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Переводы

THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

FEBRUARY 1951

Février 1951

Page 65: *Humanisme et Architecture*, par Sir Kenneth Clark. Geoffrey Scott, dans son livre *L'Architecture de l'Humanisme*, affirme que l'architecture de la Renaissance 'ne cherchait aucune justification outre que celle de plaire.' En s'exprimant ainsi, comme le démontre Sir Kenneth Clark dans son essai sur le dernier livre de Rudolf Wittkower, *Principes Architecturaux à l'Époque de l'Humanisme*, Scott se révélait être l'esclave de son antipathie à l'égard de Ruskin et envers tous les principes que défendait celui-ci. En réalité, comme le fait ressortir l'ouvrage du Professeur Wittkower, les architectes de la Renaissance, d'Alberti jusqu'à Palladio—Scott avait-il jamais lu Alberti, se demande Sir Kenneth?—avaient très à cœur la signification morale de leur œuvre: le *De Re Aedificatoria*, en certaines parties, ne diffère guère en ton des *Pierres de Venise*. D'autres sections du livre du Professeur Wittkower, sur lesquelles commente Sir Kenneth, sont celles qui traitent des façades d'église de Palladio et des mathématiques de la proportion—ce dernier sujet, ainsi que le Professeur Wittkower le fait remarquer, 'constituant un thème dont les jeunes architectes de nos jours ont de nouveau pleinement conscience.'

Page 81: *L'Architecture dans la Peinture Moderne*, par A. D. B. Sylvester. Comment se fait-il que les peintres modernes peignent si rarement les édifices modernes? La question ne manque pas d'importance, en vue de l'absence générale de liaison qui existe actuellement entre l'art de la peinture et celui de l'architecture. Selon la réponse fournie dans cet article par A. D. B. Sylvester, le peintre romantique ne peint que rarement l'architecture contemporaine parce que celle-ci n'a pas encore eu le temps d'acquiescer les associations traditionnelles auxquelles, en tant que romantique, il s'intéresse surtout, tandis que le peintre classique n'a plus aucun besoin de peindre l'architecture car, étant libéré des obligations du 'représentationalisme,' il peut, en se servant de formes abstraites, accomplir tout ce auquel il était autrefois redevable à l'architecture peinte. M. Sylvester discute ensuite le processus de 'métissage' entre la peinture et l'architecture qui a caractérisé les premières phases du Mouvement Moderne, et suggère que le peintre dont l'œuvre est le plus en rapport avec les idéaux et les aspirations actuels du mouvement précité est Paul Klee.

Page 91: *Centre Municipal de Birmingham*. Birmingham est une ville animée et prospère, douée de fierté civique, mais ne possédant aucun centre municipal, lui permettant de s'exprimer avec dignité. LA REVUE présente ici l'avant-projet d'un centre civique pour la ville, d'une étendue d'environ trente-six hectares, qui a été préparé par trois étudiants de la Birmingham School of Architecture. Ce plan ne constitue certainement pas la première tentative de la sorte pour combler cette lacune de la cité, mais LA REVUE trouve qu'il est d'un intérêt exceptionnel, étant donné que les dessinateurs ont non seulement solutionné le problème des terrains de construction et de la réorganisation de la circulation, mais ils ont su rehausser la beauté visuelle de l'endroit en pratiquant l'art de l'urbanisme, basant leur projet sur les deux grands principes de l'enclos et de l'usage multiple. L'avant-projet des étudiants précités est illustré de quelques dessins exécutés par Gordon Cullen.

Page 99: *Vers une Architecture Appropriée: les Devantures de Magasins d'après-guerre à Londres*,

par Fello Atkinson. La devanture de petit magasin traditionnelle était au fond un agrandissement de la fenêtre située dans la pièce donnant sur la rue des maisons urbaines, avec la porte d'un côté ou de l'autre, style qui a survécu en Grande-Bretagne sous une forme très peu changée jusqu'à ces derniers temps. La débâcle de cette tradition, par suite de l'apparition du 'grand magasin,' est si complète que c'est maintenant la petite boutique qui expose les pires atrocités au nom de la publicité. Toutefois, ainsi que l'affirme Fello Atkinson dans cet aperçu, la forme des devantures de magasins britanniques est d'une banalité qui n'est pas attribuable entièrement aux restrictions et à la crise de matériaux. En fait d'éclairage, surtout, l'Angleterre reste très en arrière vis-à-vis de l'Amérique, et parmi d'autres sphères qui admettraient la possibilité de grandes améliorations, on peut citer le lettrage, la protection contre le soleil, et l'utilisation des potentialités décoratives de la marchandise exposée. Le développement le plus intéressant, dont nous ne voyons encore que bien peu d'exemples à Londres, est l'élimination complète de la devanture et son remplacement par le magasin tout entier comme unité d'exposition.

Page 113: *Entrepôts de Glasgow*, par Henry-Russell Hitchcock. Les constructions en fonte américaines, conçues par Bogardus et d'autres vers le milieu du dix-neuvième siècle, sont devenues en quelque sorte célèbres; les tentatives réalisées par les Anglais dans l'utilisation de la fonte, non seulement pour les charpentes mais aussi pour les façades, sont beaucoup moins connues. Elles n'ont jamais été très nombreuses, en partie à cause des règlements locaux sur le bâtiment, et en partie parce que, comme le fait remarquer le Professeur Hitchcock, lorsque la fonte était le plus discutée comme matière potentielle de construction, le goût contemporain exigeait pour un bâtiment des qualités qui étaient tout autres que celles que le fer de fonte pouvait bien offrir. Cependant, il existe toujours, à Glasgow surtout, des constructions britanniques en fonte qui méritent d'être considérées sur un pied d'égalité à côté des exemples américains dans l'histoire de l'architecture du dix-neuvième siècle, et celles-ci sont examinées ici du point de vue du vingtième siècle. Elles sont illustrées par des clichés, pour la première fois.

AVIS AUX PERSONNES DÉSIRANT S'ABONNER À LA REVUE

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Februar 1951

Seite 65: *Humanismus und Architektur* von Sir Kenneth Clark. In seiner 'Architecture of Humanism' stellt Geoffrey Scott den Grundsatz auf, dass für Renaissancearchitektur, nur Formprobleme von Bedeutung waren. Sir Kenneth Clark betont in

seinem Aufsatz über Professor Rudolf Wittkowers neuestes Buch 'Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism,' dass Scott infolge seiner Haltung gegen Ruskin und gegen alles, wofür Ruskin eingetreten ist, zu dieser Auffassung gekommen ist. Tatsächlich geht aus Wittkowers Buch hervor, dass die Architekten der Renaissance von Alberti bis zu Palladio—Sir Kenneth Clark stellt die Frage, ob Scott Alberti je gelesen habe—für den ethischen Gehalt ihrer Werke besonders interessiert waren; zuweilen gibt es kaum einen Unterschied im Ton zwischen 'De Re Aedificatoria' und 'The Stones of Venice.' Sir Kenneth Clark geht ausserdem im wesentlichen auf jene Abschnitte in Wittkowers Buch ein, die sich mit Palladios Kirchenfassaden und mit seiner Proportionslehre befassen. Wittkower weist darauf hin, dass Proportionslehre 'für die jungen Architekten unserer Zeit wieder von wesentlichster Bedeutung ist.'

Seite 81: *Architektur in der Malerei unserer Zeit* von A. D. B. Sylvester. Woran liegt es, dass moderne Maler so selten moderne Bauten malen? Die Frage ist nicht unwesentlich angesichts des geringen Zusammenhanges zwischen Malerei und Architektur in unserer Zeit. A. D. B. Sylvester ist der Ansicht, dass der romantische Maler zeitgenössische Architektur deshalb so selten malt, weil sie an den Assoziationen, für die er sich als Romantiker besonders interessiert, keinen Anteil hat, während der klassische Maler ebenso wenig Anlass hat, Gebäude zu malen, da er sich vom Zwang Gegenstände darzustellen, freigemacht hat; abstrakte Formen haben die Bedeutung für ihn, die gemalte Architektur in der Vergangenheit hatte. Sylvester untersucht den Prozess gegenseitiger Befruchtung zwischen Malerei und Architektur, der für die Anfangsstadien des modernen Stiles bezeichnend war und weist darauf hin, dass in Paul Klees Arbeiten der interessanteste Beitrag zu dieser Frage zu finden sei.

Seite 91: *Birminghams Stadtmittel*. Birmingham ist eine rührige, aufstrebende Stadt mit sehr viel Bürgerstolz, aber ohne eigentlichen Mittelpunkt im Weichbild der Stadt, in dem dieser Bürgerstolz einen sichtbaren Ausdruck findet. Die REVUE zeigt einen Plan für ein Stadtzentrum, der einen Umfang von etwa 86 Hektar hat und von drei Architekturstudenten in Birmingham ausgearbeitet worden ist. Es ist sicherlich nicht der erste Versuch dieser Art in Birmingham, aber die REVUE glaubt, dass er von besonderem Interesse sei, weil nicht nur das Problem von Wohnhäusern und Reorganisation des Verkehrs gelöst ist, sondern die ganze Anlage ein interessanter Mittelpunkt geworden ist, da das Projekt auf den beiden grossen Prinzipien: *eingeschlossener Raum und vielfache Verwendung* beruht. Gordon Cullen hat den Plan der Studenten in Zeichnungen veranschaulicht.

Seite 99: *Architektur vor neuen Aufgaben: Londons Schaufenster der Nachkriegszeit* von Fello Atkinson. Das traditionelle kleine Schaufenster war nichts anderes als eine Vergrößerung des Fassadenfensters des Stadthauses, neben dem die Haustür rechts oder links angebracht war, ein Typus, der sich in England erstaunlich lange, bis in die allerjüngste Zeit, erhalten hat. Der Zusammenbruch dieser Tradition steht mit dem Warenhaus in Zusammenhang und war so vollständig, dass es jetzt der kleine Laden ist, der die grössten Greuel im Zeichen der Reklame begeht. Aber englische Schaufenster sind im allgemeinen von einer Banalität, die man nicht nur auf Beschrän-

кungen und Warenmangel zurückführen kann. Besonders in Bezug auf Beleuchtung steht England weit hinter Amerika zurück. Aber auch Schrift, Schutzdächer gegen Sonne, dekorative Anordnung der ausgestellten Waren sind sehr verbesserungsbedürftig. Die interessanteste Entwicklung, von der es allerdings nur wenige Beispiele in London gibt, ist das Verschwinden des Schaufensters wo es ein Teil der gesamten Ladenfront wird und in ihr aufgeht.

Seite 118: Glasgows Lagerhäuser von Henry-Russell Hitchcock. Amerikas gusseiserne Bauten von Bogardus und anderen um die Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts genossen ein gewisses Ansehen, englische Versuche, in denen Eisen nicht nur als Rahmenwerk sondern auch als Fassade verwendet wurde, sind weniger bekannt. Ihre Zahl war nie sehr gross, einmal infolge der örtlichen Bauvorschriften und ferner weil auch, wie Professor Hitchcock betont, zu der Zeit, als von Gusseisen als einem Baumaterial der Zukunft die Rede war, der Geschmack der Zeit Eigenschaften von einem Bauwerk forderte, die mit diesem Material nicht ausgedrückt werden konnten. Aber, besonders in Glasgow, gibt es Eisenbauten, die neben den amerikanischen ihren Platz in der Geschichte der Architektur behaupten können. Sie werden hier vom Standpunkt des 20. Jahrhunderts betrachtet und zum ersten Mal in Abbildungen veröffentlicht.

FUER ZUKUNFTIGE ABONNENTEN

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Февраль 1951 г.

КРАТКОЕ СОДЕРЖАНИЕ СТАТЕЙ

Стр. 65. СЭР КЕННЕТ КЛЕРН. ГУМАНИЗМ И АРХИТЕКТУРА.

Джефри Скот, в своей статье „Архитектура Гуманизма“, охарактеризовал зодчество Эпохи Возрождения как зодчество, не ищущее никакого иного оправдания, кроме того, что оно доставляет удовольствие. В настоящем очерке, посвященном, главным образом, разбору последней книги Рудольфа Виттауер'a „Архитектурные Принципы Эпохи Гуманизма“, автор совершенно не соглашается с мнением

Джефри Скот'a; более того, он считает, что Скот, в данном случае, поддался своей антипатии к Раскину и ко всему, за что Раскин стоял. На самом деле, как показывает только что упомянутая книга проф. Виттауер'a, архитекторы Эпохи Возрождения, начиная с Альберти и кончая Палладио, придавали глубокое значение моральному содержанию своей работы: общий тон De Re Aedificatoria в некоторых местах почти не отличается от общего тона „Каменной Венеции“. Сэр Кеннет выражает даже сомнение насчет того, читал ли Джефри Скот работы Альберти. Разбирая остальные главы книги проф. Виттауер'a, Сэр Кеннет уделяет особое внимание тем частям, в которых говорится о церковных фасадах Палладио и о математике пропорций. Как говорит проф. Виттауер, последний вопрос глубоко занимает умы современных молодых архитекторов.

Стр. 80. ДАВИД СИЛЬВЕСТР. АРХИТЕКТУРА В СОВРЕМЕННОЙ ЖИВОПИСИ.

Почему это модернистские живописцы так редко изображают в своих картинах модернистские здания? В виду общего отсутствия связи между современной живописью и зодчеством, вопрос этот является далеко немаловажным. Автор статьи дает на него следующий ответ: Живописцы-романтики не склонны вводить современную архитектуру в свои произведения потому, что с ними пока еще не ассоциируются занимающие его идеи; с другой стороны, живописец-классик нашего времени не нуждается в архитектурных сюжетах, так как он теперь свободен от обязанности изображать натуру как она есть и поэтому в его картинах архитектурная живопись может быть заменена абстрактными формами. Автор рассматривает процесс взаимного оплодотворения между живописью и зодчеством, который был характерен для ранних стадий Нового Движения. Он высказывает мнение, что Пол Кли является в настоящее время живописцем, наиболее полно отражающим в своих произведениях идеалы и стремления этого движения.

Стр. 99. ФЕЛЛО АТКИНСОН. К АРХИТЕКТУРЕ: ФАСАДЫ ЛОНДОНСКИХ МАГАЗИНОВ

Традиционный фасад небольшого магазина является, в сущности говоря, расширением выходящего на улицу окна гостинной городского дома с прибавлением боковой двери. Этот тип фасада сохранялся в Англии до самого последнего времени почти что в первоначальной своей форме. В настоящее время однако эта традиционная форма почти что исчезла в результате появления универсальных магазинов. Благодаря этому фасад небольшого магазина в Англии превратился в настоящее время в нечто ужасающее, во имя рекламы. По мнению автора, банальность фасада, в общем характерная в данное время для магазинов в Англии, не может быть целиком приписана недостатку материалов и ограничениям послевоенного времени. В частности Англия сильно отстает от Америки в использовании эффектов освещения. Многого недостает также в изыскании вывесок и в использовании декоративного эффекта выставляемых товаров. Наиболее интерес-

ной новейшей тенденцией, пока еще очень мало распространенной, является включение в витрину всего магазина целиком, так что фасад магазина, как таковой, как бы исчезает.

Стр. 90. АДМИНИСТРАТИВНЫЙ ЦЕНТР ГОРОДСКОГО САМОУПРАВЛЕНИЯ Г. БЕРМИНГАМА

Бермингем это процветающий город, полный кипучей деятельности, гражданская гордость которого не нашла еще соответствующего выражения в архитектуре зданий административного центра. В настоящей статье описана схема такого центра, разработанная тремя студентами Бермингамской Школы Архитектуры. Согласно этой схеме административный центр городского самоуправления занимает 90 акров площади в центре города. Разумеется, это не первая попытка разрешить этот насущный вопрос. Однако, по мнению Редакции нашего журнала, настоящая схема представляет особый интерес. Авторы проекта не только удачно разрешили проблему размещения построек и проблему реорганизации трафика; они придали проекту наглядную живость, иллюстрируя его архитектурными видами массе строений. Проект основан на двух кардинальных принципах: замкнутости и многократного использования. Чертежи для схемы исполнены Гордон'ом Каллен'ом.

Стр. 113. ГЕНРИ-РАССЕЛ ХИТЧКОК. ТОВАРНЫЕ СКЛАДЫ В Г. ГЛАЗГО.

Американские чугунные постройки, спроектированные Богардус'ом и другими в середине прошлого века, приобрели некоторую меру известности. Гораздо менее известны британские попытки использовать чугун не только для остова здания, но также для его фасада. Такого рода постройки были немногочисленны отчасти из за местных строительных постановлений, отчасти же, как указывает автор, потому что как раз в то время когда о чугуне больше всего говорили как о строительном материале будущего, вкусы того времени требовали качества зданий, совершенно отличные от тех, которые чугун мог дать. Тем не менее, в Глазго сохранились еще по сию пору британские чугунные постройки, заслуживающие места в истории архитектуры XIX века наряду с американскими постройками этого типа. В настоящей статье они впервые рассматриваются с современной точки зрения. Статья иллюстрирована photographиями.

ОБЪЯВЛЕНИЕ ПОДПИСЧИКАМ

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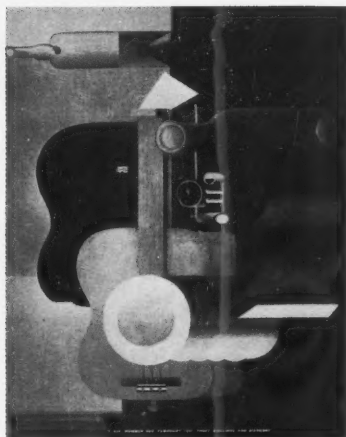
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THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

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The Cover is from a painting by Le Corbusier who alone of the leaders of the modern movement has practised both as a painter and an architect and at the same time produced paintings and buildings which speak the same language. (A comparison of the curved forms in the present painting with the baffle walls of the roof of the Maison Savoye at Poissy—a later work—shows that not merely the language, but the very phrasing, may be the same.) Perhaps the painter-architect and the architect-painter must continue to be rare characters in our era; but that is no excuse for the general indifference of modern architects to contemporary painting and of contemporary painters to modern architecture. On pages 81 to 89 of this issue A. D. B. Sylvester examines the relations of the two arts in the recent past and shows why painters, qua painters, tend to ignore modern architecture.

64 Frontispiece

65 Humanism and Architecture by Sir Kenneth Clark Geoffrey Scott, in the *Architecture of Humanism*, described the architecture of the renaissance as 'seeking no justification beyond that of giving pleasure.' In so doing, as Sir Kenneth Clark points out in this essay on Rudolf Wittkower's latest book, *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism*, Scott was the slave of his antipathy to Ruskin and all that Ruskin stood for. In point of fact, as Professor Wittkower's book shows, renaissance architects from Alberti to Palladio—had Scott ever read Alberti? Sir Kenneth wonders—were deeply concerned about the moral content of their work: the *De Re Aedificatoria* is sometimes undistinguishable in tone from *The Stones of Venice*. Other sections of Professor Wittkower's book on which Sir Kenneth comments are those dealing with Palladio's church facades and with the mathematics of proportion—the latter being a subject which, as Professor Wittkower says, 'is again very much alive in the minds of young architects today.'

70 Flats at Pimlico, London Architects: Powell and Moya

81 Architecture in Modern Painting by A. D. B. Sylvester Why do modern painters so seldom paint modern buildings? The question is a not unimportant one in view of the general lack of *liaison* between the arts of painting and architecture that obtains today. The answer given by A. D. B.

Sylvester in this article is that the romantic painter seldom paints contemporary architecture because it has not had time to acquire the associations in which, as a romantic, he is chiefly interested, while the classical painter no longer has any need to paint architecture at all because, being freed from the duties of representationalism, he can make abstract forms do what painted architecture did for him in the past. Mr. Sylvester goes on to discuss the process of cross-fertilization between painting and architecture which characterized earlier stages of the Modern Movement, and suggests that the painter whose work contains most that is relevant to the latter's present ideals and aspirations is Paul Klee.

91 A Scheme for the Centre of Birmingham by C. H. R. Bailey, Graham Winteringham and Maurice Lee Birmingham is a busy and thriving place with plenty of civic pride but no civic centre in which it finds worthy expression. Here the REVIEW presents a scheme for a civic centre for the city approximately ninety acres in extent, which has been prepared by three students of the Birmingham School of Architecture. It is certainly not the first attempt to meet Birmingham's need in this respect, but the REVIEW believes that it is of exceptional interest because its designers have not only solved the problem of building accommodation and traffic reorganization but have made the area visually exciting by the practice of the art of townscape, basing their project on the two great principles of *enclosure* and *multiple use*. The students' scheme is realized in drawings by Gordon Cullen.

99 Towards an Architecture: Post War Shop Fronts in London by Fello Atkinson The traditional small shopfront was basically an enlargement of the front parlour window of the town house, with the door to one side or the other, a type which survived in Britain in remarkably pure form until quite recently. For some time, however, it has been clear, particularly from the experiments of designers abroad, that this kind of accepted solution was entirely inadequate. In this article Fello Atkinson surveys the advances that have been made in London shopfront design since the war. In the use of lighting, in particular, he believes Britain lags far behind America, while other spheres in which there is obvious room for improvement are lettering, protection from the sun, and the utilization of the decorative potentialities of the goods displayed. The most interesting development, of which there are still only very few examples in London, is the disappearance of the shopfront altogether and the incorporation of the whole shop as the display unit.

107 Travel Centre in Piccadilly Architects: James Cubitt and Partners

113 Early Cast Iron Facades by Henry-Russell Hitchcock American cast-iron buildings, designed by Bogardus and others about the middle of the nineteenth century, have obtained a measure of fame; the British essays in the use of cast iron, not merely for frames but for facades as well, are less well known. They were never very numerous,

partly because of local building regulations, and partly because, as Professor Hitchcock points out, when cast iron was most talked about as a potential structural material the taste of the time required qualities in a building which were quite other than those which cast iron could properly produce. But, in Glasgow in particular, there still are British cast-iron buildings which deserve to take their place beside the American examples in the history of nineteenth-century architecture, and these are here discussed from a twentieth-century viewpoint, and illustrated in photographs, for the first time.

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The Authors Sir Kenneth Clark, born 1903. Worked for two years with Bernard Berenson in Florence. Keeper of Department of Fine Art, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 1931-33; Fellow Magdalen College 1933; Director of National Gallery 1934-45; Slade Professor of Fine Art, Oxford, 1946-50. Member of Committees of Royal Fine Art Commission, Arts Council of Great Britain, National Arts Collection Fund and Contemporary Art Society. Publications include *The Gothic Revival*, 1929; *On the Painting of English Landscape*, 1935; *One Hundred Details in the National Gallery*, 1938; *Leonardo da Vinci*, 1939; *L. B. Alberti on Painting*, 1944; *Landscape into Art*, 1950. A. D. B. Sylvester, born 1924. Has contributed articles and reviews to periodicals including *The Burlington Magazine*, *Les Temps Modernes*, *Penguin New Writing*, *The New Statesman and Nation* and *The Nation*. Has translated a number of books from the French including Kahnweiler's *Sculptures of Picasso*. James Cubitt, born 1914. Trained at AA 1935-40. Until formation of partnership in practice as private architect and part-time studio instructor at Kingston School of Art. Stefan Buzas, born 1915. Trained at Vienna Polytechnic and AA. Worked with private architects until going into partnership in 1949. Part-time studio instructor Kingston School of Art, 1945-49. Assistant designer for Dome of Discovery in conjunction with Design Research Unit.

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THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

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THREE SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE

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In a note on p. 117 the suggestion is made that style—meaning the stylish way of doing the necessary—is a quality almost completely lacking to-day, in most of the necessary things we do, like making lampposts or designing traffic symbols. It is important though not to identify stylishness with stuffed-shirtedness, and the picture here shows just how well quite dissimilar articles can look even when they are

slammed together apparently quite arbitrarily. As motifs in the street-scape flowers on lampposts are difficult things to bring off successfully, since they nearly always look too ornamental. But here, with the museum sign and the little girl already in need of a psychiatrist, a pleasantly casual atmosphere is provided—combining style with unpretentiousness. The example is a minor one but the principle is important.

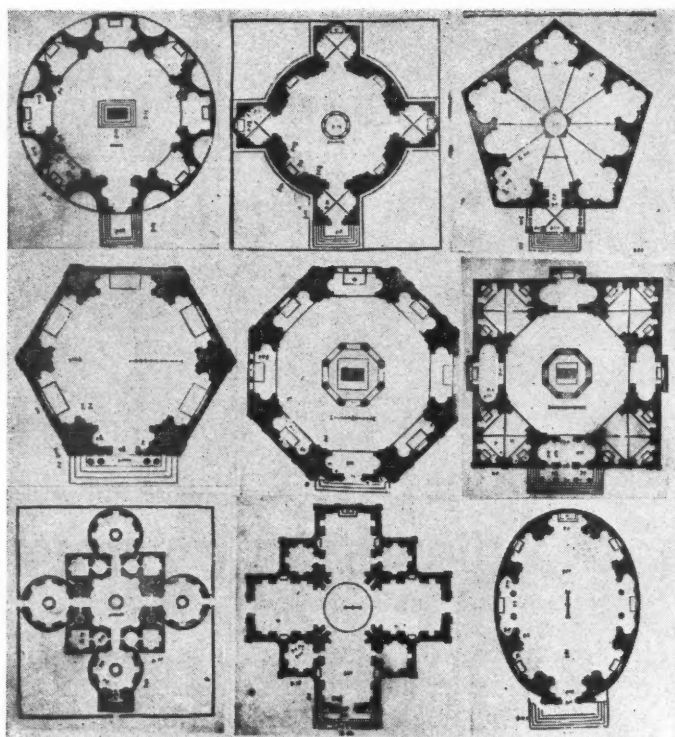
ant because it shows how even in small ways the effect of accident can be cultivated by the street designer. At present our streets are either completely chaotic, not being designed at all, or (in the case of architect-designed garden cities) so priggishly genteel that they make healthy people want to scrawl chalk marks on the walls and throw newspapers in the gutter.

HUMANISM AND ARCHITECTURE[★]

Although, in our youth, we were all told to read the original documents, the fact remains that historians still prefer to read each other; and those who go back to the sources with an inquiring mind are rewarded by unexpected discoveries. Professor Wittkower's mind is not only inquiring but immensely well-stored and tenacious. His studies of humanist architecture are masterpieces of scholarship. A vast body of learning is brought under control. But perhaps their chief value arises from an attentive reading of the most familiar sources of Renaissance architectural theory—Alberti's *De Re Aedificatoria*, Palladio's *Quattro Libri*, and Barbaro's edition of *Vitruvius*. These are not books for specialists but for the general student of architecture. Yet how few of those who theorize about Renaissance architecture seem to have read them with attention! The present writer has even been tempted to speculate whether Geoffrey Scott had read Alberti before writing the *Architecture of Humanism*. It is one of the ironies of criticism that the author of the *Della Famiglia*, whose relentless moral pressure was applied to every branch of life, should have appeared as a protagonist of pure taste—of 'an architecture seeking no justification beyond that of giving pleasure'. The first result of Professor Wittkower's studies is to dispose, once and for all, of the hedonist, or purely æsthetic, theory of Renaissance architecture. Whatever may be the effect of such buildings on us, the intention of the architects was entirely different. Both Alberti and Palladio have left us descriptions of ideal churches. They show the lofty symbolism underlying all those characteristics which a recent generation of critics believed to have a purely æsthetic intention. When Alberti recommends that churches should be white, it was not on grounds of taste, but because 'purity and simplicity of colour, as of life, is most pleasing to God'. And Palladio believes that they should be round because 'We cannot doubt that the little temples we make ought to resemble this very great one, which, by His immense goodness, was perfectly completed by one word of His'. There is no mistaking the tone of these quotations; it is the tone of the *Seven Lamps of Architecture* and *The Stones of Venice*. 'Whatever ornaments we admit ought clearly to be of a chaste, grave and noble kind; and what furniture we employ, evidently more for the honouring of God's word than for the ease of the preacher'. That is Ruskin on Pulpits (a passage in *The Stones of Venice II*, § 14, which in his later notes he described as 'very good'), and it is indistinguishable from Alberti.

The name of Ruskin gives the clue to Scott's misreading of the Renaissance theorists. Gripped by the natural forces of reaction, he believed that it was not possible to defend Renaissance architecture without attacking Ruskin and all that he stood for. It is true,

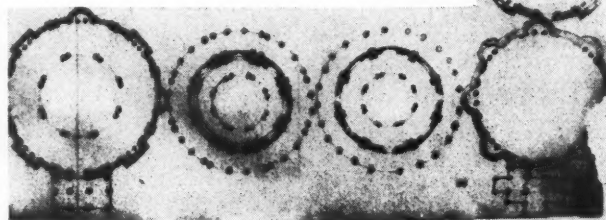
[★]*Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism* by Rudolf Wittkower has recently been published by The Warburg Institute, University of London.



1

next two sections on Alberti's approach to antiquity and Palladio's principles deal with the realization of theory in practice, and includes some admirable pieces of architectural analysis. Every amateur of architecture should read these chapters, which will show him how to follow the workings of these two great intellects. To do so is as absorbing as the pursuit of some problem of philosophy, argued with clear and scrupulous logic, and in the end perhaps more satisfying, for art admits of many answers, and philosophy, we must suppose, of only one, which is for ever unattainable. Such is the fascination of this exercise that we could wish that the chapter on Palladio's villas had been expanded, and the analysis of their plans supplemented by an equivalent analysis of their elevations. Two criticisms may, perhaps, be permitted. It is fitting that a professor should defend the academic, but the amateur must feel that Alberti's growing academism greatly diminished the effectiveness of his architecture. Even allowing for incorrect or deadening restorations, the façades of S. Sebastiano and S. Andrea can never have been as architecturally satisfying as that of the Tempio Malatestiano. The extreme dryness of Alberti's mind was relieved by a certain *quattrocento* love of conceits or decorative fancies. It is these which give life to the moral writings, and to such remarkable *jeux d'esprit* as *Momo* and *Canis*; and which make certain passages in the *De Re Aedificatoria*, in Leoni's translation, read almost like Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*. This is the fantasy which permitted the carvings on the door-jambs and the unorthodox capitals of the Tempio, or the banded pilaster of S. Maria Novella with

1, centralized plans from Serlio's *Fifth Book on Architecture*, 1547. 2, centralized plans from a manuscript by Francesco di Giorgio. 'I begin,' remarked Serlio, 'with the circular form because it is more perfect than all the others.' The preoccupation among Renaissance architects with the symbolic significance of the centralized plan leads Professor Wittkower to the conclusion, 'that the geometry of the Circle had an almost magical power over these men'—a conclusion which would dispose, once and for all, of the hedonist, or purely aesthetic theory of Renaissance architecture.



2

of course, that Ruskin grotesquely misunderstood the great architects of the sixteenth century; but in his general statements on the nature and justification of art he comes far nearer to Palladio than does the *Architecture of Humanism*. The first achievement of Professor Wittkower's book, therefore, is to set the architectural theories of humanism in their proper position between those of the Middle Ages and of the counter-revolution. He shows that they do not form a little island of hedonism, but are an adaptation of the same fundamental outlook, more rational, more aristocratic and more puritanical, in the sense that all Platonism is puritanical. This theme persists throughout the book, but is chiefly embodied in the masterly chapters on centrally planned churches with which it opens. The

its enchanting *impresa* of the Rucellai. In one of the most familiar and most valuable of all his definitions, Alberti distinguishes between Beauty and Ornament. Ornament is a kind of additional brightness and improvement to Beauty. Beauty is something which is proper and innate, and diffused throughout the whole, whilst ornament is something added and fastened on, rather than proper and innate. It is a distinction closely analogous to that of Coleridge between the imagination and the fancy, qualities which are certainly not incompatible, and which, in the *quattrocento*, were interdependent. Only the greatest artists of that age, perhaps only Masaccio and Piero della Francesca, could afford to dispense with fancy.

The other criticism of this section concerns a point in Professor Wittkower's admirable analysis of Palladio's church façades. He does not, it seems to me, fully appreciate the difficulties involved in Palladio's ideal solution, by which the orders of both the superimposed temple fronts should spring from what Alberti called 'the platform'. It is true that the design of S. Giorgio by which the pillars of the high temple are on pedestals, whereas those of the low temple are on the ground, involves certain unsatisfactory contradictions. But although deficient in logic, it is easy in effect, and was, in consequence, the Palladian form which gained widest currency; the church façades which Professor Wittkower himself reproduces to prove Palladio's influence follow this scheme. The more logical solution of S. Francesco della Vigna would have been heavy and academic in less skilful hands and the 'perfect solution' of the Redentore was too personal for general use. Moreover, it was only possible in a church with side chapels, not with aisles, which constituted the real difficulty in S. Giorgio and S. Francesco. As for the drawing in the Burlington-Devonshire collection which Professor Wittkower believes to represent Palladio's real instructions for S. Giorgio; this could scarcely have been carried out owing to the disproportionate height of the columns of the 'portico' temple, and the correspondingly narrow spaces between them. We may surmise that the drawing was left unfinished simply because Palladio did not see his way to fill these spaces with well-proportioned ornament and that its abandonment was not due to the incomprehension of Scamozzi (who must have known Palladio's intentions at least as well as we do) but to inherent difficulties which were only settled by the very different, and completely inspired, solution of the Redentore.

