THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW VOLUME CVIII NUMBER 645 SEPTEMBER 1950 THREE SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE

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THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW SEPTEMBER 1950

Septembre 1950

Page 147: *Personnages en Fer, par Robert Melville.* Depuis sa première exposition pendant l'été de 1949, Reg Butler a été reconnu par beaucoup de critiques comme l'un des sculpteurs européens les plus originaux de nos jours. Formé comme architecte, Butler travailla pendant la guerre comme forgeron et ingénieur agricole dans l'ouest de l'Angleterre, et ce fut pendant qu'il était ainsi occupé que non seulement il acquit la technique de sa sculpture en fer forgé, mais aussi y puisa cette inspiration spirituelle qui le transforma en sculpteur; car, ainsi que Robert Melville écrit dans son exposé, 'les instruments aratoires s'imposèrent sur son imagination d'une manière persistante sous la forme de présences archaïques inexplicables.' Loin d'être partisan de l'esthétique d'un art abstrait—art auquel il est en effet de nature entièrement opposé—Butler prend une forme humaine ou groupe de figures, qu'il examine de près, comme point de départ pour chacune de ses œuvres; cependant, le résultat final maintient toujours contact avec les présences perçues par lui en premier lieu dans les instruments aratoires. Mr. Melville suggère que la sculpture de Butler possède des qualités la rendant susceptible de maintenir un rapport spécial avec l'architecture moderne.

Page 161: *La Chambre des Communes, par Maurice Hastings.* A la veille de l'ouverture de la nouvelle Salle de la Chambre des Communes à Westminster, dessinée par Sir Giles Gilbert Scott pour remplacer celle qui fut détruite par une bombe allemande le 10 mai 1941, Maurice Hastings examine l'histoire du Palais de Westminster (le Palais du Parlement) en général et de la Chapelle de St. Etienne en particulier, dans le but de démontrer comment ceux-ci ont déterminé le caractère de la nouvelle Salle. Avant le grand incendie de 1834 qui donna lieu à la nouvelle construction attribuable à Sir Charles Barry, le Palais était 'une agglomération d'anciens édifices en pierre, dont quelques-uns remontaient aux temps d'avant la Conquête; entourés d'un mélange hétérogène de constructions de briques et de bois d'époque plus récente.' Parmi les édifices en pierre, les plus importants étaient la Salle de Westminster (Westminster Hall), où siégeait la Cour du Banc du Roi et des Plaids Communs (Court of King's Bench and Common Pleas), et la Chapelle de St. Etienne, qui fut assignée à la Chambre des Communes en 1547. La Chapelle de St. Etienne était une construction d'importance capitale dans l'histoire de l'architecture anglaise; le Dr. Hastings croit que c'est là que naquit le Style Perpendiculaire. Elle fut achevée en 1347, et l'année suivante le roi Edouard III fondit le Collège de St. Etienne. Ce fut ainsi que les Communes se transférèrent en 1547 à une chapelle de collège; à travers toutes les diverses modifications faites à la structure originaire par Wren et autres, la disposition des places, appropriée à une chapelle de collège, survécut; cette disposition se répéta dans l'édifice suivant, et se trouva renouvelée dans la nouvelle Salle de Sir Giles. En outre, le fait accidentel que les Communes aient reçu comme site pour leurs séances une chapelle de collège, a servi non peu à former la Constitution Britannique avec son système à deux partis (le Gouvernement 'du côté du Doyen' et l'Opposition 'du côté du Préchantre').

Page 177: *Le Point de Vue du Client, par Tom Driberg.* Un membre de la Chambre des Communes décrit quelques-uns des inconvénients subtils qu'inflige le grand bâtiment de Barry à ceux qui doivent s'y rendre aujourd'hui, et rend hommage à l'heureuse solution de Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, d'une façon générale, du problème qu'il s'est imposé en traçant le plan de la nouvelle Salle de la Chambre des Communes.

Page 188: *Le Palais des Doges, par S. J. Samuely.* Le Palais Ducal à Venise était l'idéal de Ruskin d'un bâtiment monumental. Dans cet article, un expert en construction l'analyse d'un autre point de vue, et démontre comment ses architectes sont arrivés par l'intuition à une solution parfaite des problèmes structuraux qui se sont présentés.

September 1950

Seite 147 : *Figuren aus Eisen von Robert Melville.* Seit seiner ersten Ausstellung im Sommer 1949 wird Reg Butler von vielen Kunstkritikern als einer der eigenartigsten Bildhauer im heutigen Europa angesehen. Butler war ursprünglich Architekt, während des Krieges hat er im Westen Englands als Schmied und landwirtschaftlicher Maschinenbauer gearbeitet. Dieser Tätigkeit dankt er nicht allein das technische Handwerk für seine schmiedeeisernen Figuren, sondern auch einen gefühlsmässigen Antrieb, der ihn zur Figur gedrängt hat. Denn 'die landschaftlichen Geräte haben sich, wie Melville es ausdrückt, seiner Phantasie als geheimnisvolle archaische Erscheinungen aufgezwungen.' Weit davon entfernt, ein Anhänger abstrakter Kunst zu sein—seiner ganzen Art nach ist ihm diese Kunstrichtung völlig fremd—nimmt Butler eine Figur oder eine Gruppe von Figuren als Ausgangspunkt für jede seiner Arbeiten, aber das Endergebnis zeigt einen Zusammenhang mit den Erscheinungen, die er in seinen landwirtschaftlichen Geräten zuerst gesehen hat. Melville ist der Ansicht, dass Butlers Plastik in hohem Masse für eine Zusammenarbeit mit zeitgenössischer Architektur geeignet ist.

Seite 161 : *Das Parlamenthaus, eine Studie zur Anlage von Plätzen von Maurice Hastings.* Am Vorabend der Eröffnung unserer neuen Kammer im Unterhaus in Westminster, die von Sir Giles Gilbert Scott entworfen wurde, an Stelle der von einer deutschen Bombe am 10. Mai 1941 zerstörten Kammer, untersucht Maurice Hastings die Geschichte von Westminster Palace ('The House of Parliament') im allgemeinen und die von St. Stephens Chapel im besonderen, um zu zeigen in welchem Masse sie den Charakter der neuen Kammer beeinflusst haben. Vor dem grossen Brand von 1834, der zum Neubau von Charles Barry geführt hat, bestand der Palast 'aus einer Gruppe von alten Steinhäusern, von denen einige aus der Zeit vor Wilhelm dem Eroberer stammten und um sie herum war ein Durcheinander von Backstein- und Fachwerkhäusern.' Die bedeutendsten unter den Steinhäusern waren Westminster Hall und St. Stephens Chapel. Die Kapelle war erst 1547 dem Unterhaus zugeteilt worden. St. Stephens Chapel ist von gründlegender Bedeutung in der Geschichte der englischen Architektur. Dr. Hastings nimmt an, dass hier die Geburtsstätte englischer Hochgotik ist. Die Kapelle wurde 1347 vollendet und ein Jahr später hat Edward III. das College von St. Stephen begründet. Das Unterhaus bezog im Jahre 1547 die Kapelle eines College. Bei den verschiedenen Umbauten, die von Wren und anderen gemacht wurden, blieb. soweit es sich um die Anordnung der Plätze handelt, der Charakter einer College Kapelle gewahrt, er wurde auch in der Folgezeit beibehalten, und ist selbst in Sir Giles neuer Kammer erkennbar. Und der Umstand, dass dem Unterhaus eine College Kapelle angewiesen worden war, hat nicht wenig dazu beigetragen, die Britische Verfassung mit ihrem zwei Kammersystem zu bilden (die Regierungspartei auf der Seite des Alterspräsidenten, des Dean, und die Opposition auf der Seite des Kantors, des Precentors).

Seite 177: *Vom Klienten aus gesehen von Tom Driberg.* Ein Parlamentsmitglied schildert einige der Unbequemlichkeiten, die Barrys grosser Bau denen auferlegt hat, die ihn ständig zu benützen hatten und rühmt Sir Giles Gilbert Scotts glückliche Lösung dieser Schwierigkeiten im neuen Bau.

Seite 188: *Der Dogenpalast von S. J. Samuely.* Der Dogenpalast in Venedig war Ruskins Ideal eines Monumentalbaues. S. J. Samuely, ein Fachmann in Konstruktionsfragen, untersucht den Palast unter einem ganz anderen Gesichtspunkt und weist nach wie seine Erbauer auf intuitivem Wege zu einer vollkommenen Lösung die Struktur des Baues betreffend gekommen sind.

Сентябрь 1950 г.

КРАТКОЕ СОДЕРЖАНИЕ СТАТЕЙ

Стр. 147. **РОБЕРТ МЕЛВИЛЛ.** ХУДОЖНИКИ-КУЗНЕЦЫ.

Сразу же после первой выставки его работ летом 1949 г., Реджиналд Батлер был признан многими критиками одним из наиболее оригинальных современных скульпторов в Европе. Архитектор по образованию, Батлер работал всю войну в Западной Англии в качестве кузнеца и техника по сельскохозяйственным машинам. Среди этих занятий Батлер не только приобрел технику своей скульптуры по кованному железу. Более того, в этот период он получил тот эмоциональный толчок, который превратил его в скульптора. Автор статьи подчеркивает, что земледельческие орудия, по самому своему характеру, должны были оставить на воображении художника несомненный и непреоборимый, хотя, быть может, и трудно об'яснимый, отпечаток архаизма. Батлер не относится к числу сторонников абстрактной эстетики в искусстве. Более того, по натуре своей он глубоко противоположен этому направлению. Отправной точкой каждой его работы является внимательное изучение человеческой формы, как индивидуальной, так и в группах человеческих фигур. Вместе с тем однако, в окончательной своей форме, произведения Батлера продолжают носить в себе те самые черты, которые художник схватил в архитектонике земледельческих орудий. Автор высказывает мысль, что некоторые качества произведений Батлера создают особую связь между его работами и новейшей архитектурой.

Стр. 161. **МОРРИС ХЕЙСТИНГС.** ЗДАНИЕ ПАРЛАМЕНТА (Исторический этюд).

Зал заседаний Палаты Общин был разрушен немецкой бомбой 10-го Мая 1941 г. Новый зал, ныне воздвигаемый на месте разрушенного, был спроектирован архитектором Сэр Джил Гилберт Скотт'ом. Работы по постройке подходят к концу, и открытие нового зала предполагается в ближайшем будущем. По этому случаю автор напоминает и вновь пересматривает историю Вестминстерского Дворца (здания Парламента) вообще и Часовни св. Стивенс'а, в которой Палата Общин заседала в XV веке, в частности. При этом автор показывает как эта история отразилась на характере проекта нового зала Палаты Общин. После большого пожара 1834 г. Вестминстерский Дворец был перестроен Сэр Чарлз'ом Бари. До пожара дворец этот представлял собою группу лепящихся друг к другу древних каменных построек, некоторые из которых относились к периодам предшествовавшим приходу Вильгельма Завоевателя (в 1066 г.), окруженных более или менее временными жилищами фахверочного типа, из дерева и кирпича, более позднего происхождения. Из древних каменных построек наиболе важными были Вестминстерская Палата („Вестминстер Холл"), в которой находились Суд Королевской Скамьи („Корт ов Кингс Бенч") и Суд по Разбору Жалоб („Коммон Плиз"), и Часовня св. Стивенса, которая была в 1547 г. отведена под Палату Общин. Часовня св. Стивенса является одним из важнейших сооружений в истории английской архитектуры. Автор настоящей статьи полагает, что эта постройка дала начало Перпендикулярному Стилю. Часовня св. Стивенса была закончена в 1347 г. Годом позже король Эдуард III основал при этой часовне *Колледж* св. Стивенса. Таким образом в 1547 г. Палата Общин была помещена в часовне колледжа. Во всех дальнейших перестройках и перепланировках Палаты Общин, произведенных Сэр Кристофор Рен'ом и другими, первоначальное расположение скамей в часовне Колледжа оставалось без изменений. Это же расположение скамей было принято за основу нового проекта зала заседаний Палаты Общин. Таким образом историческая случайность выбора помещения для Палаты Общин в 1547 г. сыграла немаловажную роль в формировании Британской Конституции с ее системой двух партий: правительственной партии на стороне настоятеля часовни („Дин'а") и оппозиции на стороне дьякона („Пресентор'а").

Стр. 177. **ТОМ ДРИБЕРГ.** ТОЧКА ЗРЕНИЯ КЛИЕНТА.

Автор, Член Парламента, указывает в этой статье на ряд неудобств, с которыми приходилось мириться тем, кому приходилось работать в зданиях Парламента, построенных архитектором Сэр Чарлз'ом Бари в 1834 г. Вместе с этим автор отдает должное Сэр Гилберт'у Скотт'у за успешное устранение этих неудобств в его проекте нового зала Палаты Общин.

Ст . 188. **С. ДЖ. САМЮЭЛЛИ.** ПАЛАТА ДОЖЕЙ.

Раскин считал Палату Дожей в Венеции идеалом монументального стороительства. Автор настоящей статьи, эксперт-конструктор, рассматривает Палату Дожей с инженерно-технической точки зрения. Он показывает, что строители этого дворца пришли интуитивно к совершенно правильному решению связанных с этой постройкой конструкторских проблем.

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The Cover reproduces part of K. A. Hickel's painting of the House of Commons in 1793, in the National Portrait Gallery; the younger Pitt is speaking. The Chamber in which the House is sitting is still St. Stephen's Chapel, as fitted up by Wren. The picture conveys very well the intimate atmosphere which, for reasons which Maurice Hastings explains on pages 161 *et seq.*, has ever since the sixteenth century marked the debates of the House, and which Sir Giles Gilbert Scott's new Chamber seeks to maintain.

Authors *Philip Johnson*, architect, born 1906. Chairman of the Department of Architecture at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1932-34. Served in the U.S. Army Engineers Corps during the war. Now Director of the Department of Architecture of the Museum of Modern Art, and in private practice. Published work includes 'Mies van der Rohe,' published in 1947, and, with Henry-Russell Hitchcock, 'International Style in Architecture since 1922.' *Robert Melville* is also author of 'Picasso: Master of the Phantom' and of a book on Graham Sutherland to be published this month.

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THREE SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE

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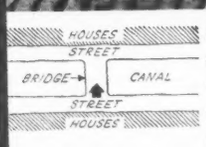


So little has the architect of the past century been concerned with the elements of large-scale design, that many useful routines have rusted. One of them is particularly well illustrated above (looking across a canal bridge at Edam, in Holland). It is the device of truncation (considered more fully on page 201), wherein the element of mystery—of something withheld—is exploited by methods resembling those of the fan-dancer. A subsidiary lesson of the photograph is the effect of richly varied texture in wall and floor attained without loss of unity between them by the simple enough expedient of a common unit—the brick.

Robert Melville

Since his first show of iron sculpture held in London in the summer of 1949, Reg Butler has come to be recognized by many as one of the most original artists working in England today. In this article Robert Melville discusses his work and suggests that, with its minimum effect of weight and openwork construction, it has qualities that give it a special relationship to modern architecture.

PERSONAGES IN IRON

THROUGHOUT THE WAR, Reg Butler was a blacksmith and agricultural engineer in the west country. In the silence and calm of the evenings, the farming implements persistently imposed themselves on his imagination as inexplicable archaic presences, and this visual experience, combined with his growing attachment to the ancient craft of iron working, gave him presentiments of the forged iron sculpture that he has recently exhibited at the Hanover Gallery and the 'London-Paris' exhibition of the Institute of Contemporary Arts. Obvious traces of this initial incentive—the implement as personage—are to be seen in his *Woman Reclining*.

Butler is not the first modern sculptor to make use of iron, but his exploitation of its tensile strength is unparalleled, and discloses so vast a field of new plastic possibilities that it seems certain that iron will become one of the standard materials of the sculptor. His only important predecessor in this field was the Spanish sculptor Julio Gonzalez, who died in 1942. Gonzalez devised a number of figures in iron, some of which have great distinction, but his handling of the forging technique was tentative, and although he worked in iron for several years he remained content to make his constructions out of many short pieces which he curved and angled on the anvil without modifying the section. Lapses in the vitality of his figures are caused by the presence of the ready-made. His work is valuable and interesting because it predicates the validity of the linear approach.

Butler, like Gonzalez, makes a linear use of iron, but he treats the prefabricated bar as if it were as shapeless as modelling clay, and he refashions every inch of his raw material under the hammer, thus giving his forms a tautness and vibrancy which assembly-work alone, however ingenious and sensitive, cannot impart.

He makes his preliminary models in wire, and the extended, sinuous lines which are a characteristic of his style—and a further radical departure from the example of Gonzalez—probably derive from this pliable medium; but the overcoming of the stubbornness of iron bar produces an energetic line scarcely hinted at in the wire model. In his *Fetish*, for instance, the long ribbon of iron rising from a horizontal projection halfway up the figure has an outward and upward thrust, culminating in a deep return swerve, that conveys so strong a sense of gathering momentum that some slackening of the pace becomes essential at the approach to the central axis, and the line is finally brought to a standstill by running it sharply into a pure vertical. The eventfulness of this long continuous line could be achieved neither in wire nor with shorter pieces of iron joined together.

An inestimably important factor in the rapidity of Butler's development—he did not begin to make iron sculpture until 1948—is the fact that the point of departure for all his configurations is a closely observed human figure or group of figures. The majority of his subjects are the common currency of sculpture—the mother and child, the family group, the reclining or the standing nude. The subject of a sculpture is not of course the same thing as its content; the content of a work of art is determined by its forms, and when the forms are lines of force caging off or pricking at space, as they are in the art of Butler, the resultant figure is not descriptive but a self-sufficient structure which arouses associations not to be found in the subject. It is the vital stance that Butler is after when he chooses his human model, but the expression of it in terms of hammered iron strip allows the subject only a residual presence; this residue is to be found in the effigial nature of the iron figure. *The Waiting Woman* brilliantly captures a feminine stance; but in discovering remote formal analogies for the thrust of the breast and the weight of the belly, Butler makes an effigy not of a woman but of a being of an unknown order, a kind of goddess or female *chimère*, as watchful and alert as a bird and at the same time in the most sympathetic corres-

pondence with the blind sensuality of that Aurignacion fertility image in mammoth ivory found at Lespugne, which is one of the glories of the Musée d'Homme. The same bird-like watchfulness, the same pungent suggestion of a mode of life in which the organs of sense are inhuman and needle-sharp, informs the *Boy*, a figure based on a cocky schoolboy with his hands in the pockets of his short trousers. In fact, all Butler's images seem to maintain contact with those disturbing ancestral presences which were first revealed to him in the forms of farm machinery and which turned him into a sculptor. I have not met any other artist as thoroughly at ease as Butler in his own technological age in whom the primitive personifying process is so highly developed: to accompany him through city streets or country lanes is to be made obsessively aware of the veiled regard of lamp-posts and telegraph poles, and of their startling resemblance to badly trained detectives in their pretence of not having noticed us as one after another they signal our approach to the next along the line.

Perhaps the most remarkable of Butler's ambiguous personages to date is the *Woman*, 7 ft. 3 in. high, in which he seems to have discovered the appropriate scale for his vision. The size of this figure magnifies its inhumanity, yet makes it much more accessible and friendly than the smaller figures.

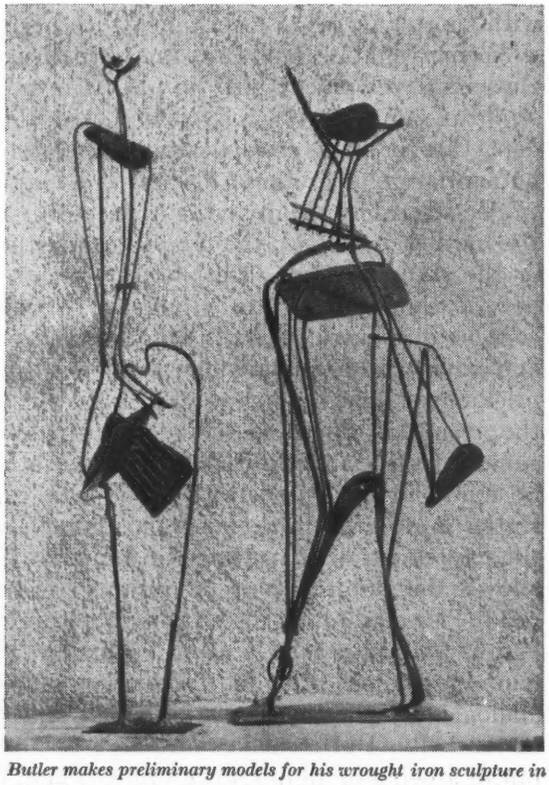
On this scale, the iron stretches itself and exhibits its unique strength. The greatest weight of iron, in the form of a shield-like oval plate, is borne by the slim, cantilevered legs, at a point far back from the central axis that would overbalance the figure if carried out in the less sinewy materials associated with carving and modelling; and this exploitation of the extensibility of iron conveys, in a less demonstrative fashion, as direct a sense of strength and vitality as the leaping balconies of the famous house at Bear Run. Another and quite different aspect of Butler's power to imbue his material with a kind of autonomous life is to be observed in the activity of the rod which rises up like an exposed backbone behind the slender body-form. The rod, suddenly bending backwards for the strike, forces itself through the wall of the body, and its point acts as a nipple to the small mound of metal raised by its passage.

The backbone is not the only 'covered' form whose exposure contributes to this peculiarly active anatomy: the heavy turns and twists of the iron at the point where the legs join the body suggest the bowels; the large single eye, in whose service the face has been reduced to a simple crutch-form holder, is backed by and connected to a larger concave oval suggestive of a completely bared sight mechanism; and since the head is entirely devoted to seeing, it is clear that the two long thin prongs, which quiver and twang at the slightest touch, one forking out from the body to waver above the head, the other curving protectively round the intestinal knots at the waist, are additional sense organs.

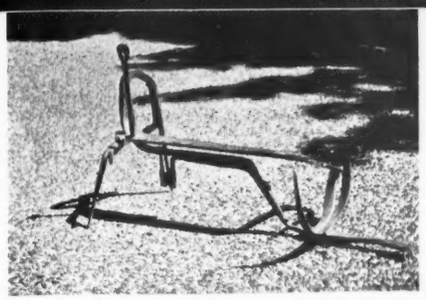
Before he made this *Woman*, Butler was hammering the iron somewhat in the manner of the traditional craftsman; it came from the anvil with a neat impersonal texture and a more or less even section. In the big figure the iron begins voluptuously to expand and contract and its surface acquires a scarred and pitted liveliness. The making of it seems to have redoubled his assurance. He relies less and less upon pencil drawings at the germinal stage, and has taken to making direct wire try-outs which are in a very real sense three-dimensional sketches. He forms them very quickly and casts many aside, seeking that 'something which rises up suddenly,' which, as Michel Leiris has pointed out, is the *raison d'être* of modern art. In a great number of cases, the wire is massed in close lines that practically close the cage, and from such studies he extracts with a counteracting stress on economy the fundamental lines of tension.

The lines of *Torso*, the first large work to emerge from this new approach, flow and ripple with an astonishingly insouciant athleticism, and the textures are so rich and various that I am inclined to claim for Butler's *matière* that it is rivalled in sensuousness only by Giacometti's blobby clay.

The subject, the torso of a woman, has proved to be somewhat intractable. It appears that nothing can prevent Butler's sculptures becoming active per-



1 *Butler makes preliminary models for his wrought iron sculpture in wire. This probably accounts for the long sinuous lines which distinguish his style from that of Gonzalez. Two wire studies: left,Woman* 1950 *(project for* 12 *ft. figure); right, Exploratory Study* 1950.



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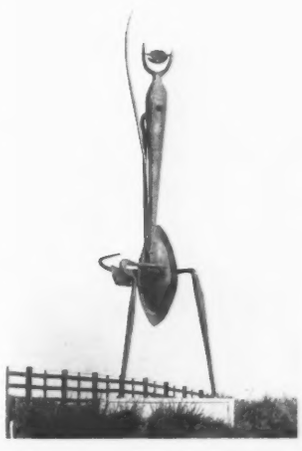
The initial incentive to iron sculpture came to Butler when, working as a blacksmith during the war, he was haunted by a feeling for farm implements as inexplicable archaic presences, and his Woman Reclining of 1948-9, 2, *contains clear evidence of this. But always the point of departure in his work is a closely observed human figure or group of figures: this is where it differs from sculpture which can properly be called abstract.* Fetish, 3, (1948) *represents what is probably his nearest approach to a purely architectonic ideal; but even here the human reference is obvious.* The Waiting Woman, 4, (1948) *is based on a feminine stance, just as* The Boy, 5, (1948) *captures the attitude of a schoolboy with his hands in his pockets—though in both cases the nominal subject is transmuted into something more primitive and disturbing. The big* Woman *of* 1949, 6 *and* 7, *now in the Tate, heralds a new exploitation of the extensibility of iron and—as the detail shows—of its texture.*



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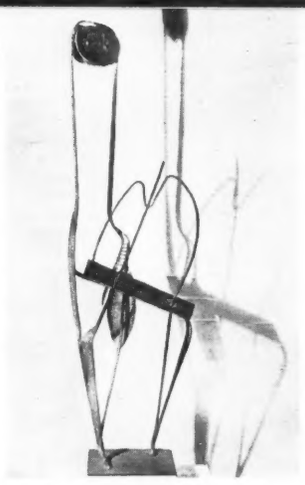

All the examples of Butler's work illustrated on the previous pages are complete figures; in each of these, Torso (1950), 8, *and* Head (1948-9), 9, *his subject is part of a figure. But the convention of the fragment as a subject for sculpture is so foreign to Butler's æsthetic that when he adopts it for his own ends the work he produces has a habit of discarding its fragmentary nature and emerging as a complete personage in its own right. This has happened most conspicuously in the* Torso, *in which the breastplate has turned into a head. 'It is a tribute to the vitality of Butler's forms,' writes Robert Melville, 'that they will have no truck with the academic convention of the fragment.' In* Torso *Butler has given his intractable material an unprecedented variety and richness of texture, as the details,* 10-12, *show.*

9

11
12

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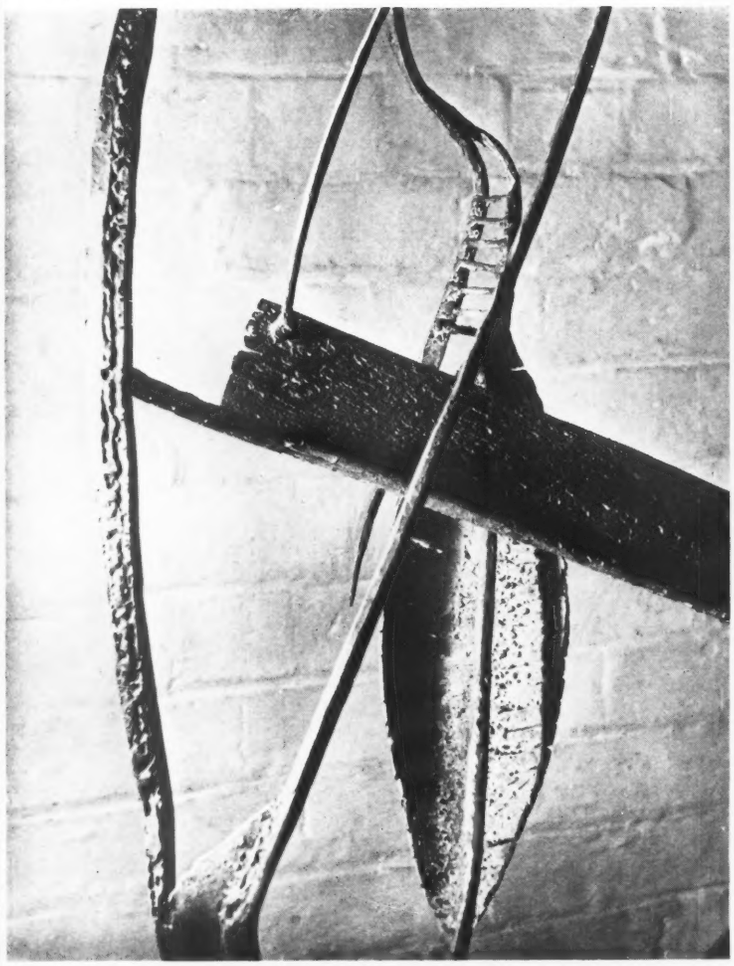


sonages. His aesthetic is so opposed to the static conception that when his subject is only a fragment of a figure his forms will go to bizarre lengths to make up for the missing parts.

In working out the *Head*, for instance, it is apparent that Butler was troubled by the fact that it had to rest on something. Presumably he would have liked it to suspend itself in the air at eye-level, but in putting it on to long stilts of iron to keep it high above the stand he has provided it with legs and turned it into a fantastic figure reminiscent of a Klee and quite alien to his own anthropomorphic sense of organization. Likewise, he turns the *Torso* into a substitute for a complete figure by allowing the breastplate to function as a head. It is a tribute to the vitality of his forms that they will have no truck with the academic convention of the fragment.

The forging of the iron of the *Torso* is altogether magnificent, and the details reproduced here exemplify the interplay of stalk-like and leaf-like forms, the beadings and striations, the nodal welds, the hyphenating threads, and the root formation of the fixed points that enables the whole structure to swing on its axis.

* * *

In the light of Butler's slim, elegant, vertebrate constructions, it begins to look as if the handrail on the roof of the Tugendhat Haus was the first faint inadequate answer to a profound architectural need.

Before Butler began to develop the possibilities of iron it was difficult to think of any sculptural embellishment that could be incorporated in a modern architectural structure without blurring its planes and surfaces; sculpture which emphasizes mass and solidity is not strictly contemporary with an architecture based on the thin strength of the steel skeleton and the concrete slab, on the lightness of the moulded unit and the 'stressed skin,' and on the transparency of large continuous surfaces of glass. The static monumentalism of a good deal of modern sculpture has its own kind of authenticity, but it is in distinct antipathy to the spare and muscular grace of an authentically modern building. At the same time, the solemn, three-dimensional geometry of constructivist sculpture, which dispenses with mass and solidity, is too puritanically motivated by architectural concepts to enter into anything but a caricatural relationship with buildings. Every good sculptor shares with the architect an unshakable belief in the beauty of revealed material, but his expressiveness is inseparable from the intimate working and reshaping of his material.

On a purely non-collaborative basis, architecture frequently provides a means by which miscellaneous sculptures can become counters in the play between inner and outer space. Rooms which extend through a transparent fourth wall into courtyards or terraces allow sculptures to be disposed on both sides of the glass as a single arrangement in space, where they retain their individual significance whilst emblemizing and punctuating the continuousness of open planning. This is probably the most interesting provision that modern architecture can make for solid sculpture, without doing some injury to its own constructive principles. It is becoming increasingly clear, however, that sculpture, on a similarly non-collaborative basis, will soon have to perform some tasks of alleviation in connection with a number of contemporary buildings erected under constraints which present practically insoluble problems. I have particularly in mind some of the new schools, which are so elongated by the two-story ruling that free standing statuary operating as focal points seems absolutely necessary if the depressiveness of the overlong horizontal is to be mitigated. Solid sculpture in stone and bronze can and will serve this purpose with distinction, but forged iron sculpture presents some striking references for the task.

