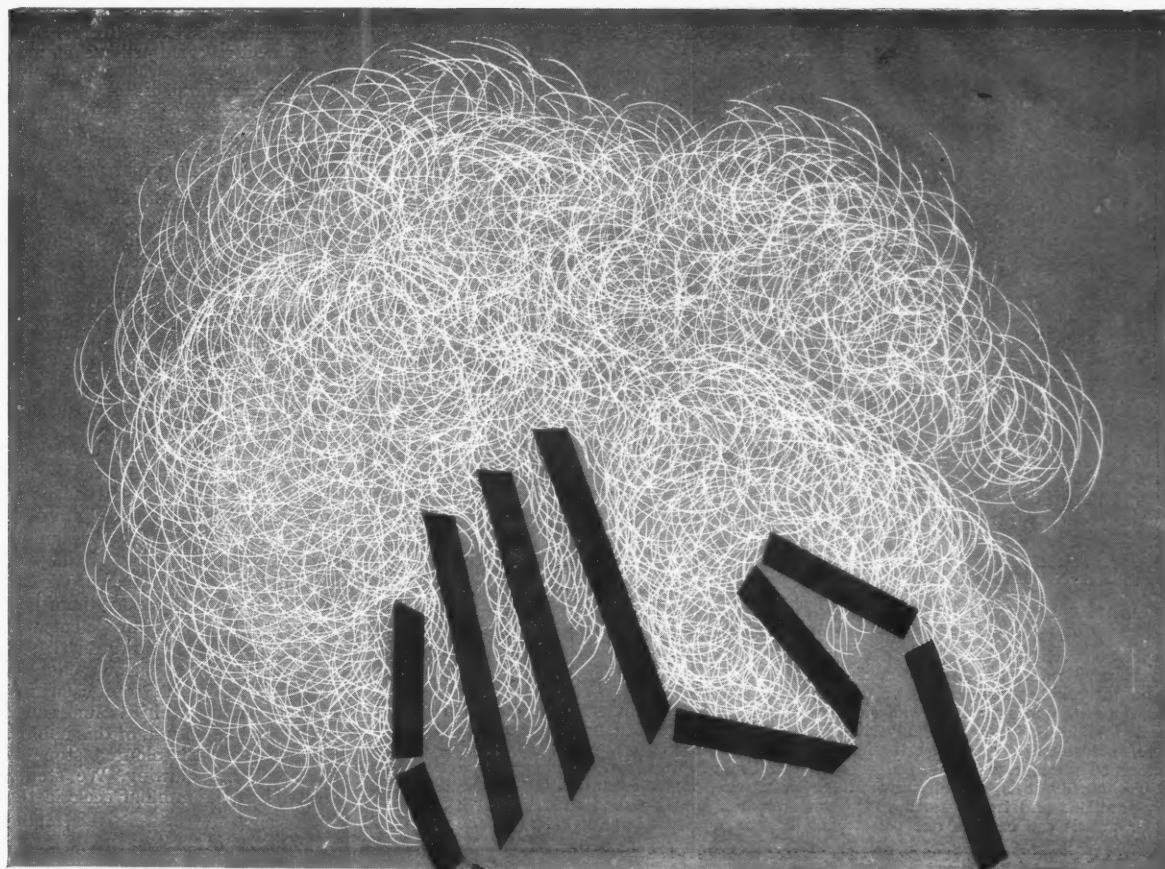
The last exhibition to be noticed this month is one which should have proved of special interest to any REVIEW readers who may have seen it, containing as it did no less than seven paintings by Monsu Desiderio. This was 'Painters of the Fantastic and the Bizarre' at the Arcade Gallery. One of the Desiderios, *The Piazzetta of San Marco*, has already been reproduced in the REVIEW (February, 1949); another, the largest—it measures 38½ in. by 50½ in.—is reproduced on this page. The name best known to fame in this exhibition was that of Magnasco, who also appeared seven times. But among the most memorable pictures was a cave containing gigantic statues, by Rombout

[continued on page 70]



1, *Head*, 1949, by Francis Bacon, from his exhibition at the Hanover Gallery. 2, *The Priory Parade*, Cheltenham, one of John Piper's four paintings for the British Embassy at Rio, exhibited at the Victoria and Albert Museum. 3, *Architectural Phantasy*, by Monsu Desiderio, and 4, *An Allegory*, by Jan Micker, from 'Painters of the Fantastic and Bizarre' at the Arcade Gallery.