The last section of the book, entitled The Problems of Harmonic Proportion in Architecture, is clearly that which has cost the author most trouble and to which he may well attach the most importance. It may be doubted, however, if it will prove quite as acceptable to the average reader. There is, of course, no doubt of the truth and value of its general thesis. The Pythagorean discovery of a consonance between musical tones and measurement or weight seemed to the men of the Renaissance an irrefutable proof of that harmony on which their deepest faith was founded; and they unquestionably gave it visible expression in their architecture and even their painting. Professor Wittkower follows their calculations with heroic ingenuity and patience; and on the whole his analysis of



Title-page from a book by the once famous musician and musical theorist Franchino Gafurio which illustrates the idea that musical harmony is 'audible geometry'.

In the sixth century BC the Greek philosopher Pythagoras made a staggering discovery. He found that the consonances of the Greek musical scale—octave, fifth, fourth and double octave—had an unchangeable relation to the length of the strings. The difference in pitch of an octave occurs if the lengths of two strings are related as 1:2, of a fifth if the ratio is 2:3, of a fourth if it is 3:4, and of a double octave, if it is 1:4. Thus all the harmonies known to the Greeks seemed to be determined by the progression of the small whole numbers 1:2:3:4. This, for all intents and purposes, mysterious relation between audible harmony and mathematical proportion seemed to open a window into the great order of all creation. Plato and the Platonic philosophers seized upon this concept and, enriched by infinite subtleties, handed it on to western mankind. It lived unabated throughout the Middle Ages and was given a new lease of life in the age of the Renaissance when, as part of a vigorous Platonic revival, artists and architects sought to adapt their own work to the harmonic ratios which, they believed, informed the universe. 3 to 6 give an insight into Renaissance thought of harmonic ratios. The title-page from a book by Franchino Gafurio, 4, illustrates the discovery of the musical consonances by Pythagoras. The tablet from

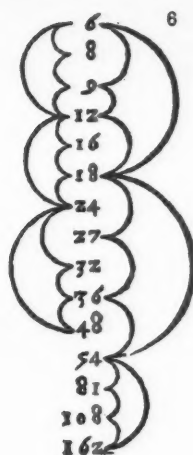
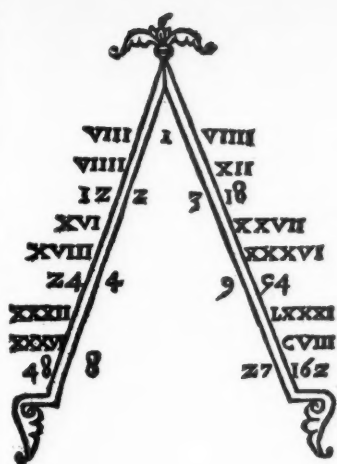


Raphael's School of Athens, 5, shows diagrammatically the Pythagorean harmonic scale with the Greek names for octave, fifth and fourth inscribed into the arches and underneath the perfect number ten (X), the sum of the first four numbers which constitute all musical harmonies. The diagram from Francesco Giorgi's Harmony of the World of 1525, 6, displays fully the interlocking of ratios ultimately derived from Pythagoras' discovery, as does the diagram 7, from Prado and Villalpando's In Ezechielem Explanationes, 1596-1604.



Palladio's 'fugal' system of proportion is convincing. Two interesting questions remain to be asked: first as to the extent to which the visual impression of these buildings was really enhanced by such abstruse calculations; and secondly, as to whether contemporary architects really believed that it would be so. To take the archetypal instance quoted by Professor Wittkower, the interior of S. Francesco della Vigna, for which we have, published in full as a most valuable appendix, Francesco Giorgi's memorandum on the proportions: can we say that this visible statement of a diapason and a diapente makes a particularly favourable impression on a spectator with normally developed responses to architecture? The answer is that it does not. The interior proportions of S. Francesco are uninspiring, even unsatisfactory. The nave is too broad, and the choir, by contrast, looks mean. We do not feel, as we do, for example, in S. Giustina of Padua, that we have suddenly entered a perfectly harmonious world; we do not even experience the quiet satisfaction and sense of completeness induced by such a church as S. Maria Formosa. Yet it seems very improbable that the modest (and under-rated) Mauro Coducci had followed any scheme of harmonic progression which could be equated with the musical scale.

To say this is not in any way to associate ourselves with those lazy critics quoted by Professor Wittkower in his conclusion, who prefer to regard all harmonious proportions as the result of chance (or, as they would say, of taste), and consider the rules that have been formulated on this subject as 'pures chimères ou superstitions'. But there is a wide difference between the rules of proportion which were common knowledge in every builder's work-room up to the middle of the nineteenth century, and the elaborate musical consonances used by Palladio and his circle. The former are essential to any



architectural tradition; the latter are either an intellectual luxury or the expression of a faith. With Palladio no doubt they were both.

This leads to the second question: how far the strict theorists really believed that their buildings benefited architecturally from musical proportions. Professor Wittkower rightly insists that Palladio never hesitated to break his own rules. There are, as is well known, frequent discrepancies between the actual measurements of his buildings and the ideal measurements given on the plans in the *Quattro Libri*. And even these ideal dimensions contain irregularities. Professor Wittkower is

worried by the length of the hall at Malcontenta, 46½ feet, and his attempt to explain it by an incredibly abstruse calculation is put forward without conviction. Ideally, as he says, the length should be 48 feet. But the widths of the rooms on either side add up to 44 feet and to gain the extra four feet Palladio would have had to make the central room jut out from the south front in a manner entirely contrary to his idea of an elevation. Actually the central feature of the south front does abut by about one

Triglyphi, Metopae.

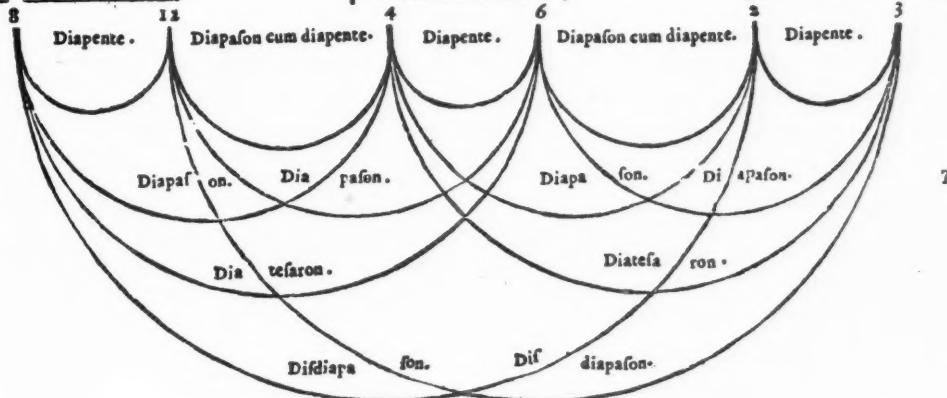
60	90
40	60
30	45

Triglyphi, Metopae.

30	45
20	30
15	22½

Triglyphi, Metopae.

15	22½
10	15
7½	11½



foot; the remaining foot and a half is accounted for by the thickness of the interior walls (which, as in all Palladio's buildings, are incredibly thin). So the figure of 46½ feet must be accounted for solely by visual and structural considerations, to which Palladio has, without hesitation, sacrificed his contrapuntal sequence.

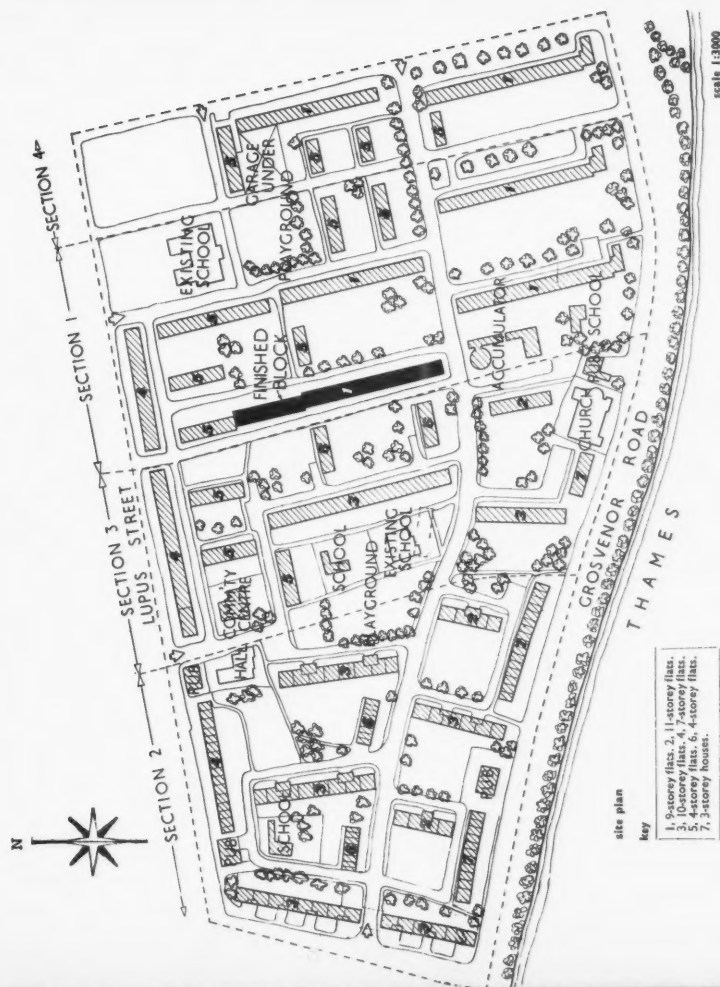
The fact is that having once declared their basic faith in harmony expressed through numbers, the men of the Renaissance were always prepared to cheat, just as good Catholics are prepared to cheat the saints. The noble capital letters in Pacioli's *Divina Proportione* are set in a scaffolding of squares and circles, but their beauty derives from variations in thickness and other factors which are entirely arbitrary, and the most beautiful thing in the book is the tail of the Q, which escapes from divine proportion altogether. Even Vitruvian man was an impostor, as the illustrations in the present book reveal. He can fit into a square, or into a circle, but not into both at once, except by giving them an arbitrary relation to one another, as in Leonardo's well-known drawing. The only honest attempt to depict Vitruvian man is in the woodcut illustration to the *Como Vitruvius*, which has involved grotesquely large hands and feet, and a sprawling attitude altogether unworthy of human dignity.

And yet this faith, as the present study makes clear, was profound and necessary, and gave to the great architects who subscribed to it a breadth and confidence which transfigures their work. This is what saves Palladio from academism, and distinguishes his buildings from later imitations. The imitator can only follow the rules; he cannot depart from them or enlarge on them, as Palladio would have done, because any departure would at once reveal a different view of life; whereas, for Palladio, rules are simply that part of his general convictions which have already been formulated.

FLATS AT PRIMLICO LONDON

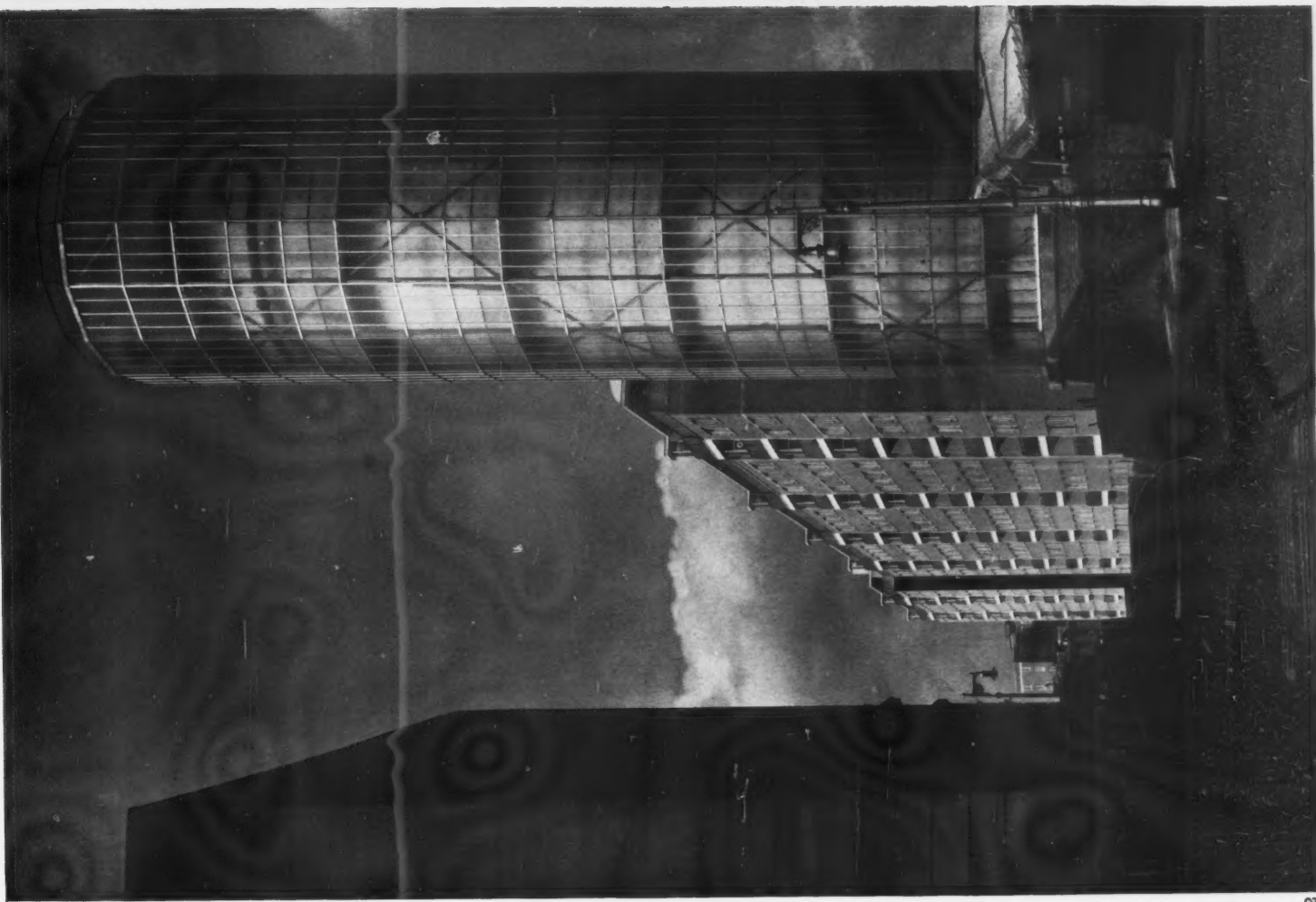
POWELL and MOYA: ARCHITECTS





In the City of Westminster the housing problem was, and still is, very acute, and drastic measures needed to be taken in order to cope with it. The Westminster City Council decided to concentrate mainly on one large area, rather than acquire small sites here and there, the premature development of which might hinder future planning. The site occupies an area of slightly over 30 acres and stretches approximately 600 yards along the north bank of the Thames at Pimlico. It is approximately 300 yards deep. The railway bridge from Victoria Station is near the western boundary of the site. The large block of flats, Dolphin Square, is near the east boundary. Because of the existing buildings on the site, development fell naturally into four sections. The first section is the area between Ranelagh Road and Antrobus Street, which was mostly covered by old factory and commercial build-

The heat-accumulator which is used to store the hot water brought in a tunnel below the river from Battersea power station for the district heating scheme. The welded steel storage chamber is insulated with 3 inch thick cork slabs and enclosed in a steel frame-work. The exterior is 1/2 inch roughcast glass fixed in aluminium framing bars.



ings most of which had already been rendered derelict or were very badly damaged by bombing.

In accordance with the requirements of the County of London Plan, an area has to be developed for housing at a density of 200 persons an acre. Apart from flats, the scheme will include a community centre, a day nursery, three nursery schools, four public houses, about 30 shops, laundries, mortuary, restaurant, public lavatories, and a service station with underground garage for 200 cars. The scheme now under construction was the winning design in a competition held in 1945-6. The first section, consisting of 495 flats, is being developed in two contracts; the first is for 370 flats in 9-storey blocks. The first block is now complete and the remaining three are nearing completion. The second contract for the remaining 125 flats (in 4-storey blocks and a 7-storey block containing also 13 shops) is also in progress. There will finally be approximately 1,600 flats. Drawings are now being prepared for the first 300 dwellings in the second section, some of which are 3-storey houses.

Due to the high density required, the majority of the blocks of flats have been built to the maximum height allowable, and are sited at right angles to the river with living rooms facing west and with the majority of bedrooms facing east. The rooms have oblique views up and down the river.

The open spaces between the blocks of flats are laid out as lawns, small enclosed public gardens, children's playgrounds and private gardens belonging to nursery schools, lower level maisonette dwellings, and 3-storey houses. At the same time, the tall blocks are staggered in layout to avoid the cutting up of these open spaces into long tunnel-like strips running from the north to the south borders of the site. The angles of light between blocks of flats taken at ground floor window level is usually 25°. The 9-storey blocks of flats are approximately 175 ft. apart.

On the first section, which is now being developed, there will be open green spaces between the tall blocks of flats. At the north end of this section, where there are 4-storey maisonette blocks and where the treatment is more intimate, there will be private gardens and small scale planting. The open way-through under the north end of Block 1 will form part of a pedestrian way which

will run from east to west across the site when all the sections have been developed.

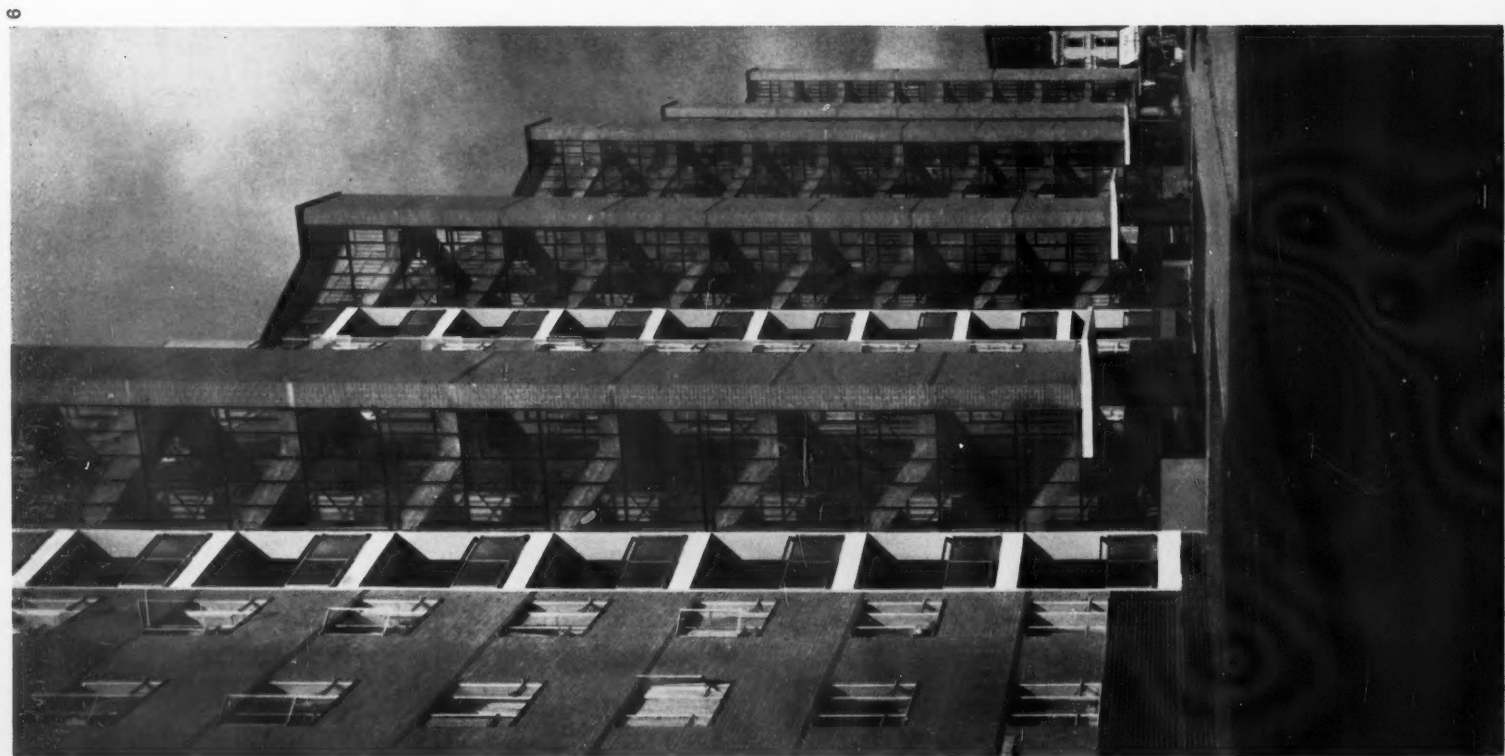
Space heating and domestic hot water are provided by a district heating scheme utilising waste heat from Battersea Power Station, which faces the site across the river. Water heated by the steam condensation plant, which is at present poured into the Thames, will now be passed through exchangers and be pumped across the river at 200°F., using an already existing tunnel, to the heat accumulator on the site. This is the first large-scale district heating scheme in London and will provide sufficient hot water for the 1,600 dwellings projected on the Pimlico site and will soon be extended to cover the Dolphin Square flats as well. The heating system is designed to give a living-room temperature of 65°, bed-

FLATS AT PIMLICO

3. Chaucer House and the heat-accumulator seen from across the Thames. Behind is the next block to near completion. In the foreground are the coaling cranes of Battersea power station. Below, 4. the west facade of the Chaucer House looking towards the heat-accumulator. 5. the same facade looking north. The walls are faced with yellow flintlime bricks. Balconies have roughcast glass in aluminium frames supported on steel tubes; their back walls are painted in red, green and blue alternately for each staircase. Vertical reinforced concrete ribs, balcony upstands and soffits are finished white.





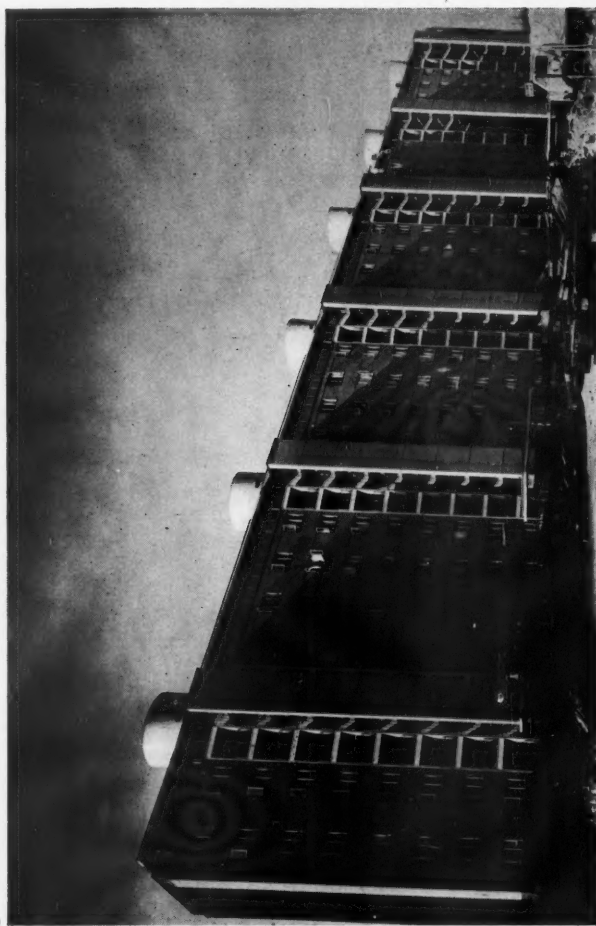


6

room temperature of 60° and a hot water supply based on an average demand of 15 gallons per head per day. Ultimately between eight thousand and ten thousand people will be served. It is estimated that this utilisation of waste heat will mean a saving of 10,000 tons of coal per annum.

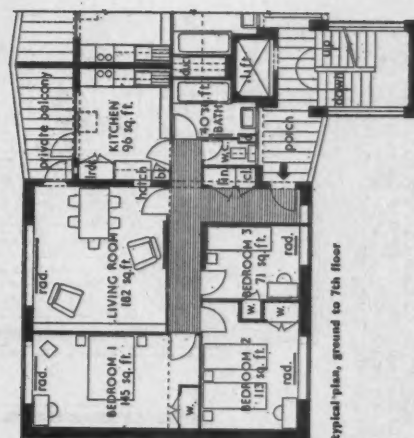
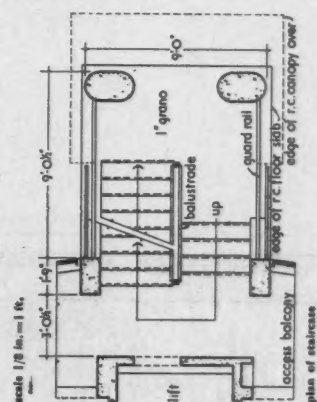
A heat accumulator is necessary for averaging out the heat continuously recovered from the turbines as the demand in the flats naturally varies during the 24 hours. This accumulator is built on the old disused dock, which has been filled in elsewhere, but which, at the base of the accumulator, has been left unfilled. It is to be converted into a sunken garden. The outer casing of the accumulator consists of prefabricated panels of rolled steel sections welded on the site. The glazing of this casing is of 4 in. rough cast glass in aluminium patent glazing frames. The glass is removable from the inside. There is a rotating jib at the top from which a cradle can be suspended for cleaning purposes. The steel frame of the casing, which can be seen through the glass, is

7



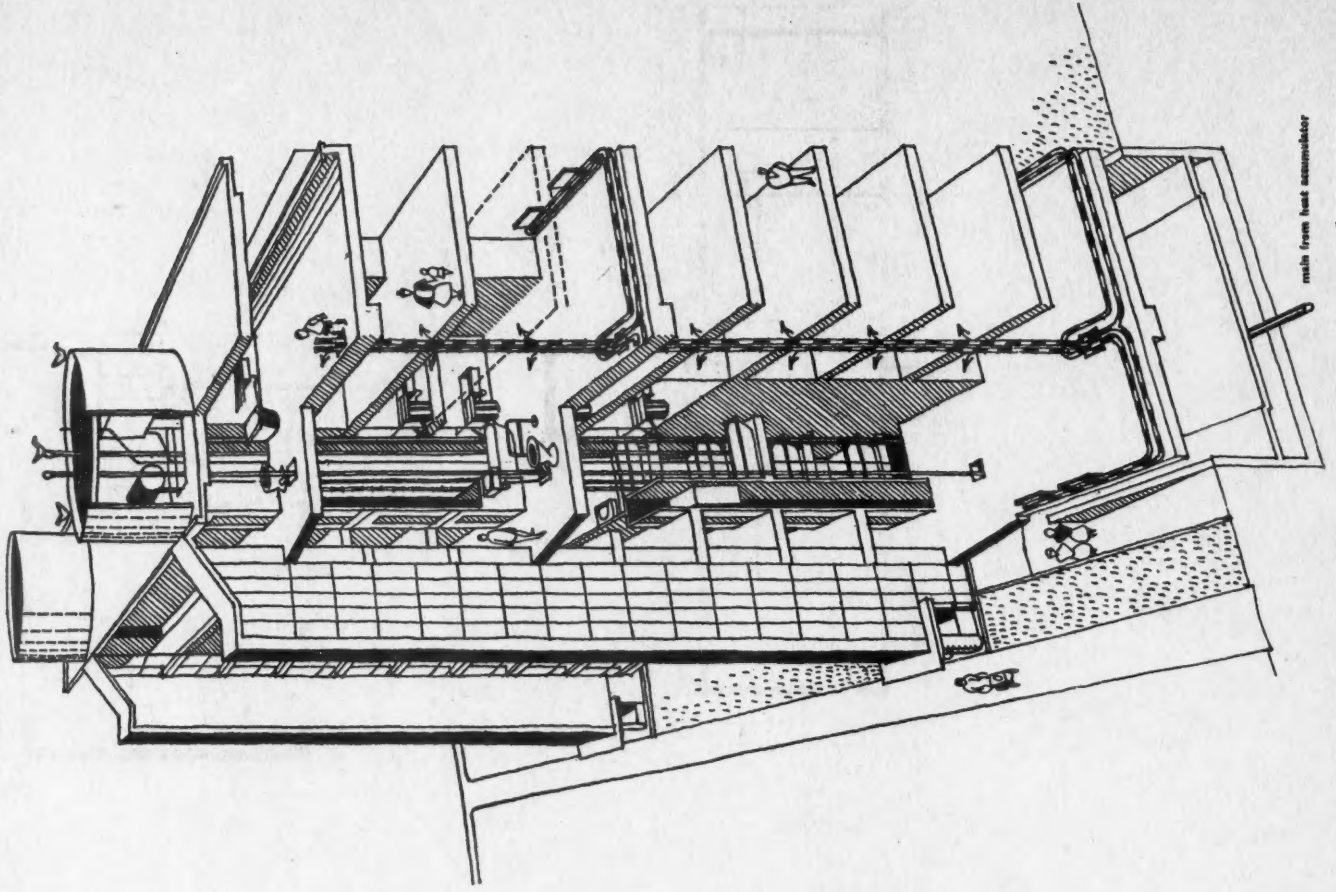
6, projecting staircase bays on the east facade of Chaucer House. 7, the east facade as a whole. The entrance columns are painted dark grey; concrete nibs supporting the brick facing are unrendered. Balcony soffits, other upstanding members and porches are finished white.



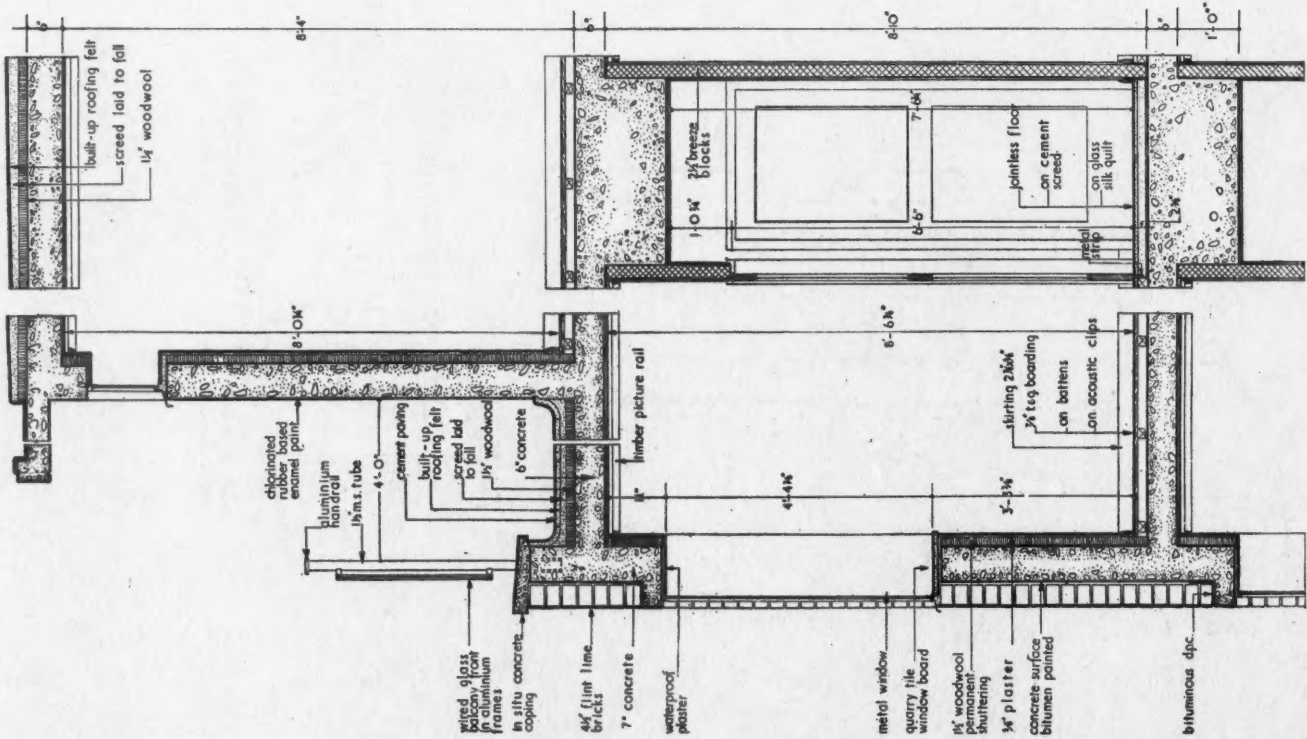


FLATS AT PINLICO

This drawing shows the operation of the central heating and hot water system for a typical group of flats leading from one stair-case. The hot water, comes from the heat accumulator at 200° F., is circulated through radiators and to the calorifiers which supply the domestic hot water at 130° F. The calorifiers are situated in the drums on the roof.



radiators from heat accumulator







painted with aluminium paint and the welded steel vessel containing the hot water, which is insulated with cork on its outside face, is plastered and painted light grey. The glass casing has not been carried down to ground level for fear of damage. The base has been constructed, therefore, of reinforced concrete, faced with granite setts, from roads which once crossed the site, and which were used as permanent shuttering.

Chaucer House. The 9-storey block illustrated here contains 104 flats served by 6 staircases and 6 lifts. 92 are 4-room flats, 12 (on the top floor) are smaller. The basement is accessible by lifts, staircases and a ramp and contains pram and bicycle stores for each flat, and a small laundry. It also acts as a horizontal duct for the district heating services.