The 1948 Battersea Park exhibition rather poignantly established the fact that free-standing sculpture in the open air is not monumental until it is over life size, and Butler's work has demonstrated that large iron sculptures have more *élan* and are less overbearing than solid sculpture on the same scale. But even more important than this question of scale is the fact that Butler's exploitation of the tensile strength of iron enables large sculpture to spring from a shallow base and to be constructed in the form of figures that can be clambered over and climbed through. The accessibility of such figures would bring them intimately into the recreational and fantasy life of the child, combining the mystery of the effigy with the allure of the tree and the parallel bars.

Yet it is primarily as an embellishment of the buildings themselves—of the most advanced and disciplined buildings in the modern style—as an embellishment contrasted with their rectilinear proportions and dramatically identified with their structural principles, that Butler's sculpture presents its most fascinating possibilities. His standing figures, with their minimum effect of weight and their open-work construction, and as combinates of the tracery of the iron balcony and the monumentalism of the effigy in the niche, propose themselves as figures for glazed apertures, imaginative presences at the intersection of inner and outer space, relieving with their soft blackness the hard whiteness of concrete, and tautening with their augur-like intensity the amplitude of light-filled rooms.

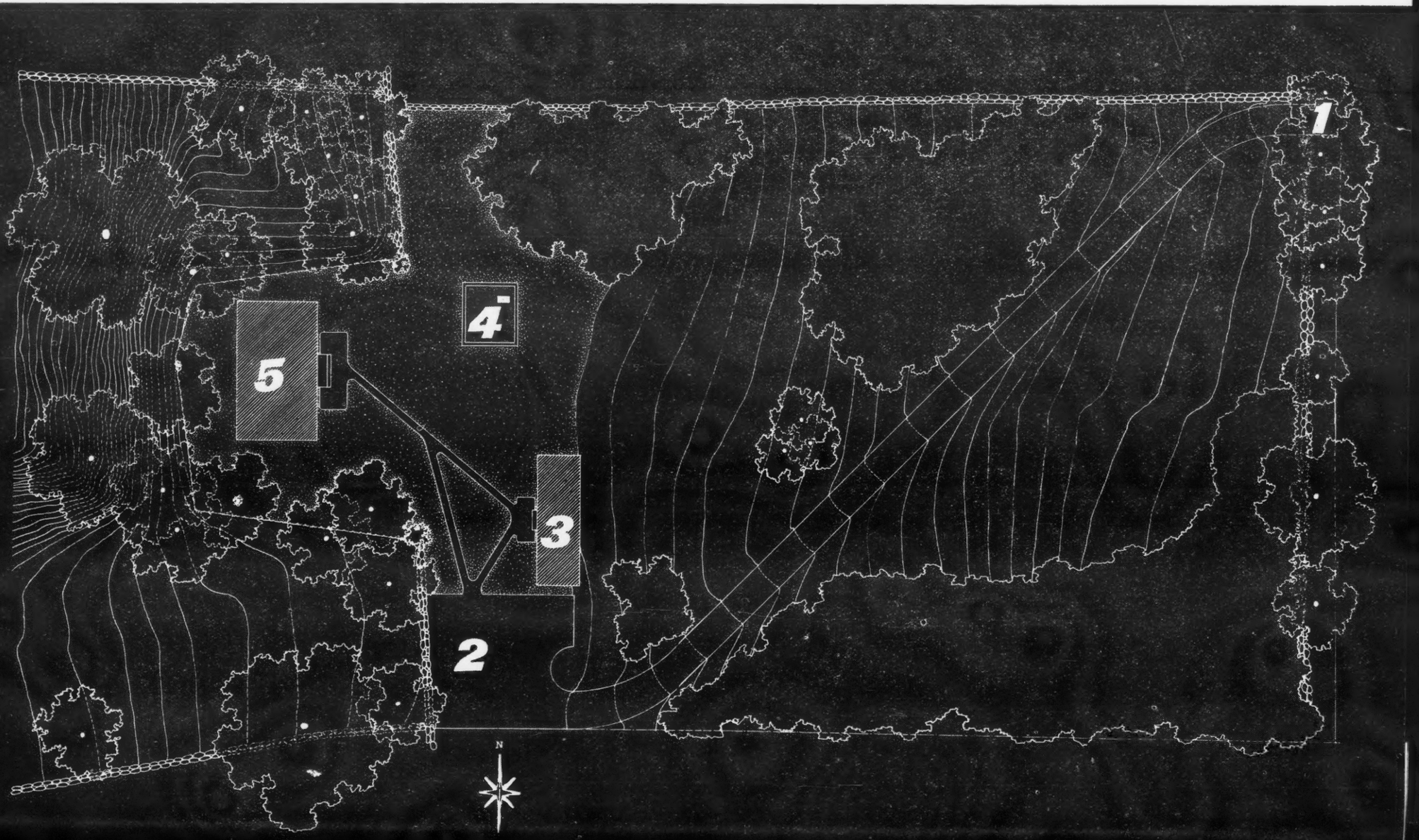
HOUSE AT NEW CANAAN, CONNECTICUT

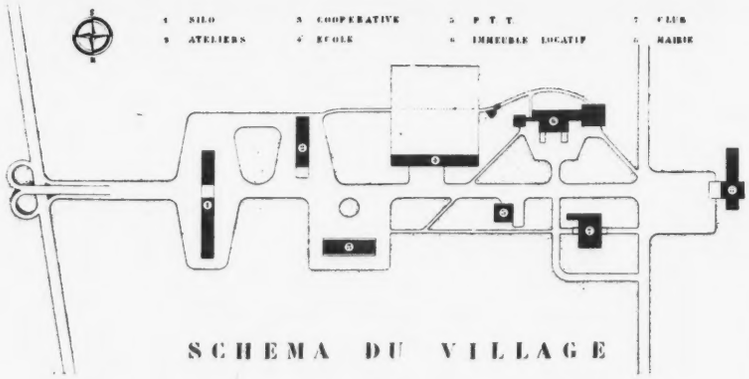
PHILIP JOHNSON: ARCHITECT

The latest development in 'skin and bones' architecture* is Philip Johnson's glass house, which he has designed for his own occupation. Since the work is proclaimed by the architect as frankly derivative, in this publication of it and the adjacent guest building, Mr. Johnson has followed the unusual and, it should be granted, praiseworthy expedient of revealing the sources of his inspiration. These are presented in consecutive order, and precede the illustrations of the two houses. The commentary is Philip Johnson's own.

* A phrase once used by Mies van der Rohe to describe the structural system of which he is the leading exponent.

key to site plan 1, entrance to site. 2, car park. 3, guest house. 4, sculpture. 5, glass house.



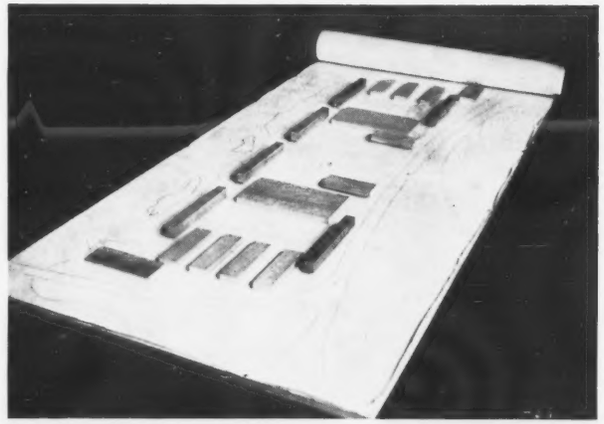


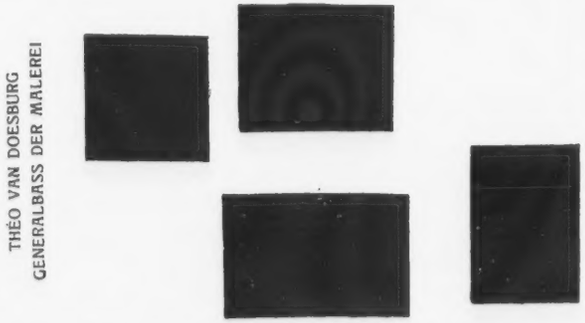
1 Le Corbusier: Farm Village Plan—1933.

The approach to the house through meadow and copse is derived from English Eighteenth Century precedent. The actual model is Count Pückler's estate at Muskau in Silesia. The driveway is straight, however, like the pathways in the plan above. The footpath pattern between the two houses I copied from the spiderweb-like forms of Le Corbusier, who delicately runs his communications without regard for the axis of his buildings or seemingly for any kind of pattern.

2 Mies van der Rohe: Ideal arrangement of Illinois Institute of Technology Buildings, 1939.

The arrangement of the two buildings and the statue group is influenced by Mies' theory of organizing buildings in a group. The arrangement is rectilinear but the shapes tend to overlap and slide by each other in an asymmetric manner.

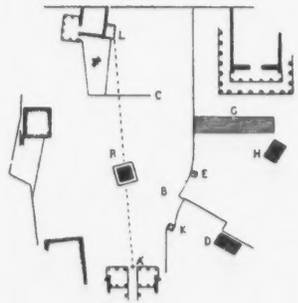




3 Theo Van Doesburg: The Basso Continuo of Painting. (Published in "G" an *avant garde* magazine by Mies van der Rohe in 1922).

The idea of asymmetric sliding rectangles was furthest developed in the De Stijl *aesthetics of war-time Holland. These shapes, best known to posterity through the painting of the late Piet Mondrian, still have an enormous influence on many other architects besides myself.*

4 Plan and Perspective of the Acropolis at Athens from Choisy: *L'Histoire de l'Art Grecque.*



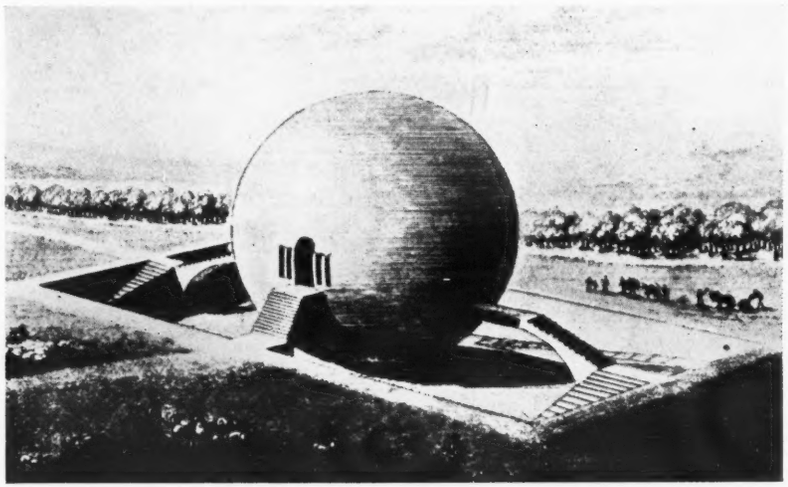
Choisy proved that the Greeks restricted the angle of approach to their buildings to the oblique; also that they placed their monuments so that only one major building dominated the field of vision from any given point.
The grouping of my buildings follows Choisy: from the focal point at the beginning of the footpath near the parking lot, the brick house (Propylaea) is passed and forms a wall on the right hand. The statue group (Athene Promachos) is in full view slightly to the right. The glass house comes into view (from an oblique angle) only after the pine tree at the angle of the promontory is circumnavigated.

5 Karl Friedrich Schinkel: Casino in Glienicke Park near Potsdam c. 1830. Entrance façade.

The site relation of my house is pure Neo-Classic Romantic—more specifically, Schinkelesque. Like his Casino my house is approached on dead-level and, like his, faces its principal (rear) façade toward a sharp bluff.

6 Karl Friedrich Schinkel: Casino in Glienicke Park near Potsdam c. 1830. Terrace overlooking the Havel.

The Eighteenth Century preferred more regular sites than this and the Post-Romantic Revivalists preferred hill tops to the cliff edges or shelves of the Romantics (Frank Lloyd Wright, that great Romantic, prefers shelves or hillsides).



7 Claude Nicholas Ledoux: Maison des Gardes Agricoles, at Maupertuis c. 1780.

The cubic, "absolute" form of my glass house, and the separation of functional units into two absolute shapes rather than a major and minor massing of parts comes directly from Ledoux, the Eighteenth Century father of modern architecture. (See Emil Kaufmann's excellent study Von Ledoux bis Le Corbusier.) *The cube and the sphere, the pure mathematical shapes, were dear to the hearts of those intellectual revolutionaries from the Baroque, and we are their descendants.*

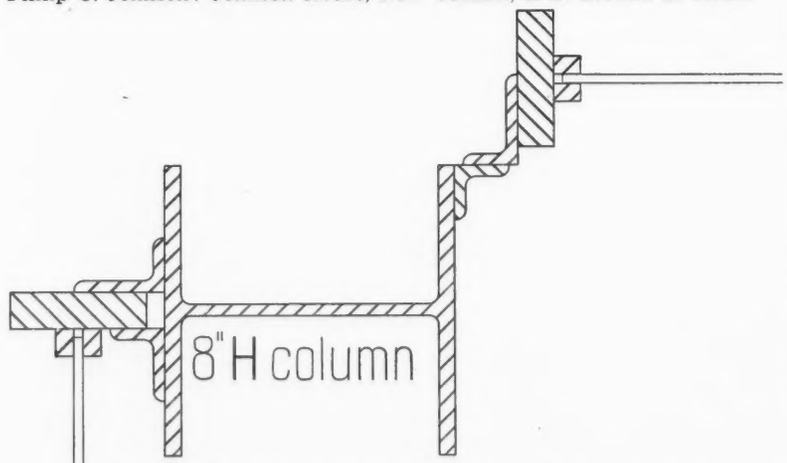
8 Mies van der Rohe: Farnsworth House, 1947. (Now under construction near Chicago).

The idea of a glass house comes from Mies van der Rohe. Mies had mentioned to me as early as 1945 how easy it would be to build a house entirely of large sheets of glass. I was sceptical at the time, and it was not until I had seen the sketches of the Farnsworth House that I started the three-year work of designing my glass house. My debt is therefore clear, in spite of obvious difference in composition and relation to the ground.

dear to the hearts of those intellectual revolutionaries from the Baroque, and we are their descendants.

obvious difference in composition and relation to the ground.

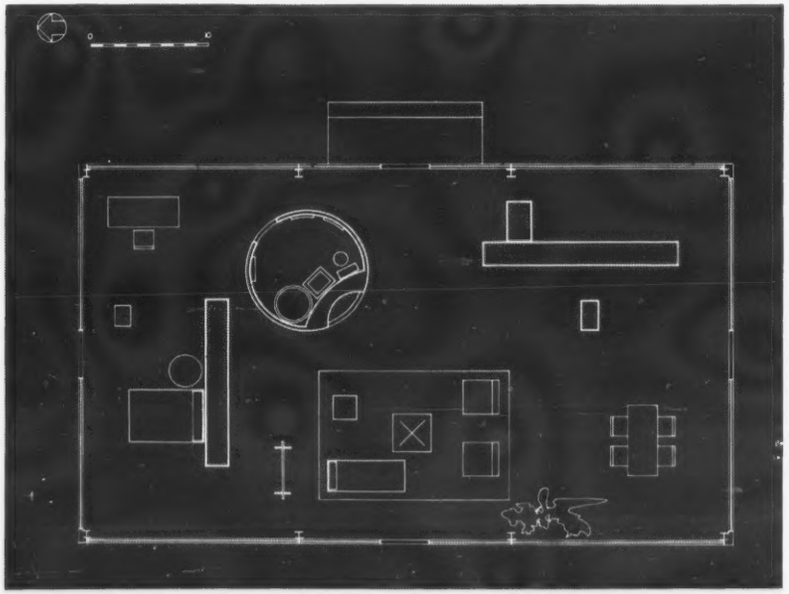
9 Philip C. Johnson: Johnson House, New Canaan, 1949. Section at corner



Many details of the house are adapted from Mies' work, especially the corner treatment and the relation of the column to the window frames. This use of standard steel sections to make a strong and at the same time decorative finish to the façade design is typical of Mies' Chicago work. Perhaps if there is ever to be "decoration" in our architecture it may come from manipulation of stock structural elements such as this (may not Mannerism be next?).

10 Kasimir Malevitch: Suprematist Element: Circle—1913.

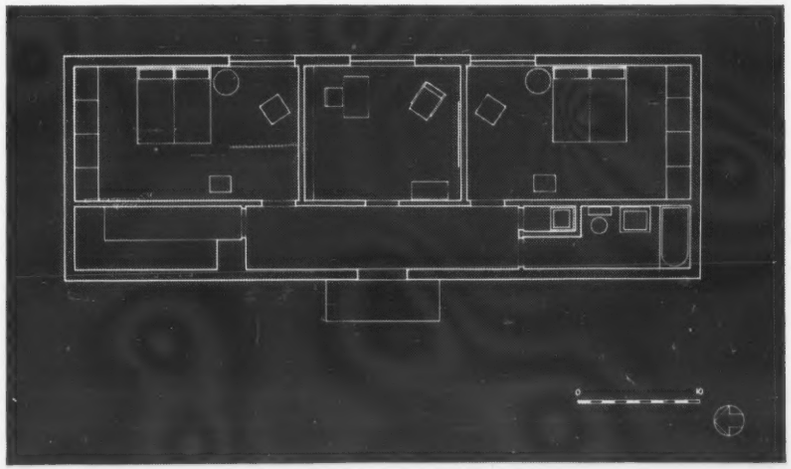
Although I had forgotten the Malevitch picture, it is obviously the inspiration for the plan of the glass house. Malevitch proved what interesting surrounding areas could be created by correctly placing a circle in a rectangle. Abstract painting of forty years ago remains even today the strongest single aesthetic influence on the grammar of architecture.



11 Johnson House: Plan of Glass Unit.

North end, sleeping and writing; brick cylinder, washing and w.c.; south-east, cooking; south-west, eating; west, sitting.

Except for the cylinder, the plan of the house is Miesian. The use of 6 foot closets to divide yet unite space is his. The grouping of the furniture asymmetrically around a coffee table is his. The relation of cabinets to the cylinder, however, is more "painterly" than Mies would sanction.



12 Johnson House: Plan of Brick Unit.

Two double guests' bedrooms with study between; combined entrance hall-picture gallery with storage room at one end, bathroom and shower at the other.

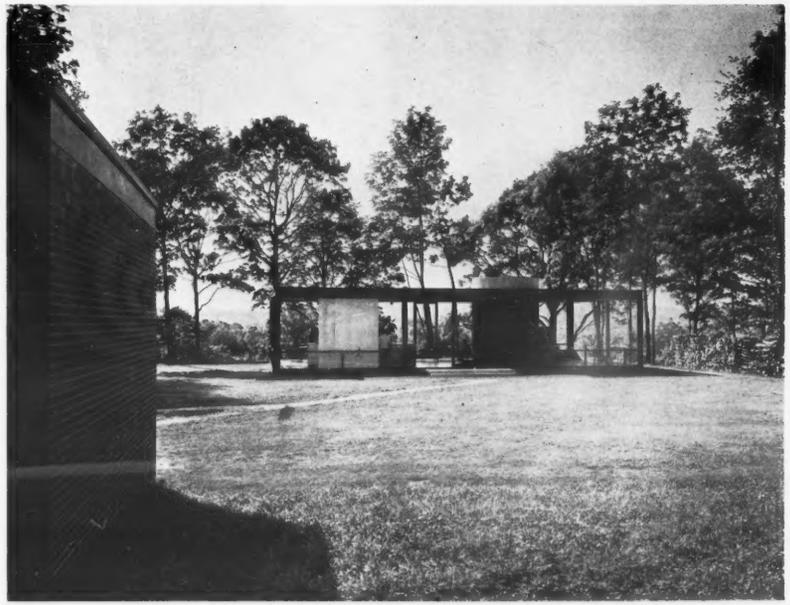
The guest house with Baroque plan central corridor and three symmetrically placed rooms, was derived from Mies' designs. The three round windows in the rear of the façade are a Renaissance approach to a Miesian motif. Mies uses the round window as a method of admitting light in a long brick wall in a manner least to disturb the continuity of the wall. A rectangular hole would compete in direction with the shape of the wall itself. I used the round windows for the same reason, with a totally different compositional effect.

13 Johnson House: North End of West Wall.

The multiple reflections on the 18' pieces of plate glass, which seem superimposed on the view through the house, help give the glass a type of solidity; a direct Miesian aim which he expressed twenty-five years ago: "I discovered by working with actual glass models that the important thing is the play of reflections and not the effect of light and shadow as in ordinary buildings."

14 Johnson House: General View of Brick and Glass Units.

The bi-axial symmetry of each façade of the glass house is as absolute as Ledoux and much purer than any Baroque example. Opposite sides of my house are identical and the "minor" axis is almost as developed as the "major". (Is there a slight left-over of Baroque in the fact that the front door is in the long *elevation?)*



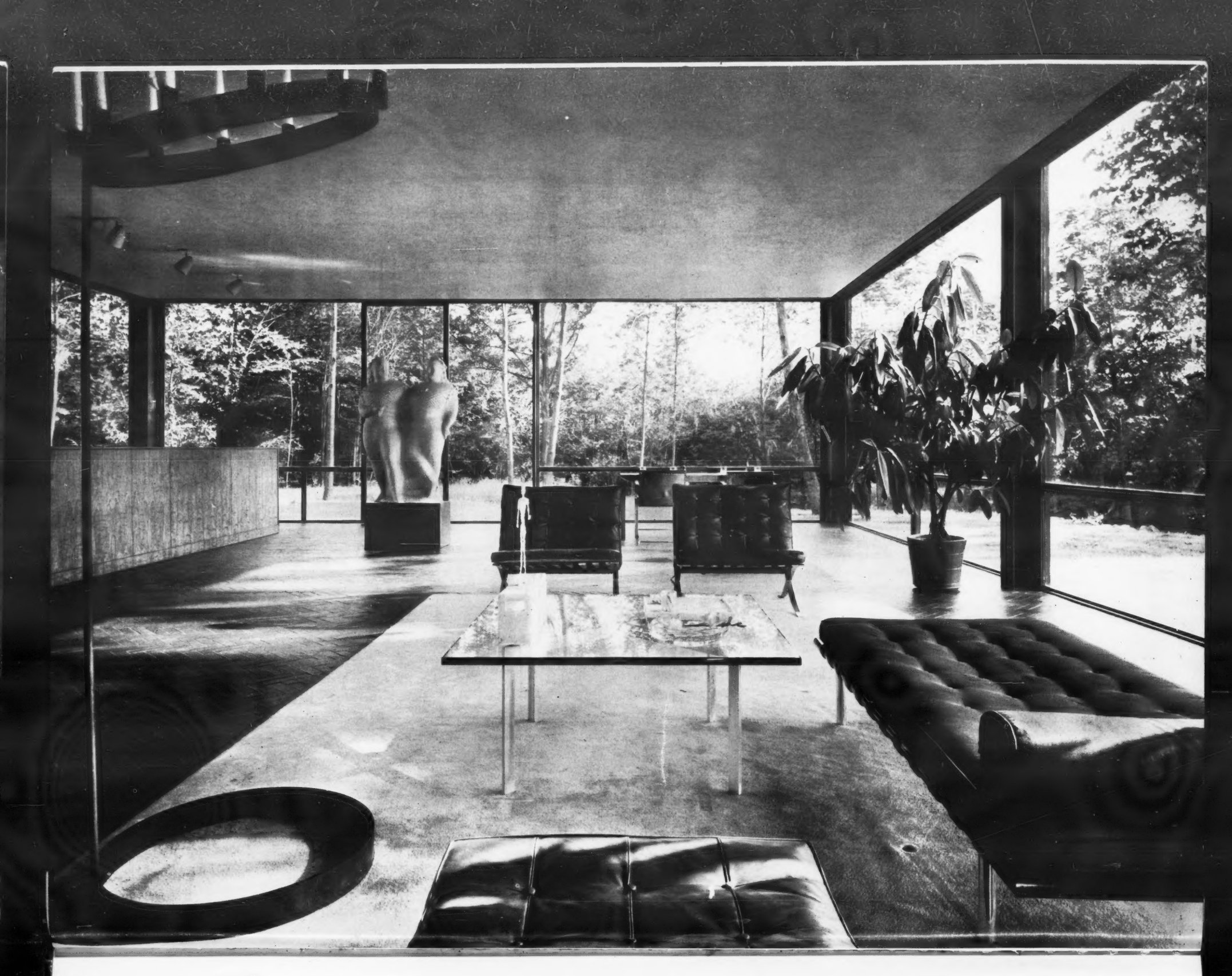
15 Johnson House: Entrance Façade of Glass Unit.

16 Johnson House: Entrance Façade of Brick Unit.

The guest house with central door and severely axial plan is jointly descended from the Baroque and from designs by Mies. (See 12.)

17 Johnson House: Glass Unit at Night.

The cylinder, made of the same brick as the platform from which it springs, forming the main motif *of the house, was not derived from Mies, but rather from a burnt wooden village I saw once where nothing was left but foundations and chimneys of brick. Over the chimney I slipped a steel cage with a glass skin. The chimney forms the anchor.*



18 Johnson House: Interior looking south.

Mies van der Rohe has not only influenced the concept of the house. He has designed all of the furniture—some of it a quarter century ago, none of it later than 1930.

19 Johnson House: Sculpture Group.

The papier-mache sculpture by Nadelman provides the type of foil which this kind of building needs (Mies again established the precedent in his Barcelona Pavilion).

20 Johnson House: Interior looking west.

The view of the valley, with its repoussoir of giant trees, is contrived with the aid of many Baroque landscapes. A view without a frame seems impossible after the Seventeenth Century.

21 Johnson House: Cooking Unit.

The kitchen I reduced to a simple bar so that it would not close off any space. I have no idea what precedent I followed on that.

22
Johnson House: Interior, north-east corner.

Bed and writing desk, with strips of pandanus cloth hanging from the ceiling—the only screening I felt to be necessary.

The Chamber of the new House of Commons from the ordinary strangers' gallery at the south end. The Speaker's Chair is visible at the foot of the left-hand opening.

Maurice Hastings

1 introduction

The new Chamber of the House of Commons, designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott to take the place of Sir Charles Barry's Chamber (destroyed by a bomb on May 10, 1941), is to be opened next month. Like its predecessor, it differs from the chambers of all other legislative assemblies in being an oblong room with banks of seats facing each other across a central gangway. Here Maurice Hastings describes the origin of this form of chamber, which though it has no apparent logical justification, has been so influential in moulding the two-party system. The key to the riddle—and, Dr. Hastings believes, to the riddle of the origin of the Perpendicular style—is to be found in St. Stephen's Chapel, which became the first permanent home of the House of Commons in 1547.

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

The New Palace of Westminster, or—as it is now called—'The Houses of Parliament,' occupies a pivotal place in architectural history. This is because it contained the chapel of St. Stephen's, which, in 1547, became the Chamber of the House of Commons. The building has, in consequence, two distinct and separate histories—one as a Gothic work of art of the greatest magnificence (and probably the key to the mystery of the origins of the Perpendicular Style), and the other, as the abode of the Commons. In the latter capacity it has been developed first into Barry's Chamber and now into that of Sir Giles Gilbert Scott. It is essential to grasp the relation between the Chapel and its successors for otherwise the latest manifestation is incomprehensible.*

The background to the Chapel was the palace—that is to say, the hall—which Edward the Confessor built near the Abbey he had founded in the Isle of Thorney. This hall was called the Painted Chamber and it was the nucleus around which the later residence of the Kings grew up, and from which the present monumental phoenix has arisen.

To the Painted Chamber subsequent Kings added more halls, and the Palace grew, not by increasing the size of any one building, but by an accretion of halls. It became a conglomeration of buildings added without plan from time to time, rather in the same way that dominoes are added one to another. The first known addition was Westminster Hall, built by Rufus. This was no more than 'his bed-chamber', he said; but the grand ideas he had for further developing the Palace were prevented by his death.

It is not a matter of exact knowledge after this as to which Kings built which halls, and the subject cannot be enlarged upon here. The tradition is that King Stephen built the chapel of the Palace named after his patron Saint. Edward I pulled down this Romanesque building and started to build a new St. Stephen's. In Edward II's reign a list was made of buildings which had been 'burnt in the time of the King's father'—that is, in the great fire of 1298. We learn of the Queen's Hall, the Little Hall, and other sources tell us of Marcolf's Chamber, the Antioch Chamber, the Parliament Chamber, the Prince's Chamber, and—one to be very famous later—the Star Chamber.

Confusion is caused by the changes of names made to these buildings, sometimes

* This subject is developed in a book shortly to be published:—*Parliament House*—The Chambers of the House of Commons; by Maurice Hastings. (London: The Architectural Press.)

the south end. The Speaker's Chair is visible at the foot of the left-hand opening.

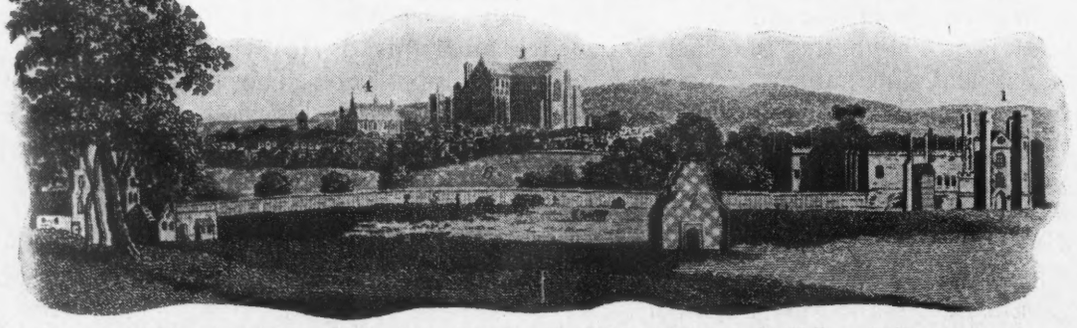
due to the uses to which they were put. The Little (or Lesser) Hall was also called the White Hall (not to be confused with Whitehall Palace). Later it was known as the Court of Requests, because the Master of Requests sat in Court there, and still later, after 1801, as the House of Lords. The White Chamber, which was early used for the meetings of the full Parliament, was called the Parliament Chamber, and then, until 1801, the House of Lords. The name given to St. Stephen's Chapel in the seventeenth century was 'Parlament House'.*

There seem to be two reasons why this Palace was chosen as the seat of government. In the first place Westminster was, as it were, the Crown's centre of gravity because of Edward the Confessor's burial there. To please the English, the Norman usurpers fostered the reverence felt for this Saint and King, although they did not live in Westminster any more than in their other palaces. William Rufus, however, started to add to the Palace, which has been called 'The New Palace' since his time. Secondly, the great size of Westminster Hall made it useful to house the departments of government when they no longer moved with the King. For in early times the King was not stationary. He moved about the country from palace to palace, taking with him the whole machinery of government. When this most unwieldy process gradually ceased, the Exchequer was the first to settle down. It did so in the Great Hall of the Palace, and, by degrees, other government offices followed its example. The Commons were the last to settle permanently in the Palace when, in 1547, they were assigned the King's chapel.