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The Barton Seagrave Orangery referred to in Mr. Taylor's letter below. The photograph on the right shows the wrought iron apex ring, with below a section through the glazing.

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Troyen, of whom it is only known that he died in Amsterdam in 1650 or 1656, and an allegory of 'the broad and the narrow way' by his equally obscure contemporary and countryman Jan Micker.

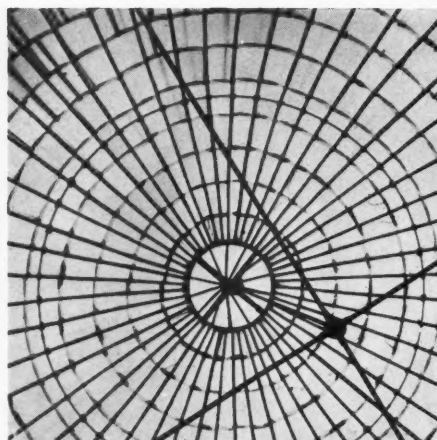
CORRESPONDENCE

Early Hothouses

To the Editors

THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

SIRS,—I was very interested in Mr. Pevsner's recent note on early hothouses, as I have during the last vacation made measured drawings of an orangery erected about 1791, or probably shortly after that date, at Barton Seagrave in Northamptonshire. The attached photograph shows its graceful appearance. Technically it is specially rewarding. The doorway mullions and transomes are of cast iron. The door panels are cast as one piece, the



PUTTY
COPPER
WROUGHT IRON

mullions in two, and the transomes in four. The domes are made with a wrought iron footing and an iron apex ring, but with glazing bars of copper sheeting reinforced with what appears to be wrought iron wire. The diagram shows the section of bar from the main dome (diameter 19 ft.). The glazing bars in doors and fan-lights are made in a similar

fashion but of lighter section. I imagine that orangeries of this type were made in some quantity by a foundry and would be very grateful if any of your readers could tell me of more examples. I would be only too willing to supply more information on structural details.

I remain, etc.,

Kettering.

PETER TAYLOR.

Thank you, Mr. Priestley

Although the Royal Fine Art Commission has turned down Sir Giles Gilbert Scott's design for the rebuilding of Coventry Cathedral, it must not be forgotten that the Church is still committed in principle to the policy of rebuilding it eventually. For this reason J. B. Priestley's remarks on the subject, in one of his recent Sunday evening broadcasts describing a journey from Lincolnshire to Somerset, were most timely. After commending the enterprising spirit shown by Coventry in so many departments of its civic life, he said:

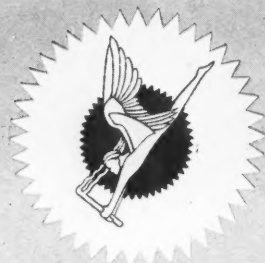
'There is, however, one decision recently taken in Coventry that I deplore. It is no business of mine, but that fact never prevented me yet from doing my share of deploring and condemning. It is the decision to restore the cathedral of Coventry. If this ruin were mine, I would leave it untouched. We saw it about the middle of the afternoon when the sky was clear and very pale, a pure element, far removed from this world. Towards this sky the spire, which by some curious chance was neither blasted nor burnt, went soaring. And against this sky and within its luminous envelope, we saw the roofless ruin of this noble Perpendicular church, its rust-coloured stone very warm in tone, almost glowing. We stepped into light instead of the familiar ecclesiastical dusk. At a

[continued on page 72]

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NEWEST ST. PAUL'S. A model, to half-inch scale, has been made to show the proposed changes at the east end of St. Paul's Cathedral (made possible by the decision to pull down the blitzed reredos). This photograph of the model shows the new baldachino, of oak, over the high altar. The architects are W. Godfrey Allen, surveyor to the fabric, and S. E. Dykes Bower.

continued from page 70]

first rapid glance, this might almost have been some Egyptian or Greek temple. But then you noticed the tall windows, although they had no glass in them to hide the pale radiance of the

sky; the broken pillars; the side chapels and entrances to crypts; and all the symbols of the Christian faith. The city outside had vanished, and was forgotten. There was nothing but this ruin, rosy but infinitely solemn, and the vast pearl of the afternoon. . . . If there is a nobler war memorial than this ruined cathedral, one that drives harder at that shell of chicanery, hypocrisy or self-deceit in which we encase our hearts, I have yet to see it.'