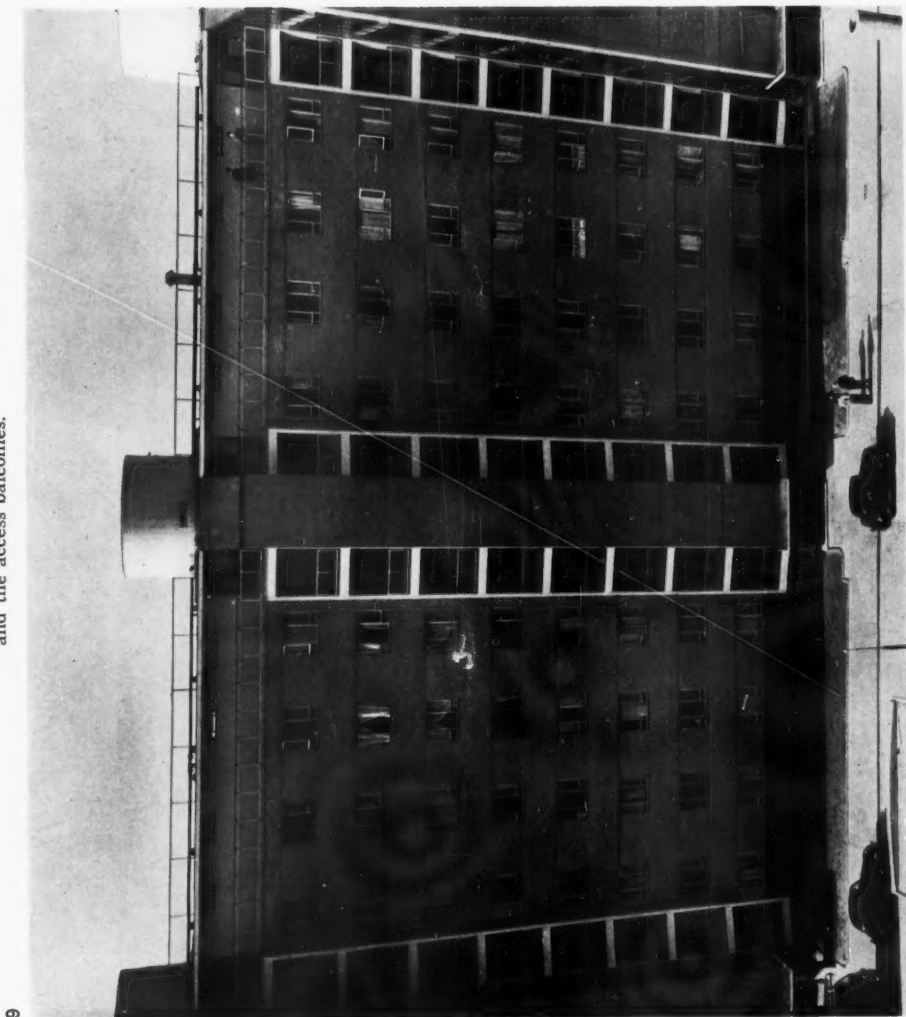
Construction is of reinforced concrete with external walls and transverse spine walls 7 in. thick. Floors are solid reinforced concrete slabs 6 in. thick. The external walls are lined internally with $1\frac{1}{4}$ in. wood wool slabs, which are used as permanent shuttering and which provide thermal insulation. On the main faces of the building, these walls are faced externally with brick. The bricks are treated purely as a panel facing and are supported by exposed horizontal reinforced concrete nibs at each window head level, tied back to the structural walls by means of galvanized iron cramps, which fix into dovetail galvanized slots cast in with the concrete walls. The flank walls and back walls of the balconies, the top floor and the tank rooms are of exposed concrete and smooth shuttering has been used. These surfaces are painted with a chlorinated-rubber based enamel paint. For facing, yellow flint lime bricks were chosen. The metal windows set in the brick faced walls are almost flush with the surface. The front doors, casement doors and the windows on the balconies are of timber.

The floors are insulated against sound. In the case of living rooms and bedrooms, the floors are T. & G. boarding on battens on cork pads, which are stuck down with bitumen on to the concrete slab. In the case of kitchens, bathrooms, w.c.s and halls, there is a screed floating on a resilient glass silk quilt. The finish of these floors is dark brown plastic tile. The $2\frac{1}{2}$ in. breeze partitions are built up on felt strips. In the case of the block illustrated, the party walls are 7 in. reinforced concrete and there is no

8. two of the staircase bays on the east façade with the heat-accumulator behind.



9, the east façade of Chaucer House seen from the top of the next block nearing completion. The round domes above the staircases house tanks and lift machinery. 10, the glazing of a staircase bay and the access balconies.

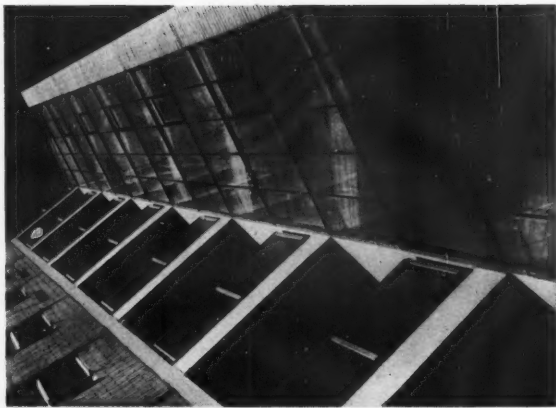


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additional soundproofing applied to these walls, as in no case is the living room of one flat placed adjacent to the living room or bedroom of another*.

Walls internally are plastered with a $\frac{3}{8}$ in. thick hemihydrate plaster suitable for application on to breeze, concrete or wood-wool surfaces. Ceilings are plastered with a special gypsum plaster, which bonds in with the concrete soffits without the necessity of providing a

10



mechanical key on these soffits. Cills are of dark brown quarry tiles and white glazed tiles are used for the splash-backs in the kitchens.

All services are taken in internal ducts. The main ducts serve a pair of flats on each floor and are situated, therefore, at the party wall. The ducts have large access doors. The rainwater pipes (with the exception of those on private balconies) are internal but are adjacent to the external wall of the access porches, which are drained into these rainwater pipes by means of special flat cast iron gulleys; the latter are placed within the thickness of the slab and do not project through the underside of it. The central heating mains rise in one of the bedroom cupboards and horizontal branches to the radiators are taken in the floor screed. The radiators

*The 7 in. concrete wall is slightly above the recommended standard of sound insulation for bedroom against bedroom. In the case of Blocks 5 and 6 where living room is placed adjacent to living room, there are free standing 21 in. breeze partitions on either side of the party wall, giving, therefore, three leaves of wall and two air spaces.



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(which are in all living rooms and bedrooms) are bracketed from the walls.

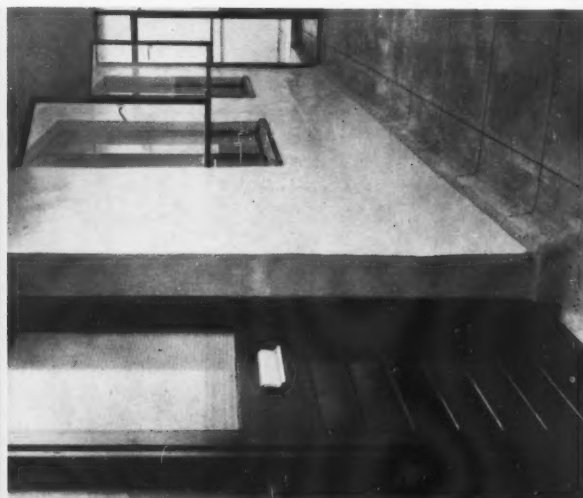
The electrical service is on three circuits, a cooker circuit, a 5 amp circuit for the light fittings, and a 13 amp fused plug ring main circuit for all floor points, whether light or power. There are four such plugs in each living room, two in kitchens, and two in bedrooms. All horizontal conduits are cast in with the reinforced concrete floor slabs. All kitchens have free choice of gas or electricity for cookers, refrigerators and wash boilers. The flats are also serviced for relay wireless and television.

The main walls are faced with yellow flint lime bricks with a plinth of Staffordshire blue engineering bricks up to ground floor cill level. Window frames in these walls—off white; metal cills—black; horizontal ribs supporting brickwork—unpainted; reinforced concrete “way-through” supporting the north end of the block—unpainted concrete; staircase glazed walls, metal frames—black; metal panels at base of staircases—violet. Top floor, tank rooms, balcony reveals and staircase columns

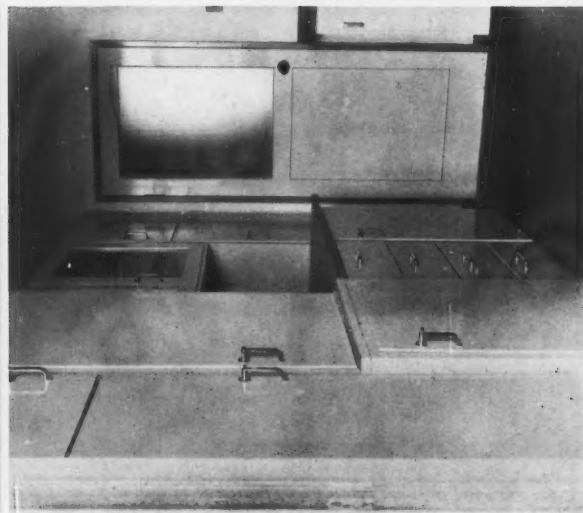
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—light putty. Vertical r.c. ribs, balcony upstands and balcony soffits—white. Balcony fronts—Georgian wired roughcast glass in aluminium frames, supported on steel tubes. Tubes and handrails painted black. Entrance columns—dark grey; front doors—black. Back walls of balconies, lift fronts, panels below windows are painted in variations of blue, red and green. Internal colour scheme for a typical 4-room flat is as follows:—ceilings—white; door trims, skirtings and radiators—dark grey; woodwork generally—light putty; window frames—off white; the living room wall containing special living room fitment—terra-cotta, other walls—light putty; the living room fitment—black top, white frame, lead grey flush door; bedroom 1 (facing west), walls and soffit of wide beam—light yellow; bedrooms 2 and 3 (facing east), walls—light pink; hall walls—light pink; one end wall—dark grey; the kitchen wall above sink and cooker—canary yellow (gloss paint); other walls—light putty (dis-temper); hatch doors—red; bathroom, w.c.—light putty.

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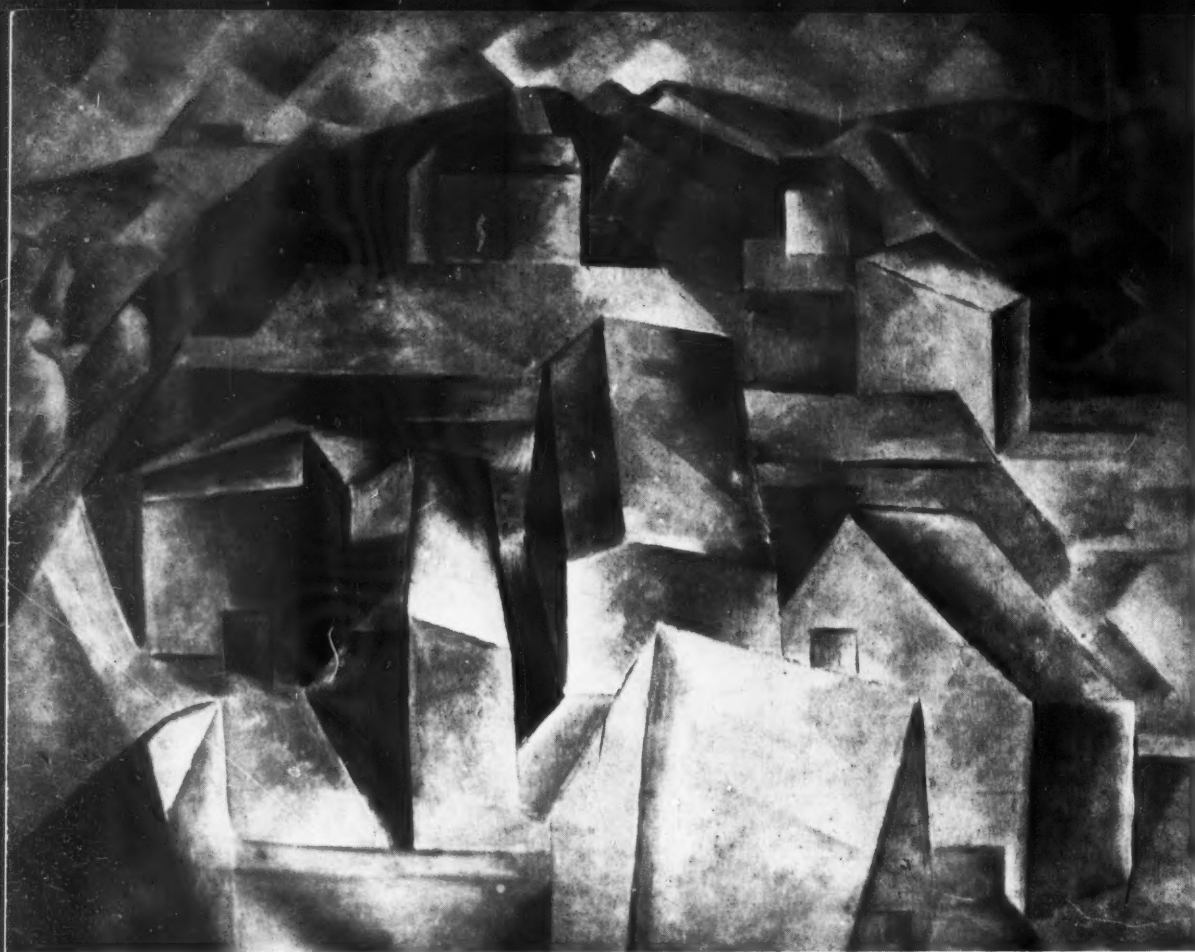


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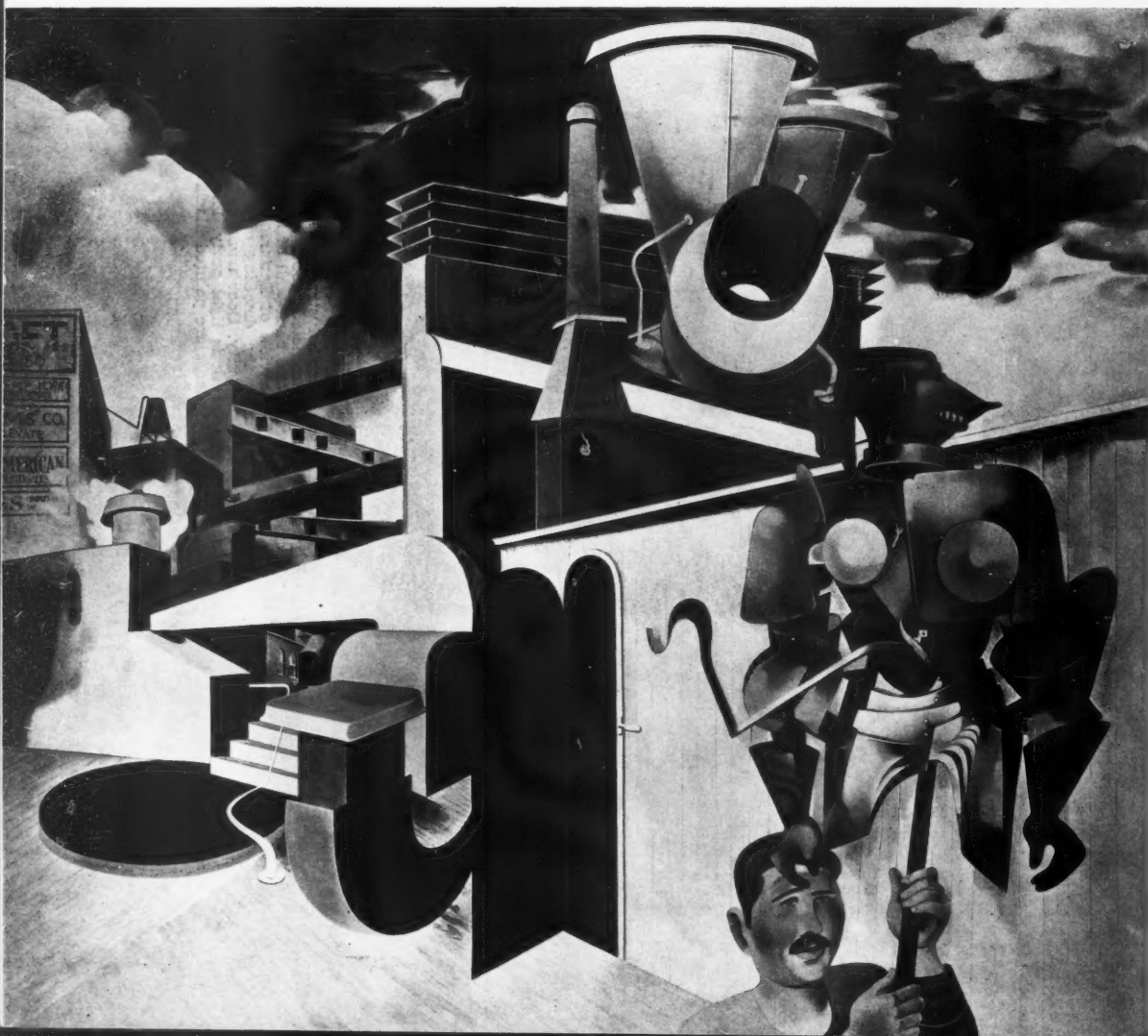


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11, a typical staircase balustrade and landing. The concrete has been painted with a chlorinated-rubber based enamel paint. The colours of each staircase and back wall of balcony are blue, red and green alternately. 12, the view of Battersea power station from a private balcony. 13 shows the detailing of a typical kitchen. Walls are distempered light putty. Door trims and skirtings are painted grey and other woodwork is light putty. 14, a flat entrance door on the eighth floor. All doors are painted black.



1 Pablo Picasso, Les Maisons sur la Colline, 1909



2 Peter Blume, Parade, 1930



Why does modern architecture play so negligible a part in contemporary painting? In the following article A. D. B. Sylvester sets out to answer a question to which serious thought has not, it would seem, hitherto been given. Dividing the painters into the admittedly rough and ready—though always serviceable—categories of romantic and classical, he finds that the former do not paint modern buildings, because what interests them in buildings is primarily the richness of their associations—a quality which modern buildings naturally have not had time to acquire. Even when—as happens mainly in America—they paint architecture in a contemporary style (2 on the facing page), this style must not be so up to date as to be unfamiliar. As for the painters of today who may be called classical, their abandonment of illusionism has enabled them to create forms whose function is identical with that of invented architecture in classical illusionistic painting and which often achieve close analogies with those of modern architecture, even when the subject represented is a building from the past (1 on the facing page) or is not architectural at all. These forms, indeed, have influenced the work of architects such as Corbusier, Gropius and Mies van der Rohe. England, however, has not produced a modern classical painter of importance, and this may be the reason why the impact of modern painting on architecture has been so slight in this country—a situation the more to be regretted in that painting has been in the past an exceedingly important source of inspiration for English architecture.

ARCHITECTURE IN MODERN PAINTING

Pictorial representations of architecture, other than the purely topographical, serve two distinct purposes. These can best be designated by those hardy perennials 'classic' and 'romantic,' provided they are taken to mean no more than is here stated. By classic painting of architecture I mean its representation for the sake of its intrinsic worth as a means of organizing forms in space and of communicating a state of mind through the inherent expressiveness of shapes and their relations. By romantic painting of architecture I mean its representation for the sake of its evocative power, of its associations with particular persons or places or events or ways of life which have captured the artist's fancy. Needless to say, the two purposes are usually both operative: but there are few cases in which it is difficult to spot the predominant one.

The classic use of painted architecture can be found at its most complex level in the art of the Renaissance—as in *The School of Athens*, where the mood of the philosophers is sustained by a lofty and impassive architectural setting, dominated by the tall and spacious barrel-vaulted nave which conducts us toward the distant sky, source of the light symbolizing enlightenment, or, again, in *The Expulsion of Heliόδorus*, where the action of driving the defiler out of the temple is reinforced by harsh reflections from light beating forward like waves from the cornices of the domes between the sturdy,

tense, aggressive arches. Raphael's achievement in this respect was far from unusual in his time. Most of the great Italian masters of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries—and some non-Italian masters also, such as Roger van der Weyden in *The Seven Sacraments*—excelled in creating intrinsically beautiful and articulate architectural backgrounds.

Since architecture painted in the classic spirit is not dependent for its efficacy upon its resemblance to a particular building or style of building with which the artist's public is familiar, and since classic artists are usually concerned with the same formal problems as the most advanced architects of the period, classic representations of architecture are usually in the style of contemporaneous real architecture. Sometimes they are more or less copies—the setting of *The School of Athens* was based upon Bramante's designs for St. Peter's. More often they are original inventions. In the latter case, they may realize the aims of contemporary architects at an earlier date than their real buildings. This is obviously due in part to the extra time needed for an architect's designs to be executed. But it is chiefly the result of the painter's not having problems of construction and of fitness for use to hamper his invention. In any case, painted architecture in the classic spirit sometimes anticipates and may influence the real architecture of the next decade.¹

¹ Cf. Sir Kenneth Clark, 'Architectural Backgrounds in XVth Century Italian Painting,' *The Arts*, No. 1, pp. 13-24, No. 2, pp. 33-42.



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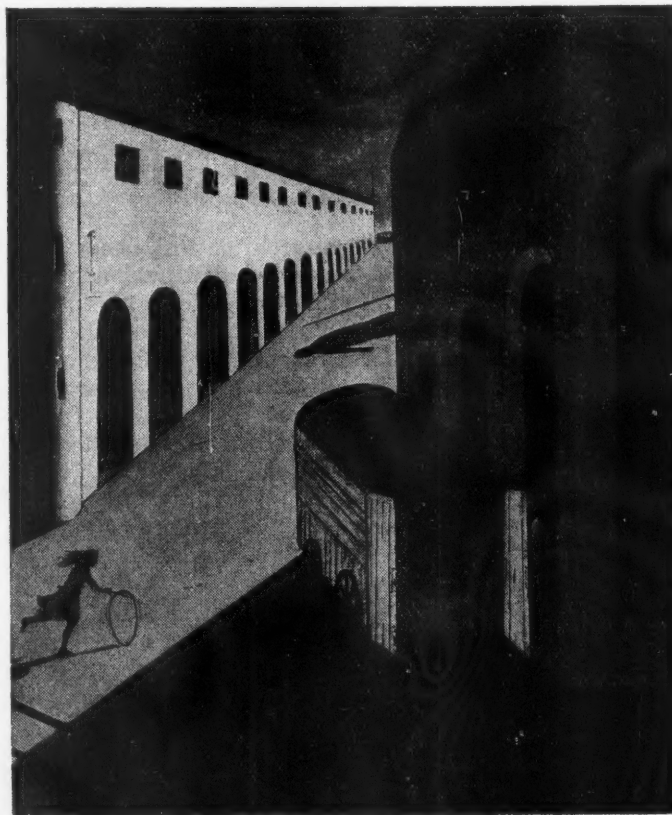
Two varieties of evocative architectural painting. Utrillo's contemplation of an actual place shows a fragment of the past unaltered by its continuation into the present. Di Chirico's ideal arcades show a symbol of the past threatened by the intrusion of the present. For the present—embodied in the child, which is the new, and the removal van, which will take away the old—have come to disturb the peace of a forgotten street. 'The "melancholy and mystery of a street" are due to its being in the same place but at another time.' 3, Maurice Utrillo, Montmartre, 1912; 4, Giorgio di Chirico, Melancholy and Mystery of a Street, 1914.

Painted architecture can fulfil a romantic purpose, on the other hand, only if the artist uses a familiar architectural style, either by depicting actual buildings which exemplify it or by creating a pastiche of it, because communication by means of evocation depends upon the spectator's recognizing a particular style and instinctively associating it with certain patterns of human existence. Thus, whereas the Renaissance used classical models to create new worlds and therefore used them freely, the so-called neo-classic movement, which in spirit was romantic, used them to evoke the antique world and therefore copied them slavishly. Generally, romantic artists are interested in worlds remote in time or space from the everyday life of the age, but, even when they are fascinated by contemporary life, they are still unable to paint buildings in the architectural style of the immediate present, but only of the recent past, because their imagination is fired only by forms that have had time enough to acquire associations. Their fondness for remote worlds may, of course, take them forward in time, inspiring them to conceive those cities of the future of the comic-strip and the cinema, but it is hardly likely that their fantasies, which of course are simply exaggerations of the 'modernistic' (e.g., Odeonic) idiom of today, are anticipations of

new developments in the main stream of architecture. Such anticipations are the prerogative of the classic artist; the romantic lacks the necessary powers of original formal invention. Romantic artists do not create forms: they re-create existing forms in a manner which will emphasize the meaning those forms have for them.

Most of the twentieth century artists who have specialized in painting architecture have been romantics. Thus Maurice Utrillo's views of Paris affect us, not so much through the expressiveness of their forms or through their rendering of structure, space and light, as through the fidelity and subtlety and nostalgia with which they evoke places we know or which, having seen his pictures, we should like to know. And the reason why we care to be reminded of these streets, or should like to see them, is that we are drawn to the life they are a part of. Utrillo, painter of memories and promises, finds his apt subject-matter in buildings that are picturesque and rich in associations: his choice never falls on modern buildings.

For different motives but in accordance with the same principle, the Surrealists and their associates have painted architecture which is invariably remote from modern building. It is precisely because ancient architecture is so potent a means of evoking the past



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that di Chirico, Delvaux and Berman have used it extensively. Their old buildings become symbols of a lost world; how better to engender a surrealistic incongruity than by juxtaposing such nostalgic images with symbols of the assertive present? The 'melancholy and mystery of a street' are due to its being in the same place but at another time. When modern

architecture does appear in a Surrealist work, the picture is a jest—Magritte's *Mental Calculus*, with its white cuboids and hemispheres as parodies of the functional style.

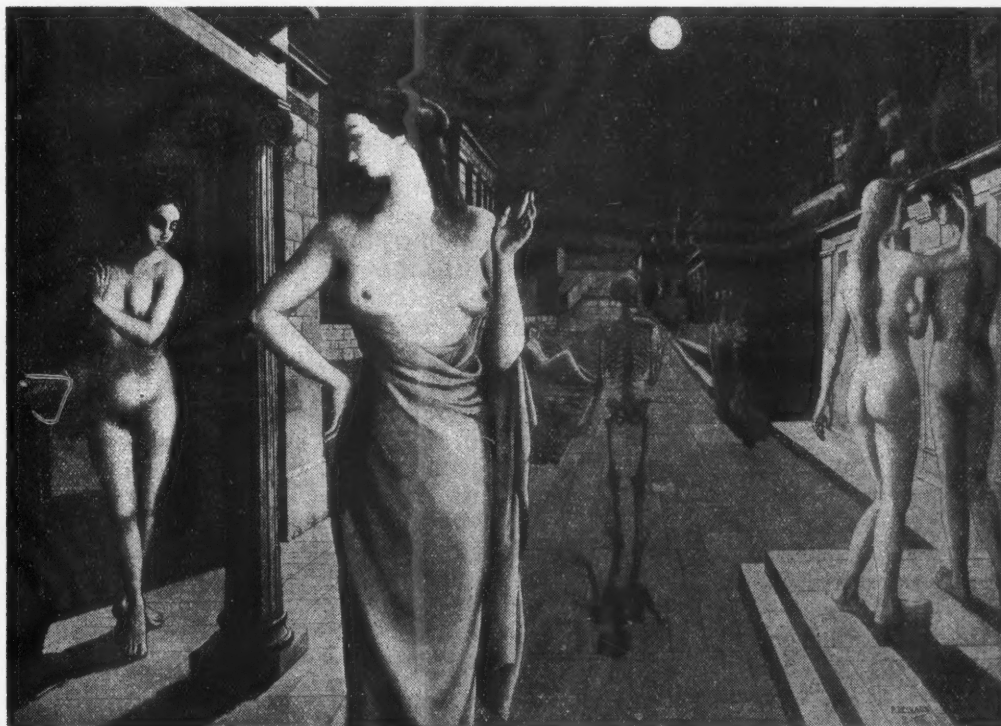
Nostalgia for the past is found again in the architectural paintings of John Piper. Concerned as he is with the character and drama of buildings, Piper is drawn only to architecture that has been handled by history. When he departed, quite recently, from his customary subject-matter and depicted the huts of a holiday camp at Portland Bill, he made them look like palaeolithic remains.

In America, however, romantic painters have found enough character and drama in modernity to represent modern buildings or to invent buildings in a modern

all, modern buildings have been painted indefatigably by Lyonel Feininger, whose obsession with architecture is as insistent as Monsù's. To describe Feininger as an American may appear to be special pleading, since he left his native country before he began to paint and did not return there until fifty years later. But it was not in Germany that he saw and became obsessed by the tall buildings which have been his preferred architectural theme: it was during his childhood in America, as he himself has told us.³ It may also be questioned whether Feininger does indeed paint architecture in a romantic spirit, and not in a way allied to Cubism, in view of the angularity of his forms. But modern painting which is angular is not necessarily in the Cubist tradition, and the motives

for Feininger's angularity are very different from those of the Cubists. He does not use angular forms to establish a more stable construction, but to suggest a precarious instability. Many of his architectural subjects are Gothic, and in all his paintings there is an element of Gothic claustrophobia and vertige. Feininger, like Marc and Chagall, has made Cubist angularity and transparency serve romantic ends.

The American romantic painters of modern architecture invariably represent or invent buildings in a style not quite modern enough to be unfamiliar. For, if it were unfamiliar, it would not be recognizably modern. And for him who romanticizes about



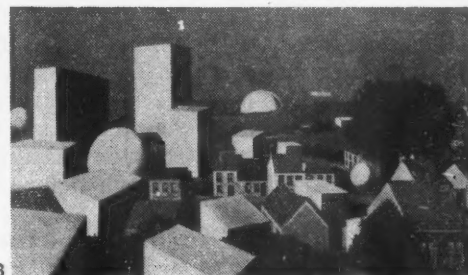
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Two types of incongruity. Is Delvaux' skeleton a premonition of the figures' future or a remnant of the buildings' past? The rigid poses, the frigid handling, the inconsequential architecture are reminiscent of Bronzino. Magritte is less in earnest. The little suburban villas are obviously lived in; the parodies of modern buildings are machines for living in—but are obviously uninhabitable.

5, Paul Delvaux, *Lunar Town*, 1944;
6, René Magritte, *Mental Calculus*, 1921.

style. The reason is obvious. Americans are not burdened with the weight of Europe's cultural heritage: because they do not live among the relics of a past greater than their present, they cannot look backwards in time when they look for poetry in the world around them.² Thus John Marin has painted menacing skyscrapers ready to topple down upon the crowds beneath. Thus Peter Blume, who paints his social criticisms of American life by juxtaposing objects characteristic of it, has included fragments of modern architecture among those objects. Above

² Cf. Robert Motherwell in Max Ernst, *Beyond Painting*, New York, 1948, p. v: 'Time gives objects and images their qualities of love and hate; generations of connotations, associations, sense experiences are what make the past. But for better or worse, most Americans have no sensation of being either elevated or smothered by the past; most of us (or our ancestors) came here in order to cease to deal with the past.'

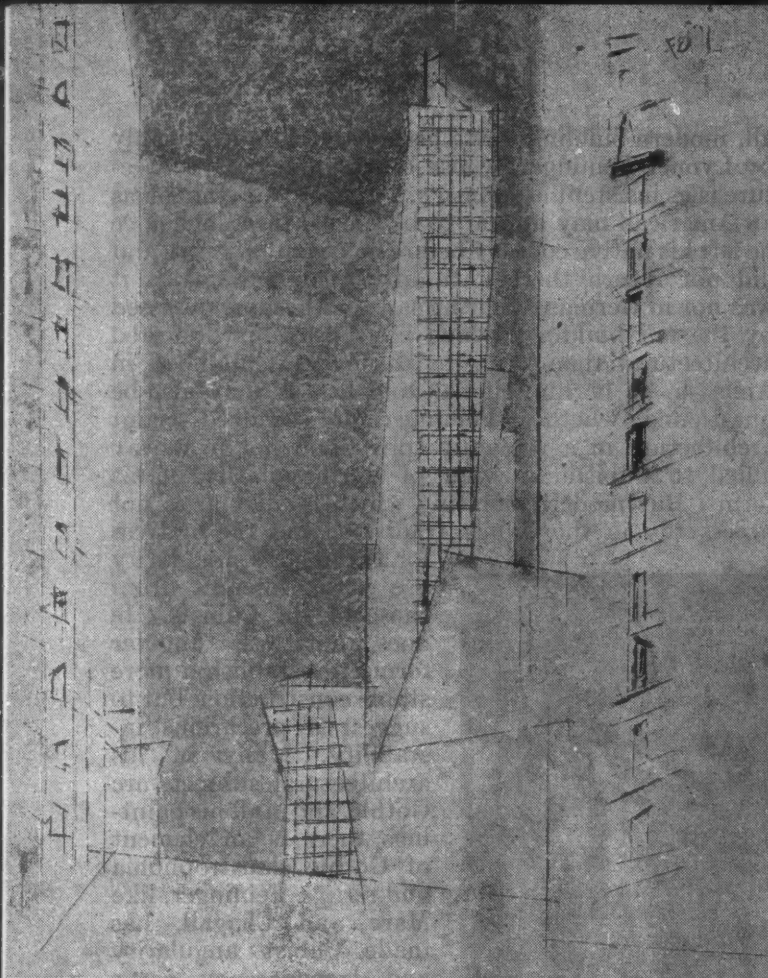


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modernity, it is essential that his subject be *recognizably* modern. This, no doubt, is why the Futurists painted relatively little architecture. They depicted locomotives and automobiles, but buildings very seldom, because in Italy there were no modern buildings for them to evoke.

It is, then, to the classic painters of the age, the

³ The context in which he speaks of this is precisely a claim to being essentially American; and Alfred Barr echoes the artist's insistence on this point. New York, Museum of Modern Art, *Feininger-Hartley*, New York, 1944, pp. 7-13.