There is no need to describe its later architectural history beyond mentioning that some alterations were made by James Wyatt and that Soane added a Library and a new entry (at the insistence of George IV) to the House of Lords. Otherwise mediæval methods survived in the sense that buildings were added as they were wanted, although, contrary to mediæval practice, very unsubstantial ones were built. We should think of the Palace as a cluster of ancient stone buildings, some dating back to pre-Conquest times, with round them a changing medley of later brick and timber dwellings. Its amorphous nature scandalized the eighteenth century man of taste. It was a fire trap as well, but, although warnings were frequent, nothing was done to avert the catastrophe of October 16, 1834, when some old Exchequer tallies left burning in a stove in the Court of Requests building (then the House of Lords) set fire to the Palace.

Although William IV would have been delighted to hand over Buckingham Palace to the homeless Parliament, public opinion thought otherwise. It wanted a new monument to government—and a 'Gothic' one at that. On the ruins Barry, assisted by Pugin, built—with the maximum of interference from Select Committees, Commissions, the Fine Arts Commission and Dr. Reid the Ventilator—the present Palace between about 1840 and 1852. All that remains of the ancient one is Westminster Hall, the under-Chapel of St. Stephen's, St. Mary Undercroft, and restored parts of the Cloister and Oratory. On the site of St. Stephen's and with the same floor dimensions, Barry built St. Stephen's Hall. The new Commons Chamber he placed near the site of the Chapel but at right angles to it. The Commons sat there for nearly ninety eventful years, until May 10, 1941.

* See also 'The Meeting Places of Parliament in the Palace of Westminster' by Ivy M. Cooper published in the *Journal of the British Archæological Association.* Third Series. Vol. III. 1938.



A distant view of Westminster Hall and Westminster Abbey from the Village of Charing, after Hollar, c. 1645.

2 a study in place-history: The Palace

commentary by J. M. Hastings

Palace from Westminster Bridge

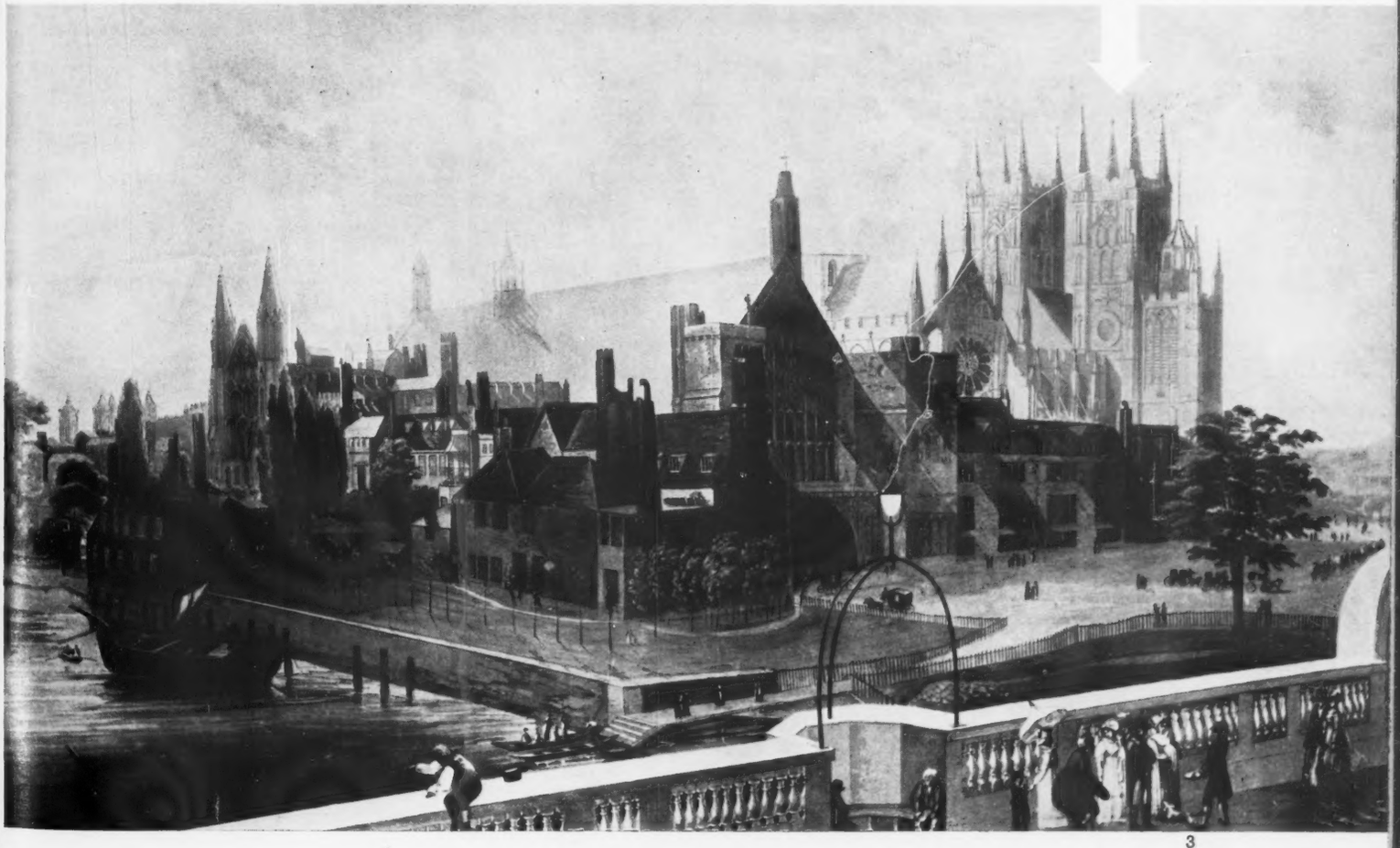
3, a view of the Palace of Westminster from old Westminster Bridge. This was the Palace, burnt down in 1834, now replaced by the present one (the Houses of Parliament) on the same site. The Abbey is on the right; Westminster Hall is in the centre leading (as it still does) into New Palace Yard; and the east end and turrets of St. Stephen's Chapel are on the left. This Chapel, until 1834, was the House of Commons for 300 years. But no care has been taken to represent it correctly. Vague 'Gothic' arches are seen in the window, and from the seventeenth century onwards the Chapel did not have any pinnacles on the corner towers. It shows the inaccuracies which artists of the day allowed themselves. The oldest part of the Palace lies behind St. Stephen's, out of sight (see plan page 166). The vicar's and canon's houses of St. Stephen's College once stood where the buildings on the river front appear. 2, right, the same view as it appears today.

N.W. Tower, Westminster Abbey

2

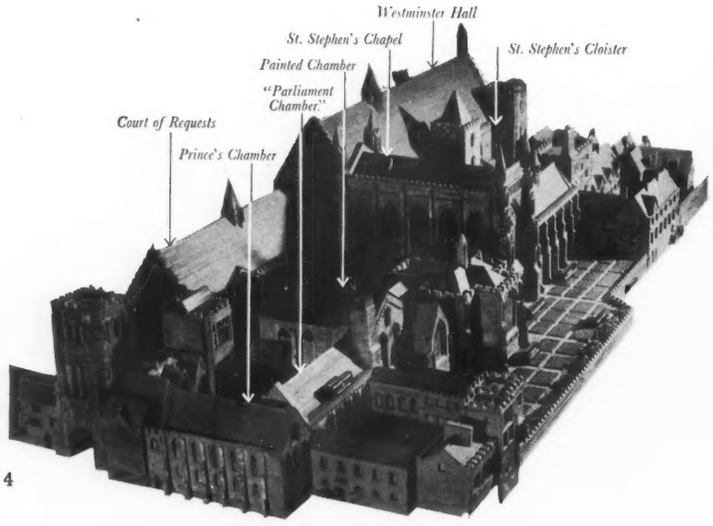
1750 **1950**

N.W. Tower, Westminster Abbey



3

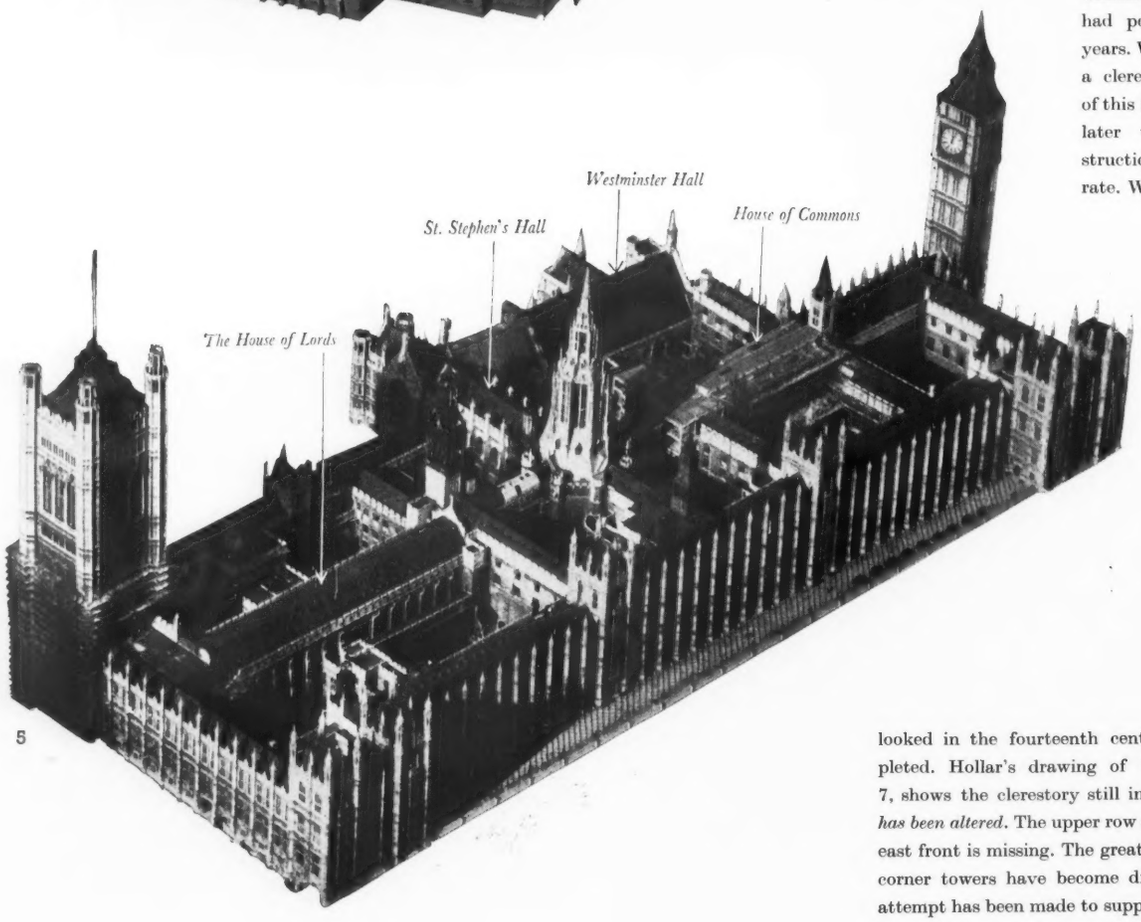
Before 1834



4

The mediæval palace, 4, against the brilliant improvisation of Barry, 5. The ancient, authentic palace was a conglomeration of separate buildings forming, as it were by accident, the sides of squares, but really without order and arrangement, i.e. with no predetermined design. Barry has added 'Italianate' symmetry. The Renaissance note is clearly struck, for all the 'Gothic' intent. He encroached upon the river, without authority, in order to achieve the magnificent river frontage. St. Stephen's as shown in 2 is not accurate, but one of the innumerable guesses. 6, on the facing page, *is* St. Stephen's. This remarkable and very important sketch done by the Dutch artist van den Wyngaerde (c. 1558) shows the building *before any alterations have taken place whatever*. The Commons have hardly had possession for ten years. We see that it had a clerestory. Ignorance of this fact has rendered later would-be reconstructions wildly inaccurate. We see it here as it looked in the fourteenth century, when completed. Hollar's drawing of 100 years later, 7, shows the clerestory still intact, *but the roof has been altered*. The upper row of windows in the east front is missing. The great pinnacles on the corner towers have become diminutive. Every attempt has been made to suppose that the huge lower windows of the chapel represent the still existing windows of the lower chapel (or crypt, so-called), but this is ridiculous. These could not be visible over the tree tops. St. Stephen's—the first skyscraper—towered above the Palace.*

After 1834

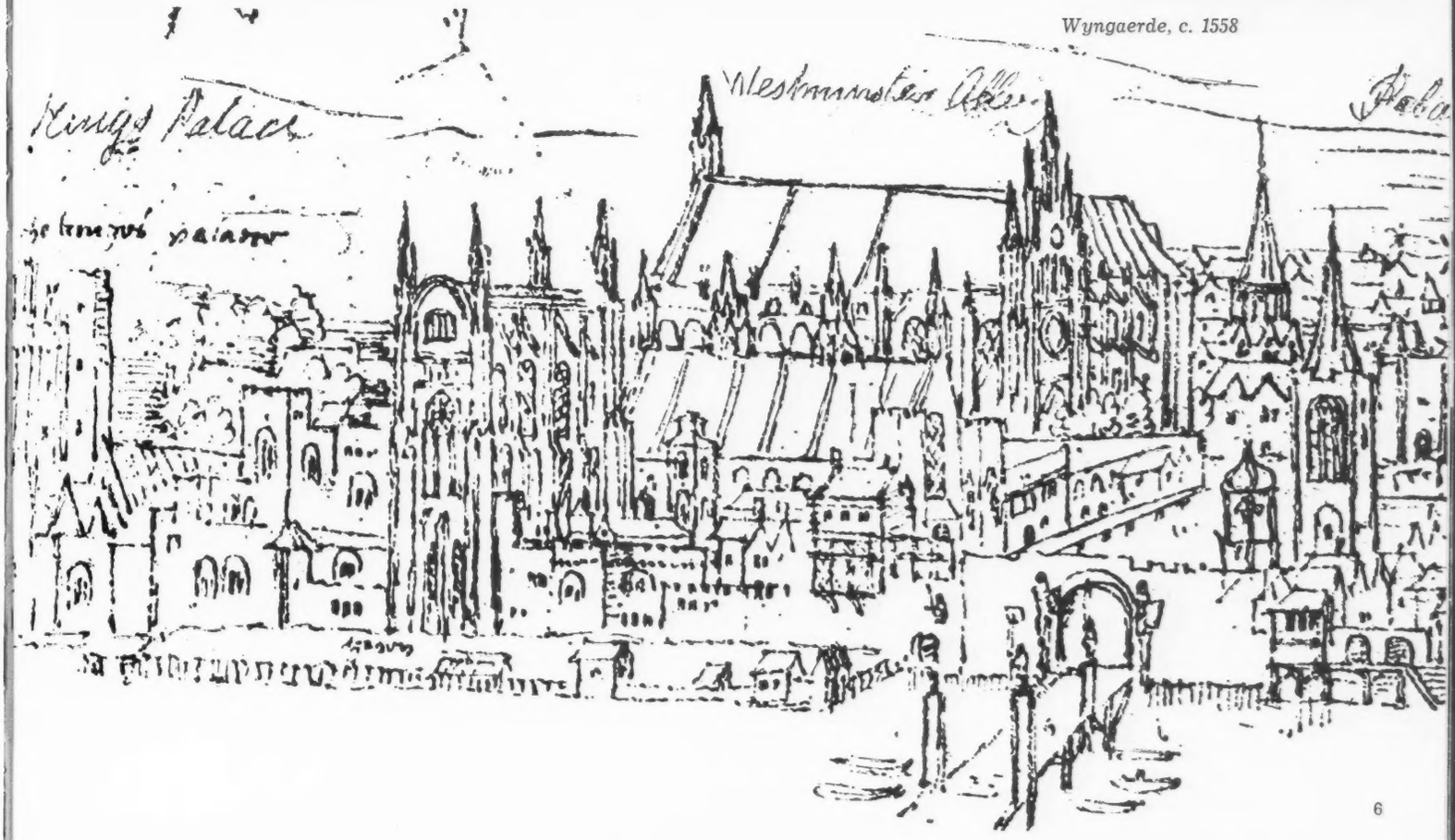


5

* This and other illustrations by courtesy of the Lord Great Chamberlain are acknowledged on page 212.

Panoramas compared.

Wyngaerde, c. 1558

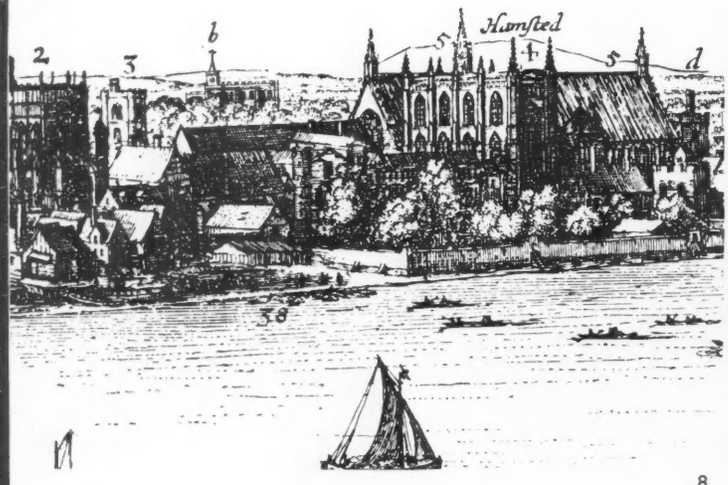


6

Hollar, c. 1647

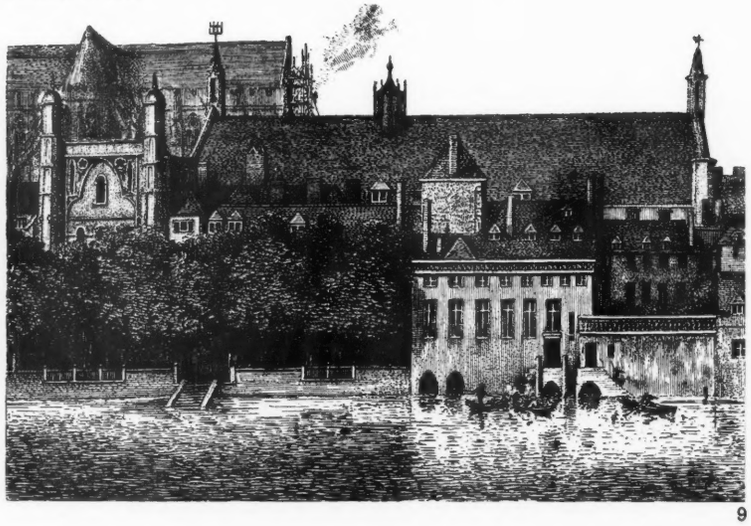
7

Hollar, c. 1666



8

Smith, c. 1800

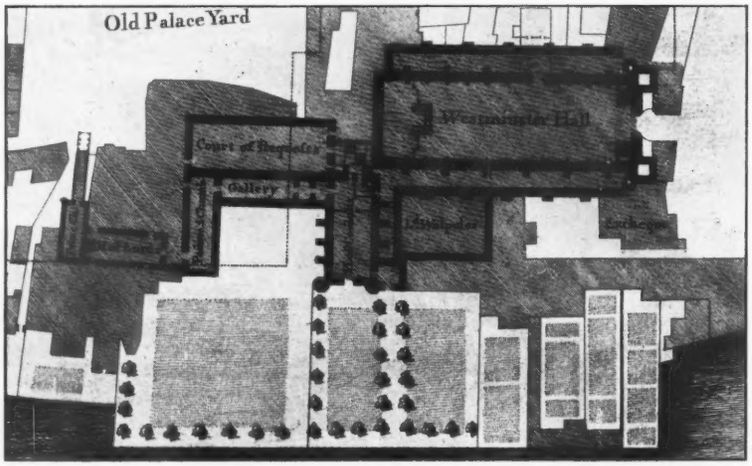


9

Arnald, 1803

10

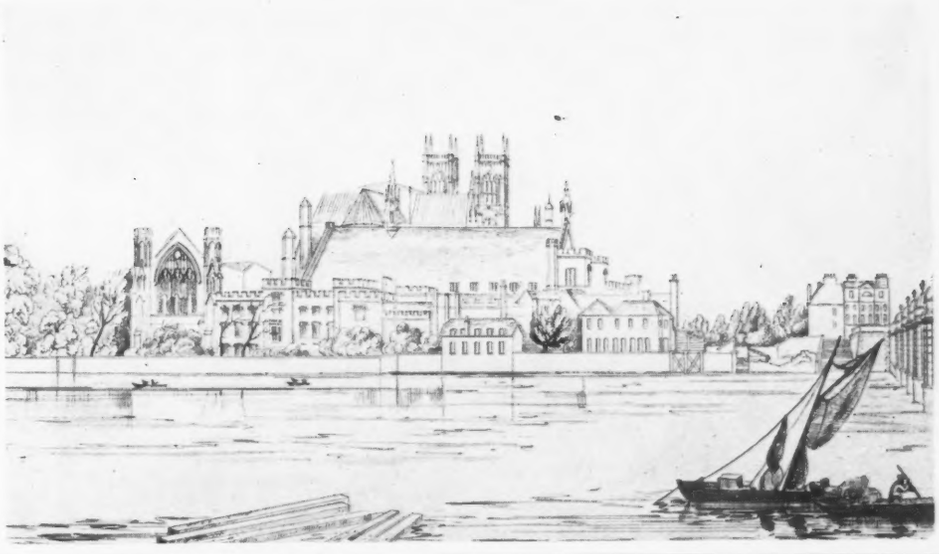
Plan of the Mediæval Palace



11

Hollar's admirable view of the Palace, 8, with St. Stephen's in correct proportion. It is now 'Parlament House'; the Commons are inside complaining about the roof, which, later, had to be 'brought very much lower' (Wren's words). 9 shows what he did. The clerestory has gone and his three round-headed windows are just visible. In the picture of 1803 by G. Arnald, 10, Wyatt's workmen can be faintly discerned on scaffolding to the right of St. Stephen's; but Wren's east front has not yet given place to Wyatt's imitation Gothic. The vicar's and canon's houses (in the foreground of 7, on the previous page) have been altered but probably not rebuilt. The plan, 11, gives the lay-out of the mediæval Palace. The 'Painted Chamber'—the original Palace of Edward the Confessor—was built with a south front, probably so that his chapel of St. John could occupy the east end facing the river. (This is conjecture; but we know of this chapel, which does not appear on the plan.) At right angles is the hall of Henry II ('The House of Lords'), also known as the 'Parliament Chamber' because Parliament (the King, Lords and Commons) assembled there. Subsequently it was used only by the Lords, and it was this building which Guy Fawkes tried to blow up, making use of the amenities of the 'Seigneurial Style.' He entered what had once been Henry II's kitchen on the ground floor. Because it was vaulted (like the ground floor of the Banqueting Hall, Whitehall) the erroneous transition from 'vaults' to calling it a 'cellar' was easy. But this is to misinterpret the story. Beyond is the Prince's Chamber (the King's robing room). Westminster Hall was known as the 'Great Hall' to distinguish it from the 'Little Hall,' or 'Lesser Hall' (here called 'The Court of Requests'). In between is St. Stephen's ('H. of Commons' on plan). The Chapel was built without reference to Westminster Hall, and entry was from the Court of Requests building. The Alura (alley), a gallery joining the east end of the Painted Chamber to St. Stephen's, is not shown. 'Ld. Walpole's' marks the position of St. Stephen's Cloister. A charming view of the Palace

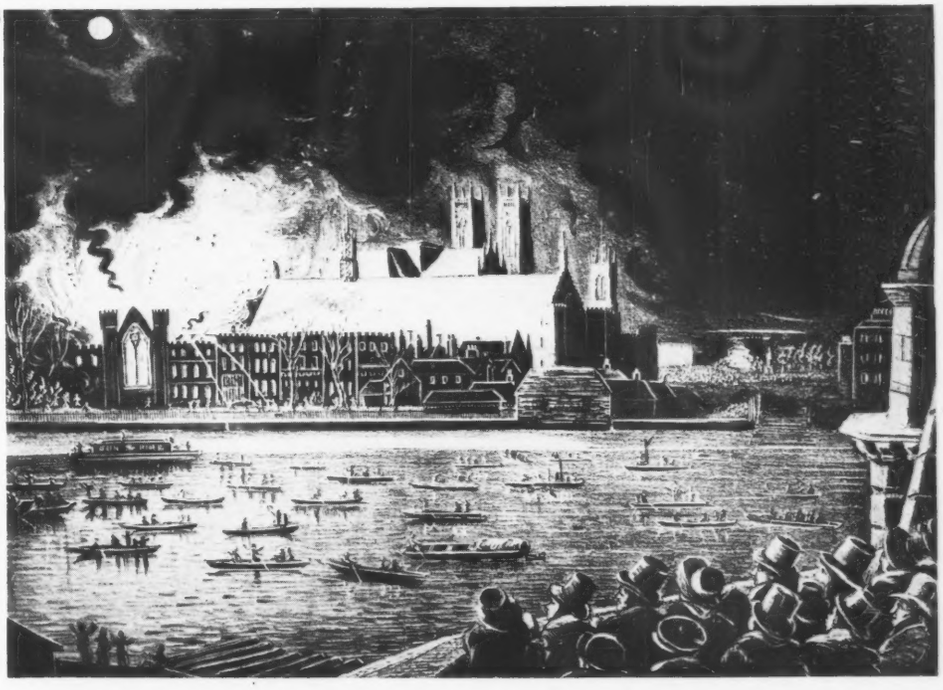
12



and Chapel, 12. The latter shows Wyatt's imitation Gothic east front (temp. 1801). On the right of the chapel is the mess of stucco (à la Fonthill) erected by Wyatt in place of the beautiful and dignified earlier buildings. All Wyatt's alterations, save the extending of the chapel, were purposeless and irritating (even contemporaries say this).

Russell, c. 1830

13



The Fire, 1834

13, the same scene as the above, but on the night of October 16, 1834, when the Palace caught fire. We see the glare in the sky which Barry saw from the Brighton coach. The fire broke out in the Court of Requests (see plan on opposite page) and was fanned by the strong wind. This is the '*tableau vivant* of not inferior interest' vastly enjoyed by the populace, according to Brayley and Britten (authors of *The History of the Ancient Palace at Westminster*).

14

14, a fascinating picture because it was drawn, by William Heath, by the actual light of the flames—not after the event. '. . . the strong glittering of the flames,' wrote Brayley and Britten, 'on Henry the Seventh's Chapel, and the Abbey Church, on the adjacent buildings, and on the working parties, fire-engines, and soldiers in the open space below, formed a scene of great animation and beauty.' Here is the scene in Old Palace Yard, with Henry VII's Chapel on left, and Soane's buildings and Lord's entry on right.

15

15, another most spirited view of the fire, from Henry VII's Chapel, looking across Old Palace Yard on to Soane's entry to the House of Lords. The corner of Westminster Hall is invisible in the flames. The row of semicircular windows (centre) belong to the Court of Requests—the Lords' Chamber where the fire started.

16

After the fire

16, the smoking ruins on the morning after the fire, by Constable. On the extreme left are the ruins of the Painted Chamber. In the centre is the early nineteenth century Commons Library, and, next to it, St. Stephen's dimly seen through the smoke, with Wyatt's tracery showing in the east window. Behind is the roof of Westminster Hall.

17

17, the gutted shell of St. Stephen's Chapel (the House of Commons), with Westminster Bridge in the distance. This is excellent as showing the proto-Perpendicular panelling of the spandrels of the windows, the buttressing, the squat windows of the under chapel, Wren's three windows in the east end, with Wyatt's Gothic details above. The tops of the corner towers are also by Wyatt.

3 the evolution of St. Stephen's

The original chapel of the Palace of Westminster was reputed to have been built by King Stephen, in 1141. But by the time of Edward I this Romanesque building was completely out of date. For in 1245 Louis IX of France had set a fashion by building the Sainte Chapelle, and his cousin, Henry III of England, after remarking that he would like to take it away in a horse and cart, set about rebuilding Westminster Abbey. Henry's remark about the 'horse and cart' are the keywords. He was probably entranced by the diminutive elegance of the Sainte Chapelle—judging by how the style developed in London, later. This quality the London Court masons ever afterwards strove not only to retain but to improve on, in a manner alien to French taste. We may say that the French, on the whole, liked stonework to look like stonework, while the London masons did not. They liked it to look like metalwork. Space forbids discussion here of this all-important matter, but an understanding of St. Stephen's Chapel (as rebuilt by Edward I, II and III between 1292 and 1347), and subsequent stylistic developments in England, is hardly possible unless this fact is grasped.

We might put it then that Henry III's son, Edward I, started to rebuild his palace chapel on modern French lines. But it is curious to see that while every detail was demonstrably French, what emerged was something which was unmistakably English. It was an essay in what was later called 'the Perpendicular Style', the finishing touches to which were added in Gloucester Choir.

The Chapel was called by Professor Lethaby, 'perhaps the crest of the Gothic movement in England'—words, in the writer's opinion, of profound and hitherto unregarded truth. But Lethaby did not know (as he admits later) what it was really like, and therefore was unable to develop his theme. It has remained somewhat of a mystery ever since—or, worse, something about which people thought they knew everything of any importance, more or less.*

St. Stephen's was almost completely 'un-functional'. Everything about it was for show. It broke every canon of nineteenth century Gothic theory. It was only just about able to stand up, in fact it was so high that its roof had to be taken successively lower and lower. It contained two elements of the Perpendicular style—the panel (in the interior spandrels of the windows), and the exterior descending mullion. These elements, put together (with perhaps additions from Bristol) in Gloucester Choir, produced Perpendicular architecture. But the beginning of this style is not in St. Stephen's: it is in the Sainte Chapelle. The spandrels of St. Stephen's appear to be taken from the apse windows of the latter, while the descending mullion makes a half-hearted appearance in the same building. Therefore it does not seem far-fetched to presume that St. Stephen's was designed to appear as it did, by Edward I's master mason, Michael of Canterbury, in 1292.