As a broadcaster, Mr. Priestley is as popular as he is eloquent. That he should have put forward such views at what must be the 'peak listening time' is something for which one may be grateful indeed.

Leave us our Fountain

One of the results of the new scheme for Parliament Square, commented on in Marginalia for October, will be the destruction, or at least the removal, of the Buxton Memorial Fountain. The intention of this fountain, with its iron roof enamelled in the style of medieval goldsmith's work, was to commemorate Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton and the other Members of Parliament who had supported the emancipation of the slaves in the British colonies, and it was erected at the cost of Sir Thomas's son, Charles Buxton, under the auspices of the Metropolitan Free Drinking Fountains Association, in 1860. The architect was S. S. Teulon, who is probably best remembered for the church of St. Stephen, Roslyn Hill, Hampstead, and as Peter F. R. Donner said in the REVIEW for March 1942, it is 'a memorial to mid-Victorian taste and mentality, as complete as one can find anywhere.'

The fate of the fountain recently became a subject of debate in the House of Lords. The occasion was the second reading of the Parliament Square (Improvements) Bill, when Viscount Simon moved an amendment providing

that the Buxton Memorial Fountain should be re-erected in Parliament Square. Viscount Simon pointed out that whereas the Bill provided for the reinstatement of the statues in the square, the Minister was to have the right to remove the fountain altogether; his amendment required the Minister to deal with the fountain as the statues were to be dealt with. Basing his case on the significance of the fountain as a memorial to one of the great achievements of the British Parliament, he described the proposal to remove it as a monstrous one and said that the House should

[continued on page 74

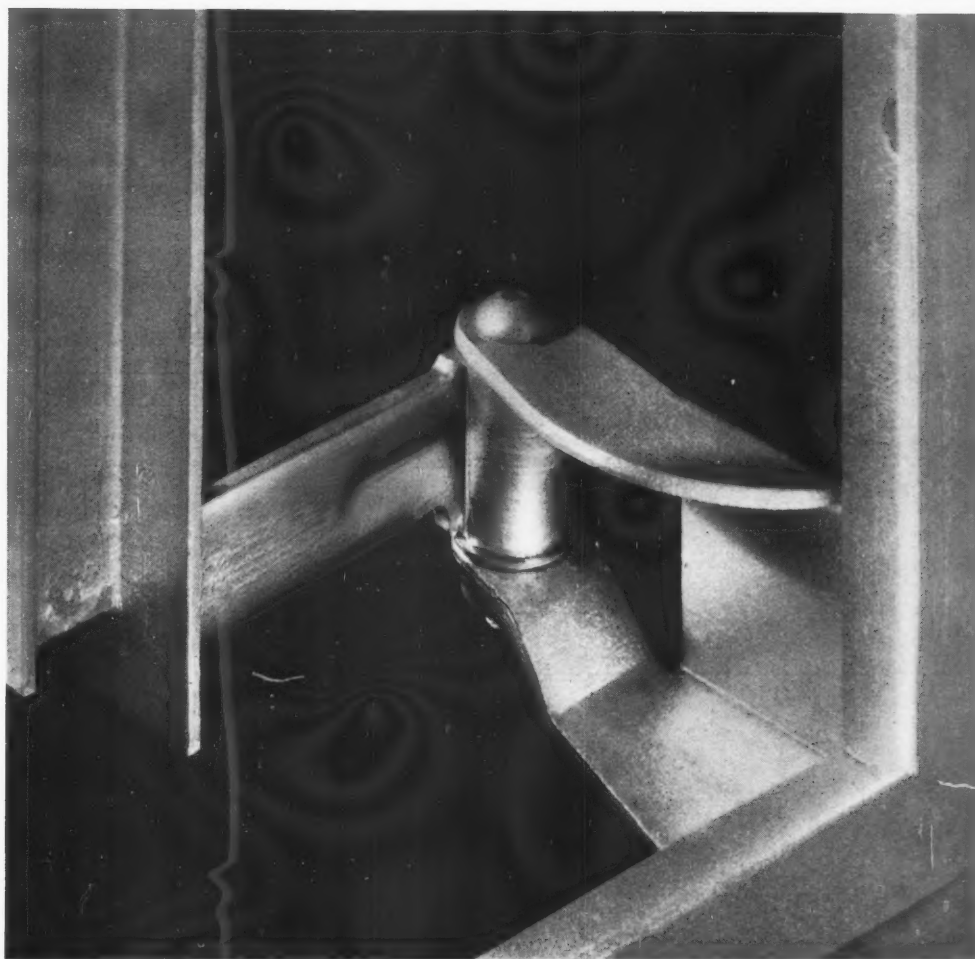


The Buxton Memorial Fountain in Parliament Square.