7

Feininger's subject is the skyscraper. His angularity, however, is not that of Cubism: he seems to want to induce awe—a romantic motivation. His angularity is Gothic. 7, Lyonel Feininger, *Manhattan—The Tower*, 1944.

Cubists, that we look to find painted architecture in a style contemporaneous with, or in advance of, the progressive building of the period. Knowing of their preoccupation with the structure of objects and with the architecture of painting—didn't Gris define painting as 'a sort of flat, coloured architecture'?⁴—and of the excitement which geometric forms aroused in them, we are not surprised to find houses, factories, churches, railway stations, bridges and lighthouses in numerous Cubist pictures by Picasso, Gris, Braque, Léger, Delaunay and Gleizes. Nor are we surprised to find that these subjects were tackled at the very outset of Cubism, since they provided the Cubists with half the answers to their problems before they began to paint.

What is more, the problems of the Cubists were precisely those of the progressive architects of the time: 'to find beauty in form instead of making it depend on ornament,' as Adolf Loos wrote in 1898;⁵ to conceive of their means as a species of construction, of engineering; to eliminate all 'disguise' overlaying the structure, so that this could be rendered visible; to replace *art nouveau* arabesque with the straight line; to be faithful to the character of the medium—either by working in accordance with its natural inclinations

(in architecture, the William Morris standpoint; in painting, an insistence on respecting the two-dimensional nature of the canvas) or by exploiting or inventing new media to suit their conception (in architecture, ferro-concrete; in painting, *collage*).

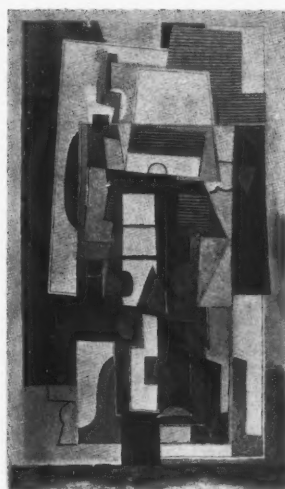
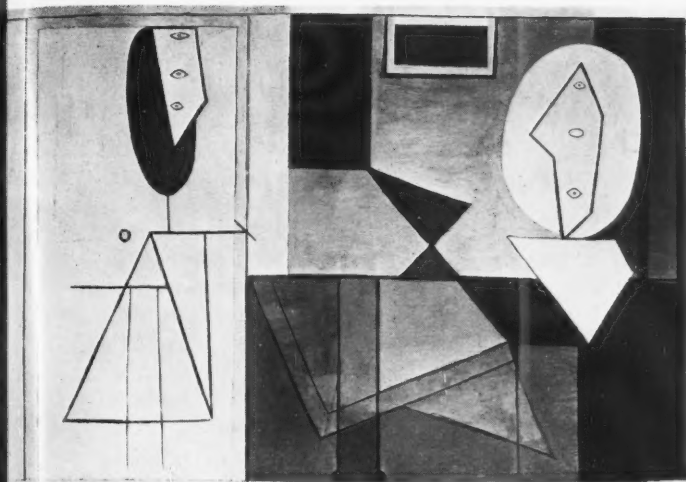
And yet, contrary to all our expectations, we discover that the style of architecture represented by the Cubists—whether they depicted existing buildings or invented them—is not contemporary. It came quite near to being so when Delaunay did a series of paintings and prints of the Eiffel Tower in 1910-11 and Gleizes painted Brooklyn Bridge in 1915: but the Eiffel Tower was a familiar enough landmark for Chagall to make a purely evocative use of it in 1913 (*Paris through a Window*), and, in any case, by 1913 Feininger was painting buildings more recent than these. Furthermore, the four great Cubists contented themselves in the main with painting eighteenth century houses and nondescript cottages of no particular style or period.

Only, the style of the buildings represented is not relevant to our thesis in the case of Cubism. For Cubism is not an illusionistic language. The pictorial language of the Renaissance cycle is illusionistic: the signs signifying architecture, real or invented, present its appearance; the forms of the architectural conception and the pictorial forms in which it is communicated are one and the same. But in the language of Cubism, the signs signifying architecture, real or invented, do not present its appearance; the stylistic features of the buildings depicted are quite different from the forms in which they are depicted, because of the extreme formalization and rearrangement to which the shapes of the real or imaginary objects represented have been submitted. It is true that, wanting as they did to avoid arbitrary stylization, the Cubists had to use models which lent themselves to their system of interpretation—obviously, buildings as ornate as Rouen Cathedral, beloved of Monet, were less suitable to their purposes than buildings with a simple and clearly-defined structure, like those of Gardanne, which Cézanne so often painted. But it is clear that buildings conforming to this requirement cover a multitude of styles and periods. Broadly speaking, the stylistic principles of the buildings painted by the Cubists and those of the forms assumed in their paintings by those buildings had little or nothing in common. And when we come to consider the relation between the architectural conceptions of the Cubists and those of modern architecture, it is not the style of the buildings painted but the style in which the buildings are painted that concerns us.

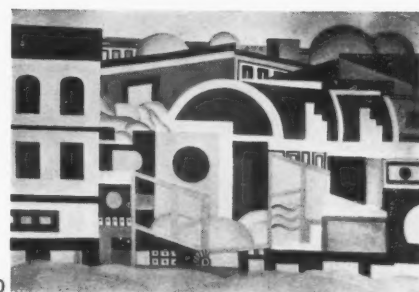
Approaching the problem in this way, we find our expectations confirmed. The various old or nondescript houses painted by Braque (at Estaque) in 1908, by Picasso (at Horta de Ebro) in 1909 (1, p. 80), by Gris (in Paris) in 1911-12 are all translated into forms which reflect the aspirations of the most progressive architects of the period. Again, when Léger did two paintings of an imaginary railway station in 1923, the style of the architecture was that of the large Paris stations built in the nineteenth century, but the pictorial forms resembled the architectural forms of the Bauhaus movement.

⁴ 'On the Possibilities of Painting' in Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, *Juan Gris—his Life and Work*, trans. Douglas Cooper, London, 1947, p. 141.

⁵ In a magazine article reprinted in *Ins Leere gesprochen*, Paris, 1921, p. 72.



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*Synthetic Cubism employs the language of Gropius and Mies van der Rohe—a language of advancing and receding rectilinear planes. Even a nineteenth century station is treated in these terms. 8, Pablo Picasso, *The Studio*, 1928; 9, Pablo Picasso, *The Table*, c. 1919-20; 10, Fernand Léger, *Railway-station*, 1923.*



11

*The Cubists reveal a conception allied to that of contemporary architecture irrespective of the subject depicted—whether eighteenth century houses or a bottle and fruit. 11, Georges Braque, *Bottle and fruit*, 1911; 12, Juan Gris, *Houses in Paris*, 1911.*



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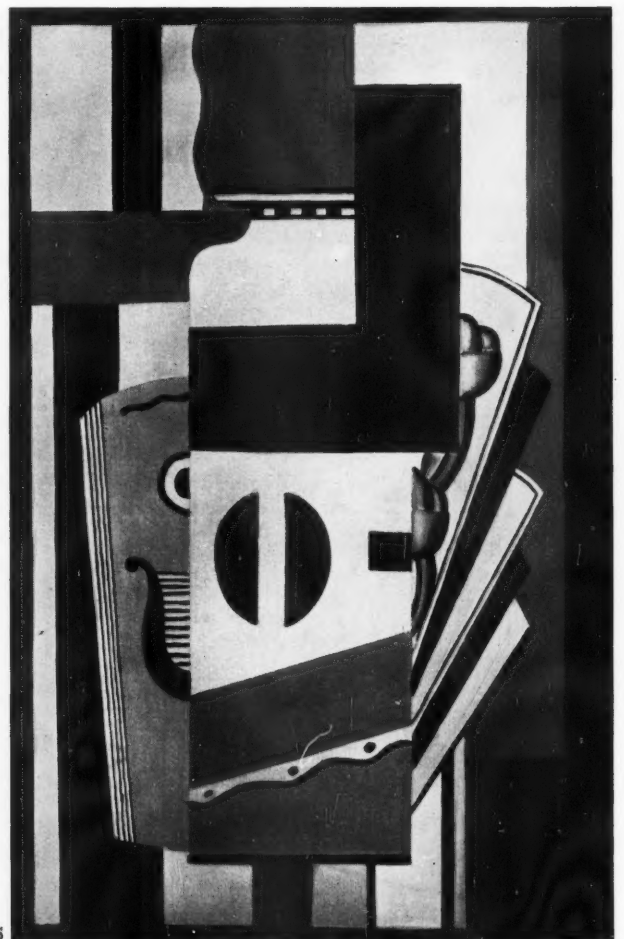


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'In the non-illusionistic language of modern painting, it is possible to create geometric designs whose function is identical with that of invented architecture in illusionistic painting without their having any representational significance whatever.' So Léger has been able to use the same geometric forms to serve an identical purpose both in pictures in which these forms signify architecture and in pictures in which they are non-representational. 13, Fernand Léger, Landscape with figures, 1921; 14, Fernand Léger, Luncheon, 1921. 15, Fernand Léger, Pot and book, 1926.



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Since there is no connection between the appearance of the buildings, real or imaginary, represented by the Cubists and the architectural conception underlying their representation, it is natural enough that this conception should not only be manifest in their representations of architecture, but also in their still-lives and portraits. Thus Giedion has been able to confront an analytical Cubist head (*L'Arlesienne*) by Picasso with a view of Gropius' Bauhaus,⁶ revealing an affinity of architectural conception and perhaps some influence of the picture—or its type—upon the building. Again, when Picasso and Braque, in the later phases of analytical Cubism, combined their transparent planes with a sort of linear scaffolding, they did not have to depict the Eiffel Tower or Brooklyn Bridge in order to find a stimulus, or even an excuse, for drawing lines in space. The subject did not matter. Analytical Cubism, irrespective of whether it was representing architecture of any kind, used the forms of modern architecture.

Synthetic Cubism brought modern painting closer still to modern architecture, for its language was one of rectangular planes, advancing and receding at right-angles to the line of vision, and was therefore closely analogous to the mature style of Gropius and Mies van der Rohe. This affinity is especially evident in Picasso's still-lives of the period immediately preceding and following the 1914-18 War (it is far less evident in related works by Braque because Braque avoids verticals in his composition, whereas Picasso uses them with deliberate emphasis); in Léger's work of the early 'twenties—such as the station paintings cited above and the compositions with figures mentioned below—and in Picasso's large angular compositions of 1928. And, of course, synthetic Cubism is also related to Corbusier's architecture, in that it was the parent of his Purist painting, whose forms are constantly echoed in his buildings.

Comparison between the architectural conceptions of the Cubist painters and those of architects working along analogous lines shows that the painters tended to get there first. In the theoretical formulation of the principles of the modern movement, architects preceded painters. It was not only that, in the 'nineties, Adolf Loos probably had a clearer conception of what had to be done than any painter—even Cézanne—but that the germ of that conception had been in the minds of architectural theorists since as far back as 1850, whereas pictorial theory did not begin to change direction until 1880. In practice also, architecture was the first to manifest the new principles: in painting, they did not appear until Seurat, but in architecture they were present in the Crystal Palace. On the other hand, these principles were first fully realized by the painters. By the beginning of the 1914 war, the Cubists had fulfilled them with greater inventiveness and authority than had Behrens, Loos, Hoffmann, Gropius, Perret or Tony Garnier. And when modern architecture came to maturity in the 'twenties, breaking up the solid block of Gropius' model for a factory shown at the Cologne Werkbund exhibition of 1914 into the planes

in space and transparencies of his Bauhaus, it was virtually, as Giedion,⁷ Berendt⁸ and Barr⁹ have shown, a translation into three dimensions of Cubist painting.

That the Cubist pictures which lent themselves to translation into buildings were not necessarily pictures of buildings is the crux of the whole matter. Indeed, in the non-illusionistic language of modern painting, it is possible to create geometric designs whose function is identical with that of invented architecture in illusionistic painting without their having any representational significance whatever. Purely abstract forms are geometric inventions of the artist, and so are the imaginary buildings of the illusionistic painter. They differ in that the former cannot, the latter can, be 'justified' objectively. Modern painting has liberated itself from the obligation to give objective justification to every form, to make every form simulate a real object: the modern painter whose composition requires a patch of brown in the corner need not portray a dog or a pair of slippers; he simply paints a brown blob or plane. The illusionistic classic painter wishing to use geometric forms as a foil and framework for his organic forms must paint a building. The romantic painter paints architecture, not for the sake of its plastic and pictorial value, but in order to evoke a particular reality; so he will never produce a geometric invention, since this lacks the reference to the particular which he needs. But the classic artist, once he has ceased to aim at objective justification of his forms, can fulfil the purpose (for him) of painted architecture by painting a non-figurative geometric design. Thus Léger, after painting, between 1920 and 1925, groups of figures against backgrounds of what were obviously houses, and other groups and still-lives against a background clearly meant to be read as interior architecture, proceeded, between 1925 and 1930, to paint still-lives against geometric backgrounds which do not signify anything, yet are composed of exactly the same shapes as the houses and interiors and have the same pictorial function. All the same, though abstract geometric forms are theoretically capable of fulfilling the same function as painted architecture, they tend, by depending entirely on colour-relations to make us read them as constructions in space, to become no more than flat decorative patterns. Then, while they are architectural they are a purely decorative architecture, like façades which fail to communicate a sense of the space behind them.

Abstract painting of the geometric type has indubitably influenced later developments in real building. Comprehensive accounts of such influences have been given by Barr¹⁰ and Giedion.¹¹ Thus, with the *Stijl* group in Holland, which included architects as well as painters and sculptors (its founder and theorist, Theo van Doesburg, practised both painting and architecture), the development of its painting invariably anticipated that of its architecture. The

⁶ Siegfried Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture*, eighth, enlarged, edition, Cambridge, Mass., 1949, pp. 426-27.

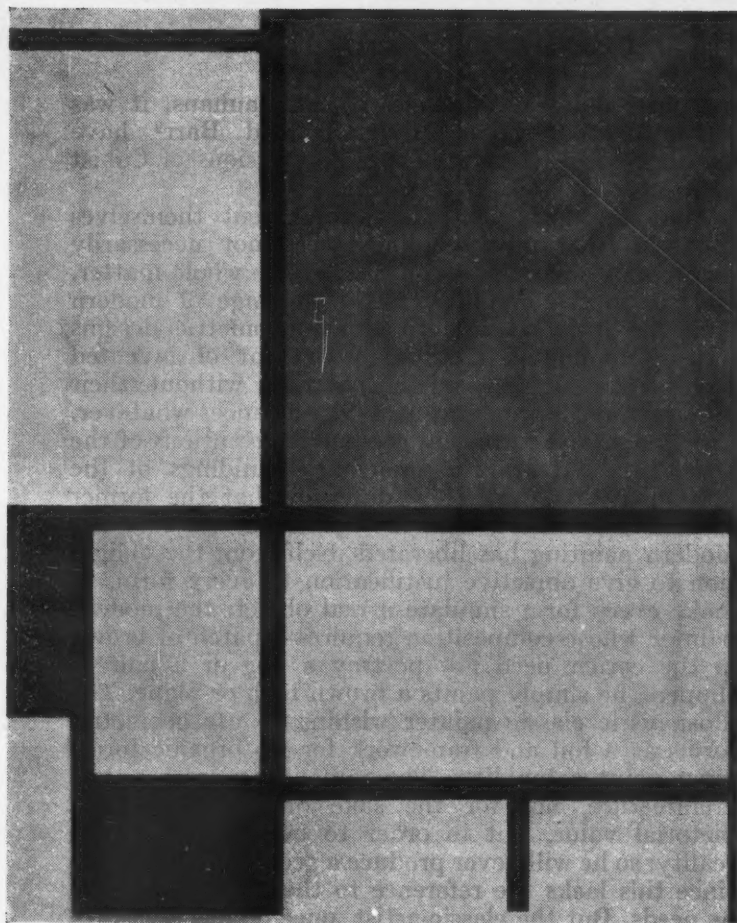
⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 367-72, 398, 425-28.

⁸ W. C. Berendt, *Modern Building*, New York, 1937.

⁹ A. H. Barr, *Cubism and Abstract Art*, New York, 1936, pp. 168-66.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 138-39, 142-50, 153-62.

¹¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 372-75.



16

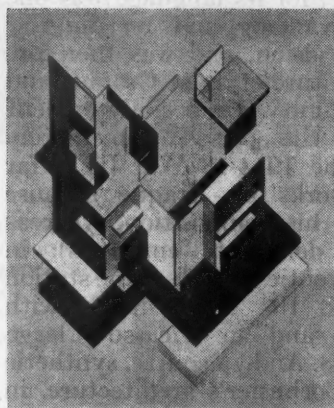
Paintings by Mondrian of this kind directly inspired the architecture of his friend van Doesburg, the theorist of the Stijl group, whose painter and architect members had a reciprocal influence on one another. 16, Piet Mondrian, *Composition in Grey, Blue, Yellow and Red*, 1921; 17, Theo van Doesburg, *Colour Construction (Project for a Private House)*, 1922.

domain of this movement's influence extended beyond the borders of Holland: the repercussions of the paintings of Mondrian are manifest not only in the buildings of Oud and Doesburg but in those of Mies van der Rohe and of Gropius and other Bauhaus architects.

Since the middle 'twenties, no painting has been done which has, *as yet*, corresponded to new developments in architecture. This is not for want of trying on the part of Picasso, for in 1929 he painted a series of pictures which were projects for monuments to be erected on the Mediterranean shore. These are buildings—their dimensions are indicated in some cases by the presence of a human figure—which at the same time are enormous sculptures, in a post-Cubist style, of a woman's head. Here Picasso affirms his desire that his architectural conception should be realized by painting in an illusionistic language, so that the pictures faithfully present the appearance of his imaginary buildings. Obviously, this is not architecture for normal purposes: these are twentieth century 'follies.' All the same, they manage to combine a highly imaginative and poetic treatment of the head with what appears to be a perfectly functional structure.

A more probable source of inspiration for the contemporary architect is to be found in the architectural

paintings of Paul Klee. Architectural theorists to-day feel a need for a less austere and puritanical approach than that of the Bauhaus tradition and functionalism in general, a revulsion against both rigid geometry of design and bareness of surface, a desire for a more organic style. Klee's architectural paintings—indeed, his whole formal conception—are relevant to these aspirations. For his forms and his design have an intensely organic quality *quite apart from their representational significance*: his own work fulfilled his statement that 'a formal cosmos will be created out of purely abstract elements of form quite independent of their configurations as objects, beings or abstract things like letters or numbers,' and that this formal cosmos 'resembles the Creation so closely that only a breath is needed to bring it to life.'¹² Klee thought of the artist as the trunk of a tree, rooted in nature and whose crown is art:¹³ and surely this describes the architect who would create organic forms and relations—not in representational detail adorning the surface, but, following the principle of finding 'beauty in form instead of making it depend on ornament,'



17

in a total structure which objectifies natural forces and laws (as, indeed, did the Gothic, the tradition to which Klee belonged). Klee himself accomplished this in his pictures, which, by dispensing with focal points, wholly reject a scenic conception (without substituting a panoramic one); which are unified not by a balance

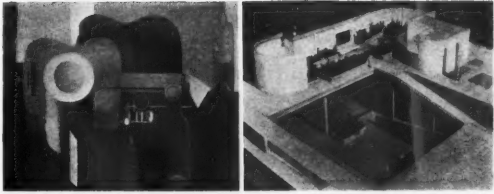
of masses but by an equipoise of forces (movement directed in space); and which demand that the spectator, instead of taking up a position as a mere observer in front of the picture, should project himself into it in imagination and journey through it.¹⁴ This last attribute calls to mind German Baroque buildings, which provide the same stimulus of linear rhythm to keep the spectator on the move and the same refusal to reveal their structure until he has moved through them. Although his fantasy was exceedingly personal, his pictorial handwriting highly idiosyncratic, Klee found a fresh solution to some of the fundamental problems of design. So it may well be that the next positive step in architecture will, wittingly or unwittingly, take the road Klee has indicated.

¹² 'Schöpferische Konfession,' *Tribüne der Kunst und Zeit*, edited by Kasimir Edschmid, Berlin, 1920, XIII, p. 36. Translated in New York, Museum of Modern Art, *Paul Klee*, New York, 1945, p. 12.

¹³ V. Paul Klee, *On Modern Art*, London, 1948, pp. 15-16.

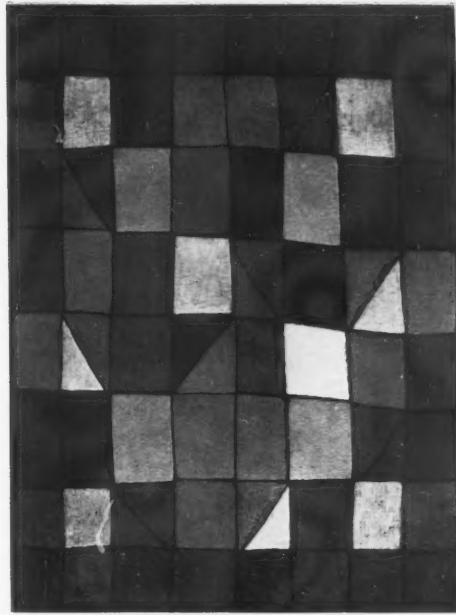
¹⁴ For a fuller discussion of Klee's method of composition, I must refer the reader to my article on 'Paul Klee. La Periode de Berne,' in *Les Temps Modernes*, January, 1951.

note—I wish to express my deepest gratitude to M. Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler for supplying indispensable information and many helpful suggestions; to Professor Rudolf Wittkower for valuable advice; to Mr. Joseph Rykwert for reading the MS; to Miss Hannah B. Muller, of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and to the Galerie Louise Leiris, Paris, for help in collecting photographic material; and to Mr. Douglas Cooper and Messrs. Lund Humphries for permission to use the block of a painting reproduced in *Juan Gris—his Life and Work*.

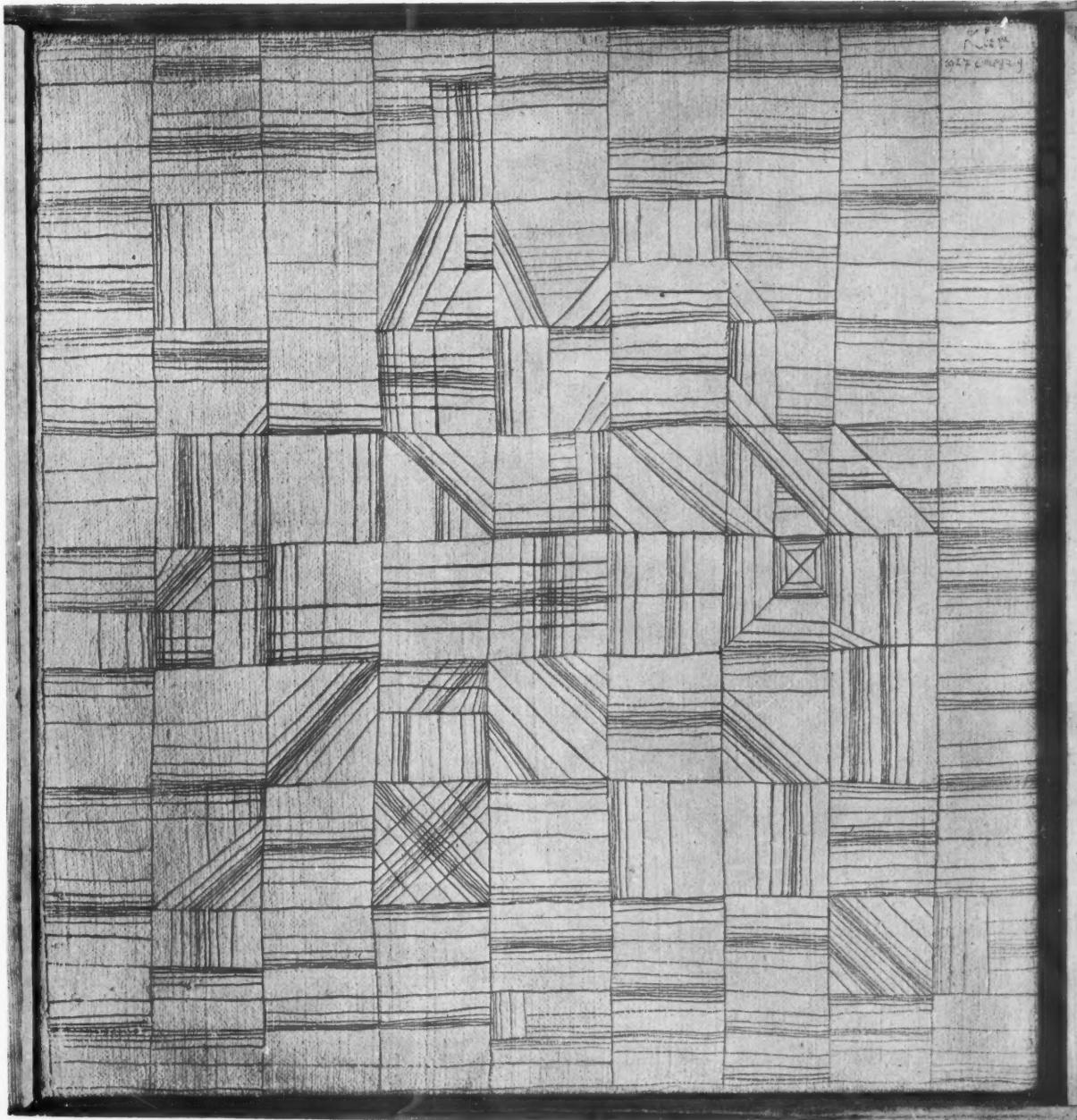


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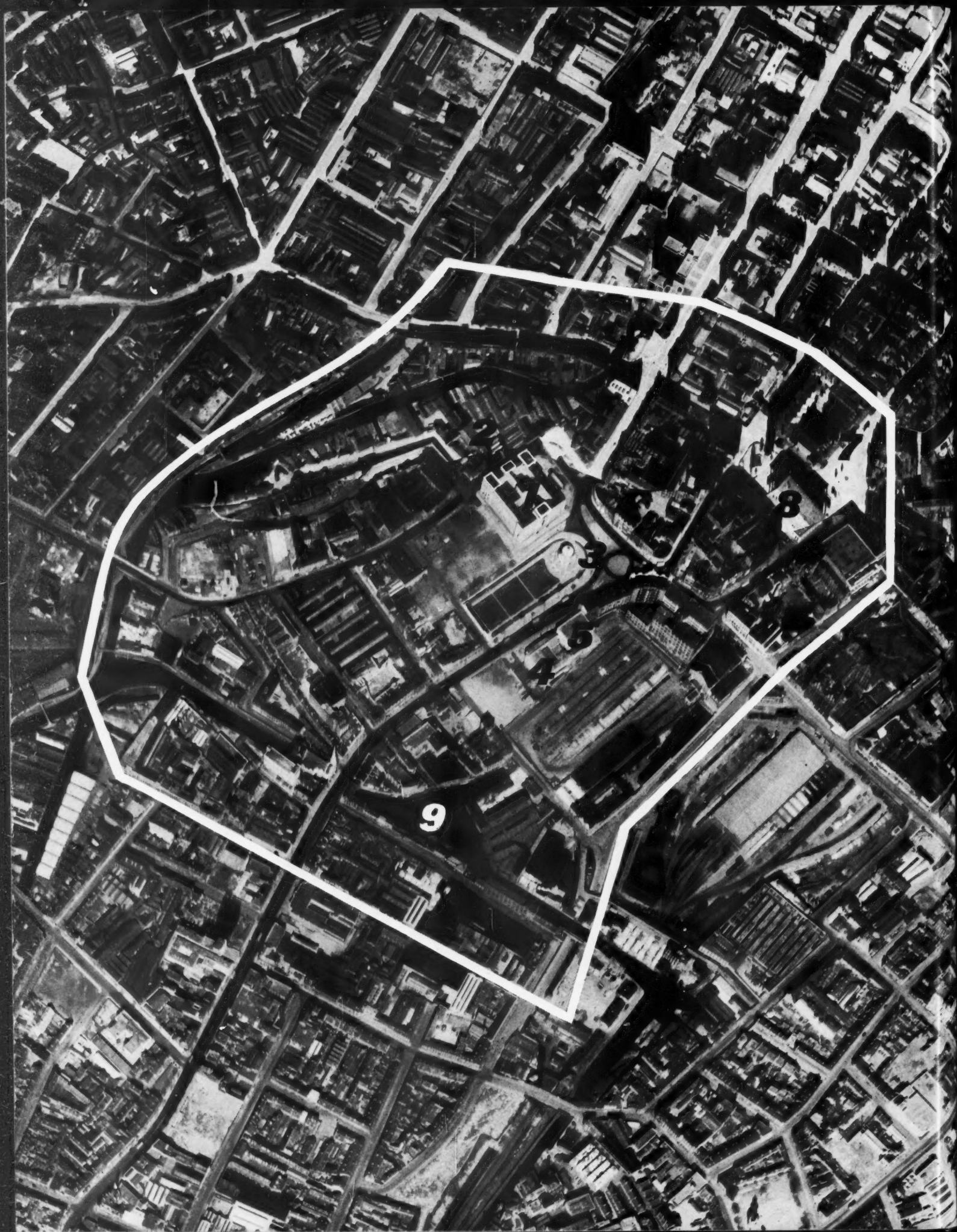
The painting and building by Corbusier show how a painter-architect adapted the pictorial forms he had created to architectural use. The pictures by Klee have so far had no obvious impact on architecture. Mr. Sylvester suggests, however, that they may well point a way to the architects of the next decade. 18, Le Corbusier (Jeanneret), *Still Life*, 1920; 19, Le Corbusier, *Model of Savoye house*, Poissy-sur-Seine, 1929-30; 20, Paul Klee, *Architecture*, evening, 1937; 21, Paul Klee, *Omega*, 1927.



20



21



The central area of Birmingham delineated by the white line on the air photo opposite has long been the subject of consideration. In 1926 a competition was held for the development of the site; it was won by M. Romanoff, of Paris. The scheme did not materialise and in 1933 a new plan was produced by the City Surveyor in collaboration with T. A. Swan, S. N. Cooke and Sir Reginald Blomfield. The plan was approved and what development has taken place since has followed its recommendations. The proposals put forward here by three students of the Birmingham School of Architecture are an alternative to those of 1933. With regard to traffic it was decided to follow the 1946 plan for a Birmingham Inner Ring Road. The figures on the photograph refer to buildings and features which it is proposed to retain and are keyed to the site plan below.

A Scheme for the Centre of

BIRMINGHAM

Question What have we here?

Answer A scheme for a Civic Centre for Birmingham prepared by students of the Birmingham School of Architecture, C. H. R. Bailey, Graham Winteringham and Maurice Lee.

Q What is wrong with the present Centre?

A There isn't one; schemes have been prepared in the past but until now little has been done.

Q And what have the students done to interest me?

A Not only have they solved the problem of building accommodation and traffic reorganization but they have made the area exciting by the practice of townscape.

Q Townscape? You mean cobbles and Victorian lettering?

A Tut-tut, let us go through the scheme together.

key to site plan: 1, existing office block (T. Cecil Howitt, Architect). 2, remainder to be completed. 3, hall of memory. 4, municipal bank. 5, masonic temple. 6, existing museum and art gallery. 7, council house and offices. 8, town hall (J. Hansom, Architect). 9, canal basin.



site plan (cross-hatching indicates area cleared of building)



1 and 3



4 and 5



8

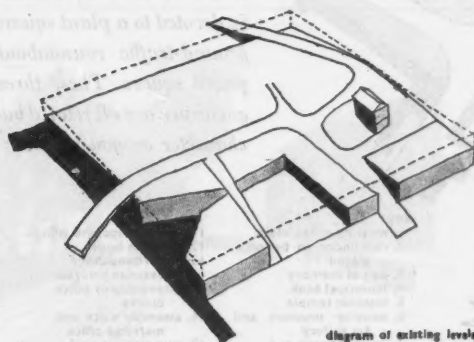


diagram of existing levels

Drawings and Description by Gordon Cullen

the site The area to be developed is approximately 90 acres in extent. It is set in the middle of Birmingham, a city which although vigorous and thriving has had little time to stop and look at itself. Birmingham has very little open space in the centre and one of the aims of this scheme is to preserve what there is.

At the moment most of the area is built over but little is to be kept except the half-dozen buildings shown on the site plan. It is surrounded by a densely developed industrial and residential conglomeration. The north and east edges are bounded by canals, of which more later. If you imagine a line running east and west through the middle of the site then the ground falls away gradually to the north and south as far as the boundaries, thereafter more steeply. Hence there will be good views especially to the north.