The Chapel was finished by 1347. In 1348, Edward III founded a *College* of St. Stephen, and what this change was to mean to the House of Commons will be shown. St. Stephen's remained the Chapel of this College (which was a thorn in the flesh of the Abbot of Westminster) until the Reformation. In 1547 the Commons were housed in it, and here they stayed until the Fire of 1834.

From 1347 to 1547, the chapel has no architectural history, and from 1547 to 1834 the alterations made to it can be very easily summed up. Perennial attempts were made to adapt a building, built for an entirely different purpose, to the needs of the Commons. The roof had to be taken lower and lower, until Wren drastically removed *the whole clerestory of the Chapel* (some time between 1690 and 1707). His work is the first which needs note. Before that, what was done was to attempt to disguise the remnants of 'Popery' by taking out the stained glass windows, and hiding the

* The present writer was asked to make the Chapel an object of special research, because of this lingering mystery. But his conclusions must be tentative, until other minds have had the opportunity of weighing the facts he has collected. They are put forward in that spirit, without dogmatism.

paintings and carvings with tapestry and hangings. It can be presumed that Wren first built the gallery to accommodate the extra members at the Union with Scotland. He gave the whole Chamber a firmly classical superficies, inserting an interior shell of wooden panelling. The gallery was supported on Corinthian columns, and three round-headed windows replaced whatever had remained before of the old east window.

Thus the Chamber remained until the year 1800, and the Union with Ireland. Then one hundred additional members had to be admitted, and the Surveyor-General, James Wyatt, had the, perhaps impossible, task of 'stretching' the building to include them. He set about this in the most ruthless fashion possible.* He took down the old, thick walls and built thinner ones, making this the excuse for much vandalism. Further, he rebuilt the east end externally, and added adjacent buildings in a spurious bastard 'Gothic' of his own. However amusing, and not without charm, Fonthill Gothic may appear, its attempted incorporation with real mediæval craftsmanship turned even contemporary stomachs.

The interior he put back as he had found it; so that, to all intents, it remained the 'Wren' Chamber until the end. This came with the Fire of 1834, and, curiously enough, it was 'the end' in two senses. For no further change has ever taken place in the two subsequent Commons' Chambers, apart from certain detail and the addition of such amenities as artificial lighting, heating and ventilation. The actual space dimensions were increased in Barry's Chamber, but not to a great extent. Barry's plans for a different type of Chamber were rejected *in toto*, and he was reluctantly forced to build something as like St. Stephen's as possible; while Sir Giles Gilbert Scott has been restricted to Barry's floor dimensions.

There is a good reason for all this. The explanation of Barry's Chamber is simply that the country at large—which now liked Gothic architecture—had discovered that the Commons had, quite unremarked, been sitting for centuries *in a Gothic chapel* disguised as a Renaissance meeting-house. The consequence was that they now had to sit in something as much like a Gothic Chapel as possible. The 'Italianate'-loving Barry was therefore forced to rebuild Wren's massively classical Chamber with violently ecclesiastical appendages—church windows, niches for Saints, etc. And the explanation of Sir Giles Gilbert Scott's Chamber is equally simple: he has 'de-ecclesiasticized' Barry's Chamber, on his own lines.

The 'true inwardness' of the Commons' entry into St. Stephen's now needs succinctly stating. It is that, in 1547, the *House went into a College Chapel.* The members sat down in the stalls of the Choir, which now, instead of being called *Decani* (on the Dean's side) and *Cantoris* (on the Precentor's side), became 'the Government' and 'the Opposition', because people of like views tend naturally to sit together. Those who agreed with nobody sat in the return-stalls, now called 'crossbenches'. A member (temp. 1547) sitting in the House could look towards the east end of the Chapel, and could see there the Speaker in his Chair on the steps of the altar, with the Table in front of him, where once the lectern had stood. And looking westwards he could see the Roodloft and Choir screen, the other side of which he would know to have been formerly the ante-chapel, but which now, by a mere change of term, was called 'the Lobby'.

In other words, the House of Commons took over what was given to them—a College chapel divided into a choir and an ante-chapel. By a mere change of *names*, it made the formal arrangements of the building part of its own nature—even to adopting (for ever it seems) the exiguous dimensions of the original because it gave an intimate atmosphere to the proceedings of this assembly. More than this, by never changing its seating arrangements, the House has moulded the British Constitution. A two-party system of government is not inevitable, as French politics show, but it is startling to realize how completely we now take it for granted. The House does not, as a legislative assembly, have to sit on two sides facing one another. It chooses to do so. This is the fundamental explanation of both Barry's Chamber, and that of Sir Giles Gilbert Scott.

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4 a study in place history: St. Stephen's

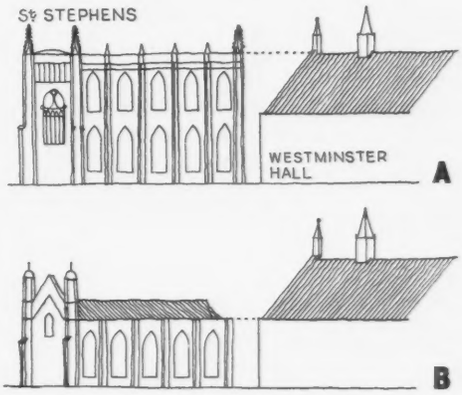
commentary by J. M. Hastings

The Sainte Chapelle

18

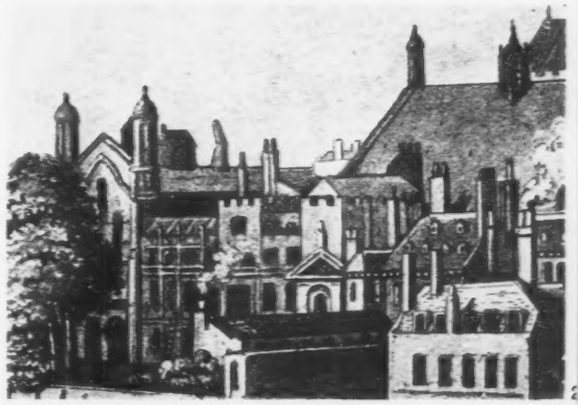
The inspiration of St. Stephen's—the Sainte Chapelle, 18, before restoration, showing the embryo Perpendicular Style in the form of mullions descending a short way down the walls. (Drawn by Thomas Shotter Boys in 1836.)

Disappearance of the clerestory



A, St. Stephen's in relation to Westminster Hall before the eighteenth century. B, the same after c. 1700.

1



19, Hollar's 'Parlament House.' The balance of the building has been spoiled by the loss of that top part cut off during the 100 years between Wyngaerde and Hollar (see page 165). With it have gone the fliers of the flying buttresses, dimly seen in Wyngaerde's sketch. But the clerestory remains. This was later taken down by Wren as the picture, 20, of 1803 and the diagrams A and B show. In 18, Wyatt's scaffolding is up, to the right of the Chapel, inside where all eyes are on France, for Napoleon is about to proclaim himself First Consul.

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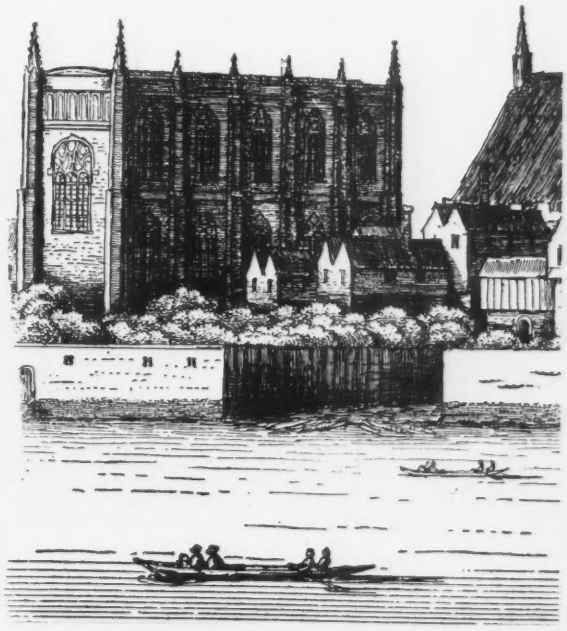

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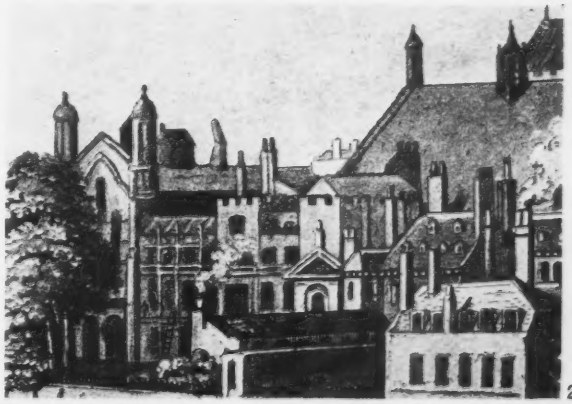

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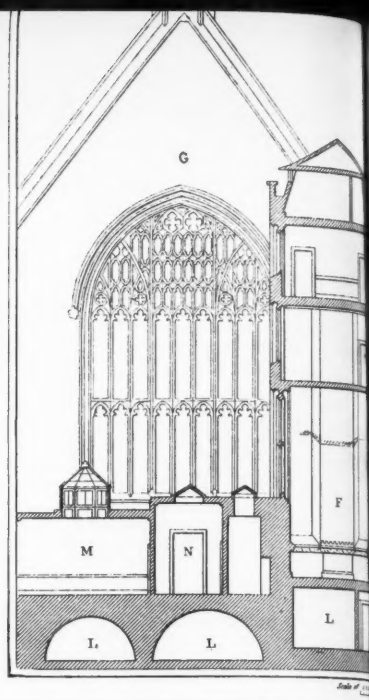
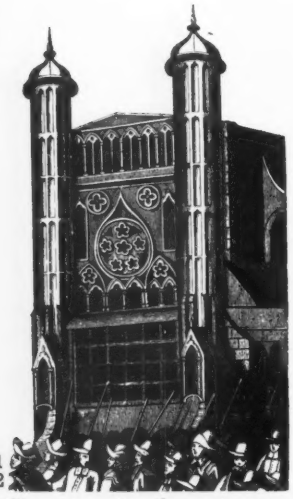
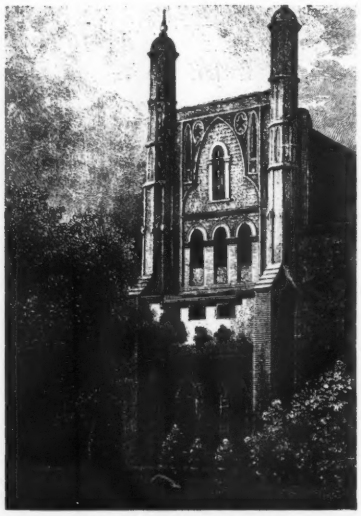


From chapel to chamber



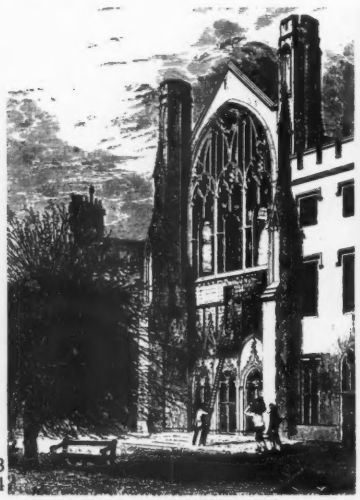


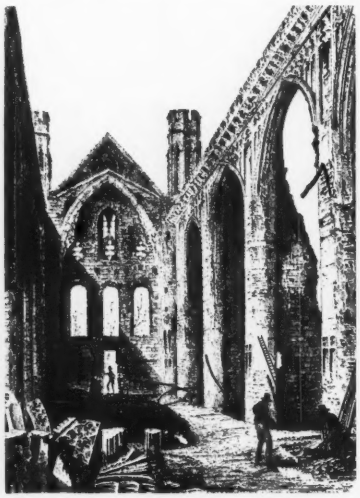
21
22

21, a seventeenth century engraving indicating roughly how the east end of St. Stephen's looked before, 22, its appearance in the eighteenth century, between 1707 (at latest) and 1800. Note Wren's three semicircular headed windows. The extraordinary trefoil headed arch is not a part of the old blocked up east window. The niches above are genuine. The tops of the corner towers are not.

25

25, looking from the roof of the Painted Chamber straight into Mr. Bellamy's, the Housekeeper's, windows. We see how he lived tucked away inside the arches of windows of the ancient chapel, with the Chamber below him. This was drawn soon after Nelson's death at Trafalgar.



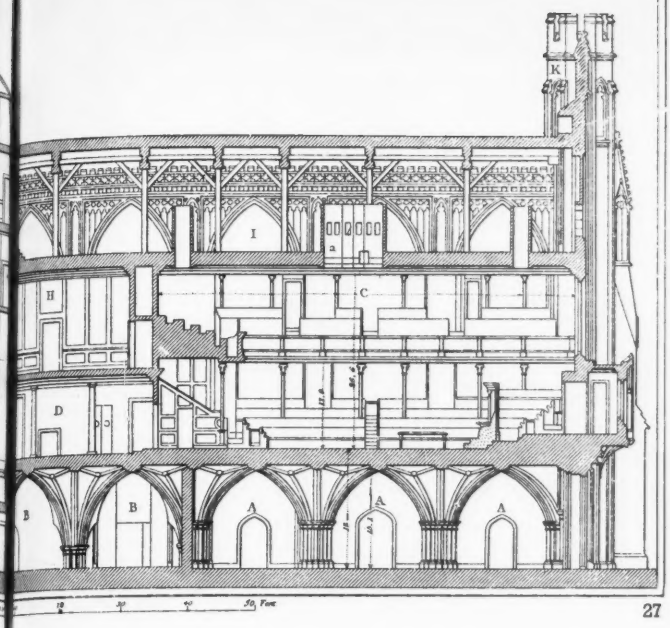


23
24

23 shows what Wyatt did (c. 1801), and comment is needless. Only the faint lines below the east window are genuine mediæval work and are the last remains of the *descending mullions*. 24, how the House of Commons looked immediately after the Fire of 1834. The chapel at long last sees the light of day again.

26

26, St. Stephen's from beyond the east end of the Painted Chamber. What is missing is the mediæval 'Alura,' or Alley (meaning the King's two-storeyed passage way) running between the two buildings. The King's Pew was outside the last window on the right.



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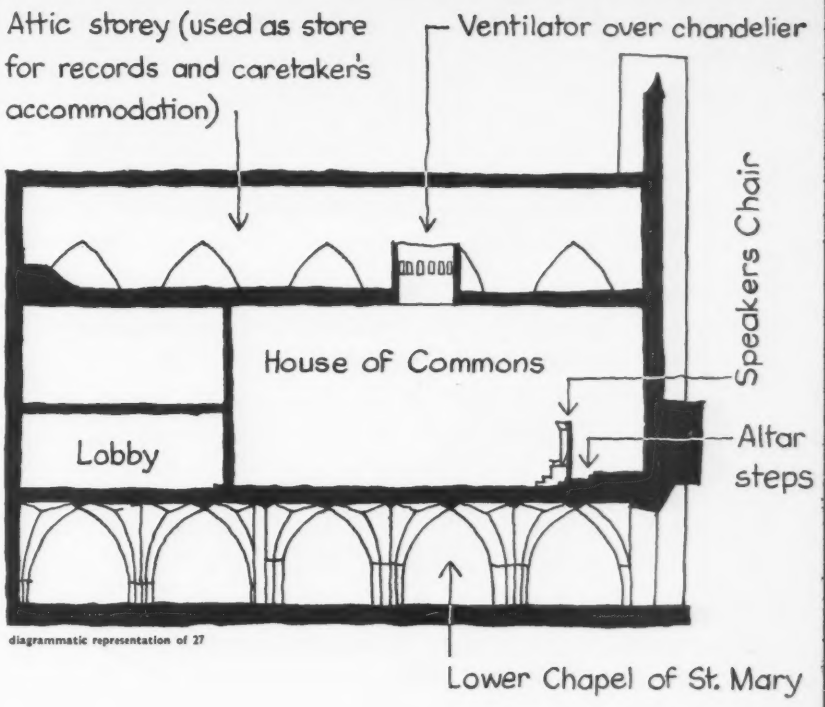
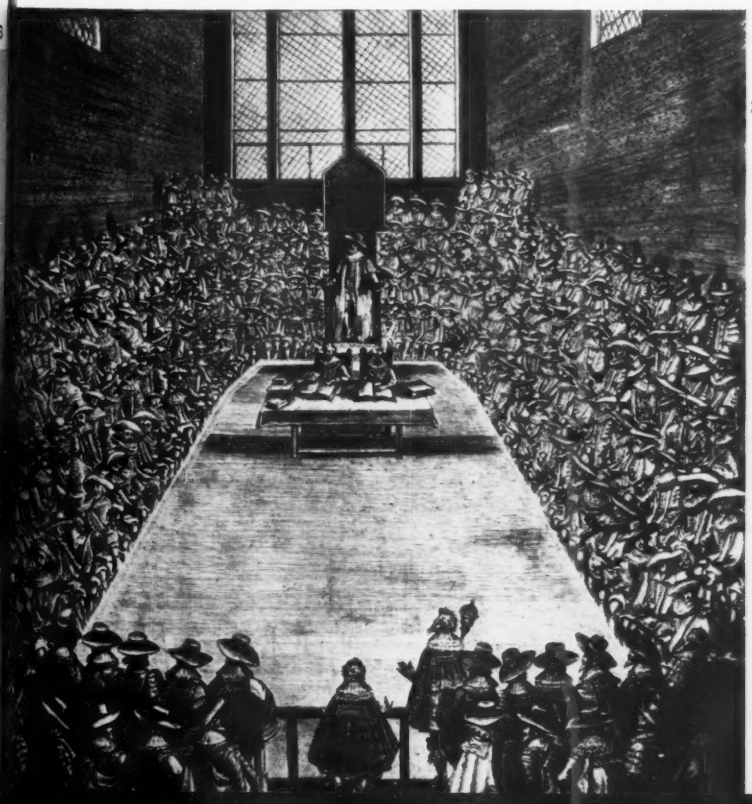


diagrammatic representation of 27

27, a measured drawing showing how the Chamber of the Commons was fitted inside the chapel, drawn after Wyatt's alterations (c. 1801). It is highly important. Wyatt altered nothing inside, he merely replaced 3 ft. walls by 1 ft. walls and then replaced the panelling. First, we see the height of the post-Wren Chapel as compared with Westminster Hall. Comparison with Hollar's and Wyngaerde's drawings helps to prove the former existence of a clerestory, a fact denied by all, including Lethaby. Next, two bays from the west end we see how the pulpitum of the Chapel divided the Lobby from the Chamber. We see the position of the Speaker's Chair cut to fit the altar steps. The pathetic top portion shows how the main window arches looked in 1347, before even Edward III had started alterations, by adding a pulpitum and stalls for the Dean and canons. 28, the House in session in the seventeenth century. Someone is kneeling at the Bar being reprimanded by the Speaker. It is interesting as showing indications of the altar steps rising under the carpet. The walls are not wainscotted but hung with tapestry. The stalls of the chapel are extended towards the east end to accommodate members. There are no galleries. The Royal Arms are faintly discernible over the Speaker; therefore this picture was drawn before the Civil War. The impression created of the Chamber is misleading. It is made to look far too big, no doubt to add importance and dignity. 29, the Great Seal of the Commonwealth of 1651 gives a wonderful idea of the original 'chapel' atmosphere. Though, by counting heads, the number of members present is ludicrously inadequate, yet the impression produced is quite accurate. This *is* the House sitting. This is the atmosphere which the House has always been determined to retain.



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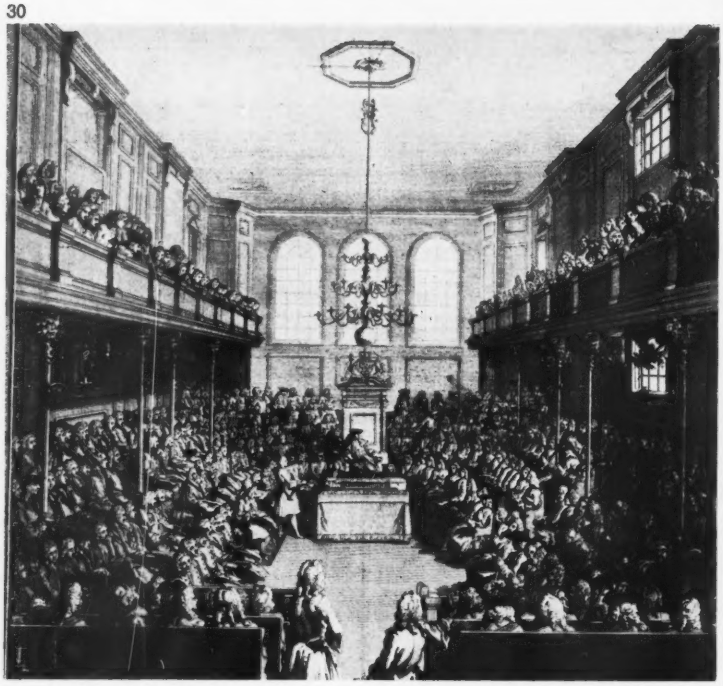
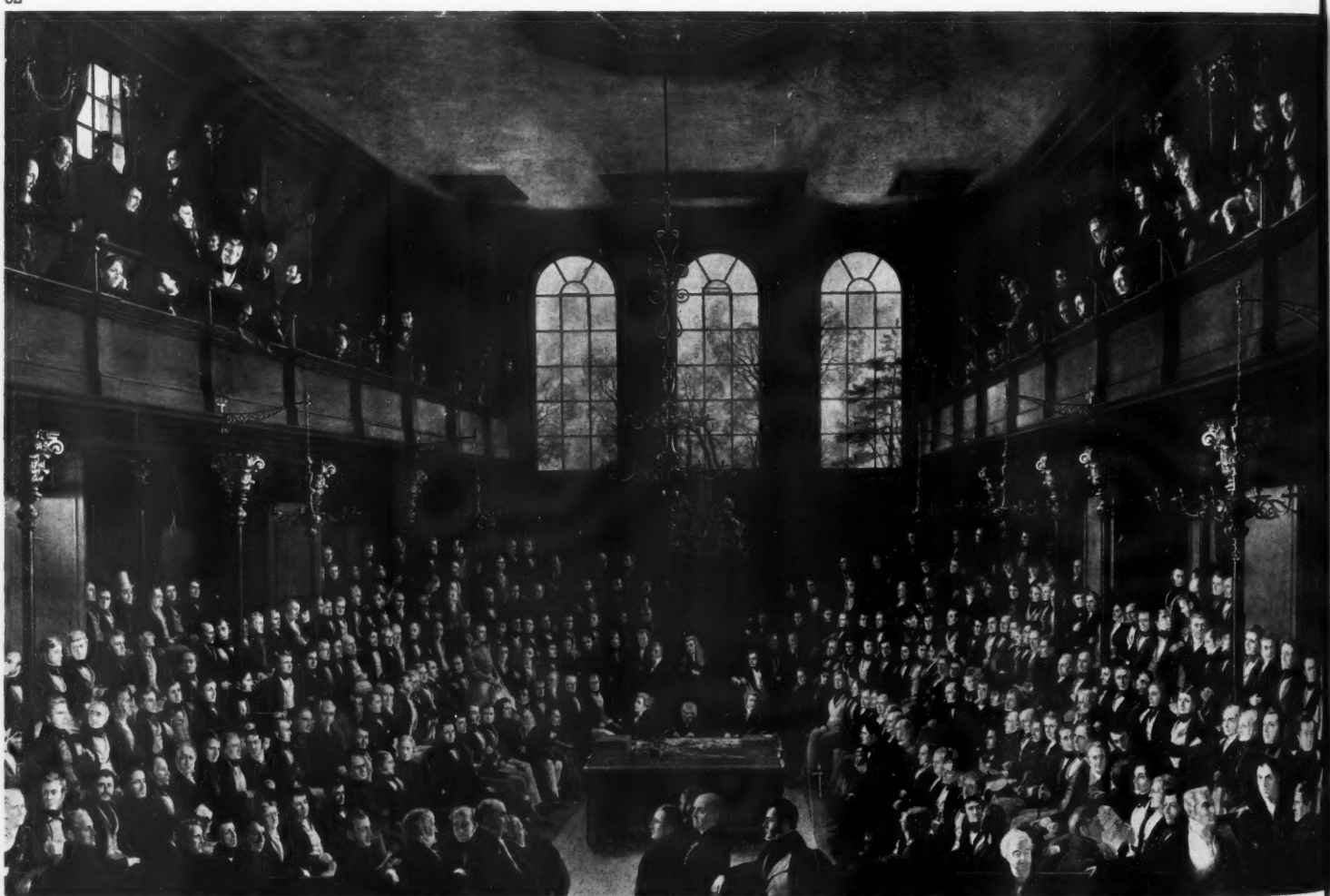


31

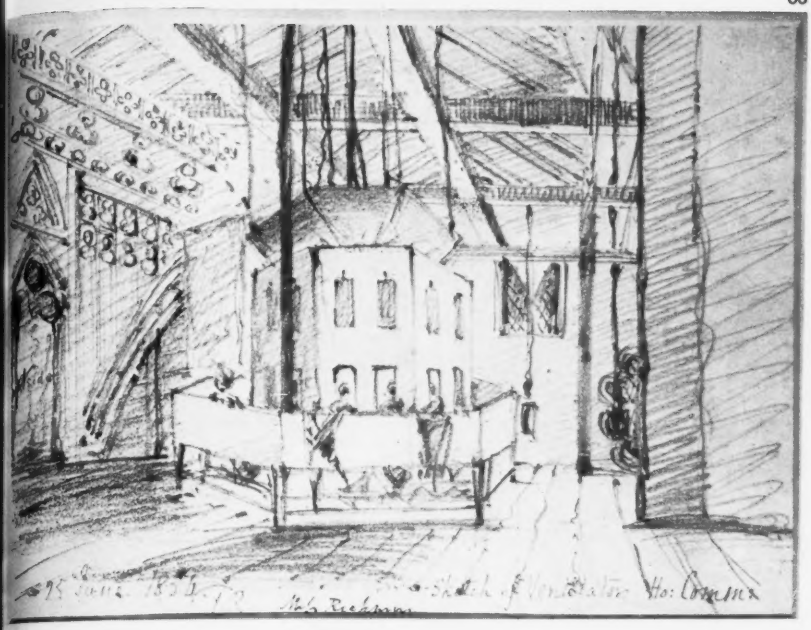
30, the session of 1741 showing Wren's Chamber. The famous Speaker Onslow is in the Chair, and Robert Walpole is addressing the House. Onslow should never be forgotten. The Lords' officer, Black Rod, tried to treat the Mace (the Commons' symbol of authority from the King) with disrespect. Onslow told the Lord Chancellor that if he did not call Black Rod off, he would take the Commons back to their own place—that is to say no Acts of Parliament would be passed. The Chancellor instantly apologized and all was well. 31, 'Dr. Syntax' on a visit to Wyatt's Chamber early in the nineteenth century.

32



32, a magnificent painting by Sir Charles Haytor, of the first reformed Parliament sitting in 1833 in Wyatt's Chamber. Every figure is a portrait. Wellington is there, with Macaulay, the young Gladstone, Peel, Grey and William Cobbett. There is no change from Wren's Chamber, except that the thinner walls have thrown into prominence the hidden piers of the original Chapel. Also another grating has been inserted over the great candelabrum.

33



33 is the ventilator over the candelabrum of the previous pictures. Seats were put round for ladies to sit and peep down into the House below. Lord Brougham said that he liked to see ladies in their proper place, but that a legislature was not one of such places. And everybody heartily agreed. This was in 1836. In less than a hundred years they had become M.P.s. This very interesting sketch shows the remains of the Chapel as they appeared in the attic storey above the ceiling of the Chamber. We see the early Perpendicular work in the spandrel of the window arch. The apparent doorway to the left is a niche to hold a statue six feet high. Above it is the great upper parapet of the chapel, of three orders, carved with exquisite skill. Its prototype can still be seen on top of the Choir screen (parclose) in Canterbury Cathedral. Almost certainly the same hands carved both.

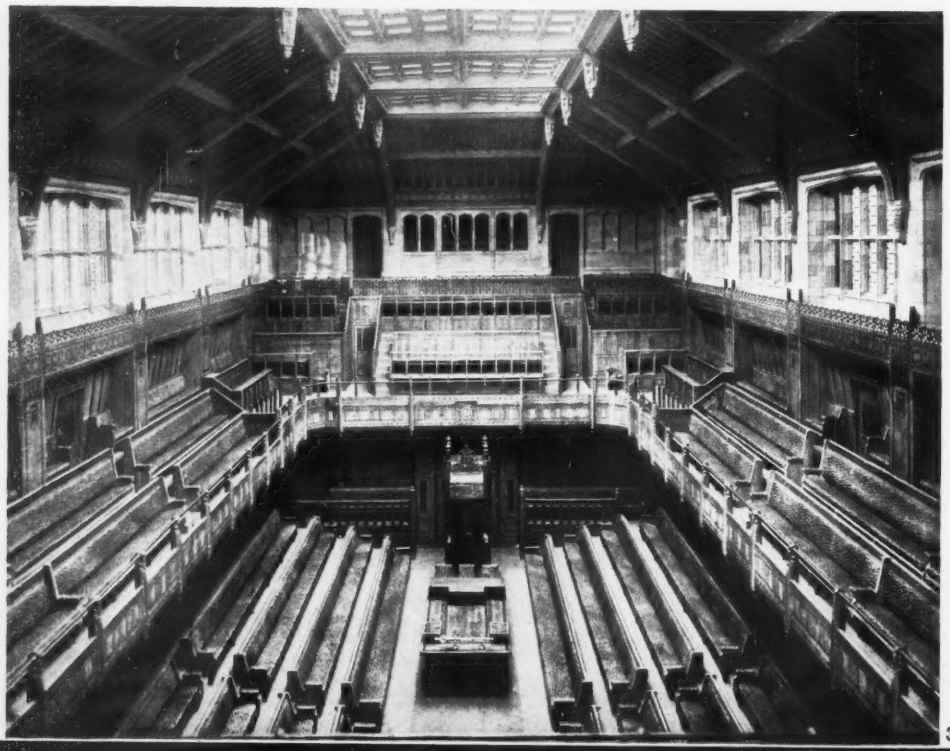
Chamber to corridor

35

34

34, St. Stephen's Hall as it is today—a pathetic travesty of the original St. Stephen's. It is exactly on the original site, and of the same dimensions (compare with 35, a view towards the same end after the fire of 1834). The original position of the Speaker's Chair and the Table is indicated by brass studs in the floor. The statue of Lord Mansfield marks the line of the entry into the Chamber from the Lobby—that is where the ancient Choir screen or pulpitum (a screen with a loft over it) stood. We can thus see how small the Chamber was. Everything about the supposedly 'Gothic' ornamentation is highly offensive. The statues in the corner, one above another, strike precisely the wrong note. That is not the Court Style of London. It is very French but not the French of Westminster. All the detail is open to similar criticism. The effect produced by the statuary ordered by the Fine Arts Commission is laughable; after the straightforwardness of Wren, and the relative sanity of Wyatt, the effect is particularly depressing.