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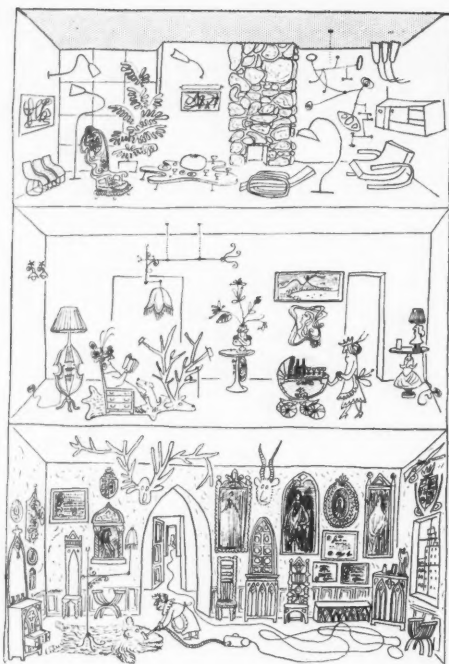
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DESIGN AT DETROIT. The Institute of Arts has been holding an exhibition of domestic design entitled 'For Modern Living.' We reproduce here a section of a mural drawn by Steinberg for this exceptionally stimulating exhibition.

continued from page 72]

insist on its being restored somewhere in Parliament Square.

In the debate that followed the Marquess of Reading, Lord Winstanley and the Bishop of Lichfield spoke in support of the retention of the fountain. But the only reference to the aesthetic implications of the affair was made by Lord Morrison, replying for the Government, who said that although opinions about its aesthetic worth were not unanimous, it could be described as a piece of distinctive architecture—a remark which was greeted with laughter. He went on to say that to place anywhere in the new design for the square so architecturally distinctive a monument as the fountain would be to ruin the whole scheme. Nevertheless, it had never been the intention of the Minister of Works to destroy it or even to remove it from the precincts of the Houses of Parliament, and he was authorized by the Minister to put forward suggestions for alternative sites—such as Victoria Embankment Gardens or the north-east corner of St. Margaret's churchyard, both of which sites were crown property, and if the Royal Fine Art Commission agreed with the Minister, both Houses would be asked to sanction the site. On these assurances Viscount Simon agreed that his amendment should be altered to provide that if another site was agreed to on the resolution of Parliament the fountain should be erected on it. The Bill was read the third time and passed.

What is the moral of the story? At first it might be thought encouraging that the question should have taken up so much of their lordships' time. But second thoughts prompt the reflection that it was not after all as a visual

matter that it was discussed, and none saw fit to question Lord Morrison's statement that the incorporation of 'so architecturally distinctive a monument' would ruin the new scheme. The truth is that so characterful an object has great possibilities from the townscape's point of view; its very richness (however doubtful one may consider its taste) should be welcomed by an age which does not easily achieve that quality in its own monuments. The REVIEW has already made known its views on the Parliament Square scheme as a whole; now that it has become law further comment would be useless. But it is perhaps still not too late to urge that the Buxton Memorial Fountain, which was retained in the REVIEW's own plan for Westminster, should be replaced, in newly cleaned splendour, somewhere in Parliament Square.

Corrigendum

MESSRS. W. N. FROY & SONS LTD. regret that in their advertisement in THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW for December they quoted in error the name of Messrs. E. H. Smith (Croydon) Ltd. as Contractors for the Hamsey Green School, Upper Warlingham. The Contractors for this school were, of course, Messrs. Walker (Tooting) Ltd., of Epsom.

Announcement

ARTHUR E. T. MORT & PARTNERS (Alfred H. Howard, LRIBA) of Westminster Bank Chambers, Winchester, have opened a branch office at 33, High Street, Andover, Hants., and would be pleased to receive trade catalogues, information sheets, etc.

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