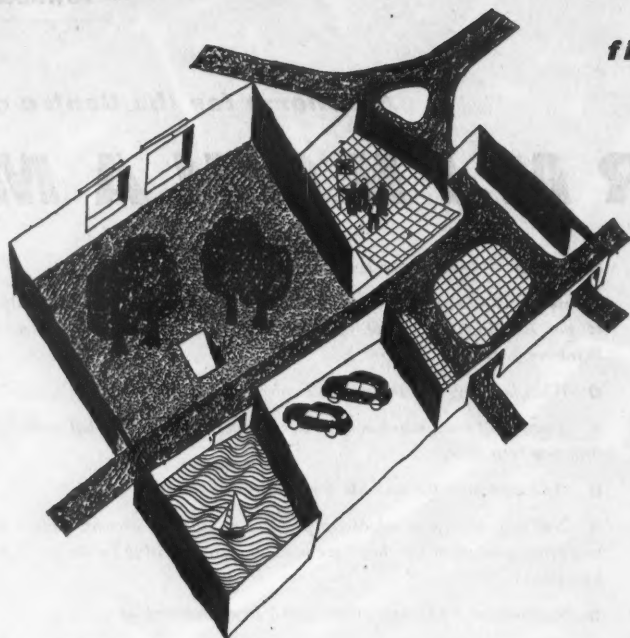


diagram view of the scheme

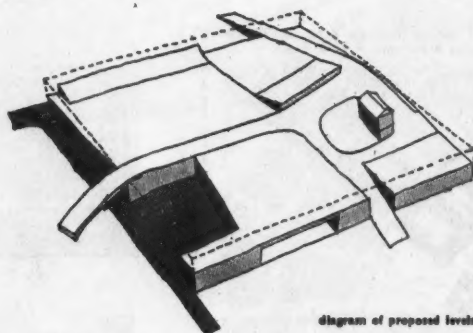
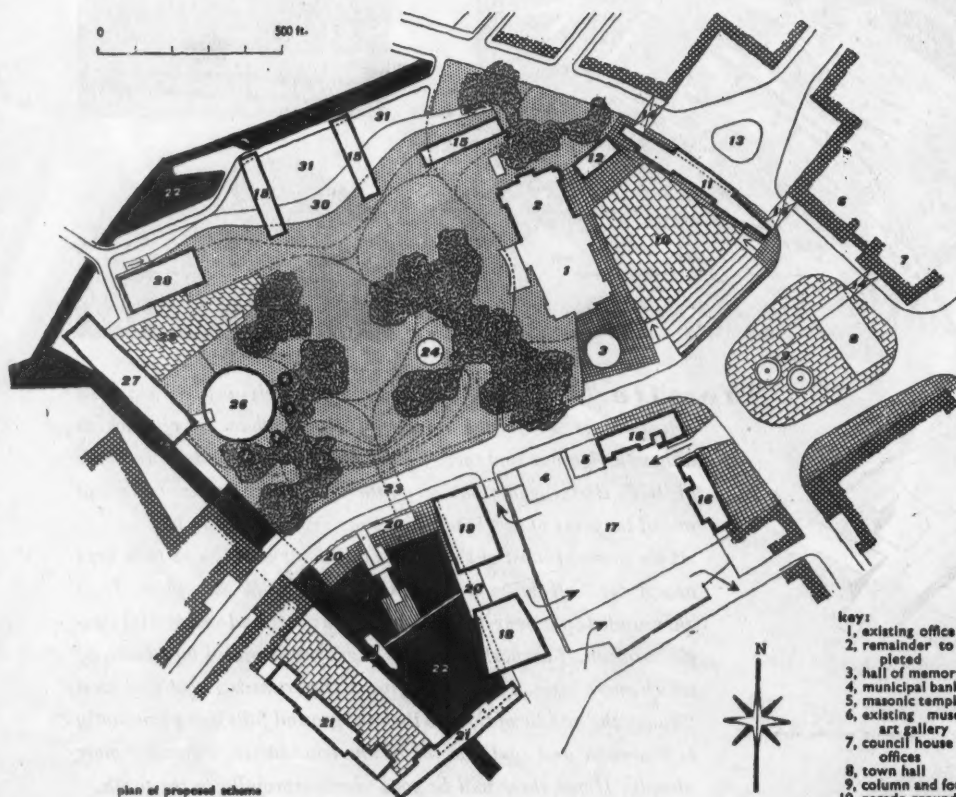


diagram of proposed levels



plan of proposed scheme

first steps The site, then, as the planner sees it is a fairly flat 90 acres of cleared ground, some half-dozen incongruous buildings remain mainly to the east. It is bisected by a main road and bounded on two sides by canals. On this area he has to place a dozen new buildings and provide open space amenities for a large number of people. A simple enough problem but on what basis does he start work. There are so many possible solutions. In this scheme there are two main themes which dictate the planning

(a) Enclosure.

(b) Multiple use.

Question And how do you pick on these two odd little things?

Answer First of all the area is a Civic Centre and although the green space and function of the buildings will eventually indicate to the citizen that he is, in fact, in a Centre that is hardly enough. It is important that he should also SEEM to be in a special area and the simplest way of doing this is to build up the boundaries so that you reverse the usual order and penetrate into the open space like going into a room.

Q I thought you said that there were some good views over Birmingham.

A So there are, but views are a detail, enclosure is a principle. You can have windows in a room yet still retain enclosure.

Q And how do you get enclosure?

A By using the buildings to form the walls of the open-air room and in such a way that the viewer is aware all the time that he is in the Centre of a great city and not lost in the veldt.

Q What is the use of an enclosure half a mile square?

A Very little, but it has to be subdivided so that the enclosure not only SEEMS to be a real enclosure but also seems to be much greater than it really is.

Q You keep on talking about things seeming to be this and that. Either it is or it isn't.

A Not at all. Townscape, in its purely visual aspect (which is what we are talking about here), is a matter of the eyes and the eyes are interested in what seem to be, not what is. People know and learn about the things that are seen only by the eyes, what other way is there? Anyway this brings us to the second principle of multiple use whose visual function is to accentuate the possibilities of variety latent in the scheme and thus add to the richness of the whole. We utilize the existing canal basin to form a water square, it will be used by industry, the main area is devoted to a plant square, whilst the parade ground-traffic roundabout area becomes a paved square. These three different kinds of enclosure are all related but preserve their own character as you will see from the sketches.

key:

- 1, existing office block
- 2, remainder to be completed
- 3, hall of memory
- 4, municipal bank
- 5, masonic temple
- 6, existing museum and art gallery
- 7, council house and offices
- 8, town hall
- 9, column and fountains
- 10, parade ground

- 11, cafes, shops and offices
- 12, mansion house
- 13, new roundabout
- 14, pedestrian bridges
- 15, fifteen-storey office blocks
- 16, assembly suite and marriage office
- 17, two-tier car park
- 18, concert hall
- 19, civic theatre
- 20, cafe
- 21, terrace housing

- 22, enlarged water basins
- 23, tunnel between water and plant squares
- 24, band-stand
- 25, kiosks
- 26, library and reference stack
- 27, art gallery
- 28, museum
- 29, terrace
- 30, grass ramp
- 31, terrace

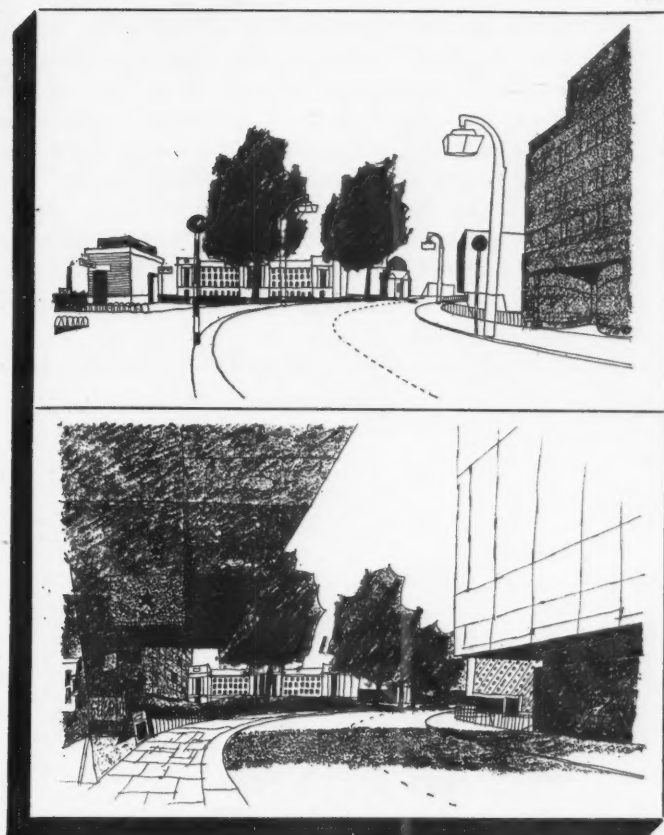
the entrances In order to explain what we mean by enclosure more fully we have made two drawings of one of the entrances. The first shows what often happens. There is no entrance but an emptying out into desolation. You are halfway through before you realize that the shops have just finished and there's a draught blowing from the distant landscape between two buildings. In other words, open space has been regarded purely as a social amenity which can be expressed in acres and percentages in official publications. The second sketch shows how the buildings at the edge of the area are drawn in to form a gateway and the space inside treated as a surprise just round the corner for the lucky visitor.

Question Is not this a sort of stage setting? Has anything basic been altered?

Answer Exactly. What we are trying to do is to take the basic things and exploit them visually, which is like giving a man with poor eyes a pair of spectacles.

Q Which means him seeing the thing in detail?

A Precisely.



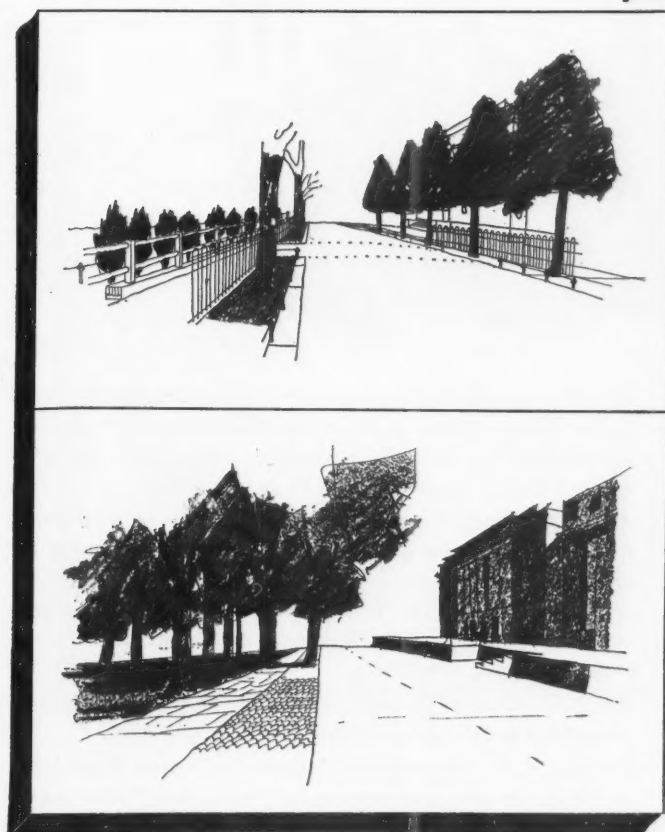
parkway Take this detail of the 'parkway' where the park comes up to the buildings which form the wall or container of the enclosure. The first sketch (which is not imagination) shows how the inner beauty of the idea 'road' has been lost by reason of the fact that people regard roads as a hazard and officials regard people as sheep. In fact, a road is an interesting part of our floor, specially prepared for rubber-wheels and there is no reason why it should be segregated from the rest of the floor providing it does its job. In the first sketch the road is quite separate from park and buildings, it reduces the sense of space and by a ridiculous and useless agglomeration of hazards cuts up the picture without providing any real measure of safety for the pedestrian. The second sketch shows how it is proposed to treat this part of the site in order to emphasize the plant square; here you see one floor and a containing wall. Where grass would be trampled on an alternative durable surface is provided.

Q But surely you don't object to the Champs-Élysées?

A No, because the Champs-Élysées is an axis directing a flow. The whole point of a 'centre' is that it breaks flow.

Q So enabling you to stop and look at the view?

A Yes.





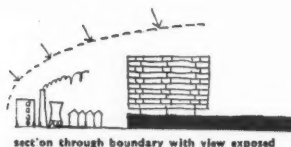
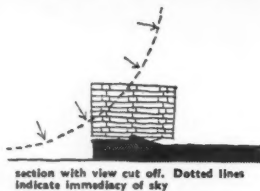
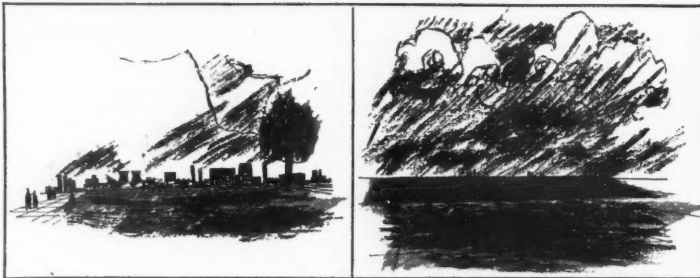
the plant square This first photograph, taken on the site, is only intended as a pointer to the sort of view we aim at.

Question Don't you aim at the Birmingham View?

Answer We face up to the unfortunate fact that the Birmingham landscape is a squalid one and so the squalor is cut off by a grass ramp which still allows the view later but at this point accentuates something else very important in a crowded city—the infinity of the sky. The two sketches below illustrate this more clearly. Tall office blocks are placed across this ramp and the whole of the traffic and circulation for these is situated behind the ramp so that the park remains quiet. (See large drawing.)

Q 'Infinity of the sky,' that's pretty obvious, isn't it? What's so interesting about that?

A Perhaps the two diagram sections below will explain better than words. It's a very unusual thing in a built-up area.

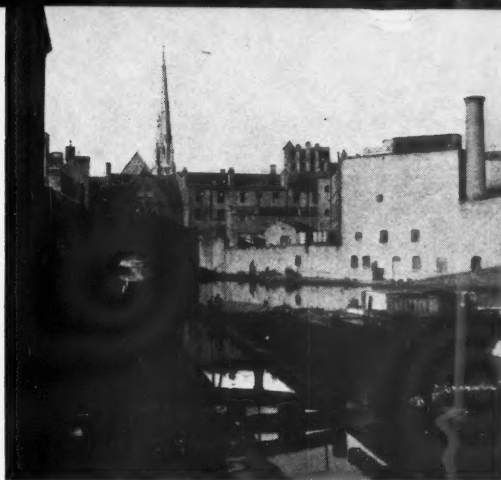


Q Let me get in first this time. I see from the two sketches on the left one is supposed to be good and the other bad and I think I can guess which you intend. But why do you attempt to impose your own particular likes and dislikes on Birmingham?

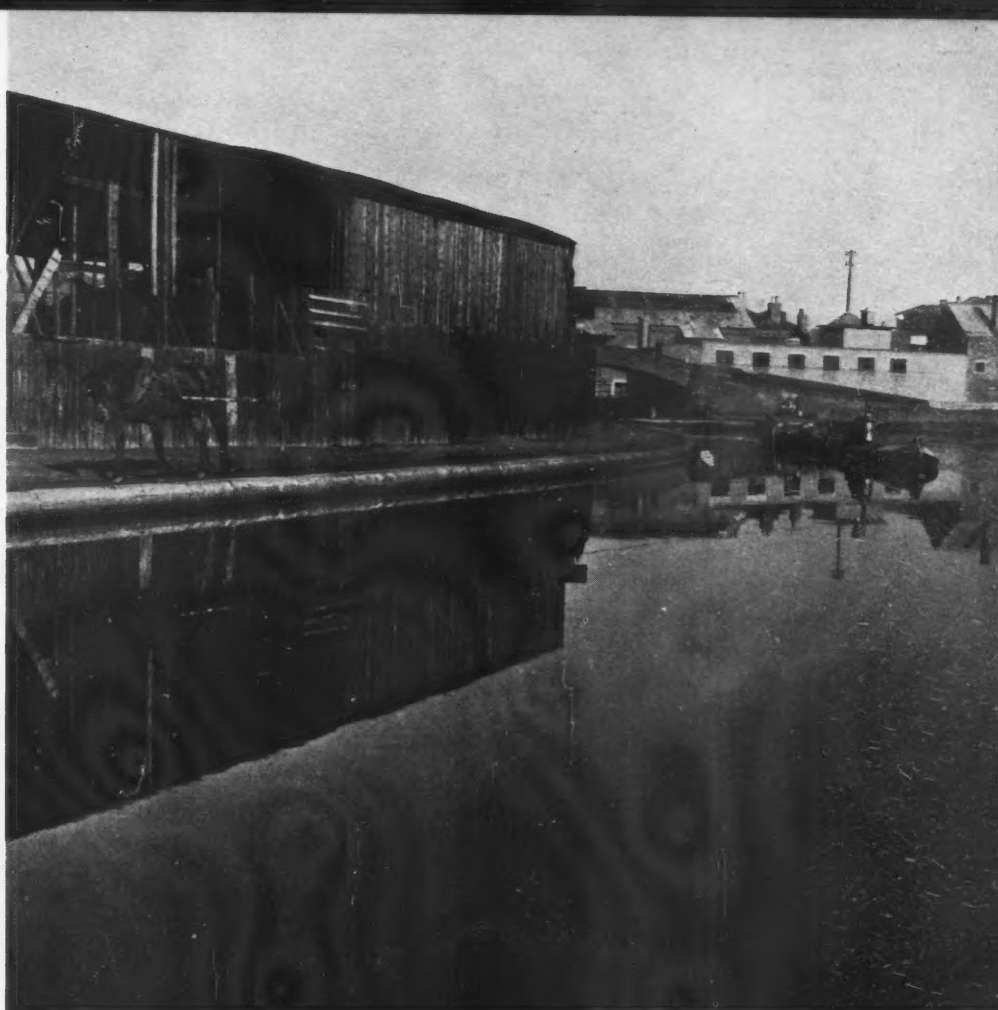
A We don't regard anything in this scheme as a personal whim; everything has been done to extract the greatest value out of the conditions. It is almost a mathematical problem. Surely for people in a city contrast in the form of irregular landscaping is more refreshing than the formalized beds and lawns which is an extension of the city gridiron.

Q A lot of people like a formal garden, they like things done properly. You can take pride in a good show of dahlias.

A Granted. We still maintain, however, that in an English industrial city wear on the nerves makes 'free planning' more restful and it doesn't cut out the possibility of dahlias.



three views of the Birmingham canal

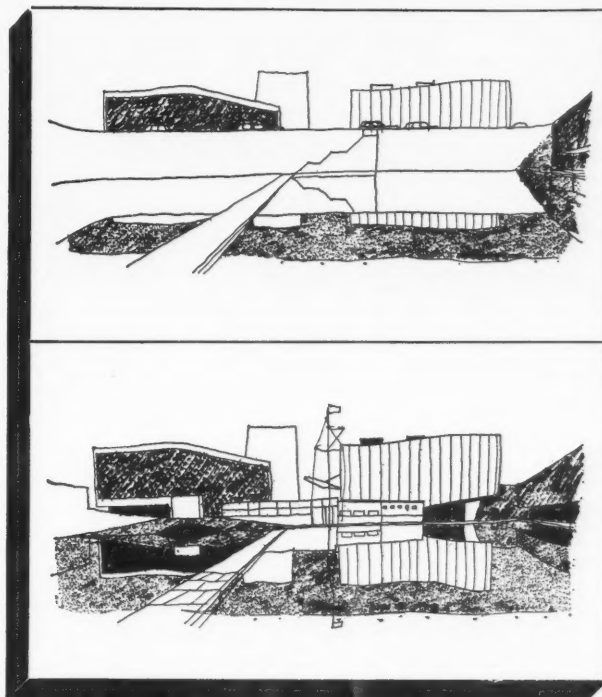


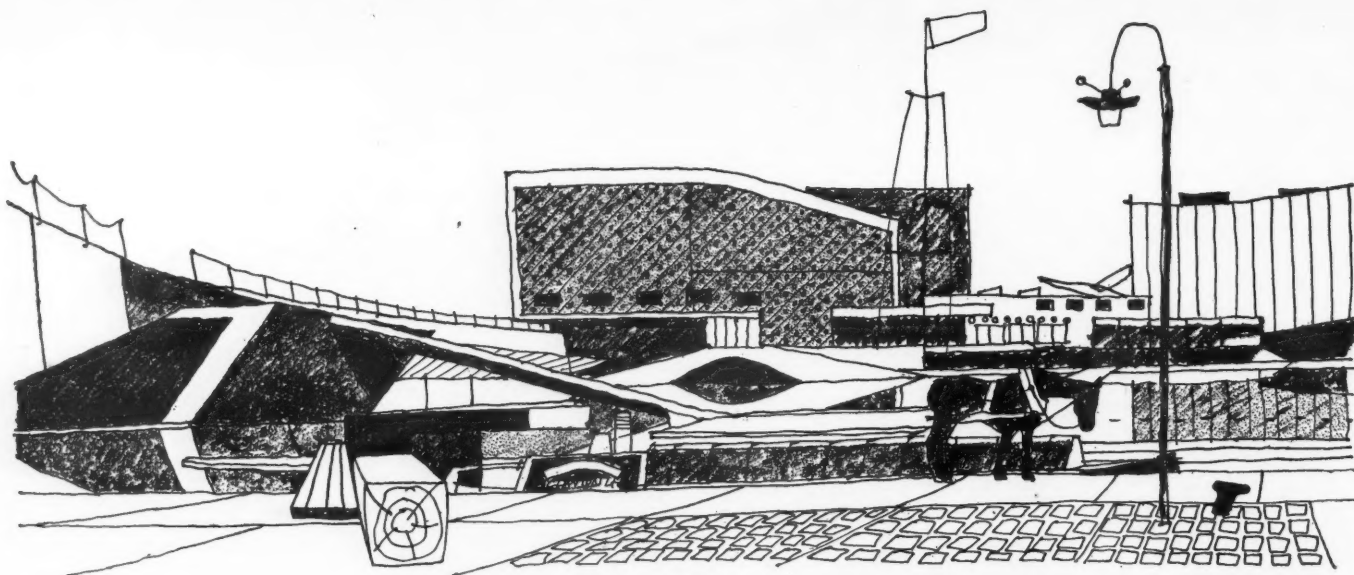
the water square

And here we discover a tremendous fact. Right in the middle of Birmingham at the top, believe it or not, of its highest hill, is water—all the water in the world. A waterway still open and still used by water traffic. But it is all hidden away behind buildings and walls. It is proposed to develop this and bring it into the scheme. The towpath walk would include views as shown in these photographs and bring one into the water square which is surrounded by the Civic theatre and concert hall and by terrace houses.

Question Dead dogs and smells?

Answer Perhaps for a bit. But later people would begin to take pride in it. A lot of people like a good stretch of water. One of the most pleasing qualities of water is its power to reflect. Hence a layout should be designed to take advantage of this. Often one plans to provide an amenity and then forgets about its particular qualities. In the result one may destroy the amenity by a mere detail as in the top sketch where a road is placed between the buildings and the water. By adjusting the plan the road can be moved and immediately reflection comes into its own—only a detail but all the finer parts of planning are matter of detail (bottom sketch). For instance the canal here is still in use and since it is a canal the level of controlled water can be fixed only an inch or two below towpath level thus giving the sensation of precision and continuity and avoiding the difficulties of the river





general view of the water square

bank, a tremendous advantage in a city. When we have done with it here we use the water to liven up the plant square to which it is connected by a tunnel.

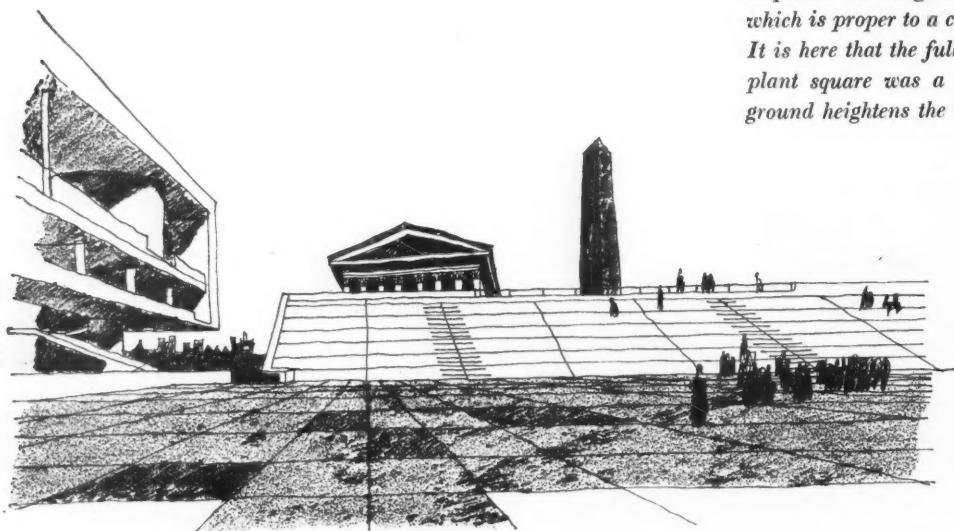
the paved square The third main zone, to the east of the site, is shared by pedestrians and traffic. As you can see from the plan (p. 91) the pedestrian part is a parade ground focusing on to the new Mansion House and is flanked on the west by the existing office building and to the east by a low block of shops, cafes and other city amenities. The parade ground itself is sunk below the surrounding promenade to allow people to see and to the south the floor is ramped up to form another vantage point for viewing. Pedestrian bridges link this area to the east. The roundabout centre has been regarded as a civic mantelpiece and decorated with objects which are meant to be seen and not touched. Metaphorically speaking of course since one of them is the town hall. Notice below how truncation is deliberately used as a visual tease—the equivalent of the foam bath on the films—a ploy used by some of the greatest makers of landscape, including le Nôtre.

The fact that this area is set aside for large crowd scenes means that normally it will seem fairly empty and yet it is just this emptiness which gives the sense of vastness and monumentality which is proper to a civic centre (bottom drawing).

It is here that the full value of the floor is revealed. Whereas the plant square was a complete contrast to the 'city' the parade ground heightens the monumentality and only allows itself to be overlooked by the outside civic buildings and monuments, all the shops and neon signs are excluded.

Question And the people too it seems. How on earth do the crowds get there—it seems cut off from the town.

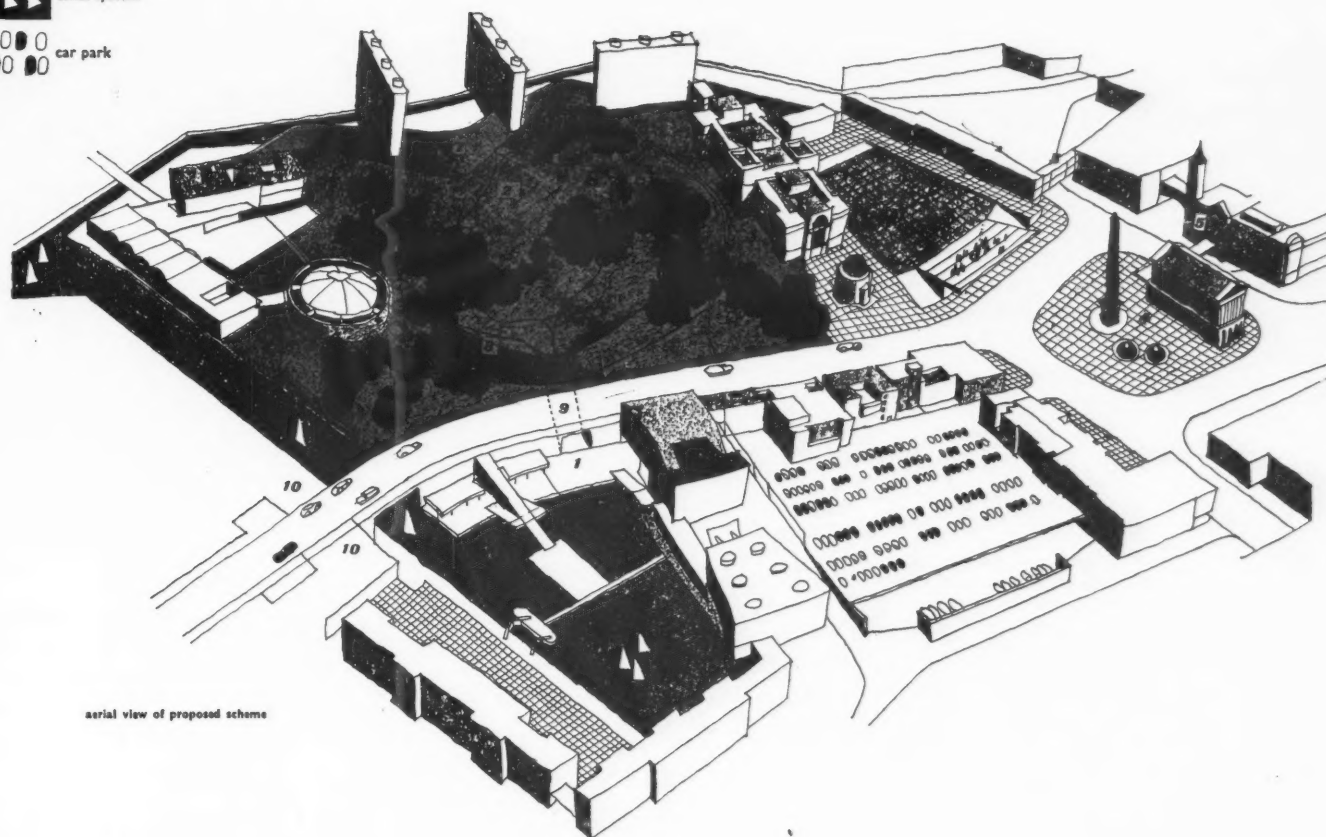
Answer An illusion of the drawing. In fact the square is joined to the existing town rather than the plant square. It is reached by overhead bridges which cross the main traffic streams.



the paved square

key:

- 1, water square
- 2, plant square
- 3, paved square
- 4, traffic roundabout
- 5, pedestrian bridges
- 6, viewing ramp
- 7, grass ramp
- 8, artificial hill
- 9, tunnel from water to plant square
- 10, buildings removed to show canal and bridge



Here in this air view of the completed scheme you can see in relation to each other all the points that have been made, the building up of the boundary to form enclosure, the three zones of multiple uses, the entrances and parkway and so on. Though it is only a sketch of what might be, it nevertheless shows that Birmingham has the opportunity to provide for itself a centre of which any city might be proud—and that without moving or making mountains, without even having to lay on the ornamental water.

conclusion By concentrating on what are details of the visual scene, we have tried to show how the physical requirements of a plan, its size, accommodation and organization must at some stage in the planning process be interpreted in terms of seeing. Any kind of three-dimensional plan can be seen of course. There are the buildings and there are the roads, trees and lampposts. The actual arrangement of these things together is seldom haphazard—everyone observes some rule or convention, from scientific principles of daylighting to æsthetic conventions like the Beaux Arts, or the modern 'free' plan. But none of these seems to get under the surface. In the last resort the criterion is visual, and visual effects

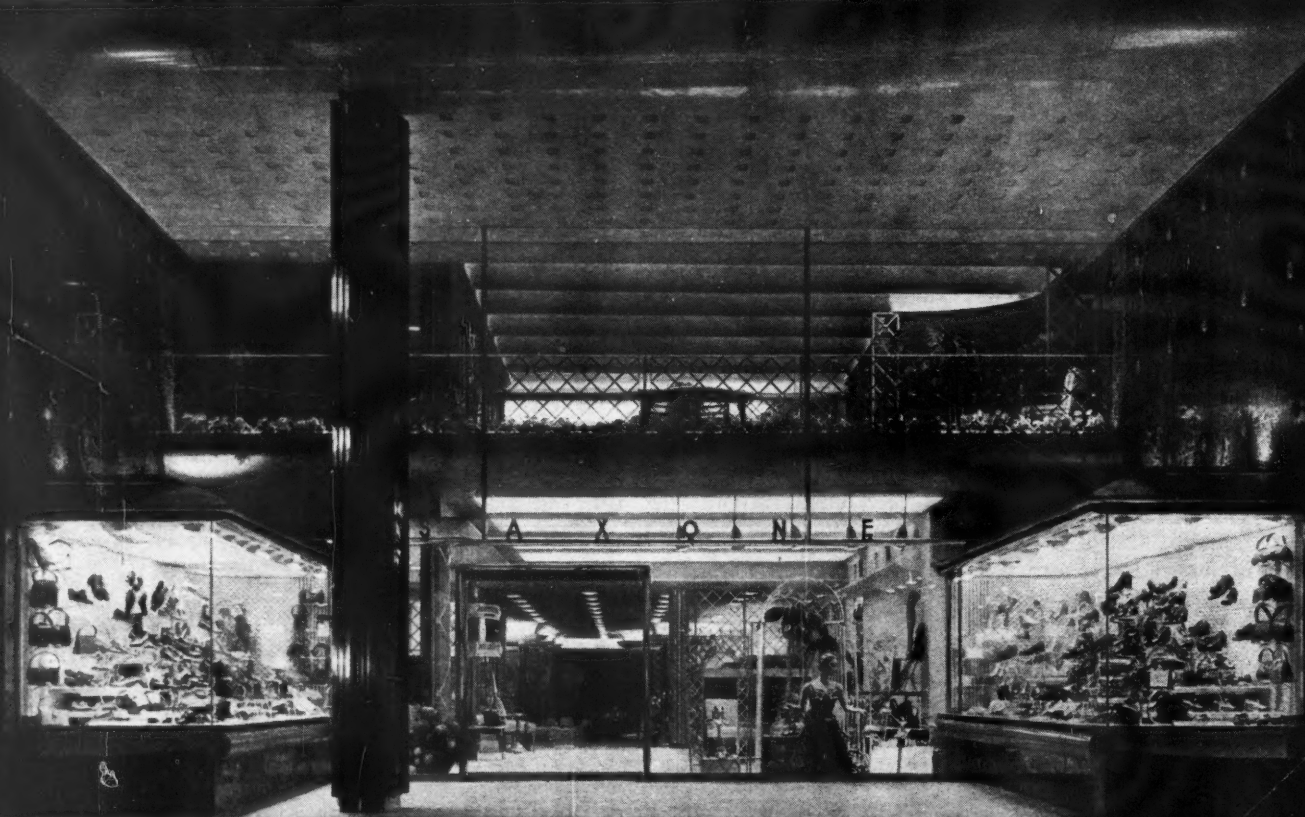
are matters of nuance. To worry about nuances before you have worked out other aspects of the plan would be absurd in practice; but in practice what happens is that plans get worked out without the planner ever getting down to the nuances—which is equally absurd. Thus the situation arises in which all the most delicate problems of townscape are totally ignored because their existence is not recognized, and this is where an academic exercise on paper can be useful. Certain general planning principles are here laid down as they apply to the centre of Birmingham, and after that the object of the planners has been to show the subtler visual implications that can arise.