36



37

The new site for the Commons

This is the end of the story, and if the result is a failure artistically, the foregoing may give some explanation of why. Here is the Chamber of the House of Commons, with all its past history packed, somewhat ludicrously, into its detail. In Barry's version, 36, what faces us, above the Speaker's Chair, are details from St. Stephen's Cloister. Wren's Gallery has 'gone Gothic' in a trumpery manner. The columns supporting it are covered with spots, because the Purbeck columns of the original Chapel had applied gesso-work, gilded. The ceiling might be called 'Barry's Despair.' It broke his heart. The Commons made him lower the ceiling to improve the acoustics, and thereby cut off the tops of the windows. He never spoke of the Chamber again, and never entered it unless forced to do so. 37 is a photograph looking north in the model of Sir Giles Gilbert Scott's Chamber. A comparison of these two pictures shows in what sense he has 'tidied up' the Barry version of St. Stephen's. He has removed 'ecclesiastical' ornament and replaced so-called Gothic by Tudor Domestic. This is certainly preferable to the style which was forced on Barry. That style was nothing more than a 'classical' interior with applied 'Gothic' ornamentation. It would have been gilding the lily with a vengeance to have made any attempt to develop on such lines. To have replaced the Wren interior would have clashed with the rest of the Palace, and with the exterior of the Chamber itself. To have been logical would have been to rebuild a Gothic chapel *in toto*, in the light of modern knowledge about St. Stephen's. But this would have been quite absurd, because, ever since 1547, the House has been trying to pretend *not* to be sitting in a chapel, as the foregoing illustrations show. To build something entirely new was ruled out at the beginning. Therefore the best approach to the new Chamber is to regard it as a chimera—a fascinating monstrosity, but one which has a *raison d'être*. Once that is understood the mind can turn to the examination of how, in detail, Sir Giles Gilbert Scott has solved the problem of giving the Commons increased physical comfort and much more space without destroying the ancient feeling of being inside St. Stephen's; a feeling which survived the migration to Barry's Chamber, and which the House is determined to retain in its new home.

5 client's eye view by Tom Driberg

It is often forgotten in the enthusiasm over the House of Commons as a symbol, that it is also a place where Members of Parliament debate, write, read, eat, interview, telephone, meet in committee and dictate letters. In the following article Tom Driberg (MP for Maldon) considers both the old and the new House of Commons from the point of view of these essential considerations. The article is accompanied by diagrams, explaining the ingenious and complicated methods which have been devised to meet the needs of members, staff, reporters and strangers.

On my first day as a Member of Parliament, I remember, I gave my finger a nasty jab on one of the ornamental spikes of the gothic brasswork surrounding the handle of a heavy swing-door.

It was a trivial incident, but an appropriate introduction to the most maddeningly inconvenient and indeed anti-functional building that it has ever been my lot to work in.

The modern MP is overworked, anyway; and when the two sides of the House are closely matched, and divisions threaten, he cannot escape to work elsewhere. His efficiency is probably diminished by one-third by the archaic unfitness of what should be his workshop.

A constituent calls to talk over some urgent private problem. In remote corners of the Palace of Westminster there are a few small interviewing rooms; but, unless he cares to waste perhaps seven or eight minutes in walking to and from one of them, the average MP will do what most of his fellows do—squat uneasily with his visitor on a 'sofa' ledge just off the Central Lobby* and talk against a distracting babel from the passing legislators, officials, strangers, colonial deputations, and flocks of schoolgirls being shown round.

In the same way, once or twice a day, he will usually confer with and dictate to his private secretary. She, poor girl, probably has to come in all weathers, carrying files and folders, from some inaccessible spot outside the Palace altogether, where a dozen or more secretaries work at small tables in a dark room that would have seemed old-fashioned to a City merchant of the early Forsyte period.

If the MP wants to do some writing or reading, he goes into the library. This is a series of five lofty rooms stretching along the river front of the Palace one floor above the terrace level. It is, in its way, a splendid set of rooms: the carpets are thick; the chairs are covered in fine green leather, stamped in gold with the Westminster portcullis; the bookshelves run to within six feet of the ceiling; above them are panels of green brocade in heavily carved frames. The file of *The Times* rests on a mahogany table provided by Sir Christopher Wren. It is a quiet place to work in (but for the division-bells, the messenger with the green card indicating that someone has called to see you, the messenger with the pink slip indicating that someone wants you on the telephone, the periodic ticking of the annunciator recording that at 3.50 your colleagues in the Chamber had reached Clause 3, Page 3, Line 32, the honking of river traffic saluting you as it passes, the colleague who says, 'Excuse me, old boy, but who's PPS to the Financial Secretary to the War Office?' the colleague who says 'Do come up to Room Twelve for half-an-hour—we've got Dr. Jumbo-Mumbo speaking to the Tropical Malnutrition Group, and nobody's turned up,' and the agitated Whip who wants you to help 'make a House' because old so-and-so's 'up' and everyone's trooped out for a drink).

It is, superficially, a quiet, or rather a 'hushed,' resort; but here more than anywhere, perhaps, the MP realizes the truth of the old dictum that Parliament is 'a place where you can neither work nor rest.' There is room for only a few score of the 625 MPs to sit at the massive tables (laden with artistic metal stationery-racks, green-shaded lamps, Pugin penwipers, letter-scales, flagons of gum, bottles of water for moistening stamps, and sealing-wax lamps, always flickering behind their shields, like sanctuary-lamps beside a Tractarian aumbry). There are easy chairs for barely a dozen to read or snooze in. There is practically nowhere else in the whole building to rest during the purgatorial ordeal of an all-night sitting.

All this is nobody's fault—least of all that of such functionaries as the Serjeant-at-Arms or the Minister of Works, who do their utmost for the comfort of the Members (always a pernickety lot).

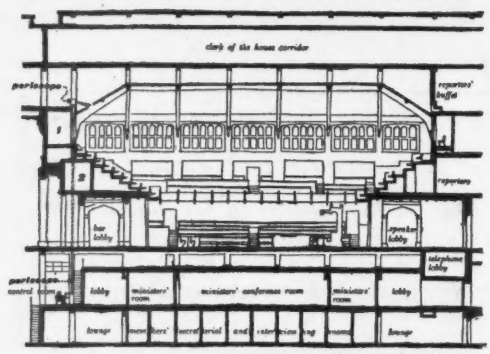
Nor was it the fault of Sir Charles Barry, architect of the building completed in 1852. His vast and numinous Palace, 'all glorious within,' with its eleven hundred rooms and two miles of corridors, its quaint turret staircases, its smells of bad drains and bad cooking, its statuary and louvres and diapering, was, as a French admirer said, a '*mélange de finesse et de grandeur*'—a suitably rich stage-setting for the leisurely legislation and refined intrigue of a century ago. The MP of those days was not, as now, a universal welfare officer with a mailbag of fifty or more letters a day and a cheap room in a Bloomsbury hotel: he was a gentleman who strolled 'down to St. Stephen's,' from his town house or his club in St. James's, to defend the landed interests and gossip for an hour.

Even by May 10, 1941, this modern intensification and speeding-up had begun to set in. On that night German bombers destroyed the Commons Chamber. So, for nearly a decade, the modern MP, busier than his predecessors ever were—working since 1945 especially under unexampled pressure—has had less space, fewer facilities and amenities than were even allowed by Barry.

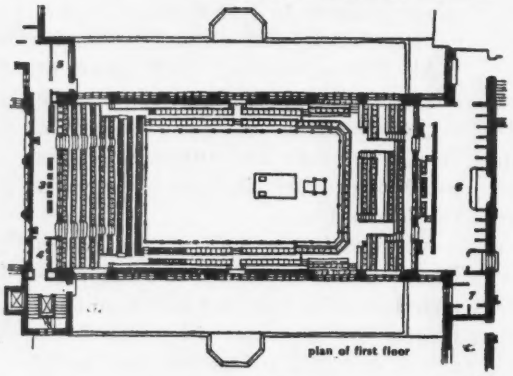
It seems providential that Westminster Hall—directly adjacent to the gutted Chamber and the most ancient (1097), historic, and majestic part of the Palace—was spared in the air-raids. Save for this, some have thought that it would have been well had the whole place been razed—that the Barry-Pugin pile can never accommodate a twentieth-century legislature. In the

* Usually so called: its proper name is the Central Hall.

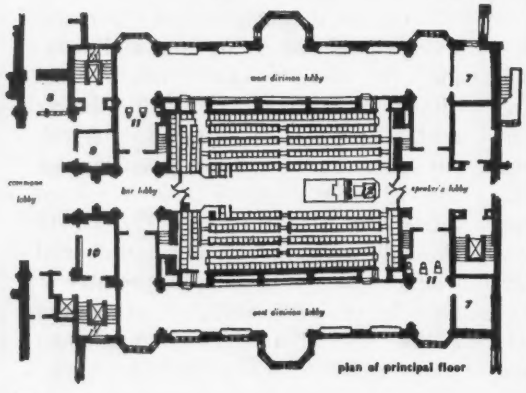
planning of the new House of Commons



longitudinal section through new chamber



plan of first floor

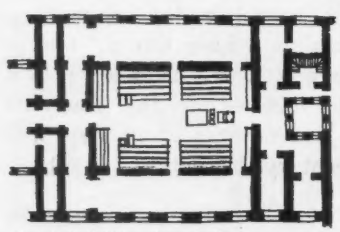


plan of principal floor

key

1, ordinary strangers' lobby. 2, special strangers' lobby. 3, annunciator. 4, speaker's special gallery. 5, annunciator's transmitter room. 6, upper reporters' room showing telephone and cable room. 7, lavatories. 8, post office. 9, head doorkeeper. 10, vote issue office. 11, division boxes. 12, speaker's chair.

Extra rooms have been provided in the reconstruction of the House of Commons by the addition of three floors. Two are in the vertical space of 27 ft. below the floor of the old chamber, where its heating and ventilating apparatus was housed (see Section on p. 181). On these floors there are committee and Ministers' rooms, and rooms for secretaries and interviewing. The third floor, for the Clerk of the House and his staff, is over the top of the new House. Accommodation in the chamber has been increased from 802 to 939, chiefly by a replanning and extension of the galleries. The new floor of the House is of exactly the same dimensions as the old, though there have been slight changes in the adjoining rooms and division lobbies. For the purposes of comparison, Barry's plan is reproduced below to a smaller scale. (At the south end of the longitudinal section is the periscope, which, by transmitting a view from the ceiling of the Chamber to the control room in the basement, permits advance estimates to be made of changes in population, and, consequently, a closer adjustment of temperature and humidity than is possible with thermostats only —for further details of air-conditioning see p. 181.)



plan of principal floor of Barry's chamber

wartime debate on the rebuilding, Mr. Maxton and his friends even suggested that a new Parliament House should be built right out of London—a kind of Middlesex Canberra.

Such notions did not commend themselves to a House most of whose Members, in all parties, are strictly conservative in these matters. There was general acceptance of the view that the Chamber must be rebuilt more or less as it had been and, in particular, of Mr. Churchill's two propositions (one of constitutional, the other of dramatic significance): that the new Chamber, like the old, must be oblong, not circular; that it must not be so big that all the Members could sit down in it at once.

Within the framework of this general directive, the Select Committee and the Committee's select architect, Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, must have had formidable problems to face. These problems seem to have been dealt with so successfully that there is little doubt that the new Chamber and its incidental offices will seem a Utopia of spaciousness and comfort to MPs habituated to the conditions that I have described.

The least fundamental of the problems must have been one of the stickiest: the style to be adopted. This is an extract from Sir Giles's report to the Committee on this problem:—

'At present we have no traditional style that is characteristic of our times. Modernism looks as if it might develop into such a style but at present it has no tradition behind it, being the product of a revolution rather than of evolution; it throws over everything and starts again from nothing. It . . . lacks depth and quality. . . . Its vocabulary is very limited. . . . It is . . . too mechanistic, being frankly based on the beauties of the machine rather than nature, which has always been, and surely must always be, the basis of all art. Whether it will develop a quality in, say, fifty or a hundred years, time alone will show.

'. . . the style adopted should be in sympathy with the rest of the structure, even if it has to differ in some degree in order to achieve a better quality of design. The gothic detail of the old Chamber was lifeless and uninteresting, and the richness was spread evenly over the whole area without relief or contrasts. It has been our endeavour to remedy this. . . .'

Pure 'modernism' would, no doubt, have looked uncouth in the middle of the Barry building—like a single ivory tooth in a denture of gold. I confess that I personally found some of the architect's views, and his expression of them, distasteful; yet I must also confess that, the moment I set foot in the new Chamber, still cluttered as it was with workmen's paraphernalia, I was greatly pleased and impressed. Even then, it had a serenity, a robustness, and a certain homeliness—all, in combination, peculiarly English, peculiarly Parliamentary, true to the nature of the Commons Chamber and of the debates therein, which must in general be *parleys*, not Demosthenean set-pieces nor Passion plays. (We are ill-suited to the crimson grandeur of the Lords' Chamber, which we have been occupying these past few years.)

The general colour scheme is a restful brown and green. By tradition, the Commons benches are upholstered in green; the oak is dark, but not what Sir Giles rightly calls 'the unpleasant dark varnished colour of the old House.' In the design of the oakwork, here and in the lobbies, there is 'a concentration of ornament to form horizontal bands of enrichment, with contrasting plain areas.' The craftsmanship seemed to me excellent; my only criticism would be that there is a certain sameness in the detail of the ornament. More variations—a few carved jokes, even—would have been welcome, and gothic.

The roof of the Chamber is 'a shaped ceiling.' It is dignified, and not oppressive. The carpets (except for the green one on the floor of the Chamber) are of mottled brown fawn. I should like to have been able to see permanently some of the floors, which are in pleasant Australian walnut blocks.

One important, and welcome, difference from the old Chamber is in the windows. They are more domestic in type, less depressingly ecclesiastical. I do not, however, like the palely tinted panes in the windows of the restored Members' lobby: I should have preferred clear white glass, diversified perhaps by occasional coats-of-arms. (These may yet be put in: they are envisaged in Sir Giles's report.)

Most welcome of all, to MPs who have been penned for, altogether, many days in the narrow, fetid division-

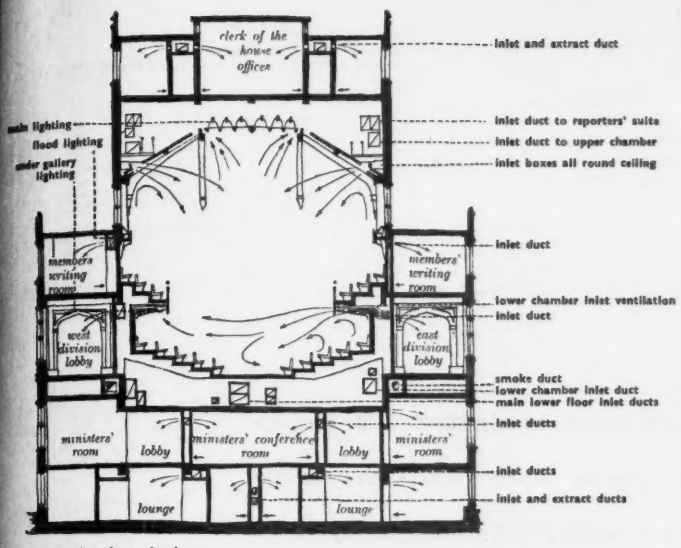
38

The New Chamber *looking north along the east wall of the chamber. There are machine-operated sun blinds which rise from below the window cills. In the east gallery the two centre rows in the lower two tiers of seats are for members, the rows in the foreground and the top tier are for special strangers. Beyond the barrier are seats for reporters. The photograph was taken before the upholstered seating was placed in position. The opening in the north wall, below the roof, leads to the upper reporters' room.* 39, *a detail of the roof showing air inlets, and below, the stone screen in the south wall of the chamber. Behind this end of the screen is the Speaker's special gallery.* 40, *looking south from behind the Speaker's chair. The opening in the background leads to the Commons Lobby, and is framed, on the lobby side, by the Churchill arch, part of the old House of Commons which has been left with its scars from fire and high explosive unrestored. With the exception of the Speaker's Chair* (see 40, also page 205, No. 6) *which is made of Black Bean, the woodwork throughout the chamber is English Oak, the coffered ceiling panelling being bolted direct to the concrete. Although the new chamber is not yet completed, in view of its special importance it is illustrated here in the unfinished state.*

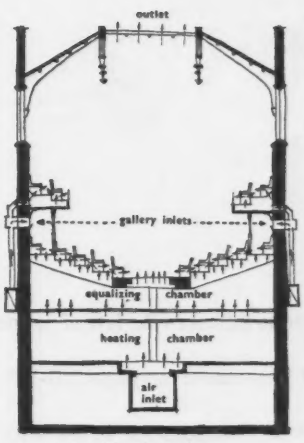
39
40

The New Chamber *looking south from the back of the reporters' end of the gallery. The main artificial lighting of the chamber is from behind glass panels in the centre portion of the ceiling.*

air-conditioning in the new and old chambers compared



cross section of new chamber



cross section of Barry's chamber

In view of the varying conditions in different parts of the House, at different times, eight separate air-conditioning plants are provided. Each one consists of preheating coils, viscous oil filters, electrostatic precipitation filters, an air cooler using brine, air heaters using hot water, humidifying jets and a fan. The aim is to keep the temperature of the new Chamber at 67°F. in winter and a little higher in summer, and the relative humidity at 50-60 per cent. In order to correspond as nearly as possible with natural conditions the air travels horizontally and not vertically as it did formerly (see the section alongside). In the lower part of the Chamber, air is introduced from one side, while it is cut off from the other, and vice versa. This avoids the unpleasant effect of a continuous air current and condition of turbulence if the two streams were to meet in the middle.

lobbies of the Lords' Chamber, is the ample width of the new ones.

Another problem was to use this opportunity for providing more space for MPs' incidental, extra-cameral activities. Here again, to an MP, the architect seems to have been remarkably ingenious. Without causing any unsightly obtrusion above the general roof-level of the Palace, he has given us a new building on five floors. It is not a Chamber only: it contains also various sets of necessary offices—offices for the Clerks of the House, Ministers' rooms, conference rooms, interviewing rooms for Members and their secretaries, lounges, reporters' rooms and bars, and much else.

It is impossible to calculate how much time and shoe-leather we shall save simply because all these offices will now be concentrated near each other instead of scattered in various parts of the Palace.

When one comes to what Mr. Stokes, the Minister of Works, colloquially calls 'the guts of the business'—the arrangements for lighting, heating, ventilation, and plumbing—I can give only the most inexpert and cursory account.

There has always been trouble about these essentials in the past. It was, after all, the primitive heating system—the use of Exchequer tallies as fuel—which caused the great fire of 1834.

Until 1913, the Palace was lit by gas. The Victorian lobbies must have looked, in a way, rather fine: at each corner of a lobby was a twelve-foot-high gothic brass standard, 'rising from a moulded plinth, coloured to represent black marble,' surmounted by 'a highly wrought coronal' for the flaring jets. In the Chamber, however, this illumination seems to have been inadequate. There were pendent chandeliers of bronze 'for gas on Faraday's principles,' which could be lowered or raised; but an oculist who inspected them officially in 1912 reported that they, with other lamps, 'light up the faces of Members so that they can be seen by the Speaker,' but were not 'situated in the best position to enable Members on the back benches to read.'

In the last century it was said that the House had 'a perfect system of ventilation.' It was 'on Dr. Reid's principle: the fresh warm air passing upwards through the perforated floor. . . .'

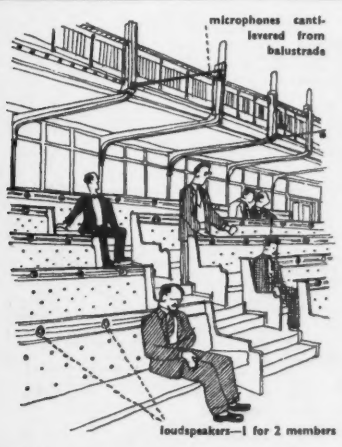
In time it came to be realized that this system was not so 'perfect' after all. It was, indeed, grossly unhygienic—for dirt carried in on the Members' boots 'became incorporated in the uprising air currents.'

For the new House, Dr. Oscar Faber has designed a scheme of heating and ventilation which the Select Committee believe to be 'the best which modern science can devise.' There seems to have been a tussle between Dr. Faber and the Committee on the question of open windows. The Committee, like all conservative Englishmen, wanted windows that would open. Dr. Faber won the main point: the windows in the Chamber will be sealed. No doubt at some inconvenience to himself, he made one minor concession: the windows in the division lobbies can be opened.

On the whole, this is the most important aspect of the new building. 'Atmosphere' is a crucial element in environment. The new Chamber, we are told, will have 'all the atmospheric conditions of a warm spring day out of doors.'

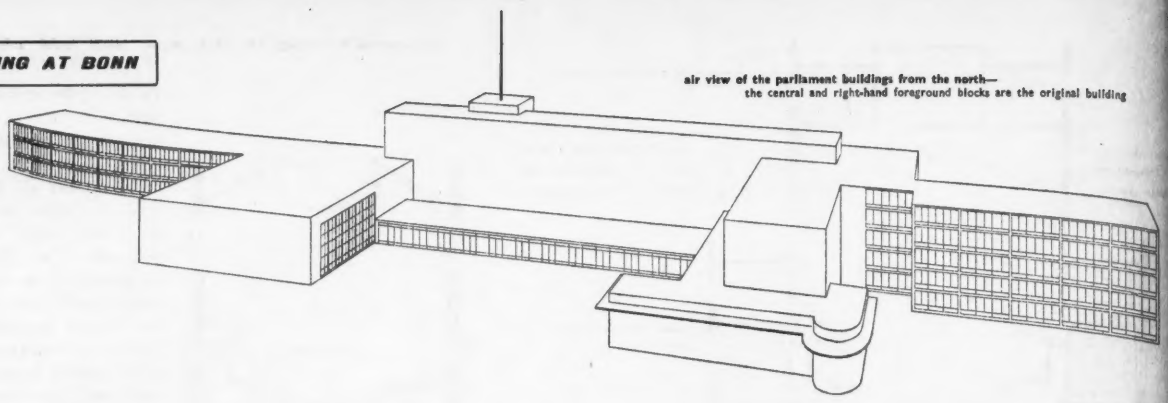
This is indeed something to look forward to. Men are largely the product of their environment. It may well be that Dr. Faber will be conditioning not only the air that politicians breathe but also their tempers and outlook, which should, in this vernal balminess, become steadily more harmonious.

It would be strange if one indirect result of the bombing in 1941 were the inculcation in the Westminster lobbies of the spirit of universal tolerance, peace, and love.



sound *A sound amplification system is provided in the form of one loudspeaker for each two members, situated in the back of the seats; microphones are placed at intervals on arms which are cantilevered out from the base of the galleries. These can be turned on and off according to the position of the member who is speaking.*

PARLIAMENT BUILDING AT BONN

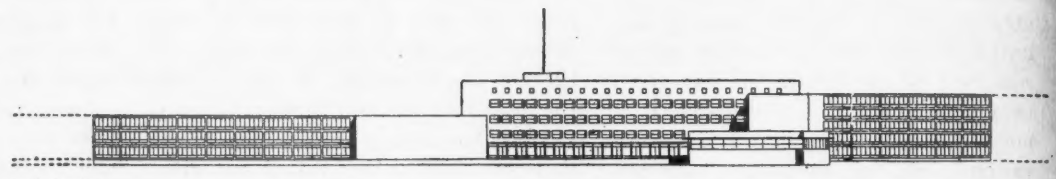


air view of the parliament buildings from the north—
the central and right-hand foreground blocks are the original building

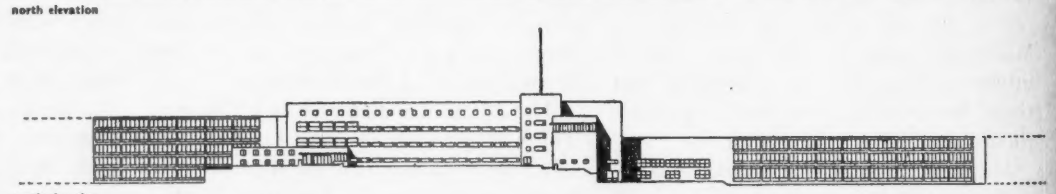
Nowhere else, it seems, does architecture so influence the fate of nations as in its parliament buildings. J. M. Hastings has shown, in his study of the Palace of Westminster on pages 161-176, that even our two-party system can be largely attributed to the fact that the House of Commons sat in the stalls of a converted chapel and that subsequent re-buildings of the chamber have followed the same model. How the planning of the chamber of the lower house (*Bundestag*) in the new temporary parliament building of the Federal Republic of Germany is influencing what goes on inside it was described in a recent article in *The New Statesman and Nation*.* This building, an extension of one originally part of Bonn University, is illustrated on the pages that follow.

* Picture of Bonn. 1, Talking to the Gallery, *by Peter de Mendelssohn, from* The New Statesman and Nation, *April* 29, 1950. '*How is parliamentary democracy faring. . . . It has no choice but to conform to its architectural pattern: it talks to the gallery. Members are seated in semi-circular rows on the floor of the House, facing a huge, black, elevated dais, whose right half is reserved for the Cabinet, the left for members of the Upper House. Below it is the "stand" used by members addressing the House. The gallery, accommodating press and public, is suspended below the ceiling directly facing the Government dais. Thus Members on the "stand" cannot see the Ministers whom they may or may not be addressing; raised from the floor of the House above the heads of their fellow-members, they are compelled to face the gallery. The loudspeaker installation ensures a series of public orations. . . . Once in office, the Government no longer considers itself part of the parliament, but literally "above" it; rarely, if ever, does it take the House into its confidence or invite its co-operation. High up, it has made itself inaccessible.*'

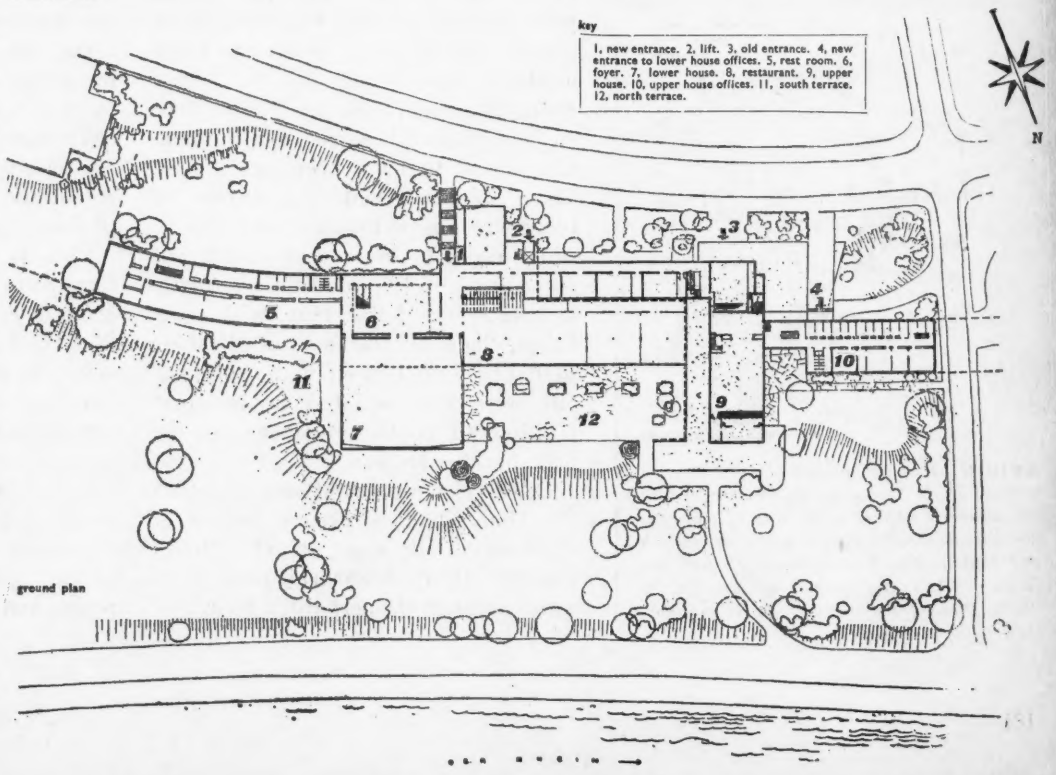
In answer the architect writes that 'for a permanent chamber I would have based my design on a different plan, one that expressed more fully the idea of discussion and conversation between members and government, and between the parties, rather than between the floor and the platform—a round-table plan, with a circular chamber, or a plan of facing benches as at Westminster. However, the present chamber is designed so that it may fulfil alternative functions later, and it does have the advantage of bringing the elected members into a closer relationship with the public. Its large windows not only allow people to see in, but they also give the members a view of the terrace and the busy Rhine outside.'



north elevation



south elevation



ground plan

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PARLIAMENT BUILDING AT BONN

HANS SCHWIPPERT: ARCHITECT

1

1, the large chamber of the *Bundestag* (lower house) of the parliament of the Federal Republic of Germany. 2, the temporary parliament buildings seen across the Rhine. The central block was built before the war as part of Bonn University.

The building which temporarily houses the first parliament of the Federal Republic of Germany, was originally erected by the Prussian government in 1930, as part of Bonn University. Alterations have now been made which provide additional accommodation in the form of a large congress hall for the *Bundestag*, or Lower House of the new parliament (the hall is suitable also for concerts and exhibitions), a restaurant to seat all the members of both Houses, and extra office accommodation. The architects had to cope with considerable difficulties; a period of four months in which to complete the work, a shortage of funds, the requirement

2

that the building should continue in use during reconstruction, and a possible future change in use of the building, which may become either part of Bonn University or the nucleus for a further extension of parliamentary activities. The office blocks to the north and

3

4

5

south of the central building were completed and equipped in three, and the large halls in five, months.

The Congress Hall has a floor area of about 11,000 square feet (about one-third more than the Reichstag). It seats 420 delegates, but chairs can be arranged for up to 850 people; in addition to 45 on the platform, and 400 in the gallery. The Hall was added at the north end of the former gymnasium. The construction is similar to that of the new London Concert Hall: an outer shell of steel construction with tubular trusses, about 100 ft. span, pumice block walls, stone faced, and an inner shell of stud walls, with a suspended ceiling and floor. Doors and windows are similarly constructed of two layers, acoustically separated. There are about 4,000 square feet of window area. The ceiling is surfaced with sound-absorbent material graded according to low, middle and high frequencies. The acoustical elements are at the same time designed to take the (high-voltage) lighting. The illumination at desk level had to be sufficient for reading and writing, both for delegates and for those on the platform. The walls are finished with a smooth plaster and the floor with parquet.

Electrical acoustical aids are integral with the design. There are ear phones for those who are hard of hearing, a sound film projector chamber, microphones, amplifiers, magnetofones and reproduction equipment, and broadcast transmission facilities including reporters' boxes for the various broadcasting companies. There is a complete air conditioning plant and plenum system, which also

7

PARLIAMENT BUILDING AT BONN

3, on the facing page, entrance to the north block of offices serving the *Bundesrat* (upper house). 4, on the facing page, a former gymnasium which has been made the foyer of the *Bundestag*. 5, the north block of offices, the entrance to which is shown in 3. 6, the south terrace, between the restaurant and the *Bundestag*. 7, the members' restaurant, which seats seven hundred.

6

supplies the restaurant and the south wing. The former gymnasium was turned into a foyer. Its gallery and stairs link the ground floor which is open towards the town with the upper storey which faces the Rhine. A new entrance, with a flight of steps leading up to it, gives independent access to public and Press gallery, and makes the hall, the foyer and the restaurant independently accessible from the rest of the building.

On the lower floor, facing the Rhine, and between the old hall of the Academy, which now serves the Upper House, and the new Congress Hall that serves the Lower House, there is a single storey gallery which is the Members' Restaurant (700 seats). This glazed gallery opens on to a terrace facing the Rhine. The windows of the Congress Hall also open on to this

8

terrace. The lower ground floor, parallel with the gallery, contains the kitchens. South of the foyer, there is a rest room for members, which seats 150.

The south office block is a steel framed structure, three storeys high, and contains committee rooms, meeting rooms, offices, and service rooms for the Lower House (*Bundestag*). The grid allows single cubicles of 7ft. 6in. width (stancheons at 23 ft. centres). Roof and floors are prefabricated. Installations were fixed in the cavity, and the internal walls and inner leafs of outer walls were added afterwards. These consist of specially designed gypsum slabs. The wooden parts of the structure followed, then the steel windows were inserted and finally a stone facing of dark Rhenish lava and light tufa stone was applied. The five storey north wing block containing the offices of the Upper House (*Bundesrat*) was constructed in a similar manner. The whole building is wired to be connected to the various government offices in the Bonn region, and to the cables that lead to the federal member states. There are teleprinting installations for Press, government, post office, etc.

Consultant Architect: Konrad Rühl, Principal, Ministry of Reconstruction, North Rhine-Westphalia. Chief Assistant: Dipl. Ing. Stefan Leuer. Assistant Architect: Kurt Schweflinghaus. Assistant Architect for Interiors: Vera Meyer-Waldeck. Consultant Engineers: E. M. Hünnebeck, Prof. Dr. Ing. Ph. Stein. Consultant for Acoustics: C. Kaus. Landscape: Hermann Mattern.

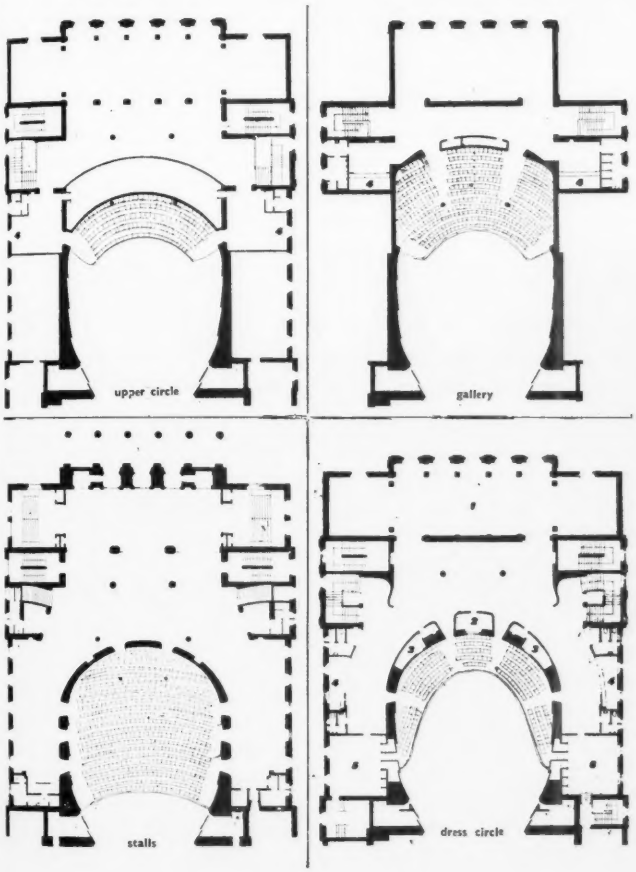
9

10

8, furniture of elmwood, which is standard for all the offices. 9, table and chairs, designed by Joh. Krahn specially for committee rooms. 10, light alloy chairs, in the foyer, designed by Professor Schwippert. The curtain is by Margaret Hildebrand.

NATIONAL THEATRE AT WEIMAR

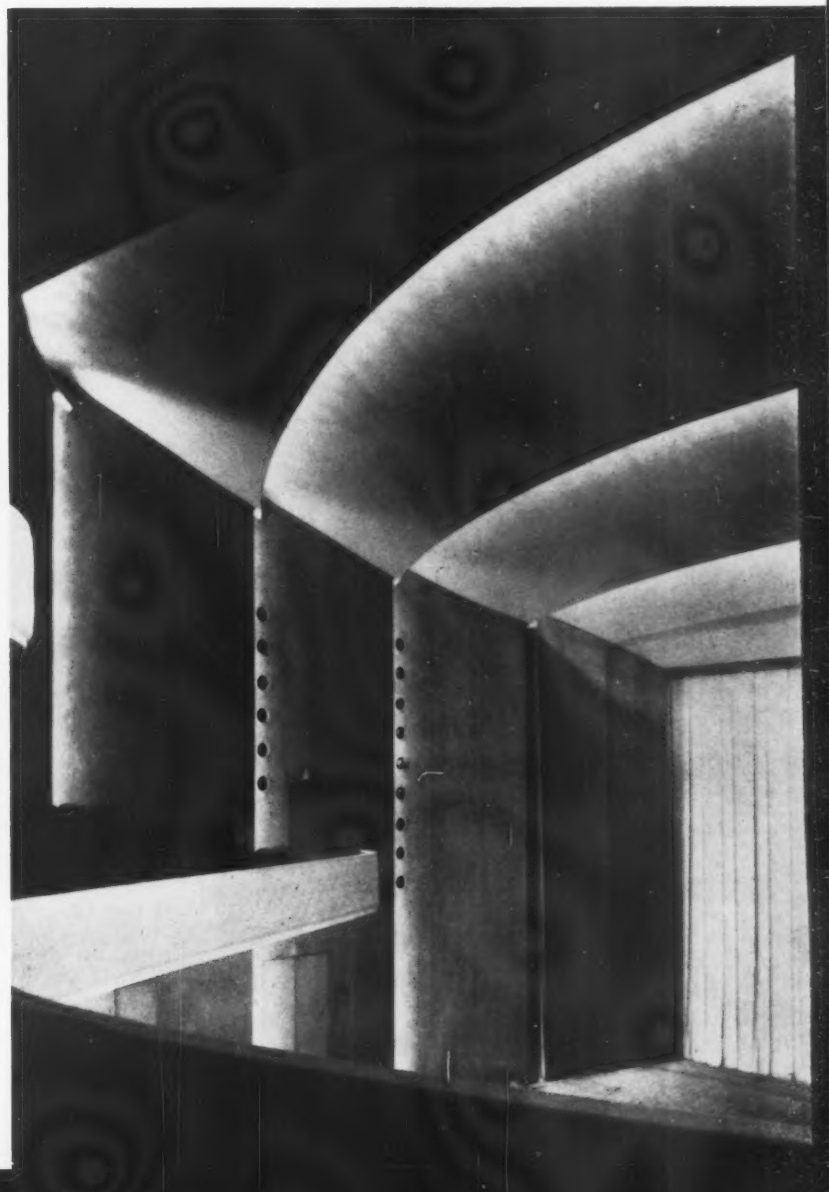
WERNER HARTUNG: ARCHITECT



key

1, foyer. 2, projection room. 3, broadcasting control room. 4, cloakroom. 5, conference room. 6, manager's office.

1, the auditorium seen from the front of the dress circle



The first theatre in Weimar was the Comedie, built in 1779. Goethe was its director from 1791 until 1817. It was twice rebuilt, first, after a fire, in 1825, and again in 1907. It was given the status of a National Theatre in 1918, and it was in its auditorium on November 11, 1919 that the first Republican German National Assembly adopted the Weimar Constitution. The building was entirely gutted during an air raid on the night of February 9, 1945, and has now been rebuilt, partly from public funds and partly from the sale of special reconstruction stamps.

In the design of the new theatre the architect has

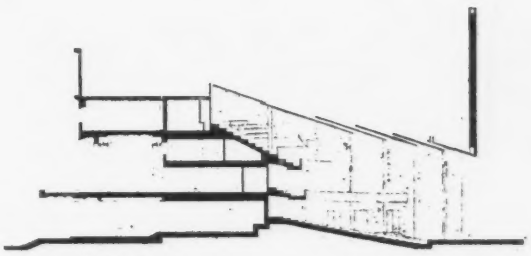
2

2, the auditorium of the Weimar national theatre. The walls are covered with grey velvet, the front of the dress and upper circles with white silk, and the chairs with dark red fabric, some being in lighter red, dark green and yellow. 3, 4 and 5, the main foyer.

3

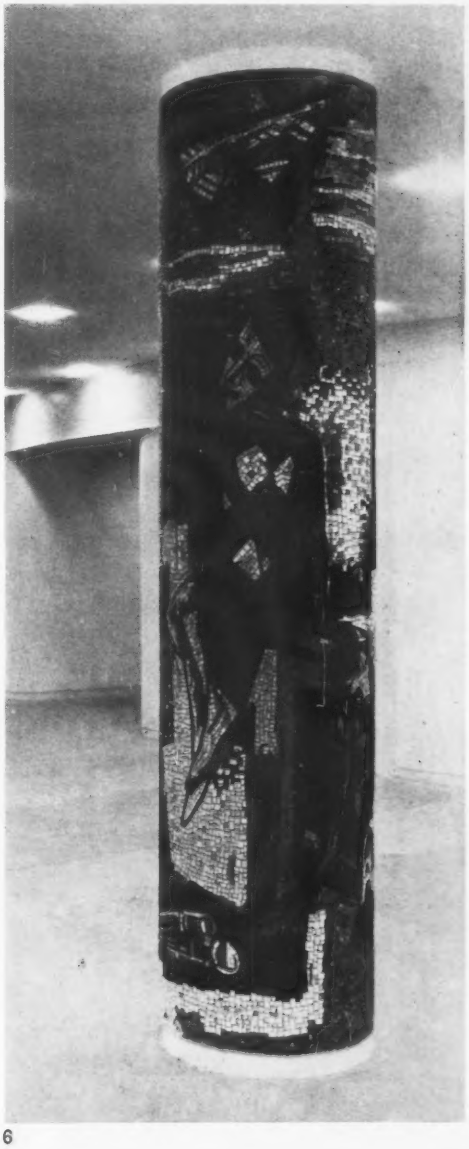
4

abandoned the picture frame of the proscenium stage, and with it the illusion of 'another world' and the technical apparatus necessary to maintain it. The stage, which includes a revolve, is brought forward into the auditorium, and this, with its special lighting and finishes, is designed to play a part, along with the audience, in the drama. Since much of the original structure of the building has been retained, a measure of compromise in the final result was unavoidable; it was, however, possible to attain a stage opening forty feet wide. The side walls of the auditorium are staggered, and lighting is housed in the slits that face the stage. Special attention has been paid to the arrangement of the lights, in view of the fact that they are the most important element in the stage décor. Walls are covered with grey velvet, the front of the dress and upper circles with white silk, and the ceiling with white plywood. The steps in the ceiling contain indirect lighting, projectors for still and moving pictures, and ventilating inlets. The chairs are covered with dark red upholstery, and, in the stalls, are varied with some seats of lighter red, dark green and yellow. The light yellow colour is repeated in the coping of the balustrade of the dress circle, and in the drop curtain. There is a second curtain which draws across the forestage; it is grey and can be coloured by the auditorium lights: some of these lights are so arranged that they also illuminate directly the walls of the auditorium, thus carrying the stage effects right into the theatre. Foyers and corridors are painted white, with light grey curtains and coloured mosaic columns. The entrance hall has walls of stone the colour of graphite; the joinery work is in white and grey maple. The doors to the auditorium are veneered with green-yellow lemon-wood, and there is a mural (thirty-five feet long) in the upper circle foyer. On the level of the dress circle one of the rooms of the eighteenth century theatre has been restored.



section through auditorium

6, one of the mosaic-faced columns in the foyer.



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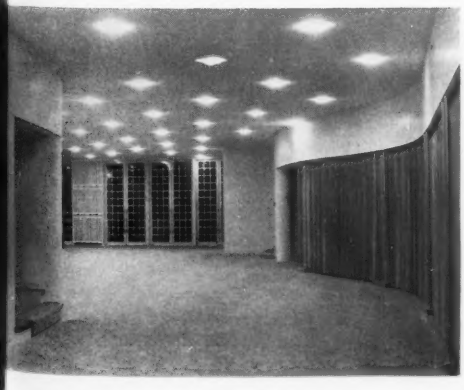

F. J. Samuely

TRECENTO MECHANICS

The Doge's Palace in Venice is one of the few major secular buildings in the Gothic style that have survived from a period earlier than the fifteenth century. The well-known water front was designed and started at the beginning of the fourteenth century, and that to the Piazzetta carried out a hundred years later. Minor work continued until about 1550. As the building then appeared, so it remains, virtually unchanged. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, style was still of the predominantly ecclesiastical type of Gothic, yet multi-storey buildings set the architect problems that were not encountered in the many churches of that period. These problems were of both an engineering and an aesthetic nature. In theory there should be no difference between the two, but in practice the issue is rather more complicated. This conflict occurs throughout all ages, but it is particularly significant in the Doge's Palace and F. J. Samuely, the well-known concrete engineer, analyses its solution here.

The main task, as it presents itself in the elevations, was to provide an external wall for a large hall, in which the windows were of minor importance, the whole rather massive construction to rest on two storeys of light colonnades.

Gothic architecture does not lend itself to such a task. Gothic structures are essentially designed to carry single loads, accentuated and preferably visible, and not a distributed mass. This fact might actually be considered one of the basic principles that distinguish the Gothic from earlier styles.

If the Doge's Palace had been Romanesque, the problem of carrying the massive upper wall would have been dealt with by means of a series of small semi-circular arches, supported by small piers (see **a**) interrupted at places by stretches of wall, as demonstrated by the Church of St. Sabina, Rome or St. Paul's Church, Rome (fuori le mura), or St. Sophia, Constantinople. These long stretches of wall, following a series of arches, would however no longer have satisfied fourteenth century architects. From an engineering point of view, the problem was the resolving of a uniformly distributed load into point loads, the latter to be carried on Gothic arches. Gothic arches not being suitable for carrying distributed loads, half-circular arches had to be used to resolve the distributed loads into the necessary point loads. By making these arches rather small it was possible to keep the thrust within such limits that the stretches of wall or large piers to be found in Roman and Romanesque buildings became unnecessary.

The simplest theoretical solution of the given

F. J. Samuely

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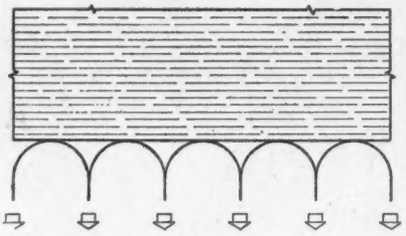
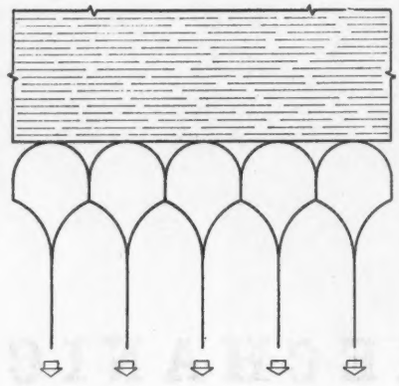
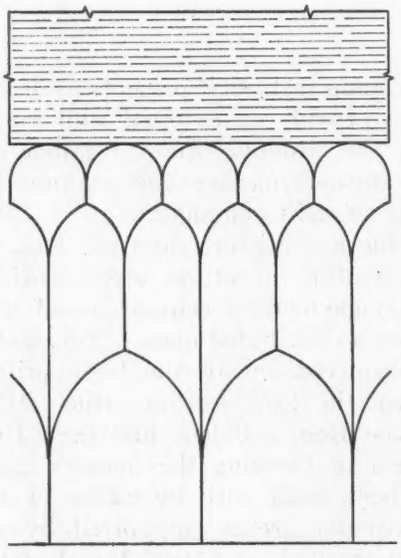
The simplest theoretical solution of the given



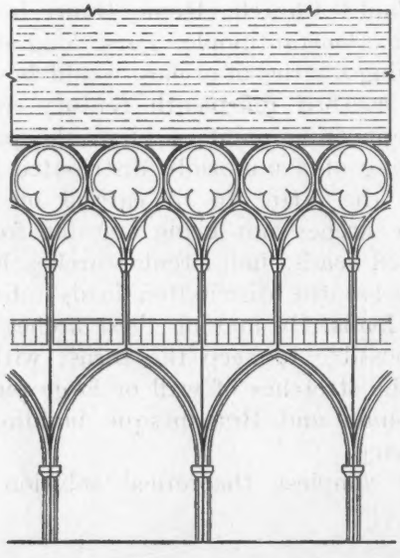
a *The simple romanesque solution to the structural problem of the Doge's Palace — upper wall carried on point supports.*



b *Since Gothic arches are not suitable for carrying evenly distributed loads, semi-circular arches were needed to resolve these into point loads.*



c *This results in very narrow spacing between columns which is overcome by the addition of a third tier of Gothic arches.*



d *Ornament has been added but the structural system shown in 'c' is still visible, apart from a skilful circular transformation of the romanesque arches into quatre foil openings.*

problem is shown in ***b***. This results in rather a narrow column grid, and if this grid needed to be widened in a lower storey, the construction logically works itself out to two tiers of Gothic arches, with a row of Romanesque ones on top (see ***c***). If the diagram in ***c*** is compared with the construction of the Doge's Palace shown in ***d***, they will be seen to be, in principle, almost identical.

d, of course, represents the bare outlines of the necessary structure, and æsthetics called for something in addition, but it is characteristic that the ornaments are entirely additional, leaving the structure visually unaltered. These additions (see 2) nevertheless distract attention from the Romanesque arches and make them appear to be part of the actual ornaments. What happens is that each Romanesque arch is continued round to complete the circle and the whole is made into a very Gothic kind of rose window (pointed trefoliated). Other ornaments are added to distract from the line of stresses (anti-stress lines) very similar to those to be found in our perpendicular style.

These anti-stress lines help to solve another problem in a very interesting manner. Almost every building has a different basic effect on a visitor, depending on whether it is viewed from the inside or the outside. From the outside, it is quite reasonable that a monumental building like the Doge's Palace should give some indication of the structure. There is the gigantic wall above, and it is satisfying to follow the means by which this wall is carried. Even the man in the street who is wholly ignorant of mechanics, would probably detect a false note if the appearance of the building was absolutely contrary to the demands of the structure.

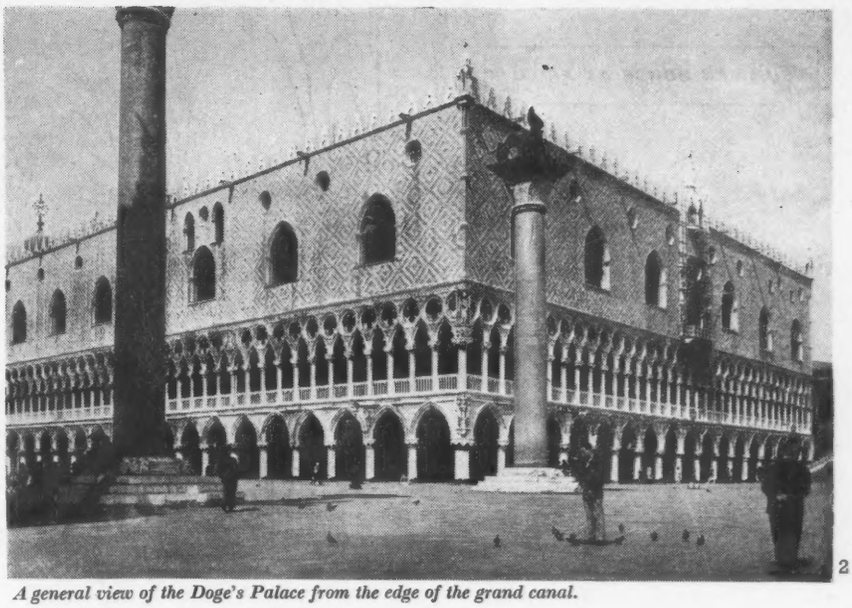
When standing inside the colonnade, the presence of the wall above is not apparent. Looking out, there is nothing to indicate that this wall exists, unless possibly the construction of the windows suggests loads from above, and indeed some of the pleasure would be spoiled if its presence was insisted upon. Looked at from inside, the window is a self-contained unit and an ornamental outline is more pleasing than one that is merely structurally necessary. It can be seen from 6 that the ornamental additions to the arch define the shadow inside the building and make this appear to be the main outline. By recessing this line against the face of the arch on the outside it becomes much less important, when seen from the outside, and thus gives the impression that it is merely ornamental, and the true line of the arch is not disturbed. In this way, æsthetics are satisfied from every viewpoint.

The treatment of the corner of the building is interesting. With all the other columns there is a thrust from both sides and the possibility of there being unresisted thrust from one side is comparatively

small. Such unresisted thrust occurs however at the corner and this is therefore taken up by an extra large column. Special life-size sculptures are arranged ornamenting the corner (see 1) and they serve two purposes :—

(*a*) They follow the old Roman tradition of indicating the presence of a heavy load to balance the thrust, although the sculpture itself does not represent the actual load.

(*b*) They distract the eye effectively from the corner column so that the unobservant would not notice the increased size.

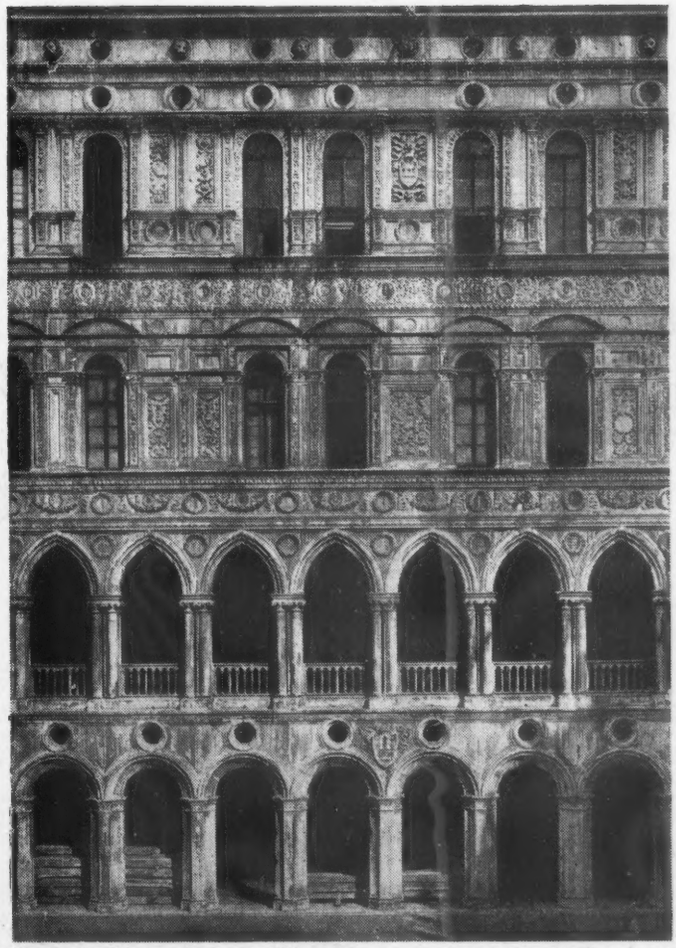


2

A general view of the Doge's Palace from the edge of the grand canal.

It was mentioned in the introduction that the Doge's Palace was finished at a much later date, in fact not until 1550, that is in times when the common outlook had changed from Gothic to Renaissance. It is very much to the credit of the later architects that they did not spoil the elevations begun earlier by superimposing their own ideas. They made up for this however in the courtyard, which can never be seen at the same time as the main elevations. This courtyard, which is shown in 3, is intentionally a very formal affair, without visible reference to structural requirements, and it might be described as one of the most unfunctional designs in existence. There is no reference whatsoever between the arches and the loads which they have to carry, and in fact in some instances point loads come on to the sides of Gothic arches.

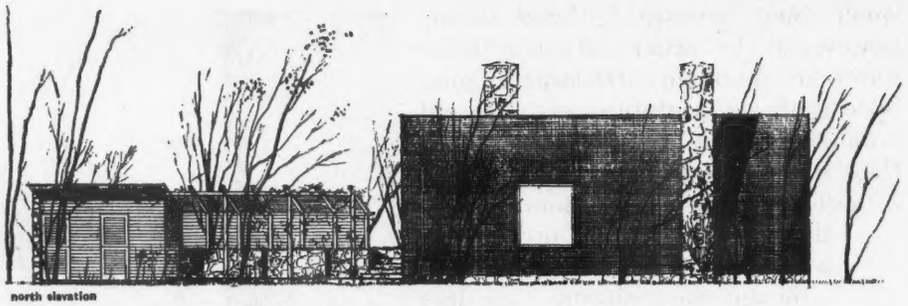
All the same, it cannot be denied that the overall effect of the courtyard is pleasing, and so we are left with the somewhat embarrassing antithesis between a Gothic part which convinces us on the strength of its functional qualities and a Renaissance part which convinces us equally in spite of their absence.



3

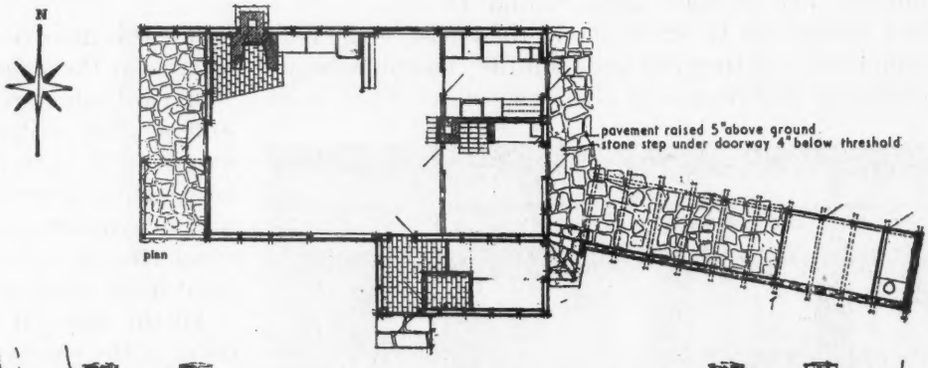
The facade of the interior courtyard is an uncompromising rejection of the functional approach with, in some cases, point loads descending on to the sides of Gothic arches.

SUMMER HOUSE AT ARILD

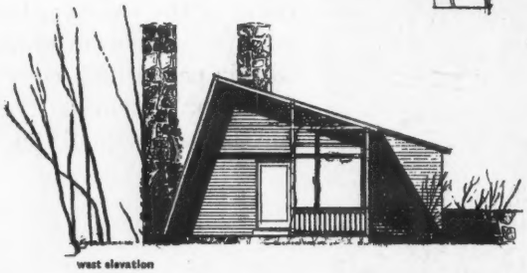


north elevation

south elevation

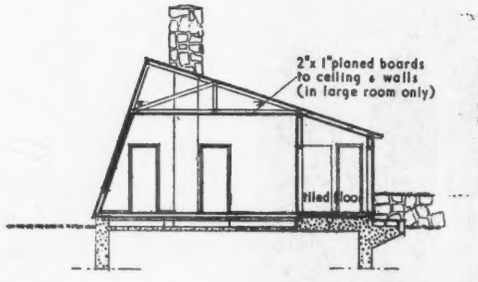


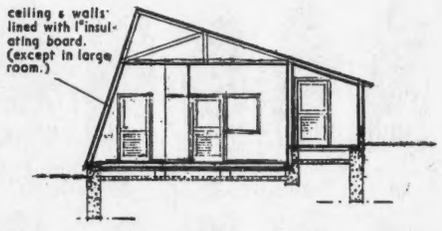
plan

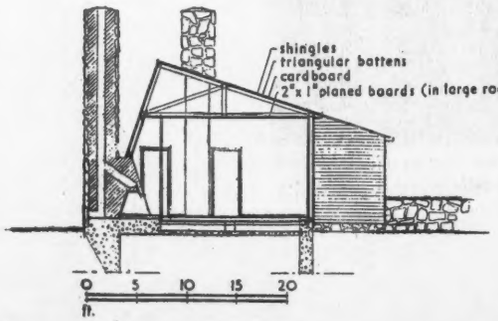


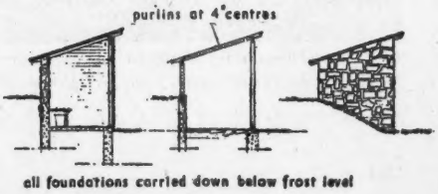
west elevation

east elevation









all foundations carried down below frost level

SUMMER HOUSE AT ARILD

ARNE JACOBSEN: ARCHITECT

1 the terrace and dining porch which face west

2, a hill rises sharply to the south of the house

This summer house near Arild, Southern Sweden, on the edge of the Kullen Downs, was built in 1944 for two Danish doctors. The walls are of frame construction with painted boards outside and natural pine boards inside. The floor is varnished pinewood and the roof is covered with shingles. The chimney, terrace, garden path and the end wall of the garden shed are of local stone. The exterior is painted light grey with the framing in white.

3

3, the main living room interior which is walled with natural pine boards. 4, the garden with the pergola at the end of which is a garden shed.