The most remarkable thing about the post-war shop-front is its disappearance; the next most remarkable thing the time it has taken to disappear. Large expanses of plate glass have, after all, been available since the nineteenth century. frameless windows and doors had made their appearance by the twenties, and exploration of the kind of spatial effects made possible by these devices goes back beyond the Bauhaus. However, few as are the examples in London, it is clear that the idea has caught on of making the whole shop the display window. The visual possibilities of the development are endless—apart from the additional width it will bestow on our streets. So far most of them still have to be discovered. Saxone's new shop in Oxford Street below is a brave attempt marred by a certain lack of inventiveness and a tendency to ape the rococo in decoration (based perhaps on the fallacy that any kind of squiggle provides a good contrast to a straight line). On the left is another Oxford Street shop, this one of 1825. The same principle is at work, but determined by the size of the goods displayed—agricultural implements—rather than by æsthetic theory, so it is not in fact a genuine prototype. The effect must nevertheless have been excellent; it is unfortunate that agricultural implements are no longer on show in the West End. On pages 106-112 is illustrated the most advanced and imaginative frontless shop yet attempted in London, the South African Tourist Centre.



E. WEIR,
Implement Maker and Machinist,
AGRICULTURAL REPOSITORY,
369, OXFORD STREET,
LONDON.

S A X O N E



towards an architecture

POST-WAR SHOP FRONTS IN LONDON

No large department stores have been built in London since the war. A survey of new shop-fronts completed during the period is therefore concerned with the distinct problems of the small and medium-sized shop. The most interesting development, the 'disappearance' of the front and the incorporation of the whole shop as the display unit, is commented on in the article that follows and on the facing page. Because of this development such things as lettering, lighting, the general display of merchandise and new spatial effects pioneered by painters and sculptors now take on an added importance. The commentary to the illustrations on pages 101-104 is contributed by Stefan Buzas.

The shopfront, particularly the small-shop front, as distinct from the shop, has changed less in general conception than most building types. Its origins, in the front parlour windows of the small town house accessible from the pavement through an enriched front door, persist to an extraordinary degree. It is an archetype which clings and which is expected, and to deviate from it often spells disaster to trade. We can throw our homes one on top of the other in high slim blocks on stilts, bury our factories in the ground, or scatter our schools in little pieces among the trees, but we cannot foresee or attempt easily any great change in this basic pattern of the windowed room facing the street. Yet this pattern, because of its narrow limits, produced a very high product and one which remained consistent until recently. The refined elegance and subdued richness of such fronts—they still exist in Bond Street and St. James's and differ but slightly in even the smallest provincial town (see J. M. Richards's *High Street*)—are always delightful. The very slowness of evolution, comparable to that of the English House and the Pub interior, produced these refinements within a quasi-classical bay system, the width and height of which were imposed by the limitations of, usually domestic, street frontages. Their window sizes were limited by the intercolumniation.

After the invention of plate glass in the middle of the nineteenth century the almost paper thin astragals

were largely replaced by single panes. Size of lettering, which often only stated name, trade and street number were controlled by the architrave, and carried out in one or other of the numerous and excellently legible bill types which had been developed through the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Whole streets of such shops achieved a scale and integrity which it would be impossible to achieve with the most rigid planning legislation, and yet possessed a liveliness and subtlety which such legislation would only kill. These frontages had little more purpose than to locate the whereabouts of familiar wares known by reputation. It was a pattern which was destroyed, not only in scale but in purpose by the crowd magnetism and unified anarchy of the department store, with its plate glass windows circumscribing whole street blocks. The smaller shop no longer able to sell by merit alone was forced to adopt new means of seduction. It is a noticeable fact that such techniques of architectural harlotry as flashiness and gaudiness belong not so much to the big store but the small shop. It is here one finds elephantine lettering, neon make-up, overlighting, tinsel and all the Diamond Lil glitter. And it is in the small shop that least architectural success has been achieved. The traditional architect, by training and profession a man of fastidious taste, passed by them, like the Levite on the other side, feeling incapable of using visual techniques associated with Blackpool and Times Square. He did

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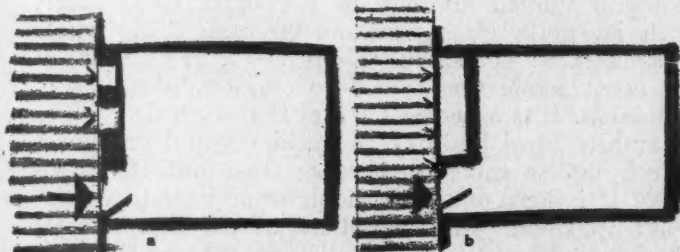
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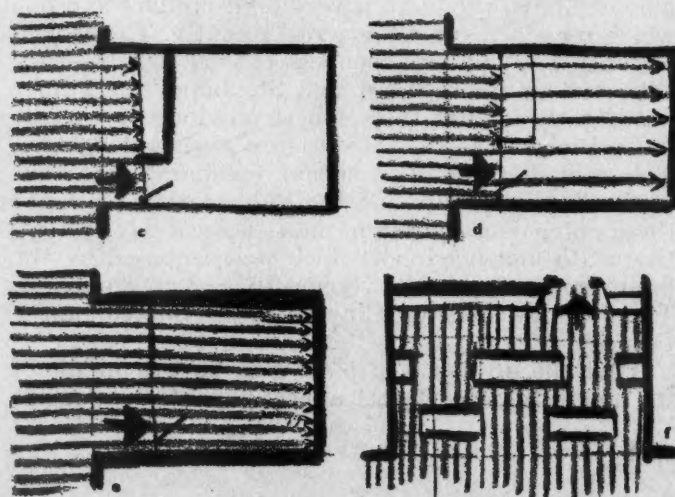
deal, more or less adequately if unimaginatively, with the department store, glazing in its carefully detailed, if unobserved, porticoes as Blomfield did at the Army and Navy Stores, or raising up mighty temples on plate glass podii. Quietly he ignored the implication of the display window and concentrated on the unobtrusive frame. Quite independently and willy-nilly these frames were filled in by display staffs trained to a different viewpoint. In one possibly unique example, Simpsons, Piccadilly, an architectural designer, Moholy-Nagy, was used with singular success. If it was possible for the big store, by its very vastness, to withstand such anarchy without great visual schism, it was certainly not possible for the small shop where eye-catching display is by far the greatest design element. Only in very few cases of a special nature (jewellery and bookshops and arty-crafty shops) did architect participation occur (the term architect is here meant to indicate one with a trained visual conscience).

Curiously enough, the shopfront, if it can be distinguished from the shop, having so few elements and such simple functions, has often proved as much a pitfall for modern designers with all their receptivity to new materials and techniques as to the traditional designer who was repelled by them. The reason for this is not hard to find. For when the designer has resolved the comparatively simple basic problems of ingress and display area he is left with a very meagre skeleton on which to hang his architectural flesh. More often than not he literally does hang his architecture on it. His training and practice condition him to build up a whole range of rational and statistical user-client data around structure, function and cost about which he develops his designs. He is unable to fall back on these to any degree for the shopfront with its simple needs, archetypal solution, mystique, and usually predetermined form. Trained more or less

As the examples on the following four pages show, designers of lettering on recent London shopfronts seem beset by the fear of vulgarity—of overstepping some imaginary mark of good taste. With a few exceptions the results entirely lack vitality and miss an excellent opportunity to satisfy the requirements of publicity while adding some vigorous and much needed decoration to shops and streets. 1 and 2, pre- and post-war lettering on a dress shop—a depressing potted history—bad spacing of weak letters has given way to better spacing of the same weak letters and an inexplicably horrid transformation of the 'A'. If refinement is wanted there is nothing intrinsically wrong with a nameplate instead of a fascia board, 3. However, it is still a display device, and this demands a type with more character than the muted Roman shown here. 4, the Tea-chest type-face from Richard Shops—simple, bold and nearly always well placed and beautifully in scale, see 12, page 103. 5, a letter of the Ionic type family, taken from a German type-book and used with complete success on the South African Travel Centre, Piccadilly, see page 107. 6, a metal letter on the Cunard Building. The 'A' is perhaps the best letter. The unpleasantly mannered general effect is seen in 5, page 102. 7, a good condensed sans serif from the Prestold shop, Regent Street where it has unfortunately been used too small and with rather self-conscious placing. 8 and 9, pre- and post-war lettering for Dolcis shoe shops. The bold sans serif of 9, designed with an eye to night display, is an enormous advance on the modernistic trickery of 8. Streamlined lettering for Pan-American Airways, Piccadilly, 10—a piece of styling which has impaired legibility without adding character, see 9, page 102.



These sketch plans illustrate the tendency which is remarked upon in the accompanying article, for the whole of the smaller shop to take over the function of a display window. a, the picture-frame window, a special device which will presumably continue to be used for the display of small objects such as jewellery and perfume bottles. b, the conventional shopfront, with the window on the line of the pavement, and a shallow display. c, the set-back front, which largely overcomes the reflections that are a disadvantage of b. d, the set-back front with the stallboard removed, thus permitting a view of the whole shop through the display. e, set-back with frameless windows and doors—the 'invisible front'—the whole shop has now become a display for the passer-by in the street. f, the maze front, consisting of a series of show-cases placed so as to inveigle the shopper inside—a type that now appears to be defunct.









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commentary on the illustrations by Stefan Buzas

The architects and designers of the shopfronts on this and the following pages are: 2, Russell and Bromley, Bond Street, Lionel Brett and Arcon; 3, Gay Kaye, Bond Street, Sadie Speight; 4, Tea Centre, Lower Regent Street, Misha Black, Kenneth Bayes, Austin Frazer, Bronsk Katz, R. Vaughan; 5, Cunard White Star, Lower Regent Street, Willink and Dod; 6, Swedish Travel Bureau, Haymarket, 7, Swedish Airlines, Regent Street, 9, 10, Pan American Airways, Piccadilly, Gerald Lacoste and Kenneth Dod; 8, Swiss Travel Bureau, Strand, Alfred Roth; 11, Scandinavia Travel Bureau, Northumberland Avenue, Stein Finne; 12, Richard Shops, Kilburn, Bronsk Katz and R. Vaughan; 13, Dolcis, Oxford Street, Ellis E. Somake; 16, Dolcis, Leicester Square, 17, 18, Dolcis, Oxford Street, Ellis E. Somake; 14, Bedding Centre, Knightsbridge, Eric Brown and Peter Chamberlin; 15, Saxone, Oxford Street, Michael Egan; 19, Saxone, Strand, Bernard Gold.

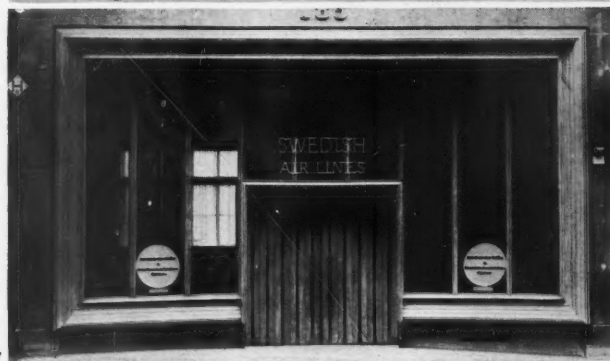
The hostility to luxury building which was particularly in evidence in the period immediately following the war, seems to have affected designers even when working fully within the law, and has resulted in many new shopfronts looking temporary or ingeniously inexpensive. One senses it in the tawdry stucco front of Jack Jacobus, Shaftesbury Avenue **1**, and even in the Russell & Bromley shop, Bond Street **2**, where austerity materials like brick, asbestos and aluminium sheeting frame temporary-looking picture windows which contrast strangely with the boudoir-like lushness of the interior. Paradoxically, considerable success has been achieved in those fronts where little external alteration has been done and where reliance is placed on good display such as Gay Kaye, Bond Street **3**; while one conversion at least, The Tea Centre, Lower Regent Street **4**, with bright coloured panels and



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well scaled lettering achieves an elegance heightened by proximity to the Cunard White Star premises opposite **5**; so similar in their travertine boredom to the cyclopean Dunlop showrooms in Bond Street and curiously reminiscent of the Third Reich.

The unspectacular effect of the Swedish Travel Bureau, Haymarket **6**, and Swedish Air Lines, Regent Street **7**, points the moral that expensive materials do not of themselves produce a distinctive shopfront. If the designer ignores the lead given by painters and sculptors in the manipulation of space, form, texture pattern and colour, he does so at the risk of the kind of boredom that invests these two shopfronts. There are other ways of avoiding it—one, by minute and painstaking attention to detail, which makes the Swiss Travel Bureau, Charing Cross **8** so distinguished. This is a shopfront—as are **6** and **7**—no attempt has been made to 'dissolve' the façade, but, in addition to the excellence of the detailing, the panels into which it is divided are so well pro-

portioned that the effect is entirely successful. Unfortunately the interior, which is composed as a picture framed in the window, is inadequately presented through under-lighting. Pan American Airways, Piccadilly **9**, is an attempt at the dissolution of façade. It fails, however, because of an uninteresting interior. It is no use removing a façade if there is nothing to show behind it. The fact that there are now window displays where no provision was originally made for them, serves, even when they are as delightful as **10** is, to strengthen the argument.

Most new shopfronts are placed in existing buildings and it is an interesting point that their designers generally ignore the 'mother-building'—arguing, no doubt, that the passer-by seldom looks up. This is true to some extent. However, there are times when an out-of-hand rejection of what exists may lose the designer a valuable foil or element of contrast. In the Scandinavia Offices, Northumberland Avenue **11**, the canopy entirely fails to override the exuberance of the



11



13



12



14

Edwardian embellishments above; with skill and imagination these might easily have been incorporated in the design. The Richard Shop, Kilburn **12**, is an excellent solution where all-out concealment is called for. The existing building is simply and effectively obliterated. For the architect it is a delicate matter to decide between incorporation or obliteration. What must be avoided, however, is an unhappy compromise.

The traditional Edwardian shopfront with raised stallboard, head-high window back and tall, often clerestoried windows for interior daylighting seems to be dying out, possibly due to improved artificial lighting. In its place a number of quite distinct variations have developed. (a) *The Picture Window*: where prestige selling is the main factor and where small objects such as jewellery are displayed. In this type any view of the interior is avoided and the surrounding to the frame is subordinated to the showcase as in Dolcis, Oxford Street **13**. (b) *The In-*

visible Front, where the stallboard is eliminated and the window, and often the door, is frameless, the whole shop being thrown open to view. This type is becoming more and more general but, since the shop itself becomes a window display, very careful control of interior and goods shown is essential. The classic example is the pre-war Electricity Showroom in Regent Street, where strong architectural forms continue dominant and fresh after twelve years. A recent example is the South African Tourist Corporation's offices in Piccadilly (pp. 106-112). The difficulties of a constantly changing display of goods are absent in a travel bureau, which makes the architect's job easier. By contrast the carefully considered design of the Bedding Centre, Knightsbridge **14**, is almost entirely swamped by the display of beds, blankets and pillows, not to mention the existing staircase. (c) *The View Window*. This falls between the first two types. The window is still clearly visible, but instead of a display backed by a stallboard, there is either a display

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through which the shop is seen, or the shop interior itself is designed as the display (e.g. Richard Shops, Gay Kaye and many others). (d) *The Maze Front*, where island showcases are so arranged as to ensnare customers into the shop like a fenland duck decoy. The Galleries Lafayette in Regent Street is the archetype of this, and shoe shops for some reason once favoured it. No further examples of this type have appeared since the war, and it would seem to have been discarded. The most opulent newcomer, the Saxone Shop in Oxford Street **15** (and page 98) supports this view. The showcases are used to flank an immense and almost invisible glass wall, which reveals the whole complex interior with its double height, gallery walk and sunken floor. Dolcis, Leicester Square **16**, is another example which has the showcase built-in. Apart from individual shops, and there is a considerable variety and invention shown in them, one of the most heartening things to see is the greater use made by chain stores of good designers, as in the Richard

Shops, and the Saxone and Dolcis shoe shops. The Dolcis, Oxford Street one, **17** and **18**, is a really imaginative attempt at developing the whole interior as an extension of the window.

This brief survey shows clearly that English post-war shopfront design leaves room for vast improvement. The designer seems to find it difficult to strike a mean between complete barrenness **9**, and over-complexity **15**. Even when he achieves entire success the results may be negated by the client or window dresser, with different ideas from his own; the Saxone Shop in the Strand **19**, suggests this has happened. In conclusion, the most rewarding fields for experiment seem to be in lighting which, compared with American practice, is still in its infancy in England, and in the new spatial effects which are made possible by the disappearance of the shopfront (contributions towards these from painters and sculptors, who are, after all, pioneers in the matter, are singularly lacking).



17



19



adequately to an understanding of form-organization, he is not always so perceptive of space-organization, especially where the main outlines are already decided for him. He is still less aware of what one might call 'space decoration,' where he must rely on just those creative impulses and responses which one associates with such abstract artists as Ben Nicholson and Moholy-Nagy.

English education until now, and American until recently, have almost entirely lacked any basic design training such as the Bauhaus developed in its near laboratory design experiments. It is not surprising that many of the more successful shops—and exhibitions, too, where the same techniques must be used—have been produced by Bauhaus trainees or devotees. Whereas others, however competent or creative, have tended to produce pastiche, the inevitable product of drawing-board designing. 'Swedish modern' (William Perring's, Kensington High Street) (14), 'Drug Store modern' (Delro, Oxford Street), are two post-war international pastiche styles, to which might be added our own peculiarly national pastiche born of restrictions and conversion: 'The Spiv modern' which is more common to restaurants, but can be seen in many shops. It certainly deserves special study. It makes great use of plastics and wrought iron. These styles have replaced the much despised but one suspects more robust Jazz Modern of the 30's. And it is disturbing to see shopfronts which a few years back appeared so fresh, taking on 'that peculiar look of being both new and faded—a kind of modern fatigue' as Henry James put it; while the Maxwell Fry electricity showroom, The Jaeger Shop in Regent Street, and even such old stagers as Hooper's in St. James's remain fresh as ever; at least after a little spit, polish and paint. No doubt this is all due to post-war conditions and will pass. Nevertheless, for architects building is the only satisfactory form of expression, and many of our post-war shops show they have not had enough of it. Too many ideas would seem to be culled from magazines (mostly American), and cosseted in maturing minds, from which they have sprung like Athene, fully armed from the mind of Zeus, rather blowsy and a little the worse for wear.

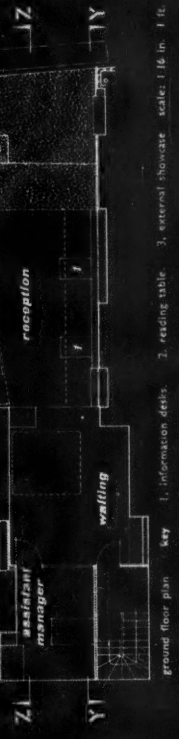
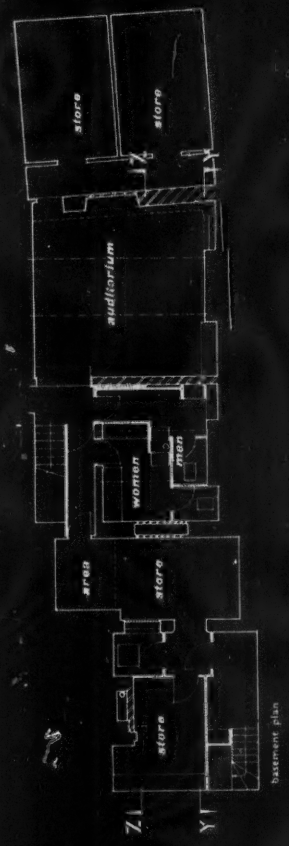
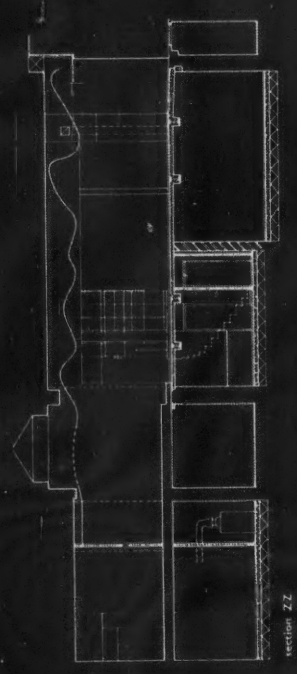
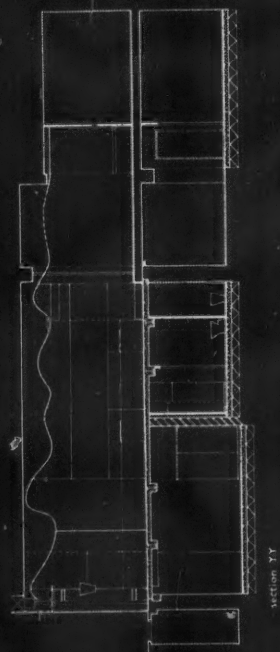
This picture is, of course, distorted by other factors, and criticism may be unfair in this light. Building restrictions have limited new shops almost entirely to travel bureau and export firms. Others have had to make do and mend, often within the incredible complexity of war damage regulations. Materials have been limited and their availability uncertain. Many shops have had to be built piecemeal, making it virtually impossible for the designer to have any real conception of the final result. And lighting, both

internal and external, prime essence of good display, has been severely restricted. There is no doubt that London shops are badly lit—not so much underlit (one only has to see Brussels or Dublin to see the disastrous effect of overlighting)—but unimaginatively lit. Those who have had occasion to stroll down Fifth Avenue, New York, during the past six years will understand this. There the use of coloured lighting, highlights and shadows are on a dramatic level which we hardly begin to comprehend. There a whole range of descriptive terminology (e.g., ambience, focal glow, sparkle) has developed in the lighting field where we still tend just to light things in a rather hit-or-miss manner.

Though the armour plate glass door has almost universally replaced the non-reflecting plate glass window as the leitmotif of the expensive modern shop, other elements remain curiously neglected: we still ventilate our stallboards to prevent condensation; surely a hangover from the period of bad heating and gaslighting? And sunblinds, or more correctly sun protection, remain primly Victorian, hiding many a fascia behind their voluminous striped petticoats. In the years since the war we have been subjected to a veritable rash of Dutch blinds and striped canvas. Surely we can find other answers in addition to these?

Lettering also remains generally undistinguished. It is a mystery why architects, who go to engineers for quite simple technical advice, still presume to design or allow some junior to design such a highly technical and important thing as lettering when there are plenty of first-rate typographers experienced in this difficult art or, for second best, numerous excellent type-faces to be seen and judged for scale and effect, all around the place. The possibilities of night lettering have also been neglected. It is perhaps the fashion to despise neon lighting, at least among amenity-minded planners, yet it is here to stay and Times Square, if not Piccadilly, has a Klee-like gaiety which could well be investigated and improved upon. How exciting, for example, on an otherwise better undiscussed shopfront are the large green 'D' and 'P' against the black night over the Dorothy Perkins shop in Oxford Street. There is a whole range of possibilities here awaiting development. The day must come, too, when the architect interests himself in casual patterns, the accidental patterns of people and furniture and sales stock, in the same way that Eisenstein understood and designed crowd patterns for the cinema or Alexander Calder plays with moving shapes and colour. There seems to be no reason why such chance patterns cannot be understood, controlled and utilized instead of being all but entirely ignored.

travel centre in Piccadilly



key 1, information desks 2, reading table 3, external showcase scale: 1/16 in. 1 ft.



TRAVEL CENTRE IN PICCADILLY

JAMES CUBITT AND PARTNERS: ARCHITECTS

1, from the street, showing the main reception and information room.

SOUTH



One of the two information desks in the first office. The wall is faced with acoustic tiles, painted white.



2

Looking through the window past the two information desks. The panels of the rear wall are painted.



3

The head of the staircase leading to the auditorium in the basement. The side wall is of black Tinos marble.



4

The west wall with its showcase and information desks. The undulating ceiling is made of sycamore slats.





The main façade showing the set-back of frameless plate glass and the Tinos marble wall panel which continues into the interior. This is the most advanced and imaginative example of the disappearing shop front to be carried out in London to date.

The premises when leased by the South African Tourist Corporation consisted of a dilapidated ground floor shop, a basement which was quite uninhabitable, and at the back, five floors of one small room each, connected by a damaged staircase. The client's requirement was to make the maximum possible use of the ground floor. As existing, the floor level was up two steps from the pavement. This wooden floor was replaced by a concrete one at pavement level and the basement level lowered to make an auditorium.

The glazed shop window was set back to form a small recess from the pavement so that the two flank walls, one covered in thin Tinos marble slabs, the other by an enlarged map of South Africa impregnated in plastic sheets, are partially external and partially internal. This was done to lead the eye of the passer-by to the interior. To break down the separation between shop and street yet further an apparently frameless glass wall extends from floor to ceiling. The fascia and surround are of

TRAVEL CENTRE IN PICCADILLY

TRAVEL CENTRE IN PICCADILLY

white terrazzo. The lettering consists of wooden letters covered with white plastic and held against two glass sheets between which yellow and green gelatine filters have been fitted. The glass is lit from behind. The glazed vertical showcase is powerfully lit and contains displays intended to give an exotic touch reminiscent of the South African landscape.

The main feature of the interior is the undulating wooden ceiling of the ground floor, consisting of sycamore slats on a suspended wooden framework, the curves being originally set out freehand. It was necessary to conceal the existing plaster ceiling which was at various levels and to hold together the existing irregular plan. The west wall is partly faced with acoustic tiles, painted white and partly with plastic sheets. All wall finishes are white except the rear wall which is coloured in panels

8



The undulating wooden ceiling was designed to conceal the existing ceiling which was at various levels and to unify the interior.



7

The interior looking towards the street. The slender vertical members provide punctuation in depth and exotic plants are used to suggest the character of South Africa.

of brown, olive green, yellow and pale blue, and the dwarf wall beside the staircase which is a slab of black marble. The floor is paved with white rubber tiles with insets coloured red, blue and yellow.

Fittings have been carefully designed to remain in scale and strong colours have been used, with a view to increasing the effect of spaciousness. Adjustable shelves are lacquered red and the bookcase by the staircase is enamelled white with red, yellow and black members. The curtain which entirely covers the back wall of the auditorium is of native export cloth. The architects selected all the furniture and arranged for it to be specially covered. No suitable desk could be found for the manager, and this was therefore specially designed. The carpet in the manager's office is lemon yellow; bookcases and shelves are as in the main shop. On the second floor in the typist's office the walls are distempered white, the ceiling deep red. Doors are painted olive green. Light fittings are generally standard, but modified in various minor ways. For instance the bullseye lights to the staircase have been provided with metal discs to prevent the light falling on surrounding surfaces from revealing any unevenness.

9, a corner of the assistant manager's office. The adjustable shelves are lacquered red. The carpet is lemon yellow; the chair covering green and yellow. 10, the main reception room from the stairs leading to the auditorium. 11, map of South Africa on an impregnated plastic sheet. It is by the entrance and

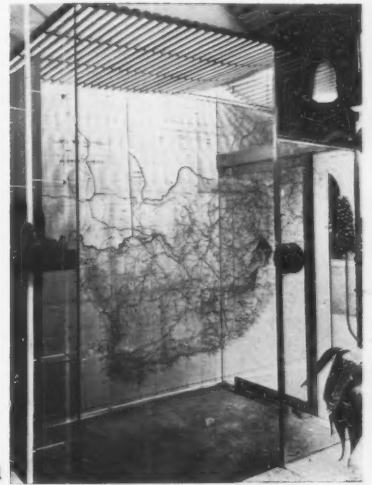
extends through to the pavement. 12, the rear wall of the information office. The door on the right leads to the assistant manager's office, that on the left to a staircase to the upper floors. The panels are painted brown, olive green, yellow and pale blue.



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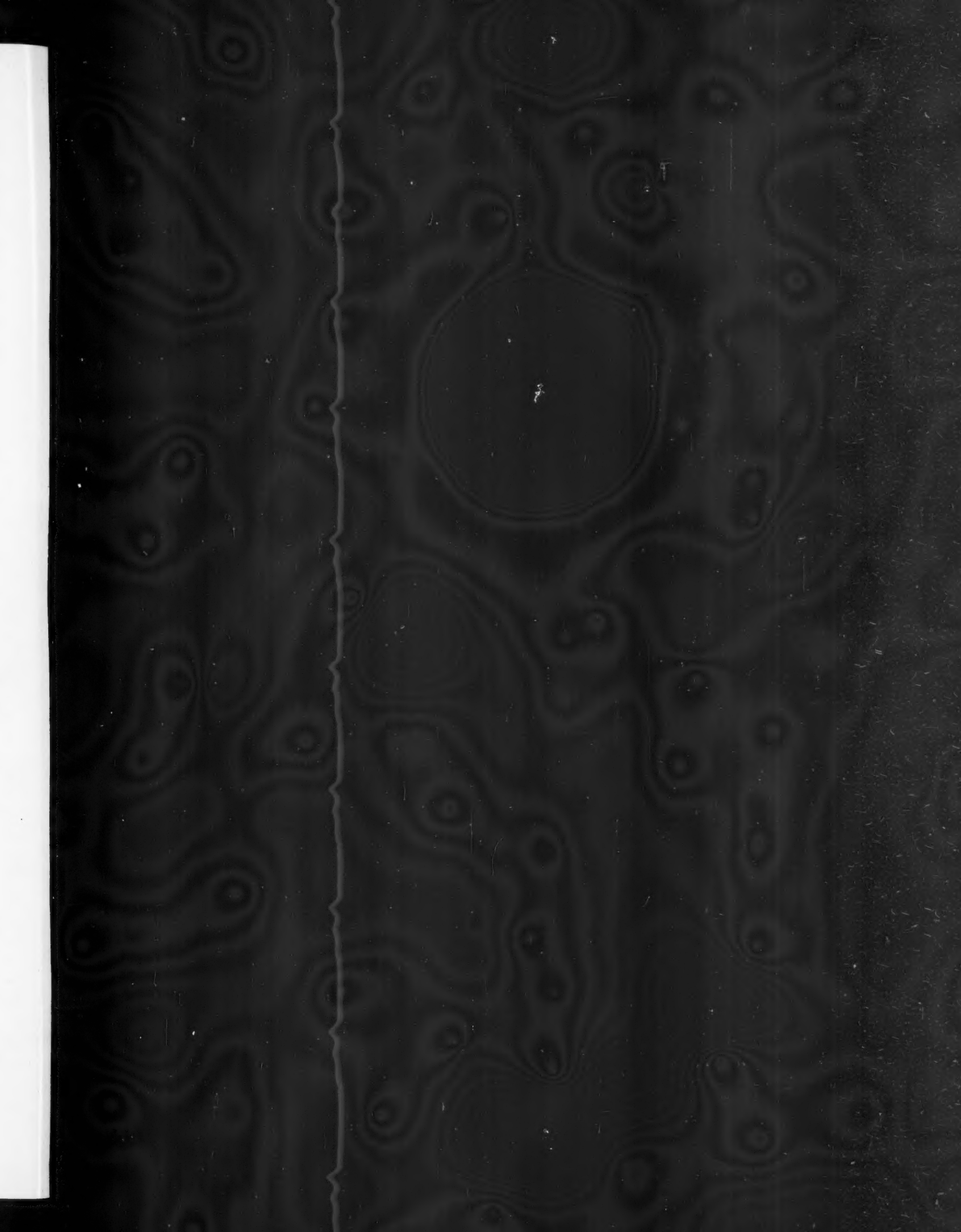
13



14

TRAVEL CENTRE IN PICCADILLY

13 and 14 show how the large sheets of glass, besides opening the travel centre to the passer-by in the street also serve as mirrors reflecting lights, colours, plants, columns and furniture. The whole interior becomes a display with its various facets assembling and reassembling in kaleidoscopic patterns. The large artificial plant spotlighted in the showcase is derived from a South African aloe.





EARLY CAST IRON FACADES

The cast iron facade is not an American innovation as was previously thought. Professor Hitchcock here establishes the fact that the first, and most notable, ones were erected during the fifties of the last century in Glasgow. They are illustrated on pages 115-116 for the first time.

CONSIDERING the immense enthusiasm for the structural use of iron in Victorian England and the extent of the English export trade in prefabricated iron buildings, it is curious how very few commercial buildings were built in Victorian times with castiron fronts comparable to those which lined the business streets of American cities in the fifties, sixties and seventies. Castiron bressummers had made possible wide shop windows since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Shop fronts boldly exploiting both the structural and the decorative possibilities of iron were, moreover, very common in English cities in the fifties and sixties. Often, in addition, iron and glass construction was carried up to provide a first storey practically as open as that on the street level; while toward courts and alleys the rears of commercial buildings were sometimes largely formed of a severely functional grid of iron stanchions and beams. Yet the extension of the internal iron skeleton (generally used in good-class commercial work from the late forties on) to the exterior on street façades is all but unknown before 1870.