4

The name miscellany implies, of course, an architectural miscellany—one that will include subjects which, though marginal to architecture, are nevertheless vital to it.

miscellany

LETTER FROM

CHINA

THE AMATEUR OF nineteenth century architectural eclecticism may still find, in the ex-treaty ports of the China coast, remains testifying to an architectural incursion which began after the Treaty of Nanking in 1842 opened up the country and paved the way for the first large-scale assault by foreign traders. The phase lasted for exactly a century and ended, so far as the British were concerned (and they were much the largest holders of 'concessions') by the Treaty of 1943. The get-rich-quick atmosphere of Shanghai, the largest and most intensively developed of the treaty ports, has obliterated all but a few pieces of delicate ironwork and some traces of the Gothic revival in domestic work. Other than this nothing earlier than the buildings of the eighties now remain and it can be said that capitalist baroque of the early twentieth century now dominates the scene; in Tientsin the battlements of a Gothic Town Hall (1887), late Victorian Italianate villas and riverside warehouses which inherit the tradition of their counterparts in London may still be found.

To understand the position of architecture in China today, we need to go back to the beginning of the treaty port era. In 1842 contact with England had had over 200 years history, and approved trading, initiated by the East India Company, had been carried on through Canton for over a hundred. But the new treaty was the first of those known by the Chinese (not unreasonably) as the 'unequal' treaties whereby actual areas of land were given over to foreign powers within which they enjoyed extra-territorial rights. It was followed by other treaties and ports were ceded, not only on the seaboard but up the river Yangtze.

At first they developed slowly; the Chinese were rarely well-disposed towards this imperialist nibbling nor were the potentialities offered by the concessions immediately apparent to the traders themselves. But as the century passed a stability, sufficient at least for the pioneering spirit, led to widespread building in the seventies and eighties and steadily thereafter. This continued into the present century, barely interrupted by the war of 1914-18 and it was only on the outbreak of the Japanese war in 1937 that their confident and largely unplanned expansion was halted. A growing nationalism, the 1911 revolution with its final acceptance of international relations, followed by the attempted unification of the country under the Kuomintang party in 1928 gradually changed the status of China in the eyes of the other powers and soon after their full alliance in the war against Japan the concessions were returned to China (in the case of the United Kingdom) by the Treaty of 1943. In 1945 the Japanese surrender brought these rather vulgar and ill-set jewels bespattered along the China coast back into Chinese control.

The foregoing will have suggested that, architecturally, the treaty ports were in no way a graft into the stream of an ancient culture; nor were æsthetic considerations likely to influence the minds of hard-headed pioneering merchants; what architectural merits the treaty ports had they shared with the styles then prevailing in Europe and it must be admitted that architectural merit is hardly to be claimed for Shanghai or Tientsin today for the peak period of expansion just after the turn of the century coincided with one of the least orderly and least scholarly periods of European architecture, of which the much publicized Shanghai Bund is perhaps the most representative example.

As China reluctantly accepted these impositions, so it accepted such a new profession as that of architect. In the early years of this century Chinese architects trained in Europe or America joined the foreigner in his building of the treaty ports but the impact of the West was still far too strong, and the Chinese architectural tradition far too moribund for its influence to be felt. The Chinese architect by training and impulse shared the foreigner's approach and produced buildings which in no way differed from his.

But the resurgence of Chinese nationalism culminating in the revolution of 1911 began a process of revaluation which after some time affected architecture in turn. In 1929 a Society for Research in Chinese Architecture was founded by *Chu Chi-chien*. Its initial aims were no more than documentation and research; an attempt perhaps to re-establish the value of the Chinese architectural tradition at a time when the attention paid to ancient buildings, never great, was at its lowest. But, at the same time, the gradual unification of the country after the divisions of the early years of the Republic suggested the principle of revival, and during the twenties and thirties buildings wholly or partly in the 'Chinese style'—some spurious, some scholarly—were built.

The Mausoleum of Sun Yat-sen, that gargantuan piece of vulgarity on the hillside above Nanking, government buildings in the capital (formally set up in Nanking in 1928), the National Library in Peking were all fitted with appropriate symbolical Chinoiserie; nor were Chinese architects alone responsible; foreigners resident here who had 'found' China were eager to assist in this ill-digested atavism. The war against Japan re-emphasized the nationalism even if it removed most opportunities for building and the return of the Concessions at last removed the obstacles for the Chinese architect anxious to evolve a genuinely national and contemporary style.

Since the war ended reconstruction has been the theme in the Far East as in Europe, but in China the civil war, coupled with acute economic difficulties, has so reduced the possibility of building in most parts of the country, while virtually prohibiting it in some, that it would be useless to say anything about buildings. It is perhaps worth recapitulating the progress of architectural education in China to see what material is now available when circumstances are more favourable for experiment.

Whatever claims may now be made for the existence of Chinese architects in the Sung or Ming periods we may have no compunction in saying that their significance *as architects* was no greater than that of their counterparts in mediæval England at about the same time. The professional position and æsthetic role of the architect as he had developed in Europe between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries was something quite foreign to Chinese conceptions. Even before the revolution of 1911 the first few Chinese students of architecture had gone overseas to study but the presence—and by this time entrenchment—of foreign architects in centres such as Shanghai and Tientsin, the continuing disturbed state of the country and the lack of any established position for the profession kept down their numbers. By 1927 the Department of Architecture at the National Central University in Nanking had been founded and this was quickly followed by others; unfortunately, there was a tendency, by no means yet ended, to regard such departments as merely extensions of

1, *Tomb of Sun Yat Sen, Nanking.* 2, *National Library, Peking.* 3, *Public Library, Wuchang.* 4, *Post Office, Hong Kong.* 5, *A block of flats, Shanghai.* 6, *Street in Shanghai.*

the department of engineering, a tendency which one may perhaps attribute both to the predominantly American training of those who had studied abroad and to the not unnatural tendency of China, looking to the West for technical assistance, to confuse the functions of the architect and the engineer. By 1930 some sixty or more Chinese architects were in practice and the short hiatus between the civil war of the twenties and the disturbances which began in the Manchurian incident of 1931 and developed into the war against Japan in 1937 offered further opportunities for study overseas, not a few finding their way to the A.A. and Liverpool. Today, there are probably some two hundred or more architects in China (though not all in practice) of whom some sixty or more have studied in Europe and America. Meanwhile the tide of the foreign architects settled in the Far East has begun to recede and conditions at the time of writing may well before long completely banish the species.

Thus, in less than fifty years has the change been made and the seed sown. How healthy is the plant and what is its future? There is no professional tradition, as yet no standards in architectural education, and the Association of Chinese Architects has yet to emerge as an organization which can assert any leadership over professional or teaching standards. Nothing would be easier, nothing indeed has been easier in the immediate past, than to dress up a building in a Chinese style; but the real qualities of Chinese architecture and landscape are in no way transmitted by the addition of a curved roof or painted brackets. Landscape gardening—almost extinct as an art in China—can play no less a part in the future than it is now doing in England. The sense of space so admirably expressed in walled courtyards, the openness of Chinese planning, the austere, massive dignity of city walls—all these are domestic characteristics whose study and revival in a modern idiom may contribute to a new architecture in China. The gospel of Corbusier or Gropius need not be set on one side by those few who have grasped it fully and are clearly capable of exercising its teachings. It may well be some time before one can expect a Chinese spirit to inform buildings in China whose functions are no different from our own and which use contemporary urban materials.

But the rest of China has been stagnant far too long; even more stagnant has been the Chinese acceptance of Western admiration for their art and architecture, for it is only too often uncritical and tasteless and has done little service to China except to add further swathes to an already well wrapped mummy. New eyes are needed in China; eyes for the landscape, eyes for the pattern of the Chinese village and small town, eyes for the nearly obliterated traces of vernacular art. The return to the peasant and his background need be neither sentimental nor regressive; if it means that Chinese architects turn their backs for a while on the up-to-date vulgarity of Shanghai, much might be gained from that. If it means a return to simpler building methods that, too, may bring its æsthetic reward. It will not be an easy task for those poised between an (architecturally) ossified past and an invading West with which the Chinese must willy-nilly come to terms. But the ground is now clear and a resurgence after a period of confusion is long overdue.

Richard Harris

SCULPTURE

REALISM

In Pontormo's Joseph in Egypt (1, *facing page*) *the people are treated as statues and the statues as people.* Looked at historically, as Professor Pevsner has pointed out (AR, December, 1949), this is a typical Mannerist ambiguity. But there's a moral for the present in it too—that if you want the effect of people, only the real thing will do: it's no good copying it in stone. To point the moral again, there are the statues in the Foro Mussolini in Rome. Superficially these would seem to aim at realism; in fact, idealism has crept in, and created a particular brand of monumentality. How far they are from realism could hardly be emphasized more forcibly than by the Communist demonstrators swarming over them in the photographs on the opposite page (3 and 4)—and it isn't just a matter of scale. What happens when realism in sculpture is pursued to its logical conclusion is seen in the (modern) temple in Southern India (2). Here the ultimate absurdity has been

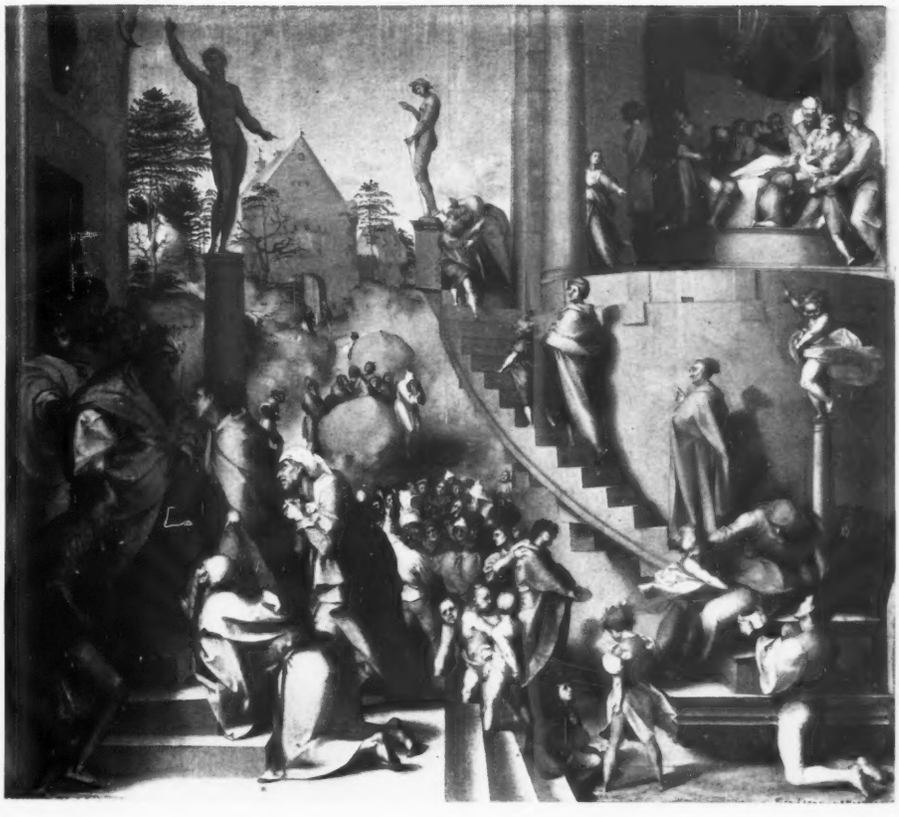
reached, typified by the tennis racquet in the photograph (top right). Realism, when carried to the nth degree, as it has been in this Indian temple, far from reproducing reality, ends by caricaturing it and producing a monstrosity. What is most remarkable about the figures above and below, is not their realism but their

extraordinary effect of *lifelessness.* The sculptors have expended immense effort in defeating their own ends.

ARCHITECTURE

THE GLASS FACADE

The disappearing building is a new phenomenon. What has caused it, and what are its implications for the future? The cause: as nearly always in matters of architectural innovation, part technical and part æsthetic, but with the technical and æsthetic parts complementary and ultimately inseparable. Take Philip Johnson's house at New Canaan (illustrated and described fully on pages 152-



1

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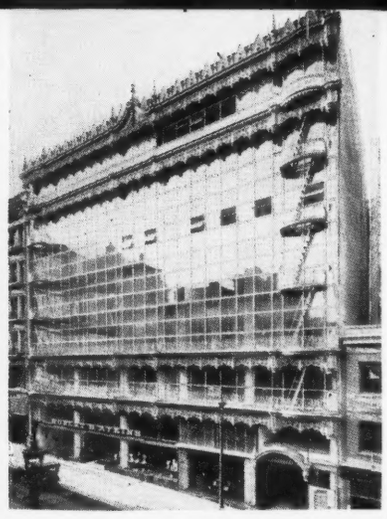
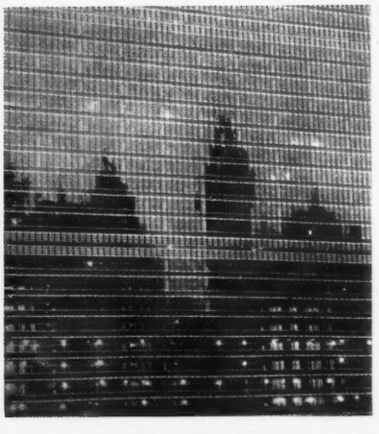
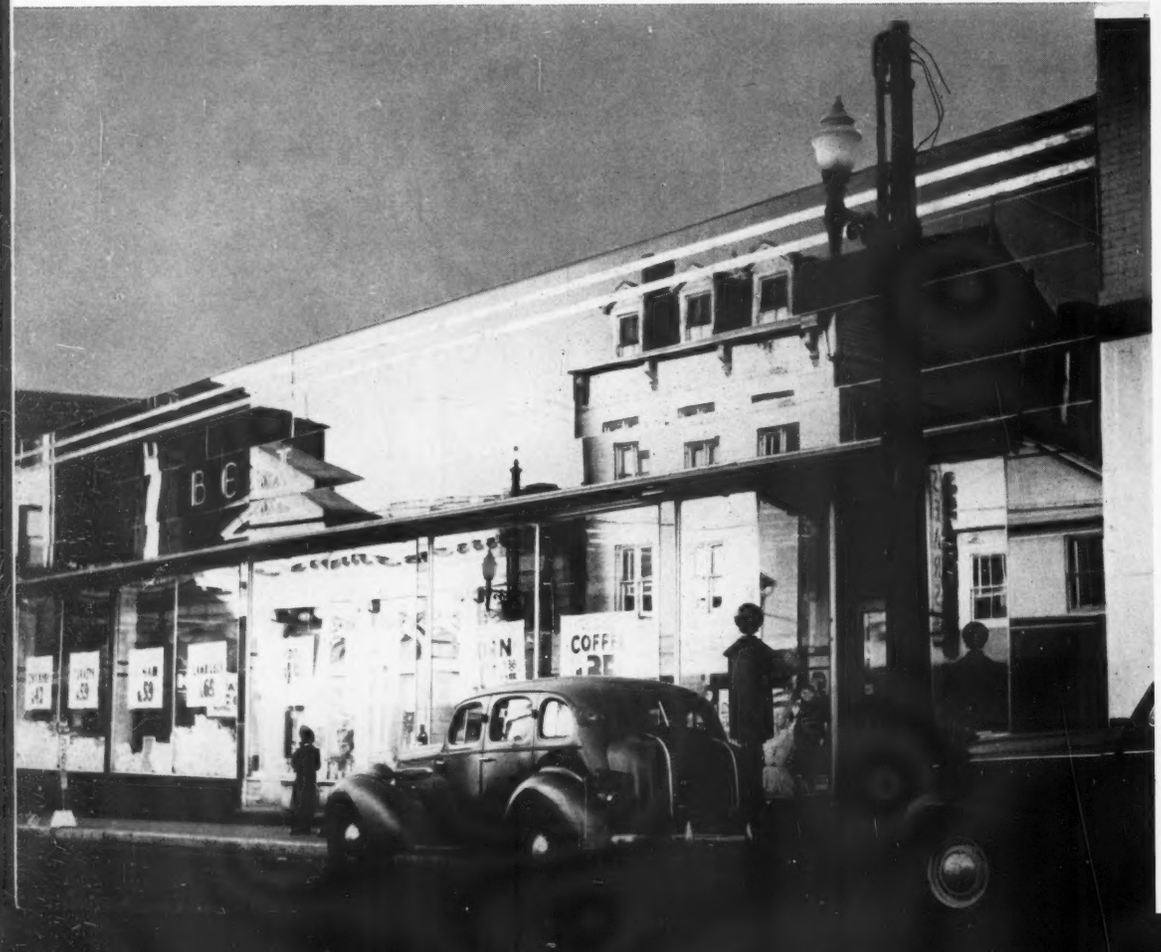






159). Looking at the top photo opposite, you may say that it disappears because of the plate glass of which its 'walls' are composed; that is to explain it in terms of technique. But then Philip Johnson uses those vast areas of plate glass only because they enable him to resolve the old duality of inside and outside, house and garden; so one must give due weight to the æsthetic side of the matter—the more so because one may be sure that Philip Johnson was perfectly aware of what he was doing, and consciously utilized the tree reflections to the same end. One might explain the other example, an urban one, in much the same way, though substituting the demands of publicity, and a love of the glossy surface as a symbol of opulence, for the more sophisticated æsthetic considerations that operate in the house. But in this case, it is clear, the disappearance was quite unpremeditated; the reflections were something the designer never took into account. At any rate the phenomenon of the disappearing building exists and, as the smaller illustrations show (for references see page 212), is increasingly in evidence.

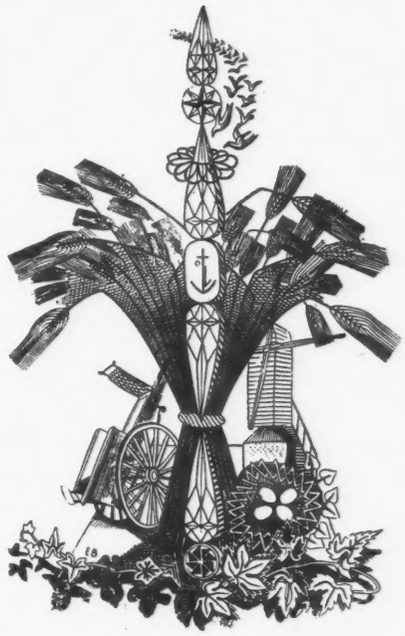
Many of the old uses for a wall—as a place on which to represent by one symbol or another, power, luxury, mythology and so on—have been winnowed away, and modern architecture tends increasingly to become diagrammatic. What is more, with the feasibility of great areas, and great sheets, of glass, nature is moving in on buildings (in the case of the Johnson house it has all but taken over). In towns other things have moved in. All sorts of objects and buildings once thought of as separate entities when reflected in glass façades become a new kind of architecture at one remove. Obviously this poses special problems in which architecture melts into townscape, which, up to date, show few signs of being tackled.

Andrew Hammer

INDUSTRIAL DESIGN

MENU CARDS

Good design, like peace, is indivisible. For a number of years the Orient Line have pursued the policy of decorating their ships in a contemporary manner. The first was the S.S. 'Orion,' built some years before the war, followed by the S.S. 'Orcades' a year or two later. Furniture, fabrics and lighting were all contemporary in design and leading modern artists were commissioned to carry out murals in the main rooms. All the minor accessories, as well as the company's publicity material, naturally had to pursue the same theme and the total result has been an object lesson in the excellent way that a commercial organization can exercise its powers of patronage. The story started, of course, with intelligence at the top and that the policy has proved satisfactory to the shareholders is shown in the decor of the new 'Orcades' (ARCH. REV. Sept. 49), successor to the earlier one which was



a wartime casualty. Here, as an example of the right kind of attention paid to one

detail, are the menu cards designed by Edward Bawden for a dinner on the occasion of a visit to the ship by the Council of Industrial Design.

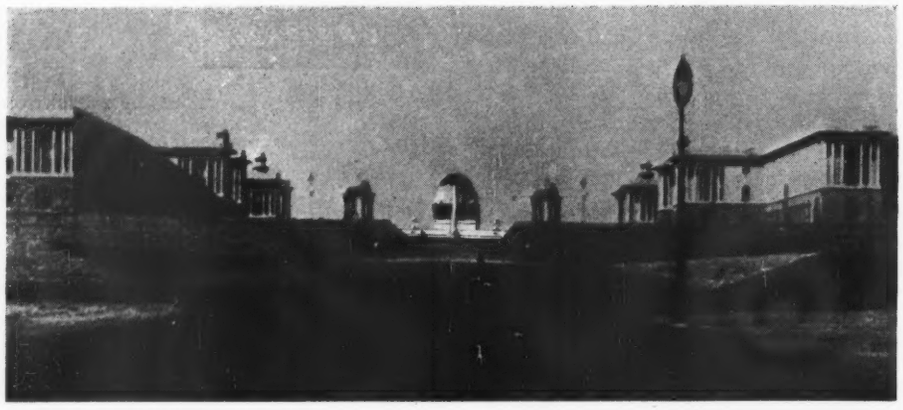
H. McG. Dunnett

TOWNSCAPE

CHARMS OF TRUNCATION

One of the architectural cause-célèbres of our time was the Lutyens-Baker conflict over the truncation of the Viceroy's House, New Delhi. Originally Lutyens had designed the Viceroy's House to be at the edge of Raisina Hill, exhibiting its full height down the 1¼ mile approach of the King's Way. The pair of secretariat buildings flanking it were placed at a lower level where the Great Place now is. However, when Baker was brought in to take over the design, among others, of the secretariat buildings, he wanted these also to stand up on the hill, and the Viceroy's House to be moved back. Lutyens agreed on condition that the entire area between Baker's buildings should be excavated to reveal the foundation line of his own. That this condition was not carried out

was the occasion of his row with Baker and a life's embitterment. What is remarkable about the story is the fact that a man of Lutyens' magnificent sensibility should make such efforts to avoid an effect which at Versailles Louis XIV, through Le Nôtre, expended vast sums to achieve—with the most spectacular success. The explanation can only be that Lutyens, just because of his ability as an architect, failed to recognize that in the wider field of landscaping other principles operate—that the time factor, for instance, makes demands and provides opportunities which are scenic rather than architectural. Naturally, an architect prefers to think of



his building whole. To the landscapist, on the other hand (and today the all-round architect has got to be one), half or three-quarters of a building is often much better than a whole one (see the frontispiece). The landscapist understands the occasional need for holding some cards in reserve. And ironically enough there are few better illustrations of the visual benefits to be derived from this than the approach to Government House, Delhi, which can be seen in the photo above.* Robert Byron described it in the following words: 'As the motor approaches the Great Place, the colonnade beneath the dome gradually sinks below the level of the secretariats' platforms; so that the monument stands by itself, appearing to rise off the top of the asphalt gradient between them. It has receded now. Its top has sunk below the roof-line of the secretariats. But the marble column stands out in front, to indicate the extent, half a mile in length, of the intermediate distance. . . . The effect is . . . magnificent: the dome of the Viceroy's House alone is sufficient to dominate any city; and even when it has sunk out of sight, the very mystery of the asphalt gradient leading into the sky still rivets the eye to the axis of the design.' Other examples are St. James's Palace seen from Albemarle Street and Tom Tower from Cornmarket Street, Oxford.

Robert More

* Though the two examples cited here, Versailles and New Delhi, are on a vast scale, as the frontispiece on page 146 shows, the argument applies equally well to landscape design on a smaller scale. In fact, a thousand illustrations to the visual benefits of truncation (vertical as well as horizontal) are to be found in the city or countryside–no less successful because they may be accidental.

BOOKS

TOO MUCH TALK

TOWARDS AN ORGANIC ARCHITECTURE. *By Bruno Zevi. Faber and Faber,* 1950. 25*s.*

This book was first published in Italy shortly after the war. It was intended to revive an understanding of the spirit of modern architecture which the years of Fascism had suppressed. The publisher's justification for producing an English edition is that, whereas most books on modern architecture stop short at 1930, Mr. Zevi 'pays particular attention to the decade before the war, years when exciting and important developments took place.'

The scheme of the book is in three parts. First, a history of modern architecture in Europe. This is familiar stuff based on the writings of Giedion, Pevsner and Behrendt. It is no more than an annotated collection of quotations—so much so that it is often difficult to decide whose words one is reading at any particular time. The second part sets out to define the meaning of the term 'organic architecture.' It fails—yet how should Mr. Zevi succeed where everyone else from Giedion to Frank Lloyd Wright himself has been defeated? After eleven pages of a disorderly skirmish among the collected sayings of modern masters one turns in bored confusion to the last part of the book. Here, in a survey of the progress of American architecture based on embarrassingly exaggerated praise for the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, Mr. Zevi claims to illustrate the meaning of organic architecture in terms of the work of the younger generation of American architects—H. H. Harris, J. E. Dinwiddie, H. P. Clark, V. de Mars, W. Hamby and G. Nelson. He says that they have established a new trend away from the limitations of European functionalism towards an architecture where 'the spatial arrangement of room, house and city is planned for human happiness, material, psychological and spiritual.' If the picture on the dust cover is any indication, this trend does not yet seem to have got very far. Nor does it seem so very new.

Coherent criticism is impossible because this is an incoherent book. Its central argument is the nature and development of organic architecture and its superiority over all other kinds of architecture. What is organic architecture? Is it a rejection or an extension of rational methods? Is it concerned with the natural rather than the geometrical organization of forms, and if so what is the difference? Is it first from the heart or from the head, or from the unity of both? Does the landscape flow into the house or the house into the landscape—and which came first, the chicken or the egg? Mr. Zevi cannot decide and so says yes to everything. He is eager to please everybody and ready to confuse. He has no point of view. 'The organic,' he says, 'is based therefore on a social idea and not on a figurative idea. We can only call architecture organic when it aims at being human before it is humanistic.' It is a fine point.

I have not seen any of Mr. Zevi's buildings but if they are as equivocal as his writing they will inevitably display that lack of faith in the value of creative work which lies at the root of all this uncertainty and confusion, and at the base of all reaction. It is fatally easy to talk. Architects saying the same words, following the same bible, can produce very different buildings. In England there is a congenital mistrust of talk. For once this is healthy. We have had for a long time too much talk and not enough building. Our immediate problems are problems of production. This book does not help.

It is difficult to read. The best one can say about the English is that it would translate very well into Italian. It is poorly designed with a centre line for each page in the tradition of the English government publication. It has an inexcusable number of photographs that one has seen before and several of recent American work that one will not want to see again—although it is a welcome change to find plenty of plans to read with the photographs. Many of the references in the text to pictures and chapter notes are wrongly numbered and the price is high.

Andrew Derbyshire

Shorter Notices

JAMES WYATT. *By Reginald Turnor. Art and Technics. 8s. 6d.*

In most people's readiness to appreciate any art, interest in the artist as a man counts for much. (Modern architecture, one might suggest, has lost much through never having had a Van Gogh.) Thus a series of short and well-illustrated biographies of architects is a project that deserves the blessing of anyone with the future of architecture at heart, quite apart from its value for purposes of reference and record. What is odd is that such a series should not, in England, have been attempted before.

Reginald Turnor leads off for a team of writers which includes Dorothy Stroud (on Holland), Marcus Whiffen (on Archer), John Brandon-Jones (on Voysey), and Antony Hippisley-Coxe (on Le Corbusier), under the general editorship of Hugh Casson. It is a little unfortunate that Mr. Turnor's subject should be one of the very few English architects on whom there are monographs already; and it cannot have made things any easier for him. It is also unfortunate that he should illustrate the portico of Francis Goodwin's Manchester Town Hall, as re-erected at Heaton House, as a work of Wyatt, and refer to Wyatt's rebuilding of the west front of Hereford Cathedral as if it still existed. However, this is a book by an author who evidently has a sincere regard for architecture, and its handiness of format and elegance of production augurs well for the future of the series it belongs to. **A.H.**

Books Received

ALEXANDER GIBB—THE STORY OF AN ENGINEER. By Godfrey Harrison. Bles. 15s.

RURAL CRAFTS OF ENGLAND. By K. S. Woods. Harrap. 15s.

NORTHUMBERLAND. By Herbert L. Honeyman. Robert Hale. 15s.

ROADS—THE NEW WAY. By Harold Nockolds. British Road Federation. 2s.

EDWARD HOPPER. By Lloyd Goodrich. Penguin. 3s. 6d.

ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY. By Leslie Shand. Newnes. 30s.

VIEWS OF HARVARD—A PICTORIAL RECORD TO 1860. By Hamilton Vaughan Bail. Harvard University Press. London, Geoffrey Cumberlege. 80s.

SCHOOLS. By Z. S. Perkins and W. O. Cocking. Reinhold Publishing Corporation. London, Chapman and Hall. 80s.

ANTHOLOGY

The Destroyer at Westminster

Scarcely had I finished these Westminster innovations, when my anticipating fears began to be realized; for, having received information that the interior of St. Stephen's chapel was actually giving way to the general plan for the entire extermination of the antient palace, I hastened to the spot, where I found that great part of the wainscoting of the House of Commons, hiding the original work on the walls, had been taken down, whereby those parts that had not before been disfigured were then open to the sight. Much of the entablature and compartments under the windows had before my arrival been cut away; and, as I stood confounded at the havock, and astonished at the extraordinary beauty of those objects not yet struck at, my attention was called away by a person, who told me, that he had orders from the Surveyor of the Board of Works, that no one was to be permitted to make any memorandum or drawings from the chapel; that whatever was pickaxed down into rubbish was to be carefully preserved, &c.; with other strange, contradictory, and unaccountable reasons; and, by way of giving a finishing stroke to his refusal, 'Sir,' says he, 'I have just got rid of the Artist who some time back made, by order of the Society of Antiquaries, plans, elevations, &c., of this chapel, and which they afterwards published. He came, he said, to complete those parts of that work which he could not make out when the wainscoting was up. I told him my orders—bid him be gone—so you see, Sir, that I am deputy-master here.' I was permitted, however, to gaze with admiration unmolested for an hour or two; when I made such observations as will, I trust, be of the utmost satisfaction to my readers, and render the above description more complete.*

* The ridiculous and absurd accounts in the daily prints, of the discoveries made in St. Stephen's chapel are designedly introduced, to mislead the publick, that the loss of such inestimable remains of antient art may be the less regretted, so that, if a more forcible reason, the cause of Antiquity, did not induce me to the disclosure, the insult offered my countrymen by such lying tales were sufficient cause for me to come forward to confute the same.

(*Pursuits of Architectural Innovation, by An Architect, No. XXVII* (*The Gentleman's Magazine*), 1800, *Vol.* 70.)

MARGINALIA

This Month's Anthology

The passage quoted in Anthology this month serves as a footnote to Maurice Hastings's article, *Parliament House: a Study in Place History*. 'An Architect' covers the identity of the antiquary John Carter, who was himself 'the Artist who some time back [actually in 1791] made . . . plans, elevations, &c. of this chapel'; the works referred to are James Wyatt's enlargement of St. Stephen's to make room for the hundred new Members whose inclusion was necessitated by the abolition of the Irish Parliament by the Act of Union of 1800. Carter had been an unyielding enemy of Wyatt since the latter's removal of the chantries in the nave of Salisbury Cathedral and destruction of the chapter house at Durham. Besides being the author of numerous literary attacks on him, he was responsible for his being blackballed when he stood for election to the Society of Antiquaries in 1796. The exclusion of Carter from St. Stephen's Chapel by Wyatt's special order in 1800 was thus an act of revenge.

Wyatt's procedure at St. Stephen's, as described by Dr. Hastings, was to demolish the original three foot thick walls between the buttresses and build new walls, about one foot thick, in their place. Many of the medieval carvings that had been concealed behind the wainscoting and benches were sold as junk. Wyatt's title of 'destroyer' would in fact be well earned on the basis of what he did to St. Stephen's Chapel alone.

Earlier in the same article Carter employs his gift for invective on the pre-Wyatt furnishings of the Chapel: 'Who can define taste, when we look at the clumsy carpentry that ennobles the "*fitting-up*"? Who can talk of refinement, when we behold over the present cieling, air-engines, barbers' blocks, knife-boards, coal-holes, maids' garrets, and men's leeking holes, mixing their accommodations with the beauties of art in all their burst of scientific perfection? Here the royal arms, there the plebeian brush and blackball, coal-scuttles, salt-boxes, and washing-stands, crowd up before the forms of lions, fleurs-de-lis, roses, stars, and crowns! I can no more; these dishonoured scenes I wish were but the phantasies of the brain, the workings of a mind disturbed, the idle images of a dream of air, or any thing but what I see. Who are the most distant from "insanity", those who cause and defend this spoliation, or he that has dared to dart the light of truth into such dark recesses? I then arouse you from your skulking holes! Fly to low-raised roofs, ye hous-hold hords, where all your kitchen scum, your filth, and rags, may lie unseen! . . .'

Un-Planning Chichester

One of the main recommendations made by Thomas Sharp in his *Plan for the Preservation and Improvement of Chichester* (published in February, 1949) was that there should be no widening of any of the four main streets of the city. The natives, however, knew better, and in April, 1949, an agreement was reached by the City and County Planning authorities, and approved, in due course, by the Ministries of Transport and Town and Country Planning, for the establishment of a new building-line for the north and south sides of East Street, which would involve the setting back, as opportunity offered, of forty-two houses. The first building has now been set back—with the effect shown in the accompanying photograph.

1, *East Street, Chichester, showing no.* 70 *set back to the new building line.*

The purpose of the new building line, it should be explained, is to provide not a wider carriage way, but more room on the pavement for perambulators.

Eliel Saarinen

The death in July of Eliel Saarinen, at the age of 76, deprived America of one of her most eminent designers—and also, incidentally, deprived the RIBA of the opportunity of presenting in person the Royal Gold Medal for Architecture that was awarded to Saarinen earlier this year.

Though he had lived in America for twenty-five years and had become an American citizen, he was fifty before he went there. This was in connection with the competition, held in 1923, for the Tribune Tower at Chicago, in which Saarinen won second prize. He already had a high reputation in Finland, his native country, chiefly due to his railway station at Helsingfors, designed in 1905, though not completed till 1914. He had made his mark even earlier through his design (illustrated herewith) for the Finnish pavilion at the 1900 Paris exhibition.

The Helsingfors railway station was a pioneer building in many ways: freely and

2. *The Finnish Pavilion designed by Saarinen for the Paris Exhibition of* 1900.

asymmetrically planned in an age still dominated by academic formality, and very personal in style. Though he acquired a large practice in America, he never designed a greater building than this, most of his American work, though full of vitality, being somewhat mannered and eclectic. This tendency was less noticeable in recent years, when he was working in partnership with his son, Eero Saarinen. His American works include a series of educational buildings at Cranbrook, Michigan, where he taught for many years, the Kleinhaus Music Hall at Buffalo, a number of schools, churches and houses, and many town-planning projects. He had great influence as a teacher and lecturer.

The Finnish Government, in spite of Saarinen's American citizenship, decided to give him a state funeral, and his body was brought to Helsinki, where the ceremony took place in mid-July. A state funeral is an honour rarely awarded; only ten, in fact, have taken place since the Finnish republic was founded after the 1914 war. It is an indication of the prestige that the profession of architect has in the Scandinavian countries that of the ten Finns so honoured four have been architects.

The Speaker's Chair

The Commons appear to have followed two traditions, or customs, in regard to their Speaker's Chair. One is that of the throne, or great chair of State, with a canopy over it; the other a modification presumably introduced by Wren, who was assisted by Sir James Thornhill. We see that he built an elaborate, ornate and classical backing for the Speaker's Chair, which thereupon became, in itself, movable and replaceable, and was so treated. Each Speaker had his own chair, and when his term of office was over, he took his chair away. Thus Speaker Onslow's (3) chair can be seen, to this day, in All Souls College, Oxford. It was placed, as we see, against Wren's imposing erection in which

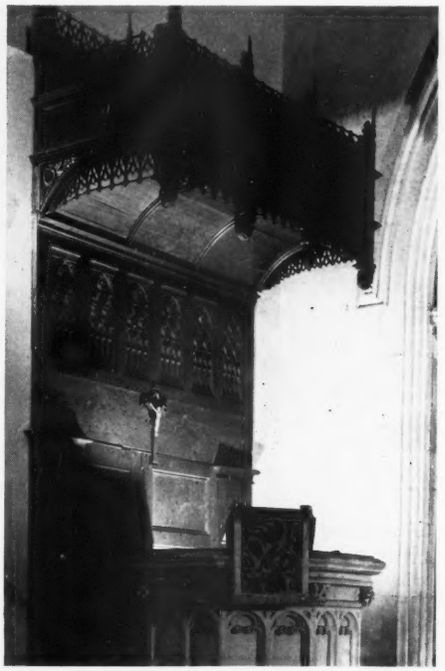
3, *Speaker Onslow's chair, now in All Souls College, Oxford.*

Corinthian columns support a plinth which again carries the Royal Arms. (4) shows the arrangement in some detail. Sir Robert Walpole is having a word with Mr. Speaker Arthur Onslow, and Sir James Thornhill is himself in the background, therefore we may presume that the detail of the chair back is extremely accurate. We note that there is no canopy.

But the custom of the Speaker taking his

4, *the plinth designed by Wren behind the Speaker's Chair. Sir Robert Walpole is speaking to Mr. Speaker Onslow and Sir James Thornhill can be seen in the background.*

chair away is presumably far older, if the tradition is correct that the pulpit of Radley Church, Berks (5) is composed of Speaker Lenthall's chair. Doubt has been cast on the genuineness of this extremely important and interesting monument, but it has certain features which almost by themselves prove its authenticity. To the eye accustomed to the Court Style of London in the fourteenth century, this work appears at once to be *of that style*. The importance of this cannot be exaggerated. The actual canopy in Radley Church does not appear to be of that date, but to be something more interesting still, a Jacobean version of fourteenth century London Gothic. How are we to account for this? We recollect at once that the Commons were



5, *the pulpit of Radley Church, Berks, said to be built from Speaker Lenthall's chair.*

sitting in the Choir of St. Stephen's Chapel, Westminster; that they occupied the choir stalls. The actual stalls were far too small to hold the body of the Commons, so the mediæval work (of c. 1353) had to be scrapped and replaced by 'benches.' Now comes conjecture. The appearance of Speaker Lenthall's canopy instantly causes the inference that the original Speaker's Chair of 1547 was actually composed of fragments of the old choir stalls. What the appearance of these was like is totally unknown. Can it be that in Radley Church we have the last faint shadow of the stalls of St. Stephen's?

It will be seen that the authenticity or otherwise of this canopy hardly matters. If it is not authentic, then it is a copy. The point remains that it is a (roughly) Jacobean version of the Court Style of London, therefore ultimately the model must have been the stalls of St. Stephen's—what else could it have been at that time and in that place? Space forbids discussion, but attention should concentrate on the spandrel in the left-hand corner. That is the Westminster version of the 'oculus' between two or three 'mouchettes.' Comparison is with

the tomb of Aymer de Vanance, and the Northampton Eleanor Cross. The other feature which can truly be described as fascinating is the panelling in the back. This we can call the lancet windows of the Sainte Chapelle of 1245 'modernized' in 1350 and again 'brought up to date' in the seventeenth century. With the cove compare that of the screen round Henry VII's tomb, and those in the niches on the screen in St. Albans.

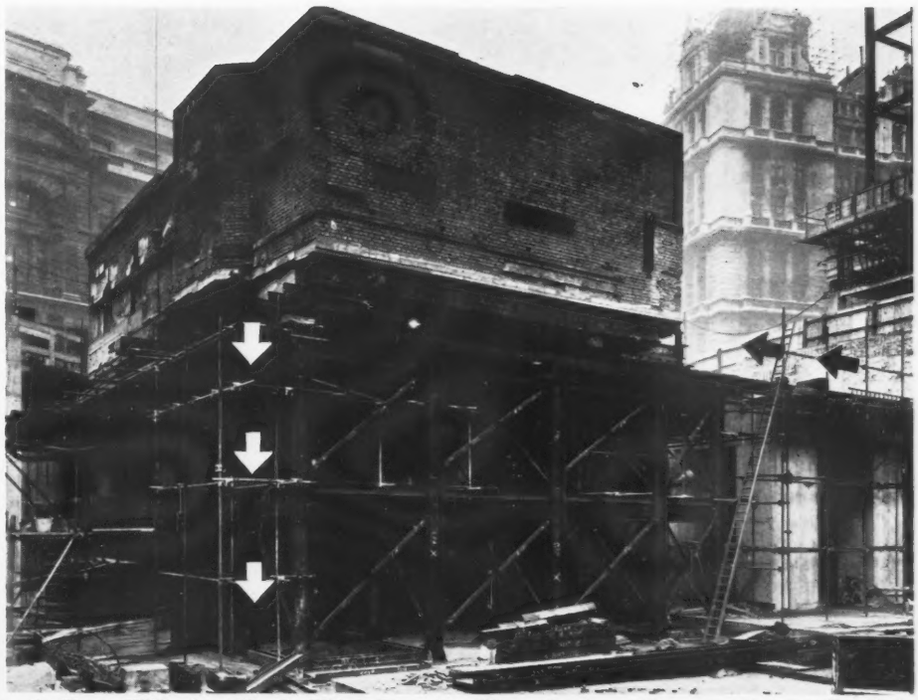
Turning to the newest chair of all (6) there is the 1950 version of the same features. Therefore to the question, on what is the new Speaker's Chair modelled, the most curious answer could probably be returned with truth: On something which has never been seen, and which has been entirely lost even to memory—something on which human eyes last rested in the middle of the sixteenth century—the choir stalls of St. Stephen's Chapel in the Palace of Westminster.

6 *The new Speaker's Chair in the yet unfinished House.*

Where there's a will . . .

More than ten years ago an undertaking was given that Henry VIII's wine cellar in his Palace of Whitehall would be preserved when the new Government offices were erected on the site. This undertaking has now been made good, though it involved moving the cellar bodily, with its brick vaulting and four central stone columns, 43 feet from its original site and sinking it over 20 feet deeper down. When it is realized that it weighed nearly 800 tons, it will be seen that this constituted a remarkable feat of engineering—the more so since the slightest jar would have resulted in the disintegration of the whole structure.

Before the removal operations began the roof was raised by less than a sixteenth of an inch in order that the columns might be taken out. Then the cellar was underpinned with concrete and steel girders and mounted on steel rollers so that it could be moved, by eight men using screw jacks, at the rate of eight feet a day. The lowering process, according to *The Times*, 'was carried out by pairs of 16-ton jacks, 186 in all, working alternately. The movement was only a sixteenth of an inch at a time, and was synchronized by whistle.' There were alarms from time to time, but the whole operation was concluded without a single brick being disturbed. One could wish that the same determination and ingenuity was brought to bear more often on the practical problems of preserving historic buildings.



7, *the Henry VIII wine cellar in Whitehall, see note* Where there's a will . . . *on this page. The black arrows show the movement from its old site on to the gantry; the white arrows the 20 foot descent. The cellar was then returned to a point immediately below its original position.*

INTELLIGENCE

Frederick Gibberd has been elected a Vice-President of the RIBA. He has also recently been appointed architect for the London Airport Terminal building.

The Government, the building industry and the associated professions are to combine in presenting another Building Week, to be held in Leeds from September 11 to 16.

The Rome Scholarship in Architecture for 1950 has been awarded to Edward Carter of the School of Architecture, Durham University.

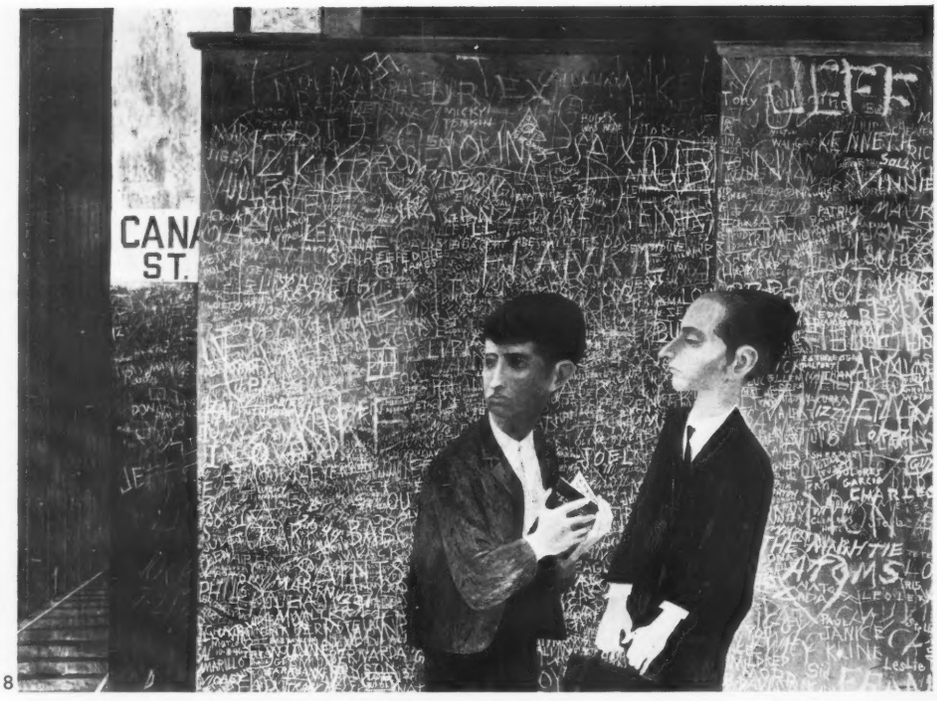
The next meeting of the Building Teachers' Conference will be held in the Northern Polytechnic, Holloway, London, N.7 on Saturday, 25 Nov., 1950.

The President of the Board of Trade is to introduce legislation requiring that all furniture shall have the manufacturer's name on it.

EXHIBITIONS

Throughout July the Tate held an exhibition entitled 'Modern Italian Art,' organized by the Milanese Society of the *Amici di Brera* under the patronage of the Arts Council and the Italian Institute. This was not an exhibition of *contemporary* Italian art, but a selection of 126 works by a score or so of artists designed to show the main trends between the opening of the twentieth century and today. The chief emphasis was on the 1910-30 period, which was all to the good in an exhibition designed for a country where the achievements of Futurism have been under-rated and metaphysical painting is too often thought of as the preserve of Giorgio de Chirico, to the exclusion of the more sensitive (if less inventive) Carlo Carra. Umberto Boccioni, as might be expected, dominated the Futurists. In addition to eleven of his paintings, three of his sculptures in bronze were shown. The latter included the *Bottle Evolving in Space*, which will be known to many REVIEW readers from the illustration in *Space, Time and Architecture*, where Dr. Giedion calls it 'one of the few sculptural masterpieces of the epoch.' In fact it has a monumental quality quite independent of its size. (Surprisingly, it is only 15 inches high.)

Severini, better known in England than Boccioni, was represented at the Tate by half-a-dozen paintings, and Giacomo Balla, the oldest of the Futurist group and one-time master of both Severini and Boccioni, by four. Other painters shown who for a period subscribed to Futurist doctrines were Achille Funi, Ottone Rosai, Luigi Russolo, Mario Sironi and Ardengo Soffici. A more considerable artist than any of these perhaps, there was Giorgio Morandi,



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8, Orthodox Boys, *by Bernard Perlin*, 9, Envy, *by Paul Cadmus*, 10, The Lot, *by Henry Koerner from Symbolic Realism in American Painting at the Institute of Contemporary Arts*. 11, Les Fiancés, *by Constant Permeke, at the Roland, Browse and Delbanco Galleries.*

whose excursions from the metaphysical starting-point are marked by a simplicity and precision which are the fruits of infinite pains and an exquisite taste. Then for Italians who belong by naturalization (as it were) to the school of Paris we were shown Modigliani and Campigli. An enjoyable exhibition in itself—and most useful as an introduction to the comprehensive exhibition of *contemporary* Italian painting and sculpture, which it is to be hoped we shall see before too long.

'For these painters, unlike most influential artists since Manet, paint is a means, not an end.' So writes Mr. Lincoln Kirstein in the catalogue of the exhibition of 'American Symbolic Realism' at the Institute of Contemporary Arts. In other words, they are what one used to call literary painters. Well and good: there is no reason why a painting should not have a considerable literary, or (if you prefer) symbolic, content. But if it has nothing else, if it is deficient in more strictly æsthetic virtues, it is liable to become a bore; for in the visual arts the eye, and not the mind or the moral sense, is the final adjudicator. Unfortunately most of the Symbolic Realists do not give the eye half a chance: it skates uneasily over the hard, even finish which they affect, until it retires wearied by the accumulation of minute detail which so effectively conceals any formal qualities their pictures may possess.

Still, some of them have been able to transcend the limitations of so finical a technique. One of them is Henry Koerner, who manages to convey an acute sense of the strangeness of things. Another is Bernard Perlin, represented by only one picture, but that a memorable one (reproduced on this page). A third, though more doubtfully, is Paul Cadmus; it is a pity that we were shown only two of the less deadly (to judge from photographs) of his *Seven Deadly Sins*. Pavel Tchelitchew is also, apparently, to be reckoned a Symbolic Realist.

At Roland, Browse and Delbanco there has been a show of the Belgian artist Constant Permeke. Strangely enough—for Permeke is a very good painter indeed, and no newcomer (having been born in 1886)—this was the first time his work had been seen in England. An expressionist without being an exhibitionist, Permeke is happiest with large figures on a large canvas. (He is also a sculptor.) He paints, for the most part, in a sombre range of browns and greys, with great breadth and yet with great solidity; and on the human side his work shows a tenderness for and sympathy with men and women redeemed from the taint of sentimentality by more than a touch of wit.

CORRESPONDENCE

Grosvenor Square

To the Editors
THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

SIRS,—I refer to the modest building which has risen with such studied deliberation on the east side of the garden of Grosvenor Square. As I write, it is still largely obscured by a tarpaulin and there is something in the pitch of the roof which suggests an agreeable exercise in the Chinese taste, not wholly

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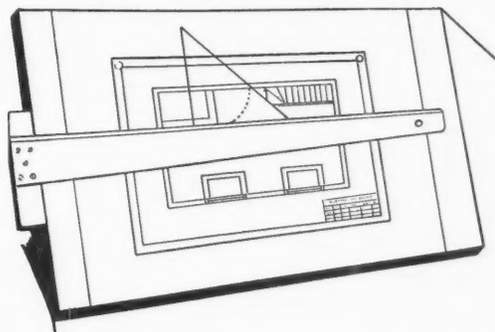

INDUSTRIAL CANTEENS

FROM INITIAL PLANNING TO COMPLETE INSTALLATION

LOCKHART EQUIPMENT LTD. plan and supply *all* the necessary equipment from refrigeration plant to the smallest item of cutlery, crockery, linen, etc., and so with one equipment account the Canteen is handed over complete and ready for operation.

Illustration shows a recent installation for D. & P. Studios Ltd., Denham.

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12 *The new structure in Grosvenor Square (see* Correspondence).

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inappropriate perhaps to a square with sentimental attachments to the eighteenth century. Unhappily, the skirts of the awning are short enough to reveal nothing of the first elegance. Indeed, I am apprehensive that the Ministry of Works, who presumably are responsible for the design, may have neglected a rare opportunity of paying a delicate compliment to the inhabitants of the district. The failure is the more regrettable since most of us are glad to accept the site as a British field that is for ever America, and the curious erection upon it, whether park shelter, privy or mower port, is clearly of a simple timber frame type familiar throughout the United States and easily disguised to remind nostalgic American Embassy staff of their homeland. Firstly, it could be painted barn red, or, as aptly, white in the customary transatlantic domestic tradition. Thirdly, it could be faced with redwood boarding in the now accepted idiom of the Bay Region style and contemporary ranch house. Fourthly—and this I most warmly advocate—it could be a composite building with each of three walls finished differently in one of the above ways, and on the remaining side open, except for a sheet of glass, to the gardens in grand defiance of reason, climate and privacy—a universal gesture of practical sympathy with all the best architecture to-day, whether European or American.

I look to you, Sirs, to take the necessary action

Yours, etc.,

Surrey. SEMLAP.

TRADE & INDUSTRY

Plastic Tubing

At a recent exhibition of 'Celanese' Plastics, though most of the many products shown were of more immediate interest to industrial and commercial users, one was of considerable interest to architects and designers.

'Celastoid' plastic tubing can be used for covering either metal tube or wood of $\frac{1}{4}$ inch diameter upwards. In the exhibition, a barrier rail, constructed of about $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch steel tube was covered with a pale cream coloured plastic tubing. It looks extremely neat, is easy to keep clean, the makers have assured themselves of its wearing qualities, and it is pleasant to the touch since it quickly assumes room temperature.

It also has obvious applications wherever tubular furniture has advantages over other kinds, in hospitals, cafés, bars, for instance, and it will doubtless find a place among display fittings.

It is made as a plastic tube which is then drawn over the metal or wood, either before or after the latter is bent. It can be drawn over almost any bend that the metal or wood will take.

An interesting type of expander joint has been devised, for joining two lengths of covered tube; the manufacturers claim that it is extremely simple to use, very effective and provides a neat, satisfactory join.

Finally, the covered tubing conforms to the LCC fire regulations, and the cost of this finish is about the same as for a chromium finish.

British Celanese, Ltd., Hanover Square, London, W.1.

A Portable Screen

The Great Room at Grosvenor House, which serves the purpose of both banqueting room and exhibition hall, has recently been equipped with a portable screen so that it may be varied in size to suit the varying capacities of the successive functions for which it is used.

It was essential that the screen should be portable, since it might have to be moved and put back in position at frequent intervals, so lightness in weight and ease in handling was essential. It naturally had also to conform to the LCC fire regulations and appear, when in position, to be a permanent fixture.

[continued on page 210

Architect : Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, O.M., R.A., P.P.R.I.B.A.

Consulting Engineer : Dr. Oscar Faber, O.B.E., D.Sc., M.Inst.C.E.

The building of the new House of Commons exacted the highest standards in reliable craftsmanship. That is why Troughton and Young were entrusted with the supply and installation of all the electrical equipment for lighting, heating, power and telecommunications — an undertaking that necessitated the laying of twenty tons of conduit and twenty-five miles of cable.

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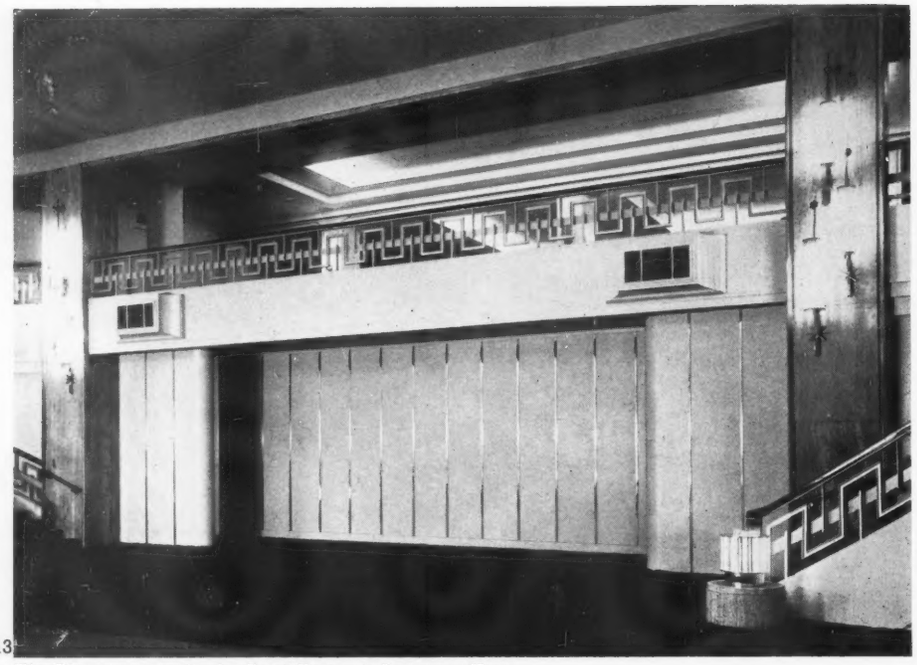

13 *The Plymax screen in the Great Room at Grosvenor House.*

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It has been designed by George Ramon and constructed by Pollards of sixteen separate panels, 11 feet high and with a door at each end, the total width being 34 feet. Each panel consists of Plymax packed with mineral and is only $1\frac{3}{8}$ inches thick, thus achieving the necessary degrees of lightness—74 lb. is the weight of a panel—heat resistance and fire proofing, and they tongue into one another to make an apparently solid barrier. It takes only a few minutes to take the screen apart and stack it away or reassemble it as required. The illustration shows the screen in position.

E. Pollard & Co., Ltd., 159, St. John Street, E.C.1.

Rust and Corrosion

Until recently the problem of rust has been rather akin to weeds in the garden, an inevitable process of nature against which the only weapon seemed to be sweat and tears and all too frequently blood. Since, and perhaps because of the war, de-rusting preparations have come on the market which replace the Churchillian prescription with a much less arduous method.

'Preperite' is such a branded product, introduced recently by The Pyrene Co., and though it is intended primarily for removing rust from iron and steel it can also be used for the removal of corrosion products from aluminium and aluminium alloys.

The preparation is a liquid which is diluted with water in proportions depending on the method of application. In the first instance it can be put on with a brush in which case the 'Preperite' is diluted two parts to one of water. Alternatively the parts to be treated can be immersed in a tankful of the solution and then the ratio is two parts of water to one of 'Preperite.' Such tanks if part of a permanent installation for this purpose must be lined with lead or rubber or be made of a suitable glazed earthenware. The solution will keep in the tank indefinitely and only requires periodic 'topping-up.'

Before the de-rusting, a degreasing process is usually necessary, using any suitable solvent such as turpentine substitute or white spirit if applied or else trichlorethylene or alkali immersion.

The de-rusting process follows, a five-minute application usually is sufficient though it may

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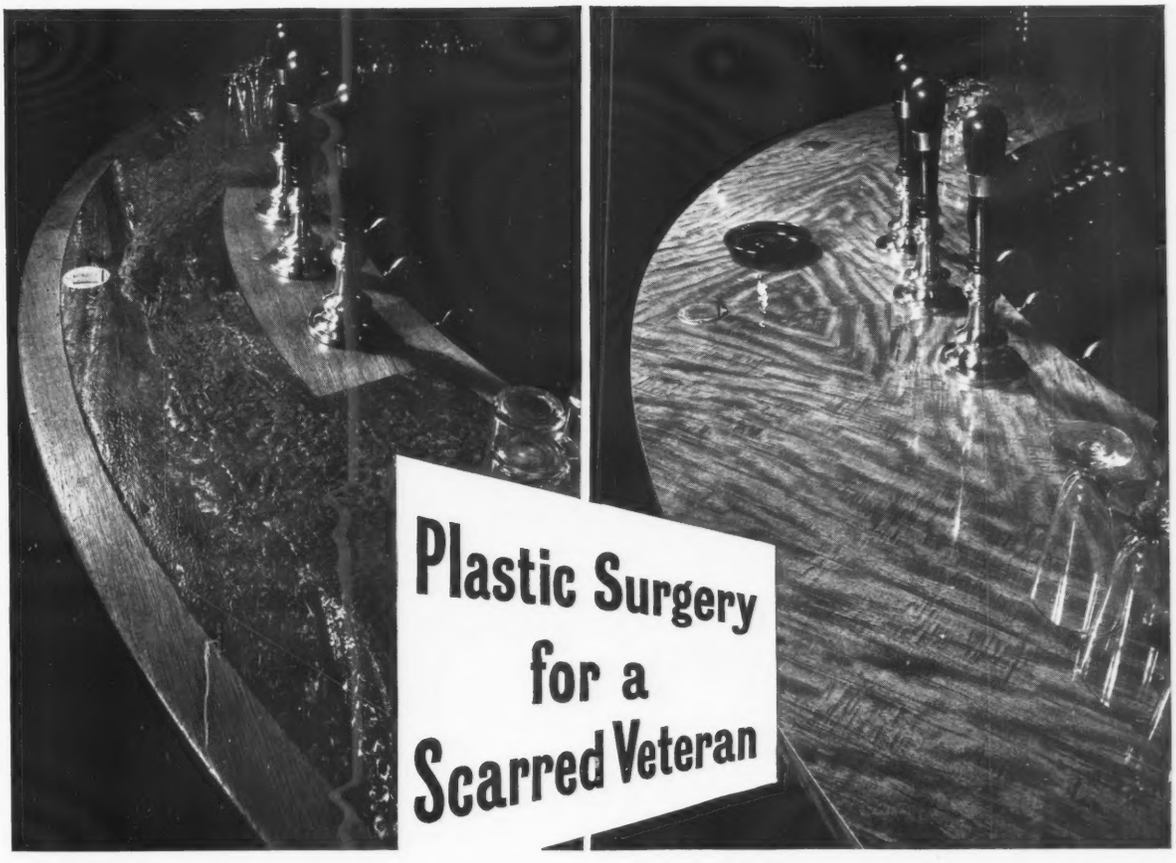

Plastic Surgery for a Scarred Veteran

At "The Horseshoe," Tottenham Court Road, London, the bars have been rejuvenated with "Formica," the beautiful, hard-surfaced laminated plastic that requires no maintenance other than occasional wiping. The "Formica" chosen is Cherry Mahogany wood grain effect—but there is a wide choice of other finishes and colours, and the material is available both in Standard and Cigarette-Proof grades. It is highly resistant to abrasion and unaffected by spilt drinks—"hard" or "soft." Fabricators: Permatops Ltd.

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continued from page 210]

be used cold or heated to any temperature up to 140°F. and the hotter it is the more quickly it acts.

After processing the treated parts are rinsed with hot or cold water either by hosing or immersion and may be painted in the normal way.

In the case of aluminium and aluminium alloys, the process is exactly the same though in certain cases weaker solutions may be used. The process leaves a slight etch on aluminium surfaces which assists the bonding of the paint.

'Preperite' is supplied in minimum packings of 7-gallon carboys.

The Pyrene Co., Ltd., Great West Road, Brentford.

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