The second and third storeys of No. 50, Watling Street, in London (perhaps dating from the early forties) are an early exception to the rule, still extant and easily accessible. Even here there are brick piers between the windows of the first storey, while the iron and glass areas above are framed by solid brick corners and separated by a horizontal brick 'spandrel' above the visible iron beam of the second storey. Neither structurally nor visually, therefore, is there any comprehensive use of iron: one might almost suspect that the tiers of great windows separated by delicate iron colonnettes were later interpolations, although I feel sure that this is not the case.

A Belgian architect, Servaas de Jong, visiting London at the time of the Great Exhibition in 1851 mentioned with approval a castiron façade at No. 76, Oxford Street, (presumably then relatively new), preferring its 'Mauresque style' to the 'architecture in cordage' of the court of Bunning's New Coal Exchange in Lower Thames Street.* The fact that the detail was 'copied with much conscience from the beautiful remains of the Alhambra' must lead us to suppose that this was by Owen Jones, whose enthusiasm for iron and glass is well known.

The 'London Crystal Palace' (a bazaar off Oxford Street) by Owen Jones, was not opened until some years later, in 1858 (3). This not only had a magnificent castiron barrel roof filled with polychrome glass (of which the *Illustrated London News* offered an excellent illustration, p. 442, November 6, 1858), but also, in Great Portland Street, a 'small but entire frontage' of

iron and glass. 'He has produced a façade which may well be applied to street architecture elsewhere,' the writer in the *News* said; apparently it was not. Moreover, these rare examples of non-masonry commercial design in London (in any case posterior to Bogardus's first all-castiron commercial structures in New York) are known only through such contemporary periodical references.

In other English cities also, iron before the seventies seems never to have risen above the first two storeys of the street façade (at least in commercial buildings now extant). Yet the elements of complete façades of castiron were being designed, fabricated, and sent by water to such West Coast American cities as Portland and Salem, Oregon. No local iron industry existed there to provide them; and the enormous costs and difficulties of transportation overland made it impossible to obtain in the fifties, sixties and seventies the products of the Eastern American foundries that were supplying castiron fronts in such profusion to Atlantic Seaboard and Middle Western cities.

But the situation in Scotland, or more specifically in Glasgow, from the eighteenth century a major centre of the iron trade, was rather different. It is surprising how little attention the English professional press gave at the time to the considerable commercial structure which rose in Glasgow in 1855 at the corner of Jamaica and Argyle Streets with a complete exterior of iron and glass (1 and 2). The journals described in that year Bogardus's castiron Shot Tower in New York (whose height of 174 feet made it the Empire State Building of its day); they dilated on Carpenter's incomplete project for an iron church (commissioned some years earlier by the Ecclesiological Society) when this was taken over by Slater on Carpenter's death; but of the Glasgow warehouse there was barely a word. However, as is indicated by the general neglect of 'Greek' Thomson's work (down at least to the last few years before his death in 1875), the London professional magazines in High Victorian times seem to have ignored architectural activities in Glasgow rather generally.*

The *Illustrated London News* often seems to posterity to have had a better eye for significant architectural news in this period than the professional press. They at least provided an illustration and an account of the building after its completion (p. 281, March 15, 1856). The *Builder* had already given a very short notice the previous March: 'An iron founder has recently contracted to put up a cast-iron building in one of the principal streets of the city—to be four storeys high and

to be used as shops and warehouses,' with the additional word in December that it was 'making progress.' In April, 1855, on the other hand, in a letter perhaps written before the plans for the building were generally known, *The Builder's* correspondent, James Wylson, did not mention the iron warehouse in a considerable account of current building activity in Glasgow. He called Glasgow 'at the present time the most go-ahead city in Great Britain,' and found space to mention what must have been the earliest of those prefabricated iron structures which the local firm of MacFarlane, Walter & Co. eventually purveyed to most British cities—'spiral-planned halting places somewhat similar in appearance to those on the Boulevards of Paris.' Yet in the field of commercial architecture Wylson remarked only the increasing use of 'Venetian' (not Venetian Gothic of course, as yet, but something related to the Sansovinesque *palazzo* formula), and spoke in deprecation of an extensive range of warehouses in Ingram Street 'in what is intended for the Old Scottish Style, by a clever London practitioner who should have known better.'

Thus no more complete technical account seems to be available than the few paragraphs provided by the *Illustrated London News*. Sections and structural details, which would make the character of the construction really intelligible, are quite lacking until they can be supplied by modern investigation. The chief internal innovation was the use of framed girders consisting of flat bars of malleable iron with castiron distending frames. These had lately been patented by Robert McConnell (probably the ironfounder who contracted to build this building). As our illustration indicates, the main structural piers are rather more widely spaced than is usual in American castiron façades, doubtless because of McConnell's framed girders. Wooden window frames, mentioned in the account, are not the light arcades which fill the bays of the upper three storeys, but merely the sash set behind them to hold the glass. Yet the fact that there are timber floors resting on the iron girders makes the construction as a whole inferior in solidity, as also in fire-resistance, to the best English structural methods of the time which incorporated brick-arched floors. And of course the English external walls of masonry are likewise solidier if less bold technically.

None of the contemporary accounts of the Jamaica Street warehouse mentions an architect. In the case of American cast-iron work, clients and builders seem sometimes to have selected the constituent members of their façades from iron-founders' catalogues without benefit of custom design by architects. Something of the same sort may well have occurred here. The result, however, is not to modern eyes unworthy of comparison with good masonry commercial work of the time in the South* which had the benefit of skilled professional design; its design is definitely superior to most contemporary American castiron work. Yet the very qualities that seem to us admirable today, the delicacy of scale, the crisp repetition of a few basic forms, and the continuity of the fenestration, probably help to explain why

* The president of the Glasgow Architectural Association complained in this year 1855 that *The Builder* treated notices of their meetings with silent contempt.

* See 'Victorian Monuments of Commerce,' *THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW*, 1949, pp. 61-74.

* *The Builder*, 1851, p. 658.

it attracted so little favourable attention at the time and had so little influence outside Glasgow. Where the American foundries, after the very first, generally supplied iron elements of conventional Renaissance design at masonry scale in order to provide a boldness of relief at least comparable to that of arcaded stone façades, there is here an almost Regency directness in the ranges of simple arched window frames and a frank admission of plate-like character in the panelled facings of the main piers. Even the cornice, which masks a serrated roof with skylights, is relatively crisp despite its deep brackets; the lower string courses and balustrades have a minuscule daintiness which contrasts markedly with the very vigorous relief the taste of the mid-fifties generally demanded in such details.

Of colour nothing is said in the contemporary accounts. But however the iron work was originally painted, it will hardly have been sanded and painted stone-colour like the fake-masonry façades in America. The present very light colour of the paint is both attractive and plausible, recalling the cheerful appearance of the ZCMI department store façade in Salt Lake City, Utah, as it was freshly painted white, with touches of grey, for the Utah centenary several years ago. (The metal frame of Miés van der Rohe's newest house, outside Chicago, is also painted white, it is perhaps worth noting, not black or dark grey.)

Like the Brompton Boilers (which were building in South Kensington in London at the same time, without benefit of architect and hence the subject of violent critical attack in *The Builder*) the Jamaica Street warehouse was unable to satisfy the tastes of critics south of the border for what was then considered 'real' in architecture. Solidity, breadth, and sculptural articulation of structure were as lacking as strong contrasts of colour and that bold, or even coarse, sort of detail that sophisticates of the age approved in contemporary work. Yet it was at this time that architects and critics were generally most responsive in theory to the possibilities of innovation in architecture that iron so obviously provided. It must seem a paradox, but the root of the matter seems to be that the High Victorian age of the fifties and sixties, which talked so much about iron and actually used it so generally for everything except street façades, *did not like iron*. At least the English leaders of taste in the fifties did not, as those of the Regency had done, admit the aesthetic value of the characteristic visual effects of lightness, openness, extreme regularity, and neat precision coming almost automatically with any rational use of metal in architectural design.*

There were, of course, practical objections as well. As the later American conflagrations proved and as English engineers were well aware in the fifties, even though iron does not burn like wood, it rapidly loses strength when exposed to heat; thus cast-iron façades will collapse when surrounding and facing buildings burn, as masonry façades will not. (The way cast-iron interior skeletons stood up to the fires of the blitz was most surprising.)

* Ruskin's detestation of iron is well known; but others who paid more lip-service to innovation must really have disliked it almost as much, to judge from its chary use on exteriors by architects of reputation.

Despite Owen Jones's façades of glass and iron which have been mentioned and the many buildings in which exposed iron was used in the lower storeys and on the rear, it is rather doubtful, moreover, whether permission could have been obtained from the authorities, in such English cities as had rigid building codes, to erect so considerable an all-iron façade in the fifties in a congested business area. At Glasgow builders had more leeway. In this sort of construction, as in the still little known work of 'Greek' Thomson, Glasgow has more to offer students of mid-nineteenth century architecture than is suspected.

The bold use of iron in the interior of Thomson's Queen's Park church is fairly familiar. His use of iron in commercial work has only just begun to be studied. A project at the Mitchell Library for a warehouse in Dixon Street, and the Buck's Head Buildings in Dunlop Street—if they are indeed his work—do not make as comprehensive a use of iron for the entire façade as does the Jamaica Street warehouse, but they are more elegant in their general design. They are also very refined and imaginative in detail, like his better known warehouse in Sauchiehall Street (6) and the superb one in Bath Street for John Cairney, side of the Mechanics' Institution, now unfortunately demolished. (*Building News*, XXII, p. 488.)

Other architects (or builders) besides Thomson were using a great deal of iron in warehouse façades in the late fifties and sixties in Glasgow. The building now occupied by Paisleys may be mentioned as particularly frank and admirably proportioned, with three storeys of delicate iron colonnettes above the modernized ground storey, which is itself in the tradition of Thomson's plain, flat fascia-surrounded shop windows. Here, however, the relatively heavy entablatures, with mouldings crisp enough to be worthy of Thomson, are presumably of stone (4). The building occupied by the Dormie Hire Service (5) has a more Liverpoolian air. The brackets under the cornice and the carved mouldings of the second storey arches recall Picton's warehouses in Water Street of the late fifties (cf. *THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW*, 1949, p. 68, fig. 8). In this the articulation is phrased by broader piers into triple bays and the whole superstructure above the second storey arches appears to be of masonry.

These Glasgow buildings deserve thorough study in order to determine their dates and architects, as well as the precise way in which the iron and the masonry elements are combined. One of them will doubtless prove to be that which *The Builder* (1863, p. 713) mentions as being built by John Baird and James Thomson, in Argyle Street a little west of Jamaica Street, with a complete iron framework and using the same patent beams that were first used in the Jamaica Street warehouse. The dimensions given, 57½ ft. by 58 ft., would fit Paisleys, although stylistically that façade might seem a decade earlier. I do not doubt that students closer to the scene than I will shortly investigate these remarkable structures in all their technical details.

In the seventies, cast-iron façades at last moved south—or perhaps the influence was from across the Atlantic. A portion of a building at No. 20, Old Street in London which survived the blitz (but may be gone by now) closely recalled the Jamaica

Street warehouse in the delicate arcading of the four upper storeys. At Nos. 46-47, Boar Lane in Leeds, a corner façade built in 1873 by the local commercial architect Thomas Ambler uses glass and iron not ineffectively in a sort of Perpendicular grid. This is crisper and more businesslike, if considerably less luxuriant, than Thomas Hopper's Carlton House conservatory built two generations earlier of iron and glass with lacy Tudor detail. In Derby the previous year Owen Jones, still faithful to iron and glass, designed a façade in several storeys, appropriately enough in Irongate. This was executed by the local Haywood Iron Foundry who occupied the building. Although the ornament here is of course richer and more original, the scheme of small decorative arches grouped between panelled piers is very close indeed to that of the Jamaica Street warehouse. But there had by that time been a general shift in taste toward smaller scale, more delicate detail, and regular repetition of multiple units of fenestration in façade design. The 'Queen Anne' architects provided the leadership for this, despite their own lack of interest in the visible use of new materials. Thus cast-iron façades did finally appear in the streets of English cities, if only rather sporadically, in a later period that was in the main rather timid in its exploitation of iron.

When C. R. Cockerell spoke in his Royal Academy lecture at the end of 1855, just as the Jamaica Street warehouse was rising, in favour of new materials, this archaeologist, who was also perhaps the most distinguished of Early Victorian commercial architects, suggested the Alhambra and the imaginary structures in Pompeian murals as possible precedents for the lightness and delicacy he considered proper to the expression of iron construction. But Cockerell had no illusions that a new architecture would be created overnight. 'If we labour at a competent exhibition of these novelties (iron, glass, concrete, etc.) it need never be doubted that the year 1900 will display in architecture that which was never before dreamt of, characterizing the century in a manner worthy of its extraordinary progress in civilization.' As regards the extensive use of glass and iron in commercial architecture his dating was not far off as regards general European developments. But for all his prophesying, neither he nor many of his contemporaries had eyes to see or faith to encourage such contemporary work as the Glasgow warehouses, once the first excitement attending the construction of the Crystal Palace in 1850 had died down. Historically, despite the fact that they are exceptional, and intrinsically, despite the fact that they are in many ways no more to the taste of the mid-twentieth century than to that of the mid-nineteenth, these Glasgow warehouses deserve something of the fame their American cousins have now so generally won. Whether their design owes more to architects or to ironfounders, they are among the most successful Victorian commercial edifices to be found on either side of the Atlantic.

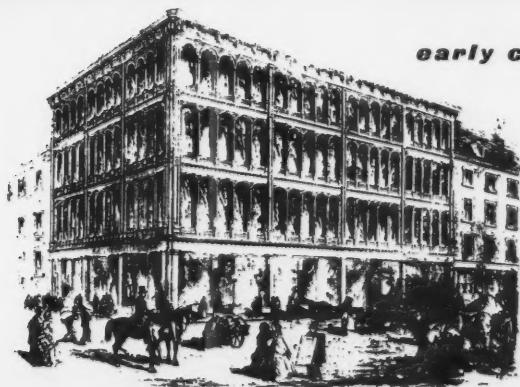
note I owe to the kindness of Graham Law, of King's College, Cambridge, the possibility of including the photographs he had taken at my request by Messrs. Annan. Without his aid I should not have known of the buildings shown in figures 4 and 5. The research on 'Greek' Thomson Mr. Law is undertaking at present should increase our knowledge of these matters notably.





1

early cast iron facades



In spite of the widespread use of iron by Victorian builders as a structural material, the extension of the iron skeleton to the street facade of buildings was rarely seen before the third quarter of the nineteenth century. But in Glasgow, a major centre of the iron trade for more than a century, such facades did appear earlier. 1 is a commercial building at the corner of Jamaica and Argyle streets, Glasgow, built in 1855 with an exterior entirely of iron and glass. The engraving, 2, which is from the Illustrated London News, shows it in 1856.

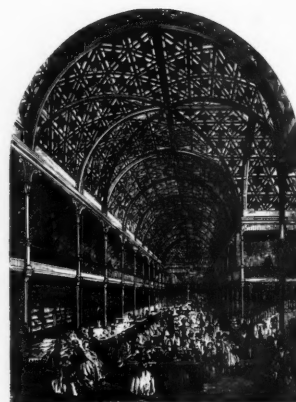
2



4



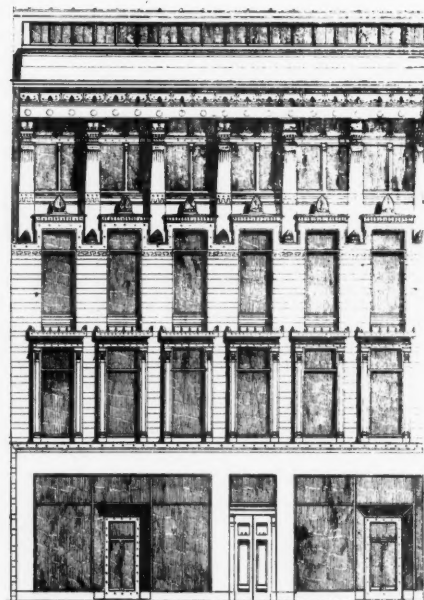
5



3

early cast iron facades

The building now occupied by Paisleys, Glasgow, 4, with its three storeys of delicate iron colonnettes, is particularly well-proportioned. The modernized front is similar in feeling though not nearly so elegant as the original front above. The three heavy entablatures are of stone. 3, the London Crystal Palace which was opened in Oxford Street in 1858 was constructed entirely of iron and coloured glass. 5 has more the air of a Liverpool building of the period. The whole superstructure



6

above the three triple bays appears to be of masonry. The remarkable absence of information or comment on these buildings in the trade press at the time renders them virtually anonymous. The work of 'Greek' Thomson is only a little better known and his warehouse in Sauchiehall Street for John Cairney, 6, though illustrated in the Building News of 1872—twelve years after it was built—was dismissed in one short paragraph.

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

HIGHWAY CODE

STYLE IN TRAFFIC SYMBOLS

Public signs and symbols must be immediately legible or recognizable; that is their lowest common denominator. But if they are to make a positive contribution to the outdoor scene they must go further: they must have style. The possession of style is what links the five French examples shown here. The first dates from the nine-



teenth century; a common sight in France, the Notary Public's sign, superb in craftsmanship and a good yardstick for judging the quality of modern symbols. The second



is one of the enamelled number plates, with white numerals on a blue ground, that are standard in France; the typeface used is full of character and the relationship between the numerals and their background could not be improved. The perfection of the next two examples

also depends largely on the nice adjustment that has been achieved between the symbols and their frames; they illus-



trate, incidentally, two kinds of symbol. In the parking sign above, an initial letter has been taken over and turned into something more expressive, yet in a sense more elementary, while in the no entry sign below, the symbol, owing to a kind of basic right-



ness, has been able to shed any legend that may once have accompanied it. These are signs of the universal, permanent types,

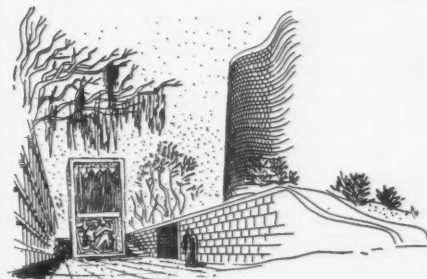
and already in international circulation, o'er leaping boundaries of race, language or, indeed, creed. The ticket seller's cap at Les Baux, is an instance of the *ad hoc* sign showing not only a sense of style, but something even higher—wit. At this level signs and symbols are not valuable merely for what they are in themselves—as specimens of good design—they become adjuncts to the urban landscape and can be treated seriously as motifs in the landscape game. This is one point which the planner has got to get to traffic engineer and borough surveyor.

I. de Wolfe

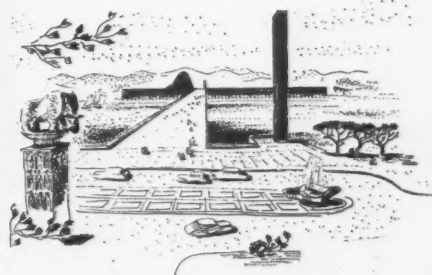
WORLD

MATTHEW NOWICKI

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, recently held an exhibition of the projects of Matthew Nowicki, the young Polish-born architect who was killed in a plane crash in Egypt last August. Nowicki's brilliance as a



draughtsman has already been demonstrated to REVIEW readers in his sketches of the Chapel of Three Faiths at Brandeis University (AR Dec., 1950, and above), in the design of which he assisted Eero Saarinen. Below is another design of his, produced in collaboration with Albert Mayer—the capital of the East Punjab. Reviewing the Nowicki exhibition in *The New Yorker* (November 18, 1950), Lewis Mumford wrote of this project: 'Most modern architects, if they had been asked

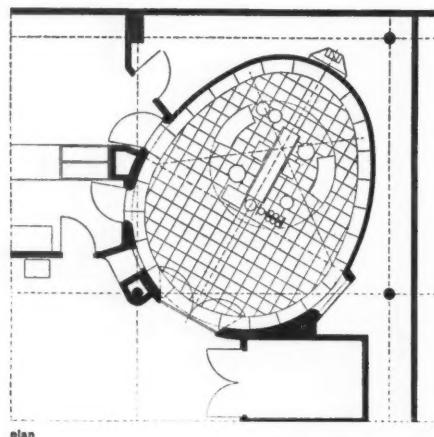


to consider the East Punjab capital, would probably have designed buildings and groups of buildings in no way different from what they would have designed for a capital in Sweden or Africa or South America—in effect, a neutered, mechanized version of Sir Edwin Lutyens' New Delhi. Nowicki, in designing the East Punjab House of Parliament, used a characteristic modern form for roofing a big structure—the parabolic arch—but a few touches on the walls suggest a geometric ornament in relief, rich and variegated, that transforms the bare interior by its mere suggestion of the carved surfaces of Indian temple forms. With such little acts of æsthetic grace and insight, he made the universal forms of the machine both regional and personal.'

FRANCE

Six operating theatres of this design are now being built at the France-Etats-Unis Memorial Hospital at Saint-Lô. The architect is Paul Nelson.* The particular ovoid shape was chosen for its economy of construction, convenience of movement and maintenance and in particular for the maximum degree of control it offers over the different services and processes required for surgery.

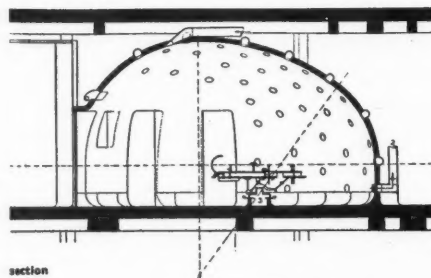
The operating or sterile circle (see plan below) is not in the centre of the theatre but towards the back, away from the main axes of movement but in easy reach of them. (If the theatre were circular more space would be needed for circulation



and for seclusion from it; a larger ceiling would be entailed meaning a reduction in control of air conditioning, stronger lighting yet more distant light sources, and so on.) The theatre is 21½ ft. long, 17½ ft. wide, and the ceiling is 11½ ft. at its highest point. The importance of the fact is stressed that the operating table lies along the longitudinal axis of the theatre and with the lighting similarly being

planned along the same axis the surgeon's arrangement of his lights is considerably facilitated.

The remarkable flexibility of the lighting system is again a result of the ovoid shape of the theatre. Seventy-one small light projectors are studded in the ceiling shell, a more hygienic arrangement than the customary suspended fittings. It was found on analysis that for each of the classic operating positions a 40° cone of light provided best illumination without blinding the surgeon and his assistants or causing shadows to be cast. The seventy-



one projectors are arranged in the ceiling shell so that in groups of nine they provide a 40° cone from any direction. The centre lamp of each group of nine has a letter corresponding to buttons on the control panel so that the surgeon can call for different lightings as he needs them. The double lenses of each projector focus the light and the catathermic glass corrects any distortions of colour.

To avoid the dangerous confusion of wires and pipes on the floor electric cables, compressed air, vacuum and oxygen sources are located in the base of the operating table itself.

The ovoid shape again was found to provide easiest control of ventilation. Air, filtered, sterile, warmed to 25–28°C. and with a 60–65 per cent hydrogen content, enters the theatre from a high inlet near the main doors (it is directed towards these doors to deflect any draughts from the sterile circle) and is extracted near the floor at the opposite end of the theatre, ensuring the carrying away of anæsthetic gases and avoiding a dangerous concentration.

The floor is of granite squares separated by copper, earthed to prevent static electricity collecting. (All objects in the theatre are similarly earthed.)

An observation gallery, if required, is easily constructed about the shell of the theatre, and has the advantage of there being no obstruction from suspended lamps.

A full scale test model made of reinforced plaster which was used for testing the design is being employed now for the construction of forms on which an expanded metal frame can be shaped which is then sprayed with cement from a cement gun to a thickness of 2 in. When

dry the cement facing is painted light sea-green, the complementary colour for the surgeon, and with a 60 per cent reflection factor. The granite floor is darker green.

FLOORSCAPE

WAR MEMORIAL AT SÄYNÄTSALO

The surfaces we walk on out of doors were not always the textureless monotone that we are used to to-day.

Fortunately there are signs of a re-

awakening. In the war memorial at Säynätsalo, Finland, which was consecrated in 1948, the art of floor-surfacing—or floorscape—has been given a status equal to the sculpture which forms the focal feature of the memorial. The result is seen in the four photographs on the opposite page. The architect of the scheme was Aulis Blomstedt, while Elizabeth Koch was responsible for the detailed planning of the landscape garden and for supervising the work; the sculptor was Wäinö Aaltonen. The work was carried out by voluntary labour, with stones taken from the shores of Päijänne; the names on the gravestones, shown in the bottom right photograph, were sandblasted. Has the thing come off? Perhaps not quite. The effect is rather staring—though time no doubt will remedy this—and a trifle over-busy; also, the arrangement of the small stones, in carefully contrived disorder, has the self-consciousness which betrays all attempts to conceal art by imitating nature. (You can control nature, even 'improve' her, or you can leave her alone; but she just won't be imitated.) These criticisms made, much praise is due to the designers of this memorial for their recognition of the fact that the earth's surface is as fine a canvas as anyone could ask for, and for their adventurous expedition into what for the twentieth century is almost a new art.

Andrew Hammer

TOWNSCAPE

PICTURE IN THE STREET

Painting has long ceased to be a public art; the remedy, say some, is to commission painters to decorate the interiors of public buildings.

But public buildings, in our civilization of paradox, are not much frequented by the public. Isn't there a better case for turning painting out of doors, into the most frequented place of public assembly of them all—the street? Let us grant that the

* See Hospital at Saint-Lô, AR March 1949.



war memorial at Saynatsalo



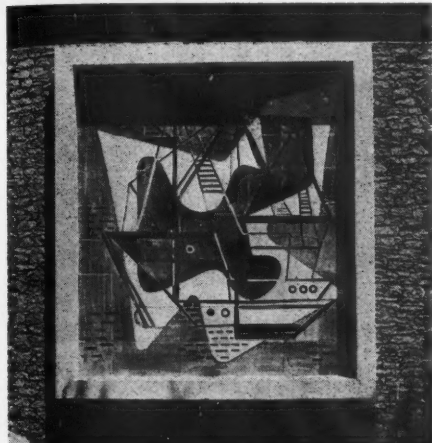


picture in the street

black letter at Stratford



usual remedy would benefit both painting and architecture—two arts; this one would benefit painting and architecture and town-



scape—three. An instance of its application, from the Miguel Ribeiro house at Ipanema, Rio de Janeiro, is shown on the opposite page and above; the fact that the medium of this particular picture (by Roberto Burle Marx) is the azulejo tile doesn't affect the argument at all.

Claude Vincent

LETTERING

BLACK LETTER AT STRATFORD

Few towns can have been so much bedevilled in the interests of a mistaken ideal, the ideal of which the bogus antique is the necessary outcome, as Stratford-on-Avon. An excess of applied 'half-timbering' is one of the legacies of this treatment; another is the monstrous crop of 'black letter' with which the facades of the town are loaded. A few samples from this crop are shown opposite*



and on this page. It will be conceded that they are neither decorative nor legible.

* The black letter, or gothic, was a calligraphic letter form in use in the fifteenth century. The first black letter types were cast (in the fifteenth century) in frank imitation of that letter form and the books printed with those types were imitations of contemporary manuscript books.

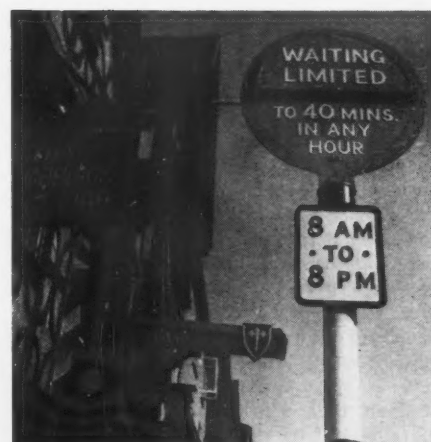
But questions of taste apart, there is a perfectly good historical reason why black letter won't do for the kind of purpose for which it has been used here. For when black letter was the only letter, literacy was a possession limited to the few; sign-boards relied on symbols, and black letter was never developed as an instrument of public information. Sometimes, of course, in late medieval buildings, inscriptions are used as ornamental motifs; but it is quite possible to appreciate such inscriptions as



ornament, without being able to read them—while in a street sign legibility must always be a prime need. It is not pedantry to raise these historical considerations. After all, it is a sense of history, however rudimentary or perverted, that is responsible for what we see here.



But if we forbid black letter to the citizens of Stratford, what can we allow them instead? Two other possible ideals (together with another specimen of the ubiquitous black letter) are illustrated next—the purely utilitarian in the foreground, and the tasteful-genteel at Harvard House behind. Neither will do: the one is too little concerned with atmosphere, the other far too much. Yet the right answer is to be found for the looking—and not so far away. The lettering on the Old Town Croft



below has legibility, style and 'period character'—the three qualities most needed for lettering in a situation where the demands of popular sentiment call for a deliberate attempt to produce an immemorial atmosphere. And it happens to express the very genuine character of Shakespeare's home-town far better than



the bogus black letter and sham half-timber which have already threatened Stratford, strangled Shrewsbury, and made Chester a cheap piece of vaudeville.

Robert More

BOOKS

THE NEW CHAMBERS

THE NEW CHAMBERS'S ENCYCLOPÆDIA. George Neumes Ltd., London. £42 10s. 0d.

The architectural parts of the new Chambers's Encyclopædia are a remarkable achievement far ahead of anything available until now in any encyclopædia in English or, indeed, in any language, if one excepts the Enciclopedia Italiana, and that, as is known, was an enterprise of 36 quarto volumes, whereas the information in Chambers is compressed into 15 volumes of a handier size. The effect of this is, of course, that Chambers has far less entries on individual architects than the Italian encyclopædia. In the Enciclopedia Italiana you find, for instance, paragraphs on Francesco di Giorgio, on Delorme, on Sir George Gilbert Scott, all missing in Chambers, and Bramante (by Giovannoni) fills 4½ pages and has 19 illustrations in the Italian encyclopædia, whereas in Chambers he has only 50 lines (John Summerson). Even Wren has 56 lines in the Italian encyclopædia

as compared with only three times as much in Chambers.

The Wren entry in Chambers (by Geoffrey Webb) can serve as an example of how excellent the new encyclopædia is at its best. It contains a wise choice of the pertinent facts about Wren's life, a whole paragraph on the Sheldonian Theatre, another on St. Paul and the City churches, a brief, but perfectly adequate exposition of secular buildings, including the problem of Hawksmoor's connection with the later works, and occasionally even references to very little known, but significant works such as the landscape drawing of 1667 at Windsor. Equally good of its scale, is on the same page spread as the end of Wren, the much briefer account of Frank Lloyd Wright by Henry-Russell Hitchcock.

The names of these two authors are characteristic of the exemplary selection of authors for Chambers. Inigo Jones, for instance, is written by Margaret Whinney, Mansart by Anthony Blunt, Le Corbusier by John Summerson. On the whole the most important architects are, indeed, those chosen for entries. Villard de Honnecourt is there, to give an example of what might easily have been forgotten, and Gabriel, and even Gilly (who is missing in the *Enciclopedia Italiana*), though not Ledoux and not Uvedale Price. John James and Hugh May might, perhaps, have been left out instead.

The scarcity of individual entries is, however, not entirely a matter of space, but also, it seems, one of principle. On this principle one can argue. I prefer myself the opposite principle of many headings, even if half of them are only of five to six lines each. The editors of Chambers have tried to collect as much as possible in one large article, in our case of course that which is headed *Architecture*, and leave the rest to a very large number of cross-references in the index volume. *Architecture* has thus become a treatise of, if my computing is correct, between forty and forty-five thousand words, that is quite the length of a book. It starts with a brief glossary of terms and a brief introduction to the aesthetics of architecture, and then goes on in two parallel parts, the first dealing with the architecture of the principal countries, the second with architectural styles in chronological order. The latter part is especially enlightening. Take, for instance, *Baroque*. In the 1949 edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* one had still to read the late Corrado Ricci's definition that the Baroque in Rome 'represented the very beginnings of the architecture of imperial Rome, just as Rome adorned herself with Byzantine, Romanesque and Renaissance buildings, because all their forms were akin or derived from the Romans. The vaults, the cupolas, the arches had their origin in the imperial art, even if enriched by the Byzantine, toned down by the Romanesque, softened by the Renaissance, amplified by the Baroque, subtitled by the Neo-Classical.' That may sound fine in Italian, but as a guide to Baroque architecture it does not lead far. Corrado Ricci mentions Bernini and Borromini in one paragraph without any works and then goes abroad to Churriguera, 'Virig-

boon,' Vanbrugh (but not Wren), etc.

Compare with this what Professor Wittkower has to say about the Baroque:—

'The constituent elements of Baroque architecture are the classical forms introduced by the Renaissance. Baroque architecture stands on the shoulders of both Renaissance and Mannerism; but in contrast to the static character of Renaissance architecture Baroque architecture has a dynamic quality, while compared with the ambiguity of Mannerist architecture Baroque structures, like those of the Renaissance, are clearly defined. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Baroque architecture was accompanied by a classical trend varying in importance; moreover, complex Mannerist combinations, particularly in the arrangement of details, remain part and parcel of the European stock of architectural ideas. The classical trend was backed by an academic theory which continued Renaissance theory in a direct line (above all in France in the treatises of Perrault, Blondel and Briseux). Baroque architects did not develop a specific theory. They regarded themselves (in Bernini's phrase) as "vessels of divine grace" and used the rational academic theory as a handmaid for irrational aims.

'A Baroque structure, unlike the crystalline structures of the Renaissance, has direction and movement. The eye is led to the focusing point of the composition and every part is subordinated to one leading idea. This applies not only to buildings individually but also to the building in its surroundings, be it countryside or town. Thus the Baroque is the age of town-planning on the grand scale and of the formal garden. In the most accomplished works of the style, architecture, sculpture, decoration and painting unite and no separation of the different mediums is possible without destroying the meaning of the whole. Illusionist painting helps to create a new reality in which the boundary between architectural space and imaginary space is eliminated, and the careful direction of light (in contrast to the diffused, neutral lighting of the Renaissance) assumes an extraordinary importance in achieving the desired result.

'It is evident that a Baroque structure does not allow of calm and detached perception. The individual is transported into a new reality; he is drawn into the movement and consistently led to the point where everything converges (e.g., the altar in a church); he participates in the drama which is being enacted. This architecture appeals to the emotions, it evokes irrational sensations and is a bridge between man and the supernatural. The architects of the Roman full Baroque—Rome was the cradle of the style—glorified the triumph of the catholic counter-Reformation.'

This is easily the best brief summing up of the distinguishing qualities of the Baroque which I know. Professor Wittkower follows it with analyses of buildings by Maderna, Bernini, Guarini and others. He is equally excellent on Mannerism. This term is absent from the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, although Brockhaus had it already in 1932 and the *Enciclopedia Italiana* in 1934. Brockhaus has no reference yet to Mannerist architecture, but the

Enciclopedia Italiana ends its paragraph (by G. C. Argan) with Serlio, Vignola and Palladio. That, of course, it may be said, remains controversial to this day. In Chambers, John Summerson sums up Palladio 'as a man of the High Renaissance, and only in the later works influenced by mannerist tendencies.' Mr. Summerson's summings-up at the end of his entries on Renaissance architects deserve altogether the highest praise: 'Alberti was the intellectual pioneer of Renaissance architecture, his theoretical approach contrasting sharply with the more intuitive conceptions of his older friend Brunelleschi.' 'Bramante's importance in the history of architecture is in his exposition of the essential logic of Roman architecture as the basis for a new classicism adaptable to the needs and spirit of his age.' This could not be improved in neat conciseness. The late Sir Alfred Clapham is, of course, wariest of generalizations in his account of Romanesque architecture; and on Gothic, Mr. Summerson tends to be naughty. A definition of the Gothic Cathedral as 'a vast fantasy' plus 'a work of engineering' presupposes, perhaps, more in readers than Chambers should. The architecture of Greece (by Professor A. W. Lawrence), Rome (by Dr. Jocelyn Toynbee), China and Japan, India and Islam is treated in separate articles.

The selection of headings and general arrangement lay, of course, in the hands of the editors. They are Mr. Summerson for architecture, Professor Lawrence for classical archaeology, Professor Blunt for art. Theirs also was the choice of authors. The authors, however, made up their own bibliographies—on the whole up to date (except on Italy)—and chose their own illustrations. The 75 illustrations to the article on architecture deserve special mention. Some, it is true, are without interest; for instance, the north porches of Chartres as the only French thirteenth century cathedral exterior, St. Ouen at Rouen as the only later Gothic French exterior (with its nineteenth century front) and a view of the interior of Henry VII Chapel (with the vault cut off) as the only interior to illustrate Late Gothic. The Renaissance, Mannerism, Baroque and Revival buildings, on the other hand, are put together with the greatest ingenuity—a final proof of how far the architectural parts of the new Chambers are from the routine compilation which from bitter experience one expects all encyclopædias to be. If other subjects are treated as well by Chambers as architecture, England can surely be proud of this publishing achievement.

Nikolaus Pevsner

Books Received

- A MEASURING DIAGRAM FOR DAYLIGHT ILLUMINATION. By Percy J. Waldram. Batsford, 5s.
THE CREATIVE CRAFTSMAN. By John Farleigh. G. Bell and Sons, 21s.
YOUR LOCAL BUILDINGS. By Kathleen Harston and Elizabeth Davis. Allen and Unwin, 4s. 6d.
THE WORKS OF ALFRED STEVENS AT THE TATE GALLERY. Kenneth Romney Townsend. Longmans, Green and Co., 20s.
FABRICS IN THE HOME. By Roger Smithells. Herbert Jenkins, 25s.
DARTMOUTH. By Percy Russell. Batsford, 18s.
LONDON HISTORIC BUILDINGS. A series of illustrations with an introduction by Harry Batsford. Batsford, 7s. 6d.
THE PAINTERS OF FERRARA. By Benedict Nicolson. Paul Elek, 42s.
A GUIDE TO DESIGNING WINDOWS. By Neville Woodbury. Neville Woodbury, 6s.
A CRITICAL REVIEW OF LE CORBUSIER. By P. M. Bardi. Museu de Arte de São Paulo, Brazil.

First Meeting with Scott

My father lost no time in pushing his views as to my profession to a decision. Mr. Gilbert Scott, then [1858] at the head of his profession, had come to be our neighbour and we had made his acquaintance before we left Hampstead; my father went to see him and showed him one of my sketch-books and arranged that I should go and talk the matter over with him. I went to breakfast with him and he offered to take me to the 'Brompton Boilers,' as the irreverent had christened the temporary buildings in which the South Kensington Museum had its origin, and where the architectural casts with which he was concerned were temporarily housed. We walked across the Conduit Fields—now fields no more—till we took an omnibus, from the top of which I remember he disparaged Decimus Burton's arch opposite Apsley House as 'a thing one could design in ten minutes.' In his disregard of personal appearances I think he outmatched my father. His negligent dress and ill-brushed hat were counterbalanced by a certain unconscious dignity in his manner and were part of the modesty and simplicity of the man. He would stand still in the middle of the road and take out a case of pencils and a notebook and illustrate by a sketch what he was saying. I was much touched by the freedom and absence of pretension with which he discussed architecture with me, a mere tyro and a youngster with the merest smattering of knowledge on the subject. . . . I told him of my leaning rather towards painting, but he thought it late to begin at my age. 'However,' he said, 'there is Mr. Jones of Exeter College who has done it.' The Pre-Raphaelites nevertheless seemed not much to his taste; he said they painted like a school of madmen let loose. This roused me to defend them, for I was steeped in Ruskin and mad about Hunt and Millais. 'Well,' said Scott, 'bring your Pre-Raphaelitism into architecture, for it is exactly what architecture is most in need of at the present time.'

THOMAS GRAHAM JACKSON, *Recollections*.
(Oxford University Press, 1950).

MARGINALIA

Archaeologists in the Agora

One of the oddest uses that have yet been found for Marshall Aid is revealed in the announcement that it will finance the early stages of the reconstruction of the Stoa of Attalos, the colonnaded building of the second century BC that enclosed the Athenian Agora on the east side. The purpose of this reconstruction, which is being undertaken by the American School of Classical Studies, is to provide a museum to house the finds made during the excavations that have been carried out in the Agora since 1931. At present they are kept in a group of nineteenth-century houses in the middle of the area, but these houses are now due to make way for further excavations.

The Agora, as the photograph shows, has already been reduced by the American archaeologists to a desert of foundations—no doubt a source of pride to the archaeologists themselves as an outward sign of the success of their labours, but visually so dreary as to prompt in the non-archaeologist the irreverent thought that as soon as excavated foundations have been measured, drawn, photographed and described

there is really no very good reason for not covering them up again. As to the proposed reconstruction of the Stoa, perhaps one should not begrudge the archaeologists their fun, although one can think of better ways—and better archaeological ways—of spending the money. It is when the archaeologists ask us to take their fun seriously and to believe that the real thing really looked like their version of it, that we may be permitted a certain scepticism. The reconstruction of the Stoa reproduced here was drawn by Mr. Gorham P. Stevens in 1948. Since then, however, the archaeologists have

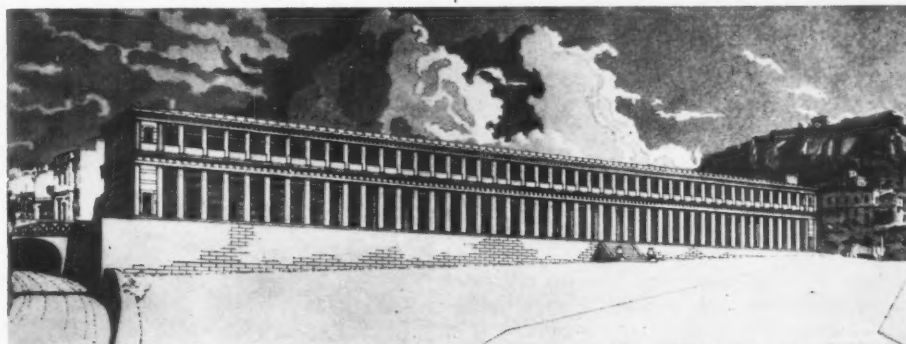
decided that it is incorrect in certain particulars. The ends of the building, for instance, should be restored with gables, the entablature of the upper order of the façade should be Ionic rather than Doric, and in the middle of the front the stairway should be replaced by a bronze chariot group. Most people would agree that these are pretty radical alterations, and those who are not initiated in the *mystique* of classical archaeology might be inclined to ask what guarantee there is that the second thoughts of people who were so wildly wrong in the first place are much to be relied upon. But no doubt that is to take too simple a view of the matter.

Carlton House Terrace

The latest of the schemes to destroy, or failing that to spoil, Carlton House Terrace suffered a set-back at the hands of the Westminster City Council recently.

This scheme, characteristically enough, is conceived for the benefit of civil servants and motor cars. It comprises the rebuilding of a large part of the south side of the terrace to provide two new buildings for the Foreign Office, together with the sinking of a ramp in the middle of Waterloo Place to give access to a garage underneath them. The new buildings, one on each side of the Duke of York's Column, would be 96 ft. high and would rise three storeys above Nash's façade to the Mall. The architects are Louis (Welwyn) de Soissons and Partners.

As *The Times* pointed out on the day the scheme came before the Westminster City Council, only nine months previously the Government had given an undertaking in the House of Commons that the terrace would be preserved. 'In the present proposal,' *The Times* continued, 'the Nash façades are indeed preserved, but in a fashion that cannot really be said to be in accordance with the spirit of the undertaking. . . . Inevitably, it seems, the delightful view of the Nash terraces from St. James's Park will be spoiled and the whole balance of the composition destroyed. An old building cannot be said to have been preserved when an immense new building has been



1, a recent photograph of the site of the Agora at Athens and 2, a reconstruction of the Stoa of Attalos which originally enclosed it and is to be rebuilt as a museum to house the discoveries made on the site.

4
5

6

4, Waterloo Place from an engraving by Thomas Higham. 5, the western end of Carlton House Terrace showing the pediment which disappears in the scheme

proposed. 6, the terrace as it would appear with the Foreign Office buildings rising above it. (See note Carlton House Terrace on p.123, and below.)

grafted on it. . . . If a new Foreign Office is needed—which has yet to be proved—it should not arise out of the ashes of one of the most graceful survivals of the age of London elegance.'

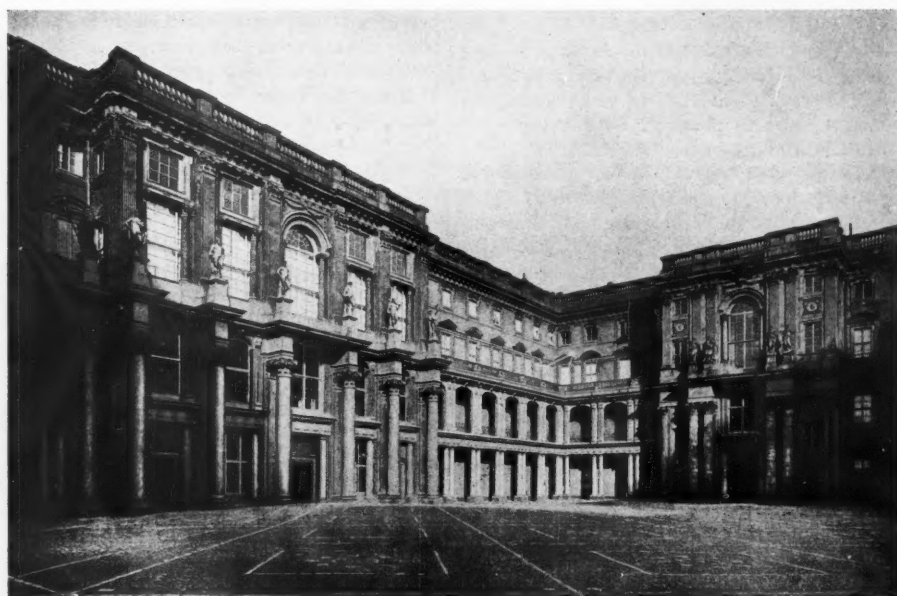
When the Westminster City Council met to consider the scheme, the reference back of its town planning committee's report approving the scheme was moved by Mr. E. H. Keeling, MP, who pointed out that while the Westminster City Council was not the planning authority concerned the scheme had been submitted to it by the architects and that it was free to express its views on the architectural aspect—which the town planning committee had not thought within its province to consider. After a discussion in which mention was made of *The Times* leader, a letter of protest from the Georgian Group, and telegrams from Professor R. Wittkower and the editors of *THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW*, the chairman of the town planning committee asked leave to withdraw the report in order that the architectural aspect might be considered. The Council agreed to this.

Those who are concerned for the preservation of what *The Times* described as 'almost the only piece of town-planning that London possesses on the monumental scale worthy of a capital city' will understand that the set-back that the scheme has sustained may be of a quite temporary nature. Government Departments, as we have more than once been made aware, are in every sense a law unto themselves

in matters of architecture and planning. But some comfort may be taken from the fact that the direct pressure of public opinion has had even this limited measure of success. For the future, the case of Carlton House Terrace needs watching with all vigilance.

Peaceful Destruction

The *Schloss* at Berlin has been demolished by the East German authorities to give way to a parade ground or arena for public assemblies with a grandstand and all the paraphernalia of totalitarian display. The building was badly



3, the second courtyard of the Imperial Palace, Berlin, which, it is reported, has been demolished by the East German Authorities. (See further photograph on following page.)

MARGINALIA

damaged, it is true, but by no means past restoration, as recent photographs and an article in the *Kunstchronik* (November, 1950) show. It seems an almost unbelievable piece of self-mutilation. Nobody can deny that the Palace, built in 1698-1713, and designed partly by Schlüter and partly by Eosander, was the most important work of Baroque architecture in Prussia—the North German parallel to Blenheim. The plasterwork inside



7, the western entrance of the Imperial Palace, Berlin. (See note Peaceful Destruction, p.124.)

also was of the best of its kind. One would think that her war losses of valuable buildings, severer than those of any other country, save perhaps Poland, would have made Germany the most careful trustee of her architectural possessions, regardless of all matters of party politics. But to despise history seems to have become one of the standard features in the early stages of revolutions nowadays.

Duke of York's

The redecoration of the Duke of York's Theatre under the direction of Cecil Beaton



8, the reconstructed auditorium of the Duke of York's Theatre, from the stage.



9



10
11

INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS 9, exhibition hall in their new premises at 17, Dover Street, London, which were opened recently. The design is by Jane Drew and Maxwell Fry. On the left is a wall fitment for small exhibits with adjustable shelving, each containing its own lighting fixture. The wall behind the sculpture by Barbara Hepworth is lined with woven straw. The special picture rail supports movable light fittings. 10, the entrance to the exhibition room. 11, a chair made of laminated Honduras mahogany and Canadian birch upholstered in rubber foam. This and other furniture was designed by Jane Drew and Maxwell Fry, and made by Neil Morris.

has recently been carried out in the Edwardian style. Embellishments are picked out in gold on a background of yellow, green, pink, blue and white, and extensive use is made of wallpapers. The general effect is more successful than that of the reconstructed Old Vic (Marginalia, January, 1951). In the latter, though the dark red wallpaper is delightful and the details are also in gold, the paint work is a particularly depressing shade of grey which makes the auditorium appear underlit.

INTELLIGENCE

The RIBA has published the report of the committee set up in November 1948, under the chairmanship of Sir Percy Thomas, to study the future

of private architectural practice.

The Royal Gold Medal for Architecture for 1951 has been awarded to E. Vincent Harris.

The Punjab is to build a new capital city and Le Corbusier has been appointed architectural adviser. Executive architects will be Maxwell Fry and Pierre Jeanneret. Maxwell Fry has already left England for India to take up his appointment.

Sir Eric Maclagan, member of the Executive Committee of the British Council and Chairman of its Fine Arts Committee, is undertaking a lecture tour in South Africa for the Council. His subjects are 'Modern British Sculpture,' 'Medieval British Sculpture,' 'Sir Christopher Wren' and 'Reynolds and Gainsborough.'

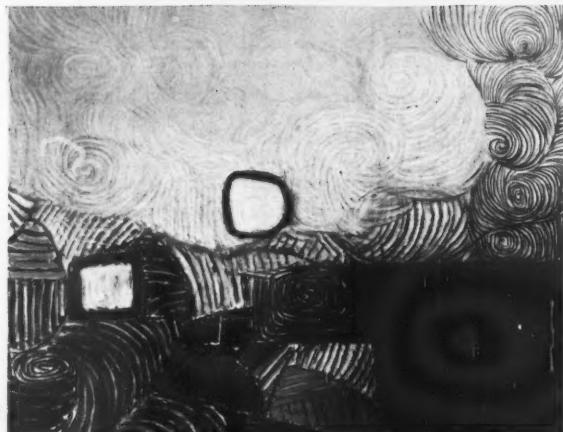
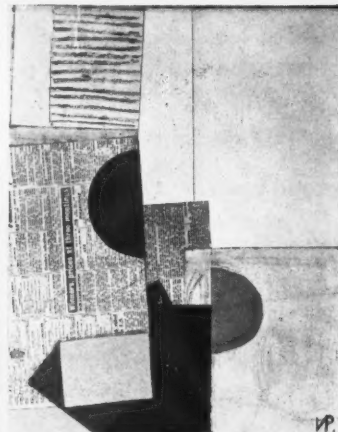
Viscount Samuel has consented to be the President of the Building Research Congress, which will take place in London from September 11 to 20, 1951.

EXHIBITIONS

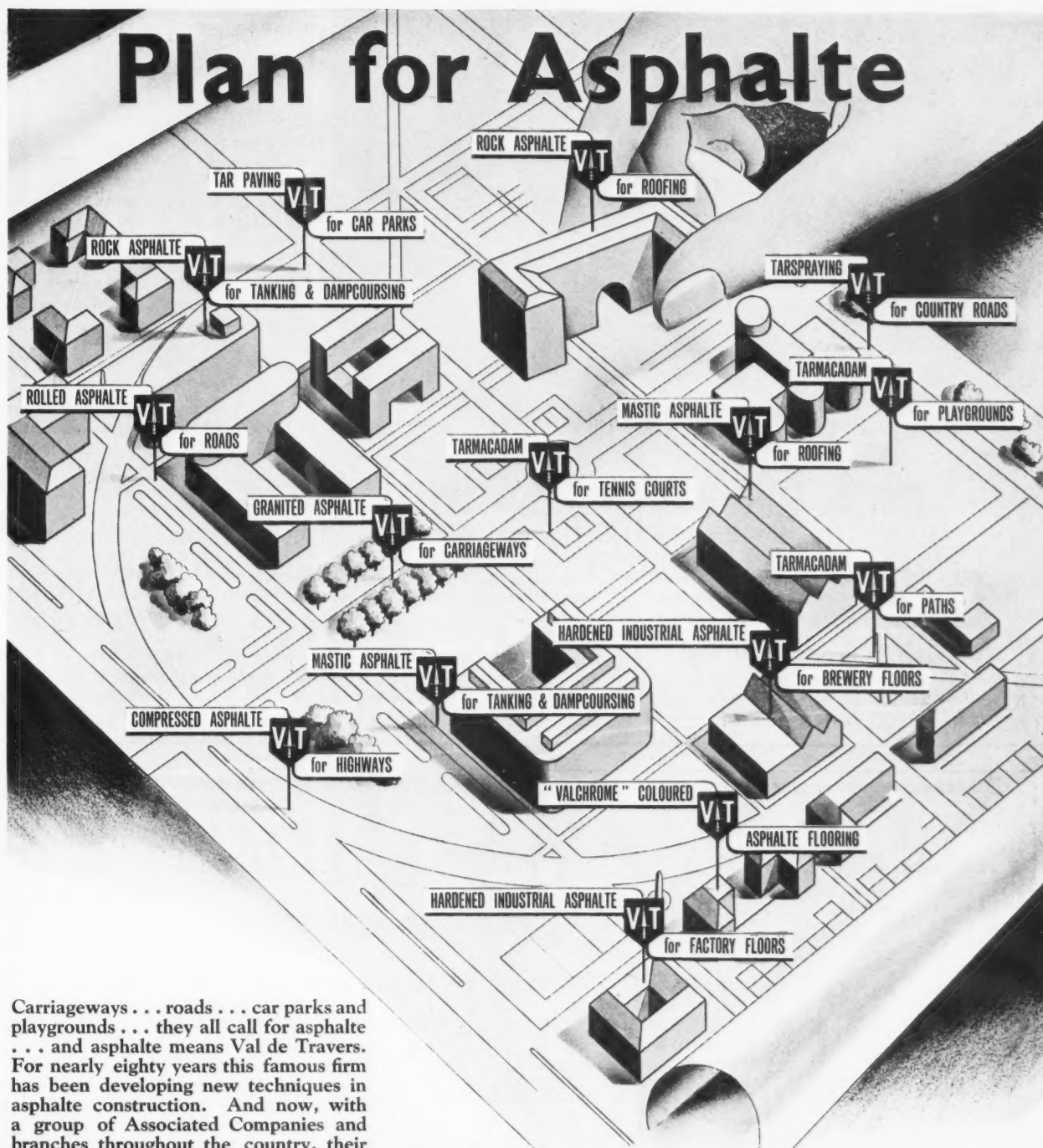
Abstract painting, one tends to assume, implies in its practitioners an interest in composition for its own sake, colour being used strictly as a means to an end. How wide of the mark this assumption may be was demonstrated by the exhibition of Victor Pasmore's recent paintings at the Redfern Gallery. For Pasmore's abstracts are scarcely composed at all, if by composition one means the attainment of an inner equilibrium based on pyramidal or contrapuntal principles. This is most obviously the case in the *Spiral Motifs*, which but for the chance of their canvases being finite might quite well go on for ever. But even when Pasmore paints an abstract with mainly rectangular forms it is not like other men's abstracts, and it would be quite possible for a spectator not unsympathetic to abstract painting in general, when confronted with Pasmore's wilful bisections and arbitrarily disposed small patches of colour, to arrive at the conclusion that Pasmore really did not know what he was up to. What is the explanation? Surely that it is a passionate interest in paint as a thing in itself, and in colour as an attribute of paint, rather than a desire to construct an ideal world of pure form and pure colour, that has led Pasmore into this field. Which suggests that 'abstract' is a vague enough epithet even when applied far more narrowly than it is in common parlance.

The Institute of Contemporary Arts is now installed in its new quarters in Dover Street, which have been tactfully and ingeniously ameliorated by Jane Drew and Maxwell Fry. For its house-warming it put on a mixed exhibition, called *1950 Aspects of British Art*, which set out to illustrate the general situation with some two-score paintings and sculptures—and somehow, by another exercise of tact and ingenuity, came reasonably near to doing so. History is likely to decide that the most important work in the show was the *Head and Shoulders* in which Henry Moore exploits the fact that a bronze is hollow—a simple fact which others before Moore have observed, just as men had noted the habits of apples before Newton, but which before Moore has finished with it may open up for us a whole new realm of artistic discovery. Graham Sutherland was also notably well represented in this exhibition, with an *Armoured Figure*, while among the others present were Piper, Hepworth, Heron, Nicholson, Hitchens, Paolozzi, Turnbull and Denis Williams. One of the most covetable paintings there, in the present critic's estimation, was the quiet and beautifully painted *Springtime Composition* by William Gear.

So much for contemporaries. For the past, we have had Holbein and Co. at Burlington House, together with a Seicento exhibition, and Rubens's Whitehall ceiling, or rather part of it, in the Kensington orangery on its way back to the Banqueting House. And the Arcade Gallery weighs in with a show of Italian painters of the Baroque and Rococo, including in the former category the Neapolitan Massimo Stanzoni, whom Roger Fry thought one of the best of the early seventeenth century Italians, and, in the latter, Pellegrino and Sebastiano Ricci, who both worked for a time in England.

12
1314
1516
17

12, supposed self-portrait of Salvator Rosa, 13, Portrait of a Singer, Italian School c. 1770, from *Italian Pictures of the Baroque and Rococo* at the Arcade Gallery; 14, *Spiral Motif*, 15, *Rectangular Motif* by Victor Pasmore from his exhibition at the Redfern Gallery; 16, *Head and Shoulders* by Henry Moore, 17, *Women in Café* by Patric Heron from the exhibition *1950 Aspects of British Art* at the Institute of Contemporary Arts.



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18

The new sodium lamp installation on the Reading-Ascot road

TRADE & INDUSTRY

Street Lighting

New schemes of street lighting were not only delayed by the war but actively prevented for only too well-remembered reasons. Recently,

Wokingham Borough Council were able to complete an installation with which they had experimented before the war, and for this purpose chose sodium units. Philips So/H type 140 watt lamps, fitted in 'Golden Ray' lanterns supplied by the Engineering and Lighting Equipment Co., Ltd., were erected to provide Group 'A' lighting on all Class 'A' and

'B' roads, and on Class III roads where road width and traffic density made this desirable.

Philips Electrical Ltd., Shaftesbury Avenue, London, W.C.2.

Electric Cooker

The Englishman's traditional home undoubtedly began with the kitchen, though the contemporary owner would hardly have styled his one-room house with its fire of logs and hole in the roof, a kitchen. Today, no matter how many new types of room we evolve, the kitchen seems to become more and more the one round which everything else has to evolve. And to a not inconsiderable degree, it is firms like the Simplex Electric Company that keep the process going, when they offer one more 'tour de force' to the ever interested kitchen occupier, the housewife.

This time it is the 'Creda Comet,' a large capacity horizontal electric cooker designed for normal sized kitchens. It is described as of the so-called American type, mainly because of its appearance and arrangement. Otherwise it is designed to British tastes and needs in the matters of size and price.

The cooker has an over-size oven, half as big again as that of the average sized vertical cooker, with a drop-down door on to which oven pans can be slid, instead of requiring to be lifted. The three rod shelves are claimed to be untippable.

Alongside the oven is a griller, in which the grill-pan slides on runners to the correct height for even grilling. Below this is a roomy plate-

[continued on page 130]

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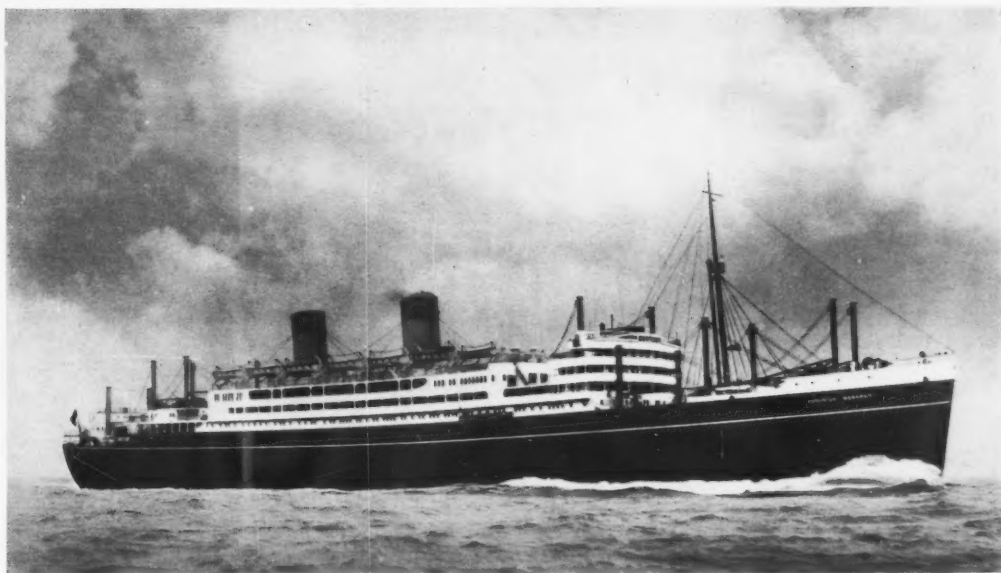
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19

The new 'Creda Comet' electric cooker

continued from page 128]

warming drawer, separately heated and controlled so as to warm plates to a temperature cool enough for handling, but warm enough for serving.

Beneath the oven and plate-warmer, a cupboard unit can be fitted; alternatively the cooker can be supplied with a space here.

The controls are ranged in a row above the oven and grill. Three control the three 8-in. diameter boiling plates (four on export models) which are well spaced to give room for standing saucepans between them. These switches (Simmerstats) enable any heat to be pre-selected, from boiling to simmering. The oven switch operates a Credastat which automatically maintains the oven temperature at the heat

selected. The others operate the plate-warming drawer and the grill.

The standard finish is two-tone ivory. All-white finish is extra. Overall dimensions are: height to hob 36 in., to top of splash plate $44\frac{1}{8}$ in., width 36 in., depth 21 in.

Oven capacity, 3,600 cub. in., height 15 in., width $14\frac{1}{2}$ in., depth $16\frac{5}{8}$ in., loading 3,450 watts. Grill area $9\frac{3}{4}$ in. by $7\frac{1}{4}$ in., height $5\frac{1}{2}$ in., width $13\frac{1}{2}$ in., depth $14\frac{3}{8}$ in., loading 1,500 watts.

Warming drawer: height $6\frac{1}{2}$ in., width $13\frac{1}{4}$ in., depth 16 in., loading 400 watts.

Boiling plates: loading 1,800 watts each.

Voltage ranges: 200/210, 220, 230/240, 250 AC.

Prices: Home Models, DH1, 54 guineas; DH2, 60 guineas. Export Models, DH3, 56 guineas; DH4, 62 guineas.

Simplex Electric Company Ltd., Oldbury, Birmingham.

Booklets Received

Pioneer Plasterboard, published by Imperial Chemical Industries Ltd. Pioneer plasterboard is manufactured in three forms; as Gypsum Wallboard for direct decoration, as Gypsum Baseboard and Gypsum lath for plaster finish, the last being finished in long narrow lengths. Insulating Gypsum Plasterboard, for improved thermal insulation, is available in each of the three types. These materials are suitable for the construction of ceilings and interior partitions, and this booklet deals fully with their properties and the methods by which they should be used. The booklet is available from any ICI Sales Office.

Materials and Fabrication, published by T. I. Aluminium Ltd. This is a brief but well produced

introduction—to those unfamiliar with them—to the general properties and working of aluminium and its alloys. It is also a simple handbook of reference on the commercial specifications, mechanical properties, compositions and points on the various fabrication techniques which concern the working of aluminium.

Copperad Series '50' Unit Heaters issued by Copperad Ltd. This is a detailed catalogue of the series '50' unit heaters, with full information on construction, selection, control gear and operation.

Metrovick Lamps and Metrovick Commercial Fittings, produced by Metropolitan-Vickers Electrical Co., Ltd., are catalogues which deal fully with the range and performance figures of equipment manufactured by the company in these categories.

Architectural Metalwork, by the Morris Singer Company, Ltd. An illustrated booklet of recent statues and ornamental metalwork carried out by the Company.

Creda Hot Water, by the Simplex Electric Co., Ltd., describing the full range and performance of their electric water heating appliances.

The Economics of Maintenance Painting by Imperial Chemical Industries. This is a very concise eight-page leaflet—in spite of its rather alarming title—setting out to explain to property owners, the principles of how to cost soundly this kind of work.

Correction

We are advised by John Thompson Beacon Windows Ltd., that in a recent advertisement in this journal featuring Beacon Windows supplied to the Chloride Electrical Co., Manchester, the name of the Architect was incorrectly stated. This should have read Mr. T. Trepass.



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Travel Centre in Piccadilly. Sub-contractors: Paving at main entrance, marble wall lining and fascia terrazzo: Jaconello Ltd. Linoleum: Cellulin Flooring Co. Ladder and rails in Typists' Office: Porter London Products Ltd. Ironmongery: Knight & Co. Door mat: General Welfare of the Blind. Metal window (Manager's Office): W. James & Co. Venetian blind: J. Avery & Co. Handrailing: Knight & Co. Shop front: Holland & Hannen & Cubitts Ltd. Fascia lettering, notice panel and signwriting: The Lettering Centre. Mirrors and sanitary fittings: John Bolding & Sons. Electrical installation: E.S.I. Some light fittings: Merchant Adventurers of London Ltd. Light fitting over Manager's desk: John Harker Ltd. House telephones: E.S.I. Heating: Weatherfoil Heating Systems Ltd. Water heater: General Electric Co. Ducts and fans: Vent-Axia Ltd. Low glass tables: Holland & Hannen & Cubitts Ltd. Showcase, bookcase, entrance screen, adjustable shelves, film filing cabinet, Assistant Manager's partition, table fitting in main showroom: Holland & Hannen & Cubitts Ltd. Satour sign (execution), lettering on glass: Pugh Bros., Ltd. Display: Cockade Ltd. West wall Exhibition (Paxtiles): Newalls Insulation Co. Waverite panel on west wall and east wall map and letter box: Waverite Ltd. Desk maps: Georama Ltd. Fascia lighting: Electrolumination Ltd. Satour sign (design): H. Lunn. Manager's desk: Mayfair Displays Ltd. Floor display: West End Flower House. Furniture: Dunn's of Bromley and Story & Co. Sofal projector: Morris & Maguire Ltd. Carpet in Manager's Office: Afia.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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